

Julia Roberts

Epic Mythomemology (*The Odyssey*)

Book 1 of *The Odyssey*

The book starts with an invocation of the Muses. All the survivors from Troy return home safely, expect Odysseus. Trapped in the cave of the nymph Calypso, the goddess keeps Odysseus hostage longing for him as her husband. All the Gods has empathy for Odysseus. but Poseidon is enraged by Odysseus for killing the Cyclops Polyphemus . The God's assemble in meeting, (except Poseidon who travels to the Ethiopians) and Zeus finds issue with the way the mortals always blame the Gods. Athena tells Zeus to let all those mortals die, but to help Odysseus, the man with a cursed fate. Zeus decides to work out a plan with the Gods to bring Odysseus back- disregarding the anger of Poseidon. Athena proposes for Hermes to go to Ogygia Island to the nymph Calypso and release Odysseus, while she goes to the house of Telemachus to send the young prince off to learn more about his father's journey home. The Gods agree, and Athena goes off to the home of Telemachus disguised as Mentos, an old friend of Odysseus. Athena, as Mentos, makes a prophecy to Telemachus that his father is really alive and making plans for a journey home. Telemachus tells Mentos of the misfortunes of his family and the suitors who are trying to court his mother. Mentos tells Telemachus to drive the suitors out of his home, send his mother to her father's home to arrange a new marriage (if she wishes), and to sail out in quest to find news of his father. Telemachus, having a feeling that his father's "friend" was an immortal goddess, did as Mentos said- speaking to his mother and calling for an assembly of the suitors the next day.



“You must not cling to your boyhood any longer- it’s time you were a man.”

*The Odyssey* 87.341-342

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Translated by Robert Fagles, Penguin Books, 1996.

### Book 2 of *The Odyssey*

The assembly with Telemachus and the suitors begins. The old lord Aegyptius begins by admiring Telemachus for his bravery and for calling the first assembly since Odysseus had left. Telemachus speaks in anger about the misfortunes of his father’s leaving and the mortifying acts of the suitors who court his mother, slaughter his animals, and destroy his home. The assembly went silent except for Antinous who says that it is Penelope who is to blame for playing with all the suitor’s hearts. He says that Penelope tricked the suitors by declaring that she would marry one after she finished her knitted web for Laertes; however, every night she would unravel the work she had knitted during the day. Antinous argues she should be sent back to her father and declares that the suitors will not leave until she marries. Telemachus says he could never drive his mother from her home and demands that the suitors leave. Telemachus cries out to the Gods and Zeus sends two eagles into the assembly. Halitherses says that this is a sign that Odysseus is alive and planning to return. However, Eurymachus says that Odysseus is dead and not returning. Mentor speaks up in fury at how those other than the suitors are sitting silent. Telemachus goes off to pray to Pallas Athena and she answers by coming in the form of Mentor. Athena, as Mentor, tells Telemachus to prepare for his trip. Telemachus goes and tells Eurycleia, the nurse, of his journey, but makes her promise not to tell Penelope. Athena disguises as Telemachus and goes to gather men. Telemachus sails off with Athena, as Mentor, leading the way.



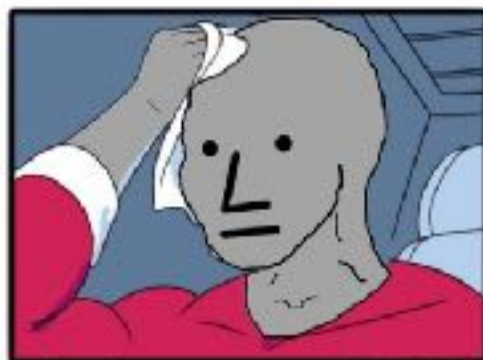
“Young men, my suitors, now that King Odysseus is no more, go slowly keen as you are to marry me, until I can finish off this web’...by day she’d weave at her great and growing web- by night... she would unravel all she’d done.”

*The Odyssey* 96.104-117

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Translated by Robert Fagles, Penguin Books, 1996.

### Book 3 of *The Odyssey*

Telemachus arrives in Pylos where the people are sacrificing black bulls to Poseidon. Telemachus is nervous to approach the king Nestor, who fought with Odysseus in Troy, but Athena settles him down. Nestor invites Athena and Telemachus to their banquet where they are given a cup of wine to pray to Poseidon. Telemachus explains that he is the son of Odysseus and has come to hear news of his father's journey. Nestor begins to remember the atrocities that occurred and tells what he can recall. He explains Zeus was not in favor of the Achaeans and many met awful fates because of Athena. The brothers, Menelaus and Agamemnon, were fighting because Menelaus wanted to sail home while Agamemnon wanted to stay and appease Athena. Nestor and Odysseus sailed with Menelaus and half the men back home, but Odysseus decided to go back to Agamemnon with a few others. Therefore, Nestor made it home from Troy safely without any idea what happened to Odysseus. Nestor reassures Telemachus by telling him that Athena was always on Odysseus' side and may favor the young prince too. Athena chimes in saying that its easy for a God to save a mortal, but even an immortal can't save a man once their fate takes the reigns. Telemachus asks more about Agamemnon's fate. Nestor explains that Agamemnon's wife, Clymnestra, was lured by Aegisthus while Agamemnon was away. Agamemnon made it home only to be killed by Aegisthus. Menelaus was out on his ships and couldn't give a proper burial. Aegisthus and Clymnestra ruled over Mycenae for seven years, until Orestes came back and took vengeance on them. Nestor tells Telemachus to visit Menelaus for news of his father. He invites Telemachus to spend the night and Athena, revealing herself, flies in eagle form to watch the crews. Nestor, in amazement, offers a sacrifice to Athena. Telemachus and his crew ride to Sparta accompanied by Nestor's son Pisistratus.



“The brothers harangued them, told them why they’d met: a crisis- Menelaus urging the men to fix their minds the voyage home across the sea’s broad back, but it brought no joy to Agamemnon, not at all. He meant to detain us there and offer victims, anything to appease Athena’s dreadful wrath- poor fool, he never dreamed Athena would not comply.”

*The Odyssey* 111-112. 156-162

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Translated by Robert Fagles, Penguin Books, 1996.

#### Book 4 of *The Odyssey*

Telemachus arrives in Sparta and is immediately invited into Menelaus’ feast. Menelaus hears Telemachus whisper in awe of the home to Pisistratus and tells how there are few who have his riches, but coming home from his travels, he was blindsided by the death of this brother and now rules unhappily. Menelaus says that he misses his men from Troy, especially Odysseus. As Menelaus talks about Odysseus, tears stream from Telemachus’ eyes. Menelaus recognized Telemachus, but waits for Helen to state the resemblance before speaking it. Helen drags the wine at the table which causes one to forget their pains and eases anger. As they drink the wine, Helen tells how crafty Odysseus was as he disguised himself as a beggar to infiltrate Troy and get information. The next morning, Telemachus explains to Menelaus why he has come to Sparta. Menelaus, in anger of Telemachus’ situation, tells the story of how he was stranded in Pharos. He explains that Eidothea told him the only way to reach home is to find her father Proteus and pin him down so he will tell him the truth. With help from Eidothea, Menelaus captures Proteus and learns that he is stuck on Pharos because he didn’t offer Zeus and the other Gods a proper sacrifice before he left. He must sail back to the Nile first and give a sacrifice before going home. Before sailing back, Menelaus asks Proteus about the other Achaeans and his loved ones. Proteus tells him that two men- Ajax and his brother Agamemnon had died- and one man is still alive and being held captive. Proteus tells Menelaus that Odysseus is being held in Calypso’s house by force. Back at Telemachus’ home, Noemon (who sold Telemachus his ship) asks Antinous when Telemachus will be back. Upon discovering Telemachus is gone, Antinous calls a meeting with the suitors and they make a plan to ambush Telemachus on his way home. The herald Medon tells Penelope that her son has sailed away. Heartbroken at the news, she prays to Athena to send a phantom of Iphthime (Penelope’s sister) to soothe her by revealing that Telemachus has the power of Athena with him.



“Into the mixing-bowl from which they drank their wine she slipped a drug, heart’s ease, dissolving anger, magic to make us all forget our pains...No one drank it deeply, mulled in wine, could let a tear roll down his cheeks that day, not even if his mother should die, his father should die, not even if right before his eyes some enemy brought down a brother or darling son with a sharp bronze blade.”

*The Odyssey* 131. 244-249

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Translated by Robert Fagles, Penguin Books, 1996.

### Book 5 of *The Odyssey*

The Gods sit in council where Zeus sends Hermes on a mission to go to the Nymph Calypso and tell the goddess to let Odysseus go upon which he will sail to Scheria where the Phaeacians will treat him like a God and send him off with ships. Calypso recognizes Hermes immediately. When Hermes tells her to let Odysseus go, she complains that the Gods are jealous of goddesses who sleep with mortals. Calypso argues that she saved Odysseus and even offered to make him immortal. Calypso finally agrees to let Odysseus go and shows good faith that she won’t plot against him. Odysseus sails off in the raft that was built for him, but is interrupted by Poseidon who spots him on his return home from visiting the Ethiopians. Poseidon sends a storm with large waves to Odysseus, but Ino saw the young prince and gave him an immortal scarf to keep him afloat as he abandons his boat to swim to land. Athena fought against Poseidon to calm the sea and allow Odysseus to swim to shore. After a few days, Odysseus finally reaches land.

Calypso: I’m willing to let you go home, but you can stay if...  
Odysseus:



“In the nights, true, he’d sleep with her in the arching cave-he had no choice- unwilling lover alongside lover too willing...But all his days he’d sit on the rocks and beaches, wrenching his heart with sobs and groans and anguish, gazing out over the barren sea through blinding tears.”

*The Odyssey* 157. 170-175

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Translated by Robert Fagles, Penguin Books, 1996.

### Book 6 of *The Odyssey*

Athena travels to the Phaeacian city where she enters the dream of the daughter of the king, Nausicaa, disguised a friend and tells the princess that she should start thinking about marriage. She tells the princess to go wash her sashes and dresses for her bed in the washing-pools. The next day at the washing-pools, Odysseus awakes to the sounds of the women. Unclothed, he scares all the other women away except Nausicaa who was given courage by Athena. Odysseus tells Nausicaa of the wonder he sees when he looks at her and begs her to help him. Nausicaa tells Odysseus she is the daughter of King Alcinous and calls her girls with lovely braids to bathe Odysseus and give him food. Athena made Odysseus taller and more muscular. Nausicaa tells Odysseus to follow the wagons into town and wait in the orchards of the palace until he thinks she has arrived. Then he must go and meet the Queen, hug her knees so she will take his heart. Odysseus goes to the town, and he prays to Athena.



“Beguiled by her dream, down she went to tell her parents now... ‘Daddy dear, I wonder, won’t you have a wagon for me, the tall one with the good smooth wheels... so I can take our clothes for a washing? Lovely things, but lying before me all soiled. And you yourself, sitting among the princes, debating at your council, you should really be wearing spotless linen.’”

*The Odyssey* 170. 54-68

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Translated by Robert Fagles, Penguin Books, 1996.

### Book 7 of *The Odyssey*

While Odysseus walks into town, Athena protects him with a heavy mist. She comes to Odysseus in the form of a young girl and guides Odysseus through the palace. When Odysseus reaches King and Queen, he approaches Arete and hugs her knees- pleading for mercy and a convoy home to Ithaca. The eldest lord stands up and tells the King to welcome the stranger. King Alcinous asks if Odysseus is a God, and when says no, Queen Arete begins to question Odysseus on his identity and his clothing. Odysseus tells the story of how he got to the island of Ogygia with the nymph Calypso and was kept there for seven years. He tells of his escape and his





journey to find the Phaeacian city and Princess Nausicaa. Alcinous offers Odysseus the opportunity to stay and marry his daughter or voyage home with his men sailing him the next day. Odysseus chooses to go home to his native land.

“if only- seeing the man you are, seeing we think as one- *you* could wed my daughter and be my son-in-law and stay right here with us. I’d give you a house and great wealth- if you choose to stay, that is.”

*The Odyssey* 189. 356-360

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Translated by Robert Fagles, Penguin Books, 1996.

Book 8 of *The Odyssey*

The next morning at the palace, Athena makes Odysseus taller and more massive yet again. At the feast, the blind bard, Demodocus, is called in to sing songs. The first song he sings is of the famous deeds of fighting heroes: the fight between Odysseus and Achilles. Odysseus tears up and covers his face so his hosts don’t see him, but King Alcinous notices his tears. Next the Phaeacians compete in a few contests- a footrace and wrestling. After the wrestling competition, Odysseus is challenged by Laodamas in a competition of discus. Odysseus throws the discus further than any other man and invited the others to challenge him. Demodocus comes back to sing another song, this time about how Hephaestus caught Ares and Aphrodite in bed with a trap. King Alcinous orders two men to dance and then the men give Odysseus each a cloak and a bar



of gold. Odysseus asks the bard to sing about the man Odysseus and his wooden horse trap at Troy. Upon hearing the song, Odysseus broke down in tears. King Alcinous asks Odysseus to tell his story.

“At that the heart of the long-suffering hero laughed, so glad to find a ready friend in the crowd that, lighter in mood, he challenged all the Phaeacia’s best: ‘Now go match *that*, you young pups, and straightaway I’ll hurl you another just as far, I swear, or even father! All the rest of you, anyone with the spine and spirit, step right up and try me- you’ve incensed me so- at boxing, wrestling, racing; nothing daunts me.’”

*The Odyssey* 198. 230-237

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Translated by Robert Fagles, Penguin Books, 1996.

### Book 9 of *The Odyssey*

Odysseus reveals himself as the son of Laertes and begins the story of his journey. He tells how Calypso, Circe, and the queen of Aeaeta all tried to keep him from home. Odysseus went and sacked Ismarus- home of the Cicones. They escaped death there to travel for nine days to the land of the Lotus-eaters who fed the men lotus to make them want to stay in the land. Odysseus brought his men out of the land where they next met the cyclops, Polyphemos. Odysseus took some of his finest men to go into the Cyclops’ cave. When they arrived the cave was empty and the men awaited for its return. The Cyclops came back with his herd and closed the entrance with a large boulder. The Cyclops asked Odysseus where he landed his ship, and Odysseus responded that Poseidon had smashed it. Quickly, the Cyclops eats two of Odysseus’ men. Odysseus comes up with a plan, and him and his men sharpen a large wooden stake. When the Cyclops comes back, Odysseus gives him wine. When the Cyclops asks his name he tells him it is “Nobody.” This way when the Cyclops falls over drunk, Odysseus rams the stake into the Cyclops’ eye, blinding him. And when the other Cyclopes come to Polyphemos’ rescue, he says Nobody did this to me. Odysseus and his men escape, but Odysseus bursts out to Polyphemos that if anyone asks him, Odysseus was the man that blinded him. Polyphemos’ screams to his father, Poseidon, to never let Odysseus reach home without first becoming a broken man with a life of pain that awaits him.





“Cyclops- if any man on the face of the earth should ask you who blinded you, shamed you so- say Odysseus, raider of cities, *he* gouged out your eye, Laertes’ son who makes his home in Ithaca!”

*Odyssey* 227.559-562

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Translated by Robert Fagles, Penguin Books, 1996.

### Book 10 of *The Odyssey*

Odysseus continues the story of his journey with his arrival at the Aeolian island, home of Aeolus, who hosted him for an entire month. Before Odysseus left the Aeolian island, Aeolus gave Odysseus a sack of winds. Odysseus sails for nine days, but on the tenth, he falls asleep and his crewmen look to see what is in the sack. By opening the sack, Odysseus and his men are blown back away from Ithaca. The crew arrives back at the Aeolian island and Aeolus says the immortals must hate Odysseus. Next, Odysseus goes to the Laestrygonian land where Antiphates barbarously welcomes Odysseus’ men by tearing one of the men and eating him for dinner. They leave the land quickly and sail to the Achaean island- home of Circe the nymph. Odysseus sends men to scout the area, but when Circe invites the men in, Eurylochus stays behind. He watches as Circe stirred a drug into their drinks to wipe the men’s memories of home and turns them into swine. Eurylochus runs back to Odysseus to warn him, but Odysseus goes to rescue his men. Hermes visits Odysseus and gives him a drug that will shield him from Circe’s witchcraft. Hermes tells Odysseus to draw his sword on Circe when her magic doesn’t work and promise to have sex with her if she agrees to not use magic on him again. Odysseus goes in and does what Hermes instructed; Circe realized the man must be Odysseus and vows not to harm him. Circe brings Odysseus into a feast, and after he doesn’t touch his food, she reverses the witchcraft she performed on his men, turning the pigs back into humans. Odysseus and his crew stayed with Circe for a year until Odysseus approached Circe about helping him go home. Circe tells Odysseus that he can’t go home until he travels to the Underworld to consult Tiresias the prophet. Elpenor, the youngest man, goes out at night for fresh air and falls off the roof, but Odysseus and his men are focused on going to the Underworld.

Odysseus: Where are my men?!

Circe: ... ^glances over^



“Once they drained the bowls she filled, suddenly she struck with her wand, drove them into her pigsties, all of them bristling into swine- with grunts, snouts- even their bodies, yes, and only the men’s minds stayed steadfast as before.”

*The Odyssey* 237-238. 261-265

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Translated by Robert Fagles, Penguin Books, 1996.

### Book 11 of *The Odyssey*

Odysseus and his men travel to the Underworld and perform the offerings for their entrance. The first ghost to approach Odysseus was that of Elpenor who begs Odysseus to go back and give him a proper burial in his full armor. Odysseus finds out his mother has passed away when he sees her ghost, but before she comes Tiresias approaches Odysseus and tells him that a God will make his journey hard for him in revenge for blinding Polyphemus. If he escapes, he will return home alone and find a world of pain. He tells him there will be a sign and he must sacrifice to Poseidon so that he may have a painless death where all his people will be there bringing him peace. Next, Odysseus’ mother approaches and tells Odysseus about his home. She tells him how she died of loneliness and how Penelope and Telemachus are back home dealing with the suitors trying to court Penelope. After Odysseus speaks to his mother, many other ghosts approach to speak to the hero. Odysseus speaks to Tyro, Antiope, Alcmena, Megara, Epicaste, Chloris, Leda, Iphimedeia, Phaedra, Procris, Ariadne, Clymene, Maeram and Eriphyle. After telling of his conversations with these ghosts, Arete bursts out how impressed she is with her guest. Alcinous says that Odysseus must wait until tomorrow to sail off so the Phaeacians can gather his parting gifts. Alcinous asks Odysseus if he saw any of his fellow soldiers from Troy in the Underworld, and Odysseus answers, continuing his story. He tells of how he saw Agamemnon and learns of his fatal death by murder. He warns Odysseus to sail home in secret, and to not trust women. Next Odysseus sees his other fellow soldiers- Achilles, Antilochus, and Ajax. He speaks to Achilles and Antilochus, but Ajax ignores him. Odysseus also sees Minos, Orion, Tityus, Tantalus, Sisyphus, and Heracles. Ghosts began to swarm around Odysseus, and worried that

Odysseus after hearing  
Tiresias’ prophecy:



Persephone may send a monster or hound, Odysseus fled back to his ship and away from the Underworld.

“...but a god will make it hard for you-I know- you will never escape the one who shakes the earth, quaking with anger at you still, still enraged because you blinded the Cyclops, his dear son.”

*The Odyssey* 252. 113-116

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Translated by Robert Fagles, Penguin Books, 1996.

### Book 12 of *The Odyssey*

Odysseus and his men sail back to Aeaea to give Elpenor the proper burial as Odysseus promised. Circe comes to the men telling them to come stay the night and eat. She tells the men that she will help them set a course to go home. Circe pulls Odysseus aside to hear the story of the Underworld and then she tells him he must first go to the island of the Sirens, but he must fill his men's ears with beeswax so they can't hear the sirens. He should have his men tied him in the ship so he can hear the Sirens without being lured to death. Circe then tells Odysseus he has two options. The first side is the Clashing Rocks where only one ship has survived crossing. The other option is the two enormous crags- Scylla and Charybdis. Circe advises that Odysseus hug Scylla's crag and lose six men sailing past her rather than losing his entire crew. She tells him when he reaches Thrinacia, leave the beasts unharmed or his ships and men will be destroyed. Odysseus and his men sail to the land of the Sirens and follow the instructions of Circe. They make it past the Sirens and approach Scylla and Charybdis. The Scylla takes six of Odysseus' men, but they make it past. Next they approach Thrinacia, and Odysseus remembers the advice of Tiresias and Circe to not harm the cattle. He wants to continue to sail past, but Eurylochus says the men need to stop and rest. They rest at the land, but a storm was sent and the men started running out of food. Odysseus went to pray and Eurylochus tells the men they need to kill one of Helios' cows so they don't die of starvation, but they can build a temple to Helios to appease him. Odysseus comes back to see what his men had done. Helios rages in anger and tells Zeus to avenge him. Zeus send a thunderbolt to Odysseus' ship killing all of Odysseus' men, leaving the hero alone. Odysseus survives the Scylla and Charybdis once again and the gods next cast him to Ogygia, the island of Calypso.

Odysseus: "Which one of you  
killed Helios' cow?!"  
Odysseus' men:



“At once they drove off the Sun-god’s finest cattle...Once they prayed, slaughtered and skinned the cattle, they cut the thighbones out, they wrapped them in fat, a double fold sliced clean and topped with strips of flesh... and once they burned the bones and tasted the organs- hacked the rest into pieces, piercing them with splints.”

*Odyssey* 282. 380-392

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Translated by Robert Fagles, Penguin Books, 1996.

### Book 13 of *The Odyssey*

Alcinous tells the Phaeacians to give Odysseus more gifts before his journey home the next day. They feasted and Odysseus fell into a peaceful sleep as the Phaeacian crew sailed him safely to Ithaca. Poseidon sees that Odysseus has made it back to Ithaca and unleashes his wrath on Zeus. Poseidon tells Zeus that he will lose his honor among the immortals as he decreed that Odysseus would suffer long and hard before coming home. Zeus tells Odysseus that he is a mighty god and if a mortal doesn't show him respect, he has the power to take revenge. Poseidon decides to turn the Phaeacian ship to stone on their voyage home and then pile up a huge mountain around their port. Odysseus wakes up from his sleep and doesn't recognize Ithaca because Athena has covered the hero in mist to make his appearance unrecognizable until the suitors were killed. Athena appeared to him in the form of a shepherd boy and announces that he is in Ithaca. Odysseus makes up a story about who he is and his journey, but Athena reveals herself and tells him that she knows who he is, knows his witty tales, and has been with him his whole journey. Athena helps Odysseus bury the treasures and seal the mouth of the cavern and then they go to plot the death of the suitors. Athena says she will turn Odysseus into an old man in rags and he should go first to his swineherd while she went to tell Telemachus to return.

When the prophecy  
comes true...



“They might well wonder, blind to what had happened, till Alcinous rose and made things all too clear: ‘Oh no- my father’s prophecy years ago...it all comes home to me with a vengeance now!’

He used to say Poseidon was vexed with us because we escorted all mankind and never came to grief. He said that one day, as a well-built ship of ours sailed home on the misty sea from such a convoy, the god would crush it, yes, and pile a huge mountain round about our port.”

*The Odyssey* 292. 192-201

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Translated by Robert Fagles, Penguin Books, 1996.

#### Book 14 of *The Odyssey*

Odysseus visits his swineherd where there are less pigs than usual due to the suitors feasting on them. At his swineherd Odysseus is almost attacked by dogs, but knows their tricks and avoids it. Eumaeus, a loyal swineherd, sees Odysseus disguised as the old man and offers him to come into his shelter. Eumaeus tells the disguised Odysseus about the old king who left for Troy and died- not knowing that he was talking to Odysseus himself. Eumaeus also tells the disguised Odysseus about the suitors that have taken over the palace. Odysseus tries to hint to Eumaeus that the king may not be dead, but Eumaeus is sure. Eumaeus asks the stranger who he is, and Odysseus begins to tell a made up tale about his journeys. In his journey, the stranger (Odysseus) explains that he reached Thesprotia's beaches where the king told him that Odysseus had just left to Dodona to hear Zeus' will and after her would return. Eumaeus still doesn't believe Odysseus, so Odysseus makes a bet that if the king returns Eumaeus must send him in cloak to Dulichion, but if the king doesn't return Eumaeus can set his men on the stranger. Eumaeus tells Odysseus to sleep in the hut until Odysseus' son Telemachus returns home.

Eumaeus: Odysseus is never coming back.

Odysseus:



“Odysseus, he'll never come home again. Never...Drink your wine, sit back, let's talk of other things. Don't remind me of all this. The heart inside me breaks when anyone mentions my dear master. That oath of yours, we'll let it pass- Odysseus, oh come back!- just as *I wish...*”

*The Odyssey* 307-194-199

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Translated by Robert Fagles, Penguin Books, 1996.



## Book 15 of *The Odyssey*

Athena goes to Sparta and tells Telemachus to speak to Menelaus about sending him home immediately because Penelope's father and brothers are urging her to marry Eurymachus. She also tells Telemachus to go to the swineherd first and send him to town to tell Penelope he is back so that the suitors do not kill him. The next morning Menelaus fills Telemachus' chariot with gifts, and an eagle clutching a goose flies by. Helen interpreted the eagle as a sign that Odysseus will come to his house and take revenge, he may even be there already. Telemachus and Pisistratus leave and Telemachus requests that Pisistratus not take him past his vessel so that Nestor won't keep him long. They made it to Pylos, but just as Telemachus was about to set sail, a prophet Melampus and asks to come along with Telemachus; Telemachus agrees. Odysseus tries to test the swineherd to see if he would give him a warm welcome or send him to town. Eumaeus tells the stranger to stay until Telemachus comes back. Odysseus asks Eumaeus about his parents, and Eumaeus tells Odysseus that Laertes is alive but wants to die. Odysseus asks Eumaeus to tell his story and it is revealed that Eumaeus was sold to Laertes. Born in Sidon to a wealthy man, but stolen and shipped off by Taphian pirates. He was later taken by a nurse in his home on a ship to Ithaca. The seer Theoclymenus asks Telemachus on his ship where he can stay in Ithaca, and Telemachus responds that he would offer his home but it is overtaken by suitors. At this time, a hawk flew past and the prophet said that this was a sign that his line would rule Ithaca forever.

Greek hospitality  
vs.  
American hospitality



“But wait till I load your chariot down with gifts- fine ones, too, you’ll see with your own eyes- and tell the maids to serve a meal at hall... It’s honor and glory to us, a help to you as well if you dine in style first, then leave to see our world.”

*The Odyssey* 321-322. 82-87

*Book 16 of The Odyssey*

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Translated by Robert Fagles, Penguin Books, 1996.

Telemachus arrives at the swineherd’s hut, and Eumaeus runs to greet and embrace him. Telemachus offers to give the stranger a cloak, good clothing, a sword, sandals and a send off to wherever he desires unless he wants to stay at the farm. Odysseus tells Telemachus to go fight the suitors even if he doesn’t think he can beat them. Telemachus sends Eumaeus to go tell Penelope he is home and to send the housekeeper to tell Laertes. At this point, Athena visits Odysseus and removes the disguise. Telemachus doesn’t believe the man is his father, rather a trick of a god. Odysseus explains that it is him and Telemachus throws his arms around his father sobbing. Telemachus and Odysseus discuss a plan to defeat the suitors: Athena will disguise Odysseus again and he will go to the suitors while Telemachus brings swords for them to seize the suitors. The two will have Athena to daze the suitors, but no one can know that Odysseus has returned. The suitors found out that Telemachus was home because Odysseus and Telemachus sent a herald to tell Penelope of the news, but the herald shouted it. The suitors talk and plan what to do about Telemachus. The herald Medon hears the suitors and goes to tell Penelope their plans. Penelope approaches the suitors and speaks directly to Antinous about his plans to destroy her son. Eurymachus tells Penelope that they could never kill Telemachus. Meanwhile, Athena disguises Odysseus as old again and him and Telemachus eat a proper meal and go to sleep.



“At that Odysseus sat down again, and Telemachus threw his arms around his great father, sobbing uncontrollably as the deep desire for tears welled up in both...Both men so filled with compassion, eyes streaming tears...”

*The Odyssey* 345.243-249

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Translated by Robert Fagles, Penguin Books, 1996.

### Book 17 of *The Odyssey*

Telemachus wakes up to go visit his mother. Penelope is happy to see her son alive, and she asks him about his adventure: news of Odysseus. Telemachus tells Penelope to go bathe and put on fresh clothes. Athena casts splendor on Telemachus and he sees Mentor, Antiphus, and Halitherses. As he sits Piraeus and Theoclymenus approach and they make a plan for Menelaus' gifts. Penelope comes back and asks about Odysseus again. Telemachus tells her of his journey and how he heard that Odysseus was alive on an island with the nymph Calypso. Theoclymenus added his prophecy that Odysseus is in Ithaca now planning for revenge on the suitors, but Penelope does not believe him. Odysseus, as the old man, and Eumaeus go to town where they are met by Melanthius who says cruel things. Instead of beating the scoundrel, Odysseus decides to pray to the nymphs of Zeus that Melanthius get punished. Eumaeus and Odysseus reach the palace, and Eumaeus heads in first. Odysseus sees his dog Argos, who Odysseus trained, but now is mistreated and neglected. Argos passes away after he sees Odysseus finally enter the palace. Telemachus gives the beggar Odysseus a loaf of bread and meat; he tells the beggar to round the table. Athena tells Odysseus to go through the suitors, begging for food to test them and see who is innocent and guilty. Melanthius recognizes the beggar and Antinous begins yelling at Eumaeus for bringing him into town and the palace. Telemachus stops Eumaeus' rebuttal and commands that they give the stranger food. Odysseus goes around and stops at Antinous. He begs him for food and tells him of how he used to be rich. When Antinous refuses to give the beggar food, Odysseus responds telling the man that his head doesn't match his looks. Furious, Antinous throws the stool from under his feet at the stranger. Penelope hears the noise and asks Eumaeus to bring the beggar to her for a warm welcome while she asks him if he knows of anything about Odysseus. Eumaeus goes to Odysseus and he tells Eumaeus he will meet with Penelope when the sun goes down.

Antinous: You won't get out of here  
unscarred \*throws the stool\*  
Everyone else:



“Boiling over Antinous gave him a scathing look and let it fly, ‘Now you won’t get out of the hall unscarred, I swear, not after such a filthy string of insults!’ With that he seized the stool and hurled it- Square in the back it struck Odysseus, just under the right shoulder but he stood up against it- steady as a rock, unstagged by Antinous’ blow- just shook his head...”

*The Odyssey* 369. 506-513

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Translated by Robert Fagles, Penguin Books, 1996.

### Book 18 of *The Odyssey*

Another beggar Irus comes to the palace and yells at Odysseus. Antinous proposes the two battle and he plans the contest: the beggar that wins gets to pick from the goat sausages and gets a place at the table to feast from that day on. Antinous tells Irus if he loses, he will be whipped and sent to Echetus, the king who wrecks all men alive. Odysseus decided to give the beggar a light jab, but in his punch he smashed the bones in Irus’ neck sending red blood to spew through his mouth. Odysseus wins the battle and Antinous gives Odysseus a large goat sausage. Amphinomus, a suitor who wishes the stranger great days, is warned by disguised Odysseus to leave before Odysseus comes back to take revenge, but Athena bounds all suitors to a fate of death. Athena put a slumber over Penelope and made her even more beautiful so that the suitors would not be able to resist her. Penelope goes out into the halls and scolds Telemachus for letting a stranger be abused in the palace. Eurymachus tells Penelope how beautiful she is which leads her to a rant about how much she misses Odysseus and how poorly the suitors have done in trying to win her over, not even showering her with gifts. Antionus responds telling the queen that the suitors will bring gifts and not leave until she has picked a man to wed. Penelope goes back to her room with all the gifts, and the suitors continue with dance and song. Odysseus scared the maids off to go take care of Penelope over night, and Eurymachus begins mocking the beggar. The beggar responded by wishing that he and Eurymachus could fight. Eurymachus through a stool at Odysseus, but missed and hit the wine-steward. Telemachus raises his voice, demanding the suitors go home, and Amphinomous agrees, telling the suitors to make their libations and then go to sleep.



“The two men squared off- and Irus hurled a fist at Odysseus’ right shoulder as *he* came through with a hook below the ear, pounding Irus’ neck, smashing the bones inside- suddenly red blood came spurting out of his mouth, and headlong down he pitched in the dust, howling, teeth locked in a grin, feet beating the ground...”

*The Odyssey* 378-379. 108-115

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Translated by Robert Fagles, Penguin Books, 1996.

### Book 19 of *The Odyssey*

Odysseus tells Telemachus to hide the weapons from the halls. Telemachus tells Eurycleia to lock the maids in their rooms, and Athena lights the way as Odysseus and Telemachus stow the weapons. Odysseus goes to talk to Penelope, and she tells him about her pain yearning for her husband; she plans to marry a suitor soon now that her husband is no longer coming home. She begs the stranger to tell her who he is, and Odysseus tells her a story of how his name is Aethon and he is a Cretan who sailed to Troy and took Odysseus back to his home. When Penelope doesn’t believe him, the man describes Odysseus perfectly. Penelope orders Eurycleia to come wash the beggar’s feet, and she notices the man’s resemblance to Odysseus immediately. As Eurycleia was washing she touched the scar Odysseus received by a boar in Parnassus, and she knew the man was Odysseus. He warns Eurycleia to not tell anyone or he will not spare her, and she swears not to tell. Penelope comes back to tell the beggar about her dream: she is watching the geese in her home when an eagle comes and kills all of them. In her dream, Penelope describes how the eagle flew back again and spoke to her like a human saying the geese were her suitors and the eagle was no one but Odysseus. Penelope asks the beggar to interpret her dream in which he responds that Odysseus must be telling her himself that he is coming to take revenge on the suitors. Penelope still not convinced, decides she is going to hold a contest to see which suitor can string Odysseus’ bow through twelve axes.

\*at anything Odysseus says...\*

Eurycleia:





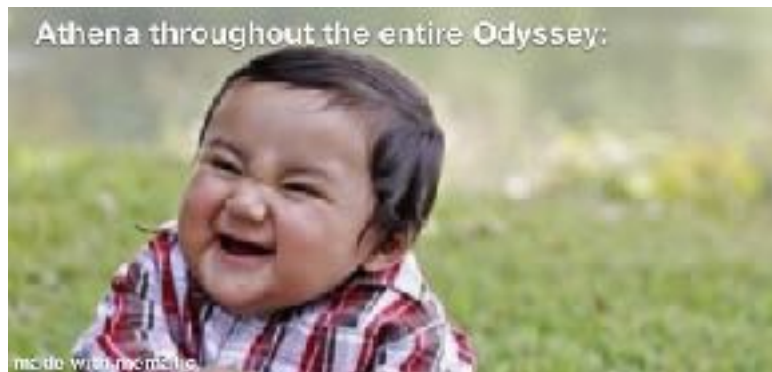
“Child,’ shrewd old Eurycleia protester, ‘what nonsense you let slip through your teeth! You know *me*- I’m stubborn, never give an inch- I’ll keep still as solid rock or iron. One more thing. Take it to heart, I tell you. If a god beats down these brazen suitors at your hands, I’ll report in full on the women in your house: who are disloyal to you, who are guiltless.”

*The Odyssey* 406. 555-562

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Translated by Robert Fagles, Penguin Books, 1996.

### Book 20 of *The Odyssey*

Odysseus lay up at night plotting the suitors’ death, and witnesses the maids going to lay with the suitors. He is enraged, but forces his anger into submission. Athena visits Odysseus, and, meanwhile, Penelope prays to Artemis for death. Odysseus asks Zeus for a sign that he is supposed be back in his native land, and Zeus sends thunder. Telemachus decrees a public feast. The cowherd, Philoetius, approaches the beggar and marvels at his resemblance to Odysseus, the King. The men feast and Odysseus is given his fair share of food. Athena planned to make the suitors insult Odysseus to deepen his anger. One suitor, Ctesippus, speaks up and throws an oxhoof at Odysseus- barely missing. Another suitor, Agelaus, stands up and tells Telemachus to go sit with Penelope and get her to wed a new man. When Telemachus responded, Athena sent uncontrollable laughter throughout the suitors. The seer Theoclymenus sees the blood of the meat oozing and shouts that the suitors are in for great trouble, but they just laugh even harder.



“But Athena had no mind to let the brazen suitors hold back now from their heart-rending insults-she meant to make the anguish cut still deeper into the core of Laertes’ son Odysseus.”

*The Odyssey* 419.316-319

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Translated by Robert Fagles, Penguin Books, 1996.

### Book 21 of *The Odyssey*

Athena inspires Penelope to grab Odysseus’ bow from the hall- a gift from a friend Iphitus. She takes the bow and iron axes and announces the contest to the suitors. Telemachus steps up first to

string Odysseus' bow, but just before his fourth attempt Odysseus stops his son from attempting again. Telemachus then invites the other suitors to try. Leodes steps up first, but quickly realizes he can't complete the challenge. Antinous stands up and asks that Melanthius go build a fire and bring the ball of lard so they can heat and grease the bow before using it. Meanwhile, Odysseus sees the cowherd and swineherd leaving the palace and he goes to reveal himself. Back at the palace, Eurymachus is unable to string the bow. Antinous suggests to give the bow a rest for the remainder of the day, but the disguised Odysseus asks to give it a try. After the suitors refuse, Penelope speaks up to give the man a chance. Telemachus steps in and tells Penelope to go back to her quarters and leave the contest to be overseen by him. He also tells Eurycleia to lock the doors of all the maids. The suitors mock the beggar, but he shoots the bow through all the arrows in a single try. Zeus cracks the sky with thunder and Telemachus draws his sword to join his father.

When Odysseus steps up  
to string the bow...



“So they mocked, but Odysseus, mastermind in action, once he handled the great bow and scanned every inch, then, like an expert singer skilled at lyre and song...with his virtuoso ease Odysseus strung his mighty bow.”

*The Odyssey* 437.451-456

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Translated by Robert Fagles, Penguin Books, 1996.

Book 22 of *The Odyssey*

Odysseus strips back his rags and goes straight for Antinous' throat. The suitors realize that their weapons are gone, and they panic. Eurymachus begs Odysseus to spare the rest of the suitors, but Odysseus says he would never- even if they paid him in all their possessions. Eurymachus tries to rally up the suitors to fight, but Odysseus draws up his arrow and shoots it through his liver.

Telemachus goes to the room where all the weapons were stored and grabs arms, but Melanthius sees the storage room and grabs arms for the suitors. When Odysseus sees the suitors' weapons, Telemachus admits it's his fault. Odysseus orders Eumaeus to tie Melanthius up and let him hang alive in the storage room. Athena comes disguised as Mentor, and Odysseus calls her to help, but the suitors threaten Mentor to not let Odysseus trick him. Athena is enraged and yells at Odysseus to fight like he did in Troy. She keeps testing Odysseus and Telemachus-letting them prove their fighting heart in battle. The battle continued and finally Athena reveals her shield to the suitors, sending them running in panic. Leodes flings himself on Odysseus and begs for mercy, but Odysseus shows none. The rest of the suitors are killed except Phemius the bard and the herald Medon who Telemachus begs Odysseus to spare. Odysseus calls Eurycleia to bring all the maids, and he orders them to clear the bodies and scrub the palace of blood. Afterwards, Telemachus hung the dishonorable maids outside in the courtyard, and the men tore Melanthius to pieces with a knife. Odysseus cleaned his palace with cleansing fumes and all the survivors wept that their King has returned.

Odysseus: how did the suitors  
get weapons?!

Telemachus:



“He turned to Telemachus, warnings flying: ‘A bad break in the fight, my boy! One of the women’s tipped the odds against us- or could it be the goatherd?’ ‘My fault, father,’ the cool clear prince replied, ‘the blame’s all mine. That snug door to the vault, I left it ajar...’”

*The Odyssey* 444. 160-164

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Translated by Robert Fagles, Penguin Books, 1996.

### Book 23 of *The Odyssey*

Eurycleia goes to tell Penelope that Odysseus had returned. Penelope thinks that Eurycleia has gone crazy, but the nurse insists that Odysseus is back and the suitors were all killed. Even after this Penelope thinks that it must be a god who has killed the suitors. Penelope leaves her room to face Odysseus, but won't accept it's him until he shows her their sign. Odysseus comes up with a plan to have a feast and invite the bard to play; the rest of Ithaca will just believe Penelope finally married one of the suitors. Penelope tells Eurycleia to move the bedstead so Odysseus can sleep, testing him. Odysseus shouts in rage wondering where his bed went, and he went on to describe the entire room he built. This was the proof Penelope was looking for, and she finally rushed to her husband. He tells the story of his journey, and the next morning he announces that he will visit his father. He tells the women to protect themselves in their chambers, and he sets off with Telemachus, the cowherd, and the swineherd.



“Living proof- Penelope felt her knees go slack, her heart surrender, recognizing the strong clear signs Odysseus offered. She dissolved in tears, rushed to Odysseus, flung her arms around his neck and kissed his head...”

*The Odyssey* 462. 230-234

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Translated by Robert Fagles, Penguin Books, 1996.

### Book 24 of *The Odyssey*

Hermes leads the suitors' ghosts to the Underworld, where they find the ghosts of Achilles, Patroclus, Antilochus, Great Ajax, and Agamemnon. Agamemnon notices the suitor, Amphimedon, and asks him what brought them to the Underworld. Amphimedon tells the story, and Agamemnon cries out in happiness for Odysseus' voyage home. Odysseus reaches the house of Laertes and sees his father worn down. Odysseus approaches his father as a man named Man of Strife, looking for Odysseus- he once hosted him in his own country. When grief fell over Laertes, Odysseus revealed himself to his father by showing his scar and describing the trees. The father and son go back to feast and Athena makes Laertes look younger again. The herald spread what took place in the palace and soon everyone knew about the death of the suitors. Eupithes rose to speak in front of the Achaean people asking for revenge, and many agreed with him. Athena goes to Zeus to ask him if he is going to prolong the war or bring peace. Zeus says

both sides need to seal their pact. The Achaeans come to kill Odysseus and take revenge, but Athena came (disguised as Mentor) and demanded peace.



“So Athena commanded. Terror blanched their faces, they went limp with fear, weapons, slipped from their hands and strewed the ground at the goddess’ ringing voice...So she commanded. He obeyed her, glad at heart. And Athena handed down her pacts of peace between both sides for all years to come...”

*The Odyssey* 485. 586-600

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Translated by Robert Fagles, Penguin Books, 1996.