

NO PLACE LIKE HOME.

Co-written by Patrick Morris, Joanna Lagey, Marley Lagey, Tony Clark, Lorna McNeur, Alfie Johnson.

Performed by at the Hotbed Theatre Festival, Cambridge Junction, July 10th 2016, and at Barnwell Baptist Church, July 12th 2016

Caroline: Welcome ladies and gentlemen. We are the Abbey Community Theatre Group and this is our performance of 'No Place Like Home'.

Alfie: Our play is inspired by a story over 3000 years old, written down by the Greek poet Homer.

Beth: The story of Odysseus – Oddy is what we call him - and his 20 year round trip to the Trojan War and back home.

Neil: More importantly, it's also about his wife, Penelope because she's the one who stayed at home. You'll meet them both in a moment.

Caroline: But first, we must introduce our narrator, who, since she cannot be with us today, we have recorded. Lorna are you there?

Narrator: Yes, Hi everybody, I'm here. Your friendly guide and absent host. I'm in Scotland as you're hearing this – my ancestral home – although I live in Abbey, but – as you can probably tell from my accent - I'm from the USA, New York City to be exact. So even though I've come home, I'm also a long way from home. But enough about me! To the big questions: where is home? What is home? What does it all mean? Start us off guys....

Each of the actors speaks a line in turn:

Caroline: Home is a place of laughter and tears. Home is family far or near.

Beth: Home is a box to store your life in

Neil: Home is the North, we like to get the beers in!

Alfie: Home is Hemsby down by the sea

Beth: Home to me means stability

Caroline: Home is bridges over the Cam

Alfie: Home could be in a far away land

Caroline: Home is the safe place under lock and key

Neil: Home is not the worst place for anyone to be.

Beth: Home is where your love lies

Alfie: Home is my bubble

Neil: Home was nowhere, was chaos, was trouble

Caroline: Home is not infested or falling apart

Alfie: Home is not very happy, dingy and dark

Neil: Home is where the kitchen is, where you can carve with a knife

Beth: Home is where my heart is

Caroline: Home is my life

Beth: Home is where Penelope is. Penelope is our main character. Her home is in a place called Ithaca.

Alfie: Hang on a second. Odysseus is our main character

Beth: Who is Odysseus?

Alfie: Who is Penelope?

Oddy: Penelope is my wife!

Penelope: Odysseus is my husband! And he has been away from home, 'at war', for 20 years!

Oddy: She's right about that.

Penelope: While I've been stuck at home in Ithaca! I've brought up my son, Telemachus – come here Macca – all by myself, ALL the time fending off the attentions of other men. 108 in all! And counting. Still, it's good to know I'm still attractive... but it's not easy! To be faithful to the man I married. I don't even know if he's alive or dead. So, you may be wondering, have I been faithful? Have I let one of those 108 strapping, eligible bachelors into my bed? Well.....that is my secret. Just do not judge me, that is all I ask.

Oddy: And I, Odysseus, have fought bravely in the Trojan War. The wooden horse?
[PICTURE OF WOODEN HORSE ON SCREEN] That was my idea. Leaving it as a gift for the Trojans, filled with Greek soldiers. Once they'd brought it into the city, out we came and...well, we did what soldiers do. Put it this way, no Trojan will be telling their side of the story! I was sick of it after that, all that killing, so now I'm a global salesman – I sell globes,

whole worlds, to earn my Caroline journey back home to Ithaca where lives my beauty, my own, my ever-faithful Penelope.

Narrator: So there we have it – 2 people trying to get back to each other, across time, across the world. Penelope has a friend, known only as Spinner. Spinner knows more than she lets on. Trouble is, she’s always happy to share that knowledge with anyone who’ll listen. Knowledge such as...

Spinner: Why it’s taking Oddy – as he’s affectionately known – such a long time to get home. Could it be that he’s not having a lot of luck with selling globes?

Oddy: [Singing] “She’s a canny lass, she’s a bonny lass, and she likes her beer. And her name is Penelope and I wish she was here”. Globe for sale! Get your world here! Round as your eyeballs! Shows all the undiscovered lands!

Spinner: Until, one morning he knocks at the door of one Lucille Calypso – though not rich, she lives alone on her island. He catches her at a particularly lonely time...

Calypso: Another salesman? What now? More stuff of the back of a wooden horse?

Oddy: Madam, may I interest you in a world?

Calypso: [THINKS FOR A SECOND] You certainly may. But you’ll have to come into my world first **[PULLS HIM INSIDE]**

Narrator: What went on behind that door, we’ll never know, but he stayed 7 years. **(6 FREEZE FRAMES OF LIFE TOGETHER)** Then Oddy got the itch to leave. Did he ‘suddenly’ remember Penelope? **[ODYSSEUS LEAVES, TIPTOEING AWAY SINGING CUSHIE BUTTERFIELD VERY QUIETLY]**. Calypso not ideal enough for him? And Calypso. What was she after? What broken heart did he leave behind? We might never have known but luckily, the local TV channel did a special interview with her for their daytime show “Celebrity Deadbeat Homebusters”

Reporter 1 (Alfie): Miss Calypso, Miss Calypso, how do you feel?

Reporter 2 (Danni): What do you miss most about Oddy?

Calypso: Hah, good news travels fast. What do I miss? How do I feel?

Reporter 1: Yeh, feel.

Reporter 2: Miss, yeh.

Calypso: Your camera rolling?

Reporter 2: 15 million viewers Miss Calypso

Reporter 1: Live!

Reporter 2: So, what do you miss? How do you feel? How sad ARE you? Just turn a little bit more from the camera. **[To the invisible camera man]** Hey! Make sure you get my young side!

Calypso: Live, you say?

Reporter 2: And direct Miss Calypso!

Calypso: Well let me tell your audience exactly what I feel, what I miss.

Reporter 1: [To audience] This is gonna be juicy!

Calypso: Just his hope. We both thought it was perfect. An island. The two of us. My beach. The perfect home. Laying in. Happy. And being in love.

Reporter 2: And what were you hoping?

Calypso: To be married – what do you think? That I was doing it for fun? .

Reporter 1: And?

Calypso: It was me who tried to make it work. I even said I'd get a boob Carolineb if he wanted.

Reporter 2: Er, Miss Calypso, please, this is a family show. Tell us about your future

Calypso: This is still my island. This is home. Yes, I'm sad he's gone, but I'm not going to cry for your camera.

Reporter 2: Not even a few tears Miss Calypso?

Calypso: Not even a hint of a tear. I'm not going to spend my life yearning for him. Let him sail off to his Mrs, whoever, wherever she is. Now I'm going for a swim, and your viewers can dream of my future family, my 2.4 children, and bedtimes, being happy, sleeping peacefully, cuddling up, happy. That's it.

Reporter 1: That's it Miss Calypso?!

Reporter 2: One more question, please Miss Calypso -

Calypso: No, no more questions. Safe Carolineurney Oddy! **[She leaves]**

Reporter 1: I'm David Sly

Reporter 2: And I'm Hugh Wiley

Together: And this has been “Celebrity Deadbeat Homebusters”. Goodbye

Narrator: While Calypso bids farewell to Oddy, let us return to Penny – as she likes to be known – and her ‘friend’, Spinner.

Spinner: ‘ No I haven’t heard anything sweetheart, not a sausage – it’s terrible, him being gone so long, not a word, not even if he’s alive or dead’

Penelope: ‘He must have the world on his shoulders, I shouldn’t imagine. If he’s even –’

Spinner: ‘Don’t say it! Don’t even think it!’

Narrator: But Penelope couldn’t help it. 108 strapping young eligible bachelors, day after day, pleading with her to give up Oddy as dead, it was hard to resist. She devised a cunning plan to keep them at bay (*Penelope starts to finger knit*)

Penelope: If my husband is dead, then he must be buried. I will marry again when I’ve finished knitting his funeral shroud.

Narrator: And so, by day, she knitted, and she knitted and she knitted. (*Penelope knits*). Then, at night, while the 108 suitors slept, she unravelled what she’d knitted. And it was at night, at her most deceptive, that she could also be most truly herself, and let her mind run to what she most wanted:...

Penelope:

My sleep

My bed

Where I dream

In my head

My kitchen

My coffee

My breakfast

My ciggy

My clothes

My hair

My lippy

My pretty

My dog

Her hair

My Henry

Get it clear

Myself

My art
Displays
From my heart

My garden
My land
My fingers +
Green hand

My front door
Under lock and key
Safe as my house
Perfect for me

Narrator: This helped her forget the nightmares, her anger, the loneliness of her own house. Spinner would tell her how she saw Odysseus in rough seas, high mountains, border guards stealing, threatening and shooting. Of one-eyed monsters, the Cyclops, who ate sea farers alive. **[Spinner and others acting out story with gestures]** She talked of six-headed wild dogs, of whirlpools, of beautiful songs tempting Oddy towards the clashing rocks. She talked of the thousands of others she saw on the seas, fleeing homes, running for their lives, of the live and the dead washing up on beaches. Thousands upon thousands, out of nowhere.

Penny: Stop! You think your stories help? I don't care about all those others, their boats, their dinghies and wars. I just want him, my Oddy.

Spinner: But angel, I'm only saying what I see

Penny: Well, see something else!

Spinner: Have you finished your shroud? They've caught on, you know. They've seen you at night, unravelling. They don't like to be deceived. They think you need teaching a lesson.

Penny: So let them come. What do they know to teach? They're scroungers, eating my food, ruining my garden, leaving their rubbish everywhere.

Spinner: You need to decide Penny

Penny: Some friend, you. Go entertain someone else with your stories! **[Spinner leaves]**

Narrator: So Penny found herself now truly alone with the eyes of 108 men watching her unravel one last time. The game was up. But one man stood out from the crowd – we won't name him. It's enough to say that he was different from all of the others. It's enough to say that the night passed. Remember, she asked you not to judge her. Meanwhile, Oddy was fighting his way back towards home, but was picked up by the authorities and **[FREEZE FRAMES]** arrested for illegal migration. Fingerprinted and processed, he was deported and

dropped in the dead of night on Ithaca's shores. He had nothing - all his globes lost at sea or given away as bribes, he looked more like a beggar rather than king of his castle. He made his way towards home.

Nobody saw it coming. Not even Spinner who saw more than most. But it happened. As the morning sun shone, Penny was finishing her night's unravelling, when she saw this old homeless man walking up the path...

[They walk slowly towards each other from opposite ends of the space. They circle each other and meet face to face].

Penny: My husband?

Oddy: My wife?

Tele: My father?

Oddy: My son?

Penny: My husband.

Oddy: My wife.

Tele: My father.

Oddy: My son.

Penny: Your son!

Oddy: My wife!

Penny: My husband!

Oddy: My home.

Penny: Our home

Oddy: These people?

Penny: Er... guests

[ODYSSEUS LOOKS AROUND AT THE AUDIENCE]

Oddy: Guests? Strangers? They must leave.

Penny: But they've –

Oddy: I said LEAVE!! What have they done?

Penny: Eaten, drank, slept

Oddy: Here? In my house?

Penny: Here. In our house.

Oddy: And you? What have you done?

Penny: I knitted, I unravelled, I knitted, I unravelled.

Oddy: Clever.

Penny: Every day and every night.

Oddy: You're clever

Penny: I kept a light burning every day

Oddy: For who?

Penny: For you. See? **[She shows him the lantern]**

Oddy: And it never went out?

PENELOPE IS SILENT

Oddy: Did you ever let it go out?

Penny: One time.

Oddy: One time too many.

Penny: In twenty years

Oddy: Who?

PENELOPE IS SILENT.

Oddy: Tell me.

Spinner: You need to decide Penny. Whose home is this?

Oddy: This is my home. I'm the hero. She's my wife. That's my bed. Simple!

SILENCE

Penny: Yes, your bed Odysseus. The very one you made, but never slept in. Yes, you're back. But nothing can ever be home again here.

Oddy: I kept you in my dreams. It was the only way I could get home

Penny: And I kept you in mine. But to see what you've become. Your prize? Your trophy? No. This is a house I must leave. My home is elsewhere. So I free myself of you. Of your walls and doors and carpets.

Penny begins to walk away from Oddy, Carolineining Spinner, walking backwards away from him.

Spinner: Of your windows, curtains and gardens. Your kitchens, bedrooms and bathrooms

Penny: I free myself of waiting. Home? I don't know where it is anymore. But if I close my eyes I'm there, it's perfect. Goodbye Odysseus. Close your eyes.

Tele: Close my eyes. Home is heaven.

Spinner: - I see myself in New York

Penny: – or Spain....the Med! Or Amsterdam, shiny, happy people in Amsterdam

Calypso: Driving a Cadillac, up and down 5th avenue

Penny: If I just close my eyes. Can you see it Spinner?

Spinner: Lines in the air, like a spider's web... 2.4 kids....

Penny: how can you have .4 of a kid?

Spinner: It's just an average. It's my perfect.

Penny: Close your eyes.

Spinner: We're spinning

Odysseus: Penelope! My wife!

Penelope: I'll always be your wife – in every story they tell, I'll always be your wife. Close your eyes Odysseus.

[He closes his eyes]

Odysseus: Close your eyes Telemachus

Tele: Close my eyes. I'll have kids one day. I'll look after them, wherever I am, that's my promise to the future – I WILL look after the children. Close my eyes.

Spinner: (To audience) Close your eyes...close your eyes...

Music fills the space as Penny & Spinner get further away from Oddy, with Telemachus in the middle. Lights go down slowly.

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