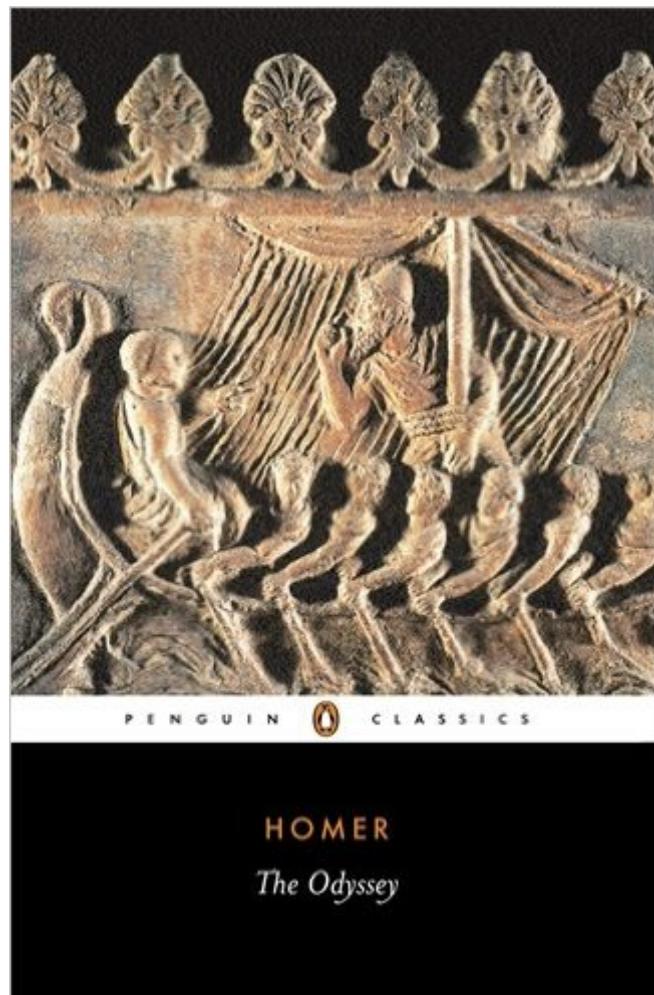


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The Odyssey (Penguin Classics)



Synopsis

The epic tale of Odysseus' journey home – one of the earliest and greatest works of Western literature. If the *Iliad* is the world's greatest war epic, the *Odyssey* is literature's grandest evocation of an everyman's journey through life. Odysseus' reliance on his wit and wiliness for survival in his encounters with divine and natural forces during his ten-year voyage home to Ithaca after the Trojan War is at once a timeless human story and an individual test of moral endurance. E. V. Rieu's translation has long been beloved and celebrated by scholars and readers alike, and for this Penguin Classics edition, classicist D. C. H. Rieu has revised the work of his father. This edition also includes an introduction by Peter V. Jones.

For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is Alexander Pope's verse translation of the *Odyssey*, first published in 1726, glommed into a kindle edition. It is not formatted for the Kindle and is thus very difficult to read -- instead of stanzas, it's all oddly-broken chunks that vaguely resemble paragraphs, presumably an artifact of whatever software was used to scan the original text. To add to that, it's poetry *by Alexander Pope*, and thus

largely in heroic couplets, deliberately archaic even to the ear of Pope's 18th-century contemporaries, with "thou"s scattered throughout -- there's a reason that William Wordsworth thought Pope's poetry archaic and artificial. As this is a "kindle bestseller" but there aren't any other listed reviews, I suspect a lot of people are (like myself) downloading this for their kindles because it shows up readily in a search for "Odyssey", and then getting stymied by the five-hundred-"location" introductory essay (written, as best I can tell, in the early 1800's, and thus hopelessly outdated by little things like two hundred year's worth of Homerian scholarship, Schliemann's discovery of Troy, etc.) and the near-impenetrable arrangement of the text. If anyone can find a better-formatted free-download kindle version of the Odyssey (perhaps a prose translation?) please link me to it in a comment. Thanks.

How frustrating that Wildside Press didn't include more with their complete text of Pope's translation. Not only is there no mention of Fenton and Broome, the two men who actually translated 12 of the 24 books--not only are none of Broome's notes included, but there is no annotation whatever, no bibliography of recommended further reading, no criticism, not even a decent history of the translation or of Pope himself, aside from a single reductive paragraph by Theodore Alois Buckley (who edited the text and wrote the rather flowery introduction--in fact there isn't even a date for the introduction--it's Victorian but Wildside doesn't make that clear). Even the back cover is misleading, attributing a Samuel Johnson quote to the Odyssey, when it referred explicitly to the Iliad. Finally, there is no line-numbering, so this edition would be difficult to teach or reference in a paper. Not a scholarly edition.

I own a number of translations of Homer, and the Rieu/Jones translations of The Odyssey and The Iliad are among my favourite (the others are Albert Cook's and Mandelbaum's translation of The Odyssey). I like all these better than the Fagles since they are more faithful to the original text. If you order this book, grab yourself a Cliff Notes just so you get the necessary background info so it all makes sense. Good luck!

I too like some of the reviewers was close to removing this free edition from my Kindle as I began to wonder when The Odyssey would begin. It starts at 8 % or location 413 on the third Kindle type size. The first 8% is a biography of Homer and a critique of Alexander Pope's translation of Homer's The Odyssey. I found the biography interesting and The Odyssey itself is a great Greek epic. A linked table of contents would have been nice and a page break between the foreword and the start

of the actual work would have been appreciated. So I take off a star for that. With Kindle's bookmarking, highlighting, note adding feature, and search feature you can quickly find and go anywhere though from your Kindle menu so the point becomes moot. Then I add a half star back for it was free anyways.

Alexander Pope's translation of Homer's *Odyssey* ranks as a wonderful lesson in how not to translate. Successive generations have pilloried Pope's wholecloth fabrication translation, in which he forces an unrhymed epic poem into the straitjacket of heroic couplets. No remark hits as aptly as that of Bentley's famous criticism: "A fine Poem, Mr. Pope, but you must not call it Homer." Okay--let's not call it Homer. Let's call it "Pope's Epic Greek Poem Loosely Based on Homer," and then let's call it magnificent. In any language, and with any emendations, the *Odyssey* is an *odyssey* of sorts in the reading. Long, rambling, filled with a thousand references that only a footnoted text or Grecian scholar could explain, getting through this massive tale takes endurance, pluck, and courage. Pope's version makes the rough parts easier going, and makes the great parts positively, well, English. When Ulysses returns home and smashes the jaw of the impudent slave, crushing the bone and bathing the floor in blood, it's enough to make you feel like you're watching the Raiders play at home. The goosebump sections are so powerful and speak with such majesty through the genius of Homer and the genius of Pope, that you'll fling down the Kindle in search of a Trojan War and a ten year journey home. That was the blind poet's intent, right? Right.

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