The Odyssey
Homer
Translated by Robert Fitzgerald

Part 1
The Adventures of Odysseus

In the opening verses, Homer addresses the muse of epic poetry. He asks her help in telling the tale of Odysseus.

Sing in me, Muse, and through me tell the story of that man skilled in all ways of contending, the wanderer, harried for years on end, after he plundered the stronghold on the proud height of Troy. He saw the townlands and learned the minds of many distant men, and weathered many bitter nights and days in his deep heart at sea, while he fought only to save his life, to bring his shipmates home.

1. Muse (μυστήρα): Any one of the nine goddesses of the arts, literature, and the sciences.

2. Troy (Troy): City in northeastern Asia Minor, site of the Trojan War.

Build Vocabulary
plundered (πλαύτειν) v.: Took goods by force from; looted

CHARACTERS

Alcinous (αλκίνοος)—king of the Phaeacians, to whom Odysseus tells his story
Odysseus (οδύσσεα)—king of Ithaca
Calypso (καλυπτος)—sea goddess who loved Odysseus
Circe (κείρκες)—enchantress who helped Odysseus
Zeus (Ζευς)—king of the gods
Apollo (Ἀπόλλων)—god of music, poetry, and medicine
Agamemnon (Ἀγαμήμονος)—king and leader of Greek forces
Poseidon (Ποσειδῶν)—god of sea and earthquakes
Athena (Ἀθηνᾶ)—goddess of wisdom, skills, and warfare
Polyphemus (Πολυφημος)—the Cyclops who imprisoned Odysseus
Laertes (Λαέρτης)—Odysseus’ father
Cronus (Κρόνος)—Titan ruler of the universe; father of Zeus
Perimedes (Περίμηδης)—member of Odysseus’ crew
Eurylochus (Εὐρυλόχος)—another member of the crew

Tiresias (Τηρεσίας)—blind prophet who advised Odysseus
Persephone (Περσεφόνη)—wife of Hades
Telemachus (Τελεμάχος)—Odysseus and Penelope’s son
Sirens (Σίρινες)—creatures whose songs lure sailors to their deaths
Scylla (Σκύλλα)—sea monster of gray rock
Charybdis (Χαρυβδίς)—enormous and dangerous whirlpool
Lampetia (Λάμπεττα)—nymph
Hermes (Ἑρμῆς)—herald and messenger of the gods
Eumaeus (Εὐμαῖος)—old swineherd and friend of Odysseus
Antinous (Ἀντίνοος)—leader among the suitors
Eurymachus (Εὐρυμάχος)—sailor
Atalante (Ἀταλάντη)—housekeeper for Penelope
Amphinomus (Ἀμφινόμος)—sailor

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But not by will nor valor could he save them, for their own recklessness destroyed them all—children and fools, they killed and feasted on the cattle of Lord Helios, the Sun, and he who moves all day through heaven took from their eyes the dawn of their return.

Of these adventures, Muse, daughter of Zeus, tell us in our time, lift the great song again.
Ten years after the Trojan War, Odyssey departs from the goddess Calypso’s island. He arrives in Phaeacia, ruled by Alcinous. Alcinous offers a ship to Odyssey and asks him to tell of his adventures.

“I am Laertes’ son, Odysseus. Men hold me formidable for guile in peace and war; this fame has gone abroad to the sky’s rim.

My home is on the peaked sea-mark of Ithaca under Mount Neion’s wind-blown robe of leaves, in sight of other islands—Dulichium, Same, wooded Zacynthus—Ithaca being most lofty in that coastal sea and northwest, while the rest lie east and south. A rocky isle, but good for a boy’s training; I shall not see on earth a place more dear, though I have been detained long by Calypso, least among goddesses, who held me in her smooth caves, to be her heart’s delight, as Circe of Aeaea the enchantress, desired me, and detained me in her hall. But in my heart I never gave consent.

Where shall a man find sweetness to surpass his own home and his parents? In far lands he shall not, though he find a house of gold.

What of my sailing, then, from Troy? What of those years of rough adventure, weathered under Zeus? The wind that carried west from Ithaca brought me to Lemnos, on the far shore, a stronghold among Cicones, and I stormed that place and killed the men who fought. Plunder we took, and we enslaved the women. To make division, equal shares to all—but on the spot I told them: ‘Back, and quickly!’

Note: In his translation of the Odyssey, Fitzgerald spelled Greek names in a way that suggests the sound and flavor of the original Greek. In the excerpts included here, more familiar spellings have been used. Where, for example, Fitzgerald wrote “Kirke,” “Cyclops,” and “Sirens,” you will here find “Circe,” “Cyclops,” and “Sirens.”
4. What happens to the men who eat the Lotus?

3. What keeps Odysseus from reaching home?

2. Describe the events on Ismarus.

I. about Troy in modern times.

[Image 0x0 to 784x608]

4. What lessons can be learned from the defeat of Odysseus? Which of his qualities do you admire?

Reader's Response What is your first impression of Odysseus? Which of his qualities do you admire?

Thematic Focus Identify the conflicts represented by each of Odysseus' foes and explain how a person might work out these conflicts.

Questions for Research Troy was a great city at the time of the Trojan War, but what is its status in more recent times? Generate research questions about Troy in modern times.

1. Who is narrating these adventures?
2. Describe the events on Eetes.
3. What keeps Odysseus from reaching home?
4. What happens to the men who eat the Lotus?

The Odyssey, Part 1, The Lotus-Eaters • 886

The Cyclops

In the next land we found were Cyclopes,15 giants, louts, without a law to bless them. In ignorance leaving the fruitage of the earth in mystery to the immortal gods, they neither plow nor sow by hand, nor till the ground, though grain—wild wheat and barley—grows untended, and wine grapes, in clusters, ripen in heaven's rains. Cyclopes have no master and no meeting, no consultation or old tribal ways, but each one dwells in his own mountain cave dealing out rough justice to wife and child, indifferent to what the others do.

As we rowed on, and nearer to the mainland, at one end of the bay, we saw a cavern yawning above the water, screened with laurel, and many rams and goats about the place inside a sheepfold—made from slabs of stone earthfast between tall trunks of pine and rugged towering oak trees.

A prodigious man slept in this cave alone, and took his flocks to graze afield—remote from all companions, knowing none but savage ways, a brute so huge, he seemed no man at all of those who eat good wheaten bread; but he seemed rather a shaggy mountain reared in solitude. We beached there, and I told the crew to stand by and keep watch over the ship: as for myself I took my twelve best fighters and went ahead. I had a goatskin full of that sweet liquor that Euanthes' son, Maron, had given me. He kept Apollo's holy grove at Iramas; for kindness we showed him there, and showed his wife and child, he gave me seven shining golden talents'41 perfectly formed, a solid silver winebowl, and then this liquor—twelve two-handled jars of brindy, pure and fiery. Not a slave in Maron's household knew this drink; only he, his wife and the storeroom mistress knew; and they would put one cupful—ruby-colored honey—smooth—in twenty more of water.
but still the sweet scent hovered like a fume
over the winebowl. No man turned away
when cups of this came round.

A wineskin full I brought along, and victuals in a bag,
for in my bones I knew some towing brute
would be upon us soon—all outward power,
a wild man, ignorant of civility.

We climbed, then, briskly to the cave. But Cyclops
had gone afield, to pasture his fat sheep,
so we looked around at everything inside:
a drying rack that sagged with cheeses, pens
crowded with lambs and kids, each in its class:
firstlings apart from middlings, and the ‘dewdrops,’
or newborn lambskins, penned apart from both.
And vessels full of whey were brimming there—
bowls of earthenware and pails for milking.
My men came pressing round me, pleading:

Why not
take these cheeses, get them slowed, come back,
throw open all the pens, and make a run for it?
We'll drive the kids and lambs aboard. We say
put out again on good salt water!

Ah,

how sound that was! Yet I refused. I wished
to see the cave man, what he had to offer—
no pretty sight, it turned out, for my friends.
We lit a fire, burnt an offering,
and took some cheese to eat: then sat in silence
around the embers, waiting. When he came
he had a load of dry boughs on his shoulder
to stoke his fire at supper time. He dumped it
with a great crash into that hollow cave,
and we all scattered fast to the far wall.
Then over the broad cavern floor he ushered
the ewes he meant to milk. He left his rams
and he-goats in the yard outside, and swung
high overhead a slab of solid rock

22. boughs (bouz) n.: Tree branches.

23. withy (with'0) adj.: Tough, flexible twigs.

thickened his milk, then, into curds and whey,
slew out the curds to drip in withy baskets,
and poured the whey to stand in bowls
cooling until he drank it for his supper.

When all these chores were done, he poked the fire,
heaping on brushwood. In the glare he saw us.

'Strangers,' he said, 'who are you? And where from?
What brings you here by seaways—a fair traffic?
Or are you wandering rogues, who cast your lives
like dice, and ravage other folk by sea?

We felt a pressure on our hearts, in dread
of that deep rumble and that mighty man.
But all the same I spoke up in reply:

'We are from Troy, Achaeans, blown off course
by slitting gales on the Great South Sea:
homeward bound, but taking routes and ways
uncommon; so the will of Zeus would have it.
We served under Agamemnon, son of Atreus—
the whole world knows what city
he laid waste, what armies he destroyed.
It was our luck to come here; here we stand,
beholden for your help, or any gifts
you give—as custom is to honor strangers.
We would entreat you, great Sir, have a care
for the gods' courtesy; Zeus will avenge
the unoffending guest.'

He answered this
from his brute chest, unmoved:

You are a ninny,
or else you come from the other end of nowhere,
telling me, mind the gods! We Cyclopes
care not a whistle for your thundering Zeus
or all the gods in bliss; we have more force by far.
I would not let you go for fear of Zeus—
you or your friends—unless I had a whim to.
Tell me, where was it, now, you left your ship—
around the point, or down the shore, I wonder?

He thought he'd find out, but I saw through this,
and answered with a ready lie:

The Odyssey, Part I, The Cyclops ♦ 867
My ship? Poseidon, Lord, who sets the earth a-tremble,
broke it up on the rocks at your land's end.

A wind from seaward served him, drove us there. We are survivors, these good men and I.

Neither reply nor pity came from him, but in one stride he clutched at my companions and caught two in his hands like squirming puppies to beat their brains out, spattering the floor.

Then he dismembered them and made his meal, gaping and crunching like a mountain lion—everything: innards, flesh, and marrow bones. We cried aloud, lifting our hands to Zeus, powerless, looking on at this, appalled; but Cyclops went on filling up his belly with marindish and great gulps of whey, then lay down like a mast among his sheep.

My heart beat high now at the chance of action, and drawing the sharp sword from my hip I went along his flank to stab him where the midriff holds the liver. I had touched the spot when sudden fear stayed me: if I killed him we perished there as well, for we could never move his ponderous doorway slab aside. So we were left to groan and wait for morning.

When the young Dawn with fingertips of rose lit up the world, the Cyclops built a fire and milked his handsome ewes, all in due order, putting the sucklings to the mothers. Then, his chores being all dispatched, he caught another brace of men to make his breakfast, and whisked away his great door slab to let his sheep go through—but he, behind, reset the stone as one would cap a quiver.

There was a din of whistling as the Cyclops rounded his flock to higher ground, then stillness. And now I pondered how to hurt him worst, if but Athena granted what I prayed for.

Here are the means I thought would serve my turn:
a club, or staff, lay there along the fold—an olive tree, felled green and left to season for Cyclops' hand. And it was like a mast a lugger of twenty oars, broad in the beam—a deep-sea-going craft—might carry: so long, so big around, it seemed. Now I chopped out a six foot section of this pole and set it down before my men, who scraped it; and when they had it smooth, I hewed again to make a stake with pointed end. I held this in the fire's heart and turned it, toughening it, then hid it, well back in the cavern, under one of the dung piles in profusion there. Now came the time to toss for it: who ventured along with me? whose hand could bear to thrust and grind that spike in Cyclops' eye, when mild sleep had mastered him? As harsh would have it, the men I would have chosen won the toss—four strong men, and I made five as captain.

At evening came the shepherd with his flock, his woolly flock. The rams as well this time, entered the cave: by some sheepherding whim—or a god's bidding—none were left outside. He hefted his great boulder into place and sat him down to milk the bleating ewes in proper order, put the lambs to suck, and swiftly ran through all his evening chores.

Then he caught two more men and feasted on them. My moment was at hand, and I went forward holding an ivy bowl of my dark drink, looking up, saying:

'Cyclops, try some wine. Here's liquor to wash down your scraps of men. Taste it, and see the kind of drink we carried under our planks. I meant it for an offering if you would help us home. But you are mad, unbearable, a bloody monster! After this, will any other traveler come to see you?'

He seized and drained the bowl, and it went down so fiery and smooth he called for more:

'Give me another, thank you kindly. Tell me, how are you called? I'll make a gift will please you. Even Cyclopes know the wine grapes grow out of grassland and loam in heaven's rain, but here's a bit of nectar and ambrosia.' Three bowls I brought him, and he poured them down. I saw the fuddle and flush come over him,

The Odyssey, Part 1, The Cyclops ♦ 860
Some heard him; and they came by divers ways to clump around outside and call:

And he said:

"Nohbdy's my meat, then, after I eat his friends. Others come first. There's a noble gift, now.'

Even as he spoke, he reeled and tumbled backward, his great head lolling to one side; and sleep took him like any creature. Drunk, hiccuping, he dribbled streams of liquor and bits of men.

Now, by the gods, I drove my big hand spike deep in the embers, charring it again, and cheered my men along with battle talk to keep their courage up; no quitting now. The pike of olive, green though it had been, reddened and glowed as if about to catch. I drew it from the coals and my four fellows gave me a hand, lugging it near the Cyclops as more than natural force nerved them; straight forward they sprinted, lefted it, and rammed it deep in his crater eye, and leaned on it turning it as a shipwright turns a drill in planking, having men below to swing the two-handled strap that spins it in the groove. So with our brand we bored that great eye socket while blood ran out around the red-hot bar. Eyelid and lash were seared; the pierced ball hissed broiling, and the roots popped.

In a smithy one sees a white-hot axhead or an adze plunged and wrung in a cold tub, screeching steam—the way they make soft iron hale and hard—; just so that eyeball hissed around the spike.

The Cyclopes bellowed and the rock roared round him, and we fell back in fear. Clawing his face he tugged the bloody spike out of his eye, threw it away, and his wild hands went groping; then he set up a howl for Cyclopes who lived in caves on windy peaks nearby.

The Odyssey, Part I, The Cyclops ♦ 871

Reading Strategy
How would you write Odysseus' sly lie in regular prose?

Some heard him; and they came by divers ways to clump around outside and call:

'What ails you, Polyphemus? Why do you cry so sore in the starry night? You will not let us sleep. Sure no man's driving off your flock? No man has tricked you, ruined you?'

Out of the cave the mammoth Polyphemus roared in answer:

'Nohbdy, Nohbdy's tricked me, Nohbdy's ruined me.'

To this rough shout they made a sage reply:

'Ah well, if nobody has played you foul there in your lonely bed, we are no use in pain given by great Zeus. Let it be your father, Poseidon Lord, to whom you pray.'

So saying they trailed away. And I was filled with laughter to see how like a charm the name deceived them. Now, by the gods, I drove my big hand spike deep in the embers, charring it again, and cheered my men along with battle talk to keep their courage up; no quitting now. The pike of olive, green though it had been, reddened and glowed as if about to catch.

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The Odyssey, Part I, The Cyclops ♦ 871

Build Vocabulary
mammoth (mam' eth) adj.: Enormous
and peaks of bleating echoed round the pens where dams with udders full called for a milking. Blind ed, and sick with pain from his head wound, the master stroked each ram, then let it pass, but my men riding on the pectoral fleece

38. pectoral (pek"tar' el) adj. Located on the chest.

39. carrion (kar" 6 en) rogue (rog): Repulsive scoundrel.

literary focus
An epic hero is larger than life but usually also has some human failings. What human weakness does Odysseus' behavior reveal?

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The Odyssey, Part 1, The Cyclops ∗ 873

874 ∗ The Epic

you damned cannibal? Eater of guests

under your roof Zeus and the gods have paid you!

The blind thing in his doubled fury broke a hilltop in his hands and heaved it after us. Ahead of our black prow it struck and sank whirled in a spinning gyser, a giant wave that washed the ship stern foremost back to shore. I got the longest boat hook out and stood fending us off, with furious nods to all to put their backs into a racing stroke—row, row, or perish. So the long oars bent kicking the foam sternward, making head until we drew away, and twice as far. Now when I cupped my hands I heard the crew in low voices protesting:

"O godsake, Captain!

Why butt the beast again? Let him alone!"

"All but stove us in!"

"Give him our bearing with your trumpeting, he'll get the range and lob a boulder."

"Aye He'll smash our timbers and our heads together!"

I would not heed them in my glorying spirit, but let my anger flare and yelled:

If ever mortal man inquire how you were put to shame and blinded, tell him Odysseus, raider of cities, took your eye: Laertes' son, whose home's on Ithaca!

At this he gave a mighty sob and rumbled:

"Now comes the weird upon me, spoken of old. A wizard, grand and wondrous, lived here—Telemus, a son of Eurymus, great length of days he had in wizardry among the Cyclopes, and these things he foretold for time to come: my great eye lost, and at Odysseus' hands. Always I had in mind some giant, armed

Literature: and Your Life

When they are angry or boasting, people sometimes say things that they later regret. How do Odysseus' words relate to your own observations of a person "having a big mouth"?
Critical Viewing

Odysseus and his surviving men escape in their ship as the blinded Cyclops hurl boulders and curses. What events provoke this scene? [Analyze]

The god of earthquake could not heal you there!

At this he stretched his hands out in the darkness toward the sky of stars, and prayed Poseidon:

'O hear me, lord, blue girdler of the islands,
if I am thine indeed, and thou art father:
grant that Odysseus, raider of cities, never see his home: Laertes' son, I mean, who kept his hall on Ithaca. Should destiny intend that he shall see his roof again
among his family in his father land,
far be that day, and dark the years between.
Let him lose all companions, and return under strange sail to bitter days at home.'

In these words he prayed, and the god heard him.

Now he laid hands upon a bigger stone and wheeled around, titan's for the cast, to let it fly in the black-prowed vessel's track.
But it fell short, just all the steering oar, and whelming seas rose giant above the stone to bear us onward toward the island.

as we ran in we saw the squadron waiting, the trim ships drawn up side by side, and all our troubled friends who waited, looking seaward.
We beached her, grinning ked in the soft sand, and waded in, ourselves, on the sandy beach.

Then we unloaded all of Cyclops' flock to make division, share and share alike.
Only my fighters voted that my ram, the prize of all, should go to me. I slew him by the seaside and burnt his long thighbones to Zeus beyond the stormcloud, Cronus' son, who rules the world. But Zeus disdained my offering:
destruction for my ships he had in store and death for those who sailed them, my companions.

Now all day long until the sun went down we made our feast on mutton and sweet wine, till after sunset in the gathering dark we went to sleep above the wash of ripples.

When the young Dawn with fingertips of rose

470 In giant force, would come against me here.
But this, but you—small, pitiful and twigg—you put me down with wine, you blinded me.
Come back, Odysseus, and I'll treat you well, praying the god of earthquake to befriend you—his son I am, for he by his avowal fathered me, and, if he will, he may heal me of this black wound—he and no other of all the happy gods or mortal men.'

Few words I shouted in reply to him:

'If I could take your life I would and take your time away, and hurl you down to hell!'
Critical Viewing

What can you infer about ancient Greek beliefs about death and the afterlife from the text and this illustration?

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520 touched the world, I roused the men, gave orders to man the ships, cast off the mooring lines: and filing in to sit beside the rowlocks oarsmen in line dipped oars in the gray sea.

So we moved out, and in the vast offing, 525 having our precious lives, but not our friends.

The Land of the Dead

528 Odysseus and his men sail to Aeolia, where Aeolus, king of the winds, sends Odysseus on his way with a gift: a sack containing all the winds except the favorable west wind. When they are near home, Odysseus’ men open the sack, letting loose a storm that drives them back to Aeolia. Aeolus casts them out, having decided that they are detested by the gods. They sail seven days and arrive in the land of the Laestrygonians, a race of cannibals. These creatures destroy all of Odysseus’ ships except the one he is sailing in. Odysseus and his reduced crew escape and reach Aeaea, the island ruled by the sorceress-goddess Circe. She transforms half of the men into swine. Protected by a magic herb, Odysseus demands that Circe change his men back into human form. Before Odysseus departs from the island a year later Circe informs him that in order to reach home he must journey to the land of the dead, Hades, and consult the blind prophet Tiresias.

We bore down on the ship at the sea’s edge and launched her on the salt immortal sea, stepping our mast and spar in the black ship; embarked the ram and ewe and went aboard in tears, with bitter and sore dread upon us. But now a breeze came up for us astern—a canvas-belling land breeze, hale shipmate sent by the singing nymph with sunbright hair; so we made fast the braces, took our thwarts, and let the wind and steersman work the ship with the full sail spread all day above our coursing, till sun dipped, and all the ways grew dark upon the fathomless unresting sea.

By night our ship ran onward toward the Ocean’s bourn, the realm and region of the Men of Winter, hidden in mist and cloud. Never the flaming eye of Helios lights on those men at morning, when he climbs the sky of stars.

The Odyssey, Part I, The Land of the Dead
Now the souls gathered, stirring out of Erebus, 63
brides and young men, and men grown old in pain,
tender girls whose hearts were new to grief;
many were there, too, torn by brazen lanceheads,
battle-slain, bearing still their bloody gear.
From every side they came and sought the pit
with rustling cries; and I grew sick with fear.
But presently I gave command to my officers
to fly those sleek the bronze cut down, and make
harsh offerings of flesh to the gods below—
to sovereign Death, to pale Persephone. 14
Meanwhile I crouched with my drawn sword to keep
the surging phantoms from the bloody pit
till I should know the presence of Tiresias. 55

One shade came first—Elpenor, of our company,
who lay unburied still on the wide earth
as we had left him—dead in Circe's hall,
untouched, unmourned, when other cares compelled us.
Now when I saw him there I wept for pity
and called out to him:

'How is this, Elpenor, how could you journey to the western gloom
swifter afoot than I in the black lugger?'
He sighed, and answered:

'Son of great Laertes,
Odysseus, master mariner and soldier,
bad luck shadowed me, and no kindly power;
ignoble death I drank with so much wine.

I slept on Circe's roof, then could not see
the long steep backward ladder, coming down,
and fell that height. My neckbone, buckled under,
and snapped, and my spirit found this well of dark.
Now hear the grace I pray for, in the name
of those back in the world, not here—your wife
my mother, daughter of Autolycus, 58
my mother, daughter of Autolycus, 58
dead now, though living still when I took ship
for holy Troy. Seeing this ghost I grieved,
but held her off, through pang on pang of tears,
till I should know the presence of Tiresias.

Soon from the dark that prince of Thebes 60
came forward
bearing a golden staff; and he addressed me:

'Son of Laertes and the gods of old,
Odysseus, master of landways and seaways,
why leave the blazing sun, 0 man of woe,
to see the cold dead and the joyless region?

At this I stepped aside, and in the scabbard
let my long sword ring home to the pommel silver,
and quit the violet sea, dark on the land
as he bent down to the somber blood. Then spoke
the prince of those with gift of speech:

'Great captain,
a fair wind and the honey lights of home
are all you seek. But anguish lies ahead;
the god who thunders on the land prepares it.

If you raid the beeves, I see destruction
by whom all things are seen, all speech is known.
Avoid these kine, hold fast to your intent,
and hard seafaring brings you all to Ithaca.

But if you raid the beeves, I see destruction

He ceased, and I replied:

'Unhappy spirit,
I promise you the barrow and the burial.'
for ship and crew. Though you survive alone, bereft of all companions, lost for years, under strange sail shall you come home, to find your own house filled with trouble: insolent men eating your livestock as they court your lady. Aye, you shall make those men atone in blood! But after you have dealt out death—in open combat or by stealth—to all the suitors, go overland on foot, and take an oar, until one day you come where men have lived with meat unsalted, never known the sea, nor seen seagoing ships, with crimson bows and oars that fledge light hulls for dipping flight. The spot will soon be plain to you, and I can tell you how: some passerby will say, 'What winnowing fan is that upon your shoulder? Halt, and implant your smooth oar in the turf and make fair sacrifice to Lord Poseidon: a rain, a bull, a great buck boar: turn back, and carry out pure hecatombs at home to all wide heaven's lords, the undying gods, to each in order. Then a seaborne death soft as this hand of mist will come upon you when you are wearied out with rich old age, your country folk in blessed peace around you. And all this shall be just as I foretell.'

The Sirens

Odysseus returns to Circe's island. The goddess reveals his course to him and gives advice on how to avoid the dangers he will face: the Sirens, who lure sailors to their destruction; the Wandering Rocks, sea rocks that destroy even birds in flight; the peril of the sea monster Scylla and, nearby, the whirlpool Charybdis; and the cattle of the sun god, which Tiresias has warned Odysseus not to harm.

As Circe spoke, Dawn mounted her golden throne, and on the first rays Circe left me, taking her way like a great goddess up the island. I made straight for the ship, roused up the men to get aboard and cast off at the stern. They scrambled to their places by the rowlocks and all in line dipped oars in the gray sea. But soon an offshore breeze blew to our liking—a canvas-bellying breeze, a lusty shipmate sent by the singing nymph with sunbright hair. So we made fast the braces, and we rested, letting the wind and steersman work the ship. The crew being now silent before me, I addressed them, sore at heart:

Dear friends, more than one man, or two, should know those things Circe foresees for us and shared with me, so let me tell her forecast: then we die with our eyes open, if we are going to die, or know what death we baffle if we can. Sirens weaving a haunting song over the sea we are to shun, she said, and their green shore all sweet with clover; yet she urged that I alone should listen to their song. Therefore you are to tie me up, tight as a splint, erect along the mast, lashed to the mast, and ill shout and beg to be untied, take more turns of the rope to muffle me.'
amidships, back to the mast, lashed to the mast, and took themselves again to rowing. Soon, as we came smartly within hailing distance, the two Sirens, noting our last slip off their point, made ready, and they sang:

This way, oh turn your bows, Achaea's glory.
As all the world allows—
Moor and be merry,
Sweet coupled airs we sing.
No lonely seafarer
Holds clear of entering
Our green mirror.

Pleased by each purling note
Like honey twining
From her throat and my throat,
Who lies a-pining?

Sea rovers here take joy
Wagging onward,
As from our song of Troy
Graybeard and rower-boy
Goeth more learned.

All feats on that great field
In the long warfare,
Wounds you bore there,
Charmed out of time we see.
No life on earth can be
Hid from our dreaming.

The lovely voices In ardor appealing over the water made me crave to listen, and I tried to say 'Untie me!' to the crew, jerking my brows; but they bent steadily to the oars. Then Perimedes got to his feet, he and Eurylochus, and passed more line about, to hold me still. So all rowed on, until the Sirens dropped under the sea rim, and their singing dwindled away.
My faithful company rested on their oars now, peeling off the wax that I had laid thick on their oars; then set me free.

Scylla and Charybdis

But scarcely had that island faded in blue air than I saw smoke and white water, with sound of waves in tumult—a sound the men heard, and it terrified them. Oars flew from their hands; the blades went knocking wild alongside till the ship lost way, with no oar blades to drive her through the water.

Well, I walked up and down from bow to stern, trying to put heart into them, standing over every oarsman, saying gently, have we never been in danger before this? More fearsome, is it now, than when the Cyclops penned us in his cave? What power he had! Did I not keep my nerve, and use my wits to find a way out for us?

Circe's bidding against arms had slipped my mind, so I tied on my cuirass and took up two heavy spears, then made my way along to the foredeck—thinking to see her first from there, the monster of the gray rock, harbingering torment for my friends. I strained my eyes upon the cliffside veiled in cloud, but nowhere could I catch sight of her.

We rowed into the strait—Scylla to port and on our starboard beam Charybdis, dire gorge of the salt-sea tide. By heaven! when she vomited, all the sea was like a cauldron boiling over intense fire, when the mixture suddenly heaves and rises.

The shot spume soared to the landside heights, and fell like rain.

But when she swallowed the sea water down we saw the funnel of the maelstrom, headland; watch the drift, or we fetch up in the smoke:64 steer for that headland; watch the drift, or we fetch up in the another; and you drown us.'

That was all, and it brought them round to action. But as I sent them on toward Scylla, I told them nothing, as they could do nothing.

They would have dropped their oars again, in panic,
and deathly pity ran me through
at that sight—for the worst I ever suffered,
questing the passes of the strange sea.

We rowed on.
The Rocks were now behind; Charybdis, too,
and Scylla dropped astern.

The Cattle of the Sun God

In the small hours of the third watch, when stars
that shine out in the first dusk of evening
had gone down to their setting, a giant wind
blew from heaven, and clouds driven by Zeus
shrouded land and sea in a night of storm;
so, just as Dawn with fingertips of rose
touched the windy world, we dragged our ship
to cover in a grotto, a sea cave
where nymphs had chairs of rock and sanded floors.
I mustered all the crew and said:

'Old shipmates,
Our stores are in the ship's hold, food and drink;
the cattle here are not for our provision,
or we pay dearly for it.

Fierce the god is
who cherishes these heifers and these sheep:
Heliogabalus; and no man avoids his eye.'

To this my fighters nodded. Yes. But now
we had a month of onshore gales, blowing
day in, day out—south winds, or south by east.
As long as bread and good red wine remained
to keep the men up, and appease their craving,
hunger drove them to scour the wild shore
with angling hooks, for fishes and seafowl,
whatever fell into their hands; and lean days
wore their bellies thin.

The storms continued.
So one day I withdrew to the interior
to pray the gods in solitude, for hope
that one might show me some way of salvation.
Slipping away, I struck across the island
to a sheltered spot, out of the driving gale.
I washed my hands there, and made supplication

Now on the shore Eurylochus
made his insidious plea:

'Comrades,' he said,
You've gone through everything; listen to what I say.
All deaths are hateful to us, mortal wretches,
but famine is the most pitiful, the worst
end that a man can come to.

Will you fight it?
Come, we'll cut out the noblest of these cattle
for sacrifice to the gods who own the sky:
and once at home, in the old country of Ithaca,
If ever that day comes—we'll build a costly temple and adorn it
with every beauty for the Lord of Noon.
But if he flares up over his heifers lost,
wrathful and vengeful, and if the gods
make cause with him, why, then I say: Better
open your lungs to a big sea once for all
than waste to skin and bones on a lonely island.'

Thus Eurylochus; and they murmured 'Ayer'
trooping away at once to round up heifers.
Now, that day tranquil cattle with broad brows
were gazing near, and soon the men drew up
around their chosen beasts in ceremony.
They plucked the leaves that shone on a tall oak—
having no barley meal—to strew the victims,
performed the prayers and ritual, knifed the kine
and flayed each carcass, cutting thighbones free
to wrap in double folds of fat. These offerings,
with strips of meat, were laid upon the fire.

Just then my slumber
left me in a rush; my eyes opened,
and I went down the seaward path. No sooner
had I caught sight of our black hull, than savagely

*Build Vocabulary*

Insidious (in old‘76 es)
adj.: Characterized by treachery, deceit, and betrayal.
odors of burnt fat eddied around me; 
grief took hold of me, and I cried aloud:

'O Father Zeus and gods in bliss forever,
you made me sleep away this day of mischief!
O cruel drowsing, in the evil hour!
Here they sat, and a great work they contrived.73

Lampetia74 in her long gown meanwhile
had borne swift word to the Overlord of Noon:

'They have killed your kine.'”

And the Lord Helios
burst into angry speech amid the immortals:

'O Father Zeus and gods in bliss forever,
punish Odysseus' men! So overweening,
now they have killed my peaceful kine, my joy
at morning when I climbed the sky of stars,
and evening, when I bore westward from heaven.
Restitution or penalty they shall pay—
and pay in full—or I go down forever
to light the dead men in the underworld.'

Then Zeus who drives the stormcloud made reply:

'Peace, Helios: shine on among the gods,
shine over mortals in the fields of grain.
Let me throw down one white-hot bolt, and make
splinters of their ship in the winedark sea.'

—Calypso later told me of this exchange,
as she declared that Hermes75 had told her.
Well, when I reached the sea cave and the ship,
I faced each man, and had it out; but where
could any remedy be found? There was none.

The silken beeves76 of Helios were dead.
The gods, moreover, made queer signs appear:
cowhides began to crawl, and beef, both raw
and roasted, lowed like kine upon the spits.
Now six full days my gallant crew could feast
upon the prime beef they had marked for slaughter
from Helios' herd; and Zeus, the son of Cronus,
added one fine morning.

All the gales
had ceased, blown out, and with an offshore breeze
we launched again, stopping the mast and sail,
to make for the open sea. Astern of us

The island coastline faded, and no land
showed anywhere, but only sea and heaven,
when Zeus Cronion piled a thunderhead
above the ship, while gloom spread on the ocean.

We held our course, but briefly. Then the equal
struck whistling from the west, with gale force, breaking
both fore and aflat, and the mast came toppling aft
along the ship's length, so the running rigging
showered into the bilge.

On the afterdeck
the mast had hit the steersman a slant blow
bashing the skull in, knocking him override,
as the brave soul fled the body, like a diver.
With crack on crack of thunder, Zeus let fly
a bolt against the ship, a direct hit.
so that she bucked, in reeking fumes of sulphur,
and all the men were flung into the sea.
They came up 'round the wreck, bobbing awhile
like petrels77 on the waves.

No more seafaring
homeward for these, no sweet day of return;
the god had turned his face from them.
I clambered
fore and aft my hulk until a comber
split her, keel from ribs, and the big timber
floated free; the mast, too, broke away.
A backstay flooted dangling from it, stout
rawhide rope, and I used this for lashing
mast and keel together. These I straddled,
ridding the frightful storm.

Nor had I yet
seen the worst of it; for now the west wind
dropped, and a southeast gale came on—one more

twist of the knife—taking me north again,
straight for Charybdis. All that night I drifted,
and in the sunrise, sure enough, I lay
off Scylla's mountain and Charybdis deep.
There, as the whirlpool drank the tide, a billow
 tossed me, and I sprung for the great fig tree,
catching on like a bat under a bough.
Nowhere had I to stand, no way of climbing,
the root and bole78 being far below, and far
above my head the branches and their leaves,
maned, overshadowing Charybdis pool.

73. contrived (ken tried)
v.: Thought up; devised.
74. Lampetia (lam' pe' a): A nymph.
75. Hermes (her' mez): The herald and messenger
of the gods.
76. beeves (bevz) n.: Plural of beet.
77. petrels (pet' relz): Small, dark sea birds.
78. Scylla (sir e)
Beyond Literature

Geography Connection

Tracing Odyssey's Route: Odyssey's journey carries him to real places, such as Troy and Sparta, as well as to fictitious places, such as Aeolia and Aeaea. In modern times, historians and explorers have tried to retrace the epic journey of Odyssey to determine the actual locations of the places with fictional names and thus to determine Odyssey's exact route. What follows is just one of many theories of the actual route of Odyssey: from Troy in present-day Turkey, Odyssey proceeded briefly northward and then southwestward on the Aegean Sea, passing between the Greek lands of Peloponnesus and Crete. Then, sailing westward on the Mediterranean Sea, Odyssey traveled near Sicily, where he found the Cyclops and where nearby islands were homes to the Lotus Eaters, the Sirens, and Aeolus, among others. After circling Sicily clockwise, Odyssey sailed northeastward and finally reached the Ionian Islands of Greece and his home, Ithaca.

Activity: Journeys or pilgrimages are common themes in epic literature around the world. Research an epic traveler from another culture, and draw a map tracing his or her journey.

The Odyssey, Part 1, Cattle of the Sun God • 891

Guide for Responding

• Literature and Your Life

Reader's Response: In your opinion, when does Odyssey act most heroically? Explain.

Thematic Focus: What personal qualities are useful when it comes to working out problems and reaching goals?

Check Your Comprehension

1. (a) What does Tiresias foretell? (b) What directions and warnings does he give?
2. What does Odyssey do to protect his men from the Sirens?
3. How does Eurylochus persuade Odyssey's men to slaughter and eat Helios' cattle?
4. What is Zeus' response to Helios' demand for revenge?

• Critical Thinking

INTERPRET

1. Compare and contrast the peril of the Sirens and the peril of the Lotus-Eaters. [Compare and Contrast]
2. Why do you think Odysseus chooses to sail toward Scylla rather than Charybdis? [Analyze]
3. In these adventures, how does Odysseus show himself to be an effective leader? [Draw Conclusions]

EVALUATE

4. Is Odysseus right to keep his decision to sail toward Scylla a secret from his men? Give reasons for your opinion. [Make a Judgment]

COMPARE LITERARY WORKS

5. How do the form and tone of the Sirens' song (p. 884) differ from the rest of the Odyssey? [Distinguish]
Guide for Responding (continued)

◆ Reading Strategy
Read in Sentences
Read the words of an epic in complete sentences, without worrying about line breaks.
1. Copy Odysseus’ description of preparing to meet the Sirens on pp. 883–884 from the second part of line 704 through the first part of line 713 as a single paragraph. Read your paragraph aloud.
2. Rewrite the paragraph in your own words.

◆ Literary Focus
The Epic Hero
The epic hero—the central character of an epic—possesses qualities superior to those of most people yet remains recognizably human.
1. (a) How is Odysseus different from ordinary men? (b) How is he similar to ordinary men?
2. Do you admire Odysseus? Explain.

◆ Build Vocabulary
Using Words From Mythology
The words that follow come from mythology. Use one word to complete each sentence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>a.</th>
<th>b.</th>
<th>c.</th>
<th>d.</th>
<th>e.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>museum</td>
<td>odyssey</td>
<td>titan</td>
<td>siren</td>
<td>mammoth</td>
<td>assuage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Because the enormous ocean liner was thought to be unsinkable, it was named the __________.</td>
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<td>The treasures from ancient Troy were housed in a __________.</td>
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<td>The archaeologist’s study of ancient ruins took her on an __________ across Turkey and Greece.</td>
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<td>Unlike its mythical namesake, a modern __________ makes an unpleasant warning sound.</td>
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Using the Word Bank: Antonyms
Match each word with its opposite.

1. dispatch
   a. restore to its owner
2. beret
   b. finish slowly
3. plunder
   c. joyfully acquiring
4. equal
   d. tiny
5. mammoth
   e. small and weak
6. assuage
   f. calm, sunny weather
7. insidious
   g. honest
8. gestic
   h. aggregate
9. ardor
   i. lack of interest

◆ Build Grammar Skills
Restrictive and Nonrestrictive Appositive
Appositives add information about the nouns and pronouns in a sentence. A restrictive appositive is essential to the meaning of the sentence and is not set off by commas. A nonrestrictive appositive or appositive phrase provides nonessential information and is set off with commas.

Practice In your notebook, identify the appositives in these phrases from the Odyssey and tell whether each is restrictive or nonrestrictive.

1. Of these adventures, Muse, daughter of Zeus, tell us in our time, lift the great song again.
2. Sweet counsel ran, why lag behind the rest in the night cave?
3. We Cyclopes care not a whistle for your thundering Zeus ...
4. ...grant that Odysseus, raider of cities, never see his home: Laertes’ son, I mean, who kept his hall on Ithaca.
5. ...a burning heat came down from Helios, lord of high noon.

◆ Build Grammar Skills
Participial Phrases
A participle is a verb form that is used as an adjective to modify a noun or pronoun. A participial phrase is a phrase that consists of a participle and the words that work with it. The entire participial phrase then serves as an adjective to modify a noun or pronoun. Here are some examples of participial phrases from the Odyssey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>participle phrase</th>
<th>example</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dispenser of Life</td>
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<td>incredulity</td>
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<tr>
<td>maudlin contempt</td>
<td>maudlin contempt</td>
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</table>

Practice These words from the selection.

Guide for Reading

◆ Review and Anticipate
In Part I of the Odyssey, Odysseus and his companions face many perils on their voyage from Troy to Ithaca, including the hypnotic Lotus, a man-eating Cyclops, the Sirens, and the monsters Scylla and Charybdis. Odysseus journeys to the Land of the Dead to consult the prophet Tiresias and learns of still more challenges to come. Although warned by the prophet to leave the castle of the sun god Helios alone, Odysseus’ men fall to heed this advice and are killed when a lightning bolt hurled by the god Zeus destroys their ship.

The events you will read about in Part 2 of the Odyssey take place in Ithaca, Odysseus’ homeland and the goal of all his travels. Predict what you think will happen when Odysseus arrives home.

◆ Literary Focus
Epic Simile
An epic simile, sometimes called a Homeric simile, is an elaborate comparison that may extend for a number of lines. Epic similes may use the words, like or as, to make the comparison. In lines 268–271, Odysseus uses an epic simile to describe the fallen tree from which he will create the weapon to blind the Cyclops.

It was like a mast
a lugger of twenty oars; broad in the beam—
a deep-sea-going craft—might carry:
so long, so big around, it seemed.

◆ Build Vocabulary
Latin Word Roots: -equi-
A disguised Odysseus, speaking to his wife Penelope, tells her that her good name is like the honor of a just king “who rules in equity.” The word equity means “fairness” or “justice” and contains the Latin word root -equi-, which means “same” or “equal.” Thus, a long who rules in equity treats all his subjects the same.

Word Bank
Preview these words from the selection.

disable<
lethal
incredulity
bumbling
gloowering
equity
maudlin contempt

894 ◆ The Epic
Part 2
The Return of Odysseus

"Twenty years gone, and I am back again"

Odysseus has finished telling his story to the Phaeacians. The next day, young Phaeacian noblemen conduct him home by ship. He arrives in Ithaca after an absence of twenty years. The goddess Athena appears and informs him of the situation at home. Numerous suitors, believing Odysseus to be dead, have been continually seeking the hand of his wife, Penelope, in marriage, while overrunning Odysseus' palace and enjoying themselves at Penelope's expense. Moreover, they are plotting to murder Odysseus' son, Telemachus, before he can inherit his father's lands. Telemachus, who, like Penelope, still hopes for his father's return, has journeyed to Pylos and Sparta to learn what he can about his father's fate. Athena disguises Odysseus as a beggar and directs him to the hut of Eumaeus, his old and faithful swineherd. While Odysseus and Eumaeus are eating breakfast, Telemachus arrives. Athena then appears to Odysseus.

... From the air
she walked, taking the form of a tall woman,
handsome and clever at her craft, and stood
beyond the gate in plain sight of Odysseus,
unseen, though, by Telemachus, unguessing,
for not to everyone will gods appear.

1. Eumaeus (yo — o me — es)

Odysseus noticed her; so did the dogs,
who covered whimpering away from her. She only
nodded, signing to him with her brows,
a sign he recognized. Crossing the yard,
he passed out through the gate in the stockade
to face the goddess. There she said to him:

"Son of Laertes and the gods of old,
Odysseus, master of landsways and seaways,
dissemble to your son no longer now.
The time has come: tell him how you together
will bring doom on the suitors in the town.
I shall not be far distant then, for I
myself desire battle."

Saying no more,
she tipped her golden wand upon the man,
making his cloak pure white, and the knit tunic
fresh around him, ruddy with sun, his javelins clean, the beard
no longer gray upon his chin. And she
withdrew when she had done.

Then Lord Odysseus
reappeared—and his son was thunderstruck.
Fear in his eyes, he looked down and away
as though it were a god, and whispered:

" Stranger,
you are no longer what you were just now!
Your cloak is new; even your skin;
You are one of the gods who rule the sweep of heaven!
Be kind to us, we'll make you fair oblation
and gifts of hammered gold. Have mercy on us!"

The noble and enduring man replied:

"No god. Why take me for a god? No, no.
I am that father whom your boyhood lacked
and suffered pain for lack of. I am he."

Held back too long, the tears ran down his cheeks
as he embraced his son.

uncomprehending, wild
with incredulity, cried out:

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Critical Viewing
What can you tell about Eumaeus from this illustration?

"This is not princely, to be swept away by wonder at your father's presence. No other Odysseus will ever come, for he and I are one, the same; his bitter fortune and his wanderings are mine. Twenty years gone, and I am back again on my own island. As for my change of skin, that is a charm Athena, Hope of Soldiers, uses as she will; she has the knack to make me seen a beggar man sometimes and sometimes young, with finer clothes about me. It is no hard thing for the gods of heaven to glorify a man or bring him low."

When he had spoken, down he sat. Then, throwing his arms around this marvel of a father Telemachus began to weep. Salt tears rose from the wells of longing in both men, and cries burst from both as keen and fluttering as those of the great taloned hawk, whose nestlings farmers take before they fly. So helplessly they cried, pouring out tears, and might have gone on weeping so till sundown, had not Telemachus said:

"Dear father! Tell me what kind of vessel put you here ashore on Ithaca? Your sailors, who were they? I doubt you made it, walking on the seal"

Then said Odysseus, who had borne the barren sea:

"Only plain truth shall I tell you, child. Great seafarers, the Phaeacians, gave me passage by night over the open ocean, while I slept, they brought me in their cutters set me down on Ithaca, with gifts of bronze and gold and stores of woven things. By the gods' will these lie all hidden in a cave. I came to this wild place, directed by Athena, so that we might lay plans to kill our enemies. Count up the suitors for me, let me know what men at arms are there, how many men.
I must put all my mind to it, to see
if we two by ourselves can take them on
or if we should look round for help."

replied:

"O Father, all my life your fame
as a fighting man has echoed in my ears—
your skill with weapons and the tricks of war—but what you speak of is a staggering thing,
beyond imagining, for me. How can two men
do battle with a houseful in their prime?"

For I must tell you this is no affair
of ten or even twice ten men, but scores,
throng of them. You shall see, here and now.
The number from Dulichium alone
is fifty-two, picked men, with armorers,
a half dozen: twenty-four came from Same,
twenty from Zacynthus; our own island
accounts for twelve, high-ranked, and their retainers,
Medon the crier, and the Master Harper,
besides a pair of handymen at feasts.

If we go in against all these
I fear we pay in salt blood for your vengeance.
You must think hard if you would conjure up
the fighting strength to take us through."

who had endured the long war and the sea answered:

"I'll tell you now.

Suppose Athena's arm is over us, and Zeus
her father's, must I rack my brains for more?"

Clearheaded Telemachus looked hard and said:

"Those two are great defenders, no one doubts it,
but throned in the serene clouds overhead;
other affairs of men and gods they have
to rule over."

And the hero answered:

"Before long they will stand to right and left of us
in combat, in the shouting, when the test comes—
our nerve against the suitors' in my hall.

Here is your part: at break of day tomorrow
home with you, go mingle with our princes.
The swineherd later on will take me down
the port-side trail—a beggar, by my looks,
hangdog and old. If they make fun of me
in my own courtyard, let your ribs cage up
your springing heart, no matter what I suffer,
no matter if they pull me by the heels
or practice shots at me, to drive me out.
Look on, hold down your anger. You may even
plead with them, by heaven! in gentle terms
to quit their horseplay—not that they will heed you,
rash as they are, facing their day of wrath.
Now fix the next step in your mind.

Athena,
counseling me, will give me word, and I
shall signal to you, nodding: at that point
round up all armor, lances, gear of war
left in our hall, and stow the lot away
back in the vaulted storeroom. When the suitors
miss those arms and question you, be soft
in what you say: answer:

'I thought I'd move them
out of the smoke. They seemed no longer those
bright arms Odysseus left us years ago
when he went off to Troy. Here where the fire's
hot breath came, they had grown black and drear.

One better reason, too, I had from Zeus:
suppose a brawl starts up when you are drunk,
you might be crazed and bloody one another,
and that would stain your feast, your courtship.
Tempered
iron can magnetize a man."

But put aside two broadswords and two spears
for our own use, two oxhide shields nearby
when we go into action. Pallas Athena
and Zeus All-Provident will see you through,
bemusing our young friends.

And now one thing more.

If son of mine you are and blood of mine,
let no one hear Odysseus is about.
Neither Laertes, nor the swineherd here,
nor any slave, nor even Penelope.
But you and I alone must learn how far
the women are corrupted; we should know
While he spoke an old hound, lying near, pricked up his ears and lifted up his muzzle. This was Argus, trained as a puppy by Odysseus, but never taken on a hunt before his master sailed for Troy. The young men, afterward, hunted wild goats with him, and hare, and deer, but he had grown old in his master's absence. Treated as rubbish now, he lay at last upon a mass of dung before the gates—manure of mules and cows, piled there until fieldhands could spread it on the king's estate. Abandoned there, and half destroyed with flies, old Argus lay.

But when he knew he heard Odysseus' voice nearby, he did his best to wag his tail, nose down, with flattened ears, having no strength to move nearer his master. And the man looked away, wiping a salt tear from his cheek; but he hid this from Eumaeus. Then he said:

"I marvel that they leave this hound to lie here on the dung pile; he would have been a fine dog, from the look of him, though I can't say as to his power and speed when he was young. You find the same good build in house dogs, table dogs landowners keep all for style."

And you replied, Eumaeus:

"A hunter owned him—but the man is dead in some far place. If this old hound could show the form he had when Lord Odysseus left him, He never shrank from any savage thing he'd brought to bay in the deep woods; on the scent no other dog kept up with him. Now misery has him in leash. His owner died abroad, and here the women slaves will take no care of him. You know how servants are: without a master they have no will to labor, or excel.

For Zeus who views the wide world takes away half the manhood of a man, that day he goes into captivity and slavery."
Penelope now on the higher level of her room had heard the blow, and knew who gave it. Now she murmured:

"Would god you could be hit yourself, Antinous—hit by Apollo's bowshot!"

And Eurynome, her housekeeper, put in:

"He and no other? If all we pray for came to pass, not one would live till dawn!"

Her gentle mistress said:

"Oh, Nan, they are a bad lot: they intend ruin for all of us: but Antinous appears a blacker-hearted hound than any. Here is a poor man come, a wanderer, driven by want to beg his bread, and everyone in hall gave bits, to cram his bag—only Antinous threw a stool, and banged his shoulder!"

So she described it, sitting in her chamber among her maids—while her true lord was eating. Then she called in the forester and said:

"Go to that man on my behalf, Eumaeus, and send him here, so I can greet and question him. Abroad in the great world, he may have heard rumors about Odysseus—may have known him!"

Penelope

In the evening, Penelope questions the old beggar about himself.

"Friend, let me ask you first of all: who are you, where do you come from, of what nation..."
and parents were you born?"

And he replied:

"My lady, never a man in the wide world
should have a fault to find with you. Your name
has gone out under heaven like the sweet
fame of some god-fearing king, who rules
in equity over the strong: his black lands bear
both wheat and barley, fruit trees laden bright,
new lambs at lambing time—and the deep sea
gives great hails of fish by his good strategy,
so that his folk fare well.

O my dear lady,
this being so, let it suffice to ask me
of other matters—not my blood, my homeland.
Do not enforce me to recall my pain.
My heart is sore; but I must not be found
sitting in tears here: in another's house:
it is not well forever to be grieving.
One of the maids might say—or you might think—
I had got maudlin over cups of wine."

And Penelope replied:

"Stranger, my looks,
my face, my carriage, were soon lost or faded
when the Achaeans crossed the sea to Troy,
Odysseus my lord among the rest.
If he returned, if he were here to care for me,
I might be happily renowned!
But grief instead of heaven sent me—years of pain.
Sons of the noblest families on the islands,
Dulichium, Same, wooded Zacynthus, with native Ithacan are here to court me,
against my wish; and they consume this house.
Can I give proper heed to guest or suppliant
or herald on the realm's affairs?
How could I?
I wasted with longing for Odysseus, while here
they press for marriage.
Ruses served my turn
to draw the time out—first a close-grained web
I had the happy thought to set up weaving
on my big loom in hall. I said, that day:
Young men—my suitors, now my lord is dead,
let me finish my weaving before I marry,
or else my thread will have been spun in vain.
It is as abroad I weave for Lord Laertes
when cold Death comes to lay him on his bier.
The country wights would hold me in dishonor
if he, with all his fortune, lay unshrouded.'
I reached their hearts that way, and they agreed. So every day I wove on the great loom,
but every night by torchlight I unwove it;
and so for three years I deceived the Achaeans.
But when the seasons brought a fourth year on,
as long months waned, and the long days were spent,
through impudent folly in the slinking maids
they caught me—clamored up to me at night;
I had no choice then but to finish it.
And now, as matters stand at last,
I have no strength left to evade a marriage,
cannot find any further way; my parents
urge it upon me, and my son
will not stand by while they eat up his property."

He comprehends it, being a man full-grown,
able to oversee the kind of house
Zeus would endow with honor.
But you too
confide in me, tell me your ancestry.
You were not born of mythic oak or stone."

Penelope again asks the beggar to tell about himself. He makes up a tale in which Odysseus is mentioned
and declares that Penelope's husband will soon be home.

"You see, then, he is alive and well, and headed
homeward now, no more to be abroad
far from his island, his dear wife and son.
Here is my sworn word for it. Witness this,
god of the zenith, noblest of the gods, and Lord Odysseus' hearthfire, now before me:
I swear these things shall turn out as I say.
Between this present dark and one day's ebb,
after the wane, before the crescent moon,
Odysseus will come."
The Challenge

Pressed by the suitors to choose a husband from among them, Penelope says she will marry whoever can string Odysseus' bow and shoot an arrow through twelve axehandle sockets. The suitors try and fail. Still in disguise, Odysseus asks for a turn and gets it.

...And Odysseus took his time, turning the bow, tapping it, every inch, for borings that termites might have made while the master of the weapon was abroad. The suitors were now watching him, and some jested among themselves:

"A bow lover!"

"Dealer in old bows!"

"Maybe he has one like it at home!"

"Or has an itch to make one for himself."

"See how he handles it, the sly old buzzard!"

And one disdainful suitor added this:

"May his fortune grow an inch for every inch he bends it!"

But the man skilled in all ways of contending, satisfied by the great bow's look and heft, like a musician, like a harper, when he draws between his thumb and forefinger a sweet new string upon a peg, so effortlessly Odysseus in one motion strung the bow. Then slid his right hand down the cord and plucked it, so the taut gut vibrating hummed and sang a swallow's note.

In the hushed hall it smote the suitors and all their faces changed. Then Zeus thundered overhead, one loud crack for a sign. And Odysseus laughed within him that the son of crooked-minded Cronus had flung that omen down.

The Odyssey, Part 2, The Challenge • 907

A Critical Viewing: The winner of the archery contest will win Penelope's hand in marriage. How does the artist capture the tension in this scene? [Interpret]
He picked one ready arrow from his table
1385 where it lay bare: the rest were waiting still
in the quiver for the young men's turn to come.
He nocked it, let it rest across the handgrip,
drew the string and grooved butt of the arrow,
among from where he sat upon the stool.

1390 arrow from twanging bow clean as a whistle
through every socket ring, and grazed not one,
to thud with heavy brazen head beyond.

Then quietly
Odysseus said:

"Telemachus, the stranger
you welcomed in your hall has not disgraced you.
I did not miss, neither did I take all day
stringing the bow. My hand and eye are sound,
not so contemptible as the young men say.
The hour has come to cook their lordships' mutton—
supper by daylight. Other amusements later,
with song and harping that adorn a feast."

He dropped his eyes and nodded, and the prince
Telemachus, true son of King Odysseus,
belted his sword on, clapped hand to his spear,
and with a clink and glitter of keen bronze
stood by his chair, in the forefront near his father.

Guide for Responding

Literature and Your Life
Reader's Response How would you react if you were in Telemachus' or Penelope's place?

Thematic Focus How should Odysseus work to solve the problems caused by his long absence?

Check Your Comprehension
1. How do Odysseus and Telemachus plan to handle Penelope's unwanted suitors?
2. What is Argus? What was he like in his youth?
4. Describe the trick Penelope used to delay choosing a husband from among the suitors.

Critical Thinking

INTERPRET
1. Compare Odysseus' emotions with Telemachus' when they are reunited. [Compare and Contrast]
2. Is Argus' death just when Odysseus returns a coincidence? Explain. [Analyze]
3. What impression of Penelope do you get from her conversation with the disguised Odysseus? [Interpret]
4. Why do you think Odysseus chooses not to reveal his identity to his wife? [Speculate]

Odysseus' Revenge

Now shrugging off his rags the wildest of the islands
leapt and stood on the broad doormat, his own bow in his hand.
He pounced out at his feet a rain of arrows from the quiver
and spoke to the crowd:

"So much for that. Your clean-cut game is over.
1410 Now watch me hit a target that no man has hit before,
if I can make this shot. Help me, Apollo."

He drew to his fist the cruel head of an arrow for Antinous
just as the young man leaned to lift his beautiful drinking cup,
embossed, two-handled, golden: the cup was in his fingers:

"The wine was even at his lips: and did he dream of death?
How could he? In that revelry amidst his throng of friends
who would imagine a single foe—though a strong foe indeed—
could dare to bring death's pain on him and darkness on his eyes?
Odysseus' arrow hit him under the chin
1420 and punched up to the feathers through his throat.
Backward and down he went, letting the winecup fall
from his shocked hand. Like pipes his nostrils jetted
1425 knocking the breath and dust to soak in dusty blood.

Now as they craned to see their champion where he lay
everyone on his feet. Wildly they turned and scanned
the suitors jostled in uproar down the hall,
not a shield, not a good ashen spear was there for a man to take and throw.

All they could do was yell in outrage at Odysseus:
"Foul! to shoot at a man! That was your last shot!"
"Your own throat will be slit for this!"
"Your own throat will be slit for this!"

1430 But glaring under his brows Odysseus answered:
"You yellow dogs, you thought I'd never make it
amidst the suitors jostled in uproar down the hall,
1435 Out of your toes! You killed the best on Ithaca."
"Your own throat will be slit for this!"
"Foul! to shoot at a man! That was your last shot!"

You killed the best on Ithaca."
"Buzzards will tear your eyes out!"
"Our finest lad is down!"

"Our finest lad is down!"
"Foul! to shoot at a man! That was your last shot!"
"Your own throat will be slit for this!
"You yellow dogs, you thought I'd never make it
1440 home from the land of Troy. You took my house to plunder."
"You yellow dogs, you thought I'd never make it
home from the land of Troy. You took my house to plunder."
... You dared
bid for my wife while I was still alive.
6. Contempt was all you had for the gods who rule wide heaven,
contempt for what men say of you hereafter.
Your last hour has come. You die in blood."

Build Vocabulary

contempt (kon tempt) n.: Actions or attitude of a person toward someone or something he or she considers low or worthless.

Reading Strategy
Summarizes Odysseus' interactions with the suitors to this point. Why does he catch them by surprise? What do you think will happen next?
As they all took this in, sickly green fear pulsed at their entrails, and their eyes flickered looking for some hatch or hideaway from death.

Eurymachus alone could speak. He said:

"If you are Odysseus of Ithaca come back, all that you say these men have done is true. Rash actions, many here, more in the countryside. But here he lies, the man who caused them all. Antinous was the ringleader, he whipped us on to do these things. He cared less for a marriage than for the power Cronion has deeded him as king of Ithaca. For that he tried to trap your son and would have killed him. He is dead now and has his portion. Spare your own people. As for ourselves, we'll make restitution of wine and meat consumed, and add, each one, a little of twenty oxen with gifts of bronze and gold to warm your heart. Meanwhile we cannot blame you for your anger."

Odysseus glowered under his black brows and said:

"Not for the whole treasure of your fathers, all you enjoy, lands, flocks, or any gold put up by others, would I hold my hand. There will be killing till the score is paid. You forced yourselves upon this house. Fight your way out, or run for it, if you think you'll escape death. I doubt one man of you skins by."

They felt their knees fall, and their hearts—but heard Eurymachus for the last time rallying them.

"Friends," he said, "the man is implacable. Now that he's got his hands on bow and quiver he'll shoot from the big doorstone there until he kills us to the last man. Fight, I say, let's remember the joy of it. Swords out! Hold up your tables to deflect his arrows."

After me, everyone: rush him where he stands. If we can budge him from the door, if we can pass into the town, we'll call out men to chase him. This fellow with his bow will shoot no more."

He drew his own sword as he spoke, a broadsword of fine bronze.

"Run then, while I hold them off with arrows as long as the arrows last. When all are gone if I'm alone they can dislodge me."

Quick upon his father's word Telemachus ran to the room where spears and armor lay. He caught up four light shields, four pairs of spears, four helms of war high-plumed with flowing manes, and ran back, leaped down, to his father's side. He was the first to pull a helmet on and slide his bare arm in a buckler strap. The servants armed themselves, and all three took their stand beside the master of battle.
How does the epic simile in lines 1535–1539 help you to picture the scene in your imagination?

While he had arrows
he aimed and shot, and every shot brought down
one of his huddling enemies.

But when all barbs had flown from the bowman's fist,
he leaned his bow in the bright entryway beside the door, and armed: a four-ply shield hard on his shoulder, and a crested helm, horsetailed, nodding stormy upon his head, then took his tough and bronze-shod spears . . .

Aided by Athena, Odysseus, Telemachus, Eumaeus, and another faithful herdsman kill all the suitors.

Aided by Athena, Odysseus, Telemachus, Eumaeus, and another faithful herdsman kill all the suitors.

And Odysseus looked around him, narrow eyed, for any others who had lain hidden while death's black fury passed. In blood and dust he saw that crowd all fallen, many and many slain.

The Odyssey, Part 2, Odysseus' Revenge  913

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build with his own hands. Place the big bed with fleeces, rugs, and sheets of purest linen.

1570 With this she tried him to the breaking point, and he turned on her in a flash raging: "Woman, by heaven you've stung me now! Who dared to move my bed?

1575 No builder had the skill for that—unless a god came down to turn the trick. No mortal in his best days could budge it with a crowbar. There is our pact and pledge, our secret sign, built into that bed—my handiwork and no one else's!

1580 An old trunk of olive grew like a pillar on the building plot, and I laid out our bedroom round that tree, lined up the stone walls, built the walls and roof, gave it a doorway and smooth-fitting doors.

1585 Then I lopped off the silvery leaves and branches, hewed and shaped that stump from the roots up into a bedpost, drilled it, let it serve as model for the rest. I planed them all, inlaid them all with silver, gold and ivory, and stretched a bed between—a pliant web of oxhide thongs dyed crimson.

1590 of odysseus' reaction to what she says.

1595 Those secret as she heard it told, her knees grew tremulous and weak, her heart failed her.

1600 With eyes brimming tears she ran to him, throwing her arms around his neck, and kissed him, murmuring:

"Do not rage at me, Odysseus! I know no more. Could someone else's hand have sawn that trunk and dragged the frame away?"

1605 Their secret as she heard it told, her knees grew tremulous and weak, her heart failed her.

1610 No one ever matched your caution! Think what difficulty the gods gave: they denied us peace in our prime and flowering years, and kept us from crossing into age together. Few men can keep alive through a big surf in joy, in joy, knowing the abyss behind:

1615 but here and now, what sign could be so clear as this of our own bed?

1620 No other man has ever laid eyes on it—only my own slave, Actoris, that my father sent with me as a gift—she kept our door.

1625 You make my stiff heart know that I am yours."

1630 Now from his breast into his eyes the ache of longing mounted, and he wept at last, his dear wife, clear and faithful, in his arms, longed for as the sunwarmed earth is longed for by a swimmer spent in rough water where his ship went down under Poseidon's brows, gale winds and tons of sea.

1635 spent in rough water where his ship went down under Poseidon's brows, gale winds and tons of sea.

1640 Few men can keep alive through a big surf to crawl,clothed with brine, on kindly beaches in joy, in joy, knowing the abyss behind:

1645 and she too rejoiced, her gaze upon her husband, her white arms round him pressed as though forever.

1650 The Ending

Odysseus is reunited with his father. Athena commands that peace prevail between Odysseus and the relatives of the slain suitors. Odysseus has regained his family and his kingdom.

Guide for Responding

- Literature and Your Life

Reader's Response Do you think Odysseus' revenge is justified? Why or why not?

Thematic Focus How do you think the problem of the suitors should have been handled?

Questions for Research Generate research questions to learn about epic heroes in the literature of other cultures.

1. What is the suitors' reaction when Odysseus, still in disguise, takes up the bow?
2. Describe the immediate reaction of the suitors to the killing of Antinous.
3. How does Odysseus get revenge on the suitors?
4. What is Penelope's test, and how does Odysseus pass it?
Guide for Responding (continued)

◆ Critical Thinking

INTERPRET
1. What does Odysseus mean in "The Challenge" when he says, "The hour has come to cook their lordships' mutton—supper by daylight"? [Interpret]
2. What are Odysseus' reasons for slaying all the suitors? [Analyze]
3. Since Odysseus has abandoned his disguise, why does Penelope still need to test him? [Infer]
4. Describe the mood of the scene at the end of "Penelope's Test"—is it altogether happy or does it include some sadness? Explain. [Support]

EVALUATE
5. Does Odysseus' success in the contest show that he is a skilled archer or merely that he has a god on his side? Support your answer. [Assess]

APPLY
6. Compare justice at the hands of Odysseus with justice in a modern society. [Distinguish]

◆ Reading Strategy

SUMMARIZE
Summarizing what you have read is a good way to check your understanding. It is also a useful skill when you need to demonstrate your knowledge on a test or when you want to share what you have learned with a friend.
1. List the main events in Part 2 in order.
2. For each event you listed, tell what caused it and what was the result of it.
3. Retell Part 2 of the Odyssey in a summary that explains why events occurred as they did.

◆ Literary Focus

EPIC SIMILE
An epic simile is a long, elaborate comparison between two dissimilar actions or objects. Many epic similes compare familiar objects and events with imaginative occurrences.
Identify three epic similes from Part 2 of the Odyssey and tell what two dissimilar objects or actions each one compares.

◆ Build Vocabulary

USING THE LATIN WORD ROOT -equi-
Keeping in mind that the Latin word root -equi- means "equal," complete each sentence with one of these words.
- equinox
- equivalent
1. Two nickels are __________ to a dime.
2. At the __________ the day and the night are of the same duration.

USING THE WORD BANK: Synonyms
Write the letter of the word or phrase that is the best synonym of the first word.
1. dissemble: (a) lie, (b) take apart, (c) disguise
2. lithe: (a) limber, (b) thin, (c) agile
3. incredulity: (a) disbelief, (b) naïveté, (c) anger
4. bemusing: (a) muddling, (b) entertaining, (c) allowing
5. glowering: (a) shining, (b) scowling, (c) laughing
6. equity: (a) fairness, (b) horses, (c) calmness
7. maudlin: (a) boring, (b) tired, (c) sentimental
8. contempt: (a) scorn, (b) pity, (c) pavilion

◆ Build Grammar Skills

PARTICIPIAL PHRASES
A participial phrase is a phrase that contains a participle and serves as an adjective to modify a noun or pronoun.

Practice Copy each excerpt below from Part 2 of the Odyssey in your notebook. Underline the participial phrase, identify the participle as past or present, and draw an arrow from the participial phrase to the noun or pronoun it modifies.
1. Crossing the yard, he passed out through the gate in the stockade to face the goddess.
2. Held back too long, the tears ran down his cheeks as he embraced his son.
3. Athena, counseling me, will give me word, and I shall signal to you, nodding . . .
4. Then anger made Antinous' heart beat hard, and, glowering under his brows, he answered . . .

The Odyssey, Part 2 ♦ 917