

**The Trojan War and Its Aftermath:
Four Epic Poems**



Homer's *Iliad*

Quintus of Smyrna's *Posthomerica*

Homer's *Odyssey*

Virgil's *Aeneid*

David Bruce

The Trojan War and Its Aftermath: Four Epic Poems

David Bruce

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THE TROJAN WAR AND ITS AFTERMATH: FOUR EPIC POEMS

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Table of Contents

The Trojan War and Its Aftermath: Four Epic Poems.....	1
Chapter 1: The Rage of Achilles and the Quarrel by the Ships (Iliad)	4
Chapter 2: Agamemnon's Dream and the Great Gathering of Armies (Iliad).....	18
Chapter 3: Helen Reviews the Greek Champions (Iliad)	30
Chapter 4: A Truce and a Battle (Iliad)	41
Chapter 5: Diomedes Battles the Gods (Iliad)	48
Chapter 6: Hector Returns to Troy and Andromache (Iliad)	59
Chapter 7: A Duel with Hector (Iliad)	67
Chapter 8: The Tide of Battle Turns in the Trojans' Favor (Iliad)	73
Chapter 9: Peace Offerings to Achilles (Iliad)	80
Chapter 10: A Night Raid (Iliad)	92
Chapter 11: Agamemnon has a Day of Glory, but the Greeks Face Disaster (Iliad)	100
Chapter 12: The Trojans Storm the Barricade (Iliad).....	111
Chapter 13: The Trojans Attack the Ships (Iliad)	118
Chapter 14: Hera Deceives Zeus (Iliad).....	128
Chapter 15: The Battle at the Ships (Iliad).....	135
Chapter 16: Patroclus Fights and Dies (Iliad).....	144
Chapter 17: The Fight Over Patroclus' Corpse (Iliad).....	155
Chapter 18: The Shield and Weapons of Achilles (Iliad)	165
Chapter 19: Achilles Arms for Battle (Iliad)	173
Chapter 20: Achilles Returns to Battle (Iliad)	180
Chapter 21: Achilles Fights the River (Iliad)	187
Chapter 22: Hector Fights Achilles (Iliad).....	196
Chapter 23: Funeral Games for Patroclus (Iliad)	204
Chapter 24: Achilles and Priam (Iliad)	216
Chapter 1: The Story of Penthesilea (Posthomerica).....	228
Chapter 2: The Story of Memnon (Posthomerica)	239
Chapter 3: The Death of Achilles (Posthomerica).....	247
Chapter 4: The Funeral Games to Honor Achilles (Posthomerica)	256
Chapter 5: The Madness of Great Ajax (Posthomerica)	263
Chapter 6: Eurypylus Comes to Troy (Posthomerica)	273
Chapter 7: Neoptolemus Comes to Troy (Posthomerica).....	284
Chapter 8: The Death of Eurypylus (Posthomerica)	291
Chapter 9: The Return of Philoctetes (Posthomerica).....	296
Chapter 10: The Death of Paris (Posthomerica).....	302

Chapter 11: Battles (Posthomerica)	308
Chapter 12: The Trojan Horse (Posthomerica)	313
Chapter 13: The Fall of Troy (Posthomerica).....	320
Chapter 14: The Departure for Greece (Posthomerica)	326
Chapter 1: Athena and Telemachus (Odyssey).....	333
Chapter 2: Telemachus Calls a Council and Sets Sail (Odyssey)	339
Chapter 3: Telemachus and King Nestor (Odyssey).....	344
Chapter 4: Telemachus, King Menelaus, and Helen (Odyssey)	348
Chapter 5: Odysseus and Calypso (Odyssey).....	356
Chapter 6: Odysseus and Nausicaa (Odyssey)	361
Chapter 7: Odysseus and the Phaeacians (Odyssey).....	366
Chapter 8: Entertainment Among the Phaeacians (Odyssey)	369
Chapter 9: Odysseus and the Cyclops (Odyssey)	375
Chapter 10: Odysseus and Circe (Odyssey)	380
Chapter 11: Odysseus in the Land of the Dead (Odyssey)	384
Chapter 12: Odysseus and the Cattle of the Sun-god (Odyssey).....	390
Chapter 13: Odysseus Arrives on Ithaca (Odyssey).....	394
Chapter 14: Odysseus and the Loyal Swineherd (Odyssey).....	399
Chapter 15: Telemachus Returns to Ithaca (Odyssey)	404
Chapter 16: Odysseus and Telemachus (Odyssey).....	409
Chapter 17: Odysseus Enters His Palace (Odyssey)	415
Chapter 18: Odysseus in His Palace (Odyssey)	423
Chapter 19: Odysseus and Penelope (Odyssey)	428
Chapter 20: Deadly Omens for the Suitors (Odyssey)	433
Chapter 21: Odysseus and the Archery Contest (Odyssey)	438
Chapter 22: The Battle in the Great Hall (Odyssey)	443
Chapter 23: The Bed of Penelope and Odysseus (Odyssey)	449
Chapter 24: Peace at Last (Odyssey)	454
Chapter 1: Arrival at Carthage (Aeneid)	460
Chapter 2: The Fall of Troy (Aeneid).....	472
Chapter 3: Wanderings (Aeneid).....	486
Chapter 4: The Passion of Dido (Aeneid).....	496
Chapter 5: Funeral Games and Fire (Aeneid)	509
Chapter 6: The Land of the Dead (Aeneid)	520
Chapter 7: A Fury and Warriors (Aeneid)	538
Chapter 8: Allies and a Shield (Aeneid).....	549

Chapter 9: Battles by Night and by Day (Aeneid)	562
Chapter 10: Deaths of Loved Ones in Battle (Aeneid).....	574
Chapter 11: Camilla and Other Warriors (Aeneid)	589
Chapter 12: A Destiny Fulfilled (Aeneid)	602
Appendix A: Important Terms	615
Appendix B: Background Information.....	619
Appendix C: About the Author.....	633
Appendix D: Some Books by David Bruce.....	634

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In these retellings, as in all my retellings, I have tried to make the work of literature accessible to modern readers who may lack the knowledge about mythology, religion, and history that the literary work's contemporary audience had.

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HOMER'S ILLIAD: A RETELLING IN PROSE

A Note (Iliad)

Some terms such as *kleos* and *time* are important in understanding the *Iliad*. They are explained in the epic poem, but they are also explained here for easy reference.

At the end of these epic poems is a section titled "Appendix B: Background Information."

***Aristeia* (a-ris-STAY-a):**

A warrior's period of excellence in battle.

Human Condition:

Humans are mortal; we will die someday.

***Kleos*:**

Glory or fame or reputation.

Kleos is reputation. It is what people say about you after you are dead. Early in the *Iliad*, Achilles is very interested in his *kleos*.

Kleos is important because it is the only kind of meaningful immortality that ancient Greek society has. This society believes in a kind of afterlife, but it is insubstantial. Souls go down to the Land of the Dead, but there they have no meaningful kind of afterlife. In some accounts of the afterlife in the Land of the Dead, souls don't know who they are until they have a drink of blood. At that time, they regain their memory and are able to converse with other souls. Without the drink of blood, they are like gibbering bats.

According to classics scholar Elizabeth Vandiver, *kleos* can be translated as glory or fame or, sometimes, reputation. What it literally means is what other people say about you, what is spoken aloud about you (*The Iliad of Homer* 45).

***Kleos Aphthiton*:**

Undying *kleos* or imperishable glory. Undying glory, reputation, and fame.

***Kredemna*:**

1) The veil and headdress of a married woman. 2) The ramparts and battlements of a city.

***Menis*:**

Anger (used of a god and of Achilles).

***Moirai*:**

Fate. Share or portion or lot of life.

***Timê* (TEE-MAY):**

Timê is gifts of honor. After a city has been captured, what is inside the city is given out as gifts of honor. If a warrior has fought bravely, that warrior will get *timê*. An important kind of *timê* is a *geras* or spear-bride or sex-slave. *Timê* is the physical expression of honor; *timê* can take the form of booty, gifts, or a particular prize (*geras*).

In the *Iliad*, *kleos* and *timê* are related. The more *timê* a warrior has, the more *kleos* the warrior has. Achilles is upset when Agamemnon takes away his *geras* because Agamemnon is taking away his *timê* and therefore is taking away his *kleos*. At this time Achilles values *kleos* more than anything else in the world. Achilles — early in the *Iliad* — is willing to give up his life in order to have *kleos*.

Xenia:

The guest-host relationship. Civilized people of the ancient world followed rules of hospitality. Uncivilized people (and other beings) did not. This is an odd phrase, and we don't have exactly that concept in our culture. In ancient Greece, no inns, motels, or hotels existed. If you traveled, you would stay with a family. You would knock on the door of a house and ask for hospitality. The residents of the house, if they observed *xenia*, would let you stay with them. They would feed you, give you a place to sleep, and offer you water for bathing or washing. As the guest, you of course would not murder your host or run away with your host's wife. Instead, you would entertain your hosts by giving them news and telling them of your travels. The Trojan War started because of a breach of *xenia*. Paris, prince of Troy, stayed with Menelaus, King of Sparta, and ran away with his wife, Helen, the most beautiful woman in the world. *Xenia* was taken seriously in the ancient world. Zeus was Zeus *Xenios*, Zeus the god of *Xenia*. He often punished people who did not respect the protocols of *xenia*.

Chapter 1: The Rage of Achilles and the Quarrel by the Ships (Iliad)

Rage.

Goddess, use me to tell the story of the rage of Achilles, a Greek warrior who had the rage of a god. The rage of the son of Peleus made corpses of many men and sent their souls to the Land of the Dead. Dogs and birds feasted on warriors' flesh, all because of Achilles and the will of Zeus, king of gods and men.

Start telling the story, Muse, from the time when Achilles, the greatest warrior of the Greeks, and Agamemnon, the leader of the Greek forces against Troy, first quarreled by the Greek ships.

The actions of a god led them to quarrel. Apollo, Zeus' son, raged against Agamemnon and spread the plague throughout the Greek warriors. Many brave warriors died because Agamemnon had disrespected a priest of Apollo, the god of plague.

Chryses, the priest of Apollo, loved his daughter, whom the Greeks had captured when they conquered the city of Thebe, which was allied with Troy. To get his daughter back, he gathered shining treasure with which to ransom her. He took his shining treasure to the Greek ships while carrying a golden staff on which Apollo's wreaths were tied, clearly identifying Chryses as a priest of Apollo.

He did everything as he ought to have done. He begged the Greek warriors, and especially Agamemnon and his brother, Menelaus, to accept the shining treasure and give him back his daughter, Chryseis.

He said, respectfully, "Agamemnon, Menelaus, and all you Greek warriors! May Zeus and all the other gods of Mount Olympus allow you to conquer the city of Troy and sail safely home again! But set my beloved daughter free. I love her so much. Take this shining treasure as fair ransom for my daughter! I am the priest of Apollo — respect the archer god who is also the god of plague."

The ranks of the Greek warriors approved of the ransom; they shouted, "Respect the priest of Apollo! Respect the suppliant! Respect the old man! Accept the ransom!"

But Agamemnon would not.

He told the old father and priest, "Don't let me see you among the Greek ships. Leave immediately and don't come back. Even if you are a priest of Apollo, I will kill you. I won't give your daughter back to you. She will die of old age back in the city of Mycenae. She will die far from the land where she was born and raised. She will work as a slave weaving cloth, and I will force her to sleep with me. Leave immediately, or die!"

The old priest of Apollo was afraid and left. He turned and quietly went down to the shore. When he was a safe distance from Agamemnon, he prayed to Apollo, god of archery and of plague: “Hear me, Apollo. You are the god of the silver bow, and you walk in my city: Chryse. If I have ever built shrines for you, if I have ever sacrificed cattle to you and burned fat and bones on your altar, hear my prayer and answer it: Kill many Greek warriors. I have shed tears — now you shoot arrows!”

The prayer traveled in the air, and the archer god heard it on Mount Olympus. Gods have that power. Angry at how his priest had been treated, Apollo stormed from Olympus, traveling quickly to the Greek ships. His quiver was full of arrows. When he reached the Greek ships, he dropped to one knee and started shooting arrows. With each shot of an arrow, something or someone died.

First, Apollo shot at and killed mules and dogs, but then he started aiming at warriors, and they died of the plague. The Greeks burned the corpses of the dead warriors, and the corpse-fires stayed lit all day and all night.

Apollo was angry at Agamemnon, but other Greek warriors were the ones who died. Such is the anger of the gods.

For nine days, the plague killed many, many Greek warriors. On the tenth day, Achilles — the greatest warrior among the Greeks and the greatest warrior among all who fought at Troy — did what Agamemnon should have done and called a council to see how to stop the plague.

When everyone, including Agamemnon and Menelaus and the other kings of Greece who had come to wage war against Troy, had gathered, Achilles said, “Agamemnon, things are going badly. Unless we can figure out how to stop this plague, we might as well sail back home to Greece — or we will also die of the plague before we can set sail. The war and the plague are killing so many Greeks.

“But a prophet may know why the plague has come and what we can do to stop it. A prophet may know why Apollo has sent a plague to kill us. Perhaps we have not honored a vow we made to the god, or perhaps we need to make a sacrifice to him. Perhaps if we sacrifice lambs and goats to Apollo, the archer god may have mercy on us and take this plague away from us.”

Achilles spoke sensible words.

Calchas, the Greeks’ chief prophet, was a seer who can look at the flight of birds and interpret the will of the gods. A wise man, he knew the past, the present, and the future. He had let the Greeks know what they had to do in order to sail safely to Troy to make war. Apollo is also the god of prophecy, and Apollo had blessed Calchas with special sight.

Calchas wanted what was best for the Greek warriors. He said, “Achilles, the great god Zeus knows and respects you. You want me to say why this plague has come against us? You want me

to explain why Apollo is angry at us? I can and will explain these things, but first swear to protect me.

“If I explain why Apollo is angry at us, I will make angry a powerful man among us. This powerful man gives orders that must be obeyed. This man is a powerful king. When a powerful man is angry at a man who is not powerful, the powerful man will win. Even if the powerful man is able to choke down his rage today, he will get his revenge later. Achilles, will you protect me against this powerful man?”

Achilles replied, “Yes. Have courage. Tell us why Apollo is angry at us. I swear by Apollo that I will protect you against anyone who becomes angry at you. No one will harm you. I swear that I will not allow even Agamemnon — who claims to be the best of all the Greeks — to harm you.”

Reassured by Achilles’ words, Calchas said, “Apollo is not angry at us because of a lack of sacrifice or a vow that we failed to fulfill. Instead, the god is angry because of the actions of Agamemnon. The priest of Apollo acted correctly when he tried to ransom his daughter, but Agamemnon disrespected the old priest. Agamemnon should have respected the old priest and the god — Apollo — he serves. Now, because of Agamemnon’s disrespect to him, Apollo shoots his arrows at us and kills us with plague. The deaths will not stop until we give the old priest his daughter — without taking shining treasure as ransom. She must be given back to her father with no price paid for her freedom. Both she and a hundred bulls need to be sent to the city of Chryse; the bulls must be sacrificed to Apollo. Only then will Apollo be appeased and stop the killing.”

Powerful Agamemnon, as Calchas had foreseen, was furious. He turned to Calchas and said, “You are a seer of misery. All you forecast is bad. With you, nothing is ever good news. Every prophecy is about disaster. This prophecy is more of the same. Why is Apollo angry at us? You say that it is because of me, because I refused to accept shining ransom for the priest’s daughter.

“It is true that I much prefer having the girl to having the treasure. I want her to be a slave in my house in the city of Mycenae. I value her more than I value Clytemnestra, my own lawfully wedded wife. The girl’s beauty, upbringing, mind, and skill in crafts are equal to Clytemnestra’s.

“Still, I am willing to return the girl to her father. That will be the best for all of us. Better than to have Greek warriors continue to die of the plague.

“She is the girl I won. Whenever we conquer a city, we gather the treasure, the cattle, and the women and children of the city, and we award them to the warriors who conquered the city. Each main warrior receives a prize of honor in recognition of that warrior’s strength in battle and leadership.

“But now my prize of honor is taken from me! I need a prize of honor to take her place. So give me another prize of honor, or I alone of all the Greek warriors will be without a prize. That would disgrace me. All of you know that my prize of honor is being taken away from me.”

Achilles replied to Agamemnon, “You are a great general, Agamemnon, but how can we give you a prize of honor now? If you were to cause that to happen, you would be the greediest man alive.

“We have no treasure, no cattle, no women, and no children to give as prizes of honor. All of those things have been awarded to warriors who deserve them. We have no prizes of honor that we can now award. Nothing is left to be awarded. For you to call back prizes of honor would be a deadly insult to your warriors.

“So give the girl back to her father, the old priest. We will pay you back for what you have lost. When we conquer Troy, we will give you three or four times what you lose today. Your loss of a prize of honor will be only temporary.”

Such words were wise, but Agamemnon’s response was not.

Agamemnon said to Achilles, “You are a brave man, and you are like a god, but I will not allow you to cheat me. You want to keep your own prize of honor while I go without one. Am I someone to be empty-handed? Am I someone to be without a prize of honor? No.

“If the Greek warriors will willingly give me a prize of honor, well and good. But if they won’t, I will take one without their and your consent.

“Maybe I will take your prize of honor. You are the greatest Greek warrior.

“Maybe I will take Great Ajax’ prize of honor. He is the second greatest Greek warrior.

“Maybe I will take Odysseus’ prize of honor. He is a master of rhetoric and a man of action.

“I am greater than any of you, and I will NOT go without a prize of honor. Anyone whose prize of honor I take can choke with rage, but I will still take his prize of honor.

“But enough for now. We can talk about this later. Right now, we have business to take care of. Let’s haul a ship from shore into the water, get oarsmen ready, and load the ship with cattle and with beautiful Chryseis, who was my prize of honor. A person of authority — Great Ajax, Idomeneus from Crete, Odysseus, or even you, Achilles — as violent as you are — can sail the ship to Chryses, give Chryseis to her father, perform the sacrifice, and appease Apollo.”

But Achilles was angry — Agamemnon had threatened to take his prize of honor.

Achilles — a man without tact — said to Agamemnon, “You are both shameless and greedy. Why should a Greek warrior obey your orders? Why should a Greek warrior do your errands? Why should a Greek warrior fight for you? I should not and will not.

“We are here to fight the Trojans, but the Trojans have never done anything to *me*. The Trojans did not steal *my* cattle. The Trojans did not steal *my* horses. The Trojans did not harm the crops in *my* fields.

“You and Menelaus — the sons of Atreus — have a quarrel with the Trojans. We other Greek warriors are fighting *your* fight — you dog. Paris took Helen away from Menelaus, and we are fighting to get back the honor of the House of Atreus.

“But do you care that we are dying and fighting for you? This is not the way to show it. You lack intelligence. You lack prudence. You don’t think ahead. You don’t consider the consequences of your actions.

“You are planning an act of outrage. You are threatening to take from me my prize of honor. I fought hard, and I was awarded a prize of honor because I fought hard.

“A good leader should reward his men. I fight hard — harder than you — but your prizes are greater than mine. Whenever we sack a city allied to Troy, I fight harder than anyone and I wreak the most damage, but you get loaded down with prizes of honor and I get something small, exhausted as I am from fighting.

“I won’t take it anymore! I will sail back home to my own country: Phthia. It is better to sail home than to stay here and be insulted by you despite all that I have done to make you richer.”

Agamemnon was also angry. He said to Achilles, “If you want to go home, then go home. Be a deserter. I will not beg you to stay and fight. Other warriors are here to fight, and Zeus, the king of gods and men, will know that I am in the right. I hate you the most of all the Greek warriors battling before Troy.

“You love battles, and you love war. You are a great warrior, but so what? Did you earn it? No. It’s simply a god’s gift to you. So go back home to Phthia and take your Myrmidons — your soldiers — with you. I don’t value you or respect your anger.

“But I will say this. I have lost my prize of honor — Apollo has taken her from me. To make up for my loss, I am going to take your prize of honor from you. Face-to-face with you at your tents, I will take your prize of honor — Briseis — from you. That way, you will know that I am more powerful than you are. And so will all Greek warriors who seek to challenge me.”

Achilles was furious. Hanging at his side was a long sword in a scabbard. He put his hand on its grip and started to draw it from its scabbard.

But the gods were watching from Mount Olympus. Hera, the wife of Zeus, did not want Achilles to kill Agamemnon. Neither did Athena, the daughter of Zeus, but not by Hera. Hera and Athena wanted Troy to fall, and if Achilles were to kill Agamemnon, the war of Troy would end and the Greeks would sail back home. The Trojans would be triumphant.

Hera, who was watching the quarrel from Mount Olympus, sent Athena to appear before Achilles and order him not to kill Agamemnon. Athena sped down from Olympus and grabbed Achilles’ hair. No mortal but Achilles saw or heard her. Gods have that power.

Achilles knew the fiery-eyed goddess Athena at once and said to her, “Why have you come to me now? Do you want to witness Agamemnon insulting me? I tell you now — he is going to pay for his insult to me!”

Athena replied, “I have come from Olympus to stop you from killing Agamemnon. Hera sent me. She cares for both you and Agamemnon — you are warriors who fight the Trojans. Don’t

draw your sword. Don't kill Agamemnon. Do tell him that he will suffer and pay for what he has done. I am a goddess, and I know the future. Soon, brilliant gifts will be brought to you — worth three times what you have lost today. The gifts will be the payment for Agamemnon's insult to you. Do not kill Agamemnon. Obey both Hera and me."

Achilles respected the two goddesses. He said to Athena, "I will obey. I must. When you two goddesses give commands, a mortal man must obey them no matter how angry he is. It is the best thing to do. Gods hear the prayers of a mortal man who obeys their commands."

Achilles pushed his sword back in its scabbard. Athena flew back to Mount Olympus. Gods have that power.

But Achilles spoke again to Agamemnon, "You drink until you stagger, you have the eyes of a dog, you have the heart of a fawn, you lack courage in battle. When it is time for the best Greek warriors to ambush the Trojans, you are not present because you know how dangerous it is. Rather than fight and earn a prize of honor at the risk of losing your life, you find it safer to stay in your well-guarded camp and take the prize of honor of a warrior who fought well and who earned it but who dares to criticize you. You feed on your own people, as worthless as they are. If they were not worthless, they would not let your outrage of today stand and would not allow you to commit any new outrages.

"I swear an oath upon the scepter I hold. It is wooden, and never again will leaves sprout from it. In councils, whoever holds the scepter can speak. I swear that someday you will regret what you have done today. I swear that soon you and your warriors will want me to fight again for you. For without me fighting on your side, Hector — the greatest warrior of the Trojans — will kill and kill again. Then you will regret what you have done today. Then you will regret having disgraced me — the greatest warrior of the Greeks!"

Achilles threw the scepter on the ground. Agamemnon glared at him.

Nestor, the king of Pylos, was an old man and the wisest of the Greeks. He knew how to use rhetoric; he could speak persuasively. He said, "No more quarreling. If you continue to quarrel, great misery for the Greeks will be the result. Think of how the Trojans would rejoice if they heard you two quarreling. Priam — the King of Troy — and his sons would rejoice, as would all the Trojans. You two are the best of the Greeks: the best in our councils, and the best on the fields of battle.

"Stop quarrelling. Please. Listen to me. I am older than you, and I have more experience than you. I have known better men than you, and they were my colleagues and respected me. They were excellent men: Pirithous, Dryas, Caeneus, Exadius, Polyphemos, and Theseus.

"These men were strong, and they fought the half-man, half-horse Centaurs, who were wild and lived in the mountains. These strong men hacked down the Centaurs. I was a young man then, far away from my home in Pylos. They had sought me and enlisted me in their team. I

fought, and fought well. These strong men were fighters whom no man of today could beat, but they listened to my words when I spoke up in councils.

“Now you should also listen to me. Sometimes, compromise is the best course of action. Agamemnon, don’t take Briseis, Achilles’ prize of honor. We warriors awarded her to Achilles, so let Achilles keep her. She belongs to him.

“Achilles, don’t quarrel with Agamemnon, the leader of the Greek forces. He is the main Greek king before Troy, and he is the most powerful. Zeus, the king of gods and men, has given Agamemnon much glory. Achilles, you have a goddess for a mother, and you are the most physically strong of all the Greeks, but Agamemnon is more powerful than you are because he brought more warriors to Troy than you did and because he is the leader of the Greek forces against Troy.

“Agamemnon, stop being angry at Achilles. Listen to me — I am an old man. Achilles is the greatest Greek warrior. Don’t disrespect a man who fights well for you!”

Nestor spoke wise words, but Agamemnon’s words in reply were only partially wise.

Agamemnon said, “Everything that you say is wise, Nestor, but Achilles wants more respect than he deserves. He wishes to be the leader here. He wishes to give everyone orders and have his orders obeyed. But I will never allow that to happen. The gods have made him a great spearman, but that does not entitle him to abuse me, although he may think that.”

Achilles’ words were not wise: “Yes, I do think that. If I submitted to your orders, I would be worthless and cowardly. Give other people orders, not me! I will never again yield to your orders.

“But I will not fight for Briseis. I will not fight you. The Greek warriors gave me Briseis, but now you, Agamemnon, are taking back my prize of honor. So be it. But everything else at my ship is mine. If you try to take any of it, Agamemnon, you will die. If you doubt me, just try to take something of mine. My spear will be in your body, and your blood will gush out!”

The quarrel of words ended, but the bad feelings continued. The council broke up, and Achilles returned to his camp and his best friend, Patroclus.

Meanwhile, Agamemnon prepared to send a ship to Chryses so the god Apollo would be appeased. He ordered men to drag a ship into the sea. He picked out twenty oarsmen to be the crew of the ship. He ordered one hundred bulls to be put on board the ship. He led Chryseis to the ship. Odysseus, ever competent, captained the ship. It sailed to the city of Chryse.

Agamemnon’s men washed themselves in the sea to clean and purify themselves after being around the plague so long, and they sacrificed to the gods.

Agamemnon could have decided not to follow through on his threat to take Briseis away from Achilles. Agamemnon could have taken the advice of Nestor. Agamemnon could have restrained his anger.

But he did not.

Agamemnon called his two heralds, Talthibius and Eurybates, to him and said, “You two go to the camp of Achilles and get his prize of honor, Bryseis, and bring her to me. If Achilles will not give her up, I will go to the camp of Achilles myself — with an army of warriors — and take her.”

Reluctantly, the two heralds obeyed. They reached the camp of Achilles and found him. He was grim, but he was not murderous. He looked at the two heralds, and they were afraid and said nothing, but just stood in his camp.

But Achilles was courteous to them, saying, “Welcome! I am angry at Agamemnon, not at you, so come closer. You have not treated me badly, as Agamemnon has.

“Agamemnon sent you to get Bryseis, and you shall have her. Patroclus, my friend, bring out Bryseis, and give her to these two heralds.

“But, heralds, listen to my words. Agamemnon shall need me one day to keep death away from his men. Agamemnon is a man who forgets what I have done in the past and what I can do in the future. He does not know what he needs to do to keep his warriors safe.”

Patroclus obeyed his friend’s request. He brought out Briseis and handed her over to the two heralds, who led her to Agamemnon. She followed them, reluctantly. She wanted to stay with Achilles.

Achilles left his friends and went to the beach. Raising his arms, he prayed to his mother: the sea-goddess Thetis.

He prayed, “Mother, you gave me life. My life will be short, and so Zeus should give me honor as recompense, but he does not. I lack honor. Agamemnon has taken my prize of honor away from me!”

He wept.

Thetis, sitting by her father, the Old Man of the Sea, heard her son’s prayer. She swam to him and rose up out of the surf and sat by him on the shore. She stroked him gently and said, “Achilles, you are my child. Tell me why you are crying. Tell me what is wrong. Share your pain with me.”

Achilles said to his mother, “You already know what is wrong. We Greeks attacked Thebe, the city of King Eetion. We conquered the city, and we carried away its treasure, cattle, women, and children.

“Agamemnon was awarded Chryseis, a beauty. But her father, a priest of Apollo, tried to ransom her with shining treasure. He carried the staff and wreaths that identified him as a priest of Apollo and approached Agamemnon and the Greek warriors. The Greek warriors wanted Agamemnon to respect the old priest and accept the shining ransom, but Agamemnon disrespected the old priest and ordered him to leave.

“The old priest prayed to Apollo, who — angered by the bad treatment given to his priest — answered his prayer by shooting arrows at the Greek warriors, killing them with plague. Our aged seer, Calchas, revealed the cause of the plague: the anger of Apollo.

“I wanted the anger of Apollo to be appeased. I was the first one to advocate appeasing his anger. But this made Agamemnon angry. Agamemnon made a threat to me, and he carried out his threat. His prize of honor, Chryseis, was returned to her father with sacrifices for Apollo. My prize of honor, Briseis, was taken from me and given to Agamemnon.

“Mother, help me to regain my honor! Go to Mount Olympus and plead with Zeus. Convince him to help me regain my honor.

“Zeus has never been conquered, although on occasion he has had to put down rebellions. On one occasion, he needed your help. Three gods — Hera, his wife; Poseidon, his brother who is the god of the sea; and Athena, his daughter — had succeeded in chaining him. But you were loyal to Zeus. You, alone of all the many gods, rushed to Zeus and broke the chains that bound him. In addition, you ordered the giant with a hundred hands to go to Zeus and protect him. The gods call the giant Briareus, and the mortals call him Aegaeon. Hera, Poseidon, and Athena saw the giant with the hundred hands. Terrified, they stopped their rebellion against Zeus.

“Remind Zeus of what you did for him. Sit by Zeus. Clasp his knees. Supplicate him. Convince him to allow the Trojans to be victorious for a while — to push the Greek warriors back to their ships and to kill and kill again. That way, the Greek warriors will understand — and Agamemnon will understand — how much they need me and how much they ought to respect me!”

Thetis wept, and she said, “Achilles, my son. You will die soon, and I do and shall grieve for you. You are doomed to have a short life. And now, you have both a short and an unhappy life. I want you to be happy in the life that remains to you. I will do as you ask, I will go to Mount Olympus, supplicate Zeus, and try to persuade him to allow the Trojans to kill and kill again.

“Achilles, stay here in your camp. Don’t fight in the battles against the Trojans.

“Zeus is not now on Mount Olympus. Yesterday, he went to Ethiopia to take part in a feast. All of the other Olympian gods went with him. But he shall return to Mount Olympus in twelve days, and I shall see him then. I think I can persuade him to do as you wish.”

Thetis left Achilles, who mourned in his camp for Briseis and for his lost honor.

Odysseus and the ship he captained reached the city of Chryse. The sail sailed into the harbor, docked, and unloaded the sacrificial animals for Apollo. Chryseis stepped on shore. Odysseus led Chryseis to her father, who was at the altar of Apollo. The old priest of Apollo hugged his daughter, and Odysseus said to him, “Chryses, Agamemnon sent me here. He wants you to have your daughter, and he wishes to sacrifice to Apollo, who has killed so many Greek warriors with plague. By doing these things, Agamemnon hopes to appease Apollo’s wrath.”

Odysseus left Chryses, and Chryses rejoiced with his daughter. Odysseus and his men prepared the cattle for sacrifice. They brought the cattle and barley to the altar. They rinsed their hands. Chryses raised his hands to the sky and prayed, “Apollo, earlier you heard and answered my prayer. You brought plague to the Greek warriors and killed many of them. Now I pray to you again. Stop the plague. Stop killing the Greek warriors.”

Odysseus’ men scattered grains of barley. They cut the throats of the cattle and killed them. Then they skinned the cattle and carved away the meat from the thighbones. They wrapped the thighbones in fat — two layers — and put some strips of meat on top. Chryses burned these offerings to the god Apollo, and then he poured out some wine for the god.

They then roasted the meat on spits, and each man ate. Next they poured out wine for each man, who spilled a few drops for the god and then drank.

All day, they sang songs that pleased Apollo who brings plague and who drives away plague. Apollo was happy.

Odysseus and the men slept on the island that night. At dawn, they sailed away back to the Greek camps. Apollo sent them favorable winds. The sails filled out, and the ship sped as the water foamed up at its bow. Once they had returned to the Greek camps, they hauled the ship high up on the beach and then each man returned to his camp.

Achilles stayed away from the other Greeks. He no longer attended councils. He no longer fought in battles. Still angry, he stayed in his own camp. But although he was angry, he yearned to fight again.

Twelve days passed since Achilles had spoken with Thetis, and now Zeus and the other gods returned to Mount Olympus. Thetis rose up out of the ocean and flew to Mount Olympus. She found Zeus sitting alone, away from the gods, at the top of the mountain. He was looking down at the world.

Thetis supplicated him. She knelt at his feet, grasped his knees with her left hand, and held him under his chin with her right hand. Zeus had to pay attention to her.

She said to him, “Zeus, if I have ever been of service to you and have ever helped you when you needed help, answer my prayer now. Honor my son — Achilles. He is mortal, and his life will be short. And now Agamemnon has disgraced Achilles by taking away his prize of honor that he fought so hard to earn. But you, Zeus, can bring my son honor. You are the king of gods and men, and you have the power to bring honor to my son by allowing the Trojans to kill and kill again until Agamemnon realizes just whom he has dishonored and gives him the honor he deserves!”

Zeus did not immediately respond. Instead, he thought. Yes, he owed Thetis, and yes, if he agreed to honor Thetis’ request, his wife, Hera, who favored the Greeks, would try to make trouble for him and would probably succeed to some extent. He thought for a long time.

Thetis said to him, “Grant my prayer now, Father Zeus, and nod in assent. Swear an oath that is impossible for you to take back.

“Or, if you prefer, deny my prayer and let me know that you don’t value me at all — that you dishonor me more than any other goddess.”

Zeus replied, “If I agree to answer your prayer, it will be a disaster for me. Hera will be impossible. She and I will fight with each other. She will make me angry, and she will insult me. I have much experience with this. Even now, Hera accuses me of siding with the Trojans, of always taking their side. Leave now, before Hera sees you and guesses what you are asking me to do. But yes, I will answer your prayer. I will nod my head and make an inviolable vow to do what you are asking me to do. This is a vow that I *must* fulfill.”

He nodded his head, and earthquakes shook Mount Olympus.

Thetis left Zeus and returned to the sea. Zeus returned to his halls on Mount Olympus, and the other gods stood up to show respect to him.

Hera, however, had seen Thetis supplicate Zeus. She had seen him bow his head. She knew of the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon, and she could guess to what Zeus had agreed.

Hera taunted Zeus, “So, my treacherous husband, with which god have you been plotting now? Whenever my back is turned, you make grand plans and never let me know about them.”

Zeus replied, “Hera, don’t bother me. You do not need to know everything I do. If you ever have a need to know my plans, I will tell them to you. But if I choose to make plans with another god and you do not need to know what we are planning, don’t expect me to tell you about our plans. So do not question me now.”

Hera widened her eyes and said, “Are you accusing me of probing and prying? I have not and am not doing any such thing! You can make whatever plans you wish, but right now I am worried that Thetis, the daughter of the Old Man of the Sea, has convinced you to honor her mortal son, Achilles. I am afraid that she has convinced you to allow the Trojans to kill and kill again and drive the Greek warriors back against their ships.”

Zeus replied, “And what if I have decided to allow the Trojans to be triumphant for a while? What can you do about it? Nothing. So sit down and be quiet. Even if all the gods on Olympus were to try to rescue you, I am powerful enough that I could still choke you with my strong hands.”

Hera was terrified. Zeus was physically and mentally capable of doing exactly what he said he could do. Hera did not speak.

The other Olympian gods were also terrified. Zeus was that powerful and that strong.

Hephaestus, the blacksmith god with the strong shoulders and the lame legs, wanted to lighten the mood. He said, “Zeus and Hera, don’t quarrel. Why fight over the doings of mortal

men? Are they worth it? When you two quarrel, we gods are unable to enjoy the good life here on Mount Olympus.

“Mother, give in to the will of Zeus, my father. You two are my parents, and I want you to get along. Zeus is strong and powerful, and he can blast us gods with his lightning bolts. Better for you, Mother, to make Father happy. That way, he will be kind to us gods.”

Hephaestus held out a two-handed cup filled with nectar to his mother, Hera, so she could drink.

He said to her, “Give in to the will of Zeus. I do not want to see him beat you, as he is very capable of doing. I would not be able to help you. Once, I ran to help you, and he grabbed my foot and threw me from Mount Olympus. I fell for twenty-four hours. Finally, I fell on the island called Lemnos. I am immortal, but I was injured. The mortals on Lemnos took care of me and made me healthy again.”

Hera smiled and took the two-handed cup.

Hephaestus then poured out nectar to all of the other gods, exaggerating his limp and making jokes. The gods laughed and were happy again. They feasted on nectar and ambrosia and listened to Apollo’s lyre and the Muses’ singing until the sun went down.

The gods went to their own homes to sleep. Hephaestus had built their homes for them. Zeus slept, and Hera lay beside him.

Hera thought, *The cause of the Trojan War happened long ago. Thetis is a sea-goddess with whom Zeus, my husband, would normally want to sleep. He has many affairs with goddesses and with mortal women, and this drives me crazy. I am a jealous wife.*

But Thetis is a special case because of a prophecy. The prophecy about Thetis’ male offspring is that he will be a greater man than his father. This is something that would make most human fathers happy, but it would not make Zeus happy. Zeus was greater than his own father, and he overthrew his own father and became the king of gods and men. Zeus did not want to sleep with Thetis because if he did that, Thetis would give birth to a male who would be more powerful than he is and who would overthrow him.

Therefore, Zeus, my husband, wanted to get Thetis married off to someone else. A marriage to a human being for Thetis suited Zeus just fine. A human son may be greater than his father, but a mortal is still not going to be as great as a god, and so Zeus knew that he would be safe if Thetis gave birth to a human son.

Zeus got Thetis to marry the mortal man named Peleus. After Peleus married Thetis, he fathered Achilles. The marriage did not last. Peleus is now an old man, and Thetis has not lived with him for a long time.

When Peleus married Thetis, they invited many gods and many mortals to the wedding. One goddess whom they did not invite was Eris, goddess of discord. But even though Eris was not invited to the wedding feast, she showed up anyway.

Eris, goddess of discord, threw an apple on a table at the wedding feast. Inscribed on the apple was the phrase 'For the most beautiful female.'

Obviously, this apple was meant for me, and I claimed it. But Athena, who is my husband's daughter, and Aphrodite, who is the goddess of sexual passion, also claimed the apple — bitches! Each of them thinks that she is more beautiful than me.

Someone had to judge the beauty pageant of the goddesses and decide who is the most beautiful. This should have been an easy task, since I am the most beautiful by far!

Zeus would seem to be the perfect choice to judge the beauty pageant, but he was smart enough not to.

He knew that I would make his life miserable — as a simple matter of justice — if he did not choose me as the most beautiful.

He knew that he would make Athena — his favorite child — unhappy if he did not choose her as the most beautiful.

He knew that Aphrodite could make his life miserable by making him think with his penis rather than his brain — something he does a lot of anyway — if he did not choose her as the most beautiful.

Zeus is not a fool. He knew that if he judged the beauty contest, he would make two enemies. The two goddesses whom Zeus did not choose as the most beautiful would hate him and likely make trouble for him. I have to give my husband some credit here.

So Zeus found a mortal sap to judge the beauty contest. Paris is a prince of Troy, and Zeus allowed him to judge the divine beauty contest. Paris was not as intelligent as Zeus, or he would have tried to find a way out of judging the beauty contest. Plus, he chose the wrong goddess as the winner.

Each of us goddesses offered Paris a bribe if he would choose her.

I offered Paris political power: several cities he can rule. I did this because I knew that Athena and Aphrodite would offer Paris bribes — cheaters!

Athena offered Paris prowess in battle. Paris would become a mighty and feared warrior.

Aphrodite offered Paris the most beautiful woman in the world to be his wife.

Paris chose Aphrodite as the winner of the beauty contest.

Why? Her bribe was the poorest!

A person such as Achilles would choose to be an even greater warrior, if that is possible.

A person such as Agamemnon would likely choose more cities to rule.

To choose the most beautiful woman in the world to be his wife is to choose the worst of the three choices!

The most beautiful woman in the world is Helen, who is legally married to Menelaus, the King of Sparta. Paris visited Menelaus, and he ran away with lots of Menelaus' treasure and with his wife. Paris treated his host abominably.

Did Helen run away with Paris willingly? I don't know. Helen is tricky and hard to figure out.

Running away with Helen was and is a terrible insult to Menelaus and to Menelaus' entire family. Menelaus and Agamemnon are the sons of Atreus. Agamemnon, the king of Mycenae, is the older brother and the brother who rules a greater land, as seen by the number of ships the two kings brought to the Trojan War. Menelaus brought sixty ships, while Agamemnon brought one hundred ships.

Because Agamemnon is the older brother, he is the leader of the Greek troops in the Trojan War.

Agamemnon and Menelaus gathered many Greek ships and warriors to sail to Troy and make war against the Trojans.

When the Greek ships were gathered together and were ready to set sail against Troy, a wind blew in the wrong direction for them to sail. The goddess Artemis was angry at the Greeks because she knew that the result of the Trojan War would be lots of deaths, not just of warriors, but also of women and children. This is true of all wars, and it is a lesson that human beings forget after each war and relearn in the next war.

Artemis knew that Agamemnon's warriors will cause much death of children, so she made him sacrifice one of his own daughters so that he would suffer what he will make other parents suffer.

Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter Iphigenia. This was a religious sacrifice of a human life to appease the goddess Artemis.

On the day that he quarreled with Achilles, Agamemnon told the prophet Calchas that he always brings bad news to Agamemnon. This is true. Calchas is the prophet who told Agamemnon that he had to sacrifice his daughter in order to get favorable winds that would sail the ships to Troy.

After the sacrifice of Iphigenia, Agamemnon and Menelaus set sail with all the Greek ships for Troy. They landed, and then the Trojan War started.

Aphrodite supports the Trojans during the war, while Hera and Athena support the Greeks.

Hera and Athena are happy for many Trojans to die during the Trojan War — all because of a beauty contest.

Such is the anger of the gods.

Chapter 2: Agamemnon's Dream and the Great Gathering of Armies (Iliad)

Most of the gods and the mortals slept all night, but Zeus woke up and stayed awake, thinking of what he had promised to Thetis: to allow the Trojans to be triumphant in battle for a while. How could he bring that about? How could he make that happen?

At last, he had an idea: He would send a lying dream to Agamemnon. Agamemnon had quarreled with Achilles, and he would love to be able to conquer Troy without the aid of Achilles, so Agamemnon was likely to believe a dream that stated that the gods had decided that now was the time for Troy to fall. Some dreams are true, and Agamemnon would at this time want to believe the dream although he had never been able to conquer Troy even with the help of Achilles, the Greeks' best warrior. As a leader and as a human being, Agamemnon has faults.

Zeus called a dream to him and told it, "Go to the Greek ships and find Agamemnon. Tell him what I tell you to tell him. Tell him to get his Greek warriors ready for a battle. Tell him to attack Troy because today is the day that he will conquer the city. Tell him that at last the gods have decided to allow Troy to fall and let the Greeks walk in its broad streets. At last Hera has persuaded all the gods to let fate take its course. All the gods agree: Today Troy will fall!"

The lying dream took flight and found Agamemnon asleep in his camp. The dream took the shape of Nestor, the oldest and the wisest of the Greeks at Troy. The dream told Agamemnon the lie that Zeus wanted Agamemnon to be told. In the form of Nestor, the dream said to Agamemnon, "Still asleep? You ought not to be sleeping, Agamemnon. You are the leader here. You ought to be thinking of the warriors under your command. They are the ones who die for you.

"I have a message for you from Zeus. He is far away, but he is thinking of you. He orders you to arm your warriors for battle, and to attack Troy with all your force. Zeus says that today Troy will fall! Hera has persuaded all the gods to agree to let fate take its course. Grief will come to the warriors of Troy. Remember this dream — do not forget it when you wake up."

The lying dream left Agamemnon, and he woke up. He believed the dream. Fool! If he could not conquer Troy even with the help of Achilles and all of Achilles' soldiers — the Myrmidons — why should he think that he could now conquer the city!

But Agamemnon got up, dressed himself, slung his sword and sheath over his shoulder, and took his scepter — whoever held it would be listened to — and then he went off to rouse the other Greek kings fighting at Troy.

Dawn arrived, and heralds cried out for all the common soldiers to assemble.

Before the general assembly, Agamemnon met with the other kings, telling them, “Good news. The gods have sent me a dream. Nestor appeared to be talking to me, telling me what the gods wanted me to know. Zeus wants us to attack Troy — this is the day that Troy will fall! The dream told me that Hera has convinced all the gods to let fate take its course. I then woke up. Now I am going to have an assembly of the common soldiers. In it, I will test the men. I will tell them that we are giving up the war against Troy and that we will now sail home. The men will shout that they want to stay and fight, and then we will go into battle.”

Nestor then spoke. He told the kings, “You have heard what Agamemnon said about his dream. If anyone other than Agamemnon had spoken these things, we would say that he had had a lying dream. But this is Agamemnon. He is our leader, and we ought to obey him. Let’s prepare the men for battle.”

The kings and the common soldiers went to the general assembly. The common soldiers had been hearing rumors. They knew that Agamemnon and Achilles had quarreled, and they wondered whether the general assembly was about that quarrel. Had Agamemnon’s plans for Troy changed?

So many soldiers were present that the land shook as they moved into position. They were like bees swarming. The soldiers were noisy, and nine heralds shouted for quiet — “Silence! Listen to your betters!” — so that Agamemnon could speak and be heard.

Agamemnon stood and held his scepter, a symbol of authority that Hephaestus himself had made. Hephaestus had given it to Zeus, who gave it to the messenger god Hermes, who gave it to the charioteer Pelops, who gave it to his son Atreus, who gave it to his brother Thyestes, who gave it to his nephew Agamemnon. Agamemnon leaned against the scepter, which was studded with golden nails, and he said, “Friends and warriors, Zeus made me insane. He tricked me. He vowed to me that I would not return to Mycenae, my home in Greece, until I had conquered Troy and seen its walls fall down.

“I know now that we will never conquer Troy. Zeus lied to me. Zeus wants me now to return to Greece. He simply wanted to have many Greeks killed before Troy; he did not want Troy to fall. Now he wants me to return to Greece in disgrace. This gladdens the heart of Zeus!

“Zeus is too powerful to resist. He has made a thousand cities fall, and he will make more cities fall — but not Troy, not yet.

“This is a humiliation. The Greek armies are vast and strong and outnumber the Trojans. Why should we lose? Why should future generations learn about our ignominious defeat? Suppose the Greeks were divided into groups of ten, and each group of ten was given one Trojan to pour the wine. Many Greek groups of ten would lack a Trojan to pour the wine — that is how much we outnumber the Trojans! That is the simple truth, although the Trojans do have allies from other cities. Their allies prevent me from conquering Troy.

“We have been fighting for nine years. Our ships are now so far gone that their timbers are rotting and the frayed ropes snap when pressure is applied to them.

“For nine years, our wives and children have been waiting for us to return home. And what about us? We have been laboring and warring for nine years, and the war is not yet over.

“Listen to me. Let’s give up! Let’s sail for home!”

Agamemnon expected the common soldiers to shout, “NO! LET’S KEEP ON FIGHTING!”

He had misjudged his troops. They ran for the ships, eager to sail home to wives and children, eager for the war to be over, even if the Greeks lost.

The common soldiers swarmed like big waves to the ships. They were like the winds of a hurricane as they ran to the ships. As they ran to the ships, a big cloud of dust rose in the air.

They shouted, “DRAG THE SHIPS TO THE SEA! GET THEM READY TO SAIL!”

The war could have been over right then, and the Greek common soldiers could have defeated fate, but Hera was watching from far away, and she alerted Athena: “Can you believe this? The Greeks are ready to sail for home! They are willing to let Priam, the King of Troy, glory in victory over them. They are willing to let Helen stay in Troy, a trophy for the Trojans to glory over.

“Go to the Greeks. Stop them from sailing home.”

Athena obeyed. She flew to the Greek camps and found Odysseus, a man of words and action. He stood by his ship, but he was not preparing to sail home. He stood still, thinking and brooding.

Athena said to him, “Odysseus, what are you doing? Nothing! The common soldiers are rushing to sail home. They are willing to leave behind Helen, a woman for whom so many of you Greeks have died. Now is not the time to give up. Go to the Greeks. Convince them to stay at Troy. Don’t let them sail back home to Greece!”

Odysseus knew that the goddess Athena was speaking to him. He obeyed her. He flung off his cape, and the herald Eurybates picked it up for him. Odysseus ran to Agamemnon and took the scepter — the symbol of authority — from him and ran to the Greeks on the shore.

Odysseus was a master of rhetoric. He knew how to talk to kings, and he knew how to talk to common soldiers. Each time he met a king, he said, “My friend, I am not going to threaten you. You are a king. It would be wrong for me to threaten you. But I advise you to go back to the assembly and convince your men to go back. Agamemnon is not serious about returning home to Greece. You’ll see. This is a test. You do not want to fail this test because he will be angry, and he is a powerful man. You and I and the other kings heard about his test in the council of kings. So avoid his anger. Come back to the council and bring your men with you. Zeus loves kings such as Agamemnon.”

When Odysseus met a common soldier, he hit him with the scepter and yelled at him, “You fool! Obey the commands of your superiors. Don’t be a coward and a deserter. You are a common soldier. You aren’t a leader either on the battlefield or in council. You have one commander. Zeus chose him to be your leader.”

Odysseus commanded the Greeks to return to the council, and they did return to the meeting ground, leaving their ships.

Almost everyone had returned to the meeting ground, but one man, a common soldier named Thersites, remained on the beach, still shouting. A favorite activity of his was criticizing the kings, men who were better than he was. He loved to get a laugh at the expense of a king.

Of all the Greeks who came to Troy, he was the ugliest. His legs were bowed, and one foot was crippled. His shoulders were narrow, and his chest was caved in. His head was pointed, with only a few tufts of hair keeping him from being completely bald-headed. Achilles despised him. So did Odysseus. Both had been victims of his insults. Now he was criticizing Agamemnon and alienating his fellow soldiers, who had regained their sense.

Thersites yelled, “Still complaining, Agamemnon? Why? You have stored away in your camp lots of bronze and lots of women. Whenever we sack a city, you get the most beautiful women. Do you want more gold than you already have? Do you want more ransom — the ransom a loving parent might pay for a captured warrior son? You get the ransom although I or another warrior captured the Trojan warrior. Or do you want yet another woman — a sex-slave to sleep with? You have messed things up royally here at Troy. The men you lead are not men but rather women. It’s time to return home to Greece! We can leave Agamemnon here at Troy to see if we have done good service for him. Agamemnon has made Achilles angry, and Achilles is a better man than Agamemnon is. Agamemnon insulted Achilles, but Achilles was generous and did not kill him. The day you insulted Achilles could have been your last day alive on earth!”

Odysseus glared at Thersites and told him, “Shut up, Thersites! The nonsense you are yelling is excessive even for you! Who are you to criticize kings? Who are you to criticize Agamemnon? You are the least of all the Greek warriors who came to Troy. So shut up, and stop looking to return home to Greece. The war is not yet over. We don’t know how it will end. We may be victorious, or we may end up being defeated.

“But here you are, flinging insults at Agamemnon, to whom we give much treasure and many women because he is our leader. Why are you outraged at him? You are the outrage! Listen to me carefully. If I hear you yelling like this and criticizing Agamemnon again, may my head be torn off my shoulders and may I never be called the father of my son, Telemachus, if I don’t strip your clothing from you, exposing the parts of your body that you keep hidden, and whip you naked out of the ranks of real soldiers!”

Odysseus then hit Thersites across the back with the scepter — hard! Thersites bent over. He cried. A bloody welt formed on his back.

The other Greek soldiers, relieved that they were not the objects of Odysseus' wrath, laughed. They did not like Thersites.

The other Greek soldiers shouted, "A hit! A terrific hit! One of many that Odysseus has dealt in his career as a warrior! He has done a good deed for us warriors! He has made Thersites shut up! I'll bet that Thersites will never again insult a king."

Odysseus stood in the center of the meeting ground. Athena was present. Like a herald, she made the Greek warriors be quiet so that they could hear Odysseus.

Odysseus, master of rhetoric, said loudly enough that all could hear him, "Agamemnon, your warriors seem intent on deserting you, on making you an object of scorn. They have forgotten that they swore an oath to you nine years ago when we sailed from Greece to Troy. They swore that they would not leave Troy until the city had fallen. But look at them! They are like weak boys and scared women. They want to go home.

"It's true, however, that they have been away a long time. It's true that they long for home. A man who is away from his wife for even a month will want to go home, and we have been here at Troy for nine years. We cannot blame the warriors for wanting to go home.

"But still we would be humiliated to go home after warring here for nine long years — unless we conquer Troy! Let us not sail home without treasure and women. Let us remember the prophecy that Calchas made. Let us stay long enough to find out whether the prophecy is true or false. All of us witnessed that prophecy.

"Our ships were at Aulis, in between the island of Euboea and the Greek mainland. We had gathered our sails there before we sailed the Aegean Sea to Troy. We were at a spring, making sacrifices to the gods at an altar to help ensure eventual success. A snake with a blood-red back appeared — an omen sent by Zeus himself! The snake came from under the altar and climbed a tree, where was the nest of a sparrow with eight nestlings. The snake swallowed all eight nestlings — the mother bird could not stop the killing — and then the snake coiled and bit the mother sparrow and swallowed her, too. Zeus then turned the snake into stone.

"Calchas interpreted the omen. He said, 'Zeus has revealed the future, long distant, to us. We shall be before the walls of Troy for nine long years, and then we shall conquer the city, bringing death and destruction to women and children as well as to warriors. Only in the tenth year of fighting will the city of Troy fall.'

"Thus Calchas interpreted the omen, and now the omen is coming true. All of you warriors, fight! Soon we will take the city of Troy!"

The warriors reacted to Odysseus' speech the way that Agamemnon had hoped that they would react to his speech. Morale restored, they were ready to fight, with or without Achilles.

Nestor, the oldest and wisest of the Greeks, also made a speech: “Words are important, but so is action. We have had many words, but we also need action. We have made oaths, and now we need to keep them with our actions.

“We need to avoid fighting with words.

“Agamemnon, you need to keep your eyes on the prize. Lead your troops into battle, just as you have planned. And if one or two warriors want to hang back, want to go home, let them go to hell. Those are the few who want to run home before we find out whether the omen is true and we will take Troy. Zeus has sent omens to us. Even as we sailed to Troy, Zeus sent us omens. He threw down thunderbolts that landed to the right side of the ships — the right side is the lucky side!

“We have had many positive omens. So let all men fight here at Troy and not sail for home — not until he’s slept with a woman who was faithful to her Trojan husband. We deserve that because of all we have suffered to get Helen back!

“And if any man still tries to sail for home, let’s kill him. As soon as he touches a ship, he dies.

“Agamemnon, listen to my advice. Form your warriors into ranks. Let men fight in their own tribes and in their own clans. You will be able to see which tribes and clans fight well and which are cowardly. If we fail to conquer Troy, you will know whether it is because of the will of the gods or because of the cowardice of your warriors.”

Agamemnon praised Nestor: “You are the first of the Greeks when it comes to speaking in public. If I had ten more men like you to advise me and help me form battle tactics, we would conquer Troy in a single day!

“But Zeus has other plans. He makes me engage in battles of words. He makes me wrangle with words with Achilles — and all because of a girl! I was the first to get angry. If Achilles and I could work and think together, Troy would quickly fall. Its day of death would quickly arrive.

“But now, let us eat. Get ready for battle. Sharpen your spears. Balance your shields. Feed your horses with grain so that they run fast. Make sure the chariots are in good repair.

“Prepare yourself to fight all day long. We will not rest until night falls. You will be fighting so hard that sweat will soak your shield-strap. You will be fighting so hard that the hand holding your spear will ache. You will be fighting so hard that your horses will lather as they pull your chariot.

“Let no one hang back from battle, staying by the ships. That man’s corpse will be food for dogs and birds!”

The warriors roared their approval of Agamemnon’s plan. They went back to their ships, ate a meal, and prepared for battle. Each man sacrificed to a god. Each man prayed to escape death and live another day.

Agamemnon prepared to sacrifice a bull to Zeus, and he called all the other kings to him. Nestor came first. Idomeneus, King of Crete, came. So did Great Ajax and Little Ajax. So did Diomedes, the youngest king fighting the Trojans. Odysseus, king of Ithaca, arrived sixth. Menelaus came without being called; he knew what Agamemnon was thinking.

With all the kings present, Agamemnon prayed to Zeus: “God of greatness, god of the sky, do not allow this day to end until we have conquered Troy! Let me take the city of Priam, the Trojan king — today! Let me set on fire the gates of Troy — today! Let me kill Hector, the greatest of the Trojan warriors — today!”

Zeus heard the prayer and accepted the sacrifice, but he would not grant Agamemnon’s wish. Zeus wanted the war to continue and many warriors to die.

Agamemnon and the others sacrificed the animals and prepared a feast. All ate and drank, and then Nestor said, “Agamemnon, now is not the time for words. Now is the time to call the warriors together and form them into tribes and clans. Let us review the troops before we go into combat.”

Agamemnon ordered the heralds to call the warriors together. The warriors formed ranks. Athena was present, carrying her shield. Her shield had one hundred golden tassels; each golden tassel was worth one hundred oxen. Athena put heart into each Greek warrior. Suddenly, they wanted to do battle more than they wanted to sail home.

Just like a fire burns brightly as it marches through a mountain forest and can be seen from miles away, the bronze armor of the Greek warriors shone brightly.

Just like flock upon flock of birds such as geese or cranes circle and then land in an Asian marsh, the Greek warriors poured out of their camps and took up their position upon the plain before Troy. Their feet made the sound of thunder as they — thousands and thousands of warriors — took up their positions.

Just as numerous as the swarms of countless flies that fill the stalls in spring when buckets are full of milk were the Greek warriors as they readied themselves to fight the Trojans and the Trojan allies.

Just like when flocks mingle together, experienced shepherds can separate them with ease, the commanders grouped their men together. Agamemnon watched. His eyes and head were like those of the sky-god Zeus, his waist was like that of the war-god Ares, and his chest was like that of the sea-god Poseidon.

Muses, sing now the tallies of the Greek warriors. As goddesses, you know. Human beings lack knowledge. I could not name every warrior — not even with ten tongues and ten mouths, a voice that never tires, and a heart made of bronze — unless I had your help. Now I can name only the commanders and tell how many ships they brought with them.

Briefly, these are the numbers of ships that the major heroes brought with them.

Agamemnon brought one hundred ships.

Nestor brought ninety ships.

Diomedes brought eighty ships.

Idomeneus brought eighty ships.

Menelaus brought sixty ships.

Achilles brought fifty ships.

Little Ajax brought forty ships.

Great Ajax brought twelve ships.

Odysseus brought twelve ships.

But many other kings brought many other ships.

Here are the tallies in more detail.

Leitus and Peneleos commanded the Boeotians, who sailed to Troy in fifty ships. In each ship were one hundred and twenty Boeotians.

Ascalaphus and Ialmenus commanded the Minyans, who sailed to Troy in thirty ships. The mother of Ascalaphus and Ialmenus was Astyoche, who when she was a young woman climbed up to the upper rooms of the palace, where the war-god Ares slept with her and made her pregnant with Ascalaphus and Ialmenus.

Schedius and Epistrophus commanded the Phocians, who sailed to Troy in forty ships. The Phocians lined up to the left of the Boeotians.

Little Ajax, the son of Oileus, commanded the Locrians, who sailed to Troy in forty ships. Little Ajax was much smaller than Great Ajax, but like Great Ajax, Little Ajax excelled at fighting with spears.

Elephenor commanded the Abantes, who sailed to Troy in forty ships. They cut their hair short in front and long in the back.

Menestheus commanded the Athenians, who sailed to Troy in fifty ships. Menestheus excelled at arranging horses and men in effective fighting units. No one was better at doing this except for Nestor, who had lived longer and experienced more.

Great Ajax, son of Telamon, commanded the warriors from the island of Salamis, who had sailed to Troy in twelve ships. Great Ajax was the second-best Greek warrior; Achilles was the best of all the warriors fighting at Troy.

Diomedes, King of Argos, commanded the warriors from his country, who sailed to Troy in eighty ships. Second in command was Sthenelus, and third in command was Euryalus.

Agamemnon, King of Mycenae, commanded the warriors from his country, who sailed to Troy in one hundred ships. Agamemnon was the supreme commander of all the Greek warriors. He was the greatest warlord, and he brought the greatest number of ships to Troy.

Menelaus, King of Lacedaemon, who ruled in the city of Sparta, commanded the warriors from his country, who sailed to Troy in sixty ships. Agamemnon was Menelaus' older brother. Paris, prince of Troy, had stolen Helen away from Menelaus.

Nestor commanded the Pylians, who sailed to Troy in ninety ships. He was the oldest and wisest of the Greeks.

Agapenor commanded the Arcadians, who sailed to Troy in sixty ships. Agamemnon had given Agapenor these ships; the Arcadians did not normally sail the sea but instead remained on land.

Four captains — Thalpius, Amphimachus, Dioreas, and Polyxenus — commanded the Epeans, who had sailed to Troy in forty ships. Each captain commanded the warriors of ten ships.

Meges commanded the warriors from Dulichion and the Echinades, who sailed to Troy in forty ships.

Odysseus commanded the warriors from the island of Ithaca and the islands near it. These warriors sailed to Troy in twelve ships. Odysseus was a mastermind like Zeus.

Thoas led the Aetolians, who sailed to Troy in forty ships. Meleager, now dead, had been an Aetolian.

Idomeneus led the warriors from the island of Crete, who sailed to Troy in eighty ships. Idomeneus was a renowned spearman. Meriones was second in command.

Tlepolemus led the warriors from the island of Rhodes, who sailed to Troy in nine ships. His father was Heracles.

Nireus led the warriors from the island of Syme, who sailed to Troy in three ships. He was the best-looking Greek warrior except for Achilles, but Nireus commanded few warriors.

Antiphos and Phidippus, two grandsons of Heracles, commanded the warriors from the island of Cos and the islands near it, who sailed to Troy in thirty ships.

Muse, son of Achilles, who commanded the Myrmidons, who sailed to Troy in fifty ships. These warriors did not line up. Achilles was angry. He stayed in his camp, enraged over the loss of Briseis, whom Agamemnon had taken from him although Briseis had been given to Achilles after he had fought at the city of Lyrnessus, exhausting himself. Achilles would not fight now, but soon he would — magnificently.

Podarces had commanded the warriors from the city of Phylace, who sailed to Troy in forty ships. Protesilaus had been their commander, but a Trojan had killed him as the Greek warriors had landed at Troy. Protesilaus had been the first Greek killed at Troy, and now Podarces commanded his warriors.

Eumelus commanded the Thessalians from the city of Pherae, who sailed to Troy in eleven ships.

Philoctetes the master archer had commanded the Thesalians from the city of Methone, who sailed to Troy with seven ships. In each ship were fifty oarsmen. But Philoctetes had not made it to Troy. He was on the island of Lemnos, in agonizing pain caused by the bite of a water-viper. Soon, the Greeks would go to Lemnos and bring Philoctetes to Troy. In his absence, Medon commanded Philoctetes' warriors.

Two skilled physicians, Podalirius and Machaon, the two sons of the healer Asclepius, commanded the Thesalians from the cities of Tricca and Oechalia, who sailed to Troy in forty ships.

Eurypylos commanded the Thesalians from the city of Ormenion, who sailed to Troy in forty ships.

Polypoetes and Leonteus commanded the Lapiths from the city of Argissa, who sailed to Troy in forty ships.

Guneus commanded the Enienes and Peraebians from near the oracle of Dodona, who sailed to Troy in twenty-two ships.

Prothous commanded the Magnesians, who sailed to Troy in forty ships.

These were the Greek commanders and ships.

Muse, tell me now who were the best Greek warriors and whose were the best horses.

The best chariot-team of horses by far was the mares of Eumelus, commander of the Thesalians from the city of Pherae. These mares were as fast as birds. They were matched in age and matched in body size. Apollo had bred the mares.

With the exception of Achilles, Great Ajax was the best of the Greek warriors. But now Achilles stayed angry at Agamemnon, and he stayed with his warriors in his camp. His warriors stayed busy, practicing hurling the discus and spears and practicing archery. Their horses stood idle, waiting beside chariots. Achilles' own chariots were stored away under blankets; Achilles had no use for them now. Achilles' warriors wanted to fight, but Achilles was too angry to fight.

All the Greek warriors who were ready to fight marched on like a wildfire, and the ground thundered under their feet.

The Trojans and their allies also assembled.

Iris, goddess of the rainbow, who like Hermes bears messages from the other gods, now brought the Trojans a message from Zeus, king of gods and men. The Trojans gathered at their gates, and Iris spoke to them. She looked and sounded like Polites, a son of Priam, the King of Troy.

Polites had been at a Trojan gate, watching the Greeks and ready to give warning if they showed signs of attacking.

Iris said, "Priam, you often give speeches, but now war is upon us. I have fought often, but the Greek army is the biggest and most powerful that I have ever faced. Right now they are marching

toward us, on and on, ready to fight. Hector, I urge you to gather our warriors together. We have many foreign allies in Troy, many foreign warriors. These foreign warriors speak many different languages from ours, which is the same language spoken by the Greeks. Let the commanders of each tribe give commands in the language they understand, and gather all the warriors together.”

Hector was willing — he had recognized the goddess Iris. He ended the assembly, and the Trojans and their allies readied for battle. The gates of Troy were opened, and the Trojan and allied warriors marched out onto the fields of battle. The men on foot, men on horses, and men in chariots made a huge roar.

Hector, the crown prince of Troy and son of Priam, commanded the Trojans. He was the greatest warrior fighting for Troy, and his army was the greatest.

Aeneas, the son of Aphrodite, goddess of sexual passion, commanded the Dardanians. His father was mortal: Anchises. Also leading the Dardanians were Acamas and Archelochus.

Pandarus, who wielded a bow that Apollo himself had made, commanded the men who lived in Zelea under Mount Ida. Pandarus was the son of Lycaon.

Two sons of Merops — Adrestus and Amphius — commanded the men from the city of Adrestia. Merops was a prophet. He could foretell the future and did not want his sons to go to war, but they resisted him — black death and a deadly fate made them go to Troy.

Asius commanded the men from the city of Percote and the surrounding area. Huge stallions carried him to Troy.

Hippothous and Pylaeus commanded the men from the city of Larissa.

Acamas and Pirous commanded the Pelasgians.

Euphemus commanded the Cicones.

Pyraechmes commanded the Paeonians. The clear water of the broad river Axius flowed through their country.

Pylaemenes commanded the Paphlagonians, men from a country filled with wild mules.

Odius and Epistrophus commanded the Halizonians.

Chromis and Ennomus commanded the Mysians. Ennomus was a seer who could read bird-signs, but his knowledge could not keep him from death. Achilles would slaughter him at the river where Achilles would slaughter so many Trojans and their allies.

Ascanius and Phorcys commanded the Phrygians.

Mesthles and Antiphus, the two sons of Talaemenes, commanded the Maeonians.

Nastes and Amphimachus commanded the Carians. Nastes wore gold armor — the fool! He would not keep it. Achilles killed him later at the river ford where Achilles killed so many others. Achilles stripped away his gold armor.

Finally, Sarpedon and Glaucus commanded the Lycians.

As was his habit, Zeus was watching the Greeks and Trojans. This was a favorite entertainment for the other gods and him.

He thought, *Agamemnon's Greek warriors vastly outnumber Hector's Trojan warriors.*

Although he leads a vast army, Agamemnon is sometimes a bad leader. Agamemnon did not listen to his men when they wanted him to accept the shining ransom that the priest of Apollo brought to ransom his daughter. After losing his prize of honor, Agamemnon did not listen to Achilles when Achilles suggested a reasonable compromise — the Greeks would replace Chryseis with wonderful gifts when Troy fell. Agamemnon made his greatest warrior, Achilles, angry by taking Briseis away from him. Agamemnon did not listen to the reasonable attempt of Nestor to stop him and Achilles from quarreling. Agamemnon thought that the lying dream I sent was true. Agamemnon tested his men only to have the test backfire, and it took Odysseus to stop the men from sailing back home to Greece. Odysseus would be a better leader for the Greeks than Agamemnon. So would Nestor.

Agamemnon, the son of Atreus, is sometimes a bad leader. So why is he the leader of the Greeks? He is the leader of the Greeks because his family — the House of Atreus — suffered a violation of xenia.

Xenia is the guest-host relationship. Xenia carries with it an obligation to the gods and especially to me. When people abuse their sacred duty of xenia, they are disrespecting me.

Travelers knock on the door of a house or palace and ask for hospitality. The host feeds the guest, allows him to bathe, and gives him a place to sleep. Upper-class hosts also give the guest a gift, appropriately called a guest-gift. In return, the guest provides news and entertainment for the host. Also, of course, the guest does not kill the host, rob the host, or run away with the host's wife.

The Trojan War started because of a violation of xenia. Paris was traveling away from Troy, his home, and Menelaus became Paris' host at Sparta. Paris treated Menelaus badly by robbing him of some of his treasure, and by running away with Menelaus' wife, Helen.

Menelaus and his older brother, Agamemnon, gathered together a number of Greek armies, and they all sailed to Troy to get Helen back. Agamemnon, being the older brother, became the leader of the Greek warriors against Troy.

I am Zeus Xenios: Zeus, the god of xenia. Anyone who does not follow the rules of xenia is not doing my will. This offends me, and eventually the offender will pay for his transgression.

Troy is in the wrong here. The Trojans are fighting to defend their city, yes, but they are also fighting so that Paris and Helen can have an adulterous love affair. Troy will eventually fall to the Greeks because the Trojans are in the wrong.

Chapter 3: Helen Reviews the Greek Champions (Iliad)

Now the two armies approached each other. The Trojans shouted as if they were aggressors invading a country to take it, while the Greeks marched silently, as if they were grimly defending their country.

In truth, although the Greeks had sailed across the Aegean Sea to attack the city of Troy, the Trojans were the aggressors. Paris, prince of Troy, had sailed across the Aegean Sea and stolen some of the treasure and the wife of Menelaus.

The South wind brings fog to mountains. Shepherds hate it and thieves love it because no one can see as far as they can throw a stone. Just like that fog, dust rose up as the armies marched toward each other.

Paris, prince of Troy, was in the front ranks. He dressed flashily. The skin of a leopard caressed his shoulders, a bow hung on his back, a sword hung at his hip, and he carried two spears.

He showed himself to the Greek warriors and challenged any one of them to fight him.

Menelaus saw him. Paris was boasting and showing himself to the Greeks.

Menelaus felt like a hungry lion that has discovered a carcass. He would eat his fill of the stag or goat even though hunters and dogs were near and were attacking him. Menelaus was ready to accept Paris' challenge and fight him.

But when Paris saw Menelaus, Paris felt like a man who had stepped on a snake. His knees trembled, and his cheeks grew pale. Instead of staying at the front of his troops, he withdrew, afraid to fight Menelaus. He no longer felt like boasting.

Hector, Paris' older brother, saw all. He said to Paris, "Prince of beauty. You prefer to seduce women than fight warriors. I wish to the gods that you had never been born and that you had never had a wife. That would be better than to see you now — you are a disgrace. The enemy warriors don't respect you.

"You are a handsome man, but you are often not a warrior. I look at you now, and I don't see the man who had the courage to sail across the Aegean Sea and steal the wife of his host. That was wrong, but it took some courage and now you slink away from Menelaus.

"You are bringing destruction to your father, to the city of Troy, and to all the Trojans, yet you are afraid to face Menelaus. If you fought him, you would find how powerful he is as a warrior — he is the man you robbed of his beautiful, warm wife.

"If you fought a duel with Menelaus, you would find that your skill with a lyre and your long hair and your beauty — gifts of Aphrodite — would be of no use to you, not as you roll and die in the dust.

"The citizens of Troy are cowards, else they would have stoned you to death long ago."

Paris, who could fight when he wanted to, although he often did not want to, replied to Hector, “Your criticisms of me are fair. I deserve them. You say what is in your tireless heart. Your words are like an ax chopping through wood. You tell the truth.

“Aphrodite has given me many gifts, including Helen. The gifts of a god are not to be lightly tossed aside. We cannot give such gifts to ourselves.

“If you really want me to duel with Menelaus to the death — and you do — I am willing. Let me and him fight to the death now in front of Greeks and Trojans. Whoever wins the duel will have Helen and the treasure. The living warriors will swear pacts of friendship. The Trojans will live in peace at Troy, and the Greeks will sail across the Aegean Sea to their homes, wives, and children.”

Hector rejoiced. The Trojan War would end on this day, and the Trojan women and children would be safe and at peace.

Hector stopped his warriors from fighting, and then he strode into the ground separating the two armies. Greek soldiers threw rocks at him, and Greek archers tried to kill him with arrows, but Agamemnon stopped them, saying, “Stop attacking Hector! Let us hear what he has to say!”

All became silent, and Hector said to both armies, “Paris, who caused the war between us, challenges Menelaus. He wants all the Greeks and all the Trojans to stop fighting and allow Menelaus and him to fight in single combat. Whoever wins the single combat will take Menelaus’ treasure and Helen, and all the living warriors will swear pacts of friendship.”

Greeks and Trojans were silent.

Menelaus spoke, “Hear me now! This is limited vengeance, and I deserve more than that, but I want peace between Trojans and Greeks. Many Greek warriors have died because of the conflict between Paris and me — a conflict that Paris started.

“Now Paris and I will fight. Let the one who is fated to die, die now! But everyone else can depart in peace after this conflict is ended, which will be soon.

“Trojans, bring two lambs — a black male and a white female — for a sacrifice to the sun and earth. The Greeks will provide another lamb to sacrifice to Zeus.

“And Trojans, bring King Priam out to swear an oath with a sacrifice. I don’t trust his sons, the princes of Troy. We will swear an oath to Zeus, an oath that must not be violated. Too often, young men are reckless. Let an old man swear the oath to Zeus. An old man can remember the past and can see ahead. An old man has prudence and will respect the oath made to Zeus. This is our best hope for peace between Greeks and Trojans.”

The Greek warriors and the Trojan warriors rejoiced, hoping that soon the war would end. They drew their chariots in ranks. The soldiers stripped off their armor and placed it on the ground. Greek armor lay next to Trojan armor.

Hector sent two heralds to Troy to bring the sacrificial lambs and Priam. Agamemnon sent the herald Talthibius to bring a lamb to sacrifice to Zeus.

A messenger also went to Helen: the goddess Iris, looking now like Laodice, one of Hector's sisters. Laodice was a beautiful woman who had married Helicaon, the son of Antenor. Helen was in her rooms, weaving a robe decorated with scenes from the Trojan War. Helen was an artist.

Iris said, "Come, Helen, to the walls of Troy so that you can see what is going on. Greeks and Trojans were ready to slaughter each other in battle, but now no one is fighting. Menelaus and Paris are going to fight a duel to the death over you. You will be the wife of whoever wins the duel."

Helen wanted her husband of years ago, Menelaus, to win the duel. She put on a cloak and left her rooms. Two female attendants went with her: Aethra and Clymene. They went to the Scaean Gates.

Many old men were gathered there with King Priam, who was also an old man: Panthous, Thymoetes, Lampus, Clytius, Hicetaon, Ucalegon, and Antenor. They were too old to still be warriors, but they spoke well in council. The old men sitting near Priam saw Helen and her beauty, and they murmured, "Can anyone blame the warriors for fighting over Helen? We old men can understand why the warriors have been fighting for nine years over such beauty. She has the beauty of an immortal goddess! Still, it is much better for Troy if she goes back to Greece. If she stays here, she will continue to bring sorrow to us and our children."

Priam saw Helen and called to her, "Dear child, come here. Sit with me and look at your husband of years ago. Look at all the Greek warriors. I don't blame you for this war. The gods are the ones who brought this war to the Trojans — this war that devastates us and devastates the Greeks.

"Come closer and identify some of the Greek warriors. Who is the Greek warrior who is so regal? Other Greek warriors are taller, but this Greek warrior must be a king!"

Helen replied, "I respect you, and I honor you, Priam. I wish that I had died before I came to Troy, before I forsook my husband and left my relatives and my child and the friendship of women. But I did not die, and so now I mourn.

"But to answer your question, that Greek warrior is Agamemnon. He is a king, and he is a strong spearman, and he used to be my brother-in-law. But now I am a whore. I think I can remember life in Greece, but it all seems to be a dream."

Priam, looking at Agamemnon, said, "You are fortunate to be able to command so mighty an army! When I was young, I visited Phrygia, and I helped fight the Amazons. Not even the hordes of the Amazons could match your army!"

Priam saw Odysseus but did not recognize him. He asked Helen, “Who is this Greek warrior? He is shorter than Agamemnon, but his shoulders and chest are broader. His armor lies on the ground, and he ranges through the soldiers like a ram among sheep.”

Helen replied, “That warrior is Odysseus. His father is Laertes, and he comes from Ithaca, a rocky island. Odysseus is good at coming up with plots and plans — he is a man of twists and turns.”

Antenor spoke up: “All you say is correct, Helen. He came with Menelaus on an embassy about you. I was their host, I observed *xenia* well, and I learned about them. When Menelaus and Odysseus stood up, Menelaus was taller, but when they were seated, Odysseus looked nobler. Both spoke to us about you. Menelaus spoke well and to the point. He wasted no words. When Odysseus stood up to speak, he did not speak right away. He stood, he stared down at the ground, and he clutched the scepter. He seemed unimpressive until he spoke, but when he did speak, he impressed us all. No one can match Odysseus with words.”

Priam saw another fighter: Great Ajax. Priam asked Helen, “Who is the Greek warrior who towers over the others? He is huge! He is strong!”

Helen replied, “That is Great Ajax, one of the two strongest Greek warriors.

“And near him is Idomeneus, King of Crete. Menelaus, my husband of long ago, used to host him in our home when Idomeneus traveled.

“I can see all the Greek warriors, but two warriors I expected to see are missing. Castor and Polydeuces are my blood brothers. Perhaps they stayed in Greece, or if they did sail to Troy, perhaps they are staying in their camp because they are ashamed to fight with the Greek warriors, ashamed because of me and because of how the other Greek warriors think of me.”

So Helen speculated, but her brothers were dead and buried beneath the life-giving earth in Lacedaemon, where she and Menelaus had lived.

The heralds Hector had sent to Troy had gathered the two lambs — a black male and a white female. The herald Idaeus had also gathered wine, a bowl, and wine cups. All of these items were needed for the oath. Idaeus went to Priam and said, “The commanders of both armies — Hector and Agamemnon — need you. They want you to come to them to swear an oath. Paris and Menelaus will fight a duel to the death. Whoever wins the duel will win Helen and the treasure of Menelaus. Everyone else will swear pacts of friendship. We will live in peace in Troy, and the Greeks will sail to their homes.”

Priam shuddered — this could be the day that Paris, his son, died. Priam ordered his men to prepare a chariot, and then he climbed aboard with Antenor. They went through the Scaean Gates and to the waiting warriors.

Reaching the warriors, they got off the chariot and walked in the area between the two armies. Agamemnon and Odysseus came to greet them. They prepared everything for the

sacrifice and for the swearing of the oath, and Agamemnon raised his arms and prayed, “Zeus, sun, and earth, witness what we swear here. Punish anyone who breaks this oath! If Paris kills Menelaus, then Paris keeps Helen and he keeps Menelaus’ treasure, and the Greeks sail home. But if Menelaus kills Paris, then Menelaus gets Helen and his treasure back, and we Greeks get reparations for what we have suffered in our nine years of fighting here — reparations of an amount that men will remember. And if Menelaus kills Paris but Priam does not live up to his oath, then we Greeks will continue the war, fighting to destroy Troy.”

They slaughtered the lambs as a sacrifice, and then they drank wine and swore the oath.

The Greek warriors and the Trojan warriors supported the oath. Both Greeks and Trojans could be heard saying as they spilled a few drops of wine on the ground for the gods, “Whichever side breaks this oath, may their brains and their children’s brains spill on the ground just like this wine is spilled, and may their enemies make their wives sex-slaves!”

Zeus heard these prayers, but he would not grant — yet — the warriors’ wish for peace.

Priam then spoke, “Listen to me, Trojans and Greeks. I am returning to Troy. I do not wish to see my son, Paris, battle Menelaus. Zeus knows which warrior is fated to fall, which fighter is fated to be triumphant.”

Priam placed the slaughtered lambs in the chariots — food is often scarce in a besieged city — and he and Antenor rode back to Troy.

Priam and Odysseus measured the ground where the duel would be fought. The warriors on each side prayed, “Zeus, let the man who caused this war die and go to the Land of the Dead, but let the rest of us be friends and be at peace!”

Two lots — one for Menelaus and one for Paris — were placed in a helmet and Hector shook it to see which warrior would throw his spear first. Paris’ lot fell out of the helmet — he would throw first.

The troops sat down according to rank. Paris and Menelaus prepared for the single combat. They put on their armor, and each warrior had a helmet, breastplate, shield, spear, and sword. They armed at opposite sides of the dueling ground, and then they went into the no-man’s land in the middle.

Paris suddenly hurled his spear. It was a direct hit, but ineffective. It hit the center of Menelaus’ shield but did not punch through the shield — the shield was too tough.

Now, in accordance with the ancient custom, it was Menelaus’ turn to throw his spear. Menelaus first prayed to Zeus: “Give me revenge, Zeus. This is the man who wronged me. Let me crush him so that other people may learn not to violate *xenia*!”

Menelaus hurled his spear — a direct hit! It hit the center of Paris’ shield and punched on through the shield and through Paris’ breastplate. But Paris dodged death as he twisted out of the path of the spear.

Menelaus drew his sword and charged at Paris. He raised his sword and crashed it down on Paris' helmet — the sword broke into pieces.

Menelaus cried out to Zeus, "I thought I would kill Paris today, but my sword is broken and I wasted the throw of my spear!"

But Menelaus was not finished. He grabbed Paris' helmet and started dragging him to the Greek side of the dueling ground. The chinstrap of his helmet choked Paris. Menelaus would have won the duel and achieved undying glory, but Aphrodite rescued Paris. She broke the chinstrap, and the helmet came away empty in Menelaus' hand. Menelaus threw the helmet to the Greek warriors — it was a notable piece of booty. Then he grabbed his spear and ran toward Paris — but Aphrodite was faster. She created a fog to hide Paris and spirited him behind the safe walls of Troy.

Aphrodite placed Paris safely down in his own perfumed bedroom, and then she went to bring Helen, who was in a tower with a group of Trojan women, to him. Aphrodite disguised herself, changing her appearance to that of an old woman who had woven clothing for Helen in Lacedaemon. Aphrodite said to Helen, "Come quickly — Paris wants you. He is in your bedroom, waiting for you. He is handsome and finely dressed. He does not look like a man who has been fighting — he looks like a man who is going to a dance."

Helen felt sexual passion for Paris. He was good for one thing.

Helen recognized Aphrodite and said to her, "Goddess, why are you luring me to go to Paris? This is ruinous. Do you have plans to eventually drive me to another man in another country — another favorite of yours?"

"Why do you want me to go to Paris now? Is it because Menelaus has beaten your favorite mortal and because Menelaus still wants to take me back to Sparta despite what I have done to him? Is that why you want me to go to Paris?"

"Why don't you go to Paris yourself? He is your favorite! Stop being a goddess! Be a mortal instead! Stay with Paris and protect him. You can be his wife — or his slave. I don't want to go to Paris and sleep with him. That would be shameful, and the Trojan women would hate me."

It is not wise to make a god or goddess angry — they can do bad things to you.

Aphrodite was angry. She said to Helen, "Don't make me your enemy. I can easily hate you as much as I love you now. I can easily make all the Trojans hate you and make all the Greeks hate you. I can easily make the rest of your life wretched."

Helen was afraid. She knew that Aphrodite had spoken the truth. She followed Aphrodite, who led her to Paris, who was in his and Helen's bedroom. Aphrodite brought Helen a chair, and Helen sat down, facing Paris.

Helen said to Paris, "So, you have had enough fighting for today. I wish that you had died today — killed by Menelaus, who used to be my husband. You have long boasted that you are a

better warrior than Menelaus. If that is true, why don't you go out and duel Menelaus again? Why don't you two fight to the death?

"Wait, I understand why you don't do that. If you were to fight Menelaus again, he would most likely put a spear through your body."

Paris replied, "No more words, Helen. True, Menelaus won the duel, but only because he had the help of a goddess: Athena."

Helen thought, *That is a likely story.*

Paris continued, "I will kill Menelaus tomorrow."

Helen thought, *That is also a likely story.*

Paris continued, "But right now, let us go to bed. I want you now more than I ever have — even more than when I ran away with you and we made love on an island. I want you much more now."

Paris and Helen went to bed together.

As Paris and Helen had sex, Menelaus was looking for Paris on the battlefield. None of the Trojans or the Trojan allies could say where Paris was although none of them regarded Paris as a friend and all of them wanted Paris to die so that the war would end.

Agamemnon shouted to all, "Trojans and Greeks, Menelaus has clearly won the single combat. He is the victor. Trojans, you must return Helen and his treasure to Menelaus and pay the Greeks fitting reparations for nine years of war."

The Greeks roared their approval.

Zeus, who was watching the war, thought, *The Trojans do not have a good reason for fighting the war. They are fighting only so that Paris can sleep with Helen.*

If the Trojans were to win the war, and they won't, Paris would keep the treasure he stole from Menelaus, and he would keep the wife he stole from Menelaus. In order for him to do that, many Trojans and many Greeks will have died in the war. Paris isn't worth the deaths of those men, and neither is Helen. Of course, while the war is being fought, many children are growing up in Greece without fathers. Some young men will run wild because they did not have fathers around to help raise them and teach them the correct way to behave. And at least one young man on Ithaca will still be an adolescent when he should be a man because his father was not around to raise him. In addition, many parents are growing old without their sons being around to take care of them.

If the Trojans lose the war, they lose everything. The men will lose their lives, and the women and children will become slaves. The young and pretty Trojan women will become sex-slaves. In addition, the world will lose a center of civilization.

The Trojans don't even respect Paris. All of them, including Helen, would be happy if he were to die. Paris has no concern for the Trojans. He is willing to have sex with Helen in Troy while the Trojans are on the battlefield.

Meanwhile, in his camp by his ships, Odysseus thought, *The world is what it is.*

The world is polytheistic. Many gods exist.

The gods are powerful beings. They are powerful forces in nature, and they can walk among human beings.

Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades decided to divide up the world. They cast lots to decide who would be the god of the sky, who would be the god of the sea, and who would be the god of the Land of the Dead.

Zeus is the god of the sky. Zeus' weapons include thunderbolts, which he throws.

Poseidon is the god of the sea. He has a chariot that he can drive over water.

Hades is the god of the Underworld. He rules a gloomy world: the Land of the Dead. The Land of the Dead is also known as Hades.

Zeus is the most powerful god. The land should be ruled in common by these three major gods, but Zeus seized power over the land. He is the strongest god, and the other gods cannot resist him. Zeus rules by might. He has many affairs with both immortal goddesses and mortal women.

These are the three major gods, but many other gods exist.

Aphrodite inflicts sexual passion on other people, and she is sexual passion.

Apollo is the god of the sun, of archery, of the lyre, of the plague, and of medicine.

Ares is hated because he is war.

Artemis is the goddess of the moon and of the hunt. She is also the goddess of the young of beasts and the children of human beings.

Athena is the goddess of wisdom.

Bacchus is the god of grapes and of wine.

Hera is the goddess of marriage. She is the wife of Zeus, and she is depicted in art wearing a veil and headdress. A veil and headdress are signs of a married woman. Hera is jealous of Zeus' many lovers.

Hephaestus is the god of fire: the blacksmith god. His legs are lame, but he has strong shoulders and so he became a blacksmith and a creator of beautiful objects.

Hermes is the god who guides the souls of the dead to the Underworld. He also delivers messages for the gods.

Iris is the goddess of the rainbow. She delivers messages for the gods.

Thetis, the mother of Achilles, is a minor sea-goddess. Her father is the Old Man of the Sea.

These gods have human form, with some differences. The gods and goddesses are larger and better looking and stronger than human beings. However, they look like human beings, and they speak the language of human beings. They feel the human emotions of jealousy, anger, and grief. They eat, drink, and have sex like human beings. Gods and mortals can mate together and have children.

The gods are not omniscient, or omnipotent, or omnibenevolent.

The gods are not omniscient; they know a lot, but they do not know everything. The gods can trick other gods. The gods can do things behind other gods' backs. The gods can wait until the attention of Zeus is turned elsewhere and then act without his knowledge. If Zeus were omniscient, he would know when another god is tricking him. Hera sometimes tricks Zeus.

Here is an example of Zeus being unfaithful to Hera, who in turn tricks him. Zeus was able to sleep with Alcmene by assuming the form of her husband. This is a form of sexual misconduct. Alcmene did not want to have sex with Zeus; she thought that she was having sex with her husband. Alcmene became pregnant with the super-strong mortal named Heracles. Zeus wanted Heracles to become a king. Hera asked Zeus to swear an inviolable oath that a descendant of Perseus born on a certain day would become a king. Zeus swore the inviolable oath, knowing that Heracles was a descendant of Perseus and expecting him to be born on that day. But Hera held back Heracles' birth and instead another descendant of Perseus, Eurystheus, was born on that day and so he became a king. Heracles performed his famous twelve labors for Eurystheus.

Of course, the gods do know a lot. They know a human being's fate. The gods know when a human being will die. They also know the fate of cities; for example, they know that Troy will fall.

The gods are very powerful, but they are not omnipotent.

The gods can change their shape. They can take the shape of a bird or of a particular human being. The gods often take the shape of human beings when they appear before mortals because if they appeared in their full glory before mortals, the sight of them would incinerate the mortals. For example, Semele was the mortal mother of the god Bacchus. She wanted Zeus, the father of Bacchus, to reveal himself to her in all his glory. He did, and she burned to ashes.

The gods can make themselves invisible. They can make mortals invisible by hiding them in fog. When Agamemnon and Achilles quarreled, Athena appeared before Achilles and stopped him from killing Agamemnon. I was present. I did not see Athena, but Achilles did. He must have. And Aphrodite was able to make Paris invisible in a fog as she swept him off the dueling ground when he fought — and lost to — Menelaus. All I saw was the fog, but I know that Aphrodite loves Paris and she must have helped him.

The gods have well-developed senses of hearing and of sight. They can hear prayers addressed to them from far away. They can be on Mount Olympus and yet hear and see everything that is going on at Troy.

The gods can fly through the air. They can travel very quickly.

Some gods have special powers. Poseidon can cause earthquakes, and Zeus can cause lightning. Aphrodite can cause sexual desire in an immortal or a mortal being. Zeus at least sometimes knows the thoughts of mortals.

The gods cannot go back on their inviolable oaths. When Zeus swears by the River Styx, he must keep his oath. The same is true of the other gods.

Zeus and the other gods cannot simply annul death, and they cannot change fate — or, at least, they decide not to do these things. However, the gods can decide which course of events will lead to a certain fate. For example, if a mortal is fated to die on a certain day, a god such as Zeus can decide how that mortal will die.

The gods are a part of the universe. The universe existed and then the gods such as Zeus came into existence.

The gods are not omnibenevolent; they are not all-good; they are often not just. Some of the gods, including Zeus, are rapists. Hera is very capable of exacting vengeance on innocent people. The gods are very dangerous, and they can do bad things to human beings. One example is the story of Actaeon. He was out hunting with his dogs, and he saw the goddess Artemis bathing naked. He did not mean to see her naked, but she exacted vengeance anyway. She turned him into a stag, and his own dogs ran him down and killed him. He suffered horribly because his mind was still human although his body was that of a male deer.

The gods can at times be just. Zeus is the god of xenia, and he punishes those who violate xenia.

Because the gods are immortal, they do not regard time as humans do. They have all eternity to live. A mortal can die today. The Trojan War started because of a violation of xenia, but the war has gone on for nine years and Zeus has not yet punished Troy. What is nine years to Zeus? Nothing. What is nine years to me? If I were home in Ithaca, my wife, Penelope, and I could have had more children by now.

The gods take sides. Apollo, Artemis, and Aphrodite support the Trojans, while Athena, Hera, and Poseidon support the Greeks.

Usually, the gods do not love or respect human beings, although exceptions exist. Thetis really does love Achilles; she has long conversations with him. Athena has a certain regard for me. Both Athena and I can form well-planned plots. Athena respects me for that reason.

Often, we human beings seem to be playthings of the gods. Zeus rapes mortal women whom he desires but who are unwilling to sleep with him. The gods look at the Trojan War as a long-running source of entertainment.

The gods are not omnipotent, the gods are not transcendent, the gods are not necessarily good, the gods are not omniscient, and the gods are not necessarily loving. Occasionally, the gods can be good or loving, or both. Occasionally, the gods can be rapists or murderers, or both.

The gods are immortal, while human beings are mortal. I, Odysseus, accept mortality. Immortality does not work well for most human beings. For example, the goddess Dawn fell in love with the mortal Tithonus. As a gift, she made him immortal. However, she did not make him ageless, and so he grows older and older. A Sibyl was once granted anything she wished for. She wished to live as many years as the number of grains of sand on beaches. She will eventually die because the number

of grains of sand on beaches is finite, but if you ask the very aged Sibyl now what she wishes for, she replies, "I wish to die."

I much prefer mortality. Mortality makes heroism possible. If a god goes to war against human beings, the god risks little because the god cannot die. A god can be wounded, but the god will quickly heal and be pain-free. When a mortal goes to war, the mortal can die and lose all. A mortal who risks his life to save the life of another human being is a true hero. The gods at times can inspire awe, but they cannot be heroes.

One characteristic of the gods is their anger. The word for the anger of a god is menis.

We Greeks saw how strong the anger of the gods can be when Agamemnon disrespected the priest of Apollo, and Apollo sent the plague against the Greeks. Agamemnon did not catch the plague and die, but many innocent Greeks did. The anger of the gods results in many innocent human beings dying. Take the Trojan War. I know about the Judgment of Paris. Athena and Hera are willing for many, many Trojans — and Greeks — to die simply because they lost a beauty contest.

The world is patriarchal. Males have the power. Of course, the goddesses are a special case and are more powerful than human men. However, even in the world of gods and goddesses, the gods have more power. The king of gods and men is Zeus, a male.

Slavery exists in this world. Women are spoils of war, and young, pretty women become sex-slaves to the warriors who have killed their husbands and brothers. Even in places of peace, slaves are servants in the palaces and on the farms.

The world is monarchical. Agamemnon is a king, Menelaus is a king, Achilles is a king, and I am a king. Many other Greek warriors at Troy are kings. Priam is the King of Troy.

This is just the way the world is.

Chapter 4: A Truce and a Battle (Iliad)

On Mount Olympus, Zeus and the other gods were enjoying an easy life. They sat in comfort, and Hebe, the goddess of youth and spring, poured nectar for them in golden goblets. They looked down at the Trojan War, a source of entertainment for them.

But Zeus decided to anger his wife, Hera. He said to the gods, “Look at those two there: Hera and Athena. They support Menelaus, and yet Aphrodite just rescued her favorite, Paris, from death at the hands of Menelaus. Hera and Athena watch, and Aphrodite takes action. Otherwise, Paris would now be dead. However, Menelaus obviously won the single combat.

“Now we need to decide future events. Troy is fated to fall, but will it fall now? Or do we ensure that the fighting starts again and Troy falls at a later date? If Troy falls now, men could still live in Troy and Menelaus could take Helen home to Sparta.”

Hera and Athena sat together discussing the war. Athena knew that her father was trying to make Hera angry. Athena ignored him and stayed silent, but Hera said, “Why do you want to end the war now? I have labored long and hard to bring the Greek ships to Troy. I have labored long and hard to make the war painful for Priam and Priam’s sons. I want them to suffer more.

“Do whatever you please. You have the strength. You have the power. But don’t expect the other gods to praise you!”

Zeus had wanted to make Hera angry, but now he was angry. He said to her, “You want to bring miseries to Priam and to Priam’s sons, but what miseries have they heaped on you? What have they done to you that makes you want to tear down the walls of Troy? How will you ever satisfy your thirst for vengeance? By eating Priam and Priam’s sons raw? Is that what it would take? Take your vengeance. Do whatever you want. But if I ever want to destroy a city you love, Hera, don’t try to stop me.

“After all, I am allowing you to destroy Troy — unwillingly. I love Troy and I love Priam. At Troy, my altars have never lacked for sacrifices. For me, the Trojans sacrifice animals and pour wine onto the ground. That is the way that mortals pay homage to me and to you other gods.”

Hera opened her eyes wide and said, “Wonderful. I love three cities ruled by men. I love the city of Argos, which is ruled by Diomedes. I love the city of Sparta, which is ruled by Menelaus, and I love the city of Mycenae, which is ruled by Agamemnon. Destroy these three cities whenever you wish. Do whatever you want to do to them whenever you want to do it. I will not come to their defense. And if I did, what good would it do? You are strong and powerful. Still, you ought to give me what I want. I am your wife, after all. So let us give in to each other’s wishes: You allow me to destroy Troy, and I will allow you to destroy Argos, Sparta, and Mycenae.

“But right now, let us keep this war going so that Priam and Priam’s sons can suffer even more. Send Athena to the battlefield. Let her make sure that the Trojans break the truce. Let her make sure that the war starts again — no peace!”

Zeus obeyed her wish. He knew that Troy was fated to fall, but not yet. He said to Athena, “Go to the battlefield and make sure that the Trojans break the truce. They started the war; they are the ones who will break the truce.”

Athena flew to the battlefield like a falling meteorite trailing fire behind it. The warriors saw the trail of fire, and they were terrified. They asked each other, “What does this sign mean? Will the two armies battle again? Or does this sign mean peace?”

Athena reached the battlefield, and looking like the Trojan Laodocus, she searched for Pandarus, a skilled archer. He was near, standing by warriors carrying shields.

Athena said to him, “You can win glory, Pandarus. You have skill as an archer. Are you man enough to kill Menelaus with an arrow? If you do, the war will be over, and Paris will reward you with shining treasure. So shoot an arrow into Menelaus and bring him down. Let his corpse be placed on a burial pyre and burned to ashes. But before you shoot an arrow, pray to Apollo, god of archery. Swear to him that you will sacrifice many newborn lambs to him when you return home.”

Athena tempted him, and the fool believed that he would be successful. He unstrapped his bow. It was made from the horns of a wild goat that he had hunted and hit in the heart. The horns were sixteen hands in length, and a skilled bowyer made them into a bow with gold caps on the tips. Apollo had given Pandarus the skill to hunt the wild goat and had given the bowyer the skill to make the bow, and so the bow was a gift from Apollo to Pandarus.

Pandarus strung the bow and fitted an arrow to the string. His fellow warriors hid him from sight with their shields. He prayed to Apollo, promising him sacrifices, and he aimed at Menelaus and shot the arrow.

But Athena protected Menelaus. She wanted the war to start again, and she wanted the Trojans to repeat their guilt, but she did not want Menelaus to die. Just like a mother flicks a fly from a sleeping baby, she flicked the arrow away from Menelaus’ vital organs. Blood flowed, but the wound was not mortal.

Warriors grabbed their armor and weapons and retreated to their respective sides.

The arrow had hit Menelaus’ war-belt and been deflected from his vital organs. The tip of the arrowhead had grazed his flesh, but most of the arrowhead remained outside his body.

Imagine a Carian woman dyeing ivory. From white it turns red. The prized ivory item — the cheek piece of a horse — is stored and valued in a king’s vault. Menelaus’ red blood flowed and dyed his legs red.

Agamemnon loved his brother. He saw the flowing blood and shuddered. Menelaus himself feared at first for his life, but he saw that the arrow had only lightly penetrated his body and had not made a mortal wound.

Agamemnon grabbed his brother's hand and said, "Menelaus, the truce I made with the Trojans was a mistake — it sealed your death. It exposed you before the treacherous Trojans. They did not observe our truce. But the sacrifices we made and the oaths we swore to the gods shall not go for nothing. Zeus will take vengeance on the Trojans for breaking the oath. Maybe not today, but eventually. People who do such treachery will be punished. Eventually, Troy will fall and Priam and his people will die. Zeus, god of *xenia*, will make sure that this happens.

"But I will grieve for you if you die and I am forced to go back to Greece in disgrace. If you die, our warriors will want to immediately return home. The war will be over, and Priam and the other Trojans will be triumphant. Helen will stay at Troy, as will your corpse and funeral mound. Some Trojan will stand on your funeral mound and boast, 'Let Agamemnon always be this "successful" in war! Let him always go home empty-handed, as he did when he attacked Troy and was forced to leave the corpse of his brother behind.' Some Trojan will boast that way. Let me die before that happens!"

Menelaus said to him, "Don't worry. This is not a mortal wound. My war-belt stopped the arrow before it reached a mortal spot."

Agamemnon said, "I pray to the gods that you are right. Right now, let's get a healer who will treat your wound and stop the pain."

Agamemnon said to his herald Talthibius, "Get the healer Machaon. His father was the healer Asclepius. We need him to treat Menelaus. An archer has hit him with an arrow to gain glory for himself and to give defeat to us."

Talthibius ran to find Machaon. He was with other warriors from Tricca. Talthibius said to Machaon, "Come quickly! Agamemnon needs you to treat Menelaus, who has been hit by an arrow in an act of treachery."

Talthibius and Machaon ran to Menelaus. Machaon removed the arrow from Menelaus' body and sucked blood out of the wound, and then he applied salves that the wise Centaur Chiron had given to Asclepius in years past.

Meanwhile, the Greeks and Trojans had put on their armor and grabbed their weapons and were preparing to do battle.

Agamemnon took charge. He left Machaon and Menelaus and went off to make sure that his warriors were ready. He left his team of horses and chariot in the care of his aide Eurymedon until he would need them when he grew exhausted in battle.

Agamemnon went first to the charioteers and said, "Fight strongly. Right is on our side. The Trojans started this war, and the Trojans broke the truce. Zeus will not support them in this war.

Dogs and birds will eat the flesh of their dead warriors, and we will drag their wives and children home with us to be slaves after we have conquered Troy!”

Agamemnon also saw warriors retreating from doing battle. These men he scorned with words: “Bragging cowards! Why are you running from battle! Why are you acting like winded fawns? Is your fighting spirit dead? Are you waiting for the Trojans to pin you with your backs against your ships? Are you hoping that Zeus will perform a miracle to save your lives?”

Agamemnon moved down the front line and made sure that his warriors were ready to fight. He praised some commanders, and he criticized other commanders.

Idomeneus, commander of the warriors from Crete, stood with his warriors ready to fight the Trojans.

Agamemnon praised the Cretan leader, “I prize you, Idomeneus, more than other warriors, and I show it at our feasts. Other warriors drink only their allotted amount of wine, but your wine cup is filled and refilled without limit. Now fight bravely. Be the fighter whom you have always claimed to be.”

Idomeneus replied, “I will. You can count on me. Now fire up the other warriors and make them ready for battle. The Trojans broke the truce. Let them die because of it.”

Agamemnon next saw the two warriors named Ajax: Great Ajax and Little Ajax. They stood with their warriors, ready for battle. Think of a goatherd on a mountaintop seeing a black storm coming. The goatherd drives his goats to a cave, where they crowd together as they wait for a storm. Much like that, warriors crowded behind the two Ajaxes.

Agamemnon said to them, “Great Ajax and Little Ajax, I have no need to fire you up for battle. You are ready to fight, and so are your warriors. If all of my commanders and warriors were like you and yours, the city of Troy would fall — immediately!”

Next Agamemnon saw Nestor, who was too old to do battle but who still knew strategy. He was readying his warriors to be led into battle by Pelagon, Alastor, and Chromius. Nestor placed the charioteers in the front and the foot warriors behind them. He placed the weaker and more cowardly warriors in the center — they could not run away but had to fight.

Nestor gave advice to the charioteers: “Fight as a team, not as individuals. Don’t go far out in front and try to be an individual hero, and don’t lag behind. Drive at the Trojans in a solid line. When you use your spear, thrust it and hold on to it. Don’t throw it at the Trojans. Use the effective, time-tested form of fighting.”

Nestor had fought many battles in his long life, and he had learned from fighting them. He understood strategy.

Agamemnon praised him: “Honored sir, I wish you were young again and could fight. But old age comes to all who do not die. Still, I wish that another warrior had your old age and that you were young again.”

Nestor replied, “I wish I were as young as I was when I killed Ereuthalion, but the gods give some gifts and hold other gifts back. No man receives all the gifts of the gods at one time. But with the burden of old age, I received the gifts of experience and knowledge. I will advise my warriors in battle tactics — that is something an old commander can do. The young warriors will engage in actual battle.”

Next Agamemnon saw Menestheus, commander of the warriors from the city of Athens, and Odysseus, commander of the warriors from the island of Ithaca. They were standing still, waiting for orders. Other commanders had received their orders, but not them.

Agamemnon thought they were slacking off and so he criticized them: “What are you doing? Avoiding battle? Letting other warriors do all the fighting? Are you avoiding your duty — your duty to fight in the front line? Both of you have been honored at my feasts. Both of you have been able to eat your fill of meat and drink your fill of wine. But are neither of you willing to dine at the feast of battle?”

Odysseus said sharply to Agamemnon, “Don’t talk nonsense! Watch me, and you will see that I fight well!”

Seeing that Odysseus was angry, Agamemnon controlled himself and said to him, “You are right, son of Laertes. I know that you have the heart of a warrior. If anything is wrong between us, we will fix it later. May the gods not allow us to quarrel!”

Agamemnon next saw Diomedes and his second-in-command, Sthenelus. Diomedes was standing in his chariot. Sthenelus was beside him. It seemed to Agamemnon that they were hanging back, unwilling to fight.

Agamemnon said to Diomedes, “You are the son of Tydeus. You ought not to be hanging back. Tydeus was a warrior who fought in the front lines. I never met him, but they say that he was a ferocious warrior. With Polynices, he visited the city of Mycenae a generation ago. They were preparing to attack the city of Thebes, and they wanted Mycenaean warriors to fight with them. My royal family was at first happy to fight with them, but Zeus sent them bad omens and they stayed at Mycenae. Tydeus and Polynices went to Thebes.

“Tydeus took a message to Thebes, a city which Eteocles ruled. Enemy warriors in the city surrounded Tydeus, but he was not afraid. He challenged warrior after warrior to contests of strength, and he won all contests. When he left the city, the Thebans sent warriors after him to kill him. Fifty warriors tried to kill Tydeus, but he killed forty-nine of them, leaving one alive to retreat to Thebes in accordance with signs sent by the gods.

“Such a man was Tydeus, but his son is not worthy of him.”

Diomedes, a young man, remained silent, but Sthenelus was angry. He said to Agamemnon, “You are wrong. We are better men than our fathers, and our successes show it. Our fathers fought at Thebes, but they were defeated. We fought at Thebes and won. Our army was weaker

than the army of our fathers, but we followed the will of the gods and obeyed the signs sent by the gods. Our fathers were fools because they did not respect the will of the gods.”

Diomedes said to Sthenelus, “Calm down. Be quiet. Agamemnon is trying to inspire us to fight well. That is what a commander-in-chief should do. He will gain great glory if the Greeks conquer Troy, and he does not want the Trojans to kill great numbers of Greeks. So come now. Let us be ready to fight well.”

Diomedes jumped down from his chariot, and his armor rang. He headed toward the front lines. Any enemy warriors who saw him would have felt fear.

A heavy surf can pound a shore as wave after wave arrives and reaches the shore. Much like that, line after line of Greek warriors approached the Trojan warriors. The Greek warriors marched silently into battle.

The Trojan warriors made much noise as they marched into battle. They sounded like a rich man’s thousands of cattle waiting to be milked. The Trojan warriors and their allies shouted in various languages. No single language united them.

Ares led the Trojans and Trojan allies, and Athena led the Greeks. Other immortals were present: Terror, Rout, and Strife. Strife grows larger. At first, Strife, the sister of Ares, seems small, but she quickly grows so that her head touches the sky. Strife brought Hate with her.

The two armies clashed. Warriors fought. Some men screamed in defeat, and other men roared in triumph. The ground turned red with blood.

Flash floods sometimes thunder down from mountaintops through a gorge and into a valley. Miles away, shepherds can hear the thunder. Miles away, old men, wives, and children could hear the thunder of the two armies.

The Greek Antilochus killed Echeolus. Antilochus thrust his spear into Echeolus’ forehead, breaking the skull. Echeolus fell like a tower. The Greek Elephenor grabbed the corpse’s feet and tried to drag him away to strip off his valuable armor, but the Trojan Agenor saw Elephenor and stabbed his ribs with a spear and now the Greeks and Trojans fought like wolves over the corpse of Elephenor.

Zeus, who was watching the war, thought, *Often, the warriors fight over corpses. They want to strip away the armor and weapons, which are valuable. In addition, they can ransom the corpses. The family and friends of the dead warrior will pay to gain possession of the corpse so that they can give it a proper funeral.*

Great Ajax speared Simoisius, the young, unwed son of Anthemion. Anthemion was named after a flower, and his son died in the flower of his youth. Simoisius’ mother had given birth to him along the banks of the Simois River when she and her parents had walked down the slopes of Mount Ida to tend to their sheep, and so he was named after the river. His parents loved him, but he died too soon to repay his parents by taking care of them in their old age. Great Ajax thrust

his spear through Simoisius' right nipple and chest, and Simoisius fell like a black poplar tree that had grown tall and strong, but that had been cut down by a chariot-maker. The black poplar lies by the river, seasoning. The black poplar grows hard, and Simoisius' corpse will grow hard in *rigor mortis*.

Zeus thought, *Such are the results of war. Simoisius was a young man, very healthy, and still unwed. He will never know the pleasures of wedded life and never have a child. His life is cut short, unfinished and unfulfilled. His mother used to help her parents to tend sheep, but taking care of sheep on Mount Ida has been interrupted by the war. No longer do Trojans herd sheep on Mount Ida — the war has stopped that.*

The Trojan Antiphus, one of Priam's sons, hurled a spear at Great Ajax. He missed Great Ajax but hit Leucus, one of Odysseus' friends. Leucus was trying to haul away a corpse, but Antiphus speared him in the groin and Leucus fell on the corpse and died.

Odysseus was furious. He moved closer to the enemy and hurled his spear. The Trojans fell back, but Odysseus' spear found a target: Democoon, a bastard son of Priam. Odysseus' spear hit Democoon's head, entering one temple and exiting through the other temple. Democoon's eyes saw only the darkness of death.

The Trojans, including Hector, fell back, and the Greeks dragged away Democoon's corpse.

Apollo, watching from the fortress of Troy, yelled at the Trojans, "Kill the Greeks! Their bodies are not made of hard rock! They are made of soft flesh! Kill them! Achilles is not even present! He is in his shelter on the beach!"

In turn, Athena spurred on the Greeks.

The Trojan Pirous killed Dioces. Pirous threw a jagged rock at him and hit his right shin, breaking bones. Dioces fell, and Pirous rushed at him and speared him in the navel. Dioces' intestines spilled on the ground.

The Greek Thoas then speared Pirous. The spear hit him near the nipple and pierced his lung. Thoas ran to Pirous, wrenched his spear out of Pirous' body and drew a knife and slashed him across his stomach. Thoas killed Pirous, but he could not take Pirous' armor. Pirous' fellow warriors were present, protecting his corpse and forcing Thoas back. Dioces' and Pirous' corpses lay side by side upon the bloody ground.

No warrior who fought in that battle could doubt the ferocity of the battle. Even if a warrior were led into battle by Athena, and protected by her as she prevented deadly weapons from taking that warrior's life, that warrior would know that this was a battle to be celebrated in days to come.

Chapter 5: Diomedes Battles the Gods (Iliad)

Athena decided to help Diomedes achieve great glory. She would help him have an *aristeia*: a day of glory in battle — a day in which he would fight so well that a bard would sing his deeds of courage and his fame would never die. For millennia after the warrior died, people would remember his name and talk about him.

Athena set Diomedes on fire. His weapons gleamed. His armor gleamed. Fire seemed to surround him as he battled the Trojans.

The Trojan Dares, a wealthy, respected priest of Hephaestus, had two sons: Phegeus and Idaeus. They were trained for war, and in their chariot they rushed at Diomedes, who was on foot. Phegeus threw his spear, but he missed — the spear went over Diomedes' left shoulder. Diomedes then threw his spear and hit Phegeus in the chest, knocking him out of the chariot. Idaeus jumped out of the chariot and ran, afraid to stay and defend his brother's corpse. Diomedes would have killed Idaeus, but Hephaestus saved his life, taking him from the battlefield so that his father the priest would not have to endure the loss of both sons. Diomedes captured their team of horses and chariot and gave them to his aides to take back to his ships. The death of Phegeus stunned the Trojans.

Athena, supporter of the Greeks, saw Ares, supporter of the Trojans, and said to him, "Let's not take part in the battle. Let these mortals do the fighting. Zeus can allow whichever side he chooses to win. We need not get on his bad side." Athena and Ares sat on the bank of the river Scamander and watched mortals die.

Agamemnon killed Odios, a giant of a man. The spear hit him in the back between the shoulders and came jutting out of his ribs. He fell, and his armor clanged.

Idomeneus killed Phaestus, who tried to climb into a chariot. Idomeneus thrust his spear deep into Phaestus' right shoulder and Phaestus fell, dead. Idomeneus' aide stripped the armor from Phaestus' corpse.

Menelaus killed Scamandrius, a skilled hunter who had been taught how to hunt by the huntress goddess Artemis. She taught him how to track and kill the game found in the mountains. As Scamandrius fled, Menelaus speared him between the shoulder blades. The spear came out through his chest.

The Greek Meriones, second in command of the warriors from Crete, killed Phereclus, the son of a blacksmith. He was clever with his hands, and Athena cared for him. Phereclus had built Paris' ships when Paris sailed across the Aegean and visited Menelaus at Sparta. Phereclus had not known what would be the result of that trip. Meriones speared him in the right buttock.

The spear pierced his bladder, and he dropped to his knees, screaming until his eyes saw only the darkness of death.

The Greek Meges killed Pedaeus. He was a bastard son of Antenor, but Theano, Antenor's wife, raised the boy to please her husband. Meges struck behind Pedaeus' neck with a spear. The spear came out through Pedaeus' mouth, cutting through his tongue. His teeth gripped the spearhead as he fell to the ground.

The Greek Eurypylus killed Hypsenor, the son of Dolopion, the priest of Scamander. Hypsenor fled from him, and Eurypylus followed and swung a sword and sliced off his arm. Hypsenor's arm and body hit the ground.

Warriors fought, and Diomedes fought in their midst. He was like a flash flood when spring arrives. Nothing can contain it; nothing can hold it back. It overflows the banks and washes away the dikes. The Trojans fled from Diomedes.

The archer Pandarus saw Diomedes routing the Trojans, and quickly he aimed an arrow at him. He shot — and hit his target! He hit a part of Diomedes' right shoulder that was not protected by his breastplate. Blood splattered Diomedes' armor.

Pandarus shouted, "Attack, Trojans! I've wounded Diomedes! I don't think he will live much longer!"

But Diomedes was not seriously wounded. He retreated to his chariot and team of horses and told his second-in-command, Sthenelus, "Pull this arrow out of my shoulder."

Sthenelus pulled out the arrow, and blood gushed.

Diomedes prayed to Athena, "Hear me. You have stood by your father, Zeus, in battle before. Now stand by me. Pandarus fights at a distance. Bring him within range of my spear so that I can kill him. He wounded me with an arrow and boasts that I will not live much longer."

Athena heard him and gave him strength and speed. She said to him, "Fight the Trojans! I have given you the strength of your father. Tydeus was never afraid in battle; he was a fierce killer of foes. I have also given you special sight. Now you can tell when a god is fighting. If a god comes to fight you, do not engage in battle with the god, with one exception. If the god is Aphrodite, you may fight her and wound her with your spear."

Athena flew away, and Diomedes charged into battle. Now that he had been wounded, he was three times as angry as previously. He was as angry and as dangerous as a lion that a shepherd has wounded. The lion is ferocious, and the shepherd must flee as his flocks scatter in panic as the lion kills them. Like that lion killed sheep, so Diomedes killed Trojans.

Diomedes killed first Astynous and then Hypiron. He stabbed one with the lance, and the other he hacked with a sword that sliced his victim's entire shoulder and arm from his body.

Diomedes left them dead, not taking time to strip their armor. He charged the brothers Abas and Polyidus and killed them. Their father was Eurydamas, who read the meaning of dreams. But he had not read his sons' dreams when they sailed to become allies of Troy.

Diomedes killed two more brothers, Xanthus and Thoon. They had grown tall as their father had aged, and now he would father no more sons to be his heirs. Diomedes killed both of his sons and left the old father grieving. The father would never welcome his sons home from the war — distant relatives would inherit his property.

Diomedes killed Echemmon and Chromius, two more sons of Priam. They rode together in a chariot. Like a lion charging cattle and snapping their necks, so Diomedes charged them and took their lives. He stripped their armor and gave it and their team of horses to his aides to take back to his camp.

Diomedes kept killing Trojans, and Aeneas hunted for Pandarus, hoping that the archer could stop the Greek warrior. He found him and said to him, "Pandarus, you are the best of our archers. No one is better than you. Pray to Zeus, and kill with an arrow that Greek warrior who is routing us and killing many good warriors. You can kill him unless he is a god who wars against mortals."

Pandarus replied, "Aeneas, the Greek warrior looks like Diomedes to me. I can identify him by his distinctive shield and helmet and by his team of horses. I have been watching him closely. However, I cannot swear that he is not a god. But if he is Diomedes, then he fights with a god beside him. He can't be alone. An invisible god must be with him — a god who protects him. I shot an arrow at him and hit him and drew blood. I thought that I had killed him. But he still fights! Maybe he is a god!

"Here I am, on foot. I have no chariot and no team of horses. In the halls of my father, Lycaon, are eleven chariots and eleven teams of horses. My father urged me, 'Take the chariots and horses. Use them to lead the Trojans against the Greeks.' But I did not listen. I wish I had. I worried that I could not provide enough fodder for them during this war, so I left them at home, thinking that my bow and arrows would be offense enough.

"I have already wounded two of the best of the Greeks — Diomedes and Menelaus — but I killed neither of them. I drew blood, but I only made them angrier.

"It was bad luck when I chose to bring only my bow and arrows to Troy. If I make it back home again and see my wife and my house again, then let a stranger kill me if I don't break my bow and burn it. It has been worthless to me here."

Aeneas said to Pandarus, "Don't talk about returning home. Let's stop this rout by turning and facing Diomedes with my chariot and team of horses. Climb on board and see the horses that come from the stock of Tros, long-ago King of Troy. They are fast, and they will carry us back to Troy safely if we need to retreat. You can drive the team if you want, or if you prefer, I will do it."

Pandarus replied, "It's better for you to drive the team. They are your horses, and they will more readily obey you than they will me if we need to retreat. We don't want them to panic if they don't recognize my voice. They will be expecting to hear you. We don't want Diomedes to kill the two of us and take your horses. You do the driving, and I will try to spear Diomedes and kill him."

They boarded the chariot, and Aeneas drove the horses at Diomedes. Sthenelus, who was serving as a charioteer, saw Aeneas and Pandarus and said to Diomedes, "Here comes a challenge. Two enemy warriors are ready to fight you. One is the skilled archer Pandarus, and the other is Aeneas, whose mother is the immortal goddess Aphrodite. Climb aboard the chariot now. Don't fight. You might die."

Diomedes replied, "I won't retreat. I prefer to fight. I will meet them on foot with Athena helping me. Two men are charging at me, but at best only one man will remain alive. If I should kill them both, I want you to capture Aeneas' horses and take them to my camp. Aeneas' horses come from the stock of Zeus' horses that the god gave to Tros. Zeus had stolen Ganymede, one of Tros' three sons, to be his cupbearer, and the god compensated Tros with strong stallions.

"Aeneas' father, Anchises, was tricky. When his mares were in heat, he secretly drove them to be bred by the stallions, which then belonged to Laomedon, Tros' grandson and the father of Priam. The mare produced six foals. Anchises kept four for himself, and he gave two to Aeneas, who is now using them in the war. With luck, we can take Aeneas' horses and win great fame."

Pandarus, bearing down upon Diomedes and Sthenelus, shouted, "What foolhardiness! Diomedes is standing his ground and will fight us!"

He shouted to Diomedes, "I failed to kill you with an arrow! Now we will see if I can kill you with a spear!"

He hurled his spear, and it drove through Diomedes' shield and reached his armor.

Pandarus shouted, "A direct hit! You're dead, Diomedes!"

But Diomedes replied, "No. Your spear did not go through my breastplate. My armor saved my life. But now one of you will die."

Diomedes hurled his spear and it hit Pandarus' face, splitting his nose and cracking his teeth and cutting his tongue. Pandarus fell off the chariot, and Aeneas' horses reared into the air.

Aeneas jumped down from the chariot to protect the body of Pandarus. He straddled the corpse and shouted a battle cry.

Diomedes lifted a huge rock that no two men today could lift, and he threw it at Aeneas. It hit Aeneas' hip, destroying the socket and cutting Aeneas' skin. Aeneas did not die, but he fell unconscious.

Diomedes would have killed Aeneas, but Aeneas received divine help from his goddess mother, Aphrodite. She held him in her arms and threw part of her robe over his body. Weapons

hit her robe and harmlessly bounced off. Aphrodite did not want a Greek warrior to kill her son. She started to carry Aeneas away from the fighting

Sthenelus remembered Diomedes' orders. He caught Aeneas' team and drove them over to the Greek side and gave them to Deipylus to drive to Diomedes' ships. Sthenelus then climbed into his own chariot and drove to Diomedes.

Diomedes saw Aphrodite, recognized her, and remembered Athena's words not to fight any of the gods except Aphrodite. Athena was allowing him to attack and wound the goddess of sexual passion. He stalked Aphrodite, knowing that she was a coward goddess, not a goddess like Athena, who is at home in war, and not a goddess like Enyo, who is the goddess of war.

Diomedes caught up to Aphrodite and rushed her and stabbed her wrist with a spear. Ichor, the blood of the gods, flowed from the wound. Gods drink nectar, they eat ambrosia, and ichor flows in their veins.

Unlike most mortal mothers would do when her son's life is in danger, Aphrodite screamed and dropped her son and fled. But Apollo, a god at home in war, picked up Aeneas and shielded him.

Diomedes shouted after Aphrodite, "Stay out of the fighting! You lured Helen to her ruin! I think that you have learned not to get involved in the fighting!" He mocked the goddess, and she ran away in pain.

Iris went to Aphrodite, took her hand, and led her out of the fighting. They found Ares, who was relaxing at the side of the battle. His spear was resting on a cloud beside his stallions.

Aphrodite dropped to her knees and begged him to lend his stallions to her, "Help me, brother, to quickly reach Mount Olympus. I'm been wounded, and I'm in pain. Diomedes stabbed my wrist. He is willing even to fight Zeus!"

Ares lent his chariot and horses to her, and Aphrodite and Iris climbed on board. Iris drove her to Mount Olympus. Aphrodite found her mother, Dione, and like a little girl, climbed into her lap. Dione held her in her arms, stroked her hair, and asked, "Aphrodite, child, who has hurt you? Which god? It is as if you have been punished for doing something wrong in public."

Aphrodite replied, "The mortal Diomedes wounded me because I was carrying Aeneas, my son, away from the battle. Diomedes is insolent. The Greek warriors are fighting the gods!"

Dione tried to calm her daughter, "Be brave, although I know that you are in pain. Mortals have wounded other gods and caused them pain.

"Ares was chained and imprisoned for thirteen months in a bronze cauldron by two giants: Ephialtes and Otus. Although Ares is immortal, he was near death before Hermes, summoned by the giants' stepmother, freed him.

"Hera endured pain, too, when Heracles fired a three-barbed arrow at her and struck her in the right breast.

“Even Hades endured pain. Heracles shot an arrow into him at Pylos. Hades climbed Mount Olympus and saw Zeus. A healer applied a salve to Hades’ wound and cured him.

“Heracles had no problem attacking the gods with his arrows. Their pain did not bother him. But Diomedes — Athena must have given him permission to attack you. Still, he ought to know that anyone who attacks the gods will not live a long life. The children of that kind of man will not get to know him and play games with him because he will not return home after the war.

“Let Diomedes beware. A better warrior than you may fight him and make his wife, Aegialia, a widow who will cry at night out of grief for him and wake up the servants.”

Dione comforted Aphrodite with soothing words and wiped away the ichor. Aphrodite’s wound healed, and her pain vanished.

Hera and Athena had watched, and now they mocked Aphrodite. Athena said to Zeus, “Will you get angry at me if I guess what caused Aphrodite’s pain? She’s been getting another Greek woman to fall in love with a Trojan man — one of the men whom Aphrodite loves. Aphrodite stroked a Greek woman’s gown and scratched her wrist on a brooch.”

Zeus said to Aphrodite, “You are not a warrior, child. Attend to marriage and sexual passion. Let Athena and Ares attend to war.”

Diomedes now charged at Aeneas, trying to kill him and strip his armor, although Aeneas was still protected by Apollo, who repelled Diomedes’ attack. Three times Diomedes attacked, and three times Apollo repelled his attack. When Diomedes attacked a fourth time like a superhuman warrior, Apollo shouted at him, “Think, Diomedes! You do not want to do this! The gods are not mortals and never will be! The gods will never die!”

Diomedes pulled back and stopped attacking. Apollo took Aeneas away from the battle and into Troy. He set Aeneas down on the citadel of Troy, and the goddesses Leto and Artemis healed him.

Apollo made a phantasm of Aeneas and put him on the battlefield, lying unconscious and wounded. The phantasm seemed to be wearing Aeneas’ armor. Greeks and Trojans battled over the unconscious phantasm.

Apollo shouted to Ares, “Can you stop Diomedes? He wounded Aphrodite, and like a superhuman warrior, he even attacked me!”

Apollo went to the citadel of Troy, while Ares went to war. Taking the form of the Trojan Acamas, Ares shouted encouragement to the Trojans: “When are you going to fight these Greeks? When your backs are against the walls of Troy? Aeneas lies wounded and unconscious. We prize him like we prize Hector. Fight to protect him!”

Sarpedon, one of the Trojan allies from Lycia, taunted Hector, leader of the Trojans: “Where is your courage? Didn’t you used to brag that you and your brothers-in-law and your brothers could defend Troy without help from allies? Where are these warriors now? I don’t see them. We

— your allies — are doing the fighting. I come from Lycia, a long distance away, a country where I left my wife and my son and my wealth. Here, I fight, although if I die here, the enemy warriors will find nothing of mine worth looting — no cattle or gold. So poorly do you reward your allies.

“Why are you just standing around? Why don’t you at least encourage your warriors to defend their wives? Be careful. You and your city can fall. You need to encourage your allies to keep fighting. Lead by example, thereby stopping any criticism of you.”

Sarpedon’s criticism made Hector want to kill Greek warriors. He jumped from his chariot, fully armed and carrying two spears, and he encouraged his troops to fight well. The Trojans stopped retreating and turned around to face the Greek warriors, who stood their ground.

When men winnow the crop and the goddess Demeter separates chaff from grain, the dry chaff falls to the ground and turns it white. Similarly, the Greek warriors turned white as dust kicked up into the air and settled down on them — dust kicked up by the feet of fighting men.

Ares now helped the Trojans. Apollo had advised him to join the battle once Athena left the battlefield. Ares sent Aeneas, fully recovered, into the battle. The Trojan warriors were thrilled to see him again, but they had no time to ask him questions — they were too busy fighting.

Great Ajax, Little Ajax, Diomedes, and Odysseus encouraged the Greeks in their attack. The Greeks held firm against the Trojan onslaught. The Greeks were like unmoving clouds above a mountain peak on a windless day.

Agamemnon shouted to his troops, “Be courageous, and remember that men will talk about what you do today. Think of your future reputation! When warriors do that, more warriors stay alive. When they forget their reputation and run, more warriors die and their reputations also die.”

Agamemnon threw his spear and killed Deicoon, one of Aeneas’ friends. Agamemnon’s spear went through Deicoon’s shield and war-belt and plunged deep into his intestines. He fell dead.

In retaliation, Aeneas immediately killed the twin brothers Orsilochus and Crethon. The twins were like two young lions that mauled sheep and cattle until they themselves died. They had killed Trojan warriors, but now Aeneas killed them.

Menelaus wanted to avenge their deaths. Ares encouraged his fury, hoping that Aeneas would kill him. Antilochus, the son of Nestor, saw Menelaus exposed on the front line and ran to join him, afraid that Menelaus would die and the Trojans would win the war. Aeneas had been ready to fight Menelaus, but when he saw Antilochus join Menelaus, Aeneas backed away. Menelaus and Antilochus dragged away the corpses of the twin brothers and rejoined the battle.

Menelaus killed Pylaemenes, commander of the Paphlagonians, stabbing him and splintering his collarbone. Antilochus killed Mydon, the charioteer of Pylaemenes. Antilochus threw a rock at him and smashed his elbow. Mydon dropped the reins, which dragged in the dust, and Antilochus ran at him and thrust a sword into his temple. Mydon gasped and fell from

the chariot. His head and shoulders struck some soft sand. Antilochus grabbed the reins and mounted the chariot and drove over Mydon while driving the team to the Greek side.

Hector saw all, and he and Ares charged the Greeks. Enyo, goddess of war, brought Uproar into the battle.

Diomedes saw Ares and was unwilling to fight him. Diomedes was like a man who comes to a river with raging rapids. He looks at the water and decides not to try to cross. Diomedes said to his warriors, "Hector fights with Ares, who is beside him. Retreat, but continue to face the Trojans. We ought not to attempt to fight the gods."

The Trojans charged, and Hector killed Menesthes and Anchialus, two men in one chariot.

Great Ajax ran to their corpses and threw a spear, killing Amphius, who was rich and owned much farmland. The spear pierced Amphius' war-belt and penetrated deep into his intestines, and Great Ajax rushed to the corpse, eager to strip the armor.

The Trojans attacked Great Ajax, and their weapons repeatedly hit his shield. Great Ajax planted a foot on the corpse and wrenched his spear out of the body. But he could not strip the corpse's armor. Too many Trojans were attacking him, and he was forced to retreat.

Heracles, of a previous generation, was now a god and did not take part in the Trojan War, but one of his sons, Tlepolemus, a Greek, attacked the Trojan ally Sarpedon. Heracles' father was Zeus, and Sarpedon's father was Zeus, so now a son and a grandson of Zeus attacked each other.

Tlepolemus taunted Sarpedon, "Are you really a son of Zeus? I think not. You are not worthy to have Zeus as a father. My father, Heracles, was a real son of Zeus. Think of Heracles' exploits. Poseidon sent a sea monster to attack Hesione, the daughter of the Trojan king Laomedon. Heracles rescued her, but Laomedon did not give him the reward that had been agreed upon: Laomedon's famous horses. Therefore, Heracles gathered an army and sailed to Troy with only six ships. Despite the smallness of his army, he conquered Troy. But you — you're no hero. You will die here, now, at my hands!"

Sarpedon replied, "You are correct that Heracles conquered Troy, but Laomedon was stupid to withhold from Heracles the price they had agreed upon: Laomedon's mares. But you will not kill me; instead, I will kill you and gain fame."

Both threw their spears at the same time. Sarpedon's spear hit Tlepolemus in the neck, going clear through and coming out the other side. Tlepolemus' eyes saw the darkness of death.

But Tlepolemus' spear hit Sarpedon's left thigh, reaching the bone. But Zeus would not allow Sarpedon to die yet.

Sarpedon's warriors carried him out of the battle, the spear still in his thigh. No one thought to pull the spear out so that Sarpedon could hobble away despite his wound. They were in too much of a hurry to carry him away to safety.

The Greeks carried the corpse of Tlepolemus away. Odysseus thought about the best course of action: Should he go after Sarpedon and try to kill him, or kill as many Lycians as he could? Athena turned his thoughts to the Lycians.

Odysseus killed and killed again. His fury took the lives of Coeranus, Chromius, Alastor, Alcander, Halius, Prytanis, and Noëmon. He would have killed more, but Hector charged toward him.

Sarpedon saw Hector and begged him, "Don't leave me here! Protect me! Let me die within the walls of Troy! I'm obviously not fated to see my home again!"

Hector ignored him; he was too eager to kill Greeks.

Sarpedon's fellow Lycians laid him under an oak and attended to his wound. Pelagon pushed the spear through and out Sarpedon's body. Sarpedon fainted. His life-breath left him, but a strong North wind pushed it back into his mouth and he continued to live.

Seeing Hector and Ares, Odysseus and the other Greek warriors retreated, always facing the enemy. They did not break their ranks and run for their ships.

Hector and Ares killed many Greeks. They killed Teuthras, Orestes, Trechus, Oenomaus, the son of Oenops named Helenus, and Oresbius, a very wealthy man who had hoarded his wealth.

Hera saw Hector slaughtering Greek warriors, and she said to Athena, "It's a disaster! We promised Menelaus that he would sack Troy before he sailed home again, so we can't let Ares rampage on this way! Let's stop him!"

The two goddesses mounted Hera's chariot, a marvelous work of art with silver and gold. Athena carried her own shield, which displayed the head of a Gorgon, a monster the sight of which would turn a person to stone. She wore her golden helmet, which was decorated with the figures of warriors from one hundred cities. She also carried her heavy spear.

They drove the chariot to Zeus, and Hera said to him, "Aren't you angry at Ares? He is killing many good Greek warriors. Apollo and Aphrodite are sitting at ease, but they are the ones who sent Ares to fight. Do I have your permission to drive Ares off the battlefield?"

Zeus said, "Go to the battle, but let Athena drive Ares back to Olympus. She is the one who can drive the god of war away in pain."

Hera drove the chariot to the plain of Troy, and she let the immortal horses graze on the ambrosial grass she caused to grow beside the river Simois.

Hera and Athena went to Diomedes and his men, and Hera shouted with the voice of Stentor, who was famous for his loud shout, "Greeks! You are cowardly! When Achilles was fighting for us, the Trojans were afraid to leave the walls of Troy! Now they fight far from their walls! Now they fight close to your ships!"

Athena made her way to Diomedes. He was bathing the wound that the archer Pandarus had given him. Diomedes was wiping away the blood.

Athena said to him, “You are not worthy to have Tydeus as your father. He was a much better man than you are. When he went alone to Thebes, I forbade him to kill. But he challenged the young Theban men to feats of strength and defeated them easily. I stood beside him.

“I also stand beside you, Diomedes. So why aren’t you fighting Trojans? Either you are tired or you are afraid. Either way, you are not the son your father deserved.”

Diomedes replied, “I recognize you, Athena. I am not afraid. Why am I not fighting? Because I am following your orders. You yourself forbade me to fight the gods except Aphrodite. I am not on the battlefield because Ares is leading the Trojan warriors.”

Athena said, “I have new orders for you. Fight Ares. You need not fear him or any god. I will go with you. Fight Ares. He lied to Hera and me. He promised us to fight with the Greeks, not against them, but now he leads the charge against the Greeks.”

Hera thought, *Ares did not promise us to fight with the Greeks, not against them, but if Athena’s lie will motivate Diomedes to attack Ares, then it’s a worthwhile lie.*

Athena grabbed Sthenelus and threw him out of the chariot. She herself would be Diomedes’ charioteer. Diomedes climbed aboard the chariot, and Athena drove it straight at Ares.

Ares, smeared with blood, was stripping the corpse of Periphas. Athena put on the helmet of Death so that Ares would not recognize her, but Ares did recognize Diomedes. Ares left the corpse of Periphas, and thrust his spear at Diomedes, eager to take his life. But Athena moved the trajectory of the spear so that it missed Diomedes.

Diomedes then thrust his spear at Ares, and Athena guided the spear into Ares’ intestines, past his war-belt. Ares screamed with pain. The scream sounded like nine thousand or ten thousand warriors clashing in battle.

Ares soared up into the air and headed for help on Mount Olympus. He settled down by Zeus and showed him his wound. Overcome with self-pity, he complained, “Zeus, doesn’t the sight of this wound make you angry? We are gods, and yet, when we show mortals kindness, we suffer for it at the hands of other gods. I was fighting for the Trojans, and your headstrong daughter — it must have been Athena — spurred on Diomedes to attack first Aphrodite and then me. But I escaped.”

Zeus said to Ares, “You are a whiner. Stop it. You are the god of war, and I hate you more than I hate any other of the Olympian gods. You love war, and you love battles, and you love suffering. You have the same kind of anger that your mother, Hera, has. But I do not want you to suffer. After all, you are my son. If you were not, I would have sentenced you long ago to dwell in the Land of the Dead.”

Zeus thought, *I really do hate my son: Ares, the god of war. He is a ridiculous god. He fights in battles against mortals, and he risks very little. Mortals die; gods can be wounded and feel pain, but they quickly heal. A god fighting in war is never tragic; mortals fighting in war are frequently tragic.*

In order to have a tragedy, someone must lose something important, such as his or her life. The gods and goddesses are immortal, so they are incapable of tragedy. A human being who loses his or her life stays dead forever in the Land of the Dead. Human beings can be heroes, but the gods and goddesses cannot. Only heroes can risk their lives in war or to help another person. When Ares fights in a battle and kills many mortal warriors, so what? He is immortal — he can't be killed. Ares isn't risking anything when he fights in battle. He knows that later he will sit at his ease — it is human beings who die and stay dead. And why does Ares consider his killing mortals in battle to be a kindness?

The healing god covered Ares' wound with a salve, and the wound healed. Hebe then gave Ares a bath and dressed him in luxuriant robes. He sat down among the gods and enjoyed himself.

Mission accomplished, Hera and Athena returned to Mount Olympus. They had stopped Ares.

Zeus thought, Diomedes is a better warrior than Aphrodite and Ares. Pandarus wounded Diomedes, but despite the wound, Diomedes kept fighting, stopping only when, under orders from Athena, he would not fight Ares. The wounded gods quickly left the battle.

Diomedes is noted for his obedience. He is able to get along with his superiors. When Agamemnon reviewed the troops, he criticized Diomedes and Sthenelus for not being prepared to fight. Sthenelus defended himself and Diomedes against Agamemnon's attack, but Diomedes said that he did not mind Agamemnon's criticizing him because a leader is supposed to rally his troops. If criticizing the troops will make them fight harder, then that is what their troops' leader ought to do.

One reason Diomedes is so deferential to Agamemnon is because he is the youngest commander among the Greek kings. Agamemnon is older, and therefore Diomedes defers to him.

Diomedes respects the authority of Agamemnon, and he respects the authority of the gods. He knows his human limits. Even during his aristeia, Diomedes recognized that he is human and not a god. Athena told Diomedes to keep away from all the gods except Aphrodite, and Diomedes obeyed — he wounded only Aphrodite until he had Athena's permission to wound Ares. After receiving Athena's permission, Diomedes wounded Ares.

Diomedes appeared superhuman as he tried to kill Aeneas (who was acting as Pandarus' charioteer) while Apollo protected him, and he did risk going too far when he charged Apollo three times in his battle frenzy as he attempted to kill Aeneas. However, Diomedes withdrew after Apollo warned him. Of course, Diomedes was trying to kill Aeneas, not wound Apollo.

Diomedes is different from Achilles. Diomedes is obedient and listens to orders from his superiors, whether mortal or immortal, whereas Achilles does not always obey the commands of Agamemnon.

Diomedes is noted for his sophrosyne — his lack of presumption, his restraint, his recognition of human limits. At this time, Achilles is not noted for his sophrosyne. Achilles will have a hard time recognizing his human limits.

Chapter 6: Hector Returns to Troy and Andromache (Iliad)

Now that the gods were relaxing on Mount Olympus, the battle was between mortals and mortals. Greeks and Trojans battled on the land in between the river Simois and the river Xanthus.

Now that Ares had withdrawn from battle, the Greek warriors were victorious.

Great Ajax attacked and killed Acamas, the bravest of the Trojan allies from Thrace. Great Ajax threw his spear through Acamas' helmet and into his forehead.

Diomedes killed Axylus, the son of Teuthras. Axylus was a good person. He had wealth, and he entertained travelers, showing them good *xenia*. But none of the people he had hosted could prevent his fate. Diomedes killed both him and his aide-in-arms: Calesius, who drove Axylus' chariot.

Euryalus, the third-in-command, after Diomedes and Sthenelus, of the warriors from Argos, killed Dresus and Opheltius. He then charged the twins Pegasus and Aesepus, who had been born to Bucolion and Abarbarea. Bucolion had been tending his flocks of sheep when he made love to Abarbarea, nymph of the spring. But Euryalus killed the twins and stripped their armor from their corpses.

The Greek Polypoetes killed Astyalus.

Odysseus threw his spear and killed Pidytes.

Teucer speared Aretaon.

Antilochus, the son of Nestor, killed Ablerus.

Agamemnon killed Elatus, who lived by the river Satniois in a city set on a cliff.

The Greek Leitus ran down and killed the fleeing Phylacus.

The Greek Eurypylus killed Melanthius.

Menelaus captured Adrestus alive. Adrestus had been fleeing in a chariot drawn by terrified horses, and the horses had been tangled in tamarisk branches. Adrestus' chariot had been damaged. The horses broke free of the branches and galloped back to Troy, but Adrestus fell out of the chariot. Menelaus stood over him, spear raised, and Adrestus, a suppliant, hugged Menelaus' knees and begged for his life: "Menelaus, take me alive and ransom me instead of killing me. My father is rich, and he has bronze and gold and iron. My father will gladly give you treasure in return for keeping me alive if you send word to Troy that I have been captured alive!"

Menelaus was about to hand Adrestus over to an aide to take him alive to Menelaus' ships. But his brother, Agamemnon, saw him and said, "Why are you so soft and forgiving? Why are you showing mercy to an enemy? Did Paris and the other Trojans show you mercy when Paris

visited you in Sparta? I want every Trojan to die, including every baby boy still in his mother's womb. I want Troy to be destroyed, and I want Trojans to lie in unmourned and unmarked graves."

Zeus thought, *When Troy falls, women and children will die, as, of course, will many Trojan warriors.*

Menelaus listened to his brother and shoved Adrestus away from him, and Agamemnon speared Adrestus in the side. Adrestus fell on his side, and his chest heaved. Agamemnon put his foot on Adrestus' chest and pulled his spear out of Adrestus' body.

Nestor, a strategist, advised the Greek warriors: "You have the advantage. You are routing the Trojans. Don't stop to gather booty and strip the armor off corpses. Keep fighting and killing — you can strip off the armor later!"

The Trojans seemed to be on the verge of fleeing back to Troy. However, Helenus, a son of Priam, gave them good advice. Helenus was a seer who understood the interpretation of bird-signs sent by the gods.

Coming up to Aeneas and Hector, Helenus said, "You two are our bravest and strongest warriors. We need you two to rally our warriors. Keep the Trojans from fleeing to the walls of Troy. Rally the warriors, and we can hold the line here.

"Hector, after you and Aeneas rally the Trojans, go to Troy. Get our mother and tell her and the old women of Troy to go to Athena's shrine. Have her give to Athena a large, lovely robe — the best we have. Have her promise to make a sacrifice of twelve heifers to Athena, if Athena will have mercy on Troy and pity the Trojan women and children. We need Athena to hold back Diomedes and stop him from slaughtering us. Right now, Diomedes is the strongest Greek warrior. We did not fear even Achilles the way we fear Diomedes — and Achilles is said to have a goddess for a mother. Diomedes is slaughtering us now."

Hector knew that his brother Helenus' advice was good. He leapt down from his chariot and went from Trojan to Trojan, rallying the troops and making them face the Greek warriors. The Greeks were unable to keep on routing the Trojans. Hector shouted to the Trojan warriors, "Be men! Be warriors! I will return to Troy and ask the old men and the women to pray to the gods for us!"

Hector then headed toward Troy, and his helmet shone in the sun.

Zeus thought, *Troy is doomed. The Greeks will conquer it. Many Trojan warriors will die. Their wives and children will become slaves. The wives who are young and pretty, including Hector's wife, will become sex-slaves. Many children, including Hector's young son, will die.*

Diomedes was still on the battlefield. He met the Trojan ally Glaucus and said, "Who are you? Another Trojan or ally about to die? I have not seen you on the battlefield before. But you must be brave — you have chosen to come out and fight me. Mortals who do so die! But are you

a god? If you are, I will not fight you. Usually, it is a bad thing to fight the gods. Lycurgus once attacked the followers of Bacchus — the maenads. He frightened them so much that they ran away from him, leaving their sacred staffs behind. Even the god Bacchus was terrified and ran to the sea and dived beneath the surf so that the sea-goddess Thetis could comfort him. But Zeus struck Lycurgus blind and Lycurgus died young.

“That is why, warrior, I do not wish to fight the gods. But if you are a mortal, come closer and attack me so that I may kill you.”

Glaucus, who had come to Troy with Sarpedon, replied, “Diomedes, why are you asking me about my identity? The lives of mortals are like the lives of leaves. The old leaves are scattered by the wind, and new leaves grow on the trees. The same is true of mortal men. One generation comes into existence. It dies, and another generation takes over.

“But about my birth and family — this is my story. Sisyphus lived in Corinth, and he had a son named Glaucus. Both were my ancestors. Glaucus had a son named Bellerophon. But Proetus, the king of Corinth, became angry at Bellerophon because of lies. Antea, the wife of Proetus, wanted to have sex with Bellerophon, but he acted morally and would not sleep with her. She lied to her husband and told him, ‘Bellerophon keeps trying to rape me. I have to fight him off! Kill him!’

“These were lies, but Proetus believed them to be true. He sent Bellerophon to Lycia with a written message to show to Antea’s father. The message said to kill Bellerophon.

“Bellerophon went to Lycia, and Antea’s father hosted him well for nine days, slaughtering nine oxen to feast him. After nine days, he asked for any messages from his daughter’s husband. Bellerophon then gave him the written message.

“Antea’s father tried at first to get Bellerophon killed without resorting to outright murder. He ordered Bellerophon to kill the Chimaera: a monster formed of a lion in front, a goat in the middle, and a snake at the end. It breathed fire! Bellerophon obeyed signs sent by the gods and killed the Chimaera.

“Next the father of Antea ordered Bellerophon to fight the tribe known as the Solymi. Bellerophon did — and he won.

“Next the father of Antea ordered Bellerophon to fight the Amazons, a tribe of women who fought in war like men. Bellerophon did — and he won.

“Then Antea’s father picked out warriors to ambush Bellerophon — but Bellerophon killed them all.

“Knowing Bellerophon’s worth at last, Antea’s father offered him one of his daughters to wed. The Lycians gave him an estate with good cropland, and his wife bore him three children: Isander, Hippolochus, and Laodamia.

“Laodamia slept with the god Zeus and bore him a son: our commander, Sarpedon.

“But the wheel of fortune turned, and the gods hated Bellerophon. He became a fugitive and wandered the earth. The Solymi killed Isander, his son. The goddess Artemis killed Laodamia, his daughter.

“But Bellerophon’s other son, Hippolochus, became my father. He sent me to fight at Troy, and I still can hear his advice to me: ‘Have pride in yourself. Be the best. Do not do anything to disgrace your ancestors, who were champions.’

“Now you know who I am, and who my family members are.”

Diomedes was happy with what he had heard. He plunged his spear into the earth instead of attacking Glaucus with it, and he said to Glaucus, “You and I are friends because our grandfathers were friends. The laws of *xenia* bind us. My grandfather Oeneus hosted your grandfather Bellerophon in his palace for twenty days. They exchanged binding gifts of friendship. My grandfather gave Bellerophon a gleaming sword-belt, and Bellerophon gave my grandfather a two-handled, solid-gold cup. I still have it; I left it at home in Argos.

“I don’t remember my father, Tydeus, who died at Thebes when I was still a baby. But because of the friendship of our grandfathers, you and I share a hereditary friendship. That is the way that *xenia* works. If you ever visit me in Argos, I will be your friend and host. If I ever visit you in Lycia, you will be my friend and host.

“You and I should not fight each other in this way. Here are many Trojans for me to kill. Here are many Greeks for you to kill. We need not and ought not to try to kill each other.

“To show the others that we are friends, let us trade armor. We share a hereditary friendship that others should know about.”

The two warriors shed and exchanged their armor and vowed their friendship to each other. However, the gold armor that Glaucus gave Diomedes was worth one hundred oxen, and the bronze armor that he received from Diomedes was worth only nine oxen.

Zeus thought, *Similarly, Troy is making a bad trade. The Trojans have traded away the blessings of peace so that Paris and Helen can have an adulterous affair. Helen isn’t worth it even though she is my daughter, and neither is Paris. Why should so many Trojans die or become slaves just so those two can have sex? Why should the world lose a center of civilization for the likes of Paris and Helen?*

Hector had reached the Scaean Gates of Troy. He entered the city and was immediately surrounded by women and girls asking him whether a husband, a father, a son, or a brother was still alive. From the walls of Troy, they had witnessed the fighting in the battle and had seen much slaughter. Hector told them, “Pray to the gods.”

He went to the palace of his father, Priam, in which were fifty bedrooms in which fifty of Priam’s sons slept beside their wives. Also in the palace were twelve bedrooms in which twelve of Priam’s daughters slept beside their husbands.

Hector's mother, Hecuba, met him and said, "Why have you returned from the fighting? You must be exhausted. Let me bring you some wine so you can pour some to Zeus and drink the rest to refresh yourself. Stay a while. Relax."

But Hector shook his head and declined the wine: "No, mother. I need to keep on fighting, and I can't pour wine to Zeus with blood on my hands. It would not be fitting. Mother, pray to Athena. You and the older women of Troy go to the shrine of Athena. Give her the best robe we have. Promise that we will sacrifice twelve heifers to her if she will pity Troy and the women and children of Troy by stopping Diomedes. Go now, and I will see Paris and convince him to return to the fighting. I wish that he were dead and the war were over. That would make me happy."

Hecuba did as Hector wished. She got the best robe — one made by Sidonian women. When Paris had stolen Helen away from Menelaus, he had stopped by Sidon and brought back with him women skilled in weaving.

Hecuba went to the shrine of Athena. Theano, the priestess of Athena, let her in. Theano offered Athena the robe and prayed, "Stop Diomedes! Pity Troy and the Trojan women and children! If you do, we will sacrifice twelve heifers to you." But Athena would not hear the prayers of Theano.

Hector went to the apartment of Paris and Helen. Paris had built the luxurious quarters himself with the help of master craftsmen. He and Helen lived near Priam's quarters and near Hector's quarters.

Hector carried his long spear into the apartment where Paris lived with Helen. Hector's spear and armor were bloody. Paris was polishing his weapons and armor. They were clean and gleaming. Helen was present. She was sitting with her female servants, overseeing their embroidery.

Hector saw Paris and taunted him, "What are you doing here? Are you nursing the anger you have inside you?"

Hector thought, *Paris ought to be angry at the Greeks who are killing Trojans, but he is not. He is relaxing and not thinking about the battle.*

Hector continued, "Outside the walls of Troy, people are fighting and dying for you. If you were outside the walls of Troy and saw a warrior slacking off, you would criticize that warrior. Don't you yourself do what you would criticize someone else for doing! Get up, come with me, and fight!"

Paris replied, "Your criticize me fairly, but it is not anger that keeps me in my quarters. I came here to plunge myself in grief because of this war."

Hector thought, *Not likely. If anything, you came here to plunge yourself in Helen.*

Paris continued, "Helen has been convincing me to return to the battle. She is very persuasive. So let me put on my armor and we shall go. You can wait for me, or if you wish, you can go ahead. I am sure that I can catch up with you."

Helen said to Hector, "My dear brother-in-law, I am a bitch and I wish that I were dead. It would have been much better for everyone if I had died the day that I was born. When I was born, I should have been carried away by a whirlwind or by the waves of the sea. But since the gods have kept me alive, I wish I were the wife of a better man than Paris. I wish I were the wife of a man who is sensitive to what other people think of him. The husband I have is selfish.

"Hector, sit down. Relax. You fight hard — harder than any other Trojan. You are fighting for me — a whore. And you are fighting for Paris. Because of what Zeus made us do, Paris and I will be remembered by many generations to come."

Hector said, "Don't ask me to sit and relax, Helen. I need to get back to the battle. My warriors need me. But make Paris put on his armor and get ready to fight. He can catch up with me — I will briefly see my wife and son. It is possible that I will never see them again. This may be the day that I die."

Hector quickly reached his quarters, but his wife, Andromache, was not at home. She had taken a servant and her son to the high walls of Troy so that she could watch the battle and try to determine whether she was still a wife or newly a widow.

Hector asked the servants, "Where is Andromache? Is she visiting my sisters? Or my brothers' wives? Or is she praying at the shrine of Athena?"

A servant said, "Andromache is watching the battle. She knows that the battle is hard fought, and she is worried that you are already dead or are going to die today. She is like a madwoman."

Hector rushed to the Scaean Gates, and Andromache saw him and came running to meet him. Following Andromache was a nurse who was carrying the son of Hector and Andromache. Hector called his son Scamandrius, but other Trojans called him Astyanax — the Lord of the City.

Hector looked at his son and smiled.

Andromache cried and said to Hector, "Pity your son, and pity me. You have too much courage. You will fight, and you will be killed. With you dead, it would be best for me if I were to also die.

"My father was Eetion, king of Thebe. My father is dead. My mother is dead. Achilles killed my father when he and the Greeks conquered Thebe. But he treated my father's corpse with respect. Achilles did not strip the armor off Eetion. Instead, he burned the armor with my father's body when he gave my father a proper burial. Achilles heaped up a grave-mound over my father's ashes. Mountain nymphs planted elms around the grave-mound. Achilles also killed all seven of my brothers on the day he conquered Thebe.

“But Achilles respected my mother’s life. He allowed her to be ransomed and set free. But she died because of Artemis, who took her life the way she takes the lives of so many women. Artemis kills women with her arrows, and her brother, Apollo, kills men with his arrows.

“Hector, you are all I have left! You are my father, my mother, my brother, and my young and warm and strong husband!

“Don’t fight on the battlefield. You and your warriors can defend the city from behind its walls. One wall of Troy is lower than the other walls. Take up your position there. Three times have Great Ajax, Little Ajax, Idomeneus, Agamemnon, Menelaus, and Diomedes tried to storm the city at that point. Don’t allow your courage to make your son an orphan and your wife a widow.”

Hector said to Andromache, “I worry about the same things that worry you, but I must fight. I cannot be a coward. I want to fight bravely in the front ranks. I want to win glory for my father and for myself. But I know that Troy is doomed and that my father and all Trojan warriors must die.

“But what hurts me most — more than the pain that my father, my mother, and my brothers will feel — is the agony that you will feel after I die and a Greek warrior takes you, crying, away and makes you a slave in Greece. You will work in a Greek household, weaving, and you will be forced to obey the orders of a Greek wife and fetch water. A Greek man may see you and say, ‘She was the wife of Hector, the bravest of the Trojan warriors when Troy still existed.’ You will hear him, and the grief will come to you again. You will be a widow, and the man who could keep you from being a slave will be dead.

“I prefer to be dead rather than to hear you crying as you are led away to be a slave!”

Hector reached to take his son, but his son saw Hector’s shining helmet, which scared him. Terrified, he screamed.

Zeus thought, *Someday, not long from now, a Greek warrior with a shining helmet will take Hector’s son to a high wall of Troy and murder him by throwing him to the ground.*

But now Hector laughed at his son, and Andromache laughed, too. Hector took off his shining helmet, and his son knew him and was not afraid. Hector kissed his son and tossed him in his arms.

Hector lifted up his son and prayed to Zeus, “Let Troy not fall! Allow my son to grow up and to be like me: a brave, strong defender of Troy. Let the Trojans say about my son, ‘He is a better, braver, stronger man than his father.’ Let him come safely home from battle wearing armor that is dirty with the blood of the enemy warriors whom he has killed! Let him be a man his mother can be proud of.”

Zeus thought, *Hector is praying for his son to be a better man than he is. That is a very human thing to pray for. I myself would never do a thing like that. If I had slept with Thetis, my son would be*

a better, stronger god than I am. He would have overthrown me, just like I overthrew my father, and just like my father had overthrown his father. If I had slept with Thetis and had fathered Achilles, he would now be the king of gods and men.

Hector truly is a mortal human. He said that he knows that Troy must fall, but he does not really know that. He knows that it is possible for Troy to fall, but just a few minutes after he said that he knows that Troy must fall, he is praying for his son to grow up to be a better, braver, stronger man than he — Hector — is.

Finishing his prayer, Hector gave his son to Andromache. She held him, and with tears in her eyes, she smiled.

Hector gently stroked her arm and said, “Why feel so much grief for me? I have my fate. No man can kill me unless I am fated to die on that day. No man has ever escaped his fate: All mortal men must die. Brave men must die, and cowards must die. On the day that we are born, our parents know that we must die. So go home and keep busy and keep the female servants busy, too. Let me attend to the battle; that is the job of men and especially of me.”

Hector put on his shining helmet again, and Andromache went home, turning again and again to look at her husband and cry. In their apartment, Andromache and her female servants mourned for Hector. They were afraid that he would not return from the battle alive.

Paris left his apartment and hurried to catch up to Hector. Paris was like a well-rested and well-fed stallion that has broken free and is running to plunge into a stream. He was happy and laughed.

Hector walked slowly, knowing that he had to return to battle but wishing to stay with his wife and son.

Paris said to Hector, “Brother, I am sorry to hold you back from returning to the battle. I have been too late in coming.”

Hector replied, “Paris, you can fight well when you want to fight, but all too often you do not want to fight. The Trojans feel contempt for you, but if you fought the way that I know you can fight, their opinion of you would change.

“Let’s join the battle and fight. Someday, everything will work itself out well if Zeus will let us fight off the Greeks and win this war.”

Chapter 7: A Duel with Hector (Iliad)

Hector and Paris rushed through the Scaean Gates, eager for war. Their warriors welcomed them the way that sailors, exhausted from rowing, welcome a breeze sent by the gods.

Rested, Hector and Paris each quickly killed a warrior.

Paris killed Menesthius, the son of King Areithous and his beautiful-eyed wife, Phylomedusa.

Hector used his spear to slash the throat of Eioneus, who collapsed and died.

Inspired, Glaucus killed Iphinous just as he was leaping onto a chariot. Glaucus stabbed him in the shoulder. Iphinous fell off the chariot, and his arms and legs stopped moving.

The Trojans were rallying, but Athena witnessed the Greek deaths and flew to Troy from Mount Olympus. Apollo was watching from Pergamus, the citadel of Troy. He flew to meet her, and he said to her, “What do you want now? No doubt you want to turn the tide of battle and let Trojan blood flow. You want the Trojans to die. Listen to me. Let’s stop the war for a day. The Greeks and Trojans can spill each other’s blood tomorrow and the next day and the next day until Troy’s day of doom arrives — that is what you and Hera want and what you are waiting for.”

Athena agreed, “Good idea! But how do you plan to stop the war for a day?”

Apollo replied, “With Hector. He is a brave warrior. We can convince him to challenge the Greek warriors to choose a champion to duel with him to the death. The Greek warriors will find a champion to duel with him.”

Athena communicated with the Trojan prophet Pandarus, one of Priam’s sons. He heard her voice inside his head. Pandarus went to Hector and told him, “Listen to me. Challenge the Greeks to fight a single combat with you: a duel to the death. This is not your day to die. One of the gods told me.”

Hector was willing. He went into the no-man’s land between the two armies. The Trojan warriors and the Greek warriors stopped fighting. Apollo and Athena, having taken the shape of vultures, looked on from the branches of an oak tree.

Hector shouted, “Listen to me, Greeks and Trojans. Our oaths and sworn truth have been broken for reasons that Zeus knows. We will continue fighting and dealing death until the Greeks conquer Troy or the Trojans kill the Greeks with their backs up against their ships.

“But now, let one of your champion warriors fight me: a duel to the death. These are the conditions. If your champion kills me, he will strip my armor and take it to his ships, but he will allow the Trojans to take my corpse and give it a proper cremation and burial. But if I kill your champion, I will strip his armor from his body and take it to our temple of Apollo, and you will take his corpse and give it a proper burial, burning it and raising high a burial-mound, to which

men yet to be born may point and say, “There is the burial-mound of a warrior of long ago, a brave warrior whom Hector killed.”

The Greek warriors were silent. They were afraid to fight Hector. After a long, uncomfortable wait, Menelaus accepted the challenge and said, “It would be a disgrace if no one were to accept Hector’s challenge. We would be like women. You are just sitting there, silent. Well, I’ll fight Hector since no one else will. Who knows? The gods might let me win.”

Had Menelaus been allowed to fight Hector, Menelaus would have died. He was no match for Hector. Hector was a much stronger warrior — and Menelaus knew it.

Agamemnon was afraid for his brother. He grabbed Menelaus’ right hand and said to him, “Don’t fight Hector, brother. Don’t do something insane. Don’t try to fight a stronger, better warrior. Even Achilles is afraid to fight Hector, and Achilles is a stronger, better warrior than you.”

Nestor thought, *It is true that Achilles is a stronger, better warrior than Menelaus, but it is false that Achilles is afraid to fight Hector. Still, if Agamemnon’s lie will motivate Menelaus not to fight Hector and get himself killed, then it’s a worthwhile lie.*

Agamemnon continued, “Sit down. Another warrior can fight Hector. Hector is supposed to be fearless and eager for battle, but if he comes out of this duel alive, I think that he will be happy to rest and stay away from battle for a while.”

Menelaus sat down, and Nestor said to the Greek warriors, “Let us meet this challenge. Achilles’ father, Peleus, would be embarrassed if he were to see us now. Peleus was impressed with the reputations of the Greek warriors whom we brought to Troy. He would be ready to die if he believed that all of us were afraid to duel Hector.

“I wish I were young again. My Pylia warriors fought the spearmen of Arcadia. Their champion, Ereuthalion, wore the armor of King Areithous, who was a giant of a man and was called the Great War-Club. He did not use a bow and arrows or a spear; he smashed the enemy with his iron war-club. Lycurgus killed King Areithous by spearing him when he was in a narrow footpath so cramped that he could not swing his war-club. Even before he could lift his war-club, Lycurgus had speared him in the intestines. King Areithous fell backwards, and Lycurgus stripped his armor. Lycurgus wore the armor for years, but when he grew old, he gave the armor to Ereuthalion, who then challenged the best Pylia warriors. They were afraid, all except for me. I was the youngest of the warriors, and I killed Ereuthalion — the biggest and strongest warrior I have ever killed.

“Make me young again, and I will fight Hector. I cannot believe that you are the best warriors we have — none of you is brave enough to fight Hector in a duel to the death.”

Shamed by Nestor, nine Greek warriors stood up, ready to fight Hector: Agamemnon was the first to stand, but he was followed by Diomedes, Great Ajax and Little Ajax, Idomeneus and his aide Meriones, Eurypylus, Thoas, and Odysseus.

Nestor ordered, “Each of you make your mark on a stone, and the lottery will choose who will fight Hector. That warrior will make his fellow Greeks proud if he does not die.”

Each warrior made his mark on a stone, and they put the stones in Agamemnon’s helmet.

Nestor shook the helmet until a stone fell out, as warriors prayed that the warrior they thought would best be able to fight Hector would be chosen: Great Ajax, Diomedes, or Agamemnon.

The stone that fell out bore the mark of Great Ajax, the warrior the majority of the Greeks wanted to fight Hector. A herald showed the stone to the warriors willing to fight Hector, and Great Ajax recognized his mark and took the stone. He threw it to the ground and shouted, “This is my lot, and I am thrilled to fight Hector! Everyone pray to Zeus, silently — no, pray out loud. No one can make me run — not by force and not by treachery. I am an experienced warrior.”

The Greek warriors prayed, “Zeus, allow Great Ajax to win the duel, but if you love Hector, allow both warriors to share glory.”

Great Ajax was ready to fight. He resembled Ares, the god of war, and Hector’s heart started pounding, but he could not back out of the fight — he was the challenger. Great Ajax carried his huge shield. It was eight layers thick. Seven layers were oxhide, and the top layer was made of heavy bronze. This shield could stop death.

Great Ajax with his deep voice said to Hector, “Now you will learn, face-to-face in single combat, what kind of warriors the Greeks have. Achilles is still angry at Agamemnon and will not fight, but we remaining warriors can defeat you. Come now. Begin the duel.”

Hector replied, “Great Ajax, don’t talk to me as if I were a weak boy or a woman who knows nothing of battle. I know war well, and I know how to butcher a warrior. I know how to fight while on the defense and while on the offense, and I know how to fight until the end. So let the duel begin. Be on guard. I do not want to hit you with my spear by treachery. I want to hit you with my spear openly.”

Hector hurled his spear at Great Ajax. It hit his shield and tore through the topmost bronze layer and six of the seven oxhide layers, but the final oxhide layer stopped his spear.

Great Ajax then hurled his spear. It went through Hector’s shield and through his breastplate and tore his war-shirt and narrowly missed bloodying Hector’s side, but Hector swerved and escaped death. Both warriors wrenched their spears away from the other’s shield and attacked each other. They were like lions or wild boars.

Hector stabbed at Great Ajax’ shield, and Great Ajax stabbed his spear through Hector’s shield, slightly cutting his neck and making the blood flow.

Hector kept fighting. He picked up a heavy rock and threw it. It hit Great Ajax' shield, which clanged, but Great Ajax picked up a heavier rock and threw it and Hector's shield broke and he fell on his back. Apollo lifted him up, and Great Ajax and Hector would have attacked each other with swords, but Greek and Trojan heralds — the Greek Talthibius and the Trojan Idaeus — rushed in and stopped the duel, parting the warriors by holding staffs in front of them.

Idaeus said to the two warriors, "No more. It's easy to tell that Zeus loves both of you and that both of you are great fighters. But darkness is coming and you need to stop fighting now."

Great Ajax said, "Idaeus, tell Hector to ask for the duel to stop. He is the challenger. I will agree to Hector's request."

Hector replied, "Yes, Great Ajax. You are a mighty warrior. Let the duel end now. We can fight again tomorrow. We will keep on fighting until one army is the victor. Night is coming, and it is a good idea to stop fighting now. You will go back to the Greek ships, and I will return to Troy. Both sides will be happy.

"But let us each give the other a gift. Let others say that you and I fought each other with hatred, but we parted with respect."

Hector gave Great Ajax his silver-studded sword and a sword-strap, and Great Ajax gave Hector his purple war-belt.

Hector went back to his Trojan warriors — they were thrilled to see him still alive. Great Ajax — thrilled with victory — went back to his Greek warriors.

Zeus thought, *Usually, Great Ajax is second best. For example, he is the second-best Greek warrior — Achilles is the best Greek warrior. After Achilles dies, Thetis will give his divine armor to the Greeks to give to the most deserving warrior. The two warriors in the running to get the armor will be Great Ajax and Odysseus; Odysseus will get the armor. But here Great Ajax is the victor. He deserves to be the victor because the Greeks will eventually conquer the Trojans.*

The Greek warriors escorted Great Ajax to the camp of Agamemnon, who sacrificed an ox. Agamemnon served Great Ajax the cut of honor: the rich, tender cut along the backbone.

After they had eaten, Nestor spoke. He was a good man with ideas: "Agamemnon and commanders, many Greek warriors lie dead on the battlefield. Their souls have gone to the Land of the Dead, but they will not be allowed to enter it until their bodies have been cremated and a burial-mound has been raised. Souls mourn until they can enter the Land of the Dead — where they belong. Cremation and burial is the respect we show to the dead.

"Therefore, we need to devote time to our duty to the dead. We will not fight. Instead, we will get wagons and load them with dead warriors, and we will burn their bodies at a distance from our camps. We will gather the bones so each dead warrior's family can have them after the war, and we will raise a burial-mound over the cremation site.

“In addition, let us build defensive fortifications for our ships and camps. Let us build a wall and a trench. The wall will be nearest to the ships, and the trench will be nearest to the Trojans: a double fortification. We will build gateways for our chariots to drive through. The trench will be a barrier for the Trojans’ chariots. These are fortifications that will stop the Trojans from reaching our camps and ships.”

The Greek warriors recognized that this was good advice, and they shouted their assent.

Meanwhile, the leading Trojans met in Troy: Hector, Paris, Priam, and the old advisors and the leading commanders. Antenor said, “Listen to me, Trojans. Let us stop this war. Let us give Helen and all the treasure that Paris stole from Menelaus back to him. We are in the wrong. The Greeks and we had a truce, and we are the ones who broke it. We will gain no profit by continuing the war.”

Paris was angry and replied to the old advisor, “Don’t be stupid, Antenor. I tell you and all the other Greeks that I will NOT give up Helen. I am going to keep her. But I am willing to give Menelaus’ treasure back to him and even add treasure of my own to give to him.”

Priam, King of Troy and father of Hector and Paris, said, “Hear me, Trojans. Let us eat our evening meal, and stand our night watch. In the morning, the herald Idaeus will go to the Greeks and inform Agamemnon and Menelaus of Paris’ offer to give treasure to Menelaus. In addition, Idaeus will ask whether the Greeks are willing to call a truce so that we can burn the bodies of our dead warriors. We can fight again later. We will fight until one army wins.”

All obeyed Priam.

In the morning, the herald Idaeus went to the Greeks and said, “Agamemnon and leading Greek commanders, Priam wishes me to tell you about the offer that Paris has made — Paris, whom we all wish had drowned before causing this long war. Paris will return to Menelaus all the treasure he stole, and he will add treasure of his own to give to Menelaus, but he insists on keeping Helen, although all other Trojans wish that he would give her back to Menelaus. In addition, Priam wishes me to ask if you are willing to call a truce so that we can burn the bodies of our dead. We will fight again after this deed is done.”

Diomedes thought, *This is a very bad speech for a herald to make. Obviously, the Trojans know that they are in the wrong. Obviously, the Trojans are demoralized. Odysseus, a master of rhetoric, would never make a speech like that.*

Diomedes shouted, “Let’s not stop the war! Let’s not accept the treasure — or even Helen! It’s easy to see that Troy is in the wrong. It’s easy to see that one day Troy must fall.”

The Greek warriors shouted their agreement with Diomedes, and Agamemnon said to Idaeus, “I agree with my warriors: The war will continue. But also I agree that we need a truce so that both sides can burn their dead. The way to respect the dead is to burn their corpses quickly and allow their souls to enter the Land of the Dead.”

Idaeus returned to Troy and told Priam what Agamemnon had said. The Trojans organized themselves quickly. One group would gather the corpses, and the other group would gather the wood to burn them.

Greeks and Trojans met on the battleground and began to gather their corpses. The bodies were hard to recognize. Greeks and Trojans washed blood away from the corpses to make identification possible, and then they loaded their dead on wagons as they wept. The Trojans worked silently because Priam had forbade them to cry loudly. Both armies piled their dead on funeral pyres. The fires burned all night.

The next day, the Greeks built their fortifications. They piled up earth to form a burial-mound, they built a wall with gateways, and they dug a trench. In the trench they put sharp stakes to serve as additional protection against attack.

Meanwhile, on Mount Olympus, Poseidon complained to Zeus, “The mortals are disrespecting the immortals. The Greeks have built a magnificent wall and trench, and they did it without first sacrificing and praying to the gods. They should have sacrificed one hundred magnificent bulls to us. The fame of their fortifications will spread, while the fame of the walls I built will fade.”

Zeus thought, *I remember you building the walls of Troy. You and Apollo rebelled against me, and as punishment I made you two serve for a year the then-King of Troy, Laomedon. You two built the walls of Troy.*

Zeus replied, “You are a powerful god. You ought not to be jealous of a wall built by mortals. You are better than that. Listen: Wait until the Greeks sail back home and then tear the wall down. Beat the wall into the sea, and let nothing but sand lie on the beach. You can easily do that.”

Night arrived, and the Greeks’ fortifications were complete. They ate the evening meal, and ships arrived from Lemnos with cargoes of wine. Euneus, king of Lemnos, gave the gift of a thousand measures of wine to Agamemnon and Menelaus. The other Greek warriors bought their wine, paying for it with bronze or iron or hides or cattle or slaves.

The Greek warriors feasted, but all night Zeus sent thunder and lightning, and the Greek warriors worried about the bad omens. They poured wine for Zeus, but still worried. They then slept.

Chapter 8: The Tide of Battle Turns in the Trojans' Favor (Iliad)

As morning came, Zeus assembled the gods on Mount Olympus. He told them, "Listen to me. Let no one — god or goddess — disobey my orders. I order you to stay out of the Trojan War. Do not help the Greeks or the Trojans. Stay away. I have something that I wish to accomplish. Anyone who interferes with my plans will be whipped back to Mount Olympus in disgrace. Or I will throw that god or goddess to Tartarus, the lowest part of the Land of the Dead. Whoever interferes with my plans will learn how strong I am. If you wish, try to fight me now. Let me hold on to one end of a golden cable in the sky, and let all of you hold on to the end of the golden cable on the earth. All of you together are not strong enough to pull me down from the sky. But I could pull all of you up into the sky, and I could pull up the earth, and I could leave you and the earth dangling at the end of the golden cable. That is how strong I am."

The gods and goddesses were uneasy, and they were afraid of Zeus.

Athena said, "Father, Zeus, we all know how strong you are. But other gods and I pity the Greek warriors. They have fates, and they die bloody deaths. We will obey your orders and not fight in the war, but we will offer the Greek warriors advice so that they don't all die."

Zeus replied, "Don't be afraid. Don't take me too seriously. You are my favorite daughter."

Zeus then harnessed his horses to his battle-chariot and drove to Mount Ida, where an altar to him stood. This was one of his favorite spots for viewing the Trojan War. He released his horses so that they could graze, and he sat on his throne and watched the Greek and Trojan warriors.

Both armies ate and put on armor, and the gates of Troy opened and the Trojan warriors marched out. The Trojans knew that they had wives and sons to defend.

The armies met and fought, and warriors screamed and died. Blood flowed and the ground turned red.

All morning the two armies were evenly matched, and warriors died on each side with no army winning an advantage. But at noon, Zeus lifted his golden scales. In one scale was the fate of the Trojans and in the other scale was the fate of the Greeks. The fate of the Trojans rose, and the fate of the Greeks fell. On this day, the Trojans would be triumphant.

From Mount Ida, Zeus created thunder and sent lightning bolts against the Greek army. The Greek warriors were terrified. They knew that Zeus opposed them.

Many Greek warriors were terrified and retreated: Idomeneus, Agamemnon, Great Ajax, and Little Ajax. Nestor remained on the battlefield, but not by his own free will. Paris had shot an arrow and killed one of Nestor's horses. The horse had been hit in the head and had reared in agony before dying. Now Nestor was cutting the horse out of its harness with his sword.

Hector saw Nestor and charged toward him in a chariot. Nestor would have died, but Diomedes saw Hector and came to Nestor's rescue. Diomedes also saw Odysseus, who was running to the ships. Diomedes called to him, "Odysseus, why are you running away? Be careful that you don't get a spear in your back. Stay here with me and fight off Hector and save Nestor!"

Odysseus did not hear Diomedes. He kept running.

So Diomedes alone faced Hector. He came to a stop before Nestor's chariot and said to Nestor, "Old soldier, climb aboard my chariot and drive my horses that I took away from Aeneas. Our aides can take your chariot and living horses back to our ships. Come, let's fight Hector!"

Nestor was willing. Sthenelus and Eurymedon boarded Nestor's chariot and drove it to the ships, while Nestor boarded Diomedes' chariot. He grabbed the reins and charged straight at Hector. Diomedes threw his spear. He missed Hector, but killed Hector's driver: Eniopeus. He stabbed him in the chest beside the nipple, and Eniopeus fell off the chariot as his horses reared.

Hector grieved for his driver, but left him lying dead on the ground. Hector sought and quickly found another driver: Archeptolemus.

Now the Greeks would have rallied and thrust back the Trojans, but Zeus took direct action against the Greek warriors. He threw a thunderbolt that hit the earth just in front of Diomedes' team. Lightning flashed and thunder sounded. The horses reared and Nestor dropped the reins.

Nestor was afraid. He shouted to Diomedes, "Let's retreat! We can't be victorious without the help of Zeus, who today is helping Hector. Today, Hector wins glory. Tomorrow, Zeus willing, we will win glory. No one of us mortals can fight the will of powerful Zeus!"

Diomedes, unhappy, said, "All you say is correct, but I hate it that one day Hector will boast that he drove me back to the ships! I would rather die than hear that boast."

Nestor replied, "Your reputation is secure. Even if Hector makes that boast, no one — not even the Trojans — will believe it. Especially not the Trojan women whom you have made widows!"

Nestor turned the chariot around and drove back to the ships. Hector and other Trojan warriors followed him, shouting as they attacked them with spears and arrows.

Hector yelled at Diomedes, "Once you had a reputation. Once you were respected. Once you were worthy of the best meat and the best drink. But now everyone will know that you are a girl. You will never conquer Troy! You will never drag our women to your ships! I will kill you first!"

Diomedes wanted to turn and fight Hector, but three times Zeus created thunder that rolled across the battlefield — a sign that today was a Trojan day of triumph.

Hector shouted to his warriors as they chased Nestor and Diomedes, "Trojans! Trojan allies! Be warriors! Zeus is giving us glory, and he is giving the Greeks death! The Greeks erected fortifications — the fools! Nothing can hold me back! Nothing can keep me from reaching their ships! And when I do, bring fire! We will burn their ships, and we will slaughter their warriors!"

Hector then shouted to his horses, “My wife, Andromache, has always treated you well. Now you can repay us! She has given you wheat soaked in wine to eat. She has fed you before she fed me! So now run after Nestor and Diomedes! If we can take Nestor’s solid-gold shield and Diomedes’ armor that was created by Hephaestus himself, I think that we will reach the Greek ships!”

Hera witnessed all from Mount Olympus — Zeus was routing her Greek warriors. She tried to convince Poseidon to help the Greeks: “God of the sea and of earthquakes, don’t you feel pity for these Greeks? They are dying, all these warriors who sacrificed to you at Aegae and Helice. If only we gods who support the Greeks could help them and resist Zeus!”

Poseidon replied, “That can’t happen. Zeus is too strong for us.”

The trench in front of the Greek wall was filled with warriors fighting. Hector might have reached the ships, but Hera put a thought in Agamemnon’s mind that he ought to encourage his men. He made his way to Odysseus’ ship, which was moored in the middle of all the other ships. A man shouting here could be heard on both ends of the line of ships: the vulnerable sides that were protected by Great Ajax and by Achilles, the Greeks’ mightiest warriors.

Agamemnon shouted to his warriors, “You have made many boasts, but what are they worth? You used to boast that you were the greatest warriors. While eating meat and drinking wine on the island of Lemnos, you boasted that one Greek warrior could fight up to one hundred — no, two hundred — Trojan warriors. Now, one Trojan warrior — Hector — conquers us all! Soon, he will set our ships on fire!

“Zeus, why aren’t you helping us? On our way here to Troy, we stopped at each of your shrines and made sacrifices. If nothing else, let us escape with our lives! Don’t let these Trojans kill us all!”

Zeus heard the prayer and answered it. An eagle clutching a fawn flew to Zeus’ altar and released it. The fawn had been in great danger but had escaped. And so the sign from Zeus communicated that the Greek army was now in great danger but it would not be annihilated. It would live to fight another day. The Greeks recognized that Zeus had sent them a favorable sign, and they attacked the Trojans.

Diomedes was the first to kill a Trojan in the Greek rally. Agelaus had turned his chariot around and was fleeing. Diomedes’ spear hit him in the back and came out through his chest. Agelaus fell from his chariot, and his armor clanged.

Following Diomedes were Agamemnon and Menelaus, Great Ajax and Little Ajax, Idomeneus and his aide Meriones, and Eurypylos.

The archer Teucer, who shared a father but not a mother with Great Ajax, worked with him to kill Trojans. With his shield, Great Ajax protected Teucer while he fitted an arrow to his bow, then he raised his shield until Teucer shot, and then he lowered his shield to protect Teucer again.

The teamwork paid off. Teucer killed Orsilochus, Ormenus, Ophleustes, Daetor, Chromius, Lycophontes, Amopaon, and Melanippus. Arrow after arrow hit warrior after warrior, and corpse after corpse fell to the ground.

Agamemnon saw all. He told Teucer, “Son of Telamon, you show your effectiveness in battle. You bring hope to your fellow warriors. You bring glory to your father, who raised you although he was not married to your mother. If Zeus allows us to conquer Troy, you will be the first to be rewarded after myself. I will give you a gift of honor: a tripod, a chariot and a team of horses, or a sex-slave to sleep with.”

Teucer responded the way a good warrior should respond: “You don’t need to encourage me. I will fight well without the encouragement. I have no intention of quitting. I have shot eight arrows, and I have hit eight Trojans. But still, try as I do, I can’t hit Hector and kill him.”

Teucer aimed an arrow at Hector, but he missed and killed Gorgythion, a handsome son of Priam. The arrow hit Gorgythion in the chest. One of Priam’s wives, Castianira, had given birth to him. As he died, his head, weighed down by his helmet, drooped the way that a red poppy, weighed down by its seeds, droops in a garden.

Again, Teucer aimed an arrow at Hector. Again, he shot and missed — Apollo protected Troy’s mightiest warrior. Teucer hit Hector’s driver, Archeptolemus, in the chest beside the nipple. He fell off the chariot, and the horses reared.

Hector grieved but left the corpse on the ground and cried to his brother Cebriones, “Take the reins!” But before Cebriones could do so, Hector jumped from the chariot and seized a rock and threw it at Teucer, who was fitting another arrow to his bow.

The rock, thrown by Hector as hard as he could, struck Teucer’s collarbone. The string of the bow snapped, and Teucer’s hand went numb. Hector would have killed him, but Great Ajax protected his half-brother with his shield as Greek warriors lifted Teucer up and took him to their ships.

Again Zeus helped the Trojans as they charged, forcing the Greeks back. Hector was like a dog harassing a wild boar or a lion, chasing it and snapping at its heels but alert lest the wild boar or lion turn around and attack.

Hector killed the Greek warriors who lagged behind as the others fled back to their ships. The Greek warriors who reached their fortifications prayed to the gods and lined up to face the Trojans.

Hector’s eyes were like those of Ares or of a Gorgon — a female monster the sight of whom would turn a mortal to stone.

Hector and his Trojans had routed the Greek warriors.

Hera saw all, and she was unhappy. She said to Athena, “Don’t we care anymore for the Greek warriors? They are dying! One warrior — Hector — has routed them! If we are going to help the Greeks, we need to do it now!”

Athena replied, “Let Hector die on the battlefield before Troy! But Zeus protects him. Zeus has forgotten the many times that I helped his son Heracles when he was performing the labors that Eurystheus set for him. Heracles often needed help, and Zeus often sent me down from Olympus to help him. If I knew then what I know now, when Heracles went down to the Land of the Dead to kidnap Cerberus, the three-headed guard dog, Heracles would never have left the Land of the Dead.

“Now, Zeus ignores what I want. He obeys the wishes of Thetis, the mother of Achilles. She supplicated him and asked him to teach the Greeks how much they need Achilles, her son. But someday, Zeus, my father, will give me what I want.

“Harness the horses to your chariot, and I will dress myself in armor. Then I will see if Hector is happy to see us on the battlefield or if he will grieve at the destruction we will wreak.”

Hera got the chariot ready, and Athena put on her armor and grabbed her spear. Then they set off to Troy.

But Zeus was watching. He had given them orders not to interfere in the war. He called Iris, the messenger of the gods, to him, and told her, “Go after Hera and Athena and tell them that I am ordering them to stay at Olympus. If they do not return, I will maim their horses, smash their chariot, and use my lightning bolts to wound them so badly that it will take more than ten years to heal their wounds. I am especially angry at Athena, who ought to know better. But I am used to Hera’s disobedience — she always goes against my will, whenever she can.”

Iris raced away with his message. She quickly reached Hera and Athena and told them, “Zeus orders you to stay at Olympus. He orders you not to fight in the war. If you disobey him, he will maim your horses, smash your chariot, and use his lightning bolts to wound you so badly that it will take more than ten years to heal your wounds. He says that he is especially angry at Athena, who ought to know better. But he says that you, Hera, always go against his will, whenever you can. Bitch, do you really want to challenge Zeus?”

Having delivered the message, Iris raced away, and Hera decided not to challenge Zeus. She said to Athena, “Let’s return to Olympus. Let mortals fight, and let mortals die. Let Zeus decide which side will be triumphant. I cannot challenge Zeus.”

The Seasons took care of Hera’s horses, and Hera and Athena sat down among the other gods.

Zeus then returned to Olympus from Mount Ida. Poseidon took care of his horses, and Zeus sat on his throne. Athena and Hera ignored him, but Zeus openly mocked them: “What is wrong with you two? Are you exhausted from helping the Greeks on the battlefield? Are you exhausted from slaughtering Trojan warriors? No one can stop me from going to the battlefield, but I was

able to keep you two from going there. If you had not obeyed my orders, I would have blasted you with lightning bolts and never have allowed you to return to Mount Olympus.”

Athena remained angry but silent, but Hera was both angry and loud: “We know how powerful you are, but we pity the Greek warriors. They are bloody. They are dying. We will not fight on the battlefield, but we will give advice to the Greek commanders.”

Zeus replied, “Tomorrow you can watch the battle. You will see me getting many, many more Greek warriors killed. Hector will kill and kill again until Achilles rejoins the fighting, as he will when the battle reaches the ships and warriors fight to gain possession of the corpse of his best friend, Patroclus. This is the doom of Zeus.

“You, Hera, will be angry, but that means nothing to me. I would not care if you ended up in Tartarus, a place of pain and the lowest part of the Land of the Dead. You are a bitch.”

Hera was silent, and the day came to an end. The Trojans were unhappy to see dusk — more time, and they could have reached the Greek ships and set fire to them. The Greeks were happy to see the dusk — finally a respite from blood and death.

Hector met with his commanders in a place where corpses did not lie unburied on the ground. He said to them, “Listen to me. I had hoped to reach the Greek ships and set fire to them, but night arrived too soon. We could have saved our city, our wives and female relatives, and our children. Let us camp out on the battlefield and not return to Troy tonight. We will get cattle from the city and eat out here. We will set watch fires so that the Greeks cannot sail tonight and escape death at our hands. We won’t let the Greeks board their ships without a fight, without wounds to take back to Greece. We will destroy the Greeks so that other warriors will decide not to attack Troy.

“Heralds will return to Troy and order that boys and old men stand on the walls and take watches. Our wives can set big fires in their homes. All will be on guard in case of a surprise night attack by night raiders while our army is camped on the battlefield.

“Those are my orders for tonight. Tomorrow we will attack.

“Zeus is on our side. I pray to him that we destroy the Greeks and their ships. Tonight we will guard our camps, and tomorrow we will fight a great battle.

“Tomorrow we will see who is triumphant: me or Diomedes. Will he drive me away from the ships? Or will I kill him? I think that Diomedes will die, and his Greeks will be routed. I wish that I were as sure of immortality as I am of this.”

The Trojans were triumphant, and their morale was high. They shouted their agreement with Hector’s orders and carried them out.

The watch fires spread across the battlefield, hundreds of them blazing in the night, in between the Greek ships and the Xanthus River. One thousand watch fires blazed, and by each

watch fire fifty warriors camped — fifty thousand Trojans waited for dawn to come so that they could kill Greeks.

Meanwhile, in his camp, Achilles was thinking, *Why am I here? Why was I fighting? I am not married to Helen. Paris has never done anything to harm me. Why have I been risking my life in this war? What benefit can I gain from fighting?*

The major benefit I can gain is kleos: reputation, fame, and a kind of immortality. Human beings are mortal; all of us will die. The Land of the Dead is a gloomy place. Souls go down to Hades, but they have no meaningful kind of afterlife. Nothing good can be found there, and the only thing worse is to be a soul who is not allowed to be in the Land of the Dead because his corpse has not been properly burned and buried. The soul suffers a horrible fate when dogs and birds are allowed to eat his corpse. The soul is not allowed to enter the Land of the Dead. For a soul, this is horrible. The dead belong with the dead.

The immortality of the soul is worthless. The only meaningful kind of immortality is kleos. I have been fighting in this war and risking my life in order to attain kleos. I have wanted to fight so well that I will be immortalized in poetry and song. I have wanted to fight so well that an epic poet will come along and create a poem about me that will be sung forever. That way, I will have undying kleos. People will remember my name after I am dead. I will have reputation and fame.

I want to be remembered after my death. I want my name to live on after I die. I want to be remembered as a great warrior who slaughtered many other warriors.

My body will become a corpse. All of us will die, but my kleos can live on in epic poetry after I die.

To get kleos, I need to fight well and earn timê. If I fight well, I am supposed to be rewarded with timê. Timê is booty — the spoils of war. Timê is cattle, slaves, and pretty young women who become sex-slaves. The more timê I earn, the more kleos I will have.

Timê is gifts of honor. After a city has been captured, what is inside the city is given out as gifts of honor. If a warrior has fought bravely, that warrior will get timê. An important kind of timê is a sex-slave.

Briseis was my timê. I earned her because I fought well in battle. She was my sex-slave, but Agamemnon took my timê away from me. By taking away my timê, Agamemnon is taking away my kleos.

All warriors are fighting for timê and kleos. All warriors are willing to risk dying in order to achieve undying kleos. But if Agamemnon can take away my timê and kleos so easily, are those things worth dying for? All warriors believe that timê and kleos are worth dying for. Maybe they are wrong. Maybe life is more valuable than timê and kleos.

All mortals need to decide how to live their lives. Warriors believe that since we are mortals and we will die, the best way to live our lives is to fight bravely and gain undying kleos. Maybe we are wrong.

Chapter 9: Peace Offerings to Achilles (Iliad)

The Trojans stood watch to make sure that the Greeks did not sail away during the night. Their mood was one of triumph.

The mood of the Greeks, however, was discouragement for many and near-panic for others. They had lost a significant battle. For the first time, the Trojans were camped on the plain near the Greek ships. The Greeks grieved.

Just like the winds will stir the sea and cast up seaweed on the shore, so the Trojans had cast the Greeks back to their ships on the shore. The spirits of the Greeks were like damp seaweed.

Agamemnon ordered heralds to call the Greek commanders to a council — not loudly, but quietly. He did not want the Trojans or common soldiers to hear and wonder what they would discuss.

They gathered. Morale was low.

Agamemnon stood up with tears streaming down his face and said, “Friends, Zeus has tricked me. Long ago, he promised — he nodded to me — that I would return to Greece triumphant, with the walls of Troy torn down. But, no, it was all a trick to bring disaster to us and to get many of us killed. Zeus wants me to return — defeated — to Greece. He wants me to leave entire regiments of warriors behind as corpses. Who can go against the will of Zeus? He has destroyed a thousand cities, and he will destroy a thousand more.

“So let us return to Greece. We have lost the war! We will never conquer Troy!”

Although the Greek commanders were discouraged, they were stunned by Agamemnon’s orders. True, they had lost a significant battle, but the lost battle was not so significant that they should quit the war.

Diomedes said, “Warriors are allowed to speak up honestly in council, and I will do so. Agamemnon, your plan is exactly what we should not do. We should not sail home to Greece. I am a young warrior, and when I came to Troy you thought that I was a poor warrior. Ask the Trojans now what they think of my skill in battle. Zeus gives us some gifts, but not all. He gave you power, but not courage. We Greek warriors are not cowards; we shall stay here. If you wish to return to Greece, go! But we other Greek warriors shall continue the war until we have conquered Troy. And if all the other Greek commanders sail home to Greece with you, Sthenelus and I will stay here and conquer Troy by ourselves. I say this: Stay here and conquer Troy! The gods are on our side!”

The Greek warriors roared their approval of what Diomedes had said.

Nestor approved of the substance of Diomedes’ speech, but he did not approve of how Diomedes had made the speech. An old man, Nestor knew the importance of saving the face of

an important leader. A young commander such as Diomedes should show respect to an older commander such as Agamemnon. Young men do not always know how to speak properly. Nestor also knew that a hungry man feels discouragement much more than a fed man.

Nestor stood up and said, “You are a mighty warrior, Diomedes, and in council you speak well — for a young man. What you said is good, but we need to add to it. We need a plan of action. You are very young — you could be the youngest of my sons. I can add more to what you have said, and everybody — including mighty Agamemnon — will listen to what I have to say. We will not have civil war during our council.

“But first, let’s eat. Let’s set up sentries to stand watch. The younger warriors can do the guarding. You, Agamemnon, are the greatest commander here. Make a feast for all the lesser commanders. You are hospitable. You have lots of wine. You command so many men.

“After we eat, we will meet again and seek a good plan. Good advice is what is needed now, now that the Trojans are camped so close to our ships. This night will lead to destruction or to victory.”

Seven captains with one hundred men set up as guards, keeping the Greek warriors safe. The seven captains were Thrasymedes, Ascalaphus, Ialmenus, Meriones, Aphareus, Deipylus, and Lycomedes. They lit fires, cooked, and ate their meal as they stood guard.

Agamemnon feasted the commanders, and after they had eaten, Nestor said, “Great commander Agamemnon, lord of men, you are the most important commander here. You rule many men, and Zeus has given you power. You must speak up in council, and you must listen to the advice of other people. If another person has a good plan, you must implement it, if it truly is good. You will get much credit for doing so.

“This is what I think is best. I think it is the best plan possible. I have been thinking about it ever since you angered Achilles by taking away his *timé*: his sex-slave Briseis. None of the Greek warriors wanted you to do that, including me. I advised you — strongly — not to take Briseis away from Achilles. But you were angry, and you dishonored Achilles by taking away his *timé*, his prize of honor. And you have Briseis even now.

“But you can make things right again. You can stop Achilles’ anger by giving him gifts of friendship and by giving him words of friendship.”

Agamemnon agreed at once with much of what Nestor had proposed. He said, “You are right, old man. I am in the wrong. Achilles is a mighty warrior, and we need him. Zeus obviously loves him because Zeus is now supporting the warriors of Troy and making them triumphant. Because I am in the wrong, I will give Achilles gifts of friendship.

“Listen to what I will give Achilles if he will stop being angry and will start fighting again.

“I will give him ten tripods that have never been set over a fire. I will give him ten gold bars. I will give him twenty polished cauldrons. I will give him one dozen racing stallions that have won

prizes that make a man rich. I will give him seven women from Lesbos who are skilled weavers and artists — these are the women I chose for myself when Achilles conquered the citadel of Lesbos. They are beautiful women. I will give him back Briseis, and I will swear that I have not slept with her. These are the gifts that I will give Achilles now.

“If we conquer Troy, I will give Achilles more. I will allow Achilles to take from Troy as much gold and bronze as his ships can carry back to his home. I will allow Achilles to take from Troy twenty women who are nearly as beautiful as Helen.

“If we return safely to Greece, I will make Achilles my son-in-law and honor him the way I honor my own son: Orestes. I have three daughters — Chrysothemis, Laodice, and Iphianassa. Achilles can choose any one of the three to marry; he will not have to pay a bride-price. I will also give Achilles a dowry: a treasure. I will also make Achilles the king of seven citadels: Cardamyle, Enope, Hire, Pherae, Anthea, Aepea, and Pedasus. The people there will give Achilles gifts and obey his laws.

“All of these things I will give to Achilles if he will stop being angry and will start fighting again. But he will have to obey my orders! Only Death submits to no man, and so Death is hated. Achilles must obey my orders! He must submit to me! I am a greater king than he is! I am an older man than he is!”

Nestor thought, *You are offering to Achilles half of what I wanted you to offer him. You are offering many generous gifts of friendship — but no words of friendship. Let us hope that this is enough. For all or almost all warriors, it would be.*

Nestor said, “Agamemnon, you are certainly generous. These gifts are remarkable. Let us pick men to send to Achilles to talk to him and bring to him your offer. Who will be the three heralds? Old Phoenix, Great Ajax, and Odysseus. These are the men for this mission. Bring them water so that they can wash their hands and pray to Zeus.”

Nestor thought, *These are all good people to be in the embassy to Achilles.*

Odysseus is a skilled rhetorician as well as a skilled warrior. People who know rhetoric can speak persuasively. Because Odysseus is a skilled rhetorician, he will be able to speak persuasively to Achilles. Odysseus knows how to use language to please and to persuade.

Phoenix is an old man who serves as a father figure to Achilles. We Greeks respect fathers, and we Greeks respect old men. Phoenix will be able to speak to Achilles on an emotional level.

The prowess of Great Ajax as a warrior is second only to Achilles. Great Ajax can speak to Achilles warrior to warrior.

If all goes well, these three people can persuade Achilles to stop being angry and to start acting as a warrior again.

Everyone was pleased with the three people he had chosen to be emissaries to Achilles. Heralds brought water. After everyone had washed their hands and poured out offerings of wine

to Zeus, the three emissaries and two heralds — Odius and Eurybates — set out for Achilles' camp. As the three emissaries left, Nestor looked each of them in the eyes — especially Odysseus.

As the group walked to Achilles' camp, Great Ajax and Odysseus prayed to Poseidon that they could persuade Achilles to end his anger.

When the emissaries reached Achilles' camp, Achilles was performing an epic song. He was singing about the *kleos apthiton* — the undying reputation — of heroes of long ago. The lyre he was playing was part of the *timé* he had gotten after conquering the city of King Eetion, the father of Hector's wife, Andromache. His best friend, Patroclus, sat quietly and listened to the songs.

Startled by the arrival of the embassy to his camp, Achilles stopped singing and stood up. Patroclus also stood up, and Achilles said to the emissaries, "Welcome! I must be needed now — my friends have come to visit me."

Achilles welcomed his guests into his camp and invited them to sit down. He said to Patroclus, "Bring more wine, and make it strong. Give each of our guests a cup full."

Patroclus brought the wine, which the Greeks mixed with water, and Achilles cooked mutton, goat, and pork — the best and tastiest cuts, which are along the backbone. Patroclus brought bread, Achilles served the meat, and Patroclus sacrificed to the gods. Everyone ate, including the emissaries, who had just eaten a meal that Agamemnon had given to them. Breaking bread with another person is important, and the emissaries did not want to do anything to upset Achilles.

After they had eaten, Great Ajax nodded to Phoenix — a signal for him to begin speaking. But although Odysseus saw the nod, he — confident in his ability as a speaker of rhetoric — began speaking.

First he toasted Achilles and complimented him.

Odysseus said, "To your health, Achilles! Thank you for the feast! We know that we can receive excellent *xenia* here and at the camp of Agamemnon.

"But we did not come here to feast. We are facing disaster, and we are afraid. Soon, either we will save our ships or the Trojans will burn them. It could go either way — unless you decide to fight for us. The Trojans are camped close to our ships. Thousands of watch fires are burning on the plain before Troy. Nothing can stop the Trojans from burning our ships — so the Trojans say.

"Moreover, Zeus is on their side. He sends them lightning bolts on their right side — the lucky side. Hector trusts the signs of Zeus, and he prays for daylight to come so that at last he can set fire to our ships and slaughter us. I fear that this will happen. With the gods' help, Hector and his Trojans can kill us all and make us corpses in his country, far from the Greece we love.

"Help us now! Arm yourself and fight! You can save us if you want. But what if you don't save us? Then the memory of our deaths will be a misery for you to think of in future years. Once we are dead, you cannot bring us back to life. Now is the time to stop our coming deaths.

“Your father, Peleus, must have given you good advice when you set out to fight at Troy: ‘Victory is yours if Athena and Hera give it to you. But do not be proud. Avoid quarrels. Instead, get along with others. If you avoid quarrels, your Greek friends will respect you.’ Your father must have said that to you. You must have forgotten his words.

“Stop this quarrel now. Let go of the anger you have. Agamemnon insulted you, but he is willing to give you many valuable gifts to make up for the insults. Listen to what Agamemnon has promised that he will give you.

“He will give you ten tripods that have never been set over a fire. He will give you ten gold bars. He will give you twenty polished cauldrons. He will give you one dozen racing stallions that have won prizes that make a man rich. He will give you seven women from Lesbos who are skilled weavers and artists — these are the women he chose for himself when you conquered the citadel of Lesbos. They are beautiful women. He will give you back Briseis, and he will swear that he has not slept with her. These are the gifts that he will give you now.

“If we conquer Troy, he will give you more. He will allow you to take from Troy as much gold and bronze as your ships can carry back to your home. He will allow you to take from Troy twenty women who are nearly as beautiful as Helen.

“If we return safely to Greece, he will make you his son-in-law and honor you the way he honors his own son: Orestes. He has three daughters: Chrysothemis, Laodice, and Iphianassa. You can choose any one of the three to marry; you will not have to pay a bride-price. He will also give you a dowry: a treasure. He will also make you the king of seven citadels: Cardamyle, Enope, Hire, Pherae, Anthea, Aepea, and Pedasus. The people there will give you gifts and obey your laws.

“All of that is what Agamemnon will give you if you return and fight.

“But if you are still angry at Agamemnon, think of your fellow warriors. If you continue to be angry at Agamemnon, many of us will die although you are not angry at us. If you save our lives, we will honor you. You will gain *kleos*.

“If you return to the fighting, you will be able to meet Hector in battle and kill him, thereby winning great *kleos*. Before, the Trojan warriors stayed in Troy. Now, they fight on the plain. Now, you can meet Hector face-to-face!”

Odysseus thought, *This is the best speech I can make. I wish that I could offer words of friendship from Agamemnon, but Agamemnon did not say them. Instead, he wants Achilles to submit to him. Agamemnon’s words about submission are not persuasive words and so I left them out of my speech. I did mention the kleos that Achilles can win on the battlefield. If Achilles were to meet and kill Hector, Achilles will have undying kleos. Kleos motivates all of us warriors: Greek and Trojan.*

Achilles replied, “Odysseus, son of Laertes, I will tell you what I have to say plainly. I hate a liar: one who says one thing although what is in his heart is different. Agamemnon is a liar. He said that he would give me Briseis, but he took her back. I am not a liar. I speak the plain truth.

“Will I fight for Agamemnon again? Never. What is the reward that a warrior gets for fighting? *Kleos*? With Agamemnon, a brave warrior and a cowardly warrior get the same *kleos*. And they reap the same reward. In the long run, we are all dead: brave and cowardly alike. The brave warrior who fights in every battle will die. The coward who runs away from every battle will die. I have fought hard — and what have I gotten?

“I have been like a mother bird feeding her nestlings unendingly without time for her to feed herself. I have fought hard. I have sailed to and conquered twelve cities, and I have traveled by land to eleven cities and conquered them. I have seized booty from these cities and fed it all — given it all — to Agamemnon, who stands not in the front lines but in the safe lines and often in his camp. Agamemnon would return a small portion to me as my *timê*, but the majority he would keep. Some other portions he would hand out to other commanders.

“The other commanders still have their *timê* — but not me! From me — and only from me — he takes back the *timê*. He took back Briseis, whom I loved. Let him sleep with her now! He can have sex with her to the hilt!

“Why are we here before Troy? Why did Agamemnon gather an army and lead us here? For Helen. But are Agamemnon and Menelaus the only men who love their wives? All decent men love their wives. I loved my spear-bride. I loved Briseis.

“Agamemnon awarded Briseis to me, and then he took her back. Why should I trust him now? I know him all too well to trust him now. I have learned from experience.

“So let him fight his own battles. You, Odysseus, and the other commanders can help him if you wish.

“He has erected a mighty wall and trench. He has erected mighty defensive fortifications. Even with the wall and the trench, he can’t stop Hector, who is intent on setting fire to the ships. No, Agamemnon can’t stop Hector.

“When I was fighting, Hector had little desire to leave Troy. He stayed close to the Scaean Gates. Once, I met him face-to-face and I nearly killed him. Now, he camps by your ships.

“At one time, I wanted to fight and kill Hector — but not now. Tomorrow morning, I will sacrifice to Zeus and the other gods, and then I will load my ships so that my warriors and I can sail home. If you want to watch, you will see us setting sail. If Poseidon, the god of the sea, permits, we will reach home on the third day.

“At home, I have treasure, Here, I have gained more treasure. I will haul it all home: gold, bronze, women, and iron. All that I have won by fighting I will haul home — all except Briseis, my *timê*. Agamemnon gave her to me and took her back — an insult to his greatest warrior!

“Tell Agamemnon all that I have said. Tell him in front of other warriors. Perhaps they will be prepared to resist him if he tries to steal someone else’s *timê*.

“I will not be reconciled with Agamemnon. I will never forgive him for what he did. He has no shame. He cheated me. Once. He never will again. If he dies, the world will be a better place.

“Agamemnon wants to give me gifts? I despise his gifts. He could offer me ten or twenty times what he has offered plus all the treasure in the world — all the wealth that flows into Orchomenos or into Egyptian Thebes, which already overflows with treasure and with warriors. Even if Agamemnon were to offer me as many gifts as there are grains of sand, it would not be enough to repay me for the insult he has given me and it would not be enough for me to fight for him.

“I will never be Agamemnon’s son-in-law. Even if his daughters were as beautiful as Aphrodite or as wise and skilled as Athena, I still would not marry one of his daughters. Let him find other people to marry his daughters. My father will find me a wife. Many women live in the lands of my father. They are women who have powerful and rich fathers. I can find a good woman to marry and to share my wealth and the wealth of my father.

“Agamemnon has offered to give me much wealth, but no amount of wealth — no amount of *timê* — is worth dying for. Troy was a rich city before the war started. The wealth that Troy had and the gold that Apollo has are not worth my life!

“I can gain wealth. I can make raids to get cattle and sheep. I can trade for tripods and stallions. But once I am dead, I cannot make a trade to get my life back! I cannot make a raid to get my life back!

“My mother, Thetis, the goddess, has special knowledge. Almost all men have one fate. They will die at a certain place at a certain time. They have no choice in the matter.

“Not me! Thetis has told me that I have two fates. If I stay here and fight at Troy, I will definitely die here — soon. But if I stay here and die here, I will earn undying *kleos*. People millennia from now will know my name and will talk about me.

“If I sail home, I will have a long life but no *kleos*. Soon after I die, no one will remember my name.

“You warriors have one fate, but you do not know what it is. You know that if you stay and fight at Troy, you may die in battle — or you may not. You know that if you leave Troy now and return home, you may have a long life — or you may not. Because my mother is a goddess, I know for certain what my fates are. You have probabilities; I have certainties.

“I advise you to set sail for Greece. You will not conquer Troy. You know that Zeus now favors the Trojans.

“Go back to Agamemnon and tell him what I have said. Let the leading commanders decide what to do. The Trojans are close to burning your ships, and your embassy to me has failed — completely!

“However, Phoenix is welcome to stay the night here. He can sail to Greece with me tomorrow if he wishes. I won’t force him to go with me.”

The emissaries were shocked by the vehemence with which Achilles had turned down Agamemnon’s offer of reconciliation. They were silent.

Then old Phoenix spoke. He said to Achilles, “You wish to sail home? Trojan fire is coming close to our ships! You are too angry to help us?”

“I will not be separated from you, Achilles. Your father, Peleus, wanted me to stay with you. You were just a boy with no experience in war when you joined forces with Agamemnon. You had no experience speaking in council. Peleus wanted me to be your teacher, your mentor. You had so much to learn. He wanted me to make you a man of words and of action. Can I be separated from you now when Peleus gave me such responsibility?”

“I do not want you to leave me behind here at Troy. I would not want to be separated from you even if Zeus promised to make me young again — as young as I was when I fled from a quarrel with an older man — my father, Amyntor — over a woman.

“We had quarreled over his mistress: a woman with beautiful dark hair. My mother — his wife — was jealous. She begged me to seduce my father’s mistress. My mother supplicated me and hugged my knees. She thought that if the mistress felt the love of a young man, then the mistress would leave the old man.

“I did as my mother wished and seduced my father’s mistress, but he was jealous and cursed me: his own son. He even prayed to the Furies, ‘Never let me bounce on my knees the son of my son!’ This was an awful curse, but the gods granted my father his wish. Zeus and Persephone gave my father what he wanted.

“I even wanted to murder my own father. But a god stopped me and reminded me of the bad consequences and the bad reputation that would follow a father-killer.

“I was kept prisoner in my father’s house. My kinfolk were always around, and they begged me to stay and not run away, and they watched me to make sure that I did not run away. For nine nights they feasted and drank wine, letting me join the festivities in hopes that I would stay.

“On the tenth night, I escaped. I burst through the bolted door of my quarters and ran. I jumped over the wall and fled from guards and female servants.

“I traveled through many lands and reached Phthia, where your father, Peleus, is king. He welcomed me, and he treated me like a son. He made me rich and a ruler.

“I helped him raise you, Achilles. I loved you and treated you well. At feasts, you would sit on my knee and I would cut up meat and feed it to you. I would mix wine and water and gave you sips from a cup I held up to your lips. Often, you spit up the wine and soaked my shirt with it.

“I loved you, and I often thought about how the gods had not given me a son of my own.

“Achilles, I made you my son. I wanted you to treat me like a father when I grew old. I wanted you to protect me when I grew old like a son would protect an elderly father.

“Now is the time to do that, Achilles. The fire has nearly reached the ships. Resist your anger; put out your burning rage! Your heart does not yield to better feelings — even the gods can put aside their anger when they are given sacrifices and prayers.

“Prayers are daughters of Zeus; they are goddesses who follow the goddess Ate, who is also known as Ruin. Prayers are lame and wrinkled and cross-eyed, and they follow Ate, who is strong and quick. Ate causes damage, and Prayers attempt to repair the damage. If a man will respect Prayers, they will be on his side. If a man disrespects Prayers and refuses them, they will go to Zeus and tell him to strike down that man.

“Achilles, respect Prayers! Give honor to Prayers!

“If Agamemnon were not giving you great *timê*, and were not promising you much more *timê* in the future, I would tell you to continue being angry. I would not tell you, ‘Stop being angry! Defend the ships and the lives of your friends!’

“But Agamemnon is offering you much *timê*. He will give you much *timê* now and much *timê* in the future.

“He has sent to you three friends — commanders of warriors — to ask you to put aside your anger. You know us. Don’t ignore the appeals of your friends, not now. Before, no one could blame you for being angry. That is not the case now.

“Remember the ancient heroes and what you and we can learn from them. Famous fighting men have gotten angry before. Famous fighting men have been offered great amounts of *timê* before. I remember an old story. Let me tell it to you. We are friends.

“The Curetes and the Aetolians warred. They slaughtered each other. The Aetolians defended their city, and the Curetes vowed to conquer it.

“The war began because of Artemis. The Aetolian Oeneus, the father of Tydeus and Meleager, did not offer her a sacrifice, although he had sacrificed to the other gods. He had forgotten about Artemis or he did not want to sacrifice to her. Either way, it was a fatal mistake!

“Artemis was angry, and she set loose in his kingdom a wild boar. The boar ripped up Oeneus’ orchard, but his son, Meleager, killed it. Many men had banded together to hunt the boar, and the boar had killed many men, and Meleager was the one who killed it.

“A fight broke out over who would get the boar’s head and hide. Curetes fought Aetolians. As long as the Aetolian Meleager, a ferocious warrior, fought, the Curetes were continually beaten. They were even beaten back to the walls of their own city.

“But Meleager became angry and stopped fighting. He became angry at Althaea, his mother, and he stayed in bed with his wife, Cleopatra, instead of going to war and fighting.

“Cleopatra’s mother was Marpessa, a woman who was such a prize that Idas, who became her husband, even dared to draw a bow against the god Apollo. Apollo had carried away Marpessa. Idas followed them and then challenged Apollo. Zeus intervened and asked Marpessa to choose whom she preferred: Idas or Apollo. She chose Idas.

“When Cleopatra was born, her parents called her by another name: Halcyon, after a seabird. While grieving after Apollo had kidnapped her and taken her away, Marpessa had made a noise that sounded like the wail of the seabird.

“Angry, Meleager lay beside Cleopatra. His mother had enraged him. When the fight broke out over who would get the boar’s head and hide, Meleager killed his uncle — his mother’s brother. She cursed Meleager. She prayed to the god Hades and his wife, Persephone, “Kill him! Kill Meleager! Kill my son!” A Fury — one of the goddesses who punish the murderers of family members — heard her, and suddenly the Curetes attacked the city of the Aetolians.

“The elders of the city begged Meleager, ‘Come and fight! Save us! Defend your city and your people!’ They promised him a wonderful gift if he would fight: They would give him fifty acres of the best land — his own choice. Twenty-five acres would be devoted to vineyards, and twenty-five acres would be devoted to crops.

“Oeneus, his own father, supplicated him. But Meleager refused to fight. Meleager’s brothers and — now — his mother begged him to put aside his anger and fight, but he would not. His friends came to him and begged him to put aside his anger and fight, but he would not. The Curetes continued to attack and were on the verge of conquering the city and setting it on fire.

“Finally, Cleopatra herself, Meleager’s wife, begged him to save the city. She reminded him of what happens when a city falls: The enemy warriors kill warriors, set the city on fire, rape the women, and make the children slaves. Conquered people have no power and no freedom.

“Meleager armed himself and went to war. He saved the city. But so many Aetolians had died that Meleager did not receive the gift of land that he would have received if he had fought earlier. He saved the city, but he did not receive a reward.

“Don’t make the mistake that Meleager made. And don’t let the ships be set on fire. After they are set on fire, it is hard or impossible to repair the damage. Go into battle now and earn the gratitude of the Greeks while they are offering you gifts.

“If you go into battle without the gifts, without the *timè*, your *kleos* will be less although you beat back the Trojans!”

Odysseus thought, *Old Phoenix made a very good speech. His stories are relevant to the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon. One of Old Phoenix' stories stressed the problems that result when an older man and a younger man quarrel over a woman. In another story, he also stressed, like me, the importance of saving the lives of friends and the importance of timê and kleos.*

Achilles replied, "Phoenix, old sir, why should I try to get *kleos* by accepting the *timê* of Agamemnon? My *kleos* — if I should get it — will come from the decree of Zeus, who has vowed to make the Trojans triumphant. If I want the *kleos* that comes from the decree of Zeus, I will stay here by the ships and I will die here. I have already explained this to you.

"One more thing. Don't try to persuade me to stay by weeping and wailing and pleading the cause of Agamemnon. He is not worth pleading for. If you continue to support him, I will hate you. Now, I love you. You should take my side, and you should attack, not support, Agamemnon. Stand by me, and take half of my honor.

"Let the other emissaries carry my message back to Agamemnon. You may stay here and sleep in a soft bed. Tomorrow, we will decide what to do: sail back home to Greece or stay in our camps, not fighting."

Achilles nodded to Patroclus, a signal to him to make a soft bed for old Phoenix and a signal to the other emissaries to leave.

Great Ajax stood up and spoke to Odysseus, "Let's go. We have failed in our mission to Achilles. Let's report to Agamemnon and the other commanders, all of whom are waiting for us.

"Achilles is too proud to help us, although we have honored him. Other men have suffered injustice — a brother or a son killed. But they allow the murderer to live on in the same land as long as the murderer pays money as the price for his crime. Once the father or brother accepts the blood-price, he will hold down the anger in his heart.

"But Achilles does not do that, although the injustice done to him is much less than the loss of a brother or of a son. Achilles is angry because of the loss of a girl — just one girl. We have offered him his girl back, and seven other girls, and much treasure as well.

"Achilles, soften your heart! We three have appeared here because we were sent by *all* the Greek warriors. We three want to be your friends."

Achilles replied, "Royal son of Telamon, warrior and commander, Great Ajax, you have spoken well. I agree with most of what you have said. But still I am angry at Agamemnon. I remember how he humiliated me in front of everyone when he treated me as an outcast instead of as a warrior — I cannot forgive him.

"Go to him and tell him my message. Hector will continue to fight and to kill, and he will set on fire your ships. I will not fight again until the fire reaches my own ships. When Hector tries to attack my own troops and my own ships, then I will fight him and I will stop him. I will fight for myself, but I will not fight for Agamemnon!"

The warriors poured out an offering of wine to the gods, and Odysseus and Great Ajax and the two heralds went back to Agamemnon and the other commanders. Odysseus led the way.

Patroclus ordered that a bed be made for Phoenix, who then slept on soft fleeces. Achilles slept beside Diomedes, a woman he had brought from Lesbos. Patroclus slept beside Iphigeneia, a woman whom Achilles had given to him. Achilles had won her by conquering the city of Scyros.

When Odysseus and Great Ajax and the two heralds reached Agamemnon's camp, Agamemnon urgently asked, "Odysseus, will Achilles fight again? Will he keep the Trojan fire from burning our ships? Or is he still too angry to fight?"

Odysseus replied, "Agamemnon, Achilles is still too angry to fight. He has no intention of stopping his anger. He says that he does not care about you, and he does not care about your gifts. He tells you to fight your own battles and to keep the Trojan fire from the ships without his aid. He even threatens to sail away to Greece tomorrow. He also advises your warriors, 'Sail away to Greece. You will never conquer Troy. Zeus favors the Trojans, and the Trojans know it.'"

Odysseus thought, *Achilles actually told Great Ajax that he would not sail away tomorrow but would stay here and not fight until the fire reached his own ships. Still, it's best to give Agamemnon and the others the worst news. That way, they will be prepared if Achilles changes his mind and sails home. In addition, they may feel a bit better if Achilles does not sail home tomorrow. Interestingly, Great Ajax made the shortest speech — and the most effective. After hearing what Great Ajax had to say, Achilles decided not to sail home to Greece.*

Odysseus added, "That is his answer to us. Here are men who can confirm it: Great Ajax and the two heralds. Phoenix stayed with Achilles. Achilles has invited him to sail home to Greece with him tomorrow, but only if he wishes to go with him. Achilles says that he will not force Phoenix to go."

Agamemnon and the other commanders were stunned into silence for a long time.

Then Diomedes spoke up: "Agamemnon, it was a mistake to send an embassy to Achilles. He has always been proud, and now he will be prouder. Let him do whatever he wants. He can sail home if he wants, or he can stay at Troy if he wants. If he stays here, I think he will fight again — a time will come when he wishes to fight.

"Let all of us work together. We have eaten, so now let us sleep. When dawn comes, we fight. Agamemnon, you take your chariot and team of horses and lead us into battle. You fight in the front ranks!"

The Greeks roared their approval of Diomedes' words. They poured wine to the gods, returned to their own camps, and slept.

Chapter 10: A Night Raid (Iliad)

Most of the Greek commanders slept, but Agamemnon could not — his mind was too active. He was worried and he groaned. His groans were like the thunderbolts thrown by Zeus to signal rain or hail or snow — or war. He looked at the watch fires of the Trojans — there were so many! He saw a thousand fires! He groaned again, and he tore hair from his scalp, but he formed a plan of action. He would go to Nestor and see if the old, wise warrior could think of something that would keep the Trojan fires away from the Greek ships. He seized a spear and prepared to go to Nestor.

Menelaus also could not sleep. He was afraid for the Greek warriors who had crossed the sea to war against Troy for his sake, to fight in his war. He dressed and seized a spear and went to his brother Agamemnon's camp, thinking to wake him up.

Agamemnon was pleased to see Menelaus coming — Menelaus was taking action instead of hanging back.

Menelaus said to Agamemnon, "Why are you arming? Are you thinking of sending a spy to gather information about the Trojans? Whoever will do that will have to be a brave man."

Agamemnon replied, "We need a plan. We need to do something that will rally the troops. We need to raise morale. We need to make sure that we save our ships.

"Right now, Zeus supports the Trojans and especially Hector, who wreaked such damage on us yesterday — and Hector isn't even the son of a god or goddess! Hector slaughtered so many of us!

"Go and wake up Great Ajax and Idomeneus. I will go to Nestor and wake him up. I want him to go to the guards and make sure that they are doing what they ought to be doing. The guards will obey him. One of his sons, Thrasymedes, and the aide of Idomeneus, Meriones, are the main captains of the guards. We gave them that power."

Menelaus replied, "What do you want me to do after I wake up Great Ajax and Idomeneus? Do you want me to stay with them, or do you want me to go and find you?"

Agamemnon said, "Stay with them at the place where we will meet. Otherwise, we may miss each other in the maze of camps. But as you walk, shout to the guards to stay awake. Show the warriors respect. Show them that you know the names of their fathers. We ought not to be overly proud. Zeus has given us many misfortunes to face and rise above."

Menelaus left to follow Agamemnon's orders, and Agamemnon left to wake up Nestor, who was lying in bed, beside his armor, his shield, his helmet, his war-belt, and two long spears. Nestor was old, but he did not act old.

Ever alert, Nestor heard Agamemnon coming, and called out, “Who are you? Why are you walking during the night while others sleep? Are you trying to find a lost mule or a missing friend? Who are you, and what do you want?”

Agamemnon said, “Nestor, son of Neleus, it is I, Agamemnon — the man to whom Zeus has given many troubles. I can’t sleep. I am too worried about our warriors and the death that may come to them. Apparently, you can’t sleep, either. Let’s go to the guards and make sure that they are awake and alert — the Trojans may decide to attack this night.”

Nestor replied, “Hector hopes to defeat us, but it won’t happen — Zeus will not allow it to happen. You have troubles now, but Hector will have troubles if Achilles ever decides to fight again.

“Will I go with you to the guards? Of course. Let’s also wake the other commanders: Diomedes, Odysseus, Little Ajax, and Meges. Maybe someone else can wake up Great Ajax and Idomeneus — their camps lie far away. We ought to hold a council and make plans.

“But I do blame your brother: Menelaus. You should not do all the work. Menelaus sleeps too much. He should also be waking up commanders. This is a desperate time.”

Agamemnon replied, “You are right when you say that Menelaus often hangs back. He lets me do the leading. But this time he came to me first, and I sent him after Great Ajax and Idomeneus. He wants to rally the troops. He even has a plan. He deserves credit for what he has done tonight. Let’s go.”

Nestor said, “Menelaus is right. We need people to rally the troops.”

Nestor dressed quickly and grabbed a spear. He went to Odysseus’ tent and cried, “Wake up!”

Odysseus — always ready to respond to crises — came out of his tent and said, “What is wrong? What crisis are we facing now?”

Nestor replied, “We need to wake up the other commanders and hold a council. We need a plan of some kind. Should we stay here, or sail home?”

Odysseus got a shield from his tent and went with the others to the camp of Diomedes, who was sleeping outside his tent with other men. They had their shields under their heads, and their spears, points up, were sticking out of the ground.

Nestor pushed Diomedes with his foot and said, “Wake up! Do you want to sleep all night? Don’t you know that Trojans are near? Only a small space separates us from a quick death.”

Diomedes woke up and said to Nestor, “You are an old warrior who is harder than younger warriors. Shouldn’t they be the ones waking up the commanders? You out-work the younger warriors!”

Nestor replied, “There is truth in what you say, friend. I have sons and friends who could do this work — but we are facing a crisis. Get up and awaken Little Ajax and Meges for me — you are a younger man.”

Diomedes got up, wrapped the hide of a lion around his shoulders, grabbed a spear, and went off to wake up Little Ajax and Meges.

Nestor went to the guards, who were all awake and alert. They were like sheepdogs on edge because a wild beast is near and eager to reach the flock. The beast charges, and men and dogs are awake and ready to defend the flock. The guards had no intention of sleeping; they were ready to repel a night attack.

Nestor said to the guards, “Keep it up. You are doing the right thing. Stay awake, or you will bring much joy to the Trojans who want to kill us.”

Nestor and the other commanders met in council. Meriones and Thrasymedes, as requested, were present. They all met in a place in which there were no corpses — it was the place where Hector had stopped his attack when darkness arrived.

Nestor asked, “Is there a man here who is willing to volunteer to gather information about the Trojans? We need someone to try to find out what the Trojans are planning. Possibly, the volunteer can find a warrior who is away from his fellow warriors. A lone warrior may be a good source of information. We need to know whether the Trojans are going to stay out on the plain before Troy or are going to return to Troy now that they have inflicted a defeat upon us. If someone can find out that information, he will be a hero and will win *kleos*. Plus, he will win *timé*. Each commander here will give him a black ewe and a suckling lamb. Each commander here will invite that man to feasts.”

Diomedes quickly volunteered, saying, “I’ll eagerly do it. I will go among the Trojans who are camped to the side of the battlefield. But I want another warrior to go with me. When two warriors work together, good things happen. They cooperate, and they seize opportunities. Two warriors working together accomplish more. A warrior who is alone will accomplish less. Cooperation among warriors is important to achieve victory.”

Several warriors volunteered to go with Diomedes: Great Ajax, Little Ajax, Meriones, Thrasymedes, Menelaus, and Odysseus.

Agamemnon said to Diomedes, “Choose your own companion for this exploit. But don’t think that you have to choose according to rank. Choose the best man for the exploit.”

Agamemnon was afraid that Diomedes would pick Menelaus as his companion. Spying on the Trojans was dangerous, and Agamemnon was afraid that his brother might die that night.

Diomedes said, “Pick my own companion? Great! I pick Odysseus. He is the best man for the job, and Athena is his protector. With Odysseus and I working together, both of us will come back alive.”

Odysseus said to Diomedes, “Don’t over-praise me, but don’t under-praise me, either. People have witnessed what I have done during the war. They know my exploits. Let’s go. Not much night remains. Only a few hours are left.”

Diomedes and Odysseus prepared themselves. Not enough time remained for them to go to their camps and get the rest of their armor and weapons, so they borrowed what they needed from other warriors. Thrasymedes and Meriones, who had had guard duty, were well armed.

Thrasymedes lent Diomedes a two-edged sword, a shield, and a bull's-hide helmet. Meriones lent Odysseus a bow, a quiver of arrows, and a leather helmet that was decorated with the teeth of a boar. Odysseus' maternal grandfather, Autolycus, a cunning man and a thief, had stolen the helmet from Amyntor, who lived in Eleon. Autolycus then gave the helmet to Amphidamas, who gave it as a guest-gift to Molus, who gave it to his son, Meriones, to wear during the war. Now Odysseus wore it.

Diomedes and Odysseus headed out into the night, leaving the Greek commanders behind. Athena watched them and sent them a lucky bird-sign: They heard a heron heading to their right.

Odysseus prayed to Athena, his patron goddess who respected him, "Athena, you are aware of all my exploits. Once more, please give us your support. Allow Diomedes and me to return to our ships safely after we have accomplished something that will harm our enemies!"

Diomedes also prayed, "Athena, hear my prayer, too. Be with me now just as you were with my father, Tydeus, when he left his warriors behind and went into enemy territory alone — a dangerous exploit. Tydeus took a message to Thebes. Enemy warriors in the city surrounded Tydeus, but he was not afraid. He challenged warrior after warrior to contests of strength, and he won all contests. When he left the city, the Thebans sent warriors after him to kill him. Fifty warriors tried to kill Tydeus, but he killed forty-nine of them, leaving one alive to retreat to Thebes in accordance with signs sent by the gods. You, Athena, stood by Tydeus and helped him then. So protect me now. I will sacrifice to you a yearling heifer. It will be yours — I will decorate its horns with gold."

Athena heard the prayers of Diomedes and of Odysseus. She was pleased. The two warriors went into the darkness. They walked by corpses and pools of blood.

The Trojans, however, were also awake. Hector was holding a council of war. To his leading commanders, he asked, "Is anyone willing to volunteer for a dangerous mission? If you can accomplish it, you will receive a worthy prize. I will give that warrior a chariot and two horses — the best that the Greeks have brought to Troy. That warrior will win *kleos* if he will spy on the Greeks and find out what they are doing. Are they well guarded in the night or too discouraged to mount a proper guard? Are they planning on racing away from Troy in their ships?"

Dolon, who was rich in bronze and gold and iron but was not handsome, was a swift runner and the only son in a family with five daughters. He spoke up, "Hector, I will get information for you. But first swear that you will give me the horses and chariot of Achilles — his are the best. I will be a good spy. I will even spy on the camp of Agamemnon, which is where they must be holding a council."

Hector swore the oath: “I swear to Zeus that you will get the horses and chariot of Achilles — they will be your prize possession.”

The oath was sworn in vain — Dolon would not return alive — but it motivated Dolon. He armed himself with a bow and arrows, and he threw a wolf skin over himself and wore a cap made from the skin of a weasel.

He ran from the council of the Trojans and headed toward the Greek ships. Odysseus saw him first and alerted Diomedes, “Someone is coming from the Trojan camps! It could be a spy or someone who loots corpses at night. Here’s a plan. Let’s allow him to go past us so that he is in between our ships and us, and then we can capture him. He will have nowhere to run but toward our ships. He won’t make it back to his fellow Trojans — he will be too afraid of your spear.”

Diomedes and Odysseus hid themselves and allowed Dolon to run past them, and then they raced after him. Dolon heard them and hoped that they were Trojans calling him back to the council because they had decided that the mission was not needed, but then he saw enemies. He raced away.

Diomedes and Odysseus pursued him. They were like hounds pursuing a fawn or hare that they want to rip to pieces. Diomedes and Odysseus kept Dolon from returning to his own troops. Dolon was getting close to the Greek ships when Athena gave Diomedes strength. He wanted the glory of capturing Dolon to go to him and Odysseus, not to the Greek guards. He shouted at Dolon, “Stop, or I’ll kill you!” He then threw his spear but deliberately missed Dolon.

Dolon stopped. His fear made him shake. He started crying and pleaded, “Don’t kill me! Capture me and allow me to ransom myself with bronze and gold and iron. My father will give you whatever you want if you don’t kill me!”

Odysseus said, “Don’t think about dying. Tell us what we want to know. Why are you out here in the night? Are you trying to loot the corpses, or did Hector send you to spy on us? Are you out here to earn *kleos*?”

Dolon, still quivering with fear, replied, “Hector tempted me. He swore that he would give me the horses and chariot of Achilles if I would spy on the Greeks and learn whether you are guarding yourselves well or you are so discouraged that you are planning to return to Greece and have failed to set up a guard for your troops.”

Odysseus smiled and laughed, and then he said, “That is quite a prize you are attempting to win. Achilles’ team of horses is difficult for any mortal man to control. Achilles can do it, but his mother is an immortal goddess.

“Now tell us where Hector is. Where are your guards? Where are the Trojans and your allies sleeping? What are you Trojan warriors planning to do: stay by the ships or return to Troy?”

Dolon replied, “I will tell you everything. Hector is holding a council with his commanders. The Trojan warriors have guards, but our allies do not. The Trojans keep watch because their

wives and children are near and need to be defended. The wives and children of our allies are far away and so they leave the guarding to us. Our allies are asleep.”

Odysseus asked, “Where are your allies sleeping? Are their camps among the Trojan camps or do they sleep in a separate area?”

Dolon said, “I will tell you everything you want to know. Toward the sea sleep the Carians, Paeonians, Leleges, Cauconians, and Pelasgians. Toward the city of Thymbra sleep the Lycians, Mysians, Phrygians, and Maeonians. If you are looking to kill some of our allies, I can tell you what you need to know. Some newly arrived Thracians are exposed on the side, including King Rhesus, who has fine horses — they are big and swift. His chariot is decorated with gold and silver, and he wears gold armor. Now that I have helped you and told you what you need to know to kill some of our allies, will you take me to your ships, or will you leave me bound and gagged here until you have killed some of our allies and learned that I have told you the truth?”

Diomedes said to him, “Don’t think about escaping death even though you have given us the information we need to kill some of your allies. What would happen if we were to ransom you and set you free or if you were to escape? You would try to spy on us again. But if I kill you now, we do not need to worry about you ever hurting the Greeks.”

Dolon started to beg for his life, but Diomedes’ sword sliced through Dolon’s neck and his head fell to the ground. Diomedes and Odysseus stripped the corpse of the wolf skin, bow and arrows, weasel cap, and spear, and Odysseus, the older man, raised them to Athena and prayed, “These are yours, Athena. You have helped us! Continue to help us as we attack the Thracian camp.”

Odysseus put the bloody spoils on a tamarisk bush and marked the spot so that he and Diomedes would not miss it when they returned from their raid on the Thracian camp.

They walked on past more pools of blood and reached the camp of King Rhesus and his men, all of whom were asleep without warriors guarding them. King Rhesus’ horses and chariot were beside him.

Odysseus said to Diomedes, “This is the king whom the man we just killed pointed out to us. And here are his horses. Let us go among them. Do you want to get the horses ready for stealing, or do you want to kill the warriors?”

Athena inspired Diomedes with bloodlust, and he began to kill men as they lay sleeping, killing them quickly so that they could not raise a cry as they gasped out their lives. Like a lion kills goats or sheep when the goatherd or shepherd is absent, so Diomedes killed men. He killed twelve warriors.

Diomedes and Odysseus worked together. Diomedes killed men with his sword, and Odysseus grabbed each corpse by the feet and dragged it out of the way. They knew that the

horses — newly arrived to the war and not yet used to corpses — would balk if they tried to drive the horses over corpses.

The thirteenth and final man whom Diomedes killed was King Rhesus himself. Had he been awake, he would have seen a nightmare above his head: Diomedes!

Odysseus got the horses ready and hitched together, using the horses' own reins, and Diomedes wondered what more damage he could inflict. Should he try to take King Rhesus' chariot as well as his life? But Athena appeared beside him and said, "Time to get back to your ships. Another god may awaken the Trojans and then you would have to flee for your life."

Diomedes mounted one of King Rhesus' horses, and he and Odysseus rode away with the horses. Unused to working with horses, Odysseus had forgotten to get King Rhesus' whip out of the chariot and so he used a bow on the horses instead of a whip.

Apollo saw Athena with Diomedes and Odysseus, and the god woke up a Thracian commander named Hippocoon, who was related to King Rhesus. Hippocoon saw that King Rhesus' horses were missing. Then he saw dead and dying men. Hippocoon cried out, and other warriors awoke and stared at the damage that Diomedes and Odysseus had inflicted.

The two Greeks reached the spot where they had killed Dolon. Odysseus put the bloody spoils into Diomedes' arms and then he used the bow on the horses and drove them to the Greek ships where Agamemnon and the other Greek commanders waited.

Nestor was the first to hear them coming. He said, "I hear horses. I hope that Diomedes and Odysseus have managed to steal them from the Trojans, but it's possible that the Trojans have killed Diomedes and Odysseus tonight."

Diomedes and Odysseus raced into the council meeting place, and their friends greeted them and hugged them.

Nestor asked, "Odysseus, how did you get those horses? Did you steal them from behind the Trojan lines, or did a god give them to you? These are fine horses — their coats shine! I have been going out onto the battlefield facing the Trojans and not staying by the ships, old as I am, and I have not seen such fine horses before. Because I have not seen them before, I'd have to say that a god or goddess gave them to you — Athena respects both you and Diomedes!"

Odysseus replied, "No god or goddess gave us these horses — a god or goddess could give us finer horses than these. Let me give credit where credit is due — Diomedes killed the owner of these horses, which are newly arrived at Troy. Diomedes also killed twelve other warriors and a thirteenth man, too — a man whom Hector sent out to spy on us Greeks."

They then drove the team to Diomedes' camp as their friends cheered them. Diomedes got the horses. He fought with horses and a chariot, and Odysseus did not. Odysseus was the king of Ithaca, a hilly island that was good for goats but not for horses. Odysseus got the bloody gear of Dolon as his share of the spoils — Odysseus had promised the gear to Athena.

Diomedes and Odysseus went into the sea and washed off their sweat, and then they bathed and rubbed their skin with olive oil. Finally, they sat down for a meal and poured out wine for Athena.

Chapter 11: Agamemnon has a Day of Glory, but the Greeks Face Disaster (Iliad)

Dawn rose, and Zeus brought the goddess Strife to the Greek ships. She was the only goddess he wanted to take part in the coming battle. She stood on Odysseus' ship, which was moored in the middle of all the Greek ships. A shout from Odysseus' ship would reach the ships of Great Ajax and of Achilles, which were at the far ends of the line of ships. Strife yelled now and raised the battle-fury inside each Greek. They had heard what damage Diomedes and Odysseus had inflicted on the Trojans during the night, and their morale was restored.

Agamemnon also called to his warriors to arm themselves as he was doing. He put greaves on his legs, and he wore his breastplate — it was a guest-gift from Cinyras, lord of Cyprus. The breastplate had ten bands of blue enamel and twelve bands of gold and twenty bands of tin, and it was decorated with the figures of dark blue snakes. Agamemnon's sword had golden studs at the hilt, and his scabbard was sheathed in silver. His shield had ten rings of bronze and twenty disks of tin and was decorated with the figure of a Gorgon with burning eyes. His shield-belt, glinting with silver, was decorated with the figure of a dark blue snake with three heads. His helmet had four knobs in front and two horns and a horsehair crest on top. Finally, he picked up two spears with bronze points that flashed like lightning. Today would be a day of glory for him — a day on which he would win *kleos* — and Athena and Hera exalted him with the sound of thunder.

Those who fought in chariots got ready, each warrior telling each driver, "Line up with the other chariots in good battle-order."

But Zeus meant for this day to be a day of glory for the Trojans, although the Greeks would have some success, too. He sent a wave of terror over the Greeks, and he made the sky rain blood. Today, Zeus intended that many warriors would die.

The Trojans also prepared for battle. They grouped around Hector, Polydamas, Aeneas, and three of Antenor's sons, all in their prime: Polybus, Agenor, and the still unwed Acamas.

Hector's round shield blazed: This would be a day of glory for him, a day on which he would win *kleos*. Hector made his way along the front lines, making sure that his warriors were prepared to fight.

The two armies attacked each other. No one thought of fleeing. All fought. The goddess Strife was pleased; this was what she liked to see.

The other gods and goddesses stayed away from the battle. Zeus had forbidden them to go to the battlefield. They were unhappy, but Zeus did not care. Zeus stayed apart from the other gods and goddesses, and he watched the war. Warriors were killing, and they were being killed.

All morning, the two armies were evenly matched and neither had an advantage. But at noon, the time when a woodsman wearies from chopping down trees and thinks of food, the Greeks gained the advantage.

Agamemnon killed and killed again. He killed Bienor, who fought from a chariot, and he killed Oileus, the driver of Bienor's chariot. After the death of Bienor, Oileus leapt from the chariot and charged at Agamemnon, but Agamemnon speared him through his helmet. Agamemnon's spear burst through metal and bone, and Oileus' brain splattered inside his helmet. Agamemnon left both Bienor and Oileus lying dead on the ground after he stripped off their armor.

Next Agamemnon killed two sons of Priam: the bastard Isus and the legitimate Antiphus. Isus drove the chariot from which Antiphus fought. Previously, Achilles had captured both of them on a spur of Mount Ida. They had been watching their sheep, but Achilles tied Isus and Antiphus with ropes made from willow shoots. Achilles had allowed them to be ransomed. Now Agamemnon stabbed Isus in the chest beside a nipple, and he slashed Antiphus with a sword. He knew both Trojans, having seen them when Achilles captured them. Agamemnon was like a lion whose jaws break the backbones of fawns and tear out their hearts. The mother doe may be near but can do nothing, and the Trojans nearby could do nothing to save the lives of Isus and Antiphus.

Next Agamemnon killed Pisander and Hippolochus, the two sons of Antimachus, whom Paris had bribed with gold and gifts to oppose the return of Helen to her legitimate husband. Now Agamemnon saw Pisander and Hippolochus in a chariot. They were having trouble controlling the horses — they had dropped the reins. Like a lion, Agamemnon appeared before them, and they pleaded for their lives: "Take us alive and ransom us. Our father, Antimachus, has much treasure in his house: bronze and gold and iron. Don't kill us!"

So they begged, but Agamemnon replied, "So you are the sons of Antimachus? He once tried to kill my brother, Menelaus, who was in his house as part of an embassy with Odysseus. They had a safe-conduct guarantee, but your father ignored it. You are Antimachus' sons? Then you deserve to die!"

He threw Pisander off the chariot and thrust a spear into his chest. Hippolochus tried to run away, but Agamemnon used his sword to cut off his arms and head. What was left of Hippolochus' body rolled on the ground like a log.

Agamemnon left the two corpses behind and charged the Trojans with his warriors following him. The Greeks killed and killed again. Agamemnon was like a fire burning dry timber with a wind blowing — everything toppled before his army's onslaught. Trojan chariots emptied as the warriors they were supposed to carry fell dead to the ground, now of more use to vultures than to wives.

Zeus kept Hector away from the onslaught of Agamemnon as the Greek commander pushed back the Trojan warriors. Agamemnon, splattered with blood, pursued the Trojan warriors as they fled to Troy. The Trojans reached the Scaean Gates, and then they faced the Greeks again.

But some Trojans lagged behind, and Agamemnon chased them down. He was like a lion pursuing cattle that had scattered. The lion snaps the neck of its victim and then eats its victim's blood and meat. Like the lion pursuing its victims, so Agamemnon pursued the Trojans.

But just as Agamemnon came near Troy, Zeus called the messenger goddess Iris to him and gave her a message: "Go to Hector and tell him that as long as Agamemnon is fighting, Hector must hold back and not fight him but command his warriors to fight. But once Agamemnon is wounded, whether by spear or by arrow, and leaves the battlefield, then Hector must fight because on this day I will give Hector great power. On this day, Hector will kill and kill again. He will drive the Greeks back to their ships. I will give Hector great power until the sun sets."

Iris obeyed and told Hector, "Zeus has a message for you. As long as you see Agamemnon fighting, don't engage him in combat. But as soon as Agamemnon is wounded and withdraws from battle, then you may attack. On this day, Zeus will give you great power to kill and kill again until the sun sets."

Hector leapt from his chariot. Carrying two spears, he went along the front lines and encouraged his warriors to fight. The two armies faced each other, and Agamemnon charged.

Muses, tell us who first tried to stop Agamemnon.

Iphidamas tried to stop Agamemnon, but he failed. His mother's father, Cisseus, raised Iphidamas in Thrace. Cisseus was the father of Theano. When Iphidamas grew up and wished to gain *kleos* in war, Cisseus tried to stop him by getting him a wife. But Iphidamas sailed off to war with twelve ships at his command. He left them at Percote and marched with his warriors by foot to Troy, and now he came closer and closer to Agamemnon.

Agamemnon threw his spear at Iphidamas but missed. Iphidamas tried to stab Agamemnon in the waist, but his spear point could not pierce Agamemnon's war-belt. Agamemnon grabbed Iphidamas' spear and pulled and wrenched it from Iphidamas' grasp, then he sprang toward Iphidamas and slashed his neck with a sword. Iphidamas dropped to the ground, far from his wife, whom he had known so short a time. He had paid a hundred oxen as a bride-price and had promised in addition a thousand goats and sheep, but Agamemnon killed him and stripped off his armor.

But Coon, Iphidamas' brother, saw him die. He charged Agamemnon from the side and slashed his arm with a spear. Agamemnon did not quit the fighting despite his bloody wound. Coon grabbed his brother's foot and tried to drag away his brother's corpse. He called for help from other Trojans, but Agamemnon thrust his spear under Coon's shield and wounded him and

then swung his sword and cut off Coon's head, which fell onto his brother's corpse. These two sons of Antenor went together to the Land of the Dead.

Agamemnon kept fighting, thrusting with his spear, slashing with his sword, and throwing rocks. As long as the blood flowed from his wound, he fought, but when the blood stopped flowing, the pain came — pain as great as that felt by a woman giving birth, pains brought by the daughters of Hera.

Agamemnon jumped back in his chariot and told his driver to return to the ships, but first he told his warriors, "Keep fighting! Keep the Trojans away from our ships! Zeus has sent me a wound that keeps me from fighting."

Agamemnon's charioteer drove him to the Greek ships, away from the battle.

Hector had been watching. He knew that now was the time that Zeus would grant him great power to kill and kill again. He shouted to his troops, "Be warriors! Now is the time for battle fury! Agamemnon is wounded and cannot fight. The Greeks' best warrior flees the battlefield! Now is the time to attack!"

Hector led his warriors in a charge against the Greeks. Who was the first he killed, and who was the last he killed? He killed Asaeus first, and then he killed Autonomous, Opites, Dolops, Opheltius, Agelaus, Aesymnus, Orus, and Hipponous. He kept on fighting. He battered Greek warriors the way the West wind batters clouds.

The Greeks could have been routed, but Odysseus shouted to Diomedes, "Can't we fight harder than we are fighting now? Fight with me. We will die if Hector destroys our ships!"

Diomedes replied, "I will stand by you and fight, but clearly Zeus is helping the Trojans and not the Greeks."

Despite his pessimistic words, Diomedes speared the left breast of Thymbraeus. Odysseus killed Molion, the aide of Thymbraeus. Diomedes and Odysseus left the corpses and then charged the Trojans. They were like two wild boars that want to kill and kill again. Diomedes and Odysseus attacked the Trojans the way that two wild boars attack the pack of dogs that hunts them. Their attack gave the Greek warriors who had fled from Hector a chance to regroup.

Diomedes killed two more warriors who were riding in a chariot: the two sons of Merops, who understood prophecy and foresaw the future. He refused to give his two sons permission to fight in the war, but they disobeyed him. Fate knew when and where they would die. Diomedes killed both sons: Adrestus and Amphius. Meanwhile, Odysseus killed both Hippodamus and Hypirochus.

Zeus watched the battle from Mount Ida.

Diomedes killed Agastrophus. Diomedes hit his hip joint with a spear. If Agastrophus' horses had been near, he could have escaped. No such luck. His driver kept the horses by the side of the battle while Agastrophus fought. Agastrophus died.

Hector saw Diomedes and charged. Diomedes called to Odysseus, “A mighty warrior is headed our way like a massive wave ready to wreck a ship. Let’s stand up to him!”

Diomedes concentrated and hurled his spear. No miss! A hit! But Diomedes’ spear hit Hector’s helmet, and metal bounced off metal. Hector was hurt and retreated. He retreated a long way and then sank down onto one knee before he lost consciousness.

Diomedes ran to his spear and recovered it, and Hector regained consciousness. He boarded his chariot and drove toward his warriors and away from death.

Diomedes shouted after Hector, “Once again you have escaped death, but I nearly killed you! Apollo must have helped you. The next time we meet I will kill you if a god helps me as much as Apollo helps you. But since you are no longer here, I will kill as many other Trojans as I can!”

Diomedes started to strip the armor off the corpse of Agastrophus. Paris saw him, and aimed an arrow at him. He loosed the arrow, and it pinned Diomedes’ foot to the ground.

Paris laughed and shouted, “You’re wounded, but I wish it were a mortal wound. I wish that I had sent an arrow deep in your intestines! Then my Trojans could rally; you have scared them the way a lion scares goats.”

Diomedes, unafraid, replied, “You are brave with a bow and arrow, pretty boy who chases girls. But a real man fights up close with a spear. Let’s you and I face each other with spears — no fighting from a distance! No wounds from an arrow. All you have done is to wound my foot. A woman or child could do that. An arrow is a toy. But look at my spear — it has weight and sharpness. When a spear hits a warrior, the warrior’s wife weeps and his children become orphans. The corpse of the warrior turns the ground red, and suddenly the warrior is sought after by dogs and birds, not by women.”

Odysseus had come running and stood in front of Diomedes to protect him. Diomedes kneeled and pulled out the arrow. The pain came, and Diomedes boarded his chariot and told his driver to head for the Greek ships.

Now Odysseus stood alone. An experienced warrior, he knew he was in a dangerous situation. He thought, *What will happen to me now? If I flee, I will disgrace myself. But if I stay, the result can be worse. Zeus panicked the other Greeks, and they fled. Cowards will run, but the man who wants to win kleos must fight and either kill or be killed.*

Some Trojan warriors approached him, thinking to kill him and not knowing that they would be killed. Odysseus was like a wild boar caught in a thicket by hunters and their dogs. They think they have the wild boar trapped and ready to be killed, but the wild boar bursts out of the thicket and charges the hunters.

Like the wild boar, Odysseus attacked. He wounded Deiopites in the shoulder, and then he killed Thoon and Ennomus. The Trojan Chersidamas jumped down from his chariot, and Odysseus speared him under his shield and split him open from crotch to navel.

Then Odysseus speared Charops, whose brother, Socus, moved in to defend Charops' corpse and shouted at Odysseus, "Today you will kill *both* sons of my father, Hippasus, and strip their armor — or I will kill you!"

Socus stabbed with his spear. It went through Odysseus' shield and through Odysseus' breastplate and through the skin over Odysseus' ribs, but Athena kept the wound from being mortal — she would not let the spear kill him.

Odysseus knew that the wound was not mortal; he was an experienced man of war and had seen many wounds. He said to Socus, "Today is your day to die. You have wounded me enough to make me withdraw to the ships, but I shall not leave until I have taken your life. You will die and increase my *kleos*!"

Panicked, Socus turned to run, and Odysseus' spear hit him in the back between his shoulders. The spear punched through his chest. Odysseus boasted over Socus' corpse, "You raced death and lost. Your grieving father and mother will never be able to close your eyes in death and will never be able to give you a proper funeral. Vultures will claw out your eyes, and their wings will beat your corpse. Your soul will not be able to enter the Land of the Dead. But if I die in this battle, the Greek warriors will give me a proper funeral. My soul will enter the Land of the Dead quickly. Your soul will weep."

Odysseus pulled Socus' spear out of his body, and the blood gushed. The Trojans saw that he was wounded and attacked. Odysseus retreated now, and he yelled three times as loudly as he could for Greek warriors to help him.

Menelaus heard Odysseus' cries for help and said to Great Ajax, "Odysseus sounds as if he is in trouble — in danger of being overpowered by the Trojan warriors. Let's save him. The great warrior may be wounded!"

Menelaus and Great Ajax ran and found Trojans besieging Odysseus the way jackals besiege a stag that has just been wounded by a hunter. The stag escapes the hunter and runs fast for a long time, but now the wound saps his strength. If a lion arrives, the lion will scatter the jackals and kill the stag.

Odysseus' life was in danger as the Trojans attacked him, but he fought back and kept himself alive. Great Ajax arrived and stood in front of Odysseus. The Trojans saw Great Ajax and scattered in panic. Menelaus led Odysseus away from the Trojans, supporting him with his arm. A chariot arrived and took Odysseus to the ships and safety.

Great Ajax charged the Trojans and killed Doryclus, a bastard son of Priam. Then Great Ajax wounded Pandocus, Lysander, Pyrasus, and Pylartes. Great Ajax swept the Trojans from the field the way a flash flood rushes downward and sweeps away everything in its path, including entire forests.

Hector did not see the Trojan rout because he was fighting off to the side, a place of fierce killing. Nestor and Idomeneus were there, and war cries sounded. Hector killed and killed again.

The Greeks fought back, but Paris wounded the fighter and healer Machaon with an arrow that pierced his right shoulder. Now the Greeks feared for Machaon's life. Idomeneus shouted to Nestor, "Mount your chariot and rescue Machaon. Drive him back to the ships. He is a healer and can cut out spearheads and arrowheads. One healer is worth many warriors!"

Nestor knew that Idomeneus was right. He mounted his chariot, and Machaon climbed aboard, and Nestor drove the horses quickly to the ships.

The Trojan Cebriones saw Great Ajax fighting and shouted to Hector, "We are fighting well here, but we are off to the side. Our troops in the middle need help — they are being routed. Great Ajax is routing them — I recognize him by his huge shield. Let's fight in the middle! Let's go where the fighting is most fierce! Let's go where warriors hack each other to death and war cries fill the sky!"

Cebriones drove Hector toward the middle. Their chariot passed over fallen warriors and blood sprayed into the air and onto the chariot. Hector fought with his spear and his sword, and he threw rocks, but he did not fight Great Ajax man-to-man.

Zeus forced Great Ajax to retreat. Great Ajax stood, stunned by Zeus. Holding his seven-layer oxhide shield that had an additional metal layer, he retreated, slow step by slow step. He was like a lion trying to kill cattle so he could get his fill of meat, but the oxherds stay awake all night and beat the lion away. At dawn, the lion leaves, still hungry.

Great Ajax continued to fight. He was like an ass some boys were driving down a road. They try to lead him, but he breaks into a field and eats his fill of crops while the boys break sticks on his back. Finally, after the ass has eaten his fill, the boys succeed in driving him down the road. So now Great Ajax retreated slowly, but he kept stabbing with his spear and he more than anyone kept the Trojans from the ships. The Trojans kept throwing spears at him. Some spears lodged in his shield, but many spears fell into the earth short of their target. Many Trojans were too afraid to come close to Great Ajax.

The Greek warrior Eurypylus saw Great Ajax under attack by spear-throwing Trojans and ran to assist him. Standing by Great Ajax' side, Eurypylus threw a spear and hit Apisaon in the liver. Eurypylus started to strip off Apisaon's armor. Paris saw him and drew an arrow on his bow. He shot, and the arrow buried itself in Eurypylus' right thigh. The shaft of the arrow snapped off.

Eurypylus moved back to the Greek side and cried aloud, "Greeks, help Great Ajax! Too many Trojans are battling him! Come and keep Great Ajax away from death!"

Greek warriors came running and fought, and Great Ajax kept fighting, too.

As they fought, Nestor's chariot took Machaon the healer away from the battle. Achilles saw them — he was watching the battle from his ships. He called to his best friend, Patroclus, who quickly came. In doing so, he took his first steps toward death.

Patroclus asked, "What do you want, Achilles?"

Achilles replied, "The battle is going badly for the Greeks, I think they will beg me for my help. They need me. Badly. Go and ask Nestor who is the warrior he drove away from the battle just now. It looked like Machaon, but I saw him only from the back. The chariot was moving quickly."

Patroclus left the camp immediately.

Nestor and Machaon reached Nestor's camp. Eurymedon, Nestor's driver, took care of the horses, and Nestor and Machaon went inside the tent and sat. Inside the tent was Hecamede, a woman whom the Greeks had given to Nestor after Achilles conquered Tenedos — a prize given to Nestor on account of his wisdom. She mixed for them Pramnian wine with goat cheese and barley, and the two men drank and banished their thirst.

The solid gold wine cup she mixed the wine in was so heavy that an average man could barely lift it, but Nestor — despite his age — could lift it easily.

Patroclus appeared at the door of the tent. Nestor was not the person to miss an opportunity — he could not talk to Achilles, who would not listen to him, but he could talk to Patroclus, who might listen to him. Nestor stood up, took Patroclus by the hand, and drew Patroclus inside the tent, despite Patroclus' wish to go immediately.

Patroclus protested, "I'm in a hurry. I don't have time to stay here. Achilles sent me to find out who was wounded, and I can see the wounded man here: Machaon. I need to let Achilles know immediately — he can be impatient, as you well know."

But Nestor would not let Patroclus leave. He said, "Is Achilles grieving for just one wounded man? Many Greek warriors have been wounded. Our finest warriors are out of commission because they have been wounded by arrows or by spears. Diomedes and Odysseus and Agamemnon and Eurypylus and here, Machaon, are all wounded and unable to fight.

"Achilles does not care. He is brave, but he does not respect our pain or our lives. When will he return and fight? When our ships are destroyed by fire? When all that is left is a final stand with our backs against the sea? When most of us are dead?"

Nestor thought, *I hope that you are paying attention, Patroclus. I am trying to impress upon you how desperately we need another fighter.*

Nestor continued, "I am old, and I wish that I were young again so that I could go into battle. When I was young, I fought well.

"When we fought the Epeans in a feud, I killed Itymoneus. The Epeans had raided our cattle, and so we were raiding their cattle. I threw a spear and killed him, and the Epeans near him ran

away in panic. We got fifty herds of cattle, fifty herds of sheep, fifty droves of pigs, fifty herds of goats, and one hundred and fifty horses, all of which were mares and many of which were nursing foals.

“We drove them all back home to Pylos, and my father, Neleus, was proud of me and proud of the plunder. I was young, and this was my first raiding party.”

Nestor thought, *I hope that you are paying attention, Patroclus. I am trying to impress upon you that a young warrior can win plunder by fighting and can make his father proud.*

Nestor continued, “In the morning, a herald cried out, ‘Pylions, come collect what is due to you from the wealth of Elis, the realm of the Epeans!’ Much was due to us from the Epeans. Years before, Heracles had attacked us and killed many Pylions. My father had twelve sons, but eleven died during that attack. Heracles had weakened the Pylions, and the Epeans took advantage, harassing us and stealing our herding animals.

“Following our raid on the Epeans, my father took a herd of cattle and a flock of sheep: three hundred animals. The Epeans owed him much. He also took four fast horses and their chariot. They belonged to my father, but when he sent them to a race, the Epean warlord Augeas stole them and threatened their driver before sending him away.

“So now my father, Neleus, received a treasure in payment for the Epeans’ bad conduct in years past. My father gave the rest of the haul to his people so all could share in the spoils.”

Nestor thought, *I hope that you are paying attention, Patroclus. I am trying to impress upon you that a young warrior can right wrongs.*

Nestor continued, “But three days after the raid, the Epeans showed up ready to fight. Among them were the twin brothers known as the Moliones: Cteatus and Eurytus. They were thought to have had a mortal father, but their real father was Poseidon. They were still young and not fully experienced in war.

“The Epeans surrounded a frontier fortress named Thryoëssa, but Athena supported us. She came to us and shouted, ‘To arms! Get ready to fight!’ She gathered many warriors and formed an army.

“But I was still young, and my father did not want me to fight — he thought that I was too young and inexperienced. He even hid my horses, hoping that he could keep me away from the fighting.

“But I was determined to fight, and I walked to the battle, where I distinguished myself. That night, we waited at the Minyeos River for dawn. We had men on horseback and men on foot. We then marched, armed for battle, to the ford at the Alpheus River, which we reached at noon. We sacrificed to Zeus, the Alpheus River, Poseidon, and Athena. We ate the evening meal and then slept.

“The Epeans still surrounded Thryoëssa, but that dawn we arrived and started fighting. We prayed to Zeus and Athena for victory.

“I was the first to make a kill and to take a chariot and team of horses. I speared Mulius, son-in-law to the Epean king. Mulius had married blond Agamede, who understood the properties of drugs. As Mulius fell to the ground, I leaped into his chariot and charged their lines. They were shocked that Mulius had died.

“I took fifty chariots that day, and I killed two Epeans for each chariot I took. I could have killed both Moliones, but their real father, Poseidon, protected them. He hid them in fog and took them from the battlefield.

“Zeus gave us victory! We pushed the Epeans back, slaughtering them all the way and stripping off their armor. We pushed them far away, and finally Athena stopped us as I killed my final man.

“We went back to Pylos. The Pylians gave glory to the god Zeus and to the mortal me: Nestor.”

Nestor thought, *I hope that you are paying attention, Patroclus. I am trying to impress upon you that a young warrior can win kleos.*

Nestor continued, “That is how I was when I was young.

“But what about Achilles? What is he doing? He has great courage, but no one is benefiting from it, not even him. He will grieve when all of us are dead.

“Patroclus, remember your father, Menoetius, and what he told you. When he sent you to Agamemnon so that you could go to the Trojan War, Odysseus and I heard what he told you. We had come to your country to look for warriors. In the palace of Peleus, we found you, your father, and Achilles. Peleus was sacrificing to Zeus. He had sacrificed an ox and was pouring wine to Zeus.

“You and Achilles were carving the meat when we appeared. Achilles was startled by our sudden appearance, but he led us into the hall and gave us good *xenia*. He gave us a place to sit and meat to eat and wine to drink.

“After we had eaten, I spoke and invited you and Achilles to come to Troy. Both of you were willing. Peleus told his son, Achilles, ‘Be the best. Be the bravest. Be proud.’ And your father, Menoetius, told you, ‘Achilles has nobler blood than you do because a goddess is his mother, but you are older than he is. He is stronger by far than you, but you can advise him well. Guide him to do the right thing for others and for himself.’ This is what your father told you. Odysseus and I heard him. You must have forgotten what your father told you.

“But it is not too late to advise Achilles. You can tell him what I have told you about our battered army and wounded warriors. Perhaps you can convince him to fight. You are his best friend.

“But if he is worried about what his mother, Thetis, has told him about his fate, then convince Achilles to send you into battle. You can lead all of Achilles’ warriors into battle. You may bring victory to our side.

“And convince Achilles to allow you to wear his armor. That way, the Trojans will think that you are Achilles and they will be afraid to attack, and that will give our warriors time to rest and regroup. You are rested, and Achilles’ warriors are rested. All of you can force the Trojan warriors back to Troy and away from our ships!”

Nestor’s speech was effective. Patroclus burned to go into battle, and he took off running to Achilles’ camp.

But by Odysseus’ ship, he saw Eurypylus, limping, with an arrow in his thigh. Sweat dripped from his head and body, and blood flowed down his thigh, but he was able to walk.

Patroclus said to him, “The Greeks are doomed. Far from home, you will die at Troy — Greek corpses will feed dogs and birds. Eurypylus, is there a way to stop Hector? Or will he batter down the Greeks?”

Eurypylus replied, “We have no hope, Patroclus. We will be battered back to our ships. Arrows and spears have wounded the best of us, and we are unable to fight. Help me, please. Take me to my ship and cut this arrow out of my flesh. Clean the wound and give me the healing drugs that Achilles taught you and that Achilles learned from Chiron, the best of the Centaurs.

“We have two healers: Podalirius and Machaon. Podalirius is on the battlefield, fighting, and Machaon needs a healer — an arrow wounded him.”

Patroclus replied, “We are in a bad situation. I was going to Achilles to tell him what I have learned from Nestor, but I will help you.”

Supporting Eurypylus, Patroclus walked with him to his ship. An aide put down some oxhides, and Eurypylus lay down. Patroclus cut out the arrow. Patroclus crushed a root in his hands and covered the wound with it. Eurypylus’ pain stopped, and the blood quit flowing.

Chapter 12: The Trojans Storm the Barricade (Iliad)

As Patroclus helped Eurypylus, the Greeks and Trojans fought before the Greek trench and wall. At any time, it seemed that the Trojans would break down the wall and bring fire to the ships — the Greeks had neglected to sacrifice to the gods and so their defensive fortifications would not protect them.

After the war, the wall would not last long. After the war, it would vanish. After many warriors died, and after Troy fell in the tenth year of the war, and after the Greeks had sailed for home, Poseidon and Apollo would turn their anger to the wall. They would turn rivers — the Rhesus and Heptaporus and Caresus and Rhodius and Grenicus and Aesepus — against it. They would also turn the Scamander and Simois rivers against it — rivers into which fell shields and helmets and the corpses of warriors who seemed half god and half mortal. Apollo would join all these rivers together and direct their force against the wall for nine days as Zeus sent cloudburst after cloudburst and Poseidon ripped apart the foundations of the wall. The Greeks had built the wall with their own hard work, but the gods knocked it down and covered it with smooth sand, and then the rivers flowed in their natural channels again.

In the future, Poseidon and Apollo made it look as if a wall had never existed there.

But now the wall still stood, and the battle raged before it. Hector was driving the Greeks back to their ships. Hector fought like a whirlwind. Hector fought like a boar that hunters have cornered but that wheels around and attacks. The hunters hurl their spears at the boar, but the boar with its strength and bravery charges the hunters again and again. What will kill the boar will be its own courage. It charges, and the hunters give way, and the boar charges again.

Hector kept charging, kept rallying his warriors, kept trying to reach the ships so he could keep his wife and son safe at Troy.

But the Greek trench stopped his horses. They whinnied and balked. The trench was deep, and the far side was lined with sharpened stakes.

Polydamas warned Hector, “The trench is too deep for our chariots, and just beyond it is the Greek wall. The Greeks have the advantage. If Zeus is on our side and wants us to win and to kill the Greeks, I hope he helps us soon. I hope that the Greeks die here, far from their homes.

“What if the Greeks attack while we and our chariots are in the trench? What if the Greeks are triumphant? The warriors and chariots will be in a disorganized mass of confusion.

“It is best if we don’t fight here with chariots. Let everyone dismount from the chariots and fight on foot. All of us will follow you, Hector, in a mass attack. We can defeat the Greeks on foot.”

Hector agreed. He leapt from his chariot, and so did the other Trojans. They lined up their chariots and prepared to fight on foot. Five captains led five battalions of Trojans and Trojan allies against the Greeks.

The largest battalion was with Hector and Polydamas. Cebriones was third in command.

Paris led the second battalion. With him were Alcatous and Agenor.

Helenus led the third battalion. Second in command was Deiphobus. Both of them were sons of Priam. Third in command was Asius — huge stallions had carried him to Troy.

Aeneas led the fourth battalion. With him were Acamas and Archelochus, two sons of Antenor.

The fifth battalion consisted of many of the Trojans' allies. Sarpedon, the son of Zeus, led them. Next in command were Glaucus and Asteropaeus. They were the best men next to Sarpedon.

The five battalions charged the Greeks, intending to break through the wall and reach the ships.

Almost all Trojans followed Polydamas' plan of fighting on foot, but Asius did not. He charged the Greeks in his chariot — fool! He was fated to die. Idomeneus' spear would take his life.

Asius charged the ships on the left, straight toward some gates through which the Greeks passed after a battle.

The gates were open — two warriors who kept them open so that any straggling Greeks could make their way to safety guarded them. Asius drove straight at the gates with his warriors following him.

The two Greek warriors guarding the gates were Polypoetes and Leonteus. They were like deeply rooted, huge oak trees on a mountain ridge, standing up to storms.

They stood up to Asius, who was followed by Trojan warriors yelling cries of war. Following Asius was Adamas, his son, as well as Iamenus, Orestes, Thoon, and Oenomaus.

Polypoetes and Leonteus yelled to the other Greeks, "Defend the ships!" Polypoetes and Leonteus then stood in front of the gates and fought like two wild boars on a hilltop taking on hunters and dogs, charging and shattering trees, fighting men and dogs with their tusks until a hunter spears them. Meanwhile, Greek warriors from the wall behind Polypoetes and Leonteus threw rocks at the Trojans and their allies.

Blow on blow sounded on the Greeks' armor and on the Trojan allies' armor.

Asius cried, "Zeus, I did not believe that the Greeks could withstand our charge. The Greeks are like wasps or bees defending their homes and their young. The bees keep the hunters of honey away. Although only two warriors are in front, they will not stop defending the gates until either they kill all of us or we kill both of them."

Zeus heard Asius, but Zeus would give *kleos* to Hector, not to Asius.

At the gates they fought. It is impossible to tell the story with the detail with which a god could tell it. But the Greeks were desperate — what would happen if the Trojan allies broke through the wall? The gods who supported the Greeks were dejected, but the Greek warriors Polypoetes and Leonteus kept fighting and kept killing.

Polypoetes' spearhead went through Damasus' metal helmet and through his skull. His brain splattered inside his helmet.

Polypoetes then killed Pylon and Ormenus and stripped their armor from their corpses.

Leonteus speared Hippomachus in the belly and then drew his sword and killed Antiphates, Menon, Orestes, and Iamenus. Corpses littered the ground.

While Polypoetes and Leonteus stripped the armor of the warriors they had killed, the warriors led by Hector and Polydamas witnessed a bird-sign sent by Zeus. An eagle was flying on their left — the unlucky, sinister side. It clutched in its talons a huge bloodied snake. Still alive, the snake bit the eagle's throat, and the eagle dropped it. It fell in the midst of the Trojan warriors and wriggled.

Polydamas the prophet was able to interpret the sign. He said to Hector, "Often you criticize me when I interpret a bird-sign or other sign from the gods, although my advice is good. You don't think that anyone should criticize you in council and especially during a war. But I have to tell you what I have learned from this bird-sign. Stop the attack and return to Troy. The eagle bloodied the snake, but the eagle was unable to feed it to its nestlings. We have bloodied the Greeks in battle today, but we will be unable to continue to do so. Eventually, the Greeks will batter us back to Troy, defeated. That is what this bird-sign shows us."

Hector said, "Polydamas, shut up. You are wrong. I have heard a message from Zeus himself that this is my day of triumph. I will not put that aside because of a bird-sign. Not all movements of birds are signs from the gods. I pay no attention to birds on the right, lucky side or to birds on the left, unlucky side or to birds in the middle. I do pay attention to messages given to me from Zeus.

"The best thing that all of us can do is to fight for our country. We have wives and children and parents and other family members to protect. You yourself have nothing to fear in war. The rest of us risk our lives and may die trying to set the Greek ships on fire, but you are so cowardly that you will not fight long or hard.

"I warn you not to hold back from the fighting. I warn you not to convince even one of our warriors to hold back from the fighting. If you do, I myself will kill you with my spear!"

Hector led the Trojans in a charge against the Greeks, and Zeus sent a dust storm against the Greeks. This was the day on which Zeus would allow Hector to win great *kleos*.

Hector and his Trojans were mad to tear down the Greek wall. They tried to use levers to tear it down, and they tried to wreck the foundations so that the wall would fall. But the Greeks kept fighting. They used shields to plug holes in the wall, and from the wall they threw rocks at the Trojans.

Great Ajax and Little Ajax were on the wall, calling on their fellow Greeks to fight fiercely: “Warriors! Commanders! Look at the Trojans as they attack! This is not the time to rest! We can either achieve victory and live or we can be defeated and die! There is no other outcome! May Zeus help us to achieve victory!”

Zeus sometimes sends a snowstorm from which flakes of snow fall and cover the highlands and the lowlands, the plowed fields and the beaches, everything except the sea. Rocks thrown by Greeks and by Trojans were as plentiful as those flakes of snow.

Zeus inspired Sarpedon, his son, to achieve a great feat and so earn *kleos*. Sarpedon charged straight at the Greeks, holding his shield in front of him. He was like a hungry mountain lion wanting to feed on some sheep. Even if the lion chances on herdsmen protecting the flocks with spears and with dogs, the lion still charges. Either the lion kills a sheep and carries it away or the herdsmen kill the lion.

Sarpedon called to his second-in-command, “Glaucus, why do our fellow Lycians honor us with the best meat and the best wine? Why do our countrymen respect us as if we were gods? Why do we have the best vineyards and the best cropland?

“They do it because of times like this. Our duty is to fight in the front lines. Our duty is to fight so well that a fellow warrior will say, ‘Our kings of Lycia have earned *kleos*. Our kings eat the best food and drink the best wine, and they deserve it. They have great fighting ability, and they lead us during war!’

“Glaucus, my friend, if it were possible for us to leave this battle and never die and never age, to be immortal and eternally young, I would never fight again. Nor would I command you to fight. But immortality for us is not possible because death is not optional.

“Death in any of a thousand forms awaits you and me and all men. All living men will die. No living man will escape his fate. So let us fight! Let us kill and earn *kleos* for ourselves, or let us be killed and earn *kleos* for another warrior! Let us achieve such great feats that we will be remembered after we die!”

Glaucus heard him and responded by charging at the Greeks. Sarpedon and Glaucus led the Lycian warriors in the attack.

Menestheus saw them charging and knew he needed reinforcements. Who could help defend the wall at that spot? He saw Great Ajax and Little Ajax with Teucer, the archer who had been wounded earlier but, rested now, had come from the camps to help fight the Trojans. They were

too far away for them to hear Menestheus shout. The Trojans and Greeks yelled as they fought before the bolted gates.

Menestheus sent a herald to give Great Ajax a message: “Ask Great Ajax to come here and fight. Better, ask Great Ajax and Little Ajax to come here and fight. The Lycians are attacking with a mighty force and we will be hard pressed to resist it. But if their part of the wall is strongly under attack, let Little Ajax stay there. But let Great Ajax and Teucer fight here.”

The runner took off and delivered the message: More warriors were needed to fight off the Lycians.

Great Ajax told Little Ajax, “Stay here. You and Lycomedes command the Greeks in their fight with the Trojans. I will return soon — after I have fought off this fresh attack.”

Great Ajax and Teucer went to Menestheus. Pandion, Teucer’s comrade, carried Teucer’s bow. The Lycians were attacking in force, storming against the Greeks like a tornado.

Great Ajax was the first to kill a Lycian. He threw a rock that a strong man of today would find difficult to lift with both hands. The rock struck Epicles, one of Sarpedon’s friends, and splintered his skull.

Teucer shot an arrow that wounded Glaucus, hitting him in his shoulder blade.

Sarpedon felt sorrow for his friend, but he kept on fighting. Sarpedon stabbed Alcmaon and then drew his spear out of Alcmaon’s body. Alcmaon fell headfirst from the wall.

And now Sarpedon grabbed the wall and wrenched it, and a part of the wall fell. A gap in the wall was before him, a gap through which hundreds of Trojans could attack.

Teucer and Great Ajax both targeted Sarpedon. Teucer aimed an arrow at him and shot and hit Sarpedon’s war-belt. But Zeus made sure that Sarpedon — his son — was not wounded. Sarpedon was not yet fated to die.

Great Ajax stabbed at Sarpedon and hit his shield, which held off Great Ajax’ spear. But Great Ajax forced Sarpedon back — slowly, unwillingly.

Sarpedon shouted to his Lycians, “Fight harder! I’ve knocked down part of the wall! Now we need to charge through it! The harder we fight together, the more Greeks we will kill!”

The Lycians rallied around Sarpedon, but the Greeks also rallied. What would happen to the Greeks if the Trojans and Trojan allies got through the wall? The Lycians were unable to push the Greeks back and get through the wall, and the Greeks were unable to push the Lycians back.

Two farmers sometimes fight over boundary stones, and each tries to get more territory. They fight it out with measuring rods, but the Greeks and the Lycians were fighting it out with spears and swords as they jabbed and hacked at each other.

Many warriors were wounded, sometimes in the back and sometimes when a spear punched through a shield. Everywhere was the blood of Greeks and Lycians — on rocks, on the ground,

on pieces of the wall, and on weapons. But the Trojans and their allies could not pour through the gap in the wall. Greeks and Trojans were evenly matched.

But Hector arrived, and Zeus gave him the glory of storming the wall. Hector shouted, “Charge, Trojans! Get through the wall! Burn the ships!”

Hector’s warriors gathered around him, and Hector picked up a huge boulder that no two men of today could easily lift into a wagon. But Hector lifted it as easily as a shepherd can lift the fleece of a ram.

Hector ran toward the gates. They were sturdily built, with two crossbars locking them. Hector threw the boulder against the gates, using his weight as he did so. The boulder smashed the gates and knocked them down.

Hector’s armor blazed. No Greek could stop him as he battled his way through the gate, shouting to his warriors, “Storm the wall!”

They obeyed him. Some climbed over the wall, and some followed Hector through the gate.

The Trojans forced the Greeks back. Nothing was behind the Greeks except their camps and ships. They had nowhere to escape the fighting.

Zeus, watching the battle, thought, *What are these warriors fighting for? Hector and the Trojans are fighting to save their wives, children, parents, other family members, and siblings. The Greeks are fighting to get Helen back. But what else are these warriors fighting for?*

Although it is difficult for an immortal god to understand, my own son, Sarpedon, explained it well in his speech to his friend and second-in-command, Glaucus. They are fighting for something that Achilles at this time completely rejects: kleos. Achilles told the embassy of Odysseus, Phoenix, and Great Ajax that he is no longer willing to fight for kleos and timê. In doing that, he is completely rejecting what Sarpedon, Glaucus, and every other warrior — Greek or Trojan or Trojan ally — wants. He is rejecting the Warrior Ethic on which mortal society is built.

The human condition is mortality. Every human being must die. Many, many warriors have died and are dying here. For human beings, death is not optional. Everyone must face death, and warriors face it almost daily. Every mortal, including the mortal’s friends and family and the mortal himself, must die. They have to accept that, and although they accept that, they also have to eat, sleep, and try to find joy in life.

For these warriors, only one kind of meaningful afterlife exists, and it cannot be found in Hades, the Land of the Dead. Every mortal dies and goes to Hades, a gloomy and unhappy place. The breath of life leaves the mortal body and, once the body has had a proper funeral, the warrior’s psyche, or soul, enters Hades. The only thing worse than being a soul in the Land of the Dead is being a soul that is not allowed to enter the Land of the Dead. The dead belong with the dead.

Kleos apthiton is the only kind of meaningful or significant afterlife available to a warrior. It is not a living body but a living reputation. Kleos is fame or glory or reputation; it is what people say

about you after you are dead. Kleos apthiton is undying kleos. The body of the warrior will die, but if he fights well enough in battle, his kleos will be everlasting — people will remember his name and he will be talked about after he is dead. Epic poets such as Homer who is yet to be born will sing songs about him.

The only alternative is to be forgotten.

The way that a warrior can get kleos apthiton is to kill and/or to be killed — or both. Many of the warriors who achieve immortality by having their exploits sung have killed other warriors and were killed themselves.

Achilles told Odysseus, Phoenix, and Great Ajax about his two fates that he learned about from his goddess mother, Thetis. If he returns home to Greece, his life will be long but he will die with no kleos. If he stays at Troy, he will die young but his kleos will be apthiton — everlasting.

Previously, Achilles has been willing to die for kleos, but Agamemnon has shown him that kleos can be taken away arbitrarily. Timê is related to kleos in that if the warrior gets lots of timê, the warrior will also get lots of kleos; however, kleos is what the warrior is truly fighting for. Agamemnon took away Achilles' timê: Briseis. If Agamemnon can take away Achilles' timê — and therefore his kleos — arbitrarily, then Achilles says that kleos is not worth dying for.

Achilles can get kleos apthiton, but only at the price of killing many, many Trojans and at the price of dying young.

My son Sarpedon stated the Heroic Ethic clearly. Death is not optional, and therefore what warriors ought to do is to fight bravely and win kleos. By killing or being killed, warriors can either win kleos for themselves or give kleos to others.

Achilles, of course, has rejected the Heroic Ethic. He said that he loves life and therefore he no longer values kleos and timê. This is entirely different from what the other warriors believe.

Achilles, in rejecting kleos and timê, rejects everything that his warrior society believes in. He is rejecting the Heroic Ethic, and he is rejecting everything that he has built his life on up to this point.

Achilles is examining the Heroic Ethic and asking if it is worthwhile.

Chapter 13: The Trojans Attack the Ships (Iliad)

Zeus had driven Hector against the Greeks and had allowed him to earn great *kleos* by smashing the gates of the Greeks. Now, as Greeks fought and died to save their ships and as Trojans fought and died to save their wives and children, Zeus grew bored and stopped watching the war. His eyes turned north to Thrace. He did not believe that any god would disobey his orders and fight for the Greeks or for the Trojans.

Poseidon had been watching Zeus. Seeing that Zeus was no longer watching the war, Poseidon decided to help the Greeks. He pitied them. Walking only four steps, Poseidon traveled from Samothrace, an island in the northeastern Aegean, to Aegae, a city in the northern Peloponnesus. He yoked his horses to his battle-chariot and put on armor and drove his chariot and team of horses to Troy. Dolphins swam with the chariot.

In between Tenedos, an island near Troy, and Imbros, another island near Troy, is a sea-cave. Poseidon stopped there and unyoked his immortal horses. He gave them ambrosia to eat, and he put golden hobbles on their feet. Then he went to the Greek camps.

The Trojans fought alongside Hector, screaming war cries. Now was a chance to burn the Greek ships and ensure that Trojan wives and children would be safe from Greek enslavement and other atrocities by the Greeks.

Poseidon assumed the shape and voice of Calchas, the Greek prophet. He spoke to Great Ajax and Little Ajax, “Both of you, fight to save the Greeks! Now is not the time to rest. Elsewhere, the Greek warriors will be able to hold off the Trojans and their allies. Here the Trojans may very well break through. If you two fight as hard as you can, and inspire other Greek warriors to fight as hard as they can, then you can keep Hector and the Trojans away from the ships — even if Zeus helps Hector!”

Poseidon touched Great Ajax and Little Ajax with his staff and inspirited both warriors with courage and strength and fighting prowess. Then Poseidon sped away as quickly as a hawk high in the air swoops down to the plain to attack larks and swallows.

Little Ajax recognized that a god had visited them. Little Ajax said, “Great Ajax, one of the Olympian gods has visited us. This was not the prophet Calchas. Such speed! He had to have been a god! And now my spirit is transformed! I am ready to fight — and to fight well!”

Great Ajax said, “I can feel it, too. I feel strong, and I want to fight Hector face-to-face.”

Poseidon sped to other Greeks, those in the rear, resting, exhausted from the battle, and disheartened by seeing the Trojans attack so fiercely so close to the ships.

Poseidon said to Teucer, Leitus, Peneleos, Thoas, Deipyrus, Meriones, and Antilochus, “You are acting like raw recruits, not like experienced warriors! Have you no shame? If you don’t join

the fighting now, the Trojans will win. The Trojans have now almost reached the ships, although before today they were like frightened deer — good for nothing but food for carnivorous beasts: jackals, leopards, and wolves. For months, the Trojans did not want to fight the Greeks. They stayed behind their walls. But now the Trojans are far from the walls of Troy. Agamemnon has been a bad leader, and many Greek warriors are standing around, doing nothing. Achilles and his warriors stay by their ships, not fighting. But so what! So Agamemnon erred by insulting Achilles! How can we not fight now! We must fight or lose honor and *kleos*!

“I would not criticize someone who has been a coward from the beginning. Of course they are cowards now! But you have been warriors! Why are you holding back now! Hector has knocked down our gates, and the Trojans are near the ships!”

Inspired by Poseidon’s words, the Greek warriors went back into battle. They fought beside Great Ajax and Little Ajax. Even Ares, the god of war, would respect their fighting ability. So would Athena. Here were good warriors to stop Hector. They stood side-by-side, helmet-by-helmet, and spear-by-spear, and they were prepared to gain *kleos*.

Hector and his Trojans stormed against them. Hector was like a boulder that a river has loosened. The boulder hurtles downward, trampling timber until it reaches the plain. Hector crashed against the Greek warriors, but the Greeks stopped him. They jabbed at him with their two-edged spears, and he was forced back. He shouted to his troops, “Attack! They cannot hold us away from the ships! If Zeus’ word to me is true, I will crush them on this day!”

Deiphobus, a son of Priam, moved forward. The Greek Meriones hurled his spear. A hit! The spear hit Deiphobus’ shield, but did not penetrate it. The shield was strong, and Meriones’ spear shaft snapped. Meriones retreated, furious that he had not killed Deiphobus and furious that he had ruined his weapon. He ran back to the ships to get another spear.

The other warriors continued to fight. Teucer killed Imbrius, who had wed an illegitimate daughter of Priam: Medesicaste. He lived in Pedaeon, but when the war started, he went to Troy to fight for his father-in-law. Teucer stabbed him under the ear, pulled out his spear, and down Imbrius fell like a tree that had been cut down with an ax.

Teucer charged forward to strip Imbrius’ armor, and Hector hurled his spear. Teucer saw it and dodged, barely avoiding death. But the spear hit the Greek Amphinachus in the chest. Hector charged forward to strip off Amphinachus’ helmet, and Great Ajax stabbed at him with a spear — Hector’s armor protected him from death. But Great Ajax stabbed at Hector’s shield and forced him away from the corpses of Imbrius and Amphinachus.

The Greeks hauled away both corpses by their feet. Stichius and Menestheus carried Amphinachus’ body away. Great Ajax and Little Ajax carried Imbrius’ body away. After two lions take away a goat from dogs, they lift it in their jaws so they can carry it away. Great Ajax and Little Ajax lifted the body of Imbrius and stripped his armor.

Little Ajax, furious over the death of Amphimachus, cut off Imbrius' head and threw it like a ball at the Trojans. It landed at Hector's feet.

Amphimachus was a grandson of Poseidon. Angered, the god of the sea spurred on the Greeks to fight the Trojans. He moved among the ships and camps and found the Cretan commander Idomeneus, who had been taking care of a wounded friend who had been gashed in the back of the knee. Idomeneus made sure a healer was with his friend, and then he went to his camp to get his armor — he wanted to return to battle.

Poseidon, taking the form and voice of Thoas, said to him, "Greeks used to boast about how well they would fight the Trojans. Were those empty boasts?"

Idomeneus replied, "Thoas, no Greek is to blame. All of us know how to fight — and fight well. No one is panicked. No one is a coward. It is Zeus' will for the Trojans to triumph now. You yourself, Thoas, are a warrior. Encourage all Greek warriors you see."

Poseidon said, "May any coward die and stay here and never return home! May anyone who stays away from the battle become food for dogs and birds! Quick, get your armor and let us fight together. Even cowards, when they fight together instead of singly, have some power. You and I, warriors fighting together, will be much more effective than any cowards who fight together."

Poseidon left, and Idomeneus went to his camp. He put on his shining armor, left, and found Meriones, who had returned to the camp to get a spear.

Idomeneus said, "Meriones, friend, why aren't you fighting? Are you wounded? Did your spear break? Do you have a message for me? I am ready to fight! I am ready to do battle!"

Meriones understood that Idomeneus was encouraging him to return to the battle. He replied, "Idomeneus, I have come to the camps to get a spear. If you have one I can use, it will save me time. I ruined my spear in a wasted throw against Deiphobus."

Idomeneus said, "If you need a spear, I have twenty of them. I took them from Trojans I have killed. I don't fight from a distance. I fight up close, and my reward is taking spears, shields, helmets, and armor from the warriors I kill."

Meriones replied, "I also fight up close, and my ship and shelter have hoards of Trojan weapons and plunder. But my camp is far from here. I fight in the front lines — courageously. You are a witness to that."

Idomeneus said, "Yes, I am. You are a warrior who would be picked to be part of an ambush. We need our best warriors for that. Ambushes reveal who is brave and who is cowardly. Cowards change color; their skin grows pale. They move around, excited. Their heart beats rapidly. Their teeth chatter. But the skin of a brave warrior does not grow pale. The brave warrior is in control of himself. The brave warrior is alert but not panicked. The brave warrior is ready to wreak damage against the enemy. The brave warrior is ready to wade in the blood of the enemy."

“No one can deny your bravery. If you were wounded in battle, your wound would be in the front, not in the back. The wound would be in your chest or in your belly as you charged forward.

“Let’s go to the front lines now. Go to my shelter and choose a spear to wield.”

Meriones ran to Idomeneus’ tent and seized a spear, and the two warriors headed for the front lines.

Meriones asked Idomeneus, “Where should we join the fighting? Where are we most needed: right, center, or left? I think we Greeks are most outfought on the left flank.”

Idomeneus replied, “Plenty of Greeks are guarding the middle. Great Ajax, Little Ajax, and Teucer can hold off Hector. Even if Hector is mad to shed Greek blood and burn our ships, he won’t be able to unless Zeus himself sets the ships on fire. Great Ajax is second to no mortal warrior. In single combat, Great Ajax would stand up to Achilles, although Achilles would be the victor in a footrace. So let’s fight on the left flank. Either we will win *kleos* for ourselves, or we will give *kleos* to our enemy.”

When the Trojans saw Meriones and Idomeneus, they attacked. Sometimes, wind scatters piles of dust on a dirt road. Much like that, the dust obscured the air as warriors fought. They slashed each other, and their armor shone. Only a man who loved war could find joy in that slaughter.

Zeus and Poseidon wished different outcomes for the warriors. Poseidon wanted a Greek victory every battle. Zeus wanted a Trojan victory on this particular day so that Hector could gain *kleos*, but Zeus had no intention of allowing all the Greek warriors to be killed. Zeus simply wanted to honor his promise to Achilles’ mother, Thetis.

Zeus was still not watching the battle, so Poseidon was still encouraging the Greeks to fight fiercely, but he was not doing so openly. Zeus was the stronger god, and Poseidon would not resist his will openly. But both gods wanted the deaths of many mortals.

Idomeneus, despite his grey hair, killed Othryoneus, who had come to Troy and asked to marry Priam’s most beautiful daughter, Cassandra. He did not pay a bride-price, but instead vowed to fight well for Troy and to drive the Greeks away. Priam nodded his head in assent to the marriage, but Idomeneus speared Othryoneus through his breastplate.

Idomeneus shouted over the corpse, “Can you keep your promise to Priam now, Othryoneus? I think not. So why not make an agreement with the Greeks? If you do, we will allow you to marry Agamemnon’s most beautiful daughter. We will lead her here from Greece so you can be married, but you must help us to destroy the city of Troy. If you make an agreement with us, the outcome will be better than the outcome of your agreement with Priam.”

Idomeneus grabbed one of Othryoneus’ feet and tried to drag away the corpse, but Asius jumped from his chariot and tried to kill Idomeneus. He failed. Idomeneus speared Asius just

under the chin and the spear came out the back of Asius' head. Asius fell the way a tree falls that has been cut by the builders of boats.

Asius' driver panicked and did not drive the chariot away from the Greeks. Antilochus, a son of Nestor, speared him through the breastplate. Asius' driver gasped and died, falling out of the chariot. Antilochus drove the chariot and horses to the Greek side.

Deiphobus, angry at the death of Asius, hurled a spear at Idomeneus, who ducked under his shield and avoided death as the spear flew past, merely grazing the shield. But the spear hit Hypsenor and split his liver. His knees could not hold him.

Deiphobus shouted, "Asius has died, but he will have company on his way to the Land of the Dead!"

Antilochus grieved for Hypsenor, who was wounded but not dead. Antilochus ran forward and stood over him, protecting him with his shield. The Greeks Mecisteus and Alastor helped Hypsenor, in pain and groaning, back to the ships.

Idomeneus kept fighting. He was ready to kill many Trojans or to go himself to the Land of the Dead. He killed Alcahous, who had married Hippodamia, the daughter of Anchises, who had fathered Aeneas with Aphrodite. Hippodamia's parents loved her. She was skilled at crafts. Idomeneus killed her husband, a brave man, by spearing him in the chest, cracking the metal that protected his ribs. Idomeneus' spear stuck in his heart, which beat and made the spear quiver — for a short time.

Idomeneus, King of Crete, shouted to Deiphobus, "We have killed three men — Asius, Asius' driver, and Alcahous — for the man you boasted about killing! Try to fight me! I dare you! I am related to Zeus himself. He fathered the Cretan king Minos, who fathered Deucalion, who fathered me, whose purpose in life right now is to make your life and the lives of all Trojans miserable."

Deiphobus wondered which was the better course of action: to fight Idomeneus by himself or get a friend to help him fight Idomeneus. He left and found Aeneas, who was by himself, sulking, angry at Priam, who he felt did not give him enough credit for the deeds he performed in battle.

Deiphobus said to Aeneas, "We need you now. Your sister's husband is dead, and we need to get the corpse so that we can give it a proper burial. Fight with me to recover the corpse of Alcahous, who helped to raise you when you were a child. Idomeneus has killed him."

Aeneas charged at Idomeneus, who did not scare easily or at all. He was an experienced warrior. A wild mountain boar will stand up to hunters and dogs, not retreating but ready to take a life or many lives. So Idomeneus stood up to Aeneas and did not retreat. But with his experience, he knew he needed help.

Idomeneus called for other Greeks to come to him: Ascalaphus, Aphareus, Deipyryus, Meriones, and Antilochus. He shouted, "Come here, friends, and help me face Aeneas! I am

alone, and he is a young, powerful warrior. If he and I were the same age, I would fight him alone. Either I would win *kleos*, or he would!”

Idomeneus had called to his friends, and they came running. But Aeneas called to Deiphobus, Paris, and Agenor, and they and other warriors ran to him.

Greeks and Trojans fought over the corpse of Alcahous. The Greeks wanted the corpse so that they could ransom it or mistreat it by allowing dogs and birds to eat it, thus preventing Alcahous’ *psyche* — his soul — from entering the Land of the Dead. The Trojans wanted the corpse so that they could give it a proper funeral and allow his *psyche* to enter the Land of the Dead.

Aeneas threw his spear at Idomeneus, but Idomeneus ducked and Aeneas’ spear hit only earth.

Idomeneus speared Oenomaus in the belly and his entrails spilled on the ground. Oenomaus’ hands clawed at the earth. Idomeneus pulled his spear out of Oenomaus’ intestines, and Oenomaus’ hands stilled. But Idomeneus could not strip Oenomaus’ armor; the Trojans’ weapons drove him back. Idomeneus did not run away, but he was forced back, slow step by slow step.

Deiphobus threw his spear at Idomeneus, a man he hated, but missed Idomeneus and instead hit Ascalaphus, son of the war god Ares. The spear went all the way through his shoulder and he fell, grabbed at the ground, and died.

Ares did not know that one of his sons had died. He was on Olympus, away from the battle as Zeus had ordered.

The fight over the corpse of Alcahous raged on. Deiphobus managed to strip away Alcahous’ helmet, but Meriones stabbed him in the upper arm and Deiphobus dropped the helmet and it clanged on the ground. Meriones pulled his spear out of Deiphobus’ upper arm and then retreated.

Deiphobus’ brother, Polites, another son of Priam, grabbed him around the waist with both hands and dragged him away from the fighting and to the Trojans’ horses and chariots, one of which bore him back to Troy with blood running down his arm.

Aeneas slit open the throat of Aphareus, who had hoped to kill him. Aphareus’ head slumped, and he fell.

Antilochus saw Thoon attempting to run away. Antilochus sprang at him and severed the vein that runs the length of the back to the nape of the neck. Thoon fell on his back and reached his hands out to his friends. Antilochus wanted to strip off Thoon’s armor, but Trojan weapons struck his shield, which protected him. Antilochus was not wounded as he lashed out with his spear at the Trojans who were trying to kill him.

Adamas, the son of Asius, was watching Antilochus. He ran at Antilochus and stabbed with his spear. It hit Antilochus' shield and broke. Half remained stuck in the shield, and half fell to the ground.

Adamas retreated, but Meriones speared him, thrusting his spear in between Adamas' naval and genitals. This is the worst injury that can be suffered in battle. Adamas grabbed the spear and writhed. He fought death the way a wild bull resists the huntsmen who have captured him and are beginning to drag him away. Adamas fought death, but death quickly won. Meriones pulled his spear out of Adamas' body, and Adamas' body became a corpse.

The Trojan Helenus charged the Greek Deipyrus and his sword split the side of Deipyrus' head, knocking off his helmet. A Greek picked up the helmet, and Deipyrus' eyes went dark.

The death of Deipyrus angered Menelaus, who charged Helenus. Arming himself with a bow, Helenus shot an arrow at Menelaus' chest. A direct hit, but the arrow bounced off Menelaus' breastplate. Black beans and chickpeas fly when tossed from a shovel by a winnower. Much like that, Helenus' arrow bounced off Menelaus' chest.

Menelaus aimed at Helenus' hand that was grabbing the bow, and the spearhead punched through his hand and cracked his bow. Helenus retreated, wounded but alive, and Agenor removed the spear from Helenus' hand and made a sling for his arm.

Pisander and Menelaus rushed at each other. Menelaus hurled his spear. It missed Pisander, who stabbed with his spear at Menelaus' shield. The spear broke, but Pisander still hoped for victory. Menelaus drew a sword, and Pisander grabbed his ax. Both warriors hacked at each other, each hoping to kill the other. Pisander hacked at Menelaus' helmet. But Menelaus hacked Pisander between the eyes. Pisander's bones broke, his blood sprayed, and his eyes fell out of his head. Pisander's body crashed. To get his sword out of Pisander's corpse, Menelaus had to step on Pisander's chest and then pull on the sword.

Menelaus stripped off Pisander's armor and boasted over the corpse, "You Trojans have not treated me well. Zeus is the god of *xenia*, but you Trojans stole my wife and much of my treasure. You had no reason to do such evil; Paris received good *xenia* in my palace. Now, you want to set fire to our ships and kill us all. That is not going to happen!

"Zeus, you are supposed to be wise, but you are helping the Trojans to kill and kill again. Why should you be favoring the Trojans? The Trojans want war. Usually, a person will get enough of something: sleep, even sex, and other good things. But the Trojans never get enough of war."

Menelaus gave the bloody armor of Pisander to his aides and then started fighting again.

Harpalion was the next Trojan ally — a Paphlagonian — to fight Menelaus. Harpalion stabbed Menelaus' shield, but the spear did not punch through to kill Menelaus. Harpalion retreated, but Meriones shot an arrow at him and hit him in the right buttock. The arrow reached his bladder. Harpalion sank to the ground and died, wriggling like an earthworm. His fellow

Paphlagonians bore his corpse to Troy. His father, King Pylaemenes, walked beside the corpse and wept.

Paris wanted to avenge the death of Harpalion. He shot an arrow at Euchenor, whose father was a prophet: Polyidus of Corinth. Like Achilles, Euchenor had two fates. Euchenor's father had told him that he could fight at Troy and die in battle or stay at home and die of illness. Euchenor decided to go to Troy and die, both to avoid paying the tax that Agamemnon levied on those warriors who would not go to Troy and to avoid a slow death from illness. Paris' arrow hit Euchenor in the neck, and Euchenor's death was quick.

The warriors kept fighting on the right flank, but Hector did not know that his men were being bested there. Poseidon kept encouraging the Greeks to fight well.

But Hector fought well, too. He was still where he had broken through the gates. Here were the ships of Protesilaus and Great Ajax, and here the wall was lower. This was the weakest part of the Greek defenses, and Hector was attacking it.

The warriors resisting Hector included Menestheus, Phidas, Stichius, Bias, Meges, Amphion, Dracius, and Medon, the bastard son of King Oileus. Medon was Little Ajax' half-brother, but they lived in separate cities. Medon had been banished from the land of his birth because he had killed a relative — someone whom his stepmother valued. Also fighting here, beside each other, were Little Ajax and Great Ajax. They were like two oxen yoked together and working hard as sweat poured off them.

Many of the Greeks were ready to fight up close, but the Locrians — the people with whom Little Ajax was kinsman — preferred to fight from a distance, with arrows. The two kinds of warriors fought together. Greeks in heavy armor fought in the front lines, while behind them the Locrians sent swarms of arrows against the Trojans.

The Trojans were being outfought, so Polydamas ran up to Hector and said, "Listen to me! You are a great warrior, but these battle tactics are not working. Being a great warrior and being a great tactician are two separate things. The gods give gifts to mortals, but no single mortal gets all the gifts of the gods. One man is a great warrior, another man is a great dancer, another man is a great singer and musician, and Zeus gives yet another man great intelligence. The man with great intelligence can help many other men.

"Listen to what I think is the best course of action. Draw back. Find your best commanders. Form a plan of action. Is it best to keep attacking the Greeks? Or is it best to return to Troy? I am afraid that the Greeks may defeat us. Remember that Achilles is not fighting now. He and his warriors are well rested. If he begins to fight, he will defeat us today the way we defeated the Greeks yesterday."

Hector agreed. He called to Polydamas, "Stay here. I will return soon."

Hector searched for Deiphobus, Helenus, Adamas the son of Asius, and Asius. Where were they? Dead or wounded. Adamas and Asius lay by the Greek ships; the Trojans had not recovered their corpses. The others, wounded, had returned to Troy.

But Hector did find Paris and said to him, “Where is Deiphobus? Where is Helenus? Where are Adamas and Asius? Where is Othryoneus? Is Troy to be conquered because you are mad for women?”

Paris replied, “I am fighting hard. On other days, I may have stayed away from battle, but not today. My mother did not give birth to a coward. Ever since you attacked the Greeks on this day, we have been fighting hard with no letup.

“The warriors whose names you mentioned are dead, except for Deiphobus and Helenus, who are wounded and back at Troy. Their wounds are in the hand or arm; Zeus did not let them die.

“Lead us. We are ready to fight. We are not afraid of battle. As long as our strength holds, we will fight.”

Hector was ready to fight again. The fighting was most fierce around the Trojans Cebriones, Polydamas, Phalces, Orthaeus, Polyphetes, and Palmys, and the newly arrived allies Ascanius and Morys. Imagine storm winds and thunder pounding sea waves and making them higher. The Trojans charged like that. Hector led them.

The Trojans tested the Greek lines, looking for a weak point, but the Greeks held firm.

Great Ajax challenged Hector, “Come closer! We can fight well, but Zeus is giving you aid today. Without his help, you could not defeat us. Do you hope to set fire to our ships? We will defend them. Before you can set fire to our ships, we will have conquered Troy. Soon, you will run from us and pray to Zeus to make your horses fast.”

A bird flew to Great Ajax’ right — the lucky side. The Greeks were encouraged by the bird-sign and cheered.

Hector yelled to Great Ajax, “I know that today is the Greeks’ day of doom. I know that you will die with the rest of the other Greeks. If you and I fight, my spear will rip your skin. If you and I fight, your corpse will feed dogs and birds.”

The Trojans charged and yelled, and the Greeks yelled as they prepared to resist the charge, and the air was filled with the cries of war.

Ares, the god of war, who was resting on Olympus, thought, *An aristeia is a warrior’s day of glory in battle, a day in which the hero is nearly unstoppable. The warrior fights so well that bards keep his memory alive after the warrior dies by singing about the warrior’s aristeia. Of course, many warriors in the Trojan War will have such days of excellence in battle.*

An aristeia can have a few different parts, although an aristeia need not have all of them to be considered an aristeia.

First, the warrior arms himself in armor that shines like fire.

Second, the warrior turns the tide of battle and wreaks havoc against the enemy and kills many opposing warriors.

Third, the warrior is wounded, but recovers, often with the help of a god, and reenters the battle.

Fourth, the warrior kills an especially important enemy.

Fifth, the opposing sides battle over the corpse of the opposing warrior.

A warrior who has an aristeia is a warrior whose name will be remembered after he dies.

Chapter 14: Hera Deceives Zeus (Iliad)

In his tent, Nestor heard the cries of the warriors on both sides. He said to Machaon, “The cries are growing fiercer, and they are near the ships! You stay here and drink wine. Hecamede will draw you a bath and wash the blood off of you. I am going to find out how the battle is going.”

Nestor grabbed a shield that belonged to his son, Thrasymedes, who was using Nestor’s shield. He also grabbed a spear. Outside his tent, he stopped, sick and stunned. Part of the Greek wall had been knocked down, and the Trojans were across the wall! What was the best thing to do: to get in his chariot and join the Greeks or go to Agamemnon and form a plan of action? He went to find Agamemnon as the warriors continued to cut and kill each other.

The other kings — those who had been wounded — were with Agamemnon; they knew that the battle was going badly for the Greeks. Diomedes, Odysseus, and Agamemnon were all too badly wounded to fight.

The shore in front of Troy was not wide enough to house all their ships, and so the Greeks had hauled many up on land in rows and built a wall to protect them. That was where the wounded kings met. They saw Nestor coming toward them and dreaded that he was bringing bad news.

Agamemnon said to Nestor, “Why have you come here, away from the battle where warriors are dying? Hector is keeping good his threat to me that he would force back our troops and burn our ships. So he threatened then, and so he does now! Our troops must be as angry at me as Achilles is. They must have no more will for battle.”

Nestor replied, “Indeed, we are facing a disaster. I’m not certain that even Zeus could help us. Part of the wall is down, and the Trojans are fiercely attacking. Look up and down the lines, and it is impossible to tell which section — right, middle, left — is the most threatened by the Trojans. Carnage is everywhere, and Trojan war cries fill the sky! We need a plan of action. We need tactics. Clearly, wounded warriors cannot fight.”

Agamemnon said, “The Trojans have almost reached the ships. The fortifications — the wall and the trench — are useless. They did not hold back the Trojans. We had hoped that they would be permanent barriers, but Zeus must be giving the Trojans victory. Zeus used to help us, and now he helps the Trojans, but always he must have planned an ultimate Trojan victory.

“Listen to me. Let us take the ships that lie along the shore and push them into the sea. When night comes, unless the Trojans attack during darkness, we will put the rest of the ships into the sea and sail for home. It is better to run away than to die.”

Odysseus, master of tactics, hissed, “Don’t be stupid, Agamemnon. With orders like that, you don’t deserve to command warriors. Instead, you should command cowards. Zeus has decreed

that we fight, not run away. Do you really want to run away from the Trojans after we have endured so much for so many years?

“What would happen if your warriors found about your plan? These are the warriors who live or die as they follow your orders. Our warriors are fighting, and yet you want to put ships in the sea? The warriors would see the ships and think that we are deserting them and leaving them to their deaths. They will look to the right and see death. They will look ahead of them and see death. They will look to the left and see death. They will then stop fighting and run for the ships with Trojan warriors pursuing them and slaughtering them. Your plan will get all of us killed! We need the warriors to keep fighting — not try to run away!”

Agamemnon said, “You are right, Odysseus. What you say is direct and true. I will not order you or anyone else to haul the ships to the sea against your will. But does anyone have a plan of action that we can follow?”

Diomedes replied, “I do. Please listen to me, although I am the youngest commander. Although I am young, I come from a notable family. My father is Tydeus, dead now and buried in Thebes. Porthus, his grandfather, gave birth to three sons: Agrius, Melas, and Oeneus, who is my grandfather. Oeneus stayed at home and did not wander, but my father wandered over the earth. He decided to live in Argos, where he married a daughter of Adrastus and lived in a grand house with lots of cropland and orchards and pastures for sheep. He was a superior spearman, as all of you know. So my family is notable, and if my advice is good, you ought to follow it.

“We need to return to the battle. Really, we have no choice. Because of our wounds, we cannot fight. We will stay out of the range of spears and arrows so that we do not double our wounds. But our warriors will see us and be encouraged — they will know that we are not planning to run away and leave them to die.”

This was good advice, and they went to the battle.

Poseidon had been watching. Taking the shape of an old veteran, he said to Agamemnon, “Achilles must be happy right now to see that his companions are dying, cut down by Trojan weapons. He has no compassion in him, so I hope he dies! I hope that a god kills him! But the gods are not angry at you, Agamemnon. They will not let all the Greeks die. Soon you will see the Trojans create a huge cloud of dust as they run away from us and to Troy!”

Poseidon then ran to the front lines and shouted as loud as nine thousand or ten thousand warriors — a cry loud enough to put courage in each Greek’s heart.

Hera was also watching. She saw Poseidon helping the Greeks, and she saw Zeus on Mount Ida looking away from the Trojan War, bored with the battle. She wanted the Greeks to win, and she hated that Zeus wanted the Trojans to win for now.

Hera wondered if she could form a plan that would allow the Greeks to be triumphant and push back the Trojans. How could she allow Poseidon to be more active in helping the Greeks?

Eventually, she found a plan. She would beautify herself and go to Zeus on Mount Ida. If Zeus were to have sex with her, he would go to sleep and Poseidon could do whatever he wanted on the battlefield to help the Greeks.

She went to her bedroom, built for her by Hephaestus, and prepared for her feminine *aristeia*. She used ambrosia to clean her body and then rubbed her body with olive oil to make it soft. The scent of this special olive oil wafted from Mount Olympus to below and made the earth smell sweet. She combed her hair and braided it, and then she dressed herself in robes that Athena had made. A golden brooch and a waistband kept the robes closed. She wore earrings and a headdress and a veil — Hera, who was a married woman, wore a headdress and a veil — and she put on sandals.

She was not finished yet. She went to Aphrodite, goddess of sexual passion, and asked for a favor: “Will you lend me something, or will you hold it against me that I favor the Greeks?”

Aphrodite replied, “Tell me what you want. If I can, I will lend it to you.”

Hera lied to get what she wanted: “I am going to visit Ocean and Mother Tethys, my friends who took care of me after Zeus overpowered his father, Cronus. Ocean and Mother Tethys are fighting, and they have not made love for a long time. I want to convince them to make up and to enjoy themselves in bed again. Lend me something that will accomplish that.”

Aphrodite said, “It would be wrong to deny your request. This is exactly what you need.”

She took off her breastband and lent it to Hera. The breastband was something that no mortal man or immortal god could resist.

Aphrodite said to Hera, “Take this breastband. Whoever wears it will immediately make males much more than merely interested.”

Hera smiled.

Aphrodite went to her home, and Hera went to the god Sleep before she went to Zeus. She needed one more thing for her plan.

To Sleep, whose twin is Death, she said, “I have something to ask of you. If you give it to me, I will owe you. I want you to put Zeus to sleep after I have made love to him. I will give you a solid gold throne that I will have my son, Hephaestus, make for you. He will also make you a stool for your feet.”

But Sleep replied, “Hera, I would put to sleep whatever god you wish — except Zeus. The only way I will put Zeus to sleep is if he himself requests it. Remember when you had me put Zeus to sleep because of Heracles?”

Hera replied, “Of course I do. I hate all the bastard children my husband, Zeus, has fathered. One of them was Heracles. I also hate all the mortal women who have given birth to those bastards. It does not matter to me whether the women had sex with my husband willingly or not.”

Sleep continued, “You wanted to cause trouble for Heracles after he sacked Troy because the Trojan king Laomedon would not give him the horses he had promised, so you made me make Zeus fall asleep. You called up a storm that caused Heracles to go far off course, and Zeus was furious when he woke up. He flung gods out of his way as he searched for me — he regarded me as being the guiltiest. I fled to the goddess Night, and Zeus gave up searching for me. Now you want me to do something that will get me in that much trouble again.”

Hera replied, “You have nothing to worry about. Zeus loved his son Heracles. Do you think that he values the Trojan warriors as much as he did his son Heracles? But if you do what I say, I will get you a wife. I will arrange a marriage between you and Pasithea, one of the younger Graces.”

Sleep said, “You will! Swear an oath, and it’s a deal! I can’t sleep during the day because I keep thinking about Pasithea.”

Hera swore an oath in which she named all the Titans punished in Tartarus. She and Sleep then wrapped themselves in fog to hide themselves and went to Mount Ida, where Zeus was resting. Sleep climbed up a high pine tree before Zeus saw him, and Hera went alone to her husband.

Hera’s breastband that she borrowed from Aphrodite, goddess of sexual passion, immediately worked. Her husband wanted to have sex with her.

Zeus said to Hera, “Where are you going? Why are you here?”

Hera replied, “I am going to visit Ocean and Mother Tethys, who are fighting and have not made love for a long time. They are my friends, and I want to reconcile their quarrel. I want them to enjoy themselves in bed again. My horses and chariot are nearby, but I came to you first so that you would know what I am doing. I do not want to make you angry.”

Zeus said, “Why are you in such a hurry? You can visit Ocean and Mother Tethys tomorrow. Today — right now — have sex with me. I have never so wanted to have sex with anyone — mortal or immortal.

“I am hornier than I was when I had sex with the wife of Ixion. She bore to me a son: Pirithous.”

Hera thought, *I know that you had sex with the wife of Ixion and that she bore you a bastard son, and I hate it.*

Zeus continued, “I am hornier than I was when I had sex with Danaë, who bore me a son: Perseus.”

Hera thought, *I know that you had sex with Danaë and that she bore you a bastard son, and I hate it.*

Zeus continued, “I am hornier than I was when I had sex with Europa, who bore me twin sons: Minos and Rhadamanthys.”

Hera thought, *I know that you had sex with Europa and that she bore you twin bastard sons, and I hate it.*

Zeus continued, "I am hornier than I was when I had sex with Alcmena, who bore me a son: Heracles."

Hera thought, *I know that you had sex with Alcmena and that she bore you a bastard son, and I hate it.*

Zeus continued, "I am hornier than I was when I had sex with Semele, who bore me a son: Dionysus."

Hera thought, *I know that you had sex with Semele and that she bore you a bastard son, and I hate it.*

Zeus continued, "I am hornier than I was when I had sex with the goddess Demeter, who bore me a daughter: Persephone."

Hera thought, *I know that you had sex with Demeter and that she bore you a bastard daughter, and I hate it.*

Zeus continued, "I am hornier than I was when I had sex with the goddess Leto, who bore me twins: Apollo and Artemis."

Hera thought, *I know that you had sex with Leto and that she bore you bastard twins, and I hate it. Zeus, my husband, you know nothing about how to seduce a wife!*

Zeus continued, "I am hornier than I have ever been. Let us have sex right here, right now!"

Hera said, "What are you saying? Here on Mount Ida! Any god and goddess can see us making love. If one sees us making love, he or she will tell the other gods and goddesses. I don't wish to be the subject of gossip. If you want to make love to me, we can go to your bedroom, which Hephaestus made for you, and shut the doors."

Zeus said, "Don't worry. I will bring clouds around Mount Ida to hide us. Not even the sun will see us."

Zeus had sex with Hera, and under and around them grew green grass and beautiful flowers. Zeus and Hera did not touch the ground. Drops of dew rained down on them.

Zeus immediately fell asleep afterward, and the god Sleep rushed to the Greek ships and told Poseidon, "Fight for the Greeks! Zeus is asleep for a while at least. He made love to Hera, and I made him go into a soothing sleep."

Poseidon said to the Greek warriors, "Do you want Hector to win? Do you want the Trojans to set fire to your ships! That's what he wants, now that Achilles is not fighting for us. But if we fight well, we need not miss Achilles. We can defeat Hector without his help.

"Listen to me. Let us make sure that the best fighters have the best armor. If a big, strong warrior has a small shield and a small, weak warrior has a big shield, make them exchange shields. We need to make sure that our best fighters stay alive."

This was good advice, and the Greek commanders knew it. Diomedes, Odysseus, and Agamemnon arranged exchanges of armor. Poseidon led the warriors into battle.

On one side, Hector led the Trojans, and on the other side, Poseidon led the Greeks. The surf pounded the shore, and the warriors clashed against each other and shrieked cries of war.

Not so loud was the sound of waves crashing on the shore, not so loud was the crackling of a rampaging forest fire, not so loud was a storm wind tearing branches off of oak trees — none of these was so loud as the cries of war as Trojans killed Greeks and Greeks killed Trojans.

Hector ran forward and threw his spear at Great Ajax. It hit him just where two straps — one for his shield and one for his sword — crossed his chest. The straps saved his life. Hector was angry and backed up to rejoin his troops.

Great Ajax picked up a rock and threw it at Hector. It went over the edge of his shield and hit him on his chest close to his throat. Hector spun around and fell like an oak tree hit by a thunderbolt from Zeus falls, ripping up its roots and scaring passersby.

Hector fell, and his spear and helmet fell, too. The Greeks ran to try to kill him. The Trojans — who were faster than the Greeks — ran to save him. Aeneas, Polydamas, Agenor, Sarpedon, Glaucus, and all their Trojan and allied troops saved Hector's life. They protected him with shields and lifted him up and put him in a chariot and drove him away from the fighting.

When they reached the ford of the river Xanthus, they lifted him out of the chariot and poured water over him. Hector's eyes cleared. He got to his knees, vomited, and fell unconscious.

The Greeks fought the Trojans harder than ever, now that Hector was injured. Little Ajax speared Satnius, who was named after the river Satniois, where his father, Enops, and his mother, the nymph of the ford, had coupled. Little Ajax speared him in the side.

The Trojan Polydamas threw a spear and hit Prothoënor, the son of Antenor, in the shoulder. He fell and grabbed the ground with both hands. Polydamas boasted, "Once again I've thrown my spear and hit my target: a Greek who will go down to the Land of the Dead."

The Greeks detested that boast. Prothoënor had fallen at the feet of Giant Ajax, who, angered, threw his spear at Polydamas, who jumped to the side. The spear missed Polydamas but hit Archelochus, cutting through his neck. His torso, arms, and legs fell to the ground, but his head hit the ground first.

Great Ajax yelled at Polydamas, "Your spear hit Prothoënor, and my spear hit Archelochus. I think it's a good trade. This man looks like a warrior, not a coward. He must be the brother or the son of Antenor."

Great Ajax knew that Prothoënor was a son of Antenor. Acamas, Prothoënor's brother, straddled the corpse and speared the Greek Promachus, who was trying to drag away the corpse by the feet.

Acamas boasted to the Greeks, “You also can suffer and die. Some day all of you will be like Promachus. He did not live long after the death of my brother. Warriors pray for blood relatives. If the warrior dies in battle, a blood relative will avenge his death.”

The Greeks wanted to avenge the death of Promachus. The Greek Peneleos charged the Trojan Acamas, who ran, so Peneleos stabbed Ilioneus, on whose father Hermes had showered riches but whose mother had given birth to only one son. Peneleos stabbed Ilioneus under an eyebrow. One eyeball was scooped out, and the spear went into Ilioneus’ eye socket and out the back of his head. Ilioneus sat down, his hands to his sides, and Peneleos cut off his head. Hoisting his spear with Ilioneus’ head at the end like the top of a poppy, Peneleos displayed the grisly flower to the Trojans and boasted, “Tell the loving parents of Ilioneus that he isn’t coming home anymore. I have avenged the death of the Greek Promachus, whose wife will grieve when he does not return home from the war.”

The Trojans were afraid now, and they fled, pursued by Greeks who killed them.

Great Ajax killed Hyrtius, commander of the Mysians.

Antilochus killed Phalces and Mermerus.

Meriones killed Morys and Hippotion.

Teucer killed Periphetes and Prothoon.

Menelaus killed Hyperenor, spearing him in the side and spilling his intestines.

Little Ajax killed the greatest number of Trojans. He was fast on his feet, and he outran many fleeing Trojans and sent them to the Land of the Dead.

Chapter 15: The Battle at the Ships (Iliad)

The Trojans fled, and the Greeks pursued and killed them. Zeus woke up and looked down at the battle. He sprang to his feet. This was not how the battle was supposed to go. The Greeks were winning, and Hector struggled to breathe as he vomited blood. Great Ajax, a mighty warrior, had earlier wounded him with a rock.

Zeus told Hera, “You are treacherous. You stopped Hector’s attack and made the Greeks victorious while I was sleeping. Don’t be surprised if you suffer for what you have done. I can whip you. Remember that I once strung you up in the air with two huge anvils strung on your feet. I tied your hands with a golden chain — you could not break it. The other Olympian gods wanted to help you, but I would not let them. If a god tried to help you, I caught him and threw him far away. The god hit the earth headfirst and endured agonizing pain. That was how angry I was at you when you sent my son, Heracles, off course after he defeated Troy. You always hated my son, and you planned pain for him. But I saved Heracles and took him to his home. If you don’t remember how I punished you then, I can easily help you to remember. Your seductiveness will not help you.”

Hera was afraid of her husband’s anger. She told him, “I did not *directly* tell Poseidon to help the Greeks. It must have been his own idea. He hates the Trojans. He pitied the Greeks when their backs were against their ships. My advice to Poseidon is to always obey your will!”

Zeus was pleased by Hera’s words although he still knew that she was, is, and will be treacherous to him. He told her, “I like what you are telling me. If you obey me and follow my orders, then Poseidon will have to bend to my will even when he would like to oppose me.

“Hera, go to Mount Olympus and tell Iris and Apollo to come to me. I will order Iris to go to Poseidon and order him to stop helping the Greeks. I will tell Apollo to help Hector rejoin the battle. Hector will rout the Greeks and send them back to their ships. Achilles will send his best friend, Patroclus, into battle. Hector will kill Patroclus but only after Patroclus has had an *aristeia* and has slaughtered many Trojans, including my own son, Sarpedon. Angry at the death of Patroclus, Achilles will kill Hector. From that time, the fighting will continue until the Greeks conquer Troy.

“I will not allow any god or goddess to take part in the war until I have kept my promise to Thetis and exalted her son, Achilles.”

Hera obeyed her husband — immediately. She flew to Mount Olympus as quickly as thought. The gods greeted her with cups of nectar. She accepted a cup from Themis, who asked her, “Why have you returned here? You look worried. I can guess that your husband, Zeus, has threatened you.”

Hera replied, “I don’t want to think about my husband’s threat. You know how angry Zeus can get and the ways that he can punish a god or goddess. Continue being the hostess here, Themis, and no doubt you will hear all. What my husband is planning will not bring joy to all the gods and goddesses on Mount Olympus.”

The gods looked concerned. Hera’s lips smiled, but her forehead frowned. She said, “Anyone who tries to oppose Zeus is a fool. We try to get our way, but he is stronger than we are, and he does not concern himself with our happiness. All of us must accept whatever pain he throws our way.”

Hera then sent some pain Ares’ way. She said, “Ares is going to feel some pain right now. His son, Ascalaphus, is dead — killed in battle. I do believe that Ares has claimed to be his father.”

Ares felt pain and grief. He slapped his thighs hard and said, “Would anyone here blame me if I went to the battle and avenged the death of my son? Would anyone here blame me if I did that — even though Zeus might throw a thunderbolt at me that would knock me to the ground amid dust and dead warriors?”

Ares ordered the immortals Rout and Terror to hitch his horses to his chariot. He put on his armor — he wanted to avenge his son. But Athena stopped him. She tore his helmet from his head and snatched away his shield and spear. She told him, “Don’t be stupid, and don’t do something stupid. Haven’t you been listening to Hera? If you go to the battle now, soon you will return, whipped by Zeus. And Zeus won’t stop after causing you pain. He will leave the battle and come to Mount Olympus and batter us — *all* of us: the guilty and the innocent. Don’t be angry at the death of your son. A better warrior than your son has died by now or soon will die.”

Ares sat down.

Hera summoned Iris and Apollo to her and told them, “Go to Zeus on Mount Ida, and do whatever he orders you to do.”

Iris and Apollo flew to Zeus. He was pleased to see them arrive so quickly — Hera had followed the orders he had given to her.

Zeus told Iris, “Go to Poseidon and tell him to leave the battle. He can go to Mount Olympus or to the sea, whichever he chooses. Tell him that if he does not obey me to beware because I am stronger and older than he is. It is best for him to obey my orders.”

Iris swooped down to the battle and found Poseidon and gave him Zeus’ message. Poseidon was angry. He complained to Iris, “Who is Zeus to give me orders? He is my brother, along with Hades. Rhea is the mother and Cronus is the father of all three of us. Zeus is the oldest of us three brothers. We split the world into three parts, and we shook lots to see who would get each part of the world. I became the god of the sea, Hades became the god of the Land of the Dead, which is also known by the name Hades, and Zeus became the god of the sky. But common to all of us is Mount Olympus and the land.

“Why should I follow his orders? He is powerful, but he needs to be content with the sky and not try to control the land, too. If he wants to order someone around, let him give orders to his sons and daughters!”

Iris asked, “Do you really think it wise to give that answer to Zeus? How do you think he will react to it? Aren’t you willing to bend even a little? Be careful. The Furies are avenging goddesses who concern themselves with familial violence and punish those whom they regard at fault — remember that the Furies protect older brothers.”

Poseidon replied, “Yours are wise words — you are right, Iris. You have wisdom, but I am still angry when Zeus threatens me although I am his brother and equal. I will bend to his will. But I say this: If Zeus should decree that Troy not be conquered — against the wishes of Athena, Hera, Hephaestus, Hermes, and me — then the anger between us shall never end.”

Poseidon caused an earthquake and then dove into the sea. The Greek warriors immediately missed his leadership and presence.

Immediately afterward, Zeus sent Apollo away with his orders: “Go to Hector. Poseidon has left the battle. If he had not, we would have fought. I would have won, but it is better for both him and me that Poseidon simply do what I tell him to do. Take my shield — it will panic the Greeks. But most of all, put courage into Hector so that he will fiercely attack the Greeks.”

Apollo quickly followed his father’s orders. He swooped like a hawk from Mount Ida and found Hector. Hector was sitting up, recovering from being hit with the rock that Great Ajax had thrown at him. Hector began to recognize his fellow warriors. Zeus revived him, and Hector’s gasping and heavy sweating stopped.

Apollo said to him, “Hector, why are you so far away from the fighting?”

Hector replied, “Which of the gods are you? I am surprised that you don’t know that I was killing Greeks when Great Ajax threw a rock at me and hit my chest. I thought my time to journey to the Land of the Dead had come.”

Apollo said, “Be courageous. Zeus has sent me — Apollo — to help you and to protect you. I saved you once before. Get in your chariot, and command your Trojans to get in their chariots and attack the Greeks. I will go ahead of you and help you to drive the Greeks back.”

This was good news for Hector, who recovered fully from his wound. He was like a well-fed stallion breaking free of a tether and racing to a river to cool off in its currents. The stallion is alive and proud. Hector was eager to kill and kill again.

The Greeks saw the Trojans coming. The Greeks turned around and ran. Imagine dogs and huntsmen going after a stag or mountain goat but a mountain lion appears and attacks. The dogs and huntsmen flee. The Greeks had been attacking the Trojans, but when they saw Hector they turned around and ran.

But the Greek Thoas — a good spearman and one of the best young debaters — did not run, and he tried to convince other Greeks not to run. He called to the Greeks, “Look! Hector is back when I thought that he had died — killed by Great Ajax! Once more, a god has saved Hector. Zeus must be his friend.

“Warriors, follow my advice. All of you who consider yourselves common soldiers, leave and go back to the ships and prepare to defend them. But the best of us will fight Hector! I don’t think that he can get past us.”

The Greeks’ best warriors knew that this was good advice. They gathered around Great Ajax, Idomeneus, Teucer, Meriones, and Meges. The common soldiers withdrew to the ships.

The Trojans charged. Hector led them, but out in front was the god Apollo bearing Zeus’ shield — a shield that caused panic in opposing warriors. Hephaestus had made it for Zeus, and now Apollo wielded its power.

The Greeks stood their ground. Both sides shouted cries of war, and arrows darkened the sky. Many arrows hit their targets, cutting deep into the bodies of warriors. Many other arrows landed in the ground.

As long as Apollo did not shake Zeus’ shield and instead held it steady, both sides fought well. But when Apollo shook Zeus’ shield and stared at the Greeks, they panicked and fled. They looked like herds of cattle or flocks of sheep that are fleeing carnivorous beasts that pursue them when the cowherd or shepherd is gone and they have no defense. Hector and his Trojans killed Greeks and gained *kleos*.

Hector killed Stichius and Menelaus’ friend Arcesilaus.

Aeneas killed Medon and Iasus. Medon had the same father as Little Ajax: Oileus. However, Medon had killed a relative who was related to King Oileus’ wife. Iasus fought with the Athenian warriors.

The Trojan Polydamas killed the Greek Mecisteus.

The Trojan Polites killed the Greek Echius.

The Trojan Agenor killed the Greek Clonius.

Paris, illicit husband of Helen, killed the Greek Deiochus. Paris speared him in the shoulder as Deiochus fled; the spear exited Deiochus’ body through the chest.

The Trojans tore off the bloody armor from Greek corpses as the Greeks fled past the trench and inside the wall.

Hector shouted, “Leave the armor! Storm the ships! I will kill anyone who does not fight! His corpse will not be buried! The dogs and birds will eat it!”

Hector charged in his chariot, shouting a cry of war. The Trojans yelled with the joy of war and of killing, charging in the chariots in a line with Hector’s chariot.

Apollo made their way smooth. He kicked and filled in the trench for a distance as long as a man can throw a spear when he is really trying, and then he knocked down the Greek wall as easily as if he were a boy who builds a sand castle and then knocks it down for fun. Trojans charged over the fallen wall.

The Greeks ran to the ships. They prayed to the gods. Nestor prayed most fervently: He stretched his arms up to the sky and prayed, “Zeus, if anyone in Argos sacrificed to you and you accepted the sacrifice and promised us a safe return home, please remember your promise now! Don’t let us die here!”

Zeus heard Nestor’s prayer, and in reply he cracked thunder across the sky. The Trojans heard the thunder. Thinking that it was a favorable omen for them, they attacked more fiercely.

Imagine a huge wave crashing over the sides of a ship — that is how the Trojans charged over the fallen wall. The Trojans fought from chariots, but the Greeks fought from the decks of ships. The Trojans threw spears. The Greeks used long pikes to keep the Trojans from the ships. The pikes were normally used in sea battles.

As the armies fought, Patroclus heard them as he sat with the wounded Eurypylus, talking to him and treating his injuries with pain-killing drugs. Hearing the Trojans so close to the ships, he slapped his thighs hard and said, “Eurypylus, I need to leave now even though you need my help. I hear the sounds of fighting at the ships. An aide can help you; I need to rush to Achilles and try to convince him to fight. If a god helps me, I may be able to persuade him. I am his friend; he may listen to me.”

Patroclus left the shelter of Eurypylus and started running.

The Greeks were keeping the Trojans away from the ships, but they were not able to force the Trojans back. The line of battle between the two armies was taut like a chalk-line used to mark the timber of a ship. The two armies were evenly matched in fighting prowess now as the Greeks fought to save the ships and the Trojans fought to destroy the ships. Desperation gave the Greeks strength, and hope gave the Trojans strength.

Hector and Great Ajax were fighting over the same ship. Hector could not set it on fire; Great Ajax could not drive Hector away — Apollo was helping Hector. The Trojan Caletor brought fire to the ship, but Great Ajax speared him in the chest and Caletor fell dead at Hector’s feet.

Hector shouted to the Trojans, “Keep fighting! Rescue Caletor’s corpse before the Greeks can strip the armor. Caletor has fallen!”

Hector threw his spear at Great Ajax. He missed Great Ajax but hit Lycophron, who had killed a man in his homeland and had moved to Great Ajax’ land. Hector’s spear cut through Lycophron’s skull above the ear. Lycophron fell from the ship and his back hit the ground.

Great Ajax yelled, “Teucer, our friend is dead. We all lived in the same halls. We respected him. Are you ready to avenge his death?”

Teucer ran to Great Ajax' side and fired off an arrow that hit Clitus, the charioteer of Polydamas. Clitus was struggling with the horses, trying hard to charge the Greeks and follow the orders of Hector, but Clitus met his fate. Teucer's arrow hit him in the back of the neck, and he fell, leaving the chariot empty, but Polydamas caught the horses and gave the reins to Astynous, ordering him, "Keep the chariot nearby!" Then Polydamas returned to the battle for the ships.

Teucer readied himself to shoot an arrow at Hector. He saw an opening to a mortal spot, but Zeus was watching and caused the string of Teucer's bow to break. The arrow went wide of the mark.

Teucer complained to Great Ajax, "A god must be helping the Trojans. A god has snapped the string of my bow — a new string that I fastened to my bow this morning so I could fill the sky with arrows."

Great Ajax said, "Set aside your bow and arrows since a god will not allow you to fight with them. Fight with a spear and a shield. We will not allow the Trojans to easily set fire to the ships."

Teucer threw his bow in back of the battle line and armed himself with a shield, helmet, and spear. He stood by Great Ajax.

Hector had seen Teucer's bowstring break. He shouted, "Trojans, fight on! Zeus is on our side. He has ruined the bowstring of the Greeks' best archer. Zeus is giving us *kleos*; he is giving the Greeks defeat. Everybody, fight! We are fighting for Troy and our loved ones! There is no dishonor in fighting and even dying to keep a wife and sons safe!"

Great Ajax also shouted encouragement to his fellow Greeks, "Do you want Hector and the Trojans to set fire to the ships? Listen to him shout! He is inviting the Trojans to a battle, not to a dance! Let us fight up close and face-to-face. How we fight now determines whether we live or die!"

Hector killed Schedius.

Great Ajax killed Laodamas.

The Trojan Polydamas killed Otus, one of Meges' friends.

Meges saw Otus die, and he quickly tried to kill Polydamas, but Apollo protected the Trojan and Meges missed. But Meges did stab Croesmus in the chest.

As Meges was stripping off Croesmus' armor, the Trojan Dolops tried to kill him. Dolops was strong, and his spear went through Meges' shield, but Meges' breastplate saved his life. Euphetes had hosted Dolops' father and had given him the breastplate that Dolops wore to war.

Meges cut at Dolops' helmet, which fell to the ground, but Dolops did not retreat. Menelaus speared Dolops — the spear went into the back of Dolops' shoulder and came out his chest. He fell facedown, and the two armies scrambled to strip off his armor.

Hector rallied his Trojans, especially Melanippus, a cousin of Dolops. Melanippus used to graze sheep at a distance from Troy, but when Greek ships and war arrived, he returned to Troy to fight. Priam respected him.

Hector shouted, “Melanippus! Your cousin is dead! Let’s kill the Greeks and avenge his death!”

Great Ajax also rallied his Greeks: “Be warriors! Make a reputation for yourselves! What will people say about you after this battle? Dread being called a coward! Be a hero instead! Win *kleos*!”

Great Ajax fired up the Greeks, and Zeus fired up the Trojans.

Menelaus saw Antilochus, the swift son of Nestor and challenged him, “Among the younger warriors, you are the fastest and you fight fiercely! Show us what kind of fighting skill you’ve got!”

Antilochus moved forward and hurled his spear. The Trojans tried to dodge the spear, but it hit Melanippus in the chest. He fell, and Antilochus rushed toward him like a dog jumping on a deer that a hunter has just wounded.

Hector saw Antilochus and rushed toward him. Antilochus saw Hector and turned and ran. Antilochus was like a wild beast that has killed a dog or a herdsman and runs away before groups of men are able to hunt him. Hector and the Trojans tried to kill Antilochus, but he made it safely back to his fellow Greek warriors.

The Trojans stormed the Greek ships. Zeus wanted to give Hector *kleos*, and so he gave him courage. Zeus wanted Hector to set on fire a Greek ship. The burning of a ship would fulfill Zeus’ promise to Thetis: It would show the Greeks how much they needed Achilles, who would soon fight and push the Trojans away from the ships and back to Troy.

Hector was wild to set the ships on fire. His eyes burned, and his mouth foamed. He was like a flash fire that consumes everything in its path. Zeus glorified Hector, whose life would soon end — Achilles would send him to the Land of the Dead.

But now Hector was killing Greeks. He fought where the greatest number of Greek warriors wearing fine armor fought — he wanted to kill the best of the Greeks. But despite his anger, he could not smash through their line. They were like a stone wall or a granite cliff. Storms and waves assault the granite cliff, but it does not move. Still, Hector charged at their mass like a huge wave storming at a ship. The huge wave — driven by a hurricane — crashes over the ship and the sailors are afraid.

The Greek warriors feared Hector as he charged again. He was like a lion killing sheep and cattle. A lone inexperienced herdsman cannot keep the lion from slaughtering the animals. All he can do is to herd the living animals away as the lion feasts on meat. The Greeks fled. Zeus and Hector made them flee, even though Hector killed only one Greek: Periphetes. His father was Copeus, a herald of Eurystheus. Copeus, following orders, summoned Heracles again and again to perform one of his famous twelve labors. Copeus was an ignoble father, and he had a

noble but unlucky son. Turning to flee, Periphetes tripped on his shield and fell to the ground. Hector rushed up to him and speared him in the chest. The other Greeks saw him die — they were unable to prevent his death. They dreaded facing Hector.

The Greeks were now at the ships, and the Trojans were driving them back from the first row of ships lined up away from the shore. The Greeks had no choice but to retreat a little way, but they regrouped at the tents. Discipline made them take a stand, as did the thought of what would happen to them if the ships were set on fire.

Nestor pleaded with the Greeks to fight: “What do you want people to say about you after this battle is over? That you were a coward? Or that you were a hero? Remember that you have parents and other loved ones who will hear stories about you. Fight! Don’t run! Win *kleos*!”

The Greeks listened to Nestor. Athena cleared away the dust that had arisen from the fighting. The Greeks and the Trojans could clearly see each other on the battle lines. Each side knew the army it was fighting. Each side knew that this was an opportunity to earn *kleos*. All the Greek warriors clearly saw Hector and his Trojans — those fighting in the front lines and those who were the Trojan reserves.

Great Ajax fought as well as he had ever fought. He wanted to be where the fighting was most fierce. He jumped from the deck of one ship to the deck of another, stabbing Trojans with his long pike. He was like a skilled rider who yokes together four horses and races them while he jumps from one horse’s back to another horse’s back and another’s. The crowd watches, not believing that such skill can exist. Great Ajax jumped from deck to deck — fighting, and shouting to encourage the Greeks to hold off the Trojans.

Hector was like an eagle swooping down on flocks of geese, cranes, or swans. Hector swooped at a ship of war, and Zeus urged him on.

Again, troops battled at the ships. They fought so fiercely that it seemed as if all the troops were fresh. The Greeks were afraid that this was their day to die. The Trojans were hopeful that this was their day to win the war — they wanted to burn Greek ships and kill Greek warriors.

Finally, Hector achieved a moment that he had wanted ever since the Greeks came to Troy. He reached a ship. It had brought Protesilaus to Troy, but it would not take him home to Greece. Warriors fought at close range now: face-to-face. Their weapons were hatchets, battle-axes, swords, and short spears — not arrows and long spears for throwing. The weapons and blood of fallen warriors covered the ground. Hector held onto the ship and screamed, “Bring fire! This day makes up for all the other days. The Greeks came here to make war on us. I wanted to fight, but Troy’s elders insisted on trying to wait out a siege. Zeus helped the Greeks then, but Zeus is helping us now!”

Inspired by Hector, the Trojans fought more fiercely, and even forced back Great Ajax — Trojan weapons forced him to back up slow inch by slow inch, all unwillingly. He moved to a

bridge erected between two ships and continued to spear Trojans with his pike. He shouted to his fellow Greeks, “Fight with fury! We are all the warriors we have! We have no warriors in reserve! We have nowhere to retreat! The sea is in back of us, the Trojans are in front of us, and the best and only thing we can do is fight!”

With each breath, Great Ajax speared a Trojan bringing fire to Hector. Great Ajax stabbed twelve Trojans.

Looking down at the battlefield, Zeus thought, *The warriors whom Great Ajax just killed were fated to die on this day. The same is true of all the other warriors who have died or will die today. Each mortal human being is given a certain amount of life. Each mortal human being is given a certain moira — share or portion or lot — of life. Each mortal human being has a fate.*

Fate is what is bound to happen. Fate is what we gods know was bound to happen. Mortals do not have that foreknowledge. When a warrior is hit in a mortal place with a weapon, only then does the warrior know that he was fated to die on that day.

The fate of warriors varies. Many warriors will die on the battlefield, but many warriors will survive. Some Greek warriors will return home and live a long life. Gods know the fate of mortals, but mortals almost always do not know their fate unless they receive help from a prophet or a god.

Achilles is unusual both in that he has two fates — almost all mortals have only one fate — and in that he knows that he has two fates. Very few mortals know when they are fated to die.

We gods and goddesses have unusual abilities, of course. We know the fates of human beings in advance. Thetis knows that Achilles, her son, has two fates. I know that Sarpedon is fated to die in this battle. I also know that Patroclus will kill Sarpedon, Hector — with help — will kill Patroclus, and Achilles will kill Hector.

Cities also have fates. Troy is fated to fall in the tenth year of the war.

Fate can be malleable. We gods can make things happen that may seem to go against fate. Troy is fated to fall, yet I can make the Trojans be victorious for a while. But Troy will still fall in the tenth year of the war.

I, Zeus, am powerful. Am I powerful enough to keep my son, Sarpedon, alive although he is fated to die on this day? I don't know. I want my son to live, and I am tempted to allow my son to keep living past the day he is fated to die, but I don't know what the consequences would be if I did that. Would going against fate create terrible consequences in the universe — consequences that even I would not be able to control? Almost certainly. Tempted though I am to allow Sarpedon to continue to live past this day, and despite the grief that I feel now and will feel again when he dies, it is best that I allow my son to die.

Chapter 16: Patroclus Fights and Dies (Iliad)

As Greeks and Trojans fought and killed each other, Patroclus reached Achilles' camp. Patroclus was crying, and his tears ran down his face like water runs down the face of a rock.

Achilles saw him coming, and he saw his tears. He said gently to his best friend, "Why are you crying, Patroclus? You are crying like a young girl holding on to her mother's skirts and begging to be picked up. The young girl looks up pleadingly at her busy mother, who picks her up. Your tears remind me of the tears of a little girl like that.

"But why are you crying? Do you have a message for our warriors or for me? Do you have a message from home? The last I heard, your father and my father were still alive. If our fathers have died, then we should cry.

"Or are you crying because the Trojans are defeating the Greeks? The Greeks are dying against their ships because Agamemnon insulted me.

"Please tell me why you are crying. Don't keep the reason a secret from me."

Patroclus groaned and answered, "Achilles, please don't be angry at me! The Greeks are being hit hard! Many of our champions are wounded and unable to fight! Diomedes, Odysseus, Agamemnon, and Eurypylus have all been wounded. Healers are trying to help them, but these warriors cannot fight.

"Achilles, I hope that I never grow as angry as you! You have courage and fighting ability, but you are not using them to defend the troops. Peleus must not be your father! Thetis must not be your mother! No, your parents must be the ocean and rocks.

"Are you worried about a prophecy? Are you worried about something that Thetis said that Zeus told her? So be it. But at least send me into battle wearing your armor. That way the Trojans will think that I am you, Achilles, and that will give the Greek warriors a chance to regroup. Our Myrmidons are fresh and ready to fight. The Trojans have been fighting hard and are exhausted. The Myrmidons and I can fight these Trojans and force them baway from the ships!"

Patroclus did not know it, but he was pleading to go to his own death.

Achilles replied, "No, Patroclus, I am not worried about any prophecy. I am not worried about anything that my mother has said to me. But I am still angry at the way that Agamemnon treated me. I am the greatest Greek warrior, and yet he took my prize of honor — Briseis — away from me. To earn Briseis, I conquered an entire city. The Greeks awarded her to me. Agamemnon treated me like a beggar, not like an honored warrior!

"I cannot be angry forever. However, I said that I would not fight until the Trojans reached my own camp, my own ships. But I do not want all the Greeks to die. So put on my armor and fight with our Myrmidons! The Trojans are triumphant and have fought the Greek warriors back

into this little strip of land where we have our camps and our ships. Why? Because I am not fighting. The Trojans do not see my distinctive armor and so they are not afraid. If they were to see my armor, they would flee.

“If Agamemnon were to come to me now with a real apology and not just a bribe, I would return to battle. Maybe he will do that later, after you have saved the Greeks and their ships.

“I hear the Trojans fighting at our camps. I do not hear the battle cries of Diomedes or hated Agamemnon. All I can hear is Hector urging his troops on to fight. All I can hear are the triumphant cries of Trojans. They are routing the Greeks.

“So fight, Patroclus, and save the Greeks. Fight the Trojans away from our camps and ships. Fight the Trojans before they set fire to all the ships.

“Listen, Patroclus, and remember. Fight hard. By doing so, you will win *kleos* for yourself and for me. If you fight hard and save the Greeks, I think that Agamemnon will give me a real apology, Briseis, and treasure. But after you have forced the Trojans away from the camps and ships, stop fighting. Come back to my camp. Even if Zeus and Hera are allowing you to win great *kleos*, do not fight the Trojans on the plain in front of Troy. Leave that for me to do later.

“Remember, Patroclus, do not take the battle back to Troy. If you were to fight on the plain, Apollo, who respects the Trojans, may decide to fight you.

“Again, Patroclus, listen and remember: Once you have forced the Trojans away from the Greek camps and ships, return to my camp. Don’t continue to fight. Let the other warriors die on the plain.

“I wish that the Trojan warriors and the Greek warriors could all die fighting, and then you and I could conquer Troy all by ourselves!”

Great Ajax was still fighting magnificently, but he was exhausted. The Trojans were forcing him back. His left arm ached from holding up his shield. Trojan weapons kept hitting his helmet and shield. He breathed hard, gasping for breath, and sweat streamed down his body. Everywhere he looked, he saw enemy warriors.

Muses, sing to me how fire came to the Greek ships!

Hector battled Great Ajax and cut off the head of his spear. Suddenly, Great Ajax was holding a useless stick, not a deadly weapon. Great Ajax knew that Zeus was now on the side of the Trojans and was bringing them victory.

Great Ajax was forced to retreat — without a spear, he had no other choice.

The Trojans flung fire on a ship, and smoke filled the air.

Achilles saw the smoke. He slapped his thighs hard and ordered Patroclus, “Get ready for battle. At least one ship is on fire. The Trojans must *not* burn all the ships. The Greeks will have no way to escape the enemy. Put on my armor, and I will encourage the Myrmidons to fight well.”

Patroclus put on the armor of Achilles: greaves to protect his legs, breastplate, sword, shield, and helmet. He took two spears, but neither belonged to Achilles. Achilles' spear was so big and heavy that only Achilles could use it well in battle. The Centaur Chiron had given it to Peleus, Achilles' father. Its purpose was to kill warriors.

Patroclus ordered Automedon, the charioteer of Achilles, to yoke Achilles' horses to the chariot. Automedon yoked Roan Beauty and Dapple to the chariot. Bold Dancer served as the trace horse. Achilles won the purebred Bold Dancer when he conquered King Eetion's city.

Achilles gathered the Myrmidons together. They were armed and ready for battle. They were as hungry to fight and kill Trojans as wolves are hungry to hunt in a pack and rip apart their prey and eat the raw meat as their jaws drip with blood.

Achilles had brought fifty ships to Troy. Each ship carried fifty warriors. Five commanders led his troops into battle.

Menesthius led the first battalion. He was the son of the god of the river Spercheus — the river-god had slept with the mortal Polydora. But people called Menesthius the son of a mortal man, Boris, who had given Polydora many gifts and had married her.

Eudorus led the second battalion. Like Menesthius, he was born to an unmarried mother and he had an immortal father. Hermes lusted for Polymela after seeing her dancing and singing to the immortal Artemis, goddess of the hunt. Hermes climbed up to her bedchamber one night and slept with her, and she gave birth to Eudorus, a good leader and warrior. As soon as Eudorus was born, the mortal Echeclus led Polymela to his home and married her.

Pisander led the third battalion. He fought well with spears — better than any Myrmidon except Patroclus and Achilles.

Phoenix, Achilles' old friend and father figure, led the fourth battalion.

Alcimedon led the fifth and final battalion.

After all the battalions were assembled and ready to fight, Achilles commanded them, "Myrmidons, remember the threats you made against the Trojans while I was angry and kept you out of battle! You blamed me. You complained, 'Achilles is merciless. He forces his warriors not to fight. We might as well go home in our ships since Achilles feels such anger!' You warriors denounced my anger and me! You have no need to complain now. You are going back into battle. Fight the Trojans away from the Greek camps and ships!"

The Myrmidon warriors moved closer together in tight fighting formation. They were as close as the stones in a well-built wall built for a house that can resist strong winds. And now Patroclus and Automedon came and stood in front of them, eager to fight in the vanguard — in the front lines!

Achilles went to his shelter and opened a chest that contained war-shirts and cloaks and rugs. It also contained his drinking cup — the one that he used to pour libations of wine to Zeus, the

king of gods and men. He purified his drinking cup with sulphur and then rinsed it with water. He washed his hands and poured wine into his drinking cup.

Achilles poured out the wine as a sacrifice to Zeus and prayed, “You heard my earlier prayer and answered it. You made the Trojans triumphant. Once more, please listen to my prayer and answer it. I will not fight now, but I am sending my best friend, Patroclus, into battle with my Myrmidons. Give him so much courage and fighting ability that Hector will know that Patroclus is a mighty warrior in his own right and does not need me by his side to protect him. Give him *kleos*. Allow him to fight the Trojans away from the Greek camps and ships. But once he has done that, allow him to come back to my camp safely with my armor and with the Myrmidons!”

Zeus heard Achilles’ prayers, but he would grant only one of the two requests. Yes, Patroclus would drive the Trojans away from the Greek camps and ships. No, Patroclus would not safely return to Achilles’ camp.

Achilles stored the cup in his chest and then returned to watch Patroclus and the Myrmidons go into battle.

Patroclus and the Myrmidons swarmed into battle like wasps that have been angered by idiot boys who make travel on a road dangerous by torturing wasps and making them all too eager to fight for their home and for their young.

Patroclus shouted to the Myrmidons, “Be warriors and fight! Win *kleos* for Achilles. Achilles is the greatest Greek warrior, and we are the greatest Greek troops. We must fight well so that Agamemnon realizes how much he needs Achilles and us!”

The Trojans saw Achilles’ distinctive armor and his charioteer, and they thought that Achilles had returned to battle. They thought that Achilles had put aside his anger and was now fighting for the Greeks. The Trojans looked around — what would be a good escape route?

Patroclus made the first kill. He hurled his spear at the Trojans and their allies around the burning ship and hit the shoulder of Pyraechmes, the leader of the Paeonians. Pyraechmes fell, and his Paeonians panicked. Patroclus drove them away from the burning ship. The Greeks battered back the Trojans.

The Greeks were rallying. Zeus sometimes moves a storm cloud away from the top of a mountain, and suddenly the mountain peaks can be seen in the bright air. Much like that, the Greek warriors suddenly could be seen as they battered back the Trojans.

But the Trojans were not being routed. They had been forced away from the ships, but they stood and held their ground. The fierce fighting continued.

Patroclus saw Areilycus moving, and he speared him in the hip. The spear broke bone and came out through his body. Areilycus fell on his face.

Menelaus speared Thoas in the chest over his shield.

The Trojan Amphiclus tried to kill Meges, but Meges speared him at the top of his thickly muscled thigh. The spear tore through the muscles, and Amphiclus died.

Now the sons of Nestor gained glory! Two brothers killed two brothers!

Antilochus speared the Trojan Atymnius in the side and through his body. Atymnius fell at the feet of Antilochus.

Enraged at the death of Atymnius, his brother, the Trojan Maris charged forward and stood over his brother's corpse. Maris wanted to kill Antilochus, but Thrasymedes, Antilochus' brother, stabbed Maris in the shoulder. His spear cut through the tendons and the socket and tore off Maris' entire arm. Atymnius and Maris were the sons of Amisodaros, who had bred the Chimaera, which was a lion in the front, a snake in the rear, and a goat in between. The Chimaera had killed many men, and now Antilochus and Thrasymedes had killed the sons of the man who had bred the Chimaera.

Little Ajax ran at Cleobulus and could have taken him alive but instead plunged his sword in Cleobulus' neck and through his neckbone.

The Greek Peneleos and the Trojan Lycon hurled spears at each other and missed, and so now they fought with swords. Lycon chopped off the horsehair crest of Peneleos' helmet, but Peneleos' sword entered Lycon's neck through the ear. Lycon's head drooped as he fell, but some skin still connected his head to his body.

Meriones ran at the Trojan Acamas as he mounted his chariot. Meriones stabbed him through the right shoulder.

Idomeneus speared Erymas in his mouth. His skull split, his teeth shattered, and blood gushed from his nose and mouth as he died.

Wolves will harry a flock and kill sheep and lambs when a careless shepherd gives them the opportunity. Much like that, the Greek warriors killed Trojans, who were losing their lust for battle.

Great Ajax, newly rearmed with a spear, wanted to kill Hector, but Hector was an experienced warrior who was always alert for spears and arrows. Hector knew that the Greeks had the momentum, but he defended his warriors.

But the Greeks could not be stopped. Their battle cries filled the air. The Greeks were like a storm cloud that Zeus uses to bring cyclones. The Trojans retreated past the Greek wall and into the trench. Hector's horses carried him away as the Trojans struggled in the trench. In the confusion, chariots crashed.

Patroclus charged the Trojans and shouted, "Kill them all!"

The Trojan line broke, dust rose in the air, and the Trojans retreated. Horses galloped away from the Greek camps and ships. Trojans fell from and were run over by their own chariots.

Patroclus charged wherever he saw the greatest number of Trojan warriors. The immortal horses of Achilles kept him safe, and Patroclus sought Hector, but Hector's horses kept him away from Patroclus.

Zeus can grow angry at evil men who lie in assemblies. He sends rains to flood and wash away the land that men have plowed. The floodwaters scream as they rush down to the sea. Much like that, the Trojan horses screamed.

Patroclus drove to the front of the Trojans running to Troy and then he turned, wanting to stop them from reaching Troy. He wanted to slaughter them on the plain between the ships and the city. He killed and killed again, avenging the many Greeks whom the Trojans had killed in the battle at the ships.

The shield of the Trojan Pronous did not protect part of his chest — Patroclus speared him there.

The Trojan Thestor was crouching, terrified in his chariot. He dropped the reins. Patroclus speared him in the right jawbone between his teeth. The spearhead stopped in Thestor's head, and Patroclus lifted him out of the chariot just like a fisherman lifts a fish out of the sea. Patroclus dropped Thoas' body facedown on the battlefield.

Patroclus killed, and he killed quickly. He made corpses out of Amphoterus, Erymas, Epaltes, Tlepolemus, Echius, Pyris, Ipheus, Euippus, and Polymeus. The corpses lay on the earth that nourishes us all.

Sarpedon saw Patroclus killing so many warriors. He shouted to his Lycian warriors, "Where is your joy of war? Why are you running away? Attack! I will fight this warrior myself. We have seen him clearly enough that we know he is not Achilles although he is wearing Achilles' armor. I will find out who this warrior is — he is routing our troops!"

Sarpedon and Patroclus jumped from their chariots and charged each other and shouted war cries. They were like two vultures that swoop and attack each other.

Zeus watched from Mount Olympus and pitied his son, Sarpedon, whose fate had arrived. Zeus said to Hera, his wife, "Sarpedon is the mortal son I love the most. He is fated now to die at the hands of Patroclus. I don't know what to do. Should I pick him up and put him — alive — in his home country of Lycia? Or should I allow Patroclus to kill him, as is fated?"

Hera protested, "Sarpedon is a mortal man, and his fate was set when he was born. He is fated to die here — now. Do you wish to keep a mortal man from dying? If you save Sarpedon, the other gods and goddesses will want to save their sons. Many warriors battling in front of Troy have an immortal god or goddess for a parent. Do you think the result will be good?"

"I have a better idea. Allow Sarpedon to die as fated. Allow Patroclus to kill your son. After Sarpedon has died, send the immortals Death and Sleep to pick his corpse up and carry it to

Lycia, where he can be properly buried so his *psyche* can enter the Land of the Dead. That is an honor that the dead deserve.”

Zeus agreed to do as Hera wished, but he cried tears — not of water, but of blood — that wet the ground.

Patroclus and Sarpedon came close to each other, and Patroclus hurled his spear. He missed Sarpedon, but he killed Thrasymedes, Sarpedon’s charioteer. His spear spilled Thrasymedes’ intestines.

Sarpedon hurled his spear, missing Patroclus but hitting Bold Dancer, Achilles’ mortal trace horse, in the shoulder. The horse fell, screaming, and died. Achilles’ two immortal horses reared. Automedon quickly drew his sword and cut the dead horse free, and then he was able to control the chariot and two immortal horses again.

Sarpedon hurled his second spear, but it harmlessly passed over Patroclus’ left shoulder.

Patroclus then hurled his second spear and struck Sarpedon between the midriff and the heart. Sarpedon fell the way that an oak or an elm falls that shipwrights have cut for lumber. Sarpedon fell in front of his chariot and horses. He clawed the ground and bellowed like a bull that a lion is killing. As Sarpedon died, he shouted, “Glaucus, be a leader and a warrior. Find the Lycians and protect my body. Get possession of it so that I may receive a proper funeral and my *psyche* can enter the Land of the Dead. Don’t let the Greeks strip my armor. You will be ashamed whenever you remember that. Fight to get my corpse!”

Patroclus put one of his feet on Sarpedon’s corpse and pulled out his spear. As he pulled out his spear, he pulled out Sarpedon’s inner organs. Sarpedon’s last breath and his inner organs exited his body together. The Myrmidons held on to Sarpedon’s horses that were now straining to run away.

Glaucus had heard Sarpedon’s last request, but Glaucus was wounded — Teucer had shot Glaucus’ right arm with an arrow when Glaucus was fighting at the Greek wall.

Glaucus prayed, “Hear me, Apollo. Wherever you are, you can hear a prayer to you, especially one that comes from a man who is in pain. My right arm has an ugly wound. My entire arm throbs with pain. The blood keeps running, and I can’t use my shoulder or arm. I can’t pick up and use a spear. I can’t even hold a spear steady. I can’t fight, and the Lycians’ best warrior — Sarpedon — is dead. Sarpedon was Zeus’ son, and Zeus did not keep him alive!

“Help me, Apollo. Heal my wound. Stop the pain. Make me able to fight again. I want to rally the Lycians and get possession of the corpse of Sarpedon.”

Apollo heard and answered Glaucus’ prayer. The pain stopped. The blood clotted. Glaucus could use his arm and shoulder. He was ready to go to battle. He was grateful that Apollo had quickly answered his prayer.

Glaucus gathered the Lycians together, and then he ran for the Trojan lines and Hector. He found Polydamas, Agenor, Aeneas, and Hector, and he said, “Hector, have you forgotten your allies? We have come to Troy to fight for you far from our homes. We bleed and die here. But we need you to fight, too. Sarpedon is dead. I was close enough to recognize the warrior who killed him. He was Patroclus, who is wearing Achilles’ armor. Fight to get Sarpedon’s corpse! Don’t let the Greeks strip his armor! Don’t let the Greeks mutilate his corpse! The Myrmidons would gladly do that to get revenge for all the Greek warriors we killed as we attacked their ships!”

The Trojans grieved for Sarpedon, who had been a formidable warrior for their city. Hector drove them at the Greeks, and Patroclus rallied his troops. He yelled, “Great Ajax! Little Ajax! Fight! Sarpedon is dead — he was the first to tear down part of our defensive wall. Let’s get his corpse and tear off his armor! And let’s kill anyone who tries to stop us!”

Trojans and Greeks now fought around the body of Sarpedon. They shouted cries of war, and Zeus spread darkness around the corpse of his son Sarpedon to make the fighting more difficult.

The Trojans killed the first warrior in the battle over Sarpedon’s body. The Myrmidon Epigeus had ruled a city, but he killed a kinsman and fled for his life. He went to Peleus and Thetis and begged for help. They sent him to the Trojan War with Achilles. As Epigeus grabbed Sarpedon’s body, Hector hit him with a rock and split his skull in his helmet.

Grieving for Epigeus, Patroclus drove straight at the enemy army like a hawk diving at crows and starlings. Patroclus threw a rock and hit Sthenelaus in the neck, snapping the tendons that hold the head up.

Hector and the Trojans retreated a short distance — the distance of a spear toss in a game of strength or in battle. Glaucus was the first to turn back to fight the Greeks. Bathycles was about to catch up to Glaucus when Glaucus suddenly turned and speared him in the chest. A brave Greek died. Bad news for the Greeks. Good news for the Trojans.

Trojans and Greeks swarmed over Sarpedon’s body.

Meriones speared Laogonus under his jaw and ear. Laogonus’ *psyche* left his corpse.

Aeneas hurled his spear at Meriones, but Meriones saw the spear and ducked. Aeneas’ spear stuck in the ground and quivered. Aeneas shouted, “Meriones, you should be dead! I barely missed you!”

Meriones replied, “Aeneas, you are a good warrior, but you can’t kill everyone you would like to kill. Like me, you are mortal. If I were to spear you in the intestines, I would win *kleos* and you would earn a trip to the Land of the Dead.”

Patroclus said to Meriones, “Why waste time with threats? They won’t force the Trojans away from Sarpedon’s body. The only thing that will do that is a fight with many deaths. Don’t talk! Fight!”

The sound of weapons hitting shields and bodies was as loud as the sound of men cutting trees on a mountain. The woodsmen's axes can be heard far away, and so could the warriors' swords and spears.

Fallen weapons, blood, and dust hid Sarpedon's body. Not even a scout with sharp eyes could see him clearly. But the warriors kept fighting over the corpse — they were like flies buzzing over a milk-filled bucket.

Zeus kept watching the battle over the corpse of his son. He was thinking of the best way for Patroclus to meet his fate. He would die, yes, but how? Should he die in the battle over the corpse of Sarpedon? Should Hector kill Patroclus now and strip Achilles' armor off Patroclus' body? Or should Patroclus kill and kill again and earn more *kleos*?

Zeus decided to allow Patroclus to earn more *kleos*. Patroclus would drive Hector and the other Trojans back to Troy. Zeus created fear in Hector, and Hector jumped in his chariot and shouted, "Trojans, retreat!" Hector knew that Zeus was now favoring Patroclus and the Greeks.

With Zeus' aid, the Greeks routed the Trojans and the Lycians. Sarpedon, the Lycians' leader, was dead, and they were now afraid. Now the Greeks stripped the armor off Sarpedon's body. Patroclus gave it to aides to take to the ships.

Zeus ordered Apollo, "Get the corpse of my son, Sarpedon, and wipe the blood off him. Take him away from the battle. Bathe his corpse in a river, anoint him with oil, and dress him in fine robes. Then give Sarpedon's body to the immortals Sleep and Death to take home to Lycia. There his corpse will receive a proper funeral. This is an honor that the living owe the dead."

Apollo obeyed. He went to the battlefield and picked up Sarpedon's body. He wiped off the blood, bathed Sarpedon in a river, and dressed him in fine clothing. He then handed over the corpse to the immortals Sleep and Death, who took the corpse to Lycia.

Patroclus kept fighting. He ignored Achilles' order to return to the camp after he had forced the Trojans away from the ships. Zeus put the urge to fight in Patroclus.

Patroclus killed and killed again and won great *kleos*. He killed Adrestus, Autonomous, Echeclus, Perimus, Epistor, Melanippus, Elasmus, Mulius, and Pylartes. The other Trojans fled.

Patroclus and the Greeks might have conquered Troy, but Apollo himself stood on the city's ramparts and fought off their attack. Three times Patroclus hurled himself against the city ramparts, and three times Apollo forced him back. The fourth time Patroclus began to hurl himself at Troy, Apollo shouted, "Patroclus, stop! Troy is not fated to fall before you! And it is not fated to fall before Achilles!"

Patroclus then backed away, respecting the god.

Hector thought about what he should do. Should he continue to fight? Should he call his army to go back inside the walls of Troy? Apollo assumed the form of the mortal Asius and said,

“Hector, keep fighting out here! You are a mighty warrior. Challenge Patroclus. Apollo may help you to kill him!”

Hector ordered his charioteer, “Cebriones, let’s go where the fighting is fiercest!”

Hector sought Patroclus, the most devastating Greek warrior now on the battlefield. Patroclus saw Hector, got off his chariot, and seized and hurled a rock. He threw it hard, and he hit Hector’s charioteer. The rock hit Cebriones in between his eyes and crushed his skull. Cebriones’ eyes hit the ground before the rest of his body did.

Patroclus taunted the corpse, “This man has great ability as a tumbler! He knows how to dive! He would do well at diving for oysters in the sea!”

Patroclus ran to the corpse of Cebriones as Hector leapt from his chariot and rushed toward Patroclus. The two warriors fought over the corpse the way that lions fight over a freshly killed stag. Hector grabbed the corpse’s head, and Patroclus grabbed one of the corpse’s feet. They fought to gain possession of the corpse.

The East and South winds sometimes roar in a wooded mountain valley, and the branches of trees thrash against each other. Trees fall with a crash. Greeks and Trojans crashed against each other. Each side fought to defeat the other side; no warrior thought of fleeing. Around the corpse of Cebriones, arrows, spears, and rocks flew. Weapons struck shields. Cebriones lay dead; he was no longer a master horseman.

The fighting continued until and past noon, and then the Greeks mounted a fiercer offensive. They dragged the corpse of Cebriones away from the Trojans and stripped its armor.

Patroclus charged the Trojans three times, and each time he charged he killed nine warriors.

But the fourth time Patroclus charged, he met his fate.

Apollo came up behind Patroclus and hit him with the force of a god. Patroclus was stunned. Apollo knocked off Patroclus’ helmet, broke his spear, knocked his shield to the ground, and ripped off his breastplate. Patroclus was vulnerable and exposed to the enemy warriors.

A young warrior named Euphorbus speared Patroclus in the back in between the shoulder blades. Although Euphorbus was young, he was a good warrior. This was his first battle in which chariots were used, and he had killed twenty charioteers.

Euphorbus wounded Patroclus, but he did not kill him. He pulled his spear out of Patroclus’ body and ran back to the Trojan troops. Euphorbus would not finish off Patroclus, vulnerable as he was.

Hector saw the wounded Patroclus trying to stagger back to the Greek troops. Hector rushed forward and speared him in the intestines and the spear went through his body and out his back. Patroclus fell. A lion and a boar sometimes fight. The boar is fierce, but the lion kills him as the boar struggles to breathe. So Hector killed Patroclus.

Hector said, “Patroclus, you thought that you could conquer Troy. You thought that you could make slaves of the Trojan women and drag them to your ships and take them to Greece. Fool! The Trojans and I are fighting so that the Trojan women can continue to be free. I fight for them, but as for you, I will allow the vultures to eat your corpse!

“Achilles must have given you this order: ‘Don’t return to my camp until after you have killed Hector.’ You tried to obey the order, but you failed.”

Struggling to breathe, Patroclus replied, “Victory is yours — today. You have defeated me, but Zeus and Apollo are the ones who killed me. Without the help of the gods, you and nineteen other Hectors would have all died at the end of my spear. Apollo and my fate killed me. The mortal Euphorbus helped. You are only the third of those who killed me, and you simply finished me off after I was already disarmed and wounded. I am a dying man, and I have the gift of prophecy. You do not have much longer to live. Death and your fate are swiftly coming for you. I see that you will die at the end of the spear of a great warrior — Achilles!”

Patroclus died, and his *psyche*, mourning the loss of life, went to the Land of the Dead.

Hector said, “Who can tell what the future will bring? Why are you trying to prophesy? Achilles may very well go down to the Land of the Dead before I do. Achilles may die at the end of my spear!”

Hector put his foot on Patroclus’ chest and pulled out his spear. He then ran after the charioteer Automedon and tried to kill him, but Achilles’ immortal horses kept Automedon out of danger and away from death.

Chapter 17: The Fight Over Patroclus' Corpse (Iliad)

Red-haired Menelaus saw that the Trojans had slain Patroclus. He ran to the corpse and stood over it to protect it like a mother cow protects her first-born calf. Menelaus stood over the corpse with his spear and his shield.

Euphorbus wanted the fruits of his kill, so he challenged Menelaus. Close to the corpse, he boasted to Menelaus, "I was the first Trojan to wound Patroclus. I speared him. Let me have the corpse to further my *kleos*. If not, I will kill you, also."

War-seasoned Menelaus replied, "Zeus, listen to this arrogant youngster! Listen to his boasts! The leopard, the lion, and the wild boar are all proud, but none is as proud as the sons of Panthous: Euphorbus and Hyperenor. Earlier, Hyperenor challenged me. He insulted me and said that I was the weakest of all the Greek warriors. I sent him home, but he did not go home alive. His homecoming brought no joy to his wife and his parents. And now you challenge me! Go back to the other Trojan troops. Stay safe. Challenge me, and I will give you a bloody death. I will give you a bloody education about whom you ought not to challenge."

Euphorbus did not retreat to the Trojan troops. He replied, "Menelaus, now you will pay for the life of my brother whom you killed. You boast about making his wife a widow. You boast about bringing grief to his and my parents. I can lessen their grief by bringing them gifts: your bloody head and your bloody armor. I will give them to my parents: Panthous and Phrontis. But let's stop talking. It's time to fight and see who will kill the other."

Euphorbus stabbed Menelaus' shield. The shield was stronger and bent the point of Euphorbus' weapon. Euphorbus retreated, and Menelaus pursued him and speared him in the throat. Menelaus put all his strength into the thrust of his spear. The spear went through Euphorbus' soft neck, and Euphorbus fell. He was a young man, and he paid attention to his hair, which he braided like the hair of the Graces. He decorated his hair with gold and silver clips. But his hair and clips were bloody now.

A farmer will tend a young olive tree on a hilltop. The farmer waters it carefully, and the young olive tree bursts into bloom. But a gale wind arises and rips it out of the earth, and it lies on the ground, fallen and dead. Euphorbus was like that young olive tree.

Menelaus had killed him, and now Menelaus stripped him of his armor.

Menelaus was like a powerful and dangerous mountain lion that sees a herd and picks out the best heifer. The mountain lion bites the heifer's neck and kills it and then begins eating the heifer. The dogs and shepherds make a lot of noise, but they are too afraid to attack the mountain lion.

The Trojans were afraid to challenge Menelaus as he stripped the armor from Euphorbus' corpse.

Apollo took the shape of the Trojan Mentor and challenged Hector, who was trying to capture Achilles' immortal horses. Disguised as a mortal man, Apollo said to Hector, "You have better things to do than chase Achilles' immortal horses. Only Achilles, whose mother is immortal, can control them. Menelaus is protecting Patroclus' corpse. He has killed Euphorbus!"

Hector surveyed the battlefield and saw Menelaus stripping the armor off Euphorbus' corpse, which was still spurting blood. Hector charged Menelaus and filled the air with a war cry. Menelaus heard Hector and said to himself, "What is the best thing for me to do? If I leave Euphorbus' armor and Patroclus' corpse, won't I be criticized? After all, Patroclus was fighting to help redeem the honor that Paris stole from me. But am I able to fight Hector and his Trojans by myself? They can circle me and kill me. I am one warrior against many. Be careful. Hector is having a day of glory; Zeus is helping him. If Zeus is helping Hector, the Greek warriors will forgive me for retreating.

"I need help to fight Hector. If I can find Great Ajax, he and I together could fight Hector and his Trojans. Then we could bring Patroclus' corpse back to Achilles' camp. This is a bad situation, and this course of action is the best that we can do in it."

Hector and the Trojans kept charging toward Menelaus, and he retreated. He left behind Patroclus' corpse, but he kept turning to look back to be ready to fight if necessary. He was like a lion that the dogs and farmhands force away from the farm. The lion does not want to leave, but the dogs and farmhands force it to.

Menelaus reached the other Greeks and looked for Great Ajax, who was fighting on the left flank. Great Ajax was trying to convince the other Greek warriors to fight fiercely — Apollo had made them afraid. Menelaus ran to him and said, "Friend, help me. Patroclus is dead. Help me to recover his body so that we may bring it to Achilles. Hector is now stripping Achilles' armor from Patroclus' body so we cannot bring the armor back to Achilles."

Great Ajax went with Menelaus. Hector was eager to chop off Patroclus' head and then drag the rest of the corpse to Troy to feed the dogs and birds. But Great Ajax charged him, and Hector threw Achilles' armor to aides to take back to Troy. Hector retreated, and Great Ajax guarded Patroclus' corpse. He was like a lion guarding its cubs when hunters see them. Menelaus stood beside Great Ajax.

Glauco, who was now the leader of the troops from Lydia, said to Hector, "Where is your fighting fury? You need to start planning how to save Troy without the help of the Lycians. Why should we fight for you if you are going to allow the Greeks to let dogs and birds eat Sarpedon's body? Sarpedon fought fiercely for Troy when he was alive. Now you are unwilling to fight for him and save his body from dogs and birds. If I can get the Lycians to obey my orders, we will leave Troy and return to Lycia. If only you could fight well enough to get Patroclus' corpse and drag it to Troy, we could trade it for Sarpedon's armor and corpse."

Glaucus did not know that Apollo had taken Sarpedon's body to Lycia. He thought that the Greeks had taken Sarpedon's armor and body back to the Greek ships.

Glaucus continued, "Patroclus was a great warrior and Achilles' great friend. The Greeks will definitely trade to get his body back. But you are afraid to fight Great Ajax. He is a better, stronger, fiercer warrior than you!"

Hector replied, "Glaucus, you are a good man and a good warrior, but you are speaking nonsense. I thought that you were more intelligent. I am not afraid to fight Great Ajax. But Zeus is more powerful than any mortal. Zeus can turn a brave man into a coward. Zeus can also make a brave man even braver. He both gives and takes away *kleos*. Watch me fight! See if I am a coward or if I can stop a Greek from trying to protect Patroclus' corpse."

Hector shouted to the Trojans, "Be ready to fight. I am going to put on the armor of Achilles — armor that I stripped from Patroclus' corpse!"

He ran after the aides who were taking Achilles' armor to Troy. Away from the fighting, Hector took off his own armor and put on Achilles' armor. When Achilles' father grew old, he gave this armor to Achilles, but Achilles would not grow old.

Zeus saw Hector putting on Achilles' armor. He knew that Hector would soon die. Zeus said, "Poor Hector. You are not thinking of dying, but death is quickly coming for you. The armor you are putting on is that of a great warrior — a great warrior whose kind and gentle and strong friend you killed. You stripped Achilles' armor from Achilles' friend. I will give you strength and fierceness in battle to recompense you for your death that is soon to come. You will never return from battle alive, Hector. You will never give Achilles' armor to your loving wife, Andromache."

Zeus bowed his head. He changed Achilles' armor so that it fitted Hector well. Ares filled Hector with fighting fury. Hector motivated his men to fight well: Mesthles, Glaucus, Medon, Thersilochus, Asteropaeus, Disenor, Hippothous, Phorcys, Chromius, and the prophet Ennomus, who knew how to interpret bird-signs. Hector told them, "Listen to me, all of you allies. When I called on you to come to Troy and fight, it was not for show. I needed and need you to protect Trojan women and children. That is what I want. I tax the Trojans to give you gifts and food so that you will fight fiercely. So let us now fight the Greeks. Let us feel the joy of war. If anyone can force back Great Ajax and drag the dead Patroclus to our chariots to haul back to Troy, that warrior will get half of the spoils and he will get *kleos* that will be the equal of my own."

This reward was worth fighting for. The Trojans and Trojan allies attacked Great Ajax, hoping to get the body of Patroclus and drag it to Troy, but their hope was foolish. Great Ajax was a mighty warrior, and he had killed many men around the corpse of Patroclus. Still, Great Ajax said to Menelaus, "We are outnumbered. Theirs is a mighty force. I don't think that we can stay here, alone. I am afraid that Patroclus' corpse will feed dogs and birds inside the walls of Troy, and I am

afraid that you and I will die here. Hector and his Trojans are covering the battlefield. Shout for help. I hope that someone will hear you.”

Menelaus was known as the lord of the war cry. He shouted, “All Greek captains who fight for Agamemnon and me and drink our wine and command your own men, help us. I can’t see where you are because of the dust kicked up by so many warriors, but come and save Patroclus’ corpse. Don’t let the Trojans feed it to the dogs and birds!”

Little Ajax heard him and ran to help. He arrived first, followed by Idomeneus and Idomeneus’ second-in-command, Meriones. More captains followed them, but only the gods can name them all.

Hector charged the Greeks the way that surf charges into the mouth of a swollen river. The surf booms as it crashes against land. The Trojans charged the Greeks, but the Greeks were ready to fight them. They stood ready to fight in a circle around Patroclus’ body holding their shields in front of them. Zeus created a heavy fog to help hide Patroclus’ corpse. Zeus had not hated Patroclus when the mortal was alive, and Zeus did not want Trojan dogs to eat Patroclus’ corpse.

The Trojans forced the Greeks to retreat and leave Patroclus’ corpse behind although they did not kill any Greeks. Instead, they tried to drag away Patroclus’ corpse. Great Ajax, the best warrior of the Greeks except for Achilles, led the Greeks as they attacked the Trojans. He fought in front like a wild boar that charges dogs and hunters and makes them run and pursues them. Now Great Ajax charged the Trojans and forced them to scatter although they wanted to drag Patroclus’ body back to Troy.

The Trojan Hippothous had tied a shield strap around Patroclus’ ankle. He was dragging the corpse away, hoping to win *kleos* and praise from Hector. Great Ajax charged Hippothous and speared him through his helmet, cracking the horsehair crest. Hippothous’ brain burst out of his skull as he dropped Patroclus’ foot. Hippothous’ body fell onto Patroclus’ body, face-to-face. Hippothous died far from Larissa, his home. The spear of Great Ajax prevented Hippothous from repaying his parents who had reared him. He died too young.

Hector hurled his spear at Great Ajax, but he dodged death and the spear hit Schedius, who was from Phocis. Hector’s spear went through his collarbone and came out through his shoulder. He fell, and his armor rattled.

Great Ajax stabbed Phorcys, who was trying to protect the corpse of Hippothous. Great Ajax ripped open Phorcys’ belly and his intestines fell out. Phorcys fell and clawed at the ground. The Trojans backed away, and the Greeks dragged away the corpses of Hippothous and Phorcys and stripped off their armor.

The Trojan warriors were on the verge of running back to Troy, overcome by fear, and the Greeks would have seized great *kleos* because of their own great merit despite the will of Zeus. But Apollo took the form of the Trojan Periphas, the son of a herald to Aeneas’ father. Disguised

as a mortal, Apollo spurred Aeneas to fight fiercely: “Aeneas, no one can save himself when the gods are against him. But here and now Zeus is *for* you and the Trojans. Zeus wants the Trojans to triumph over the Greeks. So why are you and the other Trojans so afraid and so unwilling to fight?”

Aeneas looked at the god and recognized him, and then Aeneas shouted to the Trojans, “Hector! Trojan captains! Don’t retreat to Troy! A god just told me that Zeus wants us to fight and win. So charge the Greeks! Don’t let them take Patroclus’ corpse back to the ships! Not without a fight!”

Aeneas went to the front of the Trojan line and the Trojans turned around and faced the Greeks. Aeneas speared Leocritus all the way through his body. Leocritus’ friend Lycomedes grieved but hurled his spear and buried it in the liver of the Trojan ally Apisaon, the best of the warriors from Paeonia, except for Asteropaeus.

Asteropaeus wanted revenge, but the Greeks maintained a good defensive formation, protecting themselves with their shields, surrounding Patroclus’ corpse, and defending it with their spears.

Great Ajax gave the Greeks orders: “Protect the corpse! Nobody try to be a hero! Stay in defensive formation, and don’t jump in front of the line to try to make a kill. Stand shoulder to shoulder, and protect the corpse of Patroclus.”

Warriors on both sides inflicted mortal wounds, and blood covered the ground. But the Trojans suffered many more deaths than the Greeks, who fought in tight formation. Greek warriors defended Greek warriors.

The battle around Patroclus was difficult to see because of the haze of dust kicked up by warriors and fog sent by Zeus, but other parts of the battlefield were clear, lit well by bright sunlight on a cloudless day. Some warriors fought from a distance, shooting arrows and dodging arrows. Others fought face-to-face and suffered as warriors hacked at opposing warriors.

Fighting in the front lines on one side of the battle, the Greeks Antilochus and Thrasymedes did not know that Patroclus had died. They thought that he was still alive and fighting in the front lines although Nestor had ordered them to keep watch and note who had died and whether any Greeks were retreating.

The fighting and the dying continued all day. The work of war did not stop.

Around the corpse of Patroclus, warriors sweated. In the fight to possess Patroclus’ body, the warriors engaged in a tug of war. A tanner sometimes gives a huge bull’s hide to his laborers, and they stretch it, pulling it as hard as they can. Much like that, Greeks and Trojans grabbed Patroclus’ body and pulled. The Trojans hoped to bring the corpse to Troy. The Greeks hoped to bring the corpse to their ships and to Achilles. Ares, god of war, delighted in the struggle and the slaughter.

Achilles still did not know that the Trojans had killed Patroclus, whose death had occurred far from the ships and by the walls of Troy. Achilles believed that Patroclus was still alive and would return soon. Achilles thought, *Would Patroclus try to conquer Troy without my help? No.*

Achilles' mother, the goddess Thetis, had told him many things, but she had never told him directly that Patroclus would die without him nearby to protect him and keep him alive.

The fight continued over Patroclus' body, and a Greek shouted, "We can't return to our ships without Patroclus' body! We will lose *kleos*! It is better to die here and now than to let the Trojans take his corpse to Troy!" And a Trojan shouted, "Keep fighting even if you are fated to die beside the corpse of Patroclus!"

So they fought and kept fighting, but away from the fighting Achilles' immortal horses wept. Achilles' charioteer tried to get the horses to return to the ships, but they resisted. Sometimes, he whipped them. Sometimes, he tried to coax them with winning words. But they stayed and continued to mourn. Their heads hung low like the depictions of horses on a gravemarker. Achilles' immortal horses wept, grieving for the death of Patroclus and the coming death of Achilles.

Zeus saw the immortal horses, and he pitied them. He said, "Why did we give you to a mortal: Achilles' father, Peleus? He will die, but you horses are immortal and will never grow older or die. Did we want you to suffer? Did we want you to learn about the pain of mortals? Mortals suffer more than any other being on the earth. Almost all animals are mortal, but they do not know that they are mortal and do not think about their coming deaths. Gods are immortal and know that they will never die. Only human beings are mortal and know that they will die and think about their coming deaths. This makes mortals wretched. However, I will never allow Hector to capture you immortal horses and use you to pull his chariot. He has Achilles' armor. That is enough. Hector can boast now, but he will die soon. But I will give you immortal horses strength so that you can save the life of Automedon and take him back to the ships. I am giving the Trojans a day of glory. They will kill and kill again until they drive the Greeks back to their ships."

Odysseus was still wounded and unable to fight. Watching the battle from the ships, he thought, *The gods are born and they grow older until they reach a certain age and then they stop aging. Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades are all mature men and they will never grow older. Apollo and Hermes are young men, and they will never grow older. Human beings can grow old. Human beings are mortal, and they can die at a young age or at an old age, but they will definitely die. Is this a bad thing? Not necessarily. Mortality makes our decisions important. We have only a very limited amount of time to live. Will we spend it wisely or foolishly? A god can waste thousands of years on trivial pursuits and still have eternity to do something important. Human beings can't. And who is a hero? A hero is someone who risks his life to save other people. Great Ajax is a hero. He fought*

magnificently to keep the Trojans from setting fire to our ships. He saved himself, true, but he saved the rest of us, too. Only a mortal can be a hero. A god in a good mood may go into a burning house and save someone, but the god is risking little. The god can't die. If the god is injured — or wounded in battle — the god will quickly heal. And saving someone will take only a little of the eternity of time that lies before the god. A mortal who tries to rescue someone from a burning building is risking everything: life. Mortality need not be a curse; mortality is what makes heroism possible.

Zeus gave Achilles' immortal horses strength, and they galloped, taking Automedon with them. Automedon did his best to control the horses. They came close to the Trojans, but no spearman stood in the chariot, so no one could kill a Trojan.

Alcimedon shouted, "Automedon, what are you doing? These are poor battle tactics! You have no spearman! Patroclus is dead, and Hector is wearing Achilles' armor that Patroclus wore to battle!"

Automedon replied, "Alcimedon, you are a good charioteer. You are better at controlling these horses than anyone except Achilles and Patroclus. You take over and drive this team. I'll fight on foot."

Alcimedon climbed aboard the chariot, and Automedon jumped to the ground. Hector saw them and said to Aeneas, "I see Achilles' team. They have drivers who cannot control them. You and I can capture them, if you work with me. These two Greeks can't stand up to us."

Hector and Aeneas, and their fellow Trojans Chromius and Aretus, moved to capture the horses and to kill Automedon and Alcimedon. But Automedon was alert. He shouted, "Alcimedon, keep the horses close to me. Hector hopes to kill both of us and take the horses. He is so implacable that he will do that or die in the attempt."

Then Automedon called for help: "Great Ajax! Little Ajax! Menelaus! Let other warriors defend Patroclus' body. Because of you three, we Greeks are still alive. Here come Aeneas and Hector — they are Troy's best warriors! They are better warriors than I, but the gods may bless me as I hurl my spear."

Automedon hurled his spear and hit Aretus' shield. The shield broke, and the spear rammed through Aretus' shield and war-belt and stuck in his stomach. A farmhand sometimes kills a bull for butchering. He swings an ax and hits the bull behind its horns. The bull rears up and then falls. Much like that, Aretus reared up and then fell on his back. The spear quivered in his intestines.

Hector hurled his spear at Automedon, who saw it coming and dodged death. Now Hector and Automedon would have fought with swords, but Great Ajax and Little Ajax arrived in answer to Automedon's call for help, and the Trojans backed away. Hector, Aeneas, and Chromius left the dead Aretus behind. Automedon started to strip off Aretus' armor, shouting,

“I have made the *psyche* of Patroclus feel a little better although this dead warrior is only half the man that Patroclus was.”

Automedon then climbed into Achilles’ chariot. His hands and feet were dripping blood just like the paws of a lion that has killed and fed on a bull.

The fight for Patroclus’ body intensified. Zeus sent Athena to the battlefield to encourage the Greeks. He wanted the Greeks to rally — briefly — on the day of Hector’s triumph. Zeus sometimes sends a lurid rainbow as an omen to warn humans of approaching war or a blizzard that will put an end to all kinds of work. Iris, whose mode of transportation is the rainbow, sometimes brings news of war and other tragedies. Now Athena came wrapped in a lurid cloud to encourage the Greeks to kill and kill again. Lurid clouds sometimes forecast bad weather.

The first Greek she encouraged was Menelaus. She assumed the form of Phoenix and said to him, “You will be ashamed if the Greeks succeed in taking the corpse of Patroclus to Troy and allow the dogs and birds to eat it, so fight fiercely and encourage your men to fight fiercely!”

Menelaus replied, “Phoenix, I pray to Athena that she will give me strength and courage to defend Patroclus’ body. Hector is fierce and never stops stabbing with his spear. He never stops killing. Zeus is giving him *kleos* today.”

Menelaus had prayed to Athena instead of any of the other gods — she was thrilled. She answered his prayer and gave him strength and courage. She also gave him persistence. A horsefly is persistent. It wants human blood. Each time the man brushes the horsefly away, back again it comes. It wants to feed on human blood.

Standing over the corpse of Patroclus, Menelaus hurled his spear and hit Podes, cutting his war-belt and ripping his skin and body. Podes fell. He had been a drinking buddy to Hector, and he had been courteous and wealthy.

Apollo assumed the form of the Trojan ally Phaenops, a man whom Hector valued most of his foreign allies. The disguised Apollo said, “Hector, why are you afraid of Menelaus? He has not been a great warrior before today, but now you are holding off from attacking him although he has killed your friend Podes.”

Hector felt grief and rushed to fight Menelaus, and at that moment Zeus hurled a thunderbolt from Mount Ida, and he shook his storm-shield that could cause any army to panic. Zeus was now giving the Trojans triumph and routing the Greeks.

Peneleos was the first Greek to be hurt. Polydamas speared his shoulder and hit bone.

Hector speared Leitus in the wrist. No longer could he fight the Trojans with spears. Leitus ran for the ships.

Hector rushed at Idomeneus, but Idomeneus speared him. He hit Hector’s breastplate, but his spear broke. The Trojans shouted, first in horror and then in relief. Hector hurled his spear at Idomeneus and missed him but hit Coeranus, the charioteer and aide of Meriones. Idomeneus

was fighting on foot that day, but Coeranus saved Idomeneus' life by driving the chariot up to him. Although Coeranus saved Idomeneus' life, he lost his own life. Hector's spear came up under Coeranus' jaw. His teeth fell from his mouth, and his tongue was cut in two. He fell to the ground, taking the reins with him.

Meriones grabbed the reins and said to Idomeneus, "Whip the horses and drive to the ships. The Greeks will not be victorious today." Idomeneus obeyed.

Great Ajax and Menelaus saw that the Trojans were winning. In frustration, Great Ajax said, "Anyone can see that Zeus favors the Trojans now. All Trojan weapons hit a Greek target, even when weak warriors hurl them. Our spears hit only ground. They are harmless to Trojans. What is the best thing we can now do? How can we save our own lives and still carry Patroclus' body back to the ships? Right now, Hector is invincible. We cannot stop him. We need to get word to Achilles that Patroclus is dead. I am sure that he does not know. But I can't see anyone we can send to Achilles. This dust and fog make it impossible to see! Zeus, at least make it so that we can see! If you are going to kill us, at least do it in the clear sunlight!"

Zeus heard and granted Great Ajax' prayer. The dust and fog dissipated, and the sun shone. Great Ajax could see.

He said to Menelaus, "Look for Antilochus, Nestor's son. He is a swift runner. If he is still alive, he is the one to carry the bad news to Achilles, to tell Achilles that his great friend Patroclus is dead."

Menelaus was exhausted but obeyed. A lion grows exhausted from fighting the dogs and men who guard sheep and cattle. The lion craves meat, but the dogs and men fight him all night long. The lion charges and charges again, but the men and dogs fight him and drive him away from the sheep and cattle each time. Finally, at dawn, the lion leaves, exhausted and hungry.

Menelaus left Patroclus' body, reluctantly. He was afraid that the Trojans would capture the corpse. He said to Great Ajax, Little Ajax, and Meriones, "Remember how gentle and kind Patroclus was when he was alive. Protect his corpse, now that he is dead."

Menelaus then left and searched for Antilochus, looking to the left and to the right like a sharp-eyed eagle that flies high, looks for and sees a rabbit, and swoops down and tears its life away. Menelaus hoped that Antilochus was still alive. Fortunately, he quickly saw him on the left flank. Menelaus called to him, "Antilochus, today victory goes to Troy. They have killed Patroclus. Run to Achilles and tell him the horrible news: Patroclus is dead. Hector killed him. If Achilles acts quickly, he may be able to help us to bring Patroclus' body — stripped of armor as it is — back to the ships."

Antilochus hated the message that he had to bring to Achilles: His best friend was dead. He gave his armor to his aide Laodocus, and then he ran as fast as he could to Achilles' camp. Antilochus wept as he ran.

Menelaus put Thrasymedes in charge of the men whom Antilochus had commanded, and then he ran to defend the corpse of Patroclus, standing alongside Great Ajax, Little Ajax, and Meriones. He told the two Ajaxes, “Antilochus is taking the news of Patroclus’ death to Achilles. But how can Achilles help us? He has no armor! He is a big, strong, powerful man, and ordinary armor will not fit him. He will be furious at Hector, but how can he fight him? Achilles is not invulnerable, although he does have a goddess for his mother. So what can we do to take Patroclus’ body back to the ships?”

Great Ajax said, “You and Meriones grab hold of the body and carry it. Little Ajax and I will protect you and fight Hector and the Trojans. We two Ajaxes are no strangers to war, no strangers to protecting others.”

Menelaus and Meriones lifted Patroclus’ body onto their shoulders. The Trojans and their allies closed in to attack. The Trojans were like dogs that attack a wounded boar before the hunters can reach it. The hounds want to rip apart the boar, but it turns back and charges the pack of hounds. They are afraid, and they scatter out of the boar’s path. The Trojans charged them, and Great Ajax and Little Ajax turned toward them, and the Trojans were afraid.

They made their way to the ships as the Trojans pursued them like a flash fire racing its way to a city, catching houses on fire as winds whip it to frenzy. Much like that, the Trojans bore down on the Greeks. Menelaus and Meriones worked like mules pulling heavy loads of timber as they worked to get Patroclus’ body to the ships.

The two Ajaxes fought off the Trojans. Great Ajax and Little Ajax were like a rocky ridge that stops the waters of a flood. The Trojans kept coming, led by Hector and Aeneas. They were like hawks or falcons pursuing crows or starlings as they pursued the Greeks, who raced for the ships.

Chapter 18: The Shield and Weapons of Achilles (Iliad)

Pursued by Trojans and protected by the two Ajaxes, Menelaus and Meriones carried the corpse of Patroclus to the ships as Antilochus arrived at Achilles' camp. Achilles was worried. He said to himself, "Once again, the Greeks are routed, but why? They shouldn't be. Mother once revealed to me a prophecy that I fear that I am just now beginning to understand. She said that while I still lived, the best of the Myrmidons — the warriors I lead — would die at Troy. Patroclus must be dead — I know it. I warned him to stop fighting once he had saved the ships. I warned him not to fight on the plain before Troy. I warned him not to attempt to fight Hector."

As Achilles worried, Antilochus, panting and with tears streaming down his face, came up to him and said, "Patroclus is dead. The two armies are fighting over his body. Hector now has your armor!"

Achilles grabbed handfuls of dust from the ground and poured it over his face to express his grief in the classic Greek manner. He tore his hair. His slave women knew kind, gentle Patroclus, and they mourned his death. They beat their breasts to express their grief in the classic Greek manner. They fell to the ground like Achilles had. Antilochus, weeping warm tears, grabbed Achilles' hands because he was afraid that Achilles would end his own life, cutting his own throat with a knife or sword. Achilles screamed with grief.

Achilles' mother, Thetis, seated near her father, the Old Man of the Sea, in a sea cave, heard Achilles' cries of mourning. She also cried out in mourning. And the Nereids — minor goddesses of the sea like Thetis — came to her, also mourning: Glauce, Thaleia, Cymodoce, Nesaea, Speio, Thoe, Halië, Cymothoë, Actaia, Limnoreia, Melite, Iaira, Amphithoe, Agave, Doto, Proto, Pherousa, Dynamene, Dexamene, Amphinome, Callianeira, Doris, Panope, Galatea, Nemertes, Apseudes, Callianassa, Clymene, Iancira, Ianassa, Maera, Orithyia, Amatheia, and others. The Nereids beat their breasts.

Thetis mourned, "Sisters, I grieve. I am the mother of a son who is flawless and great. He is a warrior and a hero. I reared him, but then he sailed to Troy to fight Trojans. I will never be able to hug him as he walks through the doors of the palace of his father. He will not live long. Most of the short amount of life he has left will be wracked with grief. But I will go to him, although I cannot stop his grief. I will go to him, and he will tell me why he grieves."

Thetis and the other Nereids left the sea cave and swam to Troy. They all came ashore and walked to Achilles. He lay on the ground. Greek artwork sometimes shows a woman cradling the head of a man in her hands as he lies on the ground. The man is a dead warrior, and the woman is a mother or wife who grieves for him. Exactly like that, Thetis cradled Achilles' head in her hands. Crying warm tears, she asked him, "Why are you crying, my son? What is wrong? Please tell me."

Don't keep it hidden from me. Zeus has done everything that you wanted him to do. The Trojans have forced the Greeks back to their ships. The Trojans have killed many Greeks."

Groaning, Achilles replied, "All you say is true, mother. Zeus has done everything I asked him to do. But Patroclus, the man I valued most as a friend, is dead. I valued him as much as I valued my own life, and he is dead — Hector butchered him and stripped him of my armor, armor that the gods gifted to Peleus the day he married you. I wish that Peleus had taken a mortal wife and that you had stayed with the other Nereids. Now you must mourn your own son's death. I have nothing to live for except to kill Hector. I will watch Hector gasp as he dies, mortally wounded by my spear. That is the price he will pay for killing Patroclus!"

Thetis replied, "If what you say is true, you have little time left to live. After Hector dies, you will quickly die."

Achilles replied, "Then let me die as quickly as possible! I was unable to save the life of Patroclus. He died far from home. If I had been with him, I could have kept him from death. I have been sitting here in my camp, and I have not been fighting the Trojans. No Greek is a better warrior than I am, although other Greeks are better at public speaking. I wish that anger would disappear from the earth and from Mount Olympus. Anger is too destructive. Just look at the anger that Agamemnon created within me.

"But enough. I will end my anger at Agamemnon so that I can turn my anger fully against Hector. He is a murderer. He murdered Patroclus in cold blood. I don't even care that he did it on the battlefield — in my eyes, it is murder. I will kill him, and then I will freely meet my own death. Whenever Zeus wishes to end my life will be all right with me as long as I have first killed Hector. Heracles is the greatest Panhellenic hero, and even he met his fate, Hera's anger and fate brought him down. As long as I send Hector down to death first, I will die willingly. Now I will earn great *kleos* as I kill Trojan warriors and make their wives widows. I am well rested, and I will kill and kill again. Don't try to stop me from returning to battle. You can't stop me."

Thetis replied, "All you say is true. But you have no armor that fits you. Hector is wearing your armor, but he will not live long. His fate quickly approaches. Do not go into battle now. You can't. Wait until I come back tomorrow, and I will bring you armor created by Hephaestus, the blacksmith-god."

Thetis told the Nereids, "Go to my father, the Old Man of the Sea, and tell him all that has happened. I will go to Olympus, and I will ask Hephaestus to make armor for my son."

The Nereids dived into the sea, and Thetis flew to Olympus.

Guarding Patroclus' body, the Greeks, pursued by Hector, reached the ships. Again and again the Trojans attacked. It seemed impossible that the Greeks could carry the corpse of Patroclus to Achilles' camp. Three times Hector grabbed Patroclus' feet. Three times the Greeks fought him

off the corpse. Always, Hector attacked again. Shepherds sometimes cannot scare a hungry lion away from a kill, and the Greeks could not scare Hector away from the corpse.

Hector would have captured the corpse, but Hera — without Zeus' knowledge — sent Iris to take a message to Achilles: "You must help recover the corpse of Patroclus. This battle by the ships is over who will have possession of the corpse. The Greeks are struggling to take it to you; the Trojans are struggling to take it to Troy. Hector wants the corpse so that he can cut off the head and display it on a stake on the palisade of Troy. Get up! Don't let dogs and birds eat the corpse of your friend!"

Achilles asked, "Which god has sent you to me with this message?"

Iris replied, "Hera sent me. Zeus knows nothing of this, nor do any of the other gods."

Achilles asked, "How can I fight the Trojans? I have no armor: Hector is wearing it. My mother, Thetis, told me not to go to war until she brings me armor made by Hephaestus, the god of fire. Even the armor of Great Ajax is not big enough for me, except for his shield, and he is using it in battle. I am sure that he is fighting hard to save the corpse of Patroclus."

Iris thought of a plan and said to Achilles, "We gods know that the Trojans have your armor. But go and show yourself — without armor — to the Trojans. They will be afraid of you, and the Greeks can carry Patroclus' body into your camp."

Achilles rose, and Athena slung her shield over his shoulder. He stood in front of the Greeks and Trojans fighting over Patroclus. Behind him the sun set, and Achilles' head and hair blazed with fire sent by Athena. Smoke rises from a city under siege on an island. Enemies attack it, and defenders stand on the city walls and defend the city. When the sun sets, the city lights beacon fires to ask neighbors for help. Much like that, Achilles' fire-capped head blazed.

Achilles shouted three times. Each time Athena shouted with him. The shouts panicked the Trojans; the shouts were as loud as war trumpets blown by the enemies attacking a city. The Trojan horses panicked, too, as did the charioteers. Three times the flame-capped Achilles cried out, and three times the Trojans and their allies were thrown into confusion. Twelve fighting Trojans died as horses reared — the Trojans were crushed by horses and chariots or were impaled on their own spears.

The Greeks took advantage and carried the corpse of Patroclus to the camps and put it on a litter. Achilles looked at his dead friend and grieved. Achilles had sent his best friend into battle, but he never welcomed him home — alive — again.

Hera drove the sun into the sea. Hector's day of glory was over.

The Trojans held a council even before they ate. No one sat; all stood. The decision to be made was serious: Should they return to Troy tonight and stay behind the high, strong walls of Troy, or should they camp out on the battlefield tonight and fight the great Achilles tomorrow?

While he had been absent from the battle, the Trojans had been triumphant, but now Achilles was ready to fight again.

Polydamas, a good man at debate and a man who was born the same night that Hector was born, advised, “Let’s go back to Troy now. We are too close to the ships and too far from the walls of Troy. While Achilles stayed angry at Agamemnon and refrained from fighting, we defeated the Greeks. Like you, I hoped to set fire to their ships. But now Achilles is back. He is furious at the death of his friend, and he will return to battle. He will kill Trojan warriors and enslave Trojan wives and conquer Troy itself. So let us retreat behind the high, strong walls of Troy.

“This night has stopped Achilles from fighting, but he will fight tomorrow, and all too many of us will learn how deep is his anger at us. Whoever escapes his wrath and makes it alive back to Troy will be lucky. Tomorrow, dogs and birds will feast on Trojan flesh. I do not want to hear Trojan cries of grief tomorrow. So let us return to Troy tonight. Instead of fighting on the plain, we will stay on the walls of Troy and fight from there. Achilles will never be able to conquer the walls of Troy; he will be forced to return to the ships still thirsty for vengeance.”

Hector objected, “No, Polydamas! I don’t want to go back to Troy and be crammed behind its walls. I don’t want to be in a cage. Troy was once a rich city, but our wealth has been sold to pay the costs of war. Finally, Zeus is allowing me to seize *kleos* at the Greek ships. He is allowing me to be triumphant as I defend Trojan wives, children, and parents. He is allowing me to cram the Greeks inside their own camps with their backs up against the sea. I will not retreat back to Troy! Everyone will follow my orders. Eat and set guards around our camps. If any Trojan warrior thinks that he will die tomorrow, he can give his property now to other Trojans. Better that than to allow the Greeks to have it. Tomorrow at dawn we attack. If it really was Achilles we saw tonight and if he really wishes to return to battle, then we fight him tomorrow. I will never run from him. Either he will win *kleos* by killing me or I will win *kleos* by killing him. The god of war supports those who succeed at killing.”

The Trojans unwisely shouted their approval of Hector’s words. Athena made them approve of Hector’s advice — and not of Polydamas’ advice.

They set the guards and prepared their evening meal.

All night, the Greeks mourned the death of Patroclus. They shouted cries of grief. Achilles’ strong hands touched Patroclus’ chest as he mourned. A hunter sometimes takes away the cubs of a lion when the lion is away hunting. The lion returns, but where are its cubs? Angry, it runs to find the thief. But where is the thieving hunter? Achilles groaned with the lion’s anger and misery. He cried to his Myrmidons, “I promised Menoetius, the father of Patroclus, that Patroclus would return safely home after we had sacked Troy. I promised that Patroclus would have his fair share of plunder. But Zeus will not give to us what I planned. Both Patroclus and I are fated to die at

Troy and make its ground red with our blood. Like Patroclus, I will never see my father again. I will never greet and hug him.

“Patroclus, I will follow you into the Land of the Dead. I will not bury you now. Before I bury you, I will kill Hector, the Trojan who killed you. I will capture alive twelve Trojan warriors, and I will cut their throats in a human sacrifice in front of the pyre that will burn your corpse down to bones. Until I vent my anger on the Trojans, you will lie here unburied. The slave women I have won will mourn your death. You and I fought hard to win these slave women by sacking cities allied to Troy.”

Achilles ordered his friends to heat water using a three-footed cauldron. They washed away the blood that had clotted in Patroclus’ wounds. They bathed his body, and they rubbed it with olive oil. They closed his wounds with an ointment. They then put his corpse on a bier and covered it with a white cloth. All night they mourned the death of Patroclus.

Zeus and Hera watched all, and Zeus said to Hera, “Are you happy? You have gotten what you wanted: You wanted Achilles to return to war against the Trojans. Now Achilles will be as unreasonably angry as you so often are. Is it possible that you — and not Thetis — is his mother? Is it possible that you are the mother of the Greeks?”

Hera replied, “Yes, I have gotten what I wanted. The Trojans will suffer many, many deaths at the hands of weapon-bearing Achilles tomorrow. But why shouldn’t I get what I want? Often, a mortal man will kill a man he hates. I am a goddess. I am so much more than a mere mortal. So why shouldn’t I get what I want?”

As Zeus and Hera argued, Thetis reached the house of Hephaestus, the blacksmith god. As is so often the case, he was at work. Although his legs were lame, his arms and shoulders and chest were powerful and his mind and creativity and sense of aesthetics were marvelous. He was sweating as he created twenty three-legged cauldrons. Much of the work he had finished, including bolting golden wheels to them. Still needing to be done was attaching their handles. This work he had just started: He was hammering in the rivets.

Thetis approached the famous smith, but his wife, Charis, saw her first and warmly welcomed her. She held Thetis’ hand and said to her, “Thetis, welcome to our house. You are loved and honored here, and we are happy that you have come. We have often wished that you would more frequently visit us. Come in, please, and let me give you *xenia*.”

Charis led Thetis into the home and sat her in a chair and slipped a stool under her feet. She called to her husband, “Hephaestus, we have a visitor: honored Thetis. Perhaps you can do a favor for her.”

Hephaestus replied, “Thetis? Here? Wonderful! She is always welcome. She saved my life when I was born. My mother, Hera, looked me over, saw that my legs were lame, and threw me

from Mount Olympus. She did not want the other gods and goddesses to know that she had given birth to an infant with crippled legs.

“Thetis found me and breastfed me. Another goddess, Eurynome, also breastfed me. These two goddesses reared me for nine years, and I became a blacksmith. I created brooches, pins, necklaces, and other jewelry. The only ones who knew where I was were the two goddesses. And now Thetis is here. I must do anything I can for her — I owe her so much. Quick, give her something to eat and drink while I put away my current blacksmithing project.”

Hephaestus packed away his tools and washed his arms, shoulders, chest, and neck, and then he put on a shirt. Using a staff, he hobbled in to see Thetis. Handmaids, whom he had created out of gold but who were otherwise like real girls, waited on him, his wife, and his guest.

He said to Thetis, “Welcome. You should visit more often. I will do for you whatever I can do.”

Thetis started to cry. She said, “Hephaestus, Zeus has given me misery. The prophecy said that I would give birth to a man who would be greater than his father. Zeus did not want me to give birth to a son who would overpower him, and so he married me to a mortal man: Peleus. I married him. I had to, but I didn’t want to. Now he is old and will soon die, and now I grieve because my son will also soon die. I reared my son, and he grew strong, but he went to fight in the Trojan War, and now I will never again give him a hug as he returns home — alive — to his father’s palace. My son, Achilles, has little time left to live, and he is miserable. I cannot bring him out of his misery. There is nothing I can do. The Greeks awarded him a young woman after he sacked the city of King Eetion, but Agamemnon tore the young woman from him. Achilles grieved for her and stopped fighting. The Trojans triumphed because my son was not fighting, and the Greeks begged my son to fight and wanted to give him treasure. He refused to fight, but he did send his best friend, Patroclus, into battle wearing Achilles’ own armor. Patroclus and the Trojans battled all day, and Patroclus and the Greeks could have conquered Troy but Apollo caused Patroclus to die. Apollo gave the *kleos* of killing Patroclus to Hector. Now I beg you on my knees to give my son armor: shield, breastplate, helmet, and greaves. When the Trojans killed Patroclus, Hector took Achilles’ armor that Patroclus had been wearing. Now Achilles lies on the ground grieving for Patroclus.”

Hephaestus replied, “I will make your son the best armor that ever was made. Whoever sees it will marvel at it. I wish that I could change your son’s fate.”

Hephaestus returned to his forge and turned the bellows on the fire. He commanded, “To work!” The bellows, all on their own, blew on the fire and made it hotter — the right degree of heat for the work to be done. He heated bronze, tin, gold, and silver, and he grabbed his hammer and tongs.

First Hephaestus created the shield. He made the rim with three layers of metal. The shield itself had five layers of metal. The shield strap he made of silver. Then he focused on the design of the shield: a design that would depict much of what was known of the universe and of human civilization.

On the shield, Hephaestus created the earth and the sky and the sea and the sun and the moon and the constellations: Pleiades, Hyades, Orion, and the Great Bear.

On the shield, Hephaestus created two populous cities.

In one city weddings and wedding feasts took place. Torches burned. The brides came out of the women's dwellings. Choirs sang. Young men danced. Flutes and harps played. Women stood in their doorways and watched.

In the same city people ran to the marketplace to witness a lawsuit. Two men argued over the blood-price for a murdered kinsman. One person offered money. The other argued against the proposed recompense, preferring to get satisfaction with more money or with the blood or exile of the murderer. The crowd watched excitedly. Elders rendered their judgments. Two talents of gold lay before them. The elder who rendered the most righteous judgment would be awarded the gold.

Outside the other city, an army lay in siege. The warriors were divided about what to do. Should they conquer the city and take all its wealth? Or should they accept half of the city's wealth and lift the siege? Inside the city the male citizens were arming. They did not want to surrender. They wanted to make a raid that would lift the siege and give them freedom. The warriors marched out of the city, and women and children and old men stood on the walls of the city. Wearing gold armor, Ares and Athena led the warriors. The gods towered over the mortal warriors. They reached the zone from which they would attack: a place where they watered the herding animals. Two scouts waited as two enemy herdsmen approached, playing music on pipes, as they drove their animals to the besieging army. The scouts killed the herdsmen and stole the animals. The besieging army heard the cries of alarm and raced to the site where the scouts had ambushed the herdsmen. Both armies fought each other at the river, throwing spears and killing and dying. Havoc and Strife and Death — all immortals — fought alongside the mortal men. Their bodies grew red with the blood of mortals.

Hephaestus created a field that farmers plowed, driving their teams from one end of the field to the other, and back again. Farmhands gave the plowmen wine to refresh them so that they could continue to work. The earth the farmers plowed was black although Hephaestus had made it out of solid gold — Hephaestus had that skill.

Hephaestus created the estate of a king. Harvesters reaped the grain with scythes. Boys gathered the stalks and brought them to laborers who bound them with rope. The king watched, happy with the bountiful harvest. His heralds prepared a great feast and roasted meat from the

ox they had slaughtered. Women servants generously measured out the barley. Soon the reapers and all the others would eat the noonday meal.

Hephaestus created a vineyard loaded with ripe grapes and long vines. Around the vineyard was a ditch, and around the ditch was a fence that he made of tin. Grape pickers walked on the path leading to the vineyard, and boys and girls carried away the grapes in baskets. A boy played the lyre and sang about the ending year. His was a fine voice, and the boys and girls stepped in rhythm to his song.

Hephaestus created a herd of cattle with long horns. The cattle walked from the dung-filled farmyard out to green pastures. Four herdsmen and nine dogs kept the herd moving, but lions attacked a bull and killed it and were eating it. The herdsmen tried to make the dogs attack the lions, but the dogs were afraid.

Hephaestus created a meadow in a valley. Flocks grazed there amid the shepherds' homes.

Hephaestus created a circle that depicted a dance. Boys and girls — handsome and pretty — danced and danced. The girls wore linen robes and the boys wore fine tunics. The girls wore garlands of flowers on their heads, and the boys wore daggers on their belts. Sometimes they danced in rings and sometimes they danced in rows. A crowd had gathered to watch the dancers, and tumblers performed tricks.

Finally, Hephaestus created the Ocean River on the rim of the shield — the Ocean River that surrounds the entire earth.

After creating the shield, Hephaestus created a breastplate, a helmet, and greaves.

Having finished the armor, Hephaestus laid all of it at the feet of Thetis. She gathered it in her arms and flew to Achilles' camp. When Achilles went into battle, he would carry on the shield on his arm a depiction of the universe with the exception of Hades — the Land of the Dead — and Mount Olympus — the abode of the major gods.

Chapter 19: Achilles Arms for Battle (Iliad)

Dawn arrived, and Thetis reached Achilles' camp. Achilles was still lying facedown, mourning Patroclus' death. The other Greeks also were mourning Patroclus' death. Thetis held Achilles' hand and said to him, "Achilles, get up and leave your friend's body. You must. Patroclus is dead. But look at the new armor that Hephaestus, god of fire, created for you. No mortal has ever worn such fine armor!"

Thetis put the brightly polished armor on the ground beside Achilles. The armor blazed, and the Greeks saw it and trembled. No one could look directly at the armor — except Achilles and the gods. Achilles looked at the armor, and he knew that he would be wearing it when he killed Hector. His anger at Hector deepened, and he said to Thetis, his mother, "You are right. Only a god could make such armor. No mortal man has ever seen or worn armor such as this, and no mortal man could ever create armor such as this. I will put on this armor, and I will kill Hector.

"But I am worried about the corpse of Patroclus. It will decay. Insects will get to it, and worms will eat his flesh. Patroclus' *psyche* has left his body; now his body will rot."

Thetis replied, "Don't worry about the corpse of Patroclus. I will take care of it and ensure that it does not rot. I will keep the insects and the worms away from it. Patroclus' body could lie here an entire year, and it still would not rot. I will put nectar and ambrosia — the food and drink of the gods — in Patroclus.

"Now call a council and be reconciled with Agamemnon. You and he must not be angry at each other anymore. Afterward, you can arm for battle."

Thetis instilled courage into Achilles, and she instilled nectar and ambrosia, the food and drink of the immortal gods, into the corpse of Patroclus to ensure that the corpse would not rot.

Achilles went among the Greeks, calling the leaders to a council. They readily came, wanting to see what Achilles would do — Achilles who had stayed away from the fighting for so long. Diomedes and Odysseus arrived at the council. Still hurting from their wounds, they moved slowly. The last Greek leader to arrive was Agamemnon. He also still hurt from his wound — Coon had slashed his arm in battle.

Achilles spoke first, "Agamemnon, you and I foolishly fought over a mere girl. It would have been better if she had died when I conquered Lyrnessus, the city she lived in — Artemis should have killed her with an arrow. If she had died then, many more Greeks would be alive now. Our arguing with each other has been good only for Hector and his Trojans. It has not been good for the Greeks. People will remember, I think, our argument and its consequences. Epic poets will sing about it. But let us end our argument now. It is over. Done. Finished. All the anger I felt at

you I now turn to Hector. Call the Greeks to combat so I can begin fighting and killing Trojans! I can convince them to stay behind the walls of Troy and not camp on the plain before Troy!”

These were words that the Greeks wanted to hear. They shouted with pleasure.

Agamemnon said, “Greeks, listen. Do not interrupt. Listen as I speak to Achilles. I have been blamed for the argument between us, but it was not my fault! Zeus and Fate and the Furies are at fault! They are the ones who made me insane when I took Achilles’ prize — Briseis — away from him. I was utterly mad! What can a mortal do when the gods are against him? The goddess Ate, who is also called Ruin, is the main one at fault — she blinded me as she has blinded so many other mortals!

“Ate even blinded Zeus once! Hera had the help of Ate as she deceived Zeus. Alcmena was about to give birth to the great hero Heracles in Thebes. Zeus wanted him to be the king of the surrounding region, so he said to the other gods, ‘Listen to me. Today a woman will give birth to a son — my son who will rule the region around him.’

“Hera hates all the bastard children fathered by her husband, Zeus. She set out to make a fool of her husband.

“Hera said to him, ‘I don’t believe you — not unless you swear an inviolable oath. Swear by the river Styx that a son born today from your line will rule the region around him.’

“Zeus swore the oath; he did not know that Hera was trapping him.

“Hera flew to Argos, where the wife of Sthenelus, son of Peleus, whose father was Zeus, was seven months pregnant. Hera, the goddess of marriage, caused her to give birth two months early to a son: Eurystheus. She also kept Alcmena from giving birth.

“Hera then rushed back to Zeus and taunted him: ‘Today a new ruler is born from your line: Eurystheus. As you promised in your inviolable oath, he will rule the region around him.’

“Zeus was furious at being tricked, but the oath he had sworn was inviolable. Eurystheus, not Heracles, would be a ruler. But he grabbed the goddess Ate and threw her from Mount Olympus. Never again can she return to Olympus, so now she ruins the lives of mortals. Zeus thought of the goddess Ate whenever Eurystheus forced Heracles to perform one of his famous twelve labors.

“Ate harmed Zeus, and Ate harmed me! Ate made it possible for Hector to reach our ships.

“But that was then. Now let us put everything right again. I promised you, Achilles, magnificent gifts if you would fight again. I will give you everything I promised. Odysseus was the emissary who conveyed my promise to you. Aides will bring those gifts from my ships and convey them to you now.”

Achilles replied, “Agamemnon, I don’t care about the gifts. Keep them, or give them to me. I don’t care which. Right now, let’s go to battle — right now! We have Trojans to kill!”

Odysseus, a practical man, said, “We can’t fight yet, Achilles. We are hungry. A hungry man cannot fight for long. He will grow weak and be useless in battle. So let us eat and drink, and that

way we can fight all day until the sun sets. Our legs and arms will not fail us, and we can kill and kill again. So order everyone to eat.

“Also, allow Agamemnon to bring the gifts so that every man can see that he has given to you everything that he promised. And allow Agamemnon to swear an oath that he has not touched Briseis — that he has not forced her to sleep with him.

“Also, Achilles, be sure to show Agamemnon the respect that is due to him.

“Achilles, allow Agamemnon to prepare a feast for you in his tents. You two should break bread.

“Agamemnon, show your warriors the respect that is due to them. It is not a disgrace for you to give gifts to Achilles, whom you have wronged. It is kingly to reconcile with those whom you have wronged.”

Agamemnon replied, “Odysseus, all you have said is right. I will swear the oath: I have not touched Briseis — I have not slept with her. I swear this oath to the gods. Everyone, including Achilles, should stay here until everything I promised to give to Achilles has been brought from my ships.

“Odysseus, pick out a few men to help you to bring here everything I promised to give to Achilles, including the women. I will have Talthibius prepare a wild boar for sacrifice to Zeus and the sun.”

Achilles, however, was impatient to return to the fighting. He said to Agamemnon, “Let us leave these things for a different time. I am set on fighting and killing Trojans. Why should I sit down to a feast when I could be doing what I want to do most? If it were my decision, I would lead the Greeks, hungry as they are, into combat now. Only after many Trojans are dead and the sun has set would I lay out a feast for everyone.

“I myself will not eat or drink. Patroclus is dead. His body is ready for burial. Instead of feasting, I will kill and kill again.”

Odysseus, a practical man, said, “Achilles, you are stronger by far than I am. You are the greatest warrior among the Greeks. But I am older, and I know more about ordinary warriors. Listen to me. We ordinary men must eat. Hungry men cannot fight. Warriors cannot mourn the dead by starving. It cannot and will not work. War is wearying work.

“We ordinary men mourn the dead, but our mourning must come to an end. Warriors should mourn the dead the day they die and then move on with their lives. Everyone who is still alive must eat and drink. That way, we can continue to go to war.

“So, after we eat and drink, no warrior who is capable of fighting will hold back. May pain and death come to those who shirk the work of war. Today, many Trojans will die.”

Odysseus led men to Agamemnon’s ships: Meges, Meriones, Thoas, Lycomedes, and Melanippus. They brought out the gifts that Agamemnon had promised to give to Achilles if he

would fight again: seven tripods, twenty polished cauldrons, twelve stallions, ten bars of gold, seven women skilled in crafts, and Briseis. They brought the gifts back to the meeting place.

Talthybius had the wild boar ready for sacrifice. Agamemnon drew his dagger and cut a few tufts of hair from the boar. He lifted his arms and prayed, “Zeus and the Furies, I swear that I never touched Briseis — I never slept with her. If I have falsely sworn this, may the gods punish me!”

He cut the boar’s throat, and Talthybius swung the boar and threw it into the water for the fishes to enjoy.

Achilles said, “Zeus, you sometimes send miseries to men. You make us blind. Otherwise, Agamemnon could never have made me so angry. He would never have taken Briseis away from me. Zeus, you wanted the Greeks to die.

“Warriors, eat and drink quickly. I am eager to go to war.”

The Greeks went to their own camps and prepared their meals. Achilles’ Myrmidons happily took Agamemnon’s gifts back to Achilles’ ships.

Briseis arrived at Achilles’ camp, where she saw the corpse of Patroclus. She threw herself on the corpse and wailed, “Patroclus, you were my friend. You looked out for me. When Agamemnon forced me to leave, you were alive. Now you are dead. I used to be married, but now I am a widow. My husband died defending his city, Lyrnessus, one of the cities that Achilles conquered. I saw Achilles kill my husband. I watched my husband and my three brothers die in battle. I loved them all. You, Patroclus, kept me from crying. You promised that you would convince Achilles to make me his lawful, wedded wife. Being a wife is better than being a slave. You promised that in Greece Achilles would marry me. I mourn your death. Gentle Patroclus, you were always kind to me.”

Briseis cried, and the female slaves around her cried.

The Greek warriors tried to convince Achilles to eat. He would not, saying, “Stop bothering me. I will not eat at least until the sun sets.”

The Greek warriors knew that Achilles meant what he said, so they did not press him to eat. Some Greek leaders stayed and tried to comfort him, including Agamemnon and Menelaus, Odysseus, Nestor, Idomeneus, and Phoenix. He could not be comforted.

Achilles remembered past times and he said, “Often, Patroclus, you would set out the meal for us, but now you are dead. Plenty of food lies in my ships, but I shall not eat. I grieve for you! I want you to be alive! I cannot feel worse than I do now — not even if I were to hear news that my father has died! My father, I know, is mourning back home in Greece because he is separated from his only son. Instead of being with him, I am here, fighting Trojans because of the misdeeds of Helen. I cannot feel worse than I do now — not even if I were to hear news that my son — Neoptolemus — has died.

“I had hoped that only I would die at Troy and that you, Patroclus, would return home alive. You would bring my son from Scyros to my father’s high-vaulted palace and show him all of my wealth and servants.

“I don’t even know whether my father is alive or dead. He may be alive although he is very old and waits to hear news of me. Soon, if he is alive, he will learn that I have died.”

Zeus and Athena were watching Achilles. Zeus said to Athena, “Have you abandoned Achilles? Don’t you respect him? He is grieving, and he refuses to eat. Put nectar and ambrosia into his stomach. Give him the nourishment of the gods.”

Athena flew through the air like a hawk, and she put nectar and ambrosia into Achilles’ stomach. During battle, he would not grow weak. Then she returned to her father, Zeus.

The Greek troops marched out of the camps, ready for battle. Zeus sometimes sends thickly falling snowflakes to earth. The marching Greek warriors were as numerous as those snowflakes.

Achilles armed himself for battle. He ground his teeth. His eyes blazed. He was on fire to fight. He put on the armor that Hephaestus had made for him. He put on his greaves. He put on his breastplate, and he slung his sheathed sword over his shoulder. He lifted his shield — a masterpiece created by Hephaestus. The shield gleamed like a full moon or like a watch fire on a mountain — a watch fire seen by sailors on ships at sea. The light reflected from Achilles’ shield shone far into the sky. Achilles then put on his helmet with waving plumes. He tested the fit on the armor. He spun to see whether the armor fitted him. Yes, it did. He spun to see if he could move easily while wearing the armor. Yes, he could. Finally Achilles grabbed his spear. It was a gift from the Centaur Chiron to Achilles’ father, Peleus. The spear had been made to kill warriors.

Achilles’ aides Alcimus and Automedon yoked Achilles’ immortal horses to his chariot. Automedon grabbed a whip and jumped on the chariot; he was Achilles’ charioteer. Achilles was ready for battle. He said to his immortal horses, “Roan Beauty and Charger, do better this time. Bring me back alive to the ships! You failed to bring Patroclus back alive!”

Hera gave the immortal horse Roan Beauty the ability to speak. Roan Beauty said, “We will bring you back alive, Achilles! Today. But you will die soon at the hands of a god and your fate.

“We are not responsible for the death of Patroclus or the stripping of your armor. Apollo is responsible for Patroclus’ death — he gave *kleos* to Hector.

“We immortal horses are as swift as the wind, but we will be unable to save you. Your fate, a god, and a mortal man will end your life!”

The Furies took away the voice of Roan Beauty. The immortal horse could no longer speak.

Achilles said, “Why are you prophesying my death? I know I will die soon after I kill Hector. I know that I will die at Troy far from home, far from my mother and father. But before I die, I will kill many Trojans and especially Hector!”

Achilles went to war.

Zeus was watching. He thought, *I can see at least part of the future. Achilles is now both less and more than human. He is both less than a living human and more than a living human being.*

Achilles is such a remarkable being that he will refuse to recognize his human limits. Achilles' anger is more than human. It is excessive — the anger of a god. Previously, he was angry at Agamemnon. Now, he is angry at Hector. His anger was and is more than it should be. Achilles' anger at Agamemnon got many Greeks killed, including Achilles' best friend, Patroclus.

Why is Achilles so angry now? It is because he does not accept the human condition. The human condition is that humans live for a time and then they die. Achilles has no problem accepting the human condition for himself. As long as he can kill many Trojans and especially Hector first, he is willing to die. But Achilles will not accept the human condition when it comes to Patroclus. Achilles sent Patroclus into battle, and Patroclus died. Patroclus is mortal. All mortals die. But Achilles desperately wants Patroclus to be alive again, and that cannot happen. Therefore, Achilles' anger now is more excessive than it was when he was angry at Agamemnon. Because he is so angry, Achilles is now both less and more than human.

Achilles is such a remarkable being that he is almost a god. Only the gods eat ambrosia and drink nectar, yet that is the food and drink that is nourishing Achilles' body. I myself gave Athena the order to put ambrosia and nectar in Achilles' stomach.

Achilles is such a remarkable being that only a god can slow down or stop his killing. Achilles will kill all human beings who oppose him. Achilles will kill all Trojans he comes across except for those whom he captures so that he can kill them later as a human sacrifice. Achilles will be almost a god in this battle, and only a river-god can successfully oppose him. Only Apollo or some other god will be able to distract Achilles enough that some Trojans will escape him and return to Troy.

Achilles is such a remarkable being that his death is foreshadowed in his life. Achilles will die. Achilles knows that. When Thetis mourned the death of Patroclus, it was as if she were mourning the death of Achilles. When Thetis held Achilles' head as he lay in the dust grieving for Patroclus, she was just like a woman mourning a fallen warrior. Other foreshadowings of Achilles' nearing death will take place. Achilles is less than a living human being because in some ways it is as if he were already a corpse.

Achilles is not now a normal human being. Achilles has two natures because of his parents. His mother, Thetis, is a goddess, so part of Achilles' nature is divine. His father, Peleus, is mortal, so part of Achilles' nature is mortal. Achilles' two sides are now in opposition. Achilles is almost an immortal god, yet his coming death is foreshadowed in his life. Also, an ordinary human being would grieve for a while for Patroclus, and then he would return to living his normal life. Achilles finds it very, very difficult to do that.

Achilles completely rejects the human condition — the fact that human beings and their loved ones are mortal and they die. Achilles will put off holding a funeral for Patroclus. Patroclus' psyche

will have to appear before Achilles in a dream and beg to be buried before Achilles will hold the funeral for Patroclus. It takes the gods to protect the body of Patroclus and keep it from decaying. Thetis put nectar and ambrosia in Patroclus to keep the body from decaying. Because of Achilles' anger at Hector and desire to kill him, Patroclus has not had a funeral yet, and so his psyche cannot enter the Land of the Dead. This is horrible for a psyche.

Because of his grief at the death of Patroclus, Achilles has put his life on hold. Achilles will not eat or drink or sleep or wash or have sex with Briseis. Thetis wants Achilles to stop putting his life on hold and to do all of these things. Achilles finds it very, very difficult to do any of these things right now.

Achilles must learn to accept the human condition.

Chapter 20: Achilles Returns to Battle (Iliad)

As the Greeks prepared for war, Zeus on Mount Olympus ordered the goddess Themis to call a council of the gods. She summoned all gods and all goddesses to the halls of Zeus. Every river-god and every nymph came to the halls of Zeus. No one resisted Zeus' order. Poseidon also came and asked Zeus, "Why are you summoning a council of the gods? Is this about the Trojan War? A major battle is about to occur."

Zeus replied, "Poseidon, god of the sea and of earthquakes, you are correct. I am concerned about the mortal warriors of the Trojan War. I myself will stay here on Olympus and watch the war. The rest of you gods and goddesses are welcome to go down to the war and help whichever side you want to help. Gods must take part in the war. Unless some gods oppose Achilles, he is so powerful that he will destroy all the Trojans. Before, they shook with fear to see him. Now, with his intensified anger — all because of the death of Patroclus — I am afraid that his *menis* — his anger that is equivalent to the anger of the gods — will cause him to conquer Troy although it is not fated to fall at his hands."

The gods and goddesses went to Troy to support their sides. On the side of the Greeks were Hera, Athena, Poseidon, Hermes, and Hephaestus. On the side of the Trojans were Ares, Apollo, Artemis, Leto, the god of the river Xanthus, and Aphrodite.

Achilles and the Greeks went to war. The Trojans were afraid as they looked at Achilles. His armor shone like fire. Now the Olympian gods merged with the mortal warriors. On the side of the Greeks, Athena shouted a cry of war. On the side of the Trojans, Ares answered her with his own cry of war.

The gods roused the mortals whose side they supported, whether Greek or Trojan. Poseidon, who supported the Greeks, created an earthquake. The entire earth shook, and Hades, the god of the Land of the Dead, screamed. He was afraid that the earthquake would rip open the earth, and living men and gods would be able to look down into the Land of the Dead and see its horrors.

The opposing gods faced each other. Poseidon opposed Apollo. Athena opposed Ares. Hera opposed Artemis. Hermes opposed Leto. Hephaestus opposed the god of the river that gods call the Xanthus and mortals call the Scamander.

Achilles went into battle looking for Hector above all — it was Hector whom Achilles most wanted to kill. But Apollo encouraged Aeneas to face Achilles and fight him. Apollo assumed the form of Lycaon, one of Priam's sons, and said, "Aeneas, you used to make threats against the Greeks and boast to the Trojans about what you would do to them. Where have the threats and boasts gone? Didn't you boast that you would fight Achilles face-to-face?"

Aeneas replied, “Lycaon, son of Priam, why are you encouraging me to fight Achilles face-to-face? I really do not want to. Achilles is powerful, and he is angry. I have met him face-to-face before. On the day that he conquered Lyrnessus and raided our flocks, he found me on Mount Ida and chased me. I ran from him and escaped — but only with help from Zeus. If not for the help of Zeus, I would have died at the hands of Achilles and of Athena — she was helping to keep him safe. She was also encouraging him to kill Trojans and their allies. No mortal can face Achilles and live. The gods are on his side. But even if he did not have the help of the gods, his strength and skill in war are overwhelming. His spear flies straight and causes mortal wounds. Still, if Zeus would stop giving Achilles the advantage, Achilles would have to work hard to defeat me.”

Apollo, still disguised as Lycaon, replied, “Like Achilles, you are a heroic warrior. Why not ask for help from the gods? Isn’t Aphrodite, an Olympian goddess, your mother? Achilles’ mother is also a goddess, but she is lesser than Aphrodite. Thetis is a minor sea goddess, the daughter of the Old Man of the Sea. So fight Achilles! Don’t let his pride and his threats scare you!”

Apollo convinced Aeneas to fight Achilles. He went to the front line to find and to fight him. Hera was watching, and she shouted, “Poseidon! Athena! Aeneas is coming to fight Achilles. Apollo has encouraged him. Either drive Aeneas back, or one of us must stand by Achilles and help him. We need to let Achilles know that many gods respect him. The gods who support the Trojans are worthless! We have come down to the war to make sure that Achilles does not die on this day. Later, he will die, as fated. We need to let Achilles know that we gods support him, or he may be terrified when he sees a god — we can be terrifying to humans.”

But Poseidon said to Hera, “We need not get involved in the war right now. The Greeks are much more powerful and much stronger than the Trojans. Let us move to one side, out of the way, and watch the war. Let the mortals do all of the fighting. But if Ares or Apollo decides to oppose Achilles and keep him from fighting, then we can oppose them. We gods can then fight each other. The fight will not last long. Defeated, the gods who support the Trojans will go back to Olympus.”

Poseidon, Hera, and Athena went to one side of the battle and relaxed. They rested on a breastwork that Athena and the Trojans had built for Heracles to use when he fought and killed the sea-monster that was threatening the daughter of Laomedon: Hesione. Fog hid the gods so that the mortals could not see them. The gods who supported the Trojans went to the other side of the battle and relaxed. Zeus stayed on Mount Olympus.

The two armies rushed toward each other. In the middle, Achilles and Aeneas faced each other. Achilles was like a lion. Many men hunt the lion, but the lion has only contempt for the men and ignores them until one of the hunters spears him. Then the lion crouches to spring and

attack. Furious, the lion is determined to kill or be killed. Just like the lion, Achilles was proud and furious.

Achilles said to Aeneas, “Why are you so far away from your fellow Trojans? Do you really want to fight me? Do you think that if you kill me that you will become king of Troy? That won’t happen. Priam will instead make one of his own sons king of Troy. Or do you hope to win a fine estate — a gift of the Trojans — if you kill me? I do not think you will kill me. We met once before, remember? You were guarding sheep, alone, and you fled down Mount Ida for your life. You were so scared that you did not even look behind you. You escaped me then. You fled to Lyrnessus, which I conquered with the help of Athena and Zeus. I made all the women of Lyrnessus slaves. You escaped me on that day — Zeus helped you. But I doubt that you will escape me now, although you must be hoping that you will stay alive. Don’t challenge me! Go back to your troops! If you fight me, I will kill you!”

Aeneas replied, “Don’t try to scare me with words, Achilles. I am not a child or a fool. I am a warrior. We know each other, and we know about each other’s parents, although I have not seen your parents and you have not seen my parents. You are the son of Peleus, a king, and of Thetis, a sea-nymph. I am the son of Anchises and of Aphrodite. Either your parents or my parents will mourn the death of a son today. We will fight, not just talk.

“If you want to know more about my family, here is my story. Let us start with Dardanus, the son of Zeus who founded Dardania before the city of Troy was founded. Dardanus had a son: King Erichthonius. This king was rich and owned three thousand mares. The North wind assumed the form of a stallion and had sex with some of the mares — twelve colts were the result. These offspring could run on the tops of corn stalks without breaking them and could run on the tops of sea waves.

“King Erichthonius fathered Tros, a Trojan lord. Tros fathered three sons: Ilus, Assaracus, and Ganymede. Ganymede was a beautiful man, and the gods took him away so that he could be Zeus’ cupbearer.

“Ilus fathered Laomedon, who fathered five sons: Tithonus, Priam, Lampus, Clytius, and Hicetaon.

“Assaracus fathered Capys, and Capys fathered Anchises, who fathered me.

“Priam fathered Hector.

“That is my lineage.

“In battle Zeus helps some warriors and he hurts other warriors. Zeus is a strong god — the strongest of all gods.

“Achilles, let’s have no more talking. We could hurl insults at each other, but this is a battlefield. Let us fight.”

Aeneas hurled his spear at Achilles. It hit Achilles' shield — a masterpiece created by Hephaestus. Achilles was afraid that Aeneas' spear would punch through the shield, but the work of Hephaestus was and is better than Achilles realized. Aeneas' spear broke through two layers of the shield, but the middle layer — made of gold — stopped it. The layers around the gold were made of tin, and the outermost layers were made of bronze. Achilles was strong enough to carry a shield that was made of metal, including heavy gold.

Achilles hurled his spear. It hit the edge of Aeneas' shield, and Aeneas ducked. The spear tore through the two layers — bronze and oxhide — at the edge of Aeneas' shield and then buried itself in the earth. Aeneas was afraid — the spear had come close to killing him.

Achilles drew his sword and shouted a war-cry and charged Aeneas, who picked up a huge rock that no two men of today could lift, although Aeneas did so easily. Aeneas would have thrown the rock at Achilles, whose armor and shield would have protected him. Achilles would then have killed Aeneas with his sword, but Poseidon was watching the battle.

Poseidon said to the gods with him, "Aeneas is close to dying and going down to the House of the Dead. Achilles is about to kill him — all because Apollo tempted Aeneas to fight Achilles! Aeneas is a fool — Apollo is not going to save him! Why should Aeneas die? He is a good person. He has always sacrificed to the gods. Why should he die because of Paris and Helen? So let us save Aeneas' life. Zeus wants Aeneas to stay alive because Aeneas is fated to survive the Trojan War. He is fated to stay alive so that he may have descendants and the bloodline of Dardanus will not vanish from the earth. Dardanus was the son of Zeus, and Zeus loved him more than his other mortal sons. After Troy falls, Aeneas will rule the surviving Trojans and their children."

Hera replied, "Do as you wish, Poseidon. If you want Aeneas to live, save him. If you want him to die, let him die. But Athena and I will stay here. We have sworn never to help the Trojans, even when their city burns and falls."

Poseidon went to Aeneas and Achilles. He put fog in front of Achilles' eyes, and then he pulled Achilles' spear out of the ground and lay the spear near Achilles. Then he picked up Aeneas and threw him far away to the side of the battle.

Poseidon went to Aeneas and said, "Aeneas, what god tempted you to fight Achilles? Are you mad! Achilles is a much better warrior than you are, and the gods respect Achilles more. Do not fight him. If you do, you will die. But Achilles will soon die. After he dies, then fight whomever you wish. Achilles is the Greek capable of killing you against your fate."

Poseidon then went to Achilles and removed the fog in front of his eyes. Achilles looked around. Aeneas was no longer present. Achilles said to himself, "It is impossible. I threw my spear at Aeneas, and now my spear is lying beside me. And I can't see Aeneas. The gods truly love that warrior. So him I will not be able to kill. No matter. I will rally the Greeks, and we will kill the many Trojans who remain."

Achilles shouted to the Greek warriors, “No more staying away from the fighting. Let each warrior find a Trojan to kill. I am powerful, but I am a single warrior. Not even the gods Ares and Athena — masters of war — could fight an army singlehandedly. But I will fight the best I can. I will attack the Trojans head-on. No Trojan will want to fight me — they will be afraid to meet me face-to-face.

At the same time, Hector rallied the Trojans: “Don’t be afraid of Achilles! Fight him with spears rather than with words! Achilles makes many boasts. Some he will make good on, some he will partially do, and others he will be unable to accomplish! I will seek him and fight him!”

But Apollo told Hector, “Don’t fight Achilles face-to-face! Fight him with other Trojan warriors to help you. If you try to fight him by yourself, he will kill you with his spear or his sword.”

Hector kept his warriors near him, but Achilles charged the Trojans and killed and killed again. He killed Iphition, whose mother was a river-nymph and whose father was named Otrynteus. Iphition charged at Achilles, and Achilles speared him in the head, splitting his skull. Achilles boasted, “Here you die, Iphition — far from home.”

Achilles killed Demoleon, again with a wound to the head. Achilles’ spear stabbed Demoleon’s temple, going through his helmet’s cheekpiece. Demoleon’s brain splattered inside his helmet.

Achilles killed Hippodamas, who jumped from his chariot and fled from Achilles. Achilles speared him in the back. Hippodamas died bellowing like a bull about to be sacrificed.

Achilles killed Polydorus, the youngest son of Priam. Priam did not want him to fight, but Polydorus was proud of his fast running. He ran by Achilles, and Achilles speared him in the back. The spear went through his breastplate and came out his naval, taking his intestines with it. Polydorus died screaming with his intestines in his hands.

As he killed, Achilles demonstrated his skill at warfare. The head is a smaller target than the chest. A warrior who misses an enemy’s chest could hit the stomach, shoulders, or head. A warrior who misses an enemy’s head is likely to miss altogether. Achilles often killed Trojans by inflicting head wounds.

As he killed, Achilles demonstrated his lack of mercy. He killed every Trojan he could, including those fleeing from him. Achilles often killed Trojans by inflicting back wounds.

Hector saw his brother Polydorus die, and Hector charged Achilles, who saw him. Achilles said to himself, “This is the person who has caused me the most grief, who has killed Patroclus. At last, I can fight him.”

Achilles shouted at Hector, “You are now going to die.”

Hector replied, “Don’t try to scare me with words. I am a warrior. I know that you are a great warrior. I am much weaker than you are, but I may still be able to kill you. I have killed warriors before.”

Hector hurled his spear at Achilles, but Athena gently blew her breath, and the spear flew back to Hector and fell at his feet. Achilles charged at Hector eager to kill him, but Apollo surrounded Hector in fog and kept him away from Achilles’ weapons — a god has that power. Three times Achilles stabbed with his spear — three times his spear encountered only fog. The fourth time Achilles stabbed with his spear, he realized that he would not be able to kill Hector — yet.

Achilles said, “Hector, you dog, you have dodged your death. Apollo has saved your life. But we will meet again in battle, and then I will kill you. Right now, I will kill as many Trojans as I can.”

Achilles killed Dryops, spearing him in the neck.

Achilles killed Demuchus, spearing him in the knee and then taking his life with a sword.

Achilles killed two sons of Bias: Laogonus and Dardanus. He threw them from their chariot and killed one with a spear and the other with a sword.

Tros supplicated Achilles and begged for mercy. He grabbed Achilles’ knees, hoping to stay alive, hoping that Achilles would not kill him. He was wrong. This Achilles was not merciful — not to Trojans and their allies. Achilles used his sword to slit open Tros’ liver. Tros’ wound gushed with blood, and his *psyche* went to the Land of the Dead.

Achilles killed Mulius. Achilles rammed his spear through one of Mulius’ ears so that it came out through the other ear.

Achilles killed Echeclus. Achilles used his sword to split open Echeclus’ head. Achilles’ sword was hot from blood and friction.

Achilles killed Deucalion. Achilles speared Deucalion’s arm, rendering it useless. Deucalion stood with his arm dangling and waited for Achilles to kill him. Achilles used his sword to cut off Deucalion’s head. The head and helmet dropped to the ground, and marrow spurted from Deucalion’s spine.

Achilles killed Rhigmus and his charioteer, Areithous. Achilles speared Rhigmus in the belly, and Rhigmus fell out of the chariot. Rhigmus’ charioteer, Areithous, tried to escape, but Achilles speared him in the back and Areithous fell out of the chariot beside Rhigmus.

Achilles was like a wild fire, blazing through a mountain gorge and feasting on dry timber and creating chaos. Achilles used his chariot to kill Trojans, running over them and their corpses like oxen stomp on barley. The axle under Achilles’ chariot was covered with blood. The handrails of his chariot were covered with blood. Blood sprayed into the air from the hooves of the horses

pulling his chariot. Blood sprayed into the air from his chariot's wheels. Blood covered Achilles' powerful arms.

Zeus thought, *At one time, Achilles showed mercy to his enemies. This is something that Andromache, Hector's wife, knows. Achilles killed her father, King Eetion, but he did not strip his armor and he did give the corpse a proper funeral. Achilles showed respect to his enemy King Eetion. Also, Achilles did not make Andromache's mother a slave but instead allowed her to be ransomed. In addition, Achilles used to often respect suppliants and allow them to stay alive so they could be ransomed.*

In battle, suppliants beg for their life. The suppliant takes one arm and puts it around the knees of the person he is supplicating. This keeps the warrior from moving. The suppliant often uses his other hand to reach up and grab the warrior's chin or beard or weapon. Then the suppliant begs for mercy. By doing these things, the suppliant is showing that he does not have a weapon. One hand is around the warrior's knees; the other hand is grabbing the warrior's chin or beard or weapon. Obviously, the suppliant is not holding a weapon in either hand. In addition, the suppliant is making the warrior pay attention to the suppliant. One hand is around the warrior's knees, so the warrior can't move. The other hand is grabbing the warrior's chin or beard or weapon. The warrior is forced to pay attention to the suppliant. Most importantly, the act of supplication shows that the suppliant is completely vulnerable. The suppliant is unarmed, and the suppliant's throat is exposed because he is looking up at the warrior.

Achilles used to respect suppliants. Not now.

Chapter 21: Achilles Fights the River (Iliad)

Achilles continued attacking Trojans, and he split their army into two parts at the ford of the river Xanthus. One half of the Trojans ran across the plain toward Troy. The previous day the Greeks had fled across the plain to escape from Hector. Now the Trojans fled across the plain to escape from Achilles. Hera spread thick fog across the plain to slow down the Trojans so that Achilles could kill more of them.

Achilles trapped the other half of the Trojans in the river. They spun around in whirlpools. They screamed. They had little control of their movements. They were like locusts feeling the heat of a fire and flying into the air and heading toward a river as the fire burns them and beats them down. Now, because of Achilles, the river was choked with men and horses.

Achilles dropped his spear on the riverbank and plunged into the river with his sword, eager to kill and kill again. Trojans groaned and screamed. Stabbed by Achilles' sword, they bled and the river water grew red. Like fish fleeing from a dolphin that devours all it can, the Trojans attempted to flee from Achilles.

Even Achilles grew tired because of all the effort he exerted while killing. He captured twelve young Trojans warriors alive so that he could kill them later as a human sacrifice at the funeral of Patroclus. He took the young Trojans from the river and onto the riverbank. They were dazed; they were as helpless as fawns. He tied their hands behind them with their own war-belts, and he gave them to aides to take back to the ships. Then he returned to killing.

Now he saw Lycaon, a son of Priam, climbing out of the river. Achilles had captured him not long ago. Achilles had been on a night raid, and he had found Lycaon in Priam's orchard, where he was cutting branches from a fig tree so that he could use them to make rails for a chariot. Achilles captured him. Achilles had sold him off as a slave to King Euneus of Lemnos, but Eetion of Imbros ransomed him and sent him to Arisbe, and from there Lycaon went back to Troy and his father, Priam.

Lycaon stayed with his father for eleven days, and the twelfth day — this day — he returned to war and again ran into Achilles — an Achilles now without mercy, an Achilles very willing to send him to the Land of the Dead. Lycaon was disarmed — no shield, no helmet, no spear.

Achilles, recognizing him at once, said, "These Trojans keep coming back. I captured this man and sold him as a slave in Lemnos, and here he is again! Let me see if I can keep him from coming back this time. My spear should accomplish that goal. Either he will return yet one more time or the life-giving earth will cover him and keep him from rising."

Lycaon was afraid. He wanted to live. He stumbled toward Achilles, wanting to grab his knees and plead for mercy. Achilles raised his spear — Lycaon ducked underneath it and grabbed

Achilles' knees with one hand and Achilles' spear with the other. He begged, "Achilles, have mercy on me. Respect me — a suppliant! Don't kill me! When you captured me, I ate your food, that day you captured me in my father's orchard. You sold me and made a lot of money. I have been at home in Troy for only a few days. I have suffered much already, and yet again fate has placed my life in your hands. Zeus must hate me! My mother, Laotoë, must have given birth to a man with a short life. Priam wed my mother, one of his many wives. My mother gave birth to two sons. You have already killed one of her sons — don't kill the other! You have already killed my brother Polydorus. You speared him in the back as he ran, and the spear came out his navel. He died screaming and holding his intestines. Now I may face a horrible death. You are angry at the death of kind and gentle Patroclus, whom Hector killed. But I am only a half-brother to Hector. We have the same father, but we did not come out of the same womb."

Achilles replied, "You are a fool if you think I will allow you to be ransomed. Don't even speak of it. Before Hector killed Patroclus, sometimes I would spare the lives of a few Trojans. I would take them alive and then sell them as slaves. No longer. I will spare the lives of no Trojans. I especially will not spare the lives of Trojans who have Priam as their father.

"Friend, you are going to die anyway. You are mortal. Why are you complaining? Look at me. I am handsome. I am strong. I have an immortal goddess as a mother. Does that make me immortal? No. I will die. Someday, not long from now, my death and my fate are coming. Perhaps at dawn, perhaps at sunset, perhaps at noon, a warrior will kill me with a spear or an arrow."

Lycaon knew that he was going to die. He let go of Achilles' spear, and he sank to the ground. Achilles drew his sword and plunged it to the hilt into Lycaon's neck. Lycaon died quickly, his blood spilling as he fell on the ground.

Achilles grabbed Lycaon's foot and threw him in the river. Lycaon's corpse washed downstream and Achilles shouted after it, "Stay with the fish. They will eat your corpse! No need for a funeral! Your mother will not be able to give your body a proper funeral. The river Scamander will carry your corpse to the sea. The fish will dine on your fat.

"Trojans, die! I will kill and kill again until I reach Troy. Try to run from me, and I will run you down and kill you! Not even this river will be able to save you. You have sacrificed to the river-god many bulls and horses. Those sacrifices won't help you. All of you Trojans will pay with your blood for the death of Patroclus and the other Greeks!"

The river-god of the Xanthus River grew angry at Achilles and his words. A Trojan river-god, he supported the Trojans and wished to slow down or stop Achilles' rout of the Trojans. The river-god was angry at pitiless Achilles for killing so many Trojans.

Achilles charged Asteropaeus, whose father was the son of the river-god of the Axius River. The river-god of the Xanthus River filled Asteropaeus, who carried two spears, with courage.

Achilles asked, “Who are you? Where do you come from? Pity all warriors who attempt to fight me!”

Asteropaeus replied, “I am a Trojan ally, not a Trojan. I come from a land that is far away. This is the eleventh day since I arrived at Troy. The Axius River fathered Pelagon, and he is my father. I know who you are, Achilles. Let’s fight!”

Achilles raised his spear, but ambidextrous Asteropaeus threw both of his spears at the same time. One spear hit Achilles’ shield, but the third layer — the gold layer — stopped it. The other spear grazed Achilles’ arm, cutting the skin and drawing blood. Achilles threw his spear. It missed, plunging half its length into the ground because of Achilles’ great strength.

Achilles drew his sword and rushed at Asteropaeus, who tried but failed to pull Achilles’ spear out of the ground. Three times he grabbed the spear and pulled, but the spear would not move. The fourth time he tried to pull out the spear, Achilles was on him, cutting open his midriff so that his intestines fell out onto the ground.

Normally, Achilles was too eager to kill to stop and strip off his fallen enemies’ armor, but he was angry at being wounded and so he stripped off the armor of Asteropaeus, telling the corpse, “Stay there with the other corpses! You say that your ancestry includes a river-god? My ancestry includes Zeus himself. My grandfather is Aeacus, and his father was Zeus, who is much stronger than any river-god.

“Look at this river beside us! Can it help you? No! No river — not even the Ocean River — is more powerful than Zeus!”

Achilles pulled his spear from the ground and left Asteropaeus lying in the river, fish nibbling at his fat.

Achilles charged Asteropaeus’ warriors — the Paeonians — who fled from him now that their leader was dead. Achilles killed and killed again. He killed Thersilochus, Mydon, Astypylus, Mnesus, Thrasius, Aenius, and Ophelstes.

Achilles would have killed more Paeonians, but the river-god of the Xanthus River cried out, “Achilles, stop! You are strong, and you are merciless. You have the help of the gods! If you must kill Trojans, do it on the plain, not in my river, which is choked with so many corpses that the water cannot reach the sea. The amount of slaughter you are committing horrifies me!”

Achilles replied to the river-god, who is called Scamander by mortals and Xanthus by the gods, “I will kill on the plain, as you want, but I will not stop killing Trojans and their allies until either I kill Hector or he kills me.”

Achilles ran to the plain, but the river-god cried out to Apollo, “Why are you holding back and doing nothing? Don’t you have orders from Zeus to help the Trojans and save their lives until the sun sets?”

Hearing that, Achilles became angry and not recognizing the limits of a human being, he ran to the river and jumped into its waters, eager to fight the river-god, who caused the waters to rise and throw all of the corpses in the river out onto the plain. The river-god also hid the still living Trojans in the river's water so that Achilles could not find and kill them.

The river-god caused a tremendous wave to slam against Achilles' shield and stagger him. Achilles grabbed a full-grown elm tree and held on to it, but the elm tree fell into the river, taking much of the riverbank with it. Achilles rose to the surface and rushed toward the plain. But the river-god was not finished with Achilles, although Achilles ran as fast as a swooping eagle. The river-god caused the river's waters to run after Achilles. A farmhand sets up an irrigation system to bring water to plants, but the water gets out of control. Too much water flows, and what should be a trickle becomes a flood that threatens the farmhand. Much like that, the waters threatened Achilles. Mortals should not fight gods unless they have the permission of gods more powerful than the ones they are fighting.

Achilles kept whirling about trying to find the river-god to fight him, wondering if all the gods were now opposed to him. Again and again, huge waves crashed down on Achilles, trying to knock him off his feet.

Achilles prayed, "Zeus! Won't even one god rescue me! If I escape this river-god, I will face any fate you give me. My mother must have lied to me. She said that I would die before the walls of Troy, killed by the arrows of Apollo. A better death than drowning would be for Hector to kill me. He is the best Trojan warrior. Hector is a hero, and anyone he kills in battle is a hero, even if Hector strips the fallen warrior's armor. Better a death like that than to be drowned like a young pig-keeper who falls into a river!"

Poseidon and Athena heard Achilles' prayer. They assumed human form and came to assist him and give him courage. They grabbed his hands and brought him onto the plain.

Poseidon said, "Achilles, have courage! Don't be afraid. Two gods — Athena and I — are helping you. Your mother did not lie. You will not drown in the river. Soon this river will subside.

"Listen to us. Keep killing Trojans until you have routed them back to Troy. Do not stop killing Trojans until you have killed Hector. Then return to the ships. You will win *kleos* today!"

Poseidon and Athena left Achilles, and filled with courage by Athena, he ran down the plain in search of Trojans to kill.

But the river-god was not finished. The waters flooded the plain, and corpses rolled in the waters. Still angry at Achilles, the river-god of the Xanthus River called to the river-god of the other Trojan river — the Simois, "Arise, brother, and attack Achilles! He can this day conquer Troy — no Trojan can stop him in battle! Use your waters as weapons against him, and together we can stop him. He is strong, and his armor is glorious, and we can drown him and

keep the Greeks from ever finding his corpse. I myself will bury his corpse under river-silt! His grave-mound will be under water!”

The waters attacking Achilles grew stronger and more powerful, but Hera was watching. She said to her son, Hephaestus, the god of fire, “Fire opposes water. You are the one who ought to fight the river-god. You are a worthy opponent. Rescue Achilles with your fire! I will order the West and the South winds to blow and make the fire burn hotter. Burn the river-god into submission. Don’t listen to the river-god’s threats or flattery! Keep burning the river-god until I order you to stop!”

Hephaestus followed her orders. His fire burned the plain and the corpses lying on the plain — corpses that Achilles had scattered. In the autumn the North wind blows on a wet field and dries it, gladdening the farmer who can now work in the field. Much like that, Hephaestus and the winds parched the plain and burned the corpses, and then Hephaestus turned the fire on the trees and the river. Elms burned, willows burned, tamarisk bushes burned, and lotus, galingale, reeds, and rushes burned. Eels and fish writhed and jumped in agony.

The river-god, conquered, shouted, “Hephaestus, stop! I give up! I cannot oppose you and win. Let Achilles kill the Trojans! Why should I worry about mortals!”

The river-god screamed. The river’s waters bubbled just like a cauldron bubbles as it melts pig-fat.

The river-god then shouted, “Hera, why is Hephaestus attacking me so much more than any other? Have I ever done anything to you? I have not done anything more than the others who help the Trojans! If you want me to stop helping the Trojans, I will obey! But tell your son — Hephaestus — to stop torturing me! I swear not to do anything to help keep Troy from falling!”

Hera heard the river-god, and she shouted, “Stop, Hephaestus! Enough! There is no need for one god to fight another god over some mortals!”

Hephaestus heard her and quenched his fire, and the waters of the river settled back into their natural channel.

The river-god was defeated, but now many of the gods decided to go to war. Not Zeus. He remained on Mount Olympus. Amused, he watched the battle of the gods.

Ares charged Athena and shouted, “Flea of a dog, I have not forgotten when you helped Diomedes to wound me. You yourself grabbed his spear and guided it into my body. Now it’s payback time!”

He stabbed at her shield — without result. Athena backed away and grabbed a boulder from the ground. It was jagged and weighty; it was an old boundary stone. She threw it at Ares and hit his neck. He fell, and his godly body covered seven acres. Athena laughed at him and said, “Fool, I am better than you are! Ask Hera, who is angry at you because you support the Trojans!”

Athena moved away, and Aphrodite came over to assist Ares and take him away from the gods' battlefield. He groaned. He could not support his weight. Hera saw Aphrodite. Hera said to Athena, "Your work is not done yet. Look at Aphrodite as she helps Ares. Bring her down!"

Athena charged at Aphrodite. Athena used her fists to beat Aphrodite's breasts — a painful punishment. Aphrodite sank to the ground with Ares. Neither Aphrodite nor Ares wanted to go to war against Athena.

Athena boasted, "You are no match for me! May all the gods who support the Trojans have the same 'success' in battle as you two! Then the Trojan War will soon be over, with Troy conquered at last!"

Hearing Athena, Hera smiled.

Poseidon challenged Apollo, his nephew, to fight: "Why not try to take me down? The other gods are fighting, so why shouldn't we? Won't we two be disgraced unless we come to blows? You should throw the first punch. You are younger than I am. I have experienced more and know more than you do.

"But you must have a short memory. You and I labored here at Troy. Zeus punished us when we rebelled against him — Zeus sent us to Troy to work for an entire year for Priam's father, Laomedon, who promised us wages. I labored at building the walls of Troy, and you worked as a shepherd of the king's flocks — but Laomedon refused to pay us the wages he had promised us. He cursed us. He sent us away. He threatened to bind us and make us slaves. He threatened to cut off our ears with an ax. So we went back to Mount Olympus, angry. So why do you now support the Trojans?"

Watching and listening on Mount Olympus, Zeus thought, *Poseidon and Apollo were able to get revenge against Laomedon, the father of Priam. Apollo sent a plague to Troy, and Poseidon sent a sea-monster to terrorize Troy. An oracle told Laomedon that to stop the plague he would have to sacrifice his daughter Hesione to the sea-monster, so Laomedon chained her to a rock so that the sea-monster could kill her. But Heracles showed up at Troy and offered to kill the sea-monster and save Hesione in return for a team of excellent horses. Heracles kept his part of the deal, but Laomedon, treacherous as ever, reneged on giving the horses to Heracles. Angry at this treachery, Heracles conquered Troy and killed Laomedon.*

Apollo replied, "Poseidon, I should not fight you because of some wretched mortal men. Mortal men are like leaves. They flourish for a moment, and then they die. You and I need not fight. Let the mortals fight."

Apollo left. He would be ashamed to fight his uncle, a god older than he.

But Apollo's twin sister, Artemis, insulted him: "So, Apollo, you are a coward who flees from Poseidon. You give him *kleos* without his having to fight you. Why are you even carrying that

bow if you aren't willing to use it? Never let me hear you boast on Mount Olympus that you are willing to fight Poseidon."

Apollo did not reply to Artemis, but Hera had heard her words. Hera, who was Artemis' aunt, said to her, "Artemis, do you have the nerve to fight me with your bow and arrows? You have the power to kill women in childbirth, but I doubt that you have the power to defeat me. You are much more talented at hunting wild animals in the woods than you are at fighting a goddess! So let me teach you not to fight me!"

Hera's left hand grabbed Artemis' wrists, and Hera's right hand stripped away Artemis' bow and quiver of arrows. She then used the weapons to hit Artemis' ears. Hera smiled as Artemis writhed and Artemis' arrows fell on the ground. Artemis cried and ran away from Hera like a dove escaping the attack of a hawk. She left her weapons behind as she fled.

Hermes told Leto, the mother of Apollo and Artemis, "I would never fight you. It is not wise to fight any goddess who has slept with Zeus. So leave. Tell everyone that you defeated me in battle."

Leto gathered her daughter's bow, quiver, and arrows and followed Artemis to Mount Olympus. Artemis arrived first and sought refuge in the arms of Zeus, her father. Crying like a little girl, she sat on her father's lap.

Zeus hugged her and asked, "Who has hurt you, child? It is as if you have been punished for doing something unseemly in public."

Artemis replied, "Your own wife — Hera — hit me! It's all her fault!"

Apollo arrived at Mount Olympus next. He was worried. Troy was not fated to fall on this day, but the Trojans were routed and the Greeks were triumphant, and Troy could fall despite its fate.

The other gods and goddesses soon returned to Mount Olympus. Their battle had been very brief.

Achilles kept on slaughtering Trojans and Trojan allies. Fire can kill many people in its path, and Achilles killed every enemy he could.

Priam was watching from the high walls of Troy. He saw Achilles triumphant, killing and killing again. He saw the routed Trojans trying to make it to Troy alive. He cried out, "Open the gates of Troy! Let our routed troops inside Troy! Achilles is pursuing them. Once our warriors are inside the gates, close them. Don't let Achilles in!"

The Trojan guards opened the gates, and Apollo decided to help the Trojan warriors, who ran to the gates, hoping to save their lives as Achilles pursued them.

Apollo put courage into the heart of Agenor, a minor Trojan warrior and one of the many sons of Antenor. Agenor saw Achilles running toward him, and Agenor wondered what he should do. He said to himself, "Should I run away from Achilles and run toward Troy as the other

Trojans are doing? Is that the best course of action? Achilles is fast, and he will catch up to me and kill me. Or should I leave the other Trojans and run away from Achilles on the plain toward Mount Ida? Is that the best course of action? I could hide from Achilles in the underbrush and stay alive. Then I could wash off my sweat in the river and make my way to Troy. But that is also a bad choice. If I run away from Achilles, he will run after me and kill me. Achilles is much, much stronger and faster than I am. I will not be able to run away from my death at his hands.

“Have I not even one good choice? I could face Achilles here and now. He is stronger than I am. I will almost certainly die, but still I may be able to kill him and bring hope to the Trojans. If I were to fight Achilles a hundred times, at least ninety-nine of those times would result in him killing me. But maybe — not certainly, but maybe! — the hundredth time I would kill Achilles! That is what I will do. I will fight Achilles and almost certainly die. But maybe I will defeat him. At the very least, Achilles will take a few minutes to kill me and that will allow some of my fellow Trojans to escape.”

Zeus, who sometimes knows the thoughts of men, thought, The battle of the gods was silly. The gods who did not fight ended up with more dignity than those who did fight. Many battles of the gods are silly. The gods cannot die, and their wounds heal quickly. In contrast, the battles of mortals are deadly serious. Mortals die, and their psyches go down to the Land of the Dead.

Agenor is a hero. Heroes are willing to risk their lives to help other human beings. Agenor is willing to fight Achilles although he knows that almost certainly Achilles will kill him. Agenor is not going to run away from Achilles. Instead, Agenor is willing to sacrifice his life in an effort to kill Achilles, knowing that his effort will almost certainly fail. Gods cannot die; gods cannot be heroes. But even a warrior who is usually a minor warrior can be a hero.

Agenor stood, waiting for Achilles. Agenor was willing to fight to the death, just like a panther that attacks a huntsman who has a pack of dogs. The panther is not afraid. Even if the panther is speared, she still fights. Either she will kill the huntsman, or the huntsman will kill her.

Agenor held his shield in front of his chest, and gripped his spear. He said to Achilles, “You must be hoping to conquer Troy today. It won’t happen. We still have plenty of warriors — hundreds — left to defend their wives, children, and parents. You will meet your fate at Troy.”

Agenor hurled his spear at Achilles. It hit Achilles below the knee, but it bounced off his armor.

Achilles charged Agenor, but something happened that Agenor had not anticipated — Apollo saved his life. Apollo wrapped fog around Agenor and took him away from Achilles.

Apollo assumed the form of Agenor, returned to Achilles, and fooled him. Apollo allowed Achilles to chase him — Achilles wanted to kill Agenor. Apollo teased Achilles by letting him almost but not quite catch up to him. Apollo ran away from Achilles, leading him to the Scamander River and away from Troy.

Meanwhile, Trojan warriors ran back to Troy. Defeated, they crowded into the city, grateful that they were fast enough to save their lives.

Chapter 22: Hector Fights Achilles (Iliad)

In Troy, the warriors who had fled like fawns away from Achilles drank to quench their thirst. Outside the walls, the Greek troops approached the city. Still outside Troy's walls was Hector, standing by the Scaean Gates. His fate approached.

Apollo now revealed himself to Achilles, saying, "Look at the god you are chasing. You thought that you were chasing Agenor! I tricked you. I wanted to save Trojan warriors. Look! They have reached the walls of Troy! But you are out here, far from the walls. You have been trying to kill me, but you can't — I am immortal!"

Achilles was furious. He shouted at Apollo, "You saved many Trojans whom I would have killed! You have stolen *kleos* away from me. Because you are an immortal god, I cannot punish you, but if I were powerful enough to kill you, I would!"

Achilles ran to Troy. He was like a stallion pulling a chariot in a race.

Priam, King of Troy, saw Achilles first. Achilles blazed like the star known as Orion's Dog, the star that brings dangerous fevers to mortals. Priam saw Achilles' armor glinting, and he groaned and called to Hector, who was still standing outside the walls of Troy, "Don't try to fight Achilles, my son! You have no friends by you to help you! Achilles will kill you without mercy! He is a much stronger warrior than you. I wish that the gods would answer my prayers and kill him and allow the dogs and birds to eat his flesh. Seeing that would relieve much of my misery!"

"Achilles has taken so many of my sons away from me. Either he killed them, or he captured them and sold them into slavery far away. I look, but I cannot find my young sons Lycaon and Polydorus. They are two sons whom Laothoë bore to me. If Achilles captured them alive, I will ransom them with bronze and gold, treasure that is still left to me. We still have treasure left in Troy — treasure that Laothoë's father gave to me as a dowry. But Lycaon and Polydorus may be already dead. Their mother and I will grieve long for them. The Trojans, however, will grieve for them for only a moment because they were minor warriors.

"But you, Hector, are the main defense of Troy! All Troy will grieve long for you if Achilles kills you! So come into the city — be safe behind the walls. You can still defend the Trojan men and the Trojan women. Don't let Achilles kill you and gain *kleos*!"

"Hector, pity me! I am an old man. I am not senile, but old age has withered my limbs. I have already looked on much horror, and no doubt Zeus knows that the end of my life will be additional horror. What will I see at the end of my life? With you dead, I will see my sons killed, my daughters dragged away to become sex-slaves, my treasure carried away, infants killed by being flung to the ground from the high walls of Troy, and the wives of my sons carried away to be slaves and serve their masters in bed!"

“As for me, an enemy will kill me and my dogs will eat my body. The dogs that I have raised to guard me will lap up my blood.

“Young men who die in battle have a noble death. They win *kleos* as they defend wives, children, parents, and citizens. But when an old man dies, the dogs chew his head and his genitals. Does a crueller sight exist?”

Priam groaned, but Hector stayed outside the walls of Troy.

Hecuba, Hector’s mother, cried and opened her robe. She revealed a breast and held it. She called to Hector, “My child, look at *this!* Pity me, your mother, who breastfed you. Come behind the walls of Troy and fight Achilles from here. Don’t try to fight Achilles outside the walls of Troy in single combat. Achilles has no pity. If he kills you, I won’t be able to mourn over your body. Neither will Andromache, your wife, who loves you. Achilles will take your corpse back to the ships and allow the dogs and birds to eat your flesh!”

Both Priam and Hecuba wept and cried out to Hector, but he stayed outside the walls of Troy, waiting for Achilles. A poisonous snake can lie in wait, ready to strike and kill. So Hector waited for Achilles.

As he waited, Hector said to himself, “I must fight Achilles. I have no other good course of action. If I go inside the walls of Troy, I must face Polydamas, who urged me last night to return to Troy now that Achilles is once again fighting for the Greeks. I would not do as Polydamas advised. I was wrong. I should have followed his advice. Now the Trojan army is defeated. Now many Trojan warriors and allies are dead who would be still alive if I had followed Polydamas’ advice. Now many Trojan parents lack sons who would be still alive if I had followed Polydamas’ advice. Now many Trojan sisters lack brothers who would be still alive if I had followed Polydamas’ advice. Now many Trojan women are widows who would be still wives if I had followed Polydamas’ advice. I am ashamed to face the Trojans. Someone will point this out — correctly: ‘Hector destroyed his army because he was so confident in his own strength.’

“Now the best thing I can do is to fight Achilles and kill him. That is the best course of action available to me, and that is the best outcome.

“But suppose I put aside my weapons and armor and greet Achilles with respect. I could promise to give Helen back to the Greeks and give back the treasure that Paris stole from Menelaus. As war reparations, I could give half of the treasure that is inside Troy. I could swear an oath that we will hide no treasure from the Greeks.

“But why even daydream about such things. Achilles will have no pity for me, no mercy. If I don’t wear armor, he will kill me anyway. Instead of killing me like the warrior I am, he will kill me as if I were an unarmed woman.

“I can’t reason with Achilles. I can’t talk to him. It is not as if we are a boy and a girl talking together and sharing secrets.”

Hector was trying very hard not to think of Andromache, his wife.

Hector continued speaking to himself, "All I can do now is to fight Achilles. Zeus will give one of us — maybe even me — the victory."

Achilles was close now, looking like Ares, the god of war, running straight at Hector. Achilles' armor blazed like a fire or the sun.

Hector looked at him and lost his nerve. He was afraid, and he ran. He had no time to get through the Scaean Gates before Achilles reached him, so he ran away, around the city. Achilles was like a hawk chasing a dove, eager to tear it to pieces.

They ran and ran, passing the washing grounds outside the city. Two streams were there: one hot and steaming, and the other cold. In the days of peace, women would gather here to wash their laundry and then dry it on the grass. In the days of peace, so many things were different. People, including women and children, could leave the city and be safe. Shepherds could take their sheep to good pasture. Now only armed warriors left the city. The blessings of peace were gone. The people of Troy had traded the blessings of peace away for Helen so that Paris and she could have an adulterous relationship.

Achilles and Hector ran. Hector was a great warrior, but Achilles was a greater warrior. The two raced for a prize. They raced for a life — the life of Hector. They were like stallions racing in funeral games to celebrate the life of a fallen warrior. They were racing for a fine, notable prize worth racing for.

Achilles chased Hector three times around Troy, and the gods watched them.

Zeus said to the other gods, "I pity Hector. He is a mortal I respected, who respected me. Hector sacrificed many oxen to me both on Mount Ida and inside the walls of Troy. Now Achilles is chasing him, eager to take his life. Achilles is a faster runner than Hector.

"Gods, what should we do? Should we intervene and save the life of Hector or allow Achilles to take his revenge and kill him?"

Athena replied, "Hector is only a mortal. He has a fate — like all mortals, he is fated to die. You can do as you wish, but if you save his life, you will cause trouble."

Zeus said, "Athena, I was merely pitying Hector. I do not intend to save his life. Go, and do to him whatever you wish to do."

Athena flew from Olympus to outside the walls of Troy.

Achilles kept chasing Hector. He was like a hound hunting a fawn until the hound finds and kills the fawn. Hector could not outrun Achilles. Hector tried to run to the walls of Troy so that the Trojans could throw spears at Achilles, but Achilles headed off every attempt, making sure that Hector stayed in between Achilles and the other Greek warriors.

Hector ran like a man in a nightmare. He runs and runs and he can't escape his pursuer, and his pursuer cannot catch him. Apollo gave Hector enough speed to keep just ahead of Achilles.

Achilles shook his head at the Greek warriors, warning them not to try to kill Hector. Only Achilles would kill Hector. Only Achilles would avenge the death of Patroclus.

When Achilles and Hector reached the washing springs for the fourth time, Zeus held his scales. On one scale he placed Hector's fate, and on the other scale, he placed Achilles' fate. Hector's fate sank; on this day, his *psyche* would journey to the Land of the Dead. Apollo then left Hector.

Athena said to Achilles, "Now we will kill Hector. He cannot escape us. Not even Apollo can save his life. Stay here, and I will convince Hector to face and fight you."

Athena assumed the form of Deiphobus, one of Hector's brothers. She said to him, "Brother, I have come to help you fight Achilles. You and I can face him together."

Hector replied, "Deiphobus, you are the brother closest to me, the one I have loved the most out of all the sons whom Priam and Hecuba produced. Now I love you even more. Only one brother left the walls of Troy to come and help me. All my other brothers have stayed where they are safe."

Athena, still disguised as Deiphobus, said, "The others were afraid, both for themselves and for me, and they did not want to leave Troy. Even Priam and Hecuba wanted me to stay behind the walls of Troy. Everyone begged me to stay there.

"But now let's fight Achilles. Either he will kill both of us, or you will kill him."

Athena was luring Hector to his death.

Hector said to Achilles, "I will no longer run from you, Achilles. I was afraid, and I ran three times around the walls of Troy. No longer will I run. Now I want to fight you. Either you will kill me, or I will kill you.

"But first let us make an agreement with the gods as our witnesses. I swear to the gods that if I kill you I will not mistreat your corpse. I will strip your armor from you, but I will give your corpse to the Greeks so that they can give your body a proper funeral and your *psyche* will be allowed to enter the Land of the Dead and not be kept from it, wailing. The dead belong with the dead."

Achilles frowned and said, "No, Hector! You and I shall make no agreements. Do lions and men make agreements? Do wolves and lambs make agreements? No, the only thing that they have in common is that they hate each other. The same is true of you and me. We have no love for each other. The only thing we desire for the other is death. But let's fight. Use whatever courage you have, but it won't do you any good. You do not have long to live. You will pay for the grief you have caused me."

Achilles hurled his spear, but Hector ducked and avoided death. Athena instantly grabbed Achilles' spear and gave it back to him — but Hector did not see her.

Hector said to Achilles, “You missed! You were sure that I would die, but that is not something you can know for sure. You are bluffing. You are trying to scare me with words. You may kill me, but you will not spear me in my back. I will not run. Even if the gods help you, the most you can do is to spear me in the front of my body. But maybe I can kill you with my spear — I want to bury it in your body. With you dead, the Trojans will have an easier time in battle.”

Hector hurled his spear and it hit Achilles’ shield right in the center — but the spear bounced harmlessly off it. Hector did not have a second spear, so he asked Deiphobus to give him his spear — but Deiphobus was not present. Hector realized that he was alone, and he knew that he must die.

Hector shouted, “My fate has arrived! The gods have let me know that I must die now. I thought that my brother Deiphobus was helping me, but Athena was tricking me. And now my death has arrived — the death that long ago all the gods must have planned for me. So let me die — but let me go down fighting!”

Hector drew his sword and charged Achilles. Hector was dangerous like an eagle attacking a lamb. But Achilles also charged, holding his shield in front of him. He also held his spear, the metal point of which blazed like the evening star.

Achilles thought about how best to kill Hector, who was wearing Achilles’ armor — armor that Hector had stripped from the corpse of Patroclus. Achilles knew the armor well, and he knew that the armor left the warrior’s throat exposed. As Hector charged him, Achilles stabbed him in the throat. The mortal wound did not damage the windpipe, so Hector was able to choke out some words as he lay dying.

Achilles spoke first: “Hector, when you stripped my armor from the corpse of Patroclus and put it on, you must have thought that you would be safe — even from me! I was far away, but I am a better warrior than you and I am the avenger of Patroclus’ death. You are not yet done paying for his death. The dogs and birds will mutilate your corpse as they feed on it. You will not be buried, but we Greeks will bury Patroclus. Your *psyche* will not be allowed to enter the Land of the Dead.”

Gasping, Hector pleaded, “I beg you by your parents and by the gods, don’t let the dogs and birds mutilate my corpse. My father and mother will ransom my corpse with bronze and gold. Give my corpse to the Trojans so that it can receive a proper funeral and my *psyche* can enter the Land of the Dead. The dead belong with the dead.”

Achilles frowned and said, “Don’t beg, dog! If I could, I myself would eat your corpse. I would hack off strips of your flesh and eat them raw. You have caused me agonies of grief.”

Zeus thought, *Hector killed Achilles’ best friend, but Achilles has killed or sold into slavery many of Hector’s brothers. The person who has the bigger grievance is Hector, not Achilles. Achilles sent his*

best friend into battle — Achilles should have known that Patroclus could die in battle. What is the essence of war? The death of a loved one.

Achilles continued, “I will not allow you to be ransomed. No one will be able to keep the dogs and birds away from your corpse — not even for ten or twenty times the ransom you speak of, not even if they give me all that now and promise more later. I will not allow you to be ransomed even if Priam offers me your weight in gold. Your father and mother shall never give you a funeral. Instead, the dogs and birds will eat your flesh!”

Hector replied, “You have no mercy. You are incapable of pity. I am dying, and so I have the gift of prophecy. Your mutilation of my corpse will make the gods angry. Soon, Paris and Apollo will kill you before the Scaean Gates.”

Hector died. His *psyche* went down to the Land of the Dead, but not until his corpse had received a proper funeral would it be allowed to enter. His *psyche* mourned at having died in the prime of manhood. His *psyche* mourned at not being allowed to cross the river that kept it from the Land of the Dead. His *psyche* mourned at not being allowed to enter Hades.

Achilles said to the corpse, “Die! Die! Die! Now that you are dead, I will die willingly whenever Zeus chooses to bring my fate to me.”

Achilles pulled his spear out of Hector’s neck, and then he stripped the armor — Achilles’ old armor — from Hector’s body. The other Greek warriors now came close to look at the corpse of Hector, Troy’s greatest warrior. Every Greek warrior stabbed the corpse of Hector. They laughed and said, “Hector isn’t so tough now — not like he was when he burned one of our ships!”

Achilles said to the other Greeks, “Now that the gods have allowed me to kill Hector, we will have to see what the Trojans plan to do next. Will they surrender to us? Will they make a last stand? But first, I have to attend to unfinished business. Patroclus is still unburied. His corpse is lying in my camp. I will never forget Patroclus, not even in the Land of the Dead, a place where souls are thought to lose all memory.

“Now we have triumphed! Let us take the corpse of Hector to our ships. Let us cry out in triumph: Hector is dead!”

Achilles was not finished shaming the corpse of Hector. He cut holes in Hector’s ankles. Through them he threaded rawhide ropes. He tied the ropes to his chariot and left Hector’s head lying on the ground. Then Achilles mounted his chariot and drove away, dragging Hector’s handsome head in the dust.

Hecuba, Hector’s mother, tore the veil and headdress from her face and screamed as she looked at her son’s corpse being dragged away with no hope for a funeral.

Priam cried, and the citizens of Troy cried with him. They cried as if Troy were in flames and were being sacked. They knew that soon — now that Hector was dead — Troy would fall to the Greeks.

Priam wanted to get Hector's corpse back immediately so he could bury it and allow Hector's *psyche* to enter the Land of the Dead. He wanted to ransom it immediately. Troy's citizens physically held him back.

Priam cried to his citizens, "Let me go! I must go to Achilles and give him treasure. I must ransom the corpse of my son. Maybe Achilles will respect an old man. His own father is an old man now. He raised Achilles, who has been a horror to me — he has killed so many of my sons. I mourn Hector most of all. I mourn him so much that I could die. I wish that Hector could have died here, in my arms — then his mother and I could give him a proper funeral!"

Hecuba mourned, "How can I live without you, Hector? I was so proud of you. You were the defender of Troy. Trojan citizens honored you. But now you are dead."

Andromache still did not know that she had become a widow. No one had brought to her the news that Achilles had killed Hector. She was still in their home, weaving and embroidering flowers onto a robe. She had ordered her serving women to heat water so that Hector could have a hot bath when he returned home from the fighting. She did not know that Achilles was dragging Hector's head in the dust.

Andromache heard screams coming from the walls of Troy. She knew that something bad had happened. She stopped weaving; she shook with fright. She ordered her serving women, "Two of you go with me to the walls. I must find out what has happened — I just heard the screams of Hecuba, Hector's mother. Something horrible must have happened! Maybe Achilles has killed my husband!"

She ran to the walls, her serving women following her. She looked down on the plain. She saw Achilles dragging the corpse of her husband behind his chariot. She fainted, and as she fainted she tore her veil and headdress from her face.

Zeus thought, *I see so much when Andromache — and Hecuba earlier — tears off her veil and headdress. Married women wear veils and headdresses. When in Greek art a warrior tears off the veil and headdress from the head of a woman, it means that woman is now a widow and a slave. If the woman is young and pretty, like Andromache, she will be forced to serve her master in bed — she will be a sex-slave, just like Briseis and Chryseis. If the woman is older, like Hecuba, she will be a slave. The tearing off of a married woman's headdress and veil is a way of representing that the woman's marriage is being violated. The word for a married woman's veil and headdress is kredemna. This is also the word for the ramparts and battlements of a city. When the ramparts and battlements of a city are thrown down, that city has been conquered. When Andromache tears off her veil and headdress, her kredemna, we see in that image the coming fall of Troy. Now that Hector is dead, the fall of Troy is inevitable — the Greeks will conquer Troy.*

Andromache regained consciousness and struggled to breathe. The women of Troy tried to help her.

Andromache cried, “Hector, both of us are destroyed! We share the same sad fate, although you were born and raised in Troy and I was raised elsewhere. I wish that I had never been born!”

“Now your *psyche* is journeying to the Land of the Dead, and I am still alive: a widow with a baby boy who has no father. What will happen to him now that you are dead and can no longer protect him? Even if he does not die during the war, his life will be filled with misery. Strangers will steal his land. Fatherless children have no friends. He will be humiliated and hungry. He will go to your former friends, and they will give him some food, but not enough. He will not starve, but he will be hungry. Bullies will beat him and tell him, ‘Go away. You have no father. You are not welcome here.’ Then he will come crying to me, his mother, a widow.

“But when you were alive, our son ate well. He ate the best, tastiest cuts of meat. When he was tired, he would go to sleep in the arms of his nurse; he was safe, secure, with no worries. He was called the Lord of the City because he was your son. You were the great hope of the Trojans to fight off the Greeks and keep Trojan citizens alive and free.

“But now your corpse will lie by the Greek ships. Worms will crawl through your corpse and eat it after the dogs and birds have eaten their fill.

“Your corpse will lie naked although in our home we have fine clothing. The clothing will never serve as your shroud, so I will burn it. I will sacrifice the clothing to honor you.”

Andromache cried, and the Trojan women cried.

Chapter 23: Funeral Games for Patroclus (Iliad)

The Greeks took Hector's body to the ships. Most of the Greeks went to their camps, but Achilles commanded his Myrmidons, "Let us honor Patroclus. Drive your chariots three times around the corpse of Patroclus. Then we will unhitch the horses from the chariots and eat the evening meal."

They did that, and Achilles cried in grief. The Myrmidons also grieved, and the sand around Patroclus' body was wet from tears.

Achilles touched Patroclus' chest and said, "Farewell, Patroclus. I will do everything that I have promised you that I would do. As I promised, I have killed Hector — the dogs and birds will eat his flesh. I have captured twelve Trojan young men. As I promised, I will sacrifice them at your funeral."

Achilles threw Hector's corpse facedown beside the corpse of Patroclus. One corpse was well cared-for; the other was not.

The Myrmidons removed their armor and took care of the horses, and Achilles and his Myrmidons prepared the evening meal. They butchered many cattle, sheep, goats, and swine.

At the request of the other Greek commanders, Achilles went to Agamemnon's camp. They wanted him to eat with Agamemnon. They also wanted him to wash the blood from his body. Achilles refused, saying, "No. I have taken an oath. I will not wash until I have placed the corpse of Patroclus on a pyre and burned it. Agamemnon, I request that when dawn arrives you order the warriors to cut timber for Patroclus' pyre. We must do everything necessary for Patroclus' *psyche* to enter the Land of the Dead. Patroclus' body must be cremated, and then we can begin to fight again."

Agamemnon agreed. The Greeks ate and then returned to their own ships to sleep.

Achilles lay alone on the beach, mourning for Patroclus. Exhausted from fighting and from grief, he managed to fall asleep. Immediately, Patroclus appeared to him in a dream.

Patroclus said to Achilles, "Have you forgotten me now that I am dead? You never forgot me while I was still alive. You must give me a proper funeral — quickly. Burn my corpse and collect the bones so that I may enter the Land of the Dead. My *psyche* is not allowed to cross the river and pass through the gates that lead to the Land of the Dead — not until my corpse receives a proper funeral. The horrible punishment that you want to give to Hector you are also giving to me because you have not burned my corpse. I mourn. I weep. I cannot enter the Land of the Dead. I wander up and down on the wrong side of the river. I am unable to reach my eternal home. Hermes, the Guide of the Dead, will not allow me to cross the river. I beg you to help me reach the Land of the Dead.

“I will never be alive again. I will never be with you and talk with you again. I am dead, and the dead belong with the dead.

“Achilles, your fate is coming for you. You will die — soon — before the walls of Troy.

“I have one final request to ask you. Let your bones and my bones be together in death. Let them be together just as we have been together since our youth. I came to your father’s palace because I had killed a man and was fleeing for my life. I was just a boy when I killed a man with whom I had been gambling. I had not meant to kill him. My father, Menoetius, took me to the palace of your father, Peleus. You and I finished growing up together. I was your aide. Put my bones in the gold two-handed urn that your mother gave you. Later, your bones can join mine.”

Achilles replied, “Patroclus, I will do everything that you have asked me to do. Let me hug you once more.”

Achilles tried to hug Patroclus three times, but there was nothing substantial for him to touch. Each time he tried to hug Patroclus, it was if he were trying to hug smoke.

Patroclus disappeared, and Achilles woke up. He said to himself, “Even after we are dead, something of our personality remains. We are not alive, we are a phantom, but something of us remains. I saw Patroclus, and I talked to him.”

Dawn arrived, and Agamemnon ordered men to cut timber for the funeral pyre of Patroclus — his corpse must be cremated. Agamemnon put Meriones, Idomeneus’ aide, in charge. They cut down trees, split them, and dragged them back to the ships to the spot where Achilles would burn the corpse of his best friend. Achilles planned to build a funeral mound there; it would house the bones of Patroclus and of himself.

They built the pyre, and Achilles ordered his Myrmidons, “Harness your chariots. We must take the corpse of Patroclus to the pyre.”

They placed the corpse of Patroclus in a chariot, and they covered his corpse with locks of hair they cut off to honor him. In tears, Achilles held the head of his best friend.

They reached the site of the pyre. Achilles cut off a long lock of his own hair. He had been growing the lock long in order to cut it off to honor the river-god Spercheus back home in Greece, but Achilles would never return home.

Achilles cried out, “Spercheus, my father wanted me to cut off this long lock of hair in order to honor you once I returned home. He also wanted me to sacrifice many animals to you once I returned home. But now I will never return home, and so I cut off this lock to honor my fallen friend.”

Achilles placed the lock of his hair in the hands of Patroclus.

Achilles then said to Agamemnon, “You are the leader of the Greek army. The warriors will obey your orders. I request that you dismiss the warriors so that they can go and butcher animals

for the evening meal. My Myrmidons and I will attend to the cremation of Patroclus' body. But I request that you and the other main commanders stay here."

Agamemnon agreed and dismissed the troops. He and the other main commanders stayed.

The mourners prepared the pyre. It was a hundred feet long and a hundred feet wide, and they placed the corpse of Patroclus on top. They sacrificed sheep and cattle, and Achilles cut fat from their bodies and covered Patroclus' body with it. He wanted to ensure that the corpse would completely burn.

Achilles put jars of honey and oil beside the corpse. He sacrificed four stallions and threw their bodies on the pyre. He cut the throats of two of the nine dogs that Patroclus had fed — he wanted to be sure that enough dogs remained to feast on Hector's corpse. Achilles also sacrificed the twelve young Trojans; enraged, he hacked them with his sword.

Achilles said to his friend's corpse, "Just as I promised, I have sacrificed twelve Trojan youths. Their bodies I will burn, but I will never burn the body of Hector — the dogs will eat his corpse!"

Achilles was wrong about the dogs — the gods protected the corpse of Hector. Aphrodite stood guard over the corpse, and she beat away any dog that came near it. She also anointed the body with oil to protect it when Achilles dragged the body behind his chariot. Apollo, god of the sun, also protected the corpse. He put a cloud between the sun and Hector's body to keep the body in shadow and protect it from the sun's rays.

The funeral pyre of Patroclus was not burning the way it should burn. It was burning feebly, not fiercely. Achilles prayed. He promised splendid sacrifices to the West wind and the North wind if they would blow and make the fire burn.

Iris, the messenger of the gods, heard Achilles and took his prayer to the West wind and the North wind. All of the winds were banqueting in the halls of the West wind. Iris stood in the doorway, and the winds invited her in to feast with them.

Iris declined: "Thank you, but no. I am off to the land of the Ethiopians to share in their sacrifice. I have come here to bring you the prayer of Achilles. He promises splendid sacrifices to you, the West wind and the North wind, if you will blow and make Patroclus' funeral pyre burn."

Iris sped away, and the West wind and the North wind blew. The winds reached the seas and created waves. They reached the funeral pyre, and the fire burned fiercely. All night the winds blew and the fire burned. All night Achilles poured wine onto the ground as a sacrifice to the gods. All night Achilles mourned for Patroclus. He mourned for Patroclus the way a father mourns a son who dies on the day that he was to be married.

After the morning star came and then the Dawn, the fire burned down and the winds headed for home and the waves died down. Achilles lay down. Exhausted, he slept.

Agamemnon and the other commanders arrived.

Achilles woke up and requested, “Agamemnon, commanders, please pour wine over the fire to put it out. Then we will collect the bones of Patroclus. They are in the center of the pyre, away from the bones of the human sacrifices. We will put the bones of Patroclus in an urn made of gold. We will seal it tight until I myself am dead. For now, we will build a small funeral mound for Patroclus. Later, after I am dead, you can build the funeral mound higher.”

The Greek commanders obeyed Achilles’ wishes. They poured wine over the fire. They gathered Patroclus’ white bones. They put the bones in a golden urn and sealed it tightly and then placed it in Achilles’ shelter. They also built the funeral mound.

The Greek commanders were ready to leave, but Achilles asked them to stay. He wanted to hold funeral games to honor Patroclus. Achilles brought out valuable prizes from his ships: cauldrons, tripods, stallions, mules, cattle, women, and metals.

The first event was the chariot race. The winner of the chariot race would win a beautiful woman who was skilled in crafts and a tripod with two handles. The runner-up would win an unbroken six-year-old mare that was pregnant with a mule foal. The third-place finisher would win a cauldron. The fourth-place finisher would win two bars of gold. The last-place finisher would win a jar with two handles.

Achilles announced to the Greeks, “Agamemnon, Menelaus, all you Greeks, let the funeral games for Patroclus begin. Here are the prizes for the charioteers. If the funeral games were being held for another hero, and if I were a competitor and not the host, I would win first place. My team of horses is the best — my horses are immortal. Poseidon gave these immortal horses to my father, and he gave them to me. But I will not race. My horses are mourning for Patroclus, who took such good care of them. The heads of my horses hang down, their manes in the dust, mourning a fallen warrior. But the rest of you can compete, if you trust in your horses and chariot.”

The competitors stepped forward. Eumelus was a good charioteer with the best team of horses except for Achilles’ own. Diomedes would use horses that he had taken from Aeneas — horses that had descended from those belonging to Tros. Menelaus would use Blaze, a mare belonging to Agamemnon, and Brightfoot, his own stallion. Blaze used to belong to Echepolus, but he gave Blaze to Agamemnon to pay his fine so that he would not have to go to Troy and fight. He was rich, and he preferred to stay in Greece. The fourth charioteer was Antilochus, one of the sons of Nestor, and the fifth and final charioteer was Meriones, the aide of Idomeneus.

Nestor gave Antilochus advice in racing tactics: “Antilochus, you are young, but the gods have shown that they respect you. You have learned horsemanship. You have racing skills. Still, out of all the teams that are competing in the race, your team is the slowest. Nevertheless, the charioteer is as important as the team of horses. A good charioteer can make up for the slowness of his horses by using skill and tactics.

“Too many charioteers drive their horses carelessly. They make wide turns and lose ground. A skilled charioteer will make a tight turn, staying close to the turning point. That way, the charioteer does not travel too much distance and does not lose time.

“In this race, the turning point is a stump that is six feet high. Make a tight turn there. Keep close to the stump but do not hit it or you will lose the race. As you make your turn, lean to the left, in the direction in which you are turning. Whip the horse on the right to make it run faster than the horse on the left. Make the left horse stay close to the stump as you turn the chariot. In the straightaway you will trail the other teams, but you can make up time and distance in the turn.”

Nestor sat down to watch the race.

The charioteers boarded their chariots, and Achilles shook the lots that had been placed in a helmet. Antilochus got the inside track. Next came Eumelus, then Menelaus and Meriones, and Diomedes got the outside track. The referee at the stump was Phoenix, who would ensure that all competed by the rules as they turned and headed for the finish line.

At the signal, the chariots took off. The charioteers whipped their horses and yelled. Dust rose in the air, and the horses' manes were swept back by the wind the racing horses created. The chariots bounced, and the charioteers drove their teams of horses.

They reached the halfway mark, turned, and then began the final jockeying for position. Eumelus, who had the best horses, was far in front. Diomedes was in second place, close and coming closer.

The gods were watching, and the gods had favorites, and the gods were not above cheating. Apollo knocked Diomedes' whip out of his hands. His team slowed. But Athena grabbed the whip and placed it back in Diomedes' hands. She then smashed the yoke of Eumelus' chariot. The yoke of his chariot plowed a furrow, and Eumelus fell out of the chariot. Contact with the ground ripped skin from his elbows, mouth, and nose. He hit his forehead. He was disappointed and frustrated — he had been far in the lead.

Now Diomedes raced ahead, first by far of all the charioteers. In second place was Menelaus, and close behind him was Antilochus.

Antilochus yelled to his father's horses, “Faster! We can't pass Diomedes — he is too far in front! But we can pass Menelaus! If you don't pass Menelaus, Blaze will beat you — she is a mare! I warn you that if you don't pass Menelaus, my father will kill both of you horses! Faster! We can pass Menelaus where the road narrows!”

Antilochus' horses galloped faster. Just ahead was a place where winter rains had washed out part of the road. Enough hard dirt remained for one chariot to drive on, but around it was soft mud and holes that would slow down or ruin a chariot and injure horses. Only a fool would drive a chariot on such dangerous land.

Now Antilochus started to pass Menelaus although ahead there was not enough hard ground for two chariots. One charioteer would have to slow down to avoid the total disaster of two chariots crashed and two teams of horses injured. Menelaus was in front; he had the right of way. The rules of chariot racing stated that Menelaus should stay in the lead until the chariots passed the narrow place, and then Antilochus could attempt to pass him. But Antilochus ignored the rules. He was a young man, willing to take unnecessary, dangerous chances, and he wanted to win the second-place prize: the unbroken, pregnant mare.

Menelaus shouted at Antilochus, “Don’t try to pass me here! Wait until we are past the narrow place, and then you can try to pass me! Don’t wreck both of our chariots — don’t destroy both of our teams of horses!”

Antilochus kept trying to pass, and Menelaus slowed his horses to avoid a disaster.

As Antilochus drove past him, Menelaus shouted at him, “You used to have good sense, or so we thought. We were wrong! The only way you will take the second-place prize is to perjure yourself by swearing to the gods that you did not break the rules of chariot racing!”

Menelaus then shouted to his horses, “Gallop! We can still catch up with Antilochus’ horses! They are older than you! They don’t have staying power!” His horses galloped after Antilochus’ chariot.

Achilles and the other Greek commanders waited for the chariots to arrive. Idomeneus stood on a good spot to see far, and he was the first to see the chariots and horses coming.

He said to the other Greek commanders, “Am I the only one who sees the chariot in front? I think we have a new leader. Eumelus was in front at the beginning of the race, but now it’s someone else. Eumelus must have run into trouble of some kind. Maybe he dropped his reins. Maybe his horses failed to safely make the turn. He may have smashed his chariot, and maybe his horses have run away.

“But look! I think I see Diomedes in the lead!”

Little Ajax disagreed — vehemently. He had faith in the chariot driving of Eumelus and in the swiftness of Eumelus’ horses. Little Ajax said to Idomeneus, “Don’t talk nonsense! You are an older man, and you don’t see as well as younger men. Eumelus is still in the lead — he must be!”

Idomeneus replied, “Little Ajax, you are a fool. Stubborn, too. Let’s make a bet. Let’s bet a tripod or a cauldron each and let Agamemnon be the judge of the chariot race. You will learn to be quiet after you have paid the price of losing the bet.”

Little Ajax and Idomeneus were ready to fight, but Achilles, a dissolver of quarrels, said to them, “No more! No more insulting each other, and no more fighting! Think of where you are! This is not the time or the place for such behavior! When you cool down, you will realize that. Wait, and the winner of the chariot race will soon arrive and you will see who is right.”

Diomedes and his horses stormed to the finish line in first place, well ahead of everybody else. His horses were lathered, and Diomedes was covered with dust from the race. Diomedes' aide Sthenelus collected his first-place prizes: the beautiful woman who was skilled in crafts, and the tripod. He took them to Diomedes' camp.

Antilochus crossed the finish line, but Menelaus closely pursued him. His horses had been behind by the length of a spear-throw, but now the distance between them was very small. Menelaus would have passed Antilochus if only the racecourse were longer. Meriones, Idomeneus' aide, finished fourth. His horses were slow, and the other charioteers were more skilled than he.

Finishing last was the charioteer who, if all had gone well, would have finished first: Eumelus. Achilles wished to give credit to Eumelus for his fine team of horses and for his skill as a charioteer, and so he said, "The best charioteer finishes last. Allow me to give him a better prize than his finish allows — we all know his skill at driving chariots. Allow me to award him the second-place prize. Diomedes has won first place."

Everyone agreed with Achilles' desire — everyone but Antilochus. An older man would have agreed with Achilles' desire, but Antilochus was still young and learning. He said, "Achilles, I will be furious if you give Eumelus the mare that I have won. Yes, Eumelus would have won if the yoke of his chariot had not broken, but he should have prayed to the gods. Then he could have finished the race in a better position. You want to give Eumelus a better prize? No problem. In your shelters you have gold, bronze, sheep, female slaves, and racehorses. Pick out a prize for him and give it to him. But I won't give up my prize — the mare! Eumelus will have to fight me before he gets it!"

This was an awkward situation, but Achilles, a solver of problems, knew how to handle it. He smiled. He liked Antilochus.

Achilles replied, "You want me to give Eumelus a prize from my shelters? Good idea. I will give Eumelus the breastplate that I stripped from Asteropaeus. It is bronze and tin, and I know that Eumelus will value it."

Achilles' aide, Automedon, brought the breastplate from Achilles' tents, and Achilles was right — Eumelus did value it.

But now more unpleasantness arose. Menelaus was still angry at Antilochus for passing him at the narrow part of the road. He said, "Antilochus, you cheated in the chariot race. You disregarded safety and the rules of chariot racing. You deliberately passed me at a narrow part of the road — a part where there was not enough room for two chariots to race side by side. The rules of chariot racing state that one chariot can pass another only when the passing can be done safely. I want justice, and I want everyone to realize that I am in the right and am not exerting power over you simply because I am older and more powerful than you. Here's what we will do.

You can keep the mare if and only if you swear an oath to the gods that you did not cheat in the chariot race.”

Antilochus matured. He realized that Menelaus was right, and he admitted it in public.

Antilochus said, “I am at fault, Menelaus. I cheated exactly as you said I did. I am young, and sometimes I act like it. Young men sometimes act without intelligence, and I acted that way. You take the second prize: the mare. And if you want an additional prize, anything I have in my shelter, I will get it and give it to you. Just tell me what you want. I do not want to make an enemy of an older man, and I will not swear a lying oath to the gods. I apologize for my bad actions.”

Antilochus led the mare to Menelaus and handed her bridle to him.

Generosity can breed generosity, just as anger can breed anger. Menelaus’ heart melted like dew dripping from corn. Achilles had been generous to Eumelus, and now Menelaus was generous to Antilochus.

Menelaus said, “Antilochus, I accept your apology. I am no longer angry at you. In the past, you have always exhibited good sense. Please continue to do so. Let me give credit where credit is due. You, Nestor, and your brother have served me well in my fight to get Helen back. You can keep the mare. I don’t want people to think that I am unforgiving.”

Menelaus gave the mare to Antilochus’ aide, and he led it away. Menelaus accepted the third-place prize: a cauldron. Meriones accepted the fourth-place prize: two bars of gold.

One prize was left: the two-handled jar.

Achilles, a master of etiquette, wanted to honor Nestor. He said to Nestor, “Here is a prize for you, old friend. When you look at it, remember the funeral of Patroclus. We will never see him again among the living. You are too old to compete for prizes, but nevertheless you should have a prize.”

Achilles handed the two-handled jar to Nestor, who was pleased to be so honored.

Nestor said to Achilles, “You are right about my old age. I cannot race, and I cannot box. Not now. No longer. But I was young at one time, and then I could compete in funeral games! When the Epeans buried Amarynceus, I was present and competed in the games. In boxing, I was the victor, defeating Clytomedes. In wrestling, I was the victor, defeating Ancaeus. In foot racing, I was the victor, defeating swift Iphiclus. In the spear-throwing competition, I was the victor, outhurling Phyleus. Only in chariot racing did I come in second, and it took two men working together to beat me. The two sons of Actor — twins — cut in front of me and defeated me. One steered, and the other twin whipped the team. That’s the kind of athlete I was when I was young. Now I am old, but once I was a champion athlete.

“But let me stop talking. You need to hold the funeral games to honor Patroclus. But I value this gift. You honor me, Achilles, and I hope that the gods may give you joy!”

Achilles had enjoyed listening to Nestor’s story.

The next event was the boxing match, and Achilles set out two prizes: a six-year-old unbroken mule for the victor, and a two-handled cup for the runner-up.

Achilles said to the Greeks, “Two men will box for these prizes. If you are willing, step up and box. The victor will take away the mule, and the other boxer will take away the two-handled cup.”

Epeus, a huge boxing champion, stood up. He was willing to fight anyone, and he intended to win. He placed a hand on the mule and announced, “This is my prize — the first-place prize. Anyone who is willing to come in second place can box me. I may not be the best warrior, but I am the best boxer. No man is good at doing everything. But be warned — I will not go easy on you. I will break your ribs, and I will beat you so badly that you will need help leaving the field of our combat.”

The Greeks were silent following his boast. But then Euryalus stood up and met Epeus’ challenge. Diomedes helped him get ready for the boxing match. He fastened the boxer’s belt on him and wrapped his hands with strips of rawhide.

The boxers at first traded jabs, testing each other, and they then traded heavier blows. They then boxed in earnest, grinding their teeth and trying to knock each other out. Epeus looked for an opening, found one, and hurled his fist at Euryalus’ head. Euryalus’ knees bent, and he crashed to the ground. A fish can jump out of the water and be carried by a strong North wind to land, where it will become unconscious. Much like that, Epeus’ fist made Euryalus fall to the ground, unconscious. Epeus, a kind man, lifted him, and Euryalus’ friends dragged him away and sat him down, still half-unconscious and spitting blood. They got the two-handled cup for him.

The third event was the wrestling match. Achilles set out a large tripod — worth twelve oxen — for the winner. The runner-up would win a woman, skilled in crafts and worth four oxen. Achilles said to the assembled Greeks, “Two men are needed to wrestle for first prize.”

The challengers were Great Ajax and Odysseus. Great Ajax was stronger, but Odysseus knew more wrestling moves.

The two locked arms. They were like rafters bolted together to keep a roof from being ripped apart by storm winds. They wrestled, and sweat poured from their bodies and their bones made cracking noises. The two were evenly matched. Odysseus was unable to force Great Ajax to the ground and pin him, and Great Ajax was unable to force Odysseus to the ground and pin him. The two wrestlers were so evenly matched that the Greeks watching them grew bored.

Finally, Great Ajax said to Odysseus, “Either you lift me, or I will lift you. Victory will go to the wrestler whom Zeus favors!”

Great Ajax lifted Odysseus, but Odysseus used his heels to kick Great Ajax in the back of his knees, and Great Ajax fell with Odysseus on top of him. Now the Greeks watching the wrestling match were interested.

Odysseus tried to lift Great Ajax, but he could not lift him completely off the ground. Odysseus hooked his leg around Great Ajax, and both fell to the ground.

The two wrestlers would have attempted a third time to achieve a clear victory, but Achilles said, “Enough. There is no profit in killing yourselves. Both of you are the victors. Share the prizes between you. Now let the other Greeks have a chance at winning prizes.”

Great Ajax and Odysseus wiped off their sweat and the dust and put their shirts back on.

The next event was the footrace. The first prize was a silver bowl: a work of art created by craftsmen of Sidon. Phoenicians had taken it across the sea and given it to Euneus, king of Lemnos, who had given it to Patroclus in order to buy Lycaon, the son of Priam, as a slave. The runner-up would win an ox, and the third and last runner would win a half-bar of gold.

Competing were Little Ajax, known for his swiftness; Odysseus, who liked prizes; and Antilochus, the son of Nestor and the fastest runner among the young warriors.

Achilles pointed out where the runners would turn, and the three runners took off. Little Ajax was in the lead with Odysseus behind him. As much space was between Little Ajax and Odysseus as there is between the breast of a weaver and the weaver’s rod after she has pulled it toward her. As Odysseus ran, his feet hit Little Ajax’ footprints before the dust stirred up by Little Ajax could settle.

Odysseus prayed to Athena, who respected him, “Goddess, help me!”

Athena heard and answered Odysseus’ prayer. She made him faster.

Near the finish line, Little Ajax slipped on some cow manure. He fell, and the manure got in his mouth and nostrils. Odysseus finished in first place.

Little Ajax, who finished second, kept spitting out manure. He said, “Athena made sure that Odysseus would win. She must love the mortal.”

The Greeks laughed.

Antilochus, who finished last, said, “The gods prefer mature men over young men. Little Ajax is just a few years older than I am, but Odysseus is much older. You could almost call him an old man, but his old age is the early, healthy, vigorous part of old age. It is difficult for anyone to beat Odysseus in a footrace — that is, for everyone except swift Achilles.”

Achilles was flattered, and he also wondered, *Did Antilochus deliberately finish last? As the son of Nestor, who is too old to compete, Antilochus ought to compete in the funeral games, but perhaps Antilochus has learned from his earlier interaction with Menelaus not to make older men angry in any way.*

Achilles said to Antilochus, “Thank you for your praise. Allow me to give you a better third-place prize. Instead of a half-bar of gold, here is a full bar of gold.”

Antilochus was happy to receive the better prize.

The next event was the duel. Two warriors would fight and draw blood but not kill each other. Achilles brought out a broadsword, a spear, a shield, and a helmet.

Achilles announced, “Two warriors will fight with armor and spears. Whoever draws blood first will win the broadsword. Both warriors will share the spear, shield, and helmet. I will also give both of them a feast in my shelter.”

The two challengers were Great Ajax and Diomedes. They charged at each other three times, trying to draw blood. The third time they charged, Great Ajax stabbed his spear through Diomedes’ shield but failed to wound him — Diomedes’ breastplate stopped Great Ajax’ spear!

Diomedes tried to stab Great Ajax with his spear and draw blood from Great Ajax’ throat.

The Greeks were afraid for Great Ajax. They cried for Achilles to stop the combat. They declared the contest a draw. Achilles stopped the combat and gave Diomedes the broadsword.

The next event was throwing a lump of pig-iron that King Eetion had used to test his strength before Achilles had killed him in battle and conquered his city.

Achilles announced, “This is the prize for first place. There is enough iron here to keep the winner in iron for five years. Even if he lives far out in the country, he won’t have to go to a market to buy iron. He will have plenty at home.”

The competitors were Polypoetes, Leonteus, Great Ajax, and Epeus, who threw first. His throw was so poor that the Greeks laughed. Leonteus out-threw Epeus. Great Ajax out-threw Leonteus. Finally, Polypoetes far out-threw Great Ajax. Polypoetes won with a throw that out-distanced the field of competitors by as far as a herdsman could throw his staff.

Zeus, who was watching the funeral games, thought, *Great Ajax always seems to finish in second place in the games. Odysseus was perhaps a little better than Great Ajax in wrestling, and Great Ajax came in second in throwing the lump of pig-iron. Diomedes was a little better than Great Ajax in dueling. Diomedes is an offensive warrior, while Great Ajax is a defensive warrior. Diomedes is known for his aristeia in which he wounded Aphrodite and Ares. Great Ajax is known for his defense of the ships. Here offense conquers defense. Similarly, the Trojans, who are on the defensive, will be conquered by the Greeks, who are on the offensive. Great Ajax also comes in second in real life. Achilles is the greatest Greek warrior, while Great Ajax is the second greatest Greek warrior. Even when Great Ajax was heroically almost single-handedly fighting the Trojans at the ships, he still came in second — he was forced back after Hector cut off the head of his spear, one ship was set on fire, and it was up to Patroclus to save the Greeks. After Achilles is dead and his armor is distributed, Great Ajax again will come in second. When the vote is taken on whom to give Achilles’ armor, Odysseus — not Great Ajax — will be awarded the armor.*

The next event was the archery contest. The first-place prize was ten double-headed axes; the second-place prize was ten single-headed axes. Achilles tied the foot of a dove to the mast of a ship, and he challenged two archers to shoot the dove.

Achilles said, “Whoever shoots the dove will win first prize, but whoever hits the cord that ties the dove to the mast will win second prize.”

The competitors were the master archer Teucer and Meriones, Idomeneus’ aide.

They shook lots, and Teucer shot first. He failed to pray to the gods, and so he missed the dove. Instead, he hit the cord that tied to the dove to the mast. Freed, the dove took flight.

Meriones was already holding an arrow in his hands. He quickly took the bow from Teucer, prayed to Apollo and promised him sacrifices, aimed, and shot the dove. The arrow went through the dove’s body and fell at Meriones’ feet. The dove settled back on the mast, fluttered briefly, died, and fell.

The final event was the spear-throwing contest. The first prize was a cauldron, and the second prize was a spear.

Two competitors stepped forward: Agamemnon and Meriones.

Achilles, a master of tact, said, “This is a contest that we do not even need to hold. Everyone, including Meriones, already knows what an excellent spear-thrower you are, Agamemnon. You are going to win, and so let me give you the first prize. We need not hold the contest.”

Achilles said this to honor Agamemnon, who could get angry when things did not go his way. Achilles, who knew that sometimes the best man did *not* win, as seen in the chariot race in which the best man, Eumelus, finished last, did not want Agamemnon to risk a last-place finish.

Meriones, an older and wiser man than Antilochus had so recently been, agreed with Achilles’ decision.

Agamemnon was pleased at the honor shown to him. Generosity breeds generosity, and Agamemnon gave away his prize. He gave the cauldron to Talthibius, his herald.

The funeral games were over. Patroclus had received a proper funeral. So now Hermes, the Guide of the Dead, went down to the Land of the Dead. He landed on the bank of the river opposite the entrance to the Land of the Dead. There, he saw the *psyches* of the dead who had not yet crossed the river. Some, such as Patroclus, had received proper funerals and were ready to enter the Land of the Dead. Other *psyches* had not yet received proper funerals. They wailed. They were dead, and they wanted to be with the dead.

Hermes separated the *psyches* who were allowed to enter the Land of the Dead from those who were not. Hermes led the *psyches* of Patroclus and the others to a ford where they crossed. On the other side of the river, Hermes opened the gates barring the way to the Land of the Dead. He led the *psyches* inside.

If a *psyche* can be happy, the *psyche* of Patroclus was happy. The dead belong with the dead.

Soon, Hermes would lead Priam across a river and then he would open a gate so that Priam could visit Achilles, who would soon die.

Chapter 24: Achilles and Priam (Iliad)

Now that the funeral games for Patroclus were over, the Greeks returned to their camps. They thought of the evening meal and sleep.

Achilles still mourned Patroclus. He could not sleep. He lay on his back and then his side and then his stomach. He could not sleep. He got up and walked on the shore. In an attempt to get some relief, he mounted his chariot and dragged the corpse of Hector three times around Patroclus' funeral mound. Then Achilles tried again to go to sleep.

Apollo pitied Hector and kept his body from rotting. Apollo wrapped an invisible shield around Hector so that Hector's skin would not tear as Achilles dragged him around Patroclus' funeral mound.

Achilles continued to abuse the corpse of Hector, and the gods pitied Hector. Most of the gods wanted Hermes to steal Hector's body, but not Poseidon, Hera, and Athena. They still hated Troy, Priam, and Priam's sons. They were still as angry as they were when the war had started ten years previously. Poseidon was still angry at Troy because of King Laomedon although Laomedon had been dead for many years. Hera and Athena were still angry because they had lost a beauty contest. Paris had accepted the bribe of Aphrodite and had spurned the bribes of Hera and Athena. Paris had accepted Aphrodite's bribe of Helen, the most beautiful woman in the world.

Apollo, god of the plague and of medicine, disliked the abuse of Hector's corpse. Unburied corpses bring plague to living men.

On the morning of the twelfth day since Hector had been killed, Apollo said to the other gods, "Gods can be hard-hearted. Hector always treated us well. He always made sacrifices of oxen and goats to us. Now the gods will not allow Hector's wife, father, and mother and the other Trojans to see his corpse and to grieve over it. Hector's family longs to give his corpse a proper funeral.

"But many of you gods support Achilles, a man without mercy or pity. He is like a lion that pitilessly kills lambs to satisfy his hunger. Achilles has no decency and shame.

"Other men have suffered a worse loss than his. He has lost a friend, but others have lost a brother or a son. These others mourn, they grieve, they cry, and then they continue to live their lives. That is what mortals are supposed to do. The Fates have given mortals hearts that can endure such heavy grief.

"But Achilles refuses to accept the human condition. He slaughtered Hector, he mutilated Hector's ankles, and now he drags him behind his chariot — he lets Hector's head drag in the dust. This does Achilles no good. He will never see Patroclus alive again. Achilles needs to learn

to accept the human condition. He needs to actually live what little is left of his life, not waste it with excessive grieving!”

Hera was angry and lashed out at Apollo: “Hector and Achilles are not equals. Hector’s parents are mortal. He was formed from the seed of his father, and he nursed at the breasts of his mother. But Achilles’ mother is immortal. His mother is Thetis, a goddess I myself reared and then gave to Peleus, a mortal man. All of you gods attended the wedding, including you, Apollo. You played your lyre. Because Hector and Achilles are not equals, we should not treat them as equals. If Achilles has anger like the anger of the gods, he is worthy of it. You, Apollo, regard Hector with too much respect.”

Zeus cautioned his wife, Hera, “Don’t be angry at another god. These mortals are not worth it. Neither Achilles nor Hector will attain the rank of an immortal god. Both of them are and will remain mortal. Still, many of us gods respect Hector — I certainly do. He always kept me well supplied with sacrifices of animals and wine.

“But we won’t steal the corpse of Hector to give it back to his parents. Thetis is almost always near Achilles. She would see what we were doing.

“One of you gods must go to Thetis and call her to me. I have made up my mind: Achilles must allow King Priam to ransom the corpse of his son — Hector must receive a proper funeral!”

Iris carried Zeus’ message to Thetis. She went down to the sea and plunged into the water and dove like a weighted hook carrying death to fish. She found Thetis in a cave with other sea-nymphs; all of them were mourning the fate of Achilles. They knew that he would die before the Scaean Gates of Troy.

Iris told Thetis, “Zeus calls for you to appear before him immediately.”

Thetis replied, “Why? What does Zeus want with me? I don’t want to see any of the Olympians now. But I will go. I must obey the command of Zeus.”

Thetis put on a dark veil, and she and Iris left the cave. Iris led the way, and once they reached the shore they flew to Mount Olympus.

Thetis sat down beside Zeus, taking the seat that Athena vacated for her, and Hera handed Thetis a golden cup of nectar and said a few words to welcome her. The Olympians were showing Thetis good *xenia*.

Thetis sipped some nectar, and then she gave the cup back to Hera.

Zeus said to Thetis, “Thank you for coming to Olympus despite all the grief that you are feeling. I myself recently suffered the death of my mortal son Sarpedon.

“For nine days, we gods have been arguing about the way that Achilles has been treating the corpse of Hector. Many gods want Hermes to steal Hector’s body and give it back to his parents. But I have a better way. I do not want to go behind your back. I want to give Achilles *kleos*, and I want you to continue to respect me.

“Go to Achilles and tell him that the gods are angry at the way he has been treating the corpse of Hector. Tell him that I myself am angry at him because he mistreats Hector’s body and will not allow Hector’s father to ransom the corpse. Perhaps Achilles will respect my wishes and give Hector’s body to Priam.

“At the same time that I am sending you to Achilles, I will send Iris to Priam to command him to bring treasure to Achilles and ransom the corpse of Hector.”

Thetis immediately agreed to do the will of Zeus. She flew from Mount Olympus to Achilles’ camp. He was still mourning the death of Patroclus. He was grieving and shedding tears. The Myrmidons around him were doing the work of living men: slaughtering a sheep and preparing food for the morning meal.

Thetis sat beside her son, stroked his face, and talked to him gently, “Achilles, how much longer will you grieve for your friend? Don’t you ever think of food or sleep? Having sex with a woman is a good thing. Don’t you ever think of that? Remember that you do not have much longer to live. Your fate is coming and bringing death to you.

“Listen to me. Zeus has a message for you. The gods are angry at you because of the way that you have been treating the corpse of Hector. Zeus himself is angry at you. He wants you to allow Priam to ransom with treasure his son’s body.”

Achilles replied, “If that is what Zeus wants to do, I’ll do it. If Priam brings me a ransom, I will accept it.”

Mother and son continued to talk.

Zeus sent Iris speeding down to Troy. He told her, “Be quick! Tell Priam to go to Achilles’ camp and take treasure. He must go with only a herald, an aged man, to accompany him. He will need someone to drive the mules that pull his wagon. Achilles will accept the ransom, and Priam will then bring the corpse of Hector back to Troy.

“We will send Priam a guide. Hermes, the Guide of the Dead, will escort Priam to the camp of Achilles. Hermes is the escort of the dead, taking *psyches* across the ford of the river and opening for them the gates leading to the Land of the Dead.

“Priam need not be afraid — Achilles will respect him and his supplication. Achilles will also not allow anyone else to kill Priam. Achilles’ anger and grief have been excessive, but he is not a madman or a fool. He will not rebel against my will. Achilles will respect whoever supplicates him for the corpse of Hector.”

Iris raced with Zeus’ message to Troy, where she found Priam and his sons, all of them grieving for Hector. Priam had smeared manure on his head and neck — he mourned his dead son. Throughout his palace, the women mourned for Hector, crying aloud with their grief. Widows remembered the many Trojan warriors whom Achilles had killed.

Iris spoke gently to Priam, but recognizing that she was a goddess, he trembled. She said to him, “Have courage! I am here with good news. Zeus pities you, and he will help you to recover the corpse of your son Hector. Take treasure to Achilles to ransom your son. Be accompanied by only an old herald to drive the mules that pull your wagon. Do not be afraid that Achilles will kill you. He will respect you, accept the ransom, and let you take Hector’s body back to Troy. Zeus is even sending you a guide: Hermes will take you to Achilles’ camp. Achilles will not hurt you, and he will keep the other Greeks from hurting you. Achilles will now respect suppliants.”

Iris sped away.

Priam ordered his sons to hitch a team of mules to a wagon. He went to his treasure chamber, and he sent for his wife, Hecuba, and said to her, “A goddess came to me from Zeus and ordered me to ransom the corpse of our son. What do you think? I think that I need to go to Achilles’ camp.”

Hecuba was afraid and cried, “Don’t go! You used to have sense! If you go to Achilles’ camp, he will kill you just like he has killed so many of our sons! All we can do now is to mourn for Hector. Achilles is feeding his corpse to the dogs and birds. I wish I could eat Achilles’ heart and liver — raw. Only that would avenge what he has done to our son Hector, who fought Achilles and never thought of fleeing!”

Zeus, who was listening on Mount Olympus, thought, *How like a mortal mother! Hecuba has chosen not to remember that Hector fled from Achilles three times around the walls of Troy.*

Priam replied, “I have decided to go to Achilles. The message came to me from Zeus, who sent a goddess to deliver it to me. If a mortal prophet had advised me to go to Achilles, I would not. I would think that the prophet was wrong. But not Zeus! And not his goddess messenger! I looked her in the eyes — we were face-to-face. I am going to Achilles, and if I am fated to die in his camp, so be it. At least I can hold Hector in my arms and mourn him before I die!”

Priam lifted the lid of a chest and took out twelve robes, twelve cloaks, twelve blankets, twelve capes, and twelve shirts. He also picked out ten bars of gold, two tripods, four cauldrons, and a magnificent cup: a gift from the Thracians. Priam wanted the corpse of his son so much that he was willing to sacrifice even this magnificent work of art.

Many Trojans surrounded Priam in his palace. Priam was nervous and afraid to meet Achilles, and so he took out his emotions on his citizens: “Get out! Don’t you have somewhere else to be! I am in pain! Achilles has killed my son Hector! You should grieve for him, too — without Hector to protect you, you will be the victims of the Greeks! I hope that I die before I see my city fall!”

Priam shook his staff at them, and they quickly left.

Nine of Priam’s sons remained, and he criticized them: Helenus, Paris, Agathon, Pammom, Antiphonus, Polites, Deiphobus, Hippothous, and Dius. None of these sons was Hector, and Priam wanted Hector to be alive. He shouted at them, “Get to work! I wish that all of you had

been killed instead of Hector! Of all my sons who were heroes, not one of them is still alive! Mestor, Troilus, and Hector are all dead! Ares, the god of war, killed them all! All I have left are you, and you are better dancers than warriors! You eat well, but you don't fight well. You are robbing the Trojans of the best food. Get my wagon ready! Now!"

Hector's nine sons prepared the wagon and hitched up the mules to it. They put the ransom for Hector's body in the back of the wagon.

Priam and his aged herald Idaeus were ready to go, but Hecuba carried a cup of honeyed wine to her husband and requested, "Pour out a libation to Zeus and pray for a safe and successful return. Ask also for a sign — now! — that your prayer will be answered. Ask for a bird flying to the right — the lucky side! If you see the sign, then go, although you go against my will. If you do not see the sign, then stay here and be safe!"

Priam replied, "It is the right thing to do."

He poured water over his hands, and he poured out the libation of honeyed wine to Zeus. He prayed, "Zeus, let Achilles receive me and be kind and merciful. Send us a bird-sign that you will grant my prayer. Allow me to see that bird-sign so that I know that it is safe for me to see Achilles and ransom my son."

Zeus sent a huge eagle that flew to Priam's right — the lucky side! Priam, Hecuba, the aged herald, and Priam's sons looked at the eagle and knew that it was a favorable omen.

Priam and his herald drove out of Troy. His wife and sons followed him to the gates and then returned to their homes. They were crying as if Priam were soon to die.

Zeus saw the two men going across the plain toward the ships, and he summoned Hermes to be their guide: "Hermes, you are the guide of many men. Go to Priam, and guide him to the camp of Achilles. Make sure that no one sees him and recognizes him."

Hermes put on his sandals that make him swift, and he grabbed his wand that enchants men or puts them to sleep as Hermes wishes.

Looking like a young man, newly able to grow a beard, he flew near to Priam's wagon. Darkness now covered the region.

Priam and his herald had driven to the river but had not crossed it. They watered their mules at the river. The herald saw Hermes and said to Priam, "Danger! I see someone! We may be killed! We should either flee or beg for mercy!"

Priam was frightened, and he stared at the oncoming man. Hermes walked up to Priam and said, "Greetings, old man! Where are you going? Aren't you afraid of the Greeks? How would you feel if they were to see you — especially with so much treasure in your wagon? You are old, and your wagon-driver is too old to fight off anyone. But don't worry about me. I would never hurt you. You remind me of my own father."

Priam replied, "I am facing hard times, but even now Zeus is looking after me. He has sent you to me. You are a lucky omen! Your parents are blessed to have a son like you."

Hermes said, "My parents are proud of me, just like you said. But tell me what you are doing with this treasure. Are you sending it away so that it may be kept safe for you? Are you fleeing from Troy, certain that the city will fall now that its finest warrior has fallen — Hector, your own son, who fought well and bravely?"

Priam replied, "Who are you? Who are your parents? How do you know about my son?"

Hermes said, "I have often seen Hector fight in battle. I saw him when he pushed the Greeks against their ships and nearly set their entire fleet on fire! That day he killed and killed again! I am a Myrmidon; I am the aide of Achilles. Achilles kept us out of the fighting for a while. I am the son of an aged father named Polyctor. He had seven sons who shook lots to see who would go to Troy — my lot fell out. I have come to scout the terrain because tomorrow the Greeks are planning to fight again."

Priam requested, "If you really are the aide of Achilles, please tell me about my son's body. Is it still intact, or has Achilles chopped it into pieces and fed them to the dogs?"

Hermes reassured him: "Hector's body is still intact. It lies by Achilles' ships. Although Hector has been dead for twelve days, his corpse has not decayed — no worms eat his flesh. Achilles daily drags the corpse around the funeral mound of Patroclus, but the corpse's skin does not break. Many Greeks stabbed the corpse, but those wounds have been sealed. The gods themselves are taking care of the corpse of your son. He is dead, but the gods respect him."

Priam was happy, and he said, "Making sacrifices to the gods is the right thing to do. Hector always made fitting sacrifices in honor of the gods. He remembered them, and now they remember him — now that he is dead. Please take this cup as a gift. Please safely escort me to the camp of Achilles."

Hermes said, "I will not take the cup. That soon will belong to Achilles, and I will not rob him of what will soon be his. But I will gladly and safely escort you to his camp. I will take you further when needed. I will take you across the ford of a river and open the gates."

Hermes climbed on the wagon, took the reins in his hands, and drove across a ford of the river. He drove the wagon to the trench and some gates of the Greek wall. In the darkness the sentries were beginning to eat their evening meal — Hermes made them sleep. He opened the gates and drove the wagon through. A second set of gates led to Achilles' camp. A heavy pine beam was used to bar the gates. Three ordinary men were needed to lift the beam; Achilles was the only mortal man who could bar and unbar the gates by himself. But now Hermes easily unbarred the gates and drove the wagon into Achilles' camp.

Hermes said to Priam, "Old man, I am the god Hermes. Zeus sent me to be your escort. I will not stay by you now. I should not meet Achilles face-to-face — yet. Go in and clasp Achilles'

knees and beg him to let you ransom your son. Beg him by his father. Beg him by his mother. Beg him by his own son. Move his heart!”

Hermes returned to Olympus.

Priam got off the wagon and left his aged herald behind. Courageously, he went to Achilles’ dwelling. Achilles was sitting. With him were his aides Automedon and Alkimus. Achilles had just finished eating, and the table was still before him.

Priam walked up to Achilles, knelt, clasped his knees with one hand, and with the other brought Achilles’ hands to his lips and kissed them — Priam kissed the hands that had killed so many of his sons in battle.

Achilles recognized Priam and marveled. He marveled at Priam the way people marvel at a man who has murdered a man and fled for his life and then suddenly appears. Automedon and Alkimus stared at Priam.

Priam begged, “Remember your own aged father, Achilles. He is as old as I am. The people in the territories around him must be threatening him now, old as he is, and he does not have you to defend him. But at least he has the joy of hearing that you are still alive, and he hopes to see the day that you leave Troy and return home.

“Now consider me. Some of my sons were heroes, but none of my hero sons is now alive. When the war started, I had fifty sons. Nineteen sons were born to me by one mother, and all of the others were born to me by various women in my palace. Many of my sons died in battle.

“But I had one hero son left: Hector. You killed him! I have come with treasure to ransom his body. Respect the gods! Pity me! Remember your aged father! I deserve pity. I have endured what no man has ever endured before — I have kissed the hands of the man who killed my son!”

Achilles remembered his aged father, and he grieved. Both men grieved together. Priam wept for Hector. Achilles wept sometimes for his aged father, sometimes for Patroclus.

Achilles took Priam’s hand and gently raised him up. This gesture meant that he would respect the suppliant — he would allow Priam to ransom Hector’s body.

Achilles said, “You, old man, have suffered so much — I have caused you so much suffering! You have shown great courage in coming here to my camp without warriors to protect you. You have shown great courage in facing the man who has killed so many of your sons — sons you love. Sit down on this chair. We must get over our grief. We have mourned so long. What good does it do us?”

“The gods are the only beings who do not suffer the grief that you and I and other mortals feel. Zeus has two jars in his palace. In one jar are miseries; in the other jar are blessings. From these jars Zeus gives gifts to mortal men. Many men receive gifts from both jars; sometimes they enjoy good things, and sometimes they suffer miseries. But to some men Zeus gives gifts only

from the jar of miseries; these men are always unhappy — they wander the earth in misery and hunger. No mortal man receives gifts only from the jar of blessings.

“My own father received gifts from both jars. When he was born, he was blessed. He was wealthy and respected. The gods gave him an immortal goddess to marry. But now his gifts come from the jar of miseries. He had a son — only one son: me. And now his son will soon die. His son will not return to Greece to take care of him. No. I will die here at Troy, where I have brought so much misery to your children and to you.

“And you, Priam, have received gifts from both jars. You used to be prosperous. You used to rule a large and wealthy realm. You had many sons and much wealth. But now Troy is at war. Your warriors suffer in battle. So many of your sons and citizens have died.

“But you must continue to live your life. Excessive grieving is not good. Hector will never come to life again. All too quickly, your own life will end.”

Priam said, “Don’t make me sit here in your shelter, Achilles. Give me my son back, and let me leave immediately! Take the ransom, and let me care for my son’s body.”

Achilles replied, “Don’t make me angry, old man. As I have said, I will give you back your son. A goddess — my mother — brought me a message from Zeus telling me to do that. Also, I know that your guide must have been a god. How else is it possible for you to come into my camp? How else could you get past the sentries? Who else could unbar my gates? Don’t make me angry! I don’t want to kill you and violate the rules of *xenia*!”

Achilles knew himself, and he knew other people. He knew that he and Priam were still enemies. Hector had killed Patroclus, and Achilles had killed Hector. Tension still existed between Priam and Achilles. Achilles knew that if Priam were to see the uncared-for corpse of Hector, still filthy from being dragged on the ground, Priam could grow angry. Achilles knew that if Priam were to grow angry, then in turn he could grow angry and kill Priam. Achilles knew that he could not give Hector’s body to Priam in its present state.

Priam was afraid, and he sat down on a chair.

Achilles left his shelter with his aides. They unhitched the mules and led Priam’s aged herald into the shelter so he could sit near Priam. They unloaded much of the ransom, but left two capes and a shirt to clothe the corpse of Hector. Achilles ordered some slave women to wash Hector’s body and rub it with olive oil and then to dress the corpse in the fine clothing. After this had been done, he put Hector’s body on a bier and lifted it onto the back of the wagon.

Achilles prayed to the *psyche* of Patroclus, “Do not be angry at me, Patroclus, if in the Land of the Dead you hear what I have done — I have let Priam have his son. He gave me treasure, and I shall give you your share. I will burn some clothing for you.”

Achilles went back into his shelter and said to Priam, “Your son lies in your wagon, as I promised, and in the morning you will see him and take him to Troy. Now let us eat. As much

as we have grieved, we still must eat. Even Niobe, who suffered the deaths of all twelve of her children in one day, remembered to eat. Niobe was proud. She had given birth to six sons and six daughters, and she boasted aloud, 'I am more worthy of respect than the goddess Leto, who has given birth to only two children: the twins Apollo and Artemis.' Leto's children were angry at the disrespect shown to their mother, and with the anger of the gods, they killed all of Niobe's children, shooting them with arrows. Niobe's children lay for nine days in their own blood, unburied. On the tenth day, the gods buried her children, and then Niobe, who had grieved for so long, ate.

"We too must eat. Later, you can grieve again for your son, after you have taken him to Troy."

Achilles slaughtered a sheep, and his aide skinned and cooked it, and then everyone, including Priam and Achilles, ate.

Achilles and Priam looked at each other, marveling. Then Priam said, "Let me go to bed now, Achilles. I have not slept for a long time — not since you killed my son. Instead of sleeping, I lay awake, moaning with grief. I smeared manure on my head and neck. Finally, I have eaten food and drank wine again. Before this meal, I had eaten and drunk nothing."

Achilles ordered his aides and slaves to make beds for Priam and his aged herald and for himself. But Achilles, a man who thought ahead, said to Priam, "You and your herald should sleep outside my shelter. The Greek commanders often come to my shelter to consult with me, and if one of them were to see and recognize you, he may tell Agamemnon. Then things could go badly for you and your son.

"But tell me one more thing: How much time do you need to mourn and bury Hector? I will keep the Greeks from fighting for that much time. Agamemnon respects me now, and he will agree to my request."

Priam replied, "You will show me great kindness if you give us nine days to mourn Hector, and two days to burn his body, bury him, build his funeral mound, and hold a feast in his honor. On the twelfth day, we will fight — if we have to."

The fighting was necessary. Trojans and Greeks were still at war.

Achilles said, "I will give you the time you ask for, Priam. We will not fight until after you have mourned Hector and given him a proper funeral."

He touched Priam's wrist, and then Priam and his herald went to their beds outside Achilles' shelter.

Achilles went to sleep in his own shelter. Briseis slept by his side.

Zeus, who was watching from Mount Olympus, thought, *Achilles no longer has the anger of the gods. Achilles has stopped his excessive anger. Achilles has stopped his excessive grief. Achilles has accepted the human condition. Now that Achilles has accepted the human condition, he is ready to die.*

Most of the gods and mortal men slept now, but not Hermes. He kept thinking about what he should do. It was important for him to get Priam safely back to Troy, unseen by the Greek guards.

Hermes appeared before the sleeping Priam and said, "You are in the midst of your enemies. Yes, Achilles spared your life, but many Greeks here would like to kill you. You have ransomed your son with a treasure, but if you are captured, it will take three times that amount of treasure to ransom you. Think what will happen if Agamemnon were to learn that you are here."

Priam woke up, and he woke up his herald. Hermes harnessed the mules and got the wagon ready, and he drove all of them out of the Greek camps. No guards saw them.

When they reached the ford of the river Xanthus, Hermes left them, and Priam and his herald went to Troy alone. Priam's daughter Cassandra was the first to see them bearing the corpse of Hector back to Troy. She cried, "Look, Trojan men and Trojan women! Hector is coming home! He was our greatest warrior and our greatest hope!"

The Trojans arose and grieved. They left Troy to go out to the wagon and meet Priam. Hector's wife and mother flung themselves on the wagon taking his corpse home. They tore their hair, and they held Hector's head.

Priam ordered his citizens, "Let the wagon through! When we are inside the gates of Troy, then you can have your fill of mourning!" The Trojans moved away from the wagon, and the herald drove inside the walls of Troy. They took Hector's body into Priam's palace and placed it on a bed, and women sang laments.

Andromache cradled her husband's head in her arms and grieved, "My husband, you died so young! You have left me a widow with a baby boy! I do not think that he will live to become an adult. Troy will soon be conquered now that you are no longer alive to defend it and keep its citizens safe and free. Now the women and children will become the slaves of the Greeks. At best, our son will be the slave of a harsh master. Worse, a Greek will take him to the high walls of Troy and throw him to the ground because you killed the Greek's brother, father, or son — you killed so many Greek warriors! Now all of Troy grieves for you, Hector. You have brought grief to your parents, but most of all to me, your widow. You did not die near me and say some last words to me that I could remember as I weep for you!"

Andromache cried, and the women of the palace cried.

Hecuba grieved, "Hector, you were the son I loved most. The gods respected you while you were alive, and they still respect you now that you are dead. Achilles captured many of my sons and sold them far away as slaves. But he killed you with his spear, and he dragged your corpse around the funeral mound of Patroclus, Achilles' friend whom you killed. Now you are with me, and I can mourn you."

The women of the palace shouted cries of mourning.

Helen grieved, “Hector, you were the kindest to me of all of Paris’ brothers. Paris brought me to Troy — I wish I had died before that happened! This is the twentieth year since I have arrived here, and in all of those twenty years, never did you taunt or insult me. If anyone were ever cruel to me, you would talk to them and make them stop their cruelty, no matter who it was: one of your brothers or sisters or sisters-in-law or even your own mother. Your father has always been as kind to me as you were. I mourn for you, and I mourn for myself. I have no friends left in Troy — the Trojans regard me with loathing!”

Helen cried, and the Trojans cried, and Priam ordered, “Cut timber and bring it into Troy. The Greeks will not attack you. Achilles has promised to give us eleven days in which to mourn Hector and give him a proper funeral.”

Trojan men cut and hauled timber into the city for nine days. On the tenth day, they placed Hector’s body on the pier and burned it. In the morning, they poured wine over the fire and collected his white bones. His brothers and brothers-in-law mourned as they gathered the bones, covered them with fine cloth, and placed them in a golden chest that they lowered into a grave over which they placed huge stones. They built a mound over the grave with lookouts alert in case of a Greek attack, and they ate a feast in honor of Hector.

And so the Trojans buried Hector, the most human of heroes.

QUINTUS OF SMYRNA’S *POSTHOMERICA*: A RETELLING IN PROSE

A Note (Posthomerica)

Homer created the epic poems the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The *Iliad* tells only a small part of the story of the Trojan War. For example, the *Iliad* does not tell the story of the Trojan Horse although Homer knew about the Trojan Horse and assumed that his audience knew its story. Other, shorter epic poems that made up the Epic Cycle told the rest of the story of the Trojan War.

The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* show many signs of oral composition; they were written down perhaps in the eighth century B.C.E. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* have survived to the present time, but the other epic poems of the Epic Cycle have been lost. Quintus of Smyrna, writing perhaps in the third century C.E., wrote an epic poem that retold the tales recounted in the lost epic poems of the Epic Cycle. He told the story of the Trojan War from the burial of Hector until the Greeks set sail for home after the fall of Troy. In other words, he told the story of the Trojan War from the end of the *Iliad* to when Odysseus sets sail for home in the *Odyssey* after Troy has fallen. Homer is an epic poet of genius; Quintus of Smyrna is not. Quintus of Smyrna, however, did a service to Humankind by retelling the stories of the other epic poems of the Epic Cycle and telling us some of the most important stories, such as those about the deaths of Achilles and of Paris and the fall of Troy, that Homer did not tell us. Unfortunately, he chose not to tell the story of the theft of the Palladium from Troy by Odysseus and Diomedes; he merely mentions that story.

In this retelling, as in all my retellings, I have tried to make the work of literature accessible to modern readers who may lack the knowledge about mythology, religion, and history that the literary work's contemporary audience had.

Since so many hundreds of years lie between Homer and Quintus of Smyrna, we should not be surprised that some inconsistencies appear in their work. For example, according to Homer, Paris and Apollo kill Achilles. According to Quintus of Smyrna, only Apollo kills Achilles. Another example: According to Homer, Achilles goes to the Land of the Dead, which he hates. According to Quintus of Smyrna, Achilles becomes a god and lives on an island that Poseidon gives to him. The people living near Achilles worship him.

Chapter 1: The Story of Penthesilea (Posthomerica)

After the funeral of Hector, the Trojans stayed behind their walls. They were afraid to fight the Greeks now that Achilles had ended his anger at Agamemnon. As long as Achilles had been angry at Agamemnon, he had stayed away from war and had not fought. Now he was fighting again in war.

The Trojans were like a herd of cattle that refuses to face a lion and instead runs away from its fangs and claws. The Trojans knew all too well how many brave warriors Achilles had killed at the Scamander River and before the walls of Troy. They remembered how Achilles had killed Hector and dragged his corpse around Troy. They remembered the many cities allied to Troy that Achilles had conquered both by land and by sea. They remembered how many warriors Achilles had killed ever since he had first arrived at Troy with the other Greeks. The grieving Trojans had good reason to stay behind the walls of their city.

But new allies arrived for the Trojans from the land of the warrior women known as the Amazons, who lived by the river Thermodon in northeast Asia Minor. The Amazon warrior-queen Penthesilea, whose father was Ares, the god of war, arrived with twelve other Amazons to fight in the Trojan War. She had good reasons for wanting to fight in the war. First, she wanted to win glory as a warrior. Second, she wanted to avoid criticism at home. Penthesilea had accidentally killed Hippolyta, her sister: While hunting, Penthesilea had thrown a spear at a stag but missed the stag and hit Hippolyta. Third, she hoped to appease the Furies with deeds of glory and with sacrifices. The Furies — who are invisible to all except the guilty — wreak vengeance when someone kills a member of his or her family.

Penthesilea brought these twelve Amazons with her: Alcibie, Antandre, Antibrote, Bremousa, Clonie, Derimacheia, Derinoe, Evandre, Hippothoe, Harmothoe, Polemousa, and Thermodosa. Penthesilea was the best and the most glorious of the Amazons. Penthesilea outshone the other Amazons just as the Moon outshines the stars, and just as the goddess Dawn outshines the Horae: the goddesses of the seasons.

When Penthesilea and the other warrior-women arrived at Troy, the Trojan citizens marveled at them. Penthesilea's beauty impressed them but also troubled them: She was a beautiful woman, but she was also a warrior who was willing to kill and to be killed in battle. She smiled, and her eyes sparkled, and she blushed occasionally out of modesty, yet she was willing to thrust a spear into a man's belly and then pull it and the warrior's intestines out.

Troy needed allies to fight for it, and the Trojan citizens looked at Penthesilea and her Amazons the way that a farmer whose crops have long been suffering from drought looks at a rainstorm above his fields.

Even the sorrow of Priam, King of Troy, lessened when he saw Penthesilea and her Amazons. Many of Priam's citizens — and many of his sons — had died in battle. Most recently, his son Hector, a hero and the strongest warrior of Troy, had died. Priam was like a man who had been blind and wished to die if he could not see again. A doctor or a god partially restores his sight, and he rejoices to see again, although his eyes still ache.

Priam welcomed Penthesilea and her Amazons into his palace and showed them every sign of respect available in Troy after ten years of siege by the Greeks. He treated Penthesilea as if she were a daughter who had undertaken dangerous travel and returned home after twenty years of absence. Priam ordered his servants to prepare for the Amazons a meal of the best food available. He also gave Penthesilea wonderful presents and promised her many more if she succeeded in helping the Trojans defeat the Greeks.

Penthesilea made no ordinary vows: She vowed to kill Achilles, to defeat the Greek army, and to burn the Greek ships. These vows were impressive, but foolish, because she did not realize the strength and skill of Achilles in battle.

Andromache, the widow of Hector, heard Penthesilea make these vows. Knowing the might of Achilles, Andromache thought to herself about the overconfident Penthesilea, *You vow to do much more than you can accomplish. Achilles is much more dangerous than you know — he will kill you, and quickly. You must be fated to die at Troy. My strong husband, Hector, was much better at fighting in battles than you are, but his strength did not save him — Achilles killed him. Yet Hector was like a god! I wish that I had not lived to see the day when Achilles speared my husband in the neck. I wish that I had not lived to see the day when Achilles dragged the corpse of my husband around the walls of Troy. Achilles made me a widow, and each day I cry for Hector.*

Night arrived, and servants made a bed for Penthesilea. Athena, who supported the Greeks in the Trojan War, sent a lying dream to her to make her eager for a battle that she would not win. In the dream, Ares, her father, appeared before her and urged her to fight Achilles face to face. The dream delighted Penthesilea, who believed that it prophesied that she would kill the best warrior of the Greeks, but this dream, like all too many dreams, deceived.

When dawn arrived, Penthesilea armed herself with the gifts of Ares, her father: golden greaves to protect her legs, a breastplate, a sword in a silver and ivory scabbard, a gleaming shield shaped like a half-moon with curved horns, and a helmet with plumes. Fully dressed in armor, Penthesilea resembled one of the thunderbolts that Zeus uses as a weapon. She also armed herself with two javelins and a double-bladed battle-ax. The battle-ax was a gift to her from Eris, the goddess who values strife and discord. Penthesilea rejoiced in this gift.

Although the Trojan warriors had previously wanted to avoid fighting Achilles, who killed every enemy he met in battle, Penthesilea persuaded the Trojan warriors to go again into battle.

Penthesilea herself was eager to fight. She rode a swift horse that Oreithyia, wife of the North wind, gave to her when she visited Thrace. This horse was faster than the Harpies, who are like birds but with the heads of women.

Penthesilea rode to war with the other Amazons and the Trojan warriors. Fate made her go to her death on her first and last day of battle in the Trojan War. She stood out among the other warriors like Athena stands out when she goes to fight giants or like Eris stands out when she runs among warriors and creates havoc. The Trojans followed her like sheep following a ram, the leader of the flock.

Priam raised his hands to the temple of Zeus, king of gods and men, and prayed, “May Penthesilea, the daughter of the god of war, have success in battle and kill many Greek warriors. May Penthesilea return safely home from the battle. Zeus, keep her safe because she is the daughter of your son Ares and because she is your granddaughter. Keep her safe for my sake because I have suffered so much from the deaths of many of my sons in battle. Help us Trojans. A few of the descendants of Dardanus, who is your son and my father and the former king of Troy, are still alive. Show mercy to us and allow Troy to remain unconquered.”

In answer to Priam’s prayer, Zeus sent an omen. An eagle cried out on Priam’s left, and Priam looked at it. It was clutching a dying dove in its talons. Priam grieved because the left side is the unlucky, sinister side. This omen was negative. Priam believed that he would never see Penthesilea return from battle safely.

The Greek warriors watched the Amazons and the Trojan warriors approach. The Trojans were like wild animals that prey on sheep. Penthesilea was like a fire that destroys everything in its path.

The Greek warriors said among themselves, “For a long time, the Trojans would not fight after Achilles killed Hector. Someone has roused their fighting spirit although we thought that they would stay behind the walls of Troy. It almost seems as if a god has convinced the Trojans to fight. We will fight them with courage and skill — we also have gods on our side.”

The Greek warriors armed themselves and came from their ships and camps to fight their enemy. The two armies clashed, and the ground reddened.

The Amazons found success and defeat in battle.

Penthesilea killed Molion, Persinous, Elissus, Antitheus, Lernus, Hippalmus, Haemonides, and Elasippus.

The Amazon Derinoe killed Laogonus.

The Amazon Clonie killed Menippus, who had come to Troy with Protesilaus, the first Greek to be killed in the Trojan War. Cycnus had killed Protesilaus when the Greeks landed on the Trojan shore at the start of the war, and then Achilles had killed Cycnus.

Angry at the death of Menippus, the Greek Podarces speared Clonie in the stomach. Blood gushed from the wound, and her intestines were visible.

Penthesilea retaliated by deeply cutting Podarces' right arm. Blood gushed as he ran from her. He ran only a little way, and his fellow warriors grieved for him as he died.

Idomeneus, King of Crete, killed the Amazon Bremousa with a spear by her right breast. She fell like a mountain tree harvested by woodcutters. The tree makes a whistling sound as it falls, and Bremousa wailed as she fell.

Meriones, the aide of Idomeneus, killed the Amazons Evandre and Thermodosa. He killed one with a spear to the head and the other with a sword between her hips.

Little Ajax killed the Amazon Derinoe with a spear through her collarbone.

Diomedes killed the Amazons Alcibie and Derimacheia, using his swords to cut off their heads at the shoulders. A man can kill heifers quickly with an ax to their necks. Alcibie and Derimacheia fell quickly to the ground, and their heads lay far from their shoulders.

Sthenelus killed the Trojan Cabeirus, who had traveled from Sestus, a town on the Hellespont, to fight in the war, and he would never return alive to his home.

Angry at the death of Cabeirus, Paris, who had taken Helen from Menelaus, aimed an arrow at Sthenelus, who was not fated to die at that time. The arrow instead hit the Greek Evenor, who was fated to die.

Angry at the death of Evenor, the Greek Meges acted as if he were a lion in the midst of sheep. Enemy warriors were afraid of him as he killed the Trojans Itymoneus and Agelaus, who fought under the command of the Trojan allies Nastes and Amphimachus. Meges also killed many other enemy warriors with his spear. The goddess Athena had blessed Meges with courage.

The Greek Polypoetes killed the Trojan Dresaeus, whose parents were Theiodamas and Neaera, who had slept together under the snow-capped mountain Sipylus, where Niobe had been turned to stone. Niobe was guilty of the sin of pride. She had seven sons and seven daughters, and she boasted that she was more worthy of praise than the goddess Leto, who had only one son and one daughter. It is not wise to place yourself above a god or goddess, and Leto's children — Apollo and Artemis — killed all fourteen of Niobe's children. Apollo killed all of Niobe's sons, and Artemis killed all of Niobe's daughters. Niobe mourned the deaths of her children, and even after Zeus turned her to stone, she still mourns the deaths of her children — tears can be seen trickling down her stone cheeks. From a distance, the stone looks like Niobe. Up close, the stone looks like a cliff and a spur of the mountain.

The battle continued, and deaths occurred frequently. Trojans and Greeks died, and as they died, they groaned.

Penthesilea continued to fight; she stayed strong and energetic. She was like a lioness that attacks cattle. The Greek warriors were surprised at her endurance, and they retreated from her.

She followed them the way that storms and huge waves follow ships that try to speed away from danger.

Penthesilea shouted, “All of you Greeks will pay for making war upon Troy and Priam! None of you Greeks will escape me! None of you will live to be a blessing to your aged parents and to your wives and children! None of you Greeks will have a tomb; instead, you will be food for dogs and birds! Where are Achilles and Great Ajax? They are your best warriors, so why aren’t they fighting? Are they afraid that I will kill them in battle?”

Penthesilea was proud, and she was confident, and she was skilled in war, and she killed many warriors. She cut with her battle-ax, and she inflicted wounds with her javelins. Her horse carried her bow and arrows, and she wore a sword. Fighting with her were mighty Trojans, the friends and brothers of Hector. Spears filled the air and killed Greek warriors, who fell like dying leaves or drops of rain. The ground was wet with blood and covered with corpses. Wounded horses and warriors screamed and died. The Trojans on their horses trampled the dead and the dying Greeks as if they were threshing grain.

Penthesilea impressed the Trojans. As she fought the Greeks, she was like a storm raging against ships on the sea.

One Trojan — his hopes raised too high — said to others, “Clearly, Penthesilea is one of the immortal goddesses. Clearly, Zeus is on our side. Zeus is remembering that Priam is one of his descendants. Penthesilea cannot be mortal. She must be the virgin warrior goddess Athena or Enyo, the goddess of war. Or she may be Eris, goddess of strife, or Artemis, the huntress daughter of Leto. I predict that on this day she will conquer the Greeks and burn their ships — those ships on which they arrived from across the sea to try to conquer Troy, kill our men, and make our women and children slaves. I predict that because of Penthesilea, the Greeks will never return alive to their homes.”

So the Trojan spoke, but he too was overconfident. The two best warriors of the Greeks — Great Ajax and Achilles — were not yet fighting in the battle because they were mourning at the burial mound of Patroclus, Achilles’ best friend, whom Hector had killed. Achilles had avenged Patroclus’ death by killing Hector.

Penthesilea continued to gain glory by killing warriors while Great Ajax and Achilles were not fighting. Her spear killed men by wounding them in the back when they ran away from her, and her spear killed men by wounding them in the front when they ran toward her to fight her. Penthesilea was splattered with blood that was not her own, and she did not grow tired but continued to make enemy warriors spill their blood. Although now Penthesilea was winning glory in battle for herself, soon Achilles would win glory for himself by killing Penthesilea.

A heifer can get into a garden and busily destroy plants. Penthesilea had gotten onto the battlefield and busily destroyed men.

The Trojan women watched the battle, and they were impressed by the glorious deeds of Penthesilea the Amazon. Tisiphone, the daughter of Amphimachus and the wife of Meneptolemus, was especially impressed. She urged the other Trojan women, “Our men fight bravely for our city and our children, so why shouldn’t we also fight? In what relevant way are women different from men? We have courage like men. We have eyes and legs and arms like men. We see with the same sunlight, and we breathe the same air. We eat the same food. Why shouldn’t we women also fight in battle? Look at Penthesilea, a woman who is superior to so many men who have much experience at making war. She is not fighting for her own city or for her own family, but she is fighting fiercely. Why shouldn’t we fight fiercely for our city and our families? We have experienced the deaths of fathers and brothers and husbands and sons. They died fighting for us so that we do not become slaves. So let us also fight. It is better to die in battle than to become a slave. If our men die and Troy falls, our children will also become slaves.”

The Trojan women were ready to go to war. They were like bees that have been in their hive all winter and now are eager to leave their hive and go out into warm weather. The Trojan women were ready to stop weaving and to start fighting with cruel weapons.

The Trojan women would have died on the battlefield if Theano, an older woman who was a priestess of Athena, had not reasoned with them.

Theano pointed out, “We have no training in wielding weapons or in waging war. We have no experience in killing men. We lack the strength of the Greek men who will fight us, and we lack the many years of experience in making war that the Greek warriors have. The Amazons are much different from us. From the day they are born, they take pleasure in battle and riding horses. From the day they are born, they do the things that men do. They get training and experience, and so they are always ready to wage war. Their training and experience give the Amazons courage and strong bodies. Penthesilea is much different from us. She is either the daughter of Ares, god of war, or she is herself a goddess come to help us in this war. Either way, she is not like us. Human beings, whether male or female, have their humanity in common, but people are trained to do different tasks, and people ought to do the task for which they are trained. Our men are trained in waging war; we are trained at weaving. Let the men do the work for which they are trained, and let us do the work for which we are trained. Right now, we women have no necessity of going to war. Our warriors are fighting well and are killing many Greek warriors. Let us stay out of the battle.”

Theano persuaded the Trojan women to stay behind the walls of Troy. Many of the Trojan women watched the battle from the walls.

Penthesilea was still fighting well and killing many men. The Greek warriors were afraid of her the way that goats are afraid of a leopard. The Greek warriors thought of flight, not fight. They fled; some dropped their armor so they could flee faster. Making the battlefield even more

chaotic were horses pulling chariots that no longer had charioteers. The Amazons and the Trojans felt joy in battle; the Greeks felt terror. Penthesilea was like a terrible storm that uproots huge trees as she destroyed Greek warriors.

Penthesilea drove the Greeks back to their ships, and Great Ajax and Achilles heard the sounds of the battle.

Great Ajax said to Achilles, “We are needed in the battle. It grows close, and our ships are in danger of being burned. Both of us have Zeus as an ancestor, and we ought to live up to such a heritage by defending our fellow warriors and our ships. Heracles also had Zeus as an ancestor, and with fewer warriors than we have now he conquered the city of Troy back when Laomedon, the father of Priam, was its king. Your father, Peleus, and my father, Telamon, fought with Heracles and helped conquer Troy. Laomedon had cheated Heracles out of the horses that he had earned by saving the life of Hesione, Laomedon’s daughter, and our fathers helped Heracles, the greatest hero of all time, conquer Troy. We need to live up to our fathers, and we need to conquer Troy.”

Great Ajax and Achilles armed themselves and went to the battle. Athena blessed both of them with strength.

Seeing Great Ajax and Achilles ready to fight, the Greek warriors rejoiced. Great Ajax and Achilles looked like the two sons of the giant Aloeus: Otus and Ephialtes. These two giants made war against the gods and attempted to carry away goddesses to make them their wives. Otus wanted to marry Artemis, and Ephialtes wanted to marry Hera. Part of their plan was to pile the mountains Ossa and Pelion on top of Mount Olympus.

Great Ajax and Achilles fought and killed many warriors. They were like two lions that kill sheep and drink their blood and eat their flesh. Great Ajax killed Deiochus, Hyllus, Eurynomus, and Enyeus. Achilles killed all of the remaining Amazons except for Penthesilea: Antandre, Antibrote, Harmothoe, Hippothoe and Polemoussa. Fighting together, Great Ajax and Achilles easily pushed back the warriors fighting against them. They were like a raging fire destroying the trees of a forest.

Unafraid, Penthesilea advanced toward Great Ajax and Achilles, who were like hunters awaiting a leopard. Great Ajax and Achilles lifted their spears and held them, ready to throw them when necessary.

Penthesilea threw her javelin first. It broke as it hit Achilles’ shield, which had been made by the skilled blacksmith god Hephaestus. Such gifts of the gods are not easily pierced.

Penthesilea held her other javelin in throwing position and said, “My first throw was not effective, but I think my next throw will kill. You two warriors are the best of the Greeks, and I want to kill both of you and make this war less burdensome for the Trojans. Come closer and find

out how dangerous I am. My father is not mortal; my father is Ares, the god of war. Because of my father, I am more effective in battle than men.”

Her words were proud and confident, but both Great Ajax and Achilles laughed.

Penthesilea threw her javelin at Great Ajax, but it hit his greave and did no damage.

Penthesilea groaned, dismayed that neither of her javelins had inflicted any damage.

Great Ajax was an experienced warrior, and he knew the fighting strength of Achilles. He was able to look at Penthesilea, evaluate her fighting strength, and know that Achilles could easily kill her the way that a hawk kills a dove. Great Ajax did not fight Penthesilea; he left and fought Trojans.

Achilles said to Penthesilea, “You are a proud woman, but you cannot live up to your words. Great Ajax and I are the best warriors of the Greeks and indeed the best warriors of the Trojan War. We trace our descent from Zeus himself. Hector himself was afraid to meet us, and I killed him with a spear. You are threatening us, but you will not be able to kill us. You are the one who will die, and your father, Ares, cannot save your life. You will die like a deer hunted by a lion. You should have heard by now of the many warriors I killed while I was fighting by the river that mortals call the Scamander and the immortals call the Xanthus. I threw their corpses into the river and choked it. If you have heard about those many deaths I caused, you should know not to boast about killing me.”

Achilles then swiftly attacked, and he speared Penthesilea above her right breast with the spear that Chiron the Centaur had given to Peleus, Achilles’ father, who had given it to him. No one other than Achilles was strong enough to wield this spear.

Penthesilea bled and grew weaker. She dropped her battle-ax. She began to lose her eyesight, and she felt agonizing pain. She recovered, a little, and looked at Achilles coming toward her and wondered whether she should draw her sword and defend herself or dismount from her horse and supplicate him, offering him masses of bronze and gold if he would not kill her. Perhaps Achilles would respect her youth — he was also young — and she could continue to live.

But Achilles ran to her quickly and with his spear he pierced both Penthesilea’s horse and her body the way that a man pierces pieces of meat on a spit for cooking or the way that a hunter throws a spear that goes through the belly of a deer and then strikes the trunk of a tree.

Both Penthesilea and her horse fell. She lay facedown, and both she and her horse quivered. Penthesilea had fallen the way that a tree falls when a fierce wind topples it.

The Trojans, seeing Penthesilea fall, ran in terror and grief back to their city. Sailors can battle to stay alive on the sea after their ship sinks. Land finally appears, and a few exhausted sailors make it to safety. A few Trojans made it safely back to Troy as they mourned for the loss of Penthesilea and her Amazons and for the loss of so many of their warriors in battle.

Achilles laughed as he stood over the fallen Penthesilea. He said, "Lie there and die, girl. Your corpse will feed dogs and birds. Why did you come here to fight? Were you tricked with bribes? You must have thought that you would return victorious from the battle and return to your home with many valuable gifts from Priam, but the gods did not give you victory in battle. Great Ajax and I are the best of the warriors here. The Greeks value us; the Trojans fear us. You should been a weaver, not a warrior; war takes away the courage even of strong men."

Achilles pulled his spear out of the bodies of Penthesilea and her horse, and then he removed Penthesilea's shining helmet. She was dead, but she was still beautiful. The Greeks gathered around her and marveled at her beauty as she lay on the ground in her armor. She resembled a sleeping Artemis, tired after a long day of hunting lions. Aphrodite, the wife of Ares, had given Penthesilea the gift of beauty, and Achilles regretted that he had killed her. Greek warriors looked at her, and they prayed to the gods that someday they could sleep by a wife as beautiful as Penthesilea. Achilles wished that he had made Penthesilea his bride and taken her home with him to Greece.

Ares grieved at the death of his daughter; the Gales, daughters of the North wind, had brought him the news. He wanted to avenge his daughter by slaughtering Achilles, and he jumped up and sped to Mount Ida like one of Zeus' thunderbolts that shakes Olympus.

But Ares' father, Zeus, was watching. Zeus did not want gods to fight at that time in the wars of men, and so Zeus threw thunderbolts at the feet of Ares to warn him to stay away from the battlefield. Ares recognized the wishes of Zeus, and he stopped his descent the way that a boulder breaks free from a cliff and rolls downward and crushes everything in its path until it reaches level ground and then stops. Zeus is more powerful than any other god. All Olympians must wrench their wills to match the will of Zeus or endure painful punishments. Although Ares grieved over the death of his daughter, he fought against his desire to kill Achilles before the time Achilles was fated to die and he returned to Olympus. Ares knew that Zeus had allowed many of his own sons, including Sarpedon, to die at Troy, and so Ares allowed Achilles to continue to live. If Ares had not, Zeus would have struck him with a thunderbolt and imprisoned him in Tartarus, the place in the Land of the Dead where evildoers are tormented.

The Greeks stripped the armor from the corpses of their enemies, and Achilles continued to regret killing Penthesilea. He grieved for her much as he had grieved for Patroclus.

Thersites, the ugliest warrior among the Greeks, was also the most despised because of his personality. He delighted in criticizing other people, including Achilles, Agamemnon, Odysseus, and other warriors of much higher rank than he. Thersites looked at Achilles and knew that Achilles regretted killing Penthesilea. Openly mocking Achilles, Thersites said, "Achilles, why are you so concerned about a dead woman, even if she is an Amazon? She wanted to kill many of us Greeks, and yet you care about her death. Are you mad for women? Do you regard Penthesilea

the way you would regard a woman whom you court with gifts so that she may become your bride? Your priorities are in the wrong place. Penthesilea should have killed you with one of her javelins. That would be better than being mad for women. Achilles, you are not yourself. Wise up. Think of Paris, who was and is mad for Helen. Think of what has happened to the Trojans as a result of Paris' lust. Lust can make a wise man a fool, and so it is better to seek glory in battle. Be a soldier and kill. The alternative is to be another Paris. Get your joy in battle, not in bed with a woman. Bed is where a coward like Paris gets his joy. You, Achilles, are a coward."

Quick to anger, and not a man to lightly endure an insult, Achilles punched Thersites as hard as he could on the jaw below an ear. With his blood gushing and his teeth falling from his mouth, Thersites fell to the ground and died.

Because Thersites was so disliked, the Greeks were happy that he was dead. One of the Greek warriors said, "Despite being an inferior man, Thersites constantly criticized kings. Such criticism is not right. Themis, the goddess of justice, despises such criticism. Ate, the goddess also known as Ruin, punishes such criticism, as we can see here and now."

Still angry, Achilles said to the corpse of Thersites, "Lie there, dead. You deserve it. You criticized Odysseus, and he hit you hard but did not kill you. I am not as merciful as Odysseus. Go now to the Land of the Dead and insult the ghosts there."

Only one Greek was angry at the death of Thersites: Diomedes, who was related to him. Agrius and Oeneus were brothers. Thersites was the son of Agrius. Diomedes was the son of Tydeus, who was the son of Oeneus. Diomedes was tempted to fight Achilles, but friends spoke to both Diomedes and Achilles and persuaded them not to fight each other.

Priam learned of the death of Penthesilea, and he sent a herald to Agamemnon and Menelaus to ask for the return of her corpse and her armor. Priam wanted to give the Amazon a worthy funeral and to put her ashes in the tomb of Laomedon, his father. Agamemnon and Menelaus were so impressed with Penthesilea's fighting ability that they honored Priam's request and gave her corpse and armor to the Trojans to carry back to Troy.

Priam ordered a funeral pyre built in front of the city, and the Trojans burned Penthesilea's corpse and her armor. After her corpse had been burned to bones, the Trojans put out the fire with wine, and then they collected her bones and put them in a chest. The Trojans grieved as they placed the bones of Penthesilea by the bones of Laomedon. Penthesilea and the twelve Amazons she had brought with her had all died during their first day of battle at Troy.

During a truce with the Greeks, the Trojans also held proper funerals for the other dead Amazons and for the Trojans who had died in the battle. Agamemnon and Menelaus felt no anger toward the dead enemy soldiers.

The Greeks also held funerals for their fallen warriors. Most of the dead warriors were burned together on a common funeral pyre, but Podarces was especially respected and was burned on a

separate funeral pyre. Afterwards, they built a mound over his bones. Podarces was the brother of Protesilaus, who was the first Greek to be killed in the Trojan War; he died as the Greek ships landed on the Trojan shore at the beginning of the war.

Thersites' bones were buried separately, away from the bones of the other Greek warriors. His bones were not worthy enough to be buried with the bones of heroes.

After the funerals of the Greeks, Achilles and the other Greek heroes feasted with Agamemnon.

Chapter 2: The Story of Memnon (Posthomerica)

The next morning, the morale of the Greeks was high, but the morale of many Trojans was low. The Trojans kept watch on their walls; they were afraid that Achilles would conquer the city and burn it.

Thymoetes, an aged advisor, said, "I worry about the future of Troy, now that Hector is no longer alive to protect it. He was our greatest warrior, but Achilles killed him. Achilles is so powerful that he can defeat even gods on the battlefield. Achilles also killed Penthesilea and her Amazons. I had thought that Penthesilea must be a goddess come to us from Mount Olympus to help us resist the Greeks. Obviously, I was wrong. Now we should decide what we ought to do. Should we continue to fight, or should we flee from the city? Now that Achilles is fighting, I do not see how we can be victorious against the Greeks."

Priam replied, "Let us not flee the city. Also, let us not fight the Greeks on the battlefield. Instead, let us stay behind our walls and resist the Greeks. We have powerful allies coming to fight with and for us. Memnon, king of Ethiopia, land of black people, is coming to Troy with an army. I think that by now he must be close to Troy. I sent him a message asking for his help, and he replied that he would help us. We Trojans should stay here and fight. To run away and live among foreigners would be a disgrace."

Polydamas spoke next in the council: "If Memnon is really coming to us to help us, we should wait for him. However, I worry that he and his warriors will die in battle as they fight for us. Now that Achilles is fighting again, the Greek army is much stronger. I do not think that we should flee from Troy, but I also do not think that we should die in battle. I recommend that we give Helen, Menelaus' lawfully wedded wife, back to the Greeks, along with all the treasure that Paris took when he sailed away with Helen and returned to Troy. As war reparations in the tenth year of this war, we can offer twice as much treasure as Paris stole. That would be better than to have our city conquered and set on fire. I believe that this is the best plan. Previously, I urged Hector to be cautious, but he ignored my advice. It would have been much better for him and for us if he had taken my advice."

Many Trojans believed that Polydamas' advice was good, but they did not say so openly because they respected Priam, whom they thought would reject Polydamas' advice. They did not want to upset their king.

Paris, who had run away with Helen, over whom the war was being fought, did not want to give her back to Menelaus. Paris said, "Polydamas, in war you are a weak coward. In council, you believe that you give the best advice, but you are wrong. It is best for you to stay in Troy and not fight, while I lead real warriors into battle. Real men find pleasure in fighting in war; women and

children find pleasure in running away from war. You also find pleasure in running away from war.”

Not one to say one thing behind a man’s back and a different thing to that man’s face, Polydamas said to Paris, “Your adultery will destroy your city and your people. I hope that I am never as selfish and as rash as you. I want to keep my home and my family safe. You say that I lack courage, but what kind of courage have you had? You have had the courage to steal the lawfully wedded wife of another man. You have had the courage to plunge your city into war. You have had the courage to get many of your fellow warriors killed. I want no part of that kind of courage.”

Paris did not answer. He knew that many Trojans had died so that he and Helen could have an adulterous love affair, and he knew that many more Trojans would die so that he and Helen could continue to have an adulterous love affair. But he preferred sleeping with Helen and watching many Trojans die to giving Helen back to her husband. He himself was willing to risk dying rather than give back Helen.

Soon after the council, Memnon and his army of Ethiopians arrived. Sailors rejoice when they see the stars of the Great Bear after a dangerous storm, and the Trojans rejoiced to see so many new allies. Priam rejoiced. He thought that now the Trojans and their allies could burn the Greek ships because Memnon was a huge warrior and his army contained many battle-ready warriors eager to win glory by killing Greeks. Priam gave Memnon many gifts, and he gave everyone a feast.

Priam and Memnon talked to each other at the feast. Priam spoke about the Greek warriors and the war. Memnon spoke about his parents: the immortal Dawn and the mortal Tithonus. Memnon also told Priam about his journey from Ethiopia to Troy. He and his warriors had fought and defeated an army of Solymi soldiers in southwest Asia Minor who had attempted to keep him from reaching Troy. Memnon also told Priam about the many other peoples he had encountered.

Priam said to Memnon, “The gods have granted me one of my wishes by allowing me to see you and your warriors who have come to fight for Troy. I hope that the gods continue to grant me wishes. I want to see the Greeks die at the end of your spear and your warriors’ spears. You and your warriors resemble gods. Tonight, you and your warriors can feast. Later, you and your warriors can go into battle.”

Priam then toasted Memnon with a huge golden cup that Hephaestus had given to Zeus when Hephaestus had married Aphrodite. Zeus had given the cup to Dardanus, the founder of Troy, and the cup had since passed from one king of Troy to another as father passed it on to son: Dardanus to Erichthonius to Tros to Ilus to Laomedon to Priam. Priam had planned to give the huge golden cup to Hector, but fate made that impossible.

Memnon said to Priam, “A feast is a time for enjoying oneself, not for making boasts. Soon enough, you will see for yourself whether I am a brave man or a coward in battle. Right now, however, it is time for my warriors and me to sleep. For us to be ready to fight, we need to sleep and not drink too much wine.”

Priam replied, “You are right. Do as you wish. A good host ought not to force a guest to stay at a feast longer than he wishes, and a good host ought not to force a guest to leave a feast sooner than he wishes.”

Memnon left the banquet and went to sleep — the last sleep that he would have in the Land of the Living. The other banqueters also left the feast and went to sleep.

The gods were also feasting on Mount Olympus. Zeus gave them orders about the next day’s battle: “Tomorrow, many warriors and many horses will die in the battle. I order all of you not to interfere in the battle. Some of you will regret the deaths of some of the mortals. I order each of you not to request that I prolong any mortal’s life past the time that he is fated to die.”

The gods would obey the orders of Zeus: He was powerful, and they were afraid of him. Even if a god’s or a goddess’ son were to die in battle the next day, that god or goddess would not go against the will of Zeus.

The next morning, Memnon woke up early. He was eager to go to war. On this day, the Trojans and their allies would fight on the battlefield in front of Troy. As the armed Trojans and Ethiopians and other Trojan allies poured onto the battleground, they looked like black storm clouds or like great clouds of locusts that devour grain and bring famine to humans.

Achilles and the other Greeks put on their armor. Achilles’ armor shone like lightning. It shone like the Sun that brings light to humans. The Greek soldiers followed Achilles, and the Trojans and their allies followed Memnon.

The battle started, and the Ethiopians fought well as the two opposing armies crashed against each other like huge waves in a sea disturbed by winds coming from changing directions. The two armies crashed against each other, making a sound like that of a swollen river as it pours into the sea as rain pelts the ground and thunder booms and lightning strikes.

Achilles killed the Trojans Thalius and Mentos and many other warriors with his spear. Achilles was like an earthquake that assaults buildings.

Memnon killed many Greeks, including Phronon with a spear to the chest. Memnon also killed Ereuthus. Phronon and Ereuthus, whose king was Nestor, had been eager to fight in battle. Memnon then tried to kill Nestor, but Antilochus, Nestor’s son, stood in front of his father to defend him. Antilochus threw his spear at Memnon, but Memnon swerved aside and Antilochus’ spear narrowly missed him and instead killed the Ethiopian named Aethops.

Angry at the death of Aethops, Memnon rushed at Antilochus, who threw a rock at him and hit him. Memnon’s sturdy helmet saved his life. Now angrier, Memnon was like a lion rushing

at a boar that is dangerous and knows how to defend itself. Memnon speared Antilochus in the heart. Antilochus, the son of Nestor and the friend of Achilles, was dead.

Having seen his son die in front of him, Nestor grieved. Antilochus had given his life in order to save the life of his father. No grief is worse than the grief a father feels when a son dies.

Nestor called to Thrasymedes, another of his sons, “Come here and help me to kill Memnon, who has killed Antilochus. If we cannot kill Memnon, then let us die fighting him. This is not the time to fear Memnon; we should be like my brother Periclymenus, who was not afraid to fight Heracles, although Heracles killed him and all of my other brothers. Sometimes, a weaker man must fight a stronger man.”

Thrasymedes came quickly, as did the Greek Phereus. They were eager to fight Memnon. They were like two hunters running toward a boar or a bear that is eager to fight them.

Thrasymedes and Phereus threw their spears. They missed Memnon but killed Trojan warriors. Phereus’ spear killed Polymnius, the son of Meges. Thrasymedes, angry at the death of his brother Antilochus, killed Laomedon.

Memnon busied himself stripping the armor off Antilochus’ corpse. Memnon knew that as a warrior he was much the superior of Thrasymedes and Phereus, and he did not fear them. Having thrown their spears, Thrasymedes and Phereus were like two jackals that were afraid to attack a lion that was standing over a stag.

Nestor ordered other warriors to attack Memnon. He also wanted to personally attack the warrior who had killed his son. Nestor would have died at the end of the spear of Memnon, but Memnon saw that Nestor was an elderly man — as old as Memnon’s father — and said to him, “Aged sir, I ought not to fight you — you are so much older than I am. Before, when I charged you, I thought that you were a much younger warrior and a worthy opponent for me to kill. Please back away from the fighting, or I may be forced to kill you although I am much younger and much stronger than you. Don’t be a fool: You ought not to attack a warrior so much younger and stronger than you.”

Nestor replied, “No one will call me a fool: It is not foolish to try to kill a man who has killed one’s son and to try to recover the corpse of the son in order to give it a proper funeral. But instead you stand there boasting — you are so young, and your mind is so proud. I wish I were younger and had the strength of my youth. If that were the case, you would be dead. But I am burdened by the indignities of old age. I am like an aged lion that a dog has chased away from a sheepfold. The lion cannot kill the dog because the lion has lost its teeth and its strength. But despite being as old as I am, I am still better than many younger men.”

Nestor backed away from Memnon and from the corpse of Antilochus. Thrasymedes and Phereus also backed away: Memnon was a mighty warrior — mightier than they were. A river can rush toward the sea, swollen by the rain of a storm, with Zeus’ thunderbolts crashing down. So

Memnon rushed across the battlefield, killing Greeks and forcing them to the sea. His Ethiopian warriors also killed many Greek warriors, spilling their blood onto the ground. Many Greek corpses lay on the ground, but Memnon kept on killing. He wanted to be a hero to the Trojans and a terror to the Greeks, but his fate was coming closer to him.

Many strong and confident Ethiopian warriors fought beside Memnon: Alcyoneus, Alexippus, Asiades, Clydon, Meneclus, Nychius, and others.

Nestor killed Meneclus, and in retaliation Memnon killed several Greek warriors. He was like a hunter who with other hunters has driven a herd of deer into a trap of nets and throws javelins and kills swift does as the hunting dogs bark. Memnon's Ethiopians rejoiced at the slaughter Memnon was creating, and the Greek warriors fled from him.

Zeus sometimes hurls a thunderbolt and breaks off a crag from a mountain. The crag rolls down the mountain, and sheep in its path try to flee and avoid destruction. Just like those frightened sheep, the Greek warriors tried to flee from Memnon.

Nestor found Achilles and said to him, "My son Antilochus, your friend, is dead. Memnon has killed him and stripped his armor. If Memnon keeps the corpse, he will feed it to dogs and birds. Please help recover the corpse — Antilochus was your friend!"

Achilles had been killing many Trojans on a part of the battlefield away from Memnon, but now — angry at the death of his friend Antilochus — he ran toward Memnon, who lifted a huge rock that marked the boundary of a wheat field and threw it at Achilles and hit his shield — which protected him.

Fighting on foot, Achilles injured Memnon — Achilles' spear struck Memnon's right shoulder. But Memnon's spear also drew blood as it grazed Achilles' arm.

Memnon said to Achilles, "I think that this is your day to die. You have killed many Trojans, and you have boasted both that you are the greatest warrior at Troy and that your mother is a goddess: an immortal Nereid, a sea-goddess whose father is the sea-god Nereus.

"But I also have divine parentage. My mother is the immortal goddess Dawn, who brings light to the world, and the immortal nymphs known as the Hesperides raised me. One of the reasons that I am not afraid of you is that my divine mother is superior to your divine mother. My mother provides light for immortal gods and mortal humans that allows them to work to accomplish many good things. Your mother hides in the sea with the fish. Few see her, and she accomplishes nothing of value. I do not respect your mother — she is only a minor sea-goddess."

Achilles replied, "Why have you come to Troy to challenge me? I am stronger and more skilled in war than you. My lineage is better than yours. Zeus is one of my ancestors. My father is Peleus, whose father is Aeacus, whose father is Zeus, and so my great-grandfather is Zeus.

"The sea-nymphs known as the Nereids are the daughters of Nereus, and they are honored by the Olympian gods. The Nereid who is most honored by the Olympian gods is my mother,

Thetis, because of her wisdom that she uses to help the gods. She helped the god Dionysus when Lycurgus, the king of Thrace, persecuted him and imprisoned his followers, who are known as the Maenads. Dionysus fled and Thetis hid him until he could get revenge on Lycurgus. Thetis also helped Hephaestus the blacksmith god, Hephaestus was born with lame legs, and his mother, Hera, threw him from Mount Olympus because of his lame legs. The immortals Thetis and Eurynome took care of him for nine years. Hephaestus showed his skill as a blacksmith and an artist early; he made beautiful jewelry. Thetis also aided Zeus when three gods — Hera, his wife; Poseidon, his brother who is the god of the sea; and Athena, his daughter — had succeeded in chaining him. Thetis stayed loyal to Zeus. She, alone of all the many gods, rushed to Zeus and broke the chains that bound him. In addition, she ordered the giant with a hundred hands to go to Zeus and protect him. The gods call the giant Briareus, and the mortals call him Aegaeon. Hera, Poseidon, and Athena saw the giant with the hundred hands. Terrified, they stopped rebelling against Zeus and instead respected him. For all of these reasons, the Olympians honor and respect Thetis.

“You will regret insulting my mother when my spear is in your body. When my friend Patroclus died, I was angry and I killed Hector. Now that my friend Antilochus has died, I am angry and I will kill you. I am not a weak warrior. But let us stop talking. Now is the time to fight!”

Achilles and Memnon fought with swords. The two warriors were nearly equal in fighting strength and ability, and both wore divine armor made by Hephaestus. The two warriors fought so hard and so close that the plumes on their helmets touched. Zeus respected both warriors, and he gave both warriors strength. Eris, the goddess of discord, also respected both warriors. Swords clanged against shields, breastplates, and greaves.

The Trojans and the Ethiopians continued to fight the Greeks, and the dust created by their fighting filled the air. Fog can rise on a mountain in rainy weather when water fills the streams and creeks; shepherds fear for their flocks because wolves take advantage of fog and make raids on the shepherds’ livelihood. The dust rising on the battlefield was like the fog rising on a mountain; dust and fog both hide the Sun.

One of the gods dissipated the dust, but no god stopped the fighting. The Fates dealt out death to warriors, and Ares was happy to see so much blood. The plain between the Simois and the Xanthus rivers became a temporary resting place for corpses.

Achilles and Memnon continued to fight each other, and the gods watched. The immortal relatives of Achilles and Memnon feared for them. Thetis and her sisters, the Nereids, were afraid that Achilles might die. Dawn and her nieces, the daughters of Helios, her brother, were afraid that Memnon might die.

These immortal relatives were tempted to join the fight, but Zeus ordered two Fates to go to Achilles and Memnon. The dark Fate went to Memnon; the bright Fate went to Achilles. A shout went out from the immortals as the Fates took their positions. The immortals supporting Memnon grieved; the immortals supporting Achilles rejoiced.

Achilles and Memnon were fighting so hard that they did not notice the Fates. Each warrior concentrated on his enemy: a worthy opponent. It seemed as if a giant were fighting a Titan. Each warrior tried to kill the other by wielding a sword or throwing a huge rock. Sometimes, a weapon hit a warrior, but the warrior continued to fight. Neither warrior showed fear. Each warrior was like a headland jutting out into water. Storms assault the headland, but the headland resists the winds and waves.

Achilles and Memnon both had divine ancestry, including Zeus. Memnon's father was Tithonus, a son of King Laomedon of Troy. One of Laomedon's ancestors was Dardanus, the son of Zeus. Because Achilles and Memnon were both related to Zeus, Enyo, goddess of war, made them almost evenly matched as they fought each other.

The two opposing armies were also almost evenly matched. Each warrior received at least one wound, and blood and sweat dripped from each warrior onto the ground. Corpses covered the ground as clouds sometimes cover the sky and make sailors afraid. The corpses were as numerous as the fallen leaves at the beginning of winter, and horses trampled the corpses.

Achilles and Memnon continued to fight, and Eris lifted up her scales. Previously, the fate of Achilles in one scale and the fate of Memnon in the other scale had been equal, but now Achilles' fate rose and Memnon's fate fell. Achilles thrust his sword through Memnon's chest, and Memnon fell, terrifying his Ethiopian warriors and his Trojan allies. The Myrmidons, Achilles' warriors, stripped off Memnon's armor, and the Trojans fled. Achilles ran after them.

Memnon's mother, Dawn, grieved, and she covered herself with clouds. She requested that the winds go to the corpse of her son and lift it and carry it away. Drops of blood fell from the corpse, and the gods gathered them and put them in one place and used them to create the Paphlagonian River under Mount Ida. On the anniversary of the day that Memnon died, the river turns red and stinks like a festering wound.

A god gave the Ethiopians a special power. Veiled in fog, they flew behind the corpse of Memnon as the winds carried it away just like the friends of a hunter who has been killed by a boar or a lion carry his corpse away so that it can receive a proper funeral. The hunter's friends mourned, and the Ethiopians mourned.

The Trojans and the Greeks were amazed at the disappearance of the Ethiopians, who went with the corpse of Memnon to a bank of the Aesepus River where is now a grove sacred to the water-nymphs who are the daughters of the river-god Aesepus. The water-nymphs mourned the death of Memnon and planted the trees of the grove around his tomb.

Night arrived, and Dawn came down from the sky. The twelve maidens who are the Zodiac came with her to mourn the death of her son. These twelve maidens are the daughters of the Sun. The seven females who are the Pleiades also came to mourn.

Dawn hugged the body of her son and said, “You are dead, and I mourn the loss of your life. I no longer want to bring light to the sky above the earth. Instead, I want to go to the Land of the Dead and be with you and bring light there. In the Land of the Living and on Mount Olympus, let there be darkness and chaos. Why shouldn’t Zeus grieve, too? I am a goddess. I do not deserve this grief. I bring light, a great good to all — but Zeus did not care about my light, or he would not have let you die. So I prefer to go to the Land of the Dead to be with you. If Zeus wants light, then let him get Thetis, the mother of the warrior who killed you, to provide that light. Now that you are dead, I prefer darkness to light. I do not want Achilles to be able to see with the light I provide.”

Dawn cried as she spoke, and the ground by the corpse grew wet. Night also mourned the death of Dawn’s son, and clouds hid the stars. Inside Troy, Priam and the other Trojans mourned the death of Memnon. Even the Greeks were not entirely happy. They honored Achilles, but they wept for Antilochus.

Dawn mourned all night, and she did not think about returning to the sky in the morning. She hated Mount Olympus. Beside her, her horses grew uneasy and stomped on the unfamiliar soil; they were eager to pull Dawn’s chariot and bring light to the world. Zeus, knowing that Dawn was mourning, sent thunder and lightning and made the earth tremble. He was warning Dawn that he would be angry if light did not shine on the earth. Zeus is dangerous, and he is powerful, and Dawn, despite her grief, was afraid.

The Ethiopians buried Memnon, and then Dawn changed them into birds that are called Memnons. They still fly around his tomb and drop earth on it. To honor their fallen king, they hold games for him. They divide into two groups and play at war, with one group attacking the other group. Sometimes, one group of birds wins. Sometimes, each group of birds “kills” the opposing group. These games held to honor her son please Dawn. They also please Memnon, wherever he is: in the darkness of Hades or in the light of the Elysian Fields.

The goddesses known as the Horae persuaded Dawn, unwilling as she was, to return to the sky and bring light to the world. Despite her grief, she obeyed them because she was afraid of the might of Zeus. The Pleiades returned to the sky before Dawn did, but Dawn herself opened the gates and drove her chariot into the sky to banish the darkness and bring her light into the world.

Chapter 3: The Death of Achilles (Posthomerica)

When dawn arrived, the Greeks, mourning, buried the body of Antilochus. The Greeks honored Nestor, who endured his grief without collapsing. Nestor was a strong man.

Angry because of the death of his friend, Achilles armed himself. The Trojans, despite the deaths of their allies Penthesilea and Memnon, came from behind their walls and prepared to battle the Greeks. On this day, many warriors would die, including Achilles.

Achilles killed many Trojan warriors. The ground that gives us life grew red with blood, and the waters of the Simois and Xanthus rivers could not reach the sea because Trojan corpses dammed them. Achilles killed Trojans right up to the gates of Troy. He could have smashed open the gates and conquered the city that day, but Apollo himself opposed him. Apollo flew from Mount Olympus to Troy, stood in front of Achilles, and warned him, “Back away from Troy — now! You have killed enough Trojans. If you do not back away from Troy, one of the gods may kill you.”

Achilles did not fear Apollo or his words. Achilles replied, “I prefer not to battle against a god, although I will if I have to. You have tricked me before. You once surrounded Hector with fog and kept him away from my spear. Later, I was killing Trojans and chasing them back to Troy. You assumed the form of a Trojan, and I chased you, hoping to kill you, and you led me away from the city. Through your trick, you delayed the death of Hector and saved the lives of many Trojans. Apollo, *you* need to leave Troy and go back to Mount Olympus, or I may end up fighting you — even if you are an immortal god.”

Achilles turned away from Apollo and continued to chase and kill Trojans.

Apollo thought, *Achilles is insane to resist my will and my orders. He has made a big mistake. Zeus and the other gods are not going to protect him.*

At the Scaean Gates of Troy, Apollo wrapped mist around himself and fitted an arrow to his bow. He shot the arrow and hit Achilles on the ankle. Achilles fell like a tower that an earthquake has knocked over.

Achilles shouted, “Who has hit me with an arrow? Reveal yourself so that I can kill you! My spear will shed your blood and pull out your intestines and send your ghost to the Land of the Dead! No one — no matter how much courage he has — can withstand my spear. You were able to wound me only because you were hidden from me. Even if you are a god, even if you are Apollo, reveal yourself. My mother, Thetis, told me that Apollo would kill me at the Scaean Gates of Troy. The arrows of the immortals kill.”

Achilles pulled out the arrow and threw it away, but the winds carried it back to Apollo, who caught it as he returned to Mount Olympus. The arrows of the immortal gods are also immortal.

On Mount Olympus, the gods were accustomed to watch the Trojan War as a form of entertainment.

Hera, who supported the Greeks, said to Apollo, who supported the Trojans, “Why have you shot Achilles with an arrow that will kill him? Have you forgotten the marriage of his parents? The mortal Peleus married the immortal Thetis. You played your lyre and sang at the wedding to celebrate their union. Your audience — gods, people, beasts, and birds — listened eagerly to your songs. You even prayed that Peleus and Thetis would have a son. You have forgotten all of this and have killed Achilles.

“And why did you kill Achilles? To please the Trojans, although you worked a year for Laomedon, King of Troy. You tended his flocks, and he cheated you out of your pay and forced you and Poseidon, who had also worked a year for Laomedon, to leave Troy. You and Poseidon had offended Zeus, and he forced you to work for Laomedon.

“So now you have killed Achilles, yet his ancestry included immortals and he respected the gods. Can’t you tell which mortals deserve to die, and which mortals deserve to live?

“Even though you have killed Achilles, the war will not become easier for the Trojans because Achilles’ son, Neoptolemus, will come immediately to the war to replace him. Neoptolemus is strong like his father, and he will kill many Trojans. Now that you have killed Achilles, how will you be able to look his mother, Thetis, in the eyes? She has always respected you.”

Apollo did not reply to Hera. He sat and looked at the floor. The gods who supported the Greeks were angry at him, but the gods who supported the Trojans were happy. They praised Apollo, but they praised him when Hera was not present — they did not want to make Hera angry.

Achilles was still fighting; his blood still ran hot in his body. Because Achilles was dangerous although he was wounded, many of the Trojans stayed a distance away from him, the way they would stay a distance away from a lion that a hunter has mortally wounded. Despite its wound, which will kill it, the lion still roars and its jaws and talons are still deadly.

Achilles speared Orythaon, one of Hector’s friends, in the temple, cutting through his helmet and skull and destroying his brain. Achilles then killed Hipponous with a spear in the face — one of Hipponous’ eyes fell onto the ground. Achilles then killed Alcathous with a spear to the jaw — the spear cut off Alcathous’ tongue and came out through his ear. These three Trojans had rushed at Achilles, trying to kill him. Achilles also killed many other Trojans who tried to run away from him.

But Achilles’ blood grew cold and he lost his strength. He could no longer run. He stood and leaned on his spear, and he shouted at the Trojans who were running away from him, “You are cowards. Even after I am dead, you will still die — I will send Furies after you to kill you! That will be my revenge for the way I died!”

The Trojans heard Achilles' shout, and they were terrified the way a fawn is terrified when it hears the roar of a lion. Achilles' shout was so strong that many Trojans did not think he was wounded. But Achilles, as strong as he was, was unable to resist the wound caused by Apollo. He fell to the ground and added his corpse to the many other corpses lying there. Even though Achilles was dead, the Trojans stared at his corpse from a distance — they were so afraid of Achilles that they did not want to come close to his corpse. Sheep are terrified of lions, and even after a shepherd has killed a lion, the sheep are too afraid to come close to the lion's corpse.

Paris rejoiced at the death of Achilles because he hoped that the Greeks would leave Troy and sail home, and he encouraged his Trojans to seize Achilles' corpse: "Let us fight to get his body. Today, either the Greeks will kill us or we will drag Achilles' corpse to Troy behind Hector's horses. Because Hector is dead, I am using his horses, although they are still mourning the death of their master. If we can take Achilles' corpse to Troy, we will win honor for Hector and for his horses. If the ghosts in Hades have intelligence and feeling, Hector's ghost will rejoice that we have the corpse of the warrior who has killed so many Trojans and Trojan allies.

"If we take the corpse of Achilles back to Troy, we will make happy the Trojan women who have lost a husband, a father, a brother, or a son because of Achilles. The Trojan women will gather around the corpse of Achilles the way that lionesses gather around a hunter who has attacked their cubs. My father, Priam, will be happy. The old men of Troy will also be happy when they see the corpse of Achilles provide food for birds."

The Trojans and Trojan allies who had previously been afraid of Achilles now surrounded his corpse. Glaucus, Aeneas, Agenor, and other warriors were eager for Hector's horses to drag the corpse to Troy.

But Great Ajax stood over Achilles' corpse and defended it with his spear as the Trojans attacked him. The Trojans were like bees attacking a man who is harvesting their honey. The smoke brought by the harvester of honey bothers the bees, and the harvester of honey attends to his work. Great Ajax' spear hurt the Trojans as Great Ajax kept possession of Achilles' corpse.

Great Ajax killed Agelaus, Ocythous, Agestratus, Aganippus, Zorus, Nissus, and Erymas. Erymas fought for Glaucus, the leader of the Trojans' allies from Lycia. Glaucus mourned Erymas' death and attacked Great Ajax and stabbed his shield, which protected him. The shield was made of eight layers: seven oxhides and a top layer of bronze.

Glaucus said to Great Ajax, "The Greeks consider you to be their best warrior: the equal of Achilles. But Achilles is dead, and I think that today you will die."

Great Ajax replied, "You are a fool. Hector was a much better warrior than you, and he stayed away from me in battle. He was intelligent. But you seek to battle me although you are much weaker than I am. You will not be able to escape death at my hands the way you escaped death at the hands of Diomedes. You and I are not hereditary friends, the way that you and Diomedes

are. Because your ancestors had been friends, you and Diomedes were hereditary friends, and you and he exchanged armor and did not fight each other. The armor you gave Diomedes was worth one hundred oxen, and the bronze armor that you received from Diomedes was worth only nine oxen. That was a good deal for both of you. Diomedes became richer, and you saved your life. But I am willing to kill you and anyone who fights alongside you. I am willing to send you and others to the Land of the Dead.”

Great Ajax then attacked the Trojans and their Lycian allies and killed many warriors. The Trojans were afraid of Great Ajax the way that fish are afraid of a hungry dolphin. Nevertheless, they continued to fight him. Corpses lay on the ground around Great Ajax just like the corpses of boars lay on the ground around a lion.

Great Ajax speared and killed Glaucus, who fell onto the corpse of Achilles just like a small tree can fall at the foot of a huge tree. Aeneas fought Great Ajax and recovered Glaucus’ corpse, which the Lycians carried back to Troy as they mourned the death of their leader.

Aeneas continued to fight Great Ajax, who speared him above the bicep of Aeneas’ right arm. Aeneas retreated from Great Ajax and returned to Troy, where healers took care of him.

Great Ajax kept fighting, and his spear was like bolts of lightning that flash and kill. As he fought, he mourned the death of Achilles.

Fighting now alongside Great Ajax was Odysseus, the son of Laertes of the island of Ithaca. Odysseus killed Maenalus, Oresbius, Atymnius, and other warriors. Atymnius’ mother was the nymph Pegasis. Oresbius’ mother was Panacea, the goddess of universal remedy, who could heal all diseases but who could not welcome her son home alive from the war.

Alcon wounded Odysseus with a spear near his right knee. His blood gushed out, but Odysseus speared Alcon. The spear went through Alcon’s shield and pierced his flesh, and Alcon fell onto the ground. Odysseus pulled his spear out of Alcon’s body, and as the spear exited Alcon’s body, so did his breath. Alcon breathed no more.

Despite his wound, Odysseus stayed and fought.

Other Greeks also fought around the corpse of Achilles and speared many Trojans. When autumn arrives, many leaves fall to the ground. The Greeks used their spears to make many Trojans fall to the ground. The Greeks — especially Great Ajax — wanted to take the corpse of Achilles back to their ships so they could give it a proper burial.

Paris aimed an arrow at Great Ajax, but Great Ajax saw Paris and threw a rock at him and shattered his helmet. Paris fell, unconscious, and his arrows littered the ground. Paris’ friends grabbed him and used Hector’s horses to carry him to Troy. They also picked up his arrows and carried them to Troy. Paris recovered consciousness and groaned.

Great Ajax shouted at Paris, “You have escaped death today, but soon you will die. I may kill you, or some other Greek will kill you. Right now, I am more concerned with taking the corpse of my friend back to our ships.”

Great Ajax kept fighting, and he scattered the Trojans, who were afraid. Great Ajax was like a mighty eagle that scatters worthless vultures that are eating the remains of sheep killed by wolves. The Trojans were afraid of Great Ajax the way that starlings are afraid of a hawk that pursues and kills them. Great Ajax, covered with the blood of Trojans and Trojan allies, chased the Trojans as they fled to Troy. The Trojans fled through the open gates and closed them. Great Ajax had penned the Trojans the way that a shepherd pens sheep.

Great Ajax walked back to the corpse of Achilles, but his feet not once touched the ground. Instead, he stepped on bloody armor and bloody bodies. Farmers reap grain and place sheaves on the ground. Fate had reaped lives and placed many corpses on the ground. The corpses no longer thought about war.

The Greeks did not strip the armor off their fallen enemies. Instead, they attended to the funeral of Achilles. They carried his corpse to their camps and ships, and they mourned his death — the death of their mightiest warrior.

In ancient times, Tityos tried to rape Leto, the mother of Apollo, who defended her and killed Tityos with many arrows. Tityos was so huge that his corpse covered many acres of his mother, the earth, who mourned his death. Leto, however, laughed at the death of Tityos. The Greeks mourned the death of Achilles, but the Trojans laughed.

The Greeks mourned the death of Achilles, and they wondered if the Trojans would defeat and kill them in battle. They also remembered their parents, their wives, and their children at home, and this also caused them to mourn. They lay on the sand around Achilles’ body, and they pulled out their hair and poured sand on their heads. When a city is conquered, its citizens grieve as the city burns and the enemy warriors kill the city’s defenders. Like that, the Greeks grieved for Achilles, whom a divinely made arrow shot by a god had killed. No mortal and no mortal weapon had killed Achilles. Athena once threw a rock at Ares in battle, and Ares fell. Achilles looked just like the fallen Ares.

Achilles’ warriors, the Myrmidons, mourned his death. To them, Achilles had been a friend. He had not been arrogant to them; he had been gentle and intelligent and not just mighty in battle.

Great Ajax and Achilles were related, as both had Zeus as an ancestor, and Great Ajax mourned Achilles both as a friend and as a relative. Great Ajax said, “Achilles, you died at Troy, far from your home. An arrow — the weapon of a coward — killed you. Real warriors fight up close, spear-to-spear or sword-to-sword. Those who are capable of fighting up close do so. They hold a shield, and they use their spears or swords to pierce the enemy’s chest. They do not shoot

arrows from a safe distance. If the archer who had shot you had instead run at you with a spear, he would be dead and you would be alive.

“Your death must be the result of the will of Zeus, who must be planning victory for the Trojans. We have worked hard to defeat Troy, but now Zeus is against us.

“Soon, Achilles, your aged father, Peleus, will learn about your death. He may die when he learns that you are dead. That may be best because it will end his grief. If he lives, he will have to further endure a grim old age without his son to comfort and protect him. The gods gave him a son to be proud of, but the gods did not give him a son who will comfort him in his extreme old age. A son ought not to die before his father dies.”

Phoenix, the old man who had helped raise Achilles, and who had served as an advisor to him, said, “I wish that I had died before you died. I have never felt this kind of grief before, not even when I left my parents and went into exile. Your father, Peleus, let me live in his palace. When you, Achilles, were a small child, your father let me look after you as if you were my own son. You spoke baby talk, and you spit up on my shirt. I laughed as I took care of you because I believed that when I grew old, you would take care of me. You grew up to be a brave warrior, as your father and I wanted, but now you are in the eternal darkness. I want to die now, before your father learns that you are dead. He will grieve as I grieve. He and I will both wish to die soon — that will be better than to continue to live without you.”

Agamemnon, the leader of the Greek forces against the Trojans, said, “You are dead, Achilles, although you were our very best warrior. Now that you are dead, the Trojans may very well win this war. Now that you are dead, the Trojans rejoice. When you were still alive, they feared you the way a lamb fears a lion. Instead of hiding behind the high walls of their city, the Trojans will fight on the battlefield in front of our camps. Zeus must have lied to me. He promised that I would conquer Troy, but now that seems to be impossible.”

The Greeks all mourned along with their leaders. Their cries rose to the sky. Winds can cause huge waves that crash on the shore. The Greeks’ cries rose into the air the way that huge waves rise on the sea.

Nestor, the father of Antilochus, said, “Let us stop mourning long enough to care for Achilles’ corpse. We need to wash him, dress him in fine clothing, and lay him on a bier. This is the way to show respect to the dead. We can continue to mourn him for several days after this deed is done.”

Agamemnon ordered water to be heated. They washed Achilles’ corpse and dressed it in purple clothing that his mother, Thetis, had given to him.

Athena came down from Mount Olympus and sprinkled ambrosia, the food of the gods, over Achilles’ head to preserve the corpse and keep it from corruption. She gave Achilles a fierce frown that matched his frown when Patroclus had died. Achilles looked not as if he were dead — he looked as if he were sleeping.

Achilles' slave-women mourned his death. He had won these women and made them slaves when he conquered the island of Lesbos and the city of Thebe. Achilles had killed these women's husbands and brothers and made the women slaves, yet they mourned for him. Although they were slaves, he had treated them well, and now in mourning they beat their breasts and scratched their faces.

Briseis, Achilles' concubine, especially cried aloud. She had scratched bloody welts on her skin; the welts looked like blood dripped on milk. A beautiful woman, she said, "I have suffered much in my life. My husband and my brothers died defending my city and me. But my city fell, and I became a slave. Your death will cause much more suffering for me. You did not force me to do the harsh tasks of most slaves but instead made me your concubine and gave me a better life than most slaves. I hoped to become your wife — being a wife is better than being a slave. But now that you are dead, I will be passed on to another Greek master who will take me away in his ship and force me to live a life of wretchedness and degradation. I wish that I could have died before you died."

The tears fell from Briseis' eyes to the ground the way that frost and ice melt and fall to the ground from the side of a cliff.

The sea-nymphs heard the cries of mourning and realized that Achilles, the son of Thetis, had died. Thetis and her sisters of the sea dressed themselves in dark robes and swam to the shore; the water of the sea made a swift path for them. The Muses also heard the cries of mourning and came to the Greek ships to support Thetis. The Greeks normally would have been afraid to see even one immortal so close, but Zeus gave them courage, and many mortals and many immortals mourned together.

Thetis kissed the lips of her dead son and said, "The goddess Dawn will be happy that you are dead because you killed Memnon, her son. The god of the river Axius will be happy that you are dead because you killed Asteropaeus, his grandson. The Trojans will be happy that you are dead because you killed so many Trojans.

"But I will go to Zeus and show him my grief. I did not want to wed a mortal man; Zeus forced me. That mortal man, Peleus, is now very old, and soon the Fates will come for him and he will die. But I mourn for my son rather than for my husband. I resisted going to the marriage bed. I can change shapes, and I turned myself into wind and water and fire so that I would not have to sleep with Peleus. But Zeus had heard that I would give birth to a son who would be greater than his father, and so he married me to a mortal so that the mortal's son would not be so powerful that he could overthrow Zeus. For Zeus' plan to work, I had to give birth to a mortal son. Zeus convinced me to allow myself to be mastered by that mortal man on our marriage bed. Zeus convinced me by telling me how great my son — Achilles — would be. Zeus kept his promise that my son would be glorious and warlike, but Achilles was also short-lived, and so I am in great

pain. I will go to Zeus and let him know that I am suffering. Zeus caused my suffering. If I had married a god, then my son would have been immortal.”

Calliope, the Muse of epic poetry, said to Thetis, “Other gods have felt the grief that you are feeling. Zeus himself lost many sons in the Trojan War, including Sarpedon. My son Orpheus died because he was mortal, although his skill at playing the lyre and singing made even the trees in a forest listen. I endured, and you must endure. We must accept what the Fates have decreed; they make no exceptions for mortals, not even mortals with a god as a parent. Know that your son will be remembered by future generations. The other Muses and I will inspire poets to remember your son in song. Know also that Troy, the city your son was attempting to conquer, will fall. That, also, is fated.”

Night arrived, and many Greeks slept. Thetis, however, could not sleep because of her grief, and the Muses stayed awake with her and tried to comfort her. Thetis’ sisters, the sea-nymphs, stayed up and mourned. Thetis’ father and other minor sea-gods also mourned.

Dawn, the mother of Memnon, arrived, and she cast a brilliant light on the city of Troy. The Greeks mourned Achilles for days, and then they burned his body with wood taken from Mount Ida. The Greeks put much armor on the funeral pyre — the armor of warriors whom Achilles had killed. They also slaughtered Trojan men and threw them on the pyre along with slaughtered horses and bulls and sheep and fat. Achilles’ slave-women threw clothing on the pyre along with gold and amber. The Myrmidons and Briseis cut off locks of their hair and threw them on the pyre. They also put jars of oil and honey and wine and other good things on the pyre.

When the fire had been lit, Zeus sprinkled drops of ambrosia on Achilles, and he sent Hermes the messenger god to Aeolus, the god of the winds, to command him to release the winds so that the funeral pyre would burn with fierce flames. The winds blew all day and all night, and the fire consumed everything. The winds then went back to Aeolus.

The Myrmidons put out the remaining fire with wine, and then they collected the bones of Achilles, which were apart from the other bones. Achilles’ bones looked like the bones of a giant. They put his bones in a tomb and built over it a funeral mound. The sea-nymphs had honored Thetis by pouring ambrosia, the drink of the gods, over Achilles’ bones before they were buried. Thetis provided a vase to hold the gold and silver casket that held the bones. Hephaestus had made the vase and given it to the god Dionysius, who gave it to Thetis.

Achilles’ horses also mourned for him. His horses wanted to leave mortals behind and go back to the land where they had been born, where Zephyrus, the god of the West wind, had mated with Podarge, a Harpy who was the horses’ mother. But Achilles’ horses did not leave because they were awaiting the arrival of their new master: Neoptolemus, Achilles’ son. Achilles’ horses knew their fate: First, they would serve Poseidon, then Peleus, then Achilles, and finally Neoptolemus, who would come to Troy from the island of Scyros, and whom they

would eventually carry to the Elysian Fields, where blessed souls live happily and well. The horses mourned for Achilles, but they were also eager to see Neoptolemus.

Poseidon came out of the sea and comforted Thetis, “I have good news for you, Thetis. Achilles, your son, will not go down to the Land of the Dead. He will be a god. At one time, Dionysus and Heracles were mortals, but they became gods. So it is with Achilles. I am giving him an island in the Black Sea. He will be a god there, and the people who live in the region will worship him and give him sacrifices. You need not cry any longer.”

Poseidon left and returned to the sea, and Thetis felt her grief leave her. Poseidon kept his promise. The Greeks returned to their camps, the Muses returned to Mount Helicon, and the sea-nymphs returned to the sea.

Chapter 4: The Funeral Games to Honor Achilles (Posthomerica)

While the Greeks mourned the death of Achilles, the Trojans mourned the death of Glaucus. They put Glaucus' body on a funeral pyre outside the Trojan Gates, but Apollo took the body and gave it to the winds to carry to Glaucus' homeland: Lycia. The Lycians buried the body under an unbreakable rock, and nymphs caused water to flow there. People today call that stream the Glaucus.

The Greeks continued to mourn the death of Achilles, a death that made the Trojans happy. Some Trojans said among themselves, "Zeus has given us a generous gift: the death of our most powerful enemy. Now we can have a break — a breathing space — in the war. Achilles killed many of us Trojans, but now I think that the Greeks will sail for their homes. I wish that Hector were still alive — he would kill all the remaining Greeks."

Other Trojans were older and wiser. They said, "The Greeks will not set sail for their homes. Although Achilles is dead, the Greeks will still be eager for battle. The Greeks still have many powerful warriors: Diomedes, Great Ajax, Agamemnon, and Menelaus. Achilles may be dead, but the Greeks still have many warriors whom we ought to fear. If Apollo kills these other powerful Greek warriors, then perhaps the war will end."

The gods had taken sides in the Trojan War. Those gods who supported the Greeks were miserable because Achilles was dead. Those gods who supported the Trojans were happy because Achilles was dead.

Hera, who supported the Greeks, said to Zeus, "Why are you helping the Trojans? You must have forgotten the immortal goddess Thetis, whom you gave in marriage in Peleus, a mortal man. You arranged the marriage, which we immortals attended. We immortals gave Thetis and Peleus many gifts. So why are you helping the Trojans?"

Zeus did not reply. He was planning the end of the war and its aftermath. The Greeks would conquer Troy, but Zeus was planning to give many hardships to the Greeks both during the war and after it ended.

Darkness arrived, and the Greeks ate. Eating is a necessity even for those who grieve. Many Greeks then slept. When Dawn came to light the earth, the Greeks arose. They were still planning to conquer Troy despite their grief because of the death of Achilles. The many Greeks arose and moved like waves whipped by wind or like grains at the ends of wheat stalks whipped by wind.

Diomedes said to the Greek warriors, "Let us go to battle now. The Trojans probably think that we will leave because Achilles has died. Let us show them that they are wrong. Let us win glory in battle."

Great Ajax said, “What you say is good: We will continue to fight the Trojans, and we will continue to win glory in battle. However, first we need to wait for Thetis, who will come from the sea to hold funeral games for her son. She spoke to me yesterday, apart from other Greeks, and she told me what she was planning. She will arrive quickly. Also, the Trojans are likely to stay behind their walls and not leave the city and fight. Achilles is dead, but of course you and Agamemnon and I are still alive and ready to fight.”

Great Ajax spoke without knowing his fate following the funeral games held to honor Achilles.

Diomedes replied, “Of course, we should obey the will of the gods. If Thetis wants us to compete in funeral games, then we ought to do that and not fight the Trojans. In addition, we ought to honor Achilles ourselves in addition to the immortals honoring Achilles.”

Thetis came out of the sea and approached the Greeks, some of whom were eager to compete in the funeral games, although most were happy simply to watch the games. Thetis, who was wearing a dark veil, brought out the prizes for the games. The Greeks were eager to start the games.

Before the athletic games began, Nestor gave a funeral oration. In public speaking, Nestor was the clear superior among all the Greeks. Even Odysseus, a master of rhetoric, acknowledged that Nestor, the much older man, was his superior in public speaking. So did Agamemnon, the leader of all the Greeks fighting against Troy.

Nestor praised Thetis, the most beautiful and intelligent of all the sea-nymphs. Thetis was delighted by the praise. Nestor told the story of Thetis’ wedding, which took place on Mount Pelion near the cave of Chiron, the wise Centaur. Nestor spoke of the immortals who all attended the wedding, and of the Horae bringing and serving immortal food, and of Themis, the goddess of divine law, laughing as she set out silver tables, and of Hephaestus, the blacksmith god, building a fire, and of nymphs mixing ambrosia in gold chalices, and of the Graces entertaining with dance, and of the Muses entertaining with song, and of how the hills, rivers, wild animals, and sky rejoiced with the immortals and the mortals.

Nestor also praised the deeds of glorious Achilles. He spoke of the twelve cities that Achilles had conquered by sea, of the eleven that Achilles had conquered on land, of how Achilles had wounded Telephus, of how Achilles had killed Eetion while conquering the city of Thebe, of how Achilles had killed Cycnus, Polydorus, Troilus, and Asteropaeus, of how Achilles had dammed the water of the Xanthus River with the corpses of Trojans and their allies and had made the water of the river red with their blood and had killed Lycaon by the river, and of how Achilles had killed Hector, Penthesilea, and Memnon, who was the son of the goddess Dawn. Nestor also spoke of Achilles’ great size, strength, and speed, and of how handsome Achilles was and how fearsome in battle. Finally, he prayed that the Greeks would find another Achilles in

Neoptolemus, Achilles' son who would soon arrive at Troy after journeying from the island of Scyros.

The Greeks shouted their pleasure at the speech of Nestor, and Thetis, who was also pleased, gave him the horses that Telephus had given to Achilles. Before the Greeks sailed to Troy, they got off course and went to Mysia, a country against which they made war. Achilles wounded Telephus, the king of Mysia, in the thigh. The wound would not heal, and Telephus consulted the oracle of Delphi, who told him, "He who wounded shall heal." Achilles healed the wound using rust from the head of the spear that had caused the wound, and in return Telephus gave Achilles some horses and told the Greeks how to get to Troy. Those were the horses that Thetis awarded to Nestor, whose aides took them to his camp.

The first athletic game was the footrace, and Thetis set out as the prize for the winner ten cows, each of which was suckling a calf. Achilles had won these animals in a raid on Mount Ida.

Two men rose to compete in the footrace: Teucer and Little Ajax. They did not compete naked, as was the custom. Instead, because Thetis and other goddesses were present, the Greek athletes wore clothing that covered up their sex organs. Agamemnon showed the racers where they would race, and Eris, the goddess of discord, urged them to run quickly. Teucer and Little Ajax did run quickly. The race was close until a god or a mischievous spirit made Teucer trip on the root of a tamarisk close to the finish line. His left ankle twisted, and the veins swelled. Little Ajax raced past him and won the cows and their calves. Teucer, helped by friends, limped to doctors, who bandaged his ankle and stopped the pain.

The next event was wrestling. The competitors were Diomedes and Great Ajax, who attacked each other like wild, hungry, carnivorous beasts fighting over the carcass of a stag. Diomedes and Great Ajax were both strong and deadly, and they kicked up dust as they wrestled. Great Ajax grabbed Diomedes and tried to break his ribs, but Diomedes lifted Great Ajax and then threw him to the ground and sat on him.

Great Ajax was angry at being bested in the first round. Determined to win the second round, he covered his hands with dust to soak up the sweat, and then he and Diomedes fought like two bulls fighting on a mountain. The necks and backs of Diomedes and Great Ajax cracked with the effort that the two men made. Diomedes grabbed Great Ajax' thighs but could not knock him to the ground. Great Ajax grabbed Diomedes' shoulders but could not push him to the ground. Finally, Great Ajax grabbed Diomedes' torso and threw him on the ground.

The two wrestlers were ready and eager to compete in a third round, but Nestor told them, "This is enough wrestling. You two, now that Achilles is dead, have shown that you are our best wrestlers by far." The two wrestlers kissed in accordance with the ancient custom; the wrestling competition ended with friendship.

Thetis gave the two wrestlers four slave-women who were intelligent and skilled in crafts. Only Briseis surpassed them. Achilles had made these women slaves when he conquered the city of Lesbos, and they served at meals. The first served the food, the second poured the wine, the third poured water so the diners could wash their hands, and the last removed the tables after the meal. Diomedes and Great Ajax divided the women and sent them to their ships.

The next contest was boxing. Idomeneus stood up to compete; he was skilled in athletic contests, although his hair was partially gray. No one challenged him because of his skill and because he was an older man. Thetis gave him the horses and chariot that Patroclus had taken after he had killed Sarpedon, the son of Zeus. Idomeneus won the prize without having to compete and to bleed.

Phoenix spoke, "By the will of the gods, Idomeneus has won this prize, which is right: An older man has been honored. But now you younger men need to hold a boxing contest. Box to honor Achilles."

The younger men stayed quiet and did not volunteer, and Nestor said to them, "You younger men fight in battle, and so you should not avoid a boxing match. Younger men should enjoy boxing; a boxing match is a time and place to win glory. I wish that I were young again. I competed in the funeral games that my cousin Acastus held to honor his father, Pelias. I boxed Polydeuces to a draw, and we each won equal prizes. I won the prize for wrestling without having to compete because everyone was afraid of me. Even Ancaeus would not wrestle me. I had defeated him previously while I was among the Epeans. I am old now, but you are still young, and so you ought to compete in a boxing match."

Epeus, who would soon build the Trojan Horse, stood up. He was a good boxer, although he was not a good warrior. For a while, it seemed that no one would challenge Epeus and he would win the prize without competing, but then Acamas, the son of Theseus, challenged him.

The two boxers wore pieces of leather to protect their hands, and first they swung their arms and moved them and tested them to see if they were warmed up for boxing. As Epeus and Acamas boxed, their friends cheered them. For a while, they watched each other and then suddenly they fought. Blood flowed and mixed with sweat to form a red froth. Epeus steadily threw blows at Acamas, but Acamas was skilled enough to avoid many of the blows, causing them to hit only empty air. Acamas then hit Epeus' brow and cut it to the bone. The blood flowed as Epeus retaliated by hitting Acamas' temple and knocking him to the ground. Acamas immediately stood up again and hit Epeus' head. Epeus retaliated with a left to Acamas' brow and a right to Acamas' nose. Both Epeus and Acamas wanted to continue fighting, but the Greeks stopped the boxing match.

Epeus and Acamas kissed each other in friendship, and Thetis gave them each a mixing bowl made of silver. Achilles had received these bowls from Euneus, the son of Jason the Argonaut.

Euneus had ransomed the Trojan Lycaon, whom Achilles had captured. Hephaestus had originally made the bowls and given them to the god Dionysus when Dionysus brought his bride, Ariadne, to Mount Olympus, after Jason had — involuntarily — left her behind on the island of Dia, which is now called Naxos. Dionysus had later filled the bowls with nectar and given them to Thoas, his son, who later gave them to Hypsipyle, Queen of Lemnos, who gave them to Euneus, her son, who gave them to Achilles as the ransom for Lycaon.

The physician Podalirius quickly healed the wounds of Epeus and Acamas. He sucked out the blood from the wounds, stitched the wounds, and put a salve on them. His father, the great healer Asclepius, had given him the salve, which healed even incurable wounds in only one day. The salve also took away the pain of Epeus and Acamas.

The next contest was archery. Teucer and Little Ajax, who had previously competed against each other in the footrace, again competed against each other. Teucer was a talented archer who came from the island of Salamis; Little Ajax was the best of the archers from Locris.

The target was a helmet with a horsehair crest, which Agamemnon set far away from the archers. Agamemnon told Teucer and Little Ajax, “The archer who shoots the arrow that cuts off the horsehair crest will be the winner.”

Little Ajax shot first, and quickly. His arrow hit the helmet and made it ring. Teucer then shot. His arrow cut off the helmet’s horsehair crest. Teucer’s ankle had been injured in the footrace, and it still hurt, but Teucer won the archery competition and his fellow Greeks praised him.

Thetis awarded Teucer the armor of Troilus, whom Achilles had killed. Troilus had been a young, unmarried son of Hecuba, Queen of Troy, and she mourned his death. Troilus, the handsomest of her unmarried sons, was like a poppy cut by a scythe in a field before it has lived a life to maturity and produced seeds. Achilles killed Troilus before Troilus had grown a beard and had won a wife who would bear children. Troilus had gone to war as a young man — young men are bold in battle and display courage.

The next contest involved throwing a huge mass of metal. Only one warrior — Great Ajax — was strong enough to throw it, and he threw it as if it were a dry branch of an oak tree that lay in a field where reapers work and a reaper tosses the branch out of the way. As for the other Greeks, it took two men — working hard — to even lift it. In the old days, Antaeus used to throw it as a form of exercise before Heracles killed him. Antaeus was a half-giant who would regain his strength each time he touched the ground. Heracles battled him and kept throwing him to the ground, but he discovered that Antaeus kept regaining his strength, so to kill Antaeus, Heracles lifted him off the ground and strangled him. After killing Antaeus, Heracles took the huge mass of metal and other booty. Heracles later gave the metal to Telamon, the king of Salamis, after they

had conquered the city of Troy a generation before the generation that was fighting the Trojan War, and Telamon gave it to his son, Great Ajax, to take to Troy.

Thetis awarded Great Ajax the armor of Memnon, the Ethiopian king whom Achilles had killed. Memnon had been massive, and his armor was massive. Great Ajax was the only Greek whom the armor would fit, and Great Ajax laughed with pleasure as he received the prize.

The next contest was the broad jump. Many warriors competed, and Agapenor easily defeated the other competitors. Thetis gave him the armor of Cycnus, who had killed Protesilaus, the first Greek to be killed at Troy. Cycnus had killed many more Greeks, and after Achilles killed him, the Trojans mourned.

The next contest was javelin throwing. Euryalus easily defeated the other competitors, and the Greeks did not think that even an arrow could surpass his throw. Thetis gave him a large silver bowl that Achilles had won when he killed Mynes during the sack of the city of Lyrnessus.

The next contest was a fight while using hands and feet. Great Ajax stood up and challenged all the other Greeks to fight him. Great Ajax was so strong that no one accepted his challenge; Great Ajax' fists could crush a warrior's face. The Greeks nodded at Euryalus, inviting him — an expert fighter — to accept Great Ajax' challenge, but Euryalus said, "Friends, I will accept the challenge of any warrior except Great Ajax, who is by far superior to me. If he were to get angry during the fight, he could kill me. Even if he doesn't get angry during the fight, I do not think that I would be able to walk back to my ship after the fight."

The other Greeks laughed, and Great Ajax was pleased with the praise. Great Ajax did not have to fight anyone to win. Thetis gave him two talents of silver. She looked at Great Ajax, was reminded of Achilles, her son, and felt sad.

The next event was the chariot race. Menelaus, Eurypylos, Eumelus, Thoas, and Polypoetes prepared their horses and chariots and drove them to the starting point. The horses were ready, and their ears pricked up. Then the horses raced, speeding away like Harpies. Dust rose in the air like smoke or fog. Eumelus jumped out in front, and Thoas was a close second, but Menelaus won the race — Thoas and Eurypylos were both thrown from their chariots during the race.

Menelaus' ancestor, Pelops, had won an important chariot race so that he could marry Hippodamia, the daughter of Oenomaus, King of Pisa. Oenomaus worried about a prophecy that his son-in-law would kill him, so he challenged all suitors of Hippodamia to a chariot race. The agreement was that if the suitor won, the suitor would marry Hippodamia, but if the suitor lost, Oenomaus would cut off the suitor's head and display it on his chariot. Pelops won the chariot race — Oenomaus died during the race when his chariot's wheels came off — and married Hippodamia. Menelaus' horses were faster than the horses of Pelops.

Doctors attended to the wounds of Thoas and Eurypylus, and Thetis gave Menelaus a gold goblet that had belonged to King Eetion. Achilles had won it when he sacked Thebe, the city of King Eetion.

The next contest was a horserace. The horses were eager to run; they pounded the earth with their feet and they champed the bits of the bridles. Several riders competed. Sthenelus rode a fast but undisciplined horse that frequently got off the racecourse. The horse came from the stock of Arion, whose father was Zephyrus, the god of the West wind. Arion used to race his father. The gods had given Arion to Adrastus, King of Argos, who gave one of Arion's foals to Diomedes, who had married one of his daughters. Diomedes had given the offspring of Arion to his friend Sthenelus, who finished in second place in the horserace because of the wildness of his horse. Agamemnon finished in first place. The Greeks honored both men. Agamemnon had finished first, but Sthenelus' horse was faster. Thetis gave Agamemnon the silver breastplate that Achilles had taken from Polydorus, and she gave Sthenelus the helmet that had belonged to Asteropaeus, two spears, and a belt.

Thetis gave prizes to the other horsemen and to all of those who had competed in the funeral games. Odysseus was unhappy. He liked prizes, but he had been wounded in battle while helping to defend Achilles' corpse and had been unable to compete.

Chapter 5: The Madness of Great Ajax (Posthomerica)

Thetis then brought out the divine armor that Hephaestus had made for her son. The armor gleamed; the decorations that Hephaestus had put on the shield especially gleamed.

Hephaestus had put on the shield the sky and the sea and the land. He had put on the shield the winds and the clouds and the Moon and the Sun and the constellations. He had put on the shield Tethys, the mother of all rivers, and Oceanus, the god of the river Ocean that surrounds all land.

Hephaestus had put on the shield birds, lions, jackals, bears, leopards, boars, and hunters and their dogs. All looked as if they were alive.

Hephaestus had put on the shield battles in which were warriors and horses. In the battle, the gods Terror and Dread were active, as were Eris and the Furies and the Fates. From each warrior, sweat and blood dripped to the ground.

Hephaestus had put on the shield Gorgons with snakes in their hair.

In addition to these scenes of war, Hephaestus had put on the shield scenes of peace. He put on the shield scenes of civilization and Lady Justice. Inside a city, people worked at various tasks. Outside the city, farmers grew crops.

Hephaestus had put on the shield the steep mountain of Virtue, on top of which was the goddess of Virtue, standing on the top of a palm tree, her head disappearing into the sky. Paths led to the top of the mountain, but the mountain was very difficult to climb and few people attempted the climb to the top.

Hephaestus had put on the shield reapers of grain who wielded sickles. Other workers bound the sheaves of grain. Some oxen hauled wagonloads of sheaves to barns. Some oxen plowed the fields.

Hephaestus had put on the shield a celebration with flutes and lyres and dances and feasts. Near the dancing, Aphrodite arose from the sea. Sea-foam clung to her hair, and her attendants were winged Desire, who smiled, and the Graces.

Hephaestus had put on the shield Thetis' marriage to Peleus. She and her sister sea-nymphs arose from the sea. All feasted on Mount Pelion. Around the feast were meadows, flowers, groves of trees, and springs of water.

Hephaestus had put on the shield sailors at sea during a storm. Ships were in distress, and sailors were scared. Some sailors manned the sails, while other sailors pulled hard at the oars. The oars disturbed the water and made it white.

Hephaestus had put on the shield the beings of the sea, including Poseidon. Smiling, he rode his chariot on the sea and whipped his horses and calmed the waves. Dolphins swam alongside Poseidon's chariot.

Hephaestus had put on the shield many other things. All along the outside of the rim Hephaestus had put the river Ocean.

Thetis now put down beside the shield Achilles' divinely made helmet. Hephaestus had put on the helmet an image of Zeus looking very angry. Zeus and the other gods were fighting the rebelling Titans. Zeus threw a constant barrage of thunderbolts at the Titans, who were surrounded by fire.

Thetis placed beside the helmet Achilles' divinely made breastplate and greaves. Achilles found the greaves to be light, but all other warriors thought the greaves were heavy. Thetis also lay down Achilles' divinely made sword, gold sword-belt, and silver scabbard. She also lay down Achilles' spear, which still bore traces of the blood of Hector.

Thetis then said to the Greeks, "The funeral games and athletic contests are over, but I have a reward for the warrior who kept the Trojans from taking the body of my son. I want to reward the man who recovered my son's body so that we could give it a proper burial; that man is the best of the Greeks. Will that man come forward, please? To him I will give Achilles' armor and weapons."

Not one, but two, warriors stood up. This would be a contest.

Looking down from Mount Olympus, Zeus thought, *This is interesting. I don't think that Thetis believed that this would turn into a contest. I think that she believed that one man — Great Ajax — obviously did the most to keep the Trojans from taking possession of the corpse of Achilles.*

Odysseus and Great Ajax were the two warriors who stood up and claimed the prize. Great Ajax, tallest of all the Greek warriors, looked like the evening star — the star that outshines all other stars at night. Great Ajax asked that Idomeneus, Nestor, and Agamemnon judge who had done the most to recover the corpse of Achilles and is therefore the best of the Greeks. Great Ajax regarded these three men as expert judges; he knew that they had witnessed his deeds. Odysseus also regarded them as expert judges who were fair and incorruptible.

Idomeneus and Agamemnon were happy to serve as judges, but Nestor took them aside and spoke to them in private: "Let's think about this contest, which I fear will be a disaster for the Greeks. Only one warrior can be awarded Achilles' armor and weapons. That warrior will be happy, but the other warrior will be very unhappy and will blame us and all the other Greeks for what he will think is an insult. I predict that that warrior will stay away from the battles and not fight for us. Great Ajax and Odysseus are both very important to our cause. Great Ajax is a great warrior, while Odysseus has a great intellect.

“Listen to me: an old man who has gained wisdom through experience. A knowledgeable old man is wiser than a knowledgeable young man because the old man has experienced more. Let us three not judge the contest. Let the Trojans do it. They can decide which warrior they are most afraid of and which warrior did the most to recover the corpse of Achilles. We have many Trojans in our camp whom we are holding for ransom or are holding until we can sell them as slaves. These Trojans will make a fair judgment. They will not have a favorite because they hate all Greeks. If we do this, we may be able to avoid a disaster.

“If all goes well, the loser of this contest will become angry at the Trojans, not at us. If all goes well, the loser of this contest will fight more fiercely on the battlefield.”

Looking down from Mount Olympus, Zeus thought, *This is interesting. The contest has changed. Thetis said that she wanted to give to the divine armor to the Greek warrior who had recovered the corpse of Achilles; she regards that warrior as being the best of the Greeks. But now the contest includes a decision about whom the Trojans fear most. This could benefit Odysseus. His intelligence and ability to form plots pose a clear danger to the Trojans, and they know it.*

Agamemnon listened carefully, and then he said, “Nestor, no one here — whether old or young — is wiser than you are. You can see ahead and determine whether problems can arise. Only you saw the problem that could arise from this contest. Your advice is good, and I will accept it. If a warrior finds fault in whatever judgment the Trojan captives make, that warrior will direct his anger at the Trojan captives and not at us.”

Idomeneus, Nestor, and Agamemnon then publicly declined to judge the contest, and some Trojans were brought out to listen to speeches by Great Ajax and Odysseus and decide the winner. The contest would be like a trial. Both men would speak, and then both men would make shorter additional speeches.

Great Ajax, who was annoyed that Idomeneus, Nestor, and Agamemnon would not judge the contest, spoke first: “Odysseus, you are intelligent, but intelligence is not the same thing as strength in battle. Are you really saying that you did the most to keep the Trojans from taking away the corpse of Achilles? I am the one who killed Trojans while you stayed away. You are weak and cowardly. You compared to me are like a dog compared to a lion. You lack courage in battle. Instead, your strength lies in tricks and plots.”

Zeus thought, *Not everything Great Ajax said is true, although some of it is. Odysseus did help Great Ajax to keep the Trojans from taking away the corpse of Achilles, although clearly Great Ajax did the most to protect Achilles' corpse. It is true that Odysseus' strength is forming plots, but Odysseus is also a good warrior. Great Ajax is being way too critical of Odysseus.*

Great Ajax continued, “Here is some evidence that you lack courage. You did not want to fight at Troy. You thought up a trick that you hoped would keep you out of the fighting. You pretended to be insane, and you sowed your fields with salt. Palamedes knew that you were faking

insanity, and he placed your infant son, Telemachus, in front of the plow. If you were insane, you would kill your son. But, of course, you were faking insanity and you turned the plow aside and did not kill your son. You then had to come to Troy and fight — against your will.

“You have done great evil in your life, Odysseus. A poisonous snake on the island of Lemnos bit Philoctetes. The wound stank and caused Philoctetes to have fits, and you persuaded the Greeks to leave him on the island.

“And rumor has it that you brought about the death of Palamedes by hiding gold in his tent along with a letter purportedly written by Priam, King of Troy. Rumor has it that you did these things to make it look like Palamedes was a traitor to us Greeks. Palamedes was executed.

“Who is the better warrior: you or I? I once saved your life on the battlefield. You were wounded, and many Trojan warriors fought you. Other Greek warriors were not near you. You cried for help, and I came and rescued you. You went back to the Greek camp until your wound healed. If not for me, you would have died on the battlefield. Since you are now saying that you did the most to keep the Trojans from taking the corpse of Achilles, I wish that you had died on the battlefield that day. The Trojans should have fed your body to the dogs.”

Zeus thought, *This contest is going to end badly. Great Ajax is so angry that he is saying things that he ought not to say.*

Great Ajax continued, “Odysseus, you say that you are the best warrior of the Greeks, but why then do you keep your ships in the middle of the Greek camps? Achilles had his ships and I have my ships at the far sides of the Greek camps. Those are the most vulnerable places, and those are the places where the mightiest warriors are needed to protect the Greek camps.

“I am the warrior who did the most to keep the fire away from the Greeks ships when the Trojans stormed our defensive trench and wall and fought at the ships. Hector managed to burn only one ship. You did not fight Hector; I did. You were afraid of Hector; I was not.”

Zeus thought, *Great Ajax did fight magnificently when Hector brought fire to the Greek ships. However, Great Ajax did not mention that Odysseus was wounded at that time and unable to fight.*

Great Ajax continued, “I was the one who picked up Achilles’ corpse and carried it back to our camp. You are hoping to win this contest with your words. What you lack in skill with weapons, you make up for in skill in rhetoric. But if you should win this contest, you can’t wear Achilles’ armor; it is too big for you. I can wear Achilles’ armor; it fits me, and I won’t shame the gods when I wear it.

“I don’t see why we are talking here. This ought to be a contest of strength, not of words. Thetis wants the strongest warrior to have her son’s armor, not the warrior who speaks best in a council.

“In addition, I ought to have the armor because I have some of the same ancestors as Achilles. My father is Telamon, whose father is Aeacus, whose father is Zeus. Achilles’ father is Peleus, whose father is Aeacus, whose father is Zeus.”

Odysseus then spoke: “You have said many words, but the content of your words is lacking. I am far your superior in making plans and speeches, and these abilities are valuable. Skill and intelligence multiply strength, as we see when quarrymen cut out blocks of stone from a cliff that seems unbreakable, as we see when sailors cross a dangerous sea, as we see when hunters kill lions, leopards, boars, and other dangerous wild beasts, and as we see when men use powerful oxen to pull a plow. Intelligence accomplishes everything. A smart man is always better than a stupid man.

“When Diomedes volunteered to make a night raid against the Trojans after we Greeks had lost a battle, he selected me to go with him because I am intelligent. He did not select you, although he had that option. Diomedes and I killed many Trojan allies, including King Rhesus, and we stole his horses. We succeeded in raising the morale of the Greeks despite the previous day’s defeat in battle.

“Because I am intelligent, I was able to have Achilles come to Troy to fight in the war. I persuaded him with words.”

Zeus thought, *Odysseus is using rhetoric well. He is not going into detail about how he persuaded Achilles to come to Troy to fight in the war because it would put Achilles and Thetis in a bad light and he does not want to upset Thetis. Thetis did not want Achilles to go to the Trojan War because she knew that he would die there; therefore, she disguised him as a girl and hid him in the court of King Lycomedes on the island of Scyros. Odysseus showed the girls much fine women’s clothing, among which he had placed some weapons. The fine clothing fascinated the girls, but the weapons fascinated the disguised Achilles. Having penetrated Achilles’ disguise, Odysseus forced him to fight at Troy.*

Odysseus continued, “Strength is nothing without intelligence. Fortunately, the gods gave me both strength and intelligence.

“You did not say the truth when you said that you saved my life on the battlefield. Although I was wounded, I did not run away from the Trojans; instead, I held my ground and killed many Trojans. You looked after yourself, not me, and you ran away.”

Zeus thought, *Odysseus is correct when he said that he killed many Trojans although he was wounded, but he is completely wrong when he said that Great Ajax did not save his life but instead ran away. Odysseus killed many Trojans; he fought hard to save his own life. But he needed help, he called for help, and Great Ajax and Menelaus rescued him and fought the Trojans and allowed Odysseus to go back to the Greek ships.*

Odysseus continued, “You pointed out that my ships are in the middle and not on the sides of the Greek camps. There is a reason for that. My ships are in the middle so that I am available

to make plans with Agamemnon and Menelaus. The advice I give them is good. I did not put my ships in the middle because of cowardice.

“I showed that I have courage when I disguised myself as a beggar, including whipping myself to inflict wounds, so that I could go into Troy as a spy and find out what they were planning to do. Helen recognized me, but I was able to leave Troy safely, although I had to kill Trojans as I left the city.

“I was not afraid of Hector. When he challenged any of the Greeks to fight him in single combat, I was one of the first to volunteer to fight him.”

Zeus thought, *Odysseus is guilty of the fallacy of suppressed evidence here: What he said is true, but he is leaving out some information. No one at first was willing to fight Hector in single combat. It took Nestor to shame the Greeks so that some of them would volunteer to fight him. Both Great Ajax and Odysseus volunteered, among others, and a lottery resulted in Great Ajax fighting Hector. In the single combat, which darkness ended before anyone was killed, Great Ajax got the better of Hector.*

Odysseus continued, “Who did the most to recover the corpse of Achilles? I did. I killed more of the enemy than you did, and I was wounded as I fought.

“I have one more reason why I should be awarded Achilles’ armor. He and I are both descended from Zeus. The father of my grandfather Autolycus was Hermes, and Hermes is the son of Zeus.”

Great Ajax then responded to Odysseus’ speech: “You are annoying, Odysseus. Who did the most to recover the corpse of Achilles? I did. I am the one who made the Trojans grow weak in the knees when they saw me. I am the one who kept attacking them, and I am the one who made them flee. I was like an eagle attacking geese that are feeding in a field by a river. To escape my spear, the Trojans fled and hid behind the walls of Troy. Were you fighting by the side of the corpse of Achilles? If you were, I did not see you. If you were fighting, you were fighting at a distance from the corpse of Achilles.”

Zeus thought, *Odysseus did fight, and he was close to the corpse of Achilles, but Great Ajax clearly did the most to keep the Trojans from taking the corpse of Achilles. Both Great Ajax and Odysseus are exaggerating or even lying in their speeches.*

Odysseus replied to Great Ajax’ speech, “You are a great warrior, but I do not think that I am your inferior in either strength or intelligence. In fact, I think that when it comes to intelligence, I am your superior by far. We may be equal in strength, or I may be slightly stronger than you. Remember that at the funeral games held to honor Patroclus, we wrestled and you were unable to defeat me; I was slightly your better.”

Zeus thought, *The wrestling match ended in a draw, although Odysseus was, as he said, slightly Great Ajax’ better. But Odysseus’ slight superiority came from his knowledge of wrestling moves, not from any supposed superior strength.*

The Trojan captives then made their decision: They decided — unanimously — that Odysseus deserved the divinely made armor of Achilles. The Greeks groaned: They thought that Great Ajax deserved the armor. Odysseus was thrilled with his victory.

Zeus thought, *This is interesting. What is going on here? Perhaps the Trojan captives are intelligent enough to try to cause dissension among the Greeks. Clearly, Great Ajax did the most to keep the Trojans from Achilles' corpse and armor, and yet the Trojan captives decided unanimously to give Achilles' armor to Odysseus. Maybe they are valuing intelligence over strength, or maybe they want to cause a quarrel between Great Ajax and Odysseus. Nestor hoped to avoid trouble by having the Trojan captives judge this contest. Sorry, Nestor — it didn't work.*

Great Ajax was shocked by the decision. His heart and his head hurt. He stared at the ground; he could not understand how the Trojan captives had made such a decision. Friends led him to his ships and tried to comfort him with words.

The Greeks began to prepare their meal, and Thetis and the sea-nymphs returned to the sea. The Nereids — the daughters of the minor sea-god Nereus — were angry at Prometheus, who had told Zeus that Thetis would give birth to a son who would be greater than his father. This information had caused Zeus to marry Thetis against her will to a mortal. Zeus did not want a god to sleep with Thetis; their son might be powerful enough to overthrow Zeus and become the new king of gods and mortals.

The sea-nymph Cymothoe said, “Because Prometheus is the reason Zeus married Thetis to a mortal against her will, he deserved the punishment he received, even if he received it for the wrong reason. Because Prometheus had given the knowledge of how to use fire to mortals, Zeus caused him to be chained to a rock. Each day, an eagle ate Prometheus' liver, which grew back so that it could be eaten again the next day.”

The Greeks ate their meal and drank wine and slept, but Great Ajax did not eat or drink or sleep. Angry at his fellow Greeks, he put on his armor, held his sword, and brooded. What ought he to do? Set fire to the ships and kill all the Greeks? Or kill only Odysseus?

Athena especially respected Odysseus because he was good at forming plans like she was. She also liked the many sacrifices that he had made to her. She did not want Great Ajax to kill him, so she made Great Ajax insane.

Great Ajax was like a storm in his madness. He rushed around like a wild animal that foams at the mouth and thinks about killing hunting dogs and the hunters who have killed the animal's cubs. The animal rushes around, searching for its cubs, and it fights any dogs or hunters it sees. Great Ajax' spirit was like the boiling water in a cauldron. He raged like a hurricane or a forest fire. He cried out, and all who saw or heard him trembled.

Dawn arrived, and Hera met the god Sleep, and she kissed him. Hera had bribed Sleep with a marriage to the young Grace Pasithea to put Zeus to sleep after Hera had slept with Zeus.

This allowed Poseidon to help the Greeks fight the Trojans although Zeus had forbidden such interference. Hera's interference harmed Zeus and the Trojans, and Athena's interference was harming Great Ajax and the Greeks.

Great Ajax killed many sheep, thinking that he was killing Odysseus and other Greeks.

Menelaus quickly learned of Great Ajax' madness and said to Agamemnon, privately, "We will suffer much today. Soon, Great Ajax in his madness will set our ships on fire and then kill all of us because of the contest over Achilles' armor. I wish that Thetis had never brought the armor out to give away, and I wish that Odysseus had not challenged Great Ajax for the armor. Clearly, Great Ajax is the stronger warrior. We have behaved foolishly, and the gods must be against us. With Achilles dead, Great Ajax is our strongest warrior and our best hope of defeating the Trojans. But now the gods seem determined to destroy Great Ajax and us, too."

Agamemnon replied, "Blame the gods, not Odysseus, who has served us well. I do not hold Odysseus responsible for what is happening."

As Great Ajax killed sheep, the shepherds hid, trying to avoid being killed. They were like rabbits hiding in thick brush from eagles.

After Great Ajax had killed a ram, he said to it, "Lie there dead, Odysseus. The armor of Achilles is of no use to you. You will never see your wife again, or your son, or your parents. You will never take care of your parents in their old age. You have died in a land far from your home, and the dogs and birds will eat your flesh."

Athena then took away Great Ajax' madness, and he realized that he had been killing sheep and not Odysseus and other Greeks.

Great Ajax looked around, and he realized what had happened: The gods or a god had tricked him. He stood still; he could not move. At first he could not talk because of his misery, but then he said, "Why do the gods hate me? Why do the gods treat me this way? They made me insane and made me kill sheep. I wanted and I want to kill Odysseus. He is the evil one, and I wish that the Furies would pursue and exact vengeance on him. I also wish that the Furies would pursue other Greeks, including Agamemnon. I hope that Agamemnon will never return happily to his home in Greece.

"Why am I still alive? Why am I in this army of Greeks? Why live a life that is not worth living? I am a brave man, but my bravery is not recognized. The man who gets honor is the worse man. The Greeks honor Odysseus, and the Greeks forget all the acts of courage that I have done in this war."

Great Ajax had previously fought Hector in single combat. Because of darkness, the single combat had been stopped, and he and Hector had exchanged gifts that showed that they respected each other's courage and strength. Great Ajax had given Hector a sword-belt, and Hector had given Great Ajax a sword.

Great Ajax now cut his throat with the sword that Hector had given him. His blood gushed out, and Great Ajax fell to the ground and died.

The Greeks had stayed away from Great Ajax when he was insane because they were afraid of him. Now they came to him and mourned his death. They poured dust on their heads. When men take away lambs to butcher for a meal, the ewes bleat in anguish. The Greeks cried out in anguish for the death of Great Ajax.

Teucer, Great Ajax' half-brother — both were the sons of Telamon, but they had different mothers — wanted to kill himself out of grief, but the other Greeks stopped him. Teucer grieved the way that a child grieves when he becomes an orphan. His mother has died, and he has never known his father.

Teucer said, "For what purpose did you kill yourself? Did you kill yourself so that the Trojans can kill the Greeks? Now that you are dead, the Greeks will not be able to fight courageously in battle. You were our strongest and most courageous warrior.

"Now that you are dead, I wish to die here, far from home. I want to be buried here with you. I care more about you than I do about my parents, whom I do not know whether they are still alive on the island of Salamis."

Tecmessa, the spear-bride of Great Ajax, mourned his death. He had treated her as if she were his lawfully wedded wife, and she had given birth in his camp to his still-small son, who was named Eurysaces.

Tecmessa said, "I did not expect that you would die here at Troy, and now that you are dead, I am wretched. I wish that I had died before you died. This day is worse than the day that I became a slave with other captured women when you dragged me away from my home and my parents. I had been a queen, and you made me a slave. But you made me your spear-bride, and you treated me well. You promised that when you returned to Salamis that you would make me its queen, but now that will never happen. And your son will never have a father to care for him, and he will never succeed you as king of Salamis. Instead, your son will be a slave and miserable, and I will be a slave and miserable. All of this will happen because you are now dead."

Agamemnon comforted her: "Tecmessa, you will not become a slave — not as long as Teucer and I still live. We still respect you and your son, just as we respected you and your son while Great Ajax was still living. We wish that he were still alive. The entire Trojan army was unable to kill him. Only he was able to bring about his own death."

All the Greeks mourned, including Odysseus, who said, "Anger is a great evil, and because of his anger at me, Great Ajax killed himself. I wish that the Trojans had not awarded me Achilles' armor. Because they did, Great Ajax killed himself. I am not responsible for his anger or for his death. Fate is responsible. If I had known that this would happen, I would never have challenged him for the armor of Achilles. I would have given him the armor and whatever other gifts he

desired. I did not know that this would happen. We argued not over a wife or a city or great wealth and possessions. We argued over ability and prowess. Sensible men should be able to argue over such things without it ending like this.”

Nestor then said, “We have suffered much. Great Ajax is dead. Achilles is dead. My own son Antilochus is dead. But we cannot mourn forever. We must respect the dead by giving the dead a proper funeral. That is the best thing that we can do for the dead.”

The Greeks carried the corpse of Great Ajax to the ships, and they cleaned his corpse and covered it with cloth. They built a funeral pyre and burned his body with many sheep and robes and cattle and horses and gold and armor and amber.

Amber originated from grief. When Phaëthon demanded proof that Helios, the Sun-god, was his father, he made Helios swear an inviolable oath that he would grant Phaëthon a wish. After Helios made the inviolable oath, Phaëthon demanded that he be allowed to drive the Sun-chariot that brought light to earth. Phaëthon could not control the horses, and he nearly destroyed the earth, and Zeus was forced to save the earth by throwing a thunderbolt at Phaëthon and killing him so that Helios could drive the Sun-chariot. Helios’ daughters cried tears, and Helios turned those tears into amber.

Along with amber, the Greeks also burned ivory and silver and jars filled with oil and other good things in honor of Great Ajax.

Thetis sent a strong wind to assist in the burning of the corpse of Great Ajax. Smoke rose from the funeral pyre just as smoke rose from the thunderbolts that Zeus threw when he fought and defeated the giant Enceladus or just as smoke rose from the fire that the living Heracles lit when the Centaur Nessus tricked Heracles’ wife, Deianira, into giving Heracles a robe soaked in Nessus’ blood, which burned Heracles like acid and caused him to burn himself to death and to become a god.

From the walls of their city, the Trojans watched the funeral pyre burn. The Trojans rejoiced; the Greeks mourned.

When the fire burned down, the Greeks put it out with wine. They gathered Great Ajax’ bones and put them in a box made of gold. The Greeks heaped a great mound of earth over the bones and then went to their ships and ate.

The Greeks found it difficult to sleep that night because they were afraid that the Trojans might attack them now that Great Ajax was dead.

Chapter 6: Eurypylus Comes to Troy (Posthomerica)

Dawn arrived, and Menelaus held an assembly of all the Greeks. He intended to test the army's morale by suggesting that they give up and go home, and he hoped that they would reject the suggestion. He said to them, "I am discouraged because so many of you Greeks have died for me before the walls of Troy. So many Greeks will not return home and take care of their aged parents. The gods have opposed us and brought death to many of us. Can any of us take joy in battle under such circumstances? Let us return home — now! Great Ajax is dead. So is Achilles. If we could not conquer Troy with these warriors alive, will we be able to conquer Troy with these warriors dead? These warriors and others died for me and for Helen, my bitch of a wife. I am much more concerned about you warriors than I am about Helen. Paris can have Helen! They deserve each other! Let Priam and the Trojans have all the troubles that Helen will bring to them. Let us return to Greece and live rather than stay at Troy and die."

So Menelaus spoke, but he was actually planning how he could spill the blood of Paris and other Trojans and tear down the walls of Troy. He hoped that the Greek warriors were planning the same things.

Diomedes replied, "To leave Troy would be cowardly. You sound as if you were a child or a woman who lacks strength and courage. We Greeks will stay here and conquer Troy. And if any Greek wishes to go home, I myself will cut off his head and give it to the birds to eat. Instead of fleeing, those of us warriors who have courage will sharpen our spears and make sure our shields and other armor are ready to do their duty in battle. Let us eat and then go to war and see how courageous we are."

Calchas the prophet said, "You know that my prophecies come true. I have prophesized that Troy will fall in the tenth year of the war, and this will in fact happen. Victory will be ours. However, before the victory can occur, we must send Diomedes and Odysseus to the island of Scyros to persuade Neoptolemus, Achilles' son, to come to Troy and fight for us. Neoptolemus will help us to win the war."

The Greeks knew Calchas and believed his prophecies; they believed him when he said that Neoptolemus would help them win the war.

Odysseus said, "I will not make a long speech. When people are grieving, a speaker brings no pleasure — not even a singer whom the Muses love brings pleasure to grieving men. I pray to the gods that Diomedes and I will succeed in this task. The two of us will be able to persuade Neoptolemus to come and fight for us in this war. His mother may cry with grief as he leaves with us, but the son of a mighty warrior is a warrior, too, and he will come with us."

Menelaus then said to Odysseus, “You have done good work for us Greeks. Tell Neoptolemus that if he fights for us in this war that I will give him in marriage my daughter, Hermione, along with many gifts. He should be happy and proud to marry my daughter and be allied with my family.”

The council ended, the men ate, and Diomedes and Odysseus set sail with twenty men to row. The men worked hard at the oars, just as oxen work hard at dragging a wagon, and the ship sped swiftly over the sea.

The Greek warriors who stayed at the camps sharpened their weapons and prepared for battle. The Trojans also prepared for battle, and they prayed to the gods for victory.

The gods heard and answered the Trojans’ prayers: They brought a mighty champion to Troy to fight for them. The King of the Cetaeans, Eurypylus, whose grandfather was Heracles, the greatest of all Greek heroes, brought an army with him to Troy. The Trojans were gladdened by the numerous reinforcements. The Trojans were like tame geese that see coming toward them the farmer who feeds them. The geese rejoice to see the farmer, and the farmer rejoices to see the geese. Trojan women stared at Eurypylus. He was the most outstanding warrior in the army that he brought with him: He was like a lion among jackals.

Paris, who had stolen Helen from Menelaus, welcomed Eurypylus. They were cousins as well as fellow warriors. Eurypylus’ mother was Astyoche, the sister of Paris’ father, Priam. Eurypylus’ father was Telephus, whose father was Heracles and whose mother was Auge. The two had slept together without her father knowing about it. Auge’s father ordered that the infant Telephus be exposed on a mountain so that he would die, but a doe that loved him as if he were her own fawn allowed him to drink milk from her udders. The children of Heracles are not meant to die in infancy.

Paris showed Eurypylus the city of Troy. He showed him the statue of Assaracus, who had ruled the city of Dardania. Assaracus’ brother was Tros, an earlier king of Troy. Paris also showed him Hector’s house and the shrine dedicated to the goddess Athena. Near this shrine was the home of Paris and an altar dedicated to Zeus. The two men talked, and Paris asked Eurypylus about his relatives.

When they arrived at the home of Paris, they saw Helen. Four female servants attended to her needs, and other slave-women did the tasks that female slaves do. Helen impressed Eurypylus, and Eurypylus impressed Helen. Paris and Eurypylus sat by Helen, and the three talked.

Eurypylus’ army camped in front of Troy, along with many Trojan guards. His warriors unloaded their supplies and fed their horses. Night arrived, and all ate. Musicians brought out their instruments and played them. The Greeks watched and listened, and they made sure that their ships were well guarded. The Trojans and their allies were camped outside the walls of Troy, and the Greeks worried that they might make a night raid and try to set the ships on fire.

Inside the walls of Troy, Paris and Eurypylus feasted with Paris and other Trojan leaders. After the meal, Paris gave Eurypylus the best room in his home to sleep in — the room where Paris and Helen usually slept.

At dawn, Eurypylus and the other warriors armed for battle. Eurypylus' shield was magnificent — a work of art that bore images of the deeds of Eurypylus' grandfather Heracles.

Eurypylus' shield showed the infant Heracles strangling two snakes. Heracles' father was Zeus, but his mother was not Zeus' wife, Hera. Hera hated the children whom Zeus fathered outside of their marriage, and so Hera sent two snakes to strangle Heracles in his crib. But even as an infant, Heracles was immensely strong, and he strangled the two snakes. This was the first of Heracles' many deeds of courage and strength.

Eurypylus' shield showed the twelve labors of Heracles. Heracles had grown up and married Megara, and they had children, but Hera made Heracles insane and he killed his children. Heracles traveled to the oracle of Delphi to find out how he could purify himself of this evil, and the oracle told him that he had to serve Eurystheus, a king in the land of Argos, and perform ten labors for him. Heracles did this, but Eurystheus argued that two of the labors should not count, and so Heracles performed two more labors, bringing the total to twelve. During many of his labors, Heracles killed many dangerous monsters and made the world much safer.

Eurypylus' shield showed Heracles' first labor, which was killing the Nemean lion. Heracles set out for Nemea and the lion. In Nemea, he met a shepherd named Molorchos whose son the lion had killed, and Heracles told him to wait thirty days. If Heracles returned with the carcass of the lion, then Molorchos would make a sacrifice to Zeus, but if Heracles had not returned with the lion's carcass in thirty days, that meant that Heracles was dead and Molorchos should make a sacrifice to Heracles — the Greeks sometimes made sacrifices to heroes as well as to gods. Heracles found the lion and tried to kill it by shooting arrows at it, but he discovered that weapons could not penetrate the lion's fur. Heracles forced the lion into its cave, which had two entrances. Heracles trapped the lion by blocking one entrance and then going into the cave through the other entrance. Because ordinary weapons could not penetrate the lion's skin, Heracles killed the lion by strangling it. To skin the lion, Heracles used one of the lion's claws. For the rest of his life, Heracles wore the skin of the lion. On the thirtieth day, he found Molorchos ready to make a sacrifice to Heracles, whom he thought had died, but Molorchos happily made the sacrifice to Zeus instead.

Eurypylus' shield showed Heracles' second labor, which was killing the Lernaean Hydra. In accomplishing this labor, Heracles had the help of a nephew named Iolaus. The Hydra of Lerna had nine heads, the middle of which was immortal. Heracles and Iolaus traveled to Lerna and found the Hydra's lair. Heracles forced the Hydra to leave its lair by shooting flaming arrows into the lair. Heracles fought the Hydra, but he discovered that each time a mortal head was cut off,

two more heads grew in its place. Hera gave Heracles even more trouble by sending an enormous crab to fight him, but Heracles crushed the crab. Heracles then got help from Iolaus. Each time Heracles cut off one of the Hydra's mortal heads, Iolaus cauterized it with a torch, thus preventing more heads from growing. Heracles then cut off the immortal head and placed it under a boulder. The blood of the Hydra was poisonous, and before leaving, Heracles dipped the heads of his arrows into the Hydra's blood. Eurystheus, however, said that this labor did not count because Heracles had help from Iolaus in accomplishing it.

Eurypylus' shield showed Heracles' third labor, which was capturing the fire-breathing Ceryneian Hind — the goddess Artemis' golden deer that lived in Ceryneia. Eurystheus ordered Heracles to bring back this deer, whose horns were made of gold. Because the deer belonged to the goddess Artemis, Heracles did not want to kill it, so he chased it for a year — the deer was so swift that it could outrun arrows. Finally, Heracles captured the deer while it was asleep. Artemis confronted Heracles as he was taking the deer to Eurystheus, but Heracles promised to release the deer as soon as he had shown the deer to Eurystheus. Eurystheus, however, wanted the deer to be a part of his zoo — Eurystheus was hoping that Artemis would become angry at Heracles and kill him. Heracles said that Eurystheus could put the deer in his zoo, and then he released the deer, which immediately fled back to Artemis. Eurystheus complained, but Heracles said that Eurystheus should have caught the deer before it fled.

Eurypylus' shield showed Heracles' fourth labor, which was capturing the Erymanthian boar. The shield also showed Heracles' battle with the Centaurs, and his rescue of Prometheus. Boars were dangerous, and this especially dangerous boar lived on Mount Erymanthus. While traveling to Mount Erymanthus, Heracles became the guest of a Centaur named Pholus. The Centaur ate his meat raw, and Heracles ate his meat roasted. The Centaurs had a jar of wine, and Pholus and Heracles drank from it. The other Centaurs smelled the wine, and they also drank, but they did not mix the wine with water and so became drunk and unruly. Heracles fought the Centaurs and chased them, and he discovered Prometheus, who had given the knowledge of how to control fire to mortals. Zeus had punished him by chaining him to a rock on a mountain and by sending an eagle each day to eat his liver, which grew back each night so it could be eaten again the following day. Heracles shot the eagle with an arrow and released Prometheus, and then he consulted the wise Centaur Chiron, seeking advice about how to capture the Erymanthian boar. Chiron advised Heracles to drive the Erymanthian boar into deep snow and then capture it. After following Chiron's advice, Heracles took the Erymanthian boar to Eurystheus, who ordered it to be thrown into the sea. The Erymanthian boar swam to Italy, where it died. Its tusks were put on display in the temple of Apollo at Cumae.

Eurypylus' shield showed Heracles' fifth labor, which was cleaning the barn of Augeas in a single day. The cattle's manure had not been cleaned out for decades, and Augeas had hundreds

of cattle. Heracles appeared before Augeas and offered to clean out his barn in one day if Augeas would give him one tenth of his cattle. Thinking that the job was impossible to accomplish in a single day, Augeas accepted the offer. Heracles opened the ends of the barn and then diverted the course of the river Alpheus so that it flowed through the barn. When the barn was cleaned out, Heracles diverted the river so that it flowed again in its original channel. Nymphs watched and marveled at this deed. Eurystheus, however, said that this labor did not count because Heracles had done it for payment.

Eurypylus' shield showed Heracles' sixth labor, which was to kill and chase away the Stymphalian birds. To escape wolves, they had migrated to a marsh in Arcadia. These birds killed human beings. Heracles could not go into the marsh because the soggy land would not support his weight, so Athena gave him some castanets. Heracles clicked the castanets, making noises that frightened the birds. He shot many of the birds, and the others flew away, never to return. Arcadia became much safer for mortals.

Eurypylus' shield showed Heracles' seventh labor, which was to capture the fire-breathing Cretan bull. This bull had been plaguing Crete, and King Minos wanted to be rid of it. Heracles choked the bull into submission and took it to Eurystheus, who released it. It wandered to Marathon and resumed its evil ways. Eurystheus lost an opportunity to help mortals when he released the dangerous bull instead of killing it. He should have sacrificed it to the gods.

Eurypylus' shield showed Heracles' eighth labor, which was to capture the man-eating mares of Diomedes of Thrace. Heracles took a few companions with him during this labor. He captured the horses, but they ate human flesh. While Heracles was fighting Diomedes, Heracles' companion Abderus watched the mares; unfortunately, they attacked and ate him. To avenge the death of Abderus, Heracles fed Diomedes to the mares. Heracles took the mares to Eurystheus, who ordered them to be taken to Mount Olympus and sacrificed to Zeus. Zeus did not want such a sacrifice, so he sent wild animals that killed the mares.

Eurypylus' shield showed Heracles' ninth labor, which was to get the war-belt of Hippolyta, the queen of the Amazons. The Amazons were war-like women who learned the skills of war such as archery from birth. Heracles sailed with other warriors to the Amazons, and Hippolyta met him. Heracles was in a hurry to get her war-belt, and he attempted to drag her by her hair from her horse. She respected Heracles' strength and daring, and she willingly gave him her war-belt. However, Hera caused trouble. She told the Amazons that Heracles was planning to kidnap Hippolyta, and the Amazons attacked Heracles, who sailed away with Hippolyta's war-belt. Penthesilea, Hippolyta's sister, later killed her with a spear in a hunting accident.

Eurypylus' shield showed Troy, which Heracles visited after he got the war-belt of Hippolyta. The gods Poseidon and Apollo had displeased Zeus, so he forced them to disguise themselves as mortals and work for Laomedon, King of Troy, for one year. Laomedon promised the two

gods payment if they would build the walls of Troy; however, after the two gods had worked for a year and built the walls, Laomedon refused to give them the agreed-upon fee and even threatened to sell them into slavery. Poseidon and Apollo did not want to reveal themselves as gods because it would be humiliating if it became known that they had worked for a mortal, so they left. But Apollo sent a plague and Poseidon sent a sea-monster to Troy. Laomedon consulted seers, who told him that the plague would stop and the sea-monster would leave if he sacrificed Hesione, his daughter, to the sea-monster, so Laomedon chained Hesione by the sea. At this time, Heracles arrived and said that he would rescue Hesione if Laomedon would give him the valuable mares that Zeus had given to Laomedon when Zeus kidnapped Laomedon's son Ganymede and took him to Olympus to be his cupbearer. Heracles fought off the sea-monster with arrows and rescued Hesione, but Laomedon refused to give Heracles the mares that he had promised as payment. Heracles sailed away, but he promised to return later with more ships and conquer Troy. After he completed his twelve labors, he returned to Troy and conquered the city. He and his warriors killed all of Laomedon's sons except for Podarces, who saved his — Podarces' own — life by giving Heracles a golden veil that Hesione, Podarces' sister, had embroidered. Afterwards, Podarces used a new name that in his language is related to the word for "ransomed": Priam.

Eurypylus' shield showed Heracles' tenth labor, which was to steal the cattle of a monster named Geryon, who was three men joined together at the waist. Because of this, Geryon was called "triple-bodied Geryon." To get to Geryon's island, Heracles had to cross a desert. Heracles became so hot that he shot an arrow at Helios the Sun-god. Helios respected Heracles' daring, and he lent him a golden cup. Helios used the cup each night to sail from west to east on the ocean, and Heracles used it now to sail to the land of Geryon. Heracles was attacked there by a two-headed dog named Orthrus; the three-headed dog of Hades, Cerberus, was his brother. Heracles killed Orthrus with his club, and when Geryon's cowherd, Eurytion, attacked Heracles, Heracles also killed him with the club. Geryon then attacked Heracles, who shot and killed him with an arrow whose head had been dipped into the poisonous blood of the Hydra. Heracles put the cattle of Geryon into the golden cup of Helios, sailed back to the desert, and returned the golden cup to Helios. Heracles then took the cattle to Eurystheus.

Eurypylus' shield showed Heracles' eleventh labor, which was to steal some golden apples from the garden of the Hesperides. The shield also showed the fight between Heracles and Antaeus. Gaia, the goddess of the earth, had given the orchard that produced golden apples to Hera when Hera married Zeus. The Hesperides were nymphs who lived in the west and took care of the garden. To find out where the nymphs lived and how to get to them, Heracles captured the sea-god Nereus and held tightly to him as he changed into many shapes. Eventually, Nereus gave up and told Heracles the information he needed. On his way to the land of the Hesperides, Heracles met Antaeus, who challenged him to a wrestling match — the loser of the wrestling

match would forfeit his life. Antaeus did this to collect the skulls of travelers so that when he had enough, he could build a temple out of them to Poseidon, his father. The mother of Antaeus was Gaia, the goddess of the earth. As long as Antaeus touched Gaia, he regained his strength. After throwing Antaeus to the earth a few times, Heracles discovered this secret, and he defeated Antaeus by holding him up in the air so that Antaeus' feet did not touch the earth and then strangling him. In the garden of the Hesperides, a dragon with a hundred heads guarded the golden apples, and Heracles fought and defeated the dragon. Heracles brought the golden apples to Eurystheus to show that he had completed the labor, and Athena then returned the golden apples to the Hesperides.

Eurypylus' shield showed Heracles' twelfth and final labor, which was to bring Cerberus, the three-headed guard dog of Hell, to Eurystheus. The shield also showed Heracles freeing Theseus from the Land of the Dead. Heracles visited Eleusis so that he could become initiated in the Eleusinian Mysteries and so learn how to go to and from the Land of the Dead while he was alive. Many entrances to the Land of the Dead exist, and Heracles used the one at Tanaerum. Heracles asked Hades for permission to take Cerberus to the Land of the Living, and Hades granted him permission as long as he did not use any weapons to subdue the three-headed dog. Using his bare hands and arms, Heracles subdued Cerberus and took him to Eurystheus to show that he had performed the final labor. Heracles then returned Cerberus to the Land of the Dead.

Eurypylus' shield showed Heracles' killing of the Centaur Nessus. Heracles had remarried. His new wife was Deianeira. One day, Heracles and Deianeira had to cross a river. Nessus offered to carry Deianeira across the river, but then he attempted to rape her. Heracles shot him with an arrow whose head had been dipped into the poisonous blood of the Hydra. Before Nessus died, he told Deianeira that his blood had a magical quality; it was a love potion. He said that if Deianeira were to ever think that Heracles was in love with someone else, she could make him love her again by smearing Nessus' blood on the inside of a robe and then giving it to Heracles to wear. Deianeira believed him, but it was a trick. She thought that Heracles was falling in love with someone else, so she did what Nessus had told her to do, but Heracles' arrow had poisoned the blood of the Centaur. When Heracles put on the robe, Nessus' blood, which was infected by the poisonous blood of the Hydra, burned Heracles like acid, as Nessus had known it would. In agony, Heracles climbed on a funeral pyre, lit it, and burned himself to death. Once dead, he became a god and lived on Mount Olympus.

The Trojans admired Eurypylus and his shield. Paris said to him, "Welcome. Now that you are here, I hope that we can kill the Greeks and set fire to their ships. I hope that your deeds will be like those of Heracles, your grandfather. You can keep Troy from being conquered."

Eurypylos replied, “Paris, the gods will decide who dies and who lives in the war. But I will fight for you and your city, and I promise you that I will not return to Troy until I have conquered the Greeks or the Greeks have killed me.”

Eurypylos then chose Trojans to fight with him in the front lines: Paris, Aeneas, Polydamas, Pammon, Deiphobus, and Aethicus. All of these warriors were skilled at war. The Trojan warriors and their allies moved out to fight the Greeks; the Trojan warriors and their allies were like bees pouring out of a hive. The warriors and their horses made much noise as they went to fight the Greeks.

The Greeks also left their camps to fight in battle. The Trojans and the Greeks met and fought with rocks, swords, arrows, battleaxes, and spears. The blood of men and horses reddened the ground, and broken chariots mixed with broken bodies. Yet the warriors were eager to fight, as eager as calves kept near the herdsman’s home are eager to be rejoined with their mothers when the cows return to the barn after grazing all day.

At first, the Greeks pushed back the Trojans, but then the Trojans gathered their strength and pushed back the Greeks. Eurypylos was mighty in battle. He killed Nireus, a Greek who was almost as handsome as Achilles but who had brought only three ships to Troy. Eurypylos speared Nireus a little above the waist, and Nireus fell. His blood gushed out of his body and soaked his armor and his hair. Nireus was like a young olive tree growing on the bank of a river that floods and tears away the bank and the young olive tree, which falls.

Eurypylos said, “Lie there, dead. You are a handsome man, but your good looks did not save your life. You met a much better man. In battle, strength is more important than beauty.

Eurypylos wanted to strip off Nireus’ armor, but the Greek healer Machaon attacked him and tried to avenge the death of Nireus. Machaon speared Eurypylos in the right shoulder, and blood flowed out of the wound, but like a lion or boar that quickly strikes back at the hunter who has wounded it, Eurypylos speared Machaon in the groin. Despite his wound, Machaon lifted a rock and threw it at Eurypylos, whose helmet protected him. Eurypylos then thrust his spear into Machaon’s chest and out his back. Machaon fell like a bull falls after a lion kills it.

Eurypylos said, “You are a fine healer, but not so fine a warrior. Your knowledge of medicine cannot help you now. Even your father, the skilled healer Asclepius, cannot help you now.”

Machaon, because he was a dying man, had the gift of prophecy. He said, “Eurypylos, you do not have much longer to live. Your fate is coming quickly for you.”

Machaon died, and Eurypylos said to the corpse, “Lie there, dead. As for my own death, I am not concerned about it. We mortals die; fate comes for us all.”

Eurypylos then stabbed Machaon’s corpse.

Teucer had been fighting elsewhere, but now he mourned because he saw that Eurypylos had killed both Machaon and Nireus. He called for help: “Greeks, help me to recover the corpses of

Machaon and Nireus. It will be a disgrace to us if their corpses are carried away to Troy. We must recover their corpses and so win honor. Only by working hard in battle can we win honor.”

The Greeks and the Trojans fought over the two corpses. Machaon’s brother, Podalirius, had been healing wounded warriors by the ships, but when he learned that his brother had died, he put on armor and came to fight to recover his brother’s corpse.

Podalirius killed Clitus, whose mother was a nymph. He also killed Lassus, whose mother was also a nymph: Pronoe. Pronoe gave birth to Lassus near a cave that is a holy place. Cold water flows through the cave, and in the rock of the cave appear what seem to be mixing bowls, nature-gods known as Pans, and nymphs. The cave had two entrances: one for mortal men, and one for immortal nymphs and gods. The entrance for mortals is difficult to use.

Many warriors died in the fight over the corpses of Machaon and Nireus, but the Greeks managed to recover their bodies and take them to their ships. But the Trojans and their allies — especially Eurypylus — began to attack fiercely and force back the Greeks. Little Ajax, Agamemnon, and Menelaus and a few other Greeks fought well and kept the Trojans and their allies from completely routing the Greeks.

Little Ajax speared Polydamas in the left shoulder but did not kill him. Polydamas retreated. Menelaus wounded Deiphobus in the right part of his chest, but did not kill him. Deiphobus also retreated. Agamemnon killed several of the enemy warriors and chased after Aethicus, who ran quickly and escaped death.

Eurypylus had driven many Greeks back to the ships. Now he attacked Little Ajax, Agamemnon, and Menelaus. Paris and Aeneas fought beside Eurypylus.

Aeneas threw a rock and hit Little Ajax, whose helmet saved his life. Little Ajax fell to the ground, but he was fated to die during his return to Greece, not during the Trojan War. Some of his fellow Greeks carried him back to the Greek ships.

Enemy warriors surrounded Agamemnon and Menelaus and tried to kill them. Agamemnon and Menelaus were like boars or lions that have been captured and put in an enclosure where they will fight armed men. Agamemnon and Menelaus killed warriors who came close to them. So many enemy warriors attacked them with arrows and rocks and spears that they would have died on that day, but Teucer, Idomeneus, Meriones, Thoas, and Thrasymedes came to help them. These five Greeks had run away from Eurypylus, but they faced him again to keep him from killing Agamemnon and Menelaus.

The Greek Teucer attacked Aeneas, but Aeneas’ shield made of four oxhides stopped Teucer’s spear. Still, Aeneas was forced to back up a short distance.

The Greek Meriones attacked Laophoon, who had come to Troy under the command of Asteropaeus. Meriones stabbed him under the naval and above his genitals, and when he pulled out his spear, he also pulled out Laophoon’s intestines.

Alcimedus, a companion to Little Ajax, prayed to the gods and released a stone from his sling. It struck Hippiasides, the charioteer of Pammon, on the temple. Hippiasides fell from the chariot, and its wheels ran over him. Pammon mourned his death. A Trojan saved Pammon's life by coming to him and taking the reins.

Thrasymedes, the son of Nestor, wounded Acamas above a knee with a spear. Acamas retreated.

One of Eurypylus' companions speared the Greek Deiopites, one of Thoas' friends, in the chest. Deiopites tried to retreat, but Eurypylus ran after him and cut the tendons of his legs and killed him.

The Greek Thoas speared Paris in the right thigh. Paris retreated and got his bow and arrows from an aide so he could fight at a distance.

Idomeneus picked up a huge stone and threw it at Eurypylus, hitting his arm and causing him to drop his spear. The Greeks then forced Eurypylus back.

Because Eurypylus had dropped his spear, Agamemnon and Menelaus had a brief respite from battle, but Eurypylus' aides quickly brought him another spear, with which he killed many warriors.

Eurypylus fought so well that he made all the Greeks, including Agamemnon and Menelaus, retreat.

Eurypylus called to the Trojans and to his warriors, "The Greeks are running for their ships, just like sheep hurry to their enclosure at night. Let us kill as many Greeks as we can before night arrives."

The Trojans and their allies chased the Greeks just like dogs chase deer.

Eurypylus killed the Greeks Bucolion, Nesus, Chromius, and Antiphus, and many more warriors. To name all the warriors he killed would take much time.

Aeneas killed the Greeks Pheres and Antimachus, who had come to Troy from Crete under the command of Idomeneus.

Agenor killed the Greek Molus, who fell behind the other Greeks as they ran for the ships. Agenor's javelin hit Molus in the lower part of his right leg and shattered the bones. Molus' spirit went to the Land of the Dead.

Paris killed the Greeks Mosynus and Phorcys, two brothers who had come to Troy from the island of Salamis under the command of Great Ajax. Paris also killed Cleolaus, the aide of Meges. Paris' arrows were deadly. The arrow that killed Cleolaus lodged in his heart and quivered as long as the heart beat. Paris shot an arrow at Eetion and hit his jaw. Eetion screamed, and his tears mixed with blood.

For a large area of the battlefield, the only corpses were those of Greeks.

The Trojans and their allies could have burned the ships, but the arrival of night saved the Greeks. Eurypylus and the other Trojan allies and the Trojans camped by the Simois River and rejoiced in their victory. The Greeks mourned their many dead.

Chapter 7: Neoptolemus Comes to Troy (Posthomerica)

The next morning, many Greeks went out to meet the Trojans in battle, but some Greeks stayed in the camps so that they could bury Machaon and Nireus. The gods had blessed Nireus with beauty, but they had not blessed him with strength. The gods give gifts to mortals, but they do not give all their gifts to any one man. Still, the Greeks buried Nireus with full honors, just as they did Machaon. The Greeks built one funeral mound over their bones.

The battle continued, but Podalirius, the brother of Machaon, mourned his brother's death. Podalirius even thought of committing suicide with either a sword or a fatal drug. His friends spoke to him and attempted to comfort him, but Nestor said the words that meant the most.

Nestor told him, "Stop mourning like a woman mourning a fallen warrior. Mourning will not bring your brother back from death. He was born, and so death came to him. Endure your grief, just like I endure the grief I feel for the death of my son: Antilochus. My son was much like Machaon: skilled in war and of great intelligence. My son loved me. He died protecting me. Still, although I grieve, I eat, I stay alive, and I greet each new day, although I know that I am mortal and like everyone else I will die. Every man who has been born will someday die. While we are alive, we must accept what comes to us: both the good and the bad."

Podalirius replied, "I must mourn my brother: I owe him. He is the one who raised me after our father died and became a god. Although he was my brother, he treated me as if I were his son. He is the one who taught me how to properly use medicine. We ate at the same table and slept in the same bed, and we shared our possessions. I grieve so much that I no longer want to live."

Nestor said, "Every human being will mourn at sometime in their life. Every human being will someday die. We human beings do not all travel the same path while we are alive and we human beings do not always travel the path that we desire, but grief and death are things that all human beings have in common.

"Good fortunes and bad fortunes come from the gods, and the Fates mix them and without looking at where they land throw them down to earth, where they scatter as though a wind is blowing them. Sometimes a good man suffers misfortune that he does not deserve, and sometimes a bad man enjoys prosperity that he does not deserve. No man enjoys only good fortune his entire life. Because we live such a short time, we ought not to spend our time mourning. It is better to have hope: hope for better fortune.

"People say that we have an afterlife. The souls of good people go to a good place, and the souls of bad people go to a bad place. Your brother was a good man, and his father went to a good place. We can be sure that your brother went to a good place and joined his and your father."

Nestor raised Podalirius from the ground and walked with him to the ships. Podalirius still mourned, but he went with Nestor.

The battle continued, and Eurypylus killed many warriors, as did the Greeks. With his hands and feet splattered with blood that was not his own, Eurypylus killed Peneleus and other warriors. He was like his grandfather Heracles battling the Centaurs and killing them. A river can carve away its banks with swiftly flowing water and can batter and destroy dikes. Like that river, Eurypylus battered and destroyed Greeks.

Some Greeks saved their lives by running away. They rescued the body of Peneleus and carried it away to the ships, where they ran for protection from Eurypylus, to whom Heracles was giving great strength in battle. The Greeks stayed behind their defensive wall; they were like goats standing under an overhanging crag, using it for protection against snow and hail. The goats wait for the winter to end; the Greeks hoped that the attack of Eurypylus would end.

Athena gave the Greeks courage, and they kept Eurypylus from burning their ships. From their wall, the Greeks used arrows, rocks, and spears to repel the Trojans and their allies. The Greeks killed many warriors, and the defensive wall grew red with blood.

Eventually, the fighting came to a stop because the Greeks asked for a truce of two days so that both sides could bury their dead. Eurypylus agreed to the truce.

The Greeks mourned most the death of Peneleus and gave him a separate funeral pyre and burial mound. The other Greek corpses were burned at a distance in a common funeral pyre. The Trojans also burned their dead, and after the two-day truce, the fighting started again.

Odysseus and Diomedes made good time in their travel to the island of Scyros. When they arrived, Neoptolemus, Achilles' son, was practicing throwing spears and riding horses. Neoptolemus had heard of his father's death, and he mourned him, but he continued to practice the skills of war. Odysseus and Diomedes noticed Neoptolemus' strong resemblance to his father.

Neoptolemus greeted them, "Welcome. Please tell me who you are and where you are from and why you have come here."

Odysseus replied, "We are friends of your father, and we see the strong resemblance you have to your father. We are warriors you may have heard of. I am Odysseus, and my companion is Diomedes. We have come to you and to your mother, Deidamia, because we want you to come to Troy and fight for us. A prophecy says that we will win the war if you fight for us. If you do, you will receive many gifts from the Greeks. I will give you the armor that Hephaestus made for your father; the armor is a work of art. The only person who has used this armor is your father, whom all Greek warriors and I respected. When your father died, I brought his corpse back to our ships, and I killed many Trojans as I defended your father's corpse. Because of these actions, Thetis gave me the armor."

Diomedes thought, *Odysseus is taking sole credit for a group effort. Certainly, Great Ajax was instrumental in protecting the corpse of Achilles. Many other Greeks also helped in that effort.*

Odysseus continued, "After you come to the war, I will gladly give you your father's armor. And after the war is over, Menelaus will become your father-in-law: He wants you to marry his daughter, Hermione. He will also give you gold and other gifts."

Neoptolemus replied, "The prophecies will come true. Tomorrow, let us set sail for Troy. Tonight, let us go into the palace so that I may entertain you."

They entered the palace and saw Deidamia, who was thin because she was mourning the death of her husband, Achilles. She would mourn more when she learned that her son, Neoptolemus, was going to Troy. Neoptolemus told her the names of Odysseus and Diomedes, but he resolved not to tell her until the morning that he was going to Troy so that she would not grieve that night and so that she would not spend the night trying to persuade him not to go. All ate, and then most slept.

Deidamia did not sleep. Odysseus and Diomedes had persuaded her husband, Achilles, to go to war. He had died and made her a widow, and she was afraid that Odysseus and Diomedes would convince her son to go to war.

At dawn, Neoptolemus told her that he was sailing to Troy with Odysseus and Diomedes. She screamed and held on to her son, wrapping her arms around him and begging him not to go. She cried as loudly as does a cow searching for a lost calf.

Deidamia said to her son, "Why are you going to Troy? Many men — experienced and skillful warriors — have died there. You are very young and totally inexperienced in war. Stay here so that the day will not come when I learn that you have died at Troy like your father. These men persuaded your father to go to Troy, and now they are trying to persuade you to go to Troy. If your father, as strong and as skilled as he was, and who had a goddess for his mother, died at Troy, do you think that you will return from Troy alive? If you die, I will be wretched. The worst pain a woman can feel comes from knowing that her husband and her son have died and she has no one to protect her. Men do not respect a widow without a son; they take away her land and possessions. They ignore justice."

Neoptolemus replied, "No man can go against his fate. If I am fated to die at Troy, then I will die there. If I do die there, I hope that I shall accomplish great deeds before I die."

Neoptolemus' maternal grandfather, Lycomedes, said to him, "You are brave and strong like your father, but what you are doing is dangerous. Not only is fighting in battle dangerous, but sailing over the sea in ships is dangerous. Sailing both to and from Troy will be dangerous; many sailors do not return to port."

Lycomedes kissed Neoptolemus and said no more to dissuade him from going to Troy. Deidamia, however, kept talking to him and trying to convince him to remain at home.

Neoptolemus, however, was eager to leave. While Deidamia delayed him with talk, Neoptolemus was restless like a horse eager to compete in a race; the horse's feet dance continually because it is eager to start the race. Deidamia was proud of her son's spirit, although she worried about his safety.

Neoptolemus kissed his mother many times and then left the palace. She stayed behind, grieving. She was like a swallow that mourns the nestlings that a snake has eaten. The swallow flits here and there, crying out in grief. Deidamia wandered through her son's room, crying on his bed or handling each of his possessions and kissing it, whether the possession were a child's toy or a man's weapon.

Neoptolemus went to the ship with Odysseus and Diomedes and twenty men whom Deidamia had sent to be her son's aides. Thetis, the Nereids, and Poseidon looked at Neoptolemus and rejoiced. He was brave and strong and eager to go to Troy. In battle, he would look like Ares, scowling in anger and fighting fiercely, although he was young and still without a beard. The townspeople on the island of Scyros prayed for Neoptolemus to return safely, and the gods heard their prayers: Neoptolemus would not die at Troy.

They set sail, and Poseidon made the sailing safe because he wanted the ship to quickly arrive at Troy, where Eurypylus and the Trojans were harrying the Greeks. Odysseus and Diomedes sat by Neoptolemus and told him stories about Troy and his father's heroic deeds in battles both by land and by sea, both in the land of Telephus and at Troy. Neoptolemus longed to win fame in war.

From the palace, Deidamia mourned as the ship sailed away. Mothers worry about sons, even when the sons simply eat an evening meal elsewhere. Deidamia continued to mourn after she could no longer see the ship's sails.

The ship sailed all day and all night and sailed past the burial mound of Achilles. Odysseus did not tell Neoptolemus when they passed his father's burial mound because he did not want him to mourn. The ship also passed the burial mound of Protesilaus, the first Greek to be killed in the Trojan War. Above his burial mound rise tall trees, the tops of which wither when they are high enough to be within sight of Troy. When the ship reached the Greek camp, the Greeks were busy fighting the Trojans at the defensive wall, which Eurypylus was trying to knock down. The Greeks were weaker with Odysseus and Diomedes absent and not fighting for them.

Diomedes said to the warriors on the ship, "We need to put on our armor and go to the battle at once, or the Trojans will knock down our wall and burn our ships. If that happens, we will die at Troy and never return home and see our wives and children."

The ship had landed closest to the camp of Odysseus, so to save time everyone went there and put on armor that Odysseus and his men had stripped from warriors whom they had killed. The best warriors put on the best armor, as was fitting.

Diomedes put on the excellent armor that Odysseus had stripped from the Trojan Socus. Neoptolemus was eager to fight, just like his father had been. Neoptolemus put on his father's armor, which fit him, due to the skill of Hephaestus. The gods made Neoptolemus strong enough that he could use his father's spear.

The Greeks who saw Neoptolemus arrive at the battle wanted to welcome him, but because of the heavy fighting, they could not. They felt like sailors who have been forced to stay on a desert island for a long time because the winds are blowing in the wrong direction. They are running out of food when favorable winds come and they can sail to civilization. The Greeks had longed for help, and they got it.

Neoptolemus was like a lion that sees hunters approaching its cave, eager to drag away the lion's cubs. The lion roars and races to the cave, eager to protect its cubs and to kill the hunters. Neoptolemus was eager to go to war, and he went to where the battle was being most fiercely fought: the place where the defensive wall of the Greek camp was weakest.

Eurypylyus and other enemy warriors were trying to destroy a tower, but Neoptolemus, Odysseus, Diomedes, Leonteus, and the other Greeks forced them back. The Greeks were like herdsmen and dogs chasing lions away from the herdsmen's cattle; the lions are fierce and hungry, but they are forced to back away from the herd — a short distance.

Eurypylyus encouraged his warriors to keep fighting so that they could burn the Greeks' ships. He picked up a huge rock and hurled it at the defensive wall. The foundations of the wall cracked, but the Greeks kept fighting. They were like jackals or wolves that hunters are trying to drive out of a cave and away from their pups so that the hunters can kill the pups. The jackals or wolves stand firm, challenging the hunters and their weapons.

Eurypylyus yelled at the Greeks, "You are cowards. The only reason you are not dead yet is because of your defensive wall, which protects you. You are like dogs that are afraid to fight a lion; that is why you stay behind your wall. Fight out on the plain; meet me face to face, and I will kill you."

So he yelled, but this would not happen. His fate was coming to him: Neoptolemus would soon spear him and take away his life.

Neoptolemus fought from the Greeks' wall and killed many enemy warriors. The Trojans retreated, and they crowded around Eurypylyus the way that children crowd around their father's knees when Zeus' lightning frightens them.

Neoptolemus frightened the Trojans, who saw that he was wearing Achilles' armor and who thought that Achilles had come back to the Land of the Living. The Trojans did not tell Eurypylyus that they thought that Achilles was fighting again; they did not want to frighten Eurypylyus and his warriors.

The Trojans were like men who see a dangerous torrent of water across their path. The men must cross the water to continue their journey although they prefer not to. They stand and look at the raging water. The Trojans stayed by the Greeks' defensive wall although they wanted to flee.

Eurypylus continued to encourage the Trojans to fight. He believed that Neoptolemus would grow tired because he had killed so many warriors in the battle, but Neoptolemus did not grow tired.

Athena watched the battle from Mount Olympus. She flew from Mount Olympus to a hill close to Troy and gave the Greeks strength and courage in battle.

Neoptolemus continued to kill. Zeus was one of his ancestors, and Neoptolemus had the strength of his father, Achilles. He was like a fisherman spearing fish. The fisherman fishes at night, and when fish come close to the ship because they see the gleam of fire, the fisherman spears them with a trident. Neoptolemus speared Trojans when they came close to the wall.

All the warriors on both sides fought hard, and almost all the warriors grew tired, but Neoptolemus stayed strong and unafraid. He was as unwearied as a river. He was as brave as a river that does not feel fear even as a forest fire burns closer to it. The river has nothing to fear because when fire touches water, the fire goes out.

The Trojans threw spears at Neoptolemus, but none inflicted a wound: The armor of his father protected him. Neoptolemus encouraged the Greeks to fight, and he wanted to kill many Trojans because his father had died at Troy.

Neoptolemus killed Celtus and Eubius, the twin sons of Meges, who was wealthy. Celtus and Eubius were born on the same day, and they died on the same day after a short life. Neoptolemus killed one with a javelin that entered his heart and the other with a rock that crushed his helmet and his brain. Many other warriors died, too.

Evening arrived, and the two armies separated. Neoptolemus, Odysseus, and Diomedes had arrived in time to defend the walls and to keep Eurypylus and the Trojans from burning the Greek ships. The battle ended for this day.

Phoenix came to Neoptolemus and marveled at how much he resembled his father, Achilles. Phoenix felt joy when he looked at Neoptolemus, and he felt sadness when he remembered Achilles. Despite the happiness that Phoenix felt, he cried.

Phoenix hugged Neoptolemus and said to him, "Welcome. I took care of your father when he was little. I treated him like my son, and he treated me like his father. He had great strength and courage, and so do you. I mourn him, and I wish that I had died before he did, but I don't want you to be sad. Instead, concentrate on fighting, and especially on fighting Eurypylus. You are a better warrior than he is, just as your father, Achilles, was a better warrior than Eurypylus' father, Telephus, and you will win glory if you fight him."

Neoptolemus said, "Fate and Ares will witness me and Eurypylus in battle, and Fate and Ares will pass judgment on our fighting ability."

Neoptolemus wanted to go past the Greeks' defensive wall and fight Eurypylus immediately, but night made that impossible.

The Greeks were happy as they praised Neoptolemus. Many Greeks gave him gifts: gold, silver, slave-women, bronze, iron, red wine, horses, armor, and clothing. Neoptolemus rejoiced.

Agamemnon said to him, "You are definitely the son of Achilles. You have your father's strength, beauty, size, and courage. With your help, we shall defeat Troy. When I look at you, I remember the time that your father, with his head blazing with non-burning fire sent by Athena, shouted at the Trojans, panicking them and helping the Greeks bring the corpse of Patroclus to our ships. Your father is now a god, and I feel that he sent you to us."

Neoptolemus replied, "I wish that my father were still alive so that he could see me fight. I do not think that he would be ashamed of me."

After eating, Neoptolemus went to his father's camp and looked at the armor of warriors whom his father had killed. Achilles' slave-women were attending to their tasks. Neoptolemus mourned for his father. After hunters kill a lion, the lion's cub goes into its lair and sees the bones of animals its parent has killed. The cub mourns the death of its parent. Just like that, Neoptolemus mourned the death of Achilles.

The slave-women admired Neoptolemus, and Briseis looked at him and rejoiced at seeing him but also mourned for Achilles.

The Trojans paid respect to Eurypylus in their camps, just as the Greeks paid respect to Neoptolemus in their camps. Then everyone except the guards slept.

Chapter 8: The Death of Eurypylus (Posthomerica)

At dawn, both armies prepared for battle. Neoptolemus urged the Greeks to fight well, and Eurypylus urged the Trojans and their allies to fight well. On this day, Eurypylus wanted to destroy the Greeks' defensive wall and burn their ships and destroy their army. The Fates knew what Eurypylus wanted to do, and they laughed.

Neoptolemus said to the Myrmidons, his father's warriors, "We need to be the saviors of the Greeks and a disaster to the Trojans. Let us be courageous and without fear — fear takes away strength and courage in battle. Let us fight so well that the Trojans will think that Achilles has returned to the Land of the Living and is fighting again."

Neoptolemus put on his father's armor; Thetis was proud of him. Automedon, his charioteer, then drove Neoptolemus' father's horses into battle. The horses were happy that Neoptolemus so resembled his father: Both men were heroes. The morale of the Greeks was high as Neoptolemus led them into battle — the Greek warriors were like wasps that have been disturbed and pour out of their nest to attack.

The plain in front of Troy filled with the two armies. They charged and fought, and dust rose high on the plain and the air filled with the noise of battle. The battle was like a storm at sea, and it was like two storms crashing against each other in the sky when Zeus is angry that mortals do not honor Themis, the goddess of justice. Eris, the goddess of strife, was happy as she witnessed the battle.

Neoptolemus killed the brothers Melaneus and Alcidamas, sons of Alexinomus. He also killed Menes, Morys, Polybus, Hippomedon, and other enemy warriors. He covered the ground with the corpses of Trojans and their allies, and he destroyed the Trojans the way that a wind-blown fire destroys dry brush.

But the Trojans continued to fight. Aeneas killed Aristolochus, splintering his helmet and his skull with a rock.

Diomedes killed Eumaeus, who lived on a mountain in Dardania, the mountain where Anchises had lived and where he had slept with the goddess Aphrodite, who gave birth to Aeneas.

Agamemnon killed Stratus, who had come to Troy from Thrace.

The Greek Meriones killed Chlemus, who had become a king when Glaucus died.

Eurypylus also killed many warriors. He killed Eurytus, Menoetius, and Harpalus. Harpalus was one of Odysseus' friends, but Odysseus was fighting in another part of the battlefield and could not prevent his death or protect his corpse. The Greek Antiphus, one of Harpalus' friends, threw a spear at Eurypylus but missed and killed Meilanion.

Eurypylus was angry at the death of Meilanion and rushed at Antiphus, who fled and escaped his death for now. He was not fated to die at Troy; later, when Antiphus tried to sail home with Odysseus to Ithaca, Antiphus would be the last Greek whom the Cyclops Polyphemus would eat before Odysseus and the other surviving Greeks blinded him.

Eurypylus killed many Greeks. Their corpses lay on the ground, as do tall trees that have been felled by woodsmen.

Eurypylus and Neoptolemus met on the battlefield. Eurypylus asked Neoptolemus, “Who are you, and whose horses do you have? Why are you fighting here against me, who will soon kill you? All who have fought me have died, and dogs have feasted on their flesh and left only the bones.”

Neoptolemus replied, “Why are you asking me questions as if I were one of your friends? But let me answer them. I am the son of Achilles, who injured your father, Telephus, and then cured the wound. These horses, which can run even over the sea, belonged to my father. This spear also belonged to my father; its wood came from Mount Pelion.”

Neoptolemus jumped from his chariot to the ground, and Eurypylus lifted a heavy rock and threw it, but Neoptolemus’ shield protected him. Neoptolemus was like a crag that a swiftly flowing river tries to batter but the river cannot move it.

The two warriors rushed at each other like hungry wild animals that fight over an ox or stag that one of them has killed. Other warriors also fought in the front lines of battle.

Eurypylus and Neoptolemus attacked and tried to kill each other; they made Eris happy. Sweat streamed from the two warriors as their weapons clanged on each other’s shields.

The gods watched from Mount Olympus as the two warriors fought. Some gods supported Eurypylus, and some gods supported Neoptolemus. Finally, Neoptolemus speared Eurypylus through the throat, and his blood gushed out along with his spirit as darkness overcame him. As his blood gushed out, his body grew pale.

Neoptolemus said, “Eurypylus, you must have thought that you would defeat the Greeks and burn their ships and kill all of us here at Troy. The gods did not allow that to happen. Instead, my father’s spear has killed you, as it will kill any mortal man who fights me. Even if the man were made of bronze, my father’s spear would kill him.”

The Trojans were terrified as Neoptolemus stripped off the armor of Eurypylus and gave it to his aides to take back to his camp by his ships. Neoptolemus mounted his chariot and charged against the Trojans as if he were a thunderbolt that all except Zeus fears as it shatters trees and rocks. Neoptolemus killed many Trojans. Their corpses covered the ground and made it red just as leaves in autumn turn red and fall and make the ground red.

Neoptolemus and the Greeks would have forced the Trojans to run inside the walls of Troy the way that lions force cattle to run to their stalls or the way that a storm forces pigs to run

for shelter, but Ares — without the knowledge of the other gods — came down from Mount Olympus to help the Trojans prevent a rout. His four fire-breathing horses — Aethon, Conabus, Phlogius, and Phobus — pulled his chariot. The horses' parents were a Fury and the god of the North wind. Ares called to the Trojans to stay and fight the Greeks. The Trojans heard his voice but did not see him or his horses — Ares was hidden in a mist.

The prophet Helenus, one of Hector's brothers, heard Ares and shouted to the Trojans, "Don't retreat! Stay and fight! Neoptolemus is only a mortal, like his late father. We have the immortal Ares, god of war, helping us. Ares orders us to fight the Greeks — now! Be bold! Be courageous! We have a mighty god on our side."

The Trojans listened to Helenus and faced the Greeks and fought them, the way that dogs that have run from a wolf that wants to eat the sheep the dogs are supposed to defend turn around and fight the wolf when they hear the shepherd shouting orders at them.

The two armies fought, and men died, and the two armies were equal in strength and courage. Imagine workers going down two lines of vines in a vineyard and trimming them. The pieces they trim fall to the ground. Just like that, dead warriors from both armies fell to the ground. Equal numbers of warriors on both sides fell. The Trojans fought well because Ares was on their side; the Greeks fought well because Neoptolemus was on their side. Blood splattered the warriors on both sides, and it splattered Ares and Enyo, the god and goddess of war. Enyo enjoyed the equal slaughter by evenly matched armies. Not wanting to anger either Thetis or Ares, she did not help either army.

Neoptolemus killed Perimedes, Cestrus, Phaleris, Perilaus, and Menalces, the only son of Medon, a skilled craftsman. After Medon died, distant relatives divided his possessions among themselves.

The Trojan Deiphobus killed Lycon with a spear a little above the groin. Lycon's intestines poured out through the wound caused by Deiphobus' spear.

Aeneas killed Dymas, who came from Aulis but never again returned home.

The Greek Euryalus killed Astraeus with a spear to the stomach. Food mixed with blood exited the wound.

The Trojan Agenor killed Hippomenes, one of Teucer's friends.

Angry at the death of his friend, Teucer shot an arrow at Agenor, but he missed and hit Deiphontes. The Fates, who send weapons wherever they want, sent the arrow through his left eye to his right ear. Deiphontes jumped, and Teucer shot an arrow at his throat and cut the tendons in his neck and killed him.

The work of war is killing men, and warriors on both sides did their work well. Eris and Ares gloried in the slaughter, and the Fates did not rest.

Ares gave the Trojans courage and he sent fear to the Greeks, but Neoptolemus remained unafraid. He killed Trojans as easily as a boy kills flies that swarm around a pail of milk. The boy is proud of his kills, and so was Neoptolemus, who was like a mountain crag standing firm as winds blast it.

Ares became angry at Neoptolemus, who was killing Trojans whom Ares respected, and Ares would have fought him, but Athena came down to Mount Ida. She carried her aegis, the shield on which were depicted fire-breathing dragons, and she wore her helmet and armor from which lightning flashed. The earth shook. She would have fought Ares, but Zeus sent thunder to warn the two immortals to withdraw from the war that mortals were fighting. Ares departed for Thrace, and Athena departed for Athens.

Now the Trojans, exhausted from fighting, retreated to Troy, pursued by Greeks. Just like dogs chasing deer, the Greeks chased Trojans. Neoptolemus killed many Trojans as they fled.

Routed, the Trojans withdrew behind the walls of Troy. The Greeks rested from killing Trojans, just as oxen rest after having pulled the plow and labored long. After a brief respite from fighting, the Greeks circled Troy and prepared to attack. Inside the city, the Trojans made sure their gates were tightly secured. They were like shepherds in a sheepfold who are preparing for a storm that they know is coming. The Greeks made much noise as they came toward the city. They were like hungry jays or starlings that cry loudly as they eat olives hanging from olive trees.

The battle started again as the Greeks attacked the gates and the Trojans defended the gates with arrows, rocks, and spears.

The Greek Meriones shot an arrow that hit Phylodamas under the jaw and in the throat. Polites, a son of Priam, was one of Phylodamas' friends. Phylodamas fell from the tower like a vulture that has been sitting on a crag falls after an arrow hits the vulture.

Meriones shot another arrow, hoping to kill Polites, who swerved out of the way of the arrow and saved his life just like a sailor who sees a dangerous rock in the sea moves the ship's rudder and avoids death.

Warriors on both sides bled and died, and the blood of Trojans streamed down the walls of Troy. The Greeks were the superior fighting force and would have conquered Troy on this day except that Ganymede, the cupbearer of Zeus, made an appeal to the father of gods and men: "Zeus, hear me. I am one of your descendants, and although I was mortal, I now live as an immortal among the gods on Mount Olympus. I am in pain as I see the agonies that Troy is undergoing. I do not want to see the city fall, and I do not want to see its citizens die. Please take that sight away from me."

Zeus saved the city; it was not fated to fall on this day. The god sent fog that covered the city, and no Greek could see its walls. Lightning flashed, and thunder rumbled.

Nestor shouted to the Greeks, “Zeus is sending a message to us. We must no longer attack Troy on this day. We must stop fighting and return to our ships. No mortal should oppose the will of Zeus: He is too powerful. When the Titans attacked him, he burned the land and he boiled the sea. He dried up the streams and rivers, and he destroyed many living things. He filled the sky with fire.

“Let us return to the ships now. On another day, Zeus will favor us the way that he now favors the Trojans. Calchas told us that Troy would fall in the tenth year of the war, but it will not fall today.”

The Greeks knew that Nestor was a good advisor, and they obeyed him. They collected their dead from the battlefield and gave the corpses a proper burial — the battlefield was clear of fog. Then the Greeks returned to their ships and washed away their sweat and blood.

Night arrived, and the Greeks honored Neoptolemus, who was not tired because his grandmother Thetis took away all the pains that follow fierce fighting.

After the evening meal, the Greeks and the Trojans set guards and then slept. The Greeks were afraid that the Trojans might attack, and the Trojans were afraid that the Greeks might attack.

Chapter 9: The Return of Philoctetes (Posthomerica)

By dawn, the fog that Zeus had sent to hide the walls of Troy had dissipated. The Greeks looked at the city — it seemed as if it had never been hidden by fog. The Trojans stayed in the city. They were afraid to fight the Greeks; they believed that Achilles might still be alive and fighting.

The Trojan Antenor prayed to Zeus, “Stop this warrior who is killing so many of us, whoever he is. He may be Achilles, whom we thought to be in the Land of the Dead, or he may be another great warrior. Zeus, please help us — do not help the Greeks. Many Trojans are dying now. You must have forgotten that your own son Dardanus is one of our ancestors. If you want Trojans to die and Troy to fall, please bring that about quickly. We prefer that to our having to suffer for a long time.”

Zeus heard the prayer. Soon many Trojans would die and Troy would fall; Zeus would not keep Neoptolemus from killing Trojans. Instead, Zeus gave Neoptolemus strength and courage because he wanted Thetis to be proud of her grandson.

Priam sent Menoetes, a herald, to Agamemnon to ask for a temporary truce, which Agamemnon readily granted. Anger ought not to be directed toward the dead. The Greeks and the Trojans held funerals; they burned many dead warriors on funeral pyres. They also burned many dead horses.

The Trojans especially honored Eurypylus; they buried him in front of the Dardanian Gate, apart from other warriors.

Neoptolemus visited his father’s tomb to mourn. He kissed the memorial pillar and then said, “Father, hello. I will never forget you. I wish that you had still been living when I came to the war at Troy. We could have known each other, we could have fought the Trojans together, and perhaps we could have taken much treasure home. Those things did not happen. But the Trojans feared you, and now they fear me. You fought well for the Greeks, and now I am fighting well for the Greeks.”

Neoptolemus, Phoenix, and twelve other Myrmidons mourned at the tomb of Achilles, and then they returned to their camp and slept through the night.

At dawn, the Greeks ate and then armed for battle and marched to the walls of Troy. Dust rose into the air, and the warriors shouted. Trojans heard the shout, and almost all felt despair.

The Trojan Deiphobus felt bold and fearless. He said to the Trojans, “Remember what we are fighting for. We are not fighting just for Paris and Helen. We are fighting for Troy and for our wives and our children and our aged parents. I prefer fighting and dying in battle to seeing my city conquered. Do not be afraid. Do not think that Achilles is fighting you — we know that the Greeks burned his corpse and so his spirit is in the Land of the Dead. Because we are defending

our city, we ought to be willing to fight whatever warrior has replaced Achilles. We have suffered much in battle, but let us continue to fight. Food and wealth follow hard work. Spring follows winter. Health returns after an illness. Peace follows war. With time, all things change.”

The Trojans armed for battle. Here, a weeping wife, afraid for her husband, brought him his armor. There, small children brought their father pieces of his armor. The father knew that the children worried about him, but he smiled proudly at them. In another place, an aged father helped his son put on protective armor and urged him to fight fiercely and showed him scars — mementos — on his chest from the time when the aged father was a warrior. The Trojan warriors knew the fear and pain their relatives felt, but the warriors were eager to defend their families and their city.

The Trojans warriors left their city, and the battle started. Cavalry fought other cavalry, infantry fought other infantry, and warriors in chariots fought other warriors in chariots. Both sides shouted. Arrows and spears sped through the air. Weapons clanged against shields. Battle-axes killed warriors, and armor turned red with blood.

The Trojan women — wives, mothers, daughters, and sisters — watched from the walls and prayed for husbands and sons and fathers and brothers. The old men of Troy watched with them. Only Helen, ashamed that so many warriors were dying because of her, stayed in her quarters with her female servants.

The Trojan Deiphobus killed a charioteer, Hippiasides, who fell from the chariot. Hippiasides’ comrade-in-arms with whom Hippiasides went to war in the same chariot was afraid that Deiphobus would now kill him, but Melanthius climbed onto the chariot, seized the reins, and drove him to safety. Melanthius had no whip, so he used his spear to hit the horses.

Deiphobus killed many Greeks. They fell the way that trees fall when a tree cutter fells a forest in order to make charcoal. Many Greeks fled to the Scamander River, and Deiphobus followed them and continued to kill. Fishermen sometimes drag a net filled with swordfish into shallow water, and a fisherman goes into the water and kills the swordfish with a weapon and the water turns red with their blood. Just like that, Deiphobus went into the river after the fleeing Greeks, killed them, and turned the water red with their blood.

In another part of the battle, Neoptolemus was killing many Trojans. Thetis felt proud of her grandson just as she had previously felt proud of her son. As she watched Neoptolemus in battle, she remembered Achilles and mourned for him. Neoptolemus killed Amides, who was on horseback. Neoptolemus’ spear hit Amides in the stomach, and the point of the spear hit his spine. Amides’ intestines came out through the wound. Neoptolemus also killed Ascanius and Oenops with his spear, wounding one in the mouth and the other in the throat. Neoptolemus killed many men, yet he did not grow tired. Warriors fell before Neoptolemus the way that olives fall before a harvester who hits them with a stick.

In another part of the battlefield, Diomedes, Agamemnon, and other Greeks were fighting. Many Trojans bravely fought them, but others were afraid and fled from the Greeks.

Neoptolemus became aware that many Greeks were being slaughtered at the Scamander River, so he ordered his charioteer, Automedon, to drive him to the river so he could fight there. As they approached the Trojans, Neoptolemus resembled Ares.

Automedon recognized Deiphobus, and he said to Neoptolemus, “This is one of the sons of Priam and Hecuba: Deiphobus. When your father was alive, Deiphobus was afraid to fight him. Now some god has made Deiphobus brave.”

Neoptolemus urged Automedon to drive the chariot faster. Deiphobus saw Neoptolemus approaching, and he was not sure what to do: flee or fight. A boar can chase jackals away from its young and then see a fierce lion. The boar does not know what to do: It is afraid to fight the fierce lion, but it wants to protect its young. Deiphobus was afraid to fight Neoptolemus, but he wanted to protect his city. Neoptolemus shouted to Deiphobus, “You are killing Greeks who are not great warriors! If you think that you are a great warrior, then fight me!”

With Automedon driving the chariot, Neoptolemus charged upon Deiphobus and would have killed him if Apollo had not filled the air with fog and grabbed Deiphobus and taken him safely away to Troy, where many Trojans were fleeing for safety. Neoptolemus’ spear that would have stabbed Deiphobus stabbed only air.

Disappointed, Neoptolemus said, “You have escaped me, but not because of anything that you did. A god has saved you from me.”

Zeus dissipated the fog, and Neoptolemus saw the Trojans fleeing to Troy. Neoptolemus charged toward the Trojans, who were afraid the way that sailors are afraid when they see a huge wave rushing toward their ship.

Neoptolemus yelled to the Greeks, “Be brave, and be bold. We are on the verge of victory. We Greeks have been at Troy far too long. It is time that we conquered the city. We should not be weak like women. It is better to be dead than to be thought to be weak and unwarlike.”

The Greeks attacked the Trojans, and both sides fought bravely. The Greeks fought to conquer the city; the Trojans fought to keep their city from being conquered.

Apollo wanted to help the Trojans, so he came down from Mount Olympus and landed by the Xanthus River. Apollo shouted, and the Greeks felt afraid while the Trojans felt brave. Poseidon reacted by making the Greeks brave, and both sides fought bravely.

Angry, Apollo wanted to kill Neoptolemus in the same way that he had killed Achilles: He wanted to shoot an arrow into Neoptolemus’ ankle. But birds of omen shrieked on his left — the unlucky side. Neoptolemus was not fated to die on this day.

Apollo was tempted to disregard the bad omens and kill Neoptolemus, but Poseidon came to him and said, “Stop! Zeus will be angry if you kill Neoptolemus. The death of the son of Achilles

will make the other immortals of the sea and me unhappy, the way we were when Achilles died. Leave now, without killing Neoptolemus. If you stay here, I will open a wide crack in the earth and push Troy into it and then close the crack again so that Troy will be forever under ground and in darkness. You do not want that to happen.”

Apollo departed from the battlefield, and then Poseidon departed. The two armies continued to fight until the prophet Calchas advised the Greeks to withdraw to the ships because he had learned through divination that Troy would not fall until Philoctetes rejoined the Greeks.

Philoctetes had been with the Greeks at the start of the war. He had sailed with their ships from Aulis but had never reached Troy. When the Greeks camped on an island during the voyage, a poisonous water-snake had bitten Philoctetes and he had never recovered from the wound, which festered and stank and caused him to cry out because of the pain. The Greeks had abandoned him on the island of Lemnos and had sailed to Troy. For ten years, Philoctetes had lived alone in a cave on the island. A master archer, he killed enough birds to stay alive.

Following the advice of Calchas, Agamemnon and Menelaus sent Odysseus and Diomedes to Lemnos to find and bring back Philoctetes.

Odysseus and Diomedes arrived at the city of Hephaestus on Lemnos; this city was known for great wrong. The women of the city had exacted a terrible vengeance on their husbands, who were ignoring them and instead sleeping with slave-women whom they had gotten when they fought a war against Thrace. Filled with jealousy, the women had killed their husbands all on the same night. Philoctetes would likely want to kill Odysseus and Diomedes because the Greeks had abandoned him on the island ten years previously.

Odysseus and Diomedes found the cave where Philoctetes had taken refuge. Philoctetes was lying on the ground and groaning because of pain. The feathers of many birds lay on the floor of the cave. Philoctetes had shot the birds with his arrows so he could eat them and sew together some of their feathers to make a blanket. He tried to treat his wound, but he was unable to stop the pain for very long.

Philoctetes had long hair that resembled that of a wild beast whose paw is caught in a trap. The wild beast gnaws off its paw so that it can escape from the trap and return to its lair, where it suffers from hunger and pain. Philoctetes was like that wild beast. He was very thin, and he was very dirty. He and his wound stank. Exhausted by pain, he lay on the floor of the cave, and his eyes were sunk deeply into their sockets.

Philoctetes kept groaning because of pain. His wound, which was in his foot, was black and infected. The sea can cut away a crag by pounding and destroying its base over time. Philoctetes' life was being cut away by his wound, which slowly grew worse over time. Pus dripped from the wound onto the floor of the cave. By Philoctetes was his quiver filled with arrows and his bow, which Heracles had made and given to him. Philoctetes had dipped the heads of some of the

arrows in the deadly poison of the water-snake; Philoctetes used these arrows against enemies. The other arrows were for hunting.

Philoctetes saw Odysseus and Diomedes, and his first thought was to kill them with his poisoned arrows. He grabbed his bow and arrows, but through the agency of Athena, he quickly decided not to kill them.

Sorrowing, Odysseus and Diomedes came to him and spoke to him. They asked about his wound, and they said that the Greeks had a skilled doctor who had learned much by treating wounds and injuries during the war and who could cure him if he returned to the Greeks. They also told him that a prophecy had said that Troy would fall if he fought for the Greeks. In addition, they asked him not to blame the Greeks for his ills, but to blame the Fates: “They are the ones who bring all ills and all goods to mortals. They can bring good things to a man who has suffered evil things, and they can bring evil things to a man who has enjoyed good things. They wander the world, and no one can escape them.” Philoctetes listened, and he agreed to go to Troy.

Odysseus and Diomedes carried him to their ship, and they washed his wound with sponges and lots of water — this lessened the pain, a little. They prepared a good meal for him, which he greatly enjoyed. At dawn, they set sail for Troy, and dolphins swam beside their ship. Athena sent them a favorable wind.

The Greeks were happy to see Philoctetes, who held on to Odysseus and Diomedes and limped into the camp. A woodcutter can cut halfway through the trunk of a pine tree in order to make a torch of its resinous wood. The tree is weakened and leans against saplings that support its weight. Philoctetes was like that pine tree.

The Greeks saw Philoctetes’ wound and pitied him, and then Podalirius, son of the famous physician Asclepius, demonstrated his skill in healing. He applied drugs to the wound and prayed to his father for help, and the Greeks washed Philoctetes and rubbed him with olive oil. His pain disappeared, and color came into his face. He gained weight, and the Greeks rejoiced. A grain field looks bleak during the winter, but with the arrival of spring it begins to flourish. Philoctetes began to flourish.

Soon, Philoctetes’ wound had healed, and Athena had made him the man he was before the poisonous snake had bitten him. In his honor, Agamemnon held a banquet. After Philoctetes and the other Greeks had eaten their fill, Agamemnon said to him, “Please do not be angry at us because we abandoned you. The gods made us deluded; they must have wanted to punish you. Some gods support Troy, and they knew that you would kill many Trojans. The gods also wanted to hurt us because they knew that we could not conquer Troy without your help.

“The Fates will find their way. They bring ills and goods to mortals, and no mortal knows what the path of his life will bring. A good man may suffer many evil things. An evil man may

enjoy many good things. All that we can do is, when we have evil fortune, endure the evil things, and when we have good fortune, enjoy the good things.

“We were wrong when we left you alone on the island of Lemnos. Because we were wrong, we will recompense you. Right now, we give you seven slave-women, twenty fast horses that have won prizes, and twelve tripods. These are the things that make a man wealthy. You will also always be welcome to feast in my camp with the other leading Greeks. When Troy falls, you will get additional recompense.”

Agamemnon gave him the gifts, and Philoctetes said, “I am not angry at you or at any of the other Greeks. It is not good to always be angry. Often it is better to give up anger. But let us sleep now, so that we can be rested and fight fiercely tomorrow.”

At dawn, the Greeks ate, fed their horses, and then prepared for war.

Philoctetes said to them, “Now let us go to war. We will tear down the walls of Troy and set fire to the city.”

The Greeks put on their armor, and close together in a packed mass they went to fight the Trojans.

Chapter 10: The Death of Paris (Posthomerica)

The Trojans were outside the city, burying their dead. They saw the Greeks coming toward them, so they quickly put earth over the dead and then returned behind the walls of the city.

Polydamas, an intelligent man, said to his fellow Greeks, “Ares is raging against Troy. The war has gone on a long time, and the Greeks are fighting well. They are winning the war. I think that we should stay in our city and fight the Greeks from our walls. Eventually, they will get tired and return to their homes. Poseidon with assistance from Apollo built the walls of Troy, and the Greeks will not be able to tear down what the gods have done. We need not worry about food and drink because we have large supplies of both stored in Priam’s palace. Even if large numbers of allies were to come to Troy to help us fight the Greeks, we would have enough food and drink for everybody for a long time.”

Aeneas, however, replied, “Polydamas, you are wrong. You are not talking like an intelligent man. If we stay inside the city, we will be crowded and suffer much. If the Greeks have not grown tired of war and returned home in the ten years we have been fighting, they are unlikely to go home anytime soon. If we stay inside the walls of Troy, they will think that we have grown tired of war, and so the Greeks will attack even more fiercely. The stores of food and drink you mention are not as great as you suppose. If we stay shut up behind the walls of the city, we will not be able to get grain from the city of Thebe or wine from the country of Lydia. It is better for us to fight. If Zeus is opposed to us, I prefer to die quickly in battle among warriors than to die slowly of starvation among old fathers and women and young children.”

The Trojans approved of the words of Aeneas. They prepared to fight outside of the city, and Zeus sent them courage. Many deaths, however, would soon occur, including the death of Paris at the hands of Philoctetes.

Eris, the goddess who values strife and discord, appeared in the battle. She wore armor that was splattered with blood, and she encouraged the warriors on both sides to fight and to die. The warriors stamped loudly on the earth as they went to war.

Aeneas killed Harpalion with a spear beneath his waist. Aeneas then killed Hyllus with a javelin to the throat. Hyllus was born on Crete, and his death pained his king, Idomeneus.

Neoptolemus killed and killed again. He killed twelve Trojans: Cebrus, Harmon, Pasitheus, Ismenus, Imbrasius, Schedius, Phleges, Mnesaeus, Ennomus, Amphinomus, Phasis, and Galenus. Galenus had brought a huge army to Troy because Priam had promised him many glorious gifts, but Galenus died before he could take those gifts home.

The Trojan Eurymenes, one of Aeneas’ friends, fought fiercely. He killed many Greeks, and the Greeks retreated from him. He killed so many Greeks that he grew exhausted, and the point

of his spear bent back, blunting it, and the hilt of his sword broke. Meges' spear hit him in the throat, and his blood gushed out, taking his life with it.

Two Greeks, Deilion and Amphion, started to strip Eurymenes' armor off his corpse, but Aeneas killed them. In a vineyard a man destroys wasps before they eat the fruit; Deilion and Amphion died before they had acquired the booty they desired.

Diomedes killed Menon and Amphinous, two good men.

Paris used an arrow to kill Demoleon, who had sailed to Troy under the command of Menelaus. Paris shot the arrow under Demoleon's right breast.

Teucer killed Zechis, the son of Medon. Zechis came from Phrygia, where is a cave in which the shepherd Endymion slept. Selene, the Titan Moon goddess, saw him and loved him and came down from the sky and slept with him. People today visit the cave, which is sacred to nymphs, and a stream that comes from it, and the people marvel.

The Greek Meges speared Alcaeus under the heart with his spear and sent him to the Land of the Dead. Phyllis and Margasus, the parents of Alcaeus, were never able to rejoice at their son's return home.

Little Ajax stabbed Scylaceus, one of Glaucus' friends, with a spear that reached over his shield and pierced his shoulder. The wound spurted blood over the top of his shield, but Scylaceus did not die at Troy; he was fated to die at home in Lycia after the war. He returned alone to Lycia; all the other Lycians had died in the war. Outside their city, the Lycian women asked him about their husbands and their sons, and he told them that they had all died. Angry that he alone had survived the war, they stoned him to death, and then they covered his corpse with the stones that had killed him. His tomb was near the tomb of the Lycian hero Bellerophon. After Scylaceus died, the god Apollo decreed that the mortal should be worshipped as if he were a god, and the Lycians obeyed Apollo's decree.

Philoctetes killed Deioneus and Acamas, as well as many other Trojans. He was dangerous like Ares or like a river that violently rushes downstream and floods and washes away dikes and dams. The Trojans were afraid to come close to Philoctetes, who used the weapons of Heracles.

On the belt of his quiver appeared the images of dangerous beasts: bears, jackals, leopards, wolves, boars, and lions. Blood and slaughter and battles also appeared on the war-belt.

On his quiver appeared Hermes, who was slaughtering Argus, the hundred-eyed giant. Usually, Argus' eyes took turns sleeping, but Hermes played music that put all of Argus' hundred eyes to sleep, and then Hermes killed the giant.

On his quiver also appeared Phaëthon, after he had been thrown from the chariot of the Sun-god. Phaëthon had not been able to control the immortal horses that pulled the chariot, and the Sun had come too close to the earth, burning it. Smoke came from the earth.

On his quiver also appeared Perseus, who was slaying Medusa. Anyone who looked directly at this monster would be turned to stone. Perseus cut off her head. He avoided being turned to stone by looking at her reflection in his shield, which was mirrored.

On his quiver also appeared Prometheus, who suffered terribly as an eagle ate his liver, which grew back each night so that the eagle could devour it again the following day.

The god Hephaestus had made the quiver and its belt for Heracles, who had given them to Philoctetes.

Paris shot an arrow at Philoctetes, but he narrowly missed him and instead hit Cleodorus in the shoulder. Cleodorus was retreating until he could get another shield because Polydamas had swung an ax and cut the strap of Cleodorus' shield, which had fallen to the ground. Because Cleodorus was unprotected by a shield, Paris was able to kill him.

Philoctetes said to Paris, "You should not challenge me because I will kill you. You started this war, and you have brought disaster to your city."

Philoctetes fitted an arrow to his bowstring and drew it back until his bow was almost a circle. Philoctetes' arrow grazed Paris' arm, doing little damage. Paris fitted an arrow to his bowstring, but Philoctetes was quicker and his second arrow hit Paris in his groin, forcing him to withdraw from the battle. Paris was like a dog that has been attacking a lion but is overcome with fear and runs away.

The battle continued, and warriors on both sides fell. Dying warriors fell on dead warriors.

Paris moaned because of pain as doctors attended to him, and when night approached, the two armies stopped fighting. The doctors could not stop Paris' pain, and he lay awake all night. According to a prophecy, which Paris believed, the only one who could prevent his death was his first wife, Oenone — if she were willing to help him.

Before Paris was born, his mother, Hecuba, dreamed that she would give birth to a flaming torch. Seers interpreted this to mean that her child would be the destruction of Troy, and so they advised that the child be killed. A shepherd took the infant Paris to Mount Ida, where he was supposed to lie exposed to wild animals that would kill him, but the shepherd was unwilling to leave the infant to die so he raised Paris to adulthood. When Paris was herding sheep on Mount Ida, the nymph Oenone saw him, fell in love with him, and became his first wife. She told him that she could cure any wound he suffered, no matter how serious the wound was. Later, Paris left Oenone so that he could go to Sparta and run away with Helen. Oenone mourned the end of her marriage.

Paris decided to go to Mount Ida and seek the mountain-nymphs and ask Oenone to cure his wound and save his life. The bird-signs were ominous, but Paris hoped that they were wrong.

On Mount Ida, Paris kneeled before his first wife, who was with other nymphs, and begged her to save him. The infection of his wound was spreading. Suffering pain, and growing feeble,

he said to her, “My wife of long ago, do not hate me because I left you for Helen. Fate forced me to leave you. I wish that I had died in your arms before I met and slept with Helen. Have mercy on me. Use your knowledge of healing drugs to take away my pain and stop the poison of Philoctetes’ arrow from killing me. You have that power, if you are willing to act. Restrain your jealousy, and heal me while there is still time. I am at your feet. The Prayers of Repentance, who sometimes seek vengeance against excessively proud people, want you to heal me. I know that I have done wrong, and I hope that you will forgive me and heal me.”

Oenone was unwilling to heal him: “Why have you come to me? Why didn’t you go to Helen? You abandoned me so that you could have Helen, who is rumored to be immortal, so go to her. You ignored my feelings and my mourning. You preferred Helen’s bed to my bed, so go and sleep with her. You ignored my tears, and now I ignore your tears. If I could steel myself to do it, I would eat your flesh as if I were a wild animal. Where is Aphrodite? Where is Zeus, your father-in-law? Get out! You have been a disaster to Troy and the Trojans. Many gods and mortals are mourning the loss of loved ones because of you. Go to Helen and lie whimpering with pain in her bed until she cures you.”

Paris was forced to leave her home. He would soon die, and Oenone would also soon die.

Paris began his journey down Mount Ida. He limped, and he suffered. Hera, who hated him, saw him and was happy. On Mount Olympus, Hera sat by four handmaidens, daughters of Selene the Moon-goddess and Helios the Sun-god. The four handmaidens manage the four seasons. Hera, an immortal goddess, knew what fate had planned after the death of Paris. Helen would marry Deiphobus, and Helenus would become angry. The Greeks would capture Helenus, still angry, who would give them information that would help Odysseus and Diomedes to enter Troy, kill Alcatous, and with Athena’s consent steal the Palladium, a statue of Athena — as long as the Palladium was in Troy, the city would not fall, even if the strongest god opposed it. No mortal had created the Palladium; Zeus threw it from Mount Olympus to Troy. Hera and her four handmaidens talked about the future.

Paris did not make it to Troy and Helen; he died on Mount Ida. The nymphs who had known him when he was a young child and then an adolescent cried; they and he had been friends. Shepherds mourned with the nymphs.

A shepherd brought the news of Paris’ death to Hecuba, who mourned, “You have died, my son. Except for Hector, you were my favorite of all my sons. I shall mourn you as long as I live. I am afraid that fate has more evils planned for the future. I hope that I die before I see more of my sons killed in the war, Troy conquered and burned, and my daughters and daughters-in-law and all their children made slaves and forced to serve Greek masters.”

Priam, who was away, sitting and mourning by the tomb of Hector, had not yet heard of the death of his son Paris. Hector had been the best of his sons and the best Trojan warrior; he had been the main defender of Troy.

Helen loudly cried; she knew that the Trojans expected her to cry. But Helen also had private thoughts that she did not want the Trojans to know: *Paris, my husband, you have been a disaster to me. Your death is also a disaster to me. It would have been better for me if the Harpies had killed me and I had not become your wife. I am in Troy, a city where many warriors have died for me and all the citizens have suffered because of me. Now that you are gone, I have lost the husband who protected me. What will happen to me? The Trojans hate me. The Greeks hate me. If I run to the Greeks, what will they do to me? Will they rape me and then kill me? If I stay here, what will the Trojans do to me? Will the Trojan men and women kill me? Whoever kills me — Greeks or Trojans — will not give my corpse a proper burial — no earth will cover my body. I wish that I were dead; I wish that I had died before I ever came to Troy.*

Helen cried loudly. The Trojans thought that she was crying for Paris, but she was crying for herself and her sin. The Trojan women also cried loudly. People thought that the Trojan women were crying for Paris, but they were crying for husbands, sons, brothers, and fathers who had died because of Paris.

Many people cried, but most were not crying with grief at the death of Paris. Oenone alone among Paris' lovers deeply and sincerely mourned his death, but she mourned silently and did not cry. She lay in the bed that Paris and she had shared.

Oenone thought, *I fell in love with Paris, and he abandoned me for another woman. I had wanted him to stay with me until we died of old age. I wish that I had died before he abandoned me, but although he abandoned me I still love him and I want to die by his body.*

That night, while her father and the others slept, Oenone left her home and ran swiftly to the funeral-pyre of Paris. Oenone usually feared the wild animals that hunt during the night, but now she felt no fear of them. Selene, the goddess of the Moon, looked down at Oenone and knew that she was mourning the death of Paris. Selene remembered Endymion, a handsome mortal she had loved who now slept forever without aging, and she felt empathy for Oenone.

Nymphs mourned around the funeral-pyre where the corpse of Paris burned. Oenone covered her face with her clothing, and then she jumped into the fire. She willingly gave up her life.

The nymphs who had known Paris and who mourned him thought, *As an adult, Paris became foolish and wicked. He gave up a wife who loved him for a wife who has brought destruction to his family and his city and the citizens of his city.*

The bodies of Paris and Oenone burned, side by side. At Thebes, Capaneus had boasted that not even Zeus could prevent him from conquering the city. Zeus was insulted by Capaneus'

impiety and killed him with a thunderbolt. As Capaneus' body was burning on a funeral-pyre, his wife, Evadne, jumped into the fire and died beside him.

After the fire had burned away the flesh of Paris and Oenone, shepherds and nymphs put out the fire with wine and gathered the bones and buried them. The shepherds and nymphs made two memorial pillars, but the pillars face away from each other, a symbol of the separation Paris and Oenone had suffered in life.

Chapter 11: Battles (Posthomerica)

The Trojan women could not go to Paris' grave to mourn his death because the gravesite lay far from the city, and the fighting continued outside the walls of Troy. The death of Paris did not end the war.

The Greeks and the Trojans fought on the plain in front of Troy. Eris, Enyo, and Ares made sure that blood spilled and warriors died — the result of spears, arrows, axes, and swords.

Neoptolemus killed Laodamas, who had been raised in Lycia by the river Xanthus, which the goddess Leto had created when, while giving birth to Apollo and Artemis, she had beat her hand on the ground, cracked it, and brought the water of the river to the surface.

Neoptolemus then killed Nirus with a spear to the jaw. The spear cut off his tongue. Nirus howled as his blood gushed out and he fell. Neoptolemus then speared and killed Evenor, Iphition, and Hippomedon. Hippomedon did not return alive to his mother, the nymph Ocyroe.

Aeneas retaliated by killing Bremon and Andromachus, who fought in chariots. Aeneas speared Bremon in the throat, and he threw a rock that hit Andromachus on his temple. Their fine horses panicked and ran over the battlefield until Aeneas' aides captured them.

Philoctetes shot an arrow that hit the back of the fleeing Peirasus' knee and lamed him. A Greek swung his sword and decapitated Peirasus. His head — its lips parted to scream — rolled far from his body.

The Trojan Polydamas speared Cleon and Eurymachus, who came to Troy with the very handsome Nireus. Cleon and Eurymachus were skilled at fishing, whether with hooks or nets or tridents.

The Greek Eurypylus killed Hellus, a Trojan ally. With his sword, Eurypylus cut off Hellus' arm, which still held a spear. The arm would have killed a Greek, but it was powerless now that it had been separated from the rest of the body.

The Greeks killed many Trojans. Odysseus killed Aenus and Polyidus. He used a spear to kill one warrior and a sword to kill the other. Sthenelus killed Abas with a javelin to the neck. Diomedes killed Laodocus, and Agamemnon killed Melius.

The Trojans killed many Greeks. Deiphobus killed Dryas and Alcimus. Agenor killed Hippasus, who grew up by the river Peneius.

The Greeks retaliated. Thoas killed Lamus and Lyncus. Meriones killed Lycon. Menelaus killed Archelochus, who used to live near a fire that never went out, around which fruit-bearing palm trees grew.

The Trojan Menoetes charged at Teucer, who shot him in the heart with an arrow. Menoetes died before Teucer's bowstring stopped vibrating.

The Greek Euryalus threw a huge stone into the ranks of the Trojans. A man can become angry at noisy cranes that threaten his crops — he uses a sling made of ox sinews to throw a stone among them, and the stone causes the cranes to become frightened and to fly away. Euryalus' throw was effective; it shattered the helmet and the head of Meles and killed him.

A strong wind can uproot trees and kill them and lay them in the dust. In the battle, warriors killed warriors and lay them in the dust.

Taking the form of the prophet Polymestor, who served him, Apollo went to Aeneas and Eurymachus and said, "Both of you are fated to live a long time, so keep fighting the Greeks."

Apollo disappeared, but Aeneas and Eurymachus recognized him and felt stronger and braver. They attacked the Greeks the way that wasps attack bees that swarm around drying grapes at harvest time. The Fates rejoiced, Ares laughed, and Enyo shrieked.

Aeneas, Eurymachus, and the other Trojans killed many Greeks. The dying Greeks were like falling grain that the reapers cut at harvest time. The battlefield was crowded with bodies and wet with blood. The Trojans were like lions attacking sheep.

The Greeks fled, and Aeneas and Eurymachus pursued and killed them. Apollo enjoyed the sight. Pigs can come into a field filled with grain because the reapers have not yet completed the harvest. Dogs chase and bite the pigs, which think no longer of food but only of escape. The pigs squeal and flee. The Greeks also fled and thought no longer of battle.

One Greek retreated no more but instead turned his horse around to fight the Trojans, but Agenor cut off the Greek's arm at the bicep with a two-edged ax. The wound spurted blood, and the Greek hung on his horse's neck and then fell to the ground. Although his arm had been severed, his hand still held on tight to the reins. The warrior was dead, but his hand and arm seemed to still want to fight.

Aeneas killed Aethalides with a spear through his back; the point of the spear came out through his navel. Aethalides fell to the ground, holding both the end of the spear and his intestines. He groaned, his teeth bit the ground, and he died.

The Greeks were like a team of oxen that have been plowing but a gadfly torments them and makes them run away, worrying the farmer who needs to get the plowing done and is also afraid that the iron plow may bounce into the air and land on the rear legs of the oxen and cut them.

Neoptolemus tried to rally the Greeks: "Be brave again. Right now you are like starlings pursued by hawks. Seek glory. Know that it is better to fight and die than to run away from a battle."

The Greeks listened to him, and he and his Myrmidons rushed upon the Trojans and killed many warriors. They pushed Aeneas and the Trojans back — a little. The goddess Enyo made the two armies equal in strength and courage and killing ability.

Neoptolemus and Aeneas fought in two different parts of the battlefield, and each killed many enemy warriors. Thetis respected Aphrodite, and she did not want her grandson to fight Aphrodite's son. The birds were eager to feast on dead warriors, but the nymphs of the Trojan rivers Simois and Xanthus mourned the deaths of Trojans.

A wind arose and blew dust into the air, reducing visibility to zero. Even so, the warriors fought and killed anyone they ran into. The dust made it impossible to tell friendly warrior from enemy warrior, and fearing to meet an enemy warrior who would immediately kill them, Trojans killed Trojans, and Greeks killed Greeks. Zeus pitied them, and he stopped the wind and the dust settled. Now, Trojans killed Greeks, and Greeks killed Trojans.

Shepherds on far-away heights watched the battle. One shepherd raised his hands and prayed to the gods that the Trojans would be victorious and drive the Greeks back to Greece, but Fate would not let this happen. Fate is powerful and can withstand even the will of Zeus. Fate determines a man's destiny, and whether his life will be good or bad. Because of Fate, the Trojans and the Greeks kept killing each other. Fate also determines a city's destiny and whether the city will rise or fall.

Athena rallied the Greeks; she was eager to see Troy fall. Aphrodite hid Aeneas with fog and took him away from the fighting. Although Aeneas was fated to survive the fall of Troy, Aphrodite was afraid that Athena might go against Fate and kill him. Earlier in the war, Athena had even fought Ares and defeated him. Ares, a god, was superior in strength to Aeneas, a mortal.

The Trojans retreated, and many warriors and horses died and many chariots were wrecked. Corpses, warriors, horses, and chariots were bloody.

A raft can be disassembled on the beach, and its logs lie on the beach and are washed by waves. Many Trojans, struck down by spears and swords, lay like logs on the battlefield and were washed by blood. They no longer thought about the agony of war.

The battle ended, and the surviving Trojans retreated behind the walls of Troy. Their wives helped take off their bloody armor and prepared hot baths for them. Doctors attended wounded warriors. The families of the wounded gathered around them and mourned, and many families mourned warriors who did not return to Troy. The Greeks also attended to their wounded.

When dawn arose, most Greeks fought again, but some Greeks stayed in the camps to guard the wounded, lest the enemy attack them.

The Trojans fought on this day from behind their walls. The Greeks Sthenelus and Diomedes fought at the Scaean Gates, which Deiphobus, Polites, and other Trojans defended with arrows and rocks. Often, flying weapons struck helmets, and the helmets protected the warriors.

Neoptolemus and his Myrmidons fought at the Idaean Gates, which Helenus, Agenor, and other Trojans courageously defended.

Odysseus and Eurypylus fought at the gates that faced the plain and ships and sea, and Aeneas opposed them.

Teucer, the Greek archer, was stationed at the gate that faced the Simois River. Trojans also defended this gate.

The warriors fighting with Odysseus arranged their shields in a pattern that Odysseus thought of. Close together, they lifted their shields and formed a roof or tortoise shell over their heads so that all the warriors were protected from arrows the way that a roof protects the inhabitants of a home from rain. The Trojans threw down weapons from their walls, and many arrows and spears stuck in the shields but the shields blunted the points of other arrows and spears and they did not stick. The weapons hitting the shields sounded like rain hitting a roof.

Under the shields, the Greeks moved to the Trojan wall, and Agamemnon and Menelaus rejoiced. The Greeks planned to reach the gates and tear them down. Their plan was good, but Aeneas seized a boulder and dropped it on the shields, which broke. The boulder crushed the warriors underneath their broken shields the way that a falling mountain crag can crush goats. Aeneas continued to drop huge rocks on the Greek warriors, and he destroyed their tortoise shell. Aeneas frightened the Greek warriors the way that mountain crags that Zeus hits with thunderbolts and sends crashing down the mountain frighten shepherds and sheep.

Aeneas' armor gleamed so brightly that no one could look at him, and he had the strength of a god. Ares stood beside him and guided the rocks that Aeneas dropped to ensure that they caused maximum loss of life. Aeneas was fighting the way that Zeus fought when he destroyed the rebelling Titans. The Trojans had carried many rocks to the top of their walls, and Aeneas used these to destroy the Greeks and protect his city.

The Trojans fought courageously beside Aeneas. He rallied the Trojans, ordering them to fight for their city, their children, their wives, their parents, and themselves. Neoptolemus ordered the Myrmidons to fight to conquer Troy and burn it.

Little Ajax, fighting away from the section of wall that Aeneas defended, killed many Trojans with his arrows and javelins. He killed so many Trojans that they abandoned the wall. Alcimedon, a Locrian warrior under Little Ajax' command, climbed a scaling ladder while holding his shield over his head. He climbed to the top of the wall and looked down on the city, but Aeneas saw him and brought a rock down on him. The rock hit Alcimedon and also broke the ladder he was climbing. Alcimedon's helmet fell from his head, and he dropped his shield and spear as he fell to his doom. Alcimedon's brain splattered when he hit the ground, and his bones broke through his skin.

Philoctetes aimed an arrow at Aeneas, but his shield protected him with the aid of Aeneas' mother, Aphrodite. The arrow barely grazed the shield and then hit Mimas, who fell from the Trojan wall just like a goat falls from a mountain crag after an archer hits it with an arrow.

Angry at the death of Mimas, Aeneas threw a rock that shattered the skull of Toxaichmes, who was one of Philoctetes' friends.

Philoctetes shouted at Aeneas, "You think that you are a brave warrior, but you are fighting from a wall like a woman would fight. If you are brave, come out onto the battlefield and fight me."

Aeneas did not reply, although he wanted to. He was too busy fighting to defend his city. He and the Trojans had been fighting for ten years, and they were still fighting.

Chapter 12: The Trojan Horse (Posthomerica)

When the battle ended, Troy had still not fallen, and the prophet Calchas called the Greek leaders to a meeting so that he could tell them what he had learned from Apollo. Calchas had the ability to clearly remember the past, clearly see the present, and partially predict the future.

Calchas told the Greek leaders, “Let us not fight the Trojans directly, but instead conceive of a trick to fool the Trojans and so at last conquer Troy. Yesterday, I watched a hawk hunt a dove. The dove, frightened, went into a hole in a rock. The hawk waited outside the hole for a long time, but the dove saw it and stayed in the hole. Then the hawk hid itself in a bush near the hole. The dove waited a while, and then came out of the hole, thinking that the hawk had flown away. The hawk then caught and killed the dove. Let us think up a trick that will result in the fall of Troy.”

The Greek leaders thought for a long time, and then clever Odysseus said, “Here is a way that we can conquer the city through trickery. We can build a giant wooden horse; it will be hollow so that warriors can hide inside it. Our fleet will sail away and hide behind the nearby island of Tenedos so the Trojans cannot see our ships. When the ships sail away, we Greeks will burn our camps so that the Trojans think that we are really gone. One brave Greek must stay and allow the Trojans to capture him. He must tell the Trojans that he escaped from the Greeks because they wanted to kill him as a human sacrifice so that they would have safe returns to their homes. He must convince the Trojans to pull the horse inside their city by telling them that according to a prophecy as long as the horse is inside the city, Troy will not fall. The brave Greek must tell the Trojans that the Greeks made the horse for the goddess Athena, who is angry at the Greeks. The brave Greek must stand up to the Trojans’ questioning, which will be harsh, until they believe his story and take him and the horse inside Troy. At night, when it is safe and the Trojans are sleeping, the brave Greek will tell the warriors to come out of the horse and make their way to the Trojan gates and open them. The brave Greek can use a burning torch to signal the warriors on the ships, which will have returned to the Trojan shore, to come to the gates. The Greek warriors inside Troy will open the gates and let in our army so that we can finally conquer Troy.”

The Greeks, and especially Calchas, approved of Odysseus’ plan. Calchas marveled at Odysseus’ cleverness.

Calchas advised the Greek leaders, “Let us follow Odysseus’ plan, which omens show will be successful. We can hear the thunder and see the lightning of Zeus, and birds have been shrieking to the right of our troops — the lucky side. This trick is exactly what we need, as the Trojans are desperate and so are fighting better than ever. Even a coward can fight fiercely when it is necessary to save his life. Fighting even fiercer than that is a man who is desperate to save his parents, wife,

children, and city — such a man is willing to die if necessary to save his loved ones. A desperate enemy is a dangerous enemy.”

Two men, Neoptolemus and Philoctetes, opposed the plan. They had recently come to Troy and were not yet exhausted from the fighting. They were eager to gain glory in war.

Neoptolemus said, “Brave men fight their enemy face to face. Cowardly men fight from the walls of their city. We are braver than the Trojans, and we ought to seek glory on the battlefield. Let us conquer Troy through battle and not through trickery.”

Odysseus replied, “Neoptolemus, I respect you and I respected your father. You are and he was a brave and noble man. Achilles, however, despite all his strength and courage and fighting ability, was unable to conquer Troy. And all of the many experienced warriors here have been unable to conquer Troy, although we have been fighting with all our strength for ten years. So let us follow the advice of Calchas. We can have Epeus, our best carpenter, design and build the horse. Athena taught him what he knows.”

The Greeks, except for Neoptolemus and Philoctetes, approved the plan. Neoptolemus and Philoctetes planned to continue to fight on the battlefield, but the actions of Zeus convinced them not to fight. Zeus caused an earthquake and threw a thunderbolt that landed in front of Neoptolemus and Philoctetes. They knew that they had offended Zeus, and so they agreed to Odysseus’ plan. They realized that Calchas knew the will of Zeus.

That night, Athena appeared in the guise of a young girl to Epeus in a dream. Athena told him how to design and make the horse. She also told him that she would be near him as he made the horse and that she would help him. Epeus woke up, and he knew that he would follow the goddess’ directions. He could think of nothing other than the horse.

At dawn, Epeus gave the Greek leaders pleasure when he told them about his dream and about Athena’s directions for designing and making the horse.

Agamemnon and Menelaus ordered the Greeks to go to Mount Ida and fell trees for lumber to build the horse. They clear-cut a wide area that had housed many wild animals; the animals did not like the area after it was clear-cut.

The Greeks cut up the trees into long sections, and men and mules carried them to Epeus. They cut the timber into planks, and Epeus supervised them in how to build the horse. Each Greek who was not standing guard found something to do to help build the horse. They built the feet and legs and then the belly of the horse. Then they built the flanks and back and throat and head. Epeus added a mane and a tail and ears and eyes. In three days, the horse was finished.

Epeus prayed, “Athena, here is your horse, made according to your directions. May you keep it and me, who will be inside it, safe.”

Athena listened to his prayer. He had created a work of art as well as a weapon of destruction, and she knew that she would answer his prayer.

While the Greeks admired the horse and the Trojans stayed behind the walls of their city, Zeus left Mount Olympus and visited lands far away. Without Zeus present to maintain peace, the other gods split into two factions: those who supported the Greeks and those who supported the Trojans. The gods came down from Mount Olympus to the river Xanthus and took up opposing positions on each side of the river. Many minor sea-gods took up positions alongside the Olympian gods. Some gods wanted to destroy the horse and the ships, and other gods wanted to destroy Troy, but Fate made them turn their hatred against each other. Ares attacked Athena, and all the other gods began to fight. The sounds of the gods' battle reached the Land of the Dead and terrified the Titans, but the living mortals were unaware that the gods were fighting.

In their battle, the gods broke off mountain crags and threw them at each other, but the crags broke against the gods' immortal bodies. Zeus became aware of the gods' battle. Iris yoked the four winds to Zeus' chariot, and Zeus drove it to Mount Olympus and then threw thunderbolts at the site of the gods' battle. The gods were terrified.

The goddess of justice, Themis, who alone of the gods had refrained from fighting, went down to the gods and said, "Stop fighting. Zeus does not want you to fight. It is hardly right for immortals, who live forever, to fight over mortals, who live only a short time. Being immortal, you are vulnerable to eternal punishment. If Zeus wishes, he can cover you with a mountain. For the rest of your lives, which last forever, you will see only darkness."

The gods listened to Themis and stopped fighting. Some gods stayed on the land, and the others returned to the sky or the sea.

After the horse had been completed, Odysseus said to the Greeks, "We have some decisions to make. Who will be the warriors who will go inside the horse? Who will be the warriors who will sail behind the island of Tenedos and hide their presence from the Trojans? Most importantly, who will be the brave Greek who will stay behind and allow the Trojans to capture him so that he can convince the Trojans to pull the horse inside the city as a gift to Athena? That Greek should not be well known to the Trojans. All of the Greeks whom the Trojans know well will be great warriors who have killed many men, and if the Trojans capture one of these Greeks, the Trojans will immediately kill him."

Sinon spoke up: "Odysseus, I am willing to be the man whom the Trojans capture. I realize that they may torture me and may kill me. They may even throw me — while I am still alive — into a fire, but I am willing to suffer all this. I want to bring us glory, and I want us to conquer Troy."

The Greeks were impressed by his bravery. One Greek said, "Sinon has not been this courageous before, but he is definitely very courageous now. Troy is doomed."

Nestor said, "I wish that I could be the first warrior to go inside the horse. When I was young and Jason summoned the Argonauts, I wanted to be the first warrior to go inside the *Argo*, but

Pelias, my uncle, stopped me from enjoying that honor. Now, although I am old, I will gladly go inside the horse.”

Neoptolemus said, “Nestor, you are the wisest of all of the Greeks, but you are old now and you have lost much of your strength. You must be one of those who sail behind the island of Tenedos. Younger men, including myself, will go inside the horse and do the deeds that you would like to do.”

Nestor kissed Neoptolemus’ hands and head. He was pleased with what Neoptolemus had said. Neoptolemus was eager to win glory, and he had shown concern and respect for Nestor, an old man.

Nestor said to Neoptolemus, “You are truly the son of Achilles, both in strength and in intelligence. Now that you are fighting for us, we will conquer Troy. It will have taken ten years, but the gods force us to work hard before we gain good things.”

Neoptolemus replied, “I also hope that we conquer Troy, but if the gods will not allow that to happen, I prefer to die here rather than to return home in disgrace.”

Neoptolemus put on his armor. So did the other Greek warriors who would go inside the horse.

Muses, tell me the names of the brave Greeks who entered the horse. The first to enter the horse was Neoptolemus, and he was followed by Menelaus, Odysseus, Sthenelus, Diomedes, Philoctetes, Anticlus, Menestheus, Thoas, Polypoetes, Little Ajax, Eurypylyus, Thrasymedes, Meriones, Idomeneus, Podalirius, Eurymachus, Teucer, Ialmenus, Thalpius, Antimachus, Leonteus, Eumelus, Euryalus, Demophoon, Amphimachus, Agapenor, Acamas, and Meges. Other outstanding warriors also went inside the horse. The last to go inside the horse was Epeus, who had designed it with the help of Athena. Epeus entered last because he would open one of the two doors at the right time. Odysseus would open the other door. They drew inside the horse the ladders they had used, and they closed the doors. Soon, the Greeks inside the horse would either die or they would conquer Troy.

The other Greeks burned their camps, and then they sailed away to Tenedos. Nestor and Agamemnon commanded these Greeks. Both Nestor and Agamemnon had wanted to go inside the horse, but the other Greeks vetoed that idea. Commanders were needed for the Greek fleet. Behind Tenedos, the Greeks cast their anchors and waited on shore. The next night, Sinon would burn a torch on the wall of Troy, and the Greeks would know that they should go to the gates of Troy.

Inside the horse, the Greeks sometimes thought of dying and they sometimes thought of burning the city.

At dawn, the Trojans saw smoke still rising from the Greek camps. They did not see the Greeks' ships. Despite their joy, they put on their armor before going to the Greek camps. They also saw the horse and admired it.

The Trojans captured Sinon. They surrounded him, and they asked him questions. At first, they were gentle, and then they were not gentle. They wanted to make sure that he told them the truth. They cut off his nose and his ears, and they tortured him with fire, but Sinon was brave and he continued to lie. They asked him where were the Greeks and if anything was inside the horse. Because he was brave and lied, the Trojans did not find out about the Greeks inside the horse — if Sinon had told the truth, those Greeks would have died.

Sinon told the Trojans, "The Greeks have given up. They have sailed away to their homes. Calchas told the Greeks that Athena is angry at them because Odysseus and Diomedes stole from Troy the statue of Athena that is known as the Palladium; the Greeks built the horse as an offering to Athena so that she will stop being angry at them. The Greeks also wanted to kill me. Odysseus told the Greeks that to ensure their safe passage home they needed to make me a human sacrifice to the gods of the sea. I learned of this plot, and I took sanctuary at the feet of the horse. I was under the protection of Athena, and so the Greeks could not kill me. If they had killed me, they would have further enraged Athena."

So Sinon spoke, and he spoke persuasively. Some Trojans believed him; however, other Trojans did not believe him.

Laocoon was one of the Trojans who did not believe him. He told the Trojans that the horse was a trick of the Greeks, and he advised the Trojans to burn the horse and see if anything were hidden inside it.

Athena came to the aid of the Greeks. She caused an earthquake under the feet of Laocoon, and she caused pain in his eyes. His eyes rolled, and ooze and blood flowed from them. While he could still see, he saw double, and then Athena entirely took away his sight. Despite being now completely blind, he was concerned for his city and continued to urge the Trojans to burn the horse.

The Trojans pitied Laocoon, and they feared Athena, whom they believed that Laocoon had offended. They also worried that they had offended Athena by torturing Sinon, so they welcomed him.

Sinon told them that according to a prophecy if the Trojans took the horse inside the city, it would never fall. By taking the horse inside Troy, they could make it their own offering to Athena. The Trojans believed him, and they put a rope around the horse and pulled it to the city. Epeus had put wheels under the horse to make it easier to pull.

As the Trojans pulled the horse into the city as if they were pulling a ship into water, they celebrated what they believed to be their victory in the war. They put garlands on the horse, and

they wore garlands on their heads. They played flutes. The goddesses Enyo, Hera, and Athena laughed because they knew that the war was coming to an end with the Greeks victorious.

Epeus had made the horse huge. It would not fit through the gates, but the Trojans tore down some of their own battlements so that they could bring the horse inside Troy. The Trojan women stared at the horse; they did not know that soon many of them would die and others would become slaves.

Laocoon continued to try to convince the Trojans to burn the horse, but the Trojans were convinced that doing that would anger the gods. They became even more convinced of that when Athena sent two sea-snakes to kill the two sons of Laocoon. The sea-snakes swam to Troy from the island of Calydna. Aphrodite and the nymphs of the rivers Xanthus and Simois, all of whom supported the Trojans during the war, mourned.

The Trojans — men and women — fled when the sea-snakes clambered on shore. Some women were so frightened that when they fled they left their children behind. The Trojans also left behind blind Laocoon. The two boys stretched out their hands to their father as the sea-snakes seized them in their jaws, but he could not help them. After devouring the two boys, the sea-snakes vanished underground. The Trojans built a cenotaph — an empty tomb — for the two boys, and Laocoon wept. The boys' mother also wept, like a mother nightingale mourning when a snake devours her young. The boys' mother also wept for her blinded husband.

The Trojans attempted to sacrifice to the gods, but their fires went out as if rain were falling on them. The libations of wine the Trojans poured to the gods turned to blood. The floors of temples in Troy became slick from blood, and tears flowed from statues. Happy with their supposed victory, the Trojans ignored the bad omens.

One Trojan clearly saw the future: Cassandra. She had promised to sleep with Apollo if he would give her the gift of prophecy. Apollo kept his promise, but she did not keep her promise. Therefore, to punish her, Apollo gave her an additional "gift": Although Cassandra would have the gift of prophecy, no one would believe her prophecies until they had come true.

Cassandra saw the omens, and she knew what they meant. With her hair falling on her shoulders and her eyes glaring and her head turning from side to side, she said to the Trojans, "I see destruction, fire, blood, and death. I see bad omens, and yet you are celebrating. I see that your doom is hidden from you — you cannot see it. The destruction that Helen has been bringing to Troy will finally be fulfilled. You are eating a feast, and it will be your last one. Soon, you will complete your journey to the Land of the Dead."

One of the Trojans, who like all the Trojans did not believe her prophecies, said to her, "Cassandra, stop talking nonsense. The gods have finally shown favor to us, and it would be wrong for us to reject their gifts. If you want to make dire prophecies, make them silently, to yourself. Otherwise, you may suffer a fate worse than that of Laocoon."

Cassandra wanted to destroy the horse with an ax or with fire. She picked up a burning brand from the fire and ran to the horse with a double ax in her other hand, but the Trojans stopped her and warned her to stay away from the horse and not to cause any more trouble. The Trojans then returned to their feasting.

Inside the horse, the Greeks listened to the sounds of celebrating and of drinking. They had heard the prophecy of Cassandra, and they had heard the Trojans stop her from destroying the horse. The Greeks marveled at her intelligence.

Cassandra stayed away from the horse like a lioness that has been driven away by armed shepherds and their dogs, and she mourned.

Chapter 13: The Fall of Troy (Posthomerica)

That night, the Trojans celebrated. They played music, danced, feasted, and drank wine. They became drunk, and they could not see well — everything seemed to be in motion. Drunken men cannot fight well.

The celebrating Trojans said, “The Greeks brought many warriors here, but they did not win the war. They left as if they were children or women, not warriors.”

Very late that night, the Trojans slept, and Sinon displayed a blazing torch on the high walls of Troy, alerting Agamemnon and the other Greeks to return to the city. Sinon worried that the Trojans might see him, but they were all asleep. He also went to the horse and called softly to the warriors inside that it was safe to come out. The Greek warriors inside the horse had stayed awake all night. Odysseus, who warned the Greeks to be quiet, and Epeus opened the two doors of the horse and looked to see if any Trojans were awake. Some Greeks were tempted to jump out of the horse, but Odysseus restrained them with words. Alert for enemies, Odysseus was the first Greek to exit the horse. The other Greek warriors followed him. They were like wasps exiting their nest to attack a woodcutter. They made their way to the gates, killing Trojans as they went.

Meanwhile, the Greek ships had sailed back to Troy with the help of a wind sent by Thetis and had marched silently to the gates, which Sinon, Odysseus, and the others opened. They entered Troy the way that wolves enter a sheepfold, and they began to kill and kill again. They also set many buildings on fire.

Many Trojans were killed before they could put on armor and get weapons. They lay in their own blood, and dying Trojans fell on top of them. Some Trojans were grievously wounded but not dead — they fled, holding their intestines in their hands. The Greeks hacked off the feet and hands and heads of other Trojans. Many Trojans were speared in the back as they fled. In the city, dogs howled and wounded Trojans screamed.

The women also wailed. An eagle can fly among cranes and frighten them. The cranes have no courage to fight the eagle; they merely make cries of distress. So did many Trojan women. In their distress, and with many of their homes on fire, the Trojan women were not fully dressed. Many wore only a single garment, and many were naked, concealing their nakedness with only their hands. The women tore their hair and beat their breasts and cried. Some women grabbed weapons and fought the Greeks; they wanted to help their husbands and save their children.

Children woke up. Some had had nightmares in which they had died; those nightmares came true for many children. The children were like pigs being slaughtered for a feast that a rich man is holding.

Blood sprayed into the air and fell into the wine still left in mixing bowls. Trojan men, women, and children died. The swords of all the Greeks — even the worst fighters — were red with Trojan blood.

Some unarmed Trojans threw up their hands in an attempt to stop Greek swords; the swords cut off their fingers. Other unarmed Trojans reached for swords they could use to defend themselves; the Greeks used their own swords to cut off the fingers of the Trojans.

Greeks also suffered wounds, and some died. The Trojans fought back with whatever weapons they could find. They threw goblets and burning pieces of wood from the fire. The Trojans stabbed some Greeks with the spits that the Trojans had used to cook food. Some Trojans had gotten real weapons such as hatchets and battleaxes and swords and spears; they used them to kill Greeks. Many Greeks died.

In the confused fighting, sometimes a man threw a rock and killed a friend, although many Greeks carried burning torches so they could tell friend from foe.

The Trojan Coroebus attacked Diomedes, who speared him in the throat. The previous day, Coroebus had arrived at Troy. He had promised Priam to fight and to defeat the Greeks in return for a marriage to Cassandra. Diomedes then killed Eurydamas, the next Trojan to attack him.

Aged Trojans wandered or hid in the confusion. Diomedes met the aged Ilioneus, who fell to his knees and grabbed Diomedes' sword and knees. Afraid to die, Ilioneus said to him, "Have mercy on me, whoever you are. If you kill a young man in battle, you win glory, but if you kill an old man, you do not win glory. Therefore, let me live. Hope that you will also reach an advanced old age."

Diomedes replied, "I hope to live long enough to grow old, but on this day I will spare no Trojan. The Trojans are my enemies, and I will send as many of them as I can to the Land of the Dead."

Diomedes thrust his sword into Ilioneus' throat, and then he continued to kill as many Trojans as he could, including Abas and Eurycoon.

The other Greeks also killed Trojans. Little Ajax killed Amphimedon. Agamemnon killed the son of Damastor. Idomeneus killed Mimas. Meges killed Deiopites.

Neoptolemus killed Pammon, Polites, and Antiphonus — all three were sons of Priam. Then Neoptolemus killed Agenor. Neoptolemus killed many other Trojan heroes.

Neoptolemus saw Priam by the altar of Zeus in the courtyard of the palace. Priam was unafraid; he wanted to join his sons in death. Priam said to Neoptolemus, "Son of Achilles, kill me. Do not pity me because after all that my city and I have suffered and suffer, this is a good time to die. I only wish that Achilles had killed me before I ever saw my city conquered. Please kill me now so that I may no longer suffer."

Neoptolemus replied, “Yes, I will kill you because you are my enemy and life is the most valuable thing that a man can possess.”

Neoptolemus swung his sword and cut off Priam’s head, which rolled on the ground far from his body. Priam no longer grieved.

The innocent suffer in war. Hector had killed many Greeks, and in revenge the Greeks forcibly took Hector’s toddler son, Astyanax, away from Hector’s screaming wife, Andromache, and killed him by throwing him from the high walls of Troy. Astyanax had hurt no one and knew nothing of war.

The Greeks then forced Andromache to go with the other captive Trojan women. Andromache’s father, husband, and son had died because of war, and now she knew that she would be a sex-slave to a Greek master — she did not yet know which one.

Andromache said to the Greeks, “Kill me now. Throw me from the high walls of Troy the way you did my toddler son. Or throw me off a cliff or into fire. Achilles killed my father in Thebe, and he killed my husband at Troy. I still had my son, but now he is dead, too. Please don’t make me a sex-slave. Kill me and end my life and my misery.”

The Greeks ignored her wish; she was more valuable to them alive. They dragged her away with the other Trojan women to make them slaves.

The Greeks did not burn the home of Antenor, and they did not kill him. Antenor, an advocate of peace and the husband of the priestess Theano, had wanted the Trojans to return Helen to the Greeks. When Menelaus and Odysseus had come as emissaries to the Trojans, Antenor had given them hospitality and made sure that they were safe. In return, the Greeks spared him and his house as they conquered the city. In this instance, the Greeks did what Themis, goddess of justice, wanted them to do, although they committed atrocities in other parts of Troy.

Aeneas had been fighting bravely and had killed many Greeks as he defended the doomed city, but now he realized that the city had fallen and no one could change its fate. When a large ship sinks, a sailor can take refuge in a small boat. Aeneas gave up trying to save his city and instead concentrated on saving his family.

Aeneas carried his aged father on his shoulders and he led his young son by the hand as he took them out of Troy. His son was frightened and cried as he ran beside his father. As they fled the city, Aeneas stepped over many dead bodies, and he stepped on many dead bodies.

The Greeks saw Aeneas and shot arrows and threw spears at him, but Calchas, the prophet, told them, “Stop! Aeneas is destined to survive the fall of Troy and to go to the river Tiber in Italy, where he shall become the ancestor of a mighty people who will rule the world from the east to the west. His mother is Aphrodite, and he will become a god. He deserves this destiny. In fleeing from Troy, he chose not to take gold but instead to take his aged father and his young son.”

The Greeks stopped trying to kill Aeneas. His mother, Aphrodite, led him, his father, and his son safely out of the burning city.

After the death of Paris, Deiphobus had married Helen. During the fall of Troy, she hid, and Menelaus found Deiphobus drunk and still asleep in the bed he shared with Helen. Menelaus stabbed Deiphobus with a sword, and as the blood gushed out of the wound, Menelaus said, “I have killed you, and I wish that I had killed Paris, too. But both of you are dead, and you have paid your debt to Themis, goddess of justice.”

Menelaus continued to kill Trojans. He wanted justice because the Trojans had done evil actions: Paris had stolen his host’s wife and had stolen much of his host’s treasure, the Trojans had broken oaths they had sworn to the gods, and they had killed many Greeks. Themis would not allow their city to remain unconquered.

Menelaus searched the palace and finally found Helen. He wanted to kill her, but Aphrodite filled his heart with passion, not anger. Aphrodite did not want Helen to die. Menelaus thought of marriage, not of murder. But he rushed at Helen with a sword because he wanted to show the Greeks that he knew that Helen had been the cause of so many Greek deaths. As Menelaus knew would happen, Agamemnon restrained him and did not allow him to kill Helen. The Greeks had fought a war to regain Helen, not to kill her.

Agamemnon said to Menelaus, “It is not right to kill your wife. Blame Paris, not Helen. Paris is the one who violated the rules of hospitality and treated you, his host, so badly. It is because of Paris that the gods have caused Troy to fall.”

As Agamemnon had requested, Menelaus spared the life of Helen.

Many gods mourned the fall of Troy, but Athena and Hera rejoiced in its fall. But even Athena ended up feeling pain during the city’s fall. Cassandra had taken refuge in the temple of Athena. The Greeks could and should have respected Athena by respecting all who took refuge in her temple — they should not kill or harm them because those inside Athena’s temple were under the protection of Athena. But blinded by lust, Little Ajax committed an atrocity: He desecrated Athena’s temple by going inside it and raping Cassandra. Athena averted her eyes from the rape, and she planned death for Little Ajax — he would never return home.

The city was burning, and tall buildings were falling. The houses of Aeneas and of Antimachus were burning. Temples and altars burned. Troy’s destruction was assured.

The Greeks killed many Trojans, but others died in the fires. Burning buildings fell and became tombs. Some Trojans committed suicide with their own swords. Some killed their wives and children to prevent them from becoming slaves, and then they took their own lives and fell on the corpses of the family members they had killed.

One Trojan thought that the fighting was still far from his home. He took a jar to get water, hoping to be able to drink his fill before fleeing, but a Greek saw him and speared him and killed

him. The still-empty jar fell and broke. Many Trojans died in their own halls when burning beams fell on them. Some women had run out of their homes when they heard the tumult of fighting and of fires; they ran back inside to get their children, and the women and children died when the burning roofs collapsed on them.

Dogs and horses ran in terror throughout the city. The horses trampled many people and killed them.

The fires that were destroying Troy could be seen from far away. From a distance, people saw the fires and knew that Troy had fallen. A sailor at sea said, “The Greeks have done a notable deed. The Trojans have paid the price for taking Helen.”

A forest fire panics or kills all the wild animals living in it. All of the citizens of Troy were panicked or killed. The gods looked upon the destruction.

Theseus had once abducted the very young Helen and taken her to his home in Aphidnae, and he left her there when he visited the Land of the Dead. Helen’s brothers, Castor and Polydeuces, rescued her and captured Theseus’ mother, Aethra, and made her a slave. When Paris and Helen sailed to Troy, they took Aethra with them.

Aethra now was looking for Greeks. Two Greeks, Demophoon and Acamas, now saw her, and they thought that she was Hecuba, the wife of Priam. They seized her and were going to take her to the Trojan women who had been captured, but she said to them, “I am Aethra, and I am not Trojan, but Greek. I am the mother of the famous Greek hero Theseus. If you can, take me to his two sons who are at Troy. They are the same age as you, and they will be happy to see me.”

Demophoon and Acamas were the two sons of Theseus at Troy, and they were happy to see her. They remembered the stories about how Castor and Polydeuces had conquered Aphidnae so they could rescue Helen. At the time, Demophoon and Acamas had been infants, and they had been safely and secretly taken away from the city. They also remembered that Aethra, their grandmother, had been made a slave and had been taken to Troy.

Demophoon said to Aethra, “Your request is granted — and quickly. We are your grandsons, and we will take care of you. We will take you to our ship, and we will take you back to Greece and freedom and family.”

Aethra kissed the shoulders, head, chest, and bearded cheeks of Demophoon, and then she did the same to Acamas. A man may erroneously be reported to have died in a foreign land. He returns home, and his sons cry with pleasure at seeing him again, and the man cries, too. Such crying is pleasant. Aethra, Demophoon, and Acamas cried with pleasure.

Other kinds of crying took place in Troy. Laodice, one of the daughters of Priam, cried and lifted her arms as she prayed to the gods to let the earth open and swallow her so that she would cease living and not become a sex-slave. One of the gods answered her prayer.

The constellation named the Pleiades has seven stars, one of which is very faint. The Pleiades used to be nymphs, but Zeus made them stars and put them in the night sky. All seven stars used to be bright, but one of the stars, Electra, was the mother of Dardanus, an ancestor of the Trojans. When Troy fell, Electra dimmed herself because of her grief.

That night, the Greeks continued causing death and destruction in Troy. Eris, goddess of strife, enjoyed the deaths and the destruction.

Chapter 14: The Departure for Greece (Posthomerica)

Dawn arrived, and the Greeks looted the destroyed city, finding and taking much treasure. Along with the material treasure, they took the women of Troy. Some were virgins, others were newlyweds, others were aged and with grey hair, and others were mothers whose children had suckled their breasts for the last time. Many children had died, and many still-living children were separated from their mothers.

Menelaus took Helen, over whom the war had been fought. Agamemnon took Cassandra, and Neoptolemus took Andromache. Odysseus dragged away Hecuba, who was crying and trembling. She had torn her hair and had poured ashes on her head. Each Greek hero had a Trojan woman to take to his ships.

The Trojan women were now slaves, and they cried as their new masters led them to the ships. With the arrival of winter, men separate piglets from their mothers and drive the piglets from the old pigsty to a new pigsty. The piglets squeal as they are herded from one place to a new place. The Trojan women wailed as they were herded to the ships.

Helen did not cry, but she was afraid that the Greeks would hurt her. She covered her face with the veil of a married woman and followed her husband, Menelaus. Hephaestus had once found his wife, Aphrodite, having an affair with Ares. He cast a net over them while they were having sex, and then he invited the gods and goddesses to look at them. The goddesses were embarrassed and stayed away, but the gods came to look and laugh while Aphrodite blushed with shame. Helen blushed. The Greeks marveled at Helen's beauty, and no one insulted or physically mistreated her.

The Greeks were happy to see Helen; they had fought a war for ten years to recover her. They were like sailors who have been at sea for a long time and finally see land.

But the river-gods around Troy and their daughters the nymphs mourned, as did the god of Mount Ida, as the city was abandoned. Its buildings had been burnt, its warriors had been killed, and its surviving women and children were being taken away to be slaves in Greece. The river-gods and nymphs and mountain-god felt as a farmer does whose ripe grain field is destroyed by a hailstorm. Food that could have nourished and kept alive many people is destroyed, and the center of civilization that was Troy had been destroyed.

The Greeks sang epic songs as they went about their work of putting their booty in their ships. The songs were about the gods, the war, the wooden horse, and the Greeks' decisive victory after ten years of inconclusive warfare. The songs were joyful, like those of jackdaws following a storm when the Sun comes out. The songs reached Mount Olympus, and they made the gods who had supported the Greeks happy, but the gods who had supported the Trojans were unhappy at

the working of Fate, which even they could not alter. Even Zeus, the most powerful of all beings, cannot alter Fate.

The Greeks made many sacrifices to the gods, and they praised all who had entered the wooden horse. They also especially gave gifts to and praised Sinon, who had told the lies that conquered Troy although the Trojans had tortured him in an attempt to make him tell the truth. Although the Trojans had cut off his nose and his ears, Sinon was happy with the glory that he had won.

The Greeks said among themselves, “We have won the war after ten years of struggle. We have won glory. Now we pray to Zeus to allow us a safe homecoming.”

To some Greeks Zeus gave a safe homecoming, but not to all.

During the evening, poets continued to sing the history of the Trojan War: the Greek ships had gathered at Aulis, the port from which they had sailed to Troy; Achilles had sacked twenty-three cities, twelve by sea and eleven by land; Achilles had wounded Telephus, and he had killed Eetion and Cycnus; Achilles had grown angry at Agamemnon and stopped fighting for the Greeks, and the Trojans had won major battles; Achilles had killed Hector, and then he had dragged the corpse around Troy; Achilles had killed Penthesilea and Memnon, Great Ajax had killed Glaucus, and Neoptolemus had killed Eurypylus; Philoctetes had returned to fight for the Greeks and had killed Paris; Odysseus had come up with the idea of the Trojan Horse, Epeus had built it, and many Greek warriors had gone inside the horse; the Greeks had conquered Troy, and now they were celebrating.

At midnight, exhausted from the work of war and after many hours without sleep, most of the Greeks slept.

Menelaus and Helen, however, talked. Helen said, “Menelaus, do not be angry at me. Paris kidnapped me while you were away from our home; I did not go with him voluntarily. I suffered, and I wanted to commit suicide either with a noose or with a sword. The Trojans stopped me and tried with words to make me forget my sorrow at being separated from my family. I wanted to return to you and our daughter. Please believe me.”

Menelaus replied, “Let us talk of this no longer. Let us forget the evil past.”

Helen was relieved; her husband did not sound angry at her. She embraced him, and they lay down together, and they had sex. They were like ivy and a vine that grow together and intertwine. The wind cannot separate the ivy and the vine, and Menelaus and Helen were one.

That night, Achilles appeared in a dream to his son, Neoptolemus. Achilles kissed his son’s neck and eyes, and then he said, “Do not mourn me — my spirit lives now among the gods. Let me give you some advice. During war, fight in the front lines. During councils, listen to the older men. Find men with good and noble minds, and make them your friends. Be friends with good men, and reject bad men. Make your mind good, and your deeds will be good. Pursue excellence

and its rewards, and do not over-react to bad fortune or to good fortune. Be good to your friends, your future sons, and your future wife, and realize that not long from now you will be dead. Be kind.

“And do what I tell you to do now. I want you to go to Agamemnon and the other Greeks and tell them that I — who did so many notable deeds in the war — am angry at them. I am even angrier at them than I was when Agamemnon took Briseis away from me. I am so angry that I will send storms to the sea so that the Greeks will have to stay at Troy for a long time. The only way they can appease my anger is to sacrifice Polyxena, a young daughter of Priam, at my tomb. After she is dead, you may bury her at a distance from my tomb.”

Achilles’ spirit departed and went to the Elysian Fields, where the gods use a path that travels to and from heaven.

Neoptolemus woke up and wondered, *Some of what my father said seems contradictory. Have I heard both true things and false things? Is Achilles trying to be a good person but letting his anger conquer him? Should a good son obey his father no matter what?*

At dawn, Neoptolemus remembered the dream of his father and felt glad. The Greeks wanted to pull their ships into the sea and set sail, but Neoptolemus told the Greek leaders, “My father, Achilles, whose spirit now resides with the gods, came to me in a dream last night. He demands his share of the spoils of Troy. He orders us to sacrifice Polyxena at his tomb and then bury her at a distance from his tomb. If we don’t do that, he threatens to send storms to the sea and force us to stay at Troy for a long time.”

The Greeks looked out at the sea; a storm was rising and making the waves dangerous. Poseidon, who respected Achilles, had created the storm. The Greeks prayed to Achilles, and they said, “Achilles, who was descended from Zeus, is now an immortal god.”

The Greeks forcibly tore Polyxena away from her mother, Hecuba, and led her to Achilles’ tomb the way they would take a frightened calf from its grieving mother and lead it to an altar. Polyxena and Hecuba both knew that the Greeks were going to cut Polyxena’s throat with a sword. Polyxena cried the way a mother cries when her young daughter is being taken away to be a human sacrifice. Polyxena’s tears soaked her dress.

The previous night, Hecuba had had a dream: She was standing at the tomb of Achilles, crying, and from the breasts that had fed her children came not white milk but red blood that dripped onto the tomb of Achilles. She mourned the way a mother dog mourns when its masters have taken its puppies, whose eyes are still closed, and thrown them into a field for birds to kill and eat. The dog howls, and Hecuba sobbed loudly with grief.

Hecuba said, “What should I mourn first, and what should I mourn last? My sons have died. My husband has died. My city has fallen. My daughters are or will be dead, or they will be sex-slaves. You, Polyxena, will soon be dead. You are at the age where you should be looking

forward to your marriage, but fate has brought you death. Achilles is dead, but that has not stopped him from bringing us grief and feeling joy at the sight of our blood. I wish that I could die before you die.”

At the tomb of Achilles, Neoptolemus gripped Polyxena tightly with his left hand so she could not run away. He drew his sword with his strong right hand and rested the hilt on the tomb, saying, “Father, do not be angry any longer at the Greeks. Be satisfied with this sacrifice and allow us to return safely home.”

Polyxena screamed, and Neoptolemus drove the sword into her throat. She bled much and died quickly.

The Greeks gave Polyxena’s body to the Trojan Antenor, whose son Eurymachus had been going to marry her. He buried her by his home, which was near a monument of Ganymede and the temple of Athena. As soon as Polyxena was buried, the winds and waves died down, and the sea was suitable for sailing.

The Greeks sacrificed to the gods, and they feasted and drank. They used goblets of gold and silver that they had taken from the noble palaces of Troy.

After everyone had feasted, Nestor said, “Achilles is no longer angry, Poseidon has calmed the storm at sea, and the time is right to set sail. Let us drag our ships to the sea and go home.”

As Nestor had advised, the Greeks dragged their ships to the sea and loaded them with treasure and women taken from Troy and conquered cities that had been allied with Troy.

The gods performed one more marvel before the Greeks set sail. The grieving Hecuba was changed into a dog made out of stone. The Greeks put her on board one of their ships and took her across to the other side of the Hellespont, where they left her at a spot afterward known as Dog’s Tomb.

Two Greeks were afraid to set sail immediately. The prophet Calchas worried that the ships would sail into danger when they arrived at the Capherean Rocks at the headland of the southeast end of the island of Euboea. He tried to convince the other Greeks to wait to set sail, but only Amphilocheus, who also understood prophecy, stayed with him. Neither Calchas nor Amphilocheus would die during their sea journey, but both would go to cities that were not their own.

The Greeks who were immediately setting sail poured wine into the sea as an offering to the gods. Their ships were crowded with armor that they had taken from dead Trojans. Their ships were decorated with garlands signifying victory. The Greeks prayed to the gods for a safe passage home for all and poured wine into the sea as a sacrifice, but their prayers were scattered by the wind.

The Trojan women looked at Troy, from which smoke still rose, as the ships sailed away; they tried to conceal their grief. Some women clasped their knees with their hands; some women held

their heads in their hands. Some women held children in their arms. The children, who sucked milk from their mothers' breasts, did not know yet that they were slaves. Their mothers' breasts bore red welts from the scratches the Trojan women had made in their grief. No longer wives, the women did not braid their hair but let it fall loose. On their faces were the traces of dried tears; new tears soon covered up those traces. The Trojan women remembered the prophecies of Cassandra, and they looked at her. Some people sometimes respond to grief and misery in strange ways: Cassandra laughed.

Some Trojans had escaped and run away during the sack of the city. When it was safe for them to do so, they returned and buried the dead. Antenor led the holding of the funerals. The few survivors burned the many corpses of men, women, and children on one funeral pyre.

The Greeks, who rejoiced because of their victory but mourned because of their dead, used oars and sails to leave the Trojan land. They made good time, and it seemed as if all of them would return home safely, but Athena was angry at Little Ajax because he had raped Cassandra in her temple.

When the Greeks sailed close to the island of Euboea, Athena said to Zeus, "Father, mortals no longer respect the gods, who ought to dispense justice. Mortals know that a good man often suffers and that a bad man often rejoices. Because of this, they no longer try to be just — they willingly do evil actions. This is wrong. Evil men ought to be punished. In my own temple, Little Ajax raped Cassandra. This is wrong on many levels. He committed rape. He raped a virgin who was soon to be married. He raped a virgin in a temple as she called on the virgin goddess to whom the temple was dedicated to protect her. Do not stop me as I punish Little Ajax and teach men not to commit rape. I also want to teach them to respect the gods."

Zeus replied, "I will give you all the weapons you need to punish Little Ajax for his rape. Call up a storm against the Greeks. I give you my lightning bolts so you can kill Little Ajax. The Cyclopes made these lightning bolts for me."

Athena put on a breastplate on which was displayed the head of Medusa with its writhing, fire-breathing snakes, she picked up her father's thunderbolts, and she sent a message to Aeolus, the god of the winds, to cause a storm at sea to raise huge waves and sink ships. Iris took Athena's message to Aeolus, who was with his wife and their twelve children. He listened to Iris, and then he used his trident to strike the side of the mountain in which was a cave that housed the winds. Aeolus' trident broke a hole in the mountain, and the winds rushed out. Poseidon helped Athena by sending waves to batter the ships.

The waves raised the ships high and then dropped them low as if they were falling from a mountain into an abyss in which sand boiled up from the bottom of the sea.

The winds of Aeolus pummeled the ships. Zeus' lightning bolts terrified the Greeks. Athena laughed.

The Greeks could do little or nothing to save themselves. They could not row or manage their sails. Their pilots could not steer their ships. Ships collided and crushed Greek men and Trojan women and children. Many fell into the sea and drowned. Some held onto pieces of oars and other wreckage and hoped to survive.

Athena threw a lightning bolt that shattered the ship of Little Ajax and scattered its pieces across the waves. Many Trojan women were happy to die even if it meant the death of their children, whom they held in their arms. Some Trojan women tightly gripped Greeks so that they could not swim; the Trojan women were eager to make Greeks die with them.

Little Ajax grabbed onto a piece of wreckage and stayed afloat; he was strong like a Titan. The waves lifted him and then let him drop. The gods marveled at his ability to stay alive in the storming sea.

Athena knew that he would die, and she wanted him to suffer before he died. Little Ajax, however, did not know that he would die. He boasted that he would live even if all the Olympian gods were against him.

Little Ajax grabbed onto a rock, and struggled to hold on to it as his hands grew bloody, but Poseidon broke the rock that Little Ajax was holding onto and Little Ajax fell into the sea. Even then, he could have escaped death, but Poseidon sent the rock after Little Ajax to land on top of him and carry him to the bottom of the sea and bury him. Athena had once lifted the island of Sicily and covered the giant Enceladus with it; Poseidon now covered Little Ajax with a huge rock.

The Greek ships were either sunk or badly damaged by the storm. Heavy rain fell. One Greek said, "In the days of Deucalion, storms such as this raged. He had sacrificed a boy to Zeus, who was disgusted by such a sacrifice, and Zeus sent storms to flood the world."

Many corpses floated in the sea, and many corpses were cast onto the nearby land. This made Nauplius, the son of Poseidon and the father of Palamedes, happy. Odysseus had not wanted to go to Troy, and so had feigned madness, but Palamedes discovered the fakery and so Odysseus had to go to war. Odysseus never forgave Palamedes for that, and in revenge, according to rumor, he got Palamedes killed. Nauplius wanted justice for his son's death, but the Greeks refused to give him justice, and so Nauplius prayed for the destruction of many Greeks and their ships. Poseidon granted that prayer.

Nauplius personally caused the death of many Greeks. On a dangerous shore, he held up a flaming torch. The Greeks thought that it was a signal directing them to a safe harbor, so they sailed toward the torch, and their ships and their bodies broke on the rocks of a reef.

Athena was happy in the destruction of ships and lives, but she respected Odysseus and she mourned because she knew that he was fated to suffer from the future anger of Poseidon at him.

Poseidon, with the help of Zeus and Apollo, destroyed the defensive fortifications the Greeks had built at Troy. Floods and an earthquake swept away the Greeks' defensive wall and filled in their trench. After this destruction, only sand could still be seen.

The storm eventually ended, as all things do, and the surviving Greeks continued their sea voyages and tried to reach their homes, bringing their slaves with them.

HOMER'S ODYSSEY: A RETELLING IN PROSE

A Note (Odyssey)

Xenia: The guest-host relationship. Civilized people of the ancient world followed rules of hospitality. Uncivilized people (and other beings) did not.

Chapter 1: Athena and Telemachus (Odyssey)

Muse, goddess of inspiration, please help me. I have an important story to tell, and I need help to tell it. Please use me to tell the story.

Help me to tell the story of a man of twists and turns. His mind twists and turns to seek solutions to problems. His journey twists and turns in the Mediterranean—and beyond. His strategy conquered Troy. He is a man who tried mightily—but failed—to bring his companions home, fools though they sometimes were.

Help me to tell the story of Odysseus, the great individualist and mastermind and man who feels pain deeply.

All other heroes of the Trojan War were home by now—or dead. Only Odysseus remained away from his home. Odysseus was kept captive by Calypso the sea-goddess.

Still, most gods and goddesses pitied Odysseus now, so long absent from his island kingdom: Ithaca. But Poseidon, the great ruler of the seas, did not pity Odysseus. No, Poseidon was still angry. Poseidon still wanted Odysseus to suffer, to stay away from home, to long to see his day of homecoming. But Poseidon was now absent, away on a visit to the Ethiopians.

Zeus, the king of gods and men, at home on Olympus among the gods and goddesses, spoke his mind about another homecoming: “Mortals have no shame, blaming the gods as they so often do for their own problems. Look at Aegisthus. Paris, Prince of Troy, visited Menelaus, King of Lacedaemon, and then ran away with his lawful wife, Helen, taking her to Troy. Angry, Menelaus and his older brother, Agamemnon, took hundreds of ships loaded with soldiers and fought a ten-year war to get Helen back. Clearly, pursuing another man’s wife is destructive, and Aegisthus should have realized that. But he didn’t, and he looked with desire at Clytemnestra, the lawful wife of Agamemnon. I even sent the messenger-god Hermes to tell him to leave Clytemnestra alone. Did he listen? No. Did he pay the penalty? Yes. Aegisthus killed Agamemnon when he returned home, and Agamemnon’s son, Orestes, kept anger in his heart. When Orestes became a young man, he exacted proper revenge and killed Aegisthus and avenged his father, exactly as a man ought to do.”

Athena, goddess of wisdom, sensing an opportunity to act and to help her favorite mortal, spoke to her father, Zeus, “Father, all you say is true. Aegisthus deserved what he got. He did the wrong thing, and he paid the proper penalty.

“But what about Odysseus? He has been cursed by fate. He is far from home, held captive on an island by Calypso. He longs to see his day of homecoming. He longs to see even the smoke of cooking fires rising from Ithaca. Is Odysseus your enemy? Has Odysseus shown you disrespect?”

Zeus replied to his favorite daughter, “No, Athena. Odysseus is not my enemy. Odysseus has never shown me disrespect. But Poseidon, the earth-shaking god of earthquakes and of the sea, hates Odysseus, who hurt his son, the one-eyed Cyclops Polyphemus. Poseidon knows that he cannot kill Odysseus—Odysseus is not fated to die just yet—but Poseidon knows that he can cause Odysseus great trouble and delay his day of homecoming.

“Still, Poseidon is gone now. So let us think together how we can help Odysseus to return home.”

“If you mean what you say,” Athena replied, “then send Hermes to Calypso to tell her that she must let Odysseus go free so he can attempt to return to Ithaca. I, meanwhile, will go to Ithaca, to see his son, Telemachus, and help him to grow up.

“I will put courage in Prince Telemachus’ heart. I will advise him to call an assembly and speak out against the suitors who are courting his mother—Odysseus’ wife, Penelope—even though Odysseus is still alive. I will advise him to speak out against the suitors who are treating him and his household badly, slaughtering his sheep, pigs, cows, and goats, partying on his property while showing him disrespect. I will also advise him to visit the mainland, to go to Pylos and Lacedaemon to seek news of his father.

“The son of a hero should also be a hero. It is time for Telemachus to stop being a boy and start being a man. Perhaps he will do a deed that will be remembered.”

Zeus agreed with her plan.

Athena armed herself with a spear and disguised herself as a mortal man: Mentos, lord of the Taphians. Then she flew—the gods and goddesses have that power—down to Odysseus’ palace on Ithaca to see Telemachus and the swaggering suitors for herself.

The suitors were behaving exactly as she had known they would. They were playing dice and drinking wine while servants heaped tables in Odysseus’ Great Hall with huge platters of meat—meat butchered from Telemachus’ own animals. Athena stood in the doorway, waiting to be noticed and hoping to be welcomed.

As all know, although not all act on their knowledge, strangers ought to be noticed and welcomed. What is the difference between a civilized society and an uncivilized society? A civilized society feeds the hungry. A civilized society takes care of the needs of guests. A civilized society treats strangers as guests. An uncivilized society does not do these things.

Of course, both host and guest must be civilized. The host must not rob or murder his guest. A guest must not rob or murder his host. A host must feed his guest, give the guest water to wash with, and give the guest a place to sleep. A guest must not run away with his host’s wife, as Paris, prince of Troy, did, and a guest must not stay too long, must not waste the property of his host, and must not treat his host with disrespect, as the suitors were doing to Telemachus.

The proper relationship between guest and host has a name: *xenia*. A civilized society is a society that observes *xenia*. An uncivilized society is a society that does not observe *xenia*.

Telemachus saw Athena, disguised as Mentès, first. She, of course, appeared as a mortal man and not as a goddess to him. Having been raised correctly, he went immediately to her, horrified that perhaps that she had been waiting a long time at the doorway for someone to notice her and to greet her. He shook her right hand, and then he took her spear, both to relieve her of her burden and to disarm her. Always, it is a good idea to disarm a guest until you are sure that the guest knows and observes *xenia* properly.

He led Athena into the Great Hall, put her spear on a rack filled with other spears, and then led her to a high seat of honor among the tables laden with platters piled high with meat. They sat together, a servant brought them water so they could wash their hands, and they ate. Only after they had eaten did Telemachus, who had been raised properly, ask her who she was. He hoped to learn, if he could, news of his father. The suitors, having feasted while ignoring Telemachus' guest, danced to the music of the bard Phemius, a man who, like many of the other servants in the palace, was forced to serve the suitors. Unfortunately, some servants were loyal to the suitors, not to Telemachus.

Telemachus unburdened himself to Athena: "Look at these young men! They party every day, eating food that does not belong to them and drinking wine that does not belong to them. Their days are filled with games and feasts and music. They take and take, and they give nothing in return. If only my father, Odysseus, were alive, they would run away from the palace as fast as they can. But my father is dead. He will never return to Ithaca. But tell me about yourself. What is your story?"

"My name is Mentès," Athena said. "I had heard that my friend of long ago, Odysseus, had returned to Ithaca, but I see that I was wrong. The gods must be preventing his return. I will tell you that you are wrong about the death of your father. I know that Odysseus is alive. No, I am not a prophet, but the gods sometimes speak to people who are not prophets. Your father will return to Ithaca soon. But tell me about yourself. What is your story? You certainly resemble your father."

"Odysseus is said to be my father," Telemachus said, "but sometimes I wonder if that is true. We can know for certain who our mother is, but does anyone truly know who is his father? I wish that my father were here, and yes, people say that Odysseus is my father."

"All will be well in the end," Athena said. "Penelope has given birth to a fine son. But what is going on in the palace? Anyone would think from all the food and wine that this is a wedding-feast, but the young men are not acting like guests at a wedding. Anyone would think that they are uncivilized delinquents rather than guests."

“They are courting my mother—against her will! She is the wife of a man whose white bones lie unburied somewhere,” Telemachus replied. “I wish my father had died among friends. If he had died at Troy, his friends would have raised a burial-mound for him and have properly mourned his death. If he had returned home to Ithaca and died, we would have raised a burial-mound for him and have properly mourned his death. But no, he died friendless and alone, far from home.

“The suitors are uncivilized. They waste all my possessions. They party all day. My mother does not know what to do. She does not know whether her husband is alive or dead, and therefore she does not know whether to remain faithful to a living husband or to seek a new husband because she is a widow. If Odysseus is alive, Penelope has a duty to remain faithful to him. If Odysseus is dead, Penelope ought to remarry. In the meantime, as we wait for reliable news about whether Odysseus is alive or dead, the suitors run wild. Someday, they will try to kill me to get me out of the way. There are over a hundred suitors. What can I do against so many?”

“The suitors are behaving shamefully,” Athena said, “but if they knew Odysseus, they would leave the palace quickly. I know Odysseus, and he would not allow the suitors to run wild. The last time I saw Odysseus, he was on a mission to get poison to put on the heads of his arrows. If that Odysseus were to return to Ithaca, the suitors would soon be dead.

“But Odysseus is not here. You, Telemachus, are here. Think. What can you do to rid your palace of the suitors? You are your father’s son, and you know your father would not permit such outrageous actions in his own palace.

“Listen to me. In the morning, call an assembly of the men on Ithaca. Speak out against the suitors. Let the other men know what the suitors are doing. They are running wild. They are uncivilized. They do not respect *xenia*. They take and take, and they give nothing in return. They produce nothing of value. They live only to eat and to produce human excrement.

“In the assembly, tell the suitors to leave your palace and to return to their own homes. Tell them that with the lords of Ithaca and the gods as your witnesses.

“As for your mother, let her act as she thinks best. If she thinks that she ought to remarry, let her return to the house of her father so that he can arrange a suitable marriage for her. A marriage with one of the suitors is not a suitable marriage—not when they act like this!

“Also, Telemachus, get a ship ready and journey to the mainland to seek news of your father. Perhaps you will hear something of value. First go to Pylos to consult Nestor, the wise old man of the Greek forces during the Trojan War. Then visit Lacedaemon, where Menelaus is king. See what, if anything, they know of your father.

“If you hear that Odysseus is still alive, then wait one more year for him to return.

“But if you hear definitively that he is dead, then return home, raise a burial-mound for him, and mourn him. Find a husband for your mother. And then take thought of how to kill the suitors. They will not leave willingly—not when they can party at no cost to themselves here. You

are not a boy any longer, so it is time for you to grow up. A beard is on your face, yet you are clinging to the ways of boyhood.

“Think of Orestes, a young man of your own age. Aegisthus killed Orestes’ father, so Orestes killed Aegisthus. For this righteous killing, Orestes has achieved renown throughout the world. If you succeed in killing the suitors, you also will achieve renown throughout the world.

“Telemachus, you are tall and handsome. Be brave, too. I must leave now and return to my ship, but think about and remember everything that I have advised you.”

A proper host, Telemachus replied, “I will. You have advised me the way a father would advise a son. But stay a while. Bathe, and then return to your ship bearing a gift from me to you. This is the way that *xenia* works.”

Athena, pleased with Telemachus, replied, “No, I must be going now. But I will return. Keep the gift until I return.”

Then Athena, shape-shifter extraordinaire, turned herself into a bird and flew away, letting Telemachus know that he had been honored with a visit from the goddess Athena.

Meanwhile, in the Great Hall, Phemius the bard sang of the Homecomings of Heroes from the Trojan War, a song that did not include the homecoming of Odysseus, whom Calypso was holding captive on an island.

In her quarters, Penelope heard the song of the bard and wondered whether she was a widow or a wife. If she was a widow, her society demanded that she remarry and go to live with her new husband, turning over the palace to Telemachus. But if she was a wife with a living husband, her society demanded that she remain faithful to Odysseus and stay on Ithaca to preserve his property as much as she was able to.

Upset by the bard’s song, Penelope went to the Great Hall, accompanied by two serving-women. Ever-prudent Penelope would never appear before men she was not related to without serving-women to accompany her.

“Phemius!” she cried. “Stop singing that song! It breaks my heart, knowing that Odysseus has not returned home although twenty years have passed. I need my husband here—now.”

Telemachus spoke up, “Don’t blame the bard for Odysseus’ absence. So many warriors failed to return home from Troy. Let the bard sing. Go back to your quarters and attend to your work. I will look after things here.”

Telemachus disliked his mother’s appearing before the suitors, although she never appeared before them alone. Wild young men who drink and party are dangerous.

Penelope obeyed her son. She wanted him to grow up, become a man, and take command. In ancient Greece, women obeyed men. She left the Great Hall, and in her quarters, she wept for Odysseus.

In the Great Hall, the suitors spoke—loudly—about Penelope’s beauty, and about how they wanted to go to bed with her.

Telemachus spoke to the suitors, “In the morning, I will call a council of all the men of Ithaca. You suitors who wish to marry my mother—although she is unwilling to remarry—must leave my palace and return to your own homes. You take and take, but you never give. Go to your own homes and devour your own possessions! Enough! I pray to Zeus that all of you will receive justice—justice of a kind that will make you regret what you have done to my possessions.”

The suitors were shocked. Telemachus had never spoken to them with such daring before.

Antinous, one of the leaders of the suitors, spoke up: “Telemachus, you must have received encouragement from a god, if such a thing were possible. Otherwise, you would not dare to talk to us in such a way. Still, I doubt that you will ever be crowned King of Ithaca.”

“If the crown ever comes to me, so be it,” Telemachus replied. “Father Zeus can award the crown to whomever he desires. Still, many princes are on Ithaca, and one of them may hold the crown, now that Odysseus is dead. But whether I ever become King of Ithaca, I intend to be king of my own palace. Odysseus won this property for me, and I intend to keep it.”

Eurymachus, the other leader of the suitors, countered, “All of this lies in the hands of the gods, but yes, of course, by all means you are the ruler here. I would be a hypocrite if I were to say anything but the truth. But who was your guest just now, the one who left so quickly? Did he bring news of your father?”

“My father will never return to Ithaca,” Telemachus said. “I no longer listen to the rumors that are spread by strangers, although my mother insists on questioning them. But the guest was Mentos, a man who is a friend to my family from long ago.” However, Telemachus knew that his guest had been the goddess Athena, not a mortal man.

The suitors resumed their partying, and then, late at night, they left the palace until the following morning.

Telemachus prepared for bed. An aged servant named Eurycleia, whom Laertes, Telemachus’ grandfather, had bought when she was young and pretty, but had never bedded because he did not want to upset his wife, lit his way with a torch. That night, Telemachus did not sleep, but lay awake, thinking over everything that Athena had said to him.

Chapter 2: Telemachus Calls a Council and Sets Sail (Odyssey)

In the morning, Telemachus arose and sent out heralds to summon the men of Ithaca to a council—the first called since Odysseus had left to fight at Troy twenty years ago.

The men arrived quickly—and so did the suitors.

The people at the council could easily be divided into two groups. One group consisted of the aged: men who had been too old to fight in the Trojan War twenty years ago, and who were very old now. The other group consisted of young men: Telemachus, and the suitors, many of whom were a few years older than he.

No middle-aged men were here. The men who would have been middle-aged now had gone to Troy with Odysseus, and they had perished either fighting there or trying to return home after the war. In addition, few fathers were present. Mostly, sons and grandfathers were present. Most of the fathers had left Ithaca to go with Odysseus to Troy and had died.

A generation of very old men, and a generation of very young men who had grown up without fathers to teach them the correct way to behave, attended the council.

Telemachus looked like a magnificent young man. Even now, Athena was looking after him. In the guise of a mature father figure named Mentos, she had encouraged Telemachus to take steps to grow up. He had taken the first step and called the council, so Athena, shape-shifter extraordinaire, rewarded him by making him taller, stronger, and more handsome.

But first to speak was an old man named Aegyptius. Old men should always be respected and listened to. He had four sons. One had gone to Troy with Odysseus and had died, two worked hard on their father's farm, and one, despite his father's best efforts, ran wild with the other suitors.

Aegyptius spoke up: "Who has called the council, and for what purpose? Is an attack imminent? Is a crisis underway? Let the man speak, and may Zeus be with him."

May Zeus be with him—these are lucky words, Telemachus thought.

Telemachus spoke up, addressing his first words to Aegyptius to show respect: "I called the council. No attack is imminent. No public crisis is underway. Instead, the crisis is in my palace. My father—my protector—is dead. And now my palace is besieged with suitors who take and take and never give. They claim to woo my mother, but they do it against her will, and not in the proper way. They should go to her father and talk to him, making a case for being a good husband and a good son-in-law. They should give gifts to Penelope. Penelope's father should choose the best man for her to marry. But the suitors don't do that. Instead, they infest my palace. They drink my wine, and they slaughter my sheep, pigs, cows, and goats to fuel their feasts. Tell the suitors

to leave my palace. They are not respecting *xenia*, and they are not respecting the gods who wish *xenia* to be properly observed. I am just a boy, and my father is dead. I have never been a warrior, and I cannot fight off over one hundred suitors.”

Telemachus was so angry that he started crying. Heroes of the ancient world sometimes cried. Even Achilles, the greatest warrior of the Trojan War, cried. The old men of the council pitied Telemachus, but Antinous, one of the leaders of the suitors, spoke up first:

“Don’t blame the suitors for your problems, Telemachus. Instead, blame your mother. For nearly four years, I and the other suitors have been courting her, and she has been lying to us, leading us on. Her most recent trick was to set up a loom and say that she intended to weave a shroud for her father-in-law, old Laertes, in preparation for the day he dies. For three years, she led us on, promising to marry one of us once the weaving was done. By day, she would weave the shroud. By night, she would unweave what she had woven. Finally, one of her serving-women told us what she was doing. We caught her in the act of unweaving the shroud. We forced her to finish it.

“So, Telemachus, let us give *you* advice. Tell her to marry one of us, whomever she chooses. Until she does, we will continue to court her, to drink your wine, and to slaughter your animals to fuel the feasts we eat in your palace. If she refuses to marry us, her good reputation for remaining faithful to Odysseus will grow, but your possessions will diminish. We suitors have no intention of leaving your palace until Penelope remarries.”

“What you ask is unreasonable,” Telemachus replied. “I will not make my mother remarry. To do that I would have to force her out of the palace and give her back to her father. I am not going to do that to the mother who raised me. Instead, you and the other suitors must leave my palace. Find somewhere else to feast! Devour your own animals! Respect the gods who decree that *xenia* should be followed! I pray to Zeus that you be punished for all you have done!”

Zeus, the god of *xenia*, heard Telemachus, and sent him a bird-sign: Two eagles glided down to just above the council, they fought, and they flew away to the right—the lucky side.

A bird-sign is an omen, yes, but a seer must interpret omens.

Just such a seer was present in the council. Halitherses, old warrior and reliable seer, spoke up, “Men of Ithaca, listen to me. Suitors of Penelope, this especially concerns you. Odysseus is not dead. He is somewhere near, and he is plotting bloody vengeance against the suitors. It’s best for us old men to find a way to stop the suitors from besieging Odysseus’ palace—or for the suitors to stop on their own. When Odysseus left for Troy, I prophesized that twenty years would pass before he returned home. The twenty years are over, and now, just as I predicted, he is returning home.”

Now Eurymachus, the other leader of the suitors, spoke up, making clear his intentions and the intentions of all the suitors: “Shut up, old man, old seer, old prophet. Birds are common, and

not every bird bears a message from Zeus. I know more than you do. What do I know? I know that Odysseus is dead and that he will never return to Ithaca—and I wish that you were dead, too. Unless you keep your ‘prophecies’ to yourself and stop trying to incite the boy against us, we suitors will force you to pay for your actions with a heavy fine.

“And let me say this in public to Telemachus. Force your mother to return to her father so that he can marry her off. Unless she does, we will continue to act as we have always acted, taking and taking and never giving. And why shouldn’t we? Is there anyone for us suitors to be afraid of? We certainly are not afraid of Telemachus, a whiny little mama’s boy! We also are not afraid of prophecies, of seers, and dare I say it—I do!—of the gods who put prophecies in the seers’ mouths. We will continue to woo Penelope and to feast in Odysseus’ palace.”

Telemachus said to Eurymachus, “The gods and the men of Ithaca know how you and the other suitors are acting. Now I intend to sail to the mainland with a ship and twenty crewmembers. I sail in search of news of my father. If I hear that Odysseus is still alive, then I will wait for one more year for him to return. If I hear definitively that he is dead, then I will return home, build a burial-mound for him, and mourn him. I will also find a husband for my mother.”

Mentor, another old man of Ithaca, spoke up against the suitors: “Men of Ithaca, we remember Odysseus as a good and a wise king. His son and his possessions should be treated with respect. I do not envy the suitors with all their partying. They do not think that Odysseus will ever return home. They do not think that they will ever have to face justice and pay for the crimes they have committed. But can’t we do something? We are old, and we are few. The suitors are young, and they are many. Still, must we old men be silent?”

A third suitor, Leocritus, spoke out: “Mentor and you other old men of Ithaca, don’t try to fight us. You would lose. Even if Odysseus with all of his armed men were to return to Ithaca, Penelope would get no joy from him. Instead, we suitors would quickly kill Odysseus and all of his armed men. Let the council end now. You can do nothing to stop us.”

The council ended. The old men went to their homes, and the suitors went to Telemachus’ palace.

Calling the council had failed to remove the suitors from the palace. The mature men of Ithaca were too old to help Telemachus remove them.

Still, Telemachus had succeeded in making known his objections to how the suitors were acting. No one could now say that he had never objected to the suitors’ actions. The old men of Ithaca now knew how bad things were in Odysseus’ palace. They had heard rumors, yes, but rumors can be false. Now they knew that the worst rumors were true.

Telemachus walked along the beach and prayed, “Athena, thank you for appearing to me and giving me advice, but look at what is happening! The suitors ignore my wishes!”

Athena heard the prayer and appeared. This time she assumed the shape of wise old Mentor, and again she advised Telemachus: “You have good blood in you, and I think you have your father’s spirit. Your father was a brave man, and you can be a brave man as well. The suitors are running wild, and they will pay with their blood for what they have done and are doing. But you have a journey to make. Go back to the palace and keep an eye on the suitors. But quietly get ready provisions for your journey: wine and barley-meal. I will arrange for you to use a ship with twenty crewmembers.”

Telemachus returned to the palace, and the suitors, as usual, were slaughtering his sheep, pigs, cows, and goats, preparing to feast and to party.

Antinous, hoping that Telemachus was now the boy of old after his brief rebellion of calling and speaking out at the council, grabbed his hand and did not let go, saying to him, “Telemachus, young person, feast with us and drink with us. We will give you whatever you need. You say that you want a ship with twenty crewmembers? We’ll arrange that for you.”

Indeed we will, Antinous thought. That way, the twenty crewmembers can keep an eye on you so that you don’t become a danger to us.

“How can I enjoy the feast now that I have grown up?” Telemachus asked. “When I was young, you moved into the palace. I was too young to realize what you were doing and how badly you were acting. But now I have grown up. How can I enjoy you wasting my possessions and giving nothing in return? But yes, I will go in a ship to the mainland—as a passenger. Obviously, you are not going to allow me to be the master of the ship.”

Let him think that I will allow the suitors to provide me with a ship, Telemachus thought. I will be gone before they discover that they have been deceived.

Telemachus withdrew his hand from Antinous’ grasp and walked away.

The suitors began to talk about him.

One suitor said, “He’s starting to think deep, dark thoughts about us. Why does he want to go to the mainland? Perhaps he wants to hire mercenaries to kill us. Or maybe he wants to get poison to slip into the wine we drink.”

“This can work to our advantage,” another suitor said. “His father drowned while on a voyage, so why can’t Telemachus drown while he is on his voyage? That way, when one of us marries Penelope, we can also divide Telemachus’ goods—he won’t be needing them!”

Meanwhile, Telemachus and Eurycleia, an aged and loyal servant, went to Odysseus’ storeroom, and Telemachus told her his plan to visit the mainland and ordered her to prepare wine and barley-meal for him to take on his journey.

His plan shocked Eurycleia: “Why must you go to the mainland to seek news of your father? Won’t the suitors seize their opportunity and kill you? Shouldn’t you stay here to guard your possessions?”

“I have the help of the gods,” Telemachus replied, “but promise me that you won’t tell my mother that I am gone—at least not until ten or twelve days have passed. She won’t miss me. She will think that I have gone to visit one of the farms. Perhaps she will think that I have gone to visit old Laertes, my grandfather.”

Eurycleia promised, making a vow to the gods that she would not tell Penelope. The provisions having been prepared, Telemachus returned to the Great Hall and the suitors.

Meanwhile, Athena—disguised this time as Telemachus himself—arranged for twenty crewmembers, and she borrowed the use of a ship from Noëmon. Telling all the crewmembers to go to the ship at nightfall, she made sure that all was prepared. She then went to Odysseus’ palace and—as the gods can do—made the suitors sleepy. The suitors left the palace to find their beds, and Athena, who now appeared in the form of Mentor, told Telemachus, “The ship is ready.”

They went to the ship, and Telemachus assumed command, giving orders to his friends, “Let’s load the ship with provisions from my storeroom. No one except for one servant knows of the journey we will make. Not even my mother knows.”

They loaded up the ship and set sail. With the sails filled with wind, they drank wine, but first they poured out an offering to honor Athena. All night the ship sailed.

Chapter 3: Telemachus and King Nestor (Odyssey)

At dawn, the ship pulled into the harbor of Pylos.

On shore, King Nestor and his people were sacrificing bulls to the gods and preparing a feast. One time that people in ancient Greece could legitimately enjoy a feast was during a sacrifice to the gods. King Nestor, who was both old and wise, understood the rules of feasting and of *xenia*.

The men on the ship got onto shore, Telemachus last of all. This displeased Athena, who was still disguised as Mentor: “Telemachus, you are the leader of this expedition. Act like it! Don’t bring up the rear! Lead! You undertook this expedition in order to discover news of your father, so now go to King Nestor and seek the information you desire.”

King Nestor was a good person to ask about Odysseus. He had served in the Trojan War with Odysseus and knew him well. Even then, King Nestor was too old to fight, but he shared his wisdom with Agamemnon, leader of the Greek forces.

Telemachus, still timid, still hung back.

“How can I approach King Nestor? I am so young, and he is so worthy of respect.”

“Speak, and the gods will give you the right words,” Athena answered.

Athena led the way to King Nestor, while Telemachus followed her.

King Nestor saw them—strangers—approaching, and so did Pisistratus, his young son. Both King Nestor and his son understood the rules of *xenia*. Pisistratus reached the strangers first. Having been raised correctly, he welcomed them. He held their hands and led them to the feast and asked them to sit down and refresh themselves. He also gave them wine to pour as a sacrifice to Poseidon, being careful to give wine to the older man first.

“Say a prayer to the sea-god Poseidon,” Pisistratus invited them. “The feast you see is in honor of him. And pour an offering of wine to honor the god.”

Athena was pleased with the actions of Pisistratus. He knew how to treat an older man such as Mentor, and he knew how to welcome strangers and how to respect the gods. Athena also knew how to act correctly. She prayed to Poseidon, “Great sea-god, please grant our prayers. First reward King Nestor and the Pylians for the sacrifice that they have made to you. Then allow Telemachus and myself safe passage home again.”

Telemachus also poured an offering of wine to Poseidon, and then everyone feasted. After everyone had eaten and drunk their fill, King Nestor knew that it was the proper time for conversation, so he asked, “Friends, who are you and why are you travelling?”

Telemachus remembered the encouragement that Athena had given him to speak to King Nestor, so he answered, “We come from Ithaca, and we seek information about my father,

Odysseus, with whom you fought at Troy. No one knows where he is buried. Can you tell me how and where he died?”

“Troy was a hardship for all of us,” King Nestor said. “So many people fought and died there. Great Ajax is buried there. So is Achilles. So is Patroclus. So is my own son Antilochus.

“Your father and I never quarreled, never disagreed. Your way of speaking is just like his. Your father, cunning mastermind, conquered Troy, but Zeus and the gods prepared hardships for many Greeks as they attempted to return home. Agamemnon and his brother, Menelaus, quarreled about what to do. Menelaus wished to return home right away, but Agamemnon wished to first offer a sacrifice to Athena. Half of the Greeks followed the advice of Menelaus and left at dawn; half of the Greeks followed the advice of Agamemnon and stayed to offer a sacrifice to Athena.

“Menelaus, Diomedes, and I left at dawn, eager to return home. Diomedes and I made the journey safely, but many of the others did not, as I have learned from the news of travelers to Pylos. True, the Myrmidons of Achilles made it home safely, as did Philoctetes the master archer. So did King Idomeneus of Crete. But Agamemnon was killed by his wife’s lover, Aegisthus, when he left Troy and returned to Mycenae. But Agamemnon’s son, Orestes, won renown throughout the world by killing the murderer of his father.”

“How true,” Telemachus said. “Orestes will always be remembered. I wish that the gods would help me to earn such renown. I wish that the gods would help me to get rid of the suitors who besiege my palace.”

“I have heard news of the suitors,” Nestor replied. “Why is this happening? Do you willingly allow yourself to be bullied? Or are the gods against you? Do they cause the people of Ithaca to despise you?”

Nestor thought, *Orestes won renown by killing the murderer of his father. You, Telemachus, can also win great renown by ridding your palace of the suitors, killing them all if necessary.*

Nestor continued, “Odysseus may perhaps return someday, either alone or with an army. Let’s hope that Athena is on your side. She helped Odysseus immensely throughout the Trojan War. Goddesses seldom show such favoritism toward a mortal. With her on your side, you could rid your palace of the suitors.”

“I would love for those things to happen,” said Telemachus, “but Odysseus will never return, and I cannot rid my palace of the suitors, even if the gods should help me.”

Insulted, Athena, who was still disguised as Mentor, said sharply, “The gods are much more powerful than you think, Telemachus. Don’t be a fool! It is better for Odysseus to return home years late than to be like Agamemnon, who quickly returned home and quickly was murdered. The gods are very powerful, but even the gods cannot stop a mortal’s fated day of death.”

“Mentor,” Telemachus said, “let us not speak of Odysseus. He has been dead for a long time. But I wish to ask King Nestor, who is so wise, something else: What are the details

of Agamemnon's death? Was Menelaus present? How did Aegisthus manage to murder Agamemnon?"

"Menelaus was not present," King Nestor replied. "If Menelaus had found Aegisthus alive in the palace of Agamemnon, he—not Orestes—would have killed him. He also would have fed Aegisthus' corpse to the dogs and the birds, not allowing Aegisthus' soul to travel to the Land of the Dead until a hundred years had passed.

"Aegisthus wooed Agamemnon's wife, Clytemnestra, and he succeeded in seducing her, even though Agamemnon had left behind a bard to guard her. Aegisthus got rid of the bard, marooning him on an island, and Clytemnestra moved into Aegisthus' palace.

"Menelaus was delayed during his journey when his pilot, Phrontus, died. He stayed behind at Sounion to bury him, and when he resumed his journey home, he was driven off course. A hurricane split his fleet in two, and Menelaus and five ships landed on Egypt. Away from home he stayed, amassing wealth.

"Aegisthus killed Agamemnon, and then he ruled—badly—as King of Mycenae for seven years before Orestes, having grown up, killed him, avenging the murder of his father. Orestes then buried both Aegisthus and his mother on the same day that Menelaus sailed into the port of Mycenae.

"Telemachus, learn from this story. Don't stay away from your home too long. Be present so that you can protect your possessions. However, I advise you to visit Menelaus and ask him for news of your father. If you wish, I can lend you a chariot and horses to visit him, and I can send my son with you as a guide."

Athena praised the old king: "Thank you for a well-told story. Now let us pour wine for Poseidon and then think of sleep."

They poured the wine, and Nestor, a good host, wanted them to stay with him, not return to their ship: "Stay here with me. It is not right for Telemachus to sleep on the deck of a ship, not when I have plenty of rugs and blankets with which to make beds."

Athena replied, "That's a good idea. Let Telemachus stay here, but I will return to the ship and sleep there and make sure that things are OK. I'm the oldest—all the crewmembers are the same age as Telemachus. At dawn, I'll visit the Cauconians while Telemachus pays a visit to Menelaus, with the loan of your chariot and with your son as his guide."

Athena then changed herself into a bird and flew away, amazing all who saw her. Gladdened, King Nestor told Telemachus, "The gods are protecting you. This was Athena, the bright-eyed goddess."

He then prayed to Athena, "Please bless us. Please bless me, my children, and my wife. I will sacrifice to you a heifer whose horns have been wrapped with gold."

They shared a drink and went to their beds to sleep.

Nestor thought about Telemachus, *He has the protection of the gods, but his situation with the suitors is still very bad. I wish I could help him fight the suitors and drive them from his palace. But I am too old, and Pisistratus, my son, is too young and inexperienced to help him. Antilochus, my one son who would be of the proper age and who would have the proper experience to help him, lies buried on the plain before Troy.*

The next morning, King Nestor issued orders. He had promised Athena a sacrifice of a heifer whose horns had been wrapped with gold, and he kept his word, ordering the sacrifice, and he requested that most of Telemachus' crewmembers attend the sacrifice—but two crewmembers needed to stay behind to guard the ship. Athena also attended the sacrifice.

As the heifer was being sacrificed, Polycaste, the youngest daughter of King Nestor, bathed Telemachus in accordance with the ancient custom, making the guest comfortable and showing him proper *xenia*.

Following the feast, King Nestor ordered that a chariot and a team of horses be brought to them. He also ordered that provisions for the journey of Telemachus and Pisistratus be stowed away in the chariot.

Telemachus and Pisistratus rode all day, stayed with the good host Diocles that night, and rode again in the morning and reached Lacedaemon, home of King Menelaus and of Helen, at dusk.

Chapter 4: Telemachus, King Menelaus, and Helen (Odyssey)

In Lacedaemon, King Menelaus and his people were celebrating a double wedding. One of the times that people in ancient Greece could legitimately enjoy a feast was during the celebration of a wedding.

Menelaus and Helen's daughter, Hermione, was being sent to Neoptolemus, the son of Achilles. They would be man and wife in the land of the Myrmidons. Menelaus' son, Megapenthes, whose mother was one of Menelaus' slaves, was marrying the daughter of Alector of Sparta.

All were enjoying the feast and the music and the dance when Pisistratus and Telemachus drove up in the chariot, then stopped and looked at the palace in awe.

Eteoneus, aide-in-arms to Menelaus, reported to the king, "Strangers are in the courtyard. Should I offer them hospitality, or should I send them on to someone who has leisure to attend to them?"

"Don't be a fool, Eteoneus," Menelaus said. "You and I have enjoyed hospitality as we traveled the Mediterranean. Now it is our turn—and our civilized duty—to offer hospitality to other people. Invite the strangers in, make them comfortable, and let them enjoy the feast."

Eteoneus and servants attended to the strangers, and to the strangers' team of horses. Telemachus and Pisistratus entered the palace, marveling at all they saw. Women bathed them in accordance with the ancient custom, and Telemachus and Pisistratus sat by Menelaus, who said to them, "Enjoy the feast, and then tell me who you are. No doubt you are the sons of kings. Anyone could tell that by looking at you."

Menelaus then gave them good cuts of tender meat, the cuts that he himself had been served. As they ate, Telemachus whispered to Pisistratus, "Just look at the palace—lots of gold, amber, silver, ivory, and bronze. The halls of Zeus on Mount Olympus must look like this."

Menelaus overheard him, and he said, "The palace of no mortal man can rival that of Zeus, but the palaces of few mortal men can rival my palace. I have wandered for eight years around the Mediterranean, visiting Cyprus, Phoenicia, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Libya.

"While traveling, I made a fortune, but at home someone killed Agamemnon, my brother. I have undergone hardships, as have those who fought for me in the Trojan War. I wish that I had stayed here—even after Paris had stolen two-thirds of my wealth—and never had gone to Troy. That way, those who died fighting for me during the Trojan War would still be alive, as would my brother.

“I mourn for many men who died for me, but for no one as much as I do Odysseus. No one labored more mightily for me, and his days ended in suffering. And how much must others suffer who mourn him: Laertes, his father; Penelope, his wife; and Telemachus, who was just an infant when his father left to fight at Troy.”

Hearing this, Telemachus wept, and Menelaus recognized who his visitor must be. He hesitated, not knowing whether to call the prince by name or to let him introduce himself.

Helen entered the room, immediately recognized who Telemachus must be, and did not hesitate, but said, “I have never seen anyone resemble Odysseus more. This young man must be Telemachus, son of the man who fought at Troy to return me, where that I was then, to you.”

Menelaus replied, “I think you are correct, dear. I too see the resemblance, and just now when I mentioned Odysseus, this young man started crying.”

Pisistratus said, “You are right. He is Telemachus, the son of Odysseus. We are delighted to speak to you, a man who is like a god. Nestor sent me with him to be his escort as he consulted you about his father. With Odysseus gone, he has no man to defend him and his possessions.”

“It’s wonderful to have the son of my friend as a guest,” Menelaus replied. “Odysseus and I spent years fighting together at Troy. We have a bond, and I would give him a city. Unfortunately, the gods have denied him his day of homecoming.”

All grieved. Telemachus grieved for his father. Menelaus grieved for the men who had suffered for him. Helen wept. Pisistratus wept, thinking of Antilochus, his brother who lay buried on the plain of Troy.

Thinking of Antilochus, Pisistratus said, “My father, Nestor, has always spoken highly of you, Menelaus. So now, can we please speak of something else? I prefer not to cry while eating a meal. It’s not that I think we should not grieve over the warriors who fell at Troy. I myself lost a brother there: Antilochus, a fast runner and a mighty warrior.”

“Well spoken,” Menelaus said. “You speak with the wisdom that is normally given only to the old. You are like your father—you have his wisdom in words. Zeus has blessed Nestor, who grows old in comfort at home, surrounded by family. Come, let us finish eating, and let us drink. Tomorrow, Telemachus can talk about his father.”

So much sorrow was in the house. To dispel the sorrow, Helen mixed a drug in the wine. The drug was called heart’s-ease, and she had learned about it in Egypt. Anyone who drank wine in which the drug had been mixed would feel no sorrow—not even if his family died, not even if an enemy murdered his family in front of him.

It’s good that I know about this drug, Helen thought to herself. It will make this meeting happier. And, of course, it comes in handy to keep my husband under control when he grieves for all the men lost at Troy and wonders if all that suffering and death was worthwhile just to get me back.

Helen brought the wine, they drank, and Helen said, “Menelaus, guests, let us dine and drink and tell old stories to each other. I remember when Odysseus disguised himself and snuck into Troy to spy. He had disguised himself in rags, and he even whipped his own body to make the blood run and make it seem like he had led a hard, abused life. Wearing rags, he came into Troy, and everybody thought that he was just another beggar. He no longer resembled the king and warrior who camped before Troy with all the other Greeks. I was the only one who recognized him. I took him to my apartment, I gave him a bath, and I gave him good clothing to wear and took away the filthy rags that he had used to disguise himself. I also made him tell me the plot of the Greeks. He left my apartment, and he made his way to the gate of Troy, killing Trojans as he went. The Trojan women grieved, but I was glad. By then, I was on the side of the Greeks, and I regretted leaving my husband and infant daughter and coming to Troy with Paris.”

Did you really? Menelaus thought, even though he was under the influence of the drug. *Did you take Odysseus to your apartment to keep him from spying among the Trojans? And why did Odysseus kill so many Trojans as he made his way to the gate of Troy? Was he forced to kill them because you bathed him and gave him fine clothing and totally destroyed his disguise? Was he forced to fight for his life because now the Trojan warriors were able to recognize him? Were you trying to get him killed? And what did you do with the information that you say Odysseus told you about the Greeks’ plan?*

“Your story is well told, Helen,” Menelaus said. “I also have a story to tell. What a mastermind Odysseus was! What courage he had! He came up with the idea of the Trojan Horse, and he and I were among the warriors who hid in the horse when the Greek army left the horse behind and pretended to sail back home. That night, with the horse inside Troy, you and your newest husband, Deiphobus, whom you married after Paris died, visited the horse. You circled the horse three times, mimicking the voices of the wives of the men inside the horse, trying to get them to call out and reveal themselves to the Trojan warriors. Odysseus is the man who saved us. Odysseus is the man who told us that our wives were not outside, that they were not in Troy. All listened to Odysseus and kept quiet except for Anticlus. When you mimicked his wife’s name, he started to cry out, but Odysseus put his hands over Anticlus’ mouth and saved our lives.”

Menelaus thought, *Yes, Helen, you told a good story in which you want us to believe that you helped Odysseus, but I know better. I remember when you tried to get us all killed.*

Telemachus was aware of the tension between Menelaus and Helen. Hoping to prevent a fight between husband and wife, he said, “Thank you for the story about my father, Menelaus, but even his great courage could not prevent his death. It’s time for bed. It’s time to enjoy sleep.”

Telemachus’ tactic worked. Helen ordered her serving-women to make up beds for Telemachus and Pisistratus, and all slept.

The next morning, Menelaus asked Telemachus, “How may I help you? Why have you journeyed to see me?”

“I came to seek information about my father,” Telemachus replied. “My palace is overrun by suitors who court my mother against her will and who slaughter my sheep, pigs, cows, and goats, feasting every day while giving nothing in return. I hope that you can give me definitive news about my father, whether the news is good or bad. If you know that he is dead, tell me. Perhaps you even saw him die. Tell me the truth.”

“The suitors don’t know what they are doing,” Menelaus said. “They want to crawl into Odysseus’ bed, but they don’t realize what kind of man he was. Should he return home, he will slaughter them all.

“But let me tell you what I know. I was on an island off the coast of Egypt, still eager to return home but having little luck. The winds were not blowing, and we could not sail. Twenty days had passed, and we were running out of food. Fortunately, Eidothea, the immortal daughter of the Old Man of the Sea, pitied me, and she told me how I could get home, and how I could get information.

“She said to me, ‘My father always takes a nap among the seals each day. He counts each seal, and then he lies down and sleeps. You and three men grab him while he is asleep and hold on to him. He is a shape-shifter extraordinaire and will transform himself into many shapes, but hold on to him. When he stops shape-shifting and has assumed his own true shape, then he will answer any questions you have.’

“We did as she advised. That morning, three trusted men and I went to the place where the seals gathered. Eidothea was waiting for us with four sealskins. The stench was overwhelming, but she daubed sweet-smelling ambrosia—the food of the gods—under our noses, and so we did not smell the stench. Just as she said, the Old Man of the Sea came on shore, counted the seals, and lay down for a nap.

“We grabbed him, and we hung on although he turned himself into a snake, a panther, a boar, and even moving water. Tired, the Old Man of the Sea resumed his real shape and asked me, ‘What do you want, Menelaus?’

“I replied, ‘I want to know how to return home. Apparently, one of the gods is against me and prevents my homecoming. Tell me what I have to do to return home again.’

“The Old Man of the Sea told me, ‘You left Egypt without first making a sacrifice to Zeus and the other gods. You will never make it home until you return to Egypt and make a sacrifice.’

“Bad news for me: another delay before I returned home. But at least I would return home. I then asked him, ‘What about the other Greeks? Did they make it home safely? Or have some of them died—did any drown on their way home, or did any die after reaching home?’

“The Old Man of the Sea replied, ‘Do you really want to know such bad news? You know who died while fighting at Troy. Two more died while returning home or after reaching home. And one more has not returned home, but is being held captive.

“Little Ajax died while journeying home. A storm arose, his ship broke into pieces, but he made it to a rock, hanging onto it and boasting that he had survived despite the fury of the gods that had been directed against him. Poseidon heard that boast, and he used his trident to split the rock that Little Ajax was clinging to. Little Ajax fell into the sea and drowned.

“And what about your brother? Agamemnon did not drown on his way home, but he met his death nevertheless. Agamemnon reached home and rejoiced, but a watchman saw him and sent news of his return to Aegisthus. Aegisthus had planned ahead. Knowing that Agamemnon would return home, he gave a watchman two bars of gold to look for Agamemnon. Now, after an entire year of staying alert, the watchman saw Agamemnon’s day of homecoming.

“Alerted by the watchman, Aegisthus set a trap for Agamemnon. Aegisthus hid twenty armed men in his palace and he ordered a feast to be prepared for the returning king. Agamemnon sat down to eat, and Aegisthus and his twenty armed men slaughtered him and all of Agamemnon’s men.’

“So the Old Man of the Sea told me how my brother had died. I wept,” Menelaus said. “The Old Man of the Sea then said, ‘No more weeping, Menelaus. Go to Egypt, make the sacrifice, and then hurry home! You may be able to avenge Agamemnon’s murder—if his son, Orestes, has not already done that. At the least, you will be able to attend the funeral of Aegisthus.’

“I then asked the Old Man of the Sea about the hero who was being held captive, unable to see his day of homecoming.

“That man is Odysseus,’ the Old Man of the Sea told me. ‘I saw him on the island of the sea-nymph Calypso, crying and longing for his day of homecoming. Calypso keeps him captive and will not allow him to leave. He has no ships, no men. He has no way to return home.

“But you, Menelaus, have no such fate. You will return home, and when it is time for you to cease living in your country, you will go to the Elysium Fields, where life after death is easy. You are married to Helen, and so you are Zeus’ son-in-law; therefore, ease awaits you.’

“I followed the advice of the Old Man of the Sea,” Menelaus said. “I returned to Egypt, and I sacrificed to the gods. There I made a burial-mound for Agamemnon. After stopping at Mycenae and seeing Orestes, I returned home with Helen.

“But, Telemachus, stay here for ten or twelve days. When you leave, I will give you gifts: three stallions, a chariot, and a precious cup for you to use in pouring offerings to the gods.”

Tactfully, Telemachus replied, “I would be willing to stay with you—even an entire year!—to hear your stories, but I must return home. I left my crewmembers in Pylos, and they will wonder

about me. As for the gifts, simply give me a keepsake to remember you by. I can't use those horses. Here the land is level, but Ithaca is hilly. It's much better land for goats than for horses."

Menelaus thought, *Yes, I can understand why you wish to leave early. The suitors are ruining your possessions, and you need to return to keep an eye on them. I wish I could help you, but I have not been home long after years of warfare and of wandering, and there is no way in Hell that I am leaving Helen alone.*

"You speak well," Menelaus said. "I can understand that horses are of no use on Ithaca, so I will change the gifts. I will give you a mixing-bowl that is a work of art. It is silver with a rim of gold, and Hephaestus, the blacksmith god, created it himself."

As they talked, Menelaus' servants prepared dinner, and back at Odysseus' palace on Ithaca, the suitors played games, throwing spears and a discus, and enjoyed themselves. But the ringleaders of the suitors, Eurymachus and Antinous, strongest of the bunch, sat by themselves and did not participate in the games.

Noëmon, one of the young men on Ithaca, walked up to Eurymachus and Antinous and asked, "Do you know when Telemachus will return? I lent him my ship, but now I want to go to the mainland, where I have some horses suckling young mules. I want to bring a mule home and break him for work on the farm."

Eurymachus and Antinous were shocked. True, Telemachus had not been around for a few days, but they had assumed that he was visiting his grandfather or one of his farms. They had not dreamed that Telemachus would have enough initiative to go to the mainland.

Antinous asked Noëmon, "When did Telemachus go, and who went with him?"

Noëmon replied, "He left days ago, and the best young men of Ithaca went with him as his crew. Mentor also went with him. At least he looked like Mentor. But I saw Mentor recently, so he can't have gone to the mainland. A god must have gone with Telemachus."

Noëmon left, and the suitors gathered together. Antinous, furious, said, "Telemachus is becoming a danger to us. Why did he go to the mainland? Is he trying to gather armed men to force us out of his palace? We must kill him before he kills us. Give me a ship and twenty armed men, and when he returns home, we will sail out to meet him and kill him and his crew. His father is dead, and soon he will be dead."

All of the suitors—no exceptions—approved the plan.

Medon the herald overheard the plot. Loyal to Penelope and Telemachus, he hurried to tell Penelope what he had heard.

Seeing him come toward her, Penelope said to him, "Why are you coming to see me? Have the suitors ordered you to tell me to order the serving-women to prepare their feast? How I hate the suitors! I wish that this would be the last meal that they will ever eat!"

Medon replied, "My news is worse than that. The suitors are plotting to murder Telemachus, who sailed to the mainland to seek news of his father."

"Why did he feel that he had to go to the mainland?" Penelope asked. "Is he trying to get himself killed?"

"Perhaps a god encouraged him, or perhaps it was his own idea," Medon replied, "but he wanted to discover news of his father. He wanted to learn whether his father is alive or dead."

Penelope sank to the floor, cried, and said to her serving-women, "Zeus has given me more torment than I can bear. My beloved husband is dead, and my son may soon be dead. If only I had known that he was planning to travel to the mainland, I would have kept him here. Send someone to Dolius, my old servant, who can tell Laertes about Telemachus. Maybe Laertes will know what to do."

Her old servant Eurycleia told her, "I knew that Telemachus went to the mainland, but he ordered me not to tell you until at least ten or twelve days had passed. He didn't want you to worry about him. Right now, bathe and put on fresh clothing, and then you may pray to Athena to protect your son. But please don't make Laertes, an old man, worry about his grandson. He already has too much grief to bear."

Penelope took her advice. Refreshed, she prayed to Athena, "Hear my prayer, bright-eyed goddess. If Odysseus has ever favored you, has ever sacrificed to you, save his and my son, Telemachus, from these suitors." She then cried out in grief.

One of the suitors in the Great Hall heard the cry of sorrow and said, "Penelope is preparing for her day of marriage. She knows that it is inevitable, and she does not know that we are going to kill her son."

Antinous told him, "Shut up! Keep your mouth closed so that no one can learn about our ambush!"

Antinous then chose twenty men. They armed themselves, boarded ship, and sailed out to set an ambush for Telemachus.

In her rooms, Penelope mourned and then slept. Athena saw her, and she thought of a way to help her. She created a phantom in the form of Iphthime, Penelope's sister, to appear to Penelope in a dream.

The phantom said in the dream, "You need not mourn, Penelope. The gods have heard your prayer. Your son will return safe from his journey. The suitors' ambush will not succeed. Telemachus has never offended the gods."

In the dream, Penelope replied, "My life is troubled. My husband has been absent for twenty years, and now my son is in danger. The suitors plot to kill him."

“Be strong and have courage,” the phantom replied. “Nothing will happen to Telemachus. He has a protector. The goddess Athena sails with him. She will take care of him. Athena knows what you are going through, and she sent me here to reassure you.”

“Can you tell me whether Odysseus is alive or dead?” Penelope asked.

“The gods do not tell all,” the phantom said and then departed.

Penelope felt much better after the dream, but Antinous and twenty armed men sailed to set up an ambush to kill Telemachus. They landed on a rocky island, and they waited for Telemachus to sail near so they could kill him.

So ends the Telemachy: a mini-epic starring Telemachus.

Chapter 5: Odysseus and Calypso (Odyssey)

The next morning, Dawn rose from the bed of her lover, Tithonus, who is both old and immortal. When he, a mortal man, first became her lover, Dawn gave him immortality, but she was unable to make him ageless. Now he grows older and older, and he grows feebler and feebler, but he always sleeps—sleep was a gift that Dawn could give him, a welcome gift to an aged and continually aging man whose every waking moment is filled with pain.

That morning, Athena addressed the Olympian gods in council (all except Poseidon, who was visiting the Ethiopians), saying, “Father Zeus, and all other gods on Olympus, remember Odysseus, held captive on an island by the sea-nymph Calypso. He is unable to leave her; he is unable to see his day of homecoming. And now the suitors who infest his palace and plague his wife plot to murder his son, Telemachus, who has sailed to the mainland to seek news of his father.”

Zeus replied, “You know that Telemachus will not be murdered. You know that you yourself will protect him. You know that the suitors will be unsuccessful. As for Odysseus, we shall help him.”

Zeus turned to the messenger-god Hermes and ordered, “Go to Calypso and order her to release Odysseus. He will build a raft and sail to the island of the Phaeacians, who will shower gifts on him and sail him home. Odysseus shall return home, and he shall see his loved ones.”

Hermes set off at once, flying through the sky—the gods and goddesses have that power—to the sea and then skimming over its surface until he reached Calypso’s island. She was in her home, a cavern, pleasantly furnished and very comfortable. Odysseus was not present. As usual, he was on the shore closest to Ithaca, grieving because he so longed to be home.

Calypso was surprised to see Hermes, and she immediately said, “Why are you here?” But then she remembered her duty as hostess and added, “Your visits are so infrequent. You should visit more often. I am very happy to give you any assistance you need.”

She set the table with ambrosia and nectar, the food and drink of the immortal gods, and Hermes ate and drank. Then it was time for business. Such is the way of *xenia*.

“You ask why I have come,” Hermes said. “Zeus sent me. Zeus says that you are keeping captive a hero of the Trojan War, that you are preventing his day of homecoming. Zeus commands you to release the hero. He is not fated to die here; he is fated to see his loved ones again. You cannot go against fate.”

Zeus’ command was not pleasing to Calypso: “You gods are angry when a goddess sleeps with a mortal. The goddess Dawn slept with Orion, and so the goddess Artemis shot him with one of her arrows and killed him. Demeter slept with Iasion, and so the god Zeus hurled a thunderbolt

at him and killed him. Now you gods are angry at me because I am sleeping with a mortal man. I saved this man's life. His ship was wrecked, and his men all died, but I welcomed him to my island. I am even willing to make him immortal—and to make him ageless. But no one can withstand Zeus, the most powerful of the gods. Since he orders me to release the man, I will release him and I will give him advice as to how he can best reach his home.”

“Good decision,” Hermes said. “Anyone who disobeys the command of Zeus will regret it.” Hermes left and returned to Olympus.

Calypso walked to the beach and found Odysseus grieving as usual. The two slept together because Calypso made him sleep with her. It is not wise for a mortal to go against the wishes of an immortal—the immortal gods and goddesses can do terrible things to mortals. But Odysseus longed to be with Penelope, his wife.

Calypso told Odysseus, “You don't need to grieve any longer. You may leave my island. Build yourself a raft, and I will stock it with wine and water and food. You will see your home again, just as you wish—provided the gods don't interfere.”

A chance to leave Calypso's island? This was what Odysseus had long wanted, but he was a cautious man. He thought, *Is this a trick? Has Calypso tired of me and now wants me dead? I am not going to leave this island unless I know that I have a reasonable chance of reaching land safely again.*

Odysseus said to Calypso, “I won't build a raft and leave, goddess, unless you swear a binding oath that this is not a trick to get me killed.”

This made Calypso smile. One of the things that she liked about Odysseus was his shrewdness. He was a brave man, but he liked to have the odds in his favor. He was willing to take necessary risks, but not unnecessary risks.

Calypso said to Odysseus, “I swear on the River Styx that I am not trying to trick you, that I am not trying to kill you or to get you killed. Swearing on the River Styx is the inviolable oath of the gods—does that satisfy you?”

It did satisfy Odysseus. No god or goddess can go against an oath sworn on the River Styx.

The two returned to Calypso's cavern, and there they ate and drank. Calypso ate ambrosia and drank nectar, the food and drink of the immortal gods; Odysseus ate food and drank wine for mortals.

Calypso then said to Odysseus, “Are you really so eager to leave me? If you knew the hardships that lie before you if you leave my island, you would not be so eager to leave. I know that you long to see your wife, but why? Is she as beautiful as I am? Does she have a better figure? Why not stay with me and be immortal?”

Be careful, Odysseus thought. Do not make Calypso angry. The gods and goddesses can do terrible things to mortal men they are angry at. Remember what Artemis did to Orion. Remember

what Zeus did to Iasion. Do not say anything to Calypso that will make her angry. I must not say that I prefer Penelope to her. Instead, I must give a reason for wanting to leave her island that will not make Calypso angry. As for immortality, it doesn't work for mortal men. Remember what happened to Tithonus. And if I become immortal and stay here, I will never see my wife and my son and my home again.

Odysseus said to Calypso, "Don't be angry with me, please. I know that you speak the truth. My wife is not as beautiful as you. My wife's figure is not better than yours. How can a mortal woman compare to an immortal goddess? The immortal goddess will always be more beautiful.

"But I want to see my home again. I want to see Ithaca again. That is what I have been longing for every day. I have faced many troubles before, and I am willing to face more troubles if only I can see my home again."

Calypso thought, *I can understand that Odysseus wants to see his home again. That is reasonable. I need not be angry at him.*

The sun set, and they slept together.

The next day, Odysseus built his raft. Calypso brought him cloth, and he made a sail. It took him four days to build his raft, and on the fifth day he set off, with his raft well provisioned by Calypso.

He sailed for seventeen days, but on the eighteenth day he ran into trouble. All that Zeus and Athena and Hermes had done for him had been done without the knowledge of the sea-god Poseidon. They had acted behind his back while he was away from Mount Olympus, attending a sacrifice held in his honor by the Ethiopians.

But now, returning from Ethiopia to Olympus, Poseidon saw Odysseus on his raft. Poseidon knew that the other gods had acted without consulting him, and he was angry: "Look at Odysseus. He is near the island of the Phaeacians, who are fated to help him return home. I cannot prevent his day of homecoming and I cannot go against fate, but I can still make Odysseus' life difficult."

Poseidon then created a storm, and Odysseus knew he was in trouble. Alone on a raft, and with a big storm coming, Odysseus knew that death by drowning could very well await him. He said to himself, "My friends who died at Troy are more fortunate than I am. They were mourned. Burial-mounds were raised for them. Their souls entered the Land of the Dead. I may drown alone, with no one to mourn me and to give my corpse a proper burial. My soul may be prevented from entering the Land of the Dead until a hundred years have passed."

The storm struck him and his raft. He was washed overboard, and the mast broke. He was underwater for a long time, but finally he surfaced and then clung to his raft.

Help arrived. Ino, the daughter of Cadmus, a mortal woman who had been made an immortal sea-nymph and had changed her name to Leucothea, saw him and knew his fate. She

boarded Odysseus' raft and said to him, "Poor man. Poseidon hates you, but even he cannot alter your fate. You will not drown here. Take my advice. Strip off your clothes so they don't weigh you down, then swim for shore with my scarf tied around your waist. As long as you have my scarf, you need not fear death. But when you reach land safely, give my scarf back to me."

Odysseus listened and took her scarf, then Leucothea dived into the sea again. Ever cautious, Odysseus considered his options: *Should I jump into the sea right away and begin swimming? No. Better to wait and stay on the raft until it floats closer to land. That will improve my odds of reaching land safely.*

As Odysseus thought about what he should do, Poseidon sent a huge wave over the raft that tore it to pieces and plunged Odysseus into the sea. He grabbed a piece of floating wood, tore off his clothing, and tied the scarf of the immortal sea-nymph around his waist.

Poseidon saw him and knew that Odysseus was fated to reach land, but Poseidon was happy that he had made Odysseus' journey difficult and dangerous. "Go," Poseidon said. "You will reach a land filled with helpful people, but I do not think that you will have found your journey easy."

Poseidon headed toward his palace at the port of Aegae. Athena took advantage of his absence and calmed the storm and the sea. She allowed the North wind to blow Odysseus toward land.

For two days, Odysseus stayed afloat by clinging to the wrecked raft. On the morning of the third day, he saw land—a sight that made him joyful, as joyful as children are when their father recovers from an illness that could have killed him.

Land there was, but the water was filled with pounding surf and jagged rocks, a place where swimmers could die. "More danger," Odysseus said to himself, "and the alternative to this danger is a different danger. If I try to reach land here, I will be cut to pieces on the rocks. If I cling to the wreckage and try to make my way along the island, a storm will spring up and kill me. Or I will die, devoured by sharks."

A wave washed him toward the rocks, and he grabbed one and hung on to it, although it tore the skin from his hands. When a fisherman grabs an octopus and tears it from its lair, the suckers on its tentacles will cling to pebbles and carry them away. Bits of skin from Odysseus' hands clung to the rock as a wave carried Odysseus away from it.

Odysseus started swimming—and he saw a river flowing to the sea, a good spot to make landfall. He prayed to the river-god, "Help me, please. I am your suppliant. The gods will give help to mortals when mortals request it."

The river-god listened to Odysseus' prayer, and granted his request. Odysseus did not have to fight a strong current. He reached land, and he rested until he could breathe normally and not have to gulp air. Then he remembered the scarf of the immortal sea-nymph Leucothea. If Odysseus had been a different kind of man, he would have been tempted to keep it. It was a

treasure—wear it and never fear death! Odysseus was not tempted. He untied the scarf and threw it into the river. It floated downstream to the sea, and Leucothea recovered it. She had shown respect to Odysseus, and now Odysseus had shown respect to her.

Odysseus climbed up the banks of the river, and thought about what he should do: “Man of misery and son of pain. What next? Do I stay here, naked and alone, by the river? Would it be better to leave the river and find a place to sleep? What if a wild beast finds me, naked and defenseless?”

Odysseus walked away from the river, and he found some woods in which two olive trees—which were sacred to Athena—were standing. One olive tree was wild, and the other was cultivated. Odysseus looked at the two olive trees, and he thought, *What kind of people will I find here? Will they be wild and not follow the rules of xenia? Will they be civilized and respect xenia? Tomorrow I will find out.*

He then piled up dry leaves to make a bed for himself. He lay on the leaves and piled more leaves over himself, and he slept. The leaves kept alive the one small spark of life left in Odysseus the way that a farmer will pour ashes over a fire to keep the embers alive until it is time to build the fire again. No one lives near the farmer, so he cannot easily get a fire again if the embers should die.

Odysseus slept.

Chapter 6: Odysseus and Nausicaa (Odyssey)

Odysseus slept, and Athena made her way to the city of the Phaeacians, who used to live near the Cyclopes, savage creatures that were not civilized and did not show *xenia* to strangers. Therefore, the King of the Phaeacians, Nausithous, led his people to another home, the island of Scheria. There they built homes and temples and plowed fields and built a wall around the city and formed a civilization. Nausithous died, but he had raised his son, Alcinous, well, and the gods respected them both and gave Alcinous wisdom. Such things happen in a society that has good fathers.

Athena went to the palace of Alcinous and into the bedroom of Nausicaa, the young Phaeacian princess. The goddess appeared in Nausicaa's dream in the form of the daughter of Dymas, a Phaeacian noble. The goddess appeared to be Nausicaa's age.

The disguised Athena said to Nausicaa, "Haven't you things to do, Nausicaa? Look at your clothing, lying here, neglected. Shouldn't you prepare for your wedding? You are old enough to be married soon, and when you are married, all of your family should be wearing fresh, clean clothing. So tomorrow, go to the river and wash your family's clothing. Prepare for marriage. The eligible Phaeacian men all want to marry you."

Her job finished, Athena flew to Olympus.

Morning came, Nausicaa awoke and dressed, and then she went to her parents to tell them what she wanted to do. She said, "Father, will you arrange for me to use a wagon and mules to carry our clothing to the washing-pools? You should have fresh, clean clothing to wear in council, and I have five brothers, three of whom are still unmarried and are always wanting fresh, clean clothing to wear while courting." So Nausicaa said, neglecting to mention her hoped-for marriage.

But her father, King Alcinous, guessed her real reason for wanting to wash the clothing. He said to her, "Yes, of course. By all means. You will have everything you need." He ordered men to prepare the wagon and mules. Nausicaa gathered the dirty clothing, and her mother packed a lunch and wine for Nausicaa and for the girls who would help her wash the clothing. King Alcinous did not send men to guard the girls. The Phaeacians were at peace, and they were so remote from the rest of the world that they did not fear pirates who elsewhere would kidnap children and young women and sell them into slavery.

Nausicaa and the other girls reached the washing-pools at the river, unloaded the wagon, washed the clothing, and then spread it out in the sun to dry. They bathed in the river, enjoyed their lunch, and then played ball.

As she played ball, Nausicaa resembled Artemis, the virgin huntress-goddess. Nausicaa was more beautiful than the other girls.

It was almost time for Nausicaa to fold the clothing and load the wagon and return home, but Athena formed a plan. Odysseus must awake and meet Nausicaa, and she must give him *xenia*. But how to arrange their meeting? Athena came up with the answer: Nausicaa threw the ball to a girl, but it fell into the river with a splash—a splash that woke up Odysseus.

Suddenly awake, Odysseus wondered, *Man of misery and son of pain. Where are you? Who lives here? Are they wild and do not follow the rules of xenia? Are they civilized and follow the rules of xenia?*

I hear voices, the voices of young women. Be careful. You may be hearing the voices of the immortals. Perhaps you hear the voices of Artemis and her attendants. Artemis can be dangerous to mortal men who offend her. Actaeon went hunting one day, and he had the misfortune to see Artemis naked, bathing in a pool of water. He did not mean to see Artemis naked; he was not spying on her. But that meant nothing to Artemis, who fiercely protects her virginity. She turned his body into that of a stag, but he kept his human mind. His own hunting dogs pursued him, caught him, and tore him to pieces. A mortal man would be insane to offend Artemis.

Odysseus was cautious, but he needed help, and to get help he had to be a suppliant, although he was completely naked and covered with seaweed and dried sea-salt. He tore a branch from a tree, held it in front of him to hide his private parts, and stepped out into the open and thought about what he should do.

Odysseus thought, *These are human girls, not immortal goddesses and nymphs, but I am still in danger. I am naked, I look like a wild man, and these girls have no men whom I can ask for help. Instead, I have to be a suppliant before them. What is best for me to do? Should I fall to the ground before the young girl in charge here and grab her knees in the typical suppliant position? No! Definitely not! If I were to do that, she would run away screaming and her father and brothers would come and kill me. I need to stay far from these young girls and speak to them and convince them that I am not a danger to them.*

Odysseus stood before the young girls with only a leafy branch to hide his nakedness. Seaweed clung to his body, and sea-salt had dried on him. He looked like a wild man who had never known civilization or followed the rules of *xenia*.

Seeing him, the girls scattered, putting distance between him and them, all except Nausicaa—Athena gave her courage.

Odysseus spoke to her, “Princess, show me mercy. Are you a mortal, or are you a goddess? If you are a goddess, you must be Artemis, the huntress-goddess who uses weapons well. In you, I see her beauty, her grace. But if you are a mortal, your father and your brothers must rejoice to have

you in their family—you are so beautiful. But one man will rejoice even more than these—the man you will marry. I have never seen anyone as beautiful as you.”

Odysseus thought, *I have let this young mortal girl know that she has the power here and that she is in no danger from me. Because I have called her Artemis, she knows that she is safe. After all, a mortal man would have to be insane to do anything that would offend Artemis—remember what she did to Actaeon! I have also mentioned that I know that she has male protectors: a father, brothers, and possibly a fiancé. With so many male protectors who wish to take care of her, I would have to be insane to try to harm her. In addition, I have thrown in some pretty good flattery.*

Odysseus continued, “Wait, once I saw something beautiful like you—a palm-tree on the island Delos, home of a temple to Apollo. To Delos I had sailed at the head of an army during a campaign that led to my misfortune. I marveled at the Delian palm-tree just like I marvel at you.”

Odysseus thought, *I have let this young girl know that I am civilized—I know about gods such as Apollo and about temples such as the one on Delos. I have also let her know that I used to be a man of enough importance that I led an army even though now I am naked and alone.*

Odysseus continued, “Yesterday, princess, after many days at sea, I washed ashore. I have suffered misfortune, and I have no doubt that I will suffer more misfortune. Please show me mercy; please give me *xenia*. You are the first person I have met here. Show me how to get to town, and give me something to hide my nakedness. And may the gods give you everything you desire: a good husband and a happy marriage.”

Odysseus thought, *Of course, I know that this young girl is not a goddess. She is simply a young mortal girl who will be married soon. But I have let her know that she is not in danger from me. I have managed to let her know that she is in no danger of being raped by me, something that a man much different from me might attempt. And I have done that without mentioning the word “rape,” a word that might cause these young girls to panic and to run home and to gather their male protectors. Now I will see if my speech has been successful. Will this young girl offer me hospitality, or will she run home and tell her father and brothers that a wild man in the woods tried to attack her? Either I will immediately receive the help I need, or I will soon be killed.*

“Stranger,” Nausicaa said, “friend, Zeus has given you troubles, but now that you have reached the island of the Phaeacians, you will receive what you need: clothing and food. I am the daughter of King Alcinous, and he will take care of you.”

Nausicaa called to her serving-girls, “Come closer. Zeus sends strangers and suppliants, and it is our duty—the duty of civilized people—to help them. Bring this guest wine and food and olive oil and clothing, and bathe him in the river.”

Odysseus replied, “Thank you, but allow me to bathe myself in the river. All of you girls stand back a long way from me. I am embarrassed to be naked in front of you girls.”

All is going well, but stay cautious, Odysseus thought. It's best not to be bathed by these young girls. What would happen if a man were to ride by and see these young girls bathing me and then report what he saw to the king? It's best to completely avoid anything that might make someone think that I have had any kind of sexual contact with these girls.

Odysseus bathed himself in the river, washing away the seaweed and the sea-salt. He rubbed himself with the olive oil, and then he put on the clothing the girls had laid out for him. Athena transformed him, making him taller and stronger and more handsome, with curly hair.

Nausicaa noticed the transformation in Odysseus, and she said to her serving-girls, "At first this man looked wild and uncivilized, but now he looks like a god. In fact, he looks like a potential husband for me. Give him something to eat and to drink."

Odysseus ate, and Nausicaa and the other girls folded the clothing and put it in the wagon, and then after Odysseus had finished eating, she said to him, "Let's go to the town now, but when we reach the town, let me and the others go on ahead while you wait a while before entering town. I don't want people to talk about us. Someone might see us together and say, 'Who is the stranger with Nausicaa? He is tall and strong and handsome. Is he a shipwrecked sailor? Is he a god come down from Olympus? Has he come to answer her prayers and to marry her? That's OK by us. All the eligible Phaeacian men have been courting her, but she has shown little interest in them. Let her marry this stranger.' So they might say, as they criticize a girl who has made friends with a man her parents do not know—something that I would never do."

Nausicaa thought, *I've flattered the stranger by saying that the Phaeacians are likely to think that he is a god. I've told him that I am unmarried and that Phaeacian men are courting me but that I have shown little interest in them. I have fairly strongly hinted that I consider him a potential husband for me. I have also said that I know what a good girl should not do—make friends with a man her parents do not know—even though I am doing exactly that. In short, I have hinted that I would like to marry this stranger.*

Odysseus thought, *Interesting. This princess has shown an interest in me, even hinting that a marriage with me is possible, but she has done it so subtly that I need not reject her outright and embarrass her. I can simply ignore her interest in me. This girl is intelligent.*

Nausicaa continued, "We will reach a grove of poplars with a spring. That is part of my father's estate. Stay there and give us time to walk to my father's palace, then you may go into town and ask for directions to my father's palace. Anyone can tell you how to get there. When you gain entrance to the palace, go past my father and go to my mother and supplicate her. If the queen pities and respects you, she will give you a voyage home."

Nausicaa, the serving-girls, and Odysseus all headed toward town. When they reached the grove of poplars and the stream, Odysseus stayed behind and prayed to Athena, "Help me now,

Athena. You did not help me when Poseidon wrecked my raft. Bring it to pass that the Phaeacians give me *xenia*—that they treat me the way that civilized people should treat a stranger!”

Athena heard his prayer, but she did not appear before him openly. She feared Poseidon, the sea-god, whose anger toward Odysseus still burned.

Chapter 7: Odysseus and the Phaeacians (Odyssey)

Nausicaa reached her father's palace, and her brothers carried the clothing inside and took care of the mules and the wagon. She went to her bedroom, and an aged servant, Eurymedusa, made her a meal. Nausicaa was well cared for, with a loving family and household.

Judging that enough time had passed, Odysseus began walking toward the city. Athena created a heavy fog so that no common Phaeacian would see and question him—the common Phaeacians were not as friendly as their king. Disguising herself as a young girl holding a pitcher of water, Athena appeared before him.

Odysseus asked her, “Little girl, please tell me how to reach the palace of King Alcinous. I am a traveler who has met much hardship, and I need help. I know no one in this country.”

“Yes, sir,” the disguised Athena replied. “King Alcinous is a neighbor of my royal father. I will lead you to the king's palace. Follow me, and avoid the common Phaeacians. They are not friendly toward strangers. They are fine sailors, with quick ships, but they are not hospitable.”

Odysseus followed her lead, and as he walked behind her he looked and he marveled. He saw ships and meeting-grounds, and everything was well ordered. All he saw was admirable. The Phaeacians had a society that worked.

They reached the palace of King Alcinous, and Athena said, “Go inside the palace and be bold. You will see the queen. Ask her for help. Her name is Arete, and she is known and respected for her excellence. She is so respected here that she can make peace between arguing men. King Alcinous honors and respects her, as do all the people on this island, even the common Phaeacians. If you appeal to the queen and ask her for help, you will see your home again.”

Athena left, and Odysseus walked toward the palace, which was magnificent. Friezes showed that the Phaeacians respected art, and the palace was rich with metal. The walls were bronze, and the doors were gold. The threshold was bronze, and the doorposts were silver. Hephaestus, the god of fire, had made golden and silver statues of dogs. No, they were more than statues—they were guard dogs to keep the king and queen safe. The king and queen's thrones were decorated with weavings created by women—fine works of art. Boys made of gold held torches to make the feast room bright with light. Fifty serving-women worked in the palace, grinding grain or weaving. The Phaeacian sailors were famous for their art on the ocean, and the Phaeacian women were famous for their art with a loom.

Outside the courtyard was an orchard filled with trees that bore fruit all year round: pomegranates, pears, apples, figs, olives, and grapes. Also present were vegetable gardens, and two springs provided water for all: people and plants.

Odysseus looked, marveled, and thought, *Here is a fine society with a fine king who looks after his people. The gods have blessed this place. Why? When the rulers are good, the people will be good. I have heard that the common Phaeacians are not hospitable to strangers, but I have also heard that I will receive hospitality from the king and the queen. When the king and the queen observe xenia, they can make the common people be hospitable, too. And a good society is one in which the queen is respected. All of these things lead to blessings from the gods.*

Odysseus entered the palace, where he saw the Phaeacian lords drinking in honor of Hermes the messenger-god. Odysseus walked to King Alcinous and Queen Arete, and he sank at the feet of Queen Arete and beseeched her, “Queen! I ask for mercy! I pray to the gods to make you and your people prosperous. Please give me passage back to my home!”

All were shocked by Odysseus’ sudden appearance in their midst. Echeneus, a wise and aged advisor to the king, said, “Alcinous, this is not the way to act. Your people are waiting for you to lead them. Give the stranger *xenia*. Raise him by the hand and give him a seat. Tell everyone to drink to Zeus, and tell a housekeeper to give a meal to the stranger.”

King Alcinous knew that the advice was good—he had not acted sooner simply out of shock at the stranger’s sudden appearance. He raised Odysseus from the floor and gave him a place to sit, telling his own favorite son to move from a chair so that the stranger might sit down. A housekeeper brought water so that the stranger could wash his hands, and then she brought him food. As Odysseus ate and drank, King Alcinous ordered wine so that all could pour offerings to Zeus, the god of *xenia*, the god who wishes humans to respect suppliants.

After all had poured and then drank, King Alcinous said, “Go home and sleep. Tomorrow morning we will hold a council with the elders, host the stranger, sacrifice to the gods, and arrange an easy voyage home for our guest. At home he must bear whatever the gods send him. But perhaps he is one of the gods, who sometimes come to test mortals to see if we are civilized, if we observe *xenia*.”

Odysseus replied, “No, I am nothing like a god. I am a mortal man. I have suffered more than anyone you know. But let me finish my supper. An empty stomach is a misery, always insisting on being fed like a greedy dog. But please give me a safe passage home. Once I have seen my home again, I can die happy.”

The other nobles left, leaving Alcinous, Arete, and Odysseus in the palace. Queen Arete recognized the clothing that Odysseus was wearing. She and her women had made the clothing, clothing that Nausicaa had just washed at the river.

Seeking necessary information, she asked, “Stranger, who are you, and from where did you come? Where did you get the clothing you are wearing now?”

“I have suffered much,” Odysseus replied. “Far away is an island called Ogygia, where the sea-nymph Calypso lives. When Zeus crushed my ship and all my crewmembers died, I clung

to the wreckage and floated to her island. She took care of me and even wanted to make me immortal and ageless, but I never loved her. She kept me captive on her island for seven years. Then she allowed me to build a raft, and she stocked it with provisions. I sailed in the raft for many days, and then I saw your island. Poseidon sent a storm against me and shattered my raft. I swam to shore, reaching a river that was free of rocks to cut me. I covered my body with leaves and slept all night and until the afternoon. When I awoke, I saw your daughter and her serving-maids—your daughter looked like a goddess! I asked her for help. She gave it to me, without ever making a misstep or doing anything that would discredit either her or you. She acted with much more tact and wisdom than most girls her age. She gave me food and wine, allowed me to bathe by myself in the river, and let me wear this clothing. Your daughter has been well raised.”

King Alcinous replied, “My daughter, however, did one thing wrong. She did not escort you to our palace; instead, she let you find the palace by yourself.”

Be careful, Odysseus thought. Nausicaa has given you help when you needed help. You don't want the king and the queen to think that she has done anything at all wrong. If a lie will help, then tell a lie.

“Don't find fault with your daughter,” Odysseus said. “She has done everything right. She asked me to follow her, but I chose not to. I didn't want to cause any gossip.”

Odysseus thought, *That isn't quite a lie. I simply left some information out. Nausicaa did ask me to follow her, but only to a point outside the city. I need not add any information that will make her parents think that she has done something wrong.*

“I try not to find fault without reason,” Alcinous replied. “That is the way of wisdom. But you are intelligent and a good man. If you were to marry my daughter, I would give you a house and wealth. But I would never make you stay against your will. Zeus would not approve of such conduct. If you wish, we will give you transportation to your home. Our ships are magic. They can go anywhere across the sea and return home in just one day. The Phaeacian ships and sailors are magnificent!”

Odysseus prayed aloud to Zeus, “May King Alcinous fulfill his promises. Then his fame will never die, and I will reach my home again!”

The queen ordered a bed to be made for Odysseus, and all slept that night.

Chapter 8: Entertainment Among the Phaeacians (Odyssey)

The next morning, King Alcinous led Odysseus to the meeting-grounds, and Athena, disguised as King Alcinous' herald, called the mature men to the council: "Come to the meeting-grounds and meet the new arrival, a stranger who has come here after roving the sea—a stranger like a god!" Athena also made Odysseus taller, stronger, and more handsome.

King Alcinous addressed his people: "Hear me! This stranger has come to us to ask us for aid. I don't know his name, but he is our guest. We are renowned for our hospitality. We show good *xenia* to all who come to our island. Let us show good *xenia* to this stranger also. No one who asks me for a journey home will be long gone from home.

"Come, obey my orders. Ready a ship for a voyage. Pick 52 young men of proven strength—the best of the Phaeacians—to row the ship. When the ship is ready, then the young men can come to the palace for a feast."

I can see why this society works so well, Odysseus thought. First, the king gives clear orders. Perhaps the common Phaeacians would not themselves be kind to strangers, but the king makes it clear that strangers will be respected. Second, the king praises those who respect xenia. The young men who will row me home are, the king says, "the best of the Phaeacians." Finally, the king rewards those who respect xenia. These young men who will row me home are invited to a feast in the palace.

The king continued, "Now let us entertain our guest. Call the bard Demodocus to sing for us. The gods have given him the gift of song—he can entertain all who listen to him."

The 52 picked young men of Phaeacia made the ship ready, then went to the king's palace. There a feast of a dozen sheep, eight boars, and two oxen was prepared for them. The bard arrived. He had the gift of song, but not the gift of sight. The gods don't give all their gifts to one person. The bard's lyre was hung within his easy reach, and he enjoyed wine and food.

Then the Muse inspired the bard—now is the time to sing of heroes. He sang of the Quarrel Between Odysseus and Achilles. Normally, a quarrel between heroes is a bad thing, but Agamemnon rejoiced when this quarrel occurred. He recalled a prophecy that when the two best Greeks quarreled, then Troy would soon fall.

Odysseus heard the song and wept, but he covered his face with his clothing so that the Phaeacians would not see him crying. Only King Alcinous noticed that he was crying.

When the song was over, King Alcinous said, "Now that we have enjoyed food and song, let us go to the meeting-ground so that the young men can participate in athletic contests: boxing, wrestling, running, and jumping."

All, including Demodocus, whom the herald led by the hand, went to the meeting-ground. The young athletes ran a race—Clytneus won easily. In wrestling, Broadsea distinguished himself with victory. Seagirt out-jumped all the other athletes. Rowhard hurled the discus farther than anyone else. Laodamas, the son of King Alcinous, achieved victory in boxing.

Thrilled with victory, Laodamas said, “Come, let’s ask our guest if he wishes to participate in our games. He’s built strong like an athlete: big arms, broad chest, strong legs. And he’s not so old that he must be a spectator, although his many hardships have taken a toll on him.”

Broadsea agreed, “By all means, invite the guest to compete.”

Laodamas went to Odysseus and said, “Come, guest, join our games. Win victory in the contests. All the world loves a winner.”

Odysseus declined the invitation: “No contests for me. I am a suppliant, beaten down by hardship, hoping for a journey home.”

“I knew that you weren’t an athlete,” Broadsea mocked Odysseus. “You don’t know the skills that athletes and warriors know. Rather, you must be a pirate, trying to steal cargo and gold.”

Odysseus, warrior that he was and had been, was insulted. Many of the skills used in athletic games are the same as the skills used in combat. “You speak nonsense, Broadsea. You are handsome, but you don’t know how to properly speak to a guest and you don’t know how to properly treat a guest. You look impressive, but your brain is lacking. I am an athlete, and I am a warrior, not a pirate. I have been at sea, I have been shipwrecked, and I am beaten down by hardship. But you have insulted me, so I will show you what I am capable of doing.”

Odysseus picked up a discus, whirled, and hurled it far into the distance. Athena, disguised as a man, measured the distance and called out, “You’re the winner. You threw the discus much farther than any of the Phaeacians. No one here can beat you.”

Odysseus laughed with pleasure, and then he said, “I can equal that distance again—or beat it. Anyone who wants to can challenge me in contests—but not Laodamas. He is my host and the son of my host, and I must show respect to him. I would be foolish to challenge him. All the other athletes I challenge. Well I know how to shoot arrows—only Philoctetes was a better archer than me at Troy. Still, the old masters of archery are better than I am: Heracles and Eurytus. I must not over-praise myself and think that I am better than I am. That leads to trouble. Eurytus foolishly challenged Apollo, the god of archery, to a contest and Apollo shot him dead because of his boasting. I am also an expert spear-thrower. But at running I think that you can out-distance me. I have been on board a raft for so long that my legs don’t have the power they used to have.”

All the young men listened to Odysseus, and Odysseus thought, *I have taught the young men a lesson today: Don’t insult a guest. I hope that they learn the lesson and that King Antinous will teach them well.*

King Antinous said, "Guest, everything you have said here is correct. You spoke well, and you behaved properly. You were insulted, and your response to the insult was admirable. The adolescent who insulted you should not have spoken that way to you. But let's continue with the entertainment. The Phaeacians are renowned dancers. So, Phaeacians, begin the dance!"

The herald fetched Demodocus' lyre, Demodocus played, and the young Phaeacian men competed in the dance. Odysseus watched with pleasure.

Then it was time for another song. Demodocus sang a comic song of Aphrodite's affair with Ares, the god of war. The two had fallen in lust although Aphrodite, the goddess of sexual passion, was married to Hephaestus, the gifted blacksmith god. Hephaestus learned of the affair, so he set a trap for the illicit lovers. He created fine chains that bound tightly, he placed the chains above his bed, and then he pretended to leave his mansion to journey abroad. Ares ran to Aphrodite and invited her to join him in Hephaestus' bed, and together they ran to the bed. Ares and Aphrodite lay down in bed together, and then the fine chains snared them, locked in lust.

Hephaestus returned home, knowing what and whom he would see in his bed. He invited all the gods and the goddesses to look, also. He complained to Zeus, "Father, look at how my wife treats me. I am crippled, so she sleeps with Ares because of his handsome looks. Right now, they are in my bed, locked together in the act of lovemaking by chains that only I can loosen. Come, look and laugh at the lovers. I will keep them bound until I receive my bride-gifts back. The goddess I married is a bitch."

The gods entered Hephaestus' bedroom and looked at the unhappy and embarrassed Ares and Aphrodite, naked and stuck together. The goddesses, however, were embarrassed and stayed away.

The gods laughed, and one god said to another, "Hephaestus one, adulterers zero. The blacksmith god conquers both the god of war and the goddess of sexual passion."

Apollo asked Hermes, "Would bedding Aphrodite be worth the embarrassment of being caught by Hephaestus?"

Hermes replied, "Of course! Look how beautiful she is!"

Only Poseidon did not laugh; he was a friend to Ares. He begged Hephaestus to release the lovers, saying, "Ares will pay you whatever you ask for sleeping with your wife."

Hephaestus replied, "Ares is a worthless god, and a promise from a worthless god is a worthless promise, so don't ask me to release him from my chains."

But Poseidon said, "If he won't pay the fine, I will. My word is good."

"So it is," Hephaestus said. He released the two lovers, who ran away in opposite directions to friends who would not laugh at them.

Odysseus listened to the comic song, and he was reminded of Paris and Helen, whose adulterous love affair had caused the Trojan War. He did not want to think about what could possibly be happening on Ithaca.

Now King Antinous asked two Phaeacians, his sons Laodamas and Halios, to dance, as they were the best of the Phaeacians at dancing while tossing a blue ball as the other men pounded out a beat with their feet.

Well entertained, Odysseus praised the dancers: “King Alcinous, I am amazed. Your Phaeacian dancers certainly live up to their reputations.”

Pleased, King Alcinous said, “Phaeacians, let us give our guest the gifts that such a man deserves. Our land has twelve lords. Let each lord, including myself, give our guest a cloak and a shirt and a bar of gold. Bring the gifts to the palace tonight so that our guest may see the gifts and rejoice. And Broadsea must apologize to our guest as well as give gifts. Earlier, he insulted our guest.”

Each noble sent away for the gifts, and Broadway apologized to Odysseus, “King Alcinous, of course I will apologize to our guest. And I will give our guest this sword. I am sure that he will value it. Guest, sir, please accept my apology for what I said earlier. I wish you a swift and safe journey home to your loved ones.”

Odysseus replied, “I accept your apology. May you enjoy good fortune throughout your life.”

I can see why this society works so well, Odysseus thought. Look at the king. He is like a good father to these young men. When they do something wrong, he lets them know it and he lets them know how to make up for the wrong they have done.

The sun set, and all of Odysseus’ gifts from the lords were carried into the palace. King Alcinous then spoke to his queen and requested of her, “Please, queen, give our guest a cloak and a shirt, and I will give him a golden cup so that he will remember us.”

The serving-women prepared a hot bath for Odysseus, and all of Odysseus’ gifts were put in a chest, ready for him to carry away. The queen invited Odysseus, “Tie the lid of the chest with a strong knot. You don’t want to be robbed during your journey home.”

That’s good advice, Odysseus thought. Even with a good king and queen, the common people can go astray. It’s best to keep them away from temptation, to make it difficult for them to rob me.

He tied the chest with a good strong knot. Circe had taught it to him; it was difficult to untie unless you knew how.

Odysseus bathed and dressed, and then he met Nausicaa as he walked to the dining hall to join the Phaeacian nobles. Nausicaa said to him, “Farewell, friend. I know that you are leaving to go to your home soon. Remember me when you are at home. I helped you when you needed help.”

“Yes, Nausicaa,” Odysseus replied. “I will always remember you, and I will pray to you as if you were a goddess. You saved my life.”

He entered the dining hall, and he sat by King Alcinous. The meat was brought to the table, and Odysseus cut a savory portion from the roast boar, tender and tasty, and he sent it to Demodocus, the blind bard, saying, “Herald, take this to Demodocus, and ask him to eat. The gods love a bard—the Muse herself gives bards their gift.”

The bard rejoiced at the honor shown him, and all ate their fill. Odysseus then said to Demodocus, “I respect you and all bards. You have been given a great gift. You have sung of the Greeks’ war against the Trojans. Now sing of the wooden horse filled with warriors—the trap that Odysseus thought up and that Epeus built. Sing that for us, and I will speak to men of your genius for epic song.”

The bard knew the song. He sang of the Greeks’ pretending to return to their homes, leaving behind a wooden horse that was pregnant with warriors. The Trojans debated what to do with—or to—the horse, but their city was fated to fall, and they brought it inside Troy. That night, the Greeks crept out of the wooden horse, opened the gates of the city to let in Agamemnon and the rest of the Greek army, and conquered the city. Odysseus and Menelaus fought side by side, going together to the house of Deiphobus, Helen’s newest Trojan husband.

So the bard sang, and Odysseus wept just like a woman weeps whose husband has died in battle as his city is conquered. She clings to his corpse, but the enemy soldiers force her to leave the body and become a slave.

So Odysseus wept, perhaps out of recognition that the Trojan War had brought grief both to the victors and to the vanquished. Odysseus may also have wept because of the atrocities that the Greeks had committed during the fall of Troy. Little Ajax raped the virgin Cassandra in Athena’s own temple—a place where the virgin should have been respected. The Greeks killed Hector’s son by throwing him from the high walls of Troy. The Greeks sacrificed Polyxena, a daughter of King Priam, following the fall of Troy. Such atrocities should not be committed—even against an enemy.

Only King Alcinous noticed Odysseus crying, and he said, “Let Demodocus stop singing now. His song is not pleasing to all here. Our guest has been crying throughout the song. We must treat a guest the way that we would treat a brother—that is the civilized way. But now, guest, tell us who you are. Who are your parents? From which land are you? We will sail you home. No land bordering the sea is too far for our ships to reach. We return all wanderers to their homes.

“Such has been the case so far, but my father once told me a prophecy. Poseidon is angry at us. He is the god of the sea, and he thinks that we are disrespecting him by returning travelers to their homes in our ships that can cross the sea and never sink. According to the prophecy, someday

Poseidon will crush one of our ships as it returns home and he will put a mountain in our harbor to keep us from using the port to send travelers home.

“But guest, friend, tell us your story. Where have you traveled? What have you seen? Why do you cry when you hear a song about Troy? Did a relative of yours die at Troy? Or a friend?”

Chapter 9: Odysseus and the Cyclops (Odyssey)

Odysseus said, “King Alcinous, it’s a wonderful thing to listen to a bard, to hear his stories and songs. Nothing is better than to listen and to feast and to drink in times of peace. But since you want to hear the tale of my hardships, so be it. I have suffered so much. But first let me tell you my name. Some day to come, perhaps you will visit me and be my guest.

“My name is Odysseus, and as the songs of the bard have shown, my fame has reached the skies.”

King Alcinous and the Phaeacians marveled. Here before them was *the* Odysseus, a hero of the Trojan War, a hero who had vanished and no one knew whether he was alive or dead. They had known that their guest must be a man of some importance in his own land, but they had not expected *this*.

“My father is Laertes, and my home is Ithaca,” Odysseus continued. “I am the man of twists and turns, and I long to see my home. For years, I lived with the goddesses Calypso and Circe, but even then I longed for home. Nothing is better than one’s own home—not even foreign luxury. Let me tell you my story, everything that happened after the Fall of Troy.”

Tell a good story now, Odysseus thought. Tomorrow you will return home. You are generously laden with gifts, but if you can impress the Phaeacians with your story, they may give you more gifts. You have lost everything you gained from the Trojan War, and this is a chance to make up for what you have lost.

“We sailed first to Ismarus, the city of the Cicones. We attacked and conquered the city, gaining more booty than we hoped to take home with us. We killed all of the men, and then we divided the Cicones’ wives and booty equally—no one went without a fair share. I urged my men to sail away quickly, but they did not listen to me. No. They were more interested in drinking the wine of the Cicones and feasting on their cattle. Meanwhile, the refugees from the city sought relatives and friends, armed themselves, and attacked at dawn. We fought all day, but in the end the Cicones defeated us, killing six men from each of my twelve ships.

“We fled in our ships, mourning the men we had lost, and Zeus sent a storm against us, blowing us way off course for nine days. Finally, we reached the land of the Lotus-eaters. We landed, we ate, and I sent out three men to scout the territory to see who, if anyone, lived there. They ran across the Lotus-eaters, a gentle people who would never attack anyone, but who were addicted to the Lotus, a plant that contains a drug that takes away all ambition. Anyone who eats the Lotus forgets about goals and forgets about trying to achieve something important with their lives. All they want to do is to eat the Lotus. That is no life for a human being. The scouting party

ate the Lotus, and they forgot about seeing home again, but I forced them to return to the ships and continue our journey.

“Then we reached the land of the Cyclopes, a one-eyed race of giants who do not farm. They herd animals and gather wild plants. They make wine from wild grapes. They have no laws, no courts, no councils. They have no ships. They live wild and uncivilized. Each Cyclops rules his own wife and children, if any, and they do not care for neighbors or for strangers.

“We landed on an island by the home of the Cyclopes. We slept and ate there for a day, and then I became curious. I did not know then that the Cyclopes lived just across the water, but I could see the smoke from their fires, and I could hear the sounds made by their animals. I could even hear the voices of the Cyclopes.

“The next morning, I issued orders: ‘Most of you will stay here on this island. I will sail in my ship across the water and investigate what is on the land over there. Who lives there? Are they wild and do not follow the rules of *xenia*? Are they civilized and follow the rules of *xenia*?’

“We crossed the water and landed. Most of my men stayed behind with the ship, but twelve warriors and I set off to investigate a cave that was home to one of the beings that lived here. I took along fine wine as a gift to my host. The wine was a gift from Maron, a man whom we had rescued—him and his family. Even when mixed with water, the wine was strong and delicious.

“We went to the cave, but no one was at home. We looked around. We saw the cheeses. We saw the young animals: lambs and kids. We saw the buckets the owner used for milking.

“My crewmembers urged me to be a pirate—to steal the cheeses first and then to come back and steal the lambs and kids. But I was curious and would not be a pirate, although it would have better for my men and me if I had been a pirate rather than a curious but bad guest.

“We made ourselves at home. We built a fire. We ate most of the cheeses. We also sacrificed some of the cheeses to the gods. We were bad guests. Then the Cyclops returned home, carrying logs with which to build a fire. We saw him—one-eyed, immense—and out of fear, we hid ourselves in the shadows in the rear of the cave.

“The Cyclops blocked the opening to his cave with a boulder that was impossible for us—even with our strength combined—to move. We were trapped in the cave of the Cyclops. He milked his animals, and then started a fire—and saw us.

“He cried out, ‘Strangers, who are you? Where’ you come from? Are you merchants sailing the seas? Or are you pirates, robbing everybo’y you can?’

“I replied, ‘We are men from Troy, trying to sail home but driven far off course. We fought for Agamemnon, but now we are your guests. We hope that you will welcome us, even give us a guest-gift. That is what the gods would want you to do—especially Zeus, the god of *xenia*.’

“The Cyclops replied, ‘Stranger, we Cyclopes ’o not fear Zeus or any other go’. We ’o what we want, and we have no ’uties except to ’o what benefits us. But tell me, where is your ship?’

“I was suspicious. I did not want to tell him where our ship was, so I lied: ‘We are shipwrecked. Our ship has been broken by Poseidon, god of the sea.’

“Hearing that, the Cyclops grabbed two of my men, knocked their heads against the rocky floor of his cave, dashing out their brains, and then ate them raw. We were horrified. We prayed to Zeus, god of *xenia*, but we heard no reply. Having filled his belly, the Cyclops slept.

“My first thought was to kill the Cyclops as he slept, but I could not. We were trapped inside the cavern, and all of us together could not move the boulder that blocked the opening of the cave. If I had drawn my sword and killed the Cyclops, we would have been trapped in the cave with his decomposing corpse. And once we had eaten all the cheeses and all the animals inside the cave, we would have starved to death.

“The next morning, the Cyclops awoke and milked his ewes, and then he killed and ate two more of my men. He drove the mature animals out of the cave so they could go to pasture, but he made sure to block the opening of the cave with the boulder so that we could not escape.

“We needed a plan. We could not do nothing and allow the Cyclops to devour us. I gave orders. We found a club that the Cyclops had in the cave—it was big enough to be the mast of a ship with twenty oars. We cut off six feet of the club, and we planed it to make it smooth. I myself sharpened one end of the club to a sharp point. We hardened the point in a fire, and then we hid our new weapon well. By lot we chose four good men to help me that night as the Cyclops slept.

“That evening the Cyclops returned to the cave. He drove all of his animals into the cave, blocked the opening with the boulder, performed his chores, and then ate two more of my men. I poured some of my wine—my gift to my host—into a mixing-bowl and offered it to the Cyclops, saying, ‘Drink this fine wine. I brought it as a gift. I had hoped to meet a friendly host, but you have been the opposite of friendly. Instead of making your guests a meal, you have made your guests your meal!’

“The Cyclops took the wine and drank, and then praised the wine, ‘This is ambrosia, the drink of the gods. More! Give me another bowlful! And tell me your name—I will give a guest-gift to you.’

“I gave the Cyclops another bowlful of wine. He drank three bowlfuls—enough to cloud his brain and make him drunk and sleepy. I said to him, ‘You want to know my name, Cyclops? I will tell you, but give me a guest-gift. My name is Nomad, wanderer of the sea.’

“‘Your name is Noma?’ the Cyclops replied. ‘I will give a guest-gift to Noma. I will eat your men first. I will eat you last of all. That is the guest-gift I will give to you.’

“Having said that, the Cyclops fell down drunk and vomited up chunks of human flesh mixed with wine. Then he slept.

“My men and I got out the sharpened log hardened in fire, and we put it in fire again—to make it red-hot. Then I told my men, ‘Be brave. We can’t afford to be cowards now.’ We then

drove the red-hot stake into the sleeping Cyclops' eye—I myself directed the point into his eye and used all my strength to drive the stake deep. The eye sizzled and blood ran from the socket. The Cyclops awoke, roaring with pain, and he grabbed the stake and pulled it from his eye.

“The neighboring Cyclopes arrived to see if he needed help, but I was too clever for them. I had foreseen what would happen and had planned a trick. The Cyclopes shouted, ‘Polyphemus, what man now is hurting you?’

“As I had foreseen, Polyphemus, the one-eyed Cyclops who had been keeping us captive, replied, ‘Noma’ now is hurting me.’ The other Cyclopes replied, ‘If no man now is hurting you, then the go’s must be angry at you and are sending you an illness. Pray to your father, Posei’on, for help.’ Then they left.

“Polyphemus wanted revenge. When it was time to take his animals to pasture, he moved the boulder from the opening of the cave and he squatted in the opening and used his hands to feel whatever left his cave. He hoped to catch my men and me and kill us, but I was too smart for him. I tied rams together—three rams were enough to camouflage one of my men so that they could escape the hands of the Cyclops and escape from the cave. I myself hid under the oldest and the biggest of the rams, leaving the cave last of all.

“Polyphemus felt the back of the old ram, and with newfound sympathy learned from suffering said, ‘Ol’ ram, why are you the last of the flock to leave the cave? When you were younger, you were the first of the flock to reach the pasture and feast on grass. When you were younger, you were the first of the flock to hea’ for home in the evening. Now you are last of all. Why? ’o you mourn for your master, whose eye has been put out by Noma’, the coward’ who got me ’runk and attacked me while I was asleep? I will have my revenge against him. He will not escape retribution. How I want to kill him!’

“Polyphemus let the ram—and me—go. When I was out of the cave, I left the ram and gathered my men together and we drove Polyphemus’ flocks to my ship—the Cyclops was floundering, unused to being blind. The crewmembers we had left behind with the ship mourned the men who had died, but quickly loaded the animals on board our ship. We set sail.

“But I spoke when I should have remained silent. I yelled to Polyphemus, ‘You devoured the men of a captain who is no coward! You ate your guests, and now you have been paid back!’

“Furious, Polyphemus grabbed a boulder and hurled it in the direction of my voice. It fell past my ship, and the wave it made drove us toward Polyphemus. My men rowed frantically to save their lives.

“Again, I taunted the Cyclops, although my men urged me not to, saying, ‘We almost died. Why risk death a second time? If he had heard us when we were close to shore, he would have killed us all!’

“But I insisted on taking the credit for my exploit. I yelled to the Cyclops, ‘Do you want to know who blinded you? It was I, Odysseus, son of Laertes. My home is Ithaca.’

“The Cyclops moaned, ‘Once I heard a prophecy that O’ysseus would blind me. I have always looked for him, but I expected him to be a giant, a magnificent warrior, not a puny human. If you return, O’ysseus, I will give you a guest-gift. My father, Posei’on, will heal my eye if he wants to.’

“I was not about to return to the Cyclops’ shore. I shouted at him, ‘I wish that you were dead! I hope that your eye is never healed!’

“Polyphemus, angry, prayed to Poseidon, ‘Father, curse O’ysseus, son of Laertes. O’ysseus’ home is Ithaca. May he never return home. Or if he ’oes return home, let it be only after years of wandering, and let him find ’anger and trouble at home.’”

As soon as I heard the Cyclops’ prayer, I knew that I had made a mistake, thought Odysseus. If I had not told the Cyclops my identity, he would not have been able to pray to Poseidon and curse me. Poseidon may never have found out that it was me who blinded his son, and he would not have known to hate me.

“Poseidon heard the Cyclops’ prayer. Gods can do that. Polyphemus lifted and hurled another boulder. It fell short of my ship, and the wave it made pushed us across the water to our other ships. We landed, and we divided the Cyclops’ animals equally, so that all had a share. My crew voted to award me the big, old ram, which I sacrificed to Zeus, god of *xenia*, but the sacrifice did not move Zeus. He still plotted to destroy my ships and my men.

“We feasted, and then we slept. In the morning, we rowed away to new lands, mourning still for the men who had died.”

Chapter 10: Odysseus and Circe (Odyssey)

“Next we reached the island over which lorded Aeolus, god of the winds, who welcomed us. Aeolus and his wife and his six daughters and six sons live happily in his palace, feasting continually. Aeolus asked me for news of Troy as he hosted us for one whole month, and when we left he gave me the best possible guest-gift: a sack in which all the contrary winds were tied up. The only wind left out of the sack was the one that would blow my ship straight to home—my men and I would see Ithaca once more!

“For nine days and nights we sailed, with me as pilot—I would not trust that job to anyone but myself. I even saw the smoke rising from the fires burning on Ithaca, and then I was so weary that I fell into a deep sleep. My crewmembers—greedy as they were—began to complain among themselves: ‘Odysseus gets heaps of treasure from Troy, and he gets a guest-gift from Aeolus. We get nothing.’ Another of my crew suggested, ‘Let’s open the sack that Aeolus gave Odysseus and see what’s inside.’ Bad luck—they opened the sack and the contrary winds stormed out and blew us away from Ithaca and back to the island of Aeolus. He was not pleased to see me, saying, ‘Why are you here, Odysseus? How could anything keep you from reaching Ithaca? Do the gods hate you?’ I replied, ‘It was my crewmembers—they untied the sack.’ Aeolus told me, ‘Get away from here, and don’t expect any more help from me. If the gods hate you that much, it would be a crime for me to help you.’

“I pleaded, but Aeolus would not be moved. We had to leave without the guest-gift that I wanted so much. We traveled for six days and nights, rowing all the way, until we reached the land of the Laestrygonians. They had a fine harbor, and all of the other ships pulled in close to shore. I alone ordered my ship to remain outside the harbor. I have learned to be cautious in this world.

“I sent three men to scout the land. They met the daughter of Antiphates, King of the Laestrygonians, a huge girl, much larger than our girls. She took them to the palace and summoned her father, who grabbed one of the men and tore him to pieces so he could eat him.

“The other two men ran for their lives, but the king summoned his Laestrygonians, who gave chase. The Laestrygonians hurled boulders from the cliffs, breaking the ships. Other Laestrygonians waded in the water, spearing men as if they were fish, to take them home and eat them.

“I fled to safety, cutting the ropes that moored us and yelling at my men, ‘Row quickly now—or die!’ We made it to safety; all of the other ships and men were lost. We mourned the loss of our companions, but we were glad that we had escaped.

“Next we reached Aea, the island of the goddess Circe. We sailed into a harbor and stayed for two days and nights, mourning for our lost companions. Then I went exploring. I climbed to

a lookout point and surveyed the land. In the distance, I saw smoke rising from a palace. I didn't want to go to the palace until my men were fed, so I returned to my ship. On the way, I killed a stag, meat enough for all of my men and me.

"I carried the meat to my men, and then I said to them, 'Be brave. We aren't dead yet. Let's eat and drink.' We cooked the meat, feasted and drank wine, and slept. The next morning I told my crewmembers about the smoke I had seen. Thinking of the Laestrygonians, they regarded the smoke as a bad sign—a sign of another race of cannibals who wished to feast on our bodies.

"But I divided everyone into two groups. I was the leader of one group, and Eurylochus was the leader of the other group. We shook lots, and it fell to Eurylochus and his men to investigate the house of the rising smoke. I stayed by my one remaining ship with the other group of men.

"Eurylochus and his men found Circe's palace. Mountain lions and wolves—beasts that she had bewitched—guarded it. The mountain lions and wolves did not attack, but they watched Eurylochus and his men. Circe was inside, singing as she worked at her loom. Eurylochus was hanging back, suspicious, so Polites took command and called to Circe, who invited all of them inside.

"Eurylochus alone stayed outside of her palace. Inside, Circe fed the men a potion, and then she waved a wand and transformed them into pigs, which she drove into a pigsty. Only the minds of the men remained human.

"Eurylochus ran back to me and my ship and told me what he had witnessed: 'I saw the men go into the palace with the singing female—whether she was immortal goddess or mortal woman, I do not know. The men never came out of the palace again, although I waited outside a very long time.'

"I armed myself with sword and bow and arrows and prepared to go in search of my men, but Eurylochus begged me to set sail and leave the men behind. I refused. He begged me not to make him return to the palace, so I ordered him to stay behind at the ship. I set off, alone. I was not going to leave the island without my men.

"As I drew near the palace, Hermes, the messenger of the gods, appeared and gave me advice: 'So, friend, you go in search of your men. They are with Circe, turned by her into swine. Without my help, you also would fall under her enchantments. I will help you. Here is an herb called moly that will keep you safe from Circe's enchantments. Take it with you into her palace. She will give you a potion, and then she will draw her wand to enchant you. When she does that, draw your sword and rush at her. She will invite you to go to bed with her. If you want her to release your men from her enchantment, take her to bed. But first make her swear that she will do nothing to hurt you.'

"Hermes left, and I went to Circe's palace. I called to her, and she invited me inside. She mixed a potion for me to drink, but the herb that Hermes had given me protected me. She then

waved her wand, saying, 'Now, pig, go into the sty with the other pigs.' I drew my sword and rushed at her. Goddesses are immortal and cannot die, but they do feel pain.

"Circe avoided the blade of my sword and fell at my feet, begging me not to stab her. She said, 'Why didn't my potion and wand have any effect on you? You must be Odysseus. Hermes told me that you would arrive one day. Put away your sword, and let's go to bed.'

"I remembered what Hermes had told me. 'Go to bed with you?' I said. 'Why? So you can get me naked and vulnerable? You turned my men into swine, and you tried to do the same thing with me. I won't go to bed with you unless you swear an oath that you will not hurt me.'

"Circe swore the oath, and I took her to bed. Her handmaids prepared a meal, and after Circe and I had finished making love, Circe gave me a bath and then invited me to eat. But I, thinking of my men, could not eat. I said to her, 'How could any man eat, knowing that his men are still in the shape of swine? If you want me to eat and drink, give them back their human shapes.'

"Circe went to her pigsty, rubbed an ointment on each pig, and my men returned to their human shapes. Each man was thankful to me for not abandoning them on the island. Circe herself invited me to get my other men and bring them to her palace.

"I did as she asked. I returned to the ship and found my men worried—but glad that I was alive and glad at the good news that I brought them. I told him, 'Let us go to the palace of Circe and enjoy her hospitality.' But Eurylochus was overly cautious; he was still worried about Circe and her tricks. He did not want to be turned into a pig.

"I wanted to kill Eurylochus right by the ship—a crewmember should obey his captain. But my men persuaded me not to, advising instead that I leave him by the ship if he did not want to go to Circe's palace and feast. We left for Circe's palace—and Eurylochus followed, reluctantly.

"Circe had bathed the men left behind in her palace, and now they were feasting. We all rejoiced to be together again, safe. Circe said to me, 'Eat and drink now. All of you have had a long, hard journey. Now it is time to relax.'

"We stayed at Circe's palace—for an entire year. It was my companions who grew homesick and urged me to set sail again—it was time to look for our homecoming. I had delayed too long. I knew that my men were right.

"That night I entreated Circe to let us go. I did not want to make her angry, so I made it clear that my men were the ones who were restless and wanted to leave, but I also said that I too longed for my homecoming.

"She told me, 'Leave if you wish—I won't hold you here against your will. But before you return home, you must make another journey. You must visit Persephone's land—the Land of the Dead. There you must see Tiresias, the blind Theban prophet who can tell you what lies ahead for you. Although he is dead, his spirit has retained its wits. The other ghosts of the dead have lost their wisdom.'

“This was not a journey I wished to make. I asked her, ‘Circe, what living man has ever reached the Land of the Dead in a ship?’

“Circe gave me directions and advice. She said, ‘To reach the Land of the Dead is easy. Simply spread your sail and let the North wind blow you out into the Ocean and to Persephone’s land. Beach your ship and find the rivers that flow into a flood of grief — a River of Fire and a River of Tears flow into Acheron, the Flood of Grief. That is where you need to be. When you arrive there, dig a trench, and all around it pour milk and honey and wine and then pour barley—these are the offerings to the dead. Vow that once you are home on Ithaca you will slaughter a heifer and offer treasures to the dead. In addition, vow to sacrifice a black ram for Tiresias alone. Then slaughter a ram and a black ewe, but as you do so look toward the ocean. Let their blood flow into the pit. The ghosts of the dead will smell the blood and come out of the pit of the Underworld. Order your men to skin the carcasses of the sheep you have slaughtered and to say prayers to Persephone and her husband: Hades, God of the Underworld. You, Odysseus, draw your sword and keep the ghosts of the dead away from the blood until you have talked to Tiresias and heard his prophecy. He will tell you what you need to know, what you need to do, and what you need to avoid doing. He will tell you how you may reach home.’

“Dawn came, I dressed, and I spoke to my men: ‘Today we leave. Let us set sail.’ But one man did not sail with us. Elpenor had drunk too much. To find a cool place to sleep in the hot night, he had climbed up to Circe’s roof, but at dawn, still drunk, he got up and fell off the roof. He broke his neck and died. His soul reached the Land of the Dead before we did.

“As we were walking to the ship, I gave my men the news: ‘We are not sailing for home. Circe has set for us a different destination. We must visit Persephone’s land: the Land of the Dead. We go there to consult Tiresias, the blind Theban prophet.’

“My men groaned, but it did them no good. Moaning and groaning never does. When we arrived at the ship, we saw that Circe had prepared everything for our voyage, including giving us a ram and a black ewe to sacrifice. The gods and goddesses can move quickly and silently.”

Chapter 11: Odysseus in the Land of the Dead (Odyssey)

“We launched the ship, and filled with grief, embarked on our journey to the Land of the Dead. Circe sent us a favorable wind, and we sailed quickly past the inhabited lands and into the Ocean. When we reached Persephone’s land, we disembarked and found the rivers that flow into a flood of grief. There I dug a trench and after I had made all the vows that Circe had advised me to make, I sacrificed the ram and the black ewe, spilling their blood into the trench. The ghosts of the dead smelled blood and came out of the Land of the Dead, but I drew my sword and would not let them drink blood—I first wanted to speak to Tiresias.

“But first I saw my crewmember, the newly dead Elpenor, whose corpse we had not yet buried because we wanted to undertake this important journey. I called to him, ‘Elpenor, how did your ghost arrive here so much faster than our ship?’

“‘I died too soon,’ the ghost of Elpenor replied. ‘I slept on the roof of Circe’s palace but fell from her roof and broke my neck. Then my ghost traveled here. But when you leave Persephone’s land, I beg you to return to Circe’s island and hold a funeral for me. Until you give me a decent funeral, I cannot enter the Land of the Dead but must remain just beyond its boundary.’

“I promised him, ‘I will do that for you.’

“Then I saw the ghost of my mother, Anticleia. Until this moment, I had not known that she was dead. I grieved, but even so I would not let her drink blood—not until I had questioned Tiresias.

“Tiresias arrived, and he immediately recognized me, saying, ‘Odysseus, why are you here? Seeking prophecy and knowledge of the future? I have my wits in the afterlife, but I need to drink blood in order to regain the gift of prophecy.’

“I allowed him to drink blood, and then he began to prophesy: ‘You hope for an easy journey home, but you have made Poseidon angry at you. You blinded the one-eyed Cyclops Polyphemus, his son. Poseidon will make your journey home difficult. Still, you may make it home quickly, despite difficulties, if you can control yourself and your crewmembers. You will reach Thrinacia, the island of the Sun-god, where you will find his immortal cattle and sheep. Leave the immortal animals alone. If you do, you and your men will reach home. But if you harm the animals in any way, your ship will be destroyed and your men will die. You will return home to Ithaca, but not quickly, and you will be alone and you will find a world of trouble waiting for you. You will find young men courting your wife, trying to marry her although you are still alive. No doubt you are intelligent and brave enough to kill all of the suitors—either by trickery or in open battle. After you have killed the suitors, you must undertake a journey. You must travel inland while carrying an oar. When you meet a people who have no knowledge of the sea and who call the oar

a winnowing fan, plant the oar in the ground and sacrifice to Poseidon. By carrying knowledge of Poseidon to a people who know nothing of him, you will make peace with Poseidon and the god will no longer be your enemy. At that time, you may return home to Ithaca. You will meet your death there—it will be an easy death. When you die, you will die of old age, surrounded by family and friends. I have told you the truth.’

“I replied, ‘Tiresias, all that you have said is fated to occur, but I have one question for you. I see the ghost of my mother before me, but she does not recognize me or speak to me. What can I do to have a conversation with her?’

“Tiresias replied, ‘It’s very simple. Any ghosts you allow to drink blood will recover their wits for a short time—long enough for you to speak with them. If you do not allow a ghost to drink blood, that ghost will return to the Land of the Dead.’

“Tiresias left me then and returned to the Land of the Dead, and I allowed the ghost of my mother to drink blood. She recognized me and cried, saying, ‘Why are you here—you are still alive! Have you just left Troy? Have you been home to Ithaca yet to see your wife?’

“I replied, ‘Mother, I have not yet been home. First I had to visit the Land of the Dead to see Tiresias and to hear him prophesy. But tell me how you died. Did you die a slow death of illness? Or did the goddess Artemis bring a quick death to you? Tell me about my father and my son. Is someone else King of Ithaca now because people do not think I will ever return home? Tell me about my wife. Has she married someone else by now?’

“My mother told me, ‘I am sure that Penelope has not remarried. No one else is King of Ithaca. Telemachus is the head of your house. As for your father, he stays on a farm, working hard in his old age, wearing rags, and grieving for you. As for me, I died out of grief for you. I so longed for your return, with you gone so long, that I died.’

“I wanted to embrace my mother. Three times I tried to hug her in my arms, but she was insubstantial. Three times my arms closed on nothing. She was a ghost. I said to her, ‘Mother, I long to hug you. Are you a wraith that Persephone has sent to torment me?’

“My mother replied, ‘No, I am not a wraith sent to torment you. This insubstantial form is simply what ghosts are like in the Land of the Dead. This is what death is. The body is gone, and all that remains is a ghost. But you must want to return soon to the Land of the Living. Go soon, and remember all that you have learned so that you can tell Penelope.’

“Then many famous women of the past came to me. I wanted to speak to them, so I allowed only one at a time to drink blood. I saw and spoke to many famous women. I saw and spoke to Alcmena, the mother of Heracles and wife to Amphitryon. Zeus wanted to sleep with her, so he disguised himself as her husband. Looking exactly like Amphitryon, Zeus slept with her and she gave birth to Heracles, the greatest hero Greece has ever produced, at the same time she gave birth to Iphicles, the son of Amphitryon.

“I saw and spoke to Megara, the wife of Heracles. I also saw and spoke to Epicaste, the mother of Oedipus. Horror—she married her son, Oedipus, who had killed his father, her husband. I also saw and spoke to Leda, the mother of the twins Castor and Polydeuces, who after their deaths, take turns being alive. When one is alive for a day, the other is dead.

“So many famous women I saw in the Land of the Dead, I cannot name them all. But it is late now; it is time for sleep. I could even sleep on a ship as it carries me home.”

Odysseus thought, *This is a perfect time to stop telling my story. Queen Arete has much influence among the Phaeacians, and I have been careful to speak about the women she is most interested to hear about. I have also been careful to tell an interesting story to the Phaeacians. In addition, I have been careful not to tell everything. For example, I have not spoken about seeing any of the dead heroes of the Trojan War. If I have told my story well enough, King Alcinous and the other nobles will want me to continue telling my story. They won't want me to go to sleep now and leave for home in the morning. If that were to happen, they would never hear the rest of my story. Instead, they will encourage me—with more gifts—to stay awake all night and tell them what else I saw in the Land of the Dead—and what happened afterward. I will be able to return to Ithaca with more possessions. My twenty years away from Ithaca will not have been spent without gaining material wealth.*

“Queen Arete, who had enjoyed hearing about the famous women in the Land of the Dead, spoke first: ‘Phaeacians, isn’t our guest an impressive storyteller and an impressive man? Let’s not be quick to send him on his way, and let’s be generous in giving him gifts. We are a wealthy people, and he washed up on our shore with nothing.’

“Echeneus, advisor to the king, said, ‘Our queen speaks wisely. We should do as our queen says, if the king agrees.’

“King Alcinous said, ‘Yes, by all means, let us give gifts to our guest, who must stay here until we can gather all of his gifts.’

“I replied, ‘King Alcinous, now, if you should wish me to stay here for an entire year and then send me home with many gifts, I would be willing. If I return to Ithaca laden with many gifts, I will be much more respected than I would if I should return home with empty hands.’

“King Alcinous told me, ‘Odysseus, you are an honest man. Frauds rove the world, but you are not one of them. You tell your story like a bard! Please tell me, when you were in the Land of the Dead, did you see any of your fallen comrades from the Trojan War? Please keep telling us your story—I want to hear it all.’

“‘King Alcinous,’ I replied, ‘there is a time for sleep and a time for storytelling. Since you want to hear my story, I will continue. I will tell not only my own story, but the story of a leader who escaped death during the war, only to be killed at home.’

“After the ghosts of the famous women had left, I saw Agamemnon, leader of the Greeks during the Trojan War. I had not known that he was dead. He drank blood, and he recognized

me. He wanted to embrace me, but he was a ghost so he could not. I wept. I said to him, 'Famous Agamemnon, why are you in the Land of the Dead? Did you drown during your voyage home? Were you killed as you tried to sack another city?'

"He replied, 'Odysseus, I did not drown during my voyage home. I made it safely home, but I was not safe at home. My wife, Clytemnestra, had taken a lover named Aegisthus while I was at Troy. Together, they killed me. Aegisthus invited me to his palace for a feast. As I was eating, he slaughtered me. All of my comrades also died in his palace. He showed no mercy. You, Odysseus, have seen hundreds of men killed in battle, but this slaughter would have made you feel pity. As I lay dying, Clytemnestra killed Cassandra, the woman I was awarded after the fall of Troy. As I lay pierced by the sword of Aegisthus, Clytemnestra turned away from me. When I was dead, she did not close my mouth or my eyelids.'

"Agamemnon continued, 'Such is the way of vengeful women. They have no pity on those they slaughter! Clytemnestra also ruined her own reputation throughout the ages, and she makes it much harder to believe that any woman can be honest, faithful, and true.'

"I said to Agamemnon, 'Your family has suffered much at the hands of the gods. So many of us died to get Helen for Menelaus, your brother. While we were dying, Clytemnestra was plotting how to murder you.'

"'That's true,' Agamemnon said. 'So learn from my death. Don't trust a woman, even if you are married to her. Never tell her everything. Still, Odysseus, your wife is unlikely to murder you. Penelope is wise. When we left to go to Troy, Penelope was very young. She was nursing her newborn son. That boy is becoming a young man. How fortunate he is—he will see his father returning home. I myself never saw my son. Clytemnestra killed me before I could see him. Remember what happened to me. Be cautious—don't trust a woman! But have you heard anything of my son?'

"I replied, 'I have heard nothing. I have run across no news of him during my travels.'

Odysseus thought, *At the time I visited the Land of the Dead, Agamemnon's son, Orestes, had not killed Aegisthus yet. Orestes' fame had not yet spread throughout the world. Of course, if he had killed Aegisthus, Aegisthus' ghost would have told Agamemnon how he had died.*

"We grieved together, and then Achilles, the greatest warrior of the Trojan War, strode up to me. He was pleased to see me and said, 'What are you planning for your next exploit? Can you ever top visiting the Land of the Dead while you are still alive? Why are you here?'

"I replied, 'Achilles, I needed to consult the ghost of Tiresias, the Theban prophet, to get advice on how to reach home. I have not been home since I left to fight at Troy. I have had many troubles. But Achilles, you have been blest! While you were alive, we honored you. And now that you are dead, you are honored in the Land of the Dead. You should not grieve at being dead, Achilles.'

“Achilles replied, ‘Don’t praise death to *me*. I have experienced both life and death. I know this to be true: Being the slave of an impoverished farmer in the Land of the Living is vastly preferable to having the very highest status in the Land of the Dead. Being dead sucks. But can you tell me about my son? Did he ever fight at Troy? Did he become a hero? Can you tell me about my old father, Peleus? Is he still respected at home, or do people take advantage of him because he has grown old? I wish I were alive again, even for a day, so I could see my father and teach his tormentors not to victimize an old king.’

“I replied, ‘Achilles, I can’t tell you anything about your father, but I do know the story of your son, Neoptolemus. I myself brought him to Troy to fight. He understood the strategy of war—only old wise Nestor and I were better than he at devising plans. As a fighter, he was always in the front ranks. He killed and killed again. He even killed the magnificent hero Eurypylos, the leader of the Ceteans. When we entered the Trojan Horse, many warriors were afraid—what if the trick did not work? Your son was not afraid—he was eager to sack Troy. Even after fighting so hard before and during the sack of Troy, his body remained without scars—he was such a skillful warrior that he could fight yet avoid wounds that scar.’

“Achilles was proud of his son. He strode off, thinking of his son and glorying. Now all of the other dead came crowding around the blood—with one exception. The ghost of Great Ajax kept his distance. Great Ajax was still angry at me. After Achilles died, his mother, the goddess Thetis, wished to give his armor that was made by the god Hephaestus to one of the Greek warriors. They voted. I came in first; Great Ajax came in second. Great Ajax was so angry that he lost his sanity. He tortured and killed sheep, thinking that they were Agamemnon and I. When he returned to his senses and realized what he had done, he was so ashamed and felt so dishonored that he committed suicide. I wish that I had not won the armor. It would be better by far for Great Ajax to live.

“I called to Great Ajax, ‘Please stop being angry at me. The gods tormented the Greeks by setting up the contest for the arms of Achilles. We lost a mighty warrior when you died. We grieved, and we gave you a funeral as magnificent as the funeral we gave Achilles. Please talk to me, Great Ajax.’

“Still angry at me, he did not answer, but walked away.

“I saw still more illustrious dead. I saw Minos, the King of Crete who was renowned for his justice. I saw the hunter Orion.

“I also saw famous sinners. Tityus had once kidnapped and tried to rape Leto, the consort of Zeus and mother of Apollo and Artemis. For this infamous deed, he had been sentenced to lie chained on the ground as two vultures eternally dug into his body and ate his liver.

“And I saw Tantalus, so proud that he tried to fool the gods. He killed and cooked his own son, Pelops, and he put the meat into a stew that he served the gods. The gods knew the trick,

however, so they did not eat the stew—with the exception of the goddess Demeter, who ate part of Pelops' shoulder. Outraged, the gods brought Pelops to life again and gave him a shoulder made out of marble, and they sentenced Tantalus to eternal torment in the Land of the Dead. He stands in a stream of water, and branches heavily laden with ripe fruit are overhead, yet Tantalus is eternally thirsty and hungry. Whenever Tantalus bends over to drink from the stream, the water dries up. Whenever Tantalus reaches overhead to seize a piece of fruit, a breeze blows the fruit just out of his reach.

“And I saw Sisyphus, a trickster who even tricked the God of Death. When Sisyphus was on his deathbed, he ordered his wife not to give his corpse a funeral. After his death, his spirit went to the Land of the Dead and complained to Hades, King of the Dead, that he had not yet had a funeral. Hades allowed him to return to the Land of the Living so that he could tell his wife to give him a funeral, but once he was back in the Land of the Living, he refused to return to the Land of the Dead. He lived to an advanced old age and then died again. Now he is punished to forever roll a boulder up a hill. Just as he reaches the top of the hill, he loses control of the boulder and it rolls back to the bottom of the hill again. Sisyphus can never accomplish his goal.

“And I saw Heracles—his mortal part, of course, since his immortal part is among the gods on Olympus. Such accomplishments that man is known for! He immediately recognized me, and he hailed me, ‘Odysseus! You’re unlucky like me. Like me, you had to go to the Land of the Dead while you were still alive.’”

King Alcinous and the other Phaeacians thought, *Heracles himself recognized Odysseus! The greatest hero ever of the Greeks treated Odysseus like an equal! Wow!*

“Heracles continued, ‘Like you, I was luckless while I was alive. I had to slave for a man who was not my equal. I had to visit the Land of the Dead so that I could take Cerberus, the three-headed dog of Hell, to the Land of the Living.’”

“Heracles then left and returned to his home among the dead. I hoped to see more heroes, but so many dead crowded around the blood that I was overcome with dread and horror. I was afraid that Persephone, the Queen of the Dead, might send some monster to keep me there and not allow me to return to the Land of the Living. I returned to my ship, and we set sail.”

Chapter 12: Odysseus and the Cattle of the Sun-god (Odyssey)

“We returned to Circe’s island, and there we buried Elpenor. We burned his body, and we heaped earth over his bones to create a burial-mound.

“Circe welcomed us back to her island: ‘Twice-dying men, come and eat and drink. But tomorrow, you must undertake your journey home. I will advise you where to sail.’

“After we had feasted, Circe drew me aside and gave me advice. No easy journey would we have, but instead we would face many dangers.

“Circe told me, ‘First you will come to the island of the Sirens, who enchant men with their lovely song. Sailors who hear their song crash their ships on the Sirens’ island, whose shores are strewn with the bones of men. Sail quickly past the Sirens! Your men must not hear their song. Soften beeswax and plug their ears with it. But if you must hear their song, have your men tie you to the mast so that you don’t jump overboard and swim to their island and die. Tell your men that when you order them to untie you, they must tie you tighter.’

“Circe continued, ‘Next you have a choice of routes to take. On one side are the Crashing Rocks. If you try to go between them, they will crash together and destroy you, your men, and your ship. No ship has ever gone between them and survived, except for the *Argo*, which was piloted by Jason. The only way the *Argo* and the Argonauts made it between the Crashing Rocks was through the divine aid of Hera, wife of Zeus. She sped the *Argo* between the Crashing Rocks.

“Your other route is between Scylla and Charybdis. Scylla is a man-eating monster with twelve legs and six necks. If you sail too close to Scylla, she will shoot her six long necks out of the cavern she lives in, and each of her mouths will seize a man to devour. Charybdis is a whirlpool. If you sail too close to Charybdis, it will suck your ship down into the ocean and destroy it. It is better to sail close to Scylla. You will lose six men, but you will not lose your entire ship and all the men on board.’

“But, Circe,’ I asked, ‘isn’t there some way to fight Scylla so that I don’t lose any men?’

“Odysseus,’ Circe replied, ‘sometimes you try to do more than mortal men can do. Scylla is not mortal; she is an immortal monster. You cannot stop her from devouring six of your men if you sail by the cliff where she lives. No. Simply row as fast as you can, so you don’t lose more than six men.

“Next you will reach the island of Thrinacia, where the cattle and sheep of the Sun-god graze. Do not harm his cattle and sheep. They never breed, and they never die. If you do not harm his cattle and sheep, you will still face hardships, but you and your men will reach Ithaca. However,

if you or your men harm the cattle and sheep of the Sun-god, your ship will be lost and your men will die. And if you survive, you will return to Ithaca alone and in danger.’

“When Circe finished speaking to me, dawn arrived, and I went directly to my ship and we set sail. Circe sent us a favorable wind to help us on our way. I told my crewmembers, ‘I will tell you everything—everything that Circe told me. Dangers await us. We will come to the island of the Sirens. Circe said that only I would hear their song. You must tie me to the mast so that I cannot jump overboard, swim to their island, and die.’ I did not tell them everything, as I had promised. I did not tell them about Scylla—I feared a mutiny.

“As we approached the island of the Sirens, I melted beeswax and stopped the ears of the crewmembers with it so that they could not hear the song of the Sirens. They tied me tightly to the mast. I heard the song of the Sirens: ‘Come to us, Odysseus. Your fame has reached the sky. Hear our song and become wise. We know what happened at Troy, and we know what will happen on the Earth.’

“I wanted my crewmembers to untie me. They tied me tighter to the mast. They rowed quickly to escape from danger. Once we were past the island of the Sirens, they removed the beeswax from their ears and untied me.

“We avoided the Crashing Rocks—we went the other route, the one that lay between Scylla and Charybdis. I told my men, ‘We will get through this alive. You see the whirlpool. Stay clear of it. Sail close to this cliff, away from the whirlpool.’ I did not mention Scylla. I remembered that Circe had told me that it was useless to try to stop Scylla from devouring six of my men, but I put on my armor, got my spears, and watched and waited. We saw Charybdis suck water down, down, down, and then vomit it up again. While we were watching Charybdis, Scylla struck. Each of her six long necks snaked down from her lair and grabbed one of my men. They shrieked my name, they screamed for help, but I could do nothing. She ate them raw. I have seen much evil in my life, but this made me feel the worst.

“Next we reached the island of the Sun-god. I could hear the lowing of the cattle and the bleats of the sheep. I remembered the warnings that I had heard, both from Tiresias and from Circe. I did not want to land on the island. I told my crewmembers, ‘Race past this island! Danger lies here! So Tiresias and Circe have told me!’

“Eurylochus opposed me, saying, ‘Odysseus, you are hardy, but your men are exhausted and they need rest and a hot meal. We need time on land so that we can cook and sleep without having to worry about the ship. Let us land on the island for just one night. In the morning, we will set sail and leave.’

“My crewmembers cheered Eurylochus. I feared trouble. I said, ‘Eurylochus, you and the men wish to land here against my orders. I am outnumbered. Promise me something. Cattle and sheep

are on the island. Promise me not to harm them. We have food on board ship—the food that Circe gave us.’

“They promised, and we landed. The men ate and slept, but during the night the winds changed, and we could not set sail in the morning. Again, I warned my crewmembers not to harm the cattle and the sheep of the Sun-god. For an entire month we stayed on the island as the winds blew in the wrong direction for us to set sail. We ran out of food. We tried to hunt and to fish, but we had no luck. I went inland to be alone to pray to the gods for help. I prayed, and then I slept.

“While I was gone, Eurylochus misled the men, telling them, ‘No death is a pleasant death, but to die of hunger is the worst way to go. Here we see cattle and sheep. Let us sacrifice them to the gods and eat. When—if—we make it home to Ithaca, we will build a magnificent temple to the Sun-god. But if the Sun-god wants revenge and sinks our ship so that we all drown, I prefer to die that way than to die of hunger.’

“Immediately, they began to sacrifice the cattle and the sheep of the Sun-god. They roasted the meat. I awoke, I smelled the meat, and I knew what they had done. They had acted like bad guests. I groaned, but I could do nothing. The cattle and the sheep were immortal. Their skins lay on the ground, but they moved, creeping around. Their meat roasted on spits, but the meat lowed and bleated. I complained to Zeus about the actions of my men and the disaster that I knew would occur. The Sun-god quickly found out about the sacrifice of his herds and flocks. He complained, ‘Father Zeus, look at this outrage! The crew of Odysseus has sacrificed my cattle and my sheep. I want revenge! Unless I get satisfaction, I will no longer shine my light on the Earth. Instead, I will go down to the Land of the Dead and shine my light there.’

“Zeus quickly promised, ‘This sacrifice of what is yours shall be avenged. Keep shining your light on the Earth. I will destroy these impious men’s ship with a thunderbolt.’

“So Calypso told me when I was on her island.

“I upbraided my men, but I could not undo the damage that they had done. For six days, they feasted on the meat of the cattle and sheep of the Sun-god. I did not eat. Then the winds changed, and we set sail.

“As he had promised, Zeus sent a storm against us and hit my ship with a thunderbolt. The mast fell and crushed the skull of my helmsman. My men fell into the sea, I with them. I made a raft from some of the wreckage. Another wind drove me to Charybdis. As Charybdis sucked my raft underwater, I grabbed a branch growing from the side of a cliff. I hung on until Charybdis vomited my raft to the surface of the water again. In the evening, a judge goes home after a day of dispensing justice, and in the evening, Charybdis vomited my raft. Zeus’ work as judge was done: My ship was destroyed and my men were dead. I climbed aboard the floating timbers. Scylla did not see me—thanks to Zeus, the father of gods and men. For nine days and nights, I drifted. On

the tenth day, I reached the island of Calypso. I have already told you about Calypso. There is no need to repeat the story that I have already told so clearly.

“And so I end the tale of my Great Wanderings.”

Chapter 13: Odysseus Arrives on Ithaca (Odyssey)

The Phaeacians had been listening intently to Odysseus' story, and now King Alcinous said, "Odysseus, we will make sure that you will arrive home safely. What's more, we will give you even more guest-gifts. Lords of Ithaca, let each of us give Odysseus a tripod and a cauldron. We will be able to recoup the cost of the guest-gifts by taxing the common people of our land."

The Phaeacian lords applauded the king and then went home to sleep. The next day, they arrived at the palace bearing tripods and cauldrons. The sailors stowed the guest-gifts on board ship.

King Alcinous gave a feast for everyone, and Demodocus sang, but Odysseus was eager to set sail for home. A farmer hard at work is eager for the day to end so that, weary, he can go home and eat. Odysseus was also eager to return home. When the sun set, he pleaded, "King Alcinous, please send me on my way. Make your offerings to the gods, and let your sailors and me set sail. May I be happy with what I find when I return home: a loyal wife and all of my loved ones safe. And may all Phaeacians find good fortune throughout their lives!"

King Alcinous ordered his herald, "Bring wine so that we can drink and then pray to Zeus, king of gods and men. Then Odysseus will go to his home."

The herald poured the wine, and Odysseus toasted the queen: "May good health attend you all your days until death, which comes to all mortals, arrives. I go home now, and I wish you good fortune and good family relationships all your life."

Odysseus walked to the ship with the herald as an escort, and Queen Arete sent along a sea-cloak, a shirt, the chest stuffed with guest-gifts, and food and wine. Everything was stowed on board the ship, and Odysseus climbed on board, lay down, and slept.

The sailors rowed quickly and reached Ithaca when the morning star rose. They entered a harbor where an olive tree grew by a cave. Two ways go into the cave: Mortals use one way, while nymphs use the other way. The way of mortals and the way of immortals are different.

The Phaeacian sailors lifted Odysseus, who was still asleep, out of their ship. They also lifted out all of his guest-gifts and placed them on shore by the olive tree. Then they set sail again and headed for their home.

Poseidon, still angry at Odysseus, witnessed all. He complained to Zeus, "Mortal men do not respect me. Look at the Phaeacians. I made it difficult for Odysseus to return home. I did not block his passage home forever—I would not go against fate and your orders. But look at what the Phaeacians do and have done! They have helped Odysseus return home safely with many valuable guest-gifts, and the Phaeacians do the same thing for other travelers. They are renowned

for their hospitality, and they sail any traveler who arrives on their island to his home, using *my* sea.”

Zeus replied, “The gods still respect you, Poseidon. You are among the oldest and the most powerful gods. Mortals count for little. Do to them whatever you would like to do.”

“I want revenge immediately,” Poseidon said. “I have held my anger back out of respect for you, the god of *xenia*. But now I will blast the Phaeacian ship to pieces, and then I will put a mountain in the harbor of the Phaeacians’ island so that they can’t sail travelers home anymore.”

Zeus advised, “Why not wait until the Phaeacian ship reaches its harbor and then turn it to stone as the people on the shore watch? Then you can put a mountain in the harbor of the Phaeacians’ island.”

Poseidon flew to the island of the Phaeacians. As the Phaeacian ship came into the harbor, Poseidon turned it to stone.

The Phaeacians on shore saw this and gasped, and King Alcinous stood up and addressed his people, “I remember a prophecy that my father made years ago. My father told me that Poseidon hated us because we used his sea to safely sail travelers to their homes. Poseidon felt that it should be up to him—not to mortals—whether someone sailed home safely. My father said that one day Poseidon would turn one of our ships into stone as it entered our port, and then Poseidon would put a mountain in our harbor, thus keeping us from safely returning travelers to their homes. Part of the prophecy has come true! Let us immediately sacrifice twelve bulls to Poseidon and pray to him not to put a mountain in our harbor. We will promise Poseidon that we will no longer safely return travelers to their homes using his sea. In the future, we will leave it to Poseidon whether or not travelers return home safely.”

Odysseus had no knowledge of this; he still slept soundly on Ithaca. He had wished only good, not evil, on the Phaeacians, yet his visit to their island had completely changed their way of living. No longer would they be renowned for their fast ships and for *xenia*. Perhaps Odysseus would not have been surprised that Zeus, the god of *xenia*, had allowed Poseidon, his brother, to do this. The gods have a touchy sense of pride and often care little about mortals.

On Ithaca, Odysseus suddenly woke up. He looked around, but he did not know where he was. The land he had been away from for twenty years was covered with fog. The fog was the work of Athena, who worried that Odysseus might wake up, run to his palace, and put himself in danger—but Odysseus was too intelligent to do that. Athena also wanted to meet Odysseus and plot strategy with him before he went to his palace.

Odysseus looked around and said, “Man of misery and son of pain. Where are you? Who lives here? Are they wild and do not follow the rules of *xenia*? Are they civilized and follow the rules of *xenia*?”

He noticed the guest-gifts piled by the olive tree and said, “The Phaeacians are partly honest, anyway. They did not steal my guest-gifts. But they did drop me off somewhere, I don’t know where. I hope that Zeus, the god of *xenia*, pays them back!”

He counted the guest-gifts—nothing was missing. But Odysseus still longed for his homecoming, not realizing that he was home—he was on Ithaca, at least, but more time would pass before he could be reunited with his family.

Athena, disguised as a shepherd boy holding a spear, appeared before Odysseus. He was happy to see someone, and he said to her, “Hello, you are the first person whom I have seen on this land. Help me to put these treasures—tripods, cauldrons, and chest—somewhere safe. Help me, also. Please tell me where I am. Am I on an island or the mainland?”

Athena replied, “This land is well known. It is rugged—good for goats, not for horses. Grain grows well here, and grapes and other food. This is Ithaca, and its name has traveled as far as Troy, which is very far from here.”

I am home on Ithaca, Odysseus thought, and he was happy. And yet a sense of sadness quickly followed. *I have wanted to see my day of homecoming, and yet I did not see my homecoming. I wanted to see the smoke rising from the fires on Ithaca. I wanted to see the island rising in the distance. I wanted to recognize the landmarks of Ithaca. I wanted to see the harbor. And I wanted to step off the ship onto the solid ground of Ithaca. I did not see my day of homecoming, but at last I am home.*

Odysseus said to the shepherd boy in front of him, “I think that I have heard of Ithaca. I come from Crete, and I am a fugitive. I killed a man there, and when you kill a man, that man’s relatives will try to kill you. I did kill him for a good reason. He tried to steal all the treasure that I had won fighting at Troy, where I declined to fight at the command of his father. Instead, I was the leader of my own men. I lay in wait for him with a friend, and I killed him with one thrust of my spear. I then begged a Phoenician crew to take my treasure and me away from Crete. I wanted to go to Pylos or to Elis. A wind blew them off course, and they dropped my treasure and me off here and then they returned to their home.”

Athena was amused by his lies. She touched his arm, and she transformed herself from shepherd boy to goddess. “You are a talented liar,” she said. “Not even here at your own home will you stop lying—you are the man of twists and turns. I also am known for my cunning: You were unable to recognize me in disguise. I have been watching out for you. When you were among the Phaeacians, I made sure that you were treated well. Now I am here to make sure that you stay alive. I will tell you the trials that you will face—even in your own palace. You must endure hateful insults—you have no choice. And you must tell no one who you are—Odysseus, the great wanderer come home at last.”

“Goddess Athena,” Odysseus said, “a mortal cannot recognize you when you are in disguise. You are a shape-shifter extraordinaire! You used to look out for me. While I was a soldier at Troy,

you were there to make sure that I survived the war. But after we conquered Troy, I have not seen you. You could have helped me.”

Odysseus thought, *If you had warned me, I would not have visited the land of the Cyclopes, and I would not have blinded Polyphemus, the son of Poseidon. Poseidon would not be angry at me. And when we were on the island where the Sun-god kept his cattle and sheep, you could have sent a favorable wind to us. I could have arrived home years earlier. I could have returned home with my ships and crewmembers. I could have arrived home before the suitors took over my palace and tried to take over my wife. I could have watched my son grow up.*

“I do like you, Odysseus,” Athena said. “You are intelligent. Anyone else who just returned home after twenty years would have run off to his palace to see his wife and son. But not you. You are cautious. First you gather information to determine the best course of action. You will even test your wife to see if she has been loyal to you, loyal woman that she is.”

Yes, I like you, Athena thought, but I remember the atrocities that the Greeks committed when they conquered Troy. I remember that Little Ajax raped the virgin Cassandra in my own temple, a place where she—and I—should have been respected. I remember that the Greeks killed Hector’s son by throwing him from the high walls of Troy. I remember that the Greeks sacrificed Polyxena, a daughter of King Priam, following the fall of Troy. I remember all of these atrocities committed by the Greeks. It took me a long time to get over my anger at all of the Greeks, including you.

Athena continued, “I always knew that you would return home. I did not want to fight Poseidon, my father’s brother, to get you home quicker.”

The way of mortals and the way of immortals are different, Odysseus thought. Gods and goddesses look at time differently from the way mortals look at time. Time is not important to immortals—they have the time of eternity. For mortals, time is valuable. If I had come home sooner, I would not have to worry about being killed by the suitors. If I had come home sooner, Penelope and I could have had more children. If I had come home sooner, I could have raised my son, Telemachus. But I must not criticize Athena more than I have already. The gods and goddesses make powerful enemies for mortals.

“You are home now,” Athena said. She dissipated the fog, and Odysseus recognized landmarks and knew for certain that he was home. He felt joy, and he prayed to the nymphs who lived in this part of Ithaca: “I never thought that I would see you again, but soon things will be normal again and I will give you gifts. I pray that Athena will help me to fight well and will encourage my son to become a man.”

“Let us put away your treasures in this cave,” Athena said. “Then we will make plans for you to regain your position on Ithaca.”

After the treasure was hidden away, Athena and Odysseus sat by the olive tree, sacred to Athena, and thought. Athena said, “Plan how you will be able to recover your palace from the

suitors who have been partying there for years while courting your wife, who remains faithful to you. She has been leading them on, making them think that soon she will choose a husband, but in her heart knowing that she is already married to a good man who is much better than any of the suitors besieging her.”

“I have avoided the fate of Agamemnon—killed by enemies when he returned home,” Odysseus said, “but please help me now. With you by my side as you were at Troy, I would dare to fight 300 men.”

“I will stand beside you,” Athena promised. “Soon enough at least some of the suitors will splatter your floor with their blood and brains. But for now let me transform you. I will make you old. I will wrinkle your skin, make you bald, dress you in rags, and blear your eyes. Even your wife and son will think that you are an old beggar. But go first to the swineherd, who is loyal to you and your family. Talk to him and gather information. I myself will go to Lacedaemon, see your son, and tell him to return home. Telemachus traveled to Lacedaemon to ask Menelaus for news of you.”

“Why didn’t you tell him that I was alive?” Odysseus asked. “Is my son going to have a life like mine? Will he travel and suffer hardships while strangers devour our household here?”

“I myself encouraged him to make the journey,” Athena replied. “He needs to grow up, and I wanted him to undertake the journey to make a reputation for himself. He is safe—Menelaus is an excellent host. True, some suitors have set an ambush to kill Telemachus when he returns home. Will the suitors’ ambush succeed? I doubt it. Before that should happen, the suitors will be dead.”

Athena transformed Odysseus with a stroke of her wand. He aged. She gave him the clothing of a beggar, and his disguise was complete.

This disguise will work well, Odysseus thought. The world is filled with beggars, and no one will pay much attention to one more beggar. The suitors think that I am dead, and they think that if I have survived I will return home with men and ships. They won’t be expecting their king to look like an old beggar.

Odysseus walked off to find the swineherd, while Athena flew to Lacedaemon to see Telemachus.

Chapter 14: Odysseus and the Loyal Swineherd (Odyssey)

Odysseus climbed up a rugged path to find the swineherd—Athena had shown him which path to take. The swineherd was loyal to Odysseus. He worked hard to keep Odysseus' pigs safe from wild animals. He had built walls to enclose the pigs, and he had built sties for them. He also had four dogs to protect the pigs, and now he was making a pair of sandals—he had worn out his old sandals in service to his master. Men worked under him. Three men were attending to the pigs; a fourth was driving a hog to the palace for the suitors to slaughter.

The four dogs saw Odysseus and ran snarling toward him. The swineherd came quickly, calling off the dogs, and then saying to Odysseus, “You’re lucky to be alive. The dogs are not friendly to strangers. Your death would have been a disgrace to me—I observe *xenia* although my life is hard. Not only has my own life been hard, but also my master is gone. Suitors eat up his wealth in his palace, while he—if he is still alive—wanders the earth homeless, hungry, and without friends, begging for enough food to keep him alive. Come into my hut, eat and drink, and then you can tell me your story.”

The swineherd led Odysseus into his hut and gave him a place to sit. Odysseus was happy to receive such good hospitality, and he said a prayer out loud for the swineherd: “May Zeus and the other gods reward you for the hospitality you have given me.”

The swineherd—whose name was Eumaeus—replied, “*Xenia* is a duty given to us by the gods. All strangers and beggars come from Zeus, and sometimes the gods disguise themselves as strangers and beggars to test us. We servants can at least give a stranger some food. I wish my old master were home. He would have treated me well. He would have given me a house, some land to farm, and a wife. When a slave such as myself works hard for a master, the master will reward the slave. But my old master is dead now. It would be better by far if Helen of Troy were the one who is dead! She got so many men killed at Troy! My master was one of the men fighting in the Trojan War to return Helen to Menelaus and to save the honor of Menelaus and Agamemnon.”

Eumaeus went to a pigsty, picked out two pigs, slaughtered and cooked them, and set them down on a table for Odysseus and him to eat. Eumaeus said, “Eat, friend, although it is a poor meal. The suitors eat fat hogs, while we must be satisfied with scrawny pork. The suitors care nothing for the gods, but the gods take notice of who is good and who is evil. Most criminals know that—even pirates with much stolen treasure know that Zeus is aware of what they are doing and will someday take vengeance against them. But the suitors don’t care about the gods, and since they are sure that Odysseus is dead, they besiege his palace and eat his sheep, pigs, cows, and goats and drink his wine. For them, it’s a party every night. My master was a wealthy man,

but now his wealth goes to feed the suitors. I guard these pigs, but everyday I have to send one of the best to the palace for the suitors to slaughter!”

Odysseus, of course, was disguised as an old beggar. He was hungry, so acting like a hungry beggar was easy. He ate the pork and drank the wine, all the while listening to Eumaeus and thinking about how to kill the suitors. When he had satisfied his hunger, he asked Eumaeus, “What is the name of your master, the one who died because of the Trojan War? Perhaps I have seen your master. Perhaps I have news of him.”

“Many men have claimed to have had news of him,” Eumaeus replied, “but they lied. Tramps wash up on Ithaca, and when they claim to have news of my master, Penelope sends for them and questions them. They give her good news, lying that he will return soon, and she rewards them with a shirt and a cloak, crying all the while because of hearing the good news that her husband is still alive. Maybe you too would lie in order to receive clothing. What has really happened to my master? No flesh is on his bones—the dogs and the birds have eaten his flesh. Or perhaps he drowned at sea, and the fish ate his flesh, and now his bones are buried deep in sand on a distant shore. Those he left behind are broken-hearted—especially me! He was a kind master, and I will never again have a master as kind as he was. Even if I could return to the home where my parents raised me, I would not find anyone as kind as he was. I grieve for my parents, but I grieve most of all for my lost master—Odysseus, who is dead.”

Odysseus, still in disguise as an old beggar, told the swineherd, “I swear that Odysseus is on his way home. I take a sacred oath that this is true. Am I looking for a reward for bearing this good news? Give me my reward when Odysseus sets foot as master in his palace. Give me handsome clothing—a shirt and a cloak—at that time, not before. I know that people will lie when it is to their advantage, but to lie to a woman about a long-gone husband is despicable. I swear by Zeus that Odysseus will return to his palace this month. He will return to his palace, and he will get vengeance against anyone who has disrespected his wife and his son.”

Odysseus thought, *I need to convince this slave and anyone else who is loyal to me that Odysseus is—that is, I am—returning soon. That way, when I reveal myself to them, they will believe that I am Odysseus. I do not want anyone who is loyal to me to think that Odysseus is never going to return to Ithaca. If they believe that, they will not be willing to fight for me.*

“That is good news,” Eumaeus said, “but it is not true news. My master is dead, and he will never return. But drink your wine and we will talk of other things. I wish that Odysseus would return—and so does Penelope, and Telemachus, and old Laertes, Odysseus’ father. I have high hopes for Telemachus. He has grown up, and he is like his father, but I wonder at what he has done—is it a wise thing to do? He left to visit the mainland to seek news of his father. He left the suitors behind to plot their treachery. Who knows what will happen? Will Telemachus be safe, or will the suitors beat him down?”

“But, friend, what is your story? How did you come to Ithaca? You did not walk here.”

“I will tell you the whole truth,” Odysseus lied. “I have suffered many hardships. I was born the son of a rich man on Crete. His other sons were legitimate—not I. My mother was one of his slaves. But my father—a good man—died, and his legitimate sons inherited his wealth. I got very little, but I did get a poor house. By myself, I got a wife. I have had talents, and I could fight back then. But now, I am old. Look at me now, and you cannot imagine the man I used to be. At one time, I could lead troops in battle or plot an ambush. I was in the first line in battle.

“I did not care for farming. Instead, I was a wanderer. Ships and battles delighted me. Even before the Trojan War, I wandered the sea, fought, and got rich through raids. The Cretans honored—and feared—me.

“When Helen and Paris fled to Troy, I went with the Greek army that pursued them. We fought at Troy for nine whole years, and in the tenth year we conquered the city. I went home, but not for long. I was home only a month with my wife and children and treasure, but then my wanderlust led me to go to Egypt. Nine ships I had. For six days my crewmembers and I feasted and sacrificed to the gods, and on the seventh day we set sail.

“We reached the mouth of the Nile River, and I sent scouts ahead. They disobeyed orders and began raiding immediately. They became greedy when they saw the rich Egyptian farms and the Egyptian wives. They killed men, and they captured women and children to make slaves. The Egyptians armed and attacked. They killed the raiding party and attacked the ships. Anyone they did not kill became a slave. I took off my armor and cast aside my weapons. I went to the Egyptian king and supplicated him, begging for my life. He respected Zeus and did not let his men kill me. He also let me keep my freedom. I stayed in Egypt for seven years and became wealthy—the Egyptians treated me well. In the eighth year, a Phoenician—an evil man—talked me into setting sail with him with all my wealth. I stayed with him a year, and then we sailed to Libya. I was supposed to help him with his cargo, but the Phoenician regarded *me* as cargo—he intended to sell me as a slave. I became suspicious, but I could not leave the ship. Zeus sent a storm against the Phoenician’s ship. A thunderbolt hit it, it sank, and all drowned—except me. I grabbed the mast and floated for nine days. On the tenth day I reached Thesprotia. The king’s son rescued me, and the king took care of me. That is where I heard about Odysseus. The King of Thesprotia told me that he had hosted Odysseus, who had left his wealth with the king to protect it. Odysseus had left to go to Dodona to consult an oracle of Zeus and receive advice. Should he return to Ithaca openly? Should he return to Ithaca secretly? The King of Thesprotia had a ship ready to take Odysseus home to Ithaca.

“The king sent me to visit Dulichion, but the Thesprotian sailors who were supposed to take me there were treacherous. They stripped my good clothing from me and gave me rags to wear. When they reached Ithaca, they tied me up while they went ashore. I got free of the ropes

and swam to shore. When the sailors missed me, they searched for me, but I hid. They gave up searching for me and sailed away. The gods then led me here to you.”

I hope that my story has been effective, Odysseus thought. I need to convince the swineherd first to pity me and to give me xenia. But I also need to convince the swineherd that Odysseus will return to Ithaca soon and that Odysseus may return to Ithaca in secret—disguised. That way, the swineherd will believe me when I reveal my identity later.

“You have suffered much hardship. That is clear,” Eumaeus said, “but I will not believe one part of your story. Odysseus will never return to Ithaca. It would have been better if Odysseus had died at Troy. Then we could have held a funeral for him and mourned his death. Instead, we have strangers coming to Ithaca and telling lies about Odysseus to Penelope, who rewards them with clothing. I fell for the lies of an Aetolian once. He had killed a man, and to escape being killed by the man’s relatives, he had run away and traveled the earth. He told me that he had seen Odysseus in Crete with the king and that Odysseus would soon be home with his ships, his men, and his treasure. All lies. I won’t believe any more lies about Odysseus and his non-existent homecoming. But still, I will treat you well and give you *xenia*. I respect Zeus, the god of *xenia*, and I pity you and your hardships.”

“You are suspicious despite the oath I made,” Odysseus said to the swineherd, “so let’s make a pact. If Odysseus returns, I will receive clothing and passage to Dulichion. If Odysseus does not return this very month, then you and your friends will fling me off a cliff and kill me.”

“I would never kill you,” the swineherd said. “I am not the man to violate *xenia* so horribly. But it is almost time to eat. The herdsmen should be home soon and we can prepare a meal.”

Odysseus and Eumaeus continued talking, and soon the herdsmen arrived and put the pigs in the sty for the night. Eumaeus really did like Odysseus, so he ordered the herdsmen, “Bring me your fattest hog. We will slaughter it and eat it ourselves. All too long the suitors have had the fattest hogs. This one we will have for ourselves and for the guest.” Eumaeus plucked a few hairs from the hog and threw them in the fire, praying to the gods, “Please allow Odysseus to come home soon.”

Odysseus, in disguise as an old beggar, thought, *Perhaps my story has had an effect. Despite what he said earlier, Eumaeus seems more open to the possibility that Odysseus is alive and will return to Ithaca.*

Eumaeus and the herdsmen slaughtered the hog and cooked it, giving portions to the gods. Eumaeus honored his guest by giving the old beggar the choice portion of the hog—the cut of honor.

Odysseus thanked Eumaeus: “You honor me. I hope that Zeus will reward you.”

Eumaeus replied, “Eat, guest. As for Zeus, he will give whatever he will give.”

Mesaulius served everyone bread. He was a slave whom Eumaeus had bought for himself—he was the slave of a slave. After everyone had finished eating, Mesaulius cleared the table, and it was time for bed.

The night was cold, and Odysseus needed a cloak to keep him warm throughout the night. He said to the loyal swineherd, “Let me tell you a story about your master. Odysseus and I fought together at Troy. Once we were together in a raid. Odysseus was in command, and I was third in command. We were near Troy and camped out there that night. It was freezing cold, and I had forgotten to bring my cloak. The other men had shirts and cloaks and were warm—not me! I said quietly to Odysseus, ‘The night is cold, and I will freeze and die.’ Odysseus immediately came up with a plan. He called to his fellow fighters, ‘A god has sent me a dream—a warning. We are camped too close to Troy. Someone go to Agamemnon and ask him to send us reinforcements.’ Thoas jumped up, dropped his cloak to the ground, and went to the ships to find Agamemnon. I wrapped myself in the cloak and slept. I wish I were young and strong again, and I also wish I had something to keep me warm.”

“You tell a good story,” Eumaeus said, “and your story has a point. Here is my winter cloak, but it is just a loan for tonight. We slaves don’t have much clothing ourselves.”

Odysseus, now warm, slept inside the hut, and so did the herdsmen. But Eumaeus went outside to sleep so he could guard the pigs of his master.

Chapter 15: Telemachus Returns to Ithaca (Odyssey)

Athena went to Lacedaemon to find Telemachus and tell him to return to Ithaca. She appeared to him as he lay in bed, unable to sleep. Athena, her eyes blazing in the night, told him, “It is wrong for you to stay here, Telemachus. It is time for you to return home. The suitors are in your palace, devouring your wealth. You need to go back to your home. Tell Menelaus that you need to leave. Your mother, Penelope, is being begged, even by her parents, to marry Eurymachus. If she does, she may carry away your wealth for her new husband. Don’t allow her to do that! Sail home—quickly! Keep your wealth for yourself—and for the wife you will have one day.

“Listen carefully. The suitors have set an ambush for you—but I will not allow it to succeed. They wait for you in between Ithaca and the island Same. Avoid that part of the sea when you return home. Land on Ithaca, and then visit the swineherd. He is loyal to you. Stay there that night, and send the swineherd to the palace to tell your mother that you have returned safely.”

Athena thought, *This will allow Odysseus and Telemachus to meet.*

Athena flew to Olympus, and Telemachus awoke Pisistratus and said to him, “It’s time to head for home—right now.”

“No,” Pisistratus objected. “It’s still night. Morning will come soon enough, and then we can see to drive the chariot. Let’s wait awhile. Let’s collect the guest-gifts that Menelaus has promised to give to us. We will remember him and his gifts to us as long as we live.”

At dawn, Menelaus woke up and went to see his guests. Telemachus said to him, “Menelaus, it is time for me to return to my home.”

Menelaus replied, “If you want to return home, so be it. I am not the man to keep a guest here longer than the guest wishes. A host must find a balance—not be too stingy or too generous with his hospitality. Allow me to put my guest-gifts to you in your chariot, and let me feed you before you leave for home. But if you would like to tour all of Greece, I will be your guide. Each person we visit will give us a gift: a tripod, a cauldron, a pair of mules, or a cup made of gold.”

Telemachus replied, “I must go home. No one is guarding my possessions. I must not lose anything valuable—my life or my possessions—while I search for news of my father.”

Hearing this, Menelaus ordered that a meal be prepared. He and Helen went to their storeroom, and Menelaus chose a two-handed cup and a silver mixing-bowl with a lip of gold to give to their guests. Helen went to the chests and lifted out a robe that she had made.

They went to Telemachus and presented the gifts to them. Menelaus said, “Please take this silver mixing bowl with a lip of gold—Hephaestus himself made it.” He also placed the two-handed cup in Telemachus’ hands. And Helen added, “Here is another gift for you. It’s a robe that your future bride can wear on her wedding day. Let your mother keep it until that day.”

Pisistratus put the gifts in the chariot. Everyone ate, and then Telemachus and Pisistratus prepared to set off on their journey. Menelaus prayed to the gods for the boys' safety and said to them, "Farewell. Give my regards to Nestor, who was always as kind to me as a father at Troy."

As Menelaus spoke, an eagle flew past on his right side—the lucky side. The eagle had killed a goose and was carrying it off. Pisistratus said, "It's a lucky omen, but who is it for? Is it a lucky omen for us, or for you?" Menelaus thought a moment, wondering how best to interpret the omen, but Helen said, "I will be a prophet and interpret the omen. The gods have told me what the omen means. The fierce eagle killed the defenseless goose. Just so, Odysseus—fierce in his anger—will return home and kill the suitors, who are as defenseless as geese against him, although they do not know it. It's even possible that Odysseus has already set foot on Ithaca and is awaiting the right time to strike."

Telemachus said to Helen, "May Zeus bring all to pass that you have stated. If he does, I will pray to you as if you were a goddess."

Telemachus and Pisistratus set off, traveling all day. They received *xenia* at the house of Ortilochus, a good man, where they slept, and at dawn they journeyed again.

As they approached close to Nestor's palace, Telemachus said to Pisistratus, "I need to return home now. I don't want to go to your father's palace. He loves to be hospitable, but I am eager to leave. I don't want to be a guest any longer. Please drop me off at my ship!"

Pisistratus did as Telemachus asked. He dropped Telemachus and his guest-gifts off at the ship, and then urged him, "Leave quickly. Set sail at once. I know my father. He will come after you and urge you to stay at his palace. It is hard to tell him no."

Telemachus sacrificed to Athena first, and before he set sail, a stranger arrived. The man was a prophet who had killed a man and then had fled his country to keep from being killed by the man's relatives. This prophet, whose name was Theoclymenus, asked Telemachus, "Who are you? What is your story? Who are your parents?"

Telemachus replied, "My country is Ithaca, and Odysseus is said to be my father. I am Telemachus. I left my home to seek news of my father."

"Like you, I have left my home behind," Theoclymenus said. "In my case, I killed a man and now I am trying to escape his many relatives—they want me dead. I am a fugitive, and I beg you as a fugitive—take me to Ithaca with you! Don't let the dead man's relatives find me and kill me!"

"Poor man," Telemachus replied. "Yours is a desperate situation. Of course, I will take you to Ithaca. That is what Zeus, the god of *xenia*, would want me to do." He took Theoclymenus' spear on board and told Theoclymenus to sit behind him. They set sail, and Athena sent them a good wind. Telemachus steered, keeping in mind Athena's warning about the suitors waiting to ambush him. He wondered, *Will I live or will I die?*

That night, Odysseus, the herdsmen, and the swineherd finished their evening meal, and Odysseus tested Eumaeus, wondering whether the loyal swineherd would extend further hospitality to him or send him out to beg somewhere else: “Eumaeus, in the morning I plan to go and beg in town. I don’t want to be any further burden on you. But help me—give me a guide to show me the way to town. From there I will be on my own. I would like to visit the palace of King Odysseus and talk to his wife, Penelope, so that I can give her news of her husband. Perhaps the suitors will give me food—they certainly have enough that they can spare some for me! I could do chores and run errands for them: I can build a fire, I can split kindling, I can carve meat, and I can pour wine. In short, I can be a good servant.”

“Don’t do something rash,” Eumaeus said. “Why do you want to go to the palace and see the suitors? They already have servants—finely dressed men who look nothing at all like you. Stay here. You are not a burden. Stay here until Telemachus comes back. He will give you clothing and passage to wherever you want to go.”

“You are good to me, Eumaeus,” Odysseus said, “and I wish that Zeus were as good to you. You have fed me and given me a place to sleep. You have stopped for a while my wandering across the world without a friend. I must do that in order to find food to fill my belly. But since you want me to wait until Telemachus comes back, please tell me about his grandmother and his grandfather. Are they still alive?”

“Friend,” Eumaeus replied, “old Laertes is still alive, but he prays for death to relieve his misery. He mourns for his son and for his wife. He is older than he should be by the count of his years. His wife died of mourning for her son, absent for so long. No parent should die that way. She was always good to me—she raised me after I came here. I was a friend with her daughter until she married and moved away. Telemachus’ grandmother gave me a shirt and a cloak and a pair of sandals and sent me here to work. She was good to me, and I always have enough to eat and drink. Penelope is different. She is so burdened by the suitors that she ignores me. I miss seeing her.”

“You must have been very young when you came to Ithaca,” Odysseus said. “How did you become a slave? Was your city conquered? Were you kidnapped by pirates?”

I already know your story, Odysseus thought. After all, I am your king, although you do not now know it, but I would like to hear you tell it. It is a way to pass the time and a way for us to bond. Later, I may need your help when I kill the suitors. My bonding with you now may help me convince you to fight for me later.

“This is my story,” Eumaeus replied. “The nights are long now, and we have lots of time for telling stories. Sleep is a blessing, but the nights are so long now that we can get too much sleep. You and I will stay awake and remember our sorrows.”

“I was born on the island Syrie, a good place for raising crops and herds, but not many people live there. Two cities are there, and my father ruled both. I am the son of a king. One day, some good-for-nothing Phoenicians landed there. One of my father’s household servants was a Phoenician woman. When she was alone washing clothes, with no man from the palace guarding her, one of the Phoenician sailors seduced her—even the best women alive like being seduced—and then he asked who she was and where she was from. She replied that she worked as a slave in my father’s palace, but she added, ‘Originally, I came from Sidon, and my father was a wealthy man, but Taphian pirates kidnapped me and sold me as a slave.’

“The Phoenician sailor then said, ‘Why not escape with us? When we leave, come with us. I have heard about your family—I have heard that they are rich!’

“Cautious, the woman said, ‘I am tempted to run away with you, but first swear to me an oath that you will take me home and not hurt me in any way.’

“The Phoenicians swore the oath she required, and the woman said, ‘It’s a deal! No one speak to me in the palace. I don’t want anyone to suspect what I am going to do. But when the cargo is packed in your ship and you are ready to set sail, let me know and I will come running with as much gold as I can steal—and with something else that will pay for my passage home. I take care of my master’s son—a toddler. I will bring him with me, and you can sell him. He’ll bring you a lot of money!’

“The Phoenician scoundrels stayed with us for a year, and then, with their cargo stowed away in the ship, the Phoenician who had seduced my nurse came to the house. He displayed beautiful jewelry—and nodded to my nurse. She went through the house, grabbing golden goblets, and she grabbed me and took me to the Phoenician ship. I was innocent. I willingly went with her. The Phoenician took us on board and set sail. For six days and nights we sailed, and then my nurse died. The Phoenicians treated her body with contempt. They heaved the corpse overboard—no fitting funeral rites for her! I was left alone. When we reached Ithaca, Laertes saw me and bought me.”

“You have suffered much hardship,” Odysseus said, “but good is mixed with the bad. You may be a slave, but you have enough to eat and drink—not like me! I wander the earth without enough food to eat, without enough wine to drink, and alone.”

As they continued to talk, Odysseus thought, *Anyone passing by would see an old beggar and a slave, but actually we are a king and the son of a king. Take note of Eumaeus’ life. He was the son of a king, but now he is a slave. Odysseus, what will happen to you? Unless you can find a way to kill the suitors and reestablish yourself as King of Ithaca, you will be condemned to spend the rest of your life as a beggar. Such changes of fortune can be permanent!*

They talked, and then they slept.

Meanwhile, Telemachus and his crew reached Ithaca—safely. They landed, and they prepared a meal and ate. Then Telemachus ordered, “Take the ship off to the town. I am going to visit some of my herdsmen. Later, I will go to the town, and I will repay you for all you have done for me—I will give you a feast and wine.”

Theoclymenus quickly asked, “Where should I go? Where can I stay? Will one of the lords of Ithaca be my host? Or should I stay at your palace?”

Telemachus bitterly replied, “I would and should invite you to my palace, but I am not master there. I will be away from the palace for a while, and I am afraid that the suitors will not show you respect. My mother stays away from the suitors as much as she can, so she will not be able to protect you. You might stay with Eurymachus. He is regarded as a fine, upstanding young man, although he is one of the leaders of the suitors and wants to marry my mother and seize my property. Zeus knows whether or not that will ever happen.”

As Telemachus spoke, a hawk flew by on his right side—the lucky side. The hawk had killed a dove and was carrying it away.

The prophet Theoclymenus immediately knew what the bird-sign meant: “This is good news for you, Telemachus. Your line will remain intact. No one will wrest the kingship of Ithaca from you or your family.”

“I hope that what you say is true,” Telemachus replied. “You would soon know my gratitude and my hospitality.”

Telemachus then turned to his friend Piraeus and said, “You have always been good to me. Please do me a favor. Let Theoclymenus be your guest for a while until I can be his host and make sure that the suitors do not harm him.”

“Of course, Telemachus,” Piraeus replied. “I will be the man’s host. Attend to your business as long as it takes. He will have a place to sleep and food to eat.”

Piraeus, Theoclymenus, and the other men boarded the ship and headed for town.

Telemachus headed for the hut of the swineherd, just as Athena had ordered, where, unknown to him, his father was waiting.

Chapter 16: Odysseus and Telemachus (Odyssey)

As Telemachus neared the swineherd's hut, the dogs caught his scent. The dogs did not growl, so Odysseus knew that one of Eumaeus' friends must be arriving. Telemachus stood in the doorway of the hut, and Eumaeus went to him and kissed his face and his eyes, crying with happiness that he had come safely home again. Eumaeus greeted Telemachus the way that a father who has been absent from home for ten years would greet a son whom he had not seen for those ten years.

Eumaeus said, "You're home, Telemachus. I worried about you when you were gone, and I thought that I might never see you again. I am so happy to see you. You have stayed away from the farm for so long."

Hearing this, Odysseus thought, *This is Telemachus, my son. I would love to greet him the way that Eumaeus is greeting him, but I cannot. I must remember that I am disguised as an old beggar. I must stay in character.*

Telemachus said to Eumaeus, "I have come to you, who have been like a father to me all these years, to find out news about my mother and the palace. Does she still resist the suitors? Or has she married again?"

"I am sure that she still resists the suitors," Eumaeus replied. "Her life is so hard. She cries both day and night."

Eumaeus took Telemachus' spear, and Telemachus walked into the hut. Odysseus stood up and wondered, *How will my son act? Does my son observe xenia? Has he been raised properly? Does he know how to treat strangers? What kind of young man is he?*

Telemachus told the old beggar, his father, "Go ahead and sit down. Eumaeus can get me another chair."

Good, Odysseus thought. He knows how to properly treat a stranger.

Eumaeus brought a chair for Telemachus, and then he brought food for all. As was proper, Telemachus did not ask about the old beggar, whom he did not know was his father, until all had eaten. Then Telemachus asked Eumaeus, "Old friend, who has acted like a father to me for so many years, who is this stranger and what is his story? How did he get here? I don't think he walked."

"He comes from Crete and claims to have traveled much," Eumaeus replied. "He just escaped from a Thesprotian ship and came here. Now he is your guest. You may treat him as you think proper. He needs both food and shelter."

"It is difficult for me to offer shelter to a stranger," Telemachus said. "I am young, and I have troubles. I don't know what my mother will do. Will she marry again? Will she continue to resist a second marriage? But I will give him clothing—a shirt, a cloak, and sandals. I will also give him

a sword and passage to wherever he wishes to travel next. Or he can stay here, if you like, and I will send food and clothing here. But the suitors in the palace are dangerous. It is not wise for him to go among them. They are abusive, and I cannot restrain them—I cannot make them observe *xenia*. They are a mob, and they are much stronger than I.”

This is disappointing, Odysseus thought. *My son is not the master of his own home. He allows himself to be bullied by the suitors. He has not yet become a man.*

Odysseus said to Telemachus, “Friend, may I speak? I am saddened to hear about the suitors besieging your palace. Tell me about them and yourself. Do you allow yourself to be bullied? Do the people of Ithaca, at the prompting of a god, despise you? Don’t you have any brothers to help you? If I were young again, or if I were the son of Odysseus, or if I were Odysseus himself returned to Ithaca, I would fight the suitors. I would kill them all or die trying. And what if the suitors should overcome me and kill me? It is better to fight the suitors and die than to be bullied in my house and watch them mistreat strangers and serving-women and also watch them waste my wealth partying all the time.”

“The suitors run wild,” Telemachus said to the old beggar, his father. “The people of Ithaca are not my enemies. My brothers are not at fault because I have no brothers. I am an only son, as was my father and his father and grandfather before him. The suitors moved in when I was young, when I was too young to resist them. Now I don’t know what to do. Is my mother planning on marrying one of them? Is she planning on continuing to resist them? She never has decided what she wants to do. Someday, the suitors may kill me. But everything depends on the will of the gods.

“Eumaeus, go to Penelope and tell her that I have safely returned home. Tell only her, and then return. Don’t tell the suitors that I am back.”

“Of course,” Eumaeus said. “Do you also want me to tell Laertes, your grandfather, that you are back? Since you went away, he has grieved. He has not eaten, and he has not worked on his farm.”

“Don’t tell Laertes,” Telemachus replied. “Come back here after your errand is done. But tell Penelope to send a housekeeper—in secret—to tell Laertes that I have safely returned.”

Eumaeus put on his sandals and left. Ever-watchful Athena appeared in the doorway of the swineherd’s hut and motioned to Odysseus to come outside. Odysseus could see her, but Telemachus could not. The gods appear only to those whom they wish to appear. The dogs saw her—they did not bark, but only whimpered.

Outside the hut, Athena told Odysseus, “Now is the time for you to reveal yourself to your son. The two of you must work together to kill the suitors. I also will help—I want the suitors dead.”

Athena waved her wand and made the old beggar into Odysseus again. His skin was unwrinkled, his eyes were clear, and his head had curly hair. He stood tall and strong and handsome.

Odysseus returned to the swineherd's hut, and afraid, Telemachus stared at him. Telemachus exclaimed, "You have been transformed! You are no longer an old beggar! You must be a god! Mortals don't transform themselves! Please don't hurt me!"

"I am not a god," Odysseus replied. "I am a mortal. I am your father, Odysseus. I have returned to you after twenty years."

Odysseus kissed Telemachus, and Odysseus cried, but Telemachus did not believe him: "No! You can't be my father! You can't be Odysseus! This must be a trick! No mortal can do what you have just done! Unless you had help from a god!"

"Telemachus," Odysseus said, "don't be disbelieving. I am the only Odysseus who will ever come to you. I am the man who fathered you and has been away from you for twenty years. How did I transform? That is the work of Athena. She can make me appear as an old beggar or as myself. The gods have that power."

Telemachus believed Odysseus, his father. They wept together, just as eagles will mourn when farmers steal the eagles' nestlings. Telemachus and Odysseus wept for the lost years.

I have missed so much time with my son, Odysseus thought. I never saw Telemachus as a toddler, as a youngster, as a young teenager, or as an older teenager. When I left Ithaca, Telemachus was an infant. Now I have finally returned to Ithaca, and he is a young man, on the verge of maturity. I never saw my son grow up.

Telemachus thought, *This is the father I don't remember and have never known.*

After they had wept, Telemachus asked his father for his story: "How did you get here, father? What ship brought you?"

"The Phaeacians carried me in their ship to Ithaca," Odysseus said. "They brought treasure, too, which I have stored in a cave. Athena helped me return to Ithaca so that together—you and I—we can plan how to kill the suitors. Tell me how many of them there are. Then I will decide if you and I can defeat them, or if I should seek allies before confronting them."

"There are over a hundred suitors," Telemachus replied. "I know that you are a warrior, but the thought that you and I can defeat over one hundred suitors is staggering. I don't see how we can fight them and win. Can you think of an ally who can help us?"

"Of course I can," Odysseus replied. "You and I, fighting together, with Athena and Zeus as our allies, can defeat over one hundred suitors. Do you think that we need better allies than these two champions?"

My father thinks that he and I—fighting together—can kill over one hundred suitors, Telemachus thought. I have always heard great things about my father, but wow!

“I trust you,” Telemachus said. “If you say that we can do it, then we can do it.”

Yes, we can do it, Odysseus thought, but I need you to completely grow up. I am your father, I am here now, and I can help you to grow up and become a man. Right now is a good time to start. I will give you some responsibilities to take care of.

“The time that we fight the suitors is not long off,” Odysseus said. “You need to return to the palace quickly. I will arrive soon. The swineherd will lead me there. Once again, I will look like an old beggar. Listen carefully. When I am in the palace, if the suitors abuse me, you must endure it. They may beat me or throw me out of the palace or throw things at me, but you must endure it. You can’t treat me with any special consideration; if you do, you will draw the attention of the suitors to me. The suitors are evil, and they will treat me evilly. They cannot change, not at this late date.

“When I am in the palace, Athena will let me know when it is the right time to give you a signal. When I signal you, take all of the weapons hanging on the walls of the Great Hall and stow them away in the storeroom. If anyone asks you what you are doing, say that you are putting the weapons in the storeroom away from the smoke that is damaging them. Say that the weapons are in much poorer shape than they were when Odysseus left Ithaca. But leave two swords, two spears, and two shields. They will be for us to seize and use. The rest of the weapons and armor will be in the storeroom out of the reach of the suitors. When we fight, we will be armed—the suitors will not. Athena and Zeus will do their parts—they will panic the suitors so that they cannot think well.

“Here is one more responsibility for you. Don’t tell anyone that I have returned to Ithaca. Don’t tell Laertes. Don’t tell Eumaeus. Don’t tell Penelope. You and I will test the servants. Some of them may be willing to help us, but many of them are probably on the side of the suitors.”

“I will do as you say,” Telemachus replied, “but I don’t think it is a good idea to go from farm to farm investigating the men, unless Zeus has advised you to do that. It will take much time, and throughout that time the suitors will be running wild in the palace. We can test the women in the palace, though. Some of them may be willing to help us.”

As Odysseus and Telemachus plotted against the suitors, the ship that had brought Telemachus home pulled into port. The crewmembers sent a herald to tell Penelope that Telemachus was home, and the herald met Eumaeus and together they entered the palace. Both had the same task to perform, but they performed it differently. Eumaeus told Penelope quietly, so that no one could hear, that Telemachus had returned home and that she should send the news to Laertes, and then Eumaeus left the palace. The herald, however, loudly announced, “Your son, Queen Penelope, has returned to Ithaca.”

The suitors heard the news, and they were shocked—Telemachus was still alive! Eurymachus said, “Telemachus is asserting himself and becoming dangerous to us. We thought that he would

be dead by now. Send a ship to go to Antinous and the other men waiting to ambush Telemachus. They have been outwitted.”

But Amphinomus said, “No need to send the message. Look in the harbor. Our friends have returned in their ship. Perhaps a god told them the news, or perhaps they saw Telemachus’ ship but were outrowed.”

The suitors met together. Antinous was angry: “Telemachus escaped the ambush although we kept watch for his ship. We failed to kill him during his journey home, so we will have to kill him here on Ithaca. Now that he has begun to assert himself, he is too dangerous for us to allow him to live. He made a speech against us, and the people of Ithaca heard him and are on his side. Then he went to the mainland to spread news of our outrages. What if a king pities him and sends an army to help him? We had better kill him quickly and take all he owns, splitting it among ourselves. But whoever marries Penelope will keep the palace. Either we murder Telemachus, or we give up our life of partying here.”

Amphinomus, one of the less evil suitors, said, “I don’t want to murder Telemachus—that is an evil deed. Let us find out what the gods think of this plan. If the gods are in favor of killing Telemachus, then I myself will kill him. But if the gods don’t want us to kill Telemachus, then we must restrain ourselves.”

Amphinomus’ plan was agreeable to the suitors, and for now they did not plot to kill Telemachus.

Now Penelope appeared before the suitors. The herald Medon was loyal to her, although the suitors forced him to serve them. Medon told Penelope all that the suitors had been plotting—she knew that they had wanted to ambush and kill her son. Penelope said, “Antinous, people of Ithaca say that you are among the finest young men here. They are wrong. You are violent! You are vicious! You want to commit murder! Why do you want to murder Telemachus? You need to remember how your father came to Ithaca. He had been a pirate, and mobs were after him. He fled to Ithaca to save his life. Odysseus protected him, kept the mob from tearing him to pieces. Knowing this, you should treat Odysseus’ wealth, Odysseus’ wife, and Odysseus’ son with respect. Stop your outrages, and stop the outrages of the other suitors, too!”

Eurymachus tried to calm her down: “Penelope, don’t worry. No one will ever harm Telemachus while I am near him to protect him. If anyone tries to kill Telemachus, that man will feel my spear—deep in his belly! I am old enough to remember Odysseus. When I was a young boy, he held me in his lap and fed me bits of roasted meat and gave me sips of wine. I love your son, and I will protect him. As long as I am around, the suitors will not harm him. But what the gods send him is something that I can’t control.”

So Eurymachus spoke, but he lied. Telemachus’ death would please him, even if he had to make that death occur faster than the gods wanted.

Penelope returned to her quarters and wept.

Eumaeus returned to his hut, where Telemachus and the old beggar—transformed again by Athena—were cooking supper.

Telemachus greeted Eumaeus, “Welcome back, friend. How are the suitors? Have they recalled the ambush they set against me?”

“I did not stay to ask,” Eumaeus said. “I was eager to return here. But as I was heading home, I saw a ship filled with armed men pulling into the harbor. Perhaps they are the men who plotted to ambush you, but I am not sure.”

Telemachus was sure that they were the men. He smiled, and he glanced at his father. All ate, and then they slept.

Chapter 17: Odysseus Enters His Palace (Odyssey)

The next morning, Telemachus put on his sandals and said, "I'm off to my palace to see my mother. I know that she will not stop crying until she sees for herself that I am safely back on Ithaca. Take this stranger to town so that he can beg for his food. I have troubles of my own to take care of, so I can't take care of every stranger who comes around begging. I am blunt because I have to be."

"Friend, that suits me," Odysseus said. "Beggars do better in town than on a farm. Someone will feed me. I am too old to work on a farm. Your servant will take me to town later. It is too early for me to go now. I am wearing rags, and I would freeze. Soon enough, the sun will warm the air."

Telemachus walked home. When he entered the palace, his old servant Eurycleia saw him and rejoiced. She hugged and kissed him.

Penelope came down to see her son and said, "Telemachus, you're home! I was afraid I would never see you again. Did you get any information about your father—or even see him yourself?"

Telemachus replied, "Mother, don't bother me about that now. I have narrowly escaped death. Take a bath and get dressed, and then stay in your quarters with your serving-women. Offer a sacrifice to Zeus. I am off again to welcome a guest, a man I met while I was roving. Piraeus has been taking care of him, but now I am ready to host him."

Penelope did as her son ordered her. She wanted Telemachus to grow up, and in ancient Greece, women obeyed men.

Telemachus walked out of the palace and went to the meeting-ground with two dogs at his heels. He looked like a god. The suitors saw him and welcomed him with warm words on their lips and black murder in their hearts. Telemachus avoided the suitors and sat with loyal friends and advisors: Mentor, Antiphus, and Halitherses. Soon Piraeus arrived with Theoclymenus. Piraeus requested Telemachus, "Now please send men to pick up the gifts that Menelaus gave you on your travels."

"Not yet, Piraeus," Telemachus replied. "I don't know what the future holds. Perhaps the suitors will murder me. If that happens, they will get everything in my palace. In that case, I prefer that you get the gifts. But if, however, I can rid my palace of the suitors, then I will send for the gifts."

Telemachus led Theoclymenus home to his palace. Women bathed both of them and massaged them with oil, and then Telemachus and Theoclymenus enjoyed a meal with Penelope while the suitors were still at the meeting-ground.

Penelope said, “Telemachus, I am going to return to my quarters, but before I do, please tell me, while the insolent suitors are still away, whether you have heard any news about your father.”

“Yes, mother,” Telemachus replied, “I will tell you everything. We visited King Nestor in Pylos, and he treated me like a father, away from home for many years, would arrive home and treat his son. Unfortunately, Nestor had no news of Odysseus, so he sent me to visit King Menelaus of Lacedaemon. I saw Helen, the cause of the ten years of war between the Trojans and the Greeks, the cause of so much death and suffering.

“Menelaus asked me why I had come. I told him the purpose of my journey, and he said, ‘The suitors don’t know what they are doing. They want to crawl into Odysseus’ bed, but they don’t realize what kind of man he was. Should he return home, he will slaughter them all.’

“Menelaus told me that he had received news of Odysseus. He had spoken to the Old Man of the Sea and learned that the god had seen Odysseus on an island, longing for his homecoming, held back from returning by the goddess Calypso, who kept him on her island by force. Around three years ago, Odysseus was still alive.

“Having learned all that I could, I returned to Ithaca. The gods sent me a good wind.”

Penelope was reassured by the news, and Theoclymenus reassured her further: “Queen Penelope, Menelaus could give you no more recent news, but I am a prophet who is skilled in the interpretation of bird-signs. I can tell you—and I swear by Zeus that I am saying the truth—that Odysseus is on Ithaca right now! He is either ready to attack or he is gathering information, but either way, he will wreak havoc on the suitors. I saw a bird-sign that told me these true things.”

“I hope that you are right,” Penelope said. “If you are, you will be rewarded with many gifts. All will call you fortunate.”

The three talked together, while the suitors stayed outside, amusing themselves by throwing the discus and spears. In addition to partying, they sometimes played sports. Always, they amused themselves. They did no work. Evening came, and Medon the herald announced that it was time for them to go to the palace and prepare their feast.

The suitors went to the palace and butchered sheep and goats and pigs and a cow—no stinting on the feast when it was someone else’s meat they were eating.

Meanwhile, Eumaeus and Odysseus, still in disguise as an old beggar, left the hut and headed to town. Eumaeus said to Odysseus, “I know that you want to go to the palace, but if it were up to me, you would stay here—it’s safer. No swaggering suitors will hurt you here. But I am a slave, and I must follow Telemachus’ orders. I will take you to town and the palace.”

“I believe you when you say that it is safer here,” Odysseus replied, “but let’s set off. Please give me a walking stick—you say that the road to town is rough and rocky, and it’s easy to fall while walking on it.”

Odysseus slung his beggar's sack—tattered like his clothing—over his shoulder, and the two set off. The dogs and the herdsmen guarded the pigs. When they reached the fountain where the people in town got their water, they met Melanthius, the goatherd, who was the son of Dolius. He sneered at them and said, “Two pieces of dirt walking along together! A pig-boy and his pig! Pig-boy, where did you find this beggar? He is worthless. What can he do? Just scratch his back and eat. Give him to me, and I will teach him to work. He can clear the shit out of the goat-stalls. But, no. He wouldn't do that! It's much easier to beg for a living—much easier than doing actual work! If he goes into King Odysseus' palace, he had better watch out! The suitors will fling stools at him and knock him silly!”

Melanthius did more than insult Odysseus with words. He kicked him in the ribs. Zeus, and everybody, knows that this is no way to treat a king—or an old beggar!

What should I do? Odysseus thought. *Should I kill this treacherous goatherd right here, right now? Should I merely beat him up? What is the best thing to do? It is best for me to stay in character — to remember that I am disguised as an old beggar. It is best to do nothing now and avenge the insult later.*

Eumaeus, shocked at this treatment of a stranger, prayed, “Nymphs of the fountain, Odysseus has made many sacrifices to you. Help him to come back to his home.”

Eumaeus then said to Melanthius, “If Odysseus does come back to Ithaca, you will not go unpunished. You spend all of your time in town instead of taking care of Odysseus' goats.”

“What do *you* care?” Melanthius replied. “*You* can do nothing about what I do. Someday I will tie you up and give you to some sailors who will sell you far from Ithaca. I will do that just as soon as the suitors kill Telemachus, and I am just as sure that that will happen as I am sure that Odysseus will never return to Ithaca.”

Melanthius left them behind and went to the palace, where he sat with the suitors, facing Eurymachus, who liked him. As they did with the suitors, the servants brought him meat and bread to eat.

Eumaeus and Odysseus drew near the palace. They could hear the lyre of Phemius the bard. Odysseus said to Eumaeus, “This must be Odysseus' palace. The wall around it is strongly built—it can hold off attackers. I can smell the feast inside, and I can hear the suitors as they party. I can also hear the music of the bard.”

“You are intelligent,” Eumaeus said, “but it is easy to guess that this is Odysseus' palace. What should we do now? Is it better for you to go into the palace first, or should I? We should not linger here. Someone may see you, think that you're an intruder, and order you to leave. The suitors are not friendly to strangers.”

“I have endured many hardships,” Odysseus said. “You go in first—they know you. I am prepared for whatever happens. Another hardship matters little. Bring it on. My belly is empty, and I will endure much to be able to fill it.”

As they talked just outside the palace, an old dog lying on a dung heap heard them. The old dog lay on the dung heap because it was warm there, but the dung should have been carted off long ago to fertilize the fields—no dung heap should be near a palace!

The old dog recognized Odysseus. The old dog was named Argos. When Argos was a puppy, he and Odysseus had hunted together before Odysseus left Ithaca to fight at Troy. Now Argos was old, abandoned, and covered with ticks. The ticks were sucking away Argos’ blood just like the suitors were wasting away Odysseus’ possessions. But with the little strength left to him, Argos wagged his tail weakly. He had no strength left to crawl to his master.

Odysseus saw Argos, but he could not show that he recognized the old dog—Eumaeus was still present. Odysseus said to Eumaeus, “How strange, Eumaeus, the way that this old dog is neglected. You can see that it used to be a handsome dog. But I don’t know if it was a good hunter.”

“Yes, this dog was once a good hunter,” Eumaeus replied. “He and Odysseus used to hunt together. This old dog was strong and swift. He was a champion tracker. But now his master is gone, and the serving-women neglect him. Many slaves slack off when their master is not around. When a person becomes a slave, that person usually becomes lazy.”

Eumaeus entered the palace, and Odysseus followed him. At exactly that moment, Argos died.

This death is significant, Odysseus thought. The old way of doing things is dying now, and a new order of things is starting. Now I will set my palace to rights. Soon the suitors will be dead, and order will reign again in Ithaca. I will see to it. The king has returned.

Telemachus saw Eumaeus and waved him in. Eumaeus took a stool and moved it across from Telemachus, and then a servant served them. Odysseus stood in the doorway, waiting to be noticed. Telemachus saw him. Telemachus gave Eumaeus a loaf of bread and as much meat as he could hold in his hands and ordered him, “Take the food to the stranger and tell him to eat and then beg from each of the suitors. A beggar cannot be shy.”

Telemachus thought, *This will give my father a chance to see the suitors and learn what kind of men they are.*

Eumaeus did as Telemachus ordered and gave the old beggar the food and the message. “Stranger,” he told Odysseus, “Telemachus wants you to eat and then beg food from the suitors. He says that a beggar cannot be shy.”

Smart boy, Odysseus thought. This will give me a chance to see the suitors and learn what kind of men they are.

“Your master is intelligent,” Odysseus told Eumaeus. “May the gods bless him.”

Odysseus ate the food first, and as all ate, the bard sang. After eating, the suitors continued to drink. Athena appeared before Odysseus—no one else could see her—and she advised him, “Go to each of the suitors. See what kind of men they are. Are any of the suitors better men than the others?”

But Athena knew that all of the suitors were guilty of outrage against Odysseus, his family, and his possessions. They had been evil for so long that they were no longer capable of change even if they had wanted to become good men. People who do not use their free will to be good soon become incapable of being good. They are incapable of making the effort of the will that is needed to change. They are slaves to their evil desires.

Many of the suitors gave the old beggar food. They pitied him—he looked wretched. They wondered who he was. Melanthius the treacherous goatherd loudly told what he knew about the stranger, “The swineherd led the stranger here—I saw them earlier. But I don’t know who the stranger is or what is his story.”

Antinous sneered at Eumaeus and said, “Swineherd, why bring a beggar here? Don’t we see enough disgusting beggars as it is? Why bring yet another beggar to lick other people’s plates? Aren’t we eating enough of your master’s animals without help from beggars?”

Eumaeus replied, “Antinous, you are a noble, but you lack intelligence. No one would invite a stranger in to eat away one’s possessions unless he had skills such as prophesying, healing, working in wood, or singing. You are the hardest on the servants, but I endure it all as long as Penelope and Telemachus are still alive.”

“Stop, Eumaeus,” Telemachus said. “Don’t argue with Antinous. He simply likes to cause trouble.”

Telemachus then said to Antinous, “What kind of a man are you? You want me to order this stranger away from the palace. You want me to disrespect the laws of Zeus. Not I! Give food—*my* food—to the beggar. You have much more than enough to stuff your face and your belly. Why not give to the hungry?”

“You need to shut up, Telemachus,” Antinous said. “I would like to give the stranger a gift, indeed. The gift I would give him would keep the palace free of beggars for months!” He lifted a stool and pretended to throw it at the old beggar.

All of the other suitors gave Odysseus food, but he wanted to see Antinous close-up, so he stood in front of Antinous and said, “Give me some food, friend. You look like a king. Please act like one and be generous. If you do, I will pray for you. I once led a far different life. I had a fine house, and I often gave to strangers. I was rich. But all went wrong. I sailed to Egypt with some other pirates. I sent out scouts to gather information, but they went wild. They robbed the farms

and carried off the women and children. Armed men gathered and hunted us down. My men were killed or made slaves. I went to Cyprus and then to Ithaca, worn down by hardship.”

“Stay away from me, you loser,” Antinous replied. “I can bring much more hardship into your life! I can’t believe that the other suitors are giving you food, but then again, it is not their food that they are giving you. They are being generous with food that does not belong to them.”

“Why shouldn’t you be generous, too?” Odysseus asked as he walked away. “Look around. There is more than enough food here. You wouldn’t even feed your own servant—not if you won’t give me some food from the feast of someone else’s food that is spread before you.”

“Now you’ve done it,” Antinous said. “I can’t ignore an insult such as that.”

He grabbed a stool and threw it at Odysseus, hitting him under the right shoulder. Odysseus bore the blow, but he wanted to kill Antinous. He went to the doorway, set down his beggar’s sack, and then said to all the suitors, “Taking a blow as one fights to save one’s possessions is honorable, but Antinous hit me because I was begging—something that I have to do to fill my belly. If beggars have gods to look after them, I pray that Antinous will die before he marries!”

“Shut up, stranger,” Antinous shouted. “Sit and eat, or leave! If you keep on talking that way, we will beat you so badly that you will regret ever talking.”

Even the suitors were outraged at how Antinous had treated the beggar:

“By hitting the stranger, you violated the laws of Zeus, the god of *xenia*!”

“What if the stranger is a god in disguise? Then you’re dead!”

“The gods know everything that we do—good or bad!”

Antinous did not care about what the other suitors—or the gods—thought of him.

Telemachus obeyed the orders that his father had given him earlier. He sat still and did not defend the beggar. But he thought about the best way for Antinous to die and how to make that happen.

Soon the news reached Penelope of how Antinous had thrown a stool at the old beggar, violating the laws of Zeus in Odysseus’ palace. She prayed, “May Apollo, whose arrows cause death, hit Antinous as hard as Antinous hit the old beggar.”

A loyal housekeeper, Eurynome, added, “If the gods would answer our prayers, none of the suitors would be alive tomorrow morning!”

“Antinous is the worst of the suitors,” Penelope said. “The other suitors gave food to the old beggar, but Antinous threw a footstool at him. That is no way to treat a hungry guest.”

Penelope gave instructions for Eumaeus to come to her. She then gave him orders: “Tell the old beggar to come to me so that I can talk to him. I want to find out if he has any news of my husband.”

“Queen,” Eumaeus replied, “you will be impressed with the old beggar. He spent three days and nights with me, and we talked—I was the first person he saw on Ithaca. Even after three days

of talking, he could not finish his tale of troubles. A bard is marvelous to listen to, and the old beggar talks like a bard. The old beggar says that he knew Odysseus' father. The old beggar comes from Crete, and he has heard news of Odysseus. The old beggar swears by the gods that Odysseus is in Thesprotia and will return to Ithaca soon!"

"Go to the old beggar," Penelope said, "and tell him to come to me. I want to hear what he has to say. The suitors will party, as they always do. They are wasting Odysseus' possessions, not their own. They squander everything. If only Odysseus were to return to Ithaca, he and Telemachus would take care of the suitors—easily."

As Penelope said these words, Telemachus sneezed—a lucky sign. Penelope was happy to hear the sneeze, and said to Eumaeus, "Go and quickly bring the old beggar to me. The omens are all in our favor. Soon the suitors will be dead, and I will be happy again. If I believe that the old beggar is telling the truth, I will give him a shirt and a cloak."

Eumaeus went to the old beggar and said, "Penelope wants to talk to you and ask you questions. If she believes all that you say in answer, she will give you a shirt and a cloak. Those are things you need—it's easier to beg and get food than to get a shirt and a cloak."

"Of course, I will talk to the queen," Odysseus said, "but now is not a wise time to talk to her. Look at the suitors—they drink and they party! I am afraid to turn my back on them. Antinous just threw a footstool at me and hit me. Who would protect me from violence? Telemachus will not—he said nothing to Antinous. No one would protect me. Please tell Penelope that I will see her after the sun has gone down and the suitors have left. She can ask me anything, but let her give me a seat close to the fire—my clothing is rags and will not keep me warm."

Now is not a good time to talk to Penelope, Odysseus thought. There is lots of light, and she may recognize me. She will have serving-women with her to act as chaperones. Penelope would never meet a man alone whom she is not related to—and she does not know that I am her husband. And I know that some servants are not loyal to me, to Telemachus, or to Penelope. If Penelope were to recognize me and call out my name, a disloyal servant would run to the suitors and say, "Odysseus has returned—come quickly and kill him!"

Eumaeus returned to Penelope, who was surprised that the old beggar was not with him. "Where is the old beggar?" she asked. "Why didn't he come with you? Is he afraid or embarrassed?"

"The old beggar is a smart man," Eumaeus replied. "He wants to avoid trouble with the suitors. He requests that you wait to ask him questions until after the sun has gone down and the suitors have left the palace."

"He is right," Penelope said. "It is a good idea to avoid angering the suitors. I will wait and talk to him later."

This is interesting, Penelope thought. When a queen asks an old beggar to come to her, the old beggar will come—quickly. Is this old beggar different from other old beggars, or is he simply afraid of the suitors?

Eumaeus returned to the Great Hall, where he said quietly to Telemachus, “I need to return to the pigs to watch after them. You must, of course, remain here to look after things—including your own hide. The suitors are dangerous, and I pray that Zeus kills them before they kill you.”

“You are right,” Telemachus said. “Eat some more, and then leave. But bring some boars to the palace in the morning so that we can slaughter them. I will watch after things here.”

The swineherd ate, and then he left to watch after the pigs. The suitors partied, as they always did.

Chapter 18: Odysseus in His Palace (Odyssey)

A tramp arrived at the palace. His name was Arnaeus, but his nickname was Irus because he ran errands and carried messages for the suitors just like the rainbow goddess Iris carried messages for the gods. He was big, with an enormous belly but no muscle. He was also unfriendly to rivals for the suitors' scraps.

Seeing Odysseus, still disguised as an old beggar, Irus told him, "Get lost, tramp! The suitors don't want you here, and I don't want you here! Either leave, or take a beating!"

"I have at least as much right as you to be here," Odysseus replied. "There's plenty of food to feed both of us. You have no right to try to make me leave the palace. Don't try to fight me, or you're the one who will take a beating!"

Irus loudly made his threats so that the suitors could hear, "This beggar talks big, but I am handy with my fists. One uppercut from me, and he'll be lying and bleeding in the dust—among his teeth! Beggar, if you want to try to fight me, I'm ready. You're old; I'm not. How can you hope to beat me?"

Antinous, a man who enjoyed entertainment that involved the pain of other people, told the suitors, "Listen to the beggars threaten each other! Let's have them fight!"

All the suitors crowded in a ring around the two beggars, and Antinous named a prize for the winner of the fight: "We are cooking goat sausages—filled with tasty fat and blood—for supper tonight. The winner of the fight will step up and take his pick of the sausages. In addition, he will be the only beggar who eats here. All other beggars we will drive away from the feasts!"

This will work out well, Antinous thought. Not only will we have the entertainment of the fight, but also we will be down to only one beggar here—and we will have a reason to drive away any other beggars who show up at the palace. No beggars need come here looking for xenia!

Odysseus, cautious as ever, wanted to be sure that it would be a fair fight: "Friends, I am old. He is young. Swear to me that you will not interfere in the fight. Swear that you will not hit me or trip me to give my opponent even more of an edge."

The suitors swore the oath that Odysseus requested, and Telemachus vowed, "Stranger, have no fear of an unfair fight. Anyone who hits you or trips you will have to answer to me—and to Antinous and Eurymachus, the leaders of the suitors."

That was clever of Telemachus, Odysseus thought. He mentioned the names of Antinous and Eurymachus as referees of the fight. They are two people whom the suitors will respect, even if they don't respect Telemachus.

Odysseus prepared for the fight, pulling up his rags and tying them around his waist so that he would not trip on them. As he did so, he revealed massive muscles—Athena had made him stronger.

The suitors were amazed by Odysseus' muscles, which had been hidden by his rags:

"Irus hasn't got a chance!"

"Whoever would have thought that an old beggar could look like that!"

Irus heard, and he was afraid, but he could not back out of the fight now—the suitors wanted their entertainment. Antinous sneered at Irus and said to him, "Don't be afraid of this broken-down beggar. I want a good fight. If the stranger wins, I will send you to King Echetus on the mainland. He is renowned for cruelty and will cut off your nose and ears and private parts—his dogs will eat them raw!"

Irus was shaking with fear, but he put up his fists.

Odysseus thought, *What is the best thing for me to do? Should I go for a knockout punch that might kill him? Would that draw too much attention to me? Or would it better for me simply to hit him hard enough to knock him down? Yes, that way seems best.*

Irus threw a punch, but Odysseus threw a much harder punch. Odysseus' fist caught Irus in the neck, and Irus' bones cracked, and he sprawled on the floor with blood coming from his mouth. He was not unconscious, but lay kicking the ground and howling with pain.

The suitors laughed. Irus' pain made them happy.

Odysseus grabbed Irus' leg and pulled him to the outer gate in the courtyard, and then he gave him his walking stick and said, "Don't bother strangers any more. If you try to be the king of the beggars, something worse will happen to you—I guarantee it."

Odysseus returned to the Great Hall of the palace, and the suitors congratulated him:

"Fill up your begging sack with food!"

"All that you want!"

"We're glad that you got rid of Irus—the tramp!"

As promised, Antinous gave a goat sausage to the winner of the fight. Amphinomus added two loaves of bread and said to him, "Well done, old man. I wish you good luck."

Odysseus knew that the suitor's name was Amphinomus and he knew whose son he was because he had heard other suitors call him by name and mention his father's name. Odysseus believed that Amphinomus was less evil than the other suitors, so he said, "Amphinomus, you are intelligent. You have sense, just like your father."

Whoa, Odysseus thought. Be careful. How would I, who am supposed to be an old beggar from Crete, know Amphinomus' father? I would like to warn Amphinomus subtly and have him leave the palace—if he leaves the palace, I will have one fewer suitor to kill. Still, I don't want to reveal my identity and get killed because I am trying to warn this man.

“At least I have heard that your father is a man of sense,” Odysseus said. “Listen to me. The life of a man is filled with hardship. When a man is young, life is good, and the young man thinks that it will continue to be good. But hard times come to all men, and old age comes to all men, unless the man dies young. Once I was a young man, and I thought that my happy days would continue, but they did not. I engaged in violence, and my fortune changed.

“I look around and I see the suitors also engaged in violence, eating the animals of another man and wanting to marry that man’s wife. But that man will return. I say that he is near—nearer than you think! Why not go home now? If that man returns, much blood will flow in this hall.”

Amphinomus listened to the old beggar, and the old beggar’s words made him uneasy, but he stayed in the Great Hall with the other suitors. He had partied at another man’s house for so long that he was unable to make the effort of will needed for him to change. Athena saw this, and she knew that Amphinomus would die—stabbed by the spear of Telemachus. The gods and goddesses know how men are fated to die.

Athena also knew that it was time for Odysseus to see his wife, Penelope, for the first time in twenty years. Athena inspired Penelope to appear in front of the suitors—and to trick them.

Penelope said to her faithful servant Eurynome, “I want to appear before the suitors and talk to them. I also want to talk to Telemachus and warn him that he is spending too much time with the suitors.”

Eurynome replied, “As you wish, but first take a bath. Don’t appear before the suitors with tears streaming from your eyes. You have grieved too much. You have something to be happy about—your son has grown up, as you can tell from his beard.”

Yes, Telemachus does have a beard now, Penelope thought. *That gives me an idea.*

“Eurynome,” Penelope said, “I have grown old in grief. I have cared nothing for how I look since Odysseus sailed away. Please call my servants Autonoe and Hippodameia to me. I would never appear before the suitors without chaperones.”

Eurynome obeyed Penelope’s orders. After Eurynome left, Athena caused Penelope to go to sleep, and then Athena beautified her. Athena washed away the stains of tears from her face, made her taller, and gave her curves. Eurynome and the other servants arrived and Penelope woke up from her nap, feeling much refreshed.

Penelope went into the Great Hall, attended by two women. The suitors saw her and wanted to take her to bed. First, Penelope said to her son, “Telemachus, you had more sense when you were a boy. Now that you are a young man, you have forgotten how to treat strangers. Just now, in the Great Hall, our guest the old beggar was mistreated and had to fight. That is no way to treat a stranger—strangers are protected by Zeus.”

“You are right, mother,” Telemachus said. “I have grown up, but I am outnumbered by the suitors. No one is on my side. Fortunately, the fight between the stranger and Irus did not end

the way the suitors desired—the stranger clobbered Irus! I wish the suitors would suffer the same fate as Irus—flattened, punch-drunk, unable to stand or walk.”

Eurymachus thought, *Now is a good time to change the subject of conversation.*

He said, “Penelope, you are beautiful. If more young men could see you, you would have even more suitors.”

“No, Eurymachus,” Penelope replied. “I was beautiful when Odysseus was home on Ithaca, but not now. I lost my beauty when Odysseus sailed away. I remember what he told me when he left, ‘Not every Greek will return home again. The Trojans are good fighters. I do not know if I will ever see Ithaca again. You must watch over things here and take care of my mother and father. Wait for me until Telemachus grows a beard, and then if I have not returned home, find a husband and leave the palace behind for Telemachus.’ The time has come. I must get married, although I would rather not. But I am bothered by your behavior—you don’t court me the way you should. When a man courts a woman, the man sacrifices his own animals and provides the feast, and the man brings gifts for the woman. The man does not devour the food of the woman and give nothing in return.”

Good going, Odysseus thought. This is a trick, I know. I have heard from Athena that you are faithful to me. This is a way for you to recover some of the wealth that the suitors have wasted through the years. You are beautiful, Penelope. You are as beautiful as the day I married you, but I married you for more than your beauty. You are as sly as the day I married you—as sly as I am.

“Gifts?” Antinous said. “We will be happy to give you gifts. Please accept them—we won’t leave until you choose a man to marry.”

Each of the suitors sent a servant to get a gift and bring it to the palace. Antinous gave Penelope an elegant robe. Eurymachus gave her a necklace of amber. Eurymachus gave her earrings. Pisander gave her a choker. Suitor after suitor gave Penelope a gift; all of the gifts were valuable. Penelope’s servants carried away her gifts to her chamber.

The suitors now began to party and to dance. The serving-women of the place kept the fires and the torches lit, but Odysseus, disguised as an old beggar, told them, “Servants of Odysseus, please attend to your queen. I can attend to things here. I will tend the fires and keep the torches lit.”

The women laughed at him, and Melanthe, the daughter of Dolius and the sister of Melanthius, mocked him. Penelope had always treated Melanthe well, but Melanthe was not loyal to Penelope. Melanthe was loyal to Eurymachus, whom she slept with.

“Are you proud, old beggar?” Melanthe mocked. “Has defeating that braggart Irus made you proud? Why are you still here? Shouldn’t you seek shelter with the other tramps? You may have beaten Irus, but soon someone else will beat you.”

“Bitch,” Odysseus said, “I’ll tell Telemachus what you said and how you treat a guest. He’ll take care of you! If he wants to, he’ll kill you—you’re his slave!”

Melantho and the other female slaves ran then. Yes, masters can kill their property, their slaves.

Odysseus attended to the fires and to the torches, and he thought about what he must do and how to do it.

Athena watched. She knew that the suitors would engage in outrage—would make Odysseus even more eager to kill them. Change is impossible for those who do not wish to change and who have lost their free will and become slaves to evil.

Eurymachus mocked the old beggar first: “It’s fortunate that we have the old beggar to tend to the fires and to the torches. His bald head is as good as a torch—it shines!

“I could give you a job, old beggar. You could build a stone wall or plant trees. Or could you? No, you’re too lazy to do real work. It’s much easier to beg for a living.”

“Eurymachus,” Odysseus replied, “I can work. If you and I should compete in plowing or reaping, you would be impressed by my work. Or if Zeus ever made it necessary for us to fight in a battle, you would see that I would fight in the front ranks. But you, you’re too proud! You are one of the leaders of the suitors—a weak band! Let Odysseus come home, and you would run as quickly as possible and wish that you could be quicker!”

“Are you drunk, old beggar?” Eurymachus asked. “I will make you pay for your insults.”

He grabbed a stool and threw it, but it missed Odysseus—he ducked—and hit the wine steward in the right hand. He dropped his cup, and he dropped to the floor in pain.

The suitors were outraged:

“This old beggar causes trouble! I wish that he had never shown up here!”

“Why should we be concerned about an old beggar? We should be enjoying the party!”

Telemachus ordered, “Enough! You have partied enough for one day. You are drunk. Go home and sleep it off. Leave if you’re ready, for I don’t want to throw a guest out of my house.”

Amphinomus said, “Telemachus is right. We are fighting too much. Let us have one more drink and then leave. We shall leave the old beggar here. He came to Telemachus’ palace, so he is Telemachus’ problem.”

The suitors drank, and then they went home.

Chapter 19: Odysseus and Penelope (Odyssey)

Odysseus and Telemachus were the only mortals left in the Great Hall, but Athena was present, too.

Odysseus said to Telemachus, “Now we have the opportunity to take the weapons from the walls and put them in the storeroom, out of the suitors’ reach when the fighting starts. When the suitors ask you where the weapons are, say that you put them in the storeroom away from the smoke that is damaging them. Say that the weapons are in much poorer shape than they were when Odysseus left Ithaca. Also say that when you, the suitors, are drinking and a quarrel breaks out, you suitors might grab the weapons and someone could get hurt, so it is better for the weapons to be out of your reach.”

Telemachus obeyed his father. He ordered Eurycleia, “Shut the serving-women in their quarters. I am going to take my father’s weapons to the storeroom, away from the smoke in the Great Hall. The weapons are in much poorer shape than they were when Odysseus left Ithaca. I have grown up, and I realize now that I must protect them from the smoke.”

“Good idea,” Eurycleia said. “Who will carry the torch?”

“This old beggar will,” Telemachus said. “If he is going to eat my food, then he needs to do work for me.”

Odysseus and Telemachus both carried weapons and armor—it was Athena who lit the way for them, although Telemachus could not see her.

“Look, father,” Telemachus said. “A god must be present. Our way is brightly lit, but I see no person or torch.”

“Don’t talk so loudly, Telemachus,” Odysseus said. “Yes, a god is present. This is the way of the gods. Now that we have the weapons and armor stowed away, go to bed. I will see your mother now. She will ask questions of the old beggar.”

Odysseus returned to the Great Hall, and Penelope came down from her quarters. As always, she was not alone. Serving-women attended her. One of them was Melantho, who saw the old beggar and spat, “What are you doing here, old beggar? Are you leering at the women now? Be glad for the food you have gotten and get lost! Or we will throw you out!”

Odysseus replied, “Why are you so angry at me? Is it because I’m old? Because I’m poor? Because I have to beg for a living? Once I was well off. I had a home. I gave to beggars. I had many servants, and people called me rich. But the will of the gods was to make me poor. Be careful! One day you may lose all you have. Perhaps your mistress will punish you. Perhaps Odysseus will return one day and punish you. Or perhaps Telemachus, who is finally growing up, will punish you.”

Penelope overheard their conversation and warned Melanthis, “You bitch, I see what you are doing and I am aware of what you have done. You don’t obey orders. You know that I intend to ask this old beggar questions, and yet you want to drive him away! I want to see if this old beggar knows anything about my husband.”

Penelope then turned to Eurycleia and asked her to bring a chair for the old beggar so he could sit while she asked him questions.

Be careful, Odysseus thought. Penelope and I are not alone. I cannot reveal myself to her. Melanthis is present, and if Melanthis finds out that I have returned to Ithaca, she will run to the suitors and tell them to kill me. I cannot speak openly.

When Odysseus was seated, Penelope asked him, “Stranger, what is your story? Who are you? Where are you from?”

Odysseus replied, “You are a queen, and you are known for your virtue. Please, ask me anything, but don’t ask me that.”

Ask me anything but that, Odysseus thought. I can’t reveal who I am to you yet, so I will have to lie, and Penelope, I don’t want to lie to you.

Penelope looked at the old beggar, and she thought, *Is this old beggar my husband? Odysseus might look like this if he is still alive. Let me tell this old beggar my situation just in case this old beggar is Odysseus. I must be careful. If this old beggar is Odysseus and Melanthis were to find out, she would run to the suitors and tell them to kill him. I cannot speak openly.*

“My life is horrible,” Penelope said to the old beggar. “The palace is filled with suitors who court me against my will. They also waste my husband’s and my son’s property. They party all the time and do no work. They kill our animals and feast on them. They take and they take, and they give nothing in return. I want my husband back.

“I thought of a trick to keep the suitors at bay. I told them that Laertes, Odysseus’ father, was growing old and would need a funeral shroud. I told them that I would weave the shroud, and I would marry one of the suitors when the shroud was finished. For three years I wove by day and unwove by night. But my disloyal servants told the suitors about the trick. They caught me unweaving the shroud. I had to finish the shroud—they forced me.

“Now I don’t know what to do. The suitors are pressing me to marry one of them now that the shroud is finished. My parents want me to get married again. My son has grown up and is angry at the suitors for wasting his possessions. If I were to marry again, the suitors would not have an excuse to be in the palace partying all the time. I don’t know what to do. I don’t know whether I am a wife or a widow.

“But now tell me: What is your story?”

Does Penelope recognize me? Odysseus thought. A queen just poured her heart out to an old beggar. Is she giving me information, letting me know how desperate her situation is? Or is she

pouring her heart out simply to make herself feel better? But now, I must answer her question. I must lie to her. I have no choice.

“I come from Crete,” Odysseus said. “My father is Deucalion, and my brother is Idomeneus. My name is Aethon, the fiery one. We saw Odysseus on Crete when he was going to Troy. He became my friend. He was looking for Idomeneus, but Idomeneus had already sailed. I took him to my home and hosted him for twelve days. Then he went to Troy.”

Penelope replied, “I will test you. You say that you hosted Odysseus. What kind of clothing was he wearing?”

Odysseus answered, “Twenty years have passed since I saw him, but I remember that he was wearing a purple cape made of wool with a gold brooch that was a work of art that depicted a hound with a fawn in its mouth. He also wore a tunic that was yellow like the sun. I gave him guest-guests—a sword and a cloak. One more thing: Odysseus was accompanied by a friend named Eurybates.”

Penelope cried briefly, and then she said, “You have described Odysseus’ clothing well. I myself gave him those clothes. When he left to go to Troy, I fastened the gold brooch you mentioned. But Odysseus will never return home.”

Does Penelope recognize me? Odysseus thought. I gave her a strong hint of who I am by describing the clothing of a man whom I am supposed to have last seen twenty years ago. Penelope is intelligent. If she recognizes me, she deliberately said that ‘Odysseus will never return home’ to keep Melanthe from knowing who I am. If Penelope recognizes me, perhaps I can give her a message.

“I can’t blame you for crying over your husband,” Odysseus said. “Any wife would cry if she thought that her husband would never return home. But I have more recent news about Odysseus. He is near. He is in Thesprotia, but he is alone. He has lost his ships and his men, but he does have treasure. His men sacrificed and ate the cattle of the Sun-god, and because of that his men were destroyed. But Odysseus remained alive, clinging to the floating wreckage of his ship that Zeus destroyed. He made his way to the land of the Phaeacians, who would have sailed him to Ithaca. But Odysseus wanted to gather treasure before returning home, and so he has been wandering through the world and picking up wealth. But now he is ready to return to Ithaca—so the King of Thesprotia said. I saw Odysseus’ enormous treasure. But Odysseus went to Dodona to consult an oracle and hear the will of Zeus—should he return to Ithaca openly, or in secret? So, queen, Odysseus is alive and he is near. Soon he will return to Ithaca.”

Is this old beggar my husband? Penelope thought. Is he giving me a message? Is he telling me that he lost his men but will nevertheless try to reestablish himself on Ithaca?

“I hope that what you say is true,” Penelope said. “I would give you many gifts. But now, stranger, let one of the serving-women wash your feet and make up a soft bed for you. Tomorrow

you can eat breakfast with Telemachus. We will show you good hospitality. We will take care of you. It is the right thing to do.”

“Wait,” Odysseus replied. “A soft bed? That’s too fancy for a man like me. All I need is a blanket. I have led a rugged life. I also don’t want anyone to wash my feet unless it should be an old woman who has known troubles like I have.”

“I do have an aged servant who has known troubles,” Penelope said. “She can wash your feet. Eurycleia, please do this. You took care of Odysseus from the day he was born. Now wash your master’s ... equal in hardship. Odysseus has suffered so much hardship that he must have aged like this old beggar by now.”

Eurycleia loved her master. She cried at the mention of his name, and she said to the old beggar, “My master must have suffered hardship like you. He was denied his homecoming, and he had to seek hospitality at many houses. At some of those houses serving-women must have treated him the way that you have been treated here. The young serving-women mock you, so you will allow only an old woman to wash your feet. You even look like my master. Many people have visited here, and of them all you most resemble my master.”

“Yes, I have heard that before,” Odysseus said. “Other people have noticed a resemblance.”

Eurycleia poured water into a basin, and suddenly Odysseus remembered his scar—if Eurycleia saw the distinctive scar on his knee, she would know that he was Odysseus.

Long ago, Odysseus had visited Parnassus to see his mother’s father, Autolycus, who had visited Ithaca when Odysseus was born and who had named Odysseus. Eurycleia had put the baby in the man’s lap and had said, “Autolycus, you must name your grandson.”

Autolycus had replied, “I have the perfect name for him. Call him Odysseus, the son of pain. In his life, he will both give and receive pain. When he becomes a young man, send him to visit me so that I can give him gifts.”

When Odysseus came of age, he visited his grandfather at Parnassus. He was welcomed with hugs and kisses, and with a feast and a hunt. The hunt was for a wild boar. Odysseus was in the lead, ahead of Autolycus’ sons, when the boar rushed from a thicket and gouged Odysseus’ knee as Odysseus drove his spear deep into the boar, and so Odysseus both gave and received pain. The gouge left a distinctive scar on Odysseus’ knee—a scar that he was afraid that Anticleia would recognize now.

Anticleia bathed Odysseus’ feet—and she saw the scar. She dropped the basin, which clanged on the floor, and turned to get Penelope’s attention, but Odysseus grabbed her by the throat and whispered fiercely to her, “Don’t get me killed! Yes, I am Odysseus, and I have returned home after twenty years. But be quiet about it! Don’t tell anyone. Or if I succeed in killing the suitors, I will kill you, too.”

“I will keep quiet,” Eurycleia replied, “and if you succeed in killing the suitors, I will tell you which serving-women are loyal and which are disloyal.”

Does Penelope recognize me? Odysseus thought. *The basin clanged on the floor, but Penelope seems not to have noticed. Maybe she did not want to draw the attention of disloyal Melanthe to me.*

Penelope then said to the old beggar, “Friend, I have a question to ask you. I keep wondering what I ought to do. Ought I to stay here in the palace and wait for Odysseus to return? Or ought I to get married again and move out of the palace so that Telemachus can have it? But my question is about a dream I have had. Can you interpret it for me, please? In my dream, an eagle killed all of my geese. But then the eagle spoke to me with a human voice, saying, ‘This is not a dream. It is the truth. The geese represent your suitors. I was an eagle, but now I am Odysseus. I have returned to Ithaca, and I am going to kill all of the suitors.’ Please interpret this dream for me.”

Does Penelope recognize me? Odysseus thought. *This dream does not need to be interpreted. It already has its own interpretation. Perhaps Penelope is asking me what I plan to do. Do I plan to try to kill all of the suitors? Or have I given up and decided that I will leave Ithaca to save myself from a bloody death at the hands of the suitors?*

“Queen,” Odysseus said, “interpreting your dream is easy. Odysseus shall return, and he shall kill all of the suitors. None of them will escape death.”

Is this old beggar my husband? Penelope thought. *Is he telling me what he plans to do? If so, is there anything that I can do to help him?*

Penelope then said, “Tomorrow I will hold a contest in the Great Hall. Whoever wins the contest will make me his bride. Twelve axes will be lined up in a row. Each ax will have a hole at the end of its handle. Whoever shoots an arrow through all the holes of all twelve axes will have me for his bride.”

Does Penelope recognize me? Odysseus thought. *Is she helping me to get a weapon in my hands? Is she telling me that she will get my old bow in the Great Hall and then it will be up to me to get the bow into my hands? A bow and arrows would be an excellent weapon to use when I am outnumbered—with a bow and arrows I can kill at a distance. Or is Penelope simply finding a way to humiliate the suitors? No ordinary man can string my bow, much less shoot it. Penelope knows that. She may know that the suitors are weak from their partying and unable to even string my bow. This may be a way for her to insult the suitors, to tell them that none of them is the man I was.*

“Queen,” Odysseus said, “that is an excellent idea. Hold the contest tomorrow. Before any of the suitors can even string the bow, Odysseus will be here with you.”

“Stranger,” Penelope said, “it is time for sleep. You can sleep on the floor with a blanket, if you wish. Or the serving-women can make up a soft bed for you.”

Penelope went to her quarters, but she did not immediately sleep. Instead, she cried because of Odysseus.

Chapter 20: Deadly Omens for the Suitors (Odyssey)

Odysseus put his blanket on the floor of the entrance-hall, but he found it difficult to sleep. He thought, *Tomorrow is the day that I kill the suitors, or they kill me. Tomorrow is the day that Penelope brings my bow into the Great Hall. I need to get my hands on it and then kill and kill again.*

He heard the disloyal serving-women of his palace leave to meet their lovers. He thought, *These are the female slaves who would like me to be dead. If they knew that I—the old beggar—am Odysseus, they would run to their lovers and tell them to kill me. Once I am dead, the suitors would kill Telemachus.*

Odysseus was angry. He was tempted to kill the disloyal female slaves immediately, but he knew that it was too early for him to do that. He thought, *Odysseus, you have been in tough spots before. Remember when you and your men were trapped in the cave of the Cyclops, who used a boulder to close off the exit from the cave? You got out of the cave alive although most men would have given up. Now you are in a tough situation again. You will have to use your cunning, but you will succeed.*

He kept thinking about ways to kill the suitors, and he thought about other problems. Athena appeared before him and asked, “Why are you still awake? You are at home now. You are with your wife and your son.”

“Goddess,” Odysseus replied, “you are right, but I am thinking about tomorrow. First, I need to find a way to kill all of the suitors. Second, what happens if I kill all of the suitors? They have families who will want revenge against me. Many men will come after me to kill me. What can I do then? If I succeed in killing the suitors, well and good. But I don’t want to die at the hands of their avengers.”

“Odysseus,” Athena said, “think of who your ally is. I am a goddess. I will protect you. Even if fifty bands of avengers would come against you, still you would live. So go to sleep. Don’t stay up all night worrying.”

Odysseus slept then, but his wife, Penelope, awoke. She thought of the upcoming archery contest, wept, and then prayed, “Artemis, you are the goddess who shoots arrows at women and kills them. Kill me now! Kill me the way that Pandareus’ daughters were killed. First the gods killed their parents. Then Aphrodite and other goddesses raised the daughters until they were young women ready to marry. But storm spirits snatched the daughters before they were married and gave them to the Furies, goddesses of vengeance. Just so, kill me! I married Odysseus and was happy, but then he left and the suitors came. Even my dreams torment me! I dreamed that Odysseus was here, lying beside me, but then I awoke and discovered that it was a dream!”

Goddesses know much. Artemis had seen Odysseus and Athena together. Artemis also heard Penelope's prayer. Artemis thought, *Yes, mortals have changes in fortune, from bad to good to bad. Odysseus' palace is overrun with suitors. Bad. Odysseus returns and kills the suitors. Good. The suitors' families possibly kill Odysseus. Bad.*

The gods kill the parents of Pandareus' daughters. Bad. Aphrodite and other goddesses adopt the daughters and raises them until they are young women ready to be married. Good. Storm spirits snatch the daughters before they are married and give them to the Furies. Bad.

The suitors try to marry Penelope against her will. Bad. Penelope dreams that Odysseus is lying in bed with her. Good. She awakes, discovers that it is only a dream, and wishes to die. Bad.

So it goes with human beings and the wheel of fortune. Still, Odysseus and Penelope have a mighty ally in Athena. Good.

Penelope cried out in grief, and her cry awoke Odysseus. It was dawn. Odysseus thought about Penelope, and he daydreamed that they were together again. He prayed, "Zeus, you have brought me home to Ithaca. Now please let me have a good omen—an omen that good things are fated for me this day!"

Zeus heard the prayer and answered it. The sky was clear, but thunder rumbled—a lucky sign! Another lucky sign followed—lucky words! One of the twelve serving-women who were already up so they could grind grain for the suitors' supper heard the thunder and said, "Zeus, the sky is clear, but I heard thunder—a lucky sign! No doubt you have said 'yes' to somebody's prayer. Please hear my prayer now. Let this be the last day of life for the suitors. Let all of them die, choking on their own blood."

The lucky signs pleased Odysseus. He was confident that this day he would kill all of the suitors.

Telemachus arose and asked Eurycleia, "Where did the stranger sleep? Did he get a soft bed? Did my mother neglect him?"

"Your mother is blameless," Eurycleia replied. "She offered him a soft bed, but he declined. He slept in the entrance-hall with a blanket, which is all he wanted."

Telemachus went to the meeting-ground to see other lords of Ithaca, while Eurycleia gave orders to the serving-women to clean the palace. Today was the feast day of Apollo, and all had to be clean for the god. As always, the suitors would eat at the palace that day.

The swineherd Eumaeus arrived at the courtyard with three fat pigs to be slaughtered. He asked the old beggar, "How are you doing at the palace? Are the suitors treating you well or badly?"

"Eumaeus," Odysseus replied, "they treat me badly. They are wild and reckless. I wish that Zeus would punish them."

The goatherd Melanthius arrived with goats to be slaughtered. Seeing the old beggar, he said to him, “Get lost! Why are you still here? Are you looking for a fight?”

Odysseus ignored him.

The cowherd Philoetius arrived with more animals to be slaughtered. He noticed the old beggar and asked Eumaeus, “Who is this stranger? Who are his relatives? He is dressed as an old beggar, but he looks like a king! The gods send troubles to all men, rich and poor.”

Philoetius shook hands with Odysseus and said, “Welcome, friend. You have seen troubles. Zeus sends troubles to all men. But when I saw you, I noticed your resemblance to Odysseus right off. My old master, if he is alive, must be wearing rags like the rags that you are wearing. He put me in charge of his cows, and his herds have grown! But they would have grown much greater if it were not for the suitors. They eat and eat, and they disrespect Telemachus. I have thought about running away and going elsewhere, but I don’t want to leave Telemachus and I pray that Odysseus will return.”

“Cowherd,” Odysseus replied, “you’re a good man. You are neither a coward nor a fool. I swear to you by Zeus that Odysseus will return—and soon! You yourself will see all of the suitors lying dead in their own blood.”

“Stranger,” Philoetius said, “I hope that what you say is true. I would fight for Odysseus against the suitors.”

Eumaeus also joined in the wish that Odysseus would return to Ithaca.

At the same time, the suitors were talking together—they were planning how to kill Telemachus. Suddenly, a bird-sign appeared: An eagle holding a dove in its claws flew past on the left—the unlucky side!

Amphinomus saw the bird-sign and told the other suitors, “This is an unlucky omen. Our plot will not be successful—not at this time. Let’s stop talking and start getting ready to feast.”

The suitors went to the palace and started butchering animals. They butchered, they cooked, and they ate and drank.

Telemachus situated his father in the doorway just inside the Great Hall, next to the courtyard. He gave him food and said to him, “I’ll make sure that you are left alone.” He then said loudly, “Suitors, control yourselves! Don’t insult the guest, and don’t fight—or you’ll have to answer to me! Odysseus built this palace, and now it is mine.”

Antinous was angered by Telemachus’ words: “Suitors, Telemachus is becoming high and mighty, but let’s obey him—for now. He should be dead now, a casualty of our spears, but some god has saved him.”

Telemachus ignored him.

People all over the island celebrated the feast of Apollo, god of archery. All ate.

Inside the palace, the feast continued. Athena was present, although no one saw her. She wanted Odysseus to see just how depraved the suitors had become. At this point, no one could save them. They were so far gone in debauchery that the only thing that could be done was to kill them. They had used their free will to do evil for so long that they were no longer capable of doing good.

Ctesippus was wild, reckless, out of control, evil. He told his fellow suitors, “The old beggar has eaten well. He has been treated as a guest. Guests get guest-gifts, and so I have a guest-gift for him.”

He picked up an ox-hoof from a basket—a remnant of the recent slaughter—and he threw it at the old beggar. Odysseus ducked, and the ox-hoof missed him.

Telemachus shouted at Ctesippus, “You should thank Zeus that you missed the old beggar with that throw! Otherwise, you would be dead—with my spear stuck in your belly! Suitors, enough! I have seen enough outrages in my palace! No more! Otherwise, it would be better for you to kill me. Death is preferable to watching you feast in the palace day after day, taking and taking and never giving anything in return. Death is preferable to watching you abuse my guests and mistreat my serving-women.”

The suitors were silent for a moment, and then Agelaus said, “Telemachus has spoken well. Why should we fight or start a fight? Suitors, leave Telemachus’ guests and servants alone!

“But, Telemachus, listen to me. You and your mother keep hoping that Odysseus will return. But clearly, he will never see his day of homecoming. So, Telemachus, talk to your mother. Convince her to marry one of us. When that happens, you will be the master of your palace and your mother will live in the home of her new husband.”

“Agelaus,” Telemachus replied, “I don’t hold my mother back. I want her to marry the man she chooses. But I am not going to force my mother to marry again. I am not going to force her out of the palace.”

The suitors laughed at Telemachus. It was not normal laughter. It was the laughter of mad men. Athena made the meat they were eating bleed. And she did more.

Theoclymenus, the seer and prophet, saw and heard all. He cried out, “Suitors, what is happening to you? I look at you, and I see ghosts! I hear cries of mourning! I see tears of grief! The sun is dark! All is night! This is a sign! Death is coming, and you don’t know it!”

The words of the prophet made the suitors laugh even more. Eurymachus brayed like a donkey and said, “This guest of Telemachus says that everything is dark here. Let’s send him into the courtyard where he can see the sun.”

“I don’t need your help to leave the Great Hall,” Theoclymenus said. “This is not a place where I want to be. I can see what will happen here soon. Death. Blood. Destruction. None of you suitors will escape.”

Theoclymenus left the Great Hall and walked to the house of Piraeus to seek hospitality. It was safe there, with no ghosts and with no premonitions of the slaughter of humans in the Great Hall. Being a prophet has its advantages.

The suitors continued their outrages:

“Telemachus has the worst guests!”

“First he has a dirty old beggar who is too lazy to work!”

“Then he has a guest who claims to be a prophet and to see ghosts!”

“Telemachus, let me give you some advice. Tie up your guests, put them on board a ship, and then sell them as slaves!”

“You’ll make a lot of money if you sell them on Sicily!”

Penelope was nearby, outside the Great Hall, but close enough to hear the suitors’ drunken conversation. She was waiting for the right moment to hold the archery contest.

Soon, the suitors began to butcher more animals for another feast that day. They were unaware of the feast that Odysseus, Telemachus, and Athena were planning for them—a feast of blood.

Chapter 21: Odysseus and the Archery Contest (Odyssey)

Penelope realized that the time for the archery contest had come. She went to the storeroom and found Odysseus' bow. The bow was a guest-gift that Odysseus had received while on a mission to recover sheep stolen from Ithaca. He had met Iphitus, who was also trying to recover stolen animals. Iphitus died, a victim of bad *xenia*, killed by Heracles while he was Heracles' guest because Heracles wanted Iphitus' horses. Iphitus gave Odysseus the bow, originally a gift by Apollo to Iphitus' father. Odysseus gave Iphitus a sword and a spear. They were friends, and they understood the way that *xenia* is supposed to work.

That bow, a guest-gift, was the bow that Penelope found in the storeroom. She wept briefly, and then she carried the bow and quiver of arrows to the Great Hall, where she told the suitors, "Listen to me. You have been partying here every day for over three years, claiming that you are courting me. Today is the day that one of you can win me as your bride! This is the bow of Odysseus. Today we will hold an archery contest, and the winner will take me as his bride. Twelve axes will be lined up in a row. Each ax will have a hole at the end of its handle. Whoever shoots an arrow through the holes in all twelve axes will have me for his bride."

Penelope ordered Eumaeus the swineherd to carry the axes to the Great Hall and to put them before the suitors. Both Eumaeus and Philoetius the loyal cowherd grieved when they saw Odysseus' bow, remembering their master, but Antinous told them, "Fools, stop grieving. Sit down and eat and drink. Leave Odysseus' bow and the axes in the Great Hall. I remember Odysseus from when I was young. Stringing his bow will not be easy."

Although Antinous knew that stringing the bow would not be easy, he hoped to be the suitor who would win the archery contest and take Penelope as his wife. He did not know that he was fated to be the first suitor killed—struck down to the Land of the Dead by an arrow shot by Odysseus.

Telemachus was giddy with excitement and nervousness—he knew that today he would fight the suitors, but he did not know whether he would be alive at the end of the battle. He laughed and told the suitors, "Take a good look at Penelope. She is the bride whom you will win if you are victorious in the archery contest. I myself will also try to string my father's bow and shoot an arrow through the twelve axes—to see how I match up to my father."

Telemachus then dug a trench, lined up the axes, and planted them. The axes were all in a row, and the suitors marveled at his competence in lining up the axes although he had never seen them lined up before.

He then attempted to string the bow. Twice he came close but did not succeed. On his third attempt, Telemachus would have strung the bow, but he saw his father shake his head not to. Odysseus did not want the suitors to waste the arrows shooting in the archery contest—Odysseus had a much better use in mind for the arrows.

“I must be a weakling,” Telemachus told the suitors. “I must still be a boy because I am unable to string my father’s bow. Suitors, see if you are able to string the bow.”

No, you are not a weakling, Odysseus thought. You could have strung the bow, but you chose not to, at my command. By not stringing my bow, you have ensured that we will have more arrows to use to kill the suitors. Good work, Telemachus.

Antinous then invited the suitors to try to string the bow in order, going from left to right. The first suitor to try to string the bow was Leodes, but he gave up almost immediately. His palms were soft—they had no calluses. He said, “Suitors, I can’t even bend the bow, much less string it. All of you, try to string the bow. This is a bow that can take the life out of us, but that might be preferable to always staying in the palace and never being able to marry Penelope. Try the bow, but I don’t think that you will succeed in stringing it. Soon you will try to marry a different woman, wooing her with gifts. I don’t think that any suitor will win the archery contest. Whoever wins Penelope will have to woo her with gifts.”

Antinous did not care for anything that Leodes, who was reputed to be a seer, had said, “Are you trying to prophesy when you say, ‘This is a bow that can take the life out of us’? That is a bad omen. You shouldn’t talk like that just because you can’t string the bow. We may very well be capable of it.”

Antinous then ordered Melanthius the disloyal goatherd, “Build up the fire in the fireplace bigger, and bring us some lard. We will warm the bow in the fire and rub it with lard. Doing that will make the bow easier to bend and to string.”

The suitors conditioned the bow—the bow that Odysseus would use to kill many of them. On this day, Apollo’s feast day, Odysseus would use to kill the suitors a bow that had been owned by Apollo. They warmed it and they rubbed it with lard, and then they tried to bend it. They failed. Two suitors did not try to bend the bow: Antinous and Eurymachus. They were hoping that the attempts by the other suitors to bend the bow would make it easier for them to string it, and they were afraid of failing in front of the other suitors—and Telemachus and Penelope.

Eumaeus the loyal swineherd and Philoetius the loyal cowherd were tired of watching the suitors. They went into the courtyard, and Odysseus followed them. No one else was there. Odysseus asked them, “What if Odysseus were to suddenly appear? Would you fight for him, or would you fight on the side of the suitors?”

“I wish to Zeus that Odysseus would return home,” Philoetius said. “I would fight for him. I want all of the suitors to die.”

Eumaeus said the same.

Odysseus then said, “Odysseus has returned to Ithaca. I am he. Here’s how you can know that I am who I say I am. You remember the scar on my knee that I received while hunting on Mount Parnassus. Look—here is the scar.”

Odysseus lifted his rags, and his loyal servants knew that he was telling the truth. They rejoiced, and Odysseus told them, “Fight for me, and after we kill the suitors, this is what I will give you: I will give you your freedom—you will no longer be slaves. I will find you wives. I will give you land and a house. You will be able to work for yourself and earn a living. You will be friends to my family and me. All of this I will give you after we kill the suitors.”

All knew that killing the suitors would not be easy, and the rewards for making the attempt needed to be great. Even with two loyal servants on their side, Odysseus and Telemachus would find it difficult to kill over one hundred suitors. It was much more likely that the suitors would kill them and the two loyal servants.

Odysseus then told the loyal servants, “Let’s go back in the Great Hall one at a time. Let’s not draw attention to ourselves. Eumaeus, when I ask you to, carry the bow to me. The suitors will yell at you and threaten you, but bring the bow to me. I need it to kill the suitors. Then you must tell the serving-women to stay in their quarters. I don’t want the loyal serving-women to get hurt, and I don’t want the disloyal serving-women to help the suitors. Tell the serving-women that no matter what they may hear they must stay in their own quarters.

“And Philoetius, you must lock the outer gate of the courtyard. I don’t want passersby to hear the noise of battle and be able to come running to help the suitors.”

Odysseus entered the Great Hall first and then the two loyal servants entered the Great Hall, one at a time.

Eurymachus was trying to string Odysseus’ bow, but he failed. He complained, “This is galling to me. Not only have I failed to string Odysseus’ bow and win Penelope as my wife, but I—we—have failed in public. People will hear about this, and they will know that we have failed.”

“Eurymachus,” Antinous said, “don’t worry about that. We don’t need to worry about the contest today. Today is the feast day of Apollo, so let us feast. Tomorrow we will feast again, and then we will resume the archery contest. We can leave the axes as they are. Right now, let us drink.”

Odysseus let them drink for a while, good strategy on his part: *That’s right*, he thought. *Drink your fill. Befuddle your wits with wine. Then I will take action.*

Once the suitors had drunk and drunk again, Odysseus said, “Let me try to string the bow. I am old and gnarled now, but I used to have some strength. Let me see if any of my strength remains. You may find my attempts to string the bow amusing.”

“Old beggar,” Antinous shouted, “don’t even attempt to touch the bow! You must be drunk! Remember what happened to the Centaur Eurytion when he got drunk at a wedding while visiting the Lapiths. He tried to rape the bride—the worst violation of *xenia* possible—and the Lapiths cut off his nose and ears.”

Antinous thought, *The old beggar just might string the bow—he displayed some impressive muscles when he fought Irus. How will that make us suitors look? We could not string the bow—a bow that an old beggar was able to string.*

Odysseus thought, *Yes, I know that story about the Centaur and the Lapiths. But who is drunk here? Not I. You, the suitors, are the ones who have been drinking. And who is trying to rape a bride? You suitors want to marry Penelope, but she does not want to marry any of you. I know what the Lapiths did to the Centaur, but I am going to do worse to you.*

Penelope spoke up, “Antinous, the old beggar is a guest in the palace—a guest whom Telemachus has welcomed. We should let the old beggar try to string the bow. After all, even if he strings the bow, do you think that he will take me away and make me his wife? That will never happen.”

True, Odysseus thought. *I will not take Penelope away from here and make her my wife. We are already home, and she is already my wife.*

Eurymachus said to Penelope, “Yes, we know that the old beggar will not take you away and marry you. But we don’t want to be shown up by an old beggar. If he strings the bow, men will talk about us. They will say that the suitors were too weak to string the bow—a bow that an old beggar was able to string. Years from now, people will still be talking about the failure of the suitors to string the bow. We will be shamed.”

“Aren’t you already shamed?” Penelope replied. “Look at how you and the other suitors have been acting for the past three years. Can anything shame you more than that? Give the bow to the old beggar and let him attempt to string it.”

“Mother,” Telemachus said, “let me attend to this. I am the man of the palace, and men are concerned with weapons. Go to your quarters and stay there.”

Telemachus thought, *Please, go quickly. A battle is going to be fought in a few minutes, and I don’t want you to get hurt or killed. My father and I are going to try to kill over one hundred suitors, and the odds are very much against us. We will probably die, and I don’t want you to see us die.*

Odysseus thought, *This is a sign of maturity. My son is protecting his mother.*

Penelope left the Great Hall and went to her quarters. She wept briefly, and then Athena blessed her with sleep.

After Penelope left the Great Hall, Eumaeus, the loyal swineherd, picked up the bow and started carrying it to Odysseus, who was at one end of the hall with Telemachus and Philoetius, away from the suitors.

The suitors yelled at Eumaeus:

“Slave, put that bow down!”

“Where do you think that you are going with that bow?”

“We’ll kill you unless you put that bow down!”

Eumaeus, a slave who was accustomed to obey, stopped.

Telemachus shouted out orders of his own: “Carry that bow to the old beggar, or you’ll suffer at my hands! I am younger and stronger than you!”

Eumaeus obeyed and carried the bow to Odysseus, and then he went to Eurycleia and told her, “Telemachus orders you to keep the serving-women locked up in their quarters. Don’t let any of them out, no matter what sounds you hear coming from the Great Hall—even if you hear the sounds of dying men.”

Eurycleia obeyed quickly—she knew that the old beggar was Odysseus.

Philoetius slipped outside and locked the outer yard of the courtyard.

Odysseus stood by Telemachus with the bow in his hands. He and Telemachus were blocking the gateway to the courtyard and the door leading to the rest of the palace. The suitors were trapped inside the Great Hall, although they did not know that yet.

Odysseus looked his bow over, turning it back and forth. The bow was faultless—it had not decayed or been damaged during his twenty years away from Ithaca.

The suitors laughed at him:

“The old beggar appears to be a connoisseur when it comes to bows!”

“Perhaps he has a huge collection of bows in his palace!”

“Look at the way he twists and turns the bow!”

“Good luck to the old beggar—exactly as much luck as he will have when he attempts to string the bow!”

Quickly and easily Odysseus bent the bow and fastened the top of the string to the top of the bow. Now the bow was ready for shooting arrows. But first Odysseus plucked the string—and its sound carried throughout the Great Hall the way the sound of a lyre string carries throughout a great hall when a bard plucks it. The suitors listened, and Zeus threw a lightning bolt from Mount Olympus that thundered to the ground. The suitors felt fear.

Odysseus grabbed an arrow, fitted it to the string, and then shot an arrow that went through the holes in the handles of all twelve axes. He then said to his son, “Telemachus, your guest is not a disappointment to you. I strung the bow and I shot an arrow through all twelve axes. But we have work to do. The suitors have mocked us both. Now it is time for us to pay them back.”

Telemachus strapped a sword around his waist and grabbed a spear—one of the two spears left in the Great Hall. Then he stood beside his father—the bronze point of his spear glittered like fire.

Chapter 22: The Battle in the Great Hall (Odyssey)

Odysseus poured the arrows from the quiver. There they lay in front of him, within easy reach, so that he could kill and kill again. He yelled to the suitors, “The contest is over—I won. But I see another target in the Great Hall—let me see if I can hit it.”

Odysseus then shot an arrow at Antinous, who was drinking with his throat exposed. Odysseus’ arrow hit Antinous in the throat, and dying, Antinous fell from his chair to the floor.

Kill the leaders first, Odysseus thought. Then it will be easier to kill the followers. One leader is dead; the other leader will be next to die.

The suitors could not believe what they were seeing. They thought that the old beggar had aimed at another target and had not meant to kill Antinous. They yelled at the old beggar:

“Next it is your turn to die!”

“You killed Antinous!”

“You will not escape your own death!”

Odysseus told them the truth: “You did not think that I would return from Troy! You thought wrong! You have feasted at my palace for over three years, taking and taking and never giving anything in return. You have been sleeping with my female slaves, and you have been trying to marry my wife although I am still alive! You did not fear me, and you did not fear the gods! Now you will pay for your crimes!”

The suitors knew then who the old beggar was, and they also knew that their lives were in danger. People who are guilty sometimes pay for their crimes.

Eurymachus, the other major leader of the suitors, took charge. He tried to talk Odysseus into not killing them: “Odysseus, you’re right. The suitors have committed outrages. But you have already killed the leader: Antinous. He wanted to marry Penelope and become King of Ithaca. He is the one who led us astray. You don’t need to kill us, too. We will tax the people and repay you for everything we ate and drank. Each of us will give you twenty oxen as well as bronze and gold.”

But Odysseus was too wise to be swayed by lying promises.

What if I accept your proposal and don’t kill you? he thought. *As soon as I put down my weapons, you will grab them and kill me, kill Telemachus, and kill any servants who are loyal to me. Then one of you will marry Penelope and rule Ithaca. I value my life and the life of my son too much to throw them away foolishly.*

“No, Eurymachus,” Odysseus said. “You don’t have enough wealth to buy me off. Neither does your father. Now fight or flee! None of you will get away alive if I can prevent it.”

Eurymachus then rapidly gave orders to the suitors: “We have no choice. We have to fight Odysseus. Draw your swords. Use tables as shields to block his arrows. Charge him in a pack. We can kill him, or we can drive him away from the doorway and escape.”

Eurymachus was the leader of the suitors for a reason. His tactics were sound, and he had the courage to put them in action. He drew his sword and ran toward Odysseus with a battle-cry. Odysseus’ arrow hit Eurymachus in the chest, and he fell, dead, to the floor.

Amphinomus, the suitor whom Odysseus had tried to warn, was next to die. With his sword out, he rushed toward Odysseus, but Telemachus speared him. He left the spear in the corpse because he was afraid that the suitors would be able to kill him if, exposed, he tried to pull out the spear.

This is a sign of maturity, Odysseus thought. Telemachus is fighting well and has killed his first man in battle.

Telemachus said to his father, “I’ll go to the storeroom and get armor and weapons. I’ll arm myself and put on armor, and I’ll bring you weapons and armor. I’ll also bring weapons and armor for the swineherd and the cowherd. We can fight better that way.”

“Go, but hurry,” Odysseus said. “These arrows won’t last forever, and the suitors may force me away from the doorway and then go and get weapons and help.”

Telemachus went to the storeroom and got four shields, four helmets, and eight spears and quickly returned without locking the door to the storeroom. He and the two servants armed themselves and put on armor, while suitor after suitor died, cut down by Odysseus’ arrows. With the leaders dead, the panicking suitors did not think to rush Odysseus. If dozens of suitors had rushed Odysseus, Telemachus, Eumaeus, and Philoetius, the battle would have ended quickly, and the wrong men would have been victorious.

When Odysseus’ arrows ran out, he also put on armor and grabbed two spears. The number of suitors had decreased, but many suitors still lived, and they had their swords, although they lacked helmets and shields.

The Great Hall had a side-door, but the swineherd was guarding it. However, Agelaus asked, “Can anyone climb through the ventilation holes? Can someone reach the courtyard?”

“No one can reach the courtyard,” Melanthius the disloyal goatherd said, “but I can climb through the ventilation holes and get you weapons and armor. They must be in the storeroom.”

Melanthius did exactly that, returning soon with twelve spears, twelve helmets, and twelve shields.

When Odysseus saw the suitors arming themselves and putting on armor, he knew that it was bad news. He said to Telemachus, “Things just went badly for us. How did the suitors get weapons and armor? Did one of the disloyal serving-women or the goatherd do this?”

“It’s my fault, father,” Telemachus said. “I did not lock the door to the storeroom, and the suitors have taken advantage of my deadly mistake. Eumaeus, lock the door to the storeroom and see who is taking the weapons and armor to the suitors. Maybe it’s one of the women, but my guess is that it’s Melanthius.”

Odysseus said, “Telemachus and I will fight here. Eumaeus and Philoetius, both of you go to the storeroom. Tie up Melanthius and let him hang from the ceiling in agony until we are done here.”

This is a sign of maturity, Odysseus thought. Telemachus took responsibility for his mistake instead of letting one of the serving-women or Melanthius take the full blame.

Eumaeus and Philoetius ran to the storeroom and found Melanthius inside gathering more weapons and armor to take to the suitors. He had in his hand a shield once carried by Laertes into battle, but now it was old like Laertes, and it was in poor shape, like Laertes. Eumaeus and Philoetius overpowered Melanthius, tied him up, and let him hang from the ceiling in an agonizing position.

Eumaeus told him, “Stay and guard the storeroom all night, Melanthius. No soft bed for you tonight!” They locked the door to the storeroom and ran to join Odysseus and Telemachus in battle.

The four heroes stood confronting the suitors, and Athena, who had taken the form of Mentor, appeared in the Great Hall. Odysseus was thrilled to see an ally and called, “Mentor, now is the time to fight. We have been friends since we were boys.” However, Odysseus knew that this ally was Athena.

One of the suitors, Agelaus, also addressed Athena—with threats: “Don’t help Odysseus and Telemachus, or after we kill them we will kill you. Then we will take your property and drive away your wife and sons and daughters.”

It is never a good idea to insult a goddess, even one who is disguised as a human. Athena rallied Odysseus with words, “This is the time to fight, Odysseus, just as you fought at Troy. You killed and killed again at Troy; now it is time to kill and kill again to protect your wife and your son.”

Athena took the form of a bird and flew to a roof beam. She did not fight for Odysseus with spears and swords—the gods and goddesses can give aid without fighting with weapons.

Agelaus now acted like a leader. He told five suitors, “Now is the time we fight. Mentor is no longer here, so only four heroes stand against us. Let each of us throw our spears together. Six spears thrown against four heroes ought to do some damage. Let’s try to kill Odysseus. Once he is dead, it will be easy to kill the others.”

All six suitors threw their spears, but Athena made sure that they did no damage.

Odysseus then told his son and two loyal servants, “It is our turn to throw spears now. The suitors would love to kill us and strip the armor from our corpses.”

The four heroes threw their spears, and each hero killed a suitor. Next the suitors threw spears—and Athena made sure that they missed. One spear barely nicked Telemachus on the wrist—enough to draw blood, but no more. Again the four heroes threw spears, and again they each killed a suitor. Telemachus killed Amphimedon, whose spear had nicked his wrist. Philoetius the cowherd killed Ctesippus, who had earlier thrown an ox-hoof at the old beggar. Philoetius vaunted, “You’re the bad son of a bad father. You once gave Odysseus an ox-hoof as a guest-gift. I hope that you are happy with the guest-gift I just gave you.”

Odysseus killed Agelaus, last of the suitors’ minor leaders, and Telemachus killed Leocritus, and now the suitors totally panicked, screaming and running around the Great Hall, pursued by heroes dispensing justice, and the floor of the Great Hall was red with blood.

Leodes, the suitor with soft palms who was completely incompetent at stringing Odysseus’ bow, fell to the floor, grabbed Odysseus’ knees, and supplicated him, “Don’t kill me, Odysseus! I never slept with any of your serving-women! I tried to restrain the suitors, keep them from committing outrages! I was only their prophet!”

“You say that you were their prophet,” Odysseus said. “As their prophet, you must have prayed that I would never return to Ithaca, that your feasting would go on and on. You must have hoped that you would marry my wife, and that she would give birth to your children. For that, you will not escape your punishment.”

Odysseus picked up Agelaus’ sword from the floor—Agelaus was dead so he had no use for it—and cut the self-declared prophet’s head from his body.

Only one person could now be seen to be alive: Phemius, the bard whom the suitors forced to sing and play music for them. He stood against the wall, staying away from the carnage, with his lyre in his hands. *What should I do?* he thought. *Try to escape from the Great Hall, or beg Odysseus for mercy?*

Supplicating Odysseus seemed the better course, so he fell to the floor and grabbed Odysseus’ knees, begging, “Spare my life, Odysseus! Don’t kill a bard! I taught myself to be a bard, but the gods have blessed me with talent. I can sing songs for you and play music. I was forced to sing for the suitors—ask Telemachus!”

Telemachus vouched for the bard, “Don’t kill him! He’s innocent! He was forced to sing for the suitors. The herald Medon is innocent, too. I hope that he’s still alive. He may have been killed by one of us in the battle.”

The herald was still alive—hiding under one of the chairs. He came out of hiding now and ran to Telemachus, fell to the floor, and grabbed Telemachus’ knees, begging, “Don’t kill me, please! And don’t let your father kill me!”

Odysseus reassured both Medon and Phemius, “Don’t worry—you are safe. Telemachus has saved your lives. Remember this, and tell other people. You have done the right thing, and so Telemachus has saved you. Go to the courtyard. Wait until I call for you.”

Medon and Phemius ran to the courtyard and went directly to the altar of Zeus. There they were under the god’s protection.

This is a sign of maturity, Odysseus thought. *Telemachus has protected innocent people who needed protection.*

Odysseus walked through the Great Hall, looking to see if any of the suitors were alive. All were dead. He turned to Telemachus and ordered, “Bring Eurycleia, my old nurse, here.”

Telemachus brought Eurycleia from the women’s quarters. When she saw the dead suitors, she was about to cry out in triumph, but Odysseus stopped her, saying, “Rejoice only in your heart—silently. The suitors have well deserved their deaths. The gods have brought their deaths upon them. They did not respect the gods, they did not respect guests, and they did not observe *xenia*. Tell me—who among the serving-women are loyal, and who are disloyal?”

Eurycleia replied, “Of the serving-women, twelve are disloyal to you, to Telemachus, and to Penelope. Please let me wake up Penelope and tell her that you have returned and killed the suitors.”

“For now, let Penelope sleep,” Odysseus said, “but bring the twelve disloyal serving-women here.”

While Eurycleia went to get the twelve disloyal serving-women, Odysseus told Telemachus and the two loyal herdsmen what needed to be done. The corpses of the suitors had to be carried into the courtyard, and the Great Hall had to be cleaned. The twelve disloyal serving-women would help them do that. Odysseus told Telemachus, “After the Great Hall has been cleaned, take the twelve disloyal serving-women outside and kill them with your sword.”

Eurycleia brought the twelve disloyal serving-women to the Great Hall, and the disloyal serving-women carried the bodies of the suitors—their lovers—out of the Great Hall into the courtyard. Crying, they cleaned up the blood of the suitors, and they cleaned up the Great Hall.

After the disloyal serving-women had finished their work, Telemachus took them outside, but instead of killing them with his sword, he told them, “That is too good a death for you.” Instead, he hanged them. The nooses went around their necks, they were lifted into the air, and they kicked—but not for long. And so the twelve disloyal serving-women who would have been happy to run to their lovers and tell them to come quickly and kill the old beggar—Odysseus—died.

Next to be punished was Melanthius. He had almost gotten Odysseus and Telemachus killed when he provided weapons and armor to the suitors. He wanted one of the suitors to marry Penelope, and he wanted Odysseus and Telemachus dead. For him, no mercy. The victors cut off

Melanthius' nose and ears. And his private parts. And his hands and feet. Once Melanthius had died in agony, they washed off his blood from their bodies and clothing. They did not bury his corpse.

Odysseus burned sulfur and spread its purifying fumes throughout the Great Hall. He had no time to put on fresh clothing—not yet. He also ordered Eurycleia to wake Penelope and bring her to him.

Eurycleia told the loyal serving-women that their master, Odysseus, had returned. They crowded into the Great Hall, happy that their master was home again.

Chapter 23: The Bed of Penelope and Odysseus (Odyssey)

Eurycleia went to awaken Penelope. She stood over her and said, “Wake up, queen. What you wished for has happened. Odysseus has returned, and he has killed all of the suitors.”

“Eurycleia,” Penelope said, “I don’t believe you. It can’t have happened. Leave me alone.”

“I am telling you the truth,” Eurycleia said. “The old beggar was Odysseus in disguise. Telemachus knew that the old beggar was his father. Together they have killed the suitors.”

Penelope rose from her bed and asked, “How did they kill the suitors? The suitors were so numerous. How could Odysseus and Telemachus kill so many?”

“I don’t know,” Eurycleia replied. “I didn’t see what happened. I did hear the screams of the suitors as they died. The other serving-women and I were in our quarters. We were under orders to stay there. Finally, Telemachus came and ordered me to come into the Great Hall. I saw Odysseus in the midst of bloody corpses strewn around him. That is a sight that you would have loved to see—the man you love splattered with the blood of the suitors who courted you against your will. Now the corpses of the suitors are piled in the courtyard. Odysseus is purifying the Great Hall with the smoke of sulfur. Come into the Great Hall and see him for yourself. He has killed all of the suitors who plagued you!”

“Eurycleia,” Penelope said, “can this really be true? Isn’t it more likely that a god has killed the suitors? Can one or two people really kill so many? The suitors violated *xenia*. The suitors cared nothing about the gods. Wouldn’t the gods want to kill such men? Odysseus must be either dead or gone so long that he has given up hope of ever returning to Ithaca.”

“Penelope,” Eurycleia replied, “the person who killed the suitors is Odysseus. I have proof. Remember the distinctive scar on his knee—the scar he got while hunting a wild boar? I have seen it for myself. I saw it while I was washing his feet, but he made me stay silent and not tell you—not until he had killed all of the suitors. Come to the Great Hall and see him for yourself.”

“I can’t believe that Odysseus has returned to Ithaca,” Penelope said, “but I would like to see the bodies of the suitors—and whoever killed the suitors.”

Be careful, Penelope thought. The gods can take the shape of men, and they can even replicate distinctive scars. This may not be Odysseus at all, but instead a god who has come down from Olympus. Remember that gods will sometimes take the shape of mortal husbands so that they can sleep with mortal wives. Remember that the father of Heracles is the immortal Zeus, not the mortal Amphytrion. You have guarded your chastity ever since Odysseus went away twenty years ago. You don’t want to make a mistake now and sleep with someone who is not Odysseus.

Penelope went down to the Great Hall and looked at the man whom Eurycleia thought was Odysseus. She sat near, but not beside, him. He looked like Odysseus—at times. But at other times she thought that no, this is not her husband come home again. She could not tell, not for certain.

Telemachus could not believe that his mother was restraining herself. He thought, *Why isn't my mother running up to my father and hugging and kissing him, ecstatic that he is home again? That is what I have wanted to see for many years. Why is she just sitting there?*

“Mother,” Telemachus said, “why are you holding back? Why aren't you at least sitting beside your husband, my father? Do you have a hard heart? Would another wife act as you are acting when your husband comes back after twenty years of absence?”

“I can't do anything other than I am doing,” Penelope said. “But if this stranger really is Odysseus, I will soon know it. Odysseus and I have secrets that we share—secrets that are not known even by the gods.”

Odysseus thought, *This is one of the reasons I married you, Penelope. You have always been intelligent and prudent. By holding back now until you know with absolute certainty that I am Odysseus, you are reassuring me that you have guarded your chastity for the twenty years I have been away. And yes, you and I do have secrets that we share—secrets that are not known even by the gods.*

“Telemachus,” Odysseus said. “Leave your mother and me alone. Soon we will know each other.

“Also, think about what our next step will be. We have killed the suitors, but soon their deaths will be known and their relatives will want us dead. What will we be able to do then to keep them from killing us? When a man kills another man, the family of the dead man will pursue the killer. But we have killed more than one hundred men. All of their families will be after us.”

“You are a master strategist,” Telemachus said. “Whatever plan you come up with, I will help you to put it into effect.”

This is a sign of maturity, Odysseus thought. Telemachus knows that I have the experience and intelligence needed to come up with good tactics. Therefore, he is asking me what needs to be done and he is willing to help me do it.

“This is what I think best,” Odysseus said. “Go and wash and then return to the Great Hall. You and the servants dance while Phemius plays music. I want passersby to hear music and partying. I don't want them to wonder why the palace is silent. That would make them suspicious. Instead, let them think that a wedding is being held here—that Penelope has a husband. That will buy us a little time. Tomorrow, we will be able to go to one of my farms where loyal servants will fight with us.

“In the meantime, Penelope and I will leave the Great Hall and go into another part of the palace. We can talk there, and I need to rest.”

Telemachus and the servants danced in the Great Hall, and passersby thought that Penelope had finally married one of the suitors. They were not pleased:

“Penelope should have stayed faithful to her husband.”

“The suitors are worthless. None of them will make a good husband whom a wife can respect.”

They did not know that Penelope was still faithful to her husband and still guarding her chastity.

Eurycleia bathed Odysseus, and he dressed in clean clothing. Athena made him taller, stronger, and more handsome. No trace of the wrinkled skin, bleared eyes, and baldness of the old beggar remained.

Odysseus said to Penelope, “Most wives would rush to welcome their husbands home, but not you. Even after I have been gone for twenty years, you hold back from welcoming me. You are a strange woman if you hold back from welcoming me.”

Odysseus thought, *Actually, I appreciate your prudence. I know that the gods can make themselves look like a human, right down to a distinctive scar. I want a wife who is completely faithful to me. And I am not going to force you to share my bed, Penelope. I am not that kind of man.*

He then turned to Eurycleia and said, “I am tired, and I need rest. Make up a bed for me to sleep in.”

Penelope saw her chance. She said, “You are a strange man if you think I am going to welcome you in my bed without my knowing for sure that you are my husband.

“Eurycleia, take the bed out of my bedroom and bring it here for this man to sleep on.”

Odysseus thought, *Way to go, Penelope. Test me. Make sure that I am your husband and not a god in disguise or a mortal imposter. You have been faithful to me for the twenty years that I have been gone. Make sure that you don't make a mistake now.*

“Bring my bed from out of your bedroom?” Odysseus said. “Not likely, I think. I built that bed when I built the palace. I picked a spot for my palace where a wild olive tree was growing. First I built my bedroom over the olive tree, and then I trimmed the olive tree to make a post for our bed. After I built the bed, I finished the rest of my palace. This is our secret sign, Penelope. No one should know about that bed. Not even the gods know about it—they can't see through the walls and roof that I built before I built our bed.

“Penelope, is our bed still deeply rooted, or has a man been in the bedroom to cut the roots of our bed—and our marriage?”

Penelope knew now that the stranger was not an imposter, but was really her husband. He knew the secret sign. She went to Odysseus, hugged and kissed him, both of them rejoicing, and said, “Don't be angry with me, Odysseus. I had to test you. I did not want to make a mistake after twenty years of guarding my chastity. Frauds exist throughout the world. They would love

to impersonate a husband so that they can sleep with the husband's wife. Sleeping with the wrong man leads to pain and hardship—look at the pain and hardship that Helen and Paris caused when they had an affair and started the Trojan War. But since you know the secret sign of our bed, which none but you and I know, except for the single trusted servant who makes up the bed, I know that you are my husband, Odysseus, returned at last.”

Odysseus cried. He cried as he hugged his wife, feeling as joyful as sailors feel when they see land after Poseidon has sent a storm to sink their ship and many sailors drown and only a few are able to reach shore and live—as joyful as these surviving sailors seeing land was the sight to Penelope of her husband.

They cried together, hugging each other for a very long time. Both thought, *The bed is a perfect symbol of our marriage. Both the bed and our marriage are deeply rooted.*

Having a goddess for a friend has its advantages. Athena made the night last longer. She knew that Odysseus and Penelope needed time to talk together, time to have sex together, and time to sleep. Ordinarily, the night would not have been long enough for them to do all of these things, but Athena held back the dawn.

Odysseus said to Penelope, “Not everything is perfect. I still have another journey to take. I have talked to Tiresias, the Theban prophet, in the Land of the Dead. He told me that I must undertake another journey. But come, Penelope, let us go to bed now.”

“If you want the joys of bed, I won't refuse you—ever—now that you have returned home,” Penelope said, “but I do want to hear about this journey that you must take.”

Just like a woman, Odysseus thought. She is not especially anxious to jump into bed right away, even with a husband who has been away for twenty years. Instead, she wants to talk first. I can understand that. After all, I have been away for twenty years. She needs time to know me again. And I am not the type of man to force her to go to bed.

Odysseus said to Penelope, “Tiresias said that I must travel inland while carrying an oar. When I meet a people who have no knowledge of the sea and who call the oar a winnowing fan, I must plant the oar in the ground and make a sacrifice to Poseidon. By carrying knowledge of Poseidon to a people who know nothing of him, I will make peace with Poseidon and the god will no longer be my enemy. At that time, I will return home to Ithaca. I will meet my death here—it will be an easy death. I will die of old age, surrounded by family and friends.”

They continued to talk, and Eurycleia and Eurynome made up the bed, and then the two servants went to their own quarters to sleep. After Odysseus and Penelope had finished talking, they enjoyed the pleasures of bed.

Meanwhile, Telemachus and the servants were dancing in the Great Hall, celebrating the marriage of Penelope, now reunited with her husband.

After Odysseus and Penelope had enjoyed having sex together—Penelope’s first time in twenty years—they talked. Penelope told Odysseus the story of how she had been besieged by the suitors, of how she had used her weaving trick to hold off the suitors for three years, of how Odysseus had arrived home just in time. Odysseus then told Penelope the story of his Great Wanderings, leaving nothing out. Penelope marveled at his story, and she was flattered that Odysseus had rejected two goddesses as well as immortality and agelessness because he chose to be with her instead.

Then they slept.

After Athena thought that they had rested enough, she allowed the goddess Dawn to bring morning to the Earth.

Odysseus woke up and told Penelope, “I will be able to recover what we lost to the suitors. I can make raids and take animals to replace those animals the suitors butchered. Also, the Ithacans will replace many of the animals—after all, they owe me.

“But right now I must see my father. He is grieving for me and does not know that I have returned to Ithaca.

“You must stay here. But soon the families of the suitors will know that the suitors have been slaughtered. You and the serving-women must stay in your quarters behind locked doors. Allow no one to enter.”

Odysseus then went to Telemachus, Eumaeus, and Philoetius and told them to arm themselves, and then they set out to visit one of Odysseus’ farms—the farm where Laertes worked.

Chapter 24: Peace at Last (Odyssey)

Hermes, the guide of the dead, went to the ghosts of the suitors and led them down to the Land of the Dead. The ghosts made cries like bats as they mourned the loss of their lives.

In the Land of the Dead, they would meet many heroes: Achilles, the greatest of the warriors of the Trojan War; Patroclus, Achilles' best friend whose death drove Achilles to rout the Trojan Army single-handedly; Antilochus, Nestor's son who was killed during the Trojan War; and Agamemnon, the leader of the Greek armies against Troy.

Achilles said to Agamemnon, "Your fate was not what it should have been. You led the Greek armies against Troy. You fought for ten years to recover Helen for Menelaus, your brother. But when you returned home, your unfaithful wife and her lover slaughtered you. It would have been better if you had died during battle at Troy. Then everyone would have raised a burial-mound for you, and your son would have been proud of the way that you died. But your death is one that no man would want."

"Achilles," Agamemnon replied, "you died well. You died in battle against the Trojans. That is the way that a warrior ought to die. We carried your corpse to our ships, and we gave you a magnificent funeral. We mourned you. Your mother, the immortal goddess Thetis, heard our mourning and rose from the sea with her sea-nymphs. We were afraid, but Nestor told us, 'Don't panic. Be calm. This is Achilles' immortal mother with all of her sea-nymphs. She wants to mourn her son.' Thetis mourned, the sea-nymphs mourned, even the Muses mourned. For seventeen days, we mourned your death, and then we gave you a magnificent funeral that will be remembered throughout the ages. We burned your corpse and then gathered your bones and mixed them with the bones of Patroclus, your best friend, in a gold two-handled urn, made by Hephaestus, that your mother gave us. Over your bones we raised a burial-mound—one that can be seen by sailors far out at sea. Your mother, the goddess Thetis, hosted the funeral-games. She set out magnificent prizes for the winners. You are famous, Achilles. People will remember your name millennia after your death. But as for me, my death was ignoble—I was cut down by my unfaithful wife and her lover."

Hermes led the ghosts of the suitors to the ghosts of the heroes. Agamemnon recognized the ghost of Amphimedon, the son of a man who had hosted him once in Ithaca. Agamemnon asked Amphimedon, "How did you and the others die? All of you are young. All of you are in your prime. Were you shipwrecked and did you drown? Did enemy warriors slaughter you? Do you remember when I came to visit you before I went to Troy? Menelaus went with me, too. We found it difficult to convince Odysseus to join us in the fight against Troy. He knew that the war would be long, and he did not want to leave his home for so many years."

“Agamemnon,” Amphimedon replied, “Odysseus was gone for many years, and so we courted Penelope, his wife. She neither rejected us, nor did she accept any of us as her new husband. She fooled all of us with a weaving trick. For three years, she led us on, promising to marry one of us once she finished weaving a shroud for Laertes, Odysseus’ father. By day, she would weave the shroud. By night, she would unweave what she had woven. She fooled us for three years. Finally, one of her serving-women told us what she was doing. We caught her in the act of unweaving the shroud. We forced her to finish it.”

You say that Penelope neither rejected any of you, nor did she accept any of you as her new husband, Agamemnon thought. The weaving trick sounds to me like Penelope rejected all of you as a husband for her. You also say you were fooled for three years by this weaving trick. It sounds to me as if none of you suitors is intelligent enough to be the husband of a woman like Penelope.

“Then Odysseus came back to Ithaca,” Amphinomus continued. “He did not come openly. He looked like an old beggar. He visited the swineherd, and then Odysseus and Telemachus plotted our deaths. They came to the palace, first Telemachus and then Odysseus and the swineherd. In Odysseus’ own palace, we insulted him because we thought he was just an old beggar. He endured it all, but he and Telemachus carried the weapons out of the Great Hall and locked them out of our reach in the storeroom. Then he told Penelope—we guess, he must have—to hold an archery contest in the Great Hall. Whoever would win the archery contest would win Penelope for his wife. None of us suitors could even string his bow. Then the swineherd carried the bow to the old beggar—we ordered him not to do it. But Telemachus ordered the swineherd to carry the bow to the old beggar, and the swineherd obeyed Telemachus’ orders, not ours. Odysseus easily strung his bow and easily won the archery contest. Then he killed Antinous. Next he shot us down with arrows, and finally he and Telemachus and his two loyal herdsmen cut us down as we ran screaming in the Great Hall. Our blood flowed across the floor.

“That is how all of us died, Agamemnon,” Amphinomus said. “Even now our corpses lie unburied. Our families don’t yet know that we are dead.”

“Odysseus is fortunate in his choice of wives,” Agamemnon said. “Penelope is totally unlike Clytemnestra, my treacherous wife who took a lover and then slaughtered me when I returned from Troy. Penelope’s name will be remembered for millennia.”

Odysseus, Telemachus, Eumaeus, and Philoetius reached Laertes’ farm. The farm was well tended. Laertes had worked hard on it, and now, even in his old age, he was still working hard on it.

Odysseus told Telemachus, Eumaeus, and Philoetius, “Go into the house now. I myself will go and see my father. I would like to see if he is able to recognize me after my twenty years away from home.”

Odysseus left his armor in the house and then set off to find his father. He did not see his servant Dolius or Dolius' six strong sons, but he did find his father, working hard despite his old age. Odysseus was overcome with pity when he saw his father. His father looked like a slave, clothed in rags.

What is the best way to proceed? Odysseus thought. *Should I run to my father and tell him who I am and hug and kiss him? Should I speak with him and see if he recognizes me? Should I reproach him because he looks like a slave? My father is working hard, and work is often a good thing, but my father looks like a slave. One can work and still have pride. I won't tell my father who I am right away; instead, I will reproach him for looking like a slave.*

Odysseus went to his father and said, "You are working hard, and the farm shows it. Nothing is out of place here. All is well tended. However, you are old and you look poverty stricken. The plants you look after are in better shape than you. You work hard, so your master should take good care of you. Whose slave are you? And please tell me—I have just arrived—is this island Ithaca? I want to visit Ithaca so that I can tell my news about a friend of mine. This man visited me and became my friend. He said that his father was Laertes of Ithaca. I hosted him, and I gave him glorious guest-gifts. I gave him seven bars of gold, a silver mixing bowl, and twelve cloaks and other clothing, as well as rugs. In addition, I gave him four women, beauties who were skilled in crafts. I let him choose his pick of the women."

"Stranger," Laertes replied, "this is Ithaca, but it is ruled now by uncivilized men without laws. Those gifts you gave him have never reached Ithaca, nor has the man you gave them to. But if he had returned to Ithaca, you would have found him to be a good friend and a generous host. He would have given you guest-gifts to remember.

"Please tell me. When did you host that man? By now, that man must be dead, perhaps drowned and food for fishes. Or if he died on land, then the wild beasts have devoured his corpse. No funeral has ever been held for him on Ithaca. Penelope, his wife, has never been able to properly mourn for him.

"But what is your story? Who are you?"

"I will tell you my story," Odysseus replied, still keeping his identity secret. "I am a wanderer. I have endured many hardships. I know pain all too well. I sailed here from Sicily, and I saw my friend—Odysseus—five years ago. When he left my house, all of the bird-signs were on the right—the lucky side. We hoped to meet again with him as host."

Five years, Laertes thought. *A lot can happen in five years, including death.*

Laertes grieved, and in his grief he scooped up dirt from the ground and poured it over his head.

Odysseus took pity on his father and said, "Father, I am your son, Odysseus. I have returned after twenty years. I have killed all of the suitors."

“Are you really my son, Odysseus?” Laertes asked. “Show me proof.”

“Yes, I am your son,” Odysseus replied. “Here is the proof. First look at the scar on my knee. No other mortal has a scar exactly like it. I received it when I visited my grandfather on Mount Parnassus.

“Next, let me share a memory with you. I remember when I was a little boy standing at this exact spot with you. You showed me the trees, and you said that I would inherit them. You gave me thirteen pear trees, ten apple trees, and forty fig trees. You also gave me forty rows of vines with grapes for wine.”

Laertes knew that his son was standing before him. He hugged his son, and he prayed, “Zeus, thank you for helping to rid the palace of the insolent suitors, but now please protect us as the relatives of the suitors try to kill us.”

“All will be well,” Odysseus promised. “Let us go to the house. Telemachus is there, as well as the cowherd and the swineherd. Let us eat there.”

Talking together, they returned to the house and saw Telemachus, the loyal swineherd, and the loyal cowherd. Laertes took a bath, cleaning off the grime from the fields, and he dressed in clean, fresh clothing—not rags. Athena made him taller, stronger, and more handsome. He looked like a god—not like a slave.

Odysseus complimented his father, who said, “I wish that I were younger. I wish that I had been in the palace helping you to kill the suitors. You would have been proud of me.”

As they were sitting down to eat, Dolius and his six strong sons returned from working in the fields. They saw Odysseus and were amazed—they guessed who he was. Odysseus told old Dolius, “Yes, the king has returned. Sit down and eat, old friend.”

Amazed and happy, Dolius kissed his master’s hand. “Should I tell Penelope that you have returned?”

“That won’t be necessary,” Odysseus said. “By now, she has heard the news.”

I have killed two of Dolius’ children: Melanthius and Melanthe, Odysseus thought. I don’t want him to know that yet. They were disloyal and they deserved to die, but a father will grieve for the deaths of his children just as sons will grieve the deaths of their siblings, and I want Dolius and his six strong sons to fight for me when the families of the suitors come after Telemachus and me. Soon enough, Dolius and his six strong sons will learn that Melanthius and Melanthe are dead.

As they ate in the farmhouse, rumors swept Ithaca. People heard of the death of the suitors, and their families arrived to take away the corpses for burial. Ships carried some of the corpses to the nearby islands where the families of those suitors lived. The Ithacan families grieved, and the Ithacan elders met together.

Eupithes, the father of Antinous, rose to speak, “Men of Ithaca, Odysseus has been a disaster to us and our families. First, he left to go to Troy, taking ships filled with men with him. But he

returned alone. He lost the ships, and every man whom he took with him to Troy is dead. And now look! He returns home, and he kills more men! Not only did he take many of the Ithacan fathers to Troy and get them killed, but also he returns to Ithaca and kills many of their sons! Let's go after him and kill him before he is able to escape! When someone kills a member of our family, we are honor-bound to avenge the death of our loved one. A death for a death!"

Medon the herald and Phemius the bard arrived at the meeting-ground. Medon told the men of Ithaca, "Odysseus did not act alone when he killed the suitors. A god was helping him! I myself saw this!"

Halitherses, an old and wise man, spoke next, "Men of Ithaca, you let the suitors run wild. You did not restrain them, although Mentor and I warned that the result of letting a generation of young men run wild would be ruinous. Look at what happened! They besieged Penelope, the wife of Odysseus. They courted her against her will! They filled their days with feasts and music and games, and they took and took and gave nothing in return. They disrespected the gods, and they did not observe *xenia*. Don't try to kill Odysseus! We have seen too much death already!"

Half of the men listened to Halitherses and wanted peace, but half of the men listened to Eupithes and wanted revenge. That half ran to get weapons and armor, and they went in a group to find Odysseus and kill him. Eupithes led them.

Athena, watchful, saw them and appealed to her father, Zeus, the king of gods and men, "What will happen now, father? Shall war come to Ithaca? Or shall peace?"

"All has worked out as you wanted," Zeus replied. "Odysseus has returned home and has killed the suitors. You can do what you like now, but I advise that you make peace between the two sides. Make them agree that Odysseus shall be king as long as he lives. We are gods. We can purge their memories of the death of the suitors. We can bring peace between the two sides. We have that power."

Athena flew from Olympus to Ithaca.

Odysseus and the others finished eating, and he asked one of the others to look outside and see if the families of suitors were approaching. One of Dolius' sons looked and reported, "Here they come! They are almost here!"

Everybody, including the old men Laertes and Dolius, put on armor and grabbed weapons. They were ready to fight.

Athena, in the form of Mentor, came into the house. Of course, Odysseus was happy to see her. Odysseus said to Telemachus, "It is time to fight. For generations, our family has fought well."

Telemachus replied, "Don't worry, father. I will fight well. I will not disgrace our family."

Laertes was thrilled to hear his son and his grandson. He said, "This is a great day for me and for all our family! My son and my grandson are both ready to display their courage!"

Athena, disguised as Mentor, advised Laertes, “Pray to Athena, the bright-eyed goddess, and to Zeus. Then prepare to fight.”

Laertes did as she wished, and the heroes attacked. Laertes threw his spear—a direct hit! He killed Eupithes, who crashed to the ground. Odysseus, Telemachus, Laertes, and the others ran toward the male relatives of the suitors, and another slaughter by the heroes would have resulted, but Athena ordered them, “Stop, you men of Ithaca! We have seen enough blood! Generations of men of Ithaca have died! We need no more bloodshed!”

Even so, it took more than orders from Athena to stop the slaughter—Odysseus thirsted for blood. Zeus threw a thunderbolt that crashed in front of Athena—that got Odysseus’ attention. She told him, “Stop, Odysseus! If you continue to kill, you will make Zeus angry at you. Making a god angry at you is never a good idea.”

Odysseus stopped.

Athena kept the shape of wise Mentor, who was respected by all. She made peace between the two sides, and peace came to Ithaca.

VIRGIL’S AENEID: A RETELLING IN PROSE

A Note (Aeneid)

When Virgil died in 19 B.C.E., he had not quite completed his *Aeneid*; therefore, some minor inconsistencies remain. For example, one particular prophecy is made by the Harpy Celaeno in one section, and by Aeneas’ father in another section. However, the *Aeneid* is well worth reading. In addition to being *the* epic of ancient Rome, the *Aeneid* contains the fullest surviving ancient account of the fall of Troy. It also contains the story of the tragic love affair between Aeneas and Dido, the Queen of Carthage — a story that Virgil apparently invented. On his deathbed, Virgil requested that the manuscript of the *Aeneid* be burned. I am grateful that Caesar Augustus did not honor that request.

In the *Aeneid*, one of the great themes is a conflict between two things: *furor* (rage or passion) and *pietas* (proper, dutiful behavior).

Furor means rage or passion. It is excessive rage or passion. Juno’s hatred for Aeneas and the Trojans is an example of *furor*.

Pietas means proper, dutiful behavior. It means respect for things for which respect is due, including gods, family, and destiny. Aeneas is noted for his *pietas*, as when he carries his father on his back out of Troy.

Another important Latin term is *clementia*, from which we get our word “clemency.” A person is clement when he or she gives a mild rather than a harsh punishment. Julius Caesar was noted for his *clementia*. *Clementia* can mean calmness, clemency, compassion, forbearance, gentleness, humanity, indulgence, mercy, mildness, etc. *Clementia* is especially mercy shown by a person who has much power to a person who has less or no power.

Chapter 1: Arrival at Carthage (Aeneid)

My theme is war and a particular man — a man driven by destiny to abandon Troy and sail to western Italy to fulfill his fate of founding the people who would build Rome. Fulfilling his destiny was not easy. Juno, the wife of Jupiter, the king of gods and men, opposed him, as did many warriors. They did not want him to bring his household gods — the Penates — to Latium on the western coast of Italy, to marry Lavinia, to found the city of Lavinium, and to become the ancestor of the Romans.

Muse, remind me of the reasons why Juno hated Aeneas, a man renowned for his *pietas*, for his devotion to duty, whether to the gods, to his family, or to his destiny. Aeneas had respect for those things to which respect is due. Why did Juno make his fulfilling his destiny so difficult? Are the immortals capable of such anger?

Phoenicians from the city of Tyre founded a city named Carthage on the coast of north Africa. Carthage and Rome were the two competitors for worldwide empire, and Juno loved Carthage even more than her beloved island of Samos. In Carthage, Juno kept her armor and her chariot. Juno was willing for Carthage to have a worldwide empire, but the Fates were not. Juno did all she could to make Carthage strong, but gods and goddesses know fate, and Juno knew that a city founded by the descendants of men from Troy would conquer Carthage. Rome, not Carthage, would have a worldwide empire. For that reason, Juno hated Aeneas.

Juno also hated Aeneas because she hated all Trojans. A jealous wife, Juno hated the many affairs that her husband, Jupiter, had had over the centuries. She especially hated the children who resulted from these affairs. One of these illegitimate children, Dardanus, became an early king of the city of Troy.

Also, Paris, prince of Troy, had insulted Juno. Asked to judge a beauty contest of the goddesses Juno, Minerva, and Venus, Paris had accepted a bribe from Venus, the goddess of sexual passion, who offered him the most beautiful woman in the world. Paris went to Sparta and ran away with the most beautiful woman in the world: Helen, the lawfully wedded wife of Menelaus, King of Sparta. Helen became Helen of Troy, and the Trojan War was fought so that Menelaus could get Helen back. Because Juno's beauty had been insulted, Juno hated the Trojans.

Juno also hated the Trojans because of Ganymede. A jealous wife, Juno hated the many affairs of her husband Jupiter, who chased more than just skirts. Ganymede was a beautiful young son of Tros, a king of Troy, and Jupiter kidnapped Ganymede to be his cupbearer and his paramour.

For these reasons, Juno hated Aeneas and the other Trojans, and she did her best to keep them away from western Italy, forcing them to wander the seas and strange lands despite their destiny. Founding the Roman people was a huge burden borne by many people.

Aeneas and his Trojans had set sail from Sicily in twenty ships. Their mood was good; Juno's mood was not. Juno said to herself as she watched Aeneas' ships, "Am I powerless to cause trouble for Aeneas and keep him away from western Italy? True, he has a destiny, and fate decrees that he will fulfill that destiny, but at least I can make that difficult to do. Why should it be easy for Aeneas to reach western Italy?"

"I have power, as does another goddess: Minerva. Minerva was angry at Little Ajax, the Greek who during the fall of Troy raped Cassandra in a temple dedicated to Minerva. Anyone in a temple is under the protection of the god or goddess whose temple it is — the mortal has sanctuary. By raping Cassandra in Minerva's temple, Little Ajax disrespected Minerva. Minerva got revenge when Little Ajax attempted to sail home to Greece after the fall of Troy. Minerva hurled one of Jupiter's thunderbolts at Little Ajax' fleet, and she caused a storm with high waves. Little Ajax' ship burned and a cyclone swept him up into the air and then impaled him on a rock.

"Minerva got her well-deserved revenge — quickly! But I am the queen of gods and men, and I have to battle Aeneas and his Trojans continually — for years! Don't I have more power than that? Who among men will worship me unless I show that I can triumph over Aeneas and his Trojans?"

Juno flew to Aeolia, the island ruled by Aeolus, king of the winds. In a cave, Aeolus keeps the winds. They howl and want to break out and cause storms, but Aeolus calms them enough to keep them from breaking out of the cave and destroying the world. Jupiter had been afraid that the winds would cause massive destruction, so he shut them up in a cave, put a mountain over the cave, and gave the winds a king to rule them. Aeolus decides when to keep the winds shut up in the cave and when to allow them to blow freely.

Juno said, "Aeolus, Jupiter gave you great power over the winds. You can either calm them or rouse them. Right now, Aeneas and the Trojans — all of whom I hate — are on the sea carrying their household gods from Troy to Italy. I want you to release the winds and allow them to attack the Trojans' ships and sink them.

"I will reward you if you do what I say. I will give in marriage to you the most beautiful of fourteen sea-nymphs I have much influence over: Deiopea. She will live with you as your wife and bear your children. I reward well those who serve me."

Aeolus replied, "You, Juno, should have everything you want. I, Aeolus, should do everything you tell me to do. You have always been good to me. You are responsible for making me the god of the winds. You have made sure that Jupiter treats me well, and you have made sure that I am invited to the feasts of the Olympian gods. Because of you, I am the lord of the storm winds."

Aeolus struck the mountain over the cave holding the winds with his spear and created a hole through which the winds rushed to the sea. They made huge waves, and they made clouds that

blotted out the sun. The sailors shouted, and the ships rose and fell on the huge waves. Thunder roared and lightning bolts crashed, and sailors saw death everywhere.

Aeneas, in private, groaned and said, “So many Trojan warriors died on the plain before Troy as they defended wives, children, parents, and city. They were the lucky ones. They died an honorable death in battle, not an ignoble death by drowning. I would have been better off if the Greek Diomedes had killed me on the battlefield. I would have been better off if I had been buried at Troy with Hector, the greatest Trojan warrior, and Sarpedon, a Trojan ally from Lydia, and other heroes!”

The winds and waves battered Aeneas’ ship, breaking oars, and the waves poured over the decks. Waves rose and fell, sometimes rising above the ship and sometimes exposing the sand at the bottom of the sea.

The South wind stranded three of Aeneas’ ships on the mid-ocean rocks the Italians called the Altars. The East wind stranded three more of Aeneas’ ships on the dangerous coastal reefs called the Syrtes.

Aeneas saw another ship — captained by Orontes — wreck after a huge wave crashed on it. Orontes fell headfirst into the sea, and his ship circled three times in a whirlpool before sinking. In the water, sailors and cargo floated.

The winds and waves battered and damaged four more ships — those captained by Ilioneus, Achates, Abas, and Aletes. Their joints split open and the waters rushed in.

Neptune, the god of the sea, sensed the storm above him. He realized the violence of the winds and the waves — violence not approved by him. Neptune raised his head above the water and saw the scattered ships of Aeneas — the Trojans had been attacked by the violent winds and the violent waves.

Immediately, Neptune realized that this was the work of Juno. He ordered the East wind and West wind to come to him, and he said to them, “You seem awfully sure of yourselves to trespass so on my domain. You have caused destruction in my area of influence. If you ever cause a storm on the sea, you must do so only with my permission. This time I will let you off with a warning, but the next time this happens you will pay. Go back to your cave and tell Aeolus that I — not he — am the god of the sea. Jupiter, Pluto, and I shook lots to see who would rule what. Jupiter became the god of the sky, Pluto became the god of the Land of the Dead, and I became the god of the sea. Aeolus is the god of the island on which he usually keeps you winds imprisoned in a cave. Let him stay in his own area of influence and stay out of mine unless he has my permission.”

Neptune then calmed the sea and sent away the clouds so that the sun would shine. Triton, who was one of Neptune’s sons, and the sea nymph Cymothoë lifted Aeneas’ ships from the rocks while Neptune himself used his trident to raise the ships. Neptune also cleared a passage for the ships that had been grounded on the reefs, and he drove his chariot over the waves to calm them.

Neptune calming the waves was like a statesman calming an unruly crowd. The crowd is full of passion and rage — of *furor* — and it throws rocks and burning torches. But a statesman worthy of respect comes to the crowd of people and talks to them, and they listen to him and become calm and law-abiding. Just like that statesman, Neptune calmed the unruly waves.

Aeneas' men, weary from battling the storm, headed for the nearest land. Driven off their course, they headed for the north African country of Libya. An island there provides a shield for the mouth of a bay, creating a safe haven for ships. The island shields the haven from high waves, and twin towers of rock protect the sides of the harbor.

On the mainland is a forest and cut in a cliff is a cave that is the home of sea nymphs. The harbor here is so safe that ships need not use anchors.

In this harbor arrived Aeneas and seven of his ships — perhaps the only ships left to him out of his entire fleet. Happy to be on land again, the Trojans lay on the sandy beach. Achates used flint to make a fire, and the Trojans began to grind grain to make a meal.

Aeneas climbed a hill and searched the sea, hoping to see the ship of Antheus or of Capys or of Caicus. No ships were in sight. But Aeneas did see three stags and a herd of deer. Using the bow and arrows that his aide Achates kept for him, Aeneas shot the three stags and then began shooting does. He did not stop shooting until he had killed seven deer — one for each of his ships. A good leader provides food for his men.

Aeneas gave the deer to his men and set out wine that Acestes, the king of Sicily, had stocked in the ships.

Before he and his men ate, Aeneas spoke to his men to raise their spirits: “Friends, we have endured much worse than what we are enduring now. This, too, shall come to an end — a god will help us. We have survived the man-eating monster Scylla, and we have survived the boulders thrown by the Cyclops. Once again, we need to be courageous and to resist grief and fear. Someday, we shall look back on this and be proud that we have survived. We still have a destiny: We shall reach Latium in western Italy. Fate has promised us a homeland there, and there the city of Troy shall rise again. Be courageous.”

The public Aeneas put on an act of confidence for his men, but the private Aeneas worried.

The men skinned the deer and cut off strips of meat. They cooked the venison, and then they ate and drank. No longer hungry, they talked, wondering about the other ships. Were their shipmates still alive? Aeneas privately mourned for Orontes, Amycus, Lycus, Gyas, and Cloanthus.

Jupiter gazed down on Libya, looking at Aeneas and his Trojans, and witnessed their troubles. Venus, the goddess of sexual passion and of laughter, approached him. Usually a happy goddess, Venus, the mother of Aeneas, was sad. One way for her to help her son was to intercede in his behalf with Jupiter, the king of gods and men.

Venus said to her father, Jupiter, “You rule the lives of gods and men. Has my Aeneas committed a crime against you? Have the Trojans done any harm to you? Why are Aeneas and the Trojans barred from Italy? Haven’t you promised that in Italy the Romans will arise, a people descended from the Trojans? Haven’t you promised that the Romans will be a powerful people — the most powerful people? Have you decided not to keep your promise? I was saddened by the fall of Troy, but I consoled myself with the thought that their descendants would be the Romans. So why are the Trojans still enduring so many hardships? Will you set an end to their hardships?”

“Antenor, one of the old men of Troy, managed to escape from the city with some other Trojans. They made their way to Italy, and they founded the city of Padua. Now they live in peace.

“But what of Aeneas and the Trojans he leads? How many ships are lost? Because of one enemy — Juno — Aeneas and his Trojans are kept away from Italy. Is this the way you reward the Trojans who worship you? Is this the way you give them power?”

Jupiter kissed his daughter gently and said, “You need not worry, Venus. Aeneas’ fate has not changed; he and his Trojans still have the same destiny. They will found the city of Lavinium, and Aeneas’ fame will reach the stars.

“To ease your mind, let me tell you more of what fate holds for your son and his Trojans. Aeneas will land on Italy, and he will fight a war there and win. He will build the city of Lavinium in the territory of Latium, and he will govern for three years. Ascanius, his son, who also holds the name of Ilus for Ilium or Troy and who in Italy will also be called Iulus, a name that will later become Julius, will rule Latium for thirty years. Ascanius will build the city of Alba Longa and rule from there. For three hundred years, the Trojans will continue to rule in Latium, and then the priestess Ilia will sleep with Mars, the god of war, and give birth to twin boys: Romulus and Remus. They will be raised by a she-wolf, and they will found Rome. Romulus will name the city, and its citizens will be called Romans.

“On the Romans I set no limits on their power, either in space or in time. Their empire will have no end.

“Juno now hates the Trojans, but eventually she will reform and not resist the toga-wearing Romans. All of this, I decree. Eventually, the Romans will even conquer Greece, land of Achilles, the greatest warrior of the Trojan War, and land of the city of Mycenae, once ruled by Agamemnon, leader of the Greek forces against Troy.

“A Trojan Caesar will arise from the House of Julius, a name that will come from Iulus. This Caesar — the Emperor Caesar Augustus, nephew and adopted son of Julius Caesar — will have an empire that is bounded only by the Ocean. He will receive treasure from the Orient. His fame will also reach the stars. He and Aeneas will be worshiped, and in the reign of Caesar Augustus, Rome will be known for the rule of law and will find peace after centuries of warfare. The gates

of the temple of Janus, which are kept open during times of war, will finally be closed as the civil wars come to an end.”

Jupiter then sent Mercury, the messenger of the gods, down to Carthage in Libya. Mercury’s job was to make sure that the Trojans would find welcome there. Jupiter did not want Dido, the Queen of Carthage, who did not know her fate, to be an enemy to Aeneas and his Trojans. Mercury quickly accomplished his goal: He filled the Carthaginians and Dido with peace and good will.

That night, Aeneas wrestled with worry. When the morning came, he ordered his ships moved to a narrow place where rocks and trees hid them, and then he explored the countryside with his aide Achates by his side. For protection, Aeneas carried two javelins.

Another way for Venus to help her son was by meeting with him, even when she was disguised as a mortal. That way, she could give him information and advice.

Having assumed the form of a young woman, a huntress who could be from Sparta or from Thrace, Venus met Aeneas and Achates in the woods the two men were exploring. She carried a bow and a quiver of arrows. Her hair was not tied up, and her knees were bare — she had tied her skirt so it would not catch on bushes.

The disguised Venus said to Aeneas and Achates, “Have you seen my sister? If you have, where did she go? She is wearing the skin of a spotted lynx and carrying a bow and a quiver of arrows. You may have seen or heard her hunting a boar.”

Aeneas replied, “I have not seen any of your sisters. How should I refer to you? You can’t be a mortal, not with your physical features and the quality of your voice. You must be a goddess. Are you Diana, Apollo’s sister? Are you a nymph? Be kind to us, and help us, please. Where are we? A storm at sea drove us here, and we don’t know where we are or who lives here. If you help us, we will sacrifice many animals to you.”

Venus lied and said, “I am not a goddess, so I don’t deserve sacrifices. We young women from the city of Tyre carry bows and arrows and wear red hunting boots. This land is a kingdom ruled by Phoenicians. The city here is Carthage, and Dido is its queen. She sailed here with her people from Tyre, fleeing from a crime. I will tell you the story.

“Dido’s husband was the richest man in Tyre: Sychaeus. He was her first and only husband. Dido’s brother is Pygmalion, the ruler of Tyre. He is evil, and he hated Sychaeus and wanted his gold. Pygmalion killed Sychaeus with a sword at an altar, spilling his blood in a holy place. Pygmalion hid his guilt; he did not care about his sister’s grief. He lied to her.

“One night Dido dreamed: The ghost of her husband — who was still not buried — told her about his death and ordered her, ‘Flee from the city of Tyre!’ He also revealed the hidden location of treasure — silver and gold — to help her be able to flee.

“Dido planned her flight and gathered followers. They were easy to find because they hated the tyrant Pygmalion. They gathered ships and loaded them with what Pygmalion desired most: gold. They then set sail with Dido as their commander. They reached this land, and they have started to build a new city: Carthage. To get land to build on, they bought as much land as a bull’s-hide would enclose. A tricky people, they cut the bull’s-hide into very thin strips so that it would encircle a large hill.

“But who are you? Where did you come from, and where are you headed?”

Aeneas replied, “Goddess, to tell my entire story would take until nightfall. Briefly, we come from Troy. You may have heard of it. We sailed over the sea until a storm drove us here. I am Aeneas, and I seek to fulfill my destiny. On board our ships, we carry our household gods that we took from Troy when the city fell to the Greeks. My name is famous, and I seek Italy. We set out with twenty ships, but after the storm I have only seven left. Here in Libya, I am a stranger, an exile.”

Venus, still disguised as a mortal, said, “Whoever you are, not all the immortals hate you. You are still alive, and you are near Carthage. Walk on this path: You will arrive at the city, and you can see the queen.

“Also, I have good news. I can read bird-signs, and the signs tell me that most of your ships and friends are safe. The winds drove them into a safe port. Look up, and you will see a dozen swans flying together. An eagle had attacked them and sent them in all directions, but now these dozen swans have regrouped and are flying together and are looking for the other swans. Twelve more of your ships are safe. You have seven ships, so in the storm you lost only one ship.

“Now follow the path and go to Carthage.”

Venus moved away from Aeneas and revealed herself as a goddess. Her skirt was long and reached the ground, and her appearance and movements revealed that she was a goddess.

Aeneas recognized that she was his mother, and he — all too often isolated — called after her, “Why must you disguise yourself when we meet? Why can’t we know each other and hug each other and talk together as mother and son?”

Aeneas and Achates took the path to Carthage. Venus created a fog to hide them. No one could see them, and so no one hindered them. She then flew to the city of Paphos on the island of Cyprus. There her worshippers burned Arabian incense to her on a hundred altars. Paphos was one of her favorite cities.

Aeneas and Achates followed the path, which took them to the top of a hill on which they could look down and see Carthage. Once nothing had been there but a few huts, but now the Phoenicians were building gates and cobbled streets. They were building walls, raising a citadel, and setting boundaries for buildings. They were building a civilization with laws and judges and a senate. They were dredging a harbor and building a theater and quarrying rock to make columns.

They were working as hard as bees work in early summer, raising a new generation and harvesting honey and making a living hive.

Aeneas was impressed. He said, “The walls are rising, and this will be a great city.”

Aeneas and Achates continued walking. Wrapped in fog, they passed unseen among people. They came to a famous grove. There the Phoenicians had dug after landing on the shore and had unearthed a sign put there by Juno: the head of a fiery stallion. Afterward, the stallion’s head appeared on Carthaginian coins. The sign meant that for ages the Carthaginians would have power in war and ease in life. In this sacred grove, Dido was building a temple for Juno, lavishing on it bronze doors, a bronze threshold, and bronze doorposts.

In this grove, Aeneas saw something that gave him hope — hope that he had found a haven. Juno’s temple was a place for works of art. The city’s artists had created depictions of the Trojan War — a war that was known throughout the world. Depicted in these works of art, Aeneas saw Agamemnon and Menelaus, Priam the King of Troy, and Achilles.

Aeneas said, “Achates, the entire world knows of the hardships of Troy. I see a depiction of Priam here. Here in this city, people’s hearts are touched by Trojan troubles. The fame of the Trojan War will offer us respite here.”

Aeneas looked at the depictions of the Trojan War on the walls of the temple of Juno. He had known the living, breathing people, and their depictions were empty and lifeless, but they still had the power to arouse memories and grief. He groaned as he looked at the Greeks attacking Troy. In one work of art, the Trojans routed the Greeks. In another work of art, Achilles routed the Trojans. In yet another work of art, Aeneas saw the white tents of Rhesus, a king allied with the Trojans. Diomedes had slaughtered Rhesus and many of his warriors the night they had arrived at Troy. Splattered with the warriors’ blood, Diomedes had driven Rhesus’ horses back to the Greek camps.

Aeneas also saw Troilus, a young son of Priam. Achilles had ambushed Troilus, who fell out of his chariot but who still held onto the reins and his javelin, which drew a jagged line in the dust.

Aeneas also saw a depiction of the Trojan women praying to the goddess Minerva for her help. The Trojan women were suppliants who beat their breasts in the ancient way of showing grief and who offered Minerva a robe, but the goddess turned away and would not listen to their prayer.

Aeneas also saw the body of Priam’s son Hector, the greatest Trojan warrior. Achilles had killed Hector, had dragged his corpse three times around the walls of the city of Troy, and now was selling his corpse. Aeneas groaned as he saw the lifeless body of his friend and as he saw Priam, Hector’s father, grieving.

Aeneas also saw a depiction of himself fighting in battle. And he saw the Ethiopian Memnon who had fought for the Trojans and been killed by Achilles. And he saw Queen Penthesilea leading her Amazons into battle; Achilles had also killed her. In the work of art, she cinched a breastband under her bare breast. She and the other Amazons were women who fought like men.

As Aeneas looked at the works of art, Queen Dido came to Juno's temple with several escorts. She was like the goddess Diana walking with a thousand mountain nymphs. Dido sat on her throne with an honor guard by her side. Here she ruled. She made laws and decrees, and she assigned the work that needed to be done. Sometimes she used lots, and sometimes she used her sense of what was right.

Aeneas saw some of his lost Trojans approaching her: Ilioneus, Antheus, Sergestus, Cloanthus, and other Trojans who had been separated from Aeneas and the seven ships that had stayed with him.

Aeneas and Achates wanted to greet the lost Trojans, but they restrained themselves and stayed silent and hidden in fog. They wanted to learn whatever they could learn. Where are these Trojans' ships? Why have these Trojans come to Dido?

The lost Trojans approached Dido, and Ilioneus said to her, "Your majesty, Jupiter has blessed you by allowing you to build a new city here. We are Trojans, and we ask you to welcome us and not set fire to our ships. We worship the same gods that you worship. We have not come to attack your people and to loot your city. We are not in a position to do that; we have suffered many troubles.

"We are in search of a land to settle in. The Greeks know of a land they call Hesperia, but it has another name: Italy. We had set sail for Italy when a storm arose and scattered our ships. We had twenty ships, but now we have only twelve ships left — twelve ships that landed on your coast after the storm.

"Here we have not been welcomed. We have not been treated as guests. Sailors have a right to shore, but your people have forbidden us a footing on the beach. This is not the way to treat sailors. Remember the gods. Remember what the gods say about how to treat other people. Remember the duty that gods have given to mortals.

"Our king was Aeneas. He was devoted to duty. He understood *pietas*, and he did his duty to the gods, to his family, to his city, and to his city's survivors. He was also a formidable warrior. We do not know whether he still lives, but if he does live, you will not regret helping us.

"We have places in the world where we are welcome. In Sicily is a king named Acestes who was born to Trojan parents. Allow us to pull our storm-damaged ships onto shore so that we can repair them and make new oars, and then we shall set sail for Italy, where — fate permitting — we shall land at Latium.

“But if fate does not permit us to sail to Latium, if Aeneas has drowned in the waters off Libya, then we shall sail back to Sicily and we shall have Acestes as our king.”

Dido welcomed the Trojans: “Have no fear, Trojans. We have a new kingdom, and we are cautious. That is why you were not allowed — at first — to pull your ships onto the shore and repair them.

“But we, like all people, have heard of Troy and know its story and its fame. We know the fame of Aeneas.

“Wherever you choose to sail to — Italy or Sicily — I will provide safe escorts for you. Or, if you prefer, you can settle here at Carthage. I now allow you to pull your ships onto shore. The Trojans will be equals with the Carthaginians if you choose to settle here.

“I will also send out men to search the coast to try to find Aeneas. He may have been shipwrecked and then reached the shore.”

Aeneas and Achates were ready to reveal themselves. Achates said to Aeneas, “This is good news. Dido and the Carthaginians are welcoming us, and we have lost only one ship instead of the thirteen ships we feared we had lost. Your mother, Venus, told us the truth.”

Venus melted the fog around Aeneas and Achates, and the two Trojans stood visible in the presence of Dido and the others. Venus made her son handsome and strong; he was like a god. His beauty was of the kind that an artist can add to ivory, or of the kind that an artist can create by working with silver and marble and gold.

Aeneas said to Dido, “I am Aeneas, and my followers and I survived the fall of Troy. You have pitied the fate of Troy and the Trojans, and you have welcomed us to Carthage. We have suffered much, and we cannot adequately reward you for your kindness. But we can ask the gods, who understand right and wrong, to reward you. You are a good person, and your parents have been blessed by giving birth to such a daughter as you. Your name and your goodness will be remembered as rivers flow to the sea, shadows move across mountains as the sun moves, and stars shine in the night sky.”

Aeneas then greeted his fellow Trojans whom he had thought were lost: Serestus, Gyas, Cloanthus, Ilioneus, and others.

Aeneas’ appearance and his words impressed Dido. She said to him, “Why does your destiny include such troubles as those you have suffered? How is it that you have landed on our coast? Are you really Aeneas, the son of the goddess Venus and the mortal Anchises? Were you really born at Troy?”

“I remember the Greek archer named Teucer. He suffered banishment from his native land, and he visited Sidon, the major city of the Phoenicians. Belus, my father, who had sacked Cyprus, was able to help him. Because of this, I have long known of Troy and the Trojans. The Greek Teucer traced his ancestors back to the first king — who was also named Teucer — of the Trojans.

“Trojans, you are welcome here. I have had hard times in my past, and they led me here. Because of the hard times that I have experienced, I have learned to help other people who need help.”

Dido led Aeneas into the halls of her palace, and she arranged for sacrifices to the gods. She sent to the Trojans on the shore twenty bulls and one hundred boars and one hundred lambs. This would be a day of feasting, a day of joy.

Dido’s palace was regal and splendid. Servants set out a feast in the central hall. Gold and silver and the color purple abounded. Works of art memorialized the deeds of her father and other heroes of Phoenicia.

Aeneas, a loving father, wanted his son, Ascanius, to be with him, so he sent Achates to the ships to get him and bring him to Carthage. Aeneas also ordered Achates to bring gifts from the ships for Dido — gifts taken from the ruins of Troy. The gifts included a gown with gold embroidery and an embroidered veil. These had belonged to Helen, who took them with her when she left her lawfully wedded husband and Sparta and went with Paris to Troy. Helen’s mother, Leda, had embroidered these articles of clothing. Aeneas also ordered Achates to bring a scepter that the oldest daughter of Priam, Ilione, used to bear, and he ordered him to bring a necklace of pearls and a two-banded crown — one band was decorated with gems and the other was made of gold. Achates went to the ships to carry out his orders.

Another way for Venus to help her son was to use divine supernatural powers — the powers of the gods and goddesses. She decided to have Cupid, her immortal son, take the place of Ascanius. Cupid, the god of love, could make Dido fall in love with Aeneas, thus ensuring his continued welcome at Carthage. Cupid could make Dido burn with love for Aeneas. Venus feared that the Phoenicians could be untrustworthy, and she feared that the hatred of Juno could cause trouble for her son Aeneas.

Venus said to her son, Cupid, “You, son, are powerful. Zeus once killed Typhoeus, the hundred-headed, fire-breathing monster, with a thunderbolt, but you laugh at Zeus’ thunderbolts. Help me, please. I need you, and Aeneas, your half-brother, needs you. Aeneas has been traveling the Mediterranean and has suffered many troubles thanks to the hatred and anger of Juno. Now he is in Carthage, where Dido rules, and Dido has him at her mercy. I am worried that Dido will keep him at Carthage, away from Italy and his destiny. I am also worried that Juno will take action to hurt Aeneas — she does not want him to fulfill his destiny. My plan is for Dido to fall in love with Aeneas. That way, she will not hurt him.

“Listen to my plan and how you can help. Aeneas has sent for his son, Ascanius, to be brought to Carthage, along with presents for Dido. I will cause Ascanius to go to sleep, and I will take him somewhere safe — to the island of Cythera or the town of Idalium on Cyprus. Both places are devoted to me.

“I want you to assume the form of Ascanius — gods and goddesses have that power. Take on his form for only one night. That way, when Dido sets you on her lap and kisses you, you can make her fall passionately in love with Aeneas. She will never know that a god caused her to fall in love.”

Cupid was willing to do as his mother asked. He shed his wings and assumed the form of Ascanius. Venus put the real Ascanius into a soothing sleep and carried him off to the town of Idalium on Cyprus and placed him on a bed of aromatic marjoram.

Achates led “Ascanius,” carrying gifts, to Carthage. Dido sat on her throne, and Aeneas and the Trojans entered her throne room. Servants brought water so that everyone could wash their hands, and they set out a meal. As all ate, they admired the gifts that Aeneas gave Dido and they admired the boy whom they thought to be Ascanius.

Dido especially was enthralled with the gifts and with the boy. Cupid hugged Aeneas and then he went to Dido. She held him in her lap, and the god slowly dissipated her memory of Sychaeus, her late husband. Her heart had long been closed to love and passion, but Cupid began to open it.

Servants cleared the tables of food, and they brought out more wine for all to enjoy. Conversation abounded, and servants lit lamps and torches.

Dido ordered that a golden, bejeweled bowl filled with wine unmixed with water be brought to her, and she prayed aloud to the king of gods and men, “Jupiter, you are the god of hospitality. You are the god of hosts and of guests. Please allow this day to always be a day of joy for Carthaginians and for Trojan exiles. Please allow this day to be remembered with happiness by our children. May Bacchus, god of wine and giver of bliss, and Juno give us their blessings. And now let us celebrate with happiness.”

Dido poured out wine for the gods, and then she sipped the wine and passed the bowl to the nobleman Bitias, who drank with pleasure. Then the other nobles drank from the bowl.

The bard Iopas played his lyre and sang songs of epic glory. His teacher had been Atlas, a Titan. Iopas sang about the phases of the moon and the eclipses of the sun, the origins of humans and beasts, the sources of storms and lightning bolts and the constellations, and why winter days are so short and winter nights are so long. The Carthaginians and the Trojans applauded his genius.

As Venus had planned, Dido fell in love with Aeneas, and she asked him many questions about Priam, about Hector, about the Ethiopian king Memnon who had fought for the Trojans, and about the Greek warriors Diomedes and Achilles.

Dido then said to Aeneas, “Please tell us your story from beginning to end. Start with how Troy fell and then tell us your wanderings for the seven years from the fall of Troy to your coming to Carthage.”

Chapter 2: The Fall of Troy (Aeneid)

Everyone fell silent and stared at Aeneas, who sat in a seat of honor. Aeneas said, “Queen, you ask me to renew a terrible sorrow. You ask me to tell how the Greeks conquered Troy, once a great city but now destroyed. I was there, and I saw horrors. No one who was a witness can refrain from crying at the memory of the fall of the city — not even a Greek, not even Ulysses, the Greek with the hardest heart.

“Now night is falling, but if you want to hear my story and the story of the fall of Troy, I will tell it.

“In the tenth year of the Trojan War, the Greeks were exhausted. So many years had passed. But Minerva gave them the skill to build the Trojan Horse. It was huge, hollow, and wooden. The Greeks pretended that it was an offering for a safe voyage back to Greece, but that was a lie. The Greeks picked their best and bravest warriors, and they hid them and their weapons in the hollow Trojan Horse.

“Within sight of Troy is the island of Tenedos. The Greeks sailed away from Troy and hid behind the island. We Trojans thought that the Greeks had gone back to Greece and that we had won the war. We were wrong. It was all a trick.

“But we opened the gates and walked onto the plain before Troy. We wandered the abandoned camps of the Greeks. We stood on the shore. We stood where Achilles had pitched his tents. We looked over the place where the Greeks had drawn their ships out of the sea. We looked at the battlefield, the place of killing.

“Some Trojans looked at the Trojan Horse, a gift for Minerva, the unwed virgin goddess. Thymoetes urged the Trojans, ‘Drag the Horse inside the walls of Troy!’ The fate of Troy and the end of Troy were coming closer.

“But some Trojans resisted moving the Horse inside the city walls. Capys and other Trojans, saner than Thymoetes, advised, ‘Either throw the Horse into the sea or set it on fire! Or else break open the Horse and see whether warriors are inside!’

“Some Trojans sided with Thymoetes; some Trojans sided with Capys.

“Laocoön, a priest of Neptune, arrived from Troy. He said to the Trojans, ‘Are you insane? Do you really believe that the treacherous Greeks have sailed back to Greece? Do you trust any Greek gift? You know the reputation of Ulysses. Do you trust that he has left Troy? This Horse either hides Greek warriors inside, or it will be used to batter our walls, or it has some other treacherous purpose. Do not trust that the Trojan Horse is harmless. I do not trust the Greeks, especially when they are giving gifts.’

“Laocoön hurled his spear at the Trojan Horse. It struck the Horse’s side, which echoed, showing that the Horse was hollow. Fate opposed us Trojans, and our own wits also opposed us. If not, we would have listened to Laocoön and broke open the Horse, and Troy would still be a rich center of civilization today.

“Suddenly, in the midst of the arguments the Trojans made, both pro and con, for destroying the Horse or taking it inside the walls of Troy, some Trojan shepherds brought a Greek man to Priam, our king. They had come across him by what they thought was accident, and they had captured him.

“It was a trick. The Greek had made sure that he would be captured. He had a purpose that demanded that he be captured. He wanted to lie to us Trojans and ensure our destruction and the destruction of our city.

“He was a liar, but he was a courageous liar. If his lies had not been believed, he would have died.

“Young Trojan males came up to him and mocked him, and he stood there, helpless, and groaned. Looking at the Trojans who surrounded him, he said, ‘What will happen to me now? There is no safe place anywhere for me. Not on land. Not on sea. The Greeks want me dead. So do the Trojans.’

“We Trojans are a merciful people. Instead of killing him, we asked him for his story: ‘Who are you? What is your birth? Who is your family? What is your story?’

“He replied, lying, ‘I will tell you all, and all of it is truth. Fortune may be against me, but I won’t allow Fortune to make me — Sinon — a liar. You may have heard of the Greek named Palamedes, whom the other Greeks charged with treason — falsely. He was innocent of treason, but he opposed the Trojan War. Because of that, the Greeks put him to death, an action they regretted later. I am related by blood to Palamedes, and I opposed the charge of treason. A young man, I had come to Troy as the companion of Palamedes. As long as he had the respect of the Greeks, they gave me some respect as well. Once they had killed Palamedes, I was no longer treated with respect.

“Ulysses, whose treachery you well know, hated me. I had opposed the charge of treason made against Palamedes, and now, grieving his death, I swore aloud that if I ever returned to Greece I would get revenge for his death. I swore an oath that I would do this.

“From that moment, Ulysses tormented me by making charge after charge against me and by starting rumor after rumor about me. He was mainly guilty of the death of Palamedes, and he wanted to ensure that I would not get the revenge that I had sworn to get. Ulysses was determined that I would die at Troy, and so he formed a plan with the prophet Calchas.

“But do I need to tell you what happened next? If you think that all Greeks are guilty and deserve to die, then kill me now. That would make Ulysses happy. Agamemnon and Menelaus would even pay you to kill me.”

Ulysses had hated Palamedes because Palamedes was responsible for making Ulysses go to the Trojan War. Ulysses had not wanted to leave his home island of Ithaca, and so when the Greeks came to recruit him for the war, he pretended to be insane and plowed his land with salt. Palamedes guessed that he was faking insanity, and he put Ulysses’ infant son, Telemachus, in front of the plow. Rather than kill his son, Ulysses turned aside the plow, proving that he was sane.

Aeneas continued, “We Trojans wanted to hear the rest of his story. We did not know exactly how treacherous a Greek could be.

“Trembling, he continued to tell his lying story: ‘After ten long years of fighting, the Greeks grew tired of the war. They wanted it to be over. They wanted a respite from war. How I wish that they had immediately returned home to Greece! But when they wanted to set sail, the waves and the winds were against them. Even after we built this Horse you see before you, the waves and winds were unfavorable for sailing back home to Greece.

“Therefore, we sent Eurypalus to consult the oracle of Apollo. Oracles can foretell the future and can tell how to gain the favor of the gods. We sought the knowledge of what we should do to ensure favorable waves and winds. Eurypalus brought back the words of the oracle: “When you sailed to Troy, you sacrificed a human being to ensure favorable waves and winds. Now that you want to sail back home to Greece, you must sacrifice a human to ensure favorable waves and winds.”

“News of the oracle’s words spread among all the Greeks. Someone must be sacrificed. Whose life did the gods demand? Who would be the human sacrifice?

“Ulysses brought the prophet Calchas before the Greeks and demanded that he tell whom the gods wanted to be the sacrifice. The Greek warriors also wanted to know. Even then, the Greek warriors thought that I would be the sacrificial victim because of Ulysses’ hatred of me.

“For ten days, the prophet Calchas refused to name the sacrificial victim. Finally, he seemed to give in to the demands of Ulysses, but actually it was a part of their plan. He named me as the sacrificial victim. The Greek warriors were happy — none of them would be the one to die. They were happy to live, and they were happy that I was the one who was supposed to die.

“The day set for the human sacrifice soon arrived. The Greeks prepared to sacrifice me. They performed the religious rites, they got ready the salted meal, and they tied the sacred bands around my head. But I escaped. I broke the bonds holding me and ran away and hid all night in a marsh until they set sail.

“I have no hope now of ever returning to Greece and seeing my children and my father. Maybe the Greeks will punish them because the Greeks failed to sacrifice me.

“Pity me, king. I have suffered what no man deserved to suffer.”

“Sinon cried, and we Trojans pitied him. We Trojans are merciful. We Trojans have the quality of *clementia*: mercy. Priam ordered that the bonds that the shepherds had put on Sinon be removed. Priam then said to the lying Greek, ‘From now on, you are a Trojan. Please, answer my questions. Why did the Greeks build this huge Horse? What is the Horse’s purpose? Is it a gift to the gods, or is it a weapon of war?’

“Sinon’s hands were now free from his bonds. He raised his arms and prayed, ‘Bear witness, stars and sun and gods. Bear witness, altar and knives and the other implements of human sacrifice. Bear witness that I am right to break my oath to the Greeks to fight against Troy. Bear witness that I am right to detest the Greeks. Bear witness that I am right to reveal the purpose of the Trojan Horse. Trojans, keep your promise to me that I will be one of you — a Greek no longer — and I will tell you the truth about the Horse.

“The Greeks’ hopes of conquering Troy have always rested on the good will and the help of Minerva. But her good will toward the Greeks came to an end when Ulysses and Diomedes snuck into Troy and stole the Palladium, the sacred statue of Minerva belonging to you Trojans. Ulysses and Diomedes killed several guards in Troy, and when they reached the Palladium, they touched it with bloody hands — a sacrilege and affront to Minerva. From that moment, Minerva no longer helped the Greeks.

“Minerva sent omens to show the Greeks that they had offended her. When Ulysses and Diomedes brought the sacred statue into the Greeks’ camp, fire shot forth from the statue’s eyes. Sweat ran down the statue. Minerva herself, bearing her shield and spear, appeared to the Greeks three times.

“The prophet Calchas knew that Minerva was offended. He knew that she no longer had good will toward the Greeks. He knew that she had withdrawn her help from the Greeks.

“He advised the Greeks, “You cannot conquer Troy unless you first return to Greece and make amends to the goddess. Take the Palladium to Greece, propitiate the goddess, and then bring the Palladium back to the plain before Troy.”

“The Greeks obeyed him. They set sail for Greece. They have left Troy — temporarily. They plan to acquire new weapons, persuade the gods to be on the Greeks’ side, and then return to Troy and defeat you.

“Calchas also ordered the Greeks to build this Horse. It is an offering to Minerva. The Greeks hope that she will forgive them for the theft of the Palladium.

“Calchas ordered that the Horse be built on a massive scale so that you Trojans could not take the Horse inside the city’s walls. Calchas knew that you Trojans would either desecrate the

Horse or respect it. If you should desecrate the Horse — this offering to the goddess — disaster will come to you and your city and your futures. But if you should respect the Horse — this offering to the goddess — and bring it inside your walls, then you will take the war to Greece. Instead of Greece attacking Troy, Troy and the rest of Asia will attack Greece. So says the prophet Calchas.’

“We believed Sinon, the lying Greek. Achilles could not defeat the Trojans, ten years of war could not defeat the Trojans, the thousand ships that the Greeks had brought to Troy could not defeat the Trojans, but our good nature and our pity for the tears of Sinon ended up defeating us. Our *clementia* ended up defeating us.

“An omen from the gods also defeated us. Laocoön was sacrificing a bull at the altar of Neptune when out of the sea came two huge sea-snakes. Their crests were the color of blood, and the Trojans ran away from them. Each sea-snake coiled itself around one of Laocoön’s young sons. Each sea-snake bit the young boy it was killing. Laocoön tried to save his sons. He ran to the sea-snakes and slashed at them with his sword. The sea-snakes trapped him in their coils, wrapping themselves around his waist and his throat. Laocoön tried to push them away. He could not. He screamed, but his screams did not sound human. He sounded like a bull that had been wounded at the sacrificial altar. The bull had not been quickly killed. The ax did not hit a mortal spot. A wounded bull will fight to escape from the altar.

“Having killed Laocoön and his two sons, the sea-snakes went to the shrine of Minerva at Troy and vanished under her shield.

“We Trojans were afraid. We believed that Laocoön had offended the gods. We believed that he deserved the punishment that the gods had given him. Laocoön had thrown his spear at the Trojan Horse, desecrating it.

“We did not know that the gods were determined that Troy should fall.

“We Trojans shouted, ‘Haul the Trojan Horse to the temple of Minerva inside the city of Troy. Let us honor the goddess.’

“We Trojans worked to make that happen. The Trojan Horse was too big to fit through the gates, so we tore down part of our own walls to enlarge the opening so that the Horse could come inside the city. We put rollers under the Horse and we tied ropes around its neck so that we could drag the Horse inside Troy.

“Trojan boys and girls were happy. They sang and danced as the Horse rolled toward the city gates.

“Four times the Horse came to a halt, and four times the armor of the Greek warriors hidden inside clanged, but we Trojans were deaf, blind, insane, ill-fated. We kept working until we had the Horse inside Troy.

“Cassandra, the daughter of Priam, prophesized the fall of Troy, and she prophesized correctly, but no one believed her. Later I learned that she had promised the god Apollo that she would sleep with him if he gave her the power of prophecy. He swore an inviolable oath that he would give her that gift, but she reneged on her promise and would not sleep with him. Because Apollo had sworn an inviolable oath, he was forced to give her the gift of prophecy, but he gave her an additional ‘gift’: She would prophesize correctly, but no one would ever believe her prophecies until after the events she had foretold had actually occurred.

“We Trojans foolishly believed that this was a day of joy, a day to be celebrated. We decorated the city with festive garlands.

“Night came. We Trojans, wearied by our celebrations, slept. The Greeks sailed back to Troy from the island of Tenedos. They arrived at their campsites that they knew very well. The Greeks sent up a flare that signaled Sinon to go to the Trojan Horse and let out the Greek warriors, who slid down a rope to the ground. The warriors inside the Horse were Thessandrus, Sthenelus, Ulysses, Acamas, Thoas, Pyrrhus (Achilles’ son, who is also known as Neoptolemus), Machaon, Menelaus, and Epeus, who had built the Horse. The city was quiet, it had few guards, and the Greek warriors killed those guards and opened the gates to let the waiting Agamemnon and his Greek warriors inside the city.

“I was asleep, and I dreamed that Hector, the greatest warrior of the Trojans and one of the warriors whom Achilles had killed, came to me. Tears streamed down his face, and he looked the way that he had looked when Achilles had dragged his corpse behind the chariot. I saw the holes that Achilles had pierced in Hector’s ankles so that he could tie his corpse to the chariot and then drag the corpse on the ground. Hector did not look the way he had looked when he proudly wore Achilles’ armor that he had stripped from the corpse of Patroclus, Achilles’ best friend. He did not look the way that he had looked when the Trojans had set fire to one of the Greeks’ ships. He looked the way he had looked when he had been defeated and killed. His beard was matted, his hair was bloody, and his body displayed many wounds.

“I dreamed that I talked to Hector, saying, ‘We Trojans are happy that you have returned to us. We have missed you. You were always our best hope for defeating the Greeks. But what is wrong? Your face and body are bloody and wounded.’

“Hector groaned and said to me, ‘Now is the time for you to escape from the fires of the city. Troy has fallen. The Greeks have conquered our city. You have served your king and your city valiantly, but it was not enough. If anyone could have saved Troy, it would have been me. Now, you must preserve the city’s household gods. Take them with you as you escape from the Greeks and leave Troy. Sail the sea and found a new city where the household gods can reside.’

“In my dream, I saw Hector carry the image of Vesta, the goddess of the hearth, away.

“Noise came from the city. Cries of pain filled the air. I was asleep in my father’s palace, which was located in a place with trees, away from the main city, but the noise woke me up. I climbed up on the roof and listened. I heard a roar. It sounded like fire burning a field of wheat or like a flooding and rapidly flowing river dragging full-grown trees into its waters. A shepherd can hear such a roar and be amazed. I understood immediately the treachery of the Greeks.

“I saw the house of Deiphobus. It was on fire, and it crashed to the ground. The house next to his — the house of Ucalegon — had also caught on fire. I saw the fires reflected in the water of the sea. I heard the sound of fighting warriors and of trumpets.

“I seized my armor and weapons. The city had fallen, but I wanted to kill Greeks. If I had to die that night, I wanted to go down fighting. To die defending your city is a noble death.

“I saw Panthus, a priest of Apollo. He was carrying the holy items used in the worship of Apollo. He held the hand of his little grandson as they tried to escape.

“I asked, ‘Panthus, where are the Trojan warriors? Where are they making their last stand?’

“Panthus groaned and said, ‘It’s all over. Troy has fallen. Troy no longer exists. The glory of Troy has vanished. Jupiter now gives glory to the Greeks, who are burning our homes. The Trojan Horse was filled with Greek warriors. Sinon exults as our city burns. Our gates are open wide so that the Greeks can easily enter. Greeks fill our streets and use their weapons. A few Trojans — only a few — are fighting back. They cannot last long.’

“I headed toward the fighting, toward the cries of war. I met other Trojans: Rhipheus, Epytus, Hypanis, Dymas, and Coroebus, who had come to Troy to marry Cassandra. Not even he understood her prophecies.

“We were ready to do battle and kill Greeks. I told them, ‘This is a battle we cannot win. Look around, and you will see that the gods have deserted us and gone over to the side of the Greeks. But let us send some Greeks to the Land of the Dead. We know that we are defeated and we cannot live. Let us not fear the arrival of death because death has already arrived for us.’

“We moved on. We were like a pack of wolves whose hunger drives them to kill so that they can feed their young. Shielded by darkness, we went into the center of the city.

“We saw so much slaughter. We saw so many dead bodies — not just in homes and on the streets but on the altars of the gods as well. The Greeks should have respected the gods at whose altars the Trojans had taken refuge — the Greeks did not.

“Not only Trojans died. Many Trojans sent Greeks to the Land of the Dead.

“The first Greek we saw was Androgeos, who was with his warriors. He was happy and celebrating, and he mistook us for Greeks. He called to us, ‘Hurry up. Kill some Trojans. Do some looting. You’re late. You must have just come from the ships.’

“Suddenly, Androgeos realized that we were not Greeks. We had given him no friendly words. He was like a man who walks in the woods and steps on a snake that gets into biting position. Androgeos cringed away from us and tried to flee.

“We attacked. The Greeks panicked, and we killed them. In this first encounter with Greeks, we were completely triumphant.

“Coroebus said, ‘Trojans, let us trick the Greeks. Let’s use these dead Greeks’ distinctive shields and their weapons. That way, the Greeks will think that we are Greeks, and we can surprise them with death. Why shouldn’t the Greeks supply Trojans with shields and weapons that they can use to kill Greeks?’

“Coroebus put on the armor of Androgeos: his helmet and shield. He also strapped a Greek sword on his hip. We other Trojans also commandeered Greek armor and weapons. Rhipheus and Dymas armed themselves with the possessions of the warriors they had just killed.

“We kept encountering Greeks and killing them. Some Greeks turned coward and fled back to their ships. Other Greeks climbed the rope dangling from the Trojan Horse so that they could hide themselves in its womb.

“But the gods were against us. We saw Cassandra — she was a prisoner, and her hands were tied. Greeks were dragging her by her hair from the temple of Minerva. Later I learned that Little Ajax had raped the virgin Cassandra in the temple — an outrage to Minerva, a virgin goddess. Because Cassandra was in the temple of Minerva, she was under the protection of the goddess. Little Ajax did not respect Minerva.

“Because Cassandra could not raise her hands to the heavens, she raised her eyes. Her fiancé, Coroebus, was infuriated by the sight of the Greeks leading her away as a slave, and he hurled himself at them, knowing that he would die.

“We followed Coroebus, and now we suffered disaster. Our fellow Trojans saw our Greek helmets and shields, and they attacked us. From the roof of the temple, Trojans threw spears at us, thinking that we were enemy soldiers. Our ruse tricked both the Greeks and our fellow Trojans.

“Not only did the Trojans attack us, but so did the Greeks. Briefly, we freed Cassandra, but Little Ajax, Agamemnon, Menelaus, and other Greek soldiers attacked us. We were attacked from above and from all sides.

“The Greeks were as fierce as a whirlwind that howls in the forests. The Greeks were as dangerous as the high waves created by Nereus, the father of Achilles’ mother, Thetis, and the other sea-nymphs.

“We had routed many Greeks, but now they regrouped and fought against us, aware that the Greek helmets and Greek shields we wore were lies, aware that the common language we shared with them had a different sound when spoken by Trojans.

“We were outnumbered, and Coroebus was the first Trojan whom the Greeks killed. Peneleus killed him, and Coroebus fell onto the altar of Minerva. Next to die was Rhipeus, the most righteous man in Troy, the Trojan most devoted to justice. Even so, the gods allowed him to die.

“Hypanis and Dymas also died at the end of weapons, but the weapons were in the hands of Trojans. In the chaos of a falling city, the weapons of friendly warriors can be as dangerous as the weapons of enemy warriors.

“Even Panthus, the priest of Apollo, whom I had seen trying to flee the city, fell. Apollo did not save him.

“I survived, but I swear that I did not stay away from the fighting. I sought the enemy, and I killed the enemy. If I had been fated to die that night, fate would have easily found a way for me to die.

“Two other Trojans were still alive with me. Iphitus was an old man, and his old age slowed him down. Pelias was also slow because Ulysses had wounded him. We made our way to the palace of Priam.

“At the palace, a battle roared! Here was death, frequent and in many violent forms. Mars, the god of war, enjoyed the blood and the battle.

“The Trojans were on the roof, being assaulted by the Greeks. On the ground, the Greeks made a tortoise shell of their shields for protection. They also climbed ladders, trying to reach the roof, each carrying a shield on his left arm for protection and climbing higher with his right arm.

“The Trojans ripped off pieces of the roof — tiles and wooden beams — to hurl down on the Greeks climbing the ladders. The Trojans knew that they wouldn’t last much longer. Other Trojans defended the doors below. These Trojans also had little time left to live.

“I ran to the palace, eager to defend it.

“In the palace of Priam is a secret passageway that Andromache, the wife of Hector, used to take their son, Astyanax, to visit his grandparents Priam and Hecuba. I used the passageway to climb up to the roof, where Trojans were throwing their spears.

“On the roof was a tower. We used tools to detach it from the roof, and then we tipped it over to crash it onto the Greeks. But more Greeks came to replace those we had killed. The battle continued; we had no respite.

“I saw Pyrrhus, the son of Achilles. Pyrrhus was like a snake that had hibernated and now had come forth to be a danger to men. He had been absent for most of the Trojan War but came to Troy after his father had died. Pyrrhus stood at the front gates with Periphas and Automedon, who had been Achilles’ charioteer.

“The Greeks hurled fire onto the roofs. Pyrrhus grabbed an ax and started attacking the doors that led inside the palace. He attacked the doorposts and the doors, and he opened a breach

that led inside the palace. Pyrrhus and other Greek warriors saw the Trojan guards who were defending our king.

“Inside the palace was despair. The women, afraid, were crying. Mothers did not know where to go to find safety.

“Pyrrhus and other Greeks kept battering the doors. The doors split and caved in. They fell. The palace was open to the enemy.

“The Greeks rushed in and killed the Trojan guards. The Greeks were everywhere. From a hole we had made in the roof when we were tearing it apart to find things to throw on the enemy, I was able to see everything.

“No flooding river bursting its dikes and overflowing its banks and sweeping away animals and barns could match the flood that was the Greeks sweeping away the Trojan resistance.

“In the palace, I saw Pyrrhus, and I saw Agamemnon and Menelaus. I saw Hecuba, the wife of Priam, with her hundred daughters and daughters-in-law. And I saw Priam.

“Fire was destroying much of the palace. The fifty bridal-bedchambers in the palace fell to fire. Whatever parts of the palace that did not fall to fire fell to the Greeks.

“Do you want to know how Priam died? I can tell you. I saw him die. I wish I had not.

“When Priam realized that the Greeks were inside Troy and were conquering the city, he put on his armor, which he had not worn for decades. As he put it on, his hands shook with old age. He strapped his sword to his hip, and then he went to meet the enemy.

“Inside the palace was an altar, a shrine to the household gods. Hecuba and her daughters had fled there in hopes to find refuge. They were like doves that a storm has thrown to the ground. Hecuba saw her aged husband wearing armor and carrying a spear and said to him, ‘Armor and weapons are useless now. Not even our son Hector, if he were alive, could save us. Come to the altar. It is our last and our best hope. Either we will live under the protection of our household gods, or if the Greeks disrespect the gods, we will die here, together.’

“Hecuba took her husband’s hands and led him to the altar.

“But Polites, one of their young sons, ran into the room, pursued by Pyrrhus, the son of Achilles. He was already badly wounded by Pyrrhus, who wanted to finish killing him. Polites reached his parents and the altar, Pyrrhus speared him, and then Polites vomited blood and died.

“Angered by the death of yet another of his sons, Priam said to Pyrrhus, ‘You are vicious! I hope that the gods repay you for your outrage! You have forced me to witness the death of my son at the altar! You say that you are the son of Achilles? You lie! Achilles was capable of goodness. He honored me when I was a suppliant, and he allowed me to ransom the corpse of my son Hector so I could give him a proper funeral. He allowed me to return safely home to Troy with the body of my son.’

“Priam then threw his spear with all the strength he had at Pyrrhus. It feebly struck his shield and did no damage.

“Pyrrhus told Priam, ‘I want you to take news to Achilles, my father, down in the Land of the Dead. Tell him about my outrages and my bad character. Now it is time for you to die!’

“Pyrrhus dragged Priam to the altar. Priam’s feet slipped on the blood of his son. Pyrrhus grabbed Priam’s hair with one hand, and with the other hand he plunged his sword all the way to the hilt in Priam’s side. Hecuba witnessed the death of her husband. So did their daughters.

“So died Priam, King of Troy. So died Troy itself. Priam had ruled Asia, but now it was as if he were a headless corpse lying without a name on a shore.

“Seeing the death of Priam reminded me of my own father — the two men were the same age. I also thought of my wife, Creusa, and my son, Ascanius. They were alone in our house without a warrior to defend them. I looked around. I was alone. The other Trojans had died. They had fallen in battle or had been overcome by the fires.

“I was the only Trojan warrior left there, and suddenly I saw Helen of Troy in the light of the fires destroying Troy. She was clinging to the image of Vesta, hoping for protection from the goddess. She was silent, hoping that no one would notice her. She was terrified of the Trojans, whose city had fallen because of her, and she was terrified of her husband, whom she had deserted.

“Helen had good reason to be terrified. I wanted to kill her.

“Why should Helen live when Troy, its king, and its warriors had fallen? Why should Helen live when Troy’s women and children were going to become slaves?

“Should Helen be allowed to go back to Sparta and live an easy life, served by Trojan slaves? No.

“Killing a woman is not honorable. Warriors receive no fame for killing a woman. But Helen being Helen, she should die. Her death would bring comfort to conquered Trojans.

“*Furor* — the passion of rage — conquered me, and I moved with my sword toward Helen, but my mother, Venus, stood before me. I saw her clearly. She wore no disguise. She is a goddess, and she appeared before me as a goddess. She was and is beautiful.

“Venus grabbed my hand and said to me, ‘You are feeling grief and anger. You are feeling *furor*. But leave Helen and look for your father. Do you know whether your wife and your son are still alive? The Greeks are all around them.

“While you have been gone, I have been protecting them. If I had not, they would be dead by now. Either the fires or the Greeks would have killed them.

“Why is the city falling? Not because of Helen or Paris, but because of the gods, who are tearing apart your city.

“I will give you special sight. Usually, the sight of mortal men is faulty. Mortal men are blinded by mist. I will sweep away the mist so that you can see the gods and you will learn that what I am saying is true.

“The mist is gone. Now look and see clearly. Look at the foundation stones of Troy. Neptune himself is breaking them; he is destroying the foundation of Troy.

“Now see Juno. She was the first god to reach the Scaean Gates. She led the Greek warriors inside Troy.

“Look at the heights of Troy. There Minerva and Jupiter are putting courage into the hearts of the Greek warriors. They want the Greeks to kill the Trojans.

“Run. Save your life. I will help you.’

“She vanished. I realized that she had spoken the truth. The gods themselves were destroying Troy. Neptune was tearing down Troy the way that woodsmen chop down and topple a proud, tall tree that has stood for ages, but conquered by the wounds the woodsmen inflict on it, it falls.

“My mother led the way, and I climbed down from the roof of Priam’s palace, avoiding fire and enemy spears. I made my way to my home and my family.

“I found my father. I wanted to carry him to safety. If he stayed in Troy, he would die. But I had a chance to carry him out of Troy and to the safety of the mountains.

“But my father refused to go.

“My father said to me, ‘You, your wife, and your son are young. Save yourselves. I am old. If the gods had wanted me to continue to live, they would not have allowed Troy to be destroyed. I would still have a home here. I have already witnessed one sack of Troy. I was alive when Hercules conquered Troy because its king, Laomedon, refused to give him the horses he had earned. I survived one sack of Troy. I need not survive another — I am too old to go into exile. Leave me here, and let me die. The Greeks will not allow me to live. My corpse will not be buried, but I prefer even that to exile. For many years now, I have been crippled. I boasted that Venus loved me. Jupiter heard me, grew angry that a mortal should make such a boast, and threw a thunderbolt at me to kill me. Venus pushed the thunderbolt aside so that it did not kill me, but it crippled me. My legs are useless, and I have lived long enough.’

“We pleaded with him — I, my wife, and my son — but he was determined to die. My duty was to my father, and I would not leave him. I prepared to die defending him.

“I told my father, ‘Do you think that I would leave you? Never! If you are determined to die here, the rest of our family and I will also die here. Soon the son of Achilles, Pyrrhus, will arrive. He will be willing to kill all of us. Already, the blood of Priam is on his body, as is the blood of Priam’s son Polites whom Pyrrhus slaughtered on an altar in front of his father, whom he also slaughtered on an altar.

“My mother, your wife, told me to come back here. Why? So I could see my father, my wife, and my son slaughtered on an altar? So I could see their blood mingling on the floor?

“At least I can kill some Greeks before I die. I will have Greek company as I go down to the Land of the Dead.’

“I strapped my sword to my hip again and took up my shield. I was leaving the house when my wife, Creusa, knelt with my son before me and grabbed my knees and supplicated me: ‘If you are going away so that you can die, take us with you. Let us face death together. Don’t leave us. Your duty is to defend us. You should not leave us alone and let the Greeks find us.’

“My wife cried. I had no good choice. My father refused to leave the house.

“Suddenly, the gods sent us an omen. My son’s head appeared to be on fire. He wore a crown of fire. Afraid for our son, we tried to put out the fire — but the fire did not burn him. Our son was in no danger.

“My father interpreted the omen. It was a good omen. The omen meant that my son would become a king.

“My father raised his arms and prayed to the king of gods and men, ‘Jupiter, send us another sign — one that will confirm this omen.’

“Immediately, thunder sounded on the right — the lucky sign. Also, a star fell from the sky and landed on Mount Ida — a sign that we should go there.

“My father changed his mind because of the omens. He said, ‘Let us leave immediately. I am willing to go wherever the gods send me. Keep Ascanius, my grandson and your son, safe. You and he have a destiny.’

“My father was ready to leave. Just in time. The fires were growing stronger and closer.

“I told my father, ‘I will carry you on my back. I will carry you to safety. Ascanius, my son, stay by my side. Creusa, my wife, follow me a little way behind. Servants, listen to me. Past the walls of Troy are a grave-mound and an old shrine to the goddess Ceres. The shrine has an old cypress tree growing by it. That will be our meeting place. Get to it by whatever route you can — we should not all take the same route. Father, carry the household gods. I am covered with blood, and it would be sacrilegious for me to touch them with bloody hands.’

“I put a lion’s skin on my shoulders and then lifted my father and our household gods. I took my son by the hand, and my wife followed us. By taking my son by the hand and leading him, I was taking the future with me. By taking my father and our household gods with me, I was taking part of the past with me. My wife did not make it out of Troy. Some of the past we cannot take with us.

“We walked along paths, seeking an escape from the city. I had not been afraid of Greek weapons. I had not been afraid to face death. But now I was terrified for my family. I wanted my

family to stay alive. We got near the gates, and I thought that we were all safe, but suddenly I heard warriors approaching, and my father told me, 'Run! I see the warriors' weapons!'

"I ran. Blindly. I did not look back. At some time and some place, my wife was no longer behind me. She may have gotten lost in the darkness and the confusion. She may have been overcome by exhaustion. I made my way to the shrine dedicated to Ceres, and then I learned that my wife was not with me. I raved. I blamed the gods. I blamed every mortal, including myself. I hid my father and my son in a valley along with other Trojans who had escaped, and then I went back to Troy to look for my wife. Once again, I took the chance of losing my life.

"I went back to the walls and the rear gates through which we had exited Troy. I retraced the path we had taken out of the city. I went back to my home in case my wife had returned there. There I saw only Greeks and fire. I went to the palace of Priam, and in the courtyard I saw Phoenix and Ulysses standing guard over the loot they had taken — valuable religious items. Also in the courtyard were mothers and children who would soon be portioned out as slaves. I returned to the Trojan streets and risked calling aloud my wife's name: 'Creusa!' No reply. I called her name again. No reply.

"And then I saw my wife's ghost, larger than she had been while alive. I was afraid. She spoke to me, 'Aeneas, my husband and my love, do not grieve. My death and the fall of Troy occurred because of the will of the gods. The gods did not want you and me to be together after the fall of Troy. Jupiter will not allow that.

"Let me prophesize to you. You will now have a long exile. You will sail the seas until you reach the land called Hesperia: the Land of the West. There you will see the Tiber River. It will be a land of rich soil and hardy people. You will find a kingdom there and a wife.

"Don't mourn me. I will not be taken as a slave to serve a Greek master. Cybele, the Great Mother of Gods, has kept my body on Trojan soil.

"Farewell, and take care of our son, whom we love.'

"Those were the last words she ever spoke to me. Three times I tried to hug her. Three times I hugged nothing. I was not able to touch her ghost — it dissipated each time I tried.

"Her ghost was gone. I went back to my father and son, and I saw many Trojans who had fled the city and come to the shrine of Ceres. They needed a leader, and they were ready to follow me. Dawn was approaching. The Greeks had taken the city — Troy was no more.

"I lifted up my father, and I led the Trojan exiles away from the city and toward the safety of the mountains.

Chapter 3: Wanderings (Aeneid)

“Now that Troy was gone, we needed a new city, a new land, a new country. The gods sent us signs, and we attempted to follow them. At the bottom of Mount Ida, we built a fleet. We knew that we needed to set sail, although we did not know exactly where we were going.

“Summer had just arrived, and my father, Anchises, ordered us to set sail: ‘Let us go and find our fate.’ We left behind the land that had been our home. We journeyed on the water. I had my son, my fellow exiled Trojans, and my household gods.

“We arrived at Thrace, a land ruled by Lycurgus, a king without pity. He had supported us Trojans, as long as fate seemed to support us.

“Here we began building a city that I named after myself.

“I wanted to make a sacrifice to my mother, Venus, the daughter of Dione. I also was going to sacrifice a white bull to Jupiter. I needed to make a canopy for the altar. Seeing a thicket of dogwood and myrtle, I broke off a branch.

“But as soon as I broke off a branch, blood flowed from the broken wood and dripped to the ground. Of course, this was a bad omen. I was afraid, but I broke another branch, and more blood flowed. I prayed to the nymphs of Thrace and to the god Mars, ‘Make this a good omen, not a bad one.’ I broke a third branch — more blood flowed.

“And I heard a voice that came from the ground: ‘Why, Aeneas, are you making me bleed? Spare me, and spare yourself. No good can come to you from fouling your hands with my blood. You know me. I am a Trojan, and the blood you see is Trojan. Escape from this guilty land. I am Polydorus, and I am one of the sons of Priam. Here I was murdered with spears. The spears stayed in my body after my death. They took root and grew.’

“I felt fear, and I could not speak to the voice.

“I had known Polydorus, who was a prince of Troy. Priam had sent him to the Thracian king along with a large quantity of gold. Priam wanted to ensure that at least one of his sons would survive the Trojan War. But when Troy fell, the king of Thrace was overcome by greed and murdered Polydorus and stole his gold. The lust for gold can motivate such evil.

“Soon, I regained my wits, and I carried news of the omen to my father and the other advisors. They all had the same opinion: We needed to leave Thrace immediately. This was not the land on which we should build our city. We set sail again.

“But first we built Polydorus a proper burial mound. We heaped great quantities of earth over his body. On the altar, we made offerings to all the gods. The Trojan women mourned with their hair unbound in accordance with the ancient custom. We poured out cups of milk and cups of blood. We mourned him, and we gave his soul rest.

“When dawn came, and a gentle South wind, we launched the ships and headed toward the island of Delos. Neptune and Doris, who is the mother of the sea-nymphs, love this island. Apollo was born there when it was a floating island, but later Apollo fastened it in between two other islands: Myconos and Gyaros. It no longer wandered; it stayed in one place.

“We landed at Delos, and we saw the city of Apollo that is ruled by Anius, who is both a king ruling men and a priest serving Apollo. Anius came to welcome us; he knew my father, Anchises, from long ago.

“We saw the shrine to Apollo, and I prayed to the god, ‘Apollo, give us a home. We are weary. We want a permanent home of our own. We are the remnant of a once-proud city: Troy. Keep us safe, and tell us what path we should follow. Give us a sign, Apollo!’

“I had just finished my prayer when a sign revealed itself. An earthquake struck the island, and we fell to the ground. We heard a voice: ‘Sons of Dardanus, an ancestor of the kings of Troy, seek your ancient homeland. From there, the descendants of Aeneas will rule the world for generations through all the years.’

“This prophecy by Apollo created joy and happiness among us Trojans, who asked ourselves, ‘What is the land that Apollo wants us to sail to?’

“My father thought about our ancient history, and he said, ‘I know the land that is meant. In the middle of the Mediterranean is an island: Crete. On Crete is the first Mount Ida, after which the Trojan Mount Ida was named. The Cretans have many cities and rich land. Teucer, one of our ancestors, came from Crete. He sailed to our shore and founded his kingdom there. When he arrived, Troy had not yet been founded. From Crete also came the goddess Cybele, whom her priests, the Corybantes, worship with dance and with cymbals. So let us follow the prophecy of Apollo and go to Crete to found our city. It is not far. Within three days, we can reach the island.’

“Anchises then sacrificed a bull to Neptune, a bull to Apollo, a black ram to the storms of winter, and a white ram to the warm West winds that are so helpful to sailors.

“We heard rumors about Idomeneus, the King of Crete who had fought against us during the Trojan War. We heard that he had left Crete. On the island, houses stood empty, ready for us to move into. Our enemies had left the island of Crete.

“We set sail, and we sailed past the islands of Naxos, Donusa, Olearos, and Paros — islands of the Cyclades near Delos.

“We sailed quickly, and our sailors encouraged each other: ‘Forward to Crete. Forward to the land of our ancestor.’ We landed in a harbor of Crete, and we began to build a city I called Pergamum — a Trojan name.

“Almost immediately, a plague struck us. We worked hard, but the plague attacked our bodies and our crops. People and plants died. For an entire year, the plague either killed Trojan men or weakened them. For an entire year, the plague blighted our crops.

“Clearly, the gods were against us. My father, Anchises, advised, ‘Let’s return to Delos and consult Apollo again. Let us pray for the god’s help. Let us pray that the god will tell us our correct destination. Clearly, Crete is not where we should be.’

“Night fell, and Trojans slept. As I slept, the Penates — the Trojan household gods — stood before me. The Penates are the protecting spirits of the household, and Trojan families each have a shrine to these gods. Families give offerings to these gods — when the family members eat a meal, they throw a little food into a fire as an offering to these gods — hoping to keep them favorable to the family. However, Trojan families do not expect these gods to appear before them and speak to them.

“But the Penates appeared before me and gave me the help we Trojans needed. I had saved them from the fires of Troy when I had carried my father out of the burning city, and now they helped the Trojans.

“The Penates told me, ‘You need not return to Delos to consult Apollo. All that he would tell you there, we will now tell you here. Apollo himself has sent us to you. We have stayed true to you Trojans, and in the future we will make your children famous and your city powerful. Your destiny is great, and it is worth the pain of exile and the labor of erecting huge walls. But your city will not be here. Apollo did not intend for you to settle on Crete.

“Go to the country that the Greeks have named Hesperia: the Land of the West. It is a rich country, and its warriors are mighty. The people there call the land Italy — one of its founding fathers was Italus. It is there that you will find your and our true new home. Dardanus, one of the forefathers of the kings of Troy, was born there. So was Iasius, his brother. Go and tell your father what we have told you. You must go to the city of Corythus in Italy. You must not stay here in Crete — Jupiter forbids it.’

“This dream was not empty — I clearly saw the Penates and clearly heard them speak. This was a dream to take seriously. The Penates awed me, and a cold sweat came from my body. I woke up and prayed and poured a libation to the gods.

“I then told my father my dream. He remembered that the Trojans had two sets of forefathers. Dardanus had come from Crete, but Teucer had come from Italy. My father knew that he had erred when he advised setting sail for Crete.

“Anchises said to me, ‘Cassandra prophesied to me, but I did not believe her. She told me that we would go to Hesperia. Often, she said that we would go to Italy. At that time, that seemed unlikely or impossible: Why would a Trojan fleet go there? At that time, no one believed Cassandra’s prophecies — about Italy or anything else. But we must believe the words of Apollo sent to us by way of the Penates. Let us sail to Italy!’

“So Anchises advised us, and we rejoiced in his advice. We were eager to leave Crete and the plague, and we were eager to do what Apollo told us to do. A few Trojans stayed at Crete, but the rest of us set sail.

“Almost immediately, a storm made the sky black and the waves high. The light came from lightning, not from the sun. We could not tell the fleet’s location. We could not tell daytime from nighttime. For three days and three nights, the storm continued. At dawn of the fourth day, we saw land — mountains, and smoke. We took down our sails, and we rowed to the land.

“We landed on one of the islands called the Strophades. On this island live the Harpies, creatures that are part girl and part bird. Celaeno was their leader. Their faces are those of girls, but their bodies are those of birds. Their hands are talons, they have wings, and they are ravenously hungry; from their bottom half arises a stench.

“When we landed, we did not see the Harpies and we did not know that they lived there. We did see cattle and goats. We killed some of them, and we cooked their meat. When the meal was ready to eat, the Harpies burst among us, tearing the food with their talons, eating some and fouling the rest, rendering it unsuitable to be eaten. Their cries deafened us, and their stench sickened us.

“Again, we tried to prepare a meal and eat. This time, we prepared our meal in a large hollow at the bottom of a cliff. Again, the Harpies arrived and ate or befouled the meal.

“We tried a third time to prepare a meal and eat, but this time we set a trap for the Harpies. I told my men, ‘To arms! Let us fight them!’ Some of my men hid their swords and shields in tall grass, Misenus worked as a lookout, and when he saw the Harpies coming, he blew a trumpet. My men armed themselves and fought the Harpies, but our weapons did not harm them. My men struck their feathers and backs with swords, but the swords did no damage. Again, the Harpies ate part of the meal and befouled the rest, and then they left.

“One Harpy stayed behind to prophesize. She shrieked to us, ‘I am Celaeno. So you are making war against the Harpies on their own island after you have butchered their cattle and their goats? So you want the Harpies to leave their own island? Listen to the prophecy that Jupiter told to Apollo and then Apollo told to me and now I am telling to you: You will reach Italian shores, but you will not found a city until after ravenous hunger has made you eat your plates!’

“Celaeno then flew away. The Trojans were dejected after hearing the prophecy. They lost all morale. They wanted to hear a prayer to the gods.

“Anchises prayed, stretching out his arms to the gods, ‘Keep us from bad things! Ward off the evil that Celaeno has prophesized!’

“We set sail, and we passed the islands of Zacynthos, Dulichium, Same, and Neritos. As we passed Ithaca, the home of cruel Ulysses, we cursed it. Finally, we landed at Actium in

northwestern Greece. We walked to the small town there in order to sacrifice to Jupiter. We cleansed ourselves for the sacrifice, made our offerings to the gods, and then engaged in Trojan sports. My men stripped, oiled themselves, and wrestled naked in accordance with our ancient custom. We were happy because we had safely passed cities where our enemies, the Greeks, lived.

“Winter arrived while we were at Actium, and the North wind made the sea rough. At the temple I set up an offering: the bronze shield of Abas, which I had won in the Trojan War. On the shield I engraved these words: AENEAS DEDICATES THIS SHIELD SEIZED FROM THE GREEK VICTORS.

“We set sail again, and we passed Phaeacia and Epirus, and we sailed into the port of Chaonia, reaching the town of Buthrotum.

“At Buthrotum, we heard something incredible. The king of these lands was Helenus, who had been a priest of Apollo in Troy. He was now married to Andromache, the widow of Hector and the former concubine of Pyrrhus, son of Achilles.

“I wanted to see Helenus, my old friend, again and find out how these things had come to be. Walking away from the harbor, I saw Andromache. She was pouring out libations to Hector, her late husband. She had food and other offerings for Hector. His empty tomb was before the city, by a stream that was named Simois after one of the rivers of Troy.

“Andromache was at the tomb praying for the spirit of her late husband to visit the tomb erected for him. She saw me, recognized me, and wondered. She said to me, ‘Is that really you? Are you really alive? If you are dead, why didn’t the spirit of Hector come here with you?’

“Andromache cried, grieving for Hector. She could not be consoled.

“I said to her, ‘Yes, I am still alive. I keep on living despite the many troubles I have encountered. Believe me when I say that I am real. You have suffered evil, too, in the death of your Hector. But have you also experienced good? Is Helenus still your husband?’

“Lowering her eyes, she said quietly, ‘Polyxena, the youngest daughter of Priam, was the luckiest of all the women of Troy. She was a virgin, and she was sacrificed at the tomb of Achilles after the Trojan War. She did not become a sex-slave to a Greek master.

“I did become a sex-slave to a Greek master. With Troy still burning, I was shipped to Greece in one of the ships of Pyrrhus, the son of Achilles, the Greek warrior who killed my husband: Hector. I was a slave, I was forced to serve Pyrrhus in bed, and I bore his child. But he wanted to marry Hermione, the daughter of Menelaus and Helen, and so he gave me to Helenus, another of his slaves. But Orestes, the son of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, thought that Hermione had been promised to him, and while the Furies were pursuing him after he had murdered his mother, who had murdered his father, he killed Pyrrhus — he caught Pyrrhus off guard and murdered him at an altar. When Pyrrhus died, Helenus inherited part of his kingdom, and he created a little version of Troy.

“But what is your story? How did you come here? Is your son, Ascanius, still alive? Does he still remember his mother, who died during the fall of Troy? Does he have your courage and the courage of his uncle, Hector? Hector was Creusa’s brother.’

“Andromache, still crying, asked many questions. Her husband, Helenus, arrived and welcomed us. He showed us Buthrotum, a small version of Troy. Troy’s towers were great; Buthrotum’s towers were small. The Xanthus at Troy was a mighty river; the Xanthus at Buthrotum was a trickle of water. The Scaean Gates at Troy were great; the Scaean Gates at Buthrotum were small. Still, the king and queen of a Trojan city welcomed us. Their guests, we ate and drank.

“Time passed, and we were ready to sail again. I approached Helenus, whom I knew to be a prophet. I said to him, ‘You are a seer, and you know the will of Apollo. You can interpret the signs of birds, and you can interpret omens. Give me information. The signs that we have received from the gods have all been favorable. Only the Harpy Celaeno prophesized something bad: terrible hunger. What are the dangers that we need to avoid? What is the course that we need to sail?’

“Helenus sacrificed many bulls, and he prayed for peace. He took me to the shrine of Apollo, and he began to prophesy, saying, ‘Son of Venus, fate is on your side. You have a destiny. Jupiter, the king of gods and men, has a plan for you. I will reveal to you a few parts of your future so that you may more safely cross the sea and reach a harbor in Latium. The Fates will not reveal everything to me; Juno does not want me to tell you everything.

“The eastern part of Italy lies near, but you must reach the western part of Italy and it does not lie near. You will have to undertake a long journey before you reach your destination. You will have to sail in the waters around Sicily, you will have to go past the lakes of the Land of the Dead, and you will have to go past the island of the goddess Circe before you can found your city.

“Here is a sign for you to remember. It will tell you where to found your city. During a time of trouble, you will sail on a river in Latium. Under the trees you will run across a white sow nursing thirty white piglets. That is the place to found your city. After your city has been founded, you will no longer need to travel long distances.

“Here is something to give you courage. You need not worry about the prophecy of Celaeno. The Harpy prophesied that you Trojans would be so ravenously hungry that you would eat your plates. Fear not. The Fates will find a way to make the prophecy harmless. Apollo is willing to help you.

“Set sail away from Buthrotum, but on the eastern side of Italy, stay away from the coast. Every city on the eastern coast of Italy is Greek. The inhabitants are your enemies, including some who fought against you at Troy. Idomeneus, once King of Crete, has a city now in Italy. Philoctetes, a master Greek archer, has a city now in Italy.

“Once you have sailed past the Greek cities and set up altars so you can sacrifice to the gods, wear purple and cover your heads during the rite. Make sure that no enemy can interrupt the rite. Remember this and make it a rite that you and your descendants perform in days to come. This rite is sacred.

“When the winds take you to Sicily, sail to the left and go around the island the long way. If you sail to the right, you will see a narrow passage. Long ago, people say, Italy and Sicily were connected by land, but now there is a narrow passage of sea between them. A cataclysm separated them.

“That narrow passage of sea is dangerous. Scylla is on the right, and Charybdis is on the left. Charybdis is a whirlpool; three times each day it sucks down the sea waters and then it vomits them into the sky. Scylla is a monster that lives in a cave. She thrusts her mouths out of the cave and grabs ships and wrecks them. From above the waist up, much of Scylla appears to be a beautiful woman, but her belly is that of a wolf and her body ends in the tails of dolphins. She is a sea monster. It is much wiser to take the long way around Sicily than to see Scylla.

“The most important advice I can give you as a prophet and as a priest of Apollo is this: Respect Juno. Pray to Juno first of all the gods. Make vows to Juno. Give sacrifices to Juno. She is a powerful goddess. Only if you respect the goddess will you be able to leave Sicily and go to Italy.

“Once you reach Italy, go to the city of Cumae. See the prophetess there — the Cumaean Sibyl. She will be in a forest by the lake of Avernus. The prophetess has visions in a cave, and she writes down the visions carefully on leaves and keeps them in the cave. As long as the leaves are undisturbed, they stay in the correct order. But if someone opens the door to the cave and the winds blow in, the leaves are blown out of order. The prophetess does not sort the leaves and does not restore them to their correct order. Such careless visitors who consult the Sibyl, she does not enlighten. Those visitors then hate her cave.

“The time you spend with the Sibyl will be worthwhile. Your Trojans will be eager to sail onward; the winds will blow favorably. Although they press you to leave immediately, stay and see the Sibyl. Beg her to prophesy to you. She will tell you about the Italian tribes and about the battles you must fight. She will tell you what to do during your trials. Respect her; she can help you.

“This is all that I am allowed to tell you. Sail to your destiny. Your actions can exalt the Trojans.’

“Helenus’ words were very helpful, and after he had finished speaking, he gave us gifts: gold, ivory, silver, cauldrons, and the armor of Pyrrhus: his breastplate and helmet. He gave gifts of honor to my father. He also gave us horses, and he sent with us pilots who knew the Italian coast, Sicily, and the sea. He made sure my men were well armed.

“My father gave the order to set sail; the winds were favorable. Helenus said to my father, ‘Anchises, the gods love you. You married Venus. Twice you have survived the fall of Troy. Italy is now the future of your family. But remember to sail quickly past the Greek cities on the eastern coast of Italy; your destination is the western coast of Italy. Apollo orders you and your pious son, “Set sail now.” The winds are favorable. It is a good time to go.’

“Andromache was sorry to see us go. She gave my son clothing, including a cloak, saying, “Please take these gifts I made myself, and remember me, Ascanius. You remind me of my son, Astyanax, whom the Greeks murdered after Troy fell. If he had survived, he would be your age.’

“With tears in my eyes, I said to our hosts, ‘You have found your destiny. Your destiny is here. But I go forth still in search of my destiny. You have earned rest, but we still have dangers to face. You need not sail the seas. We do. You have created a little Troy here. I go to find the Tiber River and found a city. Let us hope that my people and your people may one day be one people. This is something that our descendants may one day accomplish.’

“They had created a city that looked to the past; I had yet to create a city that looked to the future.

“We sailed north, and when night came, we slept on the beach, but in the middle of the night, our pilot, Palinurus, woke up and scanned the sky. He saw the constellations, the sky was completely clear, and conditions for sailing were excellent. He blew his trumpet, we woke up and boarded our ships, and we took advantage of the excellent conditions for sailing.

“When dawn arrived, we had reached Italy — the western coasts that our enemies the Greeks inhabited. Achates first shouted, ‘Italy!’ Other Trojans echoed his shout.

“My father poured wine for the gods and prayed, ‘Give us good winds for an easy and safe passage.’

“We saw a harbor and in the distance a temple built to Minerva. We headed for the harbor.

“On land, we saw our first omen: horses. My father interpreted the omen: ‘Horses are used in war. We will fight a war in Italy. But horses are also used to plow during peacetime, so we have hope of finding peace. This country will bring us both war and peace.’

“We prayed to Minerva, and we stood at her altar, and remembering what Helenus had told us, we sacrificed to Juno.

“We did not stay there. We went to the ships. We were eager to sail past the dangerous Greek cities. We saw Tarentum, a bay, and we saw a city there that people believe that Hercules founded. We also saw a temple dedicated to Juno.

“We wanted to follow the advice of Helenus and avoid sailing in between Scylla and Charybdis — we wanted to sail the long way around Sicily.

“We saw Mount Etna on the east coast of Sicily, which was pounded by waves. Anchises saw the boiling water and said, ‘That must be Charybdis — a death trap for ships and sailors! Row away, men! Row for your lives!’

“My men rowed hard, away from danger. Even so, three times our ships were raised high on the tops of waves and three times our ships fell deep in the troughs of waves. Three times we were raised up to the sky, and three times we were plunged deep in the pit of hell. Finally, we rowed out of this danger — and toward the coast of the Cyclopes.

“We sailed into a harbor near Mount Etna, which rumbled and poured forth smoke and lava. According to ancient stories, the giant Enceladus rebelled against Jupiter, who struck him with a thunderbolt and then placed him under Mount Etna. Whenever Enceladus moves, the volcano rumbles and pours forth smoke and lava. We stayed on the shore that night, and we could not see the stars — the smoke from Mount Etna blotted them out.

“In the morning, we saw a wild man — a hungry man, a man covered with dirt, a man wearing the rags of a Greek. He came out of the woods, saw us, and realized that we are Trojans, and he was afraid. He hesitated, but then he begged us, ‘Please save me. Sail me away from this coast and the Cyclopes. I beg you by the stars, the gods, and the air we breathe! Sail me away from here and leave me anywhere else! I admit that I am a Greek. I admit that I fought to conquer Troy and your household gods. If you want to kill me because of that, do so. Death is preferable to staying here and being afraid of being captured and eaten by the Cyclopes! If I have to die, I prefer that humans kill me!’

“The Greek hugged my knees as he supplicated me for mercy: *clementia*. We asked him who he is and what is his story. How did he end up on the coast of the Cyclopes?

“He told us his story: ‘I come from Ithaca. My name is Achaemenides, and my father was an impoverished man named Adamastus. I sailed to Troy with Ulysses hoping to make my fortune there. I did not.

“Ulysses and my fellow Greeks left me here. We were fleeing from the Cyclops named Polyphemus. I fell behind, and Ulysses and my fellow Greeks forgot me. I thought that they were my friends. They were not. They were too concerned about saving themselves to worry about saving me.

“We had been in the cave of the Cyclops. He is huge, and he eats human flesh when he can get it. His cave was gory with the blood of the Greeks he had eaten after he had trapped us in his cave. I have seen him grab two Greeks, knock their heads on the rocks of his cave, and then eat them while their arms and legs were still moving.

“Ulysses found a way to pay the Cyclops back. Say what you will about him, he would not put up with that outrage. After the Cyclops lay drunk on the floor of his cave, vomiting human flesh and wine, we prayed to the gods and drew lots. Those chosen by lottery then used a huge

sharpened stake to blind the Cyclops' one huge eye. It was as big as a Greek shield or the sun. We avenged our friends whom the Cyclops had killed.

“But you Trojans need to flee! Now! Polyphemus is just one Cyclops, but a hundred Cyclopes just like him live here! They raise sheep, and they wander the land. For three months, I have lived here, if you can call it living. I have been on the lookout for the dangerous Cyclopes as I struggled to stay alive on berries and nuts and roots. Each day, I have watched the sea. Yours are the only ships I have seen, and I beg you to either take me with you as you set sail or kill me now.”

“Achaemenides the Greek finished speaking, and we immediately saw blind Polyphemus. He was with his sheep, and he made his way cautiously to the shore, feeling his way and using the trunk of a pine tree as a cane. Once on the shore, he went into the deep water and washed his eye socket, out of which still dribbled blood and pus.

“We ran to our ships, and despite our experience with Sinon the lying Greek, we took Achaemenides with us — we Trojans value *clementia*.

“We rowed away as quickly as we could, and Polyphemus heard our oars. He turned toward us, but he could not catch us, and so he howled. All the other Cyclopes heard him and came to the shore, but we were too far away for them to come into the water after us.

“We were still worried about Scylla and Charybdis, so we headed south and went around the cape of Pelorus and past the mouth of the Pantagias River, past the bay of Megara, and past the peninsula of Thapsis. Achaemenides knew the territory; he had sailed here with Ulysses.

“We landed on the island once named Ortygia and worshipped the local gods, and then we sailed past the town and river that are both named Helorus, past the cape named Pachynus, past the town of Camerina, past the town and river that are both named Gela, past the city of Acragas, past the city of Selinus, and past the headland of Lilybaeum on the western coast of Sicily. We landed at the town of Drepanum on the northwest coast of Sicily.

“Drepanum did not bring joy to me because my father died there. He had helped me through many dangers, but he died and left me. Helenus had not prophesied his death. Not even Celaeno had prophesied his death. I was unprepared for the death of my father.

“We sailed from Drepanum, and a storm drove us to Carthage.”

Aeneas had finished his story. He fell silent.

Chapter 4: The Passion of Dido (Aeneid)

But the queen, Dido, was now seriously in love. Aeneas' story had been of the many dangers he had faced and survived. His story had also been of his heroism, including going back into a burning city filled with enemy warriors so he could search for his missing wife. His story was pleasing to unmarried Dido.

Dido's love for Aeneas gave her no rest, no peace. Her love burned.

As dawn arrived, Dido, who had not been able to sleep, said to Anna, her sister, "I am impressed by this stranger, this Aeneas. He is noble, he is courageous, and he is a mighty warrior. He must be the son of a god. A lowborn man would have shown fear amid the many dangers he has faced. The story he told us is impressive.

"When my husband died, I vowed to myself and to his ashes that I would not remarry. I had married one man, and my heart broke when he died. If not for this vow, I would be tempted to marry Aeneas. My own brother murdered my husband and spilled his blood and angered our household gods. Ever since then, Aeneas is the only man I have been interested in. For my husband, I felt the flame of love. When I think of Aeneas, and I think of him all the time, I feel again the flame of love.

"But I think it is best if I die before I break the vow that I have made not to remarry. I want to be true to my vow. I want to be true to my conscience. Queens and well-born women should not have affairs."

Dido stopped speaking. She cried.

Anna replied, "Why shouldn't you be remarried? Why shouldn't you know the joys of children of your own? Why shouldn't you know once more the joys of love? Will the ashes and ghosts of the dead care that you remarry? A city needs a king, not just a queen. The leader of a city must leave behind children who will grow up and assume power.

"You can do what you wish, but no one has tempted you to remarry before this. Back in Tyre, the city that we fled, and here in Libya, the land that we fled to, no one has tempted you to remarry before this. You have had suitors. Iarbas of Libya wanted to marry you, but you turned him down. Other suitors in Libya have courted you.

"But now that you are in love, why resist your love?"

"Think of Carthage. What would be best for your people? Not all of our neighbors are friendly. On one side are dangerous peoples, including the wild Numidians. On the other side are a dangerous desert and a dangerous people: the raiders of Barce. Remember also that your brother is dangerous; he may make war on you from Tyre. Carthage needs a king who can lead troops into war when necessary.

“Juno has shown the Carthaginians great favor, I think, by sending the Trojan ships here.

“If you marry Aeneas, Carthage will have an impressive king. If the Carthaginian warriors and the Trojan warriors join together, think what an army we will have! We will have a mighty city and a mighty kingdom!

“As for the vow you made to yourself and to your late husband’s ashes, pray to the gods. Sacrifice to them. Win them over.

“And keep our Trojan guests here. Winter is coming, and the Trojan ships are now too battered from the storm to sail. You have good reasons to use to convince Aeneas to stay here. Treat him and the Trojans like kings so that they will want to stay.”

Anna’s words helped convince Dido to hope for love, to break her vow, and to not worry about shame.

Dido and Anna visited several altars, and at each altar they sacrificed to the gods — to Ceres, Apollo, Bacchus, and Juno. They especially sacrificed to and prayed to Juno, the goddess of marriage.

Dido poured wine over the horns of a white cow and other sacrificial victims, and after the victims were killed, she examined their entrails for signs from the gods.

But Dido was in love, and her love was like a wound. She wandered the streets of the city. She was like a deer that an archer shoots in the forests of Crete. The archer is unaware that he has made a direct hit as the deer flees with the arrow in her side that will kill her.

Dido showed Aeneas the glories of Carthage. She wanted to tell him of her love for him, but her voice would not allow her to speak. She stopped in the middle of a sentence. Each night, she provided a feast for him and listened to his stories, wanting often to hear about the fall of Troy.

Whenever Aeneas and her guests left the feast, Dido sat in the chair he had vacated.

Dido was lost in love. She thought about Aeneas constantly, seeing and hearing him even when he was not present. Dido often held Ascanius in her lap, taking pleasure in his resemblance to his father.

Because Dido was in love, she no longer did her duty as ruler of Carthage. Before Aeneas came to Carthage, she had busied herself with the construction of her city. Only partially built, the city lay exposed to enemies. No longer did the Carthaginians build the walls and other fortifications. Work on the harbor was also only partially completed. Dido had given in to the *furor* of passionate love; she neglected her *pietas* of building and ruling a city.

Juno kept watch; she saw that Dido was in love. Dido was willing to sacrifice her pride and her reputation if she could have an affair with Aeneas.

Having formed a plot in her mind, Juno said to Venus, “You and your son Cupid have triumphed over Dido! You two have made her fall in love with Aeneas. You are the goddess of sexual passion, and Cupid is the god of love. Dido did not have a chance against you two.

“I know that you have not liked the rising walls of Carthage, a city I love, but why should you and I disagree? What good is it for we two goddesses to be opposed to each other?”

“Here is a way for us to be at peace with each other. Why not allow Aeneas and Dido to be married? You are the one who made Dido fall in love with Aeneas, so I don’t see why you would be opposed to their marriage. Aeneas, who is your favorite, and Dido can rule the Carthaginians together. Since Aeneas, your favorite, is the male, he will have the most power.”

Venus knew that Juno had proposed a trick: a way for future Roman power to become future Carthaginian power. After all, if Aeneas never reached Latium and never founded his city, he could not found the Roman people and so the great power of the Roman people would never exist. Instead of Rome being the great power in the Mediterranean, Carthage would be the great power.

But Venus had her own secret plans. If Aeneas and Dido were to have an affair for a while, this would ensure that Aeneas would continue to receive the help he needed until he could set sail once more for Italy.

And so Venus said to Juno, “Your offer is a good offer, and I will not shun it. But will Jupiter agree that one city — Carthage — should be home to the exiles from Tyre *and* the exiles from Troy? I think that the Fates may forbid that. But you are the wife of Jupiter, and you have influence over him, so I will do what you say.”

Juno replied, “I shall arrange everything. Let me tell you my plan. Tomorrow, Aeneas and Dido will go hunting together. I will create a storm. Everyone will scatter to seek shelter, and Aeneas and Dido will seek shelter in the same cave. I will be there. I will ensure that two will become one. This will be the marriage of Aeneas and Dido.”

Venus nodded her consent to Juno’s plan although she knew that the plan was meant to be a trap.

When dawn arrived, Carthaginians and Trojans prepared for the hunt. Huntsmen brought nets and spears. They brought horses and hunting dogs. Dido kept them waiting as she dressed. Finally, she appeared in rich clothing and with her hair neatly styled.

Now the Carthaginians and the Trojans were ready to hunt. Aeneas took the lead; his son, Ascanius, was with him. So were many, many hunters.

Following winter, Apollo visits the island of Delos to enjoy a festival, and around his altars dance people who worship him. Apollo swiftly goes to Delos as drums pound a welcome for him. As swiftly as Apollo goes to Delos, Aeneas went to the hunt.

The hunters found game: goats and deer. Ascanius rode his horse in the lead, but he longed for more dangerous game than goats and deer; he hoped to find a wild boar or a lion.

Before the hunters could find more dangerous game, a storm hurled hail at them. All scattered and sought shelter. Dido and Aeneas found and entered the same cave. Here the

goddesses Earth and Juno lit what resembled wedding torches. Here nymphs sang what resembled a wedding song. Here the sky witnessed what resembled a wedding. But although Juno provided the trappings of a wedding, this was not a legal wedding. Aeneas did not hold the torch that a groom holds in a real marriage. Aeneas did not make the vows that a groom makes in a real marriage.

Dido called her relationship with Aeneas a marriage, but it was really an affair. Dido used the word “marriage” to lessen her feeling of guilt.

Rumors of the affair spread quickly to all the cities of Libya. Evil moves quickly, and of all evils, rumor moves the quickest. Rumor is the daughter of Mother Earth, who bore her after Jupiter had killed two of her sons: the Titan Coeus and the Giant Enceladus. Mother Earth gave birth to Rumor as a way to get revenge for the death of these sons.

Rumor has wings and many feathers. Her many eyes never sleep, and she has many tongues and many ears. By night she flies, and by day she watches and listens. She values lies as much as she values truths.

Now Rumor quickly travelled throughout Libya and filled the ears of Libyans. Rumor told all, “Aeneas, a Trojan, and Dido, Queen of Carthage, are having an affair. They neglect their duties because they are spending so much time having sex.”

Rumor spread this gossip to many Libyans, and then she went to Iarbas, whom Dido had earlier declined to marry. Iarbas was the product of rape. Jupiter had raped a nymph in Libya, and she had given birth to a son: Iarbas. Jupiter suffered no punishment for his crime; as king of gods and men, he is too powerful to suffer punishment even for his many rapes. In contrast, mortals can be punished even for consensual love affairs.

Iarbas had built many temples and many altars to his father. He made sure that the sacred fires were kept burning. He made sure that the blood of many sacrificial animals reddened the ground. He made sure that wreathes of flowers decorated the doors of temples.

Maddened by rumor, Iarbas went to one of Jupiter’s altars and prayed, “You are worshipped here. You are adored here. You are respected here. We make sacrifices to you here. And for what? What do we get in return for fearing your anger? Look at Dido. She came here, and she got at little price land on which to build her city. I proposed marriage to her; she turned me down. Instead, she is having an adulterous love affair with Aeneas, a womanizer like Paris, who ran away with Helen and started the Trojan War. Aeneas’ Trojans are like eunuchs. Aeneas prettifies himself with oiled hair and with effeminate clothing. He gets Dido and Carthage, and we get nothing although we keep sacrificing to you. This is not fair.”

Jupiter heard the prayer of Iarbas and so became aware of Aeneas’ actions. Jupiter now paid attention to Carthage and to the adulterous love affair of Aeneas and Dido.

Jupiter ordered Mercury to come to him. He then gave Mercury orders to take to Aeneas: “Tell him that he is ignoring his destiny. He should not be in Carthage. He should be working to found his own city. This is not why his mother, Venus, saved him from the attack by Diomedes against him in the Trojan War. This is not why his mother saved him during the fall of Troy. Carthage is not his destiny.

“Italy is his destiny. He must go there and fight a war and establish a city and the Roman people. He must found a people who will bring law to the entire world.

“If Aeneas is not concerned about his own destiny, he ought to be concerned about the destiny of his son. Unless Aeneas goes to Italy, Ascanius will not have a glorious future. Ascanius is also supposed to have Italian offspring. His blood is also supposed to flow in the veins of Romans.

“Aeneas must not stay in Carthage: He must go to Italy. Give him this message from me: You must set sail!”

Mercury put on the winged golden sandals that sped him to his destinations. He grabbed the wand that can make ghosts exit the Land of the Dead or enter the Land of the Dead. Mercury’s wand can also make men close their eyes in sleep or open their eyes in death.

Mercury flew through the air, and he saw Atlas, a Titan who used to hold up the sky, and who was transformed into north Africa’s Mount Atlas, which holds up the sky. Clouds always surround the crown of Mount Atlas, ice is always in his beard, and snow always covers his shoulders.

Mercury landed on Mount Atlas first, and then he plunged down to the sea the way that a hawk flies above the water and hunts fish. Mercury flew in between the sky and the earth and went to Libya.

Landing at Carthage, Mercury immediately saw Aeneas, who had taken over the duties of Dido and was supervising the building of the city that in years to come would be Rome’s greatest enemy. Dressed as a Carthaginian, Aeneas built the walls that Rome would fight against in three wars before finally destroying Carthage as a power in the Mediterranean.

Mercury scorned Aeneas: “Look at what you are doing! You are building the walls of a city that is not your own. You are sleeping with a woman who is your ‘wife.’ You are ignoring your fate, your destiny. Jupiter ordered me to come here and try to make you sane again. He wants you to stop ignoring your destiny. He wants you to leave Carthage — if not for your own destiny, then for the destiny of your son. Ascanius’ destiny lies in Italy, not in Carthage. You owe him the land on which Rome will be built!”

Mercury vanished from Aeneas’ sight.

Aeneas had clearly seen and clearly heard Mercury. The god had spoken clearly. Such direct messages from the gods are not to be ignored.

Instantly, Aeneas remembered his duty. He longed to go to Italy. He longed to leave Carthage, although this is a land he loves. He knew that he must obey the commands of Jupiter.

But what about Dido? What can he say to the queen that will have good consequences? How can he break up with a woman who loves him so? What should he do?

Aeneas gave orders to Mnestheus, Sergestus, and Serestus: “Get our ships ready to sail, but tell no one. Make sure that the Trojans are ready to sail. Keep everything secret from the Carthaginians.”

Aeneas did not want to leave Dido without saying goodbye, but he did want to wait for a good time to talk to her. He hoped that time would quickly arrive.

Mnestheus, Sergestus, and Serestus quickly followed Aeneas’ orders.

But the queen soon heard of a trick, a plot — the Trojans are planning to sail away in secret. She will be left behind without an explanation. Rumor was active, vicious, and destructive. Dido heard rumors that the Trojans were preparing their ships so that they could quickly sail away from Carthage.

Dido was like a Maenad, a wild follower of Bacchus, driven to frenzy by her worship of the god.

Dido spoke to Aeneas before he could speak to her and explain his actions: “Did you really think that you could keep your departure a secret from me? Why do you want to sneak away without even talking to me? Doesn’t our love mean anything to you? Would my death mean anything to you?”

“Why are you planning to leave now, in winter, a dangerous time to sail? Why would anyone attempt to set sail at this time when the sea is such a danger? The reason for your departure at this time must be me — you are running away because of me!”

“Don’t I deserve better from you? Aren’t we married? Doesn’t that mean anything to you? Don’t my tears have any effect on you at all?”

“If I in fact deserve better than this from you, stay here in Carthage!”

“Because of my relationship to you, the tribes and kings that surround Carthage hate me — they are my enemies! Even the Carthaginians hate me because of my relationship with you!”

“Because I so much wanted to have a relationship with you, I have broken my vow, I have lost my honor, I have lost my reputation.”

“I thought that you would be my permanent husband, but apparently you are my temporary guest.”

“What will happen to me now? Will Pygmalion, my brother, the King of Tyre, fight me and conquer the city of Carthage? Will Iarbas force me to become his sex-slave?”

“I wish that you had made me pregnant. I wish that I could have your son. I wish that I could have a little Aeneas when you leave — at least, I could look at him and see your features in his face.

“If I could only give birth to your son, I would not feel so abandoned by you.”

Dido stopped speaking, and Aeneas resolved to restrain his emotions as he replied to her. Jupiter had reminded him of his destiny and of the destiny of his son, and he thought it best to make a clean break with Dido and not give her a false hope.

Aeneas said, “You have been kind to my Trojans and me. I know this, and the gods know this. I shall always be thankful to you, and I shall always remember you throughout my life. I know that you deserve good things.

“Please let me say a few things.

“I never intended to leave you without saying goodbye. I did not ever intend to sail away from you in secret. Please do not believe that I ever intended such things.

“Also, remember that I am not your husband. We are not legally married. I have never held the torch of a bridegroom, and I have never said the vows of a bridegroom to you.

“If the Fates would have allowed me anything I wished for after the fall of Troy, I would not have come to Carthage. I would have stayed at Troy, and I would have rebuilt the city on its old site. I would have rebuilt the palace of Priam, and I would have rebuilt the fortifications of Troy to keep its defeated citizens safe.

“But I was not allowed to rebuild Troy. The oracle of Apollo at the city of Gyrrnia has stated my task, my destiny. I must go to Italy. That will be my new homeland, not Carthage.

“You, yourself, left Tyre and founded a new city — Carthage — in north Africa. I have left Troy and will found a new city in Italy. I want to do what you have done. If what you have done is the right thing to do, we Trojans should not be criticized for wanting to do the same thing.

“My father, Anchises, died in Sicily, but his ghost appears to me in dreams. He warns about things I ought not to do. I fear that I will do what I ought not to do: ignore my destiny.

“I think about my son, Ascanius. He, too, has a destiny. I must fulfill my destiny so that he can fulfill his destiny. I must not rob him of his future kingdom in Italy. Fate has decreed that his kingdom lies there, not in north Africa.

“I swear that a messenger of the gods who was sent by Jupiter appeared before me and brought me the commands of Jupiter himself. I saw and heard clearly Jupiter’s messenger. He ordered me to achieve my destiny.

“Do not try to prevent me from sailing. You will be hurting both of us with your futile attempts.

“Yes, I will set sail for Italy — by the order of Jupiter, not of my own free will.”

As Aeneas had spoken to her, Dido had glared at him. She had looked him over, as she silently stood. Now she shrieked at him, “Venus is not your mother! Dardanus is not your ancestor! Your parents are not immortal gods or mortal humans! Mount Caucasus with its rocks must be your father! The tigers of Hyrcania must have suckled you!

“How do I know this? Because you have no pity for me. Did you groan as you spoke to me? No. Did you even look at me? No. Did you cry as you ought to have done? No. Why do you not pity me — I love you!

“Why aren’t Jupiter and Juno helping me? Why aren’t they taking pity on me? Shouldn’t the gods have a sense of fairness?

“You washed up on the shores of Carthage, and I gave you food, clothing, and shelter. I let you rule my kingdom. I saved your ships, and I saved your Trojans.

“The Furies are the gods who concern themselves with me. They madden me.

“The gods who concern themselves with you are Apollo and his oracles. They tell you what to do. So does Jupiter, who sends a messenger with orders for you. This is work for gods? Don’t they have better things to do?

“So go to Italy. I won’t stop you.

“But I hope that the gods do. I hope that you and your ships are wrecked on rocks in the middle of the sea. I hope that you die while crying out my name again and again. While I am alive, I will wish only evil for you.

“After I die, my ghost will follow you wherever you go. After I am dead, I will wish only evil for you. I will haunt you.

“Even when I am in the Land of the Dead, I will wish only evil for you. News of you will reach me even there, and bad news about you will comfort me.”

Dido ran away from Aeneas, leaving him behind, unhappy. Once out of the room, she fainted and her serving women caught her and took her to her chamber and placed her on her bed.

Aeneas now pursued his duty. He felt bad about Dido, but he knew that he must pursue his destiny. Instead of going to Dido and talking to her, he went to his ships and worked to make them seaworthy.

He and his men worked hard. They brought timber with which to repair the ships and to make oars. They worked as hard as ants when they find a huge mound of wheat and pillage it and take it to their home. Some ants carry the grains of wheat, and some ants supervise the workers and punish the lazy. The Trojans repaired their ships and put them back in the water.

Dido witnessed the Trojans’ labor. She looked out at all of the activity on the beach and mourned. Her lover was getting ready to leave her.

Love can be a cruel tyrant. It often treats people badly. Dido cried. She wanted Aeneas back. She tried to think of ways to get him back.

Dido said to Anna, her sister, “Look at the Trojan ships in the water. They are nearly ready to sail. I know that Aeneas wants to leave me, but go to him. You know him; he and you have been friends. Plead with him. Remind him that my ships did not join the Greek ships at Aulis where they sacrificed Agamemnon’s daughter Iphigenia before sailing across the sea to attack Troy. Remind him that I never made a vow to make war against Troy. Remind him that I never sent ships to attack Troy. I have done nothing that would ever hurt his father, Anchises, either while Anchises was alive or after his death.

“Why should Aeneas be in such a hurry to leave? Make a request of him for me: Ask him to wait a while longer so that he will have safe sailing weather. He will need good winds and a smooth sea.

“I no longer request that he observe our marriage. I don’t expect him to forget his destiny that lies in Latium.

“I do ask him to give me time — time to partially recover from the loss of his love.

“If he will give me time now, I will pay him back more than I owe when I die.”

So Dido pleaded to her sister, who spoke to Aeneas and told him of Dido’s tears. But Dido’s tears did not turn Aeneas from his destiny. Fate had decreed that he go to Italy.

A huge tree can be blasted by the North wind, which tries to uproot it. The tree limbs move, but the tree stays firmly rooted. Aeneas was like that tree. He heard the appeals that Anna made, but he stayed true to his destiny.

Tears fell. In vain.

Consumed by *furor*, Dido resolved to die. She was tired of living. She laid gifts for the gods on an altar, and the omens were terrifying. She put holy water on the altar — the water turned black. She poured out wine for the gods — the wine turned to blood. She did not tell anyone — not even her sister — about the omens.

She went at night to a marble temple that held a shrine dedicated to her late husband: Sychaeus. She seemed to hear his voice calling her name from the Land of the Dead.

She heard an owl on a rooftop calling out what appeared to be a lament for the dead: a dirge.

She remembered the prophecies of seers of ancient times. The prophecies were terrifying, and they made her afraid.

She had nightmares about Aeneas: He was a savage hunter who wanted to kill her.

She had other nightmares: She wandered alone, looking for her people in a strange country.

She felt like Pentheus, who was driven insane by Bacchus because he did not respect the god. In his manic *furor*, his vision became double, and he saw two suns when only one existed, and he saw two cities of Thebes when only one existed.

She felt like Orestes, the son of Agamemnon. Consumed by *furor*, Orestes killed his mother, and so the Furies pursued him, driving him mad — he saw his dead mother threatening him with fire and snakes and he tried to run from her, but the Furies blocked his way.

Maddened with *furor*, Dido thought about her death. How should she die? When should she die?

Dido went to her sister, and putting on an act so Anna would not know what she was planning, she spoke to Anna calmly, “I have good news. I have found a way to do one of two things: make Aeneas love me again, or make me forget my love for him. In Ethiopia is a priestess who takes care of the temple of the daughters of the Evening Star. She takes care of the sacred grove, and she feeds honey and poppies to the dragon. The priestess knows spells for various purposes: how to end passionate love, how to cause pain, how to stop a river, how to make stars cross the sky in a different direction, how to bring the dead out of Hades, and how to cause an earthquake. She knows magic, and although I am reluctant to do it, I will use her magic now.

“Please do as I ask you. Build a funeral pyre in the inner courtyard in the open air. Don’t let people know what you are doing. On the funeral pyre, put Aeneas’ armor and weapons. He left them in our bedroom; he has not taken them. On the funeral pyre, put Aeneas’ clothing and put the bed he and I slept in. The funeral pyre will burn every trace of Aeneas that remains in Carthage. So works the priestess’ spell.”

Dido fell silent, and her face grew pale.

Anna suspected nothing. She did not know that her sister was planning to commit suicide. She felt that Dido would grieve for Aeneas only as much she had grieved for her late husband.

But the queen took action when the funeral pyre was built under the sky in the inner courtyard. She placed funeral wreathes in her palace. She put an effigy of Aeneas on the bed on the funeral pyre, beside his armor and his sword.

Dido then performed rites of magic. At the altars by the funeral pyre, with her hair and robes unbound, in accordance with the rites of magic, she named three hundred gods, including Erebus, Chaos, and Hecate, goddess of the Land of the Dead, who was also Diana, a goddess huntress on earth, and Luna, the goddess of the moon.

Dido sprinkled water that represented the waters found in Hell. She found poisonous herbs by the light of the moon. She used the membrane that had covered a colt when it was born. With only one foot wearing a sandal, in accordance with the rites of magic, she prayed to gods who knew that she was about to commit suicide. She also prayed to any god — should one exist — who cares for lovers who love each other unequally, with only one lover greatly loving the other.

It was night, and everything and everyone but Dido was at rest. The woods were calm, the sea was calm, and the stars moved in their usual course.

Dido could not sleep; she could not stop thinking about her love for Aeneas and his refusal of her love.

She said to herself, “What should I do? What are my options? I have rejected proposals of marriage here in Libya. Should I make a fool of myself and urge kings to propose to me again?”

“Or should I follow the Trojans as they sail away? I have helped them — oh, so recently — but will they remember? Will they welcome me? More likely, they will hate me. Haven’t I realized yet that the Trojans are as untrustworthy as their early king, Laomedon, who cheated Poseidon and Apollo after they had worked for him for a year at the command of Jupiter? Haven’t I realized yet that the Trojans are as untrustworthy as their early king, Laomedon, who tried to cheat Hercules of the horses that he had promised him after Hercules had rescued Laomedon’s daughter?”

“Should I follow Trojan ships by myself? Or should I follow Trojan ships with all my Carthaginians? Would my Carthaginians be willing to leave their new city? No. I found it hard enough to get them to leave Tyre and sail to north Africa. I will not be able to uproot them again.

“Therefore, it is best that I die.

“I deserve to die.

“I will end my life with the sword of Aeneas.

“I cried in front of Anna, and she advised me to seek love. She advised me to do what would be best for my new city. I gave in to her and to my love, and this is the result. Much better it would have been never to have felt love again, never to have been tempted to be married, never to have been tempted to break the vow I made to myself and the ashes of my late husband. I broke that vow!”

Dido agonized that night; Aeneas slept peacefully on one of his ships.

Mercury appeared to Aeneas in a dream. The blond god said to him, “Why are you asleep? Why aren’t you sailing? The West wind is blowing, ready to take you away from Carthage.

“Dido, who is unhappy, is thinking about treachery, so leave now.

“Set sail now, while you still can. If you don’t set sail now, tomorrow you will see your ships set on fire.

“Worry about your destiny, not about a woman. Women change; your destiny is unchanging.”

Aeneas woke up. He took action, waking up his men and ordering them to set sail: “I have seen a god. He wants us to set sail — now!” He prayed to the god, “We will do as you say. Help us. Give us good sailing weather.”

Aeneas used his sword to cut the rope that moored his ship. The crews of the other ships did the same. Soon, the harbor was empty of Trojan ships; they were at sea.

Dawn arrived, and Dido looked out at the harbor from her high tower. It was empty of Trojan ships, and she mourned. She beat her breasts and tore her hair in the ancient way of showing grief.

Dido lamented, “This stranger — Aeneas — has mocked Carthage. We Carthaginians should arm ourselves, set sail in our ships, and overtake the Trojans! We can fight the Trojans with weapons! We can set their ships on fire in the sea!

“But no. I am not making sense. I have already resolved to die.

“I am unhappy now, and I have been unhappy. I have acted the wrong way.

“Aeneas is supposed to be a good man. He carried his father out of burning Troy! He carried his household gods out of burning Troy! But is Aeneas a good man?

“I should have killed Aeneas when I first saw him. I should have killed his men. I should have killed Aeneas’ son, cooked him, and served him to Aeneas.

“We Carthaginians should have fought a battle with the Trojans. The victory might have gone to the Trojans, but so what? Either way, win or lose, I, Dido, would have died. I should have set their camp on fire and burned their ships. I should have killed both Aeneas and Ascanius and then myself!

“Hear my prayers, sun, Juno, underworld goddess Hecate, and avenging Furies! Listen to me. I deserve that much. If Aeneas is fated to fulfill his destiny and found his city in Latium, let him and his descendants suffer from my curse! Let him fight a war in Italy. Let him beg for help and see his people die. Let him have a peace that is not just, that lacks *clementia*. Let him not enjoy his unjust peace. Let him die early. Let him lie unburied.

“I pray this with my words and with my blood. I also pray that my Carthaginians will forever be the enemies of his descendants. Let the Carthaginians’ hatred for Aeneas’ descendants be an offering made to my ghost. May the Carthaginians and Aeneas’ descendants never love each other and never be at peace.

“I pray that a Carthaginian avenger, now unknown, will rise up in the future and battle the descendants of Aeneas. I curse Aeneas’ descendants with war — unending war!”

Maddened by *furor*, Dido then turned her thoughts to suicide.

To Barce, the nurse of her late husband — her own nurse had died in Tyre — Dido said, “Ask Anna to come to me. Anna must sprinkle herself with river water in preparation for a sacrifice. She must bring the sacrificial animals here. You and she must wear the sacred headbands for the sacrifice. I am ready to set the rite in motion. I will end my love for Aeneas.”

Barce set off on her errand.

Dido was frenzied by *furor*. Her eyes rolled, and her face paled. She climbed the funeral pyre and unsheathed a Trojan sword. The sword was a gift, but the giver had not intended that it be used for this purpose.

She looked at Aeneas' clothing and the bed that they had slept in. She wept, and she lay down on the funeral pyre and said her last words: "I am ready to die. I am ready to end my suffering. I am ready to be free of pain. I have lived my life. I have lived what I have been fated to live. I am ready to journey to the Land of the Dead. I have built a great city. I have avenged the death of my husband and punished my brother, who murdered my husband. I have been happy, and I would have continued to be happy if only the Trojans had not landed here."

Dido pressed her face into the bed that she had shared with Aeneas, and then she said, "I will die without a present avenger. So be it. I will die willingly, and I will make my way to the Land of the Dead. I much prefer that to continuing to live. I hope that Aeneas sees the smoke of my funeral pyre far out at sea. Let it be a bad omen for him."

Maddened by *furor*, Dido fell on the sword. Blood reddened the sword; blood reddened her hands. Female servants screamed.

Rumor ran like a maddened follower of Bacchus throughout Carthage. The Carthaginians mourned; the women cried and shrieked. It sounded as if a city — Tyre or Carthage — were falling to enemy soldiers, and waves of fire were destroying the city.

Anna heard the cries of grief and despair. Terrified, and mourning, she scratched her face and beat her breasts and cried, "Dido, is this what you wanted? Is this why you wanted the funeral pyre? You have deceived me. You have hurt me. You should have told me what you planned to do — we could have died together. I built this funeral pyre at your request. I did not know what you planned to do. You have destroyed so much: your life, my life, and your people and city.

"Come, women of Carthage, and help me to bathe my sister's wounds. Let me be with my sister in her final moments of life."

Anna climbed to the top of the funeral pyre and held her dying sister in her arms. Anna cried. She used her gown to try to stop Dido's bleeding.

The wound had penetrated one of Dido's lungs. As she labored to breathe, her wound hissed.

Three times Dido tried to raise herself on one of her elbows. Three times she failed.

Dido looked at the sky and sought the sun. When she saw it, it hurt her eyes and she moaned.

Dido was dying hard.

Juno saw her and pitied her. Dido was dying at the wrong time, too early a time. Because Dido's death was a suicide, Proserpina, the Queen of the Land of the Dead, refused to come and cut the lock of hair that would free Dido from life and from an agonizing death. Juno sent Iris down to free Dido. Iris flew to Dido, held a lock of her hair, and said, "As commanded by Juno, I cut this lock of hair — an offering to the god of Death — and I release you from life and from your body."

Iris cut the lock of hair, and the warmth left Dido's body and her breath fled with the wind.

Chapter 5: Funeral Games and Fire (Aeneid)

Aeneas and his ships were underway, but the sky darkened. He looked back at Carthage, and he saw the glow of a fire. He did not know it, but the glow came from Dido's funeral pyre, which the Carthaginians had lit. Although he did not know the source of the glow, it made him uneasy. The Trojans and he knew how much a woman can feel passion, and how much *furor* a woman can feel when a love affair ends.

The Trojans reached open water; they were out of sight of land. A thunderstorm reared in the sky and made the waters high and the day as dark as night. Even Palinurus, an experienced pilot, was concerned. He asked, "What trouble have you, Neptune, god of the sea, planned for us?" Palinurus then gave the Trojans orders: "Trim the sails! Row!"

He called to Aeneas, "With the sky and the sea like this, we can't sail for Italy — not even with the help of Jupiter! The winds are unfavorable for that destination. We can't fight the winds; we can't fight the storm and the waves. Our best course of action is to sail for Sicily. There we will find friends. We are close to the part of Sicily where your half-brother, Eryx, lived. I remember the way to Sicily, and I remember the location of the stars before the storm arose."

Aeneas replied, "Good thinking, Palinurus. I have watched you try to fight the wind. It is better to go with the wind, when possible, than to fight it. The wind is driving us to Sicily, and to Sicily we shall go. It is a good place for our ships and us. Our friend Acestes lives there, and the bones of Anchises, my father, rest there."

A West wind blew them to Sicily. High on a mountain, Acestes saw and recognized the sails of the Trojan fleet. Carrying spears and wearing the fur of a she-bear from Libya, he went to the harbor and welcomed his friends. Acestes' parents were a woman of Troy and the god of the Criniscus River in Sicily. Acestes gave the Trojans food and shelter.

The following day, Aeneas spoke to his Trojans: "It has been one year since my father died, one year since we buried his bones, one year since we cried for him.

"It is time for us to perform the anniversary rites. We need to have a funeral procession, and we need to give gifts to the gods. This is a vow that I would keep even if I were an exile at Carthage in north Africa or a prisoner on the Greek island of Mycenae. But we are on the friendly island of Sicily. Let us hold rites to honor my father. I will always honor my father. After I build my city, I will hold rites to honor him year after year.

"Acestes, who was born in Troy, is our friend. He has agreed to give us two head of cattle for each ship. We will sacrifice them, and we will invite to the feast the household gods of Troy and the gods of Sicily that Acestes worships.

“In nine days, if the weather is good, we will hold funeral games to honor my father. We will hold contests of racing ships and racing men, as well as contests of throwing javelins or shooting arrows and a contest of boxing with gauntlets made of rawhide. All of you are welcome to attend. Now crown your heads with wreathes.”

Aeneas put on his own head a wreath made of myrtle, a plant sacred to his mother, Venus. The Sicilian Helymus, old Acestes, Ascanius, and the young men also put wreathes on their heads.

Aeneas and the others went to the tomb of Anchises, and Aeneas poured the proper libations: two bowls of wine, two bowls of milk, and two bowls of blood. He scattered red flowers around the tomb, and then he prayed, “Father, I honor your ashes and your spirit. I rescued you from Troy, but I regret that I was unable to take you to Latium and the Tiber River in Italy.”

As Aeneas said the final words of his prayer to his father, a snake slithered up from under the tomb and made its way among the altars. It shimmered in the sun like a rainbow, and it tasted the feast that Aeneas had provided. It then slithered away under the tomb. The snake was a good omen.

Aeneas wondered whether the snake was a local god, or whether it was a spirit associated with his father. He continued the rites. He sacrificed two sheep, two pigs, and two steers. He then poured out wine, and he called out his father’s name. The others also brought sacrifices for the gods, and they cooked the meat.

On the ninth day, the weather was good. Many people gathered for the funeral games in honor of Anchises. Some wanted to compete; most wanted to watch. Aeneas set out prizes: tripods, crowns made of leaves for victors, armor, purple clothing, gold, and silver. A trumpet blew to announce the beginning of the games.

The first event was a race with ships. The crews of four ships readied themselves to compete. Mnestheus commanded the *Dragon*; he would give rise to the Memmian clan. Gyas commanded the *Chimaera*; it was a huge ship, with three tiers of oars. Sergestus commanded the *Centaur*; he would give rise to the Sergian clan. Cloanthus commanded the *Scylla*; he would give rise to the Cluentius clan.

Far out in the water was a rock; it would be the midpoint for the race. In bad weather, the rock was washed over by high waves; in good weather, it rose above the sea and was a favorite resting place for cormorants. Aeneas marked this rock; ship crews knew to circle the rock and race for home.

The ship captains drew lots to determine their starting place, and the crews oiled their bodies and wore on their heads wreathes made of poplar leaves.

The trumpet sounded, and the oarsmen began rowing. At first, all four ships stayed together as they raced faster than chariots drawn by two horses that the charioteer whips to make them run faster.

The spectators shouted, and their shouts echoed back to them.

Gyas' *Chimaera* took the lead, and Cloanthus' *Scylla* followed close behind. Cloanthus had the better oarsmen, but Gyas' *Chimaera* was better constructed for speed — Cloanthus' *Scylla* had a hull made of pine.

Mnestheus' *Dragon* and Sergestus' *Centaur* fought for third place. The *Dragon* surged ahead, and then the *Centaur* surged ahead and they were tied.

The ships reached the rock that was the turning point. Gyas' *Chimaera* was still in the lead, but his pilot, Menoetes, was cautious — wary of hidden rocks — and he made a wide turn.

Eager for victory, Gyas yelled at him, "What are you doing? Stay close to the rock! Let the other ships make their turns in deeper water!"

Still cautious, Menoetes headed for deeper water, and Gyas shouted, "No! Hug the rock as you turn!"

Cloanthus' *Scylla* took advantage of the wide turn being made by the *Chimaera*. It took the inside track, stayed close to the rock, and raced into first place.

Humiliated, Gyas, a young man, cried. He wanted to win so badly that he was willing to risk the safety of his crew and of his ship. He seized Menoetes and threw him overboard, and then he became his own pilot.

Menoetes was weighed down by his clothing, but he struggled to the surface of the water and swam to the rock, climbed it, and sat there. The race's spectators laughed when Gyas threw Menoetes overboard, they laughed again as Menoetes struggled in the water, and they laughed again as he spit up salty sea water.

Mnestheus and Sergestus hoped to pass Gyas' *Chimaera*, which Gyas, a young, inexperienced helmsman, now piloted.

Sergestus' *Centaur* took the lead as it and the *Dragon* neared the turning point, but not by much — not even the whole length of the ship. Mnestheus ordered the oarsmen of his *Dragon*, "Row harder! We are not rowing for first place. Cloanthus' *Scylla* is too fast for us. But we must not finish last — that would be a disgrace! You are the oarsmen I picked. You are the best of my men. You have shown what you can do on the sea during storms; now show what you can do in a race! Spare us disgrace! Don't allow us to finish last!"

Mnestheus' oarsmen rowed hard in the *Dragon*. Sweat streamed from their bodies, they gasped for breath as they rowed, and their mouths were dry. But an accident by another ship allowed them to avoid a last-place finish.

Sergestus chose to turn close to the rock — too close! His *Centaur* struck some rocks. Oars broke, and the *Centaur* hit the rocks so hard that part of it was lifted out of the water. The oarsmen tried to get the ship off the rocks. The crew used pikes and poles and oars to push the ship off the rocks.

Mnestheus' oarsmen took advantage. They rowed hard, and a favorable wind gave their *Dragon* speed. Their ship sped like a terrified dove flies. Meanwhile, Sergestus had to figure out how to get his ship to shore when so many of the ship's oars had shattered.

Mnestheus' oarsmen passed Gyas' *Chimaera* — the ship now lacked an experienced helmsman. Then Mnestheus' *Dragon* tried to overtake Cloanthus' *Scylla*. Mnestheus' oarsmen rowed as swiftly as they could.

The crowd was excited as Cloanthus' *Scylla* and Mnestheus' *Dragon* arrived at the finish line. Cloanthus' crew would be embarrassed to lose now after leading the race for so long. Mnestheus' crew would love to achieve a last-second victory after trailing for so long.

Mnestheus and his men might have achieved the victory if Cloanthus had not prayed to the gods of the sea: "I will sacrifice a white bull to you, and I will pour out wine for you."

The gods of the sea — the sea-nymphs known as the Nereids, the old sea-god named Phorcus, the virgin sea-nymph named Panoepa, and the god of harbors named Portunus — heard and answered his prayer. Portunus used his hand to shove Cloanthus' *Scylla* quicker than Mnestheus' *Dragon* toward the finish line.

A herald announced that Cloanthus' ship had won the race, and Aeneas crowned Cloanthus' head with a wreath made of green laurel. Aeneas gave the crew of each ship wine, three bulls, and a bar of silver. The captains of the ships got prizes of honor.

Aeneas gave Cloanthus, whose ship finished first, a gold and red cloak decorated with an eagle sent by Jupiter grabbing Ganymede as he hunted and taking him to Mount Olympus to be Jupiter's cupbearer and paramour.

Aeneas gave Mnestheus, whose ship finished second, armor that he had stripped from the Greek Demoleos, who died at Troy by the Simois River. Two of Aeneas' aides, Phegeus and Sagaris, could barely hold up the armor, yet Demoleos had worn it as he chased after Trojans and tried to kill them.

Aeneas gave Gyas, whose ship finished third, two cauldrons and two silver cups.

Finally, Sergestus arrived with his crippled ship. Many of the ship's oars were missing; many of the ship's oars were in splinters. His ship was like a snake that has been run over by a wheel on a road or injured by a rock thrown at it. Its head is still dangerous and eager to bite. Its tail is damaged and useless. Sergestus' ship slowly sailed to the finish line.

Aeneas, happy that the ship had been salvaged, gave Sergestus the last-place prize: a Cretan slave-girl named Pholoë, and her twins who nurse at her breasts.

The next event was the footrace. Aeneas set out the prizes. The competitors included Nisus and Euryalus; Nisus was a man who loved the younger Euryalus, who loved him back. Other competitors were Dioreas, who was related to Priam; Patron, who was from Acarnania; Salius,

who was from Arcadia; the Sicilians Helymus and Panopes, who were hunters; some friends of Acestes; and many others.

Aeneas told the racers, “Every competitor here will win a prize: two Cretan arrows and a double-headed axe, but the first three finishers will win special prizes and crowns made from olive leaves. The first-place finisher will win a horse and its trappings. The second-place finisher will win an Amazon’s quiver and arrows and a belt decorated with gold and a jewel. The third-place finisher will win a Greek helmet.”

The race started, and Nisus quickly ran ahead of everyone else. In second place was Salius, and in third place, far behind the two leaders, was Euryalus. Following him was Helymus, and close behind him and coming closer was Dioces.

The racers neared the finish line, and Nisus — with the victory practically assured — slipped on some blood from a sacrifice and fell headlong into manure. But if Nisus couldn’t be the winner of the footrace, he wanted his best friend, Euryalus, to be the winner, so Nisus threw himself into the path of Salius, deliberately held him back, and Euryalus raced past Salius and took first place. Helymus finished second, and Dioces finished third.

But Salius protested — loudly. If not for Nisus’ foul, Salius would have finished first, not Euryalus. But many Trojans and Sicilians took the side of young and handsome Euryalus — they wanted him to win. Dioces, who finished third, also wanted Euryalus to win — if Salius were to be awarded first place, Dioces would be fourth and would lack a special prize.

Aeneas handled the situation well. He said, “I will not alter the order of the finishers, but I will give an additional prize to Salius: the giant hide of an African lion.”

Nisus said, “If Salius gets such a prize, what about me? I clearly would have won if I had not had the bad luck to slip on the bloody ground.” He displayed the blood and manure that covered his face and body because he had slipped and fallen down.

Generous Aeneas smiled and awarded Nisus a shield that the Greeks had taken from a temple of Neptune. The shield was the work of the metal-smith Didymaon.

The next event was the boxing match; the boxers would use rawhide gauntlets. Aeneas announced, “Who wishes to compete in the boxing match? Who are the two volunteers?” He set out the prizes for the match. The victor would win a bull with gilded horns, and the other boxer would win a sword and helmet.

Dares, a huge man, stepped forward. He had boxed Paris, and at the funeral games held to honor Hector, he had boxed the braggart Butes, another huge man — and killed him. Dares was a strong man, and he intimidated almost everyone as he shadow-boxed.

Was anyone willing to box Dares? It seemed not. It looked as if Dares would win the bull by default. Dares grabbed one of the bull’s horns and said to Aeneas, “It looks as if I have already won.”

The Trojans were willing for Dares to lead away the bull, but Acestes said to his fellow Sicilian Entellus, “You were a boxer once — are you still a boxer? Should we allow Dares to take away the first prize without a fight? The famous boxer Eryx was your teacher. You have fame as a boxer, and you have won many boxing prizes.”

Entellus replied, “I still love glory and fame, but I am older than I used to be. My blood is colder, and it moves sluggishly. If I were younger, like Dares, I would not hesitate to fight him. I would not even need the promise of a prize.”

Entellus then threw into the boxing area the heavy gauntlets that he had used as a boxer. They had belonged to Eryx, who would first wrap his fists with rawhide and then put on the gauntlets, which were made of layers of oxhide and pieces of metal. Dares looked at the gauntlets and did not want to box anyone wearing them. Aeneas lifted the gauntlets and examined them closely.

Entellus said, “These are the gauntlets of Eryx, but all of you should have seen the gauntlets of Hercules. The two fought here, and Eryx used these gauntlets, as I did later. If you examine the gauntlets, you will see traces of blood and brain.

“Now, I challenge Dares. I will not use these gauntlets. I do not want to have that advantage over Dares. He and I can use gauntlets that are matched in style and weight.”

Entellus took off his shirt and revealed his muscles. He may have been older than Dares, but no one could question his strength.

Aeneas gave the two boxers gauntlets that were matched in style and weight, and the two put them on and squared off. They began to trade punches, looking for an opening and testing each other. Dares relied on speed and footwork; Entellus, whose knees creaked, relied on strength. Soon, the testing was over, and the real fight began. The two traded heavier blows and sought a way to win.

Entellus tried for a knockout with one blow, but Dares saw the blow coming and dodged it. Entellus had put so much force into the blow that he fell to the ground like a pine tree struck by lightning falls to the ground on a mountain. This excited the crowd, and Acestes helped his friend regain his footing.

Entellus was unshaken by the fall; instead, he was angry and redoubled his efforts to knock out Dares. Now, his blows came fast and furious and repeatedly hit Dares, who was driven back and was clearly defeated.

Aeneas stopped the fight and declared Entellus the victor. He said to Dares, “This is not your day to win. Entellus has superhuman strength. The gods support Entellus today, not you.”

Dares could barely stand up; as his friends led him away, he spit out blood and teeth. His friends also took away for him the runner-up prizes: the sword and helmet.

Entellus was proud of his victory and of his prize: the bull. He said to Aeneas, “Let me show you an example of the power I have now — that will help show you the power I had when I was

young. It will also show you that you did the right thing when you stopped the fight — you saved Dares' life.”

Entellus put on his own, heavy gauntlets, drew back his fist, and then hit the bull right between the eyes, crushing bone and brain and killing it.

Entellus said, “Here is a sacrifice for you, Eryx. It is more suitable to sacrifice the life of a bull than the life of a human being such as Dares. And now, I retire from boxing with my final victory.”

The next event was the archery contest, and Aeneas tied a live dove to the mast of Sergestus' crippled ship. Four archers put their lots in a helmet, which was shaken to determine the order in which they would compete. Hippocoön's lot fell out first, so he shot first. The next lot belonged to Mnestheus, and the third lot belonged to Eurytion, the brother of the Trojan archer Pandarus, who at Troy had broken a truce by attempting to assassinate Menelaus. The final lot belonged to Acestes, an older man competing with younger men.

The archers warmed up by flexing their bows, and then Hippocoön shot first — his arrow missed the dove and stuck in the mast. Mnestheus shot next. He also missed the dove, but his arrow severed the cord that tied the dove to the mast. The dove, sensing freedom, started to fly away, but Eurytion prayed to Pandarus, his late archer brother, and shot the dove, which fell to the earth with the arrow in its body.

Only Acestes remained to compete, but the competition was over. To show his skill, he shot an arrow high into the air. The arrow burst into flames — an omen — and it vanished the way that a falling star or a comet vanishes after trailing flames or a tail behind it.

Omens, whether good or bad, are important. This omen foretold fire and a loss.

The Trojans and the Sicilians prayed to the gods, and Aeneas declared Acestes the winner of the archery contest, giving him gifts and telling him, “Jupiter wants you to have these gifts, including an engraved bowl that Cisseus of Thrace gave to my father, Anchises.”

Although Eurytion had shot the dove, he agreed that Acestes should be declared the victor.

Before the archery contest had been concluded, Aeneas had told Epytides, who looked after the safety of Ascanius, “Make sure that Ascanius and the other boys are ready to perform their parts in the honor of Anchises.”

Ascanius and the other boys rode up on horseback. First, they paraded in front of their parents. The boys wore their hair bound tight, and they each carried two lances. Some carried the gear of archers. Three captains each commanded twelve boys.

The first captain was Priam, who bore his famous late grandfather's name. He rode a stallion from Thrace. The second captain was Atys, a close friend of Ascanius. From Atys came the Latin line of the Atians. The final captain was Ascanius, who rode a stallion that was a gift from Dido and that came from Sidon in Phoenicia. The other boys rode Sicilian horses.

Once the parade was finished, Epytides ordered the boys, “Get ready.” He cracked a whip, and the boys enacted a little battle. They charged, they retreated, they charged again. They wheeled and circled and rode in a pattern as complex as the labyrinth at Crete. The boys rode as swiftly as dolphins at play. Sometimes, the groups of boys made peace, and then they rode side by side.

Ascanius later made this mock battle a tradition in Italy. When he built the city of Alba Longa, he taught this mock battle of the Trojan boys to his Italian citizens. From generation to generation, this tradition was passed down, and it — the Trojan Games — became a tradition of great Rome.

The funeral games for Anchises ended with the end of the Trojan Games.

But now a bad thing happened. Juno had been watching, and she sent Iris, goddess of the rainbow, down to the Trojan women to cause trouble. Iris went to the harbor, where the Trojan ships had been left without guards. At burning altars on the shore, the Trojan women mourned Anchises.

They also mourned their long journey. For the seven years since the fall of Troy, they had not had a real — a permanent — home. They lamented, “How much longer must we travel? How many more sea-miles must we go?”

The Trojan women wanted a permanent home — a permanent city. They did not want to sail on the sea.

Iris assumed the form of Beroë, an aged woman of Troy. Iris cried to the Trojan women, “It would have been better if we had died at Troy. Even after seven years of wandering, we do not have a home. Why should we sail to Italy? We could have a home here. This is the land where Eryx, the half-brother of Aeneas, lived. Here is a king, Acestes, who is friendly to us. Why don’t we build walls and a city right here? That is better than more journeying. We will never see the Simois and Xanthus rivers again. We will never see Troy again. So let us make our home here! Let us burn these ships and force the men to settle here! I have seen the ghost of the prophetess Cassandra in a dream. She gave me flaming torches and told me, ‘This is your new home, your new Troy.’ She wants us to burn the ships. So let us do it. Fires are burning at the altars; we have what we need to set the ships on fire! The altars are dedicated to Neptune — Neptune must want us to set the ships on fire!”

Iris, disguised as the mortal Beroë, took fire from an altar and threw it on a ship.

The Trojan women, shocked, did not move. The oldest Trojan woman, Pyrgo, who had been the nurse to Priam’s sons, said, “This is not Beroë! Look at her! Look at her beauty and her bearing! Listen to her voice! This is a goddess. Beroë is not here. I just left her — she is too ill to attend these rites!”

The Trojan women still hesitated. They hated the ships, they loved Sicily, but they remembered the promise of Italy. Iris then revealed herself and rose in the air and created

a rainbow. Now the Trojan women were convinced that they should burn the ships. They screamed, and they grabbed fire and threw it onto the ships.

The fire caught quickly. All of the ships were on fire. Eumelus carried the news to the Trojan and Sicilian men, who now saw the smoke rising from the ships.

On horseback, Ascanius raced to the ships and shouted at the Trojan women, “What are you doing? You are not burning the camp of the Greeks! In your *furor*, you are burning our own ships!” In frustration, he threw his helmet on the ground.

Aeneas and the Trojan men arrived, and the Trojan women fled and hid in woods and caves — wherever they could. They now regretted what they had done, and they feared the consequences.

The ships burned, despite the attempts by the men to put the fires out. Aeneas ripped his clothing in the ancient way of showing grief. He prayed, “Jupiter, if you still have some sense of concern for Trojans, save our ships! Or, if you prefer, kill me now with a thunderbolt! Kill all of us Trojans with thunderbolts!”

Immediately, a rainstorm arose. Thunder sounded, and rain fell on the ships until all the fires were put out. All of the ships — except for four — were saved.

The fires disheartened Aeneas although he still had fifteen ships left. He wondered whether he should stay in Sicily and give up the hope of settling in Italy.

Old Nautes, whom Minerva had taught and had made renowned for his intelligence and prophecies, advised Aeneas, “Let us follow our destiny despite whatever challenges we face. This is a new challenge, but we shall meet it. Acestes is the king here, and he is a friendly king. Let him be the king of some of the Trojans — our ships can no longer carry all of us Trojans. All Trojans who are exhausted by the long journey, all the old men, all the women who hate the sea, all who are weak and feeble, and all who wish to avoid danger can stay here and build a city and name it Acesta after Acestes.”

Aeneas listened carefully to the words of Nautes, but he did not immediately make a decision.

That night, the ghost of Anchises came to Aeneas in a dream and told him, “Son, when I was alive, I loved you more than my own life. I know that you are disheartened now. Jupiter is taking pity on you and so the god sent me to advise you. Take Nautes’ advice — he advised you well and truly. Take the best troops with you to Italy. In Latium, you will fight a war, and you will need soldiers who are not afraid of war.

“But before you fight the war, go down to the Land of the Dead. The entrance is near the lake of Avernus. See me there. I am not in Tartarus, where the wicked are punished. Instead, I am in the Elysium Fields, where the good are rewarded. The Cumaean Sibyl will be your guide to and in the Land of the Dead. She will take you there after you have sacrificed many black sheep to the

gods. In the Land of the Dead, I will teach you about your future descendants and about your future city. But now I must go — morning is coming.”

The ghost of Anchises vanished. Disappointed and isolated, Aeneas called after it, “Why are you going so quickly? Are you fleeing? Why can’t we hug each other?”

Awake, Aeneas worshipped his Trojan household gods and Vesta, the goddess of the hearth.

Aeneas first talked to Acestus, and then he talked to other leading Trojans. He reported what the ghost of his father had told him in the dream, and he told them that he had decided to follow the advice of Nautes and Anchises.

Aeneas decided who would stay in Sicily and who would journey to Italy. The Trojans then set about repairing the fire-damaged ships. The Trojans who were ready and willing to fight in war were the ones who would go to Italy.

As some Trojans repaired the ships, Aeneas and the other Trojans planned the new city on Sicily. Aeneas determined the city limits and assigned homes by lot. One neighborhood of the city he named Troy; another neighborhood he named Ilium. Acestes was pleased with the new city, and he determined its laws and system of justice. Acestes also founded a temple to Venus and appointed a priest to take care of the tomb of Anchises.

After nine days of feasting and sacrificing, the Trojans and Sicilians recognized that the time had come for Aeneas and the best of the Trojans to depart. The weather was good for sailing. Now all the Trojans wanted to journey to Italy, even those who had most wanted to stay in Sicily, but it was impossible for all to sail to Italy. Aeneas comforted those who would stay in Sicily.

Aeneas ordered that three calves be sacrificed to Eryx and a ewe be sacrificed to the gods of the winds and storms, and then the Trojans set sail.

Venus, who was worried about Aeneas and his Trojans, went to Neptune to ask for help. She complained, “Juno’s hatred for Troy and the Trojans never stops. Even now that the Greeks have destroyed Troy, she continues to hate the Trojans despite the will of Jupiter and despite fate. You have witnessed her hatred — not long ago she even caused a storm in your own realm, the sea, to drive the Trojans to Carthage, not Italy! She even caused the Trojan women to set fire to their own ships in Sicily!

“I have a favor to ask you. I want you to give the surviving Trojans safe passage in their ships over your sea to Italy. Let them reach the Tiber River safely.”

Neptune replied, “You can trust me to keep Aeneas safe, Venus. You were born in the sea, which is my realm. I have often calmed the sea, and I have even saved Aeneas on land — the Xanthus and Simois rivers witnessed that.

“Achilles was slaughtering the Trojans and threw so many Trojan corpses into the Xanthus River that its waters were dammed and could not reach the sea. Aeneas challenged Achilles, although Achilles was the more powerful warrior and had the help of powerful gods. I saved the

life of Aeneas although I wanted to see Troy destroyed — I supported the Greeks during the war because an early king of Troy, Laomedon, refused to pay me after I had built the walls of Troy.

“Even now, I want to protect Aeneas, so don’t worry about him. He will reach Italy safely. Only one Trojan will die as they cross my waters.”

Venus was happy to hear that Aeneas would cross the sea and reach Italy safely.

Neptune hitched his horses to his chariot, and then he drove them over the sea and calmed the waves. Storm clouds moved away. Following Neptune’s chariot were whales, the monsters of the sea; the followers of the minor sea-god Glaucus, who was the father of the Cumaean Sibyl; Palaemon, the son of Ino, both of whom were once mortal but are now immortal; some minor sea-gods known as the Tritons; the old minor sea-god Phorcus and his Nereids, including Thetis, who had given birth to Achilles, and Melite and Panopea, as well as Cymodocea, Spio, and Thalia.

The weather was good, and Aeneas was in a good mood. All seemed to be going well.

That night, nearly everyone was asleep except for the pilots of the ships. Palinurus was awake and working, and the god of Sleep came down to him to make him die. The god of Sleep assumed the form of Phorbas and said to Palinurus, “All is going well. The sea is calm, and the winds are blowing in the right direction. It is night, so sleep for a while — I will take over as pilot.”

Palinurus wanted to do his duty, so he replied, “No, thank you. The sky and sea are calm — now. But I have enough experience to know that they can quickly change. I want to make sure that I keep Aeneas and his ships safe.”

Palinurus wanted to do his duty, but the god of Sleep took a branch from which dripped dew from the Lethe, a river in the Land of the Dead that makes its drinkers forget, and shook it over Palinurus.

Palinurus fell asleep, and instantly the god of Sleep heaved him overboard. Palinurus had a tight grip on the steering oar — it broke and Palinurus took a part of it into the water. He called for help, but no one heard him, and the ship left him behind.

The ship kept sailing — safely. It sailed close to the island of the Sirens and the shore on which so many bones lay bleached by the sun. Aeneas felt the ship moving strangely. He investigated, discovered that Palinurus was gone, and took over as pilot, mourning to himself, “Palinurus, you fell overboard and you will die. Your naked corpse will wash up on a shore somewhere.”

Chapter 6: The Land of the Dead (Aeneid)

As the ships sailed, Aeneas continued to mourn for Palinurus.

Eventually, the ships safely arrived at Cumae in Italy. The Trojans moored the ships, and then they disembarked. Finally, they were on Italian soil and they began exploring the immediate vicinity.

Aeneas went to visit the Cumaean Sibyl, the prophetess of Apollo. She lived in a temple and a cave sacred to Apollo, and there she made prophecies that he inspired in her. Outside her cave was a grove sacred to Diana, Apollo's twin sister.

Daedalus had built the temple in front of a cave. He was the first man ever to fly, and he used his wings to escape from Crete. Flying to Cumae, he built the temple and created works of art for it.

On one panel, he told the story of Androgeos, the son of King Minos and Queen Pasiphaë of Crete. Androgeos had competed in athletic games and was victorious, but some of his competitors, jealous Athenians, murdered him. Because of that, King Minos demanded tribute in the form of human beings from Athens, which sent seven young men to Crete each year to be killed.

On another panel, Daedalus told the story of the Minotaur. Queen Pasiphaë felt lust for a bull, and she made Daedalus create a replica of a cow for her to hide in. When the bull had sex with the replica of the cow, it had sex with the queen, who became pregnant and gave birth to a creature that was half-man and half-bull. Daedalus built a labyrinth at Crete to house the creature, which was called the Minotaur. Each year, the seven Athenian young men were put in the labyrinth, and the Minotaur feasted on their flesh.

One year, one of the seven Athenian young men was Theseus, with whom Ariadne, daughter of King Minos and Queen Pasiphaë, fell in love. Daedalus sympathized with Ariadne, and he told her how Theseus could find his way out of the labyrinth: He should carry a ball of string, tie one end of the string to the entrance of the labyrinth, and unwind the ball of string as he walked the labyrinth.

Because Daedalus had helped Ariadne and Theseus, he and Icarus, his son, were put in prison in Crete. Daedalus conceived the idea of making wings out of feathers and wax so he and his son could escape from prison. He warned Icarus not to fly too high because the sun would melt the wax and the feathers would fall out, but Icarus was so excited by his flight that he ignored the words of his father. The feathers fell out of Icarus' wings, and he fell into the sea and drowned.

Daedalus attempted to create a work of art depicting the death of his son. He tried twice to create the work of art, but each time grief forced him to stop. He never completed the work of art.

The gods had given Daedalus great gifts, but he did not always use his great gifts in an ethical manner. Building the replica of the cow and building the labyrinth were misuses of his great gifts.

Aeneas looked at the works of art as Achates went ahead to talk to the Sibyl, whose name was Deiphobe. She was the daughter of Glaucus, a minor sea-god. This priestess of Apollo and Diana arrived with Achates and told Aeneas, “Don’t spend your time looking at the works of art. Instead, now is the time to sacrifice seven bulls and seven sheep.” This was quickly done.

Aeneas and the Sibyl then entered the temple. Inside the temple an enormous cavern had been carved into rock. The cavern had a hundred tunnels that echoed the prophecies of the Sibyl when she spoke. The Sibyl said to Aeneas, “Apollo is coming here now — I see him! Now is the time for you to learn your fate!”

Before Aeneas’ eyes, the Sibyl changed as the god began to possess her. Her chest heaved, her face changed, her braided hair became loose, she became taller, and her voice changed. She shouted, “Aeneas, you must pray. Until you do, you will hear no prophecies.”

Aeneas prayed, “Apollo, you have always helped the Trojans. When Paris shot Achilles with an arrow, you guided the arrow to a mortal spot. You have been with the remaining Trojans and me as we have sailed the seas, making our way at last to Italy.

“Let the bad luck of the Trojans stop now, please, Apollo and all you gods and goddesses who opposed Troy. Sibyl, I hope that you will also grant my prayer. I ask no more than my destiny requires: I request that the Trojans and their household gods be allowed to find a new home in Latium. If you grant that, Apollo, I will build a temple of marble for you and your twin sister, Diana. I will set aside sacred days for festivals for you. And Sibyl, for you I will build a magnificent shrine in which to safely keep your prophecies and to ordain your priests.

“Now, Sibyl, I ask you to say your prophecies out loud. Don’t write them on leaves that are quickly scattered by the wind!”

The Sibyl resisted being possessed by Apollo. The god was like a breaker of horses as he worked to possess the Sibyl and prophesy through her. The Sibyl tried to buck off Apollo, but the god won and the hundred tunnels of the cave echoed with her frenzied prophetic words: “You Trojans have endured bad things at sea, but you will endure worse things on land. You will reach the land where you will found a city, but war and a bloody Tiber River await you. The horrors of the Trojan War will be renewed in Italy. I see a new Achilles, another warrior son of a goddess, arising to fight you. Juno will continue to be your enemy, and you will be forced to ask cities for help. What will be the cause of this new war? The same cause as that of the old war. The Trojan War was fought over who would be the husband of Helen. This new war will be fought

over who will be the husband of an Italian princess. But fight the war. You will find help from an unexpected source — a city that Greeks have built!”

So the frenzied Sibyl prophesized, and the hundred tunnels echoed with her words. She stopped speaking.

Aeneas said to her, “I am used to dangers. Whatever I will face in a new war, I have already experienced in the old war.

“But I have a request. Here at Avernus is an entrance to the Land of the Dead. Please allow me to enter it and consult the ghost of my late father, Anchises. Show me how to enter the Land of the Dead, how to get past its gates. I saved my father during the fall of Troy by carrying him on my shoulders out of a city on fire. He shared my travels until his death. He appeared to me in a dream and told me to consult you. Now help me, please — you have the power! Hecate, the goddess of the Land of the Dead, gave you power when she made you the guardian of the forest and lake and cave of Avernus!

“Others have traveled to and back from the Land of the Dead. Orpheus traveled to the Land of the Dead in an attempt to bring his wife back to the Land of the Living. Pollux traveled to the Land of the Dead to be with Castor, his late brother, and to share his life with him: They alternate being alive and being dead together. I do not need to tell you that Theseus and Hercules also visited the Land of the Dead. Other heroes also visited the Land of the Dead and returned. Like these heroes, I also have an immortal as a parent, and Jupiter is one of my ancestors.”

The Sibyl replied with grim humor, “Entering the Land of the Dead is easy; the hard part is returning to the Land of the Living. Only a few have ever returned, and they have been the children of gods.

“You are correct: An entrance to the Land of the Dead is here. If you really want to enter the Land of the Dead twice — now and then again after you die — I will tell you what you have to do.

“Hidden in the forest of Avernus is a tree that has a golden bough — the stem and the leaves are gold. This is the gift that you must offer to Proserpina, the goddess of the Land of the Dead. The golden bough is well hidden, and without it you cannot enter the Land of the Dead. Each time the golden bough is plucked — which rarely happens — another golden bough appears in its place.

“If you are fated to enter the Land of the Dead while you are still alive, you will be able to easily pluck the golden bough. If you are not fated to enter the Land of the Dead, no matter how hard you try you will not be able to pluck the golden bough.

“Listen to one more thing because it is important. Unknown to you, one of your friends is dead. Before you can enter the Land of the Dead while you are still alive, you must bury your friend.”

Aeneas left the Sibyl and the cave and thought about all that he had heard. Achates walked with him, and they talked about whom the dead friend might be.

They arrived at the Trojan camp, and they saw the corpse of Misenus, their trumpeter who rallied the Trojan troops in times of battle. Misenus had fought beside Hector at Troy. After Achilles had killed Hector, Misenus fought beside Aeneas. Proud of his ability with the trumpet, Misenus challenged the gods to a competition. The sea-god Triton was angered by such presumption and drowned Misenus.

The gods had given Misenus the great gift of blowing the trumpet, but Misenus became overly proud. Challenging the gods to a competition was a misuse of his great gift.

Aeneas and the Trojans mourned the death of Misenus. They searched for wood to build a funeral pyre for his corpse.

In the forest, Aeneas thought about the words of the Sibyl. He said to himself, “I wish that I could see the golden bough shining. What the Sibyl told me about it must be true since what she said about the death of one of my friends is true.”

Two doves — the sacred birds of Venus, Aeneas’ mother — flew to the ground at his feet. He recognized the birds and prayed, “Let the doves be my guides to the golden bough. Mother, help me now to find the golden bough.”

The birds led him to the golden bough. They flew ahead a little, let Aeneas catch up, and then flew ahead a little more. Eventually, they flew to a tree that had many boughs of green — and one bough of gold.

Aeneas grabbed the golden bough and pulled. He had to pull hard to pluck it, but it eventually came away in his hand. Founding the Roman people was difficult in many ways. Aeneas carried the golden bough to the Sibyl.

The Trojans built the funeral pyre for Misenus. They bathed his corpse in warm water, they clothed his corpse, and they mourned for him. They burned his corpse along with offerings to the gods: frankincense and oil. After the fire burned down, they put it out with wine.

The Trojan priest Corynaeus gathered Misenus’ bones and sealed them in an urn, then said the final prayer. Aeneas built a mound over the cremation site. At the top he placed Misenus’ oar and trumpet. The cape that is the site where the Trojans cremated Misenus’ corpse was thereafter named Misenum.

Aeneas then went to meet the Sibyl at a cave by a lake and woods. From the cave came poisonous fumes; no bird could fly above the cave and live. The Sibyl sacrificed four black calves to Hecate, goddess of the Underworld. Aeneas sacrificed a black lamb to honor the goddess Night, who is the mother of the Furies, and the goddess Earth. He also sacrificed a black heifer to Proserpina, Queen of the Underworld. To Hades, the god of the Land of the Dead, he sacrificed many cattle.

The earth shook and the dogs of hell approached, and the Sibyl shouted, “All unhallowed ones, stay away. But you, Aeneas, are ready to go to the Land of the Dead. Unsheathe your sword — you will need courage!”

The Sibyl went into the cave; Aeneas followed her.

Please, gods of the Land of the Dead, of Chaos, and of the River of Fire, give me permission to reveal the secrets of the Land of the Dead.

The Sibyl and Aeneas walked a dark path like that dimly lit by the Moon when night has taken all color from the world.

The entrance to the Land of the Dead was densely populated with Grief, Cares, Diseases, Old Age, Fear, Hunger, Poverty, Death, Hard Labor, Restless Sleep, Evil Joys, Hallucinations, and War. Here lived the Furies and Discord.

A tree grew at the entrance to the Land of the Dead — a tree whose fruit was False Dreams.

Also living at the entrance to the Land of the Dead were monsters: Centaurs, Scyllas, Briareus and his hundred hands, the Hydra, the Chimera, Gorgons, Harpies, and Geryon and his three bodies.

Terrified, Aeneas held his naked sword in front of him. He was ready to fight, but the Sibyl told him that the forms he saw were ghostly and without physical substance.

Aeneas and the Sibyl passed through the entrance and followed a road that led to Acheron and Cocytus, two rivers of the Underworld.

Aeneas and the Sibyl saw Charon, the ferryman of Hell, who took souls to the Land of the Dead. He is an old god, bearded, with staring eyes, and he wears rags.

The ghosts of the dead — mothers, adult men, heroes, boys, unmarried girls, and young sons — came to Charon. They were as numerous as the leaves that fall in autumn and as numerous as the birds that migrate when winter arrives. They begged Charon to ferry them across the river to the Land of the Dead. He sorted them. Some he would take across the water; some he would leave behind.

Aeneas asked the Sibyl, “What is the reason for what I am seeing here? What makes Charon divide the souls into two groups?”

The Sibyl replied, “Here you see the water of Cocytus and the marsh of the Styx. Charon is determining who shall be taken across the water to the Land of the Dead. Only those souls whose bones have been buried are allowed to cross the water. Any soul whose corpse did not receive a proper funeral will not be allowed to cross the water until a hundred years have passed following his or her death. Until that time, the soul unhappily wanders these shores.”

Aeneas recognized two men whom Charon refused to ferry across the water: Leucaspis and Orontes. They had drowned in the storm that had sunk one of Aeneas’ ships and driven the remaining ships to Carthage. They had been dead for one year.

Aeneas also saw Palinurus, his pilot, who came toward him. He was very recently dead, having fallen off Aeneas' ship after the god of Sleep drugged him with dew from the Lethe River.

Aeneas spoke first: "Palinurus, Apollo has never lied to me but once. Apollo told me that you would not drown. That is the only lie he has told me."

Palinurus replied, "Apollo did not lie to you. I did not drown. True, I fell into the water. I was piloting your ship, and the steering oar broke and flung me into the water. I swear that I worried more about the safety of you and your ship than about the safety of my own life. For three days and three nights, I stayed afloat, and finally I reached shore. But barbarians killed me there and robbed my corpse. I have not been buried — my corpse rolls in the waves.

"I beg you to help me somehow to cross the water and reach the Land of the Dead. Find my corpse and throw soil on it. Or if Venus will allow you, take me with you — make Charon ferry me across the water!"

The Sibyl knew the rules of the Land of the Dead. She said, "Palinurus, talk sense. Your corpse is not yet buried, and so you cannot cross the water. The gods have set the rules here, and no one can break them.

"But listen to me, and I shall comfort you. The gods will send signs to the people who live where you died. The signs will convince those people to give your corpse a proper burial, and then you can pass over the water and enter the Land of the Dead. What's more, your burial site will become known as Cape Palinuro."

The Sibyl was right: This information greatly comforted Palinurus.

Charon was now close to the shore. He saw Aeneas and knew that he was a still-living man. He shouted at Aeneas, "Stop! Do not come closer! I am forbidden to carry the living across the water. The living should stay out of the Land of the Dead. Whenever living men have come here, they have brought trouble. Hercules came here, and he carried away Cerberus, the three-headed watchdog of the Underworld. Theseus and Pirithous came here and tried to kidnap Proserpina, the Queen of the Underworld. Their attempt failed. I have had bad experiences with the living!"

The Sibyl replied to Charon, "Aeneas will not cause you trouble. Cerberus will stay here. Aeneas will not try to kidnap either Cerberus or Persephone. Aeneas is renowned for his *pietas* — he knows how to behave both in the Land of the Living and in the Land of the Dead. Aeneas has come here to consult his late father, a good reason for visiting the Land of the Dead. He also brings the golden bough."

The Sibyl showed Charon the golden bough, something that he had not seen for a very long time. Charon no longer objected to the presence of Aeneas, a still-living man.

Charon brought his ferry to shore and allowed Aeneas and the Sibyl to board. Aeneas' weight made the ferry groan as Charon took them to the Land of the Dead.

Here they saw Cerberus — snakes wrapped themselves around his three heads. The Sibyl gave him grain sweetened with honey and drugged with a sleeping potion. The three-headed dog slept as Aeneas and the Sibyl passed him.

They heard cries and wails. Here were the ghosts of babies who had died before they had experienced much of life. Also here were people who had been incorrectly judged guilty and then executed. In the Land of the Dead, Minos, the judge of the Underworld, judged them again — correctly, this time. Also here were the suicides who had treated their lives as if they were disposable. Now they wanted their lives back, even if living meant poverty and hard labor. They will never get their lives back.

The Sibyl then pointed out to Aeneas the Fields of Mourning, where reside those who died because of love. Even here, in death, they suffer because of love.

Aeneas saw Phaedra, who had married Theseus and then had fallen in love with Hippolytus, Theseus' son by a previous wife. She committed suicide after Hippolytus died.

Aeneas saw Procris, who became falsely jealous of her husband, Cephalus. He accidentally shot her with an arrow when she hid and spied on him.

Aeneas saw Eriphyle, who accepted the bribe of a necklace in return for making her husband participate in a war against Thebes. Her son killed her in revenge.

Aeneas saw Evadne. When her husband died in a war against Thebes, she burned herself alive at his funeral pyre.

Aeneas saw Pasiphaë. She fell in love with a bull, copulated with it, and gave birth to the Minotaur. She was unable to prevent the death of the Minotaur.

Aeneas saw Laodamia, the wife of the Greek Protesilaus who fought at Troy. When he died in the war — he died as the Greeks landed their ships at Troy as the Trojans opposed them — Laodamia committed suicide.

Aeneas saw Caeneus, who was born female. After Neptune raped her, he gave her a wish that he would grant. She requested to be changed into a man so that men would never again rape her. After Caeneus died, he became a woman again in the Land of the Dead.

Aeneas also saw Dido in the shadows of the woods. Her ghost was dim and misty, like a new moon seen through clouds, but Aeneas could see her self-inflicted sword wound. Aeneas cried and said to her, "Dido, I heard that you died. I have heard that you committed suicide with a sword. Did you die because of me? I swear by the stars, by the gods, and by whatever one swears by in the Land of the Dead that when I left you I did so unwillingly — I left you against my will. My gods and my destiny forced me to leave. I did not know that you would commit suicide because of me. Please stay, Dido. This is the last time that I will see you while I am alive — these are the last words that I will say to you while I am alive."

Crying, Aeneas tried to convince Dido to stay, but stony-faced, she turned away from him and would not speak to him. She walked away and met her dead husband, Sychaeus, a man who returned her love.

Aeneas and the Sibyl continued their journey. They walked along the path and came to the part of the Underworld where great heroes of war resided.

They saw Tydeus, the father of the Greek warrior Diomedes. Tydeus had fought against the city of Thebes — he was one of the famous Seven Against Thebes.

They saw Parthenopaeus, another of the famous Seven Against Thebes. Both he and Tydeus had died at Thebes.

They saw Adrastus, the leader of the Seven Against Thebes and a warrior who had survived the war.

They saw Trojans who had died during the Trojan War: Polyboetes, Idaeus, and three sons of Antenor — Glaucus, Medon, and Thersilochus. These ghosts crowded around Aeneas and asked him why he was visiting the Land of the Dead.

Also present here were the ghosts of Greeks who had died during the Trojan War. Many of these ghosts were afraid and ran away from Aeneas, as during the war at times they had ran back to their ships. Some of the Greeks tried to shout a war-cry, but they could manage to produce only a whisper.

Aeneas saw here Deiphobus, a son of Priam. After the death of Paris, Deiphobus had married Helen. He had been tortured and mutilated. His hands, his ears, and his nose had been cut off. Even in death, these wounds remained. Aeneas barely recognized Deiphobus, who tried to hide his wounds.

Aeneas said, “Deiphobus, who mutilated you? Who is capable of such cruelty? I heard that you died at Troy after killing many Greek warriors. I built a tomb — empty — for you on Cape Rhoeteum north of Troy, and I called on your spirit three times. I was unable to find your bones and bury them.”

Deiphobus replied, “You did for me everything that you ought to have done and were capable of doing. I am in the Land of the Dead and am not wailing on a distant shore and waiting for Charon to ferry me across the river.

“You remember the last night of Troy. We had brought the Horse into Troy. We thought that the Greeks had left Troy. We thought that we had won the war. We celebrated that night.

“Helen led the women of Troy in a dance, supposedly to celebrate our victory. In reality, she used a torch to signal the troops of Agamemnon to come to the Scaean Gates, where the Greek warriors who had been hidden inside the Horse came to let them into the city to sack it.

“I was home asleep. Helen crept into our house, and she removed every weapon, including the sword I kept under my pillow. Then she let Menelaus, her husband at Sparta, in. With him

came cruel Ulysses. By turning me over to her husband of long ago, Helen hoped to win his forgiveness.

“Menelaus and Ulysses gave me the wounds you see now. They tortured me, and they killed me. I pray that the gods will avenge me.

“But why have you come here? Did the gods send you here? Does your destiny bring you here?”

They talked, noon arrived, and then the Sibyl said to Aeneas, “You have much more to see, Aeneas. Let us continue our journey. The path now divides in two. The right fork leads to our destination: the Elysium Fields, where the truly good are rewarded. The left fork leads to Tartarus, where the truly evil are punished.”

Deiphobus said, “Sibyl, you are correct. You two should leave and accomplish your goal. Aeneas, may you have a better fate than mine.” He departed.

Aeneas looked to the left and saw a fortress with three walls. Outside the three walls was a river of molten lava, a river of fire. Tisiphone, one of the Furies, guards the gate to Tartarus. Aeneas heard the groans and wails of sinners, the cracks of whips, and the sound of metal against metal.

Aeneas asked the Sibyl, “Who is punished there? What kinds of crimes have they committed?”

The aged Sibyl said to Aeneas, “You cannot go there, even for a visit — no pure soul can. But Hecate has told me about Tartarus and what goes on there. The judge is Rhadamanthus of Crete, who hands out punishments to souls who while they were alive enjoyed committing secret crimes. That is, they were secret in the Land of the Living — they are not secret in the Land of the Dead. When a guilty soul comes here, the Fury Tisiphone whips them and sends them through the gate — a gate from which they will not exit. Inside the gate is another monster: the Hydra with its fifty heads and fifty mouths.

“Tartarus is a pit. It plunges down into darkness twice as far as our gaze goes upward to Olympus, home of the gods. At the bottom of Tartarus lie the Titans, who rebelled against Jupiter and whom Jupiter subdued with his thunderbolts.

“Also in Tartarus are the giant brothers Otus and Ephialtes, who also rebelled against Jupiter.

“Also in Tartarus is Salmoneus, who impersonated Zeus and faked his thunder and lightning. He faked thunder by having his horses run over a bridge made of metal. Because of Salmoneus’ excessive pride, Zeus hurled a thunderbolt at him that knocked him down into the agonies of Tartarus.

“Also in Tartarus is Tityus, whose giant body lies across nine acres. A vulture feeds on his internal organs, which, once eaten, grow back so the vulture can eat them again and eternally torment Tityus.

“Also in Tartarus are sinners over whom a rock is balanced and always about to fall, terrifying the sinners below.

“Also in Tartarus are sinners before whom a table is set with food, but whenever the sinners reach out to get food to eat, a Fury forces them back with terrifying shrieks and a flaming torch. The sinners are always hungry.

“Also in Tartarus are Ixion and Pirithous, Ixion’s son, both of whom are Lapiths. Ixion tried to rape the goddess Juno, and Pirithous tried to kidnap the goddess Persephone. Ixion is bound on a flaming wheel that constantly spins. Pirithous is chained for eternity.

“So many sinners are punished in Tartarus, including sinners who hated their brothers or killed their fathers. In Tartarus are sinners who defrauded their clients. In Tartarus are sinners who piled up gold they never used although they could have helped family members with it — multitudes are in Tartarus because of that sin. In Tartarus are sinners who committed adultery. In Tartarus are sinners who waged civil war against their rightful rulers.

“Many sinners are in Tartarus, waiting to learn what will be their punishment.

“Do not try to learn all the punishments in Tartarus — they are too numerous. Some sinners push boulders. Some sinners are tormented on spinning wheels. Theseus sits forever and cannot leave. While alive, Phlegyas set fire to a temple of Apollo. Too late, and in torment in Tartarus, he warns others, ‘Don’t try to fight the gods — they are too strong!’

“In Tartarus are sinners who betrayed their country for money. In return for money, they set up a tyrant to rule the country. In return for money, they made bad laws. In return for money, they repealed good laws.

“In Tartarus are sinners who committed incest with their daughters.

“It is impossible for me to tell you about all the sinners in Tartarus and about all their punishments. I could not do that even if I could speak with a hundred voices.

“But let us continue our journey. You have not yet accomplished what you set out to do. We must hurry. Ahead of us I see a gate guarded by Centaurs. There you must place the golden bough, your gift to Persephone.”

They reached the gate, Aeneas purified himself with water, and he placed the golden bough at the gate.

They passed through the gate and entered the Elysium Fields that are the reward for especially good souls. Here are air, stars, and sun. Here is land for roaming and for sports. Here are singing and dancing. Here Orpheus plays his lyre.

Here are the descendants of Teucer: famous Trojans, including Ilus, Assaracus, and Dardanus, who founded Troy.

Aeneas, awed, looked around. The things that give joy in the Land of the Living are here in the Elysium Fields: weapons, horses, chariots, and more.

Aeneas saw several souls feasting and singing a song in praise of Apollo.

Among the souls here are many warriors who died fighting for their country. Among the souls here are priests who truly served their god. Among the souls here are talented poets. Among the souls here are talented artists. Among the souls here are those who did much good for Humankind.

All of the souls here wear white headbands. Many souls crowd around the Sibyl, including the famous Greek singer Musaeus. The Sibyl asked them, "Tell me, please, where can we find Anchises? We have come here to consult him."

Musaeus replied, "Here in the Elysium Fields, souls are free to wander where they please. No one has a permanent home in one particular place. But I can show you where you need to go to meet Anchises."

Musaeus showed them a valley. Aeneas and the Sibyl climbed down from the heights and into the valley.

They found Anchises passing his time in a review of heroes who would be reborn into the Land of the Living. The heroes he was at this time reviewing were his own descendants and the descendants of Aeneas. Anchises knew the souls' future histories and future fates. He knew which values they held and which heroic acts they would perform.

When Anchises saw Aeneas walking toward him, he started to cry and he said, "So at last you have come! I have waited for you. The love you have for me outweighed the difficulty of your journey here. Let me look at you, let me talk to you, let me hear your voice. I have dreamed about you, and I knew that you would come. I was afraid for you when you went to Carthage. You have traveled in dangerous lands to come here."

Aeneas replied, "You appeared in my dreams and told me to come here. Let me hug you, father."

Aeneas tried three times to hug his father, but three times his arms closed on air. Aeneas, a living man, was unable to touch the soul of his father.

Knowing that he could not hug his father, Aeneas then looked around him. He saw a river. He also saw many, many souls around the river. They were like the numerous bees that flit from flower to flower in a meadow.

He asked his father, "What river is this? And who are these souls?"

Anchises replied, "These souls will be given a second body. This is the Lethe River; whoever drinks from it loses all memory. These souls will drink from the river and then be reborn in the Land of the Living.

"I have long wanted to show you these souls. They are our descendants. They are the reason for your coming to Italy. This is the people you will found."

Aeneas said, “Do souls here return to the Land of the Living? Will a physical body again burden these souls? Why would souls want that?”

Anchises replied, “Let me explain the universal spirit, purgation, and reincarnation to you.

“Understand first that spirit permeates all things: sky, earth, sea, moon, sun, and stars. Nothing is untouched by spirit. Spirit and matter joined together and formed the universe first and formed human beings and other living things later. Spirit is pure, but matter is not pure. The matter that makes up the bodies of human beings weighs down their spirits. Human beings have fears and desires and joys and sorrows. Because of the impurity of their bodies, human beings are unable to clearly see the spiritual things that are real.

“Even when human beings die and their spirits are separated from their bodies, the spirit remains tainted by its earthly contact with the physical body it used to have. The sins of the body taint the spirit. Therefore, the spirit undergoes a process of purgation that varies for each spirit. Some spirits are exposed to the winds, some spirits are exposed to flooding waters, some spirits are burned by fire — the spirits undergo whatever is needed to purge their old sins.

“Reincarnation is part of God’s plans for most spirits. After their sins have been purged, the spirits are sent to the Elysium Fields. A few are completely purified and remain here forever, but most are not completely purified and they stay in the Elysium Fields for a thousand years. They then drink from the Lethe River and are reincarnated in the Land of the Living — they live again, burdened with physical bodies.”

The Sibyl thought, *This means that living human beings are, to some extent, tarnished. All living human beings, if they live long enough, sin. Some living human beings are slightly tainted by the sins of a past life. Romans, like all other peoples, will be tainted by sins although Romans are also capable of great things. Individual Romans can give in to furor, or they can be renowned for pietas and for clementia. If enough individual Romans are renowned for one or the other quality, that will result in the Romans as a whole acquiring a reputation for that quality.*

Anchises watched the spirits in front of him. They were spirits who would be reincarnated as Romans.

Anchises said to Aeneas, “Let me show you our descendants. These are your descendants and the descendants of your Italian wife. These descendants are your reward for fulfilling your destiny.

“Here is Silvius, who will be the last-born son of you and your Italian wife — her name will be Lavinia. Silvius will become a king of the city of Alba Longa — your son Ascanius will be the founder of Alba Longa.

“Here are Procas, Capys, Numitor, and Silvius Aeneas. All will play important roles in Italy before Rome is founded. The men you see here will build the cities of Nomentum, Gabii, Fidena, Collatia, Pometia, Inuis, Bola, and Cora.

“Here is Romulus, a son of the god Mars. A king of Alba Longa will be Amulius, who will be an evil man who will exile Numitor, his brother, and will force his brother’s daughter, Rhea Silvia, to become a Vestal Virgin. The god of Mars will see Rhea Silvia, desire her, and sleep with her.

“The unions of gods with mortal women are fertile. Rhea Silvia will give birth to twins: Romulus and Remus. Because Vestal Virgins are supposed to be virgins, King Amulius will order the twin boys to be thrown into the river. Instead, the man responsible for throwing them into the river will put them in their cradle and let it float down the river. A she-wolf will find the twin boys and suckle them.

“A shepherd by the name of Faustulus will find them by the banks of the Tiber River and will take care of the boys and raise them. Eventually, as grown men, Romulus and Remus will build a city on the bank of the Tiber River where they had been discovered. You, Aeneas, will found the Roman people. Romulus will found the city of Rome. Romulus and Remus will quarrel. Romulus will kill Remus, and so the city will be known as Rome rather than Reme. Romulus will be the first king of Rome.

“Rome will become a great empire. Much glory will be in its future. Rome will be happy with its hero sons just as the goddess Cybele is happy with her hundred grandsons.

“Let me skip ahead hundreds of years and show you Caesar Augustus, the first emperor of Rome. Before his time, Rome will be a republic.

“Caesar Augustus will fight a civil war to become the first Roman emperor. He will be born with the name Octavian. He will live from 63 B.C.E. to 14 C.E. He will defeat Mark Antony and Cleopatra at the naval Battle of Actium in 31 B.C.E.

“Many stories will be told about Caesar Augustus.

“Before the Battle of Actium, Octavian will set up a camp that will overlook his fleet and the fleet of Mark Antony. He will meet a peasant with a donkey, and he will ask the peasant what is his name and what is the donkey’s name. The peasant will reply that his name is *Eutyches*, which means ‘Good Fortune,’ and the donkey’s name is *Nikon*, which means ‘Victor.’ Such positive omens will go a long way toward motivating his superstitious soldiers.

“Caesar Augustus will fire a young soldier, who will plead with him not to be fired, saying, ‘How am I to go home? What shall I tell my father?’ Caesar Augustus will reply, ‘Tell your father that you didn’t find me to your liking.’

“After a Roman nobleman dies, leaving behind enormous debts, Caesar Augustus will order that the nobleman’s pillow be bought at an auction, saying, ‘That pillow must be particularly conducive to sleep if its late owner, in spite of his debts, could sleep on it.’

“A retired Roman commander who will have fought for Caesar Augustus will have to appear at court, and he will ask Caesar Augustus to appear at the court and testify for him. Caesar Augustus will reply that he will not appear in court himself but will send an agent instead. The

retired Roman commander will show Caesar Augustus several scars and say, 'When you were in danger at the Battle of Actium, I didn't choose a substitute; instead, I fought for you in person.' Caesar Augustus will appear in person in court and will testify for the retired Roman commander.

"Caesar Augustus will bring another Age of Gold to Rome. He will stop the civil wars that will have ravaged Rome for decades. He will greatly extend the power of Rome. Not even Hercules and Bacchus have traveled over as much territory as the territory over which Rome will hold power.

"Let us now see some of the early future kings of Rome and other early Romans. Romulus, of course, will be Rome's first king.

"Here is Numa Pompilius, the white-haired second king of Rome, who will give laws to Rome.

"Here is Tullus Hostilius, the third king of Rome, who will make the Romans fight again in war after they have grown stagnant in peace. He will be a warrior king.

"Here is Ancus Martius, the fourth king of Rome, who will desire too much to be popular with the people.

"Here is Brutus the Avenger, who will expel the last of the Roman kings: Lucius Tarquinius Superbus, whose son will rape Lucretia, who will then commit suicide. Brutus will found the Roman Republic, and as consul he will protect it. When his own two sons rebel against the republic, he will allow them to be executed.

"Here are the Decii, who will be an important family who will win victories in war for the Roman Republic.

"Here are the Drusi, who will be another important family who will provide many generals for Rome.

"Here is Titus Manlius Torquatus, who will be a consul and who is carrying an axe, who will execute his son when his son disobeys orders.

"Here is Camillus, who will recover the Roman standards that the Gauls will take from Rome when they occupy the city. The standards will be tall poles topped with various insignia and symbols, including the Roman eagle. The loss of standards in battle will be taken very seriously.

"Now let us see some spirits who will be Romans further in the future than the spirits we just looked at.

"Here are Pompey and Julius Caesar. They are friends here and now, but they will fight a civil war as they attempt to gain power. Civil war is evil; peace is better.

"Eventually, Julius Caesar will be victorious over Pompey, but after Julius Caesar is assassinated, a new round of civil wars will break out. Mark Antony and Octavian will fight for

supreme power. Eventually, Octavian will defeat Mark Antony and Cleopatra, Mark Antony's ally, and then Octavian will become Caesar Augustus.

"Julius Caesar will be a Roman general and politician who will help turn the Roman Republic into the Roman Empire. In 55 B.C.E., he will invade Britain. In 48 B.C.E., he will defeat Pompey at Pharsalus. On 15 March 44 B.C.E., a group of republicans led by Cassius and Brutus will assassinate him.

"Many stories will be told about Julius Caesar.

"When Julius Caesar is a young man, he will sail for the island of Rhodes, where he will wish to study rhetoric and persuasive speaking. Pirates will capture him and will hold him for ransom. Julius Caesar will tell the pirates that after he is ransomed he will hunt them down and crucify them — something that the pirates will think is funny. After Julius Caesar is ransomed, he will get some ships, hunt down the pirates, and crucify them.

"Among his other accomplishments, Julius Caesar will be a good writer. In 47 B.C.E. after he defeats the king of Pontus, Pharnaces II, near Zela in Asia Minor, he will send this message to Rome: '*Veni, vidi, vici*,' which means, 'I came, I saw, I conquered.'

"In 49 B.C.E., against orders, Julius Caesar will take an army of soldiers to Rome, precipitating civil war. To reach Italian soil after traveling from Gaul, he will have to cross the Rubicon River. This will be a big step. Once he crosses the Rubicon River, he will have defied the orders of the Roman Senate, and he will not be able to turn back. He and his army did cross the Rubicon River, and he said, '*Alea iacta est*,' which means 'The die is cast.'

"During the Roman civil wars when Julius Caesar will be fighting Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus — Pompey the Great — for power, Julius Caesar will land on the coast of north Africa. As he jumps from his ship into the shallow water, he will stumble and fall. Knowing that his superstitious Roman troops regard accidental stumbling as an unlucky omen, Julius Caesar will pretend that he did not stumble. He will grab two fistfuls of sand, stand up, and raise his hands so his troops can see the sand. He will then yell, 'Africa, I hold you in my hands!' Hearing these inspiring words, his troops will charge upon the beach with high morale.

"During a dinner that Julius Caesar will have with friends, conversation will turn to the subject of death. Someone will ask Julius Caesar what kind of death is best, and he will reply, 'A sudden one.' The next day, 15 March 44 B.C.E., a group of republicans led by Cassius and Brutus will assassinate him.

"Early in March of 44 B.C.E., an augur named Spurinna will warn Julius Caesar that the Ides of March — that is, March 15 — would bring danger to him. On March 15, Julius Caesar will walk to the Senate. He will see Spurinna and say to him, 'The Ides of March have come.' Spurinna will reply, 'Yes, they have come, but they have not yet gone.' Shortly afterward, Julius Caesar will be assassinated.

“One of the people who will assassinate Julius Caesar will be Marcus Junius Brutus, whom Julius Caesar trusted. When Julius Caesar sees Brutus among the assassins, he will cry out, ‘*Et tu, Brute?*’ This means, ‘You, too, Brutus?’

“Now let us see some spirits who will be generals involved in the wars against Greeks and in the wars against Carthage. These wars will occur long before the time of Julius Caesar.

“Here is Lucius Mummius, who will help avenge the fall of Troy by sacking the Greek city of Corinth in 146 B.C.E.

“Here is Lucius Aemilius Paullus, who will help avenge the fall of Troy by defeating Perseus, the king of Macedon, in the Battle of Pydna in 168 B.C.E. Perseus will claim to be the descendant of Achilles.

“Here is Cato the Censor, who will recognize that Carthage is the great enemy of Rome. He will end every speech he makes, whatever its topic, by saying, ‘*Carthago delenda est*,’ which means ‘Carthage must be destroyed.’

“Here is Aulus Cornelius Cossus, who will be only the second Roman general to win the *spolia opima*, which means ‘rich spoils,’ which is given to a Roman general who has killed the enemy general in single combat. Romulus will be the first Roman to win the *spolia opima*.

“Here are the Gracchi, who will be a famous Roman family who will produce two tribunes who will be reformers, but who will be killed.

“Here are the Scipios, a family who will produce two famous generals who will fight the Carthaginians.

“The elder Scipio will be Africanus the Elder, or Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus Major. Hannibal will be a great Carthaginian general — the unknown avenger called up by Dido before she committed suicide. He will be a great enemy of Rome and will cross the Alps into Italy with war elephants. For fifteen years, he will terrify the Roman people in Italy. The elder Scipio will take the war away from Italian soil and move it to north Africa by taking an army to Carthage. He will decisively defeat Hannibal at the Battle of Zama in 202 B.C.E. This will be the end of the second of three Punic, or Carthaginian, wars that Rome will fight with Carthage.

“The younger Scipio will be Africanus the Younger, or Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus Minor. He will defeat Carthage in the third and final Punic War. He will crush Carthage, and it will no longer challenge Roman power.

“Here is Caius Fabricius Luscinus, who will defeat the Greek general Pyrrhus, who will win a victory at heavy cost, leading him to say that one more victory like that and he would lose the war. This will lead to the term ‘Pyrrhic victory.’ Fabricius will be renowned for his incorruptibility — he will not accept bribes.

“Here is Marcus Atilius Regulus, also known as Serranus the Sower, who will be a hero of the First Punic War, or the first war between Rome and Carthage. He will have a farm, but he will leave it at the request of his country so that he can lead the Romans.

“Here are the Fabii, who will be an important Roman family. Quintus Fabius Maximus will be a hero of the Second Punic War, or the second war against Carthage. Hannibal will achieve a great early victory at Cannae against the Romans, after which he will collect bushels of gold rings taken from the fingers of dead upper-class Roman warriors. Hannibal’s army will be greater than Fabius’ army, so Fabius will harass Hannibal’s army but will not fight it in open battle. Fabius will be known as *Cunctator*, which means ‘The Delayer.’

“Listen, Aeneas, because this is important. Other peoples, no doubt, will be better than the Romans in many endeavors. Others will be better at creating sculptures, whether of bronze or of marble. Others will be better at public speaking. Others will be better at astronomy. But Romans must remember to rule well the peoples of the world, including their own people. Romans must remember to rule while encouraging peace. Romans must remember to spare the defeated, just as Romans must remember to defeat the proud. Good government and good laws will be the arts of the Romans.”

Anchises then pointed out another famous Roman of the future: “Here is Marcus Claudius Marcellus, who will be a Roman general who will win the *spolia opima* in 222 B.C.E. by killing the general of the rebelling Insubrian Gauls. He will do this following the end of the First Punic War, in which he fought. Marcellus will be the third Roman to win the *spolia opima*.”

Aeneas now saw a young, handsome Roman walking by the side of Marcellus the Roman general. His armor shone, but his face was sad.

Aeneas asked his father, “Who is this by the side of the Roman general Marcellus? Are they related? He is handsome, yet so sad.”

With tears in his eyes, Anchises replied, “This young man will only briefly have a second body in the Land of the Living. His death will rob the Romans of a man who would have been a great hero. If he would live longer, the Romans would be too powerful, so the Fates will cut short his life.

“When he dies, the Romans will grieve mightily. The Romans’ hopes for him will be high, but his death will dash those hopes.

“He will be an honorable man, and he will be undefeated in arms. If only his fate could be changed and he could live a normal span of years!

“He will be Marcus Claudius Marcellus, the son of Octavia, Caesar Augustus’ sister. He will be born in 42 B.C.E. and he will die in 23 B.C.E. He will marry Julia, Caesar Augustus’ daughter. If he would not die so young, he would be the second Roman emperor.

“Let me scatter lilies to honor Marcellus, although it is a vain tribute.”

The Pageant of Heroes ended with Marcus Claudius Marcellus.

Aeneas, Anchises, and the Sibyl stayed longer in the Elysian Fields. Anchises showed them many parts of the Elysian Fields, and he made his son happy about the future glory of the Romans. Anchises also told his son about the battles that he would fight in Italy. He also told him about Italian people and about the city of Latinus, and he advised him about how to handle each ordeal that he would face.

Time came for Aeneas and the Sibyl to exit. Two gates lead out of the Elysian Fields. Both are gates of sleep. The gate of transparent horn is the gate of true shades. The gate of polished ivory is the gate of false dreams.

Anchises showed Aeneas and the Sibyl to the gate of polished ivory: the gate of false dreams.

The Sibyl wondered, *Why are we exiting the Elysian Fields through the gate of false dreams? Is it because the Pageants of Heroes that Anchises showed us is in some sense a false dream? Roman history will have much glory, but it will also have much human suffering and human misery. Roman history will have good parts and bad parts. And what about Anchises' exhortation to future Romans to rule with pietas and clementia and not with furor? To what extent will that happen? To what extent will Anchises' exhortation be ignored? Anchises has set an ideal for future Romans. That ideal can be a goal that future Romans will strive for, or it can be something that future Romans will ignore. That Aeneas and I left the Elysian Fields by way of the gate of false dreams may be a bad omen for future Romans.*

Chapter 7: A Fury and Warriors (Aeneid)

Caieta, who had been Aeneas' nurse when he was young, now died in Italy. To honor her, he gave her name to a port and promontory on the western coast of Italy.

After Caieta had received a proper funeral and the Trojans had piled earth over her bones, Aeneas and the Trojans set sail again on a calm sea under a full moon. They passed by the home of Circe, a sorceress who turned men into beasts. As they passed by her land, they heard the growls of lions, boars, bears, and wolves — all of these animals used to be human men. Neptune wanted to spare the Trojans an encounter with Circe, so he gave them favorable winds and so they passed by her home without incident.

At dawn, the wind died and the Trojans began to row. Aeneas saw a river — soon the Trojans would know that it is the Tiber River — and he ordered his men to row into the river's mouth and land on the bank of the river.

Erato, Muse of love, help me to tell the tale of Aeneas in Italy, of how he sought an Italian wife and of how he fought a war to gain her. Erato, who were the kings in Italy when the Trojans landed on Italy's western shores? Inspire me as I tell how things were and how they changed. I must tell of a war and warriors and death. I must tell of many people fighting. This is a greater mission than the one I have already undertaken.

Latinus was an Italian king. He was old, and for many years he had ruled a people at peace. His father was the horned god Faunus, and another of his ancestors was the nymph Marica. Faunus' father was Picus. Latinus had no living son, but he did have a daughter named Lavinia. His only son had died young, so he needed to find someone who would rule after he died; that someone would be whoever married his daughter. Lavinia was single and of an age to be married, and she had many suitors. Of all her suitors, Turnus was the handsomest and the most eligible. His birth and breeding were impressive, and Amata, the wife of Latinus, wanted Turnus to marry her daughter. However, omens warned against such a marriage.

In a courtyard of Latinus' palace was a sacred laurel tree. When Latinus was a young ruler and building his city, he had found the laurel and dedicated it to Apollo. Latinus also named his followers Laurentes and his city Laurentum after the laurel tree, but they were also known as Latins. One day, an omen occurred. A swarm of bees went to the laurel tree and covered it in a mass. So many bees clung to the laurel tree that its branches bent. A prophet interpreted the omen: "An army of strangers will come here. They will want to rule our city."

Another omen occurred as Lavinia lit an altar with torches. A non-burning fire lit her hair, and she seemed to wear a fiery crown. Prophets predicted fame for Lavinia and war for the Laurentes.

Troubled by the two omens, Latinus consulted the spirit of his father, Faunus, in a sacred grove where lived an oracle whom the Italians consulted in times of need. The priest would first sacrifice a hundred sheep and then sleep by the sacred spring and wood and communicate with swarms of spirits and gods and learn from the dead and the immortals.

Latinus sacrificed a hundred sheep and then slept by the sacred stream and wood. As Latinus slept, Faunus, whose voice came from the sacred grove of trees, told him, “Do not allow Lavinia to marry a Latin. Do not go through with the previously arranged marriage. Strangers will arrive, and they will become your relatives. Their and your descendants will have fame that reaches the sky, and the sun will never set on their empire.”

Latinus did not keep the words of his father secret. Rumor spread the prophecy throughout western Italy even before Aeneas’ ships reached the Tiber River.

Aeneas and his men prepared a meal on the banks of the Tiber River. They prepared flatbread, and using the flatbread as plates, they put food on top of the bread. Having eaten the food on top of the flatbread, and still hungry, they began to eat the flatbread.

Ascanius joked, “We are so hungry that we are even eating our plates.”

Aeneas recognized the sign: A prophecy had been fulfilled.

Aeneas said to all the Trojans, “This is our home. This is the home promised to us by Fate. My father once told me, ‘When you reach a strange shore and your hunger drives you to eat your plates, that is your new home. That is where you must build your houses.’ This is the land my father meant! This is where our exile ends. Let us explore the land and see what people live here and where their towns are. But first let us pour wine to Jupiter and pray to my father.”

Aeneas put a wreath on his head and prayed to many spirits and many gods: the spirit of the shore, the goddess Earth, nearby nymphs and rivers, Night, stars, Jupiter, Cybele, and his immortal parent and his mortal parent. Jupiter heard his prayer and answered it with thunder in a mostly clear sky with one cloud that Jupiter made blaze with light.

The Trojans now knew from the omen that this is the land where they were to build their city — they had arrived at their new home.

The next day, the Trojans explored the country, locating towns and rivers. Aeneas picked a hundred envoys to go to Latinus, king of the Laurentes, to ensure peace between the Trojans and the Laurentes. Aeneas’ envoys carried an olive branch of peace, and they carried gifts for King Latinus.

As the envoys set off on their mission, Aeneas and the other Trojans began to build their first settlement in Italy. They built a defensive trench and walls; the settlement was an armed camp.

Aeneas’ envoys reached Latinus’ city. Boys and young men were busy training in the arts of war. They practiced riding horses, shooting arrows, throwing javelins, running, and boxing. A Latin herald told Latinus, “Powerful men — strangers — have arrived and are coming this way.”

King Latinus invited the Trojans into his impressive palace and temple of the gods. The palace had one hundred columns; his ancestor Picus had ruled here. Kings ruled here, senators met here, feasts and sacrifices were held here, and here were many statues, carved from the wood of cedar trees, of gods and men: Italus, after whom Italy was named; Sabinus, a vintner and founder of the Sabine people; Saturn, god of agriculture; two-faced Janus, a god who looks at both the past and the future; and many kings and many warriors. Many trophies of past wars were here: armor, chariots, axes, helmets, javelins, and shields. Even the beaks of captured ships were here. A statue of Picus when he was human was here. The sorceress Circe had in his later life changed him into a colorful woodpecker when he refused her love.

King Latinus greeted the Trojans with friendly words: “We know your history. We know that you come from Troy. Tell me what you want. Why have you come to Italy? Are you lost? Have storms blown you away from your destination?”

“We welcome you. We Latins are a fair and just people. We obey the laws, and we are fair and just.

“We remember the old stories of your ancestor Dardanus, who was born in Italy but who traveled to eastern lands, the land from which you came. Dardanus is now a god with a palace in heaven.”

Ilioneus, the head of the Trojan envoys, replied, “Son of Faunus and king of the Laurentes, we have not been blown off course by storms or faulty navigation. We have come here on purpose. Once we were driven from Troy, we sought the home of our great ancestor Dardanus, whose father is Jupiter. Aeneas sent us here to meet you. Everyone knows the story of Troy and the destruction that came to it from the city of Mycenae, home of Agamemnon.

“Now we seek a safe home here. We want water and air. We will not disrespect you or your kingdom. We will always be grateful to you for any kindness you show us. You should have no regrets for making us your friends. We come to you bearing the olive branch of peace, but that does not mean that we are not warriors. Many people have wanted us to ally ourselves with them. But this is the place where the gods and our fate have wanted us to come. Dardanus was born here, and the gods have told us to seek the birthplace of our ancestor. Apollo wanted us to seek the Tiber River.

“Aeneas offers you these gifts in friendship: These are items taken from burning Troy. Aeneas gives you this gold goblet that his father used to pour wine to the gods. Here are more gifts for you: the scepter that Priam held and the coronet and robes that he wore when making laws for the people of Troy.”

King Latinus looked down at the ground and concentrated, thinking about the recent omens. He was impressed by the gifts of the Trojans and by their wish for peace, but he was much more concerned about whom his daughter should marry.

Latinus thought, *Aeneas is the man whom the omens say should marry my daughter. He comes from a foreign land, and he shall be my son-in-law. He and my daughter shall have famous descendants with much power.*

Latinus' thoughts made him joyful, and he said to the Trojan envoys, "I make you my friends and the friends of my family. The omens are in favor of our friendship. I accept your gifts, and you shall have land on which to build a city and to farm.

"Please tell Aeneas to come here in person and make an alliance with us. Let he and I shake hands in peace. Tell Aeneas that I have a daughter whom omens have told me to marry to a man from a foreign land. The descendants of that foreign man and my daughter will be famous and powerful. Aeneas is the man whom the Fates want to marry my daughter. I want him to become my son-in-law."

Latinus then gave the Trojans horses, blankets, and golden bridles and bits. For Aeneas he picked out two stallions and a chariot. The stallions came from immortal stock — Circe had stolen an immortal stallion from her father the Sun-god to breed with her mares.

The Trojans returned to Aeneas with the gifts and with news of peace.

But Juno saw Aeneas happy with news of peace. She saw the Trojan ships safely at anchor, and she saw the Trojans building homes. Unhappy, Juno said, "I hate the Trojans. Why couldn't all of them have died at Troy? Why couldn't they stay defeated after the fall of Troy? Despite their troubles, they are building a future glory! Am I now a goddess with no power? When the Trojans were at sea, I tried to harm them — to little effect. The dangerous coastal reefs called the Syrtes did not stop the Trojans, nor did Scylla and Charybdis. The Trojans are now building a camp on the bank of the Tiber River. They are now safe from the sea — and apparently they are safe from me!

"Why should that be so? Mars was angry at the Lapiths, and he destroyed the Lapiths. When Pirithous, the king of the Lapiths, married Hippodamia, he did not invite Mars to the wedding, but he did invite the Centaurs. Mars tempted the Centaur Eurypus to attempt to rape Hippodamia, and a battle broke out between the Lapiths and the Centaurs.

"And when Oeneus, the king of Calydon, insulted Diana, Jupiter allowed Diana to send a boar to ravage the countryside of Calydon. Eventually, the hero Meleager, who was the son of Oeneus, killed the boar, but first the boar caused much damage.

"I, Juno, hate the Trojans more than Mars hated the Lapiths and more than Diana hated the king of Calydon. Yet, even though I am a powerful goddess, Aeneas and his destiny defeat me! But even if I am not powerful enough to defeat the Trojans by myself, I will enlist the help of others, even if I have to go to Hell to find that help.

"Is Aeneas fated to marry Lavinia? Then let him marry Lavinia. I cannot go against fate. But I can make fulfilling his fate difficult for Aeneas. I can delay the marriage. I can kill many Trojans

and many Laurentes. I have no intention of making things easy for Aeneas. Both he and King Latinus will pay for their alliance. Lavinia, the dowry I will give you will be Trojan blood and Italian blood. I will choose your maid of honor: Bellona, the goddess of war.

“When Hecuba was pregnant with Paris, she dreamed that she was pregnant with a flaming torch. This was an omen of future war. Aeneas, Venus’ son, will be another flaming torch, another Paris. In his search for a foreign bride, he will find war!”

Juno then brought Allecto, one of the three Furies, out of Hell. The Furies are winged avenging goddesses with snakes in their hair. They bring misery to the human beings whom they target. War, anger, premeditated evil, and bloody crimes bring joy to Allecto. She causes so much misery that even her father, Pluto, god of the Land of the Dead, hates her. She brings so much sorrow that even her sisters, the other two Furies, hate her. She can assume many shapes in order to cause her many sorrows.

Juno requested, “Allecto, do something hateful for me. Let Aeneas and his Trojans know what kind of goddess I am. Let Aeneas and his Trojans know how powerful a goddess I am. You are capable of making loving brothers fight each other in war. You are capable of destroying a loving family by making the members hate each other. You are capable of destroying a loving family by filling its house with funerals. You have a thousand ways of bringing sorrow to human beings.

“Now bring war to western Italy! Make the young men desire weapons and blood!”

Allecto flew to Latium and the palace of King Latinus. She sought the queen, Amata, who was already angry. Amata had wanted Turnus to marry her daughter, Lavinia, but the omens of the gods and the arrival of Aeneas had changed all that. Now her husband, the king, wanted Lavinia to marry Aeneas and not marry Turnus.

Allecto took a snake from her hair and flung it at Queen Amata. The snake glided between Amata’s clothing and her breasts, but Amata felt nothing except a desire to resist her husband’s plans and to keep her daughter from marrying Aeneas. The snake changed its form and became a golden necklace hanging around Queen Amata’s neck.

The snake inflamed Queen Amata’s smoldering resentment. Before the snake did its evil work, Amata was unhappy, but she could still speak and make arguments to her husband, King Latinus: “So you want our daughter to marry a Trojan. Do you really think that is best for her, for you, for me? Aeneas is a pirate. When the wind blows in the right direction, he will sail away like the pirate he is. The treasure he steals will be our daughter!”

“Aeneas is another Paris. Paris visited Sparta, the home of Menelaus and Helen, and he ran away with Helen, Menelaus’ lawfully wedded wife. Aeneas will run away with Lavinia, who is engaged to Turnus.

“You have allies in western Italy. One of them is Turnus, with whom you have pledged peace many times. The omens say that Lavinia must marry someone who is a foreigner. Anyone not ruled by you in this land is a foreigner. The person whom the omens want Lavinia to marry is Turnus. His ancestors include Inachus and Acrisius, both of whom were kings of Argos, the land where is the city of Mycenae.”

So Amata spoke, but her words did not change her husband’s mind. The snake bit Amata, and its venom went through her body and brain. She raved. She was frenzied. Her heart was filled with *furor*. She was like a top spun as quickly as possible by boys at play. Amata raved through the city, and then she went to the woods. She pretended to have been driven insane by the god Bacchus, whose female followers, the Maenads, lived without men in the woods and mountains. She hid her daughter, Lavinia, in the woods with her, so that Aeneas could not marry her.

Putting on a performance, Queen Amata yelled, “You alone, Bacchus, deserve to have my daughter! She will become a Maenad. She will dance in your honor.”

Rumors of Amata’s actions travelled quickly, and mothers joined her in the woods. They deserted their homes, they wore clothing that left their necks uncovered, and they unbound their hair. Many of the women cried aloud to the god Bacchus. Many of the women wore the skins of fawns, and they carried the thyrsus: a stick around which vines were wrapped.

Amata, in the midst of the Maenads, sang a wedding hymn for Turnus and Lavinia, and she said to the Maenads, “If you care for me and my rights as a mother, then carry out the religious rites due to Bacchus.”

Allecto whipped Amata and the Maenads into a frenzy.

Having succeeded in her first goal, Allecto flew to Turnus, commander-in-chief of the Italian people known as the Rutulians. Their chief city was called Ardea, and according to tradition, a woman had founded it. Danaë, made pregnant by Jupiter, gave birth to the Greek hero Perseus. An oracle had told Danaë’s father, King Acrisius of Argos, that her son would kill him. Therefore, he put Danaë and Perseus, her son, into a chest and threw it into the sea. Neptune provided a calm sea, and the chest washed up on the western coast of Italy, where Danaë founded the city of Ardea. Perseus grew up, learned about the prophecy that he would kill his father, and resolved never to go to Argos. Unfortunately, he competed in athletic games elsewhere, his aged father watched the games, and Perseus accidentally killed him with a discus.

Turnus was asleep when Allecto came to him. She transformed herself and took on the shape of an old woman named Calybe, a priestess of Juno. In a dream, she said to Turnus, “How can you do nothing? You are sitting back and watching as your hopes disappear! You should become the king of Latinus’ country, but now the kingship is being handed to a Trojan! You were promised Lavinia as your bride, but King Latinus is giving her to another man. And yet you have kept his people from danger — you have fought battles for them.

“Juno has told me that you must go to war. Stop sleeping! Get up! Fight the Trojans and burn their ships! The gods order you to do that. If King Latinus will not remember his promise and give you Lavinia, then you must marry her by force!”

In his dream, Turnus laughed at the Fury, whom he thought to be merely an old woman. He told her, “I already know that a fleet of ships has sailed into the mouth of the Tiber River. Don’t try to make me panic. I have faith in Juno; she wants me to marry Lavinia. Old woman, you must be in your dotage — you are overreacting and you are getting yourself worked up about nothing. Don’t try to raise the alarm. Don’t try to be a prophet. Don’t try to make troops go to war. Do your womanly chores, worship the gods, and leave war and battles to the men.”

Allecto became angry. She reverted to her own form. Her snakes hissed at Turnus. He was terrified. She pushed him back and said, “So you think that I’m in my dotage? You think that I do not know what is reality? You think that I cannot prophesy? You think that I am raising false alarms? Look at me now! I am a Fury, and I have come to you from Hell!”

She threw a burning torch at Turnus, and it buried itself in his chest and made him eager for war. Sweat pouring from his body, he woke up and shouted for his weapons and armor. Now he wanted war and blood. He was like burning brush under a cauldron filled with water. The water boils and overflows from the cauldron, and steam shoots into the air. Turnus was overheated just like that. Turnus’ heart was filled with *furor*.

Despite the pact of peace between the Rutulians and the Laurentes, Turnus ordered, “Get ready for war! We will march against King Latinus and his Laurentes! We will drive the Trojans away from Italy!” He prayed to the gods for help in battle.

The Rutulians were eager for war. They were eager to follow Turnus because of his strength and his youth, because of his royal heritage, and because of his prowess as a warrior.

Allecto’s work completed here, she flew to the Trojan camp. She must find a way to start the war. Ascanius was hunting with other Trojans and with his dogs, and Allecto made sure that the dogs picked up the scent of a tame stag. The war would start over a trivial cause — the death of a pet stag would result in the death of many, many people.

The dogs chased the stag, which had been taken from its mother when it was a fawn. Tyrrhus, the keeper of King Latinus’ herds, and his sons had raised the stag. Tyrrhus’ family and especially his daughter, Silvia, made it a member of the family. Silvia loved the stag and tamed it and put garlands in its horns. She bathed it and combed it. It roamed the woods during the day, and it returned to its human home at night.

Ascanius’ dogs scented this stag and chased it. Ascanius sighted it and drew an arrow. Allecto steadied his hands, and the arrow hit the stag, driving deep into its body. The stag ran back to its human home and filled it with cries of pain.

Mourning, Silvia called for help, and help arrived from the surrounding area. Country folk came with charred torches, heavy clubs, and other weapons that can be found on a farm. Tyrrhus himself carried an axe; he had been splitting wood.

Eager to cause more misery, Allecto flew to the roof of the stable and blew on a horn — this was the signal for country folk to assemble for emergencies. The horn sounded throughout the woods and valleys, traveling far away. Mothers heard the emergency signal and held their babies close.

Herdsmen heard the signal, grabbed whatever would serve as a weapon, and came running to Tyrrhus. Young Trojans also came running; they were eager to defend Ascanius.

The lines of battle formed. The Trojans had real weapons: swords that gleamed in the sunlight. The battle grew just like waves grow; small waves sometimes grow into huge waves.

People fought and died. The oldest son of Tyrrhus, Almo, took an arrow in his throat that cut off his breath. Amid the heaps of dead was Galaesus, an old man who went into the middle of the battle to plead with both sides to stop fighting. Galaesus was a just man; he was a good man. He was also rich; he owned five flocks of sheep and five herds of cattle, and a hundred plows tilled his cropland.

The two sides fought, and neither side achieved victory. Allecto was happy; she had performed well the task that Juno had given to her.

Allecto flew away and found Juno. Allecto said, “I have done what you asked me to do. I have started a war. Now let the Trojans and the Latins try to achieve peace! The Trojans now wear the blood of the Latins!

“With your permission, I shall do worse things than I have already done. I can start rumors, and I can draw other Italian peoples into the war. I can make everyone willing to go to war. Instead of the seeds they plant in their fields, I will plant swords!”

Juno replied, “You have done enough already. The war has started. The Trojans are fighting the Latins, and weapons are red with blood. An alliance will not now happen between Aeneas and King Latinus. I am afraid that Jupiter, my husband, will not allow you to cause any more trouble than you have already caused. I myself will handle the rest of the war.”

Allecto obeyed Juno. The Fury flew away, and she and her snakes went back to Hell, which has many entrances. One such entrance is a cave in a wood on a hillside in the valley of the sulfurous lake named Amsanctus. Allecto went there to re-enter Hell and relieve the Land of the Living of her presence.

Juno had more work to do. Now that the battle had ended, the Latins carried their dead, including the young Almo and the elderly Galaesus, home. The Latins prayed to the gods, and they complained to King Latinus. Turnus was present, and he asked the angry Latins, “Do we

want the Trojans to conquer the Latins? Do we want Trojan blood to mingle with and corrupt our blood? Do you want Aeneas, and not me, to marry Lavinia?"

Amata and the mothers who had been worshipping Bacchus arrived, and they also called for war. Now everyone — the Latin men, the Latin mothers, Turnus and the Rutulians — were calling for war against the Trojans. The only advocate for peace was King Latinus. All others opposed the omens, and they opposed fate. They surrounded King Latinus and begged for war, but he resisted them the way that a rock at sea resists a huge wave.

But the mass of people wanted war — the war that Juno is causing. King Latinus told them, "We are doing the wrong thing by wanting war. Our emotions and not our reason are in control. We ought to oppose war. We will bleed, and many of us will die. Turnus, you are wrong when you call for war. I prophesy that you will die in the war — by the time you pray to the gods for mercy, it will be too late. I myself will not call for war, but I see that I am powerless to keep all of you from going to war. I am an old man, I will not live much longer, and now that war has come, I will not be able to die the good death I could have had if my country were at peace."

King Latinus said no more. He stayed in his palace, and he no longer attempted to keep his people from going to war.

Latium had a custom that was later adopted by Alba Longa and then by Rome. Whenever men went to war anywhere, they would open the doors of the temple of Janus. They called these doors the Twin Gates of War. In times of peace, the gates were kept closed; in times of war, they were kept open. Now the Latins opened the twin doors. In Roman times, a consul would wear the clothing of Romulus and open the doors. When the doors are opened, the trumpets sound and the soldiers go off to war.

The Latins wanted King Latinus to open the gates of the temple of Janus, but he refused to touch them. He stayed in his palace. Therefore, Juno herself flew down from the sky and hit the gates with her hand. The Gates of War swung open. Some Latins prepared to go to war on foot, others planned to ride horses, and all shouted, "To war!" They polished their shields and the heads of their spears, and they sharpened their axes.

Five cities readied themselves for war: Atina, Tibur, Ardea, Crustumerium, and Antemnae. The blacksmiths forged new weapons and armor. Previously, the cities had taken pride in the arts of peace: They grew life-giving food. Now, they took pride in the arts of war: They got ready to kill. Instead of plows, they preferred swords.

Muses, you remember the warriors and you can help me to sing a song that tells what you know. Which Italian kings went to war? Who were the Italian warriors? Who opposed Aeneas and the Trojans? Who marched to war against the Trojans?

At the front of the line, Mezentius marched to war against the Trojans. A former king of the Etruscans, he was renowned for his cruelty. He did not worship the gods. Lausus, his son, rode

with him. Turnus was the only Italian warrior who was more handsome and had a better build than Lausus. A person with many good qualities, Lausus deserved to have a better father than Mezentius. Lausus led a thousand warriors to war, but they would not be able to save his life. Lausus would die in battle.

Next came Aventinus, a son of Hercules. His shield depicted the Hydra with its hundred heads — each time one head was cut off, the Hydra grew two more in its place. Hercules had succeeded in killing the Hydra of Lerna by having a nephew cauterize each neck after Hercules had cut its head off — this was the second of his twelve famous labors. Hercules had come to Italy, where he slept with the princess Rhea, who gave birth to Aventinus. Hercules had previously killed the monster Geryon of the three bodies, and he had watered in the Tiber River the cattle he had taken from Geryon. Aventinus' warriors carried spears and pikes and swords to battle. Aventinus himself wore the hide of a huge lion — its shaggy head hooded Aventinus' head.

Twin brothers — Catillus and Coras — marched next in the line to war. Their brother was Tiburtus, after whom the city of Tibur was named. The twins were fearless — they charged into battle as quickly as two Centaurs would run down a mountain, crashing through the thickets.

Next came Caeculus, whose father was the god Vulcan. Caeculus was born among sheep in a field but was found lying in front of a fire. He founded the city of Praeneste, and he brought many of its citizens and many of the people who lived near the city to fight for Turnus. Some had chariots, armor, and shields. Many of them carried slingshots to use as weapons. They wore caps made of wolfskin. Their left feet were bare; their right feet were covered with boots made of rawhide.

Messapus, the son of Neptune, also allied himself with Turnus and marched to war. He and his people had long been at peace, but now he and they held swords again. They sang as they marched. Their songs were like the songs of swans. If you were to hear the men singing, you would think not of warriors, but of birds.

Next in the line marched Clausus, who led mighty warriors and who himself was a mighty warrior. He was a Sabine, and he led men of Sabine blood. From them would arise the Claudian tribe after the Romans and the Sabines had united. He led many warriors. They seemed to be as numerous as waves rolling to shore from the sea in winter or as numerous as ears of corn in a field. As they marched, their shields clanged and the earth shook under their pounding feet.

Next in the line was a man who hated Troy and all Trojans: Halaesus, who was once the companion of Agamemnon. His warriors used long stakes that they hurled with a thong, they used shields to protect their left side, and they used scimitars to cut the enemy.

Oebalus marched next in the line. According to tradition, his parents were the mortal Telon and the river-nymph Sebethis. Oebalus expanded the territory that his father had ruled. His

warriors threw barbed lances, and they used the bark they stripped from corkwood trees to make their helmets. They carried bronze shields and swords.

Ufens marched next in the line. His warriors were accustomed to hunting. They farmed, but they wore armor even as they plowed. They enjoyed going on raids and seizing booty.

Next in the line marched a warrior-priest named Umbro, whom King Archippus sent. Umbro knew the ways of snakes, and he could cure their venomous bites with herbs. But when he was speared in battle, he could not cure his mortal wound.

Virbius, the son of Hippolytus, rode next in the line. His mother, Aricia, sent him to battle. Hippolytus' stepmother, Phaedra, fell in love with him, he resisted her advances, and she told his father, Theseus, that Hippolytus had raped her. Hippolytus died while riding in a chariot; sea-monsters spooked his horses, which upset his chariot and killed him. The healer Aesculapius and the goddess Diana brought Hippolytus to life again. Jupiter was angry that a dead man had been restored to life, and so he killed Aesculapius and sent him to the Land of the Dead. Diana, however, took Hippolytus away to the water-nymph Egeria, who lived in a healing wood that is sacred to Diana. Hippolytus took a new name: Virbius, which means "twice a man." He also named his son Virbius. Because of the way that Hippolytus had died, no horses were allowed in the grove. His son, Virbius the younger, however, rode a chariot drawn by horses into battle.

Next in the line was Turnus, the commander-in-chief. He was taller than any other warrior by a head. His build was impressive, and he was well armed. His helmet was decorated with the figure of a fire-breathing Chimaera — the fires of the volcano Etna seemed to blast from its throat. As a battle grew fiercer and more blood spilled, the fire of the Chimaera on Turnus' shield grew redder. His shield also depicted Io in the form of a cow. Jupiter had fallen in love with the beautiful girl named Io, and so Juno, a jealous wife, had turned Io into a cow and sent Argus, who has a hundred eyes, to keep her away from Jupiter. His shield also depicted Io's father, Inachus, a river-god, who was pouring water from an urn. Turnus brought many, many warriors with him.

Coming at the end of the line was Camilla, a woman who knew the ways of war. She led men into battle. Camilla's education did not include weaving; instead, it consisted of the arts of war. She ran quickly and lightly. It seemed that she could run on the tops of wheat stalks with hurting the kernels or on the tops of waves without getting her feet wet. Young males and mothers travelled just to see her: a woman who was going to war. They stared at her purple clothing, the gold brooch that bound her hair, and her arrows and spear.

Chapter 8: Allies and a Shield (Aeneid)

Now that Turnus was armed and leading armies to battle, all of western Italy wanted to go to war. His allies Messapus, Ufens, and Mezentius took men from farms and enrolled them among the soldiers.

Turnus and his commanders also sent the Latin Venulus as leader of some envoys to Diomedes, a great Greek hero of the Trojan War who had founded the city of Argypa in southern Italy. The envoys carried a message asking Diomedes to fight with them against Aeneas and the Trojans: “Aeneas has arrived in western Italy with his ships and with the household gods that he carried away from conquered Troy. He claims that his destiny led him to western Italy to become a king here. Many Italian tribes support him — there is much talk about him in western Italy. Come help us to fight against him.”

The envoys also hoped to get information from Diomedes about what Aeneas would want and what would happen if fortune favored the Trojans in war. Chances are, they thought, Diomedes would know that better than King Latinus or King Turnus.

Aeneas was aware of the armies being raised and marching against him. He thought over his options. His thoughts moved from option to option as quickly as sunlight or moonlight reflected from a bowl of water rises to a ceiling.

Late at night, Aeneas, worried about war, lay down on the bank of the Tiber River and slept. The river-god, wearing a crown made of reeds, came to him in a dream and said, “We here in western Italy have long waited for you to come. This is now your home; this is now the home of your household gods. Do not be afraid that you will be conquered in war — you and your Trojans will be triumphant. Most of the gods who have been angry at you have ceased their anger.

“I will tell you something so you will know that what I say is true. Soon, you will find on the bank of my river a white sow nursing thirty white piglets. This is a sign. In thirty years, Ascanius, your son, will found the city of Alba Longa. All of this is fated to happen.

“Now let me give you advice about the upcoming war — the war that you will win. Listen — this is important. On the shores of my river is a city that was founded by the Greeks. Its king, Evander, was born in Arcadia in the Peloponnese of Greece. His grandfather was Pallas, a king of Arcadia. King Evander named his city in Italy Pallanteum after him. He also named his son Pallas. These Greeks are at war against your enemy, and they will be your allies. Go to them and make a pact. I will help you to reach Pallanteum. Your men will have to row upstream, but I will make my current gentle so that you can go faster.

“Get up now, Aeneas. Pray to Juno and seek to end her anger at you. Ask her for help. When you are successful in forming a pact with King Evander, you can sacrifice to me: I am the river-god

of the Tiber River. The gods love my river and its clear blue water. Noble cities lie along my banks.”

The river-god disappeared, and Aeneas woke up. He cupped his hands and held up water from the Tiber River, and he prayed, “Water-nymphs and the river-god of the Tiber, help me and shield me from danger. Help the Trojans. I will sacrifice to you often. Please help the Trojans.”

Aeneas then took two ships and filled them with men wearing armor. As he was outfitting the ships, he saw a white sow and thirty white piglets lying on the riverbank. Aeneas sacrificed all thirty-one of the pigs to Juno at her altar.

The two ships made good speed. The men rowed, but the river-god kept the river’s current gentle, as he had promised. They rowed all that night, and the next day at noon they saw a city. Aeneas did not know it, but this city was built on the future site of Rome. Rome would be a mighty city, but this city was humble. As the river-god had told Aeneas, the city’s name was Pallanteum, and its king was Evander, whose son was Pallas. Evander had come to Italy from Arcadia, which is in Greece. Evander’s grandfather had been named Pallas; he was a noted king of Arcadia.

The day that the Trojans arrived at Pallanteum was a day devoted to honoring Hercules, a hero of the past who had slain the half-human, half-beast, fire-breathing monster named Cacus that had terrorized the citizens of Pallanteum.

Evander, Pallas, and the city’s other citizens were honoring Hercules with incense and with sacrifices. The city’s citizens were feasting. When Aeneas’ ships arrived, the city’s citizens were startled and would have fled, but Pallas forbid them. Fearless, he grabbed a spear and went to the ships and shouted at Aeneas and his armed men, “Who are you? What do you want? Do you bring war or peace?”

Aeneas held up a branch of an olive tree: a sign of peace. He lifted it high so that Pallas could see it. Aeneas then replied, “We are Trojans. The weapons that we carry we intend to use not against you, but against the Latins, our common enemy. We wanted peace, but they want war. We are looking for King Evander. Please tell him that Trojans have arrived and want to form a pact with him and his city.”

Pallas had heard of the Trojans; he was impressed. He said to Aeneas, “Disembark and talk to my father. You are welcome here.” He took Aeneas’ right hand and led him to his father.

Aeneas said to King Evander, “I have come to you in peace. You are the best of the Greeks, and although I am a Trojan, and the Greeks and the Trojans fought a war, I can approach you without fear although you are related to Agamemnon and Menelaus, the two leaders of the Greek forces against Troy.

“We have ties, and we have good reasons to form a pact. The Trojans and I are strong, and we will make a good ally for you. The river-god Tiber sent me here. We have a common ancestry. Also, your fame is worldwide — we would be proud to form a pact with you.

“Let me explain our common ancestry. Atlas had many daughters, including Electra and Maia. Electra gave birth to Dardanus, ancestor of the Trojans. Maia gave birth to Mercury, the god who is your father. Therefore, you and I have the blood of Atlas flowing in our veins; the same is true of many of our people.

“Knowing our common ancestry, I came to you in person instead of sending envoys to you. I am a suppliant to you. The Trojans and I need help. Your enemy is also our enemy. Turnus, your enemy, is leading his Rutulians against us. If Turnus succeeds in driving us from Italy, he is likely to keep making war until he rules all of western Italy. Form a pact with us. We are brave soldiers, and we will fight well as your allies.”

While Aeneas spoke, King Evander looked him over carefully. When Aeneas stopped speaking, Evander replied, “You are welcome here. I recognize in your features the features of your father, Anchises. I remember well Anchises’ face, words, and voice.

“Priam, the son of Laomedon, the King of Troy, once visited the island of Salamis, where Hesione, his sister, was queen, in Greece. He also visited Arcadia, where I was born. I was young then, and I rejoiced to see the leading men of Troy, including one who was taller than the rest: Anchises, your father.

“A young boy, I went to Anchises and showed him around the city. When Anchises left with the other Trojans, he gave me gifts: a quiver and arrows, a cloak, and golden bridles. Now that I am old, I have given these gifts to Pallas, my son, who loves them.

“You and I, your people and my people, are allies. Tomorrow, you can leave along with soldiers that I will send with you. Today, you and your men can participate in the festival honoring Hercules.”

Evander ordered cups and food to be brought, and most of the Trojans sat on the grass. Aeneas, the guest of honor, sat on a wooden chair with a lion’s hide serving as a cushion. The priests and young men brought meat and bread and wine. Aeneas and the Trojans feasted.

After the meal, Evander said, “This annual festival has been held for many years and for good reasons. Hercules saved us from a monster. Look at this hill. It has a long-abandoned lair: a cave that has been filled in with rocks. A half-human, half-beast monster lived there. Its name was Cacus. In front of its lair was much human blood, and nailed to his doors were the rotting, bloodless, pale faces of human men. The father of Cacus was Vulcan, and Cacus breathed fire.

“We prayed to the gods for deliverance from the monster, and the answer to our prayers came in the form of Hercules, who had recently slaughtered another monster: the triple-bodied Geryon. Now Hercules was driving the herd of cattle that had belonged to Geryon to pasture

near here. Cacus, greedy as always, stole four bulls and four heifers from the herd. Wanting to keep his crime secret from Hercules, he grabbed the cattle by their tails and pulled them to his lair so that the prints of their hoofs led away from his lair. Cacus dragged them inside his cave and waited for Hercules to leave.

“As Hercules prepared to drive his cattle away, they mooed, and one of the heifers in Cacus’ cave mooed back. Realizing that some of his cattle had been rustled, Hercules came running to the cave. Terrified, Cacus let down a boulder — using an apparatus created by Vulcan, his father — to seal the cave.

“Furious, Hercules circled the hill three times, looking for a way inside the cave. He could not find a way in. Finally, he went to the top of the hill and used his great strength to push over a crag and send it tumbling down the side of the hill. This exposed the cave within the hill. It was as if an earthquake had torn open the earth and exposed the Land of the Dead and the ghosts of the dead.

“The light flooded into the cave and exposed Cacus, who howled with fear and terror. Hercules threw down on him whatever he could find: enormous tree branches and enormous rocks the size of millstones. Cacus had no way out of his home, which was now a deathtrap.

“Cacus used the fire inside his body to spit great bursts of fire up at Hercules. All this did was to make Hercules angry, and he jumped into the cave and strangled Cacus. Hercules gripped Cacus’ neck so hard that his eyes bulged and no blood was left in his neck.

“Hercules then burst out of the cave. He dragged out Cacus’ carcass and left with the cattle that he had recovered. All the people of this area stared at the corpse of Cacus and rejoiced at the death of the monster that had terrorized us.

“Since that time, we have celebrated his death with this annual festival. The priest Potitius founded the festival, and ever since we have observed these rites. Potitius built this altar in this grove. We call the altar the *Ara Maxima*, or the Greatest Altar, and we dedicate it to Hercules *Invictus* — the Unconquered Hercules.

“So let us wear garlands and pour out wine as an offering to the gods.”

Evander put on his head a wreath that Hercules had once worn, and all poured out wine and prayed to the gods.

Evening was coming, and the priests — Potitius was in the front — continued the rites. They brought more food for another round of feasting. The Salii — priests of Mars — danced in honor of Mars, and a chorus of young boys and a chorus of old men sang in honor of Hercules. They sang of how he had exhibited his strength as a baby. Juno had hated Hercules, and now she hated Aeneas. Juno had hated Hercules because her husband, Jupiter, was his father, but she was not his mother. Juno sent two huge snakes to kill the infant Hercules, but he strangled the snakes. The two choruses also sang of two notable victories of the adult Hercules: how he had conquered the

city of Troy and how he had conquered the city of Oechalia on the island of Euboea in Greece. They also sang of the Twelve Labors that Hercules had performed for Eurystheus.

The two choruses sang, “Hercules, you are unconquered. Your victories are many. You have defeated Hylaeus and Pholus, two half-man, half-horse Centaurs. Ixion, the king of the Lapiths, tried to rape Juno. Jupiter made a cloud in the shape of Juno. Ixion coupled with it, and from this union came the Centaurs, most of whom were wild.

“Hercules, you also conquered many beasts in your famous Twelve Labors. You defeated the Cretan bull by roping it and taking it to Eurystheus. You defeated the Nemean lion that was impervious to weapons by choking it to death. You defeated Cerberus, the three-headed watchdog of the Land of the Dead by fearlessly going down into Hell and dragging Cerberus to the Land of the Living. Cerberus trembled in fear of you as he stood over half-eaten bones. You were not afraid of even the giant Typhoeus, who was armed with many weapons. You also killed the Lernean Hydra that had seven heads. Hercules, you are the son of Jupiter, and you are now a god. Come to your festival and bless it and us!”

Then the two choruses sang about how Hercules had killed Cacus.

Now that the festival was over, all turned away from the altar and went back to the city. King Evander, who was old, told many stories as he walked with his friends, his son, and Aeneas, who eagerly listened to the stories of heroes of long ago.

King Evander showed Aeneas around the city and its environs as he told stories of the past.

Evander told Aeneas about the early history of the area: “Here lived immortal fauns and nymphs. Mortal humans also lived here, but they were wild. They ate berries and nuts and the fare of hunters. They were not civilized, and they did not farm. They were hunters and gatherers.

Saturn had been the king of gods, but Jupiter, his son, overthrew him. Saturn then came here and made the wild people civilized. He gave the wild people laws, and he named the country Latium. Saturn’s age was the Age of Gold, but it was slowly succeeded by a worse age, an age of war, an age of desire for possessions.

“In this age were present the Ausonian peoples and the Sicanian tribes. In this age were kings and a giant named Thybris, after whom the Tiber River was named, replacing its mostly forgotten old name of Albula.

“Driven by exile, I came here from Arcadia. Fate and Fortune brought me here. So did the prophecies of my mother, the nymph Carmentis, and so did the power of Apollo.”

Pallanteum was built on the future site of Rome, and so as Evander showed Aeneas Pallanteum, he was — without knowing it — showing him some of the sites of future Rome. For example, Cacus’ cave was in the Aventine Hill of Rome.

Evander also pointed out the Altar of Carmentis and the Carmental Gate, both of which honored his mother: the nymph Carmentis, who was a true seer and who was the first to foretell

the greatness of future Rome. The Carmental Gate would later be an entrance to Rome at the western base of what would later be known as the Capitoline Hill.

Evander then showed Aeneas a grove between the two summits of what would later be known as the Capitoline Hill. This grove was later the site of the Asylum, a temple that Romulus would establish where refugees from other cities could find asylum.

Evander then showed Aeneas a cave at the foot of what would be known as the Palatine Hill. The cave would later be called the Lupercal because a female wolf suckled Romulus and Remus in this cave until Faustulus, a shepherd, found them.

Evander then showed Aeneas the grove of Argiletum, the site of which would later be a main road leading between the Roman Forum and the Esquiline and Viminal hills.

Evander told Aeneas a story about Argus, who had been a guest of Evander's, but Argus had plotted against Evander and so Argus had been killed.

Evander then showed Aeneas the Tarpeian Rock on what would later be known as the Capitoline Hill, and all unknowingly, showed him the site of the future Roman Capitol.

Although neither Evander nor Aeneas could know it, one of the most sacred sites in Rome would be the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus: Jupiter the Best and Greatest. It would stand at the top of the Capitoline Hill. Because Pallanteum had been built on the future site of Rome, Evander and Aeneas were now looking at the site where the temple would later be built. In Roman times, it would be an urban site. Now, it was a wooded area, but it was still sacred to Evander and his people.

Evander said to Aeneas, "This wooded area is sacred to a god, but we don't know which god. Some of my town's citizens, however, believe that they have seen Jupiter here."

Evander also showed Aeneas two other important sites. One site was called Janiculum, and on this site — a hilly ridge along the Tiber River — the god Janus had built a fortress in the days of old. The other site — on the Capitoline Hill — was called Saturnia, and the god Saturn had built a settlement there in the days of old.

They drew close to Evander's home, passing a herd of cattle grazing in what would later be known as the Roman Forum. Cattle also grazed in what would later be known as the Carinae — an elegant area of future Rome.

King Evander's home was humble. He said to Aeneas, "Hercules once passed through these doors. He had to stoop as he entered this home. This is a humble home, but it was good enough for Hercules, and I hope that it will be good enough for you. Hercules humbled himself here, and after he died as a mortal, he became a god. Be like Hercules — scorn luxury. Come into my home, and please be kind."

Aeneas entered King Evander's home. That night, Aeneas slept there on a pile of leaves, and he used the hide of a Libyan bear as a blanket.

As Aeneas slept, his mother, Venus, went to her husband, Vulcan. The war-cries of the Latins alarmed her, and she wanted to protect her son. In the bedroom that she and her husband shared, Venus said to Vulcan, “When the Greeks were warring against doomed Troy, which was fated to fall, I did not ask you to create armor and weapons for the Trojans although I loved Priam and the Trojans and although I wept because of the dangers that Aeneas faced in the war. Now Aeneas is facing a new danger. He is in western Italy, and he will be fighting a new enemy. This time, I beg you to create armor for my son. You have done this for other mothers. Aurora wept and asked you to make armor for Memnon, her son. You made the armor. Thetis wept and asked you to make armor for Achilles, her son. You made the armor. Please make armor for my son Aeneas. In western Italy, armies are massing — they are filled with warriors who want to kill my son.”

Venus, the goddess of sexual passion, threw her arms around her husband, and he reacted exactly the way she knew he would. He was filled with the ancient flame that he knew very well. The ancient flame went through him the way that lightning goes through a cloud. Venus rejoiced in her power.

Vulcan said to Venus, his wife, “You can count on me. If you had asked me to arm the Trojans, I would have done so. Troy was fated to fall, and it would still have fallen, but Priam would have been able to live inside the as-yet-unconquered city for ten additional years. But now, since you ask me, I will create divine armor for Aeneas using all my skill. You need not beg me any more. You know that you have much power over me!”

Venus and Vulcan made love — something they both desired — and he fell asleep with his head resting on her breast.

Very early in the morning, he woke up. So did many faithful, hard-working mortal women who work some hours of the night as well as all hours of the day. They work at weaving, and they supervise female servants who work at chores. They are good wives and good mothers.

Vulcan’s workshop is in a cave on Vulcania, an island off the northern coast of Sicily. Here Cyclopes work as blacksmiths. Vulcan flew there and found the Cyclopes already hard at work. Brontes, Steropes, and Pyracmon were creating a thunderbolt for Jupiter to hurl. They had yet to add the sound of thunder to the thunderbolt. Other Cyclopes were creating wheels for the chariot of Mars, god of war, which he would use to fight mortal warriors and their towns. Yet other Cyclopes were creating a shield — an aegis — for Minerva. The shield was decorated with the image of the severed head of a Gorgon — a female monster that had living snakes for hair. Anyone who looked at a Gorgon would be turned to stone.

Vulcan said, “Cyclopes, whatever creations you are working on now, put them away. We have another, different task to perform. We must create divine armor for a mortal warrior. We will need strength, quick hands, and skill! Let’s get started!”

Vulcan and the Cyclopes worked well together. Soon different kinds of metal — bronze and steel and gold — had been melted, and they were forging a huge shield. Some Cyclopes worked the bellows, some plunged hot metal into water, and some beat the hot metal on anvils.

As Vulcan and his Cyclopes created the divine armor, dawn arrived and Evander woke up. He dressed himself in simple clothing: a tunic and sandals. He wore a sword in a belt over his right shoulder and the skin of a panther over his left shoulder. He and two watchdogs went to visit Aeneas, who was already up. Evander and Pallas met Aeneas and Achates, and all greeted each other as friends.

King Evander remembered his promise to provide military aid to Aeneas and the Trojans. Evander said to Aeneas, “You are a great warrior, and I cannot regard the Trojans as a defeated people because you are leading them. I have promised to help you, and I will keep my promise to the extent that I am able. I wish that I could do more. The Tiber River hems us in on one side, and hostile people sometimes harass us on the other side.

“I, however, know of a population with great armies who will become your allies. I believe that fate brought you here to become their leader.

“Close by here is Agylla, an Etruscan city. Agylla was a happy and prosperous city until Mezentius became its king. Mezentius is a cruel man who has committed many murders and many savage crimes. He was a tyrant to his people. He used to tie a living person to a corpse. Living head was tied to deceased head, and living hand was tied to deceased hand. The living person, locked in a putrid embrace, died — slowly. Finally, the Etruscans rebelled and drove Mezentius out of the city. They attacked his palace, they killed his guards, and they threw fire on the roof of his palace. Mezentius escaped and went to the country of the Rutulians. Turnus, King of the Rutulians, is his friend and shields him.

“The Etruscans want to punish Mezentius for all of his crimes. They are eager to attack the Rutulians and to capture Mezentius. They have thousands of soldiers and many ships. They are eager to fight, but an old prophet is stopping them, telling them, ‘Etruscans, you are courageous and your cause is righteous. Mezentius deserves to be punished for his murders and his other crimes. But the gods forbid you to go into battle with an Italian as your commander. You must chose a commander who comes from overseas!’

“The Etruscans are trying to find that commander. Tarchon, an Etruscan leader, even sent envoys to me, asking me to lead their troops into battle. I come from overseas, having been born in Greece. But I am old. My blood is sluggish and cold. I am no longer strong. Pallas, my son, cannot be the commander because his blood is mixed. I married an Italian woman, and so Pallas is part Italian.

“You, Aeneas, will be their commander. You are a mighty warrior, and you come from overseas. The gods want you to lead the Etruscans to war.

“I will send Pallas, my beloved son, with you. Watch after him. Teach him to be a soldier. Be a role model for him.

“In my name, I will give you two hundred horsemen now — they are our best warriors. In addition, you will get two hundred more warriors in Pallas’ name.”

Aeneas and Achates thought about what Evander had said, and Venus sent all a sign: A thunderbolt flashed from a sky without clouds. They seemed to hear trumpets. Another thunderbolt flashed and rumbled, and the sky grew blood-red.

Some of Evander’s people were frightened, but Aeneas knew that the omen had come from his mother. He said, “I know what this sign means. My mother, the goddess Venus, promised to send me this sign when war broke out. She also promised to bring me armor forged by Vulcan, her husband: the blacksmith god.

“War will be bad for the Laurentes and for Turnus. Much blood will flow, including the blood of Turnus. Under the water of the Tiber River will be many shields and helmets and corpses of brave warriors. But the Rutulians want war, not peace, and they will get what they want!”

Aeneas prayed to Hercules and to the gods of the household, and all sacrificed sheep to the gods.

Aeneas went to his ships and picked out the best Trojans to go with him to the Etruscans. The other men he sent back to the Trojan camp downriver at the mouth of the Tiber. The river current carried the ships home — Ascanius would soon hear news about his father.

Evander gave horses to the Trojans. Aeneas’ horse was the best and had a lion’s skin as a blanket. In the town of Pallanteum, citizens knew that Aeneas was going to visit the Etruscans to seek their help in the war. Afraid of war, mothers prayed.

Evander held his son’s hand and cried. He said, “I wish that Jupiter would make me young again. I once was a mighty warrior. I once fought before the city of Praeneste in Latium in Italy. I killed the city’s king, Erulus. Feronia, his goddess mother, had given him three lives, so I had to kill him three times. He also had three suits of armor — one for each life. I took all three of his lives — and all three of his suits of armor.

“If I could be young again, I would not leave you, Pallas, my son. I would stay with you and watch over you. If I were young, cruel Mezentius would not have been able to kill so many men and make so many women widows.

“Gods, please listen to my prayer! Jupiter, grant me my wish! Protect my son, if the Fates permit it. As long as I can see my son alive again, I can endure any pain. But if my son is going to die in the war, then let me die now! I love you and hug you, my son, and I pray that I will never learn of your death!”

Evander collapsed, and his servants helped the old man back into his home.

Aeneas and the others then rode away from Pallanteum and toward the Etruscans. Aeneas rode in the lead, with Achates and other Trojans behind him. Wearing armor, Pallas rode in the center of the line. Pallas was as bright as the morning star.

Mothers, trembling, watched them ride away from the city.

Aeneas and his horsemen reached a sacred grove by the river that flowed by the Etruscan city of Caere. People of long ago held a festival there for Silvanus, the god of woods and fields. Close by the grove were Tarchon and his Etruscans. At the grove Aeneas and his horsemen dismounted, watered their horses, and rested.

Venus saw Aeneas resting alone on a bank of the river. She flew to him, bearing the armor created by Vulcan, and said to him, “Here is the divine armor that I promised to give to you. Vulcan, my husband, created it for you. It will protect you from all the enemy warriors, including Turnus!”

Venus hugged her son and put down the armor under a tree.

Aeneas loved the gifts of his mother and her husband. He stared at them. He held them. He looked at them from all sides. He looked at the helmet and the sword and the breastplate and the spear. And he looked at the shield.

The shield was special. It told the history of Italy and of Rome. As a god, Vulcan knew the future history of Rome, although Aeneas did not. Vulcan knew the achievements of the descendants of Aeneas, and he knew of the future wars of Rome.

Vulcan put on the shield a depiction of Romulus and Remus, who will be suckled by a she-wolf in the cave known as the Lupercal. The baby boys will not be afraid of the she-wolf that licks them with her tongue — the tongue of a mother.

Vulcan also put on the shield a depiction of the abduction of the Sabine women. Rome will need citizens, and the citizens whom Romulus will gather around him will be young men. Romulus’ city will need female citizens as well as male citizens — the young men who will gather around Romulus will need wives. Romulus and the early citizens of Rome will get wives by violating a religious festival. The Roman men will invite their neighbors, the Sabines, to a religious festival. Someone will give a signal, and the Romans will abduct the Sabine women. These women will become their wives. The Romans will later make peace again with Tattius, the king of the Sabines, and they will sacrifice to Jupiter together.

Vulcan also put on the shield a depiction of the death of Mettius, King of Alba Longa, who will not keep his word to Tullus Hostilius, the third king of Rome. Tullus will want the army of Alba Longa to fight alongside the Roman army. Mettius will promise that his warriors will fight, but he will keep them out of the battle. Tullus will then tear Mettius apart with horses.

Vulcan also put on the shield a depiction of Horatius Cocles, a famous Roman soldier. Lars Porsenna, an Etruscan king, will attack Rome in the 6th century B.C.E. The Romans, who will

have recently overthrown their king, will gather behind the walls of the city. Porsenna will want to force the Romans to let the deposed king, Tarquin, rule them again. A vulnerable spot will be the wooden Sublician bridge over the Tiber River. Horatius will be guarding this bridge when the Etruscans appear. Horatius' soldiers will want to run to safety behind the walls of Rome, but he will convince them to stay and destroy the bridge so that the Etruscans will not be able to use it. Horatius will guard the bridge as his soldiers destroy it. Two soldiers will join him, but when the bridge is almost destroyed, Horatius will tell them to cross the bridge to safety. This will mean that Horatius alone will face the Etruscan army. The Etruscans will have held back, impressed by the bravery of Horatius, but now they will attack Horatius just as the bridge falls. Horatius will jump into the river while wearing armor and swim to safety.

Vulcan also put on the shield a depiction of Cloelia, who will have been taken hostage by Lars Porsenna, but who will escape and also swim across the Tiber River to safety. Cloelia will be a Roman girl at a time when Rome will be having difficulties with the Etruscans. At one point, the Etruscan king Lars Porsenna will make a treaty of peace with Rome. To ensure that the peace will be kept, he will receive a number of Roman hostages: both boys and girls. The Etruscan camp will be close to Rome, and Cloelia will lead an escape of some of the Roman girls back to Rome. Porsenna will be angry at first, but then he will respect her courage. He will ask that she return to be his hostage, and he will promise to keep her safe. She will return, and Porsenna will even allow her to choose some hostages to be returned to Rome. She will choose the little boy hostages. Because of Cloelia's great bravery, the Romans will put up an equestrian statue of her in the Via Sacra.

Vulcan also put on the shield a depiction of the cackling geese on the Capitoline Hill. In 396 B.C.E. the Romans will make Marcus Furius Camillus dictator. He will fight and conquer the Etruscans and become a hero. Camillus, however, will be accused of taking booty from the Etruscan stronghold named Veii. It will be against the law for him to take the booty for his own personal gain. He will say that he is innocent, but he will be thought to be guilty. Camillus will go into voluntary exile, along with some supporters. An army from Gaul will arrive and win a battle 11 miles north of Rome. The Roman general Marcus Manlius and a few supporters will defend the temples of Jupiter, Minerva, and Juno on the Capitoline Hill. Manlius will send a messenger to Camillus, asking him to return and fight the Gauls. Camillus will agree to return — as long as the troops of Manlius formally approve his return. A messenger will take Camillus' message to Manlius, using a hidden trail up the Capitoline Hill. The Gauls will observe the messenger and discover the hidden trail. At night, the Gauls will use the hidden trail, hoping to spring a surprise attack upon Manlius. Geese that are sacred to Juno will be on the Capitoline Hill. The geese will hear the Gauls, and the geese will begin to cackle. The Romans will hear the geese, and they will successfully repel the Gauls. Camillus and an army of 40,000 soldiers will arrive at exactly the

right time. Manlius and his men will be exhausted, and so they will be trying to use gold taken from Juno's temple to buy peace for the Romans. Camillus will say, 'Rome buys its peace with iron, not gold,' then he and his army will attack the Gauls and drive them north, away from Rome. Camillus will be given the title of Second Founder of the City and stay in Rome.

Vulcan also put on the shield a depiction of the Dancing Priests who are and will be known as the Mars-worshipping Salii, the priests of the god Lupercus, and the chaste women who will lead sacred marches through Rome.

Vulcan also put on the shield a depiction of Hades and its sinners. He depicted the sinner Catiline, who will try but fail to overthrow the Roman government. Catiline's eternal punishment will be to dangle from a mountain crag and be tormented by the Furies.

Vulcan also put on the shield a depiction of Hades and its heroes. Marcus Porcius Cato Uticensis — the grandson of Cato the Elder, who will also be known as Cato the Censor — appeared on the shield giving laws to the just souls in the Land of the Dead. Cato the Elder will be a Roman politician, general, and writer who will live in the 2nd century B.C.E. Cato the Elder will have ethical principles that he will strictly observe, and he will have an austere way of life.

Marcus Porcius Cato Uticensis — often called Cato the Younger — will also live according to strict ethical principles. He will fight against Julius Caesar, whom he will believe would like to do away with the Roman Republic and make himself king of Rome. After Julius Caesar will defeat the army of Cato the Younger at Utica in Africa, Cato the Younger will commit suicide after reading the *Phaedo*, a dialogue by Plato in which appear arguments for the immortality of the soul. Julius Caesar will be noted for his *clementia* — for his clemency. Julius Caesar will be very unlikely to order Cato the Younger to be killed; most likely, he would forgive him. Cato the Younger will kill himself because he will love freedom and will not want to live in what he will think would become a kingdom rather than a republic.

Vulcan also put on the shield a depiction of the Battle of Actium. After the death of Julius Caesar, people will jockey for power in Rome. The main contenders for power will be Octavian, who will later take the name of Caesar Augustus, and Mark Antony. Mark Antony will marry Octavian's sister, Octavia, but he will start an affair with Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt. Mark Antony and Cleopatra will become enemies of Rome. The Battle of Actium will take place on 2 September 31 B.C.E. Actium will be a Roman colony in Greece. In the naval battle of Actium, Octavian's forces will defeat the forces of Mark Antony and Cleopatra. Cleopatra and her 60 ships will leave the battle and flee back to Egypt in the late afternoon, and Mark Antony will follow her with 40 of his own ships. With the opposing leaders gone, Octavian's forces will win a massive battle. They will kill 5,000 of Mark Antony's men. Mark Antony's land soldiers will also surrender. One year later, Octavian will take the war to Egypt. Both Mark Antony and Cleopatra will commit suicide. Octavian will capture Cleopatra, but rather than be seen in a

Roman triumph, she will order that a poisonous snake be smuggled in to her. She will allow the poisonous asp to bite her, and she will die from the poison. Within three years after the Battle of Actium, Octavian will become emperor and take the name of Caesar Augustus.

Vulcan's depiction of the Battle of Actium showed Egyptian gods such as the dog-headed Anubis battling the Roman gods Neptune, Venus, and Minerva. The Egyptian gods will be defeated along with the Egyptian mortal forces.

Vulcan also put on the shield a depiction of Caesar Augustus' triple triumph that Rome will celebrate in 29 B.C.E. All Romans will celebrate Caesar Augustus' conquest of the country of Illyricum, victory in the Battle of Actium, and annexation of Egypt. All Rome will celebrate for three days. Caesar Augustus will parade through the city with enemy captives and booty and his troops, he will sacrifice to Jupiter, and people will eat at a public feast.

Many heroes have walked on the site of Rome, including Hercules, Aeneas, and Caesar Augustus. Although Aeneas did not know what the scenes depicted on the shield meant, he gloried in them. Aeneas lifted his shield. When he lifted his shield, he lifted the history of Rome: depictions of important events in Roman history. When he lifted his shield, he lifted the history of his future descendants.

Chapter 9: Battles by Night and by Day (Aeneid)

Because Aeneas was traveling to seek help from the Etruscans, he was away from the Trojan camp on the bank of the Tiber River. Seizing the opportunity, Juno sent the goddess Iris to take a message to Turnus.

Iris said, “Turnus, I have good news for you. Aeneas has left the Trojan camp. He has been visiting Evander and Pallanteum, and now he is going to the Etruscans to get their help. Seize this opportunity! Attack the Trojan camp while Aeneas is away!”

She flew away, leaving behind a rainbow.

Turnus recognized the goddess and prayed, “Iris, who gave you this message to bring to me? Whoever it was, I will obey the message. I see your rainbow, and I will obey a message this clearly stated.”

Turnus went to the river, purified himself with water, and prayed to the gods. Then he mustered his army and set out. At the front of the army was Messapus, and at the rear were the sons of Tyrrhus, the gamekeeper of King Latinus. Turnus was in the middle. His forces were like the mighty Ganges River, which is fed by seven streams, and like the mighty Nile River, which floods frequently and nourishes crops.

The Trojans saw dust rising in the air from Turnus’ soldiers. Caicus said, “What is that blackness coming toward us? I know — it’s enemy warriors! Arm yourselves! Mount the walls and prepare to defend our camp!”

The Trojans ran through the gates and mounted the defensive walls they had built. They followed the orders that Aeneas had given them when he departed: “Should enemy soldiers arrive when I am gone, don’t fight a battle in the open. Stay behind the walls, and defend the camp. You will be much safer that way.” Ascanius was still young, and Aeneas wanted to keep him safe.

The Trojans, ready for battle, preferred to fight a battle in the open and win glory, but they obeyed Aeneas’ orders. Fully armed, they stayed behind their walls.

Turnus and twenty horsemen arrived at the Trojan camp. Slower troops followed. He said, “I will be the first one to attack the Trojans!” He threw his spear at the Trojans — this was the beginning of Turnus’ war.

Turnus and his men were surprised that the Trojans stayed behind their walls instead of coming out of their camp and fighting man to man. They shouted, “The Trojans must be cowards! They are hiding behind their walls! They are afraid to fight us man to man!”

Turnus looked for a way into the Trojan camp, but he could not find one. He was like a wolf trying and failing to find a way into a sheepfold. The wolf stays hungry — the sheep are safe in their shelter.

Angry, Turnus tried to think of a way to force the Trojans to come out from behind their walls and fight. He saw the Trojans' ships tied up in the river, and he shouted to his warriors, "Bring fire!" He and his warriors seized torches and approached the ships.

Muses, name the goddess who saved the ships from fire. Tell the famous story that will never be forgotten. Cybele saved the ships. Following the fall of Troy, when Aeneas and his men were harvesting timber on Mount Ida to use to build the ships, Cybele, the Mother of Gods, went to Jupiter and pleaded, "Grant me my prayer. On Mount Ida, I have a grove of trees that are sacred to me. Worshippers brought gifts for me there. I am gladly giving to Aeneas those trees so that he can build his fleet — he needs ships so that he can fulfill his destiny. But I pray to you that the ships built from my sacred trees will never sink at sea."

Jupiter replied, "Cybele, Mother of Gods, you are asking for too much for the ships. Mortals will sail those ships, and ships should not enjoy the rights of gods, who are safe in every storm. Aeneas is a mortal, and he should not face dangers in complete safety.

"But I promise you this: When the ships have completed their mission and are moored in western Italy, I will allow you to transform all of the ships that have not already been sunk into immortal sea-nymphs — they will be like the sea-nymphs Doto, who is the daughter of Nereus, and Galatea and be at home in the waves."

Jupiter swore this oath by the river Styx — it was an inviolable oath. When he swore this oath, Mount Olympus shook.

As Turnus and his troops carried fire to the ships, Cybele and her dancing followers from Mount Ida appeared in the sky. Cybele said, "Trojans need not defend the ships. Turnus can burn my ships no more than he can burn the ocean. Ships, run free — become sea-nymphs!"

Each ship plunged into the water of the river like a diving dolphin and then surfaced as an immortal nymph who then swam to the sea. The Trojans were in their new home in Italy; they no longer needed ships.

Turnus' Rutulians were frightened of the omen. Even Messapus was terrified. The Rutulians' horses reared into the air.

Turnus misinterpreted the omen: "This omen favors us, not the Trojans. Jupiter himself has taken away the Trojans' ships! Now we don't need to destroy them! The Trojans now have no way to escape us. They have lost the sea, and soon we will control all the land.

"The Trojans may boast about their fate, but their fate was to reach Italy. I have my own fate: to repel enemy warriors who land on Italy. I have good reason to do that — the Trojans have taken away from me Lavinia — she was to be my bride! Menelaus went to war when a Trojan stole Helen. I am going to war because a Trojan has stolen Lavinia. Troy fell because of a stolen bride. I would have thought that the Trojans would have had enough of war because of women. But, no, they have not. They have built a wall here, although they saw the Greeks conquer Troy

and its high walls. Dying once is enough for people. I would have thought that stealing one bride would be enough for the Trojans.

“Troops, are you ready to attack the Trojan camp? To attack Trojans, I don’t need divine armor forged by Vulcan. To attack Trojans, I don’t need a thousand ships. If the Etruscans wish to fight on the side of the Trojans, let them! The Trojans need not fear that we will sneak around and steal their Palladium — their sacred statue of Minerva — and kill their guards in the dark! The Trojans need not fear that we will build a second Trojan Horse! No, we will surround their camp in the daylight and fight. For ten years, Hector fought off Greek boys. We will teach the Trojans that we are better warriors than the Greek recruits!

“But night is coming. We have done good work today. Now rest, eat, and know that tomorrow we will fight the Trojans.”

Messapus set up guards and fires around the Trojan camp. Fourteen Rutulians who each commanded a hundred troops watched the Trojan walls and served as guards. They took turns doing duty. While off duty, they drank wine or played at dice.

From their walls, the Trojans looked out at the fires. The Trojans made sure that the gates were strong, the camp was well guarded, and troops had plenty of weapons.

Because Ascanius was so young, Aeneas had left Mnestheus and Serestus in charge. They did their duty; the camp was well defended during the night. The Trojan guards stayed alert.

Nisus and Euryalus were loving friends — Nisus was older than Euryalus — who had competed in the footrace during the funeral games held on Sicily to honor Anchises, Aeneas’ father. Now they guarded a gate together. Euryalus was young — he was just starting to grow a beard. They did everything together, including fighting side by side in battle.

Nisus said, “I have in mind doing a great deed. Perhaps the gods have given me this desire. Look out at the Rutulians, and what do you see? They are careless. They have not paid enough attention to detail. They have watch fires, but the watch fires are far apart. I hear silence — I do not hear the sounds of still-awake guards. The Rutulians are asleep after drinking too much wine.

“This is what I want to do. Our leaders want Aeneas here. They need someone to carry a message to him and let him know that the Rutulians have arrived and will attack our camp. I can do that — as long as they give to you the reward that I will ask for. I myself will be satisfied with the glory of the exploit. Over there, I see a way through the Rutulians and to Aeneas.”

Euryalus replied, “Do you wish to leave me out of your exploit? You want me to let you face so much danger alone? My father, who raised me during the Trojan War, did not raise me to act in that way. And I have not acted in that way as we have followed Aeneas. I want a share of the glory of the exploit even if it means risking my life!”

Nisus said, “I know that you are brave, but I want to do this alone. It is risky, and I hope that Jupiter and the gods will allow me to return safely to you. If I should die, you should continue to

live. You are younger than I am, and therefore your life is worth more than my life. If I die, I want you to give my body a proper funeral. You may be able to ransom it or get it some other way. But if you cannot bury my body, build an empty tomb for me. I want you to stay alive because of your aged mother who came with you here although so many Trojan mothers stayed on Sicily. She did not want to live there without you.”

Euryalus said, “I won’t accept your arguments that I should not go with you. I have decided to go, so let’s get started.”

Euryalus got guards to replace Nisus and him, and the two loving friends went to see Ascanius and get permission to leave the camp and carry a message to Aeneas.

Nearly everyone except the guards was asleep, but the Trojan leaders stayed awake and debated what they ought to do. Send a message to Aeneas? Yes. But who should bear the message?

Nisus and Euryalus arrived, and asked to speak to the Trojan leaders: “It’s urgent!” Ascanius heard them and admitted them to the council and asked Nisus, the older man, to speak.

Nisus said, “Listen to us, although we are fairly young. We have been guards tonight, and we have observed the enemy. Their soldiers are drunk and asleep. They are lax in their guard. We have seen a place where we can get through their ranks: a road that forks along the coast. There it is dark: the watch fires are dying, and the dark smoke obscures vision. Let us leave the camp and carry a message to Aeneas. Along the way, we can kill some of the enemy. Don’t worry. We can find our way in the dark. Because we are hunters, we know this area, and we know the river. We can find our way to Aeneas. Aeneas and we will return soon to the camp.”

Aletes, an aged Trojan advisor, said, “The gods must be looking out for us if they are making our young warriors so courageous.”

He touched the hands of Nisus and Euryalus and said, “What reward can we give you for the risky exploit that you are about to undertake? I know that the gods will reward you, and I know that you will take pride in your exploit. But Aeneas will also reward you, as will Ascanius, who will never forget what you are about to do.”

Ascanius said, “Aletes is correct: I will never forget this. I need my father back here in this camp. By our household gods and by Vesta, the goddess of the hearth, I swear that I will reward you if you bring back my father.

“I will give you two silver cups that Aeneas received as booty when he conquered the city of Arisba. I will also give you two tripods and two bars of gold. I will also give you an ancient wine bowl: a gift from Dido to Aeneas.

“If we conquer western Italy, I will give you more gifts. You will receive twelve beautiful Italian women and you will receive twelve defeated soldiers and their armor to be your slaves or to be released for ransom. You will also receive the private land of King Latinus.

“Nisus, you will receive Turnus’ stallion and his gold armor.

“Euryalus, you are only a year older than I am. You will be my friend and my comrade. We will share glory together as long as we two shall live.”

Euryalus replied, “These are notable rewards, and I hope that we are successful in our dangerous mission. But I ask you for one more thing because I know that our mission may not be successful. I have an aged mother who has come all this long way with me. She would not stay behind on Sicily. I have not told her of this mission because I know that she will be afraid for me and she will cry. Please, swear that whatever happens you will take care of her.”

Euryalus’ *pietas* — his devotion to his mother — impressed the Trojans and especially Ascanius, who said, “I swear that your mother will be my mother. All she will lack will be the name Creusa. She gave birth to a brave son, and she deserves to be rewarded for that. You will be successful in your mission, and she will receive great honor, as you will.”

The Trojans made sure that Nisus and Euryalus were well armed for their mission. Ascanius gave them a sword made of gold and a sheath made of ivory; Lycaon of Crete had made both. Mnestheus gave Nisus the hide of a lion. Aletes exchanged helmets with Nisus; Aletes’ helmet was better than Nisus’ helmet.

The Trojans escorted Nisus and Euryalus to a gate, and Ascanius gave them many messages to give to his father — but his father would never hear the messages because the winds scattered the words among the clouds.

Nisus and Euryalus left the gate and crossed the trench. Their mission would fail, they would die, but they would kill many enemy warriors. They saw many drunken soldiers lying beside weapons and wine cups and lying amid the harnesses of their horses.

Nisus said, “Euryalus, this is a time to slaughter enemy soldiers. Watch the rear so no one comes up behind us as I slaughter soldiers. I will clear a way for us through these warriors.”

Nisus thrust his sword into King Rhamnes, the favorite prophet of Turnus. Although Rhamnes had the gift of prophecy, it did not save his life. Nisus also killed three guards lying by Rhamnes — they were sleeping, not guarding.

Then Nisus cut the throats of the armor-bearer and the charioteer of Remus, and he cut off the head of Remus, whose torso spurted red, hot blood.

Nisus also killed Lamyrus, Lamus, and Serranus. Serranus had won at gambling before falling asleep. He would have been luckier had he gambled all night and lost.

As Nisus killed enemy soldiers, he was like a hungry lion tearing sheep into bloody pieces of corpses.

Euryalus also killed enemy soldiers. He killed Fadius, Herbesus, Rhoetus, and Abaris. Rhoetus woke up — too late. He started to rise so he could hide, but Euryalus thrust a sword into his body. Rhoetus vomited red wine and red blood.

Euryalus moved closer to the camp of Messapus, but Nisus stopped the killing: “Dawn is near. We have cleared a path through the enemy. We have done enough killing.”

They left behind much valuable booty: silver armor, mixing bowls, and expensive rugs. Euryalus, however, took Rhamnes’ sword-belt. Long ago, Caedicus had given it to Remulus of Tiber. When Remulus died, he had given it to his grandson. When the grandson died, the Latins seized it as booty. Now Euryalus seized it. He also took Messapus’ shiny, polished helmet.

Nisus and Euryalus moved forward. They were past the enemy warriors and seemed to be safe, but on the road ahead came a troop of enemy cavalry bringing messages to Turnus. Volcens commanded the three hundred mounted enemy warriors.

Nisus and Euryalus heard the horses and turned off from the road — too late. Euryalus’ shiny, polished helmet reflected moonlight, and Volcens saw the two warriors heading to the left.

Volcens shouted, “Identify yourselves!” Nisus and Euryalus ran, but the cavalry troops fanned out and looked for them. The woods were thick, and they were dark. Nisus was able to follow a barely visible path to safety, but Euryalus was young and afraid, and he got lost and was not able to follow Nisus.

Nisus came to the fields where King Latinus pastured his sheep and cattle. He looked around for Euryalus, but his friend was not there. Nisus said, “My friend, where did you get lost? Will I be able to find you now?”

Nisus could have gone forward and taken Ascanius’ messages to Aeneas. That was his duty, but Nisus instead went back to look for his friend. He heard the sound of hoofs, he heard a chase, and he heard a cry. Then he saw Euryalus, who had been captured. The enemy soldiers were dragging him away.

Nisus did not want to leave his friend behind. Should he rush the enemy and fight and die a noble death? Should he try to kill some of the enemy warriors from afar and hope to rescue Euryalus? He lifted one of his spears and prayed to Diana, goddess of the moon, “Help me now! Remember my father’s many sacrifices to you. Remember my own sacrifices to you. Help me to kill the enemy!”

He threw the spear, which hit Sulmo in the back. Sulmo fell, vomited blood, and died. The Rutulians looked all around, but they did not see Nisus in the darkness.

Nisus aimed another spear at the enemy and threw it. It hit Tagus in the head and splattered his brain. Another quick death of an enemy soldier.

Volcens was furious. Two of his men had died, and he could not see the man who had killed them. He shouted, “Whoever you are, this captive here will pay the punishment for your crimes!” He then pulled out his sword and moved toward Euryalus.

Terrified for his friend, Nisus came out into the open and shouted, “I killed your men! Let him live! Kill me instead!”

Too late. Volcens plunged his sword into Euryalus' body. Euryalus' blood flowed out of his body, and his head drooped. It became limp like a flower that a plow has cut. It drooped like a poppy droops when rain falls on it and makes it heavy.

Nisus drew his sword and charged among the Rutulians, charging straight at Volcens, who screamed. Nisus plunged his sword into Volcens' open mouth and killed him. The Rutulians attacked Nisus, inflicting wound upon wound. Nisus fell on Euryalus' body and died.

The two men had failed in their mission. Euryalus was sidetracked by a love for booty, and the shiny, polished helmet he seized caused his death. Nisus was sidetracked by his love for his best friend. Instead of taking the messages to Aeneas, Nisus tried to rescue his friend, failed, and then sacrificed his life to avenge his friend's death. Nevertheless, as long as the *Aeneid* exists, the two friends will be remembered.

The Rutulians celebrated the deaths of Nisus and Euryalus, but they mourned the deaths of Volcens and the many warriors whom Nisus and Euryalus had killed. Many Rutulians gathered around the corpses. Rhamnes' body was white because all of his blood now soaked the ground. The Rutulians returned Messapus' helmet to him.

Dawn arrived and brought light to the world. Turnus called his warriors to battle. News of the deaths of Nisus and Euryalus and of the deaths caused by them spread, and the Rutulians decapitated their bodies and spiked the two Trojans' heads on pikes and displayed them before the Trojan camp.

On the walls of the camp, the Trojans lined up for battle and saw heads that they knew well. They mourned for Nisus and Euryalus and for a mission left unfinished.

Rumors of the deaths of Nisus and Euryalus swept through the Trojan camp and reached Euryalus' mother. She stopped weaving. Grieving, crying, and tearing her hair, she went to the Trojans' walls and looked out at the enemy and saw the two pikes topped with decapitated heads. She screamed, "Euryalus, how can you die and leave me alone? I am an old woman. You left on a deadly mission and did not allow me to say goodbye to you. Now you are dead in Latium, and the dogs and birds will feast on your flesh. I, your mother, will not be able to lead a funeral procession or close your eyes or bathe your wounds or dress your body in a shroud that I have woven.

"What will happen to me now? What is left to me? Only your head?"

"Rutulians, if you have any mercy in you, kill me now. Or, Jupiter, show mercy to me by killing me with a thunderbolt — send this body to the Land of the Dead so that I can be with my son. The life I have left to me is not worth living!"

The Trojans mourned along with Euryalus' mother. Ilioneus and Ascanius, who also mourned, ordered Idaeus and Actor to take her away from the wall.

An enemy trumpet sounded, and enemy soldiers held their shields over their heads, forming a tortoise shell of protection. They ran forward, seeking to cross the trench and tear down the Trojans' wall. Some enemy soldiers pushed ladders against the wall and attempted to climb them.

The Trojans defended their walls by thrusting with pikes and by dropping huge rocks on the enemy. Because of their years of fighting in the Trojan War, they were experienced in this form of warfare. The Rutulians were brave, but the Trojans' rocks broke their tortoise-shell defense. The Rutulians backed away and hurled spears and shot arrows at the Trojans. In a different part of the assault, Mezentius carried fire to the Trojan wall. Messapus broke down a section of the wall and shouted, "Bring ladders! Climb the walls!"

Muses — especially you, Calliope, Muse of epic poetry — help me to tell of the death and destruction that Turnus caused that day. Help me to tell about the many Trojans he sent to the Land of the Dead. This is an important story. Help me tell it.

The Trojans had built a defensive tower. The Italians attacked it, working hard to bring it down. The Trojans in the tower defended it with rocks and spears. Turnus threw a burning torch at the tower, and it hit the tower's side and stuck there. The wind whipped the fire, which climbed upward toward the Trojans, who backed away from it. The shift in weight to one side and the damage caused by the fire on one side caused the tower to fall outward, away from the Trojan camp and into the midst of the enemy.

Most of the Trojans in the tower died in the fall. They were crushed on the ground and impaled by their own weapons and by the splintered timber of the falling tower.

Two Trojans were left alive: Helenor and Lycus. Helenor was young. His parents were a slave woman named Licymnia and the King of Maeonia. Helenor went to Troy and fought, although slaves were forbidden to have weapons. Now Helenor was surrounded by thousands of enemy warriors, closing in on him the way that hunters close in on a wild beast that knows that it will die and that attacks the hunters. Helenor knew that he would die, and he charged the enemy, rushing toward the place where enemy weapons were thickest.

A fast runner, Lycus darted through the enemy warriors and reached the Trojan wall. He tried to climb it and grab the friendly hands that could pull him up to safety, but Turnus reached him and shouted, "Did you think that you could escape death?" He grabbed Lycus and pulled him down from the wall and killed him. Turnus was like an eagle that grabs with its talons a rabbit or a white swan. He was like a wolf that enters a sheepfold and kills a lamb as its mother bleats in grief.

Cries of war filled the air as the enemy attacked. Some enemy warriors filled the trench with dirt, and some flung burning torches onto the roofs of the Trojan camp.

The Trojan Ilioneus hurled a rock that killed Lucetius as he ran toward the Trojan gates with a flaming torch in his hand.

Liger, an Etruscan who was loyal to Mezentius, killed the Trojan Emathion.

The Rutulian Asilas, who fought with javelins, killed Corynaeus, who fought with arrows.

The Trojan Caeneus killed Ortygius, but immediately Turnus killed Caeneus.

Turnus also killed Itys, Clonius, Dioxippus, and Promolus, and he killed Sagaris and Idas.

The Trojan Capys killed Privernus, who had been grazed by a spear thrown by Themillas. Privernus foolishly dropped his shield to put his hand over his wound, exposing himself to the arrow shot by Capys that killed him.

Mezentius, the cruel Etruscan fighting on the side of Turnus, swung a sling three times around his head and hurled a shot that split the skull of the son of the Sicilian Arcens. Arcens' son was wearing fine, colorful clothing. Arcens had raised his son by the Symaethus River in a place where there was a grove that was sacred to Mars and a shrine that was dedicated to some gods of Sicily.

Ascanius now achieved his first kill in combat. He had achieved skill in archery through hunting, and now he took the life of a boastful enemy warrior: Numanus, who was also called Remulus.

Numanus had recently become the brother-in-law of King Turnus, having married Turnus' younger sister, and he was proud of the connection. Numanus yelled, "You Trojans are pitiful. Twice now, at Troy and here, you have been besieged. Twice now, you have been forced to stay behind your walls. You are the people who wish to steal Italian women? Why are you even here? Menelaus is not here. Agamemnon is not here. Lying Ulysses is not here. Here are real men. When boy babies are born, we dip them in cold river water to make them tough. Italian boys hunt constantly. They ride horses, they shoot arrows, and they work hard. They can work the land, and they can conquer cities. All our lives we work with weapons. Even in old age, we are able to fight, even though we put on helmets over gray hair. We revel in taking booty from other peoples.

"But you Trojans concern yourselves with dressing up, with fashion. You wear yellow and purple. You like easy lives. You like to dance. You like to wear ribbons. You are Trojan women — not Trojan men! Go back to Troy and play music and dance for Cybele on Mount Dindyma and Mount Ida! Leave fighting to real men like us Italians!"

Ascanius was angered by the insults. He drew his arrow, aimed, and prayed, "Jupiter, make this arrow hit its target. Each year, I will bring gifts to your temple. I will sacrifice to you a bull."

Jupiter heard the prayer and sent thunder on the left: Ascanius would kill his man, but boys as young as Ascanius should not fight in war.

Ascanius' arrow went through Remulus' head. Ascanius shouted, "Now let us hear you insult us! This is the reply to you from Trojan 'women' who have been twice besieged!"

The Trojans shouted in support of Ascanius and his words.

Apollo, god of archery, was by chance flying by. He witnessed Ascanius' first kill. He said about Ascanius, "Well done. You will be a success in life, and your children will be successes. All

wars that you and your descendants fight will end in peace. They will not end the way that the Trojan War ended.”

But Ascanius was still young — very young — and so Apollo flew down to him. Apollo assumed the form of Butes, an elderly man who had once served Anchises but who now, at the request of Aeneas, served Ascanius. Apollo, who now looked exactly like Butes, said, “Ascanius, you have done enough in the battle. Numanus is dead, and you are alive. Let’s keep you alive. Apollo supports you; you used his weapon of choice. You will fight in future battles, but for now, stop fighting.”

Apollo vanished, but the Trojans heard the arrows in his quiver as he flew away and so they recognized the god. The Trojans had heard his words to Ascanius, and they made Ascanius stop fighting, eager as he was to continue.

The Trojans were also eager to fight as the battle continued. Cries of war filled the air, as did flying weapons of war. On the ground were shields and helmets and corpses. The battle was as violent as a storm that hurls hailstones at the earth.

The Trojans Pandarus and Bitias, two brothers of huge size, so trusted in their strength and fighting ability that they disobeyed orders and opened the gate that they had been entrusted to guard. They dared the enemy soldiers to attack them and try to get inside the Trojan camp.

Pandarus and Bitias stood tall in the gateway like armed towers or mighty oaks.

The Rutulians saw the open gate and charged, but Pandarus and Bitias repelled them. Pandarus and Bitias made the enemy leaders Quercens, Aquiculus, Tmarus, and Haemon, along with their warriors, retreat — or die. The battle grew hotter, and some Trojans dared to leave the camp, and — against Aeneas’ orders — fight in the open.

The Trojans’ lack of *pietas* turned the battle against them. They were neglecting their duty, not doing their duty.

Turnus learned that Pandarus and Bitias had opened a gate, and he charged them and all other Trojan warriors. Turnus killed Antiphates, the bastard son of Sarpedon and a mother who had been born in Thebes. Turnus threw his spear — it pierced Antiphates’ chest.

Turnus also killed Merops, Erymas, Aphidnus, and the massive Bitias. To kill Bitias, he used not a spear — to kill Bitias took more than a mere spear — but a massive pike. Turnus thrust the massive pike through Bitias’ shield of two bull’s-hides and through his breastplate. Bitias fell and his massive shield made a sound like that of a structure that men destroy by pushing it over so that it lies in the shallows of the sea. The sound made mountains tremble, and the shock of the fall shook the earth under the sea. The corpse of Typhoeus, the hundred-headed, fire-breathing monster that Jupiter had killed with a thunderbolt and buried, trembled when Bitias fell.

Mars put courage into the hearts of the Latins, and he sent fear to the Trojans. The Latins attacked the Trojans. Pandarus, now that his brother was dead, knew that the enemy had the

advantage, and so he put his shoulder to the gate and closed it. Outside the gate were many Trojans who fought and died, but many Trojans rushed inside the gate with Pandarus before it closed.

But the Trojans were not safe — Turnus also rushed inside the gate before it closed. Now he was in the Trojans' camp the way that a tiger sometimes gets into the pen of a flock of sheep.

The armor and weapons of Turnus glowed as the Trojans recognized him and knew him for the enemy he was.

Pandarus, angry at the death of Bitias, his brother, shouted at Turnus, "You are not among friends here! This is not the palace of Amata, the mother of Lavinia! You are in the camp of your enemy, and you will not escape!"

Turnus, unafraid, replied, "Fight me if you dare. I will send you to the Land of the Dead with a message for Priam, defeated King of Troy: A new Achilles has arisen in Italy."

Pandarus used all his strength to hurl a spear at Turnus, but Juno protected him and flicked it away — the spear stuck in the gate.

Turnus yelled, "I escaped your spear, but you won't escape my sword! You won't escape a fatal wound!" Turnus brought his sword down on Pandarus' head, splitting his skull and splattering his brain. Pandarus fell, his head divided in two, the halves dangling over his shoulders.

The Trojans backed away from Turnus, who — if he had not been overcome with *furor* — could have won the war if only he had opened the gate and let his soldiers into the camp. That would have been the end of the Trojans, the end of Ascanius. Turnus would have changed future history forever.

But Turnus' *furor* made him attack the Trojans all on his own. He killed Phaleris, and he cut the leg tendons of Gyges. He then used their spears to kill Trojans as they fled from him. Juno put courage in his chest as he killed Halys and Phegeus. Turnus also killed men on the Trojan wall who were unaware that he was in the Trojan camp: Alcander, Halius, Prytanis, and Noëmon.

The Trojan Lynceus attacked Turnus and shouted for his fellow warriors to attack him in a mass, but Turnus spun and used his sword to cut off with one stroke Lynceus' head. Turnus then killed Amycus, a gifted hunter and a warrior gifted at dipping the points of arrows and spears in poison. Turnus also killed Clytius and Cretheus. The Muses regarded Cretheus as a friend; he played the lyre and sang songs of heroes.

Now all the Trojans knew that Turnus was fighting in their camp. Mnestheus and Serestus, who led the Trojans while Aeneas was gone, ran to the scene and saw Turnus routing the Trojans. Mnestheus shouted at the Trojans, "Why are you running? Do you have other walls to be safe behind? Cannot all of you kill *one* enemy warrior? Will one Rutulian kill so many first-rate warriors and live on without even a scratch? Aren't you ashamed for what just one warrior has

done to you? Aren't you ashamed for your gods and for Aeneas to learn of the destruction that just one enemy warrior has wrought?"

Mnestheus' words stopped the rout of the Trojans. In a mass, they fought Turnus and forced him back. He slowly backed up to the part of the Trojan camp that was beside the Tiber River. The river — not walls — provided the protection there. The Trojans fought him the way that many hunters attack a lion. Under attack by so many hunters, the lion is afraid, but it is dangerous as it backs away from the many spears. The lion will not flee, but it cannot defeat so many hunters and so it slowly backs away.

Turnus now slowly backed away from the Trojans. Twice he charged them, and the Trojans fled, but they quickly regrouped and more Trojan warriors arrived to fight him. Juno could not give Turnus enough courage and power to fight all these Trojans — Jupiter had sent Iris to her to tell her that Turnus must leave the Trojan camp — or else.

The Trojans with their many weapons kept forcing Turnus back. Their weapons hit his helmet and damaged it. Mnestheus and the other Trojans attacked Turnus with their spears. Sweat streamed down Turnus' body. He gasped for breath. His knees and body grew weak with exhaustion.

Then Turnus dived into the Tiber River, which washed away his sweat and others' blood and carried him — triumphant — to his fellow warriors.

Chapter 10: Deaths of Loved Ones in Battle (Aeneid)

On Mount Olympus that night, Jupiter called a council of the gods. The gods arrived, and Jupiter said to them, “Why are you gods taking sides and fighting? I did not want the Trojans and the Italians to fight each other. Why are you resisting my wishes? Why is there a war now? The time for war will come — later. It is fated that Carthage will cross the Alps into Italy and fight Rome. That is the time for war. Now peace should be in Italy. Gods, stop the fighting and obey my wishes.”

Jupiter spoke briefly, Venus spoke at length in her reply to him: “Father, the Trojans must fight. The Rutulians are actively making war. Turnus is actively fighting the war and planning fresh assaults following his success in the Trojan camp. The Trojans’ walls did not protect them. Turnus fought inside their walls. Aeneas, the Trojans’ leader and best fighter, is far away from the camp and knows nothing of the siege. The Greeks attacked old Troy, and now another enemy threatens new Troy. Another Diomedes wishes to kill Aeneas. Diomedes once wounded me when I saved my son Aeneas from him. I see that I will probably be wounded again in this new war.

“If the Trojans had come to Italy against your will and against the will of the Fates — which they have not — I would tell you to punish them. But the Trojans have followed rightful oracles from the gods and from the ghost of Anchises in the Land of the Dead, and so they deserve no punishment. They have not gone against your will or against the will of the Fates.

“And yet they have suffered punishment. On Sicily, some of their ships burned. A storm at sea sank one ship and drove the remaining ships to Carthage. Iris even took a message to Turnus telling him to attack the Trojan camp while Aeneas is absent. And Allecto even left the Land of the Dead to cause trouble for the Trojans. She was wild like a Maenad as she started this war.

“I once hoped for an empire for the Trojans’ descendants. But Fortune is against the Romans. Whoever you support, let them be the victors. If Juno is so against the Trojans that she will not let them stay in Italy, then at least let Ascanius, my grandson, survive. You can do what you like to Aeneas — let him travel on an unknown sea. But let me take Ascanius somewhere safe, somewhere I am worshipped: the towns of Amathus or Paphos in Cyprus, or the island of Cythera. Ascanius can live the rest of his life safely, without weapons, without glory. And if you wish, allow Carthage to defeat Italy, which will have no Rome to resist the Carthaginians’ invasion.

“The Trojans fled their conquered city, and for what? They have risked danger at sea and on land to found a new Troy in Italy. But apparently it would have been better for the Trojans not to have left Troy, but to have rebuilt a new Troy on the ashes of old Troy. If the Trojans cannot live

in Italy, at least give them back their Xanthus and Simois rivers, if they must now be conquered in Italy.”

Angry, Juno said, “I must speak up now, although it means revealing my wounded feelings to all. Did I force Aeneas to come to Italy to make war on King Latinus? Aeneas came to Italy, but why? Because of the Fates — and the ranting of Cassandra. Did I force Aeneas to leave the Trojan camp and seek allies? Did I force Aeneas to leave Ascanius behind in the Trojan camp? Did I force Aeneas to inflame the Etruscans and drive them to war? Is either Iris or I responsible for these things?

“Venus, you think it is wrong for the Italians to fight the Trojans at their camp. Is it wrong for Turnus to be on Italian soil? Turnus has impressive ancestors, including Pilumnus, a woodland god. His mother is Venilia, a sea-nymph. Turnus is a king and a warrior.

“Haven’t the Trojans fought the Italians? Haven’t the Trojans settled on land that is not their own? Haven’t the Trojans arranged for Aeneas’ marriage to Lavinia, a woman who was already betrothed to Turnus? Don’t the Trojans plan to take other Italian daughters as their brides?

“Aren’t the Trojans pleading for peace with one hand in front holding an olive branch and the other hand in back holding a spear?

“You, Venus, think that you are allowed to help the Trojans, but I am not allowed to help the Italians. You think that you are permitted to save the life of Aeneas on the battlefields of the Trojan War. You think that you are permitted to change into sea-nymphs Trojan ships threatened with fire. You do not think that I am permitted to help the Italians.

“You pointed out that Aeneas is far away and does not know that the Trojan camp is under attack. Wonderful! Let Aeneas stay far away, and let him continue to be ignorant that the Trojan camp is under attack. You have areas of the world devoted to you: the towns of Paphos and Idalium on Cyprus, and the island of Cythera. So why are you messing around with Italy?

“You think that I am trying to destroy the Trojans. Am I the one who sent Paris to Sparta to steal Helen? Am I the one who caused the Trojan War? Am I the one who supported Paris? If you really care for the Trojans, you ought to have helped them then. If you did not help them then, you ought not to help them now — and you ought not to blame me for helping the Italians!”

As Venus and Juno had spoken, the gods had listened, sometimes agreeing and sometimes disagreeing with what they heard. Their murmurs were like the first stirrings of a wind that warns sailors of the coming of a storm.

Jupiter spoke, and all the gods grew silent: “Listen to what I tell you. The Italians and the Trojans are now at war, and Juno and Venus oppose each other. I am not going to personally help either side: Italian or Trojan, Turnus or Aeneas. Why is the Trojan camp besieged? Perhaps because of fate. Perhaps because of Trojan foolishness. I will not take sides. Let Italians and

Trojans, Turnus and Aeneas, take action as they will. Their own actions will lead to their glory or to their grief. I am the king of all, and I will allow the Fates to find their own way.”

Jupiter had made his judgment, and he swore an inviolable oath by the river Styx that what he had said would be so. Jupiter nodded his head, and Olympus shook. The council of the gods was over.

At dawn, the Rutulians again attacked the Trojan camp. The Trojans were trapped inside their camp with not enough warriors. Manning the walls in a thin line were Asius, Thymoetes, the twin sons of Assaracus, Castor, and aged Thymbris. With them were Clarus and Thaemon, the brothers of Sarpedon who were new allies from Lycia. All of them were fighting. Acmon struggled to lift a boulder to drop on the enemy. Others were hurling javelins and rocks and burning torches. Still others were shooting arrows.

Ascanius was present. He was a favorite of his grandmother Venus: handsome, shining like a gem surrounded by gold, glowing like ivory set in a work of art. He wore a circlet of gold around his long hair.

Others also fought. Ismarus, who dipped his arrowheads in poison, shot arrows at the enemy. Mnestheus, who had the previous day driven Turnus from the Trojan camp, fought notably. Capys, whose name is remembered today in the city of Capua in southern Italy, also fought notably.

During the night, Aeneas had been sailing on the coastal sea back to the Trojan camp. He had found Tarchon, King of the Etruscans, and had identified himself. Aeneas had explained what the Trojans could do for the Etruscans and what the Etruscans could do for the Trojans — both peoples would benefit from a pact. Aeneas had talked to Tarchon about Mezentius and about Turnus. The two leaders had sworn to a pact, and now the Etruscans had — as the oracle demanded — a foreign leader. And so the Etruscans and Aeneas and the Trojans with him had set sail on the sea to the Trojan camp.

The ship Aeneas was on led the other ships. The ship’s prow was decorated with an image of Mount Ida and its lions — an image dear to Trojans. Aeneas thought about the upcoming battles, and Pallas sometimes asked him about the stars used for navigation and sometimes about his past battles on land and hardships at sea.

Muses, sing now and tell who were Aeneas’ allies. Who sailed with Aeneas? Who were his Etruscan allies?

Massicus sailed in the ship *Tiger*, which had bronze sides. He led a thousand warriors who came from the cities of Clusium and Cosae. Their weapons of choice were arrows.

Abas led six hundred warriors from the city of Populonia, a city on the coast. Another three hundred warriors came from Ilva, an island rich with iron ore. They sailed in a ship decorated with a gilded Apollo.

Asilas, a prophet who could read the entrails of animals, the position of stars, the flashes of lightning, and the cries of birds, led a thousand warriors from Pisa, a city settled by Greeks.

Astyr led three hundred warriors from Caere and other cities.

Cunarus of Liguria, a brave man in battle, also led warriors.

Cupavo, the son of Cycnus, led a small band of warriors. Cycnus had loved Phaëthon, who died when he attempted to drive the chariot of his father the Sun-god. Phaëthon could not control the chariot's immortal horses and nearly destroyed the Earth, and so Jupiter killed him. Cycnus grew old and white mourning for Phaëthon, remembering him in song, and Apollo transformed him into a swan and put him in the night sky as the constellation Cycnus. Cupavo, his son, now sailed on the ship *Centaur* with warriors under his command.

Ocnus also led warriors. His mother was the seer Manto, and his father was the river-god of the Tiber. He founded Mantua, naming the city after his mother. Mantua is a diverse city, with many people living in it. Mezentius, Aeneas' enemy, so angered the Mantuans that five hundred warriors from Mantua sailed on the sea to fight him.

Aulestes also led warriors. They sailed on the *Triton* with her hundred oars. The blast of her sea-horn shook the waters, and on her prow was a figure that had the head and torso of a man and the tail of a dragon.

In all, thirty ships were sailing to the Trojan camp.

The day passed, and the moon rose. Aeneas was on deck when sea-nymphs swam up to him. They had been his ships before Cybele had turned them into sea-nymphs. The sea-nymph named Cymodocea gripped the stern of the ship Aeneas was on and said to him, "Sail quickly, Aeneas! We used to be your ships, made of timber harvested from Mount Ida, which is sacred to Cybele. Now we are sea-nymphs, transformed when Turnus tried to destroy us with fire. We have been looking for you to bring you news.

"Your Trojan camp is under attack. Ascanius is trapped behind its walls as the Italians hurl spears at Trojans. The cavalry of Pallas and your Etruscan allies are approaching the Trojan camp, as Turnus knows. He plans on using his troops to keep your allies from reaching the Trojan camp.

"At dawn, put on your divine armor, call your warriors to battle, and fight. Tomorrow will see the deaths of many Rutulians."

Cymodocea dove into the water, got behind the ship, and sped it forward with her right hand — she knew ships and how to make them go fast! The ship sped faster than a spear or arrow.

Aeneas prayed, "Cybele, please be my leader in battle and help the Trojans."

Dawn immediately came, and Aeneas ordered his troops to prepare for battle.

Aeneas saw his Trojan camp, and he lifted his shining shield. The Trojans on the walls saw Aeneas and his ships filled with allies, and they shouted cries of greeting and relief and hurled spears at the enemy — the spears were as numerous as the cranes flying above the Strymon River.

Turnus and his allies didn't understand why the Trojans were shouting cries of greeting and relief until they looked toward the sea and saw Aeneas and his ships filled with warriors. Flames came from the armor of Aeneas. Flames shot from his helmet and from his sword. The flames were like the light from a bright comet that is a bad omen and brings death to many and like the light from the bright star Sirius, called the Dog Star because of its prominent location in the constellation called *Canis Major*, or Big Dog. Sirius, the brightest star, is thought to bring plague and thirst to mortals.

Turnus remained confident in his ability to fight the Trojans and their reinforcements. He wanted to fight Aeneas and his allies on the beach as they landed. Turnus told his troops, "Here is an opportunity! Let's take advantage of it! Let's defeat the Trojans on the beach! Think of your wife and home that you are defending. Think of the glory of your fathers and how you can add to the glory of your family. Let's fight the Trojans and their Etruscan allies on the beach! They are not ready to fight yet. Just now getting off the ships, they don't even have their land-legs yet!"

Turnus decided to lead the attack on the shore and leave other warriors to continue to attack the Trojan camp.

Aeneas' men walked on planks to the shore, or they jumped into shallow water and ran to shore, or they rowed to shore.

Tarchon looked for a safe place for his ships to land on shore, but his main priority was reaching the land and fighting. He told his men, "Row hard. We may wreck our ship, but we need to reach the shore." Tarchon's ship was the only ship that did not make it to the shore. His ship hit a rock in the sea and teetered and then broke into pieces. He and his men fell into the water amid broken oars and pieces of the ship. They fought the undertow and struggled to shore.

Turnus and his warriors charged the beach. Aeneas was the first warrior to kill a man. Theron attacked Aeneas, but Aeneas' sword pierced his tunic and his body.

Aeneas then killed Lichas, whose mother had died trying to give birth to him. The infant Lichas had been cut out of his mother's womb. He had avoided the knife then, but he did not avoid Aeneas' sword now.

Aeneas next killed Cisseus and Gyas, who fought with clubs, a favorite weapon of Hercules, who had been a friend of their father, Melampus.

Pharus opened his mouth to hurl a threat at Aeneas, but Aeneas hurled a javelin that flew into Pharus' open mouth.

Aeneas next targeted Cydon, a man who had loved many men and now loved young Clytius. Cydon would have died, but his seven brothers rescued him. They threw seven spears at Aeneas. Some hit his helmet and shield, which protected him. Some lightly grazed him as Venus ensured that none seriously wounded her son.

Aeneas cried to Achates, his aide, “Bring me more spears! I killed many Greeks at Troy with my spears, and I won’t miss here!”

Aeneas threw a spear at Cydon’s brother Maeon. It went through his shield and breastplate and his chest. The same spear struck the arm of Maeon’s brother Alcanor, who had run up to assist him. Alcanor’s arm dangled, useless. A third brother, Numitor, grabbed Aeneas’ spear and pulled it out of Maeon’s body and threw it at Aeneas hoping to kill him, but missed him and managed only to graze the thigh of Achates, Aeneas’ aide.

Clausus, one of Turnus’ young, proud warriors, hurled his spear and struck Dryops under the chin. Dryops tried to speak but could not, and he fell to the ground and vomited blood until his breath stopped.

Clausus also killed three Thracians and three sons of Idas.

Turnus’ allies Halaesus and Messapus brought troops to the shore, and the Trojans and the Italians fought on equal terms. Winds can fight each other with no wind winning. Just like that, the Trojans and the Italians fought man against man, and neither side had an advantage.

In another part of the battle in a place filled with boulders where a storm had knocked down trees, Pallas’ Arcadians had dismounted from their horses because of the rough terrain. But because they were untrained in fighting on foot, they were being defeated and so they backed away from the enemy.

Pallas took action as their leader. He shouted at them, “Why are you fleeing? Think of your reputations! Think of what people will say about you! Think of your own past victories and of the victories of King Evander! Don’t flee! Fight! I will lead you into battle! I will be at the front! That is what our country demands of us. We are mortals fighting mortals — we are not fighting gods! The enemy warriors do not have more hands for holding weapons than we have. The enemy warriors do not have more lives than we have. And we have the Ocean at our backs. Where can you flee? Can you flee to Troy?”

Pallas then started to fight. Lagus lifted a huge rock to throw at Pallas, but Pallas hurled a spear that hit Lagus’ sternum in between his ribs. Pallas pulled out the spear as Hisbo — angry at the death of his friend — rushed toward him. Pallas plunged his sword into one of Hisbo’s lungs.

Pallas next attacked and killed Sthenius and Anchemolus — Anchemolus had slept with his own stepmother.

Pallas also attacked Thymber and Larides — identical twins whose own parents sometimes had difficulty telling them apart. Pallas made it easy to tell them apart. Using his father’s sword, he cut off the head of Thymber and the hand of Larides. On the ground, Larides’ hand kept moving, trying to grasp a sword.

Pallas’ fighting rallied his troops. They no longer thought to flee — they were ready to fight.

Pallas threw a spear at Ilus, a Rutulian warrior. He missed, but his spear struck and killed Turnus' ally Rhoeteus, who had the bad luck to drive his two-horse chariot between Pallas and Ilus. Rhoeteus had been fleeing from the brothers Teuthras and Tyres, two of Pallas' warriors. Rhoeteus fell from his chariot and kicked the ground.

Pallas' warriors came to him and fought with him. They were like a fire that a shepherd starts and the wind blows and suddenly the fire grows and burns everything in its path.

But the enemy fought back. Halaesus, Turnus' ally who had been the companion of Agamemnon, killed Ladon, Pheres, and Demodocus. With his sword, he cut off the hand of Strymonius, who was trying to choke him. Halaesus crushed the skull of Thoas with a rock that smashed in his face and splattered blood and brain.

Halaesus' father, wanting to keep him safe, had hid him long ago deep in the woods. Halaesus' father knew how Halaesus was fated to die. But when Halaesus' father's eyes grew blind in death, the Fates took command and put Halaesus in Italy to die.

Pallas attacked Halaesus. As he did so, he prayed, "River-god of the Tiber, let this spear of my father go through the chest of Halaesus. I will strip his armor and give it to you!" The river-god heard Pallas' prayer. Halaesus used his shield to guard his ally Imaon. This left his chest exposed, and Pallas threw his spear and hit the target.

Lausus, the son of cruel Mezentius, also fought well as he sought to match the exploits of Pallas. Lausus killed the Trojan captain Abas first, and he killed other Trojans as well as Etruscans who fought for Aeneas.

The two sides fought fiercely. They were close together — too close to fight by throwing spears.

Pallas fought on one side; Lausus fought on the other side. They were young men who loved their fathers, who loved them in return. Pallas and Lausus were nearly matched in age and in handsomeness. They were matched in fate — neither would survive this battle. But neither would kill the other — Jupiter would not allow the two to fight face to face.

Turnus' sister Juturna had been a mortal, but Jupiter had raped her and then turned her into an immortal sea-nymph. She loved Turnus and advised him now to go to Lausus.

Turnus raced his chariot to where Lausus and Pallas were fighting with their men and shouted, "I will fight Pallas. He is mine! I wish that his father were present to watch me kill him!"

Lausus and the other warriors withdrew, and Pallas faced Turnus. Pallas looked Turnus over and then said to him, "We will fight, and I will win glory in one of two ways. Either I will kill you, or you will kill me. Either way, my father will be able to bear it. No more talking! No more threats! Let's fight!"

Pallas and Turnus faced each other in the center of the field. Turnus had dismounted from his chariot and now faced Pallas like a lion faces a bull just before attacking it.

Pallas lifted his spear and prayed to Hercules, who had been mortal but was now an immortal god: “Hercules, you came to my father’s land, where you were welcomed, although you were a stranger. Help me now to kill Turnus and strip his bloody armor from his bloody body!”

Hercules heard Pallas’ prayer, but the gods know the fates of mortal men, and so Hercules groaned in mourning. Tears streamed down his face as Jupiter said to him, “Each mortal man is fated to die after a brief life. For mortal men, life will never come again. All that they can do to achieve a kind of immortality is to achieve fame with their courage.

“Even the mortal sons of gods die — just look at the Trojan War! In that war, I lost my own son Sarpedon. Pallas will die now. Turnus will die, and soon. Every mortal man will at some time reach the end of his life.”

Jupiter stopped speaking, and his eyes moved away from the battle.

Pallas hurled his spear at Turnus. It pierced Turnus’ shield and grazed Turnus’ skin. Pallas drew his sword, and Turnus lifted his spear and hurled it at the young warrior, saying, “Let us see whether my spear will do more damage to you than your spear has done to me!”

Turnus’ spear pierced Pallas’ shield and his breastplate and his chest. Pallas pulled out the spear from his chest, and his blood and life exited his body with the spear. His mouth bloody, Pallas fell to the ground and died.

Standing over Pallas’ body, Turnus said, “Take a message to Pallas’ loving father, King Evander. Tell him that I am giving him his son’s body back. He is welcome to whatever comfort giving his son a proper burial will give him, but he has paid much for the welcome he gave to Aeneas.”

Turnus put his foot on Pallas’ corpse and pulled from the corpse a trophy: Pallas’ sword-belt. It was decorated with a scene depicting the marriage of the fifty daughters of Danaus to the fifty sons of Aegyptus. Danaus was suspicious of Aegyptus and his fifty sons, who wanted to marry Danaus’ fifty daughters, so he fled with his daughters, but Aegyptus and his fifty sons pursued them. To avoid a battle, Danaus told his fifty daughters to marry the fifty sons of Aegyptus, but although he allowed the marriages he also ordered his fifty daughters to kill the fifty sons of Aegyptus. All of his daughters except Hypermnestra, who had married Lynceus, obeyed. Hypermnestra spared Lynceus because he treated her with respect and did not force her to have sex with him their first night together. The gods did not like what the forty-nine women who had killed their husbands had done, and so those forty-nine daughters are punished in Hades with meaningless work. They are condemned to spend all their time trying to fill up with water a container that has a big leak and so can never be filled. Only one daughter avoided this eternal punishment. Only one daughter out of fifty gave *clementia* to her husband. Only one son out of fifty gave *clementia* to his wife. Giving *clementia* to another person can be difficult, but some

people find a way to do it although most people may do the wrong thing. Lynceus showed *clementia* to Hypermnestra, and Hypermnestra showed *clementia* to Lynceus.

Turnus gloried in the sword-belt, which the artist Clonus had created. But Turnus did not know his fate, and soon he would wish that Pallas were still alive and still wore this sword-belt.

Pallas' friends carried his corpse away on his shield as they mourned. Pallas would return dead to his father, having been killed on his first day of battle after killing so many of the enemy.

A messenger quickly brought news of the death of Pallas to Aeneas, who needed to rally his troops and the troops of his allies. Angry, he killed the enemy warriors nearest to him, and then he sought Turnus, killing as he went. Turnus was proud that he had killed Pallas, and Aeneas was angry at Turnus. Aeneas remembered King Evander and the welcome that Evander and Pallas had given to him.

Aeneas took eight enemy warriors alive so that they could be sacrificed later at the funeral of Pallas: They were four sons of Sulmo and four sons of Ufens. Aeneas wanted their blood to soak Pallas' funeral-pyre.

Aeneas next threw a spear at Magus, but he ducked and then ran to Aeneas, clasped his knees, and pleaded for his life: "I beg you not to kill me. I beg you by the spirit of your father, and I beg you by your son, don't kill me! I also have a father and a son, and I beg you not to kill for their sakes! I have wealth: gold and silver. Allow me to ransom myself. I am just one person. Whether you win or lose this war will not depend on me — I can make little difference in this war."

Aeneas replied, "Save your gold and silver for your sons. Let them have it. When Turnus killed Pallas, he also killed all chances of ransom. My living son and the ghost of my father want me to kill you."

Aeneas grabbed Magus' helmet and forced it back, exposing the throat, into which he plunged his sword to the hilt.

Aeneas next chased Haemon's son, who was a priest of Apollo and Diana. Haemon's son stumbled and fell to the ground. Aeneas stood over him and slaughtered him, staining his white robes red. Aeneas' aide Serestus stripped off Haemon's son's armor, which was later dedicated to the god Mars.

Caeculus and Umbro tried to rally the other enemy soldiers, but Aeneas cut off the left arm of Anxur, who had been boasting, thinking that his strength would keep him alive with all his limbs until he reached old age.

Tarquitus stood in Aeneas' path and challenged him. Aeneas hurled his spear and pinned Tarquitus' shield to his breastplate. Tarquitus begged for mercy, but Aeneas' sword cut off his head, and Tarquitus' head and torso rolled on the ground. Aeneas said, "Lie there! Your mother will not bury you. You will not be laid to rest in the tomb of your ancestors. Either birds will eat

your flesh as you lie on the ground, or your corpse will end up in the sea and fish will feed at your wounds.”

Aeneas attacked the finest enemy warriors he could find: warriors whom Turnus put in the front lines. He killed Antaeus, Lucas, Numa, and Camers. Camers was the son of Volcens, a wealthy man who had killed Euryalus and then been killed by Nisus.

Aeneas was like the monster Aegaeon, who had a hundred arms and a hundred hands and fifty shields and fifty swords and fifty mouths that spewed fire when he battled Jupiter and Jupiter’s thunderbolts.

Aeneas’ sword was hot from blood and friction as he continued to fight. He saw Niphaeus’ four-horse chariot and ran toward it. The four horses reared in terror, knocked Niphaeus out of the chariot, and then ran away.

Two brothers, Lucagus and Liger, rode together in their chariot. Liger held the reins, and Lucagus held a sword. On foot, Aeneas charged them. Liger shouted, “These horses do not belong to Diomedes, this chariot does not belong to Achilles, and this battlefield is not that of Troy. You will meet your death on *our* territory!”

Aeneas did not reply — with words. He hurled his spear at Lucagus, who held a shield as he slapped the horses with the flat side of his sword. Aeneas’ spear went through Lucagus’ shield and into the left side of his groin. Lucagus fell to the ground, writhed, and died. Aeneas shouted, “Lucagus, your horses have not deserted you — you have deserted your horses!”

Aeneas stopped the chariot by seizing the yoke, and Liger jumped from the chariot and begged for his life: “I beg you by your ancestors not to kill me. You are a great hero of Troy — please spare me!” Aeneas replied, “What you are saying now is much different from what you yelled at me before. Your new words will not save you. You will accompany your brother as he travels to the Land of the Dead!” Aeneas plunged his sword into Liger’s chest.

As Aeneas continued to slaughter many enemy warriors, Ascanius and his troops left the Trojan camp and reached a safer location.

On Mount Olympus, Jupiter teased his wife, Juno, “It is Venus, just as you thought, who makes the Trojans victorious — Aeneas’ strong hands have nothing to do with it.”

Juno replied, “Why try to anger me? I am saddened by what will happen. If only you loved me the way you used to love me, you would allow me to take Turnus away from the battlefield — unharmed. But I know what you want. You want him to die at the hands of Aeneas. But remember that Turnus has a notable heritage. One of his ancestors was Pilumnus, a woodland god. Also remember that Turnus has made many sacrifices to you.”

Jupiter replied, “If you are asking for a temporary reprieve from death for Turnus, knowing all the while that he must soon die, then save his life for now. Take him away from the battle. I

will allow you to do that much. But if you are asking for more than that — an ending to the war different from the ending that is fated — realize that that will not happen.”

Crying, Juno said, “I wish that your heart were different from your words. I wish that Turnus could live a long life. However, although Turnus is innocent, he is fated to endure an early death. I wish that you would — you have the power to do it — give him a long life.”

Juno flew down to the battle and created a phantom of Aeneas wearing Trojan armor. The phantom of Aeneas taunted Turnus, who threw a spear at it and then charged it. The phantom ran away, and Turnus ran after it, thinking that he was running after the real Aeneas.

Holding his sword in his right hand, Turnus shouted at the phantom, “To where are you fleeing, Aeneas? Why are you abandoning Lavinia, the bride you want so much? You have sought land in Italy, and my right hand will give you a few feet of land in which your corpse shall rest.”

Nearby was the ship that the Etruscan Osinius had sailed in. Aeneas’ phantom ran on board and hid itself. Turnus pursued the phantom, and once Turnus was on board, Juno cut the ropes that moored the ship and it sailed out to sea.

Turnus challenged the phantom of Aeneas, but the phantom vanished. The real Aeneas was still fighting and still looking for Turnus on the battlefield. Turnus then discovered that he was far from shore with no way of getting back. Not knowing that Juno had saved him from death, and thinking only about how what appeared to be his flight would result in a loss of honor, Turnus cried, “Jupiter, why are you punishing me? Where is this ship taking me? Is this ship taking me home? Why are you making me look like a coward? I had brave soldiers fighting for me — without me to lead them, they will probably die in battle. I see them dying. I see me in disgrace. I wish that the earth would open and swallow me! I wish that the winds would wreck this ship on rocks that are so far away that no one will know my shame!”

Turnus thought about what he should do. Should he commit suicide by falling on his sword? Should he jump into the sea and swim to shore and fight once more? Three times he thought of doing one thing. Three times he thought of doing the other thing. Juno would not allow him to do either. The ship carried Turnus to his home.

With Turnus gone, Mezentius led the attack, obeying the command of Jupiter. The Etruscans whom he had formerly cruelly ruled fiercely attacked him. They hated him, and they made him their sole target in the battle. He was like a rock standing up out of the ocean. The waves and winds batter it, but it still stands.

Mezentius killed Hebrus. He threw a rock and smashed Latagus’ face and mouth. Palmus tried to run away, but Mezentius cut the tendons in the backs of his knees. Palmus writhed on the ground, and Mezentius gave to Lausus, his own son, Palmus’ armor.

Mezentius then killed Euanthes and Mimas. Mimas was exactly the same age as Paris, Prince of Troy. Mimas' mother, Theano, gave birth to him the same day that Hecuba gave birth to Paris. Paris' corpse lay in Troy; Mimas' corpse lay in Italy.

Mezentius was like a wild boar that packs of dogs pursue down a mountain and toward the nets of hunters. The boar stops and the hunters attack him from a distance with spears — no hunter is brave enough to get close to him. Now, no warrior is brave enough to attack Mezentius up close with a sword. Instead, they stay at a distance from him and throw spears at him.

Mezentius saw Acron, a newly arrived Greek ally of Aeneas. Acron had gone into exile and left behind a marriage. Like a hungry lion that sees a goat or stag and pounces and bloodies its jaws with meat, Mezentius pounced on Acron and killed him.

Orodes ran away from Mezentius, who would not kill him with a spear from behind. Mezentius caught Orodes and turned him around and stabbed him with a sword in the front. Orodes fell, and Mezentius stabbed him with a spear.

Mezentius shouted, "Here lies a warrior who was among Aeneas' strongest!"

Dying, Orodes prophesized, "You don't have long to boast — you don't have long to live! Soon, you will lie dead on this battleground!"

Mezentius replied, "Jupiter will see about my death and when it will occur. As for you, you will die now!"

Mezentius pulled his spear out of Orodes' body, and Orodes' eyes saw the darkness that never ends.

Even without Turnus, the Rutulians and Mezentius' Etruscan allies were fighting well — although most Etruscans hated Mezentius and wanted him dead, a few Etruscans were loyal to him and fought for him. They had gone into exile with him.

Mezentius' Etruscan friend Caedicus killed Alcathous, Sacrator, and Hydaspes.

The Rutulian Rapo killed Parthenius and Orses.

Turnus' ally Messapus killed Clonius, who had been thrown from his horse. He also killed Erichaetes, who was fighting on foot.

Valerus, an Etruscan who fought for Mezentius, killed Agis, who fought for Aeneas.

The Rutulian Salius killed Thronius, and the Trojan Nealcus killed Salius. Nealcus fought well with spears and arrows.

If Aeneas had killed Turnus on the battlefield, the war would have been over. By saving Turnus' life, Juno had prolonged the war, getting more warriors killed. Mars, enjoying the slaughter, made both sides equal so that the battle would be long and many warriors on both sides would die. Other gods pitied the dying mortals. Venus watched the battle, as did Juno. In the midst of the battle, the Fury Tisiphone, snakes writhing in her hair, wreaked destruction.

Mezentius marched on the battlefield like the giant hunter Orion, whose shoulders rose above the water when he stood in the middle of the sea. When he stood on land, clouds hid his head.

Aeneas saw Mezentius and moved to fight him. Unafraid, Mezentius stood his ground and judged the distance between them. When Aeneas had come within range of Mezentius' spear, Mezentius cried, "My right arm is my only god. I pray to it that it will make my spear deadly! If I kill Aeneas, Lausus will wear Aeneas' armor. Lausus will be a living trophy of my victory over Aeneas."

Mezentius hurled his spear. It hit Aeneas' strong shield, bounced off, and hit Antores in between his side and groin. Antares had been the aide of Hercules, but had decided to serve Evander and stay in Italy. Killed by a spear that Mezentius had meant for Aeneas, Antores looked up at the sky and died as he thought of his Greek homeland.

Aeneas then hurled his spear at Mezentius. The spear tore through all the metal and bull's-hide layers of his shield and planted itself in Mezentius' groin, but the spear did not make a mortal wound.

Happy to have wounded Mezentius, Aeneas drew his sword and prepared to kill him, but Lausus, the loving son of Mezentius, protected him, although it meant that he — the good and loving son of a loving father who had been a cruel king — could die.

Mezentius backed away from Aeneas. Mezentius carried his shield, through which Aeneas' spear still stuck. Aeneas raised his sword, but Lausus stepped in front of his father and blocked Aeneas' sword. Mezentius' allies threw javelins at Aeneas. Imagine a storm with hailstones pelting the ground. Farmers and travelers seek shelter and safety until the sun returns and they can work or travel again. Aeneas stood behind the shelter of his shield until the hail of javelins stopped, and he said to Lausus, "Your love for your father will get you killed. You are not a match for me."

Lausus did not back away; instead, he attacked Aeneas, who was overcome by *furor*. The Fates finished spinning the thread of Lausus' life, and Aeneas plunged his sword to the hilt through Lausus' shield and tunic and embedded it in his body. Blood reddened Lausus' tunic, and his spirit, sorrowing, fled to the Land of the Dead.

Aeneas saw the look on Lausus' face as he died, and he pitied Lausus, a son who had deeply loved his father. Aeneas said to Lausus' corpse, "Is there anything I can do for your spirit now? Your love for your father is impressive. Keep your armor; I will not strip it off your body. You will receive a proper burial. And take comfort in that you died at the hands of a great warrior, for I am Aeneas."

Aeneas lifted Lausus off the ground, where the blood was soaking his hair, and he ordered Mezentius' Etruscan allies to come and carry away the corpse.

Mezentius had left the battlefield. He had bathed his wound by the river and now he was resting. His armor lay on the ground, and his helmet hung from a tree branch. Young soldiers stood guard around him. Mezentius was in pain, and he kept asking about his son, wanting Lausus to leave the battlefield — alive — and come to him.

Soon, Lausus' friends came carrying his body on his shield to Mezentius. Even while they were far away, Mezentius saw and heard them grieving and realized what had happened. He poured dust over his head, and then he held the corpse of his son and said, "Was I so fond of life that I wanted you to die for me? Did I want your death to save my life? No. I did not want this. This wound is worse than any mortal wound. I have been evil, but you have not, and you should not have died because of my sins. I have long owed my death to the Etruscans I so harshly ruled. I wish that I had paid that debt before you died. I am still alive — but not for long!"

Despite his painful wound, Mezentius stood up. His body was weak, but his spirit was strong. He ordered that his horse, Rhaebus, be brought to him, and he said to it, "We have been together for a long time, if that concept has any meaning in this world of mortality. Today, either we will kill Aeneas and avenge the death of Lausus, or you and I will both die. I do not believe that you would ever serve another master."

Mezentius armed himself and then mounted Rhaebus. He carried several spears as he rode toward Aeneas. Mezentius shouted to Aeneas three times. Aeneas recognized his voice and prayed to Jupiter and Apollo for victory. He shouted to Mezentius, "Let us fight!"

Mezentius replied, "You have already done to me the worst thing that you could do to me: kill my son. You have destroyed me in the only way you could ever destroy me. I do not fear death or the gods. So yes, let us fight!"

Mezentius rode Rhaebus in a circle around Aeneas and threw lances at him, but Aeneas' shield protected him. Aeneas kept tearing away the lances that lodged in his shield so he could continue to hold it up for protection.

Tired of being always on the defense, Aeneas decided on a course of action. He threw his spear at the head of Mezentius' horse — a direct hit! Rhaebus reared and then fell and died, dazing Mezentius and pinning him to the ground. Warriors on both sides shouted as Aeneas drew his sword and stood over Mezentius and said, "You used to be fierce. Where is your fierceness now?"

Mezentius recovered from his daze and said, "You have defeated me, so kill me — why bother to taunt me? In war, killing the enemy is not a crime. Neither of us has made an agreement to spare the other's life. My son made no pact with you that you would spare my life. I do ask one favor, if that is permitted. I know that the Etruscans hate me, and I ask that you bury my body. I want to share a burial-mound with my son."

Mezentius lifted his head and exposed his throat, and Aeneas drove his sword deep. Blood poured over Mezentius' chest.

Chapter 11: Camilla and Other Warriors (Aeneid)

After the battle, the enemy warriors retreated to Latium, the country of King Latinus. Turnus was also there. The Trojans stayed at their camp.

At dawn, Aeneas made a trophy for Mars. He cut the branches off the trunk of an oak tree, and he hung Mezentius' bloody armor and weapons on the trunk so that it resembled the fallen warrior. Mezentius' breastplate had been pierced a dozen times — the result of the Etruscans' hatred for him.

Aeneas then spoke to his warriors: "We have won the battle, troops. We will win the war. You see here the armor and weapons of one of our most important enemies: Mezentius. I killed him. Now we will march against Laurentum: King Latinus' city. Make sure that you are prepared to fight. When we go to war, we must be prepared to be victorious.

"But now we must do two things. We must bury our dead with the honors that they deserve. They have died for a good cause, and we must show them respect. But even before that we must prepare Pallas' body so that he can be sent to his father, our ally, King Evander."

Aeneas, in tears, grieved for Pallas. Acoetes, an old man, was with Pallas. As a younger man, Acoetes had been King Evander's armor-bearer. At that time, the omens were favorable. But when Acoetes left Pallanteum with Pallas and Aeneas, the omens were not favorable.

Around the corpse of Pallas was an honor guard of soldiers. Also present were many Trojan women with their hair unbound. They cried and shouted with grief and beat their breasts.

Aeneas looked at the corpse of Pallas. Because of the loss of blood, Pallas' face was very white. His chest bore a savage spear wound.

Aeneas said to the corpse, "A little while ago, you were alive and happy. Now you will never see the Trojans build a city. You will never return home to your father alive and triumphant. I promised your father to watch after you, but I failed to keep you alive. Your father warned me that the warriors we would fight were dangerous and brave and used to battle. Right now, not knowing that you are dead, your father is likely sacrificing and praying to the gods for your safe return. But we will bring to him only your corpse.

"King Evander, you will suffer the worst thing that a parent can suffer: the funeral of your child. The son who would have ruled Pallanteum after your death is now dead.

"But at least Pallas died bravely. He did not run from danger. He did not run away and disgrace himself so that he could continue to live. King Evander, you will know that you have a brave and honorable son. But Italy has lost a man who would have been a good king, and my son has lost someone who would have been a good friend to him."

Aeneas then sent Pallas' body back to King Evander. He chose a thousand troops to carry the corpse back and to mourn at the funeral. A funeral can offer only little comfort, but King Evander deserved whatever comfort he could find. Aeneas' people built a bed of wickerwork on which to place the corpse and carry it. Pallas' corpse lay on the wickerwork like a flower that a girl has cut. The flower is dead, but it is still beautiful. Aeneas brought two robes that Dido had made and given to him. These were used to cover Pallas' body — a body that would soon be burned on a funeral-pyre.

Aeneas ordered much of the plunder that his troops had seized after winning the battle to be sent to King Evander along with Pallas' body. Aeneas also sent horses and weapons. In the battle, Aeneas had captured twelve enemy warriors. He sent them — their hands tied behind their backs — so that they could shed their blood as a human sacrifice at the funeral. He also ordered trophies to be sent: tree trunks with limbs cut off that bore the armor and weapons and names of fallen enemy warriors.

Old Acoetes mourned, beating his chest and clawing at his face and stumbling and falling on the ground. The Trojans helped him up and journeyed with him to King Evander. In the procession were chariots that were covered with the blood of enemies. Aethon, Pallas' horse, mourned, tears trickling down his face. Pallas' spear and helmet would be returned to King Evander — Turnus had the rest of Pallas' armor, including the sword-belt.

The long cortege set off to bear Pallas' corpse to King Evander, and Aeneas mourned, "I cannot go with you. The war continues, and I must fight and lead my troops into battle. Farewell, Pallas." He returned to the Trojan camp.

Envoys came to Aeneas from King Latinus' city. They displayed olive branches to show that they did not intend to fight but had come for a different reason. They asked for a truce in which to bury the dead: "It is time for us to return these defeated, dead warriors to the earth. They need a proper burial. There is no need to punish them by not allowing their bodies to be buried — they have already been defeated and killed and so will never fight again, and at one time you regarded them as your hosts."

Aeneas agreed to the truce, saying, "Why have you fought us and then fled from us? We should be your friends. You want peace for the dead? I grant that. I am also willing to grant peace to the living. Why are we Trojans here in Italy? Because it is our fate to make our home here. If not for fate, we would never have come here. I did not start the war. King Latinus and I had a pact of peace, but the Latins who serve him broke the pact and started the war — a war that Turnus fights. Many people would live if Turnus were to die. Turnus and I should have fought a single combat to the death, thus sparing the lives of many warriors. I agree to this truce. Go and bury your dead."

The envoys were impressed by the way that Aeneas had spoken.

Drances, an aging Rutulian and a personal enemy to Turnus, was willing to build Aeneas up and to tear Turnus down. He said, “Great Aeneas, you are worthy of praise. You are just, and you are a mighty warrior. We will carry news of the truce you have consented to back to King Latinus. If we can, we will make you friends with King Latinus and let Turnus find new allies. We will even help you, if we can, to build a new Troy!”

The other envoys agreed with Drances. The truce held for twelve days, and the Trojans and their enemies worked close to each other without incident during that time as they cut wood with which to build funeral-pyres.

Rumors now reached King Evander. He had heard news at first of Pallas’ triumphs, but now came news of his death. Pallas’ body arrived with its long cortege of mourners; in Pallanteum, the citizens greeted the cortege with funeral torches. The mothers of the city wailed with grief.

King Evander went to the corpse of his son and threw himself on it. He cried, “Pallas, you promised me that you would be careful, that you would do nothing rash. I know that a young man can be overeager to do mighty deeds in battle and not realize the battle’s dangers. I prayed to the gods for your safety, but the gods did not grant my prayer. In contrast to me, my wife, your mother, was blessed — she died before you died. She cannot feel the grief that I feel. My fate is evil: I outlived my son! I should have gone to war alongside the Trojans and been killed with a spear in battle. Better it would have been if the Trojans had brought my corpse — not yours — to Pallanteum. I do not blame the Trojans for your death — the Trojans and we are friends. I blame fate for your early death. But at least I know that you gained glory in battle!

“Now we will give you a proper funeral that will be attended by the trophies of the enemy warriors whom you killed in battle. One trophy, however, is missing — the trophy of Turnus, the trophy that will bear Turnus’ bloody armor. If you, Pallas, had been as old and as strong as Turnus, his trophy would be here now.

“Trojans, tell Aeneas that the reason I keep on living now that my son is dead is that I wait for Aeneas to kill Turnus. Aeneas owes me the life of Turnus, the warrior who killed my son. Killing Turnus will bring Aeneas glory; it will not bring me joy, for it is now impossible for me to feel joy. But when I die, I want to take to my son the news that Turnus is dead.”

When dawn arrived, Aeneas and his Etruscan ally Tarchon erected funeral-pyres on which to burn their dead. They put the dead on the pyres, set the pyres on fire, and performed the proper rites, riding three times on horseback around the burning pyres. They wept, and they shouted cries of grief.

Some mourners heaped the property of enemy warriors on the pyres: helmets, swords, bridles, and chariot wheels. Others heaped the shields and spears of the fallen friendly warriors on the pyres. Others made sacrifices to the gods: swine and cattle and sheep. All day the funeral-pyres burned.

Elsewhere, the enemy also built funeral-pyres for their dead. Some dead were sent back to their hometowns for burial rites. Many of the dead could not be recognized, so they were burned in a common funeral-pyre. After the bodies were burned, the mourners piled earth over the bones.

Cries of grief filled the city of King Latinus. Mothers and brides and sisters and fatherless boys mourned. They hated the war, and they said, “Turnus wants to marry Lavinia. Turnus wants to rule western Italy. Turnus is the one who should fight Aeneas. This is his fight — it ought not to be our fight!”

Drances deliberately caused hate and discontent. He swore that Aeneas had challenged Turnus to single combat. But many people still supported Turnus, including Amata, the queen. Turnus was still respected — he had achieved notable victories in battle.

Now the envoys who had traveled to Diomedes’ city to ask him for his support in the war returned — with bad news for Turnus: “Diomedes will not fight with us against Aeneas. If we are to have allies, we must find them elsewhere — or we must ask Aeneas for peace.”

After hearing this news, King Latinus believed that the Fates really must have ordered Aeneas to come to Italy. By opposing Aeneas, his warriors deserved their new graves. King Latinus called a council. Unhappy, he ordered the envoys who had seen Diomedes to make their report.

Venus, the leader of the envoys, said, “We have seen Diomedes and his city, and we have talked to him. We traveled through dangerous lands, and we clasped Diomedes’ hand — the hand that conquered Troy. He is in the midst of building his city, which he has named Argypa, in northwest Italy.

“We gave him our gifts and talked to him about Aeneas, our enemy. He replied, ‘You have been happily at peace, so why do you now seek war? You do not know the evils of war. Those of us who fought at Troy know the pain of fighting and the pain of losing warriors. We still suffer pain. Many of us are strewn around the world, far from the lands that we used to call home. We have been punished for our crimes, and now even Priam might pity us. Minerva has been angry at us, and she has shown us the consequences of her anger. Menelaus has been driven far from his homeland; he has been long an exile. Ulysses, far from home, has seen the Cyclopes. The son of Achilles, Pyrrhus, reigned only briefly and is now dead. Idomeneus returned to Crete, but his citizens banished him after he killed his son. The Locrians fought at Troy, but on their way home they were shipwrecked in Libya. Agamemnon returned home, but immediately his wicked wife murdered him. Agamemnon had conquered Asia, but an adulteress killed him.

“What about me? The gods have not allowed me to stay at my old home and be with my wife. The omens I see terrify me — they show my comrades turned into lamenting birds! I deserve my punishment — at Troy, I dared to attack and wound Venus!

“I am not willing to fight with you against Aeneas. I have not fought the Trojans since the Trojan War, and I see no need to fight them now. After all, I hardly look back on the Trojan War with joy. You have brought gifts for me, but I advise you to take the gifts and give them to Aeneas. I have fought him face to face. I know what a mighty warrior he is! If Troy had had two more warriors like Aeneas, Troy would have won the war and then would have crossed the sea and attacked Greece. The Greeks would now be in mourning. If Troy had had two more warriors like Aeneas, the Fates would have decreed a good destiny for Troy. We Greeks fought for ten years at Troy on equal terms with the Trojans because of Aeneas and Hector, who kept the Greeks from victory for so many years. Aeneas and Hector were both courageous, and both were mighty warriors, but Aeneas was first in *pietas*. My advice to you is to make peace with Aeneas and the Trojans. It is not wise to make war against them.”

“This is what Diomedes said to us. This is Diomedes’ advice to us.”

Troubled conversations broke out among the Italians. The sound was like rocks resisting the swift water in a river, and the banks of the river echo the sound. When the conversations died down, King Latinus said, “We would have done much better if we had made peace with the Trojans long ago. Now the Trojans are our enemies, and they are camped nearby. The Trojans are descended from the gods, and the Trojans are mighty warriors. They may have been defeated in the Trojan War, but they are far from laying down their swords. Even after defeat, they are dangerous. Diomedes will not become our ally; if we fight the Trojans, we must alone fight them. We have fought as well as we can fight, but we have been defeated. None of us is to blame; the Trojans are simply mightier warriors than we are.

“I want to make a proposal of peace to the Trojans. Our kingdom has land along the Tiber River. Much of it is good cropland; the other parts are good for grazing herds. I want to give the Trojans this land and some good timberland if they wish to stay here and build a city. But if they wish to sail to another land, we will build them twenty ships — more if the Trojans need more ships — out of timber. We have the metal and the shipwrights needed to build the ships.

“I want to send one hundred envoys to the Trojans to bear news of this offer of peace. The envoys will carry olive branches to show that they want peace. They will bring the Trojans gifts: gold, ivory, and other good things.

“Talk over my proposal. I think that my proposal is the best for our kingdom.”

Drances then rose to speak. He hated Turnus, and he envied Turnus’ glory. Drances spent money freely, and he spoke even more freely. In battle, he was a weakling. His strengths were debate and power politics. His mother was noble, but no one was quite sure who was his father.

Drances said, “Obviously, our situation is poor. Everyone knows that, although many do not want to admit it. Turnus needs to allow us to speak the truth. He is a proud man, but his

leadership is poor. He can threaten me with death if he likes, but I will speak up. Many of our best people have died in battle — a battle from which Turnus sailed away alone in a ship!

“King Latinus, your offer of peace to the Trojans is good, but I advise you to add one more gift for Aeneas. Allow him to marry your daughter. You are her father, and Aeneas will make you a good son-in-law. A marriage will result in peace.

“Let Turnus agree to let Aeneas marry Lavinia. Why should Turnus get so many of us killed because he wants to marry Lavinia? He is the cause of the war — we are the ones who suffer! We need peace!

“Turnus, I am the first one to speak out against you, and you believe that I am your enemy. Should it matter that I am your enemy? Do the right thing! Take pity on the families of the warriors who have died, and seek peace! You have been defeated, so act like it! We are tired of death. We are tired of seeing our kingdom devastated.

“Turnus, if you want to be a hero, you can be a hero by meeting Aeneas in single combat. That is the way for you to win your bride! That is better than letting us die so that you can marry Lavinia. You regard our lives as being worth less than your own. Our corpses are the ones littering the battlefield. Aeneas is challenging you to single combat — accept the challenge!”

Drances would be happy if Aeneas were to kill Turnus in single combat.

Filled with *furor*, Turnus replied, “You are a mighty warrior, Drances — but with words, not weapons! At councils, you are always the first citizen to speak. You keep talking — that is what you are good at. You are brave as long as you are behind high defensive walls and a trench.

“But you are saying that I am a coward. I will believe you as soon as I see heaps of Trojans that you have slain. When you have killed as many Trojans as I have killed, I will believe what you say about courage and cowardice.

“Drances, march with me against the Trojans. They are near; they will not be difficult to find. What? You aren’t willing to fight the Trojans? You find it much safer to fight with words than with weapons.

“Drances, you say that I am defeated, but many Trojans are dead — the Tiber River swelled because of their blood. Ask King Evander if I am defeated. Ask his warriors if I am defeated. Ask Pandarus and Bitias and the many warriors I killed when I was the only Rutulian inside the Trojan camp if I am defeated.

“Drances, you say that we cannot win the war. Go and tell that to Aeneas and make him happy; you can find a way to personally benefit from being a traitor. Here you are, trying to create panic in your hearers by criticizing the warriors of your own country.

“Drances, I suppose that you believe that everyone is afraid of the Trojan warriors. The warriors of Achilles are afraid of them, Diomedes is afraid of them, and you seem to think that we are supposed to believe that even Achilles was afraid of them.

“Drances, you are putting on an act right now. You are pretending to be afraid of me and you are cowering. You have attacked my courage. Now you are attacking my character by pretending that I am a bully. You need not be afraid. I am not going to attack you. I am not going to kill you. Your heart will keep on beating inside the body of a coward.

“King Evander, if you truly think that we are defeated, then we should beg for peace, but are we defeated? At one time, we were courageous. The best men are those who reject surrender. A good man is one who will not surrender, but who will fight and die.

“King Evander, if we still have warriors and weapons, if we still have Italian allies, if the Trojans have also suffered in battle and have lost many warriors, then why should we give up and surrender now? Why should we lack courage?

“The Wheel of Fortune turns, and those once brought low are then raised high. Many men have been defeated before, but Fortune has then made them victorious. True, Diomedes declines to fight with us. But Messapus will fight with us, Tolumnius will fight with us, and many other men will. So will Camilla, who is the head of many horsemen.

“If Aeneas calls on me to fight him in single combat, and if you want me to accept, I will. I am no stranger to victory in combat. I am willing to fight Aeneas even if he is strong enough to defeat Achilles and even if he is wearing armor the equal of Achilles’ divine armor. Let he and I fight! That is something that Drances is not willing to do.”

Aeneas had been busy. He and his warriors had left the Trojan camp, and they were prepared for battle. He had sent out some troops ahead of the others.

A messenger now came into the Italian council and blurted, “The enemy army is advancing against us! The Trojans and their allies are coming!” Panic and confusion spread in King Latinus’ city. Many young warriors shouted, “To battle!” But their elderly fathers mourned. The many cries in the city were like the cries of a flock of birds in a grove of trees or the cries of swans in the Padusa River.

In the council, Turnus said, “While you are praising peace, your enemies are preparing to kill you!”

Turnus left the council and gave orders: “Volusus, lead your warriors outside the city. Messapus, you and Coras, and Catillus, Coras’ twin brother, lead the cavalry. One group of warriors will stand here and guard the city. All other warriors, come with me!”

King Latinus left the council. Now he could not put his plans for peace into effect. He blamed himself for not making peace earlier — he blamed himself for not making Aeneas an ally instead of an enemy.

The warriors prepared for war. Boys and mothers were on the walls, ready to defend them. The queen and other ladies rode on horseback and took gifts to the temple of Minerva to pray for her protection. Beside Queen Amata rode Lavinia, the bride over whom the war was being

fought and warriors were dying. Lavinia's eyes looked down at the ground. At the temple, the ladies burned incense and prayed, "Minerva, shatter the spear of Aeneas, and shatter Aeneas!"

Turnus armed himself and went out to lead the army. He was like a stallion that has broken free of its tether and now runs to a pasture to mingle with mares or to plunge into a river.

Camilla, the warrior woman, met Turnus. Camilla and her horsemen dismounted, and Camilla said to Turnus, "Let me meet the enemy troops. Aeneas has sent his cavalry ahead of his other troops. Let me and my cavalry fight them. You can stay here and guard the walls of the city."

Turnus said, "Camilla, warrior princess, thank you. You are courageous, but I will share the fight with you outside the walls of the city. As you say, Aeneas has sent his cavalry ahead of his other troops. I have learned that Aeneas himself is marching here with his infantry through hilly terrain, and I am going to set an ambush at a path Aeneas will take through a gorge. You and your cavalry can fight the Etruscan cavalry Aeneas has sent ahead of his other troops. You can lead the attack; backing you up will be Messapus and his cavalry and Tiburtus' warriors."

Turnus knew the terrain around the city, and he knew well the path that Aeneas and his infantry would take. It was a narrow path, and alongside it were walls of rock from the tops of which warriors could throw weapons or drop boulders or ride down and attack Aeneas and his troops. Turnus and his warriors went there and waited to ambush Aeneas.

On Mount Olympus, Diana, who knew the fates of mortals, called for Opis, an immortal nymph who served her. Diana was a virgin goddess, and her followers — whether immortal or mortal — were also virgins. Opis and Camilla were both virgin followers of Diana.

Diana said to Opis, "Camilla is putting on armor to fight in war, but her fighting will be in vain. She will not get the result she wants. I love and respect her, and she loves and respects me.

"This is Camilla's story. Her father, Metabus, became a tyrant and his people hated him and drove him away. They pursued him as he ran away with Camilla, his daughter, who was then an infant. Her mother's name is slightly different: Casmilla.

"Metabus fled through woods, and enemy weapons forced him to go to the Amasenus River, then in flood. To escape his enemies, Metabus had to swim the river, but he loved his daughter and would not risk her life. He tied her to a spear and cushioned her with corkwood. He then threw his spear and Camilla across the river, first praying to me, 'Diana, I give this baby girl to you. She will worship you. I ask you for your mercy. Protect my infant daughter as she travels through the air to the opposite shore!'

He hurled the spear that carried his daughter across the river, and as his enemies arrived, he jumped into the river and swam across it. With joy, he discovered that I had protected Camilla — she was safe.

Metabus stayed away from cities, preferring to live in the woods and raise his daughter there. He fed Camilla with milk from a wild mare, squirting milk from its udders directly into her

mouth. When Camilla began to toddle and take her first steps, he gave her a tiny spear and a tiny bow and arrows. She did not wear a gold band around her head. For clothing, she used the skin of a tiger. She hurled her tiny spears. With a slingshot, she killed birds.

“When Camilla reached puberty, many mothers wanted her to marry their sons, but she remained devoted to me and stayed a virgin. She loves chastity and hunting, but now she is going to war against the Trojans. I wish that she had stayed at her home. She would continue to live and continue to serve me.

“I have orders for you, Opis. Go down to the battle, where the omens are bad for Camilla and for Turnus. Take my bow and quiver of arrows. Watch the battle, and after Camilla is killed, take one of my arrows and avenge her death by killing the person who killed her. I myself will take Camilla’s body to her home so that it can receive a proper funeral.”

Opis obeyed the orders of Diana. Taking Diana’s bow and quiver of arrows, she flew down to the battlefield. No one saw her; she had wrapped herself in a whirlwind.

Some Trojan forces and the Etruscan cavalry advanced toward King Latinus’ city: Laurentum. Warriors carried many spears across the plain in front of the city. Messapus, Coras, and Camilla and their troops also appeared with their weapons and marched against the forces opposing them.

When the two forces of warriors had come so close that a spear could be thrown from one army to the other, the two armies rushed forward and fought. The Etruscan Tyrrhenus and the Italian Aconteus rode against each other, charging with spears. Their horses crashed together and broke ribs. Aconteus fell off his horse. Badly injured, he gasped and died.

The Italians fled on their horses, and the Trojans and the Etruscans chased them. The Italians carried their shields on their backs for protection as the Etruscan seer Asilas and his horsemen chased them. When the Italians had nearly reached the walls of their city, they turned around and attacked. Now the Trojans and the Etruscans turned around, and their enemy chased them.

Waves wash up on a shore, going high, and then they reverse direction and retreat. So it was with the Trojans and the Etruscans and their enemy. They kept reversing direction: The first group chased the second group, and then the second group chased the first group.

But then the two groups closed together and fought warrior to warrior. The air filled with the groans of dying warriors, weapons and blood and dead warriors and horses covered the ground, and dying horses writhed.

The Trojan Orsilochus was wary of fighting the Rutulian Remulus on horseback, so he threw his lance at Remulus’ horse, spearing it below an ear. In agony, the horse reared and threw Remulus, who rolled on the ground.

Catillus, an ally of Turnus, killed Iollas and the huge warrior Herminius, who fought with his shoulders bare because he did not fear injuries. But Catillus speared him, and the head of the spear exited through Herminius' back, and Herminius felt the agony of the wound.

The battlefield was filled with pools of blood, the crashes of weapons against shields, death, and wounded warriors and horses.

Camilla fought with one breast bared — her weapons were spears and arrows and a double-headed battle-ax. Even when she retreated on horseback, she shot arrows at her pursuers. Fighting with Camilla were other warrior maidens: Tulla, Larina, and Tarpeia, who fought with an ax. They were like the Amazons of Thrace who fought around Queen Hippolyte or who cried out to welcome Queen Penthesilea.

Camilla killed and killed again. She ran toward Eunaeus and speared him, and he vomited blood and writhed on the ground and died. The Trojan Liris fell to the ground when his horse was injured, and his friend Pagasus ran to help him. Camilla killed both of them. Camilla then killed Amastrus. Throwing spears, she killed Tereus, Harpalycus, Demophoön, and Chromis. She did not miss with her spears.

Ornytus, a hunter who was an Etruscan ally of Aeneas, wore unusual armor to the battle. He wore a bull's-hide over his shoulders. For a helmet, he wore the head of a wolf. For a weapon, he carried a hunter's javelin. He was taller than the other warriors by a head, but when he and the warriors with him were retreating, Camilla chased him and pierced his body with a spear, saying, "This is a battle, not a hunt. My spear has made that clear to you. You will be able to tell the other ghosts in the Land of the Dead that you were killed by no ordinary warrior — Camilla killed you!"

Camilla then killed the Trojans Butes and Orsilochus. While Butes' back was turned toward her, she speared him in the neck, under his helmet. Then she outsmarted Orsilochus. She fled from him and raced her swift horse in a circle so quickly that the pursued became the pursuer. He begged her for mercy, but she raised her battle-ax and smashed his head many times, cutting through his helmet and his skull and splattering his brain onto his face.

Camilla then faced Aunus' son, a noted liar who was terrified to see her. He tried to trick his way out of death. Both Aunus' son and Camilla were on horseback, and Aunus' son said to her, "Your horse deserves much of the credit for your victories in battle. Meet me face to face on the ground, and we will see who is victorious!"

Camilla was willing to fight Aunus' son on the ground. She dismounted and gave her horse to an aide and stood with a sword waiting for Aunus' son to dismount, but he immediately attempted to gallop away from Camilla and his death.

She said, "Fool and liar! Your trick will not work! You will not return to your homeland alive!"

She ran and grabbed the horse's bridle and killed the son of Aunus. She was like a falcon diving down from the sky and seizing a dove and ripping it to bloody pieces. Drops of blood and bloody feathers fall from the sky.

Jupiter was watching the battle. He now sent courage in battle to the Etruscan leader Tarchon, one of Aeneas' allies. Tarchon led his cavalry and spurred them on with words: "Are you cowards? Look at the damage that a woman is doing to us! Are our swords useless? Are our spears useless? When it is time to have sex or dance or eat and drink, you show no fear. Isn't the battlefield another place where you should have no fear?"

Ready to die if his death were fated, Tarchon rode his warhorse into the midst of the battle. He rode straight at Venulus, grabbed him and pulled him off his horse, and holding him tightly, he rode away with his enemy. Tarchon first broke off the tip of Venulus' spear and then searched for a mortal spot so that he could kill him. Venulus fought to keep Tarchon's hand from his throat. Tarchon was like an eagle that has seized a snake — the snake fights back, but the eagle clasps its talons all the more tightly around the snake. Tarchon, triumphant, rode away with Venulus.

Tarchon's Etruscans were inspired by his success. Arruns, an Etruscan ally of Aeneas, began to stalk Camilla, wanting to kill her without losing his own life. He did not know that on this day he would die. He followed Camilla, and whenever she turned around and came toward him, he retreated. Continually, he tried to get close enough to her — without her seeing him — to kill her.

Camilla saw the Trojan Chloerus, a priest of Cybele, the Great Mother of Gods. Cybele was the wife of Saturn and the mother of many of the Olympian gods, including Zeus and Poseidon. Works of art often showed Cybele seated with lions by her side. Worship of her included dancing to the music of drum and fife. The priests of the Phrygian goddess Cybele were known as Corybantes, whose worship of Cybele included an ecstasy in which they castrated themselves.

Chloerus was dressed in gaudy armor with lots of red and purple and yellow. He carried a bow made of gold, and he wore a gold helmet. His cape was saffron, and he wore a golden brooch. Camilla may have wanted to dedicate Chloerus' armor and clothing to Diana, or she may have wanted his armor and clothing for herself, but she was attracted by the gaudy armor and clothing and she wanted it. She stalked Chloerus, neglecting to pay enough attention to the other enemy warriors.

Arruns saw his chance to kill Camilla. He prayed, "Apollo, we worship you and we even walk on fire for you as part of our worship of you. Let me be victorious over Camilla, who has killed so many of our warriors. I am not out for plunder or even for glory. I can gain those with other feats in battle. Just let me kill this girl, even though I gain no plunder from the kill. And let me return to my father's land alive and unharmed."

Apollo heard the prayer, but he would grant only part of it. Yes, Arruns would kill Camilla. But no, Arruns would not return to his father's land alive and unharmed. That part of the prayer Apollo allowed the winds to scatter.

Arruns threw his spear. Camilla's warriors heard the spear and turned and watched as it struck Camilla beneath her naked breast and sank deep in her body. Camilla's attendants ran to catch her as she fell off her horse. Arruns did not stay to glory over his kill, but instead quickly galloped away, hoping to outrace death.

Arruns was like a wolf that has killed a shepherd or an ox. The wolf knows that men with spears will be out for revenge, so it runs away, its tail between its legs, hoping to disappear before the armed men can take revenge. Arruns hoped to escape, and so he ran away.

Camilla tried to pull out the spear, but she could not. She had lost much blood, and she was weak and growing weaker. Her eyes were becoming useless, she was growing colder, and her face was growing paler. With only a few breaths remaining to her, she told her fellow woman warrior Acca, "This is my last battle. Go to Turnus and tell him that he must return and defend the city from the Trojans and their allies. Goodbye."

Camilla died. She dropped her weapons, and her breath left her body. Her spirit went to the Land of the Dead.

Her warriors and their allies grieved for her, and their cries reached the golden stars. The Trojans and their allies attacked more fiercely now that Camilla had died, and they shouted cries of war.

Opis, the attendant of Diana, had kept watch. She saw Camilla die, and she mourned, "Your death is cruel. You should still be alive. But Diana has remembered you. You have gained honor in battle, and your death will gain you honor. An arrow of Diana shall avenge you.

Opis flew to the burial-mound of Dercennus, a king of old. She saw Arruns, who was proud of his kill, galloping away from the battle and toward the burial-mound. Opis shouted, "Why are you galloping so quickly? You are racing toward your well-deserved death!"

Opis fitted one of Diana's arrows to the bow and drew back the bow until its ends almost touched each other. She loosed the arrow. Arruns heard the arrow coming toward him, and he heard it enter his flesh. He fell from his horse and gasped his final breath, alone. Opis returned to Diana and Olympus.

The Trojans and their allies routed the enemy. Left without a leader, Camilla's cavalry fled first, followed closely by the Rutulians. Atinas, a brave Rutulian leader, also fled. The Trojans' enemies raced for their city's walls, and the Trojans and allies pursued and killed them. The mothers of the Trojans' enemies wailed.

The Trojans and their allies killed many Rutulians and their allies in front of the gates. Some warriors closed the gates, leaving friends outside — friends begging for the gates to be opened so

that they could reach safety. Warriors fought, and some fell in the trenches. Mothers on the walls of the city emulated Camilla and fought, dropping heavy wooden beams from the walls onto their enemies. Their hands trembled as they lifted the heavy beams, but the mothers were willing to die for their city. They fought with weapons of wood, not metal.

Turnus was still lying in ambush, waiting for Aeneas and his troops. Acca brought him the news that Camilla had died and the Trojans were routing Turnus' allies. As Jupiter desired, Turnus was filled with *furor* and abandoned the ambush. Almost as soon as Turnus abandoned the ambush, Aeneas and his troops arrived. If Turnus had stayed only a little while longer, he could have inflicted heavy damage on his enemy.

Now two armies sped toward the walls of Laurentum: Turnus' army and Aeneas' army. The two armies were close, and Turnus and Aeneas looked at each other. They would have fought immediately, but darkness arrived. Aeneas' army camped in front of the city; Turnus' army fortified the walls of the city.

Chapter 12: A Destiny Fulfilled (Aeneid)

Turnus knew that his troops had been defeated again in a major battle. Twice they had faced Aeneas' troops, and twice Aeneas' troops had defeated them. Turnus knew that he should meet Aeneas in single combat. Turnus was like a lion that fights hunters more fiercely after the hunters have deeply wounded it. Then the lion is willing to fight. The lion bites and breaks off the spear in its body, and it roars, unafraid of wounds.

Inside the walls of Laurentum, Turnus said to King Latinus, "I will not keep the Trojans waiting. Aeneas and I will fight in single combat. The Trojans have no reason to avoid the single combat. Start the sacred rites and form a pact with the Trojans for the single combat. I will fight and defeat Aeneas, who fled from Troy. I alone — with my warriors watching — will show that we are not cowards. The alternative is that Aeneas will rule a defeated people and Lavinia will be his bride."

King Latinus calmly replied, "Turnus, no one doubts your courage, but I need to consider what is best for my people as a whole. You have a kingdom of your own. Your father, Daunus, has many towns for you to rule, and you have conquered other towns with your sword. I, King Latinus, have wealth and am willing to share it. Listen. In my kingdom are many unwed girls who need husbands. They can marry any of several suitors. But the gods have plans for Lavinia. The gods forbid me to marry Lavinia to an Italian suitor. The gods and the prophets have clearly stated that that would be wrong. But out of my love for you, and because of our kinship and the wishes of my wife, I allowed Lavinia to be engaged to you, although the gods want Aeneas to be her husband. We are wrong when we wage war against the Trojans.

"You have seen the results of our unjust war. Twice we have fought major battles, and twice we have been defeated. Our enemies, who should be our friends, camp outside our city. The Tiber River is still red with our blood. Our bones still lie on the battlefield.

"I must obey the gods. If you, Turnus, were to die in battle, I would accept Aeneas as my son-in-law. Why should I not accept Aeneas as my son-in-law now, while you are still alive? If I let you fight and die, what will your Rutulians think of my people and me? Give up your desire for marriage with my daughter. Do what is best for your aged father, who does not want you to die."

King Latinus' words made Turnus only more eager to fight Aeneas. He replied, "Do not worry about my death. I am willing to trade death for glory and fame. And remember that I have weapons and that I am a warrior — the wounds that I inflict make much blood flow. When I fight Aeneas, I think that his mother, Venus, will be far away and unable to hide her son in fog to keep him safe."

Queen Amata, worried about the single combat, said to Turnus, “Let my tears influence your decision. Do not fight Aeneas in single combat. In your warrior’s hands rest the fate of our kingdom. In your warrior’s hands rest my own fate. If you fall in single combat, I will also die. I am not willing to stay alive if it means seeing Aeneas marry Lavinia.”

Lavinia was present and listening to the debate. Hearing her mother’s words, she wept and blushed. Her cheeks were like ivory dyed red. Her cheeks were like white lilies that take on a ruddy hue when surrounded by red roses.

Turnus looked at Lavinia as she blushed. Inflamed with love, he said to Queen Amata, “I will fight Aeneas in single combat, so don’t say anything that can be interpreted as an evil omen. My fate, whatever it is, is already set.”

Turnus then said to Idmon, a fellow Rutulian, “Take a message to Aeneas — a message that I doubt he will like. At dawn, he must not attack the city; instead, he and I will meet in single combat. The blood of our warriors shall not end this war; instead, either his blood or my blood will end this war.”

Turnus left and went to his horses to make sure that they would be ready. His horses were magnificent and swift. They were gifts from Orithyia, who had married Boreas, the North wind. She had given them to Pilumnus, an ancestor of Turnus. Turnus’ charioteers were grooming them and getting them ready for the next day.

Turnus then armed himself with breastplate, shield, helmet, and a sword that had been made for his father, Daunus, by the fire-god himself, Vulcan, who had plunged it into the Styx River. He also armed himself with a spear that he had taken as plunder from Actor, an enemy. Turnus shook the spear and said, “You have never failed me in battle. The great warrior Actor wielded you in battle, and now I wield you. Help me to kill Aeneas and strip his breastplate and destroy it. Aeneas is nothing but a eunuch! Let me make his perfumed hair bloody in the dust!”

Furor consumed Turnus. Fire consumed him. Turnus was like a bull before it goes into battle. It bellows, it buries its horns in tree trunks, and it challenges the wind as it prepares to do battle.

Aeneas had received Turnus’ message and was happy that a single combat would end the war. He spoke to his friends and his son about fate, and he sent envoys to King Latinus to set the terms of the peace that would follow the single combat.

Just before dawn, the Trojans and their enemies prepared the dueling ground in front of the city and set up altars to their common gods. Both armies were present; thousands of warriors would witness the single combat. Among the leaders present were the Trojan Mnestheus, the Etruscan seer and Trojan ally Asilas, and the Rutulian Messapus. The time for the single combat arrived. The warriors put aside their spears and shields. Watching from the walls of the city were unarmed mothers and old men.

Juno watched from a mountain. At that time, it had no name, but now it is called the Alban mountain. She saw the two armies, and she saw the dueling ground. Always ready to interfere and cause trouble for Aeneas, she called Juturna to her. Juturna was the sister of Turnus. She had once been a mortal girl, but Jupiter had raped her and as recompense for her stolen virginity, he had made her an immortal nymph. Juno normally hated the women whom Jupiter had slept with — it made no difference to her whether they had slept with him willingly or unwillingly — but Juturna was perhaps the only former sex partner of her husband whom she liked.

Juno said to Juturna, a water nymph whose name combined the names Juno and Turnus, “I like you by far the most of all the Italian women who have slept with my husband. You have a place among the gods. Sorrow is coming to you, but I am not to blame. I have protected your brother, Turnus, but his day of death is approaching. Today, he is supposed to fight in single combat against a warrior who is stronger than he is. I cannot and will not watch the single combat, but you are Turnus’ sister. Perhaps you can help him. You may be able to stave off his day of death.”

Juturna wept and beat her breasts.

Juno said to her, “You have no time to weep. You must hurry if you are to help your brother. If you can, save your brother’s life as he fights this duel. Or you may be able to avoid the duel by breaking the truce and starting the war again. These are my ideas, but only you can put them into effect!”

Juno left Juturna mourning for her brother, Turnus.

King Latinus rode a four-horse chariot to the dueling ground. Turnus carried two javelins and arrived in a two-horse chariot. Aeneas walked to the dueling ground, carrying his shield and wearing his divinely made armor. Ascanius walked by Aeneas’ side.

A priest wearing white robes brought a boar and a sheep for the sacrifice.

Aeneas stated the terms of the duel: “Gods, witness what I say! If Turnus achieves victory in the duel, then the Trojans will go to Pallanteum, the city of Evander, and Ascanius will leave your land. The Trojans will never again attack your city and your land.

“But if I achieve victory in the duel — as I think I will, gods willing — I will not make Italians be the servants of Trojans. I will not seek to be king over Italians. Instead, Trojans and Italians will both be at peace and obey the same laws. I will worship my gods here and follow my religious rites. King Latinus will keep his army and his power. I will be his son-in-law. We Trojans will build our city, which we will name Lavinium, after Lavinia.”

King Latinus then raised one hand and put his other hand on the altar and said, “I swear by the gods that we will never break this pact. That will never happen just as this wooden scepter I am holding will never again sprout green leaves.”

They sealed the pact of peace and sacrificed the animals.

The Rutulians, however, believed that the duel would be unequal — they believed that Aeneas had much the advantage over Turnus. They looked at both Aeneas and Turnus — Aeneas seemed much the stronger of the two warriors.

Turnus sincerely prayed at the altar, and the Rutulians pitied him.

Juturna assumed the form of the Rutulian Camers, the son of Volcens. She took advantage of the pity that the Rutulians were feeling for her brother. She spread uncertainty and rumors: “We Rutulians should be ashamed to allow Turnus to fight Aeneas in single combat. We are as strong as the troops of Trojans and their allies. We outnumber them. If only half of us were to fight the Trojans and their allies, some of us would find it difficult to find a warrior to fight. If Turnus dies in single combat, he will gain glory and fame, but we will lose our kingdom and become slaves.”

Her words worked. Even the warriors of King Latinus began to want war, although previously they had wanted peace. They pitied Turnus, and they wanted to fight.

Juturna then created a sign in the sky. An eagle — the bird of Jupiter — attacked a swan, killed it, and began to carry it away. The other birds rose in the air and attacked the eagle, which dropped the dead swan and flew away.

The Italians watched the bird-sign with awe, and the Rutulian seer Tolumnius said, “I have hoped for a sign like this from the gods. We must go to war — now! Get your swords! We have been like terrorized birds, but together we can repel the invader just like these birds repelled the eagle. Fight!”

Tolumnius threw his spear and broke the pact of peace. He threw his spear into a group of nine brothers whom one mother had bore. The spear hit one brother in the ribs, and his brothers rose up and grabbed their swords and spears and fought. King Latinus fled, his peace broken. Some warriors mounted their chariots; other warriors mounted their horses. Both sides grabbed weapons and fought.

Messapus, an ally of Turnus, charged his horse at Aulestes, who backed up and tripped, falling against an altar. As Aulestes begged for mercy, Messapus speared him and shouted, “This one’s dead. He is a better sacrifice to the gods than mere animals!” Messapus’ warriors ran to strip the armor off Aulestes.

The Trojan Corynaeus grabbed a burning torch and threw it into the bearded face of the Rutulian Ebysus. His beard caught fire, and Corynaeus forced him to the ground and stabbed him in the side.

The Trojan Podalirius tried to kill Alsus, once a shepherd but now a warrior. Podalirius stood over him with a sword, but Alsus swung his ax and split his head in two — Podalirius’ blood sprayed and his eyes saw the darkness that never ends.

Aeneas remembered the pact of peace. He did not wear a helmet, and his hands did not carry weapons. He shouted to his warriors, “We have a pact of peace! Only I should be fighting now! I should be fighting Turnus!”

As Aeneas tried to make peace so that he could fight Turnus in single combat, an arrow wounded him. Who shot the arrow was and is not known. No one admitted to wounding Aeneas.

When Turnus saw that Aeneas was wounded and forced to leave the battlefield, he began to fight. He jumped in his chariot and started running over the enemy warriors and fighting them. He chased the warriors fleeing from him, grabbed their spears, and killed them. As he killed, he resembled the war-god Mars, who is attended by his aides Fear, Anger, and Ambush as he rides in his war chariot and his shield clangs. Turnus drove his horses and chariots over enemy warriors, and their blood sprayed into the air.

Turnus killed Sthenelus, Thamyrus, and Pholus. At long range, he hurled spears and killed warriors, including Glaucus and Lades, the two sons of Imbrasmus. They had been born and raised in Lydia, and their father had given them matching weapons.

The Trojan Eumedes was fighting nearby. Eumedes had the same name as his grandfather, but his father, Dolon, was more famous. Dolon had volunteered to spy on the Greeks during the Trojan War. Dolon had asked that the immortal horses of Achilles be given to him as his reward for undertaking the dangerous mission, but Diomedes had killed him.

Turnus spotted Eumedes and hurled a spear and hit him. Turnus then drove his chariot close, dismounted, put his foot on Eumedes, took his sword away from him, and then drove the sword through Eumedes’ neck, saying, “Trojan, these are the fields that you fought to win. Lie there and enjoy them. This is the reward that all Trojans who challenge me will enjoy.”

Turnus then speared Asbytes, Chloereus, Sybaris, Dares, Thersilochus, and Thymoetes, who had been bucked off his panicking horse. Turnus was like the North wind whipping up waves and sending them to shore, and he charged enemy warriors and sent them fleeing from him.

Phegeus attempted to stop Turnus by grabbing the bridles of the horses pulling his chariot, but Turnus speared him in the side and inflicted a minor wound. Phegeus tried to defend himself with his shield and even to attack Turnus with a sword, but he fell and the wheels of Turnus’ chariot ran over him. Turnus hacked Phegeus’ neck with a sword and left his corpse headless in the sand.

Meanwhile, Mnestheus and Achates had taken the wounded Aeneas to the Trojan camp. Aeneas bled and supported himself by using his spear as a cane. Eager to get back into the battle, he insisted that the arrowhead be removed as quickly as possible: “Use a sword to open the wound and dig out the arrowhead. I need to fight!”

Iapyx, the son of Iasius, was the healer of the Trojans. Apollo, the god of prophecy, music, archery, and medicine, respected him, and offered him his choice of gifts. He could have been a prophet, a musician who played the lyre, or an archer, but Iapyx' father was deathly ill, and so Iapyx chose to be a healer. He learned the properties of herbs, and he healed people. He forsook the glory and fame that would have come to him as an excellent archer in battle. Iapyx, now aged, attempted but failed to remove the arrowhead despite his experience and knowledge as a healer. Ascanius grieved for his father. With Aeneas in the Trojan camp, the battle favored Turnus and his warriors. The battle neared the Trojan camp.

Venus, a mother grieving for the pain her son was suffering, went to Mount Ida on Crete and harvested dittany, a plant with medicinal properties. Even wild goats are aware of its healing properties, and they eat its leaves and purple flowers when an archer has shot an arrow into them but failed to kill them.

Venus harvested the dittany and soaked it in water from the Tiber River and added drops of liquid from ambrosia, the food of the immortal gods — and she added a panacea. She then slipped this potion among the other potions of Iapyx without his knowledge. Iapyx rubbed Venus' potion onto Aeneas' wound. Aeneas' pain ended, his blood stopped flowing, the arrowhead easily exited the wound, and Aeneas' strength returned to him.

Iapyx gave credit where credit is due. He said, "Give Aeneas back his weapons — he is ready to fight. This strong recovery is not due to my medicine — a god is helping Aeneas."

Aeneas put on his armor, and then he hugged Ascanius and kissed him through the visor of his helmet. He said to Ascanius, "From me you can learn about courage and hard work in times of adversity. From other people you can learn about good luck. Today I will fight for you so that you can achieve your destiny. Listen. When you are a man and are looking for role models, remember me and your uncle Hector!"

Aeneas strode back to the battle with Antheus and Mnestheus and other warriors by his side. The Trojans and their allies kicked up a cloud of dust as they marched, and Turnus and his warriors saw the advancing army and were afraid.

Juturna heard the sound of the marching Trojans and Trojan allies. She fled.

Aeneas kept marching. He was like a storm that blocks the sun. Farmers see the storm and know that it will uproot trees and destroy their crops. Aeneas and his warriors charged into the enemy warriors.

The Trojan Thymbraeus killed the Rutulian Osiris, a giant of a man.

The Trojan Mnestheus killed Arcetius.

The Trojan Achates killed Epulo.

The Trojan Gyas killed Ufens.

The Rutulian prophet Tolumnius also died. He had interpreted Juturna's bird-sign and broken the truce.

Turnus' warriors fled from the Trojans and their allies. Aeneas would not kill those fleeing from him, and he would not kill those who challenged them, and he would not chase and kill those who hurled spears at him from long range. Instead, Aeneas looked for Turnus — Turnus was the warrior whom Aeneas wanted to kill.

Juturna was terrified that Turnus, her brother, might die. She took on the form of Metiscus, Turnus' charioteer. She knocked the real Metiscus from Turnus' chariot and took his place. She had his voice, his form, and his armor. A bird can swiftly fly in the hall of a wealthy man and scavenge bits of food for its nestlings. Just as swiftly Juturna drove Turnus' chariot around the battlefield, showing Turnus to the Trojans, but keeping him well away from Aeneas, the stronger warrior. Aeneas followed Turnus, keen to meet him in battle, and he kept shouting at Turnus to stop and fight him. But Juturna ignored Aeneas' cries and kept Turnus away from the deadly warrior, frustrating Aeneas.

Messapus, Turnus' ally, hurled one of his two spears at Aeneas. Aeneas saw the spear coming and knelt on one knee. The spear missed him, but cut off the plumes on the top of his helmet. Aeneas was angry at Messapus, and he was angry as he once more saw Turnus' chariot drive away from him. Aeneas called on Jupiter to remember that the enemy had broken the pact of peace, and then he entered the battle. Filled with *furor*, he killed and killed again, no longer trying to chase down Turnus.

If slaughter can win glory, then Aeneas won much glory. Jupiter must enjoy deaths in battle — the people who were now trying to kill each other on this battlefield would later live in lasting peace as people of one country.

Aeneas stabbed the Rutulian Sucro in the side; Aeneas' sword split his ribs and stopped his heart.

Turnus attacked Amycus and Dioreas, two brothers. He knocked them off their horses, and he dismounted from his chariot and stabbed one with a spear and one with a sword. Then he cut off their heads and tied the heads to his chariot, where they dripped blood.

Aeneas killed Talos, Tanis, and Cethegus in one charge, and then he killed Onites, whose mother was named Peridia.

Turnus killed two brothers who came from Lycia, and then he killed Menoetes, who when he was young had hated war. Menoetes was a fisherman, his house was humble, and he did not experience the luxuries of the rich. His father farmed land that he did not own.

Aeneas and Turnus were like fires on two sides of a wood filled with dry timber. Both fires burn everything in their path. Both Aeneas and Turnus were filled with *furor*, and both killed and killed again.

The Rutulian Murranus was proud of his ancestry, and he was able to recite the names of his many ancestors who had been kings. Aeneas threw a rock at him and hit him. Murranus fell on the ground, and his own chariot and horses ran over him, trampling him to death.

The Trojan Hyllus charged Turnus, who hurled a spear at him and split his helmet and splattered his brain. Turnus then killed Cretheus, a Greek soldier who fought for Aeneas.

Aeneas killed the Rutulian warrior-priest Cupencus — his worship of the gods did not save his life.

The Trojan Aeolus, whom the Greeks at Troy could not kill, now died. Achilles had killed many Trojans, but he could not kill Aeolus, whose home had been in the city Lyrnesus under Mount Ida near Troy, but who found his tomb in Italy.

All were fighting. Strong warriors fought on both sides. Neither side let up.

Venus inspired Aeneas to attack Laurentum, the city of the enemy. This would panic its citizens and warriors. Still trying to get Turnus to fight him, Aeneas saw the city at peace and untouched by bloodshed. Aeneas gathered Mnestheus, Sergestus, Serestus, and other warriors and told them, “Now we must attack the city. This is the stronghold of the enemy, and I will conquer it unless it surrenders to me. I can’t wait until Turnus decides to fight me — that is taking too long. Better to attack the city immediately. Bring fire, and we will set the city aflame!”

The Trojans and their allies attacked the city, placing ladders against its walls and bringing fire. Some killed sentries at the gates. Arrows and spears filled the sky.

Aeneas shouted, “The gods know that our enemies have twice broken their pacts of peace! Twice they have started battles!”

Inside the city, citizens were divided. Some thought they should open the gates and surrender to the Trojans and give King Latinus to the Trojans. Others rushed to arm themselves and fight the Trojans.

The city, part of which was now burning, was like a beehive that a shepherd has found. The shepherd lights a fire to fill the beehive with smoke. The bees are angry and swarm as the beehive fills with smoke.

Another disaster hit the citizens of Laurentum. Queen Amata had witnessed the attack on the city. The enemy warriors were climbing ladders on the walls, and the city was burning. She could not see Turnus — he must be dead! Filled with *furor*, she ripped off part of her gown and made a noose and hung herself. The women inside the city mourned. Lavinia tore her hair and raked her fingernails across her cheeks. The air filled with the sounds of laments of women. The news spread, and King Latinus ripped his clothing and poured dust over his head.

Juturna kept Turnus away from the city. They were on the other side of the battlefield, where few warriors could be found. He heard sounds coming from the city and asked, “Why are sounds of grief coming from Laurentum?” He pulled back on the reins and made the chariot stop.

Juturna, desperate to keep her brother alive, said, “Let’s keep fighting out here and let others defend the walls of the city. You will be able to kill just as many warriors as Aeneas!”

Turnus replied, “I recognize you. I know that you are my sister Juturna. I have known for a while — ever since you broke the pact of peace and started this battle. You can’t hide your divinity from me. Why have you come here? Has one of the gods made you come down to see me die? What can I do now but die? My warriors are dying. I saw Murranus die — he called out ‘Turnus!’ to me as he died. He was a great warrior. Ufens died, and the Trojans took his armor and his body. Next, the city of Laurentum will be conquered and its houses destroyed. Must I see that and not fight? Can’t I show Drances that I am not a coward? It is better for me to die fighting than to run away! I will go to the Land of the Dead, but I will win glory!”

The Rutulian Saces, his face bearing a slash made by an arrow, rode up to Turnus and said, “We need you — now! Aeneas is attacking the city, which is on fire. Your warriors need a leader. King Latinus himself is despairing — he does not know what to do. Queen Amata is dead — she committed suicide. Before the gates of the city, Messapus and Atinas fight bravely while you are out here in an empty field!”

Turnus felt shame. He looked at the city and saw a tower go up in flames — he himself had helped to build that tower.

Turnus said to his sister, “My fate is calling me. Do not try to keep me from it. The Fates and the gods are in control, not us. I will fight Aeneas face to face. No longer will you see me in disgrace. I must fight, and I must die.”

He jumped from the chariot and ran to the city. His sister stayed behind and mourned. Dashing through his enemies and his enemies’ spears, Turnus was like a boulder crashing down a mountain after a storm or erosion has freed it. The boulder crushes trees, cattle, and men.

Reaching the wall of the city, Turnus shouted, “Troops, stop fighting! Let my sword decide the outcome of the war! Aeneas and I will fight alone!”

The warriors stopped fighting and backed away from the opposing warriors. In between was an open area where Aeneas and Turnus could fight.

Aeneas heard Turnus and was happy. He hit his shield, and his shield sounded like thunder. Aeneas seemed to be as huge as Mount Athos, Mount Eryx, or Father Apennine, the god of the Apennine mountains of central Italy.

All warriors took off their armor and prepared to watch the single combat between Aeneas and Turnus. King Latinus knew that this would be an impressive fight — it would decide which side won the war.

Aeneas and Turnus charged at each other like two bulls fighting to decide which would rule the herd. Their swords clanged against each other’s shields. The sounds of fighting reached the sky. Jupiter listened, and he placed the fate of Aeneas and the fate of Turnus onto his scales, and

he lifted them up. One warrior's scale would fall, and that warrior would die. One warrior's scale would rise, and that warrior would live. Which warrior would die, and which warrior would live?

Turnus raised his sword high and brought it swiftly down on Aeneas' divine armor — the sword broke. In his eagerness to fight Aeneas, Turnus had taken the wrong sword. He had taken the sword of Metiscus, his charioteer; he had not taken the sword of his father. Metiscus' sword worked well when Turnus fought ordinary warriors wearing ordinary armor, but it could not withstand the divinely made armor of Aeneas.

Without a weapon, bearing only a hilt, Turnus had no choice but to run from Aeneas. Turnus could not escape. Trojan warriors on one side, a swamp on another side, and the walls of the city on the remaining side enclosed him.

Aeneas, filled with *furor*, chased Turnus, but his arrow wound slowed him. Aeneas was like a hunting dog chasing a stag. The hunting dog comes close and closer and almost is able to close the gap and kill the stag, but not quite. The sky fills with the cries of the dog.

Turnus, running from Aeneas, shouted to his warriors by name to get him his own sword. Aeneas shouted that he would destroy the city if anyone armed Turnus. Aeneas kept chasing Turnus five times in a big circle. The prize for the victor of the race was the life of Turnus.

Within the circle was a wild olive tree's stump in which Aeneas' spear had stuck. The olive tree was dedicated to Faunus, the horned god of the forest. Sailors saved from drowning hung gifts and clothing dedicated to Faunus on the branches of the tree. The Trojans, however, had chopped down the tree — dedicated though it was to a god — to clear the field for fighting.

Aeneas grabbed his spear and tried to pull it loose. If he could not catch Turnus and kill him with a sword, he wanted instead to kill him with a spear.

Terrified, Turnus prayed, "Faunus, have pity on me! Hold on to that spear! Do not let Aeneas pull it out! I have always treated you with respect — unlike Aeneas' warriors, who chopped down your tree!"

Faunus answered Turnus' prayer: Aeneas struggled to pull out the spear, but he could not. Juturna, having again taken on the form of Metiscus, gave Turnus his own sword. Venus witnessed this help, and being a more powerful god than Faunus, pulled out Aeneas' spear and gave it to him. Aeneas and Turnus faced each other.

Jupiter and Juno had been watching the single combat together. Jupiter said to Juno, "You know the fates of these two heroes. You know that Aeneas' fame will eventually rise to heaven. You know that Aeneas will eventually become a god in heaven. Why resist what you know is fated to happen? All you can do is to delay what you know will happen. You helped guide an arrow so that it would wound Aeneas — a future god. Was that the right thing to do? You have helped Juturna to help Turnus. You have given strength to a warrior whom you know will be defeated. Why not stop resisting what you know is inevitable? Listen to me. Stop resisting the inevitable.

Do not grieve for what is inevitable. Do not complain to me about what is inevitable. Accept it. You have sent trouble to the Trojans both on land and sea. You have started a war. You have brought grief to many. You have brought the grief of a war to what should be the happiness of a wedding. You have done enough. I order you to do no more.”

Juno replied, “I know what you want, and that is why I am not down on earth helping Turnus myself, although I would like to. If I could do what I want, I would start the war again and make sure that Aeneas is in great danger. I admit that I greatly encouraged Juturna to help her brother. I did not, however, encourage anyone to shoot the arrow that wounded Aeneas. This I swear — an inviolable oath — by the river Styx.

“I will do what you wish. I will interfere no more in this war. But I have a request to make of you — a request that does not go against fate. Soon, Aeneas and Lavinia will be married. I request that the Italians continue to be known as Italians and not be known as Trojans. I request that the Italians continue to keep their own language and their own style of clothing. Let Italy continue to be Italian and not Trojan. The city of Troy fell — let it stay fallen!”

Jupiter smiled and said, “It shall be done. Italians will keep their own language and their own customs. The Trojans will marry Italians and will become Italian. Some Trojan religious rites will survive, but they will become Italian religious rites. The descendants of the Trojans and Italians will worship you more than any other people worship you.”

Juno consented to the will of Jupiter. Now she was a model of *pietas*, but in the future the Carthaginians she loved would fight three wars against Rome. Juno left.

Jupiter now wanted Juturna to leave her brother. The Furies number three: Allecto, Tisiphone, and Megaera. Snakes are entwined in their hair, and they have wings that make them as fast as the wind. The Furies serve Jupiter, and at his command they bring death and plague and war to men.

Jupiter commanded one of the Furies, “Go down to the world of men and cross the path of Juturna. That will let her know that she must leave Turnus.”

The Fury flew down to earth like a speeding arrow. She assumed the shape of the small bird that often sings an ominous song while perched on a tombstone. The Fury flew against the face of Turnus, and beat its wings against him and screeched. Turnus felt dread, his skin seemed to crawl, and he could not speak.

Juturna recognized the Fury and knew what it meant. Juturna tore her hair and scratched her face and beat her breasts as she grieved. She cried to Turnus, “Brother, I can do nothing now to help you. I cannot lengthen your life. This Fury is the omen that you will die. Now I am forced to leave you — against my will. Jupiter thought to reward me with immortality after he raped me. Was immortality really a reward? Is death always bad? If I were mortal, I could die with you and be with you in the Land of the Dead. Instead, I am doomed never to die, always to live without

you. Rather than live without you, I would like the earth to open and take me, a minor goddess, to the Land of the Dead!”

Juturna moaned with grief and left.

Aeneas lifted his spear and shouted at Turnus, “Why delay your death any longer? Stop running. Start fighting. Call up whatever courage you have and face your fate. With your death, you will either fly to heaven or sink to hell.”

Turnus said to Aeneas, “I do not fear you, but I do fear Jupiter, who hates me.”

Turnus saw a huge rock that property owners had set out to mark boundaries. Today, a dozen men could not lift it, but Turnus picked it up and threw it at Aeneas. But Turnus weakened as he threw the rock, and the rock did no damage — it did not reach Aeneas.

Turnus felt as if he were in a dream in which he was not in control of himself. The dreamer tries to race, but cannot. The dreamer tries to speak, but cannot. Turnus tried to take some kind of action, but the Fury prevented all action and confused his mind. Turnus could not run. Turnus could not attack Aeneas. His sister and his charioteer had left him. His Rutulians could not help him. He was without friends. Facing him was Aeneas.

Aeneas hurled his spear at a vulnerable spot. His spear made a sound like a rock hurled by a catapult or like lightning. The spear pierced the edge of Turnus’ shield and his armor and buried itself in Turnus’ thigh. Turnus dropped to his knees. His warriors groaned, and their groans echoed.

Turnus, a suppliant, said to Aeneas, “I know that I deserve this. I do not ask you for mercy for myself. This is your moment of victory. If you can respect the grief of an aged father, then send me — alive or dead, as you wish — to Daunus, my father. Your father, Anchises, was much like my father. I hold out my arms to you. You are the victor, and I am the vanquished. All the warriors here — yours and mine — have witnessed my defeat. You shall marry Lavinia. Whatever decision you make about whether I shall live or die, I ask that you do not make that decision in hatred.”

Aeneas thought about whether he should let Turnus live or die: *Good reasons for killing Turnus exist. Good reasons for allowing Turnus to live exist.*

Turnus and I have been fighting a single combat. Single combats end in death. The victorious warrior kills the defeated warrior.

If I allow Turnus to live, Turnus could rebel later. Warriors who pity Turnus now could fight for him later.

I should avenge the death of Pallas. King Evander, the father of Pallas, wants me to kill Turnus. Some kinds of anger are justified. When anger is justified, it is not negative. I should be angry at the deaths that Turnus has caused.

Perhaps a good leader ought to kill Turnus.

However, the choice between choosing to kill Turnus or to allow Turnus to live is a choice between furor and clementia. Furor can be a bad thing. When I gave in to furor in the sense of sexual passion and had an affair with Dido, it was a bad thing — I forgot my destiny and the destiny of my son.

When I visited Anchises, my father, in the Land of the Dead, he gave advice to future Romans — advice that my father must want me to follow. My father said, “Romans must remember to rule well the peoples of the world, including their own people. Romans must remember to rule while encouraging peace. Romans must remember to spare the defeated, just as Romans must remember to defeat the proud.” Turnus was proud, but now he is defeated. Because he is defeated, he should be spared, according to my father’s words. I should give Turnus clementia; I should show him mercy.

Perhaps a good leader ought to allow Turnus to live.

Sword in hand, Aeneas stood above Turnus as he considered whether to kill him or to let him live. Aeneas had won the war; he and Lavinia would marry. He would achieve his destiny and found the Roman people. The decision that Aeneas must make now would determine whether the Roman people would be founded on an act of *furor* or an act of *clementia*.

As Aeneas stood above Turnus, he saw that Turnus was wearing the sword-belt of Pallas. The sword-belt depicted the marriage of the fifty daughters of Danaus to the fifty sons of Aegyptus. Forty-nine of the marriages were characterized by *furor*. Forty-nine husbands gave in to the *furor* of sexual passion and slept with their wives without first giving the wives a chance to get to know and love them. The husbands did not respect the wives’ wishes to keep their virginity a while longer in their forced marriages. The forty-nine wives killed these forty-nine husbands. One husband resisted *furor* and did not force his wife to have sex with him. They did not have sex until after she had had a chance to get to know and to love him. He showed *clementia* to his wife, over whom he had power, and they enjoyed a good marriage, had children, and started a line of kings.

When Aeneas saw that Turnus was wearing the sword-belt of Pallas, he remembered that Turnus had killed Pallas. Aeneas said to Turnus, “Pallas was my friend, you killed him, and you stripped him of his sword-belt, which you are now wearing. Pallas strikes you with my sword! Pallas takes your life!”

Aeneas plunged his sword into Turnus. Turnus’ heart was filled with the metal of Aeneas’ sword; Aeneas’ heart was filled with *furor*.

Appendix A: Important Terms

Iliad and *Odyssey*

Achaeans:

Another name for the Greeks.

***Aristeia* (a-ris-STAY-a):**

A warrior's period of excellence in battle.

Athatoi:

Immortals, gods.

Displacement:

Occasionally in the *Iliad*, a scene will occur at a time when it ought not to logically occur. This is known as displacement. Consider the scene in which King Priam asks Helen to identify some of the Greek heroes. By the end of the ninth year or the beginning of the tenth and last year of the Trojan War, King Priam would know who the leading Greeks are, so this episode logically ought not to occur at this time. Logically, this episode ought to occur early in the war. Homer has displaced this episode. Aesthetically, of course, this episode makes sense. For the audience of the *Iliad*, it is still early in the *Iliad*. Homer needs to introduce some of the leading Greeks to his audience.

Double Motivation:

Many actions in the *Iliad* are motivated both by humans and by gods. For example, at one point in Book 11 of the *Iliad* Great Ajax is forced back by the Trojans. On the human level, he has been fighting very hard for a long time, and he is tired. No wonder the Trojan warriors force him back! But we also read that Great Ajax is forced back by Zeus. Often, we can explain actions purely on the human level, but Homer tells us that the gods are also involved in the actions.

Geras:

A particular prize of honor, often a spear-thrower.

Human Condition:

Humans are mortal; we will die someday.

In Medias Res:

In the middle of the story.

Klea Andron:

The glories of men.

Kleos:

Glory or fame or reputation.

Kleos is reputation. It is what people say about you after you are dead. Early in the *Iliad*, Achilles is very interested in his *kleos*.

Kleos is important because it is the only kind of meaningful immortality that ancient Greek society has. This society believes in a kind of afterlife, but it is insubstantial. Souls go down to the Land of the Dead, but there they have no meaningful kind of afterlife. In some accounts of the afterlife in the Land of the Dead, souls don't know who they are until they have a drink of blood. At that time, they regain their memory and are able to converse with other souls. Without the drink of blood, they are like gibbering bats.

According to classics scholar Elizabeth Vandiver, *kleos* can be translated as glory or fame or, sometimes, reputation. What it literally means is what other people say about you, what is spoken aloud about you (*The Iliad of Homer* 45).

Kleos Aphithiton:

Undying *kleos* or imperishable glory. Undying glory, reputation, and fame.

Kredemna:

1) The veil and headdress of a married woman. 2) The ramparts and battlements of a city.

Menis:

Anger (used of a god and of Achilles).

Moirai:

Fate. Share or portion or lot of life.

Over-determination:

Many actions in the *Iliad* occur because of the actions both of humans and of the gods. This double motivation is sometimes called by critics over-determination. Over-determination stresses the inevitability of certain actions — they had to occur. In literature, over-determination occurs when an action is explained by more than one cause when only one cause is enough to explain why the action occurred.

Proem:

Short introduction.

***Psyche* (SOO-KAY):**

The spirit, soul.

Sophrosyne:

Restraint, recognition of human limits, and lack of presumption. Diomedes has this quality.

***Theos* (THAY os):**

God (with a small 'g').

Thnetoi:

Mortals.

***Timê* (TEE-MAY):**

Timê is gifts of honor. After a city has been captured, what is inside the city is given out as gifts of honor. If a warrior has fought bravely, that warrior will get *timê*. An important kind of *timê* is a *geras* or spear-bride or sex-slave. *Timê* is the physical expression of honor; *timê* can take the form of booty, gifts, or a particular prize (*geras*).

In the *Iliad*, *kleos* and *timê* are related. The more *timê* a warrior has, the more *kleos* the warrior has. Achilles is upset when Agamemnon takes away his *geras* because Agamemnon is taking away his *timê* and therefore is taking away his *kleos*. At this time Achilles values *kleos* more than anything else in the world. Achilles — early in the *Iliad* — is willing to give up his life in order to have *kleos*.

Xenia:

The guest-host relationship. Civilized people of the ancient world followed rules of hospitality. Uncivilized people (and other beings) did not. This is an odd phrase, and we don't have exactly that concept in our culture. In ancient Greece, no inns, motels, or hotels existed. If you traveled, you would stay with a family. You would knock on the door of a house and ask for hospitality. The residents of the house, if they observed *xenia*, would let you stay with them. They would feed you, give you a place to sleep, and offer you water for bathing or washing. As the guest, you of course would not murder your host or run away with your host's wife. Instead, you would entertain your hosts by giving them news and telling them about your travels. The Trojan War started because of a breach of *xenia*. Paris, prince of Troy, stayed with Menelaus, King of Sparta, and ran away with his wife, Helen, the most beautiful woman in the world. *Xenia* was taken seriously in the ancient world. Zeus was Zeus *Xenios*, Zeus the god of *Xenia*. He often punished people who did not respect the protocols of *xenia*.

Xenoi:

Plural of *xenos*.

Xenos:

Guest, host, stranger, friend, foreigner.

Aeneid

Furor means rage or passion. It is excessive rage or passion. Juno's hatred for Aeneas and the Trojans is an example of *furor*.

Pietas means proper, dutiful behavior. It means respect for things for which respect is due, including gods, family, and destiny. Aeneas is noted for his *pietas*, as when he carries his father on his back out of Troy.

Another important Latin term is *clementia*, from which we get our word "clemency." A person is clement when he or she gives a mild rather than a harsh punishment. Julius Caesar was noted for his *clementia*. *Clementia* can mean calmness, clemency, compassion, forbearance,

gentleness, humanity, indulgence, mercy, mildness, etc. *Clementia* is especially mercy shown by a person who has much power to a person who has less or no power.

Appendix B: Background Information

• What are the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*?

The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are epic poems that have been created by Homer. Here are two definitions of “epic poem”:

- “a long narrative poem about the adventures of [a] hero or the gods, presenting an encyclopedic portrait of the culture in which it is composed.”

Source: <teacherweb.com/NC/OrangeHighSchool/MrMitchCox/HandyLiteraryandAnglo-SaxonTerms.doc>

- “a long narrative poem telling of a hero’s deeds.”

Source: <wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn>

The *Iliad* tells the story of one incident that lasted a few weeks during the end of the ninth year or the beginning of the tenth and last year of the Trojan War: a quarrel between Achilles, the mightiest of the Greek (Achaean) warriors, and Agamemnon, leader of the Greek armies against Troy. Both Achilles and Agamemnon are kings of their own lands, but Agamemnon is the leader among the many kings fighting the Trojans and the Trojan allies. The quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon has devastating consequences.

• What is the mythic background of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*?

The mythic background of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* consists of the Trojan War myth and myths about the Greek gods and goddesses.

• For what other works did this mythic background provide narrative material?

The Trojan War myth provided material for many other epic poems, both Greek and Roman, some of which have survived, and for many plays, including both tragedies and comedies, by both Greek and Roman authors. The Trojan War myth is one of the most important myths in the world.

During Roman times, the Trojan War myth provided material for Virgil’s great epic poem the *Aeneid*, which tells the story of Aeneas and how he survived the fall of Troy and came to Italy to found (establish) the Roman people. He and his Italian wife, Lavinia, became important ancestors of the Romans. Later, Dante used material from the Trojan War myth and its aftermath in his *Divine Comedy*. Material from the Trojan War myth has appeared in opera and in drama and in poetry. Of course, James Joyce uses this material in his novel *Ulysses*.

• Why is it important to understand the Trojan War myth when reading Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and Virgil’s *Aeneid*?

Homer’s and Virgil’s audiences knew the story of the Trojan War. How did the members of Homer’s and Virgil’s audiences get their understanding of the Trojan War? Partly through stories

told by their parents and grandparents. As they were growing up, they heard tales about the myth. Therefore, Homer and Virgil assume a lot of knowledge in their audiences. Homer does not tell the story of the Trojan Horse (Virgil does tell the story); Homer assumes that his audience members already know the story. Homer and Virgil do not tell the story of the Trojan War; they assume that their audiences already know the story. Without knowledge of the Trojan War, the audience will not be able to appreciate fully the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid*.

- **What is the *Iliad* about?**

The *Iliad* tells the story of the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon. Following the quarrel, Achilles (the mightiest Greek warrior) withdraws from the fighting, which allows the Trojans to be triumphant in battle for a while. The *Iliad* tells about Achilles' anger and how he finally lets go of his anger.

- **What is the *Odyssey* about?**

The *Odyssey* is about another Greek hero in the Trojan War: Odysseus, whose Roman name is Ulysses. Following the ten years that the Trojan War lasted, Odysseus returns to his home island of Ithaca, where he is king. It takes him ten years to return home because of his adventures and mishaps. Much of that time he spends in captivity. When he finally returns home, he discovers that suitors are courting his wife, Penelope, who has remained faithful to him and who wants nothing to do with the suitors, who are rude and arrogant and who feast on Odysseus' cattle and drink his wine as they party all day. In addition, Telemachus, Odysseus' son, has found it hard to grow up without a strong father-figure in his life. The *Odyssey* tells the story of how Odysseus returns home to Ithaca and reestablishes himself in his own palace.

- **What does *nostos* mean?**

Nostos means "Homecoming" or "Return." This is important to know because this is the theme of the *Odyssey*. In this epic poem, we read about the homecoming of Odysseus to Ithaca, the island where he is king. Odysseus has been away from Ithaca for 20 years. He spent ten years fighting in the Trojan War, and it took him an additional ten years to return to Ithaca, after having lost all his ships and men.

The great theme of the *Iliad* is *kleos*, which means imperishable glory or the reputation that lives on after one has died if one has accomplished great deeds during one's battles. The great theme of the *Odyssey* is *nostos*.

The *Iliad* is concerned with the Trojan War, and the *Odyssey* is concerned with the aftermath of the Trojan War.

- **What is the *Aeneid* about?**

The *Aeneid* is a Roman epic poem by Virgil that tells the story of Aeneas, a Trojan prince who survived the fall of Troy and led other survivors to Italy. His adventures parallel the adventures of Odysseus on his return to Ithaca. In fact, they visit many of the same places, including the island

of the Cyclopes. One of Aeneas' most notable characteristics is his *pietas*, his respect for things for which respect is due, including the gods, his family, and his destiny. His destiny is to found the Roman people, which is different from founding Rome, which was founded long after his death. Aeneas journeyed to Carthage, where he had an affair with Dido, the Carthaginian queen. Because of his destiny, he left her and went to Italy. Dido committed suicide, and Aeneas fought a war to establish himself in Italy. After killing Turnus, the leader of the armies facing him, Aeneas married the Italian princess Lavinia, and they became important ancestors of the Roman people.

- **What is the basic story of the Trojan War?**

Paris, prince of Troy, visits Menelaus, King of Sparta, and then Paris runs off with Menelaus' wife, Helen, who of course becomes known as Helen of Troy. This is a major insult to Menelaus and his family, so he and his elder brother, Agamemnon, lead an army against Troy to get Helen (and Menelaus' treasure) back. The war drags on for ten years, and the greatest Greek warrior is Achilles, while the greatest Trojan warrior is Hector, Paris' eldest brother. Eventually, Hector is killed by Achilles, who is then killed by (Apollo and) Paris, who is then killed by Philoctetes. Finally, Odysseus comes up with the idea of the Trojan Horse, which ends the Trojan War.

That is a brief retelling of the Trojan War, but many, many myths grew up around the war, making it a very detailed myth.

- **Does Homer allude to all of the details of the Trojan War?**

Homer does not allude to all the details of the Trojan War. For example, one myth states that Achilles was invincible except for his heel. According to this myth, his mother, the goddess Thetis, knew that Achilles was fated to die in the Trojan War; therefore, to protect him, she dipped him into a pool of water that was supposed to make him invulnerable. To do that, she held him by his heel. Because she was holding him by his heel, the water did not touch it and so that part of Achilles' body remained vulnerable.

Homer never alludes to this myth; in fact, this myth plays no role whatsoever in Homer's epic poems. Achilles is not invulnerable. If he were, he could fight in battle naked, as long as he wore an iron boot over his vulnerable heel. In Homer, Achilles is vulnerable to weapons, and he knows it. At one point, he would like to join the fighting, but he cannot, because he has no armor. No one who reads the *Iliad* should think that Achilles is invulnerable except for his heel.

Myth changes and develops over time, and it is possible that Homer had no knowledge of this myth because it had not been created yet. Or it is possible that Homer knew of this myth but ignored it because he had his own points to make in his epic poem.

Another myth that may or may not be alluded to is the Judgment of Paris. It may be alluded to in a couple of places in the *Iliad*, but scholars disagree about this.

- **Who is Achilles, and what is unusual about his mother, Thetis?**

Achilles, of course, is the foremost warrior of the Greeks during the Trojan War. His mother, Thetis, is unusual in that she is a goddess. The Greeks' religion was different from many modern religions in that the Greeks were polytheistic (believing in many gods) rather than monotheistic (believing in one god). In addition, the gods and human beings could mate and have children. Achilles is unusual in that he had an immortal goddess as his mother and a mortal man, Peleus, as his father. Achilles, of course, is unusual in many ways. Another way in which he is unusual is that he and Thetis have long talks together. Often, the gods either ignore their mortal offspring or choose not to reveal themselves to them. For example, Aeneas' goddess mother is Aphrodite (Roman name: Venus). Although Aphrodite does save Aeneas' life or help him on occasion, the two do not have long talks together the way that Achilles and Thetis do.

- **What prophecy was made about Thetis' male offspring?**

The prophecy about Thetis' male offspring was that he would be a greater man than his father. This is something that would make most human fathers happy. (One exception would be Pap, in Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Pap does not want Huck, his son, to learn to read or write or to get an education or to live better than Pap does.)

- **Who is Zeus, and what does he decide to do as a result of this prophecy?**

Zeus is a horny god who sleeps with many goddesses and many human beings. Normally, he would lust after Thetis, but once he hears the prophecy about her, he does not want to sleep with Thetis. For one thing, the gods are potent, and when they mate they have children. Zeus overthrew his own father, and Zeus does not want Thetis to give birth to a greater man than he is because his son will overthrow him. Therefore, Zeus wants to get Thetis married off to someone else. In this case, a marriage to a human being for Thetis would suit Zeus just fine. A human son may be greater than his father, but he is still not going to be as great as a god, and so Zeus will be safe if Thetis gives birth to a human son.

- **Who is Peleus?**

Peleus is the human man who marries Thetis and who fathers Achilles. At the time of the *Iliad*, Peleus is an old man and Thetis has not lived with him for a long time.

- **Why is Eris, goddess of discord, not invited to the wedding feast of Peleus and Thetis?**

Obviously, you do not want discord at a wedding, and therefore, Eris, goddess of discord, is not invited to the wedding feast of Peleus and Thetis. Even though Eris is not invited to the wedding feast, she shows up anyway.

- **Eris, goddess of discord, throws an apple on a table at the wedding feast. What is inscribed on the apple?**

Inscribed on the apple is the phrase "For the fairest," written in Greek, of course. Because Greek is a language that indicates masculine and feminine in certain words, and since "fairest" has a feminine ending, the apple is really inscribed "for the fairest female."

• **Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite each claim the apple. Who are they?**

Three goddesses claim the apple, meaning that each of the three goddesses thinks that she is the fairest, or most beautiful.

Hera

Hera is the wife of Zeus, and she is a jealous wife. Zeus has many affairs with both immortal goddesses and mortal women, and Hera is jealous because of these affairs. Zeus would like to keep on her good side.

Athena

Athena is the goddess of wisdom. She becomes the patron goddess of Athens. Athena especially likes Odysseus, as we see especially in the *Odyssey*. Athena is a favorite of Zeus, her father. Zeus would like to keep on her good side.

Aphrodite

Aphrodite is the goddess of sexual passion. She can make Zeus fall in love against his will. Zeus would like to keep on her good side.

Roman Gods and Goddesses

The Greek gods and goddesses have Roman equivalents. The Greek name is followed by the Roman name:

Aphrodite: Venus

Apollo: Apollo (same name)

Ares: Mars

Artemis: Diana

Athena: Minerva

Hades: Pluto

Hephaestus: Vulcan

Hera: Juno

Hermes: Mercury

Poseidon: Neptune

Zeus: Jupiter

• **Why doesn't Zeus want to judge the goddesses' beauty contest?**

Zeus is not a fool. He knows that if he judges the goddesses' beauty contest, he will make two enemies. The two goddesses whom Zeus does not choose as the fairest will hate him and likely make trouble for him.

Please note that the Greek gods and goddesses are not omnibenevolent. Frequently, they are quarrelsome and petty.

By the way, Athens, Ohio, lawyer Thomas Hodson once judged a beauty contest featuring 25 cute child contestants. He was running in an election to choose the municipal court judge, and

he thought that judging the contest would be a good way to win votes. Very quickly, he decided never to judge a children's beauty contest again. He figured out that he had won two votes — the votes of the parents of the child who won the contest. Unfortunately, he also figured out that he had lost 48 votes — the votes of the parents of the children who lost.

- **Who is Paris, and what is the Judgment of Paris?**

Paris is a prince of Troy, and Zeus allows him to judge the three goddesses' beauty contest. Paris is not as intelligent as Zeus, or he would try to find a way out of judging the beauty contest.

- **Each of the goddesses offers Paris a bribe if he will choose her. What are the bribes?**

Hera

Hera offers Paris political power: several cities he can rule.

Athena

Athena offers Paris prowess in battle. Paris can become a mighty and feared warrior.

Aphrodite

Aphrodite offers Paris the most beautiful woman in the world to be his wife.

- **Which goddess does Paris choose?**

Paris chooses Aphrodite, who offered him the most beautiful woman in the world to be his wife.

This is not what a Homeric warrior would normally choose. A person such as Achilles would choose to be an even greater warrior, if that is possible. A person such as Agamemnon is likely to choose more cities to rule.

When Paris chooses the most beautiful woman in the world to be his wife, we are not meant to think that he made a good decision. Paris is not a likable character.

- **Does the Judgment of Paris appear in the *Iliad*?**

Maybe. Maybe not. A couple of passages in the *Iliad* may contain a veiled reference to the Judgment of Paris.

- **Does myth develop over time?**

Myth does develop over time. Possibly, the myth of the Judgment of Paris was invented after Homer had created the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

- **As a result of Aphrodite's bribe, Paris abducts Helen. Why?**

Aphrodite promised Paris the most beautiful woman to be his wife. As it happens, that woman is Helen. Therefore, Paris abducts Helen, with Aphrodite's good wishes.

- **Did Helen go with Paris willingly?**

The answer to this question is ambiguous, and ancient authorities varied in how they answered this question.

- **To whom is Helen already married?**

Helen is already married to Menelaus, King of Sparta. Paris visits Menelaus, and when he leaves, he carries off both a lot of Menelaus' treasure and Menelaus' wife, Helen. Obviously, this is not the way that one ought to treat one's host.

- **Who are Agamemnon and Menelaus?**

Agamemnon and Menelaus are the sons of Atreus. They are brothers, and Agamemnon, King of Mycenae, is the older brother and the brother who rules a greater land, as seen by the number of ships the two kings bring to the Trojan War. Menelaus brings sixty ships. Agamemnon brings one hundred ships.

- **Who is responsible for leading the expedition to recover Helen?**

Agamemnon is the older brother, so he is the leader of the Greek troops in the Trojan War.

- **Why do the winds blow against the Greek ships?**

When the Greek ships are gathered together and are ready to set sail against Troy, a wind blows in the wrong direction for them to sail. The goddess Artemis is angry at the Greeks because she knows that the result of the Trojan War will be lots of death, not just of warriors, but also of women and children. This is true of all wars, and it is a lesson that human beings forget after each war and relearn in the next war.

- **Why does Artemis demand a human sacrifice?**

Artemis knows that Agamemnon's warriors will cause much death of children, so she makes him sacrifice one of his daughters so that he will suffer what he will make other parents suffer.

- **Who does Agamemnon sacrifice?**

Agamemnon sacrifices his daughter Iphigenia. This is a religious sacrifice of a human life to appease the goddess Artemis.

- **What do Menelaus and Agamemnon do?**

After the sacrifice of Iphigenia, Agamemnon and Menelaus set sail with all the Greek ships for Troy. They land, then they engage in warfare.

- **Who are Achilles and Hector?**

Achilles is the foremost Greek warrior, while Hector is the foremost Trojan warrior. Both warriors are deserving of great respect.

- **Does Homer assume that Achilles is invulnerable?**

Absolutely not. Achilles needs armor to go out on the battlefield and fight.

- **What happens to Hector and Achilles?**

Hector kills Achilles' best friend, Patroclus, in battle. Angry, Achilles kills Hector.

- **What is the story of the Trojan Horse?**

Odysseus, a great strategist, thought up the idea of the Trojan Horse. Epeus built it.

The Greeks build a giant wooden horse, which is hollow and filled with Greek warriors, then they pretend to abandon the war and to sail away from Troy. Actually, Agamemnon sails behind

an island so that the Trojans cannot see the Greek ships. The Greeks also leave behind a lying Greek named Sinon, who tells the Trojans about a supposed prophecy that if the Trojans take the Trojan Horse inside their city, then Troy will never fall. The Trojans do that, and at night the Greeks come out of the Trojan Horse, make their way to the city gates and open them. Outside the city gates are the Greek troops led by Agamemnon, who have returned to the Trojan plain. The Greek warriors rush inside the city and sack it.

Virgil's *Aeneid* has the fullest surviving ancient account of the Trojan Horse. Of course, he tells the story from the Trojan point of view. If Homer had written the story of the Trojan Horse, he would have told it from the Greek point of view. For the Greeks, the Trojan War ended in a great victory. For the Trojans, the Trojan War ended in a great disaster.

- **Which outrages do the Greeks commit during the sack of Troy?**

The Greeks committed many outrages during the sack of Troy:

Killing of King Priam

King Priam is killed by Achilles' son, Neoptolemus, aka Pyrrhus, at the altar of Zeus. This is an outrage because anyone who is at the altar of a god is under the protection of that god. When Neoptolemus kills Priam, an old man (and old people are respected in Homeric culture), Neoptolemus disrespects the god Zeus.

Killing of Hector's Young Son

Hector's son is murdered. Hector's son is a very small child who is murdered by being hurled from the top of a high wall of Troy. Even during wartime, children ought not to be murdered, so this is another outrage.

Rape of Cassandra

Cassandra is raped by Little Ajax even though she is under Athena's protection. Cassandra is raped in a temple devoted to Athena, thus showing major disrespect to Athena. Again, the Greeks are doing things that ought not to be done, even during wartime.

Sacrifice of Polyxena

The Greeks also sacrifice Priam's young daughter Polyxena. The Trojan War begins and ends with a human sacrifice of the life of a young girl. This is yet another outrage.

- **How do the gods react to these outrages?**

The gods and goddesses make things difficult for the Greeks on their way home to Greece.

- **What happens to the Greeks after the fall of Troy?**

Nestor is a wise and pious old man who did not commit any outrages. He makes it home quickly.

Apparently Odysseus' patron goddess, Athena, is angry at all of the Greeks, because she does not help him on his journey home until ten years have passed.

Little Ajax, who raped Cassandra, drowns on his way home.

Agamemnon returns home to a world of trouble. His wife, Clytemnestra, has taken a lover during his ten-year absence, and she murders Agamemnon.

Menelaus is reunited with Helen, but their ship is driven off course, and it takes them years to return home to Sparta.

- **What happens to Aeneas?**

Aeneas fights bravely, and he witnesses such things as the death of Priam, King of Troy; however, when he realizes that Troy is lost, he returns to his family to try to save them. He carries his father on his back, and he leads his young son by the hand, but although he saves them by leading them out of Troy, his wife, who is following behind him, is lost and dies during the sack of Troy.

Aeneas becomes the leader of the Trojan survivors, and he leads them to Italy, where they become the founders of the Roman people.

- **Who were the Roman people?**

The Romans had one of the greatest empires of the world.

- **In the Homeric epics, are human beings responsible for their actions?**

Yes, human beings are responsible for their actions in the Homeric epics.

- **Despite Aphrodite, is Paris responsible for his actions?**

Of course, Aphrodite promised Paris the most beautiful woman in the world to be his wife if Paris chose her as the fairest of the three goddesses who wanted the golden apple. However, Paris is responsible for his actions when he runs away with Helen, the lawful wife of Menelaus. Paris could have declined to run away with Helen.

- **Is Agamemnon responsible for his actions?**

Artemis required the sacrifice of Agamemnon's daughter before the winds would blow the Greek ships to Troy, but Agamemnon is still responsible for his actions. He could have declined to sacrifice his daughter, and he could have given up the war.

- **What happens to humans who do impious acts?**

Humans who do impious acts are punished for their impious acts.

- **What is the Greek concept of fate?**

The Greeks believe in fate. We are fated to die at a certain time, although we do not know when we will die.

In addition, people may be fated to do certain things in their lives. For example, Oedipus is fated to kill his father and to marry his mother.

Similarly, certain events are fated to happen. For example, Troy is fated to be conquered in the Trojan War.

- **Do the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* tell the entire story of the Trojan War?**

No, they tell only a small part of the story. The *Iliad* tells the story of an event that occurred in a few weeks near the beginning of the final year of the Trojan War. The story of the Trojan War is not fully told in either epic poem. Neither is the story of the Trojan Horse, although knowledge of it is essential for understanding the *Iliad*, and although the Trojan Horse is talked about briefly in the *Odyssey*.

- **What happened the first time the author of this retelling read the *Iliad*?**

I read the *Iliad* for the first time the summer before I started college. It was my way of preparing myself to be educated. As I got near the end of the *Iliad*, I started wondering, “Where is the Trojan Horse?” When I got to the end of the *Iliad*, I was very surprised that Troy had not yet fallen.

- **Did other epics exist?**

Yes, other epics did exist, and we do have some Greek and Roman epics that were written much later than the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, of course. The ancient Greek epics from the time of Homer have not survived. Fortunately, we know from ancient commentators that we have the really good epic poems. The epics that have been lost were not as good as the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

Fortunate, Quintus of Smyrna retold some of the stories of the lost epics in his *Posthomerica*, which is about the time between the end of the *Iliad* and the beginning of the *Odyssey*.

- **What do the Homeric epics assume?**

The Homeric epics assume that you know the mythic background.

- **What is the society described in the Homeric epics like?**

Homeric society is very different from many modern societies; it is patriarchal, slave-holding, monarchical, and polytheistic:

Patriarchal

This is a society in which the men have the power. Of course, the goddesses are a special case and are more powerful than human men. However, even in the world of gods and goddesses, the gods have more power. The king of the gods is Zeus, a male. Often, contemporary American society is thought of as patriarchal. I won't deny that, but the ancient Greek society was much more patriarchal than contemporary American society.

Slave-Holding

Slaves exist in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. In the *Iliad*, women are spoils of war, and young, pretty women become sex-slaves to the warriors who have killed their husbands. In the *Odyssey*, slaves are servants in the palace and on the farm. Slavery is taken for granted in the Homeric epics.

Monarchical

Kings exist in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Agamemnon is a king, Menelaus is a king, Achilles is a king, and Odysseus is a king.

Polytheistic

As we have seen, the ancient Greeks and Romans believed in many gods with a small g. We moderns tend to believe or to disbelieve in one God with a capital G.

• **What do we mean by *theos*?**

The Greek word *theos* (THAY os) is usually translated as “god” with a small g. Yes, this is a good translation of the word, but we modern readers can be misled by it because of our familiarity with the word “God” with a big G.

• **Are the gods personified forces of nature?**

Originally, the gods seem to have been personified forces of nature. They are more than that in the Homeric epics, but they are still in part personified forces of nature.

One example is that Zeus is the god of the sky and lightning. Of course, in the *Iliad* Zeus is much more than merely the god of the sky and lightning. Maybe that is how belief in Zeus arose, but Zeus became much more than that.

Another example is that Poseidon is the god of the sea.

Another example is that Ares is war. (Here we have an embodiment of human culture rather than an embodiment of a force of nature.) In the *Iliad*, Zeus says that Ares is hated. He is hated because he is war.

Another example is that Aphrodite is sexual passion. She is the personification of sexual passion. We can say that she inflicts sexual passion on other people, but in addition, she is sexual passion. This is not just a way of speaking. Someone may say, “Aphrodite filled me with lust”; in other words, Aphrodite is a way of explaining human emotion. However, in the Homeric epics, Aphrodite is more than a way of explaining human emotion. In Book 3 of Homer’s *Iliad*, Aphrodite forces Helen to go to bed with Paris. She threatens Helen, and she takes Helen to Paris’ bedroom.

• **Are the gods anthropomorphic?**

These gods are anthropomorphic. They have human form, with some differences. The gods and goddesses are larger and better looking and stronger than human beings. However, they look like human beings, and they speak the language of human beings. They also eat, drink, and have sex like human beings. They also feel the human emotions of jealousy (Hera is jealous of Zeus’ love affairs), passion (Zeus sleeps with many, many females, both mortal and immortal), anger (Ares becomes angry when he is wounded by Diomedes in battle), and grief (Zeus grieves because his son Sarpedon is fated to die).

• **Are the gods omnibenevolent, omniscient, or omnipotent?**

The Homeric gods are not omnibenevolent, omniscient, or omnipotent.

Not Omnibenevolent

Clearly, the gods are not omnibenevolent. They are not all-good; they are not even just. Some of the gods are rapists. Hera is very capable of exacting vengeance on innocent people. The gods are very dangerous, and they can do bad things to human beings. One example is the story of Actaeon. He was out hunting with his dogs, and he saw the goddess Artemis bathing naked. He did not mean to see her naked, but she exacted vengeance anyway. She turned him into a stag, and his own dogs ran him down and killed him. He suffered horribly because his mind was still human although his body was that of a male deer.

Not Omniscient

In addition, the gods are not omniscient. We see this in the *Odyssey*. Athena has been wanting to help Odysseus, but she does not want to anger Poseidon, who is opposed to Odysseus. Therefore, Athena waits until Poseidon's attention is turned elsewhere, and then she helps Odysseus. Another example is that when Hera seduces Zeus in the *Iliad*, he does not know that she is tricking him. Hera wants to seduce Zeus so that he will go to sleep, and the Greeks will be triumphant in the battle. If Zeus were omniscient, he would have known that she was tricking him. Of course, the gods do know a lot. For example, they know a human being's fate. In addition, the gods hear prayers addressed to them.

Not Omnipotent

The gods are very powerful, but they are not omnipotent. The gods can change their shape. They can take the shape of a bird or of a particular human being. The gods can travel very quickly. Poseidon can cause earthquakes, and Zeus can cause lightning. The gods cannot go back on their inviolable oaths. For example: When Alcmena was about to give birth to Heracles, Zeus announced that on a certain day a boy would be born who was a descendant of Perseus, an ancient hero, and who would rule over the region around him, which later Agamemnon ruled. Unfortunately, this news allowed Hera to interfere. Hera is the goddess of childbirth, and she was able to delay the birth of Heracles. She also was able to speed up the birth of Eurystheus, who was a descendant of Perseus. By doing this, Hera brought it about that Eurystheus, not Heracles, became a ruler. Hera made sure that Eurystheus was born on that day, and not Heracles. After all, Zeus had sworn an inviolable oath that a descendant of Perseus born on that day would be a ruler, and the gods, including Zeus, cannot go back on their inviolable oaths.

• **What does *xenia* mean?**

Xenia is often defined as the guest-host relationship. English does not have a word like *xenia*, although "hospitality" is sometimes used as a translation of *xenia*. However, "hospitality" is too weak a word for what the ancient Greeks meant. The word *xenia* carries with it an obligation to the gods. Zeus is the god of *xenia*, and when people abuse their sacred duty of *xenia*, they are disrespecting Zeus.

• **In which way is *xenia* a reciprocal relationship?**

Xenia is a reciprocal relationship between guest and host in both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

Xenia is a reciprocal relationship between two *xenoi*. (*Xenoi* is the plural; *xenos* is the singular.)

• **Which meanings does *xenos* have?**

Xenos can mean five different things, depending on the context: guest, host, stranger, friend, and foreigner.

In ancient Greece, no hotels or motels existed. If you were traveling and you arrived at a city in the evening, you would look for hospitality at a home. In such a case, you and your host would be *xenoi*.

In this case, you would be a guest, a stranger, and a foreigner. You would be a guest in this home. Because your host doesn't know you, you would be a stranger. Because you aren't from this city, you would be a foreigner.

Of course, your host would be a host.

In addition, you and your host would be friends. You would not be friends in the sense that you have known and liked each other for a long time. You would be friends because you have participated in the guest-host relationship.

By the way, *xenia* is a root word of *xenophobia*, or fear of strangers.

In addition, modern Greece has the tradition today of *xenophilia*, or of showing hospitality to tourists.

• **Which safeguards protect against the violation of *xenia*?**

There can be a lot of danger in such a relationship. What would happen if either the guest or the host were a robber and a killer? Bad things.

Therefore, some kind of safeguard is needed. The host must not murder his guest. The guest must not murder his host.

The ancient Greeks did have a safeguard for *xenia*: Zeus *Xenios*, which means Zeus, the god of *xenia*. Anyone who does not follow the rules of *xenia* is not doing the will of Zeus. This offends Zeus, and eventually the offender will pay for his transgression.

• **In which way was the cause of the Trojan War a violation of *xenia*?**

Of course, the Trojan War began because of a violation of *xenia*. The Trojan Paris was a guest of Menelaus, King of Sparta. When you are a guest, you aren't supposed to run away with your host's wife and much of his treasure. We know what happened to Troy as a result of this transgression of *xenia*: The Greeks conquered Troy.

Conclusion

Be sure to read a good translation of Homer's *Iliad* once you have read this retelling.

I recommend that you read the translations by Robert Fagles and by Ian Johnston.

I also recommend Elizabeth Vandiver's courses on the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, and *Aeneid*. Her courses are available from the Teaching Company. I have used information presented in that course in this section titled "Background Information."

Appendix C: About the Author

It was a dark and stormy night. Suddenly a cry rang out, and on a hot summer night in 1954, Josephine, wife of Carl Bruce, gave birth to a boy — me. Unfortunately, this young married couple allowed Reuben Saturday, Josephine's brother, to name their first-born. Reuben, aka "The Joker," decided that Bruce was a nice name, so he decided to name me Bruce Bruce. I have gone by my middle name — David — ever since.

Being named Bruce David Bruce hasn't been all bad. Bank tellers remember me very quickly, so I don't often have to show an ID. It can be fun in charades, also. When I was a counselor as a teenager at Camp Echoing Hills in Warsaw, Ohio, a fellow counselor gave the signs for "sounds like" and "two words," then she pointed to a bruise on her leg twice. Bruise Bruise? Oh yeah, Bruce Bruce is the answer!

Uncle Reuben, by the way, gave me a haircut when I was in kindergarten. He cut my hair short and shaved a small bald spot on the back of my head. My mother wouldn't let me go to school until the bald spot grew out again.

Of all my brothers and sisters (six in all), I am the only transplant to Athens, Ohio. I was born in Newark, Ohio, and have lived all around Southeastern Ohio. However, I moved to Athens to go to Ohio University and have never left.

At Ohio U, I never could make up my mind whether to major in English or Philosophy, so I got a bachelor's degree with a double major in both areas, then I added a Master of Arts degree in English and a Master of Arts degree in Philosophy. Yes, I have my MAMA degree.

Currently, and for a long time to come (I eat fruits and veggies), I am spending my retirement writing books such as Nadia Comaneci: Perfect 10, *The Funniest People in Dance*, *Homer's Iliad: A Retelling in Prose*, and William Shakespeare's *Othello: A Retelling in Prose*.

By the way, my sister Brenda Kennedy writes romances such as *A New Beginning* and *Shattered Dreams*.

Appendix D: Some Books by David Bruce

Retellings of a Classic Work of Literature

- Arden of Faversham: *A Retelling*
Ben Jonson's The Alchemist: *A Retelling*
Ben Jonson's The Arraignment, or Poetaster: *A Retelling*
Ben Jonson's Bartholomew Fair: *A Retelling*
Ben Jonson's The Case is Altered: *A Retelling*
Ben Jonson's Catiline's Conspiracy: *A Retelling*
Ben Jonson's The Devil is an Ass: *A Retelling*
Ben Jonson's Epicene: *A Retelling*
Ben Jonson's Every Man in His Humor: *A Retelling*
Ben Jonson's Every Man Out of His Humor: *A Retelling*
Ben Jonson's The Fountain of Self-Love, or Cynthia's Revels: *A Retelling*
Ben Jonson's The Magnetic Lady, or Humors Reconciled: *A Retelling*
Ben Jonson's The New Inn, or The Light Heart: *A Retelling*
Ben Jonson's Sejanus' Fall: *A Retelling*
Ben Jonson's The Staple of News: *A Retelling*
Ben Jonson's A Tale of a Tub: *A Retelling*
Ben Jonson's Volpone, or the Fox: *A Retelling*
Christopher Marlowe's Complete Plays: *Retellings*
Christopher Marlowe's Dido, Queen of Carthage: *A Retelling*
Christopher Marlowe's Doctor Faustus: *Retellings of the 1604 A-Text and of the 1616 B-Text*
Christopher Marlowe's Edward II: *A Retelling*
Christopher Marlowe's The Massacre at Paris: *A Retelling*
Christopher Marlowe's The Rich Jew of Malta: *A Retelling*
Christopher Marlowe's Tamburlaine, Parts 1 and 2: *Retellings*
Dante's Divine Comedy: *A Retelling in Prose*
Dante's Inferno: *A Retelling in Prose*
Dante's Purgatory: *A Retelling in Prose*
Dante's Paradise: *A Retelling in Prose*
The Famous Victories of Henry V: *A Retelling*
From the Iliad to the Odyssey: *A Retelling in Prose of Quintus of Smyrna's Posthomerica*
George Chapman, Ben Jonson, and John Marston's Eastward Ho! *A Retelling*
George Peele's The Arraignment of Paris: *A Retelling*
George Peele's The Battle of Alcazar: *A Retelling*
George's Peele's David and Bathsheba, and the Tragedy of Absalom: *A Retelling*
George Peele's Edward I: *A Retelling*
George Peele's The Old Wives' Tale: *A Retelling*
George-a-Greene: *A Retelling*
The History of King Leir: *A Retelling*
Homer's Iliad: *A Retelling in Prose*

Homer's Odyssey: A Retelling in Prose
J.W. Gent's The Valiant Scot: A Retelling
Jason and the Argonauts: A Retelling in Prose of Apollonius of Rhodes' Argonautica
John Ford: Eight Plays Translated into Modern English
John Ford's The Broken Heart: A Retelling
John Ford's The Fancies, Chaste and Noble: A Retelling
John Ford's The Lady's Trial: A Retelling
John Ford's The Lover's Melancholy: A Retelling
John Ford's Love's Sacrifice: A Retelling
John Ford's Perkin Warbeck: A Retelling
John Ford's The Queen: A Retelling
John Ford's 'Tis Pity She's a Whore: A Retelling
John Lyly's Campaspe: A Retelling
John Lyly's Endymion, The Man in the Moon: A Retelling
John Lyly's Galatea: A Retelling
John Lyly's Love's Metamorphosis: A Retelling
John Lyly's Midas: A Retelling
John Lyly's Mother Bombie: A Retelling
John Lyly's Sappho and Phao: A Retelling
John Lyly's The Woman in the Moon: A Retelling
John Webster's The White Devil: A Retelling
King Edward III: A Retelling
Mankind: A Medieval Morality Play (A Retelling)
Margaret Cavendish's The Unnatural Tragedy: A Retelling
The Merry Devil of Edmonton: A Retelling
The Summoning of Everyman: A Medieval Morality Play (A Retelling)
Robert Greene's Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay: A Retelling
The Taming of a Shrew: A Retelling
Tarlton's Jests: A Retelling
Thomas Middleton's A Chaste Maid in Cheapside: A Retelling
Thomas Middleton's Women Beware Women: A Retelling
Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker's The Roaring Girl: A Retelling
Thomas Middleton and William Rowley's The Changeling: A Retelling
The Trojan War and Its Aftermath: Four Ancient Epic Poems
Virgil's Aeneid: A Retelling in Prose
William Shakespeare's 5 Late Romances: Retellings in Prose
William Shakespeare's 10 Histories: Retellings in Prose
William Shakespeare's 11 Tragedies: Retellings in Prose
William Shakespeare's 12 Comedies: Retellings in Prose
William Shakespeare's 38 Plays: Retellings in Prose
William Shakespeare's 1 Henry IV, aka Henry IV, Part 1: A Retelling in Prose
William Shakespeare's 2 Henry IV, aka Henry IV, Part 2: A Retelling in Prose
William Shakespeare's 1 Henry VI, aka Henry VI, Part 1: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's 2 Henry VI, aka Henry VI, Part 2: A Retelling in Prose
William Shakespeare's 3 Henry VI, aka Henry VI, Part 3: A Retelling in Prose
William Shakespeare's All's Well that Ends Well: A Retelling in Prose
William Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra: A Retelling in Prose
William Shakespeare's As You Like It: A Retelling in Prose
William Shakespeare's The Comedy of Errors: A Retelling in Prose
William Shakespeare's Coriolanus: A Retelling in Prose
William Shakespeare's Cymbeline: A Retelling in Prose
William Shakespeare's Hamlet: A Retelling in Prose
William Shakespeare's Henry V: A Retelling in Prose
William Shakespeare's Henry VIII: A Retelling in Prose
William Shakespeare's Julius Caesar: A Retelling in Prose
William Shakespeare's King John: A Retelling in Prose
William Shakespeare's King Lear: A Retelling in Prose
William Shakespeare's Love's Labor's Lost: A Retelling in Prose
William Shakespeare's Macbeth: A Retelling in Prose
William Shakespeare's Measure for Measure: A Retelling in Prose
William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice: A Retelling in Prose
William Shakespeare's The Merry Wives of Windsor: A Retelling in Prose
William Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream: A Retelling in Prose
William Shakespeare's Much Ado About Nothing: A Retelling in Prose
William Shakespeare's Othello: A Retelling in Prose
William Shakespeare's Pericles, Prince of Tyre: A Retelling in Prose
William Shakespeare's Richard II: A Retelling in Prose
William Shakespeare's Richard III: A Retelling in Prose
William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet: A Retelling in Prose
William Shakespeare's The Taming of the Shrew: A Retelling in Prose
William Shakespeare's The Tempest: A Retelling in Prose
William Shakespeare's Timon of Athens: A Retelling in Prose
William Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus: A Retelling in Prose
William Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida: A Retelling in Prose
William Shakespeare's Twelfth Night: A Retelling in Prose
William Shakespeare's The Two Gentlemen of Verona: A Retelling in Prose
William Shakespeare's The Two Noble Kinsmen: A Retelling in Prose
William Shakespeare's The Winter's Tale: A Retelling in Prose

