

Untitled Odysseus project

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Screenplay

By

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FIRST ROUGH DRAFT - ODYSSEUS11 2\18\09

FADE IN

WRITTEN: Twenty have passed since Odysseus, king of Ithaca, hero and freedom fighter left home to fight in the Trojan War and never returned. He is believed to be dead.

BOY'S VOICE(V.O.)

They were told the great Odysseus would never come back. That he'd abandoned his home for glory in battle. His name was no longer spoken. His exploits soon forgotten by all except a few. Now Ithaca, the jewel of the Aegean, was without a king. Odysseus' throne lay open and was the much desired in the ancient world.

EXT. ITHACA - PREDAWN

HELICOPTER SHOT OF THE SLEEPING ISLAND as the sun's first rays catch the craggy hills encircling the undulating, central plains. Ithaca is barren and rocky, the soil dry and unforgiving. Patches of green - olive and pomegranate groves, pastures. Goats and sheep graze. Crudely built houses made of sharp rocks here and there.

PAN TO a PRIMITIVE SHRINE to ODYSSEUS with the name written in gold *relief* lettering on the portico, overlooks the sea. Down below, a stretch of beach.

A strikingly beautiful woman, of regal bearing, scans the miles of ocean. This is PENELOPE (thirties), queen of Ithaca. She is simply clothed.

A holy man ACLINOUS, the SEER, attends her. She unwinds a brilliant purple cloth from around her and plucks out a single thread which she casts onto the breeze.

It's a daily ritual for her.

INT. ODYSSEUS'S PALACE - DINING HALL - DAY

TWO WOODEN THRONE-LIKE CHAIRS, crudely carved, side by side. These pieces of wood are the chairs of a king and queen.

Penelope's FIVE DRUNKEN SUITORS are sitting at the long table eating and drinking noisily. They're loud, uncouth and horny. PENELOPE sits at a loom piously weaving.

It's obvious to us she's putting on an act - she's too beautiful and regal to genuinely enjoy such a dull pursuit. The suitors are too stupid and arrogant to get it.

SUITOR 1

(slurred)

How much longer must we wait for  
your hand? The king is not alive!  
We're impatient to know your will.

He points at the LARGER of the TWO THRONE CHAIRS.

She replies, a mischievous sparkle in her eye. She's jerking them around.

PENELOPE

(graceful)

Ah, Lucas. We all know that not  
just any man can be king of Ithaca.  
Not just any man can take the place  
of Odysseus, not so?

She prompts a SERVANT GIRL with her eyes, to ply them with more drinks.

SUITOR 2

(amorously)

My sweet Penelope.

PENELOPE

A new king must know right from  
wrong, Lupus. A new king will have  
to fill the shoes of Odysseus.

LUCAS smiles. He's drunk and now he's enchanted by the servant girl. He gives her breast a little squeeze.

LUCAS

(distracted)

Of course, my queen.

PENELOPE

(coyly, indicates the  
cloth)

See? Almost there. Be patient,  
lords. Your time is coming.

They're turned on by this. She gives them a seductive smile. We know it's fake. They don't. Underneath lies the pain of not knowing Odysseus' fate.

EXT. SEA OFF ITHACA - ON BOATS - A NEW DAWN

MEN in peak condition, bearing GRUESOME SCARS of battle, thrust their oars into the sea with perfect precision. Their disfigurements - gouged out eyes, hacked off ears, stumps for noses, jagged scars, depressions in foreheads and skulls - mark them with an inhuman look. The disparate features and skin colors - and their armor - speak of FOREIGN lands.

Every RIGHT BICEP sports a tatoo of an A, encircled with leaves.

PULL BACK and THREE LONG BOATS manned by TEN oarsmen apiece, tows a heavily laden SUPPLY BOAT behind it. The supply boat sits low in the water, weighed down by HORSES and provisions. The boats cut an arrow straight course towards an island that rises out of a flat sea on the horizon.

At the helm of the lead boat a man has his sights set on the island which at this moment, with the rising sun behind it, seems to shine like a jewel. And so it is - the jewel of the Aegean. THIS IS ITHACA.

The sight of it elicits a roar and fires them with enthusiasm to plunge their ores in and cut through the water.

The LEADER is ANTONINUS(late thirties). His face obscured by a metal MASK with only his eyes and mouth revealed - the philtrum split in half by a seam of shiny keloid. The skin on his CHIN is puckered and shiny, tugging his chin to his neck - evidence of burning. His mighty shoulders criss-crossed with scars.

CUT TO:

The boats gliding in on the waves that break onto a remote beach at the rear, rocky side of the island. Reaching the shallows, a HAND SIGN from Antoninus passes from boat to boat - the signal for a detachment from each boat to put up their oars and leap over the side and guide the boats in.

One of them is a NUBIAN. This is ARCHEAS, the gladiator.

ALL COMMUNICATIONS ARE BY HAND SIGN. Instant, clear, silent.

CUT TO:

Blindfolded horses clatter off the boats. They are huge battle steeds, rippling with muscle. They barely hit the ground when their blindfolds are ripped off, their mounts are in the saddle and their massive hooves are grabbing the sand - urged on by the riders who aim for the hills, swords and spears unsheathed.

Antoninus on a black horse, watches his men spring into action. It's seamless. Clearly this has been planned. Every man knows his part.

CUT TO:

EXT. ITHACA - DAWN - LATER

Houses here and there. No sign of smoke from the chimneys. All is quiet. Unsuspecting.

THE THRUM OF HOOVES heralds the arrival of RIDERS. Archeas' distinctive head crests the hill first. The riders fan out and sweep their way across the sleeping island.

CUT TO:

A cluster of squat stone cottages next to an olive grove. A bucolic scene. Chickens still in their crofts. Sleepy eyed goats quietly nuzzle the dew laden grass.

A POOR PEASANT exits a house and crosses to the WELL, muttering soothing sounds to the animals. He starts pulling water from the WELL.

The SOUND OF HOOVES. He looks up with shocked surprise as dozens of men in all different styles of armor - but equally terrifying - appear out of nowhere and bear down on him. The riders are led by a burly BLACK MAN.

The farmer drops the bucket and tears towards the house. He's cut down before he reaches the front door.

SCREAMS...

CUT TO:

RIDERS chasing down fleeing people and cutting them to pieces. A FRIGHTENED CHILD watches the riders TORCHING HOUSES.

AN OLD MAN stands in the path of the horses.

OLD MAN

Stop! This is the island of the  
great Odysseus!

He is mowed down.

CUT TO:

A DEAD SHEPHERD is impaled with a SPEAR as riders round up his horses and livestock and herd them away.

CUT TO:

A MAN, with his terrified family gathered behind him, watches through their doorway as the soldiers slaughter some men who try and fight back. The man is PATROCHLUS, (40) a childhood friend of Odysseus and he's not so much afraid as he is taking stock of these strange invaders. He grips onto his hot headed son, PHEMIUS (15).

PATROCHLUS  
(shoves him)  
Tell Emmeaus. Go!

The boy takes off...

CUT TO:

Phemius arms pumping, races through the woods, clearing fences, clambering, somersaulting, streaking along...

CUT TO:

Phemius arriving at a hut - there's already a solid column of smoke coming from the chimney. Nearby, a pen houses a small herd of PIGS.

PHEMIUS  
Emmeaus! Emmeaus!

An elderly man pokes his head out of the door. He's holding his firing tongs. This is EMMEAUS, foundryman and swineherd, loyal servant of Odysseus.

CUT TO:

Emmeaus and Phemius springing into action - snatching up swords and spears from the cooling racks. They toss them into a large hole, hiding them, and then cover it over with a pile of firewood.

CUT TO:

The soldiers chopping the FOUNDRY to pieces, sending the anvils flying, scattering coals and instruments. Emmeaus watches expressionless from under hooded eyes, his hand on Phemius' shoulder.

CUT TO:

Riders descending upon the bay where Ithacan FISHING BOATS are getting ready for the day's catch.

A bustle of activity as FISHING NETS are strung between poles, splayed out to dry. DRYING RACKS are thick with salted FISH drying. This is the lifeblood of Ithaca. Clearly a thriving industry.

USING THE HAND SIGNS, the invaders attack in disciplined groups. THEY slash the nets, overturn the drying racks, cut the dock lines, overrun the boats, hack fishermen and the boats to pieces.

One by one, the vessels sink under the water leaving a trail of bubbles gurgling to the surface. BODIES bob face down on the swells.

On the shore, the water is a smoky red with blood.

CUT TO:

A WIDE SHOT OF ITHACA: Murder happening everywhere. Dead bodies littering pathways.

CUT TO:

STATUES OF ODYSSEUS face the rising sun and look down on the sea below. The riders sweep in amongst the forest of statues, smashing them to pieces.

Odysseus' eyes stare lifelessly out of his decapitated marble head on the gravel.

CUT TO:

Soldiers cordoning off the WELLS and tall brick GRANARIES.

SCREAMING AND CRYING...

CUT TO:

MID MORNING. The sun blazes down on a horrifying SCENE:

VILLAGERS are being herded to an open field for SELECTION. They're weeding out the old and sick, taking the pretty girls, separating the strong men from their families.

All around us women are keening, children clinging to their mothers. Husbands separated from wives. Old people culled like they're vermin.

Antoninus walks through the carnage unmoved. He smells the air. It smells like death. He turns to:

A FAMILY - a young BOY (TIRESIUS), his mother and PRETTY SISTER, the father.

A SOLDIER grabs the girl (TYRO) and throws her over his shoulder. The girl is kicking and screaming.

TYRO  
No, no! Help me!

The father launches himself at the soldier who cuts him down with one thrust of his sword. He collapses dying and the mother runs to her husband, cradling him as he dies.

MOTHER  
Marcus!

The mother turns to Antoninus.

MOTHER (CONT'D)  
Please...

Antoninus approaches her. Walks right up to her. She looks up at him. He is backlit by the sun and just a silhouette. We can't tell if he is feeling any mercy. The woman bows her head.

MOTHER (CONT'D)  
In the name of Odysseus, spare my family.

HER POV: Antoninus' armored legs. Suddenly, A SWORD PLUNGES right in front of her face down into her cradled husband's chest. She looks up in horror and within a heartbeat Antoninus' pulls his sword out of her husband and thrusts it right into her face.

The soldier makes off with the screaming daughter who yells to her younger brother, who has witnessed this with dumbstruck horror.

TYRO  
Tiresius!

Tiresius, mad with desperation, rushes at the soldier, biting kicking, yelling. The soldier thinks this is hilarious as he swats at the flailing boy. He gives Tiresius a hard kick that sends him flying.

MOMENTS LATER:

THE BRANDING OF THE MEN

All ADULT MEN, woman and child is BRANDED on their LEFT SHOULDER with the letter A.

A WARRIOR questions a newly branded man.

WARRIOR

How many guards did you say?

The tortured man is in extreme pain.

MAN

(rasps)

I told you, five.

FIND Patrochlus as Archeas brands him and his son, Phemius.

ANGLE ON A ROCK high and behind the mayhem.

Concealed, EMMEAUS, watches.

CUT TO:

Soldiers jogging with loads of sharpened fence poles on their shoulders, makes their way along the well beaten track that leads up to:

THE PALACE OF ODYSSEUS.

Strategically situated atop a prominent hill - back to the ocean, face to the valley. This stone edifice is stark, lacking all embellishment - fittingly for the abode of a warrior king. It is lightly, but proudly guarded.

THE CHINK OF ARMOR...

CUT TO:

A DETACHMENT of FIVE mounted soldiers lead by Antoninus, descends on the palace. Their faces are hidden behind MASKS.

Their arrival draws PALACE GUARDS out, weapons unsheathed.

PALACE GUARDS

Yield. Or die by the hand of  
Odysseus.

Antoninus' men dismount. They calmly approach the guards.

ON ANTONINUS, who stays on his horse, a silent mysterious figure.

SOLDIER

(stays on his horse)

Yield. Or die by the hand of  
Antoninus.

The Ithacan guards react immediately. They attack Antoninus' men. The defenders seem at first to have the advantage.

But they're quickly decimated by the superior fighters. Soon only one palace guard is left. He is beheaded.

Antoninus calmly rides his horse through the carpet of dead bodies.

CUT TO:

INT. ODYSSEUS' PALACE - CONTINUOUS

Alerted by the NOISE outside, the terrified suitors are panicking. They run for their WEAPONS piled at the side wall. Nobody thinks to protect Penelope.

Penelope grabs a SWORD herself.

SUDDENLY the doors CRASH open and SOLDIERS storm into the room. All hell breaks loose.

The suitors are too shocked to react.

Within seconds all five of them are slaughtered and the floor awash with blood.

Penelope stands back, shocked by the carnage. All around her, INVADERS are streaming into the palace.

She wields her sword, facing the men.

TELEMACHUS (20) rushes to his mother's side.

TELEMACHUS

Mother!

At that moment, a COMMOTION at the door and ANTONINUS clatters into the hall mounted on his huge horse. The horse raises its tail and shits loudly on the stone slabs.

He sees Penelope.

ANTONINUS

Greetings, Queen Penelope. Widow of Odysseus.

He makes an exaggerated gesture indicating the butchered SUITORS.

ANTONINUS (CONT'D)

Look at the riff raff courting a king's wife, disgracing the great man's house and home.

(pointedly)

You're welcome, madam.

Telemachus steps protectively in front of his mother.

TELEMACHUS

I am Telemachus. Son of Odysseus,  
the king of Ithaca.

ANTONINUS

(matter of factly)  
The king of Ithaca is dead.

Antoninus removes the BREAST PLATE he's wearing. A soldier hands it to Penelope.

Her knees almost give way as she touches his name Odysseus imprinted on it. The finality of it.

PENELOPE

When? Where?

ANTONINUS

The word is, after the battle of  
Priam he set sail for home, but  
got, uh, 'waylaid'.

Loud laughter from the soldiers confuses and frightens Penelope.

ANTONINUS (CONT'D)

Trust me. He's not coming back.  
(smile)  
My queen.

Mother and son are instantly aware that Antoninus is no savior, but the enemy. They draw back from the soldiers who have formed a threatening circle around them.

PENELOPE

Who are you? Why are you here?

ANTONINUS

To claim what is mine.

Telemachus, with a flourish, draws his sword.

Within milli-seconds the soldiers have Telemachus disarmed and thrown on the ground with a foot on his neck, sword at his throat.

Penelope fearlessly throws herself at the soldiers with her sword hacking them. She stabs a soldier in the leg. They roughly subdue her.

ANTONINUS (CONT'D)

Drop your sword or your son dies.  
It's your choice.

She is breathless. Cornered. She flings the sword away.

ANTONINUS (CONT'D)

Good choice.

Antoninus struts on his horse in the high ceilinged Great Room. Directs his speech at Penelope. While he speaks, his horse pees and we watch the spreading puddle creep towards Telemachus' face pressed into the floor tiles.

ANTONINUS (CONT'D)

Queen of Ithaca, no need to mourn.  
Odysseus died happy in the loins of  
the goddess Calypso. I am your  
protector now, and unlike Odysseus,  
I will never abandon Ithaca.

Penelope stares at Antoninus. She's holding down violent emotions. Then she drops the breast plate at his horse's feet.

PENELOPE

You are no protector. You're a  
savage.

He kicks her in the mouth (he is on his horse). She falls on the ground next to Telemachus.

Antoninus feels his own keloid skin on his face in a strange almost sexual way as his eyes travel over Penelope's exposed thighs.

ANTONINUS

A pleasing view.

(beat)

Fatherless Telemachus, I take you  
as my lieutenant and I will teach  
you how to be a man. Husbandless  
Penelope, I'll teach you how to be  
a wife again.

She spits out the horse piss and blood.

CUT TO:

Archeas, his platoon covered in blood and gore, assembled behind him, reports to Antoninus.

ARCHEAS

Long live the new king of Ithaca.

ON PENELOPE, chained and defiant. Telemachus impotent beside his mother.

Antoninus turns his face to her, a look of manifest malevolence.

ANTONINUS

Take her below.

Two soldiers jump to his command. She's clutching the breast plate. They tear it off her. She's kicking and screaming.

Telemachus forgets his own life, fighting for hers. He's pulverized in seconds.

ON ANTONINUS as we HEAR her SCREAMS recede. He's unmoved. From now on, the breast plate will always on Antoninus.

TITLE SEQUENCE. EVERY SHOT IS TIME LAPSE PHOTOGRAPHY AS WE WATCH TWO YEARS PASS BY ON ITHACA.

An eight foot fence grows around the perimeter of the palace, cutting it off from the island.

CUT TO:

Hanged men and women, their bodies pecked at by crows. In time lapse, the bodies decompose to skeletons.

The statues are pulled down boulder by boulder, reduced to rubble.

CUT TO:

BACK TO REAL TIME

DEAD QUIET. A child's filthy hands scrabble in the dirt. They grasp at bounty - a bird's egg. From hand to mouth. The lips gobble and crunch. The tongue licks the trickling yolk.

WIDER and it's TIRESIUS, the boy. He's gone feral. Wild child. Orphaned. Abandoned. Foraging.

This is what it has come to.

Darkness descending on the land.

INT. ODYSSEUS'S PALACE - MAIN HALL - DAY

Antoninus sits on Odysseus' throne at the banquet table. He's eating.

Across from him, standing, is Penelope. Her ankles are SHACKLED.

He throws a block of bread to her. It lands on the floor.

Penelope turns her face away.

ANTONINUS  
Not hungry?

He laughs.

Her eyes drift to the window. She looks out.

INT. PENELOPE'S CELL - DAY

PENELOPE'S FACE looking out of a small slit in the wall. Her only view of the world - the blue sea.

EXT. SEA - DAY

THE BLUE SEA. A BRILLIANT SUN BEATS DOWN.

SOUND of thrashing in the water.

In the distance we see a swimmer struggling to tow something through the waves.

As it comes closer, we see that he's towing a large piece of flotsam - a ship's beam. Draped over it, is the body of a man who lies motionless. He looks half dead.

CLOSER

The swimmer frog-kicks. Holding onto the beam with one hand he forges through the water with the other. The body of the other man is slipping off the beam. The swimmer grunts with the effort of trying to push the man back onto it.

The swimmer yells at the exhausted man, trying to force his limp fingers to grip onto the log.

GLAUCUS  
(groans)  
So many miles, I don't want to die  
at the end.

Glaucus lets out an exhausted sigh and slips under the water. We RECOGNIZE the TATTOO on the man's shoulder - an O inside a circle.

The swimmer hauls Glaucus back onto the beam. Unconscious.

The swimmer squints against the glare , The SUN, a fiery ball high in the sky.

ON HIS FACE as he scans the deserted ocean around him. He weighs it up. Do or die.

CUT TO:

IT IS NOW STORMING.

The swimmer tries with all his might just to stay afloat. He loses his grip on the beam. It is swept away by the waves.

The swimmer races after it, grabs the beam and the limp man on it.

CUT TO:

CALM WATERS

The swimmer wakes. How long has he slept. The man next to him is livid. Barely alive.

In the sea below the swimmer he sees a SPARKLE. LARGE FISH reflect sunlight as they swim underneath.

And then, in the distance, the swimmer sees: an ISLAND.

SWIMMER

You're home Glaucus. You're home.

The swimmer is ODYSSEUS (40), erstwhile king of Ithaca.

As he swims with the beam away from us, we observe his leaden arms fight the downward drag. It's an impossible distance. In his weakened state, he absolutely must drown.

EXT. ITHACA - SEA SHORE - SUNRISE - THE NEXT DAY

SILENCE. Water laps softly.

ECU the Odysseus tatoo. PULL BACK to reveal Odysseus prone, flat on his belly, his cheek squashed into the sand, beached in the shallows.

Odysseus stirs. The eyes open. His fingers embrace the sand lovingly. His own.

ODYSSEUS

Ithaca.

Odysseus pulls his aching body upright. His long hair and beard is matted, his skin salt caked skin, his lips cracked lips. His body is covered in fresh scrapes and gouges - all speak of hardship, a long and arduous journey.

The BEAM is lodged into the sand. No sign of Glaucus. He whips around, his eyes scanning the sea. He plunges back into the water, stirring up the shallows for any sign of his friend.

ODYSSEUS (CONT'D)  
Glaucus! Glaucus!

But his friend is long gone.

LATER

He staggers towards the cliffs that rise up from the beach.

At the rock face, his hands find TWO NAMES in childish letters, gouged into the chalky stone: *Odysseus* and *Patroclus*. He remembers.

CLIMB WITH HIM. His hands know these rocks well. He wolfs down some berries, finds a BIRD'S EGG and slurps it down.

LATER

Odysseus pulls himself over the top. He's breathing hard, exhausted from the climb. He drags himself to his feet.

This is the moment. From this vantage point, his land lies before him. He readies himself for it...

Then he sees it - everything laid to waste. He can't believe his eyes.

IN THE FOREGROUND - the remains of a hamlet. Barren fields, smashed walls, burnt out cottages.

He crosses through the dried ruts of a FALLOW FIELD.

His feet kick up something smooth and grey. He reaches down to pick it up. A human SKULL splinters in his hands.

He drops to his knees and sweeps away the soil - more crushed skulls, broken long bones. A baby's skull. He's come upon a family of skeletons.

He HEARS the sound of hooves.

He dives for cover inside the shell of one of the houses and waits.

A single rider, a SOLDIER rides up to the WATER WELL next to the house. Dismounts. UNLOCKS the cover to the well. Waters his horse while he takes a pee.

He's so close, Odysseus can smell him. He takes in the strange garb, the weaponry, the taut physique, the mask.

The soldier pulls back his mask to reveal brutal features and a blunt stump for a nose. He bends over and dunks his head.

Odysseus is eyeing the SWORD in the scabbard on the horse. He's about to make a grab for it.

The horses suddenly lifts its tail and farts loudly.

SOLDIER  
(shoving it away)  
Hey!

The soldier locks the well cover. Then gets back on his horse. Trots away.

Odysseus emerges from his hiding place. He has no idea what is going on. But he's parched.

He rushes to the well and tries to break open the cover. He's mad with thirst.

Finds a rock and bashes the cover until it breaks.

He gulps down the water.

He looks around. No sign of anybody.

ANGLE ON THE ROOF OF A HUT on the top of far hill.

He breaks into a run towards it, crossing the expanse of fields.

He passes more burnt out farms. A skeleton hangs from a tree.

ANGLE ON: MEN ON HORSEBACK patrolling the ridge.

They see Odysseus out in the open.

A CRY goes out.

RIDER  
Hey! Who's that? Get him!

Odysseus turns. Sees them. Changes course. He aims for the shelter of the surrounding hills.

The horses thunder towards Odysseus.

He's running as fast as he can.

He makes it to the wall of boulders. He's scrambling up them.

One rider throws out a lasso that whips back in an arc, the tail coiling around his ankles in a vice-like grip. He pulls and Odysseus is YANKED hard onto the rocks. His face SLAMS onto the crags.

The men vault off their horses. Odysseus puts up a struggle - but he's unarmed against four men with swords and daggers. They overpower him and throw him to the ground.

While they hog tie him and hoist him over a pole, one of the soldiers spies Odysseus' TATTOO.

SOLDIER

Look. He's a soldier from the army  
of Odysseus.

SOLDIER 2

I thought they were all dead.

SOLDIER

(laughs)  
He soon will be.

They haul Odysseus away. He lapses into unconsciousness.

EXT. THE VILLAGE - LATER

Odysseus tied onto the pole, is carried through the main thoroughfare of the village.

WE EXPERIENCE THROUGH ODYSSEUS' EYES:

Starved and ragged villagers step back, cowed, as they stare at the captive.

MEN laboring under the whip of soldiers.

A starving old man BEGGING for food, is kicked out of the way by a soldier.

SOLDIER

Get up, you lazy old bastard.

His eyes follow a MAN (EMMEAS) pushing a cart of butchered hogs. Emmeas stops to stare at the captive.

A soldier prods Emmeas with his sword.

SOLDIER (CONT'D)

Move along.

Odysseus recognizes Emmeaus, but he does not recognize Odysseus.

They enter an encampment outside the village.

They stop next to a CAGE with a man inside it.

EXT. COMPOUND - INSIDE THE CAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Odysseus, his hands are chained together, is thrown into the cage with the other captive who groans and begs for water.

Odysseus can SEE Archeas, the gladiator, who is sparring with an imaginary opponent.

The fisherman is delirious. He mutters randomly at Odysseus.

FISHERMAN

Who are you? This is my house! I'm  
in my bedroom and this is where my  
children sleep. And this is where  
my wife sleeps. Get the fuck out of  
my bedroom!

(moans)

Water. Give me some water, you  
bastards.

A guard comes to the cage and pees into the cage. The fisherman tries to lap it up.

Then the fisherman stumbles up to Odysseus. He pokes the tatoo on Odysseus' shoulder.

FISHERMAN (CONT'D)

But you all died in the war, didn't  
you? Gone. All gone to the worms.

(squints at him)

Are you Thanatos come to take me to  
Hades?

The guards poke pointed sticks through the bars of the cage, tormenting Odysseus. Odysseus bears the blows silently,

FISHERMAN (CONT'D)

(wild, staring eyes)

He is Thanatos, messenger of death!  
Be wary, friends, or he will take  
us all!

The man collapses.

CUT TO:

LATER

The guards return. They look in and see the fisherman lying motionless.

The one guard pokes the man with a stick. No response.

Then ANOTHER GUARD, KASSIUS, approaches. He is a senior guard and approaches with a JUNIOR.

KASSIUS  
(referring to Odysseus)  
Is this him? Show me.

JUNIOR GUARD  
Yes sir.

The cage is opened and the JUNIOR GUARD walks up to Odysseus. Odysseus stares up at the man. The Guard pulls on Odysseus' arm.

JUNIOR GUARD (CONT'D)  
Get up.

Odysseus doesn't move. So the guard tries to drag Odysseus, but can't.

JUNIOR GUARD (CONT'D)  
Stubborn.

He pulls on Odysseus again. Odysseus won't budge. The guard raises a whip which he brings down onto Odysseus back.

JUNIOR GUARD (CONT'D)  
Up!

He whips and whips. Odysseus doesn't move.

KASSIUS  
(smile)  
Stop. No need to be brutal.

Kassius enters the cage.

KASSIUS (CONT'D)  
(sarcastic)  
It's only fitting that after such a long journey, I do you the courtesy of coming to you.

Kassius steps up to Odysseus and regards him carefully.

KASSIUS (CONT'D)  
Hold up his arm.

The guard holds up Odysseus' arm. The tatoo is revealed.

KASSIUS (CONT'D)  
How many of the soldiers of  
Odysseus are left?

Odysseus is silent. Kassius nods to the guard. The guard swings his arm and WHIPS Odysseus. HARD.

KASSIUS (CONT'D)  
Speak, soldier.

Kassius grabs Odysseus' face. Turns it roughly to him. Nothing. The guard whips Odysseus while Kassius holds his face. Odysseus shows no pain. Kassius smiles.

The whipping continues throughout the scene.

KASSIUS (CONT'D)  
You're no soldier, you're just  
another beggar. Did you know the  
coward Odysseus let all of his men  
die? Do you still want to be a part  
of his army? Beggar?

Odysseus is now barely conscious.

KASSIUS (CONT'D)  
He's going to fight Archeas now.

ON ARCHEAS, the monster gladiator, in the B.G, as he practices swings his sword into a wooden beam. THUD.

The guards stare at the scrawny and bedraggled Odysseus - a poor match for the monster man.

GUARD 3  
(grumbles)  
He's half dead. That's no sport.

KASSIUS  
It'll be over fast.

He gives Odysseus a hard kick. The guards bring Odysseus shakily to his feet. They drag him out of the cage and chain his ankles.

KASSIUS (CONT'D)

(barks)

Lukas, cut that fucking tattoo out of the beggar's arm. Leave it on a rock to bake.

Two guards grip Odysseus, pinning his arms. One takes a KNIFE and brings it to Odysseus bicep. The BLADE penetrates Odysseus' skin.

GUARD

(chuckle)

I haven't seen a death match in a while.

ON ODYSSEUS. He looks in terrible shape. But his eyes are casting about for an escape.

In a split second, Odysseus seizes the moment. He pulls himself free from the two guards.

GUARD (CONT'D)

Hey! Get him!

Odysseus can barely walk and the guards are young and fit. So they watch and laugh - he's got no chance - and they lose crucial seconds.

In a flash, Odysseus is scrambling up the hill. It's rocky and steep. He attacks it like a mountain goat. He's fighting pain and exhaustion. The ropes tying Odysseus' ankles loosen.

His three pursuers are catching up on him. The steep, unstable grade is giving way under Odysseus' feet. Rocks are flying down the hill. Odysseus heaves a BOULDER loose and sets it in motion at the oncoming guards.

The boulder roars down the hill. The three guards scramble to dodge its path.

One guard is too late. A boulder hits him square on the forehead and he drops.

Odysseus heaves more rocks at the others. They fall back.

Odysseus claws his way up to the top of the cliffs. His chest is heaving. He drags himself up and moves on.

LATER

Odysseus making his way through the bush. He suddenly stops.

Hears the SOUND of BOYS voices and the THWOCK THWOCK of somebody throwing stones.

Odysseus presses his face against the rocks and looks.

THREE BOYS are pelting the DECAPITATED STATUE of ODYSSEUS with rocks.

Odysseus stares. He is exhausted and depleted.

The boys suddenly see this beggar and are shocked to silence.

The oldest one, we RECOGNIZE as PHEMIUS scoops up a rock and hurls it at Odysseus, who dodges out of the way. The boys scatter and scramble away.

The youngest one is curious. He lingers.

BOYS (O.C.)  
(yell)  
You idiot. Come away! The soldiers  
will kill us. Come on!

Suddenly a stone whistles through the air and hits him on the cheek. He screams.

BOY  
Ouch!

He holds his bloody cheek as tears spring into his eyes.

Odysseus' hard stare shows no sympathy as he watches the boy run to join the others.

Odysseus takes in the vandalized statues. His eyes burn with anger.

EXT. ITHACA - EMMEUS' HUT - EVENING - LATER

POV SOMEONE WATCHING from a few yards away, concealed.

Emmeaus, former servant of Odysseus is a bent man in his sixties. THROUGH THE DOOR we can see him tend a fire in the hearth. He nurses a painful hip.

The watcher stumbles over the stony ground. His body brushes against some bushes. We HEAR rasping breath.

DROPS OF BLOOD drop on the dry ground and stain the earth.

ON ODYSSEUS as he stumbles towards the hut.

MOVE WITH ODYSSEUS as he tries to focus on the hut, his vision BLURRING.

He drags himself into the open clearing.

Emmeaus looks up to see the figure of a man swaying on his feet. He grabs a stick and approaches cautiously.

Odysseus' ankles start to crumple and he keels over slowly, dropping with a final thump onto the gravel.

Emmeaus approaches the stranger warily. Kneels down. His eyes travel over the bloodied and ragged figure. The long curls and matted beard.

His eyes alight on the TATOO. They widen with concern and flick up and around vigilantly - checking if someone saw the man.

He quickly sets about dragging Odysseus by the ankles inside the hut.

Odysseus' eyes are shut. He looks half dead.

Emmeaus pulls him into the hut and closes the door.

EXT. ITHACA - LATER

The one guard and Archeas have been joined by another guard. They huddle over the dead body of their comrade. They're terrified. Whispering.

GUARD 2  
(trembling)  
How was I supposed to know he could  
run like a fucking jack rabbit?

GUARD 1  
You better find him or you're dead  
meat.

GUARD 2  
Let's go.

CUT TO:

The two soldiers and the gladiator confer and then take off on their horses.

INT. HUT - NIGHT - LATER

Odysseus lies prone on the floor like a corpse. Emmeaus is methodically cleaning his wounds. His hand stops on the tatoo. He peers at it. Then moves on. Under the ribs, he finds a JAGGED SCAR. This gives him pause. His eyes travel over Odysseus' face. A current of emotion - shock, disbelief then anger - jolts him. He puts a lid on it. Gets to work feverishly.

Emmeaus feeds a barely conscious Odysseus water.

DISSOLVE TO:

Under Emmeaus' watchful gaze, Odysseus sleeps deeply on a bed of goat and sheep skins.

EXT. EMMEAUS HUT - A NEW DAY

Odysseus wakes up. He jumps to his feet. Adopts a defensive position, ready for anything.

Then he sees Emmeaus sitting in the corner watching him broodingly.

EMMEAUS

Relax. I couldn't hurt a fly - even  
if I wanted to. Save your strength  
for the others.

He cocks his head towards the door.

EMMEAUS (CONT'D)

They'll be back, make no mistake.  
(Odysseus says nothing)  
If I were you, I'd swim back to  
where I came from. But we'll have  
to get that chain off you first or  
you'll sink.

He chuckles to himself. It's a mirthless chuckle.

DISSOLVE TO:

FLAMES. An iron prong glows red.

EMMEAUS (CONT'D)

(smiles)  
They thought they'd destroyed all  
my tools. Idiots.

Emmeaus uses the red hot prong to burn off the links of the chain that ties Odysseus' wrists together. Odysseus grimaces as the heat singes his skin.

The chains drop to the ground.

ODYSSEUS

Thanks.

EMMEAUS

Don't thank me. Thank my master  
Odysseus. Even if he did leave us  
in the lurch, I still stand by him.

ODYSSEUS

(directly)

Why?

EMMEAUS

Only a fool would ask why.  
(he points at the tatoo)  
There's no place for one like you  
here - not with that thing on your  
arm. It marks you for death.  
(a beat)  
Eat. You'll need it. For the swim  
back.

Emmeaus laughs at his joke. Odysseus serves himself food and eats hungrily. He looks like he's not listening. But he is. Emmeaus is curious.

ODYSSEUS

Maybe Odysseus didn't 'leave you in  
the lurch'. Maybe he wanted to get  
back, but couldn't.

Emmeaus bursts out laughing.

EMMEAUS

Then you are a fool. No one could  
stop Odysseus from doing what he  
wanted.

ODYSSEUS

So you don't believe he's dead?

Emmeaus thinks for a long time. His lids are heavy.

EMMEAUS

I don't believe he wanted to come  
home. He had more important things.  
Such as glory.  
(a sardonic smile)  
(MORE)

EMMEAUS (CONT'D)

But who am I, a humble swineherd,  
to sit in judgment of the great  
Odysseus?

Odysseus bites down on the question he's dying to ask.

EMMEAUS (CONT'D)

(throws him a titbit)

He had a wife...

(Odysseus looks up)

But no one's seen her for two  
years. No matter - I'm sure she's  
forgotten by Odysseus. As for his  
son - he sucks at the teats of the  
invaders.

ODYSSEUS

(appalled)

His son's a traitor?

EMMEAUS

What can we expect? The boy was  
abandoned by his own father and  
Antoninus treats him like a son.

Emmeaus lets this sink in.

EMMEAUS (CONT'D)

(a sly smile)

Have you had your fill, sir?

Is Emmeaus jerking his chain? Emmeaus slyly indicates the  
empty plate of food.

Odysseus pushes the plate away. He goes within himself.  
Tortured with guilt - and worry about Penelope.

ODYSSEUS

Tell me, Odysseus' wife...

Emmeaus sneaks a shrewd look at Odysseus.

EMMEAUS

You speak of Penelope, brother?  
The pearl of Ithaca. More beautiful  
than ever. Indeed, if Odysseus saw  
her, he'd fall in love with her all  
over again.

ODYSSEUS

(painfully)

Did she mourn his absence?

EMMEAUS

Most grievously. All joy was torn  
from her.

ODYSSEUS

(huskily)

Was she faithful to her husband?

EMMEAUS

(ruminating)

Twenty years is a long time.

Odysseus agonizes.

EMMEAUS (CONT'D)

She was faithful - to his memory -  
before the invaders. But after? I  
have no witnesses. Perhaps  
Antoninus charmed his way into her  
heart. Apparently, he calls her his  
queen.

Odysseus suppresses a groan.

EMMEAUS (CONT'D)

So. When are you leaving, soldier?

EXT. ITHACA - SAME

A LONG SHOT of the two soldiers and Archeas coming upon the  
three boys.

Archeas places the point of his sword at the throat of  
Phemius and asks if he's seen a stranger.

The smaller boy quickly speaks up. Points towards the cliffs  
where they'd seen Odysseus.

The boys watch the soldiers ride away.

Phemius cuffs the smaller boy on the side of the head.

EXT. CLIFFS - LATER

The soldiers are leading their horses, looking at the ground.  
The one stops. He sees tracks.

He gets down on one knee and examines the bare footprints in  
the sand.

Blood

He communicates with SIGNS their tracking strategy.

The three soldiers tether their horses and follow the tracks.

EXT. EMMEAUS' HUT - LATER

Emmeaus looks up, alert. Did he hear something?

He crosses lightly to the door and presses his ear against it and listens. We HEAR VOICES.

Odysseus grabs the heated prong from the fire. Emmeaus gestures for him not to move.

POUNDING ON THE DOOR.

VOICE (O.S.)

Hey old man, open up or we'll break  
it down.

CLOSE ON EMMEAUS as he opens the door to find the two soldiers and Archeas. They look dangerous under their flaming torches.

They shove Emmeaus aside and barge their way into the hut.

INT. EMMEAUS HUT - MOMENTS LATER

NO SIGN OF ODYSSEUS.

The leader's eyes do a quick scan of the interior for anything incriminating. Sweeps stuff away using his long sword. Pokes at the fire.

Then sees the empty plate of food.

SOLDIER

What's this?

EMMEAUS

Food.

The soldier bats him sideways to the floor. He struts around the small space, noting everything.

THE CHAIN

His eyes seize on it. He becomes very still. Unsheaths his short stabbing sword. The other two follow suit.

They all turn on Emmeaus.

SOLDIER  
(to Archeas)  
Take his head.

Archeas grabs Emmeaus' head and yanks it back exposing his neck. He raises his sword. He's about to behead Emmeaus...

Odysseus, air born, from the rafters, launches himself at Archeas, thudding into him with all his weight. He sends the massive gladiator flying onto the floor.

In one quick movement, Odysseus stabs Archeas and kills him.

The two soldiers (one of them had tried to cut out Odysseus' tattoo) stare in shock at Odysseus. One charges, his sword straight out. Odysseus hits the blade HARD with his hand, the sword vibrates out of the soldiers hand. In one move, Odysseus, uses the momentum of the charging soldier and pushes him past. Odysseus, then picks up the sword and thrusts it backwards, right into the soldier who had now turned back toward Odysseus. The soldier SCREAMS. Odysseus pulls the blade from his stomach. The soldier collapses to the floor and is SCREAMING.

The second soldier drops his sword and raises his arms in surrender. Odysseus brings his sword to the man's throat.

ODYSSEUS  
Lower.

The soldier gets down onto the ground.

ODYSSEUS (CONT'D)  
Lower.

The soldier lies on the ground. Odysseus has the blade to the man's throat.

SOLDIER  
Spare me.

Odysseus slowly pushes the blade into the soldiers throat. He dies a gurgling death.

Emmeaus, rescued from the brink of death. His face cannot conceal his adoration.

EMMEAUS  
(with emotion)  
Thank you, brother.

ODYSSEUS

(a shrug)

I couldn't leave you in the lurch  
again, could I?

A BEAT. Emmeaus stares at Odysseus. His eyes moisten.

EMMEAUS

(softly)

My king.

ODYSSEUS

You crafty old bastard. I didn't  
fool you, did I?

EMMEAUS

Of course not. What do you take me  
for? I wiped your ass when you were  
a babe.

A roar of joy. They bear hug, holding onto each other.  
Emmeaus has tears streaming down his face.

LATER

ODYSSEUS

Tell me everything.

Emmeaus sits down and relates to Odysseus what happened when  
the invaders came.

EMMEAUS

They came at dawn with slashing  
swords. They showed no mercy. Babes  
and men were slaughtered alike...

Odysseus listens intently, with rising fury.

LATER

THE TAIL END OF THE STORY

EMMEAUS (CONT'D)

...and that was the last time I saw  
her, my king.

ODYSSEUS

My whole kingdom is devoured by  
brutes. I've lost my wife and son.  
By Zeus, if I'd been here, these  
Barbarians would never have had the  
gall to overrun my island.

EMMEAUS

(gravely)

You did abandon your island. That  
is true.

ODYSSEUS

(shoots back)

I was called to Troy. I had to go.  
There was no choice in the matter.

Emmeaus says nothing. Makes no attempt to exonerate Odysseus.

ODYSSEUS (CONT'D)

(a challenge)

You think it is too late. That I  
should go and never come back.

EMMEAUS

(nodding soberly)

Maybe you should.

ODYSSEUS

If I stay there will be blood.

EMMEAUS

Your people will bleed rivers.

ODYSSEUS

One man against forty.

EMMEAUS

(fiercely)

One man who is worth thousands.

Odysseus' eyes flick up into Emmeaus' eyes that eyes burn in  
his wizened old face.

EMMEAUS (CONT'D)

(visceral)

Once a king always a king. Come,  
let's spread the news.

ODYSSEUS

Not yet. Let the invaders think  
it's some stranger who washed up on  
their shores. I will attack them by  
stealth. I will make them fear  
their own shadows.

EMMEAUS

Long live the king of Ithaca.

The two men stare at each other. This is a pact. Unto death.

EXT. THE CLIFFS - LATER

POV A WATCHER: Odysseus and Emmeaus drag the bodies to the cliffs and throw them over.

The bodies land in the tumultuous seas.

They watch the bodies bobbing in the water, drawn by the current.

ODYSSEUS  
The current will wash them around  
the island.

EMMEAUS  
And onto the beach.

ODYSSEUS  
(smile)  
For all to see. Let this Antoninus  
wonder and worry who the stranger  
is.

They HEAR a rustle behind them. Odysseus whips around.

THE WATCHER sees him and flees.

Odysseus takes off after the figure that nimbly disappears into the bush.

RUN WITH THE WATCHER - deep puffing breaths as Odysseus gains on him. He comes to a hidden copse and dives into a crevice in the rocks and starts climbing upwards.

Odysseus appears at the copse and sees...

THE THREE TETHERED HORSES belonging to the dead soldiers.

Odysseus skids to a stop. He realizes he's been led here. He scans 360 degrees.

A rock suddenly stings his cheek. He lets out a bellow.

A childish laugh answers.

Odysseus looks up. The boy, Tiresius grins down at him.

LAUGHTER from...

Emmeaus who limps into the clearing, laughing at Odysseus' ignominy.

He calls up to the boy.

EMMEAUS

Well done, boy. The king will  
reward you.

ODYSSEUS

(quietly)  
By ringing his neck.

TIRESIUS

(laughs)  
What king? He looks like a smelly  
old beggar.

Odysseus takes a second look at the youngster.

EMMEAUS

Beggar or king - what's the  
difference eh, boy?  
(quietly, to Odysseus)  
His name's Tiresius. They killed  
all his family. He's my eyes and  
ears on the island.

Tiresius appears in the clearing. He and Odysseus regard each  
other disdainfully.

TIRESIUS

You look like shit.

Emmeaus laughs.

EMMEAUS

(sparkle in his eye, to  
Odysseus)  
He reminds me of a boy I once knew.  
(tousles the boy's head)  
Now, to the horses. Good thinking,  
boy.

Odysseus untethers the horses. They each take one. As he  
hands the reins to Tiresius, he gives him a hard look.

ODYSSEUS

You've never seen me. I'm not your  
friend, do you understand?

Tiresius nods.

Odysseus signals for them to follow him.

They walk the horses away.

EXT. ITHACA - THE COMPOUND - LATER

Soldiers mill about. Gladiators are sparring in the ring.

The sound of HOOVES draws their eyes.

The three horses thunder into the compound.

The men take a minute to realize. They grab the horses and restrain them.

The lead horse belonging to Archeas is shying, his teeth worrying his halter. He's trying to bite at SOMETHING TIED ONTO his halter - something that terrifies him.

SOLDIER

What's this?

The soldier cuts off the LITTLE BAG and unwraps it.

He lets out a scream and drops it.

EXT. ITHACA - THE PALACE - LATER

A FULL SHOT OF THE PALACE.

Riders race up the path to the gate. The gate is opened. They gallop up to the front steps. Dismount. Rush inside.

INT. ODYSSEUS'S PALACE - LATER

A DARK ROOM. A SILENT SILHOUETTE of Antoninus sits on the throne. A man enters the throne room.

THRACE

(scared)

Master, a prisoner killed three soldiers. One was Archeas.

The silhouette is unresponsive.

THRACE (CONT'D)

We had him in the cage and he escaped.

ANTONINUS

What more?

The soldier comes forwards with the BAG and holds it out to Antoninus on the flat of his palm for him to take.

SOLDIER

This, master.

The soldier, with trembling hands, opens the bag.

THREE SEVERED MIDDLE FINGERS lie in the bag.

Antoninus shows no emotion. He plucks one up and holds it between finger and thumb.

ANTONINUS

Why this finger?

He gives the finger as he says it. He's realizing something. Processing that he's been sent a message: fuck you.

His eyes flick up to the terrified soldier.

SOLDIER

(stammers)

The prisoner bears the mark of a soldier of Odysseus.

Antoninus turns to an OLD MAN who is leg chained. We recognize ALCINOUS, the seer from the first scene.

ANTONINUS

This is the storm you spoke of?

ALCINOUS

No. This is not the storm.

ANTONINUS

(calls)

Telemachus!

Footsteps approach and Telemachus appears. He is formal and polite, but distant.

TELEMACHUS

Master.

ANTONINUS

Trusted lieutenant. Son. Antoninus has a job for you.

THE SOUND OF HOOVES AND SHOUTING...

EXT. ITHACA - PALACE - NIGHT - LATER

Riders gallop away from the castle carrying flaming torches

AERIAL VIEW as they make for the VILLAGE.

CLOSER on the leader, Telemachus. Using hand signs, he directs the soldiers to fan out.

MOVE WITH TELEMACHUS as he rides into the village.

TELEMACHUS

A stranger is on the island. If  
anyone gives him food or shelter,  
they will die. These are the orders  
of Antoninus.

He signs to his platoon. They jump off their horses and grab a man. They string him up and hang him.

There are screams and cries from the villagers.

TELEMACHUS (CONT'D)

This is what will happen to anybody  
who helps the stranger.

He waves at his men to move out.

ON PATROCHLUS who steps in front Telemachus' horse.

PATROCHLUS

Why are you still doing Antoninus's  
dirty work for him?

TELEMACHUS

I do what keeps my people alive,  
Patrochlus. More than you can say  
for yourself.

PATROCHLUS

At least I can hold my head up.

TELEMACHUS

Thanks to me you've still got one.  
Step aside Patrochlus. Or you'll  
force me to make an example of you.

Telemachus whips his horse and gallops away.

Patrochlus watches, burning with resentment. He hustles his family inside their hut.

PATROCHLUS

Stay inside. Speak to no one.

PHEMIUS

Where are you going? Can I come,  
father?

PATROCHLUS

What you don't know can't hurt you.

He takes off at an urgent jog.

CUT TO:

The platoon riding into one hamlet after another.

Each time, Telemachus oversees a repeat of the capture and hanging of a villager as a warning.

INT. EMMEAUS' HOUSE - LATER

Odysseus and Emmeaus are taking stock of what weapons they have.

We hear the sound of an OWL HOOTING THREE TIMES.

ODYSSEUS

Patrochlus.

EMMEAUS

You didn't forget.

ODYSSEUS

How could I forget my best friend?

MOMENTS LATER

Odysseus hides and watches:

Patrochlus bursts into the hut.

PATROCHLUS

That bastard Telemachus is killing villagers. They're trying to scare us into turning the stranger in. Have you seen him?

EMMEAUS

A stranger? Definitely not.

PATROCHLUS

(wags a finger)

I know you, Emmeaus - you never turn anyone away - but this time, if he shows his face, turn him in.

EMMEAUS

No stranger came to my door, I  
swear. Thanks for the warning,  
brother.

Patrochlus looks relieved.

PATROCHLUS

By Zeus, I hope they find the  
motherfucker soon.

He quickly ducks out of the house.

Emmeaus watches Odysseus quickly gather up a sword and a  
dagger and then fasten the belt around him, sheathing them.

EMMEAUS

And now?

ODYSSEUS

Motherfucker needs a length of rope  
and the blood of a swine.

Emmeaus asks no questions. Hands him the rope. Picks up a  
bowl of blood lying underneath a butchered pig hanging from  
the rafters.

Odysseus pours the blood over himself.

ODYSSEUS (CONT'D)

(a sparkle in his eye)

Is it true - you never turn a  
stranger away?

EMMEAUS

It is.

ODYSSEUS

Damn. And there I was thinking I  
was special.

Emmeaus cannot resist a smile.

CRIES filter up...(prelap)

EXT. ITHACA - MOMENTS LATER

...from the villages below where Odysseus stands and looks  
down over valley.

He can see A THREE RIDERS led by a tall horseman, making  
their way from hamlet to hamlet.

He plunges forth.

CUT TO:

Odysseus, under cover, stealthily bypasses a cluster of houses. Four bloody bodies are laid out. Women are keening over them.

CUT TO:

ON ODYSSEUS as watches the soldiers killing villagers in twos. They're systematic and brutal.

He betrays no emotion. They keep on killing. We're wondering if and when he's going to act.

The soldiers grab hold of the young boy who threw the stone. A tightening of Odysseus' features betrays that he recognizes the boy.

Odysseus readies himself.

MOVE WITH HIM as he picks up speed running down the slope towards the group in the clearing.

He breaks from the cover of the bushes and by sheer momentum launches himself at the soldiers.

They are startled to inaction by the bloody apparition.

Quickly, Odysseus approaches a soldier on the outside of the rest - stabs him through the back. Odysseus places his hand over the soldiers face and pulls, breaking his neck.

The two other riders turns to Odysseus. He stands before them, covered in their comrade's blood. Odysseus reaches for the boy and drags him back to his parents.

The soldiers are apprehensive.

LEADER

Get him you cowards.

One soldier takes a step forward and then the other rushes Odysseus.

Odysseus pulls the first man past him by the blade of the sword, turning the sword 180 degrees. Odysseus plunges the blade into the stomach of the oncoming second soldier. The second soldier falls.

Meanwhile, Odysseus twists the arm of the first soldier. The man falls to his knees.

SOLDIER

Mercy!

Odysseus snaps his arm, taking the sword and plunging it into the man's back, pinning him to the ground.

ODYSSEUS

Go look for mercy in Hades.

Both soldiers writhe and groan in agony on the ground.

Odysseus walks up to their horses. He takes the reins and leads the horses to a couple of SHOCKED men in the watching crowd.

The leader is still on horseback watching Odysseus, uncertain of what to do. He addresses the crowd.

SOLDIER

If you stand by this man, you will  
all die. Kill him!

No one moves. Like a tired lion Odysseus approaches the soldiers screaming in agony.

ANGLE ON TELEMACHUS arriving. He pulls up his horse to a stop, just short of them. He watches, unseen.

POV TELEMACHUS: Odysseus in action. Within minutes, he's despatched the soldiers. It's an amazing sight - this ostensible 'puny beggar' battling these young fit fighters. From his practiced moves, the man is clearly a seasoned fighter.

One by one he breaks their necks - under the shocked eyes of the leader. Their dying screams faded to an eerie SILENCE.

ODYSSEUS

Aah much better.

Then Odysseus gets up and approaches the leader. His horse fidgets uneasily. Odysseus' hands are raw from handling the blade of the sword.

LEADER

You have doomed this island to the  
wrath of Antoninus.

The gathered crowd looks to Odysseus for a response.

ODYSSEUS

(raises his hands)

The wrath of Antoninus is but a puppy compared to wrath of these hands. They thirst for your blood. Leave now, before I rip your head off of your shoulders and feed your brains to the fishes. If you doubt me, ask the Thebians how I tore out their tongues at the root and hung them on the tip of my spear to wag at them as their souls seeped into the sand.

The leader's eyes are wide with terror as he fearfully backs his horse away.

Telemachus jerks his horse's head around and gallops away.

ON ODYSSEUS attracted by the sound of hooves, turns at the crucial moment - just enough to see the departing horseman.

MOMENTS LATER

The villagers gather around Odysseus and shower him with thanks and praise.

VILLAGERS

Thank you, thank you.

Patrochlus and MEDON, the village elder and OTHERS appear. They take in what has ensued - the dead soldiers, the stranger wielding his bloody weapons and the grateful villagers singing his praises.

Medon (50) is a commanding presence.

MEDON

Who are you, stranger? We owe our lives to you.

ODYSSEUS

A soldier.

Patrochlus points at the TATTOO on Odysseus' shoulder.

PATROCHLUS

He's from the army of Odysseus.

MEDON

The name Odysseus burns my tongue!  
Look how he left us - as weak as  
chickens against these foxes that  
have overrun our island.

(offers his hand to  
Odysseus)

Greetings. I am Medon, the Elder of  
Ithaca. We won't hold it against  
you that you were with Odysseus.

(to the villagers)

Away now! Before they send more  
foxes!

The people quickly and fearfully disperse.

PATROCHLUS

(urgently, to Odysseus)

Come, soldier. I'll lead you to a  
secret cove. There's a boat. You  
can take it and get away from here.

MEDON

(hurrying away)

May Zeus be with you.

ODYSSEUS

And also with you.

Patrochlus urges him ahead. Odysseus pauses to call out to  
Medon.

ODYSSEUS (CONT'D)

Friend. Tell me, was Odysseus a  
good king?

A BEAT. It galls Medon to say this.

MEDON

(a burdened look)

He was.

Odysseus nods. They set off.

EXT. ITHACA - LATER

Patrochlus leads Odysseus down towards a crevice in the  
rocks.

PATROCHLUS

Stay close. It's dark down here.

They hunch down and creep on their bellies through the narrow slit in the rock.

PATROCHLUS (CONT'D)  
(while they're crawling)  
I've been coming here since I was a boy. Odysseus and I would secretly take the boat out. He and I were like brothers, once.

ODYSSEUS  
No longer? I thought brothers were forever.

PATROCHLUS  
Me too.

INT. CAVE - LATER

The emerge on a small beach inside a cave that opens to the sea.

PATROCHLUS  
Here we are. I'll get the boat.

Patrochlus exits and reappears dragging a small boat.

PATROCHLUS (CONT'D)  
If you launch from the reeds, no one will see you. Oh, I forgot the oars. I hide them in another place. I'll go and get...

ODYSSEUS  
No, I will. Wait here.

Odysseus springs away to the other side of the cave.

PATROCHLUS  
You don't know where they are. Wait.

But Odysseus has gone. Patrochlus becomes suspicious. Quietly draws his sword and waits.

Odysseus returns holding the two oars. Patrochlus raises his sword, ready to attack.

PATROCHLUS (CONT'D)  
Son of a bitch, you tricked us. You're a spy for them! Prepare to die, vulture's asshole.

Odysseus bursts out laughing.

ODYSSEUS

I love that - vulture's asshole.  
That's original. Do you have any  
more, hyena's cum?

Patrochlus yells with fury and makes a dart towards Odysseus with his sword. But Odysseus - who is laughing - is too quick. With lightening fast footwork, he trips Patrochlus and in seconds has him disarmed, his foot on his neck.

ODYSSEUS (CONT'D)

You should stick to your day job.

PATROCHLUS

(struggling)

Kill me now, you cowardly turncoat.

ODYSSEUS

If you insist - but I'm shit scared  
of your wife Agatha. She's quite a  
tigress.

Patrochlus quits struggling. Looks dumfounded. Odysseus removes his foot from Patrochlus' neck. Patrochlus slowly gets to his feet, rubbing his neck. He squints at Odysseus.

PATROCHLUS

(coldly)

I don't know you.

ODYSSEUS

Let me jog your memory.

OFF PATROCHLUS REACTION

ODYSSEUS (CONT'D)

When I was ten years old I went  
hunting rock rabbits with my best  
friend. We were having such a good  
time that we didn't notice how late  
it had got. Before we knew it, the  
sun had set and it was pitch dark.  
I fell down the cliffs and broke my  
leg.

He bends down and points at a bony bump on his shin.

ODYSSEUS (CONT'D)

A piece of bone was sticking out,  
right here.

Patrochlus stares at this, disbelievingly.

PATROCHLUS  
(shaking his head)  
Odysseus is dead.

ODYSSEUS  
(smiles)  
My friend was a real jerk to me. He yelled at me to quit crying like a baby. Then he carried me home on his back in the dark. He saved my life. The next day we made a vow, to be brothers. We sliced our arms here...

He shows the scar on his wrist.

ODYSSEUS (CONT'D)  
And mixed our blood together and swore eternal allegiance.

Patrochlus is overcome with emotion as he processes this. With wet eyes, he drops to his knees.

PATROCHLUS  
My king.

ODYSSEUS  
Brother.

PATROCHLUS  
You came back.

ODYSSEUS  
Ten years of trying.

Patrochlus' eyes brim with tears.

LATER

In the light of a small fire the two men talk.

PATROCHLUS  
How in Zeus name did Antoninus get hold of your breast plate?

ODYSSEUS  
It was torn off me on the final day of the Battle of Priam. I led the first charge - to clear a path for the long spears. The Trojans were waiting for us. A bitter battle, but we won the day.  
(MORE)

ODYSSEUS (CONT'D)

The Trojans broke the rules of war  
by not letting us collect our dead.  
They made a bonfire of dead and  
wounded alike. We heard the screams  
from the other side of the river.

Patrochlus is revolted.

PATROCHLUS

He is burned, that is true...

ODYSSEUS

(emphatically)

The name Antoninus of Algarve means  
nothing to me. He was no lieutenant  
of mine.

Patrochlus looks at him enigmatically.

PATROCHLUS

(wistfully)

I wish I had been by your side in  
the war, that you had not ordered  
me to stay behind in Ithaca.

ODYSSEUS

(smile, softly)

Brother, who else could be the  
keeper of my sword?

This draws a smile from Patrochlus.

PATROCHLUS

Your sword awaits you, lord.

CUT TO:

THE SWORD OF ITHACA stuck in a cairn of boulders. The  
crevices have been packed with pebbles and sand which have  
formed a protective shell as hard as steel.

Odysseus grips the handle to the hilt and pulls with all his  
strength.

The sword bends and creaks as if it might crack in half. Loud  
creaks and crunches as the casing starts to give. Finally, it  
splits and the sword slides out.

Odysseus wipes down the encrusted blade with his hand. He  
holds it in the air.

ODYSSEUS

The sword of Ithaca lives.

Odysseus grips Patrochlus by the shoulders and engages his eyes.

ODYSSEUS (CONT'D)

Loyal Patrochlus. Thank you. Now, I must gauge their strength and decide if we can take them on, alone without allies.

PATROCHLUS

There are only two allies we can count on. Memories are short, lord. And most are like Medon. They say you abandoned us for glory.

ODYSSEUS

What say you, Patrochlus?

PATROCHLUS

I will die for you, my lord.

LATER

Two men bow their heads to Odysseus. Patrochlus at his shoulder.

Odysseus lays his sword on each man's right shoulder as he says their name.

ODYSSEUS

Alexis and Leodamas. Hail, brothers.

ALL

Hail, king of Ithaca.

INT. ODYSSEUS'S PALACE - LATER

ANTONINUS

Kill a boy from every household.

TELEMACHUS

Master, I beg you to reconsider. The people are innocent. Give me another day to find him.

Telemachus waits, on edge, for Antoninus to answer. Antoninus unhurriedly gazes out across the ocean.

ANTONINUS

We came upon a detachment of Trojan youths at the crossing point of the river. They were lookouts for the army. We were ordered to cut their throats. Lovely boys in the flower of youth, flapping about like gutted mullet in the shallows.

(a beat)

What is innocence, Telemachus?

TELEMACHUS

(trembles)

My mother is innocent. For Zeus sake, Antoninus. Unchain her!

ANTONINUS

(smile)

At our wedding.

Telemachus stares at him.

ANTONINUS (CONT'D)

Sunset. Then we start.

CUT TO:

AFTERNOON - LATER

Telemachus and a platoon of soldiers searching for the stranger.

They come upon the ODYSSEUS SHRINE. They burst inside. A flock of NESTING PIGEONS bolts in a flutter of feathers.

Something catches Telemachus' eyes. Bends down. Finds a well worn leather amulet fallen off someone's wrist. He picks it up. Examines it. MILITARY INSIGNIA.

SOLDIER

From the wars.

TELEMACHUS

He was here.

Telemachus' blanches. Thwarted.

EXT. ITHACA - LATE AFTERNOON

Telemachus gallops up to Emmeaus' house and slides off his horse.

Emmeaus comes to his door. His face is hard and unsmiling when he sees it is Telemachus.

TELEMACHUS

Where is he? In the name of Zeus,  
tell me - before more blood is  
spilled.

Emmeaus' gaze is unyieldingly critical.

TELEMACHUS (CONT'D)

Don't look at me like that,  
Emmeaus. You think I'm a traitor.  
Judge me if you will, but tell me  
where the stranger is so I can end  
the bloodshed.

Emmeaus' lips are a straight line.

TELEMACHUS (CONT'D)

Nothing happens on this island  
without you knowing. Tell me,  
Emmeaus, before it's too late. I  
want to save my people from more  
suffering. Do you hear me?

Emmeaus starts to withdraw into his house, slowly closing the door.

TELEMACHUS (CONT'D)

If you're helping him, Emmeaus, I  
swear, I won't be able to protect  
you any longer. Don't force my  
hand.

The crack quietly closes - infuriating Telemachus.

TELEMACHUS (CONT'D)

I spoke up when Antoninus was going  
to kill you. I saved your life!  
(viscerally)  
You don't walk in my shoes,  
Emmeaus. You don't *know*.

PAN TO THE HILL BEHIND TELEMACHUS and find Odysseus  
listening, concealed.

HOLD ON HIS FACE as he processes what he has seen and heard.  
The pain within burns.

CUT TO:

SUNSET - LATER

Telemachus and his men ride up to palace.

A LONG SHOT we see him issuing the orders.

We HEAR SNATCHES of his voice.

TELEMACHUS

A boy from every household will be  
sacrificed until the stranger is  
turned in...

The soldiers ride out, baying like hounds.

MAYHEM...

EXT. ITHACA - LATER

THE MASSACRE OF THE INNOCENTS

Boys of all ages are wrenched from their homes and taken  
away.

FIND PATROCHLUS with Phemius.

PATROCHLUS

(urgently)

Run to the cave. Cover your tracks.  
Don't move until I come and get  
you. Have these.

Patrochlus' wife presses a bag of food into his hands. They  
kiss him on both cheeks.

PATROCHLUS (CONT'D)

May Zeus be with you, son.

Phemius takes off at a run.

AGATHA, his wife lets loose.

AGATHA

Why are you helping Odysseus murder  
us all? Let them kill him and leave  
us in peace.

PATROCHLUS

Hold your tongue, Agatha! You speak  
of our king.

AGATHA

King no more. You said yourself  
that he'd forgotten about us, that  
he'd...

PATROCHLUS

(interjects)

For Zeus sake, the man has been  
fighting wars - as a king should!

AGATHA

(shoots back)

What wars, Patrochlus? They ended  
ten years ago. Other soldiers came  
home from the wars, why not him?  
Where was your Odysseus?

Reading his doubt and uncertainty, she lays it on.

AGATHA (CONT'D)

Who will be next, Patrochlus? The  
wife of every household? The  
father? You? Soon there will be no  
one left - except your great king.

Now her turns on her.

PATROCHLUS

Never speak like that in front of  
me again. Never. Or you are not my  
wife.

He stares at her, seething. A turmoil of emotions boiling in  
him. He abruptly grabs up his weapons and exits.

She yells after him...

AGATHA

May Zeus curse Odysseus and send  
him back where he came from!

EXT. ITHACA - THE RIVER - LATER

FROM A HIDING PLACE Odysseus and Patrochlus watch the  
systematic rounding up and killing of the boys at the river's  
edge.

Patrochlus is shaken to the core by what he sees. Odysseus  
watches.

PATROCHLUS

In the name of Zeus, why?  
Slaughtering them like mullet!

ON ODYSSEUS who does not allow himself to look away.

PATROCHLUS (CONT'D)  
We cannot stand by, lord. Lead us.

ODYSSEUS  
Not yet.

PATROCHLUS  
(intensely)  
When?

ODYSSEUS  
When I say.

Patrochlus's glance is accusatory.

ODYSSEUS (CONT'D)  
(admonishing him)  
Patrochlus, there are too many. If  
we show ourselves now, it'll spoil  
our chances of getting into the  
palace. We must bide our time.

PATROCHLUS  
At what cost, lord?

ODYSSEUS  
Victory cannot be measured in  
numbers.

ON PATROCHLUS, conflicted.

EXT. ITHACA - THE VILLAGE

Villagers have gathered around Medon.

VILLAGERS  
(different voices)  
Tell him to go! The soldiers will  
kill us all.

ANGLE ON MEDON the Elder. He exchanges glances with  
Patrochlus. It is loaded with meaning.

He cocks his head at Patrochlus. Patrochlus looks away.

CUT TO:

PATROCHLUS  
Master, the villagers can't bear  
anymore.  
(MORE)

PATROCHLUS (CONT'D)

They say king or no king, you must  
turn yourself in. Or leave the  
island.

ODYSSEUS

How do the people know about  
Odysseus? Who told them?

PATROCHLUS

There are rumors, lord.

Odysseus looks at him knowingly.

ODYSSEUS

Control your wife, Patrochlus. Her  
mouth runs away with her.

Patrochlus shrugs.

Odysseus engages his eyes. He has this way of seeing into  
him. It unnerves Patrochlus.

ODYSSEUS (CONT'D)

What says Patrochlus of the  
people's demands?

A LONG BEAT as Odysseus tries to read him.

PATROCHLUS

I will die for you, my lord.

Odysseus places a grateful hand on Patrochlus' shoulder.

EXT. ITHACA - NIGHT

A SHADOWY CORNER behind the village. We see the SHADOWS of  
TWO FIGURES in whispered conversation.

They part. The one gets on his horse and rides away.

We get a glimpse of the other's face: MEDON.

CUT TO:

Telemachus reining in his horse at the base of the hill. He  
jumps off and scrambles up the crags to the top.

Telemachus arrives at the broken CAIRN where the sword of  
Ithaca had been planted.

He takes in the pile of rocks now strewn aside and the EMPTY  
HOLE that had housed the sword.

Telemachus is shocked by this. But it confirms something for him.

CUT TO:

INT. EMMEUS' HUT - LATER

In the BG Tiresius sits in a corner wolfing down food.

EMMEUS

It's a simple equation. If you leave, the bloodshed ends. If you stay, it continues. You can't argue with it.

(Odysseus does not respond)

I fear the revenge you come back to take, will recoil on your head, a bitter, deadly blow.

ODYSSEUS

Emmeus, my house is plagued with a swarm of enemies. What king would turn away from such an outrage?

(pounds the table)

I will put my fighting strength to proof in my own halls, Emmeus, and be master of my own house!

A smile breaks through Emmeus' troubled visage.

EMMEUS

Spoken like a true king.

MOMENTS LATER

Tiresius looks up.

TIRESIUS

I saw Medon talking to someone, late last night. I don't know who it was, but they came on a horse.

ODYSSEUS

Only *they* have horses.

EMMEUS

Medon is a traitor then.

EXT. A HOUSE - NIGHT

Under the cover of darkness - her face illuminated by a small oil lamp, Tyro speaks to Odysseus.

PATROCHLUS

Tell my lord what you saw.

Tyro is innocently and bravely beautiful. She is patently terrified when she speaks.

TYRO

It was exactly three months ago to the day. I remember, because it was the feast of Athena. I was sent to clean the under passage. I'd never been there before. I was scared. It was dark and quiet. I heard something. A tapping sound. I put my ear to the wall. Taptap, taptap. I answered: taptap taptap. I heard it again. We went on back and forth then I called out 'who's there'? No one answered. I thought I was imagining it. I was about to go when I found this...

She pauses, overcome with fear and emotion. Odysseus is hanging on her words.

ODYSSEUS

Speak up, girl. What did you find?

She opens her fist. A small braid made of purple threads, sits in her palm.

TYRO

I don't know if it means anything.

Odysseus stares at it. He knows this thing. He picks it up and handles it with the utmost care. Emotion floods his face.

Patrochlus jerks his head at her to exit.

She slips swiftly away and merges with the darkness, the pin of light from her lamp moving away through the inky night.

ODYSSEUS

We'll get into the palace and find her. Then we kill Antoninus.

PATROCHLUS

The guards...?

ODYSSEUS

Cut the head off a snake, and the  
body dies.

Patrochlus thinks about this. He shakes his head.

PATROCHLUS

We're outnumbered. It's impossible.

ODYSSEUS

That's what they said about Troy.

LATER:

PATROCHLUS

(awkwardly, respectfully)  
Lord, it's not my place, but...  
tell me, others came home from the  
wars. Those who survived, found  
their way back to Ithaca. Those who  
wanted to.

ODYSSEUS

(a burdened look)  
Did I not come back, brother?

The unspoken accusation hangs in the air.

PATROCHLUS

You did, lord.

ODYSSEUS

One day I'll tell you of all the  
trials. It'll take more hours than  
we have now. Let me promise you  
this, brother - in twenty years,  
not an hour went by when my heart  
did not burn with longing for my  
wife - and Ithaca

It is a challenge. Patrochlus nods, accepting this.

INT. PENELOPE'S CELL - DAY

ECU PENELOPE'S FACE. Thick fingers pinch her cheeks together.  
Her eyes flicker with defiance.

ANTONINUS

(smile)  
There are rumors, queen. That your  
husband is back from the dead.

PENELOPE

It's his ghost come back to haunt  
your evil deeds.

ANTONINUS

Or to attend our wedding?

She spits in his face.

ANTONINUS (CONT'D)

Bitch!

She struggles to get free from his grip. He won't let go. He pulls her face close up to his. They're nose to nose. She's repulsed, almost gagging with disgust.

EXT. ITHACA - AFTERNOON - LATER

TITHE DAY.

A procession of CARTS loaded with produce, rolls slowly up the road to the palace.

UP AHEAD, the SENTRIES patrol the perimeter ramp inside the wall.

FIND AMONGST THE CARTS : Patroclus pushes a cart load of butchered hogs.

Alexis has a cart piled high with water melons.

A group of laborers and serving girls reports for work. FIND LEODAMAS and ALEXIS amongst them.

The procession halts at the GATE.

The sentries step out to body search the men and get the servant girls to show the contents of their baskets.

The sentries turn this into vulgar sport.

ON TYRO as a soldier body searches her. She flinches, recoiling as he gropes between her legs and squeezes her breasts. He grips her chin and forces his tongue into her mouth. He laughs when she gags.

THE CARTS. One sentry drives his spear into the melons, spearing one on its tip. He drops it and it pops open with a sharp crack - like a skull - splashing blood red juice all over the girls.

A sentry decapitates one of the hogs and uses the hog head act like a talking puppet - presses it's snout against Leodamas and 'smooches' him.

The sentries find this hilarious.

Eventually, they wave them through.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON PATROCHLUS as he pushes the cart into the palace compound. He's in a state of high alert, sweat beading on his forehead.

ANGLE ON TELEMACHUS appearing on the entrance steps.

Patrochlus raises a nervous hand in greeting. Telemachus nods his head, unsmiling.

UNDER THE EYE OF THE SENTRIES

THE CARTS proceed around to the back of the palace.

They roll to a stop at the back entrance.

The serving girls file inside the palace. The men gather at a pile of rocks for breaking. They are each handed a MALLET.

Tyro exchanges a look with Leodamas who nods at her.

Alexis and Patrochlus start unloading their consignments.

PATROCHLUS  
(to a palace guard)  
We need help over here.

The guard beckons to the stone breakers. Leodamas, primed and ready, immediately breaks away from the group and comes to Patrochlus' aid.

They're slinging a carcass over each shoulder.

ANGLE ON ALEXIS and his cart of melons.

CLOSE ON HIS HAND as he surreptitiously reaches down to the WHEEL and removes the lynch pin.

A CRASH as the cart collapses under the weigh of its load, spilling the melons all over the ground.

ANGLE ON THE HOG CART

From under the pile of hogs, Odysseus suddenly breaks to the surface and hops out. He grabs one of the hogs from Leodamas and the two hurry side by side past the palace guards.

MOVE WITH ODYSSEUS, his face obscured by the hog carcass as he enters the palace.

CUT TO:

Odysseus and Patroclus drop the hogs onto the floor in the larder. Odysseus slips his hands inside the gutted carcass and pulls out swords and knives.

As they pretend to exit, they split off and dart down a side passage and hide.

Guards walk by, a hair from them.

Odysseus signals to Patroclus. They set off again.

CUT TO:

Leodamas waiting outside nervously. They're 'helping' Alexis fix his wheel - but they're really delaying their exit.

INT. ODYSSEUS'S PALACE - MOMENTS LATER

Odysseus runs down the hallway ducking into recesses to avoid detection.

ANGLE ON TYRO at the end of a hallway, sweeping. She sees Odysseus and signals that it's safe to come. She immediately hurries down some steps. Odysseus quickly follows after her.

MOVE WITH ODYSSEUS

Down the narrow winding stairs into an under ground passage - an ancient granary and storage area.

Tyro stops and point towards the end. She's not going any further. Odysseus nods at her.

She flees back up the stairs with her broom.

CUT TO:

Odysseus runs to the end of the passage, then takes an abrupt left turn into a small alcove where he waits for a second then darts into a smaller side passage.

A HEAVY WOODEN DOOR.

VOICES nearby...

TWO GUARDS are hovering. He approaches stealthily from behind and makes his move. In one quick movement he cuts both down. Drags them into an alcove.

ODYSSEUS

Penelope.

(listens)

It is I, Odysseus.

A long beat of silence. Odysseus is about to turn away, disheartened, when we hear a TAPPING sound.

Odysseus taps furiously in return.

The tapping answers at the same tempo.

Odysseus expels a relieved breath. All his pent up pain and fear dissipates. He presses his cheek and hands against the stone. He whispers her name over and over again.

ODYSSEUS (CONT'D)

Penelope. Penelope. Penelope.

CUT TO:

PATROCHLUS waiting, his sword and dagger poised. He's sweating bullets. He seems strangely anguished.

CUT TO:

The carts are empty and ready to go. Some guards have come up to Alexis belligerently.

GUARDS

Get out of here, you lazy dogs.

ALEXIS

Alright. Alright.

Alexis cannot delay them any longer. He climbs up on the cart.

The procession starts to roll forward.

The big gates swing slowly open.

CUT TO:

Odysseus hurtling up the stairs, three at a time.

He races along the passage.

Skids to a stop. Patrochlus steps out into the light.

ODYSSEUS  
(his eyes gleam)  
The girl spoke the truth about  
Penelope. She's there.

Patrochlus nods. His mouth twitches a smile.

PATROCHLUS  
Yes, my lord.

ODYSSEUS  
Now, to Antoninus.

Patrochlus, with stricken eyes is rooted to the spot. We  
assume fear. Odysseus gives Patrochlus a penetrating look.

ODYSSEUS (CONT'D)  
(claps a hand on his  
shoulder)  
You are with me, brother?

PATROCHLUS  
Unto death.

They take off down the passage.

CUT TO:

Odysseus, with Patrochlus steps behind him, moves stealthily  
along the open passage which runs above the large hallway  
below. They stop and peer over the edge of the balustrade. A  
glimpse of ALCINOUS, the seer, entering a room. Two guards  
exit. The door closes. The guards walk away.

ODYSSEUS  
As the girl said - Antoninus will  
be alone with the seer.

Odysseus waves Patrochlus forwards.

CUT TO:

OUTSIDE ANTONINUS' DOOR

Odysseus is ready with his long sword and his smaller  
stabbing sword.

He grips hold of the handle. Opens it slowly.

He turns around to signal to Patrochlus.

But Patrochlus is not there. Odysseus does a double take. Patrochlus is walking backwards, away from him, a terrible look on his face.

ODYSSEUS

Patrochlus. Where are you going?

Suddenly, guards step out of the shadows on both side of the passage way, swords drawn.

Odysseus whips around to see...

The door of Antoninus's chambers flung open to reveal Tyro, held fast and struggling by a guard. He pulls her head back and slits her throat. Lets go of her and she crumples to the floor in a pool of blood.

ODYSSEUS (CONT'D)

(yells)

Patrochlu-uuuuus!

Patrochlus stares, his eyes hard. Then he runs.

CUT TO:

The carts passing thru the gate. Alexis' cart is the last one out.

A SHOUT RINGS OUT.

GUARDS

Stop!

Alexis turns and looks behind him.

Guards running towards them.

ANGLE ON LEODAMAS as he jumps off the cart and stabs the gatekeeper.

He and Alexis, with swords drawn prepare to face the onslaught of the guards.

CUT TO:

Odysseus cuts his way through the guards. He swings his sword like a master swordsman, cutting them down one by one.

He is surrounded. Soldiers coming from all sides. These are overwhelming odds. He'll never get away.

They close in on him. Odysseus is keeping them at bay, fighting them off with all his strength.

CUT TO:

Odysseus RUNS OUT OF THE BACK DOOR OF THE PALACE.

He sees the gates closing. Alexis is fighting off the guards. Leodamas lies dead on the ground.

Odysseus dives onto a tethered horse and kicks his heels into its sides. The horse takes off at a gallop.

Odysseus' horse thunders up to Alexis who leaps onto the back and the two tear through the gates just as the gates close.

Odysseus gallops away from the palace.

EXT. PATROCHLUS' HOUSE - DAWN

A cock crows, greeting the dawn.

FULL SHOT OF PATROCHLUS' HUT.

The door opens. Patrochlus emerges, carrying a bucket. He walks across the yard to the well.

Pumps some water into the bucket.

Walks over to the pig pen. Opens the gate. Pours the water into the trough.

He suddenly stiffens. The point of a sword sticks into his back. He drops the bucket. Raises his hands. Slowly turns around to see...

ODYSSEUS

Brother.

Patrochlus is shocked, like he's seen a ghost.

ODYSSEUS (CONT'D)

Is it Odysseus you see? Or is it his ghost?

Odysseus throws him a sword. Patrochlus catches it. He stares at it, confounded.

PATROCHLUS

My sword? How did you get it?

ODYSSEUS

While you slept I came into your house. I watched you for a long time. I thought of our youth and all we had shared. There is no honor in killing a sleeping man.

(a beat)

Besides, I wanted you to know it was me.

Patrochlus blows up at him.

PATROCHLUS

Don't you see what you have done! Your madness has unleashed the hounds of hell on us and stained us all with blood. What hero is this 'Odysseus'?

He spits in the dirt.

ODYSSEUS

May the gods forgive you for your treachery.

PATROCHLUS

May the gods punish you for your folly.

ODYSSEUS

Swords out.

They touch swords.

ODYSSEUS (CONT'D)

On guard.

PATROCHLUS

On guard.

They attack each other swinging their swords. They put everything into this.

They are evenly matched.

Suddenly, Odysseus lunges forwards, his sword aimed at Patrochlus' heart. Patrochlus moves to block him. Odysseus feints, Patrochlus reacts...

Odysseus' sword drives clean through Patrochlus' heart. Blood gushes as Patrochlus crumples to the ground.

Odysseus drops down beside him, cradling his friend's dying head.

Odysseus weeps.

INT. EMMEAUS' HUT - DAY

TELEMACHUS

He must turn himself in or every  
living thing on Ithaca will be  
killed. No baby will be spared.

Emmeaus works on a sword. He doesn't seem like he's  
listening.

TELEMACHUS (CONT'D)

Heed what I am saying, Emmeeaus.  
Every living thing. There will be  
nothing left of Ithaca but stones  
and sand.

Emmeeaus turns slowly and gives him a withering look.

EMMEAUS

Would that include you? Not knowing  
which side you're on and all.

TELEMACHUS

I do what he tells me to keep my  
mother alive.

EMMEAUS

Or to spite the father who loves  
Ithaca.

TELEMACHUS

Let Odysseus show us how much he  
'loves' Ithaca. Tell him he has  
until dawn to leave or turn himself  
in.

EMMEAUS

(a taunt)

What makes you so sure it's really  
him, Telemachus? How would you  
recognize him?

TELEMACHUS

(scathingly)

By his tattoo. How else?

CUT TO:

Odysseus speaking urgently to Tiresius.

ODYSSEUS

Tell Emmeeaus to unbury the weapons.  
We must be ready to fight.

TIRESIUS

Can I fight too?

ODYSSEUS

(tousles his head)

I'm depending on it.

TIRESIUS

(beams)

Death, rather than dishonor!

ODYSSEUS

(amused)

Where did you hear that?

TIRESIUS

Emmeaus. He says it's crap.

Tiresius takes off.

EXT. WINDING PATHWAY - LATER

Telemachus' horse thundering down the sandy path from  
Emmeaus' hut, the horse's hooves sliding in the soft sand.

Suddenly the horse is brought to a dead stop, tripped by an  
invisible line across the path. A terrified whinny as the  
horse tumbles head over heels, throwing Telemachus off onto  
the ground with a thud.

Before he can spring to his feet, his head is yanked back and  
a dagger held to his throat.

Telemachus stares into the face of Odysseus who holds him in  
his lethal grip.

ODYSSEUS

Know this, son of mine, that I  
could have killed you had I wanted  
to. I choose to show you mercy.

TELEMACHUS

Kill me. I don't give a shit. You  
can shove your mercy up your ass.

ODYSSEUS

Then who would lick Antoninus' ass  
for him?

Telemachus emits a furious growl and struggles free. Odysseus  
loosens his grip and lets go. Telemachus dumps all his anger  
onto Odysseus.

TELEMACHUS

Don't you point a finger at me. I'm  
the one who's trying to save this  
island, while you try to bury it!  
Why did you come back? Don't you  
get it? No one cares about the  
great hero Odysseus anymore. They  
hate him. Not half as much as I do.

Odysseus throws his dagger and his sword on the ground. And  
offers his wrists and a length of rope.

ODYSSEUS

You save your island then.

Telemachus looks at him. Then leans down and gathers up the  
sword and dagger.

TELEMACHUS

Odysseus never surrenders. What  
trick is this?

ODYSSEUS

Get me into the palace.

TELEMACHUS

(laughs)  
You want to die?

ODYSSEUS

One last look at your mother.

TELEMACHUS

Twenty years too late.

ODYSSEUS

My love is undimmed.

TELEMACHUS

Always about *you*, huh?

He starts tying Odysseus' hands.

TELEMACHUS (CONT'D)

They say Odysseus is the craftiest  
of men.

ODYSSEUS

Try me.

Odysseus watches his son's face while he binds his hands  
together.

ODYSSEUS (CONT'D)  
You look like her.

TELEMACHUS  
You left her.

ODYSSEUS  
You were a babe in arms when I last  
saw you.

Telemachus gives the knot an extra hard tug.

TELEMACHUS  
And you're the same motherfucker  
you always were.

LATER

Odysseus walks behind Telemachus' horse, tethered by a rope  
attached to Telemachus' saddle.

ODYSSEUS  
That was an easy trick. The way I  
caught you back there. Child's  
play.  
(chuckles)  
We did that to a whole army once.  
Ten thousand Persians brought to  
heel with some rope.

Telemachus says nothing - but he's listening.

ODYSSEUS (CONT'D)  
Do you know where I got the idea  
for the Trojan horse? Right here on  
the island. When I was a boy we hid  
under some sacks in a cart inside  
that orchard.  
(he points)  
In the middle of the night we came  
out and ate all the apricots.  
(laughs)  
It was dark, so we didn't see which  
ones were green. We spent the next  
two days shitting. My mother - your  
grandmother - beat my ass blue.

ON TELEMACHUS' FACE. He's not going to get sucked in.

TELEMACHUS  
Good she never lived to see her son  
disgrace her.

ODYSSEUS  
(shoots back)  
Nor her grandson.

EXT. ODYSSEUS' PALACE - DAWN

The gates open in front of Telemachus' horse.

ON ODYSSEUS as he takes in the lie of the land.

ANGLE ON ALCINOUS seeing the strange figure behind the horse.  
Odysseus' full beard and long tresses make him  
unrecognizable. But Alcinous gets a feeling.

ALICNOUS POV: a sudden flock of PELICANS appears out of  
nowhere, their lumbering wings flapping loudly.

ALCINOUS  
By Zeus and Athena.

Then, CLOUDS suddenly muster threateningly.

ANTONINUS  
What sees Alcinous?

ALCINOUS  
Birds, master.

ANTONINUS  
And?

ALCINOUS  
Clouds.

ANTONINUS  
Birds and clouds don't make a  
storm.

Antoninus walks slowly towards Odysseus. He looks him up and  
down. He finds it hilarious.

ANTONINUS (CONT'D)  
(scornfully)  
Hail, the beggar king.  
(laughing)  
You look like shit.

ODYSSEUS  
Shit happens.

More laughter.

ANTONINUS

(pointing at him)

You've lost none of your sense of humor. Remember how you joked when we killed those boys by the river? Make them sing like girls, you said. How they trilled and squawked as we cut their little throats.

Odysseus frowns. Trying to place him.

ODYSSEUS

They gave away our position to the enemy. We lost a thousand men.

ANTONINUS

Tsk tsk. I forgot that little detail. It's all about numbers, isn't it? Lose a hundred to win a thousand, a thousand to win a hundred. What's the difference?

ODYSSEUS

Victory or defeat. That's the difference.

Antoninus thrusts his face into Odysseus'.

ANTONINUS

You don't remember me, captain?

(Odysseus stares at him  
blankly)

Why should the hero Odysseus remember a lowly foot soldier, food for the Trojan fires? I remember you. Every time I breathe, I remember Odysseus.

(to Telemachus)

Untie him. Come. I've got something to show you.

Odysseus follows Antoninus through the phalanx of soldiers surrounding him.

INT. ODYSSEUS' PALACE - GREAT HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Odysseus looks around the large room. In the center, a large gladiator's ring has been set up.

FLAMING TORCHES illuminate the room.

Overhead is a grand CANOPY (like a tabernacle) held in place by thick ropes at four corners. Secured to rings embedded in the stone floor.

ANTONINUS

Your son has been a great comfort.  
He's kept the peace. Until you came  
along and spoiled it all. You  
should've stayed with that woman.  
What was her name? Calypso.

ANGLE ON PENELOPE is ushered into the light. Her regal bearing undiminished by her captivity. Her ankles are shackled.

ANTONINUS (CONT'D)

So, my queen. Tell us, is this  
withered old beggar your dead  
husband? Your son believes he is.

She stares at Odysseus. Her eyes travel over him disdainfully.

PENELOPE

You insult me to suggest I would  
share my bed with this puny old  
goat. He's disgusting. My husband  
was a real man.

ANTONINUS

(amused)

Look again. It's been twenty years.

She walks in a circle around Odysseus, looking at him.

PENELOPE

(sensually)

Odysseus' eyes burnt mine when he  
looked at me. See this hand? My  
husband's veins stood out, blue as  
rivers.

CLOSE ON HER as she sees the SCAR under his rib. Their eyes meet for a second. But hers quickly move on.

Her finger traces a line down his back.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)

(touching his skin)

Between the shoulder blades, he had  
a birth mark in the shape of  
Ithaca. And here, I once bit him  
too hard - a game we were playing  
in the tunnel.

Antoninus who is turned on by this talk.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)

You think I don't know my own husband whose every inch of flesh I mapped out with my tongue? The stupid beggar has fooled all of you. Throw him back in the sea where he came from.

ANTONINUS

Seems like your wife has forgotten you, captain. Sorry.

PENELOPE

If you think my eyes deceive me, let your sword be the judge, Antoninus. Go on. Smite the impostor.

Antoninus smiles. He likes this game. He removes his sword from its sheath. He nods at one of his guards. They hand over a sword to Odysseus.

Odysseus stands ready.

ANTONINUS

I won't sully my sword with a beggar's blood. My lieutenant can do the honors.

He turns to Telemachus and throws him his sword. Telemachus catches it.

PENELOPE

Yes, kill the beggar.

Antoninus is unnerved by her reaction. He hesitates for a second.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)

Go on.

Alcinous falls at Antoninus' feet.

ALCINOUS

Antoninus, no! If he is Odysseus, you invite the vilest anger of the gods to set a son against a father.

ANTONINUS

(kicks him away)  
I'm not afraid of any gods, old man.

(MORE)

ANTONINUS (CONT'D)

I've already been to hell - in the  
Trojan bonfires. Odysseus watched  
us burn. Crackle crackle crackle.  
Squealing like pigs, we were.  
(campy, sarcastic)  
Oh those Trojans.

Telemachus intervenes.

TELEMACHUS

(barks)  
I'm ready.

Odysseus and Antoninus glare at each other.

ANTONINUS

Swords out!

The signal for Odysseus and Telemachus to raise their swords,  
touch the tips and launch into the fight.

THEY FIGHT. It's a terrifying fight. Telemachus is on top  
form - lithe and fit. Odysseus, although slower on his feet,  
a formidable swordsman.

Antoninus watches from Odysseus' throne. He's loving this.

Telemachus and Odysseus hurl epithets at each other as they  
fight.

TELEMACHUS

You abandoned your people.

ODYSSEUS

I fought the Trojans and won.

TELEMACHUS

You don't deserve to be king.

ODYSSEUS

You don't deserve to be my son.

The soldiers are going wild. They're excited that Odysseus'  
strength is flagging.

Telemachus is chasing Odysseus out of the ring. The fight is  
spreading all around the room.

Telemachus seems to be controlling the fight. They're both  
swinging wildly.

Telemachus forces the fight to the door. Odysseus has his  
back to it.

Odysseus takes a deep lunge and seems to drive his sword into Telemachus' side. Telemachus falls on one knee.

A LOUD ROAR of excitement.

ALL  
(chanting)  
Kill him! Kill him! Kill him!

Suddenly, Odysseus reaches out with his sword and chops at the ropes securing the huge canopy.

The canopy falls down on top of the flaming torches which catch fire with a whoosh - enveloping the room in flames.

PANDEMONIUM - SCREAMS, SMOKE

Telemachus springs to his feet. Now we see the plan. They're in it together.

ODYSSEUS  
Lock the doors.

Telemachus races to the doors and clamps them shut.

The men flee for the doors, but can't get out. Odysseus and Telemachus lay into them with their swords, chopping them to pieces.

ON ANTONINUS as he realizes what's happening. He grabs Penelope and bolts.

Odysseus sees. But he can't get to her.

ODYSSEUS (CONT'D)  
Penelope!

The flames are too high - the conflagration forming a barrier between them.

ON TELEMACHUS as a soldier comes from behind and stabs him in the side. He drops to the floor.

Odysseus despatches the soldier.

Odysseus is appalled at the sight of his wounded son.

TELEMACHUS  
Father. Leave me. Go!

THROUGH THE SMOKE AND FLAMES we see figures falling around us.

Odysseus heaves Telemachus over his shoulder, supporting his weight.

MOVE WITH ODYSSEUS stumbling under the weight of Telemachus who is holding his bleeding side.

The fire and smoke follows them down a warren of passages.

Odysseus is coughing as he dislodges a square of rock that reveals the hidden tunnel.

He scrambles into the tunnel. Replaces the rock.

He carries his son through the darkness.

CUT TO:

EXT. ITHACA - SOME ROCKS - MOMENTS LATER

Odysseus emerges from the secret tunnel where it opens out of the hill.

He lays Telemachus gently down onto his back. Telemachus is breathing stertorously. His tunic soaked with blood.

Odysseus holds his sons' head up, trying to help him breathe.

ODYSSEUS

We nearly did it. I'm sorry. Your mother...

TELEMACHUS

(a whisper)

Her love is undimmed. Go get him, father.

Telemachus weakly raises his wrist, showing Odysseus the amulet he'd found at the temple - the one belonging to Odysseus.

ODYSSEUS

I'll be back.

TELEMACHUS

I waited twenty years. What's another hour?

The emotion breaks through.

ODYSSEUS

What a son.

INT. CAVE - LATER

Odysseus arrives at the cave.

A VOICE calls out of the gloom.

VOICE (O.C.)

Father!

Phemius appears, looking terrified.

ODYSSEUS

It's me. Odysseus.

PHEMIUS

Where's my father?

Odysseus grips his shoulder and engages his eyes.

ODYSSEUS

You need to be strong.

Tears spring up in Phemius' eyes. He breaks down crying.

PHEMIUS

I hate them. Give me a sword. I'll  
kill them all!

Odysseus smiles at the boy's bravery.

ODYSSEUS

In the name of Zeus, revenge will  
be sweet.

They quickly set about gathering up the CACHE of weapons  
hidden in the cave.

CUT TO:

EXT. ODYSSEUS' PALACE - LATER

Antoninus stands before his remaining soldiers. They're on  
horseback, their horses skittish from the smell of blood and  
smoke.

ANTONINUS

(to Alcinous)

What of the storm?

ALCINOUS

Not yet, master.

ANTONINUS

If the storm won't come to  
Antoninus, Antoninus will come to  
the storm.

He laughs. Then raises his hands to the soldiers

ANTONINUS (CONT'D)

(yells)

Odysseus will be the king of  
nothing. No prisoners!

A LOUD ROAR raises up from their throats. The soldiers take  
off at a gallop.

PIGS SQUEAL....

EXT. ITHACA - LATER

As the soldiers plunge into a herd of pigs and chop them to  
pieces.

BLEATING...

As the soldiers drive a herd of SHEEP over the edge of the  
cliffs into the sea.

SCREAMS...

As the soldiers pull every living soul from their homes and  
slaughter them.

SMOKE AND FLAMES as the soldiers torch the houses and lands.

PAN TO ODYSSEUS and Emmeaus, with Alexis and the two boys  
Phemius and Tiresius. They observe the carnage.

EMMEAUS

What now, great king?

ODYSSEUS

To the river.

EMMEAUS

What for? To drown ourselves? Maybe  
a good idea.

ODYSSEUS

(to Emmeaus, pointing)

Build a fire. Up there. For all to  
see.

They all stare at him. Confounded. Mistrustful.

EMMEAUS

A fire? What for?

ODYSSEUS

When you are near, make it look  
like you're far away.

(to Alexis)

Get the heads. How many do we have?

ALEXIS

Leonides the carpenter made ten.

ODYSSEUS

Plant half in front of the fire.  
The rest on the lip of the hill.  
When I give you the signal, show  
the heads.

ALEXIS

What is the signal, lord?

ODYSSEUS

My runner will deliver it. He can  
run like a hare.

Tiresius smiles proudly.

EXT. THE RIVER - LATER

Odysseus digs a trench at the base of the hill leading down  
to the river. He's using his sword and dagger. Anything he  
has. The river sand is soft and it comes away easily. It's  
deep enough trench to snap a horse's legs - and a man's.

He covers the trench with branches.

He strings the rope across the path.

CUT TO:

THE HILL ON THE OTHER SIDE

A fire blazes like a beacon.

Silhouetted against it, the HEADS.

CUT TO:

REVERSE ANGLE:

Five riders charging down towards the river.

CUT TO:

Odysseus sends Tiresius on his way.

ODYSSEUS

Go!

Tiresius takes off up the hill.

CUT TO:

At the river, Odysseus waits under cover, holding one end of the rope. Tied to a tree on other end.

We hear the horses hooves approaching as they thunder down the hill.

ON THE ROPE as the hooves approach.

Sweat beads all over Odysseus. He's holding the rope to the last second.

CUT TO:

In amongst the riders.

THEIR POV: Silhouetted against the fire on the hill, HEADS are moving back and forth.

Blood lust excites the riders all the more.

CUT TO:

Odysseus as the hooves bear down on him.

He raises up the rope, tripping the horsemen.

CHAOS as the whinnying horses go flying, tossing their riders off their backs and into the trench.

The riders scramble to recover their weapons - but are set upon by Odysseus. He plunges into the fray, chopping the unarmed men to pieces.

CUT TO:

THE TOP OF THE HILL

Alexis and Phemius waving their fake platoon (wooden heads on sticks), cheer as they witness the carnage below.

Tiresius does a triumphant jig.

THE SOUND OF HOOVES makes them turn around.

To their horror, three riders are storming up the hill from behind.

The two drop their sticks and run for their lives.

Phemius is chased down by a mounted soldier. He fights back bravely.

Another rider joins in. Now he's fighting two. He's hopelessly overwhelmed. The soldiers run him through, one after another.

Phemius drops to the ground, dead.

CUT TO:

Tiresius running as fast as he can down the hill back to Odysseus.

The third rider sees him. Pulls away from the group and takes off after him.

RUN WITH TIRESIUS. Breathing hard, the eight-year old tears down the hill.

ANGLE ON ODYSSEUS seeing this.

ODYSSEUS

Tiresius!

Tiresius looks behind him. Terrified, he sees the rider coming after him.

Odysseus running towards him, his sword raised and ready, trying to intercept the rider.

Tiresius is just ten feet away.

The rider catches up with him, raises his sword...

Odysseus launches himself at the horseman. He swings his sword wildly, unseating the rider. He stands over the fallen soldier, stabbing and stabbing at him.

Odysseus is covered in blood. He looks wild and crazy.

Tiresius is staring at him in shock.

Odysseus picks him up. Holds him in his arms with relief.

ODYSSEUS (CONT'D)

Brave lad. One more thing for your king.

PULL BACK as Odysseus gives him instructions. The boy takes off running away through the hills.

ODYSSEUS (CONT'D)  
Antoninus!

PULL UP AND OUT on this as the CALL ECHOES over the island.

WIDER, LOOKING DOWN ON THE ISLAND:

As the remaining soldiers down to their last men, decimate the population.

CUT TO:

A BABY, mewling in the grass. Blood smeared. Dropped beside his dead mother - Agatha, Patrochlus' wife.

CUT TO:

EXT. ODYSSEUS' PALACE - LATER - EVENING

A deathly silence.

The gate is wide open. The gatekeeper lies dead in his own blood.

ON ODYSSEUS standing in the gate way.

Inside, the compound, an eerie stillness. No one is about. It's like a ghost town.

Smoke still burns from the blackened RAFTERS of the MAIN HALL.

Odysseus stands ready with his sword. He repeats his call to arms.

ODYSSEUS  
(a bellow)  
Antoninu-uuuus!

His voice echoes.

Suddenly, HOOVES invade the silence, spooking us.

A crazed, riderless horse clatters into the compound. He's got blood on his flanks, his eyes rolling with terror, his sides heaving. He stands in place, stamping his hooves. Beached. Rudderless.

He's Antoninus' horse.

MOVE WITH ODYSSEUS as he enters the palace

UP THE STEPS INTO THE MAIN HALL

The burnt out main hall - where the canopy ignited - charred bodies are littered about in grotesque death poses.

FEET swing slowly into his eye line. He dodges his head to avoid them. We recognize the soft slippers of...

Alcinous, the seer. He's hanging from a HOOK.

Odysseus touches the foot lightly.

ODYSSEUS (CONT'D)  
(huskily)  
Brave Alcinous.

TRACK ALONG THE PASSAGES

Odysseus wields his sword, ready for an attack. He makes his way defensively, his eyes scanning from side to side.

Down the stairs to the under passage.

Along the narrow passage to the large WOODEN DOOR which is...

OPEN.

He steels himself, with dread. He goes in...

Gloom.

A SLANT OF LIGHT from a narrow rectangular slot cut out of the rock, illuminates...

A bed. A candle. A stool. An ankle shackle, opened.

ODYSSEUS (CONT'D)  
You bastard.

On the floor, the PURPLE shawl. He drops down, picking it up. Holds the shawl to his face. Breathing in the smell of her.

He's maddened with anger.

CUT TO:

HIGHEST POINT OF THE PALACE

Odysseus's eyes search the empty landscape under the reddening sky.

ODYSSEUS  
(urgently, to himself)  
Zeus, where is she?

A rush of wings, and a PELICAN launches itself from the roof and flies slowly over the island.

ODYSSEUS POV:

On the sky line. A figure, tied to a pole. Like a sentinel. Even from here, we can see it's a WOMAN, her skirt flapping in the breeze.

Odysseus is horrified to the core. His worst fear.

ODYSSEUS (CONT'D)  
No. No!

Odysseus running down the steps of the palace.

CUT TO:

Odysseus grabs the horse by its halter and swings himself onto its back.

He digs his heels in and gallops out of the compound.

EXT. ITHACA - CONTINUOUS

Odysseus urges the horse towards the figure.

He passes some villagers slaughtered. They call out to him...

VILLAGERS  
Help us! Help us!

Odysseus yanks in the reins, pulling the horse to an about turn.

But the FIGURE on the hill, pulls his eyes. He can't stop. He kicks the horse's flanks and takes off, ignoring their cries.

CUT TO:

Odysseus closing in on the figure. He slows the horse to a trot.

He can't bear to go closer. He gets off the horse and approaches with trepidation. His breath is shallow, his heart racing.

ODYSSEUS

Penelope.

She is backlit by the setting sun. We can't make out her features. Her head is slumped onto her chest. Her body limp - supported in the standing position by the ropes securing her to the pole.

Odysseus reaches her. He slowly walks around her, fearing what he might see. Clearly she is dead.

He lifts her head up.

It's not Penelope. It's a young girl. Her neck slit from ear to ear.

Odysseus gasps and let's her head slump back onto her chest.

He whips around. Realizing he's been led into a trap.

Then he sees...

A moving figure running down the path to the sandy inlet below. It is Antoninus.

The sound of a horse approaching. Odysseus braces himself.

It is Alexis.

ALEXIS

Lord, there are women and children  
sheltering in the temple. The  
soldiers are burning them out.  
Come, I beg of you!

ODYSSEUS

(bellows)  
Antoninu-uuuuus!

ALEXIS

The people, lord. What of the  
people?

But Odysseus is already half way down the hill.

CUT TO:

ANTONINUS is dragging Patroclus' boat out of the sea grass.

He looks up.

POV ANTONINUS: Odysseus hurtling down the winding path to the beach.

Antoninus unhurriedly drags the boat into the shallows.

CUT TO:

Odysseus bursts onto the beach. He races towards Antoninus.

Antoninus has one foot in the boat, about to launch it.

Odysseus plunges into the water.

ODYSSEUS

Where is she?

ANTONINUS

Gone to Hades to be ravished by all  
the men you slaughtered.

Antoninus grabs an oar and swings it at Odysseus' head,  
batting him sideways into the water.

Odysseus' sword falls into the sea.

Odysseus surfaces and grabs onto the side of the boat.  
Antoninus hammers at his hands with the oar.

Antoninus overbalances, the boat starts rocking and turns  
over, throwing Antoninus into the water.

A fight to the death in the sea as the two men, with water at  
waist height, wrestle with each other with their bare hands.

They're half drowning and strangling each other. A wave  
breaks over them and washes them onto the sand.

Their swords and daggers churn about in the sand. They  
scramble to retrieve them.

Now they're chopping and stabbing each other. Odysseus dives  
for Antoninus and plunges his dagger into Antoninus' chest.

He rips off his mask.

Odysseus is shocked by the disfigured monster he sees.  
Antoninus' face has been burned off - he's a blackened skull  
with shiny puckered skin.

Antoninus lies back cackling, a ghastly ghoulish laugh.

ANTONINUS (CONT'D)

Do you remember me now, captain?  
The platoon from Pylos. You sent us  
back to fetch the brave king's  
breastplate. Our lives were  
expendable, not his.

(MORE)

ANTONINUS (CONT'D)

No, we could *burn*.

(a beat)

Feast your eyes on what you took  
from me, captain. Remember me in  
your dreams - that I took *all* from  
the hero Odysseus - his wife, his  
son, his island.

Odysseus drops next to him, shaking him.

ODYSSEUS

(holds the dagger)

Where is she? I'll peel you like a  
fig.

ANTONINUS

(gagging and laughing)

Hail the king of Ithaca. The king  
of nothing!

ODYSSEUS

Hear this, Antoninus. You dog. You  
never imagined I'd return from  
Troy. You bled my house to death,  
ravished my serving women, abused  
my wife. No fear of the gods who  
rule the sky, no fear that men's  
revenge might arrive someday. Now  
your doom is sealed. May the  
vultures eat your corpse!

Blood is spurting out of Antoninus' mouth.

Odysseus grabs his sword and plants it into the sand.

ODYSSEUS (CONT'D)

Better the king of nothing, than  
king without honor.

Antoninus chokes in his blood and dies.

Odysseus staggers to his feet. He's bloody and exhausted. He  
wades into the sea. Dunks his head in the waves and washes  
all the blood off himself.

He pulls up his sword and makes for the cliffs.

As he looks up, he sees someone standing on the lip of the  
cliffs.

A woman.

He breaks into a run...

EXT. ITHACA - LATER - SUNSET

Penelope and Odysseus. They stare. Taking in everything. They banter with each other.

ODYSSEUS  
Puny old goat? Thanks.

She smiles.

PENELOPE  
'Puny' was a bit over the top, I guess.

ODYSSEUS  
Odysseus has no birthmark on his back. But I know someone else...

He walks around her. Pulls the top of her dress gently down her back to reveal a birth mark.

ODYSSEUS (CONT'D)  
...who does.

She turns to him. They're up close.

PENELOPE  
I never bit him on his arm. I bit him...

They both touch the same spot next to his nipple.

ODYSSEUS  
Here.

He holds onto her hand. Kisses the fingers.

PENELOPE  
I always feared someone might come to Ithaca and beguile me and pretend to be Odysseus. I had to be sure.

ODYSSEUS  
You are the craftiest of women.

PENELOPE  
I had a good teacher.

They drink in the sight of each other.

EXT. ITHACA - LATER

Against the backdrop of pockets of flames lighting up the night, the survivors gather.

Telemachus, his bloodied chest wound, bound with cloths, leans on his mother's arm.

Emmeaus bends over the body of Phemius whom he has laid out on a slab and is anointing with burial oils. The mortal wound, an oozing gash. Tiresius is helping to bind the wound.

Odysseus surveys the attrition all around.

ODYSSEUS  
What price freedom?

EMMEAUS  
Priceless, my lord.

Odysseus looks at him skeptically.

EMMEAUS (CONT'D)  
When the faces of our buried dead  
plague your dreams and their cries  
disturb your sleep, remember this:  
it is the duty and the burden of a  
king to despatch evil, no matter  
what the cost in blood or land or  
kin.  
(all encompassing gesture)  
Their blood will nourish the seeds  
of freedom.

Alexis appears out of the darkness, with two of Antoninus' soldiers he's taken captive. The men are bloody and beaten.

ALEXIS  
When they heard Antoninus was dead,  
they had no fight left in them.

ODYSSEUS  
If you cut the head off the  
snake...

Alexis nods.

ALEXIS  
I'll finish them off.

Odysseus holds up his hand.

ODYSSEUS

Put away your sword. Our quarrel is  
ended. We will shed no more blood.

He picks up his sword and holds it out to Telemachus.

ODYSSEUS (CONT'D)

Telemachus. To whom I give the  
sword of Ithaca. Take it. It's  
yours.

ON TELEMACHUS as we pull away from the scene.

BOY'S VOICE (V.O.)

Odysseus was true to his word. He  
never picked up his sword again.  
Peace and prosperity came to  
Ithaca, the flocks and herds  
replenished. He had a dream that he  
would die peacefully. And he did,  
in his old age.

(a beat)

My father Telemachus, told me the  
story of my grandfather, the hero  
Odysseus.

FADE OUT.

THE END