Digital Script

This PDF is for authorized digital use only and may not be printed.

Federal law provides severe civil and criminal penalties for the unauthorized alteration, reproduction, distribution or exhibition of copyrighted materials. This PDF may not be distributed in excess of the amount of copies purchased.

For performance, you must still apply for rights on our website, be approved and purchase a cast quantity of scripts in either digital or print format.
THE ODYSSEY

Adapted
by
R.N. SANDBERG

from Homer’s epic poem

Dramatic Publishing
Woodstock, Illinois • England • Australia • New Zealand
*** NOTICE ***

The amateur and stock acting rights to this work are controlled exclusively by THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be given. Royalty must be paid every time a play is performed whether or not it is presented for profit and whether or not admission is charged. A play is performed any time it is acted before an audience. Current royalty rates, applications and restrictions may be found at our website: www.dramaticpublishing.com, or we may be contacted by mail at: DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY, 311 Washington St., Woodstock IL 60098.

COPYRIGHT LAW GIVES THE AUTHOR OR THE AUTHOR’S AGENT THE EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO MAKE COPIES. This law provides authors with a fair return for their creative efforts. Authors earn their living from the royalties they receive from book sales and from the performance of their work. Conscientious observance of copyright law is not only ethical, it encourages authors to continue their creative work. This work is fully protected by copyright. No alterations, deletions or substitutions may be made in the work without the prior written consent of the publisher. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, videotape, film, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. It may not be performed either by professionals or amateurs without payment of royalty. All rights, including, but not limited to, the professional, motion picture, radio, television, videotape, foreign language, tabloid, recitation, lecturing, publication and reading, are reserved.

For performance of any songs, music and recordings mentioned in this play which are in copyright, the permission of the copyright owners must be obtained or other songs and recordings in the public domain substituted.

©MMX by
R.N. SANDBERG

Printed in the United States of America
All Rights Reserved
( THE ODYSSEY)

IMPORTANT BILLING AND CREDIT REQUIREMENTS

All producers of the play must give credit to the author of the play in all programs distributed in connection with performances of the play and in all instances in which the title of the play appears for purposes of advertising, publicizing or otherwise exploiting the play and/or a production. The name of the author must also appear on a separate line, on which no other name appears, immediately following the title, and must appear in size of type not less than fifty percent (50%) the size of the title type. Biographical information on the author, if included in the playbook, may be used in all programs. In all programs this notice must appear:

“Produced by special arrangement with
THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY of Woodstock, Illinois”
The Odyssey was commissioned by Tales and Scales, Evansville, Indiana. It was presented as a staged reading in the Provincetown Playhouse’s New Plays for Young Audiences series, June 2003. It was premiered by Tales and Scales in September 2003 and toured nationally during the 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 seasons.
AUTHOR’S NOTES

Comments on music casting and music:

*The Odyssey* was commissioned and premiered by Tales and Scales, an ensemble of classically trained musician/actors. The Tales and Scales performers used their instruments as props (trombone as Odysseus’ bow, flute as Circe’s scepter, for instance) and played a sophisticated musical score, composed by Jon Deak, as they acted *The Odyssey*. Though the Tales and Scales approach was wonderful, the piece works equally well done as any play, with actors singing at a few points and a bit of musical under-scoring. This was how we presented the play when I worked on it at the Provincetown Playhouse. You should add as much music as you’d like, but please don’t be concerned about making Odysseus or Telemachus singers. If they are, fine. But, really, the sea chantey and any other singing they do can be as simple as an improvised ditty they make up.

*The Odyssey* was written for four actors to do as a touring production on a bare stage. The script is spare and crisp. But for those of you who have a large company of actors or a theater capable of lighting and scenic effects, the play offers you exciting possibilities. Odysseus’ crew, Polyphemus’s cave, singing sirens that can be brought onstage, sea monsters that could be a whirling ensemble of ten—these are only some of the opportunities for your performers and imaginative theatrical staging.
In addition to the production benefits of *The Odyssey* and the various curricular tie-ins, it should be noted that this story is not merely one of the great touchstones of the cultural past. What I surprisingly discovered as I worked on the play is that the questions Homer was raising thousands of years ago—How do we protect our homes? How do we deal with “monsters” we encounter overseas? What does it mean to be a hero, to grow up, to be civilized?—are ones we’re still grappling with. *The Odyssey*, it seems, is a necessary journey not only for Odysseus and Telemachus but for all of us still.
THE ODYSSEY

CHARACTERS

ATHENA
ODYSSEUS
TELEMACHUS
ANTINOUS
CREW
POLYPHEMUS
CIRCE
SIRENS
SCYLLA
CHARYBDIS

The Odyssey can be performed with 20 or more actors (for instance, a CREW of 6, 3 SIRENS and CHARYBDIS as an ensemble of 5) or with as few as 4 actors (as Tales and Scales did):

Actor 1 - ATHENA / CREW / CIRCE / SIRENS / SCYLLA
Actor 2 - TELEMACHUS / CREW
Actor 3 - ODYSSEUS
Actor 4 - ANTINOUS / POLYPHEMUS / CREW / SIRENS / CHARYBDIS
Though most of the characters in the play are of a specific gender (e.g., ODYSSEUS – male, CIRCE – female), there’s no reason an actor has to be the same gender as the character. In the Provincetown Playhouse production, TELEMACHUS was played by a female. In ancient Greece as in Shakespeare’s time, males played all female characters in plays. I’d be perfectly happy to see an all-male or an all-female production of the play.
THE ODYSSEY

ATHENA. Let us sing, O muses.
ALL. With the Goddess Athena
ATHENA. Let us tell the tale
ODYSSEUS. Of Odysseus
TELEMACHUS. And his son Telemachus,

ATHENA & MALE 3. A tale of
   Home and sea

TELEMACHUS & ODYSSEUS. Of how we are lost
   And how we must find our way

ATHENA & TELEMACHUS. Despite our youth or age
ATHENA & ODYSSEUS. Despite our rashness or fear
ATHENA & MALE 3. How? How to find our path?
ATHENA. Let us tell the tale of
ALL. The Odyssey.

(A huge wave crashes. ODYSSEUS rows through the
storm singing a sea chantey.)

ODYSSEUS. My ship sails on the raging seas
   The wind blows against my steadfast knees
TELEMACHUS. Father, where are you?

ODYSSEUS. But still I bluster through and through
   Till I come back to you, my dears
   Heigh ho.

TELEMACHUS. Father, we need you.

(ODYSSEUS repeats his song as ATHENA speaks.)

ATHENA.
   Ten years Odysseus
   Led the Greeks
   In their fight
   Against Troy.
   Troy now vanquished,
   The others all safely home,
   Only brave Odysseus
   Has not returned.
   And his good-hearted son Telemachus
   Despairs.

TELEMACHUS. Father, come home.

(ODYSSEUS drifts off.

ANTINOUS, an Ithacan lord, struts on.)

ANTINOUS. Hey. Prince of Ithaca.
TELEMACHUS. Antinous.
ANTINOUS. Stop whinin. You’re fatherless. Accept it.
TELEMACHUS. Why haven’t you guided him home, Athena?

ANTINOUS. Look, you know how many guys got killed fightin in Troy? You know how many didn’t make it through storms comin back?

TELEMACHUS. My father is not other people.

ANTINOUS. Your father’s not here. And he’s not gonna be. Ever. It’s been years. He’s dead, swallowed up by the sea, or starved on some desert island. And you’re just like any other kid whose old man’s not around. You’re alone, you and your mom, and you gotta face it. Look, I know it’s hard. That’s why me and the guys are here.

TELEMACHUS. You’re here because you want to take his place.

ANTINOUS. Exactly right. You need a dad. Your mother needs a husband.

TELEMACHUS. No.

ANTINOUS. Your mom’s gotta choose which of us’ll slip that ring on her finger and plop himself down on the thrown of Ithaca.

TELEMACHUS. My father is the only one who’ll sit on that throne.

ANTINOUS. Am I missing something? Hello. He’s not here.

TELEMACHUS. You’re not worthy to take his place. You couldn’t even string his bow.

ANTINOUS. Who cares about your old man’s famous bow? Look, peewee, she’s gonna choose, and if you’re lucky, that means we won’t toss you out.

TELEMACHUS. You wouldn’t dare.
ANTINOUS. Try me, little prince. She’s choosin, now. *(He exits.)*

TELEMACHUS. O Athena, help us. Bring back my father.

ATHENA. Stop tossing empty words at Athena, child. You must act. Stand up to Antinous. Tell him to leave this house at once.

TELEMACHUS. He won’t listen to me. He’s a grown man and I’m a kid.

ATHENA. You’re a prince. And this is your house.

TELEMACHUS. A prince.

Like my father.

ATHENA. Like and not like your father.

*(ODYSSEUS rows on the distant sea.)*

ATHENA. There are many ways to be strong.

What gleams as riches
May not always be wealth.

ODYSSEUS. Comrades, come, come.

*(The actors playing TELEMACHUS and ATHENA become ODYSSEUS’ CREW.)*

ODYSSEUS. Pull with all your strength for Greece. For Ithaca. For our families.

CREW (ATHENA). Look, Captain, there’s an island.

ODYSSEUS. The island of the Cyclops, friends. Riches and pleasures. Row for it.

CREW (TELEMACHUS). But what about Ithaca?
ODYSSEUS. After we fill our stomachs. Row. Row.
CREW (T). What is this Cyclops, Captain?
ODYSSEUS. His cave is filled with rich meat and luscious cheese.
CREW (A). All right, I’m starving!
ODYSSEUS. Out of the boats, comrades. There’s the cave.
It’s dinnertime!

(They enter the cave.)

ODYSSEUS. Look.
CREW. Oh!
ODYSSEUS. Look at this loaf of bread! It’s as big as my son probably is by now. And this hunk of cheese, it’s the size of my bed at home. Eat, friends, eat. But make it quick. For the Cyclops—is a one-eyed—brutish—giant!

(POLYPHEMUS enters driving in the “flock” with his staff.)

POLYPHEMUS. Come on, sheep sheep. Good lamb chops, fat mutton rams, in you go.
ODYSSEUS. Look at those animals! They’re bigger than we are.
CREW (T). We need to go home.
POLYPHEMUS. Into the cave, now, you little choppies and lambie roasts.
ODYSSEUS. And look at him. He’s gigantic!
CREW (T). We need to go home.
ODYSSEUS. Ssh.
POLYPHEMUS. Into the cave for the night. Time to rest, time to let your flesh grow sweet and tender.

ODYSSEUS. Careful, comrades. Very quiet. Slowly by the edge and we can get around him.

POLYPHEMUS. What’s been going on here? Someone’s been eating my food. And that someone’s—still here! Who’s in my den? Who are you? Ah, humans.

ODYSSEUS. Quickly, comrades. Run.

POLYPHEMUS. Too late. This rock closes the entrance. You’ll have to stay for dinner. I’ll love having you for dinner. There’s nothing tastier than human flesh.

ODYSSEUS. Hide, try to get in the cracks of the rocks.

(POLYPHEMUS catches one of the CREW.)

POLYPHEMUS. Oh, you smell good. Nice and sweaty and hairy.

ODYSSEUS & CREW. Let him go. Let him go, you brute.

POLYPHEMUS. Let’s see if you taste as good as you smell.

ODYSSEUS & CREW. No! No! Nooo!

POLYPHEMUS. Umm, not too bad. A little salty, but very juicy. I think I’ll have another.

CREW. No! No!

ODYSSEUS. It’s horrible. I can’t look.

POLYPHEMUS. Um, that’s what I call nicely aged meat. Well, good night, humans. Or should I say “Good night, breakfast.” (He goes to sleep.)

ODYSSEUS. Help me with his staff. If we heat the tip in the fire…

CREW (A). It’s starting to glow.
POLYPHEMUS. Ahhhhhhh! Ahhhhhhhhhhh! My eye! I can’t see! I can’t see! Light! Give me light! *(He moves the rock.)* Get out of my way, you sheep! Out of— Oh no, the humans!
ODYSSSEUS. Yes, we’ve escaped!
POLYPHEMUS. You! You’re the one who did this to me!
ODYSSSEUS. Yes, I, Odysseus, did it! Think of Odysseus the next time you want to eat human flesh. Think of Odysseus when your head throbs and the world’s dark.

*(ODYSSSEUS and the CREW “row” away.)*

POLYPHEMUS. Odysseus! I curse you, you thief. You broke into my home. You took my sight. O my father, powerful Poseidon, god of the sea, hear me and punish him! Bring your storms! Blind him! Let him suffer in darkness as I do!

*(The seas are tumultuous.)*

ODYSSSEUS. Oh. Whoa. Ohhhhhh. *(ODYSSSEUS disappears.)*
TELEMACHUS. My father is never afraid. He’s brave and resourceful.

ATHENA. But now, it is up to you.
    This house holds your battle.

TELEMACHUS. How can I be strong like him?
ATHENA. Find your own way.
    Make this house
    Yours.

TELEMACHUS. This is my house.

    (ANTINOUS strides on.)

ANTINOUS. What are you looking so scared about, pee-wee? I’m not gonna do anything to you—yet. You know why, pal? Cause I think your mom’s ready for a new husband.

TELEMACHUS. No. As—as prince of this land, I—say it is time for you, and all the others—to leave.

ANTINOUS. Leave?

TELEMACHUS. Honor the code of hospitality and civilization. Gather your things and go.

ANTINOUS. Or what? You’ll throw us out?

TELEMACHUS. Honor the law, Antinous.

ANTINOUS. Make me.

TELEMACHUS. Athena? Athena, I can’t.

ANTINOUS. Yeah, cause you don’t have a famous bow like your father and I don’t need any arrows to squeeze the life out of you.

TELEMACHUS. Antinous—

ANTINOUS. No one’s leaving. (He tosses TELEMACHUS aside and sweeps off.)

    (A huge storm begins.)

TELEMACHUS. I know what my father would do.

ODYSSEUS. Fight the storm, comrades!
ATHENA. Telemachus
ODYSSEUS. We can make it!
ATHENA. Telemachus, find your own way.
ODYSSEUS. Throw everything into it.
ATHENA. What you will do.
ODYSSEUS. Row, friends!
TELEMACHUS. My path is
ODYSSEUS. Through the waves!
TELEMACHUS. The sea, like my father. I will find him and bring him home.
ATHENA. In that storm?
TELEMACHUS. I’m my father’s child. I can do it.
ATHENA. And what about your mother?
TELEMACHUS. My mother’s strong. My absence will make her stronger. She won’t give in till she knows what’s happened to me.
ATHENA. Then board your ship, Telemachus.

(The storm abates as ODYSSEUS and CREW “row” on. They are tossed to shore.)

ODYSSEUS. We made it, comrades.
CREW (T). And this island looks—

(CIRCE enters playing her “scepter.”)

CREW (ANTINOUS). Enchanting.
CIRCE. Yoohoo? Yoohoo? Oh boys, come here.
ODYSSEUS. It’s Queen Circe. She’s a sorceress.
CIRCE. Oh my, a boatload o’ sailors. And don’t you poor things look beat. You must be famished. Come on, come on and get a little nourishment, sailors. Drink some of
my nectar and you’ll be more refreshed than you ever imagined.
CREW (A). All right!
ODYSSEUS. Thank you, Queen. Your offer is kind, but we do not wish to trouble you. We are used to hunting for our food.
CIRCE. O silly, there’s nothing for you to hunt on this island. Everything wild’s been tamed. All the beasts live in peace here. Come and have a drink.
CREW (A). Okay!
ODYSSEUS. Careful, comrades. She’s not what she seems.
CIRCE. Say, you’re that tricky Odysseus, aren’t you? Don’t be so suspicious. I only wanna relieve you of your burdens. Come on, sailor boys, drink up.
CREW (A). All right!

(\textit{She pours from her “scepter” into the sailors’ mouths.})

ODYSSEUS. Wait, comrades, wait.
CIRCE. You see, they aren’t afraid. They’re lappin it up like wildcats. And now they’re peaceful as kittens. Come on, Ody, have a drink.
ODYSSEUS. Your nectar, I’m sure is sweet, Queen, but I will find my own food.
CIRCE. If that’s the way you want it, be my guest, big boy. Roam the island. Knock yourself out.
ODYSSEUS. I thank Your Highness. (\textit{He moves off and hides.})
CIRCE. Now, you sailors, now, my pets, up, up, up. (\textit{She touches them with her “scepter.”})
CREW. Oink, oink.
ODYSSEUS. Oh no. No! She’s turned them into pigs. My comrades are pigs!
CREW. Oink, oink. Oink, oink.
CIRCE. Oh, you cute little piggies, with your floppy ears and your curling tails and your fat little pink bellies. I just wanna eat you up.
CREW. Oink, oink.
CIRCE. And you know what, piggies? That’s what I’m gonna do. Cause I just love barbecue. Umm um um. Now, into the oven.
ODYSSEUS. Queen Circe.
CIRCE. Ah, Odysseus.
ODYSSEUS. I’ve searched the island and I’ve found nothing as enticing as your nectar.
CIRCE. Oh, you smart little boy.
ODYSSEUS. My crew seemed to like it so much.
CIRCE. They’re in pig heaven.
ODYSSEUS. If your offer still stands, I’d like to join them.
CIRCE. By all means. Why should you be the only poor sufferin human?
ODYSSEUS. Let me drink, then.

(She pours from her “scepter.”)

CIRCE. Oh, you good boy. You good, sweet boy.

(ODYSSEUS holds her “scepter” as she pours. He takes the “scepter” from her, turning it all the way upside down.)

CIRCE. That’s it, get every last drop. It’ll make you so—nice—and—tender. Ha ha ha.
(ODYSSEUS, “scepter” in his hand, his cheeks bulging, stares at her. He grins. CIRCE realizes what he’s doing.)

CIRCE. Oh no.

(She grabs for the “scepter.” ODYSSEUS smoothly keeps it out of her reach. He rears back and “spits the nectar” all over CIRCE.)

CIRCE. Eeuu, uuu, uuu, uuu!
ODYSSEUS. What’s the matter, Circe? Not so sweet now, is it?

(ODYSSEUS touches the pigs with the “scepter.”)

ODYSSEUS. Back to yourselves, friends. (The CREW becomes human again.) Off to the ship, now, before she does you any more harm. (They run off.) And what should become of you, sorceress? (He reaches to touch her with the “scepter.”)
CIRCE. No, please, don’t. I can help you. Ahead o’ you are the Sirens. Their music makes men crazy.
ODYSSEUS. Enough.
CIRCE. And the sea monsters Scylla and Charybdis.
ODYSSEUS. You’re finished, Circe.
CIRCE. Believe me.
ODYSSEUS. I trust no one. (He touches her with the “scepter.”)
CIRCE (turns into an ape). Oo oo. Oo oo oo.
ODYSSEUS. Farewell, Circe.
TELEMACHUS. I’m famished from all that sailing. There’s got to be some food on this island. Sounds like there’s sheep roaming this place. That’s a good sign. There’s probably some friendly herders here.

POLYPHEMUS (off). Oooh. Oooh.

TELEMACHUS. There’s moaning from this cave. What’s wrong?

POLYPHEMUS. Ooh.

TELEMACHUS. It’s a Cyclops, a monster.

POLYPHEMUS. Help me.

TELEMACHUS. Stay away.

POLYPHEMUS. Please, I’m blind. Only one eye and it’s been gouged out. The pain is unbearable.

TELEMACHUS. I’m sorry.

POLYPHEMUS. My sheep have run away and I’ve nothing to eat. Can you help me?

TELEMACHUS. How?

POLYPHEMUS. Gather my sheep. Bring them to me. Please.

TELEMACHUS. Yes, all right.

POLYPHEMUS. You won’t run away.

TELEMACHUS. I’ll bring you the sheep as long as you won’t hurt me.

POLYPHEMUS. There’s only one human I’d eat, and I’d tear him limb from limb first to make him suffer. You I won’t hurt.

TELEMACHUS. I’ll find your sheep. Here, sheep, sheep, sheep. Good sheep. Come with me, little lambsies. Into your home, find your master.
POLYPHEMUS. Ah, my soft furry ones. My little babies. Let me just move this rock so they can’t escape. Now, we’re safe and cozy.

TELEMACHUS. Can’t you leave it open just a little. It’s so dark.

POLYPHEMUS. It’s always dark for me.

TELEMACHUS. Who is it that did this to you?

POLYPHEMUS. I do not speak his name. It enrages me.

TELEMACHUS. I’m sorry.

POLYPHEMUS. You sound so young, how is it you’re out in the world?

TELEMACHUS. I search for my father. Perhaps you’ve heard tell of him. He’s King of Ithaca.

POLYPHEMUS. He must be a noble man.

TELEMACHUS. Yes, he is. The great lord Odysseus.

POLYPHEMUS. Odysseus?

TELEMACHUS. Yes, Odysseus.

POLYPHEMUS. Odysseus is the one who blinded me! He is the one who stole my life!

TELEMACHUS. Please, you said you wouldn’t hurt me.

POLYPHEMUS. He took my eye. Now I’ll take something of his.

TELEMACHUS. I brought the sheep. I trusted you.

POLYPHEMUS. I’ll have my revenge.

TELEMACHUS. Will killing me bring back your sight? I took nothing from you. I’m sorry for what my father did. I’d undo it if I could.

POLYPHEMUS. I should kill you.

TELEMACHUS. I’m not my father. I can’t stop you from killing me, but I can do you more good alive. Let me help you— Let me soothe your pain. (TELEMACHUS sings sweetly.)
POLYPHEMUS. It’s true...you’re not your father.

(POLYPHEMUS pushes the boulder aside, letting TELEMACHUS leave the cave.)

ODYSSEUS. Yes! Yes! Now, we’re on course. Now, comrades. I can smell home. I feel Ithaca drawing us on. Home.

CREW. What is that, Captain?

ODYSSEUS. Oh, it’s sweet. Sweet, sweet music. The Sirens.

CREW. The destroyers?

ODYSSEUS. So beautiful.

SIRENS. Come, Odysseus.

ODYSSEUS. I’ve got to hear them. I’ve got to beat them.

CREW. No, Captain.

ODYSSEUS. Lash me to this mast. And plug your ears. No matter how I cry out to set me free, don’t do it. You understand? Just row, row until we’re far past this island.

SIRENS. Odysseus.

ODYSSEUS. Oh.

SIRENS. Come to us.

ODYSSEUS. Oh.

SIRENS. Come to us.

ODYSSEUS. Oh.

SIRENS. Odysseus.

ODYSSEUS. Untie me. Untie me, now! Do you hear me?!

Oh, the sound. Please. Untie me. I must go to them.

Don’t keep rowing! Don’t! (ODYSSEUS drifts away.)

TELEMACHUS. What’s that? It’s beautiful.

SIRENS. Telemachus.

Come to us.
TELEMACHUS. Oh. It’s drawing me in. It’s as if the music’s sweeping over my whole body.
SIRENS. Come to us.
TELEMACHUS. It’s taking hold of me.
SIRENS. Telemachus.
TELEMACHUS. It’s capturing me. No! I’ve got to stop the sound! *(He sings the sea chantey until the SIRENS fade.)*
Good. Just the sea.

*(He sails off. ODYSSEUS sails on.)*

ODYSSEUS. Home, comrades. Home.

SCYLLA. Sssss.
Sssss.

ODYSSEUS. Now, our journey’s almost at an end.

SCYLLA. Odysssseussss.
Sailing cross salty sheets.

CREW (ANTINOUS). What’s that?

SCYLLA. Sail this side
Your sailors Scylla eatsssss.

ODYSSEUS. Scylla? What, do you think I’m afraid of you?
CREW (A). Please, Captain, let’s stay our course to home.
ODYSSEUS. I beat the Cyclops
SCYLLA. Surging breeze
ODYSSEUS. The sorceress,
SCYLLEA. Slapping seas
ODYSSEUS. And the Sirens.
SCYLLEA. Slightest slip
ODYSSEUS. And I’ll beat you, too.
SCYLLEA. Scylla seize.
CREW (A). Oh no, it’s got me!
ODYSSEUS. Grab him! Pull him back!
CREW(A). I’m—I’m—
CREW (T). They’ve gone under.
ODYSSEUS. No use now. Steer away from here.

(The boat veers to the other side, right into CHARYBDIS, a powerful, sucking whirlpool.)

CHARYBDIS. Iiii’m Cha-ryb-dis
   On your other siiiide
   Sail to meeee
   Your whole ship diiiiiies.

ODYSSEUS. You won’t have any of my crew, Charybdis.
   I’ll cut your head off first!
CHARYBDIS. Iii’ll swaaaalloooow youuuuu whooooole.
ODYSSEUS. Back, back. We’re being sucked down. Pull harder.

(The ship spins wildly back to the other side.)

SCYLLEA. Ship spins.
   Scylla grins.
   Sliding swabbers.
   Scylla wins.
ODYSSEUS. Scylla!
SCYLLA. Snatch loose.
CREW (T). She’s got me!
SCYLLA. Plump goose.
CREW (T). I’m being—

SCYLLA. Sweet, sweet
   Sailor juice.

ODYSSEUS. Ahhhh! Pull the other way! The other way!!
   (ODYSSEUS is out of control, veering wildly.) No the other way!

   (SCYLLA keeps eating the crew.)

ODYSSEUS. No the other way!

   (CHARYBDIS keeps sucking down the ship.)

ODYSSEUS. No the other way!

   (It’s a swirling, frantic disaster.)

ODYSSEUS. The other!!

   (In the midst of the chaos, TELEMACHUS sails on.)

TELEMACHUS. Monsters!
ODYSSEUS. No, no—
TELEMACHUS. Father.
ODYSSEUS. No! We’re going down!
TELEMACHUS. Father!
ODYSSEUS. We’re going—

*(CHARYBDIS resurfaces.)*

CHARYBDIS. Ahhhh.
TELEMACHUS. You killed my father. I hate you!
CHARYBDIS. Reveeennge yourselllf.
SCYLLA. Gainssst me
CHARYBDIS. No meee
SCYLLA. I’m the sssstronger
CHARYBDIS. Enemy
TELEMACHUS. I’ll kill both of you.
SCYLLA. Yessss
CHARYBDIS. Kill
SCYLLA. Kill
TELEMACHUS. Kill
CHARYBDIS. Meeee!
SCYLLA. Then a hero
CHARYBDIS. You will beee!
SCYLLA. Sson of Odyssseussss.
TELEMACHUS. Father.
CHARYBDIS. Kill.
TELEMACHUS. You’re gone.
SCYLLA. Ussss
TELEMACHUS. Gone.
CHARYBDIS. Now.
TELEMACHUS. No. I just want
CHARYBDIS.
   Commmme

TELEMACHUS.
   To go home.

SCYLLA.
   Thissss

I just want

SCYLLA & CHARYBDIS.
   Waaaaaaay!

To go home.

SCYLLA & CHARYBDIS. We’ll ssswaalloow youu toooo.
TELEMACHUS. No. I will not fight. I am going home.

(SCYLLA and CHARYBDIS disappear into the sea.

TELEMACHUS sails safely through.

A gong.

ATHENA watches TELEMACHUS.)

ATHENA. Though a child sailed on the sea,
   It is not a child who returns home.

(ODYSSEUS enters from UC.)

ODYSSEUS. What an escape. I thought I’d never breathe again but I’ve made it. Home. It looks so different. (Sees TELEMACHUS enter.) Perhaps it’s better no one knows I’m here just yet.
TELEMACHUS. Ithaca. I never thought I’d see you and be so sad.

(ANTINOUS saunters on.)
ANTINOUS. You turned out to be a good sailor, kid—just like your old man.
TELEMACHUS. My father is dead.
ODYSSEUS. I must be cautious, now. Wait for the right moment or there’ll be another disaster. (He disguises himself.)
ANTINOUS. Don’t take it so hard, kid. What’d ya expect after all this time? But ya know what? Your mother wouldn’t budge when you were gone. Now that you’re back, there won’t be nothin to stop the wedding. (He skips off.)
TELEMACHUS. This world. Everything is wrong.
THE STRANGER (ODYSSEUS). Not everything, my boy. So you’re the prince, huh? And the queen’s getting married? So aren’t you staying for the wedding?
TELEMACHUS. No.
THE STRANGER. Oh, I see. Ya wanna let your mother face this guy all on her own. That makes sense. You’re just a kid. Stay outa the way. Let the grownups take care of the whole deal.
TELEMACHUS. You’re right. I should be there. I need to be there.
THE STRANGER. Mind if I stick around?

(ANTINOUS enters the throne room with ODYSSEUS’ bow.)

ANTINOUS. Okay, all I gotta do, she says, to make this wedding happen is string the bow and shoot a single arrow through twelve ax heads. “Just like Odysseus.”
THE STRANGER. Nobody but him has ever been able to even string that bow.
ANTINOUS. Yeah, well, I’m a strong guy. (He struggles to string the bow.)

TELEMACHUS. What are you doing?

(ANTINOUS fails.)

TELEMACHUS. That’s my father’s bow.
ANTINOUS. Not when I finish with it. (He tries again.)
TELEMACHUS. Give it to me.
ANTINOUS. Back off. (ANTINOUS tries the bow again—mightily—but fails.)

(TELEMACHUS begins to string the “bow.”)

ANTINOUS. You’re joking.
THE STRANGER. He’s bending it back.
ANTINOUS. The bow’s starting to give.
THE STRANGER. He’s got the string taut.
ANTINOUS. It’s almost reaching.
THE STRANGER. Just a little bit more.

(TELEMACHUS fails.)

ANTINOUS. Guess you’re not your father yet.
ODYSSEUS. The child’s more than you’ll ever be. Well done, Telemachus. (ODYSSEUS strings the “bow.”)
ANTINOUS. How did you do that?
ODYSSEUS. And now, one arrow through all twelve ax heads. (He shoots.)
ANTINOUS. Incredible. Who are you?
TELEMACHUS. My father.
ANTINOUS. Odysseus.

ODYSSEUS. You’ve taken over my house. You’ve abused my family.

ANTINOUS. No, please.

ODYSSEUS. You’ll die like the animal you are.

TELEMACHUS. Father, wait.

ODYSSEUS. You’re right. You’re the one who’s suffered under him. You’re the one who deserves the honor. *(He hands TELEMACHUS the “bow.”) Take your revenge. Assume your rightful place. Do what I would do.

*(TELEMACHUS lifts the weapon and points it at ANTINOUS.)*

ATHENA. This is how the Greeks told the tale.

Revenge raging like a scarlet ocean
Will our Telemachus make blood flow like a tidal wave?

ODYSSEUS. Kill him, Telemachus.

TELEMACHUS. No, Father.

ODYSSEUS. You must kill before you are killed.

TELEMACHUS. He is our enemy, but an enemy in one moment may be a neighbor in the next.

ODYSSEUS. You don’t understand the world, Telemachus.

TELEMACHUS. If we kill him, we become monsters.

ODYSSEUS. If you don’t shoot—you are not my son.

TELEMACHUS. I am your son, Father. But I’m myself too. This man has behaved brutishly, but he is a guest in our house. I will not harm him. I have seen enough destruction. I don’t want to bring any more to the world. Go, Antinous.
ODYSSEUS. I’ve been gone a long time. The world’s changed. You’ve changed. But you have as much courage as I’ve ever known.

TELEMACHUS. Welcome home, Father.

(ODYSSEUS embraces his child.)

ATHENA.

The muses have sung
Our tale of ocean’s storm
And water’s cleansing,
Of a father brought home
By slyness and strength
Of a child who found his way,
With wisdom and trust.
Their journey is done.
What will yours be, my friends?
What path will you find?

END OF PLAY