

MAIN IDEAS: BOOK I

Athena appeals to Zeus for permission to help Odysseus reach home.

Odysseus' home in Ithaca is overrun with suitors who are trying to win Penelopeia's hand.

With the help of Athena disguised as Mentos, Telemachos finds the courage to confront the suitors.



ATHENA

MAIN IDEAS: BOOK II

In a town meeting, Telemachos announces his intentions to locate his father and rid his house of the suitors.

He is met with ridicule and doubt, especially from Antinoos who confronts Telemachos twice.

Athena helps Telemachos prepare for his journey, and he sets sail in secret that night.



Telemachos

MAIN IDEAS: BOOK III

Following Athena's advice, Telemachos visits King Nestor of Pylos to get information about his father.

Athena accompanies him disguised as an old family friend, Mentor.

Nestor tells Telemachos stories about Odysseus.

Telemachos continues his search on horseback with Nestor's son Peisistratos.



KING NESTOR

MAIN IDEAS: BOOK IV

Telemachos and Peisistratos arrive at and welcomed into the home of Menelaos and Helen.

Menelaos tells Telemachos of his travels with Odysseus and that Odysseus is trapped on an island by Calypso.

Meanwhile, Antinoos has learned that Telemachos has embarked on his journey and plots with the other suitors to kill him upon his return to Ithaca.

Penelopeia learns of Telemachos' leaving and is upset.



HELEN OF TROY

MAIN IDEAS: BOOK V

Athena again pleads to Zeus for Odysseus' release.

Zeus sends Hermes to Calypso with orders that she release Odysseus.

Calypso grudgingly complies.

Odysseus is given much trouble by Poseidon, but with the help of Ino (Leucothea the White Sea Goddess) and Athena, he finally reaches the land of the Phaiacians, where he collapses, exhausted.



HERMES

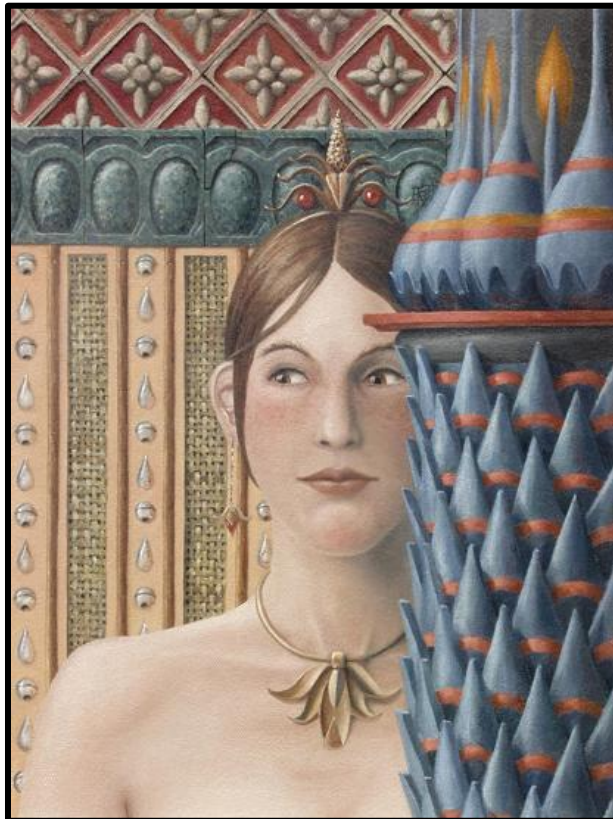
MAIN IDEAS: BOOK VI

Athena appears in Nausicaa's dream, telling her to go to the river and wash clothes.

Nausicaa and her maids meet Odysseus at the river, and all but Nausicaa are frightened of him because of his appearance.

He begs her to help him and she agrees.

He bathes and follows Nausicaa's instructions for asking her parents for assistance.



PRINCESS NAUSICAA

MAIN IDEAS: BOOK VII

Odysseus arrives at the palace of Alcinoos and Arete and begs for their help in getting him home.

They feed him, ask about his situation, and agree to give him the help he needs.



ARETE AND ODYSSEUS

MAIN IDEAS: BOOK VIII

The next day, Alcinoos sends the boys of the town to construct a ship for Odysseus' voyage and gathers the men for a day of entertainment for Odysseus.

Demodocos sings of famous men, including Odysseus.

When Alcinoos sees Odysseus crying during the minstrel's story, he commences the games and dancing to keep his guest happy.

At dinner, Odysseus again weeps when Demodocos sings about the Trojan War.

At this point, Alcinoos finally demands to know who Odysseus is.



ODYSSEUS WEEPS AT THE SONG OF DEMODOCUS

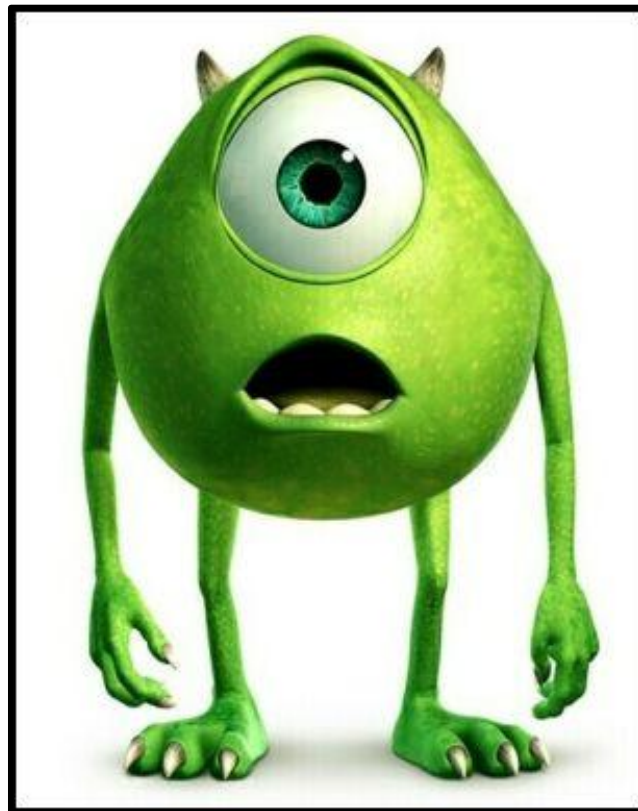
MAIN IDEAS: BOOK IX

Odysseus tells Alcinoos who he is and what things have happened to him since he left Troy.

He tells of his adventures in Ismaros, in the land of the Lotus-Eaters, and in the land of the Cyclopians.

He describes the Cyclopians as "violent and lawless," and he and his men run into trouble with Polyphemos.

Men are killed and Poseidon's vendetta against Odysseus begins.



POLYPHEMOS (sort of...)

MAIN IDEAS: BOOK X

Odysseus tells of his visit to Aiolia, where Aiolos, manager of the winds, helps Odysseus and his crew get home.

He puts wind in a bag, which Odysseus carries on board the ship.

Unfortunately, his curious crew decides to open the bag, and the released winds drive them away from home.

They arrive at the land of the Laestrygonians, who eat most of Odysseus' crew before his ship escapes.

Then they land on the island of Aeaea, the home of Circe. She traps some of the men and turns them into pigs.

Odysseus, with the help of Hermes, gets her to release his men and help him reach home.

She instructs him to visit Hades, where he will meet Tiresias, who will tell him how to get home.



CIRCE

MAIN IDEAS: BOOK XI

Odysseus follows Circe's instructions. In Hades, he first sees a dead shipmate, Elpenor, then his mother, Anticleia, and then Tiresias.

Tiresias tells him what will happen to him next, including a warning about the cattle of Helios and how to reconcile with Poseidon.

He then gets to talk with his mother, and she answers many questions for him.

At this point, Odysseus tries to conclude his storytelling, but Alcinoo begs him to continue.

Odysseus says only that he met the souls of many who passed away; then he left Hades.



HADES

MAIN IDEAS: BOOK XII

Odysseus tells of their return to Aiaia to bury Elpenor and of Circe's warning of the dangers to come: the Sirens, Scylla, Charybdis, and Helios' cattle.

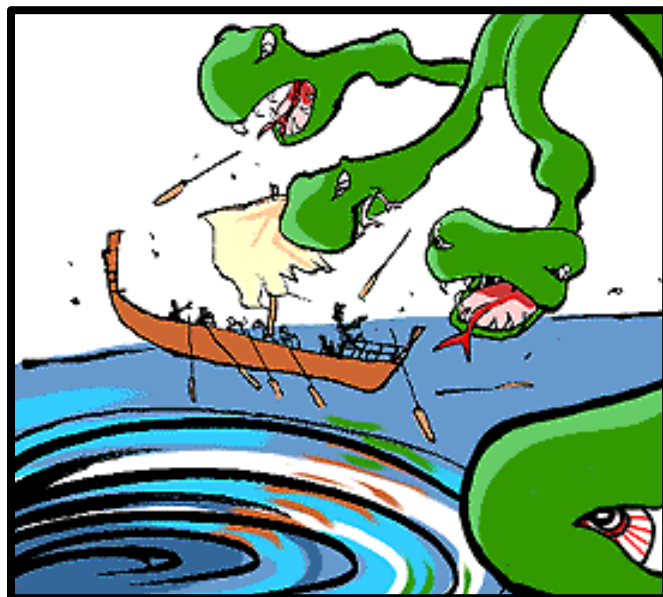
The men make it through the perils of the sea, as predicted.

On land, when they run out of provisions, they eat Helios' cattle even though Odysseus made them promise not to.

At sea, all except Odysseus are killed as punishment.

Odysseus is adrift for nine days before landing on the island of Ogygia, Calypso's home.

Alcinoos and the other listeners are now up-to-date on the travels of Odysseus.



SCYLLA

MAIN IDEAS: BOOK XIII

Odysseus is done telling his story.

King Alcinoos gives Odysseus a ship with a crew and supplies, and the townspeople all give him gifts.

The crew delivers Odysseus to Ithaca and returns home.

Poseidon, who is angry that anyone would make Odysseus' travels by sea so easy, turns the ship and crew into stone as they return to their harbor.

Odysseus does not believe he is home until Athena convinces him.

She disguises him as an old beggar and sends him to his faithful swineherd.



ITHACA

MAIN IDEAS: BOOK XIV

Athena goes to Lacedaimon (Sparta) to bring Telemachos home.

Odysseus goes to the swineherd Eumaios' house.

Odysseus is made welcome and is pleased to see how faithful Eumaios has been during his absence.



EUMAIOS

MAIN IDEAS: BOOK XV

Athena finds Telemachos at the mansion of Menelaos and instructs him to return home.

Odysseus learns from Eumaios about his (Odysseus') parents and how Eumaios was bought by Laertes when he was a child.

Telemachos lands safely back in Ithaca and, by Athena's instructions, goes straight to Eumaios.



MAIN IDEAS: BOOK XVI

Athena instructs Odysseus to reveal his identity to Telemachos and to plan their revenge on the suitors.

Eumaios tells Penelope that Telemachos has returned safely to Ithaca.

When the suitors, led by Antinoos, learn that their plan to kill Telemachos has failed, they plot to kill him another way.



ODYSSEUS AND EUMAIOS

MAIN IDEAS: BOOK XVII

Telemachos returns home, accompanied by Theoclymenos.

Eumaios brings the disguised Odysseus to his home where the suitors are entertaining themselves as usual.

Odysseus is recognized only by Argos, his old hunting dog, who dies after hearing his master's voice one last time.

Odysseus tests the suitors by begging for food from each one.

Penelopeia tells Eumaios to bring the beggar to her; she wants to know if he has any news about Odysseus.



ARGOS

MAIN IDEAS: BOOK XVIII

Odysseus fights with another beggar, Iros, who is used to being the only beggar at the castle.

Penelopeia decides to address the suitors, saying she will choose a husband according to who brings her the best gift.

Odysseus recognizes this as a trick on the suitors.

Odysseus is further antagonized by Melanths, a maid, and Eurymachos.



ODYSSEUS AND IROS

BOOK XIX

The women are shut up in their rooms, and Odysseus and Telemachos hide all the weapons in the storeroom.

Odysseus, still disguised as a beggar, goes to see Penelopeia.

He convinces her that he did meet Odysseus and that he has heard also that Odysseus is on his way home.

Penelopeia is grateful and orders Eurycleia to bathe and clothe the beggar.

Eurycleia recognizes Odysseus by a scar on his leg, but he swears her to secrecy.

Penelopeia, discouraged, decides to go ahead and marry whomever can meet the challenge that she will put forth to the suitors: to string Odysseus' bow and shoot an arrow through twelve axe-heads in a row.



AXE CONTEST

MAIN IDEAS: BOOK XX

It is a new day and Telemachos receives the beggar (Odysseus) into his house.

The beggar is ridiculed by many, but he remains calm. Philotios proves himself a faithful and kind servant.

Theoclymenos sees the suitors' future.



THEOCLYMENOS' PROPHECY

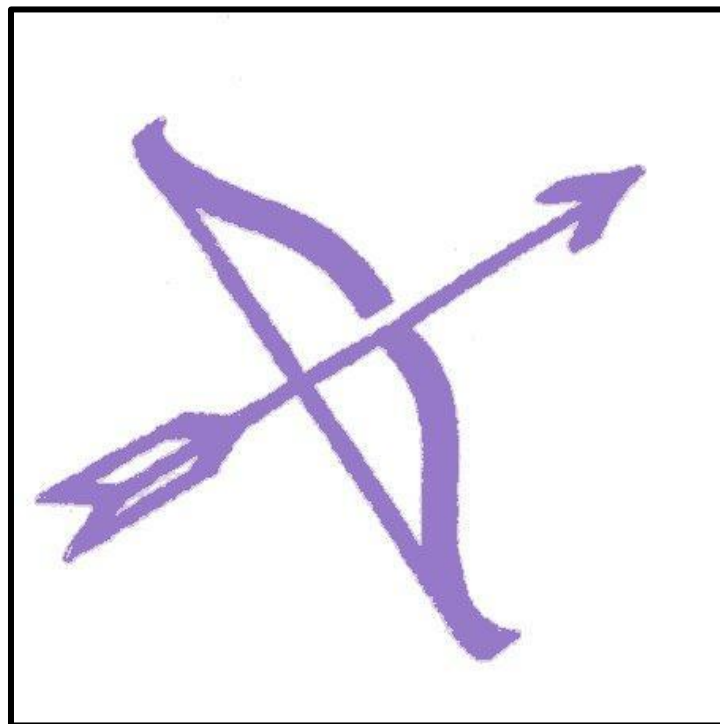
MAIN IDEAS: BOOK XXI

Penelopeia issues her challenge to the suitors, but none of the men can bend the bow to string it.

Odysseus finds a chance to confide in Philoitios and Eumaios and to include them in his plans for revenge.

Odysseus easily strings the bow and shoots an arrow through the twelve axe-heads.

Eumaios tells the women to lock themselves in the bedrooms, and Telemachos and Odysseus arm themselves against the suitors.



ODYSSEUS' BOW

MAIN IDEAS: BOOK XXII

Immediately, Odysseus reveals himself and kills Antinoos with an arrow.

Eurymachos tries to convince Odysseus that Antinoos is to blame for everything and that he shouldn't kill the other suitors.

Odysseus gives them a chance to run away, but they choose to fight, led by Eurymachos.

Odysseus, Telemachos, and the two servants kill everyone except Phemios and Medon.

Odysseus asks Eurycleia to identify the maids who have been unfaithful and bring them to him.

He makes them clean up the blood and dead bodies in the hall and then Telemachos hangs them.

Melanthios is cut up and fed to the dogs.

The maids and servants come and celebrate the return of Odysseus.



NO MORE ANTINOOS

MAIN IDEAS: BOOK XXIII

Odysseus reveals his identity to Penelopeia, but she is skeptical.

She tests Odysseus by having Eurycleia provide Odysseus a place to sleep by moving a bed into the hallway.

Odysseus becomes angry because he built this bed out of a tree trunk so that it could not be moved.

Penelopeia then knows that he is truly her husband.

He tells her that, according to Tiresias, he must carry an oar inland and make sacrifices to Poseidon.

He also feels he must regain all the livestock and goods that he lost because of the suitors.

He sets out to see his father and tells Penelopeia to stay locked in her room with her maids until he returns.



ODYSSEUS' BED

MAIN IDEAS: BOOK XXIV

The souls of the dead men pass to Hades, let by Hermes.

Odysseus goes to see Laertes, pretending to be someone else at first, but then he reveals his identity.

Laertes asks for proof that he is Odysseus.

He tells about the scar on his leg and spending time in his father's orchard.

Relatives of the suitors, led by Eupheithes, Antinoos' father, come to battle Odysseus and Odysseus kills Eupheithes.

Then Athena stops the battle and makes peace between the two sides.

