Excerpts are taken from the following translations of the Odyssey by Homer:

**Prose**


**Poetry**

...and a stream of wine mixed with
drinker sprinkled from the yoke, and all companions deep overpowered him.
He had hardly spoken before he toppled over and fell face

The Odyssey Book 9. The Odyssey (verse)
The Rock Walls Ejected

and the厅堂中央的墙壁

and the pillars of the hall,

and the bases of the columns,

and the corners of the room,

and the floor, and the walls, and the ceiling


The Blinding of Polyphemus, Book 9, The Odyssey (poetry)
and were driven back in terror. The monster wrapped the spike

Nobody's killing me now by force and not by force.

Nobody, friends—polvereus, belowned back from his cave.

Surely no one's living to kill you now by force or force.

Surely once, enclosure your hands against your will—

Roaring out in the sound night to rob us of sleep.

What troubles, where in the world is trouble?

And thinking round his cavern, asked what added him:

Hearing his cries, they numbered up from every side.

Living round about in caves on mushroom caves.

Be photographed our help from his neighbor Cypres

He might be quick with the thinness and mad with pain

from the fire and oil, came with a red feather of fiddor—

If you're alone, his friends bemoaned back at once.

If there's no escape from that,

it must be a plague sent these by mighty Zeus.

Wrongly's striving to overpower you now—look,
In Circe’s Palace, Book 10, The Odyssey (Prose)

Circe said, "The sweetest and dazziest place that goddess make, the beautiful living room on which she was wearing one of those del-fi..."

NOT a single man appeared, though I sat there a long time..."

The woman let call to her immediately, "Come in at once."

The sweetest place of a house..."
In Circe's Palace: Book 10, The Odyssey (poetry)

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Circe's order for her fair tale: roll in and
so of they are to her ears: sobbing, squealing
she turns the minds of her girls, she walks as a mother.

Snow—over the docks, you can only
all of them playing now—huzzah—with gleams
the stick with their hands close them into her phalanges.
Once they have turned the song, she leads them
up into the sky. They spread their dark wings
—sorely pressed under the weight of her—she
with a cruel beam in a position—Circe, naively
she starts them there in to do on their account.

Ours the brightness, secured behind—the sound a step
marching along—all in and away with all violence,
She opened the glowing doors at once and stepped forth,
So she went and the mean called out and bade her.

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Circe of woman—let us call out, let her now!
and how she sighs—lingering
The whole house is o'ercast to her song.

The doors were closed, and perished, and
near some inside his phalanges, the people's
captive of chance, dark command.
A shivering glow—only their dress is clean.

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Circe—let them see the doors, let them see.
Circe—let them see the doors, let them see.

...
The Sirens' Song: Book 12, The Odyssey (Prose)
They bound me hand and foot in the left ship
and I stopped the ears of my comrades one by one,
and held my breathing deep in the highest noon,
and the wind so grew fierce as to strain the thing.

Down into the block broke through a single wave
with a single sword I struck and the wax of the beemax
launched with polished cars; nothing the water wither.

The arrogant keep'd to their feet; strike the sail.
all upon a dead calm.

But when the wind fell in an instant,
the stern, shiniest, shone on the black wind.
all the while our ship went speeding toward
So I informed my companions part by part.

Then I hast me easier, hope on pressing hope;'
and I bade, 'the omens many you to set me free,

I awoke and took the voice of the seer:
I alone was to read that voice, so she said.
her's understanding; where the meadow's broad with flowers.
First the seaward we must steer clear of the shore.

Yet see, we're clear of the land the stories:
so we can let our eyes where open now.

Here's an end to my tale, I told my storytellers.

The Strays, Book 12, The Odyssey (Poetry)
Pelepe and Odysseus Return to Book 23: The Odyssey (Prose)
Odysses, form the strong, clear signs, Odysseus offered,
recognizing in tears, rushed to Odysseus, flung her arms
around his neck, and kissed his head and cried out.

"Odysses—don't leave us, don't go!"
"The gods are punishing us for your eyes and our hearts."
"But don't be angry, my mother!"
"In my heart I always knew I would come back, with your guidance."
**Odyssey Summary Handout**

**Book Summary 1-12**

This is a detailed summary to reacquaint you with the Odyssey and/or act as a revision guide. It should however be seen as an aid to your own reading of the Odyssey, and not a replacement.

**Book 1**

The poet introduces Odysseus, a resourceful man who was driven by the gods to wander far and wide, after sacking Troy. He tried to save his comrades, but they died of their own folly. We find Odysseus held up by Calypso. She wishes Odysseus to be her husband, but he wishes to go home and see his wife. All the gods pity Odysseus, apart from Poseidon, because Odysseus blinded his son Polyphemus (as told in Book 9).

After Athene has successfully argued Odysseus’ case to Zeus, Hermes is sent to tell Calypso to release Odysseus while she heads to Ithaca, Odysseus’ home. There she encourages Telemachus, Odysseus’ son, to call all the Achaeans to an assembly and then head to Sparta. Disguised as a family friend, Mentes, she meets Telemachus, who welcomes her into the house as a guest.

While the suitors amuse themselves in Odysseus’ place, Telemachus and Athene talk. Athene tells Telemachus that she thinks Odysseus is alive and will return. She also acknowledges Telemachus as Odysseus’ son. Telemachus openly admits his desire to see Odysseus return and explains that his mother Penelope is considering remarrying. Athene then urges him to call an assembly and tell the suitors to go home. She then urges him to go and see Nestor in Pylos and then Menelaus in Sparta to find out news of his father. While Phemius the bard sings of stories of Troy, Penelope comes down and asks him to stop singing as it is too upsetting. Telemachus however firmly tells his mother to let the bard sing, and speaks boldly to the suitors. The suitors only see Athene as Mentes, while Telemachus recognises her as Athene.

**Book 2**

Telemachus summons the assembly, and on his way there Athene endows Telemachus with such grace that all onlookers are impressed. He takes his father’s seat and is addressed as Odysseus’ son. After some words by Antiphus, Telemachus takes the sceptre and takes his place in the middle of the assembly. He then angrily describes how the suitors are trying to woo his mother and are destroying his home, yet the passion of the speech causes him to throw the sceptre down and to begin to cry. After a short silence full of pity, Antinous, one of the suitors, mockingly responds, and instead lays the blame with Penelope for her “duplicity”. He reports that she said she was making a shroud for Laertes, Odysseus’ father, and she would only remarry once that was complete. She would weave a
great web during the day, but at night used to unravel it until she was caught. Antinous then tells Telemachus to send Penelope away to be married. Telemachus replies that he could not expel his own mother, and vows to kill Antinous if he continues to destroy his house.

At that moment, two eagles appear, sent by Zeus, who begin to fight in the air with each other. Halitherses, a seer, predicts that this is an omen signifying Odysseus is planning to return and kill the suitors. Eurymachus, however, speaking on the suitors’ behalf, dismisses it, and again says that Penelope should be married. Telemachus then asks Eurymachus to lend him a ship to go to Sparta and Pylos to find out his father’s fate and if Odysseus is dead, then he will give Penelope to a suitor. Despite a stirring speeches to rise up against the suitors, the appeals falls on deaf ears.

Telemachus prays to Athene, and she comes down in the form of Mentor and encourages him. Telemachus again speaks aggressively to the suitors, and they fear he is plotting to kill them. Meanwhile, Athene prepares everything and then goes on the boat with Telemachus as they set out for Pylos.

Book 3

Athene again encourages Telemachus in his doubt. They are warmly greeted by Peisistratus, Nestor’s son. When asked by Nestor, Telemachus introduces himself and where is he from, and tells him he has to come to ask about Odysseus. Nestor reminisces about his adventures in Troy and then explains the journey home.

After some discussion about the situation in Ithaca, Nestor tells of Agamemnon’s return: how Aegisthus wooed Clytemnestra, Agamemnon’s wife, by exposing the minstrel left to protect her, and finally killing Agammenon. Aegisthus was then killed in turn by Orestes. Nestor uses this tale to warn Telemachus to abandon his home for too long with the suitors at home, but urges him to go to see Menelaus. After a night’s sleep and sacrifice to Athene, Nestor gives Telemachus and Peisistratus some horses with which to go to Sparta to see Menelaus.

Book 4

Telemachus and Peisistratus arrive at Menelaus’ house where a large marriage feast is taking place. Menelaus chastises his stewards’ reluctance to welcome them and invites them in. Both princes are amazed at his palace and his wealth. Menelaus says he is wealthy amongst men, but not compared to Zeus, and that he is saddened since his friends died at Troy, especially Odysseus.

When his father is mentioned, Telemachus weeps. Helen enters and recognises Telemachus as the son of Odysseus, to which Menelaus agrees. All weep at the memory of Odysseus. Helen meanwhile mixes into each man’s drink a drug which dispels grief, and tells them a tale of Odysseus: he was dressed as a beggar, and
Helen was the only one to see him, and he outwitted her until she bathed him and he told her all the Achaeans' plans. Menelaus then tells the story of when they were in the wooden horse, and Odysseus restrained him and Diomedes from calling out to Helen when she addressed the Achaeans men hidden inside, mimicking their wives' voices.

After a night's rest, Telemachus explains he has come to find out about Odysseus. Menelaus tells the story of his encounter with Proteus, the old man of the sea. Menelaus and his men clung to Proteus while he changed himself into many different forms. Menelaus then asks Proteus why it took him so long to return home, and which of his companions had returned home. Proteus tells him of the fate of Ajax and of Agamemnon who when he arrived home, was feasted by Aegisthus and then was killed by him. He finally tells Menelaus that Odysseus is being kept back by Calypso. At the end of his tale, Nestor asks Telemachus to stay with him for longer. Telemachus politely refuses.

The narrative then swings back to Ithaca where the suitors sit eating, anxiously discussing Telemachus' journey. They plan to kill Telemachus, but Penelope's herald Medon overhears and tells her. She, previously unaware that Telemachus is away, breaks down. Penelope finally goes to bed, where Athene sends a phantom of her sister Iphime to comfort her and tell her Telemachus will be safe yet withholds news of Odysseus.

Book 5

The book starts on Mount Olympus. Athene, again argues the case for Odysseus. Zeus sends Hermes to Calypso to release Odysseus to sail home, and foretells he will reach the Phaeacians, men "close to the gods" who will return him to Ithaca.

Hermes tells Calypso that Odysseus is destined to see his friends and home again. Calypso is annoyed, as she had offered to make him immortal to be her husband. She goes off to find Odysseus, who she finds weeping on the shore. She tells him she will give him a raft, food and clothing, and a favourable wind. He does not trust her however so he forces her to swear an oath. She tells him he should remain with her, especially with the problems that lie ahead, but he stresses his desire to see his own home and his wife.

Calypso prepares everything and sends him on his way. Poseidon sees Odysseus returning and in his anger launches a storm on our hero. Odysseus is however given a veil by Ino, a nymph from the sea, to offer him divine protection. Though Poseidon's waves break his raft, Athene intervenes and calms the winds, guiding him over three days to land. When he finally comes to a river's mouth, he prays to the Lord of the river to bring him to land to the Phaeacians. On arriving he kisses the earth, yet he is greatly anxious. He finally makes himself a bed out of leaves, and Athene makes him fall asleep.
Book 6

While Odysseus sleeps, Athene comes to the land of the Phaeacians, whom Homer tells once lived as neighbours to the Cyclopes. Athene appears to Nausicaa, daughter of the Phaeacian king Alcinous, as one of her friends and tells her to go and do some washing as she will need beautiful clothes for when she is to be married.

Consequently Nausicaa takes a company of young women to help her and after doing their washing they play ball amongst themselves. Athene plans Nausicaa to be the guide for Odysseus, and so causes her to throw the ball beside the sleeping Odysseus. After the initial surprise, Odysseus loads her with compliments while subtly asking her to direct him to the town and give him some clothes. Nausicaa then introduces herself and says she will take him to the town herself.

Odysseus washes himself and Athene makes him appear powerful and handsome; Nausicaa tells her maids she wishes him for a husband. She takes him through the city, pointing out the various places. She then orders him once he has reached the palace of her father to go and clasp the knees of her mother, Arete; it is she who will decide if Odysseus sees Ithaca again or not. The book ends with Odysseus praying to Athene asking the Phaeacians to receive him kindly; Athene hears his prayer, but does not appear.

Book 7

Nausicaa returns home, as Athene covers Odysseus in a mist so that none may see him. The goddess disguises herself as a young girl carrying a pitcher. She first warns him that the Phaeacians are not always friendly to visitors and then takes him to the palace and tells him about Arete. Amazed at the incredible palace, Odysseus enters and the mist disappears. He addresses Arete, who does not respond.

After some discussion, it seems agreed that Odysseus should be taken home, until Arete asks him where he received the clothes he is wearing, given to him by Nausicaa, Arete's daughter. He then explains how he came to the island: how Calypso kept him back for several years and how after he sailed away he escaped the rough sea, finding land and meeting Nausicaa. Finally Alcinous states he wishes Odysseus could be married to Nausicaa, but promises to return him to Ithaca.

Book 8

Next morning, Odysseus is led to the assembly place of the Phaeacians. Athene rouses the Phaeacian men to come and listen and again makes Odysseus appear strong and tall. Odysseus has yet to give his name to the Phaeacians and remains a stranger. Alcinous argues that a ship be prepared to take Odysseus home. He then invites those at the assembly to come to his house to hear the bard sing.
Once Alcinous' orders have been carried out and the meal prepared, the bard Demodocus sings of the famous deeds of heroes, in particular of Odysseus' and Achilles' quarrel. Hearing these tales, Odysseus weeps. Alcinous notices, and so suggests a sporting competition.

Odysseus observes the Phaeacian youths and refuses to join in until insulted by Euryalus. He picks up a discus and easily throws it further than the other Phaeacians; Athene as a judge points out how far it has flown. Demodocus then tells the story of the infidelity of Ares and Aphrodite, and how Hephaestus punished them, which pleases all. Euryalus apologises, and is forgiven by Odysseus.

After a bath, Nausicaa greets Odysseus, whom says he owes his life to her. Odysseus then asks Demodocus to tell a story of the Trojan Horse, yet again he begins weeping. At this point, Alcinous asks Odysseus' name and of his past.

Book 9

Odysseus reveals his identity:
"I am Odysseus, Laertes' son. The whole world talks of my stratagems, and my fame has reached the heavens. My home is under the clear skies of Ithaca."

Odysseus then narrates to them the events that brought him to their home: of Calypso, and then how he was taken to the island of the Cicones. There he and his companions sack the city, but lose six comrades when further fighting takes place. After a storm they look likely to reach home, but the winds drive them past Cythera. The group then come to the island of the Lotus Eaters, whose fruit make his companions forget their desire to return home. Odysseus drags all of his companions back to the ship, ties them up and sail away.

Odysseus and his men then arrive at the land of the Cyclopes, a fierce and lawless people who have nothing to do with the gods or men, an uncivilised world without assemblies or ships. After seeing some goats penned up, Odysseus sails to the mainland and takes twelve men with him and a skin of wine given to him by a priest of Apollo. Coming upon sheep, goats and their produce in a giant cave, Odysseus' men beg him to take these things and return to the ship. Odysseus, curious as ever, wishes to see who owns the cave, and whether they will receive hospitality from him or not.

The giant returns to milk his animals and asks the men who they are. Odysseus tells Polyphemus that they are the army who sacked Troy and they come to him as suppliants, protected by Zeus. Polyphemus replies that he pays no attention to Zeus; he tears some of Odysseus' companions limb from limb and messily devours them before falling asleep.

Odysseus debates in his mind whether to kill the Cyclops or not, but decides this would prevent any escape. Instead he and his men wait for the Cyclops to leave, and then cut off part of the giant's staff. They then sharpen it to make it pointed. The
Cyclops returns, and eats two more of Odysseus’ men. As part of his plan, Odysseus offers the Cyclops wine, who enjoys it so much he asks for it three times more.

Odysseus tells Polyphemus, who is now drunk, that his own name is “Noman”. The inebriated Cyclops promptly collapses. Odysseus and his men, after warming the stake in the fire, drive it into the Cyclops’ eye. Polyphemus’ screams wake his fellow Cyclopes who ask him who hurt him; to this he answers “Noman” and they leave him bewildered at his words.

After much thought on how to escape the cave, Odysseus decides to tie together three rams each and place one of his companions under the middle animal; he however chooses the largest ram. As a result, the Cyclops therefore feels the top of the rams but not the men on the underneath. Once out the cave, Odysseus and his companions untie themselves and reboard the ship. His men are ready to leave, but Odysseus is unable to resist taunting the Cyclops, who in return hurls a giant rock at the ship. All of Odysseus’ companions try and restrain their leader and his temper, but he does not listen; instead Odysseus shouts out his name to Polyphemus. With this vital knowledge, the Cyclops then prays to his father Poseidon to grant Odysseus a terrible journey home. Odysseus and his men reach another island and sacrifice Odysseus’ giant ram to Zeus, but the god does not listen. They then sail off.

Book 10

Odysseus continues his story amongst the Phaeacians. He tells how they next come to the home of Aeolus. When asked for help, Aeolus gives Odysseus a bag in which all the winds were held inside. After sailing on, Odysseus, exhausted by handling the ship single-handedly, falls asleep in full view of Ithaca. His comrades, suspicious that gold may have been inside the bag, open it and thus release all the winds. Odysseus then returns to Aeolus to obtain another bag, but Aeolus sends them away saying they were now hated by the gods.

After coming to an island, the travellers meet the Laestrygonians, giants who destroyed the ships and carry off some of the group. Odysseus and his companions then come to the island of Aeaea, home of Circe. Odysseus finds a stag which he kills and brings back to his hungry comrades. Odysseus sends off a party of men under Euryochlus, who go to Circe’s house and discover wild animals acting as if they are domesticated. All of the party except Eurylochus are coaxed into the house, where they are drugged and transformed into animals.

After Eurylochus returns and tells Odysseus who goes off to find Circe. On his way, Hermes meets him and gives him a drug to protect himself. The god then tells our hero to rush at Circe and quickly make her swear an oath. Circe tries to drug Odysseus but he does exactly as the god commanded and draws an oath from her. Since Odysseus is still unhappy that his men are still pigs, Circe frees them. Odysseus then fetches the rest of his men from his ship, and a happy reunion ensues. Odysseus and his men stayed at Circe’s for a year of merriment, until the companions remind their leader of the need to go home. Circe tells Odysseus to his
discontent that he must find Teiresias in the underworld, by summoning the dead.
One of Odysseus youngest companions, Elpenor dies. They then set off.

Book 11

Odysseus says that after Circe had sent them on their way, they arrive at a remote
spot. After the meticulous sacrifice, Odysseus summons the dead as instructed. First
he sees Elpenor, who tells Odysseus how he died and begs to be buried.

Next Odysseus speaks to Teiresias. The seer warns him not to let his men eat the
Sun god's cattle if they wish to return to Ithaca. He then predicts that if Odysseus’
men do they will be killed and that on his arrival home Odysseus will find suitors in
his house. Teiresias then tells him that must perform another obscure journey after
he has killed the suitors, but says he would not die at sea but an old man in bed.
Odysseus then sees his mother Anticleia, who explains to him Penelope’s and
Telemachus’ situations and how she herself died of grief waiting for him to return.
Odysseus tries to embrace her, but as she is only a ghost, he is unable to. He then
sees in turn all the “wives and daughters of the great.” At this point, Arete, Alcinous’
wife, interrupts Odysseus’ story, and after brief conversation, he continues his story
of the underworld. Odysseus then meets Agamemnon, who explains in detail how he
died: Aegisthus welcomed him, feasted him and then killed him. Clytemnestra
however is also said to have killed Cassandra at the same time. Agamemnon then
warns Odysseus to watch Penelope, saying all women are not to be trusted following
the example set by Clytemnestra and Helen.

Achilles then approaches. Odysseus tells him he is the luckiest man to have lived as
he was greatly honoured at his death by the Argives. Achilles however replies that
he would rather work as a peasant without any money than be king of the dead. The
dead hero then asks of his father Peleus and his son Neoptolemus, and is greatly
pleased to hear of the success of his son’s exploits. Odysseus then sees Ajax,
embittered since he lost in the contest for the arms of Achilles with Odysseus. When
Odysseus tries to talk to him, Ajax does not reply but turns away to join the other
members of the dead. Finally, Odysseus watches those being punished in the
underworld, Tityus, Tantalus, Sisyphus and then Heracles, until the tribes of the
dead surround him and make him panic. He therefore rushes off to his ship and he
and his companions set sail.

Book 12

Odysseus and his men return to Circe’s island and bury Elpenor. Circe explains the
dangers to befall them. They must pass the Sirens who bewitch men with their
songs, and then face a choice between two perilous paths, one containing the
Clashing Rocks or another containing Scylla and Charybdis. They choose the latter.
Scylla is a terrible twelve headed monster while Charybdis is a powerful whirlpool.
Circe then tells Odysseus to sail to Thrinacie, where the Sun God’s cattle live, and
repeats Teiresias’ command of not touching the animals. After instructing his men,
the group set sail. They first pass the Sirens’ island. Odysseus’ companions put
beeswax in their ears, while he is tied to a mast. Odysseus hears their song and begs to be released but his men refuse and so they sail past safely.

Odysseus reassures his men who become terrified, but does not tell them about Scylla. As they steer away from Charybdis Scylla reaches down and snatches away some of Odysseus’ companions. Remembering Teiresias’ and Circe’s warnings, Odysseus tells his men to steer clear of the Sun-god’s island, but his men beg him to stay there. He agrees but makes the crew promise not to touch the cattle. For a month they live there without trouble, but then their food begins to run out. Odysseus falls asleep while Eurylochus encourages the men to kill the cattle, arguing that starvation is a terrible way to die and that they can appease the Sun-god when they return. The men kill the animals and carry out an improper sacrifice. Odysseus wakes up and smells the meat. Meanwhile the Sun-god notices and asks Zeus to punish them, who agrees. After six days feasting on the meat, Odysseus and his crew set off, only for Zeus to destroy the ships. All are killed except Odysseus, who clings to a tree above Charybdis. After finding his mast and keel, he holds on to them for dear life until he comes to Calypso’s island.

The Odyssey Bks 13-24

The second half of the Odyssey is clearly distinguished from the first half. Odysseus finishes relating his adventures to the Phaeacians and then returns to Ithaca where he plans the suitors’ deaths. The magical, mystical part of the book is over and we return to harsh reality. Odysseus has many more human trials ahead of him – how to re-establish his kingship and destroy the suitors, to overcome their vast numbers and regain his house. He must test the loyalty of his household and be shrewd and cunning in his approach. Now we watch as Odysseus’ cunning is tested in a completely different way.

Bk 13: Odysseus returns to Ithaca.

Odysseus is still with the Phaeacians but is impatient to leave. They return him to Ithaca.

The return to reality after the magical tales which Odysseus has just recounted is marked by the fact that Odysseus falls into an “irresistibly, delicious unbroken sleep that looked like death.” (lines 80-1). Odysseus does not awaken until he is on Ithaca and the Phaeacians have already gone.

The Phaeacians’ ship is turned into a rock by Poseidon as punishment for taking Odysseus home when Poseidon wanted him to face more troubles.

Odysseus awakens but does not know where he is – Athene has hidden it from him. Athene appears to him as a shepherd. He questions her as to where he is – she tells him that he is on Ithaca. When she asks who he is, he spins her a tale. Athene reveals herself and tells him of the dangers ahead. She explains about the suitors. She says she will disguise him as an old beggar and that he must hide his true identity. She tells him to go to the Swineherd first, who is loyal to him. Athene says she will go to
Sparta to recall Telemachus, she also reveals that the suitors are planning to kill Telemachus but it will not happen.

We leave Odysseus just after a vivid description of his transformation from a handsome, strong leader into a filthy old beggar.

**Bk 14 — Odysseus with the swineherd.**

Odysseus goes to see the swineherd, Eumaeus. Eumaeus tells Odysseus about the terrible condition of his master's estate because of the suitors.

Eumaeus displays good hospitality and invites Odysseus into his hut. There is quite a long description of hospitality and why it is important to show respect to strangers. Eumaeus also describes how the suitors are abusing hospitality by eating Odysseus out of house and home.

Odysseus asks Eumaeus who his master is — in case he has heard news of him. Eumaeus reveals that anyone who comes with word of Odysseus is received hospitably by Penelope.

Odysseus swears to Eumaeus that Odysseus will return within a month and have his revenge.

Eumaeus also explains his fear for Telemachus because the suitors are planning to kill him. Eumaeus asks for Odysseus' story — Odysseus tells him he is from Crete and makes up many adventures. He also says that he received news of Odysseus in Phoenicia — which indicated that Odysseus would return soon.

Eumaeus is touched by Odysseus' tale but doesn't believe it all — particularly the news about Odysseus. He prepares a feast and prays for Odysseus' return.

**Bk 15 — Telemachus returns to Ithaca**

Athene appears to Telemachus at Menelaus' palace. She speaks directly to him and tells him that it is time he returned home. That the suitors are eating up his inheritance and that Penelope is being pressured to marry Eurymachus. She also tells him to travel through day and night to avoid the suitors ambushing and that he should go to the swineherd's hut before returning home.

Telemachus is eager to go and asks Menelaus to allow him to leave as soon as possible. Menelaus talks about hospitality — how you should not hinder a guest from leaving or staying if they wish.
Telemachus wishes that Odysseus might be in Ithaca when he returns – an omen confirms his wish. Telemachus also picks up Theoclymenus, a fugitive seer, who he offers safe passage to.

We then return to Odysseus and Eumaeus. Odysseus asks to be taken to the palace to talk to Penelope. Eumaeus asks him to wait for Telemachus' return as he can't guarantee Odysseus' safety. Odysseus asks about his mother and father. Eumaeus tells him of his mother's death. Odysseus asks to hear Eumaeus' story – he was once the son of a king but was sold by pirates.

Telemachus returns to Ithaca and is considering how to offer Theoclymenus proper hospitality despite the suitors. He wonders whether Odysseus will return before Penelope is forced to marry Eurymachus – Theoclymenus interprets another omen that indicates that Telemachus will one day be king, not any of the suitors.

Telemachus then proceeds to Eumaeus' hut.

**Bk 16 – Odysseus reveals himself to Telemachus**

Telemachus comes to Eumaeus' hut and Eumaeus jumps up and greets him, watched by Odysseus. "As a father embraces lovingly an only and darling son...when after nine years away he returns home" (lines 17-20).

Telemachus asks who Odysseus is – Eumaeus explains and asks him to offer him hospitality. Telemachus is annoyed that he can not offer proper hospitality because of the suitors.

Odysseus sympathises with Telemachus and wishes that he: "were the king himself; then let any man cut off my head if I did not prove the destruction of them all!" (lines 100-4).

Telemachus sends Eumaeus to let Penelope know, but no-one else, of his safe return.

Athene appears to Odysseus and tells him to reveal himself to Telemachus. She removes his disguise so that Telemachus would believe him. Odysseus reveals himself and is united with his son – in almost the same description as used when describing Eumaeus greeting Telemachus.

Odysseus reveals to Telemachus his plan to kill the suitors. Telemachus doesn't think that they can do it. There are 108 suitors and only two of them. Odysseus says that they have Zeus and Athene on their side. Telemachus will return first to the palace and then Odysseus will join him. Telemachus must not reveal Odysseus' true identity even if Odysseus is treated terribly by the suitors. Telemachus must remove
the arms and armour from the hall. They must together test the loyalty of the household.
When Penelope is told of Telemachus' safe return — the suitors again plot his death, with Antinous as ringleader. Amphinomus suggests that they should not try to kill him anymore. Penelope confronts Antinous about their plot and Eurymachus says that no-one will harm Telemachus.

Bk 17 — The king as beggar

Telemachus returns to the palace. Eurycleia is the first to catch sight of him and bursts into tears. The Penelope kisses and cries over him. Penelope enquires if he received any news of Odysseus. Telemachus reveals that Menelaus had predicted the suitors' downfall but that the last he had heard of Odysseus was when he was with Calypso. Theoclymenus says that he knows that Odysseus is already in Ithaca from an omen.

Odysseus and Eumaeus are coming to town and meet Melanthius, the goatherd, he insults Odysseus. He calls him a dirty, lazy beggar who won't work and who will have stools thrown at him if he dared to go to the palace to beg. He then kicks Odysseus.

Odysseus is recognised by an old dog of his, Argos, who is lying on a pile of dung. Argos dies straight after. Odysseus enters the palace and is told to beg from the suitors by Telemachus and Athene who appears to tell him to find out if they are righteous or not.

Antinous rebukes Eumaeus for bringing a beggar, then Telemachus rebukes Antinous. The suitors give food to Odysseus, all except Antinous. Odysseus rebukes him for not sharing food which isn't even his. Antinous hurls a stool at Odysseus, it hits him on the shoulder. He curses Antinous. Penelope also curses Antinous.

Penelope asks to speak to Odysseus to find if he has heard news of Odysseus. Penelope predicts that if Odysseus returned, he and Telemachus would have revenge on the suitors. This is confirmed by an omen, Telemachus sneezes! Odysseus asks to speak to Penelope after sunset.

Bk 18 — The beggar praised and mocked

Another beggar, Irus, comes to the palace. He challenges Odysseus, as they will be in competition for the scraps from the suitors. The suitors are eager to watch them fight, whoever wins will be given free rein to beg in the palace. Odysseus agrees to fight Irus, everyone sees his strong body and Irus is afraid. They fight and Odysseus knocks him out — just stopping himself from killing him and possibly giving away his true identity. The suitors are pleased and say: "may Zeus and the other immortal gods grant your wishes and give you your heart's desire" - words of omen. Odysseus
warns Amphiromus to leave before Odysseus returns but Athene reveals that he is fated to die.

Penelope comes down and warns Telemachus that the suitors are hoping to kill him. She reveals that Odysseus told her to remarry if he had not returned by the time that Telemachus reached manhood. She asks the suitors to send her gifts as is the usual courting custom.

A servant girl, Melantho, insults Odysseus. The suitors are still mocking Odysseus. Eurymachus insults Odysseus, calling him lazy. He then throws a stool at Odysseus but it misses him. Telemachus then asks the suitors to leave for the night and they are amazed at hims authority.

**Bk 19 — The Queen and the beggar — The nurse knows her master**

Odysseus reminds Telemachus to remove the arms and not to let his temper to get the better of him.

Odysseus and Penelope meet. Melantho insults Odysseus again. Odysseus warns her that she will lose her pride when her master returns. Penelope rebukes her too. Penelope asks Odysseus about himself. But he says his tale is too full of sorrows to recount.

She tells him about her misery at her husbands absence and how she'd been putting the suitors off by asking them to wait till she had finished weaving Laertes' death robe. She was un-raveling it at night but they found out. Penelope reveals that she is now considering remarrying.

She asks Odysseus about himself again. He tells her the same tale as he told Eumaeus. He tells her about his news of Odysseus. She tests him by asking what Odysseus had been wearing. Penelope doesn't believe that Odysseus is coming home. Odysseus tells her to stop mourning — he says that he had heard that Odysseus is alive though his crew are dead. He says that Odysseus will be returning soon. Penelope doesn't believe it is true.

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Penelope orders her maid to wash Odysseus' feet. Eurykleia washes him. She comments on how alike he is to Odysseus. Eurykleia recognises Odysseus by a scar from a boar hunt. She wants to let Penelope know but Odysseus grabs her by the throat and warns her not to tell anyone. Eurykleia says she will let him know which servants are loyal.

Penelope asks Odysseus to interpret a dream. In her dream 20 geese are killed by an eagle — who is her husband and tells her he is already home. Penelope reveals that she means to choose a husband on the next day. She will arrange the contest of the bow — whoever can string the bow and shoot an arrow through 12 axes will win her.

Odysseus claims that Odysseus will
Bk 20 – Odysseus insulted and protected

Odysseus is tempted to reveal himself to slay the evil maids but Athene appears to him to prevent him. Odysseus expresses his concern over how to overcome the suitors. Athene says that with him on her side his victory is guaranteed.

Odysseus asks for an omen from Zeus and is given one – there is thunder and then a servant woman asks that today might be the last day that the suitors dine at Odysseus' palace.

Melanthius insults Odysseus again. Philoctius, another slave, is kind to Odysseus. He also comments that he reminds him of Odysseus. He says he hates the suitors eating Odysseus' food. Odysseus swears to him that Odysseus will return.

The suitors are still plotting Telemachus' death. Amphimemus interprets an omen that the plan will not work and that they should forget it.

Telemachus offers his protection to Odysseus and warns the suitors not to hurt him. Most of them are amazed at Telemachus' authority but Antinous threatens him. Athene makes the suitors rude to Odysseus so that he will be more angry at them.
Ctesippus throws a cow's foot at Odysseus but Odysseus avoids it. Telemachus says he would have killed him if it had hit Odysseus.

One of the suitors tells Telemachus to persuade Penelope to marry one of the suitors. Telemachus says that he is not delaying a marriage. Athene causes the suitors to laugh hysterically, the food they are eating appears foul with blood and tears. Theoclymenus interprets this as doom hanging over them. Eurymachus is rude to him. Theoclymenus leaves. Telemachus looks at Odysseus – the suitors' death is looming.

**Bk 21 – The contest of the bow**

Penelope announces the contest. Then there is a description of how Odysseus was given the bow. Telemachus will also try the contest and if he wins then Penelope does not have to marry any of them. He goes first and 3 times he tries to draw the bow and fails. The 4th time he would have strung it but Odysseus stops him. Then the suitors all have a try but fail.

Odysseus reveals to Eumaeus and Philoetius who he is and gets their help. He shows them the boar scar as proof. He tells them that he plans to try the contest. Philoetius must bolt the outside doors so that no-one can interrupt when Odysseus is getting his revenge.

Odysseus expresses his desire to have a try at the contest. The suitors are enraged as they fear he might succeed. Antinous rebukes him. Penelope offers him the chance. Telemachus dismisses Penelope. Eumaeus brings the bow to Odysseus and tells Eurycleia to bar the hall's doors. Odysseus strings the bow easily and swiftly. The suitors are afraid, Zeus sends thunder. Odysseus shoots the arrow through the axes. Telemachus grabs his spear and stands beside Odysseus.

**Bk 22 – Vengeance on the suitors**

Odysseus leaps up onto the threshold, grabbing the bow and arrows. He shoots Antinous first hitting him in the throat. He dies and the food is splattered with his blood (see Theoclymenus' prophecy). Odysseus reveals himself to the suitors. They are terrified – Eurymachus asks him to spare them – that Antinous was the ring leader. Odysseus refuses. Eurymachus tries to rally the suitors to defense but Odysseus kills him. Amphimetheus is killed by Telemachus. Eumaeus and Philoetius are also helping, Telemachus goes to get armour for all 4 of them. Melanthius goes and gets arms for the suitors. Eumaeus and Philoetius capture him and tie him up.
Athene joins Odysseus, disguised as Mentor, she rebukes him for his fear and says she will fight with him. The suitors spears are sent astray by Athene. She raises her aegis and the suitors are panic stricken. Odysseus and the others attack them. One suitor begs for mercy but Odysseus kills him. Phemius, the bard, begs for mercy – Telemachus supports his pleas and also Medon's. All the suitors are killed.

Odysseus asks for Eurycleia – he stops her gloating over the dead. He asks her which servant girls are loyal. He tells her not to wake Penelope but to bring the disloyal servant girls to him. The women remove the dead bodies and clear up the hall. Then they are hung in the courtyard by Telemachus. Melanthius has his nose and ears cut off, his genitals are torn off and thrown to the dogs and his hands and feet are cut off. The house is purified and Penelope is called.

Bk 23 – Penelope doubts and believes

Eurycleia goes to tell Penelope of Odysseus' return and the slaughter of the suitors. Penelope doesn't believe her. Eurycleia tells her of the boar scar but she is still unconvinced. She thinks the gods have intervened to kill the suitors. Penelope comes down and sees Odysseus but is still unsure. Telemachus reproaches her. Penelope reveals that she will test Odysseus. Odysseus tells Telemachus to arrange the house so that it seems as if a wedding was taking place – so that the townsfolk won't suspect what has happened.

Odysseus rebukes Penelope for her heartlessness. She tests him by telling her servants to assemble a bed for him. Odysseus is annoyed and revealed that this can't happen because their bed was crafted from a rooted tree and therefore could not be removed. Penelope is convinced by his knowledge and runs to him, weeping.

Athene lengthens the day so that they can have longer together. Odysseus warns her that he will face more trials ahead. They spend the night together in love and talking. Odysseus tells Penelope of his adventures, she tells him about the suitors. Dawn comes and Odysseus decides to visit his father, Laertes.
Bk 24 — The suitors join the ghosts – Odysseus and Laertes – The battle renewed and ended

Hermes summons the suitors' ghosts. In the underworld, Achilles, Ajax, Agamemnon and other warriors are talking. Achilles and Agamemnon are discussing the glory of dying in battle. Agamemnon sees the suitors ghosts and asks how so many young men came to die at one time. The suitors explain – from Penelope's deception to Odysseus' revenge. Agamemnon predicts that Penelope will be remembered forever for her fidelity, Clytemnestra for her infidelity.

Odysseus goes to see Laertes. He wants to test him to see if he recognises him. Laertes is in his garden, Odysseus treats him like a stranger – asking him why he is uncared for. He tells Laertes that he met Odysseus in the past and is wondering if he is still alive. Laertes tells him of his troubles, he fears that Odysseus is dead. Laertes asks Odysseus who he is and where he's from. Odysseus spins him a tale. Laertes sobs when he hears mention of Odysseus. Odysseus' heart is touched and he reveals himself. He tells Laertes that he has killed the suitors and shows him his scar and talks about some trees that Laertes gave him to prove who he is. Laertes is concerned that the townsfolk might retaliate for the suitors death. Eventually they join Telemachus and the others for a meal.

But rumour is spreading about the suitors' deaths. The dead are being removed and mourning begins. The townsfolk hold an assembly to discuss what they should do. They want revenge, Phemius and Medon appear and reveal that the gods had a hand in the deaths. Half of the townsfolk listen to Phemius and Medon but the other half go to get revenge.

Athene asks Zeus if this must continue. He says that peace should be made.

The townsfolk find Odysseus. Athene appears as Mentor and tells Laertes to throw his spear. He does and kills the ringleader – Antinous' father. The townsfolk go to attack but Athene prevents it. She appears and tells them all to stop. Odysseus does not listen and Zeus sends a thunderbolt. Odysseus stops and peace is made between Odysseus and the and the townsfolk.