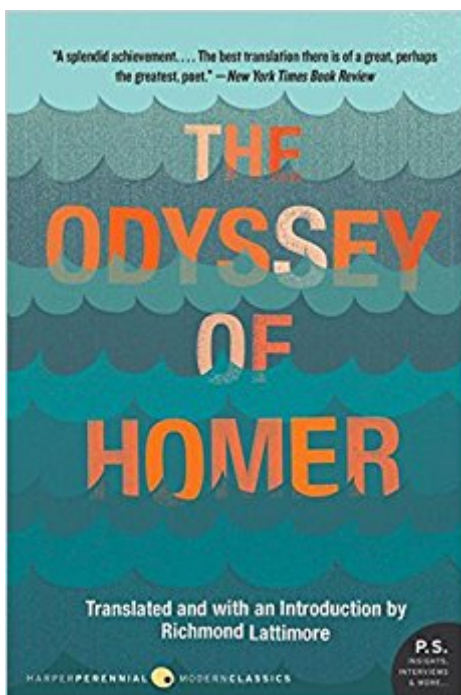


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# The Odyssey Of Homer



## Synopsis

Homer's great epic *The Odyssey* "one of Western literature's most enduring and important works" translated by Richmond Lattimore. A classic for the ages, *The Odyssey* recounts Odysseus' journey home after the Trojan War and the obstacles he faces along the way to reclaim his throne, kingdom, and family in Ithaca. During his absence, his steadfast and clever wife, Penelope, and now teenaged son, Telemachus, have lived under the constant threat of ruthless suitors, all desperate to court Penelope and claim the throne. As the suitors plot Telemachus' murder, the gods debate Odysseus' fate. With help from the goddess Athena, the scattered family bides their time as Odysseus battles his way through storm and shipwreck, the cave of the Cyclops, the isle of witch-goddess Circe, the deadly Sirens' song, a trek through the Underworld, and the omnipresent wrath of the scorned god Poseidon. An American poet and classicist, Richmond Lattimore's translation of *The Odyssey* is widely considered among the best available in the English language. Lattimore breathes modern life into Homer's epic, bringing this classic work of heroes, monsters, vengeful gods, treachery, and redemption to life for modern readers.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The most eloquent translation of Homer's epic chronicle of the Greek hero Odysseus and his arduous journey home after the Trojan War

Richmond Lattimore was born in 1906. He was considered one of the leading translators of Greek classical literature. He died in 1984



preferred Fitzgerald, but easy for her to do, she could read anything in Greek without any help. For us mortals with mostly forgotten Greek, or no Greek at all, closeness to the original in a translation should be treasured. In the end, translating Homer is a game of compromises, How much of the strangeness of 2500 year old lines and 3200 year old motivations do you keep? Dactylic hexameter calls for lines much longer than any form of English verse, so shorter lines or not? And so on. For me, Fagles is as far to compromise with how English verse should go as I am willing to accept. For what it's worth, Lattimore's English verse is better than his critics complain of. Starting from no knowledge of Greek, I'd choose Green. Over Lattimore because it's friendlier for the beginner and not worse as far as I can tell for a serious third reading. Over Fagles because the true-to-the-Greek line lengths convey the way the poem drives itself forward better in Green's line by line than in Fagles's free verse. Also. The introduction includes a plot summary of the whole Trojan War, of which the Iliad only covers a small portion. I have never seen such a succinct and complete synopsis before. There is also a synopsis of the poem keyed to the poem in the back matter to help find your place, an enlightening glossary of names and concepts to help you through your first read, and footnotes to inform the reader of context that has since been lost. Word to the wise re: Kindles. These are long verse lines. To get complete lines on a Kindle screen, you need a Kindle that allows text to display in landscape mode. Even then, complete lines only work in a very small font size. Get this in hardback for now. The hardback is stitched and bound to keep, so it is worth your money.

This is not a book review, but a warning: there is a technical problem with this page. I received a different translation than the one shown here, and apparently the page changes randomly (since someone else says this is the page for buying a copy of the Iliad!). I've reported the problem and it is being looked into. Because you can't leave a review without a star rating, I've using one star for this warning. That's no reflection on the book described here, which I hope to purchase once corrects this problem. I know this is an unusual use of book reviews, but I think it's important for people to know that if they purchase from this page there is no telling what they might receive. I will delete this once the problem is solved,

This review is concerned with the translation of Homer's Iliad by Anthony Verity: it is about the intellectual product, not some essentially irrelevant technical issue regarding the vending of the work. Anthony Verity set out to faithfully translate the original text (as best we know it) of Homer's great poem. He clearly states that "It does not claim to be poetry: my aim has been to use a straightforward English register and to keep closely to the Greek, allowing Homer to speak for

himself -- for example, in the use of repeated epithets and descriptions of recurrent scenes." Verity has carefully preserved the line numeration of the original, yielding a translation which matches the original line by line. The first-time reader of the Iliad might prefer a more classically poetic rendition, such as those by Lattimore, Fitzgerald, or Fagles, or perhaps a faster moving translation such as those by Lombardo, Reck, and, now, Mitchell. But with the Verity translation, the reader can be assured that he/she is getting something that hews quite closely to the original in structure and language, with style and word choices not artificially forced by some particular metrical scheme or in pursuit of rapidity as an end in itself. And the reader may be assured that the translation is by no means dull and plodding. Verity's choice to present his translation in what physically looks like poetic verse (in separate lines rather than a solid mass of prose) serves both to remind us of the Iliad's origin as a great poem as well as enhance its value as a classroom tool and reference, with lines of the original text readily located in Verity's rendition. And his retention of the characteristic epithets as vital to the poem's meaning (rather than dismissing them as merely technical expedients used to achieve a set meter, as some translators are prone to do) does much to preserve an authentic Homeric flavor. This translation may not have been intentionally written as free verse, but de facto it functions as a free verse poem. This is not the finest English poetic rendition of Homer's great poem, but it may well be the best way for an English language reader to best approach the real heart of the Iliad.

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