

BOOK FITEEN

Telemachus Returns to Ithaca

[Pallas Athena visits Sparta to urge Telemachus to return home, tells him to visit Eumaeus, the swineherd, when he gets back; Telemachus tells Menelaus he'd like to leave; Menelaus and Helen give gifts and a farewell banquet; they receive a favourable omen before leaving; Helen interprets the omen; Telemachus and Peisistratus leave Sparta and reach Pylos; Telemachus asks Peisistratus to leave him at his ship, so that Nestor won't delay his return; Peisistratus agrees; a stranger arrives, Theoclymenus, a descendant of the prophet Melampus, and asks for passage on Telemachus' ship; Telemachus agrees, and they sail for Ithaca; Odysseus and Eumaeus feast in the hut; Odysseus asks Eumaeus about his parents, and Eumaeus tells him; Eumaeus tells the story of how he got to Ithaca and was sold to Laertes; Telemachus lands in Ithaca and tells the crew to take the ship on without him; Theoclymenus interprets a bird omen; Telemachus walks to Eumaeus' farmyard.]

Then Pallas Athena went to spacious Lacedaemon,
to remind the noble son of glorious Odysseus
about going home and to urge him to return.
She found Telemachus and Nestor's noble son
lying on the portico, resting in their beds,
inside the palace of splendid Menelaus.
Gentle sleep had overpowered Nestor's son,
but for Telemachus no sweet sleep had come—
because in his heart all through that immortal night
[10] anxious thoughts about his father kept him awake.
Bright-eyed Athena stood beside him and spoke out:
“Telemachus, it's not good to wander
any longer from your home, abandoning
your property and leaving in your house
such overbearing men, who may divide
and use up all your goods. Then this journey
you have undertaken will be pointless.
As quickly as you can urge Menelaus,
expert at war shouts, to let you go back,
[20] so you can find your noble mother there,
still at home. Her father and her brothers
are already telling her to marry

Eurymachus—he gives more courting gifts
than any other suitor, and now he’s going
to offer even more as wedding gifts.
Take care she doesn’t carry from the house
some property, without your knowing it.
You understand what sort of spirit lies
inside a woman’s chest. She wants to enrich
[30] the household of the man who marries her
and no longer thinks about her children
or her previous husband whom she loved.
Now he’s dead, she doesn’t ask about him.
You should go yourself and entrust your goods
to the female slave you esteem the most,
until the gods show you a splendid bride.
I’ll tell you something else—take it to heart.
The bravest of the suitors lie in wait,
enough to set an ambush, in the straits
[40] between Ithaca and rugged Samos.
Before you get back to your native land,
they want to murder you. But in my view,
that won’t be happening. Before it does,
the earth will cover many of those suitors,
who are consuming all your livelihood.
You must steer your well-built ship on a course
far from the islands, and keep on sailing
day and night. One of the immortal gods
who’s watching over and protecting you
[50] will send you following winds. And then,
at the first place you reach in Ithaca,
send your companions and the ship ahead,
on to the city—you yourself should go
to see the swineherd, the man who tends your pigs.
He’s very well disposed towards you.
Spend the night with him. And then tell him
to go into the city and bring news
to wise Penelope that you are safe
and have returned from Pylos.”

Athena spoke.

[60] Then she left, going back to high Olympus.

With his foot Telemachus nudged Nestor's son
and roused him from sweet sleep. Then he spoke to him:
"Wake up, Peisistratus, son of Nestor.
Bring up your well-shod horses, then yoke them
to the chariot, and we'll be on our way."

Peisistratus, Nestor's son, then answered him:

"No matter how keen you may be to leave,
Telemachus, there's no way we can ride
in this dark night. Dawn will soon be here.

[70] So wait until warrior Menelaus,
son of Atreus, that famous spearman,
brings gifts and puts them in the chariot,
then sends us off with a kind farewell speech.
A guest remembers all his life the man
who gave him hospitality and kindness."

He spoke. Soon Dawn arrived on her golden throne.
Then Menelaus, expert in battle shouts,
rose up from bed beside his fair-haired Helen
and came to see the two. When he noticed him,

[80] Odysseus' dear son rushed to put on a bright tunic,
slung a thick cloak across his hefty shoulders,
and went out. He came up to Menelaus
and spoke to him, saying:
"Menelaus,
son of Atreus and cherished of Zeus,
leader of your people, send me back now
to my native land, for my heart is keen
to get back home."

Then Menelaus,
expert at war cries, answered him:
"Telemachus,

I'll not hold you back a long time here,
[90] not if you're eager to return. I'd blame
another man who, as a host, provides
too much hospitality or not enough.
It's far better to show moderation.
It's bad when someone doesn't want to leave
to be too quick to send him on his way,
but just as bad is holding someone back
when he's ready to depart. For a host
should welcome any guest in front of him
and send away the one who wants to go.
[100] But stay until I bring some fine gifts here
and set them in your chariot, where your eyes
can see them, and I can tell the women
to prepare a meal inside the palace
from the plentiful supply of food there.
For a traveler to feast before he leaves
to journey on the wide unbounded earth
brings double benefits—it gives him help
and gives me fame and honour. If you wish
to go through Hellas and middle Argos,
[110] then I'll accompany you in person. I
I'll have some horses harnessed for you,
and I'll guide you to men's cities there.
Not one of them will send us from their town
without offering some gift for us to take,
a beautiful bronze tripod or a cauldron,
a pair of mules or goblet made of gold."

Prudent Telemachus then answered him and said:
"Menelaus, son of Atreus,
child of Zeus, and leader of your people,
[120] I wish to get back home without delay—
when I went away I didn't leave behind
anyone to protect my property.
As I keep searching for my noble father,
I hope I don't get killed or in my palace

have any fine possessions stolen.”

When Menelaus, skilled in war cries, heard these words,
he quickly told his wife and her attendants
to use some of the abundant food they stored
to prepare a banquet. Then Etoneus,
[130] son of Boethous, came up to Menelaus—
he lived close by and had just got out of bed.
Menelaus, skilled at war shouts, ordered him
to get a fire started and to roast some meat.
Once Etoneus heard, he did what he’d been asked.
Menelaus went down to his fragrant storage room—
not by himself, for Helen and Megapenthes
went along as well. Once they reached the places
where his treasures lay, the son of Atreus
picked up a two-handled cup and told his son,
[140] Megapenthes, to take a silver mixing bowl.
Helen went up to the storage chests which held
the richly woven garments she herself had made.
Then Helen, goddess among women, picked out one,
the largest and most beautifully embroidered—
it lay below the others, shining like a star.
Helen carried off this robe, and they returned,
back through the house, until they reached Telemachus.
Fair-haired Menelaus then spoke to him:
“Telemachus,
may Zeus, Hera’s loud-thundering husband,
[150] accomplish your return, as your heart desires.
Of all the treasured gifts stored in my home,
I’ll give you the one with highest value
and the loveliest—I’ll present to you
this finely crafted mixing bowl. It’s made
entirely of silver and its rims
are plated gold. Hephaestus crafted it.
Warrior Phaedimus, the Sidonian king,
presented it to me on my way home,
when his house gave me shelter. Now I’d like

to send it back with you.”

[160] Menelaus spoke.

Then Atreus’ warrior son handed Telemachus
the two-handled cup, and mighty Megapenthes
brought in the mixing bowl of shining silver
and set it down before him. Fair-cheeked Helen,
standing beside him with the garment in her hands,
spoke to Telemachus and said:

“My dear child,
I’m giving you this gift as a reminder
of Helen, something made by her own hands.
Your bride can wear it on her wedding day,

[170] a moment to look forward to. Until then,
let it remain in your dear mother’s room.
As for you, I wish you a joyful journey
back to your well-built home and native land.”

With these words, Helen placed the garment in his hands.
Telemachus accepted it with pleasure.

Noble Peisistratus took the gifts and packed them
in a box inside the chariot, gazing at them
with wonder in his heart. Fair-haired Menelaus
then led them to the house, where they sat down

[180] on stools and chairs. A female servant carried in
a beautiful gold jug and poured some water out
into a silver basin, so they could rinse their hands,
then placed a polished table right beside them.
The worthy housekeeper carried in some bread
and set it down before them, then lots of meat,
giving freely from the food she had in store.
Standing near them, Etoneus carved the meat
and handed out the portions, while Megapenthes,
son of splendid Menelaus, poured the wine.

[190] Then their hands reached for the food spread out before them.
Once they’d had food and drink to their heart’s content,
Telemachus and the noble son of Nestor

yoked the horses, climbed in the ornate chariot,
and drove from the portico through the echoing gate.
Fair-haired Menelaus went out after them.
His right hand held a gold cup full of honey wine,
so they might pour libations before setting out.
Standing there beside the horses, Menelaus
made a pledge to both of them and said:
“Farewell,

[200] young men. Make sure you greet Nestor for me,
shepherd of his people. Over in Troy,
when we sons of Achaea went to war,
he truly was a gentle father to me.”

Prudent Telemachus then replied and said:
“Zeus-fostered king, we will indeed tell him
all the things you ask, once we get there.
How I wish when I returned to Ithaca
I’d come across Odysseus in his home,
so I could tell him how, when I left here,
[210] I’d met with every hospitality
and taken many splendid gifts away.”

As he said these words, a bird flew over them,
to the right—an eagle clutching in its talons
a huge white goose, a tame one from some farm.
A crowd of men and women chased behind it,
shouting as they ran. The bird came close to them,
then veered off to the right before the horses.
When they saw that, they were happy—in all their chests
the spirits filled with joy. Then the son of Nestor,
[220] Peisistratus, was the first of them to speak:
“Menelaus, leader of your people,
cherished by Zeus, tell us about this sign—
whether god sent it to the two of us
or just to you alone.”

Peisistratus spoke.

War-loving Menelaus thought it over—
How should he understand the omen properly
and then provide the correct interpretation?
But before he said a word, long-robed Helen spoke
and said these words:
“Listen to me.

[230] I will prophesy what the immortals
have set into my heart, what I believe
will happen. Just as this eagle came here
from mountains where it and its young were born
and snatched up this goose bred in the household,
that’s how Odysseus, after all his suffering
and his many wanderings, will come home
and take revenge. Or he’s already home,
sowing destruction for all the suitors.”

Wise Telemachus then answered her and said:
[240] “Now may Zeus, loud-thundering mate of Hera,
bring that about. If so, I’ll pray to you
as to a god.”

Telemachus said this,
then flicked the horses with his whip. They sped off quickly,
keen to move on through the city toward the plain.
All day long the yoke around their shoulders rattled.
Then the sun went down, and all the roads grew dark.
They came to Pherae, to Diocles’ house,
the son of Ortilochus, Alpheus’ child.
Diocles welcomed them with hospitality
[250] the way one should with strangers. There they spent the night.
As soon as rose-fingered early Dawn appeared,
they yoked the horses, climbed in the ornate chariot,
then drove out from the echoing portico and gate.
Peisistratus touched the horses with his whip,
and they sped on willingly. They quickly reached
the steep citadel of Pylos. Telemachus
then addressed the son of Nestor:

“Peisistratus,
will you promise to do something for me,
and see it through just as I tell you?
[260] We can claim that we’ve always been friends,
because our fathers were good friends, as well,
and we are the same age. This trip of ours
will make our hearts united even more.
So, child of Zeus, don’t take me past my ship
but leave me there, in case old man Nestor
keeps me in his house against my will,
wishing to show me hospitality,
when I must now get home with all due speed.”

Telemachus spoke. In his heart Nestor’s son
[270] considered how he might make such a promise
and see it through to its conclusion. As he thought,
he did what seemed to him the better option—
he turned the horses to the swift ship by the shore,
took out the lovely gifts, the clothing and the gold,
which Menelaus had given Telemachus,
stowed them in the stern, then urged him onward—
his words had wings:
“Move quickly now.
Climb in your ship, and tell all your comrades
to do so, too, before I get back home
[280] and let old Nestor know what’s happening.
For in my heart and mind I know too well
he likes things done his way—he won’t let you go
but come in person here to call you back.
I tell you, he won’t go back without you.
In any case, he’s sure to be upset.”

Once he’d said this, Peisistratus drove his horses,
creatures with lovely manes, quickly back to Pylos.
He soon reached the palace. Meanwhile, Telemachus
urged his companions on, saying to them:
[290] “Comrades, put all the stuff in our black ship.

Let's get ourselves on board, so we can sail."

Once he spoke, they all heard him and obeyed at once.

Soon they were aboard, sitting at their oarlocks.

At the ship's stern, Telemachus was busy
praying to Athena and offering sacrifice.

Then a man approached, someone from far away,
fleeing from Argos because he'd killed a man.

He was prophet, descended from Melampus,
who many years ago had lived in Pylos,

[300] a sheep-breeding land. He'd been a wealthy man,
living in a rich house among the Pylians.

But then Melampus went into a foreign land,
fleeing his country and great-hearted Neleus,
the most illustrious of all living men,
who for one whole year had taken his wealth by force,
while Melampus lay tied up in savage bondage
in Phylacus' palace, suffering harsh cruelty,²
all for the sake of Neleus' daughter
and thanks to the terrible blindness in his heart

[310] which the goddess Erinys, who strikes down families,
had fixed on him. But then he got away from Fate
and drove the bellowing herd from Phylace
to Pylos. Thus, he managed to obtain revenge
for the disgraceful acts of noble Neleus
and led the daughter home to be his brother's wife.
But he went off to Argos, where horses graze,
a land of strangers. He was destined to live there,
ruling many Argives. Then he took a wife,
built a high-roofed house, and fathered two strong sons,

[320] Antiphates and Mantius. Antiphates
fathered brave Oicles, who then produced
Amphiaraus, a man who could rouse people up,
and whom Apollo and aegis-bearing Zeus
loved in all sorts of ways. But he failed to reach old age—
he died in Thebes, thanks to a woman's need for gifts.³
He had two sons—Alcmaeon and Amphilocus.

And Mantius fathered Cleitus and Polyphides.
Cleitus was so beautiful he was snatched away
by Dawn on her golden throne, so he might live
[330] with the immortal gods, and then Apollo
made high-minded Polyphides his prophet,
the best of men, after Amphiaraus was dead.
He was angry with his father and moved away
to Hyperesia, where he lived and prophesied
to all. His son's name was Theoclymenus—
he was the one who now approached Telemachus,
as he poured out libations by his swift black ship
and prayed. Standing by him, Theoclymenus spoke—
his words had wings:
“Friend, since I’ve met you here
[340] while making sacrifice, I’m asking you,
for the sake of your offerings and the god
and by your comrades’ lives and by your own,
answer what I ask, and tell me the truth,
concealing nothing. Among men who are you?
Where is your city and your parents?”

Shrewd Telemachus then answered him and said:
“All right, stranger, I will speak candidly.
I am from Ithaca by birth. My father
is Odysseus, as surely as he was alive,
[350] but now he’s died by some pitiful fate.
That’s why I got this crew and this black ship
and came to find news about my father
who’s been absent for so long.”

Noble Theoclymenus
then said in reply:
“I, too, have run away,
leaving my own country. I killed a man,
one of my family. Many relatives of his
live in horse-nurturing Argos—they rule
Achaeans there and have enormous power.

I'm fleeing to prevent them killing me,
[360] a dark fate. So now it's my destiny,
I think, to roam around among mankind.
Let me board your ship—I'm a fugitive,
and I'm begging you, so they won't kill me.
I think they're on my track."

Prudent Telemachus
then answered him and said:
"If you're keen to come,
there's no way I'd stop you boarding my trim ship.
So come with us. You'll find a welcome here,
as much as we possess."

As he said these words,
he took the bronze spear Theoclymenus held,
[370] set it down lengthwise on the deck of the curved ship,
and then himself climbed in the ocean-going boat.
He had Theoclymenus sit by him in the stern.
The crewmen loosed the cables. Then Telemachus
called his comrades, urging them to hoist the tackle.
They hurried to obey, lifting up the mast of fir
and setting it in place in its hollow socket.
They tightened forestays, and then hoisted a white sail
on twisted ox-hide ropes. Bright-eyed Athena
send favouring winds blowing stiffly through the air,
[380] so the ship could complete its voyage quickly
over salt waters of the sea. So they sailed on
past Crouni and Calchis, with its lovely streams.
Then the sun went down, and all the routes grew dark.
They made for Pheae, driven on by winds from Zeus,
and for fair Elis, where Epeians rule. From there,
Telemachus steered them past the jagged islands,
wondering if he'd get caught or escape being killed.
Meanwhile, Odysseus and the faithful swineherd
were eating in the hut, with the other men as well.
[390] When they'd had food and drink to their heart's content,

Odysseus spoke to them, testing the swineherd,
to see if he would keep up his kindly welcome
and ask him to go on staying there at the farm
or if he would send him off towards the city:
“Eumaeus and all the rest of you,
listen to me now. Tomorrow morning
I’d like to wander off and beg in town,
so I won’t exhaust you and your comrades.
So give me good advice, then send me off
[400] with a fine guide who can conduct me there.
I’ll have to wander round the city by myself,
hoping to get a cup and piece of bread.
Then I could go to lord Odysseus’ home
and give some news to wise Penelope
and mingle with those arrogant suitors.
They might give me a meal—they’ve lots of food.
If so, I could serve them well in what they want.
Let me tell you. Pay attention now and listen.
Thanks to Hermes the Messenger, the one
[410] who places grace and fame on all men’s work,
no other man can match the way I serve
in splitting dry wood and building a good fire,
roasting and carving meat, and serving wine,
all those actions performed by lesser men
when they are servants to nobility.”

Then, swineherd Eumaeus, you were most upset
and spoke out to Odysseus:
“Why, stranger,
is your heart so full of this idea?
You must have a strong desire to die,
[420] if you intend to go among the suitors,
that crowd whose pride and violence extend
right up to iron heaven. Their servants
are not like you. No. The ones who serve them
are young men, well dressed in cloaks and tunics,
their heads and faces always sleek with oil.

They keep well-polished tables loaded down
with bread and meat and wine. So stay here.
No one in this place finds you a bother—
I don't, nor do the others here with me.
[430] When the dear son of Odysseus comes,
he'll give you clothing, a cloak and tunic,
and send you where your heart and spirit urge."

Then much-enduring lord Odysseus answered him:
"Eumaeus, I hope father Zeus likes you
as much as I do—you've brought to an end
my wanderings and painful hardships.
Nothing's more miserable for human beings
than wandering round, but men put up with
wretched troubles for their stomach's sake,
[440] when they have to face the pain and sorrow
their roaming brings. Now, since you keep me here,
telling me to wait for your young master,
tell me of noble Odysseus' mother
and his father, too. When he went away,
he left him just as he was growing old.
Are they still living in the sunshine here
or have they died and gone to Hades' home?"

Then the swineherd, a splendid fellow, answered him:
"Well, stranger, I'll tell you the honest truth.
[450] Laertes is still living, but all the time
inside his home he keeps praying to Zeus
the spirit in his limbs will fade away.
He grieves excessively for his own son,
who's gone, and for the wife he married,
a wise lady, whose death, above all else,
really troubled him and made him old
before his time. She died a wretched death
grieving for her splendid son. May no man
who lives here as my friend and treats me well
[460] die the way she did! While she was alive,

though she was sad, it was a pleasure for me
to ask about her, to find out how she was,
because she personally brought me up,
together with long-robed Ctimene,
her fine daughter, the youngest child she bore.
I was raised with her, though with less honour.
When we both reached our young maturity,
that time we long for, they sent her to Same
to be married and got countless wedding gifts.
[470] She dressed me in fine clothes, cloak and tunic,
and gave me sandals to tie on my feet,
then sent me out into the fields. In her heart
she was especially fond of me. But now,
I lack all this, though personally for me
the sacred gods prosper the work I do.
From that I've had food and drink and helped out
those who have a claim on my attention.
But now bad times have fallen on the house
with those overbearing men, I don't hear
[480] anything good, whether in word or deed,
about my lady, although servants have
a powerful longing to talk face to face
with their mistress and find out everything,
to eat and drink and then take something back
into the fields—such things warm servants' hearts."

Resourceful Odysseus then answered him and said:
"Well, swineherd Eumaeus, you were just a child
when you wandered far off from your parents
and your native land. Come now, tell me this—
[490] and speak candidly—was the place ransacked,
that populated city with broad streets
where your lady mother and your father lived,
or were you alone with sheep or cattle?
Did hostile people take you in their ships
and bring you here to sell you to the master
of this palace, who paid a decent price?"

The swineherd, an outstanding fellow, then replied:
“Stranger, since you ask me questions about this,
stay quiet, enjoy yourself, drink your wine,
[500] as you sit there, and listen to my tale.
These nights go on forever. There’s a time
to sleep, and there’s a time to take delight
in hearing stories. You don’t need to rest
before you’re ready, and too much sleep
can leave one weary. As for the others,
if any man’s heart and spirit tell him,
let him go outside and sleep. Then at dawn
he can eat and walk behind our master’s swine.
We two will drink and feast here in the hut
[510] and enjoy each other’s wretched troubles,
as we recall them. For once they’re over,
a man who’s done a lot of wandering
and suffered much gets pleasure from his woes.
So now I’ll give you answers to those questions.
There’s an island you may have heard about
beyond Ogygia—it’s called Syrie,
where Sun changes his course. The land is good.
Though not too many people live on it,
there’re many herds and flocks, plenty of wine,
[520] and lots of wheat. Famine never comes there,
no dreadful sickness falls on poor mortal men.
Inside the city, when tribes of men get old,
Apollo comes there with his silver bow
and Artemis as well. He attacks them
with his gentle arrows and kills them off.
There are two cities there, with all the land
divided up between them. My father
ruled both of them as king. He was Ctesius,
Ormenus’ son, like an immortal god.
[530] Phoenicians came there, famous sailing men,
greedy rogues, who carried countless trinkets
in their black ship. Now, in my father’s house

lived a tall, beautiful Phoenician woman,
skilled in making lovely things. Those Phoenicians,
truly crafty men, seduced her. First of all,
while she was doing laundry, one of them
had sex with her beside the hollow ship—
love like that distracts the minds of women,
even the virtuous ones. When he asked her
[540] who she was and where she came from, she said,
pointing to my father's high-roofed house:

‘I claim to come from Sidon, rich in bronze.
I'm a daughter of Arybas, whose wealth
was like a flood. But then I was taken
by Taphian pirates, as I was coming
from the fields. They brought me to this place
and sold me to the household of that man,
who paid an excellent price.’

“Then the man
who'd slept with her in secret said to her:

[550] ‘Would you come back home again with us,
to see your father's and mother's lofty home
and them, as well? Yes, they're still alive
and people say they're wealthy.’

”Then the woman answered him and said:

‘I might come, if you sailors were willing
to promise me on oath to take me home
safe and sound.’

“When she'd said that,
they all took the oath, as she'd requested.
When they'd sworn and finished promising,
[560] the woman spoke to them again and said:

‘Now, keep silent. None of your company
must talk to me, if you meet me in the street
or maybe at the springs, in case someone
runs to tell the old king in the palace.
If he gets suspicious, he’ll tie me up
in cruel bondage and then plan your death.
Keep what I’m saying in mind, and finish off
your trading quickly. When your ship is full,
your goods on board, send me a message
[570] at the palace right away. I’ll bring gold,
whatever I can lay my hands on there.
And there’s something else I’d like to offer
to pay my passage. Inside the palace
my master has a child. I am his nurse.
Quite an impish boy—when we’re outside
he runs beside me. I’ll bring him on board.
He’ll earn you an enormous sum of money,
wherever you run into foreigners.’

“She said this, then left for the fine palace.
[580] The men stayed there with us for one whole year,
and by trading filled their hollow ship with goods.
When the deep boat was loaded to return,
they sent a messenger to tell the woman.
The man, a shrewd one, reached my father’s house
with a gold necklace strung with amber beads.
In the hall servants and my noble mother
were handling and inspecting it, haggling
about the price. He nodded at the woman,
without saying a word. After that signal,
[590] he went back to his hollow ship. So then,
she took my hand and led me from the house.
In the front hall she found cups and tables
left by those who had been feasting there,
men who were attendants on my father.
They’d just gone out to a council meeting
where they held public debates. On the spot

she stuffed three goblets in her bosom
and walked out with them. I followed her,
without thinking a thing. The sun went down,
[600] and all the roads grew dark. But we rushed on
and came to the fine harbour where we found
the swift ship which belonged to those Phoenicians.
They put us both on board, climbed in themselves,
and sailed away across the watery road.
Zeus sent a favouring wind. We sailed six days,
moving day and night. When Zeus, Cronos' son,
brought us the seventh day, archer Artemis
struck the woman, and she fell with a thud
down in the hold, just like a sea bird's fall.
[610] They threw her overboard to make a meal
for seals and fish. But I was left heart-sick.
The winds and waters carried them along
and brought them to Ithaca, where Laertes
purchased me with his own money. That how
I came to see this land with my own eyes."

Odysseus, born from Zeus, then answered him and said:
"Eumaeus, by telling me these things,
you've really stirred the heart here in my chest,
all those ordeals your spirit has endured..
[620] But with the bad things Zeus has given you
he's put some good—you've undergone much pain,
but you did come to a kind man's house.
With a good heart, he gives you food and drink,
and the life you lead is good. As for me,
I've reached here only after wandering
through many cities of men."

So the two men
kept talking to each other. Then they fell asleep.
But they didn't sleep for long, only for a while,
since Dawn soon reached there on her golden throne.
[630] As Telemachus' comrades were approaching land,

they furled the sail and quickly lowered the mast.
Then, with their oars they rowed into an anchorage,
tossed out mooring stones, and lashed the cables at the stern.
They themselves then disembarked in the crashing surf,
to prepare a meal and mix the gleaming wine.
When they'd had food and drink to their heart's content,
prudent Telemachus was the first to speak:
"You men row the black ship to the city,
while I check on the fields and herdsmen.

[640] I'll come to the city in the evening,
after I've looked over my estates.
In the morning I'll lay out a banquet
as payment to you for the journey,
a splendid meal of meat and sweetened wine."

Then godlike Theoclymenus spoke up and said:
"Where do I go, dear lad? Of those who rule
in rocky Ithaca, whose house do I go to—
directly to your and your mother's home?"

Prudent Telemachus then answered him and said:
[650] "In different circumstances, I'd tell you
to visit our house—there is no lack
of welcome there for strangers. But for you
it would be worse, because I'll not be there,
and my mother will not see you. It's rare
for her to show up among the suitors
in the house—she stays away from them
and does her weaving in an upper room.
But I'll mention another man to you
and you can visit him—Eurymachus,

[660] illustrious son of wise Polybius,
whom men of Ithaca see as a god.
He's the best man by far and really keen
to marry my mother and then possess
the royal prerogatives of Odysseus.
But Olympian Zeus, who lives in heaven,

knows if, before that wedding day arrives,
he'll bring about a day of reckoning."

As he said this, a bird flew past on the right,
a hawk, Apollo's swift messenger. In its talons
[670] it held a dove, which it was plucking, and feathers
fell on the ground halfway between Telemachus
and his ship. Theoclymenus called him aside,
away from his companions, grasped his hand, and spoke:
"Telemachus, this bird flying to our right
has not come without being prompted by some god.
I knew when I saw it darting forward
it was an omen. In the land of Ithaca
no family is more royal than yours is.
No. You'll be powerful for ever."

[680] Prudent Telemachus then answered him and said:
"Stranger, I hope that prophecy of yours
may be fulfilled. If so, you'll quickly hear
of many gifts and kindnesses from me,
so any man you meet will call you happy."

Then he spoke to Peiraeus, a faithful comrade:
"Peiraeus, son of Clytius, of all those
who came with me on the trip to Pylos
you're the one who is especially loyal.
So now conduct this stranger to your home,
[690] take care to welcome him with honour,
until I get there."

Peiraeus, a famous spearman,
then answered him and said:
"Telemachus,
if you stay for a long time in these parts,
I will entertain him. He will not lack
anything that's appropriate for guests."

After saying this, he went on board the ship,
and told the crew to get in and loose the cables.
They boarded quickly and sat down at their benches.
Telemachus tied sturdy sandals on his feet,
[700] then from the deck picked up his powerful spear
with a sharp bronze tip. The crew untied stern cables
and then pushed out to sea, sailing to the city,
as Telemachus, godlike Odysseus' dear son,
had ordered them to do, while he strode quickly off,
his feet carrying him onward, until he reached
the farmyard and the pigs in countless numbers,
among whom the worthy swineherd lay asleep,
always thinking gentle thoughts about his master.