

THE ODYSSEY

adapted from Homer by

Nicholas Meyer

February 14, 1995

PART I

The Rage of Poseidon



FADE IN - THE SEA

SUCCESSIVE SHOTS - DISSOLVING...

\*BOILING, ROLLING - GREEN, DARK BLUE, WINE PURPLE, then SLATE GREY, CURLING like a MOUNTAIN falling on top of us, the stuff of NIGHTMARES...

TITLE OVER:

This is the story of a man who wanted to go home...

MORE VISIONS OF THE SEA...UNDULATING...BY MOONLIGHT...WITH LIGHTNING and RAIN...then -

TITLE OVER:

## THE ODYSSEY

\*The WATER becomes CALM and TURQUOISE - we are in the AEGEAN, the isles of Greece...

Now a WAVE CRASHES ON SHORE, bringing us up to a WHITE BEACH with trees above, REVEALING

A RAVISHINGLY BEAUTIFUL GIRL of 16

as she emerges from the woods and runs happily towards the surf, where she stops in surprise.

HER POV

something lying in the water, sloshing about...

WIDER

she moves down to where the WAVES CRASH ONSHORE, WASHING OVER...

THE NAKED BODY OF A MAN. The girl studies the corpse, whose arms and legs writhe with the movement of the waves -

HER POV (CLOSER)

he's forty-five, muscular, grizzled, an unkempt beard and greying hair, matted and sopping - it too undulates with the tide. His skin is a salt-encrusted hide.

CLOSER

the girl bends and attempts to tug the man up the beach.

CU THE MAN

his eyes FLICKER, then OPEN

HIS POV

the troubled face of an innocent girl peering down, then backing off with recognition and alarm. She SCREAMS...

THE RIVER MOUTH

nearby. TEN YOUNG WOMEN stand in the fresh water, washing LAUNDRY and spreading clothes upon rocks to DRY...

In response to the SCREAM they look up in alarm. One starts RUNNING towards the sound and the others follow...

ON THE BEACH

the GIRLS emerge running but are startled to a stop by what they see:

THEIR MISTRESS

squatting on her knees amid the pounding surf, propping up the exhausted MAN. She sees her companions.

THE GIRL

Help me! (they hesitate) HELP ME.

It is a command. They race to the shore and help drag the MAN out of the brine.

WATER spews from his lungs. He coughs. They help him sit up. He squints at his rescuer, trying to see...

Slowly her beautiful smiling features come into FOCUS...

THE MAN

(a hoarse croak)

Are you a goddess, too?

They giggle at the suggestion, though the girl is clearly flattered - as he intended her to be. He looks about...

THE MAN (cont'd)

What place is this?

THE GIRL

This is the kingdom of Phaeacia.  
(proud) I am the princess Nausicaa.

THE MAN

Happy the parents of so beautiful a  
maid. (realizing) I blush to appear  
before you thus.

He coughs again; can barely speak. She melts.

THE GIRL

Whatever misfortune you have endured,  
you are safe now. Here...

She gives him some of the laundry, a TOGA with which to drape  
himself. With hands accustomed to the task, he covers his  
nakedness.

NAUSICAA (cont'd)

Now, you look quite presentable - well  
almost.

She laughs. So open. So friendly. So innocent. They all smile at  
him. One produces a leather flask of FRESH WATER, which the  
stranger GULPS greedily, spilling as he drinks.

NAUSICAA (cont'd)

Now I have told you my name - you must  
tell me yours.

CU CLOSER

Long pause. He looks at her sadly. Another croak -

THE MAN

Nobody. (off her look) My name is

Nobody.

He volunteers no more. The girls look at one another, some suppressing another urge to giggle. Nausicaa extends her hand. After a moment's hesitation, the man CLASPS it.

WIDER

They help him to his feet and begin to lead him to the trees. As they are about to withdraw to the woods, he turns and faces the ocean as Nausicaa watches, wondering.

CU THE MAN

THE MAN

The sea is my enemy.

He's mesmerized by the WAVES. Gently she pulls him away.

LATER

ON THE ROAD

Nausicaa drives in her little mule-driven CHARIOT; the stranger walking beside her, struggles to keep up. The WOMEN follow, chattering and watching the two.

NAUSICAA

(gaily)

I think you must be enchanted...

The notion dimly startles him.

THE MAN

Enchanted?

NAUSICAA

Under a spell of some sort. You know. You are well-spoken and bear yourself as one accustomed to authority, yet I find you with nothing to call your own save your skin. (shrugs) Perhaps it's only my imagination - about the spell, I mean. (tests it) "Nobody..."

He looks at her.

THE MAN

You have much imagination?

NAUSICAA

I am told I have a great deal too much.

THE MAN

(looks dead ahead)

Imagination - imagination can be a curse.

NAUSICAA

(unheeding)

I am waiting for my prince.

THE MAN

(looks around)

Where is he?

NAUSICAA

No, foolish man. I mean the prince who will one day carry me off this island and make me queen of his own.

At this phrase, the Man looks pained, then, before he can answer, she sees something ahead -

NAUSICAA (cont'd)  
Stranger, do you hear what I say?

THE MAN  
(touched by her)  
I hear, my lady.

NAUSICAA  
Then attend me well. We are coming to the town and to the palace of my father, King Alcinous. You must walk farther behind my chariot. No, farther still, (waves her hand), for I do not wish to cause gossip among the common folk - "Nausicaa has found a man for herself on the BEACH..." (impatient) You know...

The Man can hardly suppress his smile, but he falls back amongst the women folk as they approach the TOWN.

THE MAN  
(a harsh whisper)  
Athena be my shield...

EXT. THE TOWN - DAY

## SEVERAL ANGLES

Nausicaa's chariot wends its way through the high street and the TOWNSFOLK watch the unkempt MAN trotting behind it, the WOMEN running and giggling, still further back, barely suppressing hoots of laughter at the whole thing.

No expression on the faces of the TOWNSFOLK as they watch the little procession travel uphill towards the PALACE.

It's not a big kingdom but it seems comfy...

CU A RAZOR SCRAPING A BEARDED CHEEK

## SEVERAL SHOTS

\*THE MAN being CLEANED. WASHED. His GREY BEARD TRIMMED. His body SCRAPED and OILED, his hair carefully untangled and COMBED. - (We see the PARTS, but not the entire result.) All this grooming is performed by smiling WOMEN. Then -

## ALCINOUS' VOICE OVER

Hear us, Great Poseidon, Earth-shaker,  
lord of the wine dark sea, from whose  
bounty we take our nourishment...

CU BLOOD RED WINE

poured into an ornate GOBLET before the FEARSOME BUST of POSEIDON, his features threatening in green bronze...

WIDEN TO REVEAL

INT/EXT. KING ALCINOUS' PALACE - EVENING

The SUN low on the sea's HORIZON, visible in the distance.

Nausicaa's father, a handsome man with an intelligent face, wears the royal DIADEM as he holds a GOBLET of wine before the altar of the God, the distant OCEAN, behind...

ALCINOUS (cont'd)

...accept this libation from our hands...  
to thee, O Poseidon, we offer our thanks  
and gratitude for our happiness...

Alcinous pours the DARK WINE into a brazier before the STATUE with its implacable snarl.

THE STRANGER'S FACE

cleaned up, but we still don't have a total look at him - only his extreme REACTION to the statue and the toast as it is echoed by Alcinous' COURTIERS -

COURTIERS

Poseidon! Lord of the wine dark sea!

PAN DOWN TO THE STRANGER'S FIST

\*clenching at Poseidon's name... the STATUE seems to grimace just for him...

ALCINOUS

plunges a TORCH into the LIBATION BRAZIER and FLAME erupts, filling the SCREEN. Then -

ALCINOUS' VOICE OVER  
I trust you have dined well, stranger...

WIDEN TO REVEAL

The BANQUET TABLE - LATER

groaning even with leftovers. The King and his guests recline on COUCHES as they conclude their meal. All DINERS are MEN, save smiling Nausicaa. They are served by WOMEN.

ALCINOUS (cont'd)  
...and that the pleasures of our table  
have restored you a little to yourself. I  
do not address you by name since you  
desire to remain unknown to us.

Now we see THE MAN. What a transformation! He wears a proper TOGA and ROBES that seem inately appropriate. Clearly this is SOMEBODY, not NOBODY. When he speaks he no longer croaks; his VOICE and ELOQUENCE will be the most compelling evidence of his stature.

THE MAN  
(spreads his empty hands)  
Since even the clothes I stand in are not  
my own, I can only repay such  
generosity with my gratitude. To both

of you (his look includes the rapt  
Nausicca), I owe my life.  
As for my name, I withhold it only to  
spare you, for it is accursed.

Nausicaa can't get enough. Her eyes shine.

#### ALCINOUS

In Phaeacia we honor the wishes of our  
guests; nameless shall you remain. (an  
awkward pause) Come, our hospitality  
is not yet exhausted. (he claps his  
hands) Demodocus! Sing for us. His  
songs will wrap us in dreams.

The Man bows and resumes his couch as an attractive WOMAN leads  
in the BLIND poet, DEMODOCUS, who uses a STAFF to help TAP his  
way. The woman carries the minstrel's LYRE for him.

As the GUESTS watch, the bard is seated and takes his instrument.  
He stares blindly at the setting SUN, his sightless eyes bathed in its  
golden glow.

#### DEMODOCUS

What poem will you hear, lord king?

#### \*NAUSICAA

Troy! Let us hear tales of the Trojan war and  
of that beauteous queen, Helen, she whose  
face launched a thousand ships and sent all  
the heroes of Greece in search of glory.

The stranger's face twitches at this request.

ALCINOUS

(laughs, eats a grape)

You are an innocent, my child. The  
Greeks went in search of gold, not glory.

NAUSICAA

(a moan)

Oh, father...

ALCINOUS

(sententious)

'Twas the Gold of Troy, not the face of  
Helen that all your heroes coveted. (to  
his guest) Sir, you seem to be a man of  
the world: do I not speak the truth?

THE MAN

(heavily)

Indeed, many say that Trojan treasure  
provoked the siege.

NAUSICAA

(beseechingly smiling)

Even so. I put it to you, stranger: will  
you not second my request and add your  
voice to my own? Which is better -  
bitter truth or the beauty of romance?

Nausicaa gestures to the blind poet who sits immobile, waiting to be  
instructed. Finally, sadly -

THE MAN

I am certain your father can deny you

nothing, lady.

ALCINOUS

Oh, very well. Demodocus, let us hear  
of Troy -

The poet collects himself and touches the LYRE delicately...

CU HIS FINGERS

plucking deftly at the STRINGS...

DEMODOCUS

Muse of poets! Give to my voice the  
magic of inspiration, that my words  
may pierce the hearts of all listeners  
and therein paint pictures of life.

(pause) "Helen,  
wife to Menelaus, King of Sparta, was  
raped by Paris, Prince of Troy.

As the poet begins, PUSH INTO HIS DEAD EYES, REVEALING -

INT. HELEN'S BEDCHAMBER, SPARTA - NIGHT

The rape of Helen and her abduction - a scene charged with brutal  
eroticism as she surrenders to Paris' ardor...legs, tongues, breasts,  
arms, loins - a mating of God-like perfections and violence, a  
coupling that will be paid for in BLOOD...

The HEARTBEATS OF PASSION grow ominously louder to accompany  
their love-making, becoming the DRUMS OF WAR, then -

EXT. PLAINS OF TROY - DAY

TEN THOUSAND GREEKS, their armor CLASHING, their HORSEHAIR PLUMES waving, march towards the HUGE WALLS of TROY, leaving their FLEET of ships beached behind them...

\*DEMODOCUS' VOICE (cont'd)

"...and all the heroes of Greece sallied forth to bring her home. From Arcadia, Corinth and Thessaly they came. Agamemnon, Lord of Mycenae, commanded the Greek armada. With him went Nestor, King of sandy Pylos, Menelaus of Sparta, valiant Achilles and cunning Odysseus, Lord of Ithaka...

We see these supermen, fighting furiously as the poet describes them upon the battlefield before Troy... they throw their JAVELINS, whip the HORSES of their racing CHARIOTS, draw their BOWS, use their SWORDS...

DEMODOCUS'S VOICE (cont'd)

"For ten years they laid siege to the impregnable city, and one by one they tasted death before its virgin walls, their souls departing their bodies for Hades and the underworld...

SLOW MOTION

STUNT MONTAGE as the Greek heroes DIE, by spear, by sword...Achilles is last, STRUCK in the HEEL by an ARROW as he pitches over his CHARIOT in agony...

CU ONE WARRIOR

watching, amidst the battle, beneath his plumed helmet, his face concealed by his faceplate. Only his eyes are familiar as they peer from the fighting up to the WALLS...

DEMODOCUS' VOICE (cont'd)

"And still the citadel defied them.  
(pause) Then it was that that man  
skilled in all ways of contending,  
cunning Odysseus, brought to bear the  
power of his mind..."

CU THE MAN

listening to the tale. We are close enough to recognize those piercing EYES...

DEMODICUS (cont'd)

Of all the heroes, he alone possessed  
that special quality of thought and  
foresight that men call - imagination..."

In remembrance - or pain - the man CLOSES HIS EYES.

BLACK.

SOUND OVER

the crash of DISTANT SURF, the CRY of GULLS...

EXT. MOUNTAIN TOP, ISLE OF ITHAKA - DAY

looking down at the harbour below the green hillside from a great height. Nestled in port, a SPARTAN GALLEY...

Below us on the hill, a WOMAN scrambling hastily upwards...

THE MAN

\*who watches from his vantage point. The face belongs to Alcinous' guest - but he's TWENTY YEARS YOUNGER, handsome, BLACK-HAIRED and CLEAN SHAVEN, but beauty is not his most striking feature, it's brains. You can almost hear the wheels going around...

Next to him a frisky YOUNG DOG...

We see the WOMAN CLOSER

She's carrying a BABY in her arms as she hurries up the mountain path.

And she's a beauty. Her name is PENELOPE.

PENELOPE  
Odysseus...husband...

She's gasping for breath as she joins him. He goes hastily to help her the last part of the way. Now we know his name.

ODYSSEUS  
My love, be careful...

PENELOPE  
They're here...from Sparta..!

She's starting to cry -

PENELOPE (cont'd)

They want you to go with them... to  
bring Helen back from Troy...

He holds her, lets her sob as he looks unhappily down at the ship in  
the harbor. TWO WELL-DRESSED MEN can be made out, walking  
ashore...

ODYSSEUS

I must go with them.

PENELOPE

But why? Why?

ODYSSEUS

(tender)

Before I met and fell in love with you,  
my own best beloved, I was, as you  
know, a suitor for the hand of Helen,  
that is now queen of Sparta.

PENELOPE

(bitter)

So was every prince in Greece.

ODYSSEUS

Exactly. And to forestall a quarrel over  
her choice of husband, a horse was  
sacrificed, and standing over its bloody  
quarters each of us swore to uphold and  
defend the honor of that husband,

whoever he might be. Now King  
Menelaus is calling due the debt.

PENELOPE  
(turning away)  
And who devised this dreadful pact?

ODYSSEUS  
(heavily)  
I did. Come, be of good cheer, this war  
cannot last long...

He puts an arm around her waist from behind...

PENELOPE  
That is what men say of every war, but  
I think the shortest war lasts long for  
widows - (re the baby) and orphans...

ODYSSEUS  
Penelope -

PENELOPE  
How long must your son wait to learn if  
his father is dead or alive? You will go;  
you will have adventures and memories.  
You will live or die. We will only wait.

ODYSSEUS  
I swore an oath. I have no choice.

She slips from his embrace and faces him.

PENELOPE

No choice? Are you made of stone? A stone has no choice. A man has a choice because a man has a BRAIN. A man can THINK. It was you who taught me that - and I loved you for teaching me.

ODYSSEUS

But my oath...

PENELOPE

Did you not swear an oath to me? Are you not king of this kingdom? Does a king owe his subjects nothing? What becomes of us if you heed your oath to Menelaus? THINK.

He stares at her. She's a match for him, alright.

ODYSSEUS

Penelope...Penelope... you are too clever even for me. (sighs) Go. Greet our guests. Bring them here. Let me see what can be done...

He kisses her, wiping the tears from her cheeks. This is a passionate couple. The BABY makes a NOISE. Odysseus laughs and gives him a kiss, as well. Pats his DOG. Happy family...

INT. ODYSSEUS' FEASTING HALL/THRONE ROOM, ITHAKA - DAY

a large, well-appointed room, which will later be the site of

dreadful events. Its whitewashed walls are adorned with WEAPONS of every description - spears, bows, swords, arrows.

FEATURED behind the THRONE is an ENORMOUS BOW, different from the rest. We'll come back to it - in twenty years.

To one side, SCRUBBING THE WALLS, is a BEAUTIFUL and modest young girl (14), MELANTHE... Awed, she watches discreetly as

AGAMEMNON (35) and NESTOR (45) stand together, waiting, their huge helmets crooked in their arms. The GREAT DOORS are swung open and Penelope enters, still carrying the baby, followed by EURYCLEIA, his NURSE (she's about forty)...

PENELOPE

Thank you, Melanthe.

Acknowledging, Melanthe scurries from the room as Penelope move forward to greet her visitors...

The visitors bow low... Nestor is older, distinguished...

AGAMEMNON

Queen Penelope...

NESTOR

Your majesty...

PENELOPE

My Lord Agamemnon, my lord Nestor; I bid you welcome to Ithaka. It is not often that kings come calling.

NESTOR

Would that our visit betokened some

joyous occasion...

AGAMEMNON

My brother's wife has been abducted by  
the Trojans.

PENELOPE

The news has already reached us...

AGAMEMNON

An army to rescue her is gathering at  
Aulis - to be commanded by me.

NESTOR

Your husband once promised that -

PENELOPE

I know what he promised. Eurycleia,  
take Telemachus. I will conduct these  
princes to my husband.

She hands the infant TELEMACHUS to his NURSE as the men exchange  
glances, then starts out of the room without looking back. They  
follow and Eurycleia and the baby bring up the rear.

EXT. GREEN FIELD, ITHAKA - DAY

Penelope leads the men atop a hill to where they gape with  
astonishment -

THEIR POV

ODYSSEUS, wearing a CAP WITH BELLS, tries, absurdly, to PLOW the  
field with an ASS yoked to an OX. The uneven team can only manage

to go in circles as Odysseus giggles.  
The DOG is yapping in distress, knows something's wrong...

The visitors look at each other, dumbfounded. Penelope is herself astonished; Eurycleia likewise amazed.

NESTOR

Your majesty - Lord Odysseus...

ODYSSEUS

Ah, ah, ah, ah...

AGAMEMNON

Odysseus, what ails you?

He responds with gibberish, hawking and spitting, rolling his eyes til the whites flash...

NESTOR

Is it possible? My lord...? (amazed)  
Look, that's not grain!

Crazy faces from Odysseus as he talks to himself... and sows the ground before him - WITH SALT. The DOG keeps BARKING...

EURYCLEIA

(starts to cry)

Salt! My master sows the earth with salt! To think that I, who raised him as now I care for his son, should live to see this day... woe...woe...

AGAMEMNON

My lord, do you hear us?

He pays them no heed as the ridiculous PLOW continues in circles, the SILVER BLADE breaking up the ground in RINGS.

AGAMEMNON (cont'd)

(hard pressed)

Are we to believe that noble Odysseus  
has lost his wits?

Odysseus cackles. Nestor eyes the troubled Penelope.

PENELOPE

My lord, you have guests from Sparta...

No response except Odysseus now foams at the mouth...

Nestor eyes the SUN, high overhead. He is thinking.

Abruptly he snatches little TELEMACHUS out of Eurycleia's arms and runs before the PLOW.

As Penelope and the nurse GASP, Nestor puts the tiny baby directly in the path of the advancing SILVER BLADE, which is about to slice him in half.

Penelope SCREAMS and tries to move forward to his rescue, but Agamemnon holds her fast, despite her struggles.

Nestor similarly prevents Eurycleia from moving...

Odysseus sees his son on the ground; his expression changes.

ODYSSEUS

Hold!

With all his might he restrains his crazy team, which still tries to go forward, dragging Odysseus with them.

CU PENELOPE

frantic -

CU THE BLADE

getting close to little Telemachus as

CU ODYSSEUS

straining to pull the team to a STOP, which he does -

CU THE BLADE

just inches from his smiling son. The DOG sits; WHIMPERS.

CU ODYSSEUS

covered with sweat - not a laugh in him. He picks the boy up, hugs him and kisses him tenderly; looks sadly at Nestor.

ON NESTOR and AGAMEMNON

also sad. Nice try. Agamemnon releases Penelope.

NESTOR

Forgive me...

CU PENELOPE

her eyes glisten, then...

ODYSSEUS' VOICE OVER  
Athena, hear me...

DISSOLVE TO:

BUST OF ATHENA

WIDEN TO REVEAL

TEMPLE OF ATHENA, ITHAKA - DAY

as Odysseus, fully armed and plumed, kneels before her.

ODYSSEUS (cont'd)  
...grey-eyed Goddess of wisdom. Before  
you I prostrate myself. Be my  
patroness and protector, that I may live  
to see my home again.

CU ATHENA

the marble expression beneath her helmet MORPHS to a small SMILE.

Kneeling, Odysseus does not see it...

EXT. HARBOR - DAY

Odysseus' WARSHIP, loaded with his ITHAKANS, their supplies, and armor, is making ready to sail. As Nestor and Agamemnon watch, Odysseus says goodbye to his little family, embracing sobbing Eurycleia, patting his DOG, who wags its tail. He kneels and kisses the feet of ANTICLEIA, his handsome MOTHER, who holds herself proudly -

ANTICLEIA

Athena protect you, my son...

ODYSSEUS

And you, my mother...

She makes the sign of benediction over his head... he rises and goes finally to Penelope and little Telemachus, who cries at the sight of him.

ODYSSEUS

I frighten him...

PENELOPE

Not you. The nodding horsehair plume and the helmet which conceals you... it frightens me, as well...

He removes the helmet, pulls from its plume a hunk of RED HORSEHAIR and gives it to the baby, who clutches it. Then he faces his wife and takes her hand...

CU THEIR HANDS

ODYSSEUS

(looks her in the eye)  
I WILL COME HOME.

PENELOPE  
(simple but firm)  
I WILL WAIT FOR YOU.

After embracing, he races up the gangplank to the ship, which makes ready to cast off as Odysseus' family and other WOMEN OF ITHAKA and their CHILDREN watch, with set faces.

BARKING, Odysseus' DOG tries to run up the gangplank but tear-streaked Eurycleia holds him back.

ROPES cast off, SAIL lowered from its spar... its design:  
THE HEAD OF THE GODDESS ATHENA is blazoned at the center.

Penelope and Odysseus looking at each other...

CU TELEMACHUS'

little baby face against Penelope's bosom, asleep. In his tiny fist, he clutches the RED HORSEHAIR...

DISSOLVE TO:

THE SHIP

on the distant horizon, vanishing...

DISSOLVE TO:

CU THE FACE OF A TEN YEAR OLD BOY

standing atop the green peak of ITHAKA, where we saw his father watching the harbor ten years before.

Around his neck, worn as a necklace, is the bit of faded RED HORSEHAIR, long since woven into a short braid. TELEMACHUS looks out to sea with wordless longing. As always, the horizon is empty. Stay on Telemachus. He wishes he could see.

PUSH TOWARDS THE EMPTY HORIZON...

DISSOLVE TO:

the FARTHER SHORE

EXT. EMPTY BEACH - DAY

where

THE ENORMOUS WOODEN HORSE

sits alone before the walls of Troy.

The Greek fleet has disappeared and the WIND HOWLS desolately as Trojans emerge from the safety of their walls and cautiously approach the enormous structure.

DEMODOCUS' VOICE OVER

"And so it was that after ten years' fighting, the Trojans came face to face with the imagination of Odysseus."

TROJAN SOLDIERS have discovered SYNON, (35) cowering nearby.

Dragged forth, they crowd round the starving, terrified man.

SYNON

The Greeks have given up. The siege is abandoned and they have sailed for home, leaving their dead behind. You are the victors.

The Trojans look at each other, amazed at this news.

KING PRIAM

And who are you?

SYNON

My name is Synon. They judged me traitor and coward and so left me behind. I throw myself upon your mercy, great king.

He flings himself at the feet of Priam, who considers.

KING PRIAM

What is this?

ie: the giant horse.

SYNON

Their gift to Athena, Goddess of wisdom, to grant them safe passage home - built large so as to prevent you taking it within your gates and completing your triumph.

## VOICES

Pull down the walls...! Breach the walls!  
We'll have our triumph..!

## ANOTHER VOICE

Make way...

A STERN-FACED OLDER PRIEST and HIS TWO SONS thread their way through the crowd.

## KING PRIAM

Lacoon - what says our high priest?  
LACCOON eyes the cringing Synon with contempt. He goes up to the wooden horse and RAPS it with his staff. It ECHOES.

## LACCOON

Beware Greeks bearing gifts.

As the crowd considers this there is a GASP. People turn to the OCEAN, where

## TWO ENORMOUS SEA SERPENTS

emerge from the surf and slither directly to Lacoon and his sons. As the Trojans watch, stepping back in horrified amazement, the SERPENTS wind themselves about Lacoon and his sons and STRANGLE all three. When they are finished, the SERPENTS, the PRIEST and his SONS have all turned to STONE.

## KING PRIAM

On behalf of his niece, Athena,  
Poseidon, Earth-shaker, lord of the wine  
dark sea, has been offended by our

priest. Poseidon bids us seize our prize!

At this command, the Trojans CHEER, produce ROPES and, in a SERIES of SHOTS, begin dragging the enormous horse towards the walls of Troy, leaving the STONE STATUE behind...

AT THE GATES

MASSES of TROJANS are widening the entrance, literally pulling down the walls before our eyes. The HUGE GATE tumbles crashing down, dust everywhere...

THE HORSE moves majestically, ominously forward as Synon watches...

THE HORSE

is pulled inside the walls as an ORGY erupts. These people have been under siege for ten years. As NIGHT FALLS the party becomes more frenzied, around and beneath the mute giant structure. MEN, WOMEN, BOYS, GIRLS - everyone drinking and fornicating. Not merely men with women, but also with other men. Finally -

DISSOLVE TO:

LATER - STILL NIGHT

silence. The ground and streets strewn with hundreds of PASSED OUT REVELERS...

SEVERAL ANGLES

Troy's defenseless population - FEATURE the BREACH in the wall as we find Synon, slowly opening one eye, then the other. He looks around, then UP...

CLIMB SLOWLY UP BENEATH THE HORSE, SYNON'S POV.

THE HORSE'S BELLY

a trap door opens as we CLOSE IN TO

ODYSSEUS

peering out. He wears his terrifying helmet. Only his eyes and mouth visible. He smiles at what he sees.

A stream of Greek warriors steal down a ROPE from the horse's belly. Odysseus runs atop the walls and signals with a FLAMING TORCH.

HIS POV

a MILLION LIGHTS on the NIGHT HORIZON - the GREEK FLEET.

Odysseus smiles.

DEMODOCUS' VOICE OVER

"And so it was that wily Odysseus  
accomplished what ten years and ten  
thousand warriors could not, and  
brought about the fall of Troy.

EXT. ALCINOUS' BANQUET - NIGHT

lit by TORCHES now as the poet chants, stroking the LYRE...

DEMODOCUS (cont'd)

"The city was sacked and put to the

sword. In time all the heroes that lived returned to their homes and destinies. It is now ten years again since the Greek victory and only princely Odysseus, cunning architect of their triumph is unaccounted for, MISSING, his wife abandoned for TWENTY YEARS to a life of - "

ODYSSEUS

Stop.

He is standing in their midst, his eyes flooding TEARS.

ODYSSEUS (cont'd)

I beseech you.

They all look at him.

ALCINOUS

I see the tale affects you, friend.

NAUSICAA

Had you relatives in Troy?

Odysseus has to struggle for the words. Finally -

ODYSSEUS

I am that wretched man of whom you sing. (off their looks) I am Odysseus.

CU DEMODOCUS' HANDS

slowly leave the STRINGS of the lyre...

Stunned reactions from the GUESTS and SERVANTS.

NAUSICAA'S EYES

are popping from her head. Alcinous half rises -

ALCINOUS

Odysseus?

ODYSSEUS

Aye, Odysseus. Odysseus, the clever,  
the cunning, the tale-teller, that man  
"skilled in all ways of contending..."  
Odysseus, who thought man the measure  
of all things BECAUSE HE HAD WHAT  
ANIMALS LACK - A BRAIN. God's gift  
and for shame to ignore it...

He laughs bitterly.

The guests are sitting up at his declaration, amazed.

ALCINOUS

Odysseus...but... ten years! What  
circumstance has so delayed your  
return? And what brings you to our  
shores, bereft of all you possess?

CU ODYSSEUS

he looks at the Princess NAUSICAA, her radiant young face, her eyes  
wide with compassion, her lips parted... Finally:

ODYSSEUS

I could not tell the difference between  
intelligence and wisdom.

\* THE WOODEN HORSE, towers over the burning city of Troy as we  
PAN OVER TO WHERE

EXT. PLAINS OF TROY - NIGHT

\*ALONE, Odysseus staggers drunkenly on the beach as the surf  
washes over his feet. He is covered in BLOOD.

\*ODYSSEUS

(shouting)

A man can do anything! ANYTHING! Do  
you hear, O Gods? A man can forge his  
own destiny. I DO NOT NEED YOU! I NEED  
ONLY MY MIND!

He laughs, hiccoughs, takes another drink, and leans up against the  
statue of the dead priest and his sons, twined about with sea  
serpents.

The TIDE is IN; waves LAP the base of the statue. Odysseus slides  
down the side of the statue, to where the surf mingles with the  
BLOOD on his body...

In the TORCHLIGHT a SHADOW passes over him and he looks blearily  
up. The SOUND OF THE WAVES FADES TO SILENCE...

ODYSSEUS (cont'd)

Who's that?

VOICE

(a terrifying whisper)

Odysseus, you have offended me - ME,  
that was your truest ally.

ODYSSEUS

Who -

VOICE

I am Poseidon, Earth-shaker, lord of the wine dark sea. You have blasphemed...

Odysseus squints, confused, disoriented. A giggle -

ODYSSEUS

(protesting)

But I took the city... !!

POSEIDON

With my help. Or have you forgot?

The SHADOW lengthens, rising impossibly HUGE, to blot out the contorted features of the dead priest, frozen in stone.

POSEIDON (cont'd)

Without me to silence this priest and his sons, your plan would have failed. But you do not give thanks. A man is nothing without the aid of God.

Odysseus, trying to sober up, wipes his mouth with the back of his hand.

POSEIDON (cont'd)

Now attend as I pronounce your fate: for your foolish pride, you never more shall

reach your home. You shall be nothing and nobody. No more shall you see your wife and son. Obstacle upon obstacle shall I heap in your path. The sea itself shall do my bidding - and if you overcome one hurdle I shall place another behind it - until at last you and all your followers join the army of the dead in Hell.

As Odysseus stares in helpless terror, the SHADOW recedes. Almost at his heels, HORDES of drunken Greeks, carrying all sorts of GOLD and TREASURE, spill onto the beach, find him, cheer him and put him on their shoulders, crying "ODYSSEUS!"

They carry him in triumph around the statue created by the God who is now to be his nemesis as Troy BURNS behind them.

ODYSSEUS

(crying above the babble)

I am accursed!

One of his men, ELPENOR, (an immature 27 year old), on whose shoulders he rides, hears.

ELPENOR

What?

ODYSSEUS

Poseidon has spoken to me. Here. Now. I am condemned! All who follow me will die.

ELPENOR

(laughs)

My lord, you are drunk!

ODYSSEUS

I am doomed - so are you all...The sea  
god has spoken.

PERIMEDES

(chubby, maybe 36)

My lord, no god has spoken here.

(laughing) It's just your imagination!

The word goes around to his drunken men: "Odysseus is imagining things!" Under the circumstances, the idea convulses them. End on Odysseus' dismayed features...

\*ODYSSEUS' VOICE OVER

Drunk with triumph, my men paid no  
heed to my warning...they could not  
know that soon we would set sail for  
Hell... As for my son, little Telemachus,  
I could only imagine what sort of Hell  
was to be his...

EXT. ODYSSEUS' PALACE COURTYARD - DAY

\*Telemachus, aged ten (as we last saw him), is playing with small  
WOODEN SOLDIERS in the SUNLIGHT entry way to the great  
\*THRONEROOM & BANQUETING HALL. The DOG is asleep.

As always, he wears the FADED RED HORSEHAIR NECKLACE...

A SHADOW falls across him and both look up, startled.

VOICE

Is your mother home?

Telemachus squints up, trying to see. The DOG snarls...

TELEMACHUS POV

TWO YOUNG MEN (20's) smile down at him. They are handsome, well dressed - but something is odd, perhaps it's a sort of casual arrogance. Young nobility. One of them pets the dog.

TELEMACHUS

Who are you?

1st MAN

My name is Antinous...

The second man kneels with ominous intimacy before the boy.

2nd MAN

My name is Eurymachus. Yours is Telemachus, isn't it?

TELEMACHUS

My father is the king.

Eurymachus, wide-eyed, makes a show of looking around.

EURYMACHUS

Is he now? The king, indeed? (smiles)  
Where is he?

TELEMACHUS

He's - away.

Antinous kneels on his other side; pushes the dog away.

ANTINOUS

Where are the king's men? There's none here but nursemaids and grandfathers...

TELEMACHUS

They went to the war. With father.

ANTINOUS

Father's been gone a long time.

EURYMACHUS

Can you remember your father?

ANTINOUS

Can your mother remember him?  
DOES she remember him?

EURYMACHUS

Perhaps he's dead.

ANTINOUS

(to Eurymachus)

After all this time? And in a war? Yes, he must be dead. (to the boy) Do you know what that makes your mother, my son? It makes her a widow.

EURYMACHUS

A rich widow.

They look at each other.

ANTINOUS

I wonder what's for lunch.

EXT. AN ISLAND - DAY

with Odysseus' SHIP nearing it...

ODYSSEUS' VOICE OVER  
Poseidon, lord of the wine dark sea  
wasted no time in his campaign to  
destroy me.

ON DECK

Odysseus, next to POLITES, (very thin; he's 40, a born pessimist)  
stares at the island. Next to him is EURYLOCHOS, 40, a sober second  
in command.

POLITES  
I see nothing.

ODYSSEUS  
(shades his eyes)  
So much the better. We seek no trouble;  
only food and fresh water.

SEVERAL SHOTS

Odysseus' ship approaches the island.

CU THE SAILORS' FACES

as they search for tell-tale signs. What is this place?

EXT. BAY - DAY

Odysseus' ship drops its ANCHOR with an ECHOING SPLASH...

ON DECK

ODYSSEUS

Elpenor, pick ten men and we'll go ashore. The rest stay aboard and make ready to sail on the instant, should we meet trouble.

He fetches forth a LEATHERN WINESKIN -

ODYSSEUS (cont'd)

Let us take some sweet wine - we may have to trade with the natives...

The men take their full WINESKINS...

EURYLOCHOS

How long will you be gone?

ODYSSEUS

(considers)

If we have not returned in three days, you must sail without us.

Reactions to this.

ON THE ISLAND

Odysseus, Elpenor and the men, 12 in all, march off the beach, with weapons and skins for water, baskets, etc. Polites shakes his head

unhappily - a bad idea...

SEVERAL ANGLES

as they penetrate the interior of the island. It is mountainous, craggy above the tree line. They look about.

ONE MAN stops, looks at the ground, eyes wide.

HIS POV

a SHEEP HOOF PRINT - only HUGE. His hand fits in it!

THE OTHERS LOOK

there are MANY HUGE SHEEP TRACKS.

Ist MAN

Sheep.

2nd MAN

(looks around)

Where there's game there's water.

ELPENOR

(smiles; to Odysseus)

Mutton tonight.

ODYSSEUS

(frowns)

Whoever saw sheep this big?

They move on. Odysseus stops, looks -

ABOVE THEM ON THE MOUNTAIN

the MOUTH OF A CAVE - also large...

Frowning, Odysseus waves his men forward towards it.

INT. CAVE - DAY

Cautiously, Odysseus and his men enter. The place is deserted but inhabited - there is a LARGE BED of SKINS, IMPLEMENTS and ENORMOUS SHEEP PENS. A HUGE CAMPFIRE SMOLDERS...

Neatly arranged are CHEESES and other supplies, stacked...

ELPENOR

Look - here's plenty for all. Let's seize  
what we can and flee.

Wondering, Odysseus attempts to lift an ENORMOUS STAFF.

ELPENOR (cont'd)

(nervous)

Lord Odysseus..!

Suddenly a DISTANT RUMBLING is HEARD...

The men look at each other, bewildered. The GROUND BEGINS TO SHAKE as the RUMBLING becomes ENORMOUS.

Odysseus tries to lead his men out of the cave, but they are scattered by the arrival of a HERD OF GIANT FLEECY SHEEP. Their BLEATINGS and BAAS ECHO, like elephants bellowing...

Before the men can recover and renew their attempts to escape, a

ONE-EYED GIANT, twelve feet in height or more, enters the cave and ROLLS a HUGE BOULDER across the cave mouth with a THUNDERING NOISE, blocking the EXIT.

They are trapped.

Odysseus motions to his men and they do the best they can to conceal themselves as the giant closes his SHEEP in their pens, and throws huge LOGS to restoke his dying FIRE.

In the fire's GLARE he espies his visitors.

The ONE EYE in the middle of his forehead blinks, surprised.

GIANT

Who are you?

They don't answer, terrified by his BOOMING VOICE.

GIANT (cont'd)

You are pirates, come to rob me...

Odysseus steps forward, his empty hands outstretched.

ODYSSEUS

We are no pirates but soldiers returning to our homes from the siege of Troy. A storm has blown us from our course and thrown us upon your mercy. In the name of Zeus, king of the gods, we invoke your hospitality.

The monster stares at him with his one baleful eye.

GIANT

Zeus? King of the gods? I am  
Polyphemous, son of Poseidon, Earth-  
shaker and lord of the wine dark sea...

Odysseus takes this in, unhappily...

ODYSSEUS

Son of Poseidon -

POLYPHEMOUS

Even so, we Cyclops recognize no gods  
but ourselves, for who are as mighty as  
we? (pause, then, with elephantine  
cunning) Where have you moored your  
ship?

Elpenor starts to tell him but Odysseus is faster.

ODYSSEUS

Our ship is at the bottom of the ocean,  
split apart by the storm which drove us  
to your shores... These men alone have  
survived the wrath of your mighty  
father...

Polyphemous looks at Odysseus and his men.

POLYPHEMOUS

Not for long.

With one swift motion, he reaches out, GRABS TWO MEN and DASHES  
OUT THEIR BRAINS on the rocks by his fire.

CU ODYSSEUS and ELPENOR

eyes wide with shock. As they watch, Polyphemous EATS the TWO DEAD men. All we HEAR is an awful CRUNCHING, then a resounding BELCH. Odysseus and his men are stunned - it all happened so fast. Polyphemous wipes his victims' juices off his mouth with the back of his hand. He yawns. You don't want to look too closely at his gaping mouth.

As Odysseus and his horrified companions watch, Polyphemous rolls onto his furs and skins and soon goes to sleep.

Quietly Elpenor slides his SWORD out of its sheath. He starts forward but Odysseus grabs him.

ODYSSEUS

Wait -

ELPENOR

What for? Breakfast? Now's our chance!

ODYSSEUS

(frantic whisper; holds him)

Think. THINK! If we kill him, we will never escape this place.

He points to the HUGE BOULDER blocking the cave mouth.

Elpenor is stunned. So are the rest of the men. They withdraw into a frightened knot, leaving Odysseus to squat by the waning fire and stare at his enemy, THINKING...

ODYSSEUS' VOICE OVER

It was a long night - made longer by the  
melancholy prospect that I would die  
horribly in this lonely

(cont'd)

place... and never lay eyes again on my  
beloved wife and innocent son... that  
Poseidon would win...

THE SUN APPEARS ON THE HORIZON

EXT. ODYSSEUS' SHIP - DAWN

The MEN watch the SUNRISE.

POLITES

Second day...

He follows Eurylochos' gaze to the hillside. No sign.

A BELCH OVER brings us back to -

CU A FINGER POPPING MORE FOOD INTO A MOUTH

WIDEN TO REVEAL

POLYPHEMOUS

finishing breakfast - two more of Odysseus' men.

CU ODYSSEUS' HORRIFIED FACE

more crunching sounds. The BELCH again.

The SHEEP are now BLEATING NOSILY to go out. In response, Polyphemous rises ponderously and goes to the STONE.

Odysseus watches carefully. There's a THUNDERING NOISE

and a SHAFT OF DAYLIGHT hits his face as Polyphemous ROLLS the BOULDER away from the cave-mouth, but stands GUARD at the EXIT as he shoos his HUGE SHEEP outside with piercing WHISTLES that cause Odysseus and his remaining men to clap their hands over their ears to protect them from the NOISE.

Then, grinning, he follows them, rolling the STONE in place and stopping the mouth of the cave like a cork in a bottle.

SEVERAL OF THE MEN

sit crying, hopelessly. Odysseus walks about the cave, surveying the same familiar objects. Elpenor stares at him.

ELPENOR

We are doomed.

ODYSSEUS

We still have our brains.

1st MAN

(bitter)

For how long?

ODYSSEUS

Athena, grey-eyed goddess, be my

guide...

He instantly TRIPS on something: the HUGE STAFF he saw when they arrived. He tries again to lift it; waves to his men.

ODYSSEUS (cont'd)

Help me. Quickly.

The seven remaining men and Elpenor help lift the staff.

ODYSSEUS

Bring it to the fire and heat the end -

ELPENOR

What for?

ON ODYSSEUS

ODYSSEUS

To make a sharp point.

Puzzled reactions to this, but

SEVERAL ANGLES

the staff end toasting in the fire and the men taking turns hacking at it with their swords until they've whittled a sharp, hard, blackened SPEAR tip. An exhausting day's work.

LATER

They are panting and frightened as the GROUND RUMBLES...

2nd MAN

(terrified)  
He's coming..!

ODYSSEUS

Quick - hide this.

The MEN pull the huge STAKE to one side and cover it with rushes as

THE BOULDER is pushed aside and the FLOCKS come BELLOWING in, followed by Polyphemous, who rolls the STONE back...

Odysseus and his remaining men have little choice but to stand there as the monster surveys them. It's going to be two for dinner - but which two? Finally -

POLYPHEMOUS

Suppertime.

Odysseus, Elpenor and the men, tears streaming down their faces, force themselves not to move. They are SHAKING...

Suddenly, as before, a HUGE HAND, snatches two of the men, one them was our "1st MAN".

STAY ON ODYSSEUS and ELPENOR

as they force themselves to listen to the hideous CRIES and then the CRUNCHING. Then silence, except the FIRE and the SHEEP and GOATS giving out the occasional BLEAT. Finally -

ODYSSEUS

Perhaps you would like something to wash down your food.

Off the giant's questioning look, Odysseus pours some of his WINE

into a BUCKET and hands it to the giant, who swigs it down in an instant. After a moment, he smiles.

POLYPHEMOUS

Good.

ODYSSEUS

Have some more.

\*He motions to his men - they empty ALL THEIR WINE into a \*VAT. Impatiently the giant waits, then seizes the vat and downs the entire contents with a GLUG. He hiccoughs, then -

POLYPHEMOUS

What is your name?

ODYSSEUS

(fractional pause)

Nobody.

POLYPHEMOUS

Nobody?

ODYSSEUS

(casual)

I am called Nobody. Mother, father, friends - everyone calls me Nobody.

POLYPHEMOUS

Nobody - that wine was good. I shall eat you last, Nobody.

ODYSSEUS

You are too kind.

POLYPHEMOUS

You're funny.

ODYSSEUS

Am I?

Another staring contest, but the wine is potent; Polyphemous' eyelid droops; he stares some more, than rolls over onto his back, pulling ANIMAL SKINS over him.

Odysseus watches without expression. His five men gather next to him, breathless. Everyone FREEZES. Then the giant begins to SNORE. Still Odysseus waits. Then, he motions with his hand to bring forth the stake -

THE FIRE

the TIP is re-immersed in the FLAMES until it GLOWS...

Odysseus nods, satisfied...

With great effort they extricate and position the STAKE, climbing onto one of the GOAT PEN FENCES so that we are

ABOVE THE MONSTER'S CLOSED EYE

looking down at it, as Polyphemous moves in his sleep. They FREEZE, fearful of discovery, but he does not wake.

Odysseus positions the point, like a DRILL. He looks at his men - they at him. He nods...

With a mighty THRUST, they shove the STAKE directly down!

BLOOD squishes up, covering Odysseus, followed by a SCREAM.

Polyphemous sits up, the STAKE sticking out of where his EYE used to be. He tugs it from the smoking socket and his SCREAMS ricochet off the walls as he staggers about, stumbling into his SHEEP PENS, stampeding his flocks in the cave; the NOISE and CHAOS is stupendous.

As Polyphemous thrashes wildly, Odysseus and his men must be nimble to avoid being crushed by the monster or his HERD. One of the MEN is TRAMPLED because he isn't fast enough.

EXT. CAVE - NIGHT

some distance away as can HEAR the BELLOWING. REVEAL

SEVERAL OTHER CYCLOPS

at their evening meal, reacting to the NOISE.

POLYPHEMOUS' VOICE  
Help! Help me!

The CYCLOPS look at each other, puzzled.

CYCLOPS  
(yelling)  
Polyphemous? Polyphemous!

2nd CYCLOPS  
(standing)  
What has happened?

POLYPHEMOUS' VOICE  
(a wail of pain and fury)  
I am blind! He has blinded me!

The Cyclops look at each other, puzzled...

CYCLOPS  
WHO has blinded you?

POLYPHEMOUS  
Nobody!! Nobody has blinded me!

1st CYCLOPS  
Nobody??

POLYPHEMOUS  
Nobody has blinded me! Ahhh..!

The Cyclops can't make it out, shrug, go back to their dinner, mumbling "Nobody". The distant NOISES subside.

INT. POLYPHEMOUS' CAVE - NIGHT

Polyphemous crawls around on all fours, whimpering, clutching his forehead where his eye used to be...

POLYPHEMOUS  
Nobody - I'll get you, do yo hear me? If  
it's the last thing I do, I'll get you...

Odysseus watches, impassive, says nothing to give his position away.

THE HORIZON

the SUN appears...

EXT. ODYSSEUS' SHIP - SUNRISE

Eurylochos and the rest of the CREW watch the SUN come up.

PERIMEDES

Third day.

POLITES

He said we should leave on the third day...

EURYLOCHOS

(torn)

Not yet...

He looks over to the island... no sign...

INT. POLYPHEMOUS' CAVE - DAY

The SHEEP are BLEATING something FIERCE, crowding at the entrance, wanting to get out as per their routine.

Polyphemous stands by the stone, unsure, his hands reaching out, trying to find his mutilators.

POLYPHEMOUS

Nobody! Nobody, you'll stay here til you rot. Do you hear me? Til you ROT.

Odysseus hears alright. He waits as Polyphemous reluctantly pushes the STONE to one side. The SHEEP start out but Polyphemous stays by the cave mouth, stroking each one, top and sides as it goes past...

Odysseus shows his men what to do. They each take one of the fleecy sheep and grab onto the wool from BELOW THE BELLY, allowing themselves to be DRAGGED out past Polyphemous' inquiring hands on inspection.

Odysseus grabs the belly of BIG RAM and goes last, looking up anxiously...

HIS POV

traveling under the sheep as Polyphemous' HUGE FINGERS come NEAR, blindly feeling, like tentacles from a GIANT SQUID...

POLYPHEMOUS

Ares, you are always first to leave the cave - why are you last, today?

The RAM can only BLEAT, not give Odysseus away...

Once the RAM has passed, Polyphemous rolls the rock back.

POLYPHEMOUS

Nobody? Nobody? I can wait...

He sits there, the picture of grief...

EXT. POLYPHEMOUS' CAVE - DAY

as the SHEEP emerge, Odysseus and his men drop off their bellies, standing, brushing themselves clean...

ODYSSEUS

Quick now, herd them to the ship before they weigh anchor...

SEVERAL ANGLES

as the FOUR remaining MEN, acting like sheep dogs, move the large SHEEP downhill towards

ODYSSEUS' SHIP

where they are indeed sadly ready to make sail.

PERIMEDES

Look!

They see the SHEEP and Odysseus and four men only, running.

EURYLOCHOS

Where are the rest?

Odysseus drives one of the sheep aboard -

ODYSSEUS

All dead except for these. Weigh anchor! Hurry!

INT. POLYPHEMOUS' CAVE - DAY

POLYPHEMOUS

(mutters to himself)

Are you hungry yet, Nobody? You will be...

ODYSSEUS' VOICE

(from far off)

Can you hear me, son of Poseidon? It is

I, Odysseus, who repaid your hospitality  
by taking your eye!

Polyphemous straightens up, in SHOCK. With increasing speed, he  
fumbles for the mouth of the cave; rolls back the STONE-

ODYSSEUS VOICE (cont'd)  
Polyphemous! We have escaped your  
clutches and you must know that it was  
the King of Ithaka, who brought you low!

EXT. POLYPHEMOUS' CAVE - DAY

The monster emerges, turning his head in the direction of Odysseus'  
VOICE. FAR BELOW Odysseus' ship is leaving the island and Odysseus  
is yelling up from the deck...

ODYSSEUS  
Polyphemous! Can you hear me? I am  
ODYSSEUS! Tell your father I AM NOT  
NOBODY!

Polyphemous, in a rage, pulls up an enormous ROCK..

ON ODYSSEUS' SHIP

Elpenor tries to restrain Odysseus.

ELPENOR  
In heaven's name, my lord, do not  
antagonize him. You've had your  
victory...

## ODYSSEUS' VOICE OVER

I would not listen. I was drunk with foolish pride at my own cleverness and rage against the monster...

## ODYSSEUS

(in a frenzy)

He killed my men! And I have repaid him! Polyphemous, where is your eye? Is Odysseus wearing your eye?! Tell your father!

## OUTSIDE HIS CAVE

Polyphemous has heard the direction of the VOICE. He HURLS the HUGE STONE DOWN in the DIRECTION OF ODYSSEUS' SHIP.

## ODYSSEUS and HIS MEN

react to the sight of the huge ROCK hurtling towards them.

## WIDE ANGLE

as the ROCK plunges into the sea BEHIND Odysseus' ship, the SPRAY DRENCHING EVERYONE LIKE A TIDAL WAVE, we CUT TO:

## INT. BANQUET HALL, ITHAKA - DAY

There are now SIX YOUNG MEN eating. Antinous and Eurymachus have been joined by FOUR SIMILAR TYPES. They're having a good meal - as little Telemachus watches with old (50) EUMAEUS, a shepherd, who acts as the boy's protector.

MELANTHE, now older, less innocent, less shy, reaches past Eurymachos, to pour him some WINE; discreetly he squeezes her; she smiles, allowing herself to be pawed...

Antinous, in the act of chewing, catches Telemachus staring at him. (Around the boy's neck he still wears the FADED HORSEHAIR BRAID NECKLACE.)

ANTINOUS

What are you looking at?

Telemachus says nothing. Eurymachus laughs.

EURYMACHUS

He's measuring you for your coffin.

ANTINOUS

(to Eurymachus)

Is that so?

He regards Telemachus unpleasantly.

ANTINOUS (cont'd)

Boy. Come here. COME HERE.

Telemachus is uncertain. Eumaeus rises.

EUMAEUS

The lad has done nothing. Leave him alone.

ANTINOUS

Hold your tongue.

EUMAEUS

When Lord Odysseus returns -

WHAM! In a flash Antinous has flung a LAMB BONE at the head of the older man, cutting him open so he BLEEDS.

VOICE

That will do.

They look. It's Penelope. The men rise awkwardly.

EURYMACHUS

Your majesty, we -

ANTINOUS

(overlapping)

Majesty, this fool insulted me...

Penelope ignores them as she surveys the SIX MEN.

PENELOPE

(to the newcomers)

Also suitors to my hand?

An overlapping mumble of "Yes, your majesty..." her contempt for them is withering. Finally -

PENELOPE

(without expression)

Come, Telemachus.

Obediently, Telemachus rises and trails his mother out of the room.

ANTINOUS

(calls after her)

Your husband is dead, my lady...

She keeps walking.

EURYMACHUS

We will stay until you choose one of us  
to sit on his throne...

ANTINOUS

...and lie in your bed..!

ON PENELOPE

she hesitates slightly in her step, then keeps walking.

PENELOPE

(to herself)

Then you will stay a long time.

The suitors' POV

Penelope and the little boy disappear down the hall.

ODYSSEUS' VOICE OVER

All unaware of my poor wife's misery, I  
redoubled my efforts to defy Poseidon's  
curse and reach home...

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

ODYSSEUS' SHIMMERING REFLECTION IN A POND. WIDEN TO REVEAL

EXT. A LARGE FRESH WATER POND - DAY

a pleasant clearing on a green island...

Odysseus, with a large LEATHERN SACK is about to dip into the pond for some water...

ODYSSEUS' VOICE OVER (cont'd)

We still needed fresh water. It was while stopping to obtain some on an uninhabited island, that I encountered a rare piece of good fortune...

Odysseus stares into the clear WATER, but instead of his reflection he sees that of a jovial grinning MAN...

Startled, Odysseus turns to see who is next to him. No one.

By the time he turns to look again at the water, the GRINNING MAN is RISING UP OUT OF IT, LAUGHING and DRIPPING. He is Falstaffian in appearance and temperament, bedecked with garlands and lily-pads...

GRINNING MAN

Did I startle you? Come, admit you were startled.

ODYSSEUS

Entirely...

GRINNING MAN

I am Aeolus, King of the Winds. I was fishing. This is my island. All winds begin here, big and little, the tempests and the breezes - I send them all on

their way. You are trespassing. Did you know that?

ODYSSEUS

I assure you, I did not. I am Odysseus, king of Ithaka. After ten years' absence, I seek only to reach my home once more...

AEOLUS

(impressed)

Odysseus! That clever fellow who dreamed up the wooden horse that toppled the walls of Troy?

ODYSSEUS

(with irony)

That clever fellow...

AEOLUS

Who has not heard of your deeds - or your cunning! But how is it that with all your brains you alone, of all the Greek princes, have not yet returned home?

ODYSSEUS

I offended the lord of the wine dark sea, Poseidon, and he has decreed that I never see my wife or son again...

## AEOLUS

Poseidon - tush, that bully. My cousin.  
I am not afraid of him. (confidential)  
The sea is nothing without the wind to  
move it. Did  
you know that? (Odysseus shakes his  
head). Well, let us see what we can do.  
You've been away from your family long  
enough. May I borrow that waterskin?

Odysseus hands him the large water bag.

## AEOLUS (cont'd)

Now watch - we'll soon have you on your  
way. You'll be home in no time.

He stretches forth one arm to the sky - his other he inserts into  
Odysseus' SACK...

From the sky AEOLUS plucks DARK WIND CURRENTS and lets them  
flow into his outstretched PALM and travel across his broad  
shoulders INTO THE SACK - one WIND after another, as Odysseus  
watches with amazed delight. Aeolus laughs hugely at his own  
cleverness.

When ALL THE WINDS but one have descended into the SACK, Aeolus  
straps the top TIGHT with a LEATHER THONG, kneeling on the  
STRUGGLING WINDS to close the knot securely.

## AEOLUS (cont'd)

There. I have left only the West Wind  
free. In nine days it will blow you and  
your ship to Ithaka.

ODYSSEUS

How can I repay your kindness?

AEOLUS

Tush, giving me the chance to foil that  
bullying cousin of mine is payment  
enough. Good luck to you...

He steps into the pond as he say this and slowly sinks into it,  
leaving Odysseus, bemused, looking for him there.

Not seeing him, Odysseus clutches the SACK, which is now quite  
heavy, and lugs it towards the shore...

EXT. BEACH - DAY

as his men watch, Odysseus returns to the ship, dragging a LARGE  
LEATHERN BAG. The men look at each other, curious.

ELPENOR

My lord, let us help...

They rush to assist him but he brushes them gruffly aside.

ODYSSEUS

Let go. I can manage...

Unceremoniously, he lugs the SACK past his wondering crew.

ODYSSEUS (cont'd)

(points)

See how the wind sits fair. Do not stand  
idle; raise the sail and seize our  
chance. Home, lads! HOME.

With a shout the CREW races to obey.

SEVERAL SHOTS

of the SHIP getting underway and speeding in fair weather before a brisk breeze. They are scudding along - DAY turns into SUNSET...

EURYLOCHOS

My lord, shall we trim the sail?

ODYSSEUS

(smiles)

She runs well enough and there's a clear moon - keep her before the wind and let her carry us to Ithaka.

POLITES

But in the dark, can you be sure -?

ODYSSEUS

Trust me.

Puzzled, the CREW obeys...

Odysseus sits in a chair on deck, next to the TILLER, one hand resting on top of THE SACK... He looks about. All is in order. Satisfied, he allows his eyes to close...

As the men work, they can't help looking at their chief, asleep, his hand resting on the mysterious BUNDLE...

EXT. SEA - NIGHT

FAINT CANDLE and TORCHLIGHT REVEAL ODYSSEUS' SHIP holding course beneath the tranquil moon...

## ODYSSEUS' VOICE OVER

For eight days we sailed thus, our  
progress home rapid and unimpeded. I  
believed I had beaten Poseidon -

## EXT. DECK - NIGHT

Odysseus, asleep, sits in his chair, his hand still on the SACK - as  
several members of the CREW gather and study him.

## ODYSSEUS' VOICE OVER (cont'd)

There is something about intelligence  
that inspires suspicion. That man who,  
like a chessplayer, can think three  
steps ahead, is viewed as calculating  
and therefore cold, and therefore not

## ODYSSEUS (cont'd)

to be trusted. He engenders neither  
affection nor faith. While I slept, my  
intelligence fomented folly.

## ELPENOR

(softly)

What's in the sack?

## POLITES

Treasure...

## PERIMEDES

Aye, he must be keeping it for himself...

Eurylochos says nothing but it is clear that he too, is troubled by the sack and Odysseus' protective hand on it.

EXT. HORIZON - DAWN

in the distance, an island, familiar, green...

EXT. ODYSSEUS' SHIP - DAWN

nearing the island...

POLITES

Look!

They crowd the gunwale and stare in happy disbelief.

PERIMEDES

Ithaka...

ELPENOR

Home...

EURYLOCHOS

Look - you can see morning fires on the beach! The fishermen breakfasting! Hey! HEY!!! HELLO! WE'RE HOME!!

True enough. They are close enough to home to see PEOPLE on the BEACH burning wood and SMOKE coming from the interior. They are home. They've made it.

MEN start to weep. Polites et al turn to tell Odysseus.

Odysseus stirs in his chair but doesn't wake. His hand is still on the

bag. They look at each other; now or never...

PERIMEDES

At least let's see what's inside.

EURYLOCHOS

It's his.

ELPENOR

Ours.

PERIMEDES

We fought side by side with him for ten years.

POLITES

Aye. We've gone every step of the way with him and shared all the same risks...

Their logic seems irrefutable. They steal forward, Ithaka tantalizingly close in the background, and creep close to where Odysseus sleeps.

CU THEIR HANDS

gently extricating the SACK from beneath Odysseus' limp hand. Struggling with the difficult KNOT, eager fingers pluck it apart.

The MEN are gaping with greedy anticipation.

CU THE TOP OF THE BAG OPENED

and WHOOSH! - A STRONG CURRENT of DARK AIR ERUPTS, sending them falling backwards with CRIES of surprise and ALARM -

The COMMOTION wakes Odysseus, who looks around, even as the BAG continues to ERUPT with DARK SWIRLING SHAFTS OF AIR.

ODYSSEUS  
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

He tries desperately to close the SACK but the eruptions are too strong. More and different winds are ESCAPING..! Their force throws Odysseus to the deck.

ODYSSEUS (cont'd)  
Fools. You FOOLS!

The WINDS ARE ALREADY SWIRLING INTO CHAOS, the SKY DARKENING, THE SAIL LUFFING MADLY. RAIN, THEN LIGHTNING, THUNDER - and whole ball of wax as the ship is overtaken by contrary elements.

As the terrified men watch, their ship is seized, turned hither and thither - TWO MEN THROWN OVERBOARD - and sent scudding in the OPPOSITE DIRECTION, the SAIL RIPPING, OARS SNAPPING - all the storms at sea rolled into one...

The CREW'S attempts to shorten sail, to pull OARS - all quite useless...

The SAIL with ATHENA'S IMAGE is ripped in pieces...

EXT. SEA - DAY

The huge STORM tosses Odysseus' SHIP like a bobbing cork.

ON DECK

Odysseus directs his terrified CREW. FOUR MEN clutch the RUDDER; others work at furling the SAIL; others use OARS to keep up some way and so stay in some control.

ODYSSEUS

Pull! PULL..!

The MEN strain at the OARS, terrified...

SUPPLIES, ANIMALS etc. get BLOWN or WASHED overboard!

Also THREE MORE MEN, screaming as they are swept away - the storm continues to LASH the wretched ship...

SEVERAL ANGLES

of the tempest, then through the clouds on the HORIZON, a distant ISLAND... Odysseus sees it; points...

DISSOLVE TO:

LATER

the storm is abating, the ISLAND getting nearer...

SEVERAL ANGLES

the storm subsiding into an eerie stillness as Odysseus' ship nears the island...

EXT. COVE - DAY

HIGH POV DOWN

as Odysseus' ship enters the little bay...

EXT. COVE - DAY

CU THE PROW of ODYSSEUS' SHIP

gently nudges into the sandy beach - a natural harbor, pretty and sheltered. Silence. Almost unnatural silence after all the roar of the tempest...

RISE FROM THE HULL

to the gunwales, where Odysseus and his men look over the side, trying to make out where they are... Finally -

ODYSSEUS

Wait here.

Seizing a SPEAR, he leaps onto the sand. The CREW shouts protests, frantically waving him to come back.

PERIMEDES

In heaven's name, my lord, do not endanger yourself - !

EURYLOCHOS

(overlapping)

Remember our dead comrades..!

POLITES

(overlapping)

Should anything happen to you...

ODYSSEUS  
DO WHAT I SAY.

Chastened, they watch him set out, their faces frozen...

SEVERAL ANGLES

as Odysseus explores. The island seems pretty flat, in contrast to Polyphemous' home. It is also densely WOODED.

A LARGE BRILLIANTLY COLORED BIRD

startles Odysseus with a sudden appearance and a MOURNFUL CRY. Odysseus tries to move forward but the bird flaps its wings in his face, crying dolefully. Puzzled, Odysseus looks about in other directions -

Perceiving a LARGE TREE, he elects to climb it. The colorful bird leaves, still cawing...

SEVERAL ANGLES

of Odysseus' climb, until he is way up and able to look...

HIS POV

the island appears deserted - but wait: there's a COLUMN OF SMOKE floating tranquilly up from the center of the woods.

ODYSSEUS

studies the smoke. A NOISE STARTLES him. He looks down -

HIS POV

below him a HUGE STAG stares directly up at him.

Odysseus smiles and hefts his SPEAR. The stag looks sadly up at him but makes no move to flee. Odysseus throws straight and true; the spear STRIKES the animal with a THUD.

CU HANDS SCRAPING

desperately at a SHELLFISH... WIDEN TO REVEAL

EXT. COVE- DAY

THE CREW unsuccessfully scavenges for seafood near their beached ship. A SOUND directs their attention to where-

EXT. COVE - DAY

Carrying the stag on his shoulders, Odysseus emerges from the woods to the beach. His men CHEER at the sight of him, running to help him with their meal... forget clams!

LATER - SUNSET

camped on the beach, the stag roasts on a spit and the men eat gratefully. Odysseus surveys them and his handiwork proudly; their morale is coming back as their stomachs fill.

EURYLOCHOS

Delicious...

POLITES

I never tasted better...

PERIMEDES

We must hunt for more...

ODYSSEUS

I saw smoke.

QUICK REACTIONS

from the men, alarmed.

POLITES

Smoke?

ODYSSEUS

(nods)

In the woods. Someone lives here.

EURYLOCHOS

Let them not know of us, my lord.

ELPENOR

Aye, remember the Cyclops...

ODYSSEUS

THINK. What choice have we? How do we find our way home unless we can determine where we are? (off their looks) There are forty of us

ODYSSEUS (cont'd)  
yet remaining. Tomorrow we will  
divide ourselves in two groups. One  
party will stay with the ship -

POLITES  
And the other?

ODYSSEUS  
Will investigate the smoke. In that way,  
should some evil befall, half of us  
should still be able to flee this place.  
(before they can speak) If you had  
trusted me, we would not be here.

He walks off, leaving his men to commiserate.

PERIMEDES  
(sadly)  
I just want to go home.

POLITES  
What do you think HE wants? (they look  
at him, alone on the beach) He has a  
wife and son he's never seen but once.  
He longs for them as we long for our  
families...had we been less greedy we  
would be there now.

They know it. The sun BLEEDS on the horizon...

CU ODYSSEUS

stares out at the TWILIGHT, just a hint of BLUE-RED. Where's his

family? What has become of Penelope and Telemachus?

CU TWO STONES

shaking inside ODYSSEUS' HELMET - one BLACK, one WHITE.

WIDEN TO REVEAL

EXT. ODYSSEUS' SHIP - DAY

the MEN watch as Odysseus swirls the clacking STONES about in his helmet...

ODYSSEUS

Black means go; white means stay. (he  
faces Eurylochos) Close your eyes.

Eurylochos closes his eyes and reaches into the helmet.

CU EURYLOCHOS' HAND OPENING

holds THE BLACK STONE. His face goes pale.

LATER

Odysseus and his half the CREW watch somberly as Eurylochos leads Polites, Elpenor and their reluctant troop off the beach.

EXT. THE WOODS - DAY

as Eurylochos' men wait beneath another large tree, looking up to where Eurylochos is climbing.

ELPENOR

Can you see it?

EURYLOCHOS

I see it.

He shimmies down, rapidly, waves them cautiously forward.

SEVERAL ANGLES

of the anxious men edging their way through the woods. One sniffs - the smell is pleasant.

1st CREWMAN

Smell. Smell that?

2nd CREWMAN

Smells like...

3rd CREWMAN

Roast pork...

They sniff the pleasant aroma. One grins...

4th CREWMAN

Someone is dining well. Come on.

They move forward with renewed energy. SUDDENLY POLITES freezes, his eyes wide with fright.

POLITES

Look!

A LION

right in front of them. Almost before they can react -

ELPENOR

Over there!

A BEAR

Now the men whirl about; they are surrounded by ANIMALS. Lions, Bears, Pigs.

The ANIMALS are closing in on the MEN, but they behave oddly. They do not menace the men, nor do they growl; instead they appear friendly, fawning, servile, even.

A LION brushes up against Polites, quite docile.

A BEAR'S PAW

gently touches Eurylochos' face...eye-to-eye contact.

A BOAR

rubs up against Elpenor like a cat...

A WOLF

trots up like a dog and licks one of their HANDS...

And from ALL, a kind of MEWING, moaning sound.

The men look at each other, dumbfounded.

EURYLOCHOS

(quietly)  
Forward...

The men move forward, surrounded by the ANIMALS, who trot amiably alongside like pets, TAILS wagging, towards

A WHITE MARBLED PALACE

glimpsed through the woods. The men react to its beauty - and the SMOKE rising from the chimney. Eurylochos is uneasy.

EURYLOCHOS  
Let us return to the ship...

POLITES  
Why? That is no cave of horrors. No Cyclops lives here...

ELPENOR  
(on the contrary)  
Someone is preparing a feast.

Murmurs of assent from the men. Reluctantly Eurylochos goes forward, looking anxiously about... the ANIMALS following...

SEVERAL ANGLES

the magnificent villa REVEALS ITSELF in layers of successive detail to the advancing men.

They now travel paths lined with GORGEOUS FLOWERS...

POLITES  
Surely we have entered paradise...

EXT. A COLUMNED HOUSE - DAY

in a clearing as the men arrive. The villa is white, palatial, covered with freize-work and marbled terracing... everything is beautiful... how came it here?

Emerging from the house, also in white, is a BEAUTIFUL WOMAN. She has luxuriant DARK HAIR, wreathed in GOLD...

She is neither frightened of the animals nor surprised by the sight of the TWENTY MEN. She strokes the mane of a LION.

WOMAN

I bid you welcome.

They can only gape.

WOMAN (cont'd)

Be not afraid. I am called Circe. (no response from the surprised men)  
Should I fear YOU?

POLITES

You need not fear us. We are the men of Lord Odysseus, returning home to Ithaka from Troy...

Circe claps her hands. ATTRACTIVE WOMEN SERVANTS appear, carrying TOWELS, FRESH CLOTHING...

CIRCE

Noble gentlemen, please avail yourselves of my poor hospitality. Inside is food and drink - all you can

consume after your perils and privations at war and on the sea. (they hesitate) Please. My house is yours. I long for guests.

Her graceful outstretched arms are too irresistible an invitation. The men go forward and follow her inside, murmuring thanks and wonderment at their good fortune -

EXCEPT EURYLOCHOS

who flattens himself against a tree, suspicious, and watches from his hidden vantage point. After the men enter the house, Circe returns and rudely SHOOS the ANIMALS away, talking to them in an indecipherable tongue... scourging them with an IVORY stick...

Sadly the ANIMALS return in different directions to the forest. A Lion walks forlornly past his hiding place...

INT. CIRCE'S BANQUET HALL - DAY

The men enter and gape at the sight. TWENTY TWO GOLDEN CHAIRS and place settings await them. A feast laid on.

CIRCE

Seat yourselves, noble travelers...

They don't need to be told twice, but head for the chairs.

EXT. CIRCE'S VILLA - DAY

From his concealment, Eurylochus tries to make sense of it all.

What can this mean? He goes back to looking at the house, where a FEAST is underway. He can see the MEN being served by the WOMEN. SOUNDS of LAUGHTER and increasing BOISTEROUSNESS from within.

INT. CIRCE'S BANQUET HALL - DAY

Presiding at the head of the table, smiling, Circe watches.

The MEN are loosening up fast, drinking WINE as quickly as the Women can pour it for them, dribbling it, grabbing for the delicious FOOD, their clumsy, greedy fingers making a fine mess of all the beautifully prepared delicacies.

POLITES

Um...delicious...

He belches.

ELPENOR

(another belch)

I could eat such food forever...

More belching from various quarters.

Circe smiles at her Serving Women. They smile back. When the Women pass her with their WINE PITCHERS, she sprinkles A BLUE POWDER in them... nobody notices...

SEVERAL SHOTS

Eurylochos' men pigging out. Food smeared everywhere...

INT. ITHAKA BANQUET/THRONE ROOM - NIGHT

ANTINOUS & EURYMACHUS, PLUS 18 MORE SUITORS

a TOTAL of TWENTY, doing the same thing, gorging themselves, looking much like Odysseus' men, making pigs of themselves at Circe's...

They are raucous and MELANTHE now is quite brazen, no longer the innocent girl scrubbing the walls. And she is not the only YOUNG SERVING WOMAN who now allows herself to be fondled... WHOOPS OF LAUGHTER as these "suitsors" begin making love to the servants on the food-covered tables...

MELANTHE  
(laughing)  
Oh, yes... yes..!

CU PENELOPE'S HANDS

hesitating at her LOOM, as Melanthe's LAUGHTER ECHOS from below.

WIDEN TO REVEAL

INT. PENELOPE'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

Penelope at her ENORMOUS LOOM. Penelope stares at her dream.

PENELOPE'S POV THE HUGE TAPESTRY

a beautiful work: Odysseus being blessed by Athena, also his SHIP - all intricately designed, even to the missing piece of horsehair plume on her husband's helmet. She's an artist. Anticleia, Odysseus' MOTHER, sits stiffly in one corner, dressed in

black, motionless.

In another corner, Eurycleia, the nurse, mends clothing.

MORE LAUGHTER.

Standing in the doorway, slightly older, Telemachus.

TELEMACHUS

Why do you permit them?

Long pause. Penelope does not move.

ANTECLEIA

She cannot prevent them.

Another pause. The boy turns and leaves.

Penelope whirls to the floor and buries her head in her mother-in-law's lap, sobbing.

PENELOPE

He is dead.

Anticleia stays rigid; stiffly strokes Penelope's hair.

ANTICLEIA

He said he would return.

PENELOPE

He is dead.

ANTICLEIA

You must pray that he is not.

PENELOPE

I have prostrated myself before Zeus to  
intercede on his behalf...

EURYCLEIA

(abruptly)

Not Zeus. (off their looks) It is not  
power your husband worships, but  
wisdom...

Penelope lifts her face up at this, thinking. MORE LAUGHTER from  
below.

PENELOPE

(wooden)

Swine.

The sound of a SNORT OVER -

INT. CIRCE'S HOUSE - DAY

Odysseus' men are now completely besotted. The hilarity and gorging  
is at its height... food thrown back and forth - you can hear the  
occasional SNORTING...

Slowly Circe RISES, an enigmatic smile playing about her features.  
She lifts her IVORY WAND from her place setting.

Walking unnoticed, she taps first ONE MAN, then another, on the  
shoulder, working her way genteelly around the table, always  
smiling...

On the MEN -

BRISTLES APPEAR...

A NOSE disappears into a goblet but emerges as a SNOUT...

ARMS BECOME FORE-TROTTERS AND PAWS...

EARS BECOME POINTED...

BACKS BENT...

CLOTHING RIPS...

VOICES BECOME OINKS...

Before our eyes and before the eyes of the astonished (hidden) Eurylochos, Circe's guests metaMORPHose into PIGS. The men register astonishment, dismay - but it is too late. They regard one another with HORROR as they witness their own transformation...

Circe and her servants shake their heads and laugh aloud.

As Eurylochos watches in disbelief, Circe and her maids rudely shoo the GRUNTING PIGS out of her house and around the corner, scourging their pig behinds with her wand...

Eurylochos stealthily manages to follow so he can SEE

THE PIGS herded into filthy STYS behind the house...

Laughing, Circe and her maids scatter ACORNS before them...

Eurylochos has seen enough. He starts to RUN. And run! AND RUN! He

tears through the woods, tripping, falling, scrambling up again, HOWLS of fear bubbling up his throat as trees, bushes and rocks go headlong past his mad flight...

PENELOPE'S VOICE OVER

To thee, grey-eyed Goddess of Wisdom...

CU STATUE OF ATHENA

looking down in her temple to the prone Penelope.

PENELOPE (cont'd)

...I make supplication. I do not know if my lord be alive or whether he sleeps with the dead in Hades. Tell me only that he lives, and living spare him for my eyes. Protect him. Shield him from harm. Send him back to me and to his son. For the sake of our love do this...

CU BUST OF ATHENA

who appears to be listening...

EURYLOCHOS' VOICE OVER

(gasping for breath)

...and then, as I watched, she -

EXT. ODYSSEUS' SHIP - NIGHT

by torchlight, Odysseus listens to tearful Eurylochus GASP out his tale. The other men crowd round.

EURYLOCHOS (cont'd)

...struck them about the shoulders with her ivory wand and changed them into hogs. Polites, Elpenor -ALL! Now they dine on acorns..!

Incredulous reactions from the men; Odysseus listens.

EURYLOCHOS (cont'd)

(crying now; sobbing)

On my life I swear this. The animals we encountered along our way, the very stag we ate last night - all MEN, under her evil enchantments...

REACTIONS FROM THE MEN

to what they ate last night...

Odysseus studies Eurylochos, then pours him some WINE, which the wretched man gulps down. Odysseus rises decisively.

EURYLOCHOS

Where are you going?

He's asking for all of them.

ODYSSEUS

To rescue my men.

A CHORUS of PROTESTS as Eurylochos jumps up and lays a desperate hand on Odysseus' arm, beseechingly.

EURYLOCHOS

My lord, you are our king. If you desert

us now you will not escape Circe's fate  
and without you none of us shall see our  
homes again.

70.

ODYSSEUS

(simply)

I am king of you all.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

illuminated by the MOON, Odysseus moves through the magical night. He passes a TREE but after he goes by a SLENDER MAN emerges from behind it, SILVER-HUED in the moonlight. He wears a WINGED CAP and short CLOAK. In one hand, he holds a STAFF topped by TWO SMALL WRITHING SNAKES...

SLENDER MAN

Odysseus, lord of Ithaka...

Odysseus turns, slightly surprised. He just passed this tree; where was the man?

ODYSSEUS

Who calls my name?

SLENDER MAN

One sent by your patroness, the grey-eyed Goddess...

Odysseus looks at his FEET - WINGS protrude from his ankles.

\*ODYSSEUS

You are Hermes, messenger of the Gods.

HERMES

You know what lies before you? Are you in such a hurry to meet your fate?

ODYSSEUS

(heavily)

I have already met my fate.

HERMES

Still clever, but not yet wise, I see. You must learn the difference between Fate and Faith.

Hermes bends down and plucks a PLANT from the ground.

HERMES (cont'd)

(proffers the plant)

Here is an herb called Moly, whose medicine will protect you from the magic of the sorceress. Use it and remember your patroness from whom it comes.

CU THE SPRIG

as Odysseus' hand reaches to take it in the moonlight.

ODYSSEUS

What must I do?

HERMES

Before you eat or drink from Circe's

hands, chew the leaf and no harm will  
come to you...

He falls into step with Odysseus. They pass another TREE.

ODYSSEUS

And then?

HERMES

And then you must take her to bed.

ODYSSEUS

Make love to her?

HERMES

Else she'll betray you unto death...

ODYSSEUS

But I cannot...

But Hermes doesn't reappear on the other side of the tree. Odysseus,  
startled, backtracks - no sign of the messenger.  
By MOONLIGHT, Odysseus studies the herb, turning the leaf, then  
tucking into the breastplate of his armor...

ODYSSEUS

I thank thee, Goddess...

SEVERAL ANGLES

of Odysseus' progress through the woods towards the VILLA and the  
tantalizing SMOKE.

EXT. CIRCE'S VILLA - NIGHT

She's out there, motionless. Not surprised by him. All around her, still as statues - LIONS, BEARS, WOLVES, BOARS.

CIRCE

I have been waiting for you, great  
Odysseus.

ODYSSEUS

For how long?

CIRCE

(easily)

All my life. Your coming was foretold  
by my dreams. (smiles) And by your men.

Odysseus surveys the menagerie briefly...

ODYSSEUS

Where ARE my men?

CIRCE

Asleep. They were hungry. And tired.  
So I fed and sheltered them.

ODYSSEUS

(smiles back)

I am hungry, too. Will you feed me?

CIRCE

It will be my pleasure.

She takes his arm and leads him into the house - the animals watch them go with glittering eyes - a LION SHEDS A TEAR...

INT. CIRCE'S VILLA - NIGHT

Gone are the TWENTY GOLD CHAIRS and THE LONG TABLE. The set has in effect been re-dressed. A SMALL TABLE with TWO INTIMATELY CONJOINED CHAIRS has been lavishly set - FOR TWO. Candle light gleams and the aura is intimate and romantic.

Circe leads Odysseus to one of the chairs. He sits, throws one leg over a chair arm and watches as she makes him comfortable ...pours him WINE - surreptitiously adding a dose of BLUE POWDER to it... He studies her appreciatively.

ODYSSEUS

Tell me how it is that so beautiful a woman lives alone here on this deserted isle?

She sets a plate of FOOD before him...

CIRCE

(shrugs)

A matter of choice, I assure you. I have given up all hope of meeting the man of my dreams. I find most men are beasts. Or pigs. Do you object to my candor?

As her back is turned to get the WINE, Odysseus pulls out the LEAF and chews it.

ODYSSEUS

On the contrary. Candor to me is as rare  
as fine wine.

This as she proffers him a handsome GOBLET.

CIRCE

Here is the finest.

She takes another for herself, twines her arm into his so that they  
drink with arms linked. Her lips glisten with sensuality and  
anticipation...

CIRCE (cont'd)

Your very good health...

ODYSSEUS

(drinks; savors)

Unusual vintage...

CIRCE

Unique...

ODYSSEUS

(another swallow)

Potent...

CIRCE

(breathless)

You've no idea...

This woman is most attractive. She watches tenderly, lovingly, as  
Odysseus begins to eat. Notices -

ODYSSEUS

You do not join me?

CIRCE (cont'd)

I have already dined. (notices) You eat  
no pork?

ODYSSEUS

Forgive me: I have taken a vow to  
consume no meat of any kind - but of all  
else I gladly partake.

He eats with gusto, drinks some more, ignoring her as she stealthily produces her ivory WAND and subtly strokes his shoulder with it, kissing his neck amorously at the same time... her whisper belies the meaning of her words...

CIRCE

(softly)

Go to your sty - wallow there with your  
friends...

He ignores her, goes on eating. Nothing happens. Circe's eyes widen in alarm. She moves to back off -

In a flash Odysseus is up, grabs her by her luxuriant tresses and shoves the point of his SWORD to her breast, knocking over the table and its seductive finery...

ODYSSEUS

Beautiful Circe, the man of your dreams  
has come.

CIRCE

(terrified)

You - you are not changed..!

ODYSSEUS

It is you who will be changed.

He makes to run her through, pressing the SWORD...

CIRCE

Spare me, I beg you. Whatever you wish,  
if it is within my power I will do it..!

ODYSSEUS

Undo the enchantments of all your  
victims or I sacrifice you on the spot to  
great Athena.

He forces the terrified woman to the ground where she clasps his  
legs in supplication and tears...

CIRCE

Alas, I cannot undo ALL my  
enchantments, for most have long since  
taken root...

Odysseus pulls her up by the hair -

ODYSSEUS

My men, then - and all of them, or you  
die.

Off her look -

CU A YELLOW POWDER

strewn into a LONG PIGS' TROUGH

WIDEN TO REVEAL

EXT. THE STYS - NIGHT

Odysseus holds a TORCH high and watches as Circe adds the YELLOW antidote to their feed...

The PIGS see Odysseus and hasten to him SQUEALING so LOUDLY that he must cover his ears for the awfulness of the SOUND.

CIRCE

(gently)

Eat. Eat...

After a moment's hesitation, they plunge in and start scarfing down. Odysseus watches. The NOISE they make is disgusting. Then his eyes widen -

The TWENTY PIGS at the TROUGH slowly change back into MEN, standing erect, naked, and clean, their own eyes wide with wonderment and wet with TEARS... they stare at their hands.

At each other...

Odysseus himself weeps at the sight, looks over at Circe -

The enchantress herself is moved. Her eyes fill with TEARS and she stares at Odysseus -

INT. CIRCE'S BEDCHAMBER - NIGHT

Odysseus and Circe make passionate love. Odysseus is still crying...

LONG DISSOLVE TO:

DOUBLE EXPOSURE - as Odysseus and Circe make love -

EXT. COVE - DAY

THE RESTORED CREW

runs down joyfully to their COMRADES on Odysseus' beached ship. Those left behind, run screaming and laughing forward to welcome back the men they had assumed lost forever. The reunion of these hardy mariner/soldiers is most touching.

Eurylochos stares with wonder and disbelief, eyes filled.

DISSOLVE BACK TO:

INT. CIRCE'S BEDCHAMBER - DAY

Odysseus and Circe lie spent together. She is asleep, satiated. His eyes are open, staring up. She realizes.

CIRCE

You dream of home.

ODYSSEUS

Are you seer as well as sorceress?

CIRCE

(sadly)

A woman in love requires no such magical powers.

ODYSSEUS

To what sad destiny have I abandoned  
my wife and son?

CIRCE

(identifying; sorrowful)  
What is the name of your wife?

ODYSSEUS

Penelope. I shall never see her again;  
the God Poseidon has decreed my fate.

CIRCE

If it is your fate, why do you struggle  
against it?

ODYSSEUS

That too is my fate. To struggle.  
(thinks) Perhaps it is the fate of all  
men. Perhaps we are all doomed to  
struggle.

CIRCE

(tenderly)  
I heard Odysseus was a clever man. I  
had not heard he was a wise one.

ODYSSEUS

(sadly)  
Wisdom has been forced upon me. The  
lessons that life teaches are hard but  
they will be learned.

CIRCE

(thinks; looks at him)

I could not love a man til I met you. And  
I know I cannot keep you. Knowing this,  
will you trust me?

He looks at her.

ODYSSEUS  
I will trust you...

CU A LOTUS BLOSSOM. WIDEN TO REVEAL

INT. CIRCE'S BANQUET TABLE - NIGHT

ALL of Odysseus' men are seated. In front of each man a GOLD PLATE.  
On each plate is a LOTUS BLOSSOM. They look at her.

CIRCE  
(smiles)  
Trust...

They look at Odysseus. After a moment's hesitation, he eats the  
flower. They all do the same. Silence. Nothing changes...

CIRCE (cont'd)  
(to Odysseus)  
What is your name?

ODYSSEUS  
My name? My name is...(he struggles  
with a smile to recall)... Nobody?

Circe turns to Elpenor.

CIRCE  
And yours?

ELPENOR

I - don't know...

He doesn't seem bothered by the fact - just bemused.

CIRCE

(to Eurylochos)

Where have you come from?

Eurylochos starts to answer, smiles gently, throws up his hands.  
She turns to Polites...

CIRCE (cont'd)

Where were you going?

POLITES

Going..?

None of them can remember. Circe rises...

CIRCE

Before you resume your journey you all  
need rest. The Lotus Blossom will help  
you. In the meantime, my house, my  
goods, all are at your disposal for as  
long as you wish...

CU THE LOTUS

MUSICAL MONTAGE -

The pleasant passage of time on Circe's enchanted isle.

Odysseus and his men GALLOP HORSES, riding through FIELDS of

MULTI-HUED FLOWERS... they run laughing along SANDY BEACHES  
 ...walk through the enveloping FOREST and admire the sunlight  
 dappling through the leaves; remark on the plumage of beautiful  
 BIRDS... Circe takes the arm of Odysseus, and smilingly points out  
 the dreamy wonders of her home.

ODYSSEUS' VOICE OVER

And so we rested... time passed and we  
 had no thought of it... the seasons  
 changed and we rejoiced to witness the  
 colors altering, and also the sky...

As he describes, LEAVES turn color, so does the SKY... TIME is  
 PASSING...WINTER COMES with CHEERFUL FIRES and SONGS...  
 Odysseus and his men are relaxed and happy; they interact with the  
 maid-servants in respectful ways; they help cook...

ODYSSEUS' VOICE OVER (cont'd)

...and finally came the SPRING!

FLOWERS BURST THEIR BUDS, BIRDS FLY BACK, TREES PUT FORTH  
 GREEN SHOOTS and Odysseus and his men hold FOOT RACES in FULL  
 ARMOR on the BEACH... it's good to stretch!

Laughing at the end of his race, Odysseus pulls off his HELMET...  
 something startles him... he looks:

CU HIS HAND

has found the place on his helmet which is missing a chunk of  
 HORSEHAIR PLUME. His fingers tentatively explore the gap.

PAN UP TO ODYSSEUS' FACE

as he tries to remember...

CU THE HORSEHAIR BRAID NECKLACE

still worn around Telemachus' neck. WIDEN TO REVEAL

EXT. ITHAKA - DAY

Telemachus must be fifteen, but he still wears his father's emblem as he practices throwing JAVELINS at a target as old Eumaeus coaches him. Nearby the OLD DOG pants in the sun...

EUMAEUS

Good! Good!! You have your father's gift!

For a moment the youth seems pleased, but then, as he fetches his SPEARS out of their TARGETS, his eyes fall to the scene BELOW...

HIS POV

on the BEACH there must now be FIFTY SUITORS, reveling, turning a BOAR on spit. It's spring in Ithaka as well and the display is a continuation of the on-going orgy of sex and the depletion of King Odysseus' goods.

Eumaeus comes up behind Telemachus and they watch together.

TELEMACHUS

What good is one spear against fifty?

He stomps disconsolately off, leaving Eumaeus with no answer, to gaze angrily down at the beach party...

ON THE HILL ATOP ITHAKA

Odysseus' favorite spot. Penelope stands, gazing to the horizon. She turns when Telemachus appears.

TELEMACHUS

I've been thinking...

PENELOPE

(smiles)

A family trait...

TELEMACHUS

Mother, you must think, too. They grow more numerous and more bold. They will eat us out of house and home. Our flocks, our herds... they will consume my father's kingdom and my birthright. Think. What would father do?

ON PENELOPE

only now we WIDEN TO REVEAL

\*INT. BANQUET/THRONE ROOM - EVENING

Penelope is on the THRONE, dressed in full regalia.

PENELOPE

I have made my decision.

REVERSE REVEALS

the FIFTY SUITORS, swaying in from their party, startled by the sight of her on the throne, in command. They are HEAVIER.

ANTINOUS

You have chosen one of us to wed?

His arm is around Melanthe, who giggles defiantly at her mistress.

PENELOPE

I have in my chamber a tapestry on which I labor. It is the funeral shroud of my husband. When that shroud is complete I will make my choice.

They are slow to take it in, then LEOCRITUS, another of the suitors smiles.

LEOCRITUS

You have worked long at that tapestry.  
It must be nearly finished.

Penelope says nothing. Another Suitor -

AMPHINOMUS

Or why else would you mention it?

Penelope remains inscrutable, then rises and pushes through them. They still are intimidated enough to part for her.

LEOCRITUS

(joyful to the others)

Soon. SOON!

Laughter behind her. From the doorway, Telemachus watches, then withdraws - but not before Antinous and Eurymachus see.

ANTINOUS

That cub is growing teeth.

EURYMACHUS

Aye - he bears watching...

CU PENELOPE'S HANDS

at work. She is UN-WEAVING her tapestry by TORCHLIGHT, pulling it apart... Penelope is unraveling Odysseus...

WIDEN TO REVEAL

INT. PENELOPE'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

as Telemachus watches approvingly. He absently touches the necklace at his throat -

CU ODYSSEUS

looks up suddenly from his helmet. He remembers. Looks out to sea and the fine line of an anonymous horizon...

ODYSSEUS

Penelope...

He turns off the beach as his men watch, wondering.

CU THE CREW IN DIFFERENT LOCATIONS

as one by one, they too blink with returning memory... Questions in their expressions - how long have they been here? Where are they?

INT. CIRCE'S BEDCHAMBER - DAY

Circe emerges from her bath, glistening like Aphrodite from the sea, as Odysseus enters, still in his armor. She smiles.

CIRCE

My love...

Seeing his expression, her smiles fades. She realizes.

CIRCE (cont'd)

(tears forming)

The spell of the Lotus is broken.

ODYSSEUS

(kneels beside her)

You have given me rest. Now that rest is over.

She falls sobbing on his chest. He holds her.

CIRCE

I am powerless against the might of Poseidon. Here you are safe!

ODYSSEUS

Here I am less than a man - if know who I am and do nothing to BE what I am.

CIRCE

I cannot help you...

ODYSSEUS

Then tell me who can. Who can tell me  
how to go home?

CIRCE

Only one man - the blind prophet,  
Tiresias.

He looks at her, astonished.

ODYSSEUS

But Tiresias is long dead.

CIRCE

I know.

ODYSSEUS

He sleeps in Hades.

CIRCE

(trembling)

I know.

His expression changes; it starts to sink in. He holds Circe in his  
arms as she weeps...

Abruptly there is a CRASH-BANG elsewhere in the house, followed by  
CRIES of ALARM. Odysseus and Circe react.

EXT. CIRCE'S HOUSE - DAY

the CREW are gathered around something as Odysseus approaches and  
makes his way through them to -

ELPENOR

lying dead with a broken neck. Near him a LADDER...

ODYSSEUS

His neck is broken. (looks up) What happened?

PERIMEDES

He fell - from the roof. But what he was doing there, none us saw...

EURYLOCHOS

Poor Elpenor. I guess we'll never know...

CU ODYSSEUS

exchanges looks with tear-stained Circe...

ODYSSEUS

Oh, yes, we will.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

ODYSSEUS' SHIP

once more on the high seas...

CIRCE'S VOICE OVER

Sail south - until you reach the river Oceanus, that borders the edge of the world...

SEVERAL SHOTS

each becoming progressively more STYLIZED, as ODYSSEUS' SHIP follows Circe's instructions... the SKY becomes BLOOD RED, the SEA BLACK as the current of OCEANUS picks up and carries the ship before it... then the SKY itself turns BLACK...

CIRCE'S VOICE OVER (cont'd)

The river will carry you to the island of Persephone. No man lives there for fear of falling into the chasm which crosses it, the fiery abyss which leads to the gate of Hell...

The SHIP reaches the unearthly island, with its huge VOLCANIC CRACK, belching RED LAVA. SMOKE EVERYWHERE makes it truly the entrance to Hell. Everything is RED and BLACK...

The MEN, streaming sweat from the HEAT, stay aboard as Odysseus, with a BLACK RAM in tow, follows directions...

Under the instructions we can hear the CREW calling-

POLITES

My Lord, do not do this -!

EURYLOCHOS

This is blasphemy -!

PERIMEDES

No man has looked upon the face of Hell and lived to tell of it - my lord..!

Odysseus ignores them, moving further inland with the RAM.

CIRCE'S VOICE OVER (cont'd)

Leave your men behind and take only a black ram, which you must sacrifice after you have dug a shallow pit next to the chasm.

Odysseus tethers the frightened ram and starts digging. He truly looks like one of the damned. Again, in stylized fashion, TIME PASSES and the pit is dug. The images grow progressively more hallucinogenic.

CIRCE'S VOICE OVER (cont'd)

When you have dug the pit, fill it with the blood of your sacrifice. The odor of it will attract the dead, but do not let them drink. Make them tell you what you wish to know as the price for their thirst. And remember, only Tiresias can direct you... Athena keep you, brave Odysseus...

The pit is dug. Odysseus holds up the Ram and slits its THROAT, allowing the spurting BLOOD to fill the pit so that it becomes a DARK POND. Our images are glimpsed through sulfurous SMOKE and incredible HEAT...all stylized by now, almost like the illustrations on Greek vases and freizework.

A NEW OMINOUS SOUND IS HEARD

and the very GROUND BEGINS TO SHAKE...

The CREVICE OPENS WIDER, BELCHING SMOKE...

and UP THROUGH IT APPEARS...ELPENOR!!! He is dead. His eyes are CLOSED but he sees... Odysseus' eyes widen in shock...

ODYSSEUS

Elpenor!

When Elpenor speaks, his VOICE ECHOES oddly...

ELPENOR

Odysseus... let me drink...

His wraith wants to taste the BLOOD in the pond but Odysseus draws his SWORD and waves back the spectre. He's terrified.

ODYSSEUS

You may not drink.

Elpenor moans, an unearthly wail... tries for the blood...

ODYSSEUS (cont'd)

You wasted no time getting here. How came you to die?

ELPENOR

Through foolishness. I fell asleep on Circe's roof, basking in the sun. Suddenly I woke, forgot where I was, and missed the ladder. Odysseus, let me drink, for pity's sake...

ODYSSEUS

Back. You may not drink. Send me the shade of Tiresias and I will say prayers for your soul. When I

ODYSSEUS (cont'd)

reach Ithaka I shall plant in the green earth the oar that you pulled in life aboard my ship...that oar shall be your grave marker...

He swings his sword, cutting the ghost of Elpenor in two; the shade

vanishes and another rises out of the crevice...

\* \* \* \*

AGAMEMNON

I smell Life! O let me drink!

Odysseus is astonished at the sight of Agamemnon...

ODYSSEUS

Great Agamemnon, leader of the Greeks!  
I thought you still alive!

He's so surprised he almost forgets to get between Agamemnon and the blood but remembers just in time; slashes with his SWORD, but not before the GHOST has bitten him, making his shoulder BLEED...

ODYSSEUS (cont'd)

Back! You may not drink! (amazed)  
Agamemnon, I had thought you safe at  
home after all our adventures...

AGAMEMNON

So I should have been but that I was  
betrayed and slaughtered like an ox at  
my homecoming...

ODYSSEUS

(stunned)  
Murdered...by whom?

The worst WAIL yet - the ground trembles with it...

AGAMEMNON

BY MY WIFE!

ODYSSEUS

Your wife? Clytemnestra?

## AGAMEMNON

And her perfidious lover, Aegisthus -  
they stabbed and slashed and gutted me,  
mingling my blood with my bath water...  
O let me taste of life..! One drop...

## ODYSSEUS

(shaking)

You may not drink. O great Agamemnon, I  
can hardly believe what you say. Can it  
be that your homecoming was so marred  
with treachery?

## AGAMEMNON

Only pray that yours will be no worse,  
cunning Odysseus. Where is YOUR wife?  
Has Penelope been true or does she even  
now conspire your death with another  
husband? Has  
she not already slain your son so  
another man's issue may inherit all you  
possess?

Odysseus is so distracted by this thought that his eyes bulge and  
Agamemnon almost reaches the pool of blood...

## ODYSSEUS

(slashes madly)

Send me Tiresias! SEND TIRESIAS  
BEFORE I LOSE MY WITS!

He is sobbing and slashing at the same time. Again the ground  
shakes, smoke belches, the heat gets hotter, then-

ANTICLEIA appears! She's crying...

ODYSSEUS

Mother!!!

ANTICLEIA

O let me drink, my son. Only let me  
taste of life once more...

Tears stream down his face too; this is the hardest of all.

ODYSSEUS

Mother, you may not drink, but only  
speak: when I set sail for Troy you were  
alive...

ANTICLEIA

I died for grief of you, Odysseus...

ODYSSEUS

And Penelope? Telemachus? Tell me of  
them. On my knees, I beseech you ...is my  
wife yet faithful to me?

ANTICLEIA

While I lived I knew her to be true, and  
the boy, as well...

ODYSSEUS

Thank the Gods...

ANTICLEIA

But disaster waits for you like an actor  
in the wings, my son. Suitors for the  
hand of Penelope crawl over your house  
like a horde of locusts - brutish young  
men feast upon your flocks and herds,

they gorge upon your cattle, sucking the lifeblood from your property and your son's inheritance. They insult your queen and ravish her servants... One day they may convince your loving wife that you are indeed dead, and when that day comes-

Odysseus drops his sword to cover his ears.

ODYSSEUS

Enough! Your words pierce my soul like daggers. O that I had never left the things I truly loved. O that I had been wise enough to understand the value of what I held IN MY HANDS..!

He clenches his very hands before him, lost, sobbing.

Anticleia swirls towards the blood. Odysseus leaps up, snatches up his sword, screaming from his vitals...

ODYSSEUS (cont'd)

TIRESIAS!! Mother stay back!

He stabs at his mother with the sword...

LAVA EXPLODES

in fiery red-gold sparks from the crevice as TIRESIAS appears, older, larger, more impressive than all the rest.

TIRESIAS

Who calls the prophet of Thebes?

ODYSSEUS

(desperate, frantic)

I, Odysseus, King of Ithaka!

TIRESIAS

(with contempt)

Lord of Cunning, Trickery and Guile.  
Imagination! I know what kind of man  
you are - I detest you. You have no code,  
no honor. You lie, dissemble, pretend and  
cheat. You live by your wits instead of  
your strength.

ODYSSEUS

Yes!

TIRESIAS

Teller of tales. Your allegiance is  
expedience. You will say anything to  
achieve your goal. You would rather  
scheme than fight.

ODYSSEUS

I use my brain! Why else do I have it?

TIRESIAS

You think you can defy fate because you  
have a brain?

ODYSSEUS

Not anymore. Therefore I come to you.

TIRESIAS

To be clever is not to be intelligent; to  
be intelligent is not to be wise.

ODYSSEUS

All you say is true. I know nothing.

Pause. Tiresias surveys him, mollified.

TIRESIAS

What do you want?

ODYSSEUS

I WANT TO GO HOME.

TIRESIAS

It is not written.

ODYSSEUS

THEN WRITE IT NOW. I WANT TO GO HOME. TELL ME HOW TO REACH MY HOME. TELL ME AND YOU SHALL DRINK YOUR FILL - YOU AND ALL THIS ACCURSED COMPANY - ONLY TELL ME NOW!

TIRESIAS

Your path is littered with danger, son of Laertes. Poseidon, Earth-shaker, lord of the wine dark sea has prophesied your doom...

ODYSSEUS

You tell me what I already know. I did not dare a thousand hazards to listen to my fate, but to defy it. A MAN CAN DO ANYTHING.

TIRESIAS

If you can do anything, sail west by

north from this place and see if you can  
escape the clutches of the Sirens...

ODYSSEUS

What are they?

TIRESIAS

Women of surpassing beauty, whose  
songs lure sailors all unwilling to their  
deaths upon the rocks...

ODYSSEUS

What do they look like, these women?

TIRESIAS

You will not see them, only hear their  
enchanted music... no man yet has eluded  
their voices...

ODYSSEUS

But if I did?

TIRESIAS

Then you must pass the straits of  
Scylla and Charybdis - to your right,  
Scylla, a six-headed dragon that feasts  
on human flesh, to your left, Charybdis,  
a giant maelstrom that thrice daily  
sucks down to the ocean's depths even  
the largest vessels...

ODYSSEUS

How must I avoid them?

TIRESIAS

It is impossible to avoid both... one or  
other must consume you...

ODYSSEUS

And then?

TIRESIAS

And then..? You will never reach "and then"...

ODYSSEUS

But WHEN I do? What then?

TIRESIAS

THEN USE YOUR... IMAGINATION!

The ground QUAKES more than ever with Tiresias' laughter.

ODYSSEUS

Drink. DRINK! Drink one, drink all!  
Taste of Life and raise your cups to that  
man skilled in all ways of contending,  
for I will outwit all gods and  
prophesies and see my home!

He waves them all in a swirling mass towards the pool of blood and they PLUNGE IN with NOISY SHRIEKS. The SMOKE and FLAMES take over and everything goes BLACK...

EXT. ODYSSEUS' SHIP - DAY

The HEAT and SMOKE are suffocating the men; the NOISE is deafening and the GROUND SHAKING all about them... they must YELL to hear one another...

POLITES

Let us leave this place!

EURYLOCHOS

No!

PERIMEDES

He is dead!

EURYLOCHOS

We have betrayed him once..!

POLITES

It is no betrayal if he does not exist! If we stay we shall die as well, our ship catch fire and none of us see home..!

Odysseus emerges from the morass of smoke and flame.

ALL

Odysseus!

As the quaking ground makes it hard for him to walk, he stumbles towards the ship and heavily regains the deck - they have to hold him up.

ODYSSEUS

Steer West by North... let us leave these waters...

EURYLOCHOS

What have you seen?

ODYSSEUS

(looks at him)

Myself.

He collapses in their arms.

WIDE ANGLE

as the ship backs off the accursed isle of Persephone.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

A FLOCK OF SHEEP ON THE GREEN HILLS OF ITHAKA - DAY

REVEAL EUMAEUS' SHEPHERD'S HUT - DAY

DRIFT INSIDE WHERE

Eumaeus is SHEARING A RAM held by Telemachus, 15. The SNIPPING of the SHEARS punctuates their talk.

EUMAEUS  
(releasing the ram)  
He's happy enough -

TELEMACHUS  
That is because he's a sheep.

EUMAEUS  
(pulling another forward)  
True enough, young master...

TELEMACHUS  
Eumaeus...

SNIP. SNIP...

EUMEAUS

Aye, my prince? Hold him steady now.  
Be useful...

Telemachus obeys. SNIP. SNIP...

TELEMACHUS

Why did my father leave us? (off his  
hesitation) Antinous says-

EUMEAUS

Antinous! Speak not to me of that  
rogue. It is sacrilege for your father's  
name even to pass through that man's  
lips. Antinous. Eurymachus...

He spits. Telemachus is thoughtful. SNIP. SNIP...

TELEMACHUS

You haven't answered my question.

EUMEAUS

Why do you ask it?

TELEMACHUS

(pause)

Because I do not wish to hate my father.  
(looks at him) So tell me.

EUMAEUS

Gather this up and put it in the basket  
first.

Telemachus gathers up the shorn FLEECE and turns to put it in the

basket, giving Eumeaus time to wipe his forehead and think of an answer. The old man is taxed by this question.

EUMAEUS

Your father made a promise - he felt  
that promise must be honored.

TELEMACHUS

More than us? More than his love for  
us?

EUMAEUS

Listen to me, boy - I raised your father  
and I know him as I know myself. No  
man left more unwilling for war than  
he. Did you know he pretended to be  
mad so as not to go?

Telemachus stares at the sheep...

TELEMACHUS

So mother tells me...

EUMAEUS

She does not lie - his sham was only  
exposed when your life was in danger  
and he dropped the pretense at once.  
(pause) He swore he would return.

TELEMACHUS

(rubs the shorn fleece  
between his fingers)  
It is easy to swear...

EUMAEUS  
 (gently behind him)  
 You hate him?

TELEMACHUS  
 (finally)  
 I miss him. Is he alive? Dead? Where is  
 he? What is he doing?

CU A HAND MELTING WAX INTO A BOWL, A SMALL FIRE BENEATH

WIDEN TO REVEAL

ON DECK Odysseus systematically melting and manipulating WAX  
 with his fingers. The ship is back to reality, sailing the high seas  
 again. The sky is blue; the breeze cool and good.

His men watch, mystified. Odysseus looks up briefly and scans the  
 clear horizon... He hasn't much time...

ODYSSEUS  
 Listen carefully. Each man must come  
 forward and stop his ears with this wax  
 until he hears nothing.

EURYLOCHOS  
 But why?

ODYSSEUS  
 Because I say so. Soon we will pass an  
 island of rock. Not until we are safe  
 may any man remove the wax.

POLITES  
 How will we know when we are safe?

ODYSSEUS

(fractional hesitation)

I will use no wax. You must tie me to the mast. (off their looks) And whatever I do you must pay no heed, nor alter course, even should I go mad. Ignore all my gestures. Bind me more tightly. When I seem calm again, then - and only then - release me.

EURYLOCHOS

Let one of the other men assume this risk, my lord.

ODYSSEUS

No.

PERIMEDES

Why?

ODYSSEUS

(sad smile)

Because I am who I am.

He hands off a clump of WAX. Hesitating briefly, Eurylochos takes it and starts wadding it in his ears. The others form a line to receive the stuff...

DISSOLVE TO:

ODYSSEUS being strapped securely to the MAST.

ODYSSEUS

Tighter. TIGHTER.

They can't hear him. Good. He is satisfied.

EXT. SEA - DAY

The SHIP draws near an ISLAND OF ROCK - alone, barren. The WIND DIES. The MEN must ROW...

AT THE MAST

Odysseus starts to HEAR. He looks over to the ROCKS...

A SOUND, more like a HUM than music per se, RINGS in his ears. He tries to shake his head; the SOUND gets stronger. It is a single note, held by the voices of WOMEN...

In his BLURRED VISION Odysseus sees NAKED WOMEN, draped in flowing transparent material, sprawled on the ROCKS. He blinks, shakes his head, trying to rid himself of the sight and the sound - which gets STRONGER...

ODYSSEUS

Come about. COME ABOUT! Very well, listen to me; I made a mistake. There is no need for these precautions. Untie me... I SAY UNTIE ME. NOW...

The men hear and see nothing. The man at the Tiller holds her steady and calm. The CREW on the masthead look serenely out to sea. The MEN at the OARS row in efficient unison.

During these SHOTS WE HEAR NOTHING AT ALL. Eurylochus looks over at Odysseus and SEES

Odysseus YELLING and screaming his HEAD OFF, writhing in his bonds, his eyes starting out of his SWEAT-COVERED head...

ALL IN SILENCE. Eurylochos closes his eyes; rows...

EXT. SEA - DAY

The ship is right next to the rocks now, passing...

AT THE BASE OF THE ROCKS

an enormous collection of HUMAN BONES, THOUSANDS, bleached white, with RAGGED PIECES OF CLOTHING washed about by the surf...

CU ODYSSEUS

SCREAMING...

ODYSSEUS

COME ABOUT! STOP! O GODS I OFFER MY  
SOUL! TAKE MY SON AND WIFE AS MY  
SACRIFICE! TAKE EVERYTHING FROM ME,  
ONLY COME ABOUT!

HIS BLURRED VISION

the BEAUTIFUL WOMEN, WAVING LANGUIDLY TO HIM - COME, COME...  
the HUMMING is now quite PAINFUL... He tries to reach his arms to his ears to clap his hands over them, but the ropes that tie him to the mast make that impossible. He is FORCED to hear, beating his head against the mast until it BLEEDS.

Eurylochos and Perimedes are tightening his BONDS, all in SILENCE.

BLOOD OOZES under the chafing ropes. Odysseus' wild eyes meet theirs. They blink back their tears; the rest keep ROWING, ignoring him...

SEVERAL ANGLES

as the ship SLOWLY passes the island of rock...

DISSOLVE TO:

PENELOPE'S TAPESTRY

depicting Odysseus' ship - a very similar image...

LAUGHTER FROM DOWNSTAIRS...

CU PENELOPE'S HANDS

undoing the tapestry; rapid, accustomed movements. A KNOCK.

WIDEN TO REVEAL

INT. PENELOPE'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

Penelope reacts, startled by the knock, her hands frozen. She look down at

CU THE WORK

starts using the SHUTTLE to PUT BACK the tapestry, so she is building it up again...

PENELOPE

Come.

Melanthe enters as per her evening ritual. She bears her mistress' night clothes... While not outright disrespectful, something in her manner which suggests insolence... her hair is disheveled, also her clothing, just a bit... a little perspiration, too...

ANOTHER BURST OF LAUGHTER

Penelope has resumed her "work". Melanthe comes over behind her and surveys it. Finally -

MELANTHE

The work goes more slowly, my lady...

PENELOPE

(after a pause)

It is difficult.

MELANTHE

I thought you had finished that section.

No answer; the SHUTTLE goes between warp and woof, making little noises as it travels. Abruptly Penelope stops; rises.

PENELOPE

I'll weave no more tonight.

She walks to her mirrored dressing table and disrobes. Melanthe watches Penelope studying her body in the MIRROR; it doesn't take much to read her mistress' melancholy thoughts. Melanthe admires her nakedness, still beautiful. She helps Penelope on with her nightclothes... In her transparent peignoir, Penelope seats herself at the dressing

table and hands Melanthe her BRUSH without once looking at her.

Melanthe sets about undoing her mistress' tresses and brushing her hair. ANOTHER LAUGH from the carousers below. Melanthe smiles and looks off - then catches Penelope's look at her in the MIRROR. Finally -

MELANTHE

You disapprove of me, my lady.

PENELOPE

Because you sleep with Antinous who wishes to marry me?

MELANTHE

You have fifty suitors - the flower of the kingdom, the finest manhood of Ithaka do you squander, and none left over for the rest because you will not choose...

PENELOPE

I am not free to choose.

MELANTHE

Surely you must hate your husband, who made you neither wife nor widow...

PENELOPE

Antinous is not so handsome as he was, I think. He has grown sleek and fat with gorging... as for the rest...

MELANTHE

The king abandoned you to a living death. We cannot all maintain our virtue as you, my lady. Life is for the living. It goes on. We all must live...

PENELOPE

Brush harder, Melanthe. I do not feel your strokes...

MELANTHE

And what of the boy, your son? Does Telemachus thrive in such a house, an object of scorn and ridicule to all? Surely you hate Odysseus for condemning you to an ignominious fate...

PENELOPE

Why is it so important to you that I hate my husband? What comfort for your actions could you derive if I told you that I hated him?

Melanthe hesitates, her eyes fall. Penelope takes the brush herself and uses it on her hair, calmer now -

PENELOPE (cont'd)

I could no more hate Odysseus than hate myself, Melanthe. It is you, I worry about and pray for, not Telemachus or me.

MELANTHE

Me?

Penelope rises and walks down the corridor to her bed. Melanthe follows, confused, anxious...

PENELOPE

I pray for you all - when my lord returns...

MELANTHE

(honestly moved)

My lady you delude yourself. He will never return. Only choose, I beg you! Choose and end this torture.

Penelope climbs into her BED, a beautiful and ingenious piece of furniture with a LIVING TREE growing through the floor which forms one corner and supports its canopy...

PENELOPE

My husband built this bed...

MELANTHE

I know, lady...

Melanthe arranges the cushions, the blankets...

PENELOPE

See how ingeniously he made a living tree part of it...

MELANTHE

I see, lady...

PENELOPE

You see nothing, child. That tree still  
lives...

ON HER PILLOW ENELOPE

looks at Melanthe.

PENELOPE (cont'd)

Do you know what faith is, Melanthe?

MELANTHE

(shakes her head)

Do YOU?

Penelope can't answer; she turns away, her eyes filled with tears.  
After looking at her back a moment, Melanthe shrugs and runs back  
towards the LAUGHTER DOWNSTAIRS.

REVERSE ANGLE ON PENELOPE TURNED AWAY

silent TEARS course down her cheeks...

CLOSE ON ONE TEAR, WHEREIN WE SEE

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SEA - DAY

Odysseus' ship approaching an extensive landmass - there's an  
opening between TWO OPPOSING WALLS OF CLIFF...

Odysseus looks unhappily at the strait, then turns, climbs up to the  
poop deck and faces his men.

ODYSSEUS

Now listen to me. Here is the needle we  
must thread if we are to get home. To

starboard, the high cliffs wherein a six  
headed monster dwells; to port, the  
whirlpool that thrice daily may claim  
us all...

The men are aghast at this news.

EURYLOCHOS

There must be another way; we can sail  
round -

ODYSSEUS

There is no way but this; no other  
choice but this: the monster or the  
maelstrom... We are between a rock and  
a hard place - the sea god will have it  
so.

ANOTHER CREWMAN

But you said -

ODYSSEUS

I said I was accursed - but in Troy you  
would not listen. Now make your  
choice.

They hesitate; the sounds of BREAKERS getting nearer...

PERIMEDES

I say the monster. Six heads can eat but  
six men - a maelstrom can sink us all.

A chorus of Aye's greets this idea. Finally -

ODYSSEUS  
(to the helmsman)  
Starboard...

SEVERAL ANGLES

as Odysseus' ship, hewing to starboard, enters the towering CLIFFS...the men looking up anxiously as they make slow ROWING progress through the terrifying pass.

THEIR POV CLIFFS LOOKING UP

Above them is a large HOLE in the rock, a CAVE MOUTH...

No one speaks. Maybe she won't hear them...

SEVERAL ANGLES THE MEN, THE SHIP, THE OARS...

Only the oars dipping and the splash of water against the rocks...

The men start to relax; they're going to make it...

SUDDENLY THE CAVE MOUTH EXPLODES WITH SCYLLA -

her SIX HIDEOUS HEADS on endless stalks of necks arch out from her lair and SEIZE SIX HAPLESS MEN IN HER JAWS...

PERIMEDES is one.

SCREAMING from the VICTIMS but also their comrades, who look on in horror... as she chews and swallows her writhing food.

In short order she peers out again, ready for seconds...

EURYLOCHOS

The maelstrom is quiet, my lord. Steer  
port. PORT!

A frantic chorus of Aye's and calls for Port greet this.

Scylla's heads re-emerge, stretching forth in search of additional  
victims... Odysseus can't bear it and the pleas.

ODYSSEUS

Port. PORT!

Frantically, as the HELMSMAN shifts the tiller, the remaining men  
pull for their lives to PORT...

Just out of reach of the snarling Scylla, who strains in their  
direction but stays in her cave...

POLITES

We made it. We -

They are aware now of being pulled...

Odysseus looks over the side - the maelstrom is forming...

ODYSSEUS

Pull. PULL!

SEVERAL ANGLES

of the rowers bent at the hapless task. Odysseus grabs an oar  
himself and strains against the wall of rising water into which his  
ship is rapidly sinking and swirling-

WIDE HIGH ANGLE

the giant maelstrom sucking Odysseus' ship as if it were no more than a toothpick.

#### INSIDE THE MAELSTROM

the terror-stricken CREW realizes their hour has come...Eurylochos, Polites... ALL...

SUDDENLY a TON of WATER cascades DOWN, inundates the entire vessel and crew... MEN are carried off in every direction...

#### UNDERWATER

and pulled to their deaths...

#### ODYSSEUS

himself is whirled about violently in the wash - there's nothing he can do; he's at the mercy of Charybdis...

Suddenly he crashes into a protruding BRANCH from a TREE growing out of the rockface. He grabs the BRANCH and holds on for dear life as the WHIRLPOOL sucks everything down beneath him...

#### CU ODYSSEUS' HANDS

holding on to the wet branch, gripping, slipping...  
AFTER SEVERAL MOMENTS

the maelstrom starts fill up RAPIDLY - an EXPLOSION of WATER...

which RIPS ODYSSEUS from his BRANCH and pushes him into the air on GIANT WATERSPOUT.

He comes crashing down onto the water's surface, almost unconscious, near a PIECE OF MAST, which he manages to grab, more dead than alive...

He looks about - he alone is living.

BEFORE HIM

the end of the strait and something that looks like OPEN SEA. He tries to swim but hasn't the strength.

WIDE HIGH ANGLE

The log with the lone man clutching it, flows out to sea.

REVERSE ANGLE FROM OUTSIDE THE STRAIT

Odysseus, unconscious by now, emerges on the current with his log, out to sea again...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BEACH - SUNSET

A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN (35) clad in skins and leaves, her skin darkened with the sun, her black hair wet and falling naturally about her, (there's a FLOWER in it), walks, carrying FRUIT. She looks like a castaway...

In a way, she is. She sees the MAST stuck upright in the sand; attached to it, a man in ragged clothes - a crucified Odysseus.

She approaches, squats next to him, untangles the lines that entwine

him, gently pulls debris off him; he opens his eyes.

ODYSSEUS

Where am I?

WOMAN

On my island.

ODYSSEUS

Who are you?

WOMAN

I am Kalypso.

ODYSSEUS

You live here? (looks about) Alone?

KALYPSO

Quite alone. I am a goddess...

ODYSSEUS

(struggles up)

If you are a goddess, help me.

KALYPSO

Who are you?

ODYSSEUS

I am - Nobody...

KALYPSO

I cannot help you. I can only keep you company. This paradise is my kingdom, but I may never leave it.

He looks at her; slowly sits up, stares at the sun, setting in the sea.  
She watches him, pitying him... Finally, as the tears roll silently -

ODYSSEUS

I understand. Poseidon, you have won.  
A man is nothing without the aid of God.

KALYPSO

That is wisdom.

ODYSSEUS

It comes too late.

KALYPSO

(looks around)

This island is pleasant. The weather is  
temperate, food is fresh and plentiful.  
(shows him some) Time will pass  
without you're knowing it...

ODYSSEUS

Good, for I will never see my home  
again. Or son. Or wife.

He rises, walks to the edge of the sea and shouts -

ODYSSEUS (cont'd)

Athena, hear me! In memory of my once  
commended virtues - intelligence and  
strength - that made me beloved of the  
Gods, I appeal to you: take care of my  
family. Protect my loving wife. Guard  
and guide my son; be his friend. Show

him the path to manhood as you showed  
that path to me. Only make him better  
than you made me. Make him WISE.  
Athena do you hear my prayer? Make him  
WISE!

Kalypso comes up behind him. Gently she leads him down the beach  
as the sun sets into twilight.

We RETREAT INTO A HIGH AERIAL SHOT

as Kalpyso's island gets smaller and smaller in the dark...

SUPERIMPOSE:

END CREDITS OVER PENELOPE'S TAPESTRY OF ODYSSEUS' JOURNEY

END PART I

