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## DIOMEDES' HEROICS

11-35: ATHENE inspires Diomedes, who goes on the rampage. ATHENE leads the War-god ARES out of the fighting.

36-165: Diomedes' onslaught starts a Trojan retreat. *Pandarus* hits Diomedes in the shoulder with an arrow, but ATHENE revitalizes him and enables him to distinguish between men and gods.

166-296: *Aeneas* and *Pandarus* attack Diomedes, who kills *Pandarus*.

297-470: *APHRODITE* rescues *Aeneas*, but Diomedes stabs her. She complains to her mother *DIONE*; *ZEUS* gently teases her. Diomedes pursues *Aeneas* but is warned off by *APOLLO*. ARES inspires the Trojans.

471-710: *Sarpedon* rebukes *Hector*, who storms into battle with ARES' support. General fighting ensues. Diomedes leads the retreat from *Hector* and ARES.

711-92: HERA and ATHENE agree to act against ARES. They arm and tell ZEUS their plans. HERA rallies the Greeks.

793-909: ATHENE rebukes Diomedes, and together they wound ARES. He complains to ZEUS.

Pallas Athene now inspired Diomedes son of Tydeus with determination and bravery, so that he might eclipse all the Greeks and win heroic glory. She made his shield and helmet glow with a steady blaze, like Sirius the autumn star which rises from its bath in Ocean to shine brightest of all. Such was the fire she made blaze from his head and shoulders as she thrust him into the very heart of the battle where the fighting was at its most confused.

There was a Trojan called Dares, rich and handsome, who was a priest of Hephæstus. He had two sons Phegeus and Idæus, both experienced in every kind of fighting. These two detached themselves from the rest and launched themselves against Diomedes in their chariot, while he went to meet them on foot. When they had come within range of each other, Phegeus was the first to hurl his long-shadowed spear. But the spear-point passed over Diomedes' left shoulder and did not hit him. Then Diomedes son of Tydeus replied with his bronze spear. It did not leave his hand for nothing.

It hit Phegeus in the middle of the chest and knocked him out of the superb chariot, which Idæus then also deserted by leaping out of it, not daring to stand over his brother's body. And black destiny would have got him too, if Hephæstus had not come to the rescue and wrapped him in night, saving him so that his aged priest Dares, their father, might not be utterly broken by grief. Great-hearted Diomedes drove the men's horses off and told his followers to take them back to the hollow ships.

When the great-hearted Trojans saw that one of Dares' sons had fled for his life and the other been killed beside the chariot, panic threatened. Then grey-eyed Athene took the wild War-god Ares by the hand and said:

'Ares, murderous Ares, butcher of men and sacker of towns, is it not time for us to let the Trojans and Greeks fight it out and leave it to Father Zeus to decide who will win the glory? Let us two leave the field of battle before we make him angry.'

So she spoke, led wild Ares out of the fight and made him sit down on the high bank of the River Scamander.

As a result, the Greeks pushed back the Trojans and each of their leaders killed his man. First Agamemnon lord of men hurled great Odius, leader of the Halizones, out of his chariot. Odius was the first to turn, and Agamemnon stabbed him with his spear in the middle of the back between his shoulders and drove it on through his chest. He thudded to the ground, and his armour clattered about him.

Diomedes kills  
Phegeus

HEPH-  
AESTUS  
rescues Idæus

ATHENE  
leads ARES  
out of battle

Greeks kill  
six Trojans

Next Idomeneus killed Phaestus, who had come from fertile Tairne in Maeonia. Just as Phaestus was getting into his chariot the great spearman Idomeneus pierced his right shoulder with his long spear. Phaestus crashed out of the chariot and hateful darkness engulfed him. Idomeneus' followers then stripped his body.

Then Menelaus son of Atreus caught the brilliant hunter Scamandrius with his sharp spear. Scamandrius was a great man for the chase, who had been taught by the goddess Artemis herself how to bring down any kind of wild game that lives in the mountain forests. But Artemis who delights in arrows was of no help to him now, nor were the long shots that had won him fame. As Scamandrius fled before him, the great spearman Menelaus son of Atreus stabbed him with his spear in the middle of the back between his shoulders and drove it on through his chest. He crashed down on his face, and his armour clattered about him.

Next, Meriones killed Phereclus son of Tecton, Harmon's son, who could turn his hand to the most intricate kind of work. Pallas Athene had no greater favourite. It was he who had built for Paris those balanced ships that had started all the trouble and proved such a curse to the whole Trojan people – and eventually to himself, since he knew nothing of the oracles of the gods. Meriones pursued him and, when he caught him, hit him in the right buttock. The spear-head passed clean through to the bladder under the pubic bone. He dropped to his knees with a scream, and death enveloped him.

Then Meges killed Pedaeus, an illegitimate son of Antenor's whom bright Theano, Antenor's wife, had conscientiously brought up like a child of her own to please her husband. The great spearman Meges caught this man up and hit him with his sharp spear on the nape of the head. The point came through between his teeth and cut out the root of his tongue. He collapsed in the dust and bit the cold bronze with his teeth.

Meanwhile Eurypylus killed godlike Hypsenor, who served as priest to the River-god Scamander and was honoured like a god by the people. As Hypsenor fled before him, glorious Eurypylus closed in at full tilt and slashed at his shoulder with

his sword. His great arm was shorn off and fell bleeding to the ground. Inexorable destiny and purple death closed his eyes.

So they fought it out in the heat of battle. As for Diomedes himself, you could not have told to which army, Trojan or Greek, he belonged. He stormed across the plain like a winter torrent in spate, bursting dykes as it races along; when the skies open, neither close-packed embankments nor walls built to protect fertile gardens can contain its sudden onslaught, and far and wide it flattens the good work of industrious farmers – so the dense ranks of the Trojans were thrown into confusion by Diomedes, unable for all their numbers to withstand him.

But when Pandarus, Lycaon's splendid son, saw Diomedes storming across the plain and driving the ranks in confusion ahead of him, he lost no time but bent his curved bow, took aim and hit him, as he raced ahead, in the right shoulder on a plate of his armour. Piercing the plate, the bitter arrow went right on through, and his body-armour was spattered with blood. Pandarus gave a great shout:

'Great-hearted Trojans, forward and at them, charioteers! The best man they've got is hit, and after a shot like that I don't think he'll last much longer, if it really was lord Apollo son of Zeus who sped me on my way here when I left Lycia.'

So he spoke, boasting. But the flying arrow did not bring Diomedes down. He fell back, came to a halt by his horses and chariot and spoke to his charioteer, Capaneus' son Sthenelus:

'Quick, Sthenelus old friend, get down from the chariot and draw this wretched arrow from my shoulder.'

So he spoke, and Sthenelus leapt from his chariot to the ground, came over to him and pulled the arrow right through the shoulder and out the other side. The blood came gushing out through his strongly woven tunic, and Diomedes, master of the battle-cry, prayed to Athene:

'Listen to me, daughter of Zeus who drives the storm-cloud, Atrytone. If ever in the past you wished me and my father Tydeus well and stood by us in the heat of battle, be kind to me again, Athene. Let me kill Pandarus. Bring me within range of the man who shot me before I saw him. And now he's boasting about it and saying I won't see the light of day much longer.'

So he spoke in prayer, and Pallas Athene heard him and removed the heaviness from his legs and arms. She went up to him and spoke winged words: 'Now, Diomedes, you can fight the Trojans in full confidence! I have filled your heart with the fearless determination of your father Tydeus, the shield-bearing chariot-eer. Also, I have swept the mist from your eyes and made you able to distinguish gods from men. Now, in case a god comes here to try you out, do not fight with any of them — with one exception only. If Aphrodite daughter of Zeus comes into battle, stab her with your sharp spear.'

With these words grey-eyed Athene left, and Diomedes went and engaged once more with the front ranks. Even without Athene, he had been determined to fall on the enemy again, and now he possessed three times the determination, like a lion which a shepherd in charge of the fleecy sheep on an outlying farm has wounded as it leaps over the fence but failed to kill. He only rouses the lion to greater fury; but now he cannot keep it off, so it gets in among the folds, and the abandoned sheep run in panic. They are left piled up in heaps against each other, and the lion, as determined as ever, jumps the high wall and escapes — with such determination did mighty Diomedes charge the Trojans.

Diomedes kills eight Trojans  
 He killed Astynous and Hypeiron shepherd of the people. He hit the one above the nipple with his bronze spear and struck the other with his great sword on the collar bone by the shoulder, severing the shoulder from neck and back.

He left them lying there and went after Abas and Polyidus, sons of Eurydamas, an old man who interpreted dreams. But the old man interpreted no dreams for these two when they set out for Troy, and Diomedes killed them both.

Then he went after Xanthus and Thoön, sons of Phaenops, both late-born. Phaenops was old now and ailing and had no other son to whom he could leave his wealth. Diomedes killed them both, depriving them of their precious lives and leaving their father only tears and a broken heart. He never welcomed them home alive from the war. Relatives divided up the estate.

Diomedes' next victims were two sons of Dardanian Priam, Echemmon and Chromius, who were riding in the same chariot. As a lion pounces on cattle grazing peacefully at pasture and breaks the neck of an ox or heifer, so Diomedes gave them no option but brutally forced them out of their chariot, stripped them of their armour and gave their horses to his men to drive to the ships.

Aeneas, seeing what havoc Diomedes was making of the Trojan lines, set out through the battle and hail of missiles in search of godlike Pandarus. When he found Lycaon's handsome mighty son, he went up to him and said:

'Pandarus, what's happened to your bow, your winged arrows, your reputation as an archer? You are supposed to be the best archer Lycia can boast, better than any we have in Troy. So lift your hands in prayer to Zeus and let fly at that man over there. I don't know who he is, but he's having it all his own way, and has done us a great deal of harm already and brought many of our best men down — unless it's an angry god, resentful at some shortcoming in our rites. If it is, his anger is taking a heavy toll.'

Pandarus, splendid son of Lycaon, replied:

'Aeneas, adviser to the bronze-armoured Trojans, if you ask me, that man is Diomedes, to the life. I recognize him by his shield and plumed helmet. I know his horses too when I see them. On the other hand, it may be a god: I don't know for sure. But if it is the man I take him for, warlike Diomedes, I can see the hand of the gods in this frenzied attack. Some god must surely be standing by him, wrapped in a mist, to have made my flying arrow swerve when it was dead on course. Because I have shot at him already — and I hit him in the right shoulder, clean through the plate of armour. I certainly thought that would see him off to Hades. Yet somehow I failed to kill him. So perhaps it is some resentful god, after all.'

'And here am I, without a chariot or horses to carry me. In my father Lycaon's palace, let me tell you, I have eleven splendid chariots fresh from the joiner's, brand new. They are still under their protective cloths, and a couple of horses stand by each

200 one, munching white barley and rye. There in the palace before I left for Troy, my old father, the spearman Lycaon, told me time and again that I should lead men into the thick of the action from a horse-drawn chariot. But I would not listen to him – better for me if I had. I wanted to spare my horses, who had always had plenty to eat, in case fodder ran short in a town under siege.

210 ‘So I left and came to Ilium on foot, relying on my archery. Not, as it turns out, that archery was going to do me any good. I have already shot two of their best men, Diomedes and Menelaus, and in each case I scored a hit and drew blood – no doubt about it. But I only roused them to greater efforts. No, destiny was not looking kindly on me when I took my curved bow from its peg that day I set out with my contingent for lovely Ilium to serve godlike Hector. But if ever I get home again and set eyes on the land of my fathers, my wife and my great house with its high roof, I’ll be ready to let anyone cut my head off then and there, if I don’t smash this bow with my own hands and throw it on the blazing fire. It’s surplus baggage.’

Aeneas leader of the Trojans spoke in reply:

230 ‘No more speeches like that, *please*. Things are not going to change till you and I confront him in full armour from a chariot and find out what he’s made of. Come, get into this chariot and you will see what horses bred by my ancestor Tros are like, and how quickly they can cover the ground in pursuit or retreat. They’ll get us safely back to Ilium, if Zeus gives Diomedes son of Tydeus the glory. Come on, take the whip and reins, and when the time comes I’ll dismount and do the fighting. Or you take on the man, while I look after the horses.’

The splendid son of Lycaon replied:

250 ‘Aeneas, take the reins yourself and drive your own horses. They’ll pull the curved chariot better with their usual charioteer behind them, if we have to run away from Diomedes. They might take fright and not respond, if they missed your voice, and refuse to take us from the battle. Then great-hearted Diomedes would close in, finish us off and drive away our horses. So

handle the chariot and horses yourself and, when the man charges, I will take him on with my spear.’

240 With these words they mounted the ornate chariot and, filled with determination, directed their swift horses at Diomedes. Splendid Sthenelus, son of Capaneus, saw them coming and promptly spoke to Diomedes with winged words:

250 ‘Diomedes son of Tydeus, my pride and joy, here come two mighty men determined to fight you – a formidably powerful pair. One is the expert Bowman, Pandarus, who can boast he is Lycaon’s son. The other is Aeneas, who can name matchless Anchises as his father and Aphrodite as his mother. Quick, let’s retreat in the chariot. No more storming about on foot in the front line like this, or you may lose your life.’

Mighty Diomedes gave him a black look and replied:

Diomedes

plans to capture Aeneas’ horses

‘Don’t talk to me of flight. I do not think you will persuade me. It’s not in my nature to evade a fight or run away and hide. My desire to win is as strong as ever. No chariot for me, either; I will go to meet them as I am.

Pallas Athene does not allow me to run in terror. As for those two, their swift horses will not save *both* of them from us and get them home, even if one of them escapes.

260 ‘And I will tell you something else, and you bear it in mind. If all-wise Athene lets me win and kill them both, leave our own horses here – you can tie the reins to the rail – and concentrate on the horses of Aeneas. Seize *them* and drive them away from the Trojans towards our lines. I tell you, they are bred from the same stock as those that far-thundering Zeus gave Tros in compensation after he had stolen his son Ganymede; and *they* were the best horses in the world. They were passed down to Laomedon, and Anchises lord of men stole the breed by putting mares to them without Laomedon’s knowledge. Six foals resulted. Anchises kept four for himself and reared them in his own stables, but gave the last two, masters of the rout, to his son Aeneas for use in battle. If we could capture them, we’d win heroic glory.’

270 As they were discussing this, their opponents came up, urging on their swift horses. Splendid Pandarus was first to speak:

'Bold and brilliant Diomedes, son of noble Tydeus, evidently my flying missile, my bitter arrow, didn't bring you down. Well, I shall try with a spear this time and see what that will do.'

He spoke, balanced his long-shadowed spear and hurled it. It hit Diomedes' shield. The bronze point pierced it and reached Diomedes' body-armour. Pandarus gave a great shout over him:

Diomedes kills  
*Pandarus*  
me!  
'A hit—clean through the flank! I don't think you'll last much longer now! What a triumph you've given

Unperturbed, mighty Diomedes said:

'Missed! You never touched me. But I reckon, before you two have done, one or the other is going to fall and glut the War-god Ares, that shield-bearing warrior, with his blood.'

With these words he threw. His spear, guided by Athene, came down on top of Pandarus' nose by the eye and passed between his white teeth. His tongue was cut off at the root by the relentless bronze, and the point came out under his chin. He crashed out of the chariot. His bright, glittering armour clattered about him, and his swift horses shied away. Life and spirit left him there.

Aeneas now leapt down from his chariot with his shield and long spear, fearing the Greeks might try to rob him of the body. He stood over it like a lion in the pride of its power, covering the body with his spear and round shield, determined to kill all comers, shouting his intimidating war-cry.

Diomedes picked up a rock, a tremendous feat. Not even two men today could manage it, but Diomedes tossed it about quite easily on his own. With this he hit Aeneas on the hip where the thigh turns in the hip-joint—the cup-bone, as they call it. He crushed the cup-bone and broke both sinews too, and the skin was ripped away by the jagged boulder. The warrior sank to his knees and supported himself with one great hand on the ground; but the world went black as night.

APHRODITE  
rescues *Aeneas*  
Then Aeneas lord of men would have perished there and then, but for the quickness of his mother divine Aphrodite who had conceived Aeneas for Anchises when he was herding cattle. Seeing what had happened, she threw her white arms round her dear son and drew

a fold of her shimmering robe in front of him, to protect him from flying weapons and any fatal spear in the chest from the Greeks with their swift horses.

While Aphrodite was rescuing her son from the battle, Sthenelus, not forgetting the instructions he had received from Diomedes, tied his horses' reins to the chariot-rail, left them there some way from the mayhem and went for Aeneas' pair with their lovely manes.

Seizing these, he drove them out of the Trojan into the Greek lines, where he handed them over to Deipylus, a close friend whom he liked more than

any man of his own age and with whom he saw eye to eye. After telling Deipylus to drive the pair back to the hollow ships, Sthenelus mounted his own chariot, grasped the glittering reins and immediately drove his powerful horses keenly off in search of Diomedes.

Diomedes, meanwhile, had gone himself in hot pursuit of Aphrodite with his relentless spear, knowing what a timid goddess she was, not one of those that play a dominating part in the battles of mankind, such as Athene or Enyo, sacker of towns. After a long chase through the crowd he caught up with her and leapt to the attack. He made a lunge at her with his sharp spear and stabbed her soft hand at the base of the palm. The point, slicing through the imperishable robe which the Graces had made for her, pierced her flesh where the palm joins the wrist.

Out came the goddess' immortal blood, the ichor that runs in the veins of the blessed gods, who eat no bread and drink no sparkling wine and so are bloodless and called immortals. Aphrodite gave a piercing scream and dropped her son, but Phoebus Apollo took him in his arms and wrapped him in a dark-blue cloud to protect him from any fatal spear in the chest from the Greeks with their swift horses. Diomedes, master of the battle-cry, gave a great shout over her:

'Aphrōdite daughter of Zeus, be off from the battlefield and its slaughter! Isn't it enough for you to seduce the feeble wits of women? If you persist in interfering in battle, I think you will be taught to tremble at the very mention of it, wherever you hear it.'

Diomedes wounds

APHRODITE

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So he spoke, and Aphrodite withdrew, bewildered and in considerable discomfort. Her lovely skin was darkening with blood and she was hurting from the pain, but Iris, quick as the wind, took charge of her and led her out of the tumult. To the left of the battlefield Aphrodite found the wild War-god Ares, seated on the ground, with his spear and horses resting on a bank of cloud. Sinking to her knees, she entreated her brother for the loan of his horses with the golden headpieces:

360 'See me safe, dear brother. Let me have your horses to get me back to Olympus where the immortals have their home. I'm in agony. I've been stabbed by a mortal, Diomedes, who is in a mood now to fight with Father Zeus himself.'

APHRODITE

retreats to

Olympus

So she spoke, and Ares gave her the horses with the golden headpieces. Aphrodite mounted the chariot in some distress but Iris got in beside her, took the reins in her hands and lashed the horses with the whip to get them moving. The willing pair flew off, and before long they reached steep Olympus where the gods have their home. There swift Iris, quick as the wind, brought the horses to a halt, unyoked them from the chariot and threw ambrosial fodder down beside them, while celestial Aphrodite went to her mother Dione and sank down at her knees. Dione took her daughter in her arms, stroked her with her hand and spoke to her:

'My darling child, which of the Sky-gods has foolishly treated you like this, as if you had done something wicked in public?'

Laughter-loving Aphrodite replied:

370 'The son of Tydeus, dauntless Diomedes, stabbed me because I was rescuing my own beloved son Aeneas from the battle – the son who means more to me than anyone! This war is no longer a struggle between Trojans and Greeks: the Greeks are fighting now against the gods as well.'

Dione, celestial goddess, replied:

380 'Endure, my child, and put up with it, despite your distress. Many of us that live here on Olympus gods' suffering have suffered at the hands of men in our attempts to inflict serious injury on one another.'

390 'Ares, for one, had to suffer when Otus and mighty Ephialtes, children of Aloeus, threw him in chains. He spent thirteen months trussed up in a bronze jar. And that would have been the end of the insatiable War-god Ares, if beautiful Eriboea his stepmother had not told Hermes what they had done. Ares' strength was already failing him when, despite the formidable shackles that held him, Hermes spirited him away.

'Hera suffered too when Heracles mighty son of Amphyryon hit her in the right breast with a three-barbed arrow – she was in absolute agony.

400 'And dread Hades had to suffer, like the rest, when that same Heracles, son of Zeus who drives the storm-cloud, shot him with a flying arrow at Hell's gate among the dead and hurt him very badly. Sick at heart and in excruciating pain, Hades found his way to high Olympus and Zeus' palace. The arrow had driven into his shoulder muscles and was giving him considerable distress. However, Paeon the healer spread pain-killing herbs on the wound and healed him; for, after all, he was immortal. But what a self-willed monster that Heracles was! He cared so little what wickedness he set his hand to that he harassed the very gods who live on Olympus with his bow!

410 'As for your trouble, it was grey-eyed Athene who told the man to chase you. What a fool Diomedes is! He has no idea how short life is for the man who fights the immortals. For him, there is no homecoming from war and its horrors, no little children gathering at his knee to call him "father". So let Diomedes, mighty man though he is, take care that no god more formidable than you comes out to fight him, or one day his wife noble Aegialea, wise daughter of Adrestus, will awaken the household she loves from sleep, bewailing the loss of her young husband, the best of the Greeks, horse-taming Diomedes.'

She spoke, and wiped the ichor from Aphrodite's wrist with her hands. The wound healed and the severe pain was relieved.

Athene and Hera had missed nothing of this and turned mockingly to Zeus. The goddess grey-eyed Athene began and spoke her mind:

The gods tease  
 APHRODITE     'Father Zeus, will you be offended by what I say?  
 Aphrodite must have been at work again, luring  
 Greek women into the arms of the Trojans whom  
 she loves so vehemently. One of these lovely-robed Greek  
 women was evidently wearing a gold brooch, and Aphrodite  
 scratched her dainty hand on it as she patted her and egged her  
 on.'

So she spoke, and the Father of men and gods smiled, called  
 golden Aphrodite and said:

'Warfare, my child, is not for you. You take charge of the  
 marriage-bed and its passions. Leave fleet-footed Ares and  
 Athene to look after military matters.'

As they discussed this with one another, Diomedes, master of  
 the battle-cry, flung himself once more at Aeneas. He knew that  
 Apollo himself had taken him under his protection, but he had  
 no respect even for that great god and persisted in his efforts to  
 kill Aeneas and strip him of his impressive armour. Three times  
 he flung himself at Aeneas, determined to kill him, and three  
 times Apollo knocked his glittering shield aside. But when like  
 something superhuman he charged for the fourth time, the  
 Archer-god Apollo gave a terrible cry:

'Think, Diomedes, and give way! Don't aspire to be our equal!  
 Immortal gods and men that walk on the ground are not the  
 same breed.'

APOLLO     So he spoke, and Diomedes fell back just a little  
 warns     to avoid the wrath of the Archer-god; and Apollo  
 Diomedes     removed Aeneas from the battlefield to the holy cita-  
 There, in the great inner shrine, Leto and Artemis who delights  
 in arrows not only healed him but made him more splendid than  
 ever.

Meanwhile Apollo, lord of the silver bow, created a phantom  
 which looked exactly like Aeneas, armour and all. Round this  
 phantom, Trojans and Greeks hacked at each other from behind  
 the oxhide shields, great and small, that protected their chests.  
 Then Phoebus Apollo spoke to wild Ares:

'Ares, murderous Ares, butcher of men and sacker of towns,  
 won't you take a hand and drive this man Diomedes out of the

fighting? He's in a mood to fight Father Zeus himself. He began  
 by closing with Aphrodite and stabbing her in the wrist and  
 then he flung himself, like something superhuman, at me.'

With these words Apollo withdrew and sat down on the  
 heights of Pergamus in the town, while Ares the destroyer dis-  
 guised himself as Acamas, the swift leader of the Thracians, and  
 slipped in among the Trojans to rally them. He began by giving  
 instructions to the Olympian-bred sons of Priam:

'Sons of Olympian-bred lord Priam, how much  
 longer are you going to let your men be slaughtered  
 by the Greeks? Till they are storming the town gates?

ARES urges  
 on the Trojans

Aeneas son of great-hearted Anchises lies low — a warrior we  
 honour in the same breath as godlike Hector. Come on now,  
 and rescue our brave comrade from the mayhem.'

With these words he put fresh heart and courage into every  
 man. Then Sarpedon rebuked godlike Hector.

'Hector, where is the spirit you used to show? You  
 talked of holding the town without troops or allies,  
 single-handed but for your brothers and brothers-in-  
 law. But I look around and can't see a single one.

Sarpedon  
 abuses Hector;  
 Aeneas returns

They are cowering like dogs before a lion, while we do the  
 fighting, though we came in only as your allies.

'Take me. It was a long, long journey I made to reinforce you.  
 It is a far cry from Lycia and the eddying River Xanthus, where  
 I left my dear wife, baby son and great possessions too, which  
 every poor man would love to get his hands on. Nevertheless, I  
 make my Lycians fight and am myself as determined as ever to  
 meet my man in battle, even though I own nothing here the  
 Greeks could loot or carry off.

'Meanwhile you just stand there, and don't even tell your men  
 to make a stand or fight in defence of their women! Take care,  
 or you'll be caught like fish in a net and fall easy prey to  
 your enemies, who will be sacking your prosperous town  
 any day now. You can plead with the leaders of your allies,  
 but your priority day and night should be to make a deter-  
 mined stand yourself and give no one any grounds for harsh  
 criticism.'

So spoke Sarpedon, and Hector was stung by his rebuke. 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, but the Greeks held their ground in massed formation and did not retreat. As the wind carries the chaff across the sacred threshing-floor when men are winnowing and, as the winds rise, the golden-haired goddess Demeter separates the grain from the chaff, and the heaps of chaff gradually whiten – so the Greeks were whitened from above by the dust which the horses' hooves kicked up through the ranks into the bronze sky as their chariot-eers wheeled them round to rejoin them again; and the enemy were engaged full on at close quarters.

But now the wild War-god Ares, ranging everywhere, threw a veil of darkness over the battle to help the Trojans. He was carrying out the orders he had from Phoebus Apollo of the golden sword. Phoebus had told him to put fresh heart into the Trojans when he saw Pallas Athene, who was on the Greeks' side, withdraw. Moreover, Apollo himself made Aeneas leave the rich shrine where he had taken sanctuary and filled this shepherd of the people with new determination. So Aeneas took his place once more among his troops, who were delighted to find him still alive and see him come back sound of limb and fired with determination. Not that they had time to ask him any questions: there was far too much fighting to do, stirred up by Apollo, lord of the silver bow, man-slaying Ares, and implacably determined Strife.

The Greeks on their side were spurred on to fight by the two Ajaxes, Odysseus and Diomedes. They needed little encouragement. No onslaught of the Trojan made them run for cover, however hard it was pressed home. They stood their ground like the motionless clouds with which Zeus caps the mountain peaks in calm weather, when sleep overcomes the powerful north wind and the other boisterous breezes that, with their shrill blasts, send the shadowy clouds scudding – so the Greeks held firm against the Trojans and refused to panic. Agamemnon went through their ranks, issuing orders:

'Fellow warriors, be men. Keep your courage up and in the heat of the battle fear nothing but dishonour in each other's eyes. When warriors fear disgrace, more are saved than killed. There's no honour or salvation to be found in flight.'

He spoke, made a swift throw with his spear and hit a leading fighter and companion of great-hearted Aeneas, Deicoön son of Pergasus. Since he was always quick to fight among the front ranks, Trojans honoured him like one of lord Priam's sons. Lord Agamemnon hit him on the shield. It failed to protect him. The bronze spear pierced it and drove on through the belt into his abdomen. He thudded to the ground, and his armour clattered about him.

Aeneas replied by killing two of the best of the Greeks, Crëthon and Orsilochus whose father Diocles lived in well-built Pherae. Diocles was a man of substance, tracing his descent from the god of the river Alpheus which flows at large through the region of Pylos. The River-god first bore Ortilochus, who ruled over many. He was father of great-hearted Diocles who in turn had these twin sons Crëthon and Orsilochus, both experienced in every kind of fighting. When they were of age, they embarked with the Greeks in their black ships for Troy to win compensation for Agamemnon and Menelaus. But there the adventure ended – in their death. As a pair of lions are brought up by their mother in deep forest thickets on mountain heights, and prey on cattle and fat sheep, and plunder farmers' yards till they themselves fall victims to men with bronze weapons – so these two were killed by Aeneas and fell, like tall pines.

Their death filled warlike Menelaus with pity. His bronze armour glittering, he advanced through the front ranks brandishing his spear. Ares spurred him on, intending him to be killed by Aeneas. But Antilochus, son of great-hearted Nestor, saw what Menelaus was doing and followed him through the front lines, fearing some disaster might overtake this shepherd of the people and bring all their efforts to nothing. Menelaus and Aeneas, both

Agamemnon  
kills Deicoön

Menelaus and  
Antilochus drive  
off Aeneas



determined to fight it out, were already aiming their sharp spears at one another as Antilochus came up to Menelaus and took his place beside him; and when Aeneas saw the two men making this united stand, he did not hold his ground, agile fighter though he was. So Menelaus and Antilochus dragged the bodies of Crethon and Orsilochus back into the Greek lines, and after handing over the luckless pair to their men, went back and fought in the front ranks once more.

Then they killed Pylaemenes, Ares' equal, commander of the great-hearted shield-bearing Paphlagonians. He was standing stock still when the great spearman Menelaus stabbed him with his spear on the collar bone. Meanwhile Antilochus hit his attendant and charioteer Mydon, who was wheeling his horses round. Antilochus hit him full on the elbow with a rock, and the reins, white with their ivory decoration, dropped from his hands and fell in the dust. Antilochus leapt in and drove his sword into the man's temple. With a gasp, he fell headlong from the well-made chariot up to his head and shoulders in the dust. For a while he stuck there, since it happened to be deep at that point. Then his horses kicked him down and laid him flat on the ground. With a lash of the whip Antilochus drove the horses back into the Greek army.

Across the ranks Hector had observed these two and now made towards them, shouting. He was supported by a powerful following of Trojans who were led on by the War-god Ares and the goddess Enyo. Enyo brought Confusion with her, the shameless destroyer, while Ares brandished in his hand an awe-inspiring spear and strode, now in front of Hector, now behind him.

When Diomedes, master of the battle-cry, saw them, he was shaken. Like a traveller crossing a great plain who halts helplessly beside a fast-flowing river rushing towards the sea, takes one look at the seething foam and turns back in his tracks, so Diomedes drew back and said to his troops:

'Men, no wonder we've been impressed by godlike Hector's bravery and ability as a fighter: he always has one of the gods with him to save his skin. Ares is with him now, disguised as a

man. Retreat then, but facing the enemy. We must not offer battle to the gods.'

So he spoke, and the Trojans were on them and Hector killed two men, Menesthes and Anchialus, neither lacking the will to fight, who were riding in one chariot.

Their death filled great Ajax son of Telamon with pity. Taking his stand close by them, he let fly with a glittering spear and hit Amphius, a rich man, who lived in Paesus and owned many cornfields. But destiny had brought him to Troy to serve as an ally of Priam and his sons. Ajax son of Telamon hit him on the belt. The long-shadowed spear stuck in his abdomen, and he thudded to the ground. But when glorious

Ajax kills

Amphius

Ajax ran up to strip him of his armour, the Trojans met him with a volley of glittering spears, many of which he took on the shield. Nevertheless, he planted his foot on the body and dragged his bronze spear out. But he could not remove the man's own fine armour from his back – the spears were too much for him. Moreover, he was afraid of being surrounded and overpowered by the proud Trojans, who faced him in formidable numbers with their spears at the ready. So they forced him, great, powerful and noble though he was, to retreat. Shaken, he withdrew.

So they battled it out in the thick of the action.

Sarpedon

is wounded

Inexorable destiny then thrust Tlepolemus, the fine, tall son of Heracles, into conflict with godlike Sarpedon. When these two had come within range of each other, one a son, the other a grandson of Zeus who marshals the clouds, Tlepolemus was the first to speak:

'Sarpedon, adviser to the Lycians, what made you come here, just to skulk and hide? You don't know what a battle is. They are liars when they call you a son of Zeus who drives the storm-cloud: you are nothing like the sons he used to have. How different, by all accounts, from mighty Heracles, my all-daring, lion-hearted father, who once came here to get Laomedon's mares and, with only six ships and a pretty small force of men, sacked Ilium and widowed its streets. You have all the heart of a coward, and your troops are on their last legs. You may be a strong fighter yourself but I don't think your journey here from

Lycia will help the Trojans much. No, you're going to fall to me and pass through the gates of Hades!

Sarpedon, leader of the Lycians, spoke in reply:

650 'Tlepolemus, Heracles did indeed sack sacred Ilium but only because of the stupidity of one man, noble Laomedon, who repaid his services with insults and refused to let him have the mares he had come so far to get. As for you, I tell you dark death and destruction await you at my hands: conquered by my spear, you will surrender the glory to me and your life to the god Hades, famed for his horses.'

660 So spoke Sarpedon, and the other raised his ash spear. The great weapons leapt from their hands at one and the same time. Sarpedon hit Tlepolemus in the middle of the neck. The painful spear passed right through, and black night came down and engulfed his eyes. At the same moment Tlepolemus' spear hit Sarpedon in the left thigh. The point pressed eagerly on and grazed the bone; but, for the moment, his father Zeus saved him from death.

Godlike Sarpedon was carried from the fight by his men. The great spear dragged along and weighed him down: in their haste, no one had noticed it or thought of pulling it out of his thigh so that he could use his legs. They had enough to do just to see him safe.

670 On the other side, the Greek men-at-arms carried off Tlepolemus. Godlike enduring Odysseus noticed and was furious. The thoughts raced through his mind whether to start in pursuit of Sarpedon son of loud-thundering Zeus or do further execution on the Lycians. But destiny did not intend the mighty son of

Odysseus kills  
seven Lycians  
he turned his fury on the Lycian ranks. Then and there he killed Coeranus, Alastor and Chromius, Alcander and Halius, Noemon and Prytanis. Indeed, Odysseus would have gone on to kill even more of the Lycians, but for the sharp eye of great Hector of the flashing helmet. His bronze armour glittering, he advanced through the front ranks, striking terror into the Greeks. Sarpedon son of Zeus was delighted he had come and appealed to him:

'Hector son of Priam, rescue me and don't leave me lying here

at the mercy of the Greeks. Then may I die in your town. It is clear I wasn't meant to return home to the land of my fathers after all and bring happiness to my dear wife and little son.'

690 So he spoke, but Hector of the flashing helmet made no reply and raced past him. He made it his first priority to thrust the Greeks back and kill as many of them as he could. But godlike Sarpedon was removed by his men and laid under a lovely oak-tree, sacred to Zeus who drives the storm-cloud.

*Sarpedon*  
is rescued  
There his close companion, mighty Pelagon, ex-  
tracted the ash spear from his thigh. A mist descended  
over Sarpedon's eyes and he fainted. But presently he came to. The north wind played about him and, drained though he was, revived him.

700 But the Greeks, faced by the War-god Ares and Hector in his bronze armour, did not run in panic to their black ships nor

counter-attack, but fell back steadily as they became aware of Ares' presence on the Trojan side. And who were the first and last of them to fall there to Hector son of Priam and to bronze-armed Ares? Godlike Teuthras was the first; then Orestes tamer of horses; Trechus, an Actolian spearman;

*Hector and*  
*ARES kill six*  
*Greeks*  
Oenomaus; Oenops' son Helenus; and Oresbius with his glittering belt, who lived in Hyle on the shores of Lake Copais where he looked after his rich estate,

710 with other Boeotians for neighbours in the fertile countryside.

When the goddess white-armed Hera saw the Greeks being slaughtered in the heat of the battle, she immediately spoke to Athene with winged words:

'Child of Zeus who drives the storm-cloud, Atrytone, this is disastrous. If we let deadly Ares run wild like this, what of the promise we made to Menelaus when we told him he would sack Ilium with its fine walls before he returned home? Come: time for the two of us to summon up that fighting spirit of ours!'

720 So she spoke, and the goddess grey-eyed Athene complied. Hera, ancient goddess, daughter of great Cronus, went off to get ready her horses with their golden headbands.

*HERA and*  
*ATHENE help*  
*the Greeks*  
The goddess Hebe quickly fixed the chariot's two bronze wheels, each with eight spokes, on the ends of the iron axle. The inner rims of these wheels are

made of imperishable gold, while bronze tyres are fitted to the outside — wonderful to see — and the hubs that rotate on each axle are made of silver. The bodywork was constructed of plaited gold and silver straps, with a double railing round it. A silver shaft ran out from the front. To the end of this shaft Hebe tied the beautiful golden yoke and attached the fine gold straps. Eager for the sound and fury of battle, Hera led her swift horses under the yoke.

On her father's threshold Athene, daughter of Zeus who drives the storm-cloud, took off the soft embroidered robe she had made and worked with her own hands, replaced it with a tunic and over that put on the armour of Zeus who marshals the clouds, in preparation for war's work with all its tears. Then she threw round her shoulders the terrifying fringed aegis. It was encircled with Fear, Strife, Force, chilling Pursuit and the Gorgon's head, a ghastly monster, the awe-inspiring, potent emblem of Zeus. On her head she put her double-ridged golden helmet with its four plates, adorned with fighting men of a hundred towns. Then she stepped into the fiery chariot and took up the long, thick, heavy spear with which she breaks the ranks of warriors when she, the almighty Father's child, is roused to anger.

Hera immediately leaned forward to whip on her horses, and of their own accord the gates of Olympus thundered open for them. These are kept by the Seasons, the wardens of the broad sky and Olympus, whose task it is to roll the gates of heavy cloud away from the entrance or roll them back. Through these gates the goddesses directed their horses, spurring them on with the whip.

They found Zeus sitting apart from the other gods on the highest of Olympus' many peaks. The goddess white-armed Hera brought her pair to a halt and questioned high Zeus son of Cronus:

ATHENE <sup>to</sup> attack ARES 'Father Zeus, aren't you angry at Ares' savagery and the sight of all these fine Greek warriors he has slaughtered without rhyme or reason? I cannot bear to watch. But your Cyprian daughter Aphrodite and Apollo lord of the silver bow are sitting back and enjoying every

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minute of it, unleashing this madman who knows neither right nor wrong. Father Zeus, will you be angry with me if I give him a severe beating and chase him from the battlefield?

Zeus who marshals the clouds replied and said:

'Not at all. Get to work, and set the war-leader Athene on him. She's well used to teaching Ares a few painful and humiliating lessons.'

So he spoke, and the goddess white-armed Hera complied. She lashed the horses with the whip, and the willing pair flew off between the earth and starry sky. These proud, snorting horses of the gods cover in one stride the distance a man can see when he looks out from a watchtower over the wine-dark sea into the hazy beyond. But when they reached Troy and the place where the two flowing Rivers Simois and Scamander meet, there the goddess white-armed Hera stopped her horses and released them from the yoke. She hid them in a mist, and Simois made ambrosia spring up for them to eat. Then the two goddesses set out on foot, strutting like pigeons, eager to bring help to the Greek army.

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They made for the part of the battlefield where the best of the Greeks had rallied in numbers round great horse-taming Diomedes and were standing at bay like flesh-eating lions or wild boars who are not easily worn down. There the goddess white-armed Hera stopped and shouted, imitating the brazen voice of great-hearted Stentor, who could shout like fifty:

'Shame on you, Greeks! Contemptible creatures, admired only for your looks! In the days when godlike Achilles came out and fought, the Trojans never showed themselves in front of the Dardanian gate: they were too afraid of his massive spear. But now the Trojans are fighting far from their town and by your very ships!'

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With these words she put fresh heart and courage into every man. Meanwhile the goddess grey-eyed Athene made straight for Diomedes son of Tydeus. She found him with his chariot and horses, airing the wound that Pandarus had given him with his arrow. Under the broad shoulder-strap of his round shield the sweat was irritating it. Troubled by this and with his arm