

# Athena's unwavering support of odysseus

[Literature](#), [Poem](#)



Despite Odysseus' will to fight and return home, it is not just his actions that help him accomplish his objective. There are several other characters in "The Odyssey" that play a pivotal role in helping him reach his goal. Most crucial to his success are the efforts of his advocate, Athena. She is the true reason that Odysseus succeeds, because she assists, protects, and champions Odysseus as her actions prove. Odysseus' journey begins after leaving Calypso, but his trip takes a dangerous turn when Poseidon unleashes fury from the sea and his ship is destroyed. He finds his way to the shore of Scheria. Athena, true to form, comes to Odysseus' rescue when she appears to Princess Nausicaa in a dream and "drifted through like a breath of fresh air, rushed to the girl's bed and hovering close, she spoke in face and form" (Homer 340). Athena uses her godly abilities to encourage Nausicaa to wake in the morning and go to the river to wash her wedding dress. It is at the river that she encounters Odysseus which eventually leads him to another leg on his journey home. In Book VII, upon meeting Nausicaa, she urges him to make his way to her father's home. However, she warns that he may encounter ill will from her people on the way. Athena "harboring kindness for the hero, drifted a heavy mist around him, shielding him from any swaggering islander who'd cross his path, provoke him with taunts and search out who he was." (Homer 348). The shielding that Athena offers him allows Odysseus safe passage to Alcinous. It is Alcinous who commands his people to transport him home. Without Athena's protection, yet again, his journey home may have been impeded. Odysseus has finally arrived home to Ithaca in Book XIII. Athena comes to him and reveals the antics that have been occurring since he has been gone. She explains to

Odysseus that despite her refusals, there have been suitors courting his beloved wife, Penelope. Athena, as incensed as he is, champions him by offering to help him devise a plan to retaliate. Odysseus urges, "Come, weave us a scheme so I can pay them back!" (Homer, 433). Athena reassures, "Surely I'll stand beside you, not forget you, not when the day arrives for us to do our work." (Homer, 433). Her support of Odysseus is, once again, unwavering as she plans to assist him to eliminate the suitors and reach the ultimate goal of returning to his Penelope. The plan is a success which allows him to return to Penelope. The Odyssey is a story of characters and how they affect Odysseus' goal to make his way home to his wife, land, and people. His journey home is filled with challenge after challenge and it is Athena who most often steps in to assist. She is an ally as she uses her abilities to assist, protect, and champion him through many different actions. Works Cited Homer. "The Odyssey." Trans. Robert Fagles. The Norton Anthology World Literature, Shorter Second Edition. Ed. Sarah Lawall et al. Vol. 1. New York: W. W. Norton, 2009. 274-551. Print. 2 vols.