

**Odyssey Discussion Question Books 13-18**

**Chapter Summaries: Write a brief, one sentence description for what happens in each of the following chapters.**

Book 13: Odysseus reaches Ithaca, Athena's disguise

Book 14: meet S

Book 15:

Book 16:

Book 17:

Book 18:

**Some questions for thought.**

1. Keeping names straight: identify the names of the swineherd, goatherd, and cowherd, respectively. (Cowherd does not appear until Book 20, pg. 416)  
 swineherd - Eumaeus  
 goatherd - Melanthius
2. The story changes considerably in the second half of the poem. Identify at least three ways in which the narrative changes from the first half of the poem. (Dig into the text here, don't just identify obvious differences like the fact that Odysseus is now at home as opposed to being at sea)

3. One of the major ways the narrative shifts in the second half of the poem is in the type of trial Odysseus faces. Whereas the dangers he faced on his journey were external, testing his physical and mental fortitude, upon his return home he now faces a series of emotional trials. Though different, these emotional trials are no less dangerous than the ones he faced at sea; he must remain disguised if he wishes to survive. Identify at least four emotional trials Odysseus faces upon reaching Ithaca and *why* they are so difficult.

seeing his wife being courted - he loves his wife

seeing his son - miss childhood

seeing his palace being wrecked - his home is... gone

seeing abuse from suitors - hard to control his rage

④ Melanthius - evil goatherd, ticks

⑤ dog - decripit

4. Odysseus faces his first emotional trial upon reaching Ithaca's shores. Skim back through pgs. 292-297. How is this an emotional trial for Odysseus? Why is it necessary that Athena test Odysseus?

suppresses his emotions

5. On pg. 293, re-read lines 228-231. Why is it ironic that Odysseus asks this question given his current location?

ironic because this is home and his palace has a lot of treasure.

6. In literature, a **foil** is a secondary character who contrasts with a major character (or group of characters) in order to highlight certain qualities of the major character. For example, we discussed in a roundabout way how Patroclus was a foil to Achilles in terms of emotional stability and compassion. In the *Odyssey* (particularly in Book 14) how does Eumaeus serve as a foil to the suitors? gentle, friendly swineherd

\*

\*Xenia

- reverant to master (Odysseus)
- suitors are abusive, Eumaeus loves son Telemachus
- rich heartless/poor-cold
- loyal

7. Odysseus designs a plan for the defeat of the suitors. Skim back through pages 347-348. What three instructions does Odysseus give to Telemachus?

- don't tell anyone I'm Odysseus
- take weapons + store them
- steel yourself, don't respond to my abuse

8. On page 363 re-read lines 317-360. How is Argos a visual symbol of the state of affairs in Ithaca?

Argos - desecration + ~~depower~~ <sup>empoverishment</sup> of the nation