

The Iliad

Book Six Hector and Andromache

[The battle continues; Menelaus captures Adrestus; Agamemnon refuses ransom; Helenus gives advice to Hector; Glaucus and Diomedes prepare to fight; Glaucus tells the story of Bellerophon; Glaucus and Diomedes exchange armour in friendship; Hector goes to Troy, talks with his mother; Hector talks to Paris and Helen; Hector goes home, talks to his housekeeper; Hector meets Andromache and Astyanax; Hector prays for his son's future; Paris rejoins Hector at the gates]

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

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

Diomedes, expert in war cries, killed Axylus,
son of Teuthras, a rich man, from well-built Arisbe.
People really loved him, for he lived beside a road
and welcomed all passers-by into his home.
But not one of those men he'd entertained now stood
in front of him, protecting him from wretched death.
[20] Diomedes took the lives of two men—Axylus
and his attendant charioteer, Calesius.
So both men went down into the underworld.

Euryalus killed Dresus and Opheltius,
then charged after Aesepus and Pedasus,

whom the naiad nymph Abarbarea bore
to noble Boucolion, son of high-born Laomedon,
his eldest son. His mother bore Pedasus in secre
Bucolion had had sex with the nymph
while tending to his flock. She became pregnant,
[30] then gave birth to two twin sons. Euryalus,
son of Mecistus, slaughtered both of them,
destroying their strength and splendid bodies.
Then he stripped the armour from their shoulders.

Next, fierce warrior Polypoetes killed Astyalus.
With his bronze spear Odysseus killed Pidytes from Percote.
Teucer slaughtered lord Aretaon, and Antilochus,
Nestor's son, with his glittering spear killed Ableros.
Agamemnon, king of men, killed Elatus,
who lived in lofty Pedasus, beside the banks
[40] of the fair-flowing river Satnioeis.
Heroic Leitus knocked down Phylacus, as he was fleeing.
And Eurypylus then slaughtered Melanthus.

Menelaus, skilled in war cries, took Adrestus still alive.
His horses had panicked and bolted off across the plain.
They charged into a tamarisk bush and snapped the pole
on the curved chariot, right at the very end.
The horses then ran off towards the city, where others,
panic stricken, were headed, too. Adrestus
rolled out of the chariot beside the wheel,
[50] face down in the dirt. Menelaus, son of Atreus,
stood there over him, holding his long-shadowed spear.
Adrestus clutched Menelaus by the knees and begged:

“Take me alive, son of Atreus—you'll get
good ransom. My father is a wealthy man,
owns lots of things—bronze, silver, well-worked iron.
So he'll give you a splendid ransom,
if he learns I'm by Achaean ships, alive.”

Adrestus pleaded. Menelaus' heart in his chest was moved.
He was about to hand Adrestus to his attendant,
[60] to take back captive to the fast Achaean ships.
But then Agamemnon came running up to him,
sharply criticizing Menelaus:

“Menelaus, you soft-hearted man,
why are you sparing men's lives like this?
In your own home, Trojans treated you
exceptionally well, did they not?
So don't let any one of them evade
a terrible destruction at our hands—
not even the young child still carried
[70] in his mother's belly. Let no one escape.
Let everyone in Troy be slaughtered,
without pity, without leaving any trace.”

With these words, by this appeal to justice,
he changed his brother's mind. So Menelaus
shoved heroic Adrestus away from him.
Mighty Agamemnon then speared him in the side.
Adrestus fell onto his back. The son of Atreus
placed his heel on his chest and pulled the ash spear out.

Then Nestor addressed the Argives, shouting:

“My friends,
[80] Danaan heroes, comrades of Ares,
let no one lag behind to pick up loot,
seeking to reach our ships with all you can.
Let's kill the enemy instead. Later,
with the corpses on the plain, you'll have time
to strip off bodies of the slaughtered men.”

With this Nestor stirred each man's strength and spirit.
Then Achaeans, filled with love of war, would once more
have beaten Trojans, broken by cowardice,

back in flight to Troy, if Helenus, a son of Priam,
[90] by far the best at reading omens, had not spoken out.
Standing by Hector and Aeneas, Helenus said:

“Aeneas, Hector, among Trojans and Lycians,
the main weight falls particularly on you,
for you are, in all attacks, the best at fighting,
at strategy. Make a stand right here.
Rally the men before the city gates.
Move around through the entire army,
before men run and fall into their women’s arms.
How that would make our enemies rejoice!

[100] Then, once you’ve restored the spirits
in all our ranks, we’ll stand right here
and fight Danaans, no matter how hard pressed.
For then we’ll have no other option.
And you, Hector, go into the city.
Speak to our mother, yours and mine.
Tell her to assemble the old women
at the temple of bright-eyed Athena,
on the city heights. She should take the key,
open the doors of the sacred building,

[110] then place in the lap of the goddess there,
fair-haired Athena, the garment she thinks
loveliest, the greatest in the palace,
the one she likes far above the others.
Tell her to promise Athena she’ll give
twelve heifers in a temple sacrifice,
yearlings, as yet untouched by any goad,
if she will pity Troy, pity the wives
and Trojan children, if she will keep
Tydeus’ son away from sacred Ilion,

[120] that fierce spearman, that mighty warrior,
who makes men afraid—in my opinion,
the most powerful of all Achaeans.
We didn’t fear Achilles, chief of men,
like this, although they say a goddess

was his mother. But this man's fighting rage
has no equal. We can't match his power."

Helenus spoke. Hector was convinced by his advice.
At once he jumped down from his chariot to the ground,
clutching his weapons. Brandishing two sharp spears,
[130] he moved through all the army, urging men to fight,
rousing their spirits for the harsh brutality of war.
So men wheeled around and faced Achaean soldiers.
Argives then drew back and stopped the slaughter,
thinking that one of the immortal gods had come,
descending from star-lit heaven to help the Trojans,
enabling them to turn themselves around and fight.
Hector issued orders to the Trojans, shouting:

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

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

Then Glaucus, son of Hippolochus, and Diomedes
moved out together between the armies, keen to fight.
When they'd come to close quarters, facing one another,
Diomedes, expert in war cries, was the first to speak:

[150] "Who are you, my dear man, among mortal men?
For I've never clapped eyes on you before
in those fights where men win glory.
But now you've stepped out well beyond the ranks,
showing more courage here than anyone,
standing up to my long-shadowed spear.
Men who face me end up with grieving parents.

If you're one of the immortal gods
come down from heaven, I won't fight you.
Even mighty Lycurgus, son of Dryas,
[160] did not live long, once he started battling
heavenly gods. He was the one who chased
attendants of the frenzied Dionysus,
forcing them to run by sacred Nysa.
They all threw their holy wands onto the ground,
as murderous Lycurgus with his ox whip
kept beating them. Even Dionysus,
terrified, jumped in the ocean waves.
Thetis embraced him, as he shook with fear,
intimidated by Lycurgus' threats.
[170] He angered the gods, who live without a care,
so the son of Cronos blinded him.
He didn't live much longer, not once he'd made
all the deathless gods displeased with him.
So I don't want to battle sacred gods.
But if you're a mortal man, someone
who eats earth's fruit, come closer to me,
so you can meet your death more quickly."

Glaucus, fine son of Hippolochus, replied:

"Son of Tydeus, great-hearted Diomedes,
[180] why ask me about my ancestry?
Generations of men are like the leaves.
In winter, winds blow them down to earth,
but then, when spring season comes again,
the budding wood grows more. And so with men—
one generation grows, another dies away.
But if you wish to learn about my family,
so you're familiar with my lineage,
well, many people know the details.
There is a city in a part of Argos,
[190] land where horses breed—it's called Ephyra.
There Sisyphus lived, craftiest man ever born,

Sisyphus, Aeolus' son. He had a son,
Glaucus, father of handsome Bellerophon.
The gods made Bellerophon so beautiful
and gave him the best qualities of men.
But Proetus, in his heart, plotted against him,
driving him from Argos, being much stronger,
for Zeus had given royal power to Proetus.
Now, Proetus' wife, lady Anteia,
[200] desperate to have sex with Bellerophon,
wanted him to lie with her in secret.
But fiery Bellerophon refused,
for he possessed an honourable heart.
So Anteia made up lies, telling Proetus,
the king,

‘You'll be murdered, Proetus,
unless you assassinate Bellerophon,
who wants to have sex with me against my will.’

Proetus was overcome with anger
at what he'd heard, but was reluctant
[210] to kill Bellerophon—in his heart
he shrank from such an evil act.
He sent Bellerophon to Lycia,
with a lethal message, coded symbols
written on a folded tablet. These told
many lies about Bellerophon.*
Proetus told him to give the message
to his father-in-law, so he'd be killed.
Bellerophon went off to Lycia,
under safe conduct from the gods.
[220] In Lycia he reached the river Xanthus,
and was honoured fully by the Lycian king,
with nine days of welcome entertainment,
nine sacrificial oxen. The tenth day,
when rose-fingered early Dawn appeared,
the Lycian king questioned Bellerophon,

asking to see the message he had brought
from Proetus, his son-in-law.
Once he'd received the evil message
from his son-in-law, he told Bellerophon,
[230] first of all, to kill the Chimera,
an invincible inhuman monster,
but divine in origin. Its front part was a lion,
its rear a snake's tail, and in between a goat.
She breathed deadly rage in searing fire.
But Bellerophon killed the Chimera,
putting his trust in omens from the gods.
Next, he battled the Solymi, the worst fight,
they say, he ever had with mortal beings.
Then, third, he massacred the Amazons,
[240] women who rival men. The king planned
one more devious evil trick against him,
as he was returning from the Amazons.
He set Lycia's best men in ambush.
But not a single one of them came back—
worthy Bellerophon had killed them all.
Then the king knew he must be divinely born.
So he kept him with him there in Lycia,
gave him his daughter's hand in marriage,
and half the honours in the entire kingdom.
[250] The Lycians then gave him an estate
far better than the rest, rich in vineyards,
wheat-growing farmland, for him to keep.
The king's daughter bore him three children—
Isander, Hippolochus, and Laodamia.
Counsellor Zeus then had sex with the girl.
She bore great Sarpedon, bronze-armed warrior.
But then Bellerophon angered all the gods.
He wandered out alone on the Aleian plain—
depressed in spirit, roaming there and shunning all.
[260] Ares, insatiable in war, killed his son Isander,
while he was fighting the famous Solymi.
Artemis, goddess with the golden reins,

in anger killed the daughter of Bellerophon.
My father was Hippolochus. I claim
my descent from him. He sent me to Troy,
telling me repeatedly to strive always
to be the best, to outdo other warriors,
so I do not shame my father's family,
the finest men by far in Ephyra,
[270] in spacious Lycia. That's my lineage,
the blood ancestry I claim as mine."

Glaucus spoke. Diomedes, skilled at war cries, rejoiced.
He jabbed his spear into the life-giving earth,
and then spoke to that shepherd of his people as a friend:

"In that case, you're an old friend of my father.
For Oeneus once entertained Bellerophon,
that worthy man, for twenty days at home.
The two of them exchanged fine presents.
Oeneus gave a shining purple belt,
[280] Bellerophon a gold two-handled cup,
which I left in my house when I came here.
I have no memory of Tydeus,
for he died while far away from me,
killed at Thebes with the Achaean army.
Now I'll be your kind host in middle Argos,
you'll be mine in Lycia, when I visit you.
Let's make sure we avoid each other's spears,
even in the thick of all the fighting.
For there are many famous Trojans and allies
[290] for me to kill, any warrior the gods provide,
whom I can run after and catch on foot.
For you there are many Argives to destroy,
all you can manage. So let's trade armour.
Then those warriors here will all recognize
that we acknowledge our father's bonds as friends."

With these words, the two men jumped out of their chariots,

clasped hands and pledged their mutual friendship.
Then Zeus, son of Cronos, stole Glaucus' wits,
for he gave Tydeus' son his golden armour,
[300] worth one hundred oxen, exchanging that
for armour made of bronze, worth only nine.

Meanwhile, Hector reached the Scaean Gates and oak tree.
The Trojans' wives and daughters ran up round him,
asking after children, brothers, relatives, and husbands.
Addressing each of them in turn, he ordered them
to pray to all the gods. For many were to face great grief.
He came to Priam's splendid palace, with porticos
of well-ground stone. It had fifty private bed rooms,
all of polished rock, built close to one another,
[310] where Priam's sons slept with the wives they married.
On the opposite side, within the courtyard,
were twelve roofed rooms, all made of polished stone,
for Priam's daughters, built near one another,
where Priam's sons-in-law slept with their married wives.
It was here Hector's gracious mother, Hecuba,
met him, as she was going to the palace,
with Laodice, loveliest of all her daughters.
Taking his hand, she spoke to Hector:

“My child,
why have you left hard battle to come here?
[320] The sons of Achaea—may gods curse them!—
press us hard, eager to fight around our city.
Your spirit has led you here to lift your hands
in prayers to Zeus from our city heights.
But wait. I can fetch some sweet wine for you,
so you can start by pouring a libation
to Father Zeus and other deathless gods.
Then you may enjoy some, too, if you'll drink.
Wine restores strength well in a weary man,
and you've grown tired guarding your own family.”

[330] Great Hector of the shining helmet then replied:

“My dear mother, don’t bring me some sweet wine,
for you’ll weaken me. I’ll lose my battle strength.
And I’m ashamed to offer up to Zeus
libations of bright wine with unwashed hands.
It’s not at all appropriate for a man
spattered with blood and dirt to offer prayers
to the son of Cronos, lord of the black clouds.
But you must go to Athena’s temple,
goddess of battle spoils, with burnt offerings.

[340] First assemble the old women all together,
then place in Athena’s lap, that fair-haired goddess,
the garment which you think is loveliest,
the very finest you keep here at home,
the one you like far better than the rest.
You must promise you will give Athena
twelve heifers in a temple sacrifice,
yearlings, as yet untouched by any goad,
if she will pity Troy, pity the wives
and Trojan children, if she will keep

[350] Tydeus’ son away from sacred Ilion,
that fierce spearman, that mighty warrior,
who makes men so afraid. You must leave now—
go straight to the temple of Athena,
goddess of battle spoils. I’ll find Paris
and call him back, if he will to listen to me.
If only the earth would open under him,
swallow him up! Olympian Zeus raised him
as trouble for the Trojans, for brave Priam,
for his children. If I could see Paris die,

[360] heading down to Hades, then I could say
my heart’s sorrows were over and forgotten.”

Hector spoke. His mother went into the house,
calling her attendants, who brought together
the matrons from the city. Then she went down

into the sweet-smelling room which stored their gowns,
fine embroidered work of women from Sidonia,
which godlike Paris brought with him from Sidon,
when he sailed across the broad sea, on that voyage
where he carried high-born Helen off. Hecuba took out
[370] one of the gowns, the finest embroidery, the largest.
Glittering like a star, it lay at the bottom of the chest.
Taking that as Athena's gift, she walked away.
The old ladies followed her. At Athena's temple
fair-cheeked Theano, daughter of Cisseus,
wife of horse-taming Antenor, let them in.
Trojans had appointed her Athena's priestess.
All the women raised their hands, praying to Athena,
while Theano took that lovely robe and placed it
in Athena's lap, the goddess with the lovely hair,
[380] then spoke out this prayer to great Zeus' daughter:

“Blessed Athena, sacred goddess,
defender of our city, break the spear
of Diomedes. Let him fall face down
before the Scaean Gates. If so, right now
we'll sacrifice twelve heifers in your temple,
beasts untouched by any goad, if you'll pity
our city, Trojans' wives and children.”

The women prayed. But Pallas Athena refused their prayer.

As they made their plea to great Zeus' daughter,
[390] Hector went to the fine house of Alexander.
He'd built it himself with fertile Troy's best craftsmen.
They'd made a bedroom, living quarters, and a yard
close to Priam and to Hector, on the city height.
Hector, loved by Zeus, went in the house, holding his spear,
sixteen feet long, bronze point glittering in front of him,
a gold band running round it. He met Alexander,
busy in his room with his fine weapons—shield
and body armour—polishing his curving bow.

Argive Helen sat there, too, with her attendant ladies,
[400] directing servants in their famous handicrafts.
Seeing Paris, Hector spoke some sharp words to him:

“Paris, you’re a worthless man.
It’s quite wrong of you to nurse that anger
in your heart, while men are being destroyed,
fighting right by the city, its steep walls.
It’s because of you the sounds of warfare
catch fire round our city. You would fight
any man you saw avoiding battle,
fleeing war’s brutality. So up with you,
[410] or soon our city will go up in smoke,
with fire consuming everything.”

Godlike Alexander then replied:

“Hector, your rebuke is not unfair—
it’s reasonable. So I’ll speak plainly.
Listen and remember what I’m saying.
I’m not sitting in my bedroom here
out of spite or anger with the Trojans.
I want to grieve. Just now my wife urged me,
using gentle words, to rouse myself to fight.
And personally I think that would be best.
[420] Winning shifts from one man to another.
Now, wait here, while I put on my armour.
Or go, and I’ll come later, catch up with you.”

Hector of the shining helmet did not answer.
So Helen spoke to Hector with these soothing words:

“O Hector, you’re my brother, and me,
I’m a horrible, conniving bitch.
I wish that on that day my mother bore me
some evil wind had come, carried me away,
and swept me off, up into the mountains,

[430] or to the waves of the tumbling, crashing sea.

Then I would've died before this happened.

But since gods have ordained these evil things,

I wish I'd been wife to a better man,

someone sensitive to others' insults,

with feeling for his many shameful acts.

This husband of mine has no sense now

and won't acquire any in the future.

I expect he'll get from that what he deserves.

But come in, sit on this chair, my brother,

[440] since this trouble really weighs upon your mind—

all because I was a bitch—because of that

and Paris' folly, Zeus gives us an evil fate,

so we may be subjects for men's songs

in human generations yet to come.”

Great Hector of the shining helmet answered Helen:

“Don't ask me to sit down, Helen. You're kind,

but you won't persuade me. For my heart's on fire

to help Trojans, who really miss me when I'm gone.

But you must rouse Paris, and he should hurry,

[450] so he can catch me here in the city.

I'm going home, to visit my dear wife

and infant son, for I've no idea

if I'll be coming back to them again,

or if the gods will kill me at Achaean hands.”

Saying this, Hector of the shining helmet went away.

Soon afterwards he reached his well-built house.

He didn't find white-armed Andromache at home,

for she'd left with the infant child, going to the walls

with a finely dressed attendant, in tears, lamenting.

[460] When Hector didn't meet his fair wife in the house,

he went and, standing in the doorway, asked his servant:

“Woman, tell me the truth. Where's Andromache?

At one of my sisters? With a well-dressed wife
of one of my brothers? Or is she at Athena's temple,
where the other fine-haired Trojan women
are praying to that fearful goddess?"

His busy housekeeper then answered him:

"Hector, you asked me to tell you the truth.
She didn't go to one of your sisters,
[470] or one of your brothers' well-dressed wives,
nor did she go to Athena's temple,
where other fine-haired Trojan women
are praying to that fearful goddess.
No. She went to Ilion's great tower,
for she'd heard the Trojans were hard pressed,
the power of Achaeans was so great.
So she's hurrying off up to the walls,
like someone in a fit. A nurse went, too,
carrying the child."

Once the housekeeper spoke,
[480] Hector left the house by the same route he'd come,
through the well-built streets, across the mighty city,
and reached the Scaean Gates, beyond which he'd go
out onto the plain. There his wife ran up to meet him,
Andromache, daughter of great-hearted Eëtion,
who'd included a large dowry with her.
Eëtion had lived below forested Mount Placus,
in Thebe, king of the Cilician people. She'd become
married wife to Hector of the shining helmet.
Now she met him there. With her came the nurse,
[490] holding at her breast their happy infant child,
well-loved son of Hector, like a beautiful star.
Hector had named him Scamandrius, but others
called him Astyanax, lord of the city,
because Hector was Troy's only guardian.
Hector looked at his son in silence, with a smile.

Andromache stood close to him, weeping.
Taking Hector by the hand, she spoke to him.

“My dear husband, your warlike spirit
will be your death. You’ve no compassion
[500] for your infant child, for me, your sad wife,
who before long will be your widow.
For soon the Achaeans will attack you,
all together, and cut you down. As for me,
it would be better, if I’m to lose you,
to be buried in the ground. For then I’ll have
no other comfort, once you meet your death,
except my sorrow. I have no father,
no dear mother. For lord Achilles killed
my father, when he wiped out Thebe,
[510] city with high gates, slaying Eëtion.
But he didn’t strip his corpse—his heart
felt too much shame for that. So he burned him
in his finely decorated armour
and raised a burial mound above the ashes.
Mountain nymphs, daughters of aegis-bearing Zeus,
planted elm trees all around his body.
I had seven brothers in my home.
All went down to Hades in a single day,
for swift-footed lord Achilles killed them all,
[520] while they were guarding their shambling oxen
and their white shining sheep. As for my mother,
who ruled wooded Thebe-under-Placus,
he brought her here with all his other spoils.
Then he released her for a massive ransom.
But archer goddess Artemis then killed her
in her father’s house. So, Hector, you are now
my father, noble mother, brother,
and my protecting husband. So pity me.
Stay here in this tower. Don’t orphan your child
[530] and make me a widow. Place men by the fig tree,
for there the city is most vulnerable,

the wall most easily scaled. Three times
their best men have come there to attack,
led by the two Ajaxes, the sons of Atreus,
famous Idomeneus, and Diomedes,
Tydeus' courageous son, incited to it
by someone well versed in prophecy
or by their own hearts' inclination."

Great Hector of the shining helmet answered her:

"Wife,

- [540] all this concerns me, too. But I'd be disgraced,
dreadfully shamed among Trojan men
and Trojan women in their trailing gowns,
if I should, like a coward, slink away from war.
My heart will never prompt me to do that,
for I have learned always to be brave,
to fight alongside Trojans at the front,
striving to win fame for father and myself.
My heart and mind know well the day is coming
when sacred Ilion will be destroyed,
- [550] along with Priam of the fine ash spear
and Priam's people. But what pains me most
about these future sorrows is not so much
the Trojans, Hecuba, or king Priam,
or even my many noble brothers,
who'll fall down in the dust, slaughtered
by their enemies. My pain focuses on you,
when one of those bronze-clad Achaeans
leads you off in tears, ends your days of freedom.
If then you come to Argos as a slave,
- [560] working the loom for some other woman,
fetching water from Hypereia or Messeis,
against your will, forced by powerful Fate,
then someone seeing you as you weep
may well say:

‘That woman is Hector’s wife.
He was the finest warrior in battle
of all horse-taming Trojans in that war
when they fought for Troy.’

Someone will say that,
and it will bring still more grief to you,
to be without a man like that to save you
[570] from days of servitude. May I lie dead,
hidden deep under a burial mound,
before I hear about your screaming,
as you are dragged away.”

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

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

He placed his son in the hands of his dear wife.
She embraced the child on her sweet breast, smiling

through her tears. Observing her, Hector felt compassion.
He took her hand, then spoke to her.

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

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

Paris did not wait for long in his high-roofed home.
Once he’d pulled on his famous armour, ornate bronze,
he hurried off on foot quickly through the city.
Just as some stalled stallion, well fed in the barn,
breaks his restraints, then gallops at top speed
across the plain, off to bathe in a fair-flowing river,
[620] something he does habitually, proud of his strength,
holding his head high, mane streaming on his shoulders,
legs carrying him swiftly to the grazing mares—
that’s how Paris, son of Priam, hurried then,
rushing down from the heights of Pergamus,
gleaming like a ray of sunshine in his armour,

laughing with joy as his feet carried him so fast.
He soon met his brother Hector, turning away
from where he'd had his conversation with his wife.
Godlike Paris was the first to speak:

[630] "My dear brother, you're in a hurry.
I'm holding you back with my delay,
not coming as quickly as you asked."

Hector of the shining helmet answered Paris:

"Brother, no one could justly criticize
your work in battle, for you fight bravely.
But you deliberately hold yourself back
and do not wish to fight. It pains my heart,
when I hear shameful things about you
from Trojans, who are suffering much distress
[640] because of you. But let's be on our way.
We'll sort all this out later, if Zeus ever grants
we arrange in place inside our homes
bowls of wine to celebrate our freedom,
in thanks to the eternal, heavenly gods,
once we have driven away from Troy
all these well-armed Achaeans."