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Penguin Classics 0140268863

The Odyssey: Instruction Manual

Translated by Robert Fagles

1. INTRODUCTION

This manual provides guidance for engaging with *The Odyssey*, Homer's timeless epic poem, as translated by Robert Fagles. This edition, a Penguin Classic, is renowned for its accessible modern-verse translation, making it suitable for both classicists and general readers.

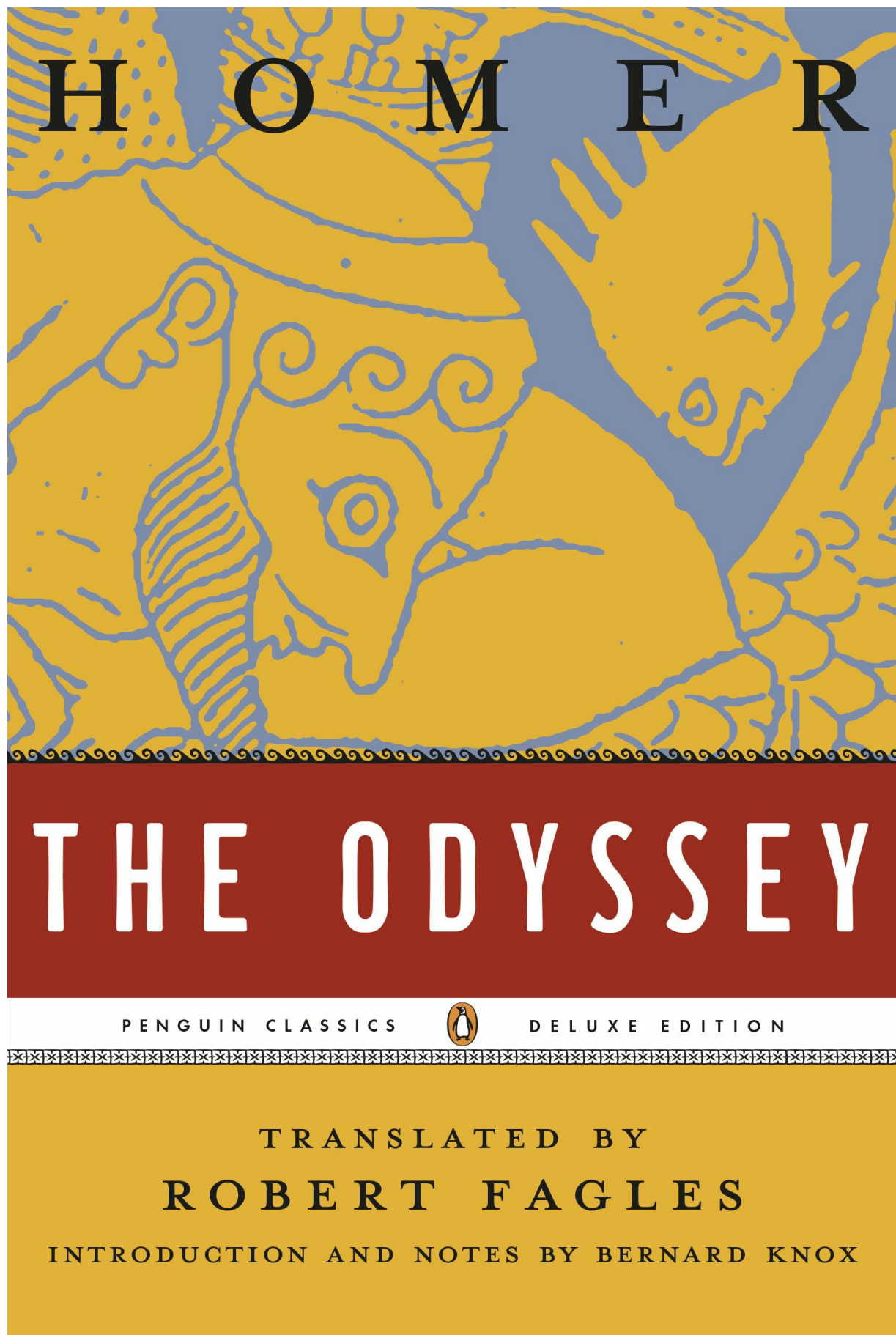


Figure 1.1: Front cover of *The Odyssey*, translated by Robert Fagles.

The Odyssey recounts the arduous wanderings of Odysseus during his ten-year voyage home to Ithaca after the Trojan War. It is a grand evocation of an everyman's journey through life, highlighting Odysseus' reliance on wit and williness for survival against divine and natural forces. The myths and legends within are magnificently retold, capturing the energy and poetry of Homer's original in a bold, contemporary idiom.

2. SETUP: PREPARING FOR YOUR READING JOURNEY

To optimize your reading experience, consider the following setup recommendations:

- **Lighting:** Ensure adequate lighting to prevent eye strain. Natural light is ideal, but a well-placed reading lamp can also suffice.
- **Comfort:** Find a comfortable reading position. This could be a quiet armchair, a desk, or any space where you can focus without distraction.
- **Materials:** Keep a pen or pencil and a notebook nearby for jotting down thoughts, questions, or key passages. This can enhance comprehension and engagement.
- **Pre-reading:** Familiarize yourself with the introduction and notes provided by Bernard Knox. These sections offer invaluable background information and textual commentary that can deepen your understanding of the epic.

3. OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS: ENGAGING WITH THE TEXT

Reading an epic poem like *The Odyssey* can be a profound experience. Here are instructions for effective engagement:

1. **Pacing:** Do not feel rushed. *The Odyssey* is meant to be savored. Read at a pace that allows you to absorb the rich language and complex narrative.
2. **Utilize Resources:** Refer frequently to the translator's notes and the introduction. These sections clarify historical context, mythological references, and literary devices, which are crucial for understanding the nuances of the text.
3. **Character Tracking:** Keep track of the numerous characters, both mortal and divine. The provided glossary can be an excellent tool for this.
4. **Themes and Motifs:** Pay attention to recurring themes such as hospitality, fate, disguise, and the nature of heroism. Reflect on how these themes develop throughout Odysseus's journey.
5. **Read Aloud:** As an oral tradition, *The Odyssey* benefits from being read aloud. This can help in appreciating the lyrical mastery and poetic rhythm of Fagles' translation.

4. MAINTENANCE AND CARE

To ensure the longevity and pristine condition of your copy of *The Odyssey*, follow these care guidelines:

- **Storage:** Store the book upright on a bookshelf or flat in a cool, dry place away from direct sunlight. Excessive heat or humidity can damage the pages and binding.
- **Handling:** Handle the book with clean, dry hands. Avoid folding pages to mark your place; use a bookmark instead.
- **Protection:** If the book has a dust jacket, keep it on to protect the cover from wear and tear.
- **Cleaning:** For minor dust, gently wipe the cover and page edges with a soft, dry cloth. Avoid using liquids or abrasive cleaners.

5. TROUBLESHOOTING COMMON READING CHALLENGES

Readers may encounter certain challenges when delving into classical literature. Here are some common issues and their resolutions:

Problem	Solution
Difficulty understanding archaic language or complex metaphors.	Consult the footnotes and the introduction. Robert Fagles' translation aims for contemporary idiom, but some concepts may still require clarification. Re-reading passages can also help.
Losing track of characters or plot points.	Utilize the character list or glossary often found at the beginning or end of the book. Consider creating your own brief notes or family trees for key figures.
Physical book quality issues (e.g., ribbed pages, poor cuts).	While rare, manufacturing defects can occur. If your book exhibits significant quality issues that impede reading, refer to the 'Warranty and Support' section for guidance on contacting the publisher or retailer.

6. SPECIFICATIONS

Key details for *The Odyssey* (Paperback, Robert Fagles translation):

- **ASIN:** 0140268863
- **Publisher:** Penguin Classics
- **Publication Date:** November 29, 1999
- **Edition:** Reprint
- **Language:** English
- **Print Length:** 541 pages
- **ISBN-10:** 9780140268867
- **ISBN-13:** 978-0140268867
- **Item Weight:** 1.35 pounds
- **Reading Age:** 18 years and up
- **Dimensions:** 8.4 x 5.7 x 1.5 inches
- **Lexile Measure:** 1050L

7. WARRANTY AND SUPPORT

As a literary work, *The Odyssey* does not typically come with a traditional product warranty. However, if you receive a copy with manufacturing defects (e.g., missing pages, severe binding issues, or improperly cut pages as noted in some customer feedback), please contact the retailer from whom you purchased the book for a replacement or refund.

For general inquiries about Penguin Classics publications or specific details regarding this edition, you may visit the official Penguin Classics website or contact their customer service department. Contact information is usually available on the publisher's website or within the book's initial pages.

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