



ON CALYPSO'S ISLE

CAST

ODYSSEUS	Wily Adventurer
CALYPSO	Amorous Sea Nymph
NYMPH	Servant to Calypso
ATHENA	Goddess of War and Wisdom
POSEIDON	Ruler of the Seas and Oceans
ZEUS	Ruler of the Gods
HERMES	Messenger God



NARRATOR: It had been seven long years for Odysseus—a prisoner on the island of Calypso the lovely-braided sea nymph and her sister-nymphs. After Odysseus had washed up on her shores—clinging to the blasted remnants of his ship—Calypso had claimed him as her mate, promising him a share in her eternal life as long as he

remained her lover. Each night they spent together in her glittering cave, but each day Odysseus found himself looking out over the sea—dreaming of Ithaca and his beloved Penelope.

NYMPH: Mistress, the *man* is weeping again.

CALYPSO: (*sigh*) He's still pining for his home and his mortal family. It's a phase. He'll forget them eventually.

NYMPH: It has already been seven years, and his sadness seems to have only grown.

CALYPSO: Don't tell me that you're feeling sorry for him?

NYMPH: Of course not. I'm only saying that desperate men try desperate tactics. He might try to escape.

CALYPSO: How could he escape? You, my servants, keep him under constant surveillance. He is surrounded by miles of sea. And besides, why would he want to leave? He gets to spend each night in my arms and each day attended by my lovely nymphs. Plus, I have offered him eternal life. What greater gift can you give to a mortal?

NYMPH: All I am saying is that the man is not happy.

CALYPSO: I am happy, and that is all that matters.

NARRATOR: Despite her harsh words, Calypso cared deeply for her mortal lover. Every trick she had tried to win over Odysseus' heart had failed. She knew—if given the chance to escape—he would take it.

CALYPSO: Odysseus, dear, are you not happy with me here?

ODYSSEUS: You have been very kind to me through the years. But I cannot lie: I desire to see my home again—my family.

CALYPSO: (*irritated*) Go ahead and say what you mean. You miss *her*—your mortal wife.

NARRATOR: Odysseus remained silent.

CALYPSO: What does she have that I do not? Are her eyes lovelier than mine? Is her skin more youthful and radiant? Does she have all the contours of a goddess?

ODYSSEUS: No. Her beauty cannot compare to yours. But beauty is not the only thing that stirs the heart.

CALYPSO: (*mocking laugh*) So you desire this mortal woman, who will wither and die, over me, who will remain beautiful forever?

ODYSSEUS: I do. (*pause*) And I will ask again: Will you let me go to her?

CALYPSO: (*fake sadness*) I am afraid not, my dear. It is for your own good. You are not thinking clearly. Give me another year, and I will have changed your mind. By then your home will be but a distant memory.

ODYSSEUS: (*passionately*) You've said that for the last *seven* years! Can't you see? I will never forget my home!

CALYPSO: These memories will fade—in time. Now let us retire.

NARRATOR: It seemed that Odysseus would be trapped on the island of Ogygia forever. His clever mind could see no way out. Athena, his patron goddess, had apparently abandoned him—left him at the mercy of the amorous nymph. But,

unbeknownst to him, Athena had not forgotten her beloved hero.

ATHENA: (*angrily*) Enough is enough! Calypso has had her chance to win him over. She's had her fun! Now she's just keeping him from reaching his home. Something must be done!

NARRATOR: The goddess went before Zeus, her royal father.

ATHENA: Mighty Zeus, I come asking a favor.

ZEUS: Athena, my favorite daughter! You know I will grant you anything—if it's in my power.

ATHENA: This favor has to do with Odysseus.

ZEUS: I'm not surprised. He has become your pet project, hasn't he?

ATHENA: I have made it my mission to see him safely home.

ZEUS: Well, that is tricky business, isn't it? Many of the Greeks offended the gods during the war at Troy. For their crimes they must not reach their homes without a few trials.

ATHENA: Odysseus has already been at sea for nearly nine years! For seven of those years, Calypso the Concealer has held him prisoner in her little love nest!

ZEUS: There are worse ways to spend seven years.

ATHENA: Father, hasn't he suffered enough?

POSEIDON: I can answer that question for you.

NARRATOR: The god Poseidon—his beard matted with seaweed and brine—appeared beside his Olympian brother.

ZEUS: Brother, we were having a private conversation.

POSEIDON: That miserable mortal's life concerns me, too. He blinded my son.

ZEUS: No one cares about your son. He's a brute who got what he deserved. Imagine eating his guests! How barbaric!

POSEIDON: I will punish whomever I want! And I want Odysseus to pay for what he's done!

NARRATOR: Athena glared at her uncle.

ATHENA: Haven't you had your revenge? The saying is "An eye for an eye," but you want his life for what he did!

POSEIDON: And I will have it! Odysseus must cross the sea to return to his home. So set the mortal free, and I can destroy him once and for all! I'll have him right where I want him. Not even you can stop me, Athena.

NARRATOR: Athena seethed in anger.

ATHENA: Odysseus is wily. He will find some way to survive.

POSEIDON: Unless he grows a pair of gills, he is doomed!

ZEUS: (*obliviously*) Good. Good. Sounds like we are agreed. Hermes! Hermes!

NARRATOR: Winging his way into the throne room, Hermes the messenger god alighted before Zeus and bowed grandiosely.

HERMES: (*pompously*) Yes, master? I live to serve! My life is but an insignificant speck compared to your awesome—

ZEUS: (*irritated*) Hermes, knock it off!

HERMES: Yes, supreme ruler of heaven and earth!

ZEUS: I need you to go to the island of Calypso the sea nymph—

HERMES: Ooh, gladly. If you're going to see some nymph, she's definitely the one to see. Isn't she the one with the—

NARRATOR: Hermes' hands shaped curves in midair.

ATHENA: (*angrily*) Lovely braids.

HERMES: (*covering*) Oh yeah. Lovely braids. That's it.

ZEUS: Anyway, tell her to release Odysseus.

HERMES: What if he doesn't want to be released? I know I wouldn't. You know what I'm saying?

NARRATOR: Hermes nudged Poseidon, who only shook his trident menacingly.

ATHENA: Not every man is controlled by his libido.

HERMES: Most of them are though. All right. I'll break the bad news to Calypso. If she is too upset by all this, I might stick around a while to console her. Lay on the ol' charm...

ATHENA: Just go!

HERMES: Right-o!

NARRATOR: The messenger god rocketed down toward the sea. In the midst of its wine-dark vastness, he spotted the tiny speck that was Ogygia. Hermes dropped into the island's network of glittering caves.

HERMES: Oh, Calypso, my sweet!

NARRATOR: He found Calypso seated on her ivory throne—a dinner of ambrosia and nectar laid out before her.

CALYPSO: Oh no. It's you.

HERMES: Not exactly the greeting I was hoping for.

CALYPSO: What do you expect when you're Olympus' official bearer-of-bad-news?

HERMES: Ouch. That hurts. By the way, you're looking lovely—as usual.

CALYPSO: Cut to the chase, Hermes! What news do you have for me?

HERMES: Are you doing something new with your braids? That's a lovely gown, too. It leaves little to the imagination.

CALYPSO: Keep your imagination to yourself! Now tell me—

HERMES: Oh, were you eating? That ambrosia and nectar looks delicious. Care if I pull up a stalagmite?

NARRATOR: Hermes began to help himself to the godly feast. Calypso rolled her eyes and sighed.

HERMES: (*between mouthfuls*) You know, the rest of the gods are always debating—who's better looking? Wood nymphs or water nymphs? I always say, "I'm more of a sea-nymph man myself."

CALYPSO: (*angrily*) Hermes! Deliver your message and leave me in peace!

HERMES: Touchy. Touchy. Well, you guessed it. It's not pretty. Zeus says your boy-toy has to go. You've had your fun. Now it's time to send him packing.

CALYPSO: (*quietly*) I knew it.

HERMES: I think your problem here is you're into mortals. What you need is a god. Not just any god either. Most of those fops are all flash and no substance. What you need is—

CALYPSO: (*angrily*) This is just typical of you arrogant males!

HERMES: Whoa, whoa. Don't shoot me. I'm just the messenger.

CALYPSO: The gods romance any mortal woman they want, but when we goddesses take a mortal lover, *then* we have crossed the line! Plus, I've been faithful to this man for seven years. Show me a god who has done that!

HERMES: You're right! It's an outrage! A complete double standard! (*pause*) Have I ever told you that you're beautiful when you're angry?

CALYPSO: I simply won't do it! You will tell Zeus that Odysseus is mine, and I will *not* give him up!

HERMES: Hmm. Interesting. Instead of obeying Zeus, you're choosing suicide. Have you ever seen Zeus when he gets steamed? He starts zinging lightning bolts left and right. Gets ugly fast.

CALYPSO: (*angrily*) All I know is that I want you off my island—now!

HERMES: Hey! Hey! I know you're probably confused right now. Lots of different emotions are running through your head. But if you need a shoulder to cry on, just give me a buzz.

CALYPSO: (*screaming*) Out! Out! Out!

NARRATOR: The messenger god skittered away.

CALYPSO: *He is impossible!*

NARRATOR: When Calypso's anger had subsided, she went to Odysseus. He was sitting on the beach—facing eastward, toward home.

CALYPSO: (*quietly*) Odysseus.

ODYSSEUS: Yes?

CALYPSO: The gods have declared you free. I am releasing you.

NARRATOR: Odysseus said nothing.

CALYPSO: Did you hear me? You are allowed to return home.

NARRATOR: Odysseus turned to her, tears in his eyes. At first Calypso thought perhaps the tears might be for her. Had Odysseus finally realized how much he would miss her if he left?

ODYSSEUS: I have waited seven years to hear these words. Thank you. You have given me my life back.

CALYPSO: (*hopefully*) If you refused your freedom, the gods would allow you to stay here. You could be one of the immortals. Your handsome features would never wrinkle. Your strong arms would never weaken. Your mind would stay quick and never falter.

ODYSSEUS: It is a kind offer, but immortality is not for me. Ithaca is my home. I will live out my days, and when the Fates decree, I will pass from this earth.

CALYPSO: You know, most men would never be able to refuse such an offer.

ODYSSEUS: I would never be able to accept it.

CALYPSO: Very well. You must build a raft. I will give you the materials and all that you require for your journey. All *I* require is one more night together before you depart—to say goodbye.

NARRATOR: Odysseus toiled like a madman on his raft—constructing it from bits of driftwood and washed-up sail the nymph had collected over the years. Calypso came to the beach daily and watched Odysseus' progress with sadness. With each peg he hammered and each plank he placed, he was drawing further away from her. At last the raft was completed, and the nymph bid farewell to her love.

CALYPSO: Of all my innumerable years, these seven have been the happiest.

ODYSSEUS: Farewell.