

Kim Shelton: Okay, good morning, everyone. I hope you've had a great week so far. I'm going to kind of dive right in and we are going to finish up our discussion of "The Odyssey" today. And that leaves us next week to really concentrate on Roman mythology, highlighting, of course, where it diverges from Greek mythology and of course a little bit about the incorporation of Greek myth into Roman myth, which thank goodness, that it makes such an important impression since so much of our source material survived from Roman authors, and we have less actually from -- as you know, from the original epochs and the original Greek authors, except for our Homeric epochs, which we're super lucky to have. So we -- when we last met we -- which was last Thursday, we were talking about book 16, where we finally had the reunion of Odysseus and Telemachus, the father and son finally coming together, and of course the importance of those recognitions to our storyline, starting out from the very beginning with Telemachus and his identity struggle because he didn't know his father. And of course Odysseus struggling with all kinds of changes of his identity, but ultimately not knowing his son, not having seen his son for 20 years, and not hearing about Agamemnon, and Clytemnestra, and Orestes, and of course, fueling his fears of whether he would encounter those same types of things. So this is a real high point in their journey and in our journey along with them, so that marking -- let's say marking a turning point. This is very much the culmination of Telemachus's search for his father that we started out books one through four with, so we're happy to see that it has a good outcome as well. Now, of course the big problem is still staring them in the face and that is the suitors. And they plot about how to deal with the suitors, what's going to come next. They make the plan that they're going to take the weapons out of the house, out of the palace, except for what Odysseus and Telemachus will need; how important disguise and disguise of their identity will be, that they won't tell anyone who Odysseus really is, that he of course is -- appears as this beggar, and not even Penelope, that she especially should not know until the time is right. And some of this is because -- and we'll see this play out in the next set of books, is that -- well from here on to 20, so but definitely 17 through 20, that it's been a long time and there is this apprehension as to who is loyal to whom, who can they trust, who can they not, assuming all the suitors are alike, but again, they'll have to see, but who among the household also. And that includes Penelope. Even Telemachus, though, hasn't been gone for that long, doesn't really know what the reception will be helps, but again it -- they kind of have to give everybody the litmus test to see how things will go, so -- or to see is his identity disguised until it's important and he decides to reveal himself. He has to be the one who reveals himself once he knows whether he can trust or not the various different groups that they're talking about. So then we'll see it's big deal with the servants especially or slaves especially. Okay, so on to the next three books and -- next four books 17 through 20 will take place at the palace. And we get sort of step by step closer to the ultimate goal. We've got the first goal, we're back on Ithaca. But we have to deal with the suitors and what they have done, how they've just demolished Xenia and how disrespectful they've been and obviously have been threatening the marriage and the relationship of Odysseus and Penelope through their insistence on marrying Penelope. So we're going to get closer and closer, but it's going to feel a little bit like step by step. Every book we go through we actually slow down a little bit, we get closer and closer to real time and the way things play out. So Telemachus and Odysseus in book 17 are going to return to the palace. They're returning separately Telemachus first. And he returns even though, again, not having been gone more than a few months, he comes home very much transformed. He is the proper host. He returns and enters to the palace as the rightful heir, which was very much in doubt the way he left. He will prove himself to be a proper host, a proper man of the household. We see this with his acceptance and his taking in of Xenia with Theoclymenus, who comes from outside and is presented to Telemachus, and he will be immediately taken care of, as he should unless of course Telemachus has learned from the examples elsewhere in the Bronze Age elite world, something that of course he didn't see at home because the beggars are the exact opposite, and these are -- you have several occasions here where we -- once again we see Homer's tendency to have characters and groups of characters present as doubles, good or -- good and evil sort of piled up next to each other so that it's very easy to see these types of distinctions. And of course Xenia, good Xenia, bad Xenia is another running theme throughout. So when Odysseus of course appears as a beggar, he will be treated really horribly by the suitors, as a contrast. Right, they even throw furniture at him and the leftover bones of the food they have been eating

were reminded of their disrespect for the provisioning of the household and the meat and other resources that they are consuming on a daily basis, putting the life of the palace and Odysseus's kingdom at risk. So when Telemachus enters the palace, he sees first Eurycleia, the maid, and then he sees his mother, Penelope. And actually, both of these characters we might call his two moms. Right, so he was like Odysseus also raised by Eurycleia; so was Eurycleia. So he sees -- encounters his two moms which gives us that sense of being in the home and in the hearth and the protective nature of family, and yet he's not the boy who left. There is a transformation and we see that. He demonstrates, again, "First let me take care of business. I'm the host. I'm going to do what I need to do, and then I'll tell you what's going on. I'll tell you a story," as it were. Through this interaction, Penelope becomes more certain that Odysseus is alive. And this begins with Theoclymenus, the guest, who predicts that Odysseus could already be on Ithaca. And this will have an end with his vision, Theoclymenus's vision of the suitor's death. And there are of course omens that help promote the action. And she states that she wants the suitors punished. And this is important, and it's in enough earshot from some characters to put more at ease the idea that she has yet to succumb to the suitors, to their wishes, and that she is still presumably loyal. We do see, though, in contrast, the disloyalty of most of the servants or slaves of the palace that were around during Odysseus's time. Melanthius is one example that Odysseus as the beggar, right, and Eumaeus run into. Melanthius is the goat herder of the palace, but he kicks the beggar and he doesn't treat him well. So we have Eumaeus on the one side, Melanthius as the other, again, contrasting and representing what are the potential loyal people in the palace and the disloyal people in the palace. And then we have one of the -- I think more emotional themes in the story when we meet Odysseus's dog, Argus, outside of the palace, and that he has -- was just a puppy when Odysseus left. And he immediately recognizes Odysseus. And in his very frail state -- and we -- this is yet another indication that the suitors have not been taking care of the place that they are, that this dog has been neglected and clearly has not been fed well. But he -- and he will symbolize, again, the abuse of the family to -- by the suitors. He also, though, represents the danger of Odysseus's disguise, because he knows immediately who Odysseus is; that in other words it's not impenetrable. There is a danger there that others too will recognize who he is before it is -- before it's safe to do so. Of course immediately after this recognition scene, Argus dies. Being 20 years old, he lasted a long time. So but again, he represents a number of things that's important to us. And it reminds us too, of course, that when Odysseus left not only was Argus a puppy, but Telemachus was an infant as well. And we hope that there will be a different outcome based on what we know so far. Penelope invites the beggar to talk, to chat, and he in the -- in book 17 he puts that off. And we'll see where they do talk in a bit, but it is -- puts it off for a whole other book, which is important to us, but it also raises the tension quite a bit. So we move on in book 18 where Odysseus will meet another beggar, in fact a -- let's call him a real beggar. He's what is described as a public beggar by the name of "Iros" or "Irus", a play on name that's very similar to the messenger of the god's "Iris". So but obviously a different character here, but one that maybe is supposed to bring some of that messaging, prediction, that type of thing, to the fore. The suitor is taunt -- both beggars kind of egging them on, and encouraging them to fight each other, which they do; is told in a sort of a mini-mock epoch style. Odysseus, of course, wins. Still though, both treated very poorly and Odysseus continues to be treated poorly. We have the -- also the warning of Amphinomus, who is one of the suitors warning to leaving. He thinks the -- he sees -- kind of predicts that there will be blood and that, again, kind of foreshadows based on the beggars' fight what is going to happen. The really essential, I would say, component of the book other than, again, relationships between different members of the family is that with Athena's sort of impetus and urging, Penelope decides to make a decision. After all this time and her trick of the loom, she's going to make a decision about the suitors and pick one of them. And part of this is she has to kind of calm down the situation. She's going to turn the attention of the suitors back to what they were -- are there for in the first place. She first goes down and talks to Telemachus, and tells him of her plans, says that she soon must marry one of the suitors, it's been long enough. She will -- and he instructs her that she should get gifts from them. And she does that, she sort of goes down among them and gets their attention, and woos -- sort of pseudo woos them into giving gifts from the suitors. And she does all of this in front of her husband, of course, and knowingly Odysseus is the beggar. He seems to in fact be very proud of her, that he sees that there's a trick here, there -- that she's acting in a way that is smart and for her safety. He has already

heard her say the wish -- wishing the death for the suitors. So there is this sense of trust that is going to be very different from if he was worried or scared and might say, "No, no, no, don't do this. I'm here." Again, it's a little bit of a test for him. And there's some debate among scholars as to whether Penelope actually knew that Odysseus was back, if her encounter with the beggar in fact had revealed his identity. It doesn't seem like it, and when we do get the big reveal, it seems that she genuinely is very shocked, or she didn't seem to know before. But there may -- this is potentially a change that it happened, that there were other versions in which he revealed himself earlier. Because some of the things she does and some of the dialogue would suggest that she's doing thing in preparation for Odysseus to take revenge, that she's already in on the plan. And then we move forward to the [INDISCERNIBLE] she's not in on the plan and so we're -- so it's a little contradictory, and again, may reveal to us that these are components of different versions of the story that are woven together. But he does -- I mean, Odysseus does kind of grow in pride of her, which he will continue to do as he eventually will meet with her. So we have that happen in book 19 when they finally -- again, we've had to wait a whole extra book, but now we have the meeting between Penelope and Odysseus. We also have an opportunity for Telemachus to remove the suitors' weapons. Along with Odysseus's help we have Athena carrying a special divine lamp. It creates this artificial but very impressive light for Odysseus and Telemachus. It's a wonderful symbol. The light and fire play very important roles in our heroic stories. They always accompany the victor. So this is shining a light on them. It's also a signal to us that everything will be okay, that we are already -- and Athena is highlighting the victors for us. She's giving us a spoiler alert in essence. There's also, of course, an audience is requested because of the things that are going to be happening the next day. The -- basically most of this book represents attempts of Odysseus to gain Penelope's confidence. But he actually isn't very successful at it, which is interesting and I guess also increases our suspense as the listeners, as the readers, since even beyond the goal of revenge is the goal of reuniting Penelope and continuing his family. So we have that in mind. She does, though, from her encounters with Odysseus have -- Odysseus is the beggar, right; has this revived hope he will -- although he tells her lies about his identity, we hear another version of the credence story. But he also says that he knows Odysseus, and says that her husband is alive, and even kind of taunts her does she recognize him, would she recognize him if he was in front of her? And she -- this evokes a very emotional response when she cries. And this is yet another direct signal to Odysseus that she is still with him, that even though this whole ploy is going to happen and in fact it's going to be the setting, it's what Telemachus and Odysseus need to get all the suitors together, that she is not a threat, that she is in fact with him, she's on the good side as it were. So that is -- that's particularly good. She offers him clothes, she offers him -- again, she sort of takes on this role of the host as she probably has for a very long time with a young child who wasn't ready to step up. But he refuses. He does accept the offer to have his feet washed, which is very interesting in a way. It's a sign of, "I am in my role as beggar. I am not worthy of this full attention as a guest. I will take the minimum as a weary traveler and -- " but in reality too if she had given him presumably Odysseus's clothes to dress up in, his disguise would have been threatened. So he remains in disguise. That's important for the success of this mission. And so he accepts what he thinks is going to be the minimally invasive solution without totally offending his host, who is offering him the version of the bath, and the food, and the clothes. So this is what he will accept. So Eurycleia, the nurse, is the one who is going to wash his feet. And of course we get another very interesting recognition scene. Although she doesn't recognize him through his disguise, she recognizes him through a scar that he has on his leg. And she recounts to him -- and again, this is a very touching sort of mother scene. It bookmarks very interestingly when he saw -- met his actual mother in the underworld, right, so not -- but again, like Telemachus with Eurycleia and Penelope, Odysseus would have had these two double moms, his actual birth mother and then the nurse who raised him. So he's lost the one but now he's reclaiming the other through this recognition scene and reveals that he -- she knows something so personal and identifying about him that it reveals -- it can break through his outer disguise. And she tells, of course, the recounts for him, the story of Odysseus, the name that came from his grandfather, Autolycus, who was this very interesting trickster kind of figure. So it recognizes that inheritance of Odysseus, and talks about how he was marked, he was cut by a boar's tusk, which also for us means -- it identifies his elite character, his warrior nature, because the hunter and the warrior are totally intertwined and important together. He also knows that he can't reveal

himself as the warrior, that that's always gotten him into trouble, so it has -- he has to go by his wits, which is not with the story that Eurycleia is representing it's all about. It could release his identity in a way that wasn't proper, wasn't going to be useful in the situation, but of course that doesn't happen. Instead, we know that she is loyal to Odysseus, she is loyal to the cause, and that's going to be important to know. We also hear of Penelope's dream of -- which is really taken as a kind of omen, so a prophesy that came to her in her dream of an eagle killing geese, both -- again, it's a warning and a prophesy at the same time. She of course decides that she is going to marry the next day and that all of this should be this assembly of the suitors and presumably the whole household, right, coming together for this great event, feasting event certainly, and proposes that to test their medal, to attest -- to test their status and who is appropriate for her, she proposes to this contest of the bow, which is important because of it's Odysseus's bow. It has this amazing back story that it's impossible for anyone to string, so anyone who would be, therefore, equal to Odysseus is worthy of her hand. So this is very much in the vain of Greek mythology, where we have seen so many contests to win the hand of the maiden; in this case, not a maiden, but the queen of Ithaca. So it puts us back into that sort of younger betrothal putting together kingdoms of the kind of power, the things that the suitors are there for, really. So they wouldn't think it's all that strange. It's within the genre that we would expect to have some display of skill. In this case, hunting and archery skill, whether that could be used also as protection or aggression in war. Then we move into book 20, where we have some of the sort of key things that are important include Odysseus recognizing and witnessing that Penelope's maids sneak out of the women's quarters and of course upstairs up above separate from the rest of the household, but separate from the men's quarters, that the maids sneak out and they do this in order to sleep with the suitors. So not only are the suitors eating them out of house and home, they're also sleeping with, taking advantage of the women servants and slaves in the household, which means that they can't be trusted. And therefore they also represent the opposite of Penelope, who has of course been going out of her way all this time to avoid being with them, to remain her pseudo chaste self waiting for her husband to return, even though we know that it's been 20 years. It's also good to get an account of Odysseus who is to be trusted, who isn't. It also details -- makes the suitors also seem even worse, if that's even possible, and it serves to bring all of the participants together. So now we have bad servants, suitors, everybody will be in one place. We have Athena appearing to Odysseus. Zeus will provide omens for success. We see lots of examples of kind of contrasting good and bad behavior among different populations in the household. And ultimately we have yet again Athena sort of provoking the suitors into outwardly insulting Odysseus and his household, if they haven't already done enough. Theoclymenus, who we remember was an outsider who had come in -- arrived at the time that Telemachus had returned, so he's not involved in any of this back story or this history. He however, sees the future and gives a prophecy of doom for the suitors, and then exits stage left, as it were. This book really slows the tempo. Again, we had already been going kind of plodding along in a much slower tempo than what we had in the first part -- first half of the book. But we also -- in some ways this slows even further, again, to -- it forestalls what we know is coming. But it also kind of lowers the tension. It kind of flattens everything out and makes it seem like, "Well, this is just the way things happen." And we see a more normal -- the new normal, I guess, of the households that are going to be coming to life and what that means, and people getting food, and jockeying for a position. And again, people like Telemachus are asserting his new status. Of course he also becomes the butt of their jokes and -- but he does not react. And he, again, is proving himself to be an ally of his father, as he is also so much like his father. So the two of them are now waiting, waiting for their moment. We are very much on the edge of that. So as we move into our last group of books of 21 through 24, it's interesting that unlike the others where you could kind of parse these little sections including that very important middle section where we get the whole flashback and the story that brings us up to the contemporary time for Odysseus. But in this case, each of these books very much covers really one discreet event, which also brings us, again, down to essentially real time, and it's going to play out in a very detailed, realistic way. Book 21 is the -- is really the contest of the bow. And we have Penelope fetching the bow, and the fact that it had been closed up, locked up, and emphasizes the fact that, again, the length of time that Odysseus has been gone, Penelope's sort of locked away also waiting for him, but even more so here his famous bow that has been locked up without anyone doing anything to it and waiting for the

action. Here's a Waterhouse painting of like some of the others we've seen through the course of the semester, and this one another version of Penelope at her loom with her -- some of her ladies, as it were, but also here we really see the aggressive suitors trying to woo her at the same time that she is weaving, and then unweaving at night. So the contest of the bow is very much a focal point, a climax of the story because it will initiate the revenge; it will initiate what needs to happen. We -- the whole book, in fact, is framed by the bow itself. We have the bow in Penelope's hands in the beginning as it's retrieved from storage, and the book ends with the bow in Odysseus' hands. So we see it as this tool for the things that are going to happen. So the contest itself is, first of all, being able to string the bow, which we've been told to understand that this is not an easy thing to do, that this is a remarkably large and strong bow and very difficult to actually string. But that's just the first part of the contest. The second part is once you have strung it, you are supposed to shoot an arrow through the half tolls of a whole row of axes that are lined up, presumably anchored into maybe a table, or a board, or something else that set them up one after the other. You can -- they are likely to have been in the minds of Homer and even if we look at the Bronze Age to have been double axes. So you can -- the sort of two shades, two-sided ax with, of course, the central part that the shaft -- the wood shaft goes through and we use as a handle for the ax. In this case, there's no wooden element in it, they are just the ax heads; they are set up with the one cutting side blade into the wood and then we have them all lined up. So again, you're shooting through this hole which could be not particularly large. If they are extra large versions still, they're about like that and we have this whole row of them. So it's a strength in the beginning equal to Odysseus' stringing his bow, but also the skill of archery to do something which sounds not just, "Hit that target way over there," it's a little bit more like, "Shoot the apple off of someone's head," but maybe with less immediate danger. It suggests a little bit that the suitors -- the suitors even kind of recognize it themselves, that they mostly have been doing nothing. They have been laying around. They've been lollygagging. They have been eating a lot, drinking a lot, and they are not in shape to even complete the first part of this attempt. They are not able to string the bow. And of course, we see Telemachus try it first. And whether he could -- there is this sense that he almost did it, but then he -- it's this whole, "I can't do this. I'm not my father," as it were. And we feel -- I mean he's still not totally reunited, although his identity has come a super long way. But we also notice, I think, that this is part of the ploy. So we have the viewers there in the room think, "Ah, Telemachus, he's just a kid. He can't do it." We as the readers are more like, "Oh, yes, he probably could have done it because he is in fact Odysseus' son." And that's interesting. But then, of course, it leads to the suitors trying and failing one after the other, after the other. And they are trying to grease the bow, and they are trying to do all of these different things, down to even ones that make excuses why they wouldn't be able to do that. We get -- we -- our attention again is kind of heightened. As it goes from suitor to suitor, we're wondering, "When will Odysseus get his hands on the bow? Isn't this what's going to happen?" We, of course, hear about the lineage of the bow itself, that it was a bow from Iphitus, the son of Eurypylus, who was killed by Heracles, of course in our earlier generation of heroes. So the bow itself has a genealogy. And that's important. And it was [INDISCERNIBLE] gift to Odysseus; so the perfect weapon to kill the suitors who, of course, have abolished [INDISCERNIBLE] had been the worst guest ever. So as we know, eventually it -- they -- Antinous uses the excuse of the Feast Day of Apollo, who, of course, is the god of archery, to put off the contest. Odysseus is going to, "Maybe we'll forget about it and I won't have to do it and be embarrassed," or there's something else that they're plotting, including potentially killing Telemachus; that, of course, is still very much up for grabs for them. And Odysseus as the beggar at this point suggests that while we're waiting for the real contest the next day, then they should let him try the bow. Of course, the -- our two sort of named suitors that we had met early in the poem, Antinous and Eurymachus speak against it as if, again, sort of figuring out that something is not kosher here and we're going to have trouble. But Penelope again speaks up for the beggar, which just makes Telemachus on the one hand scold her for sort of overstepping her boundary. Even though, again, this contest is for her, and -- but he is the man of the house right now, so he -- also this gives him the opportunity to get her out of danger, and sends her upstairs to her quarters, to the women's quarters. Eumaeus will give -- would hand Odysseus the bow. We know that Eurycleia is locking up the women servants in their quarters so they won't be in the midst of everything. We have Philoetius who had declared his loyalty to Odysseus, secure the gate of the house. And then, of course, Odysseus gets the bow,

effortlessly strings it, and then shoots the arrow all through the ax heads; so amazing like, "This is what wins the contest of the bow," as it were. Book 22, then, follows in very swift, very swift action. Though suitors and all the disloyal servants are killed, it seems a little bit anticlimactic because, of course, we've been waiting for this moment and then it happens really, really fast. But at the same time, the quick end is really important. It has to change in a way to not emphasize the killing. If it was told at the same pace and tone that we had seen in all of them trying to string the bow, it would really overemphasize for everyone what's happening, which is basically Odysseus killing all of these men, men of Ithaca, for the most part, and some from outside, but elite individuals. So he will, in fact, slaughter 108 unarmed men. And that's not something that we want to emphasize. It is -- becomes the least memorable book of the last four in the poem. And again, that is deliberate. So this is what has to happen. But you know what, we're not going to dwell on it, we're going to just let it flow by really quickly. And it reminds us of the way that the companions were dispatched in book 12, that they were, again, companions, suitors, obstacles that needed to be gotten out of the way, but to -- in order for Odysseus to resume his roles as king, father, husband, and son, all of those things that he's left behind and he needs to get back to. So they are in his way. We're going to get rid of them. Let's not overemphasize. We do have the battle going on in three parts. We start out with the slaughter of the bow, as we see here, this wonderful cup with Odysseus. And then on the other side -- and I'm sorry, I only have a black and white image of it, we have the suitors who mostly just because their weapons and their defensive gear have been locked up, they mostly have furniture to protect themselves; as we see here, one, of course, still reclining on the bed, another who had been reclining with him certainly who is just coming up, but we see has been shot in the back, and some -- yet another suitor who is hiding behind the table. So we have that sense that we are in that setting, the setting of where they've been eating, and feasting, and dining, and now they are sort of the sacrificial victims in a way. Let's -- we can think of it that way. So the slaughter with the bow; eventually it will come down to a spear fight. We have 12 suitors that -- and others that are armed, including Melanthius, the disloyal goat herd. But eventually, there will be a route and we will have everyone perish, save for a couple that are given mercy, a couple of attendees, including Phemius, who was a bard or a poet, and Medon, who was a herald. Both of them are spared in part because they are going to be the storytellers. They're the announcers. They're the witnesses that can communicate the importance of this event, and maybe even be the witnesses for why this event had to happen. We have servant women who are called to clean up -- let out and called to clean up the mess. And then they are hung by Telemachus. He uses a ship's cable to do this, and the ship's representing the escape, the potential escape and the victory for Odysseus, but of course not for them. They -- there were some servants who are spared, those ones that were -- declared their loyalty to Odysseus and were -- had said that they had had to serve the suitors only out of necessity, it wasn't out of desire; they are not ones that had been sleeping with him, for instance. The area is cleansed with what is essentially like fire and brimstone, and plus we have the punishment of the servants. And this is all important ritual act as well to clean the miasma and the murder. So a violent book, one that we know was the necessary outcome, what we've been told about all of this time; when it happens again, it happens quite quickly. But it's -- it is significant even though, again, it may be -- last in our memory the least amount, it's where things needed to be. And it's not the end of the poem, of course, that we, again, are reminded that ultimately, Penelope, the return of Odysseus into all of his roles represented by home, and wife, and son, and even his father we know is still alive but had removed himself from the palace and from society, all of that needed to be restored. In book 23, which is really Penelope's book, we will finally have the true reunion of Penelope and Odysseus. And it's really fascinating because we've seen all along that she has been a remarkable character in the sense that she's a woman who's had a voice and an identity, and we've learned much about her. And even though she seems to be smart and resourceful, she's coming out okay, he's not demonized the way many others including her cousin Clytemnestra were. She is shown as more of an archetype of the woman at home, the wife at home, who is smart and capable, but totally loyal to her husband. She doesn't fully overstep her female boundaries, let's say, that way, which is what made the danger of the suitor so strong, and the place of Telemachus so also tenuous. That idea that as he was young, and growing, and not the man of the house, was she in fact -- she could -- she didn't take over to the same extent that Clytemnestra had taken over at Mycenae. So we ourselves should always have expected a different

outcome because she was recounted as a different, more loyal, more virtuous character. But in book 23, we learn even more about her. And she is shown to be not only Odysseus' appropriate wife -- let's put it that way, appropriate soul mate, but is also his true counterpart. They, of course, as the two come together, that Eurycleia, of course, tells Penelope that the old beggar is really Odysseus and that he has killed all the suitors, because of course, she's been removed from the situation, which is for her own safety, especially. And of course, she is reluctant to believe the nurse. I mean, how could that be possible? Telemachus, of course, is upset with her for not immediately accepting the reality. And again, we have the sense that it's almost too good to be true. This is something she has dreamed about for 20 years. This is something that she has worked really hard and intelligently to plan for but -- and even though have -- showing us that she had hope, and showing us that she was loyal. She much -- she certainly had doubt and expressed doubt that these -- that this day would ever come and these things would ever happen. And she -- they are essentially virtual strangers. After 20 years, you can only imagine. They both have changed quite much, Odysseus much more, of course, with everything that he's been through including a ten-year war. It is disbelief on her part. But the focus is really on her. It's really about her, and her reaction, and the decisions that she takes. Odysseus, of course, says that they will recognize each other in time, and then sort of hints that they will know each other through secret signs. But he also recognizes what's happening and he says, "Well, we have to make noise and seem like we have a wedding party going on so that the people of Ithaca don't realize what has actually happened to the suitors." [ Background sounds ] She -- Penelope is the one who's going to react. Penelope is the one who is going to be the talker in the situation. And Odysseus is in fact uncharacteristically quiet and really says very little in their interactions. He has completed the contest for the hand of the queen. And we were reminded of that and what would mean for the two of them. Odysseus, of course, is bathed and transformed by Athena back to his sort of recognizable self. And we see the same lines, same exact lines from book six when he was bathed and glorified by Athena in Phaeacia. And we expect the same reaction from Penelope that we -- that he got from Nausicaa. And of course, he expects that as well. But Penelope, we are reminded, is no young inexperienced maiden. She's a married woman, a mother as well. And so in fact, there is no reaction. And we can tell that Odysseus is really upset by this. And this is when he pulls the whole, "Well, I'm going to go sleep on the couch," right? "I'll just sleep alone. It's fine since you obviously don't recognize me and don't believe any of this." And here we see Penelope at her best when she tests him by using the secret of their marriage bed and tells Eurycleia, "Well, go ahead, then, and drag our bed out of the chambers so that he can use it," since he should sleep alone and again, not in my chamber but somewhere else. And this just, right, sets Odysseus off. "This is impossible. What have you done? How could this be the case? No one can move our bed." Because in fact, he tells us how he built the bed around and incorporated into a living olive tree. And here's where, again, the olive tree is a safe space for him, and we understand that symbolism; and again, brings us back to Phaeacia and Nausicaa and shows this contrast with these two -- really the best female -- human female characters in the story, in that we can imagine that also the bed and the tree are rooted in the center of the house, and they symbolize the solid nature of their household, of their marriage, their relationship, even beyond that. And what's fascinating, of course, is that Odysseus has just revealed himself in a way that was not his plan and was somewhat uncalled for, and we realize that she alone in this entire story has been able to trick him into revealing his true identity. So therefore, she truly is his wife and deserving of him and he of her, that it's a two-way street and these are -- this is a relationship, these are characters that are really unparalleled in everything else that we have surviving from the ancient Greek literary tradition. It's really, really, really an amazing piece of literature, let's say. This whole scene means so much and tells us so much. He -- they -- she acknowledges him as her husband. All is well. They weep together in this case of happiness and joy. He tells her about his next journey that he needs to -- he's been told -- this is from -- and we know this is from Tiresias in the underworld, that he has to journey to the land of the people who we don't know the sea. But meanwhile, they go to bed together, they reconnect. They are now once again restored as husband and wife. He will tell her, of course, an edited version of his adventures. And then in the morning, he again makes sure that she is in her quarters safe, because he's expecting to fight all of the Ithacan families, the families of the suitors that he has killed. So then we go to our last book, the book -- book 24, which is really very much a fitting and necessary close to the story, but is a little different than the

conclusion maybe that it could have ended -- in other words, it could have ended at 23 and we would have been very happy with it, but -- and it first seems, "Well, this is kind of plodding along," but everything is important too to close up all the gaps and have closure. We have Odysseus reunite with his father; and also, of course, dealing with the families of the suitors. It is -- it's not as -- it is not really thematically concentrated or even totally connected, but it is very much a wrapping up of loose ends, right, so closure, a lot of wrapping up of all loose ends. We begin with a scene in the underworld where Hermes is leading the souls of the suitors. We have this exchange with Agamemnon and Achilles talking about their fates, including, interestingly, Agamemnon telling Achilles about his funeral, maybe signaling what the suitors would expect from their families since they themselves are not participants in it, but it's done in -- on their behalf. But they also talk about death and death with honor. And they obviously have to resolve their issues. So if we think about the start of the "Iliad" -- we can go all the way back to that, the start of the "Iliad", but the wrath of Achilles and this fight between Achilles and Agamemnon, and we end "The Odyssey" with the two of them palling around and talking together, and only they could resolve their issues, and they certainly seem to have done so; so that's a nice hook on that one. The poem -- this part of the poem of self-discovery for Odysseus began with his son and ends with his father, right, but also -- so we had that son/father/son situation. He doesn't actually reveal himself and is in fact rather cruel, and we're all like, "What are you doing?" But he does realize this. He's smart enough to see the reaction and the true grief his father displays, and they reunite. And of course, he talks about everything that's happened. And it's going to be important that the previous king of Ithaca is also there to support him. And we have -- though in the end, not an easy thing, we have some -- an actual fight, we have some individuals that are killed, we have Athena disguised as mentor joining in on them. But ultimately, she will command peace and the fighting will end. But it does resolve this whole rolling theme through the story of the revenge for relative slaying, which we saw even Poseidon and the Cyclops, and so on and so forth. So the families of the suitors are just in this to some extent in that, but also admittedly, things were not done as they should have been done in proper employed society, as it were. So we have -- that's the end of that. And I'll remind you that, of course, this is not the end of the story for Odysseus, that we know that there was an additional epoch that followed Odysseus off into the mainland somewhere where people didn't know of the sea, and talks about Telemachus taking over, and then his peaceful death among his successful family. So that's really where we end up with our story of the returns and the stories of the age of the heroes. So I'm going to finish up here for today. This is a good stopping point. Please don't forget to work on your term paper, that those are going to be, of course, due next week. And I look forward to talking to everyone about some Roman mythology next week. Thank you guys very much.