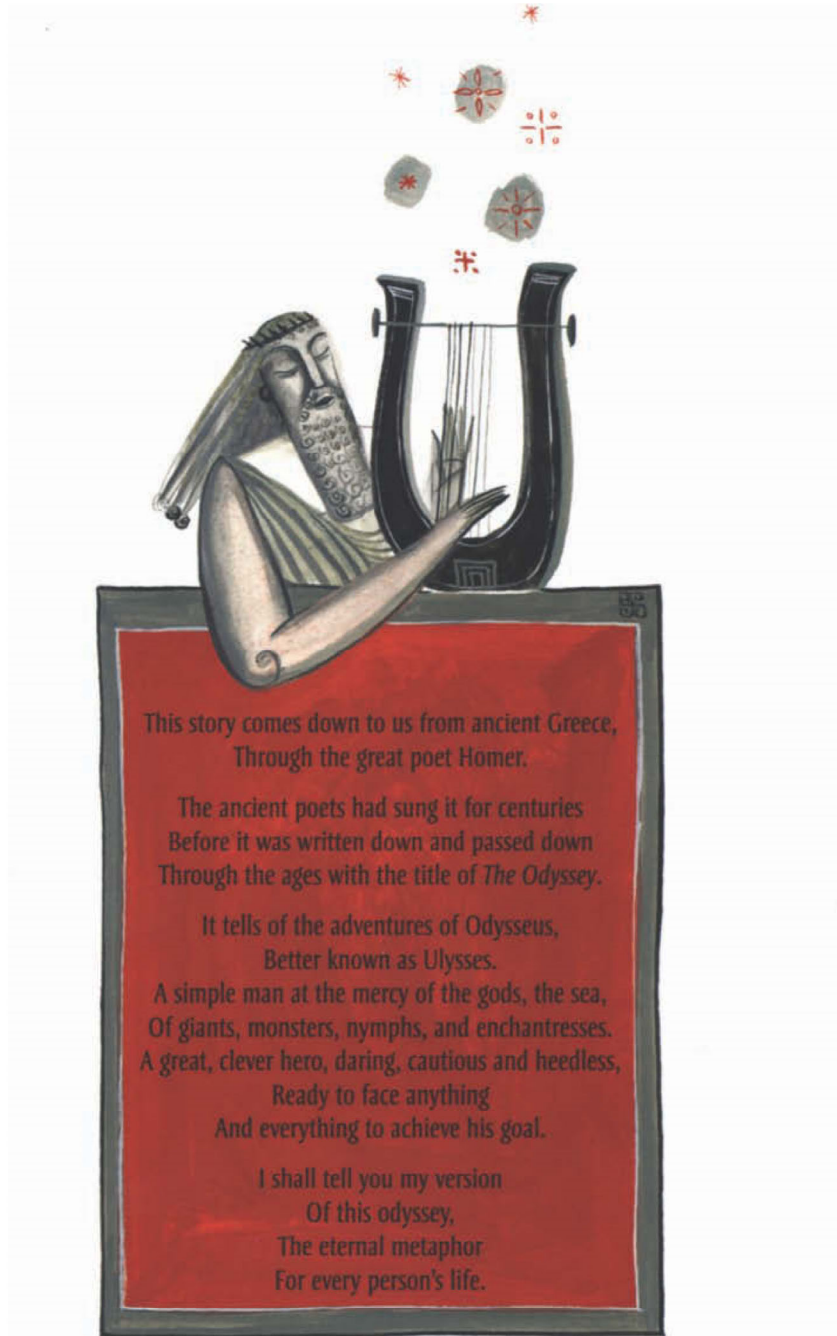


The Incredible Voyage of ULYSSES



This story comes down to us from ancient Greece,
Through the great poet Homer.

The ancient poets had sung it for centuries
Before it was written down and passed down
Through the ages with the title of *The Odyssey*.

It tells of the adventures of Odysseus,
Better known as Ulysses.

A simple man at the mercy of the gods, the sea,
Of giants, monsters, nymphs, and enchantresses.
A great, clever hero, daring, cautious and heedless,
Ready to face anything
And everything to achieve his goal.

I shall tell you my version
Of this odyssey,
The eternal metaphor
For every person's life.

Text and illustrations by Bimba Landmann

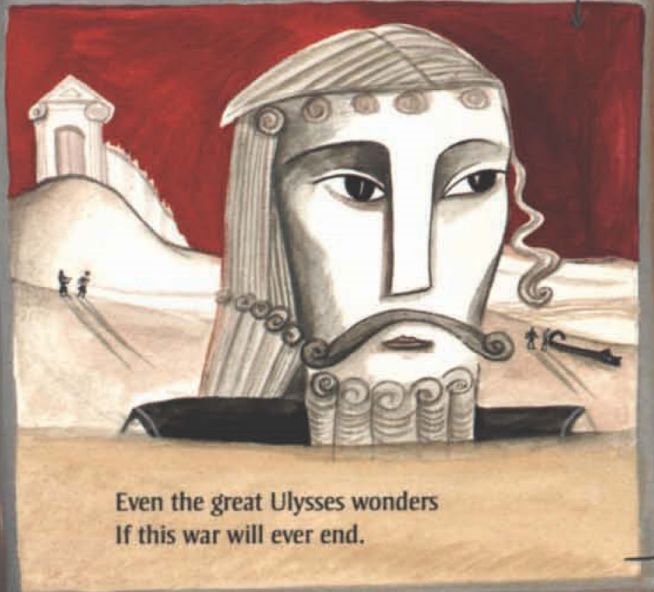


Fighting has been raging for ten years on the Plains of Troy.



Trojans against Achaeans.

The heroes of Greece are mustered on the field.
Men strong as rocks,
Brave warriors with legs of bronze.
This for ten years now. But no one prevails.
Not even when the gods intervene.



Even the great Ulysses wonders
If this war will ever end.



Until one day he discovers
A way to beat the Trojans.
Of superior intelligence,
With his sharp wits he conceives
The most famous deception in history.

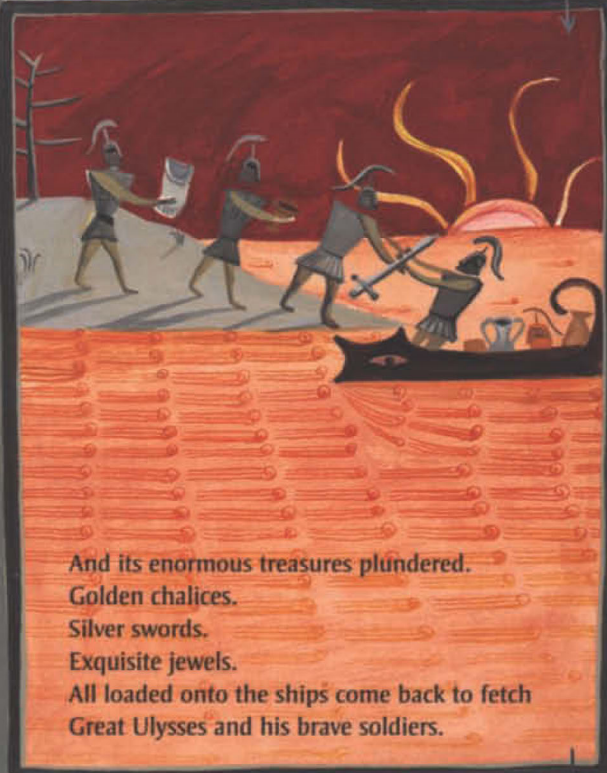
Ulysses has a huge wooden horse built.
Then tricks his enemies to believe in his surrender.
His ships set sail, one after the other.
But he and his men hide in the horse.



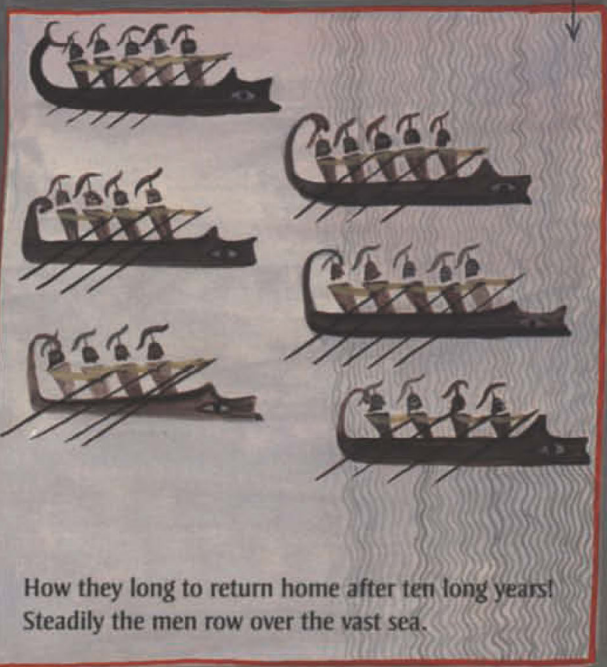
As foreseen, the Trojans pull
The horse inside the city walls.
Ulysses and his men bide their time.
Silent and still.
Night falls,
And an unnatural silence settles on Troy, too.
The Trojans sleep.
It is then that Ulysses gives the sign and all hell breaks out.



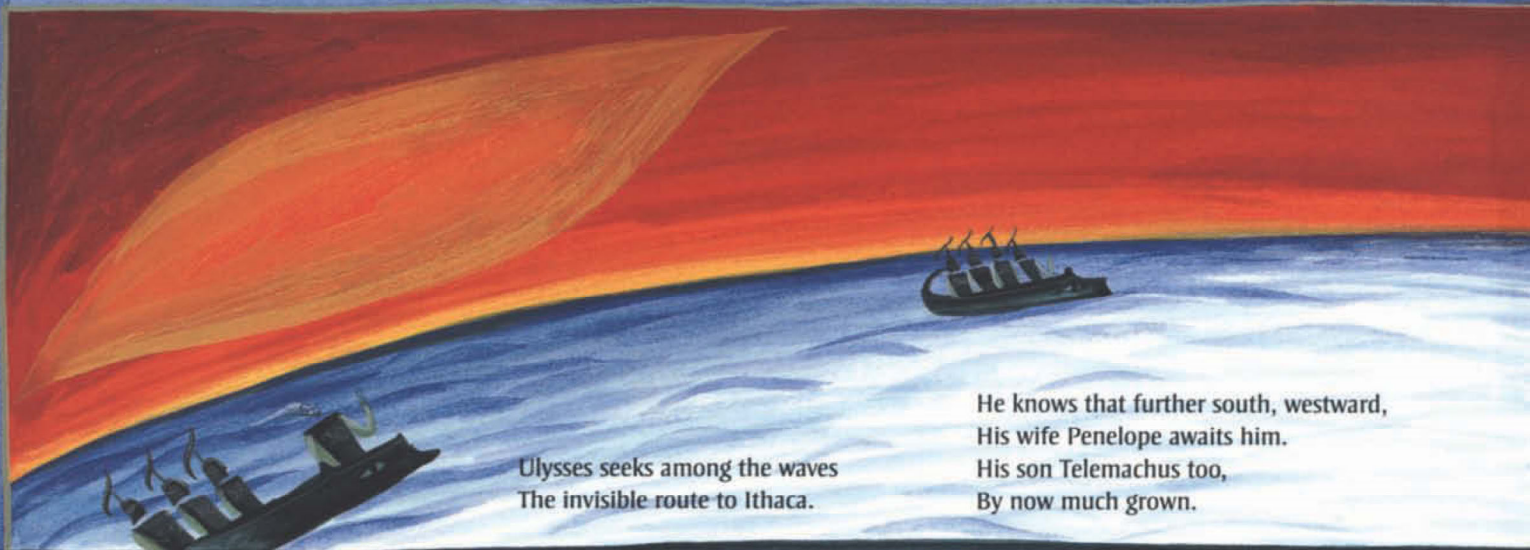
In one single night Troy is destroyed.
Razed to the ground.



And its enormous treasures plundered.
Golden chalices.
Silver swords.
Exquisite jewels.
All loaded onto the ships come back to fetch
Great Ulysses and his brave soldiers.

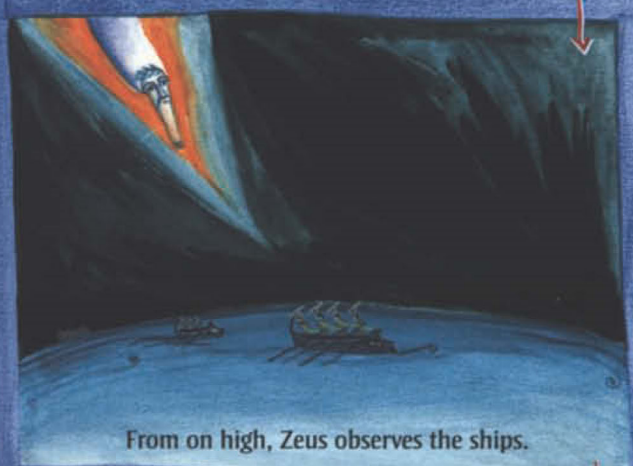


How they long to return home after ten long years!
Steadily the men row over the vast sea.

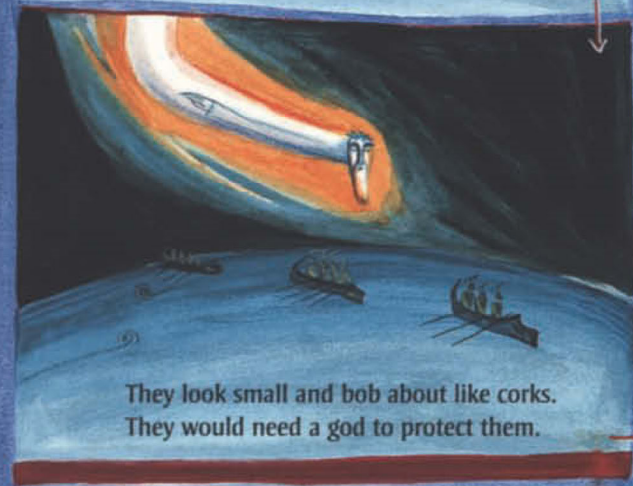


Ulysses seeks among the waves
The invisible route to Ithaca.

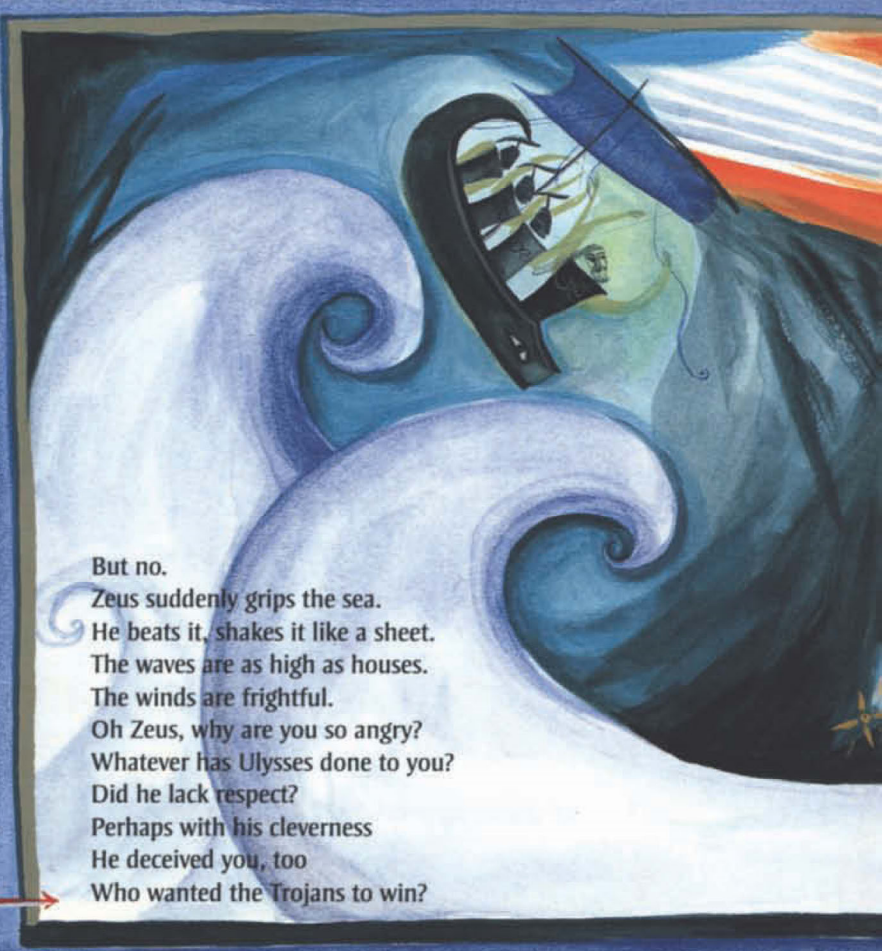
He knows that further south, westward,
His wife Penelope awaits him.
His son Telemachus too,
By now much grown.



From on high, Zeus observes the ships.

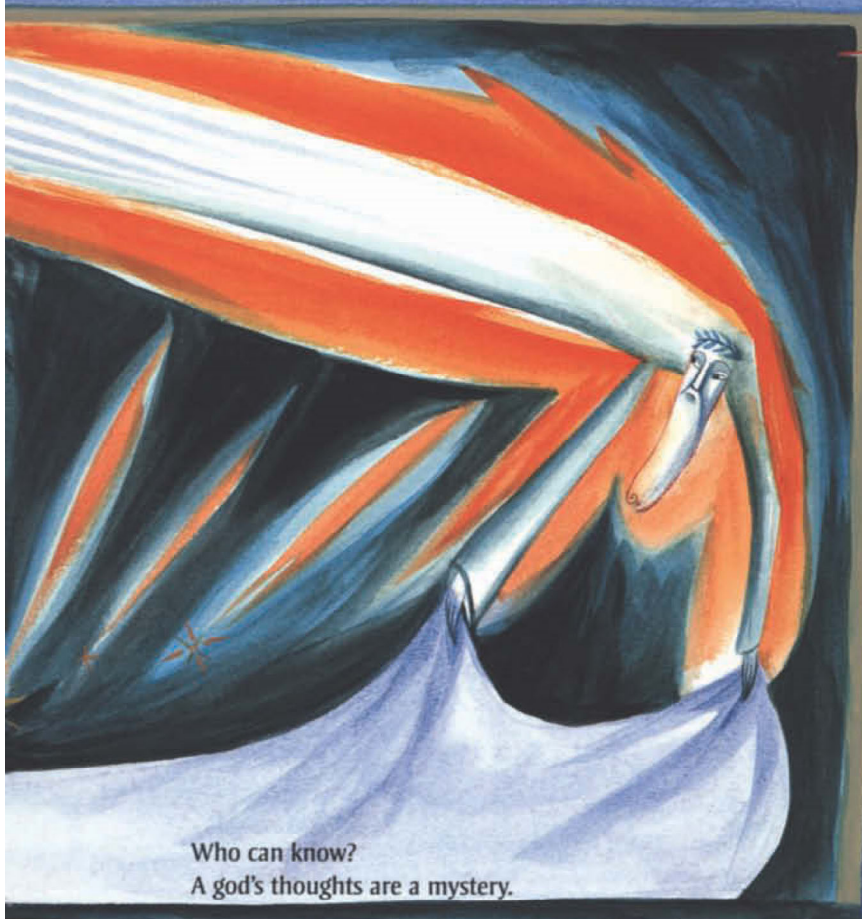


They look small and bob about like corks.
They would need a god to protect them.



But no.
Zeus suddenly grips the sea.
He beats it, shakes it like a sheet.
The waves are as high as houses.
The winds are frightful.
Oh Zeus, why are you so angry?
Whatever has Ulysses done to you?
Did he lack respect?
Perhaps with his cleverness
He deceived you, too
Who wanted the Trojans to win?

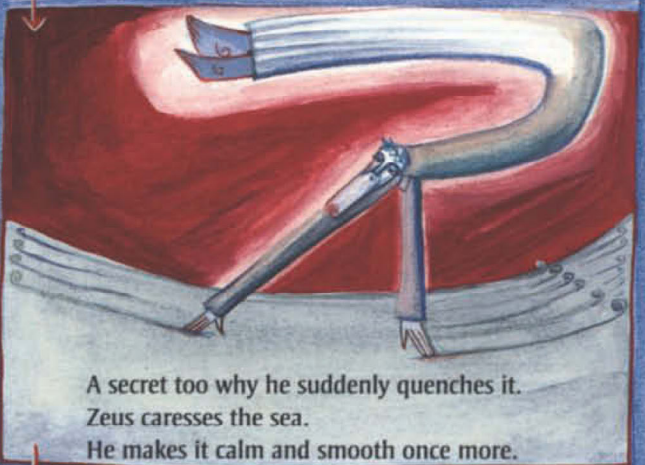




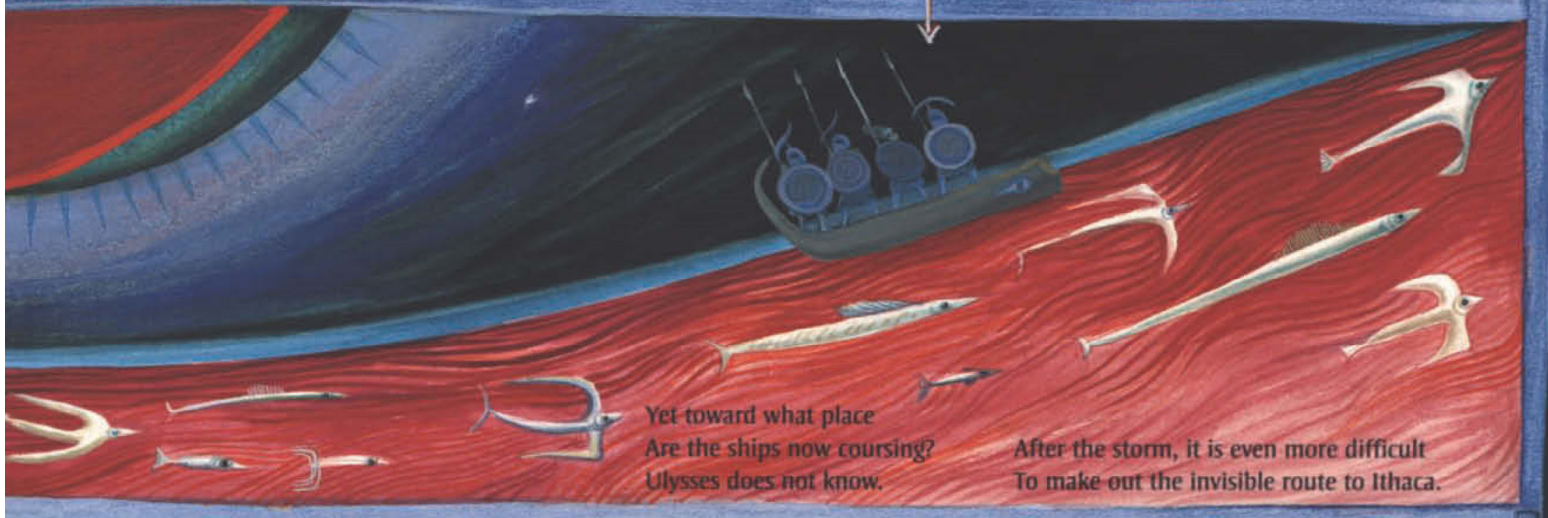
Who can know?
A god's thoughts are a mystery.



The reasons for his anger a secret.



A secret too why he suddenly quenches it.
Zeus caresses the sea.
He makes it calm and smooth once more.



Yet toward what place
Are the ships now coursing?
Ulysses does not know.

After the storm, it is even more difficult
To make out the invisible route to Ithaca.



For days and days the ship
Wanders over the gray sea.
Until one day land appears
On the horizon,
Looking like a bronze shield.

It is not Ithaca.
Yet it has soft beaches
Where tired bodies can rest
After long, long rowing.

Its trees offer shade,
There are animals to hunt,
Springs of pure water.

Who knows who lives
In such a rich land.
Ulysses sends three men to explore.

The Lotus-Eaters live there,
The people who eat
The sweet fruit of the lotus plant.

The Lotus-Eaters are kind and hospitable.
They offer the three strangers
Lots and lots of their food.
They, of course, accept.
They cannot know it brings oblivion.

Slowly their minds cloud over.
It's like a rising fog
That makes them forget everything.
They forget their journey,
Ulysses, even Ithaca.

They fall to the ground,
As heavy as rocks.
And they go on eating
The treacherous lotus fruit.

When Ulysses finds them,
He has to use force to raise them.
And force to drag them away.
"Leave us alone. Who are you?
What do you want?"
They protest loudly.

Using strong ropes, Ulysses
Binds them to his ship
And orders the others to board quickly.

And to be even quicker
In moving their oars on the sea,
So as to leave behind
That accursed land,
Which makes man forget.

"Never forget those who await you.
Even if the wind blows you
To the opposite side of the world!"
Thinks Ulysses. In his mind's eye
He sees the sweet face of Penelope.

