

## Chapter 5

### The Land of the Dead

Home is what a wolf cries for on a moonlit night. How many days until my tender heart breaks longing for my dear Ithaca?

I took supplies from Circe's palace, me and my men travelled down to my newly-fixed boat. I was ready. Ready to voyage to the Land of the dead. I ordered my crew on to the boat. I turned.

"STOP! What are you doing?" Shouted Circe, distraught and confused. I stared at her. The confusion in her eyes shone through.

"STOP!" She shouted as she stared into my eyes, she could see the determination that filled them. I started climbing onto the boat.

"STOP!" Determined to stop me, she climbed up the boat. "Where are you going?" She stepped towards me.

"The Land of the dead,"

"Why?"

"To outwit the sea god, Poseidon." I said calmly, standing still. Circe went quiet. I sat on the cold, hard floor, wandering. What is a kingdom without a king? A wife without a husband. A son without a father.

Circe brought provisions. It's like she knew... I shook it out of my wandering head. "No..." I whispered to myself. "It can't be..."

I ordered one of my men to steer. I looked around, a blank expression drawn across my face. The sea was calm. Endless. I looked around and was met by Circe's enchanting eyes. I slumped down on the sea-splashed floor. If I had never gone to war, if I had never harmed one of Poseidon's sons, if I had never taken the sack of winds, then I would be home, with my dear Penelope. In my sanctuary, warm, calm, safe.

"STOP DAYDREAMING!" Yelled Circe. "LOOK AHEAD!" I did as she said. My heart pounding in my chest. SPLASH! The humongous wave crashed over top of us.

The once blue sky now dark, grey and threatening lay above our heads. I knew that this was Poseidon's doing. The fierce waves crashed against the sides of my boat. Another wave crashed. "WATCH OUT!" I yelled to my crew clinging on for dear life. I took my hands off the

pole I was holding. I lifted my head. A wave crashed over the top of me. I was in the ocean. I reached up but it was no good. The currents were too strong. I fell.

I faintly heard Circe.

“COME ON THEN!” she screamed, panicking.

Everything went blank. Faint voices surrounded me.

“Is he dead? Is our leader dead?” Asked one of my crew member. I shot up. Breathing frantically. I coughed up water. I didn’t remember anything.

“Where am I?” I asked while observing the area.

“What’s wrong with him?” Questioned one of my crew.

“Do you know any family member of his?” Asked Circe. “His wife? His son or daughter?”

“Um...oh...Penelope.... his...his...wife...and...uh... he has a son.... named....um.... Telemachus.” Answered a member of crew.

“Ok, thank you” Circe started naming my son and wife over and over again. Until I remembered. My breath shaky and sharp. I looked to the front of the boat. A wall of mist reaching from the sea to the sky. Everything was calm. I could see my breath flowing out of my nostrils and mouth.

We were close. Close to the land of the dead. Icicles hung on the rigging. A smell of death wafted through the air and into our nostrils. The boat suddenly jerked to a halt.

“We have arrived.” Circe said solemnly.

We all stepped off. CRUNCH! CRACK! Went the old, frail bones laying on the floor. The dismal, haunting caverns wreaked of blood. Metallic: the blood tasted, we could all taste it in the eerie air.

“Stop.” I whispered. A fog blanketed over us all. The sounds, a sorrowful symphony made by lost souls, echoed throughout the caverns. A piercing scream cut the eerie silence. I immediately jolted back. “one.... two.... three...four.... five.....six and Circe.” I counted my crew, one was missing.

We continued walking, not daring to make even the smallest sound. Wails of sorrow and pain echoed. Suddenly I stopped... a gate stood in front of me, frail and rusted. I knew it would fall down soon. I knew this was the place where I would meet my demise.

My men, Circe and I scrambled up the fence. The only thing in my head - death, demise and the whispers surrounding me. My breath, heavier and heavier. My men paused and continued on behind me. I glanced down at my hands, numb and frail.

A ghastly scream was heard. My men froze and so did I, Circe continued walking.

“One.....two.... three.... four.....and.....five.” My crew stared with disgust at the blood stained floor. Fear spread through my crew like wildfire.

It was coming. Me and my remaining men continued walking trying to find Circe in the horrible, ominous caverns. Scream after scream. Crew after crew. I was left with only two of my crew.

“CIRCE!” I shouted as I frantically searched the area. It was followed by an ear piercing screech.

It had got her... my heart was beating out of my chest. I heard whispering. It was getting closer. Closer. Closer. Muffled screams were heard throughout the mind-twisting labyrinth of a cave.

I tried to take my fearful mind off everything. I observed the area, blood stained walls, floors and sharp thorn like spikes. Bones, lay across the grey, cold, hard floor.

I heard a scratching sound behind me. I turned. I was the only one left. Something grabbed at my foot, piercing my leg with its sharp claw like nails. It pulled me. I fell. I layed there. Blood pouring out of my body. I was lying in a pool of blood.

Memories of home filled my head. My wife.... Penelope.... My son, who I never knew, Telemachus. My dear Ithaca. My throne. My palace. I miss it all but I will never see it again. I will never see my dear Ithaca. The sandy beaches, the pure, blue ocean I could see from my window. I miss it all. I will never see it again. Never, ever again.