

# The Iliad

## Book Eight The Trojans Have Success

*[At a council on Olympus, Zeus decides to favour the Trojans, leaves for Ida, and holds up the golden scales; Diomedes comes to Nestor's help; Diomedes confronts Hector; Zeus stops Diomedes with a lightning bolt; Hera tries to get Poseidon to plot against Zeus; Agamemnon's speech to rally the troops; Zeus sends an omen to encourage the Argives; the Argives rally; Teucer's success against the Trojans; Hector wounds Teucer, drives him from the battle; Hera and Athena set out to help the Achaeans; Zeus sends Iris to stop them; Hector's speech to his troops the night before the big battle; Trojans sacrifice to the gods]*

As Dawn first spread her yellow robe across the earth,  
thunder-loving Zeus summoned an assembly of the gods  
on the highest crest of many-ridged Olympus.  
Zeus himself addressed them. The other deities,  
those ranked below him, listened carefully.

“Hear me, all you gods and goddesses,  
I’ll speak what the spirit in my chest prompts.  
And let no female god, no male one either,  
seek to thwart my plan. Let’s get agreement  
[10] from all of you to end this matter quickly.  
If I see any of you breaking ranks of gods,  
keen to assist the Trojans or Danaans,  
that god I’ll beat up ignominiously  
and send back to Olympus. Or I’ll seize him  
and pitch him into black Tartarus, way down,  
into the deepest pit below the earth,  
where the gates are iron, the threshold bronze,  
as far below Hades as heaven lies  
above the earth. Then he’ll acknowledge  
[20] just how strong I am, the strongest of all gods.  
Come on, try it—then everyone will know.  
Take a golden cord, hang it from heaven.  
Let gods and goddesses, all together,  
grab hold of one end of it and pull.

You'd not drag Zeus, the highest counsellor,  
down from heaven to the ground, never,  
no matter how hard you tried to do it.  
But when I wished to pull in earnest,  
I'd yank up earth itself, the sea as well.  
[30] I'd loop that cord round some Olympian peak  
and hang it in mid-air—the whole of it.  
I'm that much stronger than the gods and men.”

Zeus finished. All the gods were speechless, shocked  
at what Zeus had said, at the power of his tone.  
At last Athena, the bright-eyed goddess, spoke up:

“Son of Cronos, you're the father of us all,  
highest ruling force. We well know your strength.  
It's invincible. Still, we're sorry for the troops,  
Danaan spearmen dying, suffering dreadful fates.  
[40] But we'll stand apart from battle, as you wish,  
although we'll give the Argives our advice,  
help them, to prevent destruction of them all,  
just to answer your displeasure.”

Cloud-gatherer Zeus, smiling at Athena, said:

“My dear child Tritogeneia, have no fears.  
I wasn't speaking all that seriously.  
I want to treat you in a friendly way.”

Zeus harnessed his two horses, swift-flying animals,  
with hooves of bronze and flowing golden manes.  
[50] He encased his body all in gold, took up his whip,  
a gold one, finely crafted, climbed in his chariot,  
then lashed the horses onward. They flew off eagerly.  
Midway between the earth and starry heaven,  
Zeus reached Mount Ida with its many springs,  
mother of wild beasts. He reached Gargaros,  
site of his grove and temple, fragrant with sacrifice.

There, the father of gods and men reined in his horses,  
untied them from the chariot, and hid them in thick cloud.  
Then he sat on the mountain peak, proud and splendid,  
[60] gazing down on the Trojan city, the Achaean ships.

Long-haired Achaeans gulped a quick meal by their huts.  
Then they armed themselves. On the other side, in town,  
Trojans, too, prepared for war, fewer in number,  
but keen to fight on in the killing zone, a grim necessity,  
for wives and children. They threw open all the gates.  
The army streamed out, foot soldiers and charioteers,  
making a huge din. As the two groups moved out  
to the same spot, they crashed together, smashing shields  
and spears, the battle frenzy of bronze-armed warriors.  
[70] Embossed shields collided one against the other,  
a tremendous noise. Screams of pain and triumph  
came from soldiers—those killing, those being killed—  
and the earth was saturated with their blood.

In early morning, as that sacred day grew stronger,  
weapons hurled by both sides grimly took their toll—  
men kept on dying. But when the sun was at its height,  
Father Zeus set up his golden balance, placed on it  
two fatal destinies, one for horse-taming Trojans,  
one for bronze-armed Achaeans. Gripping the scales,  
[80] he raised them by the centre. One scale sank down,  
the one which held the Achaeans' fate that day—  
it moved down towards the all-sustaining earth,  
while the Trojans' fate rose up toward wide heaven.  
From Mount Ida, Zeus sent out a loud thunder clap  
and hurled a lighting bolt down on Achaean troops.  
Men looked and were astounded. Pale fear gripped them all.  
At that, Idomeneus did not dare to stand his ground,  
nor did Agamemnon, nor the two men named Ajax,  
companions of the war god Ares. Only Nestor,  
[90] the Geranian, guardian of Achaeans,  
kept his place, but not because he wanted to.

One of his horses had been hurt, hit by an arrow  
on its head, right on top, that spot where on a horse  
hairs start to grow out from the skull, a deadly place.  
The arrow had been loosed by Alexander,  
lovely Helen's mate. The beast reared up in agony,  
as the arrow pierced its brain. Skewered by the shaft,  
the beast's convulsions confused the other horses.  
While old Nestor with his sword was hacking feverishly  
[100] to cut the traces holding the animal in place,  
Hector's fast horses came through the fighting men,  
bearing Hector with them and their bold charioteer.  
Nestor would have died right there, if Diomedes,  
skilled in war cries, hadn't seen him right away.  
He let out a loud shout to Odysseus, urging him  
to come to Nestor's help.

"Noble Odysseus, Laertes' son,  
you resourceful man, why move away,  
turning your back on all these flying weapons,  
like a coward? Watch someone doesn't spear you  
[110] right in the back as you run off. Come on,  
let's save old man Nestor from wild Hector."

Diomedes' words missed godlike, firm Odysseus,  
who moved off to the Achaeans' hollow ships.  
Diomedes, though left alone, charged straight ahead,  
back into the fight. He made a stand right there,  
in front of old Nestor's chariot, calling out to Nestor,  
son of Neleus—his words had wings.

"Old man, in this fight  
these young men are pressing you too hard.  
Your strength is waning. Old age weighs you down.  
[120] Your attendant's weak, your horses slow.  
So come on, climb up into my chariot.  
You'll see how these Trojan horses do,  
experts in moving to and fro across the plain,

in pursuit or flight. I took them from Aeneas.  
These horses would fill any man with terror.  
So turn your team over to subordinates.  
With my two let's charge against the Trojans.  
Let Hector see how my hand wields a spear."

Geranian horseman Nestor followed this suggestion.

- [130] At once, the two strong officers, Sthelenus  
and noble Eurymedon, took Nestor's horses.  
The two men climbed up in Diomedes' chariot.  
Nestor grabbed the shining reins and lashed the horses.  
They closed in on Hector quickly. Then he, in turn,  
eager to fight, charged them impetuously.  
The son of Tydeus threw his spear at Hector.  
He missed, but struck Hector's companion charioteer,  
Eniopeus, son of proud Thebaios, in the chest,  
right by the nipple, as Eniopeus held the reins.
- [140] He tumbled from the chariot. The swift horses swerved.  
Then strength and spirit left him as he lay there.  
Savage grief seized Hector for his charioteer,  
but he left him lying there, for all the pain he felt  
for his companion. He went to find a substitute,  
a second driver full of courage. Before long,  
those horses had another charioteer,  
for Hector soon ran into Archeptolemos,  
son of Iphitus, and placed him in the chariot  
behind swift horses, then handed him the reins.

- [150] At that point irrevocable disaster might have struck  
the people all penned up in Troy like sheep,  
if the father of gods and men hadn't kept sharp watch.  
Sounding a dreadful thunder clap, he loosed his lightning,  
a dazzling fiery bolt which hit the ground  
immediately in front of Diomedes' horses.  
A dreadful flash came from the blazing sulphur.  
In terror, both horses reared up in their harnesses.  
Nestor let the shining reins drop from his hands.

Feeling fear inside his chest, he cried:

“Son of Tydeus,  
[160] wheel your sure-footed horses round. Go back.  
Don’t you see Zeus is not protecting you?  
Today the son of Cronos grants Hector glory.  
Tomorrow he’ll give victory to us,  
if that’s his will. No man stops Zeus’ plans,  
no one, not even the mightiest warrior.  
Zeus’ force is more powerful by far.”

Diomedes, expert in war cries, then replied:

“Everything you say, old man, is true enough.  
But this brings fearful pain into my heart and chest.  
[170] For Hector then will speak out in Troy.  
He’ll say,

‘The son of Tydeus, in fear of me,  
scurried off, back to his ships.’

That’s what he’ll boast.  
Then let the wide earth open up for me.”

Geranian horseman Nestor answered Diomedes:

“Son of fiery-hearted Tydeus, why talk like that?  
Even if he slanders you and calls you coward,  
he’ll not convince the Trojans or Dardanians,  
or Trojan wives, married partners of brave men  
you’ve thrown into the dirt, still in their prime.”

[180] With these words he turned the sure-footed horses back,  
fleeing through the battle zone. Hector and the Trojans,  
with a shout, threw volleys of lethal weapons at them.  
Hector with his glittering helmet then yelled out:

“Son of Tydeus,  
fast-riding Danaans at their banquets  
have awarded you a place of honour,  
with lots of meat, a wine cup always full.  
Now they’re ashamed of you. You’ve turned out  
no better than a woman. Run off then,  
you coward girl. I’ll not back away,  
[190] let you climb our walls, or take our women.  
Before that happens, I’ll send you to your death.”

At Hector’s words, the son of Tydeus was torn two ways,  
debating whether to wheel the horses round and fight,  
face Hector man to man. Three times he thought it through  
in his mind and heart, and three times Counsellor Zeus  
pealed thunder from Mount Ida, signalling to Trojans  
that victory now would shift to them. Then Hector,  
with a great shout, cried out to his Trojan warriors:

“You Trojans, Lycians, and Dardanians—  
[200] soldiers who fight in the killing zone—  
my friends, be men. Summon your warlike spirit.  
I see the son of Cronos grants us victory,  
great glory, a disaster for Danaans.  
What fools they were to build this feeble wall,  
a puny hazard—it will not check me,  
my warlike spirit. As for the trench they dug,  
my horses will jump over that with ease.  
When I reach their hollow ships, don’t forget the fire,  
which wipes out everything I’ll burn their fleet,  
[210] slaughter them, those Argives by their ships,  
as they suffocate, choking on the smoke.”

And Hector urged his horses on, saying these words:

“Xanthus, and you Podargus, Aithus,  
noble Lampus! Now’s the time to pay me back  
for all my care, all the sweet grain you’ve had

from Andromache, great Eëtion's daughter,  
for the wine she's mixed for you to drink,  
whenever you desired. She took care of you,  
even before me, her own fine husband.

[220] Come on then, go after them with speed,  
so we may capture Nestor's shield, whose fame  
extends right up to heaven—it's all gold—  
the shield itself, cross braces, too.  
From horse-taming Diomedes' shoulders  
we'll strip the decorated body armour,  
a work created by Hephaestus.  
I think if we could capture these two things,  
Achaeans would climb aboard their ships tonight."

So Hector bragged. That made queen Hera angry.

[230] She shook with fury, sitting on her throne,  
making high Olympus tremble. Then she spoke out  
to great god Poseidon:

"Alas, great Earthshaker,  
don't you feel any anguish in your heart,  
as Danaans are destroyed? After all,  
they bring you presents, many pleasing gifts,  
to Helice and Aegae. Don't you want them to win?  
Now, if all those of us who protect Danaans  
were to agree to drive the Trojans back,  
we'd leave wide-seeing Zeus up there by himself,

[240] sulking where he sits alone on Ida"

Mighty Earthshaker Poseidon, very angry,  
answered Hera:

"Hera, you fearless talker,  
What are you saying? That's not what I want,  
the rest of us to war on Zeus, son of Cronos.  
For he is much more powerful than us."



As the two gods talked together in this way,  
horses and shield-bearing troops were jammed together,  
crammed into the space encircled by the ditch,  
from ships to wall, pinned down there by Hector, Priam's son,  
[250] like swift Ares, now that Zeus was giving him the glory.  
And then he would've burned those well-balanced ships  
with searing fire on the spot, if queen Hera  
had not set a plan in Agamemnon's mind  
to rouse Achaeans with all speed on his own.  
He strode through Achaean huts and ships,  
holding a huge purple cloak in his large fists.  
He took up a position by Odysseus' ship,  
a black vessel, broad in the beam, whose place,  
in the middle of the row, allowed his voice  
[260] to reach both ends of the line, from the huts of Ajax,  
son of Telamon, to those belonging to Achilles,  
for these two men had placed their balanced ships  
at either end, relying on their courage and strong hands.\*  
Agamemnon, from that spot, then shouted out,  
making himself heard to all Danaans:

"You Argives! What a shameful bunch of men!  
Splendid to look at, but a sour disgrace!  
What's happened to our sworn oaths, when we claimed  
we were the best, the bravest? Idle boasters!  
[270] In Lemnos, as you stuffed yourselves with meat  
from straight-horned cattle and drank bowls of wine,  
foaming to the brim, you talked of how you'd stand,  
each and every one of you, firm in battle  
against a hundred or two hundred Trojans.  
Now we're matched by Hector, just one man,  
who'll quickly set our ships alight with fire.  
Father Zeus, have you ever so deluded  
a high-minded king and stolen his glory?  
While sailing well-decked ships to this disaster,  
[280] I say I never overlooked your lovely altars.  
On every one I burned fat and thighs of oxen—

I was so keen to conquer Troy, its well-made walls.  
But Zeus, grant me now at least this prayer—  
let us get out of here alive, in safety.  
Don't let Trojans kill Achaeans off like this.”

As Agamemnon spoke, tears streaming down his face  
Father Zeus pitied him and nodded his assent—  
the army would be saved and not demolished.  
At once Zeus sent the surest of all bird omens,  
[290] an eagle, gripping in its talons a young fawn,  
child of some swift deer. The eagle released the fawn,  
dropping it right beside that splendid altar  
where Achaeans sacrificed to all-knowing Zeus.  
Seeing that Zeus had sent the bird, men resumed the fight,  
attacking Trojans eagerly, their battle spirits roused.

Then none of those many Danaans there could claim  
he was quicker with his horses than Diomedes,  
driving them ahead and charging through the ditch,  
to confront their enemies face to face and fight.  
[300] Well ahead of all the rest, Diomedes killed his man,  
a well-armed Trojan, Agelaus, son of Phradmon.  
He'd turned his team around to get away.  
But once he showed his back, Diomedes speared him  
between his shoulder blades, driving through his chest.  
He fell from the chariot, armour rattling round him.  
After Diomedes, the sons of Atreus came charging in,  
Agamemnon and Menelaus, and after them  
both Ajaxes, encased in war's ferocity,  
followed by Idomeneus and his attendant,  
[310] Meriones, the equal of man-killing Ares.  
Then came Eurypylus, brave son of Euaemon.  
Ninth came Teucer, stretching his curved bow.  
He stood beneath the shield of Ajax, son of Telamon.  
As Ajax cautiously pulled his shield aside,  
Teucer would peer out quickly, shoot off an arrow,  
hit someone in the crowd, dropping that soldier

right where he stood, ending his life—then he'd duck back,  
crouching down by Ajax, like a child beside its mother.  
Ajax would then conceal him with his shining shield.

[320] Who were the first Trojans skilful Teucer killed?  
Orsilochus died first, then Ormenus, Ophelestes,  
Daitor, Chromius, godlike Lycophontes,  
Amopaon, son of Polyaimon, and Melanippus—  
all these Teucer dropped one by one on fertile earth.  
Watching him cause havoc with his bow in Trojan ranks,  
Agamemnon, king of men, was overjoyed.  
He went up, stood beside him, then spoke out:

“Teucer, son of Telamon, master of your people,  
my dear comrade, keep on shooting as you're doing.

[330] You'll be a saving light to the Danaans,  
and to your father Telamon, who raised you,  
took care of you, a bastard, in his own home.  
Though he's far off, cover him with glory now.  
For I'll tell you something—and this will happen—  
if Athena and aegis-bearing Zeus permit me  
to devastate that well-built city Ilion,  
you'll be the first to take the prize of honour,  
after me, of course—a tripod, two horses,  
their chariot as well, or some woman  
[340] to climb up into your bed with you.”

Skilful Teucer then replied to Agamemnon:

“Mighty son of Atreus, why urge me on?  
I'm eager to continue shooting.  
Since we first drove them back to Ilion,  
I've not stopped fighting as hard as I know how,  
cutting men down with my bow and killing them.  
I've shot off eight long-barbed arrows. Each one  
has sunk itself deep inside a soldier's flesh,  
some strong, swift warrior. But this man,

[350] Hector, I can't hit. He's like some crazy dog.”

With that, Teucer launched another arrow from his bowstring,  
directly facing Hector, eager to hit him.

The arrow missed, but struck handsome Gorgythion,  
son of Priam, in the chest, a man whose mother,  
lovely Castianeira, divinely beautiful,  
went from Aisyme to become a wife to Priam.  
Just as the head on a garden poppy leans aslant,  
loaded down with heavy seed and spring rain showers,  
so Gorgythion's head sagged under his helmet's weight.

[360] Teucer loosed yet another arrow from his bowstring,  
straight at Hector, his spirit still keen to hit him.  
Again he missed, for Apollo deflected it.  
But the arrow did hit Archeptolemos,  
Hector's bold driver, as he was coming to the fight.  
It struck him in the chest, right by the nipple.  
He fell from the chariot. The fast horses swerved.  
Then and there his strength and spirit abandoned him.  
In his heart Hector felt sharp pain for his charioteer,  
but he left him there, though grieving for his comrade.

[370] He called out to his brother Cebriones,  
who was near by, to take up the chariot reins.  
Cebriones heard him and willingly agreed.  
Hector jumped down from his glittering chariot  
with a fearful yell. Picking up a boulder  
lying on the ground, he went straight at Teucer,  
his heart aroused to hit him with it. At that moment,  
Teucer had just taken a sharp arrow from his quiver,  
set it on the bowstring, and was drawing back the bow,  
once again desperately eager to hit Hector.

[380] But Hector struck him with that jagged rock  
right on the shoulder, where collar bones divide  
neck from chest, an especially vulnerable spot.  
The rock broke the bowstring and numbed his hands and wrists.  
Teucer fell forward on his knees and stayed there,  
letting his bow fall from his hand. Seeing his brother down,  
Ajax quickly hurried up and straddled Teucer,

covering him with his shield. Two loyal attendants,  
Mecisteus, son of Echios, and noble Alastor,  
hoisted Teucer up—he was groaning heavily—  
[390] then took him with them back to the hollow ships.

Once more Olympian Zeus put force into the Trojans.  
They drove Achaeans back, right back to their deep trench,  
Hector at the front, proudly showing off his strength.  
Just as some hunting dog in a swift-footed chase  
gets a grip on a wild boar or lion from the back,  
on the flank or rump, and watches that beast's every move,  
that's how Hector harried the long-haired Achaeans,  
always killing off the stragglers as they fled.  
By the time Achaeans had rushed through the stakes,  
[400] as they crossed the ditch, many had died at Trojan hands.  
At last they halted by the ships and stayed there,  
calling out to one another. Raising their hands,  
each man prayed fervently to all the gods.  
Hector drove his fine-maned horses back and forth,  
his eyes glaring like a Gorgon or man-killing Ares.

Seeing all this, white-armed Hera pitied the Achaeans.  
She quickly spoke these winged words to Athena:

“Alas, child of aegis-bearing Zeus,  
Achaeans are being massacred. It's their last stand.  
[410] Aren't we concerned about them any more,  
as their evil fate accomplishes its purpose?  
They're being destroyed by one man's charging frenzy.  
Hector, son of Priam, is on a rampage.  
He can't be stopped. He's already done great harm.”

Bright-eyed goddess Athena answered Hera:

“I wish Hector somehow would lose his strength  
and die, killed in his own native land  
at Argive hands. But my father, too,

is in a rage, destruction on his mind.

[420] What a wretch he is, always in the way,  
wrecking my plans. He does not remember  
how many times I saved Hercules, his son,  
worn down by work he got from Eurystheus.  
If I'd had the foresight to anticipate  
what Zeus is doing now when Eurystheus  
sent Hercules down to the house of Hades,  
the Gate Keeper, to fetch back from Erebus  
Hades' dreadful hound, he'd never have escaped  
the deep rushing waters of the river Styx.

[430] Now Zeus dislikes me. He's carrying out  
what Thetis wants. She kissed his knee, cupped his chin,  
begged him to grant due honour to Achilles,  
destroyer of cities. But the day will come  
when Zeus calls me dear bright eyes once more.  
Now harness your sure-footed horses for us,  
while I go to aegis-bearing Zeus' home  
and arm myself with weapons for this battle,  
so I may see whether this son of Priam,  
this Hector of the shining helmet, is pleased

[440] when we two show up in the battle lanes,  
or whether some Trojan will make a meal  
for dogs and birds with flesh and body fat,  
as he falls there beside Achaean ships."

Athena finished. White-armed Hera agreed with her.  
Then Hera, honoured goddess, great Cronos' daughter,  
went off and started harnessing her horses  
with their golden headpieces. Meanwhile, Athena,  
daughter of aegis-bearing Zeus, threw her dress  
down on the floor of her father's house, a soft robe,

[450] richly embroidered, which she'd made with her own hands.  
She pulled on the tunic of cloud-gatherer Zeus  
and armed herself with weapons for destructive war.  
Then she stepped up into the flaming chariot,  
grasping the huge thick strong spear she used to break

heroic warrior ranks which had provoked her,  
making the daughter of a mighty father angry.  
Hera immediately whipped the horses forward.  
With a groan, the gates of heaven opened on their own,  
those gates which the Seasons, custodians of Olympus  
[460] and great heaven, too, look after, pushing open  
the heavy cloud, then pushing it shut once more.  
Through these gates the goddesses lashed on their horses.

Father Zeus noticed them from Ida. In a huge rage,  
he sent down gold-winged Iris with a message for them.

“Off with you, swift Iris. Turn them back again.  
Don’t permit them to come into my presence.  
For if we come to blows, then we’ll have trouble.  
But I do say this—and it will surely happen—  
I’ll cripple their fast horses in their traces,  
[470] throw them from the chariot, smash it in pieces.  
Ten revolving years won’t be sufficient  
to cure the wounds my lightning will inflict,  
so the bright-eyed goddess knows what it means  
to fight against her father. As for Hera,  
I’m not so angry or upset with her,  
for no matter what I say, she undermines it.”

Zeus spoke. Then Iris, swift as a storm, rushed off,  
taking his message. She came down from Mount Ida  
and made for high Olympus. She met the goddesses  
[480] at the outer gate of many-ridged Olympus.  
She stopped them and reported Zeus’ message:

“Where are you rushing off? Have you lost your wits?  
The son of Cronos has forbidden anyone  
to assist the Argives. And he’s made this threat—  
which he intends to carry out—he’ll maim  
your swift horses in their traces, throw you both  
out of the chariot, smash it in pieces.

Ten revolving years won't be sufficient  
to cure the wounds his lightning will inflict,  
[490] so that you'll understand, bright-eyed goddess,  
what it means to fight against your father.  
With Hera's he's not so angry or upset.  
For no matter what he says, she undermines it.  
But as for you, you shameless schemer,  
are you daring to fight Zeus with one large spear?"

Having said this, swift-footed Iris went away.  
Hera then said to Athena:

"What a mess,  
child of aegis-bearing Zeus! I'm not keen,  
not now, that two of us should take on Zeus  
[500] for the sake of mortal men. Let some die  
and others live, as chance will work it out.  
Let Zeus judge between Trojans and Achaeans,  
as his heart desires. That's how it should be."

With these words, she turned her sure-footed horses back.  
The Seasons unyoked the horses with the lovely manes,  
led them to their heavenly stalls, and leaned the chariot  
against the courtyard's luminescent inner wall.  
The goddesses then sat down on their golden thrones,  
among the other gods, with anger in their hearts.  
[510] Father Zeus drove his fine-wheeled chariot and horses  
from Ida to Olympus, to the place where gods  
were all assembled. The famous Earthshaker,  
Poseidon, loosed his horses from their harness for him,  
put the chariot on its stand, and covered it with cloth.  
Then wide-seeing Zeus himself sat on his golden throne.  
Underneath his feet great Olympus trembled.  
Athena and Hera were sitting by themselves,  
away from Zeus, not saying anything to him  
or asking questions. Knowing what was in their hearts,  
Zeus spoke:



[520] “Why are you so irritated,  
Hera and Athena? Surely you’re not tired  
from those fights where men win glory,  
exhausted after killing off the Trojans,  
for whom you feel such deadly hatred  
Be that as it may, such is my power,  
the strength in my own hands, it’s impossible  
for all the Olympian gods combined  
to turn me from my purposes. As for you,  
you both were trembling in your shining limbs

[530] even before you looked on any fight  
or witnessed first-hand war’s destructiveness.  
But I’ll tell you what would’ve taken place—  
neither of you would’ve come back to Olympus,  
the immortals’ home, riding in your chariot.  
My lightning would have blasted both of you.”

Zeus finished speaking. Hera and Athena muttered,  
sitting together, plotting trouble for the Trojans.  
Athena sat in silence, not saying anything,  
angry with her father, consumed with rage.

[540] But Hera couldn’t hold the fury in her chest. She said:

“Dread son of Cronos, what are you saying?  
We know well enough how strong you are—  
invincible. But nonetheless, we pity  
Danaan spearmen who are being destroyed,  
suffering a dreadful fate. But we’ll hold back,  
refrain from fighting, if that’s your order.  
We’ll provide useful advice to Argives,  
so they don’t all die from your displeasure.”

In response to Hera, cloud-gatherer Zeus then said:

[550] “Ox-eyed queen Hera, if you’re so inclined,  
tomorrow morning you can witness

the exalted son of Cronos, as he kills  
many Achaean spearmen in their army.  
For warlike Hector won't stop fighting,  
until beside the ships he stirs to action  
swift Achilles, son of Peleus, on that day  
they fight with bloody desperation  
by the ships' sterns—they'll be battling over  
the body of Patroclus. That's been decreed.

[560] I don't care at all if this annoys you.

Even if you descend to the lowest place  
beneath the earth and sea, where Iapetus  
and Cronos live, where they get no pleasure  
in any sunlight from Hyperion,  
or any breeze, in the depths of Tartarus—  
even if you went as far away as that  
in your wandering, I'd still pay no attention  
to your displeasure. For you've no rival  
when it comes to behaving like a bitch.”\*

[570] Zeus spoke. White-armed Hera didn't answer him.

Now the sun's bright light sank down into the ocean,  
dragging black night over fertile crop lands.  
The end of daylight made the Trojans sorrowful,  
but Achaeans welcomed the arrival of black night,  
something they'd been praying for constantly.

Then glorious Hector assembled all the Trojans  
some distance from the ships, by the swirling river,  
in open ground where there were no corpses in plain view.  
Jumping from their chariots to the ground, warriors

[580] listened for what Hector, loved by Zeus, would say.

In his hand, he gripped a spear eighteen feet long,  
its bronze point glittering there in front of them,  
a golden ring around it. Leaning on this spear,  
Hector then addressed his Trojans:

“Listen to me,  
you Trojans, Dardanians, you allies.  
Just now I stated we’d go back to Troy today,  
once we’d destroyed the ships and slaughtered  
all Achaeans. But darkness intervened.  
That’s the only thing that spared the Argives  
[590] and saved their ships beached onshore. Come then,  
let’s do what black night demands—prepare a meal.  
So from your chariots take out of harness  
those horses with their lovely manes, feed them,  
then quickly bring here from the city  
cattle and stout sheep. Bring sweet wine as well,  
and bread from your own homes. Get lots of wood,  
so all night long, until first light of dawn,  
we can burn many fires, lighting up the sky.  
Some time in the night, long-haired Achaeans  
[600] may make their move to get away by sea.  
We must not let them embark easily,  
without a fight. Let some of them be hit,  
take something home they need to nurse with care—  
an arrow wound, a slash from some sharp spear  
as they jump in their ships—so someone else  
will think twice about bringing wretched war  
upon horse-taming Trojans. Let the call go out  
from heralds, whom Zeus loves, through all the city,  
for growing boys and grey-haired men to camp  
[610] up on the city’s walls, built by the gods.  
Let each grown woman get ready a large fire  
in her home. Let all keep a sharp lookout,  
to stop a group from entering our city  
while the army is elsewhere. Do all this,  
you great-hearted Trojans, just as I’ve said.  
That’s all I have to tell you at this time.  
I’ve more orders for horse-taming Trojans  
for tomorrow. I hope and pray to Zeus,  
to other gods as well, I’ll drive away  
[620] these death-infected dogs, conducted here

in their black ships by mortal fates. Right now,  
let's watch out for ourselves tonight. At dawn,  
let's arm ourselves with weapons and re-ignite  
this bitter warfare by the hollow ships.  
Then I'll know if mighty Diomedes,  
son of Tydeus, will repel me from the ships,  
or whether with my bronze I'll slaughter him  
and take away the spoils all stained with blood.  
Tomorrow he'll understand how good he is,  
[630] whether he can stand against my spear,  
as it comes after him. I think he'll fall.  
He'll be among the first men speared to death,  
with many of his comrades round him,  
at tomorrow's sunrise. I wish I were as sure  
I were immortal, ageless for all time,  
that I'd be worshiped as Athena is,  
and Apollo, too, as I am that this day  
will bring destruction to the Argives."

Hector finished speaking. Trojans gave a shout.  
[640] They untied their sweaty horses from their yokes,  
tethered them with straps, each by its chariot.  
From the city they soon brought cattle and stout sheep,  
sweet wine and bread from home. They gathered piles of wood  
and made perfect sacrificial offerings to the gods.  
From the plain, the wind carried the sweet-smelling smoke  
right up to heaven. But the blessed gods weren't willing  
to accept it, for sacred Ilion, and Priam,  
and Priam's people, rich in sheep, did not please them.  
So all night long men sat there in the battle lanes,  
[650] with high expectations, burning many fires.  
Just as those times when the stars shine bright in heaven,  
clustered around the glowing moon, with no wind at all,  
and every peak and jutting headland, every forest glade  
is clearly visible, when every star shines out,  
and the shepherd's heart rejoices—that's the way  
the many Trojan fires looked, as they burned there

in front of Ilion, between the river Xanthus  
and the ships, a thousand fires burning on the plain.  
By each sat fifty men in the glow of firelight.  
[660] Horses munched on wheat and barley, standing there  
by their chariots, awaiting the regal splendour of the dawn.