

Meanwhile the long-haired Achaeans ate a hasty breakfast in their huts and forthwith armed themselves; while on their side, in the city, the Trojans also prepared themselves for battle. There were fewer of them, yet for all that they were eager to grapple with the enemy, driven as they were by stern necessity to fight for their wives and children. The gates were all thrown open, and with a great din their whole army, infantry and horse, poured out.

Thus the two converging forces met once more with a clash of bucklers, spears and bronze-clad fighting men. The bosses of their shields collided and a great roar went up. The screams of the dying were mingled with the vaunts of their destroyers, and the earth ran with blood.

Right through the morning while the blessed light of day grew stronger, volley and counter-volley found their mark, and men kept falling. But at high noon the Father held out his golden scales, and putting sentence of death in either pan, on

- A. Grim reality of war for humans
 B. Zeus and Hera in bed
 C. Twinkling camp fires
 D. Hospitality
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 F. Nausicaa discovers Od. Naked
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one side for the horse-taming Trojans, on the other for the bronze-clad Achaeans, raised the balance by the middle of the beam. The beam came down on the Achaeans' side, spelling a day of doom for them. Their sentence settled on the bountiful earth, while that of the Trojans went soaring up to the broad sky. Zeus thundered out from Ida and sent a flash of lightning down among the Achaean troops, who were confounded by it. Terror drained the colour from the cheeks of every man.

Then, neither Idomeneus nor Agamemnon had the heart to hold his ground. Nor did the two Aiantes stand, henchmen of Ares though they were. Gerenian Nestor, Warden of Achaea, was the only one who lingered, and that not of his own free will, but because his third horse was in trouble. Prince Paris, Lady Helen's husband, had hit him with an arrow on the top of the crown, where the mane starts to grow on a horse's head, a very deadly spot. In his agony he reared, for the point sank into his brain; and writhing round the dart he threw the other horses into confusion. Nestor rushed in with his sword and was slashing at the outrigger's reins, when Hector's horses came galloping up through the turmoil, with a redoubtable charioteer behind them, Hector himself. And the old man would then and there have lost his life, but for the quick eye of the veteran Diomedes, who saw the danger and gave Odysseus a resounding call for help. 'Odysseus,' he shouted, 'my noble and resourceful lord; where are you off to with your shield behind you like a coward in the crowd? Take care, or as you run away someone will catch you in the midriff with a spear. For Heaven's sake stop and help me keep that savage off the old man there.'

But the much-enduring, noble Odysseus did not hear him, and sped by on his way to the Achaeans' hollow ships. Left thus to his own resources, Diomedes none the less drove up to the point of attack, posted himself in front of Nestor's chariot, and brought reassurance to the old king. 'These young warriors,' he said, 'are proving too much for an old man like you, my lord, with all those years to carry. You are dead-beat.

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No, if it is really your pleasure to do this thing, you have a bedroom that your own Son Hephaestus built for you, and the doors he made for it are solid. Let us go and lie down there, if that is what you wish to do.'

'Here,' said Zeus the Cloud-compeller, 'you need not be afraid that any god or man will see us. I shall hide you in a golden cloud too thick for that. Even the Sun, whose rays provide him with the keenest sight in all the world, will not see us through the mist.'

As he spoke, the Son of Cronos took his Wife in his arms; and the gracious earth sent up fresh grass beneath them, dewy lotus and crocuses, and a soft and crowded bed of hyacinths, to lift them off the ground. In this they lay, covered by a beautiful golden cloud, from which a rain of glistening dew-drops fell.

While the Father lay peacefully on top of Gargarus with his arms round his Wife, conquered by sleep and love, the gentle god of Sleep flew off to the Achaean ships to tell the Earthshaker the news. He went up to the Girdler of the World and unburdened himself of his secret. 'Poseidon,' he said, 'you may help the Danaans now with all your heart and give them the upper hand, if only for a short time, till Zeus wakes up. I sent him into a deep and gentle sleep after Here had tricked him into lying in her arms.'

Sleep then went off to ply his business with the famous nations of mankind, leaving Poseidon more zealous than ever in his championship of the Danaans. He sprang out beyond the front rank to give them his commands. 'Argives,' he cried, 'are we going once more to leave the victory to Hector son of Priam, to let him take the fleet and reap the glory? He says he will; but his only pretext for such boastful talk is the fact that Achilles sits in dudgeon by his hollow ships. Yet Achilles won't be missed so very much, if the rest of us can only rouse ourselves to stand by one another. Listen, all of you, to my plan and carry it out. We must equip ourselves with the best and biggest shields in the camp, put dazzling helmets on our heads, and go into the fight with the longest spears we can lay

This time, the white-armed goddess said not a word in answer. And now the bright lamp of the Sun dropped into Ocean, drawing black night in its train across the fruitful earth. The Trojans had not wished the day to end, but to the Achaeans, who had yearned for this relief, the dark came like a tardy answer to their prayers.

Illustrious Hector withdrew the Trojans from the ships and summoned a meeting in an open space beside the swirling river, where the ground was clear of corpses; and they got down from their chariots to hear what the King's son had to say. He held a spear eleven cubits long; the bronze point glittered in front of him; and there was a gold ring round the top of the shaft. As he addressed his troops, he rested his weight on the spear. 'Trojans, Dardanians and allies, listen to me,' he said. 'I had hoped to destroy the ships and all the Achaeans with them, before going home to windy Ilium. But the light failed too soon. It was that more than anything that saved the Argives and their fleet on the sea-shore. Now, we can only do as night suggests and prepare for supper: Unyoke your long-maned horses and put fodder by them. Then quickly go and bring some cattle and fat sheep from the town, and supply yourselves with mellow wine and bread from your houses. Also, collect a quantity of wood, so that we can have plenty of fires burning all night till dawn, and light up the whole sky, in case the long-haired Achaeans make a dash for home, in spite of the darkness, and take to the open sea. We must certainly not leave them to embark at their leisure. Let us give those fellows something to digest at home, an arrow or a sharp spear in the back as they jump on board, to teach them and other people too to think twice of the miseries of war before they attack the horse-taming Trojans. In Troy itself, let our sacred heralds call out the young lads and the grey-headed

old men to bivouac all round the town on the walls that the gods built us, while our womenfolk keep a big fire burning in every home. In addition, regular guards must be mounted, to see that the enemy do not steal into the city while the troops are away. Those, gallant Trojans, are my orders: let them be carried out.

'So much for the moment - I think that we can say "All's well". In the morning I will announce my further dispositions to the troops. I hope, and pray to Zeus and all the other gods, that I shall be able to drive away these hellhounds whom the Fates bring here in their black ships. It is night now: we must mount guard for ourselves as well. But at peep of dawn we will arm, and attack them fiercely at the hollow ships. Then I shall see whether the mighty Diomedes son of Tydeus can drive me back from the ships to the wall, or whether I shall bring him down with my sharp bronze and carry off his bloodstained arms. He will learn in the morning whether he has it in him to stand up against my spear. More likely, as tomorrow's sun goes up, he will lie bleeding in the battle-front, with half his company dead around their leader. I wish I were as sure of immortality and ageless youth and glory like Athene's or Apollo's, as I am that this day will prove disastrous to the Argives.'

The Trojans greeted this harangue from Hector with applause. They freed their sweating horses from the yokes and tethered them with thongs, each man by his own chariot. Then they went quickly to the town and brought out oxen and fat sheep, supplying themselves at the same time with mellow wine and bread from their homes. They also collected large quantities of wood; and presently the smell of roast meat was rising to high heaven on the breeze.

Thus all night long they sat, across the corridors of battle, thinking great thoughts and keeping their many fires alight. There are nights when the upper air is windless and the stars in heaven stand out in their full splendour round the bright moon; when every mountain-top and headland and ravine starts into sight, as the infinite depths of the sky are torn open

to the very firmament; when every star is seen, and the shepherd rejoices. Such and so many were the Trojans' fires, twinkling in front of Ilium midway between the ships and the streams of Xanthus. There were a thousand fires burning on the plain, and round each one sat fifty men in the light of its blaze, while the horses stood beside their chariots, munching white barley and rye, and waiting for Dawn to take her golden throne.



Bright-eyed Athene answered him: 'Father of ours, Son of Cronos, King of Kings; if it is really the pleasure of the blessed gods that the wise Odysseus shall return to Ithaca, let us send our messenger, Hermes the Giant-killer, to the isle of Ogygia, to tell the fair Calypso at once of our decision that her long-suffering guest must now set out for home. Meanwhile I myself will go to Ithaca to instil a little more spirit into Odysseus' son and to embolden him to call his long-haired compatriots to an assembly and speak his mind to that mob of suitors who spend their time in the wholesale slaughter of his sheep and fatted cattle. After which I shall send him off to Sparta and to sandy Pylos to seek news of his father's return. It is possible that he may hear of him; and the effort will redound to his credit.'

When Athene had finished she bound under her feet her lovely sandals of untarnishable gold, which carried her with the speed of the wind over the water or the unending land, and she seized her heavy spear with its point of sharpened bronze, the huge long spear with which she breaks the noble warriors' ranks; when she, the Daughter of the almighty Father, is roused to anger. Thus she flashed down from the heights of Olympus. On reaching Ithaca she took her stand on the threshold of the court in front of Odysseus' house; and to look like a visitor she

assumed the appearance of a Taphian chieftain named Mentès, bronze spear in hand.

She found the insolent Suitors sitting in front of the door on the hides of oxen they themselves had slaughtered, and playing draughts, while their squires and pages were busy round them, the squires blending wine and water in the mixing-bowls, and the pages carving meat in lavish portions or washing the tables with sponges before they set them ready.

No one noticed her at first but Telemachus, who was sitting disconsolate among the Suitors, dreaming of how his noble father might come back from out of the blue, drive all these gallants pell-mell from the house, and so regain his royal honours and reign over his own once more. Full of these visions, which were natural in such company, he caught sight of Athene and set off at once for the porch, thinking it a shame that a stranger should be kept standing at the gates. He went straight up to his visitor, shook hands, relieved him of his bronze spear and gave him cordial greetings.

'Welcome, sir, to our hospitality!' he said. 'You can tell us what has brought you when you have had some food.'

With this he led the way and Pallas Athene followed. Once inside the lofty hall, he took her spear and put it away by one of the great pillars in a wooden rack with a number of other spears belonging to the stalwart Odysseus. He then conducted her to a carved chair, over which he spread a rug, and seated her there with a stool for her feet. For himself he drew up an inlaid easy-chair, well away from the crowd of Suitors, for fear that his guest might take offence at the uproar, and finding himself in such ill-mannered company turn with distaste from his meal. Moreover, he wished to question him about his absent father.

Presently a maid came with water in a handsome golden jug and poured it out over a silver basin so that they could rinse their hands. She then drew a polished table to their side, and the staid housekeeper brought some bread and set it by them with a choice of dainties, helping them liberally to all she could offer. Meanwhile a carver dished up for them on platters slices of various

meats he had picked from his board, and put gold cups round them, which a steward filled up with wine as he passed his frequent rounds.

The Suitors came swaggering in and took their seats on the settles and chairs. Their squires poured water into their hands and the maids put piles of bread in baskets before them while the pages filled the mixing-bowls to the brim. They helped themselves to the good things spread before them and when all had satisfied their hunger and thirst, they turned their thoughts to other pleasures, to the music which they played without which no banquet is complete. A herald brought a beautiful lyre and handed it to Phemius, the minstrel who had pressed into their service. He had just struck the strings for some delightful song, when Telemachus leant across to bright-eyed Athene, and whispered to her so that she could not hear:

'I hope, sir, that I shall not embarrass you by my questions. How easy it is for that gang over there to think of no music and songs! They are living scot-free on another man whose white bones are rotting in the rain upon some island or rolling in the salt sea waves. One glimpse of Ithaca, and they'd give all they have for a faster pair of oars, as it is, he has come to some dreadful end. No one can bring us a spark of comfort by telling us that he'll come back. The day for that is gone for ever.'

'However, do tell me who you are and where you come from. What is your native town? Who are your people? And how did you certainly cannot have come on foot, what kind of ship brought you here? How did the crew come to land at Ithaca, and who did they claim to be? Then there's another question I'd like to know. Is this your first visit to Ithaca, or have you and your people received you before - as is very likely, for my father has always to entertain in our house just as much as he visited abroad.'

'I will tell you everything,' answered the bright-eyed Athene. 'My father was the wise prince, Anchialus. His name is Mentès, and I am chieftain of the sea-faring Taphians.'

'Sir,' said the wise Telemachus, 'you have spoken to me out of the kindness of your heart like a father talking to his son; and I shall never forget your words. I know you are anxious to be on your way, but I beg you to stay a little longer, so that you can bathe and refresh yourself. Then you can go to your ship in a happy frame of mind, taking with you as a keepsake from myself something precious and beautiful, the sort of present that one gives to a guest who has become a friend.'

'No,' said the bright-eyed goddess. 'I am eager to be on my way; please do not detain me now. As for the gift you kindly suggest, let me take it home with me on my way back. Make it the best you can find, and you won't lose by the exchange.'

The goddess spoke and the next moment she was gone, vanishing like a bird through a hole in the roof. But she left Telemachus full of spirit and daring, and concerned for his father even more than he had been before. He felt the change and was overcome with awe, for he realized that a god had been with him.

The young prince now rejoined the Suitors. He found them listening in silence to a song which their admirable bard was singing to them about the Achaeans' return from Troy and the disasters that Pallas Athene made them suffer. In her room upstairs, Penelope, wise daughter of Icarius, caught the words of his stirring ballad and came down from her quarters by the steep staircase, not alone, but with two waiting-women in attendance. Face to face with her suitors the great lady drew a fold of her bright head-dress over her cheeks and took her stand by a pillar of the massive roof, with one of her faithful maids on

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either side. Then, bursting into tears, she broke in on the worthy minstrel.

'Phemius,' she said, 'with your knowledge of the ballads that poets have made about the deeds of men or gods you could enchant us with many other tales than this. Choose one of those now for your audience here, and let them drink their wine in peace. But give us no more of your present song. It is too sad: it never fails to wring my heart. For in that catastrophe no one was dealt a heavier blow than I, who pass my days in mourning for the best of husbands, the man whose name rings through the land from Hellas to the heart of Argos.'

But Telemachus would not let Penelope have her way. 'Mother,' he said, 'why grudge our loyal bard the right to entertain us as the spirit moves him? Surely it is not the poets that are responsible for what happens, but Zeus himself, who deals with each of us toilers on earth as he sees fit? We cannot blame Phemius if he chooses to sing of the Danaans' tragic fate, for it is always the latest song that an audience applauds the most. You must be brave and nerve yourself to listen, for Odysseus is not the only one who has never returned from Troy. Troy was the end of many another man. So go to your quarters now and attend to your own work, the loom and the spindle, and tell the servants to get on with theirs. Talking must be the men's concern, and mine in particular; for I am master in this house.'

Penelope was taken aback; and she retired to her own apartments, for she was impressed by the good sense that her son had shown. Attended by her maids, she went upstairs to her bedroom, and there she wept for Odysseus, her beloved husband, till bright-eyed Athene closed her eyes in grateful sleep.

Meanwhile in the shadowy hall the Suitors burst into uproar, and each man voiced the hope that he might share her bed.

Tell the Suitors to be off, each to his own place. As for your mother, if she is set on marrying, let her go back to her father's house. He is a man of consequence, and the family will provide a marriage feast, and see that she has a generous dowry, as is only right for a daughter they value. For yourself, here is my advice. It is sound, and I hope you will take it. Choose your best ship, man her with twenty oars, and set out to discover why your father has been gone so long. Someone may be able to tell you about him, or you may pick up one of those rumours from heaven that so often spread the truth. Go to Pylos first and cross-examine the excellent Nestor; then on to Sparta to see red-haired Menelaus, since he was the last of the Achaeans to get home from the war. If you hear that your father is alive and on his way back; you might reconcile yourself to a year more of this wastage. But if you learn that he is dead and gone, return to your own country, build him a mound with all the proper funeral rites, and give your mother away to a new husband. This settled and done with, you must cudgel your own brains for some way of destroying this mob in your house, either by cunning or in open fight. You are no longer a child; you must put childish thoughts away. Have you not heard what a name

Prince Orestes made for himself in the world when he killed the traitor Aegisthus for murdering his noble father? You, my friend – and what a tall and splendid fellow you have grown! – must be as brave as Orestes. Then future generations will sing your praises.

'But my crew must be tired of waiting for me, and I'll be off now to my good ship. I leave the matter in your hands. Think over what I have said.'

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When the time came for Nausicaa to set out for home after yoking the mules and folding up the clothes, the bright-eyed goddess Athene intervened once more and arranged for Odysseus to wake up and see this lovely girl who was to serve as his escort to the Phaeacian city. Accordingly, when the princess passed the ball to one of her maids, she missed her and dropped it instead into the deep and eddying current. At this they all gave a loud shriek. The good Odysseus awoke, and sitting up took counsel with himself.

'Alas!' he sighed. 'What country have I come to now? What people are there here? Some brutal tribe of lawless savages, or kindly and god-fearing folk? And what is this shrill echo in my ears, as though some girls were shrieking? Nymphs, I suppose - who haunt the steep hill-tops, the springs of rivers, and the grassy meadows. Or am I within hail, by any chance, of human beings who can talk as I do? Well, I must go and use my own eyes to find out.'

So the gallant Odysseus crept out from under the bushes, after breaking off with his great hand a leafy bough from the thicket to conceal his naked manhood. Then he advanced on them like a mountain lion who sallies out, defying wind and rain in the pride of his power, with fire in his eyes, to hunt the oxen or the sheep, to stalk the roaming deer, or to be forced by hunger to besiege the very walls of the homestead and attack the pens. The same urgent need now constrained Odysseus, naked as he was, to bear down upon these gentle girls. Begrimed with salt he made a gruesome sight, and one look at him sent them scuttling in every direction along the jutting spits of sand. Alcinous' daughter was the only one to stand firm. Emboldened by

Athene, who stopped her limbs from trembling, she checked herself and confronted him, while Odysseus considered whether he should throw his arms round the beautiful girl's knees and so make his prayer, or be content to keep his distance and beg her with all courtesy to give him clothing and direct him to the city. After some hesitation he decided that as the lady might take offence if he embraced her knees it would be better to keep his distance and politely plead his case. In the end, his address was not only disarming but full of subtlety:

'Mistress, I throw myself on your mercy. But are you some goddess or a mortal woman? If you are one of the gods who live in the sky, it is of Artemis, the Daughter of almighty Zeus, that your beauty, grace, and stature most remind me. But if you are one of us mortals who live on earth, then lucky indeed are your father and your gentle mother; lucky, your brothers too. How their hearts must glow with pleasure every time they see their darling join the dance! But he is the happiest of them all who with his wedding gifts can win you for his home. For never have I set eyes on such perfection in man or woman. I worship as I look. Only in Delos have I seen the like, a fresh young palm-tree shooting up by the altar of Apollo, when my travels took me there - with a fine army at my back, that time, though the expedition was doomed to end so fatally for me. I remember how long I stood spellbound at the sight, for no lovelier sapling ever sprang from the ground. And it is with just the same wonder and veneration that I look at you, my lady; with such awe, indeed, that I dare not clasp your knees, though my troubles are serious enough. Only yesterday, after nineteen days of it, I made my escape from the wine-dark sea. It took all that time for the waves and the tempestuous winds to carry me here from the island of Ogygia. And now some god has flung me on this shore, no doubt to suffer more disasters here. For I have no hope that my troubles are coming to an end: the gods have plenty in store for me before that can be. Pity me, my queen. You are the first person I have met after all I have been through, and I do not know a soul in this city or this land. I beg you to direct me to the

town and to give me some rag to put round myself, if only the wrapper you may have brought for your linen when you came. And in return may the gods grant you your heart's desire; may they give you a husband and a home, and the harmony that is so much to be desired, since there is nothing nobler or more admirable than when two people who see eye to eye keep house as man and wife, confounding their enemies and delighting their friends, as they themselves know better than anyone.'

'Sir,' said the white-armed Nausicaa, 'your manners prove that you are no rascal and no fool; and as for these ordeals of yours, they must have been sent you by Olympian Zeus, who follows his own will in dispensing happiness to people whatever their merits. You have no choice but to endure. But since you have come to our country and our city here, you certainly shall not want for clothing or anything else that an unfortunate outcast has the right to expect from those he approaches. I will show you to the town and tell you who we are. This country and the city you will see belong to the Phaeacians. I myself am the daughter of King Alcinous, who is the head and mainstay of our state.'

Here she turned and called out her orders to the gentle women in attendance: 'Stop, my maids. Where are you flying to at the sight of a man? Don't tell me you take him for an enemy, for there is no man on earth, nor ever will be, who would dare to set hostile feet on Phaeacian soil. The gods are too fond of us for that. Remote in this sea-beaten home of ours, we are the outposts of mankind and come in contact with no other people. The man you see is an unfortunate wanderer who has strayed here, and now commands our care, since all strangers and beggars come under the protection of Zeus, and the charity that is a trifle to us can be precious to others. Bestir yourselves, girls, provide our guest with food and drink, and bathe him in the river where there's shelter from the wind.'

The rebuke from their mistress checked the women's flight. They called halt to each other, and then found Odysseus a sea in the sheltered spot that the Princess Nausicaa had pointed out

The equerry now came up, leading their favourite bard, whom the Muse loved above all others, though she had mingled good and evil in her gifts, robbing him of his eyes but lending sweetness to his song. Pontonous placed a silver-studded chair for him in the centre of the company, with its back to one of the great pillars, and the equerry hung his tuneful lyre on a peg just

above his head and showed him how to lay his hand upon it. At his side he put a basket and a handsome table, together with a cup of wine to drink when he was thirsty. Then they all helped themselves to the good fare that was spread before them.

When they had satisfied their appetite and thirst, the bard was inspired by the Muse to sing of famous men. He chose a passage from a lay well known by then throughout the world, the Quarrel of Odysseus and Achilles, telling how these two had fallen out at a rich ceremonial banquet and dismayed the rest by the violence of their language, though King Agamemnon was secretly delighted to see the Achaean chieftains at loggerheads. He was reminded of the prophecy that Phoebus Apollo had made to him in sacred Pytho when he crossed the marble threshold to consult the oracle, in those days when almighty Zeus was conjuring up the great wave of disasters that was to overwhelm Trojans and Danaans alike.

This was the theme of the famous minstrel's lay. It caused Odysseus to lift his purple mantle with his sturdy hands and draw it down over his head to hide his comely face, for he was ashamed to be caught weeping by the Phaeacians. But in the intervals of the worthy minstrel's song, he wiped the tears away and removing the cloak from his head reached for his two-handled cup and made libations to the gods. Yet whenever Demodocus started singing again, encouraged by the Phaeacian lords, who were enjoying the tale, Odysseus once more hid his face and wept.

And let one of you run and fetch Demodocus the lyre that is so tuneful in his hands. They left it lying somewhere in my house.

At the King's word, an equerry set off to fetch the well-made instrument from the palace, and the official stewards, a committee of nine, took matters in hand. These were public servants who supervised all the details on such occasions. They now swept the dancing-floor and cleared a ring wide enough for the performance. Meanwhile the equerry came up to Demodocus and handed him his tuneful lyre. The minstrel then moved forward to the centre; a band of expert dancers, all in the first bloom of youth, took up their positions round him; and their feet came down on the sacred floor with a scintillating movement that filled Odysseus with admiration as he watched.

Presently the bard's fine voice was heard above the music of his lyre. His theme was the love of Ares and Aphrodite of the beautiful crown. He sang of their first and stealthy meetings in Hephaestus' palace; of the many gifts Ares made her, and of the dishonour he did to King Hephaestus' bed.

This was the song that the famous minstrel sang, to the delight of Odysseus and the rest of his audience, the Phaeacian sea-lords, those lovers of the oar.

With this he took a chair by the side of King Alcinous, for they were already serving the portions and mixing the wine. An equerry now came in leading their beloved bard Demodocus, the people's favourite. He seated him in the centre of the company with his back against one of the high columns, and at once the thoughtful Odysseus, carving a portion from the chine of a white-tusked boar, which was so large that more than half was left, with plenty of rich fat on either side, called to a serving-man and said:

'Here, my man, take this helping to Demodocus and let him eat it, with kindly wishes from my unhappy self. No one on earth can help honouring and respecting the bards, for the Muse has taught them the art of song and she loves the minstrel fraternity.'

The man took the meat and handed it to the lord Demodocus, who accepted the attention with pleasure. The company now helped themselves to the good fare that was spread before them, and when they had satisfied their thirst and hunger, Odysseus turned to the minstrel and said:

'Demodocus, I give you the highest possible praise. Either Zeus' Child, the Muse, or Apollo must have been your teacher. For it is remarkable how well you sing the tale of the Achaeans' fate and of all their achievements, sufferings, and toils. It is almost as though you had been with them yourself or heard the story from one who was. But I ask you now to change your theme and sing to us of the making of the Wooden Horse, which Epeius built with Athene's help, and which my lord Odysseus contrived to introduce one day into the citadel of Troy as an ambushade, manned by the warriors who then sacked the town. If you can satisfy me in the telling of this tale I shall be ready to acknowledge to the world how generously the god has endowed you with the heavenly gift of song.'

Odysseus broke down as the famous minstrel sang this lay, and his cheeks were wet with the tears that ran down from his eyes.