

The Adventures of Ulysses

Bernard Evslin

Ships and Men

After Troy was burned, Ulysses sailed for home with three ships holding fifty men each.

Three thousand years ago ships were very different: through the years they have changed much more than the men who sail them.

These beaked warships used by the pirate kingdoms of the Middle Sea were like no vessels you have ever seen. Imagine a very long, narrow rowboat with twenty oars on each side. The timbers of the bow curve sharply to a prow, and this prow grows longer and sharper, becomes in fact a long polished shaft tipped by a knife-edged, brass spearhead. This was called the ram, the chief weapon of ancient warships.

In battle, the opposing ships spun about each other, swooping forward, twirling on their beams, darting backward, their narrow hulls allowing them to backwater very swiftly. The object was to ram the enemy before he rammed you. And to ram first was the only defense, for the brass beak of the ramming ship sheared easily through the timbers of its victim, knocking a huge hole the hull and sinking it before its men could jump overboard.

These warships were also equipped with sail and mast—used only for

always at the mercy of the weather, and were often blown off course. Another thing that made them unfit for long voyages was the lack of cargo space. Only a few days' supply of food and water could be carried, leaving space for no other cargo. That is why these fighting ships tried to hug the coast and avoid the open sea.

Ulysses' problem was made worse by victory. When Troy was sacked, he and his men captured a huge booty—gold and jewels, silks, furs—and, after ten years of war the men refuse to leave any loot behind. This meant that each of his ships could carry food and water for a very few days.

This greed for treasure caused many of his troubles at first. But then troubles came so thick and fast that no one could tell what caused them: hardships were simply called bad luck, or the anger of the gods.

But bad luck makes good stories.xx

The Adventures of Ulysses

Bernard Evslin

Ships and Men

After Troy was burned, Ulysses sailed for always at the mercy of the weather, and were often blown off course. Another home with three ships holding fifty men

thing that made them unfit for long

each.

voyages was the lack of cargo space.

Three thousand years ago ships were Only a few days' supply of food and very different: through the years they water could be carried, leaving space for have changed much more than the men

no other cargo. That is why these fighting who sail them.

ships tried to hug the coast and avoid the These beaked warships used by the

open sea.

pirate kingdoms of the Middle Sea were

Ulysses' problem was made worse by

like no vessels you have ever seen.

victory. When Troy was sacked, he and

Imagine a very long, narrow rowboat

his men captured a huge booty—gold and

with twenty oars on each side. The

jewels, silks, furs—and, after ten years of timbers of the bow curve sharply to a war the men refuse to leave any loot

prow, and this prow grows longer and

behind. This meant that each of his ships sharper, becomes in fact a long polished could carry food and water for a very shaft tipped by a knife-edged, brass few days.

spearhead. This was called the ram, the

This greed for treasure caused many

chief weapon of ancient warships.

of his troubles at first. But then troubles In battle, the opposing ships spun

came so thick and fast that no one could

about each other, swooping forward,

tell what caused them: hardships were

twirling on their beams, darting

simply called bad luck, or the anger of

backward, their narrow hulls allowing

the gods.

them to backwater very swiftly. The

But bad luck makes good stories.xx

object was to ram the enemy before he

rammed you. And to ram first was the

only defense, for the brass beak of the

ramming ship sheared easily through the

timbers of its victim, knocking a huge hole the hull and sinking it before its men

could jump overboard.

These warships were also equipped

with sail and mast—used only for

The Adventures of Ulysses 2

voyaging, never in battle—a square sail,

and a short mast, held fast by oxhide

stays. The sail was raised only for a fair wind, or could be tilted slightly for a

quartering wind, but was useless against

headwinds.

This meant that these ships were almost They landed on the beach. The townsfolk The Ciconians fled before them into the hills. Ulysses did not allow his men to pursue them, for there was no room on the ship for slaves.

The voyage began peacefully. A fair

From house to house the armed men

north wind blew, filling the sails of the went, helping themselves to whatever

little ship and pushing it steadily

they wanted. Afterward they piled the

homeward. The wind freshened at night, booty in great heaps upon the beach.

and the three ships glided along joyfully Then Ulysses had them round up a

under a fat moon. On the morning of the herd of the plump, swaying, crook-horned second day Ulysses saw a blue haze of cattle, and offer ten bulls in sacrifice to smoke and a glint of white stone. He put the gods. Later they built huge bonfires in toward shore and saw a beautiful little on the beach, roasted the cattle, and had town. The men stared in amazement at a great feast.

this city without walls, rich green parks But while the looting and feasting was and grazing cattle, its people strolling

going on the men of the city had

about in white tunics. Ten years of war

withdrawn into the hills and called

had made Ulysses' men as savage as

together their kinsmen of the villages, the thieves. Everyone not a shipmate was an Ciconians, and began preparing for enemy. To meet was to fight; property battle. They were skillful fighters, these belonged to the winner.

men of the hills. They drove brass war

Ulysses stood in the bow, shading his chariots that had long blades attached to eyes with his hand, gazing at the city. A the wheels, and these blades whirled tough, crafty old warrior named swiftly as the wheels turned, scything

Eurylochus stood beside him.

down the foe.

"We attack, do we not?" he asked.

They gathered by the thousands, an

"The city lies there defenseless. We can overwhelming force, and stormed down

take it without losing a man."

out of the hills onto the beach. Ulysses'

“Yes, it looks tempting,” said Ulysses, men were full of food and wine, unready but the wind blows fair, and good fortune to fight, but he had posted sentries, who befriends us. Perhaps it will spoil our luck raised a shout when they saw the to stop.”

Ciconians coming down from the hills in

“But this fat little city has been thrown the moonlight. Ulysses raged among his The Adventures of Ulysses 3

into our laps by the gods, too,” said

men, slapping them with the flat of his

Eurylochus, “and they grow angry when

sword, driving the fumes of wine out of

men refuse their gifts. It would be bad

their heads. His great racketing battle

luck *not* to attack.”

cry roused those he could not whip with

Ulysses heard the fierce murmur of his his sword.

men behind him, and felt their greed

The men closed ranks and met the

burning in his veins. He hailed the other Ciconians at spearpoint.

The Hellenes ships and gave orders, and the three

retreated slowly, leaving their treasure

black-hulled vessels swerved toward

where it was heaped upon the beach
shore and nosed into the harbor,
and, keeping their line unbroken, made
swooping down upon the white city like
for their ships. Ulysses chose two of his wolves upon a sheepfold.
strongest men and bade them lift a thick
timber, high enough to shoot his arrows
timber upon their shoulders. He sat
over the heads of his men. He was the
astride this
most skillful archer since Heracles. He
water nymphs—were drawn by the flash
aimed only at the chariot horses, and
of the jewels. They dived after the bright aimed not to kill, but to
cripple, so that baubles and swam alongside the ships, the horses
fell in their traces, and their calling to the men, singing, tweaking the
furious flailing and kicking broke the oars out of their hands, for they
were
enemy's advance. Thus the Hellenes were sleek mischievous
creatures who loved able to reach their ships and roll them jewels
and strangers. Some of them
into the water, leap into the rower's
came riding dolphins, and in the

benches, and row away. But eighteen
splashing silver veils of spray the men
men were left dead on the beach— six

thought they saw beautiful girls with fish from each ship—and there
was scarcely a tails. This is probably how the first report man
unwounded.

of mermaids arose.

Eurylochus threw himself on his knees Poseidon, God of the Sea,
was before Ulysses and said, “I advised you wakened from the sleep
by the sound of

badly, O Chief. We have angered the

this laughter. When he saw what was

gods. Perhaps, if you kill me, they will be happening, his green beard
bristled with appeased.

rage, and he said to himself, “Can it be?

“Eighteen dead are enough for one

Are these the warriors whom I helped in

night,” said Ulysses. “Our luck has

their siege of Troy? Is this their gratitude, changed, but what has
changed can trying to steal my naiads from me? I’ll

change again. Rise, and go about your

teach them manners.”

duties.”

He whistled across the horizon to his

The ships had been handled roughly

son, Aeolus, keeper of the winds, who

in the swift retreat from the Ciconian

twirled his staff and sent a northeast gale beach. Their hulls had been battered by skipping across the sea. It pounced upon The Adventures of Ulysses 4

axes and flung spears, and they had

the little fleet and scattered the ships like sprung small leaks. The wind had faded twigs. Ulysses clung to the helm, trying to to a whisper, and the men were forced to hold to the kicking tiller, trying to shout row with water sloshing around their over the wind. There was nothing to do

ankles. Ulysses saw that his ships were

but ship the mast and let the wind take

foundering, and that he would have to

them.

empty the holds. Food could not be

And the wind, in one huge gust of fury

spared, nor water; the only thing that

drove them around Cythera, the southern—

could go was the treasure taken from

most of their home islands, into the open Troy. The men groaned and tore at their waters of the southwest quarter of the beards as they saw the gold and jewels Middle Sea, toward the hump of Africa

and bales of fur and silk being dropped

called Libya.xx

overboard. But Ulysses cast over his own share of the treasure first—and his was the largest share—so the men had to bite back their rage and keep on rowing.

As the necklaces, bracelets, rings, and

brooches sank slowly, winding their

jewels like drowned fires, a strange thing happened. A shoal of naiads—beautiful

The Lotus Eaters

like sleep, with one petal of fire-red for dreams. We will call it lotus.”

Morpheus took the flower and planted

N

it in Libya, where it is always summer.

ow, at this time, the shore of Libya was The known as “the land where Morpheus

flower grew in clusters and smelled

plays.”

deliciously of honey. The people ate

Who was Morpheus? He was a
nothing else. They slept all the time,
young god, son of Hypnos, God of
except when they were gathering
Sleep, and nephew of Hades. It was his
flowers. Morpheus watched over them,
task to fly around the world, from
reading their dreams.

nightfall to dawn scattering sleep. His

It was toward Lotusland that Ulysses

father, Hypnos, mixed the colors of sleep and his men were blown by
the gale.

for him, making them dark and thick and The wind fell while they
were still sad.

offshore. The sky cleared, the sea

“For,” he said, “it is a little death you calmed, a hot sun beat down. To
lay upon man each night, my son, to Ulysses, dizzy with fatigue,
weak with

prepare for the kingdom of death.”

hunger, the sky and the water and the air

The Adventures of Ulysses 5

But his aunt, Persphone, sewed him a between seemed to flow together in one secret pocket, full of bright things, and hot blueness.

said: "It is not death you scatter, but

He shook his head, trying to shake

repose. Hang the walls of sleep with

away the hot blue haze, and growled to

bright pictures, so that man may not know his men to unship the oars, and row death before he dies."

toward land. The exhausted men bent to

These bright pictures were called

the oars, and the ships crawled over the

dreams. And Morpeus became

fire-blue water. With their last strength fascinated by the way a little corner of they pulled the ships up on the beach,

man's mind remained awake in sleep,

past the high-tide mark, and then lay

and played with the colors he had hung, down and went to sleep.

mixing them, pulling them apart, making

As they slept, the Lotus-eaters came

new pictures. It seemed to him that these out of the forest. Their arms here heaped fantastic colored shadows the sleepers with flowers, which they piled about the

painted were the most beautiful, most
sleeping men in great blue and purple
puzzling things he had ever seen. And

bouquets, so that they might have flowers he wanted to know more
about how they to eat when they awoke, for these people came to
be.

were very gentle and hospitable.

He went to Persephone, and said, “I

The men awoke and smelled the warm
need a flower that makes sleep. It must
honey smell of the flowers, and ate them

be purple and black. But there should be in great handfuls—like
honeycomb—and one petal streaked with fire-red, the petal fell
asleep again. Morpheus hovered to make dreams.”

over the sleeping men and read their

Persephone smiled and moved her
dreams.

long, white hand in the air. Between her “These men have done
terrible fingers a flower blossomed. She gave it things,” the god
whispered to himself.

to him.

“Their dreams are full of gold and blood

“Here it is, Morpheus. Black and

and fire. Such sleep will not rest them.

purple

and felt an overpowering hunger. He too

And he mixed them some cool green

took some of the flowers and raised them

and silver dreams of home. The

to his mouth. As their fragrance grew

nightmares faded. Wounded Trojans

stronger, he felt his eyelids drooping, and stopped screaming. Troy stopped

his arms grew heavy, and he thought, "It

burning; they saw their wives smile, heard is these flowers that are making us sleep.

their children laugh, saw the green wheat Their scent alone brings sleep. I must not growing in their own fields. They eat them."

dreamed of home, awoke and were

But he could not put them down; his

hungry, ate the honeyed lotus flowers

hand would not obey him. Exerting all

and fell into a deeper sleep.

the

The Adventures of Ulysses 6

Then Morpheus came to Ulysses who

weak force of his will, he grasped his

was stretched on the sand, a little apart right hand with his left—as if it belonged from the rest. He studied his face—the to someone else—and one by one forced

wide grooved brow, the sunken eyes, the open his fingers and let the flowers fall.

red hair, the jutting chin. And he said to Then he dragged himself to his feet

himself, “This man is a hero. Terrible are and walked slowly into the sea. He went his needs, sudden his deeds, and his under and arose snorting. His head had

dreams must be his own. I cannot help

cleared. But when he went up on the

him.”

beach, the sweet fragrance rose like an

So Morpheus mixed no colors for

ether and made him dizzy again.

Ulysses’ sleep, but let him dream his own “I must work swiftly,” he said.

dreams, and read them as they came.

One by one he carried the sleeping

He hovered above the sleeping king and men to the ships, and propped them on could not leave.

their benches. His strength was going.

“What monsters he makes,” he said to The honey smell was invading him, himself. “Look at that giant with the making him droop with sleep. He took

single eye in the middle of his forehead. his knife and cutting sharp splinters of And that terrible spider-woman with all wood to prop open his eyelids, staggered

those legs....Ah, the things he dreams,

back among the men. He worked

this angry sleeper. What bloody mouths, furiously now, lifting them on his what masts falling, sails ripping, what shoulders, and carrying them two at a

rocks and reefs, what shipwrecks...how

time, throwing them into the ships.

many deaths?”

Finally, the beach was cleared. The

Ulysses awoke, choking, out of a

men rolled sleeping on the benches.

terrible nightmare. It seemed to him that Then, all by himself, using his last in his sleep he had seen the whole strength, he pushed the ships into the

voyage laid out before him, had seen his water. When the ships were afloat in the ships sinking, his men drowning.

shallow water, he lashed one to another

Monsters had crowded about him,

with rawhide line, his own ship in front.

clutching, writhing. He sat up and looked Then he raised his sail and took the helm.

about. His men lay asleep among

The wind was blowing from the

heaped flowers. As he watched, one

southwest. It filled his sail. The line grew opened his eyes, raised himself on an taut; the line of ships moved away from

elbow, took a handful of flowers, stuffed Lotusland.

them into his mouth, and immediately fell asleep again.

Ulysses smelled the honey sweetness

The men began to awake from their

dreams of home, and found themselves

The Adventures of Ulysses 7

upon the empty sea again. But the long

sleep had rested them, and they took up

their tasks with new strength.

Ulysses kept the helm, grim and

unsmiling. For he knew that what he had

seen painted on the walls of his sleep was meant to come true and that he was

sailing straight into a nightmare.xx

The Cyclops's Cave

After he had rescued his crew from

hill. He was too far off to see what they Lotusland, Ulysses found that he was

were, but he thought they must be goats

running from one trouble into another.

since the hill was so steep. And if they They were still at sea, and there was no were goats they had to be caught. So

food for the fleet. The men were hungry

the men headed downhill, meaning to

and getting dangerous. Ulysses heard

cross the valley and climb the slope.

them grumbling: "He should have left us

Ulysses had no way of knowing it, but

there in Lotusland. At least when you're this was the very worst island in the entire asleep you don't know you're hungry.

sea on which the small party could have

Why did he have to come and wake us

landed. For here lived the Cyclopes,

up?" He knew that unless he found food huge, savage creatures, tall as trees, for them very soon he would be facing a each with one eye in the middle of his mutiny.

forehead. Once, long ago, they had

That part of the Aegean Sea was

lived in the bowels of Olympus, forging

dotted with islands. On every one of

thunderbolts for Zeus. But he had

them was a different kind of enemy. The punished them for some fault, exiling last thing Ulysses wanted to do was to go them to this island where they had ashore, but there was no other way of forgotten their smithcraft and did nothing getting food. He mad a landfall on a but fight with each other for the herds of small mountainous island. He was very wild goats, trying to find enough food to careful: he had the ships of the fleet moor fill their huge bellies. Best of all, they offshore and selected twelve of his liked storms; storms meant shipwrecks.

bravest men as a landing party.

Shipwrecks meant sailors struggling in the They beached their skiff and struck

sea, who could be plucked out and eaten

inland. It was a wild, hilly place, full of raw; and the thing they loved best in the The Adventures of Ulysses 8

boulders, with very few trees. It seemed world was human flesh. The largest and deserted. Then Ulysses glimpsed

the fiercest and the hungriest of all the something moving across the valley, on Cyclopes on the island was one named

the slope of a

Polyphemus. He kept

constant vigil on his mountain, fair

He saw that the door had been closed.

weather or foul. If he spotted a ship, and The far end of the cavern was too dark to there was no storm to help, he would see anything, but then—amazed, aghast—dive into the sea and swim underwater,

he saw what looked like a huge red

coming up underneath the ship and

lantern far above, coming closer. Then

overturning it. Then he would swim off

he saw the great shadow of a nose under

with his pockets full of sailors.

it, and the gleam of teeth. He realized

On this day he could not believe his
that the lantern was a great, flaming eye.

luck when he saw a boat actually landing Then he saw the whole
giant, tall as a on the beach, and thirteen meaty-looking tree, with
huge fingers reaching out of the sailors disembark, and begin to
march shadows, fingers bigger than baling

toward his cave. But here they were,
hooks. They closed around two sailors
climbing out of the valley now, up the
and hauled them screaming into the air.
slope of the hill, right toward the cave.

As Ulysses and his horrified men

He realized the must be hunting his goats. watched, the great hand
bore the The door of the cave was an struggling little men to the
giant's mouth.

enormous slab of stone. He shoved this

He ate them, still wriggling, the way a cat aside so that the cave
stood invitingly eats a grasshopper; he ate them clothes

open, casting a faint glow of firelight
and all, growling over their raw bones.

upon the dusk. Over the fire, on a great The men had fallen to their
knees and spit, eight goats were turning and were whimpering like
terrified children,

roasting. The delicious savors of the

but Ulysses stood there, sword in hand,

cooking drifted from the cave.

his agile brain working more swiftly than Polyphemus lay down
behind a huge

it ever had.

boulder and waited.

“Greetings,” he called. “May I know

The men were halfway up the slope of to whom we are indebted for
such the hill when they smelled the meat hospitality?”

roasting. They broke into a run. Ulysses The giant belched and spat
buttons.

tried to restrain them, but they paid no

“I am Polyphemus,” he growled. “This is

heed—they were too hungry. They raced my home, my mountain,
and everything to the mouth of the cave and dashed in.

that comes here is mine. I do hope you

Ulysses drew his sword and hurried after can all come to dinner.
There are just them. When he saw the huge fireplace enough of you
to make a meal. Ho,

and the eight goats spitted like sparrows ho...” And he laughed a
great, choking,

The Adventures of Ulysses 9

his heart sank because he knew that they phlegmy laugh, swiftly
lunged, and had come into reach of something much caught another

sailor, whom he lifted into larger than themselves. However, the the air and held before his face.

men were giving no thought to anything

“Wait!” cried Ulysses.

but food:

“What for?”

they flung themselves on the spit, and

“You won’t enjoy him that way. He is

tore into the goat meat, smearing their

from Attica, where olives grow. He was

hands and faces with sizzling fat, too

raised on olives and has a very delicate, hungry to feel pain as they crammed the oily flavor. But to appreciate it, you must hot meat into their mouths.

taste some wine of the country.”

There was a loud rumbling sound: the

cave darkened. Ulysses whirled around. The great body crashed full-length on the cave floor, making the very walls “Wine? What is wine?”

of the mountain shake. Polyphemus lay

“It is a drink. Made from pressed

on his back, snoring like a powersaw.

grapes. You've never drunk it?"

The sailors were still on the floor, almost

"We drink nothing but ox blood and

dead from fear.

buttermilk here."

"Up!" cried Ulysses. "Stand up like

"Ah, you do not know what you have men! Do what must be done!
Or you missed, gentle Polyphemus. Meat-eaters, will be devoured
like chickens."

in particular, love wine. Here, try it for He got them to their feet and
drew

yourself."

them about him as he explained his plan.

Ulysses unslung from his belt a full

"Listen now, and listen well, for we

flask of unwatered wine. He gave it to

have no time. I made him drunk, but we

the giant, who put it to his lips and

cannot tell how long it will last."

gulped. He coughed violently, and stuck Ulysses thrust his sword
into the fire; the sailor in a little niche high up in the they saw it glow
white-hot.

cave wall, then leaned his great slab of a “There are ten of us,” he said. “Two face toward Ulysses and said: “What did of us have been eaten, and one of our you say this drink was?”

friends is still unconscious up there on his

“Wine. A gift of the gods to man, to

shelf of rock. You four get on one side of make women look better and food taste his head, and the rest on the other side.

better. And now it is my gift to you.”

When I give the word, lay hold of the ear

“It’s good, very good.” He put the

on your side, each of you. And hang on,

bottle to his lips and swallowed again.

no matter how he thrashes, for I am

“You are very polite. What’s your

going to put out his eye. And if I am to name?”

be sure of my stroke you must hold his

“My name? Why I am—nobody.”

head still. One stroke is all I will be

“Nobody....Well, Nobody, I like you. allowed.”

The Adventures of Ulysses 10

You’re a good fellow. And do you know Then Ulysses rolled a boulder next to what I’m going to do? I’m going to save the giant’s

head and climbed on it, so you till last. Yes, I'll eat all your friends that he was looking down into they eye.

first, and give you extra time, that's what It was lidless and misted with sleep—big I'm going to do.”

as a furnace door and glowing softly like Ulysses looked up into the great eye

a banked fire. Ulysses looked at his men.

and saw that it was redder than ever. It They had done what he said, broken into was all a swimming redness. He had

two parties, one group at each ear. He

given the monster, who had never drunk

lifted his white-hot sword.

spirits before undiluted wine. Surely it

“Now!” he cried.

must make him sleepy. But was a gallon Driving down with both hands, and all enough for that great gullet? Enough to the strength of his back and shoulders,

put him to sleep—or would he want to eat and all his rage and all his fear, Ulysses again first?

stabbed the glowing spike into the giant's

“Eat 'em all up, Nobody—save you till eye. His sword jerked out of his hand as later. Sleep a little first. Shall I? Won't the head flailed upward, men pelted to you try to run away, will you? No—you

the ground as they lost their hold. A

can't, can't open the door—too heavy,

huge, screeching, curdling bellow split the ha, ha....You take a nap too, Nobody.

air.

I'll wake you for breakfast. Breakfast...." "This way!" shouted Ulysses.

He motioned to his men, and they
hole now from which the brown blood
crawled on their bellies toward the far
jelled. He moaned and gibbered and
end of the cave where the heard of goats
bellowed in frightful pain; his groping
was tethered. They slipped into the
had found the sailor in the wall, and he
heard and lay among the goats as the
tore him to pieces between his fingers.
giant stomped about the cave, slapping
Ulysses could not even hear the man
the walls with great blows of his hands,
scream because the giant was bellowing

picking up boulders and cracking them

so.

together in agony, splitting them to

Now Ulysses saw that the Cyclops's

splinters, clutching his eye, a scorched

wild stampeding was giving place to a

plan. For now he was stamping on the

where the goats had been tethered, and

floor in a regular pattern, trying to find stamped, searched, and
roared through and crush them beneath his feet. He

the whole cave again, bellowing with fury stopped moaning and
listened. The

when he did not find them. The herd

sudden silence dazed the men with fear. grazed on the slope of the
hill beneath They held their breath and tried to muffle the cave.

There was a full moon; it was the sound of their beating hearts; all
the almost as bright as day.

giant heard was the breathing of the

“Stay where you are,” Ulysses

The Adventures of Ulysses 11

goats. Then Ulysses saw him go to the

whispered.

mouth of the cave, and swing the great

He heard a crashing, peered out, and

slab aside, and stand there. He realized saw great, shadowy figures converging just in time that the goats would rush on the cave. He knew that the other

outside, which is what the giant wanted,

Cyclopes of the island must have heard

for then he could search the whole cave. the noise and come to see. He heard the Ulysses whispered. "Quickly, swing giant bellow.

under the bellies of the rams. Hurry,

The others called to him: "Who has

hurry!"

done it? Who has blinded you?"

Luckily, they were giant goats and

"Nobody. Nobody did it. Nobody

thus able to carry the men who had

blinded me."

swung themselves under their bellies and "Ah, you have done it yourself. What were clinging to the wiry wool. Ulysses a tragic accident."

himself chose the largest ram. They

And they went back to their own
moved toward the mouth of the cave, and caves.
crowded through. The Cyclops's hands
"Now!" said Ulysses. "Follow me!"
came down and brushed across the
He swung himself out from under the
goats' backs feeling for the men, but the belly of the ram, and raced
down the hill.
animals were huddled too closely
The others raced after him. They were
together for him to reach between and
halfway across the valley when they
search under their bellies. So he let them heard great footsteps
rushing after them, pass through.
and Polyphemus bellowing nearer and
nearer.
Now, the Cyclops rushed to the
"He's coming!" cried Ulysses, "Run
corner
for your lives!"

fleet.

Polyphemus heard the dip of the oars They ran as they had never run before, and the groaning of the oarlocks, and but the giant could cover fifty yards at a aiming at the sound, hurled huge

stride. It was only because he could not boulders after them. They fell around the see and kept bumping into trees and ship, but did not hit. The skiff reached rocks that they were able to reach the Ulysses' ship and the sailors climbed

skiff and push out onto the beach. They

aboard.

bent to the oars, and the boat scudded

“Haul anchor, and away!” cried

toward the

Ulysses. And then called to the Cyclops.

“Poor fool! Poor blinded drunken

gluttonous fool—if anyone else asks you, it is not Nobody, but Ulysses who has done this to you.”

The Adventures of Ulysses 12

But he was to regret this final taunt.

The gods honor courage, but punish
pride.

Polyphemus, wild with rage, waded

out chest-deep and hurled a last boulder, which hit mid-deck, almost
sunk the ship, and killed most of the crew—among them seven of
the nine men who had just

escaped.

And Polyphemus prayed to Poseidon,

“God of the Sea, I beg you, punish

Ulysses for this. Visit him with storm and shipwreck before he
reaches home, and when he gets there let him find himself

forgotten, unwanted, a stranger.”

Poseidon heard this prayer, and made

it all happen just that way.xx

Vocabulary

Context Dictionary

Good writing and effective storytelling may often be one and the same thing, and one way to tell a story effectively—to make it come alive for the reader—is to use vivid language.

The Adventures of Ulysses 13

A. The Cyclopes removed struggling sailors from the sea and ate them raw.

B. The Cyclopes plucked floundering sailors from the sea and devoured them raw.

Which sentence uses a verb that makes the Cyclopes seem hungrier, more cannibal-like in their eating habits? Which sentence do you think uses more vivid action words?

Below are some words suggesting specific actions. If you are unfamiliar with any words, look up their meanings in the dictionary. Then rewrite each of the following sentences to make them more vivid. Substitute one or more of the words from the list for one or more words in each sentence.

pelted

stampeded

scudded

founder

drooped

tweaked

1. As the prisoner and his guard pushed through the crowd, the people near the prisoner twisted his ears and those at a distance hit him with handfuls of small stones.

2. Blown by the northeast wind, the clouds moved across the sky above the plain where the frightened cattle ran.

3. When the man stopped rowing and leaned with exhaustion over the oars, the boat began to sink.

The Adventures of Ulysses 14

Keeper of the Winds

out like a candle. Darkness fell upon the waters. Ulysses felt the deck leap

beneath him as the ship was lifted

Now the black ships beat their way

halfway out of the water by the ferocious gust and hurled through the blackness.

north—

He tried to shout, but the breath was torn ward from the land of the Cyclopes. And from his mouth and he lost consciousness.

Ulysses, ignorant of the mighty curse that Ulysses had no way of knowing this, the blind giant had fastened upon him, but the mischievous Poseidon had guided

was beginning to hope that they might

his ships to the island fortress of Aeolus, have fair sailing the rest of the way Keeper of the Winds. Ages before, when

home. So impatient was he that he took

the world was very new, the gods had

the helm himself and kept it night and day become fearful of the terrible strength of although his sailors pleaded with him to the winds, and had decided to tame

take some rest. But he was wild with

them. So Zeus and Poseidon, working
eagerness to get home to his wife,
together, had floated an island upon the
Penelope, to his young son, Telemachus,
sea, and girdled it about with a mighty
and to the dear land of Ithaca that he
bronze wall. Then they set a mountain
had not seen for more than ten years
upon the island and hollowed out that
now.

mountain until it was a huge stone

At the end of the third night, just as

dungeon. Into this hollow mountain they

the first light was staining the sky, he saw stuffed the struggling
winds, and something very strange—a wall of bronze, appointed
Aeolus as their jailer. And tall and wide, floating on the sea and there
the winds were held captive.

blocking their way. At first he thought it Whenever the gods wanted
to stir up a was a trick of the light, and he rubbed his storm and
needed a particular wind, they eyes and looked again. But there it
was, sent a message to Aeolus, who would a towering, bright wall of
beaten bronze. draw his sword and stab the side of the “Well,” he
thought to himself, “it

mountain, making a hole big enough for

cannot stretch across the sea. There must be the wind to fly through. If the north wind be a way around it.”

were wanted, he stabbed the north side

He began to sail along the wall as

of the mountain, its east slope for the east though it were the shore of an island, wind, and so on. When the storm was

trying to find his way around. Finally, he done, he would whistle the wind home, came to a huge gate, and even as he and the huge, brawling gale, broken by

gazed upon it in amazement, the gate

its imprisonment, would crawl back

swung open and the wind changed

whimpering to its hole.

abruptly. The shrouds snapped, the sails Aeolus was an enormously fat bulged, the masts groaned, and all three The Adventures of Ulysses 15

ships of the fleet were blown through the demigod with a long wind-tangled beard gate, which immediately clanged shut and a red wind-beaten face. He loved to

behind them. Once within the wall, the

eat and drink, and fight, play games, and wind fell off and Ulysses found his ship hear stories. Twelve children he had, six drifting toward a beautiful hilly island.

boys and six girls. He sent them out one Suddenly there was a great howling of

by one, riding the back of the wind

wind. The sun was blown

around

the world, managing the weather for

courage when this bronze wall and this

each month.

island, and you and yours have vanished

And it was in the great castle of

under the sea and have been forgotten

Aeolus that Ulysses and his men found

for a thousand years. I am Ulysses. My

themselves when they awoke from their

companions before Troy were Achilles,

enchanted sleep. Invisible hands held

Menelaus, Agamemnon, mighty heroes

torches for them, guided them to the

all, and, in modesty, I was not the least baths, anointed them with oil,
and gave among them.”

them fresh clothing. Then the floating

“Yes-s-s....” said Aeolus. “You are

torches led them to the dining hall, where bold enough. Too bold for your own they were greeted by Aeolus and his good perhaps. But you have caught my

twelve handsome children. A mighty

attention, Captain. I am listening. Tell banquet was laid before them, and they on....”

ate like starved men.

Then Ulysses told of the Trojan War;

Then Aeolus said, “Strangers, you are of the abduction of Helen, and the chaos, my guests—uninvited—but guests all the and the great battles; the attacks, the

same. By the look of you, you have had retreats, the separate duels, He spoke of adventures and should have fine stories Achilles fighting Hector, and killing him to tell. Yes, I love a tale full of fighting with a spear thrust, of Paris ambushing and blood and tricks, and if you have

Achilles; and, finally, how he himself had such to tell, then I shall entertain you made a great hollow wooden horse and

royally. But if you are such men as sit

had the Greek armies pretend to leave,

dumb, glowering, unwilling to please,

only to sneak back and hide in the belly

using your mouths only to stuff food into— of the horse. He told how the Trojans then—well, then you are apt to find things had dragged the horse within their gates, less pleasant. You, Captain!” he roared, and how the Greek warriors had crept pointing at Ulysses. “You, sir

—I take you out at night and taken the city and for the leader of this somewhat motley slaughtered their enemies.

crew. Do you have a story to tell?”

Aeolus shouted with laughter. His

“For those who know how to listen, I

face blazed and his belly shook. “Ah,

have a tale to tell,” said Ulysses.

that’s a trick after my own heart!” he

“Your name?”

cried. “You’re a sharp one, you are....I

The Adventures of Ulysses 16

“Ulysses—of Ithaca.”

knew you had a foxy look about you.

“Mmm—yes,’ said Aeolus. “I seem to Wooden horse—ho ho. Tell more! Tell recognize that name—I believe I heard it more!”

on Olympus while my uncles and aunts

Then Ulysses told of his wandering

up there were quarreling about some

after the fall of Troy, of his adventure in little skirmish they had interested

Lotusland, and what had happened in the

themselves in. Near Troy I think it

Cyclops's cave. And when Aeolus heard

was....Yes-s-s....Were you there?"

how he had outwitted Polyphemus and

"I was there," said Ulysses. "I was

blinded his single eye, he struck the table there for ten years, dear host, and indeed with a mighty blow of his fist, and took part in some of that petty skirmishing shouted "Marvelous! A master stroke!

that will be spoken of by men who love

By the gods you are the bravest, craftiest especially pleased because he had

warrior that has ever drunk my wine."

always hated Polyphemus. He had no

He was

way of know way of knowing, of course, wind, the south wind, and the east wind.

that the blinded Cyclops had prayed to

You must keep them prisoner. But if you

his father and had laid a curse on

wish to change course—if a pirate should

Ulysses, and that he, Aeolus, was being

chase you say, or a sea monster, or if an made the instrument of that curse. He did adventure beckons, then you open the not know this, for the gods move in bag very carefully—you and you alone,

mysterious ways. And so he roared with Captain—and whistle up the wind you laughter, and shouted. “You have wish, let just a breath of it out, close the pleased me, Ulysses. You have told me a bag quickly again and tie it tight. For brave tale, a tale full of blood and winds grow swiftly—that is their secret— tricks....And now I shall grant you any

and so they must be carefully guarded.”

favor within my power. Speak out,

“I shall not change course,” said

Ulysses. Ask what you will.”

Ulysses. “No matter what enemy

“But one thing I seek, generous Aeolus,” threatens or what adventure beckons, I said Ulysses, “your help. I need your sail straight for Ithaca. I shall not open help in getting home. For it has been a your bag of winds.”

long, weary time since we saw our homes “Good,” said Aeolus. “Then bind it to and our families. Our hearts thirst for the your mast, and guard it yourself, sword in sight of Ithaca.”

hand; let none of your men approach,

“No one can help you better than I,” lest they open it unwittingly. In the said Aeolus. “You sail on ships, and I am meantime, I will send the gentle west Keeper of the Winds. Come with me.”

wind to follow your ship and fill your sails He led Ulysses out into the night. A and take you home.”

hot, orange moon rode low in the sky,

“Thank you, great Aeolus, thank you,

and they could see without torches.

kindly keeper of the winds. I know now

The Adventures of Ulysses 17

Aeolus led him to the mountain, carrying that the gods have answered my prayers, his sword in and I shall be able to cease this weary

heartbreaking drifting over the face of the one hand and a great leather bag in the sea, having my men killed and eaten, my

other. He stabbed the side of the

ships destroyed, and my hopes shattered.

mountain. There was a rushing, sobbing I will never cease thanking you, Aeolus, sound; he clapped his leather bag over till the day I die.”

the hole, and Ulysses, amazed, saw the

“May that sad occasion be far off,”

great bag flutter and fill. Aeolus held its said Aeolus politely. “Now, sir, much as neck closed, strode to the east face of the I like your company, you had better mountain, and stabbed again. As the gather your men and go. I shall be

east wind rushed out, he caught it in his uneasy now until my winds return to me sack. Then he stomped to the south slope again and I can shut them in the mountain and stabbed again, and caught the south again.”

wind in the sack. Now, very carefully, he Ulysses returned to the castle and wound a silver wire about the neck of the called together his men. Gladly they sack. It was full now, swollen, tugging at trooped down to the ships and went his arm like a huge leather balloon, trying aboard. Ulysses bound the great leather to fly away.

sack to the mast and warned his crew that He said, "In this bag are the north no man must touch it on pain of death.

mast, guarding the sack.

Then he himself stood with naked sword

"Up anchor!" he cried.

under the

The west wind rolled off the mountain Two of the men, standing in the and filled their sails. The black ships bow, saw him slump at the foot of the

slipped out of the harbor. Away from the mast, fast asleep. Their eyes traveled up island they sailed, away from the the mast to the great leather bag, plump

mountain and the castle, toward the wall as a balloon, straining against its bonds of bronze. When they reached the wall, as the impatient winds wrestled inside.

the great gate swung open and the sailed Then Poseidon, swimming invisibly eastward over water oily with moonlight. alongside, clinked his golden armlets.

Eastward they sailed for nine days and

The men heard the clinking and thought it nine nights. In perfect weather they

came from the bag.

skimmed along, the west wind hovering

One man said to the other: "Do you

behind them, keeping their sails full,

hear that? Those are coins, heavy golden pushing them steadily home.

coins, clinking against each other. There And for nine nights and nine days,

must be a fortune in that sack."

Ulysses did not sleep; he did not close his The other man said, "Yes, a fortune eyes or sheath his sword. He kept his that should belong to all of us by rights.

station under the mast—food and drink

We shared the danger and should share

The Adventures of Ulysses 18

were brought to him there—and never for the loot."

an instant stopped guarding the sack.

"It is true," said the first, "that he has Then, finally, on the morning of the

always been generous. He shared the

ninth day, he heard the lookout cry,

spoils of Troy."

"Land ho!" and strained his eyes to see. "Yes, but that was then. Why does he What he saw made his heart swell. Tears not divide

this great sack of treasure?

coursed down his face, but they were

Aeolus gave it to him, and we know how

tears of joy. For he saw the dear familiar rich he is. Aeolus gave it to him as a hills of home. He saw the brown fields of guest gift, and he should share it with us.”

Ithaca, the twisted olive trees, and, as he “He never will. Whatever is in that watched, he saw them even more clearly, bag, he does not mean for us to see it.

saw the white marble columns of his own Did you not observe how he has been castle on the cliff. And his men, guarding it all these nights and all these watching, saw the smoke rising from their days, standing there always, eating and own chimneys.

drinking where he stands, never

When Ulysses saw the white

sheathing his sword?”

columns of his palace, he knew that

“It is in his sheath now,” said the

unless the west wind failed, they would

second sailor. “And his eyes are closed.

be home in an hour, but the friendly wind Look—he sleeps like a babe. I doubt that blew steadily as ever.

anything would wake him.”

Ulysses heaved a great sigh. The

“What are you doing? What are you

terrible tension that had kept him awake

going to do with that knife? Are you out for nine days and nights
eased its grip.

of your mind?”

He raised his arms and yawned. Then he “Yes—out of my mind with
curiosity, leaned against the mast and closed his out of my mind with
gold fever, if you

eyes, just for a minute.

must know. Ulysses lies asleep. His

sword

The Adventures of Ulysses 19

sleeps in its sheath. And I mean to see
was awake or asleep—whether this was
what is in that bag.”

some nightmare of loss, or whether he

“Wait. I’ll help you. But you must

was awake now and had slept before,

give me half.” “Come then....”

dreaming a fair dream of home.

Swiftly and silently the two barefooted Whichever it was, sailors padded to the mast, slashed the he began to understand that he was

rope that bound the bag to the spar, and being made the plaything of great bore it away.

powers.

“Hurry—open it!”

With the unleashed winds screaming

“I can’t. This wire’s twisted in a

behind him at gale force the trip back to strange knot. Perhaps a magic knot. It where they had started took them only

won’t come out.”

two days. And once again the black

“Then we’ll do it this way!” cried the

ships were hurled onto the island of the

sailor with the knife, and struck at the

winds. Ulysses left his crew on the beach leather bag, slashing it open. He was and went to the castle. He found Aeolus

immediately lifted off his feet and blown in his throne room, and stood before him, like a leaf off the deck and into the sea as bruised, bloody, clothes torn, eyes like the winds rushed howling out of the bag ashes.

and began to chase each other around

“What happened?” cried Aeolus.

the ship. The winds screamed and jeered “Why have you come back?”

and laughed, growing, leaping, reveling “I was betrayed,” said Ulysses.

in their freedom, roaring and squabbling, “Betrayed by sleep—the most cruel sleep screeching around and around the ship. of my life—and then by a wicked foolish They fell on their gentle brother, the west greedy crew who released the winds wind, and cuffed him mercilessly until he from the sack and let us be snatched back fled: then they chased each other around from happiness even as we saw the the ship again, spinning it like a cork in a smoke rising from our own chimneys.”

whirlpool.

“I warned you,” said Aeolus, “I

Then, as they heard the far

warned you not to let anyone touch that

summoning whistle of the Keeper of the

bag.”

Winds—far, far to the west on the Aeolian “And you were right, a thousand Island—they snarled with rage and roared times right!” cried Ulysses. “Be generous boisterously homeward, snatching the once

ships along with them, ripping their sails again. You can heal my woes, you

to shreds, snapping their masts like twigs, alone. Renew your gift. Lend me the and hurling the splintered hulls westward west wind to bear me home again, and I over the boiling sea.

swear to you that this time I shall do

Ulysses awoke from his sleep to find

everything you bid.”

the blue sky black with clouds and his

“I can’t help you,” said Aeolus. “Whom

The Adventures of Ulysses 20

home island dropping far astern, out of

the gods detest, no one can help. And

sight. He saw his crew flung about the

they detest you, man—they hate you.

deck like dolls, and the tattered sails and What you call bad luck is
their hatred, the broken spars, and he did not know turning gifts into
punishment, fair hopes whether he

into nightmares. And bad luck is very

catching. So please go. Get on your

ship and sail away from this island, and

never return.”

“Farewell,” said Ulysses, and strode

away.

He gathered his weary men and made
them board again. The winds were pent
in their mountain. The sea was sluggish.

A heavy calm lay over the harbor. They
had to row on their broken stumps of

oars, crawling like beetles over the gray water. They rowed away
from the island, through the bronze gate, and out upon

the sullen sea.

And Ulysses, heartbroken, almost

The Adventures of Ulysses 21

dead of grief, tried to hide his feeling

from the men; he stood on deck, barking
orders, making them mend sail, patch

hull, rig new spars, and keep rowing. He took the helm himself and swung the tiller, pointing the bow eastward toward home, which once again, lay at the other end of the sea.xx

Circe

Of the three crews, but one was left.

his way carefully toward the smoke,
trying to make as little noise as possible.

Ulysses found himself with only forty-five He came to a stand of
men. He was determined to bring these
mighty trees—oak trees, thick and tall with men home safely, or die
himself.

The Adventures of Ulysses 22

They were sailing northward again,
glossy leaves.

and on the third day came in sight of
Glimmering through the trees he saw
land, low lying, heavily wooded, with a
what looked like a small castle made
good sheltering harbor. Although they
from polished gray stone. He did not

had met terrible treatment everywhere

dare go near, for he heard strange

they had landed since leaving Troy, they howling sounds, a pack of dogs, perhaps, were out of food, water was running low, but different from any dogs he had ever and once again they would have to risk heard. So he left the grove and made his the perils of the land.

Ulysses was very way back toward the beach, thinking cautious. He moored the ship off shore,

hard, trying to decide whether to sail

and said to the crew:

away immediately or take a chance on

“I shall go ashore myself—alone—to

the inhabitants being friendly. He did not see what there is to see, and make sure like the sound of that howling. There was there are no terrible hosts, giants, man-something in it that froze his marrow. He eating ogres, or secret sorceries. If I am decided that he would not risk his men on not back by nightfall, Eurylochus will act the island, but that he would return to the as captain. Then he will decide whether ship, raise anchor, and sail away to seek to seek food and water here, or sail

food elsewhere.

onward. Farewell.”

Just then a tall white deer with mighty

He lowered a small boat and rowed

antlers stepped across his path. The stag toward the island, all alone. He beached had a bearing proud as a king, and did his skiff and struck inland. The first thing not deign to run, but walked on

haughtily he wanted to do was find out whether he as if he knew no one would dare to was on an island, or the spur of a attack him.

mainland. He climbed a low hill; then

Unfortunately for the stag, however,

climbed to the top of a tree that grew on Ulysses was too hungry to be impressed the hill. He was high enough now for a by any animal's own opinion of himself.

clear view, and he turned slowly, marking The warrior raised his bronze spear and the flash of the sea on all sides. He knew flung it with all the power of his knotted that once again they had landed on an arm. It sang through the air, pierced the island and that the ship was their only stag's body, and nailed him to a tree.

means of escape if danger should strike.

The stag died standing up, still in his

Something caught his eye. He

pride. He was a huge animal, so large

squinted thoughtfully at what looked like that Ulysses feared he could not carry a feather of smoke rising from a grove of him back to the ship unaided. But then he trees. The trees were too thick for him to remembered how hungry his men were, see through. He climbed down and and he decided to try.

picked

He picked up weeds and wove a rope

was as strong as a ship's line. Then he

which he twisted and twisted again until it

The Adventures of Ulysses 23

bound the stag's legs together, swung the said to Eurylochus, "There is a castle on great carcass up unto his back, and this island. We must find out who lives

staggered off using his spear as a cane.

there. If he be friendly, or not too strong He was at the end of his strength

a foe, we will stay here and hunt and lay when he reached the beach, and let the in water until the hold be full; then we will deer slip to the sand. He signaled to his depart. Now choose, Eurylochus.

men, who left the ship moored and came Would you rather stay here with your ashore on five small boats. They raised a men and guard the ship while I visit the mighty shout of joy when they saw the castle—or would you rather I keep the

dead stag. All hands fell to. In a

beach? Choose."

twinkling the deer was skinned and cut

"O Ulysses," Eurylochus said, "I am

up. Fires were lighted, and the delicious sick of the sight of the sea. Even as my smell of roasting meat drew the gulls to belly hungers for food, so do my eyes

the beach, screaming and dipping,

hunger for leaves and trees which might

begging for scraps.

recall our dear Ithaca. And my foot

The men gorged themselves; then lay
longs to tread something more solid than
on the sand to sleep. Ulysses, himself,
a deck—a floor that does not pitch and
kept guard. All that night he stood
toss and roll. Pray, gentle Ulysses, let watch, leaning on his spear,
looking at me and my men try the castle.”

the moon which hung in the sky like an

“Go,” said Ulysses. “May the gods

orange, and paled as it climbed. As he

go with you.”

watched, he turned things over in his

So Eurylochus and twenty-two men set

mind, trying to decide what to do. While out, while Ulysses guarded
the ship. As he was still bothered by the eerie howling the band of
warriors approached the of the mysterious animals at the castle,
castle, they too heard a strange howling.

now, with his belly full, he felt less

Some of them drew their swords. Others

gloomy. The more he thought about it

notched arrows to their bowstrings. They the wiser it seemed to
explore the island pressed on, preparing to fight. They thoroughly
and try to determine whether passed through the grove of oak trees,

it was a friendly place or not. For never and came to where the trees thinned.

before had he seen a deer so large. If

Here the howling grew louder and

there was one, there must be more; and

wilder. Then, as they passed the last

with game like that the ship could be

screen of trees and came to the courtyard provisioned in a few days. Also the

of the shining gray castle, they saw an

island was full of streams from which they extraordinary sight—a pack of wolves and could fill their dry casks with pure water. lions running together like dogs—racing “Yes,” he said to himself, “perhaps

about the courtyard, howling.

our luck has changed. Perhaps the god

When they caught sight of the men,

that was playing with us so spitefully has the animals turned and flung themselves The Adventures of Ulysses 24

found other amusements. Yes, we will

upon the strangers, so swiftly that no man explore this island, and see what there is had time to use his weapon. The great to see.” Next morning he awakened beasts stood on their hind legs and put

his men and divided them into two

their forepaws on the men's shoulders,
groups, one led by himself, the other by
and

Eurylochus. He

fawned on them, and licked their faces.

whines. Eurylochus, who stood half—

They voiced low, muttering growling

embracing a huge, tawny lion, said,

a huge loom, larger than they had ever

“Men, it is most strange. For these

seen, and wove a gorgeous tapestry. As

fearsome beasts greet us as though we

she wove, she sang. The bright flax

were lost

leaped

through her fingers as if it were dancing to

friends. They seem to be trying to speak the music of her voice. The
men stood to us. And look—look—at their eyes!

and stared. The sun seemed to be

How intelligently the gleam, how sadly

trapped in her hair, so bright it was; she they gaze. Not like beasts' eyes at all."

wore it long, falling to her waist. Her

"It is true," said one of the men. "But dress was as blue as the summer sky, perhaps there is nothing to fear. Perhaps matching her eyes. Her long white arms there is reason to take heart. For if wild were bare to the shoulders. She stood up beasts are so tame and friendly, then and greeted them. She was very tall.

perhaps the master of the castle, whoever And the men, looking at her, and he is or whatever he is, will be friendly listening to her speak, began to believe too, and welcome us, and give us good

that they were in the presence of a

cheer."

goddess.

"Come," said Eurylochus.

She seemed to read thoughts too, for

When they reached the castle gate,

she said, "No, I am not a goddess. But I they stopped and listened. For they

am descended from the Immortals. I am

heard a woman singing in a lovely deep, Circe, granddaughter of Helios, a sun-full-throated voice, so that without seeing god, who married Perse, daughter of the woman they knew she was beautiful.

Oceanus. So what am I—wood nymph,

Eurylochus said, "Men, you go into

sea nymph, something of both? Or

the castle and see what is to be seen. I something more? I can do simple magic will stay here, and make sure you are not and prophecy, weave certain homely surprised.”

enchantments and read dreams. But let

“What do you men? You come with

us not speak of me, but of you, strangers.

us. Listen to that. There can be no

You are adventurers, I see, men of the danger where there is such a song.”

sword, men of the black-prowed ships,

“Yes, everything seems peaceful,”

the hawks of the sea. And you have

The Adventures of Ulysses 25

said Eurylochus. “The wild animals are

come through sore, sad times, and seek a

friendly. Instead of the clank of

haven here on this western isle. So be it.

weapons, we hear a woman singing.

I welcome you. For the sweetest spell

And it may be peaceful. But something

Circe weaves is one called hospitality. I says to me, be careful, take heed. Go will have baths drawn for you, clean

you, then. I stay on guard. If I am

garments laid out. And when you are

attacked, and you are unharmed, come

refreshed, you shall come and dine. For I to my aid. If anything happens to you, love brave men and the tales they tell.”

then I shall take word back to Ulysses.

When the men had bathed and

So Eurylochus stood watch at the

changed, Circe gave them each a red

castle gate—sword in one hand, dagger

bowl. And into each bowl she put yellow

in the other, bow slung across his back—

food— a kind of porridge made of

and the rest of the men entered the

cheese, barley, honey, and wine plus a

castle. They followed the sound of

few secret things known only to herself.

singing through the rooms and out onto a The odor that rose from the red bowls sunny terrace.

was more delicious than anything they

There sat a woman weaving. She sat had ever smelled at

same enchanting voice he had heard

before. And as each man ate he felt

before. But of his men he saw nothing.

himself sinking into his hunger, *becoming* Nor did he hear their voices. A great his hunger—lapping, panting, grunting, fear seized him. He raced off as fast as snuffling. Circe passed among them,

he could, hoping against hope that the

smiling, filling the bowls again and again. beasts would not howl. The wolves and And the men, waiting for their bowls to lions stood like statues, walked like

be filled, looking about, seeing each

shadows. Their eyes glittered with cold

other's face smeared with food, thought, moonlight, but none of them uttered a

"How strange. We're eating like pigs."

sound.

Even as the thought came, it became

He ran until the breath strangled in his

more true. For as Circe passed among

throat, until his heart tried to crack out of them now she touched each one on the his ribs, but he kept running, stumbling

shoulder with a wand, saying: "Glut and over roots, slipping on stones. He ran swink, eat and drink, gobble food and and ran until he reached the beach and

guzzle wine. Too rude, I think, for

fell swooning in Ulysses' arms. Then with humankind, quite right, I think for *swine!*" his last breath he gasped out the story, As she said these words in her lovely, told Ulysses of the lions and wolves, of laughing voice, the men dwindled. Their the woman singing in the castle, and how noses grew wide and long, became the men had gone in and not come out.

snouts. Their hair hardened into bristles; And then he slipped into blackness.

their hands and feet became hooves, and Ulysses said to his men. "You hear The Adventures of Ulysses 26

they ran about on all fours, sobbing and

the story Eurylochus tells. I must go to the snuffling, searching the floor for bones castle and see what has happened to

and crumbs. But all the time they cried

your companions. But there is no need

real tears from their little red eyes, for for you to risk yourselves. You stay here.

they were pigs only in form: their minds

And if I do not return by sunfall

remained unchanged, and they knew

tomorrow, then you must board the ship

what was happening to them.

and sail away, for you will know that I

Circe kicked them away from the

am dead.”

table. “To the sties!” she cried. She

The men wept and pleaded with him

struck them with her wand, herding them not to go, but he said, “I have sworn an oath that I will never leave another man

there she flung them acorns and chestnuts behind if there is any way I can prevent and red berries and watched them it. Farewell, dear friends.”

grubbing in the mud for the food she

It was dawn by the time he found

threw. She laughed a wild, hard, bright

himself among the oak trees near the

laugh, and went back into the castle.

castle. He heard the first faint howling of While all this was happening

the animals in the courtyard. And as he

Eurylochus was waiting at the gate.

walked through the rose and gray light, a When the men did not return he crept up figure started up before him—a slender to a bow

slit in the castle wall and looked youth in golden breastplates and golden in. it was dark now. He saw the glimmer hat with wings on it, holding a golden of torchlight, and the dim shape of a staff. Ulysses fell to his knees.

woman at a loom, weaving. He heard a “Why do you kneel, venerable sir?”

voice singing, the

said the youth. “You are older than I, mighty warrior. You should not kneel.”

and a

“Ah, pardon,” cried Ulysses. “I have peculiar feeders.”

sharp eyes for some things. Behind your

“Thunder and lightning!” cried

youth—so fair—I see time itself stretching Ulysses. “What can I do?”

to the beginning of things. Behind your

“Listen and learn,” said Hermes. “I

slenderness I sense the power of a god.

have come to help you. Poseidon’s wrath

Sweet youth, beautiful lad, I know you.

does not please all of us, you know. We

You are Hermes, the swift one, the

gods have our moods, and they’re not

messenger god. I pray you have come
always kind, but somehow we must keep
with good tidings for me because I fear
things balanced. And so I have come to
that I have offended the gods, or one of
help you. You must do exactly as I say,
them anyway, and he has vowed
or nothing can help you. Now listen
vengeance upon me.”
closely. First, take this.”

“It is true,” said Hermes. “Somebody He snapped his fingers and a
flower up there doesn’t like you. Can’t say who, appeared between
them. It was white The Adventures of Ulysses 27

not ethical, you know. But if you *should* and heavily scented, with a
black and suspect that he may have something to do yellow spot. He
gave it to Ulysses.

with the management of sea matters,

“It is called *moly*,” he said. “It is well, you’re a good guesser, that’s
all.”

magical. So long as you carry it, Circe’s

“Poseidon...I have offended

drugs will not work. You will go to the

Poseidon,” muttered Ulysses, “the terrible castle. She will greet you and feed you.

one, the earthshaker.”

You will eat the food which, to her

“Well,” said Hermes, “what do you

amazement, will leave you unharmed.

expect? That unpleasant Cyclops whom

Then you will draw your sword and

you first blinded, then taunted is

advance upon her as though you meant

Poseidon’s son, you know. Not a son to

to kill her. Then she will see that you

be proud of, but blood is thicker than

have certain powers, and will begin to

water, as they say, even in the god of the plead with you. She will unveil sea. So Polyphemus tattled to his father, enchantments more powerful than any and asked him to do dreadful things to she has yet used. Resist them you cannot, you, which, I’m afraid, he’s been doing, nor can any man, or any god. Nor is Now, this castle you’re going to is Circe’s there any counterspell that will work and she is a very dangerous person to against such beauty. But if you wish to

meet—a sorceress, a doer of magical

see your home again, if you wish to

mischief. And she is waiting for you,
rescue your shipmates from the sty, you
Ulysses. She sits at her loom, weaving,
must resist her long enough to make her
waiting for you. She has already

fear the great oath of the immortals—that entertained your
shipmates. Fed them.

she will not do you any harm al song as

Watched them making pigs of themselves. you are her guest. That is
all I can do for And, finally, helped them in their way a you. From now
on, it is up to you. We

bit. In brief, they are now in a sty, being shall be watching you with
interest.

fattened. And one day they will make a

Farewell.”

most excellent meal for someone not too The golden youth
disappeared just as fussy. Among Circe’s guests are many a ray of
sunlight does when a cloud

god, or imagined him, but then he saw

crosses the face of the sun. Ulysses shook that

his head, wondering whether he had

he was still holding the curious flower,

really seen the

and he knew that Hermes had indeed

“Gladly,” said Ulysses. “We have much

been there. So he marched on toward the to speak of, you and I. I’m something of castle, through the pack of lions and a farmer myself. I breed cattle on my

wolves, who leaped about him, fawning, own little island of Ithaca, where I’m looking at him with their great intelligent king—when I’m home. Won’t you show eyes, and trying to warn him in their

me your livestock?”

snarling, growling voices. He stroked

“Livestock? I keep no cattle here.”

The Adventures of Ulysses 28

their heads, and passed among them,

“Oh, do you not? I fancied I heard

and went into the castle.

pigs squealing out there. Must have been And here, he found Circe, sitting at

mistaken.”

her loom, weaving and singing. She

“Yes,” said Circe. “Badly mistaken.”

wore a white tunic now and a flame-

“But you do have interesting animals.

colored scarf, and was as beautiful as the I was much struck by the wolves and lions dawn. She stood up and greeted him, who course in a pack like dogs—very

saying, “Welcome, stranger. I live here

friendly for such savage beasts.”

alone, and seldom see anyone, and

“I have taught them to be friendly,”

almost never have guests. So you are

said Circe. “I am friendly myself, you

triple welcome, great sea-stained warrior, see, and I like all the members of my for I know that you have seen battle and household to share my goodwill.”

adventure and have tales to tell.”

“Their eyes,” said Ulysses. “I was

She drew him a warm perfumed bath, struck by their eyes—so big and sad and and her servants bathed and anointed clever. You know, as I think of it, they him, and gave him clean garments to

looked like...human eyes.”

wear. When he came to her, she gave

“Did they?” said Circe, “Well—the

him a red bowl full of yellow food, and

eyes go last.”

said, "Eat." The food smelled delicious; She came to him swiftly, raised her

its fragrance was intoxicating. Ulysses

wand, touched him on the shoulder, and

felt that he wanted to plunge his face into said: "Change, change, change! Turn, it and grub it up like a pig, but he held turn, turn!"

the flower tightly, kept control of himself, Nothing happened. Her eyes and ate slowly. He did not quite finish widened when she saw him sitting there,

the food.

unchanged, sniffing at the flower he had

"Delicious," he said. "Your own

taken from his tunic. He took the wand

recipe?"

from her gently, and snapped it in two.

"Yes," she said. "Will you not finish?" Then drawing his sword he seized her by "I am not quite so hungry as I

her long golden hair and forced her to

thought."

her knees, pulling her head until her

"Then drink. Here's wine."

white throat was offered the blade of the She turned her back to him as she

sword. Then he said, "You have not
poured the wine, and he knew that she
asked me my name. It is Ulysses. I am

was casting a powder in it. He smiled to an unlucky man, but not
altogether himself and drank of the wine, then said: helpless. You
have changed my men into "Delicious. Your own grapes?"

pigs. Now I will change you into a

"You look weary, stranger," she said. corpse."

"Sit and talk with me."

She did not flinch before the blade.

Her great blue eyes looked into his. She "Welcome, my friends. You
have gone a The Adventures of Ulysses 29

took the sharp blade in her hand, stroked short but ugly voyage to
the animal state.

it gently, and said, "It is almost worth

And while you have returned—looking

dying to be overcome by so mighty a

very well—it is clear that we are in a

warrior. But I think living might be

place of sorceries and must conduct

interesting too, now that I have met you." ourselves with great care.
Our He tried to turn his head, but sank enchanting hostess, Circe,
has become so

deeper into the blueness of her eyes.

fond of our company that she insists we

“Yes, I am a sorceress,” she

stay awhile. This, indeed, is the time of murmured, “a wicked woman. But you

your release from hogdom. So you must

are a sorcerer too, are you not?

now go down to your shipmates on the

Changing me more than I have changed

beach, and tell them what has happened.

your men, for I changed their bodies and Tell them to secure the ship and then you have changed my soul. It is no return here with you to the castle. It is longer a wicked plotting soul, but soft another delay in our journey, but it is far and tender, full of love fore you.”

better than what might have been. Go,

Her voice throbbed. He raised her to then.”

her feet, and said, “You are beautiful

The men trooped happily down to the

enough to turn any man into an animal. I harbor and told the others what had will love you. But even before I am a happened. At first, Eurylochus protested.

man, I am a leader. My men are my

“How do I know,” he said, “that you are

responsibility. I must avow you to swear not still under enchantment? How do I the great oath that you will not harm me know that this is not some new trick of the when I am defenseless, that you will not sorceress to get us all into her power,

wound me and suck away my blood as

turn us all to pigs, and keep us in the sty witches do, but will treat me honestly.

forever?"

And that, first of all, you will restore my But the other men paid no heed to his men to their own forms, and let me take

warning. They were eager to see the

them with me when I am ready to leave." castle and the beautiful witch, to taste the "I will try to see that you are not

delicious food, and enjoy all the luxuries ready," said Circe softly.

their friends had described. So they

Circe kept her promise. The next

obeyed Ulysses' commands. They

morning she took Ulysses out to the sty

dragged the ship up on the beach,

and called the pigs. They came trotting

beyond the reach of the tide, unstepped

up, snuffling and grunting. As they

the mast, then marched off laughing and

streamed past her, rushing to Ulysses, she trudging toward the castle, carrying mast touched each one on the shoulder with and oars and folded sail. Eurylochus

her wand. As she did so, each pig stood followed, but he was afraid.

up, his hind legs grew longer, front

For some time, things went well. The

hooves became hands, his eyes grew,

men were treated as welcome guests.

The Adventures of Ulysses 30

nose shrank, his quills softened into hair, They feasted for hours each night in the he was his

great dining hall. And as they ate, they human self once more, only grown taller were entertained by minstrels singing, by and younger.

acrobats, dancing bears, and dancing

The men crowded around Ulysses,

girls. During the day they swam in the

grunting and laughing. He said to them: ocean, hunted wild boar, threw the discus, had in the courtyard, I suppose.”

archery and spear-throwing contests,

“Ah, they are only the best, the

raced, jumped, and wrestled. Then as

cream, the mightiest warriors of ages

dusk drew in they returned to the castle

gone. But I

for their warm perfumed baths and bowls have had lesser husbands. They are now of hot wine before feasting began again. rabbits, squirrels, boars, cats, spiders, As for Ulysses he found himself falling frogs, and monkeys. That little fellow deeper under Circe's spell every day.

there...." She pointed to a silvery little

Thoughts of home were dim now. He

ape who was prancing and gibbering on

barely remembered his wife's face.

top of the bedpost. "...he who pelts you

Sometimes he would think of days gone

with walnut shells every night. He was

by and wonder when he could shake off

very jealous, very busy and jealous, and

this enchantment and resume his voyage. still is. I picked their forms, you see, to Then she would look at him. And her match their dispositions. Is it not

eyes, like blue flame, burned these

thoughtful of me?"

pictures out of his head. Then he could

"Tell me," said Ulysses, "when I am

not rest until he was

used up, will I be good enough to join

within the scent of her hair, the touch of your select band of wolves
and lions, or her hand. And he would whimper

will I be something less? A toad,

impatiently like a dog dreaming, shake

perhaps, or a snail?"

his head, and go to her.

"A fox, undoubtedly," she said.

"It is most curious," she said. "But I

"With your swiftness, and your cunning

love you more than all my other

ways—oh yes, a fox. A king of foxes."

husbands."

She stroked his beard. "But you are the

"In the name of heaven how many

only man who ever withstood my spells,"

have you had?" he cried.

she said. "You

"Ah, don't say it like that. Not so

are a conqueror, a unique hero. It is not many, when you consider. I have been a your fate to stay with me. It is not my frequent widow, it is true. But, please happy fate to arrange your last hours.”

understand, I am god-descended on both “Is it not?” said Ulysses.

sides. I am immortal and cannot die. I

“No,” she said. “Unless you can

have lived since the beginning of things.” wipe out of your mind all thoughts of “How many husbands have you

home. Unless you can erase all dreams

The Adventures of Ulysses 31

buried, dear widow?”

of battle and voyage, unless you can

“Buried? Why, none.”

forget your men and release me from my

“I see. You cremate them.”

oath, and let them become animals,

“I do not let them die. I cannot bear

contented animals, then and then only,

dead things. Especially if they are things can you remain with me as husband I have loved. Of all nature’s forever. And I will give you of my

transformations, death seems to me the

immortality. Yes, that can be arranged. I most stupid. No, I do not let them die. I know how. You will share my immortality change them into animals, and they roam and live days of sport and idleness and this beautiful island forevermore. And I nights of love. And we will live together see them every day and feed them with always, knowing no other, and we will

my own hand.”

never grow old.”

“That explains those wolves and lions “Can such a thing be?”

against your will. If you choose, you can “Yes. But the decision is yours. I have remain here with me and make this island sworn an oath, and cannot keep you a paradise of pleasure. If not, you must “The Land of the Dead, dark Tartarus,

resume your voyage, and encounter

the realm of torment from which no

dangers more dreadful than any you

mortal returns. Must I go there?”

have seen yet. You will watch friends

“Unless you stay with me here, in

dying before your eyes, have your own

peace, in luxury, in every pleasure but

life imperiled a hundred times, be

that of adventure.”

battered, bruised, torn, ware-tosses, all

“It cannot be,” said Ulysses. “As you,

this, if you leave me. But it is for you to beautiful sorceress, choose a form for decide.

your lovers that matches their natures,

Ulysses stood up and strode to the

and

edge of the terrace. From where he

which they must wear when they are no

stood he could see the light dancing in a longer men, so the Fates, with their

million hot needles on the blue water. In shears, have cut out my destiny. It is the courtyard he saw the wolves and the danger, toil, lions. Beyond the courtyard, at the edge battle, uncertainty. And, though I stop of the wood, he saw his men, happy and refresh myself now and again, still

looking, healthy, tanned; some were

must I resume my voyage, for that is my

wrestling, some flinging spears, others

nature. And to fit my nature has fate cut drawing the bow. Circe had crossed to the pattern of my days.”

her loom and was weaving, weaving and “Go quickly,” said Circe.

“Call your singing. He remembered his wife. She men and depart.

For if you stay here any also, at home in Ithaca, would sit and longer, I shall forget all duty. I shall weave. But how different she looked.

break my oath and keep you here by

Her hair was no fleece of burning gold,
force and never let you go. Quickly then,

The Adventures of Ulysses 32

but black. She was much smaller than
brave one, quickly!”

Circe, and she could not sing.

Ulysses summoned his men and led

“I have decided,” he said. “I must
them down to the beach. They stopped
go.”

the mast, rigged the sails, and sailed

“Must you?”

away. They caught a northwest puff. The

“Yes.”

sails filled and the black ship ran out of

“First let me tell you what the gods

the harbor. Ulysses’ face was wet with

have decreed. If you sail away from this Circe’s last tears and his
heart was very island, you cannot head for home. First heavy. But
then spray dashed into his

you must go to the Land of the Dead.”

face with the old remembered bright

“The Land of the Dead?” cried

shock, and he laughed.

Ulysses. “No! No! It cannot be!”

The last sound the men heard as the

“To the Land of the Dead. To

ship threaded through the mouth of the

Tartarus.

harbor and ran for the open sea, was the

This is the decree. You must go there with howling of the lions and wolves who had all your men. And there you must consult followed them certain ghosts, of whom you will be told, down to the beach. They stood now and they will prophesy for you, and plan breast-deep in the surf, gazing after the your homeward journey. And theirs is white sail, crying their loneliness.xx

the route you must follow if you wish to

see Ithaca again.”

The Land of the Dead

In those days men knew that the Ocean helm. For he had heard that the Stream was a huge river girdling the westward rim of the world was always

earth. Hades' kingdom, dark Tartarus,

fog-girt, and was studded by murderously

was presumed to be on the farther shore, rocky islets where dwelt the Cimmerians, over the edge of the visible world. But no who waited quietly in the fog for ships to one could be certain, for those who went crack upon their shores and deliver to there did not return.

them their natural food, shipwrecked

Now it had been foretold by Circe

sailors.

that Ulysses would have to visit the Land Finally, Ulysses knew he could not

of the Dead, and be advised by wise

keep awake any longer; yet he knew too

ghosts before he could resume his

that to give over the helm to anyone else journey and find his way back to Ithaca. meant almost certain death for them all.

So he turned his bow westward; and a

So he sent a sailor named Elpenor to

strong east wind caught his white sails

climb the mast and try to see some

and sent the ship skimming toward waters

The Adventures of Ulysses 33

no ship had sailed before.

distance ahead. No sooner had Elpenor

Night tumbled from the sky and set its reached the top of the mast
than the ship blackness on the sea and would not lift.

yawed sharply. Ulysses lost his footing

The ship sailed blindly. The men were

and stumbled against the mast.

clamped in a nameless grief. They could No one saw Elpenor fall.
The fog was hardly bear the wound of their own too thick. But they
heard his terrible

voices, but spoke to each other in

scream turned into a choking gurgle.

whispers. The night wore on and did not And they knew that he had
been shaken give way to dawn. There were no stars, from the mast
and had fallen into the sea no moon. They sailed westward and

and been drowned. No sooner had his

waited for dawn, but no crack of light

voice gone still than the fog thinned.

appeared in the sky. The darkness would They could see from one
end of the ship not lift.

to the other—the wet sails, the shining

Once again Ulysses lashed himself to spar, each other's wasted faces. A white the tiller, and stuck splinters of wood in gull rose screaming and flew ahead of his eye

them.

sockets to prop the weary lids. And,

"Follow that gull," said Ulysses. "He

finally, after a week of night, a feeble

will lead us where we must go."

light did curdle the sky—not a regular

Then he stretched himself on the deck

dawn, no joyous burst of sun, but a

and went to sleep. Whereupon the crew

grudging milky grayness that floated

began to whisper among themselves that

down and thickened into fog. Still

the gull was the spirit of their shipmate, Ulysses did not dare to sleep,

Elpenor, and that Ulysses had shaken him

for day was no better than night: no man from the mast purposely, as you shake could see in the dense, woolly folds of fruit from a tree, so that he might fall in fog.

the water and be drowned, giving them

Still the east wind blew, pushing them the white flight of his spirit to follow to westward through the curdling mist, and Tartarus.

still Ulysses did not dare give over the

“He has murdered our shipmate,”

helm

they

whispered to each other, “as he will

grass. He drew his sword and scraped

murder us all to gain his ends.”

out a shallow trench, then had his men

But they did not dare say it loud

cut the throats of two black goats and

enough to awaken Ulysses.

hold them over the trench until it was

All day long they sailed, following the filled with blood. For it was ghosts he white flash of the gull, and when night had come to counsel with, and ghosts, he

came there were no stars and no moon,

knew, came only where they could find

nothing but choking blackness. Ulysses

fresh blood to drink, hoping always to fill took the helm again. But now the bow their dry veins.

The Adventures of Ulysses 34

tipped forward and the stern arose, and

The meadow was still. No birds

the ship slipped through the water with a sang. There was no shrill of insects; the rushing, rustling speed as if it were sailing goats did not bleat. The men were too downhill. The men clung to the shrouds, frightened to breathe. Ulysses waited,

and wept and groaned, and pleaded

leaning on his sword, gloomily watching

with Ulysses to change course. But he

the trench of blood. Then he heard a

answered them not at all. He planted his rustling and saw the air thicken into feet and gripped the tiller with all his spouts of steam. Steamy shapes

strength, as the deck tilted and the ship separated, heads and shoulders of mist slipped down, down...

leaning over the trench to drink, growing

“Who has ever heard of the sea

more solid as they drank.

sloping?” he said to himself. “Truly this One raised its head and looked at

must be the waterway to the underworld, him. He shuddered. It was his mother, and we are the first keel to cut these Anticleia.

fathoms. May the gods grant we cross

“Greetings, Mother. How do you
them again going the other way.”
fare?”

There was a roaring of the waters.

“Poorly, son. I am dead, dead, dead.

The deck leveled. They wailed out of

I kept telling you I would die one day, but darkness as through a
curtain, and found you never believed me. Now you see.

themselves in a strange place. The sea

But do you see? Say you see.”

had narrowed to a river, the water was

But then, striding across the meadow

black, and the sky was black, curving

came certain ghosts in armor. Ulysses

downward like the inside of a bowl; the

bowed low.

light was gray. Tall trees grew along the “Welcome, O Fox of War,”
cried the bank of the river—black poplars and ghost of Achilles. “Tell
me, do men

white birches. And Ulysses knew that the remember me in Arcadia?”

black river was the Styx, and that he had “The gods have not
allowed me to set sailed his ship into the Kingdom of the foot upon

our dear islands,” said Ulysses.

Dead.

“But on whatever savage shore I am

There was no wind, but the sails

thrown there are those who know the

remained strangely taut, and the ship

name of great Achilles. Your fame

floated easily into harbor, as if some

outshines all warriors who have

invisible hand had taken the helm.

ever handled weapons. And your son,

Ulysses bade his men disembark. He led Neoptolemus, is a hero too.”

them past a fringe of trees to a great

“Thank you, Ulysses,” said the

meadow where black goats cropped

ghost of Achilles. “Your words are fair

black

and courteous, as always. Now, heed

When you leave this place, you will sail

this:

past an island where you will hear the
not I....”

The Adventures of Ulysses 35

voices of maidens singing. And the

“Thank you, Mother,” said Ulysses.

sound of their singing will be sweeter

Then came a ghost so new that his

than memories of home, and when your

flesh had not quite turned to mist, but

men hear them, their wits will be

quivered on his bones like a pale jelly.

scattered, and they will wish to dive

Hew was Elpenor, who had fallen from

overboard and swim to shore. If they do, the mast and had led them
to Tartarus.

they will perish. For these maidens are a When Ulysses saw who it
was, he was band of witch sisters—music-mad sisters— taken by a
great dread and cried, “I did

who lure sailors to the rocks so that they not push you, Elpenor. You
fell. It was may flay them, and make drums of their an accident, I
swear.”

skin and flutes of their bones. They are

“Nevertheless,” said Elpenor, “my
the Siren sisters. When you pass their
ghost will trouble you until you make my
shore, steer clear, steer clear.”
grave.”

“Thank you, great Achilles.”

“How will I do that?”

Next to Achilles stood a huge ghost

“The first land you come to, build me

staring at Ulysses out of empty eye

a barrow and set thereon my oar. If you

sockets. He was a giant skeleton. He

forget, I shall scratch at your windows

wore a cloak of stiffened blood and a red and howl down your
chimney and dance plume upon his skull. His spear and in your
sleep.”

sword were made of bone too. He was

“I will build your grave with my own

Ajax.

hands,” said Ulysses. “Have you any

“You tricked me, Ulysses,” he said.

counsel for me?”

“When great Achilles here fell on the

“Yes. Death has cleared my eyes,

field of battle, you claimed his golden

and I

armor by craft, when I should have had

see things I would not have known. I see it. I...I...You took the golden armor that your ship now sailing in a narrow place

my heart desired and drove me mad with between two huge rocks. Beneath the rage, so that I butchered cattle and starboard rock is a cave, and in that cave captives and then killed myself. I hate squats Scylla, and unpleasant lady with

you, sly one, and I have this bad news

twelve legs and six heads who cries with

for you: If you ever do reach Ithaca, you the voice of a new-born puppy. If you will find your wife being courted by other sail too near the rock, she will seize six men, your son a captive in your own sailors to feed her six mouths—“

castle, your substance devoured. This is

“Then I will steer away from Scylla—

my word to you, Ulysses. So you had

toward the other rock.”

simply better fall on your sword new

“Ah, but under the other rock lurks a
where you stand, and save another trip
strange thirsty monster named Charybdis,
to Hades.”

whose habit it is to drink up a whole tide

“Thank you, great Ajax,” said

of water in one gulp, and then spit it out

The Adventures of Ulysses 36

Ulysses. “I will remember what you have again, making a whirlpool
of such terrible told me.”

sucking force that nay ship within its swirl

“I knew that Penelope was being

must be destroyed.”

wooed by other men in your absence,”

“Monster to the right and monster to

said Ulysses’ mother. “I knew it well, but the left,” cried Ulysses.

“What can I do I would not speak evil of your wife, not I, then?”

“You must keep to the middle way.

was empty and the misty bladder of his

But if you cannot—and indeed it will be

body was faintly pink.

very difficult, for you will be tacking

“You honor me by your visit, Ulysses,”

against headwinds—then choose the right—he said. “Many men
sought my counsel hand rock where hungry Scylla squats.

when I was alive, but you are the first

For it is better to lose six men than your client to make his way down
here. You ship and your entire crew.”

have heard these others tell you of

“Thank you, courteous Elpenor,” said certain petty dangers which
you will do Ulysses. “I will heed your words.”

well to avoid, but I have a mighty thing to A thin tittering arose from
the ghosts, tell.”

and they spoke in steamy whispers.

“Tell.”

“What are you doing here, man?”

“Your next landfall will be

You’re still alive. Go and die properly

Thrinacia, a large island which men shall and come back, and we will
welcome

one day call Sicily. Here the Sun Titan, you.”

Hyperion, pastures his herds of golden

“Silence!” cried Ulysses. “I come for cattle. Your store will have been eaten better counsel than this. I must find my way when you reach this place, and your men way back to Ithaca past the mighty wrath will be savage with hunger. But no of a god who reaches his strong had and matter how desperate for food they are, swirls the sea as a child does a mud you must prevent them from stealing even

puddle, dashing my poor twig of a ship

one beef. If they do, they shall never see from peril to grim peril. I need good home again.”

counsel to get home. Where is the sage, “I myself will guard the herds of the Teiresias? Why is he not here to greet Sun Titan,” said Ulysses, “and not one

me?”

beef shall be taken. Thank you, wise

“Coming—coming—He is blind but he Teiresias.”

smells blood as far as any.”

“Go now. Take your men aboard the

“Do not drink it all. Save some for

ship, and go. Sail up the black rover him.”

toward the upper air.”

And Ulysses smote the ghosts with his “But now that I am here and have sword, driving them back, whimpering come such a long and weary way to get

from the trench of blood.

here, may I not see some of the famous

The Adventures of Ulysses 37

Then the air grew vaporous as the

sights? May I not see Orion hunting,

mob of ghosts shifted and swayed,

Minos judging? May I not dance with the

making way for one who cleaved

heroes in the Fields of Asphodel? May I

forward toward the trench of blood, and not see Tantalus thirsting, or
my own Ulysses recognized the one he was most grandfather,
Sisyphus, rolling his eternal eager to see, the blind woman-shaped

stone up the hill?"

ghost of Teiresias, sage of Thebes, expert No," said Teiresias. "It is
better that you at disasters, master of prophesy.

go. "You have been here too long

"Hail, venerable Teiresias," he cried,

already, I fear; too long exposed to these

"all honor to you. I have journeyed far

bone-bleaching airs. You may already

to make your acquaintance.

be tainted with death, you and your men,
Teiresias came silently to the trench,
making your fates too heavy for any ship
knelt, and drank. He drank until the
to hold. Embark then. Sail up the black trench
river. Do

not look back. Remember our advice

and forget our reproaches, and do not

return until you are properly dead.”

Ulysses ordered his men aboard. He

put down the helm. There was still not

wind. But the sails stretched taut, and the ship pushed upriver.
Heeding the last words of the old sage, he did not look

back, but he heard the voice of his

mother calling. “Good-bye...good—

bye...” until it grew faint as his own

breath. XX

The Adventures of Ulysses 38

The Adventures of Ulysses 39

The Sirens

In the first light of morning Ulysses awoke and called his crew about him.

“Men,” he said. “Listen well, for your

lives today hang upon what I am about to

tell you. That large island to the west is Thrinacia, where we must make a

landfall, for our provisions run low. But to get to the island we must pass through a narrow strait. An at the head of this strait is a rocky islet where dwell two

sisters called Sirens, whose voices you

must not hear. Now I shall guard you

against their singing which would lure

you to shipwreck, but first you must bind me to the mast. Tie me tightly, as though I were a dangerous captive. And no matter how I struggle, no matter what

signals I make to you, *do not release me*, lest I follow their voices to destruction, taking you with me.”

Thereupon Ulysses took a large lump

of the beeswax which was used by the

sail mender to slick his heavy thread, and kneaded it in his powerful hands until it became soft. Then he went to each man of the crew and plugged his ears with soft wax; he caulked their ears so tightly that they could hear nothing but the thin pulsing of their own blood.

Then he stood himself against the mast, and the men bound him about with rawhide, winding it tightly around his body, lashing him to the thick mast.

They had lowered the wail because

ships cannot sail through a narrow strait unless there is a following wind, and now The Adventures of Ulysses 40

each man of the crew took his place at the great oars. The polished blades whipped the sea into a froth of white water and the ship nosed toward the strait.

Ulysses had left his own ears unplugged because he had to remain in command of the ship and had need of his hearing. Every wound means something upon the sea. But when they drew near

the rocky islet and he heard the first faint strains of the Sirens'

singing, then he wished he had stopped

could not break the thick anchor line. He his own ears too with wax.
All his

strained against it until he bled, but the strength suddenly surged
toward the

line held.

wound of those magical voices. The very The men bent to their oars
and rowed hair of his head seemed to be tugging at more swiftly, for
they saw the mast his scalp, trying to fly away. His eyeballs bending
like a tall tree in a heavy wind, started out of his head.

and they feared that Ulysses, in his fury, For in those voices were the
sounds

might snap it off short and dive, mast an that men love:

all, into the water to get at the Sirens.

Happy sounds like bird railing, sleet

Now they were passing the rock, and

hailing, milk pailing...

Ulysses could see the singers. There were Sad sounds like rain
leaking, tree

two of them. They sat on a heap of white creaking, wind seeking...

bones—the bones of shipwrecked sailors—

Autumn sounds like leaf tapping, fire
and sang more beautifully than senses
sapping, river lapping...

could bear. But their appearance did not Quiet sounds like snow
flaking, spider match their voices, for they were shaped waking,
heart breaking...

like birds, huge birds, larger than eagles.

It seemed to him then that the sun was They had feathers instead of
hair, and burning him to a cinder as he stood. And their hands and
feet were claws. But the voices of the Sirens purred in a cool their
faces were the faces of young girls.

crystal pool upon their rock past the blue-When Ulysses saw them
he was able hot flatness of the sea and its lacings of to forget the
sweetness of their voices white-hot spume. It seemed to him he

because their look was so fearsome. He

could actually see their voices deepening closed his eyes against the
terrible sight into a silvery cool pool, and that he must of these bird-
women perched on their plunge into that pool or die a flaming heap
of bones. But when he closed his

The Adventures of Ulysses 41

death.

eyes and could not see their ugliness,

He was filled with such fury of desire

then their voices maddened him once

that he swelled his mighty muscles, burst again, and he felt himself straining

the rawhide bonds like thread, and

against the bloody ropes. He forced

dashed for the rail.

himself to open his eyes and look upon

But he had warned two of his

the monsters, so that the terror of their strongest men—Perimedes and

bodies would blot the beauty of their

Eurylochus—to guard him close. They

voices.

seized him before he could plunge into

But the men, who could only see, not

the water. He swept them aside as if they hear the Sirens, were so appalled by had been children. But they had held him their aspect that they swept their oars long enough to give the crew time to faster and faster, and the black ship

swarm about him. He was

scuttled past the rock. The Siren's voices overpowered—crushed by their numbers— sounded fainter and fainter and finally and dragged back to the mast. This time died away.

he was bound with the mighty hawser

When Perimedes and Eurylochus saw
that held the anchor.

their captain's face lose its madness, they The men returned to their
rowing

unbound him, and he signaled to the men
seats, unable to hear the voices because
to unstop their ears. For now he heard
of the wax corking their ears. The ship
the whistling gurgle of a whirlpool, and
swung about and headed for the strait
he knew that they were approaching the
again.

narrow part of the strait, and must pass
Louder now, and clearer, the
between Scylla and Charybdis. xx
tormenting voices came to Ulysses.

Again he was aflame with a fury of
desire. But try as he might he

Scylla and Charybdis

or god ever fled from!”

Thereupon she changed Scylla into

something that looked like a huge fleshy

Ulysses had been told in Tartarus of

spider with twelve legs and six heads.

She also implanted in her an insatiable

these two monsters that guard the narrow hunger, a wild greed for human flesh.

waterway leading to Thrinacia. Each of

When any ship came within reach of her

them hid beneath its own rock, which

long tentacles, she would sweep the deck

stood side by side and were separated

of sailors, and eat them.

only by the width of the strait at its

The Adventures of Ulysses 42

narrowest point.

Ulysses stood in the bow as the ship

Charybdis dwelt in a cave beneath the nosed slowly up the strait.
The roaring of left-hand rock. Once she had been a the waters grew
louder and louder, and

superbly beautiful naiad, daughter of

now he saw wild feathers of spume flying

Poseidon, and very loyal to her father in as Charybdis sucked down
the tide and

his endless feud with Zeus, Lord of Earth spat it back. He looked at
the other rock.

and Sky. She it was who rode the hungry Scylla was not in sight. But
he knew she tides after Poseidon had stirred up a was lurking
underneath, ready to spring.

storm, and led them onto the beaches,

He squinted, trying to measure distances.

gobbling up whole villages, submerging

The only chance to come through

fields, drowning forests, claiming them for unharmed, he saw, was to
strike the the sea. She won so much land for her middle way
between the two rocks, just

father's kingdom that Zeus became

beyond the suction of the whirlpool, and

enraged and changed her into a monster, just out of Scylla's reach.
But to do this a huge bladder of a creature whose face meant that
the ship must not be allowed was all mouth and whose arms and
legs to swerve a foot from its exact course, for were flippers. And he

pinned her in the middle way was no wider than the ship cave beneath the rock, saying, "Yourself."

hunger shall become thirst. As you once He took the helm, and bade his men devour land belonging to me, now you keep a perfectly regular stroke. Then, shall drink the tide thrice a day—swallow considering further, he turned the helm it and spit it forth again—and your name

over to Eurylochus, and put on his armor.

will be a curse to sailors forever."

Grasping sword and spear, he posted

And so it was. Thrice a day she

himself at the starboard rail.

burned with a terrible thirst, and stuck her "For," he said to himself, "there is no head out of the cave and drank down the contending with the whirlpool. If we veer sea, shrinking the waters to shallow off our course it must be toward the other stream, and then spat the water out again monster. I can fight any enemy I can in a tremendous torrent, making a sea."

whirlpool near her rock in which no ship

The men rowed very carefully, very

could live.

skillfully. Eurylochus chanted the stroke, This was Charybdis. As for Scylla,

and the black ship cut through the waters who lived under the right-hand rock, she of the strait, keeping exactly to the

too had once been a beautiful naiad.

middle way.

Poseidon himself spied her swimming one They were passing
between the day, and fell in love with her, and so rocks now. They
watched in amazement

provoked the jealousy

as the water fell away to their left,

of his wife, Amphitrite, that she cried, “I showing a shuddering flash
of sea bed will make her the most hideous female

and gasping fish, and then roared back

The Adventures of Ulysses 43

that man

again with such force that the water was

They felt their ship tremble.

beaten into white froth.

“Well done!” cried Ulysses. “A few

had grasped six sailors, snatched them

more strokes and we are through. Keep screaming through the air,
and into the the way— sea.

the middle way!”

Ulysses had no time for fear. He had

But, when measuring distance, he had

to do a number of things immediately.

been unable to reckon upon one thing.

He roared to the crew to keep the ship on The ship was being rowed, and the great course lest it be swept into the whirlpool sweep oars projected far beyond the then he seized an oar himself and rowed

width of the hull. And Scylla, lurking

on the starboard side where the oars had

underwater, seized two of the oars, and

been broken.

dragged the ship toward her.

From where he sat he could see

Dumbfounded, Ulysses saw the

Scylla's rock, could see her squatting at polished shafts of the oars which had

the door of her cave. He saw her plainly, been dipping and flashing so regularly stuffing the men into her six bloody

suddenly snap like twigs, and before he

mouths. He heard the shrieks of his men

knew what was happening, the deck

as they felt themselves being eaten alive.

tilted violently. He was thrown against

He did not have time to weep, for he

the rail and almost fell overboard.

had to keep his crew rowing and tell the

He lay on the deck, scrambling for his helmsman how to steer past the sword. He saw tentacles arching over whirlpool.

him; they were like the arms of an

They passed through the strait into

octopus, but ending in enormous human

open water. Full ahead lay Thrinacia

hands.

with its wooded hills and long white

He found his sword, rose to his knees, beaches, the Island of the Sun Titan, their and hacked at the tentacles. Too late.

next landfall. xx

The hands

Vocabulary

Structure Dictionary

1. During the rain the hill behind our

Some compound words can be easily

house washed away, causing a

understood when you examine the words

landfall that left two inches of mud that make up the compound.

Heartbreak in our den.

can be divided into *heart* and *break*, and you understand the meaning. However,

2. Ira declared that his devotion to

many compound words are not so easily

The Adventures of Ulysses 44

analyzed. You can look at the parts of

Terry began when she was his

sheepfold and still not be certain of the *shipmate* on a shrimp boat
cruising meaning. Or the parts of a compound the ocean.

may prove misleading: a *swineherd* is not a herd of pigs, but a
person who herds 3. Stan's test score showed the

pigs. When you are unsure whether the

professor that Stan was

meaning suggested by the structure is the *dumbfounded* and should
quite

correct one, you must go to a dictionary.

school.

Each of the sentences in the next

column contains an italicized compound.

4. Mother served the chicken on

Number your paper from one to four,

breastplates of antique china .

and beside each number write (—) if you

think the compound is used correctly and

(0) if it is not. Be prepared to explain your choices.

The Cattle of the Sun

Instead of landing on Thrinacia, as the

wood was pressed a fragrant black sap,

crew expected, Ulysses dropped anchor

which was boiled in a big iron pot. Then and summoned his two underchiefs,

he had the men tar the ship from stern to Eurylochus and Perimedes, to take

stern, caulking each crack.

counsel.

The hunting party returned,

He said, "You heard the warning of

downhearted. There seemed to be no

old Teiresias down in Tartaus. You heard game on the island, they told Ulysses, him say that this island belongs to only a few wild pigs, which they had

Hyperion, the Sun Titan, who uses it as a shot, but no deer, no bear, no rabbits, no grazing land for his flocks. The warning game birds. Just the pigs, and great was most dire: Whosoever of our crew

herds of golden cattle.

harms these cattle in any way will bring

The water party returned triumphantly,

swift doom upon himself, and will never

barrels full.

see his home again."

The men were so weary that Ulysses

"We all heard the warning," said

stood guard himself that night. Wrapped

Eurylochus, "and everyone will heed it."

in his cloak, naked sword across his

“How can you be so sure?” said

knees, he sat hunched near the driftwood

Ulysses. “If this voyage has taught you

fire, brooding into the flames.

nothing else, it should have proved to

“I cannot let them rest here,” he said

you that there is no thing in the world so to himself. “If game is so scarce, they will uncertain as man’s intentions, especially The Adventures of Ulysses 45

his good ones. No, fair sirs, what I

be tempted to take the cattle. For hungry propose is that we change our plans

men the only law is hunger. No, we must

about landing here and seek another

put out again tomorrow and try to find

island, one where death does not

another island.”

pasture.”

The next morning he routed out the

“It will never do,” said Eurylochus.

men. They grumbled terribly, but did not

“The men are exhausted. There is a
dare to disobey. However, they were not
south wind blowing now, which means
fated to embark. A strong south wind
we would have to row. We simply do
blew up, almost gale strength, blowing
not have the strength to hold the oars.”

directly into the harbor. There was no

“Our stores are exhausted too,” said sailing into the teeth of it, and
it was Perimedes. “The food that Circe gave us much too strong to
row against.

is almost gone. The water kegs are

“Very well,” said Ulysses, “scour the
empty. We must land here and let the
island for game again. We must wait
men rest, and lay in fresh provisions.”
until the wind drops.”

“Very well,” said Ulysses. “If it must

He had thought it must blow itself out

be, it must be. But I am holding you two in a day or so, but it was not
to be. For directly responsible for the safety of the thirty days and
thirty nights the south sun-cattle. Post guards at night, and kill wind

blew, and they could not leave the any man who goes near these fatal

island. All the wild pigs had been killed.

herds.”

The men were desperately hungry.

Thereupon the anchor was raised, and Ulysses used all his cunning to find food.

the ship put into harbor. Ulysses did not He had the men fish in the sea, dig the moor the ship offshore, but had the men

beaches for shellfish and turtle eggs,

drag it up on the beach. He sent one

search the woods for edible roots and

party out in search of game, another to

berries. They tore the clinging limpets off fill the water kegs, and a third to chop rocks and shot gulls. A huge pot was

down pine trees. From the

kept boiling over driftwood fire, and in it the men threw anything remotely edible— sea lilies, fish heads, sand crabs—vile

sea polyps,

broth. But most days they had nothing

else. And they grew hungrier and

and that the smell of roasting meat was
hungrier.

real. He lifted his face to the sky, and For thirty days the strong south
wind

said. "O, mighty ones, it was unkind to
blew, keeping them beached. Finally,
let me fall into sleep. For now my men
one night when Ulysses was asleep,
have done what they have been told they
Eurylochus secretly called the men
must not do."

together, and said, "Death comes to men He drew his sword and
rushed off to in all sorts of ways. And however it the light of the fire.

The Adventures of Ulysses 46

comes, it is never welcome. But the worst But just then Zeus was
hearing a more of all deaths is to die of starvation. And powerful
plea. For the Sun Titan had to be forced to starve among herds of fat
been informed immediately by the quick beef is a hellish torture that
the gods spies that serve the gods, and now he

reserve for the greatest criminals. So I was raging upon Olympus.

say to you men that we must disregard

"O, Father Zeus, he cried, "I demand
the warning of that meddling ghost,

vengeance upon the comrades of Ulysses

Teiresias, and help ourselves to this cattle. who have slaughtered my golden kine. If We can do it now while Ulysses sleeps.

they are spared, I will withdraw my

And if indeed the Sun Titan is angered

chariot from the sky. No longer will I

and seeks vengeance—well at least we

warm the treacherous earth, but will go to shall have had one more feast before

Hades and shine among the dead.”

dying.”

“I hear you, cousin,” said Zeus, “and

It was agreed. They went

promise vengeance.”

immediately into the meadow. Now,

Ulysses dashed among the feasting

Hyperion’s cattle were the finest ever

crew ready to cut them down even as

seen on earth. They were enormous,

they squatted there, eating.

sleek, broad-backed, with crooked

“Wait,” cried Eurylochus. “Hold your golden horns, and hides of beautiful hand. These are not the Sun God’s dappled gold and white. And when the cattle, but six stags we found on the other men came among them with their axes, side of the island.”

they were not afraid, for no one had ever “Stags?” roared Ulysses. “What kind offered them any harm. They looked at of monstrous lie is this? You know there the men with their great plum-colored are no stags on this island.”

eyes, whisked their tails, and continued

“They were there,” said Eurylochus.

grazing.

And now they are here. Perhaps the

The axes rose and fell. Six fine cows

gods relented, and sent them as food.

were slaughtered. Because they knew

Come, eat, dear friend, and do not invent they were committing an offense against misdeeds where none exist.”

the gods, the men were very careful to

Ulysses allowed himself to be

offer sacrifice. Upon a makeshift altar

persuaded, and sat down among the
they placed the fat thighbones and
men, and began to eat with ravenous
burned them as offerings. They had no
speed.

wine to pour upon the blazing meat as a But then a strange thing
happened. The libation, so they used water instead, spitted
carcasses turning over the fire

chanting prayers as they watched the
began to low and moo as though they
meat burn.

were alive, one of the flayed hides

But the smell of the roasting flesh

crawled over the sand to Ulysses, and he

overcame their piety. They leaped upon saw that it was dappled gold
and white, The Adventures of Ulysses 47

the carcasses like wild beasts, ripped

and knew he had been tricked.

them apart with their hands, stuck the

Once again he seized his sword and

flesh on spits, and plunged them into the dashed toward Eurylochus.

open fire.

He looked about, trying to find

Ulysses awoke from a dream of food. someone to pull aboard. There was no He sniffed the air and realized it was no one. He had no way of steering the raft, dream but had to go where the wind blew him.

“Wait!” cried Eurylochus. “Do not

And now, to his dismay, he found the

blame me. We have not offended the

wind shifting again. It blew from the

gods by our trickery. For the south wind south, which meant that he would be has fallen—see? The wind blows from the pushed back toward the terrible strait.

north now, and we can sail away. If the All day he drifted, and all night.

gods were angry, Ulysses, would they

When dawn came, it brought with it a

send us a fair wind?”

roaring sucking sound, and he saw that

“To the ship!” shouted Ulysses. “We

he was being drawn between Scylla and

sail immediately.”

Charybdis. He felt the raft being pulled The men gathered up the meat that

toward the whirlpool. It was the very
was left, and followed Ulysses to the
moment when Charybdis took her first

beached ship. They put logs under it and drink of the day. She
swallowed the tide, rolled it down to the sea. Here they and held it in
her great bladder of a

unfurled the sail, and slid out of the
belly. The raft spun like a leaf in the
harbor.

outer eddies of the huge suction, and

Night ran out and the fires of dawn

Ulysses knew that when he reached the

burned the sky. The men hurried about

vortex of the whirlpool, he and the raft

their tasks, delighted to be well fed and would be drawn to the
bottom, and that sailing again, after the starving month on he must
drown.

Thrinacia.

He kept his footing on the raft until the But then Ulysses, observing
the sky,

very last moment, and just as it was

saw a strange sight. The sun seemed to

pulled into the vortex, he leaped as high as he could, frowning. He saw that black clouds as he could upon the naked face of the

had massed in front of it. He heard a

rock, scrambling for a handhold. He

rustling noise, and looked off westward,

caught a clump of lichen and clung with

where he saw the water ruffling darkly.

all his strength. He could climb no higher

“Down sail!” he shouted. “Ship the

on the rock; it was too slippery for a

mast!”

foothold. All he could do was cling to the mast. Too late. A wild west wind came

moss and pray that his strength would not hurtling across the water and pounced on him. He was waiting for Charybdis the ship. There was no time to do to spit forth the tide again.

anything. Both forestays snapped. The

The long hours passed. His shoulders

The Adventures of Ulysses 48

mast split and fell, laying its white sail like felt as though they were being torn apart by a shroud over the whip. A lightning bolt by red-hot pincers. Finally he heard a flare from the blue sky and struck great tumult of waters and saw it frothing midship. Great billows of choking yellow out of the cave. The waves leaped smoke arose. The heat

was unbearable. toward his feet. And then he saw what Ulysses saw his men diving off the deck, he was waiting for; his raft came shooting garments and hair ablaze and hissing like up like a cork.

cinders when they hit the water. He was He dropped upon the timbers. Now still shouting commands, trying to chop he would have some hours of quiet

the sail free and fighting against the gale water, he knew, before Charybdis drank and fire. But he was all alone. Not one again. So he kept to that side of the man was aboard. The ship fell apart

strait, holding as far from Scylla as he

beneath him. The ribs were torn from the could, for he well remembered the keel. The ship was nothing but a mass of terrible reach of her arms.

flaming timbers, and Ulysses swam

He passed safely beyond the rocks

among them. He held on to the mast,

and out of the strait. For nine days he

which had not burned. Pushing it before drifted under the burning sun, nine nights him, he swam out of the blazing under the indifferent moon. With his knife wreckage. He found the keel floating he cut a long

free. The oxhide backstay was still tied to On the tenth day he found himself the head of the mast; with it he hashed approaching another island.

mast and keel together into a kind of raft. He was very weak. The island grew splinter from the timbers, and shaped it dark as he looked at it. A black mist hid into a lance for spearing fish. He did not the land, which was odd because the sun find any. Then he lay on

his back, was shining. Then the sky tilted, and the pretending to be dead, and gulls came to black mist covered him. xx peck out his eyes. He caught them and

wrung their necks. He ate their flesh and drank their blood, and stayed alive.

Calypso

dream. He was strong enough now to sit up and look around. He was in a great

grove hemmed by trees—alder and

When Ulysses awoke he found himself poplar and cypress. Across this meadow four streams ran, crossing each other, lying on a bed of sweet-smelling grass.

making a sound like soft laughter. The

The sun shone hotly, but he was in a pool

The Adventures of Ulysses 49

of delicious cool shade under a poplar

meadow was a carpet of wild flowers,

tree. He was still dizzy. The trees were violets, parsley, bluebells, daffodils, and swaying, and bright flowers danced upon cat-faced pansies. His bed had been the meadow. He closed his eyes, made in front of a grotto, he saw. Over

thinking, "I am dead then. The god that

it a wild grapevine had been trained to

hunts me took pity and shortened my

fall like a curtain.

hard life, and I am now in the Elysian

The vine curtain was pushed aside,

Fields."

and Calypso came out.

A voice answered, "You have not

"You are awake," she cried, "and just

died. You are not in the Elysian Fields.

in time for your wedding feast. The stag You have come home."

is roasted. The wine has been poured.

He opened his eyes again. A woman No, don't move. You're still too weak.

was bending over him. She was so tall

Let me help you, little husband.”

that he knew she was no mortal woman,

She stooped and lifted him in her

but nymph or naiad or demigoddess.

great, white arms and carried him easily

She was clad in a short tunic of yellow

as though he were a child into the grotto, and purple. Her hair was yellow, and and set him before the hearth. A whole

long and thick.

stag was spitted over the flame. The cave

“You are here with me,” she said.

was carpeted with the skins of leopard

“You have come home.”

and wolf and bear.

“Home? Is this Ithaca? Are you

“Lovely and gracious goddess,” said

Penelope?”

Ulysses, “tell me, please, how I came

“This is Ogygia, and I am Calypso.” here. The last I remember I was on my He tried to sit up. He was too weak. raft, and then a blackness fell.”

“But Ithaca is my home,” he said. “And

“I was watching for you,” said

Penelope is my wife.”

Calypso. “I knew you would come, and I

“Home is where you dwell. And now was waiting. Then your raft floated into you belong to me, because this island sight. I saw you slump over and roll off and everything on it is mine.”

the raft. And I changed you into a fish, Ulysses went back to sleep. For he

for sharks live in this

believed he was dreaming, and did not

wish to wake up again and find himself

saw a woman, weaving.

on the raft. But when he awoke, he was

“She looks older,” he said.

still in his

“You have been away a long time.

water and they are always hungry. As

Only the immortals do not age. I was

soon as I turned you into a fish, a gull

2,300 years old yesterday. Look at me.

stooped—and he would have had you—

Do you see any wrinkles?”

but I shot him with my arrow. Then I took “Poor Penelope,” said Ulysses.

my net and fished you out, restored you

“Don’t pity her too much. She has

The Adventures of Ulysses 50

to your proper shape, fed you a broth of plenty of company. She is presumed to herbs, and let you sleep. That was your be a widow you know.”

arrival, O man I have drawn from the

“Has she married again?”

sea. As for your departure, that will

“I weary of this picture. Would you

never be. Now eat your meat and drink like to see another?”

your wine, for I like my husbands well

“My son, Telemachus.”

fed.”

She poked the fire again, and Ulysses

Ulysses ate and drank, and felt his

saw the flickering image of a tall young
strength return.

man with red-gold hair. He held a spear

“After all,” he thought, “things could
in his hand and looked angry.

be worse. In fact they have been much

“How he has grown,” murmured

worse. This may turn out to be quite a

Ulysses. “He was a baby when I left. He pleasant interlude. She is
certainly

is a young man now, and a fine one, is

beautiful, this Calypso. Rather large for he not?”

my taste, and inclined to be bossy, I’m

“Looks like his father,” said Calypso.

afraid. But who’s perfect?”

He turned to her, smiling, and said,

“You say you were waiting for me,

watching

for my raft. How did you know I would

“He seems to be defying some

be coming?”

enemy,” said Ulysses. “What is

“I am one of the Titan brood,” said

happening?”

Calypso. “Daughter of the mighty Atlas, “He is trying to drive away his who stands upon the westward rim of the mother’s suitors, who live in you castle world bearing the sky upon his shoulders. now. She is quite popular—for an older We are the elder branch of the gods, we woman. But then, of course, she has land Titans. For us there is no before or after, and goods. A rich widow. You left her only now, wherein all things are and well provided (for a sailor). She has

always were and always will be. Time,

many suitors, and cannot decide among

you see, is a little arrangement man has

them. Or perhaps she enjoys their

made for himself to try to measure the

courtship too much to decide. But your

immeasurable mystery of life. It does not son is very proud of his father, whom he really exist. So when we want to know does not remember, and seeks to drive

anything that has happened in what you

the suitors from you castle.”

call ‘before,’ or what will happen in what “I had better go home and help him,”

you call ‘after,’ we simply shuffle the

said Ulysses.

pictures and look at them.”

“Put that out of your mind. It simply

“I don’t think I understand.”

will not happen. Forget Ithaca, Ulysses.

“I have watched your whole voyage, You are a mighty hero, and heroes have

The Adventures of Ulysses 51

Ulysses. All I have to do is poke the log many homes, and the last is always the in a certain way, and pictures form in the best. Look at this. See some of your heart of the fire and burn there until I exploits. Like many warriors, you were

poke the log again. What would you like too busy fighting to know what really to see?”

happened.”

“My wife, Penelope.”

She poked the log again and again,

Calypso reached her long arm and

and a stream of pictures flowed through

poked the log. And in the heart of the

the fire. Ulysses saw himself standing on flame Ulysses

a rock at the Cyclop’s cave, holding the

white-hot sword

above the great sleeping eye, preparing said Ulysses. "You island goddesses are to stab it in. he saw himself wrestling with apt to be abrupt with your former friends.

the leather bag of winds that Aeolus had I've noticed this."

given him; saw himself running with the

"It's a depressing topic, dear. Let's

wolves and lions who had been Circe's

talk about me. Do you find me beautiful

lovers in the dark courtyard of her castle. today?"

Then, sword in hand, he saw himself

"More beautiful than yesterday, if that

hacking at Scylla's tentacles as she

is possible. And no doubt will find you

reached across the tilting deck for his

even lovelier tomorrow, since you have

men. Going back he saw himself before

shown me the penalty of any inattention."

his homeward voyage crouched in the

"Do not fear," said Calypso. "You

black belly of the wooden horse he had

are not like the others. You are bolder
made. Next, climbing out of that horse
and have more imagination. You are a
after it had been dragged into the city
hero.”

and racing with lifted sword to slaughter

“Perhaps you could persuade your

the sleeping Trojan warriors. And, as he feathered friends to nest
elsewhere?

watched and saw the old battles

They make me nervous.”

refought, the men who had been his

“Nothing easier. I shall simply tell

friends, and the monstrous enemies he

them to depart. If they do not, I shall

had overcome, his heart sang with pride, change them all to
grasshoppers, all save and a drunken warmth stronger than the one,
who will eat the rest, and then die of fumes of wine rose to his head,
drowning overeating.”

out all the pictures of home.

“Truly, you are wise and powerful,

He stood up, and said, "Thank you for and fair beyond all women, mortal or showing me myself, Calypso. I do seem immortal."

to be a hero, don't I? And worthy to love She smiled. "You have such and apt a daughter of the Titans."

way of putting things," she said.

"Yes," said Calypso.

So Ulysses made himself at home on

Now Calypso had amused herself

the island, and passes the time hunting

The Adventures of Ulysses 52

with shipwrecked sailors before. But she game and fishing the sea, and reveling was hard to please, and none of them with the beautiful Calypso. He was

had lasted very long. When she was

happy. Thoughts of home grew dim. The

tired of someone she would throw him

nymph taught him how to poke the magic

back into the sea. If she were feeling

log upon her hearth so that it would cast goodnatured she would change him to

up fire pictures. And he sat by the hour gull or fish first. Indeed, the trees of the on the great hearth, reading the flickering grove were filled with nesting sea birds— tapestry of days gone by and days to

gull and heron and osprey and sand
come. But she had instructed the log
owls—who called to her at night,
never to show him scenes of Ithaca, for
reproaching her.

she wished him not to be reminded of his
“What is the clamor of birds?” said
home in any way, lest he be tempted to
Ulysses.

depart. But Ulysses was as crafty as she
“Just birds.”

was, and after he had poked the log

“Why do they shriek so?”

many ties, asking it to show him what was

“They are angry at me for loving you. happening on his island, and
the log had They were men once, like yourself.”

cast up pictures of other times, other

“How did they get to be birds?”

places, he realized that Calypso had laid

“Oh, well, it’s no very difficult

a magic veto upon the scenes of home.

transformation, when you know how. I

And this, instead of making him forget,

thought they would be much happier so.” made him more eager than ever to know

“They don’t sound very happy.”

what was happening to Telemachus and

“They have jealous natures.”

Penelope.

“You are not unlike Circe in some

One day he went into the wood,

ways,”

snared a sea crow, and asked, “Can you

“Yes,” said the crow.

Speak?”

“Were you once a man?”

never finished. But the suitors grow

“Once...once...at the time of your

impatience. They are demanding that she

grandfather, Sisiphus. I was a clever

finish her weaving and choose a groom.

man and spy. That’s why Calypso

Your son opposes them. And they
changed me into a crow when she grew
threaten to kill him unless he steps aside.”

wearied of me, for of all creatures we are

“Thank you, crow,” said Ulysses.

the best for spying and prying and

“What will you do now—try to

tattling.”

escape?”

“Then you’re the bird for me,” cried

“Escape? I do not consider myself a

Ulysses. “Listen, I wish you to fly to

captive, good bird. I shall simply inform Ithaca. Go to my castle and
see what is Calypso that I intend to leave, and ask

happening. Then come back and tell

her to furnish transportation.”

me.”

“You make it sound easy,” said the

The Adventures of Ulysses 53

“Why should I? What will you give

crow. “Good luck.”

me?”

Ulysses went to Calypso in her grotto,

“Your life.”

and fell upon his knees before her, and

“My life? I already have that.”

said, “Fair and gracious friend, you have

“But not for long. Because if you

made me happier than any man has a

refuse to do as I ask, I shall wring you

right to be, especially an unlucky one.

neck.”

But now I must ask you one last great

“Hmmm,” said the crow. “There is

favor.”

merit in your argument. Very well. I

Calypso frowned. “I don’t like the

shall be your spy. Only don’t let Calypso sound of that,” she said.

“What do you know. She catch me and feed me to the mean ‘last’?

Why should I not go on

cat before I can report to you. I have a doing you favors?”

notion she’d like you to forget Ithaca.”

“I must go home.”

“Fly away, little bird,” said Ulysses,

“This is your home.”

“and do what you have to do. I’ll take

“No. My home is Ithaca. Penelope is

care of things here.”

my wife. Telemachus is my son. I have

The next day, at dusk, as he was

enemies. They live in my castle and steal returning from the hunt, he heard the my goods. They wish to kill my son and

crow calling from the depth of an oak

take my wife. I am a king. I cannot

tree.

tolerate insults. I must go home.”

“Greeting,” said Ulysses. “Have you “Suppose you do go home, what done what I asked?”

then?”

“I have flown to Ithaca,” said the

“I will contend with my enemies. I will

crow. A rough journey by sea, but not

kill them or they will kill me.”

really so bad as the crow flies. I flew to

“You kill them, say—then what?”

your castle, and perched in an

“Then I live. I rule. I don’t know. I

embrasure, and watched and watched.

cannot read the future.”

Briefly, your son is grieving, your wife is

“I can. Look.”

weaving, and your guests are *not*

She poked the magic log. Fire

leaving.”

pictures flared. Ulysses saw himself

“What does my wife weave?”

sitting on his throne. He was an old man.

“Your shroud.”

Penelope was there. She was old

“She is faithful. But the suitors, who

woman. “You will grow old...old...”

are brawling, ill-mannered young men,

Calypso’s voice murmured in his ear,

are pressing her to choose one of them

unraveling its rough purring way like raw for a husband. However, she refuses to silk. "Old...old...You will live on

choose until she finishes the shroud. And memories. You will eat your heart out it has been three years aweaving, for recalling old glories, old battles, old

each night she rips out the work she has

loves. Look...look into the fire."

The Adventures of Ulysses 54

done by day, so the shroud is

to island, battered by storms, swallowed

"Is that me?"

by tides. My ships have been wrecked,

"That's you, humping along in your

my men killed. But you have granted me

old age among your hills, grown dry and life. Now, I pray you, take back the gift.

cruel."

Let me join my men in Tartarus. For if I She tapped the log and the fire died.

cannot return home, if I have to be kept

“Do you still want to go back to
here as a prisoner of Calypso while my
Ithaca?” she said.

kingdom is looted, my son slain, and my

“Will my future be different if I stay
wife stolen, then I do not wish to live.
here?”

Allow me to go home, or strike me dead

“Certainly. If you stay with me, it will on the spot.”

be entirely different. You will no longer His prayer was carried to
Olympus.

be a mortal man. I will make you my

Athene heard it. She went to Zeus, and

eternal consort, make you immortal. You asked him to call the gods
into council.

will not die or grow old. This will be your They met in the huge
throne-room. As it home, not only this island, but wherever
happened, Poseidon was absent. He had

the Titans rule.”

ridden a tidal wave into Africa, where he

“Never die, never grow old. It seems had never been, and was
visiting the impossible.”

Ethiopians.

“You are a man to whom impossible

Athene said, “O father Zeus. O

things happen,” said Calypso. “Haven’t brother gods, I wish to speak in behalf of you learned that by now?”

Ulysses, who of all the mighty warriors

“‘Never’...” said Ulysses.

we sent to Troy shows the most respect

“‘Always’....These are words I find hard

for our power, and the most belief in our to accept.”

justice. Ten years after leaving the

“Do not think you will be bored. I am bloody beaches of Troy he has still not expert at variety. I deal in reached home. He is penned now on an

transformations, you know.”

island by Calypso, daughter of Atlas,

“You are eloquent,” said Ulysses.

who uses all her Titanic enticements to

“And you need no eloquence, for your

keep him prisoner. This man’s plight

beauty speaks more than any words.

challenges our Justice. Let us help him

Still, I cannot be immortal, never to die, now.”

never to grow old. What use is courage Zeus said, “I do not care to be called then?”

unjust. I am forgetful sometimes,

Calypso smiled at him. “Enough

perhaps, but then I have much to think of, discussion for one night. You have time many affairs to manage. And remember,

to decide. Take five or ten years. We

please, my daughter, that this man has

are in no hurry, you and I.”

been traveling the sea, which belongs to

The Adventures of Ulysses 55

“Five or ten years may seem little to

my brother, Poseidon, whom he has

an immortal,” said Ulysses. “But I am still offended. Poseidon holds a heavy a man. It is a long time for me.”

grudge, as you know; he does not forgive

“That’s just what I said,” said

injuries. Ulysses would have been home

Calypso. “It is better to be immortal.

years ago if he had not chosen to blind

But, think it over.”

Polyphemus, who happens to be

Then next morning, instead of hunting, Poseidon’s son.”

Ulysses went to the other side of the

“He has paid for that eye over and

island and built an altar of rocks and

over again,” cried Athene. “Many times

sacrificed to the gods. He poured a

its worth, I vow. And the earthshaker is libation of unwatered wine,
and raised not here, as it happens. He is off shaking his voice:

the earth of Africa , which has been too

“O, great gods upon Olympus—

dry and peaceable for his tastes. Let us thunder-weilding Zeus and
wise Athene, take advantage of his absence, and allow

earthshaking Poseidon, whom I have

Ulysses to resume his voyage.”

offended, golden Apollo—hear my

prayer. For ten years I fought in Troy,

“Fate...destiny...what are they but

and for ten more years have wandered

fancy words for the brutal decrees of

the sea, been hounded from island

Zeus. He is jealous, and that is the whole truth of it. He wants us all for himself.

“Very well,” said Zeus. “It shall be as Don’t deny it.

you advise.”

When Eos, Goddess of Dawn, chose

Thereupon he dispatched Hermes, the Orion for her lover, Zeus had his messenger god, to Ogygia. Hermes daughter, Artemis, slay him with her

found Calypso on the beach singing a

arrows. When Demeter, harvest wife,

wild sea song, imitating now the voice of met Jasion in the ploughed fields, Zeus the wind, now the lispings scraping sound himself flung his bolt crippling him. It is of waves on a shallow shore, weaving in always the same. He allowed Ulysses to the cry of heron and gull and osprey, tide be shipwrecked time and again. When I suck and drowned moons. Now Hermes found him he was riding the timbers of his had invented pipe and lyre, and loved lost ship and was about to drown. So I

music. When he heard Calypso singing

took him here with me, and cherished

her wild sea song, he stood upon the

him, and offered to make him immortal.

bright air, ankle wings whirring,

And now Zeus suddenly remembers, after

entranced. He hovered there, listening to twenty years, that he must go home her sing. Dolphins were drawn by her immediately, because it is ordained.”

voice. They stood in the surf and danced “You can’t fight Zeus,” said Hermes on their tails.

gently. “Why try?”

She finished her song. Hermes landed “What do you want me to do?”

The Adventures of Ulysses 56

lightly beside her.

“Permit Ulysses to make himself a raft.

“A beautiful song,” he said.

See that he has provisions. Then let him

“A sad song.”

depart.”

“All beautiful songs are sad.”

“So be it.”

“Yes....”

“Do not despair, sweet cousin. You

“Why is that?”

are too beautiful for sorrow. There will

“They are love songs. Women love

be other storms, other shipwrecks, other

men, and they go away. This is very

sailors.”

sad.”

“Never another like him.”

“You know why I have come then?”

“Who knows?”

“Of course. What else would bring

He kissed her on the cheek, and flew

you here? The Olympians have looked

away. xx

down and seen me happy for a little

while, and they have decreed that this

must not be. They have sent you to take

my love away.”

“I am sorry, cousin. But it is fated that he find his way home.”

English Borrowings from Greek

What is your *Achilles' heel*? Mount Olympus is an actual mountain in Greece, Every time Tantalus wanted to eat or drink, however, the thought

to eat or drink, however, the

the story goes, his mother

by the ancients to be the

fruit and the water would

The Adventures of Ulysses 57

dipped him in the River Styx

home of the gods. Nearby,

recede. To *tantalize* means

to make him safe from all

contests in athletics, poetry,

to torment a person with

mortal wounds. However,

and music were held every

things that can't be obtained.

the heel she held him by was four years in honor of Zeus. Some names are still used in not touched by the magic These Olympic Games were

their original forms. Any

waters, and so remained his

revived in modern times, with handsome young man may one vulnerable spot. He was athlete from all over the he called an *Apollo*; any killed at Troy by being struck world participating. The beautiful young woman, and in that heel. And to this day, word *Olympian* means *Aphrodite*; and any region of the band of tissue in your

“majestic; like a god.”

simple, quiet contentment,

heel is known as your

Hypnos was the Greek god *Arcadia*. But some names *Achilles' tendon*.

of sleep, so it is not surprising are used in more general The term *Trojan Horse* still that *hypnotism* was named

ways: *Spartan* means

means something that betrays after him. Throughout disciplined and brave, like and destroys from within; if

history, it has been a great

the inhabitants of ancient

you're caught *between Scylla* a problem of medicine to get a Sparta; to *hector* is to *bully and Charybdis*, you still face patient to relax or sleep so someone, as Hector treated two possible dangers.

that treatment could be

Achilles in the Trojan War;

Ulysses' adventures were

administered. Then in 1805

herculean describes the kind

first written down almost

a narcotic drug was found

of strength and courage that

twenty-eight centuries ago,

that was a powerful painkiller Heracles had.

but the tales were being told and anesthetic. And since *Nymph* is
sometimes or sung for unknown years

Morpheus was the god of

applied to any graceful

before. In one form or

dreams, *morphine* was

young woman, but it is used

another, they have excited

named after him.

as well for certain insects in

listeners and readers for

Atlas was one of the Titans— their stage of development thousands of years.

giants who ruled the earth

between egg and adult form.

Poetry, drama, stories, and

before the gods of Olympus. And *siren*, besides meaning films have been based on (*Titanic* still means “gigantic; an attractive but dangerous these tales. Paintings and having great strength or

woman, also means a loud,

sculpture have interpreted

power.”) For his part in the

piercing whistle (usually a

them. Modern artists

War of the Gods, he was

warning, unlike the Sirens’

continue to use these familiar punished by having to singing). No one is sure, scenes and characters.

support the heavens on his

however, how *Calypso* came

Ancient Greece has

shoulders. A picture of Atlas to mean an improvised jazz influenced our culture was used in the 16th century

song from the British West

greatly. About ten percent of for the cover of a collection Indies.

our English words are

of maps; such a book is still

borrowed from Greek or use called an *atlas* today.

Greek roots and affixes. But King Tantalus, as there are many more direct

punishment for revealing

borrowings, such as saying

some of Zeus's secrets, was

"That's fate," when a

made to stand in the

The Adventures of Ulysses 58

situation cannot be helped.

underworld in water up to his

Here are some others:

chin, under branches laden

with fruit.

Ino's Veil

coughing. Then he saw that he was

sharing his plank with a green-haired

woman wearing a green veil.

In her generous way, Calypso went

“Welcome, beautiful Nereid,” he

said. “Are you she who serves Poseidon,

beyond what the gods had ordered, and ushering drowned men to those caverns provided Ulysses not with a raft, but with beneath the sea where the white bones a beautiful tight little vessel, sturdy roll?”

enough for a long voyage, and small

“No, unhappy man,” she said. “I am

enough for one man to sail.

Ino...and I am no servant of the windy

But he would have done just as well

widowmaker. I would like to do him an

with a raft, for his bad luck held. He was injury by helping you. Take this veil. It seventeen days out of Ogygia, scudding cannot sink even in the stormiest sea.

along happily, when Poseidon, on his

Strip you garments, wrap yourself in the

way back from Africa, happened to

veil, and swim toward those mountains.

notice the little ship.

If you are bold, and understand that you

The sea god scowled, and said, "Can cannot drown, then you will be able to that be Ulysses? I thought I had drowned swim to the coast where you will be safe.

him long ago. One of my meddlesome

After you land, fling the veil back into the relatives up there must be shielding him, sea, and it will find its way to me."

and I have a good notion who. Well, I'll She unwound the green veil from her give my owlsh niece a little work to do." body, and gave it to him. Then she dived His scowl deepened, darkening the into the sea.

sun. He shook a storm out of his beard. "Can I believe her?" thought Ulysses.

The winds leaped, the water boiled.

"Perhaps it's just a trick to make me leave Ulysses felt the tiller being torn out of his the pitiful safety of this timber. Oh, well, hand. The boat spun like a chip. The sail if I must drown, let me do it boldly."

ripped, the mast cracked, and Ulysses

He pulled off his wet clothes and

realized that his old enemy had found

wrapped himself in the green veil and

him again.

plunged into the sea.

He clung to the splintered mast.

It was very strange. When he had

Great waves broke over his head, and he been on the raft, the water had seemed swallowed the bitter water. He came up, death-cold, heavy as iron, but now it gasping. The deck broke beneath him.

seemed warm as a bath, and marvelously

“Why am I fighting?” he thought.

buoyant. He had been unable to knot the

“Why don’t I let myself drown?”

veil, but it clung closely to his body.

But he kept himself fighting by instinct.

The Adventures of Ulysses 59

He pulled himself up onto a broken plank When he began to swim, he found and clung there. Each boiling whitecap himself slipping through the water like a created over him, and he was breathing fish.

more water than air. His arms grew too

“Forgive my suspicions, fair Ino,” he

weak to hold the plank, and he knew that cried. “Thank you...thank you....”

the next wave must surely take him under. For two days he swam, protected by However, there was a Nereid near, Ino’s veil, and on the morning of the third name Ino, who hated Poseidon for an

day he reached the coast of Phaeacia.

injury he had done her long before, and

But he could not find a place to come

now she resolved to balk his vengeance. ashore, for it was a rocky coast, and the She swam to Ulysses' timber, and climbed water swirled savagely among jagged on.

boulders. So he was in great trouble

He was snorting and gasping and

again. While the veil could keep him

from drowning, it could not prevent him

from

being broken against the rocks.

Nausicaa

The current caught him and swept him

in. With a mighty effort he grasped the

first rock with both hands and clung

In those days, girls did not find their own there, groaning, as the rushing water husbands, especially princesses. Their

tried to sweep him on. But he clung to

marriages were arranged by their

the rock like a sea polyp, and the wave

parents, and it all seemed to work out as passed. Then the powerful
backtow

well as any other way. But Nausicaa,

caught him and pulled him off the rock

sixteen-year-old daughter of the King and and out to sea. He had
gained nothing. Queen of Phaeacia, was hard to please, His arms
and chest were bleeding where and had been turning down suitors
for great patches of skin had been scraped two years now. Her
father, Alcinous, and off against the rock.

her mother, Arete, were becoming

He realized that the only thing he

impatient. There were several hot—

could do was try to swim along the coast tempered kings and princes
who had until he found an open beach. So he made offers—for
Nausicaa was very

swam and swam. The veil held him up,

lovely—and Alcinous knew that if he kept

but he was dizzy from loss of blood. Nor turning them down he might
find himself had he eaten for two days. Finally, to his fighting several
wars at once. He was a great joy, he saw a break in the reef. He fine
warrior, and enjoyed leading his swam toward it, and saw that it was
the great fleet into battle. Still, he preferred mouth of a river. Exerting
his last his wars one at a time.

strength, he swam into the river, struggled He told the queen that Nausicaa against the current, swimming past the would have to be forced to choose.

The Adventures of Ulysses 60

shore where the river flowed among

“I was very difficult to please, too,”

trees. Then he had no more strength. He said Arete, “but I think you’ll admit I was exhausted.

married well. Perhaps she too knows in

He staggered ashore, unwrapped the her heart that if she bides her time the veil from his body, and cast it upon the gods will send a mighty man to be her

river so that it would be borne back to

husband.”

Ino. When he tried to enter the wood, he The king smiled. Arete always knew could not take another step. He the right thing to say to him. So the

collapsed among the reeds. xx

discussion ended for that day.

Nevertheless, the queen knew that her

husband was right, and that the girl

would have to choose.

That night Nausicaa was visited by a

dream. It seemed to her that the goddess Athene stood over her bed, tall and gray-eyed, and spoke to her, saying, "How can you have wedding when all you

clothes are dirty? Take them to the river tomorrow and wash them."

The goddess faded slowly until all that

was left was the picture on her shield—a

snake-haired girl. And it seemed that the snakes writhed and hissed and tried to crawl off the shield to get at the dreamer.

Nausicaa awoke, moaning. But she was

a brave girl, and went right back to sleep and tried to

dream the same dream again, so that she all day and night. It was impossible to sit could learn more about the wedding. But still. She seized a leather ball from the the goddess did not return.

cart, and flung it to one of her maids,

The next morning she went to her

who caught it and threw it back. Then the mother and told her of the dream.

others joined in, and the girls frisked on

"I don't understand it," she said.

the riverbank, tossing the ball back and

"What wedding?"

forth.

"Yours, perhaps," said Arete.

Ulysses awoke from a deep sleep. He

“Mine? With whom?”

was still dazed, and could barely

“The gods speak in riddles. You know remember how he had gotten among the that. Especially when they visit us in reeds. He peered out, saw the girls

dreams. So you must do the one clear

playing, and then shrank back, for he did

The Adventures of Ulysses 61

thing she told you. Take your serving

not wish to be seen as he was, naked and

girls to the river, and wash your clothes. bruised.

Perhaps, if you do that, the meaning will But Nausicaa threw the ball so hard

show itself.”

that it sailed over the heads of the girls Thereupon Nausicaa told her serving

and fell near the clump of reeds where

girls to gather all the laundry in the

Ulysses was hiding. A girl ran to pick it castle, and pile it in the mule caret. She up, then shrank back, screaming.

also took food, a goatskin bottle of wine, “A man!” she cried. “A man—all and a golden flask of oil so that they bloody and muddy.”

could bathe in the river. Then they set off Ulysses reached out and plucked a in the red cart, and the harness bells spray of leaves from a fallen olive

jingled as the mules trotted down the

branch, and came out of the reeds.

steep streets toward the river.

The girls saw a naked man holding a

It was a sparkling morning. Nausicaa club. His shoulders were bleeding, his felt very happy as she drove the mules.

legs muddy, and his hair crusted with salt.

They drove past the city walls, and down They fled, screaming. But Nausicaa the hill, and along a road that ran stood where she was, and waited for him.

through a wood until they came to the

Is this why Athene sent me here? She

river.

thought. Is this my husband, come out of They dumped the clothes in the water, the river? Is this what I am to take after and stamped on them, dancing and all the beautiful young men I have

trampling and treading them clean. Then refused? "Come back, you silly geese,"

they dragged the clothes out, and

she shouted to the girls. "Haven't you

pounded them on flat stones, afterward

ever seen a man before?”

spreading them to dry in the hot sun.

Then she turned to Ulysses, who had

They then flung off their garments and fallen to his knees before her.

swam in the river, scrubbing each other

“Speak, grimy stranger,” she said.

and anointing themselves with oil.

“Who are you, and what do you want?”

“Well, you look clean enough to get

“Do not set your dogs upon me,” said

married,” cried Nausicaa. “But it’s easier Ulysses. “I did not mean to surprise you to wash than to wed, isn’t it, girls?”

in your glade.”

The maidens giggled wildly, and

“What talk is this? Are you out of

Nausicaa shouted with laughter. She

your head?”

was so drunk with sun and water that she “Forgive me, but I know the fate of felt she could run up the mountain and Actaeon, who came upon you in the

dance

woods. You turned him into a stag, and
had your hounds tear him to pieces.”

improved. I can believe you’re some

“Whom do you take me for?”

kind of chieftain now. Are you married?”

“Why you are Artemis, of course.

“Yes.”

The Adventures of Ulysses 62

Goddess of the Chase, maiden of the

“Of course. You would have to be, at
silver bow. I have heard poets praise
your age.”

your beauty, and know you by your

“I have not seen my wife for twenty

white arms. By your hair and eyes, and
years. She considers herself a widow.”

the way you run—like light over water.”

“Has she remarried?”

“Sorry to disappoint you, but I am not “Perhaps. I do not know. Last I
Artemis. I am Nausicaa. My father is heard, she was being besieged
by

king of this island. And I ask again—who
suits.”

are you?

“I am besieged by suitors too, but

“An unlucky man.”

haven’t found any I like well enough to

“Where do you come from?”

marry.”

“Strange places, princess. I am a

As they spoke at the bank of the river,

sailor hunted by a god who sends storms the serving girls had been
piling the against me, wrecks my ships, kills my laundry in the mule
cart.

men. I come now from Ogygiz, where I

“But I am thoughtless, keeping you

have been held captive by the Titaness,

here,” said Nausicaa. “You need food

Calypso, who bound me with her spells. and drink. You must come to
the castle But as I was sailing away, a storm leaped and finish your
story there.”

out of the blue sky, smashing my boat.

“The sight of your beauty is food and

And I have been swimming in the sea for drink to me. And the sound of your voice more than two days. I was dashed makes me forget my weariness.”

against the rocks of your coast, but

She laughed. “Are you courting me,

managed to swim around it till I found this stranger?”

river. When I came ashore here, I had

“I am a homeless wanderer. I cannot

no strength to go farther, and fell where court a princess. But I can praise her you found me.”

beauty.”

“I suppose no one would look his best “Come along to the castle. I want to after spending two days in the sea and introduce you to my father and mother.

being beaten against rocks. You tell a

They are kind to strangers, very partial to good story, I’ll say that for you. Why brave men, and love to hear stories. And don’t you bathe in the river now, and try I want to hear more about you too.”

to make yourself look human again. We Now, that day, as it happened, King can give you oil for anointment and clean Alcinous had consulted an oracle, who garments belonging to my father. Then prophesied, saying, “I see danger. I see you can follow me to the castle and tell a mountain blocking your harbor,

your story there.”

destroying your commerce. I sense the

“Thank you, sweet princess,” said
cold wrath of the god of the sea.”

Ulysses.

“But the earthshaker has always

He took the flask of oil, and went into favored us,” said the king. “He
has

The Adventures of Ulysses 63

the river and bathed and anointed

showered blessings upon this island. Our himself. When he came
out, he found

fleets roam far, return laden. Why

clean garments waiting. The serving girls should he be angered
now?”

helped him dress, and combed out his

“I do not know. It is not clear, it is not tangled hair.

clear. But I say to you, O King, beware

“Well,” said Nausicaa, “you look

of strangers, shipwrecks, storytellers.

much

with his wife. You can see he has

Believe no tale, make no loan, suffer no

suffered. You can see by his eyes.”

harm.”

“Where is he now?”

“I don’t understand.”

“In the guest house. Don’t you think

“Neither do I. But there is no need to we should have a banquet for him understand, only to obey.”

tonight? He’s a distinguished visitor, isn’t The oracle departed, leaving the king he—all those things he did?”

very thoughtful.

“We don’t quite know what he is, do

Just at this time, Nausicaa was

we, dear? I think I had better meet him

leading Ulysses into the courtyard of the myself first. Your father’s in a funny castle. She bade her maids take him to

mood. Met with the oracle today, and

the guest house.

something went wrong, I think.”

“Wait till I send for you,” she said.

“Yes, yes, I want you to meet him

“Food will be brought, and wine.”

before Father does. I want to know what

She raced to her mother's chamber.

you think. Shall I fetch him?"

"Oh, Mother, Mother," she cried.

"I'll send a servant, child. You are

"I'm so glad I obeyed the dream and

not to see him again until I find out more went to the river to wash
our clothes.

about him. Do you understand?"

What do you think I found there? A man, "Oh, yes, find out, find out!
Tell me hiding in the reeds, naked and wounded. everything he
says."

I soon set him right and brought him here. Queen Arete spoke with
Ulysses, and Such an interesting man."

then went to her husband, the king, and

"Brought him here? Here to the

told him of their visitor. She was amazed castle? Paraded a naked
beggar through to see his face grow black with rage.

the streets for the whole town to see? My "By the gods," he cried.
"These are dear child, haven't you given them foul tidings you bring.
Only today the

enough to gossip about?"

oracle warned against strangers,

“He’s no beggar, Mother. He’s a
shipwrecks, and storytellers. And now
sailor or a pirate or something. Such
you tell me our daughter has picked up
stories he tells. Listen, he landed on an some nameless ruffian who
combines all island once where men eat flowers that
three—a shipwrecked stranger telling wild make them fall asleep and
forget who
tales. Precisely what is needed to draw
they are. So they sleep all day and pick upon us the wrath of the sea
god. I shall The Adventures of Ulysses 64
flowers all night, and are very happy.
sacrifice him to Poseidon, and there will This man’s crew went
ashore and ate the be an end to it.”
flowers, and forgot who they were and
“You may not do that,” said Arete.
didn’t want to go back to the ship, just
“Who says ‘may not’ to me? I am
sleep. But he dragged them back
king”.
anyway. I’d like to try those flowers,
“Exactly why you may not. Because

wouldn't you?"

you are king. The man comes to you as a

"Who is this man? What's his name?" supplicant. He is under your protection.

"I don't know. He didn't tell me. It's If you harm him, you will bring down a secret or something."

upon yourself the wrath of all gods—not

"Do you believe everything he tells

just one. That is the law of hospitality."

you?"

So the king ordered a great banquet

Oh, yes. He's not exactly handsome, that night to honor his guest. But certain but very strong-looking, you know. Too young men of the court who were skilled

old though, much too old. And married, far past where the discus had landed, of course. But I don't think he gets along and thudded against the inner wall of the at reading the king's moods knew that he courtyard, knocking a hole in it. He was displeased, and decided to advance turned to the others, who were paralyzed themselves in his favor by killing the with amazement.

stranger, and making it seem like an

"Poor throw," he said. "But then, as

accident.

you say, I'm rather old for such sport.

“We will have games in the

However, since we are gathered here in
courtyard,” said Euryalus, their leader.

this friendly fashion, let us play more

“We will hurl discus and javelin, shoot

games. If any of you would like to try me with the bow, wrestle, and
challenge him with sword or spear or dagger, or even a to take part.
And when he does, it may simple cudgel, let him step forth. Or,

be that some unlucky throw of javelin, or perchance, there is one
who would prefer misshot arrow, will rid us of his company. to
wrestle?”

Or, perchance, if he wrestles, he will find “That was well-thrown,
stranger,” said his neck being broken. It looks to be a Euryalus.
“What is your name?”

thick neck, but he has been long at sea

“I do not choose to tell you my name,

and is unused to such exercises.

O athlete.”

So the young men began to hold the

“You are not courteous.”

contests in the courtyard. When Ulysses

“If you care to teach me manners,

stopped to watch them, Euryalus stepped young sir, I offer again. Sword, spear, forth, and said, "There is good sport here cudgel—any weapon you choose. Or no stranger, if you care to play."

weapon at all except our hands."

"No, thank you," said Ulysses. "I'll

"We are civilized her in Pahaecia,"

just watch."

said Euryalus. "We do not fight with our

The Adventures of Ulysses 65

"Yes, of course," said Euryalus. "The guests. But I cannot understand why you games are somewhat dangerous. And refuse to tell us your name."

one can see that you are a man of

"A god hunts me. If is say my name,

prudence. But then, of course, you are

it may attract his notice."

rather old for such sports, aren't you?"

The young men nodded. For this is

He laughed sneeringly, picked up the what was believed at that time. But heavy discus, whirled, and threw. It Euryalus ran to tell the king.

sailed through the air and landed with a

"I knew it," said Alcinous. "He

clatter far away. All the young men
carries a curse. He is the very man the
laughed and cheered.

oracle warned me against. I must get rid

“Where I come from,” said Ulysses,
of him. But the law of hospitality forbids

“such little discs are given babies to

me to kill him under my roof. So tonight teethe on. The grown men
need a bit

we entertain him at a banquet. But

more to test them.”

tomorrow he leaves this castle, and we

He strode over to a battle chariot, and shall find a way to see that he
does not broke off one of its wheels at the axle. It return.”

was a very heavy wheel, of oak bound

“He is no weakling, this old sailor,”

with brass.

said Euryalus. “He throws the discus

He hefted it, and said, “A little light,

almost as well as I.”

but it will do.”

Now all this time, Nausicaa had been

For he was filled with the wild rage

thinking about the stranger, and weaving

that makes a man ten times stronger than a plan, for she was determined to find out he really is. He cradled the great wheel, who he was. She visited the old bard whirled, and threw. It flew through the who had taught her to play the lyre, and

air,

whose

task it was to sing for the guests at the night, they came out of the horse, and royal feasts. She spoke and laughed with how Ulysses led the charge. She sang of the old man and fed him undiluted wine him fighting there by the light of the

until he lost his wits. Then she locked him burning houses, knee-deep in blood, and in the stable, where he fell fast asleep on how he was invincible that night and a bundle of straw, and she departed with carried everything before him.

his lyre.

And as she sang, she kept watching

At the banquet that night, when the

the stranger's face. She saw tears steal king called for the bard to sing his tales, from between his clenched eyelids and Nausicaa said, "The old man is ill and

roll down his cheeks. Amazed, the

cannot come. However, if you permit, I

banqueters saw this hard-bitten sailor put shall sing for your guests.”

his head in his hands and sob like a child.

The king frowned. But Ulysses said,

He raised his streaming face, and

“This illness is a blessing, King. I think I said, “Forgive me, gracious king. But the The Adventures of Ulysses 66

should rather hear your black-haired

wonderful voice of your daughter has

daughter sing than the best bard who

touched my heart. For you must know

ever plucked a lyre,”

that I am none other than Ulysses, of

The king nodded. Nausicaa smiled,

whom she sings.”

and began to sing. She sang a tale of

A great uproar broke out. The young

heroes. Of those who fought at Troy.

men cheered. The women wept. The

She sang of fierce Achilles and mighty

king said, “My court is honored, Ulysses.

Ajax. Of Menelaus and his shattering

Your deeds are known wherever men

war-cry. Of brave Diomedes, who fought with courage. Now that I know who you with Ares himself when the war god came are, I put all my power and goods at in his brazen chariot to help the Trojans.

your disposal. Name any favor you

She watched Ulysses narrowly as she wish, and it shall be yours.”

sang. She saw his face soften, and his

Ulysses said, “O King, if I were the

eye grow dreamy, and she knew that he age I was twenty years ago when the had been there, and that she was singing ships were launched at Aulis, then the of his companions. But she still did not favor I would ask is your daughter’s know his name.

hand. For surely I have traveled the

Then she began to sing of the master of whole world over without seeing her like.

strategy, the great trickster, Ulysses. She I knew Helen whose beauty kindled me to sang of the wooden horse, and how the that terrible war. I knew the beauties of warriors hid inside while the Trojans the Trojan court whom we took captive

debated outside, deciding what to do.

and shared among us. And, during my

Some of them wanted to chop it to

wanderings I have had close

pieces; others wished to take it to a cliff acquaintance with certain enchantresses and push it off; still others wanted to

whose charms are more than human,

bring it within the city as an offering to namely Circe and Calypso.
Yet never

the gods—which, of course, was what

have I seen a girl so lovely, so witty, so Ulysses wanted them to do.
She told of courteous and kind as your young

the men hiding in the belly of the horse

daughter. Alas, it cannot be. I am too

listening to their fate being debated, and old. I have a wife I must
return to, and a the fierce joy that flamed in their hearts kingdom,
and there are sore trials I must when they heard the Trojans decide
to undergo before I can win again what

drag the horse within the walls. And of

belongs to me. So all I ask of you, great how in the blackness of the

king, is a ship to take me to Ithaca, where my wife waits, my
enemies wait, my

destiny waits.”

Arete whispered to the king:

“Yes...yes...give him his ship

tomorrow. I wish it could be tonight. See

The Adventures of Ulysses 67

how your daughter looks at him; she is

smitten to the heart. She is sick with love.

Let him sail tomorrow. And be sure to
keep watch at the wharf lest she stow
away.”

“It shall be as you say, mighty

Ulysses,” said the king. “Your ship will sail tomorrow.”

So Ulysses departed the next day on

a splendid ship manned by a picked

crew, laden with rich goods the kings had given him as hero gifts.

It is said that Athene drugged

Poseidon’s cup at the feast of the gods

that night, so that he slept a heavy sleep and did not see that
Ulysses was being borne to Ithaca. But Poseidon awoke in

time to see the ship sailing back, and

understood what had happened. In a

rage he snatched Athene’s Gorgonhead

shield, the sight of which turns men to

stone, and flashed it before the ship just as it was coming into port
after having left Ulysses at his island. The ship and all its crew
turned to stone, blocking the harbor, as the oracle had foretold.

It is said too that Nausicaa never

accepted any of the young men who

came awooing, announcing that she was
wedded to song. She became the first
woman bard, and traveled all the courts
of the world singing her song of the
heroes who fought at Troy, but especially of Ulysses and of his
adventures among the terrible islands of the Middle Sea.
Some say that she finally came to the
court of Ithaca to sing her song, and
there she stayed. Others say that she fell in with a blind poet who
took all her The Adventures of Ulysses 68
songs and wove them into one huge
tapestry of song.

But it all happened too long ago to
know the truth of it. xx

Every occupation that
word under that column on 1. Would you be more people have
shared
your paper. Explain how
likely to find bales or
throughout history has
you made your decisions.

bullets in an armory?

developed its own

2. If there was no

vocabulary. Because of

fortress armory

breeze, would the

the variety of Ulysses'

guild launch

skipper of a sailboat

adventures, we find in the

dungeon smith

launch or moor his

tale words from many

sty moor

boat?

different occupations—

keel besiege

3. Would a ship more

sailing, farming, fighting

bales byre

likely remain buoyant

(warfare), and

buoyant

if it had a hole in its

manufacturing. All of the

sail or in its keel?

words listed at the right

Then be prepared to

4. Would an army be

are taken from the story,

answer in class the

more likely to besiege

and each has its origins in following questions and a fortress or a byre?

one of the four

explain why you answered 5. Would a dungeon be occupations mentioned

as you did.

a suitable place for a

above. Head your paper

guild to hold a

with these four

meeting?

occupational categories.

6. Would a smith be of

Look up each word in the

much use in a sty?

dictionary; determine in

which category it belongs,

and write the

The Return

His first care was to find a cave in the

Cliffside, and there stow all his treasure.

He moved swiftly now; he had planned

Ulysses had landed on a lonely part of his first moves on his homeward trip. It had helped him to keep his thoughts the shore. His enemies were in control of away from Nausicaa. He took off his rich the island, and it was death to be seen.

cloak and helmet and breastplate, and

The Adventures of Ulysses 69

He stood on the empty beach and saw

hid them in the cave he had found, then

the Phaeacian ship depart. He was

laid his sword and spear beside them.

surrounded by wooden chests, leather

He tore his tunic so that it hung in rags.

bags, great bales—the treasure of gifts he He scooped up mud and
smear'd his had been given by Alcinous.

face and arms and legs. Then he

He looked about, at the beach and

huddled his shoulders together and

the cliff beyond, the wooded hills, the

practiced a limping walk. Finally he was color of the sky. He was
home after

satisfied, and began to hump away along

twenty years, but it did not seem like

the cliff road, no longer a splendid

home. It seemed as strange and

warrior, but a feeble old beggar.

unfriendly as any of the perilous isles he He made his way to the hut
of his

had landed on during his long

swineherd, Eumaeus, a man his own age

wanderings. And he knew that Ithaca

who had served him all his life, and

would not be his again until he could

whom he trusted. Everything was the

know it as king, until he had slain his

same here, he saw. The pigs were

enemies and regained his throne.

rooting in the

trampled earth. There were four lanky

seen you before.”

hounds who started from their sleep and

“No,” said Ulysses. “You are

barked as he came near.

mistaken. What shall I do now? Have I

A man came out of the hut, and

worn out my welcome, or may I sleep on

silenced the dogs. Ulysses felt the tears your hearth tonight?”

well in his eyes. It was Eumaeus, but so

“What will you do tomorrow?”

old, so gray.

“Go to the castle and beg.”

“What do you want?” said the

“You will not be welcome there.”

swineherd.

“Why not? I will tell them how I met

“Food, good sir. Such scraps as you

your king, and how kind he was to me.

throw to the hogs. I am not proud, I am

That should make them generous.”

hungry.”

“It won’t,” said Eumaeus. “It will

“Are you a native of these parts?”

probably get you killed. Those who hold

said Eumaeus.

the castle now want to hear nothing

“No, I come from Crete.”

about him—except sure news of his

“A long way for a beggar to come.”

death.”

“I was not always a beggar. I was a “How is that?”

sailor once...yes, and a captain of ships. “They hate him, because they do him I have seen better days.”

harm. There are more than a hundred of

“That’s what all beggars say.”

them—rude brawling young princes from

“Sometimes it’s true. I once met a

neighboring islands and thievish young

man from Ithaca, a mighty warrior, and

nobles of this island. They dwell in his the most generous man I have ever met. castle as if they had taken it after a siege The Adventures of Ulysses 70

He gave me a good opinion of Ithaca. It and seek to marry his wife, Penelope, is a place, I know, where the hungry and refusing to leave until she accepts one of helpless are not spurned.”

them. They drink his wine, devour his

“I suppose this man you met was

stores, roister all night, and sleep all day.

named Ulysses.”

Do you know how many hogs I have to

“Why, yes. How did you guess?”

bring them? Fifty a day. That is how

“Because I have heard that tale so

gluttonous they are. My herds are

many times. Do you think you're the first shrinking fast, but they say they will kill beggar to come slinking around, me the first day I fail to bring them fifty pretending to have news of our king?

hogs.”

Everyone knows that he vanished on his

“I heard he had a grown son. Why

journey home from Troy. Beggars swarm does he not defend his father's goods?”

all over us trying to get some supper by

“He's helpless. There are too many of

telling lies.”

them.”

“Then you will give me no food?”

“Is he at the castle now?”

“I didn't say that. Even liars have to

“No one knows where he is. He

eat. Ulysses never turned a beggar

slipped away one night. Just as well.

away, and neither will I.”

They were planning to kill him. The

The swineherd fed Ulysses, and then

rumor is that he took ship and crew and

let him rest by the fire. Ulysses pretended went to seek his father. I hope he stays to sleep, but watched his host through away. They will surely kill him if he

half-closed eyes, and saw that the man returns.”

was staring at him. He stretched and

“I go there tomorrow,” said Ulysses.

yawned.

“It sounds like splendid begging. Such

“Are you sure you’re a stranger to

fiery young men are frequently generous,

this island?” said Eumaeus. “Seems to especially with other people’s goods.”

me I’ve

“You don’t know them,” said

“They are like wild beasts. But you

Eumaeus.

cannot keep a fool from his folly. Go, if pleasure.

you must. In the meantime, sleep.”

“It is my young master,” cried

Now upon this night Telemachus was

Eumaus, springing up. “Glory to the

at sea, sailing toward Ithaca. he had

gods—he has come safely home.”

found no news of his father and was

Telemachus strode in. He was flushed

coming home with a very heavy heart.

from his walk. His face and arms were

He would have been even more

wet with the night fog, and his red-gold

distressed had he known that a party of

hair was webbed with tiny drops. To

wicked suitors was lying in wait for him

Ulysses he looked all aglitter, fledged by aboard a swift ship full of fighting men.

firelight, a golden lad. And Ulysses felt a The ship was hidden in a cove, and the shaft of wild joy pierce him like a spear,

The Adventures of Ulysses 71

suitors meant to pounce upon him as he
and for the first time he realized that he put into port.
had come home.

But Athene saw this and made a plan. But Telemachus was
displeased to see She went to Poseidon, and said, "I know the old
beggar by the fire, for he wished you are angry with me, Uncle, for
helping to speak to Eumaeus privately to ask him Ulysses. But now I
wish to make it up to how matters stood at the castle and you. See,
down there is a ship from

whether it was safe for him to return.

Ithaca." She pointed to the suitors'

"I do not wish to be discourteous, old

vessel. "No doubt it holds friends of

man," he said, "but would you mind very

Ulysses, sailing out to meet their king.

much sleeping in the pig byre? You can

Why not do them mischief?"

keep quite warm there, and there are

"Why not?" growled Poseidon.

secret matters I wish to discuss."

"And he wound a thick black mist

“Be not wroth, my lord, that I have
about the suitors’ ship so that it was
given this man hospitality,” said Eumaeus.

impossible for the helmsman to see.

“He claims to have met your father once.

“Nevertheless,” he said to Athene. “I A pitiful beggar’s tale, no doubt,
but it still owe Ulysses himself a great mischief. earned him a meal
and a bed.”

I have not forgotten. In the meantime, let “Met my father? Where?
When?

his friends suffer a bit.”

Speak!”

The suitors’ ship lay helpless in the

But at the word “father,” Ulysses

mist, and Telemachus sailing past them,

could not endure it any longer. The voice ignorant of danger, put into
port and of the young man saying that word

disembarked.

destroyed his strategies. The amazed

Athene then changed herself into a

Eumaeus saw the old beggar leap from

young swineherd, and hailed Telemachus his stool, lose his feebleness, grow wider, on the beach: taller, and open his arms and draw the

“Greetings, my lord. I am sent by

young man to him in a great bear hug.

your servant, Eumaeus, to beg you to

“Dearest son,” said the stranger, his

come to his hut before you go to the

voice broken with tears. “I am your

castle. He was important news to tell.”

father, Ulysses.”

The lad set off, and Telemachus

Telemachus thought he was being

followed him toward the swineherd’s hut. attacked, and tensed his muscles, ready Ulysses, dozing by the fire, heard a to battle for his life. But when he heard wild clamor of hounds outside, then a these words and felt t he old man’s tears ringing young voice calling to them. He burning against his face, then his marrow listened while the snarls turned to yaps of melted, and he laid his head on his Nor could the honest old swine-heard father’s shoulder and wept.

say anything: his throat was choked with first.”

tears too. Ulysses went to Eumaeus and

Telemachus knelt in the firelight, and

The Adventures of Ulysses 72

embraced him, saying, "Faithful old

said, "Sire, I shall do as you bid. I don't friend, you have served me well. And if see how we can overcome a hundred

tomorrow brings victory, you will be well strong men, but to die fighting at your rewarded."

side will be a greater glory than anything Then he turned to his son and said,

a long life can bestow. Thank you,

"The goddess herself must have led you

Father, for giving me this chance to share here tonight. Now I can complete my

your fortune."

plan. Tomorrow we strike our enemies." "You are my true son," said Ulysses "Tomorrow? Two men against a

embracing the boy tenderly. "The words

hundred? These are heavy odds, even

you have just spoken make up for the

for Ulysses."

twenty years of you I have missed."

"Not two men—four. There is

Eumaeus banked the fire, and they all

Eumaeus here, who wields a good

lay down to sleep.

cudgel. There is the neatherd whom we

Ulysses came to the castle at dusk the

can count on. And, no doubt, at the

next day and followed Eumaeus into the

castle itself we will find a few more

great banquet hall which was thronged

faithful servants. But it is not a question with suitors. He humped
along behind of numbers. We shall have surprise on

the swineherd, huddling his shoulders,

our side. They think I am dead,

and limping. The first thing he saw was a remember, and that you
are helpless.

dog lying near a bench. By its curious

Now, this is the plan. You must go there golden brown color he
recognized it as in the morning, Telemachus, pretending his own
favorite hunting hound, Argo. It great woe. Tell them you have
learned was twenty-one years old, incredibly old

on your journey that I am indeed dead,

for a dog, and it was crippled and blind

and that now you must advise your

and full of fleas. But Telemachus had not mother to take one of them
in marriage. allowed it to be killed because it had This will keep them

from attacking you— been his father's.

for a while anyway—and will give us the

As Ulysses approached, the dog's

time we need. I shall come at dusk, just raw stump of a tail began to thump

before the feasting begins.”

joyously upon the floor. The tattered old

“What of my mother? Shall I tell her

ears raised. The hound staggered to his

that you are alive?”

feet, let out one wild bark of welcome

“By no means.”

and leaped toward the beggar. Ulysses

“It is cruel not to.”

caught him in his arms. The dog licked

“It will prove a kindness later. Bid her his face, shivered, and died. Ulysses dress in her finest garments, and anoint stood there holding the dead dog.

herself, and be as pleasant as she can to Then Antinous, one of the most the suitors, for this will help disarm them. arrogant of the suitors, who fancied Understand?”

himself a great jokester, strode up and

The Adventures of Ulysses 73

“I understand.”

said, “What are you going to do with

“Now mark this well. You will see me that dead dog, man, eat him? Things being insulted, humiliated, beaten aren’t that bad. We have a few scraps to perhaps. Do not lose your temper and

spare, even for a scurvy old wretch like

be drawn into a quarrel before we are

you.”

ready to fight. For I must provoke the

Ulysses said, “Thank you, master. I

suitors to test their mettle, and see where am grateful for your courtesy. I come we should strike from

Crete, and—“

I’ll do it. I, Iros”

“Shut up!” said Antinous. “Don’t tell

He raised his huge meaty fist and

me any sad stories. Now take that thing

slammed it down toward Ulysses’ head.

out and bury it.”

But Ulysses, without thinking, butted the

“Yes, gracious sir. And I hope I have man in the stomach, knocking him back the honor of performing a like service for against the wall.

you one day.”

“Look at that,” cried Eurymachus.

“Oho,” cried Antinous. “The churl

“The old souse has a head like a goat.

has a tongue in his head. Well, well....” For sham, Iros, you ought to be able to He seized a footstool and smashed it squash him with your thumb.”

over Ulysses’ back. Telemachus sprang

“Exactly what I intend to do,” said

forward, blazing with anger, but

Iros, advancing on Ulysses.

Eumaeus caught his arm.

“A fight! A fight!” cried the suitors.

“No,” he whispered. “Hold your

“A beggar-bout. Good sport.”

peace.”

They crowded around the beggars,

Ulysses bowed to Antinous, and said, leaving just enough space for them to

“Forgive me, master, I meant but a jest. I move.

go to bury the dog.”

Ulysses thought quickly. He could not

As soon as he left the room, they

risk revealing himself for what he was, yet forgot all about him. They were agog he had to get rid of the fellow. So he

with excitement about the news told by

shrank into his rags, as though fearful,

Telemachus, that Ulysses’ death had been allowing Iros to approach. Then, as the confirmed, and that Penelope would now great hands were reaching for him and choose one of them to wed. They the suitors were cheering and jeering, he crowded about Telemachus, shouting

swung his right arm, trying to measure the questions.

force of the blow exactly. His fist landed He said, “Gently, friends, gently. My on the smith’s chin. The suitors heard a mother will announce her choice during dry cracking sound, as when you snap a

the course of the night. But first she

chicken bone between your fingers, and

desires that you feast and make merry.”

they knew that their man’s jaw was

The young men raised a great shout

broken. He fell to the floor, unconscious,

The Adventures of Ulysses 74

of joy, and the feasting began. Ulysses

blood streaming from mouth and nose.

returned and went the round of the

Ulysses stooped and hoisted him over his

suitors, begging scraps of food. Finally shoulder and marched out of the banquet he squatted near Eurymachus, a fierce

room, saying, "I'd better let him bleed

young fellow whom he recognized to be outside. It will be less unpleasant for you their leader. Eurymachus scowled at him, gentlemen."

but said nothing.

He draped the big man over a stile,

Into the banquet hall strode another

and came back.

beggar—a giant shaggy man. He was a

"Well struck, old bones," said

former smith who had decided that it was Eurymachus. "You fight well for a easier to beg than to work at the forge.

beggar."

He was well liked by the suitors because

"A beggar?" said Ulysses. "What is a

he wheedled and flattered them, and ran beggar, after all? One who asks for their errands. He swaggered over to what he has not earned, who eats others'

Ulysses and grasped him by the throat.

food, uses their goods? Is this not true?

"Get out of here, you miserable cur," If so, young sir, I think you could become he said. "Any begging around here to a member of our guild tomorrow."

do,

Eurymachus carefully wiped the knife

which he had been using to cut his meat, beggar, you are a guest," said Penelope.

and held the point to Ulysses' throat.

"So take your comfort, please. Be at

"Your victory over that other piece of ease here with me, and tell me your vermin seems to have given you big tidings. I understand you met my

ideas," he said. "Let me warn you, old

husband Ulysses once upon your

fool, if you say one word more to me that voyages."

I find unfitting, I will cut you up into little

"Beautiful queen," said Ulysses, "I

pieces and feed you to the dogs. Do you knew him well. Better than I have understand?"

admitted. I am a Cretan. I was a soldier.

“I understand, master,” said Ulysses. When the war with Troy started I went as “I meant but a jest.”

part of a freebooting band to sell our

“The next jest will be your last,”

swords to the highest bidder. We took

growled Eurymachus.

service with your husband, Ulysses, and I Telemachus stepped between them

fought under his banner for many years.

and said, “Beggar, come with me to my

Now his deeds before Troy have become

mother. She has heard that you are quite famous in the time that has passed since a voyager, and would question you the city was destroyed. Bards sing them

about the places you have seen.”

from court to court all over the lands of

“What?” cried Eurymachus. “Take

the Middle Sea. Let me tell you a little this stinking bundle of rags to your

story, though, that has never been told.

mother? She will have to burn incense

“I lay with him in that famous wooden

The Adventures of Ulysses 75

for hours to remove the stench.”

horse, you know. We crouched in the

“You forget yourself, sir,” said

belly of the horse which was dragged

Telemachus. “You have not yet been

into Troy and set before the altar as an

accepted by my mother. She is still free offering to the gods. The Trojans were to choose her own company.”

crowding around, looking at this

Eurymachus played with his knife,

marvelous wooden beast, wondering at

glaring at Telemachus. He was angry

it, for such a thing had never been seen.

enough to kill, but he did not wish to lose But Queen Helen knew the truth somehow his chance with Penelope by stabbing her and, being a mischief-loving lady always, son. So he stepped aside, and let tapped on the belly of the horse, imitating Telemachus lead the old beggar out of the voices of the heroes’ wives. She did it the hall.

so cunningly that they could have sworn

“You have done well,” whispered

they heard their own wives calling to
Ulysses. "Another second and I would
them, and were about to leap out of the
have been at the cur's throat, and we
horse too soon, which would have been
would have been fighting before we were death."

ready. Besides, it is time I spoke to your "Now, Helen saved your
voice till last.

mother. She enters our plans now."

And when she imitated it, I heard Ulysses When he was standing
alone with

groan, felt him tremble. He alone was

Penelope, he sat with his face lowered.

clever enough to know it was a trick, but He did not wish to look at
her. For her your voice, even mimicked, struck him to

presence set up a great shuddering

the heart. And he had to mask his

tenderness inside him, and he knew that

distress, and use all his force and

he had to keep himself hard and cruel for authority to keep the
others quiet. A tiny the work that lay ahead.

incident, madam, but it showed me how

“In this chamber, you are not a
much he loved you.”

mighty deeds that are sung, I like this one Penelope said, “Truly, this
is a story best.”

never told. And yet I think that of all the Her face was wet with tears.
She took “Disguise your intention. Tell them a bracelet from her wrist
and threw it to you cannot decide among such him, saying, “Here is
a gift. Small

handsome charming suitors. And so you
payment for such a tale.”

will let their own skill decide. They are to

“Thank you, Queen,” said Ulysses.

hold an archery contest, using the great

“My path crossed your husband’s once

bow of Ulysses, and he who shoots best

again. My ship sailed past the Island of to the mark will win you as
wife. They the Dawn. We had run out of water and cannot refuse
such a challenge, their were suffering from thirst, and there we pride
will not permit them to. Now, good saw a marvelous thing: a fountain
of

night, lady. Thank you for your sweet

water springing out of the sea, pluming

company. I shall see you, perchance,

The Adventures of Ulysses 76

and curling upon itself. We tasted it, and when the bow is bent.”

it was fresh, and we filled our water

“Good night, old wanderer,” said

barrels. When I told about this in the

Penelope. “I shall never forget the

next port, I learned how such a wonder

comfort you have brought me.”

had come to be. The enchantress, Circe, As Ulysses was making his way most beautiful of the daughters of the through the dark hallway, something

gods, had loved your husband and

clutched his arm and hissed at him.

sought to keep him with her. But he told

“Ulysses...Ulysses....My master, my

her that he must return to his wife,

king...my baby...my lord....”

Penelope. After he left, she wept such

He bent his head and saw that it was

tears of love as burned the salt out of the an old woman, and recognized his nurse, sea and turned it into a fountain of pure Eurycleia, who had known him from the water.

day he was born, and who had tended

Penelope took a necklace from her
him through his childhood.

neck, and said, "I liked the first story
"Dear little king," she wept. "You're
better, but this is lovely, too."

back...you're back. I knew you would

Ulysses said, "Thank you, Queen. I
come. I told them you would."

have one thing more to tell. Your

Very gently he put his hand over her

husband and I were talking one time

mouth, and whispered, "Silence....No

around the watch fire on a night between one must know, not even
the queen.

battles, and he spoke, as soldiers speak, They will kill me if they find
out.

of home. He said that by the odds of

Silence...silence...."

war, he would probably leave you a

She nodded quickly, smiling with her

widow. And, since you were beautiful,

sunken mouth, and shuffled away.

you would have many suitors, and would Ulysses lurked outside the banquet be hard put to decide. Then he said, 'I hall until he heard a great roar from the wish I could send her this advice: Let her suitors, and knew that Penelope had take a man who can bend my bow. For

come among them. He listened outside

that man alone will be strong enough to

and heard her announce that she would

serve her as husband, and Ithaca as

choose the man, who, using her

king.”

husband’s great bow, would shoot the

“Did he say that—truly?”

best to the mark. He heard the young

“Truly.”

men break into wild cheers. Then he hid

“How can I ask them to try the bow? himself as Telemachus, leading the suitors They will jeer at me. They may feel into the courtyard, began to set out

offended, and do terrible things.”

torches for the shooting. Then it was that arranged his rags over it so that he he slipped unnoticed into the castle and

looked as he had before. Then he went

went to the armory where the weapons
out into the courtyard.

were kept. He put on a breastplate, and

The Adventures of Ulysses 77

All was ready for the contest. An

and grasped the other end and put forth

avenue of torches burned, making it

all his strength. His back muscles

bright as day. In the path of light stood a glistened like oil in the
torchlight. The row of battle-axes driven into the earth, bow bent a bit
under the enormous their rings aligned. Each archer would

pressure, and a low sighing sound came

attempt to shoot through those rings.

from the crowd, but when he tugged on

Until now only Ulysses himself had been

the cord, the bow twisted in his hand as if able to send an arrow
through all twelve it were a serpent, and leaped free. He axe-rings.

staggered, and almost fell. An uneasy

Now, Penelope, followed by her

laugh arose. He looked wildly about,

servants, came down the stone steps

then stomped away, weeping with rage.

carrying the great bow. She handed it to Telemachus picked up the bow, and Telemachus, saying, "You, son will see said, "Next."

that the rules are observed." Then,

One by one they came; one by one

standing tall and beautiful in the

they fell back. Not one of them could

torchlight, she said, "I have given my

bend the bow. Finally, all had tried but word to choose as husband him who best Antinous and Eurymachus. Now Antinous shoots to the mark, using this bow. I shall was holding the bow.

retire to my chamber now, as is fitting,

He shook his head, and said, "It is too

and my son will bring me the name of my stiff; it cannot be bent. It has not been next husband. Now, may the gods used for twenty years. It must be rubbed reward you according to your desserts." with tallow, and set by the fire to soften."

She turned and went back into the

"Very well," said Telemachus.

castle. The noise fell. The young men

He bade a servant to rub the bow

grew very serious as they examined the

with tallow and set it near a fire. Ulysses great bow. It was larger than any they kept out of sight. As they were waiting, had ever seen, made of dark polished

Telemachus had a serving girl pass out wood, stiffened by rhinoceros horn, and horns of wine to the suitors. The men bound at the tips by golden wire. Its drank thirstily, but there was no laughter. arrows were held in a bull-hide quiver; They were sullen. Their hearts were their shafts were of polished ash, their ashen with hatred; they did not believe heads of copper, and they were tailed the bow could be softened. And Ulysses with hawk feathers.

heard them muttering to each other that Ulysses squatted in the shadows and the whole thing was a trick.

watched the suitors as they crowded Finally, Antinous called for the bow. around Telemachus, who was speaking.

He tried to string it. He could not.

“Who goes first? Will you try, sir?”

“It cannot be done,” he cried.

Telemachus handed the bow to a

“No,” said Eurymachus. “It cannot be

done by a prince of Samos, a tall, brawny man, and done. I will not even try.
This is a trick, The Adventures of Ulysses 78

a skilled archer. He grasped the bow in

another miserable, deceitful trick. He shrouded his left hand and the
dangling cord in his that is never woven, bow that cannot be right, and
tugged at the cord in the swift bent, there is no end to this widow’s
sure movement that is used to string a

cunning. I tell you she is making fools of bow. But it did not bend. He
could not use it. She will not be taken unless she be

make the cord reach from one end to the other by force.”

other. He put one end of the bow on the ground. A great shouting and clamor
arose.

ground

The suitors pressed close about

Telemachus, hemming him in so tightly he could not draw the arrow. The cord
twanged, he could not draw his sword.

arrow sang through the air, and passed

“Stop!” shouted Ulysses.

through the axe-rings, all twelve of them.

He cried it with all his force, in the

Then, paralyzed by amazement, they

great bellowing clanging battle voice that saw him calmly sling the quiver over his head rung over spear shock and clash on shoulder, and straighten up so that his

sword to reach the ears of his men on so breastplate gleamed through the rags.

many fields before Troy. His great shout He stood tall and, throwing back his head, he quelled the clamor. The amazed suitors' heads spoke to the heavens:

turned to see the old beggar stride out of "So the dread ordeal ends, and I the shadows into the torchlight. He came here to claim my own. Apollo, dear lord among them, and grasp the bow, and of the silver bow, archer-god, help me said, "I pray you, sirs, let me try."

now to hit a mark no man has hit before."

Antinous howled like a wolf and

"It is he!" cried Antinous. "Ulysses!"

sprang toward Ulysses with drawn sword. He died, shouting. For Ulysses had But Telemachus stepped between them, notched another arrow, and this one

and shoved Antinous back.

caught Antinous full in the throat. He fell,

"My mother watches from her

spouting blood.

chamber window," he said. "Shall she

No suitor moved. They looked at the

see you as cowards, afraid to let an old

twitching body that had been Antinous,

beggar try what you cannot do? Do you and felt a heavy sick fear, as if Apollo think she would take any of you then?"

himself had come to loose his silver shaft

"Yes, let him try," said Eurymachus.

among them.

"Let the cur have one last moment in

Eurymachus found his tongue, and

which he pretends to be a man. And

cried, "Pardon us, great Ulysses. We

when he fails, as fail he must, then we'll could not know you had returned. If we chop his arms off at the shoulders so that have done you evil, we will repay you, he will never again be tempted to draw but hold your hand."

bow with his betters."

"Too late," said Ulysses. "Your evil

"Stand back," cried Telemachus. "Let can be repaid only by death. Now fight, him try."

or flee."

The Adventures of Ulysses 79

The suitors fell back, their swords still Then Eurymachus raised up his sword

drawn. Ulysses held the bow. He turned and called to the suitors, "Up, men!

it lightly in his hands, delicately, tenderly, Rouse yourselves, or he will kill us all as like a bard tuning his lyre. Then he took we stand here. Let us kill him first."

the cord and strung the bow with a quick And he rushed toward Ulysses, and turn of his wrist, and as the suitors fell immediately with an arrow through

watched, astounded, he held the bow

his chest. But he had roused them out of from him and plucked the cord, making a their torpor. They knew now that they deep vibrating harp note. Dumbfounded, must fight for their lives, and they they saw him reach into the quiver, draw charged across the yard toward Ulysses forth an arrow, notch it, then bend the in a great half-circle.

bow easily, powerfully, until the

Ulysses retreated slowly, filling the air arrowhead rested in the circle of his

with arrows, dropping a suitor with each

fingers, just clearing the polished curve of shaft. But still they kept coming through the bow.

the heaped dead. Now he darted

He stood there for a second,

backward suddenly, followed by

narrowing his eyes at the mark, then let

Telemachus and

Eumaeus, the swineherd, who had been

draw back, tried to scatter. But Ulysses protecting him with their shields. They had hurled the slab. It fell among the

ran into the dining hall and slammed the

suitors and crushed them like beetles in

great portal, which immediately began to their frail armor.

shake under the axe blows of the suitors. Only four of the suitors were left alive.

“Overturn the benches,” cried

Now Ulysses and Telemachus and the

Ulysses. “Make a barricade.”

two servants were upon them—one to

The neatherd had joined them. And

each and each killed his man. Then

now Telemachus and the two men

Ulysses and Telemachus raised a wild

overturned the heavy wooden benches,

exultant yell. Dappled with blood, they

making a barricade. They stood behind

turned to each other, and Ulysses
the wall of benches and watched the
embraced his son.

huge door splintering.

“Well struck,” he said. Then, to

It fell. The suitors poured through.

Eumaeus, “Thank you, good friend. Now

Now Ulysses shot the rest of his arrows so go tell your queen,
Penelope, that the quickly that the dead bodies piled up in contest
has been decided, and the winner

the doorway making a wall of flesh

claims her had.”

through which the suitors had to push

“Father,” said Telemachus. “When I

their way.

reach my full strength, shall I be able to His quiver was empty.

Ulysses cast

bend the great bow?”

the bow aside, and took two javelins. But “Yes,” said Ulysses. “I
promise you.

he did not throw. For the suitors were still I will teach you everything
you have to The Adventures of Ulysses 80

too far away, and he had to be sure of
know. I have come home.”
killing each time he threw.

A suitor named Agelaus had taken

Penelope heard her son shouting.

charge now, and he motioned to his men, “Mother! Mother! It’s
Father! He’s

“Let fly your spears—first you, then you, come home!”

then the rest. And after each cast of

Slowly she descended the great

spear, let us move closer to the benches.” stairway and entered the
throne-room.

The long spears hurtled past the

She looked at the man who had slain her

rampart. One grazed Telemachus’

suitors.

shoulder, drawing blood. And Ulysses,

He arose and said, “I greet you,

seeing the blood of his son, lost the battle—Penelope. I am Ulysses,
your husband.

coldness for which he was famous among xx warriors. For the first time he felt the wild hot curdling rage rising in him like wine, casting a mist of blood before his eyes.

Without making a decision to move, he

felt his legs carrying him toward the great hearth. There he knelt, and grasped the ring of the firestone—a huge slab of rock, large enough for roasting an ox. The suitors, charging toward the wall of

benches, saw him rise like a vision of the past, like some Titan in the War of the Gods holding an enormous slab of rock

over his head.

They saw their danger and tried to