

George Isherwood

ODYSSEUS

**HARTMANN &
STAUFFACHER**

VERLAG FÜR BÜHNE, FILM, FUNK UND FERNSEHEN

ODYSSEUS had its premier in Theater der
Jugend, in Vienna, on February 16, 1999

Direction... George Isherwood

Design... Eric Sperger

Costumes... Mimi Zuzanek

Music ... Klaus Erhater

Choreography...Di Sherlock

Light..Harry Michlits

Dramaturgie

und Regie Assistanz... Barbara Unger-Wiplinger

A modern greek poet (Constantine Cavafy) walks down to the harbor on morning. He is elegantly dressed in a white suite and dark glasses. He smokes a cigarette. The poet gazes at the morning harbor and the handsome sailors at work. We hear the sound of seagulls and waves.

Poet

When you set out for Ithaca ask that the way be long, full of adventure, full of instruction...

Do not fear the Cyclopes or his angry father Poseidon.

You will never meet such as these on your way, if your thoughts remain lofty, if a fine emotion touches your body and your mind..

He smokes.

Poet

The story I tell tonight is about the sea and a man lost upon it. Odysseus, wiliest of the Greeks, has been blown off course, shipwrecked and stranded. The mast of his ship has been struck by lightning and gruesome monsters have eaten the crew members that the angry waves did not drown. But still the man keeps trying to get home, home to Ithaca, home to his family.

We see at her loom Penelope weaving and in the background Eurycleia tying up the threads.

Poet

The woman you see at the loom is his wife, Penelope. She is attended by her old servant Eurycleia. Penelope has been waiting for Odysseus for 20 years. She has been waiting for him half her life.

Music. Poet leaves and the scene begins. We see the two women weaving. To the side we see a sullen young man, Telemachos, playing with a wooden horse.

SCENE 1 ITHACA

Penelope

It seems like autumn came in a day. I just turned around and the summer was over this year.

Eurycleia Yes, my lady.

Penelope It was no real summer, this year.

Eurycleia No, my lady.

Enter a servant girl chased by Melanthios. Melanthios stops to survey the work of Penelope.

Melanthios Beautiful work

Penelope Thank you.

Melanthios But you work a little too slowly.

Melanthios resumes his chase of the servant girl. They both go off.

Eurycleia Ah, we had glorious summers when the master was here.

Penelope I remember. We'd go swimming with baby Telemachos every day.

Enter Eurymachos carrying another servant girl.

Eurymachos Lovely work, hope it's finished soon.

Eurymachos exits with the girl.

Eurycleia That's the worst thing about the bad weather. It causes our guests to stay inside. They do nothing now the whole day long but drink our good dark wine.

Penelope I know.

From off stage we hear the carousing suitors.

Suitors Wine!

Eurycleia Get it yourselves!

Suitors You old bag!

We hear the suitors singing. Telemachos goes to his mother's loom.

Telemachos When will they leave us in peace?

Penelope Not until I've married one of them.

Telemachos You never do a thing like that, would you mother?

Penelope Not as long as your father is still alive.

Telemachos You still believe he will come back?

Penelope I would feel it if your father were dead. He doesn't feel dead to me.

Eurycleia As long as this thread is unbroken, your father lives.

Telemachos Mother, it's been 19 years!

Suitors Wine! Wine!

Penelope Eurycleia, see that our guests are served.

Eurycleia grumbles as she goes out.

Eurycleia Fish and guests stink after three days. All they want is women and wine...

Penelope And you Telemachos, see to it that the fire is lit on the lookout.

Telemachos What's the point?

Penelope The point is that when your father's ship rounds the cape, he will see a light.

Telemachos It's a waste of fire-wood. Go light the fire yourself.

Penelope is angry.

Penelope Don't back talk me, young man. Go light the fire!

Telemachos I'm not a little boy anymore you can just push around.

Penelope As long as you continue to live in this house, you will do what your mother tells you. Is that clear? Go!

Telemachos Yeah, yeah.

Telemachos exits sullenly. We hear the suitors rowdy singing. Penelope tries to get back to her work but there is too much on her mind. Music. She angrily pulls out the threads from her weaving as the lights falls.

Suitors Wine!

Eurycleia Coming.

From both sides of the stage we hear boistrous singing and drunken revels. The suitors call for more wine. Music. Penelope picks up her weaving and tries to concentrate on her work. Furiously she pulls out the threads she has just woven. Blackout

SCENE 2 THE PRINCESSES ON THE BEACH

Sound of waves and gulls. Two actors roll long blue cloth waves across the stage. Out of these waves rolls Odysseus onto the beach. We see a naked male body washed up from the sea. Caribbean, Baccardi ad music. Two girls with bodies like shellfish, Princess Nausikia and Mavrodaphne are partying on the beach. Mavrodavne has a cocktail shaker.

Maphro It's time for a cocktail.

The princesses dance on the beach.

Nausikia Oh yes, a margarita!

Nausicia sees the naked body of Odysseus.

Nausikia

A man!

Maphro

One eye or two?

Nausikia looks at Odysseus' face.

Nausikia

Two!

Mavrodavne lays down her cocktail-shaker as she and her sister proceed to tickle Odysseus. He comes to life and spits out water. The girls retreat. The hero stands erect. The girls begin to laugh at his naked manhood.

Nausikia/ Maphro

Hee-hee!

Odysseus grabs the cocktail shaker to hide his manly parts.

Nausikia

Cocktail-shaker, please!

Odysseus

Towel!

Nausikia

Shaker!

Odysseus

When you give me a towel, I'll give your Cocktail-shaker back.

Nausikia pulls a towel out of her shell. She and Odysseus exchange Shaker for towel and the hero cloths himself with it.

Odysseus

Thank you. Where am I!

Nausikia

On Phaeacia.

Maphro

Island.

Nausikia

Belly-button of the world.

Odysseus

Please have mercy on me. I've been on the sea for so many days and nights...

He starts to break down.

... storms...waves like rolling mountains.. .cursed by Poseidon...

He breaks down and falls to his knees crying.

Nausikia/ Maphro Poor baby!

Odysseus hungry...

The girls throw him a potato chips that he greedily gobbles down.

thirsty...

They give him some of their cocktail to drink.

Nausikia/ Maphro Come, stranger.

They lead him off stage. Odysseus looks up to the sky.

Odysseus May I find love and mercy among these people.

He goes off with the two laughing girls.

SCENE 3 THE COURT OF THE PHAEACIANS

Odysseus enters the court of King Alcinous. He like his daughters is half shellfish, half man. His antennae are golden. Using a rope the king and his daughters raise themselves on their shells that now serve as thrones. The girls bring in Odysseus who now wears a golden bathrobe. We see the King deep in business on his shell phone.

King Alcinous Two thousand catapults to the Spartans. No can do! We sold everything heavy last week to the Persians.

The girls bring the stranger before the king. They try to get his attention, but he shoos them away.

I still got some vintage war chariots I could let go for 10,000 a piece.
Vintage!

His daughters excitedly start to explain what they have found on the beach.

Don't bother me, can't you see I'm busy!

The girls try again to get his attention. This time he notices the stranger. The two princess sit on his right and left side.

King Alcinous Welcome stranger to the court of the Phaeacians.

Nausikia/ Maphro Welcome stranger!

King Alcinous I am King Alcinous.

Nausikia/ Maphro Alkinous!

King Alcinous And these are my lovely daughters, Nausikia.

Nausikia Nausikia!

King Alcinous And Mavrodavne.

King Alcinous You can call me Davne.

Odysseus It is a pleasure.

Odysseus bows. The princesses giggle.

King Alcinous Beautiful aren't they and only divorced once. They can sing too. Sing something for our guest.

The girls at first shy, sing with more enthusiasm than tunefulness.

Nausikia/ Maphro SONG

Passa, Thalassa, Thalid

There once was a clam loved a squid

**He asked her sweet Clammie, will you be my bride?
She opened her shell and went all soft inside
Passa Thalassa Thalid
Oh how that clam loved her squid
They were married next day by a pious old flounder
The squid kissed the clam and wrapped eight legs around her
Passa, Thalassa, Thalid
Oh the sweet things that married squid did**

(if this doesn't work they can sing "I Wanna be Loved By You")

King Alcinous Very talented, my girls. They wrote the lyrics themselves.

The girls nod proudly. Odysseus smiles and tries to be polite.

Nausikia/ Maphro There are many more verses.

They eagerly wait to be asked to sing again.

King Alcinous Not now, my dears. But music won't fill an empty stomach. Serve our guest Cephallenian seaweed stew with barbequed shrimps and our finest anemone wine and a Bloody Mary.

Nausikia/ Maphro Yes, Papa.

King Alcinous Make some lucky man a good wife, the pair of them.

The princesses serve him. Odysseus hungrily scoffs down the food. It's all in plastic containers.

Odysseus Delicious.

King Alcinous We Phaeacians are a trading people.

Nausikia/ Maphro We like to trade!

King Alcinous In the great war we sold spears to the Greeks and and swords to the Trojans. We were doing quite a good business until that Odysseus brought the war to an end. You've heard of him, of course. It was he who built the huge horse out of wood. We Phaeacians sold the Greeks two thousand barrels of nails for that horse. He is ever so clever that Odysseus.

Odysseus In spite of all his cleverness, he was washed up naked on your shore. I am that Odysseus.

King Alcinous Odysseus!

Nausikia/ Maphro Odysseus!

King Alcinous Welcome, Odysseus.

Nausikia/ Maphro Welcome!

King Alcinous You girls go prepare a warm bath and bed for our famous guest.

Nausikia/ Maphro Yes, papa.

The princesses start to go.

Nausikia/ Maphro Bye-bye!

King Alcinous Lovely girls, the pair of them, and only divorced once. Make some lucky man a good wife.

The princesses go off to prepare the bed flirting with Odysseus as they go. The king looks hopefully at Odysseus thinking the hero might be interested in one of his precious daughters. Odysseus shakes his head.

Maybe later.

We Phaeacians love nothing more than an ice cold cocktail and a good story. Please tell me about the war at Troy.

SCENE 4 THE WAR IN TROY

The story of the Trojan War will be played out by actors as Odysseus tells his tale.

Odysseus When the war in Troy began I was a young happy married man.

We see the young Odysseus and a very pregnant Penelope walk together across the stage. They are very much in love.

Odysseus My wife Penelope was about to give birth to our son. We lived happily on Ithaca without an enemy in the world. I had never even heard of the Trojans or their golden city.

Alcinous follows the couple off stage as if he was following the story. Odysseus is left alone telling his story.

Odysseus Who really knows how a war begins?

Odysseus disappears in the shadows. Music. Enter a beautiful girl, Helen and a very shy young man, Paris.

Helen I'm Helen. Some people say I'm the most gorgeous woman in the world. Who are you?

Paris is very shy.

Paris My name is Paris.

They look at one another. There is an instant connection. They smile at each other and Paris carries Helen off laughing. Enter three Greeks, Menelaus.

Menelaus My wife is gone! This means war!

Blackout. Odysseus pulls a large red curtain down the middle of the stage.

Odysseus

So the blood red curtain of war was drawn over our horizon.

From one side march the Greeks, from the other the Trojans. Both sides have drummers and shout and chant ever louder against the enemy. The both armies work themselves up into an ecstasy. The curtain falls and both armies face each other for the first time. There is panic. Both armies retreat in fear like frightened monkeys

For nine long years we waged war outside of Troy until Hector the Trojan fought Achilles the strongest of the Greeks.

The two heroes face each other.

Hector

Achilles, after I kill you I will strip of your shining armour.

Achilles

Hector, after I kill you I will feed your body to the dogs!

Warcries. The two heroes fight. Hector falls. Achilles is standing angrily over Hector.

Hector

Kill me, Achilles, but don't let the dogs feed on my dead body! My father is king of Troy. Let him ransom my body.

Achilles

Not for all the gold in Troy!

Achilles stabs the dying Hector again and again. We see the goddesses, Athena and Hera, holding a small model of the city of Troy.

Odysseus

Seven times Achilles drug the dead body of Hector around the walls of Troy around the walls of Troy.

Achilles wild with triumph drags the body of Hector around the stage by the legs as the two goddoddesses turn around him with their little model city. From the side of the stage we see Paris with Aphrodite behind him. She points out Achilles. She gives him an arrow for his bow.

From the ramparts of Troy Paris saw proud Achilles and fired an arrow which the goddess Aphrodite guided to Achilles' heal,

Paris takes aim and shoots. Aphrodite guides the arrow to the heel of Achilles.

Aphrodite

His one vulnerable point!

Aphrodite smiles.

Odysseus

Great Achilles fell back, broke his neck and his soul too went down to the house of Death.

The bodies of both Hector and Achilles are carried away by their respective armies.

Hera and Athena enter carrying a small model of the city of Troy. To one side we see the sleeping Greeks.

Hera

After ten years we still haven't been able to take the city. So many brave Greeks dead. The walls of Troy stand tall as ever.

Athena

Perhaps what we can't take with force we can win with cunning. I shall send a strategic dream to Odysseus.

She calls her owl, Diotoma. Owl sounds. An invisible owl lands on her finger.

Diotoma! Lay this dream in the nest of Odysseus mind.

Athena raises her finger and the owl takes flight. The owl flies to the sleeping young Odysseus.

Odysseus

Then I had the brilliant idea! We could win the war and destroy the city of Troy at the same time.

Odysseus is very proud of his brilliant idea. He throws into a container the tiny model city of Troy.

Odysseus

We Greeks would build a huge horse out of wood. A horse so big it doesn't pass through the city gates, a big that the Trojans would have to knock down their walls to get it in.

Odysseus goes to the younger sleeping Odysseus. Shakes him.

Odysseus

Oddy, my boy. Odysseus! The horse!

The young Odysseus wakes up from a vivid dream.

Young Odysseus

A horse! A wooden horse! Greeks wake up! We will take Troy with a horse!

Odysseus

We Greeks built an enormous horse of wood.

The actors build the horse from their own bodies.

Odysseus

I and a select crew hid inside while rest of the Greeks hid with their ships on a nearby island. The Trojans thought it was a gift.

Two Trojans see the great horse from the walls of their city.

Trojan I

What's that?

Trojan II

It must be a present.

A voice from offstage.

Cassandra

Beware of Greeks bearing gifts!

The Trojans disregard the warning. They walk around the horse and lasso it by the neck. Then they pull it into their city. Musicians appear and there is a wild party. Drinking and dancing and orgy or two perhaps. The drunken Trojans fall to the ground asleep.

The head of the Horse turns slowly side to side to survey the sleeping city. It neighs. The Horse slowly changes back into the Greeks who made it. It is full of death. King Agamemnon brings weapons to his soldiers. We see the Greeks raise their swords over the sleeping Trojans,

Agamemnon

For Helen and the gold of Troy!

Blackout. We hear sounds of war and screams. We see the Greeks holding the model of the Troy. It is burning.

A group of Trojan women seek shelter in the temple of the high priestess Cassandra. Cassandra raises her hands to the goddess and looks through the smoke to the heavens.

Cassandra

The Great goddess will protect us. Her power is great. Her eye is on every living creature.

Agamemnon, Menelaus and Odysseus batter down the door of the temple.

Cassandra

How dare you enter her holy sanctuary! Leave at once!

The Greeks move forward toward the altar.

One more step and the goddess will destroy you.

Agamemnon

We'll risk it.

The Greeks laugh and step forward.

You're much too beautiful to be a priestess.

Cassandra

One can not be beautiful enough for the Great goddess .

Agamemnon

Take them away. Do what you like to the other ones, but the little priestess is mine.

The Greeks grab the women. The women put up a good fight but they are overpowered.

Cassandra

Agamemnon, you shall pay for this on the day of your return. You will almost believe the welcome kisses of your wife. But even now she is the arms of another man. Even now she plans with him your...

Agamemnon

Hold your tongue or I'll cut it out.

Cassandra

Menelaus, you will take back to Greece a wife who no longer loves you. She will always love Paris. I see you sleeping in a bed that is always winter with a wife as cold as a stone.

Menelaus

You lie! That Trojan forced her to have sex with him. He forced her!

Cassandra

And you, Odysseus, whose wife still loves you dearly, shall wonder long years over the sea trying to get home. If you ever return home may it be as a shipwrecked old man and may you find your wife just as young and beautiful as on the day you left her.

Young Odysseus is so stunned that he lets his captive escape. Agamemnon points to Cassandra.

Agamemnon

Take her away!

Agamemnon tries to grab Cassandra, but she gestures him away. She crosses the stage as if protected by a higher power. Then she turns to the Greeks with a frightening look beyond hate. The Greeks are frightened.

By all the gods, take her away!

Smoke from the burning city fills the stage. It becomes the fog that shrouds the island of the Cyclops.

SCENE 5 THE CYCLOPS

Young Odysseus and his men wander through the fog. The old Odysseus will continue to tell his story.

Odysseus

After ten years of war we set sail for Ithaca loaded with treasure. Some god guided us that night for we could barely see the bows of our ships through the thick fog. We landed on a beach and fell into a deep sleep. We opened

our eyes when the dawn stretched her pink fingers across the forehead of the waking sky. We saw a rocky island covered with goats and sheep.

Sound of goats and sheep.

Young Odysseus

You men guard the ships while we explore the island.

Domestikos

Look Captain, a cave!

He finds a trap door in the stage. Odysseus and his men climb down it only to appear out of another trap. Light changes. They are now in the cave of the Cyclops. There are barrels. Odysseus sticks his spear in one and pulls it out. He gestures to one of his men to taste what is on his spear head. A Greek dabs the spearhead with his finger then puts his finger to his mouth. Then he smiles.

Sailor I

Cheese!

The Greeks begin to feast on the cheeses. The sound of heavy steps and the sound of sheep. The Greeks shake with the earth beneath them. Enter the dreaded Cyclops.

Cyclops

Come in now. All of you. You too Dolly. Yes, you know your are my favorite. Come.

He smells a strange scent in his cave.

Cyclops

Who dares to enter my cave?

Young Odysseus

Greeks who seek you hospitality.

Cyclops

Greeks. I haven't had Greeks in years,

He licks his chops.

Cyclops

... as guests I mean.

Young Odysseus

May we stay for the the night?

Cyclops Stay as long as you like.

Young Odysseus May the gods bless you.

Cyclops They already have by bringing you here to me.

How do you like my cheese?

Domestikos Delicious.

Cyclops But not as delicious as you!

We hear a mysterious hypnotic sound. The eye of the Cyclops lights up and magnetically draws two Greeks to him. They are unable to resist. The Cyclops has the squirming two men (puppets) in his grip. The Cyclops smashes their heads against the stage floor.

Odysseus Like squirming puppies the Cyclops beat their brains out on the cavern wall. Then he pulled off their arms and their legs and made his meal.

We hear disgusting sounds of the Cyclops eating.

Gnashing his teeth and crunching like a hungry mountain lion, he ate all of them, the innards, the skin and even the bones.

A few bones fly across the stage.

Cyclops Rups!

We hear the Cyclops burp like thunder.

Cyclops I beg your pardon.

The Cyclops laughs. The Greeks gather up the bones of their dead comrades.

Domestikos Poor Samos!

The Greeks are horrified but Odysseus has a plan.

Young Odysseus Every guest should offer his host a gift, even the guest of a Cyclops. Here, try this fine Trojan wine. Here's liquor to wash down your scraps of men.

Cyclops Thank you.

He laughs and takes a drink.

Cyclops And every host should offer his guest a gift, even if the host is a Cyclops. What is your name stranger?

Young Odysseus My name is Nobody.

The Greeks look at Odysseus puzzledly.

Cyclops Well, Nobody, my gift to you shall be that I shall eat you the very last. How's that for cyclops hospitality? I shall eat Nobody last of all! Nobody shall be my desert.

Odysseus Thank-you.

Cyclops More wine!

He laughs and drinks and grows weary.

Odysseus And sleep took him like any creature. Drunk, hiccuping, he dribbled streams of wine and bits of men.

The monster falls asleep. We hear snoring .

Odysseus and his men take an oar and sharpen the end to a point. Then they put the point over an open fire. They approach the snoring Cyclops. His great eye opens and they retreat in fear. Odysseus urges them to try again. Then they stab awful eye of the monster with the oar and escape into the trap. They come out of the other trap and make a boat from the barrels.

Cyclops Help! Nobody has blinded me! Help!

Young Odysseus over hears the Cyclops and can't resist taunting the blind giant. His men try to hold him back.

Young Odysseus

Hey Cyclops, you with the one eye a darker than a cow's ass at midnight, if you're wondering who it was who turned all your days to night, it was Odysseus, son of Laertes, Odysseus the Greek.

The Cyclops throws an enormous boulder at his ship. The ship shakes on the water. The Greeks row feverishly.

Cyclops

Ay, my great eye lost forever! Father Possiedon, blue girdler of the islands, destroy this man! Oh father of all waters, see to it that Odysseus never see his home. Can you hear me, father?

From tape we hear the booming vioce of the sea god.

Poseidon

I hear you, my son. I hear you!

Sounds of crashing waves. Music. Blackout.

SCENE 5 THE WARDEN OF THE WINDS

Odysseus

We made out landfall on the floating island of Aolus, the wind king. He and his daughters sup every day on clouds and candy cotton while the winds pipes around the hollow columns of his palace.

Musical scene. Enter Aolus' dancing daughters. They dance giggling in gossamer gowns with pinwheels. Enter the King of the Winds. His head is an electric fan and his white beard flows in its gentle breeze. Odysseus bows before Aeolus the King of the Winds and his dancing daughters. The king greets Odysseus warmly. Then the king is given a bag from his daughters into which he farts most regally. Aolus gives this bag of wind to Odysseus. The pictures freezes.

Odysseus

This bag contained all the evil winds of the world. No storm would blow us off course now.

The picture moves again. Odysseus thanks the King Aolus . The king and his daughters wave good-bye. Young Odysseus goes out with the bag contented. Blackout.

SCENE 7 ITHACA

Music.

Odysseus

Meanwhile on the island of Ithaca where there is good pasture and water all year long in the cattle ponds.

We hear Telemachos groaning.

Ithaca that good land for raising sons.

Telemachos is thrown on stage by the suitors.

Telemachos

When my father gets home!

Suitor I

The only way your father will be coming home is in a coffin.

Suitor II

All this high and mighty talk, Telemachos.

Suitor I

Go weave with your mother.

Telemachos tries to fight the suitors but they pin him down.

Suitor II

And tell her one day soon she will have to decide on a new husband.

Suitor I

Then your new father will show you who the real boss in Ithaca is.

Telemachos

I don't want a new father. I want my old father.

Suitor I

Then start looking for him on the bottom of the sea.

The suitors laugh and Telemachos sits on a barrel alone and dejected. He is almost about to cry. Athena enters as an old man, a real sea dog.

Athena Woosh! What's the matter boy?

Telemachos Nothing.

Singing in the halls.

Athena Loud aren't they.

Telemachos It's the same every night. They have an easy life. Eating the food of a man who's bones lie rolling under tides of the sea.

Athena And whose bones might that be?

Telemachos My father the great general Odysseus.

Athena Odysseus dead? Don't you believe it, not for one moment.

Telemachos He's alive?

Athena Alive as you or me. Your father's just drifting somewhere out on the open sea or washed up on some island, but he's still trying to get home.

Telemachos You really think so?

Athena I think it's highly probable.

Light drops on center stage and from the stairs we see Penelope carrying a barrel followed by a suitor, Eurymachos.

Eurymachos Let me carry that for you.

Penelope If you wish.

Eurymachos That's no work for a woman. Look at your hands they are as hard as the servant's.

Penelope There's so much to do.

Eurymachos You need someone to help you run this place.

Penelope I do the best I can.

Eurymachos I know you do, but the place needs a man not a boy.

He grabs her in his arms.

Eurymachos It's been nine years. Don't you miss a man?

She struggles to free herself.

Penelope Sometimes.

The lights drop and from the other steps we see the suitor Melanthios trying to bribe Eurycleia. She is cleaning as she talks.

Melanthios Please? I know she loves me more than Eurymachos.

Eurycleia No.

Melanthios I'll bring it back. No one will ever know.

Eurycleia No.

Melanthios Just for one night.

Eurycleia No!

Melanthios All I'm asking for is the key to her bedroom. I'll give you five drachmas.

Eurycleia No!

Melanthios Six.

Eurycleia No!

Light up on the center stage.

Athena But the only way to be sure your father is really alive is to go look for him yourself.

Telemachos If I stay around here I think they will kill me.

Athena It's highly probable. All the more reason to go. I've got a little ship down in the harbor.

Telemachos But I've never sailed alone.

Athena I'll be your first mate. I know these islands like the back of my hand.

Telemachos I'll go.

Light goes up on all acting areas. Both Penelope and Eurycleia push away from their respective suitor. And both women rush to the center stage.

Penelope Never!

Eurycleia Not for all the gold in Troy! You can stick your drachmas up there where the sun never shines!

Penelope They get more irritating every day. One came up to me and put his hands between his legs and said he had more to offer me than Melanthios.

The women smile.

Eurycleia Ah, these men. Once a man met the Great goddess in the Phrygian forest. "I grant you one wish, mortal," said the Great goddess. "I wish I had manly member that was long enough to reach the ground" answered the man. "No problem", said the goddess and she cut both his legs off.

The women laugh together.

Telemachos Mother, I'm going to look for father. .

Athena

Woosh!

Athena becomes invisible.

Telemachos

This stranger has a small ship.

They all look around but see no one.

Telemachos

He must have gone down to the harbor. We are going to sail together.

Penelope

But my son...

Eurycleia

Dear child, what ever put this into your head?

Penelope

And if you are lost at sea like your father?

Telemachos

The open sea is safer for me than Ithaca.

Eurycleia

He is right, my lady.

The two women look at each other knowingly.

Penelope

You are a man now.

Eurycleia

Almost twenty.

Penelope

I couldn't stop you if I wanted to.

They embrace.

Eurycleia

May the Great goddess protect you, boy.

She pinches his cheek and swats him on the bum. Telemachos and the invisible Athena run off together.

Penelope

Now it's just we two.

Penelope lights a lantern and starts to go off.

Eurycleia Where are you going, my lady?

Penelope I don't know why but I must go up to the look out tonight.

Music and blackout.

SCENE 8 THE BAG OF WINDS

The Odysseus enters holding the bag of winds.

Odysseus Nine days and nine nights I sailed with a fair west wind. I could not sleep for I knew that I was going home to Ithaca. Where shall a man find sweetness to surpass his own home and his wife and son? In far lands he shall not, though he find a house full of gold. Then on the ninth night...

Odysseus gives the bag of wind to the Young Odysseus who then joins his crew rowing toward Ithaca. Young Odysseus is guiding the rudder. In the dark distance we see a light from Penelope's lantern. She is standing high up on the steps.

Domestikos Captain, I see the lights of Ithaca!

The Whole Crew Ithaca!

Young Odysseus If we keep a steady course around the cape, we'll be home for breakfast!

Souflakos Get some sleep, Captain. I'll bring us in.

Young Odysseus You'll wake me at landfall?

Souflakos Aye, aye, Captain.

Odysseus goes to the front of the boat with the bag of wind and falls asleep. Gentle melancholy sea shanty music. The rest of the crew also falls asleep at their oars. Only Domestikos and Souflakos are awake.

Souflakos What do you think is in that sack?

Domestikos Silver, gold and a couple of rubies, I guess. King Aolus is richer than the king of the Persians. I could sleep sound too knowing I was bringing so much treasure safely home.

Souflakos The captain is welcome wherever he goes. Every time he comes on shore someone gives him something.

Domestikos And the women.

Souflakos It's just not fair. Without us, his crew, he would never have been able to sail to Troy in the first place.

Domestikos All that plunder. All those women. It's just not fair.

Souflakos Without us he would have been a poor man. And what do we get in return?

Domestikos Haul in the mainsail! Row harder men, there's a very angry Cyclops throwing a mountain down on us!

Souflakos It's just not fair. What if we divided the treasure equally. Every man got the same part.

Domestikos That would be fair. Very fair. Too fair. Wouldn't it be better if we divided it just between us. We could slip overboard as we landed. No one would even miss us.

They take the sack from its hiding place. They smile with eager anticipation.

Souflakos We'll divide it like brothers.

Domestikos No, fifty-fifty.

The curious sailors open the sack of winds. Penelope blows out her lantern. Storm sounds. All hell breaks loose. Odysseus awakes.

A sailor is washed overboard.

Sailor I Man overboard!

Barrels roll across the ship. The crew is tossed from side to side. They form a tableau.

Young Odysseus Come friends though hard beset, we'll not go down into the House of Death before our time!

Music. The tableau is broken by a huge wave and darkness falls as Odysseus and his crew are tossed turned on the boiling sea.

SCENE 9 THE ISLAND OF THE WITCH

Odysseus We came washed in our silent ship upon shore and found a cove, a haven for the ship. Some god, invisible, guided us in. It was a wooded island with cedars and cypresses and strange sweet spices.

Enter two wet sailors wringing out their wet socks.

Domestikos I love the dry land after such a sea!

Souflakos Hello!

Circe echoes his voice.

Circe Hellooooo!

Domestikos It sounds like a woman's voice.

Souflakos A woman! I haven't been with a woman for so long .

Domestikos ...too long.

Circe Long, long, long!

Souflakos They say the island women are crazy about Greeks.

Domestikos It's because we Greeks are the best lovers.

Souflakos Yes, your Egyptian or your Persian usually wears more perfume than the lady he's going after.

Domestikos We Greeks smell like men should. It drives the women crazy.

Circe Crazy, crazy, crazy.

Souflakos Well, the first woman I meet won't know what hit her. I'll have her legs over her ears before she can say Aphrodite.

Domestikos And the first woman I meet..

Circe appears in a golden gown that reveals two bare breasts much like the Cretan goddesses. She is followed by musicians that are half animals. The Greeks are stunned by her beauty.

Circe Welcome, sailors, to my island. I've prepared for you Pramnian wine mixed with barley and amber honey.

She holds up a golden chalice. The men stick their chests out very proudly.

Domestikos We're Greeks.

Souflakos From Ithaca.

Circe Oh, I've heard all about you Greeks...

Domestikos What did I tell you!

Circe opens her bodice to reveal more breasts like the statue of Diana of Ephesus.

Souflakos That's what I call island hospitality!

She holds a golden chalice.

Circe ...but first drink.

She gives them the chalice to drink from and sprinkles a little wine over them.

Drink.

They slowly transform into pigs. Circe's smile disappears. She pulls out a whip from her coiffure. Strange circus music. She commands the pigs like circus animals.

Hep! Hep!

Roll over! Stand on your hind legs! Beg, you dirty pig, beg!

She throws them both an acorn.

Now go to your sty and sleep in the mud! Good little pigies!

Circe disappears into the shadows. Enter Odysseus looking for his comrades.

Young Odysseus

Domesticos! Souflakos!

Oinks are heard from off stage. He is met by Athena who suddenly appears in his path.

Athena

Whoosh!

Young Odysseus

Hail Athena!

Athena

Odysseus, do you know on whose island you have landed?

Young Odysseus

No.

Athena

You have landed on the island of the witch, the island of Circe. She has already turned your men to pigs and she will try to do the same to you.

Young Odysseus

Just let her try.

Athena Her magic is very strong, but if you take this flower and and place it near your heart, she will have no power over you.

She gives him the flower and he places on his breast.

Athena And when she calls you to her bed, go for her neck with your sword and hold it there until she promises by the gods, she will not cut off in the darkness your manly member. Then make her promise to free your men from her dirty pig spell.

Circe discovers Athena talking to Odysseus. She is furious. Odysseus seek shelter. The goddess es duel.

Circe Athena, this island is only big enough for one goddess , go.

Athena Circe, you uneducated sea trollop!

Circe is hit by jolt of magic power.

Athena Athena, you rusty old maid in a tin can.

The goddess es fight it out throwing magic slams at each other until Athena is hit and driven away.

Athena Whooosh!

Circe Welcome, stranger, to my island, I've prepared for you Pramnian wine mixed with barley and amber honey. Drink.

Odysseus drinks her wine and pretends to begin to change into a pig.

Down in your sty and snort in the mud with rest of the piggies.

He laughs at her. Circe is shocked.

Circe Why aren't you a pig?

Young Odysseus Because I am a man, Odysseus the Greek.

Circe You must be a very strong man to resist my magic. No mortal man has done that before. Come to my bed, fair Greek. We shall mingle and make magic love. I have such delights to show you.

Odysseus draws his sword and holds it at Circe's throat.

Young Odysseus Not so fast, Circe. I'm no wide-eyed boy.

Circe I can see that.

Young Odysseus In the darkness of your bed, you must promise not to try to unman me.

Circe What woman would throw away her favorite toy? I promise.

Young Odysseus And second you must promise to free my men from your swinish enchantments.

Circe I swear by all the gods they shall walk on two legs as men again. Now put down your sword. Love requires gentler weapons. Come into my perfect bed of love.

Romantic music. They embrace and fall back into her floating hammock as the lights fall. We hear the gentle swaying of the hammock. Odysseus walks by the lovers with a lantern.

Odysseus She held me in her arms and kissed me. I spend a whole year in her perfect bed of love. Until one night we both awoke frightened from the same dream.

Both Young Odysseus and Circe awake and spring into each others arms.

Young Odysseus The dead! The dead! Everywhere corpses. And all of them whispering through dry bones to me, "You'll never get home to Ithaca, never get home alive" Circe, tell me. Will I ever get home?

Circe tries to comfort him.

Circe I don't know the future. Only Teresias knows what will happen tomorrow.

Young Odysseus

Teresias?

Circe

Teresias, the blind man who sees all. He wanders through the Underworld. You must go down there and ask him.

Young Odysseus

But the iron doors of the House of Death are always locked to the living.

She takes a key from her dress.

Circe

Here, take this key.

Circe gives him the key as he falls crying into her arms. Music and slow blackout.

INTERMISSION

ACT II

SCENE 10 THE UNDERWORLD

The underworld is a huge sunless factory where the dead forever roll barrels up and down ramps in a Sisyphos-like assembly line. There is an eerie fog on the ground. The work is endless and mindless. Odysseus sees his mate Domestikos, his mother and the greatest of the Greek kings, Agamemnon all working at the line.

Yong Odysseus opens the doors of death with his key. He surveys the vast kindom of the dead.

Young Odysseus

Domestikos, you here?

Odysseus takes the barrel of Domesticos and does his work for him.

Domesticos slowly becomes animated.

Domestikos

I had a nasty run in with a boar, a wild boar on Circe's island. How did I know the sow was married? She told me she was doing for the first time and that she loved me. It was mad passion in deep mud. But then from behind came an angry boar. It was quick and if you have to die that is the best moment, captain. I died happy, I guess, although I never used to like that sort of thing before. Promise to bury my body in back her sty with my oar stuck up as my tombstone, please captain, bury my body. I'd hate to think I was just eaten by...pigs.

Young Odysseus

I promise.

Domestikos

Thanks, Captain.

Domesticos resumes his work. Odysseus sees his mother with a kerchief around her head. He takes over ther work. She smokes as she if she is on her break.

Mother

Oh son, this is no sight for living eyes.

Odysseus

Mother?

Mother

Did you get back to Ithaca?

Odysseus

No, not yet.

Mother

What a pity. You haven't seen Penelope?

Odysseus

No.

Mother Her nights are taken up with weeping. What that girl has gone through since you left her. Any other woman would have re-married two or three times by now.

Odysseus Will I ever see her again?

Mother Of course you will, son, if you don't forget to eat your vegetables. If you brush your teeth at least twice a day.

Odysseus But mother, how did you die?

Mother Very slowly, I pined away. It wasn't your fault you were never there.

She begins to go back to work.

No true illness wasting my body to undo my spirit. No, it was only my loneliness for you, son, that took my empty life away, but I don't blame you. A son should do what he has to do.

He tries to embrace her, but she is back on the line. Agamemnon now takes his break. He unwraps a sandwich and pours himself a drink from a thermos.

Agamemnon Don't believe a word the woman says. She's always crying," If it wasn't for Odysseus, I wouldn't be here now." They all lie, everyone of them.

Young Odysseus Agamemnon, king of kings, what death brought you here? Did you fall on the battlefield or sink in an angry sea?

Agamemnon Neither. A woman got me. They all lie, everyone of them. My own wife. Cut my throat in my own bathroom, my blood flowing over the yellow Cretan tiles. That whore! Then she held my head under the red bath water until my soul swam down here to the underworld.

Young Odysseus So many died for Helen and now you die from the hand Clytemnestra.

Agamemnon Let it be a warning to you, Odysseus. The day of faithful wives is gone forever. Take my advice. When you get back to Ithaca, land your ship in

secret. Give no warning. Women will get you if you're not careful. They all lie everyone of them.

Agamemnon wraps up his things.

They all lie.

He sadly goes back to the line.

Everyone of them.

We hear the tapping of a cane. Enter the blind seer Teiresias. He is the same poet in the first scene. Now he wears dark glasses and taps his way through the darkness with a cane.

Young Odysseus

Teiresias!

Teiresias

You are seeking your sweet home but the gods make it so hard for you. Poseidon, the earth shaker is angry at you for blinding his one-eyed son.

Young Odysseus

Will I ever get home to Ithaca?

Teiresias

If you keep Ithaca always in your mind. If you don't raise the anger of the sun god. If your men do not kill the sun god's cattle. If you believe you will see your wife and son again, you will see them.

Young Odysseus tries to come closer to Teiresias. The blind man gestures him away.

Teiresias

Now go back up to the light. This is no country for living men. Here are only fluttering shadows that used to be people.

Odysseus walks away from the working dead and locks the doors of death as the lights fall.

SCENE 11 THE SIRENS, SCYLLA AND CHARYBDIS.

We see Young Odysseus and his men in a ship made of barrels.

Odysseus

We sailed from Circe's island straight into the path of the Sirens. Crying beauties whobewitch poor sailors coasting by. Circe had told me to put wax in the ears of my crew.

Young Odysseus stuffs the ears of his crew with wax.

Woe to the poor sailor who hears that sweet sound. He will never see his wife or children running down to ships to meet him. For the Sirens will sing his mind away.

Odysseus sails by the Sirens who sing a "70's number" ("Yes, I can Boogie" by Baccara) with slinky moves. At first Young Odysseus is able to resist the rhythm. He starts to dance around the boat and the crew then tie him to the mast. He holds his ears bound to the mast of his ship. The Sirens make seductive Disco movements always beckoning him nearer. With superhuman effort he overcomes the urge to join in with the Sirens.

Young Odysseus now has a model of his ship in his hand.

No sooner were we away from the Sirens when we heard a loud sucking sound.

From a trap in the stage rises an mean old cleaning lady with an old-fashioned vacuum cleaner.

It was the Charybdis that swallows down the dark sea tide, a whirling maelstrom that draws ships to their destruction.

She turns on her vacuum cleaner. Charybdis vacuums up some little paper ships.

Circe said it was better to head for the cliff of the Scylla.

She turns her vacuum cleaner toward the little ship of Odysseus and it is pulled in her direction.

Young Odysseus

Pull her to starboard!

We see a creature with many arms and false teeth chattering like castenets.

Odysseus

Scylla is huge and monstrous. God or man, no one could look on her with joy. She has twelve great tentacles and upon them are heads of snakes, nightmares of ferocity, with triple rows of fangs and six deep gullets of black death.

The Scylla attacks the ship of Odysseus. Young Odysseus steers his boat away from Scylla, but is caught in the sucking of the Charibdis. Young Odysseus veers madly back and forth between the two beasts until at last Scylla bites six times.

Young Odysseus

Better to mourn six men than lose them all, and the ship too!

Odysseus guides his ship out of reach of the Skylla.

Charibdis

Darn! The filter's stopped up.

The Charibdis her vacuum cleaner no longer working retreats back in her trap.

Young Odysseus falls to his knees crying over his lost crewmen.

Young Odysseus

The sea will kill us all. We lost six men today. How many will it be tomorrow? I can't go on!

Odysseus goes to the Young Odysseus. He puts his arm around the young man's shoulder.

Odysseus

Oddy, my boy, you must go on. If you don't, you'll never find out how our story ends.

Young Odysseus gets up and gives the little ship to Odysseus. Young Odysseus goes off with the strength to go on.

Odysseus

And so still mourning our lost companions, we came to the island of Helios, god of the sun.

SCENE 12 THE CATTLE OF HELIOS

It is hot on the island of the sun and we hear the sound of cicadas. A woman in a short sexy golden dress and high heels and horns plays the golden cow. It is her big number. She is chewing gum and has a tray on which are round canisters that make cow sounds.

Sailor I

Muesli for breakfast.

Sailor II

And a pair of apples for dinner.

Sailor I

It's barely enough to keep a man alive

Golden Cow

Mooo

Sailor II

Don't forget the yogurt.

Sailor I

I'm sick of yogurt. And Tofu!

Sailors I+ II

Yukkkk!!

The sailors run after the cow but she escapes.

Golden Cow

Mooo

Sailor I

My gods, when is the last time you had a steak, medium rare?

Sailor II

Or a charcoal grilled hamburger with lettuce, cheese, and tomato?

Sailor I Or roast beef?

They rush the cow from two sides. The cow escapes and they have each other in their arms.

Sailor I I got her!

Sailor II Me too!

They notice they have each other.

Sailor I There are so many of them. The sun god wouldn't miss a few.

Sailor II Too many cows will eat up all the grass on the island.

Sailor I Look what they did in Egypt, ate everything up but the pyramids

Golden Cow Moooo

They try to lure the cow.

Sailors I+ II Here, girl. Come here.

Sailor I But the captain said they belong to the sun god.

Sailor II The sun shares his light with everyone, so why wouldn't he also share his cattle?

Suitor I Any way, the captain is asleep.

They lure the cow between them and then pounce.

Sailor I Got her!

Sailor II hits cow on the head. She drops her head as if dead.

Golden Cow Mooooo

Sailor I gets out a knife to cut the cow. Thunder. They both look up.

Sailor II That's an awfully black cloud up there.

Enter Young Odysseus.

Young Odysseus What are you two doing here?

Sailor II Hey captain, look what we found for dinner!

Suitor I Steaks for the whole crew!

Young Odysseus You fools!

Young Odysseus pulls the two out by the ears as the storm thunder rises. Lightning.

Back to our ship!

Young Odysseus exits with his men. The golden cow comes to life again. She looks up.

Golden Cow Moooo

The cow goes off. Enter Odysseus with the little ship.

Odysseus That black cloud followed our ship. Then sea turned dark beneath us. All of a sudden there was a howling wind and a lightning bolt that cut down our mast. The mast and all its tackle fell onto the head of our navigator.

Odysseus breaks the mast of the little ship.

Odysseus There was a sulphurous smoke. Another bolt of lightning and all my crew were thrown into the boiling sea. No more sailing for them. The gods took from them the day of their return.

Odysseus drops the little ship into a barrel.

SCENE 13 ITHACA

Eurycleia My lady, we are out of meat again and the last of lambs have been slaughtered.

Penelope Then let them eat bread and cheese.

Eurycleia They won't like that. The only way you can put an end to this is to marry one of them.

Penelope But I am married.

Eurycleia I fear Odysseus is fish food at the bottom of the sea.

Penelope Eurycleia!

Eurycleia You have no choice. Your son is gone and I'm an old woman who can't protect you anymore. Marry one of them.

Penelope But I hate them.

Eurycleia Then marry the one you hate the least. That's what most women do when they get married.

Enter three suitors.

Eurymachos Penelope, the men have decided that the time has come that you pick your next husband.

Melanthios We can't wait any longer.

Suitor I Yeah!

Eurycleia I told you we were out of food. Nothing to eat so now they want to get married.

Eurymachos What is it to you, you old bag!

Penelope I know you planned to throw dice for me.

Melanthios Winner takes the widow.

Suitor I Yeah!

Penelope So great was your love for me.

Eurymachos But if you would not decide..

Melanthios We will!

Suitor I Yeah!

Penelope I will decide.

Melanthios At last!

The suitors in mass move threateningly on Penelope. She moves backwards.

Athena Woosh!

Athena appears behind her with a bow and whispers in her ear.

Athena give the bow of Odysseus to her.

Penelope With so many strong and handsome men around how is a poor woman to choose?

She flatters them. Penelope presents the bow of Odysseus to the suitors.

Penelope I have decided that the man who can draw back the bow of my late husband shall have me as his bride. Have the heralds announce that every able bodied man who seeks my hand to come to the palace. Let the contest be open to all.

Athena Woosh!

Athena disappears.

Eurymachos Madame, you have made a wise decision.

Suitor I Yeah!

Melanthios May the best man win.

Eurymachos Thank you. I'm sure I will.

The suitors go.

Eurycleia Clever, my lady.

Penelope May the gods strike those arrogant dogs down.

Eurycleia Save your curses for your new husband.

Penelope Damn Helen and her pretty face that sent so many Greeks to their death.

Eurycleia It wasn't Helen's fault she was beautiful. The gods made her that way. I was once beautiful myself.

Penelope Still because of her so many women in Greece wept. Because of her I must go to my cold bed alone.

Penelope cries. Eurycleia puts her hands on her lady's cheeks.

Eurycleia Don't cry, my lady. We both are strong enough to endure whatever the gods bring us.

Penelope Even this loneliness.

Eurycleia Even loneliness. I was only eighteen when I was sold as a slave. My city was sacked. Never saw my mother or father again. My brothers were all put to the sword. They said I was the lucky one.

Penelope Eurycleia, light the look out fires. My son and husband are somewhere out there.

Eurycleia Yes, my lady.

She goes off to the look-out.

Eurycleia Me, the lucky one.

Music. Penelope looks at the bow in her hand. Looks up and smiles.

Blackout.

SCENE14 CALYPSO

Odysseus My ship capsized and I was thrown into the sea. The last thing I remembered was clinging to the floating mast. Somehow I landed on the island of Calypso, the goddess with the golden hair.

We see Young Odysseus and Calypso in a bath tub. Calypso is a beautiful mermaid with bright golden hair. There are wine glasses and candles near by the bath tub and a cassette player playing very romantic music. Over them shine a thousand stars.

Calypso Wasn't that dolphin ride fun today?

Young Odysseus Mmmm.

Calypso Wasn't the sunset just gorgeous?

Young Odysseus Mmmm.

Calypso And all those stars. You know, I saw a shooting star and do you know what I wished.

Young Odysseus It's bad luck to tell. I saw the star too. I made a wish.

Calypso It's bad luck to tell.

Young Odysseus I wished I was off this damned island.

Calypso It's a lovely island.

Young Odysseus It's your island. Everything is so carefully arranged.

Calypso That is what we sea nymphs do. We arrange things, mix the colors of the sand and the sea, place the loveliest shells on the beach, sculpt in water the perfect wave.

Young Odysseus Yes, it's perfect, too perfect.

Calypso Have some wine.

Young Odysseus No thank you.

Calypso A little lobster in hot butter sauce?

Young Odysseus No thank you.

Calypso turns around in the tub.

Calypso Would you scrub my back?

Young Odysseus If you want me to.

Calypso I want you to.

Odysseus washes her back.

Young Odysseus It's not that I don't love you.

Calypso But you don't.

Young Odysseus I do. But somehow this perfect love with this perfect woman on this perfect island isn't enough.

Calypso Not enough. Are you unhappy in bed?

Young Odysseus You are a perfect lover. We have perfect orgasms every night.

Calypso Then what is the problem?

Young Odysseus The problem is I can't stand it here any more. I must sound like an awful ingrate. You picked me up on the beach, naked and nearly drowned. You breathed air into my lungs. You saved my life.

Calypso You saved my life. You gave me someone to share my life with.

Young Odysseus I can't share it anymore. I hate it here. Let me go.

Calypso My magic is not so strong that I can hold you against your will. My magic is not so strong that I can make you love me. I am only a sea nymph. I can only arrange things. I arranged an island in which two people might come to love each other.

Young Odysseus You are emotionally important to me. As a woman you are..

Calypso Please don't say anything else. Just know that part of my arranging was that you would never have to get any older. My magic only works on my island. If you go, you will leave the island as an old man.

Young Odysseus I'll take my chances.

Calypso Then go.

He kisses her on the shoulder and then a last embrace. He pulls away and springs out of the tub. As masked slaves cover him with a wide cloth to dry himself, the older actor takes over the role of Odysseus, the younger disappearing behind the cloth. Odysseus now a much older man nods and goes. Calypso is left alone in her tub. She puts on a series of cassettes, each a version of Jaques Brel's "N'me quite pas" in French, English, German, and Dutch. With each short version she tries to kill herself in a new way (stabbing herself, strangling herself, taking pills)but she continually fails.

Calypso Damned immortality!

Black out

SCENE 15 THE JOURNEY HOME

Odysseus

After seven years I left Calypso's island on a raft. Poseidon raised his angry seas against me again. For ten days his waves played with me like a boy with a cork in a bucket full of water. Again and again I rose to the surface gasping. Waves crashing all around me, he never drowned me.

When the lights slowly rise, we are again in the court of King Alcinous and his daughters. Odysseus is bringing his story to an end.

I woke up here with a mouth full of seaweed on your shore.

King Alcinous

The gods must have carried you here for a reason. We will give you a ship and rich gifts to carry home. And if you think you might be needing a wife or two let me remind you I have two lovely daughters, only once divorced.

The two girls look longingly at Odysseus.

Odysseus

Thank you, but I am already married.

King Alcinous

Ok, it would have been great to have you in the family.

Mavrodavne gives Odysseus a bag full of coke cans.

Maphro

Take this and here is my telephone number if you're ever back on the island.

She gives him a kiss and her card.

Nausikia

I got you this. Think of me sometimes.

Nausikia gives him a starfish.

Maphro

I will.

He kisses Maphrodavne.

Odysseus Thank you.

Odysseus Thank you.

The king gives him an oar.

King Alcinous Here take this. Your new boat is waiting for you.

Odysseus Thanks. May the gods repay you for your kindness.

Odysseus shakes the king's hand warmly. The king and his daughters escort Odysseus down to his ship. The girls are crying. They wave their handkerchieves as he embarks.

King Alcinous May the gods give clear skies a fair wind.

Nausikia/ Maphro Farewell!

Odysseus sails out on the open sea. The king and his daughters disappear waving into the darkness. Odysseus rows his boat.

Athena Woosh!

Odysseus Athena, you here?

Athena I thought you might like some company out here on the open sea.

Odysseus Outside my wife, there is no woman I'd rather see.

Athena You old flatterer. One would have to get up pretty early in the morning to get around you, my boy.

Athena I could never deceive you, oh gray eyed goddess .

Athena I'm not so sure. We are two of a kind.

She laughs.

The gods have decided at long last to let you come home, not even angry Poseidon can stop you now. But beware your house is under siege.

Odysseus My wife ?

Athena No, your Penelope remains true, but she is surrounded by suitors who eat you out of house and home. They are dangerous men, so I would advise a disguise.

She throws him a beggar costume.

Odysseus Thank you, Athena. And my son?

Athena I sent Telemachos away from Ithaca to search for you. It wasn't safe for the boy at home.

Odysseus The suitors?

Athena Yes, they thought if they got rid of the son, it would be easier to get hold of your wife.

Odysseus The dogs will pay for this.

Athena Use your head, You are one and they are many. Have no fear. When you move to strike them down, I shall be with you. By the way that little island on the horizon is..

Odysseus Ithaca!

Athena Precisely! I will send your son back to Ithaca. The time is ripe.

Odysseus Thank you, Athena.

Athena Farewell! Woosh!

Athena sails away. Music. Odysseus brings his ship to the shore. He kisses his native ground. Then quickly changes his costume to that of a beggar and hides his gifts. Enter Telemachos. Odysseus notices his son walking on the beach. He plays the poor beggar shaking his cup.

Odysseus Do you have a drachma?

Telemachos No!

Odysseus Do you have a drachma for your old father?

Telemachos stops and looks at the beggar.

Telemachos If you are my father tell me how many gates does the palace of Odysseus have?

Odysseus Seven.

Telemachos How many Greeks were hiding in the Trojan Horse?

Odysseus 24 counting Menelaus.

Realizing slowly that this man is his long lost father.

Telemachos If you are my father, where were you when we needed you?

Odysseus Telemachos, your father stands here with tears in his eyes and no words in his mouth.

They embrace. Odysseus whispers to his son. Telemachos nods with understanding. He goes out. Enter Eurycleia.

Odysseus Do you have a drachma?

Eurycleia I need it myself. Get a job!

Odysseus The same old Cleia. Don't you remember me?

The old lady looks him over very thoroughly. Then she feels for a scar on the back of calf. She is shocked. She cries as she embraces him.

Eurycleia

Oddy, we all thought you were dead.

They dance slowly around together. He whispers in her ear and she nods with approval. They go off.

SCENE 16 THE REVENGE

Telemachos pushes through a group of suitors who are preparing for the competition. The suitors look surprised that the boy is still alive.

Eurymachos

You've returned in time for the competition. The winner will be your new father.

Suitor I

Yeah.

Melanthios

Will you be competing or just watching.

Telemachos

Just watching.

Telemachos

You look pretty strong for a mama's boy and if you win, you could stay with your mother forever.

They laugh and Telemachos turns away from them.

Enter Penelope and Eurycleia.

Penelope

Telemachos, you're back.

Penelope goes to embrace him but he pushes her away. He embraces Eurycleia.

Telemachos

So this is how you keep faithful to the memory of my father.

Penelope

What could I do?

Telemachos You could have said no. You could have said never.

Penelope Easy for you to say. You were on the high seas. I was here. Everyday I heard their cheap flattering and drunken compliments. Every day their dirty eyes watching me, undressing me. I can't take any more. I shall marry one of them. It is the lesser of evils. The house will be quiet again.

Eurycleia Uninvited guests are most welcome when they leave and I have a feeling they will be leaving soon.

She winks at Telemachos.

Telemachos May the gods send them on their way.

There is the sound of trumpets. Athena appears in back of Penelope and gives her the bow. The suitors assemble. Odysseus as a beggar stands apart.

Eurycleia Look, there is even a baggar among them.

Telemachos Maybe he will be your next husband, mother.

Eurymachos Get out of here.

Melanthios Out, pig!

They begin to kick the beggar. Telemachos runs to protect his father.

Penelope Stop! This is still my house. Let the beggar be. The contest is open to all.

Odysseus Thank you, Lady Penelope.

Penelope is strangely taken by the beggar's voice. The suitors bow.

Melanthios Penelope.

Eurymachos Penelope.

Suitor I Penelope.

Penelope You all know why you are here. Any man who can pull back the bow of my late husband shall have my hand in marriage. Telemachos.

She gives the bow to [Telemachos who acts as the official for the event.

Penelope I shall be in my room. Please inform me of the winner.

She goes out. The suitors are in triumphant mood as one after the other the try to pull back the great bow of Odysseus. Eurymachos tries and fails.

Suitor I Too much wine! Eurymachos!

Eurymachos Sleeping with the servant girls has robbed you of your strength.

Melanthios takes the bow.

Melanthios Sorry, old boy let me show you how it's done.

Suitor I Show them, Melanthios.

Melanthios fails. Suitor I knows he will fail.

Suitor I Let's go for a drink. There's other women on the island.

Eurymachos But none so rich.

Melanthios Or so beautiful.

Then Odysseus as a beggar comes forth.

Odysseus I'll have a go.

Melanthios A stinking beggar?

Eurymachos Does he think he is stronger than his betters?

Telemachos Let him try.

Odysseus pulls back the bow and takes aim. His arrow hits Eurymachos.

Melanthios Foul!

Suitor I The best man in Ithaca.

Melanthios Buzzards will tear your eyes out for this.

Eurymachos Damned beggar has killed me.

Odysseus puls his beggar rags off. Athena hands him his helmet that he puts on.

Odysseus No beggar, but Odysseus come home at last.

Odysseus takes another arrow. The suitors are very frightened. They run forward but meet Telemachos with a spear.

Telemachos You forced your way into this house, now fight your way out.

They run up stage only to meet Eurycleia with a rolling pin. She is tapping her hands with it menacingly.

Eurycleia The old bag is armed.

They run away from her into the line of fire of Odysseus.

Melanthios Odysseus, I know you are angry. But you have just killed the man who was behind it all. Eurymachos was the one who wanted your house and wife.

Suitor I Yeah!

Melanthios We will gladly pay you back for any expenses.

Odysseus Not for all the gold in Troy.

Odysseus begins to fire on the suitors. Telemachos comes to his fathers aid. There is thunder and and lightning and then suddenly it is dark. We hear an awful slaughter in the dark. As the lights come up again we see Odysseus and Telemachos standing victorious but panting over the blood red bodies of

the dead suitors. Eurycleia runs through with a kitchen knife and the scalp of one of the suitors.

Eurycleia Got the last of them trying to hide in the cellar like a rat.

Odysseus Good old Cleia.

Penelope appears at the stairs. She looks down at the bloody scene.

Telemachos Mother, there is your new husband.

Eurycleia Isn't he a little bit like the old one, if you wash him up?

She descends the steps and has a closer look.

Penelope At times I see a man who looks very like my husband and then all I see is a beggar covered in blood.

Telemachos Mother, do you feel nothing?

Penelope I can not speak to him. I cannot look him in his face. If he really is Odysseus, home at last, beyond all doubt we shall know each other better than you or anyone.

Telemachos angrily drops his weapon.

Odysseus Let your mother take her time. Before long she will see and know me best.

He gives his bow and helmet to his son. Telemachos and Eurycleia start to go slowly out.

Penelope Please don't be angry with me that I didn't welcome you with love at first sight. The gods have been hard on us. They denied us the best years of our lives and kept us from crossing into old age together. Now you find a dried out woman with an iron heart.

Odysseus You are still beautiful to me.

Penelope

You make my stiff heart know that I am yours.

They cry and embrace each other. Music. Telemachos and Eurycleia smile and go off together. Penelope turns to go to the bedroom. From the side of the stage appears the Young Odysseus. Odysseus for a moment is in panic. His wife is still so beautiful and he has become so old. What will happen in the bedroom? The Young Odysseus puts his hand on the shoulder of Odysseus to reassure him.

Young Odysseus

Don't be afraid. This how our story ends.

Odysseus goes up to his wife like a hero. The young Odysseus sits down in the house. We see Athena smiling in the shadows.

For the last time the poet walks in.

Poet

Always keep Ithaca fixed in your mind. To arrive there is you ultimate goal. But do not hurry the voyage at all. It is better that the voyage last for years.

And if you find her poor, Ithaca has not deceived you. Ithaca has given you the beautiful voyage. Without her you would have never gone to sea. With all the wisdom you have gained, with so much experience, at last you have come to understand what these Ithacas mean.

Blackout

THE END

POSSIBLE OTHER ENDING TO ACT I

Below we see the crew members slowly metamorphizing back into men.

Souflakos That's strange I thought I was a..it's impossible

Domestikos A pig?

Souflakos Yes, a pig. And the funny thing about it was that I didn't really mind it. It was fun to eat garbage and wiggle my little tail and dig for roots with my nose and..

Domestikos And what?

Souflakos Roll in the warm mud with a female pig.

Pig Love Song - SCHWEIN GEHABT

