



The Odyssey of Homer: Translated by T.E. Lawrence

Homer, T. E. Lawrence

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Colonel T.E. Lawrence was one of the most flamboyant figures of his era, known throughout the Western world as Lawrence of Arabia. Glory-seeking yet self-effacing, this soldier, archaeologist, spy, and scholar was a war hero whom Winston Churchill called "one of the greatest men of our time." Less well known were his abilities as historian and author, which won him the admiration of such writers as Ezra Pound, W.H. Auden, and Robert Graves.

While stationed on a desolate R.A.F. outpost on the fringes of the Karachi desert in India, Lawrence began his acclaimed translation of *The Odyssey*. He devoted himself to the project for four years, and during that time he came to feel that he was uniquely suited to the task. "I have hunted wild boars and watched wild lions," he wrote. "Built boats and killed many men. So I have odd knowledges that qualify me to understand *The Odyssey*, and odd experiences that interpret it to me." Relying on an innate sense of language and truly gifted abilities at translation, Lawrence transformed Homer's *Odyssey* into mellifluous prose. The result was an overnight bestseller. *The New York Herald Tribune* hailed it "perhaps the most interesting translation of the world's most interesting book," and *The New York Times* called it "ruggedly and roughly masculine" and added that it "gives a vividness to the story beyond any other text familiar to us."

Lawrence breathes new life into the adventures of Odysseus, smoothing the reader's path through a fantastic array of monsters, temptresses, gods, and goddesses. For a generation of readers accustomed to verse translations of Homer, this bold and vivid prose version is well worth rediscovery.

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