

READER 1: The Trojan War had ended almost ten years ago, and the fate of most of the Greek warriors was known.

READER 2: Menelaus and his wife Helen, who was the cause of the war, had returned. Many Greeks who fought for Helen perished in battle or at sea on the voyage home. Only the fate of Odysseus was unknown.

READER 1: Penelope, faithful wife of Odysseus, cried each night and prayed for her husband's return.

3/PENELOPE: Dear Telemachus, I fear your father must be dead, but I cannot give up hope. Please go visit Menelaus and Helen and see if they have any news of Odysseus.

4/TELEMACHUS: I always obey, but I hate to leave you when our home is filled with loathsome men who want to marry you. They have moved into the castle and eat our food and drink our wine. They say they will not leave until you have chosen one of them as your husband.

3/PENELOPE: I have detained their petitions for almost three years with my sewing.

4/TELEMACHUS: What do you mean?

3/PENELOPE: I told them that I must make a funeral shroud for my father who is an old man.

4/TELEMACHUS: What did they say?

3/PENELOPE: They agreed that I should make the shroud. However, I have fooled them. I sew all day in their presence, then rip the stitches out at night.

4/TELEMACHUS: Mother, you are as clever as my father is said to be. I will leave you with our loyal nurse and seek news of Odysseus.

READER 2: Telemachus visited Menelaus and Helen. They immediately saw the resemblance between Odysseus and Telemachus. Telemachus had been a toddler when his father left, and now he was a strong young man.

READER 1: Menelaus reassured Telemachus that Odysseus was alive and would return in the near future.

READER 2: On his way home to tell his mother the good news, Telemachus met an old beggar who claimed to have seen Odysseus.

READER 1: The old beggar was actually Odysseus in disguise, for Odysseus wanted to see the state of his kingdom before making himself known.

4/TELEMACHUS: Come to the castle, old beggar. My mother is eager to hear any news of Odysseus. You will also be well fed as my mother is besieged by many suitors. They will surely give you food.

5/ODYSSEUS: Has your mother chosen a new husband?