

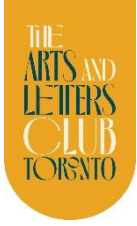


What is *Night Journey* About?

Four mature students arrive for the first evening of a college course in “The Odyssey and Ancient Wisdom” and discover that they, and their aging, inept professor, have been consigned to a dusty storeroom in the basement. There is nothing to do but begin, and as our students and professor tangle with the Odyssey, we discover that each is dealing with a painful past and all are in quest of a way forward.

Will their struggle to understand The Odyssey bring the characters closer together and allow them to move forward with their lives? Do we each have it within ourselves to become courageous heroes, like Odysseus and Penelope?

Two additional characters round out the cast: the chairman of the literary department and an enigmatic woman whom they inadvertently invite into their class.



A Synopsis of The Odyssey

You don't have to read *The Odyssey* to enjoy *Night Journey*. But, for those interested in the tale, here is a synopsis:

The *Odyssey* is an ancient Greek epic poem recounting the perilous, 10-year journey of Odysseus as he returns home to Ithaca following 10 years of war against the Trojans. The story explores themes of character, courage, wisdom, political order/disorder, concealment and the struggle to return to one's true self and home.

The tale begins in Ithaca, where Odysseus's loyal wife, Penelope, is besieged by suitors vying for her hand and his throne. As the island kingdom descends into chaos, Odysseus' son, Telemachus, struggles to maintain order and seeks news of his father's fate. The poem then shifts to Odysseus, who is approaching the end of his long journey. Until now, the story has been told by the narrator, Homer. Finally, we hear the voice of Odysseus as he recounts to the semi-divine Phaeacians his tales of wandering. These stories include encounters with the Lotus Eaters, the Cyclops Polyphemus, the enchantresses Circe and Calypso, the Sirens, the monsters Scylla and Charybdis and a visit to the Underworld.

Throughout, Odysseus's cunning—more than brute strength—defines his heroism.

Ultimately, Odysseus returns to Ithaca in disguise, reunites with Telemachus, and together they defeat and slay the suitors who have overrun his kingdom. Odysseus now proves to the doubting Penelope that he is who he claims to be and reclaims his place as king and husband, restoring order to Ithaca.