

THE ODYSSEY

adapted from Homer by

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PART II

The Wisdom of Athena



EXT. BEACH - SEMI-DARKNESS

THE SURF CRASHING

A MAN is walking towards us as we HEAR -

ODYSSEUS' VOICE OVER

Athena, hear me! In memory of my once  
commended virtues - intelligence and  
strength - that made me beloved of the  
Gods...

INT. TEMPLE OF ATHENA, ITHAKA - DAWN

The HEAD OF ATHENA, listening...

ODYSSEUS' VOICE OVER (cont'd)

I appeal to you: take care of my  
family...Protect my loving wife...

ON THE FLOOR BELOW AS

the SHADOW of Athena's STATUE grows LONGER...and LONGER...

ODYSSEUS' VOICE OVER (cont'd)

Guard and guide my son; be his friend...  
Show him the path to manhood as you  
showed that path to me...

ANOTHER ANGLE

as the STATUE ITSELF passes by us on its way...

PAN TO REVEAL

THE STATUE IS GONE...

ODYSSEUS' VOICE OVER (cont'd)

Only make him better than you made  
me... Make him WISE...

EXT. BEACH - DAWN

The MAN getting nearer...

ODYSSEUS' VOICE OVER (cont'd)  
Athena, do you hear my prayer? Make  
him WISE!

The rising SUN REVEALS THE MAN

TELEMACHUS (19), not Odysseus!

He is handsome, intelligent-looking, though his face is branded with  
his unhappy history. When has he smiled?

Not today. Now he squints at something strange...

TELEMACHUS' POV

coming towards him on the beach, floating, rather than walking,  
is...the goddess Athena..!

TELEMACHUS REACTS

blinks. Refocuses...

TELEMACHUS POV

The goddess MORPHS into a MAN OF FORTY, who holds up a hand in  
greeting, smiles... When he talks, his voice is ODD - there is, after  
all, a goddess inside his body...

MAN OF FORTY  
Telemachus?

TELEMACHUS  
(confused)  
Do I know you?

MAN OF FORTY  
My name is Mentor. I am a friend of your  
father's.

TELEMACHUS  
My father... (he looks about, still  
puzzled) How did you come here?

MENTOR  
My ship just landed from Taphos.

TELEMACHUS  
(nothing quite makes sense)  
But - you recognized me?

MENTOR  
You bear more than a passing  
resemblance to great Odysseus.

TELEMACHUS  
Entirely superficial, I assure you.

MENTOR  
I'm certain you're being modest. (looks  
about) What are you doing here, if I may  
ask?

TELEMACHUS

Uh, walking...

MENTOR

(gently pointed)

It would be good to eat a meal cooked on  
dry land...

Telemachus reacts to this... he's inviting himself. A series of conflicting emotions crosses his face, embarrassment at the prospect, but also something else - happiness?

TELEMACHUS

Be my guest.

INT. ODYSSEUS' PALACE - MORNING

The SUITORS, still holding at about fifty, at their morning activities, playing CHECKERS on the HIDES of animals they have killed, having breakfast, cleaning weapons, etc...

SOME are even having an ARCHERY contest...

A HUGE BEGGAR we'll come to know as IRUS walks about, scrounging scraps like the dog he is, and laughing at himself, playing the fool for the amusement of the mob...

SERVANTS bustle, setting the tables (again!) sponging down the excesses of last night.

ANTINOUS and EURYMACHUS

are playing CHESS, when Antinous looks up, sees, and nudges Eurymachus, who also looks up -

THEIR POV

Telemachus has entered with Mentor, who surveys the place with tactful astonishment.

TELEMACHUS

This way...

He barges through the Suitors, who watch - this is the first time Telemachus has ever brought a guest to their feasts.

He seats Mentor and himself in such a way as turns them from the prying eyes of the group, and puts a footstool beneath Mentor's feet.

TELEMACHUS

Melanthe. MELANTHE.

Startled by his peremptory tone of command, she comes over.

MELANTHE

My lord?

TELEMACHUS

Wash the feet of my guest. Bring him food.

Melanthe can't help looking over at Antinous.

TELEMACHUS (cont'd)

(sees the look)

Do as I command.

Antinous nods, slightly.

MELANTHE

Aye, my lord...

She fetches the SILVER BOWLS and sets about removing Mentor's leg armor and washing his feet...

Mentor looks about at the riot of boorish activity.

MENTOR

I did not mean to intrude. Are you celebrating? Is this some sort of feast?

Telemachus flushes. Another SERVANT brings food.

TELEMACHUS

It is a feast that never ends because my mother does not know if my father is alive or dead. (off Mentor's puzzled look) These vultures are suitors to the hand of Queen Penelope, who cannot bring herself to accept any of them. So here they perch, eating us out of house and home - and I too weak to prevent them. Thank you, Melanthe.

Melanthe reluctantly leaves. Mentor waits until she's gone.

MENTOR

(studies the young man)

You think your father dead? I do not. Oh, he may be stranded somewhere, held captive on some barbarous isle, perhaps, but he will return. (off Telemachus' look) Oh, yes, return, I promise you. And then - woe to all this princely heap.

He jerks his head in the direction of the swilling mob.

TELEMACHUS

(struggles to conceal his excitement)

My father...alive? (thinks) But even should he see these shores again, how could he hope to reclaim what is his without help? (realizes) I must help him.

MENTOR

Ah, Telemachus, you are growing up fast. This is what I hoped you would say.

TELEMACHUS

But how? How can I help?

Mentor studiously begins to eat, looking "normal"...

MENTOR

Send forth heralds to summon an assembly of the first families of the realm, and there call upon these suitors to disperse to their homes or face the consequences. (throws them a look) It won't do any good, but you will have warned them. What follows will not be on your conscience.

He starts to put on his sandals.

TELEMACHUS

And then?

MENTOR

Ask for a small ship and set forth to seek news of your father. Visit first Nestor, King of sandy

Pylos. He was Odysseus' old comrade-in-arms. If he can give you no information, journey inland and ask King Menelaus of Sparta. If you learn your father's alive, so much the better; return here and be ready to greet him; if he is dead, then rear him a funeral mound and honor his memory...

TELEMACHUS

What if there is no news?

MENTOR

Until and unless your father returns, you are master here - time to be a man, Telemachus.

TELEMACHUS

Your advice sounds good to me, but first I must sacrifice to Apollo, the lord of Life, that he may show me some sign.

MENTOR

(smiles)

An excellent idea, but pray not to Apollo. (off his look) Seek out Athena, grey-eyed goddess of wisdom, for it is she who ever loved your father. (he rises; loudly) I thank you for your hospitality, young prince. No, stay. I can see my own way out.

He bows and leaves, threading his way past Antinous and

Eurymachus, who wait until he is gone, then look at Telemachus, whose face is shining with new prospects.

ANTINOUS

Telemachus.

Telemachus looks at him coolly.

ANTINOUS (cont'd)

Who was that man?

TELEMACHUS

A friend.

EURYMACHUS

Did he bring news of your father?

TELEMACHUS

(smiles)

Rest easy, Eurymachus. I know my father is dead. You have nothing to worry about.

He leaves, leaving Antinous, Eurymachus, Melanthe and the others, puzzled in his wake. Since when has he accepted the fact of his father's death?

INT. TEMPLE OF ATHENA - DAY

Telemachus walks into the temple and prostrates himself in the traditional manner.

TELEMACHUS

Athena, hear me.

He looks up and frowns in surprise.

TELEMACHUS' POV

The STATUE OF ATHENA is nowhere to be seen. Only the EMPTY PEDESTAL. Telemachus walks over to it, wondering, then turns and hastens from the temple, his decision made.

EXT. STREETS and HILLS OF ITHAKA - DAY

HERALDS SHOUT as PEOPLE listen, startled by their words.

HERALD(S)

By royal decree, the nobles of Ithaka are commanded to meet this day in the great chamber of public assembly..!

SEVERAL SHOTS of the repeated command.

INT. GREAT ASSEMBLY CHAMBER - DAY

a CIRCULAR ROOM with TIERS of SEATS

CROWDED with representatives of the first families of Ithaka, all of them puzzled at this convocation.

AEGYPTIUS, an aged councillor, takes the SPEAKER'S SPEAR and steps to the center of the floor.

## AEGYPTIUS

This is the first time our assembly has been convened since the departure of King Odysseus, almost twenty years ago. What has occurred that merits this convocation? Are we threatened with attack? Is the kingdom under siege? Who has summoned us to this place? And why?

Telemachus moves forward and takes the staff.

## TELEMACHUS

Venerable sir, it is I, Prince Telemachus, who invokes your presence. My motives are personal. As all here know, my royal father is presumed dead and my reluctant mother is plagued by suitors from this and other islands. Fifty of them are presently encamped in our house, and there they squat, consuming all within - and I powerless to stop them.

The suitors, seated in a group, glare at Telemachus.

## TELEMACHUS (cont'd)

I therefore come before this body officially to demand their expulsion from the home of he who was once your lawful ruler. Let these... sponges be ordered to disperse and leave my mother in peace.

He jabs the SPEAR into the GROUND and walks out of the center of the hall. The ASSEMBLY murmurs sympathetic agreement with the young's speech.

CU HANDS GRABBING THE SPEAR FROM THE GROUND.

WIDEN TO REVEAL

ANTINOUS, defiantly facing the assembly.

ANTINOUS

There are two sides to every story. We suitors are not the disgraceful parasites you depict - the fault lies with your respected mother, (over the UPROAR), YES! Queen Penelope, who keeps us all dangling year after year. It is the Queen who is to blame for this deplorable situation. Some time ago she told us she would make her choice of husband when she finished weaving the funeral shroud of King Odysseus, on which she has labored lo these many years. Our hearts went out to her loving labor and patiently we waited for it to be concluded. Now I have learned by secret intelligence that everything the queen weaves by day she UN-weaves by night!

Sensation in the chamber, which Antinous relishes. In the audience, Melanthe smiles at her lover...

ANTINOUS (cont'd)

Is this straightforward dealing? (he walks to Telemachus, smirking) Let me speak plainly: we are suitors for your mother's hand, no more, no less. When Queen Penelope chooses a husband, the rest will depart. If you would have us

gone, young prince, order your mother to  
make her choice. If not, hold your peace.

Abruptly, he throws the speaker's SPEAR to Telemachus, who  
catches it.

TELEMACHUS

Bold words, Antinous, and easy to say,  
since you know well I could never bring  
myself to give such an order to a woman  
who still believes her husband lives.

MEDON, another elder, comes forward and takes the spear.

MEDON

I had two sons. One went with King  
Odysseus and perished at Troy; the  
other sues for the hand of Queen  
Penelope. Under the circumstances I  
cannot order him to leave your house.  
The families of those who died at Troy  
ought to merit something for their  
tragedy.

Murmurs of agreement. Telemachus is not going to get the vote. He  
watches Antinous et al, smiling at him.

TELEMACHUS

(takes the spear back)

In that case, I have another appeal. Let  
this assembly provide me with a small  
ship. I will seek news of my father.  
(breath) If I learn of his death, I will  
return and order my mother to marry.

Murmurs from the chamber. Eurymachos steps forward and rudely wrests the spear from Telemachus.

EURYMACHUS

My lords, this is nothing more than another delaying tactic - another tapestry to weave and unweave. Let us not put ourselves to the expense of a boat to find out what we already know, and lose more precious time.

Murmurs of agreement as Telemachus watches. No surprise.

TELEMACHUS

Then hear me. In my father's name and in my own I warn these shabby men: you stay in my house at your peril. If you persist in trespassing, you will die.

There's a tic of SILENCE in response to this. Telemachus starts out of the hall.

ANTINOUS

Gentlemen, I believe we have just heard the roar of a lion...

Telemachus keeps walking, as LAUGHTER BUILDS BEHIND HIM...

INT. TELEMACHUS' CHAMBER - NIGHT

Telemachus lies in bed, wide awake, listening...

EXT. TELEMACHUS' CHAMBER - NIGHT

TWO SUITORS stand outside his room. Antinous and Eurymachus are with them.

ANTINOUS

Stand here all night. See he doesn't leave.

INT. TELEMACHUS' CHAMBER - NIGHT

Telemachus listens as

EURYMACHUS'S VOICE

If he tries to escape, kill him.

Telemachus slowly rises from his bed, trying to make no noise. He goes to the window of his room and looks down.

TELEMACHUS' POV

it's a long way down...

Telemachus returns to his bed and starts twisting the sheets, hooking one end around a bedpost. It's a tricky business and he freezes once, worried he has attracted attention.

Satisfied, he throws the sheet end out the window.

EXT. TELEMACHUS' APARTMENTS - NIGHT

The sheet only goes half way down! Nonetheless, Telemachus slides down.

ON THE "ROPE" TELEMACHUS

sees TWO MORE SUITORS standing guard some ways off, their backs to him. Holding his breath, he drops quietly -

TO THE GROUND.

INT. INN - NIGHT

The PEOPLE of ITHAKA, (mainly fishermen at this place), drink and talk.

The door opens. Telemachus enters. They stop talking.

CU TELEMACHUS

TELEMACHUS

Men of Ithaka - how long will you be ruled by a mob?

Eumeaus, the shepherd, is among them. He stands, dashing his drink to the ground.

EUMAEUS

No longer.

After a pause, other men start standing, as well.

INT. EURYCLEIA'S BEDCHAMBER - NIGHT

Eurycleia asleep. Suddenly a hand goes over her mouth. She sits up, wide-eyed. It's Telemachus, who slowly removes his hand, holding a finger across his lips.

TELEMACHUS

I need the key to the store-room.

Off her look -

INT. PALACE CORRIDORS - NIGHT

The aged nurse and Telemachus steal quietly down the halls, tiptoeing through the GREAT HALL, where the Suitors, having had their usual meal, are drunkenly sleeping it off.

They don't wake as Telemachus and Eurycleia move past them on their way to -

EXT. STORE-ROOM - NIGHT

as Eurycleia UNLOCKS the door. The MEN who have volunteered to help Telemachus stand in line and withdraw supplies for the voyage as -

EURYCLEIA

At least bid your mother farewell-

TELEMACHUS

NO. She'd only worry that I'll disappear like my father. (off her look) I won't. Tell her that when she wakes... and give her this for me.

He kisses her. She holds on for dear life.

EXT. HARBOR - NIGHT

20 MEN piling onto a small SHIP, Eumaeus among them. He is stopped by Telemachus.

TELEMACHUS

You stay ashore, old friend.

EUMAEUS

But -

TELEMACHUS

Rowing is young men's work. I need you here. Be my eyes and ears. When I return I will visit you first.

Eumaeus nods reluctantly.

EUMAEUS

May the Gods protect you, master.

TELEMACHUS

Amen to that.

EXT. HARBOR - NIGHT

the boat being run out - big enough for twenty OARS...

LATER

by MOONLIGHT the little ship is quietly rowed out of the harbor...

ON DECK TELEMACHUS

smiles for the first time. This is more like it -

TELEMACHUS

(a whisper)  
Raise the sail.

EXT. HARBOR - NIGHT

The SAIL goes up as the ship leaves Ithaka...

DISSOLVE TO:

A COUPLE MAKING LOVE

on a splendid bed, covered with LAVISH FURS...

The WOMAN, writhing in ecstasy is Kalypso. The MAN beneath her is Odysseus.

WIDEN TO REVEAL

INT. KALYPSO'S CAVERN - NIGHT

a treasure trove of goods, jewelry, silks and gold, a veritable cornucopia of luxury, the bed at its centre.

Kalypso collapses next to Odysseus. They lie there for a time, motionless. Then, she quietly traces her hand over a SCAR on his chest.

KALYPSO  
Where did you get this?

ODYSSEUS  
Troy.

KALYPSO  
(another scar)

And this?

ODYSSEUS  
From the Cyclops.

She finds another.

KALYPSO  
This one?

ODYSSEUS  
I was bitten by a ghost...

KALYPSO  
Here's another. Also from Troy?

It's a long GASH on the inside of his RIGHT CALF.

ODYSSEUS  
(smiles, remembering)  
I was fourteen and hunting in the forest.  
A wild boar attacked me.

She turns him over and inspects his back - it is pure skin, unbroken.  
His face is turned away from her.

KALYPSO  
I see you have never run from a fight.

Odysseus says nothing. She leans over, kisses him on the back of his neck, then silently, she leaves the bed and he lies there by himself. He hears her HUMMING softly as she dresses. He stares into space.

## ODYSSEUS' VOICE OVER

Kalypso had spoken the truth. The island WAS pleasant and time did pass. All would have been well, if only I could have burned my memory. I had no way of knowing that my life was about to change - again...

## HIGH AERIAL SHOT - DAY

We are GLIDING RAPIDLY OVER THE SEA, DESCENDING, as we approach Kalypso's Island... the ocean gives way to land and TROPICAL JUNGLE as we DESCEND into the midst of it where

Kalypso is harvesting FRUIT. There's a NOISE as we land and she turns, reacting to us, going pale.

## KALYPSO

You. Why have you come here?

## REVEAL HERMES

## HERMES

You know why.

## KALYPSO

You cannot take him from me.

## HERMES

Athena has conferred with father Zeus. It is time for him to go.

KALYPSO

(desperate)

He will never succeed; Poseidon has decreed it.

HERMES

Poseidon is away.

KALYPSO

Away?

HERMES

(smiles)

In love. Come, you must help him.

KALYPSO

He will not go. He loves me.

HERMES

(fractional pause)

We shall see.

He leads the way and she follows, reluctantly.

SEVERAL SHOTS

as they make their way to the shore. There, sitting with his back to us, is Odysseus. Hermes and Kalypso look at each other - Hermes waves her forward; he himself steps into the trees and vanishes.

Odysseus stares at the sea, TEARS streaming down his face. Kalypso sits next to him, strokes his arm lightly.

KALYPSO

Can there still be water for so many tears? I would have thought by now your eyes were dry as deserts. (he doesn't answer) Do I never make you happy?

ODYSSEUS

(finally)

Sometimes. I would be lying if I said you didn't. You are loving beyond men's dreams and beautiful beyond imagining.

KALYPSO

Odysseus, listen to me. (he looks at her) I can make you immortal.

ODYSSEUS

(startled)

Immortal.

KALYPSO

(urgent)

Yes - like me, always to be young, beautiful, to be a god yourself and never know infirmity, grief or age...

ODYSSEUS

(tempted)

Never to know grief...

KALYPSO

We can make love, pleasing each other

forever...

ODYSSEUS

(caresses her cheek)

If - ?

KALYPSO

If only you promise to love me and stay.

ODYSSEUS

(smiles)

Immortal?

KALYPSO

(eyes shining)

Love for all eternity. Am I not desirable? The Gods themselves dream of me.

ODYSSEUS

(sadly)

I'm only a man. I can only desire what mortals dream of...

KALYPSO

(the light fades)

Home.

ODYSSEUS

Yes.

KALYPSO

Your wife.

ODYSSEUS  
Yes...

KALYPSO  
Your child...

ODYSSEUS  
Yes...

She puts her head in her hands for a long time, then lifts it up, blinking away her own tears.

KALYPSO  
I will help you.

She rises to walk away but he grabs her hand; looks up.

ODYSSEUS  
(suspicious)  
Why? Why now?

She looks down at him.

KALYPSO  
Because I must.

She withdraws her hand and walks into the trees. Surprised by this turn of events, Odysseus follows her...

EXT. CLEARING - DAY

A LARGE STAND OF FIR TREES

as Kalypso leads Odysseus to it. He regards the trees with wonder.

ODYSSEUS

I never saw these.

KALYPSO

I did not intend you to.

He looks at her.

ODYSSEUS

I will need tools.

KALYPSO

You shall have them.

A BANGING OVER

EXT. TELEMACHUS' ROOM DOOR - DAY

as Antinous BANGS on it.

ANTINOUS

Telemachus?

He looks at the others.

ANTINOUS (cont'd)

Break it down.

A DOZEN SUITORS hurl themselves at the door, which smashes open,  
REVEALING

Telemachus' empty room - with the SHEET strung out the window.

Antinous reacts goes forward to the window and looks down, in time

to see Leocritus running BELOW and shouting up -

LEOCRITUS

He's taken a ship and twenty men went  
with him!

ANTINOUS

(stunned)

Bound for?

LEOCRITUS

No one seems to know...

EURYMACHUS

(also at the window)

Or they're not saying... I didn't think the  
boy had it in him...

ANTINOUS

I told you one day that cub would bare  
his fangs...

There's a GASP from behind and they turn -

Penelope stands on the threshold.

ANTINOUS

Your son has fled, madam.

Ignoring him, Penelope moves forward through the Suitors and the room. Gently she touches the bed where the sheet is entwined and follows the sheet to the window and over the sill.

She sits on the sill, looking at the room full of Suitors.

PENELOPE

Now I have lost all.

She buries her head in her hands.

INT. BANQUET HALL - DAY

The Suitors are taking counsel together.

LEOCRITUS

We don't even know where he's headed.

ANTINOUS

Sparta, any fool can see that. He'll go to Menelaus and ask for an army to see him home.

EURYMACHUS

Menelaus will never give him troops - he's too old for campaigning now.

ANTINOUS

We can't take that chance. We must prepare for the boy's return.

LEOCRITUS

How prepare?

EURYMACHUS

A ship must be outfitted to intercept him.

ANTINOUS

Correct. Let it stay beyond the point,  
just outside the harbor. Telemachus  
has proven himself a rash adventurer -  
and accidents befall adventurers. The  
son of Odysseus won't be the first  
member of his family never to reach  
home. (pause) But he will be the last.

Silence as they contemplate this.

EURYMACHUS

And once the boy is out of the way..?

ANTINOUS

Then Queen Penelope has no heir. She  
MUST remarry.

He starts briskly out as -

EXT. THE BANQUET HALL - DAY

Eurycleia has been listening. Now she moves quickly off...

EXT. ITHAKA HARBOR - DAY

The SUITORS' killer ship puts out to sea... Leocritus with the

Helmsman.

LATER

The killer SHIP conceals itself, disappearing around the point outside the harbor.

INT. PENELOPE'S BEDCHAMBER - DAY

Sprawled on her bed, the queen sobs convulsively. Eurycleia stands next to her, stroking her mistress.

EURYCLEIA

Lady, be comforted, your son is escaped  
from this den of rogues.

PENELOPE

(lifts her head)

But if he lives he will return - and you  
tell me they lie in wait to kill him...

ON EURYCLEIA

what can she say? She watches, helpless, as Penelope sobs.

PENELOPE (cont'd)

(frantic)

Odysseus! Odysseus, my love, come  
back to me! End this endless torment...

SOUNDS OF AN AXE OVER

CU AN AXE CHUNKING INTO A TREE - WIDEN TO REVEAL

EXT. FIR TREE GLADE, KALYPSO'S ISLAND - DAY

Odysseus, covered with sweat, FELLING yet another FIR, which CRASHES down, joining its neighbors on the ground...

ON THE CRASH CUT TO:

FOUR RIDERS ON SADDLESS HORSES

racing down a stretch of sandy beach in glorious sunshine.

One of the riders is Telemachus.

SEVERAL ANGLES OF THE RACE

WIDEN TO REVEAL

EXT. BEACH, PYLOS - DAY

where aged King Nestor and his beautiful grand-daughter, PEISISTRATA, watch the race from beneath a colorful MARQUEE. Before them is a table set with LUNCHEON and DRINK. SERVANTS hover behind them.

NESTOR

He rides well - the son of Odysseus...

Peisistrata's eyes are shining as Telemachus wins the race, the THREE other riders bringing up the rear.

Telemachus rides his lathered mount over to the tent, where he

slides off, handing the reins to a RETAINER.

TELEMACHUS  
(breathless)  
My thanks.

The man leads off the horse...

NESTOR  
(smiles)  
You have beaten my grandsons again.

TELEMACHUS  
It is not hard to win on so magnificent a  
steed, majesty.

The three other YOUNG MEN come in, all breathless and hot.  
SERVANTS offer towels as they sit down to their meal.

Ist YOUNG MAN  
Well, Telemachus, it seems true what  
they say about the men of Ithaka.

TELEMACHUS  
What do they say of us?

Ist YOUNG MAN  
That the men of Ithaka are to be  
reckoned with.

Telemachus smiles, pleased.

NESTOR  
Your father was certainly to be

reckoned with.

A sobering reminder.

PEISISTRATA

Do you look like your father?

TELEMACHUS

(embarrassed)

Alas, I cannot say. All I have of him is this horsehair necklace, made from the plume of his helmet, before he sailed for Troy. (to Nestor) You have no news, then, of my father?

NESTOR

I wish it were otherwise. All the chiefs sailed from Troy with their own ships and men. Many had adventures, but all who survived the war returned safely to their homes.

TELEMACHUS

Except my father.

NESTOR

Have you spoken with Menelaus? He may have news where I have none.

TELEMACHUS

I plan to visit him next.

NESTOR

I shall lend you my chariot for the journey.

TELEMACHUS

You are more than kind.

NESTOR

It is nothing for the son of my old friend. All I have is yours. You may stay in Pylos as long as you wish, an honored guest...

2nd MAN

(laughs)

Stay. Eat. The day is perfect. Apollo sits in his sun chariot and all's right with the world.

TELEMACHUS

(rises)

Excuse me.

And he goes out of the tent onto the beach where he stares at the horizon.

One of the MEN makes to get up and join him, but Nestor holds his arm.

NESTOR

Not now.

LATER

Afternoon. Telemachus is still on the beach. Behind him the tent is being dismantled by the Servants. He is joined by Peisistrata.

PEISISTRATA

Walk with me.

They walk.

PEISISTRATA (cont'd)

Do you know that you stare at me?

TELEMACHUS

I?

PEISISTRATA

At lunch. Last night at supper.

TELEMACHUS

Forgive me. You are so lovely.

PEISISTRATA

Are there no lovely girls in Ithaka? (no answer) Do you see that I stare at YOU?

She stops, looks up. Kisses him. He returns the kiss. Long. Ardent.

LATER

EXT. PYLOS BEACH - NIGHT

The MOON is up. Telemachus and Peisistrata sit, their backs to us. She leans against him.

PEISISTRATA

Stay. (off his look) Here. With us. What would happen if you stayed? Your mother would remarry...

TELEMACHUS

Possibly...one day...

PEISISTRATA

Life would go on. YOU could go on. My grandfather loves you for your father's sake as well as for your own. My brothers love you; I love you...

TELEMACHUS

You...

PEISISTRATA

we could make a life together - a NEW life...

TELEMACHUS

And my father?

PEISISTRATA

He made his choice. You make yours.

TELEMACHUS

But -

PEISISTRATA

Telemachus, listen to me. He abandoned you. It's been twenty years. How long must you be loyal to his memory?

Telemachus kisses her passionately, rolling over on top of her in the

sand, laughing.

TELEMACHUS

The world is a fine new place.

PEISISTRATA

Where all things are possible...

TELEMACHUS

I never knew what it was to be happy.

PEISISTRATA

Be happy, Telemachus...

They start to make love. Abruptly, he sits up.

TELEMACHUS

I can't.

CU TELEMACHUS

racing overland in Nestor's CHARIOT...

WIDEN TO REVEAL

The CHARIOT heading for a LARGE CITY with an ACROPOLIS...  
SPARTA... In contrast to the speedy chariot -

EXT. KALYPSO'S ISLAND - DAY

Odysseus, wearing a harness like a beast of burden, drags the last of  
his timber towards the shore...

LATER

## ON THE SHORE

the LOGS are being lashed together; Odysseus works like a man possessed - sitting on the beach unhappily, Kalypso watches him...

## INT. MENELAUS' PALACE - NIGHT

a FEAST IN PROGRESS. We find Menelaus, older (!) and heavier than when we last saw him, eating.

His guests, like himself, are grizzled OLDER WARRIORS.

A SERVANT approaches and whispers in his ear. Menelaus arches his eyebrows in surprise. Says something to the Servant. Claps his hands for silence.

## MENELAUS

A stranger is at our door and begs  
admittance.

Reactions of curiosity among the MEN DINERS. Menelaus looks.

TELEMACHUS, travel-stained, but obviously a man of quality, stands on the threshold, between two columns.

Menelaus eyes him narrowly - something familiar.

## MENELAUS (cont'd)

Friend, you are welcome to my house.

TELEMACHUS

You do not even know my name.

MENELAUS

There is no need - unless you care to tell it. On my long voyage home from Troy I was frequently cared for by generous hosts who never demanded my identity as the price for their hospitality. Sit. Eat.

He nods to SERVANTS, who escort Telemachus to a couch. He's a bit wide-eyed - this is a more sophisticated world than any he has seen before.

The ritual of FOOT-BATHING proceeds...

TELEMACHUS

You are more than kind. I fear I interrupt a celebration...

MENELAUS

My daughter is to be married to the son of my old friend, Achilles. (smiles) A bachelor supper.

TELEMACHUS

Achilles...

A WARRIOR

Twenty years ago this year we set sail for Troy...

2nd WARRIOR

How like yesterday it seems...

3rd WARRIOR

And yet how much has happened. How many have gone to join the army of the dead.

The feast has turned a bit somber.

MENELAUS

My own brother among them. King Agamemnon survived ten years at Troy and made it safely home, only to be murdered by his own wife.

TELEMACHUS

Was his murder unavenged?

MENELAUS

His son avenged it.

Telemachus licks his lips, the example of Agamemnon's son clearly before him. An awkward pause, then -

TELEMACHUS

Did you know King Odysseus?

MENELAUS

Did I KNOW him?

He is amused - as are his courtiers.

MENELAUS (cont'd)

He was my brother in arms. I loved him well. (thinks) And yet -

TELEMACHUS

What.

MENELAUS

He was never really one of us.

TELEMACHUS

How do you mean?

MENELAUS

Odysseus was - what shall I say? a dreamer. He made a vow to help me in my quest and he kept his vow and fought hard. And when fighting did not avail, he used his cunning to help us take the city - but always he dreamt of something else.

TELEMACHUS

Of what?

MENELAUS

(simply)

Home. He dreamt of home.

Telemachus cannot suppress a sob. Menelaus is startled.

MENELAUS (cont'd)

You weep, young man. Why?

VOICE

Because he is the son of Odysseus.

Telemachus reacts, looks up, as does Menelaus to where

A WOMAN STANDS BETWEEN THE COLUMNS. Her shape is beautiful, but she keeps her face concealed in SHADOW - we will never see that face - HELEN.

MENELAUS

His - can this be prince Telemachus?

HELEN'S VOICE

Can you not see the resemblance?

MENELAUS

I knew there was something...  
Telemachus...

TELEMACHUS

You do not object to my visit?

MENELAUS

By no means. (dryly) Had it not been for  
your father, I would never have  
recovered my most prized possession.

The WOMAN IN THE SHADOWS...

MENELAUS (cont'd)

How can I help his son?

TELEMACHUS

I need to know whether my father is  
alive or dead.

CU DARK SURF

racing up to where Odysseus' RAFT is complete. There's a mast and

CRUDE SAIL, made from material supplied by Kalypso.

WIDEN TO REVEAL

EXT. KALYPSO'S BEACH - NIGHT

The sea is calm, a full MOON is out. Odysseus is making preparations to leave, strapping on SUPPLIES, etc.

ODYSSEUS

The tide is coming in - we'll float off in a minute... I'll steer by the stars...

KALYPSO

Are you so impatient to leave me that you cannot wait for day?

ODYSSEUS

I must go while Poseidon sleeps and the sea is calm. When he discovers me I shall pay.

KALYPSO

We both shall pay. And you will die.

ODYSSEUS

All men will die; I want to die trying.

KALYPSO

Trying what?

ODYSSEUS

To be a man.

He kisses her long and hard - then breaks away and floats free his raft, casting off the line that held it and pushing out through the mild surf as Kalypso watches, her eyes glistening in the moonlight.

KALYPSO

(soft)

You ARE a man.

SEVERAL SHOTS

as Odysseus and the raft get further out to sea. He's doing all right... the sail billows out, he gets his bearings and stares up at the stars, infinite, distant, mysterious.

ODYSSEUS' VOICE OVER

And so I began what was to be the final leg of my endless journey...

An OMINOUS CLOUD CROSSES THE MOON...

Odysseus frowns, looking at it...

INT. MENELAUS' PRIVATE APARTMENTS, SPARTA - NIGHT

Menelaus has just heard Telemachus' story.

MENELAUS

But this is monstrous. Fifty, you say?

TELEMACHUS

Consuming everything like rats.

Menelaus thinks. Telemachus looks off at

HELEN, who sits with them, though her face is VEILED.

HELEN

(soft)

Mine is no longer the face that launched  
a thousand ships.

TELEMACHUS

Forgive me. I did not mean to stare.

MENELAUS

(ignoring)

Is it men you want - troops?

TELEMACHUS

No. Thank you, but no. I have no wish to  
use foreign soldiers on Ithakan soil to  
gain my rights.

MENELAUS

A good answer. What then?

TELEMACHUS

Have you any news of my father? Could  
he be alive?

MENELAUS

(thinks; finally)

Yes. He could. On my journey home  
from Troy we had many adventures -  
during one of them I met Proteus, the  
Old Man of the Sea, servant to Poseidon,  
the Earth-shaker. He told me that  
Poseidon had marooned your father on

an island.

TELEMACHUS  
(not daring to hope)  
An island?

MENELAUS  
With a sea nymph for company.

TELEMACHUS  
My father, alive... (he swallows, forces  
himself to be calm)... do you really think  
such a thing is possible?

MENELAUS  
(shrugs)  
I believed it when I heard it.

TELEMACHUS  
(sobered by the thought)  
But - even if he lives, how can he hope  
for escape or rescue from an unknown  
island..?

HELEN  
You must not give up hope. Your father  
is the most resourceful man who ever  
lived.

MENELAUS  
She's right. In the meantime, may I  
offer you a word of advice?

TELEMACHUS

I would welcome it.

MENELAUS

Do not return to Ithaka the way you came. (off his look) The men you fight are not fools.

He rises and goes to a COLORFUL COWHIDE MAP depicting the Peleponensus, emphasizing SPARTA, the road to PYLOS and ITHAKA, with its HARBOUR facing the Greek peninsula.

Menelaus takes a DAGGER and outlines his proposition.

MENELAUS (cont'd)

When you set course for home, land on the farther side of the island, where they won't be lying in ambush for you. Then send your ship on its way without you.

Telemachus studies the map, then regards Menelaus.

TELEMACHUS

Wise counsel. I thank you for it.  
(pause) And I know my father thanks you  
- wherever he is.

THUNDER OVER

EXT. SEA - NIGHT

or is it day? Hard to tell because the most furious storm is raging, tossing Odysseus and his raft about like a cork.

LIGHTNING FLASHES and the raft seesaws precariously above and beneath mountainous WAVES as the SAIL is shredded, then the MAST SNAPPED - as one by one Poseidon's power whittles away at Odysseus' flimsy contraption.

Now the ROPES joining the LOGS together SHRED and the raft itself disintegrates beneath Odysseus' feet...

Odysseus looks up, terrified, in time to see a MOUNTAIN OF A WAVE DESCENDING UPON HIM IN HORRIFYING SLOW MOTION...

As we watch Odysseus being consumed by Poseidon, churned about underwater and virtually drowning -

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

Odysseus lying in the water on a beach, as at the beginning of this story.

It's the same scene with which we opened, only seen now from Odysseus' POV.

ODYSSEUS' VOICE OVER

Once again, Poseidon had won. The rest  
of my sad tale, I believe you know.

The young girl, NAUSICAA, comes down, spies him in the water and begins her efforts at rescue...

EXT. KING ALCINOUS' BANQUET - DAWN

They have been listening to Odysseus all night.

Alcinous and his courtiers are all equally affected.

Stunned is more like it. They are shocked, to a man.

Even the singer, blind DEMODICUS, has wept.

ODYSSEUS (cont'd)

Of my kindly rescue by your brave and  
beautiful daughter you are already  
aware.

He smiles a sad, exhausted smile, eyes the guttering TORCHES, the  
coming of day...

ODYSSEUS (cont'd)

The night is finished - and so am I.

Long pause. Everyone is thoughtful. Someone mumbles "Unhappy  
man" and others murmur in agreement. Finally -

ALCINOUS

You say your story is over - but it isn't,  
not while you live. What will you do  
now?

ODYSSEUS

Does it make any difference? No matter  
what I do, I will not see my home.  
Perhaps by now it is mine no longer.

Nausicaa has tears streaming down her cheeks.

NAUSICAA

Then this will be your home. (off his  
look) Marry me. (before he can answer)  
Marry me and I will love you as she did.  
Better.

She kneels before him, taking his hands in hers and kissing them,  
crying on them. Odysseus is infinitely touched. He looks over at  
Alcinous.

ALCINOUS

(smiles)

I could not ask for a better son-in-law.

ODYSSEUS

Oh, but you could - and you (Nausicaa) a  
better husband. Tiresias was right: I AM  
a liar and deceiver and a schemer.

NAUSICAA

Your purpose was always honorable.

ODYSSEUS

(tenderly)

Not always. But even if it were,  
I am no match for you.

NAUSICAA

I LOVE YOU.

ODYSSEUS

(more tender still)

I think you are the greatest trap

Poseidon has set for me. Am I to get  
past the Cyclops and Circe, elude the  
Sirens and the call of Hell, avoid  
maelstroms and monsters, only to  
become ensnared by your innocence?

NAUSICAA

(sobbing in his arms)

Please. PLEASE...

ODYSSEUS

(strokes her hair)

You forget: I was offered immortality,  
to become a God myself, were I to forgo  
my quest. If I am not to be a god,  
neither will I be another woman's  
husband. (to Alcinous) I want to go  
home.

Silence, only broken by the sobs of Nausicaa. Finally-

ALCINOUS

Then go home you shall, noble Odysseus.  
I myself will provide you with a ship  
and crew - the journey from here to  
Ithaka is not  
a long one.

ODYSSEUS

I thank you but I must decline your  
generous offer and fend for myself.  
Anyone who helps me risks the anger of  
Poseidon. As one who has experienced  
that anger first hand, I do not

recommend it.

Alcinous walks before the green statue of Poseidon and contemplates the grim visage. Then -

ALCINOUS

I will take that risk. Before this evening was begun we made sacrifice to the God. If he does not honor our devotions he cannot be worthy of them. Tomorrow you will sail for home, Odysseus.

ODYSSEUS

(moved)

I thank you, great King - and I know my son, wherever he is, thanks you, as well.

EXT. ROAD FROM SPARTA - DAY

Telemachus, in his chariot, going away from Sparta, returning to Pylos and his ship...

SEVERAL SHOTS

of his journey...

EXT. HARBOR OF PHAEICIA - DAY

Alcinous and Odysseus make ready to board as the ship prepares to sail. Various well-wishers have come to see Odysseus off and he

says goodbye to the COURTIERS who so sympathetically listened to his story...

Including Nausicaa, who stands apart from the rest.

Odysseus sees her, comes up and takes her hands.

ODYSSEUS

Well...

NAUSICAA

I was so sure.

ODYSSEUS

Sure?

NAUSICAA

That you were my prince. The one I'm waiting for.

ODYSSEUS

(smiles)

He'll be here one day... One day soon...

NAUSICAA

(crying)

But he won't be you.

ODYSSEUS

He'll be better.

NAUSICAA

Was I not beautiful enough?

ODYSSEUS

Beautiful? The most beautiful. Even  
Helen herself could not compare...

NAUSICAA

(laughs through her tears)

Liar.

ODYSSEUS

There, you see? Nausicaa, thank you -  
whatever happens to me, thank you for  
saving my life, for showing me simple  
goodness. I will remember.

He kisses her tenderly on the cheek and then rushes up the gangway  
where Alcinous tactfully waits.

As Nausicaa watches, the SAILORS cast off and the ship starts to  
move...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HARBOR, PYLOS - DAY

where Telemachus is saying farewell to Peisistrata. Like Odysseus,  
he holds the girl's hands in his own.

PEISISTRATA

You'll come back? You promise?

TELEMACHUS

I want to...

PEISISTRATA

I'm so frightened. I love you so much...

He kisses her hands.

TELEMACHUS

You are the only sweetness I have ever  
known. I'll remember...

Abruptly he tears himself away and races aboard, stopping to kneel  
before old Nestor and kissing his hand, as well.

As Peisistrata watches, the SAILORS cast off, the ship begins to  
move and Telemachus, at the rail, waves to her...

DISSOLVE TO:

DOUBLE EXPOSURE

One opposite sides of the SCREEN, Nausicaa and Peisistrata, both  
tear-stained, watch by the shore...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ITHAKA - DAY

seen on the near horizon. WIDEN TO REVEAL

ALCINOUS' SHIP

with its crew. ALCINOUS turns to the CAPTAIN.

ALCINOUS

Ithaka?

CAPTAIN

Aye, sir.

ALCINOUS

Where is the Lord Odysseus?

The Captain gestures to where Odysseus sleeps on deck in the sunshine.

CAPTAIN

He sleeps like a babe.

ALCINOUS

(smiles)

No need to wake him.

EXT. ALCINOUS' SHIP - DAY

as it approaches the coast of Ithaka.

ON DECK

Odysseus is still asleep.

LATER

THE SHIP GENTLY NUDGES a stretch of BEACH.

ON BOARD

Alcinous signals and SEVERAL CREWMEN lift the sleeping Odysseus on his pallet and gently carry him ashore.

EXT. ITHAKA - DAY

the MEN carry him off the beach and set him down gently beneath the shade of an OLIVE TREE.

Alcinous kneels beside the sleeping man.

ALCINOUS

(quietly)

Good luck, wanderer. You are home at last.

Odysseus stirs but doesn't wake. Alcinous signals his men and they move off...

LATER

EXT. OLIVE TREE - DAY

THICK MIST ROLLS IN FROM THE SEA. The chill causes Odysseus to wake. He looks around in puzzlement. FOG everywhere.

Odysseus stands, realizing he is on land. FOOTSTEPS in the FOG tell him someone is approaching. He squints.

HIS POV

through the fog a YOUNG SHEPHERD approaches, stops at the sight of Odysseus, who thinks fast.

ODYSSEUS

Greetings friend...

YOUNG SHEPHERD

And you, stranger...

ODYSSEUS

I pray you, do not think me mad but can you tell me the name of this place?

YOUNG SHEPHERD

You do not know where you are?

ODYSSEUS

If I did I would have no need to ask.

YOUNG SHEPHERD

This is the kingdom of Ithaka.

ODYSSEUS

(poker-faced)

Ithaka indeed? I have heard of it.

YOUNG SHEPHERD

(puzzled)

How did you get here and not know your destination?

ODYSSEUS

I will tell you the truth. I come from Crete and there I killed a man who tried to rob me. I made my escape, paying Phoenician sailors to carry me beyond the reach of the law. We encountered a great storm which drove us from our course and then discovered this island where we stopped for water. I must have fallen asleep and they pushed off again without me.

The Young Shepherd laughs - and laughs, and laughs -

YOUNG SHEPHERD

Odysseus, teller of tales, will you never  
cease to employ your imagination?

Before Odysseus' astonished eyes, the shepherd metaMORPHoses into  
the goddess ATHENA, complete with her Helmet and Spear - she is  
the statue come to life...

ATHENA (cont'd)

(still amused)

I do declare there was never so devious  
a man since the world was framed.

ODYSSEUS

Athena!

He kneels before her.

ATHENA

Yes, your grey-eyed protector. Could not  
recognize me?

ODYSSEUS

How could I, when you took care that I  
should not? Is this really  
Ithaka? Or is this another island and  
another cruel trick of the sea God?

ATHENA

You are home, Odysseus.

He trembles with the news. Bends over and kisses the earth.

The Goddess watches compassionately as he lies there, his body shaken with sobs. She sits next to him under the tree, crooking the spear in her arm. They are boon companions.

ODYSSEUS

Home.

ATHENA

Aye, home - you have beaten Poseidon, but all's not done yet. Your house is infested with vermin. You will have to plan carefully if you are to regain your kingdom and your wife.

ODYSSEUS

Will you help me?

ATHENA

As always, for I could never resist the appeal of your ingenuity. (sighs) You and I, what can I say? a match that should have been made in heaven. What a pity you are merely mortal.

ODYSSEUS

(tactful)

My loss, surely. You are the only woman

who has ever truly understood me.

ATHENA

(without rancor)

Liar. Your wife understands you perfectly. Or you would not struggle so to rescue her.

ODYSSEUS

True. (pause as they acknowledge this, then -) What do you suggest?

ATHENA

(thinks)

My advice is this: first visit old Eumaeus.

ODYSSEUS

My shepherd?

ATHENA

He has remained faithful to you and can tell you how things stand at your palace.

ODYSSEUS

A good plan. (he rises) Where is my son?

ATHENA

On his way back from Sparta. (off his look) He went there in search of news of you.

ODYSSEUS

Good lad. And his mother?

ATHENA

Still pines for her husband.

Odysseus, moved, takes this in, then stands and looks at himself in the fine clothes Alcinous has given him.

ODYSSEUS

I would do better to disguise myself,  
rather than appear like this.

ATHENA

I agree. If you were recognized now it  
might be awkward.

She passes a hand over Odysseus from top to bottom and he MORPHS into an OLD BEGGAR in appearance, wrinkled, with shabby clothes. He has an old leathern satchel and a staff.

ATHENA (cont'd)

Now your own mother wouldn't know  
you.

ODYSSEUS

(grim)

She did. I have one other question...

He turns, but Athena is vanishing in the mist...

ATHENA'S VOICE

I have done all I can for you, beloved  
friend. Now live by your wits - that's  
what they're for.

Odysseus nods, understanding, and trudges into the mist in the opposite direction.

MORE MIST, REVEALING

EXT. THE SUITORS' SHIP - DAY

with Leocritus aboard, wrapped in his cloak, ill-tempered, freezing and BORED. They huddle in angry silence until -

LOOKOUT

Off the starboard bow - it's Prince  
Telemachus' ship!

Instantly everyone is up and alert. Sure enough, they are poking out of the shore mist and the open sea is visible - and there, not far off, is Telemachus' ship.

LEOCRITUS

Man the oars! Give chase!

Every man scrambles to his post; the HORTATOR beats the rhythm and the killer ship flies across the water in pursuit of her quarry.

THE OARS FLASH IN THE WATER

LEOCRITUS licks his lips in anticipation; draws his SWORD.

SPEARS handed out to the MEN... BOWS STRUNG...

TELEMACHUS' SHIP proceeds unconcernedly on her way, oblivious to the overtaking pursuer.

The SHIPS MEET and Telemachus' vessel is boarded by Leocritus and

his men, all armed and ready for a fight.

ON BOARD TELEMACHUS' SHIP

the atmosphere is slightly anticlimactic. The MEN, who appear to be FISHERMEN-types, look astonished at the behavior of the boarders, swinging over, pirate-fashion.

LEOCRITUS

Where is Prince Telemachus?

FISHERMAN

WHO?

EXT. MIST COVERED ROCKY SHORE, ITHAKA - DAY

Telemachus, on shore, where he was dropped earlier, strains to HEAR the altercation between ships. Too far off. Shrugging, but smiling at his own cleverness, he starts climbing inland, disappearing INTO the MIST as...

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE, ITHAKA - DAY

Odysseus emerges OUT of the MIST near the tree line.

EXT. EUMAEUS' HUT - DAY

where Eumaeus, sitting on his porch, spies him. His eyes narrow in suspicion at the Beggar approaching.

ODYSSEUS

Good day, friend.

EUMAEUS

And you.

ODYSSEUS

Is there a shepherd hereabouts, Eumaeus  
by name?

EUMAEUS

Who seeks him?

ODYSSEUS

One who calls himself a friend of Lord  
Odysseus.

Eumaeus shifts his eyes quickly, checking out the landscape, then -

EUMAEUS

Come inside.

He holds the door open and lets Odysseus pass within, pulling him by  
the sleeve and closing the door quickly...

INT. EUMAEUS' HUT - DAY

the place is dark and the Beggar keeps to the shadows. Eumaeus  
silently bustles, setting forth a wooden CUP, filling it from a  
goatskin and putting a dish of scraps before him. He throws a log on  
the fire...

EUMAEUS

It's not much...

ODYSSEUS

(eating)

Hunger makes the best sauce. I thank you.

As he eats, Eumaeus studies him.

EUMAEUS

Have we met, then?

ODYSSEUS

I think not. I am a stranger here.

EUMAEUS

Where is my master? Do you know?

ODYSSEUS

(shrugs)

Over the seas. The God Poseidon stands between him and his homecoming. How fares his kingdom?

EUMAEUS

Badly. (off Odysseus' look) Aye, badly - his wife's besieged by villains who have taken over the palace. They wallow in the king's property and insist that she marry one or other but she refuses. Miserable woman.

ODYSSEUS

(intense)

Those evil men -

EUMAEUS

I do not blame them.

ODYSSEUS

(startled)

Who then?

EUMAEUS

I blame the master. When the cat's  
away the mice will play. What business  
had he to abandon his wife and kingdom  
while he went in search of glory?

ODYSSEUS

(chastened)

What business indeed. But you love him  
still.

EUMAEUS

Aye, I'm still the king's man, much good  
may it do me.

ODYSSEUS

You can never tell - the king might  
return.

EUMAEUS

(bitter laugh)

You may as well say that sheep will fly.

ODYSSEUS

(eating; casual)

But if he did - who is there still loyal  
to him, besides yourself?

EUMAEUS

A handful only. Eurycleia, his aged nurse; me, his son, of course, and Philotius, his cowherd. Melanthe, handmaid to Penelope, sleeps with the insolent Antinous - and some of the other women are sluts beside.

Odysseus takes this in - not a lot to work with.

Eumaeus picks up his shepherd's staff.

EUMAEUS (cont'd)

I must tend my flocks. Sit here and rest. For my master's sake treat this place as your own. I will return when the sun is down.

He starts out the door, opening it to face Telemachus.

TELEMACHUS

Eumaeus!

EUMAEUS

My prince! You are safe!

He kneels at the young man's feet, clasping his legs.

EUMAEUS (cont'd)

The Gods be thanked. I feared for you.

Telemachus looks over at the Beggar; then smiling, he tenderly raises the shepherd.

TELEMACHUS

Rise, faithful friend. You have a visitor,  
I see.

EUMAEUS

One who calls himself a friend to your  
father, my prince.

Telemachus comes forward and extends a HAND.

TELEMACHUS

I am well pleased to meet a friend of  
my father's. Have you news of him?

Odysseus slowly takes the HAND. His own shakes...

CU THEIR HANDS CLASPING.

ODYSSEUS

Are you indeed Telemachus, son of  
Odysseus?

TELEMACHUS

(grim smile)  
I fear that is my unhappy fate.

ODYSSEUS

I have waited long for this moment.

TELEMACHUS

Do you know if my father lives?

ODYSSEUS

He lives and I will relate what I know.  
But first let this good man go to your  
mother and tell her you have come safe  
home. I'm sure she also worries for your  
safety.

TELEMACHUS

I had come here to ask that favor.  
Eumaeus, will you visit my mother?

EUMAEUS

I will, young master.

He starts out, then turns -

EUMAEUS (cont'd)

(to Odysseus)

You are sure we haven't met before?

ODYSSEUS

A long time ago, perhaps.

Satisfied with this answer, Eumaeus leaves. Telemachus pours  
himself some wine from the goatskin as his father watches.

TELEMACHUS

So - you know my father...

ODYSSEUS

I know him well.

TELEMACHUS

What is he like?

ODYSSEUS

Like?

TELEMACHUS

I have never seen him; only heard stories - stories from my mother, my nurse - the old man...

He gestures with his head to the departed shepherd.

TELEMACHUS (cont'd)

They tell me how strong he was, how brave, how wise...

ODYSSEUS

Not wise. (off Telemachus' look) He was many things, but he was not wise. Clever. yes, clever I grant you. (sighs) At the beginning, he knew everything but he understood nothing.

TELEMACHUS

And now?

ODYSSEUS

And now - (thinks) he knows that he does not know, and that he hopes is the commencement of wisdom.

Silence as Telemachus contemplates this and Odysseus studies his son. He drinks.

ODYSSEUS (cont'd)

What took you from Ithaka, if I may

ask?

TELEMACHUS

I went abroad, hoping to learn of my father's whereabouts - something you seem to know...

ODYSSEUS

Your father is on his way home.

TELEMACHUS' eyes widen with excitement.

TELEMACHUS

On his - are you certain?

ODYSSEUS

Quite certain. He will be here any time now.

Odysseus watches as Telemachus rises, trembling with excitement and starts pacing the hut.

TELEMACHUS

I - I find it hard to believe... this isn't some kind of trick...

ODYSSEUS

No trick, I assure you... he's on his way...

TELEMACHUS

On his way - after all this time... I have forgotten what it is to hope... It's been so long... can it really be that... my father..! (he stops short) Great heavens.

ODYSSEUS

What?

TELEMACHUS

He will be killed.

ODYSSEUS

What?

TELEMACHUS

(increasingly agitated)

You are a stranger here and do not comprehend what has happened in my father's absence. Our house is overrun with so-called suitors, all petitioning for the hand of my mother and my father's crown. If they discover his whereabouts they will certainly try to kill him. (he grabs the beggar forcefully) I must find my father and warn him. Can you take me to him? Please. If you are his friend, help me save him.

Odysseus holds his son by the arms.

ODYSSEUS

There is no need, Telemachus. Your father is already safe.

TELEMACHUS  
Safe? I don't understand.

ODYSSEUS  
Look at me. LOOK.

As Telemachus, caught in his father's arms looks, Odysseus reaches with a trembling hand, and grasps the FADED HORSEHAIR necklace at his son's throat.

ODYSSEUS (cont'd)  
When you were a babe in my arms, the plume on my helmet frightened you. With my hand I tugged off a shank of red horsehair and put it in your tiny fist before I sailed for Troy.

TELEMACHUS' eyes start out of his head. The beggar's wrinkles have disappeared - in their place: Odysseus.

TELEMACHUS  
Father..!

ODYSSEUS  
(weeps)  
My son.

They embrace long and hard. Telemachus weeps, as well.

ODYSSEUS (cont'd)  
Can you forgive me?

TELEMACHUS

I forgive you, father. All my life I have waited to forgive you.

They look at each other, cry and then laugh; hug again.

When they part, Odysseus is a beggar once more, though his cheeks are wet with Odysseus' tears. Telemachus blinks in astonishment.

ODYSSEUS

The goddess Athena has offered me this disguise against the time when we take our revenge.

TELEMACHUS

Revenge - but - father, we are two against FIFTY...

ODYSSEUS

(smiles grimly)

It will require some planning. And before we plan we must have information. In the meantime no one must know I am here. Do you understand? No one.

TELEMACHUS

What about mother?

ODYSSEUS

Especially your mother. Her happiness would betray us. Now - are you with me?

Telemachus smiles broadly.

TELEMACHUS

I'm with you. To the death.

They clasp each other again.

EXT. ITHAKA HARBOR - DAY

The "killer" ship has returned and a disgruntled Leocritus is debarking, throwing his cloak over his shoulder and marching hurriedly to his CHARIOT, which drives off at a gallop for the palace.

INT. GREAT HALL, ITHAKA - DAY

The Suitors are at their usual fun and games. Abruptly their hi-jinks subside.

Antinous, who is chatting with Melanthe and Eurymachus, is slow to pick up on the silence.

Then all three look.

Telemachus stands in the doorway. They are stunned by the sight. Smiling slightly, he threads his way through them.

ANTINOUS

Welcome back, prince. Did you find your father?

Behind him, a commotion as Leocritus rushes up to the same threshold and yells -

LEOCRITUS

He got away!

Antinous rolls his eyes - points.

Leocritus sees Telemachus, who favors him with a mocking bow.  
Eurymachus recovers for them.

EURYMACHUS

We were all so worried for your safety,  
Telemachus, lest you perish at sea, like  
your father...

ANTINOUS

Such news would devastate your loving  
mother...

TELEMACHUS

(faces them)

I cannot tell you all how touched I am by your  
concern - for my well-being.

Telemachus' smile is chilling, as he proceeds out the DOOR at the  
other end of the hall.

When he is gone, the suitors crowd round Antinous, their natural  
leader.

LEOCRITUS

Now what?

ANTINOUS

Did he bring troops with him?

LEOCRITUS

He brought no one.

Silence as they wait for Antinous to think.

ANTINOUS

The plan remains unchanged.

AMPHINOMOS, another suitor, more sensitive than the rest, is appalled.

AMPHINOMOS

You mean kill him - here?

Antinous regards him coolly -

AMPHINOMOS (cont'd)

But he is the prince - you cannot do this...

EURYMACHUS

It's a little late to be developing scruples, Amphinomos.

AMPHINOMOS

But -

ANTINOUS

You wish to desert us?

AMPHINOMOS

I? Uh, no. NO.

ANTINOUS

Then let us be patient. An opportunity will present itself. When the boy is dead, his mother's proud spirit will be broken. (looks about) Where is he?

INT. PENELOPE'S CHAMBER - DAY

Telemachus hugs Eurycleia, who weeps for joy.

EURYCLEIA

My prince..!

Then he embraces his mother, who clutches him passionately.

PENELOPE

You frightened me so.

TELEMACHUS

No harm has come to me, mother. I'm back, safe and sound. I bring you greetings from Menelaus of Sparta and queen Helen.

PENELOPE

That woman began my troubles. Did you learn anything of your father?

Telemachus hesitates, then -

TELEMACHUS

No. Nothing.

She sags; he holds her, conscience-stricken.

TELEMACHUS (cont'd)

But I have invited a guest to our house.  
(off their looks) A beggar.

EXT. ITHAKA - DAY

A WELL FEATURED

Eumaeus and Odysseus (as the Beggar), walk along the rocky road towards the citadel. Odysseus in rags, with his staff, makes a pathetic sight.

They stop at the WELL and Eumaeus offers Odysseus the use of it, letting him pull up the bucket.

At the same time a GOATHERD arrives with his flock and unceremoniously, shoves Eumaeus out of the way.

MELANTHIUS

Move off!

He starts drawing water for himself.

Eumaeus is on the ground; Odysseus helps him up.

ODYSSEUS

This is strange courtesy...

MELANTHIUS

Who the devil are you?

He pokes Odysseus rudely, forcing him back.

EUMAEUS

He is a friend of the lord Odysseus.

MELANTHIUS

Pigshit. Odysseus has no friends. He's dead.

He drinks the water greedily from the bucket...

EUMAEUS

He still has friends.

MELANTHIUS

Meaning you, you stiff-necked ass? (re Odysseus) He's a beggar and he's going to whine for scraps at the Palace.

Aren't you? Aren't you?

He trips Odysseus and kicks him viciously in the ribs.

CU ODYSSEUS

on the ground, clutching his side, gasping...

ODYSSEUS

You say true, sir. Would not king Odysseus feed a poor - ?

MELANTHIUS

There IS no king Odysseus, you idiot. Have you no hearing? And those that reign in his place feed only themselves.

He flings the remainder of the bucket at Odysseus, soaking him...

He yells at his goats, shoves Eumaeus out of his way, and presses on... Eumaeus helps Odysseus to his feet and they survey the departing goatherd.

EUMAEUS

He's one who made his peace with the suitors. I apologize for him...

ODYSSEUS

No need...

But he'll remember. They move on their way.

CU A DOG

lying filthy and dying in the sun, FLIES buzzing...

WIDEN TO REVEAL

EXT. STEPS TO ODYSSEUS' PALACE - DAY

where the dog with the mangy coat lies, ignored by the comings and goings of all and sundry.

The palace has a trashed feel; it is casual, dirty - practically turned into a gymnasium for the suitors and their games.

Odysseus and Eumaeus approach - Odysseus is stunned by the appearance of his estate.

He looks at the dog, squints, and comes forward slightly, his expression one of disbelief.

EUMAEUS

That is Argos. He was the favorite  
hound of the master.

ODYSSEUS  
(kneels)  
Argos...

CU ARGOS' EARS

prick up slightly, more like a twitch -

ARGOS opens his EYES, sees the Beggar, feebly wags his tail and  
STRUGGLES to rise. We can barely recognize the dog we saw before  
Odysseus sailed for Troy...

As Odysseus watches, transfixed, his eyes glistening, the dog inches  
its way towards him, WHIMPERING...

CU ODYSSEUS' HAND

stretches forth to touch the dog; pat it.

The dog collapses dead at his feet.

Odysseus gently strokes his corpse.

Eumaeus frowns unhappily.

EUMAEUS  
Wretched creature. A bad sign that he  
did not live to see his master again.  
Come.

He pulls Odysseus forward. Odysseus looks back at his beloved pet,  
wipes tears from his eyes, then turns and heads into the great  
courtyard and hall.

INT. HALL - DAY

Men gorging themselves everywhere, fondling servants, telling dirty jokes, drinking, playing games, lifting weights, throwing spears, etc.

EUMAEUS

Sit here.

He leaves Odysseus inconspicuously by the GREAT DOOR as he goes forward. Odysseus checks out the door - there's a big OUTSIDE BOLT. Handy to know. He watches as Eumaeus approaches Telemachus at the other end of the hall where he eats alone and speaks to him.

Telemachus looks his way and then puts food on a plate for Eumaeus to bring back to Odysseus.

The Suitors slowly begin to notice as Eumaeus crosses the hall with food for the beggar at the door.

Telemachus watching...

Eumaeus is about to hand the plate to Odysseus, when

FROM BEHIND, Antinous, abruptly spins Eumaeus around, dashing the FOOD to the ground -

ANTINOUS

What do you think you're doing, old man?  
How dare you bring this mangy creature  
in here among us? You, who complain  
that we squander your master's  
inheritance. Do you propose that we  
share it with a beggar?! Throw the

rascal out before I turn the dogs loose  
on him.

The Suitors roar their approval.

TELEMACHUS

Just a moment.

He rises and crosses to Antinous.

TELEMACHUS (cont'd)

This man is my guest - here at my  
invitation, which is more than I can say  
of you. Leave him alone or you'll pay  
dearly.

Antinous is flabbergasted into silence by Telemachus, who has never  
spoken in this way before.

Telemachus turns to the beggar politely.

TELEMACHUS (cont'd)

Feel free to take your bowl before each  
man here. I assure you we are both  
perfectly safe in this house.

He eyes Antinous, daring him to dispute his invitation.

ODYSSEUS

Thank you, master...

Antinous whirls abruptly back to his place as

Odysseus, carrying his begging BOWL stops before each SUITOR in turn, looking them in the eye. The meal has turned somber with the suitors trying to avoid eye contact but throwing bits and pieces of their meal into the BOWL.

ODYSSEUS

Thank you kindly, generous princes  
...thank you for taking pity on a poor  
man... such hospitality for one less  
fortunate than yourselves... so kind...

As he moves past them, Odysseus eyes the WALL behind:

HIS POV THE WALL

IT IS COVERED WITH WEAPONS: SWORDS, SHIELDS, SPEARS, BOWS...

Odysseus takes this in. The ARMS will have to be removed...

Odysseus comes before Amphinomos, the only relatively decent man among them - his guilty expression proclaims his conscience. Odysseus holds out the bowl and stares.

Amphinomos alone puts COINS into the bowl.

ODYSSEUS

Thank you, my prince.

He starts to move off, then returns to Amphinomos.

ODYSSEUS (cont'd)

You look as if you do not belong here, my lord. Among these men...

Amphinomos starts at the remark; maybe he's about to say something, when Odysseus swings his bowl before Antinous.

ODYSSEUS (cont'd)

And you, noble lord? Will you not assist a poor beggar? I was once even as yourself - rich and powerful, with many men to command...

ANTINOUS

You're spoiling my dinner.

Long pause, eyeball to eyeball. Finally -

ODYSSEUS

What a pity.

Odysseus turns his back on Antinous, who suddenly flies into a rage and hurls his FOOTSTOOL at Odysseus' unsuspecting BACK, knocking the old man forward, almost off his balance as the food in the dish goes flying...

ALL THE SUITORS rise in spontaneous CHORUS of protest at this cowardly action.

ANTINOUS

(tops the uproar)

He insults me..! He insults us all!

TELEMACHUS' hand reaches for his SWORD, but he catches his father's EYE and controls himself.

Odysseus ambles back to his place at the door, picking up the food scraps from the ground and stuffing them into the bowl and thence to his mouth from his place by the door.

The Suitors are confused by this turn of events; no one seems quite sure how to get the party back on track.

VOICE

(booming)

Who seeks to usurp my place?

Odysseus looks up, amid the growing LAUGHTER.

Standing in the doorway is ANOTHER BEGGAR, a HUGE BULLY and braggart we have glimpsed before, called IRUS. Irus is a big favorite with the Suitors, who are relieved by his sudden appearance. He clowns and plays to them, harrumping, wiggling his rear end, etc.

ANTINOUS

Ah, Irus, our beggar of choice! Here's one who would assume your role and position.

EURYMACHUS

Aye, he'd replace you as our chief jester!

LAUGHTER.

Furious, Irus looks down at Odysseus kicks him sharply. Presents his rear end and imitates a FART with his mouth.

IRUS

Begone, vagabond. Only room for one of us to ply his trade in this place. I'm one of the family.

MORE LAUGHTER.

ODYSSEUS

(quietly)

Not the royal family.

IRUS

(furious)

Begone I say or I'll thrash you.

Odysseus slowly looks up.

ODYSSEUS

Indeed?

He rises.

VOICES

A fight!... A beggars' duel!

Make room!... etc.

The prospect of a beggars' fight brings the party to life, with the Suitors SHOUTING and space being instantly cleared before the tables as men yell their BETS.

VOICES

Now this is more like it!...Two to one on Irus!.. make that three to one and you're on..! Go Irus! Give it to him..! etc.

Irus takes off his shirt - he's a big man, alright, and angry. Odysseus starts to remove his shirt and Irus takes a huge poke at him before he's ready, knocking him down.

Before Odysseus can recover, Irus kicks him. Odysseus can only save himself by hanging on to the big man's foot.

Odysseus recovers, turns and stares at Irus, who instinctively knows he's in trouble. Slowly Odysseus pulls off his shirt.

Underneath, Odysseus' body is surprisingly well-muscled. Irus blanches at the sight.

Irus tries to walk out of the circle, but Telemachus, smiling grimly, prevents him. He turns back to Odysseus.

As the Suitors call encouragement, the two beggars circle one another.

#### VOICES

Take him!...Go! What's the matter?  
etc.

Telemachus watches, breathless.

Irus makes a move - in a second the two beggars are locked, grappling as the Suitors yell their heads off...

The fight, however, is suddenly over - Odysseus rams Irus with a fist in the gut, doubling him over, then flips him to the ground where he lies, motionless.

Stunned silence. Leocritus, who's nearest, inspects Irus.

LEOCRITUS

He's dead. His neck's broken.

Collective shock. Then -

ANTINOUS

He's... murderer!

TELEMACHUS

Not so fast. The fight was fair.

EURYMACHUS

True. Well, friend, I see you have qualities. What a pity you use them only to cringe and beg. Were you in a mood to work, I could pay you well for your labor.

Odysseus walks slowly over to Eurymachus, who cringes a bit, in spite of himself, as the beggar with the muscled chest draws near.

ODYSSEUS

In the first place - I am not your friend.

Panicked, Eurymachus hurls a WINE PITCHER at Odysseus, who ducks. The PITCHER hits another Suitor, who draws his SWORD, enraged. All the Suitors start to draw their weapons.

ANTINOUS

Enough! Stop - in five more minutes he'll have us at each other's throats...

this beggar from Hell.

TELEMACHUS

I agree. We've had enough excitement for one day. Clear the hall. Go home. Do your "wooing" in the morning after the Feast of Apollo. GO.

Uncertain, the Suitors start clearing out as Telemachus stands next to the beggar.

Eumaeus is grinning from ear to ear.

As Amphinomos walks tentatively past him, Odysseus looks him in the eye.

ODYSSEUS

(quietly)

Don't come back tomorrow. You don't belong with these men.

Frightened, unsure, Amphinomos keeps walking. Odysseus resumes looking at the floor as the suitors pass, until he is joined by Telemachus, who stands next to him, watching them go. Odysseus addresses his son without looking up.

ODYSSEUS

(quietly)

The walls need cleaning.

TELEMACHUS

What?

ODYSSEUS

We must get rid of all these weapons.  
Tell your servants to wash the walls.  
Have all the weapons taken to the  
storeroom and locked away in the  
meantime.

TELEMACHUS

Aye...

ODYSSEUS

If anyone asks after them, say they're  
being cleaned...

EXT. GREAT HALL - NIGHT

Eurymachus walks out but is grabbed by Antinous -

ANTINOUS

Tomorrow - after the feast of Apollo...

EURYMACHUS

An accident...

ANTINOUS

The boy - AND the beggar...

Eurymachus nods. Good idea...

INT. GREAT HALL - NIGHT

Telemachus still standing next to his father as the last of the  
Suitors leaves.

TELEMACHUS

What about the tables? They could be

used as shields...

ODYSSEUS

True... have them taken outdoors to be washed  
and dried in the open air...

Telemachus nods. The Suitors have gone and now the SERVANTS enter and begin cleaning up the day's debris. SEVERAL carry out Irus, the dead beggar.

TELEMACHUS

(loudly)

This place looks like a sty. Look, the walls are filthy with smoke. Take down the weapons and store them until the walls have been scrubbed clean and whitewashed.

SERVANT

Aye, master...

He instructs the rest and they begin removing the weapons from the walls and carrying them out of the hall...

ODYSSEUS

Mind you see them locked where none can get to them...

Telemachus nods again, and issues more instructions.

TELEMACHUS

You there. I want the tables removed as well. They are filled with crumbs and

stains. See they are scrubbed with lye  
and stored in open air until I send for  
them.

Another SERVANT nods and the TRESTLED TABLES begin to be carted  
off by many hands...

Odysseus watches, satisfied, then turns to his son.

ODYSSEUS

I will stay here by the fire. Sleep well.  
You will need your strength tomorrow.

TELEMACHUS

(nods; then -)

There's no other way, is there?

ODYSSEUS

Can you think of one? Thinking is  
better than fighting.

TELEMACHUS

(hesitates, then -)

Goodnight - father.

ODYSSEUS

Telemachus. (he turns) You have warned  
them.

TELEMACHUS

More than once.

He follows out after the weapons and the tables. Odysseus settles

himself down by the FIRE in a ragged heap as the MAIDS quietly go about scouring the room.

A SHADOW FALLS OVER HIM.

He looks up: it's PENELOPE.

Impossible to state the conflicting emotions crossing Odysseus' face. He struggles to his feet...

ODYSSEUS

Your majesty...

PENELOPE

You need not rise, old man. I do not stand on ceremony. You are welcome to my hearth. I have heard about you from my son and from old Eumaeus. We do not often have visitors here in Ithaka. I long to hear your news...

But as Odysseus looks at her, the SOUND of her VOICE turns into a kind of MUSIC and her smile causes him to lose the sense of her words. Twenty years he's waited to hear that VOICE, see that smile.

A TEAR ROLLS DOWN HIS CHEEK. Penelope reacts. Odysseus hastily wipes the tear with the back of his hand.

ODYSSEUS

I beg pardon, noble queen. Sometimes my own troubles come too near my memory...

Penelope smiles and draws up a footstool, sitting next to him by the fire. He remains on the floor at her feet.

PENELOPE

I have no difficulty understanding what you say. I

have cried myself to sleep for the man I love every night these twenty years.

ODYSSEUS

Odysseus?

PENELOPE

(stares at the fire as he watches her)

My poor vanished lord. Bad enough I do not know whether he is alive or dead - for years I have been forced to endure the presence of odious men in my home, my "suitors," they like to call themselves, though not one of them is worthy to lick my husband's feet. (she looks at him) Have you no news of my husband?

ODYSSEUS

(hard to say)

How I wish I did, my lady.

She closes her eyes briefly with these tidings.

PENELOPE

Your news was the straw I clung to last. My hopes are now at an end. I have put these wicked men off for years with one trick after another; I can deny them no longer. I will have to choose one or together they will empty the treasury and murder my son.

## ODYSSEUS

How will you make your choice? May an old man know?

Penelope thinks about this.

## PENELOPE

My husband left his hunting bow behind when he set sail for Troy, but I remember how adept he was in the use of it. (smiles) He could align twelve axe-heads together and shoot an arrow through every one of them. (she surveys the empty hall) Tomorrow is the feast day of the God Apollo. To celebrate I will arrange a contest with Odysseus' bow and the axe-heads. And I shall marry whoever is able to duplicate his feat - (swallows) though that marriage break my heart in a thousand pieces...

Odysseus thinks about this. They stare into the fire together. Then -

ODYSSEUS

There are many suitors. You will need a lot of arrows...

PENELOPE

Yes.

ODYSSEUS

I had a wife. I loved her above all else in this world.

PENELOPE

Where is she?

He extends his hand, almost touching her knee.

ODYSSEUS

Sometimes she seems so close I could reach out and touch her.

(withdraws his hand, then -)

Can you forgive your husband?

Long pause.

PENELOPE

For leaving me this fate? I try to forgive him. I understand why he left for Troy, though I curse the name of that place and the wicked woman who forced him to go there.

ODYSSEUS

Were you happy? Once?

PENELOPE

No woman ever was so happy. Now my happiness seems like a dream I can barely remember - but the fading memory is all that comforts me...

ODYSSEUS

He was wrong to go, I think. He should have stayed with you.

PENELOPE

(mild)

It is not for you to judge. Nor me.

ODYSSEUS

Then you DO forgive him.

PENELOPE

Always and forever.

They sit there, staring at the fire. Together.

Eurycleia approaches.

EURYCLEIA

My lady -

PENELOPE

(roused from her reverie)

Ah, yes, Eurycleia. Can we not offer our guest a proper room, a bed and fresh clothing? He has no need to sleep here before the fire...

ODYSSEUS

I assure your majesty; most of my life  
I've done with less than this. I am  
content.

PENELOPE

(rises)

Is there nothing we can offer to a weary  
traveler?

ODYSSEUS

You are most kind... perhaps the old  
woman who stands beside you will wash  
my aching feet...

PENELOPE

Eurycleia...?

EURYCLEIA

Aye, my lady.

PENELOPE

Will you excuse me? I must speak with  
my servants...

ODYSSEUS

Certainly, your majesty.

Penelope moves off to supervise her servants and their cleaning.

Odysseus sits on the vacated footstool and Eurycleia pours water  
from the pot on the fire into a nearby ornate basin.

EURYCLEIA

You've come from far away, then?

ODYSSEUS

Very far...

Odysseus stares after Penelope, watching her instructing her servants as Eurycleia sits at the hearth and starts to bathe his filthy feet and legs.

EURYCLEIA

My queen had hoped you brought news of her beloved husband...

ODYSSEUS

I know...

CU ODYSSEUS' FEET

as Eurycleia soaps the legs - suddenly, her FINGERS TOUCH THE SCAR where the BOAR attacked him, aged fourteen..!

CU EURYCLEIA

she stares at the SCAR, then

drops his foot in the basin with a SPLASH and looks up in wild surprise, catching Odysseus' eye.

EURYCLEIA

Lord Od-

He leans down and covers her mouth with his hand.

ODYSSEUS

Not a word. If I am discovered I die like  
a dog.

He takes his hand away. Her eyes are filled with tears. She says  
nothing but intently scrubs the old man's feet...

Penelope, finished giving instructions, starts out past them on her  
way to bed...

PENELOPE

I wish you a good night's rest,  
stranger...

ODYSSEUS

And you, your majesty. May your  
sorrows soon be at an end.

The remark touches Penelope. She hesitates, then goes out.

EURYCLEIA

(not looking up)  
Can we not tell her?

ODYSSEUS

Tomorrow. Tonight I need your help in  
another matter. (off her look) Eumaeus  
and the cowherd Philotius can be relied  
upon, is it not so?

EURYCLEIA

Even though they both suppose you dead,  
they are still loyal to you, master.

ODYSSEUS

Good. I need you to talk to them for me.

He leans forward and whispers. Her eyes widen.

INT. PALACE CORRIDOR - NIGHT

By the STORAGE CLOSET.

The SERVANTS finish stacking the WEAPONS in the CLOSET.

Melanthe is the last to deposit weapons. She closes the door and locks it, turning around to face

TELEMACHUS, who puts out his hand for the key.

Wondering, Melanthe hands it over to him and Telemachus tucks it away. He walks off, leaving her uneasy and puzzled. CU THE BIG TAPESTRY OF ODYSSEUS WOVEN BY PENELOPE: THE TAPESTRY IS FINISHED.

INT. PENELOPE'S BEDCHAMBER - NIGHT

Penelope lies awake, thinking about tomorrow...

INT. TELEMACHUS' ROOM - NIGHT

Telemachus is also awake...

INT. GREAT HALL - NIGHT

Lying by the dying fire, Odysseus contemplates the next day.

INT. TEMPLE OF ATHENA - NIGHT

The EMPTY PEDESTAL in the MOONLIGHT...

EXT. SEA - DAWN

as THE SUN rises out of the water.

CU BANNER OF APOLLO, DRIVING HIS SUN CHARIOT, flapping...

WIDEN TO REVEAL

EXT. ODYSSEUS' PALACE - MORNING

As the GIANT BANNER is HOISTED INTO PLACE...

Several SHOTS as preparations for Apollo's FEAST are made.

MEN CHOPPING WOOD...making cooking fires...

RAISING MORE BANNERS...

CATTLE and GOATS HERDED towards the palace by Melanthius and Philotius...

Eumaeus walking towards the palace, looking anxiously about.

A PROCESSION OF MULES LADEN with OLIVES, GRAIN and other

FOODSTUFFS...

WOMEN GRINDING GRAIN FOR BREAD, SCOURING THE TABLES,  
POLISHING THE SILVER CUTLERY...

SERVANTS HANGING GARLANDS OF FLOWERS everywhere, draping the  
outer walls and columns with floral arrangements...

INT. GREAT HALL - DAY

EURYCLEIA supervising WOMEN WHITEWASHING THE BARE WALLS. The  
room has been stripped of all furniture, save the THRONE...

SEATED BY THE DOOR, Odysseus, still in his beggar's garb, watches  
these preparations. Holding his BOWL, he looks out to all the activity  
in the courtyard where -

EXT. PALACE - DAY

The SUITORS, in a body, dressed in their finery, walk towards the  
palace, talking and laughing...

Odysseus narrows his eyes and focuses in on -

Antinous, Eurymachus and Leocritus are talking animatedly and  
seriously amongst themselves within the main body of the suitors,  
plotting, evidently...

INT. PENELOPE'S CHAMBER - DAY

Penelope, aided by servants, arraying herself with unusual  
care. She looks exquisite, more lovely than we have seen her.

Melanthe is awed - she hasn't seen the queen so beautiful in some time...

INT. TELEMACHUS' ROOM - DAY

Telemachus is also dressing carefully. He puts on his SWORD SCABBARD and briefly examines the BLADE before slamming it into its SHEATH. He studies himself in the mirror, holding out his own hand to see if it is steady.

EXT. BANQUET HALL - DAY

Eumaeus takes up a lounging position OUTSIDE the GREAT DOORS, a piece of straw between his teeth...

EXT. OPPOSITE DOOR, BANQUET HALL - DAY

Philotius helps Eurycleia carry SOMETHING LARGE AND HEAVY, WRAPPED IN A BEARSKIN...

They set the BEARSKIN down just inside the door and Philotius takes up the comparable position to Eumaeus, just OUTSIDE the door, looking nervously about as Eurycleia catches his eye and leaves him...

EXT. PALACE, SHRINE OF APOLLO - DAY

LOTS OF PEOPLE GATHER to WORSHIP AT THE SHRINE as the SUN comes up...

THE PRIESTS SING THEIR HYMN as the Suitors, et al, listen to their devotions...

A LARGE BLACK BULL is brought to the ALTAR.

The HYMN to APOLLO ends.

Antinous goes up before the BULL and pulls forth his SACRIFICIAL KNIFE, holding it aloft.

ANTINOUS

To thee, God Apollo, lord of Life and of  
the Sun, do we make sacrifice!

He slits the animal's throat and the Priests catch the sacred BLOOD in a SILVER BOWL...

ANTINOUS (cont'd)

Prosperity be ours!

There is a surprised murmur. Antinous turns -

THEIR POV

A BLACK CLOUD has CROSSED THE SUN.

Antinous looks up. The SKY has got quite dark; ominous. People murmur; it is a bad sign. A VOICE is HEARD in the CROWD: "A black day will it be - for somebody."

Antinous is unnerved by the sky. Nevertheless -

ANTINOUS

And now - to the feast!

The Suitors move towards the palace as the CROWD disperses.

EXT. GREAT HALL - DAY

the Suitors file inside without noticing Eumaeus casually leaning nearby...

INT. HALL - DAY

As the suitors enter, they are perplexed.

All the tables and chairs are gone. The walls are bare.

Instead, 12 AXE-HEADS have been aligned down the length of the middle of the room.

Penelope sits on the THRONE. Next to her stands Telemachus.

On Penelope's LAP rests a large BOW. Nearby MANY ARROWS...

Seated inconspicuously by the great door - Odysseus.

ANTINOUS

What is the meaning of this? Where is  
the feast?

PENELOPE

The feast is to come.

Behind the Suitors the Great Doors close. They turn briefly,  
confused, then back to the queen.

PENELOPE (cont'd)

And one of you will have much to

celebrate. My widowhood is this day at an end. (rises with the bow) Here is the hunting bow of my lord King Odysseus. With this weapon he could fire an arrow through 12 axe heads...

CU THE AXE HEADS...

PENELOPE (cont'd)

Whomsoever of you can string this bow and fire a shaft through these axe heads - him will I marry.

She hands the BOW to Telemachus and starts out towards the back doors.

Her action rouses the surprised Suitors to life.

EURYMACHUS

My lady. (she turns) Will you not stay to witness this contest?

PENELOPE

The result will make no difference to me.

She starts to leave - but Antinous appears before her, cutting off her exit. He seizes her hand.

ANTINOUS

It will make a great difference. To me.

He pulls her hand up and kisses it. SLOWLY, never taking his eyes from hers.

Odysseus looks at his begging bowl.

Suppressing shudder, Penelope withdraws her hand and leaves.

The Suitors are perplexed but pleased. They drift down towards Telemachus and the bow...

Odysseus never looks up...

LEOCRITUS

I will shoot first...

VOICES

Why you?... Let me... No, ME!... etc.

A quarrel over precedence with the bow breaks out...

EXT. PALACE HALL - DAY

as the Suitors argue amongst themselves, Penelope walks majestically down the corridor.

Philotius stands by the CLOSED DOOR in the background, also looking casual and inconspicuous...

INT. GREAT HALL - DAY

The Suitors still clamoring to be first with the Bow...

INT. PENELOPE'S CHAMBER - DAY

Penelope enters. Like an automaton, she strips off her DIADEM and

JEWELRY. She lies down on her bed. She can faintly HEAR the NOISE below - then her EYES SHUT and the NOISE FADES AWAY TO SILENCE...

INT. GREAT HALL - DAY

Leocritus has got the BOW and a line of sorts has formed...

Eurymachus and Antinous are at the end of it...

TELEMACHUS

Are all agreed? Leocritus, your turn,  
then is first.

Odysseus watches...

Leocritus attempts to bend the bow in order to string it.

The BOW will not bend.

The Suitors watch - they had not expected this.

SEVERAL MOMENTS pass as Leocritus does his best. He finally gives up with a sharp exhalation of breath.

Telemachus conceals a smile.

Leocritus angrily hands the BOW off to the next man, AMPHINOMUS, who steps forward and does his best...

No luck... He strains and strains...

Odysseus looks down at his begging bowl...

AMPHINOMUS gives up and thrusts the bow at the next man...

INT. PENELOPE'S CHAMBER - DAY

Penelope sleeps a DEEP SLEEP in total SURREAL SILENCE...

INT. GREAT HALL - DAY

ANOTHER SUITOR struggles with the bow - quite a few have tried and failed by now, standing off to one side...

Odysseus eats from his bowl...

Telemachus stays poker-faced...

Antinous watches as yet another SUITOR struggles. He's thinking...

EXT. GREAT HALL DOORS - DAY

Eumaeus looks around... the courtyard is now deserted...

EXT. SKY - DAY

The sun still obscured by angry BLACK CLOUDS... the day is getting DARKER by the minute...

INT. GREAT HALL - DAY

Eurymachus now strains to string the bow, the veins standing out on his red forehead.

The Bow will not yield.

With a GASP Eurymachus releases it to Telemachus who hands it to Antinous.

Antinous studies the bow, then carries it over to one of the TORCHES and bases the wood back and forth over the flame.

ANTINOUS

The wood is stiff from years of idleness.

All watch as the Bow passes back and forth over the flame.

Odysseus, too...

Finally, Antinous is ready to make his effort. And quite an effort it is, too...

The Bow begins to bend...

As the Suitors crowd round to see, Antinous keeps straining to pull down the top end, towards the LOOP in the BOWSTRING...

CU THE LOOP GETTING CLOSER AND CLOSER TO THE BOW END...

CU ANTINOUS' muscles rippling...SWEAT pouring...

The MEN watching...

ANTINOUS' FACE, GRIMACING...

CU THE LOOP GETTING CLOSER, TREMBLING WITH ANTINOUS' EFFORTS...

Abruptly, Antinous lets go, hurling the Bow away from him, bent over double and gasping with his attempt.

CU A PAIR OF HANDS

picking up the Bow.

WIDEN TO REVEAL

Odysseus, the beggar, holding it.

ODYSSEUS

Too many years of easy living have  
made you soft, Antinous.

They all look over to where Odysseus holds the bow.

ANTINOUS

(gasping)

I'd like to see you do it, old man...

Odysseus purses his lips into a smile, accepting the challenge. He comes forward next to the throne - and the supply of ARROWS - as the Suitors, almost in a trance, watch...

He holds the bow lovingly, strokes it like a faithful pet.

As Telemachus watches, Odysseus neatly bends the Bow and strings it. A Gasp from the Suitors.

The Suitors are transfixed as Odysseus takes up an ARROW and stations himself, aiming at the 12 AXE HEADS.

CU THE AXE HEADS

CU EURUMACHUS AND ANTINOUS

watching, struck with wonder...

Odysseus, kneels, aims... and SHOOTS...

The ARROW FLIES, zipping through the 12 AXE HEADS!

The Suitors can only stare - as

Odysseus, straightens up AS HIMSELF, his wrinkles GONE...

ODYSSEUS

Odysseus is home.

Amazed, Antinous nonetheless draws his SWORD...

ANTINOUS

Not for long... kill him!

But before he or anyone can move, Odysseus has let fly another arrow...

STRAIGHT INTO ANTINOUS' THROAT!

A great CRY goes up from the SUITORS as

EXT. GREAT HALL, FRONT ENTRANCE - DAY

Eumaeus reacts and SLAMS DOWN THE BOLT, locking the HALL and

EXT. GREAT HALL, BACK ENTRANCE - DAY

Philotius does the same thing with the BACK DOOR BOLT. The suitors are sealed with their fate.

INT. GREAT HALL - DAY

EURYMACHUS

You fools, there are 49 of us! Come on!

The Suitors draw their SWORDS.. but another ARROW stops Eurymachus, throwing his bloody body back into the arms of his followers...

ODYSSEUS

Forty-eight...

TELEMACHUS flips back the BEARSKIN, REVEALING -

A SUPPLY OF JAVELINS...

As the Suitors attempt to regroup, Telemachus hurls a JAVELIN into their MIDST, goring another one...

Odysseus lets fly another ARROW...

The Suitors look at the BARE walls - the weapons have gone!

VOICES

We are betrayed..!

Whether they try going forward or rushing around the room, the arrows and the javelins are finding them...

EXT. GREAT HALL DOOR - DAY

A FURIOUS POUNDING ON THE DOOR, accompanied by terrified SCREAMS from within.

Eumeaus stays at his post. SERVANTS come running, including Melanthe, wide-eyed, who hears the SCREAMS.

MELANTHE

NO!

She tries to push past Eumaeus, who throws her violently off...

He produces a SPEAR of his OWN as the SERVANTS GAPE...

Melanthe runs off...

EXT. GREAT HALL, REAR DOOR - DAY

Philotius listens without expression to the NOISES and POUNDING from within...

EXT. WEAPONS CLOSET - DAY

Melanthe runs toward the CLOSET, but Eurycleia gets there first, standing before it... SCREAMS heard nearby...

MELANTHE

Let me - !

But Eurycleia throws her back. Hysterical, Melanthe attacks the older woman; they wrestle...

INT. TEMPLE OF ATHENA - DAY

SCREAMS in the distance as the SHADOW of the STATUE LENGTHENS ON THE FLOOR as

Athena returns to her pedestal -

INT. PENELOPE'S BEDCHAMBER - DAY

Silence. Penelope sleeps...

EXT. WEAPONS CLOSET - DAY

Melanthe desperately wrestles with Eurycleia, pulling a KNIFE on the old woman. The women wrestle for the KNIFE - then Melanthe's eyes widen in shock and BLOOD burbles from her mouth and she slides down the front of Eurycleia, the KNIFE protruding from her gut...

INT. TEMPLE OF ATHENA - DAY

ATHENA'S BODY PASSING CLOSE before us on its way back to its pedestal, screams ECHOING...

INT. GREAT HALL - DAY

SWORDS DRAWN IN A PHALANX, TWENTY-FIVE SUITORS ALIVE frantically attempt to charge Odysseus and his son... Odysseus keeps shooting and Telemachus throwing spears at them, who are dying, slipping on their own BLOOD...

INT. TEMPLE OF ATHENA - DAY

WIDE REVEAL

The temple with the Statue as before, alone in the place - her work completed... More SHOUTS, as...

INT. GREAT HALL - DAY

In SLOW MOTION the ballet of death proceeds. Odysseus has almost run out of ARROWS and Telemachus out of SPEARS...

Odysseus sights Amphinomus and Amphinomus' eyes widen - he shouldn't have come back with these men -

THE ARROW goes into his open MOUTH...

Now the fighting is hand to hand as Odysseus picks up a SWORD from the BEARSKIN and

FATHER AND SON, back to back, fight off the remainder of the Suitors, who rush them now there's no more ARROWS...

EXT. GREAT HALL REAR DOORS - DAY

Melanthius, the traitorous goatherd is fighting with Philotius, trying to unbar the door...

Philotius throws Melanthius to the marbled floor and bangs his head there. Again and again...

EXT. GREAT HALL FRONT DOOR - DAY

The PALACE SERVANTS stand motionless, facing the barred front doors, where Eumaeus stands impassive, his arms across his chest, (though he still carries his spear).

The SOUNDS within are growing FAINTER, LESS FREQUENT. The NOISE of CLASHING STEEL more INTERMITTENT and also the CRIES of MEN growing fainter. More time between them.

Then SILENCE. No one moves.

INT. PALACE CORRIDORS - DAY

Eurycleia hurries. The silence is eerie...

INT. PENELOPE'S BEDCHAMBER - DAY

Penelope still asleep. Eurycleia enters and goes to the bed.

EURYCLEIA

My lady. MY LADY.

She pushes Penelope gently, then more. Penelope opens her eyes from a stuporous slumber, looks about.

PENELOPE

What is it?

EURYCLEIA

He is home.

PENELOPE

What? Who?

EURYCLEIA

Your husband. (off her look) Yes. Lord  
Odysseus.

Penelope sits up, trying to focus. She sees the BLOOD on Eurycleia's gown. Now she's awake.

PENELOPE

There's blood. What has happened?

EURYCLEIA

I tell you, lady - your husband has  
returned. He has avenged you and  
reclaimed his throne..!

Penelope closes her eyes briefly.

PENELOPE

Do not tease me, nurse. I have lived too long to be the butt of your attempts at humor.

EURYCLEIA

Lady, I do not tease. I saw him myself, and the scar on his leg from when he was a boy... You must come down...

Penelope is angry. Gets up.

PENELOPE

You were the last one I would have expected to help these evil men with their stupid jokes. Very well, I will come with you - but afterwards I will have words with you for this cruelty.

She starts out of the room, followed by Eurycleia...

EXT. HORIZON - SUNSET

The SUN emerges from BENEATH a row of GREY CLOUDS so as to set brilliantly in the SEA...

MANY OF ODYSSEUS' SUBJECTS watch, their faces bathed in the purifying red glow of the sunset...

EXT. GREAT HALL REAR DOOR - DAY

Penelope and Eurycleia approach to find Philotius on guard at the bolted door, the body of Melanthius on the floor.

Penelope sees the body. Then -

PENELOPE

Open the door.

Philotius eyes Eurycleia, who nods. He unbars and swings wide the door...

CU PENELOPE

her eyes widen in shock.

PENELOPE'S POV THE GREAT HALL

AWASH IN RED, BODIES EVERYWHERE, the WALLS SPECKLED SCARLET. Only TWO LIVING SOULS - TELEMACHUS and a MAN she hasn't seen before, both of them covered in BLOOD, gasping for breath...

Penelope comes forward...

CU A PORTION OF HER GOWN TRAILING THROUGH THE RED...

She looks around, then at the man.

PENELOPE

Who are you?

ODYSSEUS

Your husband.

She approaches, looks at him - he's a wreck. Even though no longer disguised as an old man, he's so covered with blood as to be

unrecognizable.

TELEMACHUS

Mother, it's true...he's come back...

She looks at him so closely... then -

PENELOPE

I do not know you. (before he can  
answer) I think you are another  
impostor.

She walks carefully about, inspecting the corpses.

PENELOPE (cont'd)

(re the bodies)

More determined than most, but still  
you are not my husband...

ODYSSEUS

(turning to face her)

If you do not know me, then everything I  
have done for more than ten years, all  
the hardships I have endured, the  
comrades I have lost, the men I have  
slain - if you do not know me, all my  
efforts are for nothing...

She stops circling; comes up to him.

PENELOPE

I do not know you.

TELEMACHUS

He drew the bow.

She flinches at this news. Falters. Looks at him.

PENELOPE

It cannot be.

ODYSSEUS

It is. I am.

PENELOPE

I will not believe...

ODYSSEUS

Put me to the test.

He watches her as she thinks, surveying the carnage.

Finally -

PENELOPE

(to Telemachus)

Have the servants carry down my  
wedding bed.

Telemachus hesitates, then starts to obey. Odysseus stops him.

ODYSSEUS

This they cannot do.

PENELOPE

Why, what should you fear? If you are  
who you say you are?

ODYSSEUS

If I am who I say I am, and you sleep in  
the same bed I built for our wedding,  
there is yet a living tree whose trunk  
forms one corner of that bed.

Penelope's eyes fill with tears.

PENELOPE

That was my test.

ODYSSEUS

Does that tree still live?

PENELOPE

It still lives...

She starts to shake...

ODYSSEUS

Then do you know me?

PENELOPE

(choking)

I know you...

They look at each other.

ODYSSEUS

I. AM. SORRY. TO. HAVE. KEPT. YOU.  
WAITING. SO. LONG.

PENELOPE

Odysseus...

She faints into his arms. He picks her up, light as a feather, and strides out of the room. Telemachus is left with the devastation. He looks up to see all the SERVANTS GAPING.

TELEMACHUS

Burn these bodies. Light fires with sulphur to fumigate this place, then let the doors be closed and sealed for this chamber shall never be used again.

He throws down the last spear with a CLANG and walks through them from the room...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ITHAKAN MOUNTAINSIDE - DUSK

Eumaeus herds his SHEEP home at the end of the day...

From his vantage point, he can see the SMOKE from Odysseus' palace as the place is purified... He smiles...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BANQUET HALL - DAY

Burning, filled with BLACK SMOKE and FLAME...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PALACE - EVENING

Eurycleia and Philotius sit calmly, watching the SUN set into the sea.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HARBOR, PYLOS - EVENING

Telemachus rushes off his ship into the waiting arms of Peisistrata. They embrace, passionately, kissing, laughing...

INT. PENELOPE'S BEDCHAMBER - NIGHT

Penelope and Odysseus, kneeling opposite each other on their bed are locked in each other's arms, their eyes shining with wonderment and happiness.

PENELOPE

I never thought to see you again...

ODYSSEUS

Nor I you.

PENELOPE

And yet, somewhere, I could never give up hope...

ODYSSEUS

Nor I.

PENELOPE

Was that wise?

ODYSSEUS

Loving you is all the wisdom I have or

ever hope to have.

They kiss.

PENELOPE

You must tell me everything -  
everything that happened.

He smiles.

ODYSSEUS

That's a very long story.

PENELOPE

I will hear it, though it takes a lifetime  
to tell.

They kiss again - she draws back, concerned.

ODYSSEUS

What is it?

PENELOPE

Odysseus, you have slaughtered the  
flower of Ithakan nobility. The word  
will get out soon enough. There will be  
Hell to pay.

ODYSSEUS

(grim; realizes)

Will you stay by my side?

PENELOPE

Forever. But what will happen?

He kisses her -

FREEZE FRAME

DISSOLVE TO:

SAME IMAGE -

Odysseus kissing Penelope in the TAPESTRY -

TITLE OVER:

But that's another story...

FADE OUT...