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## Odysseus: The Epic Hero

Many great adventures have been passed down through time, whether it be by writings, or by word of mouth. Great tales have come in many forms as well, some as long, narrative poems, otherwise known as epics, and some simply written or told as a story. Several of these tales are about a hero and many of his adventures and ordeals. One of the most famous adventure stories of all time is Homer's *The Odyssey*. The story *The Odyssey* is about one man's journey home from battles at Troy and the challenges he must face. Through all these trials it's apparent that Odysseus, *The Odyssey*'s main character, is in fact an epic hero.

Odysseus is an epic hero for several reasons, the least of which being simply the fact that he is the hero of the epic. The epic itself revolves around the many perils Odysseus has to overcome. Not only is he the central hero of *The Odyssey*, but he is a hero from legend as well. Odysseus has importance in many ways throughout the story. He is known for his abilities as a great leader and warrior at his home in Ithaca, the lands he's battled in, and by many of the gods. To begin with, Odysseus is held "formidable for guile in peace and war: [his] fame has gone abroad the sky's rim" (895). Many people recognize or know of Odysseus across the wide distance. Next, many of the gods respect him

enough to help him on his voyage home. Athena helps Odysseus in many ways during his journey. She even “begs her father, Zeus, to help her favorite, and Zeus agrees” (891). The gods are willing to help Odysseus because he stands out as an important figure. Last, Odysseus is also important because he was a great warrior leader. When he comes to “Ismaros, on the fare shore, a strongpoint on the coast of Cicones” (896), he “[storms] the place and [kills] the men who [fight]” (896). When he defeats others, he lets them know who he is. For instance, after blinding and tricking the Cyclops Odysseus says, “Cyclops, if ever mortal man inquire how you were put to shame and blinded, tell him Odysseus, raider of cities, took your eye” (908). To sum up, Odysseus is a very important figure, in many ways.

Odysseus is a man of great stature. He is an incredibly large and strong individual. Penelope gives all the suitors the test of using Odysseus’ hunting bow to shoot an arrow “through iron ax-helve sockets, twelve in line” (937). They all fail and none of them “can even bend [the hunting bow] enough to string it” (937). When Odysseus is given the test he “in one motion [strings] the bow. Then [slides] his right hand down the cord and [plucks] it, so the taut gut vibrating hummed and sang a swallow’s note” (939). His strength is not even comparable to any of the suitors. After the test of the arrows, Odysseus shouts out to the suitors, “Your last hour has come. You die in blood” (942). He then brutally kills every last one of them, with only the help of his son Telemachus, and the swineherd and cowherd. All of this is a great representation of Odysseus’ strength and power. Odysseus’ size is also apparent when he

Many of Odysseus' traits are honored and respected by the people and society in which he lives. First of all, he's very clever and resourceful. When trapped by hard situations, he finds a way around them by using his wits. For example, when the Cyclops asks his name he replies, "My name is Nohbdy: mother, father, and friends, everyone calls me 'Nohbdy'" (904). He does this in order to trick the Cyclops, so when the Cyclops calls for help, his friends think nobody is harming him and don't come to his aide. Secondly, Odysseus is an excellent leader. He finds ways to help his men as best he can. Even when he returns to his home in Ithaca twenty years later, many of his men still remember him and respect him. When his soldiers discover Odysseus has returned home, they "[throw] their arms around the old soldier, weeping, kissing his head and shoulders" (938). Finally, Odysseus is recognized as a very intelligent man by many people. The gods realize it enough to be willing to help him on his journey. It's apparent of this because Athena is the goddess of wisdom. To summarize, many of Odysseus' abilities are very useful and well respected by those around him.

Odysseus' abilities, skills, importance, and wits make him an epic hero. He makes use of all his skills in order to overcome the hardships he must face. The great action in Odysseus' adventures make the story *The Odyssey* one of the most famous stories, or even pieces of literature of all times. To this extent, it's obvious why *The Odyssey* has been passed down through so many years and told in so many different forms.

