

Eurymachus alone could speak. He said:

“If you are Odysseus of Ithaca come back,  
all that you say these men have done is true.  
Rash actions, many here, more in the countryside.  
280 But here he lies, the man who caused them all.  
Antinous was the ringleader; he whipped us on  
to do these things. He cared less for a marriage  
than for the power Cronion has denied him  
as king of Ithaca. For that  
285 he tried to trap your son and would have killed him.  
He is dead now and has his portion. Spare  
your own people. As for ourselves, we’ll make  
restitution of wine and meat consumed,  
290 and add, each one, a tithe of twenty oxen  
with gifts of bronze and gold to warm your heart.  
Meanwhile we cannot blame you for your anger.”

Odysseus glowered under his black brows  
and said:

“Not for the whole treasure of your fathers,  
all you enjoy, lands, flocks, or any gold  
295 put up by others, would I hold my hand.  
There will be killing till the score is paid.  
You forced yourselves upon this house. Fight your way  
out,  
or run for it, if you think you’ll escape death.  
I doubt one man of you skins by.”

300 They felt their knees fail, and their hearts—but heard  
Eurymachus for the last time rallying them.

“Friends,” he said, “the man is implacable.  
Now that he’s got his hands on bow and quiver  
he’ll shoot from the big door stone there  
305 until he kills us to the last man.

Fight, I say,

let’s remember the joy of it. Swords out!  
Hold up your tables to deflect his arrows.  
After me, everyone: rush him where he stands.  
If we can budge him from the door, if we can pass

310  
276–291 What is Eurymachus’  
strategy here? How does he hope  
to save himself and the remaining  
suitors?

279 rash: foolish; thoughtless.

315  
283 Cronion (krō’ñē-ōn’): Zeus, the  
son of Cronus.

289 tithe: payment.

320  
293–299 Why do you think  
Odysseus rejects Eurymachus’  
explanation and offer of  
restitution?

325  
299 skins by: sneaks away.

WORDS  
TO  
KNOW

**restitution** (rēs’tī-tōō’shen) *n.* a making good for loss or damage; repayment  
**implacable** (īm-plāk’ē-bəl) *adj.* impossible to soothe; unforgiving

310 into the town, we'll call out men to chase him.  
This fellow with his bow will shoot no more."

He drew his own sword as he spoke, a broadsword of fine  
bronze,  
honed like a razor on either edge. Then crying hoarse and  
loud

315 he hurled himself at Odysseus. But the kingly man let fly  
an arrow at that instant, and the quivering feathered butt  
sprang to the nipple of his breast as the barb stuck in his  
liver.

The bright broadsword clanged down. He lurched and fell  
aside,  
pitching across his table. His cup, his bread and meat,  
were spilt and scattered far and wide, and his head  
slammed on the ground.

320 Revulsion, anguish in his heart, with both feet kicking out,  
he downed his chair, while the shrouding wave of mist  
closed on his eyes.

Amphinomus now came running at Odysseus,  
broadsword naked in his hand. He thought to make  
the great soldier give way at the door.

325 But with a spear throw from behind Telemachus hit him  
between the shoulders, and the lancehead drove  
clear through his chest. He left his feet and fell  
forward, thudding, forehead against the ground.

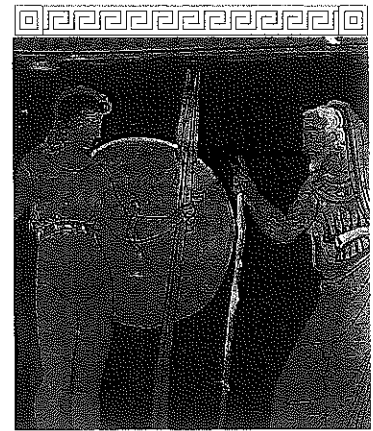
330 Telemachus swerved around him, leaving the long dark spear  
planted in Amphinomus. If he paused to yank it out  
someone might jump him from behind or cut him down  
with a sword

at the moment he bent over. So he ran—ran from the tables  
to his father's side and halted, panting, saying:

335 "Father let me bring you a shield and spear,  
a pair of spears, a helmet.  
I can arm on the run myself; I'll give  
outfits to Eumaeus and this cowherd.  
Better to have equipment."

Said Odysseus:

"Run then, while I hold them off with arrows



320 **revulsion** (rĭ-vŭl'shən): a sudden feeling of disgust.

320–321 Eurymachus' death is physically painful, but he also has "revulsion, anguish in his heart." What do you think causes this emotional pain?

322 **Amphinomus** (ām-fĭn'ə-məs): one of the suitors.

325–332 Telemachus proves to be a valuable help to his father.

340 as long as the arrows last. When all are gone  
if I'm alone they can dislodge me.”

Quick

upon his father's word Telemachus  
ran to the room where spears and armor lay.  
He caught up four light shields, four pairs of spears,  
345 four helms of war high-plumed with flowing manes,  
and ran back, loaded down, to his father's side.  
He was the first to pull a helmet on  
and slide his bare arm in a buckler strap.  
The servants armed themselves, and all three took their  
stand  
350 beside the master of battle.

345 helms: helmets.

While he had arrows  
he aimed and shot, and every shot brought down  
one of his huddling enemies.  
But when all barbs had flown from the bowman's fist,  
he leaned his bow in the bright entry way  
355 beside the door, and armed: a four-ply shield  
hard on his shoulder, and a crested helm,  
horsetailed, nodding stormy upon his head,  
then took his tough and bronze-shod spears.

353–358 Notice this depiction of Odysseus as a warrior. Try drawing a sketch of him armed for battle to get the full impact.

**T**HE SUITORS MAKE VARIOUS unsuccessful attempts to expel Odysseus from his post at the door. Athena urges Odysseus on to battle, yet holds back her fullest aid, waiting for Odysseus and Telemachus to prove themselves. Six of the suitors attempt an attack on Odysseus, but Athena deflects their arrows. Odysseus and his men seize this opportunity to launch their own attack, and the suitors begin to fall. At last Athena's presence becomes known to all, as the shape of her shield becomes visible above the hall. The suitors, recognizing the intervention of the gods on Odysseus' behalf, are frantic to escape but to no avail. Odysseus and his men are compared to falcons who show no mercy to the flocks of birds they pursue and capture. Soon the room is reeking with blood. Thus the battle with the suitors comes to an end, and Odysseus prepares himself to meet Penelope.