

140 There we brought our ship in to the shore, in silence, at a harbor fit for ships to lie, and some god guided us in. There we disembarked, and for two days and two nights we lay there, for sorrow and weariness eating our hearts out. But when the fair-haired Dawn in her rounds brought on the third day, then at last I took up my spear again, my sharp sword, and went up quickly from beside the ship to find a lookout place, to look for some trace of people, listen for some sound. I climbed to a rocky point of observation and stood there, and got a sight of smoke which came from the halls of Circe going up from wide-wayed earth through undergrowth and forest. Then I pondered deeply in my heart and my spirit, whether, since I had seen the fire and smoke, to investigate; but in the division of my heart this way seemed the best to me, to go back first to the fast ship and the beach of the sea, and give my companions some dinner, then send them forward to investigate.

145 But on my way, as I was close to the oar-swept vessel, some god, because I was all alone, took pity upon me, and sent a great stag with towering antlers right in my very path; he had come from his range in the forest down to the river to drink, for the fierce strength of the sun was upon him. As he stepped out, I hit him in the middle of the back, next to the spine, so that the brazen spearhead smashed its way clean through. He screamed and dropped in the dust and the life spirit fluttered from him.

150 I set my foot on him and drew the bronze spear out of the wound it had made, and rested it on the ground, while I pulled growing twigs and willow withes and, braiding them into a rope, about six feet in length, and looping them over the feet of this great monster on both sides, lashed them together, and with him loaded over my neck went toward the black ship, propping myself on my spear, for there was no way to carry him on the shoulder holding him with one hand, he was such a very big beast. I threw him down by the ship and roused my companions, standing beside each man and speaking to him in kind words:

155 "Dear friends, sorry as we are, we shall not yet go down into the house of Hades. Not until our day is appointed. Come then, while there is something to eat and drink by the fast ship, let us think of our food and not be worn out with hunger."

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180 'So I spoke, and they listened at once to me and obeyed me, and unveiling their heads along the beach of the barren water they admired the stag, and truly he was a very big beast. But after they had looked at him and their eyes had enjoyed him, they washed their hands and set to preparing a communal high feast. So for the whole length of the day until the sun's setting we sat there feasting on unlimited meat and sweet wine.

185 But when the sun went down and the sacred darkness came over, then we lay down to sleep along the break of the seashore; but when the young Dawn showed again with her rosy fingers, then I held an assembly and spoke forth to all of them: "Hear my words, my companions, in spite of your hearts' sufferings. Dear friends, for we do not know where the darkness is nor the sunrise, nor where the Sun who shines upon people rises, nor where he sets, then let us hasten our minds and think, whether there is any course left open to us. But I think there is none. For I climbed to a rocky place of observation and looked at the island, and the endless sea lies all in a circle around it, but the island itself lies low, and my eyes saw smoke rising in the middle through the undergrowth and the forest."

190 'So I spoke; and the inward heart in them was broken, as they remembered Antiphates the Laistrygonian and the violence of the great-hearted cannibal Cyclops, and they wept loud and shrill, letting the big tears fall, but there came no advantage to them for all their sorrowing. I counted off all my strong-greaved companions into two divisions, and appointed a leader for each, I myself taking one, while godlike Eurylochos had the other. Promptly then we shook the lots in a brazen helmet, and the lot of great-hearted Eurylochos sprang out. He then went on his way, and with him two-and-twenty companions, weeping, and we whom they left behind were mourning also. In the forest glen they came on the house of Circe. It was in an open place, and put together from stones, well polished, and all about it there were lions, and wolves of the mountains, whom the goddess had given evil drugs and enchanted, and these made no attack on the men, but came up thronging about them, waving their long tails and fawning, in the way that dogs go fawning about their master, when he comes home

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