

MYTHOLOGY & LITERATURE:

THE CHARACTERS

(The Mortals)



A watercolor of Tiresias, the prophet and Odysseus

THE MORTALS are the people in the story. Their Greek names can be hard to pronounce, but by sounding out the syllables in parentheses, you can figure it out! The emphasis is usually on the second syllable (underlined).



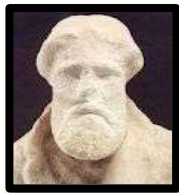
ODYSSEUS (Oh-dis-ee-us) is the hero or protagonist of The Odyssey. He is the fictional king of Ithaca, husband to Penelope, father of Telemachus and the son of Anticlea and Laertes. He is a great soldier, a hero of the Trojan war and known for his bravery, intelligence and resourcefulness. In Roman mythology, this character is known by the name, Ulysses (You-liss-ees).

PENELOPE (Pin-ell-op-ee) is Odysseus' faithful wife. Odysseus left for the Trojan War just after their son, Telemachus was born. During the 20 years that Odysseus is gone to war and lost at Sea, she has been trying to avoid the many suitors who want her hand in marriage.



TELEMACHUS (Ti-lem-i-kis) is the son of Penelope and Odysseus. His father left shortly after he was born and he is around 20 years old when Odysseus returns. He spends much of the Odyssey searching for news of his father and believes he is still alive and will return home. His name means "far from war".

ANTICLEA (An-ti-clee-uh) is the mother of Odysseus. In the story of The Odyssey, she appears as a spirit in the underworld of Hades. She has died from grief due to missing Odysseus while he was away at war. She also tells Odysseus of the trouble at home with the suitors. Her name means "without fame".



TIRESIAS (Ter-ee-see-is) is the blind prophet who Odysseus encounters as a spirit in the underworld of Hades. He is clairvoyant and can tell the future. This character appears in quite a bit of Greek Mythology.

HALITHESES (Hal-uh-ther-sis) is the seer, or prophet, who warns the suitors of Odysseus. However, the suitors do not listen to him and are killed by Odysseus and Telemachus.

EURYLOCHUS (Yer-ill-i-kis) is one of Odysseus' sailors. He is Odysseus' right-hand man and second in command. He is considered cowardly and often stirs up trouble. When they are stranded on an island of the Sun God, Helios, Eurylochus disobeys orders not to eat the cattle and as a result, Eurylochus and every soldier except Odysseus are killed by a storm sent by Zeus as punishment.

TIBERIUS (Ty-beer-ee-is) is another one of Odysseus' sailors.

LEODES (Lee-oh-dees) is a suitor trying to marry Penelope.

ANTINOUS (An-tin-oo-s) is a suitor trying to marry Penelope.

EURYMACHUS (Yer-i-ma-kis) is a suitor trying to marry Penelope.

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THE CHARACTERS

(The Immortals & Beasts)

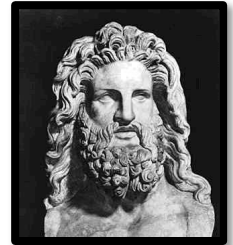


THE IMMORTALS & BEASTS are Gods, Goddesses or monsters from classic Greek Mythology. They have special powers over the mortals. Some are helpful and some are harmful to Odysseus and his crew.



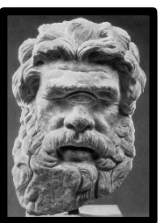
ATHENA (Uh-thee-nah) is the goddess of wisdom, courage, inspiration, justice and mathematics. She is the daughter of Zeus and assists Odysseus and Telemachus throughout the Odyssey, often disguised as other people. In Roman mythology, this goddess is known as Minerva.

ZEUS (Zoos) is the father of Gods and Man in Greek Mythology. He is Athena's father and the god of the sky and thunder. In the Odyssey, he sends a storm as punishment when the sailors disobey orders and eat the cattle on the island of the Sun God, Helios. In Roman Mythology, Zeus is known as Jupiter.



POSEIDON (Puh-sy-dun) is the God of the seas. He is the father of the Cyclops, Polyphemus and when Odysseus blinds Polyphemus, Poseidon becomes very angry. He is the antagonist (Odysseus' enemy) and makes Odysseus' journey very long and dangerous. In Roman Mythology, he is known as Neptune.

AEOLUS (A-oh-lis) is the God of wind. In the story of The Odyssey, Aeolus gives Odysseus a bag of wind to assist the sailors on a safe journey home. Odysseus is not supposed to open it until the 10th day. However, another one of Odysseus' sailors opens the bag while he is asleep and releases the winds. This throws the sailors off-course and back the way they came. Odysseus asks Aeolus for another bag of wind, but he refuses.



POLYPHEMUS (Pol-lee-fee-mis) is a Cyclops, a one-eyed giant and the son of Poseidon. He captures Odysseus and his men and attempts to eat them. However, Odysseus fools Polyphemus and blinds him which angers the god, Poseidon.

SCYLLA & CHARYBDIS (Sil-la & Ker-ib-dis)- Scylla is a 6-headed sea monster Odysseus and his crew encounter on their journey. Charybdis is also a sea monster and takes the shape of a whirlpool.



CALYPSO (Cuh-lip-so) is a nymph who falls in love with Odysseus. She keeps him captive on her island, Ogygia for seven years until the God, Hermes, convinces her to release him.

CIRCE (Seer-see) is a witch-goddess that turns Odysseus' crew into pigs. Odysseus resists her power and agrees to live with her for a year in exchange for his men to be transformed back into humans.

THE SIRENS are creatures that lure sailors into rocks with their beautiful singing. Odysseus' men avoid the Sirens' spell by putting wax in their ears.