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The Odyssey

An Illustrated Retelling of Homer's Epic
for Young Readers

Classroom Edition

Adapted by Frances Bianchi & Mara Seronda



The Odyssey Classroom Edition

An Illustrated Retelling of Homer's Epic for Young Readers

by Frances Bianchi & Mara Seronda

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Note: This work is an adaptation and simplification of Homer's "The Odyssey". Modifications have been made to make it accessible to young readers and for educational and literary purposes.

American English Edition – US Spelling and Style

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How to Use This Book

This Classroom Edition is designed for teacher use. It is intended to be used alongside the Standard Edition of *The Odyssey*, which contains the narrative text for student reading. This volume brings together the full adapted story, structured classroom activities, and chapter-by-chapter teaching guidance in a single resource.

Using the Two Editions Together

Students read from the Standard Edition. Teachers use this Classroom Edition to plan instruction, guide discussion, and distribute activities. This edition may be used selectively or as a complete course resource, depending on instructional goals and classroom needs.

Reading the Story

The narrative text in this edition is identical to the Standard Edition. It may be read aloud in class, used for close reading, or referenced when preparing discussion and activities.

Student Activities

Following each chapter, Student Activities provide structured opportunities for comprehension, discussion, vocabulary development, and creative response. They may be completed individually or collaboratively, orally or in writing, and may be selected or adapted as needed.

All Student Activities are available as a free downloadable PDF at www.olladadetinta.es/en/resources. A QR code linking to this page is included at the end of this volume.

Teacher Notes and Teacher Introduction

Each chapter includes a Teacher Notes section immediately following the Student Activities. These notes offer practical

guidance on thematic focus, instructional emphasis, and suggested classroom approaches. They are intended for educators and are not required for student reading. They are placed after the activities to allow distribution of student materials without the guidance text included.

A Teacher Introduction and an Educational Framework Overview appear at the end of this volume. Together they provide a complete picture of the book's pedagogical structure, learning objectives, and suggested approaches for integrating the text into existing ELA programs.

Curriculum Connections

This edition supports instruction in English Language Arts, Humanities, Ethics, and World Literature, and may be integrated flexibly into existing units for Grades 5–8.

Companion Standard Edition

The Odyssey: An Illustrated Retelling of Homer's Epic for Young Readers

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Visit www.olladadetinta.es/en/resources or scan this QR code to access educational resources and companion materials related to this book.





Prologue – Odysseus and the Trojan War

Long ago, when the gods still walked among men and the sea hid monsters in its depths, there lived a king named Odysseus.

He ruled the small island of Ithaca, with green mountains, golden beaches, and a safe harbor. His wife, Penelope, wove at her loom by the fire, while their son, Telemachus, dreamed of the day his father would return.

But Odysseus was far away. He camped outside the walls of Troy, a city so proud and strong that no army could defeat it. For ten long years of war, he looked toward the horizon. Smoke and cries filled the air. His heart belonged to Ithaca, but he knew he could not return without victory.

Odysseus was not the strongest warrior or the fastest runner. His true weapon was his mind. Where others saw only walls, he searched for doors. And in those dusty fields, surrounded by tired soldiers, he began to imagine a plan that would change everything.

Meanwhile, in Ithaca, greedy men filled the palace. They wanted to marry Penelope and steal Odysseus' throne. They drank his wine and ate his cattle, certain the king would never return. But

Penelope never gave up. Every day she sat at her loom, weaving a great tapestry she claimed was for Laertes, Odysseus' old father. She promised that once it was finished, she would choose a husband from the suitors.

Every night, in secret, she undid the work she had woven during the day. The tapestry never grew. With this clever trick, she won time and kept the hope of Odysseus' return alive.

Young Telemachus often stood by the sea. He dreamed of spotting a sail on the horizon, of seeing his father step off a ship. But only the waves answered him, endless and empty.

And so the story begins: with a king far from home, longing for his family, about to face the greatest trials of his life on the long road back home.



Chapter 1 – The Gift

Odysseus hadn't slept for days. From his tent he could hear the Trojans shouting insults from the top of their walls. Each word reminded him just how far he was from Ithaca. That morning, in the middle of the silent camp, he suddenly stopped and declared:

"I know how we'll win."

The men stared at him. Whenever Odysseus spoke with such *certainty*, they knew something unexpected was about to happen.

"We'll build a horse," he announced.

A wave of surprise ran through the camp.

"A horse for battle?" blurted Antiphos, always impatient, resting his sword on his knee.

"Or to ride around in?" laughed Perimedes, who never missed a chance for a joke.

Eurylochus frowned, *suspicion* darkening his face.

"This sounds like another one of your impossible *schemes*..." he muttered.



Young Polites, still shy, didn't dare say a word. He only ran his hand along his spear, as if searching for courage in it.

Odysseus stayed calm and explained his plan.

"It will be a gift. A wooden horse as tall as a house, *hollow* inside, with room to hide our best *warriors*. The Trojans will bring it into their city themselves—you'll see."

For days the sound of hammers and saws echoed through the camp. The horse grew taller and taller until its shadow stretched across the plain. From the walls, the Trojans stared in confusion, unable to make sense of it.

When the work was done, Odysseus chose his *companions*. Under cover of darkness, they climbed inside.

"Breathe softly... not a sound," he whispered.

Inside the horse, every breath sounded too loud. Their hearts thudded, and even the tiniest movement echoed through the hollow shell. They stayed frozen in the dark, listening to the silence of the deserted camp.

At dawn, dozens of ships sailed away into the *horizon*. The Greek camp, which had surrounded Troy for so long, now stood empty.

"Victory! They've given up!" shouted the Trojans.

But something else caught their eyes even more: the enormous horse on the beach, its shadow stretching across the sand like a giant.

Some men started arguing over what it meant.

“It’s an *offering*,” said one. “The Greeks always leave gifts to win the favor of the gods.”

“Let’s go see it up close,” another suggested.

Not everyone was convinced. An old man named Laocoön warned them:

“Beware! The Greeks are always hiding something.”

But no one listened. Overjoyed at the end of the war, the Trojans dragged the horse into their city.

“It will be our *trophy*! It will stand forever in the square as a memory of our victory!”

That day was filled with laughter, music, and celebration. Joy swept through the streets, as if nothing could ever stop it.

Late that night, as the city fell silent, a *trapdoor* creaked open. One by one, the warriors slipped out like shadows. The gates of Troy were forced open, and the Greek army—secretly returned—stormed the city.

Troy fell at last. Amid smoke and screams, Odysseus lifted his gaze to the stars.

“Soon I’ll be home in Ithaca,” he promised himself.

But among the ruins, an old Trojan pointed at him and cried:

“The gods do not forget, Odysseus! The sea will guard your *punishment*, and every wave will rise against you.”

To continue the story, turn to Chapter 2 – The Raid on page 23

Student Activities

Understand the Story

- ✓ Why did Odysseus decide to build the wooden horse?
- ✓ How did the Trojans react when they first saw the horse?
- ✓ What was Odysseus's plan for his best warriors?

Think and Discuss

- ✓ Do you think the Trojans should have listened to Laocoön? Why or why not?
- ✓ How would you feel if you were one of the Greek warriors hiding inside the horse?
- ✓ What does this episode teach us about cleverness and strategy?

Create

- ✓ Draw or describe the giant wooden horse as you imagine it.
- ✓ Write a short diary entry as a Trojan citizen seeing the horse for the first time.

Did You Know?

- ✓ The "Trojan Horse" is a deceptive strategy used to infiltrate or attack from within — it can be applied to a city, an organization, or even a computer system.

Vocabulary

Certainty – Complete confidence or belief without doubt.

Scheme – A clever but risky plan to achieve a goal.

Suspicion – A feeling that something may be wrong or untrue.

Warrior – A person who fights in battles or wars.

Hollow – Empty inside.

Companions – People who travel or act together.

Horizon – The line where the sea and sky seem to meet.

Offering – A gift given to please the gods.

Trophy – An object kept to remember a victory.

Trapdoor – A hidden door in the floor or ceiling.

Punishment – A consequence given for wrongdoing.

Use the words

Choose three words from the vocabulary list.

- ✓ Explain how each word helps describe a key moment in the chapter.

Teacher Notes

Focus of the Chapter

This opening chapter presents the end of the Trojan War and introduces Odysseus as a hero defined not by strength, but by intelligence and strategy. The fall of Troy is achieved through deception rather than force, establishing a key trait that will shape Odysseus's journey.

The chapter also plants the seed of conflict with the gods, as victory is followed immediately by a warning of future punishment.

Instructional Emphasis

Strategic thinking · Deception and consequence · Character motivation · Epic conflict context (Prologue).

Key Narrative and Thematic Elements

- Cleverness and strategy versus brute force.
- Deception as a tool of war.
- Trust, doubt, and ignored warnings.
- Victory followed by consequences.
- The origin of Odysseus's troubled journey home.

This episode reflects a core idea of The Odyssey: intelligence can bring success, but it may also carry a cost.

Teaching Notes

Students may initially view the Trojan Horse as a purely brilliant solution. Encourage them to consider both sides of the victory: the ingenuity of the plan and the moral ambiguity of deception.

Laocoön's warning offers an early opportunity to discuss ignored advice and overconfidence. This moment can be used to introduce the idea that not all consequences are immediate, and that success does not always mean safety.

The final curse should be treated as a narrative turning point, not as a prediction to be explained. Its role is to signal that the story is shifting from war to journey.

Suggested Classroom Use

- Focus discussion on strategy and consequences, not just success.
- Use creative tasks to explore perspective (Greek vs. Trojan).
- This chapter works well as a bridge between The Iliad and The Odyssey.



Chapter 2 – The Raid

The wind carried Odysseus's *fleet* far from Troy for days. At last, they reached the city of Ismarus, home of the Cicones. From the deck, they could see white houses, golden wheat fields, and *vineyards* sparkling in the sun. The barrels of water on the ships already smelled rotten, and their food had run out.

"We can fill the holds here," said Perimedes, eyes bright with excitement.

Odysseus went ashore with Eurylochus and Antiphos to negotiate. They offered gifts, but the guards slammed the gates in their faces.

"We don't deal with *strangers!*" they spat.

Back on the beach, Odysseus gathered his men. Their faces were pale and hollow from *hunger*.

"If we don't get food, we'll die at sea," he said firmly, though *doubt* gnawed at him. "We'll take what we need."

Still drunk with victory from Troy, the sailors stormed the city.

They *seized* grain, wine, sheep, and chests of gold. Some hesitated, glancing at the city they had just attacked, a flicker of doubt in their eyes.



“Let’s get out of here!” Odysseus urged, a hidden *tremor* in his throat.

On the beach, bonfires crackled, and laughter rang out. One man played a flute; another danced, holding a wine jar. The air smelled of smoke and spilled wine.

Then, a war horn blared in the distance. Another answered from the hill.

“Grab your *weapons*!” Odysseus shouted.

The Cicones poured in like waves, spears flashing, *chariots* thundering, shields gleaming. Odysseus fought his way through, swinging his sword and dragging his men toward the shore.

The clash was brutal. Iron rang against iron. Mud and blood mixed underfoot. Screams were muffled by the pounding of hooves. An arrow whistled past his ear.

“To the ships!” he ordered, torn between rage and fear.

Inside the ships, every man’s heart raced. Hands shook on the oars. Eyes darted to the dark water. Even the bravest sailors swallowed hard as the Cicones chased them along the shore.

Waves slapped the hull, rocking the boats. Every gust reminded them that the sea could be as deadly as any sword.

When the wind finally filled the sails, several men had been lost from each ship. No one sang that night. The silence weighed heavier than the waves. Beyond the chaos, the water shimmered calm and endless, mocking what had just happened.

Odysseus stood at the prow, biting his lip. He felt the weight of every life lost in Ismarus pressing down on him. He knew the sea would be more *merciless* than any enemy—and that every choice he made here would follow them, like shadows, shaping the journey ahead.

To continue the story, turn to Chapter 3 – The Flowers of Forgetfulness on page 33

Student Activities

Understand the Story

- ✓ Why did Odysseus and his men go ashore at Ismarus?
- ✓ How did the Cicones respond to the Greeks' arrival?
- ✓ What mistake did the sailors make after attacking the city?
- ✓ How did Odysseus feel after the battle?

Think and Discuss

- ✓ Was Odysseus right to take food and supplies by force?
- ✓ What do you think this episode teaches about greed and discipline?
- ✓ Why do you think the silence after the battle felt so heavy?

Create

- ✓ Draw the moment when the Cicones attack the Greeks on the beach.
- ✓ Write a short poem or paragraph about the feeling of guilt.

Did You Know?

- ✓ The Cicones were real people mentioned in ancient Greek texts. They lived in Thrace, near the coast of the Aegean Sea. Many historians believe Homer used them to show that pride and carelessness often bring punishment after success.

Vocabulary

Fleet – A group of ships traveling together.

Vineyards – Fields where grapes are grown to make wine.

Negotiate – To try to reach an agreement by talking.

Strangers – People who are unknown or unfamiliar.

Hunger – A strong need or desire for food.

Doubt – A feeling of uncertainty or lack of confidence.

Seized – Took something by force.

Tremor – A small shake caused by fear or emotion.

Weapons – Tools used for fighting or attacking.

Chariots – Wheeled vehicles used in ancient battles.

Merciless – Showing no kindness or pity.

Use the words

Choose three words from the vocabulary list.

- ✓ Write one sentence using each word in a new situation, different from the story.
- ✓ Make sure the meaning of the word is clear from the context.

Teacher Notes

Focus of the Chapter

This chapter complicates the idea of triumph. Fresh from victory, Odysseus's men act as if success has freed them from caution.

The raid on Ismarus shows how quickly discipline can collapse after success—and how leadership is tested not in planning, but in restraint.

Instructional Emphasis

Cause and effect · Leadership responsibility · Escalation of conflict.

Key Narrative and Thematic Elements

- Survival versus restraint.
- Greed and loss of discipline.
- Leadership under pressure.
- Consequences of delayed action.
- Guilt and responsibility.

This moment reflects a core idea in *The Odyssey*: danger often comes not from enemies alone, but from human weakness after success.

Teaching Notes

Students may be tempted to judge the raid as simply “wrong” or “inevitable.” Encourage them to examine the sequence of choices instead: negotiation, necessity, warning, delay, and consequence.

This chapter is especially useful for discussing how leadership involves not only making decisions, but enforcing limits. Odysseus recognizes the danger and orders retreat, but his authority is not fully effective.

The silence at the end of the chapter is key. It marks the moment when victory gives way to awareness and responsibility.

Suggested Classroom Use

- Focus discussion on discipline and consequence, not just morality.
- Use Think and Discuss questions to explore how small delays can lead to major losses.
- Creative writing works well as a brief emotional response rather than analysis.

This chapter pairs naturally with Chapter 1 to show how cleverness alone is not enough to ensure safety.



Chapter 3 – The Flowers of Forgetfulness

For several days, the sea had been *cruel* to them. The wind howled without pause. Waves rose like walls. The sky offered no light—not the sun by day, nor stars by night. Odysseus, who had trusted the stars so many times to guide him, now felt as if they were drifting in a *void*, at the mercy of the wind and waves.

The men were *exhausted*. Each day seemed to mirror the one before.

Then, suddenly, the storm died down. The sea calmed as if it had forgotten its rage. The air grew gentle, and a *coastline* appeared in the distance. It looked like a place plucked from a dream. Sand sparkled like treasure, and *shrubs* bloomed with white and blue flowers. Their sweet *scent* filled the air, teasing their senses.

The sailors breathed deeply. For a moment, all their weariness seemed to vanish.

“A little rest won’t hurt us, right?” muttered Perimedes, rubbing his eyes.

Young Polites whispered, tugging at the hem of his tunic:

“What if we get *trapped* here too?”



Odysseus sent Eurylochus, Antiphos, and another sailor to explore the island.

Hours passed, and they did not return. Worried, Odysseus went down with a few men. They found the explorers under trees, laughing with men and women whose eyes were calm. Golden fruit glimmered in their hands, catching stray sunbeams.

“Try it, Odysseus,” said Eurylochus, eyes half-closed. “It will make you forget your troubles.”

“Stay. There are no storms or wars here,” added Antiphos, yawning as he leaned against a tree.

The *lotus* was not only sweet. Each bite made them forget Ithaca, as if home had never existed.

A shiver ran down Odysseus’s spine. Not them too... Not my men, he thought.

“To the ship, now!” Odysseus ordered, voice sharp.

But no one moved. One sank onto the grass with a sigh. Another tried to run toward the shore again. Odysseus dragged them back, with a few still struggling against him. He tied the *disobedient* to the deck to keep them from jumping into the sea.

From the beach, the lotus-eaters watched calmly, as if they knew the men would eventually return.

The scent of the flowers lingered in the air. Odysseus fixed his gaze on the horizon. For a heartbeat, even Penelope and Telemachus seemed like a fading dream. He gritted his teeth. We’re lost... and only the gods know where we’re headed.

To continue the story, turn to Chapter 4 – Polyphemus on page 41

Student Activities

Understand the Story

- ✓ What happened to the sailors after many days at sea?
- ✓ How did the island of the lotus-eaters seem to them at first?
- ✓ What effect did the lotus flowers have on those who ate them?

Think and Discuss

- ✓ Why do you think forgetting can be dangerous, even if it feels peaceful?
- ✓ What do the lotus flowers symbolize in this story?
- ✓ Can you think of something in real life that makes people “forget” what really matters?

Create

- ✓ Draw the moment when Odysseus drags his men back to the ship.
- ✓ Write a short reflection called “The Things I Never Want to Forget.”

Did You Know?

- ✓ The land of the lotus-eaters appears in Homer’s *Odyssey* as a warning against temptation and escape. The lotus represents forgetfulness, pleasure, and losing one’s purpose.

Vocabulary

Cruel – Causing pain or suffering without kindness.

Void – A feeling of emptiness or nothingness.

Exhausted – Extremely tired.

Coastline – The land along the edge of the sea.

Shrubs – Small bushes or plants.

Scent – A smell, especially a pleasant one.

Trapped – Unable to escape or get away.

Lotus – A magical plant that makes people forget.

Disobedient – Refusing to follow orders or rules.

Use the words

Choose three words from the vocabulary list.

- ✓ Write one sentence for each word that shows its meaning without explaining it.
- ✓ Do not define the word. Let the sentence show what it means.

Teacher Notes

Focus of the Chapter

This chapter introduces temptation as a silent danger. Unlike earlier threats, the island of the lotus-eaters offers comfort, rest, and peace. The risk lies not in harm, but in forgetting one's purpose and identity.

The episode shows that the journey can fail not only through violence, but through surrender.

Instructional Emphasis

Theme of temptation · Memory and identity · Vocabulary in context.

Key Narrative and Thematic Elements

- Temptation and escape.
- Memory as identity.
- Forgetting versus belonging.
- Leadership through difficult choices.
- Loss of direction.

This moment reflects a core idea in *The Odyssey*: survival sometimes requires resisting what feels safe or pleasant.

Teaching Notes

Students may struggle to understand why Odysseus reacts so harshly in a place that seems peaceful. Encourage them to focus on what is being lost rather than what is being offered.

This chapter works well to discuss how forgetting can erase responsibility, relationships, and purpose. Odysseus's decision to use force highlights the tension between compassion and leadership.

The brief moment in which even Odysseus feels his memories fading is important. It shows that temptation affects everyone, not only the weak or careless.

Suggested Classroom Use

- Focus discussion on memory and purpose, not punishment.
- Use Think and Discuss questions to connect the symbol of the lotus with real-life distractions or escapes.
- Reflective writing works especially well here, allowing students to explore what they would choose to remember.

This chapter benefits from slower reading and quiet discussion.

Acknowledgments

Thank you for reading this book and for joining us on Odysseus' journey. Every page only comes to life when someone like you decides to embark on the adventure, and for that we are truly grateful.

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If you'd like to share your thoughts, suggestions, or even your critiques, we'd be delighted to hear from you.

You can write to us at: contacto@olladadetinta.es

Your words help other readers discover our work and encourage us to keep navigating between stories— like the heroes who once sought their destiny.

With gratitude and enthusiasm,

The Ollada de Tinta Team

