This abridged version of Homer's *Iliad* has been prepared by Ian Johnston of Vancouver Island University, Nanaimo, British Columbia, Canada, from my translation of the complete poem. This abridged translation is roughly one-third the length of the original poem. Each line is a direct translation from the Greek original (i.e., I have shortened the poem by removing large parts of it, not by rewriting different sections). In many places, I have included a very short prose summary of the missing material placed in square brackets and italics (e.g., [Summary sentences]). However, these short summaries do not include all details of the omitted text. And in many places no summary is provided for missing material.

This translation uses the traditional Latinate spellings and common English equivalents for the Greek names (e.g., Achilles, Menelaus, Achaeans) rather than modern renditions which strive to stay closer to the Greek (e.g., Akhilleus, Menelaos, Akhaians), with the exception of a few names of gods (Crons, Ouranos) and a few others. Where there is a common English rendition of the name (e.g., Ajax, Troy, Teucer), I have used that. A dieresis over a vowel indicates that is it pronounced by itself. For example "Deiphobus" is pronounced "Day-ee-pho-bus" not "Day-pho-bus" or "Dee-pho-bus."

In numbering the lines, I have normally included a short indented line with the shorter line immediately above it, so that the two partial lines count as a single line in the tally. Note that the numbering of the lines starts again in each book.

Note that Homer calls the Greek forces at Troy *Achaeans, Danaans,* or *Argives,* not *Greeks.* *Alexander* is an alternative name for *Paris.* And *Troy* is frequently called *Ilion.*

At the end of this text there is a **Glossary of Names and Places.**

A printed paperback edition of this abridged translation is available from [Richer Resources Publications](#).
Which of the gods incited these two men to fight?

That god was Apollo, son of Zeus and Leto.
Angry with Agamemnon, he cast plague down
onto the troops - deadly infectious evil.
For Agamemnon had dishonoured the god's priest,
Chryses, who'd come to the ships to find his daughter,
Chryseis, bringing with him a huge ransom.
He begged Achaeans, above all the army's leaders,
the two sons of Atreus:

"Menelaus, Agamemnon, sons of Atreus,
all you well-armed Achaeans, may the gods
on Olympus grant you wipe out Priam's city,
and then return home safe and sound.
Release my dear child to me. Take this ransom.
Honour Apollo, far-shooting son of Zeus."

All the Achaeans roared out their support:

"Respect the priest. Take the generous ransom."

Displeased, Agamemnon dismissed Chryses roughly -

"Old man,
don't let me catch you by our hollow ships,
sneaking back here today or later on.
I'll not release the girl to you, no, not before
she's grown old with me in Argos, far from home,
working the loom, sharing my bed. Go away.
If you want to get home safely, don't anger me."

The old man, afraid, obeyed his words, walked off in silence,
along the shore by the tumbling, crashing surf.
Some distance off, he prayed to Lord Apollo,
Leto's fair-haired child:

"God with the silver bow,
hear my prayer: Force the Danaans
to pay full price for my tears with your arrows."

So Chryses prayed. Phoebus Apollo heard him.
He came down from Olympus top enraged,
carrying on his shoulders bow and covered quiver,
his arrows rattling in anger against his arm.
So the god swooped down, descending like the night.
He sat some distance from the ships, shot off an arrow -
the silver bow reverberated ominously.
First, the god massacred mules and swift-running dogs,
then loosed sharp arrows in among the troops themselves.
Thick fires kept burning corpses ceaselessly.

For nine days Apollo rained death down upon the troops.
On the tenth, Achilles summoned an assembly.
White-armed Hera put that thought into his mind,
concerned for the Danaans, seeing them die.
The men gathered. The meeting came to order.
Swift-footed Achilles rose to speak:

"Son of Atreus,
I fear we're being beaten back, forced home,
if we aren't all going to be destroyed right here,
with war and plague killing off Achaeans.
Come now, let's ask some prophet, priest,
interpreter of dreams - for dreams, too, come from Zeus -
a man who might say why Apollo is so angry,
whether he faults our prayers and offerings,
whether somehow he'll welcome sacrificial smoke
from perfect lambs and goats, then rouse himself
and release us from this plague."

Achilles spoke and took his seat.
Then Calchas, Thstor's son, stood up before them all,
the most astute interpreter of birds, who understood
present, future, past. His skill in prophecy,
Apollo's gift, had led Achaean ships to Troy.
He addressed the troops, thinking of their common good:

"Apollo does not fault us for prayers or offerings,
but for his priest, disgraced by Agamemnon,
who did not free his daughter and take ransom.
That's why the archer god has brought disaster,
and will bring still more. He won't remove
this wretched plague from the Danaans,
until we hand back bright-eyed Chryseis,
give her to her beloved father, freely,
without ransom, and offer holy sacrifice
at Chryse. If we will carry out all that,
we may change Apollo's mind, appease him."

So he spoke and sat back down. Then, Atreus' son,
wide ruling, mighty Agamemnon, stood up before them,
incensed, spirit filled with huge black rage.
Eyes blazing fire, he rounded first on Calchas:

"Prophet of evil, when have you ever said
good things to me? You love to predict the worst,
always the worst! You never show good news.
Now, in prophecy to the Danaans,
you say archer Apollo brings us pain
because I was unwilling to accept
fine ransom for Chryses' daughter, Chryseis.
But I have a great desire to take her home.
Still, I'm prepared to give her back, if that's best.
I want the people safe, not all killed off.
But then you'll owe me another prize.
I won't be the only Argive left without a gift.
That would be entirely unfair to me.
You all can see my spoils are going elsewhere."
At that point, swift-footed Achilles answered the king:

"Noble son of Atreus, most acquisitive of men, how can brave Achaeans give you a prize now? There are none left for us to pass around. We've divided up what we allotted, loot from captured towns we devastated. For men to make a common pile again would be most unfair. Send the girl back now, as the god demands. Should Zeus ever grant we pillage Troy, a city rich in goods, we'll give you three or four times as much."

Mighty Agamemnon then said in reply:

"Achilles, you're a fine man, like a god. But don't conceal what's in your heart. You'll not trick me or win me with your words. You intend to keep your prizes for yourself, while the army takes my trophy from me. That's why you tell me to give Chryseis back. Let Achaeans give me another prize, equal in value, something I'll enjoy. If not, then I'll take a prize myself by force, The man I visit is going to be enraged. But let's postpone discussion of all this. Let's drag a black ship down to the sacred sea, select a crew, load oxen on for sacrifice, and Chryseis, that fair-complexioned girl, so with a sacrifice we may appease the god who shoots from far away."

Scowling grimly, swift-footed Achilles interposed:

"You insatiable creature, quite shameless. I didn't come to battle over here because of Trojans. I have no fight with them. They never stole my bulls or horses, or razed my crops in fertile Phthia, where heroes grow. Many shady mountains and the roaring sea stand there between us. But you, great shameless man, we came with you, to please you, to win honour from the Trojans - for you, dog face, and for Menelaus. You don't consider this, don't think at all. You threaten now to confiscate the prize I worked so hard for, gift from Achaea's sons. When we Achaeans loot some well-built Trojan town, my prizes never match the ones you get. The major share of war's fury rests on me. But when we hand around the battle spoils, you get much larger trophies. Worn out in war, I reach my ships with something fine but small. So I'll return home now, back to Phthia."
It's far better to sail back in my curved ships.
I don't fancy staying here unvalued,
to pile up riches, treasures just for you."

To that, Agamemnon, king of men, shot back:

"Fly off home then, if that's your heart's desire.
I'll not beg you to stay on my account.
I have others around to honour me,
especially all-wise Zeus himself.
Of all the kings Zeus cherishes, it's you
I hate the most. You love constant strife -
war and combat. So what if you're strong?
Some god gave you that. So scurry off home.
Take ships and friends. Go rule your Myrmidons.
I don't like you or care about your rage.
But I'll make this threat: I'll take your prize,
fair-cheeked Briseis. I'll fetch her in person.
You'll see just how much I'm the better man.
And others will hate to speak to me as peers,
in public claiming full equality with me."

As Agamemnon spoke, Peleus' son, Achilles,
was overwhelmed with anguish, heart torn two ways,
debating in his shaggy chest what he should do:
Should he draw out the sharp sword on his thigh,
incite the crowd, kill Atreus' son, or suppress his rage,
control his fury? As he argued in his mind and heart,
he slid his huge sword part way from its sheath.
At that moment, Athena came down from heaven.
White-armed Hera sent her. She cherished both men,
cared for them equally. Athena stood behind Achilles,
grabbed him by his red-brown hair, invisible to all
except Achilles. In astonishment he turned.
At once he recognized Pallas Athena,
the dreadful glitter in her eyes. Achilles spoke -
his words had wings.

"Child of aegis-bearing Zeus,
why have you come now?" Do you wish to see
how overbearing Agamemnon is?
I'll tell you where all this is going to lead:
that arrogance will soon cost him his life."

Glittery-eyed Athena then spoke in reply:

"I came down from heaven to curb your passion,
if you obey. White-armed Hera sent me.
She loves you both alike, cares equally.
Give up this quarrel. Don't draw your sword.
Fight him with words, so he becomes disgraced.
For I say to you, and this will happen,
because of Agamemnon's arrogance
some day gifts three times greater than this girl
Swift-footed Achilles answered Athena:

"Goddess, men should follow your instructions, though angry in their hearts. It's better so. The person who's obedient to the gods, the gods attend to all the more."

Obeying Athena's words, Achilles relaxed his huge fist on the silver hilt and pushed the massive sword back in its scabbard. Athena then returned to heaven, home of Zeus, who bears the aegis, and the other gods.

Achilles turned again on Agamemnon, Atreus' son, with harsh abuse, his anger still unabated:

"You drunken sot, dog-eyed coward, timid as deer. A king who gorges on his own people! You lord it over worthless men. If not, son of Atreus, this would be your last offence. I'll tell you, swear a great oath on this point, by this sceptre, which Achaea's sons take in hand whenever they do justice in Zeus' name. An oath on this has power. On this I swear - the time will come when Achaea's sons all miss Achilles, a time when, in distress, you'll lack my help, a time when Hector, that man killer, destroys many warriors. Then grief will tear your hearts apart, because you shamed Achaea's finest man."

So the son of Peleus spoke, throwing to the ground the sceptre with the golden studs. Then he sat down, directly facing furious Agamemnon.

Then Nestor stood up, clear, sweet orator from Pylos. Sweeter than honey the words flowed from his tongue. Concerned about their common good, he said:

"Alas, this is great sorrow for Achaeans. Priam and Priam's children will be glad, the hearts of other Trojans swell with joy, should they find out about such quarreling, a fight between you two, among Danaans the very best for counsel or combat. But listen. You are both younger men than I. And I've been colleague of better men than you, Yet they heard me and followed my advice. So listen, both of you. That's what's best now. Agamemnon, you're an excellent man, but do not take Briseis from Achilles."
Let that pass. Achaea's sons gave her to him first. And you, Peleus's son, don't seek to fight the king, not as your enemy. Son of Atreus, check your anger. Set aside, I urge you, your rage against Achilles, who provides, in the middle of war's evils, a powerful defence for all Achaeans.

Mighty Agamemnon then replied to Nestor:

"Old man, everything you say is true enough. But this man wants to put the rest to shame, rule all of us, lord it over everyone. But some, I think, will not obey him. So what if the gods, who live forever, made him a spearman? Is that some reason we should let him say such shameful things?"

Achilles, interrupting Agamemnon, shouted:

"I'd be called a coward, a nobody, if I held back from any action because of something you might say. Order other men about. Don't tell me what I should do. I'll not obey you any more. But I will tell you this - remember it well - I'll not raise my hand to fight about that girl, no, not against you or any other man. You Achaeans gave her to me, and now, you seize her back again. But you'll not take another thing from my swift black ship - you'll get nothing else with my consent. If you'd like to see what happens, just try. My spear will quickly drip with your dark blood."

Then they stood up, dissolving the assembly by the ships. Agamemnon dragged a swift ship down the shore, chose twenty sailors, loaded it with oxen, offerings for the god, and led on fair-cheeked Chryseis. Shrewd Odysseus shipped on as leader. All aboard, they set off, carving a pathway through the sea.

Atreus' son ordered troops to cleanse themselves. The men bathed in the sea, washed off impurities. They then made sacrificial offerings to Apollo - hundreds of perfect bulls and goats - beside the restless sea. Savory smells curled up amid the smoke high into heaven.

The men thus occupied, Agamemnon did not forget the challenge he'd made earlier to Achilles. He called his heralds, Talthybius and Eurybates:

"Go to Achilles' tent, Peleus's son, take fair-complexioned Briseis by the hand. Bring her to me. If he won't surrender her, I'll come myself in force and take her."
For him that will be a worse disaster."

With these firm orders, he dismissed the men, who moved off, heavy hearted, along the shore of the restless sea. They reached the huts and ships of the Myrmidons. There they found Achilles seated by his hut and his black ship. As he saw them approach, in his heart Achilles sensed their purpose. He called them.

"Cheer up, heralds, messengers for gods and men. Come here. I don't blame you, but Agamemnon. He sends you both here for the girl Briseis. Come, Patroclus, born from Zeus, fetch the girl. Give her to these two men to take away. Let them both witness, before blessed gods, mortal men, and that unfeeling king, if ever there's a need for me again to defend others from a shameful death."

Patroclus did as his dear comrade had requested. He led out fair-cheeked Briseis from the hut and gave her up to be led off. The heralds went back, returning to Achaean ships, Briseis with them, but against her will.

Achilles then, in tears, withdrew from his companions, sat by the shore, staring at the wide gray seas. Stretching out his hands, he cried aloud, praying repeatedly to Thetis, his beloved mother. "Mother, since you gave me life - if only for a while - Olympian Zeus, high thunderer, should give me due honour. But he doesn't grant me even slight respect. For wide-ruling Agamemnon, Atreus' son, has shamed me, has taken away my prize, appropriated it for his own use."

As he said this, he wept. His noble mother heard him from deep within the sea, where she sat by her old father. Quickly she rose up, moving above gray waters, like an ocean mist, and settled down before him, as he wept. She stroked him, then said:

"My child, why these tears? What sorrows weigh down your heart? Tell me, so we'll both know. Don't hide from me what's on your mind.

With a deep groan, swift-footed Achilles then replied."

"Why should I tell you what you know? Heralds came to take away Briseis from my huts, the girl who is my gift from Achaean's sons. So now, if you can, protect your son.
Go to Mount Olympus, implore Zeus,  
if ever you in word or deed have pleased him.  

For often I have heard you boast in father's house  
that you alone of all the deathless gods  
saved Zeus of the dark clouds from disgraceful ruin.  
Clasp his knee, remind him of all that,  
so he'll want to help the Trojans somehow,  
corner Achaeans by the sea, by their ships' prows,  
have them destroyed, so they all enjoy their king,  
so the son of Atreus, wide-ruling Agamemnon,  
himself may see his foolishness, dishonouring  
Achilles, the best of the Achaeans."  

Thetis, shedding tears, answered her son, Achilles:

"O my child, why did I rear you,  
since I brought you up to so much pain?  
But I'll tell these things to thunder-loving Zeus.  
I'll go myself to snow-topped Mount Olympus,  
to see if he will undertake all this.  
Meanwhile, you should sit by your swift ships,  
angry at Achaeans. Take no part in war.  
I'll go to Zeus' bronze-floored house, clasp his knee.  
I think I'll get him to consent."

Thetis spoke.  
Then she went away, leaving Achilles there.

Odysseus sailed to Chryse, bringing with him  
the sacrificial animals as sacred offerings.  
When they had sailed into deep anchorage,  
they took in the sails and stowed them in the ship,  
than rowed the ship in to its mooring place.  
Then Chryseis disembarked from the ocean ship.  
Resourceful Odysseus led her to the altar,  
placed her in her beloved father's hands, then said:

"Chryses, I have been sent by Agamemnon,  
ruler of men, to bring your daughter to you,  
and then, on behalf of the Danaans,  
to make an offering to lord Apollo -  
all these sacrificial beasts - to placate the god,  
who now inflicts such dismal evil on us."

Raising his arms, Chryses prayed out loud on their behalf:

"Hear me, god of the silver bow, protector  
of Chryse, mighty lord of holy Cilla,  
sacred Tenedos. You heard me earlier,  
when I prayed to you. Just as you honoured me,  
striking hard against Achaeans then, so now,  
grant me what I pray for - remove disaster,  
this wretched evil, from the Danaans."

So Chryses spoke. Phoebus Apollo heard him.
Meanwhile, Achilles, divinely born son of Peleus, sat down in anger alongside his swift ships. Not once did he attend assembly where men win glory, or go out to fight. But he pined away at heart, remaining idle by his ships, yearning for the hue and cry and clash of battle.

Thetis did not forget the promise to her son. She rose up through the ocean waves at day break, then moved high up to great Olympus. She found Zeus, wide-seeing son of Cronos, some distance from the rest, seated on the highest peak of many-ridged Olympus. She sat down right in front of him. With her left hand, she clutched his knees, with her right she cupped his chin, in supplication to lord Zeus, son of Cronos:

"Father Zeus, if, among the deathless gods, I've ever served you well in word or deed, then grant my prayer will be fulfilled. Bring honour to my son, who, of all men will be Fate's quickest victim. For just now, Agamemnon, king of men, has shamed him. He seized his prize, robbing him in person, and kept it for himself. But honour him, Zeus, all-wise Olympian. Give the Trojans the upper hand, until Achaeans respect my son, until they multiply his honours."

Cloud gatherer Zeus, greatly troubled, said:

"A nasty business. What you say will set Hera against me. She provokes me so with her abuse. Even now, in the assembly of immortal gods, she's always insulting me, accusing me of favouring the Trojans in the war. But go away for now, in case Hera catches on. I'll take care of this, make sure it comes to pass. Come, to convince you, I'll nod my head. Among gods that's the strongest pledge I make. Once I nod my assent, nothing I say can be revoked, denied, or unfulfilled."

Zeus, son of Cronos, nodded his dark brows. The divine hair on the king of gods fell forward, down over his immortal head, shaking Olympus to its very base. The conference over, the two parted. Thetis plunged from bright Olympus back into the sea.

[At a meeting of the gods, Zeus quarrels with Hera, who has guessed what Zeus has just promised to do for Thetis. Hephaestus soothes everyone. The gods enjoy a rich feast and then retire to bed.]
Agamemnon's Dream

[During the night Zeus tricks Agamemnon by sending him a false dream promising him victory over the Trojans and urging him to lead his troops to battle. Agamemnon gets up determined to follow what the dream has told him.]

When goddess Dawn rose high up on Olympus, bringing light to Zeus and the immortals, Agamemnon bid the loud-voiced heralds summon all the long-haired Achaeans to assembly. Such a call went out. Men answered on the run. But first, Agamemnon convened a meeting of all his great-hearted senior counselors. They met by Nestor's ships, king born on Pylos. Agamemnon spoke to the assembled group:

"My friends, listen.
A divine Dream has just come to me, 10
through the sacred night, as I lay asleep,
in form, size, and voice just like worthy Nestor.
He stood above my head and spoke these words:

'Hear what I have to say. I come to you
as Zeus' messenger, with his orders.
He bids you quickly arm long-haired Achaeans,
for now you can take Troy, city of wide streets.
Immortal gods who dwell on Mount Olympus
no longer disagree about all this.
Hera's entreaties have persuaded them.
The Trojans can expect from Zeus more sorrows,
more disasters. Remember what I've said.'

"With that, Dream flew off, sweet Sleep released me.
Come, then, let's get long-haired Achaeans
somehow armed for battle."

Agamemnon finished speaking and sat back down.

Nestor stood up before them, king of sandy Pylos. With a wise sense of their common cause, he addressed them:

"My friends, chiefs and leaders of the Argives,
if any other Achaean had told us such a dream, 30
we would declare it quite false, dismiss it.
But now the man who has a claim to be
the greatest of Achaeans has witnessed it.
So come, let's find a way to arm Achaea's sons."

So Nestor spoke. Then he began to make his way back, leaving the council meeting. The others stood up, all sceptre-bearing kings, following Nestor's lead, his people's shepherd. Troops came streaming out to them.
Just as dense clouds of bees pour out in endless swarms from hollow rocks, in clusters flying to spring flowers, charging off in all directions, so from ships and huts the many clans rushed out to meet, group after group. Among the troops Rumour blazed, Zeus' messenger, igniting them. The assembly was in uproar.

[The Achaean assembly finally grows quiet and waits for the leaders to speak.]

But a single man kept on yelling out abuse - scurrilous Thersites, expert in various insults, vulgar terms for inappropriate attacks on kings, whatever he thought would make the Argives laugh. Of all the men who came to Troy, he was the ugliest: bow legged, one crippled foot, rounded shoulders curving in toward his chest. On top, his pointed head sprouted thin, scraggly tufts of hair. Achilles hated him, as did Odysseus, too, both subject to his taunts. But now Agamemnon was the target of his gibes.

"Son of Atreus, what's your problem now? What do you lack? Your huts are stuffed with bronze, plenty of choice women, too - all presents we Achaeans give you as our leader, whenever we ransack some city. Or are you in need of still more gold, a ransom fetched by some horse-taming Trojan for his son tied up and delivered here by me or by some other Achaean? Or do you want a young girl to stash away, so you can screw her all by yourself? It's just not fair that you, our leader, have botched things up so badly for us, Let's sail home in our ships, leave this man, our king, in Troy here to enjoy his loot."

Once he stopped, noble Odysseus stood up quickly, confronting Thersites. Scowling, he lashed out sternly:

"Shut up, chatterbox. You're a champion talker. But don't try to have it out with kings. I'll tell you how things are going to be. If I find you being so foolish any more, then let Odysseus' head no longer stay upon his shoulders, let him no longer be called the father of Telemachus, if I don't grab you, rip off all your clothes, cloak and tunic, down to your cock and balls, and beat you back to the fast ships in tears, whipping you in shame from our assembly."

Saying this, Odysseus lashed out with the sceptre, hitting Thersites hard across his back and shoulders. He doubled up in pain, shedding many tears.
In the middle of Thersites' back sprang up bloody welts beneath the golden sceptre. He sat down, afraid and hurt, peering around, like an idiot, and rubbing away his tears. The soldiers, though discontent, laughed uproariously.

Then Nestor, the Geranian horseman, cried out:

"Son of Atreus, you must maintain with force your previous plan to lead the Argive troops directly to the harsh demands of war. And let those one or two be damned, the men who don't think like Achaeans, the few of them who yearn to go back home - something they'll find impossible to do."

Mighty Agamemnon then answered Nestor:

"Old man, in our assembly once again you win out over all Achaea's sons. O father Zeus, Athena, and Apollo - if I only had ten such counselors among Achaeans, king Priam's city would soon fall. But let's go off to eat, so we can resume the fight. Every one of you, get your spears and shields prepared for action. Feed your swift-footed horses properly. Inspect the chariots with a careful eye, so we can stand all day and battle Ares, hateful god of war. We'll get no respite, not even for a moment, except at dusk, when nightfall separates the frenzied soldiers. But if I see a man coming out to fight reluctantly, hanging back by our curved ships, he'll not escape being food for dogs and birds."

Argives answered Agamemnon with a mighty roar, like waves by a steep cliff crashing on the rock face, lashed by South Wind's blasts, always foaming on the rock, whipped on by every wind gusting here and there. The men leapt up, moved off, scattering to ships, set fires by their huts, and each man ate his dinner.

Every man then sacrificed to the immortal gods, praying to escape death and war's killing zone. Agamemnon, king of men, sacrificed an ox, a fat one, five years old, to Zeus, exalted son of Cronos. He summoned the best senior men of all Achaeans. Then Agamemnon prayed on their behalf:

"Most powerful Zeus, exalted lord of thunder clouds, Zeus, who dwells in heaven, grant my prayer - May the sun not go down, nor darkness come,
before I have cast down Priam's palace,
covered it with dust, destroyed its doors
in all-consuming fire, and with my bronze sword
sliced to shreds the tunic on Hector's chest.
May many of his comrades lie beside him,
face down on the ground, teeth grinding dirt."

So he prayed. But Cronos' son did not grant his wish.
Zeus took the offering but increased their suffering.

Once the men had prayed, scattering barley grain,
they pulled back the beast's head, slit its throat, flayed it,
sliced thigh bones out and hid them in twin layers of fat,
with raw meat on top. They cooked these on split wood,
then placed the innards on spits in Hephaestus' fire.
When the wrapped-up thigh bones were completely cooked,
and they'd tasted samples of the inner organs,
they chopped up the rest, arranged the meat on spits,
cooked it carefully, then drew it from the fire.
This work finished, the men prepared a meal and ate.
Each soldier's appetite was fully satisfied -
all dined equally. When every man had eaten
as much food and drink as anyone could wish,
Geranian horseman Nestor was the first to speak.

"Lord Agamemnon, son of Atreus,
king of men, let's end our discussions now,
and not postpone work given by the gods.
Come, let heralds of bronze-clad Achaeans
summon all the soldiers to assembly.
Let's move together across the wide front,
to stir Achaea's men with blood-lust for this war."

Agamemnon, king of men, agreed with Nestor.
He ordered clear-voiced heralds immediately
to sound the battle call to long-haired Achaeans.
The call went out. Troops assembled on the run.
Around Agamemnon, kings nurtured by the gods
rushed to establish order. With them strode Athena,
her eyes glittering, holding up the aegis -
her priceless, ageless, eternal aegis,
its hundred golden tassels quivering,
each finely woven, valued at a hundred oxen.
With this, she sped on through Achaean ranks,
like lightning, firing soldiers' hearts for war.
As she passed, she roused in men that hot desire
to fight, to kill. At once she made each man feel war
far sweeter than returning home, finer than sailing
in the hollow ships back to his dear native land.
Just as an all-consuming fire burns through huge forests
on a mountain top, and men far off can see its light,
so, as soldiers marched out, their glittering bronze
blazed through the sky to heaven, an amazing sight.
Then wind-swift Iris came to Troy as messenger from aegis-bearing Zeus carrying grim news. Trojans had summoned an assembly by Priam's palace gates. There all had gathered, young and old. Standing by Priam, swift-footed Iris spoke, sounding like Polites, Priam's son.

"Hector, I call on you, on you above all, to follow my instructions - the numerous allies here in Priam's great city all speak different languages from far-scattered regions. So let each man issue orders to the ones he leads, let him now organize his countrymen, then lead them out to battle."

Iris spoke. Hector understood her words. Immediately he ended the assembly. Men rushed to arm themselves. They opened up the gates. Troops streamed out, infantry and horses. A huge din arose. In the plain, some distance off, a high hill stood by itself. Here the Trojans and their allies marshaled forces.

Book Three

Paris and Helen

Once troops had formed in ranks under their own leaders, Trojans marched out, clamouring like birds, like cranes screeching overhead, when winter's harsh storms drive them off, screaming as they move over the flowing Ocean, bearing death and destruction to the Pygmies, launching their savage attack on them at dawn. Achaeans came on in silence, breathing ferocity, determined to stand by each other in the fight.

Then godlike Paris stepped out, as Trojan champion. Brandishing two bronze-tipped spears, he challenged the best men in the whole Achaean force to fight - a single combat, to the death. War-loving Menelaus noticed Alexander striding there, and he rejoiced. Menelaus was pleased to see Paris there, right before his eyes. Menelaus had in mind taking revenge on the man who'd injured him. When godlike Alexander saw Menelaus there, he moved back into the ranks, among his comrades. Seeing this, Hector went at Alexander, insulting him:

"Despicable Paris, handsomest of men, but woman-mad seducer. How I wish you never had been born or died unmarried."

[The Achaeans march out in formation. The text lists the origin, the size, and the leadership of each contingent]

[The forces of the Trojan and their allies are listed at length]
That's what I'd prefer, so much better than to live in shame. Can you now not face Menelaus? If so, you'd learn the kind of man he is whose wife you took. You'd get no help then from your lyre, long hair, good looks - Aphrodite's gifts - once face down, lying in the dirt. Trojans must be timid men. If not, for all the evil things you've done by now you'd wear a garment made of stones."

To Hector godlike Alexander then replied:

"Hector, you're right in what you say against me. Those complaints of yours are not unjustified. The spirit in your chest is fearless. But don't blame me for golden Aphrodite's lovely gifts. Men can't reject fine presents from the gods, those gifts they personally bestow on us, though no man would take them of his own free will. You want me now to go to battle. Then get the others to sit down - Trojans and Achaeans. Put me and war-loving Menelaus in their midst to fight it out for Helen."

So Paris spoke. Hearing those words, Hector felt great joy. He went to the middle ground, between the armies, halted Trojan troops, grasping the centre of his spear shaft. Hector then addressed both sides:

"You Trojans, you well-armed Achaeans, listen now to what Paris has to say, the man whose actions brought about our fight. He bids the other Trojans, all Achaeans, set their weapons on the fertile ground. He and war-loving Menelaus here will fight it out alone between the armies for Helen and for all her property. Whichever one comes out victorious, the stronger man, let him seize all the goods, and take the woman as his wife back home. Let others swear a solemn oath as friends."

So Hector spoke. The soldiers all grew silent. Then Menelaus, loud in war, answered Hector:

"Listen now to me. More than anyone, my heart has suffered pain. So now I think Argives and Trojans should part company, since you have suffered many hardships, thanks to the fight between myself and Paris, a fight that he began. Whichever one of us death takes, our fate, let that man perish. You others quickly go your separate ways."
Then Iris came as messenger to white-armed Helen. Standing near by, swift-footed Iris said:

"Come here, dear girl.
Look at the amazing things going on.
Horse-taming Trojans and bronze-clad Achaeans,
men who earlier were fighting one another
in wretched war out there on the plain,
both keen for war's destruction, are sitting still.
Alexander and war-loving Menelaus
are going to fight for you with their long spears.
The man who triumphs will call you his dear wife."

With these words the goddess set in Helen's heart sweet longing for her former husband, city, parents. Covering herself with a white shawl, she left the house, shedding tears. She did not go alone, but took with her two attendants. They soon reached the Scaean Gates. Priam was sitting there. He called out to Helen.

"Come here, dear child. Sit down in front of me, so you can see your first husband, your friends, your relatives. As far as I'm concerned, it's not your fault. For I blame the gods. They drove me to wage this wretched war against Achaeans. Tell me, who's that large man, over there, that impressive, strong Achaean? Others may be taller by a head than him, but I've never seen with my own eyes such a striking man, so noble, so like a king."

Then Helen, goddess among women, said to Priam:

"My dear father-in-law, whom I respect and honour, how I wish I'd chosen an evil death when I came here with your son, leaving behind my married home, companions, darling child, and friends my age. But things didn't work that way. So I weep all the time. But to answer you, that man is wide-ruling Agamemnon, son of Atreus, a good king, fine fighter, and once he was my brother-in-law, if that life was ever real. I'm such a whore."

The old man then spied Odysseus and asked:

"Dear child, come tell me who this man is, shorter by a head than Agamemnon, son of Atreus. But he looks broader in his shoulders and his chest. His armour's stacked there on the fertile earth, but he strides on, marching through men's ranks just like a ram moving through large white multitudes of sheep. Yes, a woolly ram, that's what he seems to me."
Helen, child of Zeus, then answered Priam:

"That man is Laertes' son, crafty Odysseus, raised in rocky Ithaca. He's well versed in all sorts of tricks, deceptive strategies."

Priam, the old man, saw a third figure, Ajax, and asked:

"Who is that other man? He's over there - that huge, burly Achaeian - his head and shoulders tower over the Achaeans."

Then Helen, long-robed goddess among women, answered:

"That's massive Ajax, Achaea's bulwark. Across from him stands Idomeneus, surrounded by his Cretans, like a god. Around him there stand the Cretan leaders. Often war-loving Menelaus welcomed him in our house, whenever he arrived from Crete. Now I see all the bright-eyed Achaeans whom I know well, whose names I could recite. But I can't see two of the men's leaders, Castor, tamer of horses, and Pollux, the fine boxer - they are both my brothers, whom my mother bore along with me. Either they did not come with the contingent from lovely Lacedaemon, or they sailed here in their seaworthy ships, but have no wish to join men's battles, fearing the disgrace, the many slurs, which are justly mine."

Helen spoke. But the life-nourishing earth already held her brothers in Lacedaemon, in their own dear native land.

[Both sides participate in a sacrifice and prayers before the single combat]

Then Hector, Priam's son, and lord Odysseus first measured out the ground, took lots, and shook them up in a bronze helmet, to see who'd throw his bronze spear first. Then every Trojan and Achaean held up his hands, praying to the gods:

"Father Zeus, ruling from Mount Ida, mighty, all-powerful, of these two men, let the one who brought this war to both sides be killed and then go down to Hades' house. And grant our oath of friendship will hold firm."

So they prayed. Hector of the flashing helmet turned his eyes to one side and shook out the lots. Alexander's token fell out immediately. When the two men, standing on each side with their troops,
had armed themselves, they strode out to the open space between the Trojans and Achaeans, staring ferociously. The two men approached each other over measured ground, brandishing their spears in mutual fury. Alexander was the first to hurl his spear. It struck Menelaus' shield, a perfect circle, but the bronze did not break through, the point deflected by the powerful shield. Then Menelaus, Atreus' son, threw in his turn. First he made this prayer to Zeus:

"Lord Zeus, grant I may be revenged on this man, who first committed crimes against me, lord Alexander. Let him die at my hands, so generations of men yet to come will dread doing wrong to anyone who welcomes them into his home as friends."

Menelaus then drew back his long-shadowed spear, and hurled it. It hit the son of Priam's shield, a perfect circle. The heavy spear pierced through it, went straight through the fine body armour, through the shirt which covered Alexander's naked flesh. But Paris twisted to the side, evading a black fate. Pulling out his silver-studded sword, the son of Atreus raised it and struck the crest of Paris' helmet. But the sword shattered into three or four pieces, falling from his hand. The son of Atreus, in vexation, looked up into the wide heavens, crying out:

"Father Zeus, what god brings us more trouble than you do? I thought I was paying Alexander for his wickedness, but now my sword has shattered in my fist, while from my hand my spear has flown in vain. I haven't hit him."

As Menelaus said these words, he sprang forward, grabbing the horse hair crest on Paris' helmet, twisting him around. He began dragging Paris off, back in the direction of well-armed Achaeans. The fine leather strap stretched round Paris' soft neck, right below his chin, was strangling him to death. At that point Menelaus would've hauled back Paris and won unending fame, if Aphrodite, Zeus' daughter, had not had sharp eyes. Her force broke the ox-hide strap, leaving Menelaus clutching in his massive hands an empty helmet. Whipping it around, Menelaus hurled the helmet in among well-armed Achaeans. His loyal companions retrieved it. He charged back, with his bronze spear, intent on killing Alexander. But Aphrodite had snatched Paris up - for a god an easy feat - concealed him in a heavy mist, and placed him in his own sweetly scented bedroom.
Then Aphrodite went to summon Helen.
She found her on the high tower, in a crowd
among the Trojan women. She clutched Helen
by her perfumed dress, twitched it, then addressed her,
in the form of an old woman, a wool carder,
someone who used to live in Lacedaemon,
producing fine wool, a woman Helen really liked.
In this shape, divine Aphrodite spoke to Helen:

"Alexander is asking you to come back home.
He's in the bedroom, on the carved out bed,
his beauty and his garments glistening.
You wouldn't think he's just come from some fight.
He looks as if he's going to a dance,
or if he's sitting down right after dancing."

Aphrodite spoke, stirring emotion in Helen's heart.
Noticing the goddess' lovely neck, enticing breasts,
her glittering eyes, Helen was astonished.

"Goddess, why do you wish to deceive me so?
Are you going to take me still further off,
to some well populated city somewhere
in Phrygia or beautiful Maeonia,
because you're in love with some mortal man
and Menelaus has just beaten Paris
and wants to take me, a despised woman,
back home with him? Is that why you're here,
you and your devious trickery?
Why don't you go with Paris by yourself,
stop walking around here like a goddess,
stop directing your feet toward Olympus,
and lead a miserable life with him,
caring for him, until he makes you his wife
or slave. I won't go to him in there -
that would be shameful, serving him in bed.
Every Trojan woman would revile me afterwards.
Besides, my heart is hurt enough already."

Divine Aphrodite, angry at Helen, answered her:

"Don't provoke me, you obstinate girl.
I might lose my temper, abandon you,
and hate you just as much as I have loved you.
I could make Trojans and Danaans hate you, too.
Then you'd suffer death in misery."

Aphrodite spoke. Helen, born from Zeus, was too afraid.
She covered herself in her soft white linen shawl,
went off in silence, unnoticed by all the Trojan women.
With goddess Aphrodite in the lead,
they came to Alexander's lovely house.
There the attendants quickly set about their work.
Helen, goddess among women, went to her room upstairs,
where laughter-loving goddess Aphrodite
picked up a chair and carried it for Helen.
She placed it facing Paris. Helen, child of Zeus,
who bears the aegis, sat down. With eyes averted,
she began to criticize her husband:

"You've come back from the fight. How I wish
you'd died there, killed by that strong warrior
who was my husband once. You used to boast
you were stronger than warlike Menelaus,
more strength in your hands, more power in your spear.
So go now, challenge war-loving Menelaus
to fight again in single combat.
I'd suggest you stay away. Don't fight it out
man to man with red-haired Menelaus,
without further thought. You might well die,
come to a quick end on his spear."

Replying to Helen, Paris said:

"Wife,
don't mock my courage with your insults.
Yes, Menelaus has just defeated me,
but with Athena's help. Next time I'll beat him.
For we have gods on our side, too. But come,
let's enjoy our love together on the bed.
Never has desire so filled my mind as now,
not even when I first took you away
from lovely Lacedaemon, sailing off
in our sea-worthy ships, or when I lay with you
in our lover's bed on the isle of Cranae.
That's how sweet passion has seized hold of me,
how much I want you now."

Paris finished speaking.
He led the way to bed. His wife went, too.
The two lay down together on the bed.

Atreus' son paced through the crowd, like a wild beast,
searching for some glimpse of godlike Alexander.
But no Trojan nor any of their famous allies
could reveal Alexander to warlike Menelaus.
If they'd seen him, they had no desire to hide him.
For they all hated Paris, as they hated gloomy death.
Agamemnon, king of men, addressed them:

"Listen to me, Trojans, Dardanians, allies -
victory clearly falls to war-loving Menelaus.
So give back Argive Helen and her property,
compensate us with a suitable amount,
something future ages will all talk about."

As he finished speaking, the other Achaeans cheered.
Book Four

The Armies Clash

The gods all sat assembled in the golden courtyard, with Zeus there, too. Gracious Hebe went among them, pouring nectar. They toasted each other in golden cups, as they looked out on Troy. Then Zeus, son of Cronos, wishing to irk Hera with a sarcastic speech, addressed them:

"Why don't we discuss how this warfare is going to finish up - whether we should re-ignite harsh combat, this horrific strife, or make both sides friends. If this second option pleases all of us, if we find it sweet, then king Priam's city remains inhabited, and Menelaus takes Argive Helen home with him."

Athena and Hera sat together muttering, plotting trouble for the Trojans. Angry at Zeus, her father, Athena sat there silently, so enraged she didn't say a word. But Hera, unable to contain her anger, burst out:

"Most fearful son of Cronos, what are you saying? How can you wish to undermine my efforts, prevent them from achieving anything? What about the sweat which dripped from me, as I worked so hard, wearing my horses out, gathering men to wipe out Priam and his children. Go ahead then. But all we other gods do not approve of what you're doing."

Then cloud-gatherer Zeus, irritated, said to her:

"Dear wife, what sort of crimes have Priam or Priam's children committed against you, that you should be so vehemently keen to destroy that well-built city Ilion? Do as you wish. We shouldn't make this matter something you and I later squabble over, a source of major disagreements. But I'll tell you this - keep it in mind. Whenever I get the urge to wipe out some city whose inhabitants you love, don't try to thwart me. Let me have my way. I'll give in to you freely, though unwillingly. For of all towns inhabited by earth's peoples, under the sun, beneath the heavenly stars, sacred Ilion, with Priam and his people, expert spearmen, stands dearest in my heart. My altar there has always shared their feasts,
with libations and sacrificial smoke, 
offerings we get as honours due to us."

Ox-eyed Hera then said in reply to Zeus:

"The three cities I love the best by far 
are Argos, Sparta, and Mycenae, 
city of wide streets. Destroy them utterly, 
if you ever hate them in your heart. 
But my own work must not be wasted, 
worth nothing. I'm a god, the same race as you - 
I'm crooked-minded Cronos' eldest daughter. 
Another thing - in addition to my birth - 
I'm called your wife, and you rule all immortals. 
In this matter, then, let's both support 
each other's wishes - you mine, I yours. 
Other gods will follow our example. 
Instruct Athena to go immediately 
where Trojans and Achaeans carry on 
their bitter conflict. There she should try 
to get the Trojans to break their oaths first, 
by harming the glorious Achaeans."

Hera spoke. The father of gods and men agreed. 
He spoke up to Athena - his words had wings. 

"Go quickly to the Trojan and Achaean troops. 
Try to get the Trojans to break their oaths first, 
by injuring the glorious Achaeans."

Zeus' words stirred up Athena's earlier desires. 
She darted from Olympus summit, sped off, 
like a comet sent by crooked-minded Cronos' son. 
Athena went down into the Trojan crowd, 
looking like Laodocus, Antenor's son, 
a strong spearman, seeking godlike Pandarus. 
She met Pandarus, Lycaon's powerful son, 
a fine man, standing there with his sturdy regiment, 
Standing near him, Athena spoke. Her words had wings. 

"Fiery hearted son of Lycaon, 
why not do as I suggest? Prepare yourself 
to shoot a swift arrow at Menelaus. 
You'd earn thanks and glory from all Trojans, 
most of all from prince Alexander. 
He'd be the very first to bring fine gifts, 
if he could see warlike Menelaus, 
son of Atreus, mounted on his bier, 
his bitter funeral pyre, killed by your arrow. 
So come, then, shoot an arrow at him."

Athena spoke and thus swayed his foolish wits. 
Pandarus strung the bow, then set it on the ground. 
Then, removing the cover from his quiver,
Pandarus took out an arrow, a fresh-winged courier bearing dark agony. Next he quickly set the keen arrow on the string, swearing an oath to the archer god, Lycian-born Apollo, that he would make splendid sacrifice, first-born lambs, when he got back to his city, holy Zaleia. Gripping the arrow notch, the ox-gut bowstring, he pulled back, drawing the string right to his nipple, iron arrow head against the bow. Once he'd bent that great bow into a circle, the bow twanged, the string sang out, the sharp-pointed arrow flew away, eager to bury itself in crowds of men. But, Menelaus, the immortal sacred gods did not forget you. Athena, Zeus' daughter, goddess of war's spoils, was first to stand before you, to ward off the piercing arrow - she brushed it from your skin, just as a mother brushes a fly off her child while he lies sweetly sleeping. Athena led the arrow to the spot where the gold buckles on the belt rest on the joint in the double body armour. The keen arrow dug into the leather strap, passed right through the finely decorated belt, through the richly embossed armour, the body mail, his most powerful guard, worn to protect his flesh, by blocking spears and arrows. The arrow pierced it, going through that mail, and grazed the skin of Menelaus. Dark blood at once came flowing from the wound.

When Agamemnon saw dark blood flowing from the wound, that king of men shuddered. Mighty Agamemnon, taking Menelaus by the hand, with a bitter groan, spoke to his companions, all grieving with him:

"Dear brother, that oath I swore to was your death - letting you step forward to fight Trojans, as Achaea's champion. For now the Trojans have shot you, walking roughshod on their oaths, that treaty they swore to in good faith. But, Menelaus, I'll be in dreadful pain on your account, if you die, if fate now ends your life, if I return to arid Argos totally disgraced. Your bones will lie rotting here in Trojan soil, recalling the work we failed to finish. Then some arrogant Trojan, leaping up onto the tomb of famous Menelaus, will shout: 'May Agamemnon's anger always end like this. His Achaean army he brought here in vain. He returned home, back to his native land in empty ships, abandoning courageous Menelaus.' That's what he'll say. Before that day I hope the broad earth will lie over me!"

Then Menelaus, to cheer up Agamemnon, said:
"Take courage. Don't upset Achaeans. 
This sharp arrow is not a fatal hit. 
My gleaming belt protected me on top, 
as did my body chain mail underneath, 
forged in bronze."

While the Achaeans 
were looking after Menelaus, Trojan ranks advanced, 
shields ready, once more armed with all their weapons, 
fully charged with passionate desire for battle. 150

Just as thundering ocean surf crashes on the sand, 
wave after wave, driven by the West Wind's power, 
one wave rising at sea, then booming down on shore, 
arching in crests and crashing down among the rocks, 
spewing salt foam, so then Danaan ranks, 
row after row, moved out, spirits firmly set on war. 
Each leader issued his own orders to his men. 
The rest marched on in silence. You'd never think 
such a huge army could move out and keep its voice 
buried in those chests, in silent fear of their commanders. 160 
As they marched, the polished armour on them glittered. 

As for the Trojans, they were like thousands of ewes 
standing in a rich man's farm, bleating constantly, 
waiting for someone to come and collect white milk, 
as they hear lambs call. Just like that, the din rose up 
throughout the widespread Trojan force. They shared no words - 
they had no common language, but mixtures of tongues, 
with men from many lands. Ares urged the Trojans on, 
while bright-eyed Athena kept rousing the Achaeans. 
With them came Terror, Fear, and tireless Strife, 
sister and companion of man-destroying Ares - 
at first small in stature, she later grows enormous, 
head reaching heaven, as she strides across the earth. 
Strife went through crowds of soldiers, casting hatred 
on both sides equally, multiplying human miseries. 170

When the two armies came to one common ground, 
they smashed into each other - shields, spears, fierce angry men 
encased in bronze. Studded shields bashed one another. 
A huge din arose - human cries of grief and triumph, 
those killing and those killed. Earth flowed with blood. 180

Antilochus was the first to kill a man - 
a well armed Trojan warrior, Echepolus, 
son of Thalysius, a courageous man, 
who fought in the front ranks. He hit his helmet crest, 
topped with horsehair plumes, spearing his forehead. 
The bronze point smashed through the frontal bone. 
Darkness hid his eyes and he collapsed, like a tower, 
falling down into that frenzied battle. As he fell, 
powerful Elephenor, son of Chalcodon, 
courageous leader of the Abantes, seized his feet
and started pulling him beyond the range of weapons, eager to strip him of his armour quickly.

But Elephenor's attempt did not go on for long. Great-hearted Agenor saw him drag the dead man. He stabbed Elephenor with his bronze spear, right in his exposed side, where his shield left him vulnerable as he bent down. His limbs gave way, as his spirit left him. Over his dead body, Trojans and Achaeans kept fighting grimly on, attacking like wolves, man whirling against man. 200

Then Ajax, son of Telamon, hit Simoeisius, Anthemion's son, a fine young warrior.

He was born on the banks of the river Simoeis, while his mother was coming down Mount Ida, accompanying her parents to watch their flocks. That's why the people called him Simoeisius.

But he did not repay his fond parents for raising him. His life was cut short on great Ajax's deadly spear.

As he was moving forward with the men in front, Ajax struck him in the chest, by the right nipple. 210

The bronze spear went clean through his shoulder. He collapsed in the dust, like a poplar tree, one growing in a large well-watered meadow, from whose smooth trunk the branches grow up to the top, until a chariot builder's bright axe topples it, bends the wood, to make wheel rims for a splendid chariot, letting the wood season by the riverbank.

Death then came to Diores, son of Amarynceus.

He was hit by a jagged rock on his right shin, beside the ankle. It was thrown by Peirous, captain of Thracians. The cruel rock crushed both tendons and the bone. He fell onto his back down in the dust. There he reached out with both hands for his companions. His spirit left his body with each gasp he took. Peirous, who'd thrown the rock, ran up and speared his gut. His bowels spilled out onto the ground. Darkness hid his eyes.

As Peirous moved off, Thoas, an Aetolian, hit him, his spear striking him above the nipple. The bronze spear point bit into his lungs. Thoas moved in to close quarters, pulled the heavy spear out from his chest, drew his sharp sword, 230 then drove it straight into the middle of his belly, destroying Peirous' life. But Thoas couldn't strip the armour off. For Peirous' companions, Thracian men, whose hair is piled atop their heads, rallied round, holding out long spears, forcing Thoas away from them. Thoas was big, strong, and brave, but he fell back, shaken. And so those two warriors lay stretched out in the dirt beside each other - one Thracian chief, one captain of bronze-clad Epeians. And many other men lay dead around them. 240
Book Five

The Battle Continues

Danaans then began to push the Trojans back.
Each leader killed his enemy. First, Agamemnon, king of men, threw huge Odious, chief of the Halizoni, from his chariot. His spear first struck him in the back, between the shoulder blades, as he turned to flee. It drove clean through his chest. Odious pitched forward with a thud, his armour rattling round him as he fell.
Idomeneus slaughtered Phaestus, son of Borus, a Meonian, who'd come from fertile Tarne.
With his long spear, skilful Idomeneus struck him in his right shoulder, as he climbed in his chariot.
Dreadful darkness came and gathered Phaestus in.
Those attending Idomeneus stripped the armour.
Then with his sharp spear Menelaus, son of Atreus, killed Scamandrius, son of Strophius, a huntsman.
Artemis herself had taught him how to shoot every animal raised in the mountain forests.
But archer Artemis was no help to him then, no more than was his expertise in archery, at which he'd been pre-eminent in former times.

Meriones then killed Phereclus, son of Tecton, Harmon's son, whose hands could make fine objects of all sorts.
Pallas Athena had a special love for him.
He was the one who'd made well-balanced ships for Paris at the start of all the trouble, bringing disaster on the Trojans and on Paris, too, for he was ignorant of what gods had decreed.
Meriones went after Phereclus as he ran off, hurled his spear straight into his right buttock.
The spear point pushed on through, below the bone, piercing his bladder. He fell down on his knees, screaming. Then death carried him into its shadows.

Then Meges killed Pedaeus, Antenor's bastard son. Theano had raised him with all care, loving him as one of her own children, to please her husband.
That famous spearman Meges, son of Phyleus, coming up close, drove a sharp spear in his neck, into the nape behind his head. The bronze point, slicing under his tongue, smashed through his teeth.
He fell into the dust, jaws locked on the cold bronze.

Eurypylus, Euaemon's son, killed lord Hypsenor, son of proud Dolopion, Scamander's priest, a man honoured by his people as a god.
Eurypylus, Euaemon's splendid son, caught him as he ran off in front of him. Going quickly after him, Eurypylus struck at Hypsenor's shoulder - his sharp sword sliced off Hypsenor's brawny arm.
Then the two Ajaxes, Odysseus, and Diomedes roused Danaans, urging them to battle. They did not fear the Trojans' powerful attack and stood their ground like clouds set in place by Zeus, son of Cronos, above a range of mountain peaks on a windless day, quite motionless, while the force of North Wind and other raging blasts is sound asleep. When these storm winds blow, they scatter shadowy clouds.

That's the way Danaans held their positions then, without flinching, without fear. The son of Atreus moved through the troops and gave out many orders.

"My friends, be men. Let courage fill your hearts. In the heat of battle remember honour, each man's reputation. When men recall their honour, more troops are saved than slaughtered. Those who run away lose life and fame."

Agamemnon spoke, then quickly hurled his spear.

Antilochus and Menelaus then killed Pylaemenes, a man like Ares, leader of the Paphlagonians, great-hearted, shield-bearing men. The son of Atreus, famous spearman Menelaus, struck him, as he stood up in his chariot, hitting him right on his collar bone. Antilochus hit Mydon, Atymnii's noble son, the attendant driver, as he was wheeling his sure-footed horses round. He struck him with a rock square on the elbow.

The reins, decorated with rich ivory, fell from his hands onto the dusty ground. Antilochus sprang out and with his sword struck Mydon on the temple. Gasping with pain, Mydon pitched over, and tumbled from the well-made chariot headfirst, his head and shoulders disappearing in the dirt. For some time he stayed stuck, buried in deep sand, until his horses kicked him flat, level with the dust, stamping him into the ground, as Antilochus whipped them on, leading them back to Achaean troops.

[The fighting continues. Hector rallies the Trojans. The Lycian leader Sarpedon is wounded. Diomedes, with Athena's help, wounds the god Ares and sends him from the battle.]

---

**Book Six**

**Hector and Andromache**
Now the grim war between Trojans and Achaeans was left to run its course. The battle raged, this way and that, across the entire plain, as warriors hurled bronze-tipped spears at one another, between the Simoeis and Xanthus rivers.

Ajax, son of Telamon, Achaea's tower of strength, was the first to break through ranks of Trojans, punching out some breathing room for his companions. He hit Acamas, son of Eussorus, a strong brave soldier, best of the Thracians. Ajax's spear struck him first on the peak of his horse-plumed helmet. The sharp bronze drove right into his forehead - dead in the centre - straight through bone into the brain. Darkness fell on his eyes.

Diomedes, expert in war cries, killed Axylus, son of Teuthras, a rich man, from well-built Arisbe. People really loved him, for he lived beside a road and welcomed all passers-by into his home. But not one of those men he'd entertained now stood in front of him, protecting him from wretched death.

Diomedes took the lives of two men - Axylus and his attendant charioteer, Calesius. So both men went down into the underworld. Euryalus killed Dresus and Opheltius, then charged after Aesepus and Pedasus, whom the naiad nymph Abararea bore to noble Boucolion, son of high-born Laomedon, his eldest son. His mother bore Pedasus in secret. Bucolion had had sex with the nymph while tending to his flock. She became pregnant, then gave birth to two twin sons. Euryalus, son of Mecistus, slaughtered both of them, destroying their strength and splendid bodies. Then he stripped the armour from their shoulders.

Hector issued orders to the Trojans, shouting:

"You proud Trojans, wide-renowned allies, friends, be men, summon up your fighting strength, while I go to Troy in person, to instruct the old men of the council and our wives to pray to the gods and promise sacrifice."

With these words, Hector of the shining helmet moved away. As he went, black leather running round the outer edge on his studded shield struck his neck and ankles.

[Diodes and Glaucus prepare for single combat but discover that their fathers were friends. So they refuse to fight and exchange gifts instead]'

Meanwhile Hector reached the Scaean Gates and oak tree. The Trojans' wives and daughters ran up round him,
asking after children, brothers, relatives, and husbands. Addressing each of them in turn, he ordered them to pray to all the gods. For many were to face great grief.

[Hector goes to the palace. He meets his mother and tells her to offer a sacrifice to Athena. Then he talks with Paris and Helen. He goes home, but is told his wife is out, so he returns to the Scaean Gates]

There his wife ran up to meet him, Andromache, holding at her breast their happy infant child, well-loved son of Hector, like a beautiful star. Hector had named him Scamandrius, but others called him Astyanax, lord of the city, because Hector was Troy's only guardian. Hector looked at his son in silence, with a smile. Andromache stood close to him, weeping. Taking Hector by the hand, she spoke to him.

"My dear husband, your warlike spirit will be your death. You've no compassion for your infant child, for me, your sad wife, who before long will be your widow.
For soon the Achaeans will attack you, all together, and cut you down. As for me, it would be better, if I'm to lose you, to be buried in the ground. For then I'll have no other comfort, once you meet your death, except my sorrow. I have no father, no dear mother. So, Hector, you are now my father, noble mother, brother, and my protecting husband. So pity me. Stay here in this tower. Don't orphan your child and make your wife a widow."

Great Hector of the shining helmet answered her:

"Wife, all this concerns me, too. But I'd be disgraced, dreadfully shamed among Trojan men and Trojan women in their trailing gowns, if I should, like a coward, slink away from war. My heart will never prompt me to do that, for I have learned always to be brave, to fight alongside Trojans at the front, striving to win fame for father and myself. My heart and mind know well the day is coming when sacred Ilion will be destroyed, along with Priam of the fine ash spear and Priam's people. But what pains me most about these future sorrows is not so much the Trojans, Hecuba, or king Priam, or even my many noble brothers, who'll fall down in the dust, slaughtered by their enemies. My pain focuses on you, when one of the bronze-clad Achaeans
leads you off in tears, ends your days of freedom. If then you come to Argos as a slave, working the loom for some other woman, fetching water from Hyperia or Messeis, against your will, forced by powerful fate, then someone, seeing you as you weep may well say: 'That woman is Hector's wife. He was the finest warrior in battle of all horse-taming Trojans in that war when they fought for Troy.' Someone will say that, and it will bring still more grief to you, to be without such a man to save you from days of servitude. May I lie dead, hidden deep under a burial mound, before I hear about your screaming, as you are dragged away."

With these words, glorious Hector stretched his hands out for his son. The boy immediately shrank back against the breast of the finely girdled nurse, crying out in terror to see his own dear father, scared at the sight of bronze, the horse-hair plume nodding fearfully from his helmet top. The child's loving father laughed, his noble mother, too. Glorious Hector pulled the glittering helmet off and set it on the ground. Then he kissed his dear son and held him in his arms. He prayed aloud to Zeus and the rest of the immortals.

"Zeus, all you other gods, grant that this child, my son, may become, like me, pre-eminent among the Trojans, as strong and brave as me. Grant that he may rule Troy with strength. May people someday say, as he returns from war, 'This man is far better than his father.' May he carry back bloody spoils from his slaughtered enemy, making his mother's heart rejoice."

He placed his son in the hands of his dear wife. She embraced the child on her sweet breast, smiling through her tears. Observing her, Hector felt compassion. He took her hand, then spoke to her.

"My dearest wife, don't let your heart be sad on my account. No man will throw me down to Hades before my destined time. I tell you this - no one escapes his fate, not the coward, nor the brave man, from the moment of his birth. So you should go into the house, keep busy with your own work, with your loom and wool, telling your servants to set about their tasks. War will be every man's concern, especially mine,
of all those who live in Troy."

Having said these words, glorious Hector picked up his plumed helmet. His beloved wife went home, often looking back, as she went, crying bitterly. She quickly reached the spacious home of Hector, killer of men. Inside she met her many servants and bid them all lament. So they mourned for Hector in his own house, though he was still alive, for they thought he'd not come back - he'd not escape the battle fury of Achaean hands.

[Paris rejoins Hector, and together they leave Troy to return to battle]

---

Book Seven

A Truce to Bury the Dead

[Paris and Hector return to battle and enjoy considerable success against the Achaean. Hector challenges the Achaean to produce a volunteer to fight him in single combat. Ajax is chosen by lot. The two men fight, but heralds stop the conflict. The two men exchange gifts.]

Well-armed Achaeans, came inside the son of Atreus' hut. Agamemnon, king of men, sacrificed an ox, a male five years old, to the exalted son of Cronos. They flayed the beast, prepared and carved it up, chopping it skilfully into tiny pieces. When everyone had had his fill of food and drink, old Nestor spoke up first, outlining for them a plan he had. Earlier his advice had seemed the best. Keeping in mind their common good, he said:

"Son of Atreus, you other Argive leaders, many long-haired Achaeans have been killed. Fierce Ares has scattered their dark blood beside the fair-flowing Scamander river. Their souls have departed down to Hades. So tomorrow you should call a halt. Stop Achaeans fighting. We should all assemble, then carry off the bodies of the dead with mules and oxen. Then we'll burn them a short distance from our ships, so each of us, when we return, may take back the bones. Let's set up one single common funeral mound close by the fire, angled back from the plain. Then we'll build with all speed from that mound some high walls with turrets, to guard us and our ships. Outside we'll dig a deep trench close by, to enclose the walls and hold out chariots - soldiers, too, if those impetuous Trojans should ever drive us back in battle."

So Nestor spoke. All the kings approved his plan.
Meanwhile the Trojans were meeting on the city heights, by Priam's palace doors - they were confused and fearful. Antenor, a wise counsellor, was the first to speak:

"Listen to me, you Trojans, Dardan allies, so I may say what the heart in my chest prompts. Come now, let's give back Argive Helen and her possessions to the sons of Atreus for them to keep. We've broken the truce and are fighting once again, so I don't see how things will work out very well for us, unless we carry out what I propose."

Antenor spoke, then sat down. Before them all, lord Alexander, husband of fair-haired Helen, stood up to reply. His words had wings:

"I flatly refuse. I won't give up my wife. But I will surrender all the goods I carried back from Argos to our home. I'm willing to give up all of it, even to add to it things of my own."

Paris spoke, then sat back down. Priam stood up, descendant of Dardanus, wise as the gods. Thinking of their common cause, he spoke out:

"Listen to me, Trojans, Dardan allies. You should prepare your dinner and then eat, here in the city, as before. But remember - keep sentries posted. Each man should stay awake. Tomorrow morning Idaios should go to the hollow ships, to tell the sons of Atreus, both Agamemnon and Menelaus, what Alexander has just now proposed, the very man whose cause launched this dispute. Idaios should propose this wise suggestion - if they'll consent to postpone grim warfare, so we can burn our dead, we'll fight later, until god adjudicates between us, and awards one side the victory."

They heard what Priam said and readily agreed. Throughout the army, in the ranks, they ate their dinner.

At dawn Idaios went out to the hollow ships. There he found Danaans, companions of Ares, assembled by the stern of Agamemnon's ship. The loud-voiced herald, standing in their midst, spoke out:

"Son of Atreus, other Achaean leaders, Priam and other noble Trojans have instructed me to tell you what Alexander has proposed, if that meets with your approval, an offer
you will want to hear. That man began our strife. All the property which Paris brought here in his hollow ships to Troy - how I wish he'd died before that day! - he'll hand over and add more goods from his own home. But he says he'll not return that noble lady, wife of Menelaus, though the Trojans wish he'd do that. There's more. My orders tell me to speak to you to see if you are willing to put a stop to the harsh clash of war, until such time as we have burned our dead. We will fight later, until god chooses between us, makes one of us victorious.

Idaios spoke. They all remained silent, speechless. At last Diomedes, skilled at war shouts, cried out:

"Let no man now accept Alexander's stuff, nor Helen. For it's quite clear, even to a fool, the Trojans are tied down to lethal fate."

Diomedes spoke. All Achaea's sons roared out, approving the reply of horse-taming Diomedes. Mighty Agamemnon then addressed Idaios:

"Idaios, you yourself have heard our answer, what Achaeans think of what you offer. And I agree with them. But I don't object to burning corpses, for when men die, one should not deny the bodies of the dead a swift propitiation in the flames. So let Zeus, Hera's loud-thundering husband, stand as witness here to our pledged word."

Saying this, Agamemnon held up his sceptre, invoking all the gods. Idaios then returned, going back to sacred Ilion. There the Trojans and Dardanians were sitting in a meeting, a general assembly, awaiting his return. He came, stood in their midst, and delivered his report. Then they quickly organized two working parties - some to collect bodies, others to get firewood. Argives also moved swiftly from their well-decked ships. Some hurried to bring in the dead, others to find wood. Just as the sun began to shine down on the fields, rising from the gently flowing Ocean depths, climbing into the sky, the two groups met each other. At that point it was hard to recognize each dead man. They washed blood off with water and piled them onto carts.

Next day, just before dawn, still at night, in half light, a chosen group of Achaeans was awake around the pyre. Beside it, on an angle, they made a common grave,
back from the plain. From that mound they built a wall, with high towers, to defend them and their ships. Outside the wall they dug a big ditch, wide and deep, close to the rampart, setting stakes down in the trench.

---

**Book Eight**

**The Trojans Have Success**

*[At a council of the gods, Zeus announces he is going to assist the Trojans and forbids the other gods to join in the battle]*

Long-haired Achaeans gulped a quick meal by their huts. Then they armed themselves. On the other side, in town, Trojans, too, prepared to fight. They threw open all the gates. The army streamed out, foot soldiers and charioteers, making a huge din. As the two groups moved out to the same spot, they crashed together, smashing shields and spears, the battle frenzy of bronze-armed warriors. Embossed shields collided one against the other, a tremendous noise. Screams of pain and triumph, came from soldiers - those killing, those being killed - and the earth was saturated with their blood.

In early morning, as that sacred day grew stronger, weapons hurled by both sides grimly took their toll - men kept on dying. But when the sun was at its height, Father Zeus set up his golden balance, placed on it two fatal destinies, one for horse-taming Trojans, one for bronze-armed Achaeans. Gripping the scales, he raised them by the centre. One scale sank down, the one which held the Achaeans' fate that day - it moved down to the all-sustaining earth, while the Trojans' fate rose up toward wide heaven.

*[Zeus sends a bolt of lightning to force the Achaean leaders back. They retreat and rally to hold their ground]*

Once more Olympian Zeus put force into the Trojans. They drove Achaeans back, right to their deep trench, Hector at the front, proudly showing off his strength. By the time Achaeans had rushed through the stakes, as they crossed the ditch, many had died at Trojan hands. At last they halted by the ships and stayed there, calling out to one another. Raising their hands, each man prayed fervently to all the gods. Hector drove his fine-maned horses back and forth, his eyes glaring like a Gorgon or man-killing Ares.

*[Hera and Athena decide to defy Zeus and join the battle to assist the Achaeans. Zeus sees them leaving heaven and stops them.]*

Now the sun's bright light sank down into the ocean, dragging black night over fertile croplands.
The end of daylight made the Trojans sorrowful, but Achaeans welcomed the arrival of black night, something they'd been praying for constantly.

Then glorious Hector assembled all the Trojans some distance from the ships, by the swirling river, in open ground where there were no corpses in plain view. Hector then addressed his Trojans:

"Listen to me, you Trojans, Dardanians, you allies. Just now I stated we'd go back to Troy today, once we'd destroyed the ships and slaughtered all Achaeans. But darkness intervened. That's the only thing that spared the Argives and saved their ships beached on the shore. Come then, let's do what black night demands - prepare a meal. So from your chariots take out of harness those horses with their lovely manes, feed them, then quickly bring here from the city cattle and stout sheep. Bring sweet wine as well, and bread from your own homes. Gather lots of wood, so all night long, until first light of dawn, we can burn many fires, lighting up the sky. That's all I have to tell you at this time. I've more orders for horse-taming Trojans for tomorrow. I hope and pray to Zeus, to the other gods as well, I'll drive away these death-infected dogs, conducted here in their black ships by mortal fates."

Hector finished speaking. Trojans gave a shout. They untied their sweaty horses from their yokes, tethered them with straps, each by its chariot. From the city they soon brought cattle and stout sheep, sweet wine and bread from home. They gathered piles of wood and made perfect sacrificial offerings to the gods. From the plain, the wind carried the sweet-smelling smoke right up to heaven. But the blessed gods weren't willing to accept it, for sacred Ilion, and Priam, and Priam's people, rich in sheep, did not please them. So all night long men sat there in the battle lanes, with high expectations, burning many fires. Just as those times when the stars shine bright in heaven, clustered around the glowing moon, with no wind at all, and every peak and jutting headland, every forest glade is clearly visible, when every star shines out, and the shepherd's heart rejoices - that's the way the many Trojan fires looked, as they burned there in front of Ilion, between the river Xanthus and the ships, a thousand fires burning on the plain. By each sat fifty men in the glow of firelight. Horses munched on wheat and barley, standing there by their chariots, awaiting the regal splendour of the dawn.
Meanwhile, as the Trojans maintained their careful watch, Panic, chilling Fear's dread comrade, gripped Achaeans, their best men suffering unendurable anguish. Atreus' son, heart overwhelmed with painful sorrow, went to give out orders for clear-voiced heralds to summon all the warriors to assembly, calling them one by one, not with a general shout. He himself, with his heralds, carried out the task. The counselors sat heart sick. Agamemnon stood, his face shedding tears like a black water spring whose dark stream flows down a sheer rock precipice. With a sigh, Agamemnon addressed the Argives:

"My friends, leaders, Argive counselors, Zeus, son of Cronos, has snared me badly in grievous folly. Deceptive god, he promised me - he nodded his assent - that I'd lay waste to well-built Ilion, before I went back home. Now he tricks me. He's devised a cruel deceit for me, telling me to return to Argos in disgrace, after the deaths of so many warriors. That's what now delights all-powerful Zeus, who has hurled down so many lofty towns, and who'll still demolish many more - such is his power, irresistible."

Then horseman Nestor, standing up before them, said:

"Mighty son of Atreus, Agamemnon, king of men, I'll begin and end my speech with you, for you are lord of many men. Zeus gave you sceptre and laws to rule them. Thus, you, above all, should speak and listen, then act upon what other men may say, if their spirit prompts them to speak well. You'll get the credit for what they begin. So I'll say what seems to me the best advice. No one else has set out a better scheme than the one which I've been mulling over a long time now, ever since you, my lord, made Achilles angry by taking back that young girl Briseis from his hut, against my judgment. Repeatedly, I urged you not to do it. But then you, surrendering to your arrogant spirit, shamed our strongest man, honoured by the gods. You still have that prize you took. So now let's think
how we may make amends, win him back with gifts
and gracious speeches, and be friends once more."

Agamemnon, king of men, then answered Nestor:

"Old man, you expose my folly justly.
I was deluded. I don't deny that.
The man whom Zeus loves in his heart is worth
whole armies. And this man Zeus now honours
by destroying an army of Achaeans.
Since my delusion made me follow
my mistaken feelings, I'm now willing
to make amends, to give in recompense
immense treasures. I'll list these rich gifts
in presence of you all - seven tripods
which fire has not yet touched, ten gold talents,
twenty shining cauldrons, twelve strong horses
whose speed has triumphed and earned them prizes.
A man who has as much as I have won
from racing these sure-footed animals
would not be poor, or lack possessions,
or need precious gold. And then I'll give him
seven women of Lesbos, skilled in crafts,
whom I chose for myself when he captured
well-built Lesbos. They surpass all women
for their beauty. These I shall present to him.
With them the one I seized from him, Briseis,
daughter of Briseus. I'll solemnly swear
I never once went up into her bed
or had sex with her, as is men's custom,
where men and women are concerned.
All these things he will receive immediately.
If gods grant we destroy Priam's great city,
when we Achaeans allocate the spoils,
let him come and load his ship with gold,
with bronze, as much as he desires. He may choose
twenty Trojan women for himself,
the loveliest after Argive Helen.
If we get back to the rich land of Argos,
he can then become my son-in-law.
I'll honour him just as I do Orestes,
my son, whom I dearly love. He's being raised
in great prosperity. In my well-built home,
I have three daughters - Chrysothemis,
Iphianessa and Laodice.
He can take whichever one he chooses
back home as his wife to Peleus' house
and pay no bridal gift. I'll give much more
to bring about our reconciliation,
a dowry bigger than any man so far
has ever handed over with his daughter.
I'll give him seven populous cities,
Cardamyle, Enope, grassy Hire,
holy Pherae, fertile Antheia,
lovely Aepea, and vine-rich Pedasus,
all near the sea, beside sandy Pylos.
People living in these places own a lot,
many sheep and cattle. They will honour him
and give him gifts, as if he were a god.
Under his laws and sceptre they'll do well.
I shall give all this if he will abate
his anger. Let him concede. Only Hades
is totally relentless and unyielding.
That's why of all the gods, he's the one
men hate the most. And let him acknowledge
my authority, for I'm the greater king.
In age I can claim to be his senior."

Geranian horseman Nestor then said in reply:

"Mighty son of Atreus, Agamemnon,
king of men, the gifts you're offering
to lord Achilles can't be criticized.
But come, let's send out hand-picked men
to go with all speed to Achilles' hut,
Peleus' son. And may those whom I select
agree to do it. First, let Phoenix,
whom Zeus loves, be leader, then great Ajax,
and lord Odysseus. Let herald Odius
accompany them, along with Eurybates.
Bring some water for our hands. Let's observe
a holy silence, so we may pray to Zeus,
son of Cronos, to take pity on us."

Nestor spoke. All present approved of what he'd said.
Along the shore of the tumbling, crashing sea,
the envoys made their way, offering up their prayers
to world-circling Earthshaker Poseidon to help them
more easily convince the great heart of Achilles.
They came to the ships and huts of the Myrmidons.
There they found Achilles. He was easing his spirit
with a tuneful finely decorated lyre.
It had a silver cross-piece. In astonishment,
Achilles got up off his chair and stood up quickly,
still holding the lyre. Patroclus did the same,
standing up as soon as he saw the embassy.
Swift-footed Achilles greeted them and said:

"Welcome.
My dear friends have come. I must be needed.
Among Achaeans you're the men I love the most,
even in my anger."

With these words,
lord Achilles conducted them inside his hut
and seated them on chairs covered with purple rugs.
Moving up close to Patroclus, Achilles said:
"Son of Menoetius, set out for us
a larger wine bowl, and mix stronger wine.
Prepare a cup for everyone. These men,
my closest friends, are under my own roof."

Achilles spoke. Patroclus obeyed his dear companion.
Then in the firelight he set down a large chopping block,
placed on it slabs of mutton, goat, and the chine
of a plump hog, swimming in fat. Achilles carved,
while Automedon held the meat. He sliced up
small pieces, then got them ready on the spits.
The son of Menoetius, godlike man, stoked the fire,
a huge one. Once the blaze died down and flames subsided,
Patroclus spread the glowing embers, laid the spits
lengthwise on top, setting them in place on stones
and sprinkling on the sacred salt. When the meat was cooked,
he laid it out on platters. Patroclus took the bread,
then passed it in fine baskets round the table.
Achilles served the meat and sat down by the wall,
directly opposite godlike Odysseus.
Achilles told Patroclus, his companion,
to sacrifice to all the gods. Patroclus threw the offering
into the fire. Then each man helped himself,
eating the food prepared and set before him.
They all ate and drank to their full heart's content.
Then Ajax gave a nod to Phoenix. Seeing that,
lord Odysseus filled up his cup with wine
and proposed a toast:

"Good health, Achilles.
We have not had to go without our share
of feasts, either in Agamemnon's hut,
Atreus' son, or here, for you've prepared
a richly satisfying meal. But now
our business is not pleasant banqueting.
For we are staring at a great disaster.
And, my lord, we are afraid, in a quandary,
whether we can save our well-decked ships,
or whether they will be destroyed, unless
you put on your warlike power once again.
For haughty Trojans and their famous allies
have camped close to the ships and barricade
and lit many fires throughout their army.
They claim nothing can prevent them now
from attacking our black ships. And Zeus,
son of Cronos, has sent them his signal,
on their right a lightning flash. Hector,
exulting hugely in his power,
in a terrifying manic frenzy,
puts his faith in Zeus, fears neither man nor god.
A killing passion now possesses him.
He prays for holy dawn to come quickly,
vowing he'll hack apart the high sterns
of our ships, burn them in destructive fire,
and by those very ships kill the Achaeans
driven out in desperation by the smoke.
So rouse yourself, late though it may be,
if you've a mind to save Achaeans
from their suffering at this Trojan onslaught.
If not, you'll suffer future agonies.
You won't find any cure for such despair.
Before that happens, you should think about
how to help the Argives at this evil hour.
Agamemnon will give you worthy gifts.

[Odysseus lists the presents Agamemnon has offered, repeating the commander's earlier words]

But if your heart continues to resent
Atreus' son and his gifts, then take pity
on all Achaeans, our exhausted soldiers.
They will pay you honours like a god."

Swift-footed Achilles then answered Odysseus:

"Divinely born son of Laertes,
resourceful Odysseus. I must be blunt
about what I think and where all this will lead,
so you do not sit there and, one by one,
try to entice me with sweet promises.
I hate like the gates of Hell any man
who says one thing while thinking something else
which stays hidden in his mind. So I'll declare
what, in my view, it's best for me to say -
I don't believe that Agamemnon,
Atreus' son, or any other Argive
will persuade me, for no thanks are given
to the man who always fights without rest
against the enemy. Whether one fights
or stays behind, the shares are still the same.
Coward and brave man both get equal honour.
Death treats idle and active men alike.
I've won nothing for all I've suffered,
battling on, pain in my heart, with my life
always under threat. Just as a bird
takes scraps of food, whatever she can find,
to her fledglings, but herself eats little,
so have I lain without sleep many nights,
persevered through bloody days of fighting,
in battling men in wars about their wives.
With ships, I've seized twelve towns and killed their men.
On land, in the area of fertile Troy,
I claim eleven more. From all these,
I took fine treasure, lots of it, brought it
to Agamemnon, Atreus' son - I gave it
all to him. He stayed back at the swift ships.
He shared very little of what he got,
keeping most of it for his own use.
He gave prizes to the best of men, the kings,
and they hung on to them. From me alone
he stole away a prize, a woman whom I love.
Let him have his pleasure in bed with her.
Why must Argives fight against the Trojans?
Why did Atreus' son collect an army
and lead it here if not for fair-haired Helen?
Are Atreus' sons the only mortal men
who love their wives? Every good and prudent man
loves his wife and cares for her, as my heart
loved that girl, though captured with my spear.
Since he's taken my prize out of my hands
and cheated me, let him not try to take
another thing from me. I know him too well.
He'll never persuade me to agree.
But, Odysseus, let him rely on you
and other kings as well to save his ships
from fiery destruction. He has done much
without me already. He's built a wall,
constructed a large wide ditch around it,
and fixed stakes inside. But for all these things,
he's not been able to check the power
of man-killing Hector. When I fought
beside Achaeans, Hector wasn't eager
to push the battle far from his own walls.
But now I don't want to fight lord Hector.
Tomorrow I'll make holy sacrifice
to Zeus, to all the gods, and load my ships,
once I've dragged them down into the sea.
You'll see, if you wish, if you're interested,
tomorrow my ships will be sailing off,
on the fish-filled Hellespont, men rowing
with great eagerness. And if Poseidon,
famous Earthshaker, gives us fair sailing,
in three days I'll reach fertile Phthia.
There I own many things I left behind
when I made this disastrous trip to Troy.
I'll take back from here more gold, red bronze,
fair women, and gray iron - all I captured.
But mighty Agamemnon, Atreus' son,
in his arrogance, seized back from me
the prize which he awarded. Tell him that.
Repeat in public everything I say,
so other Achaeans will grow angry,
if he, still clothed in shamelessness, hopes
at any time to deceive some Argive.
Cur that he is, he doesn't dare confront me
face to face. I'll discuss no plans with him,
no actions. He cheated me, betrayed me.
His words will cheat no more. To hell with him.
Let him march to his death by his own road,
for Counsellor Zeus has stolen his wits.
I hate his gifts. And he's not worth a damn.
Not even if he gave me ten times, no,
lain twenty times more than all he owns right now,
or will possess in future, not even all the wealth amassed in Orchomenus, or Egyptian Thebes, where huge treasures sit piled up in houses - that city of gates, one hundred of them, through each can ride two hundred men, horses and chariots all together - not even if he gave me gifts as numerous as grains of sand beside the sea or particles of dust, not for all that would Agamemnon win my heart, not until he satisfies me in full for all my heartfelt bitter pain. I'll never take as wife any daughter of Agamemnon, son of Atreus, not even if her beauty rivals that of golden Aphrodite, or her skill in crafts equals bright-eyed Athena's. I will not marry her. Let him select another Achaean, someone like himself, a more prestigious king than me. For me, if the gods keep me safe and I get home, Peleus himself will find me a wife. There are plenty of Achaean women in Hellas and in Phthia - daughters of lords, men who govern cities. From them I'll choose the one I want to make my cherished wife. My heart has often felt a strong desire to take a woman there as my own wife, someone suitable for marriage, to enjoy the riches which old Peleus has acquired. Life is worth more to me than all the wealth they say was stored in well-built Ilion some time ago, when they were still at peace, before the sons of Achaea came, more than all the treasures of the archer, Phoebus Apollo, stacked on the stone floor in rocky Pytho. Men can steal cattle, fat sheep, get tripods, herds of sorrel horses. But no man gets his life back, not by theft or plunder, once it has flown out from him, passed beyond the barrier of his teeth. My goddess mother, silver-footed Thetis, has said two fates may bring about my death. If I remain here, continuing the fight against the Trojans' city, that means I won't be going home, but my glory will never die. But if I go back home, my fame will die, though my life will last a long time - death will not end it quickly. And so I encourage all the rest of you to sail back home. You'll not attain your goal, steep Ilion, because far-seeing Zeus shields that city with his hand. Its people have confidence in that. Thus, you should go.
Report this message to Achaean leaders -
that's the privilege of senior men -
their minds must come up with some better plan
to save the Achaean fleet and army
beside the hollow ships. The one they've got
won't work, since anger still keeps me away.
Let Phoenix stay here with me, sleep here,
so tomorrow he may join our voyage
to his dear native land, if that's his wish.
For I will not take him back by force."

Achilles spoke. Astounded by his speech, they all sat there,
in silence, stunned by the sheer force of his refusal.
After a pause, old horseman Phoenix spoke:

"Glorious Achilles, if your mind
is really set on going back, if you
are totally unwilling to protect
our swift ships from destructive fire,
because that anger has consumed your heart,
how can I remain here, dear lad, alone,
away from you? Old horseman Peleus
sent me with you, on that day he shipped you
from Phthia to join Agamemnon.
You were young, knowing nothing about war,
which levels men, or about public debates,
where men acquire distinction. Thus Peleus
sent me to teach you all these things,
so you could speak and carry out great actions.
Given all this, dear lad, how can I wish
to be alone and separated from you?
No, not even if god himself promised
to cast off my old age, to make me young,
the man I was when I first left Hellas,
land of beautiful women, running
from my angry father, Amyntor.
I was the one, godlike Achilles,
who raised you up to be the man you are.
You would refuse to attend a banquet
with anyone or eat in your own home,
unless I set you on my knees, fed you,
cut the meat, and held the wine cup for you.
Many times you soaked the shirt on my chest,
slobbering your wine, a helpless baby.
I've gone through a lot for you, worked hard,
bearing in mind that gods had taken care
I'd never have some children of my own.
Godlike Achilles, I made you my son,
so that if I ever met disaster,
you'd protect me. So, Achilles, subdue
your giant passion. It's not right for you
to have an unyielding heart. Gods themselves
are flexible, and they have more honour
than we possess, more power, too. Men pray
when they go wrong or make mistakes,
propitiating gods with offerings,
gentle prayers, libations, sacrifice.
If Agamemnon were not bringing gifts -
and naming more to come - but persisting,
inflexibly angry, I wouldn't tell you
to cast aside your rage and help the Argives,
no matter how painful their distress. 410
But he's giving plenty now, more later.
He has sent out his greatest warriors,
selected from the whole Achaean army,
your finest friends among the Argives.
Don't show contempt for what they have to say
or insult their coming here. Up to now,
your resentment has been justified.
Once the ships catch fire, it will be harder
to defend them. So accept the gifts.
Achaeans are honouring you like a god. 420
If you return to man-killing battle
without the gifts, you'll never get such honour,
even though you may push the conflict back."

Swift-footed Achilles then said in reply:

"Phoenix, dear old father, noble lord,
I don't need such honours, for I possess
honour in the will of Zeus. That will keep
me here beside my own hollow ships,
so long as there is breath within my body,
strength in my limbs. But I'll say this to you -
bear it in mind - do not confuse my heart
with these laments, these speeches of distress,
all serving that heroic son of Atreus.
You should not love him, in case I hate you,
who are now my friend. You would be noble
to join with me, and so injure the man
who injures me. Be equal king with me.
Take half my honours. These men report back.
You stay here. Sleep in your soft bed. At dawn,
we shall consider whether to go back
to our own land, or whether to remain." 440

Achilles spoke. His eyebrows gave a silent signal
to Patroclus to set a firm bed out for Phoenix,
so the others would quickly think of leaving.
But Ajax, godlike son of Telamon, spoke up:

"Noble son of Laertes, resourceful Odysseus,
let's be off. I don't think we'll bring this talk
to a successful end, not on this trip.
We must report this news, though it's not good,
to the Danaans waiting to receive it. 450
For Achilles has turned his great spirit
into something savage in his chest.
Swift-footed Achilles then said in reply:

"Ajax, noble son of Telamon, your people's leader, everything you say matches what I feel. But my heart chokes with rage when I recall how that son of Atreus behaved towards me with contempt, as if he were dishonoring some vagrant. But you'd better go, take back this message - I shall not concern myself with bloody war until lord Hector, murderous son of Priam, comes against the huts and sea ships of the Myrmidons, killing Achaean soldiers as he goes, until he starts to burn our ships with fire. I think that Hector will be held in check around my hut, around my own black ship, for all his eagerness to battle on."

So Achilles spoke. The men each took a goblet with two handles, gave offerings, and went back to the ships. Achaea's sons stood up and welcomed them with toasts in golden cups, one after another, asking questions. The first to speak was Agamemnon, king of men:

"So come, tell me, famous Odysseus, great glory of Achaean, does he wish to protect our ships from all-destroying fire, or does he refuse, his mighty spirit still gripped with anger."

Lord Odysseus, who had endured much, replied:
"King of men,  
mighty Agamemnon, son of Atreus,  
that man's unwilling to let go his rage.  
He's full of anger, more so now than ever.  
He despises you, your gifts, and tells you  
to think for yourself with the Argives,  
how you may save Achaean ships and men."

Odysseus spoke. They all were silent and disheartened,  
especially by the force with which Achilles had refused.  
Achaeas's sons sat a long time speechless, troubled.  
They poured libations. Then each man went to his hut,  
where he lay down and stretched out to take the gift of sleep.

---

**Book Ten**

**A Night Raid**

*The Achaeans call for a volunteer to spy out the Trojan camp. Diomedes and Odysseus set off and capture a Trojan spy, Dolon. He tells them the lay out of the Trojan camp. Diomedes kills Dolon, and he and Odysseus move into the camp and kill a number of sleeping Thracian soldiers and capture the king's horses. Then they return to camp.*

**Book Eleven**

**The Achaeans Face Disaster**

As Dawn rose from her bed beside lord Tithonus,  
bringing light to immortal gods and men alike,  
Zeus sent Strife down to the fast Achaean ships,  
the savage goddess, carrying the sign of war.  
She stood by Odysseus' broad-beamed black ship  
in the middle of the line, so she could be heard  
in both directions, from the huts of Ajax,  
son of Telamon, to those of Achilles,  
whose well-balanced ships were drawn up at the ends,  
for these men trusted courage and their own strong hands.  
Standing there, the goddess screamed out a piercing call,  
a dreadful sound. In the heart of each Achaean,  
she put strength for war, for unremitting combat.  
To men war then became sweeter than sailing back,  
going home in their hollow ships to their dear native land.

Then each man told his charioteer to curb his horses  
and line up in good formation at the ditch's edge,  
while they marched ahead on foot in all their armour,  
moving fast, shouting bravely in the early dawn.  
They arranged their ranks on the far side of the ditch,  
well beyond the chariots following at some distance.  
Then Cronos' son brought them confusing signs of trouble,  
sending down from high in heaven a rain of blood  
dripping from the sky, for his intention was
to hurl the heads of many brave men down to Hades.

On the opposite side, by the high ground on the plain, Trojans gathered round Hector, fine Polydamas, Aeneas, whom Trojan people honoured like a god, and three sons of Antenor - Polybus, Agenor, godlike man, and youthful Acamas, who seemed like one of the immortals. In the front ranks, Hector carried his shield, an even perfect circle. As some ominous star now suddenly appears, shining through the clouds, and then disappears again into the cloud cover, that's how Hector looked, as he showed up in front, then in the rear, issuing orders. All in shining bronze, he flashed like lightning from Father Zeus, who holds the aegis.

Then, just as reapers work in some rich man's fields, arranged in rows facing each other, cutting the crop, wheat or barley, scything handfuls thick and fast, that's how Trojans and Achaeans went at each other, slicing men down. No one thought of lethal flight. The sides were matched in fury equally - they fought like wolves ripping at each other. Looking on, Strife, goddess who brings much sorrow, was delighted.

[The Achaeans enjoy a series of successes in the battle, especially Agamemnon. But then he is wounded and has to withdraw from the fighting.]

Gazing down from Ida, the son of Cronos made the fight an equal combat, so on both sides men killed each other. With his spear, Tydeus' son wounded brave Agastrophus, son of Paeon, on the hip. There were no horses ready, close at hand for his escape, a fatal blunder. His attendant was holding them some distance off, while he went on foot through those fighting at the front, until lord Diomedes robbed him of his life.

Hector kept a sharp watch on those men. With a shout, he went after them, taking ranks of Trojans with him.

[The fighting continues. Paris wounds Diomedes. Odysseus slaughters many allies, but is wounded and has to withdraw. The Trojans press forward.]

But the brave Achaeans would not have given way, if Alexander, fair-haired Helen's husband, had not stopped Machaon, shepherd of his people, as he was proving himself among the very best. Alexander's arrow, with a triple barb, hit Machaon's right shoulder. Then Achaeans, who breathe fighting spirit, feared for Machaon - they thought he might he captured, should the battle change. At that point Idomeneus spoke to Nestor:

"Nestor, son of Neleus, great glory of Achaeans, come, climb up into my chariot."
Let Machaon get in there beside you.
Drive those sure-footed horses to the ships,
and quickly, too. Machaon's a healer
and so worth more than other men, with skill
to cut out arrows and use healing potions."

He finished. Geranian horseman Nestor heard him.
He climbed into the chariot. Machaon got in beside him,
son of that excellent healer Asclepius.
Nestor whipped the horses. They dashed off willingly,
their spirits happy to be heading for the hollow ships.

Then Father Zeus, enthroned on high, put fear in Ajax.
He stood bewildered, shifted his seven-layered shield
onto his back, turned, looked round at throngs of Trojans,
like some wild beast, then backed off step by step, retreating,
but often turning back. Just as a tawny lion
is driven from a farmyard holding cattle
by dogs and farmers, who keep watch all night long
to stop it tearing some well-fed cow to pieces,
but the beast, ravenous for meat, keeps charging in,
without success, for a storm of spears rains down on him,
thrown by eager hands, followed then by burning sticks,
which, for all his fierce desire, make him afraid,
so, at dawn, he slinks away in bitter disappointment -
that's how Ajax most unwillingly retreated then,
away from Trojans, his spirit in distress.

When Eurypylus, fine son of Euaemon,
saw Ajax being attacked by this hail of spears,
he went and stood by him. He hurled his shining spear
and hit Apisaon, son of Phausius,
a shepherd to his people, below his diaphragm,
in the liver. His legs gave way. Eurypylus rushed up
to strip armour from his shoulders, but he was seen
by godlike Alexander, as he was pulling off
the armour from Apisaon. So Paris grabbed his bow,
aimed at Eurypylus, then shot an arrow in his leg,
hitting his right thigh. The arrow shaft snapped off.
His thigh was crippled. So Eurypylus moved back
among his comrades and thus escaped destruction.

Thus these soldiers went at the fight like a raging fire,
as Neleus' horses carried Nestor from the fight.

Swift-footed Achilles, looking on, noticed Nestor.
Achilles stood by the stern of his broad-beamed ship,
watching the harsh work of battle, the pitiful retreat.
At once he spoke out to Patroclus, his companion,
calling him beside the ship. From inside the hut
Patroclus heard him. He came out, looking like Ares.
This moment marked the start of his final rush to death.
Patroclus, Menoetius' fine son, was the first to speak:
"Why did you summon me, Achilles? Is there something you need me to carry out?"

Swift-footed Achilles then said in reply:

"Fine son of Menoetius, joy of my heart, I think the time has come for the Achaeans to stand around my knees in supplication, for their needs have now become unbearable. But Patroclus, dear to Zeus, go now - ask Nestor who that wounded person is he's taking from the battle. From the back, he looked exactly like Machaon, son of Asclepius. But I didn't see his face, for the horses passed me quickly in their haste to gallop on."

Achilles spoke.
Patroclus then obeyed his dear companion. He went on the run through Achaean huts and ships.

When the others reached the huts of Nestor, Neleus' son, they stepped out on the fertile earth. Then Eurymedon, Nestor's aide, unharnessed horses from the chariot. The two men let the sweat dry on their tunics, standing in the sea shore breeze. They went inside the hut and sat down on some chairs. The two men drank and quenched their parching thirst. They started talking, enjoying each other's pleasant conversation. Then Patroclus stood in the doorway, like some god. Seeing him, old Nestor leapt up from his shining chair, took him in hand and invited him to sit. Patroclus declined, staying where he was.

Geranian horseman Nestor then said to Patroclus:

"Why is Achilles showing pity now for Achaea's sons, those men hurt with spears and arrows? He knows nothing of our trouble, the great suffering which afflicts the army. For our best men lie injured at the ships, crippled by arrows, spears, and swords. Strong Diomedes, son of Tydeus, is hurt, as is Odysseus, famous for his spear, Agamemnon and Eurypylus as well, with an arrow in his thigh. This man here, hurt with an arrow from some bowstring, I've just brought in from battle. Achilles is brave, but shows no pity, feels nothing for Danaans. His courage will profit no one but himself. I think he might bitterly regret all this, once our army is destroyed. O my friend, that day Menoetius sent you from Phthia in Agamemnon's cause, he gave you orders."
Both lord Odysseus and myself were present.
We heard all he said to you there in his house.
Old Peleus ordered his son Achilles
always to be the best, to stand pre-eminent,
above all other men. Menoetius, son of Actor,
told you: 'My son, Achilles is by birth
a finer man than you. But you are older.
In strength he is by far your better,
but it's up to you to give shrewd advice,
prudent counsel, and direction to him.
He'll comply, for that works to his benefit.'
That's what the old man said. But you forget.
Even now, if you'd speak to fierce Achilles,
you might persuade him. Who knows? Some god
might help you shift his spirit with your words.
A friend's persuasion is an excellent thing.
At least let him send you to war, in command
of other Myrmidons - it may well be
you'll prove a saving light to the Danaans.
Let him also give you his fine armour
to carry into battle, so Trojans may confuse
the two of you and thus refrain from fighting.
Achaea's warrior sons are tired out.
They might gain a breathing space, something rare
in warfare. Your troops are fresh. They might drive
Trojans worn out with fighting to the city,
far from our ships and huts.'

Nestor finished speaking.
His words stirred up the heart inside Patroclus' chest. 190
He went off on the run along the line of ships,
towards Achilles, descendant of Aeacus.

[On his way back to Achilles Patroclus meets the wounded Eurypylus, helps him back to his hut, and remains with him.]

---

Book Twelve

The Fight at the Barricade

Then the din of war raged round the sturdy wall.
The battered timbers on the tower rattled.
Argives, broken by Zeus' whip, were all hemmed in
beside their hollow ships, held back by fear of Hector,
whose powerful presence scared them, for, as before,
he battled like a whirlwind. Just as some wild boar
or lion faced with dogs and huntsmen keeps turning,
confident of his strength, and men form in a line,
preparing to go against the beast, hurling spears
in volleys from their hands - still it doesn't tremble,
show any fear in its brave heart, but its courage
kills the beast - repeatedly it whirls itself around,
threatening the ranks of men - that's how Hector then
moved through the troops, urging men to attack the ditch
Achaeans had no choice but to defend their ships -
gods helping Danaans in the fight were sad at heart.

[The Achaeans defend the wall, but the Trojans keep attacking. Zeus sends an ominous sign to the Trojans, but Hector decides to ignore it and press the attack.]

At that point, glorious Hector and the Trojans
would not have crashed the gates or long bolts in the wall,
if Counselor Zeus had not stirred his son Sarpedon
against Achaeans, like a lion going at short-horn cattle.

He called out to Glaucus, Hippolochus' son:

"Glaucus,
why are we two awarded special honours,
with pride of place, the finest cuts of meat,
our wine cups always full in Lycia,
where all our people look on us as gods?
Why do we possess so much fine property,
by the river Xanthus, beside its banks,
rich vineyards and wheat-bearing ploughland?
It's so we'll stand in the Lycian front ranks
and meet head on the blazing fires of battle,
so then some well-armed Lycian will say,
'They're not unworthy, those men who rule Lycia,
those kings of ours. It's true they eat plump sheep
and drink the best sweet wines - but they are strong,
fine men, who fight in the Lycians' front ranks.'
Ah my friend, if we could escape this war,
and live forever, without growing old,
if we were ageless, then I'd not fight on
in the foremost ranks, nor would I send you
to those wars where men win glory. But now,
a thousand shapes of fatal death confront us,
which no mortal man can flee from or avoid.
So let's go forward, to give the glory
to another man or win it for ourselves."

Sarpedon spoke. Without making any move
Glaucus agreed. They marched on straight ahead,
leading their large company of Lycians.
With his strong hands, Sarpedon grabbed the parapet and pulled.
The whole construction fell apart, breaching the wall,
creating a passage through for many men.

Ajax and Teucer now advanced together
to attack Sarpedon. Teucer hit him with an arrow
on the gleaming strap around his chest which held
his protective shield. But Zeus defended his own son
from deadly fates to make sure he'd not be destroyed
by the ships' sterns. Ajax then jumped in, striking his shield.
The point did not pass through, but its momentum
knocked Sarpedon back in the middle of his charge.
Sarpedon withdrew a little from the parapet,
but did not retreat completely, for his heart was set on seizing glory. So he called out, rallying his godlike Lycians:

"You Lycians,
Why is your fighting spirit lessening?
It's hard for me, although I'm powerful,
to breach this wall alone and carve a pathway
to the ships. So come, battle on with me.
The more men there are, the better the work done."

On the other side, the Argives reinforced their ranks inside the wall. For both sides a major fight ensued. Lycians, though strong, could not break the Danaan wall and cut their way through to the ships. Danaan spearmen could not push the Lycians back, repel them from the wall, High on the wall they hacked each other's armour - leather bucklers and large round shields across their chests, quivering targets. Many men were wounded, flesh slashed with pitiless bronze, those who turned aside and left their backs exposed while fighting and those hit right through their shields. Everywhere along the wall, along the parapet, men's blood was spattered from Trojans and Achaeans. But even so, Trojans could not dislodge Achaeans from the wall, until Zeus gave glory above all other men to Hector, son of Priam, who was the first man to jump inside that wall of the Achaeans. He raised a resounding yell, crying to his Trojans:

"Drive forward, you horse-taming Trojans.
Breach that Argive wall. Then burn the ships with a huge fire."

With these words, he drove them on. Their ears all caught his call. Hurling themselves at the wall in a dense mass, gripping sharp spears, they began to climb. Hector picked up a rock lying before the gates, thick at its base but tapering sharply on the top. Two of the best working men now living could not lever that stone out of the ground easily into their cart, but Hector carried it with ease alone. Hector lifted up that rock, then carried it straight to the doors guarding the strongly fitted gates, high double doors with two cross pieces holding them inside secured with a single bolt. Hector moved up closer, planted himself before the doors, his legs wide apart to throw with greater force, then hurled that rock right at the centre of the doors. He smashed both hinges. The stone's momentum took it clear through the doors. The gates groaned loudly. The bolts were sheared right off. The impact of that boulder shattered all the planks. Glorious Hector, his face like night's swift darkness, leapt inside. The bronze which covered his whole body
was a terrifying glitter. In his hand he held two spears. Once he'd jumped inside the gates, no one moving out to stop him could hold him back, except the gods. From his eyes fire blazed. Wheeling through the throng, he shouted to his Trojans to climb the wall. His men responded to his call. Some scaled the wall, others came pouring through the hole made in the gates. Danaans were driven back among their hollow ships in a rout, and the noisy tumult never stopped.

Book Thirteen

The Trojans Attack the Ships

[Poseidon decides to flout Zeus' instructions and comes down to assist Achaean troops fighting to defend their ships]

At that point, Trojans, like some fire or windstorm, marched behind Hector, son of Priam, in a mass, shouting and screaming with excitement, hoping to seize Achaean ships and kill the best men there. But Poseidon, who encircles and shakes the earth, roused the Argives, once he'd moved up from the sea. If Ares had come there, he would have approved of them, as would Athena, who inspires men in war. Those known for their great bravery did not back off. They fought lord Hector and the Trojans spear for spear, shield with layered shield, in close-packed formation, shields linked together and helmet touching helmet, troops shoulder to shoulder. As men moved their heads, horsehair crests on shining helmet ridges touched - that's how densely packed they stood in that formation.

The Trojans came on in a mass, led by Hector, always charging forward, like a rolling boulder, which some river in a winter flood dislodges from a cliff beside its banks, its great flood eroding what supports that lethal stone. In its fall, it bounces - woods crash underneath it, as it accelerates in a straight line, unimpeded - then it hits the plain, where, for all its impetus, its motion stops. That's how Hector threatened then to smash his way with ease down to the sea, to Achaea's huts and ships. But when he ran into the tight-packed lines of men, he came close but was held in check. Achaea's sons faced up to him with swords, with double-bladed spears, and pushed him back. Shaken, Hector had to give ground.

By the ships' stems both sides met in frantic battle. That man-destroying combat bristled with long spears gripped by men to hack each other's flesh apart. As troops moved up tightly bunched, men's eyes went blind in the blaze of glittering bronze, glaring helmets, finely polished body armour, gleaming shields.
It would take a hard man to find joy in the sight of all that suffering and show no trace of sorrow.

Then Aeneas went at Aphareus, son of Caletor, as he was facing him. His sharp spear hit his throat. Aphareus' head snapped back - his shield and helmet fell down on him, and Death, which takes the living spirit, gathered him in.

Antilochus kept watching Thoön. As he turned, he rushed up and stabbed him, severing the vein which runs the full length of the back up to the neck - Antilochus slashed through this vein. Thoön fell, stretching his arms up from the dust, reaching to his friends. Antilochus jumped on him and began to strip the armour on his shoulders. But he kept his eyes alert, for he was surrounded, with Trojan men on every side, thrusting their spears.

As Antilochus went through that crowd of men, he was observed by Adamas, son of Asius, who charged close in - his sharp bronze spear struck the middle of his shield. But dark-haired Poseidon, unwilling to concede Antilochus' life, made the spear point fail - so part of it got stuck in Antilochus' shield, like the charred end of a stick, and half fell on the ground. Adamas then withdrew, returning to the group of his companions, avoiding death. But Meriones went after him, as he moved back, and hit him underneath his navel, in the scrotum, the most agonizing way for men to perish miserably in battle. When that spear struck Adamas, he doubled up, bent down over the spear, writhing like a bull which farmers in the mountains bind with willow shoots and drag along by force, against the creature's will. That's how Adamas, once hit, twitched there for a while, but not for long. Warlike Meriones, running up, yanked out his spear. Then darkness covered up his eyes.

The Trojans advanced. Just like blasts of storming winds striking the earth under Father Zeus' thunder, then with a roar slicing into the sea, whipping up a crowd of surging waves across a booming ocean, with lines of arching foam, one following another - that how Trojans marched behind their leaders in a tight formation, one behind the other, glittering in bronze. Like man-destroying Ares, Hector, son of Priam, led them. He held his shield in front of him, an even circle made of hide, densely packed, then covered with a solid layer of hammered bronze, helmet gleaming round his temples.

The first fighter to challenge Hector was great Ajax,
who marched out with long strides and shouted:

"Come closer,
you poor man. Why try to scare the Argives?
When it comes to fighting, we're not ignorant.
Zeus' harsh whip has lashed Achaeans back,
and your heart now wants to break our ships.
But we've got hands to raise in their defence.
In fact, I think it's far more likely now
we'll take your well-built city - these hands of ours
will smash it long before you seize our ships.
I say the time has come when you'll run back,
praying to Father Zeus and other gods,
to make your horses with their lovely manes
fly as fast as hawks, when they speed through dust
to get you to your city on the plain."

As Ajax spoke, a bird flew out on the right,
a high-flying eagle. Encouraged by the omen,
the Achaean soldiers responded with a cheer.

Glorious Hector then said to Ajax in reply:

"What are you saying, you stupid boaster?
I wish it were as certain that I was
the son of aegis-bearing Zeus himself,
with Hera for my mother, and honoured
like Apollo or Athena, as I am that this day
brings disaster to the Argives - all of them.
You'll lie among the dead, if you dare
to stand up to my long spear. It will slice
your lily skin. Then once you fall down there,
beside Achaea's ships, Trojan dogs and birds
will feed upon your flesh and fat."

Hector spoke.
Then he advanced - the troops moved up behind him,
making a huge din, even from soldiers at the back.
On the other side, the Argives raised a shout.
They hadn't lost their courage. They'd held their line
against the finest Trojans launching their attack.
The noise from both sides went up into bright Zeus' sky.

---

**Book Fourteen**

**The Wounded Leaders Rally the Troops**

As Nestor sat drinking wine, listening to the noise of war,
he said to Asclepius' son:

"Noble Machaon,
think about how this battle will end up -
the shouting from our young men by the ships
is getting louder. You should sit here for now."
Drink some sparkling wine, till Hecamede
with the lovely hair draws you a warm bath
and washes the dried blood off your body.
I'll go to a lookout, see what's going on."

Nestor took the well-made shield belonging to his son,
horse-taming Thrasymedes. It lay there in the hut,
gleaming bronze. The son was fighting with his father's shield.
Nestor took a strong spear with a sharp bronze point,
then stood outside the hut. At once he saw a shameful sight -
Achaeans in retreat, pushed back by their enemies,
high-hearted Trojans. The Achaean wall was breached.

The old man was lost in thought, his heart divided
between two courses. Should he seek out the crowd
of swift-riding Danaans, or see if he could find
Agamemnon, son of Atreus, his people's shepherd?
As he thought it over, the best course seemed to be
to find the son of Atreus.

Meanwhile, the other men
kept up the fight, kept on butchering each other.
Around their bodies the unwearied bronze rang out,
as they thrust with swords and double-bladed spears.

Then Nestor came across the kings the gods sustain -
they were walking round among the ships - all the ones
whom bronze had wounded - Diomedes and Odysseus,
along with Agamemnon, son of Atreus.

The kings had set out in one group together,
each one leaning on a spear, to see the fighting
and check the progress of the war. Deep in their chests
they were very troubled. When old Nestor met them,
the anxiety in their Achaean hearts
was even more acute. Mighty Agamemnon
spoke to him and said:

"Nestor, son of Neleus,
great glory of Achaeans, why are you here?
Why have you left the battle? I'm afraid
that mighty Hector will make good those words
he used to threaten us, in that speech
he gave his Trojans, saying he'd not return
from our ships to Troy until he'd burned them
and slaughtered all the men. That's what he said.
And now it's happening. What chaos!"

Geranian horseman Nestor answered Agamemnon:

"What's happened so far is over, done with -
not even high-thundering Zeus himself
could make that something else - our wall is down.
We put our faith in it as a firm defence
for ships and for ourselves. Whichever way you look,
even if you really try, you cannot tell
from what direction we are being attacked.
It's all confused. The killing is haphazard.
The battle shouts fill heaven. As for us,
if thinking is a help, we should consider
how these events will end. I'm not saying
we should rejoin the fight - that's not expected
from those who have been wounded."

Agamemnon, king of men, replied:

"Nestor,
since the men now fight at our ships' sterns,
and since our strong wall and ditch are useless -
something crushing for Danaans, whose hearts
had trusted they'd provide a firm defence
and keep our soldiers and our ships secure -
from this I gather that almighty Zeus
must enjoy it when Achaeans perish
without a name, right here, far from Argos.
I felt when Zeus was giving the Danaans
his full assistance, and I know it now,
when he gives the glory to the Trojans,
like blessed gods, while draining all our strength,
our fighting spirit. But come now, let's agree
to what I propose. Let's drag down those ships
drawn up in line closest to the surf
and pull them all into the sacred sea,
moor them there with stones in deeper water,
until the coming of immortal night -
which may prevent the Trojans' fighting.
Then we can shift the other ships. To flee
from ruin, even at night, brings no shame.
It's better to escape one's own destruction -
to run off - than let it overtake you."

In response to this, Odysseus scowled and said:

"Son of Atreus, how can such words as these
come from your mouth? I'm finished with you.
I wish you ruled some other army,
some useless men, and were not our leader.
Zeus sees to it that from our youthful days
to our old age we must grind away
at wretched war, till, one by one, we die.
Are you really willing to leave Troy,
city of wide streets, for whose sake we've borne
so many evils? You'd better keep that quiet -
another Achaean man may hear the news,
learn what you've proposed in words no man
should ever let pass through his mouth at all,
no man whose heart has any understanding
of what's appropriate to say, no one
who is a sceptred king whom men obey -
as many as those Argive troops you lead.
From what you've said, I think you've lost your mind.
In the middle of a fight, you tell us now
to drag our well-decked ships down to the sea,
so that, though Trojans may be winning now,
they'd get what they most pray for realized -
the complete annihilation of us all.
For once we drag our ships into the sea,
Achaeans then will never go on fighting -
the whole time they'll be looking over here
and pulling out from battle. Then your plan,
you leader of the army, will destroy it."

Agamemnon, king of men, replied:

"Odysseus,
that harsh rebuke of yours has stung my heart.
But I'm not the man to tell Achaea's sons
to drag our well-decked ships into the sea
if they're not willing. So show me someone
with a better plan than mine - young or old -
I'll welcome it."

Then Diomedes,
skilled in battle shouts, spoke up:

"That man's close by.
We've no need to search too long, if you'll listen,
without any one of you resenting me
because I'm younger than the rest of you.
I claim worthy descent through Tydeus,
who lies in Thebes hidden underground.
So you would never label me by birth a coward,
a weakling, and thus demean what I advise,
if what I say is good. We must go back there,
to the battle, though we're wounded. Once there,
we'll stand back from combat, beyond the range
of flying weapons, in case someone is hit
and gets more wounds. But we'll urge on the others,
even those who, wallowing in their feelings,
have stood aside, without fighting up to now."

They listened well to Diomedes and agreed.
So they set off, led by Agamemnon, king of men.

[In order to deceive Zeus and allow Poseidon to help the Achaeans, Hera enlists the help of Aphrodite and Sleep. She visits Zeus on Mount Ida and seduces him. They make love,
and Zeus falls asleep. Poseidon then continues to assist the Achaeans.]
On the other side, glorious Hector organized his men. Then he and dark-haired Poseidon launched the fight, the most destructive moments of that battle, one commanding Trojans, the other leading Argives. The sea surged up to the Achaean huts and ships, as the two sides met with a tremendous noise, louder than ocean surf booming on shore, driven there from the depths by the harsh North Wind, louder, too, than a roaring fire as it jumps to burn the trees in some mountain clearing, louder than the wind which howls through the highest branches of some oak tree, a wind which at its worst makes the most piercing noise - that's how loud the shouting came from Trojans and Achaeans, terrifying screams, as they went at each other.

[In the ensuing battle, Ajax seriously wounds Hector by hitting him in the head with a rock. Hector has to withdraw from the fighting]

Book Fifteen

The Battle at the Ships

[Zeus wakes up, looks at the battlefield, and turns on Hera for deceiving him. He then arranges for Poseidon to leave the fighting and for Apollo to cure Hector of his wound. Hector returns to battle fully reinvigorated, and Apollo joins the fighting in support of the Trojans]

Trojans charged in a mass assault, led by Hector, moving with huge strides. Phoebus Apollo marched in front of Hector, his shoulders covered up in clouds, holding the fearful aegis, with its double fringe glittering ominously. The smith Hephaestus had given it to Zeus to make men run from war. Apollo now held this aegis in his hands, as he lead on the army. The Argives, closely packed, stood their ground. Shriil war cries came from either side, arrows flew from bowstrings, many spears were thrown. Some impaled themselves in the flesh of quick young men. Many fell halfway before they reached white skin, skewered in earth, still longing to taste flesh.

As long as Phoebus Apollo held the aegis steady in his hands, on both sides weapons hit their mark - men kept on dying. But when Apollo stared directly at the swift Danaans and then shook the aegis, howling a horrific roar, he bewitched them all - the spirit in their chests then lost the will to fight. Just as two wild beasts stampede a herd of cattle or large flock of sheep, coming suddenly in dark night, with no herdsman present, that's how Achaeans, in their weakness, were then put to flight. Apollo sent the panic, glorifying Hector and his Trojans.

Then, as men killed each other, the battle front collapsed.
Hector slew Stichius and Arcesilaus - one a leader of bronze-armed Boeotians, one a trusted comrade of brave Menestheus. Aeneas slaughtered Medon and Iasus. Then lord Agenor slew Clonius, and from behind Paris struck Deöochus just below the shoulder, as the latter fled from soldiers fighting in the front. He drove the bronze spear straight through the man.

While Trojans were stripping armour from the corpses, Achaeans jumped in the ditch they’d dug, on the stakes, running to and fro, forced to withdraw behind their wall. Hector then gave a great shout to his Trojans:

"Charge the ships. Leave the blood-stained spoils alone. Whoever I see not moving to the ships on the other side, I'll make sure he dies right there. His relatives, men and women, won't be burying him, once he's dead, with the proper rites of fire. Instead, the dogs will rip him up before our city."

Saying this, Hector swung his whip down from his shoulders, lashing on his horses, calling Trojans in the ranks. They all shouted with him, then drove the horses pulling chariots. A tremendous noise arose. In front, Phoebus Apollo easily knocked down the banks of the steep trench with his feet - he kicked dirt into the middle, making a long broad causeway, as wide as the distance a man can throw his spear when he's showing off his strength. Trojans poured through, wave after wave of them, with Apollo leading on, holding up the priceless aegis. The Achaean wall he easily demolished, as a child will scatter sand - in a childish game beside the sea he builds a sand wall, then with his hands and feet flattens it for fun.

Hector went straight for glorious Ajax, both men struggling over the same ship. Hector was unable to push Ajax back and burn the ship, while Ajax could not drive Hector off, now that Apollo had brought him so far. Noble Ajax hurled his spear. He hit Caletor, son of Clytius, in the chest, as he was bringing fire to the ships. With a crash, he collapsed, and the burning torch dropped from his hands.

Then great Telamonian Ajax roused the Argives:

"Friends, be men. In your hearts remember shame. In the killing zone let each man shame the rest. That sense of shame saves more men than it kills. Those who flee help no one, and they get no glory."

Ajax spoke. The men were already keen to fight.
By now they were in among the ships, encircled by the outer row of those they'd dragged up first. But Trojans kept on pouring in. So Argives were forced to move back from the ships' first row. But they stayed in a single group beside the huts, not scattering throughout the camp, held there by shame and fear.

Hector did not stay in the well-armed Trojan group, but, like an eagle swooping down upon some flock of winged birds feeding by a river bank - wild geese or cranes or long-necked swans - he rushed straight at the dark-proved ships to take on Ajax. With his mighty hand Zeus pushed him from the back, while urging other warriors to accompany him.

Hector grabbed hold of a seaworthy ship, at the stern, the fine fast boat which brought Protesilaus to Troy, though it didn't take him back to his own native land. In close combat by this ship, Achaeans and Trojans were hacking at each other. By this point, the battle was no more a matter of standing at some distance, enduring showers of spears and arrows, but of fighting at close quarters - united by a common spirit - battling with sharp axes, hatchets, long swords, and double-bladed spears. Many lovely swords, with dark mountings, fell to earth, from hands and shoulders of those fighting warriors. Earth flowed black with blood. Hector seized hold of that ship and would not let go - gripping the ornamental marker on the stern, yelling to his Trojans:

"Bring fire. Raise a general shout. Now Zeus has given us a day that makes up for everything - to seize the ships that came here, contravening the gods' will, creating many troubles for us, because our elders in their cowardice restrained me, held back my troops, when I was keen to fight it out at the ships' sterns. But if all-seeing Zeus dulled our minds then, now he commands us, now he drives us forward."

Ajax could not hold his position any longer. Assailed by flying spears, he backed off a little, abandoning the deck on that well-balanced ship. He moved to the raised platform, seven feet high, and looked for Trojans, always jabbing with his pike, pushing from the ship any Trojan bearing tireless fire, always yelling fearful shouts at the Danaans.

---

**Book Sixteen**

**Patroclus Fights and Dies**
While the men kept on fighting at the well-decked ships, Patroclus went to Achilles, his people's shepherd, shedding warm tears, like a fountain of dark water whose stream flows over the lip of a sheer rock face. Looking at him, swift-footed, godlike Achilles felt pity. So he spoke to him - his words had wings:

"Why are you crying, Patroclus, like some girl, an infant walking beside her mother, asking to be picked up. She pulls the robe and stops her mother strolling on ahead, looking up at her in tears, until the mother lifts her up. You're crying just like that girl, Patroclus. Is there something you need to say to the Myrmidons or me? Some news that only you have heard?"

With a heavy sigh, horseman Patroclus, you then replied:

"Achilles, Peleus' son, by far the strongest of Achaeans, don't be angry with me. Such great despair has overcome the Argives. For all those who used to be the bravest warriors are lying at the ships with sword and spear wounds - powerful Diomedes, son of Tydeus, hit by a spear, famous spearman Odysseus with a stab wound, and Agamemnon, too. An arrow struck Eurypylus in the thigh. Many healers, exceptionally skilled in various medicines, are with them now, tending their wounds. But it's impossible to deal with you, Achilles. I hope anger like this rage you're nursing never seizes me. It's disastrous! How will you be of use to anyone in later generations, if you won't keep shameful ruin from the Argives? You're pitiless. Perhaps horseman Peleus was not your father, nor Thetis your mother - the gray sea delivered you, some tall cliff, for you've an unyielding heart. If your mind shuns some prophecy, or your noble mother has told you news from Zeus, at least send me, and quickly, with the others in our troop of Myrmidons. I could be a saving light for the Danaans. Give me your armour to buckle round my shoulders, so Trojans, mistaking me for you, may stop the fight."

Patroclus finished his entreaty. How wrong he was! He was praying for his own death, his dreadful fate. Swift-footed Achilles, with some heat, replied:
"My dear divinely born Patroclus, what are you saying? I'm not concerned with any prophecy I know about, nor has my noble mother said a thing from Zeus. But dreadful pain came in my heart and spirit when that man wished to cheat someone his equal and steal away that prize, and just because he's got more power. That really hurt, given that I've suffered in this war so many pains here in my chest. Achaea's sons chose that girl as my prize. I won her with my spear, once I'd destroyed her strong-walled city. Lord Agamemnon took her back, out of my hands, as if I were some stranger without honour. But let that be - it's over, done with. Besides, my spirit didn't mean to stay enraged for ever, in although I thought I wouldn't end my anger until the cries of warfare reached my ships. Come, put my famous armour on your shoulders and lead war-loving Myrmidons to battle, since black clouds of Trojans now surround the ships, expecting victory, and Argives stand crammed in by the sea shore, with little space, while a city full of Trojans comes at them without fear, because they don't see near them my helmet with its glittering front. Soon enough, they'd be running back, filling the gullies with their dead, if mighty Agamemnon treated me with kindness - but now they fight all through our camp. For there's no spear raging in the fists of Diomedes, son of Tydeus, to protect Danaans from disaster. I've not heard the voice of Agamemnon crying out in his vile head. As for Hector, that man-killer's voice echoes everywhere, shouting at Trojans, who fill all the plain with their noise, as they defeat Achaeans in this battle. Even so, Patroclus, you must stave off disaster from the fleet. Go after them in force - they may fire those ships and rob us of the journey home we crave. Now, pay attention to what I tell you about the goal I have in mind for you, so you'll win me great honour and rewards, so all Danaans will send back to me that lovely girl and give fine gifts as well. Once you push the Trojans from the ships, come back. If Zeus, Hera's mate, who loves his thunder, gives you the glory, don't keep on battling those war-loving Trojans with me absent. You would decrease my honours. Don't let the joy of fighting and of killing Trojans
lead you on to Ilion, just in case
some deathless Olympian god attacks you.
Apollo, the far-worker, loves his Trojans.
So make sure you come back here again,
once your saving light has reached our ships.
O Father Zeus, Athena, and Apollo -
if only no single Trojan or Achaean
could escape death, and just we two alone
were not destroyed, so that by ourselves
we could take Troy's sacred battlements!"  

Tell me now, you Muses living on Olympus,
how the fire first got tossed onto Achaean ships.
It was Hector. He came up close to Ajax,
then with his great sword hacked Ajax's ash spear,
right behind the point. He cut straight through it,
so Telamonian Ajax still gripped the spear,
but it was useless without its bronze spear head,
which fell some distance off, clanging on the ground.
The heart in mighty Ajax recognized gods' work.
He shuddered, for he perceived how high-thundering Zeus
was denying completely all his fighting skill,
wanting the Trojans to prevail. Ajax backed off,
out of range. Then onto that swift ship the Trojans threw
untiring fire, which spread itself immediately
in a fiery blaze that no one could extinguish.
The ship's stern started to catch fire.

At that moment,
Achilles, slapping his thighs, said to Patroclus:

"Up now,
divinely born Patroclus, master horseman.
In the ships I see destructive flames going up.
Trojans must not seize our ships and leave us
with no way to escape. Put armour on,
and quickly. I'll collect the soldiers."

Achilles spoke. Patroclus dressed in gleaming bronze.
First, he fixed on his shins the beautiful leg armour,
fitted with silver ankle clasps. Around his chest
he put on the body armour of Achilles,
swift-footed descendant of Aeacus - finely worked
and glittering like a star. On his shoulders he then slung
his bronze silver-studded sword and a large strong shield.
On his powerful head he set the famous helmet
with its horsehair crest. The plume on top nodded
full of menace. Then Patroclus took two strong spears
well fitted to his grip. He didn't choose Achilles' spear,
for no Achaean man could wield that weapon,
so heavy, huge, and strong, except for brave Achilles.
It was made of ash wood from the peak of Pelion.

Meanwhile Achilles went to and fro among the huts,
getting all his Myrmidons to arm themselves. They rushed out, like flesh-eating wolves, hearts full of unspeakable fury, beasts which in the mountains have caught and ripped apart some huge antlered stag. Then in a pack they charge off, jaws all dripping blood, to lap black surface water with their slender tongues in some dark spring, vomiting up clots of blood from their crammed bellies, while in their chests their hearts are resolute. That's how the leaders and commanders of the Myrmidons rushed around brave Patroclus, comrade of swift Achilles, Aeacus' descendant, who stood among them there, urging on the horses and the warriors carrying their shields.

[Achilles offers a libation and a prayer to Zeus.]

The armed warriors who went with brave Patroclus marched out in formation, until, with daring hearts, they charged the Trojans, immediately swarming out, like wasps beside a road, which young lads love to torment, constantly disturbing them in their roadside nests - those fools make mischief for all sorts of people.

When Trojans saw the brave son of Menoetius with his attendant, both in glittering armour, all their hearts were shaken and their ranks fell back. They thought Peleus' swift-footed son by his ships had set aside his anger and made friends again. Each man glanced around, checking how he might escape his own complete destruction.

Patroclus was the first to throw his bright spear right at the central mass where most troops clustered, by the stern part of the ship of great-hearted Protesilaus. He hit a man, Pyraechmes, who'd led Paeonian charioteers from Amydon, by the broad flowing Axius. Struck by that spear in his right shoulder, he fell down screaming on his back there in the dust. Comrades round him, his Paeonians, ran off - Patroclus terrified them, now he'd killed their leader and best fighter.

[The Achaeans rally and attack the Trojans]

The leaders then began to kill each other in the scattered fighting. First, Menoetius' brave son with his sharp spear struck Areilycus in the thigh, as he was turning. He drove the bronze straight through, breaking the bone. Areilycus fell face down in the dirt. Then warlike Menelaus hit Thoas in the chest, in a place where it was open right beside his shield. The blow collapsed his limbs. Meges, Phyleus' son, saw Amphiclus charging at him, but hit him first, spearing the top of his leg, where a man's muscle
is the thickest. The spear point sliced his tendons, and darkness closed his eyes. Then the sons of Nestor went into action. Antilochus jabbed his sharp spear at Atymnius, driving the bronze point in his side, so he fell forward. Maris, who was close by, angry about his brother, charged Antilochus holding his spear, and then stood by his brother's body. But godlike Thrasymedes moved too quickly for him. Before Maris could thrust, he lunged out at his shoulder. He didn't miss. The spear point sheared off muscle at the bottom of his arm and broke the bone in two. Maris fell with a crash, and darkness veiled his eyes. Thus, these two, slaughtered by two brothers, went off to Erebus. They'd been Sarpedon's brave companions, spearmen sons of Amisodarus - he'd reared the raging Chimera, who'd killed so many men. Ajax, son of Oileus, jumped out at Cleobulus, captured him alive, stuck in that confusion. Even so, Ajax struck him with his sword across the neck, draining his fighting strength. The sword grew warm with blood. Dark death closed up his eyes, and strong fate embraced him. Thus these Danaan leaders each killed his man. Just as ravenous mountain wolves suddenly attack young goats or lambs and seize them from the flock, when in the mountains an inattentive shepherd lets them wander off - once the wolves see them, they attack at once, for those young lack the heart to fight - that's how Danaans then went after Trojans, whose minds now turned to shameful flight, for they'd lost their will to battle on.

Hector realized the tide of victory in that fight was changing, but he stood there, trying to save his loyal companions. Just as those times a cloud comes from Olympus, moving from the upper air across the sky, when Zeus brings on a rain storm - that's how Trojans fled yelling from the ships, crossing the ditch again in complete disorder. Hector's swift-footed horses carried him and his weapons back, leaving behind, against their will, the Trojans held up at the trench dug by Achaeans. In that ditch many swift horses lost their master's chariots when poles snapped at the end.

[Patroclus pursues the fleeing Trojans]

When Patroclus had cut the Trojans' front ranks off, he pushed them back again towards the ships, keeping them from the city they were trying to reach. Between the ships, the river, and the lofty wall, in that middle ground, he kept charging at them, killing them, avenging deaths of many comrades. There he first struck Pronous with his shining spear,
where Pronous' shield had left his chest exposed. His limbs gave way, and he fell down with a thud. Patroclus next rushed at Thestor, son of Enops, who just sat crouching in his polished chariot, paralyzed with terror, reins slipping from his hands. Coming up, Patroclus struck him with his spear right on the jawbone, smashing through his teeth. Patroclus pulled his spear back, dragging Thestor out across the chariot rail. Just as a man sitting on a rocky point hauls up a monstrous fish out of the sea, using a line and bright bronze hook - that's how Patroclus dragged Thestor from his chariot, mouth skewered on the shining spear. He threw him down, face first. As Thestor fell, his spirit abandoned him. Then Erylaus rushed up, but Patroclus struck him with a rock right on his head, smashing the entire skull inside his heavy helmet. Erylaus collapsed on the ground face down.

Death, who destroys men's hearts, flowed all around Patroclus, as he slaughtered Erymas, Amphoterus, Epaltes, Tlepolemus, son of Damastor, Echius, Pyris, Ipheus, Euippus, and Polymelus, son of Argeas - all these Patroclus laid out, one by one, on the earth, which nourishes all men.

[Sarpedon moves out against Patroclus and is killed. The Achaeans charge on against the Trojans retreating back towards the city with Patroclus in pursuit.]

At that point Achaea's sons would have captured Troy and its high gates, at Patroclus' hands, as he raged with his frenzied spear, but for Phoebus Apollo, who stood there on the well-built wall, intending to destroy Patroclus and assist the Trojans. Three times Patroclus started to climb up a corner on that high wall. Three times Apollo shoved him back, his immortal hands repelling the bright shield. But when Patroclus, for the fourth time, came on like some god, Apollo, with a terrific cry, shouted these winged words at him:

"Go back, divinely born Patroclus. This city of proud Trojans, according to its fate, will not be ravaged by your spear, nor even by Achilles, a far better man than you."

Apollo spoke. Patroclus drew back a little, evading the anger of Apollo, the far shooter.

Then Patroclus launched a charge against the Trojans, intent on slaughter. Three times he assaulted them, like war god Ares, with terrific shouts. Three times
he killed nine men. But when he attacked a fourth time, then, Patroclus, you saw your life end. For Phoebus, a terrible god, in that grim fight came up against you. Patroclus failed to see Apollo, as he moved through the confusion, for he advanced towards him hidden in thick mist. Apollo stood behind him.

Then with the flat of his hand, he struck Patroclus on his back, on his broad shoulders - that made his eyes lose focus. Next, Phoebus Apollo knocked the helmet from his head. The horsehair crest rolled with a clatter under horses' feet. The dust and blood then stained the helmet's plumes. Up to that time, gods had not let that helmet with its horsehair plume get smudged with dirt, for it was always guarding godlike Achilles' head, his noble forehead, too. Later Zeus awarded it
to Hector to carry on his head, as his death loomed.

In Patroclus' hands, his heavy long-shadowed spear, thick and strong, with its bronze point, was completely smashed. His tasseled shield and strap fell from his shoulders down on the ground. Next, Apollo, Zeus' son, loosened the body armour on Patroclus. His mind went blank, his fine limbs grew limp - he stood there in a daze. From close behind, Euphorbus, son of Panthous, a Dardan warrior, hit him in the back, with a sharp spear between the shoulder blades.

Euphorbus surpassed all men the same age as him in spear throwing, horsemanship, and speed on foot. He'd already knocked twenty men out of their chariots, and that was the first time he'd come with his own chariot to learn something of war. Pulling the spear out of Patroclus' flesh, Euphorbus ran back again to blend in with the throng. He didn't stand his ground, even though Patroclus had no weapons for a fight. So Patroclus, overwhelmed by the god's blow and spear, withdrew, back to the group of his companions, avoiding death.

But when Hector noticed brave Patroclus going back, wounded by sharp bronze, he moved up through the ranks, stood close to Patroclus and struck him with his spear, low in the stomach, driving the bronze straight through. Patroclus fell with a crash, and Achaea's army was filled with anguish. Just as a lion overcomes a tireless wild boar in combat, when both beasts fight bravely in the mountains over a small spring where they both want to drink, and the lion's strength brings down the panting boar - that's how Hector, moving close in with his spear, destroyed the life of Menoetius' noble son, who'd killed so many men. His spirit fluttered from his limbs and went to Hades, lamenting its own fate, the loss of youthful manhood.

---

Book Seventeen
The Fight Over Patroclus

Once Hector had killed Patroclus and stripped off the famous armour from the corpse, he then tried to drag away the body, so with his sharp bronze he could hack Patroclus' head from off its shoulders, then pull back the corpse to give to Trojan dogs. But Ajax moved in close with his shield up, like a wall. So Hector gave ground, withdrawing to the company of his companions, then jumped up in his chariot. Then, with a great shout, he called out to his Trojans:

"Trojans, Lycians, Dardan spearmen, be men, my friends. Recall your battle fury, until I can put on the lovely armour of great Achilles, which I stripped off the great Patroclus, once I'd killed him."

With these words, Hector of the shining helmet left that furious conflict and strode quickly off. Then, standing apart from that dreadful fight, he changed his armour. He gave his own equipment to war-loving Trojans to carry to the city, sacred Ilion, then put on the immortal armour of Achilles, son of Peleus, which heavenly gods had given to Achilles' well-loved father.

From far away, cloud-gatherer Zeus gazed down on Hector, as he dressed himself in the battle armour of Peleus' godlike son. Shaking his head, Zeus then spoke to his own heart:

"You poor wretch, you're not considering your own death at all - it's getting closer. So you're putting on the immortal armour of the finest man, who makes other men afraid. You've just killed his comrade, a kind, courageous man, and then vainly stripped the armour off his head and shoulders. But for the moment, I'll give you great power, to compensate you, since you'll not be coming back from battle, or handing over to Andromache the glorious armour of the son of Peleus."

The son of Cronos spoke, then nodded his dark brow. He changed the armour so it suited Hector's body. Then the fearful war god Ares entered Hector, filling his limbs with strength and courage. He set off, to the tremendous shouts of all his famous allies, as he paraded there in front of them, dazzling them all with the armour of the great-hearted son of Peleus.

[The fight over the corpse of Patroclus continues, with many warriors falling on both sides]
Throughout that entire day the great combat raged, a bitter conflict. The men kept toiling on without a pause, sweat dripping on their knees and legs, under their feet, and running down men's eyes and hands, as both sides battled over swift-footed Achilles' brave companion. Trojans sought to drag the corpse back to Ilion, Achaians to their hollow ships. Around Patroclus the conflict grew intense. Neither Ares nor Athena, who incite warriors to battle, if they'd seen that fight, would have disparaged it, not even if they'd been intensely angry. That's how destructive Zeus made the conflict for men and horses that day men fought over Patroclus.

Godlike Achilles, at this time, knew nothing of Patroclus' death, for they were fighting under the walls of Troy, away from the fast ships. He'd never imagined in his heart that Patroclus was dead. He thought he was alive and would return.

[The fighting over the dead body continues.]

Then Ajax spoke to Menelaus, skilled at war shouts:

"Look now, divinely raised Menelaus, see if you can spot Antilochus alive, son of great-hearted Nestor. Get him to go with speed to rouse up fiery Achilles, by telling him his companion, the man he loves the most by far, has just been killed."

Ajax spoke. Menelaus, expert at war shouts, agreed. He issued many orders to Meriones to the Ajaxes, as well:

"You two Ajaxes, Argive leaders, and you, Meriones, let each man bear in mind the kindnesses of poor Patroclus, who, when he was alive, knew how to treat every man with care. Now fatal death has overtaken him."

With these words, fair-haired Menelaus went away, glancing warily in all directions, like an eagle, which, men say, has the sharpest sight of all the animals flying in the sky - a bird which, while soaring high, doesn't miss the swiftly running hare crouched down under a leafy bush, and, swooping low, seizes it at once, and then tears out its life - that's how, Menelaus, raised by gods, your bright eyes kept searching all around through groups of many comrades, seeking Nestor's son, to see if he was still alive. Then Menelaus, quickly seeing him on the left flank of the battle encouraging his companions, urging them to fight,
came up to him. Then fair-haired Menelaus said:

"Divinely raised Antilochus, come here,
so you can learn the painful news, something
I wish had never happened. You already know,
I think, for your own eyes can see it,
how some god is rolling this disaster
over the Danaans, giving victory
to the Trojans. The best Achaean,
Patroclus, has been slaughtered, a huge loss
for the Danaans, who miss him badly.
You must run quickly to Achaean ships
to tell Achilles, so he can bring the corpse
in safety to his ship - the naked body,
for now Hector of the gleaming helmet
wears his armour."

Menelaus finished speaking.
Hearing that news, Antilochus was overwhelmed.
For a long time he stood in shock, speechless. His eyes
filled up with tears, his strong voice failed. But even so,
he did not neglect what Menelaus told him.
Giving his armour to his noble comrade
he set off on the run. As he wept, his swift feet
took him from the battle, bearing the bad news
back to Achilles, son of Peleus.

Book Eighteen

The Arms of Achilles

As the men fought on like a blazing fire raging,
swift-footed Antilochus came to Achilles
with his news. He found Achilles by his beaked ship,
sensing in himself what had already happened.
Noble Nestor's son approached, shedding warm tears.
He told him the agonizing truth:

"Son of warlike Peleus,
you must hear this dreadful news - something
I wish weren't so - Patroclus lies dead.
Men are fighting now around the body.
He's stripped. Hector with his gleaming helmet
has the armour."

Antilochus finished speaking.
A black cloud of grief swallowed up Achilles.
With both hands he scooped up soot and dust and poured it
on his head, covering his handsome face with dirt,
covering his sweet-smelling tunic with black ash.
He lay sprawling - his mighty warrior's massive body
collapsed and stretched out in the dust. With his hands,
he tugged at his own hair, disfiguring himself.
The women slaves acquired as battle trophies
by Achilles and Patroclus, hearts overwhelmed
with anguish, began to scream aloud. They rushed outside
and beat their breasts around warlike Achilles.
Then all the women's legs gave way, and they fell down.
Across from them, Antilochus lamented,
eyes full of tears, as he held Achilles by the hand.
Achilles' noble heart moaned aloud. Antilochus
feared he might hurt himself or slit his throat
with his own sword. Achilles gave a huge cry of grief.
His noble mother heard it from the ocean depths
where she was sitting by her ancient father.
Thetis left the cave. Her sisters went with her in tears.
Around them sea waves parted, until they came
to fertile Troy. They emerged, climbing up on shore,
one after another, right where the Myrmidons
had dragged up their ships in close-packed formation
near swift Achilles. Then his noble mother moved
beside him, as he was groaning bitterly.
With a sharp cry, she cradled her son's head, then spoke.
As she grieved, she spoke to him - her words had wings:

"My child, why are you crying? What sorrow now
has come into your heart? Speak out. Hide nothing.
Zeus has given you what you begged him to
to when you stretched your hands out to him -
all Achaea's sons by their ships' sterns
are hemmed in there, desperate for your help
and suffering a terrible ordeal."

With a heavy groan,
swift-footed Achilles then answered Thetis:

"Yes, Mother,
Olympian Zeus has indeed accomplished
what I asked. But what pleasure's there for me,
when Patroclus, my beloved companion,
has been destroyed, the man I honoured
as my equal, above all my comrades.
I've lost him and the armour, which Hector took,
once he'd killed him, that massive armour,
so wonderful to look at, which the gods
gave as a priceless gift to Peleus
on that day they placed you in the bed
of a mortal man. If only you had stayed
among the eternal maidens of the sea
and Peleus had married a mortal wife.
But now there'll be innumerable sorrows
waiting for your heart, once your child is killed.
You won't be welcoming him back home again.
My own heart has no desire to live on,
to continue living among men,
unless Hector is hit by my spear first,
losing his life and paying me compensation for killing Menoetius' son, Patroclus."

Through her tears, Thetis then answered Achilles:

"My son, from what you've just been saying, you're fated to an early death, for your doom comes quickly as soon as Hector dies."

Swift-footed Achilles answered her with passion:

"Then let me die, since I could not prevent the death of my companion. He's fallen far from his homeland. He needed me there to protect him from destruction. So now, since I'm not returning to my own dear land, and for Patroclus was no saving light or for my many other comrades, all those killed by godlike Hector while I sat here by the ships, a useless burden on the earth - and I'm unmatched in warfare by any other Achaean armed in bronze, although in council other men are better - so let wars disappear from gods and men and passionate anger, too, which incites even the prudent man to that sweet rage, sweeter than trickling honey in men's throats, which builds up like smoke inside their chests, as Agamemnon, king of men, just now, made me enraged. But we'll let that pass. For all the pain I feel, I'll suppress the heart within my chest, as I must. So now I'll go to meet Hector, killer of the man I loved. As for my own fate, let it come to me when Zeus and the other deathless gods determine. For not even strong Hercules, the man Lord Zeus, son of Cronos, loved the most, escaped his death. He was destroyed by Fate and by malicious Hera's anger, too. And so for me. If a like fate has been set, then once I'm dead, I'll just lie there. But for now, let me seize great glory - let me make so many Trojan and Dardan matrons weep, and with both hands wipe tears from their soft cheeks, and set them on to constant lamentation, so that they'll know I've long refrained from war. Don't keep me from battle. Though you love me, you'll not convince me."

Silver-footed Thetis then said to Achilles:

"My child, what you say is true - it's no bad thing to protect companions
when they're in trouble from complete disaster. But now the Trojans have your lovely armour, all your glittering bronze. It's on the shoulders of Hector with the shining helmet - he boasts about it. But I don't think his triumph will last long, since his death is coming closer. But you must not rejoin Ares' conflict until with your own eyes you see me in the morning here again. I'll return at sunrise, and I'll bring you lovely armour made by lord Hephaestus."

Then the silver-footed goddess Thetis went away to fetch that lovely armour from Olympus for her beloved son.

As Thetis' feet carried her towards Olympus, Achaeans were running back, with a huge noise, fleeing man-killing Hector, until they reached their ships beside the Hellespont. But those well-armed Achaeans couldn't extricate Achilles' comrade, dead Patroclus, from the spears, for they'd been overtaken by Trojan warriors and chariots once again, with Hector, Priam's son, as furious as fire. Three times glorious Hector, from behind, seized the corpse's feet, keen to drag it off, shouting furiously to his Trojans. Three times, the two Ajaxes, clothed in their full battle strength, beat him from the corpse. But Hector kept on coming without a pause, confident of his fighting power.

Then Achilles, loved by Zeus, moved into action. Around his powerful shoulders Athena set her tasselled aegis. Then the lovely goddess wrapped his head up in a golden cloud, so from him a fiery light blazed out right up to heaven. He strode from the wall, then stood there by the ditch. But recalling what his mother said to him, he didn't mingle with Achaeans. As he stood there, he cried out. From far away, Pallas Athena added her voice, too, causing great consternation among the Trojans. As thrilling as a trumpet's note when it rings clearly, when rapacious enemies besiege a city - that's how sharp and piercing Achilles' voice was then. When the Trojans heard it, that brazen shout Achilles gave, all their hearts were shaken. Their horses with the lovely manes turned back the chariots, anticipating trouble in their hearts. Charioteers were terrified, seeing the fearful inextinguishable fire blazing from the head of the great-hearted son of Peleus. For Athena, goddess with the glittering eyes, kept it burning. Three times godlike Achilles yelled across that ditch. Achaeans then, with stronger hearts,
pulled Patroclus out of spear range and laid him on a cot. His dear companions gathered mourning round him, Achilles with them, shedding hot tears when he saw his loyal companion lying on a death bed, mutilated by sharp bronze. He'd sent him out to war with chariot and horses, but never welcomed him at his return.

Then ox-eyed queen Hera
made the unwearied sun, against his will, go down into the stream of Ocean. So the sun set.

Godlike Achaeans now could pause for some relief from the destructive killing of impartial war.

For their part, once Trojans drew back from that harsh fight, they untied swift horses from their chariots and then, before they thought of food, called for a meeting. There everyone stayed standing. No one dared sit down, all terrified because Achilles had appeared, after his long absence from that savage conflict.
The first to speak was Polydamas, Panthous' son,

"My friends, consider both sides of this issue.
For my part, I advise us to return into the city - we should not stay here, on the plain, waiting for dawn beside the ships. Personally, I was glad to spend the night by their swift ships, hoping then we'd capture those curved vessels. But now I really have a dreadful fear of Peleus' swift-footed son. He has a reckless heart - he's not a man to rest content in the middle of the plain, where Trojans and Achaeans have a share of Ares' battle fury. So let's go back, return into the city. Trust me when I say that's how things will go. For now, sacred night has stopped the swift-footed son of Peleus. But if tomorrow he moves into action fully armed and encounters us still here, we'll recognize him well enough. Anyone who gets away and makes it back to Ilion will be a happy man. For dogs and vultures will eat many Trojans. I don't want to hear that such events have happened. If we all follow my advice, although reluctantly, tonight we'll collect our forces in one group. Walls, high gates, and doors with fitted planks, polished and bolted shut, will guard the city."

With a scowl, Hector of the flashing helmet then replied:

"Polydamas, what you say displeases me - you tell us to run back into the city and stay inside it. Haven't you already
been cooped up long enough within those walls?
But now, when the son of crooked-minded Cronos
allows me to win glory by the ships,
hemming the Achaeans in beside the sea,
this is no time, you fool, to say such things
before the people. Not a single Trojan
will take your advice. I won't permit it.
But come, let's all follow now what I suggest.
You must take dinner at your stations
all through the army, making sure you watch.

Tomorrow morning early, right at dawn,
we'll fully arm ourselves with weapons,
then take keen battle to those hollow ships.
If indeed it's true that lord Achilles
is returning to that battle by the ships,
if he wants that, so much the worse for him.
I won't run from him in painful battle,
but stand against him, fighting face to face,
whether great victory goes to him or me.
In war the odds are equal, and the man
who seeks to kill may well be killed himself."

Hector spoke. The Trojans roared out in response.
The fools! Pallas Athena had robbed them of their wits.

Meanwhile, Achaeans mourned Patroclus all night long
with their elegies. Among them, Peleus' son
began the urgent lamentations, placing
his murderous hands on the chest of his companion.
Achilles, amid his groans, addressed his Myrmidons:

"Alas, what a useless promise I made then,
the day I tried to cheer Menoetius up
at home, telling him when I'd sacked Ilion,
I'd bring his splendid son back there to him,
But Zeus does not bring to fulfillment
all things which men propose. Now both of us
share a common fate, to redden the same earth
right here in Troy. Old horseman Peleus
will not be welcoming me at my return
back to his home, nor will my mother Thetis.
For in this place the earth will cover me.
And now, Patroclus, since I'm journeying
under the earth after you, I'll postpone
your burial till I bring here Hector's head,
his armour, too, the man who slaughtered you,
you courageous man. I'll cut the throats
of twelve fine Trojan children on your pyre,
in my anger at your killing. Till that time,
you'll lie like this with me by my beaked ships,
and round you Trojan and Dardanian women
will keep lamenting night and day, shedding tears,
the very women we two worked hard to win
with our strength and our long spears, by looting
prosperous cities of mortal men."

After these words, godlike Achilles told his comrades to place a large tripod on the fire, so they could wash the blood clots from his comrade's corpse. On the blazing fire, they set a cauldron with three legs, poured water in it, then brought split wood to burn below the water. Fire licked the cauldron's belly and made the water hot. Once it had boiled inside the shining bronze, they washed him, rubbed oil thickly over him, and filled his wounds with ointment nine years old. Then they placed Patroclus on a bed, covering him with a fine woolen cloth from head to foot, and a white cloak on the cloth. Then all night long, the Myrmidons around swift-footed Achilles mourned Patroclus with their lamentations.

Meanwhile, silver-footed Thetis reached Hephaestus' home. Hephaestus came limping up to Thetis and sat down in a shining chair. Then, clasping her hand, he spoke:

"Long-robed Thetis, why have you come here, to our house, an honoured welcome guest? To this point, you haven't come here often. But say what's on your mind. My heart tells me I shall do it, if I can accomplish it, if it's something that can be carried out."

Thetis answered him in tears:

"Oh, Hephaestus, is there any goddess on Olympus who's suffered so much painful sorrow in her heart to equal the unhappiness that Zeus, son of Cronos, loads on me more than any other god? He gave me a son to bear and raise as an outstanding warrior. And that's the reason why I've come here now, asking at your knees if you'd be willing to give my son, who is fated to die soon, a shield, helmet, good leg armour fitted with ankle clasps, and body armour, too. His previous equipment was all taken when Trojans killed his loyal companion. Now my son lies in the dust, heart filled with pain."

The famous crippled god then answered Thetis:

"Cheer up. Don't let these things afflict your heart. I wish I could hide him from distressful death, when his cruel fate arrives, as surely as I know there'll be fine armour for him - such splendid armour that it will astound all the many men who chance to see it."
With these words, Hephaestus left her there, going to start his bellows. He directed them right at the fire, then told them to start working. So the bellows, twenty in all, started blowing on the crucibles, each one emitting just the right amount of air, sometimes blowing hard to help when he was busy, sometimes gently, whatever way Hephaestus wished, so his work could go ahead. He threw on the fire enduring bronze and tin, precious gold and silver. Next, he placed the great anvil on its block, took up a massive hammer in one hand and in the other his tongs.

The first thing he created was a huge and sturdy shield, all wonderfully crafted. Around its outer edge, he fixed a triple rim, glittering in the light, attaching to it a silver carrying strap. The shield had five layers. On the outer one, with his great skill he fashioned many rich designs. There he hammered out the earth, the heavens, the sea, the untiring sun, the moon at the full, along with every constellation which crowns the heavens - the Pleiades, the Hyades, mighty Orion, and the Bear, which some people call the Wain, always circling in the same position, watching Orion, the only stars that never bathe in Ocean stream.

Then he created two splendid cities of mortal men. In one, there were feasts and weddings. By the light of blazing torches, people were leading the brides out from their homes and through the town to loud music of the bridal song. There were young lads dancing, whirling to the constant tunes of flutes and lyres, while all the women stood beside their doors, staring in admiration.

Then the people gathered in the assembly, for a dispute had taken place. Two men were arguing about blood-money owed for a murdered man. One claimed he'd paid in full, setting out his case before the people, but the other was refusing any compensation. Both were keen to get the judgment from an arbitration. The crowd there cheered them on, some supporting one, some the other, while heralds kept the throng controlled. Meanwhile, elders were sitting there on polished stones in the sacred circle, holding in their hands the staffs they'd taken from the clear-voiced heralds. With those they'd stand up there and render judgment, each in his turn. In the centre lay two golden talents, to be awarded to the one among them all who delivered the most righteous verdict.

The second city was surrounded by two armies, soldiers with glittering weapons. They were discussing
two alternatives, each one pleasing some of them - whether to attack that city and plunder it, or to accept as payment half of all the goods contained in that fair town. But those under siege who disagreed were arming for a secret ambush. Their dear wives and children stood up on the walls as a defence, along with those too old to fight. The rest were leaving, led on by Pallas Athena and Ares, both made of gold, dressed in golden clothes, large, beautiful, and armed - as is suitable for gods. They stood out above the smaller people with them. When the soldiers reached a spot which seemed all right for ambush, a place beside a river where the cattle came to drink, they stopped there, covered in shining bronze. Two scouts were stationed some distance from that army, waiting to catch sight of sheep and short-horned cattle. These soon appeared, followed by two herdsmen playing their flutes and not anticipating any danger. But those lying in ambush saw them and rushed out, quickly cutting off the herds of cattle and fine flocks of white-fleeced sheep, killing the herdsmen with them. When the besiegers sitting in their meeting place heard the great commotion coming from the cattle, they quickly climbed up behind their prancing horses and set out. They soon caught up with those attackers. Then they organized themselves for battle and fought along the river banks, men hitting one another with bronze-tipped spears. Strife and Confusion joined the fight, along with cruel Death, who seized one wounded man while still alive and then another man without a wound, while pulling the feet of one more corpse out from the fight. The clothes Death wore around her shoulders were dyed red with human blood. They even joined the slaughter as living mortals, fighting there and hauling off the bodies of dead men which each of them had killed.

On that shield Hephaestus next set a soft and fallow field, fertile spacious farmland, which had been ploughed three times. Many labourers were wheeling ploughs across it, moving back and forth. As they reached the field's edge, they turned, and a man came up to offer them a cup of wine as sweet as honey. Then they'd turn back, down the furrow, eager to move through that deep soil and reach the field's edge once again. The land behind them was black, looking as though it had just been ploughed, though it was made of gold - an amazing piece of work!

Then he pictured on the shield a king's landed estate, where harvesters were reaping corn, using sharp sickles. Armfuls of corn were falling on the ground in rows, one after the other. Binders were tying them up in sheaves with twisted straw. Three binders stood there. Behind the reapers, boys were gathering the crop, bringing it to sheaf-binders, keeping them occupied.
Among them stood the king, a sceptre in his hand, there by the stubble, saying nothing, but with pleasure in his heart. Some distance off, under an oak tree, heralds were setting up a feast, dressing a huge ox which they'd just killed. Women were sprinkling white barley on the meat in large amounts for the workers' meal.

Next, Hephaestus placed on that shield a vineyard, full of grapes made of splendid gold. The grapes were black, the poles supporting vines throughout were silver. Around it, he made a ditch of blue enamel, around that, a fence of tin. A single path led in, where the grape pickers came and went at harvest time. Young girls and carefree lads with wicker baskets were carrying off a crop as sweet as honey. In the middle of them all, a boy with a clear-toned lyre played pleasant music, singing the Song of Linos, in his delicate fine voice. His comrades kept time, beating the ground behind him, singing and dancing.

Then he set on the shield a herd of straight-horned cattle, with cows crafted out of gold and tin. They were lowing as they hurried out from farm to pasture land, beside a rippling river lined with waving reeds. The herdsman walking by the cattle, four of them, were also made of gold. Nine swift-footed dogs ran on behind. But there, at the front of the herd, two fearful lions had seized a bellowing bull. They were dragging him off, as he roared aloud. The dogs and young men were chasing after them. The lions, after ripping open the great ox's hide, were gorging on its entrails, on its black blood, as herdsmen kept trying in vain to chase them off, setting their swift dogs on them. But, fearing the lions, the dogs kept turning back before they nipped them, and stood there barking, close by but out of reach.

Then the famous crippled god created there a pasture in a lovely valley bottom, an open ground for white-fleeced sheep, sheep folds, roofed huts, and pens.

Next on that shield, the celebrated lame god made an elaborately crafted dancing floor, like the one Daedalus created long ago in spacious Cnossus, for Ariadne with the lovely hair. On that floor, young men and women whose bride price would require many cattle were dancing, holding onto one another by the wrists. The girls wore fine linen dresses, the men lightly rubbed with oil wore woven tunics. On their heads the girls had lovely flower garlands. The men were carrying gold daggers on silver straps. They turned with such a graceful ease on skilful feet, just as a potter sits with a wheel between his hands, testing it, to make sure that it runs smoothly.
Then they would line up and run towards each other. A large crowd stood around, enjoying the dancing magic, as in the middle two acrobats led on the dance, springing, and whirling, and tumbling.

On that shield, Hephaestus then depicted Ocean, the mighty river, flowing all around the outer edge.

When he'd created that great and sturdy shield, he fashioned body armour brighter than blazing fire, a heavy helmet shaped to fit Achilles' temples, beautiful and finely worked, with a gold crest on top. Then he made him leg guards of finely hammered tin.

When the famous lame god had made all the armour, he took it and set it there before Achilles' mother. Then, like a hawk, she sped down from Olympus, carrying the gleaming armour of Hephaestus.

---

**Book Nineteen**

**Achilles and Agamemnon**

When Dawn in her yellow robe rose from Ocean's stream, Thetis reached the ships bearing Hephaestus' gifts. She found her dear son lying beside Patroclus, crying bitterly. Many of his companions mourned around him. The noble goddess went to them. Standing by Achilles, she clasped his hand, then said:

"My son, we must let this man lie here,
for all our grief. He's dead once and for all.
It's the gods' will. Now you must accept
this splendid armour from Hephaestus -
no man has ever had such gorgeous armour
to wear around his shoulders."

With these words, the goddess set the armour down before Achilles. The wonderfully crafted metal rang out loudly. Fear gripped all the Myrmidons. They shrank away. But when Achilles saw them, his anger grew. His eyes glared underneath his eyelids, like a fire - a terrifying light. But as his hands went over the god's priceless gifts, he felt great joy. He gazed at them, filling his heart with pleasure at the rich designs.

Then he spoke to his mother - his words had wings:

"Mother, this armour the god has given me
is a work fit for the immortals, something
no living human could create. So now,
I'll arm myself for war."
Achilles, like a god,
strode down along the seashore, raising fearful shouts,
stirring Achaean warriors into action.
So even those who up to now used to remain
with the assembled ships - helmsmen who worked
ships' steering oars and stewards who stayed with the ships' rationing provisions - these men all showed up
for the assembly, because Achilles had appeared
after his long absence. Once all Achaeans
were assembled, swift-footed Achilles rose to speak:

"Son of Atreus, has it been good for us,
for you and me, to continue squabbling
in a heart-rending quarrel full of grief
for both of us, over some girl? I wish
she'd been killed by Artemis' arrow
right beside my ships, the day I got her
as my prize, after we destroyed Lyrnessus.
Fewer Achaeans would have sunk their teeth
into this wide earth at enemy hands,
if I'd not been so angry. That's really helped
lord Hector and his Trojans. But Achaeans,
will, I think, long recall this argument
you and I have had. Still, though it hurts,
we should let all this pass, repressing hearts
within our chests - we must do that. So now,
I end my anger. It's not appropriate
for me to remain enraged for ever.
But come, quickly urge long-haired Achaeans
on to battle, so I may go out once again
to face the Trojans and see if they still wish
to spend the night beside our ships. I think
many of them will be glad to get some rest,
the ones who escape this deadly war
and who evade my spear."

[Agamemnon and Achilles are reconciled. Agamemnon gets Odysseus to produce the gifts for Achilles and to return Briseis to him.]

Achaeans then came swarming out from their fast ships.
Just as freezing snowflakes fall thick and fast from Zeus,
driven by the raging sky-born North Wind - that's how
crowds of them streamed out then, pouring from the ships -
brightly gleaming helmets, strong-plated body armour,
ash spears and embossed shields - the glitter of it all
flashed up to heaven. All around, earth chuckled
to see that gleaming bronze. A noise like thunder rose,
drummed by the soldier's marching feet. Amid them all,
noble Achilles armed himself for battle,
his teeth clenched, eyes blazing with a fiery light,
his heart filled with a sorrow not to be endured.
As he pulled on the divine gifts which Hephaestus
had made for him, he raged against the Trojans.
First, he strapped on his leg armour, beautifully made,
fitted with silver ankle clasps. Then on his chest
he fixed the body armour. Around his shoulders,
he slung his bronze silver-studded sword, then picked up
his huge strong shield which, like the moon, shone everywhere.
Just like the blazing light that sailors glimpse at sea
from a fire burning in some isolated farm,
high in the mountains, as winds blow them further out,
taking them against their will over the fish-filled seas
away from loved ones - that's how Achilles' shield,
so finely crafted, burned out far into the sky.
Then raising the great helmet, he set it on his head.
It glittered like a star, that helmet with its horse-hair plumes,
adorned with the golden hairs Hephaestus placed
so thickly round the crest. Then from its case,
he took his father's spear, heavy, huge, and strong.
No other Achaeans could control that spear.
He was the only one with skill enough to wield it.

Automedon and Alcinous kept themselves occupied
yoking the horses, tying fine chest straps round them,
setting bits inside their jaws, and aligning reins
back in the well-made chariot. Taking the shining whip
which fit his grip, Automedon jumped in the chariot.
Achilles, fully armed, climbed up beside him,
his armour gleaming like dazzling Hyperion.
Then he called out to those horses of his father,
in a terrifying voice:

"Xanthus, Balius,
you famous children of Podarge, this time
make sure you bring your charioteer back safely
to the Danaan army, once we've had enough
of battle. Don't leave him out there slaughtered,
as you did Patroclus."

From under the yoke,
his swift-footed horse called Xanthus spoke to him,
ducking his head down quickly, so all his mane
streamed down from underneath his shoulder harness
beside the yoke towards the ground. Goddess Hera
gave Xanthus power to speak:

"Mighty Achilles,
on this occasion we will bring you safely back.
But the day you'll die is fast approaching.
We won't be the cause, but some mighty god
and a strong fate. It was not our laziness
or lack of speed which helped the Trojans
strip that armour from Patroclus' shoulders.
A powerful god born to Leto killed him
among those fighting at the battle front,
then gave Hector glory. The two of us
could run as quickly as the West Wind's blasts -
m en say they are the fastest thing there is -
your fate still stays the same, to die in war,  
killed by a mortal and a god."

Once Xanthus had said this,  
the Erinyes removed his voice. Then Achilles,  
in a fury, said to his horse:

"Xanthus,  
why do you prophesy my death? There is no need.  
I know well enough I'm fated to die here,  
far from my loving parents. No matter.  
I will not stop till I have driven the Trojans  
to the limit of what they can endure in war."

With these words, he drove his sure-footed horses off,  
speeding forward to the front and screaming as he went.

---

**Book Twenty**

**Achilles Returns to Battle**

*Achilles goes into the front lines against the Trojans. Zeus tells the gods they may now join in, and they leave Olympus for the war, different gods on different sides*

As long as the gods were far away from mortal men,  
Achaeans won the glory, since Achilles  
had come back, after staying away from war so long.  
For every Trojan's limbs were seized with trembling fear  
when they observed him there, swift son of Peleus  
in that blazing armour, like man-killing Ares.  
But once Olympians mingled in the crowds of soldiers,  
then mighty Strife, who stirs men up in battle,  
went into action, while Athena kept on shouting,  
sometimes standing by the ditch they'd dug beyond the wall,  
sometimes yelling out beside the roaring sea shore.  
On the other side, like a black whirlwind, Ares  
kept shouting out his piercing orders to the Trojans.

But of all warriors in that fighting crowd, Achilles  
was most eager to meet Hector, son of Priam.  
His spirit urged him to glut Ares, warrior god  
with the bull's hide shield, on Hector's blood, more so  
than on the blood of any other man.

*Aeneas and Achilles fight. Achilles wounds Aeneas, who is rescued by Poseidon. Achilles continues fighting.*

Giving a blood-curdling scream, Achilles leapt  
among the Trojans, his heart wrapped in battle fury.  
First he killed Iphition, Otrynteus' brave son,  
who commanded many men. A Naiad nymph bore him  
to Otrynteus, sacker of cities, in Hyde,  
a fertile land, below snow-covered Mount Tmolus.  
As he charged right at him, godlike Achilles
struck Iphition with his spear squarely in the head, splitting his skull apart. He fell with a crash.
Achilles triumphed. But down on Iphition's eyes, the darkness fell, and then, in the first attack, Achaean wheel rims on the chariots ripped him up.

After him, Achilles went for Demoleon, Antenor's son, a brave defensive fighter, hitting the bronze cheek armour on his helmet. But that didn't check the spear - it smashed through, breaking his skull, splattering all his brains inside. That stopped his fighting charge. Then Hippodamas jumped down out of his chariot to flee Achilles. But Achilles speared him in the back. As he died, panting his life away, he screamed - just as a bull roars, when it's pulled around the altar of Poseidon.

Then he struck Dryops with his spear right in the neck. Dryops fell at Achilles' feet. But he left him there. Next, Achilles stopped Demouchus, Philetor's son, a big brave warrior, with a spear thrust in his knee. Then he hit him with his massive sword, taking his life. After that, he went at Dardanus and Laogonus, both sons of Bias, throwing them out of their chariot onto the ground. He hit one of them with his spear and slashed the other at close quarters with his sword.

Then Tros, Alastor's son, fell at Achilles' knees, clutching them, begging him to spare his life, to capture him alive, instead of killing him, moved by pity for a man the same age as himself. What a fool! He did not know there was no way to change Achilles' mind - he was not a tender man with a soft heart, but full of fighting rage. With his hands Tros tried to clutch Achilles' knees, desperate to plead for mercy, but Achilles' sword struck him in his liver, which slid out from the wound. Black blood, pouring from the gash, filled up his lap. Then darkness veiled his eyes, and his spirit left him.

Next, Achilles moved up to Mulius and with his spear struck him on the ear. The bronze point, driven in hard, came out his other ear. Then he hit Echeclus, Agenor's son, with his hilted sword right on his head. The blood made the whole blade hot. Then dark death, his powerful fate, came down across his eyes. Next, Achilles hit Deucalion - his bronze spear point struck him in the arm where tendons meet the elbow. His arm now useless, Deucalion stood there waiting, staring death right in the face. Achilles hit him with his sword blade in the neck, slicing off his head. He knocked the head and the helmet far away. From Deucalion's spine the marrow spurted out, as his body lay there, stretched out on the ground.
Just as a terrifying fire rages through deep woods
on a parched mountain, burning dense stands of trees,
as the driving wind blows flames to every spot,
that how Achilles, like a god, raged with his spear,
attacking and killing men all through the fight.
The dark earth ran with blood. Just as a man yokes oxen,
big bulls, wide in the shoulder, to grind barley
on a well-built threshing floor, and lowing oxen
quickly flatten all the grain, that how brave Achilles
drove his sure-footed horses to trample on the dead
and on their shields as well. The chariot axle underneath
got sprayed with blood. Blood soaked the chariot rails,
thrown up in gouts from horses' hooves and wheel rims.
But Peleus' son pushed on to win more glory,
blood spattered over his all-conquering hands.

Book Twenty-One

Achilles At the River

When the Trojans reached the ford across the Xanthus,
the lovely swirling river born of immortal Zeus,
Achilles split them in two groups, chasing one
across the plain towards the city, where the previous day
Achaeans had fled in terror, when glorious Hector
had prevailed. Some Trojans fled back there in panic.
Hera sent fog in front of them to slow them down.
But half the Trojans were crammed in along the river,
trapped by its deep currents and its silver eddies.

Then divinely born Achilles left his spear
beside a tamarisk bush and jumped into the stream,
like an inhuman thing, armed only with his sword,
his heart intent on killing. Turning in all directions,
he kept on striking. The men his sword slaughtered
cried out in terror. The water turned blood red.

When Achilles' arms grew weary from the killing,
he plucked out of the river twelve young men alive,
as blood payment for the killing of Patroclus,
Menoetius' son. He led them up onto dry land,
like stupefied fawns, tied their hands behind them,
using belts they wore around their woven tunics,
and gave them to his men to lead back to the ships.
Then he jumped in again, eager to keep killing.

But then Achilles met someone fleeing the river -
Lycaon, a son of Dardanian Priam,
whom he'd captured once before in a night attack,
taking him against his will from his father's orchard.
With his sharp bronze Lycaon had been cutting
young shoots from off a fig tree to make chariot rails.
He'd had the bad luck to meet godlike Achilles.
That time, Achilles took him in his ship and sold him in well-built Lemnos, where the son of Jason had paid the purchase price. From there, Eëtion, a friend and guest from Imbros, had ransomed Lycaon, paying a huge sum, then sent him on to Arisbe. He'd escaped from there in secret and gone home, back to his father's house. Once he returned from Lemnos, for eleven days his heart enjoyed his friends. On the twelfth, some god threw him back again into Achilles' hands, who was about to ship him, against Lycaon's wishes, down to dwell with Hades.

When swift-footed, godlike Achilles saw Lycaon totally unarmed, without his helmet, shield, or spear - for he'd thrown these on the ground, exhausted, after he'd escaped the river, worn out and sweating in all his lower limbs - Achilles, much surprised, spoke to his own courageous heart:

"What's this? My eyes are witnessing something amazing. Great-hearted Trojans I've just slaughtered will rise again, up out of murky darkness, if this man's avoided death, returned like this, after I'd sold him off in sacred Lemnos. The gray sea, which holds many people back against their will, hasn't seemed to stop him. But come, let him taste my spear point. I'll see - and in my heart confirm - if he'll return, as he's just done, or if life-giving earth, which keeps even strong men down, will hold him."

That's what Achilles thought, as he stood there waiting. Lycaon, dazed with fear, approached Achilles, eager to clasp his knees in supplication, heart desperate to escape dark fate and evil death.

Godlike Achilles raised his long spear, prepared to strike. But Lycaon, stooping down, slipped underneath the spear, then clasped Achilles' knees. Flying above his back, the spear stuck in the ground, hungry for human flesh. With one hand, Lycaon grabbed Achilles' knee. His other clutched the spear, refusing to let go. He begged for mercy, addressing Achilles with these winged words:

"By your knees, Achilles, I beg you to respect me as a suppliant. Have pity on me. I claim that sacred right, my lord, because it was at your table I first ate Demeter's grain the very day you seized me in that well-built orchard. You led me far from father and my friends, then sold me off in sacred Lemnos. For me you got the value of a hundred oxen, but I was ransomed for three times that price."
It's now twelve days since I reached Ilion, after my ordeal. Once more, deadly fate has placed me in your hands. I do believe Father Zeus must hate me, to give me to you for a second time. My mother, Laothoë, daughter of old Altes, gave birth to me to live a shortened life. Altes rules over war-loving Leleges, in steep Pedasus, by the river Satnioeis. His daughter married Priam, who has many other wives.

She had two sons. Now you'll have slaughtered both. You killed fine Polydorus with those men fighting at the front, when your sharp spear sent him to die. Now death comes for me, as well. I don't expect to escape your hands this time, since some god has guided me right to them. But I'll say one more thing - take it to heart - don't kill me. I'm not from the same womb as Hector, the man who killed your comrade, that kind and powerful warrior."

So Lycaon begged for mercy from Achilles. But the response he got was brutal:

"You fool, don't offer me a ransom or some plea. Before Patroclus met his deadly fate, sparing Trojans pleased my heart much more. I took many overseas and sold them. But now not one of them escapes his death, no one whom god delivers to my hands, here in front of Ilion, not one - not a single Trojan, especially none of Priam's children. So now, my friend, you too must die. Why be sad about it? Patroclus died, a better man than you. And look at me. You see how fine I am, how tall, how handsome? My father's a fine man, the mother who gave birth to me a goddess. Yet over me, as well, hangs fate - my death. There'll come a dawn, or noon, or evening, when some man will take my life in battle - he'll strike me with his spear or with an arrow shot from his bowstring."

Achilles finished.

Then Lycaon's knees gave way, his heart collapsed. He let go of the spear and crouched there, both his hands stretched out. Achilles pulled out his sharp sword and struck, hitting him on the collar bone, beside his neck. The whole two-edged blade sliced into him. Lycaon fell, lying face down on the earth. His dark blood flowed out and soaked the ground. Achilles seized him by the foot, then flung him in the river, shouting out in triumph -
his words had wings:

"Lie there, among the fish. They'll lick blood from your wound with no respect. Your mother won't set you on your funeral bed, lamenting over you. No, Scamander, the swirling river, will carry you away to the broad lap of the sea. Many fish will swim up to the darkly rippled surface to eat white fat from Lycaon. So die, all you fleeing Trojans, until we reach that sacred city Ilion, with me there, right behind you, fighting and killing you. Your flowing river with its silver eddies won't help, for all those bulls you've sacrificed all these years, for all the sure-footed horses you've thrown alive into its swirling pools. No matter - you'll suffer an evil fate, till every one of you has paid in full for Patroclus' death, for Achaea's dead, the men you slaughtered by our swift ships, when I was not among them there."

[Achilles kills so many men in the river that the enraged river god Scamander rises to attack him with a wall of water. Achilles tries to outrun the river but cannot escape and is in danger of drowning. He begs the gods for help. Hera tells her son Hephaestus to start a huge fire burning all along the river. The river god begs Hephaestus to stop and ends the threat to Achilles. Meanwhile, the Trojan troops are running back to the city.]

Then Apollo charged out to meet Achilles, seeking to protect the Trojans from destruction, as they fled straight for the high-walled city, suffering from thirst and dusty from the plain. Still in a rage, Achilles chased them with his spear, his heart filled with a strong and unremitting fury, still eager to win glory. At that moment, Achaea's sons would have captured Troy's high gates, if Apollo had not led Peleus' son astray, far from the Trojan soldiers. The far shooter tricked him, by standing right before Achilles' feet, looking exactly like Agenor. Achilles charged off in pursuit, chasing Apollo out across the plain, past wheat fields, turning him towards the river, the deep, swirling Scamander. Apollo raced on, only a little bit ahead, using his cunning to trick Achilles with his pace, so he'd think he could catch up. Meanwhile, the other Trojans fleeing in confusion, came crowding in the city, throngs of them, cramming the gates, happy to be there. They didn't dare to wait outside the wall, to check who made it back and who had perished in the fight. They streamed into the city in an eager rush, all whose legs and knees had brought them safely in.
At this point, the Trojans, having fled like deer,
spread out through the city, resting by its sturdy walls,
drying their sweat and taking drink to slake their thirst.
Meanwhile, Achaeans were moving to the walls,
their shields held up against their shoulders. But Hector
was forced by deadly fate to stay right where he stood
in front of Ilion, outside the Scaean Gate.

Then Phoebus Apollo spoke out to Achilles:

"Son of Peleus, why are you, a mere human,
running so hard in an attempt to catch me,
an immortal god? You're still ignorant,
it seems, that I'm a god."

Swift-footed Achilles,
in a towering fury, then answered Apollo:

"You've tricked me,
god who shoots from far away, deadliest
of all the gods. You've turned me from the wall.
Otherwise, before reaching Ilion,
many men would have sunk their teeth in earth"

With these words, Achilles set off towards the city,
his heart full, charging on like a prize-winning horse
pulling a chariot at full speed across the plain
with little effort - that's how fast Achilles ran,
sprinting with his legs and feet.

Meanwhile, old Priam
was the first to catch sight of Achilles, as he dashed
across the plain, blazing like that star which comes
at harvest time - its light shines out more brightly
than any of the countless lights in night's dark sky.
The bronze on Achilles' chest glittered like that star,
as he ran forward. With a cry, old Priam
struck his head with his hand, then, reaching up,
hands outstretched, appealed to Hector's sense of pity:

"Hector, my dear son, don't stand out there alone,
facing that man with no one else to help you,
or you will quickly meet your death, slaughtered
by Peleus' son, who's much more powerful.
Don't be obstinate. If only the gods
would love Achilles just as much as I do,
then dogs and vultures would soon gnaw at him
as he lay there. And then my heart might shed
its dreadful sorrow, for he's taken from me
many valiant sons. Come here, my child,"
inside the walls, so you can help to save
Trojan men and women. Don't give that man,
that son of Peleus, great glory. He'll take
your own dear life. Have pity on me, too.
Though full of misery, I still can feel.
Father Zeus will kill me with a cruel fate
on the threshold of old age, once I've seen
so many dreadful things - my sons slaughtered,
my daughters hauled away, their houses ransacked,
their little children tossed down on the ground
in this murderous war, my daughters-in-law
led off captive in hard Achaean hands.
In the end, I'll be ripped by ravenous dogs,
in front of my own doors when some man strikes me
with his sharp bronze or throws his spear in me,
robbing my limbs of life - the same dogs I raised
at home beside my table to guard the doors.
They'll drink my blood, then lie there at the gates,
their hearts gone mad. When a young man dies in war,
lying there murdered by sharp bronze, that's all right.
Though dead, he shows us his nobility.
But when the dogs disfigure shamefully
an old man, chewing his gray head, his beard,
his sexual organs, that's the saddest thing
we wretched mortals see."

As the old man spoke,
his hands tugged his gray hair and pulled it from his head.
But he could not sway Hector's heart. Beside Priam,
Hector's mother wept. Then she undid her robe,
and with her hands pushed out her breasts, shedding tears.
She cried out, calling him - her words had wings:

"Hector, my child, respect and pity me.
If I ever gave these breasts to soothe you,
remember that, dear child. Protect yourself
against your enemy inside these walls.
Don't stand out there to face him. Stubborn man,
if he kills you, I'll never lay you out
on your death bed or mourn for you, my child,
my dearest offspring - nor will your fair wife.
Far away from us, beside Achaean ships,
their swift dogs will eat you."

So these two, both crying, spoke to their dear son,
pleading incessantly with him. But Hector's heart
would not budge. He stood awaiting huge Achilles,
who was getting closer. Just as a mountain snake
waits for some man right by its lair, after eating
poison herbs so that a savage anger grips him,
as he coils beside his den with a fearful glare -
that's how Hector's dauntless heart would not retreat.
But then he leaned his bright shield up against the wall
where it jutted out, and, with a groan, spoke up,
addressing his courageous heart:

"What do I do? If I go through the gates, inside that wall, Polydamas will be the first to blame me, for he told me last night to lead the Trojans back into the city, when many died, once godlike Achilles joined the fight. But I didn't listen. If I'd done so, things would have been much better. As it is, my own foolishness has wiped out our army. Trojan men will make me feel ashamed - so will Trojan women in their trailing gowns. I'm afraid someone inferior to me may say, 'Hector, trusting his own power, destroyed his people.' That's what they'll say. For me it would be a great deal better to meet Achilles man to man, kill him, and go home, or get killed before the city, dying in glory. But what would happen, if I set my bossed shield and heavy helmet to one side, leaning my spear against the wall, and went out to meet noble Achilles, just as I am, promising that Helen, along with all the goods shipped here to Troy by Alexander in his hollow ships, the origin of our hostilities, would be given to the sons of Atreus, to take away with them - in addition, to give the Achaeans an equal share of all this city holds. Then later on, I'd get the Trojan elders to swear on oath that not a single thing would be concealed, that all would be divided equally, every treasure our lovely city owns. But why's my dear heart having this debate? If I went out to meet him in that way, he'd show me no respect. He wouldn't pity me. Once I'd set aside my armour, he'd kill me on the spot, unarmed, like some woman. There's no way I can bargain with him now, like a boy and girl chatting by some rock or oak tree, as they flirt with one another. No, it's better to clash in battle right away. We'll see which one wins victory from Zeus."

That's what Hector thought as he stood there waiting. But Achilles was coming closer, like Enyalius, the warrior god of battle with the shining helmet. On his right shoulder he waved his dreadful spear made of Pelian ash. The bronze around him glittered like a blazing fire or rising sun. At that moment, as he watched, Hector began to shake in fear. His courage gone, he could no longer stand there.
Terrified, he started running, leaving the gate. Peleus' son went after him, sure of his speed on foot. Achilles in his fury raced ahead. Hector ran under the walls of Troy, limbs working feverishly. They ran on past the lookout and the wind-swept fig tree, some distance from the wall, along the wagon track. They reached the two fair-flowing well springs, which feed Scamander's stream. The men raced past there, one in full flight, the other one pursuing him. The man running off in front was a brave warrior, but the man going after him was greater. They ran fast, for this was no contest over sacrificial beasts, the usual prizes for a race. They were competing for horse-taming Hector's life. The two men raced three times round Priam's city on their sprinting feet.

All the gods looked on. Among them the first to speak was Zeus, father of the gods and men:

"What a sight! My eyes can see a fine man being pursued around the walls. How my heart pities Hector, who's often sacrificed to me, burning many thighs of oxen on the crests of Ida with its many spurs and valleys, on the city heights, as well. And now, godlike Achilles is pursuing him on his quick feet round Priam's city. Come, you gods, think hard and offer your advice - do we wish to rescue him from death, or kill him now, for all his bravery, at the hands of Peleus' son, Achilles?"

Then Athena, goddess with the glittering eyes, replied to Zeus:

"Father, lord of lightning and dark clouds, what are you saying? How can you want to snatch the man back from his wretched death. He's mortal - his fate doomed him long ago. Well, do as you wish, but we other gods will not all approve your actions."

Cloud-gatherer Zeus then answered Athena:

"Cheer up, Tritogeneia, my dear child, I'm not saying how my heart intends to act. I want to please you. So you can do whatever your mind tells you. Don't hold back."

Athena, who was already eager, was spurred on by Zeus' words. She rushed down from Olympus' peak.

Swift Achilles was still pressing Hector hard
in that relentless chase. Just as in the mountains
a hound startles from its cover some young deer,
then goes after it through glens and valley gorges -
and even if the fawn evades it for a while,
cowering in some thicket, the dog tracks it down,
always running till he finds it - that's how Hector
could not shake off the swift-footed son of Peleus.
Every time he tried to dash for the Dardanian gates
to get underneath the walls, so men on top
could come to his assistance by hurling spears,
Achilles would intercept him and turn him back
towards the plain, always making sure he kept
running a line between Hector and the city.
Like a dream in which a man cannot catch someone
who's running off and the other can't escape,
just as the first man can't catch up - that's how
Achilles, for all his speed, could not reach Hector,
while Hector was unable to evade Achilles.
Godlike Achilles, with a shake of his head,
prevented his own troops from shooting Hector
with their lethal weapons, in case some other man
hit Hector, robbed him of the glory, and left him
to come too late. But when they ran past those springs
the fourth time, father Zeus raised his golden scales,
setting there two fatal lots for death's long sorrow,
one for Achilles, one for horse-taming Hector.
Seizing it in the middle, Zeus raised his balance.
Hector's fatal day sank, moving down to Hades.
At once Phoebus Apollo abandoned him.
Then Athena, goddess with the glittering eyes,
came to Peleus' son. Standing close to him, she spoke -
her words had wings:

"Glorious Achilles,
beloved of Zeus, now I hope the two of us
will take great glory to Achaean ships,
by killing Hector, for all his love of war.
Stay still now. Catch your breath. I'll go to Hector
and convince him to turn and stand against you."

Once Athena had said this, Achilles obeyed,
rejoicing in his heart, as he stood there, leaning
on his bronze-tipped ash spear. Athena left him.
She came to Hector in the form of Deiphobus,
with his tireless voice and shape. Standing beside him,
she spoke - her words had wings:

"My brother,
swift Achilles is really harassing you,
with his fast running around Priam's city
in this pursuit. Come, we'll both stand here,
stay put, and beat off his attack."

Then Hector of the shining helmet answered her:
"Deiphobus, in the past you've always been
the brother I loved the most by far
of children born to Hecuba and Priam.
I think I now respect you even more,
since you have dared to come outside the wall,
to help me, when you saw me in distress,
while others all remained inside."

Goddess Athena with her glittering eyes replied:

"Dear brother, my father, my noble mother,
and my comrades begged me repeatedly
to stay there. They all so fear Achilles.
But here inside me my heart felt the pain
of bitter anguish. Now, let's go straight for him.
Let's fight and not hold back our spears,
so we can see if Achilles kills us both,
then takes the bloodstained trophies to the ships,
or whether you'll destroy him on your spear."

With these words, Athena seduced him forward.
When they'd approached each other, at close quarters,
great Hector of the shining helmet spoke out first:

"I'll no longer try to run away from you,
son of Peleus, as I did before, going
three times in flight around Priam's great city.
I lacked the courage then to fight with you,
as you attacked. But my heart prompts me now
to stand against you face to face once more,
whether I kill you, or you kill me.
So come here. Let's call on gods to witness.
If Zeus grants me the strength to take your life,
I'll not abuse your corpse in any way.
I'll strip your celebrated armour off,
Achilles, then give the body back again
to the Achaeans. And you'll do the same."

Swift-footed Achilles, with a scowl, replied:

"Hector, don't talk to me of our agreements.
That's idiotic, like a faithful promise
between men and lions - they always sense
a mutual hatred for each other.
In just that way, it's not possible for us,
for you and me, to be friends, or, indeed,
for there to be sworn oaths between us,
till one or other of us falls, gluttoning Ares,
warrior with the bull's hide shield, on blood.
You'd best remember all your fighting skills.
Now you must declare yourself a spearman,
a fearless warrior. You've got no escape.
Soon Pallas Athena will destroy you
on my spear. Right now you'll pay me back,
the full price of those sorrows I went through
when you slaughtered my companions."

With these words, he hefted his long-shadowed spear,
then hurled it. However, anticipating the throw,
splendid Hector saw it coming and evaded it
by crouching down, so the bronze spear flew over him,
then struck the ground. But Pallas Athena grabbed it
and returned it to Achilles, without Hector,
that shepherd of his people, seeing what she'd done.

Hector then called out to Peleus' noble son:

"You missed, godlike Achilles. So it seems
you learned nothing from Zeus about my death,
although you said you had. That was just talk.
Now, see if you can cope with my bronze point.
I hope you get this whole spear in your flesh.
This war would then be easier on the Trojans
with you dead, for you're their greatest danger."

With these words, Hector balanced his long-shadowed spear,
then threw it. It struck the shield of Peleus' son,
right in the centre. That spear didn't miss its mark.
But it bounced some distance off the shield. Hector,
angry that the spear had flown from his hand and missed,
stood dismayed, for he had no substitute ash spear.
So he called out, yelling to Deiphobus,
who carried a white shield, asking him with a shout
to pass him his long spear. But Deiphobus
was nowhere to be seen. Then Hector in his heart
saw everything so clearly - he said:

"This is it, then.
The gods are summoning me to my death.
I thought warrior Deiphobus was close by.
But he's inside the walls, and Athena
has deceived me. Now evil death is here,
right beside me, not somewhere far away.
There's no escape. For a long time now,
this must have been what Zeus desired,
and Zeus' son, the god who shoots from far,
and all those who willingly gave me help
in earlier days. So now I meet my fate.
Even so, let me not die ingloriously
without a fight, but in some great action
which those men yet to come will hear about."

Hector finished speaking. He pulled out his sharp sword,
that strong and massive weapon hanging on his thigh,
gathered himself, then swooped like some high-flying eagle
plummeting to the plains down through the murky clouds
to seize a tender lamb or cowering rabbit -
that's how Hector charged, brandishing his sharp sword.
Achilles attacked, as well, heart full of savage anger,
covering his chest with that richly decorated shield, his shining four-ridged helmet nodding on his head, the golden plumes Hephaestus had set there shimmering around the crest. Just like that star which stands out the loveliest among all those in the heavenly night sky - the star of evening - that's how the sharp point then glittered on the spear Achilles hefted in his right hand, intent on killing noble Hector. He inspected his fine skin, to see where it was vulnerable to a blow. But Hector's entire body was protected by that beautiful armour he'd stripped off powerful Patroclus, once he'd killed him, except for that opening where the collar bones separate the neck and shoulders, at the gullet, where a man's life is most effectively destroyed. As Hector charged, noble Achilles struck him there, driving the spear point through his tender neck. But the heavy bronze on that ash spear did not cut his windpipe, so he could still address Achilles and reply to him. Hector fell down in the dust Lord Achilles then cried out in triumph:

"Hector,
I suppose you thought you could safely strip Patroclus, without giving me a thought, since I was far away. That was foolish! By our hollow ships he'd left me behind, a much greater man, to take out my revenge. I've drained strength from your limbs - now dogs and birds will tear you into miserable pieces, while Achaeans are burying Patroclus."

His strength fading, Hector of the shining helmet answered Achilles:

"By your life, I beg you, by your knees, your parents - don't let dogs eat me by Achaean ships. No, you should accept all the bronze and gold you want, gifts my father and my lady mother give you, if you'll send my body home again, so Trojans and Trojans' wives can bury me, with all the necessary funeral rites."

Scowling at Hector, swift-footed Achilles then replied:

"Don't whine to me, you dog, about my knees or parents. I wish I had the heart and strength to carve you up and eat you raw myself for what you've done to me. So there's no one who'll keep the dogs from going at your head, not even if they bring here and weigh out a ransom ten or twenty times as much,
with promises of more, or if Priam, son of Dardanus, says he'll pay your weight in gold. Not even then will your mother set you on a funeral bed and there lament the son she bore. Instead, the dogs and birds will eat you up completely.”

Then, as he died, Hector of the shining helmet said to Achilles:

"I know you well. I recognize in you what I expected - that you'd not be convinced. For your heart and mind are indeed of iron. But think of this - I may bring down on you the anger of the gods that very day when Paris and Phoebus Apollo, in spite of all your courage, slaughter you at the Scaean Gate."

As Hector spoke, death's final end slid over him. His life slipped out, flying off to Hades, mourning his fate to have to leave such youthful manliness. Over dead Hector, godlike Achilles then cried out:

"Die there. As for my own death, I accept it whenever Zeus and the immortal gods see fit to bring it to me"

Saying this, He pulled his bronze spear from the corpse, set it aside, and stripped the blood-stained armour from the shoulders. Then the rest of Achaea's sons came running up. They gazed at Hector's stature, his handsome body. All the men who came up to the corpse stabbed it, looking at each other, saying:

"Look here, it's easier for us to deal with Hector now than when his fire burned our ships."

When swift-footed godlike Achilles had stripped the corpse, he carried out a monstrous act. He pierced the tendons behind both feet, from heel to ankle, threaded them with ox-hide thongs, and then tied these onto his chariot, leaving the head to drag behind. He climbed up in his chariot, brought on the splendid armour, then lashed his horses. They sped off eagerly, dragging Hector. A dust cloud rose above him, his dark hair spread out round him, and Hector's head, once so handsome, was covered by the dust, for Zeus had given him to his enemies to dishonour in his own native land. So all his head grew dirty.
The Trojans on the walls watch Achilles drag Hector's corpse back to the Achaean ships. Priam, Hecuba, and Andromache lament Hector's death

Book Twenty-Three

The Funeral of Patroclus

Then Achaean leaders led the swift-footed prince, son of Peleus, to lord Agamemnon. They had trouble convincing him to go there - his heart was still so angry for his comrade. Reaching Agamemnon's hut, they issued orders for clear-voiced heralds to heat up a large cauldron, to see if they could persuade Peleus' son to wash, to rinse off the spattered blood. In his stubbornness, he refused to do that, swearing this oath:

"By Zeus, highest and most excellent of all the gods, it's not right that water touch my head, until I've laid Patroclus on his fire, piled up a burial mound, and shaved my hair, since such grief will never reach my heart a second time, not while I still remain among the living. But for the moment, let's agree to dine, though I hate to eat. In the morning, Agamemnon, king of men, you must urge men to gather wood, arrange all things required for a man who's died, as he goes below to murky darkness, so tireless fires can cremate him quickly and remove him from our sight. Then soldiers can resume their duties."

Achilles spoke. They all listened to him and readily agreed.

[Achilles continues to lament Patroclus and dishonour Hector's corpse.]

Then mighty Agamemnon sent out men and mules, from huts in every quarter, to gather wood. The mules went on ahead. The men kept going, up and down the slopes, sometimes tracking sideways, sometimes doubling back, till they reached Ida's foothills with their many springs. At once they started working - cutting high-branched oak trees with their long-edged bronze. Men threw these logs down in a line along the shore, where Achilles planned a massive burial mound for Patroclus and himself. When they'd piled up immense amounts of wood on every side, they sat all together there and waited. Then Achilles quickly told war-loving Myrmidons to dress in bronze, ordering each man to get his horses harnessed
in their chariots. They leapt up to get armour on.
On that pyre’s highest point they laid out the corpse,
hearts full of sorrow. Then, in front of the pyre,
they flayed and made ready many sturdy sheep
and shambling cattle with twisting horns. From all these,
great-hearted Achilles took the fat, using it
to cover up the corpse from head to foot, piling
skinned carcasses around it. Next, he placed on top
two-handled jars of oil and honey, leaning them
against the bier. Then, crying with grief, Achilles
threw four strong-necked horses quickly on the pyre.
Patroclus had owned nine dogs who ate beside his table.
Slitting the throats of two of them, Achilles
tossed them on the pyre. Then, with his bronze, he butchered
those twelve noble sons of the courageous Trojans,
his feelings grimly set on this atrocity.
After that, he lit the fire to work its iron force
and burn up everything. With a groan he called out,
addressing his companion:

"Rest in peace,
Patroclus, though you're in Hades' house.
For I'm now completing everything
I promised you before. Flames will burn
twelve noble sons of great-hearted Trojans,
all cremated with you. But as for Hector,
Priam's son, I'll not feed him to the fire,
but to the dogs."

Achilles made this threat,
but dogs would not touch Hector. For Aphrodite,
Zeus' daughter, kept them away, day and night.
She covered him with immortal oil of roses,
so Achilles would not wear away his body
by dragging him around. Phoebus Apollo
brought a dark cloud from the sky across the plain,
shadowing the entire place where Hector lay,
to stop Sun's power from shriveling up the flesh.

[The fire won't start burning properly, so Achilles prays for help. The gods send the Winds to blow the fire up into a
great blaze]

But at that hour when the Morning Star appears,
announcing that light is coming to the earth,
the star after which Dawn in her yellow robe
moves out across the sea, by then the fire was dying.
The flames went out. Then Peleus' son,
moving away from the smouldering pyre, lay down
exhausted. Sweet sleep slipped quickly round him.
But then the troops came up with Agamemnon,
al together. The noise they made, as they marched in,
woke up Achilles. Sitting bolt upright, he said:

"Sons of Atreus and you other leaders
of Achaean forces, you must first douse
the smouldering pyre with gleaming wine -
everything the powerful flames have touched.
Then we'll collect bones from Patroclus,
Menoetius' son, separating them with care
from all the rest. They're easy to distinguish,
for he lay in the centre of the pyre -
the others burned some distance from him
on the edges, the humans and the horses.
Let's place his bones inside a golden urn,
in a double layer of fat, until the time
I myself am hiding there in Hades.
I'm asking you to build a burial mound,
nothing excessive - what seems appropriate.
You Achaeans must build it high and wide,
but later, once I'm gone, those who still remain
beside our ships with many oars."

Once Achilles spoke,
they did as the swift-footed son of Peleus wished.
First, they doused the smoking pyre with gleaming wine,
wherever flames had reached or ash was deep.
Weeping, they picked the white bones of their comrade out
and put them in a double layer of fat inside a golden urn.
They placed the urn under soft linen in a hut.
Then they traced out the dimensions of a mound,
using stones to mark its base around the pyre,
and then piled earth on top.

[Achilles then organizes a series of athletic competitions in honour of Patroclus]

Book Twenty-Four

Achilles and Priam

After the twelfth dawn had come since Hector's death,
Phoebus Apollo spoke out to the immortals:

"You gods are cruel and vindictive.
Did Hector never sacrifice to you,
burning thighs of perfect bulls and goats?
And can't you now rouse yourself to save him,
though he's a corpse, for his wife, his mother,
and his child to look at, and for Priam, too,
his father, and the people, who'd burn him
with all speed and give him burial rites?
No, you want to help ruthless Achilles,
whose heart has no restraint. In that chest
his mind cannot be changed. Like some lion,
he thinks savage thoughts, a beast which follows
only its own power, its own proud heart,
as it goes out against men's flocks, seeking
a feast of cattle - that's how Achilles
destroys compassion. And in his heart there's no sense of shame, which can help a man or harm him. No doubt, a man can suffer loss of someone even closer than a friend - a brother born from the same mother or even a son. He pays his tribute with his tears and his laments - then stops. For Fates have put in men resilient hearts. But this man here, once he took Hector's life, ties him behind his chariot, then drags him around his dear companion's burial mound. He's done nothing to help or honour him. He should take care he doesn't anger us. Though he's a fine man, in this rage of his he's harming senseless dust."

Then Hera, angry at Apollo, spoke up in reply:

"Lord of the silver bow, yes, indeed, what you say may well be true, if you gods give Hector and Achilles equal worth. But Hector is a mortal man, suckled at a woman's breast, while Achilles is the child of a goddess I raised myself. I brought her up and gave her to Peleus to be his wife, a man dear to the hearts of the immortal gods. All of you were there, when they got married. You, too, were with us at the banquet, you friend of evil men, clutching your lyre, as slippery as ever."

Cloud gatherer Zeus then answered Hera, saying:

"Hera, don't get so angry with the gods. These two will not both share equal honours. Still, of all mortal men in Ilion, Hector was the favourite of the gods. At least that's what he was to me. He never failed to offer me fine gifts. At their communal feasts, my own altar never went without the proper offerings, libations and sacrificial smoke, as is our right. But one of the gods should tell Thetis to come here before me, so I can put a useful plan to her, how Achilles can get gifts from Priam and then give Hector back to him."

Once Zeus had spoken, storm-swift Iris rushed away, bearing Zeus' message. Half way between Samos and rocky Imbros she plunged into the sea. As waters roared above her, she sank way down, just as a plummet sinks when fastened to a lure,
one fashioned out of horn from some farmyard ox
to bring death to hungry fish. She met Thetis
sitting in a hollow cave with other sea gods.
Standing right beside her, swift-footed Iris spoke:

"Rouse yourself, Thetis. Zeus, whose thoughts
dure forever, is calling for you."

Silver-footed Thetis then said in reply:

"Why is that mighty god now summoning me?
I'm ashamed to associate with immortals,
my heart holds such immeasurable grief.
But I'll go. And no matter what he says,
his words will not be wasted."

Saying this,
Thetis, queen of goddesses, took a dark veil,
the blackest of her garments, then set off on her way.
Swift Iris, with feet like wind, went on ahead.
They found the wide-seeing son of Cronos in the midst
of all the other blessed gods, who live forever.
Once Athena had made room for her, Thetis sat
with father Zeus. Hera placed a gold cup in her hand,
with words of welcome. She drank, then handed back the cup.
The father of the gods and men spoke first:

"I'll tell you the reason why I've called you here.
For nine days immortals have been quarreling
about Achilles, sacker of cities,
and Hector's corpse. They keep urging Hermes,
keen-eyed killer of Argus, to steal the body.
But I want to give honour to Achilles,
maintain my respect for you in future,
and keep our friendship. So you must leave quickly.
Go to the army. Tell your son what I say.
Tell him the gods are annoyed at him,
that of all immortals I'm especially angry,
because, in his heartfelt fury, he keeps
Hector at his beaked ships and won't give him back.
Through his fear of me, he may hand Hector over.
I'll also send Iris to great-hearted Priam,
telling him to go to the Achaean ships,
to beg for his dear son, bearing presents
for Achilles to delight his heart."

Silver-footed Thetis did not disagree with Zeus.
She went speeding from Olympus' peak to her son's hut.
His noble mother sat close by him, caressed him
with her hand, then spoke to him, saying:

"My son,
how long will you consume your heart with tears,
with this grieving, not thinking about food
or going to bed. To have sex with a woman would do you good. I won't see you still alive much longer - for at this moment, Death, your powerful fate, is standing close at hand. But quickly, listen to me. For I'm here as messenger from Zeus. He told me this - the gods are angry with you. Zeus himself is the angriest of all immortals, because, in your heartfelt fury, you keep Hector by your beaked ships and won't return him. So come, now. Give him back, and for that corpse accept a ransom."

Swift-footed Achilles then replied to Thetis, saying:

"So be it. Whoever brings the ransom, let that man have the corpse, if that's what the Olympian in his own heart truly desires."

Meanwhile, Cronos' son urged Iris to be off to sacred Ilion:

"You must go right away, swift Iris. Leave your home here on Olympus. Take this message to great-hearted Priam, inside Ilion - tell him he must visit Achaean ships to ransom his dear son, taking gifts to please Achilles' heart."

Zeus spoke. Storm-footed Iris rushed off with the message. Reaching Priam's house, she found him weeping there. Both his head and neck were covered with the dung he'd grovelled in and grabbed up by the handful. Standing beside Priam, she spoke in a soft voice, but nonetheless his limbs began to tremble.

"Let your heart be brave, Priam, son of Dardanus. Don't be afraid. I've not come with news of any harm to you, but to do good. I am a messenger to you from Zeus - he may be far off, but he looks out for you, cares very much, and feels pity for you. The Olympian is telling you to ransom godlike Hector. Take presents to Achilles, fine things his heart will find delightful. You must go alone. No other Trojan man is to go along with you. A herald, an older man, may make the journey with you, to drive the mules and sturdy wagon and bring back to the city the body of the godlike man Achilles killed. You mustn't think of death or be afraid."
A proper escort will accompany you - Hermes, killer of Argus - to guide you, until he brings you to Achilles. Once he's led you to Achilles' hut, that man will not kill you - he'll restrain all other men. For he's not stupid, blind, or disrespectful of the gods. He'll spare a suppliant, treat him kindly."

With these words, swift-footed Iris went away. Priam told his sons to prepare a sturdy mule cart and lash on a wicker box. Then he went in person down to the sweet-smelling vaulted storage chamber lined with cedar, which held many of his treasures. Then he threw open fine lids on the storage chests. From there he took twelve lovely robes, twelve single cloaks, as many blankets, white coverlets, and tunics. He brought gold, weighing out a total of ten talents, then two gleaming tripods, four cauldrons, and a cup.

Then Priam chased the Trojans from his courtyard, shaming them with angry words:

"Go away, you wretches! You ought to be ashamed. Have you nothing to cry about back home, so you come here tormenting me like this?"

With these words, Priam went at the people with his staff, lashing out. They moved off, beyond the old man's rage. Then he began shouting at his sons, cursing them:

"Hurry up, you useless children, my shame. I wish you'd all been killed instead of Hector by those swift ships - the entire bunch of you! My life's so miserable and empty. I fathered sons, the best in spacious Troy. I don't think a single one of them is left - Ares destroyed all those sons of mine. The sons still left here are disgraceful - liars, prancing masters of the dance floor, who steal lambs and goats from their own people. Will you not prepare a wagon for me - and quickly? Put all those items in it, so we can start out on our way."

Priam finished. The sons, shaken by their father's torrent of abuse, brought out the sturdy, well-made wagon, a new one. They lashed the wicker basket on it, then took down from its peg a box-wood yoke to fit a team of mules, furnished with guiding rings and with a knob on top. They brought out with the yoke the lashing for it, a strap five metres long. Next, they brought out
from the storeroom and stowed in the well-polished cart
the huge ransom to be paid for Hector's head. The mules
y they then put into harness, underneath the yoke,
strong-footed beasts, a splendid gift which Mysians
once gave Priam. Then to Priam's chariot they yoked up
the team the old man kept for his own personal use.

The old man, in a hurry, climbed in his chariot,
then drove out through the gate and echoing courtyard.
In front the mules drew on the four-wheeled wagon,
led by wise Idaios. The horses came behind.
The old man kept laying on the whip, urging them
swiftly through the city. All his family followed him
in tears, as if Priam were going off to die.
When they'd passed the gate and reached the plain,
his sons and sons-in-law turned back to Ilion.

Looking down on that old man, Zeus pitied him.
At once he spoke to Hermes, his dear son:

"Hermes, since your favourite task by far
is acting in a friendly way to men
and listening to any man you like,
go down there. Guide Priam to Achaean,
to their hollow ships, so no one sees him,
so no Danaan even is aware of him,
until he comes to the son of Peleus."

Hermes the Guide, killer of Argus, hearing Zeus,
did not disobey. At once he laced up on his feet
his lovely sandals, immortal golden shoes
which carry him across the seas and boundless earth
as fast as winds can blow. With him he took the rod
which puts to sleep the eyes of any man he wishes
or wakes up others who are slumbering.
He quickly came to Troy and to the Hellespont.
There he walked on in the form of a young prince
with his first hair on his lip, looking that age
when charms of youth are at their loveliest.

When the two men had passed the burial mound of Ilus,
they reined in the mules and horses, stopping there
beside the river for a drink. For by this time
darkness had come down over the earth. Looking round,
the herald saw Hermes approaching. He said to Priam:

"Be careful, son of Dardanus. At this point,
we need to think with prudence. I see a man,
and it seems we may be cut to pieces soon.
Come, let's go in your chariot, or at least
clasp him by the knees and beg for mercy.
He may feel pity for us."

Idaios spoke.
The old man's mind was very troubled.
He was dreadfully afraid. On his bent limbs,
the hairs stood out, and he stayed there in a daze.
But Hermes the Helper came up by himself,
took the old man's hand, then asked him questions:

"Father, where are you going with these horses
and these mules through this immortal night,
when other living men are fast asleep?
But come now, tell me - and tell me truly -
are you sending so much treasure out
for foreign people to keep safe for you,
or are you leaving sacred Ilion
in fear, now that the finest man's been killed,
your own son, who never was reluctant
in any battles with Achaeans."

Old godlike Priam then spoke out to Hermes:

"Who are you, good sir? Who are your parents?
You speak so fairly of my doomed son's fate."

Hermes the Guide, killer of Argus, then replied:

"You want to test me, old man, by asking me
of godlike Hector. My eyes have seen him
many times in fights where men win glory.
And when he drove the Argives to their ships,
killing and butchering them with his sharp bronze,
we stood there astonished. For Achilles,
still in a furious rage with Agamemnon,
would not let us fight. I attend on him."

Old godlike Priam then said to Hermes:

"If you, indeed, do serve with Achilles,
son of Peleus, then tell me the whole truth -
is my son still beside the ships, or has Achilles
already carved his body limb from limb
and thrown him to the dogs to eat?"

Hermes the Guide, killer of Argus, answered:

"Old man, birds and dogs have not yet fed on him.
He's lying still beside Achilles' ship,
among the huts, the same as when he died.
For twelve days he's lain there, but his flesh
has not decayed. But I'll be your guide -
even all the way to famous Argos -
attending to your every need on a swift ship
or else on foot. No man will fight against you
because he's thinks too little of your guide."

With these words, Hermes jumped up in the chariot
behind the horses, quickly grabbing reins and whip.
He breathed great strength into those mules and horses.

When they reached the ditch and towers round the ships, the sentries there were starting to prepare their meal. Hermes, killer of Argus, poured sleep on all of them, then opened up the gates at once, pulling back the bars. He led in Priam with the wagonload of priceless gifts. They then reached the lofty hut of Peleus' son, He climbed down from the chariot and said:

"Old man,
I am Hermes, an immortal god. I've come, because my father sent me as your guide.
But I'll go back now. I won't approach within sight of Achilles. There'd be anger if an immortal god greeted mortal men face to face. But you should go inside, appeal to him in his father's name, his mother with her lovely hair, his child, so you may stir his heart."

With these words, Hermes went on his way, back to high Olympus. Priam then climbed from his chariot to the ground. He left Idaios there to tend the mules and horses. The old man went directly in the hut where Achilles, dear to Zeus, usually sat. He found Achilles there, with only two companions. The men did not see great Priam as he entered. He came up to Achilles, then with his fingers clasped his knees and kissed his hands, those dreadful hands, man-killers, which had slain so many of his sons. Achilles looked on godlike Priam in astonishment. The others were amazed. They gazed at one another. Then Priam made his plea, entreating:

"Godlike Achilles, remember your own father, who's as old as me, on the painful threshold of old age. It may well be that those who live around him are harassing him, and no one's there to save him from ruin and destruction. But when he hears you're still alive, his heart feels joy, for every day he hopes he'll see his dear son come back home from Troy. But I'm completely doomed to misery, for I fathered the best sons in spacious Troy, yet I say now not one of them remains. I had fifty when Achaea's sons arrived - angry Ares drained the life of most of them. But I had one left, guardian of our city, protector of its people. You've just killed him, as he was fighting for his native country."
I mean Hector. For his sake I've come here, to Achaea's ships, to win him back from you. And I've brought a ransom beyond counting. So Achilles, show deference to the gods and pity for myself, remembering your own father. Of the two old men, I'm more pitiful, because I have endured what no living mortal on this earth has borne - I've lifted up to my own lips and kissed the hands of the man who killed my son."

Priam finished. His words roused in Achilles a desire to weep for his own father. Taking Priam's hand, he gently moved him back. So the two men there both remembered warriors who'd been slaughtered. Priam, lying at Achilles' feet, wept aloud for man-killing Hector, and Achilles also wept for his own father and once more for Patroclus. The sound of their lamenting filled the house.

When godlike Achilles had had enough of weeping, when the need to mourn had left his heart and limbs, he stood up quickly from his seat, then with his hand helped the old man to his feet, feeling pity for that gray head and beard. Then Achilles spoke - his words had wings:

"You unhappy man, your heart's had to endure so many evils. How could you dare come to Achaea's ships, and come alone, to rest your eyes on me, when I've killed so many noble sons of yours? You must have a heart of iron. But come now, sit on this chair. Though we're both feeling pain, we'll let our grief lie quiet on our hearts. For there's no benefit in frigid tears. That's the way the gods have spun the threads for wretched mortal men, so they live in pain, though gods themselves live on without a care. On Zeus' floor stand two jars which hold his gifts - one has disastrous things, the other blessings. When thunder-loving Zeus hands out a mixture, that man will, at some point, meet with evil, then, some other time, with good. When Zeus' gift comes only from the jar containing evil, he makes the man despised. A wicked frenzy drives him all over sacred earth - he wanders without honour from the gods or mortal men. Consider Peleus. The gods gave him gifts, splendid presents, right from birth. In wealth, in his possessions, he surpassed all men. And he was king over the Myrmidons. Though he was mortal, the gods gave him a goddess for a wife. But even to him
the gods gave evil, too, for in his palace
there sprang up no line of princely children.
He had one son, doomed to an early death.
I'll not look after him as he grows old,
since I'm a long way from my native land,
sitting here in Troy, bringing pain to you
and to your children. Think of yourself, old man.
We hear that you were fortunate in former times.
In all the lands from Lesbos to the south,
where Macar ruled, and east to Phrygia,
to the boundless Hellespont, in all these lands,
old man, they say that you surpassed all men
for wealth and children. But from the time
you got disaster from the heavenly gods,
man-killing battles round your city
have never ceased. You must endure it all,
without a constant weeping in your heart.
You achieve nothing by grieving for your son.
You won't bring him to life again, not before
you'll have to suffer yet another evil."

Old godlike Priam then answered Achilles:

"Don't make me sit down on a chair, my lord,
while Hector lies uncared for in your huts.
But quickly give him back, so my own eyes
can see him. And take the enormous ransom
we've brought here for you. May it give you joy.
And may you get back to your native land,
since you've now let me live to see the sunlight."

With an angry look, swift-footed Achilles snapped at Priam:

"Old man, don't provoke me. I myself intend
to give you Hector. Zeus sent me here
a messenger, the mother who bore me,
daughter of the Old Man of the Sea.
And in my heart, Priam, I recognize -
it's no secret to me - that some god
led you here to the swift Achaean ships.
No matter how young and strong, no living man
would dare to make the trip to our encampment.
He could not evade the sentries or push back
our door bolts - that would not be easy.
So don't agitate my grieving heart still more,
or I might not spare even you, old man,
though you're a suppliant here in my hut.
I could transgress what Zeus has ordered."

Achilles spoke. The old man, afraid, obeyed him.
Then Peleus' son sprang to the door, like a lion.
Not alone - his two attendants went out with him.
They freed the mules and horses from their harnesses,
led in the herald, the old man's crier, sat him on a stool.
Then from the polished wagon they brought in that priceless ransom for Hector's head, leaving there two cloaks and a thickly woven tunic, so Achilles could wrap up the corpse before he gave it back for Priam to take home. Achilles then called out, ordering his servant women to wash the body, and then anoint it, after moving it away, so Priam wouldn't see his son, then heart-stricken, be unable to contain his anger at the sight. Servants washed the corpse, anointed it with oil, and put a lovely cloak and tunic round it. Achilles himself lifted it and placed it on a bier. Then together he and his companions set it on the polished wagon. Achilles, with a groan, called to his dear companion:

"O Patroclus, don't be angry with me, if you learn, even in Hades' house, that I gave back godlike Hector to his dear father. He's brought to me a fitting ransom. I'll be giving you your full share of it, as is appropriate."

Godlike Achilles spoke, then went back once more into the hut and sat on the richly decorated chair he'd left by the opposite wall. Then he spoke to Priam:

"Old man, your son has been given back, as you requested. He's lying on a bier. You'll see him for yourself at day break, when you take him. We should think of eating. Later you can lament for your dear son, when you have taken him to Ilion, where you'll shed many tears for him."

When they'd satisfied their need for food and drink, then Priam, son of Dardanus, looked at Achilles, wondering at his size and beauty, like gazing face to face upon a god. Achilles looked at Priam, marveling at his royal appearance and the words he heard. Once they'd had their fill of looking at each other, the first to speak was the old man, godlike Priam:

"My lord, show me my bed now with all speed, so we may lie down and enjoy sweet sleep. For since your hands took my son's life away, my eyelids have not closed my eyes, not once. I always weep, brooding on my sorrows, my endless grief. I grovel in the dung inside my closed-in courtyard. Now I've eaten, tasted meat, and let myself drink gleaming wine. Before this, I'd eat nothing."
Priam spoke.
Achilles told his comrades and the servants
to set beds out on his portico, laying on them
fine purple rugs with blankets spread on top,
placing above them wool-lined cloaks for clothing.
Women slaves went from the hall with torches.
Right away they spread out two beds, working quickly.
Then swift-footed Achilles spoke to Priam:

"Come now, tell me - and speak truthfully -
how many days do you require to bury
godlike Hector, so I can stop that long
and keep the troops in check?"

Old godlike Priam
then said in answer to Achilles:

"If you're willing
for me to give lord Hector a full burial,
then, Achilles, as a personal favour,
there is something you could do for me.
You know how we're restricted to our city.
It's a long way to the mountains to get wood.
Besides, the Trojans are especially fearful.
We'll mourn Hector for nine days in our home.
On the tenth day we'll have his funeral.
Then there'll be a banquet for the people.
On the eleventh, we'll make his burial mound.
The twelfth day, if we must, we'll go to war."

Swift-footed Achilles then said to Priam:

"All right, old Priam, things will be arranged
as you request. I'll suspend the fighting
for the length of time you've asked for."

As he said this, Achilles took the old man's wrist
on his right hand, in case his heart was fearful.
So by that house on the porch they lay down to sleep,
Priam and his herald, both men of wisdom.
Achilles slept in a corner of his well-built hut,
with lovely Briseis stretched out there beside him.

Meanwhile, other gods and warrior charioteers,
al conquered by sweet sleep, slept the whole night through.
But slumber did not grip the Helper Hermes,
as he considered in his heart what he might do
to guide king Priam from the ships in secret,
without the strong guard at the gate observing.
So standing above Priam's head, he said to him:

"Old man, you're not expecting any harm,
as you sleep like this among your enemies,
since Achilles spared your life. Your dear son
is ransomed for that huge amount you paid. But if Agamemnon, son of Atreus, or all Achaeans learn that you are here, those sons you've left behind will have to pay a ransom three times greater for your life."

Hermes spoke. At his words, the old man grew afraid. He woke up the herald. Hermes harnessed mules and horses, then guided them himself quickly through the camp, attracting no attention. But when they reached the ford across the swirling river Xanthus, immortal Zeus' child, Hermes left them and returned to high Olympus.

As Dawn spread her yellow robes over all the earth, the two men drove their horses inside the city, weeping and groaning. The mules pulled in the corpse.

[Cassandra, a princess of Troy, sees Priam arriving and cries out to the whole city that Hector's corpse is coming back to Troy.]

There in the city all were overcome with grief beyond anyone's control. Close to the gates, they met Priam bringing home the body. First Hector's dear wife and his noble mother, tearing their hair, ran to the sturdy wagon, trying to touch Hector's head. People crowded round, all weeping. They would have stayed there by the gates, shedding tears for Hector the entire day until the sun went down, but from the chariot the old man cried out to the crowd:

"Make way there - let the mules get through. There'll be time enough, once I've got him home, for everyone to weep."

At Priam's words, the crowd moved back, making room. The wagon pushed on through. Once they'd got him home, inside their great house, they laid him on a corded bed, then placed singers there beside him, to lead their songs. They sang a mournful funeral dirge. Then the women, began their wailing, led by white-armed Andromache, who held in her arms the head of man-killing Hector.

"My husband - you've lost your life so young, leaving me a widow in our home, with our son still an infant, the child born to you and me in our wretchedness. I don't think he'll grow up to adulthood. Before that, our city will all be destroyed. For you, who kept watch over us, are dead. You used to protect our city, keeping its noble wives and little children safe. Now, soon enough, they'll all be carried off in hollow ships. I'll be there among them."
And you, my child, you'll follow with me,
to some place where you'll be put to work
at menial tasks, slaving for a cruel master.
Or else some Achaean man will grab your arm
and throw you from the wall - a dreadful death -
in his anger that Hector killed his brother,
or his father, or his son. For Hector's hands
made great numbers of Achaeans sink their teeth
into the broad earth. In wretched warfare,
your father was not gentle. So in our city
they now weep for him. O Hector, what sorrow,
what untold grief you've laid upon your parents.
What painful sorrows will remain for me,
especially for me. As you were dying,
you didn't reach your hand out from the bed,
or give me some final words of wisdom,
something I could remember always,
night and day, as I continue my lament."

Andromache said this in tears. The women all wailed with her.
Then Hecuba took her turn in leading their laments:

"Hector, dearest by far of all my children,
loved by the gods, as well, when you were living.
Now, at your death, they still take care of you.
When swift Achilles took my other sons,
he'd ship them off across the boundless seas,
to Samos, or Imbros, or foggy Lemnos.
When his long-edged bronze took away your life,
he dragged you many times around the mound
for his comrade Patroclus, whom you killed.
Yet even so, he could not revive him.
Now you lie here in our house, fresh as dew,
like someone whom Apollo of the silver bow
has just come to and killed with gentle arrows."

As she spoke, Hecuba wept. She stirred them on
to endless lamentation. Helen was the third
to lead those women in their wailing:

"Hector - of all my husband's brothers,
you're by far the dearest to my heart.
My husband's godlike Alexander,
who brought me here to Troy. I wish I'd died
before that happened! This is the twentieth year
since I went away and left my native land,
but I've never heard a nasty word from you
or an abusive speech. In fact, if anyone
ever spoke rudely to me in the house -
one of your brothers or sisters, some brother's
well-dressed wife, or you mother - for your father
always was so kind, as if he were my own -
you'd speak out, persuading them to stop,
using your gentleness, your soothing words."
Now I weep for you and for my wretched self, 
so sick at heart, for there's no one else 
in spacious Troy who's kind to me and friendly. 
They all look at me and shudder with disgust."

Helen spoke in tears. The huge crowd joined in their lament. 
Then old Prima addressed his people:

"You Trojans, 
you must fetch some wood here to the city. 
Don't let your hearts fear any ambush, 
some crafty Achaean trick. For Achilles, 
when he sent me back from the hollow ships, 
gave me his word they'd not harm us 
until the twelfth day dawns."

Priam finished. 
The people hitched up mules and oxen to their wagons 
and then gathered before the city with all speed. 
For nine days they brought in wood, an immense amount. 
When the tenth dawn came, they brought brave Hector out, 
then, all in tears, laid his corpse on top the funeral pyre. 
They set it alight. When rose-fingered Dawn came up, 
they gathered around that pyre of glorious Hector. 
Once they'd all assembled there together, 
first they doused the pyre with gleaming wine, every part 
that fire's strength had touched. His brothers and comrades 
collected Hector's ash-white bones, as they mourned him - 
heavy tears running down their cheeks - and placed them 
in a golden urn, wrapped in soft purple cloth. 
They quickly set the urn down in a shallow grave, 
covered it with large stones set close together, 
then hurried to pile up the mound, posting sentries 
on every side, in case well-armed Achaeans 
attacked too soon. Once they'd piled up the mound, 
they went back in, gathered together for a splendid feast, 
all in due order, in Priam's house, king raised by Zeus. 
And thus they buried Hector, tamer of horses.
- **Andromache**: wife of Hector, daughter of Eëtion.
- **Antenor**: senior Trojan counselor.
- **Aphrodite**: goddess of erotic love, a supporter of the Trojans, divine daughter of Zeus and Hera.
- **Apollo**: divine son of Zeus and Leto, a supporter of the Trojans.
- **Ares**: son of Zeus, god of war, especially the destructive aspects, a supporter of the Trojans.
- **Argives**: see Achaeans.
- **Argos (1)**: town in northern Peloponnesse ruled by Diomedes.
- **Argos (2)**: a large area ruled by Agamemnon.
- **Argos (3)**: a general term for the homeland of Achaeans generally (i.e., mainland Greece and Peloponnesse).
- **Artemis**: goddess, daughter of Zeus and Hera, sister of Apollo, supporter of the Trojans.
- **Astyanax**: son of Hector and Andromache, an infant, also called Scamandrius.
- **Athena**: daughter of Zeus, supporter of the Achaeans, commonly called "glittery eyed."
- **Automedon**: Achaeans.
- **Briseis**: daughter of Briseus, captive awarded to Achilles.
- **Calchas**: priest and interpreter of omens for Achaean army.
- **Chryseis**: young daughter of Chryses, captured by Achaeans.
- **Danaans**: see Achaeans.
- **Dardanians**: people from around Troy, led by Aeneas.
- **Deiphobus**: son of Priam, Trojan warrior.
- **Demeter**: goddess of grain and food generally. **Diomedes**: king of Argos, a younger warrior with the Achaeans.
- **Earthshaker**: common epithet for Poseidon.
- **Euryalus**: leader of troops from the Argolid, an Achaean warrior.
- **Eurybates**: one of the Achaean heralds.
- **Eurymedon**: Achaean warrior, attendant on Agamemnon.
- **Eurypylus**: leader of troops from Thessaly, in Achaean army.
- **Glaucus**: son of Hippolochus, leader of the Lycians (Trojan allies).
- **Hades**: brother of Zeus and Poseidon, god of the dead.
- **Hector**: leader of Trojan forces, son of Priam and Hecuba, often called "Hector of the shining helmet," or "man-killing Hector."
- **Hecuba**: wife of Priam, mother of Hector (and others).
- **Helen**: mortal child of Zeus, wife of Menelaus and later of Paris.
- **Hephaestus**: divine son of Zeus and Hera, artisan god, crippled in his legs, supporter of the Achaeans.
- **Hera**: divine wife and sister of Zeus, daughter of Cronos, frequently called "white armed" or "ox eyed," a supporter of the Achaeans.
- **Hermes**: son of Zeus, often called "killer of Argus" or "Messenger."
- **Ida**: a mountain near Troy.
- **Idaios**: a Trojan herald.
- **Idomeneus**: leader of Cretan forces, a senior commander in the Achaean forces.
- **Ilion**: another name for Troy. **Iris**: divine messenger of the gods.
- **Leto**: goddess mother of Apollo and Artemis.
- **Lycia/Lycians**: region of Asia Minor whose troops, led by Sarpedon and Glauce, are allied with the Trojans.
- **Machaon**: leader of troops from parts of Thessaly, a healer in the Achaean army.
- **Meges**: son of Phyleus, leader of troops from Doulichium, part of the Achaean army.
- **Menelaus**: son of Atreus, brother of Agamemnon, first husband of Helen of Troy, king of Sparta, a major figure in Achaean leadership.
- **Meriones**: attendant on Idomeneus, part of the Cretan contingent in the Achaean forces.
- **Myrmidons**: troops from Thessaly under the command of Achilles.
- **Nestor**: king of Pylos, a senior warrior among Achaeans, called "the Geranian horseman."
- **Odysseus**: king of Ithaca, major warrior for the Achaean forces, commonly called "resilient" and "resourceful" and "cunning."
- **Olympus**: mountain in Greece where the major gods live.
- **Pandarus**: son of Lycaon, leader of troops from Zeleia, part of the Trojan forces.
- **Paris**: son of Priam and Hecuba, brother of Hector, abductor of Helen from Menelaus, also called Alexander.
- **Patroclus**: an Achaeans and special comrade of Achilles.
- **Phoebus**: see Apollo.
- **Phoenix**: old companion and tutor of Achilles, an Achaean warrior.
- **Phthia**: region in northern Greece, home of Achilles and his father Peleus.
- **Polydamas**: a Trojan warrior.
- **Poseidon**: major Olympian god (ruling the sea), brother of Zeus, commonly called "Earthshaker" or "Encircler of the Earth."
- **Priam**: king of Troy, husband of Hecuba, father of Hector, Paris, and numerous others.
- **Sarpedon**: son of Zeus and leader of the Lycians, Trojan allies.
- **Scaean Gates**: the major gates through the Trojan walls.
- **Scamander**: river outside Troy (also called the Xanthus), also the river god.
- **Strife**: goddess active in war, sister of Ares.
- **Talthybius**: one of the Achaean heralds.
- **Terror**: son of Ares, divine presence active in battle.
- **Teucer**: bastard son of Telamon and hence brother to the greater Ajax, an Achaean warrior noted for his skill with a bow.
- **Thetis**: divine sea nymph married to a mortal, Peleus, mother of Achilles.
- **Thrasymedes**: son of Nestor, an Achaean warrior.
- **Xanthus (1)**: river in Lycia (Asia Minor).
- **Xanthus (2)**: river outside Troy, also called the Scamander, also the river god.
- **Xanthus (3)**: one of Achilles' horses.
- **Zeus**: most powerful of the gods, brother and husband of Hera, commonly called "son of Cronos," "cloud gatherer," "lord of the lightning bolt," "aegis-bearing."

---

**Copyright Notice for Documents on the johnstonia Web Pages**

All e-texts on johnstonia web pages are available for personal use by anyone, without permission and without charge. They may be downloaded, printed, and distributed freely, in whole or in part, provided the source is acknowledged.

Teachers who wish to prepare copies of a text for their students are free to do so, provided the source is acknowledged. If teachers need to edit the texts for particular purposes (e.g., to prepare an abridged version, selections, or a more suitable dramatic script, and so on) they should feel free to do so.

Performing artists may use the material free of charge for dramatic productions, public readings, and adaptations, provided the source is acknowledged and provided they inform Ian Johnston of the event.

Commercial publication of any of the material in book form or in a recording or in electronic format is prohibited, without the written permission of the author or translator.

For information please contact [Ian Johnston](mailto:ianjohnston@johnstonia.com).