

HOW ULYSSES STOLE THE LUCK OF TROY

In the chapter "How Ulysses Stole the Luck of Troy" from "Tales of Troy," the narrative progresses after Hector's burial, with the siege of Troy continuing languidly. The Greeks, inexperienced in siege warfare, cannot breach the Trojans' defenses, bolstered by their anticipation of reinforcements, including the Amazons and the Khita, led by King Memnon. Central to Trojan defense is the Palladium, an ancient divine image within the temple of Pallas Athene, believed to secure Troy's invincibility.

Ulysses, inspired by his lineage and fueled by divine petition to Hermes, conceives a plan to seize the Palladium. Feigning a quest for auxiliary support from Anius' magical daughters in Delos, he disguises himself as a beggar within the Greek camp, strategically cultivating a nuisance persona. Amidst this disguise, he endures beatings and disdain, ultimately gaining entry into Troy under the guise of a mistreated vagrant. When Helen of Troy encounters Ulysses, her compassion leads her to unwittingly shelter the enemy. Ulysses' cunning allows him to maintain his cover, even extracting from Helen crucial intelligence about Trojan allies.

Utilizing a drug to incapacitate a priestess, Ulysses accomplishes his mission, substituting the Palladium with a replica. His escape back to the Greek camp, first as a fugitive hiding in the wilderness and then as a triumphant hero, seals the deed. The revelation of the Palladium's theft electrifies the Greek ranks, marks Ulysses as a figure of unparalleled bravery and strategy, and plunges Troy into despair over the loss of their divine protection.

This act not only exemplifies Ulysses' ingenuity and resilience but also depicts the intricate interplay of divine intervention, fate, and human agency that pervades the Trojan War saga. Helen's role as an unwilling yet pivotal contributor to Troy's downfall

underscores the tragic dimensions of her character, caught between two worlds. The chapter encapsulates the broader themes of cunning over strength, the intertwined destinies of gods and mortals, and the relentless pursuit of victory at the cost of personal sacrifice and moral ambiguity.

