

UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

REINVENTING THE STORY

Inventions in the film adaptation *The Green Mile* by Frank Darabont

A Pro Gradu Thesis in Creative Writing

by

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Tutkielman tarkoituksena on selvittää romaanin ulkopuolisten elementtien (inventioiden) esiintymistä elokuva-adaptaatioissa *The Green Mile* (Vihreä maili). Tutkimuksen kohteina ovat tapahtumiin, aikarakenteisiin, asioihin (esineisiin), tapahtumapaikkoihin ja henkilöhahmoihin liittyvät yksityiskohdat. Dialogin osalta inventioihin viitataan lähinnä tekijän aikaisemman tutkielman pohjalta, eikä niitä siis käsitellä tässä yhteydessä erikseen laajemmalti. Tutkimus vastaa tarpeeseen saada tietoa populaarikirjallisuuden pohjalta tehdyistä adaptaatioista ja kiinnittää suurelta osin aikaisemmasta tutkimuksesta poiketen huomion siihen, mitä adaptaatioon on lisätty, ei siihen, mitä kirjasta on jätetty pois.

Tutkittava materiaali koostuu Stephen Kingin romaanista *The Green Mile*, Frank Darabontin samannimisestä elokuvakäsikirjoituksesta sekä elokuvasta. Tutkimuskenttänä on adaptaatiotutkimus, ja metodit ovat sekä kvantitatiivisia että kvalitatiivisia. Kyseessä on tapaustutkimus, joka pyrkii kuvailemaan inventioiden määrällistä laajuutta ja keskeisiä funktioita elokuvassa. Tutkimus vastaa kysymyksiin: 1) Millainen osuus inventioilla on määrällisesti adaptaatioissa, 2) Mitä funktioita ne täyttävät elokuvan kontekstissa, 3) Mitä inventiot kertovat valtavirtaelokuvan kerronnan perusteista ja konventioista käytännössä? Lähtökohtana tutkimukselle on elokuva-adaptaation käsittäminen yhtenä elokuvan tekemisen muotona. Siten tutkimus korostaa adaptoijan omaa taiteellista näkemystä ja elokuvakerronnan ymmärrystä, ja pyrkii näin ollen myös tarjoamaan osaltaan näkemyksen adaptoijan työhön. Näin ollen inventioita ei tuomita lähtökohtaisesti 'lähtötekstistä poikkeavina' kuten vertailevassa adaptaatiotutkimuksessa on pitkälti tehty, vaan niiden merkitys tunnustetaan kohdemedian kontekstissa.

Tutkimus paljasti inventioiden olevan tärkeä osa elokuva-adaptaatiota. Analyysin perusteella *The Green Mile* sisältää 70 inventiota, joilla on puolestaan laaja funktioiden kenttä. Kvalitatiivinen analyysi paljasti kaiken kaikkiaan yksitoista eri kategoriaa, jotka kuvaavat inventioiden funktioita elokuvassa ja antavat siten viitteitä elokuvantekijöiden mahdollisista motiiveista niiden implementoinnin takana. Kaksi kategoriaa nousi määrällisesti selvästi toisten yläpuolelle. Nämä funktiokategoriat ovat ns. 'emotionaalinen vaikutus' ja 'henkilön luonnehdinta'. Tuloksista voidaan päätellä, että adaptaatio suuntaa vahvasti kohti yleisöään ja pyrkii tuottamaan parhaan mahdollisen katsomiskokemuksen adaptaation itsensä kiinnittyessä selkeästi elokuvatradition kontekstiin.

Yhteenvetona voitaneen sanoa, että kirjallisen lähteen ulkopuolisten elementtien erittelyminen adaptaatiotutkimuksessa on hedelmällistä, eikä ainoastaan sen vuoksi ettei niitä juurikaan ole tähän saakka tutkittu. Inventiotutkimus on osaltaan avaamassa jokseenkin ummehtunutta adaptaatiotutkimuksen kenttää kohti muun muassa intertekstuaalisuuden ja genrejen tutkimusta. Mahdollisia suuntia jatkotutkimukselle on näin ollen useita, aina narratologisista näkökulmista sosiologisiin tai kulttuurisiin, ja historiallisista esimerkiksi yleistä toistamisen teoriaa koskeviin ulottuvuuksiin.

Asiasanat: film adaptation. popular literature. mainstream film. motion picture. screenwriting. screenplay. storytelling. intertextuality. writing. creativity.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The present thesis examines the extra-novelistic elements in the film adaptation *The Green Mile* (1999; screenplay and directed by Frank Darabont). The study concentrates on the events, characters, scenes, and other components of the film that do not have their origins in the novel by Stephen King (1996). My aim is to examine the significance of inventions in the process of film adaptation and scrutinise the inventions further. Moreover, I will seek clues for the possible motivations behind them, which are, hypothetically, guided by principles mainstream cinema narration and its conventions.

The thesis adds to the discussion of film adaptation as an art form, indeed, as a form of filmmaking, rather than as a form of translation or simple transferral of the novel onto screen. Furthermore, the thesis underscores the adaptor's¹ artistry and attempts to treat film adaptation as a process rather than presenting it as an uncomplicated comparison of two end-products, the novel and the motion picture. Therefore, the analysis includes references to the screenplay as well. Indeed, there are inventions that were included in the screenplay but never made it to the finished motion picture. Similarly, there are inventions that did not exist in the screenplay but were added during the filming of the motion picture. To unearth the full extent of inventions involved in the film adaptation process, the screenplay cannot be overlooked.

The present study has its roots in a small section of my previous thesis on dialogue adaptation in *The Green Mile* (Rauma 2004) which combined quantitative and qualitative analysis in tracing out what exactly the adaptor does to the literary dialogue when he adapts it into cinematic dialogue. The analysis included tracing the “life” of each line in the screenplay and the motion picture. In other words, I was able to follow the arch of existence of each line, if you will, from where they were derived in the novel, and what exactly the adaptor did with the lines of dialogue as far as the literary dialogue was concerned. Consequently, I grouped the lines of dialogue according to their ‘adaptative functions’ (i.e. whether the line was rephrased, abridged or perhaps delegated to another character in the screenplay/film, for example). As a result, I was able to conclude how dialogue is adapted in one particular case of film adaptation and, most importantly, what this implies of the

¹ Generally, the reference in the present study is to the screenwriter as the adaptor.

seemingly inherent differences between cinematic and literary dialogue. The results suggested, amongst other things, that inventing dialogue is a very important factor in film adaptation.

The present thesis, then, examines invention on a larger scale, including other aspects besides dialogue in the analysis. As the focus is on invention in general, dialogue naturally cannot be dismissed in the present thesis, either. However, rather than unnecessarily reproducing much of the earlier analysis below, I will merely refer to the previous study on dialogue invention in the present thesis.

Like the previous thesis, the present one is also based on certain elemental views on film adaptation that question some of the prevailing assumptions in the field of study and call attention to other, largely neglected aspects of adaptation. According to Whelehan (1999:17), adaptations have been studied largely from a literary point of view, thus privileging the literary predecessor over its filmic adaptation. Here lies a danger, however, that films and film adaptation are not studied on their own terms. Inspecting film from the literary point of view often leads to simplifying the nature of motion pictures, reducing them to a series of images paced by editing and accompanied by a musical score while the critics lament what they refer to as the “loss” of narratorial voice and the author’s distinctive style (see Giddings et al. 2000).

Moreover, the medium-specific approach in adaptation studies has been concerned with issues which novels are able to do, but film cannot subsequently implement. Instead of treating the issues and the filmic signification gear in an objective, impassionate way, the conclusion has generally been that film is somehow inadequate when compared to literature. This, of course, is due to the persistent misconception that films produce, or should produce meanings and emotional responses using the same means as literature, a purely verbal art form, does. In addition, adaptations are often referred to as ‘simplifications’ and ‘skeletons of the novel’. Sometimes a film adaptation even “brutally butchers” a novel (Giddings 2000:44). Consequently, inventions have largely been regarded as a negative aspect in film adaptation, since they result in filmic material that specifically deviates from the source text. The present thesis seeks to avoid this traditional juxtaposition and examine inventions from the point of view of motion pictures and the special requirements of the art of mainstream cinema.

Another major problem in the field has been the very scope of the adaptations studied. Most of the film adaptations today are based on popular novels, yet the ones that have so far received academic attention have been mainly adaptations made of literary classics. It is as if film adaptations were considered worthy of research only if the literary source “ennobled” them. This, in turn, poses various problems. In my view, much of the theoretical ponderings and adaptation criticism so far, which often seem to be prescriptive rather than descriptive, cannot be expected to apply to film adaptations of popular novels. This is mainly due to the classic novels having both an institutional and ideological standing upheld by the academic establishments. Therefore, textual fidelity has persistently been regarded as a desired outcome for film adaptations as researchers tend to value the canonical source text while denying the adaptors their artistic aspirations (see, for example, Cardwell 2002, Naremore 2000, and Cartmell et al. 1999). Indeed, Naremore (2000) and Cartmell et al. (1999) have called for research conducted on popular novels. They maintain that by examining film adaptations made out of novels that exist outside the literary canon, we might gain new insights and perspectives into what film adaptation is. This is indeed something to which the present thesis seeks to contribute.

Furthermore, adaptation studies have traditionally concentrated on pointing out what aspects of the literary predecessor have *not* been included in the film adaptation or what other features have been perhaps changed for the adaptation. As I proposed in my previous thesis (Rauma 2004:57-58) regarding dialogue adaptation, this may have to do with ignoring the screenplay altogether (thus ignoring the *process* of adaptation and how it is manifested in the dynamics of the birth of the new text) as well as using the novel as the starting point for the analysis as opposed to working backwards from the film towards the literary source. Hence, the question ‘what’ has persistently pushed the question ‘why’ aside.

The present thesis takes another angle altogether and seeks to uncover the invented elements and their functions within the film adaptation and hence the likely motives for their implementation. The basic postulation is that inventions are not the adaptor’s means of irritating the “loyal reader” of the novel (to use Nokes’ term, as quoted by Sheen 2000:16), but they exist because they serve a definite function within the construct of the motion picture. Therefore, with regard to the problematic areas touched upon above, I seek to circumvent those issues and approach film adaptation from a different angle. The present study highlights the functions of

inventions within film adaptation. It pushes aside the notion of medium-specificity while dealing with film adaptation as an artistic enterprise as opposed to a slavish attempt at reproducing a novel on screen. Moreover, the study is conducted on a popular novel without (academic) institutional or ideological constraints. The present thesis, then, seeks to expand the field in its own fundamental, but unfortunately – yet necessarily – very limited way. Within this revised framework, I hope to engage in a fruitful examination of extra-novelistic elements in film adaptation.

Below, I will identify and analyse the inventions in *The Green Mile* and draw conclusions on the nature and the functions of inventions in this particular case of film adaptation. The findings will hopefully shed light on the thus far neglected aspect of invention in film adaptation research. Furthermore, I hope to draw attention to the principles of mainstream narration and demonstrate how the adaptor reworks the source material in terms of refining its story. After all, mainstream cinema is the cinema of stories (e.g. McKee 1997). Moreover, I trust that the present study will lend something to understanding the work of film adaptors (the study indeed being conducted under a Creative Writing programme) as well as yield some interesting questions for further study.

To lay down the structure of the thesis, I will first present the theoretical framework needed for the present study. The framework includes aspects of defining an invention in the first place, views on inventions by selected theorists² and writers of film adaptations, as well as general observations regarding inventions in film adaptations by adaptation critics and textbook writers. Subsequently, I will move on to presenting the data and discussing the methodological tools and the analytic framework. I will then proceed to the analysis itself, to presenting the findings and clarifying them with several examples from the data. Finally, the thesis closes with discussion on the findings and suggestions for further study.

² I use ‘theorists’ following Cardwell (2003:91), who defines the term as “writers who attempt to conceptualise the process of adaptation or explore issues concerning the adaptation of narratives from literature to screen”.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework for the present study includes, first of all, defining what is an invention, as well as pointing out the accustomed functions of inventions. Moreover, I will draw attention to some interesting issues related to the conflicting views on reception of inventions. I do this in order to shed light on how inventions are regarded in current film adaptation research in general and how the present thesis differs from many of those views. Finally, I will present some arguments regarding adaptor's work in relation to inventions as they are put forth in textbooks on film adaptation. I do this mainly for two reasons: to take up the issue of film adaptation as a creative activity as opposed to slavish transference of a literary text to screen, and to demonstrate that often the views of adaptors and adaptation critics do not coincide. In other words, theorists and adaptors themselves do not see film adaptation and its aims in the same way and hence it seems at times that theory and practice do not in fact meet at all.

As much as one would want to ignore the issue of textual fidelity when speaking of film adaptation, it is next to impossible to do so in this present case of examining the extra-novelistic elements in *The Green Mile*. The main reason for this is the very lack of theoretical material concerning inventions which would not take up the issue of (in)fidelity in the first place. Moreover, as it will become apparent from the accounts below, inventions are both praised and despised by adaptation critics. They are praised for resulting in powerful and unforgettable scenes, and in other cases, despised for being what they are: extra-novelistic. Therefore, this section will inevitably include occasionally even somewhat heated discussion on inventions from the theorists' part. The problem in the field of adaptation studies has traditionally been that the researchers tend to work on "gut-feeling" (Cardwell 2002:31) and too often seem to be incapable of making impassionate observations. The issue of textual fidelity invokes the fiercest of emotions: when a film adaptation is seen to "do violence to the original" (McFarlane 1996:71), academics tend to bare their claws. One of my aims is to show that the claw baring is both ungrounded and needless. In many cases, the forcefully negative reaction to, for example inventions, appears to be the result of inadequate knowledge and understanding of cinema and its signifying

gear.³ Film adaptation is not as straightforward a case as some theorists claim it to be. It is an art form with profound complexities and the adaptor's artistic intentions are, more often than not, different from those of the novelist's.

Therefore, I will deal with inventions in film adaptation not as being foul because they are, for example, scenes, events or characters that do not exist in the novel. Rather, in my view, they demonstrate the adaptors' artistry and understanding of cinematic narration, as well as their vision of the preceding, novelistic text in terms of what it may be perhaps lacking. Here, I am drawing upon a notion not of a centralised view of the literary source being a fixed whole, but an idea of a mythical "story entity" towards which both the novel and the film are aspiring (see Cardwell 2002:25ff). In other words, the literary work is incomplete in itself and the adaptor, in cinematic terms, develops, retells, reinterprets, and reassesses it through a fresh, personal vision (Cardwell 2002:25). Inventions may be used to work for the cinema⁴ and its storytelling processes. That is, inventions may exist to, for example, add coherence to the narrative or highlight characterisational aspects. Before moving on to examining these features further, however, I will lay down some views on inventions that are central in the field of adaptation studies, and I will begin it by discussing the problematics of defining an invention in film adaptation in the first place.

2.1 Defining an Invention

One might think that when an element in the film is an element that does not exist in the novel, that might be considered an invention. It appears, however, that defining an invention is far from being an uncomplicated matter for many researchers. Additionally, as referred to above, inventions are regularly discussed in terms of textual fidelity: they are considered merely as departures from the novel and too often scorned for that very reason. Frequently, this leads to evading the very word 'invention' itself and reverting to using expressions such as 'imaginative flight' or 'addition' which, in turn, diminish the significance of the adaptor's artistry and personal vision by forcing the focus to remain on the source text.

³ See for example McFarlane (2000) and Cardwell (2002) for a more elaborate account on some of the inadequacies of literary training to comprehensive film study.

⁴ Throughout the thesis, I am referring specifically to mainstream cinema, the so-called 'art cinema' remaining outside the scope of the study as the core essences of the types of cinema include different aims and emphases (see, for example, Bordwell 1985).

Sheen (2000) discusses the television adaptation of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1995) and talks at length about the invented scenes in the adaptation. She points out the additional scenes in the adaptation and the point of her analysis is grounded in the question of textual (in)fidelity and the "predatory" visual medium regarding sexualising Darcy, as the very title of her article implies ('Where the garment gapes': faithfulness and promiscuity in the 1995 BBC *Pride and Prejudice*). In one of the invented scenes, for example, Darcy dives into the pond and, in another, gets out of bath to look down out of the window at Elizabeth. Sheen (2000:22, original emphasis) concludes that the episodes of Darcy's bodily exposure "all occur at a point where there *isn't* any text; more specifically they occupy positions where the *fort-da* of literary form allows us to stop attending, either for its characters' relief, or for our own". In other words, Sheen (ibid.) is talking about the literary space between instalments, that is, the additions "happen at the turn-around of chapters, or where the text itself is somewhere else, attending to completely different character altogether".

This might be termed as invention, since there is no literary text describing those added scenes in the adaptation. Sheen (2000:23), however, finishes off by arguing that these additional scenes are not "omissions and inventions within the literary discourse; only enterprising productions within available adaptive gaps". Sheen's insistence that the literary text would exist where it does not ('a point where there *isn't* any text') is admittedly a rather outlandish one. Moreover, one is forced to wonder what exactly is an invention "within the literary discourse", and how does it differ from an invention that is *not* within the literary discourse. If something is not expressed in the novel, between chapters or at points 'where the text itself is somewhere else', but it exists in the film, how exactly is that *not* an invention?

Clearly, Sheen's (2000) view above seems to imply that an invention necessarily requires an omission. She suggests that in the case where there is no omission preceding the invention we are not dealing with inventions at all, but only with 'enterprising productions'. This view, however, is unacceptable for two reasons. First, the adaptor's inventions do not require omission of a portion of the literary text. An event or a line of dialogue may be invented and incorporated – *inserted*, if you will – amongst the "literary discourse" in the film, that is, a portion of novelistic text that the adaptor has chosen to utilise in the adaptation. Second, it undermines and belittles the adaptor's artistry. Sheen perceives it as a positive aspect that the

additional scenes in the adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* are not results of omitting something and replacing that with the adaptor's own material. Rather, the adaptor has taken advantage of the "commercial breaks" offered by Austen between the chapters in the novel, and realised his artistry within those strict limits. Thus, the adaptor's inventions and artistic intentions are reduced to mere 'productions' within 'adaptive gaps' in the source text that the novelist has gracefully offered.

Sinyard (2000:159) is similarly precautionous in his wordings regarding invention. He notes that the two finest scenes in *A Passage to India* (1984) "are of events that do not appear in E. M. Forster but are nevertheless legitimate". That is, he implies that the adaptors should not invent events unless they are able to justify the action somehow. Cardwell (2002:21ff) discusses the relationship between the source text writer and the adaptor, and she notes that more often than not, the assumption is that the adaptor should share the intentions of the novelist or other writer. However, very often the filmmakers' intentions are utterly different from those of the literary author's, as will be further discussed in the next section.

Furthermore, Sinyard (2000:159) calls the inventions in *A Passage to India* "imaginative flights derived from the text, its hints, its possibilities, its absences". As Sheen (2000) above, instead of attributing the inventions to the adaptor's vision and personal aims, Sinyard looks at them strictly from the novel's point of view. Indeed, he is talking about the inventions being 'derived from the text', even its 'absences'. If such was the case, we certainly would be able to contest calling the inventions 'inventions' in the first place, for they have their origins in the source text.

It is true, however, that just as a film seems to exist outside its physical parameters, so does the novel. That is, the entity *suggests* an existence of something outside the limits of its "material" narration (whether consisting of words or images/sound/dialogue/editing etc.), i.e. in the 'adaptive gaps', to use Sheen's (2000) term. However, the source text's 'absences' or gaps do not suggest a *definitive* entity. That is, it is next to impossible that two adaptors would come up with identical inventions, for example between the chapters in the Austen novel mentioned above, unless one of them was copying the other for some reason (e.g. for satirical effect). Therefore, it is unfair to reduce an invention to something 'derived from the text's absences' without recognising personal interpretation and the adaptor's aims and intentions that affect the outcome. While the source text might imply something that

might be invented, the originator of the invention is the adaptor, not the novel or its writer.

Other adaptation theorists consider defining an invention less troublesome. Moreover, they recognise that inventions are more than simply additions to the source text: they may also have a wider net of implications arising from other films. Cardwell (2002:67) distinguishes between pure inventions and additions with “textual historical resonance”. According to her, pure inventions are just that: elements that do not have a counterpart in the source text. Additions with textual historical resonance, however, are inventions within that particular film adaptation (i.e. they do not exist in the literary source), but they have a corresponding item in other similar adaptations. An addition with textual historical resonance, therefore, is an invention that is *generic* rather than specific to the relationship between the adaptation and the source text. It is an adaptation of, or an intertextual reference to another work of art, an instance which strictly comparative theorists would push aside as pure invention (Cardwell 2002:67). As an example, Cardwell (*ibid.*) points out an archery scene in the 1996 adaptation of *Emma* with a very similar counterpart in *Pride and Prejudice* (1940). That is, the invention has a generic reference point: a classic novel adaptation refers to another classic novel adaptation, thus reproducing and reinforcing some generic traits pertaining to classic novel adaptations in general.

To conclude the present section, my definition of an invention is a straightforward one: when the film incorporates an element (e.g. a scene, an event, a line of dialogue) that does not exist in the novel, I refer to the element as an invention. The invention may or may not include an omission. Moreover, an invention may be an instance of changing or negating something in the novel, as for example in *The Green Mile*, where in the novel Percy refrains from breaking Eduard Delacroix’s fingers, but in the film adaptation, he does not. Simply on the grounds of the instance *not occurring in the literary source*, I choose to term it as an invention.

2.2 Inventions and the Adaptor’s Artistry

According to Bluestone (1957:140), inventions reveal the process of rethinking. In his view, adaptors are not mere translators, but artists in their own right. However, not all theorists share Bluestone’s sentiment. They seem to suggest that the adaptors were unobtrusive, invisible and self-effacing entities who should leave no trace of

themselves in the film adaptation but merely realise the source text author's intentions, which are, in turn, supposedly infallibly recoverable. Again, this is generally considered to apply especially to adaptations made out of classic texts, suggesting – rather uncritically – that there is something universal, definite and unbreakable in them for each reader to interpret in an uniform way with other readers (see MacKillop and Pratt 2000:87).

Sinyard (1986:23) discusses film adaptations of Shakespeare's plays by directors such as Laurence Olivier, Orson Welles, Akira Kurosawa, and Roman Polanski. In his view, their respect for the source text does not exhibit itself in copying a play as such onto the screen but in "the quality of imaginative invention they bring to the task of making the classic text fresh and exciting for a modern audience" (ibid.). Sinyard perceives the act of adaptation as a rejuvenation of a classic text, and invention as a means of rendering the text more meaningful for today's audience. What he seems to be suggesting with the remark, however, is that the adaptor should remain reverent to the source text and that the main aim of film adaptation was to make the (classic) text 'fresh and exciting'. His views remain profoundly attached to the source text rather than the end-product, i.e. the film, as he goes on to say that "[t]hose who are not strictly faithful to the literal text are often profoundly faithful to the play's spirit, and perhaps provide a working answer to the question of what Shakespeare would have used in place of the written word if he had made films instead of writing plays" (ibid.). Here he exhibits the tendency pointed out by Cardwell (2002) that the distinction between the intentions of the source text author and the adaptor is blurred, perhaps unintentionally. Adaptors are perceived to be realising the intentions and the artistic aspirations of the source text author rather than those of their own. Sinyard's (1986:23) suggestion that an adaptor cannot be, or should not be anything more than a cautious "follower" is inequitable.

Already in 1957, then, Bluestone's views moved away from the source text and towards the adaptor's own artistry. Albeit remaining defensive and, more often than not, appearing apologetic for the adaptor's personal expression, he recognises the dissimilar needs of cinema in comparison with literature and supports the adaptor's choices. Bluestone (1957:140) maintains that the filmmakers imagine what the novelist has refrained from telling them. Indeed, McKee (1997:368) echoes this when he advises that adaptors should know the book as if they had written it themselves, and have "a godlike knowledge" of it. Brady (1994:205) directs adaptors

in a similar vein. Moreover, McKee (ibid.) points out that the adaptor should never assume that the literary author has “done his homework”. In other words, the literary text is not a complete whole or an infallible object in itself and the adaptor has an obligation to examine it critically. The novelist does not include everything in the story in the novel. What the novelist does is paint a picture without borders. When we read a novel, we feel very strongly that there is a whole world in there, yet we have only a part of it on the very pages of the book. The same applies to film which is also a painting without borders. Therefore, it is unreasonable to condemn the adaptors for imagining ‘what the novelist has not told them’. After all, we all do it when we read a book or watch a film.

An interesting bias between the viewpoints concerning the technique of invention in film adaptation is that, as Testa (as quoted by Thomas 2000) seems to suggest, invention is defined differently according to who (a filmmaker as opposed to a literary author) is doing the inventing. Discussing Ondaatje as a writer in relation to his work with the cinema, Testa (as quoted by Thomas 2000:198) maintains that the novelist having worked with film has influenced his writing of novels. Testa (ibid.) states that Ondaatje’s tendency to use “juxtapositioning and polyphonous narration and heterogeneous stylistics” represents “an imaginary reinvention of filmic techniques” in literature. At the same time, however, Testa (ibid.) implies that when the literary techniques are used in filmic narration by the adaptor writing a screenplay (rather than a novelist writing a novel), we are dealing with “uncomplicated borrowing”. Furthermore, adaptation critics also tend to suggest that filmmakers could (and sometimes *should*) ‘borrow’ literary techniques to be used in their adaptations, and that they should refrain from inventing new ones, since this, in turn, would be considered diverging from the novel (see for example Selby’s (2000) views on voice-over).

Sinyard (2000:147-8, original emphasis), however, maintains that the adaptor should “make *some* changes to the original structure”, for mere duplicating of the book on screen would be redundant and hence pointless. Seger (1992:65) echoes this when discussing remakes and concludes that “if we just wanted to see the same old story, we could rent the original”. This could also be said of film adaptations of literary works: novelties and inventions make the adaptation significant and interesting in the first place. In Sinyard’s (2000:148) view, the best adaptation works as a critical commentary on the source text, a palimpsest of a kind. Moreover, Irvine

Welsh (as quoted by Paget 1999:130) has said: “I wrote the book but somebody else is making the film. The whole point of it – the exciting part of it – is that it’s going to be transformed in some way. The more transformation the better from my point of view.” Indeed, Bluestone (1957:167) puts forth a similar view presented by John Steinbeck, who maintained that a novelist’s “final statement is in his book. Since the novelist can add nothing more, the film-maker is obliged to remake the work in his own style”.

Yet, inventions invoke emotional responses, which often seem unnecessarily strong, not to mention theoretically unmotivated. Novelist Santha Rama Rau (as quoted by Sinyard 2000:156), for example, expressed abhorrence towards an invented sequence in *A Passage to India* (in which Adela goes cycling and comes across a deserted temple with erotic statues): “I think I would have had a fit if I had known in advance that the film was going to contain the sequence of a lonely ‘brave’”. Sinyard (ibid.) himself, however, sees the invention (which Rama Rau refers to as “vulgar”) as one of the greatest scenes in the film and the filmmaker boldly venturing into “territory where the novelist could not – dare not – go”. Sinyard (2000:157) maintains that the invention, which leads to renewed engagement between characters, is “immeasurably more persuasive and intriguing than in the novel, where Ronny and Adela are reunited through an arbitrary accident”. In similar vein, Asheim (1949:34) discusses an invented scene that replaces an omitted one in *Kitty Foyle* (1940), and concludes that the result (plot-wise) is as it is in the source text, but the filmic solution is more dramatic.

Therefore, not everything that works in a novel works in a film. Much of this is due to the different degrees of realism between the two media, but also the expectations of the audiences play an important role, and such is the case of adapting *A Passage to India*. While the arbitrary accident involving a car in the novel might be satisfactory, the randomness of the event would perhaps have invoked a negative reaction from the film-going public: it might have seemed that the filmmaker was using a *deus ex machina* device to bring the two characters back together.⁵ Furthermore, as in both *A Passage to India* and the *Kitty Foyle* case, what perhaps works in the novel would have appeared slack screenwriting and unimaginative filmmaking on screen. This is where the adaptor’s artistry is truly needed.

⁵ See Asheim (1949:298) for cinema generally omitting coincidence and the *deus ex machina* device.

As pointed out above, there is a tendency from the researchers' part to expect the adaptor to hold the source text in high esteem, especially when classic novels are concerned. Nokes (as quoted by Sheen 2000), however, argues that this is also what the film-going public anticipates, especially in terms of inventions. According to Nokes (as quoted by Sheen 2000:16), "[l]oyal readers of the text will more readily forgive omissions than inventions". Nokes, however, disregards the fact that not all members of the audience are what he calls 'loyal readers' who, apparently, ask no more from the film adaptation but it to be an illustrated novel on screen. Moreover, as Whelehan (1999:18) points out, the assumption that the audience wants to see a faithful film adaptation has been considered axiomatic by the researchers and critics while, in reality, it has never been investigated and documented. In fact, one might suspect that the majority of the audience has never even read the source text and, according to Whelehan (*ibid.*), they never will. Even more significantly, we have directors who have never read the novel "they" (as opposed to the screenwriters) have adapted (Bluestone 1957:62).

Indeed, there are other additional views that question the positive reception of inventions. Sheen (2000:18, original emphasis) remarks in a rather patronising tone that "[n]either critics nor spectators are likely to require a *film* adaptation of a classic novel to be 'faithful'; indeed they will arguably look for, even anticipate, its submission to the consensual ideology of Hollywood". The remark holds a telling attitude towards adaptor's in(ter)ventions. Sheen perceives inventions, and apparently also omissions and reinterpretations as 'submissions' and conflates Hollywood productions and cinematic narration in general. In reality, classic novels are being adapted outside Hollywood as well, the BBC being a major contributor. Furthermore, Sheen (2000) refuses to examine the motivations and aims behind cinematic narration and recognise the differences between its signifying system and that of literature, also in terms of audience reception and expectations (see Asheim 1949:109-110). According to Bluestone (1957), however, the case is not so simple: the source text does not validate the film. He points out that events and characters in fiction are not interchangeable with events and characters in film, and that the adaptor making alterations does not of necessity "impair the quality of the film" (Bluestone 1957:5).

Despite the distinctively negative attitude towards inventions that occupies a large segment of the research field, some researchers have remarked that inventions

hold a special position within the film itself. That is, the inventions themselves are not judged for diverting from the literary source but appreciated for their effects. Indeed, Stern (2000:226) points out that the remake of *Clueless* (1995) is remarkably faithful (to Austen's *Emma*) as a structural repetition, but "it is inventively divergent in terms of incidentals". The adaptation reinvents the story and contemporalises it. Moreover, Bluestone (1957:85) notes on *The Informer* (1935) that this particular film was praised because of "precisely these points of deviation from the novel", in other words, the film succeeded best where the adaptor had made use of his artistry and creative prowess. Furthermore, according to Bluestone (1957:113), what endows *Wuthering Heights* (1939) with substance "is precisely those additions which the film-makers have written into their story, the entire network of additions, deletions, alterations which are characteristically theirs and not Emily Brontë's".

Cardwell (2002:24) points out a persistent view shared by many literary scholars on film adaptation: in their view, everything that needs to be written has already been written by the literary author and the adaptors need not add anything of their own. Moreover, if something is added, this is labelled 'bold' and often the writer points out that the deviation is "unapologetic" on the filmmaker's part, as Thomas (2000:198) does. The suggestion then is that the filmmaker ought to apologise for intervening between the literary text and its reader who is watching the film.

Indeed, judging from the remarks by adaptation theorists it seems that inventions have to be justified in some way by the adaptor, as if they were an unnatural part of film adaptation. Sinyard (2000:159, italics mine), for example, perceives that an invented element in a Shakespeare adaptation by Orson Welles (*Othello*, 1952) "has, in Grigori Kozintsev's phrase, a 'dynamic, visual reality' that justifies the addition". Furthermore, Bluestone (1957:5) comments in a rather sarcastic tone that "deviations [i.e. inventions, omissions etc.] are permissible for vaguely defined reasons—exigencies of length or of visualization, perhaps". That is, the implication seems to be that a 'permission' to deviate from the literary source needs to be issued by some instance, as if the adaptation was somehow "responsible" to the source text author. Bluestone (1957), however, does not support the notion, although he occasionally appears apologetic for thinking so.

Moreover, Cardwell (2002:62-3) points out that, as far as adaptation theorists and critics are concerned, there seem to be changes (inventions) that are acceptable and others that are not. Indeed, Sinyard (1986:126) appears to accept inventions that

also “characterise” the novelist, in this particular case, Charles Dickens. In his view, Billy Wilder’s *Sunset Boulevard* (1950) is “an imaginative transformation” of *Great Expectations*, “converting it into the currency and imagery of modern popular art but having that cheeky confidence, risk-taking fearlessness, narrative ingenuity and blackly bizarre invention that also characterise Dickens at his best”.

In sum, according to the theorists, the worst an invention can be is a condemnable deviation from the source text, and the best it can result in is a powerful, unforgettable scene in the film. Depending on the perception of the adaptors’ role in the film adaptation process (does one consider them to be servants of the source text author or artists in their own right), theorists either expect the adaptor to apologise for adding ‘extra material’, or they do not. How one sees the source text and its “isolated wholeness” is of great importance in this instance.

According to Bluestone (1957:90, original emphasis), “a careful film adaptation goes to the original not as a finished work ... but as a kind of raw material, much as the novelist approached *his* experiences”. Bluestone (1957:62) notes that the adaptor is mainly interested in the characters and incidents in the source text, not “the organic novel, whose language is inseparable from its theme” or the language itself. Therefore, if the adaptors do not think of the source text in terms of it being a fixed, complete whole, the basis for the theorists doing so is even shakier. Indeed, as Bluestone (1957:110-111) concludes, an adaptation’s success is not about the adaptors having respected the precursory text and consequently denied themselves of inventions, omissions and other adaptative functions, but whether they have “respected [their] own vision”.

2.3 Functions of Inventions

In contrast to some of the views expressed above, many theorists hold perhaps a more practical approach to extra-novelistic elements in film adaptations. Very often these sentiments grow out of looking at the issue from the film’s point of view rather than concentrating on the literary source, and recognising the needs and the unique expressive aspects of cinema. In other words, the fact that the inventions have certain *functions* within the motion picture lend a different perspective to the issue of the adaptor’s work. The functions in film may be very different from certain functions central to literature, and the invented elements are used to reach various ends in film.

Moreover, often the same effect on the viewer may be achieved in the cinema in a very dissimilar way compared to the literary means used for the desired reader response. Therefore, the views below recognise that inventions serve a purpose and they are used to work *for* the adaptation, with the goal of making a better film in sight.

Indeed, Asheim (1949:121-122) points out that some inventions exist because they “make the most of the medium’s strongest qualities”. For example, simply because it is possible in cinema, inventions may include “opening up” the source text (e.g. a play) by taking the events to other, perhaps more visually exciting physical locations (Seeger 1992:42). What the views below all share is the attitude towards inventions that labels them a natural, an *innate* part of film adaptation. A motion picture is seen as a complex web of signifiers and an entity with a unique combination of narrative components. Moreover, many of the views below acknowledge the intertextual and contextual implications involved in filmmaking regarding inventions and the need for them.

Bluestone (1957:136) maintains that extra-novelistic elements are used to link together disparate events and to increase the visual and aural density of the material. In his view, then, inventions serve mainly two purposes. First, they help to build the film into a coherent whole by bridging selected scenes or events together. Second, they enliven the cinematic work through added visual and aural mass. In other words, inventions render the material more cinematic (see Asheim 1949:121-122). Bluestone does not perceive any problems with inventions. Indeed, in his view, inventions are as natural a part of film adaptation as omissions and alterations are. Moreover, Bluestone (1957:136) points out that inventions, as well as deletions and other changes, do not necessarily alter the meanings of the source text. Leaving aside the implication that the readers – the adaptor included – would be able to deduct infallibly the novelist’s intended meanings from the text, Bluestone’s chief remark is that inventions do not inevitably lead to massive divergences from the source text. Something might be expressed differently through an invention, but the overall effect may be the same (or very similar) as in the source text.

To be sure, based on Asheim’s (1949) dissertation, this indeed seems to be the case. According to Asheim (1949:114), the proportional percentage of inventions in film adaptations varies a great deal. According to the study, only four percent of the scenes in *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1942) were inventions, whereas a total of 83

percent of the scenes in *The House of the Seven Gables* (1940) were extra-novelistic (ibid.). Interestingly, Asheim (ibid.) notes that *Pride and Prejudice* (1940) was the most faithful to its literary source overall, yet 23 percent of its scenes were inventions. That is to say, inventions do not automatically equal rendering the adaptation less faithful, should textual fidelity be the adaptor's desired aim. Asheim (1949:88), however, points out that in the case of conflict between the adaptor remaining faithful to the source text or following the needs of the film form, the cinematic option generally wins, since the end-product is, indeed, to be a motion picture.

Moreover, McFarlane (1996:200-201) maintains that "any narrative film – adaptation or not – will be made within the prevailing parameters of the cinema, within certain cinematic traditions". This suggests that one of the functions of inventions was to realise those 'parameters of the cinema' or 'cinematic traditions'. In other words, the adaptor is *making a film*, not just an adaptation. One of the 'prevailing parameters' of mainstream cinema is incessant story progression. Indeed, Asheim (1949:109-110) asserts that studies have shown that while static scenes work in theatre and literature, they do not so in cinema. He points out that members of a theatre audience and readers of novels do not see the slow pace as a problem, but the same people watching a film will not tolerate static scenes (ibid.). Asheim (1949:109) concludes that real-life speed is too slow for cinema: the medium requires a faster pace for story progression. Therefore, inventions are also often used to increase action (Asheim 1949:113).

Furthermore, McFarlane's (1996) view on 'cinematic traditions' above is repeated in Seger's (1992) notions on the functions of inventions in film adaptation and mainstream cinema. Seger puts an emphasis on the strengthening of the storyline in the source text by inventions ranging from lines of dialogue to subplots and to whole storylines. According to her, both inventions and omissions help the screenwriter to construct the material into a "workable dramatic story line" (Seger 1992:4). Below, I will present the functions of inventions according to Seger (1992).

Firstly, mainstream cinema generally employs an Aristotelian three-act construct. It utilises turning-point scenes, which are important transition points between acts (also known as 'hinge-scenes'), and which move the viewer from one place to another (Seger 1992:86). According to Seger (ibid.), such scenes do not always exist in the source material, hence sometimes the adaptor needs to invent

them. The hinge-scenes are important because they focus and shape the material and help the adaptor move the story “through the setup, development, and payoff” (Seger 1992:86). Secondly, Seger (1992:78) states that generally the adaptor’s aim is to “create a strong, dramatic story line”, and the adaptor needs “to identify, to evaluate, and, if necessary, to add to or to create story lines”. Moreover, she points out that sometimes the adaptor invents characters to crystallise the drama in the material (Seger 1992:119). Thirdly, Seger (1992:4) maintains that inventions are used to develop characters as well as storylines more fully. Seger points out that inventions are employed to reinforce the subplots by filling them with details. Therefore, inventions can include not only minor details but also dialogue, scenes, sequences, and even characters and conflicts between characters.

Fourthly, Seger (1992:111) asserts that invented subplots, for example, can be used to reinforce the theme or characters. Finally, Seger (1992:132) maintains that sometimes the conflict in the source material is “slight, or nonexistent”, and in such cases the adaptor needs to create the conflict. This may mean inventing scenes, either based on possible cues for conflicts in the novel, or by strengthening an existing clash (*ibid.*). Therefore, in addition to the adaptor using them to dramatic ends, inventions can carry some very crucial functions such as conveying the theme and rounding up the characters. Often these functions are realised in the novel through narration and generally this is done gradually over the course of the whole book. While the reader of a novel may spend ten to twenty hours reading the book, the motion picture audience, however, has to access a comparable amount of information in a short period of two hours. Therefore, the adaptor needs to invent new ways to get all this information across to the viewer concisely.

In addition, the differing emphasis placed on various aspects in cinema and literature becomes apparent in the different play of accumulating tensions within the constructs of the respective narratives. Consequently, this has an effect on the adaptor’s work, also in terms of inventions. According to Seger (1992:100), the climax in a novel or a play need not have the same “dramatic buildup” as in a motion picture. She maintains that if the climax in the source novel is dramatic enough, the adaptor should use it, but it may need changing (e.g. adding to the actions in the source text or inventing them) in order to make it work cinematically (*ibid.*).

Moreover, Seger (1992:102) asserts that sometimes the source material contains many scenes which are able to carry the story cinematically, providing the necessary

movement of increasing and decreasing tension, and the adaptor has the pleasure of choosing between them. However, sometimes such scenes need to be invented. She maintains that adaptors can make them up as if they would when writing an original screenplay (ibid.) Furthermore, the source material often implies scenes that are not elaborated further in the literary source, and the adaptor is able to follow these cues (such as a character briefly mentioning she had a bad day at work) and create scenes around them (Seger 1992:102).

Occasionally, inventions serve the star in the adaptation or add a personal reference and a touch of authenticity. Seger (1992:46) gives an example of *Driving Miss Daisy* (1989), in which Jessica Tandy plays the role of Daisy. While Daisy was rather grim throughout the film, producer Richard D. Zanuck wanted to include a scene where the actor could flash her world-famous smile (ibid.). Such an instance was consequently invented. Moreover, a personal detail was included through invention for the same film by adding a reference to the true-life memories of another actor. The director Bruce Beresford, an Australian, did not have extensive knowledge of the American South, hence he wanted actor Morgan Freeman to tell him an interesting detail from his childhood. Consequently, the detail from Freeman's memories (a servant reclining to the kitchen to eat his dinner "off a different plate with different cutlery") was added to the film (ibid.). As can be judged from Seger's (1992) suggestions alone, inventions have an ample array of functions within in the context of film adaptation. Yet, other functions exist.

Sinyard (2000) and Thomas (2000) both consider inventions when examining film adaptations, and they both point out the functions of the inventions within the construct of the respective films. Sinyard discusses the invention of a train journey in David Lean's adaptation *A Passage to India* (1984). According to him, the invention was particularly useful because it concisely introduced and indicated character and served as a metaphor for "the emotional and psychological journeys" that some of the characters were to undergo (Sinyard 2000:153). Seger (1992) already expressed the same sentiment of characterisation involving inventions, but Sinyard adds the notion of metaphorical signification. In other words, inventions may add depth to the story.

Thomas (2000:204), in turn, points out that in the adaptation *The English Patient* (1996), there are some changes in the relationships between the characters and in the motivation for Madox's suicide, which render more tension to the story

and increase the emotional torment of the main character. Furthermore, the adaptation adds to the story some dry humour that the novel does not have, and even includes some slapstick moments (Thomas 2000:205). Thomas (2000:204-5) also recognises that the invented scene in which Geoffrey learns of his wife's affair "excites complex emotions, creating considerable tension but also [invites] some sympathy for the mortified Geoffrey".⁶ As a result, novelist Michael Ondaatje now gets complimented for a powerful scene in the film that he never wrote for the novel in the first place (Thomas 2000:205). Therefore, inventions are also used to elicit specific emotions in the viewer, either in the form of added sympathy towards a character or to a number other kinds of ends.

As the present thesis recapitulates the inventions in the realm of dialogue as well, it is necessary to say a few words on inventing dialogue and the functions found there. Indeed, from the adaptor's point of view, dialogue is one of the primary interests in a film (see section 2.4 below). Moreover, dialogue is, perhaps more often than not, automatically present in the invented scenes and events as it is such a fundamental component of mainstream cinema narration.

Yet, a common misconception exists in many of the (in all, few) theoretical accounts regarding dialogue and adaptation. The misconception is rather blunt and straightforward: dialogue is largely omitted from the discussion altogether due to the persistent dismissal of sound in cinema. Bluestone (1957:140), for example, states that "deletions and additions prune what is not pictorial and adjust resulting discrepancies". He, therefore, suggests that the adaptor cuts out those elements in the novel that are not easily told in pictures and inventions, then, make up for those deletions. Here, typically, his definition of inventions (and deletions) does not take into account inventions or omissions existing in the realm of dialogue at all. As shown above, however, inventions have various functions; their sole purpose is not to make up for omissions, just as deletions are not motivated solely by the elements being 'not pictorial'. Quite the contrary, adaptors omit and invent dialogue as much as the so-called "pictorial" elements. As my previous thesis suggested, invention in the realm of dialogue is, in fact, an extremely important feature of film adaptation.

Despite neglecting dialogue as a whole throughout his book, Bluestone *does* touch upon invented dialogue and its functions, however in passing, when discussing

⁶ Indeed, as Asheim (1949:100) points out, the audience needs to be sympathetically attentive to the characters and empathetically involved in their struggles.

a case of an Austen adaptation. As with other invented elements, he stresses that invented lines of dialogue also work as “bridges” between other elements. Bluestone (1957:130) maintains that in *Pride and Prejudice* (1940), “a number of lines have been added to establish continuity between the disparate events which have here been joined in a single sequence”. In other words, the adaptor has extracted elements from different loci in the novel and positioned them together in the film adaptation. Invented dialogue serves as glue between these unrelated elements, making the fusion seem as if it was never a result of a combination of distinct events in the first place. Therefore, one of the functions of inventions – also in the realm of dialogue – is to create important coherence and to establish continuity within a film. Indeed, the same functions of inventions as elaborated above largely apply to dialogue inventions as well. This will be discussed more thoroughly below under section 3.2 The Previous Study. Dialogue inventions will also be dealt with in the next section, where they are considered from the point of view of not adaptation theorists but adaptors themselves and the ideas presented by selected adaptation text books.

Finally, inventions in film adaptation have a wider net of implications as well. This is to say that their functions do not stop at the level of the individual film, but may have, for example, ideological reference points. Kirkham and Warren (1999:91) point out in relation to the 1994 adaptation of *Little Women* that the filmmakers added material to it in order to bring out the so-called advanced views of the Alcott family on women’s rights and other similar issues. In other words, here the inventions serve a political or an ideological end. In such cases, they are not necessarily fulfilling the above-presented functions put forth by Seger (1992). Indeed, Kirkham and Warren (1999:92) indicate that the inventions in *Little Women* “are not always dramatically or cinematically interesting” as many of the feminist issues are put forth in actor Susan Sarandon’s monologues. These additional elements do not exist in the novel, yet they have some historical resonance since the “feminist points” present in the adaptation were allegedly “espoused by Alcott” (ibid.) Therefore, inventions in film adaptations may also serve as a biographical reference to the author as in the case of the *Little Women*.

Inventions, however, need not always have a clear function as such. Sometimes they are incorporated because they *can* be incorporated. For example, the budget available to filmmakers might facilitate an invention that was forced to be left out from the source text. This case applies to stage plays rather than, for example,

novels. Indeed, the film adaptation of the stage play *Driving Miss Daisy* included a scene with two police officers that the playwright/adaptor Alfred Uhry wanted to have already in the play but could not include it there because they could not afford to pay for two more actors to play such small roles (Seger 1992:46). In the case of stage play adaptations then, the much larger budget of films allows, in fact, *more* artistic freedom – contrary to the oft-expressed claims about the “predatory” motion picture industry and its “commercial demands” that place a work of art under a threat.

2.4 The Other Side of the Fence: General Textbook Advice for Adaptors

The present research being conducted under a Creative Writing programme, one cannot dismiss the advice given to aspiring adaptors by textbook writers. In general, it seems that those doing the actual adaptations themselves take the issue of invention much less passionately than various adaptation critics and many of the theorists above. The 1995 *Pride and Prejudice* adaptor P.D. James’ (as quoted by Sheen 2000:16), for example, asserts that invented scenes could be seen as a negative element only if they replaced necessary scenes present in the source material. In other words, James suggests that if the adaptation works as a film which succeeds in conveying the source text story (i.e. none of the ‘necessary’ scenes – which is in itself a subjective consideration – have been deleted), inventions cannot be regarded as “worsening” the adaptation.

Some of the views that could have been presented under this heading have already been included above, namely Seger’s (1992) views in section 2.3 Functions of Inventions. I will refrain from presenting her pragmatic views again, but this is not to dismiss their importance. On the contrary, many of the views put forth below also reflect Seger’s observations. In this section, I will mainly concentrate on advice from Brady (1994), McKee (1997), but also Seger (1992) in terms of points not expressed above already.

First of all, unlike many of the adaptation critics and theorists, the writers of film adaptation textbooks do not regard textual fidelity as a desired outcome of the adaptation process. Indeed, Brady (1994:4) and Seger (1992:8) (as well as Asheim 1949:136) point out that adaptors are under no obligation to be faithful to the source text. Once the adaptors acquire the rights to make an adaptation, they are “permitted

to employ any changes, alterations, or innovations in the process” (Brady 1994:4). Brady (ibid.) maintains that the screenwriter “may even decide to use no more than the basic idea of a novel”. According to him (ibid.), the adaptor’s sole purpose is to turn a story into best possible film.

In addition, Asheim (1949:136) concludes that the *immediate* influence on film adaptation is the artistic consideration, but the *ultimate* influence is the audience, the adaptor seeking to affect it emotionally and intellectually. Therefore, according to Asheim, film adaptation is an artistic enterprise by the adaptor and aimed at an audience. Seger (1992) echoes these sentiments. Furthermore, she adds that the sole case of adaptation where invention is *not* allowed is the case of docudrama, i.e. a dramatisation based on a true-life story (Seger 1992:214). Therefore, from the adaptor’s point of view there are no obligations to pursue textual fidelity with adaptations made of any type of fiction.

Consequently, invention is regarded as a natural part of film adaptation. Brady (1994:23) argues that every adaptation is built on a plot “that is the screenwriter’s own invention”. What Brady means by this, is that the plot equals the manner in which the adaptor recreates the story dramatically, rearranging the chronological story so as to “hold the unswerving attention of the audience” (ibid.).⁷ Here, then, invention applies to no less than the whole structure of the film.

Moreover, Seger (1992:3) points out that adapting a short story “demands adding subplots, adding characters, and expanding scenes and story lines”. Additions include also relationships and backstories for the characters to make them fuller (Seger 1992:3). At this point, Seger (1992:2-4) conflates adaptation in rather simple terms into additions (when adapting a short story) and omissions (when adapting a novel). Clearly, the *length* of the source text does not dictate the need for inventions. Rather, we are talking about substance, the aims of the adaptor and the requirements of the story. Indeed, Seger (1992:2) herself points out that rarely the adaptation begins or ends where the source text story begins or ends. That is to say, the adaptor does not take the source text as being complete, but subtracts from or adds to it what is necessary to tell a story (and not necessarily *the* story – as in the case of the adaptor, for example, switching the main character, the story itself will change dramatically).

⁷ Brady echoes McFarlane’s (1996:23) view according to which the story is transferable to screen, but the plot is not.

Compared to both adaptation theorists and film theorists in general, who have a tendency to dismiss the aural elements in film, adaptors themselves address dialogue extensively in their accounts on film adaptation. From the screenwriters' point of view, dialogue is one of the most important aspects of film (even "sacred", see Cole and Haag 1999:87) and indeed, it takes the clearest prominence in screenplays. In a similar vein, film adaptation guide books talk about dialogue at length, also as it relates to invention. Brady (1994:205) maintains that films convey their stories through action and dialogue, whereas often most of the story material in a novel is not presented through dialogue but through narration. Therefore, in such cases (amongst others), the adaptor needs to invent the dialogue that will move the story forward.

Moreover, Brady (ibid.) argues that the adaptor will most likely need to (re)invent dialogue in any case because it is not likely that the source text dialogue will contain all the necessary elements "that are required for good [film] dialogue". This view would suggest that the adaptor should examine the dialogue in the novel critically, since it might not work as such on film. Indeed, my previous thesis on dialogue adaptation in *The Green Mile* seems to support this view. In fact, a mere six percent of the novel's dialogue was used as such in the motion picture (Rauma 2004).

Furthermore, invented dialogue can both succeed and fail, just as the dialogue can be good or bad in the source text in the first place. Bluestone (1957:130) maintains that the "Huxley-Murfin additional dialogue [in the 1940 MGM *Pride and Prejudice*] bears an unusual ring of probability", i.e. the invented lines are comparable to what "Jane Austen might have said". Huxley's dialogue, however, was mocked in the 1990s for being "all-purpose Olde England quaint, abounding in cries of 'lawks a daisy' and 'ah, the polka mazurka'" (Bennett as quoted by North 1999:39). Perhaps the reason for this was the fact that the dialogue sounded like 'what Austen might have said' instead of sounding like what the characters in the film would have said.

If the source text lacks dialogue to begin with (i.e. the story is conveyed through the narrative alone), or if it lacks *suitable* dialogue, the adaptor necessarily needs to invent it for the screenplay. When the case is such, Brady (1994:205) advises the adaptor to "translate the meaning by creating dialogue which contains the spirit and flavor that characterize the story". While his notion is a rather abstract one – for what

exactly are these ‘meanings’ and the ‘spirit’ of a story and, most importantly, can we all agree on them? – Brady’s main point seems to be that of internal consistency. That is, the invented dialogue “grows” out of the story itself and the characters that inhabit it. Moreover, Brady (1994:205) maintains that the adaptor is responsible for making sure that the resulting dialogue sounds naturalistic within the cinematic framework (i.e. is credible as cinematic dialogue). In sum, Brady’s view above “naturalises” inventing dialogue when the dialogue is either unsuitable or absent in the source text.

Seger (1992:143) likewise maintains that when there *is* dialogue in the source text, it cannot always be quoted as such on film. In such cases, the adaptor uses the subtext as a cue for invented dialogue. It is noteworthy to point out here that the subtext the adaptor is considering here is the subtext of the adaptation, not of the source text. For when the story has undergone revisions and developments, the subtext of the screenplay does not necessarily equal the subtext of the source text at all.

In addition, McKee (1997:368) emphasises that the adaptor has to be willing to reinvent, and not only dialogue but also characters, events, and scenes. In his view, the adaptor has to rethink the whole literary source in terms of “filmic rhythms” and forget about the possible comment from the critic that the film is “not like the novel” (McKee 1997:368-9). He points out that if the adaptation deviates radically from the source text, but is an excellent film, the critics tend to forget to complain on the deviations (McKee 1997:369, see also Bluestone 1957:114). Therefore, it would seem that film adaptation is more about making a good film than reproducing a book on the screen: McKee (1997) highlights the story and Seger (1992) and Brady (1994) underscore dramatic movement. They are all talking about the same thing, however, and this story, a well-told drama, is the core of mainstream cinema.

One of the motivations for inventions in film adaptation, then, is dramatic impact. Seger (1992:106) points out that the adaptor can make the story more dramatic by raising the stakes. This can be achieved through, for example, adding a love interest (which acts also as a means of dimensionalising the main character and adding conflict) or, as the case was in *It’s a Wonderful Life* (1946), through showing to the viewers George’s “desire to see the world” and putting his “reputation on the line” (Seger 1992:106, 123). Moreover, the adaptor made the brother a war hero, thus rendering him more interesting and important, and the adaptation turned “George

more despairing, the uncle more incompetent, Mary more concerned, the parents more despondent, [and showed] the town in a more desperate situation” (Seger 1992:106).

If the richness of certain character qualities or situational pressures is not enough in the source text, the adaptor invents the higher stakes in order to bring out the drama more. The adaptor adds more conflict, makes main characters more active, brings their emotions more to the fore, places the characters to situations they only talk about in the source text, invents details to add more depth to the characters and so forth (Seger 1992:134). As Asheim (1949:109-110) points out, individuals are affected differently by cinema and literature, and they expect different things from a film than they do of a novel. As concluded above, what works in a book does not necessarily work in a film.

Above, I have presented a concise look at invention in film adaptation ranging from theory to practice and from negative remarks to positive statements. In the present thesis, I seek to define, first of all, the relative quantity of inventions in the case of *The Green Mile*, but also to uncover the functions and possible motivations behind them in this particular adaptation. This will hopefully shed light on mainstream cinema narration (as well as popular literature) and the different ways filmmakers, as opposed to literary authors, seek to evoke pleasure in the viewers. Most importantly, what differentiates my study from the previous ones presented above is that the present thesis deals with a literary text which is not considered a classic. Presumably, examining a popular novel adaptation will yield some interesting results that possibly imply certain issues with regards to storytelling also in the realm of popular literature.

Most importantly, the work of the adaptor is under scrutiny here. At this point, my hypothesis is that many of the inventions in *The Green Mile* contribute to the sense of unity within the structure of the film and render the protagonists perhaps more likeable while making the antagonistic forces in the story more menacing. I am also expecting to find many of the functions assigned to inventions in the above views also in the case of *The Green Mile*. An aspect of special interest is the quantitative scope of the inventions as well, not only the qualitative one.

Before moving on to the analysis of the extra-novelistic elements in the adaptation itself, however, I will present the data and the analytic framework.

3. DATA AND ANALYTIC FRAMEWORK

Cardwell (2002:68) maintains that when studying adaptations, one should not look for equivalences only, but to examine differences as well. Therefore, overlooking inventions equals overlooking “vital elements” that have to do with aesthetics and meaning (ibid.). In the present thesis, I will concentrate on the differences between the film adaptation and its literary source: the inventions created by the adaptor.

Mainstream narration follows along the Aristotelian lines of story construction where the form plays an important role in producing pleasure. According to Aristotle (as quoted by Lothe 2000:13-14), “plots, as in tragedy, should be constructed dramatically, that is, around a single, whole, and complete action, with beginning, middle, and end, so that epic, like a single and whole animal, may produce the pleasure proper to it”. Whereas mainstream cinema has sought to refine Aristotle’s teachings, much of literature has moved away from it. Even in popular literature the Aristotelian form is not as important or pervasive as in film. This is a fundamental difference between literature and mainstream cinema. When the literary source lacks something related to the Aristotelian “requirements”, adaptors create them through invention. Or when the story could be told better (i.e. more satisfyingly with regards to the viewer’s emotions), adaptors refine the story in the precursor text with both omissions and inventions, as well as other tools in their working arsenal such as downplaying and reinforcement.

Below, I will first introduce concisely the two *Green Miles* by Stephen King and Frank Darabont. Then I will proceed to say a few words on my previous thesis on dialogue adaptation in *The Green Mile* as far as inventions are concerned. Finally, I will explicate the methodology used in the analysis below and clarify the aspects of invention to which I will be restricting my examination in the present study.

3.1 The Two *Green Miles* by Stephen King and Frank Darabont

Stephen King’s *The Green Mile* (1996) was originally published in six monthly installments, which all made it to the *New York Times* bestseller list, and at one point were there simultaneously (King 1996:backcover). Subsequently, the story has been published in a complete serial novel form. *The Green Mile* tells an extraordinary story of five death row prison guards encountering a gigantic black inmate named John Coffey in the American South during the Great Depression. The narrator in the

novel is Paul Edgecombe (subsequently ‘Edgecomb’ in Darabont’s adaptation). The aged Paul writes down the miraculous events of his past in a nursing home and his text is eventually read by his friend Elaine (as well as the reader of the novel). Paul’s present-day life and the act of writing in the nursing home functions as the story frame. The majority of the novel is set in the 1930s when Paul was the supervisor of the E block at Cold Mountain penitentiary, working with his right-hand man Brutus “Brutal” Howell and three other guards: Dean Stanton, Harry Terwilliger, and Percy Wetmore, the latter being the state governor’s close relative. The guards have to put up with Percy, who causes continuous hassle and even dangerous situations on the E block because of his spoiled, selfish nature and highly unprofessional behaviour.

The death row inmates include Coffey, a giant of a man with special, unearthly healing powers. Coffey has been condemned to die in the electric chair for supposedly raping and murdering two little girls. Paul, however, ends up thinking that Coffey is innocent. Other inmates on the block include William “Wild Bill” Wharton, Eduard Delacroix, the President, and Arlen “The Chief” Bitterbuck. An important part in the story is also played by a mouse Delacroix is able to tame and have as a pet. Moreover, there are connections between the story past (the 1930s) and the story present (Paul in the nursing home). The story present has Paul being harassed by an evil nursing home worker that reminds Paul of Percy. In addition, the aged Paul happens to see a gangster film on television and it reminds him of Wild Bill and his devilishness in the story past. These connections underline the negative forces operating in the story.

Adaptor-director Frank Darabont’s *The Green Mile* came out in December 1999 and the screenplay (the shooting script version) was published a month later. The film has a “strong cast”, to quote Stephen King (Darabont 1999b:xi), led by Tom Hanks, and it was nominated for four Academy Awards. The adaptation is over three hours long, almost double the general mainstream film duration. Furthermore, the frame story equals that of the novel, presenting Paul in the nursing home. Indeed, the basic story is very much the same as in the source text, but Darabont’s *Mile* highlights somewhat different aspects in the story (see the analysis below), rendering the film adaptation perhaps less dark and more hopeful. Similarly, there are many significant modifications and inventions that make Darabont’s *Green Mile* fresh and insightful, as the analysis below will show.

3.2 The Previous Study

The present study has its roots in my prior study on *The Green Mile* titled Cinematic Dialogue, Literary Dialogue and the Art of Adaptation (Rauma 2004). The study concentrated on adaptation of dialogue and aimed to reveal some of the differences between literary and cinematic dialogue that seem to surface in the process of adapting a literary work to screen. Consequently, it questioned the prevalent notion of simple dialogue transfer from the literary source to the screenplay and film.

In the previous thesis, I divided the process of adaptation into two stages (which is clearly an inadequate division, yet it served the purpose of the study), those of writing the screenplay and shooting the motion picture. I then examined what the adaptor had done to the dialogue in these two stages as could be deduced from the respective end-products. I identified several adaptative categories in the dialogue, Invention being one of them, the others being categories such as Rephrase, Abridgement and Reassignment. Invention was present in both of the adaptation phases.

Based on the analysis, functions of invented dialogue included the following: providing information (plot-related, characterisational, spatial); adding unity and coherence to the narrative flow; cueing subsequent scenes; creating an effect of naturalistic, spontaneous interaction; closing off a scene to avoid a “dramatic thud”; adding tension or a comic touch to the drama. The overall conclusion was that there are significant differences between cinematic and literary dialogue that examining the process of film adaptation was able to unearth. This, in turn, at least questions, if not refutes, the oft-expressed view that literary dialogue could, or even *should* be reproduced as such in film adaptations. Moreover, the study suggested that dialogue invention is a highly prominent feature in film adaptation. In all, 44.4% of the lines in the screenplay (i.e. 400 lines out of exactly 900) were inventions, and subsequently invention was present in 179 reworked lines in the second phase of the adaptation (Rauma 2004:141). That is, almost 600 lines in the course of the film adaptation process were completely or at least partly invented for the motion picture.

The present thesis, then, expands the scope of inventions by including other types of extra-novelistic elements in the film adaptation of *The Green Mile*, not only dialogue. Yet, this scope needs to be somewhat narrowed down due to the very limited length of the study. The pivotal element, then, is that the present study looks

at inventions outside the verbal expression as well. The premises and the major aim are also entirely different, although one might suspect that inventions in general follow along the lines of dialogue inventions in their functions and effects. The basis for the present thesis is not so much in attempting to disclose the differences between cinematic and literary expression, but to examine the work of the adaptor. Dealing with a mainstream film adaptation of a popular novel, the obvious goal of the adaptor is to make an excellent motion picture. The present study, then, suggests answers to questions related to cinematic storytelling and the principles and conventions of mainstream narration as well. Brady (1994:x) notes, rather humorously, that adaptors can be compared to smart engineers that correct the stupid mistakes by architects. That is, regarding mainstream film, adaptors are seeking to be masterful storytellers, something the published literary authors may not be at all. Therefore, it can be said that mainstream film adaptation seeks out to *refine the story* in the literary source in the best possible way, and specifically in Aristotelian terms. The present study aims to reveal what this might mean in practice with regards to inventions and their functions within the cinematic framework in one particular film adaptation, *The Green Mile*.

The questions the present thesis seeks to answer are the following: 1) In quantitative terms, how prominent are inventions in this particular case of film adaptation? 2) What functions do the inventions fulfil within the context of the film? 3) What do the inventions tell us about the storytelling and pleasure-producing principles and conventions of mainstream cinema in practice? I will seek answers to these questions through both quantitative and qualitative analysis. Before moving on to the analysis itself, however, I will present the methodological tools used in the investigation.

3.3 Methodology

The methodology of the present thesis involves first a comparative examination of the novel, the screenplay and the motion picture in order to identify the extra-novelistic elements. The screenplay is incorporated here for identifying inventions that perhaps existed somewhere along the line, but were never included in the finished film. That is, the inclusion of the screenplay facilitates revealing – and acknowledging – the complexity of the process of film adaptation, and it allows the

research itself to move away from mere unproductive comparison of two end products which may lead to overlooking some crucial points in the data. Indeed, the present research is conducted under a Creative Writing programme, and therefore the work of the adaptor is of special interest on an ampler scale as well. Moreover, the inventions present in the screenplay that are not included in the finished film also tell something about the relative importance of certain inventions: which ones the filmmakers think are dispensable and which are not. For the rest of the analysis, however, the novel is more or less disregarded since the extra-novelistic elements in the adaptation have of necessity been detached from the adaptation's literary source. They have established a life of their own within the screenplay and the motion picture, and this is what remains as the focus in the study. The novel is referred to, however, for some discussion on the different emphases the film and the literary source put on various story elements.

Examining the inventions incorporates looking at the extra-novelistic elements in interaction with the adapted constituents, as it were, the rest of the film adaptation. This will demonstrate how the inventions are incorporated into (i.e. crafted in to be a part of the body of) the motion picture and how seamlessly they work together with direct transferrals and 'adaptations proper', to use McFarlane's (1996) term, that is, those elements from the novel that have been utilised in the film as such or as adapted.

Moreover, the analysis includes attempts at identifying the properties and functions of the inventions. In other words, the qualitative analysis facilitates hypotheses made of possible motivations behind the implementation of the inventions. Here, therefore, the adaptor's work is also under scrutiny. As Kozloff (2000:33) has pointed out, however, the screenwriter's intentions do not always equal the ultimate effect the choices have on the audience, just as literary authors may mean other than what the reader understands from the text. The film medium is further complicated as, for example, the actors bring with them their personas that affect the viewer⁸, and often in a very personal way. As a result, there is naturally no complete overlapping of intentions or motivations and the ultimate effect. Yet, I

⁸ In many cases, this equals powerful subtexts that the filmmakers are able to use to reinforce audience's view of a character or to work against the grain in the film. For example, actor Robin Williams is generally associated with funny and kind characters. Therefore, when Williams is cast to play an emotionally disturbed man, as in the film *One Hour Photo* (2002), this "works against the grain" and the effect on the viewers is stronger because of their defied expectations.

believe that the overlapping is significant enough to make it possible to look at the adaptor's work based on the final outcome, that is, the effect on the viewer.

Because of the limited length of the present study, I have excluded ample analysis and discussion on invented dialogue below. Dialogue inventions, however, are touched upon to some extent (for a more elaborate account on inventions and dialogue, see Rauma 2004). In all, in the present thesis, the focus remains on story components, events, actions, character traits, and visual elements such as locations.

Moreover, I have defined invention as those elements in the adaptation that are extra-novelistic and those which negate an element in the novel. That is to say, I have included major alterations and changes, as well as omissions and delegations. In my view, these can and *should* be classified as inventions as they profess the adaptor's creativity and the different take on the material. Finally, the subsequent function categories of the inventions themselves are formed as dictated by the present data, not as following any pre-existing categories.

4. THE PRESENT STUDY: INVENTED ELEMENTS IN THE FILM

In all, I identified 70 extra-novelistic elements in the film adaptation on the levels of events, objects, action, location, and character. I subsequently analysed each of the elements qualitatively to unearth their functions and hence to discover the possible motivations for their inclusion in the adaptation. Consequently, the elements were grouped into appropriate categories according to their ostensible motivations. Below, I will present the categories, discuss their relevance and present examples from the data to illustrate what effect the inventions have in the adaptation and explain why perhaps the adaptor chose to include them in the first place. See the Appendix (Table 1) for a concise presentation of the inventions and their distribution in the adaptation.

Few of the invented elements in the film adaptation seem to serve only one particular function or aim. Rather, they often incorporate two or three different functions. Therefore, while there are 70 inventions in the adaptation, there are 114 functions for them. For example, while in the novel Percy refrains from breaking Del's fingers, the fact that he does break them in the film, both *characterises* Percy as impulsive, aggressive and violent, and has an effect on an *emotional* level as well

by drawing audience sympathies towards Del. Therefore, inventions are not simple cases of bringing in a component to fulfil one single function. Instead, they are necessarily incorporated into the complex web of other storytelling elements, having an effect not only on the immediately surrounding story constituents but also on the story as a whole.

Next, I will present the categories of inventions according to the apparent motivations behind them as suggested by the data. The categories themselves will help to explicate what exactly happens in the process of film adaptation regarding inventions and what factors seem to be prompting their use. They also point to the direction of issues the adaptor considers to be of importance in film adaptation. It seems, for example, that the regard for audience emotional involvement and empathy is significant. The categories below are presented in ascending order from the least outstanding features to the most prominent ones. Moreover, each of the categories incorporates at least one example from the data accompanied by analytical explication.

4.1 Legal Matters

There is only one occasion of invention that falls under the above title of ‘legal matters’. The invention holds similarly little significance story- and audience-wise as the inventions motivated by what I have labelled artistic choice (see below), yet it purportedly has a reference point in the ‘real world’ outside the adaptation. In short, ‘legal matters’ refers to a change that was supposedly motivated by possible legal consequences that might have ensued from retaining a detail present in the novel.

The pornographic cartoon book Percy is reading in the novel involves the familiar characters Popeye and Olive Oyl. For the adaptation, this has subsequently been changed into a comic book “starring” Miss Alotta Ledpipe, a fictional character (here ‘fictional character’ in the sense that she refers to no existing creation by another artist). Supposedly, this might have been done on the grounds of avoiding possible legal consequences. Motion pictures in general spread out to a much larger audience than books – even when we are dealing with a best-selling author such as King – while the photorealistic filmic presentation affects us perhaps more directly than the symbolic and purely verbal expression of literature. Therefore, the reference

to Popeye and Olive Oyl remains in the book⁹, but another character is invented for the adaptation to avoid a very straightforward presentation of well-known cartoon characters in a dubious connection.

4.2 Artistic Choice

Inventions motivated by what I have chosen to call ‘artistic choice’ are small adjustments that cannot be explained through the story structure, cinematic “requirements” or the viewers’ position concerning the story world and the characters that inhabit it. There are only two of them in the adaptation. Because of the small number and the uncomplicated facets of the inventions in this category, I will present them both below.

First, the city of Indianola in the novel is changed into Vicksburg in the film. I suspected in my previous thesis (Rauma 2004:111-112), where I also touched upon this question as it related to dialogue, that in this case we might be dealing with the filmmakers’ personae affecting the change. That is, there might be a Vicksburg somewhere that is meaningful to the actor, for example. Indeed, the name of the city is Indianola in the screenplay, and hence it was changed no sooner than during the filming, suggesting that a person other than Darabont might have originated the invention. Thus, the name of the city was changed, perhaps much to the effect of director Renny Harlin using Finlandia Vodka or the Finnish flag in his films: to underline a personal affiliation or interest.

Second, while in the novel both Harry and Brutal are bachelors, only Brutal is so in the film. In other words, Harry has been given not only a marriage but also two or more children (Paul’s line “Harry’s kids are all married” (screenplay p.89) and “Harry’s girls all married” in film). There is no other clear motivation for such a small change (i.e. it does not meet plot requirements, affect audience emotional involvement etc.) than the adaptor’s personal expression and view of the character. In other words, it seems that the change is not “directed at an audience” with an obvious function in mind.

⁹ King is especially known for his references to real products, people and events in his stories.

4.3 Mainstream Cinema Conventions

The mainstream cinema conventions – regarding, for example, the classical story design with the three-act structure and single active protagonist – play a part in only three of the extra-novelistic elements in *The Green Mile*. The small number of convention-related inventions is perhaps somewhat surprising, considering the general views on film adaptation according to which turning a literary story into a cinematic one involves “squashing the literary narrative into the standard Hollywood structure”. Yet, the conventions do play a part in film adaptation.

The convention-related inventions in *The Green Mile* have to do with either making the main character’s position more central to the story or adjusting the ending so that it is perhaps more hopeful rather than gloomy as in the novel. Indeed, the latter adjustment repeats the practice Asheim (1949:152-154) described already half a century ago: film adaptation tends to render the ending to be perhaps more positive than in its literary source. In short, generally in mainstream cinema the story ends with an affirmative note.¹⁰ In the present case, this is reached through allowing Mr. Jingles the mouse to live on. In the novel, the mouse dies at the end and Elaine and Paul bury him, whereas the film ends with a shot on the happily sleeping old mouse, thus ending the adaptation on a more hopeful note, despite the sadness and even desperation that Paul is feeling at the end of the film. Moreover, the overall ending of the adaptation is a tighter dramatic construct than in the book, thus avoiding an anticlimax. King’s novel has a more disintegrated ending dealing with both the events on the Mile in the past and the relationship between Paul and Elaine in the nursing home as well as the death of Paul’s wife Jan, but the adaptation excludes the particularities of Jan’s demise. Indeed, Thomas (no date given) points out that Darabont created a more emotionally rewarding experience when he “[improved] the novel’s two endings”. This, indeed, follows the conventions of mainstream cinema and it being a unified whole.

Another example of mainstream cinema conventions affecting the adaptation is the placement of Paul, the main character, in charge of Coffey’s execution. The novel has Brutal supervising the last execution (he also supervises the first execution, that of Bitterbuck’s, as in the film). This sudden and unexplained change may have

¹⁰ Note that this does not automatically mean the so-called ‘happy ending’. In the case of *The Green Mile*, for example, the ending is not a happy one as such: everyone Paul loves has died and he himself is left wishing for his own death.

prompted some viewers to wonder as to why Paul was suddenly in charge of Coffey's execution instead of Brutal. The delegation of the job from Brutal to Paul, however, is explainable through storytelling conventions according to which the story should have an active protagonist that plays a crucial and active part in the film's climax (see, for example, McKee 1997). Therefore, in order to avoid splintering the focus of the film between two major characters, the adaptor switched the roles of Paul and Brutal in the climactic scene. Similarly, in the same scene, the second-in-charge (i.e. Paul in the novel, Brutal in the film) does not step in to utter the final words "roll on two" that initiate the electrocution. In short, according to the storytelling conventions, the outcome of the climax needs to be in the hands of the main protagonist.

In sum, mainstream cinema conventions do play a part in the present case of film adaptation as well, but only to a small extent. The literary source for the present adaptation is a popular novel by an author often claimed to be a "masterful storyteller". Perhaps because King is a proficient storyteller, the film adaptor does not need to readjust the story in the novel to such an extent many other literary sources prompt the adaptor to do. Asheim's (1949:114) study, for example, included an adaptation of *The House of Seven Gables* (1940), in which the filmmakers felt the need to invent 83 percent of the scenes in the film, and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1941) where 80 percent of the scenes were inventions. Compared to this, and many other adaptations, the present case required very few extra-novelistic elements related to principles of Aristotelian storytelling.

4.4 Information and Exposition

I identified four information/exposition inventions in the adaptation. Again, because of their rather uncomplicated nature, they will all be presented below.

The first two short scenes in the film are both inventions: Paul, having woken up from a disturbing dream, washes his face, combs his hair and, in the next scene, goes on to have breakfast in the nursing home, greeting fellow residents along the way. The scenes tell the viewer where we are, who the man we are watching is (in a very short time we find out his whole name, learn about his stance among the elderly people in the nursing home, learn about his relation to Elaine and so on). In the novel, the narrator (Paul) gives the reader details of the nursing home bit by bit over

the course of the book. The adaptation, however, offers the viewer a concise package of information in the form of initial exposition.

Another example involving informational/expositional inventions is the film's third scene, set now in the 1930s past where Paul is trying to urinate in the prison block's tiny bathroom. The audience learns how painful the bladder infection is for Paul and this prepares us for the subsequent events. In the novel, the narrator describes the pain to the reader, whereas in the adaptation we are presented with the suffering man.

The last invention in the category concerns Paul learning from Coffey the true identity of the rapist/murderer near the end of the film. In the novel, Paul finds out the real murderer himself by reading newspapers and putting two and two together. In the adaptation, however, Coffey reveals the course of events as he takes Paul's hand and passes his magical knowledge – as well as the special “life force” – on to him. One of the functions of this invention is indeed information: as Paul learns the truth, so does the audience. The viewers see what Paul sees as he takes Coffey's hand, and we are led through the events leading to the death of the Detterick girls in a dreamlike, slow and echoing flashback.

While literature has the narrator explaining and interpreting the story world to the reader, film conveys the information visually, aurally, and verbally (see Kozloff 2000:17). Exposition is always also information; it is information about the place, the time, and the characters. Much like we do in real life, we observe the characters in a film and deduct from their behaviour what goes on inside their heads and hearts. Literature often tells us this directly through the narrator accessing a character's thoughts, for example, but film viewers infer this information from actions, words uttered and left unsaid, gazes, and gestures. We might be what we eat, but we are also what we *do*. This often comes to the fore in film adaptations and inventions that dramatise to us what we need to know.

4.5 Action

The present category includes instances of dramatisation as such, as they serve the aims of additional action. While some might claim that adding to action is automatically also adding to visuality (on the grounds that action is visual), I have divided inventions further into those that seem to emphasise action, and into those that seem to accentuate visuality. Below, in 4.7 I will discuss inventions that fall into

the latter category, i.e. where they serve mainly visual aims, whereas this category comprises of the former type, that is, chiefly action-related inventions.

In all, six of the inventions for the adaptation have their basis firmly in additional action. Five of the six action-related inventions have to do with turning either reading or writing into verbal interaction between characters or, as in two of the cases, a flashback. To give a couple of examples, whereas in the novel (p.49) Paul reads about Wild Bill's anticipated arrival on the block in a note from the warden's chief assistant, in the film the warden Hal Moores tells about it to Paul personally. In other words, the level of action is increased from a static and mental action of reading to more active scene involving two characters conversing. Similarly, the frame story of the events taking place on the Green Mile is dramatised, if you like, from the act of Paul writing his account into Paul relating the events to his friend Elaine in a conversation.

Furthermore, regarding the flashback inventions, as mentioned above, whereas in the novel Paul finds out the real rapist-murderer mainly by reading old newspapers and pondering the case in his own head, in the film, Coffey reveals the true identity of the killer to Paul. This happens through a supernatural "exchange of thoughts", the men touching hands and the knowledge flowing from Coffey to Paul's consciousness. All this is dramatised for the viewers in the form of a dreamlike flashback.

There is nothing to say the film adaptation could not have retained the way the identity of the killer was revealed in the literary source. Yet, the adaptor chose to implement the modifications, and at the same time make most of the target medium's possibilities, some of its strongest qualities indeed being the ability to present movement and action.

4.6 Thematic Concerns

Seven of the 70 inventions have to do with thematic adjustments. The inventions in this category grow out of the fact that King and Darabont's thematic concerns are somewhat different. While King seems to highlight the evil and the dark forces operating in people, Darabont offers a more hopeful look at life. Below, I will present three examples in order to show typical instances of theme-related inventions.

First, one of the inventions has to do with the religious imagery present already in the literary source. Darabont further enhances it by a minute but not insignificant invention: renaming an absent character Dr. Sadler (novel, p.45) Dr. Bishop (see screenplay, p.23). The rest of the thematic inventions, however, are more significant in the ampler context of the film. The adaptation, for example, introduces a different film that has an upsetting effect on Paul in the beginning of the story both in the novel and in the film. In the novel, Paul sees the film *Kiss of Death* (1947) in the nursing home, and the film upsets him because it reminds Paul of an inmate named Wild Bill and his devilishness. In the adaptation, however, the film the aged Paul sees is *Top Hat* (1935) (note that simultaneously the story time frame necessarily changes from the year 1932 in the novel to 1935 in the film). *Top Hat*, in turn, reminds Paul of Coffey in the adaptation, not Wild Bill. The changing of the film repeats Darabont's thematic concerns, turning the focus away from the evil and towards the good. On the most basic level, the respective film choices alone (the gloomy *Kiss of Death* as opposed to the light dance scene in *Top Hat* with the song 'Cheek to Cheek') reveal their personal views of the story world. In addition, the religious implications in the adaptation are further enhanced through the choice of film. In the adaptation, Coffey remarks, as he is watching the dance scene: "Why, they's angels. Angels. Just like up in heaven..." (see screenplay, p.118), suggesting that the inmate with the miraculous healing abilities has perhaps caught a glimpse of heaven itself at some point.

Perhaps the most important of the thematic inventions is that the mouse, Mr. Jingles, does not die in the film as he does in the novel. Both in the novel and in the film Mr. Jingles disappears from the characters' lives for a while after Del's execution. He also returns after some time in both King (one day Paul finds him lying on his kitchen steps, p.522) and Darabont (the mouse comes back to the Mile, see screenplay, p.127). Nonetheless, the novel has the mouse die close to the end and Paul and his friend Elaine bury him. The film, however, ends with an image of the old mouse sleeping in his cigar box. The result of the change is that the whole outlook of the story changes from pessimistic and dark to somewhat brighter – despite the fact that Paul, the main character, has lost everyone dear to him and is left wishing his own death in the film adaptation as well. Darabont's message is thence that even though life is often unfair and frequently painful, there is still always a spark of hope. In the novel, the hope and the innocence die with Mr. Jingles.

4.7 Visuality

The inventions under the heading ‘visuality’ share the function of avoiding visual tedium that would have ensued had the adaptation followed more closely to the literary source. In all, inventions in this category include changing locations, dramatising static action such as reading or writing into conversation, thus making it visually more “enticing”, and moving away from an unnecessarily repetitive pattern present in the literary source. In all, there are eight inventions which can be considered to be making the material visually more interesting for the viewer.

As Asheim (1949:125) points out, whereas literary texts suffer much less if the events take place in monotonous surroundings, films tend to move around more and present various kinds of environments for the story events. Indeed, it seems that just as verbal redundancy is generally avoided in literature (naturally excluding obvious stylistic and/or thematic aims, such as Samuel Beckett’s repetitive patterns, for example), visual redundancy is, in turn, eluded in mainstream film (again, excluding stylistic and/or thematic issues related to repetition). In the present case, most of the eight inventions motivated by visual demands share a common direction: movement from indoor locations to outdoor ones. Below, I will give four examples to demonstrate this type of visual invention and the other kinds of changes the adaptor chose to implement related specifically to visuality.

In the case of *The Green Mile*, the adaptor uses the possibility of introducing open spaces whenever possible. This is because the story, for the most part, takes place in the penitentiary E block, its cells, the head guard’s office, the execution chamber, and the cramped-up space of the restraint room.

First, the literary scene in which Paul and his men discuss Coffey and his healing abilities and in which Paul lets the men know he suspects Coffey is innocent takes place in the kitchen of the Edgecombe household (novel, p.324). In the film, however, the lunch is served out in the backyard, thus giving the audience “some fresh air” amidst being confined, predominantly, to the prison block (see screenplay, pp.87-90). The stifling summer heat boiling inside the prison building, the guards in their heavy uniforms, and the windowless surroundings in the prison are replaced by sunshine and a gentle breeze as well as the guards in their white, light shirts. Similarly, the scene involving Paul gaining information on Coffey (screenplay, pp.16-22) is taken from the prison library where Paul reads old newspapers (novel,

p.23ff), out to the sunny prison yard where he reads the report on Coffey while sitting on the bleachers.

Furthermore, there are inventions that realise 'visuality' in other ways. For example, the novel has the prison guards in blue uniforms, but the uniforms in the film are black.¹¹ The change for the adaptation was presumably motivated by a couple of factors. First, black has traditionally been considered more stylish (here relating to audience) and authoritative (the power hierarchy between inmates and guards) than blue. Indeed, Darabont wanted to highlight the gap between Coffey and Paul, an inmate and a guard, by putting the guards in uniforms in the first place, just as King had done, rather than going for strict, historical realism (Warner Bros. 1999, n.p.). Second, the change has a reference point in the present as well, the audience supposedly associating the prison guards with the law enforcement dressed in black in the United States today. The small change affects the whole look and feel of the film, not to mention the standing of the guards in relation to the inmates, and consequently, in relation to the audience.

Moreover, visual tedium is avoided through inventing another way of reminding the audience of Paul's painful urinary infection. In the novel, Paul goes to the bathroom after the violent arrival of Wild Bill to the Mile, and the reader is thus reminded of his illness (novel, p.178). In the film, however, Paul collapses on the floor as soon as the other guards leave the Mile, conveying to the viewer the extreme pain he is feeling (a prison guard lying on the floor of his block is outlandish) and, at the same time, adding a slightly humorous touch to the scene. Hence, the invention here erases the repetitive pattern of Paul going to the bathroom present in the novel and presents a visually varied solution to the audience reminder of the character's physical pain.¹²

The inventions under the heading 'visuality' do not serve the plot nor do they have any other significant larger-scale effects on the story itself. Yet they are important because of aesthetical reasons: the majority of them provide a break from the abundance of interior scenes that make up most of the film.

¹¹ In reality, prison guards in the 1930s United States wore no uniforms at all but were dressed in suits or khaki trousers and shirts (Warner Bros. 1999, n.p.).

¹² See Asheim (1949:132) for retained repetition reducing dramatic impact in film adaptations.

4.8 Tension

Inventions are used to play with the story's tension levels in eight cases. This is achieved through effective juxtapositioning of scenes, dialogue, opening gaps in the narration, but also through adjusting or adding to action. It is worth pointing out that camera movement, editing, music, and sound effects play a very significant role in creating the sense of heightening tension. The present thesis, however, concentrates less on the director and the cinematographer's work and more on the screenwriter's. Therefore, the elements relating to tension included in the study are more of story components than camera effects as such. I will put forth three examples to illustrate some of the most prominent types of invention that have to do with enhancing tension in the adaptation.

The first example involves an uncomplicated invention that manifests itself in the form of a few lines of dialogue uttered by Coffey. In the novel (p.158), Coffey does not sense that something will go wrong when the new inmate Wild Bill arrives to the Mile. In the adaptation, however, he has the ability to sense the impending danger. Consequently, Coffey says quietly, seemingly more to himself than directly to Paul, "Careful. Careful" (see screenplay, p.47). As a result, Coffey's unease and agitation becomes both Paul and the audience's agitation. Hence, we as well know that something is about to happen; regardless of the fact that we have been shown that Wild Bill is "doped to the gills" (as Harry, one of the guards escorting the inmate, puts it) by the mental hospital nurses before Bill's transfer to the prison (see screenplay, p.45). Coffey's warning, however, makes the audience suspect that Wild Bill is perhaps pretending. Hence, this foreshadowing works efficiently to increase tension in the scene.

Interestingly, there is equivalent foreshadowing in the novel as well. In fact, we are told first that there was something about to happen that day that was worse than Paul could have imagined. Then we are told that Dean has a rasping voice and bruises around his neck once the whole affair is over. Subsequently, we are told that the event that took place was so dangerous that Dean could have died – and *finally*, we receive an account of what happened: Wild Bill tried to strangle Dean (novel, pp.152-160, 172-174). The adaptor, however, chose to implement the foreshadowing differently in the motion picture.

According to Asheim (1949:131), events are often made more vivid in the adaptation by juxtapositioning scenes by highlighting their similarity or the contrast between them. In addition, elements within a single scene can be juxtapositioned as to produce a stronger effect. Such is the case with the invented element brought up already under section 4.7 on visuality above. The invention in 4.7 included having Paul lay down on the prison block floor because of his painful urinary infection, and also added the fact that the violent Wild Bill kicked him in the groin on his arrival. The invention, however, has not only a visual effect (avoiding tedium), but also an unambiguous tension-related function as well. As far as tension is concerned, the scene continues as follows: just as Paul has been able to push the pain to background and has managed to relax somewhat while lying on the floor, Coffey calls out to him from his cell and asks Paul to come to him, as he needs to have a word with him (see screenplay, pp.49-50). The result is a humorous beat where the viewer senses the disparage between Paul and Coffey's desires and watches as Paul struggles to put himself aside and to act according to the demands of his profession in a situation where he is at his frailest.

Contrastingly, in the novel (p.178-9), Paul goes to the bathroom after the other guards have left the block and simply goes to check on Coffey afterwards, and this is where Coffey tells him he needs to talk to Paul. There is no tension as such there. In the adaptation, however, the invention of having Paul lie on the floor affects the tension in the scene in a complex way. First, it directs the audience's emotions from excitement (the audience having experienced the suspenseful and violent entry of Wild Bill's to the block moments earlier) to compassion and concern for Paul's well-being as well as to light-hearted sympathy as they witness Paul give in to the pain and forget his "manliness" for a while, resulting in a comic effect. Right after that, the audience experiences the enhanced comical surprise of hearing Coffey call out nonchalantly to Paul, who is lying on the floor in agony, and who responds weakly "This is not a good time, John Coffey. Not a good time at all" (see screenplay, p.50). Therefore, while the result is the same as in the novel – Paul's pain is acknowledged and Coffey expresses his need to talk to him (in order to, in fact, heal his urinary infection) – the movement in the sequence is much greater in the adaptation in terms of tension as well as emotion. The tension, in fact, results from throwing the audience's emotional responses back and forth in the scene.

Finally, the last example in the category illustrates the adaptation increasing the tension by adjusting an action. That is, near the end of the film, Coffey attacks Percy and proceeds to strangle him in order to force the guard to carry the disease Coffey himself had earlier “sucked” out of the warden’s wife Melinda (as he cured her brain tumour). All the while, the audience is confused (deliberately, on the writer’s part) to see a man they thought was good and innocent – yet a condemned prisoner – inflicting harm upon another man, who is, admittedly, a “bad” man, but also a prison guard and thus ostensibly represents of the “good side”. At this point in the novel (p.447), Percy hits Coffey with his baton hard enough to make Coffey bleed. In the adaptation, however, the invention consists of Percy not managing to hit Coffey at all, although he tries. The result of this is that the audience realises that the hold Coffey has of Percy is strong enough to prevent a violent man like Percy to fight back. Therefore, the audience senses that there is a real chance of death for Percy in the situation and, consequently, the tension amplifies.

The inventions related to tension are all rather small in scale, many of them being slight adjustments such as in the last example above. Yet, their *effect* is significant, as the examples in the category showed.

4.9 Credibility and Motivation

Cinema and literature encompass greatly differing degrees of realistic (re)presentation. Indeed, whereas a novel represents, the film presents. Moreover, the novel’s language and the narrator’s mediation have a cushioning effect on the events which is absent in film. Reading about graphic violence, for example, tends to be much easier for an individual than seeing it presented on screen. Similarly, the reader accepts incongruities or illogicalities perhaps more readily than a film viewer, who is faced with a photorealistic, spatiotemporal presentation of people and events.

The film adaptation *The Green Mile* incorporates nine inventions that seem to be motivated by questions of credibility and motivation. Below, I will present two examples. The first one will shed light on the differing requirements of realism in film as opposed to literature. It will deal with what I have chosen to call the ‘cushioning effect’ of language, as well as the absence of spatial relations in literature, and the narrator mediation not present in the cinema. The second one, in turn, includes motivational aspects regarding the characters’ actions. In other words, what motivation a character has for his actions in a novel is not necessarily a suitable

motivation for him in the film. Again, the photorealistic presentation of film and the absence of an interpreting narrator have to do with the adaptor having to reconsider also motivational aspects in film adaptation.

The photorealism of cinema reveals any incongruities that might go unnoticed in the literary source. The readers of the novel (see pp.11-20) most likely have no trouble accepting what the narrator presents them in the second chapter describing Coffey's arrival on the Mile. Here, the reader is guided through the event by the character-narrator Paul, whose thoughts are explicitly noted in the text. As Coffey arrives to the block, Paul is already in the cell and sitting on the bunk, feeling unwell because of the summer heat and his painful urinary infection. Moreover, he is strongly irritated by Percy and wants the whole affair to be finished as soon as possible. Consequently, Paul decides to put Percy's political connections aside for a while, and he raises his voice and gives several direct orders to Percy in order to get him off the block so that Paul himself could finish his business with the new inmate.

In the novel, since the narration "cushions" the reality of the situation, the reader never thinks: "Paul shouldn't do that because by behaving the way he does, he jeopardises the balance on the prison block, which might cause a dangerous situation later on. He should know better than to undermine another guard's authority while there are prisoners present. And why would he be sitting down when an inmate arrives, anyway? That's not very professional of him."

This is, however, what the film audience would be first to notice. Consequently, Paul would seem to them not only unprofessional but also stupid and hence not very likeable. Therefore, Darabont has Paul standing up when Coffey arrives, and Paul is trying his best to conceal his irritation while preserving Percy's authority in the eyes of the new inmate. In fact, Paul does not raise his voice at the other guard until Percy has done the inexcusable act: breaking Del's (an inmate) fingers in his fury – something he does not do in the novel at all. It is then that Paul orders Percy to "Get the hell off my block" (see screenplay, p.12). This, in turn, however, is justifiable also from the viewer's point of view. By ordering the insolent guard off the block at this point, Paul is in fact presented as a firm leader who reacts according to the demands of the situation and steers the events towards a balance and, most importantly, who is not fuelled by his feelings of irritation and physical unease, as in the novel.

Whereas in a novel we deal with one thing at a time as we read on, cinema generally presents to us the whole situation at once. While watching a film, we never lose our perspective on the events – unless the filmmakers wish us to do so, in which case they need to work out a way to divert our attention effectively. The literary narrator can, however, argue against the readers' own conclusions and convince the readers that what they were pondering earlier does not, in reality, matter. As in the example above, the narrator simply ignores the incongruities and moves on with his description of the events, leading the reader by the hand. Therefore, film adaptations need to take into account the photorealism and the spatiality and temporality of the film art: in other words, the simultaneous presentation of different pieces of information.

The last example in the present category deals more with motivational aspects of the characters' actions. In the novel, Warden Hal Moores suggests Paul that he put Percy in charge of Del's execution so that they might get rid of the disobedient and unprofessional guard. This, however, was changed for the adaptation. In the film, Hal does not suggest putting Percy "out front", as the guards call it when one is supervising an execution. Instead, Percy proceeds to blackmail his head position for the execution by telling Paul that if he does not get to be in charge of the execution, the guards will not get rid of him: Percy would stay there on the Mile "for good" and make a career out of prison guarding (see screenplay, pp.39-40). Because Paul thinks Percy will do more harm if he stays on the Mile than if he supervised one execution, he eventually complies with Percy's demands. The above change, in turn, affects Percy's characterisation, making him even less likeable to the audience.

Even more importantly, as far as the audience is concerned, the change facilitates an acceptable motivation for the second act central crisis (the guards sneaking Coffey out of the prison to save the life of Hal's wife Melinda). That is, Hal remains a likeable character – the audience sympathy for Hal would be greatly jeopardised if he did knowingly suggest putting a man such as Percy in charge of an execution – and thus the motivation for saving his wife's life is satisfactory. In fact, the audience wants Hal's wife to be saved because Hal is a good man and, therefore, he seemingly "deserves" to have his wife by his side. Had the novel's structure been allowed to remain, the audience would have thought: "Hal is a cold, scheming bastard who is willing to play with another human being's life in order to get rid of another bastard. Why should good men like Paul and Brutal risk their jobs and their

lives to save his wife's life?" Consequently, the motivational structure in the novel required readjusting for the film adaptation central crisis, which might have otherwise disintegrated into being an endeavour both pointless and risky beyond proportion for the main characters.

4.10 Coherence and Unity

Following the Aristotelian storytelling principles, a unified whole produces the maximum pleasure. Therefore, as mainstream cinema aims for a pleasure-producing story, the unity of the literary story may need some readjusting and strengthening. The film adaptation in question includes twelve instances where the inventions add to the overall coherence of the story. Below, I will present some examples to demonstrate the kinds of inventions that contribute to the sense of unity in the film.

First, four of the inventions adding to coherence are realised mainly through dialogue. That is, the characters are given lines that are repeated during the course of the film either by the characters themselves or by another character "mimicking" the so-called originator of the line. To illustrate, the adaptation includes an invented phrase for Coffey: after he has used his healing abilities, he proceeds to say he is "dog tired" and subsequently reclines to his bunk. In addition to this characterising Coffey as someone who is willing to sacrifice a part of himself every time he does good to others (see section 4.12 below for a more elaborate account on this), it also forms an unobtrusive repetitive pattern that creates a sense of unity. Similarly, in the film Brutal "mimics" an inmate's (Toot) tendency to speak aloud what he does (see screenplay, pp.32-37; note that Brutal's mimicking line does not exist in the screenplay). While Toot goes on to say things such as "Sittin' down, sittin' down" (screenplay, p.32) and "Gettin' to my feet, walkin' again, walkin' on the Green Mile" (screenplay, p.34), Brutal adopts the same pattern when he reports at the same execution rehearsal: "Soaked the sponge" after, indeed, having first mimicked soaking the sponge in brine. This also contributes to the sense of unity between the guards and the inmate. Despite their crucial power disparity, they are connected by a shared goal (a successful execution rehearsal) and the silently-agreed-upon linguistic conventions. Hence, the audience sympathies are more tightly bound to both the guards, who treat the condemned as a human being worthy of friendly imitation, and the inmate(s) themselves.

Second, the film adaptation introduces a scene in which Paul brings to Coffey some cornbread that his wife Jan has baked as a gift for the inmate for healing her husband's bladder infection. While the scene also works as characterising those involved in it directly or indirectly (Jan, Paul, Coffey, Del, and Wild Bill), and as adding a touch of humour by allowing a joke or two, most importantly, it makes possible yet another unifying reference later on. That is, near the end of the adaptation, Coffey includes the "fine cornbread your missus make" in his list of wishes for his last meal (see screenplay, p.116). This, in turn, facilitates tying Jan more closely to the fabric of the story by giving her a bond of a kind with Coffey as well, while in the novel there is no connection between the two at all.

The last example in the category is perhaps the most significant one. It arches over the entire motion picture, pulling together the beginning and the end climax, unlike in the novel. In practice, the invention is such: when Paul asks Coffey if there was anything Paul could do for him before the execution, Coffey replies by saying he has never seen a "flicker show" (see screenplay p.117). Subsequently, Coffey watches the film *Top Hat* along with the four guards Paul, Brutal, Harry, and Dean. In the novel, Paul never asks Coffey if he could do anything for him, nor does Coffey ever see a film.

As mentioned above, the film Coffey sees ties together the beginning and the end of the adaptation. Indeed, the film that upsets Paul in the beginning of Darabont's *Green Mile* is the very same *Top Hat* Coffey, in turn, gets to watch in the story past (but near the end of the adaptation itself). In the novel, however, the film Paul sees in the nursing home, *Kiss of Death*, reminds him of Wild Bill and his devilishness and wickedness. Therefore, while in the novel *Kiss of Death* has nothing to do with neither Coffey nor Wild Bill (other than in Paul's mind, as the case is with Wild Bill), the adaptation tightens the structure by tying a character (Coffey) to the film *Top Hat* in more concretely by letting him actually watch it. In addition, the invention ties together Paul and Coffey, the two major characters in the story, creating a stronger emotional bond between them, and hence also between them and the audience. Therefore, the adaptation foregrounds Coffey, as opposed to Wild Bill who is a secondary character within the construct of the film – and the novel – albeit being significant in the overall story. Again, unity is also the consequence of not allowing the focus to splinter between two characters (here: Coffey and Wild Bill),

as the case was also above, concerning moving Paul to the fore in the film's climactic scene that involves Coffey's electrocution (see section 4.3).

4.11 Emotional Impact

A major category the invented elements in *The Green Mile* fall into is that of emotional impact. One of the reasons for this is undoubtedly the fact that motion pictures are not about regular encounters and average life: they show the viewers the most important phase in the life of the main character. When people go to the cinema, they go there to live what seems like a whole lifetime with the character and experience the full range of feelings over a short, two-hour period. In other words, films offer us a concentration of emotions and meanings. A novel may take 540 pages to do this (as the case is with *The Green Mile*), but an average motion picture generally accomplishes this in just two hours.

In real life, we might blow small things out of proportion and experience extreme irritation over a minor detail in a person's behaviour, for example. Motion pictures and literature work similarly: the smallest of details may incorporate an enormous amount of significance. Furthermore, the large-scale events affect us both in real life, on film, and in literature. It is the *average* of everything that does not move us.

Subsequently, when there is an unbalance, drama happens. In the cinema, therefore, it is not enough if a regular, nice guy meets another normal, pleasant guy and they go out to discuss football over a pint of bitter. In the cinema, the audience seeks conflicts, and the stronger the conflict, the more satisfying it is. Furthermore, as every screenwriter and director knows, after a while, a constant level of tension equals no tension. That is to say, the filmmaker swings the audience's feelings from one end the other. Cinematic tension is a constant ebb and flow of excitement, fear, sadness, exhilaration, happiness, irritation, pity, and other emotions evoked in the audience. This ebb and flow of emotions, however, is not what is necessarily required of a book for the reader to consider it a good one: we might simply enjoy the prose, the metaphors, or the access to a character's thoughts, for example. Again, this is different for the film. We enjoy a film when it constantly surprises us, both intellectually and emotionally.

The importance of the viewer's emotional involvement in the story is clear in the present case of film adaptation, judging from the number of inventions that have

to do with emotion-related inventions. In all, 23 out of 70 inventions (that is, approximately one out of three inventions) is at least partially motivated by increasing or in some way affecting the viewer's emotional involvement. The inventions play with a plethora of the viewers' feelings and emotions: pleasure, excitement, wonder, sympathy, pity, empathy, concern, surprise, sadness, relief, and joy. Below, I will put forth two examples to illustrate the complexity of the inventions that have an emotion-related reference point.

First, there is a time-structural difference in the adaptation that can be considered to have originated from reasons concerning audience's emotional involvement. In the novel (p.13), the narrator states that when Coffey arrived on the Mile, the only prisoner there was Del. Moreover, his pet mouse, Mr. Jingles, was sitting on Del's shoulder at the time. The adaptor adjusted this, however, as follows: when Coffey arrives, another prisoner, Bitterbuck, is there, and there is no mouse on the Mile yet. These changes are supposedly motivated by following reasons. First, Bitterbuck is the first prisoner to be executed in the story (both in the novel and in the film). As grim as the procedure is even if the inmate is a "nobody" to a member of the audience, yet the emotional effect of the execution is greater if the viewer has had a chance to get used to the presence of the inmate for a period of time before the execution. Therefore, the execution affects the viewers more because they have "known" Bitterbuck from the start. Second, there is nothing particularly interesting (in terms of conflict, for instance) in Bitterbuck's arrival to the mile. Therefore, also in the adaptation, we are shown only those entrances that make a difference: Coffey's, Wild Bill's – and Mr. Jingles'.

In addition, then, the audience gets to witness the arrival of the mouse on the Mile without prior knowledge of its existence in the lives of the characters (unlike in the novel, where the reader is told about the mouse already on page nine, whereas the mouse's arrival is depicted no sooner than from page 60 onwards). That is, the audience experiences the same sense of wonder and exhilaration as the characters do when Mr. Jingles enters the story. The adaptation devotes a lengthy scene to the arrival of Mr. Jingles, which perhaps strikes as somewhat odd to those seeing the film for the first time. Indeed, it seems that the mouse is suddenly getting a disproportionate amount of attention in the film; this, in turn, being an effective means of alluring the viewer deeper into the story world and also closer to the characters through the shared sense of wonder.

Finally, the adaptation expands forcefully an implication in the novel: the result is another invention regarding emotional responses of the audience. On page 235 in the novel, the narrator nonchalantly remarks that Percy has an unfortunate last name (Wetmore) regarding his “accident”: Percy wets himself out of fright when Wild Bill grabs him and makes references to wanting to have sex with the guard while ruffling his hair and kissing the guard’s ear (novel, p.233). The film renders this overall incident very closely (but has Wild Bill also lower his hand down to Percy’s crotch to increase his horror). Moreover, the adaptation includes the invention of a short “song” that Del sings after the intimidating incident between Percy and Wild Bill is finally over. Del sings it after making an explicit reference to Percy’s ‘unfortunate last name’ (“Wetmore good name for you”), and the song closes off the scene in a light tone: “Percy Wetmore do a dance, listen to him squishing in his pants”. (Note that the song and the name reference do not exist in the screenplay.) Subsequently, the next scene has Del and Paul discussing Mr. Jingles’ fate after Del’s execution (screenplay p.68). Therefore, the invention(s), again, throw(s) the audience’s emotions from the preceding scene’s excitement and even pity (towards the horrified and then humiliated Percy) to empathetic joy, even sardonic glee, that we feel with Del – only for the next scene to pull the emotions down again as we see Del preparing for his imminent death.

What is more, the inventions (Del’s reference to Percy’s last name and the song) act as a propeller of emotions between the characters, not only as projected at the audience. Del gets a chance to get back at Percy for breaking his fingers earlier, and Percy has an even stronger motivation to make sure Del dies a painful death when he is finally executed and Percy is the execution supervisor.

4.12 Characterisation

Everything characters say or do characterises them. Therefore, characterisation is not something that can be done in one shot and simply leave it there: it is necessarily spread across the whole film (Dyer, as quoted by Kozloff 2000:43). The analysis suggests that characterisation is the most prominent function or motivational aspect to have affected the inventions in *The Green Mile*. In all, 31 of the inventions are affected by characterisational features.

Naturally, characterisation as a motivation is heavily linked to the previous category of emotional impact. That is, very often someone is characterised so that he

or she becomes more likeable and thus it also increases audience sympathy and empathy. It does not automatically follow, however, that if characterisation motivates an invention, the invention would also be classified as belonging to the category of emotional impact. Characterisation is also a way of providing information for the viewer. Once we learn more about a character, we are able to predict how he might act in the future, under pressure, or when he faces death, for example. In other words, characterisation affects the whole way we understand, interpret and hypothesise the film and its world. The present study section closes off with some characterisational examples from the data to demonstrate the variety of inventions that belong to the last category.

The first example involves Paul, who is not able to figure out in the novel (p.127) why Percy would want to work on the Mile in the first place. In the film, however, he understands that Percy is still there because of his perverted wish to witness from up close a man being electrocuted (see screenplay, p.21). This adjustment characterises Paul as being more observant and knowledgeable than in the source text. Moreover, the characterisational invention fits the take on Paul's stance and professionalism he exhibits throughout the film: he is used to working with people and consequently he "reads" them proficiently. At the same time, the invention characterises Percy, who is absent from the scene where Hal and Paul discuss him (see Kozloff (2000:44-45) on character revelation through other characters' speech). The viewers are encouraged to position themselves to him as if to an antagonist: he is characterised here as somehow abnormal and perverse, something not easy to identify with as far as the audience is concerned.

Second, many of the characterisation-related inventions equal separate instances where the behaviour of a character is altered somehow. There are several characterisational inventions that make characters seem more likeable. For example, in the adaptation Hal does not suggest Paul that he put Percy out front for Del's execution (the invention presented in more detail above under 4.9 concerning motivation). This characterises Hal as a kinder man and invites audience sympathy for him. In addition, the film adaptation does not have Brutal hit Wild Bill as the guards hose him down in his cell after the inmate has urinated on Harry's (a guard) shoes. In the novel, however, Wild Bill is stunned by the hard blow ("Wharton ... went to his knees, eyes open but blind", p.211) and Harry proceeds to shoot the water at him right after. The overall tone of the scene in the film is humorous rather than

violent like in the novel. This despite the fact that the surrounding scenes render the Wild Bill pranks (first urinating on Harry's shoes and later on spitting a liquefied chocolate cookie from his mouth onto Brutal's face) very much as they are portrayed in the novel (see screenplay, pp.61-64; novel, pp.208-218). Yet, the adjustment shows the guards refraining from unnecessary violence, and thus they come forth as more sympathetic.

Moreover, Coffey's repetitive "I'm tired now, Boss. Dog tired" is an effective invention that characterises Coffey but also draws in audience sympathies as well. Whereas in the novel Coffey does not get "dog tired" after performing his healings, the film incorporates this element to show to the viewers that each time Coffey heals someone or something, each time he *does good*, he has to sacrifice something of himself. Again, this also repeats the religious imagery present in the story, paralleling Coffey with Christ suffering for the salvation of humankind. Consequently, Coffey is characterised as a being of ultimate goodness: he is self-sacrificing and utterly unselfish.

In addition, in the story (both novel and film), the guards must drug Wild Bill so that they can sneak Coffey out of the prison to save Melinda's life. The adaptation has Wild Bill (Billy) ask for a drink (as the guards are anticipating for their plan to drug Billy to succeed). Wild Bill does this insisting he has been behaving well all day and it is hot in the prison, and hence he deserves one (screenplay, p.91). Consequently, Paul proceeds to mix the previously crushed morphine pills into it. He gives the drink to Bill, demanding first that he stay behaved after he gets the drink as well (screenplay, p.92). The novel, however, facilitates getting Wild Bill drugged by having Paul simply offer Billy a drink on the grounds that he has been "behaving like a human being all night" (novel, p.366). The invention for the adaptation and the adjustments it brings with it affect the characterisations in more than one way. First, it characterises Wild Bill as a susceptible man who is more than willing to cheat others, but rests assured that no one would cheat him. Yet, Wild Bill also comes across as a reasonable man here: his justifications for getting the drink are sensible and he 'behaves like a human being' for a change – as opposed to his earlier pranks – when he asks for the drink. This levels the view on the character and makes him more normal in the eyes of the viewer and, consequently, facilitates greater effect on the audience when the reality behind the prankster of a man is revealed near the end of the film (i.e. Wild Bill is the true murderer).

In addition, the invention leaves Paul, the one who proceeds to give the drink to the inmate, as the one with the control over the situation. From the audience's point of view, Billy "inflicts the outcome" (his passing out) to himself, as he is the one who asks for the drug – unknowingly, of course. Therefore, the blame slides off from the guards' shoulders to some extent. That is, they are, in a way, less directly drugging Billy than if they simply gave the drink to him. Of course, the point is not that the invention is included on the grounds of shifting the blame away from the guards – the viewer is certainly aware that they are plotting and about to commit a crime – but the invention characterises Billy as gullible and the guards as smart and foreseeing. Most importantly, the audience gets a certain amount of satisfaction from seeing the guards' ploy working smoothly and Wild Bill falling into the trap so easily. In other words, paradoxically, the guards in fact seem to be playing a more active role in their plot by the adaptor letting Billy be the initiator in the scene.

Finally, there is an interesting characterisation-related invention in the screenplay not included in the finished film. The invention involves fireflies being attracted to Coffey whilst the guards take him out of the prison to save Melinda's life. The men stand in awe as Coffey plays with the fireflies and talks to them (see screenplay, pp.98-99). The invention makes up most of the scene and it is cut from the motion picture along with some adapted lines of dialogue as well. Possible motivations for cutting much of the scene are various. One of the reasons is most likely time restrictions. The film ends up being just over three hours, which is a very long duration for a mainstream film to begin with. Therefore, all dispensable material – storywise – is undoubtedly to be cut. Second, (and this is perhaps the most important reason behind the cutting) the invention in the scene characterises Coffey as very childlike (e.g. his line "Hey there, little firefly. Where's Mrs. Firefly this evening?", screenplay p.98). This is incongruent with his characterisation elsewhere in the Darabont story. In fact, there is another invention (screenplay, p.60) that suggests that he might not be that innocent/childish at all (Coffey makes a subtle reference to sex – which might, however, also be considered completely innocent remark as well). Therefore, while the invention set out to characterise Coffey as innocent and even childlike in the first place, the characterisation was adjusted in the process of filming the adaptation. Furthermore, what the invention does also in its context is drawing the guards' attention (as well as the audience's) to the unearthly, magical quality of Coffey, and the wondrous effect he has even on the surrounding

nature. This can be considered somewhat redundant, however, since Coffey's supernatural powers and wondrous qualities and their effect have already been made manifest earlier when Coffey brings Mr. Jingles back from the dead and the men witness it, for example (see screenplay, p.71).

Inventions that have to do with characterisation are plentiful in the present case of film adaptation. As the examples above illustrate, they are also varied. Very often, the adaptor's view of the characters is different from that of the literary author's, and this is naturally something that the inventions will also reflect. Moreover, the film medium makes an impact on its audience in a different way compared to literature, as elaborated on above. Therefore, characterisation is adjusted through invention to make characters more likeable, more despicable, or perhaps more complex or varied, as the case seems to be with Wild Bill, for example – all according to the adaptor's view and interpretation of them.

5. DISCUSSION

The reason why most of us go to the cinema is to experience a story that will affect us emotionally and intellectually and which we will hopefully enjoy. Indeed, we have the same expectations as readers as we pick up a book. This is also what adaptors tend to consider as their aim. In other words, they set out to provide the viewers the best viewing experience (see Bazin 1997:21). It can be said that the best viewing experience includes emotional and intellectual (mental) immersion; it equals a chance to experience a wide range of emotions in an intensive, concise period of time. Indeed, if art in general does not move anything in us, not emotionally nor intellectually, it is considered to have failed.

Film adaptations, however, are often treated as if the adaptors' only intention is to 'adapt' and not to express themselves artistically, reassess and reinterpret the text and offer insights and fresh ways of looking at the source text. A question remains, however: if the adaptor's sole aim is to reproduce a novel on the screen as closely as possible, why make film adaptations at all? Would that not be redundant? Following Bluestone (1957:62), an adaptor is not "a translator for an established author, but a new author in his own right". Inventions are therefore seen as a property of the artist

and as tools in the adaptor's working arsenal. The justification for inventions is then deeply rooted in the way one perceives film adaptation and the adaptor's role in it in the first place.

Bluestone (1957:50-51) argues that "quantitative deletions [in adaptations] do alter the originals". This misconception about adaptation has persisted over the decades: the adaptation is treated as if it was inseparable from the source text. Deletions, inventions, changes, commentaries and whatever the adaptors decide to do, however, do nothing to the so-called "original". The literary source remains the same while a new work of art is produced. Indeed, an adaptation never claims to be interchangeable with the source text. The very wording (e.g. 'based on a Stephen King novel') reserves the adaptor the right to re-imagine, reinvent, reassess, reinterpret, and recreate the literary source, regardless of its cultural or ideological stature. The fact that too often gets brushed aside is that inventions exist *in the film* and their functions in that context should be analysed for adequate understanding and consequently relevant criticism. Criticising an invention simply for what it is – an element not present in the literary source – manifests inadequate skills in understanding both film and film adaptation.

Furthermore, a film adaptation is necessarily filtered through multiple consciousnesses. A motion picture is very often a project involving hundreds of people and arching over several years in the making. Often the adaptors work on the scriptwriting on their own, but in the end the final solutions are negotiated between professionals from various fields, all artists in their respective areas, from cinematographers to the lighting crew and from casting directors to set decorators, and from dialect coaches to the director (see Stillinger 1991:176ff). They all have a personal vision of the final outcome that is, eventually, the sum of myriad parts. Adaptors (filmmakers), like any other artists, have at their use an arsenal consisting of their whole existence, no less. What the literary source offers can only be a start.

The present study builds on certain views on film adaptation and inventions different from those presupposed by many previous studies. The principal notion here is that inventions in film adaptation cannot be considered instances of obligatory alterations dictated by the target medium. In other words, the changes (inventions) do not control the adaptor – the adaptor controls them. Indeed, Asheim (1949:87) echoed this already half a century ago, arguing that no changes in film adaptation are inevitable "except as 'artistic necessity' makes them so", the artistic necessity itself

being the subjective evaluation of an individual artist and not “an absolute standard of universal application”. Therefore, it is the adaptor’s creative work as a screenwriter that is under scrutiny here.

First of all, inventions do not exist in order to “compensate necessary losses” in the adaptation process. Likewise, they are not “added visual elements” required in the “visual target medium”, as the implication often is regarding inventions and cinema in general, the presented view neglecting other aspects in cinema such as dialogue and music. As the present study also suggests, however, inventions clearly serve many functions. They are a variety of factors involved in the process of cinematic storytelling, in making what used to be a literary story into a cinematic one. When one acknowledges that inventions are not obligatory, this opens up a much larger window into looking at the adaptor’s work, as well as at film as a medium, and adaptation as an art form. Most importantly, inventions are not single instances or ‘passing whims’ of the adaptor, but parts of the whole that is the motion picture. While I have necessarily treated the extra-novelistic elements above separately, I have tried to show that they interact seamlessly with the organic whole and that they reach out to the viewers with the aim of affecting them in various ways.

Interestingly, when literature seeks to affect us, it is generally applauded, but when a film adaptation does the same, it is often considered manipulation. Speidel (2000:138-139), for example, chose to call Hitchcock’s fast-paced editing and stretching of time to heighten the tension near the end of *Sabotage* (1936) as ‘frustrating delaying’ of the event climax and “shameless manipulation” of the audience. Tension, however, is an integral part of storytelling, and this does not mean that the art of film (adaptation) would replace the thinking subject and the intellectual individual with a passive and ‘merely feeling object’ that is a part of an easy-to-please mass audience. Rather, films tap into those mythical, even seemingly innate story structures and schemes within human beings. Still, a member of the audience encounters the film alone and subjectively. We enjoy the tide and ebb of emotions, ideas and events that are in juxtaposition and in constant change. The greater the amplitude of the wave, the greater the tension – and the greater the pleasure. Yet, this does not mean that the changes within a scene, for example, are necessarily elaborate and obvious, but the large amplitude can equal the subtlest of implications. Even a glance or a single word can swing the emotions from one end to another and create considerable tension.

Most importantly, film and literature work differently in their ways of affecting the viewer or the reader, in creating the waves of tension and swinging the feelings from positive to negative and back, for example. As pointed out above, the level of tension required for a book or a film to be enjoyable is different. As a rule, tension needs to be heightened in the film adaptation. In the present study, I identified eight inventions that had to do with tension. Indeed, none of them lessened it or mellowed a literary scene down. Film and literature work differently also in terms of exposition and directness of narration. Novels, without exception, incorporate an interpreting and guiding narrator, whereas films most often do not. Therefore, film adaptation faces the question of presenting information and exposition in a different way than literature does.

In sum, the conclusion for the present study is that there are 70 inventions in *The Green Mile*, and the inventions themselves form twelve functional categories. Interestingly, the present case of adaptation includes very few plot and structure-related inventions (there are only three of them). This tells something about King as a storyteller (cf. the authors in Asheim's (1949) study). In other words, the literary source already encompasses most of the necessary elements in terms of Aristotelian, classic storytelling. As popular novels tend to be plot-centred, this naturally would suggest that the adaptor has a stronger basis for building a classic cinematic story upon that existing structure. One of the most persistent myths is, indeed, that one would only be able produce a good film out of a "bad" book, and be destined to make a bad film out of a "good" book (Minghella 2004:C3). As director Anthony Minghella (ibid.) stresses, however, the point is whether the source text has a strong story in it or not. Yet, a strong literary story does not make the adaptor's work any easier, as ultimately everything in the source text needs to be thought over again, readjusted, and recreated. This is where inventions, amongst other tools the adaptors have in their use, come into play.

Indeed, the adaptor needs to do a massive amount of work before the adaptation becomes anything. The fact that the literary source exists does not mean that the work is done. The adaptor has to rethink everything from the film's point of view and, in effect, start from scratch: there is a blank page before the adaptor as well. This is so on every level of the adaptation, starting from theme and plot and working

its way to characters and dialogue.¹³ There are differences in how a reader enjoys a book and a viewer enjoys a film (see Asheim 1949:109-110, also on p.20 above). A reader might enjoy ingenious metaphors, wordplay, or detailed descriptions, or perhaps the access to characters' head and their thoughts. The filmgoer, however, might enjoy the ample net of the story (e.g. in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, 2001/2002/2003), interesting camera placements or movements (*Alien vs. Predator*, 2004), beautiful images and landscapes (*The Last Samurai*, 2003), special effects (the *Matrix* trilogy, 1999/2003/2003), music (*Gladiator*, 2000), absorbing visions (*Blade Runner*, 1982), his or her favourite actor, and so on. The “image-fest”, however, is not something that will keep the viewer interested – a good, captivating story with interesting and complex characters is.

The main characters are typically introduced to the viewers in the very beginning of the film to anchor the audience to the story. In all, there are four information/exposition inventions in the present adaptation and three of them are, indeed, located near the beginning of the film. In addition, providing information about the time and place anchors the story as it relates to the world outside the film, and plants a set of expectations to the viewer's mind. Therefore, initial exposition is very important in film, which is a concise art form with speedy progression. The audience needs to be filled in on the necessary information as soon as possible. Yet, as in literature, exposition and information spreads itself throughout the story, not only to the first few scenes. Consequently, breaking a scene or an action from the rest and calling it ‘exposition’ can only be an approximation. Everything we see on the screen is information (about the characters, the story world, or the story itself). Therefore, every invention, as well, is a piece of information.

Well-paced action is one of the features of film narration that the viewer anticipates. Indeed, motion pictures are, by definition, also pictures in motion. The present case of adaptation witnessed six instances of action-related inventions. Many of them simply increased the level of action where it was static but had a potential for (inter)action. That is, for example reading or writing (both acts of a person telling something to someone else) were “upgraded” into conversing (also an act of telling, but with direct interaction).

¹³ My previous thesis suggested that only a very small percentage of literary dialogue is used as such on film. In the case of *The Green Mile*, only six lines of dialogue out of one hundred were transferred as such from the novel (Rauma 2004:124).

Furthermore, because literature consists of words on paper while the photorealistic image is a central element of film, motion pictures and literature clearly operate on very different levels of realism. Consequently, the adaptors take this into account and adjust the story elements so that they are credible, and the actions, for example, properly motivated in the context of the target medium. The analysis suggests that nine of the inventions in *The Green Mile* involve questions of credibility and motivation. In these inventions, the adaptor considers the spatiotemporal presentation of filmic elements.

In addition, while in literature the reader's experience of the narration is hardly affected by visual similarity (e.g. monotonous surroundings or loci for events do not affect the reader negatively), unnecessary visual tedium in film can be costly. Therefore, eight of the inventions in the present case of film adaptation seem to be motivated by questions of visual variation. Here, too, the inventions aim to present best something that could, by all means, be presented as it is rendered in the literary source (see Asheim 1949:121-122).

Moreover, I identified nine cases of inventions which add to the unity and coherence of the story. Coherence and unity within the structure of the film are some of the most important factors in inciting audience pleasure. The film itself, the narration of it, can be as fragmented as ever, but even then – or especially then – the viewer attempts to impose coherence on the film. People seek reasons behind actions and events and look for the ties that bind one thing to another; we seek unity.

Indeed, McKee (1997:7) has noted that the cinema audience's collective IQ "jumps twenty-five points" as the lights go out in the theatre. In other words, the audience knows that everything on the screen has a meaning, a much *more meaning* than the similar words or objects in the reality of our lives, and they actively seek out cause-and-effect relationships. Therefore, when we encounter the *deus ex machina* effect in cinema, for example, we feel cheated and let down by the writer who did not bother to build a resonating structure where everything is connected, but instead flung an easy solution at our faces and said "well, this is what happens in real life". The world of film, however, is not 'real life' although it is perhaps sometimes perceived as such. In the world of mainstream cinema, things happen 'because', they happen 'despite', they happen 'in order to', and the audience knows this. That is to say that film tolerates perhaps less coincidence and incongruities than literature, not because literature was somehow "closer to real life", but because of the different

degrees of realism operating and being expected of the two forms of art. This is why Paul can be sitting down on the prisoner's bunk when the inmate is brought to the Mile in the novel, but he needs to act professional and stand up in the film. This realism, and the temporality of the film form, as well as the simultaneous presentation of pieces of information, the adaptor has to take into account when turning a literary text into a film.

Most of the inventions in the present study had to do with characterisation (in all, there are 31 of them). Asheim (1949:100) stresses the need for the audience's "sympathetic attention" and "empathetic involvement" for the film being able to interest and ultimately produce pleasure and the catharsis in the viewers. Both characterisation and appealing to emotion are important in this process. Indeed, enhancing audience's emotional involvement appeared to play a part in 23 of the inventions in the present study. That makes 53 out of 70 inventions in *The Green Mile* to be affected by either characterisation or emotional functions, or both. The reason for this is straightforward: people watching a film do not want to feel only a little. They want to feel with all of their hearts and experience the whole range of feelings. Very often this is also what readers of a novel want. Indeed, we want art to touch us and to move us. The difference is that while the reader might achieve this in 10-20 hours of reading a book and dwelling in its world, the cinema audience needs to reach the same (or even enhanced) emotional plane in a compressed time of two hours. In this sense, film adaptation approaches poetry: it is an intense compression of information about the environment, the characters and their inner workings, and of emotional involvement growing out of empathy and the viewer identifying with the characters. In my view, this is presumably one of the core reasons why characters in film adaptations are generally rendered more likeable and emotionally accessible (i.e. empathy-evoking).

Generally, film adaptations are scorned for distorting the "truth" about life's complexities by applying changes such the motivational invention where in the novel Hal suggests putting Percy out front for Del's execution, but in the film Percy himself blackmails his position as the execution supervisor. The suggestion, then, is that literature is somehow more "real" and, above all, more "truthful to life" than cinema. These kinds of motivational or characterisational inventions in adaptations, however, are perfectly justifiable through paralleling them not with literature but with reality – and doing this from a very basic and fundamental point of view.

People seem inherently to hope that good things happen to good people and that “bad people” get what they deserve. Indeed, that is why we have institutions such as the law enforcement: we “good” people give criminals, these “bad” people, a punishment for acting against jointly accepted rules and regulations and for disrupting the surrounding society. This idea within human beings carries itself on to the screen as well.

Yet, nobody thinks they are evil, not even the “bad” people: people always find a way to justify their actions somehow. However, in real life – and in motion pictures – we are not mind readers and so we judge people not based on what they think but based on what they do. Indeed, in real life, we deduct from people’s behaviour, their gazes, movements, gestures, facial expressions and words who they are, what they want and what they might be feeling or thinking at any given time. This is also what happens when watching a film. Film acting is primarily acting not with your body as in theatre but with your face; the actor’s face communicates to us the character’s thoughts and feelings.

Moreover, in real life, a person reacts to someone perceived as untrustworthy, violent, or immoral (whom we perceive as someone ‘not like me’) by rather staying away from that person, turning their backs on him and walking away. This happens in the world of film as well. If we perceive the (main) characters as despicable and we are not able to identify with them, they lose our interest, and consequently, the film loses our interest. We turn our backs and walk away. Consequently, the film (adaptation) has failed. If the characters are disagreeable and unempathetic in the literary source, and they are so in the film, it may be a good adaptation if one chooses to define ‘goodness’ in terms of textual fidelity. This, however, does not make the adaptation a good *film*.

As pointed out above, film adaptations are often scorned for rounding off the edges of the characters. That is, grinding off the often ugly or otherwise negative qualities of literary characters. *The Green Mile* does this, as well: no characters are made less likeable in the adaptation, except for the primary antagonist, Percy. Therefore, the characters in the literary source have more less-pleasant or negative sides to them than the characters in the film. Yet, there is a reason as to why literature gets off easier than film with characters that have many negative qualities and who might even be referred to as unpleasant people. This is simply because literature offers the reader an insider’s view into characters’ (or the narrator’s)

thoughts. This way, the characters can, through the narrator's mediation, explain their negative aspects away or at least smoothen them, and persuade the reader that the characters are still good deep down even if they behave in a disagreeable way. In addition, the narrator may defend a character and provide reasons as to *why* character does something negative or even harmful to others, and even if the character does this seemingly unprovoked. Literature can, in fact, work with an unempathetic main character. Film, however, needs an empathetic protagonist (see McKee 1997:141). This does not mean the protagonists could not be 'bad' or 'disagreeable', but that the audience is able to identify with them on some level.

The factors that seem to motivate inventions, therefore, are various. In short, inventions make the most out of the target medium and its ways of telling a story, affecting the viewers, creating meaning and providing visual variety. Furthermore, invention seems to be a very significant element involved in the process of making motion pictures based on literary works. It seems that often there is a sense of the adaptation 'refining the story' that exists in the literary source. That is, polishing it according to the Aristotelian, classic story design. Yet, this is another potentially dangerous conception, since it tells only a part of the process of film adaptation. Film adaptation is, in reality, an artistic expedition that is motivated by much more than simply the structure.

The very essence of the above-mentioned recreating and readjusting of the story that the adaptor does is the fact that the adaptor is a creative artist with a subjective interpretation and a personal vision of the source text. While all inventions are necessarily manifestations of the adaptor's views, there were two inventions in the present study which seem to have no other motivation than artistic choice. It is perhaps that inventions such as these – inventions that cannot be concretely "defended" by adaptors other than by saying "to me, this is the way it should be" – are judged most harshly, especially in cases in which the inventions themselves are significant.¹⁴ In addition, inventions with thematic relevance (there are seven of them in *The Green Mile*) profess strongly the adaptor's own interpretation and idea of the story and its overall significance. *The Green Mile*, for example, witnessed a thematic adjustment from a darker view on the story world (King) to a more hopeful one (Darabont). To be sure, the very act of making a film adaptation offers insight, new

¹⁴ The significance of the two inventions regarding artistic choice, however, remains small in the present case.

angles and new interpretations. The more the adaptors choose to add and to offer new interpretations, the more interesting the interplay between the source text and the adaptation become.

The postulation has long been that cinema and literature share the functional and aesthetical principles. In other words, many of the adaptation researchers hold the assumption that film works the same way as literature, and that the viewers expect same things from films that readers expect from books. Therefore, if the book is good, the adaptation can only be good if it succeeds to emulate the literary source as closely as possible.¹⁵ This assumption is made ignoring the fact that literature consist of verbal language, while cinema incorporates words, images, movement, sound effects, music, lighting, (generally) photorealistic depictions of the surroundings, events, and characters etc. The aforementioned assumption also leads many researchers to slide into asking questions such as ‘How does the film render this metaphor?’ or ‘How has this conditional verb form been adapted?’¹⁶ While in literary studies these questions of verbal rendering are very much relevant (after all, literature consists of words only), their significance in film studies is not comparable. Therefore, adaptation studies has witnessed a plethora of seemingly pointless case studies comparing literature to film and irrationally concluding that because film aesthetics and signification differs from those of the literature sphere, adaptations ‘cannot quite live up to their literary sources’ (see Cardwell 2002, McFarlane 1996 and 2003, Cartmell et al. 1999, and Naremore 2000).

Yet, a dialogue between the two very different media clearly exists. The outcome of the adaptor and other filmmakers’ work, the adaptation itself, is an interpretation of the source text and consequently, this new interpretation has an effect on our understanding(s) of the novel: we see the source text in (yet another kind of) new light. Within this framework, the novel is suddenly more than just text written on the pages and the film is more than just a film. For those who have both seen the film and read the book, from their coexistence, a *new* interpretation emerges. This is a fully abstract entity which draws on both the novel and the film;

¹⁵ Cf. Seger (1992:70), who states that film adaptations rendering the source text too closely may in fact work *against* the “spirit” of the source story, should the adaptor aim for textual fidelity.

¹⁶ See also, for example, Naremore (2000:9), who criticises Chatman’s essay, which concentrates on commenting at length “on the problem of how to convey the tone of ‘about eighteen’ [description of a girl in a Maupassant story] in cinematic imagery”.

the film adaptation itself being a *tertium quid*, something the author and the filmmakers would never have made on their own, as David Cronenberg has put it (as quoted by Zurbrugg 1999:100). People familiar with both the novel and the film might conclude that their own *Green Mile*, for example, is something *in between* those two concretely existing interpretations, or perhaps something expanding completely outside of them both. The two separate entities coexist and the ultimate whole is much more than the sum of its parts. Hence, we are not talking about two wholes anymore, but rather about a dialogue of intertextuality that expands itself outside the boundaries of both the literary source and the film.

What adaptation research clearly needs, then, in this revised understanding of adaptation not as translation or emulation but as intertextuality, is a movement away from the close comparison between the literary source and the film adaptation. The close comparison type of research leads to identifying what the film adaptation has succeeded to transfer to screen and what it has not, generally concluding that the film somehow “lacks” something, that the film is but a skeleton of the novel, as Giddings (2000:38) has put it. Indeed, the research tends to concentrate on the “losses” and brush aside gains and elaborations as – absurdly – irrelevant. Unlike in translation where something is often lost, however, in film adaptation something gets always added, as Wells (1999:205) has pointed out. Including study of inventions in film adaptation research is a step away from the prevalent close-comparison setting.

Yet, identifying inventions *begins* with a comparison between the film and its literary source. This framework, however, is restrictive and thence unhelpful, as the massive number of comparative case studies void of theoretical findings or accumulating practical knowledge has shown. As Cardwell (2002:72) has suggested, the separation between the source text and the adaptation should be made clear and adaptations studied increasingly as films, as independent works of art, and the comparison between the book and the film left with lesser amount of attention. Inventions are perhaps the most fruitful target for research in the realm of film adaptations. They expand the notion of film adaptation to a different plane – that of complex intertextuality.

Indeed, as some researchers have already noted, film adaptations do not exist in a vacuum, nor do they interact only with the literary source. In reality, an adaptation has a wide net of possible contextual orientations. Film adaptations are films and they derive from and contribute to film genres and the art of cinema in general. That

is to say, a film adaptation resonates with other films, regardless of whether they themselves are adaptations or not. The adaptation studied in the present thesis clearly resonates with other films as well, i.e. the filmmaking tradition. That is, indeed, what seems to fuel most of the inventions: the vast net of existing films and their legacy of storytelling that subsequent films again reproduce.

The Green Mile, however, is a rather conservative one in terms of possible complex intertextual references. Yet, *The Green Mile* does also incorporate some references to other films. To illustrate one of them, a rather humorous – but at the same time also quite telling – reference to another film (*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, 1975) consists of a subtle musical cue: “[t]he music played over the loudspeakers in the retirement home as Old Paul Edgecomb first walks out of his room is the same as the music the nurses played at medication time” in the *Cuckoo's Nest's* mental hospital (Wikipedia, no date given). Those members of the audience familiar with the oppressive psychological trap the characters are in in the *Cuckoo's Nest* associate that knowledge with the retirement home in *The Green Mile* (and with retirement homes in general), where the inhabitants may be treated well and live mostly good lives, but where they also lack the freedom they would have in their own homes.¹⁷

In all, the chances for intertextuality in film adaptations are plentiful and, to be sure, their imagination is the only obstacle for the adaptors. To present another example of contextual referencing in another film: a rather recent adaptation *Troy* (2004) is based on Homer's epics *The Odyssey* and *The Iliad*. The film adaptation incorporates a scene, in which Paris shoots an arrow into Achilles' heel, as in the literary source. While in Homer, the first arrow hits its target, in the film Paris needs to shoot his bow several times before he succeeds. There are two main reasons for this. First, the obvious suspense factor: delaying the eventual hit in the film causes the audience's tension to surmount and hence the ultimate climax of the hit swells in effect. The second reason for playing out Paris' archery, however, is intertextual in a rather complex way. What the “connoisseur of film”, a person familiar with mainstream film in general, watching the scene in *Troy* thinks, is not Paris and *his* archery skills. The viewer is sure to think of Legolas and *his* archery skills (through

¹⁷ The reference in the film also effectively conveys to the viewer the underlying oppression Paul is feeling in the retirement home *in the novel*: he is harassed by a sadistic male nurse there (unlike in the film).

Orlando Bloom as an actor persona who plays both Paris and the hugely famous character Legolas), given the significance and the then-temporal relevance of *The Lord of the Rings* (2001/2002/2003). This, in turn, means of course that the archery scene in *Troy* refers not only to Homer and his epic or the Greek mythology, but also to the Tolkien lore, and *not* as it is in the novel itself, but *as it displays itself on the screen*. What is more, it is so regarding specifically Peter Jackson's film adaptation of the Tolkien story, and not the 1978 one. Therefore, the filmmakers of *Troy* are surely aware of the fact that Paris can be immediately linked to Legolas in *The Lord of the Rings*, and are thus able to invoke additional pleasure in the part of the audience who recognise the reference.

Most importantly, had the analysis held the epics by Homer as the sole counterpoint, this intertextuality in *Troy* would have been overlooked altogether, or simply dismissed as a means of heightening the tension. What seems absurd is that while the audience who sees an adaptation such as *Troy* is sure to catch the reference to another film, the great majority of adaptation researchers would most likely miss it altogether.

The suggestion here is then that the academics studying the adaptations are generally less knowledgeable and perceptive about intertextuality in film adaptations than the average filmgoers are. To be sure, it is something the filmmakers assume as well: that their audiences are well informed and experienced in the world of mainstream cinema and television. Therefore, they will not contently stop at the level of copy-pasting the literary text on screen, but they acknowledge the wide range of usable reference points in other films or other art forms or world events, for example, to which the audience has had access. Indeed, the literary source and the adaptation have their separate lives and identities, and perhaps more often than not, separate audiences as well. The question is, then, why should the adaptor under-use the possibilities of cinema and in the name of textual fidelity dismiss the options to deepen the texture of the adaptation through intertextual references and simply aim for close rendering of the literary source?

To sum, inventions and intertextuality in film adaptations in general clearly call for more research and theorising. In order to appreciate the work of the adaptor and the nature of inventions, we need to break down the dichotomy between high culture and popular culture, as McFarlane (2000) suggests. Moreover, while his reference is to breaking down the barrier between literature (i.e. high culture) and film

adaptations (i.e. popular culture), in my view the research itself should incorporate an increasing number of studies on film adaptations made out of a much larger variety of novels. Literature itself is divided into high and low culture (as is cinema), and thus far, popular novel adaptations have scarcely been studied at all – despite the fact that most of the film adaptations made out of literary sources are based on popular novels. Clearly, then, there is a need for research conducted on a wider variety of adaptations, not only those that the academia considers to have been “validated” by their source texts.

To conclude, making a film adaptation is always about the artists’ vision and look on human existence. Creative writing in general is about telling the truth – the writer’s personal truth. As they create their texts, the writers ask themselves: How does the world look through my eyes? What do I find worth living for? Worth dying for? What is love? Where are we all going? What is the true meaning of this?

Adaptors do not set out to tell the truths of other people – those of the literary authors’ – but their own unique truths. Voluntarily seeking to create art through someone else’s consciousness, *copying* someone else’s artwork, would be absurd. Eco (1985:12) says that when the imitation of another object goes to the extreme, the resulting so-called “Non-True” seeks to not only imitate but replace the original (“The True”). If the imitation is very close, it occupies the original’s position and obliterates and eventually wipes out its uniqueness, its Truth. As a result, both the original and the imitation lose their individuality and, ultimately, their meaning. In the end, there is only a void where the words ‘imitation’ and ‘original’ mean nothing anymore. They are both one and the same, neither is exceptional and neither is true.

Looking at film adaptation from this point of view gives an idea about the risks of imitation. To be sure, a film adaptation preserving what is in a literary source as such, not enhancing anything, not cutting anything, not *inventing* anything, might result in loose and ineffectual art, like a verbose poem that dissipates the feeling and rejects the emotional fulfilment of its audience. We expect different things from a film than from a book. Yet, we want to be touched by both film and literature as we are touched by life itself. Instead of obliteration, we should be talking about co-existence, and not of the True and the Non-True, but two True ones, both inimitably singular and unique.

6. CONCLUSION

In all, I identified 70 inventions on the levels of event, action, location, and character in *The Green Mile*. The instances were subsequently divided into twelve categories according to their functions and hence the ostensible motivations behind them, as dictated by the data. The categories were titled as follows (presented below in the order of frequency): characterisation (31), emotional impact (23), coherence and unity (12), credibility and motivation (9), tension (8), visuality (8), thematic concerns (7), action (6), information and exposition (4), mainstream cinema conventions (3), artistic choice (2), and legal matters (1). As shown above, the categories of characterisation and emotional impact were substantially more prevalent than the others, together consisting of almost half of the overall number of functions (114). Moreover, concerns of characterisation or emotional impact touched 54 of the overall number of inventions (70), that is, nearly 80 percent of them.

The substantiality of the first two categories is telling of the differences between motion pictures and literature which manifest themselves in the other categories as well. Therefore, the inventions in the present case seem to suggest that the adaptor takes into account the different emphasis on action and movement in film and literature. Furthermore, the adaptor recognises the different degree of realism in film and literature, and the photorealistic spatiotemporal context of the film medium, as well as acknowledges the absence of the explaining and interpreting narrator in film. All these factors contribute to the requirements on character and story progression, and ultimately on the factors pertaining to and enhancing audience involvement in film adaptations. In sum, the adaptors seek to make the best possible film, and as a result, a number of modifications and adjustments are implemented. Invention is merely one of the possible tools in the adaptor's working arsenal.

Ultimately film adaptations are independent artworks, which, indeed, are considered to have failed should they not be able to stand on their own. Therefore, inventions reflect the consciousnesses of their originators, starting from the screenwriter and spanning on to the actors and the director and other filmmaking professionals. Inventions are perhaps the most interesting faculty of film adaptations when studying the adaptor's artistry. They open up a vast matrix of referential and intertextual focus points. While this intertextual environment has been recognised by adaptors and audiences alike for decades, researchers are yet to explore it more

thoroughly. The present thesis took the inventions as the starting point in its modest way.

In all, there is great potential for adaptation studies to grow, to progress, and to accumulate new information as we take a step away from the close comparison setting between the film and its literary source that has been prevalent in the field for decades. Both the scope of adaptations studied as well as the scope of foci need to be widened. A more objective, aware, and open-minded adaptation research will undoubtedly reveal more of the complexities of film adaptation, and the results will more likely than not contribute to various branches of research from intertextuality to genre studies and beyond.

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APPENDIX

Overall Number of Inventions: 70		
Ranking of Inventions	Function of the Invention	Inventions Affected by the Function
1.	Characterisation	31
2.	Emotional Impact	23
3.	Coherence and Unity	12
4.	Credibility and Motivation	9
5.	Tension	8
	Visuality	8
6.	Thematic Concerns	7
7.	Action	6
8.	Information and Exposition	4
9.	Mainstream Cinema Conventions	3
10.	Artistic Choice	2
11.	Legal Matters	1
Functions in Total		114

Table 1. The functions of the inventions in *The Green Mile* by frequency.

"HEROES NEVER DIE"

From "The Odyssey" by Homer

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"HEROES NEVER DIE"

FADE IN:

EXT. TROY - NOON

INSERT CAPTION: "Troy. A long time ago."

The massive walls of Troy reach for the skies. The air quivers above the dry sand. The silence in the heat of the noon is piercing.

Trojan SOLDIERS patrol the wall. Sunbeams bounce off the armour plates and spears. Two soldiers bump into one another and they both fall off, screaming.

Further away, behind a small hill, there is a bustle: a group of Greek soldiers is pulling a massive wooden horse across the plain. A GREEK SOLDIER looks at the horse, and goes "Huh?" at the sight: the horse's got a second head where the tail is supposed to be.

A SMALL, FULLY ARMED ELITE FORCE stands ground. The door in the horse's belly is opened, and stairs are hauled in for the team to climb inside.

The elite force enters the wooden horse. One of them is holding a burning torch. Another one, a can of petrol. The soldiers left behind pound their shields. Inside the horse, the soldiers grunt: it starts to get crowded.

SOLDIER IN HORSE (O.S.)

Hey! Watch where you poke with that spear!

ANOTHER SOLDIER (O.S.)

Sorry!

On horseback, a GREEK ARMY GENERAL oozes strength and honour:

GENERAL

This is the front line, men! This is where history is made! Peripheries of the battle zone are for children! A playground for pussies!

Soldiers bellow out a war cry.

EXT. BATTLE ZONE PERIPHERY - DAY

INSERT CAPTION: "The Battle Zone Periphery"

A dishevelled, tired, and hungry Greek navy company. Scattered around, the men sit on the ground, gloomy and groaning.

SOLDIERS

(ad lib)

Anyone got any water? ... Where is Athena when you need her? ... Food, I need food... Shit, my sandals are broke... I ate my sandals... No, those were my sandals... Eww...

XANTHUS, 32, a scruffy and tired-looking man gazes across the plains at the yet unseen enemy.

XANTHUS

(to himself)

How many times have we been promised a trip back home?

COUNTING SOLDIER

That would be 748 times now, Xanthus!

Xanthus manages a tired smile.

XANTHUS

Better get prepared for battle. It won't be long now.

SOLDIER

(to Xanthus)

Better start praying for Athena already, priest!

Xanthus sneers to himself and starts off.

COUNTING SOLDIER

(to Soldier)

I thought She only had priestesses.

SOLDIER

Really?

EXT. TREE TRUNKS - DAY

Xanthus walks in on a band of three men gathered by some fallen tree trunks. A chicken "flies" by, cackling nervously.

A big, bearded HAIRY MAN, 33, is building a LITTLE GUY, 29, into a killing frenzy. The Little Guy tries very hard not to weep. There's grunting and face slapping.

HAIRY MAN

Come on, soldier! Kill! KILL!

After a couple more slaps, the Little Guy roars, his voice crackling only a little, and dashes for the chicken off-screen. The Hairy Man turns his back. He winces at the thumps, abhorrent cries, and chicken moans as the Little Guy attacks the innocent bird.

XANTHUS

(to Hairy Man)

Shouldn't he be scrubbing the deck?

HAIRY MAN

The boy has got to learn how not to be a pussy.

XANTHUS

The only reason why you had him do it is your irrational fear of poultry.

HAIRY MAN

It is not irrational! Ever tried killing one? I chopped its fucking head off, and it just would not die!

XANTHUS

It probably died later.

HAIRY MAN

Didn't stay long enough to find out.

ASIUS, 28, is lighting a fire by rubbing two sticks together. If something will catch fire it's Asius' shirt sleeves stuck under the sticks. Xanthus grabs the sticks from Asius and proceeds to get the fire started himself.

ASIUS

(to Xanthus)

Where'd ya get the pigeon, anyway?

XANTHUS

It's a chicken, Asius. I got it from the village.

ASIUS

Won't that get you into trouble?

XANTHUS

It's a bird. Nobody's gonna notice one of 'em's missing.

Teary and covered in bird feathers, the Little Guy returns to the men.

XANTHUS

Where's the bird?

The Little Man is unable to speak. He just points to where he came from, sees a few feathers stuck to his sleeve, and bursts into helpless tears.

EXT. COMMAND POST - DAY

The Command Post is an unimpressive tent just off the scattered-around soldiers. The COMPANY COMMANDER, slightly hobo-ish, is on horseback. The boiling Commander is surrounded by his soldiers, and a messenger squirms under his gaze:

COMMANDER

What do you mean it's not scrubbed?!

MESSENGER

Sir, he wasn't at the ship, Sir.

COMMANDER

(through his teeth)

How many times have I...

The messenger shrinks before the Commander's rage.

COMMANDER

He's done for this time! Time to open an amphora of whoop-ass. Find the bastard!

The man points at two of his meanest-looking soldiers:

COMMANDER

Get me Odysseus!

EXT. TREE TRUNKS - DAY

The Little Guy still weeps, but Asius seems hopeful:

ASIOUS

Who knows, maybe we'll actually get to go home after this one.

HAIRY MAN

Right. Just like we got the promised ride home after the battle against the Cicones?

XANTHUS

The men are exhausted. Soon there will be no choice but to send us home to rest.

ASIOUS

As they say: what can go right, will go right.

The Hairy Man glares at Asius.

ASIOUS

You have to look on the bright side of things. I bet the worst is yet to come.

Xanthus sighs, and the Hairy Man gives Asius another menacing look, but Asius doesn't see it. Instead, he gives a tissue to the weeping Little Guy:

ASIOUS

And you: just think of the delicious treat we get after Caletor comes back with the herbs and cooks the bird.

HAIRY MAN

He went to get some fucking herbs?

ASIOUS

I left him a note about it. Besides, you know how seriously he takes profession.

HAIRY MAN

Zeus Almighty! When I get my sword back from maintenance--

ASIUS

You'll forget your anger when you're enjoying some scrumptiously seasoned pigeon--

XANTHUS

--chicken--

ASIUS

--with some peas a friend of mine promised to get us.

Asius smiles heartily.

INT. GENERAL STORE - DAY

In the gloomy light of the small store, A FARMER with wild eyes is talking to the proprietor.

FARMER

If you hear anything, anything at all, I'm sure you'll let us know.

PROPRIETOR

Sure will do, Boethides. Sorry to hear about your trouble.

The cowbell above the door jingles, as CALETOR, 28, the James Dean of Homeric times, enters the store. Boethides eyes the stranger suspiciously and remains lurking behind the shelves. The farmer accidentally knocks some stuff off the shelves. Amphorae shatter.

PROPRIETOR

(to Caletor)

How'dya do?

Caletor nods to the Proprietor and looks at the farmer destroying the goods as he moves between the shelves. Then he grabs the only (sorry-looking) sweet potato there is left, and places it on the counter.

PROPRIETOR

What else can I get you, son? And sorry to say, there's not much food left on this island, let alone in this store. The war has taken its toll.

Caletor's eyes catch some herbs behind the Proprietor:

CALETOR

We'll make do. Parsley, sage,
rosemary, and thyme.

The Proprietor reaches up to the shelf behind him, knocking down half of the stuff himself while he's at it. He produces the herbs on the counter. The farmer glides closer behind the shelves, knocking down stuff as he goes. He obviously thinks he's the master of spying, but Caletor can see what the farmer's up to.

CALETOR

And have you got some sauce for
cooking a bird?

Boethides stops cold as he hears the word 'bird'. More stuff falls off the shelves. His eyes narrow to slits.

The Proprietor rummages through another shelf, and all but one amphora crash down and break. Finally, he places the one remaining amphora of sauce on the counter. The amphora has a picture of a chicken on it. The farmer rushes outside, knocking down more stuff.

EXT. TREE TRUNKS - DAY

Asius adds wood in the fire. The Hairy Man preaches to Xanthus:

HAIRY MAN

A man like him doesn't belong in the Navy. He's pathetic, has no will of his own. A fearful little weakling.

XANTHUS

You think you saying that out loud helps?

The Little Guy sits right next to them, wiping his tears.

HAIRY MAN

I will spank a man out of him even if it's the last thing I do. He puts the glorious Greek Navy to shame.

There's a jingling sound, as an extravagantly dressed DRAMATIC SOLDIER skips about towards the men. His Conan O'Brien hair quivers as he stops and stands as if he were a star in an opera.

ASIUS

Oh! Maybe it's the peas!

DRAMATIC SOLDIER

I did not come to bring peas, but a sword!

The Dramatic Soldier gives the Hairy Man his sword in its sheath. The Hairy Man pulls the shiny sword out and marvels it.

HAIRY MAN

Amazing.

The Dramatic Soldier swaggers away as the two mean-looking soldiers sent by the Commander enter:

SCAR-FACED SOLDIER

Odysseus?

Xanthus sighs: it's not the first time this has happened. The big, Hairy Man turns to the soldiers, his face hard as stone.

But then comes the reply:

LITTLE GUY (O.S.)

Yes?

Not crying anymore, the Little Guy (ODYSSEUS) puts on his full rucksack and looks at the two soldiers.

SCAR-FACED SOLDIER

Commander wants you.

The big hairy man (BORUS) sheathes his sword.

EXT. SMALL VILLAGE - DAY

Caletor exits the store and squints his eyes at the sun in its highpoint: the confrontation with the enemy forces is nearing.

But another kind of confrontation is just around the corner: four stone-faced FARMERS (including Boethides from the store) stand ground behind their menacing BOSS, who has a sign "Chicken Farmer" around his neck. Their eyes are locked in on Caletor. Caletor stops.

THE BOSS

We need to talk.

Caletor sees the knife in the Boss' hand, but doesn't let it on:

CALETOR

I sense a fruitful discussion.

EXT. BATTLE ZONE PERIPHERY - DAY

The mean-looking soldiers drag Odysseus towards the Command Post. Other soldiers look on. A big and rather scary-looking MEDIC wears a crooked smile:

MEDIC

What did he do this time?

A TALL SOLDIER and A SHORT SOLDIER grunt while struggling with a battle horn. The Short Soldier's arm is inside the horn: there's a blockage in there.

EXT. COMMAND POST - CONTINUED

The mean-looking soldiers throw Odysseus towards the Commander. The Commander is furious:

COMMANDER

Seaman Odysseus! How many times have I caught you not doing your duties?

COUNTING SOLDIER

That would be 238 times now, Chief!
Armour maintenance, sharpening the--

COMMANDER

Shut up!

Eyes flaming, the Commander eyes Odysseus. Xanthus, Borus, and Asius find their way to the Post, too. The Commander pokes Odysseus with his riding whip.

COMMANDER

I've had enough! You hear? You are hereby dismissed from the service of the Greek Navy. You miserable scum!

XANTHUS

Sir.

COMMANDER

Get this worthless piece of dog shit a horse so I don't have to lay my eyes on him ever again!

ODYSSEUS

I've never ridden a horse in my life.
In fact, I'm allergic to them. It's
very seri--

A soldier brings a sorry-ass horse for Odysseus.

COMMANDER

Now get on that fucking pony and ride
it till where the sun don't shine!

XANTHUS

Sir?

ODYSSEUS

We're on an island. Where would I go?

Odysseus adjusts his rucksack and does his best to get
on horseback. He can't quite make it.

COMMANDER

You think I give a shit!? Just get
out of my binoculars!

Odysseus' struggles start to get embarrassing, and
finally two men have to push Odysseus on the horse.

ODYSSEUS

But--

COMMANDER

I am the Commander of this company,
and all living creatures here do as I
tell them to do!

XANTHUS

Sir, I beg you to reconsider, Sir.
We are already severely outnumbered
by the enemy. We need every man
available, Sir.

COMMANDER

(to Xanthus)

Horse shit!

As ordered, both Odysseus and the Commander's horses
lose control of their bowels. An unfortunate soldier
leaves to wipe his boots clean.

COMMANDER

Even you underfed scum of the great
Greek Navy can beat the enemy, and do
so with your left hand!

EXT. MIGHTY ENEMY ARMY - DAY

The lines are clean-cut as if with a diamond. The gear sparkle in the sunlight. A BEAUTIFUL GENERAL (à la "ALEXANDER") rides back and forth before his strong and well-fed men, shouting before-the-battle clichés. His black hair gleams and his embarrassingly short skirt reveals muscular thighs.

BEAUTIFUL GENERAL

Honour! Father Land, my good men!
Gleaming steels, for the King!
Soldiers of Troy! Bloodshed, for
homeland! And, above all, honour!

The soldiers bellow out a stiff HOO-AH! The Beautiful General admires his magnificent troops for a while. Then he proceeds to ride back and forth, his skirt, sadly creeping up. The men lower their eyes.

BEAUTIFUL GENERAL

We shall give the puny enemy a chance
to surrender and save themselves from
a shameful defeat!

A soldier draws his bow with a burning arrow at the Greeks, waiting for the order.

BEAUTIFUL GENERAL

Send off the warning shot!

And the arrow is on its way.

EXT. COMMAND POST - DAY

Odysseus on horseback kicks his heels into the animal's sides, but to no avail. He looks miserable and his allergy makes him sneeze. The Commander attempts to arouse the soldiers to battle:

COMMANDER

Just because you're sick and tired
and hungry doesn't mean that you
couldn't destroy the enemy!

SHORT SOLDIER

Meh...

COMMANDER

Get up, soldiers! By Zeus, I've
never seen as sorry bunch of--

And WHACK! The Commander's sermon is cut short by the burning warning arrow that sinks into his back. Dead, the Commander falls off his horse. Some soldier lets out an excited scream.

MEDIC

Goddamn. I think we just lost our
Commander.

The excited soldier is suddenly less excited. The Commander on the ground twitches one last time.

TALL SOLDIER

What are we going to do now? Who's
leading the troops?

ASIUS

Who's the next in command?

The soldiers all stare at their sandals intently. A soldier whistles while toeing a small rock.

BORUS

Okay, any volunteers?

No volunteers.

XANTHUS

Anyone got a death wish?

The soldiers remain silent. Odysseus sneezes again. His horse is getting nervous.

EXT. SMALL VILLAGE - DAY

A hand holding a knife swings, and the Boss surprises Caletor by stabbing him in the stomach.

CALETOR

Ow! What was that for?!

Caletor is annoyed to be inconvenienced:

CALETOR

Look what you did. I'm bleeding!

The Boss stabs Caletor again.

CALETOR

AAA-AUCH! What the fuck!?

The Boss points at the herbs in Caletor's hand.

THE BOSS

You hijacked and killed one of my chickens.

CALETOR

I did not!

The Boss stabs Caletor again. Now Caletor's pissed off.

CALETOR

A-AA-AUCH! It wasn't me!

THE BOSS

Give back the chicken or face the consequences.

CALETOR

I can't give you back a chicken that someone else ate!

The Boss stabs him again.

CALETOR

Ow! I was told to get herbs for cooking a fucking pigeon!

The Farmers behind the Boss all draw out their knives. Caletor assesses the situation for a second -- and then drops the herbs and takes off like the wind.

EXT. COMMAND POST - DAY

Dozens of soldiers have gathered at the Command Post. The soldiers further away now pay attention, too.

The Tall Soldier and the Short Soldier still work on the battle horn. Turning red in the face, the Tall Soldier desperately tries to blow the horn.

ODYSSEUS

How about we skip the battle? We're all exhausted and I'm sure the enemy are too. If we just--

POW! The thing blocking the battle horn hits Odysseus on his temple and bounces to the horse's head. The animal jumps. Odysseus is inches away from passing out. He lets out a howl of pain right into his horse's ear, further scaring the animal.

A FAT SOLDIER and the Scar-Faced Soldier both notice that the thing blocking the horn is, in fact, a tomato.

They eye each other suspiciously, and finally, like starved animals, dash for the tomato. Odysseus' horse neighs nervously as the two men run past it.

The Tall Soldier and his short friend yell out their excitement about the fixed horn. Some soldiers further away turn their heads at them keenly: what's going on?

Odysseus sneezes twice. Not thinking, the enthusiastic Short Soldier blows the battle horn -- and this is too much for Odysseus' nervous horse.

The horse starts galloping madly -- towards the enemy.

EXT. MIGHTY ENEMY ARMY - DAY

The sound of the battle horn reaches the enemy. Flabbergasted, the Beautiful General witnesses the lone ranger galloping towards them and yelling something.

BEAUTIFUL GENERAL

What the..?

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY - ODYSSEUS

Odysseus jumps uncontrollably on horseback and sneezes.

EXT. COMMAND POST - DAY

The soldiers stand with their mouths hanging open: Odysseus rides on, and to the men, his sneezes sound suspiciously like he's yelling "Attack! Attack!".

TALL SOLDIER

What are you waiting for!? He's
braver than any of us! Go for it!

The soldiers seem doubtful, but only for a second. With a roar, the men dash towards the enemy, shaking their swords and spears like they had nothing to lose.

DRAMATIC SOLDIER

War for territory!

EXT. MIGHTY ENEMY ARMY - DAY

The Beautiful General watches the pathetic little company charging at them. He turns to his men:

BEAUTIFUL GENERAL
Soldiers of Troy! Move foor-ward!

And so the shining army rumbles towards the Greeks.

EXT. FOREST - DAY

The Chicken Farmers have lost track of Caletor.
Frustrated, the Boss screams at his men:

THE BOSS
Spread out! Find the bastard! Now!

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

In the clearing, the Trojan army's sparkling lines are met with the roaring bunch of Greeks. Swords and spears rattle as the Greek company attacks its enemy. A shower of burning arrows downs soldiers from both sides and sets dry tussocks afire. One of the arrows hits Odysseus' horse smack-dab between the eyes. The horse lets out a surprised neigh and dies. Odysseus gets up and pulls out his sword.

Scared not to even look his enemy in the eye, Odysseus swords away against a skilful soldier.

XANTHUS (O.S.)
(softly)
Odysseus.

Odysseus doesn't react. Xanthus tries again:

XANTHUS
It's me. Go fight someone else.

Odysseus opens his eyes and, embarrassed, turns to look for the real enemy. He spots an out-of-breath, FAT TROJAN, and engages in battle with him instead.

Further away, Borus battles a couple of small Trojans. Nearby, screaming Asius does his best to wave his sword into an enemy. On the sidelines, the Fat Soldier and the Scar-Faced Soldier still fight each other for the tomato.

The Dramatic Soldier faces an UGLY TROJAN:

DRAMATIC SOLDIER
Quick! Look! Behind me!

The Ugly Trojan stretches his neck to see behind the Dramatic Soldier. Swiftly, the Dramatic Soldier sinks his sword into the Trojan. Nearby, another Trojan soldier sees the trick and decides to use it against the cunning Greek:

TROJAN SOLDIER

Look! Behind me!

But he doesn't fall for it: the Dramatic Soldier sinks his sword into the Trojan Soldier.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD SIDELINES - DAY

Out of breath, Caletor reaches the battlefield. He sees that he has lost the Farmers. Two soldiers are fighting sitting on other soldiers' shoulders.

CALETOR

It started already?

To his surprise, there are more Greek soldiers than Trojan ones still standing. Two soldiers fight riding on the backs of other soldiers like they were horses.

Further away, the combat for the tomato still goes on. The Fat Soldier is by now seriously injured. The Scar-Faced Soldier triumphantly waves the tomato before Fatty's eyes -- until he realises that the Fat Soldier has managed to plunge his sword through his body.

The Fat Soldier laughs maliciously even though he's obviously dying. The Scar-Faced Soldier cuts Fatty's laughter short by using his last strength to sink his teeth into the delicious vegetable.

With a sour face, the Fat Soldier dies. The Scar-Faced Soldier attempts at a victorious yell, but passes away.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY - ODYSSEUS

Odysseus duels the Fat Trojan, who does his best to provoke him:

FAT TROJAN

You're fat!

ODYSSEUS

What?

FAT TROJAN

I said you're fat! And stupid!

ODYSSEUS

What are you doing?

FAT TROJAN

You're fat and stupid and I bet you can't even satisfy your wife!

ODYSSEUS

Leave my wife--

FAT TROJAN

So you do have a wife? She's probably surrounded by sleazy suitors as we speak.

Odysseus charges at the man, but the Trojan dodges his attack.

FAT TROJAN

Those handsome, smooth-talking players only after one thing.

ODYSSEUS

My wife loves me!

FAT TROJAN

Even though she doesn't believe in you?

ODYSSEUS

Yes!

The Fat Trojan ducks Odysseus' blow and manages to swing his sword so that it rips Odysseus' shirt.

FAT TROJAN

Even though she constantly makes fun of you?

ODYSSEUS

Yes!

FAT TROJAN

Even though she can't for the life of her figure out why she married you in the first place?

ODYSSEUS

Yes!

FAT TROJAN

(halting)

Wow. You're pathetic.

Screaming, Odysseus charges at the man:

ODYSSEUS

I love my wife! I'll go home to her
and I'll show her that I'm not the
man she married!

In a frenzy, Odysseus punches the Trojan's lights out.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - LATER

The field is heavy with post-battle smoke. A few Greek soldiers have been just about buried under a pile of Trojan bodies. A hand holding a sword sticks out:

BURIED SOLDIER

Yay! We won!

Xanthus and Borus find each other amidst the destruction, exhausted.

XANTHUS

You're alright, Borus?

Out of breath, Borus nods. The Medic attends a screaming soldier whose whole leg is missing:

MEDIC

Will you stop whining!?

Beside them, another WOUNDED SOLDIER #1 looks on:

WOUNDED SOLDIER #1

It's just a scratch!

The soldier pays no attention to his own leg stubs which gush blood. Another WOUNDED SOLDIER #2 agrees:

WOUNDED SOLDIER #2

Yeah, I've seen worse.

Like his own body, for example, lacking both arms and legs.

LEGLSS SOLDIER

It was a good battle, though. Real good fun.

LIMBLESS SOLDIER

Troo dat. Lotsa blood!

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY - ODYSSEUS AND ASIUS

Odysseus and Asius are both dazed and disoriented:

ASIUS

Odysseus! Seriously!

ODYSSEUS

Asius!

ASIUS

I killed three, if not two enemies
back there!

ODYSSEUS

I killed one -- but I don't think I
did.

ASIUS

You ought to keep better track of
your kills, as I'm sure you do.

ODYSSEUS

I saw Borus kill only two enemas,
maybe more.

Asius is about to cry.

ODYSSEUS

Asius? Are you alright?

ASIUS

No. You?

Odysseus is close to tears, too:

ODYSSEUS

No, not really.

EXT. BATTLEFIELD - LATER

Soldiers clean up the clearing. They carry the dead
away, pick up usable weapons etc. Xanthus, Borus,
Odysseus, Asius, and Caletor have found each other.

CALETOR

What the hell happened here? It
wasn't supposed to start yet.

Odysseus shrugs.

BORUS

Caletor, you arrived just in time.

Caletor smiles crookedly:

CALETOR

Six years in the service and never
even slapped a face.

XANTHUS

If I believed in miracles, I'd say
you're a walking miracle.

Two soldiers carry the Legless Soldier on a stretcher
past them:

LEGLASS SOLDIER

(jolly laughter)

Unlike me!

Borus motions towards the blood on Caletor's shirt.

BORUS

What's with the blood, Chef?

CALETOR

Nothing. Just a cut.

ASIUS

Looks like you've been stabbed
repeatedly.

CALETOR

(annoyed)

It's just a cut.

Eyes widening, Asius takes a step back from Caletor.

XANTHUS

I say we've deserved a ride home.

BORUS

The last enemy stand is in Troy and
our troops are taking care of it as
we speak. I say we're going home.

With tired but relieved smiles on their face, the men
start off. As they walk away, Asius remembers:

ASIUS

Where's the bird?

CALETOR

Shut up, Asius.

Asius looks at Caletor and hides behind Borus' back.

EXT. DESTROYED COMMAND POST - DAY

The remains of the company are gathered around a pile of weapons and armour.

TALL SOLDIER

We have a mighty difficult journey ahead of us. The gods are looking after the soldiers sacking Troy.

XANTHUS

(rolling his eyes)

Pah. Gods.

SHORT SOLDIER

Plus, there are pirates.

MEDIC

Just because he succeeded once doesn't mean he's got what it takes to lead the men back home.

DRAMATIC SOLDIER

Yes! We need proof!

LEGLess SOLDIER

Proof? You want proof that this--

The Legless Soldier takes a couple of hops on his stump of a torso towards Odysseus, who shrinks.

LEGLess SOLDIER (CONT'D)

--man is able to lead us back to our precious Ithaca?

MEDIC

Duh.

LEGLess SOLDIER

Fine! Odysseus?

Odysseus jumps at the sound of his name. The Legless Soldier cooks up an extra difficult question:

LEGLess SOLDIER (CONT'D)

How much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood?

Odysseus ponders the question for a long time.
Finally, he discovers an answer:

ODYSSEUS

...Twelve?

Borus rolls his eyes. Xanthus looks embarrassed.

LEGLESS SOLDIER

Exactly!

What?

LEGLESS SOLDIER

Take into account the average density
of the wood here, the strength of the
bird's beak--

Borus shivers.

LEGLESS SOLDIER

--the chucking speed, wind velocity.
Twelve is what you get.

TALL SOLDIER

Twelve what?

BORUS

You can't possibly be--

LEGLESS SOLDIER

Aye! This man will lead us back to
where our hearts reside! To Ithaca!

The majority are apparently able to follow the logic:
the men cheer. Borus can't believe his ears. Neither
can Odysseus.

EXT. HARBOUR - DAY - "LUCKY CHARM"

There is a bustle in the harbour. The Greek ship
"LUCKY CHARM" lies anchored there, the men aboard it
climbing the masts, tying the sails, washing the deck.
Some carry cargo into the ship: weapons, crates,
barrels of water, a painting of Mona Lisa, a live woman
that looks just like Mona Lisa -- and who fights back
ferociously.

BORUS

Move swiftly, men! We need to be on
our way as soon as possible!

In the background, men are leading pairs of animals into the "ark" as well: sheep, cows, zebras, monkeys, giraffes... Borus looks at Odysseus, suspicious:

ODYSSEUS

Don't worry, Borus. I'm going to be the best Captain ever.

BORUS

I have my doubts.

ODYSSEUS

I can be whatever I want to be.

Odysseus turns around and gets punched unconscious by a rake he stepped on. Borus picks him up and dips his head into a nearby water barrel. Odysseus comes to.

ODYSSEUS

You need to keep an eye on me in the beginning.

Odysseus turns around and gets punched unconscious by the rake, again. Borus picks him up and dips his head into the water barrel. Odysseus comes to, again.

BORUS

We really don't have time for this, Odysseus.

Odysseus turns around -- and carefully avoids stepping on the rake this time. He winks at Borus, takes a step -- and the rake attacks him from behind. Odysseus drops on the ground.

Borus sighs and turns to Xanthus who's there now, too:

XANTHUS

We got new oarsmen aboard the ship.
Reinforcements from Delta Company.
Capable seafarers, not too perverted.

Xanthus motions a seaman to come to them. An expressionless man with seemingly no bone in his body wriggles his apathetic self their way. Behind them, sailors are boarding the ship by a game of leapfrog.

XANTHUS

(to Borus)

Darius, a crew member from the Lucky Charm.

DARIUS

Good to have you join us, I guess.
We lost our Captain three weeks ago
in an obscure angling accident.

Darius spots another man further away. With a limp
movement, he motions him to join them:

DARIUS

Tydeus. I kinda need you here.

BORUS

Angling accident?

DARIUS

'Fraid so. I've been sort of running
the ship with Tydeus. He knows the
territory.

XANTHUS

He's local?

DARIUS

No, he's from Akritiri, Delta
Quadrant.

TYDEUS, a stiff man with wild eyes joins the men.

DARIUS

Tydeus, our new shipmates, Xanthus
and Borus.

Tydeus eyes suspiciously the hand Borus extends:

TYDEUS

I don't greet.

DARIUS

Tydeus has been here long enough to
know the area like he knows his own
dick. You know.

Tydeus twitches.

BORUS

Speaking of which, our company went
through a leader change recently.

(pointing at Odysseus)

Our new Company Commander and, by a
majority imbecile vote, the ship's
new Captain.

Further away, Odysseus loads crates on a wooden platform with wheels. He and another soldier carry a large crate on top of others. Odysseus has got his back to where he's going, and the row of crates will end soon and the man will fall. Tydeus and Darius don't seem to mind what they're seeing.

TYDEUS

Aye. We're pleased to get properly back on track again.

DARIUS

The men are fed up with rich politicians running the show when they don't know what's going on pretty much half the time.

Off-screen, there's a screech, a thump, and a crack as the crate breaks.

DARIUS

Good to have a fit leader on the deck again.

TYDEUS

We don't want any more "accidents".

EXT. HARBOUR - DAY

Asius packs some enemy armour into a crate and enemy weaponry into another. A LOCAL WOMAN approaches him:

LOCAL WOMAN

I'd advice you to drop the fish net once you have turned the ship around. As soon as you're off the pier.

ASIUS

We are soldiers, not fishermen. We don't have to drop the net.

The woman lets out a charming laughter.

LOCAL WOMAN

Well, in that case, I can offer you no other advice.

Then the laughter dies.

LOCAL WOMAN

You're on your own.
(MORE)

LOCAL WOMAN (CONT'D)

(beat)

It's quite sad, really. We could've become very good friends, you and I.

The woman leaves Asius with a confused mind. Odysseus and Xanthus walk by towards the ship:

ODYSSEUS

I feel like I just ate an amphora of laxatives.

XANTHUS

Just act confident. That'll spread the confidence to others, too.

ODYSSEUS

What confidence?

A LOCAL MAN with a hunchback grabs Odysseus:

LOCAL MAN

Are you sure you know what you're doing?

XANTHUS

I beg your pardon?

LOCAL MAN

People who set out to journeys like this usually have to face terrible things. They get plagued by storms, they shipwreck, endure starvation, nasty illnesses--

XANTHUS

We're all experienced seafarers. We can handle a simple trip home.

Xanthus pats the Local Man on the shoulder as Odysseus and he start for the ship again. Odysseus looks like he's about to hurl from both ends. They walk by Borus and Caletor picking up last of the supplies by the ship. An OLD, WIZARDLY FIGURE grabs Caletor's arm:

OLD MAN

If you want my advice--

CALETOR

We don't need your advice.

OLD MAN

But I am old and wise beyond the--

BORUS

Piss off.

Borus lifts a heavy crate on his wide shoulder and starts off. Asius enters and picks up the last sack.

ASIUS

Shouldn't we have taken the advice?
He has the experience we lack, and--

Grimacing, and with one hand on his stomach, Caletor grabs a big amphora and follows Borus.

CALETOR

Age is just a number, Asius.

BORUS

And an enlarged prostate.

CALETOR

That too.

OLD MAN

Suit yourselves! You'll be fucked!

The Old Man creaks a laughter and Asius scurries after his friends.

INT. BELOW DECK OF THE "LUCKY CHARM" - DAY

The rowers sit on uncomfortable planks on both sides of the ship. A massively-built MAN WITH A WHIP in front of the oarsmen eyes the rowers.

MAN WITH A WHIP

Oarsmen! Ready!

The rowers grunt and grab the massive oars.

EXT. "LUCKY CHARM" - DAY

Odysseus stands in the bows by himself, stiff as a stick, hugging his rucksack. The wind blows his hair from behind and tears on his shirt.

TYDEUS

Weigh anchor!

The anchor is raised. The oars sink into water. The ship slowly leaves the pier behind. In the stern, the other men look at each other and smile.

BORUS

Home, here we come.

ASIUS

I'm so happy. The hardships are finally behind us now.

As Asius speaks, the fishnet carelessly thrown on the large carved wooden statue of Athena at the back of the ship starts to move: its other end is stuck to the pier. The net keeps on tightening, and finally the fishnet rips the Athena figure in the stern off. Nobody pays attention to the protector of heroes sinking into the depths of the ocean.

EXT. HARBOUR - DAY

The five farmers reach the shore and watch the Greek ship sail off. The Boss is furious:

THE BOSS

Damn! The other way around! We'll outflank them!

FARMER

We're on an island, Boss. They're out on the sea.

The Boss stabs the insolent farmer, who drops dead on the ground.

THE BOSS

We'll hunt them down and make them pay!

The Boss points at a ship named "T3H 4V3N63R" nearby. He's ready for the hunt of his life:

THE BOSS

To the Avenger!

EXT. "LUCKY CHARM" - LATER

There's a bustle on deck as the sails are being hoisted. Legless Soldier grabs a rope, and is hoisted up to the mast with it. Up in the mast, ELPENOR, a young boy, grabs him and together they secure the ropes up there. Odysseus (now with a Leningrad Cowboys hairdo because of the wind blowing earlier) and his friends flank the rudder along with Darius and Tydeus.

TYDEUS

The crew's been rationing food and water for the past two weeks.

XANTHUS

Same with us. We need to get provisions.

DARIUS

As soon as possible. I suggest visiting King Aeolus. He's a known protector of military. I know we can count on him. I suppose.

Odysseus and the men stare at the tip of the mast. Young Elpenor is swaying in the ropes like an acrobat.

TYDEUS

That's Elpenor.

The men look at Elpenor, terrified. Elpenor, however, waves at them cheerfully. But sadly, he waves a bit too enthusiastically, and he falls off the mast. His body hits the deck with a bone-breaking thump. Odysseus and the men are the only ones who scream.

DARIUS

Gods are on his side, you'll find.

Indeed, Elpenor stands up smiling and waves again.

TYDEUS

(to ship's crew)

Alright, men! Listen up! Time to introduce to you a man who led our troops to victory today. Odysseus, a true war hero -- and the new Captain of the Lucky Charm!

The crew cheers. Odysseus tries to look comfortable.

DARIUS

I say it's time for the new Captain to make a speech! What do you say?

The crew cheers even louder. Odysseus glances at Borus, who nods and moves to stand behind Odysseus.

BORUS

I'll help you through it. Just repeat after me.

Borus whispers: *I feel proud to serve you as your Captain.*

ODYSSEUS

(to the crew)

I feel trout to serve you, Camden.

We have come a long way on our arduous journey.

ODYSSEUS

We have Camelot, nay, on an atchuu journal.

Borus tries to speak more clearly: *But we have a lengthy trek ahead of us still.*

ODYSSEUS

Butt-weed a leggy trekka head avast ill.

But he's clearly starting to get pissed off at Odysseus: *I have full confidence in you, my good men.*

ODYSSEUS

I am full, come defence in you, night goo men.

BORUS

(speaking louder)

Pay attention, asshole!

(back to whispering)

We shall reach the shores of Ithaca strong and proud.

ODYSSEUS

Pay attention, assholes! Will shall read you surely all he can, his thong and pout.

Borus has given up by now: *Ahoy, soldiers of Greece.*

ODYSSEUS

(pointing at a hoe on deck)

A hoe!

(pointing at the men)

Soldiers of Greece!

The crew is deathly silent. Borus sighs.

TALL SOLDIER

That was the worst speech I've ever heard in my entire life.

COUNTING SOLDIER

Yeah! And I've hear one hundred and three speeches. Well, one hundred and four, if you count--

MEDIC

How many times have I told you to stop that fucking counting?

COUNTING SOLDIER

That would be forty-eight--

The Medic grabs the Counting Soldier and single-handedly throws the screaming man overboard. The crew stares at the Medic.

MEDIC

His counting pissed me off. It didn't piss you off?

DRAMATIC SOLDIER

What about your Hypocritical oath?

MEDIC

Overrated.

Borus shoves Odysseus lightly, and he opens his mouth:

ODYSSEUS

No more throwing people overboard!
We need every man!

Looking sour, the Medic, along with the rest of the crew get back to work.

INT. BELOW DECK OF THE "LUCKY CHARM" - DAY

Darius and Asius tie the crates tighter to the ship's framework. Borus and Caletor step down to the rowers' domain, too. Caletor's hand presses on his stomach.

Borus' eyes catch two men, KELEUSTES and TRIERAULES, in front of the rowers. The Keleustes has a drum and the other one an aulos.

DARIUS

They're the ship's Keleustes and Trieraules. They provide the rowers the rhythm and add to the motivation.

BORUS

Well, isn't that gay.

KELEUSTES

(hugging his drum)

I resent that!

TYDEUS

It's a standard practice in the Navy.

ASIOUS

We've never had that.

BORUS

Because it's gay.

KELEUSTES

Hey!

Caletor approaches Darius:

CALETOR

I'm the company cook. I'd be happy
if you could point me to the mess.

DARIUS

Gods made the vittles but the devil
made the cook.

Darius snorts a laugh, but Caletor's face remains
blank: he's heard that one a thousand times -- and he's
hurting. Darius' laughter dies.

DARIUS

I'll show you the way. Could sure
use some help. We lost our cook last
week in an obscure filleting
accident.

With Darius, Caletor starts off towards the mess in the
front. The Keleustes and the Trieraules begin their
motivational song, which is, indeed, kind of gay.

INT. MESS OF THE "LUCKY CHARM" - LATER

Caletor and Darius reach the mess. A window lets in a
nice view out to the sea. There's a ready-to-serve pig
with an apple in its mouth on a tray. Caletor is in a
hurry of getting rid of the sailor:

CALETOR

I'm good now. Thanks.

DARIUS

I'll be on the deck if you need me.

Darius leaves. Caletor closes the mess door behind him and groans with pain. Any attitude there was earlier, is gone. He lifts up his shirt and examines the wounds which spurt out blood as soon as he takes off his hand. But suddenly the door opens:

DARIUS

I just remembered-- Whoa.

Darius is greeted by a spray of blood.

CALETOR

I got the knife. A few times.

DARIUS

I could... give you a hand with that, I guess.

CALETOR

Forget it. It's nothing.

Yet his blood is spraying all over the little room. Darius puts his hand on Caletor's wounds.

DARIUS

I was stabbed myself last year. An obscure accident it was.

Darius lifts up his shirt with one hand, and reveals a knife planted firmly and to the hilt in his side.

DARIUS

Recovered perfectly.

Darius rummages through the shelves with one hand, looking for something to clean the stab wounds with. Out of wine, vinegar, brownish water, olive oil, and fish oil, he picks vinegar.

DARIUS

Now don't hit me.

CALETOR

I'm not a violent man.

DARIUS

But you're a soldier.

CALETOR

I cook the food, I don't spill the blood.

Darius splashes vinegar on the wounds. Grimacing in agony, Caletor punches the pig. The apple shoots out and hits Darius in the face. Darius doesn't flinch.

DARIUS

I've seen more death on this ship than on battlefields. Lucky Charm ain't so lucky. You have a priest with you, don't you?

(beat)

Put your hand over the wounds.

Caletor does so. Darius rips out the hem of his shirt to wrap it around Caletor's stab wounds.

DARIUS

I think Lucky Charm needs a priest.

CALETOR

We have Xanthus. But he's going through a personal crisis of faith.

Suddenly, they see a long-haired, bearded man dressed in white walking on water past the window. The man waves at them:

JESUS

Yo! Greetings from Nazareth!

The men return to attending Caletor's wounds.

DARIUS

Why is it that people make such a big deal about priests doubting their faith? What about fishermen doubting their faith? Or butchers?

Darius takes a few sharpened wooden sticks lying around and gives them to Caletor:

DARIUS

You do the honours. Just pretend you're closing up a stuffed bird.

CALETOR

What?!

He forces himself to close the wounds with the sticks.

DARIUS

Wow. That really looks disgusting.

Caletor can't finish the job without screaming in pain.

INT. BELOW DECK OF THE "LUCKY CHARM" - DAY

Asius is half-way up the stairs leading out to the deck when he hears Caletor's cry and jumps at the sound. Frightened, he hurries onto the deck.

EXT. "LUCKY CHARM" - DAY

Borus' eyes catch Elpenor up in the mast, pointing frantically out to the sea. Borus looks where the boy is pointing at and sees it himself, too:

BORUS

A ship! At three o'sundial!

Odysseus and the rest of the men join him at the boards. Odysseus lifts his cupped hands to his eyes as if holding a pair of binoculars.

POV THROUGH ODYSSEUS' CUPPED HANDS - APPROACHING SHIP

A small ship with a dignified-looking crew in pretty robes and fancy helmets glides towards the Lucky Charm.

ODYSSEUS (O.S.)

It's a crew in light blue robes.
About twenty men.

BACK TO SCENE

The ship floats right next to the Lucky Charm.

ASIUS

What is it? Pirates?

ODYSSEUS

I can't tell.

THE PHAEACIAN LEADER on the small ship speaks with a high and snotty nasal voice:

PHAEACIAN LEADER

Surrender! Or be destroyed!

ODYSSEUS

What?

PHAEACIAN LEADER

Surrender! Or be destroyed!

XANTHUS

Is it just me, or do they really not
look too threatening?

PHAEACIAN LEADER

We are the mighty Phaeacians!

The small Phaeacian ship gently manoeuvres next to the
Lucky Charm and turns. Caletor finds his way to the
deck. Asius takes a step away from him.

PHAEACIAN LEADER

(to his crew)

Prepare to break enemy oars!

The Charm crew up on their ship exchange looks. They
don't seem concerned at all.

ODYSSEUS

(to crew below deck)

Lift up oars!

The rowers lift up their oars, and the Phaeacian ship
glides past their hull, never even touching the oars.

PHAEACIAN LEADER

(to his crew)

New tactics! Ram into enemy hull!
Sink ship!

ODYSSEUS

(to sailor at the rudder)

Starboard!

The Lucky Charm turns starboard, and the Phaeacian ship
misses them.

BORUS

(to Phaeacians)

You're not pirates, are you?

PHAEACIAN LEADER

We're the Phaeacians! We rule these
seas! Face our wrath!

(to his crew)

New tactics! Fire arrows!

The Phaeacians fire arrows at the Lucky Charm, but all
of them miss.

CALETOR

This is getting annoying.

ODYSSEUS

(to Phaeacians)

You're wasting our time! Go home!

PHAEACIAN LEADER

Those be your last words!

ASIUS

We're on our way to Ithaca, if you don't mind.

PHAEACIAN LEADER

You're not going anywhere!

(to his crew)

New tactics!

Odysseus and the men lose interest in the Phaeacians and turn away. Tydeus spreads a map on the deck.

TYDEUS

There's King Aeolus' island. After that, we head West. It shouldn't be more than ten days to Ithaca.

A Phaeacian arrow lamely drops on the map, side first. Borus picks it up and throws it out. There's a cry out on the Phaeacian ship as the arrow kills one of them.

BORUS

Alright. What about that narrow passage there? Can we get past it?

TYDEUS

We have to. Too many rocks on both sides of those islands. Don't want to waste half a day going round them.

DARIUS

The passage is guarded by Scylla, the six-headed monster, and Charybdis, who sucks ships into destruction. We have to get past them, alive, I hope.

XANTHUS

You believe that superstitious crap?

An arrow hits Xanthus in the head, but does no damage.

TYDEUS

Yes.

ODYSSEUS

So what do we do?

TYDEUS

Leave the Phaeacians to Charybdis--

PHAEACIAN LEADER (O.S.)

New tactics! Burn ship!

TYDEUS

--and we build dummies out of pieces of armour to fool Scylla. One for each of its hungry heads.

ODYSSEUS

We'd better hurry before the Phaeacians manage to--

A burning arrow flies towards Odysseus, but the fire dies mid-air. Odysseus moves little to the side to dodge the weapon.

ODYSSEUS

Let's just get on with it.

EXT. "LUCKY CHARM" - LATER

The narrow passage between two islands with rocky walls draws nearer. Odysseus puts a helmet on one of the six fake-men standing on the deck ready to take the monster attack. The deck is empty but Odysseus and Co.

BORUS

There's no more room below the deck. The rest of us huddle in that niche right at the stern.

PHAEACIAN LEADER (O.S.)

New tactics! Prepare to throw helmet at enemy!

ODYSSEUS

Alright. Let's go.

The men all squeeze in the small niche at the back of the ship. The wooden ledge above conceals them from the monster.

PHAEACIAN LEADER (O.S.)

Fire!

Some helmets drop on the deck, but do no damage. Then the Leader's helmet hits one of the dummies, knocking it over. Odysseus looks worried for a second.

BORUS

Don't worry. It'll work. Any second now.

PHAEACIAN LEADER (O.S.)

Victory! Prepare to board enemy--

WOOSH!!! Charybdis sucks in seawater and pulls the Phaeacian ship along with it to its ruin. The Charm sways and shakes for a while, too.

PHAEACIAN LEADER (O.S.)

Neeeeew taaactiics...

XANTHUS

Whoa!

ODYSSEUS

One down, one to go!

Suddenly, a massive roar fills the air, and a dark shadow sweeps over the deck: it's Scylla coming for the six dummies!

ASIUS

Wait! I didn't see that kid Elpenor down there!

Horrified, the men realise he's still up in the mast.

CUT TO:

High above the deck, Elpenor sees Scylla (off screen), and he screams in horror.

BACK TO SCENE

The men hear the boy scream, and watch as the five dummies that still stand on the deck get lifted up by monstrous heads. Elpenor's screams grow more distant as Scylla pulls away holding the boy in its teeth.

ODYSSEUS

Elpenor!

(to below deck)

Row! Row! We have to get out of here before it strikes again!

The rowers pull the oars like there's no tomorrow, and the ship storms through the passage. As soon as they're on the other side, the ship sinks into thick mist. Amidst the whiteness, the men hear a steady, low

sound that gradually grows louder. Sounds like someone's yelling.

The sound finally dies with a loud, wet thump as a large lump hits the deck: it's Elpenor, completely covered in thick, slimy monster saliva. Elpenor smiles and looks very happy to have survived.

EXT. "THE AVENGER" - DAY - FOG

Safely gliding out of the narrow passage, the Avenger escapes Scylla's second attack too. The Boss finishes hoisting up the small sail.

THE BOSS

We do it the old navy way. Start rowing!

ARGICIDES

Rowing?

THE BOSS

We catch their ship. Just as we're about to hit them, we pull in our oars and destroy theirs by running into them with our ship's hull.

ARGICIDES

But they have at least twenty times the rowers we have.

THE BOSS

Then you just have to row at least twenty times faster than them!

BOETHIDES

I have my suspicions that we won't even be able to break their massive oars with our little boat...

ARGICIDES

It's so foggy, I don't think we'll even hit their ship in the first place.

MEGADETHUS

I need to pee.

THE BOSS

Quiet! We'll sink their ship! So grab those goddamn oars!

EXT. "LUCKY CHARM" - DAY - FOG

The crew is now back on the deck, sailing away. Tydeus points at a big rock protruding out of the sea amidst the thick fog:

TYDEUS

That's the Devil's Rock. Many a ship have finished their sailing there.

BORUS

Are we to worry about incidents like that?

TYDEUS

We've got one of the best navigator's in Greece. He knows every rock and current in these waters.

EXT. "THE AVENGER" - DAY - FOG

Megadethus spots the enemy at three o'clock, and points at three o'clock:

MEGADETHUS

Enemy at twelve o'clock!

THE BOSS

Full speed ahead!

Argicides peers into the distance. His eyes grow wide.

ARGICIDES

Wait. That's not--

EXT. "LUCKY CHARM" - DAY - FOG

There's a crash as the Farmers smash into Devil's Rock.

TYDEUS

And he can steer the ship while being shit drunk, too.

DARIUS

He's proved us that numerous times.

ODYSSEUS

Good, good.

The wall of fog ends, and as the ship glides in the clear, they can see a big mountain up ahead. A colourful harbour sits at the island's shore.

TYDEUS

King Aeolus' island, gentlemen.

MEDIC

(glaring at Odysseus,
sarcastic)

I can't believe we made it.

EXT. BUSTLING HARBOUR - LATER

The Lucky Charm rests anchored in the sparkling blue sea in the bay. The Avenger looms in the background. The men step ashore, marvelling the colourful crowd: there is a festival of some kind going on. Music fills the air and some people are dancing. A POET on a small podium recites with all of his heart:

POET

In the dark of the night, a cloud
hovers over the moon. I lay awake,
and pray: come, Sleep, and save me--

--and the Poet falls asleep. A FIRE-EATER gives his best to entertain the crowd, but nobody cares. Borus notices the rucksack Odysseus is still carrying:

BORUS

What do you carry that sack around
for? What's in it?

ODYSSEUS

It's personal.

ASIUS

What's going on here?

MAN PASSING BY

The King's sons and daughters are
getting married!

WOMAN PASSING BY

To each other!

A group of young women walk towards the men.

BORUS

(looking at ladies)
Well, well, well...

Manly as ever, Borus spits on the ground, his eyes never leaving the beautiful women swaying by. The women acknowledge Borus' muscular frame:

WOMAN

Hello, Handsome.

Borus winks at the ladies, who giggle in return. Odysseus is impressed. He sees another group of women approaching them. Time to show them his masculine side. He gathers up some phlegm and spits.

BEGGAR (O.S.)

AAARGH!

Unfortunately, the blimp hit a Beggar in the face. The filthy man screams like an animal, and people turn to look at the scene.

BEGGAR

Look at the foreigner oppressing me!

Freaking out, Odysseus tries to soothe the Beggar by wiping the goo off his face.

BEGGAR

Now he's sexually harassing me!

ODYSSEUS

Will you be quiet! I'm not trying to hurt you!

BEGGAR

Get your hands off me, you beast!
(to the crowd)
Bestiality! I'm a victim of
bestiality!

The women Odysseus was trying to impress glare at the monster they see attacking a poor, innocent beggar.

ODYSSEUS

It was an accident!

Odysseus smashes his palm over the screaming Beggar's mouth and gradually the man quiets down and eventually appears to lose consciousness. Borus grabs a passing man by the sleeve:

BORUS

Any chance of us Greek soldiers getting an audience with the King?

MAN

King Aeolus has a heart for the bravest of Greeks. He should be here any time now.

(beat)

Hey, have you heard about the Spartan who was looking for a new wife?

Across the colourful forum, a short, chubby PHILOSOPHER with a big beard eyes the men keenly. The man's eyes gleam as he squirms his body. Meanwhile, the Man finishes his joke:

MAN

--olives!

Asius is the only one who laughs at the joke -- except that the Fire-Eater arrives just in time to hear the end of the joke and he bursts out laughing, too. The fiery liquid from his mouth spurts out and suddenly the Fire-Eater is on fire. He screams in pain. Xanthus points to a group of royalty in purple robes:

XANTHUS

Look! There he is.

EXT. CANOPY - DAY

Two dozen lackeys and young ladies of the castle flank the King and the Queen towards the canopy. Six wedding couples walk in a perfect formation. At the centre of it all, King Aeolus with his massive, grey hair appropriate for the King of Winds smiles happily. He talks to the people around him... and grabs his crotch as if to make a point. This is clearly a big day for the happy man.

EXT. BUSTLING HARBOUR - DAY

The unlucky Fire-Eater screeches and whirls around amidst the flames and now the audience pays attention to him: cheering and whistling fills the air. This is the best show ever! Odysseus and the men, however, have more important things to do:

ODYSSEUS

Come on.

The men start off towards the canopy. A YOUNG BOY stretches out his arm and asks for money:

YOUNG BOY

Help a young boy, kind Sir.

Borus glances at the boy:

BORUS

You'll get over it. I was ugly at your age too.

EXT. CANOPY - DAY

The men bow down before the positively glowing King, who motions them to stand up.

ODYSSEUS

My Lord, we are soldiers of the Greek Navy. We are happy to be congratulating you on this magnificent day.

KING AEOLUS

It's a pleasure having you here attending the wedding of my sons and daughters whom I've begat with my own penis.

XANTHUS

My Lord, we are on our way home, but terribly short of provisions. It pains us to be so--

KING AEOLUS

Consider it done! I am feeling most giving today. After all, this is a great day for the Kingdom and--
 (grabbing his crotch)
 --a milestone for my penis!

ODYSSEUS

We're indeed happy for the Kingdom and... your penis, my Lord. Please know that we will send you a sizeable gift in return once we get--

KING AEOLUS

Nonsense! Assisting you like this is my pleasure. You are true Greek heroes, and heroes shall never die!

PAPERBOY (O.S.)

Extra! Extra! Hector slain!

A boy with his arms full of scrolls walks among the crowd, calling out the latest news. He catches people's coins in a small pot and proceeds to throw a scroll to those who made a payment.

PAPERBOY

The Trojan hero is dead! The whole kingdom falls!

Odysseus and the men exchange looks. Then another paperboy's voice pierces the bustling of the crowd:

PAPERBOY #2

Burning news! Hero Achilles dies in battle! After the Amazon heroine Penthesilea died in his arms!

PAPERBOY

More and more heroes die every day! Read all about it!

BETTING AGENT (O.S.)

Who is the next hero to die?

A chubby agent is calling out to the festival crowd from his betting booth:

BETTING AGENT

Place your bets here!

In the next booth, a WOMAN WAVING A SWORD calls out:

WOMAN WITH SWORD

You want to go down in history as a slayer of heroes? Get your weapons here!

Odysseus and the men have heard enough.

BORUS

Well, it's getting late. We'd better get moving.

KING AEOLUS

You're not going anywhere! You men relax, enjoy, and go see a play.

CALETOR

A play?

KING AEOLUS

While my men load your ship!

In the background, the Fire-Eater, now alone and completely blackened, moans. The show is over.

EXT. AMPHITHEATRE - LATER

The theatre is packed. A play is well on its way, but the men aren't too impressed.

BORUS

They keep twisting the truth to suit their goals.

ODYSSEUS

What?

BORUS

The playwrights. The vilest creatures of all. They twist the truth to make the play more exciting. This is not how it really happened.

CALETOR

They lie about the characters, mess with the timeline. It's disgusting.

XANTHUS

And look there. Another *deus ex machina* just waiting to happen.

Behind the stage wall, two men aboard a device sit ready to swing themselves across the stage on a rope when the time comes.

Behind Odysseus and Co., the chubby Philosopher squirms his body again and then approaches the men.

THE PHILOSOPHER

I apologise for intruding, but I had to take the liberty of coming to tell you that I have been following you. So intriguing. You seem so... practical.

The men eye the Philosopher suspiciously, and the man squirms his whole body again.

THE PHILOSOPHER

I've been very theoretical these past decades and the practices of you brave soldiers seem so interesting. As viewed from a theoretical point of view, of course. May I join you?

The men hardly look enthusiastic, but the Philosopher sits down before they have a chance to reply.

THE PHILOSOPHER

Have you ever thought about the Soul?
Or considered Truth?

EXT. BACKSTAGE - DAY

The Farmers flank the *deus ex machina* device. Further away, the two men that were in it before, lie in a pile, tied up and gagged. The Boss secures the rope around Megadethus and Argicides now aboard the device.

THE BOSS

You have one chance only to reach
that chicknapper before the swinging
slows down too much. Do not fuck up!

ARGICIDES

We won't, Boss.

The two men cover their faces with actor's masks.

EXT. AMPHITHEATRE - DAY

The men sigh and roll their eyes at the Philosopher still babbling on.

CALETOR

(to the Philosopher)

What part of 'go to hell' can't you
understand?

THE PHILOSOPHER

There is no concrete place I could go
to, to fulfil your wish. It's all
subjective. Like this amphitheatre,
for example. I see it as an
amphitheatre, but some other people
might see it as a river, or a table.

XANTHUS

You're making me lose my faith in
humanity, too.

THE PHILOSOPHER

Thinking about things such as this
can drive you mad, if you don't have
the education for such thinking.
Just take the Sun, for example--

ODYSSEUS

Just leave, please. We'd like to watch this stupid play in peace.

THE PHILOSOPHER

That's exactly what I like about you soldiers. You are so comfortable with practice.

Again, the Philosopher squirms his body. Caletor turns away, disgusted.

THE PHILOSOPHER

Theoretically speaking, I've never in my life done anything really practical.

Annoyed, Borus stands up, his body hovering above the Philosopher's like a mountain.

THE PHILOSOPHER

(admiring Borus)

Oh! Practice!

BORUS

Get the fuck off, and find that practice from somewhere else!

THE PHILOSOPHER

But, but--

Borus grabs the Philosopher by his shirt and slings him away. The Philosopher squeals with excitement and remains standing further away, still admiring the soldiers of practice.

EXT. BACKSTAGE - DAY

The Boss gets a sign from the play's director to send off the *deus ex machina* device.

THE BOSS

Now! Go!

Argicides releases a rope, and with force, the device swings over the stage and way past it, towards where Borus is standing.

EXT. AMPHITHEATRE - DAY

Odysseus sees the men at the end of the rope, swinging speedily their way. Argicides brandishes his knife.

ODYSSEUS

Borus! Duck!

BORUS

(horrified)

Where?! Where?!

The farmers smash against Borus' wide back, downing him, and nearly knocking Argicides himself unconscious. The device swings back over the stage, this time downing half of the actors.

XANTHUS

What did I tell you? Just fling the easy solution at us. Disappointing.

On stage, the play finishes and the crowd cheers. The Farmers remain hanging at the rope over the stage, six feet off the ground, cursing.

EXT. KING AEOLUS' ISLAND/HARBOUR - LATER

The King's men return from loading the ship. The Charm is ready to leave. The King himself shakes hands with the men, wishing them good luck. Then Aeolus goes to Odysseus. The King hands him a leather sack and winks:

KING AEOLUS

A little farewell gift for you.
There's winds in there.

ODYSSEUS

Thanks...

Further away, the Medic and the Tall soldier eye at Odysseus and the sack. The Medic whispers something to the Tall Soldier. As the King turns away to get something else for Odysseus, Asius whispers to his friend's ear:

ASIUS

He gave us... farts?

ODYSSEUS

I think he meant real winds. He is the King of Winds, you know.

ASIUS

But I saw him wink.

ODYSSEUS

Why would he give us farts?

ASIUS

Why would he give us winds?

The King, holding a pendant, turns back to Odysseus.

KING AEOLUS

And this is especially for you. The head of Poseidon. May it bring you good luck, Captain.

The King steps towards Odysseus, who bows down as the King hangs the pendant around his neck.

KING AEOLUS

(whispering)

I couldn't help noticing that you have the buttocks of a Greek god.

ODYSSEUS

Thank you, my Lord.

The King smiles and pats Odysseus on the shoulder. The men get onboard and wave at King Aeolus and his folk. The King waves back:

KING AEOLUS

Good luck to you! And your penises!

EXT. "LUCKY CHARM" - DAY

The ship's bow carves through the waves. Odysseus and Borus feast their eyes on the supplies from Aeolus on the deck. Odysseus still holds the sack he got from the King. Further away, the Medic, Tall Soldier, Short Soldier, Darius, and Tydeus eye him with sunken brows. Xanthus rolls up his inventory papyrus and nods towards the goods:

XANTHUS

We have food for at least ten days.

BORUS

Good. That should be enough if we plan the route care--

ODYSSEUS

What's that?

Right in the middle of the deck, there's a large piece of canvas -- and there's a sizeable lump under it. Xanthus quickly checks his inventory list.

XANTHUS

I can't believe I missed that.

Suspicious, the men approach the strange bump. Odysseus hands the sack to Xanthus and lifts up the canvas -- his eyes grow wide at the sight. Both the lump and the men scream.

It's the Philosopher.

EXT. "LUCKY CHARM" - LATER

Odysseus and the men surround the Philosopher. He's smiling and trembling from excitement.

BORUS

What the hell are you doing here?

THE PHILOSOPHER

I've had enough of theory! I want to get in touch with the fascinating world of practice. With you!

The Philosopher squirms his whole body.

CALETOR

Got something up yours?

THE PHILOSOPHER

No, no. I just want to get in touch with my physical self.

The Philosopher squirms again. Borus can't contain himself anymore. He takes a step towards the man:

BORUS

You want to get in touch with my physical fist?

XANTHUS

Come on, Borus. Cool down. We're a team here.

ODYSSEUS

(to the Philosopher)

It's not safe for you to be here.
We're trained soldiers and seafarers.
In case something goes wrong, you'll
be in trouble.

The Philosopher screeches a laugh.

THE PHILOSOPHER

Oh, I believe I have the tools I need
to survive all the challenges the
physical world has to offer!

CUT TO:

EXT. "LUCKY CHARM" - LATER

The Philosopher is hanging upside down, tangled up in
the mast ropes. He's screaming in horror.

The ship crew look at him... and then get back to work.

INT. BELOW DECK OF THE "LUCKY CHARM" - DAY

The Keleustes bangs his drum and calls out to the
rowers while the Trieraulos plays his aulos:

KELEUSTES

Row, row, row your boat, gently down
the stream--

ROWERS

--merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
life is but a dream!

Still holding the sack, Xanthus stands ground, Borus by
his side. Not squirming anymore, the Philosopher sits
on a wooden crate. He has dark circles around his eyes
and he's sniffing.

THE PHILOSOPHER

Sure as the Sun travels around
Tellus, I won't get in your way.
Just drop me off at the next island.
I'll be so quiet you can forget my
physical existence if you just hurry
to the next piece of solid ground.

XANTHUS

Ready to leave this watery world
behind already?

THE PHILOSOPHER

I've had enough of ships, warfare,
matter, and human bodies.

The Philosopher glances at the chanting, sweating rowers around him and shivers. Borus grabs the Philosopher from under his arms and lifts him standing. Xanthus points to the hole leading out to the deck, and you can still see the big mountain of Aeolus' island.

XANTHUS

We've hardly left the harbour.

BORUS

It took the men ages to clean up your
vomit from the deck. Where'd you
store all that crap?

The Philosopher sinks. Xanthus shoves the sack to him.

XANTHUS

Just stay here and keep an eye on
this sack.

THE PHILOSOPHER

Here?! I don't--

BORUS

Call to us only in an emergency.
We're busy driving this bucket. You
don't want us to sink, do you?

Xanthus and Borus leave for the deck and the Philosopher is left below with the King's sack. He looks at the rowers, but soon turns his head away. He holds on to the sack tightly and closes his eyes.

EXT. "LUCKY CHARM" - DAY

Xanthus and Borus climb up to the deck where they find Odysseus surrounded by a gloomy-looking gang. Tall Soldier, Short Soldier, Tydeus, and Darius study the Medic clenching the whimpering Odysseus in his claws:

MEDIC

Part of that treasure the King gave
you belongs to us!

SHORT SOLDIER

You're not even a real captain!

ODYSSEUS

You're mistaken! There's no gold!
There's nothing but winds in the
sack! Let go of me!

The Medic twists his hand harder in Odysseus' crotch.
The little man squeals. Borus has had enough:

BORUS

Captain!

Borus takes a step forward and stands like a boulder.
Odysseus and Borus' eyes meet, and Odysseus draws his
faltering strength from his stony stare. Odysseus'
eyes never leave Borus':

ODYSSEUS

I am the Captain of this ship. And
before I make you face the
consequences, you'd better let go of
my testicles.

Odysseus holds out his arms and closes his eyes as if
he was expecting Zeus himself to speak through him.
The Medic lets go of Odysseus, but not because of his
words, but rather after seeing Borus' rippling muscles.
The insubordinate crew backs off from Odysseus, who
sighs in relief, opens his eyes and smiles contently at
his own achievement. He winks at Borus.

INT. MESS OF THE "LUCKY CHARM" - LATER

Odysseus and Borus are alone. Borus twists his hand in
Odysseus' crotch. Odysseus squeals and Borus lets go.

BORUS

Stop fooling around!

ODYSSEUS

People need to stop squeezing my
balls!

BORUS

You need to take control of the
situation.

ODYSSEUS

I don't know what to do. I'm not fit
to be a Captain.

BORUS

By gods, you're hardly a man the way
you are now.

ODYSSEUS

(to himself)

That's because people keep squeezing
my balls.

BORUS

A man is brave, he's resolute and
strong, a testosterone-oozing animal.
You, on the other hand, are pathetic
and weak, a tearful slob.

Borus glances around to make sure nobody can see them.
He grabs Odysseus by his lapels:

BORUS

It's now or never that we're going to
make a man out of you. Otherwise the
ship along with the dozens of men
aboard it are in danger.

You be a man or I'll save this crew
from destruction myself by killing
you like you killed the chicken:
slowly and badly.

Odysseus is close to tears. Xanthus finds his way to
the mess. He lays his hand on Borus' arm softly:

XANTHUS

(to Odysseus)

He's got it all wrong.

ODYSSEUS

But I'm not a Captain, Xanthus, and
I'm not a hero.

XANTHUS

You will be. Just follow your heart.

(beat)

I'd say put your trust in Athena,
too, but I've lost my faith. I am
scum.

Odysseus and Borus look at Xanthus sinking deeper into
his thoughts.

XANTHUS

You are scum, they said when they kicked me out of the temple. You're worthless, they said, you're nothing. You're fat, you're stupid, and you lack a vagina. That's what they said when they found out. Yes, they did.

Suicidal, Xanthus kneels on the floor and puts his head in the oven. Borus grabs him and pulls him out.

XANTHUS

You have what it takes, Odysseus. I don't even succeed in taking my own life because I'm too nice to attack people interfering with it.

Xanthus gives Borus a meaningful look and leaves.

INT. BELOW DECK OF THE "LUCKY CHARM" - DAY

The Medic and the Tall Soldier step down to the rowers' domain. They find the Philosopher sitting there with the sack.

MEDIC

Hi there. Mind if I borrow that sack for a while?

EXT. "LUCKY CHARM" - LATER

The Medic and his men gather around the sack. Further away, the Philosopher, gagged, tumbles inside a canvas six feet above the deck.

DARIUS

Maybe we shouldn't open the sack...

MEDIC

You're not backing down now.

DARIUS

What if we release something dangerous from there?

TALL SOLDIER

Like what?

DARIUS

I dunno... Crabs?

The Medic glares at the man.

TYDEUS

His uncle died in an obscure crab-related accident.

MEDIC

You don't want to get your share of the treasure, I suggest you get the fuck out.

Darius doesn't move. The Medic opens the sack, peers in -- and to his surprise, the brownish winds from the sack come loose and hit his face. Judging from the looks on the men's faces, apparently they also smell awful. The winds grow stronger and grab the sails. The ship begins to shimmy and shake.

INT. BELOW DECK OF THE "LUCKY CHARM" - DAY

Caletor sits on a crate and smokes. Xanthus and Borus play chess. Odysseus and Asius are busy playing pattycake. Suddenly, a strange howling sound fills the air as Aeolus' released winds gather up strength.

CALETOR

What's that rotten smell?

The men rush out to the deck.

EXT. "LUCKY CHARM" - DAY - STORM

The crew lowers the sails and hauls loose items below the deck. Odysseus and the men quickly join them.

ODYSSEUS

They opened the sack!

BORUS

If we ever get through this hell, I'm sure the captain knows what we have to do!

ASIUS

Celebrate our survival?

CALETOR

No!

ASIUS

Fix the ship?

Borus drills his eyes into Odysseus'. Odysseus forces himself to say it:

ODYSSEUS

Take punitive measures against the insubordinate members of the crew?

BORUS

Correct! Now grab those ropes!

The men fight against the storm, but to no avail. The Dramatic Soldier stands steadfast in the bows holding his short cape and yelling like he was a star in an opera. The ship tosses about wildly, water splashing across the deck and downing the men. Then the mast gives in. They're at the mercy of the waves -- and they're going down.

EXT. LARGE ISLAND - EVENING - CLOSE ANGLE - ODYSSEUS

as he stirs on the sand. The beach is lined with thick bushes and behind them there's a lush forest. The sun is starting to set, but there's still light. The seas have calmed down. The ship with a big hole in the hull sits tilted and stuck on the seabed. The Avenger sails to the next bay.

Odysseus gets up and his eyes radar the shore. His eyes catch his rucksack, and he hurries to pick it up.

Then BANG! Out of nowhere, Tydeus tackles Odysseus down. They roll on the sand, Tydeus grimacing ferociously and doing his best to strangle Odysseus. Nearby, Borus drops on the ground the stuff he's managed to salvage from the sea: there's some pieces of armour, cups, larger pieces of wood... and a rolled-up tent. Borus dashes to Odysseus and Tydeus:

BORUS

Break it off, soldier!

Borus pulls Tydeus off of Odysseus, who wheezes on the sand for a while, getting his breath back.

TYDEUS

He is irresponsible and a danger to us all!

ODYSSEUS

We wouldn't be here if you hadn't opened the sack!

TYDEUS

Irrelevant details!

BORUS

What happened, happened! Deal with it!

TYDEUS

I am!

Tydeus charges at Odysseus again and Borus has to step in once more.

BORUS

Back off!

XANTHUS

(to Tydeus)

Make no mistake: he was elected Captain by a majority vote.

TYDEUS

That doesn't make him capable for the job!

BORUS

You can't demand a recount, can you? So I suggest you shut the hell up.

TYDEUS

All he sows is destruction!

CALETOR

You're just angry because you're jealous of our democracy.

XANTHUS

And our freedom.

DARIUS

I believe Tydeus is right. I don't trust his capabilities as a leader.

TYDEUS

We want him out before he destroys us all!

The Dramatic Soldier has heard enough:

DRAMATIC SOLDIER

I trust him! I trust the Captain! I'd follow him to the edge of the world, you hear!

The Dramatic Soldier turns to Odysseus:

DRAMATIC SOLDIER

My life for you, Captain! My life
for you!

The Dramatic Soldier pulls out his sword and thrusts it
into his stomach. Thus he dies, in a blaze of glory.
The men stare at him blankly. Then Darius speaks:

DARIUS

If it was in my nature, I'd start a
mutiny right about now, I guess.
This really pisses me off, you know.
I'm like... boiling inside.

CALETOR

Oh, shut the fuck up already.

XANTHUS

We need a couple of days to fix the
ship. We do what we can to build a
temporary camp.

ASIUS

We only got sand, rocks, small pieces
of driftwood, and tree branches.

XANTHUS

If that's what we got, that's what we
must make do with. And nobody
attacks anybody. We're a team here.

Tydeus doesn't look like he's going to settle for that.
And Borus notes it.

ODYSSEUS

Does anyone know where we are?

Xanthus picks up the rolled-up tent and passes it on to
Asius:

XANTHUS

We should be able to determine our
location from the position of the
stars.

TYDEUS

It's daytime!

Obviously not giving it a second thought, Asius whacks
Xanthus in the back of the head with the tent.

ASIUS

Can you see 'em?

Caletor steps in, and Asius takes a step back:

CALETOR

I think he meant that we should get on with the camp and wait for dark.

ASIUS

You stay away from me!

Meanwhile, Xanthus manages a few excited words before he falls flat on the sand:

XANTHUS

Big Dipper!

ODYSSEUS

Can we get on with the camp now?
Caletor, gather up all the men.

CALETOR

Elpenor survived, of course, the rowers are good, and I found the Philosopher crying in the mess. So this is all the men.

ODYSSEUS

Okay, that's not good.

LEGLASS SOLDIER (O.S.)

(cheerful)

Wait! I survived!

Hanging ten feet off the ground on a tree branch, the Legless Soldier is unable to get down without help.

LIMBLESS SOLDIER (O.S.)

I'm here too!

And there he is indeed: floating in the water nearby, happy, but unable to swim ashore.

EXT. ENCAMPMENT ON THE BEACH - NIGHT

The camp is a tad more elaborate than what one might think would come out of rocks and tree branches. It's a proper camp complex with trenches and with a couple of guard towers flanking it.

The camp is asleep. Odysseus is down in a trench, leaning on his spear and about to doze off. Tydeus approaches him quietly.

TYDEUS

Odysseus.

Tydeus taps Odysseus on the shoulder, awaking him.

TYDEUS

I'm sorry about that thing earlier.

The dancing light from a nearby fire reveals Tydeus' black eye and a swollen lip.

TYDEUS

I had a talk with Borus and it seems that I like you as a leader after all. Pretty much.

ODYSSEUS

It's okay, Tydeus. Don't worry about it.

(carefully)

What's with your eye?

TYDEUS

I tripped.

Odysseus raises his eyebrow.

TYDEUS (CONT'D)

And fell down the stairs.

ODYSSEUS

Oh, okay... The lip?

TYDEUS

This? Accidentally ran into a door.

ODYSSEUS

Oh, okay then.

TYDEUS

I'm taking the next turn here. Go on, get some sleep. We have a long day ahead of us tomorrow.

Odysseus nods and leaves. Tydeus takes his place in the trench. Grimacing ferociously, he shakes his middle finger at Odysseus' back.

EXT. ENCAMPMENT ON THE BEACH - MORNING

Down on the shore, the rowers are fixing the ship. Odysseus and the men along with Tydeus, Darius, and the Philosopher are off to get some food. The men stand near the bushes lining the beach.

ASIUS

I'm starving.

Odysseus nods at Asius and Xanthus:

ODYSSEUS

You two have the bags for the fruit?

The men nod.

ODYSSEUS

Alright. Let's go. We've got a jungle to penetrate.

The men check their gear: Caletor ties his scarf tighter around his head, Borus checks his knife. They're now prepared for everything and anything -- but most of all, they're prepared for a difficult trek through the jungle.

Odysseus bashes the bushes with his sword and then parts them like a pair of curtains. And right behind the bushes -- there's no jungle. Instead, there's a massive ravine and a treacherous-looking rope bridge stretching over it. On the other side, there's a mailbox, and further away, a small house sits behind a flowery meadow. Not something they thought they'd see.

BORUS

Well. Seems like the island is inhabited.

TYDEUS

(nodding towards
the bridge)

It may not be safe. I think we should test it by sending someone expendable on it first.

ASIUS

What?

TYDEUS

Did I say expendable? I meant brave.

The Philosopher squirms. Odysseus steps up:

ODYSSEUS

I am brave. And I appoint Borus and
Asius to accompany me across the
bridge.

Neither Borus nor Asius look very excited.

TYDEUS

I was hoping you'd say that.

Tydeus' poisonous comment flies over Odysseus' head.

EXT. ROPE BRIDGE - DAY

Odysseus, Borus, and Asius are half-way across the
creaking and swaying bridge, Odysseus at the helm,
Asius bringing up the rear.

ODYSSEUS

There's some loose boards up ahead,
so keep your eyes on your feet!

Asius is terrified:

ASIUS

That's the last thing I want to do!

BORUS

Just shut up and keep moving!

Odysseus screams as a board under his foot comes loose.
At the start of the bridge, Xanthus and Caletor hold
their breath. The Philosopher squirms more than ever.

ODYSSEUS

I'm alright!

Asius swallows with an effort and forces himself to
take another step -- but his foot gets tangled up
between the loose boards and he manages to stay
somewhat upright only by grabbing the ropes. Asius is
sweating like a pig and he looks a little too pale.

XANTHUS

Asius! You alright?

Asius fails to reply and remains standing in the middle
of the bridge, clinging onto the ropes.

BORUS

Keep moving, Asius! Move!

But Asius can't. He begins to shake violently.

CALETOR

I'll save you, Asius!

ASIUS

(in utter horror)

I'd rather die!

Xanthus grabs Caletor's arm and stops him from getting on the bridge. By now Asius is making the whole bridge shake like an earthquake had hit them.

Odysseus and Borus could as well be riding rodeo horses. They fall over and roll over the bridge planks, but manage to grab a hold of the ropes and not fall to their deaths.

CALETOR

Calm down, Asius!

BORUS

Stop shaking or we'll all die!

Asius looks like he's about to lose consciousness. Indeed, his eyes roll back and he falls flat on the bridge, and as the shaking calms down, Odysseus and Borus climb back on the bridge and quickly head for firm ground again.

EXT. ROPE BRIDGE - LATER

On the bridge, Asius is still face down, but he's coming to. Odysseus and Borus are on safe ground.

ODYSSEUS

Come on, Asius!

Asius struggles to get up, slowly and carefully.

CALETOR

(to Xanthus)

He's going.

XANTHUS

(to Asius)

Go!

ASIUS

(to Xanthus)

I'm going!

ODYSSEUS

(to Borus)

He's gonna come now.

BORUS

(to Xanthus and Caletor)

He's coming!

XANTHUS

(to Caletor)

He really is going. -- Go, Asius!

CALETOR

(to Odysseus and Borus)

He's coming!

ODYSSEUS

Right!

ASIUS

Shut up!

EXT. MEADOW - DAY

The men are all across the bridge and alive. They're eyeing at the house across the meadow. The mailbox says: "Calypso". Borus pulls Odysseus closer.

BORUS

That's Calypso's house over there.
She has dragged many a man to
destruction with her charms.

XANTHUS

She lures unsuspecting sailors into
her trap and keeps them on her island
against their will for years!

BORUS

(to Odysseus)

We need as asexual man as possible to
approach her.

ODYSSEUS

Why can't the Philosopher go? He's
asexual.

THE PHILOSOPHER

Au contraire, I am very sexual.

The Philosopher squirms his body as if to make a point.

CALETOR

Stop that. It's disgusting.

THE PHILOSOPHER

(laughing)

You just want my physical body.

BORUS

(to the Philosopher)

How about you return to the ship and supervise the men fixing the ship?

PHILOSOPHER

I feel that I would be of more use with you.

BORUS

Utter bullshit. Out there on the ship, you need to climb the physical mast to supervise the crew. No practical task could be more useful than that.

PHILOSOPHER

(eyes gleaming)

Really?

Borus nods. Grinning, the Philosopher leaves, ready for the most practical and physical task of all.

BORUS

Now where were we?

ODYSSEUS

Fine, I'll go. What do I say to her?

CALYPSO (O.S.)

No need to go anywhere.

The men turn and see a woman of astonishing beauty standing by, holding a bow. A dead rabbit hangs on her shoulder. The men have trouble finding the words. They just stare at her, stunned.

CALYPSO

Yes?

The men's gazes are glazed over in awe. Asius makes a weird sound and twitches a bit in the pant area.

ODYSSEUS

I see the stories about you must be true.

CALYPSO

And what stories might those be?

XANTHUS

You destroy men with your charms.
Lure them here and keep them here
against their will for years.

ODYSSEUS

I'm warning you, we won't fall for
your tricks.

CALETOR

You vile temptress.

CALYPSO

I'm not doing anything. Now if
you'll excuse me, I've got a rabbit
to skin.

BORUS

Not so fast!

CALYPSO

What?

BORUS

You need to learn a thing or two
about treating men like fools.

CALYPSO

Don't worry. You're doing a great
job at that on your own.

BORUS

(laughs, Casanova mode on)
Women. Can't live with them, can't
live without them.

CALYPSO

(unimpressed)

Men. Can't live with them. Can easily
live without them.

ODYSSEUS

You just have to stop luring us into
your trap.

CALYPSO

Look, I was minding my own business
when you showed up. I have no
interest in you people.

BORUS

That's not what I see when I look at you.

ASIUS

You're all... pretty.

CALYPSO

...And?

Xanthus wipes off drool from his chin.

CALYPSO

(rolling her eyes)

Just go fix your ship. There's nothing for you here.

Calyпсо strolls across the meadow to her house, butterflies circling around her, and her wavy, golden hair glittering in the sun. Borus just has to have the last word:

BORUS

Lesbian!

EXT. BEACH - EVENING - BY THE "LUCKY CHARM"

The sailors still fix the ship. A new mast is put in place and they repair the big hole in the ship's hull.

Along the beach, Odysseus and Asius are twisting new ropes for the ship. Further away, Caletor finishes carving new oars. Asius won't take his eyes off him.

ODYSSEUS

Asius? You think I'll be able to get us safely back home?

ASIUS

I wrote my will this morning.

ODYSSEUS

You really don't have much confidence in me, do you?

ASIUS

It's not that I don't trust you to get us further than an island or two from here.

(nodding towards
Caletor)

I worry more about him.

Odysseus turns his head towards Caletor picking up some firewood and heading towards the campfire.

ODYSSEUS

You just misread him, Asius. It's called sarcasm. He uses it to hide the fact that deep down he's just a really sensitive guy.

ASIUS

(eyes wide)

My god. Is it contagious?

ODYSSEUS

Sarcasm's not a--

And all of a sudden, a rowing boat drifts out from behind the Lucky Charm. It's the Farmers. The Boss and his men see Odysseus and Asius and are terrified to be out in the open. They do their best to hide their faces with any object available: bucket, foot, chicken.

ODYSSEUS

(to Farmers)

Hey there! Need some help? You lost?

EXT. OFF THE SHORE - EVENING - ROWING BOAT

The Farmers do their best to hide on the little boat floating not too far from the shore.

THE BOSS

Uh -- we're just fine, thank you!

Have a good day!

(whispers to his men)

Get us the hell away from here! Now!

MEGADETHUS

The booby trap isn't in place yet.

THE BOSS

(to Odysseus)

We're just doing some fishing here!

The Boss motions furiously to Argicides, telling him to pretend like he was fishing. Nervous, Argicides throws the whole fishing rod into the sea. The Boss grimaces. Boethides sticks a device on the hull of the Lucky Charm, while keeping another similar device in his hand. The two devices are bound together with a string.

ODYSSEUS

Good! Caught any fish yet?

THE BOSS

Yeah, umm, six cods... and a couple of dolphins. Small ones.

Boethides taps the Boss on the shoulder:

BOETHIDES

Alright. We're set.

THE BOSS

(to Odysseus)

Right! We're finished here. Nice talking to you! Have a nice day!

ODYSSEUS

Likewise!

Asius waves at the Farmers. The Boss fakes a smile towards the two, and then growls at his men:

THE BOSS

Get this bucket out of there! Quick!

The Farmers row off, but the string goes around Megadethus' boot, and as the boat sails away, the device from the Charm's hull gets pulled off.

EXT. BEACH - MORNING

The ship is ready to sail again, and the crew is gathering by the Lucky Charm.

CALETOR

Where's Odysseus?

XANTHUS

(rolling his eyes)

The rowers insisted that he sacrifice to the gods so that the Lucky Charm would be a bit luckier in the future.

Xanthus points at Odysseus further along the shoreline. Kneeling beside a hole in the ground, he's busy making the sacrifice. He's got a black sheep and a baby wether next to the hole, into which he's sprinkling flour. TWO ROWERS passing by halt as one of them hears Xanthus' words:

ROWER #1

Oi! Don't you be rollin' yer eyes at gods or anythin' like that!

Xanthus jumps as the man pushes his face close to his and pokes him in the chest with his finger:

ROWER #1

You ever been to see the Delphic Oracle? Cause I 'ave. You could hardly hear a word she said, and what you 'eard you sure as hell didn't understand, but by gods, in the next twenny years or so, every single word turned out to be true. So don't you be rollin' yer eyes!

With one last poke, Rower #1 finally leaves Xanthus alone. Borus examines the fixed hole in the hull. The second Rower stands next to Borus:

BORUS

Looks good. You men did a good job.

ROWER #2

I'm mighty sorry about our supervisor, though.

BORUS

Me too. He was a good man. Most theoretical.

THE BOSS (O.S.)

Nooo!

A faint explosion travels through the air from the next bay, but the men don't hear it. -- The Farmers failed.

ROWER #2

It's of consolation that he seemed very excited right until the moment of the impact. The men said he was still smiling when they scraped his remains off the deck.

Borus pats the rower on the back. In the background, Odysseus grabs the sheep and places its throat above the pit. He gets out his knife and, gagging, puts it on the sheep's throat.

XANTHUS

Alright! We're boarding! Get your gear!

Legless Soldier picks up Limbless Soldier, and jumps on his stump of a torso towards the ship. The retching noises barely reach the men, but Odysseus is now busy throwing up in the sacrificial pit.

Asius picks up a sack and the battle horn from the ground.

ASIUS

Boarding!

Asius blows the horn. Up in one of the guard towers, Elpenor wakes up to the sound -- startled, he falls off.

The sailors carry last of the gear to the ship. Elpenor should be standing up again after the fall by now. Will he stand up? Maybe. But he's still not up. Seems like he's not getting up at all... Or is he? -- No. The gods weren't on his side anymore.

The last men to board the ship, Caletor and Borus walk up the gangplank. Odysseus returns to the ship now, too. Caletor examines Odysseus:

CALETOR

Did I just see you throw up in the sacrificial pit?

Odysseus hangs his head sheepishly and boards the ship.

BORUS

That can't be good.

EXT. "LUCKY CHARM" - LATER - FURIOUS STORM

And it most certainly wasn't. Wrathful winds beat the ship that's on the verge of falling apart completely this time. The crew are doing everything they can to get the ship under some kind of control, but it's impossible. The winds howl, and it's raining cats and dogs (up ahead, literally). By the rudder, Asius stares at the animals splashing to the waves, his eyes dazed, his mouth a gaping hole.

ASIUS

There's a first time for everything...

CALETOR

(to Xanthus)

A sign from the gods, perhaps?

Xanthus is stunned.

BORUS

Odysseus! Grab that rudder! Now!

As if in a dream, Odysseus turns around and then does his best to help Asius struggle with the wildly moving rudder. The Legless Soldier hangs on to a rope by his hands, the Limbless Soldier by his teeth.

INT. BELOW THE DECK OF "LUCKY CHARM" - DAY

The Keleustes bangs his drum like the was no tomorrow. Crying, Trieraules wheezes into his aulos. The rowers yell as the oars kick back and water begins to spurt inside the ship.

EXT. "LUCKY CHARM" - DAY - FURIOUS STORM

The crew is losing the battle against the storm:

ASIOUS

(to Odysseus, sad)

We're not going to make it this time.

DARIUS

Fuck you, Odysseus, I say! Fuck you!

As Tydeus hears Darius' words, something in him snaps:

TYDEUS

This is it!

Despite the thrashing about of the ship, Tydeus dashes at Odysseus and tackles him down.

XANTHUS

Stop that! We're going down!

CALETOR

Fight later, for gods' sake!

Water washes over the deck. Borus pulls Tydeus away from Odysseus. His eyes are blazing:

BORUS

Every man on deck do your jobs!

But there's little that can be done. The ship tilts and the waves suck the mast down. A massive wave hits the hull, breaking it. The men scream.

INSERT - A MAP

A red line traces the route of the ship and its screaming crew in the grips of the storm. They're travelling uncontrollably all over the map, finally hitting the shores of an island with a crash.

EXT. SHORELINE - DAY

The ship (or what's left of it) lies on the beach, irreparable. Odysseus hears a strange deep whirring sound, and his gaze wanders over some luggage littering the beach. Then his eyes find the source of the weird sound: a massive airplane engine lies on the beach (à la "LOST"), still running. Asius appears next to Odysseus, dazed:

ASIUS

It'll take days to fix the ship.

That second, the remains of the ship break down completely on their own. The sole survivors of the wreck stand on the beach: Odysseus, Asius, Borus, Xanthus, and Caletor. They're on their own now.

EXT. SMALL HILL - AFTERNOON

The men with some salvaged gear climb up a small hill overlooking the sea. A dry forest lies up ahead.

ODYSSEUS

Our journey hasn't quite proceeded as planned.

Xanthus drinks the last drops of water from his goatskin bottle.

XANTHUS

We had better find fresh water soon, otherwise we'll be forced to drink our own urine.

With dark circles around his eyes, Caletor looks sick:

CALETOR

I'm not drinking my or anyone else's piss!

Suddenly, Borus starts to scream like he was dying. He barks out short, raspy screams, staring at Odysseus' rucksack in horror.

ASIUS

What?! What is it?!

Still screaming, Borus points at the sack: a chicken's head peeks out of it.

ASIUS

It's the pigeon?!

XANTHUS

Chicken!

ODYSSEUS

I couldn't kill it!

BORUS

Get that fucker out of my sight!

Borus pulls out his sword and swings it at the bird. Odysseus ducks the blow.

ODYSSEUS

She's my pet!

CALETOR

Your what?

The men stop.

XANTHUS

We were starving and all this time you had food with you?!

CALETOR

Food that kept eating the little food we had!

Borus swings his sword at the chicken again.

ODYSSEUS

No! Nobody kills her!

Odysseus pulls out his sword, too:

ODYSSEUS

You eat Paula over my dead body!

ASIUS

Paula?

ODYSSEUS

(embarrassed, petting
the bird's head)

I named her... Paula.

BORUS

That bird will never come out of that
sack!

Borus brandishes his sword:

BORUS

And you keep that sack the hell away
from me!

ODYSSEUS

Alright! Can we just keep moving?
We have to find water.

Wiping sweat from his forehead, Borus sheathes his
sword and resumes walking. He keeps a distance to
Odysseus, his eyes never leaving the rucksack.

XANTHUS

Look! People!

Indeed, there are people dotting a clearing in the
forest: a happy bunch of vagabonds with their wagons.

ASIUS

The... Others?

ODYSSEUS

No, I think they're just regular
people.

EXT. LOTOPHAGI CAMP - LATER

The men approach the people, looking very soldier-like
in comparison with the colourfully-dressed Lotophagi.
Several small wagons circle the campfire sending off
sparks into the nearing dark of the night. A little
further away, there's an outhouse.

The lot is led by an OLD LOTOPHAGI, who's sitting by
the fire with the others, including a LADY LOTOPHAGI
and a SKINNY LOTOPHAGI. Two dogs chase one another
around the camp. The Old Lotophagi sees the men:

OLD LOTOPHAGI

Peace, man.

ODYSSEUS

We shipwrecked on this island. You don't happen to have some water to spare?

OLD LOTOPHAGI

Sure, man. Would you stay for dinner while you're here?

XANTHUS

We're just looking for a friendly ship to board.

ASIUS

We're on our way to Ithaca.

SKINNY LOTOPHAGI

Ah, Ithaca. The land of people who are differently interesting.

The Lotophagi laugh.

BORUS

You know of a harbour on this island?

LADY LOTOPHAGI

There's a charming little village with a charming little harbour on the other side of the island.

SKINNY LOTOPHAGI

The only place on this island where ships can safely land.

OLD LOTOPHAGI

We sold someone a bong there, man.

LADY LOTOPHAGI

Just be careful of the one-eyed monster that guards the road to the village.

SKINNY LOTOPHAGI

They say he feasts on human flesh.

OLD LOTOPHAGI

Son of Poseidon himself, they say.

LADY LOTOPHAGI

He ate the bong we threw at him.

SKINNY LOTOPHAGI

The harbour's at least two days from here on foot. Why don't you put down your gear and spend the night here?

ODYSSEUS

We wouldn't want to be of any--

OLD LOTOPHAGI

Hey man, forget about it, man! We'll drink some wine, smoke, and chill out, man.

XANTHUS

You're most kind.

LADY LOTOPHAGI

There's a river nearby. You can wash yourselves there -- if you consider personal hygiene being of importance.

Again, the Lotophagi laugh. The Skinny Lotophagi waves some flies away from circling around himself.

OLD LOTOPHAGI

Yeah, man.

EXT. LOTOPHAGI CAMP - NIGHT

Everybody's gathered around the fire. A Lotophagi plays the aulos and some others dance to it. The Old Lotophagi passes a joint to Borus, who takes in a lung-full. The Lady Lotophagi drinks some wine and passes the amphora on to Odysseus. The dogs lie by the fire, dozing off.

BORUS

So you just... travel around and... chill?

LADY LOTOPHAGI

We like to call ourselves non-goal-oriented members of society.

OLD LOTOPHAGI

We're looking for expanded consciousness.

ASIUS

Who?

OLD LOTOPHAGI

The cosmos of the mind, man.

CALETOR

(dryly)

Any luck?

SKINNY LOTOPHAGI

We seek to forget all our earthly worries. The road away from all yearning, you know.

ODYSSEUS

We yearn to be at home again...

SKINNY LOTOPHAGI

Well, just take some of that.

The Skinny Lotophagi passes the joint on to Odysseus.

SKINNY LOTOPHAGI

Soon you won't even remember what you're missing.

EXT. LOTOPHAGI CAMP - LATER

The wine and the smoking have done their deeds. The men are high and wasted, but they haven't given up on the wine yet. Borus passes the wine skin to Odysseus, whose reactions have slowed down considerably. He has to try a few times before he's able to grab the skin too, since his aim isn't what it used to be, either.

BORUS

I would go as far as calling you a person of differing sobriety.

ODYSSEUS

Correction: I am sobriety-deprived.

The men laugh. Asius is lying on the ground and singing to himself. Further away, Xanthus is playing with Paula in the rucksack.

XANTHUS

(very drunk)

I love this little precious here...

In the background, there's movement near the outhouse. The men don't notice it.

EXT. OUTHOUSE - NIGHT

It's the four Farmers. They have managed to infiltrate the camp. They lurk in the outhouse's shadow.

ARGICIDES

Are you sure this is going to work?

THE BOSS

Of course it's gonna work! All we need is one of the men to squeeze out a hefty load.

BOETHIDES

Hopefully the one who wouldn't die when you stabbed him, right?

The Boss shows the incense in his hand.

THE BOSS

Exactly. He lights up one of these, and the gases in the outhouse will do the rest.

BOETHIDES

Can't get any easier than that.

Boethides hands the Boss a small wooden sign, some dry hay, and two white rocks.

THE BOSS

That's the beauty of it. Now keep an eye out for any lookielos.

The Boss enters the outhouse with the items while the rest of the farmers eye the surroundings.

EXT. LOTOPHAGI CAMP - NIGHT

The Lotophagi are calling it a day. The Old Lotophagi turns to the men sitting around the campfire:

OLD LOTOPHAGI

Well, it's been nice talking to you.

ODYSSEUS

Likewise, man.

The Old Lotophagi gets up and pats Odysseus on the back:

OLD LOTOPHAGI

Had a good time, eh? This old geezer
is hitting the hay now. G'night.

XANTHUS

Good night, man.

BORUS

Peace out!

The older Lotophagi scatter to their wagons, the
younger ones sleep on blankets under the stars.

ASIUS

I think I'll just sleep here.

Asius lies down on the sand. The others follow suit.
Small lumps under Caletor's shirt become visible as he
lies down: the wounds have gathered pus.

BORUS

Not a bad idea. At all.

ODYSSEUS

We'll head out tomorrow.

XANTHUS

We'll get to the harbour.

ODYSSEUS

Yeah...

Sleep gets them almost instantly. From his wagon, the
Old Lotophagi eyes the sleeping men.

EXT. CAMP SITE - MORNING - CLOSE ANGLE - CALETOR

as he's smoking. He's calm and collected. Xanthus,
Borus, Asius, and Odysseus with Paula in the rucksack
find their way to him. They are hung-over, and have
obviously woken up just a minute ago.

XANTHUS

Morning.

ODYSSEUS

What's for breakfast?

CALETOR

The Lotophagi are gone. And so's all
the stuff we had left.

The men sober up in a flash. They look around -- and so it is: there's no sign of the Lotophagi anywhere.

ASIUS

What are we going to do now?

ODYSSEUS

I think I'm gonna be sick.

Odysseus hurries to the outhouse. Borus finds his own bag on the ground, but it's empty. He throws it away.

XANTHUS

We head out to the harbour anyway.
There must be a village or something
on the way.

BORUS

Well I still think this is fucked up.

Asius rubs his empty stomach:

ASIUS

I can almost feel the walls of my
stomach rubbing against each other.

XANTHUS

I could kill for some corned beef.

ASIUS

And murder for a muffin.

INT. OUTHOUSE - MORNING - CLOSE ANGLE - ODYSSEUS

as he lifts his head up after throwing up. He then pulls down his pants and sits down on, holding his head. The sign, the hay, the incense, and the white rocks are right next to him.

After a while, Odysseus turns up his nose and tries to fan the unpleasant smell away with his hand. Then he notices the wooden sign next to him.

INSERT - WOODEN SIGN

which has an inconspicuous chicken feather stuck to it, and which reads "For terrible smels: burn this insens!"

BACK TO SCENE

Happy, Odysseus puts the incense between his teeth, the hay on his lap and starts to bang the white rocks against one another to make sparks.

EXT. CAMP SITE - MORNING

Ready to leave, the men are getting a little impatient.

Suddenly: KABOOM! The outhouse blows up! The men continue what they were doing for a while, indifferent. But then, screeching Paula drops from the sky and lands between them. Startled, Borus takes a step back, his feet get tangled up and he falls down.

XANTHUS

(looking at the bird)

Zeus Almighty! Odysseus!

The men rush down to ground zero, calling out to Odysseus. There's no sign of him -- and it looks like he couldn't have survived the blast.

ASIUS

(about to cry)

I can't believe this. He was the main character.

The rest of the men stand ground solemn, stupefied.

XANTHUS

(dramatically)

Caletor? Borus? Get your shovels.

The men don't move. Borus raises an eyebrow.

XANTHUS

Alright. We use our hands.

EXT. GRASSY HILL - MORNING - ODYSSEUS' GRAVE

The men stand solemn by the burial mound. Caletor wipes his forehead: he's going through hell not to give out how bad he's feeling. Asius puts a tree branch at the head of the grave. Xanthus adjusts Paula better in his rucksack.

ASIUS

(sad)

A true friend is a rare bird...

XANTHUS

He's free now. Free as a bird.

Borus looks thunderous, but the others don't remember his phobia:

XANTHUS

We'd better get going. Early bird catches the worm.

The men walk into the forest, leaving their buried friend behind. Borus covers his ears with his hands.

ASIUS

I wish we had water, though. A sailor without water is a bird without wings.

XANTHUS

I wish we could get a bird's eye view of the island to know where to go...

EXT. CAMP SITE - LATER

The Farmers reach the camp site again and make their way to the remains of the campfire. The Boss motions towards the pile of ashes:

THE BOSS

Megadethus! Check if it's still warm. Argicides, Boethides, you search for tracks.

Argicides and Boethides leave. Megadethus walks to the campfire and squats down -- but instead of touching the ashes, he picks up a dog turd. He squishes it a little between his fingers:

MEGADETHUS

Still warm. They haven't got far.

EXT. ISLAND - PLAINS - DAY

The sun throws its dizzyingly hot beams down on the men. They drag their feet, their faces telling they can't go on much longer. Caletor's dull, dark-rimmed eyes never leave the horizon. Suddenly Asius' face brightens up:

ASIUS

How about two of us carrying the other two for a while. Then switching places when the carriers get tired?

Wow. That was the worst idea they've heard in a while.

XANTHUS

I would reconsider that before the actual implementation.

ASIUS

But the plan involves two men being able to rest half the time.

BORUS

The two men carrying the other two would tire themselves half dead.

ASIUS

But they would be able to rest when they are being carried!

XANTHUS

I think that would slow us down quite a bit, Asius.

ASIUS

How so? The two people would walk twice as fast after they'd had a nice rest while they were being carried!

BORUS

They wouldn't be walking twice as fast with a grown man on their back.

ASIUS

How so? They would be resting--

Caletor steps up and slaps Asius on the cheek. The world stops.

CALETOR

Enough. Everybody walks on their own two fucking feet.

The men still don't move as Caletor starts off, his hand on his stomach. Asius is absolutely terrified -- then his mouth forms a thin, white line: this has to stop.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - TWO DAYS LATER

Xanthus falls down and can't get back up. Seeing that, the others get taken over by exhaustion, too. One by one, they sit down on the sand, beaten.

XANTHUS

This is it. We're done.

BORUS

We need water. I... can't go on.

CALETOR

Odysseus isn't here. I say we kill the bird and drink its blood.

The men stare at him in disbelief. Then Xanthus pulls out his knife and grabs the rucksack and takes it a little further away.

Xanthus takes the chicken out and prepares to slit its throat. The bird looks at him in the eye and tilts its head and cackles sweetly. Xanthus tries to stay strong, but to no avail. He sighs and returns to the others.

XANTHUS

I can't do it. I can't kill...
Paula.

They look at the little bird as she walks up to Caletor and rubs her head against his arm. Caletor sighs.

XANTHUS

You do all know what else could keep us going for a little longer. Right?

BORUS

I'm not doing it.

XANTHUS

We all still have our skins. We can just... pretend it's apple juice.

ASIUS

Guys, I--

BORUS

Do not talk, Asius. No more "ideas".

ASIUS

But I--

CALETOR

Shut up before I shut you up!

Startled, Asius shuts up.

XANTHUS

If we don't do it, we'll all die.

They let the thought sink in. Then, avoiding looking at each other, one by one the men get their skins out and turn their backs to each other, Asius being the last one to do it. The effort alone is almost too much for them. When they've finished their business, they scan each others' faces in an awkward silence: are we really going through with this? Xanthus makes up his mind first:

XANTHUS

Apple juice.

Xanthus drinks from his skin. Once the others see he's still alright after a while, they too bring their skins to their lips and drink. Asius comes close to throwing up, but doesn't. Borus struggles to keep his face normal.

BORUS

Nobody talks about this. Ever.

The men nod. They really won't be talking about this. To anyone. Ever. Xanthus raises his gaze to the horizon, and sighs -- but his sigh stops halfway.

XANTHUS

Oh, fuck me.

BORUS

What?

XANTHUS

I think I see a house.

BORUS

What?!

The men turn to see. Indeed, a farm house lies over a dead-dry pasture, and there's light at the windows.

ASIUS

Next time, will you let me speak?!

EXT. FARM YARD - DUSK

On their last legs, the men reach the farm house and make their way across the yard with a large shed, a grain silo, and a large, dark grey main building. Xanthus pounds at the massive door with a knocker. By the shed, some sheep are baaing.

Just as Xanthus is about to knock again, the door opens. A BIG, UGLY MAN IN A LEATHER HAT AND WITH A LEATHER PATCH OVER HIS LEFT EYE stands in the doorway. He looks at the men with a stony stare.

XANTHUS

Sir. We have been wandering across the island for days. We're very tired and hungry. Please...

ASIUS

We even had to drink our own pee.

BORUS

If we could stay for the night, we'd pay you back. We're hard-working men.

For a long while, the Cyclops remains quiet, but then he speaks in an unnaturally monotonous voice:

CYCLOPS

I have been expecting you.

The men exchange looks.

XANTHUS

I beg you pardon?

CYCLOPS

What I meant to say in this situation was: welcome.

The Cyclops stands back from the doorway. The men hesitate for a second, but then enter the house.

INT. FARM HOUSE ENTRANCE HALL - LATER

The house is dark and everything in it seems to be greyish black. The decorations include items made out of leather: pillows, chair covers, etc. The house is unnaturally quiet.

The Cyclops stares at the men with his one good eye and spots Asius glancing at Caletor with suspicious fear. By accident, Asius knocks down a pin from the nearby table -- and you can actually hear the pin drop. Then the Cyclops calls out:

CYCLOPS

Wife!

A SMALL, PLUMP MAN IN A DRESS trips along to meet the guests. When the "wife" sees the men, for a second, the look on "her" face is no different from that of a deer caught in the headlights.

CYCLOPS

This woman standing here is my beautiful wife Cindy.

Despite the strangeness of the situation, the men struggle to keep a straight face: "Beautiful? Cindy?!"

CYCLOPS

Wife. Get the girls.

CINDY

GIRLS!

Two pretty, blonde girls run to their mother and shyly hide behind Cindy's dress. They seem very out-of-place compared to their parents in the dreary, ugly house.

CYCLOPS

We have received four guests who are standing there in the doorway. They will join us at the dinner table. Wife, go and lay the table with four extra plates, cups, knives, forks, spoons, and dessert bowls.

The men can't quite find the words, but the Cyclops seems to have a plan:

CYCLOPS

You, go and lie down and close your eyes and anticipate sleep. Then we all eat dinner.

The men look at the direction the Cyclops is pointing at, and see clean, soft-looking beds in the guestroom at the end of a hallway. It's like a dream come true.

CYCLOPS

(to Asius)

Pee-drinker. You and I have to talk.

EXT. FARM YARD - EVENING

The Cyclops stands on the porch, smoking a pipe, and looking into the darkness. Asius stands next to him, playing with his fingers.

CYCLOPS

(not looking at Asius)

I saw you. And I know in my brain what you are thinking about inside your head. I see it in your eyes when I look at them with my eye.

ASIUS

Y-you do?

CYCLOPS

You worry about the sick man.

ASIUS

Caletor. That's right. I--

CYCLOPS

You need to act before he gets you first. Do what you call a--

He does the quotation marks with all of his fingers.

CYCLOPS

--"pre-emptive strike".

Asius is startled to hear him say that aloud.

CYCLOPS

There are clear signs there. You know that in your head.

ASIUS

I guess so...

CYCLOPS

You can get a knife from the kitchen. Do it after dinner and before it is too late.

Asius chews his lip. He glances at the guestroom window and happens to catch Caletor there, peering out at him. There are dark circles around Caletor's eyes.

Asius swallows and looks at the Cyclops, who nods and puffs on his pipe.

Then Asius' gaze slowly climbs up the old silo nearby. He sees a window high above there.

THE CYCLOPS

That is my mother living up there.
She is old and I have to take care of
her.

Asius looks at the man and then back at the silo.

THE CYCLOPS

MOTHER!

The Cyclops waves at the window. Nothing there waves back.

THE CYCLOPS

She has not been feeling very well
lately.

The Cyclops eyes the sky:

THE CYCLOPS

We'll be getting rain tonight.

INT. FARM HOUSE DINING ROOM - EVENING

The men and the Cyclops and his family are gathered around a large dinner table. The silence weighs heavy.

CYCLOPS

Well, isn't this fun?

The men can't be quite sure if he's being sarcastic or not, but soon the Cyclops' dull stare tells them he's dead serious.

XANTHUS

This is a great... party... So
you... farm sheep here?

CINDY

My husband is a taxidermist.

OLDER GIRL

He stuffs dead things.

YOUNGER GIRL

Animals, mostly.

CALETOR

Mostly?

The Cyclops keeps his dull stare on the table.

CYCLOPS

I will show you later on what it means to be a taxidermist.

(to Asius)

I will take my funnel and show you, Pee-Drinker. Afterwards.

The Cyclops gives Asius a dull but meaningful look. Asius glances at Caletor, who seems to sense that something is going on.

CINDY

Would you help me with the dishes later, Borus?

BORUS

Yes... Ma'am.

Awkward silence sets in again. They all eat.

CYCLOPS

I have to put it in words now and say that this is the most fun I have ever had.

The men exchange glances, and keep eating.

INT. FARM HOUSE GUESTROOM - EVENING

Drying their washed hair with towels, Borus and Xanthus look much better. Caletor, however, looks sick: his stomach is swollen. Borus catches a glimpse of the pus-filled wounds before Caletor puts his shirt on.

BORUS

Caletor. You really should have those checked out.

CALETOR

(hissing)

I'm fine.

BORUS

If you say so.

(beat)

Well, I'm off to help... Cindy.

Borus and leaves the guestroom--

INT. FARM HOUSE HALLWAY - CONTINUED

--and comes across feverish-looking Asius exiting the kitchen. Borus raises an eyebrow:

BORUS

You alright there, Asius?

ASIUS

I had business there in the kitchen.

Asius stretches his arms and wriggles his fingers elaborately as if to prove his hands are empty. Then, with awkward and shuffling steps, Asius hurries past Borus. Shrugging, Borus walks on.

INT. FARM HOUSE GUESTROOM - LATER

Asius sneaks into the dark guestroom and finds Caletor and Xanthus lying on their beds, eyes closed already. Asius wipes his forehead. He's breathing fast.

INT. FARM HOUSE DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Borus is about to enter the kitchen, but raises an eyebrow, sneers to himself, and returns to the hallway instead.

INT. FARM HOUSE GUESTROOM - NIGHT

Slowly, Asius sneaks up to Caletor's bed. He places himself next to the sleeping man and raises the knife. Asius grimaces, trying to force his hands to come down on Caletor's stomach. It's close, but he can't quite make it. On the next bed, Xanthus opens his eyes:

XANTHUS

Asius? What are you doing?

Still wearing the pained grimace on his face, Asius turns to look at Xanthus, never lowering his hands. Xanthus' voice awakens Caletor, too. Borus appears at the doorway.

BORUS

What's going on here?

XANTHUS

I think Asius is trying to kill
Caletor.

BORUS

Why?

XANTHUS

Beats me.

CALETOR

What are you up to, Asius?

XANTHUS

Maybe he's afraid of you?

CALETOR

Why?

XANTHUS

I can't tell.

CALETOR

(to Asius)

Where did you get the knife anyway?

Asius trembles. Sweat drips from his pained face.

BORUS

I saw him come out of the kitchen
just now. Walking strangely. I
think he had the knife hidden in his
ass crack.

XANTHUS

(sighing)

Look what you did, Asius. Caused
such a commotion.

BORUS

Just put the knife back and get to
sleep, Asius. I've got work to do.

Borus leaves again, and outside, the thunder booms.

ASIUS

(through his teeth)

I'm gonna kill him before he gets me.

XANTHUS

Sweetheart, more often than not, our
fears are just the result of our
imagination.

Asius turns his eyes at Caletor, who just looks sick. Asius' determination falters. He is just about to lower his knife, when thunder booms again deafeningly. In the light of the flashes, there's a scruffy grinning face at the window.

Caletor sees the face in the window and screams. Startled Asius' hands drop and accidentally the knife cuts Caletor's wounds full of pus. The pus shoots out. Asius sees the face at the window now too, and screams. Caletor looks at his stomach and screams. Asius turns to Caletor and sees that he actually stabbed him. He screams.

Caletor turns his head to the window, sees the grinning face again and screams in horror. Caletor and Asius look at each other and scream. Xanthus joins them. The pus keeps shooting out and spraying everywhere. Then they all look at the window and scream some more.

The thunder roars and the lightning flashes once again, and the face is still there. -- It's Odysseus!

INT. FARM HOUSE GUESTROOM - LATER

Happy beyond all, Asius hugs the soaking wet Odysseus.

ASIUS

You're alive! I can't believe you're alive!

ODYSSEUS

I managed to trail you guys.

Odysseus sees Paula and goes to hug her.

ASIUS

Wait till Borus hears about this!

Caletor, however, sits with a sunken brow:

CALETOR

Who the hell did we bury?

CUT TO:

EXT. PA'S FARM - TWO DAYS AGO

Two farmers, MEGES and ROCK do maintenance on a horse carriage out in the sun. Except that only Meges is

doing it. Rock just stands by the wall and chews on something, looking on.

A YOUNG BOY is playing fetch with the family dog. An OLD, TOOTHLESS MAN sits in the cowshed's shadow, leaning onto his cane. The hammer slips from Meges' hand.

MEGES

Gods damn it!

ROCK

You ain't much of a fixer, are ya?

MEGES

Shut the fuck up and get Tithon!

Rock doesn't move, but bellows out a stunning roar:

ROCK

TITHON!

There's no reply.

MEGES

Where the hell is he? TITHON! Get your ass here!

After a moment, Tithon does come from around the corner with an amphora.

TITHON

Alright, Meges. Just went to get some more oil.

MEGES

Cracked the damn axle. Need Big Baby Clytus to replace it. Right now.

TITHON

(to the boy)

Boy! Where's Uncle Clytus?

THE BOY

Drunk again? Passed out behind the shed?

The Old Man points at the shed and mumbles incomprehensibly.

ROCK

Pa here says some men buried him.

MEGES

Pfft. Somebody get Pa his pills.

INT. FARM HOUSE GUESTROOM - NIGHT

Pulling his pus-and-blood-covered shirt off of his skin, Caletor grabs a towel and disappears behind the dressing screen in the corner. The Cyclops appears in the doorway and looks at Caletor's bed covered in blood and pus. Satisfied, he nods at Asius:

CYCLOPS

Now, Pee-Drinker. Come with me upstairs. We discuss you paying back our generous hospitality and the dinner party.

(points at Odysseus)

Bring your dirty new friend with you.

INT. FARM HOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

Borus puts down a small mountain of dirty dishes on the kitchen table.

CINDY

Thank you for your help, darling.

BORUS

My pleasure, Ma'am.

Cindy pauses. Then she sighs and turns slowly.

CINDY

I don't know if you've noticed, but I'm not really a woman.

Cindy's voice deepens to a man's voice.

CINDY

I'm an Armatolos. A policeman. Been working undercover inspecting disappearings here for four years.

(beat)

Been married to him for three.

(beat)

My faith prohibits premarital sex.

BORUS

And the girls?

Her voice is back to its feminine pitch and she positively glows:

CINDY

They're ours.

BORUS

How is that...?

CINDY

It was very painful. It has all been... very painful.

INT. FARM HOUSE TORTURE ROOM/UPSTAIRS - NIGHT

The Cyclops ushers Odysseus and Asius to his large study in the attic. Two doors lead to the room, one at each end. Both doors open to narrow corridors and stairs leading down. The bleak, grey room has a big wooden device with leather straps in the middle of it. The Cyclops is holding an amphora.

CYCLOPS

Here I stuff. And sometimes mummify.

The Cyclops closes the door and picks up two large funnels from the table.

ODYSSEUS

What's going on?

The Cyclops locks the door.

INT. FARM HOUSE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Xanthus shuffles his bare feet along the hallway and stops outside the bathroom door:

XANTHUS

Hurry up, Caletor! I'm about to leak!

CALETOR (O.S.)

Be a second.

Xanthus looks around, shifting weight from foot to foot. Finally, Caletor comes out with a bandage over his torso. He's looking alright.

CALETOR

I'm much better. Believe it or not.

The two little girls come out of their room and they take Xanthus by the hand:

YOUNGER GIRL

Come and play with us.

XANTHUS

Now? It's midnight. Shouldn't you be in bed?

CALETOR

I'll come and play with you girls for a while. Uncle Xanthus' bladder is about to explode.

Caletor takes the girls by the hand, and they lead him down the hallway. Xanthus opens the bathroom door, but then stops. The door next to the bathroom door is ajar and he can see a human foot on the table. The toes are spread and dead still. His curiosity overrides his bladder, and after making sure nobody can see him, he peers into the little room -- his eyes grow wide and his jaw drops.

INT. FARM HOUSE/THE GIRLS' ROOM - NIGHT

Caletor sits down on the floor with the little girls. The younger one gives him a doll, but it's got no head.

CALETOR

Your doll is broken. I can try and fix it for you, if you want?

The girl doesn't reply, but her big sister empties a basket full of dolls on the floor -- every single one of them is broken. Missing heads, detached legs and arms.

CALETOR

They're all... broken.

Caletor catches the older girl staring at him. The door to the room smashes shut and the key in the keyhole turns on its own. The girl's eyes gleam slightly yellow, and as she flashes a diabolical smile, Caletor sees that her teeth are all sharp as nails.

INT. FARM HOUSE KITCHEN - NIGHT

Cindy's voice is back to its masculine pitch:

CINDY

If you ever get to Ithaca, would you please get a hold of Commissioner Glaucoma? Tell him that I quit.

Cindy's hand travels down to her pregnant belly and rubs it gently.

CINDY

Tell him... I'm finally happy.

BORUS

(unsure)

I can do that.

Cindy breaks out in a motherly smile -- which soon changes into something else. She looks at Borus from under her brow:

CINDY

Are you jealous?

BORUS

What?

CINDY

I know you are. You want to have sex with me?

BORUS

What? No!

CINDY

My husband doesn't find me attractive when I'm big.

Panicking, Borus pushes a pile of plates on the floor as he retreats.

CINDY

I long for a man's touch.

BORUS

Get away!

Cindy comes after Borus as he throws himself out of the door.

CINDY

Get dirty with meee!

INT. FARM HOUSE/THE GIRLS' ROOM - NIGHT

Caletor dashes to the door and fumbles with its lock. Behind him, the older sister pulls out a big knife. Caletor hears it, and his hand falls onto his previous stab wound: not again!

Caletor turns as the girl attacks him screeching like a monster. Caletor shoves her and she drops the knife. The girl jumps onto Caletor's leg and sinks her teeth into his thigh. The younger girl attacks his other foot. Caletor screams in agony, and proceeds to smash his legs into a wall, the beastly girls thumping against the wall like big rag-dolls.

Caletor grabs two vases off a table, and smashes them to the monsters' heads. After some more kicking and screaming, Caletor manages to get himself loose and he throws the girls into a corner, opens the door and runs out just as they get back on their feet. The girls are unharmed and full of rage.

INT. FARM HOUSE/LITTLE ROOM - NIGHT

Xanthus looks around. The table is actually a device similar to the one upstairs and it is occupied by a dead man. The man's hands are reaching out to whomever was killing him, and his face shows utter horror. Xanthus sees it's Tydeus, and there is a funnel still stuck in his rectum.

XANTHUS

My gods... Odysseus!

Xanthus hurries out of the room to find his friends.

INT. FARM HOUSE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Dashing out of the kitchen, Borus runs into Caletor who is in a frenzy:

CALETOR

All the dolls were broken! They're monsters!

BORUS

That... "woman" is a monster!

Now Xanthus dashes out to the hallway too:

XANTHUS

Borus! We have to get out of here!
Where's Asius?

BORUS

Upstairs! We have to--

With a roar, the raging Cindy fills the doorway to the kitchen. The men are about to sprint upstairs, but the ferocious girls block the way. The men have no choice but to find their way out of the house. Borus and Xanthus dash in one direction, Caletor in another. Cindy and the little monsters scream out their rage.

INT. FARM HOUSE TORTURE ROOM/UPSTAIRS - MEANWHILE

Odysseus and Asius struggle with the leather straps binding them to the wooden device at the centre of the room. Now holding two funnels, the Cyclops looms over the men and grunts.

CYCLOPS

I am afraid this will hurt.

Suddenly Cindy and the girls' screams from downstairs catch the Cyclops' attention.

CYCLOPS

Wife?

The Cyclops stomps downstairs to see what's going on. Meanwhile, Odysseus and Asius manage to wriggle their hands free. Odysseus releases his feet, too, and dashes towards the unlocked door, but Asius isn't as fast:

ASIUS

Odysseus! Wait!

Odysseus turns back at the door. But instead of helping Asius, he just picks up Paula, and dashes out.

INT. FARM HOUSE - STAIRCASE - NIGHT

Odysseus hurries down a staircase.

ASIUS (O.S.)

Odysseus?!

Odysseus halts, looking back upstairs, and the short distance between him and the main hallway downstairs.

Suddenly, the Cyclops appears at the foot of the staircase, roaring with rage as he sees Odysseus. Odysseus has no choice but to run back upstairs.

INT. FARM HOUSE TORTURE ROOM/UPSTAIRS - NIGHT

Odysseus dashes back to the attic, but there's no sign of Asius.

ODYSSEUS

Asius?

The Cyclops' heavy footsteps draw near, and Odysseus slams the door shut and locks it. The other door is shut too, and as Odysseus now finds, it's also locked. The Cyclops pounds at the first door.

CYCLOPS

Open this door! With your hand!

ODYSSEUS

No!

Frantically, Odysseus tries to open the opposite door, but it won't budge. Then the pounding pauses. Odysseus listens for a while, and takes a step back from the second door, just in case the Cyclops goes around and attempts to enter through that one.

CRASH! An axe smashes to the first door behind Odysseus' back. One more time, Odysseus tries to unlock the second door, but to no avail. He puts Paula down, and starts to rummage through the room madly in search of a weapon.

On a shelf, a monkey doll holding two cymbals switches on and starts banging the cymbals together. Startled, Odysseus gets his pant leg stuck in a mallet-type of a device, and as he tries to get his foot loose, the mallet bangs a barrel like a bass drum.

About to fall over, Odysseus accidentally pushes his hand into an accordion, which starts playing and his hand gets stuck, too. He turns, and a flute on the shelf hits him in the mouth, and inadvertently, he plays it just by breathing into it. After a couple of bars of marching band music, Odysseus manages to rid himself of the music, and he returns to searching for a weapon.

There's a papyrus scroll and a quill on the table nearby. Odysseus' hand hovers above the scroll, but at

the last moment, he grabs the quill instead. As the Cyclops breaks through the door with the axe, Odysseus blindly attacks him with his lame weapon. Luckily, the quill penetrates the Cyclops' only remaining good eye. The eyeball gets stuck in the quill. The Cyclops screeches. Odysseus grabs the rucksack with Paula in it, and escapes through the Cyclops' groping arms.

EXT. FARM YARD - NIGHT - THUNDERSTORM

It's pissing down and Borus and Xanthus are soaking wet and breathing heavily.

XANTHUS

These people are fucking nuts!

And there's Asius and Caletor, running hand in hand from behind the house.

ASIUS

We could probably run faster if we didn't hold hands, Caletor!

Caletor lets go of Asius' hand, and they reach Borus and Xanthus.

CALETOR

Those monsters!

BORUS

We have to get the hell out of here!
Right now!

The thunder booms, and Asius notices a flock of sheep further away. Suddenly he has an idea. He pants:

ASIUS

We could -- we could grab a hold of a sheep. Cling onto its fur. We'd get away!

Suddenly a massive lightning strikes with a BOOM again, and lights up the whole world. In the flash of the lightning, Xanthus spots something further away. Meanwhile, Asius is excited, verging on mad:

ASIUS

We'd be hiding! Under a sheep!

XANTHUS

Or we could use that cart.

An oxcart hunches under the shelter about to collapse. Then there's a scream behind them: Odysseus flies out the house, the roaring, blinded Cyclops and his family right behind him. Borus sees Odysseus and screams in horror.

XANTHUS

Shit, Borus! We forgot to tell you!
He's alive!

ASIOUS

Run, Odysseus! Run!

The men start towards the oxcart, when there is a CRACKING SOUND above and a massive THUMP when something large and dark lands right in front of them.

It's CYCLOPS' MOTHER, who makes Jabba the Hutt look pretty. The Mother roars, and the men scream. The Mother attacks Asius, crushing him under her massive, monstrous body. The men grab the Mother and push her off of Asius. Just as the Cyclops reaches them and the Mother gets up, the men are back up themselves, and sprinting towards the shelter and the oxcart.

ODYSSEUS

Come on! Hurry!

THE CYCLOPS' POV - ODYSSEUS AND THE MEN

The men jump on the cart and disappear into the rainy dark of the night. The Cyclops lets out a roar, and stretches his arms up towards the stormy skies:

CYCLOPS

FATHER! Cast thine wrath upon these
men!

The thunder flashes and booms, as the Cyclops invokes his all-powerful father. Beside him, the scrawny, wrinkly old man sitting on a bench and holding up his umbrella isn't too excited, though:

CYCLOPS' FATHER

Meh.

EXT. OXCART ON THE ROAD - NIGHT

The cart rumbles along the wet dirt road. Borus is driving. The men -- all but one -- in it still high-strung. Caletor is the first one to notice that something's missing:

CALETOR

Wait! Stop! Where's Asius?

BORUS

What?!

That's right. Asius isn't there with them.

ODYSSEUS

Turn around!

EXT. OXCART ON THE ROAD - LATER

The rain is letting out, but it's still dark.

XANTHUS

Drive a little slower, Borus. We don't want to miss Asius in case he's out there.

Borus does as he's asked. Suddenly, there's a distinct baaing sound.

The men watch as a sheep comes out of the darkness, Asius hanging on to the sheep's wool and carrying himself under the animal's belly. Borus stops the wagon. The men stare as Asius smiles angelically:

ASIUS

I got away.

And the sheep lets go on his tired but glowing and seemingly ever-smiling face.

EXT. OXCART ON DIRT ROAD - NIGHT/DAY

ANGLE ON DRIVER OF CART - TRAVELING

SERIES OF SHOTS

A) Exhausted, Borus drives the oxcart. Xanthus sees he's about to fall asleep, like the others have.

B) Xanthus drives while the others are asleep. The fat oxen trot on.

C) Xanthus is nodding off. Caletor wakes up to see it. The oxen, now skinnier than before, have slowed down.

D) Caletor drives. The others sleep. The skin-and-bones oxen are walking by now.

E) Asius sits on the driver's seat as the others sleep. The oxen look like they can't go on much longer.

F) Odysseus drives. The oxen are about to collapse.

EXT. STUNTED PLAINS - DAWN - CLOSE ANGLE - DEAD OXEN

Flies circle around the dead animals. Up ahead, the men slowly walk towards the rising sun at the horizon.

EXT. STUNTED PLAINS - DAWN

The men are exhausted.

ODYSSEUS

I need food.

CALETOR

Hold on while I pull a nice juicy steak out of my ass.

XANTHUS

I'm more worried about not drinking.

CALETOR

I'm not doing it again!

ASIUS

How can we... do the drinking part this time now that we don't have our skins anymore?

There's collective turning up of noses at the thought.

BORUS

I'd rather die of thirst.

XANTHUS

Come on, we're all a team here.

The men glare at Xanthus.

XANTHUS

I'm serious. Or do you all want--

ASIUS

I think I see the sea! Look!

The men gaze at the direction Asius is pointing at, and indeed, the sea glitters there behind a stretch of plains.

ODYSSEUS

We found the charming village!

Their tiredness forgotten, the utterly happy men run for the seashore.

EXT. SO-CALLED CHARMING VILLAGE - DAY

The men reach the shore where the waves wash the idle sand. The men stand ground for a while, silent.

BORUS

Where's the fucking village?

Their gazes radar the surroundings.

ASIUS

Well, there's a hut.

A small hut sits on the beach by the tree line. This indeed IS the "village" the Lotophagi talked about.

XANTHUS

Great. I bet that there is the charming harbour. Fucking potheads.

Xanthus nods at a small, half-sunken pier with an old, leaky rowing boat tied to it.

CALETOR

Well spank my ass and call me Myrmidon.

ODYSSEUS

Let's go. See if anybody's home.

INT. SMALL HUT - LATER

The hermit inhabitant sits sprawled in his chair, having choked on his own beard. The men stare at him blankly.

EXT. SO-CALLED CHARMING HARBOUR - DAY

Beaten, the men sit on the sand, gloomy and pissed off. A small fire burns between them and Asius warms his hands over it. With a sunken brow, Caletor examines his shirt: seems that he's still leaking a bit.

ASIUS

How is it even possible to choke on
your own beard?

BORUS

I swear to fucking Zeus, Asius, if
you don't shut up I'm gonna fuck your
shit up.

ODYSSEUS

We'll never get home. We're going to
die right here on this island.

XANTHUS

Well, Caletor's going to bleed to
death, that's for sure.

CALETOR

Yeah? I'll take you down with me.

XANTHUS

Oh yeah?

CALETOR

Yeah.

XANTHUS

Yeah?

ODYSSEUS

Will you stop that!

Suddenly Borus spots something on the horizon.

BORUS

Take all the sights of that!

The men stand in awe looking at the dark shape of a
ship out in the sea.

BORUS

We can't let it leave without us!
Asius! Get some more leaves in the
fire! Smoke it good! We'll signal
them!

Asius does as he's told and the smoke gets thick. He
pulls out a piece of fabric and spreads it over the
fire to make smoke signals.

But he obviously can't make them by himself: suddenly
the fabric bursts into flames and WHUM! Asius is on

fire! He screeches. Caletor is the only one to notice the predicament.

CALETOR

Run to the sea to put yourself out!

Confused, Asius takes off to the opposite direction.

CALETOR

No, Asius! To the sea!

Asius runs into the woods, screaming and still on fire.

CALETOR

Goddamnit, Asius! Roll on the ground!

Everybody else's too busy looking at the mysterious ship. Behind them, Asius throws himself on the ground. Asius' burning body sets the forest in flames in a second. Out on the sea, the dark ship stops and starts to turn.

XANTHUS

(eyes on the ship)

Good work, Asius! I think they saw us!

ODYSSEUS

We're finally going to be at sea again!

Slowly, the dark ship creeps towards the shore.

CALETOR

Well, the ship's name looks... promising.

The men crane out to see better. The ship's side says:

"CREEPING DEATH".

The men hear a rough voice calling out on the ship:

MAN (O.S.)

Sink the iron maiden!

The ship's anchor is lowered. The men on the shore exchange concerned looks.

EXT. SO-CALLED CHARMING HARBOUR - LATER

A dark boat from the dark ship creeps towards the shore. There are three bearded and long-haired men on board: SARPEDON, and two other PIRATES, who do the rowing. The boat stops, and Sarpedon gets out. Silent, he remains standing by the boat, looking at Odysseus and the men.

ODYSSEUS

(clearing his throat)

We're Greek soldiers on our way home.
We shipwrecked on this island a week
ago. We hope to get back home to
Ithaca.

Sarpedon nods and motions the men to get into the boat.

EXT. "CREEPING DEATH" - DAY

The boat reaches the ship, which is deadly silent. As if out of thin air, a rope ladder comes down. Sarpedon nods to Odysseus: climb onboard. After a brief moment of hesitation, Odysseus grabs the ladder. Borus, Xanthus, Asius, and Caletor follow suit.

"CREEPING DEATH" CREW'S POV - ODYSSEUS AND THE MEN

With their lighter clothes and dishevelled looks, the men climbing aboard seem very much out-of-place. Asius gets tangled up in the ladder for a second, and Caletor has to push him over the railing onto the deck.

BACK TO SCENE

Sarpedon and his two shipmates climb swiftly onboard. The men look around. Their faces gradually show more and more concern.

The deck of the dark ship looks like a Cannibal Corpse concert. The pirates in their black clothes, long hair, beards, tattoos, and piercings, all eye Odysseus and Co. with stony faces. Odysseus gathers up courage:

ODYSSEUS

Good day for sailing.

Paula cackles.

ODYSSEUS

She's our pet. Meet Paula.

Nothing breaks the silence. Nobody even moves.

ASIUS

(whispering)

We're gonna die.

They all seem to share Asius' sentiments. Then there's finally life on deck, and a growl breaks the silence:

PANDARUS (O.S.)

Make way!

The men watch the CAPTAIN and two of his men, SPELUS and PANDARUS break through the wall of pirates. Sarpedon joins the three pirates as they halt.

CAPTAIN

I'm the ship's Captain. Welcome aboard Creeping Death.

Sarpedon leans toward the Captain and says something into his ear. The Captain looks at the Greeks and then at his own men. He speaks with a rumbling bass:

CAPTAIN

(to his crew)

Men! We're taking these Greek soldiers home in change of their engagement with the ship. For the next seven days, they are one of us!

ODYSSEUS

(whispers to Borus)

I believe that goes against my morals.

Captain steps aside and introduces his men:

CAPTAIN

Greeks! My crew: Spelus, Pandarus, Sarpedon.

The pirates nod solemnly as their name gets called out.

CAPTAIN

Protesilaus, Axius, Zorbas, Pylemen, Behemoth, Calchas, Patroclus, Gorgoroth, Aeacides, Moliones, Marduk, Alesius.

Odysseus and the men exchange looks: is he really going to be calling out ALL the names of the men in his crew?

CAPTAIN

Panthus, Varathron, Hyrtius, Moris,
Belphegor, Phalces, Alegenor,
Promachus. Melanippus, Thyos,
Barathrum, Capharnaum, Lycomed,
Meriones, Amorphis.

Yeah, apparently he is...

CAPTAIN

Acamas, Yanni, Panthaedes, Naglfar,
Gyrtiades, Teucer, Antenor,
Agoraphobia, Priamides. Chronius,
Sepsism, Adrastus, Thoas, Demoleon,
Vomitous, Mulciber, and...

Suddenly there's a hint of embarrassment on the
Captain's face:

CAPTAIN

...and Blackbeard.

Forward steps an outrageous stereotype of a pirate, his
sword pulled out:

BLACKBEARD

YARR!

Asius jumps a little at the sight of him. Then there's
an uneasy silence on the deck, a shared sense of
embarrassment. Finally the Captain breaks it:

CAPTAIN

We found him.

(beat, motions to Borus)

You. Follow me to the Officers'
Quarters.

INT. BELOW DECK OF "CREEPING DEATH"/HALLWAY - DAY

The Captain, with Spelus and Sarpedon flanking him,
leads Borus towards the Officers' Quarters. The
hallway is clearly much bigger and wider than it should
be in a ship of Creeping Death's size.

CAPTAIN

You and I will have to get to know
each other a bit.

Borus hesitates for a while, but then speaks:

BORUS

Captain, I feel I must inform you
that I am not our small crew's
leader.

The Captain stops.

CAPTAIN

No?

BORUS

Odysseus is our commander. The small
one.

The Captain thinks quickly:

CAPTAIN

We better tie him to the mast.

Borus blinks. Captain motions to Spelus, who leaves.

BORUS

Why? There's no need--

CAPTAIN

I have a crew to protect. No
mutinies on my ship. Not even one-
man mutinies.

BORUS

It isn't necessary. He's hardly--

The Captain shoves Borus against the wall:

CAPTAIN

I will not risk having two leaders on
this ship. It's like living with
your in-laws. Things get ugly.
People die.

I'll let you live after all, big guy,
and I see that with that muffin of a
man, the threat is eliminated with a
piece of rope. But you mind me now:
good men are hard to find, and bad
men die.

Borus gets the point and nods.

CAPTAIN

Sarpedon, get the men to the strategy
room.

INT. BELOW DECK OF "CREEPING DEATH"/THE OTHER END OF HALLWAY - DAY

Asius, Xanthus, Caletor, and Odysseus wander around in the intestines of the ship. Asius pushes a door open.

ASIUS

Whoa.

Forgetting the pirates for a second, the men enter.

INT. TREASURE ROOM - DAY

The room is full of beautiful items, apparently the pirates' plunderage. A small miscellaneous mountain of jewellery, paintings, fabrics, amphorae, and other goods hide the back wall.

ODYSSEUS

They've stolen all this?

Asius is enthralled by a box about the size of a baseball. It's covered in pretty ornaments. He picks it up.

ASIUS

What's this?

CALETOR

Looks like a box to me.

ASIUS

(missing the sarcasm)

I've never seen anything like it.

CALETOR

It's a fucking box.

Asius glares at Caletor, but now without fear.

XANTHUS

What does it say there?

Asius examines the box. It says "Pandora's Box".

ASIUS

Who's Pandora?

Suddenly there's a deep voice at the door:

PIRATE

What are you doing here?

The men jump. Asius instinctively shoves the little box in his pocket. The pirate at the door eyes them suspiciously.

XANTHUS

The door was open.

PIRATE

This is the secret room.

CALETOR

There were signs all over the ship with little arrows pointing to here.

PIRATE

Those are for our navigator. He tends to get lost on the ship. Now get the hell out of here and to the strategy room. The meeting is about to start.

INT. BELOW DECK OF "CREEPING DEATH"/THE OTHER END OF HALLWAY - DAY

As the others walk away, led by the pirate, Odysseus brings up the rear. Then four pirates led by Spelus surround him from behind:

SPELUS

(smiling)

Hello there.

Oblivious of what's to come, Odysseus smiles back.

INT. STRATEGY ROOM - DAY

Led by the Captain, the pirates surround a big table and the meeting is well underway. Sarpedon escorts the men to the table. Spelus enters the room, too, but Odysseus apparently has other engagements.

CAPTAIN

We will reach the land of the Laestrygonians tomorrow morning.
(to Borus and Co.)
You will accompany us on the raid.

PANDARUS

We'll plunder their village.

(MORE)

PANDARUS (CONT'D)

According to our intelligence, the Laestrygonians themselves have managed to gather a hefty loot from doing their own little plunderings on the nearby islands.

XANTHUS

We're soldiers, not plunderers.

Captain's fist hits the table with a bang!

CAPTAIN

You get a trip home, a bunk to sleep in, and grub. That makes you part of the Death crew.

Xanthus and Borus exchange looks.

CAPTAIN

For the next week, you're pirates -- or you walk the plank.

SARPEDON

Your call.

The men think about it. There really is no choice, if they want to get home on this ship.

CALETOR

They'll see a mile away that we're not pirates.

Spelus hands Caletor a tiny leather bag with goo in it:

SPELUS

And that's why you'll be in disguise.

Suddenly, A PIRATE OUT OF BREATH dashes into the room, his eyes wide.

PIRATE OUT OF BREATH

Captain! The seas are calm! The Sirens!

Every single man in the room tenses.

CAPTAIN

Sarpedon! The wax!

Sarpedon gets a chunk of beeswax from a nearby cabinet and passes it on. The men stuff their ears with the wax.

EXT. "CREEPING DEATH" - SUNSET - CLOSE ANGLE - ODYSSEUS

who is screaming his lungs out. The Sirens' stimulating, enticing singing fills the air.

ODYSSEUS

Aaarghh! Let me go! Please, someone
let me go-oo-o!

Odysseus is tied up, his back to the mast. The world around Odysseus is of breath-taking beauty: the sunset colours the sky in flaming shades of pink, yellow, and orange and the colours reflect from the water.

On their small island, a dozen of stunning Sirens sway their hips to the music and call out to the ship for the crew to join them.

ODYSSEUS

I want to come to you! But I can't!
Let me go! Someone!

Odysseus' desperate, lonely screams echo to deaf, wax-filled ears. His dark silhouette draws itself on the sunset sky, his erection prominent against the flaming colours of the setting sun.

INT. CREW'S QUARTERS/"CREEPING DEATH" - DAWN

Odysseus is busy shaving his legs. Caletor smears some of the goo from the leather bag on his jaw and passes the leather bag to Asius. Borus supports a real beard, and just looks on his friends struggling with getting into disguise. Asius gets some of his shaved leg hair and prepares to glue it on his chin:

ASIUS

I find this disgusting.

ODYSSEUS

It's your own leg hair, Asius.

BORUS

(nonchalantly)

Do they still make glue out of ram
testicles?

The men avoid looking at Borus.

BORUS

I thought so.

Borus can't help smiling crookedly. Then his eyes see something: Xanthus' legs are unshaven. Yet he's gluing hair into his face.

BORUS

You haven't shaved your legs.

XANTHUS

My legs aren't hairy enough.

There is a short silence as the pieces fall together in the men's heads.

CALETOR

By Zeus, Xanthus. You could've shaved your head!

XANTHUS

It's not the right hair type.

Odysseus looks at himself in a reflection on a shield on the wall:

ODYSSEUS

This looks stupid.

XANTHUS

At least my fake beard looks real.

The ship sways. The ship has reached the shore.

CAPTAIN (O.S.)

All men on deck!

BORUS

Here we go.

EXT. "CREEPING DEATH" - LATER

The ship is anchored close to the shore of a rocky island. The men and the pirates stand in formation on the deck, ready to plunder.

CAPTAIN

Move swiftly! You don't have to burn every hut, kill every man, nor squeeze every woman.

Borus and the other men in their fake beards and borrowed clothes look uncomfortable, but ready.

CAPTAIN

(to Odysseus and co.)

Looking mighty fine, gentlemen. Do not fuck this up.

(to the whole crew)

I expect everyone to return with a hefty loot! Good luck, men. I'll see you back at the ship!

The pirates hit their chests with their fists. The gangplank comes down, and the lot steps ashore.

EXT. PATH TO LAESTRYGONIAN VILLAGE - DAWN

The plunderers approach the village looming up ahead. The buildings are massive, clearly for beings larger than average humans. Huge cauldrons hang over smouldering fires outside the huts. There are piles of human bones outside the huts.

CAPTAIN

We're looking at the biggest plunderage we've ever had a chance to get. If you men feel threatened by the Laestrygonians, just kill them.

PIRATE

Kill the men?!

CAPTAIN

The Laestrygonians, you rectal vomit.

The village seems to be asleep still. The Captain motions the pirates to spread out. He speaks in a low voice as they're nearing the huts:

CAPTAIN

Raid your hut and return to the ship right away. Take only the best and leave the rest. Go!

The pirates form small groups and spread out, sneaking up to the huts. Odysseus, Caletor, Asius, Xanthus and Borus go together. As they tiptoe towards their hut, they notice one more hut behind the one they're heading for. Seems that nobody's heading for that one.

BORUS

I'll take that one.

XANTHUS

I'll come with you.

BORUS

(drawing out his sword)

I can handle it.

XANTHUS

I don't think--

BORUS

I said I can handle it. I'll see you
back here in two minutes.

Borus heads for the hut by himself. Odysseus sighs.

ODYSSEUS

He's so...

XANTHUS

Pig-headed?

ASIUS

Macho?

CALETOR

Dead?

They all nod. Then Odysseus motions them to follow him
into the hut. They have a mission to carry out.

INT. LAESTRYGONIAN HUT #1 - DAWN

Odysseus leads the men into the hut. Quietly stepping
in, Odysseus catches a glimpse of a dark shadow lurking
to his left. Startled and reacting fast, Odysseus
sinks his sword into the shadow, only to find it was
just a coat in a coat rack. In fact, the hut is empty.
The men look around in the grey gloom. The walls are
naked but for one wood carving, and an ugly bed
dominates the room with a table. Nothing worth
stealing there.

XANTHUS

Take the best, huh? Hefty loot, huh?
I was expecting something better than
this.

ODYSSEUS

We have to take something, so we'll
just take the least-bad.

Odysseus grabs a dirty pillow from the bed. Xanthus grabs two crude stone goblets from the table. Caletor rips down dusty curtains and tucks them under his arm:

CALETOR

They're probably going to kill us for this. The pirates.

Asius sees the wood carving on the wall. He takes it down and examines it closely. His face brightens:

ASIUS

It's a treasure map! The X marks the spot! Look!

Caletor snatches the carving from Asius' hands and turns it around.

CALETOR

No, Asius. The X marks a cat's rectum.

Caletor shows the carving to Asius:

CALETOR

It's a carving of a cat from behind.

Xanthus laughs. Looking sour, Asius snatches the carving back from Caletor and pockets it anyway.

INT. LAESTRYGONIAN HUT #2 - DAWN

Quietly, Borus enters the hut, keeping his eyes open for something worth stealing for. In the grey light, he sees a carved stone vase. He sheathes his sword and reaches for the vase, but then:

There's a sound of a turkey gobbling. Borus freezes. Heart thumping in his chest, he slowly turns around. There's a turkey at the doorway, blocking his way out. Beads of sweat form on Borus' forehead. He takes a sidestep, but the turkey moves in sync.

BORUS

Shit.

All of a sudden, another turkey enters the room from the next room. Borus pulls out his sword as the birds draw closer. The turkey in the doorway gobbles to the other. The second turkey gobbles back loudly -- it sure sounds like a command to attack. The other bird joins the ferocious attack gobble.

Panicking, Borus throws his sword away, lifts up a massive stone chair and hurls it at the second turkey, crushing it. Quickly, the man grabs his sword again. Borus backs into a corner, expecting the turkey to resurrect with a vengeance. The bird in the doorway gobbles ferociously, stares at Borus, and scratches the ground with her claws.

BORUS

Stay the fuck away from me!

CUT TO:

LAESTRYGONIAN HUT #1

Odysseus and the men hear Borus' yell and leave the hut.

BACK TO SCENE

The turkey spreads her wings and steps closer. Then she scratches the sand again, sending a cloud of dust into Borus' eyes. Blinded, Borus screams and drops his weapon. The bird gobbles, and Borus sees no alternative but to attack first himself, if blindly.

The turkey and the man get in close combat, the bird soon getting an upper hand. Grunting, Borus gives everything he's got, and manages to push the turkey down on the ground. He proceeds to strangle the bird, his sweat dropping onto the moaning turkey. Their eyes meet, and Borus turns into an animal:

BORUS

You are not invincible! Die!

With the last short gobble, the bird does indeed die. Victorious, Borus spreads his hands and yells out as if he were immortal himself, his massive body looming above the motionless bird.

In the doorway, Odysseus and Xanthus exchange looks.

CUT TO:

EXT. SHORES OF THE LAESTRYGONIAN ISLAND - MORNING

The pirates along with Odysseus and the men return to the ship. Borus is still glowing with post-bird-battle strength. The pirate's plunderage is no different from what Odysseus and the men managed to find: pots, hay,

firewood, some rope and canvas, a hoe... The plunderers are busy complaining:

PIRATE #1

The whole damn village was empty!

PIRATE #2

Well, this wasn't the first time, was it?

PIRATE #3

I can't believe our luck!

Suddenly, Odysseus stops dead. He looks at Creeping Death, not believing his eyes. Little by little, the others see it too: the ship sits naked by the shore.

PANDARUS

Where are the sails?

Creeping Death has been raided. The sails are gone, the ropes, water barrels, everything. All gone.

SPELUS

Shit.

The pirates all look like as if their lives have been crushed on the spot. The captain is close to tears.

EXT. "CREEPING DEATH" - LATER

The pirates are scattered around the empty deck. They are broken, some even crying. Odysseus and the men are gathered around the Captain. Sarpedon comes up from below deck:

SARPEDON

The secret room is empty too.
Everything's gone.

CAPTAIN

This is too much. We haven't successfully raided a village in three months. And now this.

XANTHUS

Everybody goes through periods of failure. Don't let it get to you.

CAPTAIN

You don't understand...

The Captain, Sarpedon, Spelus, and Pandarus look at each other: it's time to come clean.

SARPEDON

We're not really pirates.

ODYSSEUS

You're not?

CAPTAIN

You know how it goes. When you reach our age, you have everything. A house, secure job, family, flashy carriage with plenty of horsepower... All your life's goals have been fulfilled.

PANDARUS

What do you have left to look forward to? A man can't just stand around and do nothing.

Violins start to play.

SPELUS

There's a life out there, and we set out to find it. Find some excitement. Find happiness.

ODYSSEUS

And is happiness being away from those you love? Not having a place you can call home? Not knowing where you are because your navigator doesn't?

The captain breaks down crying.

CAPTAIN

I'm not good at anything.

Odysseus puts his hand reassuringly on the Captain's shoulder:

ODYSSEUS

That's not true. You're the world's best loser.

The Captain looks up, hopeful.

ODYSSEUS

I mean it. I've never seen anyone quite as good.

The Captain nods, wiping his tears.

ODYSSEUS

Come on. Let's see if we can scrape up some sails and other things we need from this shit we got from the village.

XANTHUS

Then we weigh the iron maiden and head for home. Alright?

The Captain smiles a little and nods. The rest of the "pirates" seem to agree. Then the Captain's eyes catch the carving in Asius' pocket:

CAPTAIN

What's that?

ASIUS

Something I got from one of the huts.

Asius gives the carving to the Captain who examines it.

CAPTAIN

I'll be damned! It's a treasure map! It's hidden in the jungle!

CALETOR

For gods' sake, it's a cat's--

CAPTAIN

Now we can go look for treasure!

The Captain is full of life again. His excitement finds its way to the rest of the pirates as well. Their lives have a meaning again! Odysseus and the men can't believe their ears.

XANTHUS

No, I don't think that's a--

SARPEDON

(looking at the carving)

That's clearly the island of Aeaea. It's South of here.

Odysseus and the men realise where this is heading:

ODYSSEUS

And Ithaca is North-West of here. You were supposed to take us home!

CAPTAIN

There's been a change of plans.

CALETOR

What?

PANDARUS

(to Odysseus and Co.)

It sure sucks to be you right now.

BORUS

Alright, I've had eno--

Blackbeard steps in front of Borus and puts his hook of a hand to Borus' throat.

BLACKBEARD

Harr!

The pirates draw closer. Surrounded by his men, the Captain hisses at Borus:

CAPTAIN

Sailor. Get to sailing.

EXT. "CREEPING DEATH" - LATER

Creeping Death, the rag-doll of pirate ships, sails on. Her sails are made out of dozens of smaller pieces of canvas and stolen curtains, the ropes are of colourful fabrics, but she's sailing again, and sailing with speed. While the pirates around the men are full of excited energy, Odysseus and Co. are getting desperate:

CALETOR

We can't be sure they'll ever take us home. We have to do something.

ODYSSEUS

I say we take over this ship. Sail home by ourselves.

XANTHUS

Are you insane?!

ODYSSEUS

We do that ashore. While they're pushing their way to the rectum.

BORUS

They don't trust us enough to leave us in charge of the ship while they're away.

ODYSSEUS

We'll figure out something, don't--

Pandarus and Spelus join the men, who snap their mouths shut. Just then, Creeping Death glides past a lush island where a fat and juicy cattle grazes the pastures.

PANDARUS

Would you look at that! My mouth is watering already.

ODYSSEUS

That's Helios' cattle. Mortals are not to eat cattle that's sacred to a god.

ASIUS

(glancing at Odysseus)

We just keep going to the treasure island. The last thing we want is to face the wrath of the sun-god.

PANDARUS

What's He gonna do? Shine on me?

SPELUS

There are hundreds of them there. Nobody's gonna notice if we eat a couple of them.

CALETOR

He's a god. I think he might have his ways of finding out.

CAPTAIN (O.S.)

No, we keep going!

The men see the Captain up at the helm above the deck.

CAPTAIN

Now get back to work! We have a treasure to locate!

EXT. ISLAND OF AEAEA - DAY

Creeping Death sits anchored off the shore of the island that is one big jungle. Odysseus and the men are doing their best to hide their cunning plan. The pirates are ready to enter the jungle.

ODYSSEUS

Captain, some men have to stay back and guard the ship. The five of us could do that, if--

CAPTAIN

No problem.

ODYSSEUS

No, I can assure y--
(beat)

What?

CAPTAIN

No problem. We'll be back in three hours.

(to the pirates)

Alright! Let's go!

The pirates take off, leaving the men baffled.

XANTHUS

(to the Captain)

You're just going to leave us here in charge of your ship?!

CAPTAIN

Yep!

ASIUS

(to Captain)

Are you insane?

BORUS

(to Captain)

What the fuck is wrong with you?!

Once the pirates are out of sight, Odysseus shrugs: guess it's time to roll.

EXT. "CREEPING DEATH" - DAY

The men sneak elaborately on deck, scanning the surroundings for stray pirates. No sign of them. Quietly, they reach the helm, but then:

ODYSSEUS

Shit.

The rudder is protected by a "steering wheel" lock.

XANTHUS

No wonder they let us stay behind.

CALETOR

Can't we just break it?

ODYSSEUS

And set off the alarm?

ASIUS

What are we going to do?

The men think hard. Finally Borus finds the answer:

BORUS

Only one thing we can do. Wait for them to come back and then take over the ship while we're back at sea.

XANTHUS

Are you crazy? Remember what happened the last time we tried that in the Peloponnesian War?

CUT TO:

EXT. DECK OF A SHIP - DAY

The men fail miserably in the attempt of taking over a war ship at sea. The ship's crew wins the fight, leaving Odysseus and the men lying on the deck, groaning. An OLD LADY walks to them, and smacks Odysseus with her cane. Repeatedly. Until one of the crew members comes to drag the ferocious granny away.

BACK TO SCENE

ODYSSEUS

No, Borus is right. It's the only chance we've got. We just have to do better this time.

EXT. "CREEPING DEATH" - HOURS LATER

The men sigh and stretch their limbs. A pile of fifty-or-so cigarette butts lies next to Caletor, who butts yet another one:

CALETOR

They're not coming back.

BORUS

Should we go look for them?

Odysseus ponders it for a while, then picks up Paula and nods:

ODYSSEUS

Let's go.

XANTHUS

Wait. Since they're not coming back, we could just break the lock on the rudder and sail off.

The others roll their eyes.

ASIUS

Do you want to set off the alarm?

XANTHUS

Right...

The men leave and Xanthus follows them.

EXT. ISLAND OF AEAEA - DAY - CLEARING IN THE JUNGLE

A beautiful cottage lies behind a flower-filled meadow. Smoke rises from the chimney. Trees arch their branches over the house's roof on the sides.

Four dozen pigs graze the meadow around the house. Some of the pigs wear scarves around their necks, earrings, tattoos, moustaches... Odysseus watches the animals in awe and jumps when Xanthus appears behind him:

XANTHUS

Those are men you're looking at.

CALETOR

(to Odysseus)

You wondered where the pirates went. That's your answer right there.

ASIUS

They're under a spell or something?

CALETOR

Course not, stupid.

ASIUS

(beat; unsure)

Sarcasm?

CALETOR

Circe is a powerful witch. They must've rubbed her the wrong way.

ASIUS

What are we going to do?

BORUS

I know what we have to do.

EXT. ISLAND OF AEAEA - LATER - CLEARING IN THE JUNGLE

Borus adjusts Odysseus' gear. Odysseus is equipped with a bow, and Borus puts the quiver in place for him.

BORUS

You pretend to attack her. When alarmed, witches offer to... please the attacker.

ODYSSEUS

What?

BORUS

It's just a ploy of theirs. You say no and insist that she frees the men from the spell.

ODYSSEUS

But how can I avoid being morphed into a pig myself?

Borus stops. That might indeed pose a problem. Then there's a tinkling sound as a BEAUTIFUL YOUNG MAN dressed all in white appears before them:

HERMES

Yay, I am Hermes!

BORUS

Hermes, my ass. Get the fuck out.

HERMES

But I am Hermes. I bring you brave soldiers this herb that will protect you against Circe's magic.

Hermes presents a white-flowered herb, but Borus slaps his girly hand away and continues to fasten the belt holding the quiver. The flower drops on the ground. Asius picks it up, just in case, and gives it to Odysseus. Xanthus can't get his eyes off of Hermes:

XANTHUS

(to himself)

I always thought I'd believe in gods
when I saw one. Yet I'm still
doubting.

Xanthus extends his arm, and pokes Hermes with his index finger. The god seems to be of flesh and blood.

HERMES

(to Xanthus)

Yeah, I get that poking a lot.

Embarrassed, Xanthus pulls away.

BORUS

(to Hermes)

Look, missy. We're in the middle of
something here, so get your stupid
weeds and your short skirt and wavy
hair and get out!

HERMES

But I am Hermes, the messenger of--

Borus takes a step closer and Hermes decides to shut up. There's a tinkling sound as Hermes scurries away.

HERMES

(mumbling)

Ungrateful mortal bastards...

BORUS

(to Odysseus)

Now get going.

Odysseus takes a deep breath and heads for the house. Xanthus hurries after Hermes and catches him:

XANTHUS

Wait! You really are a god?

HERMES

Yes.

XANTHUS

(breaks down crying)
You have priests too, or just
priestesses?

HERMES

Both.

XANTHUS

(through tears of
happiness)
Thank you! Oh, thank you!

Xanthus hugs the god so tightly His eyes bulge out a bit. Hermes looks baffled for a second, but after making sure nobody sees him, He grabs Xanthus' head and plants a kiss on his lips. Hermes glances around one more time -- and walks away.

EXT. BESIDE CIRCE'S HOUSE - DAY

Amidst the pigs, the four Farmers lurk in the shadow of the house. Some of the pigs are clearly pirates, the others just regular pigs. One of the pigs near the Boss has the Captain's hat on him.

THE BOSS

We'll get them this time. You don't
fuck a cow in India and get away with
it. We'll make them pay for what
they did to my chicken. Starting
with that pretty boy I stabbed.

The Captain grimaces. The pig with the Captain's hat raises its head as if to hear better.

THE BOSS

Megadethus, get your scrawny ass to
the trigger.

Megadethus leaves for a wooden device that looks like one of those devices built to test your strength at carnivals. There's a large mallet next to it. The Boss motions Boethides and Argicides to follow him to the side of the house. The men walk a few meters away from the house and drive the pigs away in the process.

THE BOSS

We're standing on the net right now.

The Boss points at a inconspicuous rope on the ground:

THE BOSS

The rope rises up to the tree and travels all the way to the trigger device. As soon as those bastards stand here he'll--

(points at Megadethus)

--hit the trigger with his mallet.

MEGADETHUS' POV - THE BOSS

the Boss points at Megadethus and then touches his thumb with his index finger to make an 'okay' sign as he finishes explaining to the men how the trap finally imprisons Odysseus and the men.

BACK TO SCENE

Megadethus nods professionally at his friends, lifts up the mallet and brings it down hard on the trigger. The other men witness it, horrified:

THE BOSS

Not yet, asshole!

WOOSH! The rope tightens and pulls the net up in a flash. The three men get hoisted high above the ground in a tight net sack. Across the yard, Megadethus makes the 'okay' sign with his fingers himself, too.

EXT. CIRCE'S FRONT YARD - DAY

Odysseus sneaks up toward the house, passing three regular pigs on his way:

ODYSSEUS

(to the pigs)

Don't worry. I'll get you out of here.

The pigs look at him indifferently and chew on the grass. Odysseus reaches the house and presses his back to the wall. All of a sudden, CIRCE comes from behind the corner with a real piglet in her arms. Startled, Odysseus screams, but composes himself in a second:

ODYSSEUS

I am the mighty Odysseus! I demand that you release these men and--

(pointing at piglet)

--the baby from your inhuman spell immediately!

Circe laughs heartily and puts down the piglet. Then the laughter dies:

CIRCE

No.

ODYSSEUS

I do not wish to get violent.

Circe raises her hands, wriggling her fingers as if casting a menacing spell. Terrified, Odysseus shakes the white-flowered herb in front of her. Circe screams, but her terror is obviously fake. Odysseus is puzzled.

CIRCE

You should've eaten the herb for it to be effective.

In a flash, Odysseus stuffs the flower into his mouth and swallows it.

CIRCE

Nah, I was kidding. You didn't have to eat it, it works anyway.

(beat)

Now also as a laxative.

Then Circe steps up to Odysseus, and softly runs her hand on his cheek and down his chest:

CIRCE

You had the flower. That means you must be in favour of the gods, soldier...

ODYSSEUS

(steps back)

I'm warning you. I will attack you if you refuse to release the men.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEHIND A BUSH

where the men are watching intently Odysseus at his rescue mission:

BORUS

It's working!

BACK TO SCENE

Odysseus waits, but Circe shows no fear, just some limp disappointment with her failed advances.

ODYSSEUS

Please?

CIRCE

You have to earn it, soldier. I challenge you to a duel. We ask each other difficult questions, and whose head explodes first, loses.

ODYSSEUS

But if you lose, you won't be able to turn the pigs back to men.

CIRCE

Alright. Rock, paper, scissors, then. Best out of three.

Circe rolls up her sleeves and leans forward like a sumo wrestler. Odysseus does the same.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEHIND THE BUSH

The men can't believe their eyes:

CALETOR

They're gonna wrestle for it?

BACK TO SCENE

CIRCE

On three. One. Two. Three.

In a flash, Odysseus signs 'scissors' and Circe produces 'paper'. Odysseus grins.

CIRCE

You haven't won anything yet, soldier. Second round. On three. One. Two. Three.

This time Circe's 'paper' beats Odysseus' 'rock'. Relieved, Circe jumps up and down like a boxer and licks her lips: it was close. Odysseus wipes sweat from his forehead: this is serious stuff.

A boxing ring has appeared around them. Out of breath, the competitors dance to their own boxing corners and sit down. Hands extend from off-screen to wipe their

faces with towels and give the competitors a drink. Then the bell rings, and its time for Round Three. The hands insert the gumshields into both Circe and Odysseus' mouths. They return to the mid-ring where they assume their positions. The tension mounts, they eye each other with icy stares: there can be only one.

CIRCE

(behind her HAMMASSUOJA)

Lasht waungh. Winger of tche waungh
isch tche winger of tche whouw
whatch. Ong stchlee. Wong! Tchwu! Tchlee!

Arms move and fingers bend. The two hands next to each other speak their language: Circe's got 'scissors' and Odysseus 'rock'. The gumshield muffles Odysseus' victorious yell.

EXT. CIRCE'S FRONT YARD - LATER

Odysseus and Circe stroll next to pigs that used to be the Captain, Spelus, Pandarus, and Sarpedon. Circe points at the pigs and with a popping sound and a cloud of smoke, the pigs turn into pirates again. Sarpedon spits out grass he was eating as a pig. The Captain throws a weird look at Odysseus, but manages to speak:

CAPTAIN

Thank you.

ODYSSEUS

It took you so long that we got worried.

(beat)

Shall we go back to the ship?

The pirates seem to think so. They head off. Odysseus follows them as they walk towards where Borus and Co. are standing and waiting. Sarpedon spits:

SARPEDON

(to Circe)

Your grass tastes like shit!

Sarpedon starts after the men, but the Captain grabs his arm:

CAPTAIN

We have a chicken bone to pick with them. At sea, they walk the plank.

SARPEDON

Captain?

CAPTAIN

Overheard some men talking.

(beat)

The bastards sodomise the chicken.

EXT. "CREEPING DEATH" - DAY

The ship carves through the waves pushed on by perfect winds. Odysseus and the men are at the bows. Ostensibly, they are busy scrubbing the deck and doing an inventory of the goods from the Laestrygonian village (amongst them swimming trunks, some olives, a wooden chair, a beach ball, an umbrella, and a couple of cups of wine). But their minds are elsewhere:

ODYSSEUS

Everybody ready? Caletor, you put the swords under the planks?

CALETOR

All set.

They spot a handful of pirates running up from below the deck, dashing to the helm and telling something to the pirates there. The men get back to the work, not minding the sudden ruckus on the ship.

ODYSSEUS

We got one chance only. Give everything you've got.

Now every pirate runs below the deck. Odysseus and the men remain the only people on deck. They exchange looks, peer towards the hole leading below the deck at the stern -- then shrug and return to work.

BORUS

Everything we've got. You bet.

Borus and Caletor put away the brooms. Odysseus nods to the men and takes Paula further away so she'd stay safe. Asius' hand accidentally brushes on the Pandora's Box in his pocket. He takes the box out and marvels it.

ASIUS

(to Xanthus)

You think I could open it?

XANTHUS

Better not. Not now.

Asius thinks about it, but in the end, curiosity wins. He carefully opens the box: a cloud of smoke puffs out.

ASIUS

Uh-oh.

Xanthus sees the smoke cloud:

XANTHUS

Asius, I told--

That second, the Captain appears next to the men. The pirates flank him, looking equally grim.

CAPTAIN

We need to talk.

Not intimidated at all, Caletor stands up:

CALETOR

I can talk.

ODYSSEUS

Excuse me. We're kinda in the middle of something here.

The Captain takes a step towards the men.

CAPTAIN

I've heard some mighty unpleasant news about your doings. You men make amends either by walking the plank in the name of justice, or by dying.

(beat)

I can, of course, go by both.

CALETOR

I don't have a fucking clue what you're talking about, so blah, blah, blah.

(beat; glancing at
Odysseus and Borus)

In fact, you'll be the ones walking the plank.

CAPTAIN

Is that a threat?

Caletor's eyes darken and a METALLIC KA-CHING rips through the air. In a flash, Caletor's hands are

extended by sharp claws (à la Wolverine) made out of kitchen knives. His hair, too, looks now surprisingly Wolverine-like.

CALETOR

(hoarsely)

Go ahead and find out.

Blackbeard jumps out of the line, shaking his hook:

BLACKBEARD

Yarr!

Swiftly, Caletor cuts off the hook with his claws.

BLACKBEARD

Harr?

All the pirates pull out their swords. Caletor throws the claws away and extends his hand to receive a sword from Odysseus.

ODYSSEUS

Soldiers! Take over the ship!

Odysseus plants his foot down hard on two planks in the deck. The planks won't budge, and Odysseus whimpers from the pain shooting up his leg. He stomps his foot down again. And again, but the planks stay put. Growling, the Captain attacks Odysseus.

They need weapons: Odysseus takes the wooden chair. Xanthus grabs the big umbrella, Borus picks up the beach ball, Caletor finds the pair of swimming trunks and some olives, and Asius prepares to fight using a cup of wine.

The Captain leads his men to attack with a roar. Odysseus swings the chair at the enemy. Caletor uses the trunks as a slingshot and the olives as ammunition. His shots are accurate, and he manages to down several pirates, including Sarpedon, who gets an olive right into his screaming mouth and falls overboard.

Borus defends himself against Spelus by throwing the beach ball at him repeatedly. Xanthus uses the umbrella to fight off pirates. Odysseus blocks a burning arrow with his chair, but the arrow remains on deck and sets it on fire.

Asius throws the wine from the cup onto Captain's face, immobilising him. Asius' joy is cut short, however,

when Pandarus attacks him from the rear. Asius throws the cup at him. Unarmed, Asius is vulnerable. A pirate sees this, and throws a sword at him. In the last minute, Odysseus manages to swing his chair in the way, saving Asius. Asius is terrified, but Odysseus winks at him and gives him another cup of wine:

ODYSSEUS

I've got your back.

Blackbeard brandishes his stub of a hook. Sadly, Borus' beach ball hits the pointy stub and deflates. Perplexed, Borus can't think of anything else but to take off his shirt and throw it at the pirate. It doesn't do much good. Screaming, Blackbeard dashes towards Borus. Borus, likewise, screams out a battle cry, but it dies soon, as he realises he doesn't have anything to defend himself with. But Odysseus does have something: the chair smashes onto Blackbeard and he goes down. Relieved, Borus nods at Odysseus:

BORUS

You saved my life.

CAPTAIN

(to Odysseus)

Thank you for that. If you hadn't succeeded, I would've had to do that myself.

Odysseus keeps on blocking the Captain's attacks, but his chair is getting smaller, blow by blow. Xanthus throws a few of the pirates off the game with his umbrella. When Spelus attacks him from behind, Xanthus turns swiftly, and judging from the shocked look on Spelus' face, the umbrella is, indeed, up his ass. There's a sound of the umbrella opening, and the screaming Spelus goes overboard. Then Xanthus swings the umbrella at the Captain armed with an axe.

The axe blade comes down and barely misses Xanthus, who falls over. The blade cuts his umbrella in two. The Captain laughs and prepares to sink his axe into Xanthus' chest:

CAPTAIN

Die, pervert!

Odysseus smashes the chair on the Captain, but not before accidentally hitting Asius with it. The Captain loses his weapon. Odysseus' chair breaks down completely and the Captain's sword punctures the deck

-- and water starts to spurt out on the deck. Some pirates escape by jumping overboard.

Caletor succeeds in fighting off a pirate, but then Pandarus' knife sinks into Caletor's stomach. To the pirate's surprise, however, Caletor lifts up his head, smiling: he pulls up his shirt and reveals a big plate acting as armour. Caletor takes the knife from the plate, swirls it between his fingers and throws it at Pandarus. Pandarus blocks its path with his sword. The knife changes direction and sinks into Darius' side, which already has the old knife planted in it.

CALETOR

Darius! What are you doing here?!

Frustrated, Darius screeches and goes down. Pandarus attacks Caletor again, backed up by two other pirates. Caletor gets hit by a fist, and it looks like he might be seeing stars soon. Odysseus dashes in with his chair. Odysseus gets rid of the pirates, and Caletor nods his thank yous.

ASIUS

I can't believe we're winning!

Pandarus pulls out a grenade, pulls the pin, and throws it (the pin). Then he covers his ears and jumps into the sea, laughing. The explosion of the pin throws Odysseus and Asius down. Caletor grabs a bowl of olives, throws them, and downs a handful of pirates. The Captain responds by lifting a bazooka on his shoulder and firing it. It misses the men, but starts another fire. The ship doesn't look too good.

Meanwhile, Odysseus pushes a cannon on deck, and lights the fuse. Horrified, the Captain sees it. BANG! The cannonball hits the Captain right in the stomach, and he falls overboard.

CAPTAIN (O.S.)

You haven't seen the last of mee!

Odysseus and the men cheer -- but then they see that the ship is in terrible shape. In fact, it's sinking.

CALETOR

The takeover could have been more successful in terms of us not fucking destroying the ship in the process!

BORUS

We're in a sinking ship at an open sea. Any ideas? Right about now?

ASIUS

So this is it?! We're gonna drown?! After all we've been through?!

XANTHUS

(to Asius)

Why the hell did you have to open that box?!

EXT. "CREEPING DEATH" - LATER

Creeping Death is sinking. The men are exhausted. Asius is close to tears, looking at the innocent-looking box in his hands. Borus tries to get the situation back together once more:

BORUS

Life-rafts?

ODYSSEUS

Broken.

XANTHUS

Lifejackets?

ODYSSEUS

Captain doesn't believe in lifejackets.

Shaking his head, Asius open the unfortunate little box once more. There is no more smoke this time.

CALETOR

Rubber boats?

ODYSSEUS

Not invented yet.

BORUS

Not invented yet?! The captain had a bazooka!

Asius' eyes brighten at the sight of something in the box. He pulls out a piece of parchment.

ASIUS

Hey!

The men turn to look at him.

ASIUS

Looks like I found us a ticket home!

Xanthus snatches the piece of parchment from Asius and reads it:

XANTHUS

A ticket to Ithaca. Five people.

The men fail to react.

XANTHUS

It says: a ticket to Ithaca. Five people.

ODYSSEUS

A ticket to Ithaca, you say? For five people?

XANTHUS

Free drinks included.

BORUS

Well, I'll be damned.

Xanthus can't help grinning. Soon the rest join in and shortly they're all faces-about-to-crack.

The ship starts to make crackling noises and it begins to shake. The men keep smiling while around them, the ship crumbles piece by piece, water spurts out on the deck, and the ship starts to tilt.

Finally, the mast gives in and falls with a bang not two feet away from the men, and the ship's rear end starts to sink fast. Still grinning, the men jump in the water, grab a hold of the mast, and start swimming cheerfully away from the ship's destruction.

EXT. LIVELY HARBOUR - DAY - YACHT

A bustling harbour is filled with fruit stalls, street musicians, and jugglers. The colourfully dressed people are smiling and some children throw flower petals on Odysseus and the men as they pass by.

The men in their tacky tourist shirts march up the gangplank to the surprisingly modern-looking, shiny white ship. Odysseus flashes the ticket to the ticket controller as the men board the yacht, still grinning.

EXT. YACHT/SUNDECK - DAY

Odysseus and the men are tipsy and having a good time. Laughing, the men sit in their deck chairs under a massive sunshade. They eat some olives and raise their colourful drinks with little umbrellas in them.

ODYSSEUS

You know, this whole journey has really brought us together. To war heroes! To us!

BORUS

(to Odysseus, nodding)
To our Captain, for getting us home.

THE MEN

Hear, hear!

As the men toast, behind them a chicken laboriously "flies" on deck and sits on the handrail. Nobody notices the bird.

Suddenly, the yacht's alarm goes off. The men jump up. They run to the boards to see what's going on.

PASSENGER

It's a warship armada!

In the horizon, a massive fleet approaches the yacht. Odysseus and the men look at each other in disbelief. There's a ruckus on the deck: people screaming and jumping overboard, but not before quickly finishing a couple of free drinks from the "FREE DRINKS HERE!" stall, gulping away amidst their screams.

The fleet lead by the Avenger, has all the people from along the way: the Lotophagi, the Cyclops and family, King Aeolus, the Laestrygonians, some Trojans, the farmers who lost Big Baby Clytus in a bizarre burial accident... Everybody's there -- with a vengeance.

ASIUS

What in the world..?

ODYSSEUS

I'm pretty sure I've seen that ship before...

The Avenger (with the water-dripping pirates onboard) hoists a black skull flag in its mast -- and it's the skull of a chicken.

EXT. YACHT/SUNDECK - LATER

The armada reaches the yacht. The Farmers drive their ship right next to it. On the other side of the yacht, the Lotophagi ship draws near. The Old Lotophagi throws a bong at the men, but it misses. Paula makes a short cackling sound.

THE BOSS

Give us back the chicken! Or else!

CALETOR

What?

THE BOSS

The chicken! Right now!

The men are baffled. But finally Caletor gets it:

CALETOR

Zeus Almighty! You stabbed me!

(beat)

And it was a pigeon!

Odysseus, Borus, Xanthus, and Asius look like they were punched in the gut. But then comes awkwardness:

ODYSSEUS

Actually... It was Paula.

CALETOR

What?!

ASIUS

(to Caletor)

We were supposed to eat her. Xanthus stole her from a farm in the village.

THE BOSS

And you killed her!

XANTHUS

No, we didn't! She's still--

Xanthus raises the rucksack. To their horror, the sack has been impaled by the bong. The chicken is dead.

ODYSSEUS

Paula!

The yacht is now completely surrounded by enemy vessels. On one of the ships, the Cyclops isn't much of a threat: the blinded man just fumbles his way on

the deck, screaming. Borus spots King Aeolus and his minions on one of the ships:

BORUS

What the hell are you doing here?

KING AEOLUS

You think you're the only ones who want to be in the spotlight when the movie ends?

ASIUS

But you get your names in the end credits!

KING AEOLUS

Not enough! We want to be heroes, too!

Calyпсо calls out from another ship:

CALYPSO

Yeah! You're not special! We're all equal here!

Another voice calls out from yet another ship:

LADY LOTOPHAGI

Surrender!

PHAEAGIAN LEADER

Prepare to meet your doom!

THE BOSS

(to his crew)

Get in front of them! We'll board the ship and kill the bastards before they know what hit--

--and suddenly the Avenger just isn't there anymore. The men are baffled, but then they hear a rumble as the seawater falls down over the edge of the flat Earth and into the nothingness of space. The yacht is approaching the ultimate waterfall of destruction.

ASIUS

Dear gods! It's the edge of the world!

ODYSSEUS

Panic!

BORUS

(to the yacht's captain)

Quick! Turn around!

There's a panic on all the ships as they realise they're heading for destruction. The ships start to turn, but the Lotophagi ship is too slow:

SKINNY LOTOPHAGI

Ahh! This is the end!

Their ship falls off the Earth. The ship with the Farmers and the pirates nears the edge, too:

CAPTAIN

It's the end of the world as we know it! It's the-- AHH!

One by one, the ships all fall into nothingness. The yacht is about to slide off just as it's turning:

BORUS

Row, you bastards! Row!

The modern yacht isn't as modern after all. The oars start cutting the sea frantically. Odysseus blows into the sail to make the yacht go faster. The men see this, and join him. Odysseus looks like he's about to faint, but the yacht slowly pulls away from the edge of the world. Then they see what's awaiting them up ahead:

A furious rainstorm thunders in the distance. A lightning strikes. Then it starts to rain.

EXT. YACHT - LATER - RAIN

The rain turns into a vicious hailstorm. The hailstorm rips the main sail, and a rope falls down on the deck between the men. The situation looks bad.

ODYSSEUS

I'm sure the situation's not as bad as it looks!

CALETOR

Not as bad as it looks?! It couldn't be any worse!

Further away, on their right, clouds gather in a suspicious way: there are clear whirls there. Soon a dark cloud spits down a column of whirlwinds. A

massive tornado hits the ocean, causing an equally massive wave. Xanthus looks miserable, Caletor swears.

XANTHUS

After all this... No more stealing poultry. Ever again.

BORUS

It's not about goddamn poultry!

XANTHUS

(breaking down)

It's all about the poultry!

ODYSSEUS

We can't give up now!

ASIUS

Agreed! We'll get through this.

The massive wave looms close. The men look at each other as if it was the last time they did so. Xanthus, bawling by now, sees no alternative than to take his own life. Not noticing that the rope from the mast is wrapped around his ankle, he jumps into the ocean from the heavily tilted ship. The rope tightens and grabs the feet of Odysseus and Co. as well. Tangled in the rope, the men slide down and into the sea. As soon as they hit the ocean, the huge wave grabs them.

EXT. SHORES OF ITHACA - DAY

The gigantic wave throws the screaming men onto the shore. The men have been separated by the storm and churned into sea-weedy, messy creatures by the waves.

Further away, there is a cottage and a woman out in the yard.

BORUS

Nice going, Xanthus. Real. Fucking.
Nice!

XANTHUS

I didn't--

Screaming, Caletor tackles Xanthus down. Borus gladly joins in. After giving it a thought, Asius jumps in, too.

While the other men roll on the sand, Odysseus peers into the distance: there's something familiar there.

ODYSSEUS

Well, look at that.

The men stop fighting, as Odysseus says softly:

ODYSSEUS

Home!

A WOMAN carrying a basket of laundry halts in front of the house as she sees the men. Odysseus smiles. The woman does not return a smile.

The men stop fighting, and as Asius lifts up his head, he bangs it painfully into a massive wooden sign on the beach. The sign says: "Welcome to Ithaca! We're happy that you ended up here! It could be worse!"

EXT. ITHACA - DAY - ODYSSEUS' YARD

The wet bunch reaches the house. The woman's gaze scans the men and finally stops at Borus. The woman looks at the dishevelled, handsome man and then drops her basket in shock:

PENELOPE

Odysseus?

Borus raises his gaze -- and apparently likes what he sees. He smiles crookedly at Penelope:

BORUS

Sure.

Odysseus shoves Borus away.

ODYSSEUS

No, honey. I'm here.

Clearly disappointed, Penelope fixes her eyes on her true husband. She doesn't look too happy:

PENELOPE

Where have you been?

Odysseus approaches her.

PENELOPE

Sailing out there Zeus knows where with your buddies, while I've had to fight off the sleazy bachelors next door for years. Now what kind of behaviour is--

Odysseus tries to kiss her, but she pushes him away:

PENELOPE

Oh no. Don't you try that with me.

ODYSSEUS

I thought I'd never see you again.

Seeing that Penelope is a hard nut to crack, Borus decides to step up:

BORUS

He led us home, Ma'am. And he saved my life.

One by one, the men speak out, too:

CALETOR

Mine too.

ASIUS

And mine.

Xanthus chokes back tears:

XANTHUS

And mine. Also.

Suspicious, Penelope scans the men's faces.

ASIUS

We went through adventures you wouldn't believe!

CALETOR

We saw pirates that got morphed into pigs by a witch.

BORUS

We heroically resisted the irresistible temptations of a nymph.

XANTHUS

And a god appeared before us!

PENELOPE

Right.

(to Odysseus)

You were supposed to beat the rugs before you left. They're still waiting.

Penelope points at old rugs covered in dust and spider webs by the house. Odysseus looks at her, and the two of them walk towards the house. Borus calls out:

BORUS

Your husband is a true hero!

BEGIN MUSIC: MEGADETH - "BLOOD OF HEROES" (INTRO)

PENELOPE

(to Odysseus)

You got ten minutes.

The men don't hear her words. Asius looks at his friends and grins:

ASIUS

I bet they're gonna be writing stories about him.

The men smile and start off, on to adventures brand new.

The song kicks in.

End credits.

FADE OUT.

THE END