

# The ODDyssey

(or A Brief Retelling of Homer's Brilliant Example of  
Why Men Should Stop to Ask for Directions)

11<sup>th</sup> Grade

10/27/00

## Characters

Narrator: Very enthusiastic about his/her job, but doesn't seem to relate to the rest of the group, passionate storyteller, can wear ordinary clothes or clothes that look nerdy (sweater vest, glasses, book to read story)

Odysseus: Cocky, handsome (and knows it), very charming, funny (can be wearing old Greek clothes, a suit, or ordinary clothes with random accessories such as a crown or hat, a sword, a beard, etc.)

Penelope: Wife of Odysseus, strong, independent woman, sarcastic, sassy, smart, (can be wearing a Greek dress, a regular dress, or ordinary clothes with accessories such as a scarf or boa, a fancy hat, a shawl, etc.)

Telemachus: Son of Odysseus, kind of goes with the flow of things, mama's boy (can be wearing old Greek clothes or ordinary clothes with accessories such as a hat or helmet, breastplate, walking stick or spear, etc.)

Athena: goddess of wisdom and war, real hip and cool, down to earth, kind of a jokester (can be wearing old Greek clothing/robe, warrior clothing, or ordinary clothes with random accessories such as fairy wings, sword, cloak, shield, staff, snake, etc. Needs an old man disguise as well (can be just a cloak))

Calypso: flighty, obstinate nymph (very small part, can be played by the same person who plays Penelope or Telemachus or can be an extra for other scenes) (can be wearing fancy clothing or ordinary clothing with fancy accessories)

\*All characters should be acting out what the narrator says, even if there are no specific stage directions to do so. There are background slides to go with the scenes, but a normal stage background or a simple island background are both fine for the play. When actors' characters aren't on stage, these actors can act as extras or stand slightly off-stage.)

(Narrator is sitting, all characters are standing in a line)

Narrator: (Slow and Deliberate, like an old-time narrator) A long time ago, in the days of old, the Trojans and the Greeks fought a great war. The terrible battle ended with the Greek's victory, but for Odysseus, the battle had just begun.

Odysseus: Whoa, wait a minute. You can't tell the story like that. You're gonna lull them to sleep.

Penelope: Yeah, maybe jazz it up a little. (Jazz hands)

Telemachus: Make it more interesting.

Athena: And cooler

Narrator: What?

Odysseus: (Taunting-like) Unless you can't be cool.

Narrator: Uh, I can be cool. Yeah. Sooo, them Greek dawgs be like, "Yay we won" and they be trippin' when they don't be praisin' the gods, and they were totally arrogant when they disrespected good ol' Athena.

Penelope: You're not very good at this, are you?

(All characters except Athena stand off to the side)

Narrator: Anyway, Athena decided to get revenge on the Greeks she once favored. She asked Poseidon for help.

Athena: (Stands, facing wall) Hey Poseidon, you wanna help me punish some Greeks. Maybe blow one to Egypt, drown some, and, I don't know, make one suffer for 10 years before he can go home. I was joking about that last one. Don't do that.

(Athena walks off, Penelope and Telemachus walk on stage)

Narrator: Meanwhile, back in Ithaca, Penelope, Odysseus's wife, was dealing with some troubles of her own. Everyone thought that Odysseus was dead, and she was a widow. This obviously meant that she was ready to start dating again. So men, all rude, greedy, and overbearing, came to make her their wife.

Penelope: (Fighting stance) Stand back, you savages!

Narrator: They also gave Telemachus, the son of Odysseus, a hard time.

Telemachus: (Stands behind his mom, still attempting to be manly) Yeah, stand back, you savages!

Narrator: Even though both the wife and son rejected them, the suitors stayed at their house, eating their food, and messing up their home, which was super annoying, so Penelope hatched a plan.

Penelope: Uh, uh! I ain't havin' that. I know! I'll tell the boys I have to weave a shroud for Odysseus's dead dad before I can marry; I'll weave all day but unweave it at night. That way it'll never be done. My plan is perfect! (Starts weaving, Telemachus helps, satisfying her every whim)

Narrator: Penelope's plan worked for a while.

Penelope: My plan will NEVER fail! (Telemachus nods vehemently in agreement)

Narrator: But then she was discovered, and the suitors were more persistent than ever.

Penelope: Aww, man!

Narrator: In the meantime, Athena began to pity Odysseus after 10 long years. So she spoke to the gathering of Olympians- which excluded Poseidon.

Athena: (to audience) Odysseus has had a rough time. He's on the nymph Calypso's island right now. Let's give him a break. He deserves to go home.

Narrator: The Olympians were moved by her words. Zeus instructed Calypso to release Odysseus. It was time for him to come home. Meanwhile in Ithaca, Athena became fond of Telemachus. She visited him in disguise (Athena puts on old man disguise), and when Telemachus saw her as an old beggar, he welcomed her.

Telemachus: Welcome. Come in.

Athena: (Crouched over-old man voice) Oh, thank you!

Narrator: The two chatted for a while, and Athena encouraged him to look for his father.

Athena: (old man voice) You know that father you have that everyone thinks is dead.

(Telemachus nods in an obvious way) Well, I think you should go look for him. Just a thought.

Narrator: Suddenly, he was filled with motivation and a certainty that he could accomplish this task.

Telemachus: (stands up, very theatrical, with boldness) ♪I can go the distance♪ (Suddenly recedes back into a shy boy) But let me just ask my mother for permission first. (Athena rolls her eyes, pushes him on his way)

Narrator: Penelope sent his son off with his blankie in one hand and snacks in the other. With his mother's blessing and Athena's protection, Telemachus set off on his adventure. Blah, blah, blah. He finds out what happened to his dad. Blah, blah, blah. Alright, and now we're back to Odysseus.

Telemachus: W-W-Wait a minute, you can't just skip over me.

Narrator: Sorry, we just don't have that much time. Plus, it's called The Odyssey, not the Telemachusey.

Telemachus: (Scoffs and walks off, snuggling his blankie for comfort)

Narrator: (Calypso walks up) Anyways, Hermes arrived at Calypso's island and persuaded her to give up Odysseus, which took a lot of convincing.

Calypso: (Complaining and throwing a tantrum) It's not fair! I saved him! I should get to

keep him! Why? Why? He's mine!

Narrator: But no one can refuse Zeus's wishes, so Calypso finally gave in. (Calypso drags Odysseus on stage.) When she told Odysseus, however, he didn't believe her.

Odysseus: No, you're trying to drown me or something. I will NEVER believe you.

Calypso: But Odysseus...

Odysseus: NEVER!

Narrator: But she finally got Odysseus to believe her.

Odysseus: (Casually) Yeah, ok. I believe you.

Narrator: So they built a raft and Odysseus set sail for home. Unfortunately, Poseidon saw him and sent a massive storm to kill him once and for all. Instead of drowning, Odysseus washed up on the shore of the Phaeacians. It was there that the princess Nausicaa was washing her laundry. Then she saw Odysseus climb out of the bushes, wild-looking and, well, naked.

(Odysseus starts to lift up his shirt slightly, possibly with music starting to play in the background, but the narrator stops him.)

Narrator: (Panicked) No, we're not doing that. (Person comes with a sign reading "Censored" on it.) Much better. (Odysseus starts walking.) So, Odysseus was taken to the palace where he was welcomed by the royal family. After a night of rest, he was asked to tell his story.

Odysseus: (Stands in center) (Quickened, yet casual, animatic, like a teenage boy trying to tell

a story- can be somewhat ad-libbed, fitting the way the actor sees his character) Well, it all started when we were heading back from Troy. A storm struck, and we might have gotten a little off course. We stopped at a place with lotuses first. Good food, would highly recommend if you don't have anywhere to be for the rest of your life. Then we ran into Polyphemus, he was a cyclops. I poked him in the eye, and we escaped. Then, we visited King Aeolus, keeper of the winds. He was nice enough to give me a sack carrying all the winds. Unfortunately, some of my crew members thought it was gold, and they opened it, blowing us in the wrong direction, and it quite literally "blew them away". After that, we met some giant cannibals, which wasn't fun. Then we came to the Realm of Circe. Ya know, Circe seemed like a nice girl, until she turned most of my men into beasts. Lucky for me, Circe ended up falling in love with me. Not only did she turn my men back into people, but she let us stay a whole year there. Then I spoke to the ghost of Teiresias to find out how to get back home. Talk about a strange way to get directions. Then we passed the sirens who sang a beautiful song, it was really killer. Anyways, then we passed a whirlpool and this really ugly monster, Scylla the killa, lost a couple members here and there until I was the only survivor. After a storm, I washed up on Calypso's Island. She fell in love with me, which was a bummer for me because I couldn't go home, but now I'm here, after...ANOTHER...storm. (Being real for a moment, sad and desperate) Honestly, it's been a crazy trip. And, all I really want to do is get home to my wife and my son... and my dog.

Narrator: Seeing Odysseus's despair, they gave him a ship to go home, and Odysseus sailed back to his homeland. (Odysseus pretends to sail, lands and Athena enters) When he arrived in Ithaca, he saw Athena disguised as man. (Use similar disguise as before) Odysseus then asked the man where he was.

Athena: You're in Ithaca.

Narrator: Odysseus didn't trust this person, so he lied about who he was.

Odysseus: Yeah, I'm just a super famous rock star coming from Rome to play at a concert, name's Julius Bieber.

Narrator: But Athena knew the truth.

Athena: You crooked scallywag. (Athena whacks Odysseus.)

Narrator: Athena transformed back into herself, (changes back into Athena costume) and Odysseus realized who she was. (Odysseus is shocked.)

Athena: Ha! You should see your face right now! Really. I was all like "You're in Ithaca" and you were all like "What?!?" and I was all like "Woosh" and you were even more like "what?!?" (deep sigh) I've been waitin' ten years to do that.

Narrator: They came up with a plan to get rid of the suitors. First, Athena disguised Odysseus as an old beggar. (Athena puts cloak over Odysseus.) Then, he went to his swine herd, where his son went after he returned from his journey. There, father and son were reunited. (Athena leaves, Telemachus walks in)

Odysseus: (Breathes in and out like Darth Vader) Luke, I am your father.

Telemachus: Actually, It's  
Telemachus.

Odysseus:(Absent-minded) Right, I knew that.

Narrator: So the two worked on a way to defeat the suitors. Meanwhile, Penelope devised a plan

of her own.

Penelope: Alright, boys. This is how it's gonna work. Whoever can string my husband's bow and shoot an arrow into those 12 rings will be my new husband.

Narrator: All the men tried, but none could complete the task. Finally, Odysseus, still dressed as the beggar, stepped forward to try. The men laughed at him, (Everyone laughs) but when he strung the bow and shot the arrow, everyone silenced. Instantly, Odysseus shot an arrow into one of the suitor's hearts. He continued to do this as Telemachus guarded the door (Telemachus inadequately attempts to block the door.). Soon, all the men were dead except two, a priest and a bard. Naturally, he killed the priest and spared the bard. After that, Odysseus had a hard time explaining to his wife that it was really him.

Odysseus: Penelope, it's me!

Penelope: Who?

Odysseus: Your husband,  
Odysseus

Penelope: No  
way.

Odysseus: Yes  
way.

Penelope: Are you sure?

Narrator: It took a while, but Penelope finally believed that this was truly her husband.

(Odysseus flexes)

Penelope: It IS you!

Narrator: Then they all rejoiced and partied. (Everybody Party Hardy) ... And they all lived happily ever after, except for the dog who died.

Everybody: What?!?!?!?

Athena: (Jumps in front) THE END