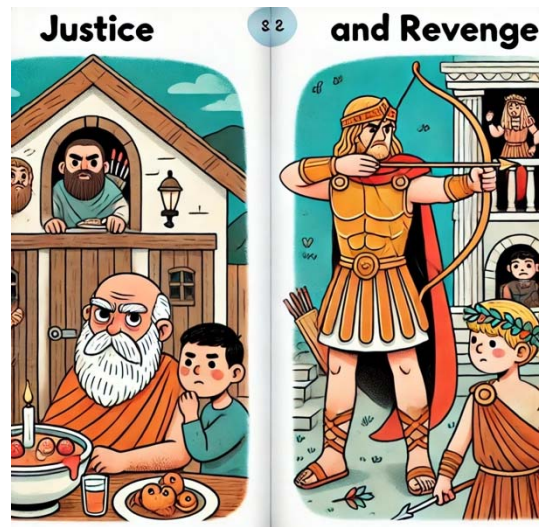


Name \_\_\_\_\_



## Justice and Revenge

After twenty years away from home, Odysseus finally returns to Ithaca. But instead of a joyful homecoming, he finds his palace overrun by suitors—men who have been eating his food, mistreating his servants, and demanding that his wife, Penelope, choose one of them to marry. Odysseus is furious, but instead of rushing into battle, he carefully plans his revenge. His actions show that *The Odyssey* explores

two important themes: justice and revenge.

To take back his home, Odysseus disguises himself as a beggar with the help of the goddess Athena. This allows him to see how the suitors behave without them knowing who he is. He watches as they mock him, refuse him food, and continue to disrespect his household. Meanwhile, Penelope remains loyal to Odysseus and tests the suitors with a difficult challenge: whoever can string Odysseus's great bow and shoot an arrow through twelve axe heads will win her hand in marriage. None of the suitors succeed. But when the disguised Odysseus steps forward, he strings the bow with ease and completes the challenge. Then, with the help of his son, Telemachus, and a few loyal servants, Odysseus reveals his true identity and attacks the suitors.

Some might wonder: is Odysseus seeking justice or simple revenge? The suitors have broken the sacred Greek law of hospitality by taking over his home, treating his wife poorly, and abusing his servants. In Greek culture, the gods were believed to punish those who mistreated guests or disrespected hosts. By defeating the suitors, Odysseus restores order and fairness to his home.

However, Odysseus does not spare any of the suitors, even those who beg for mercy. This leads to a bigger question: is complete revenge truly just? His actions show the blurred line between justice and revenge—one that is often explored in Greek myths.

In the end, Odysseus proves that justice is about restoring balance, but his harsh punishment of the suitors also shows that revenge can go too far. This final battle in *The Odyssey* teaches us that while justice is important, too much revenge can lead to more problems.