

Here as he hung Eumaeus the swineherd addressed him and mocked him :
"Somewhat a long and a sleepless night thou'lt find it, Melantheus,
Though right soft is the bed in the which thou art couched, as befits thee ;
Nor shall the Dawn, when she newly ariseth from streams of the Ocean,
Fail to appear to thee throned in her glory, as erst when thou dravest
Goats of the flock to the palace to furnish a feast for the suitors."

Thus held tight in the deadly embrace of the rope he was left there,
While in the armour they clad them, and shutting the glistening portal
Quickly returned to the master, the wise and wary Odysseus.
Here then, breathing the fury of battle, they stood on the door-stone,
Four of them, while in the hall stood many opposing them bravely.

Now did the daughter of Zeus draw nigh them, the goddess Athene,
Once more likened to Mentor in voice and in bodily semblance.
Then did Odysseus rejoice as he saw her, and spake to her saying :
"Mentor, I pray thee, defend me from harm, and remember thy comrade,
One that was dear and was kind to thee often—the friend of thy boyhood !"
Thus did he speak, but he deemed 'twas Athena who stirreth the battle.
Then from the depths of the hall great clamour was raised by the suitors,
Foremost shouting abuse Agelaus the son of Damastor :

"Mentor, I bid thee beware lest words of Odysseus beguile thee
Thus with the suitors to fight and to stand by his side and defend him,
Since I am sure we shall win us the end that we purpose in this wise :
After the death of the twain (they shall die, both son and the father)
Thou shalt be slain, thou too—such mischievous deeds thou art wishing
Here in the palace to work. With thy head thou shalt pay for thy folly.
So with the edge of the sword we shall rob you of strength to resist us ;
Then thy possessions—the whole of the wealth in thy fields and thy mansion—
All we shall mix with the wealth of Odysseus, and ne'er shall we suffer
Either thy sons or thy daughters to dwell in the halls of thy homestead,
Nor shall thy excellent wife go gadding about in the city."

So did he speak, and it maddened to fury the heart of Athene,
Till on Odysseus she turned and with angry reproaches addressed him :
"Now no longer, Odysseus, of worth is thy strength or thy manhood,
Such as was thine when in battle for white-armed Helen the high-born
Nine long years with the Trojans thou foughtest unweariedly ever,
Slaughtering many and many a foe in the terrible warfare.
Thine was the counsel that captured the wide-wayed city of Priam.
How then ! Now thou art come to thy home and to all thy possessions,
Why in the face of the suitors lament and behave as a weakling ?



THE SLAUGHTER OF THE SUITORS

FRITZ WILSON



Nay, come hither, my friend, to my side! Stand nigh and behold me,
So shalt thou learn from my deeds what manner of mortal is Mentor,
Alcimus' son, to requite thee a kindness by fighting thy foemen."
Thus did she speak, but she gave no victory full and decisive;
Still was she wishing to put to a trial the strength and the prowess
Both of Odysseus himself and his valiant son; and she vanished,
Suddenly flying aloft to the smoke-stained roof of the palace,
Where on a rafter she sat in the fashion and form of a swallow.

Odyssey
XXII
233 - 271

Now took lead in the fray Agelaus the son of Damastor,
Eurynomus, Demoptolemus, and the son of Polyctor
Peisandrus, and Amphimedon and Polybus wily,
Even the best and the bravest by far that of all of the suitors
Still were living and fighting to save their lives from destruction
(Others already the bow with the storm of its arrows had conquered).
These Agelaus addressed and to all of them shouted, exclaiming:
"Friends, the invincible strength of the fellow is failing already!
Lo too, Mentor is gone from his side, with his brags and his boastings,
Leaving the four thus standing alone in the front of the doorway.
Come, let us hurl with the spears—not all of us casting together:
Six of us only attempt it at first, in the hope that the Father
Grant that we gain us the glory of smiting and slaying Odysseus.
Should this fellow be brought to a fall, of the others I reckon not."

Thus did he speak, and they cast at Odysseus with spears as he bade them,
Eagerly hurling; but all were foiled by the goddess Athene.
Into the post of the door of the strong-built hall of the palace
One of them drove, and the door close-fastened was smit by another,
While in the wall struck lances of ash bronze-bladed and heavy.
So when they thus had escaped unharmed from the spears of the suitors,
Then to address them began long-suffering godlike Odysseus:
"Now for myself is the moment to speak and to bid you, my comrades,
Into the throng of the suitors to hurl; for they thirst to destroy us,
Adding to all of their former iniquities murder and rapine."
Thus did he speak, and the four, their keen-edged lances uplifting,
Hurled them with accurate aim. Demoptolemus by Odysseus,
Euryades by the prince, Elatus by the swineherd was smitten,
Peisandrus by the man who as neatherd tended the cattle.
Biting the dust these lay on the floor's wide surface extended,
While to the end of the hall in a panic retreated the others.
Then dashed forward the four and drew their spears from the corpses.

Now once more did the suitors, the keen-edged lances uplifting
Eagerly hurl; but the most were foiled by the goddess Athene.
Into the post of the door of the strong-built hall of the palace
One of them drave, and the door close-fastened was smit by another,
While in the wall struck lances of ash bronze-bladed and heavy.
Amphimedon nathless smote Telemachus by the hand-joint
Lightly, the edge of the blade scarce scratching the skin on the surface.
Next with a long-stemmed spear Ctesippus hurled at the swineherd.
Over his shield, just grazing the shoulder, it flew, and alighted.
Then did the four on the side of the wise and wary Odysseus
Once more hurl in the throng of the suitors the keen-edged lances.
Smitten was Eurydamas by Odysseus the sacker of cities;
Amphimedon fell struck by the prince, Polybus by the swineherd,
Ctesippus by the man who as neatherd tended the cattle;
Full on the breast he was struck, and the man exultingly mocked him:
"Ah, Polytherses' son, thou'rt fond of abuse, but I warn thee
Never to yield to the folly of brag, but to leave the decision
Unto the gods, whose wisdom is greater by far than a mortal's.
This is my gift in return for the foot of an ox that thou gavest
Unto the godlike Odysseus when here in his home he was begging."
These words uttered the herd of the crook-horned kine; and Odysseus
Stabbed with the thrust of a spear long-shafted the son of Damastor;
Telemachus too smote Leiocritus, son of Euenor,
Right in the midst of the flank, and the blade clean through him was driven;
Forward he fell and he struck on the ground with the whole of his forehead.

Then did Athena her aegis uplift, that is death to a mortal;
High in the roof she displayed it, appalling the minds of the suitors.
Hither and thither they rushed in a panic, as kine on a pasture
Scatter whene'er comes glancing and darting upon them a gadfly
Late in the season of spring, when the days grow longer and longer;
While as the vultures with sharp-hooked beaks and with terrible talons
Out of the hills come swooping and chasing the birds of the lowland
Down from the clouds, till over the plain affrighted they flutter,
Then pounce suddenly down and destroy them, and nought can defend them,
Nor can they flee (men also rejoice at the chase and the capture),
Thus those four gave chase in the hall to the horde of the suitors,
Smiting around them to left and to right; and a horrible groaning
Rose midst lopping of heads; and the floor ran red with the life-blood.

Leiodes, with a rush, now fell at the feet of Odysseus,

Clasping his knees in entreaty; and swift-winged words he addressed him:
"Lo, by thy knees I beseech thee to pity and spare me, Odysseus!
None of the women, I swear, did I wrong in the halls of thy palace
Either by act unseemly or word; yea, also the others
Often I tried to restrain when I saw such folly committed.
Nathless ne'er did they listen nor keep their hands from offending;
So hath a terrible doom o'erwhelmed them because of their madness.
What! shall an innocent priest who has harmed thee in nothing be slaughtered
Even as those? Is it thus thou repayest me thanks for my goodness?"
Glaring askance at the man deep-plotting Odysseus addressed him:
"Nay, if indeed thou avowst thee as priest to the rabble of suitors,
Often, I ween, in the hall of my palace a prayer thou hast offered
Begging my happy return might still be afar from fulfilment,
Ay and my well-loved wife might wed thee and bear thee an offspring.
So thou art doomed to a death right bitter—nor hope to escape it."
These words uttered, he seized with his powerful hand on a broadsword
Lying anear—dropt there on the floor by the prince Agelaus
While he was dying—and into the nape of the kneeler he drave it.
Down in the dust went rolling the head while still it was speaking.

Filled with a hope to escape from the darkness of death was the minstrel
Phemius, Terpes' son, who had sung at the feasts by compulsion.
Holding his sweet-voiced lute in his tremulous fingers he stood there
Nigh to the postern door; and his heart was divided within him
Whether to slip from the hall and to flee to the altar for refuge
Built in the court to omnipotent Zeus, where often aforetime
Thighs of the cattle Odysseus had burnt, and his father Laertes,
Or rush forward and grasp with his hands at the knees of Odysseus.
Thus as he pondered thereon this plan seemed surely the better,
Even to fall at the feet of the godlike son of Laertes.
Therefore his hollow phorminx he set on the floor of the palace
Next to a crater of wine and an armchair studded with silver,
Then rushed forward and fell at the feet of Odysseus and begged him,
Clasping his knees in entreaty; and swift-winged words he addressed him:
"Lo, by thy knees I beseech thee to pity and spare me, Odysseus.
Also thyself wouldst suffer hereafter the pain of repentance
Wert thou to slaughter a minstrel, who singeth for men and immortals.
None but the god was my master: he breathed in my heart and he taught me
All the enchantment of song; and now I am singing before thee
E'en as my god. Then long not to smite at my throat and to slay me!
Yea, and thy well-loved son prince Telemachus will assure thee

Ne'er was I willing to come to thy halls, far less was I wishful
Here to resort with the suitors and sing to them after the banquet.
Being the stronger by far and many in number, they forced me."
Thus as he spake he was heard by the valiant son of Odysseus.
Quickly the prince turned round and called to his father anigh him :
" Hold ! he is innocent ! Strike not the man with thy weapon, my father !
Medon the herald as well let us save, for he ever aforetime
Tended me carefully while I was still but a child in thy homestead,
Should he be living and not by Philoetius slain, or the swineherd,
Neither discovered by thee while raging around in the palace."

Thus as he spake he was heard by the wise old Medon the herald.
Cowering under a chair, wrapt round in a new-flayed oxskin,
Hiding in hope to escape from the darkness of death, he was lying.
Swiftly uprising from under the chair and unrolling the oxhide
Forward he sprang, and he fell at the feet of the youth, in entreaty
Clasping his knees, and with haste these swift-winged words he addressed him :
" Friend, I am here ! Hold, hold, I beseech thee ! and call to thy father
Lest in his furious might with the keen-edged sword he shall harm me,
Angered because of the men—these suitors who wasted his substance
Here in his palace ;—and thee they regarded as nothing, the madmen !"
Then to the man spake thus with a smile deep-plotting Odysseus :
" Be not afraid ! Thou art safe. He wishes to succour and save thee.
So shalt thou feel in thy heart this truth, and shalt tell it to others :
Better by far is the doing of good than the doing of evil.
Go now, both of you. Go from the hall and away from the slaughter.
Sit outside in the court, both sweet-voiced singer and herald,
While I remain in the palace to finish my work, as I needs must."
So did he speak, and the twain went forth from the hall to the courtyard.
Here by the altar of Zeus the Almighty they sat, and around them
Hither and thither they peered and of death were ever expectant.

Also Odysseus was peering around in the house, to discover
Any remaining and hoping to 'scape death's terrible darkness.
Weltering there in the dust and in blood lay all of the suitors,
Fallen in many and many a heap, like fishes that boatmen
Drag in a strong-meshed net from the grey-green depths of the ocean
On to the beach of a hollow recess in the shore, and they lie there
Heaped on the sand, all gasping in vain for the salt sea water,
While by the heat of the sun drawn forth is the life from their bodies.
Thus were lying in heaps, piled one on the other, the suitors.

Then at the last to his son deep-plotting Odysseus addressed him :
"Telemachus, go call me the old nurse Eurycleia,
So that I tell her a thing that is stirring my spirit within me."
Thus did he speak, and the youth, as his well-loved father commanded,
Rattled the door of the chamber and called nurse Eurycleia :
"Hither in haste, old dame, who over the women attendants
Keepst an eye and hast charge of them all in the palace as matron.
Haste ! for my father is bidding thee come. He has something to tell thee."

Odyssey
XXII
390 - 428

Thus did he speak, and the word that he uttered abode with her wingless.
Opening quickly the door of the fair-built women's apartment,
Over the threshold she stept ; and the youth went onward before her,
Till to Odysseus she came. In the midst of the dead he was standing,
Smear'd all over with blood and filthy with gore. As a lion,
Leaving the place in the which he has eaten an ox of the farmstead,
Goes on his way, and the whole of the chest and the cheeks of the monster
Drip with the gore—and a terror befalleth the man who beholds him—
So all smear'd with the blood on his hands and his feet was Odysseus.

Now when the slain she beheld and the terrible blood, and in triumph
Fain had exulted aloud (for she saw that the deed was accomplished),
Then did Odysseus, perceiving her longing, restrain and rebuke her,
While upraising his voice these swift-winged words he addressed her :
"Woman, exult in thy heart, but in silence, subduing thy triumph.
Triumphing over the slain is a deed unseemly, unholy.
These hath the doom of the gods in the midst of their wickedness smitten,
Seeing they treated alike all earth-born men with dishonour,
Good no less than the bad—yea every one that approached them.
So hath a terrible doom o'erwhelmed them because of their madness.
Come now, tell me of all concerning the maids in the palace,
Which of them honour me not and which are guiltless among them."
Then did the dear old nurse make answer and thus she addressed him :
"Well now, all of the truth in this matter, my child, I will tell thee.
Here in thy palace the women that serve are fifty in number,
Thralls that we trained of ourselves to attend to the work of the household,
Such as the carding of wool and enduring the labours of bondage.
Twelve of the maidens in all have trodden the path of dishonour,
Neither respecting myself nor the mistress, Penelopeia.
Telemachus was of late but a half-grown lad, and his mother
Would not allow him to give his commands to the women attendants.
Come now, might I ascend to the glistening upper apartment

All to report to thy wife? Some deity sank her in slumber."
Her then in answer addressed these words deep-plotting Odysseus:
"Nay, not yet shalt thou wake her; but go to the women and tell them
Hither to come—those maidens that shamelessly acted aforetime."
Thus did he speak, and the nurse went back to the inner apartment
Bearing the message, and ordered the women to hasten their coming.

Now did Odysseus to Telemachus and the cowherd and swineherd
Call, and he bade them approach, and with swift-winged words he addressed them:
"See to removing the bodies, and order the women to help you.
Then to the cleaning attend of the fine-wrought chairs and the tables.
Wash them with water, and use soft porous sponges to rub them.
Then, when the whole of the mansion is thoroughly cleansed and in order,
Lead those maids from the hall, and bringing them out of the palace
Down by the dome-roofed kitchen and faultless fence of the courtyard
Smite them with swords long-bladed, until ye shall see them before you,
All of them, dead. Yea, thus let them die and forget the delicious
Rites of the goddess of love that they held with the suitors in secret."

Thus did he speak, and the women approached all huddled together,
Uttering terrible wails as they shed great tears in abundance.
Firstly the bodies they bore of the slain from the hall, and they set them
Under the inside porch of the gate of the high-walled courtyard,
Propping them one by the other, Odysseus directing the bearers,
Forcing them also to work, for they carried the dead by compulsion.
Then they attended to cleaning the fine-wrought chairs and the tables,
Washed them with water, and used soft porous sponges to rub them.
Meanwhile Telemachus and the cowherd and also the swineherd
Scraping with shovels the floor of the strong-built hall of the mansion
Cleared it—and all was collected and carried away by the women.

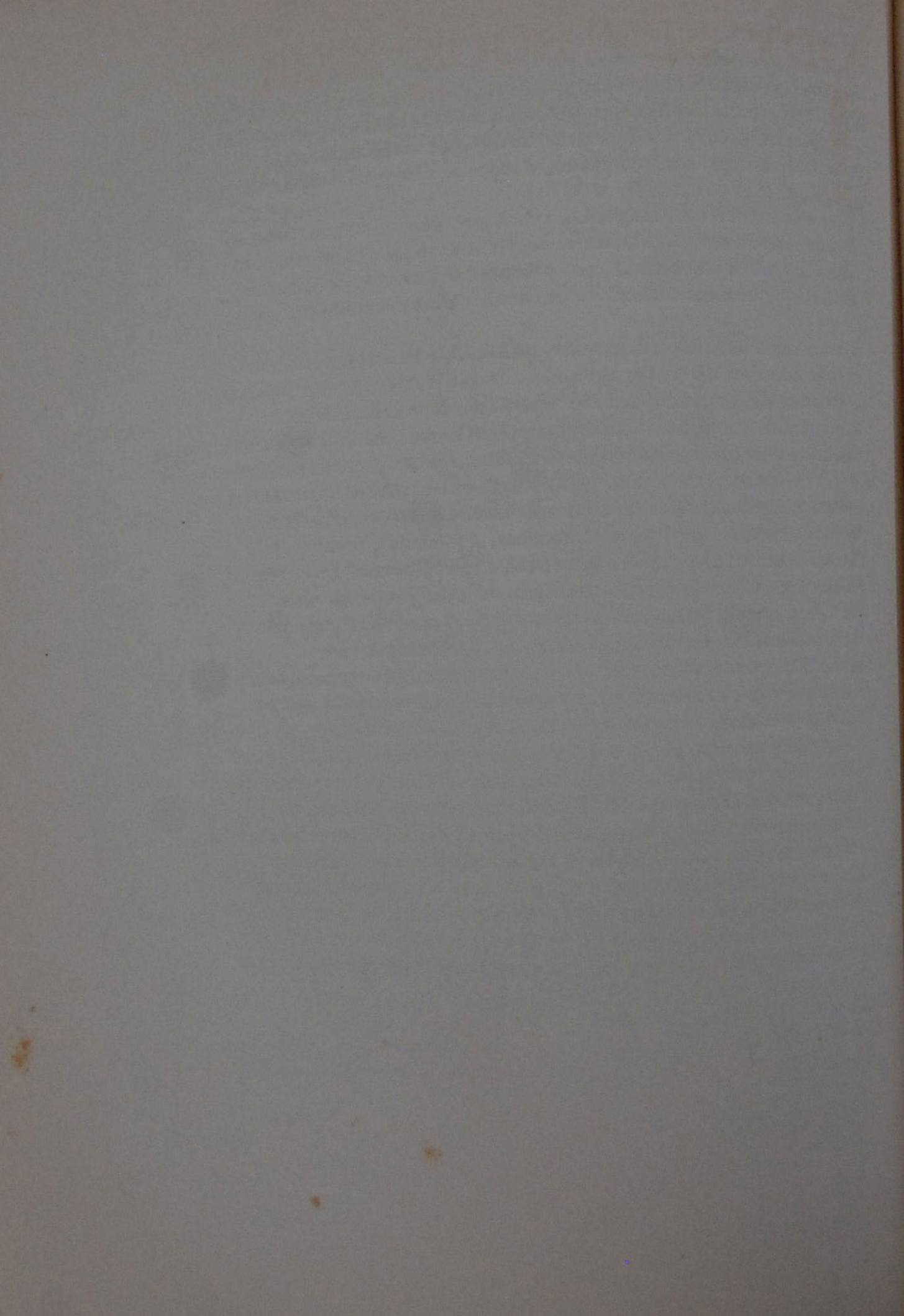
Now when the whole of the house they had cleansed and had set it in order,
Leading the women away from the hall and forth from the palace
Down to the dome-roofed kitchen and faultless fence of the courtyard,
Into a corner they drove them that gave no hope of escaping.
Then sage Telemachus spake first, addressing his comrades:
"Heaven forbid that I put to a death so cleanly and honest
Women as these, who brought on my head such shame and dishonour,
Yea and the head of my mother, consorting in love with the suitors."
Speaking, he seized on the rope of a blue-prowed vessel and lashed it
High on a pillar, and over the dome of the kitchen he slung it,

Hoisting it tautly, that none might reach to the ground for a foothold.
Then, as it haps if a covey of long-winged thrushes or pigeons
Suddenly fall in the snares of a trap that is set in a thicket,
Whither they flock for the night—but a bed right cruel receives them—
Thus with their heads in a row stood all of the women, with nooses
Over the neck, to a death most cruel and pitiful destined.
So with their feet some moments they writhed—and soon it was over.

Odyssey
XXII
487 - 501

Out by the porch to the yard they conducted Melanthius also.
First with the merciless steel of his ears and his nose they deprived him;
Then they extracted and threw as a feast to the dogs his intestines;
Lastly they hacked off both of his hands and his feet in their fury.

Now when the blood from their hands and their feet they had washed, to Odysseus
Into the house they returned; and the whole of the deed was accomplished.
Then to the dear nurse Eurycleia he called, and addressed her:
“Nurse, bring sulphur! It cleanseth pollution. And bring me a brazier,
So that I sweeten the hall with the fumes. Then go to thy mistress;
Bid her to come to my presence with all of her maiden attendants;
Summon moreover the rest of the women that serve in the palace.”
Him then in turn gave answer the dear nurse Eurycleia:
“Yea of a surety, my child, thou hast spoken according to reason.
Still, come now, I will fetch thee a mantle and tunic for raiment.
Thus, with thy great wide shoulders enveloped in beggarly tatters,
Stand not here in the hall. ’Twere verily blameful to do so.”
Her then in answer addressed these words deep-plotting Odysseus:
“Firstly I wish in the hall for a brazier of coals to be brought me.”
Thus did he speak, and the dear nurse Eurycleia, obeying,
Brought to her master the sulphur and brazier of coal, and Odysseus
Thoroughly sweetened with fumes of the sulphur the house and the courtyard.
Then did the old dame go through all of the beautiful mansion
Taking the news to the women and bidding them hasten their coming.
So with a torch in the hand these came from the inner apartments.
Flocking around him they greeted Odysseus with joy and embraced him,
Lovingly kissing his head and his shoulders in token of welcome,
Grasping and kissing his hands. And a rapture sweet overcame him,
Even a longing for wailing and tears as he saw them and knew them.



ODYSSEY BOOK XXIII

LAUGHING for joy now hurried the nurse to the upper apartment,
Bringing her lady the news that Odysseus was there in his homestead.
Onward with tottering knees and with feet unsteady she stumbled,
Till, at the head of the sleeper arriving, she called to her mistress:
“Wake, my belov’d! wake, Penelopeia my child! Thou shalt see now,
Yea with thine eyes thou shalt see, what every day thou hast longed for,
Come is Odysseus!—is here in his home, whence long he was vanished!
Slain are all of the arrogant suitors who troubled his homestead,
Wasting the wealth of the house and treating his son with oppression.”

Her forthwith gave answer the wise-souled Penelopeia:
“Nay, dear mother, the gods have driven thee mad! An immortal
Ofttimes maketh a fool of the wise—yea, even the wisest—
Ay and the one that is foolish he guides in the path of discretion.
Surely a god hath unbalanced thy mind that was steady aforetime.
Why dost thou mock me and add to the grief that is heavy within me,
Chattering thus so wildly and waking me out of my slumber
While so softly imprisoned it held me and shaded mine eyelids?
Never I slept thus sound from the day that Odysseus departed
Sailing for Ilion, city of doom, name ne’er to be mentioned.
Go now, get thee away and return to the women’s apartment!
Verily were it another of all of the maids that attend me,
Bringing reports like these and waking me out of my slumber,
Rudely enough I had sent her away and had bid her betake her
Back to her chamber—but thou . . .! it is only thy age that protects thee.”
Then once more made answer the dear nurse Eurycleia:
“Nay, I am mocking thee not, dear child! I assure thee in earnest
Come is Odysseus and here is arrived at his home, as I told thee.
He was the stranger—the guest whom all at the banquet insulted.
Telemachus long since was aware that his father was present,
Yet with a manly discretion the plans of his sire he revealed not,
Waiting for vengeance to fall on the heads of the arrogant suitors.”

Thus as the old nurse spake, in her gladness Penelopeia
Sprang from her couch and embraced her, and tears fell fast from her eyelids;
Then she uplifted her voice and with swift-winged words she addressed her:
“Come, dear mother, I beg thee to tell me and give me assurance,
Should he in sooth be arrived and be here in his home as thou sayest,

How was he able to lay strong hands on the insolent suitors,
Being alone, while ever they keep right many together?"
Then once more made answer the dear nurse Eurycleia:
"Nothing I saw—knew nothing—and nothing I heard but a groaning
Made by the dying. We sat in the strong-built room in a corner
Frozen with fear, and the door close-fitting was shut of the chamber,
Till that I heard one calling me forth from the women's apartment,
Even thy son, prince Telemachus—for his father had sent him.
So to Odysseus I came, and I found him amidst of the slaughtered
Standing; and round him was covered the hard-stamped floor with the corpses
Lying the one on the other. I ween that thy soul had exulted
Hadst thou beheld him besmeared with the filth and the gore as a lion.
Now they're lying together, anigh to the gate of the courtyard,
All in a heap, and the master is fuming the palace with sulphur,
Setting aflame great braziers of coal; and he sent me to call thee.
Follow me now, that ye both in a heaven of happiness enter,
Where your hearts shall rejoice, forgetting their former afflictions.
Now is accomplished the thing that for long long years thou hast hoped for:
Lo, he is come—he is here—he is safe in his home—and has found thee
Safe in his halls, and his son; while those who had wickedly wronged him,
Even the suitors . . . he wreaked his revenge on them all in his palace."

Her then in answer addressed these words wise Penelopeia:
"Nay, dear mother, refrain thee at present from vaunting and laughter!
Well dost thou know how welcome he were to the whole of his household,
All of us, chiefly indeed to myself and the son that I bare him.
Yet—it is never and never the truth, this tale that thou tellest.
Nay, 'twas a god immortal that slaughtered the high-born suitors,
Wroth at their grievous and insolent pride and their infamous actions,
Seeing they treated alike all earth-born men with dishonour,
Good no less than the bad—yea every one who approached them;
So for their folly and madness they suffered. But dead is Odysseus;
Lost was his way to the land of Achaea, and lost was his life too."
Then did the dear old nurse make answer and thus she addressed her:
"Nay but, my child, what word from the door of thy lips hath escaped thee,
While thou affirmst that thy lord, who is here at the hearth of his homestead,
Ne'er shall return! Ay, truly, thy heart was incredulous always!
Well, I will tell thee besides of a proof infallibly certain,
Even the wound which once by a boar's white tusk was inflicted.
This as I bathed him I spied—and I eagerly turned me towards thee
Wishing to speak; but he, laying his hand on my mouth to prevent it,

Would not permit me to utter a word, in his wisdom and foresight.
Nay, come, follow me now! I will venture my life on my tidings.
Should I deceive thee at all, by a death most pitiful slay me!"

Odyssey
XXIII
77 - 113

Her once more gave answer the wise-souled Penelopeia:
"Ah, dear mother, 'tis hard, how great soever thy wisdom,
Over the plans and the counsels to watch of the gods everlasting.
Well then, now let us go to my son. I am fain to behold them,
These dead men, these suitors—and him moreover that slew them."

Then from her room she descended, and deeply she pondered in spirit
Whether to hold her aloof from her lord and to test him with questions
Or to approach and embrace him and kiss him on hands and on forehead.
So, when at length she had entered the hall and had stept from the door-stone,
Fronting Odysseus she seated herself, in the light of a brazier,
Close to the opposite wall; and with eyes cast down he was sitting
Nigh to a pillar that rose to the roof; and he waited expectant,
Hoping his beautiful wife would speak when she saw him before her.
Long while silent she sat, with her spirit amazed and bewildered;
Now with her eyes fixed full on his face she was earnestly gazing,
Now she was doubting, beholding him clad in a beggarly raiment.

Then spake Telemachus and with words of reproach he addressed her:
"Mother—and yet no mother of mine, for thy heart is unloving—
Wherefore now dost thou hold thee aloof from my father, nor gladly
Seat thee beside him and bid him to speak and to answer thy questions?
Ne'er was a wife like thee, with a heart thus hardened within her,
So as to turn from a husband who after unnumber'd afflictions
Came in the twentieth year to his home and the land of his fathers.
Thus it was ever . . . for harder than stone is the heart in thy bosom!"
Him then in answer addressed these words wise Penelopeia:
"Nay but, my child, have patience—for dead is the spirit within me;
Neither to utter a word am I able, nor ask him a question,
Nay, nor to look in his face. If in truth it is he, as thou sayest,
Even Odysseus returned to his home, we can verily better
Learn it than thus, and be surer the one of the other; for we twain
Tokens possess that we kept to ourselves and hidden from others."

Hearing her words with a smile, long-suffering godlike Odysseus
Suddenly turned to his son, and with swift-winged words he addressed him:
"Telemachus, now leave us alone in the hall, that thy mother

Test me ; for thus she will soon be aware of the truth and confess it.
Now I am covered with filth and am clothed in a beggarly raiment,
So with dishonour she treats me and says I am never thy father.
Meanwhile, come, let us think how best we shall act in the future.
He that hath happened to slay one person alone in a people,
One who was able to leave not many behind to avenge him,
Flieth from kith and from kin and from native land as an exile ;
We . . . 'twas the stay of the city we slew . . . 'twas the best of the princes
Here in the Ithacan land. It is this that I bid thee consider."
Him sage Telemachus addressing in turn gave answer :
" See to the matter thyself, dear father ; for thine is the wisdom
Said to be greatest on earth, and with thee in the giving of counsel
None might hope to compete—no other of men that be mortal.
All of us others will eagerly follow thee. Ne'er shalt thou find us
Lacking in will to support thee, if only the power is present."
Him then in answer addressed these words deep-plotting Odysseus :
" Well now, come, I will tell thee the plan that I hold to be wisest.
First then, all of you cleanse you with water and clothe you in doublets,
Also the maidens command to array them in festal apparel.
Then let the godlike bard with his lute's loud-echoing music
Give us the lead for the dance in a mirthful melodious measure,
So that it sound as a wedding to those outside of the palace,
Whether to folk that shall pass on the road, or to neighbours around us.
Thus no word shall be bruited abroad in the town that the suitors
Lie here slaughtered before we shall get us away to the country
Unto the farm in the midst of the forest ; and there we can counsel
How to avail us of luck, if the Father Olympian grant it."

Thus did he speak, and they listened attent to his words and obeyed them.
Firstly they bathed them in water and cast fresh tunics around them ;
Also the women did on their attire ; and the godlike minstrel,
Taking his hollow harp, in the depths of their bosoms excited
Yearning for sweet-voiced song and the peerless pleasure of dancing.
Then to the sound of their feet did the spacious mansion reëcho,
While that the fair-zoned maidens and men were making them merry ;
Hearing the which spake many a one outside of the palace :
" Sure, she is married at last, our lady of many a wooer !
Pitiful creature, unable to wait for the love of her girlhood,
Faithfully keeping on guard at his palace until he arrived here !"
Thus spake many a one ; but they knew not how it had happened.

Now great-hearted Odysseus was back in his home, and the house-dame
Eurynomé brought water to bathe him and oil to anoint him,
Also apparel to clothe him withal, both mantle and tunic.
Over him then great beauty was shed by the goddess Athene:
Taller and stronger she made him in aspect, and down from his head fell
Clustering thickly the locks of his hair as the flower hyacinthine.
Even as gold o'er silver is poured by an artist—a craftsman
Taught in his art by the god Hephaestus and Pallas Athene
Manifold skill, and of beauty is every work that he fashions,
Thus did she pour forth grace on the shoulders and head of Odysseus;
So as he stept from the bath he was like an immortal in semblance.
Then he reseated himself on the chair from the which he had risen,
Placing himself in the front of his wife; and he spake to her, saying:
“Nay, good lady, a heart more hard, more cruel, than thine is
Never a woman received from the gods who inhabit Olympus;
Ne'er was a wife like thee, with a heart thus hardened within her,
So as to turn from a husband who after unnumber'd afflictions
Came in the twentieth year to his home and the land of his fathers.
Nurse, go strew me my bed! I will sleep by myself; I will forthwith
Lay me to rest—for the heart in her bosom is surely of iron.”

Him then in answer addressed these words wise Penelopeia:
“Nay, good man, it is neither because I am proud or disdainful,
Nor am I dazed. Right well I recall thee (if thou be Odysseus)
Such as thou wert when from here in a long-oared vessel thou sailedst.
Go now, Eurycleia, and strew him the strong-made bedstead
Here outside of the room that he built for himself as his chamber.
Bring ye the bedstead forth; then lay soft bedding upon it;
Cover it over with fleeces and wrappers and glistering blankets.”

Thus did she speak as a test for her husband; and much was Odysseus
Angered thereat, and he turned to his own true wife and addressed her:
“Verily, wife, this word thou hast spoken is grievously cruel.
Who hath removed it—the bed that I built? 'Twere difficult truly
E'en for a man right skilful, unless some deity helped him.
Though for a god 'twere easy to move it wherever he listed,
Never a mortal that liveth, not e'en in the prime of his manhood,
Out of its place could heave it with handspikes. Great is the secret
Touching that fine-wrought bed—for I made it myself and in private.
Once was a long-leaved olive that stood inside the enclosure,
Thriving and grown to the full; and its stem was as thick as a pillar.

Round it I built me a chamber and laboured until it was finished,
Making a structure of stones close-set; and I carefully roofed it;
Also I gave it a door well-fitting and firmly compacted.
Next from the long-leaved olive I lopped off all of the brushwood,
Whittled the bark of the stump right down to the root, and I planed it
Evenly, cutting it straight to the line with the skill of a master.
Then with an auger I bored it and fashioned it into a bed-post.
Thus I began, and I wrought me the bed, and, until it was finished,
Carved it, and richly with ivory, silver, and gold I adorned it.
Then to the frame hide thongs I attached bright-coloured with purple.
There now! Such is the secret I tell thee as token. I know not
Whether my bed stands still as it stood, O wife, or if long since
Some man moved it away, with the trunk cut off at the bottom."

Thus as he spake were loosened her knees and the heart in her bosom,
Since to herself she confessed that the token was sure that he gave her.
Bursting in tears, straightway to Odysseus she ran and embraced him,
Casting her arms on his neck and kissing his head and exclaiming:
"Gaze not upon me in anger, Odysseus! In all thou hast shown thee
Wisest of men—and thou knowst that the gods have sent us affliction,
Jealous to see us abiding in happiness one with the other,
Joying in youth and hoping to reach eld's threshold together.
Wherefore now I beseech thee to feel not wroth and indignant
Only because, when I saw thee at first, not thus I embraced thee.
Ever and ever again hath my heart in the depths of my bosom
Shuddered with fear lest any with tales might haply deceive me,
One of the many that come with an evil and gainful intention.
Nay, e'en Argive Helen, the daughter of Zeus the Almighty,
Ne'er to a stranger had given her love and her tender embraces
Had she but known that again by the warlike sons of Achaea
Back to her home she was doomed to be brought and the land of her fathers.
True, to committing the shameless deed some deity urged her;
True, she had never foreseen in her spirit the end of her folly,
End so fearful . . . that first on ourselves brought mourning and sorrow.
Now . . . I believe! for thou giv'st me a token unerring—the secret
Touching the bed—our bed—that was ne'er by a mortal beholden
Saving by thee and by me, and by one of my women attendants,
Actoris—one that my sire, when I came as a bride to thy palace,
Gave me—and ever the door of thy strong-built chamber she guarded.
Yea, I believe! thou hast conquered my heart, however unloving!"



PATTEN WILSON.

THE RECOGNITION OF ODYSSEUS BY HIS WIFE

Thus as she spake still more she excited his yearning for wailing.
Clasping his true sweet wife to his bosom he wept as he held her.
Whose good ship, o'erwhelmed in the midst of the sea by Poseidon,
Drifts as a wreck and is tossed by the wind and the mountainous billows,
While some few, in the hope to escape from the grey salt water,
Swim for the land, and with brine are thickly encrusted their bodies,
Then on the shore right gladly they step, and they find them in safety,
Thus, when she saw him, she welcomed with gladness Odysseus her husband,
Nor from his neck for a moment her fair white arms did she loosen.
Yea, on their weeping had risen the morning, the roseate-fingered,
Save for the friendly device of the grey-eyed goddess Athene:
Night in her outmost realm she delayed long-lingering; held back
Morning the golden-enthron'd at the stream of the Ocean, and bade her
Yoke not her swift-paced horses, the bringers to mortals of daylight,
Lampus and Pháethon, chariot-steeds of the goddess of morning.

Then at the last spake thus to his wife deep-plotting Odysseus:
"Not at the end, O wife, do I deem us of every labour.
Much is remaining of toil, yea, measureless travail, and hardships
Many and great—all which I am destined to do and to suffer,
E'en as foretold me the spirit of Teiresias the diviner,
Yea, on the day I descended and entered the mansion of Hades,
Seeking to hear of a way of return for myself and my comrades.
Now come, wife, let us lay us abed—'tis the season already
There to repose us and seek the delicious enjoyment of slumber."
Him forthwith gave answer the wise-souled Penelopeia:
"Yea, most surely thy bed shall be ready whenever thy spirit
Longeth to rest, for at last by the will and the favour of heaven
Here to thy well-built home thou art come and the land of thy fathers.
Still—as thou spakest thereof and a deity stirr'd thy remembrance—
Tell me, I pray, of the travail to come; for I ween I shall learn it
Later, and knowing it now were sure no greater misfortune."

Her then in answer addressed these words deep-plotting Odysseus:
"Nay, good lady, but why thus all impatiently urge me,
Bidding me speak? Well, come, I will tell thee, nor try to conceal it.
Verily little thy soul will rejoice; yea also myself too
Little am joyed, for to many a city of mortals he bade me
Wander again from my home, with a well-shaped oar on my shoulder,
Till to a people I come which never hath heard of the ocean,

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Yea to a people that mix no salt with the food that they live on ;
Neither hath any a ship, with the cheeks red-painted, beholden,
Neither hath knowledge of oars which serve as the wings of a vessel.
Also he gave me a sign most certain—the which I will tell thee.
Whensoever it haps that a chance wayfarer that meets me
Saith 'tis a winnowing fan that I bear on my glistening shoulder,
Fixing the oar in the ground I shall leave it—for thus he commanded.
Then to Poseidon the king I shall offer a goodly oblation,
Even a male of the swine and a male of the herd and the sheepfold,
Then turn homeward again, and many an offering holy
Slay to the deathless gods who inhabit the infinite heaven,
Each one after the other. At last shall a death from the ocean,
Such as of deaths is the mildest, befall me and gently remove me,
Wearied and worn, in a smooth old age ; and around me my people
Happy shall live. All this he foretold would have a fulfilment.”
Him forthwith gave answer the wise-souled Penelopeia :
“Should but the gods vouchsafe to thy life such happier ending,
Surely they grant thee a hope to escape at the last from affliction.”

Thus in the hall these twain held converse one with the other.
Meantime Eurynomé and the nurse made ready the bedstead,
Laying thereon soft wraps, by the light of the radiant torches.
Then, when the strong-built bed was prepared and the labour was ended,
Back to her room went Eurycleia to lay her to slumber,
While that the other, the maiden attendant who guarded the chamber,
Guided the way for her lord and her mistress, holding a pine-torch ;
Unto the chamber she led them and then she returned ; and with gladness
These two came once more to the rites of the bed as aforesaid.

Soon now Telemachus and the cowherd and also the swineherd
Stayed their feet from the dance, and bidding the women to cease too
Laid them to rest for the night in the shadowy hall of the palace.

Now when the twain had delighted in love and its tender endearments,
Then to the pleasure of talking they turned, and all they recounted.
First by the fairest of women was told what woes she had suffered,
Forced to behold in the palace the ruinous horde of the suitors
Coming to woo her and slaying the fat-fed sheep and the oxen,
Many and many a head, and emptying many a wine-cask.
Next did Odysseus descended from Zeus tell all of the sorrows
Brought on his foes, and how he had toiled and had suffered afflictions—

All he related ; and hearing it greatly she joyed, nor did slumber
Fall on her eyelids before he had finished the whole of the story.
Firstly he told how landing he sacked the Ciconian city,
Then to the rich-soiled land of the Eaters of Lotus was wafted,
Next of the deeds of the Cyclops he spake, and how he avenged him,
Blinding the pitiless monster for eating his valiant comrades,
Then how Aeolus' island he reached, and was kindly entreated,
Yea and was helped to return to his well-loved home, but to reach it
Yet was forbidden by Fate, and suddenly seized by a tempest,
Grievously groaning, again he was borne to the home of the fishes.
Then how Telepylus of the Laestrygonian people
Next he had reached—where perished his well-greaved mates and his vessels,
One of them only escaping, the black-hulled ship of Odysseus,
Also he told of the infinite guile and the magic of Circe.
Then how, seeking to visit the mouldering mansion of Hades,
There to consult with the spirit of Teiresias the diviner,
Over the ocean he sailed in his well-manned ship, and beheld there
All of his comrades of old, and the mother that bore him and reared him.
Then how maddened he listed the sweet-voiced song of the Sirens ;
Then of the Wandering Rocks he related and dreadful Charybdis,
Yea and of Scylla, from whom unscathed none ever escapeth.
Then how, after the kine of the Sun were slain by his comrades,
Struck by the sulphurous bolt of the Father who speaketh in thunder
Perished his swift-winged ship and perished his trusty companions,
All of them—all but himself ; and alone he escaped from destruction.
Then to the isle Ogygian come and the goddess Calypso,
How he was held by the nymph, in her yearning to make him her husband,
Long in her hollow caves ; and she cherished him kindly and promised
Even to make him immortal and ageless for ever and ever ;
Still did she never persuade him nor soften the heart in his bosom.
Then to the folk Phaeacian come through many a peril,
How he was kindly received and was honoured like an immortal,
Yea and was sent on a ship to the well-loved land of his fathers
Laden with many a treasure of bronze and of gold and of raiment.
This was the last he related before sweet slumber o'ercame him,
Slumber that loosens the limbs and loosens the cares of the spirit.

Then by the friendly device of the grey-eyed goddess Athene
(After she knew it for sure in the depths of her heart that Odysseus
Now had delighted in love and in sleep to his soul's satisfaction)
Out of the Ocean the early-arising, the golden-enthronéd

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Goddess appeared who bringeth to mortals the day ; and the hero
Rose from his soft-strewn bed, and he spake to his wife and enjoined her :
“Truly enough in the past, O wife, did we suffer affliction,
Both of us—thou with thy sorrow unending because I returned not
Weeping at home, while Zeus and the other immortals had bound me
Fast in misfortune, despite of my longings, afar from my homeland.
Now, since heaven hath brought us again to the raptures of wedlock,
See thou attend as of old to the wealth we possess in the palace ;
While, for the sheep and the cattle consumed by the arrogant suitors,
Many another as spoil I shall capture, and others the chieftains
Freely will give, till full once more are all of my farmyards.
Natheless, now I shall go to my farm in the midst of the forest.
There I shall visit my dear good father, who endlessly mourns me.
Touching thyself . . . thou art prudent and wise . . . but I tell thee my wishes :
Swiftly will spread a report, so soon as the sun is arisen,
Telling the fate of the men—these suitors I slew in the palace.
Wherefore unto thy chamber ascend with thy maiden attendants.
There keep seated, nor show thee to any that pass, and address none.”

Thus as he spake on his shoulders he buckled his beautiful armour.
Then he awakened his son and the cowherd and also the swineherd,
Bidding them each lay hand on a weapon of war to defend them.
Nor did they fail to obey, and they fully equipped them in harness.
Then they unbolted a door and they ventured them forth, and Odysseus
Led them. Already was light on the earth, but the goddess Athene
Hid them in night, and she swiftly conducted them out of the city.

ODYSSEY BOOK XXIV

NOW were summoned the souls of the dead by Cyllenian Hermes,
Even the souls of the suitors. A rod in his hand he was holding,
Beautiful, golden, with which men's eyes he entranceth to slumber
Just as he wills, while others again from their sleep he awaketh.
Touched by the wand they awoke & obeyed him, & followed him squealing.
Even as bats in the dark mysterious depths of a cavern
Squeal as they flutter around, should one from the cluster be fallen
Where from the rock suspended they hung all clinging together,
So did the souls flock squealing behind him as Hermes the Helper
Guided them down to the gloom through dank and mouldering pathways.
Passing the Ocean's stream and the White Rock's glittering portal,
Passing the gates of the Sun and the shadowy regions of Dreamland,
Soon at the world of the dead they arrived and the asphodel meadow,
Where dwell spirits—the phantoms of those whose labour is ended.

Here they encountered the soul of the great Pelean Achilles,
Yea and the souls of Patroclus and Antilochus the unrivalled,
Ajax too, who excelled all others in form and in favour,
All of the Dánaan chiefs save only the peerless Achilles.

Now these souls had assembled around him when slowly approaching,
Lo, drew nigh them the spirit of King Agamemnon Atrides
Sorrowing. Round him was gathered a throng of the others who likewise
Met with their destined doom and died in the house of Aegisthus.

First brake silence the soul of the great Pelean Achilles:
“Verily, Atreus' son, of the heroes ever we deemed thee
Dearest by far to the Father of heaven who joyeth in thunder,
Seeing he set thee as lord o'er warriors many and mighty
There in the Trojans' land, where suffered the sons of Achaea.
Ah but, alas, thee too full early was fated to visit
Death's dark doom, which none that is born on the earth can escape from.
Would to the gods on the day of thy honour and glory and lordship
There in the land of the Trojans the night of thy death had arisen!
Then had the hosts of Achaea erected a tomb to thy honour;
Yea and besides for thy son thou hadst left great glory behind thee.
Ah but thy fate by a death most pitiful doomed thee to perish.”

Then gave answer the spirit of King Agamemnon Atrides :
"Happy art thou, O peer of the gods, Pelean Achilles,
Slain—not at Argos, but far from thy home in the Troad ; and round thee
Many another, the best of the Trojans and sons of Achaea,
Died as they fought for thy body ; and under the eddyng dust-cloud
Mighty and mightily fallen thou layst, of thy prowess forgetful.
All day long we had fought, nor ever at all had the combat
Ceased, but a tempest was sent by the god of the thunder and stayed us.
Then, when at last to the ships we had borne thee away from the battle,
Laying thee down in a bed, on thy beautiful body, to cleanse it,
Soft warm water we poured, and we salved it with oil, and around thee
Bitterly weeping and shearing their locks were standing the Grecians.
Suddenly then from the sea with her nymphs immortal thy mother
Rose—for the tidings had reached her ; and over the ocean a wondrous
Wailing was heard, and a tremor of fear seized all the Achaeans ;
Yea, they had hasted away to the hollow ships and departed
Save for a man deep-versed in the wisdom of yore who restrained them,
Nestor, whose was the counsel that oft proved wisest aforetime.
Now with a kindly intent he addressed them and spake to them saying :
'Argives, stay ! I beseech you to fly not, princely Achaeans !
Lo, from the depths of the sea with her nymphs immortal his mother
Cometh to look on the face of her son who is dead, and to mourn him.'
So was the panic allayed of the high-souled sons of Achaea.
Then stood Nereus' daughters, the ancient god of the ocean,
Round thee, and bitterly wailing in raiment ambrosial wrapped thee.
Also the Muses, the Nine, made answer the one to the other,
Chanting with beautiful voices the dirge, while none of the Argives
Tearless remained, so mightily moved them the song of the Muses.
Seven and ten long nights, and by day, we incessantly mourned thee
Wailing and weeping—immortals together with men that be mortal.
Then on the eighteenth day to the flames thou wast given, and round thee
Fatlings many of sheep and of crook-horned cattle we slaughtered.
So thou wast burnt in the raiment divine and in many an unguent,
Yea and in honey ; and many a warrior prince of Achaea
Marching in armour encircled the pyre as thy body was burning,
Fighters on foot and on cars, and great was the din and the clangour.
Now when thy body at last was consumed in the flame of Hephaestus,
Early the morrow thy bones' white ashes we gathered, Achilles.
These in unwatered wine and in unguent we laid ; and thy mother
Brought us an urn twy-handled and golden, that god Dionysus
Gave her—the work, as she said, of the far-famed craftsman Hephaestus.

Here lie buried thy bones' white ashes, renowned Achilles,
Mingled with those o' thy friend who had perished before thee, Patroclus;
Here, but apart, lie ashes of Antilochus, whom thou lovedst
More than the rest of thy mates, save only the fallen Patroclus.
Over them all we erected a monument mighty and splendid,
Piled by the infinite host of the Argive army of spearmen
High on a foreland that jutteth above broad Hellespontus,
So as afar from the sea to be visible ever to mortals,
Those now living as well as the men of the age that is coming.
Then did thy mother entreat from the gods magnificent prizes.
These in the place of the contests she set for the princely Achaeans.
Oft wast thou present, I ween, at the funeral rites of a hero,
Often hast seen, if perchance some prince of the people hath perished,
Young men girding their loins and preparing themselves for the contest;
Yet had exceeding astonishment seized thee beholding the prizes,
All those exquisite gifts in thy honour bestowed by the goddess
Thetis of silvern foot—so dearly the deities loved thee.
Thus not even in death hast thou lost thy renown, and for ever
Unto the ends of the earth shall be honoured the name of Achilles,
While—what profits it me that I wound to an ending the warfare?
Home I returned, but was whelmed in a pitiful death by the Father
Under the hands of that woman accurséd, my wife, and Aegisthus."

Thus these warrior souls held converse one with the other.
Then drew nigh Hermeias the Messenger, Slayer of Argus,
Guiding to Hades the ghosts of the suitors Odysseus had smitten.
Marvelling much at the sight, those twain came forward to meet them,
Till was perceived by the soul of Atrides, King Agamemnon,
Amphimedon the renown'd, dear son of the Ithacan chieftain
Prince Melaneus, who of yore was the friend and the host of Atrides.

Then brake silence the soul of the hero King Agamemnon:
"Amphimedon, what bringeth you down to the nethermost darkness,
All picked men, all equal in age? It is verily this wise
One might choose and collect in a city the prime of the manhood.
Whether did thee and thy ships o'erwhelm earth-shaking Poseidon,
Sending an adverse blast and the mountainous billows against you,
Or was it hostile men that on dry land wrought your destruction,
While that ye drave from the pasture the fair-fleeced sheep and the oxen,
Or as around some city ye fought for the spoil and the women?
Answer me all that I ask, for thy guest-friend, lo, I avow me.

Hast thou forgotten that thither I came to the home of thy fathers
Once with the prince Menelaus, to visit Odysseus and urge him
Unto the Ilian city with well-decked vessels to follow?
Gone was the whole of a month when the sea's wide gulf we retraversed,
Since it was hard to persuade him, Odysseus the sacker of cities."

Then did the spirit of Amphimedon thus answer him, saying :
"Glorious monarch of men, O King Agamemnon Atrides,
Yea, I remember it all, Zeus-foster'd prince, as thou sayest ;
Wherefore in turn will I tell thee of all, and will truly relate it,
Touching the pitiful death that we died and how it was compassed.
Know that we sued for the wife of Odysseus, who long was unheard of.
She would neither reject our hated proposals nor end them,
Since she had plotted to bring on us all death's terrible darkness ;
Yea and besides in her heart this crafty device she invented :
Raising a spacious loom in the hall, she betook her to weaving,
Working a broad and a delicate web ; and anon she addressed us :
'Princes who sue for my hand—since dead is the godlike Odysseus—
Patiently wait, though eager to hasten my marriage, till fully
Woven this web, lest vainly I forfeit the fruits of my spinning.
Lo, 'tis a shroud for the noble Laertes, to wrap him, whenever
Bringing his destined doom low-laying death overtakes him ;
Else in Achaea's land might well some woman reproach me
Were he to lie, who possessed such riches, in want of a grave-cloth.'
So did she speak, and within us the valiant heart was persuaded.
Thus then all of the day at the spacious loom she was weaving ;
During the night she unravelled the web with her torches beside her.
Three long years with her secret device she befooled the Achaeans,
Till, when the fourth year came, and as season was followed by season,
After the waning of months, and when many a day was accomplished,
Then at the last (since one of her women who knew it had told us)
While at the loom her magnificent web she unravelled we caught her.
So she was forced, though sorely unwilling, to finish her labour.
Now when the cloth she had shown us—the great broad web she had woven—
Washen anew and as bright as the moon or the sun in his glory,
Straight did Odysseus arrive—by the malice of heaven from somewhere
Brought to the farm at the end of the isle where dwelleth the swineherd.
Also the well-loved son of the noble Odysseus arrived there,
Newly returned with his black-hulled vessel from Pylos the sandy.
These twain plotted between them a pitiful death for the suitors.
Then to the far-famed town they descended—Odysseus was later

Thither arriving than Telemachus, who had started before him.
Led by the swineherd, Odysseus appeared, in a beggarly raiment,
Under the form of a vagrant, a man right wretched and aged,
Staying his steps with a staff and invested in sorry apparel;
Nor could any among us suspect that the man was Odysseus
Suddenly thus reappearing—not even the elder amongst us.
So we attacked him with insults and even assailed him with missiles.
Long while thus in the hall of his palace he suffered in silence,
Quietly bearing the blows and abuse with a heart of endurance,
Till he was roused by the will of the Father who beareth the aegis;
Then, with the help of his son collecting the beautiful weapons,
Out of the hall to a chamber he bore them, and bolted the portals.
Also with crafty intent he had counselled his wife and had bid her
Offer his bow to the suitors and cold grey axes of iron,
Dooming us so to a trial that proved the beginning of slaughter.
None were able to master the might of the bow, and we could not
String it; the strength for the feat was in all of us utterly wanting.
Now when the weapon was just to be placed in the hands of Odysseus,
All of us raising together a din and a clamour forbade them
Give him the bow, how strongly soever he spake to demand it;
Telemachus was alone in his favour and spake with insistence.
So he was given the bow, long-suffering godlike Odysseus.
Lightly he strung it and pierced with an arrow the axes, and leaping
On to the threshold he stood, with the swift shafts poured from the quiver,
Terribly peering around—then smote prince Antinous dead;
Then at the others he loosened his arrows, the bringers of anguish,
Aiming unerringly. Thickly they fell, one over the other.
Then was it clearly perceived an immortal was present to help them,
Since all over the hall of the palace they chased us in fury,
Smiting around them to left and to right; and a horrible groaning
Rose midst lopping of heads, and the floor ran red with the life-blood.
Thus, O King Agamemnon, we perished, and e'en to the present
Lie our bodies uncared for anigh to the halls of Odysseus,
Seeing the friends and the kindred of none know aught that is happened,
Else they had come, and, washing the black blood out of the gashes,
Laid us on biers and bewailed—as is due to a man when he dieth.”

Then gave answer the spirit of King Agamemnon Atrides:
“Happy art thou, Laertes’ son, deep-plotting Odysseus!
Truly a wife thou wast granted to win surpassing in virtue!
Such was the excellent wisdom of peerless Penelopeia,

Odyssey Daughter of Icarus! So true she remained to Odysseus,
XXIV True to the love of her youth, that the story shall ne'er be forgotten,
195 - 232 How she was wise and was good; and for earth-born men shall immortals
Fashion the exquisite song of the true-souled Penelopeia;
Not as the daughter of Tyndareüs, who iniquity plotted,
Even the death of her lord and her husband. The song shall be hateful
Telling her story on earth, for on every woman for ever
Evil repute she hath brought, yea even on her that is upright."

Thus these souls of the dead held converse one with another
Down in the depths of the earth, in the mouldering mansion of Hades.

Now those others had got from the city and down to a farm-land
Beautiful, carefully tilled. 'Twas a farm that belonged to Laertes,
Even the farm he had won as the meed of his manifold labours.
Here was his home, and on all sides running around was an outhouse;
This was the barrack allotted for meals, and for sitting and sleeping,
Unto the bondsmen who worked on the fields as he willed to command them.
Serving within was an agéd Sicilian woman, who duly
Tended the poor old man on the farm-land far from the city.
Here when they came, to his son and his servants Odysseus addressed him:
"Go to the well-built house of the steading and enter within it.
Slaughter a pig for the dinner, the best ye can find in the farmstead,
While I shall go and shall look for my father Laertes and test him
Whether he knows me again and recalls me as soon as he sees me,
Or if he fails to remember because of the years of my absence."

These words spoken, his weapons of war to the servants he handed.
Quickly they went to the house of the farm; but Odysseus betook him
Unto the rich-stocked orchard, to seek for his father and test him.
Here when he entered and wandered amidst long rows of the fruit-trees
Neither was Dolius seen nor his sons nor a thrall; they had gone thence
Gathering stones to be used for the wall of the garden enclosure;
All had departed—the old man leading the way for the others.
So he discovered his father alone in the garden of fruit-trees
Spading the soil for a plant, in a doublet unseemly and filthy,
Ragged and patched, and with leggings of oxhide tattered and mended
Strapped to the calves of his legs, to afford a protection from scratches;
Gloves too over his hands to defend them from thorns and a goatskin
Cap on his head he was wearing—and thus he was nursing his sorrows.
Now when his son, long-suffering godlike Odysseus, perceived him

Wasted by age and by care, with a heart sore stricken or sorrow,
Dropping a tear he remained in the shade of a high-branched pear-tree
Gazing and striving with doubt in the depths of his mind and his spirit
Whether to fall on the neck of his father and kiss him, and tell him
All that had happened, and how he was come back safe to the homeland,
Or at the first to address him a question and thoroughly test him,
Thus as he pondered thereon this plan seemed surely the wiser,
First to accost him with words unkindly, in order to test him,
Purposing thus in his mind, came up to him godlike Odysseus,
While with his head low-bent he was spading the soil for the sapling.

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Then spake thus the illustrious son as he stood by his father :
“Gaffer, thou seemest to lack no knowledge in tending an orchard.
Verily well it is kept by thy care ; there’s nothing within it,
Whether a sapling, a fig or a vine, or an olive or pear-tree,
Ay or a plot in the garden, that shows not the care of thy tendance.
Still, one thing will I say—let it stir no wrath in thy spirit :
No good care on thyself is bestowed. Thou art aged and also
Wretchedly withered and worn and clad in a shameful apparel.
Sure it is not for neglecting thy work that thy master neglects thee.
Nay and in truth there’s nought of a slave to be seen in thy person,
Either in stature or face—Thou art like to a man that is kingly,
Even to one who is wont, when enough he hath bathed and hath eaten,
Softly to sleep, as is meet and is right for a man that is elder.
Come now, answer me this that I ask thee and clearly explain it :
Who is thy master ? For whom art thou working and tending this orchard ?
Tell me moreover exactly, that so I shall learn it for certain,
Whether I truly am here in the Ithacan island, as some one
Just now meeting me yonder, as here I was coming, informed me.
Rather a fool he appeared, and he seemed scarce willing to tell me
All that I wished, nor to listen at all to my words when I asked him
Touching a friend of my own, if he still was alive and existing,
Or if perchance he had died and had gone to the mansion of Hades.
Yea I will tell thee thereof. Do thou carefully listen and mark me.
Once I befriended a man in the well-loved land of my fathers,
One who had chanced to arrive at my house ; and ne’er was a mortal
More to be loved who has come from afar as a guest to my homestead.
Ithaca—so he avowed—was the land of his birth ; and he also
Named me a certain Laertes, Arceisius’ son, as his father.
So I invited him unto my halls and entreated him kindly,
Letting him richly partake of the plentiful stores of my household.

Presents I gave him as well—such gifts as we give to a guest-friend.
 Talents of well-wrought gold I presented him seven, moreover
 Gave him a bowl all solid of silver, engraven with flowers ;
 Also of one-fold cloaks and of wrappers I gave him a dozen,
 Beautiful mantles as many, and added a dozen of tunics ;
 Ay, and I gave him besides four women in exquisite handwork
 Perfectly skilled, fair-favoured . . the ones he selected and wished for.”

Wiping the tears from his eyes as he spake, thus answered his father :
 “Stranger, the land thou art come to is truly the Ithacan island ;
 Ay, but 'tis held in possession by men outrageous and wicked.
 Vainly moreover, alas, these numberless gifts thou bestowedst.
 Hadst thou but found him alive in the land of the Ithacan people,
 Richly with gifts he had made thee requital and sped thy departure,
 E'en as was due to the friend who began by entreating him kindly.
 Come now, answer me this that I ask thee and clearly explain it :
 What is the number of years since there in thy home thou receivedst
 That poor man—who, alas, was my son—if he ever existed !
 Ah, he was born to misfortune, and far from his friends and his country
 Drowned in the deep he is eaten of fishes, or else on the dry land
 Lies as a spoil for the beasts and the birds ; nor was able his mother,
 Neither was I who begat him, to mourn him and wind him in grave-clothes ;
 Nor did his wife, rich-dowered and true-souled Penelopeia,
 Raise the lament for her lord when he lay on the bier, as beseemed her,
 Nor close softly his eyes—as is due to a man when he dieth.
 Tell me however exactly, that so I shall learn it for certain,
 Who art thou ? Whence art thou come ? Tell too of thy city and parents.
 Where is the swift ship lying in haven that hither conveyed thee—
 Thee and thy valiant mates ? Or as passenger haply thou camest,
 Brought on a vessel of others, who landed thee here and departed ? ”

Him then in answer addressed these words deep-plotting Odysseus :
 “Well, I will tell thee the whole of the truth and will clearly explain it.
 Land Alybas is my home, and the palace I dwell in is famous,
 Since I am son of Apheidas, the son of the prince Polypemon.
 Also the name that I bear is Eperitus. Hither unwilling
 Over the sea from Sicanian shores by a god I was driven.
 Yonder my vessel is moored in a haven afar from the city.
 Touching Odysseus, the year is already the fifth that is passing
 Since from my home he departed and sailed from the land of my fathers.
 Born to misfortune indeed!—for the omen was good when he started—



ODYSSEUS AND LAERTES



Birds on the right—and I joyed when I saw them and sped his departure;
Ay and he joyed to depart; and the spirit of both was elated,
Hoping to meet some day and exchange rich presents as guest-friends.”

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Thus as he spake on his father descended the darkness of sorrow.
Clutching at dust and at ashes with both of his hands he outpoured them
Over his white-haired head, while groanings incessant he uttered.
Moved was the soul of his son, and a pricking he felt in his nostrils
Throbbing and forcing its way as he looked on his dear old father.
Forward he sprang, and he fell on his neck and embraced him, exclaiming:
“Father, ’tis I, yea even the son thou art longing to hear of,
Now in the twentieth year come back once more to my homeland!
Nay but refrain, I beseech thee, from groans and from tearful lamenting!
All will I tell thee—but great is the need no moment be wasted.
Every suitor is slain. In the hall of the palace I slew them,
Taking revenge on their bitter disdain and iniquitous actions.”

Then gave answer his father Laertes and spake to him saying:
“Beest thou truly Odysseus my son come back to the homeland,
Show me a sure and a manifest token, to make me believe it.”
Him then in answer addressed these words deep-plotting Odysseus:
“First look hither, I pray, and behold this scar, and bethink thee!
This was the wound that a boar’s white tusk on Parnassus inflicted,
Whither I went at thy wish and the wish of the lady my mother
Unto her well-loved sire, prince Autolycus, to receive there
Presents, that once when he came to us here he had solemnly promised.
Come, I will show thee as well in the terraced orchard the fruit-trees,
Those that thou gavest me once for my own, when I begged, as a child will,
Asking for this and for that as I followed thee over the garden.
Through it we passed just here, and thou toldst me the names of the fruit-trees.
Thirteen trees of the pears thou didst give me, and ten of the apples,
Forty of figs; and of vines here also thou mad’st me a present,
Rows full fifty; and each of the rows bore fruit in succession,
So that upon these vines there hung all manner of clusters,
Did but the seasons of Zeus from above make heavy the fruitage.”

Thus as he spake were loosened the knees and the heart of Laertes,
Since to himself he confessed that the token was sure that he gave him.
Stretching his arms to embrace him he sank in a swoon, but was holden
Clasped to the breast of his son, long-suffering godlike Odysseus.
Then, when at last he revived and the soul was recalled to the senses,

Once more unto Odysseus he spake and answered him, saying :
"Zeus, great Father !—Ye gods still live in the heights of Olympus,
Should it be true that the insolent pride of the suitors is punished !
Ah but I dreadfully fear that the whole of the Ithacan people
Soon will collect to attack us, and send forth messengers quickly
Hither and thither to call to their aid Cephallenian cities."
Him then in answer addressed these words deep-plotting Odysseus :
"Be not afraid, nor allow these matters to trouble thy spirit !
Come, let us go to the house that is standing anigh to the orchard.
Thither was Telemachus, with the cowherd and also the swineherd,
Sent by myself, and I bade them at once to prepare us a dinner."

These words ended, the twain to the fair-built mansion betook them.
Soon at the pleasant abodes of the farm they arrived, and within it
Found prince Telemachus and the cowherd and also the swineherd
Carving abundance of meat and mixing the fiery red wine.
Now when he came to the house was the old brave-hearted Laertes
Bathed and anointed with oil by the agéd Sicilian house-dame.
Round him a beautiful mantle she cast, and the goddess Athene
Drawing anigh made stronger the limbs of the prince of the people ;
Taller she made him appear than before and greater in person.
Then from the bath he returned ; and his well-loved son was astounded
Seeing his father before him in semblance like an immortal.
Opening therefore his lips these swift-winged words he addressed him :
"Truly I ween, O father, that one of the gods everlasting
Taller in body hath made thee and goodlier too in appearance."
Him did Laertes the wise addressing in turn give answer :
"Ay, and I would, O Zeus and Athena and Phoebus Apollo,
Such as of yore when I ruled Cephallenian people and captured
Nericus, strong-built fort that was set on a cliff of the mainland,
Even as such I had stood yestre'en in the hall of my homestead,
Clad in my armour, beside thee, to help thee in fighting the suitors,
Beating them back ; and of many a man, as we fought in the palace,
Sure I had loosened the knees, and made thee rejoice to behold it."

Thus did the father and son hold converse one with another.
Then, when the others had finished the work of preparing the dinner,
All of them seating themselves on the chairs and the benches in order
Put forth hands to the food—And shortly thereafter the agéd
Dolius drawing anigh they perceived and the sons of the old man,
Weary from work in the fields ; for to call them had hastened their mother,
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Even the aged Sicilian dame, who had reared them and alway
Lovingly tended their father when eld came creeping upon him.
These, when Odysseus they saw and had won in their hearts an assurance,
Stood there all dumbfounded in silent amaze; but Odysseus
Quietly speaking with words right gentle and friendly addressed them:
“Come, old man, and be seated!—and all of you cease from amazement.
Come! Though eagerly wishing to put forth hands on the viands,
Long in the hall we awaited thy coming, expecting you alway.”

Thus did he speak; but with arms outstretched came Dolius forward
Straight to Odysseus, and grasping his hand he uplifted and kissed it,
Pressing his lips on the wrist; and with swift-winged words he addressed him:
“Master belov’d, thou art come! and despite our longings and hopings
Never we thought to behold thee again! Now heaven hath brought thee!
Welcome and hail to thee! hail! May the gods all happiness grant thee!
Tell me however exactly, I beg thee, that so I shall learn it,
Whether already for certain the wise-souled Penelopeia
Knoweth of this thy return; or else shall we send her a message?”
Him then in answer addressed these words deep-plotting Odysseus:
“Father, she knows it already—thou needst not to trouble about it.”
So did he speak, and the other returned to his polished settle.
Likewise also his sons encompassed the famous Odysseus,
Giving him welcome in words and grasping the hand of the hero.
Then at the table in order they sat by the side of their father.

While these men in the hall of the farm were busily dining,
Swiftly the messenger Rumour had sped through all of the city
Bearing the news of the fate and the terrible end of the suitors.
All at the same time heard it, and thronging from every quarter
Gathered with groans and with moaning in front of the house of Odysseus.
Each then bare from the palace his dead to be buried; the others,
Those that had come from a distance, they sent each one to his city,
Giving them over to fishers on swift-winged ships to convey them.
Then in a body they went to the square, o’ermastered by sorrow.
Here when they all had collected together and formed an assembly,
Prince Eupheithes rose to address them, the heart in his bosom
Heavy with inconsolable grief for his son, his belovéd,
Antinous, who was smitten the first by the godlike Odysseus;
Yea and in tears as he thought of his son he arose to address them:
“Friends, ’tis a terrible wrong that Odysseus hath done the Achaeans.
Many a good brave fellow he took in his ships—and he lost them.

Odyssey All of the hollow vessels he lost and all of his shipmates.
XXIV Now he has come and has murdered the best Cephallenian nobles.
428 - 465 Up then, ere he escape and shall gain him a refuge at Pylos,
Or peradventure in Elis divine, where rule the Epeians!
Up! let us go, lest shame o'erwhelm us for ever hereafter!
Yea, for with bitter disdain would unborn ages recount it
Should we refrain us in fear and on slayers of sons and of brothers
Fail to avenge us. For me would life lose all of its sweetness.
Sweeter I hold it to die on the spot and to join the departed.
Come, let us go—lest crossing the sea these fellows escape us!”

Thus did he speak and his tears moved all the Achaeans to pity.
Now drew nigh them the singer divine and Medon the herald.
Issuing forth from the halls of Odysseus (for sleep had released them)
Unto the council they came; and all were seized with amazement.

Then did the wise old Medon the herald begin to address them:
“Ithacans, listen, I pray, to my words, for I deem that Odysseus
Nought hath designed and fulfilled but the will of the gods everlasting.
Yea I beheld it myself . . . ’twas a god immortal that stood there
Close to the side of Odysseus, in all things likened to Mentor;
Now in the front of Odysseus appearing the heavenly presence
Onward incited him;—now it was raging around as a tempest
Frighting the suitors; and thickly they fell one over another.”

Thus did he speak. Forthwith pale dread seized all the Achaeans.
Then uprose in the midst to address them the old Halitherses,
Mastor’s son, who alone saw clearly the past and the future.
So with a kindly intention he openly spake and addressed them:
“Ithacans, listen, I pray! Give heed to the words I shall utter!
Your own cowardly folly, my friends, caused all that has happened.
Neither myself did ye heed nor Mentor the prince of the people,
Begging you stay your sons from their senseless, iniquitous actions.
Thus great evil they wrought in their wicked infatuate madness,
Wasting the wealth of a man and treating his wife with dishonour,
Even the lord of the land—for they thought he was vanished for ever.
Now let it thus be determined: accept the advice that I give you:
None of you go!—that he find not the doom that he planned for another.”
Thus as spake upleapt to their feet with a vehement clamour
More than the half of the council; the rest kept quietly seated.
Not to the mind of the most was the word he had spoken, but rather

Eupeithes they approved ; and they hastily ran for their armour.
So when they now on their bodies had buckled the glittering harness,
Marshaled together in front of the wide-wayed town they assembled,
Eupeithes at the head of them all—in his ignorant folly,
Hoping to wreak his revenge for the death of his son, he was fated
Never again from the fray to return, but to meet with his doom there.

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Now did Athena to Zeus, great Father Cronion, address her :
“Father of gods, O mighty Cronion, the highest of monarchs,
Tell me a thing that I ask : what counsel is hidden within thee ?
Say, is it further of war and the terrible din of the battle
Now thou art thinking, or planning for peace and for friendship between them ?”

Her then in turn gave answer the Father who gathers the storm-clouds :
“Nay but, my child, what makes thee to ask and to urge me with questions ?
Surely the plan was devised, and by none but thyself, that Odysseus
Safely returned to his home should wreak his revenge on the suitors.
Act as thou wilt ! Natheless I will tell thee the way that is wisest.
Now that the godlike Odysseus hath punished the sins of the suitors,
Peace at the altar be made ! Let Odysseus hereafter be monarch.
Then let us make in their hearts this slaying of sons and of brothers
Wholly forgot : let them live henceforward in love and in friendship
E'en as in days long past, and let peace and prosperity bless them.”

Thus as he spake still more he incited the zeal of Athene ;
Flashing she fell to the earth from the glittering heights of Olympus.

Now when at last they had lost the delight in the pleasure of eating
Unto the others began long-suffering godlike Odysseus :
“One of you go and observe lest any approach to attack us.”
So did he speak, and a son of the old man Dolius rising
Went to the threshold, and looked—and already at hand he beheld them.
Quickly he turned to Odysseus, and swift-winged words he addressed him :
“Here be the men, quite close ! Quick, quick ! Let us hasten to arm us !”

Thus did he speak, and they ran for their arms and arrayed them in harness.
Six were Dolius' sons and three were those with Odysseus ;
Also the agéd Laertes himself and Dolius armed them,
White-haired warriors, forced once more to equip them for battle.
So, when they now on their bodies had buckled the glittering armour,
Flinging the door wide open they came forth, led by Odysseus.

Now did the daughter of Zeus draw nigh them, the goddess Athene,
 Once more likened to Mentor in voice and in bodily semblance.
 Seeing her there he rejoiced, long-suffering godlike Odysseus.
 Quickly to Telemachus his belovéd he turned and addressed him :
 "Telemachus, thou shalt learn—since now thou art come to the battle
 Where men mix in the fray and the victory falls to the bravest—
 Not to dishonour the race of thy fathers, who ever atoretime
 Unto the ends of the earth were famous for might and for manhood."
 Him sage Telemachus addressing in turn gave answer :
 "Yea, if thou wilt, thou shalt see me, my father (for passion incites me),
 Nowise bringing dishonour on those of thy race, as thou sayest."
 Thus spake Telemachus, and Laertes exulted, exclaiming :
 "Ah, how blesséd a day, dear gods ! Of a truth I am happy,
 Hearing my son and the son of my son thus vying in valour."

Then drew nigh and addressed him the grey-eyed goddess Athene :
 "Son of Arceisius, dearest by far of my friends and my comrades,
 Offer the grey-eyed Maiden a prayer and the Father of heaven,
 Then poise quickly above thee thy spear long-shafted and hurl it."
 Thus as she spake vast strength to his arm lent Pallas Athene.
 Uttering therefore a prayer to the daughter of Zeus the Almighty
 Quickly above him his spear long-shafted he poised, and he hurled it.
 Eupèithes was the foe that it struck—on the bronzen cheek-piece.
 Nor did the helmet defend him. The blade passed through it completely.
 Over he fell with a crash, and his armour rattled upon him.
 Then on the foremost ranks with his glorious son did Odysseus
 Fall with the edge of the sword, and with spears twy-bladed they smote them ;
 Yea, they had wholly despoiled them of hope of return and had slain them
 Had not Athena, the daughter of Zeus who beareth the aegis,
 Loudly uplifting her voice, called out to the fighters and stayed them :
 "Ithacans, stay, I command you, this fatal and furious warfare !
 Speedily settle the quarrel without more shedding of life-blood !"

Thus as Athene spake pale dread seized all of the toemen.
 Out of their hands, as in terror they stood, went flying the weapons,
 All of them dropping to earth at the sound of the voice of the goddess.
 Then, o'erwhelmed by the longing for life, to the city they turned them,
 While with a terrible cry long-suffering godlike Odysseus
 Gathering strength swooped down on the men as an eagle from heaven.
 Just at the selfsame moment the sulphurous bolt of Cronion
 Fell at the feet of the grey-eyed daughter of Zeus the Almighty.

Then to Odysseus addressed her the grey-eyed goddess Athene:
"Zeus-born son of Laertes, thou wise and wary Odysseus,
Hold! and refrain from the strife and the horror of mutual bloodshed,
Lest thou shalt anger Cronion the Father who speaketh in thunder."
Thus as Athene spake he obeyed and rejoiced in his spirit.
Then at the altar between them a treaty was made by the goddess
Pallas Athena, the daughter of Zeus who beareth the aegis,
Once more likened to Mentor in voice and in bodily semblance.

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