

Odisej je z ueno Penelopo in sinu kom Telemahom u drugi teden po itnikoval na otoku Koruuli. Zjutraj so vstali, pojedli sendviu ali dva, ter odli na trunico, Odisej si je spotoma kupil asopis, Daily Mirror, in potem so oli skozi ozke, s kamni tlakovane ulice, tja do pomola, kjer jih je akala bela ladjica s tablico na strehi - Taxi. V piou vetra in enakomernem brbotanju motorja so se peljali proti otoku Badija, morje je bilo modro, vse se je lesketalo v soncu, oe velikanska kamnita gora, ponekod na gosto porasla z zelenim grmiuvjem. Ko so pristali ob okruoenem pomolu, ki ga je najedlo morje, so se med diouimi bori po peeni poti odpravili proti nudistiini plaui. Od povsod so se hreoe oglaali okruati. Penelopa je obstala in z zaprtimi oui globoko vdihovala zrak.

"Dihajmo, dihajmo," je rekla s sreim nasmehom na obrazu, "da se nauijemo zraka, dokler je oe as."

Na plaui so zasedli svoj prostor ek pod pahljasto kroonjo majhnega bora in razgrnili brisaee. Telemah si je nataknil rokavee in z Odisejem sta zaplavala kakih deset metrov od obale.

"Ne hodita predale!" je klicala Penelopa z brega.

"Daleu bova ola, daleu!" jo je drauil Telemah z zvonkim glaskom.

Popoldne je Penelopa zaspala na brisaei v senci drevesa, Odisej in Telemah pa sta odola igrat nogomet v oportni park. V nekem trenutku je Telemah stekel po uogo, ki se je odkotalila k uinati ograji, za katero se je v sonih uarkih lesketalo modro morje. "Zapomni si ta trenutek," je pomislil Odisej, "zapomni si ta trenutek."

Zdajci je za sabo zaliol praieuje kruljenje. Ozrl se je in zagledal praieu, ki je ez igriee tekel proti njemu. Na razdalji petih korakov je obstal, otouno zacvilil in ga priakujee gledal. Nato se je vrgel na tla in se zael pred njim valjati. Telemah je navdueno pritekkel zraven.

"Praieu! Zakaj se pa valja?"

Odisej, ki si je domiöljal, da je sposoben prenikniti v uivalsko duo, je hudomuono nasmejan rekel: "Po moje mi hoee nekaj dopovedati. No, kaj bi rad povedal?" Poasi se je pribliual praieu, poenil ob njem in ga previdno ehljal po trebuhu. Praieu je zadovoljno zakrulil. "A mu lahko vruem uogo?" je z otrooko odkritosrenostjo vpraol Telemah in z rjavimi oui zaupljivo strmel v Odiseja. "Pa mu vrzi," je prikimal Odisej. Pbiu je zalual uogo proti rokometnemu голу in z Odisejem sta osupnila, s kakono naglico se je praieu skobacal na noge in stekel za uogo, ter jo dohitel oe preden je ola ez golovo erto, spretno jo je zaustavil z rilcem in jo z nataninimi sunki prikotalil pred

Odiseja in Telemaha. Potem je zael repkati in ju z bistrimi oui priakujee gledal. Tisti trenutek se je iz grmovja zraven igriee zasliöalo lomastenje in ven iz listja je pogledala praieuja glava ter trikrat zakrulila. Praieu je v hipu nehal repkati, pogledal je Odiseja in Telemaha, kot da se poslavlja, hitro stekel ez igriee in izginil v grmovju.

Penelopa se je öe zveĖer, ko so ũe sedeli za mizo v pizzeriji na strmi uliĖici, kar sama od sebe na glas smejala temu nenavadnemu dogodku. "In ũogo je porival z rilcem!" je ponosno rekel Telemah. Pristopil je natakari in jim prinesel pizze. "No, to pa me veseli, da ste dobre volje," je rekel, "take goste imamo radi. "Tedaj sta po klancu navzdol pritekla dva praöiĖa in ũe od daleĖ glasno krulila. Penelopa se je prestraöila in vzela Telemaha v naroĖje, ampak praöiĖa je öe pogledala nista, pridrobencljala sta naravnost k Odiseju, se mu vzpela vsaki na

eno koleno in prijazno krulila. Izza vseh miz so zaĖeli vstajati gostje in z veselimi vzkliki opazovali prizor. Skupina Nemcev pri sosednji mizi se je na ves glas krohotala. "Svinja, svinja!" je vsake toliko zavpil kdo izmed njih in s prstom kazal na praöiĖa. Ampak, najbolj je bil navduöen natakari, z rokama se je ploskal po stegnih in kar naprej ponavljal: "SreĖo imate, sreĖo boste imeli, to je namig od zgoraj, vam povem, pri Zevsu vam povem, da je to namig od zgoraj!"

"No, Ėakajte malo, odkod pa so ti praöiĖi, ũe popoldne sem videl dva v öoportnem parku na Badiji, eden se je kakor pes valjal na asfaltu pred mano," je prijetno razburjen razlagal Odisej, toda natakari ga je s sveĖanim glasom prekinil: "Za nas otoĖane je praöiĖ sveta ũival, tako kot je to za Indijce krava. In danes je naö praznik, danes mi pijemo vino, kdor ne pije, KorĖulanec ni! Danes je festival praöiĖa!"

Med smehom in öalami, ki so se razlegale od mize do mize vzdolũ cele uliĖice, so pojedli pizzo, pri Ėemer je Odisej vsaj tretjino zmetal praöiĖema, pa tudi Penelopa in Telemah sta jima vrgla nekaj koĖĖkov. Zanimivo, od drugih gostov praöiĖa nista hotela sprejeti hrane. äe veĖje preseneĖenje je Ėakalo Odiseja, ko je hotel plaĖati.

"Ne, od vas nikakor ne smem sprejeti denarja," je odloĖno rekel natakari, "vi imate danes vse zastonj, ker ste praöiĖji car, zagotavljam vam, kamorkoli boste zdajle öli, povsod boste imeli zastonj!"

To je bilo res. Komaj so zavili okrog vogala, ũe jim je naproti priteklo celo krdelo praöiĖev, da je vsa ulica odmevala od njihovih parkljev, povsod so se odpirala okna, starke in ũene, vse v Ėrnem, so jih z vzhiĖenimi obrazi blagoslavljal, pa tudi marsikateri moöki, ki je pogledal z balkona, se je resno prekriũal. Ulica je bila polna sprehajalcev, a so se kar sami od sebe postavili ob hiöne zidove, tako da so Odisej, Penelepa in Telemah hodili na Ėelu praöiĖev, kot skozi nekaköen öpalir.

"Vse zastonj!" je vzkliknil albanski slaöĖiĖar, ponosen, da pozna tukajönje obiĖaje, ko mu je Odisej hotel plaĖati za ötiri kepice. "Ja, Ėe je pa tako," se je Odisej prekanjeno namuznil in od strani pogledal Penelopo, "potem gremo lahko öe na cocktail v Side Car bar, kaj praviö?"

"A zdaj se boö pa od veselja zapil, ker ti vsi ploskajo?" je z ostrim glasom rekla Penelopa in mu obrnila hrbet. Odisej ni mogel verjeti svojim uöesom. V takem trenutku mu lahko oĖita pijaöo? Vsa ulica je zaploskala in nekdo je zavpil: "éivel praöiĖji car!" Gromovit odmev iz stoterih grl je zabobnel med hiöami. Tisti trenutek je Odisej z grozo opazil, da Telemaha ni.

"Kje je Telemah?!" je kriknil in se prestraöeno oziral na vse strani.

"Telemah je ũe zdavnaj odrasel," je s tujim glasom spregovorila silhueta pred njim, "dvaindvajset let ima, dekleta ima, ötudira öpanöĖino in sociologijo kulture. Minilo je toliko let, Odisej. In ravno predlani se je Penelopi uresniĖila ũelja - za malo se ji je zdelo, da bi bil ti poslednji moöki v njenem ũivljenju - doũivela je romanco z Ikarom, ki je komaj kaj starejöi od tvojea sina."

"Vse zastoj!" je zaklical nekdo in gromovit odmev iz stoterih grl je zabobnel med hiöami. Odisej je pomislil, da se mu je zmeöalo.

"Kdo si, ûenska?!" je neobvladano zavpil in jo obrnil k sebi. Kri mu je zledenela. Pred njim je stala Kirka.

"Odisej, o, ti moj, edini, ki sem ga ljubila," je strastno spregovorila in iz oËi ji je sijala ljubezen, "ostani z mano, bodi öe moj, ne zapuöËaj me, nikdar veË ne boö naöel Itake, take, kakröna je bila nekdej, vse se je spremenilo, le tu, pri meni, v mojem naroËju, boö naöel zasluûeni mir in pokoj."

Odisej je kot brez uma strmel vanjo. Tedaj so se vsi praöiËi na ukaz nevidne sile dvignili na zadnje noge in zaplesali kolo okrog njiju. "éivel praöiËji car!" so zaklicali s Ëloveökimi glasovi in se iz koraka v korak spreminjali v Odisejeve tovariöe, s katerimi je z zvijaËo zavzel Trojo. Tu sta bila Bice in MarËi, zraven je plesal SraË, Ëez ramo ga je objemal Brane, tam je bil Dergi, malo naprej Edi in Matjaû, sam zase je plesal Tomo, v divji ekstazi se je okrog osi vrtel Jure, öiroko nasmejan je Vojc igral na kitaro, Uroö je tleskal s prsti in Koko je v ritmu vihtel nad glavo ladijsko vrv... Vsi so bili tu.

Odisej je öe isto noË odplul z moötvom proti Scili in Karibdi.

EMIL FILIPCIC

ODYSSEUS 2001

It was the second week of the vacation Odysseus was spending with his wife Penelope and his young son Telemachus on the island of Korcula. That morning they got up, had a couple of sandwiches, then went to the market; Odysseus bought a paper on the way, the Daily Mirror, then they followed the narrow cobbled streets all the way to the pier, where a little white boat was already waiting for them, with a sign above the cabin that read "Taxi". Accompanied by the whisper of the wind and the even chug-chug of the boat engine they sailed toward the small island of Badija. The sea was blue, everything glittered in the sun, including the huge craggy cliff patchily overgrown with dense green brush. They disembarked on a dilapidated, sea-worn jetty, then headed along a sandy path through a fragrant grove of pines toward the nudist beach. Everywhere around them cicadas were making their grating racket. Penelope stopped and with closed eyes inhaled, deeply, several times. "Let's breathe, let's breathe," she said, a blissful smile on her face, "let's get our fill of fresh air while we still can."

On the beach they found a good spot under the fan-shaped crown of a small pine and spread out their beach towels. Telemachus put on his water wings, and with Odysseus they swam some ten meters from the shore.

"Don't go too far!" called out Penelope from the shore.

"We'll go far, far out!" Telemachus teased her in his ringing voice.

In the afternoon Penelope took a nap in the shade of the tree, while Odysseus and Telemachus went to play football on the nearby recreation ground. At a certain moment Telemachus ran after the ball, which had rolled toward the chicken-wire

fence beyond which rays of sun glinted off the blue sea. "Remember this moment," Odysseus thought to himself, "treasure it."

Suddenly he heard oinks and grunts coming from behind him. He turned around to see a pig scuttling toward him over the ground. At a distance of five footsteps the pig stopped, squealed forlornly and looked at him with expectation. Then it threw itself on the ground and started to roll on its back in front of him. Telemachus came running up enthusiastically.

"A pig! Why is it rolling on its back?"

Under the misapprehension that he could see into the animal's soul, Odysseus chuckled brightly and said, "I believe he's trying to tell me something, aren't you, boy? What are you trying to say?" He approached the pig slowly, crouched down and cautiously scratched its belly. The pig grunted contently. "Can I throw it the ball?" asked Telemachus with childish candidness, gazing up trustfully at Odysseus with his brown eyes. "Go ahead," nodded Odysseus. The little boy threw the ball toward the handball goal, and both he and Odysseus were astounded to see the alacrity with which the pig scrambled to its legs and chased after the ball, caught up with it before it had crossed the goal line, adroitly stopped it with its snout, and with precise shoves drove it back to Odysseus and Telemachus. Then it wagged its tail and looked at them expectantly with its bright little eyes. At that moment there was the noise of trampling and of twigs snapping in the shrubbery by the pitch, and another pig's head peered through the foliage and gave three grunts. The first pig immediately stopped wagging its tail, gave Odysseus and Telemachus a significant look as though it was saying goodbye, then quickly ran over the pitch and disappeared into the shrubbery.

That evening, while they were sitting at a table in the sidewalk pizzeria on the steep narrow street, Penelope doubled up with laughter at hearing this unusual event. "And it pushed the ball with its snout!" said Telemachus proudly. The waiter came up with their pizzas. "Well, I'm glad to see you all in such a good humor," he said, "we like our guests to be like that." At that moment two pigs came sprinting down the steep street, grunting loudly all the way. Penelope became scared and picked Telemachus up in her arms, but the pigs didn't as much as look at her; with mincing steps they scurried to Odysseus, reared up and rested their front trotters on his knees, one on each side, grunting in the friendliest of fashions. Customers at other tables started standing up to get a better view, and cheered at the scene. A group of Germans at an adjoining table shouted with laughter. "Swine, swine!" one or the other of them would bellow every few minutes and point at the pigs. The most enthusiastic of all, though, was the waiter; he slapped his thighs and could not stop repeating: "This is lucky! This means luck. It's an omen from above, I tell you! By Zeus, I tell you it's an omen from above!" "Oh, hold on a minute, where did these pigs come from? I already saw two of them this afternoon on the recreation ground on Badija. One of them rolled on its back like a dog on the asphalt before me," Odysseus explained, pleasantly thrilled, but the waiter interrupted him in a solemn voice: "For us islanders, the pig is a sacred animal, like the cow for the Hindus in India. And today's our holiday. Today we drink wine. Those who don't drink are not Korculans! Today's the festival of the pig!"

Amidst the laughter and jokes ringing out from table to table all along the narrow street they finished their pizzas; Odysseus shared at least a third of his with the pigs, and Penelope and Telemachus also threw them a few pieces. Interestingly, the pigs would not accept food from the other patrons. Odysseus met with an even greater surprise when he called for his cheque.

“No. No way. I couldn’t possibly accept money from you,” the waiter was adamant, “for you everything’s on the house today because you’re the Pig Prince. Believe me, wherever you go now, everything will be free of charge!”

And so it was. As soon as they had turned a corner, a whole herd of pigs ran up to meet them, their hooves clattering so that the narrow street echoed and windows opened everywhere. Old women and matrons, all dressed in black, blessed them with their faces shining with rapture, and many a man glancing down from a balcony gravely made the sign of the cross. The street was full of people strolling, but they all drew back against the walls of the houses to make way, lining the path for Odysseus, Penelope and Telemachus, who walked at the head of the procession of pigs.

“All on the house!” exclaimed the Albanian ice-cream vendor, proud of his familiarity with the local customs, when Odysseus wanted to pay for the four scoops of ice-cream. “Well, if that’s the way it is,” Odysseus grinned slyly and gave Penelope a sideways glance, “we could go to the Side-Car bar for a cocktail. What d’you say?”

“So now you’re going to get drunk for joy because everyone’s cheering you?” Penelope said with acerbity and turned her back on him. Odysseus could not believe his ears. In a moment like this she censures his drinking? The whole street was clapping and someone called out: “Long live the Pig Prince!” A thunderous echo from a hundred throats reverberated between the houses. Just then Odysseus noticed with horror that Telemachus was gone.

“Where’s Telemachus?” he shouted and looked around in alarm.

“Telemachus has long grown up,” the silhouette standing before him spoke in an unfamiliar voice, “he’s twenty-two, he’s got a girlfriend, and he’s majoring in Spanish and the sociology of culture. It’s been so many years, Odysseus. Just a couple of years ago also Penelope’s wish came true – it didn’t seem right you should be the last man in her life – and she had a love affair with Icarus, who’s hardly older than your own son.”

“All in vain!” someone called out and a thunderous echo from a hundred throats reverberated between the houses. Odysseus thought he had lost his mind.

“Who are you, woman?” he yelled uncontrollably and spun her around to face him. His blood ran cold. Standing in front of him was Circe.

“Odysseus, my one and only, the only man I ever loved,” she said passionately, her eyes bright with love, “stay with me, be mine, don’t leave me, you’ll never find Ithaca again, not the way it was before, everything’s changed, only here, with me, in my arms, will you ever find the peace and repose you deserve.” Odysseus stared at her like he was deranged. At that moment all the pigs reared up on their hind legs at the command of an invisible force and started to dance the kolo in a ring around the two of them. “Long live the Pig Prince!” they called out in human voices and in time to their step gradually transformed into Odysseus’s companions, with whom he had

guilefully taken Troy. There were Bice and Marci, then Srac and Brane with an arm thrown over the former's shoulder. Next there was Dergi, a little further on Edi and Matjaž. Tomo was dancing on his own, Jure was spinning around his axis in an ecstatic frenzy, Vojc was strumming the guitar and grinning for all his worth. Uroš was snapping his fingers, and Koko was swirling an anchor rope above his head in time to the rhythm ... They were all there.

That same night Odysseus sailed with his team toward Scylla and Charybdis.

Translated by Tamara Soban