

# **The Iliad Book Notes**

## **The Iliad by Homer**

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## Author/Context

Most scholars agree that the time period in which the events in the *Iliad* took place was about 1200 B.C.E. Similarly, most scholars believe that the *Iliad* was not written down until somewhere between 800 and 600 B.C.E. During and prior to this time period, there was a strong oral poetic tradition which involved traveling poets called *rhapsodoi*. These poets performed to audiences all over Greece. They sang the lines of epic poems while playing the lyre. Homer is believed to have been one of these poets. The modern understanding is that the story of the siege of Troy, an integral part of Greek mythology, was not created by a single man. The epic form of this tale as we know it is most likely the synthesis of several oral traditions. The twenty four books of dactylic hexameter we now know as the *Iliad* have been transmitted with various textual variation since around 300 B.C.E.

The oral poetic tradition thrived before the advent of writing. The people who lived in and around Greece at this time lived mostly in rather isolated city-states. Frequent festivals were held where singers and poets would compete for prizes. Out of this tradition comes the Homer whom tradition maintains was born on an island bordering the Ionian Sea. Homer not only composed the two epics that now bear his name, but he also composed numerous hymns. He is often coupled with the archaic poet Hesiod who wrote the *Theogony* and *Works and Days*. While his works are on a different subject matter than Homer's, the two authors share many similarities. Both authors are said to have sung their works all over the Greek mainland. The recitation of the *Iliad* was recorded as one of the early events at the Olympic games.

The debate around the authorship of the *Iliad* is not entirely based on the institution of writing, but it is also based on historical and linguistic analysis of the text. The Greek text possesses many dialectical variants. The subject matter of the text, specifically the understanding of warfare and description of *phalanxes*, calls into question the historicity of its authorship. The *Iliad* bears such a myriad of different traits that it is almost impossible to conceive of it as the work of a single individual.

The classical tradition, however, is that there was a man named Homer who codified the oral tradition of the siege of Troy. This oral tradition was recorded by others and became the more standard text which we possess today. Although there are still many manuscript variants, the format and the story have remained the same. Through the centuries the Homeric epics have influenced writers and philosophers for many different countries. Every generation, poets and scholars try their hands at translating Homer from ancient Greek into modern languages. Solon is said to have used a portion of Book 2 to assert that Athens had an ancient right to the island of Salamis. In Plato's apology, Socrates compares himself to Achilles and his paradox of living a short glorious life or a long life of anonymity, choosing to die a noble death rather than live in ignominy. According to Oskar Seyffert:

*"...the Homeric poems remain unsurpassed as works of art, which have had an incalculable influence not only on the development of literature and art, but also upon*

*the whole life of the Greeks, who from the earliest times regarded them as the common property of the nation, and employed them as the foundation of all teaching and culture."*

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# Plot Summary

Homer's Iliad begins nine years after the Greek armies first arrived at Troy. A plague has overcome the Greek armies because Agamemnon has refused to return the daughter of a Priest of Apollo. Achilles, the epic's central character, exposes this fact and confronts the king. Agamemnon agrees to release this girl, if, and only if, Achilles gives him his 'war-prize', Briseis in return. Achilles finds this to be tremendously unjust and withdraws from battle taking with him all of his soldiers. He asks the gods to grant him revenge and make the Greeks require his assistance in order to win. Achilles remains withdrawn for the greater portion of the epic.

Agamemnon is encouraged to attack by a dream and after some trouble with his troops, rallies them. The Trojan side rallies also. The two armies move towards each other but are stopped by a challenge from Hector: Paris and Menelaus are to fight one on one to decide the war. Paris flees the battle with the help of a divinity and Menelaus rages on with his brother demanding the release of Helen and her treasure.

Zeus, the king of the gods, calls an assembly of the gods and orders them to stop helping the battle because he has decided how it is going to turn out. Meanwhile the battle continues near Troy. The Greek Diomedes makes a heroic stand and kills many Trojans. The Trojan Aeneas fights Diomedes and is wounded but eventually rescued by his mother, Aphrodite. Ares reenters the battle on the Trojan side. With Ares at his side, Hector goes on a rampage. Ares is wounded by Diomedes as Hera and Athena enter to help the Greeks.

Telamonian Ajax joins Diomedes and the Greeks begin to repulse the Trojans. Hector returns to Troy to pray for Diomedes to be taken from battle. He chastises Paris for cowardice, speaks to Helen and spends some time with his wife Andromache. Paris and Hector return to war. The Trojans rally again and then Hector challenges a Greek captain to a duel. Ajax fights him but the duel is ended by nightfall and a truce. Both sides debate the follow day of the war expressing the need for a truce to care for their dead. The Trojans propose a settlement. The Greeks reject this, but agree to a truce day for burials.

Zeus again threatens the assembled gods and for a while they heed him. The battle begins and the Trojans, with the blessing of Zeus, push the Greeks back to their earthen walls. Zeus gives an omen to the Greeks and they rally. The Trojans rally again and continue to push onward. Night comes and the Trojan army camps outside the city. The Greeks send an embassy to Achilles requesting his return to battle in exchange for treasure and an unharmed Briseis. Achilles refuses. The Greeks go to sleep but the captains stay awake and Odysseus and Diomedes raid the Trojan camps. They kill the Trojan Dolon and steal horses from the Thracian camp.

The battle begins the next day with a Greek rally led by Agamemnon. Zeus instructs Hector not to fight until Agamemnon is wounded. With this omen fulfilled, Hector rallies the Trojans and pushes towards the ships. Odysseus and Diomedes are also wounded.

Achilles watches the battle and sends Patroclus to see who has been wounded. The Trojans continue attacking and with extraordinary feats of strength and bravery by Hector and Sarpedon, they storm the Greek camp. The fighting remains fierce near the Greek ships. With Zeus turned away from the battle, Poseidon inspires Ajax and Idomeneus to fight more fiercely. Hector is driven back and wounded.

Nestor, wounded, goes back to the battle with other Greek captains in order to rally the troops. Hera plots to seduce Poseidon and put him to sleep. With the king of the Gods sleeping, Poseidon enters the battle on the Greek side and the Trojans are routed.

Zeus wakes and reinvigorates the Trojan line. Apollo helps Hector back into battle and the Trojans again push to the Greek Ships. Ajax defends these valiantly and Nestor continues to spur on the Troops. Hector calls for torches to burn the boats as Patroclus observes the panic in his compatriots.

Patroclus returns to Achilles and requests to enter the battle. Achilles lets him go leading the myrmidons. Ajax and Hector continue to fight each other near the ships when the myrmidons enter battle led by Patroclus, easily mistaken for Achilles in the hero's armor. Patroclus kills the Trojan son of Zeus, Sarpedon and the battle centers around his body. Zeus has Apollo rescue the corpse of his son. The battle is pushed back to the walls of Troy Paris attempts to storm the walls of the city, ignoring the advice of Achilles. Patroclus is killed by a combination of the Trojan Euphorbus, Apollo and Hector.

With the death of Patroclus, the Trojans regain some ground as the two sides struggle for the body. Hector follows Achilles' chariot, desiring his horses. Hector is wounded and must retreat. The Greeks save the body of Patroclus. A runner brings the news of Patroclus' death to Achilles and the hero mourns requesting revenge from his mother. Thetis goes to Hephaestus and gets a new set of armor for her son which she bestows on him even though she finds him lying on the ground weeping.

Achilles goes to battle and Zeus releases the gods to fight as they desire. Aeneas stands up to Achilles but is wounded, saved again by a god. Achilles and Hector clash with their troops following and Achilles' rampage continues.

Achilles splits the Trojan line and murders many in the near-by river Xanthus. The river god gets angry with him and Achilles eventually attacks the god himself. The god retaliates and chases Achilles only to be stopped by Hephaestus who repulses him at Hera's bidding. Achilles presses to the very walls of Troy. Hector exits to meet his adversary but then flees him, running around the city three times. Athena tricks him into facing Achilles who kills him after a short struggle. The Greeks dishonor Hector's body and Achilles drags him back to their camp behind his chariot.

The Greeks have a feast and build a pyre for Patroclus. They burn and then bury his body. After this, Achilles hosts a set of funeral games for his fallen friend. At night Zeus has Thetis tell her son that Hector ought to be ransomed and Iris tell Priam to ransom his son. With divine help, Priam comes to Achilles' camp and ransoms the body of his

son. The two share a meal together and go to sleep. Priam leaves at the goading of Hermes before day break and the epic ends with the funeral of Hector.





# Major Characters

**Achilles:** Greek, a demi-god and son of Peleus and Thetis. Leader of Myrmidons from Pythia. The Iliad begins, ends and pivots on the Achilles' rage. His departure from battle causes Greek ruin. His reentry, guarantees the demise of Troy.

**Aeneas:** Trojan, a demi-god and son of Anchises and Aphrodite. Captain and warrior who fights bravely on several occasions. He is rescued by a god each time he is wounded. Also destined to become the leader of the refugee Trojans. Founder of Rome. The central character of Virgil's epic, The Aeneid.

**Agamemnon:** Greek, mortal and son of Atreus, brother of Menelaus. Greek King and leader of Greek armies from Argos and Mycenae. Achilles' chief instigator, responsible for his withdrawal from battle.

**Ajax Telamon:** Greek, mortal, son of Telamon, half-brother of Teucer. Greek leader from Salamis. Also known as Greater Ajax. Giant warrior who meets Hector's challenge and also wounds Aeneas. A bulwark of the Greek line.

**Aphrodite:** Trojan supporter, a deity, daughter of Zeus and Dione, mother of Aeneas. Goddess of love and lust. Presented with the golden apple by Paris in exchange for the love of Helen. Aphrodite continues to struggle with Hera and Athena in this war, taking up sides with Paris and her son. She is wounded by Diomedes.

**Apollo:** Trojan supporter, a deity, son of Zeus and Leto, brother of Artemis. Patron god of arts and archery. God of prophecy. Also associated with the sun. He actively fights with and inspires the Trojans throughout the epic. He continues to support the Trojans in Virgil's Aeneid.

**Ares:** Trojan supporter, a deity, son of Zeus and Hera. God of War and destruction. Ares strengthens the Trojan line early on but is wounded. He does not return to battle until the end of the epic.

**Athena:** Greek supporter, a deity, daughter of Zeus. Goddess of wisdom, also associated with cleverness and war. Patron goddess of Odysseus whom she continues to help in Homer's Odyssey. Athena inspires Greeks by taking the form of mortals. She also appeals to Zeus on several occasions and gets him to soften his anger.

**Briseis:** Trojan, mortal. War prize of Achilles. Focal point of contention between Achilles and Agamemnon. She is given back to Achilles and mourns for the death of Patroclus.

**Diomedes:** Greek, mortal, son of Tydeus. Greek leader from Argos. Though young, he is a powerful and effective warrior. He is an early mainstay of the Greek offense. His advice returns the captains to battle when the Trojans storm the camp.

**Glaucus :** Trojan, mortal, cousin to Sarpedon. Co-leader of Lycian allies. He rallies the Trojan troops around the body of his fallen cousin, Sarpedon.



**Hades:** A deity, brother of Zeus and Poseidon. God of the underworld. He is one of three brother gods: Zeus rules the sky, Poseidon rules the sea and Hades rules the underworld.

**Hector:** Trojan, mortal, son of Priam and Hecuba, brother of Paris, husband of Andromache, father of Astyanax. Trojan Prince. Primary leader of Trojan forces. Without Hector, the city of Troy is doomed.

**Helen:** Greek, demi-god, daughter of Zeus and Leda, wife of Menelaus, lover of Paris. Primary object of the Trojan war. Although she is from Greece, she views the entire war from the Trojan walls. Hated by Greeks and Trojans alike.

**Hera:** Greek supporter, a deity, daughter of Cronus, wife and sister of Zeus, mother of Hephaestus and Ares. Queen of the gods. Primary immortal champion of the Greek armies. Hera seduces Zeus and thwarts his decrees. In Virgil's Aeneid, she continues to persecute the refugee Trojans.

**Idomeneus:** Greek, mortal. A captain from Crete and a powerful warrior. He is instrumental in many Greek offensives.

**Iris:** A deity. Messenger goddess. Responsible for delivering Zeus' commands to men and gods. Most of Zeus' decrees and interventions are carried out by her.

**Menelaus:** Greek, mortal, son of Atreus, brother of Agamemnon, husband of Helen. The siege of Troy is primarily on his behalf, in order to return Helen to him, although other characters are more central to the epic. Menelaus fights bravely during the storming of the camps.

**Nestor:** Greek, mortal, son of Neleus, father of Antilochus. Greek leader from Pylos. Old counselor to the Greeks. Advises Agamemnon on strategy. Famous for his chariot driving ability.

**Odysseus:** Greek, mortal, son of Laertes. Captain from Ithaca. The central figure of Homer's Odyssey. Instrumental in advising Agamemnon and controlling the army.

**Paris:** Trojan, mortal, son of Priam and Hecuba, lover of Helen. Paris, although an infrequent character in the epic, is one of the primary antagonists behind the Trojan War. His choice of Aphrodite as the most beautiful goddess and his stealing of Helen from her husband's house began the conflict.

**Patroclus:** Greek, mortal, son of Menoetius. Captain of the Myrmidons. Companion to Achilles. Instrument of Achilles' re-entry into battle. He leads the Myrmidons back into battle dressed as Achilles.

**Poseidon:** Greek supporter, a deity, son of Cronus, brother of Hades and Zeus. God of the Sea also associated with earthquakes and horses. Poseidon strives with the Greeks against the will of Zeus.



**Priam:** Trojan, mortal, son of Laomedon, father of Deiphobus, Hector, Helenus, Paris and Polydorus, husband of Hecuba. Wealthy king of Troy. Although his son Hector leads the army, he is the central leadership figure of the city.

**Sarpedon:** Trojan, demi-god, son of Zeus, cousin of Glaucus. Co-leader of Lycian allies. Singlehandedly holds the breach in the Greek wall. Dies to Zeus' dismay.

**Teucer:** Greek, mortal, son of Telamon, half-brother of Ajax. From Salamis. Famous archer. Instrumental in the defense of the Greek camp.

**Thetis:** Greek supporter, a deity, daughter of Nereus, mother of Achilles, wife of Peleus. Queen of the sea nymphs. Thetis protects and aids her son. Her appeal to Zeus causes the Greek losses which require the return of Achilles. She gets Achilles his new set of armor.

**Zeus:** A deity, son of Cronus, husband of Hera, brother of Hades and Poseidon, father of Aphrodite, Ares, Athena, Helen and Sarpedon. King of the gods. God of the sky and thunder. Also regarded as the god of justice. Zeus dictates the ebb and flow of the war, although the appeals of men and gods often decide his policy for him.

### Minor Characters

**Ajax Oilean:** Greek leader from Locris. Also known as Lesser Ajax. Famous for speed.

**Andromache:** Trojan. Wife of Hector, mother of Astyanax.

**Antenor:** Trojan counselor. Father of many sons lost to the war.

**Antilochus:** Greek from Pylos, son of Nestor.

**Artemis:** Deity favoring Trojans. Daughter of Zeus and Leto. Sister of Apollo. Goddess of the hunt and the Moon.

**Asius:** Trojan warrior and charioteer, tries to breach the Greek walls.

**Astyanax:** Trojan. Son of Hector and Andromache. Real name is Scamandrius. Astyanax means "lord of the city."

**Asteropaeus:** Trojan warrior. Killed by Achilles.

**Automedon:** Greek Myrmidon. Achilles' chariot driver.

**Calchas:** Greek seer.

**Cebriones:** Trojan. Son of Priam. Half brother of Hector. Chariot driver for Hector.

**Chryses:** Trojan ally. Priest of Apollo. Father of Chryseis. His prayers to Apollo caused the plague on the Greek troops in Book 1.



**Chryseis:** Trojan ally. Disputed war prize of Agamemnon.

**Deiphobus:** Trojan warrior. Son of Priam. Brother of Hector. Impersonated by Athena to encourage Hector to face Achilles.

**Dolon:** Trojan fighter famed for swift feet. Sent on a night raid only to be killed by Diomedes and Odysseus.

**Euphorbus:** Trojan warrior who wounds Patroclus with Apollo's help.

**Eurypylus:** Greek leader from Thessaly.

**Helenus:** Trojan seer. Son of Priam and Hecuba. Brother of Hector. Often impersonated by Apollo.

**Hephaestus:** Deity associated with Greeks. Son of Hera. God of fire and metal working. Creator of Achilles' new armor and shield.

**Hermes:** Deity favoring Greeks. Son of Zeus. Messenger god. Guides Priam through the Greek camp.

**Leto:** Pre-olympian deity favoring the Trojans. Mother of Artemis and Apollo.

**Meriones:** Greek captain from Crete. Fights with the best of the Greek warriors.

**Pandarus:** Trojan allied archer from Lycia. Breaks an early truce by shooting Menelaus.

**Phoenix:** Greek Myrmidon. Advisor to Achilles. King of the Dolopians.

**Polydamas:** Trojan warrior. Advises Hector on strategy.

**Polypoetes:** Greek leader of Lapiths. Helps to protect the ships.

**Stheneleus:** Greek from Argos, friend to Diomedes.

**Xanthus:** Deity favoring the Trojans. River god. Fights Achilles.

**Thersites:** Greek, mortal. Thersites is called the most horrible of the Greeks by Odysseus in Book 2. Thersites is the Greek man who takes it upon himself to criticize Agamemnon. For this, Odysseus beats him with Agamemnon's scepter.

**Machaon:** Greek, mortal. Machaon is a co-leader from Thessaly.

**Agenor:** Trojan, mortal, son of Antenor. Agenor dies in the melee at the end of Book 4.

**Dione:** A deity, mother of Aphrodite. Aphrodite flees to Dione when she is wounded in Book 5.



**Aeantes:** Greek, mortal. The name given to the two men named Ajax (Telamon and Oilean) when they are referred to together.

**Strife (Eris):** Trojan supporter, a deity. This god is identified as the sister of Ares in Book 4. Her Greek name is Eris.

**Achaean:** One of the three major names used to refer to the Greeks in the Iliad. The other two are the Danaans and the Argives. None of these names can be translated as 'the Greeks', because the Greek word for this concept was Hellenes.

**Thoas (1):** Greek, mortal. The Achaean Thoas is a commander of the Aetolians.

**Thoas (2):** Trojan, mortal. The Trojan Thoas is wounded by Menelaus in Book 16.

**Thoas (3):** Trojan, mortal. This Thoas is the King of Lemnos mentioned only in passing in Book 14.

**Imbrius:** Trojan, mortal, son-in-law to Priam. Imbrius is Priam's son-in-law from a nearby region who is killed by Teucer in book 13.

**Pisander (1):** Trojan, mortal. Pisander is killed by Agamemnon in Book 11.

**Pisander (2):** Trojan, mortal. Another Trojan killed by Menelaus in book 13.

**Pisander (3):** Greek, mortal. A commander of the Myrmidons.

**Sleep:** A deity, brother of Death. This god is featured chiefly in Hera's betrayal of Zeus in Book 14. He is the 'twin-brother of death' because sleep is the closest state to death.

**Podes:** Trojan, mortal. Podes is killed by Menelaus in Book 17.

**Polydorus (1):** Trojan, mortal, brother of Hector. The Trojan Polydorus is killed by Achilles. This spurs Polydorus' brother, Hector, to attack Achilles.

**Polydorus (2):** Greek, mortal. An adversary whom Nestor beat in the spear throw when he was younger.

**Lycaon:** Trojan, mortal, son of Priam. Lycaon is killed by Achilles.

**Laomedon:** Trojan, mortal, father of Priam. Laomedon is the old King of Troy.

**Hecuba:** Trojan, mortal, wife of Priam, mother of Hector and Paris. Hecuba is the strong matriarch of Troy who shares in the burdens of war with her husband and sons.

**Eumelus:** Greek, mortal. A captain from Thessaly.

**Epeus:** Greek, mortal. The boxing champion in Patroclus' funeral games.

**Euryalus:** Greek, mortal. A captain from Argos.



## Objects/Places

**Achilles' horses:** Hector rages after these horses named Roan Beauty and Charger. They are of divine origin and paralleled by few.

**Achilles' spear:** This spear was given to Achilles' father Peleus by Chiron, a centaur renowned for his wisdom and ability in the arts. Not only is this spear blessed because it is of divine origin, but it is also crafted from extra hardy wood.

**Aeneas' Horses:** Diomedes desires these horses in Book 5. According to him, they are descended from divine stock given to Tros by Zeus for the stealing of Ganymede. Anchises, Aeneas' father, took the offspring from Laomedon, the father of Priam.

**Argos:** A region near the northeastern part of the Peloponnese.

**Athena's dress:** Athena, known as a maiden goddess, was frequently honored in Athens with the presentation of a fine dress. Athena's temple, the Parthenon, housed a giant statue of the goddess which was presented with a dress as a form of sacrifice.

**Aulis:** The Greek fleet's departure point for Troy. The ships had no wind to sail and Artemis demanded the sacrifice of Agamemnon's daughter Iphigenia for passage.

**Crete:** Long island located at the southern end of the Aegean sea.

**Golden apple:** The object dedicated 'to the fairest' presented by the goddess Discord at the marriage banquet of Peleus and Thetis.

**Greece:** The rough geographic area south of the modern Balkans, west of Asia minor and east of the Adriatic sea. Greece is usually considered to extend to the island of Crete, containing the Aegean sea. Most islands within the Aegean are traditionally consider to be 'Greek'.

**Greeks:** The assailants of Troy. Also known as Argives, Achaeans and Danaans. Any people from the Area known as Greece, speaking a similar language.

**Guest-friend:** The closest translation of the word 'philos'. This friendship is a complex system of hospitality, family, class and inheritance. A guest-friend could be a relative, a neighbor, a far-away acquaintance or an associate.

**Ichor:** Full divinities, as opposed to demi-gods or heroes, do not bleed 'blood', but this divine substance.

**Ithaca:** Odysseus' Island on the western side of Greece bordering the Ionian Sea.

**Lycia:** Homeland of Trojan Allies in the southern portion of Asia minor.



**Mount Ida:** A mountain located in Asia minor in Phrygia, southeast of Troy. Zeus goes to the mountain. In some myths, it is located on Crete.

**Mount Olympus:** The mythical home of the gods and an actual mountain located northeastern coastal Greece. Zeus resides here and all assemblies of the gods take place in his palace.

**Mycenae:** The home of Agamemnon and modern archaeological site located in the Northeast Peloponnese.

**Myrmidons:** The 'marines' of Achilles from Phthia.

**No man's land:** The area containing the line of scrimmage where most of the actual battles take place.

**Phalanx:** The battle formation most heavily utilized in Late archaic and classical Greece by hoplite armies.

**Pylos:** A city located in the southwestern part of the Peloponnese.

**Rhesus' horses:** King Rhesus was king of the Thracians and his horses were famous for their strength and stature. In Book 10, Odysseus and Diomedes raid the Thracian camp and steal these horses.

**Salamis:** An island located southwest of mainland Greece and east of the Peloponnese.

**Scaean gates:** The main gates to the city of Troy, the walls of which were built by Poseidon.

**Scepter:** In the description of Agamemnon's scepter, there is a divine origin. The scepter, already a symbol of power and rank, becomes an object of divine testimony to Agamemnon's rule.

**Sparta:** A Greek city located in the South central part of the Peloponnese. This city is sacred to Hera and the home of Menelaus.

**Storm cloud shield:** Zeus' shield which renders projectile weapons useless. Apollo uses it to help Hector when he storms the Greek camp and Athena uses it to protect Achilles before his mother brings him new armor.

**Thessaly:** A region located on the eastern side of Greece.

**Thrace:** A region which borders Greece in Europe at the north of the Adriatic near the eastern most part and Bosphorus and Dardanelles.

**Trojans:** The people from or around the city of Troy.

**Troy:** A powerful and rich city on the northern coast of Asia minor.

**Xanthus:** A river near the city of Troy.



# Quotes

Quote 1: "Rage - Goddess, sing the rage of Peleus' son Achilles,  
murderous, doomed, that cost the Achaeans countless losses  
hurling down to the House of Death so many sturdy souls,  
great fighter's souls, but made their bodies carrion  
feats for the dogs and birds  
and the will of Zeus was moving towards its end." Book 1, lines 1-6

Quote 2: "What god drove them to fight with such a fury?" Book 1, line 7

Quote 3: "if a man obeys the gods they're quick to hear his prayers." Book 1, lines 5-6

Quote 4: "if I catch you again blithering on this way  
Let Odysseus' head be wrenched off his shoulders  
never again call me the father of Telemachus  
If I don't grab you, strip the clothing off you  
Cloak, tunic and rags that wrap you private parts  
And whip you howling naked back to the fast ships  
Out of the armies' muster - whip you like a cur!" Book 2, lines 302-308

Quote 5: "Don't provoke me - wretched headstrong girl!  
Or in my immortal rage I may just toss you over  
Hate you as I adore you now - with a vengeance." Book 3, lines 480-482

Quote 6: "Whenever I am bent on tearing down some city  
Filled with men you love - to please myself -  
Never attempt to thwart my fury, Hera  
give me my way. For I, I gave you this  
All of my own free will but hardly willing. No,  
Of all the cities under the sun and starry skies,  
wherever men who walk the earth have dwelled,  
I honor sacred Ilium most with my immortal heart." Book 4, lines 47-54

Quote 7: "Drink deep of battle." Book 4, line 301

Quote 8: "did he rampage now with the Trojans or the Argives?  
Down the plain he stormed like a stream in spate  
A routing winter torrent sweeping away the dikes  
The tight piled dikes can't hold it back any longer." Book 5, lines 95-99

Quote 9: "The other's Aeneas, claims Anchises' blood  
The noble Anchises, but his mother's Aphrodite  
Come, up you go in the chariot, give ground now!  
No charging the front ranks, you might lose your life." Book 5, lines 274-277



Quote 10: "Doesn't son of Tydeus know, down deep,  
the man who fights the gods does not live long?" Book 5, lines 465-466

Quote 11: "All this weighs on my mind too, dear woman.  
But I would die of shame to face the men of Troy  
And the Trojan women trailing their long robes  
If I would shrink from battle now, a coward." Book 6, lines 523-525

Quote 12: "And someday one will say, one of the men to come  
Steering his oar-swept ship across the wine-dark sea  
'there's the mound of a man who died in the old days,  
one of the brave whom glorious Hector killed.'  
So they will say, someday, and my fame will never die." Book 7, lines 101-105

Quote 13: "War - I know it well, and the butchery of men  
Well I know, shift to the left, shift to the right  
My tough tanned shield. That's what the real drill  
Defensive fighting means to me. I know it all  
How to charge in the rush of plunging horses-  
I know how to stand and fight to the finish  
Twist and lunge in the War-god's deadly dance." Book 7, lines 275-281

Quote 14: "On with it - give Argive Helen and all her treasures  
Back to Atreus' sons to take away at last.  
We broke our sworn truce. We fight as outlaws.  
True, and what profit for us in the long run?  
Nothing - unless we do exactly as I say." Book 7, lines 402-406

Quote 15: "The god bent his head that the armies must be saved  
not die in blood. That instant he launched an eagle-  
Truest of Zeus's signs that fly the skies - a fawn  
Clutched in its talons, sprung of a running doe,  
But he dropped it free beside the handsome shrine  
Where the Achaean soldiers always sacrificed to Zeus." Book 8, lines 281-286

Quote 16: "...Where are you rushing now?  
What is this madness blazing in your hearts?  
Zeus forbids you to fight for Achaea's armies!" Book 8, lines 473-475

Quote 17: "I cannot let us battle the Father any longer,  
Not for mortal men...  
Men - let one of them die, another live  
However their luck may run, Let Zeus decide." Book 8, lines 491-494

Quote 18: "as crosswinds chop the sea where the fish swarm." Book 9, line 4

Quote 19: "That's no lie, old man - a full account you give  
Of all my acts of madness. Mad, blind I was!" Book 9, lines 147-148



Quote 20: "Let him submit to me! Only the god of death  
Is so relentless, Death submits to no one -  
So mortals hate him most of all the gods." Book 9, lines 189-191

Quote 21: "the very gates of death, who says one thing but hides another in his heart."  
Book 9, lines 378-379

Quote 22: "Two fates bear me on to the day of death.  
If I hold out here and I lay siege to Troy  
My journey home is gone, but my glory never dies.  
If I voyage back to the fatherland I love,  
My pride, my glory dies...  
True, but the life that's left me will be long,  
The stroke of death will not come on me quickly." Book 9, lines 499-505

Quote 23: "Athena winged a heron close to their path  
And veering right. Neither man could see it  
Scanning the night sky, they only heard its cry." Book 10, lines 322-344

Quote 24: "lions stalking through the carnage and the corpses." Book 10, lines 348-349

Quote 25: "Hector bore his round shield in the forefront, blazing out  
Like the Dog Star through the clouds, all withering fire  
Then plunging back into the cloud - rack massed and dark -" Book 11, lines 69-71

Quote 26: "sharp pain came bursting in on Atrides' strength  
Spear - sharp as the labor-pangs that pierce a woman,  
Agonies brought on by the harsh birthing spirits,  
Hera's daughters who hold the stabbing power of birth -  
So sharp the throes that burst on Atrides' strength." Book 11, lines 313-317

Quote 27: "like a huntsman  
crying on his hounds." Book 11, lines 339-340

Quote 28: "two wild boars...  
fling themselves on the yelping packs that hunt them." Book 11, lines 377-378

Quote 29: "You scratch my foot and you're vaunting all the same -  
But who cares? A woman or an idiot boy could wound me so." Book 11, lines 457-458

Quote 30: "... So such was I  
In the ranks of men... or was it all a dream?  
This Achilles  
He'll reap the rewards of that great courage of his  
Alone, I tell you - weep his heart out far too late  
When are troops are dead and gone." Book 11, lines 907-910



Quote 31: "For suddenly, just as the men tried to cross,  
A fatal bird sign flashed before their eyes,  
An eagle clutching a monstrous bloody serpent in both talons,  
Still alive, still struggling - it had not lost its fight,  
Writhing back to strike it fanged the chest of its captor  
Right beside the throat - and agonized by the bites  
The eagle flung it away to earth, dashed it down  
Amidst the milling fighters, loosed a shriek  
And the bird veered off along the gusting wind." Book 12, lines 230-239

Quote 32: "No, no put our trust in the will of mighty Zeus,  
King of the deathless gods and men who die.  
Bird signs!  
Fight for your country - that is the best, the only omen!" Book 12, lines 278-281

Quote 33: "... Here were the best picked men  
Detached in squads to stand the Trojan charge  
And shining Hector, a wall of them bulked together  
Spear-by-spear, shield-by-shield, the rims overlapping,  
Buckler-to-buckler, helm-to-helm, man-to-man massed tight  
And the horsehair crests on glittering helmet horns brushed  
As they tossed their heads, the battalions bulked so dense  
Shoulder-to-shoulder close, and the spears they shook  
In daring hands packed into jagged lines of battle  
Single minded fighters facing straight ahead,  
Achaeans primed for combat." Book 13, lines 151-152

Quote 34: "he stood his ground like a wild mountain boar,  
Trusting his strength, standing up to a rout of men  
That scream and swoop against him off in a lonely copse,  
The ridge of his back bristling, his eyes flashing fire,  
He grinds his teeth, champing to beat back dogs and men." Book 13, lines 545-549

Quote 35: "how on earth can a wounded man make war?" Book 14, line 76

Quote 36: "Not so loud the breakers bellowing out against the shore,  
Driven in from the open sea by the North Wind's brutal blast,  
Not so loud the roar of fire whipped to a crackling blaze  
Rampaging into a mountain gorge raging up through timber  
Not so loud the gale that howls in the leafy crowns of oaks  
when it hits its pitch of fury tearing branches down -  
Nothing so loud as cries of Trojans, cries of Achaeans,  
Terrible war cries, armies storming against each other." Book 14, lines 467-474

Quote 37: "So now, I tell you, drop this anger for your son.  
By now some fighter better than he, a stronger hand  
Has gone down in his own blood, or soon will go.



It is no small labor to rescue all mankind,  
Every mother's son." Book 15, lines 166-170

Quote 38: "Look - a genuine miracle right before my eyes!  
Hector's escaped again, he's risen from the dead!  
And just as each of us hoped with all his heart  
He'd dropped and died at the hands of giant Ajax.  
But again some god swoops down and saves this Hector -  
And hasn't he wiped out enough of us already?  
Now he'll make more slaughter, well I know.  
He'd never be at the front, smashing our lines  
Unless Old Thunder, Zeus, had put him on his feet." Book 15, lines 339-347

Quote 39: "So fight by the ships, all together. And that comrade  
Who meets his death and destiny, speared or stabbed,  
Let him die! He dies fighting for fatherland -  
No dishonor there!  
He'll leave behind him wife and sons unscathed,  
His house and estate unharmed- once these Argives  
Sail for home, the fatherland they love." Book 15, lines 574-580

Quote 40: "Like a girl, a baby running after her mother,  
Begging to be picked up, and she tugs her skirts,  
Holding her back as she tries to hurry off - all tears,  
fawning up at her she takes her in her arms..." Book 16, lines 8-11

Quote 41: "tight as a mason packs a good stone wall,  
That fights the ripping winds - crammed so close  
The crested helmets, the war-shields bulging, jutting  
Buckler-to-buckler, helm-to-helm, man-to-man massed tight  
And the horsehair crests on glittering helmet horns brushed  
as they tossed their head the battalions bulked so dense." Book 16, lines 251-257

Quote 42: "Patroclus, Prince, go back! It is not the will of fate  
That the proud Trojans' citadel fall before your spear,  
Not even before Achilles - far greater man than you!" Book 16, lines 825-828

Quote 43: "Hector! Now is your time to glory to the skies...  
Now the victory is yours.  
A gift of the Son of Cronus, Zeus - Apollo too -  
They brought me down with all their deathless ease,  
They are the ones who tore the armor off my back.  
Even if twenty Hectors had charges against me  
They'd all have died here, laid low by my spear.  
No, deadly fate in league with Apollo killed me,  
From the ranks of men, Euphorbus. You came third,  
And all you could do was finish off my life...



One more thing - take it to heart, I urge you -  
You too won't live long yourself, I swear." Book 16, lines 985-997

Quote 44: "...like a lion cornered round his young  
When hunters cross him, leading his cubs through woods -  
He ramps in all the pride of his power, bristling strength  
The heavy folds of his forehead frowning down his eyes." Book 17, lines 151-155

Quote 45: "live or die - that is the lovely give-and-take of war." Book 17, line 262

Quote 46: "charging in as a heavy surf roars in against the rip  
at a river's mouth." Book 17, lines 299-300

Quote 47: "So on they fought like a swirl of living fire -  
You could not say if the sun and moon still stood secure,  
So dense the battle-haze that engulfed the brave  
Who stood their ground to defend Patroclus' body." Book 17, lines 421-424

Quote 48: "Then let me die at once." Book 18, line 112

Quote 49: "No more, Polydamas! Your pleading repels me now.  
You say go back again - be crammed inside the city.  
Aren't you sick of being caged inside those walls?" Book 18, lines 331-333

Quote 50: "The god of war is impartial: he hands out death to the man who hands out  
death." Book 18, lines 359-360

Quote 51: "My child leave your friend to lie there dead -  
We must, though it breaks our hearts...  
The will of the gods has crushed him once for all  
But here Achilles, accept this glorious armor, look,  
A gift from the god of fire - burnished bright, finer  
Than any mortal has ever borne across his back!" Book 19, lines 8-14

Quote 52: "... I am sick with longing for you!  
There is no more shattering blow that I could suffer.  
Not even if I should learn of my father's death." Book 19, lines 381-383

Quote 53: "Our team could race with the rush of the West Wind,  
The strongest, swiftest blast on earth, men say -  
Still you are doomed to die by force Achilles,  
Cut down by a deathless god and mortal man!" Book 19, lines 491-494

Quote 54: "These mortals do concern me, dying as they are." Book 20, line 26

Quote 55: "What do we need with wrangling, hurling insults?  
Cursing each other here like a pair of nagging women  
Boiling over with petty, heartsick squabbles, blustering



Into the streets to pelt themselves with slander  
Much of it true, much not. Anger stirs up lies." Book 20, lines 291-295

Quote 56: "Well I know you are brave, and I am far weaker.  
True - but all lies in the lap of the great gods.  
Weaker I am, but I still might take your life  
With one hurl of a spear - my weapon can cut too,  
Long before now its point has found its mark!" Book 20, lines 492 - 496

Quote 57: "Nothing can save you now -  
Not even your silver whirling, mighty - tiding river -  
Not for all the bulls you've slaughtered to it for years,  
The rearing stallions drowned alive in its eddies...die! -  
Even so - writhing in death till all you Trojans pay  
For Patroclus' blood and the carnage of Achaeans  
Killed by the racing ships when I was out of action." Book 21, lines 149-155

Quote 58: "Father Zeus! To think in all my misery not one god  
Can bring himself to rescue me from this river!  
Then I'd face any fate. And no god on high,  
Non is to blame so much as my dear mother -  
How she lied, she beguiled me, she promised me  
I'd lie beneath the walls of the armored Trojans  
Cut down in blood by Apollo's whipping arrows!" Book 21, lines 307-314

Quote 59: "God forbid that Achilles sees me turning tail,  
Heading from town and out to open country -  
He'll come after me full tilt and run me down!  
And then no way to escape my death, my certain doom -  
Achilles is far too strong for any man on earth.  
Wait... what if I face him out before the walls?  
Surely his body can be pierced by bronze, even his -  
He has only one life, and people say he's mortal:  
It's only the son of Cronus handing him the glory." Book 21, lines 648-656

Quote 60: "As a snake in the hills, guarding his hole, awaits a man -  
Bloated with poison, deadly hatred seething inside him,  
Glances flashing fire as he coils around his lair..." Book 22, lines 111-113

Quote 61: "...don't talk to me of pacts.  
There are no binding oaths between men and lions -  
Wolves and lambs can enjoy no meeting of the minds -  
They are all bent on hating each other to the death.  
So with you and me. No love between us. No truce  
Till one or the other falls and gluts with blood  
Ares who hacks at men behind his rawhide shield." Book 22, lines 309-315





Quote 62: "I know you well - I see my fate before me.  
Never a chance that I could win you over...  
Iron inside your chest, that heart of yours.  
But now beware, or my curse will draw god's wrath  
Upon your head, that day when Paris and lord Apollo -  
For all your fighting heart - destroy you at the Scaean gates!" Book 22, lines 419-424

Quote 63: "Sleeping Achilles? You've forgotten me, my friend.  
You never neglected me in life, only now in death.  
Bury me, quickly - let me pass the Gates of Hades.  
They hold me off at a distance, all the souls,  
The shades of the burnt out breathless dead,  
Never to let me cross the river, mingle with them...  
They leave me to wander up and down, abandoned, lost  
At the house of death with the all-embracing gates." Book 23, lines 81-89

Quote 64: "You never forget my friendship, never miss a chance  
To pay me the honor I deserve among our comrades.  
For all that you have done for me Achilles,  
May the immortals fill your cup with joy!" Book 23, lines 722-725

Quote 65: "Atrides - well we know how far you excel us all:  
No one can match your strength at throwing spears,  
You are the best by far!  
Take first prize and return to your hollow ships  
While we award this spear to Meriones.  
If that you please your heart. That's what I propose." Book 23, lines 986-991

Quote 66: "But this Achilles - first he slaughters Hector,  
He rips away the noble prince's life  
Then lashes him to his chariot, drags him round  
His beloved comrade's tomb. But why, I ask you?  
What good will it do him? What honor will he gain?  
Let that man beware, or great and glorious as he is,  
We mighty gods will wheel on him in anger - look,  
He outrages the senseless clay in all his fury!" Book 24, lines 58-65

Quote 67: "How long will you eat your heart out here in tears and torment?  
All wiped from your mind, all thought of food and bed?  
It's a welcome thing to make love to a woman...  
You don't have long to live now, well I know:  
Already I see them looming up beside you - death  
And the strong force of fate..." Book 24, lines 156-161

Quote 68: "and straightaway the Father launched an eagle -  
Truest of Zeus's signs that fly the skies  
The dark marauder that mankind calls the Black-wing.





Broad as the door of a rich man's vaulted treasure chamber,  
Well-fitted with sturdy bars, so broad each wind of the bird  
Spread out on either side as it swept in through the city  
Flashing clear on the right before the king and queen.  
All looked up, overjoyed - the people's spirits lifted." Book 24, lines 373-381

Quote 69: "he gently moved him back. And overpowered by memory  
Both men gave way to grief. Priam wept freely  
For man - killing Hector, throbbing, crouching  
Before Achilles' feet as Achilles wept himself,  
Now for his father, now for Patroclus once again  
And their sobbing rose and fell throughout the house." Book 24, lines 592-599

Quote 70: "But you, once he slashed away your life with his brazen spear  
He dragged you time and again around his comrade's tomb.  
Patroclus whom you killed - not that he brought Patroclus  
Back to life by that. But I have you with me now...  
Fresh as the morning dew you lie in the royal halls  
Like one whom Apollo, lord of the silver bow,  
Has approached and shot to death with gentle shafts." Book 24, lines 886-892

# Topic Tracking: Divine Intervention

## Books 1 - 4

Divine Intervention 1: Chryses appeal to Apollo causes the god to attack the Greek armies with plague. This intervention leads to the angering of Agamemnon at Calchas' prophecy and Achilles' withdrawal for battle. Apollo's intervention on Chryses' behalf begins the series of events that continue throughout the epic.

Divine Intervention 2: Athena prevents Achilles from losing his temper and attacking Agamemnon, promising him greater glory if he waits. Athena's intervention alters the course of the story line. If Achilles had attacked Agamemnon, by winning he would have disrupted the chain of command and by losing he would have ended the story line. Without Agamemnon there is no war, without Achilles there is no hero and no rage.

Divine Intervention 3: At Thetis' request, Zeus pledges that the Greeks will suffer defeat without Achilles in their ranks. Thetis, by interfering on her son's behalf, prompts Zeus to dictate the next seventeen books of the epic. Until the death of Patroclus the story that is told is that of a Trojan resurgence and the fulfillment of Achilles' request.

Divine Intervention 4: Zeus' dream causes Agamemnon to mount an attack that he would have otherwise not mounted. This is the beginning of a series of divine actions that support Zeus' pledge to Thetis. Agamemnon's preemptive attack opens the Greeks up to an eventual Trojan offensive and undermines their confidence.

Divine Intervention 5: Iris, Zeus' messenger, calls the Trojan captains to order so that they might meet the coming Greek assault. As the dream inspires Agamemnon to attack, Iris prompts the Trojan captains to make a timely assault. This intervention reinvigorates the Trojan line and overturns a stalemate that has lasted for nine years.

Divine Intervention 6: Aphrodite rescues Paris from an almost certain death and returns him the side of his lover, Helen. This action not only enrages the Greek captains but it also effectively renders the Trojans as 'oath-breakers'. By Greek terms a violation of a truce or agreement sworn to the Gods should result in death or some sort of retribution. Priam, the King of Troy, swears on the behalf of his sons. By not fulfilling their end of the agreement and depriving Menelaus, the Trojans seal their own demise.

Divine Intervention 7: Athena, ordered by Zeus, prompts Pandarus to shoot at Menelaus, restarting the battle. Once again, even though the tide of battle favors the Trojans, they are forced by divine powers to break a truce that they might not otherwise break. This intervention not only reinstates the battle, but it also further seals the demise of the Trojan city.

## Books 5 - 8

Divine Intervention 8: Athena inspires Diomedes with the strength and the daring he needs to sustain his rampage. Athena's aid fills Diomedes with rage and produces carnage. This rampage directs the course of the battle for this entire book as Diomedes leads the Greek offensive and Trojan captains attempt to stand up to him.

Divine Intervention 9: Aphrodite saves her son Aeneas from death at the hands of Diomedes. This intervention is more indicative of gods struggling with gods than gods manipulating men. Aeneas is threatened only because Diomedes has been made stronger by the influence of Athena. Aphrodite rescues her son from danger as she continues to struggling with hostile gods.

Divine Intervention 10: Ares inspires Hector to lead the Trojans and defend their line against Diomedes' attack. Once again, in response to the action of Athena, a god aides a Trojan captain. Ares raises Hector's strength and fills him with rage so that he can rally the Trojan warriors and defend against the rampaging Greeks.

Divine Intervention 11: Apollo and Athena decide that they want a battle between champions. Hector is inspired to challenge a Greek warrior. The two opposed deities have tired of the chaos of battle and would rather see one champion die than many. Hector, foremost of the Trojans, is chosen for his talent in war and his stature. The Greeks must be shamed by Nestor before they volunteer to face the Trojan. By drawing lots, Ajax is selected to fight.

Divine Intervention 12: Zeus has decreed to the rest of the gods that he should be the only deity to interfere in the war. In order to turn the battle in the war he wants it, the king of the gods must resort to excessive force. Zeus throws thunder bolts to cause a Greek rout. Nestor loses his grip on his reigns. Zeus continues to throw bolts of lightning as the Greeks are pushed into their camp and the Trojans crowd against their walls.

Divine Intervention 13: At Agamemnon's plea, Zeus gives the Greeks a sign that he has not completely forsaken them: a doe dropped by an eagle. This inspires the Greeks to rally. Zeus takes pity on the Greeks because he has decreed that they must suffer a rout giving them a temporary resurgence.

## **Books 9 - 12**

Divine Intervention 14: Diomedes asks for a sign from Athena favoring his foray into the enemy's camps. Athena sends a heron. Inspired by this sign, Diomedes and Odysseus continue on their night raid, compared to lions as they sneak into the Trojan camp. The venture is successful and the pair return to their own camp with spoils, unscathed.

Divine Intervention 15: Apollo rouses a Trojan to defend the raided camp. In response to Athena's support of the Greek marauders, Apollo wakes a Trojan to limit the damage done by the pair. The gods struggle against each other using the mortals as pawns.

Divine Intervention 16: Zeus gives Hector the strength to storm the Trojan walls and break down the doors. With this act, Zeus continues his commitment to a Greek rout



allowing the Trojans to breach the walls and threaten the ships themselves. Hector hefts a giant rock and smashed the gate allowing the Trojan masses to flow into the camp.

### **Books 13 - 16**

Divine Intervention 17: The wills of Zeus and Poseidon struggle as Zeus tries to sustain the Trojan storming of the Greek camps and Poseidon tries to repulse it. The divine brothers ply their abilities on the mortals. Poseidon challenges his brother's authority as he inspires the Greek leaders with the strength to return to battle. As Zeus turns away, the Trojans continue to attack and Poseidon intensifies his involvement.

Divine Intervention 18: Poseidon takes the form of a mortal Greek and encourages Agamemnon to reenter battle. In the form of a Greek veteran, Poseidon gives Agamemnon the confidence he needs to return to battle and raise a significant defense against the Trojans. The group of wounded captains return to visibility and rally their warriors.

Divine Intervention 19: Poseidon reenters the battle and encourages the Greeks, resulting in the wounding of Hector. Because Hera has guaranteed that Zeus will be sleeping, Poseidon is brave enough to take a greater part in the battle. Under his inspiration, Hector receives a head wound and is forced to withdraw from battle. This loss undermines the Trojan confidence and advances the Greek rally. Poseidon intervenes against his brother and continues to struggle for his own interests.

Divine Intervention 20: Apollo leads the Trojans to causes another Greek rout. After Zeus awakens to see Hector wounded, he bursts into rage and has Iris threaten Poseidon so that he will stop helping the Greeks. Apollo goes to the aid of the Trojans and leads Hector back into battle where he rallies his captains and regains his losses.

Divine Intervention 21: As the Trojans are driven back to the walls of Troy by the Patroclus and the surging Myrmidons, Apollo flees with them. Although Patroclus has been warned that he should only push the Trojans out of the Greek camp, he doesn't heed the advice. Instead he pushes to the walls of Troy where Apollo warns him to stop attacking. Patroclus continues attacking and Apollo strikes him with an arrow. Patroclus is finished off by Hector. The death of Patroclus, foretold by Zeus, is the only act that can overcome Achilles' rage at Agamemnon and make him return to battle. This intervention is instrumental in the advance of the story-line.

### **Books 17 - 20**

Divine Intervention 22: Hector seizes Achilles' armor off Patroclus' body. Zeus pities Hector and foresees his death, allowing him a few moments of glory. As a result the Trojan prince tears into the Trojan line and strikes down many.

Divine Intervention 23: Zeus pushes back the Greeks with a thunderbolt as Apollo exposes the death of a friend to encourage Hector. Zeus' intervention simultaneously enrages the Greeks and encourages the Trojans. By exposing the death of a friend to Hector, Apollo increases his rage and sends the warrior reeling into battle.

Divine Intervention 24: Thetis acquires new weapons for her son Achilles so that he can reenter the battle and avenge Patroclus. Hephaestus forges these weapons for her. Thetis warns her son again of his fate as she attempts to save his life. She does not succeed. Because he cannot fight without armor, she goes to Hephaestus and gets him to produce unparalleled weaponry. These weapons aid Achilles in his rampage and his defeat of Hector.

Divine Intervention 25: Thetis presents Achilles with his new arms and Athena strengthens him. Achilles is inspired by his new weapons, but he still refuses to it in deference to his fallen comrade. Athena nourished the Greek captain so that he will be able to fight. The intervention of these two goddesses transforms a grieving man into a powerful warrior capable of completing his destiny.

Divine Intervention 26: Apollo sends Aeneas after Achilles to divert the Greek warrior from his search for Hector. This distraction is an intervention meant only to delay the inevitable. Hector is going to die, but if no one stands up to Achilles before he dies many other Trojans will also suffer. Apollo uses Aeneas to defend other Trojans and delay the death of Hector.

Divine Intervention 27: Poseidon distracts Achilles to save Aeneas and Apollo thwarts Achilles' attempt on Hector. Poseidon, though usually favoring Greeks, cannot bear to see Aeneas die at the hands of Achilles, so he rescues the son of Aphrodite. As Achilles gets closer to Hector, Apollo delays the inevitable for a little longer.

## **Books 21 - 24**

Divine Intervention 28: Xanthus, horrified by Achilles' rampage, asks the hero to stop killing men in his waters. Achilles has been filling the waters of the river with corpses and blood. He refuses to stop the killing and, overhearing Apollo talking with Xanthus, he attacks the river god. Xanthus surges up and chases the Greek warrior, stalling his rampage.

Divine Intervention 29: Xanthus attacks Achilles for not agreeing to cease the carnage. Achilles prays to the gods. Poseidon strengthens the Greek. Hephaestus pushes the river back with fire at Hera's request. The gods continue to use mortals as pawns in their own struggles, but they challenge each other and struggle over the course of the war. Hera and Hephaestus stop Xanthus so that Achilles can continue and destroy Hector.

Divine Intervention 30: Apollo inspires Aeneas to stand his ground against Achilles, so that the Greek warrior will not enter the city of Troy. Apollo knows that Hector is doomed, but he desires to delay the fall of the city. Aeneas stands against Achilles and gives the Trojans time to secure the gates. Apollo rescues the mortal and puts him near the river Xanthus.

Divine Intervention 31: Hector's confidence leaves him as Achilles approaches and he flees around the walls of the city. Achilles chases him three times around the city. On the fourth, Athena takes the form of Deiphobus which makes Hector think that he is not

standing up to Achilles alone. Once again confident, the Trojan hero turns and attacks Achilles with his spear. When he turns to get a second spear, she has disappeared.

Divine Intervention 32: Hector dies because of the gods: Zeus decided his fate and Athena deceived him. Athena's deception in the form of Deiphobus transforms Hector's fear into a false courage sealing his fate. When he reaches for a second spear and no one is there, he knows that he is doomed. Hector's death is part of a decree made early on by Zeus--all part of Achilles' retribution and the metamorphosis of his rage.

Divine Intervention 33: Zeus intercedes to save Hector's body and he has Thetis instruct her son Achilles and sends Iris to Priam. Both goddesses encourage their prospective parties to be open to negotiation. Thetis makes her son soften his anger and Iris makes Priam humble. Although Zeus decreed the death of Hector, he also secures the sanctity of his body and the ensuing afterlife.

Divine Intervention 34: Not only does Hermes guide Priam into the Trojan camp, but he also wakes him up so that he may retreat successfully. Because Thetis only went to Achilles, no other Greeks would be willing to receive Priam. By entering the Greek camp, Priam's life was put into imminent danger. Through Hermes' assistance, Priam is able to enter and leave the camp undetected.



# Topic Tracking: Nature Imagery

## Books 1 - 4

Nature 1: The gathered armies are compared to flocks of birds. In this comparison, Homer intends the image of a mass of birds rather than a careful formation of flight. The armies are gathered in mass groups and the sound of the voices and weapons are similar to the squawking and flapping of birds. The warriors are difficult to distinguish from each other. The juxtaposition of a nature simile for a host of fighting men further evokes the chaos of battle.

Nature 2: The moving armies are compared to the ocean in terms of size and sound. The sides clash like waves.

## Books 5 - 8

Nature 3: Diomedes is compared to a lion attacking cattle as he rampages through the Trojan line. In this comparison, Diomedes is the predator and the Trojans are helpless herds. They have no means to stave off the fangs and claws of their attacker.

Nature 4: Hector and Telamonian Ajax are compared to lions and boars as they fight. This continues the hunt metaphor begun with Diomedes. These two wild animals clash in the natural realm as Hector and Ajax clash on the battle field. The comparison augments the fierceness and desperation of their battle.

Nature 5: Zeus sends the Greeks a signal to restore their faith: an eagle drops a young deer at an altar dedicated to himself. This signal, using natural event, inspires the Greeks to rally and attack.

## Books 9 - 12

Nature 6: The Greek troops in panic are compared to water whipped by the wind. Homer elaborates the water simile from the earlier books. The strong yet predictable ocean is altered by the wind and sent into confusion.

Nature 7: Diomedes and Odysseus are compared to lions as they sneak into the Greek camp. Once again warriors are compared to hunting beasts. The sleeping Trojan allies are their prey.

Nature 8: Diomedes and Odysseus are compared to lions killing sleeping sheep as they kill sleeping Trojan allies. Homer elaborates the hunting lions simile and turns the Trojan allies into helpless herd animals, unprotected by shelter or shepherd. Herding sheep and goats was one of the primary source of food and income for many Greek peasants; such a simile would have been quite recognizable by Homer's audience.

Nature 9: As Agamemnon attacks, he is compared to a lion that kills young deer. The Greek king is made into a fierce lion which chases after the young of his prey. He is so



fierce that the Trojans can not defend themselves against him. They can merely try to run away from the rampaging king.

Nature 10: Surrounded by the enemy, Odysseus fights like a boar in a thicket. The Trojans are transformed into human hunters and Odysseus is a wild beast who turns and fights his attackers. Odysseus is in a thicket because he is making a stand in his realm lashing out at the hunters who expected him to continue fleeing.

### **Books 13 - 16**

Nature 11: The chaos of battle is compared to dust whipped up by a blowing wind. Once again the force of the wind is evoked to create a chaotic scene. Like water in the early passage, dust is still until being whipped up by a force. The battle is so chaotic that no one can see through the confusion. It rises from the ground upward and swirls into the air.

Nature 12: Idomeneus is compared to a mountain boar struggling with hunters as he fights off Trojans. The boar is an animal that forages and fights on its own. Just as Odysseus is compared to a boar who has turned on his pursuers, Idomeneus fiercely stands against his Trojan assailants.

Nature 13: The sound of the battle clash is compared to a roaring surf or a fire. This simile is evocative of the water and dust comparison in earlier books. The battle whirls under its own strength and creates a chaotic din.

Nature 14: Hector is compared to an eagle as he swoops down on the Greeks, who are described as a flock of birds. This simile reflects the bird comparisons of Book 1 with a significant alteration. The Greeks are not birds of prey, but a confused flock of birds. Hector is a lone eagle picking off the distracted birds as they fly around in confusion.

### **Books 17 - 20**

Nature 15: Menelaus is compared to a mother cow protecting her young as he stands over the body of Patroclus. Ajax is compared to a lion over his cubs when he does the same thing. The body of Patroclus is thus rendered as precious as a creature's young. Menelaus is given a maternal aspect as he fends off attackers with his own body. Ajax lashes out and keeps the Trojans at bay.

Nature 16: The Greeks and the Trojans fight like a swirl of fire. Automedon is compared to a vulture in a flock of geese. The swirl of fire invokes the sound simile mentioned earlier. The fire is uncontrolled and it rages over the battlefield flaring up in some places and dying down in other. For ashes, there are only corpses littering the field. The bird of prey and flock simile is reversed from a Trojan to a Greek predator. Automedon turns on the confused Trojans and attacks at will.

Nature 17: The Greek troops are compared to a thick blanket of snow as they move back onto the battlefield. This simile starkly contrasts earlier similes. Unlike the chaotic fire and wind-whipped ocean, blanketing snow is a calm image. There is an even



covering of troops across the battlefield, invoking an image of an absolute and silent taking of the land.

Nature 18: As he rages, Achilles is compared to a fire in mountain gorges. Unlike the other similes, this fire comparison entails only one man as he sweeps through the peaks and pitfalls of battle destroying everything in his path.

### **Books 21 - 24**

Nature 19: Hector is compared to a poisonous snake as he awaits Achilles. A snake is not aggressive like a lion or an eagle, but it waits patiently for its prey. This simile also reflects the reality of Hector's eventual attack. Like a snake, Hector is going to strike once with his spear from a distance, intending to retreat, or recoil.

Nature 20: Achilles denies Hector's request for a truce over their corpses, saying that men do not make oaths to lions, and wolves do not seal pacts with lambs. In this comparison each man is at once several things. Hector is deprived of humanity as he retains the lion simile. He is a wounded predator whose human hunter will allow him no respite. As a lamb, he is completely vulnerable to his assailant. Achilles is the wolf, a predator who has left his pack to take his own victim. There will be no pacts between these creatures.

# Topic Tracking: Rage

## Books 1 - 4

Rage 1: The poem begins with an introduction to the theme of rage. Achilles, raging at the requests and demands of Agamemnon, withdraws from the war until the death of Patroclus. In this section, however, it is the rage of Chryses at his daughter's abduction that moves along the plot. Chryses offers Agamemnon an appropriate ransom for his daughter and the Greek king refuses to accept this. As a result, Chryses appeals to Apollo. Apollo is consumed by rage and punishes the Greek armies with a plague.

Rage 2: Agamemnon is enraged by Calchas' prophecy because he blames him for the destruction. He is also angry that Achilles overstepped his bounds in asking for a prophecy, which is the office of the true leader. As a result, Agamemnon capitulates but demands Achilles' prize in exchange for his own. Achilles, equally enraged at the presumption and selfishness of Agamemnon, withdraws from the Greek camp and the battle.

Rage 3: At the beginning of the duel between Helen's husband and her lover, the two swear that the loser will forfeit their claim to the woman. Because Paris was rescued from battle, rage overcomes Menelaus. This rage increases as the Trojans refuse to remit Helen. Menelaus throws himself into battle with a new destructive power.

## Books 5 - 8

Rage 4: After the battle has begun again, Diomedes is enraged by the gods and rampages through the Trojan line slaughtering men. This anger gives Diomedes superhuman strength and the Greek warrior goes on one of the most destructive killing sprees in the poem. His rage brings about the death of many men.

Rage 5: Ares, watching the coming juggernaut of Diomedes, fills the son of Priam with anger and a desire for revenge. Hector, inspired by Ares, tears into the Greek warriors. Diomedes continues his rampage. The two heroes wreak havoc in the opposing lines as rage continues to claim lives.

## Books 9 - 12

Rage 6: Achilles, still angry with Agamemnon, refuses to help his compatriots. This is a continuation of the introduction to the epic as well as the conflict in Book 1. Achilles' rage at Agamemnon will govern his decision to enter battle until a greater anguish displaces it.

Rage 7: Despite his concern for the wounded, Achilles will not enter the battle because of his continuing rage. This anger is so strong that even in the face of wounded friends, routed troops and an endangered camp, Achilles will not compromise. Rage makes it so that Achilles would rather see friends wounded than be slighted by Agamemnon.



### **Books 13 - 16**

Rage 8: Hector returns from being wounded with the help of the gods. Finding his captains wounded and many troops dead, Hector rampages, reinvigorating the Trojan attack. He berates Paris and mimics his earlier killing spree as he carves into the Greek numbers.

Rage 9: Poseidon's rage against the Trojans causes him to transgress against the will of Zeus. The god of the sea is angry that the Trojan troops are slaughtering the Greeks, so he inspires Greek leaders to reenter battle. His rage also leads him to agree to a plan with Hera to deceive Zeus. This endangers his place in the pantheon because Zeus has threatened great retribution for any god who did not heed his orders. Rage even controls the decisions of the gods.

Rage 10: Hector's rage propels him back inside the Greek camp where he plans to burn their ships. This idea has been planted inside his heads by the gods as he continues to seek retribution for his fallen comrades. Hector puts himself at danger in this endeavor and incites fear and rage in the Greek troops.

Rage 11: Patroclus, excited by his early triumphs, falls into a fit of rage that causes him to push too far into the Trojan line. Achilles warns Patroclus that he may not be safe if he pushes too far, but eager for glory and burning with rage, Patroclus pushes on. His anger brings him temporary victory as he strikes down Trojans left and right.

Rage 12: Despite Apollo's warning, Patroclus continues to attack Troy because he is enraged. He charges the gates three time and finally the god of the sun is forced to scream at the Greek warrior. As a result of his rage-inspired risk, Patroclus is hit by a shaft from Apollo and ultimately struck down by Hector.

### **Books 17 - 20**

Rage 13: Hector's rage causes him to seize Achilles' armor from Patroclus and to taunt Glaucus. The armor is not exactly his, because he did not kill Patroclus alone. The seizure of the armor indicates a lust for glory, but it also reveals Hector's clouded vision as he seizes the armor of Achilles and attempts to desecrate the corpse of his companion.

Rage 14: The fervor over Patroclus' body sends both sides into a rage resulting in the loss of many lives. The Greeks and Trojans cluster around the body of the fallen warrior. The Trojans are enraged at their invaders and the Greeks fight for the right to bury their dead. This rage only adds to the death toll and the corpses as more warriors fall around.

Rage 15: Angered by the death of Patroclus and frustrated by his inability to kill Hector, Achilles continues to slaughter without discrimination. Only rage at the death of his companion was strong enough to overcome Achilles earlier rage. Achilles' anger is present throughout the epic as it is replaced by different focuses. During most of the book he is fooled into inaction by his own fury while by the end he is propelled into action by a new and growing anger.

## **Books 21 - 24**

Rage 16: Achilles continues his killing spree, massacring Trojans in the river Xanthus. Even though the river asks him to stop, Achilles is too blinded by anger to know what to do. When Xanthus talks to Apollo, criticizing him for not saving more Trojan lives, Achilles' rage is born anew as he challenges a god--Achilles' rage is strong enough to allow him to challenge a divinity.

Rage 17: Hector's rage, coupled with his pride, compels him to fight a battle he knows he will lose. Even though he knows that Achilles is momentarily invincible, his anger allows him to believe that it is possible to strike down the warrior with a spear. This rage allows him to be deceived by Athena as she takes on the form of Deiphobus. Hector dies at the hands of a jubilant Achilles, whose own rage makes him refuse a pledge for the safety of Hector's corpse.

# Preamble

The conflict which becomes the *Iliad* actually begins a generation before the siege of Troy. During the Age of Heroes, one of the first boats ever braves the Aegean sea. On this voyage, Fate decrees the pairing of the mortal Peleus and the immortal Thetis, the parents of Achilles. At the marriage banquet of this pair, the goddess Discord throws out a golden apple inscribed with the words "To the fairest." Three goddesses rise to claim this title: Athena, the goddess of wisdom, Hera the Queen of the gods and Aphrodite, the goddess of love. After a great deal of debate, the three decide to let a mortal man decide. They go to Paris, a prince of Troy. Each goddess offers the youth a bribe in return for a vote in her favor. Hera offers Paris a great kingdom and the promise of a lordship over many men. Athena offers him infinite wisdom and an equal amount of influence over men. Aphrodite offers him the love of the most beautiful woman in the world.

Helen a daughter of Zeus, is at this time the most beautiful woman in the world, so beautiful in fact, that she has an entire squadron of suitors who swore to avenge and protect her. After Paris chooses Aphrodite as the fairest, she helps him steal Helen from the home of her husband, Menelaus, who is also the brother of the most powerful king in Greece, Agamemnon. The two brothers hold all the suitors, also kings of their own states, to their old pledge to protect Helen and rally a great army to retrieve her. This army sails for Troy and besieges it for nine years.

# Book 1

Homer's tale begins nine years after the Greek arrival at Troy. Nine years previous, the Greek fleet had gathered at Aulis from the area's various city states to depart together in order to reclaim Helen from Paris for her husband Menelaus. Paris was given the love of Helen by Aphrodite in return for presenting her with the golden apple. Paris, having taken Helen from the house of her husband, returned to his father's city, Troy.

The Text begins with an invocation to the muse opening with the broad spectacle of war and narrowing to a specific conflict:

*"Rage - Goddess, sing the rage of Peleus' son Achilles,  
murderous, doomed, that cost the Achaeans countless losses  
hurling down to the House of Death so many sturdy souls,  
great fighter's souls, but made their bodies carrion  
feats for the dogs and birds  
and the will of Zeus was moving towards its end."* Book 1, lines 1-6

In this first line Homer, establishes one of this epic's constant themes: Rage, that of Achilles, as well as other major characters. Countless deaths follow this rage in the setting of the Trojan war. This general introduction ends with the conflict between Agamemnon and the main character Achilles. Homer asks:

*"What god drove them to fight with such a fury?"* Book 1, line 7

Homer does not ask why the two men fight, but what god causes them to fight. He proceeds to answer his own question. Agamemnon has taken the daughter of Apollo's priest, Chryses, as a war prize. Apollo has sent a plague to the Greek armies as retribution for this act. Chryses appeals to the Greeks (primarily Agamemnon and Menelaus) offering Apollo's wreaths on a golden staff as a ransom for his daughter. Although the Greek troops desire to appease Apollo, Agamemnon refuses, responding to the appeal with a threat. Chryses prays to Apollo for satisfaction and the god plagues the Greek armies for nine more days.

Topic Tracking: Rage 1

Topic Tracking: Divine Intervention 1

After these nine days, Achilles calls for a prophet to interpret the meaning of the plague. Calchas stands up and asks for protection for what he is about to say. Achilles promises to protect him against any one. Calchas reveals that Apollo is punishing them for Agamemnon's treatment of Chryses. He also advises that Chryseis should be given back to her father without ransom and that an offering of a hundred bulls should be sent with her. Agamemnon insults Calchas, saying his prophecies are always negative, and furthermore, that he prizes Chryseis above all else and will give her up only in exchange for another prize (i.e. woman or treasure). Achilles tells him that there are no more prizes and that the king should wait until Troy has been conquered. Agamemnon

threatens to take the prize of another leader in exchange for his loss thereby angering Achilles. Achilles points out that many of the Greek leaders are fighting as a service, not because they were actually harmed by Trojans like Menelaus. Achilles also says that he would rather go home than remain disgraced in Troy. Agamemnon tells Achilles that he might as well leave and that he is going to take Briseis away from him anyway, alleging that this will teach Achilles how much greater the king is than he. Agamemnon remains angry with Achilles because Achilles has overstepped his own bounds in seeking out a seer and calling for a prophecy without consulting Agamemnon. Achilles considers attacking Agamemnon, but the goddess Athena tells him to calm down. If this is done, Agamemnon will suffer eventually and he will profit. Achilles agrees: "if a man obeys the gods they're quick to hear his prayers." Book 1, lines 5-6

Achilles calls Agamemnon a coward and smashes his Scepter, swearing that the Greeks will someday long for Achilles. Nestor pleads with the two men, telling Agamemnon that it is better to lead and encouraging Achilles to not fight. Agamemnon swears that he will not yield to Achilles while Achilles asserts that he would be a coward to submit to Agamemnon's orders. Achilles returns to his own ships.

Topic Tracking: Rage 2

Topic Tracking: Divine Intervention 2

The Greeks return Chryseis and Agamemnon sends men to seize Briseis. Achilles consents, saying that the Greeks will regret this action. Patroclus leads out Briseis. Achilles weeps and begs his mother, Thetis to help him, retelling what has happened so far. Achilles asks his mother to speak to Zeus on his behalf because Zeus is indebted to Thetis for rescuing him from a plot attempted by the other gods. Thetis laments her son's short life and accepts his requests.

Meanwhile, Odysseus returns Chryseis and Chryses asks Apollo to stop the plague. This is followed by a detailed description of sacrifices to Apollo. Apollo ends the plague and the sun sets. The sun rises the next day and Achilles is still enraged. Because Zeus was dining with the Aithiopians, Thetis had to wait twelve days to speak to him. She explains to Zeus that her son has been disgraced and belittled by Agamemnon and asks for retribution. Zeus, quiet for a few moments, curses because he is going to come into conflict with Hera, but pledges to honor Thetis' request. Hera addresses Zeus and taunts him for making secret plans because she is concerned that the Greeks, whom she favors, will be slighted. Zeus tells Hera to mind her own business, but Hera guesses Thetis' request and predicts the deaths of many Greeks as a result of it. Hephaestus begs Hera not to struggle with Zeus and tells her to have patience because he will support her and the Greeks. The sun sets as Zeus and Hera go to sleep.

Topic Tracking: Divine Intervention 3

## Book 2

Zeus wakes up and sends a dream to Agamemnon instructing him to attack Troy full force. In this dream, Agamemnon is led to believe that all the gods favor him. Agamemnon rises newly inspired and dons his battle gear, even though it is not yet day. At dawn, heralds call the armies to order and Agamemnon calls together a council of the warlords. Agamemnon repeats the dream to the collected chiefs and suggest that it is time to attack although he wishes to test the courage of his men first. Nestor supports the words of the king stating that they would have been doubted from a lesser man. The chiefs leave their meeting and go to the assembled armies. After a brief description of the history of his scepter, Agamemnon announces that Zeus has ordered him to retreat to Greece. He points out how greatly the Greeks outnumber the Trojans. Describing how the work of war has dragged on, Agamemnon urges his men to "cut and run". This calculated deception fails, panicking the soldiers who run towards the ships. Hera, upset at seeing this, approaches Athena and tells her to go to Troy and convince the Greeks to stay. Athena goes to Odysseus and tells him that this is not the way it should be, encouraging him to stop the fleeing army. Odysseus recognizes the voice of the goddess and runs through the ranks meeting kings and telling them that the rage of Agamemnon will be strong if they do not obey him. Odysseus verbally assaults the enlisted men and tells them to obey their betters.

After Odysseus placates the army Thersites, a man described as ugly morally and physically, tells the collected armies that while they have earned no war prizes their leaders, Agamemnon, have gained a lot, while Agamemnon disgraces Achilles, the better man. Therefore, the Greek armies should desert Agamemnon. Odysseus verbally attacks Thersites and then physically abuses him:

*"[I]f I catch you again blithering on this way  
Let Odysseus' head be wrenched off his shoulders  
never again call me the father of Telemachus  
If I don't grab you, strip the clothing off you  
Cloak, tunic and rags that wrap you private parts  
And whip you howling naked back to the fast ships  
Out of the armies' muster - whip you like a cur!"* Book 2, lines 302-308

Then, he speaks to Agamemnon, telling him that they have been here a long time and it would be shameful to go home early. Alluding to an earlier omen of a snake at Aulis, Odysseus says that with the prophecy of Calchas they will be triumphant.

Topic Tracking: Divine Intervention 4

In all of this fanfare, Nestor gives Agamemnon some military advice. He tells him that he should execute deserters and arrange the men in their tribes so that these groups will compete with each other for glory. Agamemnon praises Nestor and sends the army to eat their meals and prepare for battle. During this time period, Agamemnon prays to



Zeus for victory and makes a sacrifice. Zeus acknowledges his prayer but does not make any promises.

After they have eaten, Zeus gathers the armies and they are compared to many aspects of nature: a brush fire, a flock of birds, flies on shepherd's stalls and flocks herded by shepherds. The next long section is known as the Catalogue of Ships. This section mentions every Greek captain and his contingent. The army comes from Crete to Thrace and Thessaly to Argos. This sort of a catalog of names and places is a literary technique used frequently in ancient oral and written traditions. Since the *Iliad* was recited all over Greece, all of Greece is mentioned in this section. Every warrior has a tangible geographic origin. Many of these warriors had actual hero cults in their home cities during the classical age.

Topic Tracking: Nature Imagery 1

With the naming of the last Greek contingent, Iris arrives in the guise of a Trojan, calling the Trojan leaders to gather their troops. Iris points out the activity in the Greek camp and addresses Priam and Hector. Hector calls up the Trojan Troops and they gather on a mound outside the city. The next section names the leaders of the Trojans and their allies and the places from where they have come.

Topic Tracking: Divine Intervention 5

## Book 3

After the armies have gathered they begin to march towards each other. Homer maintains his nature simile for armies in this section. The two armies move toward each other like wild fowl or cranes and the dust is like "mist on the mountaintops" Book 3, line 10, at the front of the Trojan army. Menelaus sees him and hopes for revenge but as soon as Paris sights Menelaus, he sinks back into the line. Hector finds him and chastises him for stealing Helen in the first place. Paris says that this criticism is fair and requests a duel with Menelaus.

Hector announces this challenge. Menelaus accepts the challenge but requires Priam's oath.

Meanwhile, Iris has been sent to Helen to fill her with a longing for Menelaus. Within the walls of the city, Priam collects his entourage. Many of them lament Helen's beauty and her arrival in Troy. Priam speaks gently to Helen. The two look out over the battlefield and point out warriors. Helen points out Agamemnon and Priam expresses his envy of the Greek King's position. Helen also points out the broader Odysseus and the giant Ajax Telamon as well as Idomeneus. Heralds gather the offerings to be made before the battle while Priam speaks with Helen

Priam leaves the walls of the city to meet with Odysseus. Agamemnon swears that if Menelaus loses to Paris, then the Greeks will sail home, but if Paris loses, then the Trojans must surrender Helen and all of her treasures. He adds that if Priam and his sons do not pay this bounty, then he will fight it out to the end. Agamemnon makes his half of the sacrifice. Priam swears to the sacrifice but then announces that he cannot bear to watch the battle. Priam returns to the city.

Hector and Odysseus draw lots for the two combatants for the first spear throw. Both armies pray to Zeus, but Paris gets the honor. With Menelaus ready, Paris hurls a spear at him hitting him the middle of the shield but not wounding him. Menelaus hurls his spear at Paris, and, although he pierces the mail shirt, he does not wound him. Then Menelaus draws his sword only to shatter it on Paris' helmet. Angered by this, Menelaus grabs Paris by crest and begins to drag him away. Aphrodite comes to Paris' rescue and returns him to the walls of Troy. Here she urges Helen to go to him and make love to him. Helen questions the motivations of the goddess and Aphrodite responds harshly:

*"Don't provoke me - wretched headstrong girl!  
Or in my immortal rage I may just toss you over  
Hate you as I adore you now - with a vengeance."* Book 3, lines 480-482

Helen bends to the will of Aphrodite, but when she comes to Paris she taunts him and says she wishes he had died by the hand of Menelaus, the better man. Paris, however, is unaffected and takes Helen to bed with him.

At the disappearance of Paris, Menelaus is enraged. Agamemnon announces that the Trojans have lost and demands Helen and the treasure.

Topic Tracking: Rage 3

Topic Tracking: Divine Intervention 6

## Book 4

This book starts on Mount Olympus. Zeus calls an assembly of the gods because he is angry about what is going on near Troy. He accuses Athena and Hera of protecting Menelaus and Aphrodite of protecting Paris. These three goddesses are essentially still battling for the golden apple. He announces that because Paris left the battle the victory should go to Menelaus. He then asks the assembled deities whether the war should continue or should the wealth and Helen be handed over to Menelaus. Hera gets very angry at the prospect of the Greeks being slighted, Zeus becomes very upset with Hera and asks her if she remembers all the sacrifices the Trojans have made on her behalf and tells her to do as she pleases but to beware:

*"Whenever I am bent on tearing down some city  
Filled with men you love - to please myself -  
Never attempt to thwart my fury, Hera  
give me my way. For I, I gave you this  
All of my own free will but hardly willing. No,  
Of all the cities under the sun and starry skies,  
wherever men who walk the earth have dwelled,  
I honor sacred Ilium most with my immortal heart."* Book 4, lines 47-54

Hera offers the Greek cities of Argos, Sparta and Mycenae in exchange and appeals to Zeus so that they may yield to each other. They decide that the Trojans are going to break the truce for a temporary triumph. Zeus sends Athena, flung like a falling star, to cause this.

Athena, disguised like a Trojan, finds the archer Pandarus to shoot an arrow at Menelaus. Pandarus shoots his arrow at Menelaus and hits. This arrow pierces Menelaus' clothing but does not wound him fatally, even though the blood comes gushing out. Agamemnon swears that Priam and the Trojans must die because they have broken an oath. Menelaus speaks to his brother and tries to calm him, pointing out that the wound is not fatal. Agamemnon calls the healer Machaon to tend to Menelaus.

Agamemnon, meanwhile, stirs up the Greeks. He yells at the Greeks who are running from the ensuing battle, calling them cowards. Then, he goes from captain to captain encouraging them and telling them that Zeus won't protect the Trojans because they are oath breakers. He tells Idomeneus, who is strong as a boar, to *"Drink deep of battle."* Book 4 line 301

The Greek army moves forward like a heavy surf and the Trojans are like flocks of sheep. Ares inspires them and the armies clash. Antilochus kills the first Trojan, whom a companion attempts to save only to be cut down by Agenor. Diomedes kills a man, followed by Odysseus' first kill. The Trojans, with Hector, begin to move back, frightened by the spectacle, but Apollo inspires them to maintain their position. The two lines clash and intermix in war.

Topic Tracking: Divine Intervention 7  
Topic Tracking: Nature Imagery 2

## Book 5

Book 5 continues the graphic warfare that ends Book 4. This book begins with the exploits of the Greek captain Diomedes whom the goddess Athena inspires with strength and daring. This action continues the practice of divine intervention begun with Zeus' dream for Agamemnon in Book 2. Athena, seeing Ares, the god of war in the battle, takes him by the hand and leads him away saying that they should let the mortals fight for themselves. The Greeks continue to rout the Trojans. Menelaus, Agamemnon, Meriones, Idomeneus and Eurypylus each kill a Trojan. Diomedes continues to rage through the battle:

*"did he rampage now with the Trojans or the Argives?  
Down the plain he stormed like a stream in spate  
A routing winter torrent sweeping away the dikes  
The tight piled dikes can't hold it back any longer."* Book 5, lines 95-99

Diomedes is compared to an uncontrollably destructive aspect of nature, caused by the gods and unaffected by men. The Trojan archer Pandarus shoots at him, bragging pompously, and hits him but Sthenelus pulls out the arrow. Diomedes prays to Athena for vengeance, and the goddess exposes Aphrodite on the Trojan side of the battle, encouraging Diomedes to spear her. Diomedes is described as a lion jumping into a flock of sheep as he kills more Greeks. He continues, like a lion in a herd of cattle, as the Trojan son of Aphrodite Aeneas enters battle.

Topic Tracking: Divine Intervention 8  
Topic Tracking: Rage 4  
Topic Tracking: Nature Imagery 3

Aeneas looks for Pandarus and instructs him to shoot Diomedes again. Pandarus is concerned about shooting Diomedes because he looks like a god in the fray, taking down opponents left and right. He expresses the desire to retreat and Aeneas chastises him offering his own chariot as a vehicle. Pandarus agrees to fight with Aeneas and the two go off in pursuit of Diomedes. Sthenelus sees Aeneas coming and expresses concern similar to Pandarus':

*"The other's Aeneas, claims Anchises' blood  
The noble Anchises, but his mother's Aphrodite  
Come, up you go in the chariot, give ground now!  
No charging the front ranks, you might lose your life."* Book 5, lines 274-277

Diomedes refuses to retreat and expresses a desire for Aeneas' horses. The two chariot teams clash. Pandarus hurls his spear at Diomedes and misses only to be killed by Diomedes who is guided by Athena. Aeneas jumps down to retrieve the body and Diomedes hurls a stone at his hip. Aphrodite, intervening, throws her robe around Aeneas to hide him and she bears him away. Meanwhile, Sthenelus steals Aeneas'

horses. Diomedes pursues Aphrodite and spears her where the wrist bone joins the palm. Aphrodite flees in pain with the aid of Iris who drives Ares' chariot.

Topic Tracking: Divine Intervention 9

Aphrodite goes to her mother Dione bleeding out divine Ichor. She explains her plight and Dione tells her that other gods have also endured pain, saying:

*"Doesn't son of Tydeus know, down deep,  
the man who fights the gods does not live long?"* Book 5, lines 465-466

Dione heals her daughter who then goes to Zeus. Zeus explains that fighting is not meant for Aphrodite. Meanwhile, Diomedes charges Aeneas three times and Apollo, who is guarding Aeneas, repulses him three times. Apollo shrieks at Diomedes and tells him to stop.

Ares enters the battle on the Trojan side and taunts the sons of Priam for abandoning Aeneas in the battle. Sarpedon criticizes the Trojan hero Hector for his ineffectiveness in battle. Hector and Sarpedon charge forward and the Trojan masses follow. The Greeks turn white like grain chaff in a dust storm. Aeneas is reinvigorated by Apollo, while the two Aeantes, Diomedes and Odysseus rouse the frightened Greeks. Aeneas kills two Greeks. Menelaus begins pursuing Aeneas backed by Antilochus. Aeneas starts to retreat. Antilochus and Menelaus go on a killing rampage, but Hector watches them and moves towards them. Diomedes recognizes that Hector is aided by Ares and calls out to his fellow Greeks that they should beware of him. Hector kills two Greeks and Ajax Telamon kills a Trojan only to be repulsed by the oncoming swarm.

Topic Tracking: Rage 5

Topic Tracking: Divine Intervention 10

Ares and Hector continue their rampage killing many Greek soldiers. Athena and Hera dress for battle to aid the Greeks and descend to the field in a chariot. Hera drives the chariot to Diomedes and Athena mocks him in an attempt to lift his spirit. Diomedes returns to the battle, hits Ares and the war god retreats to Mount Olympus. Here, Ares complains to Zeus that he favors Athena and Zeus expresses his hatred for Ares. The god of healing heals Ares.

## Book 6

The battle continues with Ajax Telamon killing Trojans along side the rampaging Diomedes. Polypoetes, and Antilochus join in the fray while Menelaus attacks the Trojan Adrestus. Adrestus begs to be given mercy and Menelaus considers, but Agamemnon chides him for being weak. Agamemnon stabs Adrestus as Nestor speaks to raise the morale of the Greek troops.

The Greek army begins to beat the Trojans back. The Trojan seer Helenus, tells Aeneas to rally the Trojan troops. He also tells Hector to return to the city and sacrifice to the gods requesting that Diomedes' be held back. Helenus explains that Diomedes is now the strongest Greek because Achilles is out of the battle. Both men carry out their instructions.

Glaucus and Diomedes meet in No man's land. Diomedes asks Glaucus about his lineage because he is afraid to fight another divinity, citing the story of Lycurgus and his attack on the immortals with its resulting blindness. Glaucus tells the story of his father Sisyphus and Diomedes realizes that the two men are Guest-friends. They decide not to fight each other and exchange armor as a token of this pledge. Zeus takes Glaucus' wits away because he allows him to trade his gold armor for Diomedes' bronze.

Hector arrives in Troy and meets his mother Hecuba. He tells his mother to pray to Athena for the defeat of Diomedes. He does not perform the sacrifice himself because he is covered with the filth of battle. Hecuba offers a dress to Athena and the sacrifice of twelve heifers, but the goddess meets this with deaf ears.

Hector goes to the halls of Paris to find him polishing his armor rather than fighting. He berates his brother and Paris admits that he is a coward and pledges to proceed to battle immediately. Helen asks Hector to sit and speak with her but Hector says that he must go to see his wife and son.

He finds his wife in the watch tower overlooking the battle. Andromache begs Hector to think of his son, Astyanax and not risk his life in the midst of the battle, but to guide the fight from the walls instead. She implores him to think of her too, so that she and her son would never be bereft of a husband and father. Hector is touched by this plea, but does not allow himself to be moved:

*"All this weighs on my mind too, dear woman.  
But I would die of shame to face the men of Troy  
And the Trojan women trailing their long robes  
If I would shrink from battle now, a coward."* Book 6, lines 523-525

Hector's fear of shame overpowers his fear of death and concern for his family. Also, in the following lines, Hector reveals to us that he thinks Troy will fall and Priam will die, predicting the dark fate of his wife and child sold as slaves in a far - off land. He prays for the future of his son and tries to cheer up his wife, but she remains sad. After leaving



his family and exhibiting such empathetic behavior, Hector meets up with Paris, who has prepared for battle and the two leave through the Scaean gates. Paris attempts to downplay his own fighting prowess and Hector chastises him lightly, criticizing him only for avoiding battle, not for lack of ability.

## Book 7

Hector and Paris enter the battlefield and rally the Trojans within the first moments of their entry. Athena tries to counter the Trojan advance but is unsuccessful. Apollo stops her and suggests that they should halt the battle for the day by having Hector challenge a Greek champion to a duel. Athena agrees to the plan and Apollo takes the form of Helenus. In this form he approaches Hector and encourages him to do just as he says. Hector is excited at the idea of such a challenge and he voices the challenge to the armies. The two sides sit down and Hector speaks. He swears that if he wins he will get the armor of the Greek he beats but if he loses his armor shall be given up but the body of the fallen will be returned to his countrymen:

*"And someday one will say, one of the men to come  
Steering his oar-swept ship across the wine-dark sea  
'there's the mound of a man who died in the old days,  
one of the brave whom glorious Hector killed.'  
So they will say, someday, and my fame will never die."* Book 7, lines 101-105

Hector assuages the idea of mortality with this immortal memory. The Greek line is at first quiet, afraid to take the challenge. Menelaus chastises the army and announces that he will take the challenge, but the Greek chiefs think that this is unwise. Nestor stands and says that he wishes he were younger, so he could do it, reflecting on the strength of his youth. Nine Greeks rise to the challenge and they all draw lots, as ordered by Nestor. Ajax Telamon's lot is chosen.

Topic Tracking: Divine Intervention 11

Ajax rejoices at his fortune and prepares for battle. Both men pray to Zeus for victory and the two armies also mouth their prayers. Ajax taunts Hector. Hector, afraid of the Greek giant, displays unwavering confidence:

*"War - I know it well, and the butchery of men  
Well I know, shift to the left, shift to the right  
My tough tanned shield. That's what the real drill  
Defensive fighting means to me. I know it all  
How to charge in the rush of plunging horses-  
I know how to stand and fight to the finish  
Twist and lunge in the War-god's deadly dance."* Book 7, lines 275-281

He hurls his spear and hits Ajax's shield. Ajax hurls and hits his shield. They fight just like lions or wild boars. Hector sustains a neck wound and hurls a rock at Ajax. Ajax throws a rock at him knocking him to the ground. Apollo picks him up. In the face of probable defeat, a Trojan points out that it is almost night and that the two should call a truce until the next day. Hector agrees. The two who fought with hatred, now exchange gifts of friendship as a sign of the truce.



#### Topic Tracking: Nature Imagery 4

The Greeks return to their camp and feast after offering a sacrifice. Nestor speaks and laments the deaths of so many men. He suggests a truce in the morning so that they might properly care for the dead and construct a ditch around the camp. In Troy, Antenor addresses the collected leaders:

*"On with it - give Argive Helen and all her treasures  
Back to Atreus' sons to take away at last.  
We broke our sworn truce. We fight as outlaws.  
True, and what profit for us in the long run?  
Nothing - unless we do exactly as I say."* Book 7, lines 402-406

Paris rebuffs Antenor, saying he will never give up Helen but he is willing to give up her treasure and more. Priam stands up and says that at dawn Idaeus should go to the Greeks to request a truce to bury the dead and to propose the treasure as retribution.

At dawn a messenger goes to the Greeks. Diomedes tells him that the treasures will not be touched, but Agamemnon agrees to the burial truce by swearing an oath. Both sides prepare pyres to burn the dead.

On Mount Olympus, Poseidon, the god of earthquakes, complains to Zeus that the Greeks built their trench and walls without making their due sacrifice to him. Zeus belittles his brother god and asks him what he is moaning about promising the destruction of the works at the fall of Troy.

The Greeks receive a gift of wine from the son of Jason and they all drink. Night falls and all the men sleep.

## Book 8

Dawn comes again and Zeus addresses the assembly of the gods. He announces his intention to change the tide of the battle and threatens any god who would strive against him. He tells them that they will not help either side for the time being. Any god who crosses him is to be disgraced. Athena is the first god who dares to speak to Zeus explaining that they pity the Greeks and merely intend to supply them with tactics. Zeus admits that he said nothing in earnest, concerning the torture of other deities, and retires to Mount Ida to overlook the battle.

The battle begins again and the ground streams with blood. By high noon Zeus decides for the death of a Trojan and a Greek. He hurls lightning into the battlefield forcing the Greeks to shrink back as Hector rushes on. Even Odysseus flees, but Nestor taunts such cowardice as he runs to the Greek ships. Diomedes calls Nestor onto a chariot as his driver. Diomedes begins looking for Hector, intending to begin the ruin of Troy, but Zeus intervenes, throwing another bolt of lightning. This causes Nestor to lose his grip on the reins. Nestor falls and Diomedes begins to turn back. Nestor talks him out of retreat, manipulating his fear of being seen as a coward.

Topic Tracking: Divine Intervention 12

The Trojans, led by Hector, continue to chase the fleeing Greeks. Hector taunts Diomedes. Diomedes returns his insults three Times New Roman, but Zeus hurls more lightning pushing the Greeks back even further. Hector calls for torches to burn the ships. Hera, however, calls Poseidon out to help the Greeks. Poseidon says that he does not want to battle Zeus. Hera inspires Agamemnon too rally his troops. Agamemnon appeals to Zeus for mercy, invoking his past sacrifices at Zeus' shrines. Zeus feels pity and gives Agamemnon a sign:

*"The god bent his head that the armies must be saved  
not die in blood. That instant he launched an eagle-  
Truest of Zeus's signs that fly the skies - a fawn  
Clutched in its talons, sprung of a running doe,  
But he dropped it free beside the handsome shrine  
Where the Achaean soldiers always sacrificed to Zeus."* Book 8, lines 281-286

With this omen, the Greeks rally. Diomedes is the first to kill a Trojan and the Greek archer Teucer knocks down many of these attackers with arrows. He keeps trying to hit Hector but fails. He shoots many Trojans and kills Hector's chariot driver, but the position is assumed by Cebriones. Hector kills Teucer with a rock and Ajax Telamon rushes to protect the body.

Topic Tracking: Divine Intervention 13

Topic Tracking: Nature Imagery 5



Zeus encourages the Trojans more and Hector is compared to a hound after the defenseless Greeks. The Trojans cause another rout and Hera gets extremely angry. She approaches Athena and the two begin to prepare for battle again. Athena wishes a thousand deaths on Hector. Zeus sees what is going on and sends Iris to intercept the pair:

*"...Where are you rushing now?  
What is this madness blazing in your hearts?  
Zeus forbids you to fight for Achaea's armies!"* Book 8, lines 473-475

Iris repeats Zeus' entire threat, focusing more on Athena because Zeus and Hera fight each other so often. To this Hera answers:

*"I cannot let us battle the Father any longer,  
Not for mortal men...  
Men - let one of them die, another live  
However their luck may run, Let Zeus decide."* Book 8, lines 491-494

Zeus returns to Mount Olympus and mocks the two goddesses. Hera lashes out and repeats that she pities the Greeks and wants to save the armies. Zeus tells them that they will have their chance the following day prophesying that Hector will not quit fighting until Achilles grieves for Patroclus.

Hector continues to muster the Trojan forces and expresses that he thought they would have already destroyed the ships. He says that it is night and they should eat. The Trojans retreat slightly and build camp on the battleground lighting many fires so that no Greeks will be able to sneak in. Hector pledges to kill Diomedes the next day.

## Book 9

The Trojans keep their watch during the night but the Greeks are restless because panic has set upon them "as crosswinds chop the sea where the fish swarm." Book 9, line 4 Agamemnon attempts to muster his troops and raise the morale calling Zeus a harsh and cruel god. He tries to convince the armies that they should retreat to Greece, but this time he is in earnest. Diomedes stands to oppose this plan. He calls Agamemnon a coward and alleges that, although he was blessed with the right to rule, he was slighted in terms of courage. Diomedes maintains that the Greek armies should remain at Troy because they arrived with the blessing of a god. Nestor rises and explains to Diomedes that although men will listen to him because he is so strong, they will be more likely to take him seriously because of his advanced age and wisdom. Nestor advises the Greeks to eat their evening meal and post sentries so that most of the army may sleep and get some rest. Everyone agrees to this advice and Agamemnon gathers the war chiefs for discussion.

Topic Tracking: Nature Imagery 6

Nestor is the first to speak at this council. He praises Agamemnon's lineage and character but then he criticizes him for angering and alienating Achilles. Nestor advises that they should send an embassy to Achilles and try to win him over. Agamemnon rises in consent:

*"That's no lie, old man - a full account you give  
Of all my acts of madness. Mad, blind I was!"* Book 9, lines 147-148

Agamemnon maintains that his blindness was an act of the gods. He plans to set things right with Achilles by giving him a great amount of treasure and returning Briseis, with whom he will swear he never slept. He also proposes that Achilles marry his daughter as a formal truce between the two men. Even though he plans to remit all of this, Agamemnon doubts that Achilles will relent:

*"Let him submit to me! Only the god of death  
Is so relentless, Death submits to no one -  
So mortals hate him most of all the gods."* Book 9, lines 189-191

Nestor says that the gifts are ample and appropriate. Nestor names the men who should go to Achilles.

Ajax Telamon and Odysseus go to Achilles with two heralds. When they arrive at the camp of the Myrmidons, they find Patroclus finishing a meal and watching Achilles perform with the lyre. They make a sacrifice and share the meal with the two men. Odysseus relates the tale of the battle so far and the offering of Agamemnon, guaranteeing the treasure and Briseis himself. Achilles stands and explains that he hates that man like "the very gates of death, who says one thing but hides another in his heart." Book 9, lines 378-379. He asks if the sons of Atreus are the only men who love



their wives and reveals how much he adores Briseis. He also says that he plans to leave for Greece as soon as he has sacrificed. He calls Agamemnon rich, stupid and shameless and refuses the offer of the king's daughter, saying he can get his own wife. Achilles reveals the prophecy given to him by his mother, Thetis:

*"Two fates bear me on to the day of death.  
If I hold out here and I lay siege to Troy  
My journey home is gone, but my glory never dies.  
If I voyage back to the fatherland I love,  
My pride, my glory dies...  
True, but the life that's left me will be long,  
The stroke of death will not come on me quickly."* Book 9, lines 499-505

This is Achilles' fundamental problem: to die young with glory or live a long, but simple, life. Phoenix is shocked at this decision and tells Achilles a long tale about his life and his curse to never have his own son. For this reason he has adopted Achilles. He tells the story of Meleager and Cleopatra. Meleager would not fight for his friends and family because of his wife, Cleopatra. Finally, he comes to their aid and saves them, but it is too late because, although they have their lives, their city and possessions have been taken. Phoenix promises Achilles that the Greeks will honor him like a god.

Achilles tells Phoenix that he does not need this honor because Zeus already gives it to him. Ajax rises and calls to Odysseus in disbelief because all of this is "for a girl". Achilles fills with rage. Odysseus returns to Agamemnon and relays what Achilles has said. Diomedes says that they should ignore him because he will fight when a "god fires his blood." (Book 9, line 858)

Topic Tracking: Rage 6

## Book 10

During the night Agamemnon is restless. He gets up and looks with horror at the fires of the Trojan camps. He goes to Nestor and runs into Menelaus who is also unable to sleep. The brothers speak and Agamemnon tells Menelaus to go and wake Ajax Telamon. When he finds Nestor, he expresses his concern about the coming day and the raging fires. Nestor tells him that he should not be concerned but that he should be angry with Menelaus because they are awake while Menelaus is sleeping. Agamemnon explains that Menelaus is actually awake and Nestor rescinds his comments. Nestor dresses and puts on his armor and gathers the rest of the captains. Odysseus wakes up Diomedes who is upset to be woken. All the chiefs climb into the trench and Nestor asks if anyone is brave enough to make a raid on the Greek camp. Diomedes volunteers to go with companions. Many of the chiefs raise their hands, but Diomedes picks Odysseus to accompany him. The pair prepare to go and when they leave, Athena gives them a sign:

*"Athena winged a heron close to their path  
And veering right. Neither man could see it  
Scanning the night sky, they only heard its cry."* Book 10, lines 322-344

Both men pray to Athena in gratitude for the sign asking for protection. Diomedes promises a sacrifice if they are successful. The two are like "lions stalking through the carnage and the corpses." Book 10, lines 348-349

Topic Tracking: Divine Intervention 14  
Topic Tracking: Nature Imagery 7

The Trojans, however, are not sleeping. Hector stirs up the chiefs challenging the men to go on a night raid. Dolon, who is not much to look at but quick on his feet, volunteers. Diomedes and Odysseus see him coming despite the darkness. They follow him and lie down with the corpses. At first he assumes they are friends, but he realizes his danger when they cut him off and Diomedes throws a spear ahead of him to stop him.

Dolon offers a rich ransom to the pair in return for his safety. Odysseus tells him that death is his last concern. Dolon asserts that Hector tricked him into going on a night raid and Odysseus laughs as he interrogates him. Dolon tells him everything, that the army is awake but the wives and their friends are sleeping near by. He talks about King Rhesus and his horses. With this Diomedes kills him and the two men move like lions into the Thracian camp. They kill sleeping men as a lion kills the unguarded flock. After twelve murders they find King Rhesus and kill him. They run back to their camp with the horses at the bidding of Athena. Apollo, having watched all this, rouses a Trojan, who begins to defend the Thracian camp. The Trojans come to his defense, but it is too late because Odysseus and Diomedes have already made it back to Greek ranks. Nestor prays for them as they arrive and the pair pours libations to Athena.





Topic Tracking: Nature Imagery 8  
Topic Tracking: Divine Intervention 15

# Book 11

Dawn rises the next day and Strife goes to the Achaeans. Battle thrills the Greek troops as Agamemnon speaks to them to raise their morale. He dresses in his war clothing and surprises even the goddesses Hera and Athena. The chariot teams prepare themselves in the trenches. On the Trojan side the troops mass around Hector:

*"Hector bore his round shield in the forefront, blazing out  
Like the Dog Star through the clouds, all withering fire  
Then plunging back into the cloud - rack massed and dark -"* Book 11, lines 69-71

The army moves forward like a gang of reapers and they lunge like wolves. The soldiers kill and are killed as their bronze weapons gleam in the sun. By mid-morning the Greeks break into the Trojan line. Agamemnon kills like a lion who kills the young of a fleeing deer. Two Trojans, Hippolochus and Pisander (1), beg to be spared but Agamemnon kills them anyway.

Topic Tracking: Nature Imagery 9

Zeus pulls Hector out of range of the weapons. The Greeks push the Trojans back to the edge of the Scaean gates and the movement stops. Agamemnon continues to slaughter and Zeus sends Iris to Hector to instruct him to stay away from the middle of the fray until Agamemnon is struck by a weapon.

More Trojans fight Agamemnon and die by his hand. Agamemnon is speared by a Trojan. The blood clots in his wound and the pain is very great:

*"sharp pain came bursting in on Atrides' strength  
Spear - sharp as the labor-pangs that pierce a woman,  
Agonies brought on by the harsh birthing spirits,  
Hera's daughters who hold the stabbing power of birth -  
So sharp the throes that burst on Atrides' strength."* Book 11, 313-317

Agamemnon climbs onto his chariot and has the driver turn away from the battle. Hector recognizes this as Zeus' sign and he begins to call up the Trojan warriors driving them "like a huntsman/ crying on his hounds." Book 11, lines 339-340 He kills almost a dozen Greek captains and the Achaean line begins to flee. Odysseus calls to Diomedes asking him to make a stand with him. The pair rage into the Trojan as "two wild boars.../ fling themselves on the yelping packs that hunt them." Book 11, lines 377-378 As they fight, Hector spots them and begins to make his way towards them. Diomedes calls this to the attention of Odysseus and the two Greeks hurl spears at the Trojan hero. Hector blacks out from a hit to the head, sustained because his helmet was gift from Apollo. Hector is carried away from the battle by his chariot. Paris draws his bow, aiming at Diomedes, and shoots. The arrow pierces Diomedes in the foot. Paris taunts the marauding Greek, but Diomedes returns the insult:



*"You scratch my foot and you're vaunting all the same -  
But who cares? A woman or an idiot boy could wound me so." Book 11, lines 457-458*

Odysseus pulls the arrow out for him and Diomedes returns to the ships. For a moment Odysseus is afraid and considers leaving the battle but he decides that he does not want to be a coward. He fights like a wild boar in a thicket but a Trojan pierces his shield with a spear and grazes his ribs. Odysseus kills the man but the Trojan line exults at his wound. Odysseus calls to his companions three times. Menelaus hears his call and takes Ajax with him to rescue Odysseus who is still attacking. Menelaus guides Odysseus as Ajax guards the way.

Topic Tracking: Nature Imagery 10

Ajax continues to kill Trojans and is said to be wild as a swollen river. Nestor struggles in the lines fighting and holding his own but Idomeneus pulls him out of battle. Idomeneus explains that a good healer is worth a troop of men. Machaon has been wounded by one of Paris' arrows and Idomeneus wants Nestor to take him to the ships. Cebriones watches the Trojans get repulsed by the Greeks and rouses Hector. Hector returns to battle. Zeus puts doubt into the mind of Ajax and causes him to retreat, driven like a lion by dogs. Ajax becomes isolated. Eurypylus and another Greek come in to help him, one is shot down by Paris. The Greeks rally into a wedge.

Meanwhile, Achilles watches the battle and sends Patroclus to ask Nestor who has fallen. Nestor questions him about Achilles. Nestor curses his age and relays a tale of his prowess as a warrior in his youth, criticizing Achilles' unwillingness to help his compatriots:

*"... So such was I  
In the ranks of men... or was it all a dream?  
This Achilles  
He'll reap the rewards of that great courage of his  
Alone, I tell you - weep his heart out far too late  
When are troops are dead and gone." Book 11, lines 907-910*

Nestor reminds Patroclus that although Achilles is more noble he was entrusted with the duty of advising him. He implores Patroclus to tell Achilles to fight or at least to allow Patroclus and the Myrmidons to fight without him. Patroclus stars back towards Achilles. At the ships of Odysseus he laments the state of the battle and runs into Eurypylus who asks for some attention to his wounds. Patroclus helps him.

Topic Tracking: Rage 7

## Book 12

Under shelter, Patroclus continues to help Eurypylus. The walls around the Greek camp, although built without the blessing of Poseidon, stand up to the assault for the time being. Hector fights like a whirlwind, described like a boar who turns on the hunters and dogs that pursue him. Hector keeps pushing the chariots into the trench, but Polydamas advises him to get off and storm the wall on foot. Hector leaps to the ground and five battalions follow him led by Polydamas, Paris, Helenus, Aeneas and Sarpedon.

The Trojan Asius, from the third battalion, refuses to leave behind his horses and is summarily speared by Idomeneus. The Trojans charge the wall after the chariot charge of Asius and many of the Greeks retreat to defend the ships. Although Asius makes a prayer to Zeus for victory, the father of the gods decides that Hector will have the glory. As they attack the walls, the Trojans feel the sting of the Greek missiles. The Greeks are depicted as wasps or bees defending their home. Hector rallies the captains and breaches the wall. Zeus gives a sign:

*"For suddenly, just as the men tried to cross,  
A fatal bird sign flashed before their eyes,  
An eagle clutching a monstrous bloody serpent in both talons,  
Still alive, still struggling - it had not lost its fight,  
Writhing back to strike it fanged the chest of its captor  
Right beside the throat - and agonized by the bites  
The eagle flung it away to earth, dashed it down  
Amidst the milling fighters, loosed a shriek  
And the bird veered off along the gusting wind."* Book 12, lines 230-239

All the men watch this omen and for a moment the charging Trojans pause. Polydamas addresses Hector and asks him to hear his advice even though he always criticizes him in the assemblies. He tells Hector that this is not a fortuitous sign but Hector does not want to listen to him. He refuses to put his trust in birds:

*"No, no put our trust in the will of mighty Zeus,  
King of the deathless gods and men who die.  
Bird signs!  
Fight for your country - that is the best, the only omen!"* Book 12, lines 278-281

Hector calls Polydamas a coward and continues the charge. The Trojans attempt to strip down the walls. The Greeks begin to strike back, but Zeus pushed Sarpedon through the wall.

Sarpedon breaks into the Greek camp and pauses to call for his friend Glaucus. The two express their desire to not be in battle and to be allowed to enjoy simple things, to live forever. He says that death awaits them and Glaucus charges forward. The Greek troops begin to rally. A Greek sends a herald to Ajax for Agamemnon and Teucer. Little Ajax remains. Ajax kills some more men and throws a rock into the battle. Teucer hits

Glaucus with an arrow. Sarpedon keeps fighting next to him. Teucer also hits him with an arrow, but Zeus strengthens the warrior and he keeps fighting. He calls in more Trojan troops as he singlehandedly holds the breach in the wall. The clashing of the two armies at this one junction is compared to farmers fighting over a boundary. Zeus gives Hector greater strength. He squares off in front of the wall, lifts a giant stone and hurls it through the gates. Hector calls the Trojans to advance and they flood into the camp.

Topic Tracking: Divine Intervention 16

## Book 13

The Trojan troops come to a stalemate with the Greeks near their ships. Zeus, still resting on Mount Ida, turns his eyes away from the battle to other affairs. Poseidon recognizes that his brother is not paying attention and takes advantage of this to help the Greeks. The Trojans swarm like a raging flame. Poseidon assumes the form of Calchas and inspires Ajax Telamon and Ajax Oilean with strength and fighting force. The lesser Ajax recognizes that he is a god. The two feel this new strength and reinvigorate the battle. Poseidon tells the two that the Trojans are weak, depending on the strength of Hector alone. The voice of the god rolls over the Greek army and strengthens them:

*"... Here were the best picked men  
Detached in squads to stand the Trojan charge  
And shining Hector, a wall of them bulked together  
Spear-by-spear, shield-by-shield, the rims overlapping,  
Buckler-to-buckler, helm-to-helm, man-to-man massed tight  
And the horsehair crests on glittering helmet horns brushed  
As they tossed their heads, the battalions bulked so dense  
Shoulder-to-shoulder close, and the spears they shook  
In daring hands packed into jagged lines of battle  
Single minded fighters facing straight ahead,  
Achaeans primed for combat." Book 13, lines 151-152*

This iron Phalanx repulses the wave of Trojan attackers. Hector calls his troops together. Meriones takes aim and hurls his spear at the Trojan Deiphobus. The spear hits him but shatters on his shield. Teucer, the Greek archer, kills a man along with Ajax Telamon, who is able to drive Hector back. Imbrius, the son of Poseidon, is killed in the charge and Poseidon returns to help the Greeks. He takes the form of Thoas (3) and inspires Idomeneus to fight more bravely. Idomeneus returns to battle compared to a lightning bolt. Meriones runs in to him coming from the camps and asks him for a spear. Idomeneus offers him a spear from his collection explaining that it is not his way to fight from a distance, but he would rather be in the thick of combat. Meriones picks a spear and the two men return to combat. Idomeneus points out the courage of Ajax Telamon, alleging that he would be able to stand up even to Achilles. With their return to battle many Trojans flee. The chaos of the battle is compared to a strong gale whipping up dust ; Idomeneus is said to be fierce as fire. The spirits of Zeus and Poseidon struggle against each other. Zeus really only wants glory for Thetis and Achilles and does not intend to harm the Greek armies, but Poseidon must operate in secret, pushing on the Greek lines.

Topic Tracking: Divine Intervention 17

Topic Tracking: Nature Imagery 11

Idomeneus tries kills a Trojan whom Asius tries to save. In turn, Asius is struck by Idomeneus and Deiphobus rushes forward to save him. Alcathous also falls, and Deiphobus tries to guard his body. Idomeneus taunts Deiphobus and Deiphobus calls

Aeneas to help him. Diomedes relays the fate of Alcathous to Aeneas and he becomes enraged rushing at the unflinching Idomeneus:

*"he stood his ground like a wild mountain boar,  
Trusting his strength, standing up to a rout of men  
That scream and swoop against him off in a lonely copse,  
The ridge of his back bristling, his eyes flashing fire,  
He grinds his teeth, champing to beat back dogs and men."* Book 13, lines 545-549

Idomeneus stands up to the charge and calls his companions to help him. Aeneas does the same. Aeneas hurls and misses Idomeneus, but Deiphobus hits his companion. Meriones attacks him and wounds his arm. &lt;Another Trojan guides Deiphobus back to Troy. Aeneas keeps attacking. Trojans surround Antilochus. A Trojan strikes Antilochus but Meriones spears him between the genitals and the navel.

Topic Tracking: Nature Imagery 12

Helenus kills a Greek captain and enrages Menelaus. He shoots at Menelaus, but it bounces off his armor. Menelaus shoots back at Helenus and pierces his hand. Pisander (2) rushes at Menelaus. Both men strike at the same time but Menelaus hits and kills his opponent. Menelaus curses Zeus and states that most men would desire to engage in many other things besides war, but not Trojans. Another Trojan charges Menelaus, but is cut down by Meriones, Paris becomes enraged and kills another man.

Hector continues to fight. Ajax and other Greeks begin to hurl missiles and arrows at the Trojans. Polydamas is forced to pull Hector away from the battle. Hector orders Polydamas and returns to the battle to find his captains. He finds many hurt and some dead. He runs into Paris and accuses him of being at fault for the deaths. In his new rage, Ajax challenges him and the armies collide.

Topic Tracking: Rage 8

## Book 14

Nestor hears the mounting cries of the battle and puts on his armor. He goes out into the fray to be stunned by the spectacle. He cannot decide whether to search for Agamemnon or to join the soldiers defending the ships. Diomedes, Odysseus and Agamemnon come to him, tired from the battle. They ask him why he is not fighting in the lines and tell him that Hector plans to burn the ships. Nestor asks him "how on earth can a wounded man make war?" Book 14, line 76 Agamemnon laments that the walls are useless and again expresses his desire to retreat to Greece, that it is better to flee death than to feel its grip. Odysseus turns on the word of the king and berates him, calling him a disaster. Odysseus explains that the Greek soldiers will not hold their positions if they see their captains preparing the ships for flight. Agamemnon claims that he is not the kind of man who would order someone against their will and asks for a better plan. Diomedes speaks to the group. He tries to counter the fact that he is almost too young to be taken seriously by invoking his noble birth. He encourages the captains to return to the battle and be seen by their troops. They should not fight too hard, because they are wounded, but they should encourage their men. The captains agree to this plan and Agamemnon leads them back into battle.

Poseidon watches all of this and takes on the form of a veteran soldier. He approaches Agamemnon and tells him that he is blessed and under divine protection. He curses Achilles for his cowardice and promises Agamemnon that the time will come when the Trojans retreat to their own walls.

### Topic Tracking: Divine Intervention 18

Hera watches the entire battle and also notices that Zeus has turned his attention elsewhere. She dresses in all her glory and plans to overwhelm Zeus with seduction. She goes to Aphrodite and asks to borrow 'love' and her powers so that she will be able to reunite Mother Tethys and Ocean. Aphrodite buys her excuse and gives her what she asks for in the form of a breastband. Hera then goes to Sleep, the twin brother of death and asks him if he will put Zeus to sleep. She offers him a great throne made by Hephaestus for his services. Sleep is afraid to help her because he has been hurt before by the wrath of Zeus when he tried to put him to sleep at her beckon as she tried to carry off Heracles. He says he will not try to do the impossible. Hera tells him that Zeus does not value Troy in the same way that he valued Heracles. Sleep asks for Pasithea as a gift for his services and Hera swears an oath in agreement.

Sleep and Hera go to Mount Ida. Lust overcomes Zeus as he gazes at his wife. Hera tells Zeus the same story about Mother Tethys and Ocean, but Zeus tells her not to hurry because he has never lusted so much before. Hera asks him how it would be possible for them to avoid shame making love out in the open, and suggests they return to his bed on Mount Olympus. Zeus cloaks them with a cloud. Soon Sleep conquers Zeus and the brother of Death goes to Poseidon to tell him what has happened.



Poseidon leaps into the front lines of the battle and encourages the Greeks telling them to put on their larger shields. Hector drives the Trojans against the Greeks and the battle raises a terrible sound:

*"Not so loud the breakers bellowing out against the shore,  
Driven in from the open sea by the North Wind's brutal blast,  
Not so loud the roar of fire whipped to a crackling blaze  
Rampaging into a mountain gorge raging up through timber  
Not so loud the gale that howls in the leafy crowns of oaks  
when it hits its pitch of fury tearing branches down -  
Nothing so loud as cries of Trojans, cries of Achaeans,  
Terrible war cries, armies storming against each other."* Book 14, lines 467-474

The din of this battle supercedes the greatest sounds of nature. Hector strikes Ajax but cannot pierce his armor and is hit by a rock in turn. The Trojans protect their wounded hero and drag him back to the river Xanthus where he vomits. With the wounding of Hector, the Greeks become even more excited. Ajax kills more men. The Trojans are driven into a rout.

Topic Tracking: Nature Imagery 13

Topic Tracking: Divine Intervention 19

Topic Tracking: Rage 9

## Book 15

The Greeks continue to push the Trojan line back, but Zeus wakes to see Hector vomiting and Poseidon in the battle. He berates Hera and threatens to search out the gods who helped her. Hera swears to him that Poseidon attacks without her knowledge. Zeus sends Hera away charged with finding Iris to tell Apollo to rouse Hector and take him back into battle. He orders that Patroclus enter battle dressed like Achilles and foretells the death of Sarpedon. Then he orders that Patroclus be killed in order to incite Achilles' wrath and bring him back into battle. Achilles, thus enraged, will kill Hector and following his death, Troy will fall. It is in this manner that he plans to fulfill his pledge to Thetis.

Hera leaves Mount Ida and returns to Mount Olympus. Themis questions her considerable state of disarray and Hera asks not to be burdened with repeating her trials. Hera, herself, decries their foolishness in challenging Zeus and acknowledges that everyone who does so suffers. She points out that Ares has just lost a son in the battle. Ares cries out and claims the right to avenge his son. He prepares for battle, but Athena rises, warning him again about Zeus' wrath and telling him his attempts are futile:

*"So now, I tell you, drop this anger for your son.  
By now some fighter better than he, a stronger hand  
Has gone down in his own blood, or soon will go.  
It is no small labor to rescue all mankind,  
Every mother's son."* Book 15, lines 166-170

Hera relays the Zeus' message for Iris and Iris goes to tell Poseidon that he had better quit the battle or be attacked by the stronger and older Zeus. Iris is compared to snow or hail as she flies down to the god of the sea. The message outrages Poseidon and he rails at the arrogance of his brother. He points out that Zeus, Hades and himself are three brothers who split the rule of creation into Sky, Underworld and Sea respectively, leaving land as common ground. Poseidon alleges that Zeus has no more authority than he does over land. Iris stops this tirade and asks the god for a better answer. Poseidon says that if Troy does not eventually fall he will continue his rage, but for the time being he will yield.

Apollo finds Hector regaining his strength. He presents him with Zeus' Storm cloud shield and asks him why he is not with his troops. Hector explains that he was hit by a boulder. Apollo tells him to have courage. With these words Hector becomes stronger and rushes off to battle. Here he charges the Greeks with new found fervor and the defenders are astonished at his recovery. Thoas (1) is the first Greek to comment:

*"Look - a genuine miracle right before my eyes!  
Hector's escaped again, he's risen from the dead!  
And just as each of us hoped with all his heart  
He'd dropped and died at the hands of giant Ajax.*

*But again some god swoops down and saves this Hector -  
And hasn't he wiped out enough of us already?  
Now he'll make more slaughter, well I know.  
He'd never be at the front, smashing our lines  
Unless Old Thunder, Zeus, had put him on his feet."* Book 15, lines 339-347

Thoas recommends that the captains rush forward to meet his assault to encourage their own men and delay his advance. He orders many of the soldiers to withdraw and protect the ships. Hector rushes in and Apollo accompanies him holding the storm shield. With this shield he deflects all arrows and spears flung by the Greeks. As he looks into their eyes he shakes their courage and many flee, stampeding like beasts. Hector slaughters many and commands his troops to storm the ships. He threatens the stragglers of his own army with death if they do not hurry up. Apollo leads them into the trench again. Nestor prays to Zeus who releases a clap of thunder as a sign only to further encourage the Trojans. They storm the walls.

#### Topic Tracking: Divine Intervention 20

Patroclus has remained with Eurypylus during all of this, but when he sees the panic of the Greek forces he is overcome by guilt and leaves with the intention of rousing Achilles. Hector continues to push through the Greeks as Ajax kills a Trojan. Hector attempts to attack Ajax, but he hits another Greek instead. Ajax calls out to Teucer. Teucer shoots one Trojan and then takes careful aim at Hector. Zeus, however, desires to protect Hector and causes Teucer's bowstring to snap. Teucer laments his broken string, but Ajax tells him to leave it and pick up a spear. Hector notices that Teucer has stopped shooting and calls up the Trojans again, inspiring them:

*"So fight by the ships, all together. And that comrade  
Who meets his death and destiny, speared or stabbed,  
Let him die! He dies fighting for fatherland -  
No dishonor there!  
He'll leave behind him wife and sons unscathed,  
His house and estate unharmed- once these Argives  
Sail for home, the fatherland they love."* Book 15, lines 574-580

Ajax, in turn tries to rally the Greeks explaining that it is a shame to die in such a small space defending the ships from inferior men. The Greeks stand their ground, each side of battle killing men.

Menelaus withdraws from battle, having spurred on Antilochus. Antilochus kills a Trojan. Hector sees this happening and charges as the Trojans shower the Greeks with missiles. Hector is compared to a fire charging at the main force and a lion lunging as the Achaeans stampede. The Trojans storm the ships and the Greeks begin to hold their ground. Nestor rallies the Greeks as he tells them to stand and fight, remembering their families. Ajax leaps from ship to ship fighting off the invaders. Hector comes down on Greeks as an eagle swoops on a flock of birds. Hector calls for a torch to burn the ships and Ajax stands with a pike killing men as they run up to him.

Topic Tracking: Rage 10

Topic Tracking: Nature Imagery 14

## Book 16

Patroclus approaches Achilles in tears and Achilles asks him why he is:

*"Like a girl, a baby running after her mother,  
Begging to be picked up, and she tugs her skirts,  
Holding her back as she tries to hurry off - all tears,  
fawning up at her she takes her in her arms..."* Book 16, lines 8-11

Patroclus tells Achilles of all the wounded Greek warriors and curses Achilles for his stubbornness. Achilles gives him permission to enter the battle leading the Myrmidons in his armor. He warns him, however, that he must not lust for battle too much and should retreat after the Trojans have been pushed out of the camp. He expresses a desire to take the walls of Troy with Patroclus by his side.

Meanwhile, Ajax and Hector continue to struggle by the ships. Hector lunges at Ajax and forces him to draw back, wounded. Hector burns a ship as Patroclus rushes to prepare for battle. He dons Achilles' armor and hefts his spear. Achilles rouses the Myrmidons who are said to be wild as wolves in a pack. The fifty ships of the Myrmidon fleet are divided into five battalions, one of which is led by Pisander (3). Achilles addresses the Myrmidons and encourages them to fight with rage remembering how their leader has been dishonored. The Myrmidons enter the battle:

*"[T]ight as a mason packs a good stone wall,  
That fights the ripping winds - crammed so close  
The crested helmets, the war-shields bulging, jutting  
Buckler-to-buckler, helm-to-helm, man-to-man massed tight  
And the horsehair crests on glittering helmet horns brushed  
as they tossed their head the battalions bulked so dense."* Book 16, lines 251-257

Achilles retrieves a special cup and pours libation to Zeus praying for Patroclus to come back unharmed having gained glory. The Myrmidons swarm like bees as Patroclus sounds the charge and fills them with courage.

The Trojans see the coming Myrmidons and believe that Achilles has finally come to battle. The Greeks start to push the Trojans back many are wounded and the Greek captains are compared to wolves coming down on goats or lambs. Ajax comes up against Hector but misses again and Hector is carried away by his horses. Patroclus continues to push the Greeks and chase the fleeing Trojans. He cuts some off near the warships and slaughters them. Menelaus cuts through the Trojans, striking Thoas (2) in the chest. Sarpedon rallies the Trojans to rescue their trapped compatriots. Zeus laments the fate of his son Sarpedon, but Hera tells him that if he rescues his son the other gods will want to rescue theirs. She attempts to comfort him by reminding him that there are solemn honors due to the dead. Zeus showers the earth with tears of blood.

Topic Tracking: Rage 11

Patroclus kills a Trojan and Sarpedon hurls at him by misses and hits a horse. Automedon reaches forward and cuts the horse free. Patroclus hurls and hits Sarpedon in the heart, he falls like an oak or poplar. Sarpedon calls to Glaucus asking for vengeance.

Grief overcomes Glaucus who prays to Apollo to heal his wound so that he may save Sarpedon's body. After Apollo grants his prayer, Glaucus gathers Trojan captains to retrieve the corpse. The Greeks rally around the body planning to mutilate it, but Zeus makes night fall to make this more difficult.

As the two sides clash over the body many men fall and for a moment the Trojans hesitate. Meriones kills a Trojan captain and Aeneas tries to exact his revenge but fails. Meriones taunts the Trojans even though Patroclus tells him to save his breath. Zeus intervenes once again and makes Hector a coward so he will call the Trojan retreat. Patroclus strips the armor from Sarpedon's corpse and Zeus sends Apollo to save his body from any further disgrace.

Patroclus, ignoring Achilles' warning to stop fighting as soon as the camp was clear, pursues the fleeing Trojans up to the walls and the Scaean gates. He charges the gates three times and is repulsed by Apollo each time. On his fourth attempt, Apollo speaks:

*"Patroclus, Prince, go back! It is not the will of fate  
That the proud Trojans' citadel fall before your spear,  
Not even before Achilles - far greater man than you!"* Book 16, lines 825-828

Patroclus obeys the god, but does not retreat altogether. Meanwhile, Hector remains indecisive on whether to rally his men outside the gates or move them inside the city and man the walls. Apollo takes the form of Asius and encourages him not to stop fighting with the additional possibility of killing Patroclus. Hector orders Cebriones back into battle. Patroclus almost kills him with a stone and taunts the as he takes Cebriones' armor. Hector leaps down to regain the armor and we see the armies clash like the east and west winds. Patroclus charges another three times and his spear is shattered. Apollo hits him from behind and loosens his grip on his spear as well as knocking off his helmet and breastplate. Euphorbus spears him, but he does not fall. Hector watches all of this and spears him again. As Patroclus hits the ground, Hector gloats over him and says his body will be food for the vultures. Patroclus retorts with his dying breath:

*"Hector! Now is your time to glory to the skies...  
Now the victory is yours.  
A gift of the Son of Cronus, Zeus - Apollo too -  
They brought me down with all their deathless ease,  
They are the ones who tore the armor off my back.  
Even if twenty Hectors had charges against me  
They'd all have died here, laid low by my spear.  
No, deadly fate in league with Apollo killed me,  
From the ranks of men, Euphorbus. You came third,  
And all you could do was finish off my life..."*

*One more thing - take it to heart, I urge you -  
You too won't live long yourself, I swear."* Book 16, lines 985-997

Patroclus prophesies Hector's death at the hands of Achilles and Hector continues to taunt him after he dies. Automedon flees the battle with his chariot.

Topic Tracking: Divine Intervention 21

Topic Tracking: Rage 12

## Book 17

Menelaus observes the death of Patroclus and runs to guard his body "like a mother cow lowing over a calf". (Book 17, line 5) The Trojan Euphorbus comes to take the body but King Menelaus will not yield. Euphorbus strikes at him and misses only to be killed by Menelaus. Menelaus intends to strip him of his armor but Apollo inspires Hector in the shape of a Trojan to stop chasing Achilles' chariot team. Hector releases a war-cry as he turns around and intimidates Menelaus who knows that he cannot stand against Hector and the other Trojan chiefs. Menelaus turns back and finds Ajax Telamon, explaining to him the plight of Patroclus' body.

Ajax and Menelaus charge towards Hector, they repulse the Trojan and Ajax stands over the body:

*"...like a lion cornered round his young  
When hunters cross him, leading his cubs through woods -  
He ramps in all the pride of his power, bristling strength  
The heavy folds of his forehead frowning down his eyes."* Book 17, lines 151-155

Glaucus scowls at Hector, calling him a girlish coward for retreating from his prize and the body of Sarpedon. Glaucus accuses him of lacking the nerve to fight Ajax. Hector calls Glaucus insolent claiming that he does not go after Ajax because he fears Zeus. Hector calls up the Trojan lines and puts on Achilles' armor, which he stole from the body of Patroclus. Zeus watches this with pity, knowing that the armor is not rightfully his and although he will have power now, he will ultimately fail.

Topic Tracking: Divine Intervention 22

Topic Tracking: Nature Imagery 15

Topic Tracking: Rage 13

Hector surges ahead inspiring the Trojan captains by saying "live or die - that is the lovely give-and-take of war." Book 17, line 262 He promises that the man who brings back the body of Patroclus will share the spoils. Ajax and Menelaus watch the coming crowd. And call other Greeks to help them. The onslaught of the Trojan army is "charging in as a heavy surf roars in against the rip/ at a river's mouth." Book 17, lines 299-300 The Greeks fight but the Trojans push them back. Ajax ploughs into the Trojan line like a boar, scattering the attackers.

A Trojan dragging the body of Patroclus is killed by Ajax. Hector hurls at Ajax and hits another Greek instead. In the face of Ajax's rage, the Trojan line would have been pushed back, but Apollo encourages Aeneas in the form of a Trojan. Apollo tells Aeneas to defend his country and Aeneas calls to Hector. The two sides exchange deaths and Ajax orders the Greeks to cluster around Patroclus. They heed his command:

*"So on they fought like a swirl of living fire -  
You could not say if the sun and moon still stood secure,*



*So dense the battle-haze that engulfed the brave  
Who stood their ground to defend Patroclus' body."* Book 17, lines 421-424

The Trojans continue to assault them. The battle over the body rages on and the Greek captains encourage their men to fight to the death. Zeus breathes new fire into Achilles' horses and Automedon attempts to break towards Achilles' camp. He fights as he goes, like a vulture in geese and he asks another to take the reins. Hector, seeing this, sends Aeneas in pursuit.

Topic Tracking: Nature Imagery 16

Topic Tracking: Rage 14

Hector and Aeneas follow the chariot. Automedon and Alcimedon continue to fight and other Greeks enter in their defense. The battle rages around Patroclus' body. Zeus sends Athena to Menelaus in the form of Phoenix. Menelaus appeals to her and she fills his heart with daring. He kills the Trojan Podes, whom Hector prizes. Apollo exposes this death to Hector and drives him on telling him not to fear Menelaus.

Grief takes Hector and Zeus hurls a bolt of lightning, pushing back the Greek army. Idomeneus spears and wounds Hector and then retreats. Menelaus and Ajax realize that Zeus is favoring the Trojans. Ajax decides that a messenger ought to be sent to Achilles and tells Menelaus to find Antilochus to do the job. Antilochus is stunned by the news of Patroclus' death and weeps as he runs to Achilles. Ajax has Menelaus and Meriones pick up the body as he and others guard them. They move slowly in retreat.

Topic Tracking: Divine Intervention 23

## Book 18

Achilles watches the retreat from afar and worries about the fate of Patroclus. Antilochus arrives and confirms his worst fears. Grief overcomes Achilles as he falls to the ground weeping. He lets out a terrible cry and all the sea nymphs gather. Thetis addresses her sister nymphs and laments that she will not be able to embrace her son again. She approaches her son and asks him why he is weeping. Achilles curses his birth and says that he has lost the spirit to live. Thetis warns him that his death will follow Hector's and Achilles says, "Then let me die at once." Book 18, line 112 He promises to forget his rage and lie in peace once he has died. Thetis tells him that she will let him rush to his death, but only after she brings new weapons.

Thetis tells the other nymphs to go home because she plans to visit Hephaestus. Meanwhile, the Trojans keep attacking the retreating Greeks. Hector rushes forward three times and is repulsed three times. Iris comes to Achilles and tells him to go to the trenches without armor to inspire the troops. Athena brings him the storm cloud shield and puts a flame over his head. Achilles shouts three times and the Trojans whirl in panic. Twelve Trojans die and Hera makes night fall.

The Trojans meet in a council and Polydamas advises them to retreat to the walls of the city before dawn in fear of Achilles. If they withdraw, they might be able to conserve their strength and guard the city. Hector becomes disgusted:

*"No more, Polydamas! Your pleading repels me now.  
You say go back again - be crammed inside the city.  
Aren't you sick of being caged inside those walls?"* Book 18, lines 331-333

Hector commands them to eat, collect everything from the battlefield and stand again tomorrow because "[t]he god of war is impartial: he hands out death to the man who hands out death." Book 18, lines 359-360. The Trojans listen to Hector.

The Greeks mourn Patroclus all night long. Achilles laments that he promised Patroclus' father his safety. Achilles has Patroclus' wounds cleaned and the body bathed in olive oil. All night long the Greeks raise the funeral dirge.

Thetis arrives at the home of Hephaestus. Hephaestus recalls that Thetis saved his life when he was flung down from heaven so he asks her what he can do. Thetis explains what has happened and asks for a set of armor for her son. Hephaestus begins work immediately. The most intricate of the armor is the shield, made of triple-ply metal and carved with an elaborate scene. Hephaestus divides the shield into the world, the stars, the sea and the sun and moon with the ocean surrounding the entire circle in a ribbon of blue. On these he forms two cities, one possessing a wedding with a quarrel and a judge, the other with an army besieging it. There are soldiers fighting a fallow field and the harvesting of a king's estate. Young boys and girls dance near a herd of cattle and a meadow with grazing sheep. A crowd watches all of this. Beside the shield he makes a breastplate, a helmet, greaves and ankle straps, to protect Achilles' tender heels.

## Topic Tracking: Divine Intervention 24

## Book 19

Dawn rises on Achilles still sobbing on the ground. Thetis approaches him and attempts to rouse him:

*"My child leave your friend to lie there dead -  
We must, though it breaks our hearts...  
The will of the gods has crushed him once for all  
But here Achilles, accept this glorious armor, look,  
A gift from the god of fire - burnished bright, finer  
Than any mortal has ever borne across his back!"* Book 19, lines 8-14

Achilles is thrilled by the armor. Thetis promises him that she will protect his companion's body. Achilles marches out and leads even the ships' rowers to battle. Achilles goes to Agamemnon and acknowledges the foolishness of their fighting and says that his rage towards him has ended. Agamemnon says that Zeus and fate made him insane and offers Achilles the gifts he had promised before. Achilles says that he is eager to fight but Odysseus tells him that he should rest and eat first. He also advises that the kings should display war booty to the men to incite a new fervor over war. He tells Achilles to let Agamemnon swear that he never made love to Briseis and that he should have a feast with him as a peace offering. Agamemnon agrees. Achilles still wants to fight as they talk about preparing an oath and a sacrifice. He says that if they rest they will lose their fury. Odysseus respond that though Achilles is stronger, he is wiser and they should rest and bury their dead.

The sacrifices and oaths are made. Agamemnon tells the Greeks to feast. Briseis weeps over the death of Patroclus because he was always kind to her. Memories overcome Achilles and he continues to fast. He addresses his fallen comrade:

*"... I am sick with longing for you!  
There is no more shattering blow that I could suffer.  
Not even if I should learn of my father's death."* Book 19, lines 381-383

All the Greek captains mourn. Zeus observes that Achilles is fasting and reprimands Athena. Athena strengthens Achilles by planting ambrosia and honey in his chest.

After the feast the troops move out as "thick and fast as the snow." (Book 19, line 422). Achilles dresses in his armor and draws his father's spear. Automedon and another Greek help him hook up his war team. His horses are named Roan Beauty and Charger. Hera gives a voice to Roan Beauty:

*"Our team could race with the rush of the West Wind,  
The strongest, swiftest blast on earth, men say -  
Still you are doomed to die by force Achilles,  
Cut down by a deathless god and mortal man!"* Book 19, lines 491-494

Achilles acknowledges his fate and rushes out to battle.

Topic Tracking: Divine Intervention 25

Topic Tracking: Nature Imagery 17

## Book 20

The Greeks line up for battle and Zeus calls all the gods to an assembly. Poseidon is the first to speak and he asks Zeus why they have been assembled. Zeus says "These mortals do concern me, dying as they are." Book 20, line 26 He tells that gods that they may go forward and fight for whatever side they wish because if Achilles fights unheeded, the Trojans will not be able to hold him. Hera, Poseidon, Athena and Hermes go to help the Greeks. Ares, Apollo, Artemis, Leto, Xanthus and Aphrodite go to help Troy. Achilles blazes into battle, gods and mortals fight side by side. Ares and Athena release their war cries. Gods challenge gods. Achilles burns to find Hector, but Apollo pushes Aeneas after him in the form of a Trojan soldier. Aeneas is afraid to fight Achilles because he has been defeated by him before, but Apollo encourages him to pray to Zeus because he is closer in heritage to the father of the gods than Achilles.

Topic Tracking: Divine Intervention 26

Hera spots Aeneas and tells Poseidon and Athena to turn him around so that Achilles will not doubt his own courage. The gods sit back and watch from both sides of the battle. Achilles meets Aeneas and asks him why he has ventured so far forward and tells him that Zeus will not favor him now. Aeneas reminds him of his lineage and his closer relationship to Zeus, but then he stops himself:

*"What do we need with wrangling, hurling insults?  
Cursing each other here like a pair of nagging women  
Boiling over with petty, heartsick squabbles, blustering  
Into the streets to pelt themselves with slander  
Much of it true, much not. Anger stirs up lies."* Book 20, lines 291-295

Aeneas hurls a spear but cannot pierce Achilles' shield. Achilles throws, pierces the shield but misses Aeneas' body. Aeneas is dazed. Poseidon shows Hera what is happening and says he wants to save Aeneas because he is innocent. Hera tells Poseidon that he is free to do whatever he wants to do. Poseidon puts a mist in front of Achilles' eyes and rescues Aeneas, leaving Achilles his spear. Poseidon orders Aeneas to cease fighting until Achilles is dead. Achilles stares with disgust at the divine magic thinking that "the deathless gods must love Aeneas too!" (Book 20, line 396)

Achilles returns to the battle line and rallies his troops. Hector rallies the Trojans in turn planning to engage Achilles. Apollo tells Hector to await Achilles in the main lines so he will not be killed. Achilles pushes on and Hector draws back. Achilles kills many Trojans among whom is Polydorus (1), a brother of Hector. Upon seeing his brother's death, Hector rushes forward. Achilles taunts him and tells him that he is rushing to his death. Hector replies:

*"Well I know you are brave, and I am far weaker.  
True - but all lies in the lap of the great gods.  
Weaker I am, but I still might take your life"*

*With one hurl of a spear - my weapon can cut too,  
Long before now its point has found its mark!"* Book 20, lines 492 - 496

Hector throws his spear but is thwarted and Achilles charges. Apollo moves Hector out of the way and Achilles screams in rage.

Achilles continues his killing spree and rages "like an inhuman fire raging on through the mountain gorges." (Book 20, line 554)

Topic Tracking: Divine Intervention 27

Topic Tracking: Nature Imagery 18

Topic Tracking: Rage 15

## Book 21

Achilles splits the Trojan line at the River Xanthus. The Trojan men "[s]pun like locusts swarming up in the air, whipped by rushing fire." (Book 21, lines 13-14) He wades into the river leaving his spear on the bank and kills many men, taking twelve captive. He meets Lycaon, a Trojan who has already been captured and ransomed once. Lycaon grasps Achilles' knees as he is about to be struck and asks to be spared. Achilles hesitates as Lycaon tells him that he is a half brother to Hector. Achilles calls him a fool and kills him anyway:

*"Nothing can save you now -  
Not even your silver whirling, mighty - tiding river -  
Not for all the bulls you've slaughtered to it for years,  
The rearing stallions drowned alive in its eddies...die! -  
Even so - writhing in death till all you Trojans pay  
For Patroclus' blood and the carnage of Achaeans  
Killed by the racing ships when I was out of action."* Book 21, lines 149-155

As Achilles exults over Lycaon's body, the river god Xanthus gets more angry. He inspires Asteropaeus with the courage to stand up to Achilles. The two speak and then Asteropaeus, being ambidextrous, hurls two spears at once. One hits Achilles' right arm.. Achilles hurls and misses. Asteropaeus tries to draw his spear three times but Achilles kills him. Achilles exults some more and continues to slaughter Trojans. Xanthus demands that he stop because he is cluttered with blood and corpses. Achilles agrees to stop killing in the river, but pledges to keep killing.

Topic Tracking: Divine Intervention 28

Topic Tracking: Rage 16

Xanthus appeals to Apollo and chastises him for not saving more Trojan lives. Achilles overhears this and dives in the river to attack the god. Xanthus surges and throws the floating corpses at Achilles. Then he hits the Greek with a giant wave. Achilles grasps an elm branch, but the entire tree comes out at its roots. Achilles continues to flee and Xanthus follows. As Xanthus gets closer, Achilles calls out to Zeus:

*"Father Zeus! To think in all my misery not one god  
Can bring himself to rescue me from this river!  
Then I'd face any fate. And no god on high,  
Non is to blame so much as my dear mother -  
How she lied, she beguiled me, she promised me  
I'd lie beneath the walls of the armored Trojans  
Cut down in blood by Apollo's whipping arrows!"* Book 21, lines 307-314

Poseidon and Athena move towards him. Poseidon gives Achilles courage to keep running and fighting. Xanthus appeals to another river for help alluding to the coming fall of Troy. Hera calls to Hephaestus and he uses fire to push back the river.



### Topic Tracking: Divine Intervention 29

The gods reenter the battle. Ares and Athena clash and Ares is wounded with a rock. Aphrodite leads the god of war from the battle. Athena charges at Aphrodite. Poseidon tells Apollo that they have disgraced themselves by not fighting and that Apollo should not support the Trojan cause because of the ancient deception of Laomedon. Apollo turns and runs, afraid to face his father's brother in battle. His sister Artemis taunts him as he flees and Hera treats this as a challenge. Leto and Hermes agree not to fight each other.

Apollo returns to the city of Troy and Priam orders the main gates to be thrown open so that the Trojan men, fleeing Achilles, may enter the city. In all the confusion, the Greeks would have entered the city, but Apollo inspired the Trojan Agenor to stand his ground:

*"God forbid that Achilles sees me turning tail,  
Heading from town and out to open country -  
He'll come after me full tilt and run me down!  
And then no way to escape my death, my certain doom -  
Achilles is far too strong for any man on earth.  
Wait... what if I face him out before the walls?  
Surely his body can be pierced by bronze, even his -  
He has only one life, and people say he's mortal:  
It's only the son of Cronus handing him the glory."* Book 21, lines 648-656

He taunts Achilles and hits his shin with a spear. Achilles, protected by his armor, keeps coming, although he has been slowed down. Apollo rescues Agenor and takes him near the River Xanthus. The rest of the Trojans retreat into Troy. Achilles chases after Apollo, enraged

### Topic Tracking: Divine Intervention 30

## Book 22

As all the troops of Troy catch their breath within its walls, Hector stands at the gates to withstand the coming raid. Achilles still chases Apollo who turns and tells him that it is impossible to kill him. Achilles turns back towards the city and Priam sees him coming like "the star that rears at harvest, flaming up in its brilliance." (Book 22, 32-33) Priam tells his son not to stand up against Achilles and laments the death of Polydorus (1) and Lycaon. Priam pleads with Hector, begging him to fight from within the walls. Hecuba sounds her agreement. Hector makes his own decision and awaits Achilles:

*"As a snake in the hills, guarding his hole, awaits a man -  
Bloated with poison, deadly hatred seething inside him,  
Glances flashing fire as he coils around his lair..."* Book 22, lines 111-113

Hector probes his own heart and knows that there is no way out for him. He considers promising Achilles Helen and all her treasures, but he knows that Achilles will attack him anyway.

Topic Tracking: Nature Imagery 19

Topic Tracking: Rage 17

Achilles arrives with his spear and Hector starts to tremble. The Trojan hero flees around the walls of the city, pursued by Achilles who is "fast...as the wild mountain hawk." (Book 22, lines 164-165) Zeus watches this and finds it unbearable. He asks the other gods to decide Hector's fate. Athena reminds Zeus that Hector's fate has already been sealed. Athena goes to Troy after Hector has circled the city three times and takes the shape of Deiphobus. She tells Hector that they will face Achilles together. Hector turns to face his opponent.

Before they clash, Hector attempts to make a pact for the safety of the loser's body, but Achilles is deaf to his plans:

*"...don't talk to me of pacts.  
There are no binding oaths between men and lions -  
Wolves and lambs can enjoy no meeting of the minds -  
They are all bent on hating each other to the death.  
So with you and me. No love between us. No truce  
Till one or the other falls and gluts with blood  
Ares who hacks at men behind his rawhide shield."* Book 22, lines 309-315

Achilles throws his spear first and misses. Hector throws his and hits Achilles' shield. He turns to Deiphobus for another spear and knows he is about to die when the man is nowhere to be seen.

Topic Tracking: Divine Intervention 31

Topic Tracking: Nature Imagery 20

Hector draws his sword and attacks. After examining his weaknesses, Achilles strikes Hector in the windpipe. Hector begs that his body be spared, but Achilles swears that the dogs will maul his flesh. Hector, in his dying breath, foretells the death of his adversary:

*"I know you well - I see my fate before me.  
Never a chance that I could win you over...  
Iron inside your chest, that heart of yours.  
But now beware, or my curse will draw god's wrath  
Upon your head, that day when Paris and lord Apollo -  
For all your fighting heart - destroy you at the Scaean gates!"* Book 22, lines 419-424

Other Greeks rush up to taunt and stab the body. Achilles orders the city to be surrounded and then stops himself, wishing to bury Patroclus first. He ties Hector's body from the ankles to the back of his chariot and drags him along. Priam burns to help his son. Andromache is still ignorant of her husband's death. When she hears the mourning she rushes out and laments her fate her son's.

Topic Tracking: Divine Intervention 32

## Book 23

The Greek armies pull away from Troy and Achilles has the Myrmidons proceed three times in battle formation to honor Patroclus. Thetis gives the Greeks a great desire to grieve. Achilles drops the body of Hector beside his fallen comrade. Everyone removes their armor and attend Achilles' feast. Before the feast, Achilles tells Agamemnon that he will not clean the blood from his body until he has laid his friend to rest. He then says that he will consent to the feast only if Agamemnon has his men build a pyre at dawn. Achilles lies down to sleep on the beach and Patroclus appears to him:

*"Sleeping Achilles? You've forgotten me, my friend.  
You never neglected me in life, only now in death.  
Bury me, quickly - let me pass the Gates of Hades.  
They hold me off at a distance, all the souls,  
The shades of the burnt out breathless dead,  
Never to let me cross the river, mingle with them...  
They leave me to wander up and down, abandoned, lost  
At the house of death with the all-embracing gates."* Book 23, lines 81-89

Patroclus also reminds his friend that his own death awaits him and he request that when his time comes they should be buried in the same urn.

At dawn the Greeks cut trees and begin to build the pyre. The myrmidons prepare as if going to battle. Achilles cuts a lock from his hair and places it on the body. The Myrmidons do the same. The troops are dismissed and the chief mourners remain to complete the pyre. The fire does not burn well so Achilles makes an offering to the gods. Iris goes to the North and West winds and has them keep the fire burning throughout the night. Achilles weeps as "a father weeps when he burns his son's bones, dead on his wedding day." (Book 23, lines 254-255) The next morning the fires are put out with wine and the bones of Patroclus are put in an urn sealed with fat. Achilles brings out prizes for the funeral games. The chariot race is the first game with a woman for first place, a tripod for second a mare for third, a cauldron for fourth and a two handed jar for fifth. Eumelus, Menelaus, Diomedes, Antilochus and Meriones enter the race. Nestor advises Antilochus to hang tight to the turning post. As the race goes on, Idomeneus and Ajax Oilean wager who is going to win, but Achilles stops them. Diomedes wins the race, followed by Antilochus, Menelaus and Meriones. Eumelus' chariot team falls in the race. Out of pity Achilles proposes to give second prize to Eumelus, but Antilochus staunchly claims his prize. Menelaus accuses Antilochus of unfair play during the race. Antilochus offers Menelaus his prize, but Menelaus lets him keep it. Achilles gives Eumelus the armor of Asteropaeus as a consolation prize. Achilles gives Nestor the fifth place prize because he is unable to enter any of the contests. Nestor recalls the game victories of his youth, including his skill at spear-throwing, in which could beat even Phyleus and Polydorus (2). After recounting his victories, Nestor blesses Achilles:

*"You never forget my friendship, never miss a chance  
To pay me the honor I deserve among our comrades."*

*For all that you have done for me Achilles,  
May the immortals fill your cup with joy!"* Book 23, lines 722-725

Achilles prepares for the boxing match with a heavy mule for the winner and a cup with handles for the loser. He invites challengers to the boxing champion Epeus. Euryalus stands as challenger and Diomedes offers to be his second. The two men prepare for battle. Epeus knocks Euryalus out. Achilles sets the prizes for wrestling with a large tripod for the winner and a woman for the loser. Ajax and Odysseus volunteer for the competition. They struggle for a long time in a stalemate and Achilles declares that neither will win. The two share the prizes.

Achilles brings out the prizes for the foot race: a silver bowl for first, handed cup for second, and a half bar of gold for third. Odysseus, Oilean Ajax and Antilochus race. Odysseus wins, Ajax comes in second because he slips in horse manure and Antilochus comes in last. Achilles sets out the spear and armor of Sarpedon as prizes for the duel. Telamon Ajax and Diomedes volunteer. The two batter each other, but are eventually stopped by the crowd, Achilles splits their prizes. Then he brings out the shot for the shot put setting an iron ingot as the prize. Polypoetes wins this competition. A pair of double axes are offered as prizes for the archery contest. Achilles tethers a live dove at the top of a mast. The man who hits the tether gets single axes, the dove, double. Teucer hits the tether and Meriones hits the dove. The prizes are brought out for the spear throwing competition, but when Agamemnon volunteers, Achilles says that the contest is already his:

*"Atrides - well we know how far you excel us all:  
No one can match your strength at throwing spears,  
You are the best by far!  
Take first prize and return to your hollow ships  
While we award this spear to Meriones.  
If that you please your heart. That's what I propose."* Book 23, lines 986-991

Agamemnon agrees and gives his prize away to his herald.

## Book 24

The games end but Achilles cannot sleep because he yearns for his friend. He lies awake and remembers all the things that they did together. He goes out of his house, planning to further disgrace Hector's body but the gods take pity on the fallen Trojan . Apollo addresses the gods wondering aloud why they don't allow Hector a funeral:

*"But this Achilles - first he slaughters Hector,  
He rips away the noble prince's life  
Then lashes him to his chariot, drags him round  
His beloved comrade's tomb. But why, I ask you?  
What good will it do him? What honor will he gain?  
Let that man beware, or great and glorious as he is,  
We mighty gods will wheel on him in anger - look,  
He outrages the senseless clay in all his fury!"* Book 24, lines 58-65

Hera maintains that Hector is less deserving than Achilles because he does not have a divine parent. Zeus agrees that Hector will never have honor equal to Achilles, but many gods loved him and he always remembered the gods. Zeus tells Iris to tell Thetis that Achilles must return the body of Hector for a ransom. Thetis reluctantly agrees. Thetis reports to Zeus who tells her to threaten her son with the wrath of the gods and Iris goes to instruct Priam.

Topic Tracking: Divine Intervention 33

Thetis finds Achilles still grieving and wonders what he is doing:

*"How long will you eat your heart out here in tears and torment?  
All wiped from your mind, all thought of food and bed?  
It's a welcome thing to make love to a woman...  
You don't have long to live now, well I know:  
Already I see them looming up beside you - death  
And the strong force of fate..."* Book 24, lines 156-161

With this, Thetis tells Achilles what he must do. Iris goes to Priam and tells him that he should not fear death and should go with only one herald and the ransom to Achilles. Hermes will guide him. Iris tells the weeping king to have courage and repeats all the orders of Zeus. Priam arranges for a wagon and begins to pile in the treasure. Hecuba tells him that he is crazy and that he should not go through with such a plan. Priam says that if a man had ordered it he would have ignored it, but if it is the will of fate for him to die, then he will.

Priam assembles twelve robes, twelve cloaks, twelve blankets, twelve capes and shirts, ten bars of gold, two tripods, four cauldrons and a Thracian cup. Priam orders the Trojan mob to leave him alone and lashes out at his sons wishing that one of them had died instead of Hector. As Priam is about to leave, Hecuba rushes out with a cup of wine

and requests that he pour a libation for safe return requesting a bird of omen. Priam consents to his wife and Zeus sends a sign:

*"[A]nd straightaway the Father launched an eagle -  
Truest of Zeus's signs that fly the skies  
The dark marauder that mankind calls the Black-wing.  
Broad as the door of a rich man's vaulted treasure chamber,  
Well-fitted with sturdy bars, so broad each wing of the bird  
Spread out on either side as it swept in through the city  
Flashing clear on the right before the king and queen.  
All looked up, overjoyed - the people's spirits lifted." Book 24, lines 373-381*

With this omen, Priam sets out into the battlefield where Hermes disguises him so that no one will recognize him. Priam and his herald come upon Hermes, disguised as a Greek soldier. Hermes tells Priam that he is in great danger and asks where the treasure is going. Priam asks him who he is and Hermes tells him that he is a Myrmidon. Priam asks about the condition of his son's bodies and Hermes tells him it is good. Priam requests Hermes' protection, but the god says he cannot take him all the way to Achilles although he will take him as far as his shelter. Moments later, Hermes speaks quietly to Priam and reveals that he has been sent by Zeus. He advises the Trojan king to beg Achilles so he will soften his heart.

Priam enters Achilles's shelter and immediately grasps his knees. Everyone in the vicinity is amazed. Priam tells Achilles to remember his own father, saying that he had fifty sons and lost many in the war. Without Hector, the Trojans have no strength, he explains. Priam reveals that he has brought a priceless ransom. Achilles takes Priam's hand:

*"[H]e gently moved him back. And overpowered by memory  
Both men gave way to grief. Priam wept freely  
For man - killing Hector, throbbing, crouching  
Before Achilles' feet as Achilles wept himself,  
Now for his father, now for Patroclus once again  
And their sobbing rose and fell throughout the house." Book 24, lines 592-599*

Achilles raises Priam and tells him that he has been given mixed blessings by Zeus. His father, Peleus, is a lord blessed with wealth and power, yet he has only one, doomed, son. He tells Priam that once he had prospered, but now he suffers, but grief for his son will do no good. Priam tells Achilles that he should not sit while his son is unburied. Achilles becomes briefly impatient and tells Priam he knows that he was guided by a god.

Achilles goes out to the wagon and takes two capes and a shirt for Hector's body, ordering his men to clean and anoint the body before Priam sees it. Achilles lifts up the body himself and asks Patroclus not to be angry with him. Achilles tells Priam that he will be safe and should leave at dawn. He recalls the story of Niobe who lost all her sons for insulting Leto, but still found the time to feast. Achilles slaughters sheep and



they feast and drink. Priam, tired out by everything, asks to be put to sleep and Achilles has the serving girls prepare him a bed outside his shelter. Achilles explains that it will be safer outside because many of the Greek captains often come to his shelter during the night. He also asks how many days they need to properly bury Hector. Priam says twelve, and Achilles promises him that the Greeks will not attack until after this period is over. The two shake hands and Achilles goes to bed with Briseis.

All the gods sleep except for Hermes. He goes to Priam and wakes him telling him he must flee because if the Greeks find him they will reason that a ransom for a live king would be much greater than the ransom for a dead prince. Hermes guides Priam to the city where he is seen by his daughter, Cassandra, who calls to the other Trojans and tells them that Hector has come home. Andromache mourns at this sight and speaks to her son Astyanax lamenting because someone will probably kill him in revenge for something his father did.

Hecuba addresses the body, lamenting the coming fall of Troy and the futility of his death:

*"But you, once he slashed away your life with his brazen spear  
He dragged you time and again around his comrade's tomb.  
Patroclus whom you killed - not that he brought Patroclus  
Back to life by that. But I have you with me now...  
Fresh as the morning dew you lie in the royal halls  
Like one whom Apollo, lord of the silver bow,  
Has approached and shot to death with gentle shafts."* Book 24, lines 886-892

Helen cries out next wishing she had never been brought to Troy but thanking Hector for having never taunted her or blamed her. Priam tells everyone that they have twelve days. During this time they prepare a large pyre and after they burn the body and bury his bones, they have a large feast in his honor.

Topic Tracking: Divine Intervention 34



## Postscript

The Trojan war does not finish until Homer's *Odyssey*. Achilles is eventually killed by Apollo and Paris. Troy is only taken by the infamous Trojan horse. The Greeks, however, do not really ever win. Some are shipwrecked, but even those who make it home do so with great trouble. Odysseus takes another ten years to make it back to Ithaca. When Agamemnon gets home he is murdered by his wife Clytemnestra and her lover, who are killed in turn by Orestes, Agamemnon's son.