

CONTENTS

BOOK ONE

[The Creation](#) • [The Four Ages](#) • [Jove's Intervention](#) • [The Story of Lycaon](#) •
[The Flood](#) • [Deucalion and Pyrrha](#) • [Apollo and Daphne](#) • [Jove and Io](#)

BOOK TWO

[The Story of Phaethon](#) • [Jove in Arcady](#) • [The Story of the Raven](#) • [The Story of Ocyrhoe](#) • [Mercury and Battus](#) • [Mercury, Herse, and Aglauros](#) •
[The House of the Goddess Envy](#) • [Europa](#)

BOOK THREE

[The Story of Cadmus](#) • [The Story of Actaeon](#) • [The Story of Semele](#) •
[The Story of Tiresias](#) • [The Story of Echo and Narcissus](#) • [The Story of Pentheus and Bacchus](#)

BOOK FOUR

[The Story of Pyramus and Thisbe](#) • [The Story of Mars and Venus](#) •
[The Sun-god and Leucothoe](#) • [The Story of Salmacis](#) • [The End of the Daughters of Minyas](#) • [The Story of Athamas and Ino](#) • [The End of Cadmus](#) • [The Story of Perseus](#)

BOOK FIVE

[The Fighting of Perseus](#) • [Minerva Visits the Muses](#)

BOOK SIX

[The Story of Niobe](#) • [The Story of Tereus, Procne, and Philomela](#)

BOOK SEVEN

[The Story of Jason and Medea](#) • [War Between Crete and Athens](#) • [The Story of Cephalus and Procris](#)

BOOK EIGHT

[The Story of Nisus and Scylla](#) • [The Story of Daedalus and Icarus](#) • [The Calydonian Boar](#) • [The Brand of Meleager](#) • [The Return of Theseus](#) • [The Story of Baucis and Philemon](#) • [The Story of Erysichthon](#)

BOOK NINE

[The Story of Achelous' Duel for Deianira](#) • [The Story of Hercules, Nessus, and Deianira](#) • [The Story of Hercules' Birth](#) • [The Story of Dryope](#) • [The Story of Caunus and Byblis](#) • [The Story of Iphis and Ianthe](#)

BOOK TEN

[The Story of Orpheus and Eurydice](#) • [The Story of Cyparissus](#) • [The Story of Ganymede](#) • [The Story of Apollo and Hyacinthus](#) • [Two Incidents of Venus' Anger](#) • [The Story of Pygmalion](#) • [The Story of Cinyras and Myrrha](#) • [The Story of Adonis](#) • [Venus Tells Adonis the Story of Atalanta](#) •
[The Fate of Adonis](#)

BOOK ELEVEN

[The Death of Orpheus](#) • [The Story of Midas](#) • [Midas Never Learns](#) • [The Building of the Walls of Troy](#) • [The Story of Thetis](#) • [Ceyx Tells the Story of Daedalion](#) • [The Story of Peleus' Cattle](#) • [The Quest of Ceyx](#) • [The Story of Aesacus and Hesperia](#)

BOOK TWELVE

[The Invasion of Troy](#) • [Nestor Tells the Story of Caeneus](#) • [Story of the Battle with the Centaurs](#) • [Nestor Is Asked Why He Omitted Hercules](#)

BOOK THIRTEEN

[The Argument between Ajax and Ulysses](#) • [After the Fall](#) • [The Sacrifice of Polyxena](#) • [The Discovery of Polydorus](#) • [The Story of Memnon](#) • [The Pilgrimage of Aeneas](#) • [The Story of Anius' Daughters](#) • [The Pilgrimage Resumed](#) • [The Story of Galatea](#) • [The Song of Polyphemus](#) • [The Transformation of Acis](#) • [The Story of Glaucus](#)

BOOK FOURTEEN

[The Story of Glaucus Continued](#) • [The Pilgrimage of Aeneas Resumed](#) • [Achaemenides Tells His Story](#) • [The Story of Picus](#) • [The Pilgrimage of Aeneas Resumed](#) • [The Narrative of Diomedes](#) • [The Return of Venulus](#) • [The Deification of Aeneas](#) • [Legendary History of Rome](#) • [Pomona and Vertumnus](#) • [The Story of Iphis and Anaxarete](#) • [More Early Roman History](#)

BOOK FIFTEEN

[The Succession of Numa](#) • [The Teachings of Pythagoras](#) • [The Return of Numa](#) • [The Story of Hippolytus](#) • [The Story of Cipus](#) • [The Story of Aesculapius](#) • [The Deification of Caesar](#) • [The Epilogue](#)

BOOK XII

*The Invasion of Troy*

But Priam mourned for Aesacus, not knowing
 He lived, a wingèd creature. To the tomb
 That bore his name Hector brought sacrifice,
 So did the other brothers. all but Paris,
 Who, not long after, brought upon his country
 Long warfare over the woman he had stolen.
 A thousand ships were launched, and all the Greeks,
 Banded together, followed, and they would have
 Taken their vengeance sooner, but the storms
 Made the sea pathless, and Boeotia held them,
 Impatient, at the little port of Aulis.
 When here, as always, they had gotten ready
 Their sacrifice for Jove, just as the altar
 Glowed with the lighted fires, they saw a serpent,
 Blue-green in color, creeping up a plane-tree

Above them, toward a nest, high up, which held
 Eight fledglings. These, together with the mother,
 Flying too close to her doomed brood, the serpent
 Seized and devoured. Amazement seized the people,
 But the augur Calchas saw the meaning clearly:
 "Rejoice, O Greeks: we shall win the war, and Troy
 Go down before us, but our task will be
 Of long duration: the nine birds mean nine years."
 Meanwhile the serpent, coiled around the branches,
 Was changed to stone, and the stone kept the form
 Of the twining serpent.

Nereus continued

Boisterous over the waves; he would not carry
 The war across the sea, and there were people
 Who thought that Neptune, who had built the walk
 Of Troy, was therefore bound to spare the city.
 Calchas knew better, and said so: *virgin blood*
Must satisfy the virgin goddess' anger.
 The common cause was stronger than affection,
 The king subdued the father; Agamemnon
 Led Iphigenia to the solemn altar,
 And while she stood there, ready for the offering
 Of her chaste blood, and even the priests were weeping,
 Diana yielded, veiled their eyes with cloud,
 And even while the rites went on, confused
 With darkness and the cries of people praying,
 Iphigenia was taken, and a deer
 Left in her place as victim, so the goddess
 Was satisfied; her anger and the ocean's

Subsided, and the thousand ships responded
To the fresh winds astern and, with much trouble,
Came to the Phrygian shores.

There is a place
At the world's center, triple boundary
Of land and sky and sea. From here all things,
No matter what, are visible; every word
Comes to these hollow ears. Here Rumor dwells,
Her palace high upon the mountain-summit,
With countless entrances, thousands on thousands,
And never a door to close them. Day and night
The halls stand open, and the bronze re-echoes,
Repeats all words, redoubles every murmur.
There is no quiet, no silence anywhere,
No uproar either, only the subdued
Murmur of little voices, like the murmur
Of sea-waves heard far-off, or the last rumble
Of thunder dying in the cloud. The halls
Are filled with presences that shift and wander,
Rumors in thousands, lies and truth together,
Confused, confusing. Some fill idle ears
With stories, others go far-off to tell
What they have heard, and every story grows,
And each new teller adds to what he hears.
Here is Credulity, and reckless Error,
Vain Joy, and panic Fear, sudden Sedition,
Whispers that none can trace, and she, their goddess,
Sees all that happens in heaven, on land, on ocean,
Searching the world for news.

She spread the tidings
That the Greek fleet was coming, and brave armies,
And so the Trojans, dressed in readiness,
Received them at their shores. Protesilaus
Was first to fall, so the fates willed, when Hector
Let fly the deadly spear. The early fighting
Cost the Greeks dear, and Hector gave them lessons
In how to kill. And Trojans learned those lessons
In blood, and Sigeon shores were turned to crimson.
Cygnus, the son of Neptune, slew his thousands;
Achilles, in his car, rode through the Trojans
Leveling columns with his spear, and seeking
Cygnus or Hector. Hector was denied him
Till the tenth year, but he did meet with Cygnus,
Urged on his horses, whose white necks were straining
Against the yoke, rode down his enemy,
Brandished his spear, and cried: "Whoever you are,
O youth, take this for comfort in your dying:
It was Achilles of Thessaly who killed you."
After the taunt, the spear. It did not swerve,
And the point was sharp, but only bruised the breast,
No damage done. "O son of Thetis," Cygnus
Called back, "you see I know you: why do you wonder
That no wound hurts me?" (And Achilles, surely,
Was wondering.) "I do not wear this helmet,
Golden with horsehair crest, I do not carry
This hollow shield on my left arm, for safety.
I wear them out of pride, for decoration,
As Mars, too, wears his armor. If I lost them,

I still would walk unharmed. You are the son
 Of Thetis, a sea-goddess; that is something,
 But I am son of the great ocean monarch
 Who rules both Thetis and her many sisters
 And Nereus, their father." He flung a spear.
 Through brass and the nine leathers of layer driving,
 It pierced, but the tenth layer kept it harmless.
 Achilles shook it off, flung spear again,
 Again it left no wound, and even when Cygnus
 Offered his body naked of protection
 The third spear did no hurt. Achilles rages
 As a bull rages in the wide arena
 Against the scarlet cloth and never finds it.
 Could the spear have lost its point? He looked it over.
 No, it was on the shaft. "Has my hand weakened,"
 He thought, "In this one instance? Once I had
 Strength enough, surely, when I led the onslaught
 Against Lyrnessus' walls, and made the rivers
 Run red with blood, and Telephus, more than once,
 Felt my spear's power and thrust. On this field also
 I have made and seen my heaps of slain; my hand
 Is strong, as it has been." As if he needed
 Proof of the past, he flung one spear the more
 Straight at Menoetes, and the weapon drove
 Through mail and breast, and as the dying victim
 Came clanging to the ground, from the hot wound
 Achilles pulled the spear in wild rejoicing:
 "This is the hand, this is the spear, that brought me
 Victory once again, and I shall use them

Against this foe, and the same fate befall him!"
 He threw again at Cygnus, and the ash
 Went straight, and hit the shoulder, and bounced off
 As from a wall. Achilles saw the blood
 Where it had landed, and rejoiced, in vain—
 That was Menoetes' blood! Down from his chariot
 He leaped, closed in, swung sword, saw shield and helmet
 Both pierced, and felt the sword go blunt on the body.
 This was too much; with shield and hilt as weapons
 Over and over again he beat on the temples,
 The unprotected visage. One gave way,
 And one came pressing on: no rest was given,
 No respite from that battle-shock. And fear
 Took hold of Cygnus, the dark shadows swam
 Before his eyes; as he stepped back, a boulder
 Barred off retreat. As he bent back against it,
 Achilles dragged him down, rode him with knees
 And shield together, loosed his helmet-thongs,
 Fastened them tight around the throat, kept choking,
 Was ready to strip the armor for his prize,
 And found the armor empty, for the sea-god
 Had changed him into the snowy bird whose name
 He had while living.

All this toil and warfare
 Brought a long truce, and men laid down their weapons
 And took their rest, but guards patrolled the trenches
 And guards patrolled the walls. There came a day
 When Cygnus' conqueror, Achilles, offered
 A heifer's blood as sacrifice to Pallas.

The entrails smoked on the altars, and the odor
 Loved by the gods ascended to the heavens,
 And what was left from the gods' share the heroes
 Put on their tables, and the chiefs reclined
 On couches there, and took their fill, and drank
 Deep of the wine, and for their music listened
 Not to the sound of lyre nor voice of song
 Nor boxwood flute, but they drew out the night
 In talk of war, and valor was the theme.
 They spoke of battles, both their own and others',
 Lived over, with pleasure, dangers they had met,
 For what else would Achilles speak of? what
 Would others tell in great Achilles' presence?
 And most of all the conversation turned
 On his last victory, the defeat of Cygnus,
 Wonderful, so they thought, for a young man
 To have a body that no spear could pierce,
 That blunted sword-edge. Even Achilles wondered,
 And Nestor said: "Your youthful generation
 Has known one only, this Cygnus, who could scorn
 The steel, invulnerable to any wound.
 I can recall another, long ago,
 Whose body took a thousand blows, unharmed,
 What was his name now? Caeneus, that was it,
 Caeneus of Thessaly, Thessalian Caeneus.
 He once dwelt on Mount Othrys and was famous
 For all he did, but the strange thing about it
 Is, he was born a woman." All who listened
 Clamored to hear the story, and Achilles

Was urgent: "Tell us, father: you are wise
 And eloquent; we all want to hear about him.
 Who was this Caeneus? why changed? who fought him?
 Who beat him if he ever was beaten? where,
 In what campaign did you know him?" Nestor answered:
 "Time has slowed me down; I forget many things
 That happened in my youth, but I remember
 A good deal more, and this thing stands out clearly
 From all the doings of war and peace. I must have
 Seen much, if any man could. I have been living
 Two hundred years, am now in my third hundred.

Nestor Tells the Story of Caeneus

Famous for beauty was Elatus' daughter,
 Caenis, her name was, loveliest of girls
 In Thessaly, throughout the neighboring cities
 And your own town (she came from there, Achilles)
 And many suitors had their eyes upon her,
 And your own father might have been one, I think,
 But: maybe he was married to your mother
 By then, or going to be. Well, anyway,
 Caenis would not consent to any marriage.
 She used to walk the lonely shore, and Neptune
 (Or so they say) got hold of her one day,
 Took her by force, and liked what he had taken
 And told the girl: 'Ask me for anything,
 And you shall have it. What do you want the most?'
 (That was what people said, at least.) And Caenis
 Replied: 'The wrong you have done me makes me ask

For something most important, that I may never
 Again be able to suffer so. I ask you
 That I may not be woman; that would be best.’
 She spoke the last words with a deeper tone,
 The voice might have been a man’s, and it was, truly,
 For the deep ocean’s god had given his word
 And to it added that no man should hurt her,
 That she should never fall by any thrust,
 So she, or he, went on his way rejoicing
 And spent the years in male pursuits, and traveled
 All over Thessaly.

Nestor Goes On and On with the Story of the Battle with the Centaurs

“Now Ixion’s son
 Had married Hippodame, and invited
 The cloud-born Centaurs to the wedding banquet
 In a shady cavern under the trees. The leaders
 Of Thessaly were there, and I was with them,
 And the palace rang with all those noisy feasters,
 And people sang *Here comes the bride*, and the hall
 Smoked to its rafters, and the bride came in,
 Beautiful, with her bridesmaids and young matrons,
 And we called Pirithous a lucky fellow,
 And that was a mistake, an act which almost
 Broke up the omens of a happy marriage,
 For Eurytus, the wildest of the Centaurs,
 And all of them were wild enough, grew heated
 With wine or lust or both of them together,

Grabbed Hippodame by the hair and dragged her
 Beyond the upset tables, through the yelling,
 And all the others took a girl, whichever
 They liked, or, anyway, whichever they could,
 Till the whole scene looked like a town being ravaged,
 With women shrieking all over the place. We all
 Jumped up as quick as we could, and Theseus first
 Cried out: ‘What is this, Eurytus? Are you crazy?
 To insult Pirithous while I live, to attack him,
 And so attack us both?’ And the great hero,
 By way of proving his words, pushed off the Centaurs,
 Rescued the bride from all that raging fury.
 Eurytus said nothing, there was nothing
 For him to say; instead, he rushed at Theseus,
 Struck him on face and chest. There stood near by
 An ancient wine-bowl, with carved figures on it,
 And Theseus, in a towering anger, seized it,
 Flung it at Eurytus, who, dying, spouted
 Blood from his mouth, and brains, and wine together,
 As all his brothers shouted down each other
 Crying ‘To arms, to arms!’ Wine gave them courage,
 And their first weapons were the flasks and goblets
 And caldrons: all utensils meant for feasting
 Were used for war and murder. Ophion’s son,
 Amycus, robbed the inner shrine and from it
 Bore off a chandelier with glittering lamps,
 Lifted it high, the way an axe is lifted
 To strike a white bull for a sacrifice,
 And dashed it at the head of Celadon,

Smashing his face so that no man would know it.
 His eyes bulged from their sockets, and his cheek-bones
 Splintered, and what had been his nose was driven
 Into his palate. Pelates of Pella
 Wrenched off a maple table-leg and used it
 To knock Amycus down with, with his chin
 Driven into his breast. That made things even,
 As he spat out black blood and teeth together.
 A second blow finished him off. Then Gryneus,
 Staring, wild-eyed, at the smoking altar near him,
 Cried out, 'Why not use this?' and caught it up
 With all its fires and hurled it at the throng
 And crushed two men, Broteas and Orios,
 Whose mother, so folks said, was named Mycale
 And she, or so they said, had incantations
 To bring the horns of the moon to earth, no matter
 How much she struggled. 'You shall not escape me
 If I can find a weapon!' one Exadius
 Cried out, and found a weapon, a stag's antlers
 Hung on a pine-tree as a votive offering.
 And Gryneus' eyes were pierced by those twin prongs,
 Eyeballs gouged out; one of them stuck to the horn,
 The other rolled down his beard till a blood-clot caught it.
 Then Rhoetus caught up a brand of plum-wood,
 Whirled it, and smashed it through Charaxus' temples,
 Whose yellow hair, caught by the fire, burned fiercely
 Like a dry field of grain, and the blood, seared dry,
 Hissed horribly in the wound, as a bar of iron,
 Red-hot in the fire, is taken by the blacksmith,

Lifted in curving tongs, and plunged, still glowing,
 Into the tub of water. How it sizzles,
 Sputters and hisses in the lukewarm water!
 That was the way Charaxus acted. Wounded,
 He pawed at the fire, and tore up from the ground
 And heaved to his shoulder a millstone, that a team
 Of oxen could hardly drag. It was too heavy
 To reach his enemy, but it did hit someone,
 Charaxus' friend Cometes, and it crushed him.
 And Rhoetus was delighted: 'That's the way!
 Be brave like that, all of you!' And he came on
 With his brand again, and used it for a mallet,
 Pounding the skull-bones into the brains. In triumph
 He turned on Dryas, Corythus, Euagrus,
 And Corythus fell, a youngster who had never
 Cut himself shaving, and Euagrus shouted:
 'What glory do you get from killing children?'
 Rhoetus gave him no chance for further talking
 But shoved the firebrand into his mouth, wide open,
 Ramming it down his throat. He went for Dryas
 And this time had no luck, for Dryas stabbed him
 With a sharp stake between the neck and shoulder,
 And Rhoetus wrenched it loose, and ran, all reeking
 With his own blood. Orneus fled, and Medon,
 And Lycabas, with a wound in his right shoulder,
 And Thaumias, and Pisenor. Mermeros fled;
 He used to be the fastest runner of all,
 But slower now from a wound. And Pholus fled
 And Melaneus fled, and a boar-hunter

Whose name was Abas, and Asbolus, the augur,
 Who had tried to stop the brawling, spoke to Nessus
 Fleeing beside him: 'Never mind; you need not
 Run quite so fast, you will be spared, they tell me,
 For the bow of Hercules.' But Eurynomus,
 Lycidas, Areos, Imbreus fell; all these
 Dryas struck down confronting him. Crenaeus
 Also received his wounds in front; Crenaeus
 Was running. but looked back, and a javelin got him
 Between the eyes. And during all this uproar
 Aphidnas lay asleep, sprawled out, his hand
 Still clinging to a goblet, drunk, and lying
 On a shaggy bearskin. Phorbas, from far off,
 Studied him, noticed that he never stirred,
 Cried: 'Mix your wine with water of the Styx
 And drink it there!' and flung his javelin
 Whose iron-tipped ash went through his neck. He lay there,
 Head back, and never knew he died, and blood
 Poured over the place he lay, and filled his wine-cup.

I saw Petraeus trying to pull an oak-tree
 Out of the earth. He held it in both arms,
 Yanking it back and forth, and just as he loosened
 The rooted trunk, Pirithous pinned him there,
 The spear going through his ribs. They say that Lycus
 Fell by the valor of Pirithous, also Chromis.
 It may be so, but Dictys and Helops brought him
 More reputation than either of these, for Helops
 Got a javelin through his temples, in one ear
 And out the other. Dictys tried to run,

And stumbled at the edge of a cliff and fell
 And landed on an ash-tree's top, impaled
 On the broken spikes of the branches. Aphareus
 Came to avenge him, and tried to hurl a boulder
 Torn from the mountain-side, but as he threw it,
 The son of Aegeus caught him with an oak-club,
 Crippling his elbow. No use bothering more
 With his maimed body, so Theseus leaped high
 On tall Bienor's back; that was one Centaur
 Who had never carried anyone but himself.
 But Theseus dug his knees into his sides,
 His left hand clutched the mane, he smashed at the face,
 The mouth, that screamed and threatened, and he pounded
 The temples with his knotty club. He slew
 Nedymnus and Lycopes, a javelin-thrower,
 Hippasos, bearded to the breast, and Ripheus,
 Taller than trees, and Thereus, a hunter
 Who brought back bears alive from Thessaly's mountains.
 Demoleon could not stand this any longer:
 He had been jerking at a pine, to tear it
 Up from the roots, the trunk and all, and could not,
 And so he broke it off and sent it flying,
 But Theseus saw it coming, and stepped back
 As Pallas told him to; at least, he told us
 That Pallas told him to. It did some damage,
 That pine, it tore off Grantor's breast and shoulder.
 He had been your father's armor-bearer, Achilles;
 Amyntor, the Dolopian king, when beaten
 In war, had given him to Aeacus' son,

Your father, Peleus. And when Peleus saw him
 So foully mangled, he cried out in horror:
 'Here is a funeral-offering for you, Crantor!
 I do not know which had more purpose in it,
 Or which more strength, his right arm or his spirit,
 But the ash went through the ribs and stuck to the bones;
 Demoleon broke the shaft off, but the point
 Stayed in the lungs. His agony made him braver:
 Wounded, he reared against his foe, struck at him
 With hoof and foreleg. Peleus took the blows
 On helm and ringing shield, kept himself covered,
 Held his own weapon ready, and in a moment
 Drove it through breast, where the horse-part and man-part
 Were joined together. I forgot to tell you
 That Peleus, before this, had slain Phlegraeos
 And Hyles, from a distance, and in close quarters
 Iphinous and Clanis. Now he added
 Dorylas, with a helmet made of wolf's hide,
 Who did not carry a spear, but went around
 With a bull's curving horns to use as weapons
 And had them red with blood. I called out to him,
 For my courage gave me strength, 'Look here, Dorylas!
 Those horns are little good against a spear.'
 And I hurled the spear, and since he could not dodge it
 He flung his right hand up to save his forehead,
 And so my spear pinned his hand against his forehead,
 And everybody yelled, and Peleus
 Was near, and while the creature stood there helpless,
 He stabbed him in the belly, so he jumped forward

Trailing his guts along the ground, and trod them
 And burst them as he trod them, and got tangled
 In what was left, and fell with empty belly.

The beauty of Cyllarus had no power to save him
 In that great fight. Centaurs have beauty, maybe.
 His youthful beard was just beginning, golden,
 And golden locks fell down his neck and shoulders.
 He had a pleasing liveliness of expression,
 And as for neck and shoulders, breast, arms, all
 That had humanity, you could call it perfect,
 A work of art, and the horse part of him
 Was every bit as faultless: give him head
 And neck, he would be worthy of a Castor,
 So arched his back for the rider, so bold and strong
 The muscles on his chest. He was black all over
 Except for legs and tail, and these were white,
 Whiter than snow. Many a Centaur-female
 Had sought him out, but only one had won him,
 Hylonome, of those half-beasts the fairest
 In all the woods. She, by her coaxing ways,
 By loving and confessing love, possessed him,
 And she was dainty, if such creatures could be,
 Combing her hair, or mane, twining her locks
 With rosemary, or violets, or roses,
 Or sometimes with white lilies. Twice a day
 She bathed her face in the brook cascading down
 From Pagasa's woody heights, and twice a day
 She bathed her body in that stream. She would not
 Wear garments over shoulder or left side

Unless she knew they suited her, the skins
 Of choicest quality. They loved each other.
 Together they ranged the mountain-sides, together
 Rested in caves; together they had come,
 This time, to the palace of the Lapithae,
 Together joined the battle, and a spear,
 Nobody knows who flung it, came from the left,
 Struck Cyllarus where neck and shoulder join,
 Pierced to the heart, a light wound, deep enough
 So that the heart grew cold and the body also
 After the shaft was drawn. Hylonome
 Embraced the dying body, staunched the wound,
 Or tried to staunch it, with her hand; her lips
 Sought for his own, to keep the dying breath
 From leaving the body, and failed, and she cried something
 I could not hear in all that din and shouting,
 And threw herself on the spear that killed her lover
 And fell, in death, above him.

“I still can see him,
 Phaeocomes, who had bound six lion hides
 Together with thongs, a makeshift sort of armor
 Protecting horse and man. He hurled a log
 Which nowadays two oxen could hardly move,
 Struck Tectaphos on the head, a crushing blow
 That shattered his skull, and squeezed, through mouth and nostrils,
 Through eyes and ears, the jellied brains, as curds
 Are strained through sieves. But I, as he made ready
 To strip his victim (and your father can prove it)
 Drove sword into his groin. Chthonius also

Fell by the sword, and Teleboas. One
 Had a forked stick as weapon, the other a spear
 Which wounded me; you still can see the scar.
 Those were the days when I should have been a warrior
 Sent out to capture Troy. I had the power
 To check, if not surpass, the might of Hector.
 But I forget—Hector was not yet born,
 Or if he was, he was nothing but a boy,
 And now I am weak and old. Do I need to tell you
 How Periphas slew Pyraethus, or how Ampyx
 Brought down Echeclus? Macareus slaughtered
 Erigdupus with a crow-bar. And I remember
 How Nessus threw a spear that hurt Cymelus
 Where spears can hurt the most. And let me tell you
 Mopsus, the son of Ampycus, was more
 Than just a prophet; he could fight, I tell you.
 It was his weapon stopped Hodites' talking,
 Pinning his tongue to his chin, and his chin to his throat.
 Caeneus—he was the one I told you of,
 Remember?—had killed five: Antimachus,
 Styphelus, Bromus, Elymus, Pyracmos.
 Their wounds I have forgotten, but, you see,
 I still remember their names. Then one came forward,
 Latreus, who bulked enormous, with the spoils
 Of slain Halaesus. He was middle-aged,
 This Latreus, with gray hair around his temples
 But he had a young man's strength. You could always tell him
 By his shield and sword and Macedonian lance.
 He faced each side in turn, and clashed his arms,

Rode in a circle, poured out many words
 On the empty air: 'Am I to stand this woman,
 This Caenis? Woman you are, and always will be,
 Caenis, to me; does not your birth remind you
 Of what you used to be, at what a cost
 You gained this lying semblance of a man?
 Remember, daughter, all that you have suffered,
 Go back to your distaff and your weaving-baskets,
 Go turn the wheel, go spin the wool; leave arms
 To men, where they belong!' Across his boasting
 The spear of Caeneus flew, plowed up his side
 Where horse met man, and mad with pain he struck
 With his long pike full in the face of Caeneus,
 But the pike jumped back, the way a hailstone bounces
 From a tin roof, or a pebble from a drum.
 Then he came closer, tried to jab the sword
 In the unyielding side, and got no farther.
 'The sword's edge, then, since the point is dull,' cried Latreus,
 'Will be the death of you!' and the long right arm
 Aimed for the loins, but the blow came off the flesh
 Clanging as if from marble, and the blade
 Was shattered, and there stood Caeneus, unharmed,
 Giving his enemy time to look and wonder,
 And then he struck; clear to the hilt he drove
 The blade, and turned the weapon in his vitals,
 Wound within wound. Now all of them together
 The double-bodied creatures rushed in roaring,
 All against one, they aimed, they drove their weapons,
 And the weapons fell back blunted, and he stood there

Unwounded, with not even a mark upon him,
 A sight that struck them dumb, till Monychus
 Cried out: 'O great disgrace! that a whole people
 Is mocked by one, one man, and he a man
 Just barely, but a man he is, and we
 Seem what he was before. Much good it does us
 To have our double strength, our double nature!
 I doubt if we are sons of any goddess,
 Nor yet Ixion's sons. He was great enough
 To hope to mate with Juno, and we are conquered
 By half a man! Let us pile mountains on him,
 Tree-trunks and stones, smother his life with forests,
 Use weight alone for weapon and wound!' So saying,
 He hurled a fallen tree, blown down by the wind,
 And the others followed; in no time at all
 Othrys was stripped of trees, and Pelion's mountain
 Lost all its shade. Buried beneath that mound,
 Caeneus strained and heaved and lifted oak-trees
 But the pile rose, buried his mouth, and gave him
 No air to breathe. He tried to lift his head,
 To shake the mass of forest off, he moved
 As Ida over there moves in an earthquake.
 We are not sure what happened. Some men say
 The weight of the mountains bore his body down
 To Tartarus, but this has been denied.
 The son of Ampycus claimed he saw a bird
 With golden wings go flying to clear air,
 I saw it, too, myself, the only time
 I ever saw such a bird, and Mopsus saw him

Circling the camp in easy flight, the wings
 Whirring with mighty sound, and Mopsus followed
 That flight with all his eyes and all his heart:
 'Hail and farewell, great Caeneus, mighty hero,
 Flier without a peer, pride of the Lapiths!
 People believed the story since he told it,
 And grief increased our anger that one hero
 Should be borne down by such a weight of foes.
 We did not stop till half of them were slaughtered,
 The others saved by running, or by the darkness."

Nestor Is Asked Why He Omitted Hercules, and Explains

So Nestor's story ended, but there was one,
 Tlepolemus, who asked, with some vexation,
 Why Hercules was left out. "Old-timer," he said,
 "It is queer you never had a word to say
 In praise of Hercules. My father often
 Told me of many a victory of his
 Over those cloud-born creatures. What about it?"
 And Nestor answered with no pleasure: "Why
 Force me to think of those old injuries,
 Reopen time-healed wounds, rehearse again
 The offenses that once made me hate your father?
 God knows he has done things no one could believe,
 Earned praise all over the whole world, God knows, and I
 Wish I could call it all a lie, but I cannot.
 Still, we do not praise Hector, we do not praise
 Deiphobus or Polydamas; who
 Would praise his enemies? Young man, your father

Brought down Messene's walls, he ravaged cities,
 Elis and Pylos, that had not deserved it,
 Made ruin of my house with fire and sword.
 Not to say anything about the others,
 There once were twelve of us, the sons of Neleus,
 Splendid young men, and he killed all of us
 Except myself. That others could be conquered
 Is something we must bear, but one death seemed
 Strange altogether. Periclymenus
 Had power, through Neptune's will, to change his form
 At will, and now tried everything
 And found all changes vain, and in the end
 Took on the form of eagle, carrier
 Of thunderbolts, most dear to the king of the gods.
 With all that power of wing, of beak and talon,
 He had torn the face of Hercules, and soared
 High to the clouds, but the unerring bow
 Loosed arrow at him there, and found the joint
 Of wing and shoulder, a slight wound, to be sure,
 But fatal, for it cost him power of motion,
 And down he fell, the weakened wing no longer
 Catching the air, and the weight of the body drove
 The weapon through the breast and throat. So now,
 My handsome Rhodian captain, why should I
 Owe Hercules any praise? I avenge my brothers
 In this small way, ignoring him. Between us
 There lies no enmity."

Nestor's long story,
 However gently told, had made them thirsty:

The wine went round again, and then they slumbered.

But Neptune still grieved for the son whose body
Was now a swan's, and most of all he hated
Achilles with a deadly hate. Ten years
The war went on, and Neptune sought Apollo:
"Dearest to me of all my brother's sons,
Who helped me, and for nothing, build the walls
Of Troy, is it not pitiful to see
These walls about to topple? Is it not
Pitiful that so many thousands perished
Defending them, the nameless dead, and Hector
Dragged in the dirt around the town? Achilles,
Fiercer and bloodier than the war itself,
Destroyer of our workmanship, lives on,
Keeps out of my reach, or I would make him feel
The power of my trident. You can find him
Better than I can, with invisible arrow:
Bring him to sudden death!" Apollo nodded;
His own, and Neptune's, grievance drew him earthward,
Cloud-wrapped to the Trojan columns. There he saw
Paris in off-hand fashion taking pot-shots
At Greek nonentities. As very god
He spoke rebuking Paris: "Why waste arrows
On common rabble? If you care at all
For vengeance, for your people, hit Achilles,
Revenge your murdered brothers!" and he pointed
To where Achilles stood, his bright sword reaping
The Trojan ranks, and Apollo swung the bow,
Guided the hand of Paris, and old Priam

Could almost smile, for the first time since Hector
Had been brought low. So the great conqueror,
Conqueror of the mightiest, was conquered
By coward and seducer. How much better
To have been killed outright by a manly woman
Than womanish man, to have the Amazon,
Penthesilea, whom he slew, been victor
With her great battle-axe!

So now Achilles,
The Terror of Troy, the ornament and bulwark
Of the Greek name, the great invincible captain,
Was burned. The same god armed him and consumed him.
Now he is only dust, and of Achilles,
Of all that might, nothing, or almost nothing,
Remains, a pitiful handful, scarce sufficient
To stop a hole to keep the wind away.
But still his glory lives, and in that glory
He fills the whole wide world. This is the measure
To judge him by, in this the son of Peleus
Is still himself; against that victory
The gates of Hell shall not prevail. His shield
Still wages war, and arms are taken up
Over his arms, that men may know, and truly,
Who owned them once. Not Diomedes nor Ajax,
Oileus' son, nor Menelaus claimed them,
Nor Agamemnon, nor the other leaders.
Only two captains had the nerve and daring
To claim so great a prize: these were Ulysses
And the other Ajax, son of Telamon,

But Agamemnon would not choose between them,
So, to avoid the burden and the hatred
Of any such decision, he called the captains
Of all the host to council, to sit in judgment.

GLOSSARY AND INDEX

The index that appeared in the print version of this title was intentionally removed from the eBook. Please use the search function on your eReading device to search for terms of interest. For your reference, the terms that appear in the print index are listed below.

SINCE THIS index is not intended as a complete mythological dictionary, the explanations given here include only important information not readily available in the text itself. Names in parentheses are alternative Latin names, unless they are preceded by the abbreviation *Gr.*; *Gr.* indicates the name of the corresponding Greek divinity. The index includes cross-references for all alternative names.

ACHAMENIDES. Former follower of Ulysses, rescued by Aeneas ACHELOUS. River god; rival of Hercules for the hand of Deianira ACHILLES. Greek hero of the Trojan War

ACIS. Rival of the Cyclops, Polyphemus, for the hand of Galatea

ACMON. Follower of Diomedes

ACOETES. A faithful devotee of Bacchus

ACTAEON

ADONIS. Son of Myrrha, by her father Cinyras; loved by Venus

AEACUS. King of Aegina; after death he became one of the three judges of the dead in the lower world

AEGEUS. King of Athens; father of Theseus

AENEAS. Trojan warrior; son of Anchises and Venus; sea-faring survivor of the Trojan War, he eventually landed in Latium, helped found Rome

AESACUS. Son of Priam and a nymph

AESCULAPIUS (*Gr.* Asclepius). God of medicine and healing; son of Apollo

AESON. Father of Jason; made young again by Medea

AGAMEMNON. King of Mycenae; commander-in-chief of the Greek forces in the Trojan War

AGLAUROS

AJAX. Son of Telamon; brave Greek warrior in the Trojan War

ALCMENA. Mother of Hercules

ALCYONE. Wife of Ceyx

ALTHEA. Queen of Calydon; mother and murderer of Meleager

AMMON. A spring in the Oasis of Siwa

ANAXARETE. A princess loved by Iphis, a youth of common birth

ANDROMEDA

ANIUS. King of Delos; priest of Apollo

APHRODITE. *See* Venus

APOLLO (Phoebus). God of music, poetry, medicine, and prophecy; also god of the sun

ARACHNE. A girl turned into a spider by Minerva

ARCADY. A pastoral region in the central Peloponnesus, Greece

ARCAS

ARDEA. City of Latium, turned into a heron

ARETHUSA. A woodland nymph changed into a fountain ARGUS. Hundred-eyed giant ordered by Juno to watch Io ARTEMIS. See Diana

ASCANIUS. SeeIulus

ATALANTA. A beautiful, swift-footed, warrior maiden

METAMORPHOSES

ATHAMAS

ATHENA. See Minerva

ATLAS

AUGUSTUS. See Caesar

AURORA (*Gr.* Eos). Goddess of dawn

BACCHUS (*Gr.* Dionysus). God of wine

BATTUS

BAUCIS. Wife of Philemon; rewarded by Jove for hospitality to him

BOREAS. God of the north wind

BYBLIS

CADMUS

CAENEUS. The woman, Caenis, changed into a man by Neptune CAESAR. Family name of GaiusJulius and later of Augustus CALCHAS. Priest of Apollo

CALLIOPEThe Muse of eloquence and epic poetry

CALYDON . Ancient Greek city in Aetolia

CANENS. A river nymph; wife of Ficus

CASSANDRA. Daughter of Priam and Hecuba (she possessed prophetic power which no one would believe)

CAUNUS

CENTAUR. Monster with the head, trunk, and arms of a man, and the body and legs of a horse; offspring of Ixion

CEPHALUS. Husband of Procris, sister of Procne and Philomela CERES (*Gr.* Demeter). Goddess of agriculture, mother of Proserpina CEYX. Son of Lucifer; King ofTrachis

CHARYBDIS. Guardian of the whirlpool off the coast ofSicily

CHIONE. Daughter of Daedalion; loved by Apollo and Mercury

CHIRON. Wisest of all Centaurs, trainer of Achilles, Aesculapius, and Hercules

CINYRAS. Father of Adonis by his daughter, Myrrha

CIPUS

CIRCE. Enchantress who turned meninto beasts CLAROS. Town in Asia Minor, with an oracle of Apollo CLYMENE . Mother of Phaethon, son of

Apollo

CRONUS. **See** Saturn

CUMAE. Ancient city in southwestern Italy

CUPID. Son of Venus; god of love

CYANE. A nymph changed by Pluto into a pool; the pool

CYBELE (*Gr.* Rhea). Goddess of nature; sometimes considered mother of the gods

CYGNUS King of the Ligurians who turned into a swan and was placed among the stars. Son of Neptune; Trojan hero

CYLLARUS Handsome young centaur

CYPARISSUS

DAEDALION. Brother of Ceyx

DAEDALUS. Artist and inventor who built the labyrinth for King Minos in Crete DAPHNE. A nymph who evaded Apollo's advances by becoming a laurel tree

DEIANIRA. Second wife of Hercules, whom she accidentally killed

DELOS. Small island in the Aegean; birthplace of Diana and Apollo DELPHI. City in Greece, site of the famous oracle of Apollo DEMETER. **See** Ceres

DEUCALION. A son of Prometheus, he and his wife Pyrrha were the only survivors of the flood inflicted by Zeus because of man's wickedness

DIANA (*Gr.* Artemis). Sister of Apollo; goddess of the moon and of hunting; patroness of virgins

DIOMEDES. Greek hero in the Trojan War; founder of the city Arpi

DIONYSUS. **See** Bacchus

DRYOPE

METAMORPHOSES

ECHO

EGERIA. Wife of Numa

ENVY

ERYSICHTHON. King who was punished for scorning the gods

EUROPA. Phoenician princess EURYDICE. Wife of Orpheus EURYTUS. **A centaur**

EVENUS. Flooding river which nearly caused Hercules to lose his wife Deianira

FAUNUS. **See** Pan

GALANTHIS. Alcmena's maid, who was turned into a weasel

GALATEA. A Nereid, loved by Cyclops. Pygmalion's statue, turned into a live woman by Venus

GANYMEDE. Cupbearer to the gods

GLAUCUS. A sea-god

HECUBA. Wife of Priam; queen of Troy; mother of Hector, Paris, Polyxena, Polydorus

HERCULES. Son of Jove and Alcmena, who was known for his great strength

HERMAPHRODITUS

HERMES. *See* Mercury

HERSILIA. Wife of Romulus

HESPERIA. Daughter of Cebren, a river-god

HESTIA. *See* Vesta

HIPPODAME. Wife of Pirithous

HIPPOLYTUS. Son of Theseus; name changed to Virbius

HIPPOMENES. Winning suitor of Atalanta

HORA. Name of Hersilia, wife of Romulus, after her deification

HYACINTHUS

HYLONOME. Fairest of the female centaurs

IANTHE

ICARUS. Son of Daedalus

ILIA (Rhea Silvia). Mother of Romulus

INDIGES. Name of Aeneas after deification

INO. Sister of Bacchus' mother

IO. Daughter of Inachus; maiden loved by Jove, turned into a heifer to protect her from the jealousy of Juno

IPHIGENIA. Daughter of Agamemnon, who offered her as sacrifice to Diana

IPHIS. A girl in Crete. A youth of common birth in love with a princess, Anaxarete

IRIS. Goddess of the rainbow; assistant to Juno

ITYS. Son of Procne and Tereus

IULUS (Ascanius). Son of Aeneas; king of Latium and Alba

JASON. Leader of the Argonauts, who, with the help of Medea, got the Golden Fleece

JOVE (Jupiter; *Gr.* Zeus). Son of Saturn; chief of the gods, ruler of gods and men

JUNO (*Gr.* Hera). Wife of Jove; queen of the gods; goddess of marriage

JUPITER. *See* Jove

LAELAPS. Cephalus' hound, turned to stone during a chase

LAOMEDON. Founder of Troy; father of Priam LATONA (*Gr.* Leto). Mother of Apollo and Diana LATREUS. Centaur killed by Caeneus

LETO. *See* Latona

LEUCOTHOE LICHAS

LYCAON. A king of Arcadia, whom Jove turned into a wolf

MACAREUS. Greek warrior who traveled with Ulysses

MAENAD. Female follower of Bacchus

MARS. God of war

MEDEA. Sorceress who helped Jason get the Golden Fleece

MEDUSA

MELEAGER. An Argonaut, son of Althea, queen of Calydon

MEMNON. Trojan warrior; son of Aurora

MERCURY (*Gr.* Hermes). Messenger of the gods, agent of Jove

MIDAS. King of Phrygia

MINERVA (*Gr.* Pallas Athena). Goddess of wisdom, technical skill, and invention; patron goddess of Athens

MINOS. King of Crete; son of Zeus by Europa

MORPHEUS. God of dreams; son of the god of sleep

MYRMIDONS. A tribe of Thessalian warriors, transformed from ants into human beings

MYRRHA. In love with her father, Cinyras; mother of Adonis

MYSCELUS. Greek who founded the Italian town of Crotona

NARCISSUS

NEPTUNE (*Gr.* Poseidon). God of the sea

NESSUS. Centaur, who loved Deianira, wife of Hercules

NESTOR. Wise old counselor, who fought with the Greeks at Troy

NIOBE. Mother whose children were slain by Latona and Apollo because of her arrogance; she was turned into a stone by Jove

NUMA. King of Rome following Romulus

NUMICIUS. River-god in Latium, who purified Aeneas

OCYRHOE

ODYSSEUS. See Ulysses

ORITHYIA. Wife of Boreas

ORPHEUS. Musician whose music possessed magic power

OSSA. A mountain in Greece, in Thessaly near Pelion

PAEON. Son of Apollo; possessor of magic healing ability

PALLAS. See Minerva

PAN (Faunus). God of fields, forests, wild animals, flocks, and shepherds, represented with the legs, ears, horns, and beard of a goat

PANCHAIA. Island in the Arabian Sea, famous for perfumes

PARIS. Son of Priam; killer of Achilles; his kidnaping of Helen, wife of Menelaus, caused the Trojan War

PELEUS. Father of Achilles, by the goddess Thetis

PELIAS. King of Thessaly; uncle and guardian of Jason, murdered by Medea

PELION. A mountain in Greece, in Thessaly near Ossa

PENTHEUS

PERDIX. An inventor, turned into a partridge by Minerva to save him from the wrath of Daedalus

PERSEPHONE. See Proserpina

PERSEUS. Son of Zeus and Danae; slayer of Medusa PHAEDRA. Wife of Theseus; mother of Hippolytus PHAETHON. Son of Apollo

PHILEMON. Husband of Baucis; the couple were rewarded by Jove for their hospitality

PHILOMELA. Daughter of Pandion; transformed into a nightingale

PHOENIX. Legendary Egyptian bird which could renew its life after dying by fire

PICUS. Son of Saturn; father of Faunus; grandfather of Latinus; early king of Latium

PIRITHOUS. King of the Lapithae

PLUTO. God of the underworld, called Hades or Dis

POLYDORUS. Son of Priam, king of Troy; murdered by Polymestor

POLYMESTOR. King of Thrace during the Trojan War

POLYPHEMUS. A Cyclops, in love with Galatea

METAMORPHOSES

POLYXENA. Daughter of Priam who was betrothed to Achilles

POMONA. A wood-nymph in Latium

POSEIDON. See Neptune

PRIAM. Last king of Troy, who reigned during the Trojan War; father of Hector and Paris

PROCNE. Daughter of Pandion; wife of Tereus; transformed into a swallow

PROCRIS. Wife of Cephalus; sister of Procne and Philomela PROSERPINA (*Gr.* Persephone). Wife of Pluto; daughter of Ceres PYGMALION. King of Cyprus; sculptor; fell in love with a statue

PYRAMUS

PYRENEUS. King of Thrace

PYRRHA. See Deucalion

PYTHAGORAS. Greek philosopher and mathematician, 6th century B.C.

PYTHON. A huge serpent born soon after the flood; killed by Apollo

QUIRINUS. Name of Romulus after his deification

RHEA. See Cybele

RHEA SILVIA. See Ilia

ROME

ROMULUS. Legendary founder of Rome

SALMACIS. A fountain whose waters make men weak

SAMOS. Greek island off Asia Minor; birthplace of Pythagoras

SATURN (*Gr.* Cronus). God of agriculture; son of Uranus and father of Jove

SCYLLA. Daughter of King Nisus; lover of King Minos. Guardian of a dangerous rock in the Straits of Messina

SEMELE. Daughter of Cadmus; mother of Jove's son, Bacchus

SIBYL. A prophetess consulted by Aeneas

SYRIN X. Nymph chased by Pan; just as he caught her, she turned into reeds

TEMPE. A lovely valley, sacred to Apollo, located between Mounts Ossa and Olympus, in Thessaly, Greece

TEREUS. Descendant of Mars; husband of Procne

THEBES. Ancient city of Greece in Boeotia THEMIS. Goddess of law and justice THESEUS. Hero of Attica; son of Aegeus

THESSALY. Ancient region in northeastern Greece

THETIS. Mother of Achilles; chief of the Nereids

THISBE

THRACE. Ancient region of the Balkan Peninsula, between Macedonia and the Black Sea

TIMOLUS. Mountain in Lydia, Asia Minor TIRESIAS. Blind soothsayer of Thebes TISIPHONE. One of the Furies

TROY. Ancient city in northwestern Asia Minor; scene of the Trojan War

ULYSSES (*Gr.* Odysseus). One of the Greek chiefs in the Trojan War

URANIA. The Muse of astronomy

VENUS (*Gr.* Aphrodite). Goddess of love and beauty

VERTUMNUS. A satyr in love with the nymph Pomona

VESTA (*Gr.* Hestia). Goddess of the hearth and the hearth fire

VIRBIUS. *See* Hippolytus

VULCAN (*Gr.* Hephaestus). God of fire and metalworking; husband of Venus

ZEUS. *See* Jove