

TROY

by

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FADE IN:

1 EXT. THESSALIAN VALLEY - DAY

1

A mangy, bone-thin DOG lopes across the broad valley floor, sniffing at the ground. At first the scene appears bucolic: tall grass, patches of wildflowers, blue sky above.

But as the dog keeps running we see signs of conflict. A spear, half imbedded in the earth, rises at an angle. A bronze helmet, cracked and bloodied, lies on its side.

The dog pauses to sniff the helmet then continues his search. Finally he stops, hackles on his back rising, ears pricked up. He growls, and we see what the dog sees.

Dozens of CROWS have descended into a shallow ravine. They squabble and peck, clustered around something on the ground.

The dog growls louder and charges at the crows. The black birds flap away to safety, shrieking in protest.

A DEAD SOLDIER lies facedown in the ravine. Whatever armor he wore was stripped away, leaving his body to the elements.

The dog walks slowly to the dead man, sniffing at the corpse's hands. The dog whines and licks the man's fingers.

Something in the air disturbs the dog, who looks up. And now we hear it, faintly, in the distance. HOOF BEATS and chariot wheels, marching men, the clank of bronze armor and weaponry.

The dog runs, abandoning his dead master.

1A THE MYCENAEAN ARMY

1A

five thousand strong, storms into the valley from the south. Armored with bronze breastplates, helmets and shields, the soldiers glitter in the morning sun.

Riding alongside the infantry are dozens of horse-drawn CHARIOTS, each holding a DRIVER, a SPEARMAN and an OFFICER.

On the opposite side of the valley, three thousand THESSALONIAN SOLDIERS march into view. The Thessalonians are less disciplined, their armor and weaponry less impressive.

(CONTINUED)

1A CONTINUED:

1A

When each army reaches the battlefield they stop and stare one another down, two hundred yards distant.

1B A MYCENAEAN CHARIOT AND A THESSALONIA CHARIOT

1B

emerge from their respective sides and meet at the center of the field.

AGAMEMNON, king of the Mycenaeans, rides in his chariot with a DRIVER and a SPEARMAN. Agamemnon holds a gold SCEPTER, symbol of command. His breast plate is engraved with an *Alpha*.

His counterpart in the Thessalonian cart, TRIOPAS (60), does not project equal confidence. He eyes the size of the Mycenaean army with evident unease. He holds his own SCEPTER.

Both kings step down from their chariots and approach each other. They stare at one another for several seconds. Agamemnon smiles and looks into the sky.

The crows wheel overhead, cawing.

AGAMEMNON

It's a good day for the crows.

TRIOPAS

I told you yesterday and I'll tell you again today. Remove your army from my land.

Agamemnon smiles again and turns to examine the valley.

AGAMEMNON

I like your land. I think we'll stay.

(beat)

I like your soldiers, too. They fought bravely yesterday. Not well, but bravely.

TRIOPAS

They'll never fight for you.

AGAMEMNON

That's what the Messenians said, too. And the Arcadians. And the Epeians. They're all fighting for me, now.

(CONTINUED)

1B CONTINUED:

1B

TRIOPAS

You can't rule the whole world,
Agamemnon. It's too big. Even for
you.

Agamemnon surveys Triopas's army.

AGAMEMNON

I don't want to watch another
massacre. Let's end this war in
the old manner.

(beat)

Your best fighter against my best.

For the first time, Triopas looks hopeful.

TRIOPAS

And if my man wins?

AGAMEMNON

We'll leave Thessaly for good.

(beat)

I'm a generous man. If mine wins,
you keep your throne. But Thessaly
falls under my command, to fight
with me whenever I call.

Triopas considers before nodding. He shouts to his army.

TRIOPAS

Boagrius!

The Thessalonians murmur and step aside. A giant emerges
from their midst, BOAGRIUS, a foot taller than the other
men, his face gouged with old knife scars. He marches out
to his king.

TRIOPAS

Here is my champion.

Agamemnon raises his eyebrows as the giant comes closer.

AGAMEMNON

(shouting to his army)

Achilles!

The Mycenaeans murmur amongst themselves, looking for
Achilles. Nobody emerges. Agamemnon frowns.

TRIOPAS

Boagrius has this effect on many
heroes.

(CONTINUED)

1B CONTINUED: (2)

1B

AGAMEMNON

Be careful whom you insult, old king.

An OFFICER on horseback gallops from the Mycenaean ranks to the center of the field. He bows his head to Agamemnon.

OFFICER

Achilles is not with the army.

Triopas laughs and looks up at Boagrius, who chuckles.

AGAMEMNON

(furious)

Where is he?

OFFICER

I sent a boy to look for him.

2 EXT. WOODS - DAY

2

A BOY (12) on a roan HORSE gallops through the woods.

3 EXT. MYCENAEAN CAMP - DAY

3

The boy rides into the camp. Scores of tents stand on the banks of a river. The only men around are COOKS tending fires and ARMORERS, mending armor and weapons.

The boy dismounts at one large tent in the corner of the camp. He pulls open the tent flap and steps inside.

4 INT. ACHILLES' TENT - CONTINUOUS

4

The boy pauses for a moment inside the tent, eyes adjusting to the dim light. Evidently last night was a wild party. Jugs of wine are everywhere, and the remains of a large feast.

Sleeping on a fur rug are two NAKED WOMEN and one NAKED MAN, tanned arms and legs entwined. The boy sidesteps shards of a broken jug. He bends to tap the sleeping man's shoulder.

Before his fingers make contact, a hand shoots out, grabs his wrist, and pulls him to the rug. The boy finds himself flat on his back with a dagger to his throat.

(CONTINUED)

ACHILLES

Shh.

The boy stares into the eyes of ACHILLES (30), who seems to have barely moved. Somehow he managed to seize the boy and put a knife to his throat without waking the women.

ACHILLES

(whispering)

I was having a good dream.

(beat)

A very good dream.

The boy nods, dumb with fear. Achilles has the lean, efficient physique of a boxer. His face and body are dark from a summer spent in the sun.

BOY

King Agamemnon sent me. He needs --

ACHILLES

I'll speak with your king in the morning.

BOY

But my lord -- it *is* morning.

Achilles frowns. He stands and walks naked to the tent flap, holds it open and stares at the empty encampment.

BOY

They're waiting for you.

Achilles prepares for battle, strapping on his breastplate. The boy assists him, fixing the bronze greaves to his legs.

BOY

Are the stories about you true?
They say your mother is an immortal goddess.

Achilles lifts up his shield. He slips his left forearm into the leather straps on the inside of the shield.

BOY

They say you can't be killed.

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

5

ACHILLES

I wouldn't be bothering with the shield then, would I?

BOY

The Thessalonian you're fighting -- he's the biggest man I've ever seen.

Achilles mounts the boy's horse.

BOY

I wouldn't want to fight him.

ACHILLES

That's why no one will remember your name.

Achilles gallops away, leaving the boy standing alone.

6 EXT. THESSALIAN VALLEY

6

Agamemnon confers with his OFFICERS on the battlefield, including KING NESTOR (65), his trusted advisor.

When Achilles rides into view the Mycenaean soldiers CHEER. Some cry out his name. Agamemnon and his officers turn to watch Achilles dismount and approach them.

AGAMEMNON

Perhaps we should have our war tomorrow, when you're better rested?

Achilles ignores the king and examines the waiting giant.

AGAMEMNON

I should have you whipped for impudence.

Achilles wheels on the king.

ACHILLES

Who's giving the whipping?

He walks toward Agamemnon, fingers curling over the hilt of his sword. Nestor slides in between Achilles and the king.

NESTOR

Achilles.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

6

Achilles, nostrils flared, eyes narrowed, stares at Agamemnon. Neither man is willing to turn away.

ACHILLES

(to Agamemnon)

Why don't you fight him yourself?
Wouldn't that be a sight, a king
who fights his own battles?

NESTOR

Achilles.

Achilles finally turns and looks at him.

NESTOR

Look at the men's faces.

Achilles surveys the faces of the battle-weary soldiers.

NESTOR

You can save hundreds of them. You
can end this war with a swing of
your sword.

(beat)

Think how many songs they'll sing
in your honor.

(beat)

Let them go home to their wives.

The soldiers, awed in his presence, stare at Achilles. He finally turns and walks toward Boagrius.

Agamemnon watches Achilles with undisguised hostility.

AGAMEMNON

(to Nestor, under
his breath)

Of all the warlords loved by the
gods, I hate him most.

NESTOR

We need him, my king.

AGAMEMNON

For now.

6A ACHILLES

6A

When Achilles is forty yards from the giant, Boagrius turns to his army and shakes his spear over his head. They cheer, slamming their bronze swords against their bronze shields.

(CONTINUED)

6A CONTINUED:

6A

Achilles keeps coming. He looks up at the circling crows.

Boagrius turns and throws his spear. The bronze spearhead glitters in the sun, blazing straight for Achilles.

Without breaking stride, Achilles raises the shield. The spearhead blasts through the bronze skin of the shield, through the thick leather on the underside, stopping inches from Achilles' face.

Achilles keeps coming.

Boagrius hoists a second spear and hurls it, grunting with effort. Again Achilles raises his shield, again the spearhead tears through the shield but does not harm Achilles.

Achilles casts aside the shield and keeps coming. Boagrius unsheathes his tremendous bronze sword. He opens his mouth, lets loose a battle cry, and charges at Achilles.

When Boagrius raises his sword, Achilles lunges forward with terrifying speed. It does not seem possible that he could close the gap between them so quickly, but he does, thrusting his sword straight through Boagrius' breastplate.

Achilles pulls his sword from the giant's chest and continues walking toward the Thessalonian line, never looking back.

Boagrius stares down at the hole in his breastplate. Blood pumps out, pouring down the polished bronze. He topples over.

The Mycenaean Army ERUPTS with exultant victory cries.

Achilles now stands in front of the massed Thessalonian troops. He searches from face to face. None of the soldiers are willing to make eye contact with him.

Finally Triopas steps out of the ranks.

TRIOPAS

Who are you, soldier?

ACHILLES

Achilles, son of Peleus.

(CONTINUED)

6A CONTINUED: (2)

6A

TRIOPAS

Achilles. I won't forget the name.

Triopas offers Achilles the heavy gold SCEPTER.

TRIOPAS

The ruler of Thessaly carries this scepter. Give it to your king.

ACHILLES

He's not my king.

Achilles walks west, away from both armies. The soldiers watch him go in silence.

7 EXT. IONIAN SEA - DUSK

7

We're high above the wine-dark sea, gliding north. Soon the Peloponnesian coast comes into view. The only break in the shoreline is the inlet of Laconia, and we follow it inland.

The inlet ends in a natural harbor where several tall-masted warships are beached, sails unfurled, oars locked and rowing benches empty. Dozens of smaller fishing boats are scattered about the harbor.

On top of the highest hill, overlooking all Sparta, stands a thick-walled PALACE. Torch-bearing SENTRIES, wearing plumed helmets and carrying long spears, man their posts.

MENELAUS (V.O.)

Princes of Troy, on our last night together, Queen Helen and I salute you.

8 INT. PALACE OF SPARTA - RECEPTION HALL - CONTINUOUS

8

MENELAUS (40), king of Sparta, stands at the head of a massive table that spans the length of a hall lit by torches. A battle-scarred warrior, Menelaus is already halfway drunk.

Beside Menelaus sits his wife, HELEN (25), wearing a white gown, head bowed, half listening to her husband. Fresh flowers are woven into her hair. Her beauty is so extreme she seems to exist in a separate realm.

(CONTINUED)

The only woman in the room and the only one wearing white, Helen shines amidst the unwashed WARRIORS of Sparta and Troy. All sit at a table laden with platters of roasted game birds, whole fish, octopi, suckling pigs and bowls of fruit.

Menelaus holds his gold wine goblet in the air, toasting his honored guests, HECTOR (35) and PARIS (25).

Hector is not the best-looking man in the room, nor the largest, but the intensity of his expression, the regality of his bearing, confirms that he is a born leader.

Paris is the best-looking man in the room, by a long shot. He's not paying attention to Menelaus. He's staring at Helen.

MENELAUS

We've had our conflicts before, it's true. We've fought many battles, Sparta and Troy. And fought well!

Menelaus's soldiers cheer drunkenly. For a moment Helen looks up and meets Paris's gaze.

MENELAUS

But I've always respected your father. Priam is a good man, a good king. I respected him as an adversary, and I respect him now as my ally.

More cheering, this time from the entire assembly.

MENELAUS

Hector, Paris, young princes, come, stand, drink with me.

Hector stands. Paris does not. He's still staring at Helen. Hector nudges his brother's shoulder. Paris stands.

MENELAUS

Let us drink to peace.

Hector nods to Menelaus and raises his cup.

HECTOR

Peace between Troy and Sparta.

(CONTINUED)

The king and the princes drink deeply and slam their empty cups to the table.

MENELAUS

May the gods keep the wolves in the hills and the women in our beds.

All the men in the hall cheer and rise to their feet.

GUESTS

To Sparta! To Troy!

A band of MUSICIANS strike up their instruments; SERVANTS roam the hall filling goblets with wine.

POLYDORA (20), one of Helen's handmaidens, leads a dozen attractive YOUNG WOMEN into the banquet hall.

The warriors howl at the sight of the women. Soon each of the handmaidens is flanked by drunken soldiers.

Menelaus grabs Hector in a bear hug. Hector gamely accepts the embrace. When the king releases him, both men spill a few drops of wine from their cups onto the floor.

They drink the rest of their wine. Menelaus grips Hector's upper arm. SERVANTS refill the cups.

MENELAUS

A strong arm. Thank the gods we made peace -- I've seen too many of my men struck down with this arm.

HECTOR

Never again, I hope.

MENELAUS

Only one man works a sword better than you. The son of Peleus the Argonaut.

HECTOR

Achilles.

MENELAUS

That madman would throw a spear at Zeus himself if the god insulted him.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED: (3)

8

Menelaus indicates Polydora, who stares at Hector openly.

MENELAUS

You see that one over there? I
picked her just for you. She's a
little lioness.

Menelaus grins at the girl, who lowers her eyes and smiles. Helen notices this silent exchange but ignores it, conversing instead with another HANDMAIDEN who sits beside her.

HECTOR

Thank you. My wife waits for me in
Troy.

MENELAUS

My wife waits for me right there.

He leans forward to whisper conspiratorially in Hector's ear.

MENELAUS

Wives are for breeding. You
understand? For making little
princes. Come, enjoy yourself
tonight.

Helen stands and walks out of the reception hall. Menelaus does not notice. Hector does. He raises his cup to Menelaus.

HECTOR

You make excellent wine in Sparta.

Menelaus laughs and drinks with Hector.

Paris excuses himself from the Spartan generals he's been speaking with and heads outside -- in the same direction as Helen. Hector watches with mounting agitation.

9 INT. HELEN'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

9

The room is lit by a dozen tall candles. Helen removes the flowers from her hair and drops them into a bowl of water. She hears a sound and looks up. Paris stands in the doorway.

For several breaths they are silent, staring at each other.

(CONTINUED)

HELEN

You shouldn't be here.

Paris closes the door behind him.

PARIS

That's what you said last night.

HELEN

Last night was a mistake.

PARIS

And the night before?

Helen continues removing the flowers from her hair but she cannot hide a half-smile.

HELEN

I've made many mistakes this week.

He approaches her.

PARIS

Do you want me to go?

His hands are on her now, sliding down her bare neck, down her back, resting on her hips. His mouth is very close to her ear. Helen closes her eyes.

HELEN

(whispering)

Yes.

Paris kisses her neck, her ears, her closed eyes. The tightness we saw in her face when she sat by her husband's side is gone, replaced by ecstasy.

PARIS

(whispering)

Where should I go?

She kisses him back now and there's a hunger in her kisses, something close to violence in her desire. She lifts off his tunic and pulls him nearer.

HELEN

(whispering)

Away. Far away.

In a moment the white gown slips to her feet. He stares at her naked body in wonder. He opens his mouth to speak but she kisses him full on the lips. They sink onto the bed.

10 INT. PALACE - RECEPTION HALL - NIGHT

10

As more and more wine gourds are emptied, the scene grows rowdier. An impromptu choir of Spartan and Trojan soldiers drunkenly sing battle songs.

Polydora sits on Menelaus's lap. She whispers in his ear while he laughs and drains another cup of wine. Bits of roasted boar fleck his thick red beard.

Hector sits nearby, half engaged in conversation with several Spartan generals. He's clearly not happy that his brother's still missing.

11 INT. HELEN'S CHAMBER - NIGHT (LATER)

11

Helen lies naked on her bed. In the candlelight her flanks are mapped with copper trails of sweat. She watches Paris, who stands bedside pulling on his clothes.

PARIS

I have something for you.

From his tunic he pulls a necklace of baby pearls threaded with silver. He sits beside her in bed.

PARIS

Pearls from the sea of Propontis.

Paris strings the pearls around her neck.

HELEN

They're beautiful.

(beat)

But I can't wear them. Menelaus would kill us both.

PARIS

Don't be afraid of him.

HELEN

I'm not afraid of dying. I'm afraid of tomorrow, watching you sail away and knowing you'll never come back.

She runs her fingers across his jaw line.

HELEN

Before you came to Sparta I was a ghost. I walked and I ate and I swam in the sea, but I was a ghost.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

11

PARIS

You don't have to fear tomorrow.

Helen watches him, unsure what he means.

PARIS

Come with me.

For a long moment they stare into each other's eyes.

HELEN

Don't play with me, prince of Troy.
Don't play.

The sounds of footsteps and laughter outside the door startle them. Paris halfway unsheathes a KNIFE hanging from his belt.

Whoever's walking by the door passes without stopping. Paris sheathes his knife, kneels beside the bed and takes her hand.

PARIS

If you come we'll never be safe.
Men will hunt us and the gods will
curse us. But I'll love you.
Until the day they burn my body I
will love you.

Helen stares into Paris' eyes, contemplating the impossible.

12 INT. PALACE - COURTYARD - LATER

12

A group of TROJAN SOLDIERS lies on goatskins and furs around a bonfire built in the middle of the courtyard. Some sleep; some continue to drink and sing old Trojan songs.

Hector stands by the fire, conferring with TECTON (30), a bull-necked captain of the elite Apollonian Guard.

HECTOR

Make the proper offerings to
Poseidon before we sail. We don't
need any more widows in Troy.

TECTON

Goat or pig?

HECTOR

Which does the Sea God prefer?

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

12

TECTON

(smiling)

I'll wake the priest and ask him.

Tecton bows and exits the courtyard. Hector sees Paris slinking past the bonfire, sneaking toward his quarters.

HECTOR

Paris!

Paris turns, smiles and waves, acting as if he hadn't seen Hector before. He ambles over to join his brother.

HECTOR

You should get to bed. We won't sleep on land again for weeks.

PARIS

I have no trouble sleeping on the seas. The sea nymphs sing lullabies to me.

HECTOR

And who sang lullabies to you tonight?

Paris freezes for a moment but quickly regains his poise.

PARIS

Tonight? Tonight was the fisherman's wife. A lovely creature.

HECTOR

I hope you didn't let the fisherman catch you.

PARIS

He's more concerned with the fish.

Paris smiles and starts to walk away but Hector holds him.

HECTOR

You do understand why we're in Sparta?

PARIS

For peace.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED: (2)

12

HECTOR

And you do understand that Menelaus, King of Sparta, is a powerful man? And that his brother, Agamemnon, King of Mycenae, commands all the Greek forces?

PARIS

What does this have to do with the fisherman's wife?

Hector seizes Paris's face between the palms of his hand. Not a violent gesture, exactly, but not gentle, either.

HECTOR

Paris. You're my brother, and I love you. But if you do anything to endanger Troy I'll rip your pretty face from your pretty skull.

He kisses Paris on the forehead.

HECTOR

Get some sleep. We sail in the morning.

Paris, a bit shocked by the encounter, stumbles away.

13 EXT. IONIAN SEA - DAY

13

The TROJAN SHIP sails over the waves.

14 EXT. SHIP'S DECK - DAY

14

The winds are strong. Nobody needs to row. SAILORS tend the sails or play dice.

Hector stands in the bow, leaning against the rail, whittling a WOODEN LION. Paris joins him.

PARIS

A beautiful morning. Poseidon has blessed our voyage.

Hector looks at the blue sky for a moment.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

14

HECTOR

Sometimes the gods bless you in the morning and curse you in the afternoon.

Paris watches his brother work the wood. When Paris speaks again his tone is more sober than we've heard it before.

PARIS

Do you love me, brother?

Hector rests his knife on the deck and smiles.

HECTOR

What have you done now?

PARIS

I need to show you something.

Paris walks toward the staircase leading inside the ship. Hector watches him for a few seconds and then follows.

15 INT. TROJAN SHIP

15

Paris pauses in front of his cabin door.

PARIS

Before you get angry with me --

HECTOR

Open the door.

Paris opens the door. Helen, wearing a hooded robe, sits on the edge of a hammock, swinging slightly. She stands. Hector stares at her in disbelief. He turns and glares at Paris.

HECTOR

If you weren't my brother I'd kill you where you stand.

PARIS

Hector --

Hector is already out the door. Helen looks at Paris.

HELEN

We'll never have peace.

PARIS

I don't want peace. I want you.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED: 15

He kisses her -- a desperate, hungry kiss, the two of them against the world -- then turns and follows his brother.

16 INT. PALACE OF SPARTA - HELEN'S BEDCHAMBER - DAY 16

Menelaus, followed by ten SOLDIERS, storms into Helen's room.

17 INT. HELEN'S BEDCHAMBER 17

He finds Polydora polishing the queen's jewelry. Menelaus grabs her arm roughly. She's terrified.

MENELAUS

Where is she?

POLYDORA

Who, my king?

Menelaus draws his sword.

MENELAUS

I swear by the father of the gods
I'll gut you here if you don't tell
me.

The handmaiden tries to speak but no words come out. Fortunately for her, HIPPASUS, (50), a royal advisor, enters the room at that moment followed by an old FISHERMAN (65).

HIPPASUS

She left with the Trojans, my king.

Menelaus stares at Hippasus, who swallows and gestures at the fisherman. The fisherman looks as if he'd rather be fishing.

HIPPASUS

The old man saw her board their
ship.

Menelaus releases the handmaiden and stares at the fisherman.

MENELAUS

The Trojans?

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

17

FISHERMAN

With the young prince. Paris.
She --

Menelaus holds up his hand. The fisherman shuts up. Everyone watches the king, waiting for an explosion, but the news -- strangely -- seems to focus him.

MENELAUS

Get my ship ready.

18 EXT. TROJAN SHIP

18

Hector walks quickly toward the stern, Paris right behind him. The PILOT mans the rudder.

HECTOR

(to pilot)

Turn us around. Back to Sparta.

PARIS

Wait, wait.

Hector spins on his brother.

HECTOR

You fool.

PARIS

Listen to me --

Hector shoves his brother backwards. The older brother's physical power is obvious. SAILORS watch in awed silence.

HECTOR

Do you know what you've done? Do you know how many years our father worked for peace? How many brothers and cousins he lost on the battlefield?

PARIS

I love her.

The muscles in Hector's jaw bulge against his cheeks.

HECTOR

Say another word and I'll break your arm. This is all a game for you, isn't it?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HECTOR (CONT'D)

You roam from town to town, bedding
merchants' wives and temple maids -
- you think you know something
about love? What about your
father's love? You spat on him
when you brought her on this ship.
What about love of your country?
You'd let Troy burn for this woman.

Paris starts to speak but Hector raises a warning finger.

HECTOR

I won't let you start a war for
her.

PARIS

May I speak?

(beat)

What you say is true. I've wronged
you. I've wronged our father. If
you want to bring Helen back to
Sparta, so be it. But I go with
her.

HECTOR

To Sparta? They'll kill you.

PARIS

Then I'll die fighting.

Hector laughs bitterly. He grabs the collar of Paris's
tunic.

HECTOR

That sounds heroic to you, doesn't
it? To die fighting. Tell me,
little brother, have you ever
killed a man?

PARIS

No.

HECTOR

Have you ever even seen a man die
in combat?

PARIS

No.

Hector's face is flushed with anger. Paris tries to look
away but Hector won't let him.

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED: (2)

18

HECTOR

I've killed men, brother. I've
watched them dying, I've heard them
dying, I've *smelled* them dying.

(beat)

There's nothing glorious about it,
nothing poetic. You think you want
to die for love, but you know
nothing about dying. You know
nothing about love.

PARIS

All the same, I go with her.

Hector releases his brother. He stares at the sea.

PARIS

I won't ask you to fight my war.

Hector shakes his head, still staring into the waves.

HECTOR

You already have.

For a long time Hector is silent. Finally he turns to the
pilot, who awaits the prince's command.

HECTOR

To Troy.

Hector walks away from his brother.

19 EXT. MYCENAE HARBOR - DAY

19

Three WARSHIPS are anchored in the harbor.

Menelaus, followed by Hippasus and a retinue of SOLDIERS,
climbs the long stone staircase that leads to the walled
city of Mycenae, a citadel hewn from the hilltop rock.

20 INT. MYCENAE CITADEL - THRONE ROOM - DAY

20

Menelaus and his followers enter the throne room.
Treasures from various conquests fill the room: statuary
and urns and intricate gold work. Armed GUARDS stand at
their posts.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED:

20

Only Agamemnon is seated, on a beautiful throne carved from solid oak. Two robed NOBLES are addressing him when Menelaus enters -- they move away as the Spartans approach.

Agamemnon stands. The two kings embrace.

AGAMEMNON

Your messenger came two days ago.
I know what happened.

Menelaus's face darkens, his rage barely submerged.

MENELAUS

I want her back.

AGAMEMNON

Of course you do. She's a
beautiful woman.

MENELAUS

I want her back so I can kill her
with my own two hands. I won't
rest until I've burned Troy to the
ground.

AGAMEMNON

(smiling)

I thought you wanted peace with
Troy.

MENELAUS

I should have listened to you.

AGAMEMNON

Peace is for the women and the
weak. Empires are forged by war.

MENELAUS

All my life I've stood by your
side, fought your enemies. You're
the eldest, you reap the glory --
this is the way of the world. But
have I ever complained, brother?
Have I ever asked you for anything?

AGAMEMNON

Never. You're a man of honor.
Everyone in Greece knows this.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED: (2)

20

MENE LAUS

The Trojans spat on my honor. An insult to me is an insult to you.

AGAMEMNON

And an insult to me is an insult to all Greeks.

MENE LAUS

Will you go to war with me, brother?

Menelaus reaches out his hand. Agamemnon looks into his eyes. Finally he nods and clasps hands with his brother.

21 INT. MYCENAE CITADEL - THRONE ROOM - NIGHT

21

Agamemnon paces the vast, torch-lit room. Nestor sits at a wooden table. Spread out on the table before him is a rough map of Greece and environs, painted on a tanned goat skin.

AGAMEMNON

I always thought my brother's wife was a foolish woman. But she's proven to be very useful. Nothing unifies a people like a common enemy.

NESTOR

The Trojans have never been conquered. Some say they can't be conquered.

AGAMEMNON

I haven't tried yet.

(beat)

Old King Priam thinks he's untouchable behind his high walls. He thinks the Sun God will protect him. But the gods only protect the strong.

(points at map)

If Troy falls, I control the Aegean.

NESTOR

Hector commands the finest army in the east. And Troy is built to withstand a ten-year siege.

(CONTINUED)

AGAMEMNON

There won't be a ten-year siege.
I'll attack them with the greatest
force the world has ever seen. I
want all the kings of Greece and
all their armies.

(beat)

Send emissaries in the morning.

Nestor stands and prepares to leave.

NESTOR

One last thing.

(beat)

We need Achilles and his Myrmidons.

Agamemnon shakes his head.

AGAMEMNON

Achilles can't be controlled. He's
as likely to fight us as the
Trojans.

NESTOR

We don't need to control him. We
need to unleash him. The man was
born to end lives.

AGAMEMNON

Yes, he's a gifted killer, but he
follows no king. He threatens
everything I've built.

(beat)

Before me Greece was nothing, a
province of warlords and cattle
raiders. I've brought all the
Greek kingdoms together -- with the
sword when necessary, with a treaty
when possible. I've created a
nation out of fire-worshippers and
snake-eaters.

(beat)

I build the future, Nestor.
Achilles is the past, a man who
fights for no flag, a man loyal to
no country.

Nestor waits a respectful moment before replying.

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED: (2)

21

NESTOR

Your words are true. But how many battles have we won off the edge of his sword?

(beat)

This will be the greatest war the world has ever seen. We need the greatest warrior.

Agamemnon thinks about it, pacing the room. Finally --

AGAMEMNON

There's only one man he'll listen to.

NESTOR

I'll send a ship in the morning.

22 EXT. ITHACA - DAY

22

A lean, bearded SHEPHERD (40) sits on a hillside looking over the Ionian sea.

Beside him sits his faithful hunting dog, ARGOS. They watch a troop of EMISSARIES climb the steep hill. The emissaries are panting for breath by the time they reach the hilltop.

EMISSARY #1

Greetings, brother. We were told King Odysseus is here in the hills.

SHEPHERD

Odysseus? That old bastard drinks my wine and never pays.

EMISSARY #2

You ought to respect your king, friend.

SHEPHERD

Respect him? I'd like to punch him in the nose. He's always pawing at my wife, trying to tear her clothes off.

The emissaries, embarrassed, begin walking away. The shepherd watches them go.

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED:

22

SHEPHERD

(to Argos the dog)

I hope Agamemnon's generals are
smarter than his emissaries.

Emissary #1 turns to look at the shepherd.

EMISSARY #1

What did you say?

The shepherd scratches behind Argos's ears. The dog wags
his tail happily.

SHEPHERD

You want me to help you fight the
Trojans.

EMISSARY #1

You're --

Emissary #1 exchanges glances with his compatriots.
They're confused. Finally the chastened emissaries bow.

EMISSARY #1

Forgive us, King Odysseus.

Odysseus stands and looks down at his dog.

ODYSSEUS

Well, I'm going to miss my dog.

EMISSARY #2

King Agamemnon has a favor to ask
of you.

Odysseus smiles and rubs his dog's head.

ODYSSEUS

Of course he does.

23 EXT. SEASIDE CLIFF - LATE AFTERNOON

23

Achilles stands in the ruins of an ivy-covered temple on a
cliff above the sea, sparring with his cousin Patroclus
(17). Both men wield wooden practice swords.

Patroclus is a talented, lean, flashy young fighter. His
sword whirls in the air like a thing alive.

Achilles, by contrast, is the apotheosis of the efficient
combatant, wasting no energy, waiting for weakness.

(CONTINUED)

Patroclus presses in on the attack. Achilles tilts his head to avoid one thrust, side-steps to avoid another. Spying a momentary opening he lunges forward and taps Patroclus' belly with the tip of his wood sword.

ACHILLES

You're getting fat, cousin.

Patroclus grins and relaunched his attack, sword spinning with blazing speed. Achilles ducks beneath an arcing swing and sword-taps Patroclus on the back.

ACHILLES

Fancy swordplay. The girls must be impressed.

Patroclus grunts and charges in again. This time a genuine duel develops, featuring splendid repartee and parrying.

PATROCLUS

A little nervous, aren't you?

ACHILLES

Terrified.

Achilles raises his right hand and Patroclus lifts his sword to parry the blow -- but Achilles no longer holds his sword in his right hand.

Sword in his left hand, Achilles taps Patroclus on the chest. Patroclus stares down at the wood blade.

PATROCLUS

You told me never to switch sword hands.

Achilles rolls his head to loosen his neck.

ACHILLES

By the time you know how to do it, you won't be following my orders anymore.

Achilles tosses aside the sparring sword. He cocks his head as if listening to some distant sound. Patroclus, oblivious to the noise, practices his swordplay.

Achilles' foot curls around the wood shaft of one of the spears lying on the ground. In one impossibly fast motion, he flips the spear into the air with his foot, catches it, and throws in the opposite direction from where he was looking.

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED: (2)

23

The bronze warhead blazes between the temple's walls and drives into the trunk of an old fir.

Only now do we see Odysseus, leading a black horse, standing inches from the quivering shaft of the spear blocking his path. He stares at the spear for a moment before ducking his head under the shaft and walking forward.

ODYSSEUS

(smiling)

Your reputation for hospitality is fast becoming legend.

ACHILLES

I don't like that smile, my friend. It's the smile you smile when you want me to fight in another war.

(beat)

Patroclus, my cousin -- Odysseus, king of Ithaca.

ODYSSEUS

Patroclus, son of Menoetius?

The boy nods. Odysseus grips Patroclus's shoulder.

ODYSSEUS

I knew your parents well. I miss them.

Patroclus nods again, looking at his feet.

ODYSSEUS

Now you have this one watching over you, eh? Learning from Achilles himself -- every boy in Greece must be jealous.

(to Achilles)

We need to talk.

ACHILLES

Tell me you're not here at Agamemnon's bidding.

Odysseus hesitates. Achilles shakes his head.

ACHILLES

How many times have I done the savage work for the King of Kings? And when has he ever shown me the respect I've earned?

(CONTINUED)

ODYSSEUS

I'm not asking you to fight for him. I'm asking you to fight for the Greeks.

ACHILLES

Why? Are the Greeks tired of fighting each other?

ODYSSEUS

For now.

ACHILLES

The Trojans never did anything to me.

ODYSSEUS

They insulted Greece.

ACHILLES

They insulted one Greek, a man who couldn't hold on to his wife. What business is that of mine?

ODYSSEUS

Your business is war, my friend.

ACHILLES

(angry)

Is it? Am I the whore of the battlefield? Can my sword be bought and sold?

(beat; calmer)

I don't want to be remembered as a tyrant's mercenary.

ODYSSEUS

Forget Agamemnon. Fight for me. My wife will feel much better if she knows you're by my side. I'll feel much better.

PATROCLUS

Is Ajax going to fight in Troy?

ODYSSEUS

Of course. You've heard of Ajax, eh?

PATROCLUS

They say he can fell an oak tree with one swing of the axe.

(CONTINUED)

ACHILLES

Trees don't swing back.

Odysseus chuckles, but he's alert to the boy's enthusiasm.

ODYSSEUS

We're sending the largest fleet
that ever sailed -- a thousand
ships.

PATROCLUS

A thousand ships! Prince Hector,
is he as good a warrior as they
say?

ODYSSEUS

The best of all the Trojans. Some
say he's better than all the
Greeks, too.

(beat)

Even if your cousin doesn't come,
Patroclus, I hope you'll join us.
We could use a strong arm like
yours.

Patroclus beams with pride and looks at his cousin.

Achilles wraps his arm around Odysseus's shoulders and
leans closer to the Ithacan. The embrace is friendly, but
there's no mistaking the power in Achilles' grip.

ACHILLES

Play your tricks on me, if you'd
like. But leave my cousin out of
it.

ODYSSEUS

You have your sword, I have my
tricks. We play with the toys the
gods give us.

Odysseus goes back to his horse and mounts.

ODYSSEUS

We sail for Troy in three days.
(beat)

This war will never be forgotten.
Nor will the heroes who fight in
it.

Patroclus, eager but frustrated, watches him ride away.

24 EXT. BEACH - SUNSET

24

Achilles makes his way across the sandy hillocks. He spies a woman in the distance.

25 EXT. SEASHORE - SUNSET

25

Achilles finds his mother, THETIS (45), standing in the surf. Her long black hair is streaked with gray. She sees a shell that she likes and stoops down to pick it up.

ACHILLES

Mother.

Thetis turns and smiles at Achilles.

THETIS

I thought I'd make you another seashell necklace.

ACHILLES

I haven't worn a seashell necklace since I was a boy.

Thetis looks at Achilles' bare neck.

THETIS

Don't you like them anymore?

Achilles spots a good shell. He hands it to his mother.

THETIS

Oh, that's a pretty one.

She surveys the beach for more pretty shells.

ACHILLES

They want me for another war.

Thetis bends down and scoops up a silvery shell.

ACHILLES

Are you listening?

THETIS

Yes, my sweet. Another war.

ACHILLES

Patroclus wants to go.

THETIS

Patroclus has never seen war.

(CONTINUED)

Thetis examines the shells in the palm of her hand. Finally she stands and looks at her son.

THETIS

If you stay here, with me, with your family, you'll have a long, peaceful life. You'll marry, you'll have children, and your children will have children. They'll love you, and when you're gone they'll remember you. But when your children are dead, and their children after them, your name will be lost.

Thetis reaches up to touch her son's cheek. Her eyes are clear, her voice steady. She speaks these lines with no hesitation, no doubt.

THETIS

If you go to Troy, no one will earn more glory than you. Men will tell stories of your victories for thousands of years. The world will remember your name.

Achilles stares at her, his eyes burning. These are words he's wanted to hear since the day he was born. His mother waits a moment before speaking again. The words hurt her.

THETIS

But if you go to Troy, you'll never come home. You'll die there.

ACHILLES

And you know this, mother?

THETIS

I know it.

Achilles looks out to the sea. Thetis, tears in her eyes, smiles bravely.

THETIS

Whenever your father came home from war, he'd stare at the sea, just like that.

(beat)

He never stayed for long.

In the distance Achilles sees a white sail. He fixates on the lonely spot of white on the endless expanse of dark water.

26 EXT. AEGEAN SEA - DAY 26

We soar above the greatest armada the world has ever seen. ONE THOUSAND SHIPS sail east, crowding the sea, churning the waves with their keels.

The white sails are painted with the signs and emblems of the various nationalities represented in this alliance. One ship sails slightly out of formation. Alone amongst the entire fleet, this ship's sail is black.

27 EXT. ACHILLES' WARSHIP - DAY 27

Achilles stands in the prow of his boat, staring east. Patroclus stands behind him, wearing a new SHELL NECKLACE.

28 EXT. TROY - DAY 28

Hector, Paris, Helen, and an entourage of SOLDIERS walk through the gates of Troy. The city is magnificent, a wonder of white-washed walls, lush gardens, and towering STATUES of the gods. ZEUS, APOLLO, APHRODITE, and POSEIDON stand eighty feet high in the four corners of the main square.

The princes' return is a holiday for the Trojans. Thousands of ONLOOKERS line the road, cheering. Other well-wishers, standing on the roofs of houses, throw flower petals.

Paris holds Helen's hand and occasionally whispers in her ear, pointing out various sights, but Helen looks nervous.

People in the crowd, mystified by her appearance, point at her and whisper amongst themselves.

Helen holds her head high and pretends to ignore the murmurs and stares. Hector looks at her. She carries herself like a queen -- but she's gripping Paris's hand with white knuckles.

29 EXT. PALACE OF TROY 29

At the bottom of a long staircase leading into the palace, four APOLLONIAN GUARDS, wearing horsehair-plumed helmets, are mounted on beautiful WHITE HORSES.

(CONTINUED)

Hector reunites with his wife, ANDROMACHE (30), pale skinned and dark eyed. He holds her to his chest; she closes her eyes, and they stand like that for a long time.

A NURSE standing nearby holds Hector's ten-month-old son, SCAMANDRIUS. Now Andromache takes the baby from the nurse. Hector stares into the boy's wondering eyes and puts his finger in the boy's hand.

HECTOR

He has a good grip.

ANDROMACHE

He's just like his father. He even hates peas.

While this reunion is going on, Paris embraces his father, PRIAM (70), king of Troy. Priam is a regal-looking man with a shock of white hair and sharp blue eyes. He adores Paris.

PARIS

Father, this -- is Helen.

Helen bows her head, paying respect.

PRIAM

Helen? Helen of Sparta?

Both Helen and Priam now look at Paris.

PARIS

Helen of Troy.

If Priam is disturbed by this revelation, his face doesn't betray it. He leans forward and kisses the former queen on both cheeks. Helen didn't know what to expect -- she's flustered and gratified at the same time.

PRIAM

I've heard rumors of your beauty.
For once, the gossips were right.
Welcome.

HELEN

Thank you, good king.

PRIAM

Come, you must be tired.

He leads them up the stairs and into the palace.

29A INT. ENTRANCE HALL (PALACE OF TROY)

29A

BRISEIS, a seventeen-year-old girl with an aristocratic demeanor, wearing the white robes of a temple acolyte, approaches the royal family. Paris smiles when he sees her.

PARIS

Briseis! Beloved cousin, your
beauty grows with each new moon.

Briseis, cheeks flushing, dips her knees in deference. Hector approaches her now, arms open. Briseis's face lights up. She hugs the eldest prince. Hector kisses the top of her head.

HECTOR

Did you miss me, little swan?

Briseis nods. Hector pinches the sleeve of her robe.

HECTOR

A servant of Apollo now?

PRIAM

The young men of Troy were
devastated when she chose the
virgin robes.

Briseis' cheeks turn bright red.

BRISEIS

Uncle.

Priam laughs and kisses the girl's forehead. He takes three goblets of wine from a SERVANT holding a silver platter and hands them to Hector and Paris, keeping one for himself.

PRIAM

I thank the gods for your safe
return.

The king and the princes spill a few drops of wine.

PRIAM, HECTOR AND PARIS

For the gods!

They drain their goblets.

30 INT. PRIAM'S MEETING HALL - DAY

30

The camera glides down the long hall, past tall columns and marmoreal depictions of the Olympians.

(CONTINUED)

At the far end of the hall, Priam stands by an open archway looking over the city. Hector sits at a table that could seat fifty men.

PRIAM

It's the will of the gods.
Everything is in their hands.

(beat)

But I'm surprised you let him bring her.

HECTOR

If I'd let him fight Menelaus for her, you'd be burning a son's body instead of welcoming a daughter.

Priam closes his eyes at these words.

PRIAM

We could send peace envoys to Menelaus.

HECTOR

You know Menelaus. He'd spear your envoys' heads to his gate.

PRIAM

What would you have me do?

HECTOR

Put her on a ship and send her home.

Priam thinks for a moment, staring out at his city.

PRIAM

Women have always loved Paris and he's loved them back.

(beat)

But this is different. Something has changed in him. If we send her back to Menelaus, he'll follow.

Hector stands and joins his father in the archway. He gestures outside. The city of Troy teems with life, the CITIZENS going about their business.

HECTOR

This is my country. These are my countrymen. I don't want to see them suffer so my brother can have his prize.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HECTOR (CONT'D)

(beat)

It's not just the Spartans coming after her. By now Menelaus has gone to Agamemnon, and Agamemnon's wanted to destroy us for years. Once we're out of the way he controls the seas.

PRIAM

Enemies have been attacking us for centuries. Our walls still stand.

HECTOR

Father.

(beat)

We can't win this war.

PRIAM

Apollo watches over us. Even Agamemnon is no match for the gods.

HECTOR

How many battalions does the Sun God command?

PRIAM

Don't mock the gods.

Hector opens his mouth to argue but holds his tongue.

PRIAM

When you were very young you came down with scarlet fever.

Hector nods impatiently. He's heard this story before.

PRIAM

Your little hands were so hot. The healer said you wouldn't last the night. I went down to Apollo's temple and I prayed until the sun came up.

(beat)

That walk back to the palace was the longest of my life. But I went into your mother's room and you were sleeping in her arms. The fever had broken.

(beat)

I promised that day to dedicate my life to the gods. I will not break my promise.

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED: (3)

30

Hector takes a deep breath. He knows Priam has decided.

PRIAM

For thirty years I've worked for
peace. Thirty years.

(beat)

Paris is a fool sometimes. I know
that. But I'll fight a thousand
wars before letting him die.

Hector looks past the city to the sea. The waters are
empty now, but he knows what's coming.

HECTOR

Forgive me, father. But you won't
be the one fighting.

He bows and leaves the old king alone in the great hall.

32 INT. PARIS'S BEDCHAMBER - NIGHT

32

Paris paces about the room. Helen stands in the archway
looking out to the dark sea. The wind blows through her
hair.

HELEN

They're coming for me.

(beat)

The wind is bringing them closer.

Paris stops pacing and stares at her.

PARIS

What if we left? Tonight, right
now, what if we went down to the
stables, took two horses and left.
Ride east, keep riding --

HELEN

And go where?

PARIS

Away from here. I could hunt deer,
rabbit. I could feed us.

HELEN

This is your home --

PARIS

You left your home for me.

(CONTINUED)

HELEN

Sparta was never my home. My parents sent me there when I was sixteen to marry Menelaus, but it was never my home.

Paris, excited with his new-hatched plan, barely listens.

PARIS

We'll live off the land. No more palaces for us, no more servants. We don't need any of that.

HELEN

And your family?

PARIS

We'd be protecting my family! If we're not here there's no need for a war.

HELEN

Menelaus won't give up. He'll track us to the end of the world.

PARIS

He doesn't know these lands. I do. We can lose ourselves in a day.

Helen stands and kisses him on the lips.

HELEN

You don't know Menelaus. You don't know his brother. They'll burn every house in Troy to find us. They'll never believe we've left -- and even if they do, they'll burn Troy for spite.

Paris considers her words and finally nods.

PARIS

Then I'll make it easy for him to find me. I'll walk right up to him and tell him you're mine.

Helen wraps her arms around Paris and rests her chin on his shoulder.

HELEN

You're very young, my love.

(CONTINUED)

- 32 CONTINUED: (2) 32
- PARIS
We're the same age!
- HELEN
You're younger than I ever was.
- 33 EXT. TROY - DAWN 33
- The sun rises above Troy and the Trojan countryside.
- 33A IN THE MAIN SQUARE 33A
- dozens of SUPPLICANTS kneel before the statue of Poseidon and lay down their offerings: bundles of flowers; small carvings; goatskins filled with wine.
- 33B SOLDIERS 33B
- prepare a series of fortifications at the beach. Men carrying torches ignite giant pumice urns filled with burning pitch. Others hammer long spikes deep into the sand to hinder enemies rushing up from the beach.
- There is little conversation and the men look tense. Everything is touched with an air of extreme urgency.
- 33C A TEMPLE OF APOLLO 33C
- overlooks the beach.
- 33D INSIDE THE TEMPLE 33D
- two PRIESTS carve strips of fat from a roasted PIG and lay them on the god's altar, muttering chants as they perform the ritual.
- Briseis, the temple acolyte, stands beside the priests, pouring ceremonial wine on the stone floor.
- 33E MERCHANTS 33E
- in the marketplace set up their stalls and display their goods: wine, olive oil, dates, figs, nuts and spices.
- The BRONZESMITH hammers a bronze sword into shape.

- 33F A SHEPHERD 33F
watches over his herd of SHEEP.
- 33G A FARMER AND HIS SON 33G
lead a team of yoked OXEN to the fields.
- 33H FOUR FISHERMEN 33H
in a small boat, a mile from shore, spread their nets in the water.
- 34 EXT. GUARD TOWER - DAWN 34
Two SENTRIES stand in a guard tower on a corner of Troy's city walls, sipping hot broth from bowls. A large flag, emblazoned with Troy's HORSE EMBLEM, flies above the tower.
Sentry #1 blows steam off his soup. He raises his eyes, blinks and squints into the distance. He bolts upright.
Sentry #2 stands and follows his partner's gaze out to the sea. Both of them stand slack-jawed.
- 34A A THOUSAND GREEK WARSHIPS 34A
clog the horizon, sailing straight for Troy.
- 34B SENTRY #2 34B
grabs a gong tapper and begins hammering the brass gong hanging from the tower's lintel. Sentry #1 still stares at the swarm of ships. No Trojan has ever seen such a force.
- 34C SENTRIES 34C
in other guard towers hammer their warning gongs.
- 35 INT. HECTOR'S CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS 35
Hector sits on a rug by his bed, beside his wife Andromache, watching his son.
The boy plays with the WOOD LION Hector carved on the journey back from Sparta.

(CONTINUED)

- 35 CONTINUED: 35
- The city bells begin to ring.
- Hector looks at his wife and walks to the balcony, where he can see over the city walls to the Aegean.
- He sees a thousand enemy sails. For a moment he stares at the armada before hurrying back into the palace.
- 36 INT. PRIAM'S MEETING HALL - DAY 36
- Priam kneels before a grand statue of Zeus in the great hall. The Thunder God, his stone face a mask of rage, thunderbolts clutched in his stone hands, stares down at the old king.
- Listening to the bells, Priam takes a deep breath and Looks up into Zeus's eyes. The father of the gods stares back.
- 37 EXT. TROY - DAY 37
- Panic in the streets of Troy. Merchants quickly pack away their goods; mothers run into the streets looking for their children; young men hurry to the armory.
- 38 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY 38
- A mad rush to get inside the safety of the city walls.
- 38A THE FARMER AND HIS SON 38A
- hastily load provisions onto a wagon.
- 38B THE SHEPHERD 38B
- hurries his herd toward the Trojan gates. He's joined by hundreds of COUNTRY DWELLERS racing for sanctuary.
- 38C THE FISHERMEN 38C
- row desperately for shore.
- 39 EXT. AEGEAN SEA - DAY 39
- The armada draws closer to shore. One ship sails far ahead of the rest. Its sail is black.

40 EXT. ACHILLES' WARSHIP

40

Achilles' OARSMEN holler encouragement to their shipmates and check to see that their boat is safely in the lead.

Achilles stands in the prow, scanning the Trojan shore. Patroclus stands beside him. EUDORUS (40), a Myrmidon lieutenant, approaches Achilles.

EUDORUS

Should we wait for the others?

Achilles marks the progress of the other ships. The nearest is a quarter-mile back.

Those MYRMIDONS (Achilles' countrymen and comrades) not rowing are suiting up for battle.

ACHILLES

They brought us here for a war,
didn't they?

EUDORUS

Yes, my lord. But Agamemnon --

Achilles stares at his officer until the man bows his head.

ACHILLES

Do you fight for me, Eudorus? Or
Agamemnon?

EUDORUS

For you, my lord.

ACHILLES

Then fight for me. And let the
servants of Agamemnon fight for
him.

41 EXT. AGAMEMNON'S WARSHIP

41

Agamemnon, Nestor and Menelaus stand in the ship's prow.

MENELAUS

Whose ship is that?

Nestor shields his eyes from the sun and looks.

Nestor

Black sail. Achilles.

They watch Achilles' ship approach the beach.

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED: 41

AGAMEMNON

What is that fool doing? He's
going to take the beach of Troy
with fifty men?

42 EXT. TROJAN BEACH FORTIFICATIONS - DAY 42

The TROJAN ARCHERS check their catgut strings one last
time.

43 EXT. TROJAN ARMORY - DAY 43

Tecton dismounts at the door of the armory and runs
inside.

44 INT. TROJAN ARMORY - DAY 44

The cavernous building is crowded with armaments: racks
and racks of spears, swords, breastplates, and shields.

Hector watches as hundreds of male CITIZENS rush into the
armory and are issued weapons by TROJAN SOLDIERS. The
faces of the men reflect fear, excitement, and resolve.

Tecton approaches the prince and bows.

HECTOR

The Apollonian Guard?

TECTON

Waiting at the city gates.

HECTOR

Good.

Hector grabs the captain, LYSANDER, overseeing arms
distribution.

HECTOR

How long before the army is ready?

LSYANDER

Half our men are still coming in
from the countryside. We have to
arm them, we have to match them
with the right officers --

HECTOR

How long?

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED:

44

LSYANDER
(taking a deep breath)

Noon?

HECTOR
Make it sooner.

We've never seen the prince in martial mode before. He looks different: eyes harder, mouth set and unsmiling.

HECTOR
I want patrols to scour the countryside. Check every home, every pasture. I want every Trojan brought inside the walls. If they can't walk, carry them.

Lysander bows his head. Hector walks swiftly away, followed by Tecton. Lysander and the other Trojans watch their prince with silent respect. There is no doubt who leads the city.

45 EXT. ACHILLES' WARSHIP

45

Though the oarsmen continue to pull, everyone is now armored. Achilles sees Patroclus, armed and ready to fight.

ACHILLES
Where are you going?

PATROCLUS
To fight the Trojans.

Achilles shakes his head and takes Patroclus' spear.

ACHILLES
You're not ready.

PATROCLUS
I *am* ready. You taught me how to fight.

Achilles rests his hand on the back of the boy's head.

ACHILLES
And you're a good student. But you're not a Myrmidon yet.

He gestures to the Myrmidons around them.

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED:

45

ACHILLES

These are the fiercest soldiers in Greece. Each of them has bled for me before.

(beat)

I can't fight the Trojans if I'm worrying about you, cousin. Guard the ship.

Patroclus looks about the deck. The only unarmored man aboard is an old, ONE-LEGGED COOK, mending spears. Patroclus angrily strips off his breastplate and drops it to the deck.

46 EXT. GATES OF TROY - DAY

46

Hector and Tecton gallop through the gate. They rein in their horses and look over the elite Apollonian Guard, eighty of Troy's finest soldiers, riding well-groomed, snorting mounts.

When Hector speaks his voice is clear and steady.

HECTOR

All my life I've lived by a code,
and the code is simple.

(beat)

Honor the gods.

(beat)

Love your woman.

(beat)

And defend your country.

The men roar.

HECTOR

Troy is mother to us all. Fight
for her!

The men roar and thrust their spears into the air. Hector leads the charge to the beach.

47 EXT. ACHILLES' WARSHIP - DAY

47

Achilles stands in his ship's bow, scanning the Trojan dunes. He turns to face his men. He smiles.

ACHILLES

Myrmidons, we are brothers of the sword. I'd rather fight alongside you than any army of thousands.

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED:

47

The Myrmidons cheer. Achilles points his sword toward Troy.

ACHILLES

Do you know what's waiting beyond
that beach?

(beat)

Immortality.

The Myrmidons raise their swords and cry out with one voice.

The oarsmen give one last mighty pull on their oars and beach the tar-caulked keel of the warship on Trojan sand.

Achilles puts on his helmet, grabs a coiled rope anchored to a bronze cleat, and rappels down to the beach. The Myrmidons follow him, tossing the ropes off the deck and shimmying down to the beach.

48 EXT. TROJAN BEACH FORTIFICATIONS - CONTINUOUS

48

The archers behind the fortifications watch the Myrmidons climb down from their ship.

Their CAPTAIN raises his hand: wait... wait...

CAPTAIN of archers

Now!

The archers rise and release their arrows.

49 EXT. TROJAN BEACH - CONTINUOUS

49

Hundreds of arrows whistle through the air. Four of the Myrmidons climbing down cry out as arrows hit them; they tumble into the sea. Other arrows rip into the packed sand or zip harmlessly into the water.

The Myrmidons, clustered together and holding their shields above their heads, look to Achilles. Achilles makes a hand signal. Half his men split off and run to the fortifications on their left, howling like wolves as arrows rain down.

50 EXT. ACHILLES' WARSHIP - CONTINUOUS

50

Patroclus huddles under the railing beside the cook as arrow after arrow screams by. A flaming arrow hits one of the sails, and then another. The sails begin to burn.

(CONTINUED)

50 CONTINUED:

50

ONE-LEGGED COOK

Help me get the sails down!

The cook limps over to the sails, ignoring the arrows that rain around him. Patroclus takes a deep breath and runs in a crouch to the cook. Together they lower the burning sails.

51 EXT. TROJAN BEACH - DAY

51

Achilles sprints toward the archers, half his men behind him. The archers let off another volley. More Myrmidons fall.

52 EXT. AGAMEMNON'S SHIP - DAY

52

Agamemnon, Menelaus, and Nestor watch the battle from the prow of their ship. They're still half a mile away.

AGAMEMNON

(in awe despite himself)

The man wants to die.

We hear SHOUTS of "Achilles!" from the other ships, a great clamor as men bash the flats of their swords against their shields and cheer their hero on.

Agamemnon hears the cheering. He grits his teeth and glares at the distant Achilles. Nestor notices Agamemnon's barely concealed fury. He speaks quietly, so no one else can hear.

NESTOR

Give him his battle. You'll take the war.

AGAMEMNON

Give him too many battles and the men will forget who's king.

53 EXT. TROJAN PLAIN - DAY

53

Hector and his men near the high dunes, galloping at breakneck speed.

54 EXT. TROJAN BEACH - CONTINUOUS

54

Achilles, three arrows in his shield, sprints across the sands. Arrows tear through the air about him. No man alive can run with Achilles.

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED:

54

He leaps over the fortification, sword flashing before his feet ever touch the ground. The archers crumple to the ground as Achilles' sword cuts through them.

In a moment the Myrmidons catch up to Achilles and lay into the archers. Within seconds they massacre them. Achilles turns and nods to the temple: the next target. Eudorus gasps for air. Achilles regards him with amusement.

ACHILLES

Breathe, my friend.

Eudorus takes two deep breaths. Achilles dashes for the temple. His Myrmidons follow behind.

54A EXT. TEMPLE OF GOLD

54A

The archers at the temple unleash a fusillade of arrows. Every few yards another Myrmidon falls. Several of them are wounded, but if they're not dead they keep moving forward.

55 EXT. AJAX'S SHIP - CONTINUOUS

55

Ajax's ship is one hundred yards from shore. Legendary AJAX (30) -- a huge man, brutally muscled, head shaved, face and body scarred -- stands in the prow, watching Achilles.

AJAX

Look at him, hogging all the glory.

He walks over to his rowers, grabs an oarsmen on the front bench under the armpits and tosses him away. Ajax sits, grabs the oar handle, and begins rowing maniacally, the veins in his massive arms bulging through the skin.

AJAX

Row, you lazy whores, row! Greeks are dying!

The oarsmen redouble their efforts and the ship leaps over the waves toward the shore.

56 EXT. TROJAN BEACH DUNES - DAY

56

Hector and the Apollonian Guards rein in their horses atop the dunes. Hector sees Ajax's ship plowing into the beach. Hundreds of other ships are close behind.

56A EXT. BEACH DEFENCES

56A

The Trojan archers rain arrows down on Ajax's ship. Several flaming arrows catch in the hull and begin to burn.

56B EXT. TROJAN BEACH DUNES - DAY

56B

TECTON

We can't hold the beach, my prince.

Hector sees where Achilles and the Myrmidons are heading.

HECTOR

They're trying to take the temple.

TECTON

No believer would spill blood in Apollo's temple.

Hector, increasingly uneasy, watches Achilles dodge arrows. He turns and points to the spot where Ajax's ship has landed.

HECTOR

(to an Apollonian officer)

The archers need help. Burn as many ships as you can, but don't sacrifice yourself. Bring the men back to the city.

The OFFICER bows and leads 60 Guards to the fortifications.

HECTOR

(to Tecton)

Follow me.

He gallops toward the temple, Tecton and his men behind him.

57 EXT. TEMPLE OF APOLLO - DAY

57

Achilles, his shield now quilled with arrows, hurls his spear. It catches the closest archer just above the breastplate, tearing through the man's throat.

The archers near by throw down their bows and take up the spears racked behind them.

(CONTINUED)

57 CONTINUED:

57

But Achilles is already upon them, cutting them down with ruthless precision. Every time his bronze sword flashes through the air another Trojan falls, and Achilles keeps sweeping through them, his face painted with Trojan blood.

The other Myrmidons are fighting beside their leader now, and the Trojan archers are no match for the Myrmidons in hand to hand combat. Soon the temple area belongs to the Greeks.

58 EXT. AJAX'S SHIP - CONTINUOUS

58

Ajax and his men rappel down the ship's hull while arrows rip into wood and flesh. Ajax carries a giant battle-axe and a shield twice the size of most men's.

When he reaches the surf he doesn't wait for his men; he roars and charges at the archers in the dunes.

59 EXT. TEMPLE OF APOLLO - CONTINUOUS

59

Achilles, not even breathing hard after the slaughter, removes his helmet and rests it on the wall. The surviving Myrmidons search the grounds, dispatching any dying Trojans.

Eudorus hurries over to Achilles' side.

EUDORUS

The temple is secure.

ACHILLES

The Sun God is the patron of Troy, our enemy. Take whatever treasure you can find.

The Myrmidons cheer and rush the temple.

EUDORUS

With your permission, my lord --

ACHILLES

Speak.

Eudorus gestures to the sun above them.

EUDORUS

Apollo sees everything. Perhaps it's not wise to offend him.

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED: 59

Achilles nods and walks over to the towering statue of Apollo in front of the temple.

Eudorus watches in horror as Achilles climbs atop the statue and beheads Apollo with a swing of his sword.

60 EXT. TROJAN BEACH - CONTINUOUS 60

Hector and Tecton rein in their horses.

TECTON

He dares attack Apollo?

Hector spurs his horse and races toward the invaders, followed by his twenty men.

The other sixty Apollonians gallop to Ajax's landing spot.

61 EXT. TEMPLE OF APOLLO - CONTINUOUS 61

Achilles gazes at the sky as if waiting for the sun to blast him for blasphemy. Nothing happens.

Hearing hoofbeats, Achilles turns and spots Hector and his men, two hundred yards away.

ACHILLES

(to Eudorus)

Get inside the temple, warn the men.

Eudorus hurries to warn his comrades.

ACHILLES

Eudorus! Wait, wait a moment.

The Myrmidon captain stops. Achilles hefts a spear, judges the distance, and throws.

One hundred yards from Achilles, the spearhead finds its mark: Tecton's breastplate. Tecton is knocked from his horse and skewered to the ground. He clutches at the wooden shaft, not comprehending his fate.

Hector reins in his horse and stares at his fallen captain. The man is finished. Hector turns to look at Achilles.

Eudorus's eyes are wide. No other man alive could have thrown a spear that far or that accurately.

(CONTINUED)

61 CONTINUED:

61

ACHILLES

Now you can go.

Eudorus runs inside the temple.

Hector kicks his horse and gallops toward Achilles. His men cry out and follow him. Achilles waits. Hector raises his own spear. When he is fifty yards away, he throws.

At the very last moment, Achilles bends his head to one side, an almost lackadaisical movement. The spear rips through the air occupied by Achilles' head half a moment before.

Achilles smiles.

Hector draws his sword and charges, his men right behind him. Achilles walks, with insulting insouciance, into the temple.

A series of high steps lead inside the temple. Hector and the Trojans dismount and proceed cautiously to the temple.

62 EXT. TROJAN BEACH - DAY

62

An arrow sticks out of Ajax's leg but he doesn't seem to notice it. He bulls forward, giant shield held in front, and slams into the Trojan ranks.

Where Achilles is all grace and speed, Ajax is brute force. Parrying his blows is useless: his battle axe splits bronze shields, bronze swords, bronze helmets.

The sound of his axe carving through a breastplate and the man beneath the breastplate is like nothing else on earth.

As Ajax drops another Trojan, he lifts his ax to the heavens.

AJAX

I am Ajax, breaker of stones,
widow-maker of Salamis! Look upon
me, Trojans, and despair!

The Apollonians join the fight against the Greeks. The Guards are far better than the archers at hand-to-hand combat.

63 INT. TEMPLE OF APOLLO - DAY

63

Hector and his men enter the temple. Eyes adjusting to the gloomy light, they gingerly advance. All is quiet. Evidence of looting is everywhere.

At the back of the temple, stairs lead up to the altar room. Hector walks toward the stairs. Blood trickles down the steps. Hector raises his eyes.

Achilles stands atop the staircase, both hands wrapped around the hilt of his sword, the sword point resting on the top step. He stares down at Hector.

WAR CRIES explode through the temple. The Myrmidons burst from their hiding places and rush the Trojans.

Hector is an obvious target. Two Myrmidons charge him, their spears leveled.

If Achilles is the apotheosis of martial grace, Hector is something altogether different -- a man of ordinary gifts who has become an extraordinary warrior by dint of experience, endless training, and powerful intelligence.

As the Myrmidons charge he waits. At the last moment he swings his sword, slicing both spearheads from their shafts. The Myrmidons stare at their decapitated spears.

Hector doesn't give them a chance to recover. He pounces, sword flashing, and both men fall to the temple floor.

Achilles watches from the top step. Hector begins running up the stairs. Achilles disappears inside the altar room.

Another Myrmidon bounds up the stairs after Hector. The prince wheels about and kicks the Myrmidon in the breastplate. The soldier tumbles down the steps. Hector continues up the stairs.

64 EXT. TROJAN BEACH - DAY

64

As more Greek ships make landfall, the Apollonian officer sees that their position is no longer defensible.

APOLLONIAN OFFICER

Back to the city! Back to the
city!

The Trojans begin to retreat. The archers still turn to fire whenever there's time. Mounted Guards haul fleeing archers onto their horses.

65 INT. ALTAR ROOM - DAY

65

Hector finds the bodies of two PRIESTS. They lie on the stone floor, limbs splayed, throats slit.

Sitting atop the altar, half-hidden by the shadows, is Achilles. He's a terrible sight to behold, splattered with blood, his bronze sword still dripping.

ACHILLES

You must be very brave or very stupid, to come after me alone.

(beat)

You must be Hector.

Hector stares at Achilles a moment before kneeling by the dead priests' bodies.

ACHILLES

A private audience with the prince of Troy. I'm flattered. Do you know who I am?

HECTOR

These priests weren't armed.

Hector closes the eyes of the murdered priests. Achilles jumps down from the altar and looks at the bodies.

ACHILLES

I didn't kill them. Cutting old men's throats -- there's no honor in that.

HECTOR

Honor?

(spits)

Children and fools fight for honor. I fight for my country.

Hector charges. Achilles dances back, staying just out of reach. Achilles looks relaxed, almost playful.

HECTOR

Fight me.

ACHILLES

Why kill you, prince of Troy, with no one here to see you fall?

Achilles backs out of an archway opening onto the bright day outside. Hector follows.

66 EXT. TEMPLE OF APOLLO - CONTINUOUS

66

Down at the beach, scores of Greek ships are on the sand.

HECTOR

Why did you come here?

Achilles gestures at the invading flotilla.

ACHILLES

They'll be talking about this war
for a thousand years.

HECTOR

In a thousand years even the dust
from our bones will be gone.

ACHILLES

Yes, prince. But our names will
remain.

A band of bloodied Myrmidons, led by Eudorus, emerges from the temple. Hector, surrounded by enemies, warily backs off.

EUDORUS

(to Achilles)

The Trojans are dead.

ACHILLES

Go home, prince. Drink some wine.
Make love to your wife. Tomorrow
we'll have our war.

HECTOR

You speak of war as if it's a game.
But how many wives wait at Troy's
gate for husbands they'll never see
again?

ACHILLES

Perhaps your brother can comfort
them. I hear he's good at charming
other men's wives.

Hector stares at Achilles and the Myrmidons for another moment before walking away.

EUDORUS

Why did you let him go?

ACHILLES

It's too early in the day for
killing princes.

67 EXT. TROJAN BEACH - DAY

67

Thousands of Greek soldiers on the beach watch as the Trojans retreat, many of the archers riding behind their Apollonian saviors.

Hector mounts his horse and rides back toward the city.

When the Greeks see Achilles climbing onto the temple's roof they stare in awe, silent.

Achilles raises his bloodied bronze sword toward the sun.

The CLAMOR that erupts from the beach is deafening. Thousands of men cheering and yelling his name: *Achilles! Achilles!*

68 EXT. AGAMEMNON'S SHIP - DAY

68

Agamemnon, still aboard his ship, waits for the gangplank to be lowered. His dark eyes are cold and hateful as he listens to the men cheering.

69 EXT. BEACH ENCAMPMENT - LATER

69

Soldiers tug more and more ships onto the sand. From the landed ships, primitive cranes are already beginning to lower boxes of provisions, military materiel, and horses.

Achilles walks across the beach, carrying his helmet, accepting the congratulations of the troops. Ajax, shirtless, strides over.

AJAX

Achilles!

Achilles halts. For a moment there seems to be tension in the air. Everyone watches. Ajax gives Achilles a bear hug.

AJAX

You're as fearless as a god.

ACHILLES

The gods are immortal. What do they have to fear?

Ajax laughs and releases Achilles.

AJAX

I'm honored to go to war with you.

Achilles nods and grips the big man's thick arm.

(CONTINUED)

ACHILLES

I don't have to worry about my back
with you behind me.

Achilles continues walking. He sees Odysseus walking down
a gangplank from his ship to the beach.

ACHILLES

(calling out)

If you sailed any slower, the war
would be over.

ODYSSEUS

I don't mind missing the beginning
of the war -- as long as I'm here
at the end.

Achilles smiles and keeps walking. He arrives at the
Myrmidon's newly established base. Patroclus, Eudorus,
and the other surviving Myrmidons greet Achilles.

EUDORUS

We have something to show you.

Achilles follows Eudorus and the grinning Myrmidons to a
large tent twenty yards inland from their beached ship. A
few Myrmidons hammer the last tent pegs deep into the
sand.

Eudorus holds open the tent flap. Achilles looks at his
captain for a moment before entering the tent.

No rugs have been laid down yet, so loot from the temple
has been stacked on the sand: gold chalices, black
amphorae, woven tapestries, goatskins filled with sacred
wine.

But Achilles does not look at this plunder. Bound by the
wrists to the center pole of the tent is Briseis, dressed
in her white robes.

Terrified but trying to retain her composure, she returns
Achilles' stare. Robes torn, hair disheveled, bleeding
from the lip: she still possesses her innate dignity and
strength. Something changes in Achilles' eyes when he
looks at her.

(CONTINUED)

EUDORUS

The men found her hiding in the temple. They thought she'd... please you.

ACHILLES

Leave us.

Eudorus bows and exits.

Achilles pulls a small, sharp knife from his belt. Briseis stares at the blade.

Achilles walks over to her and cuts the ropes that bind her. She sits back, rubbing the chafed skin of her wrists, still watching Achilles. He sheathes his knife.

ACHILLES

What's your name?

Briseis stares at him but doesn't answer. Achilles becomes aware, for the first time, that he's covered in blood. He wipes a hand across his face. Briseis looks about the tent, as if searching for a way out.

ACHILLES

You're safer in this tent than out there. Believe me.

BRISEIS

You killed Apollo's priests.

ACHILLES

I've killed men in five countries. But never a priest.

BRISEIS

Then your men did.

(beat)

The Sun God will have his vengeance.

Achilles removes his bronze grieves.

ACHILLES

What's he waiting for?

Briseis is stunned by such blunt blasphemy but she can't take her eyes off him, because Achilles, after all, is Achilles.

BRISEIS

The right time to strike.

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED: (2)

70

Achilles removes his breastplate.

ACHILLES

His priests are dead and his
acolyte's a captive.

(beat)

I think your god is afraid of me.

Briseis laughs bitterly.

BRISEIS

Afraid? Apollo is master of the
sun. He fears nothing.

Achilles nods and looks around the dark tent.

ACHILLES

Then where is he?

Briseis has no answer. Achilles smiles and she looks
away.

A bucket of hot water sits beside a washcloth. Achilles
wets the cloth and begins to scrub the blood from his
body.

BRISEIS

You're nothing but a killer. You
don't know anything about the gods.

ACHILLES

You haven't seen twenty summers and
you think you know my heart? I
know more about the gods than
priests could ever teach you.

(beat)

You're royalty, aren't you?

Briseis says nothing. Achilles smiles again.

ACHILLES

You've spent years talking down to
men, you must be royalty. What's
your name?

(beat)

Even the servants of Apollo have
names.

BRISEIS

Briseis.

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED: (3)

70

ACHILLES

Are you afraid, Briseis?

Briseis is quiet for a moment. She watches Achilles with a mixture of fear and curiosity.

BRISEIS

Should I be?

EUDORUS (O.S.)

(calling from outside
the tent)

My lord --

ACHILLES

What is it?

Eudorus sticks his head inside the tent.

EUDORUS

King Agamemnon requests your
presence.

ACHILLES

Why would I want to look at him
when I can look at her?

EUDORUS

All the kings are there,
celebrating the victory.

Achilles stands.

ACHILLES

Give me a moment.

Eudorus withdraws. A long beat while Achilles studies her.

ACHILLES

You don't need to fear me, girl.
You're the only Trojan who can say
that.

71 EXT. AGAMEMNON'S TENT - LATER

71

Two muscular GUARDS stand by the opening to Agamemnon's tent. Achilles, wearing clean clothes, doesn't bother waiting for the guards' permission to enter; he brushes past them and through the tent flap.

The largest tent on the beach, Agamemnon's command quarters are a lush affair, decorated with the spoils of a dozen wars. Several AIDES-DE-CAMP bustle in and out on various errands. The Greek kings are here: Odysseus, Ajax, Menelaus, etc.

Agamemnon sits on a heavy wood throne, garishly inlaid with gold, mother-of-pearl, and precious stones.

Triopas, king of Thessaly, kneels before Agamemnon.

TRIOPAS

You've won a great victory, King of Kings. No one thought the Trojan beach could be captured so easily.

He hands Agamemnon a ceremonial dagger with a gold hilt.

AGAMEMNON

A beautiful gift, Triopas. You will be among the first to walk the streets of Troy tomorrow.

Triopas stands and bows. Achilles has watched this exchange with disbelief. He glances at Odysseus, who shrugs. Now Nestor, king of the Pylians, kneels before Agamemnon and hands him an urn decorated with painted warriors.

NESTOR

My father Neleus had this urn made to commemorate his victory at Cyparisseis. I present it to you in honor of an even more memorable victory.

AGAMEMNON

Thank you, old friend. Tomorrow we'll eat supper in the gardens of Troy.

Nestor stands and bows. Agamemnon places the dagger and urn beside a pile of other luxurious gifts. As the kings file out of the tent, Odysseus clasps Achilles' shoulder and speaks to him out of the others' earshot.

ODYSSEUS

War is young men dying and old men talking. You know this. Ignore the politics.

(CONTINUED)

72 CONTINUED:

72

Odysseus exits the tent. Agamemnon deigns to notice Achilles waiting for him.

AGAMEMNON

(to his aides)

Leave us.

The aides exit, leaving Achilles and Agamemnon alone. Achilles eyes the pile of gifts.

ACHILLES

Apparently you've won some great victory.

AGAMEMNON

Ah, perhaps you didn't notice. The Trojan beach belonged to Priam in the morning. It belongs to Agamemnon in the afternoon.

ACHILLES

You can have the beach. I didn't come here for sand.

AGAMEMNON

No, you came because you want your name to last through the ages.

(beat)

A great victory was won today -- but the victory is not yours. Kings did not kneel to Achilles. Kings did not bring homage to Achilles.

ACHILLES

The battle was won by soldiers. The soldiers know who fought.

AGAMEMNON

History remembers the kings, not the soldiers.

(beat)

Tomorrow we'll batter down the gates of Troy. I'll build monuments to victory on every island of Greece, and carve *Agamemnon* in the stone. My name will last forever. Your name is written in the sand, for the waves to wash away.

ACHILLES

First you need the victory.

(CONTINUED)

72 CONTINUED: (2)

72

Achilles turns to leave.

AGAMEMNON

One more thing, son of Peleus.

Achilles stops.

ACHILLES

I don't want to hear my father's name from your mouth.

AGAMEMNON

The first pick of the battle's spoils always goes to the commander. Your men sacked the temple of Apollo, yes?

ACHILLES

You want gold? Take it, it's my gift, to honor your courage. Take what you want.

AGAMEMNON

I already have. Aphareus! Haemon!

Two battle-scarred soldiers, APHAREUS and HAEMON, drag Briseis into the tent. Her face is bruised -- clearly she's been slapped around.

AGAMEMNON

The spoils of war. Tonight I'll have her give me a bath. And then -- who knows?

Achilles draws his sword.

ACHILLES

(to the soldiers)

I have no quarrel with you, brothers. But you'll never see home again if you don't let her go.

The soldiers hesitate, then draw their own swords. Achilles advances on them.

AGAMEMNON

Guards!

The two sentries rush into the tent, swords drawn. Achilles is surrounded. He raises his sword.

(CONTINUED)

72 CONTINUED: (3)

72

BRISEIS

Stop!

Everyone stops and looks at the girl. Despite her torn robes, her noble bearing and authoritative tone command respect.

BRISEIS

Too many people have died today.

She looks at the various men in the room and finally addresses Achilles.

BRISEIS

If killing is your only talent, that's your curse. But I don't want anyone dying for me.

Everyone is quiet until Agamemnon laughs.

AGAMEMNON

Mighty Achilles, silenced by a slave girl.

ACHILLES

She's not a slave.

AGAMEMNON

She is now.

Achilles' eyes are flat and merciless.

ACHILLES

Before my time is done, King of Kings, I will look down on your corpse and smile.

Achilles turns and leaves the tent.

73 EXT. BEACH ENCAMPMENT - DAY

73

Most of the ships have been hauled onto the beach. Hundreds of soldiers finish digging a long trench in the sand. Pikes are anchored and other fortifications constructed to protect the tents and ships from attack.

74 EXT. CITY OF TROY - DUSK

74

In the dying light, the Trojans prepare their city for siege. Gray-bearded OFFICERS oversee the reinforcement of the main gates. SOLDIERS haul thousands of arrows atop the city walls.

74A EXT. TEMPLE OF ZEUS

74A

A massive CONGREGATION at the Temple of Zeus kneels before the Thunder God's statue while PRIESTS burn the BODIES of fallen Trojan soldiers on tall PYRES. The WIDOWS keen.

75 EXT. BEACH ENCAMPMENT - NIGHT

75

The beach is lit by thousands of torches. The Greeks have transformed the serene beach into a well-fortified camp.

76 INT. PRIAM'S MEETING HALL - NIGHT

76

Priam stands by the room's open archway. Beyond the city he sees his beach occupied by the tremendous Greek force.

Hector, Paris, and several of Troy's leading GENERALS, ARISTOCRATS and PRIESTS sit around the long table. One of the generals, GLAUCUS (60), pounds the table with his fist.

GLAUCUS

If they want a war, we'll give them
a war. I'd match the best of Troy
against the best of Greece any day.

VELIOR (40), a big-bellied nobleman, shakes his head.

VELIOR

The best of Greece outnumber the
best of Troy, two to one.

GLAUCUS

So what do you suggest, we
surrender the city, let the Greeks
slaughter our men and rape our
wives?

Velior looks at Paris until the prince returns his gaze.

VELIOR

I suggest diplomacy. The Greeks
came here for one thing. Let's be
honest, my friends. Trojans are
burning on the pyre right now
because of one youthful
indiscretion.

Paris looks away from Velior.

(CONTINUED)

PRIAM

Glaucus, you've fought with me for forty years. Can we win this war?

GLAUCUS

Our walls have never been breached. Our archers are the best in the world. And we have Hector. His men would fight the shades of Tartarus if he commanded. We can win.

ARCHEPTOLEMUS (65), High Priest of Troy, wearing a long white robe embroidered with gold thread, now raises his voice.

ARCHEPTOLEMUS

I spoke with two farmers today. They saw an eagle flying with a serpent clutched in its talons.

(beat)

This is a sign from Apollo. We will win a great victory tomorrow. Troy is the eagle. The Greeks --

HECTOR

Bird signs! You want to plan our strategy based on bird signs?

PRIAM

Hector. Show respect. When Archeptolemus prophesied four years of drought, we dug deeper wells. The drought came and we had water to drink. The high priest is a servant of the gods.

HECTOR

And I'm a servant of Troy.

(beat)

I've always honored the gods, father. You know that. But today I fought with a Greek who desecrated the statue of Apollo. Apollo didn't strike the man down.

(beat)

The gods won't fight this war for us.

(CONTINUED)

76 CONTINUED: (2)

76

PARIS

There won't be a war.

(he stands)

This is not a conflict of nations.

It's a dispute between two men.

And I don't want to see another

Trojan die because of me.

PRIAM

Paris --

PARIS

Tomorrow morning I will challenge

Menelaus for the right to Helen.

The winner will take her home. The

loser will burn before nightfall.

Paris leaves the room. The others sit in stunned silence.

GLAUCUS

Does he have a chance?

Everyone looks at Hector, who meditates before answering.

HECTOR

I want our army outside the gate in

the morning. Agamemnon won't let

this war end with a duel.

77 EXT. PALACE GARDEN - NIGHT

77

Priam's gardens are wondrous: palm trees grow in the courtyard; flowered vines climb the walls; Aeolian harps chime in the breeze.

Priam and Paris sitting on a bench, facing a statue of Aphrodite. The king holds a cloth-wrapped bundle in his lap.

PARIS

Father, I... I'm sorry for the pain

I've caused you. I --

PRIAM

Do you love her?

Paris looks up at the statue of Aphrodite.

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED:

77

PARIS

You're a great king because you
love your country so much. Every
blade of grass, every grain of
sand, every rock in the river --
you love all of Troy.

(beat)

That's the way I love Helen.

Priam nods and contemplates the goddess of beauty.

PRIAM

I've fought many wars in my time.
Some were fought for land, some for
power, some for glory.

(beat)

I suppose fighting for love makes
more sense than all the rest.

Paris says nothing, but his father's words seem to relieve
a great burden from his shoulders.

PRIAM

But I won't be the one fighting.

He hands Paris the bundle. Paris, curious, begins
unwrapping the cloth. Finally the object is uncovered: a
shining sword, expertly forged, inscribed with the seal of
Troy.

PARIS

The Sword of Troy.

PRIAM

My father carried this sword, and
his father before him, all the way
back to the founding of Troy. The
history of our people was written
with this sword.

(beat)

Carry it with you tomorrow.

Paris holds the sword up and it glows in the moonlight.

PRIAM

The spirit of Troy is in that
sword. As long as a Trojan carries
it, our people have a future.

78 INT. HECTOR'S CHAMBER - NIGHT

78

Hector sits on the bed beside Andromache, who nurses their
baby boy.

(CONTINUED)

78 CONTINUED:

78

Hector looks exhausted. He stares at his son.

HECTOR

He has no idea what's happening.

ANDROMACHE

Thank the gods.

HECTOR

The man who killed Tecton outside
Apollo's temple -- I've never seen
a spear thrown like that. An
impossible throw.

A long beat until Andromache breaks the silence.

ANDROMACHE

Briseis was in Apollo's temple this
morning.

Hector stares at Andromache.

HECTOR

Are you sure?

She nods, swallows hard, and closes her eyes. After a
moment Hector, his eyes full of sorrow, runs his hand
through her long hair.

HECTOR

I need to see my brother.

ANDROMACHE

Don't go.

HECTOR

I need to speak with him.

ANDROMACHE

I mean tomorrow. Don't go. You've
fought enough. Let other men go
out there.

HECTOR

You think I want to fight, my love?
I want to see my son grow tall. I
want to see the girls chasing after
him.

ANDROMACHE

Just like they chased his father?

(CONTINUED)

78 CONTINUED: (2)

78

HECTOR

He's much more handsome than I ever was.

For a moment they sit quietly, watching their son.

ANDROMACHE

I lost seven brothers in the Spartan Wars. You'd think I'd be good at losing by now.

(beat)

I can't lose you. I won't survive.

Hector stares at her for a beat before pulling her close and kissing her. Everything is in this kiss, their entire past. Andromache finally lets him go and Hector walks out the door.

79 INT. PALACE HALL - LATER

79

As Hector walks to Paris's room, he spies someone in a dark cloak sneaking down the candle-lit hallway -- an assassin?

HECTOR

Wait!

The cloaked figure looks back and then runs. Hector chases. The fugitive runs through the archway at the end of the corridor and into the garden.

80 EXT. PALACE GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

80

Hector runs into the garden. He's far faster. He seizes his quarry and pulls aside the fugitive's cowl. It's Helen.

HECTOR

Helen?

By the light of the moon he examines her face. The stress of recent weeks has taken its toll, but the shadows beneath her eyes make her face more compelling than ever.

Embarrassed by the awkwardness of their position, Hector stands and helps Helen to her feet.

HECTOR

What are you doing out --

(CONTINUED)

80 CONTINUED:

80

Helen runs. Hector catches her again after a few strides.

HELEN

Let me go.

HECTOR

Where?

Helen struggles against Hector's grip, but it's useless.

HELEN

Let me go!

Helen, still struggling, begins to cry. Hector pulls her to his chest. She cries for real now, violently sobbing, her mouth muffled against Hector's body.

HECTOR

Shh. Shh.

HELEN

I saw them burn. I saw them
burning on the pyres.

(beat)

It's my fault.

HECTOR

No.

HELEN

It is. You know it is. All those
widows. I still hear them
screaming.

Helen takes a deep breath. She manages to control herself.

HELEN

Their husbands died because I'm
here.

Hector can't deny this. Helen pushes herself out of his grip.

HELEN

I'm going down to the ships.

HECTOR

No. You're not.

(CONTINUED)

80 CONTINUED: (2)

80

HELEN

I'll give myself back to Menelaus.
He can do what he wants -- kill me,
make me his slave. Anything's
better than this.

HECTOR

It's too late for that. You think
Agamemnon cares about his brother's
marriage? This is about power.
Not love.

HELEN

Paris is going to fight in the
morning.

HECTOR

Yes.

HELEN

Menelaus will kill him.

Hector looks away, the words hurting him.

HELEN

I won't let that happen.

HECTOR

It's his decision.

HELEN

No. No. I can't ask anyone to
fight for me. I'm no longer queen
of Sparta.

Hector bows to Helen and kisses her hand.

HECTOR

You're a princess of Troy. And my
brother needs you tonight.

Helen stares at Hector in wonder. The words seem to
bolster her spirit, and she smiles though her eyes are
still wet. She nods, touches his arm and goes back to the
palace.

81 EXT. BEACH ENCAMPMENT - DAWN

81

Up and down the beach thousands of GREEK WARRIORS prepare
for battle. Despite their vast numbers, the men are oddly
quiet, each absorbed with his own thoughts.

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED:

81

CLOSE ON SEVERAL FACES -- these are men we haven't seen before and probably won't see again, not kings or heroes but ordinary men preparing for battle.

One warrior prays with eyes closed, mumbling the words, kneeling in the sand. A second man inspects each arrowhead in his quiver. A third sits in the sand, snapping seashells.

82 INT. ACHILLES' TENT - LATER - DAY

82

Achilles sits cross-legged, arms held straight out in front of him, palms up. His bronze sword is balanced on his palms.

Patroclus and Eudorus, armored for battle, enter the tent. Achilles does not look away from his blade. Though the sword must be heavy, his arms do not tremble.

EUDORUS

My lord? The army is marching.

ACHILLES

Let them march. We stay.

EUDORUS

But the men --

Achilles turns to glare at him and Eudorus falters.

EUDORUS

-- the men are ready.

ACHILLES

Agamemnon spat on my honor yesterday. I promised that girl her safety and he stole her from me. Let *him* fight the Trojans today.

Eudorus and Patroclus exchange glances. Eudorus bows to Achilles and exits the tent. Patroclus remains behind.

ACHILLES

When I was very small I saw my father kill a man with his bare hands.

Patroclus doesn't know how to respond to this.

(CONTINUED)

ACHILLES

There's so much blood in a human
body.

Achilles flips the sword in the air and catches it by the hilt. He examines the edge.

ACHILLES

You're ready to fight, Patroclus?

PATROCLUS

I am.

Achilles rests his sword on the ground. He stares at Patroclus for a moment before speaking.

ACHILLES

You're ready to kill?

Patroclus hesitates.

ACHILLES

At night I see their faces. All
the men I've killed. I see them
standing on the far bank of the
River Styx.

(beat)

They're waiting for me.

Patroclus stands absolutely still. He's never heard his cousin speak this way before.

ACHILLES

Some nights I walk among them.
When I wake I can still hear their
words.

(beat)

They say, "Welcome, brother."

Achilles inspects the knuckles of his fist.

ACHILLES

Never hate the men you fight. All
of us are mortals. All of us,
wretched things, tumbled crying
from our mother's loins.

(beat)

Only the gods are free from
sorrows.

PATROCLUS

I hate no one, cousin.

(CONTINUED)

ACHILLES

Good.

(beat)

I taught you how to fight. But I never taught you why to fight.

PATROCLUS

I fight for you.

ACHILLES

And who will you follow when I'm gone?

Patroclus hesitates, unsure how to answer.

ACHILLES

Most soldiers battle for kings they've never met. They do what they're told; they die when they're told to die.

PATROCLUS

Soldiers obey.

ACHILLES

We don't have much time to walk in the sun, Patroclus. After this life comes the underworld, an eternity telling stories to other shades. Don't tell them you died following some fool's orders.

PATROCLUS

And what should I tell them?

ACHILLES

Tell them your name. If your life has been worthy, they'll know the rest.

One thousand ARCHERS stand in various positions on the broad city walls, quivers of arrows by their sides. TROJAN CITIZENS also crowd atop the walls, quiet and sober.

Priam sits in a grandstand beneath a blue canopy. Seated by him are CITY LEADERS, including Velius and Archeptolemus.

Helen stands apart from everyone else. No one is overtly hostile to her, but behind her back people stare and whisper.

84 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - CONTINUOUS

84

Below the walls, on the broad field that stretches down from the city gates, the TROJAN ARMY has amassed. In the front, Hector and General Glaucus sit astride their horses.

The soldiers are disciplined and well-outfitted, arranged in tight formation.

Paris rides out to join Hector. Hector examines Paris's face.

HECTOR

Are you sure you want to do this?

PARIS

I started this war.

Paris searches the faces atop the city wall. He finds Helen.

CLOSE on Helen. The wind is blowing hard, ruffling her cloak, her hair. There is love in her eyes, and fear and exhaustion. Paris stares up at her for a long time before turning away.

A low, ominous RUMBLE grows steadily louder. Hector hears it first. He looks down the vast sloping field toward the sea.

Now the other soldiers hear it, and then the citizens atop the walls. All speech ceases. The Trojans quietly wait.

The rumbling resolves into the steady beat of WAR DRUMS.

84A EXT. BEACH - DUNES

84A

And now we see them, fifty thousand GREEKS. The reflection of sunlight off fifty thousand bronze shields, fifty thousand bronze helmets and chest plates, is spectacular -- the army looks like a river of lava, flowing uphill.

84B EXT. WALLS OF TROY

84B

The Trojan soldiers don't quiver or waver, but the expressions on their faces betray their anxiety. The Greek army is more than twice the size of the Trojan army.

85 EXT. WALLS OF TROY - CONTINUOUS 85

The citizens shield their eyes from the brightness. They exhibit their nervousness more openly than the soldiers. One OLD WOMAN moans softly, her hand over her mouth.

86 EXT. BLUFF - DAY 86

Patroclus, Eudorus, and the rest of the Myrmidons climb to the top of a tall bluff near the beach. From here they can see the broad battlefield a mile away.

87 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY 87

The Greek army halts just beyond arrow range. A delegation of kings -- Agamemnon, Nestor, Menelaus, Odysseus, and Ajax -- on CHARIOTS proceeds to the center of the battlefield.

Odysseus looks over his shoulder and then yells to Ajax.

ODYSSEUS

Where's Achilles?

Ajax looks around and shrugs.

87A EXT. BATTLEFIELD BETWEEN ARMIES 87A

Hector and Paris spur their horses and canter out to meet the Greeks. The brothers speak without looking at each other.

HECTOR

Menelaus is a bull. He'll charge you.

Paris nods.

HECTOR

He's stronger than you, so try not to fight him up close. Keep your distance. Use your quickness.

Paris leans over and tries to spit, but his mouth is too dry.

HECTOR

Brother?

Paris, his face ashen, looks at Hector.

HECTOR

You don't have to do this.

(CONTINUED)

87A CONTINUED:

87A

Paris shakes his head and continues riding toward Menelaus.

88 EXT. WALLS OF TROY - DAY

88

Helen, alone, views the battlefield. An old, spotted hand takes her elbow. She turns and looks into Priam's eyes.

PRIAM

Sit with me.

Helen follows the king to his grandstand and sits beside him. She's aware of people staring at them but he seems oblivious.

PRIAM

All my life I've prayed against this day.

HELEN

Yes, my king.

PRIAM

Call me father, dear child.

Startled by this affection, she hesitates before responding.

HELEN

Forgive me, father. For...

She pauses, staring out at the vast Greek army.

HELEN

...bringing this.

Priam shakes his head and smiles sadly.

PRIAM

I blame you for nothing.
Everything is in the hands of the gods.

(beat)

Besides, how could I blame anyone for falling in love with Paris?

Helen looks out at the battlefield, fixing on Paris, at this distance a tiny figure on horseback. Priam takes her hand.

Hector and Paris ride up to the Greek kings. Menelaus stares at Paris, his fingers tapping the hilt of his sword. Paris does not make eye contact.

The kings step down from their chariots and the Trojan princes dismount from their horses. Both armies are lined up several hundred yards apart.

Agamemnon surveys the Trojan army.

AGAMEMNON

I see you're not hiding behind your high walls. Valiant of you. Ill-advised, but valiant.

HECTOR

You come here uninvited. Go back to your ships. Go home.

AGAMEMNON

We've come too far, Prince Hector.

MENELAUS

Prince? These are not princes. What son of a king would accept a man's hospitality, eat his food, drink his wine, and then steal his wife in the middle of the night?

PARIS

The sun was shining when your wife left you.

Menelaus draws his sword. He points it at the city walls.

MENELAUS

She's up there watching, isn't she? Good. I want her to watch you die.

Agamemnon places a hand on his brother's arm.

AGAMEMNON

Not yet, brother.

He makes a sweeping gesture, indicating his entire army.

AGAMEMNON

Look around you, Hector. I've brought all the warriors of Greece to your shores.

(CONTINUED)

NESTOR

You can still save Troy, young prince.

AGAMEMNON

I have two wishes. If you grant them, no more of your people need to die. First, give Helen back to my brother. Second, Troy must submit to my command, to fight for me whenever I call.

HECTOR

You want me to look upon your army and tremble. Well, I see them. I see fifty thousand men brought here to fight for one man's greed.

AGAMEMNON

Be careful, boy. My mercy has limits.

HECTOR

I've seen the limits of your mercy. And I tell you now that no son of Troy will ever submit to a foreign ruler.

AGAMEMNON

Then every son of Troy shall die.

PARIS

There is another way.

Everyone watches Paris now.

PARIS

(to Menelaus)

I love Helen. I won't give her up. And neither will you. So let's fight our own battle. Let the winner take Helen home, and that will be the end of it.

AGAMEMNON

A brave offer. But not enough.

Menelaus pulls Agamemnon aside and speaks to him out of the others' earshot.

MENELAUS

Let me kill this little peacock.

(CONTINUED)

AGAMEMNON

I didn't come here for your pretty wife. I came for Troy.

MENELAUS

And I came for my honor. His every breath insults me.

(beat)

Let me kill him. When he's lying in the dust, give the signal to attack. I'll have my revenge and you'll have your city.

Agamemnon ponders the offer. He nods. They rejoin the others.

MENELAUS

(to Paris)

I accept your challenge. And tonight I'll drink to your bones.

He walks over to his chariot and grabs his shield. Hector helps Paris into his helmet and speaks quietly to him.

HECTOR

He doesn't have the stamina he once did. Make him swing and miss. He'll tire.

Paris nods. He turns toward Menelaus but quickly turns back and grabs Hector's arm.

PARIS

Hector!

Hector waits. Paris opens his mouth but no words come out. He tries again.

PARIS

If I fall -- tell Helen -- tell her --

HECTOR

I will.

PARIS

Don't let Menelaus hurt her. Make him swear --

HECTOR

Think about your sword and his sword. Nothing else.

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED: (3)

89

Hector hugs him close for a moment and releases him. Paris walks toward the center of the field, where Menelaus waits.

89A PARIS'S POV

89A

It's difficult to see from inside your bronze helmet. Your peripheral vision is severely restricted, and the nose guard bisects your vision.

Your breathing sounds amplified, impossibly loud and half-panicked. But there's no turning back. Menelaus stands in the center of the vast battlefield, patient and menacing, carving the air with lazy strokes of his sword.

You look back and see Hector. Hector nods, trying to encourage you, but he looks worried. Behind Hector is the Trojan army, twenty-five thousand silent men.

Behind the army is the city of Troy. Atop those walls, beneath that blue canopy, your father is watching, and the woman you love.

You turn back to Menelaus. He's smiling at you.

89B BACK TO SCENE

89B

Menelaus charges at Paris and swings mightily, trying to knock the prince's head from his shoulders. Paris manages to duck beneath the flashing blade.

Menelaus fights with little art and great savagery, exploiting his superior strength. Paris is quicker. He nearly surprises the bigger man with a fast sword thrust, but Menelaus dominates the fight, hammering Paris's shield with a furious barrage of blows.

Paris steps away and tries another thrust, but this time Menelaus sidesteps and smashes Paris in the jaw with the hilt of his sword, knocking the prince's helmet off.

Paris falls, blood leaking from his nose and mouth.

Hector, frustrated and powerless to help, tries to will his brother to victory.

HECTOR
(under his breath)
Get up. Get up.

89C EXT. GREEK LINES

89C

Ajax and Odysseus, standing together, watch the bloodied prince. Ajax looks disgusted, Odysseus amused.

AJAX

This is the prince of Troy? In
Salamis, the women fight better.

ODYSSEUS

But they're not as pretty.

90 EXT. WALLS OF TROY - CONTINUOUS

90

Helen, unable to sit, now stands at the wall, watching her lover battle her husband. Priam stands beside her.

91 EXT. BLUFF - CONTINUOUS

91

Patroclus and the other Myrmidons watch the battle.

EUDORUS

Menelaus still knows how to fight.

92 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - CONTINUOUS

92

Menelaus swings at the fallen prince but Paris is able to block the blow with his shield and scramble to his feet. Menelaus points to the sky. Three CROWS circle above.

MENELAUS

You see the crows?
(beat)
They've never tasted a prince
before.

The Spartan's mind games are working -- Paris wears the face of a man who doesn't want to fight. He swings clumsily and Menelaus manages to catch his wrist. The Spartan grins and raises his sword for the kill.

Paris lashes out with his free hand, punching the Spartan hard in the jaw. Menelaus grunts and shoves the Trojan away. He spits out a tooth. He's no longer smiling.

92A ODYSSEUS AND AJAX

92A

exchange a quick glance: *not bad.*

92B MENELAUS

92B

But Menelaus bores in again, blow after blow. Finally his bronze blade bites into Paris's thigh. Paris staggers backward, blood flowing down his leg. He swings desperately but Menelaus parries, knocking the sword from Paris's hand.

Paris stares at his fallen sword, five feet away.

Paris runs. Menelaus snarls and chases after him.

93 EXT. WALLS OF TROY - CONTINUOUS

93

The citizens seem shocked that their prince and hero would flee before a Greek assailant. They look at each other and whisper, glancing at Priam, curious to see his reaction.

PRIAM

(to himself)

Fight him, son. Fight him.

Helen stares at the battlefield, her face unreadable.

94 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - CONTINUOUS

94

Paris runs to Hector, gasping for breath, the blood pouring down his face and leg. He falls to his knees before his older brother. Hector stares at Paris and then at Menelaus, who has stopped seven feet from the princes.

MENELAUS

Fight me, you coward! Fight me!

Paris, unable to look at either man or speak, trembles by his brother's side. Hector, completely at a loss, lays his hand on Paris's head.

MENELAUS

We have a pact. Fight!

CUT TO:

94A EXT. GREEK LINES

94A

AGAMEMNON signals for the DRIVER of his chariot.

AGAMEMNON

The Trojans have violated the agreement. We march.

(CONTINUED)

94A CONTINUED:

94A

The driver nods. Agamemnon hops onto the chariot and they ride toward the army to deliver the orders.

CUT TO:

94B EXT. BATTLEFIELD

94B

HECTOR looks from his brother to the enraged Menelaus.

MENELAUS

This is not honor. This is not
worthy of royalty.

Hector looks at his brother but Paris is not looking at anybody. He gasps for breath, the blood streaming from his wounds. Hector glances at the Greek army, then back to Paris.

MENELAUS

If he doesn't fight, Troy is
doomed.

HECTOR

Paris.

Paris shakes his head, blood dripping from his nose.

PARIS

No. No.

HECTOR

(to Menelaus)

The fight is over.

MENELAUS

The fight is *not* over. Stand back,
Prince Hector.

Hector stares at the king, judging his intentions.

MENELAUS

I'll kill him at your feet. I
don't care.

HECTOR

He's my brother.

Menelaus charges, sword raised overhead. In one motion Hector draws his own sword and plunges the point through Menelaus's breastplate. Menelaus's momentum carries him forward, until his breastplate touches the hilt of Hector's sword.

(CONTINUED)

94B CONTINUED:

94B

Menelaus, eyes wide open, stares down at the blood which now begins rushing down his armor. He looks up at Hector.

Hector pulls his blade out. Menelaus falls to the ground.

CUT TO:

94C EXT. GREEK LINES

94C

AGAMEMNON standing on his chariot in front of his army, sees his brother fall. For a moment the vast field is silent.

Agamemnon SHOUTS. A wordless cry of rage, echoing from the Greek lines to the walls of Troy. He points toward Hector.

The entire Greek army surges forward. Hollering with a collective violence powerful enough to make the ground tremble, fifty thousand soldiers charge at Hector.

CUT TO:

94D EXT. BATTLEFIELD

94D

sees them coming. The ground he stands on trembles with the concussive force of Greek feet and horses' hooves.

HECTOR

Paris.

Paris still seems to be in a state of shock.

HECTOR

Get up. *Get up!*

The avalanche of Greek infantry is getting closer. Paris finally gets to his feet but runs in the wrong direction, toward the Greeks.

HECTOR

Paris!

What seems to be a sprint to suicide turns out to be something different: Paris grabs the fallen sword of Troy from the ground, dangerously close to the charging Greeks.

He turns and dashes back to Hector. The princes mount.

(CONTINUED)

94D CONTINUED: 94D

The Greeks are almost upon them. Brandishing their spears and screaming their war cries, all of them vie for the glory of felling the Trojan princes.

The closest Greeks launch their spears. One whistles by Hector's ear. He spurs his horse. The princes gallop toward the city.

CUT TO:

94E EXT. GREEK LINES 94E

ODYSSEUS watches this chase with trepidation.

ODYSSEUS

Our men are too close to the walls.

CUT TO:

94F EXT. WALLS OF TROY - BELOW 94F

GLAUCUS the Trojan general, sees that the princes have gained some distance from their pursuers. He calls to an OFFICER standing on the city wall.

GLAUCUS

ARCHERS!

95 EXT. BLUFF - CONTINUOUS 95

Patroclus turns and sees Achilles, standing on a high rock behind the other Myrmidons. We don't know how long Achilles has been watching the battle.

ACHILLES

Pull back, you fool.

96 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - CONTINUOUS 96

The Greek army continues to charge at full speed. One thousand TROJAN ARCHERS notch their arrows and pull back their catgut strings.

GLAUCUS

Now!

One thousand bronze-tipped arrows soar into the air, a deadly swarm of hornets that rises toward the clouds before descending on the charging Greeks.

(CONTINUED)

96 CONTINUED:

96

Hundreds of Greeks fall. The Trojan archers let loose another swarm of arrows. The arrows fall with a great HISS. Many find their mark, biting into the throats and faces of the Greeks.

The Greek army, so overwhelming seconds ago, is now struck with chaos. The men in the front turn back, realizing they've become targets, while the men in back still push forward. In this confusion of foot traffic the arrows continue to fall, a rainstorm of bronze.

Agamemnon, standing on his chariot in the middle of his frenzied troops, tries to maintain order, but his shouts go unheard above the general roar.

The driver of his chariot falls, an arrow through his neck.

Agamemnon grabs the reins and tries to steer the chariot, but so many men are running about, so many bodies litter the ground, that maneuvering is extremely difficult.

CUT TO:

96A EXT. WALLS OF TROY

96A

HECTOR AND PARIS have reached the city walls, where Glaucus and the army wait for them. Hector grabs Paris's arm.

HECTOR

Get inside the city.

He slaps Paris's horse. Paris, head bowed, rides away. Hector turns to his army. He shouts to them at the top of his lungs.

HECTOR

The commander of the Greeks wants the Trojan army to fight for him!

The Trojan mood becomes more and more bellicose.

HECTOR

Would any man here like to fight for Agamemnon?

TROJANS

NO!

Hector raises his sword and points it at the Greeks, who retreat from the arrow fusillade in disarray.

(CONTINUED)

96A CONTINUED:

96A

HECTOR

For Troy!

TROJANS

TROY!

The Trojans charge. Hector, on horseback, reaches the Greeks first. His sword cuts down everyone within reach.

The Trojan infantry attacks the Greeks, whose line has been broken by the rain of arrows. The Trojans take advantage of their enemies' panic. Hector's plan has succeeded.

97 EXT. BLUFF - CONTINUOUS

97

Achilles is unable to stand still. His fingers twitch as he watches the battle; he paces back and forth and curses. Patroclus and the Myrmidons avoid looking at their leader.

ACHILLES

Get them in line... get them in line...

98 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - CONTINUOUS

98

Odysseus, meanwhile, works to reorganize the troops.

ODYSSEUS

Selepius! Bring your men back into line!

Ajax, standing nearby, sees Hector chopping his way through the Greeks. Ajax runs at Hector.

Two TROJAN SOLDIERS try to intercept Ajax. The mighty Greek swings his huge battle axe. The blade cuts clean through the first soldier's arm and halfway through his torso.

The second soldier hacks at Ajax but the big man blocks the sword with his shield and then uses the shield to ram the soldier's face. Blood sprays from the Trojan's crushed skull. Both soldiers fall dead to the ground.

Hector, battling a Greek INFANTRYMAN, doesn't see Ajax coming. Ajax grabs Hector's horse's bridle and tugs hard, the veins in his arms bulging beneath the skin.

(CONTINUED)

The horse tries to buck but Ajax twists the horse's head till it falls. Hector falls with the horse, tumbling to the dirt. The Greek infantryman he had been fighting stabs at him.

Hector rolls away and manages -- while flat on his back -- to swing his sword, chopping off the infantryman's feet just above the ankles. The infantryman screams and falls.

Ajax releases the horse, raises his axe, and swings at the fallen Hector. The prince gets his shield up just in time. Ajax's axe cleaves through the shield, splitting the bronze into two even halves.

Hector stares at the halved shield, discards it, and jumps to his feet. The two fighters circle each other while thousands of soldiers around them battle to the death.

AJAX

So you're the best of the Trojans?

Hector, looking for an opening in the brute's defenses, says nothing. Ajax charges, swinging his battle axe.

Hector ducks below the axe and lunges forward with his sword, but Ajax -- quick despite his size -- sidesteps, grabs the smaller man in a bear hug and squeezes.

Hector turns red. The sword falls from Hector's hand. Ajax grins.

Hector slams his helmeted head forward, butting Ajax in the face. Ajax staggers back, blood spraying from his nose, his axe falling to the ground.

Hector struggles to regain his equilibrium. Ajax growls and launches himself at the prince.

Hector snatches a spear off the ground and positions it just as Ajax dives at him. The spear pierces Ajax's armor, driving through his belly and out his back. Hector holds the shaft steady. Ajax stares down at his wound. He seems more irritated than anything else.

Ajax places his two big hands on the spear shaft, right where the spear enters his body. He breaks the spear in two, snapping the solid wood like a twig.

Half a spear still sticking out his back, Ajax swings the shaft, clobbering Hector in the side of the head, sending the horsehair-plumed helmet flying.

(CONTINUED)

98 CONTINUED: (2)

98

Hector, dazed, falls to one knee. Ajax whacks him again on the back of his neck. Hector crawls forward blindly. His hands brush over the blade of his dropped sword.

Hector springs up, driving his sword into Ajax's gut, just below the big man's breast plate. Hector withdraws his sword. Both men see the ground drenched with Ajax's blood.

Ajax backhands Hector with the broken spear shaft, cracking the prince in the jaw and dropping him again. Ajax grabs Hector, hoists him upright and begins throttling the prince. Ajax spits a great wad of blood and smiles, teeth washed red.

Hector tries to kick at Ajax, but Ajax's thumbs dig deeper and deeper into Hector's throat. Hector's eyelids begin to flutter as he chokes.

But the Salamisian king has lost too much blood. He sinks slowly to his knees. Hector is forced to his knees as well.

Finally Ajax's eyes roll back. He topples onto Hector, hands still locked on the prince's throat. Hector undoes the death grip. He squirms out from under Ajax's corpse and stands.

99 EXT. BLUFF - CONTINUOUS

99

Patroclus and the Myrmidons watch Ajax fall with disbelief. Achilles cannot bear to watch any longer. He walks away. None of his men dare look at him.

100 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

100

The Trojans are routing the Greeks. With two of their kings already fallen, the Greek force is in disarray.

Odysseus sees Agamemnon speeding by on his chariot. Odysseus runs and manages to leap onto the chariot. The two kings shout at each other above the commotion of battle.

ODYSSEUS

We need to retreat!

Agamemnon surveys the battlefield and his battered forces.

(CONTINUED)

100 CONTINUED:

100

AGAMEMNON

My army has never lost a battle.

ODYSSEUS

If we don't fall back you won't
have an army!

Agamemnon seems dazed by the turn of events. Finally
Odysseus hollers to whichever CAPTAINS can hear his voice.

ODYSSEUS

Back to the ships! Back to the
ships!

The captains take up this cry, shouting orders to their
men.

The Greeks retreat. The Trojan soldiers give a mighty
shout as they pursue their enemies.

101 EXT. WALLS OF TROY

101

The people cheer. Nobles and commoners embrace as
brothers.

102 EXT. BATTLEFIELD

102

Hector, still on foot, leads his men as they chase down
the fleeing Greeks. Several thousand Greeks have fallen.

103 EXT. BEACH ENCAMPMENT

103

The Greeks get back to their trenches, the bulk of the
force still intact. ARCHERS in the Greek rear guard,
manning the trenches, now raise their bows and prepare to
fire.

Hector, eager to avoid the mistakes his Greek counterparts
made earlier, holds up his hands and BELLOWS to the
troops.

HECTOR

Halt!

The Trojan army stops just outside the Greek archers'
range. Lysander, the Trojan captain, stands beside
Hector.

(CONTINUED)

103 CONTINUED:

103

LYSANDER

We have them on the run, my prince.

HECTOR

We're almost in range of their archers. You saw what our arrows did to them.

(beat)

Have the men gather our fallen. When they're done, send an emissary to the Greeks. They can collect their dead without fear of assault.

LYSANDER

Would they have done the same for us?

HECTOR

Of course not. That's why Troy is worth defending.

Hector turns and heads back to the white city.

104 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - LATER

104

Thousands of BODIES litter the broad field. We see them first from high above, their bronze armor gleaming in the failing sunlight. CLOSE on several of the dead men's faces.

The living haul the dead from the battlefield. HORSES are used to pull wagonloads of bodies.

Fathers or sons or brothers or friends say their goodbyes and wash the dead men with washcloths and buckets of water.

The sun sinks into the ocean. Both sides build funeral pyres for their fallen. When a body is loaded onto the pyre, a relative or friend places two COINS on the dead man's eyes.

Dozens of SALAMISIANS view Ajax's body. They weep as they pass by, each man kneeling to kiss their fallen king's hand.

104A EXT. BATTLEFIELD - FUNERAL PYRESS

104A

Agamemnon stands before the body of Menelaus.

(CONTINUED)

104A CONTINUED:

104A

He places two coins on Menelaus's eyes. He steps down from the pyre, accepts a torch from a CAPTAIN, and sets the pyre on fire.

AGAMEMNON

I will burn their city before I leave, brother. I promise you that.

As the sky grows dark, the dead burn on the beach and inside the walls of Troy.

105 INT. PARIS'S BEDCHAMBER -NIGHT

105

Paris flinches as Helen, using needle and thread, stitches his leg wound. His face is bruised, his eyes red.

PARIS

You think I'm a coward.

Helen, concentrating on her stitching, says nothing. Paris flinches as the needle pierces his skin.

PARIS

I *am* a coward.

(beat)

I knew he would kill me. I knew it. You were watching, and my father, my brother, all of Troy -- it didn't matter. The shame didn't matter.

(beat)

I gave up my pride, my honor. Just to live.

HELEN

You challenged a great warrior. That took courage.

PARIS

I betrayed you.

Helen inspects her work. The black stitches are a little ragged, but they seem secure.

HELEN

Menelaus was brave. He lived for fighting. And I hated him from the day I married him until the day he died.

(CONTINUED)

105 CONTINUED:

105

Helen leans forward until her lips are inches from Paris.

HELEN

I don't want a hero, my love. I
want a man to grow old with.

She kisses him and there is great tenderness in her kiss.
A knock on the door. Helen looks up. Another knock.

HELEN

Come in.

Hector enters the room. He examines Paris's leg.

HECTOR

(to Helen)

Well stitched.

(to Paris)

You have a talented woman.

(beat)

I thank the gods you're alive,
little brother.

PARIS

I wanted to make you proud of me.

He grips Paris' shoulder.

HECTOR

You will.

106 EXT. BEACH ENCAMPMENT - NIGHT

106

Thousands of campfires constellate the beach. Tens of
thousands of exhausted soldiers stare into the flames.

107 INT. AGAMEMNON'S TENT - NIGHT

107

Nestor sits at a table, poring over the map of Troy.
Odysseus lies in a hammock strung between two of the tent
poles, eating olives and spitting out the pits.

Agamemnon paces the rugs that floor the tent. His usual
air of supreme confidence is gone, replaced by agitation.

AGAMEMNON

They're laughing at me in Troy.
Old Priam and the others, drunk on
victory. They think I'll quit
these shores, sail home at first
light.

(CONTINUED)

ODYSSEUS

Maybe we should.

Agamemnon spins and glares at Odysseus.

AGAMEMNON

Flee like a whipped dog?

ODYSSEUS

The men believe we came here for Menelaus's wife. He won't be needing his wife anymore.

AGAMEMNON

(furious)

My brother's blood still wets the grass and you insult him?

ODYSSEUS

It's no insult to say a dead man is dead.

NESTOR

If we leave now we lose all credibility. If the Trojans can beat us so easily, how long before the Hittites invade?

ODYSSEUS

You're right. But if we stay, we stay for the right reasons.

(to Agamemnon)

We stay to protect Greece, not your pride. Your private battle with Achilles is destroying us.

AGAMEMNON

Achilles is one man. What good could he --

ODYSSEUS

Hector is one man. Look what he did to us today.

AGAMEMNON

Hector fights for his country. Achilles fights only for himself.

ODYSSEUS

I don't care about the man's patriotism. I care about his ability to win battles.

(CONTINUED)

107 CONTINUED: (2)

107

NESTOR

(to Agamemnon)

He's right. The men's morale is weak.

ODYSSEUS

Weak? They're ready to swim home.

AGAMEMNON

Even if I wanted to make peace with Achilles, the man won't listen. He's just as likely to spear me as speak with me.

ODYSSEUS

I'll talk to him in the morning.

Agamemnon thinks about it for a moment and nods.

NESTOR

He'll want the girl back.

AGAMEMNON

He can take the damned girl. I haven't touched her.

ODYSSEUS

Where is she?

AGAMEMNON

I gave her to the men. They needed some amusement after today.

Odysseus and Nestor exchange worried looks.

108 EXT. GREEK CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

108

A band of battle-weary, drunken SOLDIERS stand by a campfire. They're exhausted, caked with dirt and their comrades' blood.

They shove Briseis back and forth between them. Each man she bounces into tears off a strip of her robes, which are now filthy rags barely covering her body.

Her face seems to have shut down. She has a bruise below one eye and her hair is wet with wine. The soldiers stare at her with a mix of hostility and lust.

APHAEREUS

You Trojan whore.

(CONTINUED)

ECHEPOLUS

We should kill her now, keep her from breeding any more Trojan bastards.

APHAEREUS

No, she's Agamemnon's property.

(tearing off a sleeve)

What's this? A virgin's robe?

HAEMON

You won't be needing that much longer.

Haemon squats by the fire, holding an iron in the flames. He pulls out a branding iron in the shape of Agamemnon's seal: a white-hot ALPHA. He carries it toward Briseis.

HAEMON

Hold her down.

Briseis sees the hot iron and begins to struggle, screaming and kicking at the men. Four of the soldiers pin her down.

HAEMON

Why are you kicking, girl? Better to be a Spartan slave than a Trojan priestess.

Briseis claws Haemon in the face. He growls and punches her.

HAEMON

Come on, come on, hold her down.

The soldiers hold her in the sand. Haemon steadies the hot brand and searches for the best place to mark her.

When the brand is inches from her arm someone grabs the iron, pulls it out of Haemon's hands and then slams it down on the man's head. Haemon collapses.

Achilles stands alone, unarmed save for the branding iron. By firelight he looks ferocious. Echepolus stumbles backward.

ECHEPOLUS

Achilles.

Aphaereus spits in the sand. He draws his sword.

(CONTINUED)

108 CONTINUED: (2)

108

APHAREUS

There's one of him and ten of us.

Achilles swings the iron, almost too fast for the eye to follow. Aphaereus's face collapses. He falls to the beach.

ACHILLES

Nine.

The other soldiers run. Achilles lifts Briseis to her feet. More gently than we would have believed possible, Achilles brushes the sand from her face and hair.

ACHILLES

Can you walk?

Briseis nods. Achilles, arm around her shoulder, leads her away from the campfire.

109 EXT. ACHILLES' TENT - NIGHT

109

Eudorus and Patroclus are waiting when Achilles and Briseis get to the tent.

ACHILLES

Get me food and water. And a new robe.

Eudorus bows. Patroclus watches Achilles and Briseis enter the tent.

110 INT. ACHILLES' TENT - LATER

110

Achilles sits near Briseis, watching her. She's clean now, dressed in a new robe -- a man's robe, far too big for her. Platters of fruit and roasted meats sit near her, along with pitchers of wine and water. Briseis doesn't touch any of it.

ACHILLES

You should eat.

Briseis says nothing.

ACHILLES

Did they hurt you?

BRISEIS

What do you think?

(CONTINUED)

ACHILLES

I saw you fight them. You have courage.

BRISEIS

To fight back when people attack me? A dog has that kind of courage.

ACHILLES

I like dogs more than people.

Briseis stares into Achilles' eyes. He's not used to people meeting his gaze. He stares back at the girl, intrigued.

BRISEIS

Why did you choose this life?

ACHILLES

What life?

BRISEIS

This... to be a great warrior.

ACHILLES

I chose nothing. I was born and this is what I am.

BRISEIS

But you must enjoy it.

ACHILLES

Does the scorpion feel joy when he stings the beetle?

(beat)

I doubt it. I doubt he feels anything at all.

BRISEIS

But you're not a scorpion. You're a man.

ACHILLES

And you're a woman in love with a god. Where was Apollo when those men tried to scar you?

BRISEIS

Do you enjoy provoking me?

ACHILLES

Yes.

(CONTINUED)

110 CONTINUED: (2)

110

They watch each other, Achilles smiling, Briseis angry.

ACHILLES

You've dedicated your life to the gods, yes?

Briseis, glaring at him, doesn't answer.

ACHILLES

Zeus, God of Thunder. Athena, Goddess of Wisdom. You serve them?

BRISEIS

Of course.

ACHILLES

And Aries, God of War, who blankets his bed with the skins of men he's killed?

Briseis pauses, caught in the trap.

BRISEIS

All the gods are to be feared and respected.

For a long beat they are silent, staring at each other. The air between them is charged with more than mere contention.

BRISEIS

What do you want here in Troy? You didn't come for the Spartan queen.

ACHILLES

I want what all men want. I just want it more.

Achilles takes an apple and unsheathes a dagger. He tosses the apple in his hand. On the third toss he whips his knife-hand up and across and neatly catches four apple quarters.

He offers a quarter to Briseis. Stunned, she slowly shakes her head. Achilles shrugs and eats the sliced apple.

(CONTINUED)

110 CONTINUED: (3)

110

ACHILLES

I'll tell you a secret-- something they didn't teach you in your temple. The gods envy us. They envy us because we're mortal, because every moment might be our last. Everything is more beautiful for the doomed.

He stares at her with such intensity she must look away.

ACHILLES

You will never be lovelier than you are right now. And we will never be here again.

Briseis is quiet for a moment. She rubs the ripe purple grapes on the platter beside her.

BRISEIS

I thought you were a dumb brute.

She looks into Achilles' eyes.

BRISEIS

I could have forgiven a dumb brute.

111 EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

111

It's quiet now. Only a few campfires burn under a full moon.

112 INT. ACHILLES' TENT - LATER

112

Achilles lies on his back on a deer skin, sleeping. Briseis kneels beside him. In the candlelight we see the glint of a bronze blade. She holds the knife near his throat.

Achilles open his eyes.

ACHILLES

Go on.

Briseis holds the blade against his skin.

ACHILLES

Nothing is easier.

BRISEIS

Aren't you afraid?

(CONTINUED)

112 CONTINUED:

112

ACHILLES

Every mortal dies. Today or fifty
years from now, what does it matter
in the face of eternity?

BRISEIS

You'll kill more men if I don't
kill you.

ACHILLES

Many of them.

For several seconds she holds the knife to his throat.
Finally she puts it down.

BRISEIS

May Apollo forgive me.

Achilles pulls her closer and they kiss.

He slowly slides the robe off her shoulders. Briseis --
eyes closed, lips parted -- trembles as Achilles unveils
her. For a moment she hesitates but soon hesitation
evaporates and she presses her body against his, kissing
his throat, his chest, his hands.

Their hunger for each other is stronger than gods and
nations.

113 EXT. BAY - DAWN

113

Rosy-fingered dawn appears. The seagulls cry above the
waves.

114 INT. ACHILLES' TENT - MORNING

114

Achilles watches Briseis sleep. She looks very young and
fragile, her face bruised, her eyelids fluttering as she
dreams. Achilles watches her with great tenderness.

Eudorus opens the tent flap. Sunlight streams in.
Achilles puts a finger over his mouth. Eudorus sees
Briseis and nods. Achilles gently pulls the blanket over
her naked shoulders. He stands and exits.

115 EXT. ACHILLES' TENT - CONTINUOUS

115

Odysseus waits for Achilles outside the tent.

(CONTINUED)

ACHILLES

(to Eudorus)

Have the men start loading the ship. We're going home.

Eudorus, surprised, looks at Odysseus for a second before bowing to his commander and walking away.

ODYSSEUS

You found the girl?

ACHILLES

I found her.

ODYSSEUS

Is she hurt?

ACHILLES

Not as badly as those who hurt her.

Achilles stares at the sea. Seagulls patrol the skies.

ACHILLES

Do you miss your wife, Odysseus?

ODYSSEUS

Always.

ACHILLES

I've never missed anyone in my life. I used to think it was a weakness, needing someone else.

ODYSSEUS

We all need someone else. Right now, Greece needs you.

ACHILLES

Greece got along fine before I was born and Greece will be Greece long after I'm dead.

ODYSSEUS

I'm not talking about the land. The valleys, the mountains -- they don't care what we do. The *men* need you. You should have seen the slaughter yesterday.

ACHILLES

I saw it. And I saw who led the men to slaughter.

(CONTINUED)

ODYSSEUS

Agamemnon... is a proud man. But he knows when he's made a mistake.

ACHILLES

The man sends you to make his apologies? He doesn't understand honor. What are you doing in thrall to that pig of a king?

ODYSSEUS

The world seems simple to you, my friend. But when you're a king, very few choices are simple. Ithaca cannot afford an enemy like Agamemnon.

ACHILLES

Am I supposed to fear him?

ODYSSEUS

You don't fear anyone, that's your problem. Fear is useful.

(beat)

Stay, Achilles. You were born for this war.

ACHILLES

My life is war. Is that what you think?

ODYSSEUS

Am I wrong?

Achilles stares at the sea again.

ACHILLES

A week ago you were right. But things are less simple today.

ODYSSEUS

Women have a way of complicating things.

Achilles smiles. He turns to Odysseus and clasps his hand.

ACHILLES

Of all the kings of Greece, I respect you most. But in this war you're a servant. And I refuse to be a servant any longer.

(CONTINUED)

115 CONTINUED: (3)

115

ODYSSEUS

Sometimes you need to serve in
order to lead. I hope you
understand that one day.

Odysseus walks away. Achilles watches him go and then
turns back toward his tent. He sees that Patroclus has
been standing by the tent throughout the previous
conversation.

PATROCLUS

We're going home?

ACHILLES

We leave at noon.

He tries to enter his tent but Patroclus grabs his arm and
blocks his path. Achilles stares at Patroclus' hand.
Patroclus releases him but doesn't move out of the way.

PATROCLUS

If Poseidon curses us and our ship
goes down, what will I tell the
shades in Hades? That I died
running from this war, abandoning
our countrymen?

ACHILLES

Our countrymen?

PATROCLUS

Yes, our country! We're Greek,
cousin. I broke bread with these
men, I drank their wine, I listened
to their jokes. These are our
comrades. We cannot desert them.

(beat)

Your feud with Agamemnon is tearing
this army apart. And your
reputation suffers. The men are
talking --

Achilles' eyes narrow as his temper rises.

ACHILLES

If my blood wasn't in your
veins --

PATROCLUS

But your blood *is* in my veins.

(CONTINUED)

115 CONTINUED: (4)

115

ACHILLES

I gave you an order, cousin. We
leave at noon.

Achilles opens the tent flap.

PATROCLUS

If you command us not to fight for
the king of kings, so be it. But
please don't ask me not to fight
for Greece.

(long beat)

When the shades hear my name I want
them to know I led a worthy life.

Achilles, face inscrutable, watches his cousin walk away.

116 INT. PRIAM'S MEETING HALL - MORNING

116

The notables we've seen in this room before -- Priam,
Hector, Glaucus, Velior, Archeptolemus -- are gathered
again.

ARCHEPTOLEMUS

The omens are gathering. The
directive is clear.

HECTOR

Fight for your country. That's the
only directive.

PRIAM

(to Hector)

The last time the high priest spoke
to us he prophesied a great victory
for Troy. We won a great victory.
Let him speak.

(to Archeptolemus)

What course of action do you
recommend?

ARCHEPTOLEMUS

The gods favor our cause. Now is
the time to destroy the Greek army.

PRIAM

Glaucus?

(CONTINUED)

GLAUCUS

Their morale is battered. Hit them now, hit them hard, and they will run.

VELIOR

I must admit, I overestimated the Greeks. They lack discipline and courage.

Hector, frustrated and weary, rubs his eyes.

HECTOR

The Myrmidons did not fight yesterday. There must be dissension among the Greeks. But if we attack their ships, we'll unify them.

(beat)

If they decide to attack, let them. They can't breach our walls. We'll beat them back again.

(beat; to Priam)

Yesterday the Greeks underestimated us. We should not return the favor today.

Priam meditates on this conflicting advice. He stands and paces about the room. He turns to Archeptolemus.

PRIAM

You're confident about the meaning of these omens?

ARCHEPTOLEMUS

The desecration of his temple angers Apollo. The gods have cursed the Greeks. Two of their kings have already gone down to the dust.

Priam continues pacing, hands clasped behind his back.

PRIAM

Prepare the army. We attack at noon.

HECTOR

We're making a mistake, father.

Father and son face each other across the long table.

PRIAM

Prepare the army.

117 EXT. ACHILLES' WARSHIP - LATER - DAY 117

Achilles' ship has already been hauled into the shallow water, ready to depart. Myrmidons climb the gangplank, carrying gear onto the ship's deck.

118 INT. ACHILLES' WARSHIP - DAY 118

Briseis sits in the cabin watching Achilles tie a hammock to a peg. Something has changed between them. She looks at him with undisguised tenderness.

BRISEIS

Am I still your captive?

ACHILLES

Captive is a harsh word. You're my guest.

BRISEIS

In Troy, guests can leave whenever they want.

ACHILLES

Strange custom.

Achilles takes her hand and inspects her uncalloused palms.

ACHILLES

You've never worked the fields.
Never chopped wood, never carried a milk pail. These are the hands of royalty.

Achilles raises his own hands and shows them to her.

ACHILLES

My hands are gates to the underworld.

(beat)

All my life I've walked with Death.
But I grow tired of his company.

(beat)

Come with me to Larissa.

A hint of a smile crosses her lips.

BRISEIS

Larissa. Is that where you're from?

(beat)

It's a pretty name.

(CONTINUED)

118 CONTINUED:

118

ACHILLES

I thought I'd never see it again.
 (beat)
 Before I left home my mother told
 me my fate.

BRISEIS

(sincere)
 She speaks with the gods?

ACHILLES

She knows things.
 (beat)
 She told me if I stayed home I'd
 have a long, peaceful life. And if
 I came to Troy, life would be
 short... but my name would never be
 forgotten.

BRISEIS

And you chose Troy.

ACHILLES

But what if Fate brought me here
 for another purpose? What if I had
 to go to war to find peace?
 (beat)
 To find you?

She cups his face between her palms, pulls him closer,
 kisses his lips. For a moment they gaze at each other,
 until the sounds of WAR CRIES, HORNS, and BATTLE DRUMS
 fill the air.

Achilles raises his head and listens, his face hardening.
 Briseis, alarmed, watches him.

119 EXT. AGAMEMNON'S TENT - DAY

119

Agamemnon, Nestor, and Odysseus exit the tent. The beach
 is a frenzy of activity. Thousands of men rush to their
 positions, hastily arming themselves. The kings look to
 the high dunes.

120 EXT. HIGH DUNES - CONTINUOUS

120

Hector and his APOLLONIAN GUARDS, on horseback, crest the
 dunes and look down on the Greek encampment. 25,000
 TROJAN FOOT SOLDIERS march behind Hector. He gives a
 signal. The force halts.

121 EXT. BEACH ENCAMPMENT - CONTINUOUS 121

The GREEKS, plainly nervous, swarm to the long trench they've dug. The Trojans crushed them yesterday. Now they're back.

121A EXT. HIGH DUNES 121A

The Trojan ARCHERS pull their bows off their shoulders and notch their arrows.

121B EXT. BEACH ENCAMPMENT 121B

The Greek archers notch their arrows.

Odysseus stands with his ITHACANS, waiting to battle. A cry starts up on the far end of the Greek line and grows steadily louder. Odysseus looks in that direction.

A glittering figure has stepped forth from the Myrmidon camp, clad in the beautiful and distinctive armor that every man in the Greek army recognizes.

ODYSSEUS

Achilles.

All down the Greek line we hear the cheer building to a roar. Agamemnon, hearing the commotion, turns and sees the shining warrior. He watches the spectacle with mixed emotions.

Eudorus, standing with several Myrmidons, is thrilled by his leader's unexpected arrival.

EUDORUS

Arm yourselves, men.

The Myrmidons quickly and excitedly arm themselves.

121C EXT. HIGH DUNES 121C

The Trojans are not aware of this energy. Hector raises his sword and points at the Greeks. The Trojan army charges. When they are within range the Trojan archers release, sending a volley of arrows over the heads of their comrades. The Greek archers release at the same time.

Two flocks of arrows cross in the sky and swoop down on the men below. Dozens of Greeks and Trojans fall to the sand.

121D EXT. GREEK BEACH DEFENSES

121D

But now the glorious bronzed figure of Achilles leaps over the trench, sunlight reflecting off his polished armor.

He raises his sword to the sky. A great, violent ROAR rises from the Greek army. When he runs toward the Trojans the Greeks jump from their positions and follow.

The two armies collide. Unlike the grassy field the men fought on yesterday, today's battle takes place on the sand, and sand is everywhere.

Horse hooves kick up clouds of sand. Men struggle for footing in the loose sand. Red blood puddles on the yellow sand.

But much more is different than the terrain. Now the Greeks have a leader. The Myrmidons are at the forefront, battling with a ferocity most Trojans have never seen before.

A Trojan OFFICER, spear raised, gallops toward the figure of Achilles. Before the Trojan can throw, Eudorus hurls his spear, catching the officer in the neck. The man goes down.

Odysseus, immersed in combat, sees this. He hesitates for a moment and in his distraction is nearly cut down by an axe-wielding Trojan. They fight.

After Odysseus dispatches the man, he looks back toward the glittering figure of Achilles. Something's making him uneasy.

A Trojan swings his sword at the shining warrior, narrowly missing a clean decapitation. The Greek hero thrusts his spear and guts the Trojan.

The Myrmidons surge forward, hacking their way through the Trojans. The Greek army steadily pushes the Trojans back, picking up more and more momentum.

Now it is the Trojans who seem frightened, unsure where the Greeks found this intense spirit.

Glaukus, the Trojan general, on horseback, shouts to Hector.

GLAUCUS

The gods are with them today! We
should fall back!

Hector, fighting, does not answer.

(CONTINUED)

121D CONTINUED:

121D

The Myrmidons are getting closer to the elite Apollonians. Hector notices them now. He notices the beautiful armor of their leader, notices the leader hop nimbly from the path of a charging Trojan and cut the man down.

HECTOR
(to himself)
Achilles.

Hector goes after him. He grips the reins and guides his horse toward the Myrmidons. His Apollonians, clustered about him protectively, move in that direction as well.

121E EXT. GREEK BEACH DEFENSES

121E

The two elite forces clash. These men are experts, wielding their spears and swords with superior skill.

Hector's horse stumbles in the deep sand. Hector abandons his mount, leaping down to the beach, running for the shining warrior. A Myrmidon intercepts him. Their battle is quick-- Hector kills him with a sword thrust.

Now he is face to face (or helmet to helmet) with the figure of glorious Achilles. The two men, breathing heavily from the combat, stand still for a moment.

The intricately-worked bronze of Achilles' helmet, breastplate, and shield all shine bright. He's a difficult man to stare at for long. Now he charges, sword raised.

They fight. And though the battle continues all around them, everyone seems to be aware of the duel taking place.

The shining warrior is quicker than Hector and lighter on his feet, swinging again and again, a blaze of bronze. Hector fights patiently, parrying the blows, waiting for an opening.

The sword of Achilles whistles over Hector's head, swung so hard that the man wielding it cannot protect himself. Hector takes full advantage, swinging quickly, his blade carving the soft flesh just beneath Achilles' helmet.

A long question mark of blood whips out of the cut throat. The man falls.

(CONTINUED)

121E CONTINUED:

121E

Everything seems to stop. Though the battle is still underway and thousands of individuals are still fighting for their lives, a collective gasp of despair comes from the Greeks.

Odysseus, stunned, stares at the body on the ground. Hector stands next to the fallen man. He wedges the tip of his sword inside the bronze helmet and lifts it off.

Patroclus is dying, trying to breathe as his throat floods with blood. His eyes are panicked.

Hector stares down at the dying boy, at the blood-soaked SEASHELL NECKLACE.

For a moment they stare at each other, the victorious prince of Troy and the dying boy in the sand. The sounds of Patroclus' gurgling breaths visibly upset the prince.

With an anguished cry he raises his sword and brings it down. We don't see the blade hit, but the boy's suffering ends.

Hector sees a stunned Odysseus standing nearby. The Greeks have pushed the Trojans back from the beach, onto the grassy inland plains, but now combat has halted.

HECTOR

Enough for one day?

Odysseus nods. Hector calls out to Glaucus.

HECTOR

Arms down! Back to the city!

Glaucus relays the call. Odysseus calls to his CAPTAINS.

ODYSSEUS

Arms down! Arms down! To the beach!

Odysseus sheathes his sword and approaches. He crouches by Patroclus and closes the dead boy's frightened eyes. Hector and Odysseus look at each other for a beat.

Hector mounts his horse and leads his men home. The two sides retreat. Eudorus hurries over and kneels beside the dead boy.

EUDORUS

We were going to sail home at noon.

(CONTINUED)

121E CONTINUED: (2)

121E

ODYSSEUS

I don't think anyone's sailing home
now.

122 EXT. ACHILLES' WARSHIP - LATER

122

Eudorus walks up to the ship, takes a few deep breaths,
and calls to his commander.

EUDORUS

Achilles!

Achilles emerges from the ship's cabin and walks to the
bow. He descends the gangplank to the beach. Briseis
follows.

Eudorus bows. Achilles examines his captain. Eudorus is
sweaty and dirty, his hands caked with dried blood. His
helmet is off but he still wears his armor.

ACHILLES

You've been fighting.

EUDORUS

My lord --

ACHILLES

You violated my command.

EUDORUS

No, my lord. There was a mistake.

ACHILLES

A mistake? I ordered the Myrmidons
to stand down. You led them into
combat?

EUDORUS

I didn't lead them.

Eudorus cannot meet his commander's gaze.

ACHILLES

Who did?

EUDORUS

We thought you did.

Now Achilles can tell, staring at his captain's face, that
something is very wrong. He looks around the encampment.
All the men returning from combat avoid looking at
Achilles.

(CONTINUED)

ACHILLES

Where's Patroclus?

EUDORUS

We thought it was you, my lord. We
-- he wore your armor. Your
shield, your grieves, your helmet.
(long beat)
He's dead, my lord.

ACHILLES

You're lying.

EUDORUS

Never, my lord. Never. He looked
like you. He even moved like you.
We all followed --

ACHILLES

Lies.

EUDORUS

He fought well, my lord. With
great courage. But Hector came
after him.

Achilles' nostrils are flared, his eyes narrowed.

EUDORUS

If I could have saved him --

Achilles hits Eudorus hard in the mouth. The captain
falls to the sand. Achilles looms above him, fists
clenched. Eudorus holds his mouth. Blood is already
beginning to stream out.

ACHILLES

Liar!

EUDORUS

My lord, I saw him fall.

Achilles seizes Eudorus by the hair and hauls him to his
knees. He snatches Eudorus's sword and raises it.
Briseis grabs Achilles' shoulder.

BRISEIS

Don't!

With his free hand Achilles grabs her throat. She claws
at his wrist. Her feet spasm and kick inches off the
ground.

(CONTINUED)

122 CONTINUED: (2)

122

Eyes bulging, she stares at him. Whatever kindness she'd seen in his eyes before, whatever tenderness, it's gone now.

Achilles drops her. She sags to the ground, gasping for breath, beginning to sob. Achilles releases Eudorus. The captain remains on his knees, watching his lord.

ACHILLES

Dead?

EUDORUS

Hector cut his throat.

Achilles walks to a dead campfire where the Myrmidons cook their dinner. He drops Eudorus's sword and kneels in the ashes, grabs handfuls of the soot, and blackens his face.

Achilles stands, grabs the sword, and walks toward the sea. Everyone stares at him. He keeps walking as the waters lap at his ankles, his knees, his waist.

The waves are high, crashing down on him, but Achilles does not turn from them. He swings the sword, chopping through the surf, slicing the crests off the waves, groaning as he fights. The soldiers on the beach stare at him.

Achilles battles the sea.

123 EXT. PALACE GARDEN - NIGHT

123

Hector, carrying a torch, leads Andromache through the lower garden, down a staircase descending from the shrine of Apollo to a door half-hidden by climbing vines. He opens the door.

124 INT. PALACE OF TROY - SUBTERRANEAN LEVEL - NIGHT

124

Andromache follows Hector into the palace's dark recesses.

ANDROMACHE

Where are you taking me?

Hector leads her until they reach a bronze-banded oak door. He opens the door, revealing the mouth of a dark tunnel.

(CONTINUED)

HECTOR

You remember how to get here?

ANDROMACHE

Yes.

HECTOR

Next time you come, follow this tunnel. There's nowhere to turn, so you can't get lost. Keep walking.

ANDROMACHE

Hector --

HECTOR

When you get outside you'll be on the south side of the Scamander River. Follow the river till you see Mount Ida. Keep Ida to your west, walk south, and you'll get to Lyrnessus.

(beat)

The Greeks won't go that far inland.

ANDROMACHE

You're frightening me.

Hector stares into the darkness of the tunnel.

ANDROMACHE

Hector.

(beat)

Why are you telling me this?

HECTOR

If I die --

ANDROMACHE

No --

HECTOR

If I die, I don't know how long the city will stand.

ANDROMACHE

Don't say that.

(CONTINUED)

124 CONTINUED: (2)

124

HECTOR

If the Greeks get inside the walls,
it's over. They'll kill all the
men. Doesn't matter how old,
they'll pull grandfathers from
their beds and carve their lungs
out.

ANDROMACHE

Please --

HECTOR

Doesn't matter how young. They'll
throw the babies from the city
walls.

Andromache closes her eyes.

HECTOR

The women they'll take for slaves.
And that will be worse for you than
dying.

ANDROMACHE

Why are you saying these things?

HECTOR

I want you to be ready. I want you
to get our boy, *get him*, and come
here. Save as many others as you
can, but you *get here*, you go down
these stairs, and you run.

(beat)

Do you understand?

She nods. The flickering flame of the taper throws giant
shadows on the stone walls.

HECTOR

I killed a boy today.

(beat)

He was too young. Much too young.

125 EXT. BEACH ENCAMPMENT - NIGHT

125

Patroclus's body lies atop a massive funeral pyre, dressed
in a simple white frock.

(CONTINUED)

125 CONTINUED:

125

Achilles, clean now, all the soot washed away by the sea, scrubs Patroclus's face with a damp cloth. As fastidious as a mother, Achilles scrubs away the dried blood on the boy's lips, the dirt on his chin, the crusted blood on his cut throat. He removes the SHELL NECKLACE.

Agamemnon stands with Nestor in the crowd surrounding the pyre. Agamemnon watches the rite with ill-concealed pleasure.

AGAMEMNON

That boy just saved the war for us.

Odysseus stands nearby. Melancholy and fatigue age his face.

When the boy is clean Achilles pulls two COINS from a leather pouch. He places one coin over each of the dead boy's eyes. He kisses the boy's forehead and descends from atop the pyre. Eudorus hands him a torch and Achilles sets the pyre on fire.

126 EXT./INT. MONTAGE - NIGHT

126

We visit all our characters tonight. First Achilles, standing by the burning pyre, watching his cousin burn.

Briseis sits nearby, watching Achilles watch the fire.

126A AGAMEMNON

126A

sits in his tent, carving X's on the map of Troy, his jaw taut as he ravages his painted enemy.

126B PRIAM

126B

stands on a palace balcony, staring over his city.

126C HECTOR

126C

stands by his son's crib, watching the boy sleep.

126D HELEN

126D

lies in bed. She hears a noise -- phhhthck! phhhthck! -- repeated over and over at brief intervals. She rolls out of bed and walks to the arched window.

126E DOWN BELOW IN THE PALACE GARDEN 126E

Paris practices his archery, shooting a target again and again by moonlight.

127 EXT. BEACH ENCAMPMENT - DAWN 127

Achilles, still standing in the same place, watches the remaining wood of the pyre collapse. He walks to his tent. On the way he passes Briseis. She has fallen asleep on the sand.

He sees the bruises on her throat where his hand throttled her. As usual, the expression on his face is unreadable. He stares at her for another moment and walks away.

128 EXT. ACHILLES' TENT - DAWN 128

Achilles finds Eudorus sleeping outside his tent.

ACHILLES

Eudorus.

Eudorus blinks, unsure where he is, then rouses himself as he recognizes his master's voice. He struggles to his feet.

EUDORUS

My lord.

ACHILLES

I need my armor.

Eudorus nods and rushes off.

129 INT. ACHILLES' TENT - DAWN 129

Eudorus helps Achilles prepare, clasping on his greaves.

130 INT. HECTOR'S CHAMBER - DAWN 130

While his wife and child sleep, Hector clasps on his greaves.

INTERCUT between Achilles and Hector, clamping on their breastplates, arm guards, helmets, etc.

131 EXT. SHRINE OF APOLLO - MORNING 131

The small shrine on the palace grounds is designed so that the summer sun rises above the sculpted Apollo's head.

(CONTINUED)

131 CONTINUED:

131

Hector kneels in front of Apollo's statue, head bowed.
When he raises his face he's almost looking into the sun.

132 EXT. ACHILLES' TENT - MORNING

132

Achilles exits his tent, fully armed.

Eudorus is behind him. The SOLDIERS are beginning to stir
and they stop in their activity now and stare at him.

Two MYRMIDONS tether a CHARIOT to a large black HORSE.
The work finished, they step back as Achilles hops into
the chariot. Eudorus attempts to hop on behind him.

ACHILLES

No.

Eudorus looks at his commander for a second and backs
away.

ACHILLES

(to the Myrmidons)

Rope.

A Myrmidon hands him a coil of braided ROPE and retreats.

Briseis steps into view. Her eyes are shadowed from lack
of sleep. She stares up at Achilles and he looks at her.
She looks fragile today, her pale throat purpled with
bruises.

BRISEIS

Don't go.

Achilles watches her in silence.

BRISEIS

Hector is my cousin. He's a good
man.

(beat)

Take me to Larissa with you. But
don't fight him. Please don't
fight him.

(beat)

We could have a life together, but
not if you choose this path.

(beat)

You can walk away from war. We can
walk away.

Achilles gazes at her, considering her words.

(CONTINUED)

132 CONTINUED: 132

He tugs the reins and the horse begins trotting toward Troy.

133 EXT. WALLS OF TROY - DAY 133

The CROWDS start to fill the viewing areas above the city walls.

Priam and his COUNSELORS sit below the blue canopy.

Paris sits near them, but not with them. He doesn't look at anybody and people are careful to avoid looking at him.

Hector stands alone at one of the wall's turreted corners, staring toward the sea.

134 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY 134

Achilles rides his chariot across the vast grassy field.

135 EXT. WALLS OF TROY - CONTINUOUS 135

Hector watches the lone chariot approach.

136 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - CONTINUOUS 136

Achilles stops one hundred yards from the walls. He steps from the chariot and walks toward Troy, helmet by his side.

137 EXT. WALLS OF TROY - DAY 137

An ARCHER standing beside Hector notches an arrow.

HECTOR

No.

Hector looks for Glaucus, standing farther down the wall. He gives the old general a hand signal. No attacks.

138 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY 138

Achilles stands alone in the vast field. He looks up at the Trojan CITIZENS staring down at him.

ACHILLES

Hector!

In the background, we see hundreds of GREEK SOLDIERS crest the high dunes.

139 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - CONTINUOUS

139

ACHILLES

Hector!

Louder and louder, his voice echoing above the silent city.

ACHILLES

HECTOR!

(beat)

HECTOR!

(beat)

HECTOR!

140 EXT. WALLS OF TROY - CONTINUOUS

140

Hector walks over to his father. Achilles keeps bellowing his name. Hector kneels before his father and kisses his hand.

HECTOR

Father. Forgive me for any offenses. I've served you as best I could.

Priam stands, beckons for Hector to rise, cups Hector's cheeks in his palms and kisses Hector's forehead.

PRIAM

May the gods be with you.

Hector hesitates for a moment, then bows and turns to go.

PRIAM

Hector!

Hector turns back. Father and son look at each other. For a moment we think Priam will be unable to speak. Finally:

PRIAM

No father ever had a better son.

The words deeply move Hector. He bows again and moves on. He passes by Glaucus, who bows to the prince.

GLAUCUS

Apollo guard you, my prince.

Hector claps the general's shoulder and keeps walking. He stops beside Paris. They embrace.

PARIS

You're the best man I know.

(CONTINUED)

140 CONTINUED:

140

HECTOR

You are a prince of Troy.

Hector grips Paris's arm tighter and stares into his eyes.

HECTOR

I know you'll make me proud.

Hector kisses Paris's forehead and continues on his way, pulling his helmet onto his head.

140A EXT. STAIRS

140A

waits for him above the stairs leading to the city gates. She holds their baby boy Scamandrius.

HECTOR

You remember what I told you?

ANDROMACHE

You don't have to go. You don't --

HECTOR

You remember what I told you.

Andromache hasn't slept. Her hair is a wild tangle; her eyes are rimmed red. She nods. She holds her son up to his father. The boy doesn't see his father, he sees something terrifying, a man with a bronze face and a plume of horsehair.

Scamandrius begins to CRY. Hector removes his helmet. Now the boy sees his father. He giggles and reaches out. Hector takes the boy in his arms and holds him. He kisses the boy's fuzzed head and closes his eyes for a moment.

Finally he hands the baby back to Andromache. He smiles at his wife. She grabs him by the back of the head and presses his face to hers. Her mouth is open, her eyes closed, her body slack against his.

Finally he disengages himself. He walks away from her. She and Scamandrius stare after him, but he never looks back.

140B EXT. GATES (INSIDE CITY WALLS)

140B

He walks down the long staircase descending from the walls. He stops at the massive city gates. The GATEMEN begin pulling the long chains that open the gates.

(CONTINUED)

140B CONTINUED:

140B

He senses someone behind him. He turns. Helen stands ten feet away, her unearthly beauty greater than ever. As the heavy gates rise, Helen and Hector stare at each other, never blinking, never looking away.

Finally the gate is lifted. Hector bows to Helen and fits his helmet on his head. He leaves the city. Helen watches him go.

141 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

141

Hector walks toward Achilles. Everything is very quiet. The people on the walls are hushed. Even the birds seem reverent.

Thousands and thousands of Greeks now line the high dunes, making the valley an enormous amphitheater ringed with spectators from the dunes to the walls of Troy.

Achilles stands motionless. The two men are alone on the great field. Hector stops twenty feet away from Achilles.

HECTOR

I've seen this moment in my dreams.

Achilles, expressionless, stares at the prince.

HECTOR

I'll make a pact with you, with the gods as our witnesses. Let us pledge that the winner will allow the loser all the proper funeral rituals.

ACHILLES

There are no pacts between lions and men.

Achilles tosses aside his helmet -- an insulting gesture, impugning Hector's combat skills.

ACHILLES

Now you know who you're fighting.

Hector pauses a moment before removing his own helmet and tossing it aside.

HECTOR

I thought it was you I was fighting yesterday. I wish it had been you. But I gave the dead boy the honor he --

(CONTINUED)

141 CONTINUED:

141

ACHILLES

You gave him the honor of your sword.

(beat)

You won't have eyes tonight. You won't have ears, or a tongue. You'll wander the underworld, blind, deaf, and dumb. And all the dead will know: this is Hector, the fool who thought he killed Achilles.

Achilles draws his sword. Hector draws his. They charge.

We've seen extraordinary fighting before, but we've never seen this -- a prowess so extreme as to be hypnotic. Two better swordsmen have never clashed. All their lives, all their training and past battles, have led to this moment.

Nothing is wasted. No flourishes or balletic leaps or spins. Every swing is a death blow countered. The rapidity of the exchange is breathless.

The bronze blades hiss as they split the air. They swing with such power that sparks fly whenever a sword scrapes a shield.

142 EXT. HIGH DUNES - DAY

142

Agamemnon, Nestor, and Odysseus stand with their men. For the moment all machinations and intrigues are forgotten. Each of them knows this fight will be remembered forever, and each watches quietly.

143 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

143

Hector lunges forward and from our angle it appears that he has skewered Achilles. Hector's face is inches from Achilles. Achilles appears unperturbed. Hector looks down.

Achilles has trapped him, allowing Hector's sword to miss his side by inches and then clamping down on Hector's sword arm. Hector tries to yank his sword free but cannot.

Achilles stabs at Hector's face and Hector ducks at the last moment, the sword point puncturing the air above his head. Achilles releases Hector and takes another mighty swing.

144 EXT. WALLS OF TROY - CONTINUOUS 144

Andromache sits with Scamandrius, her back against the wall. She cannot watch. Her boy, blissfully unaware, coos happily and plays with his mother's long hair.

145 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - CONTINUOUS 145

Achilles, sensing the advantage, moves in a step too close.

Hector sees an opening and slashes. Achilles jumps back at the last possible moment, but Hector's blade gouges out a long strip of bronze from Achilles' breastplate.

Both men swing. Their swords lock and for a moment everything is still. Achilles' face is inches from Hector's. Hector is sweating and breathing heavily. Achilles is not.

Achilles shoves Hector and relaunches his attack. While Hector still fights ably, he's clearly tiring. As Achilles' blows force Hector back, the prince steps on a rock, trips, and falls. Achilles stands above him.

ACHILLES

Get up, prince of Troy. I won't
let a stone take my glory.

Hector stands. He knows his energy is fading fast. So he spends everything on one last try. He charges, swinging with explosive fury, putting all his might into each blow.

When the barrage is finished and Hector pauses for a breath, he sees that Achilles, unhurt, has parried everything. Now Achilles bores in, swinging. Hector blocks and blocks, but doesn't have the stamina for a new assault.

Achilles lunges. Hector raises his shield. The sword plunges through the seven layers of oxhide, plunges through the hammered bronze of the shield, the bronze of the breastplate, all the way into Hector's heart.

Hector looks down at the blade. He looks at Achilles. There is no mercy or remorse on the man's face.

Hector falls.

146 EXT. WALLS OF TROY - CONTINUOUS 146

Priam reacts as if he received the blow, clutching at his chest and reeling backward.

(CONTINUED)

146 CONTINUED:

146

Paris presses forward, gripping the edge of the wall so hard his knuckles turn white.

Andromache hears the GROANS of the crowd. She covers her ears and clamps her eyes shut. Scamandrius stares at her, baffled.

147 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - CONTINUOUS

147

Hector lies on his back. Achilles pulls out his bloody sword and walks to his chariot. Hector blinks. The sun, now high in the sky, is blinding. Hector stares into the sun and dies.

Silence. Silence everywhere. No victory cry from the Greeks.

Achilles returns in the chariot. He jumps out with the coil of rope. He ties Hector's ankles together, then ties the other end of the rope to the back of the chariot.

148 EXT. WALLS OF TROY - CONTINUOUS

148

Something hardens in Paris's face. Whatever callowness we've seen before seems to ebb away as he watches Achilles abuse Hector's body. Priam and his subjects watch in horror.

PRIAM

My boy... my boy...

Andromache sits against the wall, knees tucked against her chest, face against her knees. Scamandrius begins to cry. Helen kneels by Andromache. She picks up the baby and soothes him. Helen takes Andromache's hand. Andromache looks up. Her eyes are a terrible thing to see.

HELEN

Let's go inside.

Andromache allows Helen to pull her to her feet. Helen, holding the baby in one arm, guides Andromache away.

149 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - CONTINUOUS

149

Achilles whips his horse and the chariot starts rolling, dragging Hector through the grass.

- 150 EXT. WALLS OF TROY - CONTINUOUS 150
Priam's legs give out. Glaucus and Paris catch him before he falls and carry him toward the shade beneath the blue canopy.
- 151 EXT. HIGH DUNES - DAY 151
Achilles rides his chariot over the crest of the dune. The Greek army parts like the Red Sea, solemn and silent.
- 152 EXT. BEACH ENCAMPMENT - DAY 152
Achilles rides into camp. The Greek soldiers gather round to stare at Hector's body. Achilles doesn't look at anyone. He unties the rope and hauls Hector by hand across the sands.
Odysseus stands nearby, amongst the men. A few of the soldiers laugh, seeing the Trojan prince laid low.
SOLDIER 1
He doesn't look so glorious now.
Odysseus turns and glares at the soldier, who shuts his mouth. Odysseus walks away.
Achilles drags Hector's body to his tent, dumps him there, and walks inside.
- 153 INT. ACHILLES' TENT - CONTINUOUS 153
Briseis kneels in the center of the tent, palms pressed together, eyes lowered in prayer. She opens her eyes and looks up when Achilles walks in.
He looks more beast than man, splattered with Hector's blood. Briseis sees Achilles' face and knows what happened. For the first time her strength deserts her. She looks very young, very childlike as she begins to cry.
He regards her for a moment before going to his bedding and lying on his back. We stay on his face as Briseis weeps.
- 154 EXT. BEACH ENCAMPMENT - NIGHT 154
All but the sentries are sleeping. No campfires burn as a fat moon rises above the sea.

155 INT. ACHILLES' TENT - NIGHT 155

Achilles, now clean, sits in the center of the tent, sharpening his sword. Briseis sits in a far corner. She's been crying for hours, her eyes red and swollen.

BRISEIS

You lost your cousin. And now
you've taken mine.

Achilles looks up at her.

BRISEIS

When does it end?

Achilles continues sharpening his sword.

ACHILLES

It never ends.

Briseis stares at him for a moment and leaves the tent. Achilles quits his sharpening. Now there is nothing but silence, nothing but a bronze sword for company.

156 EXT. TROJAN BEACH - NIGHT 156

Briseis sits on the beach, facing the moonlit sea.

157 INT. ACHILLES' TENT - NIGHT 157

Achilles still sits alone, his eyes empty. He hears a rustling at the tent flap. An old man wearing a hooded robe steps inside. The old man pulls his hood down. It's Priam.

ACHILLES

Who are you?

Priam seems physically hurt by the sight of Achilles. For a moment it seems he will collapse again.

But he wills himself onward, walking to Achilles' chair. He sinks to his knees, takes Achilles' hands, and kisses them. Achilles observes all this with curiosity.

PRIAM

I have endured what no one on earth
has endured before. I kissed the
hands of the man who killed my son.

ACHILLES

Priam?

(CONTINUED)

157 CONTINUED:

157

Priam nods. Achilles stands, helping the old man to his feet.

ACHILLES

How did you get in here, old king?
The sentries --

PRIAM

I know my own country better than
the Greeks, I think.

ACHILLES

You're a brave man. If Agamemnon
knew you were here, he'd have your
head on a spit.

PRIAM

Do you really think death frightens
me now? I watched my eldest son
die, watched you drag his body
behind your chariot.

Priam stares at Achilles, and for the first time since
we've known him, Achilles looks away.

PRIAM

Give him back to me. He deserves
the honor of a proper burial. You
know that. Give him to me.

ACHILLES

He killed my cousin.

PRIAM

He thought it was you. He defended
his country. How many cousins have
you killed? How many sons and
fathers and brothers and husbands?
How many, brave Achilles?

(beat)

I knew your father. He died before
his time. But he was lucky not to
live long enough to see his son
fall.

Achilles does not respond. We cannot read his expression.

(CONTINUED)

157 CONTINUED: (2)

157

PRIAM

You've taken everything from me.
My eldest son, heir to my throne,
defender of my kingdom.

(beat)

I can't change what happened. It's
the will of the gods. But give me
this small mercy.

Achilles looks into the old man's eyes. Priam tries to
blink back his tears but fails.

PRIAM

I loved my boy from the moment he
opened his eyes till the moment you
closed them.

(beat)

Let me wash his body. Let me say
the prayers. Let me place two
coins on his eyes for the boatman.

ACHILLES

If I let you walk out of here, if I
let you take him, it doesn't change
anything. You're still my enemy in
the morning.

PRIAM

You're still my enemy tonight. But
even enemies can show respect.

Achilles nods.

ACHILLES

I admire your courage, old man.
You're a better king than the one
leading this army. Meet me outside
in a moment.

158 EXT. ACHILLES' TENT - MOMENTS LATER - NIGHT

158

Achilles, carrying a torch and a white shroud, walks to
the spot where Hector's body lies. He crouches beside the
dead prince. Death has not robbed Hector's face of its
dignity.

A small sand crab approaches the body and Achilles shoos
it away. He shoves the butt end of the torch into the
sand.

(CONTINUED)

158 CONTINUED: 158

Achilles rubs his eyes with his hand and takes several deep breaths. When he removes his hand, we see something remarkable: Achilles' eyes are wet with tears.

For a moment he seems unsure what to do. Finally he begins wrapping the white sheet around Hector's body.

ACHILLES

We'll meet again soon.

159 INT. ACHILLES' TENT - LATER - NIGHT 159

Priam, deep in his grief, sits with his head bowed. He hears noises outside. He stands and exits the tent.

160 EXT. BEACH ENCAMPMENT - CONTINUOUS 160

Achilles gently loads Hector's body, now wrapped in the shroud, onto a moonlit chariot. Priam walks to the chariot.

Four Myrmidons, keeping a respectful distance, stand guard.

ACHILLES

Your son was the best I've fought.
I want you to know that.

(beat)

In my country the funeral games
last twelve days.

PRIAM

It's the same in my country.

ACHILLES

Then no Greek will attack Troy for
twelve days. The prince deserves
that honor.

Achilles, hearing footsteps, turns. Briseis emerges from the shadows. Priam is stunned.

PRIAM

Briseis?

Priam wraps his arms around her, thrilled she's alive.

PRIAM

We thought you were dead, little
swan.

(CONTINUED)

160 CONTINUED:

160

After a moment Briseis turns and looks at Achilles. Nobody speaks for a long beat. Tears shine in Briseis' eyes.

ACHILLES

You'll be safe behind the Trojan walls.

Achilles reaches into his tunic and pulls out the SHELL NECKLACE that Patroclus had worn. He fastens it around her delicate neck, where the purple bruises are still visible. He speaks quietly to her, too softly for Priam to hear.

ACHILLES

If I hurt you -- it's not what I wanted.

(long beat)

You gave me one night of peace in a lifetime of war.

She stares up at him, her young face mapped with conflicting emotions. Finally, Achilles turns to Priam.

ACHILLES

Go. No one will stop you, you have my word.

Priam gets in the chariot. Briseis still looks at Achilles.

PRIAM

Come, my girl.

Priam reaches down and helps her onto the chariot. He seizes the reins and they're off, the Myrmidons escorting them to safety. Achilles stares at Briseis until she's gone.

161 INT. AGAMEMNON'S TENT - DAY

161

Agamemnon paces about his tent in a murderous fury. Odysseus, Nestor and several AIDES stand in attendance.

AGAMEMNON

(shouting)

Achilles makes a secret pact and I have to honor it?! What treason is this?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

161 CONTINUED:

161

AGAMEMNON (CONT'D)

(fairly spitting
the words)

Consorting with the enemy king!
Giving him twelve days of peace.
Peace! Their prince is dead; their
army is leaderless. This is the
time to attack!

NESTOR

Even with Hector gone, we have no
way to breach their walls. They
can wait ten years for us to leave.

AGAMEMNON

I will smash their walls to the ground. If it costs me
forty thousand Greeks, Zeus hear me, I will smash their
walls to the ground.
Nestor and Odysseus exchange troubled glances.

162 EXT. CAMPFIRE - DAY

162

Odysseus sits with his ITHACANS by the fire. The men eat
a breakfast of grilled fish. The soldier sitting beside
Odysseus whittles with a sharp knife.

Odysseus watches the man work. The Soldier notices his
king's attention. He smiles and holds up a small WOOD
HORSE.

SOLDIER

For my boy back home.

Odysseus nods, never taking his eyes off the toy horse.

163 EXT. AGAMEMNON'S TENT - DAY

163

Hundreds of Greeks eat breakfast on the beach. Several of
them turn to watch Odysseus, who rushes to Agamemnon's
tent and disappears inside.

164 EXT. MAIN SQUARE OF TROY - NIGHT

164

A giant pyre has been built in the city square. Thousands
of CITIZENS are gathered around to watch. No crowd has
ever been more silent. The city has lost its favorite
son.

(CONTINUED)

164 CONTINUED:

164

Hector lies atop the pyre, dressed in a woven robe of white and gold, his hair washed and oiled, his skin gleaming and clean. His face is undamaged. Two coins rest above his eyes.

Priam stands at the base of the pyre, holding a lit torch. His hand trembles. He is unable to light the pyre.

Finally Paris grips his father's shoulder. Paris takes the torch from Priam and lights the kindling.

Helen, Andromache, and baby Scamandrius sit nearby. Andromache's face is completely blank. She stares dully at the quickening fire. Helen holds Scamandrius in her lap. The boy plays with the WOOD LION his father made for him.

165 EXT. BEACH ENCAMPMENT - NIGHT

165

By torchlight, we see Greeks stripping planks from two burnt shells of warships. Others pry spikes out of the fortifications.

Odysseus watches the men carry the planks and bundles of spikes to an ever-growing pile. Achilles approaches him.

ACHILLES

Wily Odysseus. You've found a way to make the sheep invite the wolves over for dinner.

ODYSSEUS

This is war.

ACHILLES

Agamemnon will kill them all. Men, women, children -- all of them. You know that.

Achilles walks away. Odysseus follows him.

ODYSSEUS

I'm the king of Ithaca, not Troy. My loyalty is to Ithaca. If this plan works, the war ends in a night. And my men can sail home to their wives.

Achilles keeps walking, Odysseus pacing after him.

(CONTINUED)

165 CONTINUED:

165

ODYSSEUS

It's not Troy you're worried about,
is it? It's one Trojan. One Trojan
girl.

Achilles halts. He stares at Odysseus for a long count.

ACHILLES

I've always liked you. But if that
girl dies because of your plan, you
will never sail home to your wife.

Achilles turns and leaves. Odysseus takes a deep breath.

166 EXT. ACHILLES' TENT - LATER

166

Achilles arrives at his tent and finds Eudorus polishing
his armor. Eudorus jumps to his feet.

ACHILLES

Eudorus.
(beat)
Forgive me.

Eudorus blinks. No one has ever heard these words from
Achilles' mouth before.

ACHILLES

I should never have struck you.
You've been a loyal friend all your
life.

EUDORUS

I hope I never disappoint you
again.

ACHILLES

Rouse the men. You're taking them
home.

EUDORUS

Aren't you coming with us?

ACHILLES

I've got one more battle to fight.

Eudorus hesitates, watching his lord. Finally:

EUDORUS

She's worth fighting for. We'll
march behind you.

(CONTINUED)

166 CONTINUED:

166

ACHILLES

All that's left is the slaughter.
I don't want to see my men fouled
with children's blood.

(beat)

Go, Eudorus. This is the last
order I give you.

After a long pause, Eudorus bows deeply to his commander.

EUDORUS

Fighting for you has been my life's
honor.

Achilles grips his lieutenant's shoulder and strides away.

167 EXT. GUARD TOWER - DAWN

167

Twelve days later.
The SENTRIES are at their posts, warming their hands over
a brazier. The sky begins to lighten.

Sentry 1 stares down to the sea. He hurries to the edge
of the tower and squints into the morning fog. Sentry 2
looks at him and then joins him.

SENTRY 1

They're gone.

It's true. All the Greek ships are gone from the beach.
All the tents have been struck, all the chariots taken
away, every last man -- gone.

Nothing's left on the beach but a strange wooden
structure.

168 EXT. BEACH ENCAMPMENT - DAY

168

Priam, Paris, Glaucus, Archeptolemus, and Velior, all on
horseback, lead the Apollonian Guard onto the beach. The
soldiers -- still wary of an ambush -- surround their
leaders, protecting them from attack. The Trojan leaders
dismount.

Slowly they approach a WOODEN HORSE standing forty feet
high.

(CONTINUED)

168 CONTINUED:

168

The beach is deserted save for the bones of burnt-out ships, a few stray arrows, the remnants of the camp fires, and corpses -- dozens of Greek bodies scattered in the sands.

Each of the cadavers is covered with large black sores. The Trojans inspect the bodies, keeping a wary distance.

PRIAM

Plague.

GLAUCUS

Don't get too close, my king.

ARCHEPTOLEMUS

This is the will of the gods.

Everyone turns to look at the high priest.

ARCHEPTOLEMUS

They desecrated the temple of Apollo and Apollo desecrated their flesh. The Greeks could fight our swords and arrows, but they can't fight the god's plague. Glaucus shakes his head and laughs.

GLAUCUS

They thought they'd come here and sack our city in a day. And look at them now, fleeing across the Aegean.

Priam stares up at the great horse.

PRIAM

What is this?

ARCHEPTOLEMUS

An offering to Poseidon. The Greeks are praying for a safe return home.

GLAUCUS

I hope the Sea God spits on their offering and lets them all drown at the bottom of the sea.

ARCHEPTOLEMUS

This is a gift. We should bring it to the temple of Poseidon.

All the men stare at the towering horse.

(CONTINUED)

168 CONTINUED: (2)

168

PARIS

I think we should burn it.

VELIOR

Burn it? My prince -- it's a gift to the gods.

GLAUCUS

The prince is right. I'd burn all of Greece if I had a big enough torch.

ARCHEPTOLEMUS

I warn you, good men. Be careful what you insult. Our beloved prince Hector had sharp words for the gods and a day later Achilles' sword cut him down.

Priam turns to look at the high priest.

PARIS

(glaring at
Archeptolemus)

Burn it, father.

Archeptolemus ignores Paris and speaks directly to Priam.

ARCHEPTOLEMUS

Forgive me, my king. I mean no disrespect. But I don't want to see any more princes of Troy incur the gods' wrath.

All the men look at Priam. He stares at the massive horse.

PRIAM

I will not watch another son die.

169 EXT. BATTLEFIELD - DAY

169

Dozens of Trojan soldiers tugging long ropes pull the massive horse across the grassy plain.

170 EXT. GATES OF TROY - DAY

170

The soldiers drag the horse through the gates. The citizens of Troy watch from atop the walls and inside the city proper.

171 EXT. MAIN SQUARE OF TROY - DAY

171

The horse now stands near the statue of Poseidon wielding his trident, beside his temple on one corner of the city square.

The square is crowded and jubilant. Soldiers and citizens celebrate their great victory, drinking wine in the streets, waving torches and Trojan flags, singing songs.

Paris and Helen sit on the palace stairs, watching the crowd.

PARIS

Look at them. You'd think their prince had never died.

Helen takes his hand.

HELEN

You're their prince.

(beat)

Make your brother proud.

Her comment echoes the words Hector spoke to him before his death. Paris nods solemnly. Helen rests her head on his shoulder. They sit quietly as the crowds sing in the street.

172 EXT. BEACH ENCAMPMENT - DUSK

172

An abandoned DOG lopes along the beach, stopping to sniff each Greek corpse. Finding one dead man he seems to recognize, the dog licks the cadaver's face.

The "sore" on the dead face is licked clean. The sores are masterful forgeries, applied with squid ink and dried blood.

173 EXT. CLIFFS OF HELLESPONT - NIGHT

173

A TROJAN RIDER on horseback trots south, away from distant Troy. He looks toward the Hellespont. Something catches his eye. He frowns and guides his mount toward the cliff's edge.

We rise above him and look down at the Hellespont. By the light of the moon, nearly one thousand GREEK WARSHIPS harbor in the deserted bay.

The rider stares at the ships in horror.

174 EXT. MAIN SQUARE OF TROY - NIGHT

174

The square is empty now, all the revelers gone home. The wood horse waits in the moonlight. We witness something strange: ropes, anchored inside the horse, fall to the ground.

Soldiers emerge from the horse and slide silently down the ropes: Achilles, Odysseus and ten other Greek soldiers. None of them wear the bright, clanking bronze armor. Their swords and spears are wrapped in lambskins.

Odysseus leads a team of Ithacans across the square. Quiet as shadows, they creep up on the sentries guarding the main gate. Another team moves toward the guard towers.

Achilles stands alone in the dark square, watching his compatriots set off on their deadly missions. Finally he turns and moves in the opposite direction, toward the palace. He's on a different mission.

174A EXT. CITY GATES

174A

Two Ithacans cut the gate sentries' throats. The soldiers begin pulling the chains to raise the city gates.

174B THE TROJAN RIDER

174B

gallops to Troy. The Greeks see him coming and look to Odysseus for guidance. The rider, still at some distance, shouts to the men at the gates.

TROJAN RIDER

They're still here! The Greeks are
still here! They sailed up the
Hellespont!

Odysseus hurls his spear. It flies through the bars of the gate and into the rider's throat, knocking him from his horse. The horse, panicked, gallops away.

175 EXT. GUARD TOWER - CONTINUOUS

175

One of the sentries, hearing the commotion, wakes up. Groggy, he looks over the edge of the tower -- into a Greek's face. The Greek, one hand on the ladder, stabs the sentry. Another Greek crawls into the tower and kills the second sentry.

176 EXT. GATES OF TROY - CONTINUOUS 176

The Greeks pull the gates open. They wave their torches, a signal. Looking into the distance, we see something shifting in the darkness, coming closer and closer.

The Greek army, shadows in the dark, charges toward the city at a sprint, silent. Thousands upon thousands of warriors running quietly as panthers.

Like water bursting through a dam, the Greeks blast through the gates, swords and spears raised.

177 EXT. PALACE OF TROY - NIGHT 177

Briseis leans against a balustrade, staring toward the beach. She wears a blue robe and the seashell necklace. She hears NOISES from the city gates and turns. On a flagpole above the highest guard tower, the Trojan flag is burning.

178 EXT. TROY - NIGHT 178

All over the city, the Greeks carry out their raids, killing sentries at their posts, setting buildings on fire with torches, opening the stable doors and shooing all the frightened horses into the streets.

178A NEW ANGLE 178A

Soon the city is in chaos. Fires burn out of control. Screams begin to echo down the alleyways, first just a few, then more and more, until it seems the entire city is screaming.

178B ACHILLES 178B

runs through the burning city, keeping to the shadows.

179 INT. PRIAM'S MEETING HALL - NIGHT 179

Priam stands on the balcony, watching his beautiful city burn, watching the destruction of his life's work.

180 EXT. TROJAN ARMORY - NIGHT 180

Trojan soldiers begin to straggle in, but they're not prepared for this. Many are unarmed and all look terrified. Four Trojans run to the armory doors and throw them open.

(CONTINUED)

180 CONTINUED: 180

They dive back as a BLAST of heat rushes out the door. The armory is aflame, fires eating at the wood-beamed ceiling, devouring thousands of spears on their racks.

181 EXT. TROJAN STREETS - NIGHT 181

FAMILIES of terrified civilians stagger through the streets in their bedclothes. MOTHERS clutch their CHILDREN's hands. OLD WOMEN flee their burning buildings.

The women scream when they see Achilles running toward them, sword drawn. But pillaging is the last thing on his mind.

182 INT. PALACE HALLWAYS - NIGHT 182

Briseis hurries through the hallways. Outside, past the archways, the white buildings of Troy are on fire. We hear the screaming of a dying city.

183 EXT. MAIN SQUARE OF TROY - NIGHT 183

Agamemnon stands in the very center of Troy, head tilted back, watching with delight as the beautiful city burns.

AGAMEMNON

I promised you, brother.

(yelling to
his troops)

Burn it all!

184 INT. PARIS'S BEDCHAMBER - NIGHT 184

Paris suits up for battle. He grabs his bow and quiver of arrows. Helen watches him. Andromache enters the room, Scamandrius in her arms.

ANDROMACHE

We have to run.

HELEN

Where?

ANDROMACHE

I'll show you.

Paris looks at Helen.

HELEN

Come, my love. Come with us.

185 EXT. STREETS OF TROY - NIGHT 185

Odysseus battles his way down the street, leading the Greeks against a contingent of half-armored Trojans. The Trojans are too dazed to offer much resistance.

186 EXT. PALACE GARDEN - NIGHT 186

Andromache, carrying her baby and a lit torch, leads Helen, Paris, and other WOMEN and CHILDREN down the staircase to the vine-tangled door. Andromache pulls it open.

187 INT. PALACE OF TROY - SUBTERRANEAN LEVEL - NIGHT 187

Andromache leads the Trojans to the bronze-banded door. She opens the door, revealing the dark tunnel.

ANDROMACHE

It's a long walk.

Helen and the others enter the tunnel. Paris does not. He stands just outside the door.

PARIS

I stay.

HELEN

No --

PARIS

My father will never abandon the city. I can't leave him.

HELEN

The city is dead! They're burning it to the ground!

Paris looks at the huddled refugees. They're a timid lot, terrified and weak. AENEAS (14) looks stronger and braver than the rest. He's supporting his ELDERLY FATHER.

PARIS

What's your name?

AENEAS

Aeneas.

PARIS

Do you know how to use a sword?

Aeneas nods. Paris pulls out the sword of Troy.

(CONTINUED)

PARIS

The sword of Troy. I wasn't so good with it, but it's a fine sword.

(beat)

As long as it's in a Trojan's hand, our people have a future.

(hands sword
to Aeneas)

Protect them, Aeneas. Find them a new home.

AENEAS

I will.

Andromache touches Paris's arm.

ANDROMACHE

Briseis wasn't in her room.

PARIS

I'll find her.

Andromache kisses him. She turns and leads the way through the tunnel. The Trojans follow. Aeneas bows to Paris and helps his father as their long journey begins.

HELEN

I'll stay with you.

Paris pushes her gently toward the door.

PARIS

Go.

HELEN

Don't leave me. Please don't leave me.

PARIS

How could you love me if I ran now?

HELEN

Please --

PARIS

We will be together again. In this world or the next, we will be together.

He kisses her hard, pushes her through the door and closes it. He kisses the wood, turns and runs toward the battle.

188 INT. PALACE OF TROY - NIGHT

188

Briseis runs down a long corridor. We hear cries from the massacre outside.

BRISEIS

Paris? Andromache?

She stops mid-stride. A riderless WHITE HORSE rounds the corner and bolts toward her, eyes crazed, muzzled foamed with spittle. Briseis backs against the wall. The terrified horse gallops past her.

189 EXT. PALACE OF TROY - NIGHT

189

ACHILLES

BRISEIS! BRISEIS!

Achilles scales the high wall surrounding the palace and jumps to the other side. He's spotted by an Apollonian.

The Guard charges. Achilles cracks him in the face with the hilt of his sword. The Guard falls. Achilles grabs him and hauls him to his feet, sword at his throat.

ACHILLES

Briseis -- where is she?

(louder)

Where is she?!

APOLLONIAN #2

I don't know... please, I have a son.

Achilles shoves him away.

ACHILLES

Get him out of Troy.

The Guard, stunned to find himself alive, finally runs. Achilles rushes into the palace.

190 EXT. PALACE STAIRS - NIGHT

190

Odysseus and his men fight their way up the palace stairs. The Trojans resist heroically. They die heroically. Agamemnon stands behind his troops, hollering orders.

AGAMEMNON

No one escapes! No one!

191 INT. PALACE - RECEPTION HALL - NIGHT

191

Outside we hear the screams and battle cries. Glaucus stands with fifty of his men, the last line of defense. He walks through their ranks, clasping hands with each man.

GLAUCUS

You men are soldiers. Leading you has been an honor.

Paris runs into the hall. Glaucus smiles and clasps hands with the prince. Glaucus addresses the men.

GLAUCUS

The boatman is waiting for us. I say, let him wait a little longer!

The men roar as the Greeks spill into the reception hall.

191A THE TROJANS

191A

attack. For a few moments they drive the Greeks back. Paris notches an arrow and fires. A Greek falls, an arrow through his throat.

But too many Greeks pour through the doors. The Trojans fight bravely, especially Paris, who fires quickly and accurately.

Odysseus engages Glaucus and quickly kills the old general. The surviving Trojans retreat farther into the palace.

192 INT. MEETING HALL - NIGHT

192

Dozens of Greeks charge into the hall, seizing whatever treasures they can carry and smashing whatever they can't.

Priam, armed with a sword, rushes into the hall. He sees two Greeks grabbing small GOLD FIGURINES of the gods from their wall sconces.

He raises his sword.

PRIAM

Have you no honor? No respect for the gods?

(CONTINUED)

192 CONTINUED:

192

Before Priam can move forward he is speared from behind, the spearhead tearing through his back and out his chest. He falls. Agamemnon stands above him. He yanks his spear free.

AGAMEMNON

I wanted you alive, old king. I wanted you to watch your city burn.

PRIAM

Please... the children... spare the innocents...

AGAMEMNON

Let Hades decide who's innocent.

He walks away, leaving the old man to die alone on the floor.

193 INT. SHRINE OF ZEUS - NIGHT

193

Archeptolemus kneels beneath the statue of Zeus. He stands when a band of Greek soldiers close in on him.

ARCHEPTOLEMUS

Beware, my friends. I am a servant of the gods.

A soldier chops him down and hurls the priest's body over the balustrade.

194 EXT. PALACE GARDEN - NIGHT

194

Briseis runs into the garden, looking for a friendly face. No one's in sight. She runs to the lower garden.

She doesn't notice Agamemnon, stained with Priam's blood, standing in an archway of the burning palace, watching her.

195 INT. PALACE HALLWAYS - NIGHT

195

Achilles races through the palace, ignoring the fire and smoke, searching the faces of the terrified women he passes.

ACHILLES

Briseis! Briseis!

196 EXT. PALACE GARDEN - NIGHT

196

Briseis kneels by Apollo's statue, ignoring the inferno around her.

AGAMEMNON (O.S.)

Too late for prayer, priestess.

Briseis does not look up. Agamemnon grabs her long hair and pulls her to her feet. He holds his sword to her throat. Two of his BODYGUARDS stand behind him.

AGAMEMNON

Your parents should have taught you to stand for a king.

BRISEIS

They did.

AGAMEMNON

You wore a white robe when I last saw you. No more? Did brave Achilles ruin you for the temple?

Briseis does not look at him or answer. He pulls her close.

AGAMEMNON

I almost lost this war because of your little romance. I want to taste what Achilles tasted.

197 INT. PALACE - NIGHT

197

Achilles, running past the bodies of dead Trojans, looks through an archway and sees Briseis in Agamemnon's hands. He dashes outside.

198 EXT. PALACE GARDEN - NIGHT

198

AGAMEMNON

(whispering in
Briseis' ear)

You'll be my slave in Mycenae. A Trojan priestess scrubbing my floors. And at night --

He tears her robe. Briseis pulls her hand out of her sleeve. She's holding a ceremonial DAGGER.

She drives the dagger into the side of Agamemnon's neck. His eyes bulge. She rams the dagger deeper. Agamemnon falls to the ground, clutching at his neck.

(CONTINUED)

198 CONTINUED:

198

The bodyguards stare at their dying king in disbelief. Briseis runs. The bodyguards pursue her.

Briseis stumbles and falls. She looks behind her. One of the bodyguards raises his sword, ready to split Briseis in half.

Before he can bring down his sword, his head flies from his shoulders. As the man falls, Achilles whirls around and dispatches the other bodyguard, bronze sword glittering in the moonlight.

199 INT. PALACE - CONTINUOUS

199

Paris, bow in hand, looks out an archway to the garden and sees Achilles -- the man who killed his brother -- splattered with blood, sword in hand, standing over Briseis.

200 EXT. PALACE GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

200

Achilles looks down at Agamemnon's corpse, lying in puddled blood a few feet away. He looks back to Briseis.

ACHILLES

Come with me.

Before she can answer her eyes go wide. She sees Paris, in the upper garden, notching an arrow.

ACHILLES

Come. I'll protect you.

Paris pulls back the catgut string. Briseis screams:

BRISEIS

No!

Paris fires. Briseis's scream distracts him -- the arrow sails off course, hitting Achilles above his heel, tearing through the tendon. Achilles staggers, turns, and sees Paris.

Achilles snarls and heads for him. Paris shoots again. Achilles tries to dodge but the torn tendon in his heel slows him down. The arrow rips through his side.

Achilles keeps limping forward.

BRISEIS

Stop! Paris! Stop!

(CONTINUED)

200 CONTINUED:

200

Paris releases another arrow. Now Achilles doesn't even try to dodge. The arrow sinks deep into his chest.

Achilles keeps coming. He knows this is the end. A small smile crosses his face. He has waited for this moment his entire life. He marches toward his destiny.

Paris notches another arrow. His hands are shaking but he fires again. This one drills deep into Achilles' belly.

BRISEIS

Stop!

Achilles keeps coming. Paris reaches for another arrow. His quiver is empty. Aeneas has his sword.

The palace around them is burning, lighting their faces. Blood pours from Achilles' wounds. The arrow shafts stick out of him. Any other man would have already fallen. But he keeps coming, relentless, his face a mask of grim purpose.

Briseis runs in front of her cousin Paris and shields him with her body. Achilles lifts his bloody sword.

BRISEIS

No more.

Briseis does not move. For several seconds the great warrior and the young girl stare at each other.

BRISEIS

No more killing.

Achilles looks at the seashell necklace she wears.

BRISEIS

No more.

Achilles raises his sword and brings it down hard, burying its bronze blade in the soil of the garden.

ACHILLES

No more.

He reaches out and rubs the shells of her necklace.

ACHILLES

My mother made this necklace.

(CONTINUED)

He sinks to a sitting position on the grass. He pulls the arrows out of his body and tosses them aside. Briseis sits beside him. She cradles his head in her arms while all Troy burns around them.

ACHILLES

You have to get out.

BRISEIS

Shh.

ACHILLES

Get out.

She kisses his lips, running her fingers across his jaw.

BRISEIS

There's no way out.

Achilles stares at Paris.

ACHILLES

There's always a way out for the princes.

Paris tries to lift Briseis to her feet but she refuses.

ACHILLES

Briseis.

She leans closer. He's losing too much blood, his strength is fading, but he summons his remaining energy to speak.

ACHILLES

I chose this night... but you will see the sun again. I want you to live.

Her face is full of sorrow and love. He touches her lips, his fingers trembling as his body fails. She kisses him.

ACHILLES

Live.

She doesn't want to go but he pushes her gently away. Finally she nods.

BRISEIS

Because of you.

(CONTINUED)

200 CONTINUED: (3)

200

She turns and follows Paris down the stairs toward escape. Achilles watches her intently until he sees she's safely away. He takes a deep breath and closes his eyes.

Hordes of rampaging Greeks storm the garden, burning anything that will burn, hollering their victory cries.

Achilles sits alone in the garden. He shivers, hugging himself for warmth, waiting.

201 EXT. MAIN SQUARE OF TROY - DAWN

201

The Greeks are victorious. The beautiful city of Troy is a ruin. Trojan PRISONERS are led off in chains. Greek soldiers carry gold treasures from the lavish temples and palace.

Funeral pyres fill the square. One pyre, taller than the rest, rises in the center of the square. Odysseus stands atop the highest pyre, staring down at the body of Achilles.

For a long time Odysseus looks at the dead man's face. He knows the world will never see another Achilles. Finally he reaches inside his tunic, pulls out two coins, and places them over Achilles' eyes.

ODYSSEUS

Find peace, my brother.

Odysseus climbs down from the pyre. A LIEUTENANT hands him a torch and Odysseus starts the fire. The dry wood quickly catches. Black smoke rises toward the circling crows.

CLOSE on Odysseus as he watches his friend burn.

202 EXT. SCAMANDER RIVER - DAWN

202

A small band of Trojans marches east toward the rising sun. Helen and Paris, Andromache and Scamandrius, Aeneas and the others -- alive. They walk toward Mount Ida.

Briseis walks behind the others. She stops for a moment and looks back toward the ruins of Troy.

(CONTINUED)

202 CONTINUED:

202

CLOSE on Briseis for a beat. And then we see what she sees: the black smoke from Achilles' pyre rising above the smoldering city, rising above the circling crows, and finally fading away into the deep blue sky.

FADE OUT.

THE END