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[Literature](#), [Mythology](#)



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Odysseus's Journey All Greek myths are crazy adventures with all-powerful gods and deadly monsters. In Homer's epic poem *The Odyssey*, the king of Ithica, Odysseus, is trying to get home to his family after a ten year war conquering the city of Troy. Odysseus encounters numerous perils during his journey home. Some of his impediments included Calypso, a god, Polyphemus, a giant Cyclopes, and the suitors. Calypso trapped Odysseus on her island for seven years because she loved him. The Cyclopes only saw Odysseus and his crew as food. Then, when he finally gets home, he learns about the suitors who have been tarnishing his home and courting his faithful wife, Penelope. Many people think Odysseus's journey was heroic but Odysseus is, in fact, not a hero by the standard of Joseph Campbell's "hero's journey." The hero's journey is a man passage to heroism. It consists of six steps; leaving home, deciding upon a quest, overcoming obstacles, fighting an all-out battle, getting a scar from the fight, and gaining great wisdom. Odysseus is close to being a hero by completing most of the phases but because he did not learn to correct any of his flaws, he did not gain any wisdom in his journey; Odysseus is not a hero. Although Odysseus is not a hero, he accomplished many aspects of the hero's journey. Odysseus completed the first two steps of his journey at Calypso's island where Odysseus "was sitting in his usual place on the shore, wearing out his soul with lamentation and tears". (pg. 63) This is when he realized he is not in power anymore. On his trip to Troy, Odysseus was a brave and powerful king. His bravery diminished and his power belittled after being trapped on Calypso's island. It is when he lost the hope of getting back to his kingdom

does he theoretically left home for his journey. Just as Odysseus was about ready to kill himself, Calypso was forced by Zeus to set Odysseus free. This act of kindness made Odysseus hopeful once again; he reverted back to his old, cunning ways. Suspicious of Calypso's sudden kindness, Odysseus tried to flatter her: " Gracious goddess, don't be cross with me! I know all that as well as you do. My wife is nothing compared to you for beauty, I can see that for myself. She is mortal; you are immortal and never grow old. But even so, I long for the day of my homecoming. And if some god wrecks me again on the deep, I will endure it, for I have a patient mind. I have suffered already many troubles and hardships in battle and tempest; this will be only one more". (pg 66)The sudden return of his freedom gave Odysseus a shimmering hope that he might be able to get home to his beloved wife and son. The mere prospect of returning to Ithica after 20 years rekindled his previous personality which indicates that Odysseus is ready to accept any hardships on his quest home. The next step to heroism is battling with " dragons" or obstacles. The first dragon was Polyphemus, a giant Cyclops. After arriving at the land of the lotus eaters: " We came next to the Cyclopians, the Goggle-eyes, a violent and lawless tribe". (pg 102) This battle was a test of Odysseus's intelligence. It was obvious that the giant could not be overpowered. However, an alternative escape plan was even more difficult to conjure. Odysseus's plan to incapacitate the giant with wine and blind him was both simple and effective. Although he beat the giant and passed the " test", Odysseus still made a major mistake by yelling his own name at the Cyclops. Because of this, the mighty God of the Sea, Poseidon sought revenge for his son's eye and sent Odysseus into a despairing

journey for ten years. During one of these ten years, Odysseus had to go through the passage between Scylla and Charybdis, two deadly monsters of the sea: “ There Scylla dwells, and yelps in her dreadful way; the cave is so high that the strongest man could not reach it with an arrow . . . Charybdis underneath swallows down the black water. Three times a day she spouts it out, three times a day she swallows it down: she is a terror-done you be there when she swallows! No one could save you from destruction, not even Earthshaker himself! ” (pg 139-140)Odysseus believes he could slay the monster Scylla, who is unable to be tamed even by the gods. This is a mental battle between him and his arrogance. Had he chosen to fight Scylla in his overconfidence, he would have lost more men. Instead, he took Circe’s advice and ran, saving his crew from complete annihilation. In these two battles, it is easy to see his courage and bravery. On the other hand his major flaws was also apparent, his arrogance and lack of forethought. This last battle is the fourth step in Odysseus’s journey is an all-out battle between Odysseus and the suitors who dishonored his home and wife. “ Dogs! You thought I would never come back from Trot, so you have been carving up me substance, forcing the women to lie with you, courting me wife before I was dead not fearing the gods who rule the broad heavens, nor the execration of man which follows you for ever. . . As long arrows lasted Odysseus went on bringing then down one after another”.(pg 243) This battle results in victory for Odysseus; however, for the last steps of the hero journey, this marks the spot where he has failed. Throughout his journey, Odysseus had many opportunities to see his errors. Even after ten years, he still could not learn to think of what would happen after he killed all the

suitors. The fathers of the slain suitors sought vengeance upon Odysseus: “He has a number of friends to avenge him afterwards, you must leave your country to escape his kinsmen. . . These very soon went away for arms and armour: and when they were ready they appeared before the city gate”(pg 270). He never thought that the suitors’ fathers would come for revenge. In his struggles with Polyphemus, he out-smarted the Cyclops but revealed his real name. His lack of foresight cost him a tiresome ten years. His arrogance was another aspect that failed him. If Circe did not continuously warn him, Odysseus would have lost all of his men fighting Scylla. Odysseus killed all the suitors even after ten years of continuous hardships. This means he is over-confident and does not think of future consequences. Odysseus is not a hero at all; he is just a man trying to get home. In this book, Odysseus goes through much hardship and strife during his passage home to his family. He goes through a treacherous journey to learn almost nothing about his personal flaws. He goes slaying every suitor going after his wife without foreseeing that of people will avenge their loved ones. This is an example of what not to do with one’s experiences. People should take every opportunity they can to discover their faults and fix their failures. They should not waste it by being conceited and saying it was a fluke. If people today learned more from their mistakes, multitudes of problems would disappear and the world would be a better place.