

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION: HOW AND WHY DOES MAN SEARCH FOR MEANING IN LIFE?**

**Welcome to Honors Shapers of the World!** “Shapers” is an interdisciplinary humanities course in which students explore how individuals and their experiences have had a significant and sometimes everlasting impact on society. Students examine common threads which link such disciplines such as literature, art, philosophy, history, music, and science in the development of human civilization.

Summer reading is not only meant to introduce you to the course’s requirements, but to also make you aware of the kind of in-depth reading, research, and writing that is expected. To prepare you for what is expected from you in this class, it is **IMPERATIVE** that you complete the following assignment before you return in September.

**What is the best way to approach this assignment?** First, have fun with it! Be creative, consider things you may not normally think about, observe the world around you, and ask lots of questions. This means recording lots of notes, ideas, definitions, thoughts, whatever may pop into your mind. There really is no right or wrong in these types of assignments. **What is expected is that you take your time, digest it fully, be productive, and know when you return in September you will be able to provide a thorough discussion of what you have accomplished and what you have learned.**

### ***Man’s Search for Meaning by Victor Frankl***

Imagine you are a young, up and coming psychologist working in Vienna in the middle of the 20th century. You are bright and can boast of having attended lectures by Freud. You have been working with “suicidal cases” and have formulated a theory which challenges the different approaches to psychoanalysis that have been developed thus far. The only problem is you are a Jew during the Nazi era.

You try to hide your manuscript as you are processed on arrival at Auschwitz, but it is taken from you. Nothing in your life has any meaning: you are only a number, a source of biological energy while you can do manual labor and a source of raw material when you are dead. What does not get used will be incinerated or buried in a mass unmarked grave. “Arbeit macht frei” proclaims the gates at Auschwitz – work will make you free.

Against the odds, you survive. While in the death camp system, you find yourself continuing to act the part of the psychiatric analyst, observing human behavior all around you. And you notice that physical strength and stamina are not indicators of who will survive. Some of the fittest physical specimens are the quickest to die. No, there is some other factor that makes a person a candidate for survival (if the disease, work, undernourishment, and lack of sleep do not ultimately kill you): and, oddly enough, you already knew what it was. Your manuscript applied to the life in the camps, predicted who could survive and who would succumb.

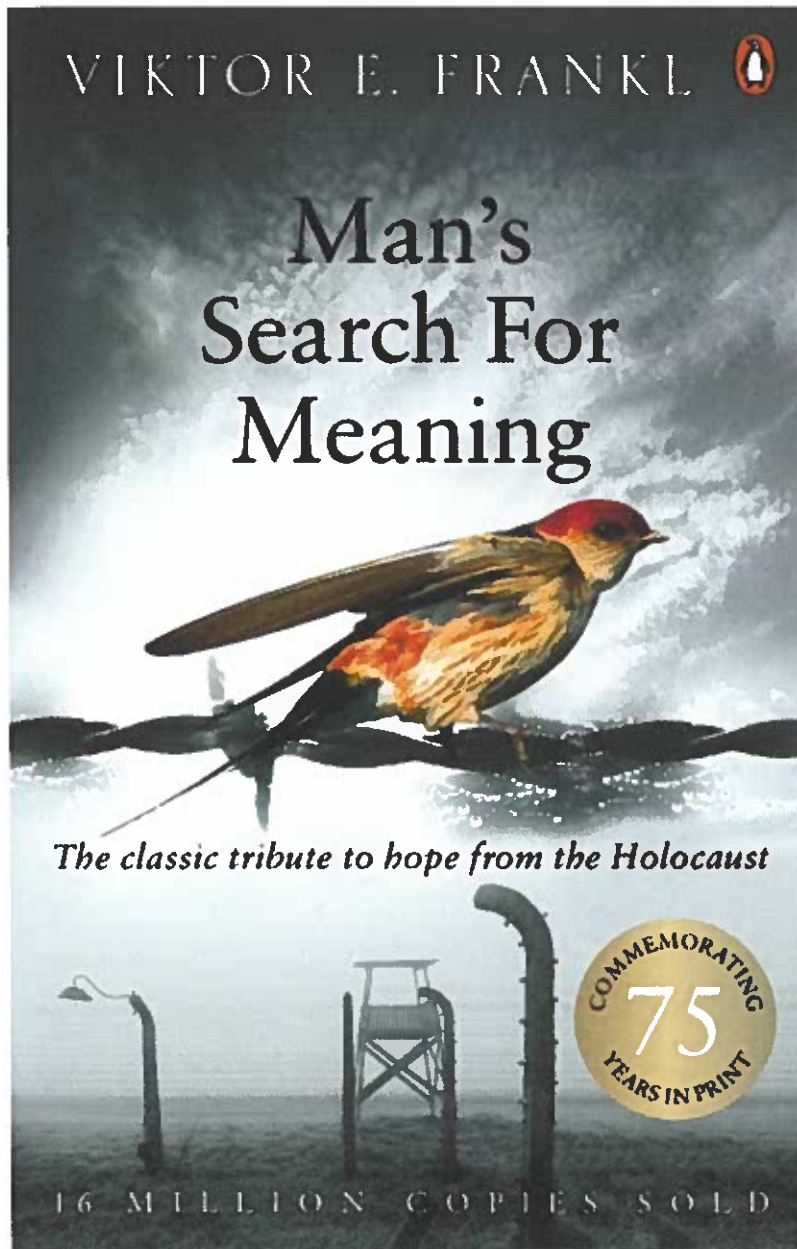
Psychiatrist Viktor Frankl's memoir has riveted generations of readers with its descriptions of life in Nazi death camps and its lessons for spiritual survival. Between 1942 and 1945 Frankl labored in four different camps, including Auschwitz, while his parents, brother, and pregnant wife perished. Based on his own experience and the experiences of those he treated in his practice, Frankl argues that we cannot avoid suffering but we can choose how to cope with it, find meaning in it, and move forward with renewed purpose. Frankl's theory—known as logotherapy, from the Greek word logos (“meaning”)—holds that our primary drive in life is not pleasure, as Freud maintained, but the discovery and pursuit of what we personally find meaningful.



At the time of Frankl's death in 1997, *Man's Search for Meaning* had sold more than 10 million copies in twenty-four languages. A 1991 reader survey by the Library of Congress and the Book-of-the-Month Club that asked readers to name a "book that made a difference in your life" found *Man's Search for Meaning* among the ten most influential books in America. It has been voted several times as one of the most thought-provoking books of all time and one of the top 10 books that inspire.

## YOUR TASKS

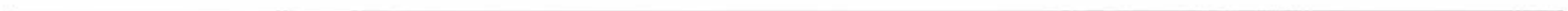
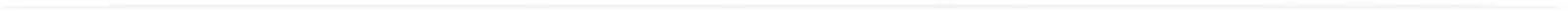
**Task One:** This summer, you will be **READING** and **ANALYZING** Victor E. Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning*. **THIS BOOK IS AN AMAZING READ!** It really does make you look at the world from a different perspective. As you **READ, ANALYZE** and **TAKE NOTES**, think about the following questions and **BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS** and **WRITE** about *Man's Search for Meaning* when we return the week of **September 5<sup>th</sup>**!



- After reading *Man's Search for Meaning*, what is **YOUR OPINION** on one of the oldest debates in psychology; **Are Humans "Basically Good" or "Basically Bad"**? Are we worthy of the name wise humans? Cite examples from the book to support your point of view, also cite any other examples that support your point of view?
- According to Dr. Frankl, **"Everything can be taken from a man or a woman but one thing: the last of human freedoms to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way."** What does this statement mean to you? Do you **AGREE** with this statement? Why or why not?
- Dr. Frankl quotes Nietzsche **"He who has a why to live for can bear almost any how."** What does this statement mean to you, and do you **AGREE** or **DISAGREE** with this statement? How could a statement like this help your fellow humans?
- After reading part 2 of *Man's Search for Meaning*, how according to Dr. Frankl can we start to live more **MEANINGFUL, RESPONSIBLE LIVES**?
- Dr. Frankl stated, **"An abnormal reaction to an abnormal situation is normal behavior."** Do you **AGREE** or **DISAGREE** with this statement and what is your reasoning behind it?

- According to Dr. Frankl what is the point of **SUFFERING** in life?

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**Task Two: READ, ANALYZE and TAKE NOTES** on Homer's the *Iliad*. You will **ONLY** be reading Books I: *The Rage of Achilles* AND Book XXII: *The Death of Hector*. Be aware that this is **CONTENT HEAVY!** Make sure you give yourself enough time to read thoroughly and thoughtfully in order to ensure your understanding of the material. Please complete the attached study guide providing **SPECIFIC EXAMPLES** from the text as they will be extremely useful for your upcoming essay. Your study guide will be worth 25 Points.



After **READING and ANALYZING** *The Iliad* by Homer, complete the **CLOSE READING CRITIQUE: THE ILIAD (ASSIGNMENT ATTACHED)**. The essay on the *Iliad* will be worth 100 Points.

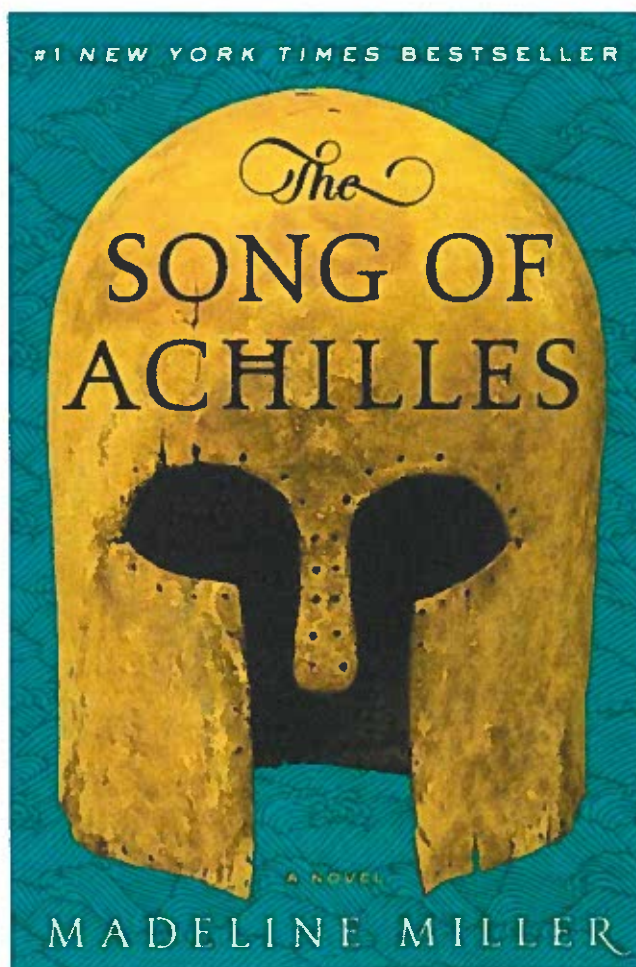
**TASK TWO IS DUE THE WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 18<sup>TH</sup>**

**Task Three: READ, ANALYZE and TAKE NOTES** on Madeline Miller's *The Song of Achilles*.

**PLEASE NOTE: DO NOT READ THE SONG OF ACHILLES UNTIL AFTER YOU READ THE ILIAD**

### Questions to Think About While You Read

- In the *Iliad*, Patroclus is a relatively minor character. Why do you think the author chose him to be her narrator? Which other figures in the story might make interesting narrators?
- Near the beginning of their friendship, Achilles tells his father that he values Patroclus because "he is surprising." What do you think Achilles means by that? How is Patroclus different from the other foster boys? Why?
- What do you think are the reasons behind Thetis' opposition to Patroclus?
- How do the boys change during their time with Chiron? Do the centaur's lessons continue to be a guiding force in their lives?
- On the island of Scyros, what motivates Deidameia's desire to speak to Patroclus alone? What does she hope to achieve?
- To what extent does Achilles' ultimate destiny shape his choices? Is there such a thing as free will in this world?
- Historical events can sometimes turn upon the will or personality of a single person. Aside from Achilles, are there other characters whose faults or virtues significantly affect the Trojan War's outcome?
- Myths are often called "timeless" for their insights into human behavior. What parallels do you see between the characters and conflicts of this novel and today? What pieces of Patroclus and Achilles' story can be universalized?
- What is the significance of song and music in the novel?
- Patroclus is often a self-critical narrator. Consider how other characters in the novel regard him—do they see him in the same way he sees himself?
- As represented in the novel, what are some of Odysseus' defining qualities? Do you find him a sympathetic character? Why or why not?
- Consider the explosive falling out between Achilles and Agamemnon. In what ways are each of them at fault for the rift? Could it have been avoided, or was it inevitable given that Achilles' fate is determined?





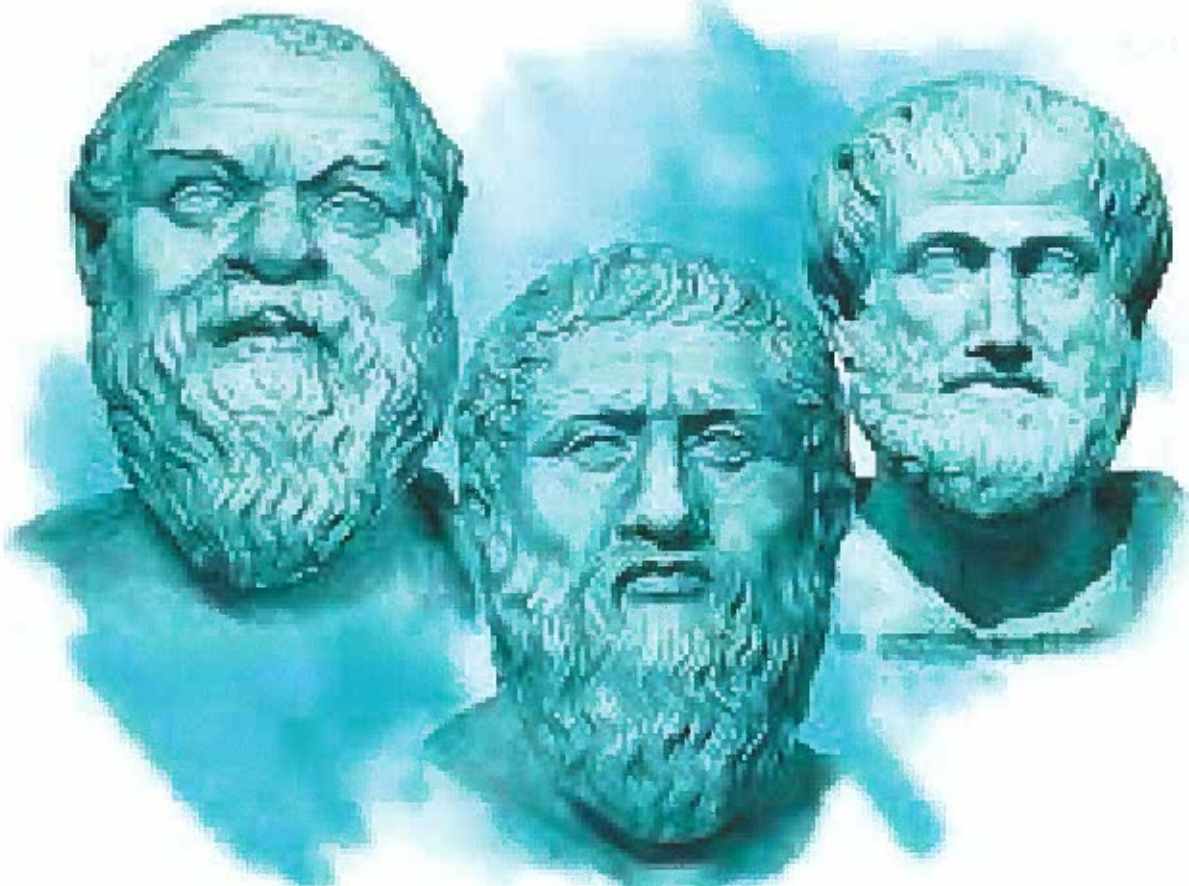
- Achilles and Briseis each claim Patroclus' loyalty and affection. In what ways are they similar or different? What are the dynamics of each of their relationships with Patroclus?
- What does the encounter between Priam and Achilles reveal about Achilles? Why do you think Achilles grants his request?
- Near the end of the book, Odysseus comes to speak to Pyrrhus on Patroclus' behalf. Why do you think he does this? How did it change (or not) your opinion of Odysseus?
- Peleus warns his son that any mortal who visits the sea-nymphs in their caves beneath the sea does not return the same. How is this belief borne out by the character of Pyrrhus, who was raised there? In what way does Pyrrhus confirm or deny Patroclus' fears about the gods?
- In the final pages of the book, we learn more about Thetis. How does this affect our view of her?
- Patroclus tells Thetis that he is "made of memories." What does he mean by that? What role does memory—both personal and cultural—play in the novel?

**TASK TWO IS DUE THE WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 18<sup>TH</sup>**

**It cannot be emphasized enough the importance of your summer work. Your intentful reading and reflective responses to the guided questions will provide the foundation for the discussions and assignments we will have and participate in at the beginning of and throughout the school year.**

**I would love to hear from you over the summer as you grapple with *Man's Search for Meaning* by Victor E. Frankl, the *Iliad* by Homer, and Madeline Miller's *The Song of Achilles*. Feel free to email me at [jambrosio@blindbrook.org](mailto:jambrosio@blindbrook.org). See you in September.**

**Jon Ambrosio 😊**





*Man's Search for Meaning*

BEFORE READING and ANALYZING *Man's Search for Meaning*, RESPOND to the following statements by marking "AGREE" or "DISAGREE" in the appropriate box. Then provide an explanation for your stance regarding the topic.

STATEMENT	AGREE	DISAGREE	REASON
There is purpose in suffering.			
Focusing on the future can help a person endure anything.			
Money is the main goal of life.			
"Happiness must happen, and the same holds for success: you have to let it happen by not caring about it."			
"Normal" is a subjective term.			
Man is capable of adapting to ANY conditions no matter how difficult.			
Life holds meaning even in the cruelest conditions.			
Death gives life meaning.			



# Before You Read

from the *Iliad*

## Reading Focus

Imagine that you are fighting in a war and your commander, out of jealousy, takes back an honor you have received. How would you respond?

**Journal** Write about your feelings in your journal and what you might say to the commander.

**Setting a Purpose** As you read, think about how the main characters respond to different situations.

## Building Background

### The *Iliad*

The *Iliad* opens *in medias res*, or “in the middle of things,” during the tenth year of the Trojan War. This war, which began in the early twelfth century B.C., was fought because Paris, a Trojan prince, abducted Helen, the queen of Sparta in Greece. For nine years the Greeks attacked Troy, and for nine years the Trojans successfully resisted them. At the beginning of the *Iliad*—from the word *Ilium*, another name for Troy—a bitter quarrel has erupted between Agamemnon, leader of the Greeks, and Achilles, their greatest warrior. Achilles abandons the battlefield. The Greeks suffer heavy losses, and at times they are nearly defeated. After refusing Agamemnon’s apology, Achilles allows his best friend Patroclus to join the fighting. Patroclus is then killed by Hector, the chief defender of Troy, at which point Achilles turns his rage from Agamemnon to Hector. The final battle between Achilles and Hector seals Troy’s fate, although the poem ends before the city is won by the Greeks.

A brief outline cannot suggest the richness of this epic poem, which runs nearly sixteen thousand lines. Although most of the action in the *Iliad* occurs within a few days, Homer includes much of Greek and Trojan history as background for the battles. The *Iliad* is set in a mythic era when gods intervened directly in human affairs and even fought in some of the battles. Events in the war are therefore shown from the Trojan, Greek, and divine points of view. Beyond its exciting story, the *Iliad* offers a fascinating exploration of the ancient Greek religion and Greek ideals of heroism and honor. In ancient Greece, the outcome of fighting is less important than how characters behave when they are tested in the face of death.

## Meet Homer

“We can say nothing but what hath been said. Our poets steal from Homer.”  
—Robert Burton

The poet Homer is traditionally given credit for Greece’s two great epics, the *d* and the *Odyssey*. We know almost nothing about Homer, except that he probably lived in Ionia, in what is now western Turkey. Ancient writers often mention his blindness, but this legend probably arose from a desire to portray Homer as a wise man, for the Greeks associated blindness with inner vision.

Scholars have long debated whether one individual created the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Some have argued that each epic developed over an extended period, with many poets contributing toward the final version. Today most experts believe that Homer composed at least one, if not both, of the poems.

The poems attributed to Homer show a thorough understanding of traditional storytelling techniques. Homer used these techniques to create poetry of unprecedented length and complexity.

Homer probably lived in the eighth century B.C.

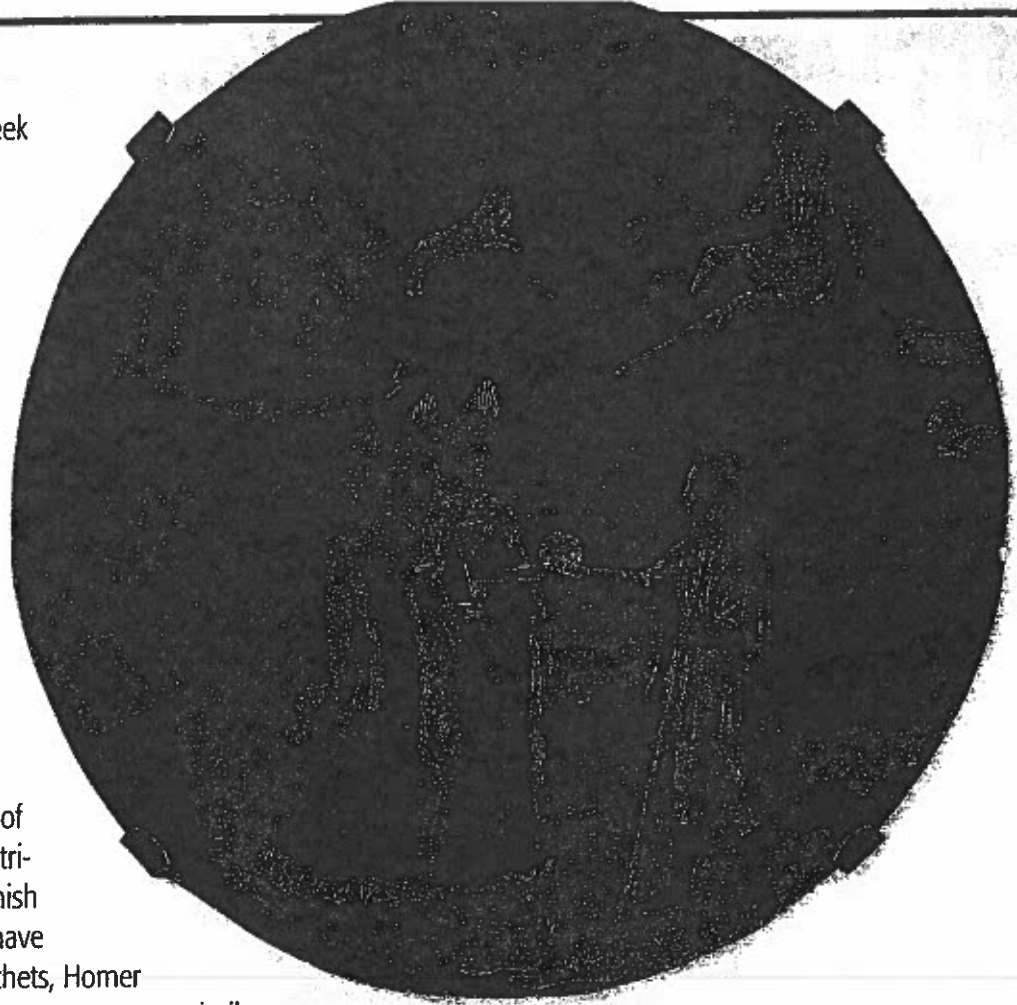
## The *Iliad's* Epic Style

For centuries prior to Homer, Greek poets improvised songs without benefit of writing. Homer relied on this oral tradition not only for stories but also for many literary techniques that he used in the *Iliad*. He probably created the poem orally, dictating it later to a scribe.

The *Iliad* contains many formulaic, or fixed, expressions which made it easy to remember the poem when it was sung. Most noticeable are the epithets, which were almost like nicknames, such as "the swift runner Achilles." Epithets allowed Homer to fit names into any part of a verse without disrupting the metrical pattern and made it easy to finish off a verse that otherwise would have been too short. In addition to epithets, Homer repeated phrases and groups of verses to express similar ideas in different contexts. These techniques were developed by oral poets to help them improvise as they sang.

The *Iliad* was written in dactylic hexameter—six "feet" (groups) of syllables stressed ' ~ ~ (e.g. "wonderful")—the style traditional for heroic verse. Since Greek verse forms are based on the sound of each syllable in a word, while English verses are based on the stresses in each word, translators have come up with many different ways of translating Homer's work into English. Robert Fagles, who translated the episodes you will read, generally uses a six-beat line to approximate Homer's verse, sometimes varying to five or seven beats.

Homer opens the *Iliad* with a traditional invocation, or plea, to the goddess of poetry for inspiration. The poem then follows the epic tradition of *in medias res* by plunging the reader into the middle of the action. Homer could begin in this manner without confusing his listeners because they were already familiar with the legend of Troy.



*Judgement of Paris*, 15th century. Verrochio da Cecchino (Italy). Oil on canvas. Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence.

**Viewing the painting:** Eris, the goddess of strife, started a rivalry among the goddesses Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite. They appointed Paris, who had been living as a shepherd, to judge their beauty. After being bribed by Aphrodite with the promise of Helen, Paris awarded Aphrodite the prize. During the resulting Trojan War, Athena sided with the Greeks, Aphrodite with the Trojans, and Hera interfered with both sides. Why do you think the painting shows several different scenes? Can you identify what is happening in each?

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## MAJOR CHARACTERS IN THE ILLAD

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### GREEKS

- ACHAEANS** (ə kē' ənz): another name for the Greeks, also called **ARGIVES** and **DANAANS** (dan' ē ənz)
- ACHILLES** (ə kil' ēz): greatest Greek warrior; invincible in battle but doomed to an early death; son of Peleus and the sea goddess Thetis (thē' tis)
- AGAMEMNON** (ag' ə mem' non): also called Atrides (ə trī' dēz) or son of Atreus; king of Mycenae and leader of the Greek armies; his wife is **CLYTEMNESTRA** (klī' tem' nes' trə)
- CALCHAS** (kal' chəs): seer or prophet who counsels the Greeks
- HELEN**: wife of Menelaus; her abduction by Paris started the Trojan War
- MENELAUS** (men' əl ā' əs): Agamemnon's brother and Helen's husband
- MYRMIDONS** (mur' mə donz'): Greek soldiers commanded by Achilles
- NESTOR** (nes' tər): oldest of the Greek leaders and a respected counselor
- ODYSSEUS** (ō dis' ē əs): the lord of Ithaca, known for his cleverness
- PATROCLUS** (pə trō' kləs): friend of Achilles

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### TROJANS

- ANDROMACHE** (an drom' ə kē): Hector's wife
- ASTYANAX** (as tī' ə naks'): infant son of Hector and Andromache
- BRISEIS** (brī sē' is): captured girl given to Achilles as a war prize
- CHRYSEIS** (krī sē' is): captured girl given to Agamemnon as a war prize
- CHRYSES** (krī sēz): priest of Apollo; father of Chryseis
- DARDANIANS**: another name for the Trojans
- DEIPHOBUS** (dē' ə pho' bəs): son of Priam, brother of Paris
- HECTOR**: son of Priam and Hecuba; leader of the Trojan forces
- HECUBA** (hek' yə bə): queen of Troy
- PARIS**: son of Priam and Hecuba; abductor of Helen
- PRIAM** (prī' əm): king of Troy

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### GODS AND GODDESSES

- APHRODITE** (af' rə dī' tē): goddess of love; sides with the Trojans
- APOLLO** (ə pol' ō): also called Phoebus, Phoebus Apollo, and the Archer; god of prophecy, music, healing, and poetry; sides with the Trojans
- ATHENA** (ə thē' nə): also called Pallas or Pallas Athena; goddess of wisdom, the practical arts, and warfare; sides with the Greeks
- HERA** (her' ə): wife of Zeus; sides with the Greeks
- ZEUS** (zōs): also called the son of Cronus; most powerful of the gods

# the ILLIAD

Homer ~

Translated by Robert Fagles

## from BOOK I THE RAGE OF ACHILLES



*Achilles Battling Agamemnon*, c. 1757. Giovanni Battista Tiepolo (Italy). Wall painting from the Hall of the Iliad, Villa Valmarana, Vicenza, Italy.

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 fighters' souls, but made their bodies carrion,  
5 feasts for the dogs and birds,  
and the will of Zeus was moving toward its end.  
Begin, Muse, when the two first broke and clashed,  
Agamemnon lord of men and brilliant Achilles.

What god drove them to fight with such a fury?

10 Apollo the son of Zeus and Leto. Incensed at the king  
he swept a fatal plague through the army—men were dying  
and all because Agamemnon spurned Apollo's priest.  
Yes, Chryses approached the Achaeans' fast ships  
to win his daughter back, bringing a priceless ransom  
15 and bearing high in hand, wound on a golden staff,  
the wreaths of the god, the distant deadly Archer.<sup>o</sup>  
He begged the whole Achaean army but most of all  
the two supreme commanders, Atreus' two sons,  
"Agamemnon, Menelaus—all Argives<sup>o</sup> geared for war!  
20 May the gods who hold the halls of Olympus<sup>o</sup> give you  
Priam's city to plunder, then safe passage home.  
Just set my daughter free, my dear one . . . here,  
accept these gifts, this ransom. Honor the god  
who strikes from worlds away—the son of Zeus, Apollo!"

25 And all ranks of Achaeans cried out their assent:  
"Respect the priest, accept the shining ransom!"  
But it brought no joy to the heart of Agamemnon.  
The king dismissed the priest with a brutal order  
ringing in his ears: "Never again, old man,  
30 let me catch sight of you by the hollow ships!<sup>o</sup>  
Not loitering now, not slinking back tomorrow.  
The staff and the wreaths of god will never save you then.  
The girl—I won't give up the girl. Long before that,  
old age will overtake her in my house, in Argos,  
35 far from her fatherland, slaving back and forth  
at the loom, forced to share my bed!

Now go,  
don't tempt my wrath—and you may depart alive."

The old man was terrified. He obeyed the order,  
turning, trailing away in silence down the shore  
40 where the battle lines of breakers crash and drag.  
And moving off to a safe distance, over and over  
the old priest prayed to the son of sleek-haired Leto,  
lord Apollo, "Hear me, Apollo! God of the silver bow  
who strides the walls of Chryse<sup>o</sup> and Cilla<sup>o</sup> sacrosanct—  
45 lord in power of Tenedos<sup>o</sup>—Smintheus,<sup>o</sup> god of the plague!  
If I ever roofed a shrine to please your heart,  
ever burned the long rich bones of bulls and goats  
on your holy altar, now, now bring my prayer to pass.  
Pay the Danaans back—your arrows for my tears!"

10–16 Incensed at the king . . . deadly Archer (Apollo): In a raid on Thebes, a Trojan ally, the Greeks captured Chryseis, daughter of Chryses, Apollo's high priest. Agamemnon claimed her as his share of the plunder.

19 Argives: natives of the city-state of Argos; Greeks.

20 Olympus: highest mountain in Greece; in mythology, the home of the deities.

30 ships: The Greek camp was on the beaches before the city of Troy. The 1,000-ship navy that carried them there lay at anchor offshore.

44–45 Chryse, Cilla, Tenedos: places near Troy that Smintheus (another name for Apollo) considers sacrosanct, or sacred.

50 His prayer went up and Phoebus<sup>o</sup> Apollo heard him.  
Down he strode from Olympus' peaks, storming at heart  
with his bow and hooded quiver slung across his shoulders.  
The arrows clanged at his back as the god quaked with rage,  
the god himself on the march and down he came like night.  
55 Over against the ships he dropped to a knee, let fly a shaft  
and a terrifying clash rang out from the great silver bow.  
First he went for the mules and circling dogs but then,  
launching a piercing shaft at the men themselves,  
he cut them down in droves—  
60 and the corpse-fires burned on, night and day, no end in sight.

Nine days the arrows of god swept through the army.<sup>o</sup>  
On the tenth Achilles called all ranks to muster—  
the impulse seized him, sent by white-armed Hera  
grieving to see Achaean fighters drop and die.  
65 Once they'd gathered, crowding the meeting grounds,  
the swift runner Achilles rose and spoke among them:  
"Son of Atreus, now we are beaten back, I fear,  
the long campaign is lost. So home we sail . . .  
if we can escape our death—if war and plague  
70 are joining forces now to crush the Argives.  
But wait: let us question a holy man,  
a prophet, even a man skilled with dreams—  
dreams as well can come our way from Zeus—  
come, someone to tell us why Apollo rages so,  
75 whether he blames us for a vow we failed, or sacrifice.  
If only the god would share the smoky savor of lambs  
and full-grown goats, Apollo might be willing, still,  
somehow, to save us from this plague."

So he proposed  
and down he sat again as Calchas rose among them,  
80 Thestor's son, the clearest by far of all the seers<sup>o</sup>  
who scan the flight of birds.<sup>o</sup> He knew all things that are,  
all things that are past and all that are to come,  
the seer who had led the Argive ships to Troy  
with the second sight<sup>o</sup> that god Apollo gave him.  
85 For the armies' good the seer began to speak:  
"Achilles, dear to Zeus . . .  
you order me to explain Apollo's anger,  
the distant deadly Archer? I will tell it all.  
But strike a pact with me, swear you will defend me  
90 with all your heart, with words and strength of hand.  
For there is a man I will enrage—I see it now—  
a powerful man who lords it over all the Argives,

50 Phoebus: literally means "bright", a reference to Apollo's role as the sun god.



51–61 Down he strode . . . swept through the army: Apollo causes a plague to break out in the Greek camp. Homer uses imagery (Apollo as "deadly archer") to convey the effect of the disease.



80 seers: individuals with extraordinary moral and spiritual insight. The Greeks believed that seers had mystical powers given to them by the gods.

81 scan the flight of birds: The examination of animal behavior and their internal organs helped seers make predictions or interpret the will of the deities.

84 second sight: the ability to see remote or future objects or events.



one the Achaeans must obey . . . A mighty king,  
raging against an inferior, is too strong.  
95 Even if he can swallow down his wrath today,  
still he will nurse the burning in his chest  
until, sooner or later, he sends it bursting forth.  
Consider it closely, Achilles. Will you save me?"

And the matchless runner reassured him: "Courage!  
100 Out with it now, Calchas. Reveal the will of god,  
whatever you may know. And I swear by Apollo  
dear to Zeus, the power you pray to, Calchas,  
when you reveal god's will to the Argives—no one,  
not while I am alive and see the light on earth, no one  
105 will lay his heavy hands on you by the hollow ships.  
None among all the armies. Not even if you mean  
Agamemnon here who now claims to be, by far,  
the best of the Achaeans."

The seer took heart  
and this time he spoke out, bravely: "Beware—  
110 he casts no blame for a vow we failed, a sacrifice.  
The god's enraged because Agamemnon spurned his priest,  
he refused to free his daughter, he refused the ransom.  
That's why the Archer sends us pains and he will send us more  
and never drive this shameful destruction from the Argives,  
115 not till we give back the girl with sparkling eyes  
to her loving father—no price, no ransom paid—  
and carry a sacred hundred bulls to Chryse town.<sup>o</sup>  
Then we can calm the god, and only then appease<sup>o</sup> him."

So he declared and sat down. But among them rose  
the fighting son of Atreus, lord of the far-flung kingdoms,  
Agamemnon—furious, his dark heart filled to the brim,  
blazing with anger now, his eyes like searing fire.  
With a sudden, killing look he wheeled on Calchas first:  
"Seer of misery! Never a word that works to my advantage!  
125 Always misery warms your heart, your prophecies—  
never a word of profit said or brought to pass.  
Now, again, you divine<sup>o</sup> god's will for the armies,  
bruit<sup>o</sup> it about, as fact, why the deadly Archer  
multiplies our pains: because I, I refused  
130 that glittering price for the young girl Chryseis.  
Indeed, I prefer *her* by far, the girl herself,  
I want her mine in my own house! I rank her higher  
than Clytemnestra, my wedded wife—she's nothing less  
in build or breeding, in mind or works of hand.



*Achilles* (detail). Ancient Greece. Red-figured amphora. Museo Gregoriano Etrusco, Rome.

**Viewing the art:** Which of Achilles' qualities do you think this artist wanted to express? Explain.

117 carry a sacred hundred bulls to Chryse town: sacrifice a hundred bulls on the altar to Apollo at Chryse.

118 appease: to make peace with through concessions; to satisfy insistent demands.

127 divine: to discover hidden knowledge; here, to interpret the will of a god.

128 bruit (brōōt): to make known loudly and publicly.

135 But I am willing to give her back, even so,  
 if that is best for all. What I really want  
 is to keep my people safe, not see them dying.  
 But fetch me another prize, and straight off too,  
 else I alone of the Argives go without my honor.  
 140 That would be a disgrace. You are all witness,  
 look—my prize is snatched away!”

But the swift runner  
 Achilles answered him at once, “Just how, Agamemnon,  
 great field marshal . . . most grasping man alive,  
 how can the generous Argives give you prizes now?  
 145 I know of no troves of treasure, piled, lying idle,  
 anywhere. Whatever we dragged from towns we plundered,  
 all’s been portioned out. But collect it, call it back  
 from the rank and file? *That* would be the disgrace.  
 So return the girl to the god, at least for now.  
 150 We Achaeans will pay you back, three, four times over,  
 if Zeus will grant us the gift, somehow, someday,  
 to raze° Troy’s massive ramparts to the ground.”

But King Agamemnon countered, “Not so quickly,  
 brave as you are, godlike Achilles—trying to cheat *me*.  
 155 Oh no, you won’t get past me, take me in that way!  
 What do you want? To cling to your own prize°  
 while I sit calmly by—empty-handed here?  
 Is that why you order me to give her back?  
 No—if our generous Argives *will* give me a prize,  
 160 a match for my desires, equal to what I’ve lost,  
 well and good. But if they give me nothing  
 I will take a prize myself—your own, or Ajax°  
 or Odysseus’ prize—I’ll commandeer° her myself  
 and let that man I go to visit choke with rage!  
 165 Enough. We’ll deal with all this later, in due time.  
 Now come, we haul a black ship down to the bright sea,  
 gather a decent number of oarsmen along her locks  
 and put aboard a sacrifice, and Chryseis herself,  
 in all her beauty . . . we embark her too.  
 170 Let one of the leading captains take command.  
 Ajax, Idomeneus, trusty Odysseus or you, Achilles,  
 you—the most violent man alive—so you can perform  
 the rites for us and calm the god yourself.”

A dark glance  
 and the headstrong runner answered him in kind: “Shameless—  
 175 armored in shamelessness—always shrewd with greed!

152 raze: to destroy completely.

156 To cling to your own prize: After a raid on the city of Lyrnessos, Achilles had chosen, as his share of the plunder, the young woman named Briseis.

162 Ajax: The Greek army had two great warriors named Ajax. Ajax, the son of Telamon, was considered second only to Achilles in skill and courage.

163 commandeer: to take arbitrary or forceful possession of.

How could any Argive soldier obey your orders,  
freely and gladly do your sailing for you  
or fight your enemies, full force? Not I, no.  
It wasn't Trojan spearmen who brought me here to fight.

180 The Trojans never did me damage, not in the least,  
they never stole my cattle or my horses, never  
in Phthia° where the rich soil breeds strong men  
did they lay waste my crops. How could they?

185 Look at the endless miles that lie between us . . .  
shadowy mountain ranges, seas that surge and thunder.  
No, you colossal, shameless—we all followed you,  
to please you, to fight for you, to win your honor  
back from the Trojans—Menelaus and you, you dog-face!  
What do you care? Nothing. You don't look right or left.°

190 And now you threaten to strip me of my prize in person—  
the one I fought for long and hard, and sons of Achaea  
handed her to me.

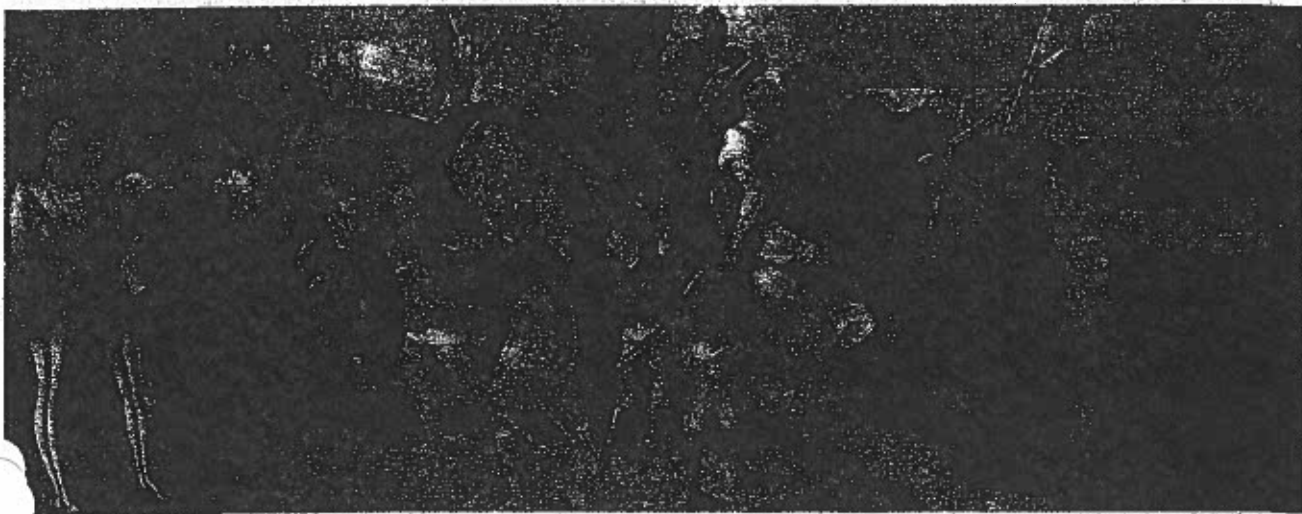
My honors never equal yours,  
whenever we sack some wealthy Trojan stronghold—  
my arms bear the brunt of the raw, savage fighting,  
true, but when it comes to dividing up the plunder  
the lion's share is yours, and back I go to my ships,  
clutching some scrap, some pittance that I love,  
when I have fought to exhaustion.

195 No more now—  
back I go to Phthia. Better that way by far,  
200 to journey home in the beaked ships° of war.  
I have no mind to linger here disgraced,  
brimming your cup and piling up your plunder.”

182 Phthia (thē' ə): a small kingdom in Greece ruled by Peleus, the father of Achilles.

189 You don't look right or left: You are completely self-centered.

200 beaked ships: ships with a metal-pointed beam that project from the bow, or front, of an ancient ship. The beak was used to pierce an enemy ship's hull.



*The Abduction of Helen.* Zenone Veronese (Italy, 1484–1552). Oil on canvas, 44 x 112 in. Private collection.

**Viewing the painting:** How does the artist represent Helen's departure from Greece?

But the lord of men Agamemnon shot back,  
 “Desert, by all means—if the spirit drives you home!  
 205 I will never beg you to stay, not on *my* account.  
 Never—others will take my side and do me honor,  
 Zeus above all, whose wisdom rules the world.  
 You—I hate you most of all the warlords  
 loved by the gods. Always dear to your heart,  
 210 strife, yes, and battles, the bloody grind of war.  
 What if you are a great soldier? That’s just a gift of god.  
 Go home with your ships and comrades, lord it over  
 your Myrmidons!<sup>o</sup>  
 You *are* nothing to me—you and your overweening<sup>o</sup> anger!  
 But let this be my warning on your way:  
 215 since Apollo insists on taking my Chryseis,  
 I’ll send her back in my own ships with *my* crew.  
 But I, I will be there in person at your tents  
 to take Briseis in all her beauty, your own prize—  
 so you can learn just how much greater I am than you  
 220 and the next man up may shrink from matching words  
 with me,  
 from hoping to rival Agamemnon strength for strength!”

He broke off and anguish gripped Achilles.  
 The heart in his rugged chest was pounding, torn . . .  
 Should he draw the long sharp sword slung at his hip,  
 225 thrust through the ranks<sup>o</sup> and kill Agamemnon now?—  
 or check his rage and beat his fury down?  
 As his racing spirit veered back and forth,  
 just as he drew his huge blade from its sheath,  
 down from the vaulting heavens swept Athena,  
 230 the white-armed goddess Hera sped her down:  
 Hera loved both men and cared for both alike.  
 Rearing behind him Pallas seized his fiery hair—  
 only Achilles saw her, none of the other fighters—  
 struck with wonder he spun around, he knew her at once,  
 235 Pallas Athena! the terrible blazing<sup>o</sup> of those eyes,  
 and his winged words went flying: “Why, why now?  
 Child of Zeus with the shield of thunder,<sup>o</sup> why come now?  
 To witness the outrage Agamemnon just committed?  
 I tell you this, and so help me it’s the truth—  
 240 he’ll soon pay for his arrogance with his life!”

Her gray eyes clear, the goddess Athena answered,  
 “Down from the skies I come to check your rage  
 if only you will yield.

212 Myrmidons: warriors who followed Achilles to Troy.

213 overweening: arrogant; presumptuous; overstepping proper bounds.

225 thrust through the ranks: push past Agamemnon’s bodyguards.

237 shield of thunder: Zeus is the god of thunder and lightning. He often hurled thunderbolts as an expression of his anger.

245 The white-armed goddess Hera sped me down:  
 she loves you both, she cares for you both alike.  
 Stop this fighting, now. Don't lay hand to sword.  
 Lash him with threats of the price that he will face.<sup>o</sup>  
 And I tell you this—and I know it is the truth—  
 one day glittering gifts will lie before you,  
 250 three times over to pay for all his outrage.  
 Hold back now. Obey us both.”

So she urged  
 and the swift runner complied at once: “I must—  
 when the two of you hand down commands, Goddess,  
 a man submits though his heart breaks with fury.  
 255 Better for him by far. If a man obeys the gods  
 they're quick to hear his prayers.”

And with that  
 Achilles stayed his burly hand on the silver hilt  
 and slid the huge blade back in its sheath.  
 He would not fight the orders of Athena.  
 260 Soaring home to Olympus, she rejoined the gods  
 aloft in the halls of Zeus whose shield is thunder.

But Achilles rounded on Agamemnon once again,  
 lashing out at him, not relaxing his anger for a moment:  
 “Staggering drunk, with your dog's eyes, your fawn's heart!<sup>o</sup>  
 265 Never once did you arm with the troops and go to battle  
 or risk an ambush packed with Achaea's picked men—  
 you lack the courage, you can see death coming.  
 Safer by far, you find, to foray<sup>o</sup> all through camp,  
 commandeering the prize of any man who speaks against you.  
 270 King who devours his people! Worthless husks, the men you  
 rule—  
 if not, Atrides, this outrage would have been your last.  
 I tell you this, and I swear a mighty oath upon it . . .  
 by this, this scepter,<sup>o</sup> look,  
 that never again will put forth crown and branches,  
 275 now it's left its stump on the mountain ridge forever,  
 nor will it sprout new green again, now the brazen<sup>o</sup> ax  
 has stripped its bark and leaves,<sup>o</sup> and now the sons of Achaea  
 pass it back and forth as they hand their judgments down,  
 upholding the honored customs whenever Zeus commands—  
 280 This scepter will be the mighty force behind my oath:  
 someday, I swear, a yearning for Achilles will strike  
 Achaea's sons and all your armies! But then, Atrides,  
 harrowed<sup>o</sup> as you will be, *nothing* you do can save you—  
 not when your hordes of fighters drop and die,

247 Lash him with threats of the price that he will face: Warn Agamemnon that his arrogance will cost him your support and that Achilles and the Myrmidons will withdraw from the war.

264 your dog's eyes, your fawn's heart: expressions meant to suggest that Agamemnon is a coward.

268 foray: to plunder.

273 scepter (sep' tar): a staff borne by a ruler as an emblem or symbol of authority.

274–277 that never again . . . stripped its bark and leaves: having been cut and carved from a living tree, the staff is dead wood.

276 brazen: Here, the adjective has a double meaning: figuratively—bold, defiant; literally—the blade of the ax may have been made from brass.

283 harrowed: under constant attack.

285 cut down by the hands of man-killing Hector! Then—  
then you will tear your heart out, desperate, raging  
that you disgraced the best of the Achaeans!”

Down on the ground

he dashed the scepter studded bright with golden nails,  
then took his seat again. The son of Atreus smoldered,  
290 glaring across at him, but Nestor rose between them,  
the man of winning words, the clear speaker of Pylos . . .  
Sweeter than honey from his tongue the voice flowed on  
and on.

Two generations of mortal men he had seen go down by now,  
those who were born and bred with him in the old days,  
295 in Pylos' holy realm, and now he ruled the third.  
He pleaded with both kings, with clear good will,  
“No more—or enormous sorrow comes to all Achaea!  
How they would exult, Priam and Priam's sons  
and all the Trojans. Oh they'd leap for joy  
300 to hear the two of you battling on this way,  
you who excel us all, first in Achaean councils,  
first in the ways of war.

Stop. Please.

Listen to Nestor. You are both younger than I,  
and in my time I struck up with better men than you,  
305 even you, but never once did they make light of me.  
I've never seen such men, I never will again . . .  
men like Pirithous, Dryas, that fine captain,  
Caeneus and Exadius, and Polyphemus, royal prince,  
and Theseus,<sup>o</sup> Aegeus' boy, a match for the immortals.<sup>o</sup>  
310 They were the strongest mortals ever bred on earth,  
the strongest, and they fought against the strongest too,  
shaggy Centaurs,<sup>o</sup> wild brutes of the mountains—  
they hacked them down, terrible, deadly work.  
And I was in their ranks, fresh out of Pylos,  
315 far away from home—they enlisted me themselves  
and I fought on my own, a free lance,<sup>o</sup> single-handed.  
And none of the men who walk the earth these days  
could battle with those fighters, none, but they,  
they took to heart my counsels, marked my words.  
320 So now you listen too. Yielding is far better . . .  
Don't seize the girl, Agamemnon, powerful as you are—  
leave her, just as the sons of Achaea gave her,  
his prize from the very first.<sup>o</sup>  
And you, Achilles, never hope to fight it out  
325 with your king, pitting force against his force:  
no one can match the honors dealt a king, you know,

307–309 Pirithous . . . Theseus:  
The individuals named are all heroes of  
Nestor's generation.

309 Aegeus' boy, a match for the  
immortals: Theseus of Athens is the hero  
of many adventure tales.

312 Centaurs: a race of savage crea-  
tures fabled to be half man and half horse  
who lived in the mountains of Greece.

316 free lance: a roving soldier avail-  
able for hire; one who acts independently  
without allegiance to a single authority.

322–323 leave her . . . his prize from  
the very first: Let her remain with Achilles  
since the Greek army agreed that she  
should be his reward for valor in battle.

a sceptered king to whom great Zeus gives glory.<sup>o</sup>  
Strong as you are—a goddess was your mother—  
he has more power because he rules more men.

330 Atrides, end your anger—look, it's Nestor!  
I beg you, cool your fury against Achilles.  
Here the man stands over all Achaea's armies,  
our rugged bulwark<sup>o</sup> braced for shocks of war."

But King Agamemnon answered him in haste.

335 "True, old man—all you say is fit and proper—  
but this soldier wants to tower over the armies,  
he wants to rule over all, to lord it over all,  
give out orders to every man in sight. Well,  
there's one, I trust, who will never yield to *him*!  
340 What if the everlasting gods have made a spearman of him?  
Have they entitled him to hurl abuse at *me*?"

"Yes!"—blazing Achilles broke in quickly—  
"What a worthless, burnt-out coward I'd be called  
if I would submit to you and all your orders,  
345 whatever you blurt out. Fling them at others,  
don't give me commands!

Never again, I trust, will Achilles yield to *you*.  
And I tell you this—take it to heart, I warn you—  
my hands will never do battle for that girl,  
350 neither with you, King, nor any man alive.  
You Achaeans gave her, now you've snatched her back.  
But all the rest I possess beside my fast black ship—  
not one bit of it can you seize against my will, Atrides.  
Come, try it! So the men can see, that instant,  
355 your black blood gush and spurt around my spear!"

Once the two had fought it out with words,  
battling face-to-face, both sprang to their feet  
and broke up the muster<sup>o</sup> beside the Argive squadrons.

360 Achilles strode off to his trim ships and shelters,  
back to his friend Patroclus and their comrades.  
Agamemnon had a vessel hauled down to the sea,  
he picked out twenty oarsmen to man her locks,  
put aboard the cattle for sacrifice to the god  
and led Chryseis in all her beauty amidships.<sup>o</sup>  
55 Versatile Odysseus took the helm as captain.

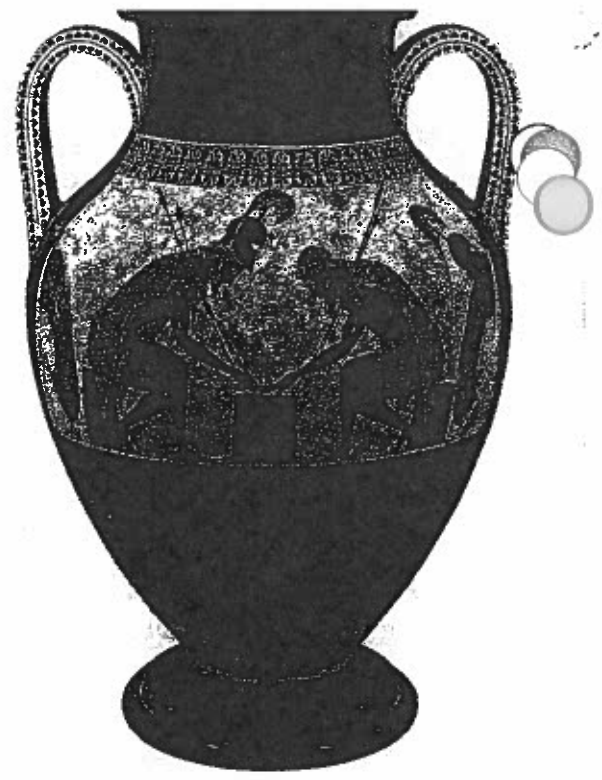
All embarked,  
the party launched out on the sea's foaming lanes  
while the son of Atreus told his troops to wash,

326–327 no one can match . . . great Zeus gives glory: No one has the right to defy a king who rules by the will of the gods.

333 bulwark (bool' wark): a solid wall-like structure raised for defense; a strong support or protection. Here, it refers to Achilles' position of strength among the Greek army.

358 muster: here, an assembly, specifically a formal military gathering.

364 amidships: midway between the bow and the stern; most stable part of the ship, and, therefore, the location of the best living quarters.



*Achilles and Ajax Playing Dice Game.* Exekias, Ancient Greece. Black-figured amphora. Museo Gregoriano Etrusco, Rome.

**Viewing the art:** Why do you think the artist might have chosen to depict Achilles and Ajax in the midst of a game? Why are they in armor with their spears in hand?

393 **their charge:** the instructions they had been given; their orders or mission.

394 **couriers:** a member of the armed forces whose duties include carrying mail, information, or supplies.

404 **ignominious** (ig' nā min' ē əs): marked or characterized by disgrace or shame.

to purify themselves from the filth of plague.  
They scoured it off, threw scourings in the surf  
370 and sacrificed to Apollo full-grown bulls and goats  
along the beaten shore of the fallow barren sea  
and savory smoke went swirling up the skies.

So the men were engaged throughout the camp.  
But King Agamemnon would not stop the quarrel,  
375 the first threat he hurled against Achilles.  
He called Talthibius and Eurybates briskly,  
his two heralds, ready, willing aides:  
“Go to Achilles’ lodge. Take Briseis at once,  
his beauty Briseis by the hand and bring her here.  
380 But if he will not surrender her, I’ll go myself,  
I’ll seize her myself, with an army at my back—  
and all the worse for him!”

He sent them off  
with the strict order ringing in their ears.  
Against their will the two men made their way  
385 along the breaking surf of the barren salt sea  
and reached the Myrmidon shelters and their ships.  
They found him beside his lodge and black hull,  
seated grimly—and Achilles took no joy  
when he saw the two approaching.  
390 They were afraid, they held the king in awe  
and stood there, silent. Not a word to Achilles,  
not a question. But he sensed it all in his heart,  
their fear, their charge,<sup>o</sup> and broke the silence for them:  
“Welcome, couriers!<sup>o</sup> Good heralds of Zeus and men,  
395 here, come closer. You have done nothing to me.  
You are not to blame. No one but Agamemnon—  
he is the one who sent you for Briseis.  
Go, Patroclus, Prince, bring out the girl  
and hand her to them so they can take her back.  
400 But let them both bear witness to my loss . . .  
in the face of blissful gods and mortal men,  
in the face of that unbending, ruthless king—  
if the day should come when the armies need me  
to save their ranks from ignominious,<sup>o</sup> stark defeat.  
405 The man is raving—with all the murderous fury in his heart.  
He lacks the sense to see a day behind, a day ahead,  
and safeguard the Achaeans battling by the ships.”

Patroclus obeyed his great friend’s command.  
He led Briseis in all her beauty from the lodge



*The Surrender of Briseis* (detail). c. A.D. 63–79, Ancient Rome. Wall painting from the House of the Tragic Poet, Pompeii. National Museum, Naples, Italy.

**Viewing the art:** How do you interpret Achilles' expression in this painting? How does the incompleteness of the picture affect your interpretation of the scene?

410 and handed her over to the men to take away.  
And the two walked back along the Argive ships  
while she trailed on behind, reluctant, every step.  
But Achilles wept, and slipping away from his companions,  
far apart, sat down on the beach of the heaving gray sea  
415 and scanned the endless ocean. Reaching out his arms,  
again and again he prayed to his dear mother: "Mother!  
You gave me life, short as that life will be,<sup>o</sup>  
so at least Olympian Zeus, thundering up on high,  
should give me honor—but now he gives me nothing.  
420 Atreus' son Agamemnon, for all his far-flung kingdoms—  
the man disgraces me, seizes and keeps my prize,  
he tears her away himself!"

So he wept and prayed  
and his noble mother heard him, seated near her father,  
the Old Man of the Sea<sup>o</sup> in the salt green depths.  
425 Suddenly up she rose from the churning surf  
like mist and settling down beside him as he wept,  
stroked Achilles gently, whispering his name, "My child—  
why in tears? What sorrow has touched your heart?  
Tell me, please. Don't harbor it deep inside you.  
We must share it all."

And now from his depths  
the proud runner groaned: "You know, you know,  
why labor through it all? You know it all so well . . .

417 short as that life will be: The Fates, goddesses who determine human affairs, prophesied that Achilles would die in the war if he joined the expedition against Troy.

424 the Old Man of the Sea: Nereus, a sea god.

We raided Thebe once, Eetion's<sup>o</sup> sacred citadel,  
 we ravaged<sup>o</sup> the place, hauled all the plunder here  
 435 and the armies passed it round, share and share alike,  
 and they chose the beauty Chryseis for Agamemnon.  
 But soon her father, the holy priest of Apollo  
 the distant deadly Archer, Chryses approached  
 440 the fast trim ships of the Argives armed in bronze  
 to win his daughter back, bringing a priceless ransom  
 and bearing high in hand, wound on a golden staff,  
 the wreaths of the god who strikes from worlds away.<sup>o</sup>  
 He begged the whole Achaean army but most of all  
 445 the two supreme commanders, Atreus' two sons,  
 and all ranks of Achaeans cried out their assent,  
 'Respect the priest, accept the shining ransom!'  
 But it brought no joy to the heart of Agamemnon,  
 our high and mighty king dismissed the priest  
 with a brutal order ringing in his ears.  
 450 And shattered with anger, the old man withdrew  
 but Apollo heard his prayer—he loved him, deeply—  
 he loosed his shaft<sup>o</sup> at the Argives, withering plague,  
 and now the troops began to drop and die in droves,  
 the arrows of god went showering left and right,  
 455 whipping through the Achaeans' vast encampment.  
 But the old seer who knew the cause full well  
 revealed the will of the archer god Apollo.  
 And I was the first, mother, I urged them all,  
 'Appease the god at once!' That's when the fury  
 460 gripped the son of Atreus. Agamemnon leapt to his feet  
 and hurled his threat—his threat's been driven home.  
 One girl, Chryseis, the fiery-eyed Achaeans  
 ferry out in a fast trim ship to Chryse Island,  
 laden with presents for the god. The other girl,  
 465 just now the heralds came and led her away from camp,  
 Briseus' daughter, the prize the armies gave me.  
 But you, mother, if you have any power at all,  
 protect your son! Go to Olympus, plead with Zeus,  
 if you ever warmed his heart with a word or any action . . .  
 470 Time and again I heard your claims in father's halls,  
 boasting how you and you alone of all the immortals  
 rescued Zeus, the lord of the dark storm cloud,  
 from ignominious, stark defeat . . .  
 That day the Olympians tried to chain him down,  
 475 Hera, Poseidon lord of the sea, and Pallas Athena—  
 you rushed to Zeus, dear Goddess, broke those chains,

433 Eetion: king of Thebes, slain by Achilles.

434 ravaged: devastated destructively and violently.

442 the god who strikes from worlds away: Apollo, god of archery, whose arrows are deadly.

452 loosed his shaft: shot his arrow.

480 quickly ordered the hundred-hander<sup>o</sup> to steep Olympus,  
that monster whom the immortals call Briareus  
but every mortal calls the Sea-god's son, Aegaeon,  
though he's stronger than his father. Down he sat,  
flanking Cronus' son,<sup>o</sup> gargantuan in the glory of it all,  
and the blessed gods were struck with terror then,  
they stopped shackling Zeus.

Remind him of that,  
now, go and sit beside him, grasp his knees . . .  
485 persuade him, somehow, to help the Trojan cause,  
to pin the Achaeans back against their ships,  
trap them round the bay and mow them down.  
So all can reap the benefits of their king—  
so even mighty Atrides can see how mad he was  
490 to disgrace Achilles, the best of the Achaeans!"

And Thetis answered, bursting into tears,  
"O my son, my sorrow, why did I ever bear you?  
All I bore was doom . . .<sup>o</sup>  
495 Would to god you could linger by your ships  
without a grief in the world, without a torment!  
Doomed to a short life, you have so little time.  
And not only short, now, but filled with heartbreak too,  
more than all other men alive—doomed twice over.  
Ah to a cruel fate I bore you in our halls!  
500 Still, I shall go to Olympus crowned with snow  
and repeat your prayer to Zeus who loves the lightning.  
Perhaps he will be persuaded.

But you, my child,  
stay here by the fast ships, rage on at the Achaeans,  
just keep clear of every foray<sup>o</sup> in the fighting.  
505 Only yesterday Zeus went off to the Ocean River<sup>o</sup>  
to feast with the Aethiopians,<sup>o</sup> loyal, lordly men,  
and all the gods went with him. But in twelve days  
the Father returns to Olympus. Then, for your sake,  
up I go to the bronze floor, the royal house of Zeus—  
I'll grasp his knees, I think I'll win him over."

510 With that vow  
his mother went away and left him there, alone,  
his heart inflamed for the sashed and lovely girl  
they'd wrenched away from him against his will. . . .

477 hundred-hander: Briareus, a monster with one hundred hands who warred with the gods until he was banished to the infernal regions.

481 Cronus' son: Zeus.

493 All I bore was doom: a reference to the fact that Achilles' life is to be short and unhappy.

504 foray: in this use, a raid or sudden attack.

505 the Ocean River: The Greeks believed that the oceans of the world were one body of water that surrounded the earth.

506 Aethiopians: to the ancient Greeks, residents of Aethiopia (Ethiopia), the lands in Africa south of Egypt and close to the Ocean River.

# Responding to Literature

## Personal Response

In your journal, describe your thoughts as you finished this episode.

## Analyzing Literature

### Recall and Interpret

1. Why has a plague struck the Greek camp? Why is the prophet Calchas reluctant to explain the cause of the plague?
2. On what condition will Agamemnon give back Chryseis? Why does Achilles take offense at this condition?
3. How does Agamemnon intend to punish Achilles for arguing with him? Why does Achilles accept this punishment?
4. Who tries to act as mediator in the dispute between Achilles and Agamemnon? Why does his attempt fail?
5. How does Achilles intend to get even with Agamemnon for seizing Briseis? Why does he turn to his mother for help?

### Evaluate and Connect

6. In your opinion, when did the quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles actually begin? Explain your response.
7. Based on what you have read in Book I, how would you characterize the Greek gods and their relationship with humans?
8. In the Reading Focus on page 210, you described how you would respond if a commander took back an honor you had received. How does Achilles behave in this episode? Do you approve? Explain.
9. **Internal conflict** is a struggle within a character (see page R2). Describe an internal conflict in Book I of the *Iliad*.

10. Groups sometimes fail to achieve their goals because members fight among themselves. What are some causes of friction within a group?

## Literary Criticism

Michael Grant sums up the character of Achilles as follows: "Savage, sulky, and vindictive, at times, but also the most handsome, eloquent, courteous, generous, wise, and cultured of all the heroes . . . He is by turns lustful for imperishable fame, valorous in battle, and furiously sensitive to insults." Which of these traits does Achilles display in the selection? Explain your answer in a brief paragraph.

## Literary ELEMENTS

### Epic Hero

An **epic hero** is a larger-than-life figure whose adventures are portrayed in an epic poem. A person of extraordinary ability and courage, the hero embodies the ideals of his or her culture. Most epics focus on the exploits of one central hero, although both Achilles and Hector can be considered the heroes of the *Iliad*. The poem also portrays other figures of heroic stature, including Odysseus, the resourceful hero of Homer's *Odyssey*.

1. In what ways is Achilles a larger-than-life figure?
  2. Most of Homer's characters have both strengths and weaknesses. Does Homer show Achilles as entirely admirable? Explain.
- See *Literary Terms Handbook*, p. R4.

## Extending Your Response

### Creative Writing

**From the Sidelines** Imagine that you are a witness to the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon. Write a brief account of the quarrel from that point of view. Suggest a peaceful solution.

### Literature Groups

**Taking Sides** Who is more at fault—Achilles or Agamemnon? Discuss this question in your group. Consider what the poem tells about Greek social values. Hold a vote in your group and share the results.

 **Save your work for your portfolio.**

*from the Iliad*  
BOOK XXII  
THE DEATH OF HECTOR



*The Fury of Achilles.* Charles-Antoine Coypel (France, 1694–1752). Hermitage, St. Petersburg, Russia.  
Do you think this is an apt title for this painting? Why?

---

Achilles and the Myrmidons, his followers, withdraw from the war after Agamemnon seizes Briseis. In their absence, the battle turns in favor of Troy. Led by Hector, greatest of the Trojan warriors, the Trojan army drives the Greeks back to the edge of the sea.

Patroclus, Achilles' best friend, cannot sit by and watch the slaughter of their comrades. With Achilles' blessing, Patroclus leads the Myrmidons into combat, turning the battle in favor of the Greeks. However, near the walls of Troy, Patroclus is slain by Hector.

The death of his friend sends Achilles into a murderous rage. He returns to the battlefield in search of Hector. So frightening is he in his rage that the Trojan army flees into the city. Hector, alone, stands before the gates awaiting his rival.

So all through Troy the men who had fled like panicked fawns  
 were wiping off their sweat, drinking away their thirst,  
 leaning along the city's massive ramparts now  
 while Achaean troops, sloping shields to shoulders,  
 5 closed against the walls. But there stood Hector,  
 shackled fast by his deadly fate,<sup>6</sup> holding his ground,  
 exposed in front of Troy and the Scaean Gates.<sup>7</sup>  
 And now Apollo turned to taunt Achilles:  
 "Why are you chasing *me*?<sup>9</sup> Why waste your speed?—  
 10 son of Peleus, you a mortal and I a deathless god.  
 You still don't know that I am immortal, do you?—  
 straining to catch me in your fury! Have you forgotten?  
 There's a war to fight with the Trojans you stampeded,  
 look, they're packed inside their city walls, but you,  
 15 you've slipped away out here. You can't kill *me*—  
 I can never die—it's not my fate!"

Enraged at that,  
 Achilles shouted in mid-stride, "You've blocked my way,  
 you distant, deadly Archer, deadliest god of all—  
 you made me swerve away from the rampart there.  
 20 Else what a mighty Trojan army had gnawed the dust  
 before they could ever straggle through their gates!  
 Now you've robbed me of great glory, saved their lives  
 with all your deathless ease. Nothing for you to fear,  
 no punishment to come. Oh I'd pay you back  
 25 if I only had the power at my command!"

No more words—he dashed toward the city,  
 heart racing for some great exploit, rushing on  
 like a champion stallion drawing a chariot full tilt,  
 sweeping across the plain in easy, tearing strides—  
 30 so Achilles hurtled on, driving legs and knees.

And old King Priam was first to see him coming,  
 surging over the plain, blazing like the star  
 that rears at harvest,<sup>32</sup> flaming up in its brilliance,—  
 far outshining the countless stars in the night sky,  
 35 that star they call Orion's<sup>33</sup> Dog—brightest of all  
 but a fatal sign emblazoned on the heavens,  
 it brings such killing fever down on wretched men.  
 So the bronze flared on his chest as on he raced—  
 and the old man moaned, flinging both hands high,  
 40 beating his head and groaning deep he called,  
 begging his dear son who stood before the gates,  
 unshakable, furious to fight Achilles to the death.

6 by his deadly fate: Hector had told his wife, Andromache, that he knew in his heart that he would die in the war and Troy would fall.

7 Scaean (skē' ən) Gates: one of the main gates in the wall around Troy.

9 "Why are you chasing *me*?": Apollo had disguised himself as a Trojan leader, tempting Achilles into pursuing him. This gave the Trojan army time to flee.

32–33 the star that rears at harvest: Sirius, the dog star, which first appears in the fall and was thought to bring disease.

35 Orion: a mighty hunter who was placed among the stars as a constellation by Artemis, goddess of the hunt.

45 The old man cried, pitifully, hands reaching out to him,  
"Oh Hector! Don't just stand there, don't, dear child,  
waiting that man's attack—alone, cut off from friends!  
You'll meet your doom at once, beaten down by Achilles,  
so much stronger than you—that hard, headlong man.  
Oh if only the gods loved him as much as I do . . . °  
dogs and vultures would eat his fallen corpse at once!—  
50 with what a load of misery lifted from my spirit.  
That man who robbed me of many sons, brave boys,  
cutting them down or selling them off as slaves,  
shipped to islands half the world away . . .  
Even now there are two, Lycaon and Polydorus°—  
55 I cannot find them among the soldiers crowding Troy,  
those sons Laothoë° bore me, Laothoë queen of women.  
But if they are still alive in the enemy's camp,  
then we'll ransom them back with bronze and gold.  
We have hoards inside the walls, the rich dowry  
60 old and famous Altes presented with his daughter.  
But if they're dead already, gone to the House of Death,  
what grief to their mother's heart and mine—we gave them life.  
For the rest of Troy, though, just a moment's grief  
unless you too are battered down by Achilles.  
55 Back, come back! Inside the walls, my boy!  
Rescue the men of Troy and the Trojan women—  
don't hand the great glory to Peleus' son,  
bereft° of your own sweet life yourself.

Pity me too!—

70 still in my senses, true, but a harrowed, broken man  
marked out by doom—past the threshold of old age . . .  
and Father Zeus will waste me with a hideous fate,  
and after I've lived to look on so much horror!  
My sons laid low,° my daughters dragged away  
and the treasure-chambers looted, helpless babies  
75 hurled to the earth in the red barbarity of war . . .  
my sons' wives hauled off by the Argives' bloody hands!  
And I, I last of all—the dogs before my doors  
will eat me raw, once some enemy brings me down  
with his sharp bronze sword or spits° me with a spear,  
80 wrenching the life out of my body, yes, the very dogs  
I bred in my own halls to share my table, guard my gates—  
mad, rabid at heart° they'll lap their master's blood  
and loll before my doors.

Ah for a young man  
all looks fine and noble if he goes down in war,  
85 hacked to pieces under a slashing bronze blade—

48 if only the gods loved him as much as I do: an example of irony—the real meaning of the statement is the opposite of the surface meaning. Priam then explains his hatred for Achilles.

54 Lycaon and Polydorus: sons of Priam slain by Achilles in battle.

56 Laothoë: one of Priam's wives; daughter of Altes, a wealthy king.

68 bereft: deprived or robbed.

73 laid low: slain.

79 spits: here, pierces with something pointed; impales.

82 rabid at heart: extremely violent; exhibiting the behavior of an animal suffering from rabies.



he lies there dead . . . but whatever death lays bare,  
all wounds are marks of glory. When an old man's killed  
and the dogs go at the gray head and the gray beard  
and mutilate the genitals—that is the cruelest sight  
90 in all our wretched lives!”

So the old man groaned  
and seizing his gray hair tore it out by the roots  
but he could not shake the fixed resolve of Hector.  
And his mother wailed now, standing beside Priam,  
weeping freely, loosing her robes with one hand  
95 and holding out her bare breast with the other,  
her words pouring forth in a flight of grief and tears:  
“Hector, my child! Look—have some respect for *this!*  
Pity your mother too, if I ever gave you the breast  
to soothe your troubles, remember it now, dear boy—  
100 beat back that savage man from safe inside the walls!  
Don't go forth, a champion pitted against him—  
merciless, brutal man. If he kills you now,  
how can I ever mourn you on your deathbed?—  
dear branch in bloom, dear child I brought to birth!—  
105 Neither I nor your wife, that warm, generous woman . . .  
Now far beyond our reach, now by the Argive ships  
the rushing dogs will tear you, bolt your flesh!”

So they wept, the two of them crying out  
to their dear son, both pleading time and again  
110 but they could not shake the fixed resolve of Hector.  
No, he waited Achilles, coming on, gigantic in power.  
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 round his lair . . .  
115 so Hector, nursing his quenchless fury, gave no ground,  
leaning his burnished shield against a jutting wall,  
but harried still, he probed his own brave heart:  
“No way out. If I slip inside the gates and walls,  
Polydamas<sup>o</sup> will be first to heap disgrace on me—  
120 he was the one who urged me to lead our Trojans  
back to Ilium<sup>o</sup> just last night, the disastrous night  
Achilles rose in arms like a god. But did I give way?  
Not at all. And how much better it would have been!  
Now my army's ruined, thanks to my own reckless pride,  
125 I would die of shame to face the men of Troy  
and the Trojan women trailing their long robes . . .  
Someone less of a man than I will say, ‘Our Hector—



119 Polydamas: a cautious Trojan leader; a rival who often opposes Hector's military strategy.

121 Ilium: another name for the city of Troy.



130 staking all on his own strength, he destroyed his army!  
So they will mutter. So now, better by far for me  
to stand up to Achilles, kill him, come home alive  
or die at his hands in glory out before the walls.  
But wait—what if I put down my studded shield  
and heavy helmet, prop my spear on the rampart  
and go forth, just as I am, to meet Achilles,  
135 noble Prince Achilles . . .  
why, I could promise to give back Helen, yes,  
and all her treasures with her, all those riches  
Paris once hauled home to Troy in the hollow ships—  
and they were the cause of all our endless fighting—  
140 Yes, yes, return it all to the sons of Atreus now  
to haul away, and then, at the same time, divide  
the rest with all the Argives, all the city holds,  
and then I'd take an oath for the Trojan royal council  
that we will hide nothing! Share and share alike the hoards  
145 our handsome citadel stores within its depths and—  
Why debate, my friend? Why thrash things out?  
I must not go and implore him. He'll show no mercy,  
no respect for me, my rights—he'll cut me down  
straight off—stripped of defenses like a woman  
50 once I have loosed the armor off my body.  
No way to parley<sup>o</sup> with that man—not now—  
not from behind some oak or rock to whisper,  
like a boy and a young girl, lovers' secrets  
a boy and girl might whisper to each other . . .  
155 Better to clash in battle, now, at once—  
see which fighter Zeus awards the glory!"

So he wavered,

waiting there, but Achilles was closing on him now  
like the god of war, the fighter's helmet flashing,  
over his right shoulder shaking the Pelian ash spear,<sup>o</sup>  
160 that terror, and the bronze around his body<sup>o</sup> flared  
like a raging fire or the rising, blazing sun.  
Hector looked up, saw him, started to tremble,  
nerve gone, he could hold his ground no longer,  
he left the gates behind and away he fled in fear—  
165 and Achilles went for him, fast, sure of his speed  
as the wild mountain hawk, the quickest thing on wings,  
launching smoothly, swooping down on a cringing dove  
and the dove flits out from under, the hawk screaming  
over the quarry, plunging over and over, his fury  
170 driving him down to beak and tear his kill—  
so Achilles flew at him, breakneck on in fury



*Helen of Troy*. Dante Gabriel Rossetti  
(Great Britain, 1828–1882).

**Viewing the painting:** What impression of Helen do you get from this painting?

151 parley: to discuss terms.

159 Pelian ash spear: Achilles' spear was carved from an ash tree on Mount Pelion. Chiron, wisest of the Centaurs, gave it to him and taught him to use it.  
160 the bronze around his body: his armor.



176 careered: went at top speed, especially in a headlong manner.

177 Scamander (skə man' dər): chief river near the city of Troy.

193 breaker of horses: Hector was famed for his ability to tame horses.



203–204 Hector who burned . . . heights: Hector sacrificed oxen to Zeus on Mount Ida, overlooking Troy.

214 his doom sealed long ago: his fate: all humans are mortal and doomed to die from birth.



with Hector fleeing along the walls of Troy,  
 fast as his legs would go. On and on they raced,  
 passing the lookout point, passing the wild fig tree  
 175 tossed by the wind, always out from under the ramparts  
 down the wagon trail they careered<sup>o</sup> until they reached  
 the clear running springs where whirling Scamander<sup>o</sup>  
 rises up from its double wellsprings bubbling strong—  
 and one runs hot and the steam goes up around it,  
 180 drifting thick as if fire burned at its core  
 but the other even in summer gushes cold  
 as hail or freezing snow or water chilled to ice . . .  
 And here, close to the springs, lie washing-pools  
 scooped out in the hollow rocks and broad and smooth  
 185 where the wives of Troy and all their lovely daughters  
 would wash their glistening robes in the old days,  
 the days of peace before the sons of Achaea came . . .  
 Past these they raced, one escaping, one in pursuit  
 and the one who fled was great but the one pursuing  
 190 greater, even greater—their pace mounting in speed  
 since both men strove, not for a sacrificial beast  
 or oxhide trophy, prizes runners fight for, no,  
 they raced for the life of Hector breaker of horses.<sup>o</sup>  
 Like powerful stallions sweeping round the post for trophies,  
 195 galloping full stretch with some fine prize at stake,  
 a tripod, say, or woman offered up at funeral games  
 for some brave hero fallen—so the two of them  
 whirled three times around the city of Priam,  
 sprinting at top speed while all the gods gazed down,  
 200 and the father of men and gods broke forth among them now:  
 “Unbearable—a man I love, hunted round his own city walls  
 and right before my eyes. My heart grieves for Hector.  
 Hector who burned so many oxen in my honor, rich cuts,  
 now on the rugged crests of Ida, now on Ilium’s heights.<sup>o</sup>  
 205 But now, look, brilliant Achilles courses him round  
 the city of Priam in all his savage, lethal speed.  
 Come, you immortals, think this through. Decide.  
 Either we pluck the man from death and save his life  
 or strike him down at last, here at Achilles’ hands—  
 210 for all his fighting heart.”

But immortal Athena,  
 her gray eyes wide, protested strongly: “Father!  
 Lord of the lightning, king of the black cloud,  
 what are you saying? A man, a mere mortal,  
 his doom sealed long ago?<sup>o</sup> You’d set him free

215 from all the pains of death?

Do as you please—  
but none of the deathless gods will ever praise you.”

And Zeus who marshals the thunderheads replied,  
“Courage, Athena, third-born of the gods, dear child.  
Nothing I said was meant in earnest, trust me,  
220 I mean you all the good will in the world. Go.  
Do as your own impulse bids you. Hold back no more.”

So he launched Athena already poised for action—  
down the goddess swept from Olympus’ craggy peaks.

And swift Achilles kept on coursing Hector, nonstop  
225 as a hound in the mountains starts a fawn from its lair,  
hunting him down the gorges, down the narrow glens  
and the fawn goes to ground,<sup>o</sup> hiding deep in brush  
but the hound comes racing fast, nosing him out  
until he lands his kill. So Hector could never throw  
230 Achilles off his trail, the swift racer Achilles—  
time and again he’d make a dash for the Dardan Gates,  
trying to rush beneath the rock-built ramparts, hoping  
men on the heights might save him, somehow, raining spears  
but time and again Achilles would intercept him quickly,  
235 heading him off, forcing him out across the plain  
and always sprinting along the city side himself—  
endless as in a dream . . .  
when a man can’t catch another fleeing on ahead  
and he can never escape nor his rival overtake him—  
240 so the one could never run the other down in his speed  
nor the other spring away. And how could Hector have fled  
the fates of death so long? How unless one last time,  
one final time Apollo had swept in close beside him,  
driving strength in his legs and knees to race the wind?  
245 And brilliant Achilles shook his head at the armies,  
never letting them hurl their sharp spears at Hector—  
someone might snatch the glory, Achilles come in second.  
But once they reached the springs for the fourth time,  
then Father Zeus held out his sacred golden scales:  
250 in them he placed two fates of death that lays men low—  
one for Achilles, one for Hector breaker of horses—  
and gripping the beam mid-haft<sup>o</sup> the Father raised it high  
and down went Hector’s day of doom, dragging him down  
to the strong House of Death—and god Apollo left him.<sup>o</sup>  
255 Athena rushed to Achilles, her bright eyes gleaming,

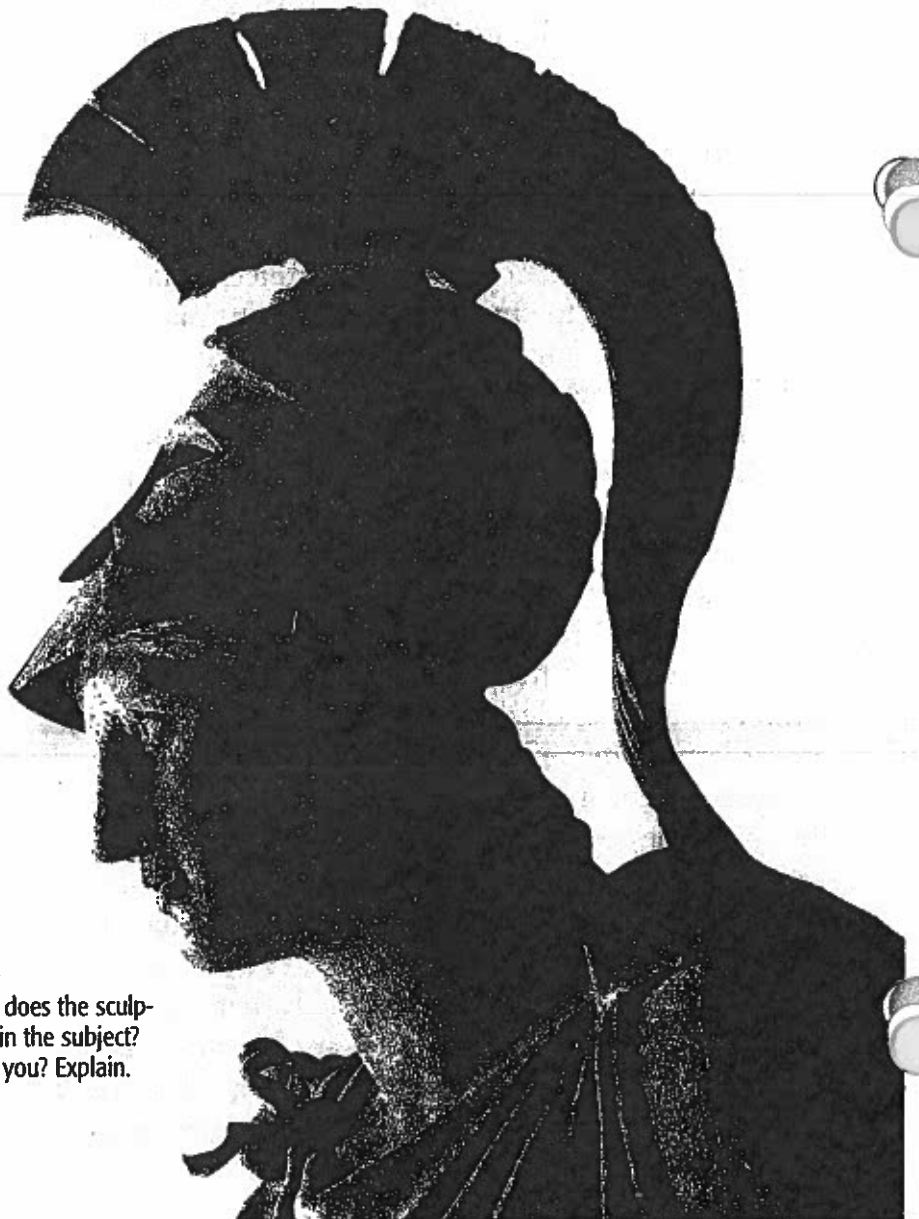
227 goes to ground: tries to avoid notice by remaining motionless.

249–254 Zeus held out . . . Apollo left him: Fate determined that Hector would lose this battle. Apollo, realizing that further help was futile, returned to Olympus. 252 gripping the beam mid-haft: holding the scales impartially so as not to favor one side or the other.

standing shoulder-to-shoulder, winging orders now:  
“At last our hopes run high, my brilliant Achilles—  
Father Zeus must love you—

260 we’ll sweep great glory back to Achaea’s fleet,  
we’ll kill this Hector, mad as he is for battle!  
No way for him to escape us now, no longer—  
not even if Phoebus the distant deadly Archer  
goes through torments, pleading for Hector’s life,  
groveling over and over before our storming Father Zeus.  
265 But you, you hold your ground and catch your breath  
while I run Hector down and persuade the man  
to fight you face-to-face.”

So Athena commanded  
and he obeyed, rejoicing at heart—Achilles stopped,  
leaning against his ashen spearshaft barbed in bronze.  
270 And Athena left him there, caught up with Hector at once,



Statue of Athena, the goddess of war.

**Viewing the sculpture:** How does the sculptor create a feeling of intensity in the subject? Does Athena seem powerful to you? Explain.

and taking the build and vibrant voice of Deiphobus  
stood shoulder-to-shoulder with him, winging orders:  
“Dear brother, how brutally swift Achilles hunts you—  
coursing you round the city of Priam in all his lethal speed!  
275 Come, let us stand our ground together—beat him back.”

“Deiphobus!”—Hector, his helmet flashing, called out  
to her—

“dearest of all my brothers, all these warring years,  
of all the sons that Priam and Hecuba produced!  
Now I’m determined to praise you all the more,  
280 you who dared—seeing me in these straits—  
to venture out from the walls, all for my sake,  
while the others stay inside and cling to safety.”

The goddess answered quickly, her eyes blazing,  
“True, dear brother—how your father and mother both  
285 implored me, time and again, clutching my knees,  
and the comrades round me begging me to stay!  
Such was the fear that broke them, man for man,  
but the heart within me broke with grief for you.  
Now headlong on and fight! No letup, no lance spared!  
0 So now, now we’ll see if Achilles kills us both  
and hauls our bloody armor back to the beaked ships  
or he goes down in pain beneath your spear.”

Athena luring him on with all her immortal cunning—  
and now, at last, as the two came closing for the kill  
295 it was tall Hector, helmet flashing, who led off:  
“No more running from you in fear, Achilles!  
Not as before. Three times I fled around  
the great city of Priam—I lacked courage then  
to stand your onslaught. Now my spirit stirs me  
300 to meet you face-to-face. Now kill or be killed!  
Come, we’ll swear to the gods, the highest witnesses—  
the gods will oversee our binding pacts. I swear  
I will never mutilate you—merciless as you are—  
if Zeus allows me to last it out and tear your life away.  
305 But once I’ve stripped your glorious armor, Achilles,  
I will give your body back to your loyal comrades.  
Swear you’ll do the same.”

A swift dark glance  
and the headstrong runner answered, “Hector, stop!  
You unforgivable, you . . . don’t talk to me of pacts.  
310 There are no binding oaths between men and lions—



*Hector Killed by Achilles*, (detail)  
c. 1635. Peter P aul Rubens (Flanders).  
Oil on canvas (design for tapestry).  
Mus e des Beaux-Arts, Pau, France.

**Viewing the painting:** Who is hovering overhead in this painting? What role does she seem to be playing? Explain.



I thought he was at my side, the hero Deiphobus—  
 he's safe inside the walls, Athena's tricked me blind.  
 And now death, grim death is looming up beside me,  
 355 no longer far away. No way to escape it now. This,  
 this was their pleasure after all, sealed long ago—  
 Zeus and the son of Zeus, the distant deadly Archer—  
 though often before now they rushed to my defense.  
 So now I meet my doom. Well let me die—  
 360 but not without struggle, not without glory, no,  
 in some great clash of arms that even men to come  
 will hear of down the years!"

And on that resolve  
 he drew the whetted<sup>o</sup> sword that hung at his side,  
 tempered,<sup>o</sup> massive, and gathering all his force  
 365 he swooped like a soaring eagle  
 launching down from the dark clouds to earth  
 to snatch some helpless lamb or trembling hare.  
 So Hector swooped now, swinging his whetted sword  
 and Achilles charged too, bursting with rage, barbaric,<sup>o</sup>  
 370 guarding his chest with the well-wrought<sup>o</sup> blazoned<sup>o</sup> shield,  
 head tossing his gleaming helmet, four horns strong  
 and the golden plumes shook that the god of fire<sup>o</sup>  
 drove in bristling thick along its ridge.  
 Bright as that star amid the stars in the night sky,  
 375 star of the evening, brightest star that rides the heavens,  
 so fire flared from the sharp point of the spear Achilles  
 brandished high in his right hand, bent on Hector's death,  
 scanning his splendid body—where to pierce it best?  
 The rest of his flesh seemed all encased in armor,  
 380 burnished, brazen—Achilles' armor that Hector stripped  
 from strong Patroclus when he killed him—true,  
 but one spot lay exposed,  
 where collarbones lift the neckbone off the shoulders,<sup>o</sup>  
 the open throat, where the end of life comes quickest—there  
 385 as Hector charged in fury brilliant Achilles drove his spear  
 and the point went stabbing clean through the tender neck  
 but the heavy bronze weapon failed to slash the windpipe—  
 Hector could still gasp out some words, some last reply . . .  
 he crashed in the dust—

godlike Achilles gloried over him:  
 390 "Hector—surely you thought when you stripped Patroclus' armor  
 that you, you would be safe! Never a fear of me—  
 far from the fighting as I was—you fool!  
 Left behind there, down by the beaked ships  
 his great avenger waited, a greater man by far—

363 whetted: sharpened.

364 tempered: hardened by reheating  
 and cooling in oil, strengthened.

369 barbaric: This word choice is ironic  
 because barbaric originally meant anyone  
 not belonging to one's cultural group,  
 which to a Greek would be a non-Greek.

370 well-wrought: fashioned with great  
 effort and artistry. blazoned: in this use,  
 adorned with ornate symbolic inscriptions  
 and artwork.

372 god of fire: Hephaestus (hi fes' tās),  
 son of Zeus, god of fire and metalworking  
 (blacksmithing). At Thetis's request, he  
 had made armor for Achilles.

378–383 scanning . . . off the  
 shoulders: Since the armor had once  
 been his own, Achilles knew where to  
 look for its one vulnerable spot.





*Achilles Dragging the Body of Hector* (detail).  
c. 520–510 B.C., attributed to The Anitope Group,  
Ancient Greece. Black-figured vase, height: 56 cm,  
diameter: 33 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

**Viewing the painting:** Several scenes from the *Iliad* are combined on this vase painting. How does the artist's decision to compress the action into one frame affect your reaction to the scene? What is your response to Achilles' treatment of Hector's body?

435 And the other sons of Achaea, running up around him,  
crowded closer, all of them gazing wonder-struck  
at the build and marvelous, lithe beauty of Hector.  
And not a man came forward who did not stab his body,  
glancing toward a comrade, laughing: "Ah, look here—  
440 how much softer he is to handle now, this Hector,  
than when he gutted our ships with roaring fire!"

Standing over him, so they'd gloat and stab his body.  
But once he had stripped the corpse the proud runner Achilles  
took his stand in the midst of all the Argive troops  
445 and urged them on with a flight of winging orders:  
"Friends—lords of the Argives, O my captains!  
Now that the gods have let me kill this man  
who caused us agonies, loss on crushing loss—  
more than the rest of all their men combined—  
450 come, let us ring their walls in armor, test them,  
see what recourse the Trojans still may have in mind.  
Will they abandon the city heights with this man fallen?  
Or brace for a last, dying stand though Hector's gone?  
But wait—what am I saying? Why this deep debate?  
455 Down by the ships a body lies unwept, unburied—  
Patroclus . . . I will never forget him,  
not as long as I'm still among the living  
and my springing knees will lift and drive me on.  
Though the dead forget<sup>o</sup> their dead in the House of Death,  
0 I will remember, even there, my dear companion.

Now,  
come, you sons of Achaea, raise a song of triumph!

459 the dead forget: a mental state oblivious to emotions, such as love or sorrow, was a characteristic of the dead in Greek mythology.

Down to the ships we march and bear this corpse on high—  
we have won ourselves great glory. We have brought  
magnificent Hector down, that man the Trojans  
465 glorified in their city like a god!”

So he triumphed  
and now he was bent on outrage, on shaming noble Hector.  
Piercing the tendons,<sup>o</sup> ankle to heel behind both feet,  
he knotted straps of rawhide through them both,  
lashed them to his chariot, left the head to drag  
470 and mounting the car, hoisting the famous arms aboard,  
he whipped his team to a run and breakneck on they flew,  
holding nothing back. And a thick cloud of dust rose up  
from the man they dragged, his dark hair swirling round  
that head so handsome once, all tumbled low in the dust—  
475 since Zeus had given him over to his enemies now  
to be defiled in the land of his own fathers.

467 Piercing the tendons; ironic, because a wound in the tendon of the heel, his only vulnerable spot, will kill Achilles.

So his whole head was dragged down in the dust.  
And now his mother began to tear her hair . . .  
she flung her shining veil to the ground and raised  
480 a high, shattering scream, looking down at her son.  
Pitifully his loving father groaned and round the king  
his people cried with grief and wailing seized the city—  
for all the world as if all Troy were torched and smoldering  
down from the looming brows of the citadel to her roots.  
485 Priam's people could hardly hold the old man back,  
frantic, mad to go rushing out the Dardan Gates.  
He begged them all, groveling in the filth,  
crying out to them, calling each man by name,  
“Let go, my friends! Much as you care for me,  
490 let me hurry out of the city, make my way,  
all on my own, to Achaea's waiting ships!  
I must implore that terrible, violent man . . .  
Perhaps—who knows?—he may respect my age,  
may pity an old man. He has a father too,  
495 as old as I am—Peleus sired him once,  
Peleus reared him to be the scourge of Troy  
but most of all to me—he made my life a hell.  
So many sons he slaughtered, just coming into bloom . . .  
but grieving for all the rest, one breaks my heart the most  
500 and stabbing grief for him will take me down to Death—  
my Hector—would to god he had perished in my arms!  
Then his mother who bore him—oh so doomed,  
she and I could glut ourselves with grief.”

505 So the voice of the king rang out in tears,  
the citizens wailed in answer, and noble Hecuba  
led the wives of Troy in a throbbing chant of sorrow:  
“O my child—my desolation! How can I go on living?  
What agonies must I suffer now, now you are dead and gone?  
You were my pride throughout the city night and day—  
510 a blessing to us all, the men and women of Troy:  
throughout the city they saluted you like a god.  
You, you were their greatest glory while you lived—  
now death and fate have seized you, dragged you down!”

515 Her voice rang out in tears, but the wife of Hector  
had not heard a thing. No messenger brought the truth  
of how her husband made his stand outside the gates.  
She was weaving at her loom, deep in the high halls,  
working flowered braiding into a dark red folding robe.  
And she called her well-kempt women through the house  
520 to set a large three-legged cauldron over the fire  
so Hector could have his steaming hot bath  
when he came home from battle—poor woman,  
she never dreamed how far he was from bathing,  
struck down at Achilles' hands by blazing-eyed Athena.  
525 But she heard the groans and wails of grief from the rampart now  
and her body shook, her shuttle<sup>o</sup> dropped to the ground,  
she called out to her lovely waiting women, “Quickly—  
two of you follow me—I must see what's happened.  
That cry—that was Hector's honored mother I heard!  
530 My heart's pounding, leaping up in my throat,  
the knees beneath me paralyzed—Oh I know it . . .  
something terrible's coming down on Priam's children.  
Pray god the news will never reach my ears!  
Yes but I dread it so—what if great Achilles  
535 has cut my Hector off from the city, daring Hector,  
and driven him out across the plain, and all alone?—  
He may have put an end to that fatal headstrong pride  
that always seized my Hector—never hanging back  
with the main force of men, always charging ahead,  
540 giving ground to no man in his fury!”

So she cried,  
dashing out of the royal halls like a madwoman,  
her heart racing hard, her women close behind her.  
But once she reached the tower where soldiers massed  
she stopped on the rampart, looked down and saw it all—  
545 saw him dragged before the city, stallions galloping,  
dragging Hector back to Achaea's beaked warships—

526 shuttle: a device used in weaving  
for passing thread through the loom.

ruthless work. The world went black as night  
before her eyes, she fainted, falling backward,  
gasping away her life breath . . .

- 550 She flung to the winds her glittering headdress,  
the cap and the coronet,<sup>o</sup> braided band and veil,  
all the regalia<sup>o</sup> golden Aphrodite gave her once,  
the day that Hector, helmet aflash in sunlight,  
led her home to Troy from her father's house  
555 with countless wedding gifts to win her heart.  
But crowding round her now her husband's sisters  
and brothers' wives supported her in their midst,  
and she, terrified, stunned to the point of death,  
struggling for breath now and coming back to life,  
560 burst out in grief among the Trojan women: "O Hector—  
I am destroyed! Both born to the same fate after all!  
You, you at Troy in the halls of King Priam—  
I at Thebes, under the timberline of Placos,<sup>o</sup>  
Eetion's<sup>o</sup> house . . . He raised me as a child,  
565 that man of doom, his daughter just as doomed—  
would to god he'd never fathered me!

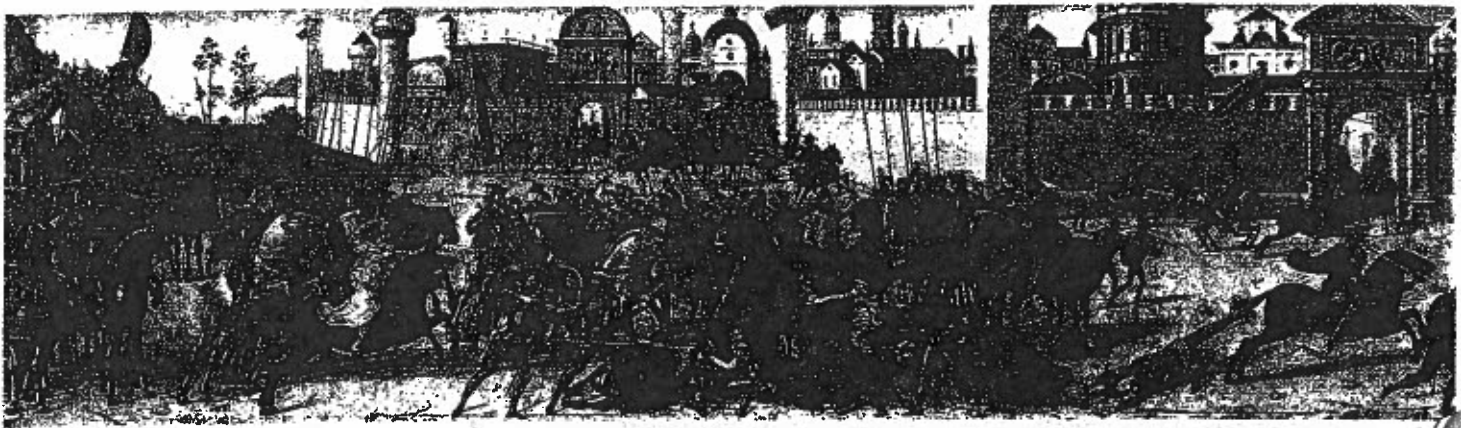
551 coronet: a small crown.

552 regalia (ri gā' lē ə): emblems or  
symbols indicating royalty.

563 Placos: mountain which dominates  
the landscape near Thebes.

564 Eetion: Andromache's father, king  
of Thebes, killed by Achilles during the  
sacking of that city.

- Now you go down
- to the House of Death, the dark depths of the earth,  
and leave me here to waste away in grief, a widow  
lost in the royal halls—and the boy only a baby,  
570 the son we bore together, you and I so doomed.  
Hector, what help are you to him, now you are dead?—  
what help is he to you? Think, even if he escapes  
the wrenching horrors of war against the Argives,  
pain and labor will plague him all his days to come.  
575 Strangers will mark his lands off, stealing his estates.



*The Siege of Troy I: The Death of Hector*, c. 1490 (detail). Biagio di Antonio (Italy). Oil on panel, 47 x 161 cm.

**Viewing the painting:** Which incident related to Hector's death is shown in this painting? How is this incident portrayed differently in the *Iliad*?

The day that orphans a youngster cuts him off from friends.  
And he hangs his head low, humiliated in every way . . .  
his cheeks stained with tears, and pressed by hunger  
the boy goes up to his father's old companions,  
580 tugging at one man's cloak, another's tunic,  
and some will pity him, true,  
and one will give him a little cup to drink,  
enough to wet his lips, not quench his thirst.  
But then some bully with both his parents living  
585 beats him from the banquet, fists and abuses flying:  
'You, get out—you've got no father feasting with us here!'  
And the boy, sobbing, trails home to his widowed mother . . .  
Astyanax!

And years ago, propped on his father's knee,  
he would only eat the marrow, the richest cuts of lamb,  
590 and when sleep came on him and he had quit his play,  
cradled warm in his nurse's arms he'd drowse off,  
snug in a soft bed, his heart brimmed with joy.  
Now what suffering, now he's lost his father—

Astyanax!

The Lord of the City, so the Trojans called him,  
95 because it was you, Hector, you and you alone  
who shielded the gates and the long walls of Troy.  
But now by the beaked ships, far from your parents,  
glistening worms will wriggle through your flesh,  
once the dogs have had their fill of your naked corpse—  
600 though we have such stores of clothing laid up in the halls,  
fine things, a joy to the eye, the work of women's hands.  
Now, by god, I'll burn them all, blazing to the skies!  
No use to you now, they'll never shroud your body—  
but they will be your glory  
605 burned by the Trojan men and women in your honor!"

Her voice rang out in tears and the women wailed in answer.



*Andromache*, 1980. Carol Miller (United States). Bronze with dark green patina, height: 49.5 cm. Private collection.

**Viewing the sculpture:** How does the feeling conveyed by the figure's posture compare with your response to Andromache's emotions?

# Responding to Literature

## Personal Response

How do you feel about what happens to Hector? Share your reaction with your classmates.

## Analyzing Literature

### Recall

1. Why do Hector's mother and father plead with him to come inside the gates of Troy?
2. What happens when Achilles approaches Hector at the gates?
3. How does Athena help Achilles in his attack on Hector?
4. What request does Hector make after he is defeated by Achilles?
5. How does Hector's wife, Andromache, learn about his death?

### Interpret

6. Why does Hector refuse to come inside the gates for protection?
7. In your opinion, does Hector behave like a coward when Achilles approaches him for battle? Why or why not?
8. What adjective would you use to describe Hector's response when he realizes that the gods are acting against him?
9. What motivates Achilles to deny Hector's final request?
10. A **symbol** is an object or action that stands for something else in addition to itself (see page R12). What object or action is a symbol for Andromache's mourning of Hector?

### Evaluate and Connect

11. Why might Homer have chosen to include a long chase scene in this episode?
12. Which character do you admire more, Achilles or Hector? Give details from the text to explain your answer.
13. What does this episode suggest to you about Greek beliefs about death?
14. The Greeks and Trojans closely follow the exploits of their heroes. What figures in today's society attract similar attention from ordinary citizens?
15. Think of a time when you mourned the death of a public figure. What effect did his or her death have on you? How did you express your grief?

## Literary ELEMENTS

### Epic Simile

A **simile** is a comparison of two things that are basically unlike but share some quality. The comparison is indicated by the word *like* or *as*. An **epic simile** is a longer and more elaborate simile. Homer uses the following epic simile in lines 165–170 of Book XXII to describe how Achilles chases after Hector:

and Achilles went for him, fast, sure of his speed  
as the wild mountain hawk, the quickest thing on wings,  
launching smoothly, swooping down on a cringing dove  
and the dove flits out from under, the hawk screaming  
over the quarry, plunging over and over, his fury  
driving him down to beak and tear his kill—

Many writers who created epics after Homer followed his practice of using epic similes.

1. Find another example of an epic simile in Book XXII. Identify the elements that the simile compares.
  2. How does your experience of reading an epic simile differ from reading a simile in a narrative work?
- See **Literary Terms Handbook**, pp. R4, R11.

## Literature and Writing

### Writing About Literature

**Analyze a Character** Write a character analysis of Achilles, Agamemnon, or Hector. Describe what is revealed about the character through his own words and actions and the words of others. Consider the narrator's direct statements about the character, including the epithets that accompany the character's name.

### Personal Writing

**Make Yourself Epic** Epic similes describe the actions of larger-than-life figures. Write a paragraph with an epic simile to describe one of your own actions. You might portray yourself behaving heroically, or describe an activity such as washing dishes. Before beginning, consider the quality that you would like the simile to express.

## Extending Your Response

### Literature Groups

**Analyzing Heroism** Achilles and Hector both understand that they cannot escape their individual fates no matter how hard they fight. If the outcome of their final battle is controlled by the gods, are these characters truly heroic? Discuss this issue in your group. Use details from the poem to support your views. When you are finished, share your conclusions with the class.

### Learning for Life

**Creating Storyboards** Suppose you have been asked to create a film about the battle between Achilles and Hector. In a small group, draw a sequence of storyboards that shows important moments in Book XXII of the *Iliad*. Under each picture, write a quotation from the poem, either dialogue or a description.

### Performing

**Reciting Poetry** Choose a passage of fifty to one hundred lines from the *Iliad* for your group to read aloud. Go over the passage with the group to clarify any unfamiliar words or phrases. Then assign at least ten lines to each person. Practice reading aloud individually and together before presenting your reading to the class. Vary your pitch, volume, and speed to reflect the mood of the passage.

### Reading Further

If you enjoyed reading these passages from the *Iliad*, the following account might also be of interest to you: "The Hellenistic Age," Chapter 8, from *The Ancient Greeks*, by M. I. Finley.

 Save your work for your portfolio.

# Skill Minilesson

## VOCABULARY • Roots

A **root** is the part of a word that contains its basic meaning. We often form a number of different words from roots by adding prefixes, suffixes, and even other roots. Many English roots come from classical Greek and Latin. For example, the words *fraternal* and *fraternity* both come from the Latin root *frater* meaning "brother." Each word also contains a suffix, *-al* and *-ity*, that creates a new word from the root.

**PRACTICE** Form a familiar word by adding a prefix, suffix, or new root to each classical Greek root. The meaning of the root is in parentheses.

- |                  |                   |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. bio (life)    | 4. photo (light)  |
| 2. geo (earth)   | 5. tele (distant) |
| 3. graph (write) | 6. thermo (heat)  |

# MEDIA connection

## Web Site

The influence of the gods and goddesses of ancient Greece continues even today. The interactive Web site featured below is modeled after the famous Greek seers and oracles. Here's your chance to ask the oracle.

### Ask the Oracle

Address:

**Welcome to Loxias's Page**  
In ancient times anyone who could afford it consulted an oracle whenever in need of help, reassurance or information unavailable elsewhere. At Delphi you asked Loxias (a.k.a. Apollo, Phoebus). Although I'm neither godlike nor infallible, I will try to answer your questions! Expect a reply normally within 48 hours.

**Literature**  
Ask about any Latin or Greek author: recent questions answered on Sophocles, Euripides, Homer, Virgil, Horace, Aeschylus, Theocritus—also comparisons with Shakespeare, Miller. Ask about plots, characters, interpretation—anything!

**Mythology**  
Ask about anyone or anything in Greek or Roman mythology. Recent questions answered on Hercules, Oedipus, Amazons, Telemachus, Atalanta, Adonis, Prometheus, Cassandra.

**Ancient History**  
Ask about anything historical. Recent questions answered on Alexander, Philip of Macedon, Pericles, Nero, Elagabalus.

**Translation**  
Any smallish chunk of Latin (or Greek) promptly translated. Try me if you're stuck

on a piece of Latin—I won't do the whole book for you, but if it's a sentence or a few lines, ask! Type it out and if possible include a reference (e.g., Cicero Philippic 2.23).

**Civilization**  
Try me on any "civilization" or social history topic. Slavery, women, Olympic Games, religion, philosophy.

**Classical Tags or Mottoes**  
Want a Latin motto for yourself, your school, your company or club, or as a special gift for that difficult friend? Tell me roughly what you have in mind, and I'll try to get back to you as soon as possible. Need a Latin tag or quote for that important speech? Tell me what the occasion is and some background detail, and it'll be on its way!

**E-mail me now?**

**Analyzing Media**

1. What kind of question would you ask the Oracle of Loxias?
2. Compare the question you would ask to the kinds of questions the people of ancient Greece asked oracles and seers. What might be some of the reasons for the differences? for the similarities?

# The Art of Translation

## Homer Through the Ages

Homer is one of the most widely translated authors in history. Today the *Iliad* appears in many different languages and literary forms. In English, since the first complete translation of Homer was made by George Chapman in 1611, almost every generation has seen a new translation of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

### The Challenges of Translating

Why do translators feel the need to create these new translations and what purpose do they serve? Before trying to answer this question, it is necessary to consider some of the difficulties that arise when attempting to translate a piece of literature.

- A word might have the same meaning (denotation) in another language, but not the same associations and feelings (connotation).
- Idiomatic expressions—such as “he’s pulling your leg”—are unique to their original language, and their meanings have little to do with the literal meaning of the words.



*Achilles Recognized Among the Daughters of King Lycomedes*, c. 1750. Pompeo Girolamo Batoni, Italy.



*Agamemnon, King of Mycenae*, 12th-century Europe.

- Sentence structure and grammar vary from one language to another.
- Every translator will have a different idea of the author’s meaning and intentions.

Add to these challenges the changes that the English language has undergone over time and the change in writing styles and taste of a given period, and you can begin to get a sense of the many possible ways in which a translator would interpret the ancient works of Homer for readers of their day.

### Translating Homer

When describing the process of translating Homer, the British poet Matthew Arnold noted that a good translator must try to capture the key elements of Homer’s work: fast-paced reading, plainness and directness of expression and idea, and a highly noble style. Throughout the ages, translators have emphasized each of these qualities to differing degrees based on their own interests and the interests of their audiences.

### Literal Translation

Sing, O Goddess (Muse), (the) destroying anger of Achilles, son of Peleus which placed innumerable woes to the Achaeans but (and) prematurely-sent many brave souls of heroes to Hades and made them prey to dogs and to all birds of prey.

### Chapman's Translation, 1611

Achilles' baneful wrath resound, O Goddess, that imposed Infinite sorrows on the Greeks, and many brave souls losed From breasts heroic; sent them far to that invisible cave That no light comforts; and their limbs to dogs and vultures gave.

### Lattimore's Translation, 1951

Sing goddess, the anger of Peleus' son Achilleus and its devastation, which put pains thousandfold upon the Achaians hurled in their multitudes to the house of Hades strong souls of heroes, but gave their bodies to be the delicate feasting of dogs, of all birds.

A word-for-word, or literal, translation gives the reader a sense of Homer's directness—his use of just a few words to establish that the poem is about human weakness and tragedy. But the awkwardness of the translation fails to capture Homer's spirit, noble style, and powerful images. George Chapman chose to render Homer's noble style in rhyming couplets, the most elevated poetic form of his own day. But changing styles, and the evolution of the language, make Chapman's version somewhat difficult for modern readers. Today, straightforward translations that read as if the works were originally written in English are in favor. Modern translators like Richmond Lattimore and, more recently, Robert Fagles have replaced the long similes used by Homer with quick, direct phrases.



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*Hector and Andromache*, 1924. Giorgio de Chirico (Italy).

### RESPOND

1. Robert Fagles translated the selections of the *Iliad* presented in this book. Compare his translation of the opening passage with the translations in this feature.
2. **Viewing the art:** Just as changes in writing style and taste have given rise to different translations of Homer, changes in artistic style and taste have given rise to different visual interpretations of Homer's work. Look back over the images in the *Iliad* selection, as well as those on these pages, and think about how the artists interpreted Homer's work. Share your insights with the class.