

IN THE WAKE OF ODYSSEUS

by

Jim Kimber

Jim Kimber
PO BOX 837
DUBAI
U.A.E.
jimkimber@gmail.com

EPISODE 1

SCENE 1: THASSOS & DONOUSSA

INT. UNDERTAKER'S WORKSHOP

MUSIC FROM MARRIAGE OF FIGARO ACT 1 SCENE 1

(DUETTINO: 'CINQUE, DIECI...')

THASSOS: (SINGING) Quinque... Decem... Viginti... Triginta...
Triginta sex... Quadraginta tres...

DONOUSSA: (SINGING) Oh this hat is simply lovely; just the very thing for
me; just the very thing for me.

THASSOS & DONOUSSA:	(SINGING)	(SINGING)
	Quinque...	Take a look, my darling, Thassos.
	Decem...	Take a look, my darling, Thassos.
	Viginti...	Take a look.
	Triginta...	Take a look, take a look at my hat.
	Triginta sex...	Take a look at my hat.
	Quadraginta tres...	Take a look, my darling Thassos; take a look; take a look; at my hat; I shall wear it at our wedding.

MUSIC ENDS ABRUPTLY.

THASSOS: Ah, Donoussa. Darling. The wedding. I'm afraid we might
have to wait just a little bit longer.

DONOUSSA: A little bit longer? We've been engaged for twenty years,
Thassos. Twenty years. Isn't that long enough?

THASSOS: You know I'd marry you tomorrow if I could, sweetheart, but
it's the current economic climate.

(THASSOS / CONT'D OVER)

THASSOS (CONT'D): I don't have to tell you these are times of great austerity all through Greece, but particularly here in Ithaca. Talking of austerity, what are you doing buying a new hat?

DONOUSSA: Oh, I only paid one drachma. And we don't have to pay the balance for three whole months. Now if that isn't austerity, Thassos, then I don't know the meaning of the word. Now why were you singing so happily just now? And what was that funny language you were singing in?

THASSOS: Well, it's great news, Donoussa, dear. A corpse arrived from the palace this morning.

DONOUSSA: From the palace? Goodness! Who is it?

THASSOS: I don't know. A young chap. Immaculately dressed. But riddled with arrows. It's really quite difficult to measure him. But I have work, Donoussa. And I was so happy that I was singing in Latin. It's rather a new, modern language, but it's the future. It really is.

FX: KNOCK ON DOOR.

DELIVERYMAN: Ithaca Funeral Services? Package for a Mr. Thassos. Well, a corpse actually. Where do you want it?

THASSOS: Another corpse? Oh, great, thanks. Um, over there, please, by the wall. Do you need a signature for that?

FX: SOUND OF BODY BEING DRAGGED AND DUMPED TO GROUND.

DELIVERYMAN: No need, squire. Good day to you.

THASSOS: And to you too. Thank you!

DONOUSSA: Another corpse! And look, Thassos, he's just like the other one. Young, smartly dressed and shot by arrows. Is he one of those suitors? Hey, you don't suppose Odysseus is back after all these years, do you?

THASSOS: Odysseus? I tell you, if Odysseus is back I'll give him a welcome home. Rushing off to that illegal war, and leaving us in economic turmoil.

DONOUSSA: Illegal? What do you mean illegal war?

THASSOS: The Trojan War? It was totally illegal. It was all about the oil, Donoussa. Barrels and barrels of Trojan olive oil.

DONOUSSA: But weren't the Trojans going to destroy the Greek olive oil business? What was all that about their methods of mass production?

THASSOS: Pah! Lies, Donoussa. Nothing but sexed-up lies.

DONOUSSA: Talking of sexed up, what about Helen then?

FX: KNOCK ON DOOR.

DELIVERYMAN: Just me again, squire. Another delivery from the palace. Six bodies this time. Where do you want them?

THASSOS: Whoa! Six? Goodness me. Er, could you could stack them up over there by the last one? What's going on?

FX: SOUNDS OF BODIES BEING DRAGGED ABOUT.

DELIVERYMAN: It's Odysseus, Squire. He's back. And I assume he's not that happy with all these suitors sniffing around his wife.

THASSOS & DONOUSSA: Odysseus!

DONOUSSA: I told you, Thassos. I knew it was Odysseus.

FX: KNOCK ON DOOR.

2nd DELIVERYMAN: Delivery for a Mr. Thassos. Eleven corpses. Where should I put them?

THASSOS: Aaargh! I don't know. Could you take them to a depot?

2nd DELIVERYMAN: Sorry, Sir. Delivery instructions say to leave them here.

THASSOS: Oh... goodness. Just leave them outside the door. In the shade.

DONOUSSA: Thassos, this is wonderful. We can afford to get married now! Let's get married tomorrow!

FX: KNOCK ON DOOR.

3rd DELIVERYMAN: Package for Mr Thassos. Forty-one corpses. Where do you want them?

THASSOS: Aaaargh!

DONOUSSA: Thassos, darling. Look at my hat! Isn't it beautiful? Let's get married, Thassos!

THASSOS: I need to go to the palace. I need to see Odysseus.

3rd DELIVERYMAN: I wouldn't do that, Sir. Not today. He's in a funny mood today. I'd leave it till tomorrow. Besides, he probably wants to spend a bit of quality time with his wife, if you know what I mean. It has been twenty years.

SCENE 2: ODYSSEUS & PENELOPE 1

INT. ODYSSEUS AND PENELOPE'S BEDROOM

PENELOPE: So... Odysseus...

ODYSSEUS: So... Penelope... Hi. (PAUSE) How have you been?

PENELOPE: Good, thanks. Mmm, yes. Good. On the whole. How about you, honey?

ODYSSEUS: Me? Yeah, good, baby. Really good. (BEAT) Hell of a trip.

PENELOPE: I know. Twenty years, darling. Twenty years.

ODYSSEUS: (PAUSE) Sorry about the mess, earlier. The suitors.

PENELOPE: It's OK.

ODYSSEUS: I'll get the maids to clear it up.

PENELOPE: You hanged most of the maids.

ODYSSEUS: Oh. Yes. Sorry about that.

PENELOPE: (PAUSE) Let's have sex.

ODYSSEUS: Um, sorry baby?

PENELOPE: Sex, sweetheart. Right now. Sex. All night. And then tomorrow more sex. All day. What do you say, honey?

ODYSSEUS: Baby, yeah.... sorry. I didn't hear you clearly. Um... It's been quite a tough day. Killing all those suitors. You know.

PENELOPE: What?

ODYSSEUS: Nothing baby. No. Um... sex. Yeah, that's great. I'm... just a bit drained. You know. Emotionally. And physically.

PENELOPE: Honey, what's...?

ODYSSEUS: Nothing. Baby, no it's good. Sex. Yeah, that's just what I was thinking too. I just need to... freshen up. I'll be right back.

FX: SOUND OF ODYSSEUS WALKING TO BATHROOM AND CLOSING DOOR.

ODYSSEUS: Oh Zeus on Olympus. What do I do now? What's Penelope going to think of me if I can't... when I can't... not without Circe's secret herb I can't.

PENELOPE: Honey, are you OK in there?

ODYSSEUS: (LOUDLY) Yeah, baby. I'm just cleaning my teeth. (NORMAL) Oh, Zeus. I've been shipwrecked twice, I've fought giants and cannibals, six-headed monsters and bird-women. I've been hounded by Poseidon for ten years, and I come home to find a hundred suitors trying to steal my wife. I took all that in my stride. But this... If only I had brought back some of Circe's secret herb. I don't suppose the Phaeacians gave me any.

FX: SOUND OF RUMMAGING AROUND IN A CHEST.

ODYSSEUS: What have we got here? Purple linen... Bronze tripods... Gold and silver... Not a herb in sight. What's this? Calypso's earrings. OK. And... what's this? A bottle of Ismaran red. Oh yes. You little beauty.

FX: SOUND OF WINE GLASSES CLINKING TOGETHER AS ODYSSEUS WALKS BACK INTO THE BEDROOM.

ODYSSEUS: Baby, tonight we are going to celebrate in style. This...

FX: SOUND OF CORK POPPING

ODYSSEUS: ...is Ismaran red. The finest wine you'll ever drink.

FX: SOUND OF WINE BEING Poured AND GLASSES CLINKED
TOGETHER

ODYSSEUS: To us, baby.

PENELOPE: To us, honey, and lots of sex.

ODYSSEUS & PENELOPE (DRINK WINE)

ODYSSEUS: So. Do you want to hear about Troy?

PENELOPE: Um... I suppose so. Briefly.

ODYSSEUS: Well it was just the most magnificent city, baby. Massive walls.
Towering battlements. Huge temples laden with gold and silver.
(BEAT) It was a shame we had to destroy it all really.

PENELOPE: Did you meet Helen?

ODYSSEUS: Uh huh. We went out for a drink one night after the war was
over.

PENELOPE: Is she as beautiful as they say?

ODYSSEUS: Mmm, sure. She's a nice-looking girl. And really down-to-earth.
Look, baby. Helen gave me these to give you.

PENELOPE: Oh my goodness, Odysseus, they're so beautiful. They're really
Helen's?

ODYSSEUS: They're yours now, baby.

PENELOPE: How do I look?

ODYSSEUS: Like Helen's long-lost sister. From now on epic poets shall call
you 'Penelope of the dangly earrings'.

PENELOPE: I had a different kind of oral tradition in mind, honey. (BEAT) Oh Odysseus, do I look so much older?

ODYSSEUS: Baby, we're all older, with a few more wrinkles. Well, apart from the immortal goddesses with eternal youth and unblemished beauty. (PAUSE) How's your wine?

PENELOPE: Amazing.

ODYSSEUS: It's from Ismarus, the first city we came to on our way home.

PENELOPE: I'd like to see this Ismarus, honey.

ODYSSEUS: Ah. I'm afraid we destroyed the city. Sorry about that.

PENELOPE: Oh. I see.

ODYSSEUS: And then we came to the land of the Lotus Eaters.

PENELOPE: Did you destroy their city too?

ODYSSEUS: (LAUGHS) No, no. (BEAT) Not completely. The people there live on this strange fruit, the Lotus. That's all they eat. It's a strange place. And from there we sailed to the land of the cyclopes. And before you ask, they don't have a city, baby. They're these wild, lawless, one-eyed hairy giants who live in caves and drink milk.

PENELOPE: Oh my goodness, how hideous. Milk?

ODYSSEUS: I'm not joking, sweetheart. We were trapped in the cave of a cyclops called Polyphemus. He ate six of my men. Snatched them up two at a time in one hand, smashed their heads on the floor and ate them raw, like sticks of cucumber, dribbling their brains down his beard.

PENELOPE: (YAWNS) Well it was nice you got to know his name anyway.
(YAWNS) Oh honey, I'm really sleepy all of a sudden. (YAWNS)
I'd better not drink any more of this wine if we're going to have
sex. (YAWNS) So how did you get out of this tricky situation with
Polywhatshisname?

ODYSSEUS: Polyphemus. Well... I gave him some wine.

PENELOPE: (SNUFFLING AND LIGHT SNORING)

ODYSSEUS: An Ismaran red. Just like this one.

PENELOPE: (SNUFFLING AND SNORING)

ODYSSEUS: (QUIETLY) Fast asleep. Just like a little baby cyclops. Much
prettier, of course. Less hairy. And with two eyes. You see,
Polyphemus, you see? I've still got it. Nobody's got it quite like
Odysseus. Oh Polyphemus, you stupid, ugly brute. I wonder
what you're up to.

SCENE 3: CYCLOPES & LOTUS EATER

INT. POLICE STATION

FX: SOUND OF DOOR OPENING.

LOTUS EATER: Hey dude. Watch your...

FX: SOUND OF HEAD HITTING DOORWAY WITH A
HARD, PAINFUL THUMP.

LOTUS EATER: ...head!

POLYPHEMUS: Roar!

LOTUS EATER: Dudes plural. Big, hairy dudes!

CYCLOPS: Is this the Lotus Eaters' police headquarters?

LOTUS EATER: Sure is, dude. How can I help?

CYCLOPS: We want to report a crime.

LOTUS EATER: OK dude, so, there's probably a form for that somewhere...
(PAUSE) No. No idea where that is. Now you guys don't look like you're from round here.

CYCLOPS: No. We're cyclopes, obviously. Although my brother doesn't have an eye anymore, so it's hard to tell, I suppose.

LOTUS EATER: Yeah dude, that looks really bad. Does it hurt?

POLYPHEMUS: Roar!

LOTUS EATER: Whoa, OK. So are you guys on vacation? Taking advantage of our liberal drug laws?

CYCLOPS: No, we just want to report a crime.

LOTUS EATER: OK, dude. Shoot.

CYCLOPS: As you can see my brother Polyphemus here has had his eye poked out by a man wielding a long, pointy stick.

LOTUS EATER: Well guys, yeah, that's Actual Bodily Harm. Now don't take this the wrong way, big man, but did you get a good look? At the perp that is, not the stick.

POLYPHEMUS: Yes. I found him in my cave with a bunch of other men...

LOTUS EATER: OK, dude, so that's breaking and entering...

POLYPHEMUS: ...eating my cheese...

LOTUS EATER: Oh dude, stop right there. I know how it is. You get the munchies after maybe a little too much Lotus, you go to the fridge and find that some annoying dude has eaten all your cheese. I feel your pain, dude.

POLYPHEMUS: And then he gave me some wine.

LOTUS EATER: Well... that sounds OK.

CYCLOPS: My brother is only thirteen years old. It was to get him drunk so he would fall asleep so they could blind him.

LOTUS EATER: OK, fellas, so there we've got supplying alcohol to a minor with intent to cause harm, and then the ABH. Did you get this guy's name?

POLYPHEMUS: He said he was called Nobody.

LOTUS EATER: Oh dude! You didn't fall for that one? No way! It's the oldest trick in the book.

POLYPHEMUS: Roar!

LOTUS EATER: Whoa, OK there, big man. It's an easy mistake to make. So after he blinds you, what else did... Nobody do? Oh dude, you have to admit, it is quite funny...

POLYPHEMUS: He stole all my goats and sheep and sailed away. And then he shouted out from his ship that he wasn't Nobody but he was called Odysseus.

LOTUS EATER: Odysseus? Hey that's interesting... But look, dude, I can't really help you as this all happened in your own country. You should complain to the Cyclopean police.

CYCLOPS: We don't have any police. We don't have any laws.

LOTUS EATER: Dude! No laws?

CYCLOPS: None. We do what we want.

LOTUS EATER: But Dude, if you don't have any laws, how can it be a crime? It seems like you want to have your Lotus and eat it, if you catch my drift.

POLYPHEMUS: Roar!

LOTUS EATER: OK, let me think. Maybe this is something you can take to the Hellenic Union.

CYCLOPS & POLYPHEMUS: (LOUD) Roar!

LOTUS EATER: Dudes!

CYCLOPS: We hate the Hellenic Union more than we hate laws. We won't have faceless Hellenic Union bureaucrats in Argos imposing namby-pamby liberal laws on us. We reserve the right to live a traditional Cyclopean lifestyle.

LOTUS EATER: Such as?

CYCLOPS: Such as sheep farming.

LOTUS EATER: Well dude, that's cool. You might get a Union subsidy for that.

CYCLOPS: And we like drinking neat milk fresh from the sheep.

LOTUS EATER: Hmmm, yeah, could be a health and safety issue there, dude.

CYCLOPS: And if any foreigners come to our land, we eat them.

LOTUS EATER: Yeah dude, that could be more problematic. All the other city-states round here have signed up to the Hellenic Convention on Guest-Friendship. Well, apart from the Laestrygonians. I think they still eat foreigners. But they were a founding member of the Union and they got a special dispensation.

CYCLOPS: Guest-Friendship? Pah! Hand-outs for scroungers more like. (WHINY, SARCASTIC VOICE) You've got to welcome them into your home, you've got to feed them, offer them a drink. You've got to wash their feet – (LOUD) Wash their feet for goodness sake! Roar! - (NORMAL) And only then can you ask them their name. If any foreigner comes to our land, we follow a simple procedure: we ask them, 'Who are you?' and then we eat them. Every time.

LOTUS EATER: Dude, there's something to be said for consistency.

CYCLOPS: So can you help us?

LOTUS EATER: Legally, dude, it's tricky, but here's the thing. Odysseus was here too. Three of his men came to the city and tried some Lotus. They were a bit delayed getting back to the ship, naturally, because they were semi-comatose. So Odysseus comes to the city with fifty armed men and starts chopping down Lotus trees with swords, burning our fields. I said, 'Dude! What's up? Chill and try some Lotus, dude.' But he wouldn't listen and continued giving orders for the destruction of our crops. I tried to reason with him. 'Dude,' I said, 'We're a peaceful society. Live and let live, dude.'

(LOTUS EATER / CONT'D OVER)

LOTUS EATER (CONT'D): But he said, 'We are at war. We will take appropriate retaliatory measures against those who threaten our children's liberty and the values of Western Achaea.' And with that, they were off, burning crops and chopping down trees as they went. Dude, I was so angry, I wrote a poem. Would you like to hear it?

CYCLOPS: No. I don't like poetry.

LOTUS EATER: Dude, well that's cool. Cultural diversity, dude. We eat Lotus, you eat foreigners. We write poetry... you eat foreigners. You gotta respect that. So here's what I'm going to do. I'm going to fill in that form and write a report. And I'll make it a high priority task. Not today. But tomorrow. Definitely by next week. How does that sound?

CYCLOPS &
POLYPHEMUS: Roar!

LOTUS EATER: Cool. Well you guys have a safe trip home. Try some Lotus. And next week I promise I'll get onto that report. Or possibly the week after.

FX: SOUND OF DOOR OPENING.

LOTUS EATER: Dude! Watch your...

FX: SOUND OF HEAD HITTING DOORWAY WITH A
HARD THUMP.

LOTUS EATER: ...head!

POLYPHEMUS: (LOUD) Roar!

END OF EPISODE 1

EPISODE 2

SCENE 4: COUNCIL OF GODS 1

INT. GODS' PALACE ON MOUNT OLYMPUS

VARIOUS GODS: (GENERAL CHATTER)

ZEUS: Right, let's get this meeting started. We're all busy I know. I have a few thunderbolts to throw this afternoon and I know Apollo is travelling to Pylos for a guest appearance on 'Have I Got An Oracle For You?'

APOLLO: It's a charity function organised by Nestor in aid of Trojan War orphans. It's a good cause.

ZEUS: And it's a good PR opportunity for us. So thanks for doing that, Apollo. OK, so I have apologies from Ares and Hephaestus. Everyone else here? Good. OK, moving on to item one. Correspondence from the Phaeacians. Yes. Essentially we have received a letter of complaint.

VARIOUS GODS: (GENERAL MURMURING)

ZEUS: Yes. Yes, I know. It's probably easiest if I read it. 'Dear Zeus, your Majesty etcetera etcetera. We are lawyers representing King Alcinous of Scherie. We refer to an incident that occurred last week when a Phaeacian trading vessel, the "Nausithous", returning from Ithaca, was, along with its crew, turned into stone at the harbour entrance. Independent forensic investigators have concluded that only gods could have performed such an act and, as this occurred in Achaean territorial waters, we hold you responsible. The incident is extremely disappointing not least because hitherto we have enjoyed close, friendly relations.

(ZEUS / CONT'D OVER)

ZEUS (CONT'D): As you know, we sacrifice regularly to all the Olympian gods and have constructed magnificent temples at great expense to the public purse. We respectfully request that you make reparations for the losses and injuries suffered by the Phaeacians through no fault of their own as a result of this incident. We remain your loyal, obedient subjects, etcetera, etcetera.

VARIOUS GODS: (GENERAL MURMURING)

ZEUS: I know. I know. Cheeky buggers, aren't they? Poseidon, it's probably easiest if you explain what this is about.

POSEIDON: Thank you, brother. Well, yes. This was my doing. Quite a nifty piece of work if I might say so myself. The timing was impeccable. The ship was just entering the harbour. All the citizens were there to welcome the crew home. It was a lovely sunny day. The sea was as calm as a mill pond. No one would have guessed that a great calamity was about to unfold. Sailors were waving to their wives and children on the quay. And then, Boom! Turned to stone. As if they'd stared at a Gorgon.

ZEUS: Well technically there was no boom, was there, brother, as you didn't liaise with me on this?

POSEIDON: No, that's true, brother. It was a silent Boom. More of a boooooommmmm, but sudden. Hard to put into words. I would have run it past you brother, of course I would. An accompanying thunderbolt would have been spectacular. But there was no time. I was on my way home from the Ethiopians and I just happened to spot them sneaking home. They almost made it too.

APOLLO: What do you mean 'sneaking'? What have you got against the Phaeacians, Poseidon?

POSEIDON: They took Odysseus home.

ZEUS: And Odysseus blinded Poseidon's son, Polyphemus, if you recall, Apollo.

APOLLO: I see.

ZEUS: OK. Look, so the question we need to consider is how much do we value our relationship with the Phaeacians?

APOLLO: They usually have that Ismaran red, don't they?

ZEUS: They do indeed, Apollo.

VARIOUS GODS: (GENERAL MURMURS OF APPROVAL)

ZEUS: Aphrodite?

APHRODITE: The wine's good but they're a bit serious, don't you think? The queen, ugh, she's so frumpy.

ARTEMIS: They keep their clothes on, is that what you're saying?

APHRODITE: You are simply obsessed with nudity, Artemis. It's that sexual frustration of yours. Let it go, girl.

ARTEMIS: I am not sexually frustrated! Oh, you are just so...

ZEUS: OK, OK, let's get back to the issue at hand. Well, I think there's a general view that Phaeacian hospitality is worth cultivating. At least until they run out of Ismaran red. Is that correct?

VARIOUS GODS: (GENERAL MURMURING)

POSEIDON: You're not going to apologise, are you?

ZEUS: Goodness me, no. Apologising is for the little people. But I think we should try not to antagonise them further. Hermes, I need you to take a message. Dear Alcinous, I am in receipt of your letter etcetera, etcetera. We are looking into the incident you refer to. Any loss of life, no, any... collateral damage arising from, um... friendly fire...

VARIOUS GODS: Lovely oxymoron / nice / ooh etc.

ZEUS: ...is always regrettable. We will review our practices to minimise the potential for future... accidents. We greatly value our good relations, and we draw your attention to the considerable benefits that the Phaeacians receive under the Most Favoured Nation bilateral agreement, in particular the unique super-fast self-navigating ships, which are able to reach any destination in one day. Please give my regards to your lovely wife Arete, and your charming daughter, Nausicaa. Yours etcetera, etcetera, Zeus.

(PAUSE)

Right, well off you go, Hermes. What are you waiting for?

HERMES: Well, um, I have put it down as an agenda item. Number six.

ZEUS: (READING) Resh-uffle. Re-shuffle. Reshuffle. What's that supposed to mean?

HERMES: You know, like a job reshuffle. I've been doing the Messenger portfolio for... well, it seems like an eternity. I thought maybe some of us might swap jobs around.

APHRODITE: You want to do my job, sweetheart? Oh Hermes, baby, have you ever even seen a naked woman?

APOLLO: Hey, you want my job, Hermes? Music, poetry, medicine, the sun, the Delphic Oracle. You want to take all that on? Be my guest. What was it you did again? Messages and, what was it?

HERMES: Messages and escorting souls to the Underworld. No, look, I know you have a big job, Apollo.

APHRODITE: Not just a big job, Hermes. Look, this is grown-up's work. You've got your winged sandals and your little wand to play with.

HERMES: It's a caduceus. It's not a wand.

APHRODITE: Whatever.

ZEUS: Listen, Hermes. You're ideally suited to your job. You're young and energetic. You've got the winged sandals.

HERMES: I know, but...

ZEUS: It's not the sandals is it? We can get you some new sandals if it helps.

HERMES: It's not the sandals. I just... feel stuck in a rut. I'm not sure where my career is headed.

ZEUS: Hermes, you're a god. An Olympian god. There is no career progression. Unless you want my job. You want my job?

VARIOUS GODS: (SHARP INTAKE OF BREATH)

HERMES: No, no. Of course not. But I've been delivering messages for ages and, well, it's getting a bit samey. I thought, well, Artemis doesn't do very much and...

ARTEMIS: (ANGRILY) Doesn't do much?! Are you serious?

ZEUS: Artemis, it's OK, I'm sure Hermes didn't mean that, did you, Hermes?

ARTEMIS: Are you trying to wind me up, Hermes?

HERMES: No, I...

ZEUS: I think you might want to apologise to Artemis, Hermes.

HERMES: I thought apologising was for the little people.

ZEUS: I think you should apologise.

HERMES: I'm sorry, Artemis.

ARTEMIS: That's... fine.

ZEUS: OK, so, Hermes, I think you have a message to deliver. What is it now?

HERMES: Um, this might sound a bit paranoid, but I sometimes wonder if, when I'm gone, you all, maybe, stop the meeting and have a bit of a party.

VARIOUS GODS: (SHORT PAUSE, FOLLOWED BY FORCED LAUGHTER)

ZEUS: Hermes, that is ridiculous.

APHRODITE: A party? Without you? Come on, sweetheart.

POSEIDON: You are the life and soul, Hermes. You are the god of parties.

ZEUS: Well, actually Dionysus is the god of parties.

POSEIDON: The party god.

ZEUS: Well, again, strictly speaking, that's Dionysus.

APHRODITE: It depends what kind of party you're talking about, if you know what I mean.

ZEUS: That's true, Aphrodite. (PAUSE) Right, well off you go, Hermes.

HERMES: OK, so.... I'll be off then. I won't be long.

ZEUS: OK, bye, Hermes.

VARIOUS GODS: See you later / Goodbye / Bye etc.

ZEUS: (PAUSE, THEN WHISPERING) Has he gone? (PAUSE) What was that all about?

APHRODITE: He is just so boring.

ARTEMIS: For once, Aphrodite, I am unable to disagree with you.

POSEIDON: The pooper of parties.

ZEUS: (PAUSE) Glass of wine anyone?

VARIOUS GODS: (GENERAL MURMURS OF APPROVAL AND CHATTER)

ZEUS: Hebe, could you fetch the snacks? (BEAT) Yes, the ambrosia. And peanuts, if we have any. (BEAT) Honey roasted? Great. (PAUSE) Reshuffle. Ha! Ha! Reshuffle! Whatever next?

SCENE 5: ODYSSEUS & PENELOPE 2

INT. ODYSSEUS AND PENELOPE'S BEDROOM

ODYSSEUS: (SOFTLY) Baby. Penelope, baby. I brought you a cup of tea.

PENELOPE: (YAWNING, STRETCHING, WAKING UP) Mmm. What time is it?

ODYSSEUS: It's hard to say, baby. The sun has passed its zenith. There's probably enough daylight left to drive fifty sheep from Eumaeus' hut to the town twice, there and back. No, eighty sheep. Maybe three times. No, sixty sheep...

PENELOPE: Roughly, sweetheart, roughly. Gently too. Gently. My head hurts. That wine. It's given me a sore head.

ODYSSEUS: Not as sore as Polyphemus' head, I hope. Anyway I brought you a cup of tea.

PENELOPE: Thanks, sweetheart. I can't believe I've slept all day.

ODYSSEUS: Not all day, baby. There's still enough daylight left to drive seventy sheep...

PENELOPE: I know, I know. Sweetheart, I've got it. (PAUSE. PENELOPE DRINKS TEA) We didn't have sex.

ODYSSEUS: I know, baby. You totally crashed out.

PENELOPE: Well tonight we'll have sex, and we'll make up for last night.

ODYSSEUS: (PAUSE) I'll be right back.

FX: SOUND OF FOOTSTEPS GOING AWAY; A PAUSE;
THEN FOOTSTEPS RETURNING.

ODYSSEUS: Baby, you remember we used to do sex sometimes with fruit?

PENELOPE: I remember the pomegranates, honey. How could I forget?

ODYSSEUS: Well this, baby, is a Lotus fruit.

PENELOPE: Whoa!

ODYSSEUS: It has mind-altering capabilities.

PENELOPE: I can see that, honey. What does it taste like?

ODYSSEUS: Go ahead. Take a bite.

PENELOPE: (BITES INTO FRUIT) Whoa. That's...

ODYSSEUS: What do you think?

PENELOPE: That's such a strange taste. It's like... (TAKES ANOTHER BITE)
I don't know. It's so different. Honey, you want to try?

ODYSSEUS: Baby, no, I'm good. I don't really like it.

PENELOPE: (EATING AND TALKING AT SAME TIME) Mmm, it's so good.

ODYSSEUS: Baby, maybe that's enough.

PENELOPE: No, honey. I'm really hungry. (MUNCHING SOUNDS) Honey, can I ask you a question?

ODYSSEUS: Sure, baby.

PENELOPE: A serious question.

ODYSSEUS: Yeah, sure, baby. Go ahead.

PENELOPE: (MUNCHING) Mmm, this Lotus fruit. So good.

ODYSSEUS: What did you want to ask me, baby? Maybe that's enough Lotus, sweetheart.

PENELOPE: On your journey... (MUNCH)

ODYSSEUS: Mmm...

PENELOPE: (MUNCH) Oh Zeus, this fruit is good.

ODYSSEUS: I'm not sure you should eat...

PENELOPE: On your journey... (MUNCH) did you meet any... (MUNCH)

ODYSSEUS: Any?

PENELOPE: (MUNCH) Any women?

ODYSSEUS: (PAUSE) Women?

PENELOPE: (MUNCH) Yes. Women. Did you meet any women?

ODYSSEUS: What, like...

PENELOPE: Women, honey. (MUNCH) Oh my goodness, this fruit is good.

ODYSSEUS: Baby, really, you really shouldn't eat any more. It's not a good idea.

PENELOPE: Are you avoiding the question, honey?

ODYSSEUS: Baby, no. No. What, like normal women?

PENELOPE: Normal women, sweetheart. Like me. (YAWNS)

ODYSSEUS: Not like you, baby. There's no one like you.

PENELOPE: (MUNCH) Honey, have you got more of this Lotus? I need more.

ODYSSEUS: No that's it, baby. I think you've had enough.

PENELOPE: Oh, I'm so sleepy all of a sudden. (YAWNS) I need more Lotus. Are we going to have sex, honey?

ODYSSEUS: Sure, baby. Sure. I went to the Underworld, baby. I saw lots of women there. Their ghosts, anyway. I saw my mother.

PENELOPE: (MUNCH. YAWNS) All gone. Oh honey I'm sleepy.

ODYSSEUS: And I saw these strange bird-women. They weren't what you'd call normal.

PENELOPE: (YAWNS. SNUFFLES.)

ODYSSEUS: They're called the Sirens, baby. They sing and lure sailors onto the rocks to wreck their ships.

PENELOPE: (SNUFFLING)

ODYSSEUS: I wanted to hear them sing, so I got my sailors to tie me to the mast...

PENELOPE: (LIGHT SNORING)

ODYSSEUS: And they stuffed their ears with beeswax so they couldn't hear.

PENELOPE: (SNORING)

ODYSSEUS: Baby, you're not hearing a single word, are you? (LAUGHS) Not one word. You're just like my crew. Unable to hear the Sirens' song. (PAUSE) Oh, those lucky sailors. Those lucky, lucky sailors...

SCENE 6: THE SIRENS

EXT. A FLOWERY MEADOW ON A CLIFF TOP

THELXINOE: OK. Band meeting number... does anyone know what number meeting this is?

MOLPE: It really doesn't matter, Thelxinoe. We don't take minutes as none of us can write. You do recall your arms becoming wings, don't you?

THELXINOE: I like to do things properly, Molpe. We are the Sirens. THE Sirens. Be proud of that. Now, as I can see we're all present... Item one. The Odysseus debacle. Thoughts?

PEISINOE: The song was awful. From start to finish. It was so mournful and dreary. It's no wonder they sailed past. Molpe shouldn't write songs any more.

MOLPE: Oh blame me, Peisinoe, as usual. Anyone but yourself. Maybe if you focused more on singing in tune once in a while...

PEISINOE: In tune? In tune? There was no tune. But what do you expect when you let a manic depressive write the songs.

THELXINOE: Ladies... Bird-ladies... we're not going to get anywhere by trading insults. But, Molpe, I do think that Peisinoe makes a valid point. Some of the lyrics were a little dreary. Some happier songs would be a nice change.

MOLPE: Happier? Like what?

THELXINOE: I don't know. Songs about love. Or sunshine. Or baby turtles.

MOLPE: Oh Poseidon.

THELXINOE: Let's move on. Item two. A new band name. Peisinoe.

PEISINOE: Thank you. So, The Sirens. Yes, when we were young and first started singing together, maybe it was appropriate. We were loud and raw and we signalled danger. But in recent years, and I don't just mean since we lost the others, it just seems to sum up the failings of our work: dull and monotonous. So I thought we should create a new identity. One that reflects what we are. And so I came up with The Sparrow Girls. We're all girls, right, except, let's face it, we're also giant sparrows. And yet we each have distinctive character traits. Aglaope, she was Speedy Sparrow. Always darting about, here, there and everywhere, always the first to reach the sailors as they scrambled ashore and lacerate their faces with her claws, bless.

MOLPE: She was certainly quick to commit suicide after Jason and the Argonauts sailed past.

PEISINOE: And Ligera, she would have been Silent Sparrow if she too hadn't killed herself.

MOLPE: She's certainly silent now.

THELXINOE: So why was she going to be Silent Sparrow?

PEISINOE: Well, let's face it, she was a terrible singer, so I thought we could turn a negative into a positive; not let her sing, but create an image around her non-singing. I thought she could do lots of moody pouting, that sort of thing.

MOLPE: Well Aglaope and Ligera are both dead. Sensible Sparrow and Lucky Sparrow if you ask me.

PEISINOE: It still works with just the three of us. You two complement each other with your contrasting personalities. Thelxinoe, you're Chirpy Sparrow, obviously, with your limitless enthusiasm and positive vibe.

THELXINOE: Hmm, yeah, I like it.

PEISINOE: And Molpe, you're Sad Sparrow.

MOLPE: Sad Sparrow? Oh thank you very much.

PEISINOE: I knew you'd take it personally. It's not a criticism, it's just a reflection of the fact that you're permanently depressed.

MOLPE: I got depressed when I was turned into this hideous bird-woman monstrosity. I was a perfectly normal, happy-go-lucky girl, like everyone else. But then Persephone is abducted one day, and Demeter blames us. She turns our arms into wings, our toes into claws, and our legs into these skinny, scaly sticks. Only a complete weirdo is going to find my feathery chest attractive. I'm not even an eagle or a kingfisher, I'm a bloody sparrow. So yeah I'm depressed, but I think I have every right to be.

PEISINOE: So, as I was saying, Molpe, you're Sad Sparrow. And I'm Sparkly Sparrow, since I happen to have been blessed with particularly beautiful feathers.

MOLPE: They're brown, Peisinoe. Just like mine. Just like every sparrow.

PEISINOE: And we need better marketing. I thought we could get some promotional vase paintings done. A bit of red-figure to show off my plumage.

MOLPE: Oh Zeus on Olympus, I can't take any more of this. Bye.

FX: SOUND OF WINGS FLAPPING.

THELXINOE: Molpe. Where... Molpe! No, Molpe!

FX: SOUND OF SOMETHING HEAVY SPLASHING INTO WATER.

THELXINOE: (PAUSE) I can't believe she just did that.

PEISINOE: It takes some strength of mind to throw yourself off a cliff and not flap your wings.

THELXINOE: (PAUSE) So, Peisinoe. About the band name.

PEISINOE: Look, forget it.

THELXINOE: Are you sure? (PAUSE) OK. Item three. Future Directions.

PEISINOE: No. Forget it. The whole thing. The band. The Sirens. I quit.

THELXINOE: What do you mean, you quit? You can't quit. What are you going to do?

PEISINOE: I dunno. Something different. A career change. I can't be in a band with just you. No offence, Thelxinoe, but you're way too bloody cheerful. It would do my head in.

THELXINOE: But you're half-woman, half-sparrow with no qualifications or work experience. Who's going to employ you?

PEISINOE: I don't know, Thelxinoe, but I'm going to try. You take care, OK. We sure had some good times, but the Sirens are finished. Goodbye, sister.

FX: SOUND OF WINGS FLAPPING.

A FEW MOMENTS OF SILENCE, FOLLOWED BY...

THELXINOE: (GENTLY WEEPING)

END OF EPISODE 2

EPISODE 3

SCENE 7: ODYSSEUS & PENELOPE 3

INT. ODYSSEUS AND PENELOPE'S BEDROOM

ODYSSEUS: (SOFTLY) Baby. Penelope, baby.

PENELOPE: (WAKING UP, STRETCHING.) Mmmmm.

ODYSSEUS: Hey. I brought you a cup of tea.

PENELOPE: Mmm. What time is it?

ODYSSEUS: Well, it's past midday. There's probably enough time...

PENELOPE: (INTERRUPTS; SLEEPILY) No, no, it's OK. It doesn't matter, honey. I slept in again, didn't I?

ODYSSEUS: Yeah, baby, that Lotus. It's powerful stuff.

PENELOPE: (EAGERLY) Lotus! Have you got any more?

ODYSSEUS: No, baby. You ate it all.

PENELOPE: I want more Lotus, honey.

ODYSSEUS: I don't have any more, baby. It's all gone.

PENELOPE: That can't be right, honey. You must have more. I need more Lotus, honey. I need it.

ODYSSEUS: Baby, it's gone. It's all gone. I brought you some tea.

PENELOPE: (SOUNDING SLIGHTLY DISTRESSED) I don't want tea, Odysseus. I want Lotus. (PAUSE) Or sex. Honey, I need sex. (PAUSE) Or Lotus.

ODYSSEUS: Baby, listen. There's no Lotus, and even if there were, it's not a good idea. It's addictive. Why don't you drink your tea...?

PENELOPE: Lotus or sex, honey. You choose. Wait! You never told me about the women you met.

ODYSSEUS: Are you sure you wouldn't prefer to hear about the monsters, baby? There were lots of monsters.

PENELOPE: Women, honey. Women. No monsters. I want to know about the women, I want sex, and I want Lotus.

ODYSSEUS: I'll just go and... freshen up.

FX: SOUND OF FOOTSTEPS ACROSS FLOOR, THEN A DOOR OPENING AND CLOSING.

ODYSSEUS: (QUIETLY, TO HIMSELF) Well... This is it, I guess. The moment when Penelope finds out I'm not the man I used to be.

PENELOPE: Honey?

ODYSSEUS: (LOUDLY) I'm coming, baby. (TO HIMSELF) I've got out of some tricky situations in the last ten years, but this time I think my luck's run out.

PENELOPE: Hurry up!

ODYSSEUS: Right with you, baby. (TO HIMSELF) I don't suppose there's another Lotus fruit I didn't spot before.

FX: SOUNDS OF RUMMAGING

PENELOPE: Hurry up, honey. Hurry.

ODYSSEUS: (LOUDLY) I'm coming. (TO HIMSELF) No, nothing. (PAUSE)
Well, Zeus, if ever I was generous in my sacrifices, now would
be a good time to pay me back. (PAUSE) No? No
thunderbolt? Nothing?

PENELOPE: Odysseus!

ODYSSEUS: (LOUDLY) Baby, almost done. (TO HIMSELF) Hang on. Why
am I praying to Zeus? This is Aphrodite's domain. O
Aphrodite, great and most beautiful goddess, if ever I
honoured you with my wandering philandering, help me in
my time of need. Give me wisdom, Aphrodite; give me
courage; give me resourcefulness. (PAUSE) Actually, forget
that. Give me virility, Aphrodite, give me rigidity, and give me
endurance.

PENELOPE: Odysseus! Who are you talking to in there?

ODYSSEUS: No one, baby. (QUIETLY, TO HIMSELF) No one who's listening,
anyway. (PAUSE) Hang on a small moment of time. What's
that...? (LOUDLY) Baby?

PENELOPE: What, honey?

ODYSSEUS: Baby, this plant on the window sill. The pot plant.

PENELOPE: What about it, honey?

ODYSSEUS: Where did you get it? (QUIETLY, TO HIMSELF) It looks like...

PENELOPE: The one that looks like a herb?

ODYSSEUS: Yeah, that one. (QUIETLY, TO HIMSELF) It can't be...

PENELOPE: One of the suitors gave it to me as a gift. It's not Lotus is it?

ODYSSEUS: No, it's not Lotus, baby. (QUIETLY, TO HIMSELF) It looks just the same...

PENELOPE: Yes it was a strange gift, but I liked the pot, so I kept it.

ODYSSEUS: (QUIETLY, TO HIMSELF) It's got the same dark green leaf... the same serrated edges...

PENELOPE: I threw most of the others away.

ODYSSEUS: (QUIETLY, TO HIMSELF) ...the same milky-white underside to the leaf... (LOUDLY) What do you mean 'others' baby?

PENELOPE: Well it was really strange, honey. Seventy or eighty of the suitors brought me the same gift - this strange herb. I was hoping for jewellery. It was a bit disappointing if I'm honest.

ODYSSEUS: And what... what did you do with the other plants, baby?

PENELOPE: I can't remember, honey. I might have planted one or two in the garden.

ODYSSEUS: (QUIETLY, TO HIMSELF) It tastes...

PENELOPE: Why, honey?

ODYSSEUS: (QUIETLY, TO HIMSELF) ...just the same. (LOUDLY) No reason, baby. I can look after this plant, if you like. I discovered an interest in herbs on my travels.

PENELOPE: That's nice, honey, but I don't want to talk about pot plants. It's even more boring than monsters.

ODYSSEUS: (QUIETLY, TO HIMSELF) But the big question is... does it have the same...

PENELOPE: Odysseus!

ODYSSEUS: (QUIETLY, TO HIMSELF) ...to which the answer... appears... to be growing...

PENELOPE: (LOUDLY) Odysseus! Hurry up!

ODYSSEUS: (QUIETLY, TO HIMSELF) ...ever clearer...

PENELOPE: (LOUDER STILL) Odysseus!

ODYSSEUS: (QUIETLY, TO HIMSELF) Oh Aphrodite, you wonderful, wonderful goddess. I'll sacrifice to you later, Aphrodite, I swear on my mother's shade. But right now there's something I need to do...

PENELOPE: (VERY LOUD) ODYSSEUS!!!

FX: SOUND OF DOOR OPENING

(PAUSE)

ODYSSEUS: (SOFTLY) Baby.

PENELOPE: (QUIETLY) Oh my.

ODYSSEUS: (PAUSE) Baby, there's no more Lotus.

PENELOPE: Oh... my.

ODYSSEUS: If you like, I can tell you about the women I met on my journey.

PENELOPE: Oh... my... goodness.

ODYSSEUS: Or if you like...

PENELOPE: Sssh.

ODYSSEUS: ...we could...

PENELOPE: Sssh..... Honey. Odysseus, honey. Sssssssshhhhhhhhh...

SCENE 8: CIRCE & PEISINOE

EXT. OUTSIDE THE ARGOS ADULT EDUCATION CENTRE

FX: SOUND OF DOOR RATTLING.

PEISINOE: I don't think they're open yet.

CIRCE: Oh, thanks. Are you here for the witchcraft course?

PEISINOE: No, Latin. Beginner's Latin. I'm Peisinoe.

CIRCE: Nice to meet you. I'm Circe.

PEISINOE: And you're studying witchcraft?

CIRCE: Yes. Well I hope so. This is the Argos Adult Education Centre, right?

FX: SOUND OF KNOCKING ON DOOR, THEN RATTLING OF DOOR.

CIRCE: (LOUD) Hello? Anyone there? (PAUSE) What time do you make it?

PEISINOE: Almost quite a while after sunrise.

CIRCE: Me too. Oh well. I guess they should be here soon. (PAUSE) So. Latin. What's that?

PEISINOE: Well, it's a new language. And they reckon it's the next big thing. I figured that if I learned Latin I might get a job with the Hellenic Union.

CIRCE: Good for you, girl... sparrow woman. I like your positive attitude.

PEISINOE: Ah, I learned that from a friend. I used to hate it, but now I realise it's the way to be. Anyway, enough about me. Witchcraft sounds much more exciting.

CIRCE: Oh, you'd be surprised. Level one is really basic stuff. Sleeping potions. That sort of thing. I used to be a level-seven witch. Technically I still am. I've got all the certificates. But I can't do any of it any more.

PEISINOE: You can't have forgotten all of it, surely?

CIRCE: Uh huh. Look. I'll show you. Opening a locked door. That's level-two stuff. I should be able to do that in my sleep. Watch.

FX: PAUSE, THEN SOUND OF DOOR RATTLING.

CIRCE: See. Still locked. It's hopeless.

PEISINOE: Wow, I'm so sorry. What happened?

CIRCE: Well I met this guy. He moved in. A year went by, and it was all good. We had great sex. I know this secret herb. Anyway suddenly one day he says to me, 'Circe, I'm leaving. I'm going home to my wife.' I didn't even know he had a wife. I was so angry I tried to turn him into a pig.

PEISINOE: Quite right.

CIRCE: But nothing happened. I don't know if it was the shock or my intense anger, but I just couldn't turn him into anything. Not even a weasel.

PEISINOE: Sounds like he already was a weasel.

CIRCE: It's true. I pretended to be pleased for him but secretly I tried all sorts of spells on him, but none of them worked.

PEISINOE: So what happened?

CIRCE: Well he asked me if I knew the way to Ithaca, so I told him he had to go to the Underworld to consult Teiresias the seer. The fool actually believed me, and off he went. I thought that would be the end of him but then one day he turns up again, very much alive.

PEISINOE: I assume you told him where to go.

CIRCE: Well... we did have great sex.

PEISINOE: The secret herb.

CIRCE: Exactly. And I thought he might have changed his mind about going back to his wife.

PEISINOE: And had he?

CIRCE: No. Next morning he was off again.

PEISINOE: Weasel.

CIRCE: Dead weasel.

PEISINOE: You killed him?

CIRCE: No, but I sent him on a route he couldn't possibly survive: past the Sirens, Scylla and Charybdis...

PEISINOE: You do know I'm a Siren. I was a Siren.

CIRCE: I did wonder. The sparrow thing.

PEISINOE: It's a bit of a giveaway isn't it? So who was he? The weasel guy?

CIRCE: Odysseus.

PEISINOE: Odysseus!

CIRCE: You know him?

PEISINOE: You bet I know him.

CIRCE: Well I assume you tormented him with your singing, wrecked his ship, scratched his eyeballs out and stripped the flesh from his bones while he was screaming for mercy.

PEISINOE: Um, no. I'm sorry.

CIRCE: You didn't have sex with him did you?

PEISINOE: No, no. No, it was nothing like that. He just sailed past. The whole Sirens thing just wasn't working. That's why I'm here.

CIRCE: So Odysseus sailed past. Hmmm.

PEISINOE: Where was he heading next?

CIRCE: Scylla and Charybdis. He can't have survived that, surely?

PEISINOE: No. It's not possible.

CIRCE: No. Exactly. He's dead. (PAUSE) He is dead, isn't he?

PEISINOE: Yeah. For sure. He's dead.

CIRCE: (PAUSE) He's not dead, is he?

PEISINOE: No. Probably not.

CIRCE: He's at home, isn't he?

PEISINOE: Probably.

CIRCE: At home. Alive. Eyeballs intact. Flesh on his bones.

PEISINOE: Making love to his wife.

CIRCE: No, he doesn't have my secret herb. (PAUSE) That's why he came back, isn't it?

PEISINOE: Weasel.

CIRCE: Weasel.

PEISINOE: What are you going to do?

CIRCE: Well I'm more determined than ever to do this witchcraft course. I'm going to get back to Level seven even if it takes me years. Then I'm going to go to Ithaca and I'm going to turn Odysseus into a pig. If it's the last thing I do.

PEISINOE: Wow, you're really focused.

CIRCE: You bet I am. That man will become a pig. Possibly we might have sex first.

PEISINOE: What's with the pigs?

CIRCE: It's just the way I roll. It's my M.O.

PEISINOE: M.O.?

CIRCE: Modus operandi.

PEISINOE: What's that?

CIRCE: It's Latin. Level four I think.

SCENE 9: CALYPSO

INT. PSYCHATRIST'S PRACTICE

FX: SOUND OF DOOR OPENING.

DR. SANTORINI: Calypso, please?

CALYPSO: That's me.

DR. SANTORINI: Hello. Wow... Sorry. This way, please.

FX: SOUND OF FOOTSTEPS AND DOOR CLOSING.

DR. SANTORINI: Please. Take a seat.

CALYPSO: Thank you.

DR. SANTORINI: (QUIETLY, TO HIMSELF) Crikey. Be professional, Santorini. Be professional. (LOUDLY) So, Calypso. I'm Doctor Santorini. Have you had... any psychotherapy before?

CALYPSO: No.

DR. SANTORINI: OK. Well, there's nothing much to it, really. You just sit there and tell me all your problems. I'll listen, make some notes. I'll probably suggest that it's all your father's fault. And then we'll arrange another appointment and repeat the whole process. (PAUSE) OK? (PAUSE) Good. So, Calypso. Tell me a little about yourself. What do you do?

CALYPSO: I'm a goddess.

DR. SANTORINI: And how do you like that? Being a goddess.

CALYPSO: (ANGRILY) If I liked it, do you think I'd be trying to kill myself, you stupid little man?

DR. SANTORINI: No... sorry. Hmm. Yes... Six failed suicide attempts. (PAUSE) No luck?

CALYPSO: (ANGRILY) You're not listening to me. I'm a goddess. I'm immortal.

DR. SANTORINI: No, no. I'm sorry, Calypso. Please. I just can't understand why you'd want to end your life. You are... and I say this in an entirely professional, clinically diagnostic way, so please don't think I'm making a pass at you... unless of course... No, no. I understand. Look, Calypso, you are, without question, the most beautiful woman I have ever seen. By a distance.

CALYPSO: (BURSTS INTO TEARS.)

DR. SANTORINI: Whoa, what did I say?

CALYPSO: (THROUGH TEARS) That's... just... what... he... used... to... say.

DR. SANTORINI: He. Ah.

CALYPSO: (THROUGH TEARS) And... now... he's... gone. And... I'm... all... alone.

DR. SANTORINI: (GENTLY) Hey. Easy. Here. Have a tissue.

CALYPSO: (THROUGH TEARS) Thanks.

DR. SANTORINI: (PAUSE) I could... maybe... put my arm round you and give you a hug in a completely professional non-sexual way, if... No, no. I understand. It's probably best. (PAUSE) So this man of yours... What happened?

CALYPSO: (THROUGH TEARS) He... went... back... to... his... wife.

DR. SANTORINI: Ah. The extra-marital affair. Passion, danger and excitement, but no commitment.

CALYPSO: (HOLDING BACK SOBS) I didn't know he was married. Not to start with anyway. I rescued him from the sea; tended to his wounds; gave him all the love and comforts that a man could imagine; some you couldn't imagine. I gave myself completely to him... for seven years. And then... (BURSTS INTO TEARS.)

DR. SANTORINI: And then he left you. (PAUSE) He didn't deserve you, Calypso. You know, he sounds like a real loser if you ask me.

CALYPSO: (CRIES.)

DR. SANTORINI: Look, strictly speaking, from a professional standpoint, I shouldn't be saying this, but you are just so... unbelievably... Calypso, you're not going to have difficulty meeting men.

CALYPSO: Do you have any idea about my life? My island is so remote that not even the gods can be bothered to visit it. I'm four hundred years old and the only man I have ever seen was the one I rescued from the sea.

DR. SANTORINI: Well... That proves my point. Every guy you've met you've pulled. Literally. From the sea.

CALYPSO: But I don't want to wait four hundred years for another man.

DR. SANTORINI: Have you thought about moving? There are lots of young professional types here in Argos I'm sure you'd get along with. Doctors, lawyers, civil servants. Particularly doctors...

CALYPSO: (SOBBING) I don't want any old man. My love was... a real man. A Trojan War hero.

DR. SANTORINI: Ah. Look, Calypso, I don't mean to sound patronising... but there's a lot of guys who claim to have fought at Troy. Most of them also happen to have been best friends with Achilles and quite a few invented the wooden horse. (BEAT) I'm just putting that out there.

CALYPSO: (BURSTS INTO TEARS.) Odysseus! I miss him so much...

DR. SANTORINI: Odysseus!

CALYPSO: Yes, Odysseus! My love!

DR. SANTORINI: Odysseus. Oh. Wow... (BEAT) What was he like?

CALYPSO: (THROUGH TEARS) He was so sad mostly... so vulnerable. He would sit for hours every day on the rocks, looking out to sea. (CRIES) I... miss him... so... so... much.

DR. SANTORINI: And... If it isn't too personal... I guess... the sex was good?

CALYPSO: (CRIES) No... We hardly ever... It didn't... matter. Oh... Why... won't he... just... come... back? I... could... make him... so... happy.

DR. SANTORINI: Calypso.

CALYPSO: I... could... change.

DR. SANTORINI: You don't need to change, Calypso. It's not you. (PAUSE)
You're... perfect.

CALYPSO: (SUDDENLY COMPOSED) Sometimes though... (BEAT) I want
to kill him. Does that make me a bad person?

DR. SANTORINI: (Laughs) No, no. That's perfectly normal, Calypso. You gave
him everything. And he rejected you.

CALYPSO: I want to kill him slowly. And painfully. And just before he
dies, I want him to beg me to sleep with him.

DR. SANTORINI: And you'd refuse.

CALYPSO: (BURSTS INTO TEARS) No! I'd make love... to him... over and
over...

DR. SANTORINI: (QUIETLY TO HIMSELF) This Odysseus. Whatever he's got, I
want some of it.

(PAUSE)

Look, Calypso. There's nothing really I can do for you. You're
sad and you're angry. You want him back and you want to kill
him. You're willing to change, but you're fiercely proud of
who you are. It's healthy.

CALYPSO: So... What should I do?

DR. SANTORINI: Well. I think... either you should go to Ithaca. And sort it out.
Either kill him, or sleep with him and take him back with you.

CALYPSO: Or?

DR. SANTORINI: Or else forget him. Start a new life. Argos is nice...

CALYPSO: I'm going to go to Ithaca. And I'm going to kill him.

DR. SANTORINI: Good choice.

CALYPSO: No. Sleep with him.

DR. SANTORINI: Ah.

CALYPSO: No. Sleep with him and then kill him.

DR. SANTORINI: Good plan.

CALYPSO: I don't know. Maybe just sleep with him and think about it.

DR. SANTORINI: Maybe kill him and think about it?

CALYPSO: No. Kill him. (PAUSE) Or sleep with him.

DR. SANTORINI: Calypso. Look. As you are officially discharged and therefore... we no longer have a doctor-patient relationship...

CALYPSO: No, sleep with him and take him home.

DR. SANTORINI: Maybe you might like to go for dinner...

CALYPSO: And then kill him one night... right in the middle of the best sex ever...

DR. SANTORINI: Calypso... Hello... Calypso.

CALYPSO: Oh. That would be such a waste.

FX: SOUND OF DOOR OPENING AND THEN CLOSING.

DR. SANTORINI: Calypso! (PAUSE) Oh my. Oh Odysseus. You lucky man.
(PAUSE) Oh, I hope Penelope is worth it.

END OF EPISODE 3

EPISODE 4

SCENE 10: COUNCIL OF GODS 2

INT. GODS' PALACE ON MOUNT OLYMPUS

VARIOUS GODS: (GENERAL CHATTER)

ZEUS: OK, OK. Let's get this show on the road. Everyone, I'd like to introduce Ajax. You might not have noticed him...

VARIOUS GODS: Whoa / Crikey.

ZEUS: Yes. Sorry about that. Obviously his ghost-like appearance is due to the fact that he is... a ghost. Anyway, welcome to Olympus, Ajax.

VARIOUS GODS: Hi Ajax / Hello / Pleased to meet you.

ZEUS: I'm afraid Ajax can't speak unless he drinks blood. I don't think we have any blood here... Hebe? (PAUSE) No. Nectar? Is that...? No. No. OK, well I'll explain why Ajax is here later, under item two. But first, item one. It's more correspondence from our legal friends in Phaeacia.

VARIOUS GODS: (GENERAL MURMURING)

POSEIDON: I'd prefer to hear from our illegal friends.

VARIOUS GODS: (GENERAL LAUGHTER)

ZEUS: Very good, brother. OK, OK, quieten down. It reads, 'Dear almighty Zeus, etcetera, etcetera, lots of fawning nonsense. We are in receipt of your message etcetera, etcetera.

(ZEUS / CONT'D OVER)

ZEUS (CONT'D): While we recognise the unique benefits conferred upon the Phaeacian people under the terms of the Most Favoured Nation bilateral agreement, it is nevertheless obvious that the value of self-navigating, super-fast ships is significantly diminished if these ships are turned to stone. Whereas previously we had two such ships, we now have one ship, and one large, non-self-navigating and not-at-all-fast rock. We respectfully ask you to reconsider our previous request for compensation. We remain etcetera, etcetera.' (PAUSE) Well! What do we make of that?

VARIOUS GODS: (GENERAL CHATTER)

ZEUS: Are we minded to grant any compensation in this instance?

VARIOUS GODS: (GENERAL LAUGHTER, SOME LOUD)

ZEUS: (LAUGHING) No. I thought not. OK. Item two. Odysseus.

ATHENA: Odysseus! But I thought that was all sorted now. He's home.

ZEUS: He is home, Athena. Yes. He's fine, but the trail of devastation in his wake just keeps on growing.

ATHENA: What's he done now?

ZEUS: Well... I talked to Hades today... and this is why Ajax is here. The Calchas Report was published yesterday...

VARIOUS GODS: Finally! / About time!

ATHENA: The what?

ZEUS: The Calchas Report. Into the riot in the Underworld.

ATHENA: But that was years ago. Why has the report taken so long?

ZEUS: Maxwellisation, Athena.

VARIOUS GODS: What? / Huh? / You what?

ZEUS: Maxwellisation. It's a mysterious and irresistible force that no one truly understands. A bit like Fate, but more ponderous.

ATHENA: So what does the report say? Do you have a copy?

ZEUS: No. (LAUGHS) It's written on sixteen thousand clay tablets. If you fancy lugging that up Mount Olympus, you're welcome. But I've read it, and it completely exonerates Ajax here.

VARIOUS GODS: Well done / Good for you, Ajax etc.

ATHENA: So he – you – sorry, it's hard to know who to address this to... I thought Ajax, you went... you know, a little crazy?

ZEUS: Oh for sure. Yes, Ajax lost the plot. I'm sure he'd be the first to admit it. Yes? (PAUSE) Yes. It was scary. Cerberus hid in his cave, whimpering. Hades did lose control of the Underworld briefly. Sure. But Calchas is clear. The fault lies with Odysseus.

ATHENA: How so?

ZEUS: Well, as you know, Ajax was pretty wound up when he first arrived in the Underworld. There was a huge loss of honour when they awarded Achilles' arms to Odysseus.

ARES: They should have been yours, Ajax.

VARIOUS GODS: (MURMURS OF AGREEMENT)

ZEUS: I don't disagree, Ares. And I think Ajax did an honourable thing, killing himself.

VARIOUS GODS: (MURMURS OF AGREEMENT)

ZEUS: But just when Ajax had started to settle down...

POSEIDON: ...Odysseus visits the Underworld.

ZEUS: Exactly, brother. Exactly. Now, by all accounts, Ajax stood at the back, minding his own business. But then Odysseus saw him and called out to him, telling him what a great warrior he used to be and how all the Greeks mourned his death. All very friendly on the face of it, but all the time he's waving Achilles' sword and shield in the air.

POSEIDON: Ah. And that's when Ajax loses it.

ZEUS: No. Remarkably it's not. Isn't that so, Ajax? (PAUSE) Yes. Calchas says you turned your back and calmly waked away.

ARES: Impressive self-restraint, Ajax. I would have...

ZEUS: Ares, I dread to imagine what you would have done. Anyway, it would probably have all been fine, but Odysseus can't resist a parting shot. He shouts out, 'Loser!'

VARIOUS GODS: Ah.

ZEUS: And that's when Ajax loses it. (PAUSE) For the record, Ajax, none of us here thinks you're a loser.

VARIOUS GODS: (GENERAL MURMURS OF AGREEMENT)

ZEUS: You remember Tantalus' hunger strike?

VARIOUS GODS: (GENERAL MURMURS OF AGREEMENT)

ZEUS: The petition by the prisoners in Tartarus to the Hellenic Court of Human Rights...

POSEIDON: Human Rights! Whatever next!

VARIOUS GODS: (GENERAL MURMURS OF AGREEMENT)

ZEUS: I know! Well it was all Odysseus. Stirring up trouble.

POSEIDON: So what shall we do?

ZEUS: Well Ajax here wants revenge. And I don't blame him. This is about honour. And it's not just Ajax who has a legitimate complaint against Odysseus.

POSEIDON: So what are you proposing?

ZEUS: Well how about we provide transport to Ithaca for anyone who wants it and then just let them all sort out their differences. I'm thinking, Ajax here, the Lotus Eaters, Polyphemus, the Sirens, Circe, Calypso. Basically, anyone who feels a bit hard done by.

VARIOUS GODS: (GENERAL MURMURS OF AGREEMENT)

ATHENA: I like the idea, but won't it take too long to find everyone and take them there?

ZEUS: Not if you have a super-fast messenger god, like Hermes, and a super-fast self-navigating ship. They could be there in a day. And I know some people who still have one of those ships.

POSEIDON: Brother, I like your style.

ZEUS: Hermes, I need you to take a message to King Alcinous...

FADE

SCENE 11: ODYSSEUS & PENELOPE 4

INT. ODYSSEUS AND PENELOPE'S BEDROOM

FX: SOUND OF COCK CROWING

FX: SOUND OF BEDCLOTHES BEING MOVED

ODYSSEUS: (GENTLY) Morning, baby.

PENELOPE: (YAWNS AND STRETCHES) Mmm, morning.

ODYSSEUS: I've brought you a cup of tea. (BEAT) And a little something extra.

PENELOPE: (SLEEPILY) Mmm, thanks, honey.

ODYSSEUS: (WHISPERING) Except it's not that little.

PENELOPE: (STARTLED) Oh my goodness, honey, you're still... and it's so...

ODYSSEUS: (SOUNDING PLEASED WITH HIMSELF) I know, baby. How was last night?

PENELOPE: It was so... you were... oh my goodness, some of the things...

ODYSSEUS: So how about it, baby?

PENELOPE: Oh, Odysseus, sweetheart, a cup of tea in bed is my idea of Elysium right now. Come here. You can give me a cuddle - but no getting frisky.

ODYSSEUS: It's good to be home, baby.

PENELOPE: It's good to have you home, sweetheart. Oh, Odysseus. This is perfect.

THELXINOE: (OFF) (SINGING – BARELY AUDIBLE)

PENELOPE: Honey, can you hear singing?

ODYSSEUS: Singing? No, baby, don't be silly.

PENELOPE: Honey, listen. (PAUSE) There.

THELXINOE: (OFF) (SINGING – BARELY AUDIBLE)

PENELOPE: Can't you hear it? It's coming from outside.

FX: SOUND OF BEDCLOTHES BEING MOVED,
FOOTSTEPS ACROSS FLOOR, THEN CURTAINS BEING
DRAWN.

PENELOPE: Aaargh!

FX: SOUND OF CURTAINS BEING QUICKLY DRAWN
SHUT

ODYSSEUS: Baby? What's up?

PENELOPE: There's something... something...

FX: SOUND OF CURTAINS BEING DRAWN SLOWLY

PENELOPE: Aaargh!

FX: SOUND OF CURTAINS BEING QUICKLY DRAWN
SHUT

ODYSSEUS: Baby, what is it?

PENELOPE: Honey, that Polywhatshisname...

ODYSSEUS: Polyphemus.

PENELOPE: What did you say he looked like again?

ODYSSEUS: Big, hairy, fierce-looking, one large eye in the middle of his face. Why, baby?

PENELOPE: Because there's something big, hairy, and fierce-looking outside the window. But it doesn't have one eye.

ODYSSEUS: Well it's probably nothing to worry about then, baby.

PENELOPE: No, this thing is big, hairy, and fierce-looking, and it has a large hole in the middle of its face.

ODYSSEUS: Ah. That might be something to worry about. What's it doing?

PENELOPE: Just standing there outside the window, looking in.

ODYSSEUS: But it doesn't have an eye.

PENELOPE: Well, whatever the opposite of looking in is, that's what it's doing. Why don't you take a look, honey?

ODYSSEUS: No, no, it's good, baby. If it's Polyphemus, I don't want him to see me.

PENELOPE: He doesn't have an eye, honey.

ODYSSEUS: I know, baby, but I don't want to take any chances. What's he doing now?

FX: SOUND OF CURTAINS BEING DRAWN SLOWLY

PENELOPE: He's just standing there. Poor thing, he looks really sad.

ODYSSEUS: Sad's good, baby. It's better than angry. I've seen an angry cyclops, sweetheart, and it's not a pretty sight.

PENELOPE: Oh my goodness, there's more things out there.

ODYSSEUS: What kind of things, baby?

PENELOPE: There's a weird bird, like a giant sparrow, except it has a woman's head, and there's two other women. One of them is unbelievably beautiful.

ODYSSEUS: Is the other one also beautiful but in an enchanting, mystical sort of way?

PENELOPE: Yes, how did you know that?

ODYSSEUS: Just a guess, baby. Anyone else?

PENELOPE: There's a man. He looks like a warrior. But it's really strange, honey. He's translucent.

ODYSSEUS: There's not anyone who looks like Poseidon is there?

PENELOPE: Not unless Poseidon wears sandals and shuffles around.

ODYSSEUS: In that case we should be fine.

PENELOPE: Who are they, honey? What do they want?

ODYSSEUS: Well it sounds like they could be some friends I made on my journey home. They've probably just come to say hello and experience a bit of Ithacan hospitality. Baby, I wonder if you could let them in and look after them briefly. There's half a bottle of Ismaran red on the dresser. See if Polyphemus will drink some of that.

PENELOPE: I thought cyclopes drank milk.

ODYSSEUS: They do, baby, they do. But this one's on holiday.

PENELOPE: But...

ODYSSEUS: Thanks, baby. I really appreciate it.

PENELOPE: But...

ODYSSEUS: Penelope, sweetheart. Listen. There's something I need to tell you.

PENELOPE: Honey? What is it?

ODYSSEUS: I love you, baby. I really really love you.

PENELOPE: I know you do, honey.

ODYSSEUS: No, baby. Penelope, sweetheart. Listen. You've got to listen to me. I love you, baby. I love you. I love you so so much.

SCENE 12: PENELOPE'S XENIA 1

INT. RECEPTION ROOM IN ODYSSEUS' PALACE

FX: SOUND OF DOOR OPENING.

PENELOPE: Hello. Welcome everyone. Do come in. Watch your...

FX: SOUND OF HEAD HITTING DOORWAY

PENELOPE: ...head.

POLYPHEMUS: Roar!

PENELOPE: Ouch. No, no translucent warrior man, the door is this way. That's the wall. Oh, wow... that's a neat trick.

FX: SOUND OF DOOR CLOSING

PENELOPE: Please, everyone, have a seat. Welcome all of you.

POLYPHEMUS: Who are you?

PENELOPE: I'm Penelope, the wife of Odysseus, and this is our home.

POLYPHEMUS: My name is Nobody.

PENELOPE: Well, it's a pleasure to meet you. I hope that you will all feel welcome here, whether you're a nobody or a somebody or even if you don't really have a body. The previous visitors were all slaughtered a few days ago, I know, but those were... exceptional circumstances. (BEAT) So, can I get you a drink? I have half a bottle of a really nice Ismaran red.

LOTUS EATER: Hey, I'll try some of that.

PENELOPE: A good choice, Mr laid-back shuffly sandal-wearing man.

POLYPHEMUS: Do you have milk?

PENELOPE: To drink? That's a little weird.

POLYPHEMUS: Nobody drinks milk.

PENELOPE: That's exactly my point. How about some wine instead?

POLYPHEMUS: Wine makes Nobody sleepy.

PENELOPE: Well it makes me really sleepy. Look, have a think about it and I'll come back to you. OK, ghostly warrior man. Have you decided yet? (PAUSE) Sorry, you'll have to speak up, sweetheart.

CIRCE: He can't speak unless he has fresh blood to drink.

PENELOPE: Oh right. We had loads of blood here a few days ago. (TALKS LOUDLY, PRONOUNCING EACH WORD CLEARLY AS IF TALKING TO SOMEONE HARD OF HEARING) It's a pity you didn't come then, Mr Silent Warrior. You could have talked all night. (TALKS NORMALLY AGAIN) So, any particular blood?

CIRCE: Lamb, goat, something like that is best. Rat or lizard is fine, technically, but it's not considered good hospitality and he might only be able to speak a few sentences.

PENELOPE: Of course. We do hospitality properly here. Ithaca has signed the Hellenic Union treaty.

POLYPHEMUS: Roar!

PENELOPE: I'll come back to you in a second, love. OK, for the silent, translucent warrior man I shall order a fine jet-black sheep to be sacrificed and he can talk to his heart's content. How about you, beautiful-in-a-mystical-and-enchancing-sort-of-way woman?

CIRCE: A cup of tea would be lovely. Here, I brought my own herbs.

PENELOPE: No problem at all. And for you, conventionally-beautiful-but-beautiful-beyond-the-bounds-of-rational-comprehension woman?

CALYPSO: I don't suppose you have any nectar? No, no, not to worry. A cup of the herb tea would be great.

PENELOPE: So, Nobody, have you decided yet?

POLYPHEMUS: Please could I have some milk to drink? I'm not actually Nobody, I'm Polyphemus.

PENELOPE: No problems, sweetheart. I was only teasing. You're welcome to drink milk, even if it is a bit weird. Eurycleia, please could you sort those drinks out for our guests, and bring some bread, cheese and olives too. Right, while we're waiting, is there anyone who would like their feet washed?

POLYPHEMUS: Roar!

SCENE 13: THELXINOE & ODYSSEUS

INT. A ROOM IN ODYSSEUS' PALACE

FX: SOUNDS OF RUMMAGING AROUND IN A CHEST

ODYSSEUS: OK, let's think. What do I need for this journey? I've got my oar. This gold will be useful. My favourite sword. Clothes. Hmm, I'm not actually sure where I'm going... Oh I'll just take lots of gold...

THELXINOE: (SINGING) Draw near, illustrious Odysseus, man of many tales...

ODYSSEUS: What... who's that?

THELXINOE: Great glory of the Achaeans...

ODYSSEUS: The Sirens?

THELXINOE: (SINGING) And bring your ship to rest so that you may hear our voices...

ODYSSEUS: Oh heavenly Zeus, not that dreadful song again.

THELXINOE: (STOPS SINGING) Oh. Is it that bad?

ODYSSEUS: Just awful. Possibly the most tuneless, depressing song I have ever heard. I was tied to the mast, screaming at my crew. But they had beeswax in their ears and couldn't hear me. They thought I was begging them to untie me so I could go to you. In fact I was begging them to put wax in my ears. It was torture. One of you sounded really out of tune too.

THELXINOE: That was Peisinoe. She doesn't sing any more. The Sirens are finished, Odysseus. It's just me. I'm going to pursue a solo career. No more shipwrecking sailors. Just music.

ODYSSEUS: So you're not going to eat me?

THELXINOE: No! I want to thank you, Odysseus, for making this possible. And I appreciate your honesty. It's refreshing.

ODYSSEUS: Oh. You're welcome. And the others? Are they here to thank me too?

THELXINOE: (LAUGHING) No, Odysseus. That's just me. I think the others want to kill you. Or sleep with you. Or sleep with you and then kill you.

ODYSSEUS: Sex. It really complicates things, doesn't it?

THELXINOE: I wouldn't know.

ODYSSEUS: Oh. Yeah... I'm sorry...

THELXINOE: (LAUGHING) It's OK, Odysseus. I'm OK. I have my music. So, what are you up to?

ODYSSEUS: I'm packing. I have to go on a journey. I met Teiresias in the Underworld and he told me I have to find a land where the people know nothing of the sea and never use salt with their food, and where a fellow-traveller refers to the oar I am carrying on my shoulder as a winnowing fan.

THELXINOE: That's so... specific and yet... so random. I could write a nice power ballad about that. Good luck with that journey, Odysseus.

ODYSSEUS: Thanks. You too, sparrow-Siren-lady. Good luck to you too.

END OF EPISODE 4

EPISODE 5

SCENE 14: PENELOPE'S XENIA 2

INT. RECEPTION ROOM IN ODYSSEUS' PALACE

VARIOUS GUESTS (GENERAL CHATTER)

FX: SOUND OF DOOR OPENING

THELXINOE: Sorry I'm late.

PENELOPE: Oh, hello. Welcome. Lovely... plumage.

THELXINOE: Thank you. It's brown. But that's OK. I'm Thelxinoe.

PENELOPE: Pleased to meet you, Thelxinoe. I'm Penelope. Welcome to Ithaca. Do you know everyone here?

THELXINOE: Yes. We all met on the journey here.

PENELOPE: Well, we're just waiting for Odysseus.

THELXINOE: Odysseus? No, he's gone, I'm afraid.

PENELOPE: Gone? What do you mean, gone? Gone where?

THELXINOE: Gone gone. Gone on a journey. I saw him just now as he set off.

(DURING THE CONVERSATION BETWEEN THELXINOE AND PENELOPE THAT FOLLOWS, THERE IS BACKGROUND CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE OTHER GUESTS, WHICH GRADUALLY BECOMES LOUDER.)

PENELOPE: But he can't have gone. He only just got home.

THELXINOE: He's gone, Penelope. I'm really sorry. I don't think he's going to be back any time soon. He took an oar. He said he had to find a land where people know nothing of the sea and don't put salt on their food.

PENELOPE: But he didn't say goodbye. (PAUSE) Oh. Maybe... (PAUSE) But he never said hello to his friends here. Why wouldn't he do that?

THELXINOE: I think, Penelope, your guests here aren't exactly Odysseus's friends.

(GUESTS' CONVERSATIONS NOW CLEARLY AUDIBLE.)

CALYPSO: But I was going to sleep with him.

CIRCE: I was going to sleep with him.

POLYPHEMUS: I was going to eat him.

CALYPSO: And then I was going to kill him.

CIRCE: And I was going to turn him into a pig.

AJAX: I was going to scare him with my ghostly sword and make ghostly noises in his face.

CALYPSO: Or maybe just sleep with him. A lot.

LOTUS EATER: Dude, I was going to express my disapproval of his actions in a polite but firm manner.

CALYPSO: No. Sleep with him and then kill him.

(GUESTS - ALL EXCEPT THELXINOE - NOW TALK LOUDLY OVER THE TOP OF ONE ANOTHER, ALL TALKING AND NO ONE LISTENING.)

PENELOPE: (SHOUTING) Stop! Stop it! All of you! Stop it!

(PAUSE – SILENCE)

How dare you? How dare you talk like that about my husband, in my house? Who do you think you are?

(PAUSE – SILENCE)

POLYPHEMUS: I'm Polyphemus.

THELXINOE: (SOFTLY) I think that was a rhetorical question, Polyphemus.

POLYPHEMUS: Oops.

(PAUSE – SILENCE)

PENELOPE: (SLOWLY, CLEARLY AND FIRMLY) Now, let's get one thing straight. No one is killing anyone. Not in my house. I've seen enough bloodshed recently for a lifetime. There's going to be no more. You hear me?

POLYPHEMUS: I hear you. (PAUSE) Oops. That was rhetorical again, wasn't it?

PENELOPE: And there's going to be no turning things into pigs, no making scary noises in people's faces, and not even any relatively polite expressions of dissatisfaction. Not in my house. Not unless I say so. And if anyone - anyone - is going to sleep with Odysseus, it'll be his wife. The woman he's married to. And are we all quite clear who that is?

(PAUSE – SILENCE)

POLYPHEMUS: That's you.

PENELOPE: That's right, Polyphemus. That's me. Now if Odysseus has caused you any harm or distress, then I'm really very sorry, and I'll do all I can to make it up to you. But I waited twenty years for my husband to return from Troy. Twenty years. And then three days ago Odysseus returns, and, just when I had dared to hope I might regain the life I had lost, off he goes again, on some ridiculous quest to find a land where people don't put salt on their food. So if anyone here has a right to feel sorry for themselves right now... it's me!

(PAUSE – SILENCE)

ALL: Sorry / I'm sorry / Very sorry, Penelope etc.

PENELOPE: Oh! Now look what you've made me do - contravene article six of the Hellenic Union Treaty of Guest Friendship.

POLYPHEMUS: Roar!

PENELOPE: Exactly, Polyphemus, exactly.

(PAUSE – SILENCE)

THELXINOE: Penelope. Why don't you go and make yourself a cup of tea? And then maybe we can start over. We were all totally out of order. You have every right to throw us out. Article twelve of the Hellenic Union Treaty of Guest Friendship...

POLYPHEMUS: Roar!

THELXINOE: Exactly, Polyphemus. Exactly.

PENELOPE: Thank you, Thelxinoe. But please don't go. Please, stay. All of you. I want us to be friends. [PAUSE.] I'll go and make that tea.

FX: SOUND OF PENELOPE LEAVING AND DOOR
CLOSING

THELXINOE: Well. I hope you are all ashamed of yourselves. I have never been so embarrassed.

ALL: (EVERYONE STARTS TO ARGUE WITH THELXINOE, MAKING EXCUSES) But Odysseus... / But I.... / Yes, but...

THELXINOE: (LOUDLY) Stop it! Enough! Listen! Forget Odysseus. Forget him. What Odysseus did to you is in the past. You've got to forget it, you hear me? You can't keep looking backwards. You've got to look forwards.

POLYPHEMUS: That's easy for you to say. I can't look in any direction.

THELXINOE: (TO HERSELF) No Direction. That would have been such a good band name. (PAUSE) Polyphemus, can you sing?

POLYPHEMUS: Roar!

THELXINOE: I guess not. (PAUSE) Can you play music? The lyre. It can't be that difficult.

POLYPHEMUS: I don't understand.

THELXINOE: Polyphemus, you can join my band. I'm going on a world tour. I've been looking for someone to play rhythm lyre. These wings of mine. They're useless for that sort of thing. So how about it?

POLYPHEMUS: Well... I don't know... I've never...

THELXINOE: Look, if the lyre's not your thing, it really doesn't matter. I could use a big, strong man... creature like you as a roadie. So how about it?

POLYPHEMUS: Well... are you sure?

THELXINOE: Sure I'm sure. I'd be honoured. It would be fun.

POLYPHEMUS: Roar!

THELXINOE: Great! We'll have a band meeting later today.

LOTUS EATER: Hey, Thelxie.

THELXINOE: Lotus man.

LOTUS EATER: This music tour. Would it be the kind of scene where casual drug use was acceptable?

THELXINOE: You're talking Lotus, right? I've got no problem with Lotus, if that's what you mean. You want to join us?

LOTUS EATER: Dude... it ticks a lot of boxes. Music... travel... eating Lotus... Dude, it sounds awesome.

THELXINOE: Great. Well that's settled. Look, if the rest of you want to join me, then I'll find things for you to do. Backing singers, dancers, ticket sales, whatever.

CIRCE, AJAX: No / no thanks.

CALYPSO: I'm a goddess, sweetheart. You think I'm going to... work?

THELXINOE: (FIRMLY) Well, you need to decide what you're going to do. Today, Calypso. Now. All of you. And you have to forget Odysseus. OK?

ALL: [GENERAL CHATTER: CALYPSO AND CIRCE CHAT ABOUT WHAT TO DO; THELXINOE TALKS WITH AJAX ABOUT WHAT HE MIGHT DO; POLYPHEMUS AND LOTUS EATER CHAT ABOUT THEIR NEW CAREERS.]

FX: SOUND OF DOOR OPENING

TELEMACHUS: Hi. (PAUSE) (LOUDER) Hello everyone! Hi!

POLYPHEMUS: Who are you?

TELEMACHUS: Hi. I'm Telemachus.

PENELOPE: My son. Odysseus' son.

CALYPSO: (WHISPERING, TO CIRCE) Oh... my... goodness, Circe. He looks so like Odysseus.

CIRCE: (WHISPERING) Doesn't he just.

CALYPSO: (WHISPERING) But so much younger... and so fit. Come on. Let's introduce ourselves.

(PAUSE)

ALL: GENERAL BACKGROUND CHATTER AS CALYPSO AND CIRCE CROSS ROOM

CALYPSO: Telemachus. Hello. I'm Calypso.

TELEMACHUS: Hi.

CIRCE: And I'm Circe. Hi.

TELEMACHUS: Hi. (PAUSE) So... what's a couple of good-looking ladies like you doing here?

CIRCE: We knew your father, Telemachus. We were good friends.

CALYPSO: Very good friends. (BEAT) But he never told me he had quite such a handsome son...

TELEMACHUS: Well... we never knew each other until a few days ago...

CALYPSO: So, Telemachus. What are your plans for the future?

TELEMACHUS: The future? Well... I want to get into the olive oil business. Menelaus - you know Menelaus?

CALYPSO: Sure.

TELEMACHUS: Menelaus told me he could give me a job with one of his oil import businesses. After uni of course. I'm doing OOBs at Thebes.

CALYPSO: OOBs at Thebes. Now you've lost me there.

TELEMACHUS: Olive oil business studies at Thebes University.

CALYPSO: Ah. Is that a good university? I don't know much about universities.

TELEMACHUS: Yeah, it's really good. After Argos and Corinth it's probably the best. It's really good for OOBs anyway. It's in the Oedipus Group. 'The Blind Leading The Blind.' That's their motto.

CALYPSO: How lovely. When do you start?

TELEMACHUS: At the end of summer. We start with the olive harvest. So, like, literally getting our hands dirty.

CALYPSO: Well listen, Telemachus. Why don't you pay me a visit on your way to Thebes? I have my own private island.

TELEMACHUS: Your own island? That's so cool. So, what do you do then?

CALYPSO: I'm a goddess.

TELEMACHUS: (PAUSE) Oh. Wow. Really? That's awesome. So, do you have, like, special powers?

CALYPSO: (SEDUCTIVELY) If you pay me a visit, you might just find out.

TELEMACHUS: So... this island. Is it, like, just you who lives there?

CALYPSO: There's a dozen nymphs who live there too. They attend on me. They don't wear much. Are you OK with nymphs?

TELEMACHUS: Um, sure. Yeah... cool. I like nymphs. I really like nymphs.

CALYPSO: Of course, if you were my guest, my nymphs would attend to your needs too. Bathe you, rub you with oil... other things. I know some things you can do with oil that they probably don't teach you at university.

TELEMACHUS: Oh, um, wow. It sounds... amazing. Are there... do you have other guests?

CALYPSO: No, no. It'll just be you, me and the nymphs. You would be the only man. If that's a problem...

TELEMACHUS: No, no, really... that's not a problem. Look. Wait here. Don't go anywhere. Really. Don't go. I need to go and talk to my mum quickly.

CALYPSO: OK.

(PAUSE. TELEMACHUS MOVES TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROOM.)

CIRCE: You, Calypso, are wicked. All that talk of half-naked nymphs. The poor boy was quite flummoxed.

CALYPSO: Oh my, Circe. He's so like his father. In looks, anyway. There's not a lot going on between his ears, but we can work at that.

CIRCE: So what are your plans for the future, then, Calypso?

CALYPSO: Well, my nymphs and I will show him a good time this summer. He might not even want to go to university, but I'll insist. I'll try and make him drop this OOBs nonsense and study philosophy. Something to make him a bit more interesting. And then he can visit me in the holidays.

CIRCE: So you're not going to try to keep him on your island?

CALYPSO: Oh, one day, for sure. When he's grown up enough to be a real man, but while his body is still so strong and firm and supple - oh my goodness, look at that body... Anyway, at the right time I'll make him immortal. My own little Odysseus to enjoy. Forever.

CIRCE: You do know he's not Odysseus, Calypso? He does have his own identity.

CALYPSO: Oh, he'll change his name soon enough. You don't know how persuasive I can be.

CIRCE: You, Calypso, are wicked. Truly wicked.

CALYPSO: Well, Circe, as my professor at god school used to say, 'There's no immortality without immorality.'

CIRCE: Oh, here he comes. I'll leave you two love birds to it.

FX: SOUND OF FOOTSTEPS AS WE FOLLOW CIRCE

THELXINOE: Oh, hi, Circe. How's it going? Calypso and Telemachus seem to be hitting it off.

CIRCE: Hi, Thelxinoe; Penelope. Yes. I think Telemachus is going to have... an educational summer.

PENELOPE: He's so like his father, Circe - restless and eager for adventure. I can't keep him here. But I am going to be a bit lonely, I fear. No husband again, and no son either this time.

CIRCE: Well I'm sure it won't be long before more suitors arrive, Penelope.

PENELOPE: Oh, Circe, I don't want another husband, even if Odysseus never comes back. And I don't know if I can cope with suitors again. If only I had a way of scaring them away.

THELXINOE: (PAUSE) What about Ajax?

PENELOPE: Thelxinoe, that is such a good idea. Where is he?

CIRCE: He was floating around just now... (PAUSE) There he is. Hey, Ajax. Come over here a moment.

(PAUSE)

PENELOPE: Ajax. What are you planning to do? Later, I mean. Are you going back to the Underworld?

AJAX: Not if I can help it. There's nothing there for me. Just lots of dead people reminiscing about the good old days.

PENELOPE: Ajax, why don't you stay here. As my guest. You can keep me company... And frighten people. Suitors, anyway. I'll kill an animal every day so you can drink blood and speak.

AJAX: Are you sure? I would love to stay. But wouldn't you rather have some female company? Circe could turn the suitors you don't like into pigs.

PENELOPE: Ajax, that is a brilliant idea. Circe, what do you say?

CIRCE: Well... it could be fun. Especially if Ajax stays too. Any suitors who are out of order Ajax can frighten a little. Float through the wall and wave his sword in their face, that sort of thing. And if they persist, or if you just really don't like them for whatever reason, then I'll turn them into pigs. Job done.

PENELOPE: This... is going to be so much fun.

THELXINOE: Well, I think that's everyone taken care of. I'll pop down to the harbour and tell the Phaeacians they can go. There's no point in them hanging around.

PENELOPE: OK, thanks, Thelxinoe. See you later.

CIRCE: Hey, Penelope. I was thinking. About the suitors. If there are any you like... Not for marrying, I understand, but, you know, for a bit of company on a summer's evening. (BEAT) Or a winter's evening. (BEAT) Or a spring morning come to that. Listen. I know this herb. It's quite a secret. But it has some pretty amazing properties. We could... you know...

PENELOPE: Circe, this herb... I'm intrigued... It wouldn't by any chance...

FADE

SCENE 15: THELXINOE IN CONCERT

EXT. OUTDOOR THEATRE

FX: OUTDOOR SOUNDS; STRUMMING ON LYRE.

THELXINOE: (LOUD) Good evening, Ithaca!

CROWD: Good evening.

THELXINOE: (LOUD) I can't hear you. I said, 'Good evening, Ithaca!'

CROWD: (LOUD) Good evening!

THELXINOE: (LOUD) Don't look so nervous! I'm not going to eat you! Let's have a big hand for Polyphemus on rhythm lyre. He's not going to eat you either. (QUIETLY) Don't eat anyone, Polyphemus.

POLYPHEMUS (QUIETLY) You got it.

CROWD: (CHEERS AND APPLAUSE)

THELXINOE: (CLOSE) I'm Chirpy Sparrow, and I'd like to dedicate this song to a friend of mine: Odysseus, son of Laertes, King of Ithaca. It's called Turtles.

CROWD: (GENERAL NOISE)

FX: STRUMMING ON LYRE.

THELXINOE: (SINGING SWEETLY) Turtles, little baby turtles, swimming through the ocean's stream. Turtles, sweet little turtles, like a summer's starlight dream...

FADE

SCENE 16: COUNCIL OF GODS 3

INT. GODS' PALACE ON MOUNT OLYMPUS

VARIOUS GODS: (GENERAL CHATTER)

ZEUS: OK, OK. Let's get the meeting started. We have just one item on the agenda today... but it's something you should all hear. We... (LAUGHS) we have received another letter from the Phaeacians.

VARIOUS GODS: (GENERAL MURMURING)

ZEUS: Yes. Yes, I know. I'll read it out. 'Dear Zeus. We write regarding an incident that occurred this morning of which you are no doubt fully aware. Our trading vessel, the "Periboia", returning from Ithaca, a voyage that you yourself commissioned, was turned to stone at the entrance to the harbour.'

VARIOUS GODS: No! / No way!

ZEUS: 'The extraordinary similarity of this incident to that which befell our other trading vessel, the "Nausithous", cannot be coincidental. We hold you entirely responsible and we regard this as an act of hostile aggression. Phaeacia no longer has any super-fast, self-navigating ships, it has lost its two most experienced crews, and its harbour entrance is now completely blocked. As you have rejected our previous requests for compensation we believe we would only be wasting time in pursuing a similar course of action. Instead we are writing to inform you of our immediate withdrawal from the bilateral agreement. Please be aware that you and the other Olympian gods are no longer welcome in Phaeacia...

VARIOUS GODS: (GENERAL MURMURING)
(PAUSE)
(GENERAL LAUGHTER)

ZEUS: Brother, brother, brother. What have you done?

POSEIDON: I couldn't help myself. It was just too tempting.

ZEUS: Well, you've done it now. That's that. No more sacrifices. No more feasts.

APOLLO: No more Ismaran red.

ZEUS: That's true, Apollo. But listen. All is not lost. I came across this place in Italy. Latium. They speak this funny language there, Latin, but they make a truly wondrous wine called Falernian. Ismaran tastes like cheap supermarket plonk in comparison. I just happen to have brought a case of this Falernian back from my fact-finding trip. I think the closure of the bilateral agreement with the Phaeacians calls for a celebration.

VARIOUS GODS: (GENERAL MURMURS OF APPROVAL)

ZEUS: Hebe, please would you fetch the wine, and some snacks. We're going to have a proper party.

VARIOUS GODS: (GENERAL CHEERS AND APPLAUSE)

ZEUS: Hermes.

HERMES: Yes.

ZEUS: There's something I need you to do.

HERMES: (SOUNDING DISAPPOINTED) Oh. Right.

ZEUS: It may take some time, I'm afraid.

HERMES: (SOUNDING EVEN MORE DISAPPOINTED) Oh. But... OK.

ZEUS: Thank you, Hermes. Yes, I need you to... (BEAT) join the party!

VARIOUS GODS: (GENERAL LAUGHTER AND CHEERS)

POSEIDON: The party god!

VARIOUS GODS: (GENERAL LAUGHTER)

ZEUS: No! Brother! How many times do I have to tell you? That's Dionysus!

VARIOUS GODS: (GENERAL LAUGHTER AND CHATTER)

FADE

END