**The Odyssey – Book 21**

**Read lines 1-67**

The bow itself is the main character of this book. Homer takes his time when dealing with items of significance but none more than this one. Collect quotes to show the bows significance:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Quote | Explanation |
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The story of Odysseus receiving the bow is told with the following ring-composition:

9 – chamber

9 – stored away

13 – gift of Iphitus

15 – they met

17 – Odysseus went on an errand

20 – Odysseus travelled

22 – Iphitus was searching

31 – Iphitus was searching

31 – Iphitus met Odysseus

38 – Iphitus gave it to Odysseus

40 – stored away

42 – chamber

What effect would this have on the audience?

Why does it take 53 lines for Penelope to retrieve the bow?

How does Penelope react to the bow? Why?

**Read lines 68-136**

What is ironic about Antinous’ initial appraisal of the trial?

Why does Homer have Telemachus attempt the bow when he clearly needs the trial to continue and yet needs to show Telemachus is Odysseus’ heir?

**Read lines 137-188**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Suitor | Reason for failure | Reaction to failure |
| Leodes |  |  |

How does Antinous respond?

**Read lines 189-244**

Why does Odysseus ask one final question to his servants in disguise?

How and why does Odysseus say he will favour Eumaeus and Philoetius?

Briefly outline Odysseus plan:

**Read lines 245-274**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Suitor | Reason for failure | Reaction to failure |
| Eurymachus |  |  |

How does Antinous respond?

**Read lines 275-358**

**Read lines 359-434**

What steps does Homer take to heighten the tension before Odysseus strings the bow?

What two things immediately change the atmosphere after the bow is strung?

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How does Homer show that Odysseus completes the challenge with ease?

How does the book ending remind the audience of the *Iliad*?