



When the victorious Greek Fleet put out to sea after the fall of Troy, many a captain, all unknowing, faced troubles as black as those he had brought down on the Trojans. Athena and Poseidon had been the Greeks' greatest allies among the gods, but when Troy fell all that had changed. They became their bitterest enemies. The Greeks went mad with victory the night they entered the city; they forgot what was due to the gods; and on their voyage home they were terribly punished.

Cassandra, one of Priam's daughters, was a prophetess. Apollo had loved her and given her the power to foretell the future. Later he turned against her because she refused his love, and although he could not take back his gift—divine favors once bestowed might not be revoked—he made it of no account: no one ever believed her. She told the Trojans each time what would happen; they would never listen to her. She declared that Greeks were hidden in the wooden horse; no one gave her words a thought. It was her fate always to know the disaster that was coming and be unable to avert it. When the Greeks sacked the city she was in Athena's temple clinging to her image, under the

goddess's protection. The Greeks found her there and they dared to lay violent hands on her. Ajax—not the great Ajax, of course, who was dead, but a lesser chieftain of the same name—tore her from the altar and dragged her out of the sanctuary. Not one Greek protested against the sacrilege. Athena's wrath was deep. She went to Poseidon and laid her wrongs before him. "Help me to vengeance," she said. "Give the Greeks a bitter homecoming. Stir up your waters with wild whirlwinds when they sail. Let dead men choke the bays and line the shores and reefs."

Poseidon agreed. Troy was a heap of ashes by now. He could afford to lay aside his anger against the Trojans. In the fearful tempest which struck the Greeks after they left for Greece, Agamemnon came near to losing all his ships; Menelaus was blown to Egypt; and the arch-sinner, sacrilegious Ajax, was drowned. At the height of the storm his boat was shattered and sank, but he succeeded in swimming to shore. He would have been saved if in his mad folly he had not cried out that he was one that the sea could not drown. Such arrogance always aroused the anger of the gods. Poseidon broke off the jagged bit of rock to which he was clinging. Ajax fell and the waves swept him away to his death.

Odysseus did not lose his life, but if he did not suffer as much as some of the Greeks, he suffered longer than them all. He wandered for ten years before he saw his home. When he reached it, the little son he had left there was grown to manhood. Twenty years had passed since Odysseus sailed for Troy.