

The book review below was originally written for [the Astral Codex Ten 2024 book review contest](#). The author, J.J. Cammarota, is a longtime Winnie-the-Pooh devotee: he came for the illustrations at age 3 and stays for the words today at an age he'd rather not disclose. You can find his website by following [this convenient link](#). This essay (with minor edits) appears here with his permission.

# Book Review: *Winnie-the-Pooh & The House at Pooh Corner*

Sing, O Muse, of the Many-Mannered Bear!

## I

A story is always more interesting than its Disney adaptation would lead you to believe. Carlo Collodi's *Pinocchio* has Pinocchio killing the Talking Cricket.<sup>1</sup> Hans Christian Andersen's "The Little Mermaid" involves the titular character having her *tongue* cut out.

And A.A. Milne's Winnie-the-Pooh books belong to the very old and respected genre of heroic epic.

## II

Even if you know nothing else about Winnie-the-Pooh, you probably know that the books are children's stories. When I called them heroic epics just now, you might have done that thing where one eyebrow goes down and the other eyebrow goes up. And fair enough—there's a lot of stuff in these stories that's Definitely Not Bronze-Age Warfare.

But here's the thing.

Winnie-the-Pooh and his friends are now, [notoriously](#), in the public domain. We could be living in an age of limitless Winnie-the-Pooh-themed creation! But we haven't gotten much. This isn't because you can't make money doing Winnie-the-Pooh things. [Wikipedia](#) lists Winnie-the-Pooh as the **third-highest-grossing media franchise of all time, with \$48.5 billion in estimated revenue!** So why aren't we seeing new Pooh stories?

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<sup>1</sup> He is later haunted by its ghost.

If I were to hazard a guess, I would say that the Walt Disney Company's success with Winnie-the-Pooh has limited our ability to see the potential in these stories. The Disney adaptations are iconic—it's Disney's version of Winnie-the-Pooh that made that \$48.5 billion, after all. And while the original books may be in the public domain, the Disney adaptations aren't. So what's the point of doing new Winnie-the-Pooh things when Disney has already made the definitive Winnie-the-Pooh adaptation?

What people don't realize is that there's so much more to the Winnie-the-Pooh stories than what Disney has chosen to repackage and resell. Even people who *have* read the original books often see them through Disney-colored glasses—it's hard to avoid when the Pooh of our collective consciousness is the one in the Disney-provided red t-shirt!<sup>2</sup>

Everybody knows the Pooh of our collective consciousness already. This book review isn't about him. I set out to read the Pooh books with an eye to finding the Pooh we *don't* know—the one who hasn't yet graced the silver screen. And when I added up all the new and surprising things I discovered while reading the Pooh stories and tried to find one idea that captured them all, I realized that that one idea was that the Pooh books are heroic epics.

So that's what this book review is about.



Disney's  
Winnie-the-Pooh



Homer's  
Winnie-the-Pooh

*Artistic challenge: reinvent this meme so that Tuxedo Pooh is replaced with Achaean Warrior Pooh.*

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<sup>2</sup> Learn about Pooh's red shirt [here](#).

### III

For those not familiar, the Winnie-the-Pooh canon consists of two books of short stories: *Winnie-the-Pooh* and *The House At Pooh Corner*.<sup>3</sup> The stories are episodic but interrelated, and they follow the adventures of the titular teddy bear and his friends in the Forest.<sup>4</sup>

Now, it's going to be impossible to talk about these stories if you don't know a little bit about the characters, so let's start with a catalog.

**Winnie-the-Pooh:** Winnie-the-Pooh is, as Milne tells us in the introduction to the first book, "the favorite." He's our poetic hero and our heroic poet (but more about all that later). He's fond of honey and condensed milk. You can tell right away that he's a Hero of the Old Sort by the number of *names* he has. Edward Bear he is called, sometimes shortened to Bear. Then, of course, there's Winnie-the-Pooh, Pooh for short. He also lives under the name Sanders.<sup>5</sup> And, just as surely as we know that "swift-footed son of Peleus" means Achilles, we know "Bear of Very Little Brain" means Pooh.



*What's even the point of Winnie-the-Pooh being in the public domain if no one is going to put high-res scans of the illustrations online where I can find them?*

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<sup>3</sup> Devotees will know, of course, that the character of Pooh first appeared in the poem "Teddy Bear" from Milne's poetry collection *When We Were Very Young*. It's about Pooh joining the fat acceptance movement decades before it became fashionable. I recommend it.

<sup>4</sup> If you've been corrupted by Disney adaptations, you might protest that the adventures are supposed to happen in the Hundred Acre Wood. In the original books, though, the Hundred Acre Wood is just one small region of the Forest.

<sup>5</sup> Which means he has the name over the door in gold letters, and lives under it.

**Christopher Robin:** Christopher Robin was author A.A. Milne's real-life son and the owner of all the stuffed animals featured in the Pooh stories.<sup>6</sup> Within the narrative, Christopher Robin is the one all of the other characters look to for Making Big Decisions or Getting Out of Trouble. He seems to be about five-years-old.

**Rabbit:** Rabbit is a rabbit. He's the practical one. He likes Organizing All the Others and Making Lists. He doesn't especially like the Arrival of Strange New Animals. Aside from Christopher Robin, he seems to be the only character who can reliably read and write. The Disney adaptations do Rabbit dirty, making him a neurotic, ear-wringing killjoy—but this doesn't match the books at all.

**Piglet:** A stuffed pig and self-professed Very Small Animal, Piglet is Pooh's closest friend after Christopher Robin, and the two of them often share adventures as a duo. He likes haycorns. Per Rabbit, Piglet's problem is "you haven't any pluck."

**Eeyore:** Eeyore is the stuffed donkey. He likes to eat thistles and Mope. If you haven't read the Pooh books, you might have the idea that Eeyore is always depressed. But it's really more accurate to say that he's always Viciously Passive Aggressive. He speaks dramatically, like an old-timey tragedian. He's not complaining, but there it is.

**Owl:** Owl is exactly what nominative determinism would lead you to expect. He's the great intellect of the forest, admired for his ability to spell TUESDAY well enough that you can tell it isn't WEDNESDAY. He's also prone to trapping the others with long stories about his distant relatives.

**Kanga & Roo:** Kanga is a stuffed kangaroo and Roo is her joey. Kanga's personality essentially consists of telling Roo they need to go home or making Roo take his medicine. Roo, meanwhile, has boundless enthusiasm for everything—except going home and taking his medicine.

**Tigger:** Tigger is a stuffed tiger prone to bouncing and overestimating his abilities. The only thing he'll eat is Extract of Malt. He doesn't appear at all until the second book (which led him to enter the public domain a bit later than the rest of the cast).

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<sup>6</sup> These stuffed animals are now kept by [the New York Public Library](#).

**Rabbit's Friends-and-Relations:** An assortment of rabbits, hedgehogs, mice, ferrets, toads, insects and what-have-you, comprising pretty much everyone in the forest besides the main cast.<sup>7</sup>



*The whole motley crew, except for Rabbit's friends-and-relations.*

The stories are, for the most part, from Pooh's point of view. Like any good epic hero, Pooh's two main activities are Feasting with Companions and Having Adventures, and most of the stories involve one or both.

Now I want to tell you a little more about these feasts and adventures, and, to do that, we need to talk a little bit about the Honor Culture in the Forest.

Most of the Winnie-the-Pooh stories involve the characters testily competing for social standing. Chapter Six of *Winnie-the-Pooh*, In Which Eeyore Has a Birthday and Gets Two Presents, shows this dynamic especially well. We find Eeyore Moping because no one has

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<sup>7</sup> The Forest may also house one or two Woozles, a Heffalump, a Jagular, and a Spotted (or perhaps Herbaceous) Backson—but the reader is given ample reason to Suspect Not.

done anything to celebrate his birthday. After Pooh has been subjected to several of Eeyore's sarcastic barbs—

"You seem so sad, Eeyore."

"Sad? Why should I be sad? It's my birthday. The happiest day of the year."

"Your birthday?" said Pooh in great surprise.

"Of course it is. Can't you see? Look at all the presents I have had." He waved a foot from side to side. "Look at the birthday cake. Candles and pink sugar."

Pooh looked—first to the right and then to the left.

"Presents?" said Pooh. "Birthday cake?" said Pooh. "*Where?*"

"Can't you see them?"

"No," said Pooh.

"Neither can I," said Eeyore. "Joke," he explained. "Ha ha!"

Pooh scratched his head, being a little puzzled by all this.

"But is it really your birthday?" he asked.

—the Bear of Very Little Brain decides to bring Eeyore a birthday present. He settles on giving Eeyore a pot of honey and shares his intentions with Piglet:

"I'm giving this to Eeyore," he explained, "as a present. What are *you* going to give?"

"Couldn't I give it too?" said Piglet. "From the both of us?"

"No," said Pooh. "That would *not* be a good plan."

So Piglet is forced to come up with an alternate plan and decides to give Eeyore a balloon.

On his way to Eeyore, Pooh absent-mindedly eats the honey ("Many a bear going out on a warm day like this would never have thought of bringing a little something with him.")

Upon realizing his mistake, he decides to wash out the honeypot, get someone to write "A Happy Birthday" on it, and give Eeyore a Useful Pot to Keep Things In. He turns to Owl for the inscription, and Owl naturally wants to get some credit for the gift:

"Couldn't I give it too? From the both of us?"

"No," said Pooh. "That would *not* be a good plan. Now I'll just wash it first, and then you can write on it."

Piglet, meanwhile, has popped the balloon he intended to give Eeyore. This came from running too fast:

He held it very tightly against himself, so that it shouldn't blow away, and ran as fast as he could so as to get to Eeyore before Pooh did; for he thought that he would like to be the first one to give a present, just as if he had thought of it without being told by anybody.



*"At first he thought the whole world had blown up; and then he thought that perhaps only the Forest part of it had; and then he thought that perhaps only he had, and he was now alone in the moon or somewhere, and would never see Christopher Robin, or Pooh or Eeyore again."*

It all works out in the end—the popped balloon turns out to be just the right size to go in and out of the Useful Pot to Keep Things In, and Eeyore is delighted. But Pooh's and Piglet's anxiousness to get credit for Having Good Ideas gives a picture of how most of the Pooh stories go. The denizens of the Forest are always jockeying for reputation.

This contest for reputation often has very Homeric resonances. Here, I want to bring in some concepts from a Homer class I took once upon a time.

#### Homer University - *Timē* and *Kleos*

One of the first things they teach you in Homer class are the Classical Greek words *timē* and *kleos*. *Timē* is usually translated as "honor" and has to do with recognition from others, usually coming in the form of loot. *Kleos* is usually translated as "glory," "fame," or "renown." It's the sort of lasting reputation that results in a hero being celebrated in song. When Achilles chose to fight and die and be remembered rather than to return home and be forgotten, he was choosing *kleos*.

*Winnie-the-Pooh* and *The House At Pooh Corner* are the stories of Pooh struggling to win *timē* and *kleos* and, eventually, succeeding.

*Timē* shows up much, much less, so let's talk about it first.

The Homeric hero is someone who goes and fights, and does such a good job that everyone agrees to give him lots of loot. When he visits his friends, they give him more loot just because he's a cool guy. This is what *timē* is all about.

Winnie-the-Pooh certainly cares a great deal about his accumulated loot—specifically his pots of honey, as in this delightful scene:

Pooh was sitting in his house one day, counting his pots of honey, when there came a knock on the door.

"Fourteen," said Pooh. "Come in. Fourteen. Or was it fifteen? Bother. That's muddled me."

"Hallo, Pooh," said Rabbit.

"Hallo, Rabbit. Fourteen, wasn't it?"

"What was?"

"My pots of honey what I was counting."

"Fourteen, that's right."

"Are you sure?"

"No," said Rabbit. "Does it matter?"

"I just like to know," said Pooh humbly. "So as I can say to myself: 'I've got fourteen pots of honey left.' Of fifteen, as the case may be. It's sort of comforting."



*I couldn't even find this illustration in color. If anyone reading this runs a library, please make your next summer intern project Scanning Pooh Illustrations.*



But while Pooh's attitude toward his treasures certainly befits a Homeric hero, Pooh's honeypots were not won by his feats of arms. (The one time he tries to win honey through a conflict with some bees it Goes Badly.)

However, there is one fine example of Pooh winning *timē* in the last story of the first book.

In the next-to-last story, the Forest had become flooded by a rainstorm, and Piglet had become trapped in his rapidly-moistening house. Pooh had been vital to the rescue operation—especially by having the idea to turn Christopher Robin's umbrella upside-down and use it as a boat—christened *The Brain of Pooh*—to come to Piglet's aid.



*The Brain of Pooh (Captain, C. Robin; 1st Mate, P. Bear)*

So in the very last story of the book, Christopher Robin decides to throw what is "to be a special sort of party, because it's because of what Pooh did when he did what he did to save Piglet from the flood."



*The book tells us that Christopher Robin serves milk at this feast, but I feel that a hero of Pooh's caliber would quite appreciate mead.*

The crowning moment of this party is when Christopher Robin gives Pooh a Special Pencil Case, full of all sorts of Special Pencils.

This is *timē* to a tee: the public recognition of Pooh's achievements in the form of a gift. It's also the Rousing Conclusion of the first book and it has a nice symmetry with the Rousing Conclusion of the second book—as we'll see in a moment.

This brings us to *kleos*: renown that reverberates through the ages in song.

Pooh's interest in his heroic reputation is clear right from the beginning of the first story. Chapter One of *Winnie-the-Pooh* starts with this frame narrative about Christopher Robin asking his father for a story:

"What about a story?" said Christopher Robin.

"*What* about a story?" I said.

"Could you very sweetly tell Winnie-the-Pooh one?"

"I suppose I could," I said. "What sort of stories does he like?"

"About himself. Because he's *that* sort of Bear."

Pooh likes to have stories told about him. And *that* is a very heroic attitude indeed.

We'll talk more about Pooh's *kleos* soon, but, first, I need to draw from my Homer class once more.

Homer University II - Words and Deeds

One of the marks of an epic hero in Homer is that he is capable with both words and deeds. Achilles is a musician—and a good yeller—in addition to being handy with a spear. Odysseus is skilled both at telling (or making up) stories and at shooting with a bow. The epic hero must have both elements: the feats of arms and the speechifying/storytelling. Possibly this is because poets are the ones making the rules.

And few characters in literature combine words and deeds better than Winnie-the-Pooh.

To enumerate some of Pooh's feats: he finds Eeyore's missing tail, rescues Roo from a Wet Situation, discovers the North Pole, rescues Piglet from a Wet Situation, finds a missing beetle, and rescues Eeyore from a Wet Situation. He also tangles with bees, tracks wozzles, and sets a heffalump trap, and, though Not Quite As Successful in these endeavors, they nevertheless show his Fearless Spirit.

Not a bad record for the *deeds* half of words and deeds!

But when it comes to the words half Pooh is still better. For Winnie-the-Pooh—and you don't get this at all from the pop-culture Pooh—is a poet. Over the course of the two books Pooh composes (by my count) eighteen assorted songs, poems, hums, and murmurs. When you consider that this number is competitive with the number of honeypots he cleans out in all the stories combined, I think it's fair to say that you don't really know Pooh until you know Pooh the poet. Here is one of Pooh's songs, to give you an idea:

NOISE, BY POOH

Oh, the butterflies are flying,  
Now the winter days are dying.  
And the primroses are trying  
    To be seen.

And the turtle-doves are cooing,  
And the woods are up and doing,  
For the violets are blue-ing  
    In the green.

Oh, the honey-bees are gumming  
On their little wings, and humming  
That the summer, which is coming  
    Will be fun.

And the cows are almost cooing,  
And the turtle doves are mooing,  
Which is why a Pooh is poohing  
    In the sun.

For the spring is really springing;  
You can see a skylark singing,  
And the blue-bells, which are ringing,  
    Can be heard.

And the cuckoo isn't cooing,  
But he's cucking and he's oeing,  
And a Pooh is simply poohing  
    Like a bird.

Rabbit overhears Pooh singing this song and consequently learns a bit about Pooh's  
Artistic Process:

"Hallo, Pooh," said Rabbit.

"Hallo, Rabbit," said Pooh dreamily.

"Did you make that song up?"

"Well, I sort of made it up," said Pooh. "It isn't Brain," he went on humbly, "because  
You Know Why, Rabbit; but it comes to me sometimes."

"It is the best way to write poetry," Pooh says to Piglet on another occasion, "letting things  
come."

Now, this brings us back to Pooh's *kleos*. Like Odysseus, Pooh is the sort of epic hero who tells of his own exploits. After finding Eeyore's tail, he composes this song:

*Who found the Tail?*

"I," said Pooh,  
"At a quarter to two  
(Only it was quarter to eleven really),  
I found the Tail!"

Later, he suddenly thinks of the line, "*Sing Ho! for the life of a Bear!*" and thinks it's such a "very good start for a song" that he composes one to do it justice. During the Expedition to find the North Pole, Pooh memorializes the entire group in song. After he rescues Pigelet from the flood, he composes a song with lines like "3 Cheers for the wonderful Winnie-the-Pooh!" When he and Piglet build a house for Eeyore, Pooh changes the words to one of his hums to celebrate the act. He also writes a song about how he will spend his morning, a song claiming ownership of a Thoughtful Spot where he sometimes meets Piglet, and a song about his adventure getting pinned under a chair at Owl's house.

In short, Winnie-the-Pooh is no stranger to being celebrated in song.

But there are other important examples of *kleos* in the Winnie-the-Pooh stories beyond Pooh's self-adulating poems.

When Pooh finds the North Pole (just some pole he finds lying around, but Christopher Robin declares it's the North Pole), Christopher Robin sticks it in the ground and affixes a sign that reads:

NORTH POLE  
DISCOVERED BY POOH  
POOH FOUND IT.



*My name is Poohzymandies, Bear of Bears / Look on my works ye mighty and admire!*

Pooh winds up feeling so proud of this piece of recognition that he later goes out in search of the East Pole by himself.

But perhaps Pooh's greatest honor comes at the end of *The House at Pooh Corner*. Remember how I said before that the Rousing Conclusions of the two books had a nice symmetry? At the end of the *Winnie-the-Pooh*, Pooh gets his *timē* in the form of the Pencil Case. At the end of *The House at Pooh Corner*, Pooh gets his *kleos* in the form of knighthood.

Christopher Robin, in this final story, is going away to school, and goes with Pooh to an enchanted place at the top of the Forest called Galleons Lap for a final heart-to-heart. He proceeds to give Pooh an info dump about Knights and Kings and Factors and Brazil and how to make a suction pump. After listening to everything, Pooh remarks that it sounds like a very Grand thing to be an Afternoon:

"A what?" said Christopher Robin lazily, as he listened to something else.

"On a horse," explained Pooh.

"A Knight?"

"Oh, was that it?" said Pooh. "It thought it was a——It is as Grand as a King and Factors and all the other things you said?"

"Well, it's not as grand as a King," said Christopher Robin, and then, as Pooh seemed disappointed, he added quickly, "but it's grander than Factors."

"Could a Bear be one?"

"Of course he could!" said Christopher Robin. "I'll make you one." And he took a stick and touched Pooh on the shoulder and said, "Rise, Sir Pooh de Bear, most faithful of all my Knights"



*"So Pooh rose and sat down and said 'Thank you,' which is the proper thing to say when you have been made a Knight."*

This is the zenith of Pooh's *kleos* in the stories.

But the most Homeric moment in the Pooh books actually belongs to Piglet.

In Chapter Eight of *The House at Pooh Corner*, Pooh and Piglet decide to use a very windy day to go around the Forest making social calls. Their last stop is the Hundred Acre Wood, where Owl lives in a treehouse. The sound of the wind in the treetops worries Piglet:

"Supposing a tree fell down, Pooh, when we were underneath it?"

"Supposing it didn't," said Pooh after careful thought.

But Piglet's supposition turns out to be closer to the truth. They've only been at Owl's house for a few moments when the wind brings down the tree and the house crashes to the ground on its side.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> It's in this context that Pooh writes his poem about being crushed under a chair.



*Tragically, Owl's house was not insured.*

With the front door on a wall that has decided to become a ceiling, Pooh, Piglet, and Owl find themselves trapped. At first, Pooh sees the situation as an opportunity to win some glory himself:

But Pooh's mind had gone back to the day when he had saved Piglet from the flood and everybody had admired him so much; and as that didn't often happen he thought he would like it to happen again. And suddenly, just as it had come before, an idea came to him

"Owl," said Pooh, "I have thought of something."

"Astute and Helpful Bear," said Owl.

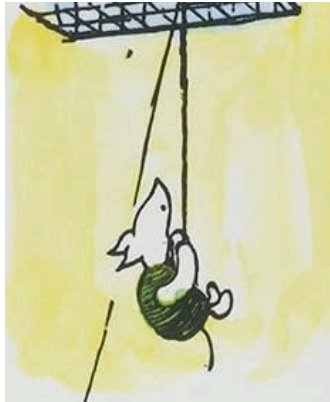
Pooh looked proud at being called a stout and helpful bear, and said modestly that he just happened to think of it.



Pooh's idea is to hoist Piglet up to Owl's letter-box (also currently on the ceiling) by using some string strung through said letter-box as a kind of makeshift pulley. Piglet finds this plan alarming, for supposing the string breaks? Here, Pooh decides to let Piglet in on the glory:

"It won't break," whispered Pooh comfortingly, "because you're a Small Animal, and I'll stand underneath, and if you save us all, it will be a Very Grand Thing to talk about afterwards, and perhaps I'll make up a Song, and people will say 'It was so grand what Piglet did that a Respectful Pooh Song was made about it.'"

Motivated by this speech, Piglet agrees to be hoisted up to the letter-box. He's able to squeeze through the letter box and go for help, and Owl and Pooh are saved.



*I must have searched the internet for twenty minutes to find this illustration. Seriously, if you want to create a Digital Repository of E.H. Shepard's Pooh Illustrations, you'd be doing humanity a favor.*

And this is the song Pooh writes for him:

*Here lies a tree which Owl (a bird)  
Was fond of when it stood on end,  
And Owl was talking to a friend  
Called Me (in case you hadn't heard)  
When something Oo occurred.*

*For lo! the wind was blusterous  
And flattened out his favourite tree;  
And things looked bad for him and we—*

*Looked bad, I mean, for he and us—  
I've never known them wuss.*

*Then Piglet (PIGLET) thought a thing:  
"Courage!" he said "There's always hope.  
I want a thinnish piece of rope.  
Or, if there isn't any, bring  
A thickish piece of string."*

*So to the letter-box he rose,  
While Pooh and Owl said "Oh!"  
and "Hum!"  
And where the letters always come  
(Called "LETTERS ONLY") Piglet sqoze  
His head and then his toes.*

*O gallant Piglet (PIGLET)! Ho!  
Did Piglet tremble? Did he blinch?  
No, No, he struggled inch by inch  
Through LETTERS ONLY, as I know  
Because I saw him go.*

*He ran and ran, and then he stood  
And shouted, "Help for Owl, a bird,  
And Pooh, a bear!" until he heard  
The others coming through the wood  
As quickly as they could.*

*"Help-help and Rescue!" Piglet cried,  
And showed the others where to go.  
Sing ho! for Piglet (PIGLET) ho!  
And soon the door was opened wide  
And we were both outside!*

*Sing ho! for Piglet, ho!  
Ho!*

Piglet is understandably delighted when Pooh shares this song with him, which leads to this exchange:

“Did I really do all that?” he said at last.

“Well,” said Pooh, “in poetry—in a piece of poetry—well, you *did* it, Piglet, because the poetry says you did. And that’s how people know.”

If this isn’t Homeric *kleos*, I don’t know what is.

And look—if a story where one of the characters is celebrated in a song with a verse beginning “For lo!” *doesn’t* count as a heroic epic in your mind, I don’t know *what* will convince you.

#### IV

But if the Pooh books are heroic epics, what can we learn from them? Heroic epics usually have something to teach us. The *Iliad* teaches us about the horrors and glories of war, and the *Odyssey* teaches us about the value of home. So what do the Pooh books have to teach?

More than one thing, I’m sure, but here’s one that stood out to me.

As we’ve seen, in the Pooh stories, the Honor Culture of the Forest leads to some competitiveness over who will be the one who Came Up With a Good Idea or who Did a Very Grand Thing. And winning honor is a zero-sum game: if Pooh discovers the North Pole, Eeyore won’t get to. In the Forest, the zero-sum nature of the honor game leads to a low simmer of Jealous Thoughts. Historically, it has led to people murdering each other.

In real life, several complex solutions have been tried to address this failure mode of the honor game (including trying not to use honor at all), and these have met with various levels of success.

The Pooh stories offer their own solution to the problem. We can see it at play in the story where Owl’s house falls down. Pooh, remember, originally wanted credit for coming up with the idea of the pulley to get Piglet up to the letter-box. But in the song he writes after Piglet saves them, he reimagines the scene so that *Piglet* is the one who came up with the idea.

Why would the fame-hungry Pooh—*that* sort of Bear, remember—give up his share of the glory for Piglet's sake?

The answer seems to be because Pooh is content with being the poet. This comes through when he suggests that people will admire Piglet because of Piglet's appearance in a Respectful Pooh Song. The implication is that featuring in a Respectful Pooh Song is quite an honor. And the further implication is that being a *bestower of honor* is honor enough for Pooh this time.

You see a similar thing when Pooh receives his Special Pencil Case.



*"Oh, Pooh!" said everybody else except Eeyore."*

The others (except Eeyore) all crowd around Pooh, excited about, and admiring of, his prize. They're seemingly able to enjoy their role as *witnesses* of Pooh's honor. In the Forest, the solution to the zero-sum nature of honor is for members of the community to see value in *other positions* within the honor economy besides that of laureate.<sup>9</sup>

That's one Bit of Wisdom from the Pooh stories, anyway. And perhaps it's a bit of wisdom shared with Homer, who seems to suggest in the *Odyssey* that there's just as much *kleos* for Penelope waiting at home enduring offenses as there is for Odysseus running about and performing more traditional heroic feats.

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<sup>9</sup> Interestingly, Eeyore, who is the one denizen of the Forest unwilling to accept anything short of Being Center Stage, is depicted as being uniquely isolated from the rest of the community. As Rabbit says, "You've never been to see any of us. You just stay here in this one corner of the Forest waiting for the other to come to you." Eeyore's unwillingness to accept being a bestower of honor rather than a receiver is reflected in his misanthropy.

Anyhow, if anyone wants to try to get a slice of that \$48.5 billion in Pooh money by making a video game where you go around the Forest completing quests and trying to get a Respectful Pooh Song written about you, I'll *totally* buy a copy!

I recommend you call it *Winnie-the-Pooh and the Search for the West Pole*.