Allison White, "Entry on: Argos: The Story of Odysseus as Told by His Loyal Dog by Ralph Hardy", peer-reviewed by Elizabeth Hale and Daniel A. Nkemleke. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/717. Entry version as of November 04, 2026.

Ralph Hardy

Argos: The Story of Odysseus as Told by His Loyal Dog

United States of America (2016)

TAGS: Argos (Dog) Cyclops / Cyclopes Gods Odysseus / Ulysses Sirens





We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	Argos: The Story of Odysseus as Told by His Loyal Dog
Country of the First Edition	United States of America
Country/countries of popularity	United States of America
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2016
First Edition Details	Ralph Hardy, *Argos: The Story of Odysseus as Told by His Loyal Dog*. New York: Harper, 2016, 382 pp.
ISBN	9780062396785
Genre	Novels
Target Audience	Children (primary school age (8–12))
Author of the Entry	Allison White, University of New England, awhite55@une.edu.au
Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Elizabeth Hale, University of New England, ehale@une.edu.au Daniel A. Nkemleke, University of Yaounde 1, nkemlekedan@yahoo.com

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Creators



Ralph Hardy , b. 1960
(Author)

Ralph Hardy is an American author, born in Massachusetts, 1960. With his four siblings, including his twin brother, David, Hardy had lived in Massachusetts, Japan and Maryland up to the age of four, where his father had been stationed by the Air Force. At the age of five, Hardy's mother died of lung cancer, so his widowed father requested to be stationed in his home state, North Carolina. As a teenager, Hardy worked every summer in the tobacco fields – an experience which he later developed into an award-winning short story while he was in Grad School. At the age of 18 he left his hometown to study at the University of North Carolina. He continued to write during this time and his teachers noticed that he had a talent for story-writing, but that he did not approach it with any real discipline. In 1987, Hardy won a writers' fellowship, which was the turning point in his career. During his college years, he worked in restaurants and roofing, which later became the subject of his novel Lefty, which he self-published in 2004. After college, Hardy worked as a free-lance editor for WHO, and then worked as a grant writer for a Refugee Social Service Agency in Chicago. During this time, he completed a Master of Fine Arts and began writing every day. In 2011, he self-published another novel, *The Cheetah Diaries*, which led to his being signed by an agent. He currently works part-time teaching composition at North Carolina Central University. His novel, *Argos: The Story of Odysseus as Told by His Loyal Dog* was published by HarperCollins in 2016. He now lives with his wife in Chapel Hill, North Carolina and is currently working on 3 novels and 1 play.

Source:

Ralph Hardy, email: 2019

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Bio prepared by Allison White, University of New England, awhite55@une.edu.au

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Additional information

Summary

Argos: The Story of Odysseus as Told by His Loyal Dog by Ralph Hardy is a novel aimed at primary school children (8–12). It retells the story of Homer's *The Odyssey* through the eyes of Argos – a loyal dog, bred from both wolf and bear (p. 4). Argos follows his master's trail by asking the birds and other animals if they have heard news of him. He sends out the seagulls to search for information about Odysseus, and soon learns that he was sailing toward the island of Ithaka (p. 19). Argos keeps searching and learns of his master's journey through many different creatures: from the sea-turtles, he discovers Odysseus has left the land of the Lotus-Eaters and sailed towards the island of the giants (p. 35); the story of the cyclops is relayed by a teal (translated for Argos by a crow); his arrival on Aiaia where the goddess Circe lives is told to him by a sea-gull and a mountain sparrow; from a bat he learns of Odysseus' descent into Hades; he is told of the siren's singing and Skylla by a black sea raven; the panned intervention of the gods by a goose and dove; he learns of King Alkinoos and Queen Arete from a cat who travels upon the ships. During the story, Argos grows old and at the end of Book Two, he dies. His story continues with his son, Leander, who tells of Odysseus' return.

Analysis

There is a particular focus on animals throughout this novel, which is not present in the original. The story as told by Odysseus' dog offers a non-human perspective on the journey of Odysseus, as well as the maturing of Telemachos and the trials of Penelope. The use of animals to relay the events of Odysseus encourages reflection upon the tale and its place in the natural world. Animal-based stories appeal to the younger audience and add an extra element of fantasy, e.g. *White Fang*.

The story follows closely to the original Odyssey by Homer. The main storyline is kept, though in a more chronological form than Homer. There are similar themes and phrases presented throughout, such as "rosy dawn," "Apollo's chariot," "gray-eyed Athena," and "winged Hermes," which are common in *The Odyssey*. The story diverges from the original when it follows the home life of Argos, Penelope and Telemachos. Argos defends their property against wolf raids (p. 139) and also finds a mate, Aurora, who then bears him sons and

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	daughters, one of their sons, Lander, becomes the new narrator of the story. When Odysseus is on the island of Aiaia and forgets his homeland, Argos sends a sparrow to him, holding a lock of fur (p. 103). Odysseus then holds Argos' fur and is reminded of home – a different reminder of home than what occurs in Homer's version.
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Argos (Dog) Cyclops / Cyclopes Gods Odysseus / Ulysses Sirens
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Adolescence Adventure Animals Child, children Death Heroism Homesickness Journeys Love Parents (and children) Relationships Survival Talking animals Violence

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