

Penelope's journey

Business



“ Everyone’s journey is completely different,” Jeremy Piven once said. This has proven to be true multiple times. Not one person experiences something the same as another does because everyone goes through life differently.

Each person battles their own unique battle in their own unique way. For example, in literature, each character undergoes different aspects of the same journey in a way that is specific to what they have faced. During Penelope’s exclusive journey in Homer’s epic poem the *Odyssey*, she follows the three major stages of a hero’s journey: separation, initiation, and return. Penelope begins the first stage when Odysseus, her husband, leaves to begin his own journey. The *Odyssey* is an epic poem of Odysseus leaving his wife and son from his home in Ithaca with his crew of over 600 men on their journey to Troy.

When Odysseus began his journey, Penelope did as well. With Odysseus gone, Penelope faced many hardships of stories, true and false, of her husband’s journey as well as facing the many suitors that tried to replace him when he was thought to be dead. She faced many other challenges over the course of these 10 years alone. After Odysseus has already begun his journey, he speaks of where he is from when he says, “ my home is on the peaked sea-mark of Ithaca under Mount Neion’s wind-blown robe of leaves, in sight of other islands” (21). This is more evidence of Odysseus beginning his trip to Troy which correlates to Penelope beginning hers.

She begins the initiation stage when facing Odysseus’ many imposters and other suitors. She faces the rudeness of Antinous, one of many suitors, when he acts upon his anger, “ the stool he let fly hit the man’s right shoulder on

the packed muscle under the blade - like solid rock, for all the effect one saw" (1228). Here Penelope is persevering through one of the challenges that has been thrown her way when Antinous throws a stool at Odysseus, who is disguised as a beggar. She comes to a solution when, " pressed by the suitors to choose a husband among them, Penelope says she will marry the man who can string Odysseus' bow and shoot an arrow through twelve ax handles" (sum. 607).

This is something that is close to impossible and will eliminate most to all of the men that are troubling her as well as determine if Odysseus is a part of this crowd. She reaches the end of her journey when she identified Odysseus upon his return. Odysseus must prove to her that he is who he says and he realizes exactly how to do so when they speak of where he will sleep, " there is our pact and pledge, our secret sign, built into that bed - my handiwork and no one else's!" (1577). In this quote, Penelope is completely reassured of Odysseus' identity by him acknowledging something sacred to them and how important it was between the two. She tells Odysseus of how she now believes him and why it took her until then when she says " I armed myself long ago against the frauds of men, impostors who might come" (1603).

Here she shows of how this journey has lead her to know not to trust someone who has not proven that they speak the truth. Although they were linked together throughout both of their journeys, both Odysseus and Penelope experienced completely different events with individual lessons. But no matter how different their experiences were they both followed the same plot outline of a hero's journey. This outline is a great example of how

someone must go through a great transformation to solve a problem or find answers to questions they might have not even known to ask.