4B—The Adventures of Odysseus

Odysseus has just won the Trojan War and he and his crewmates are ready to sail home to Ithaca. Zeus, Hera and Athena are impressed with the wisdom and heroic actions of Odysseus. However, Poseidon is skeptical and keeps a watchful eye out as Odysseus embarks on his journey.

Short on supplies, Odysseus and his crewmate Elpenor stop at a nearby island. They find food in the cave of Polyphemus, the one-eyed cyclops. Polyphemus is angry and traps the warriors in his cave. While the cyclops sleeps, Odysseus and Elpenor stab him in his one eye. Chaos ensues. To make their escape, the warriors hide on the bellies of the sheep and eventually return safely to their boat. However, injuring Polyphemus, the son of Poseidon, only angers the god even more who now vows to make Odysseus’ return home even more challenging.

The next adventure takes Odysseus past the island where the Siren Sisters live. They try to lure Odysseus to their island with their stunning vocals, in hopes of eating him. Odysseus’s crewmate Epeius outsmarts the sisters by filling his ears with beeswax and Odysseus ties himself to the mast. The sisters are disappointed when Odysseus sails right past their island.

Odysseus must then face Scylla and Charybdis, two ferocious monsters of the sea. Eurybates, Odysseus’ crewmate, is terrified and wants to figure out which monster will be more generous on their journey. Scylla and Charybdis bicker about who is more fierce and eventually one enjoys a hearty meal of several of the sailors. Odysseus travels on.

Once again needing to stop to find food, Odysseus’ crewmates Eurylochus and Perimedes convince him to stop on the island where the golden cattle live. Odysseus warns his men not to hunt the sacred cattle, but they do not listen. This angers Zeus who sends a terrible storm and lightning bolts which causes their boat to catch fire. The crewmates do not make it out alive from this adventure, but Odysseus travels on.

In the end, Poseidon is still not pleased, but the gods recognize the heroic, creative, clever, courageous and cunning adventures of Odysseus.
Hera is angry at Zeus for having yet another mortal child. Although Zeus adores Heracles, Hera casts a spell on Heracles, causing him to kill his wife and children. Devastated, Heracles visits the oracle of Delphi who tells Heracles that he must perform tasks to earn forgiveness and immortality. She sends Heracles to King Eurystheus who works with Hera to devise seemingly impossible labors.

Heracles’s first task is to kill the mighty Nemean Lion. The Nemean Lion has impenetrable skin so Heracles must be both clever and strong to defeat him. Once Heracles does, Heracles takes the lion’s skin as his cloak and helmet. Eurystheus then sends Heracles, and his companion Iolas, to defeat the frightening and poisonous Lernean Hydra. The Hydra has nine heads and, each time Heracles cuts one off, two grow in its place. It is Iolas who realizes that they can use his torch to sear the Hydra’s neck to stop new heads from growing.

Heracles completes many other tasks, upsetting Eurystheus and Hera but pleasing Zeus. Eurystheus then sends Heracles to pick some of the golden apples of Hesperides. On his way, Heracles meets Prometheus, the titan who Zeus punished for sharing fire with mortals. As an act of kindness, Heracles unbinds Prometheus and Prometheus then gives Heracles advice about how to get the apples. Heracles enlists the help of Atlas, the mighty titan who holds up the sky, by promising to hold the sky while Atlas picks the apples from the tree. However, Heracles must first defeat Ladon, a bold 100-headed monster who guards the orchard. Heracles prevails but has to overcome Atlas trying to double-cross him.

Eurystheus then gives Heracles his final labor—bringing the three-headed dog Cerberus out of the Underworld and away from Hades. While terrifying, Heracles gains the approval of Hades and then finds a way to deliver Cerberus to Eurystheus, thus gaining hard-earned forgiveness.

Finally, upon Heracles’ death, Hades and Zeus decide to make Heracles a constellation and even Hera agrees that Heracles deserves that immortality.
Bellerophon, Pegasus and the Chimera

The great **Zeus and Athena** slide down a rainbow from Mt. Olympus to Earth. They encounter our hero, **Bellerophon**, and his wonderfully winged horse, **Pegasus**. Bellerophon starts out humbly and graciously thanking Athena for giving him the golden bridle which allows him to tame and ride Pegasus.

For Bellerophon and Pegasus’ first adventure together, they are asked by **King Iobates** and his daughter, **Princess of Lycia**, to slay the horrible monster that has been terrorizing their kingdom: The Chimera. **The Chimera is made of three ferocious animals: the lion, the goat and a poisonous snake.** Bellerophon and Pegasus slay The Chimera, but Bellerophon becomes boastful and pompous. Zeus must teach Bellerophon a lesson—he sends the **Horsefly** to sting Pegasus, so he can no longer ride him. The Horsefly then conveys the moral of the myth: a true hero appreciates his friends and shows humility.

Theseus and Minotaur

**King Minos** and **Queen Pasiphae** of Crete heartwarmingly thank the masterful architect, **Daedalus** for creating their Palace of Knossos. During this acclamation, jealous **Poseidon** surfs in wanting Crete to honor him more often. Poseidon demands a white bull to be killed and a festival to honor him. Lonely Queen Pasiphae, however, befriends the white bull so he does not get sacrificed. For this, Poseidon curses Queen Pasiphae so that her baby is born the hideous **half bull**, and **half human monster** named the Minotaur.

The Minotaur must eat human flesh, so King Minos decides to have Daedalus create a labyrinth to jail it, and feed The Minotaur the conquered citizens of Athens. **King Aegeus** of Athens and his son, **Prince Theseus**, obviously do not like this idea. Brave and heroic Prince Theseus decides he will stop this atrocious feeding. Prince Theseus tells his father he will sail to Crete with a black sail, and upon his success of killing the Minotaur, return with a white sail. While landing on the island of Crete, Prince Theseus is greeted by the lovely **Princess Ariadne**. She gives him a ball of yarn to help remember his way out of the labyrinth. Princess Ariadne and Prince Theseus also decide to marry upon his victory. The almighty god, **Dionysis**, however, sitting upon Mt. Olympus, sees Ariadne and
decides he wants her, so arranges for her to fall asleep on an island. Prince Theseus then sails off without her.

Upon finally reaching Athens, King Aegeus sees the black sail, which Prince Theseus forgot to change to white, so believes his son was killed by the Minotaur. Heartbroken, King Aegeus throws himself into the sea and drowns. Dionysis explains how King Aegeus is forever honored by naming this sea, The Aegean Sea, and that the ancient Greek heroes will forever stand the test of time.