OpenEarBooks.com Launches Two Free Audiobook Versions of The Odyssey as Nolan's Film Renews Interest in the Epic Story

One poem. Two versions. Hear them. Read them. Compare them side by side.



RENO, NV, UNITED STATES, September 23, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As Christopher Nolan's The Odyssey brings Homer's nearly 3,000-year-old epic to a new generation of moviegoers, OpenEarBooks.com is offering audiences a different way to experience the story that inspired the film.

The newly launched website presents Homer's Odyssey in two complete versions: Samuel Butler's 1900 English translation and a new plain-English adaptation of Butler's text. Visitors can listen to either version as an audiobook, read either version, or place the two texts side by side, matched paragraph for paragraph, to compare them as they read or listen.

Each of the poem's 24 books also opens with a short introduction written specifically for that edition. Each provides historical, cultural, mythological, and literary context to help readers understand what is coming, without giving the story away.

Everything on OpenEarBooks.com is free. There is no subscription, no account to create, and no credit card required.

The story behind Nolan's film begins with a simple premise: a soldier tries to get home from a war that ended ten years ago. His wife is holding off a house full of suitors. His son has gone looking for him. Nobody at home knows whether he is alive.

For modern readers who want to discover that story for themselves, there can be two barriers. The language of older translations can be difficult to follow, and the ancient world Homer assumed his audience understood can be unfamiliar today.

Open Ear Books is designed to address both.

The first edition, The Odyssey (Annotated), Translated by Samuel Butler, preserves Butler's complete 1900 prose translation. Butler used Roman names such as Ulysses and Minerva; this edition restores the Greek names Odysseus and Athena while otherwise preserving his translation.

The second edition, The Odyssey in Plain English (Annotated), makes Butler's 125-year-old English easier for a modern reader to follow. Old-fashioned words are updated, long sentences are broken up, and unfamiliar expressions are said plainly. Nothing is abridged. The same events, descriptions, characters, and story remain.

Printed paperback editions of both versions are also available on Amazon.

The site's side-by-side mode puts Butler's translation on one side of the screen and the plain-English version on the other, with corresponding passages matched paragraph for paragraph. A reader who encounters a difficult passage in Butler can simply look across the page to see the same passage expressed in modern English. Separate audio players allow visitors to hear either version.

The introductions address the other barrier. Rather than summarize each book or reveal what happens, they explain the ancient customs, mythology, historical background, and literary context a modern reader may need to understand what is coming.

"Christopher Nolan's film is introducing an enormous new audience to a story people have been telling for thousands of years," said Harry Brown, publisher of Open Ear Books and writer of the introductions. "We wanted to make it as easy as possible for someone to experience Homer's story for themselves. Hear Butler's translation or hear the poem in plain English. Read either one or put them side by side and compare them. And before each book begins, we'll give you the context that helps it make sense, without telling you what's going to happen."

The Odyssey is available now at OpenEarBooks.com, along with a growing library of free audiobooks.

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Media Contact

Harry Brown
Open Ear Books
+1 775-550-4754
harry@openearbooks.com
Visit us on social media:
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X

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