

mother. Tell her to collect the older women at the temple of grey-eyed Athene on the town heights and unlock the doors of the holy shrine. Let her choose a robe from her palace, the loveliest and biggest she can find in the house and the one most precious to her, and lay it on the knees of lovely-haired Athene. And let her promise to sacrifice in her shrine a dozen year-old heifers that have never worked, if only she will have pity on the town and on the Trojans' wives and little children and keep that savage spearman and master of the rout, Diomedes, clear of sacred Ilium. He, in my opinion, is now our most powerful Greek adversary. We were never so terrified even of Achilles, leader of men, and said to be a goddess' son. But Diomedes here is quite uncontrollable and not a man can hold him.

So he spoke, and Hector complied. Fully armed, he immediately leapt from his chariot to the ground and, brandishing a pair of sharp spears, went everywhere among his men, urging them to fight and rousing their spirit for grim battle. As a result the Trojans turned and faced the Greeks, who now gave ground and killed no more of the enemy. Indeed, the Trojans rallied so effectively that the Greeks thought some god must have come down from the starry sky to help them. Hector then called out to the Trojans in a loud voice:

'Proud Trojans and famous allies, be men, my comrades, and call up that fighting spirit of yours, while I go into Ilium to tell our elders and our wives to pray to the gods and promise them a sacrifice.'

With these words Hector of the flashing helmet went off towards the town. As he walked, the dark leather rim of the bossed shield slung over his shoulder tapped him above and below, on the ankles and on the back of the neck.

Glauco son of Hippolochus and Diomedes son of Tydeus now approached one another in the space between the two armies, determined to do battle. When they had come within range of each other, Diomedes, master of the battle-cry, spoke first:

Glauco and Diomedes meet
'What mortal man are you, sir? I have not seen you in battle where men win glory – till now. Yet in facing the long-shadowed spear in my hand you

have shown far greater courage than any of your comrades. Pity those fathers whose sons face me in my fury!

'But if you are one of the immortals descended from Olympus, I am not the man to fight against the gods of the skies. Why, not even powerful Lycurgus, Dryas' son, survived his quarrel with the gods of the skies for very long. This murderous Lycurgus chased the nurses of the wild god Dionysus down from the holy hills of Nyssa, and they all scattered the god's emblems to the ground as he struck them with his ox-goad. Dionysus fled and found sanctuary under the salt sea waves where the Sea-nymph Thetis took him to her bosom, terrified and shaking violently from Lycurgus' threats. But the immortals who live at ease resented what Lycurgus had done – and Zeus struck him blind. He did not live long after that, since all the immortals hated him. So I will not be fighting against the blessed gods.

'But if you are one of us mortals who eat the fruit of the earth, come on, and the sooner your fate will be sealed.'

Glauco, glorious son of Hippolochus, spoke:

'Great-hearted Diomedes, why ask after my family? The family of man is like the leaves of the trees. The wind scatters them on the ground, but the trees burst into bud and grow fresh leaves when the spring comes round. So with the family of man: one generation grows, the other fades. But if you really wish to learn about my family, I will tell you. Most people know my story already.

There is a town called Ephyre in a corner of Argos where the horses graze. Here lived a man called Sisyphus, a man as crafty as they come. Aeolus was his father's name. Sisyphus had a son called Glauco; and Glauco in his turn was father of matchless Bellerophon.

The gods endowed Bellerophon with fine looks and every desirable manly virtue. But Zeus made him subject to Proetus from Argos, who was far more powerful; and Proetus, who had trouble in mind for Bellerophon, expelled him from the town. The reason was that Proetus' wife godlike Anteia was mad for him to make secret love to her. But prudent Bellerophon was a man of sound principles and refused. So Anteia went to lord Proetus with a lying tale and said: "Proetus, Bellerophon wanted

to seduce me, but I refused. Kill him, or may you die yourself.'

170 'So she spoke, and Proetus was enraged at what he heard. He stopped short of putting Bellerophon to death — he did not think it right to do so — but instead sent him off to Lycia carrying a fatal message, a folded tablet on which he had written signs with a deadly meaning. Proetus told Bellerophon to hand this tablet to his father-in-law, the ruler of Lycia, thus ensuring Bellerophon's death.

'The journey was smoothly overseen by the gods and, when Bellerophon reached Lycia and the flowing River Xanthus, he was welcomed as an honoured guest by the ruler of those broad lands. His host entertained him for nine days and slaughtered an ox every day. But when rosy-fingered Dawn rose for the tenth day, he questioned Bellerophon, asked to see what message he had brought from Proetus and was given the tablet with the fatal instructions that Proetus had sent.

180 'The Lycian ruler's first step was to order Bellerophon to kill the raging Chimaera, a creature born of the gods, not men. She had a lion's head, a serpent's tail and the body of a goat; and her breath came out in terrible blasts of burning flame. But Bellerophon let himself be guided by the gods and succeeded in killing her. His second mission was to fight the illustrious Solymi — Bellerophon spoke of that as the most terrific battle he had ever fought against men. And by way of a third task, he killed the Amazons, women who were a match for men.

190 'But the ruler of Lycia thought of something different and set a clever trap to catch him on his return from this adventure. He picked out the best men in all Lycia and stationed them in ambush. Not one of them came home — matchless Bellerophon killed them all. In the end, he realized Bellerophon was a true son of the gods. So he kept him in Lycia and gave him his daughter's hand and half his kingdom, while the Lycians also sectioned off a piece of their best land with rich vineyards and cornfields for him to cultivate.

'Bellerophon's wife bore him three children — Isander, Hippolochus and Laodameia, who slept with Zeus wise in counsel and became the mother of the godlike warrior Sarpedon. But the

200 time came when Bellerophon incurred the enmity of all the gods and wandered off in solitude across the Aleian Plain, eating his heart out and avoiding all contact with men. Ares, the insatiable War-god, killed his son Isander in battle with the illustrious Solymi, and Artemis, whose chariot has golden reins, killed Laodameia in anger.

'That left Hippolochus — and they say I am his son. He sent me to Troy and often used to tell me always to be the best and excel all others and never disgrace our forefathers who were by far the best men in Ephyre and Lycia.

210 'That, then, is my family; that is the blood I claim as mine.'

So he spoke, and Glaucus' tale delighted Diomedes, master of the battle-cry. He stuck his spear into the bountiful earth and warmly addressed this shepherd of the people:

'Surely your family and mine are linked by old-established ties. Godlike Oeneus my grandfather once entertained matchless Bellerophon in his palace and kept him there for twenty days, after which they

Glaucus and

Diomedes

exchange

armour

gave each other the usual splendid gifts that host and guest exchange. Oeneus gave Bellerophon a belt bright with purple, and Bellerophon gave Oeneus a gold two-handled cup 220 which I left behind at home when I set out here for Troy. (As for my father Tydeus, however, I don't remember him, as I was only a baby when he joined the Greek expedition that was destroyed at Thebes.) So now you will have a good friend in me in the heart of Argos, and I shall have you in Lycia if ever I visit that country.

'So let us avoid each other's spears even in the tumult of battle, since there are plenty of other Trojans and their famous allies for me to kill, if the god provides them and I have the speed to catch them, and plenty of Greeks for you to slaughter, if you can. And let us exchange our armour so that everyone 230 will know our grandfathers' friendship has made friends of us.'

With these words they leapt from their chariots, took each other by the hand and gave their word of honour. But Zeus robbed Glaucus of his wits since he exchanged his golden armour for Diomedes' bronze, a hundred oxen's worth for the value of nine.