

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Due: \_\_\_\_\_

Tales from the Odyssey  
Book Four: The Gray-Eyed Goddess  
*By: Mary Pope Osborne*

Answer all questions at the end of each chapter. Make sure to **use complete sentences** and that you read the questions fully. You should highlight unknown words, new characters, and important or interesting points within the story when you are reading. **Write notes on the side - it lets me know what you're thinking when reading.** If you have questions that come up when reading, write them down on the right hand side - sometimes asking yourself questions when reading helps you better understand the text.

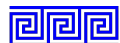
<b>Chapter One: Odysseus and Penelope</b>	Questions/Comments/Vocab
<p>Odysseus, king of Ithaca, walked slowly along the shore of the wooded island. As he stared at the restless sea, he yearned for his distant homeland. He had not seen his island of Ithaca, or his family, for almost twenty years -- not since he had sailed away to fight in the Trojan War. He mourned his ill luck since the war's end.</p> <p><i>Perhaps I would be home in Ithaca now, he thought, if the Greeks had not angered Athena, the warrior goddess, and caused our ships to be blown off course ... or if I had not angered Poseidon, the god of the seas, by blinding his son, the Cyclops ... or if my men had not angered the god of the winds or the god of the sun ...</i></p> <p>Odysseus sighed with sorrow and despair. All his men were dead now, struck down by the wrath of the gods for their grievous sins. He alone had been spared. His strength and courage had helped him survive the horrors of war and the perils of his journey toward home.</p> <p>Now Odysseus felt as if he were living in the nightmare from which he could not wake. For seven long years, the sea goddess Calypso had kept him captive on her island. Every day she tried to make him forget his past with her honeysweet words. She promised him anything, if only he would marry her. She paid no heed to his protests that he still loved his true wife, Penelope, and their son, Telemachus.</p> <p><i>And what is happening to my family now?</i> Odysseus wondered.</p>	

He remembered the words the ghost of his mother had spoken when he journey to the Land of the Dead: *“Your family has been broken by sorrow. Your wife still waits for you. But she spends her days and nights weeping. Your son is strong and brave. Though he is young, he guards your home, your fields, and your livestock. He also mourns your absence, as does your father ... “*

It had been many years since his mother’s spirit had spoken those words. Did his father still live? And what had become of his son? Telemachus had been a baby when Odysseus left Ithaca. Now we would be a young man of twenty.

And was Penelope still faithful? Or had she cast off all memory of Odysseus and married another?

Desperate to go back to Ithaca and be reunited with his family, Odysseus stared at the wine-dark waves and prayed for a ship to take him home.



Far, far away from Calypso’s island, Odysseus’ wife, Penelope, stood at her tower window listening to the rowdy suitors in the courtyard below.

Penelope shuddered. For the last four years, suitors had traveled from near and far, seeking her hand in marriage. She despised them all. She knew it was not her they truly wanted -- it was Odysseus’ farms and fields, his livestock and servants, his rule over the island.

When the suitors had first come, Penelope had thought of a clever plan to ward them off. She told them she could not remarry until she finished weaving a shroud for Odysseus’ father to wear when he died. Every day she sat at her loom, weaving the garment. But every night, by torchlight, she unraveled all her day’s work.

For three years, Penelope carried out her deception, yearning for her husband to return. But in the fourth year, one of her maids told the suitors of her trick.

The suitors were furious. They demanded that Penelope pick one of them to be her new husband. Still, Penelope refused. None of the greedy, rude men could ever compare to her lost Odysseus.

Even after so many years, she could still clearly picture her beloved: his proud posture, his broad shoulders, his auburn hair and lively, darting eyes. She felt the spirit of Odysseus whenever she looked about their house -- in the woodwork he had trimmed with silver and gold and ivory; in the special bed he had carved for them. Odysseus had built their bedroom around an olive tree. He had cut the limbs off the tree and used its trunk for one of the bedposts. Only he and Penelope knew this secret.

Penelope desperately wished for Odysseus to return and take swift, fierce action against the villains who were trying to take his place. Without her husband, there was no one to protect her.

Odysseus' father was too aged and feeble to help. Lost in grief, the old man wandered the island, never coming near the palace.

Telemachus, Penelope's son, was too young to help her. He had his father's bright eyes and auburn hair, but not his strength or cunning. Lately, the suitors had grown more and more scornful of Telemachus. They had also grown angrier and more insistent that Penelope choose one of them for a husband.

As rude laughter came from the courtyard, Penelope closed the shutters of her window. She returned to her loom and began weaving.

Desperate for help, she prayed for her true husband to come home soon, before it was too late.

Questions:

1. Do you think it would be a shock for Penelope to remarry after her husband has been gone for twenty years? Why or why not?

---

---

---

---

2. What was Penelope's plan to trick the suitors into waiting to marry her?

---

---

---

3. How long has Odysseus been on Calypso's island?

---

4. Why won't Calypso let Odysseus go? What do you think that says about her?

---

---

---

### **Chapter Two: Son of Odysseus**

Telemachus despised his mother's suitors even more than Penelope herself did. Every day, they invaded his father's estate. They slaughtered Odysseus' oxen, his long-horned cattle, his sheep, and his pigs. They stole wine from his vineyards and gave orders to his servants. Whenever Telemachus told them to leave, they laughed and mocked him.

Now, in the afternoon light, the suitors were sprawled about the courtyard, resting on the hides of oxen they had killed. They were playing dice and drinking from huge bowls of wine.

*If my father would only come home, Telemachus thought, he would quickly drive them all away and restore his rule over the island.*

Lost in his angry thoughts, Telemachus did not notice for a moment that a stranger was waiting patiently at the threshold of the house. The stranger wore glittering gold sandals and carried a bronze spear.

When Telemachus finally saw the stranger, he jumped from his chair and hurried to welcome him. "Good day, sir!" he cried. "I am sorry you have been kept waiting at our gate!"

The stranger did not speak. He stared at Telemachus with piercing gray eyes.

“Come in, come in!” said Telemachus, ushering the stranger into the courtyard. “Refresh yourself with food and drink. Then you must tell me from where you have come and what you seek.”

Telemachus led the stranger quickly past the suitors in the courtyard and into the great hall. He wanted to protect his guest from the suitors’ rudeness and noise.

“Please sit here,” Telemachus said. He gestured to a tall, carved chair draped with the finest cloth. “Rest your feet on this stool.”

Telemachus sat next to his guest. Servants brought trays of meat and bread. They poured wine and fresh water into goblets.

Soon Penelope’s suitors began barging into the hall. They had come to hear music, sing songs, and dance. Telemachus was eager to ask questions of the visiting stranger, but he waited for the music to begin so the suitors would not hear his conversation.

As soon as the music and singing started, Telemachus leaned close to his gray-eyed guest.

“Tell me, sir, who are you? they young man asked. “Where have you come from? What sort of ship brought you here? Are you a stranger to this house? Did you ever know my father, Odysseus king of this island?”

“My name is Mentor,” said the stranger. “I am chief of Taphos. Your father was a friend of mine, but I have not seen him since he left to fight the Trojan War. Recently I have heard that he had come home, so I traveled here to Ithaca to see him again, I wanted to celebrate his safe return.”

Telemachus lowered his head. “I am sorry to say my father has not returned,” he said, “and we have had no word of him. I fear he has met with an ill fate and we shall never see him again.”

“Perhaps the gods are only keeping him away for a while,” said Mentor. “Perhaps he is a prisoner on an island somewhere. I am

not a soothsayer, but deep within my heart, the gods whisper to me that your father is not dead. Remember, he is a man of great courage and strength. Even if he were in chains, he would eventually break free of them and find his way home.”

Telemachus sighed. He dared not believe Mentor’s words could be true. So many times over the years, his hopes about his father had been dashed.

The noise grew louder in the hall. All the suitors were singing now, and shouting, and making rude remarks.

Mentor looked at them. “Who are these men who swagger about your home?” he asked TElemachus. “Why do they behave in such a coarse and disgusting manner?”

“Sir, when my father was here, his estate was a safe and civilized place,” said Telemachus. “But after he had been gone for some years, men from nearby islands began to invade our home. Now they slaughter and eat my father’s livestock. They harass my mother and demand that she choose one of them to marry.”

Mentor’s eyes flashed with anger. “Odysseus must come home soon,” he said in a low voice. “I have witnessed your father’s strength. If he were here now he would quickly punish these villains.”

“Yes, I know he would,” said Telemachus. “That is why I ache for his return. They will not listen to anything I say. I even fear they may soon try to kill me.”

“My boy, you must gather your strength and courage,” said Mentor, his voice shaking with anger. “You must find a way to deal with these men. Call them together tomorrow and order them to leave at once. Then gather a crew of twenty good men. Take the best ship you can find and set sail immediately in search of your father.”

Telemachus was amazed by the vehemence of his guest. “I -- I do not know how to search for him,” he said.

“Sail to Pylos first,” said Mentor. “Go to the home of wise Nestor. He was your father’s friend and a brave warrior in the Trojan War. Ask Nestor about Odysseus. He will tell you what he knows, or he will tell you who else to ask.”

“And what then?” asked Telemachus.

“If you learn that Odysseus has died, return home and mourn for him. Help your mother make plans to marry again. Kill those suitors who will not leave your estate.”

Telemachus was frightened by the thought of such a challenge.

As if he could read Telemachus’ thoughts, Mentor leaned closer and looked deep into the young man’s eyes. “Make a name for yourself, Telemachus,” he said, “so people will praise your brave spirit. You are a man now, not a boy.”

Telemachus felt heartened by the advice from Mentor. “Sir, you have been most kind to talk to me in this way,” he said. “I feel almost as if you are my own father talking to me. I will do exactly as you say.”

Mentor stood up to leave. “Now I must go back to my ship and crew,” he said.

“Oh, please stay longer,” implored Telemachus. “Rest, refresh yourself. Let me give you gifts to take with you.”

“Nay, do not keep me,” said Mentor. “I will receive your gifts when I stop here again. But now I must be on my way.”

With these words, the gray-eyed stranger vanished as swiftly as a bird taking flight on the wind.

Telemachus was filled with wonder. He realized he’d been in the presence of a divine being.

Questions:

1. Why does Telemachus dislike the suitors?

---

---

---

---

2. What is a “mentor”? Why do you think Homer chose to give the character this name?

---

---

---

3. Why do you think Telemachus fears for his life?

---

---

---

4. Which “divine being” do you think visited Telemachus? What evidence from the text do you have?

---

---

---

### **Chapter 3: The Gray-Eyed Goddess**

Inspired by Mentor’s words, Telemachus was determined to throw the suitors out of his house, once and for all.

They had quieted down a bit. A musician was playing his lyre and singing about the Greeks returning from the Trojan War. He sang about Athena’s anger and how she had told the gods to punish the Greek warriors. He sang about the storms that had blown their ships off course.

As the man sang his sad song, Telemachus saw his mother come down the steep stairway from her chambers. Two loyal handmaidens walked behind her.

Penelope stood in the shadows, listening. Though her face was covered by a veil, Telemachus could see that she wept.

Before the song was over, she lifted her veil, “Singer, sing a different song!” she cried out. “I cannot endure your tale. It breaks my heart.”



Telemachus stepped over to his mother. Inspired by his talk with Mentor, he spoke in a strong, calm voice.

“Let him sing on, Mother,” he said. “He is not the cause of our sorrow. Only Zeus can bring such grief to mankind. Go back upstairs to your loom. Do not worry about our estate. From now on, I will be master of my father’s house.”

Penelope was astonished by Telemachus’ bold and decisive words. “in this moment, you truly seem the son of Odysseus,” she said.

Penelope began to weep again. Such a vivid reminder of her husband made her even more sorrowful than before.

As her handmaidens helped Penelope back up the stairs, the suitors shouted after her, begging her to choose one of them to marry.

Telemachus turned to them. “You are shameless!” he said. “Enjoy the music and dancing tonight. But tomorrow morning I shall command you to leave our house. From then on, you will steal from another table -- not mine, and not my mother’s.”

Amazed by Telemachus’ bold speech, the suitors did not speak at first. But when they recovered they were quick to show they were not afraid. Antinous, leader of the suitors, smiled mockingly. “Suck bold words, Telemachus,” he said. “I pray the gods never make *you* ruled over this island.”

Telemachus stood his ground. “Antinous, with the gods’ blessings, I *will* have command over all that my father has fought for and won,” he said.

“Let the heavens decide who will be the rightful king of Ithaca, then,” said another suitor. “But tell us about the stranger who was just here. From what country had he come? What family? Did he bring news of your father? He hurried away so quickly, we could not get to know him”

“He was Mentor, an old friend of my father,” answered Telemachus. “He came to inquire about my father’s return -- which he believes will be very soon.”

The suitors laughed and shook their heads. They they turned back to the sweetly lulling music. Lost in their idle pleasure, they took no more heed of the son of Odysseus.

Telemachus left the great hall and headed toward his bedroom. His old nursemaid, Euryclea, carried two blazing torches to light his way.

Euryclea loved Telemachus as her own child, for she had cared for him since he was an infant. In his room, she prepared his bed and carefully put away his clothes. Then she left him alone with his thoughts.

Telemachus lay under a soft woolen fleece and stared into the dark. His mind burned with a question: *Is it possible that Mentor is the goddess Athena in disguise?*

Telemachus remembered the story told to him since he was a child: Before the Greeks had angered Athena, she had favored Odysseus above all other men. She had told him how to build the Trojan horse so the Greeks could lay siege to the city of Troy.

Had Athena finally taken pity on the man she had once loved? Had she disguised herself as Mentor and come to save Odysseus’ wife and son?

After all, Mentor’s bronze-tipped spear was very like the spear of the goddess. His glittering gold sandals were like the magic sandals that carried her through the air.

And did not his gray eyes shine like the bright eyes of the goddess herself?

For the first time in months, Telemachus allowed hope to enter his heart. He felt certain the gray-eyed goddess had been with him today. She had come to help him find his father.

Questions:

1. What do you think about the way Telemachus treated his mother when she spoke to the musician?

---

---

---

2. What kind of men are the suitors? Why are they at the house?

---

---

---

---

3. What do you think the suitors will do when they find out Telemachus is leaving to search for Odysseus?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---