***The Iliad -Book 11* - Agamemnon's finest hour**

* This is the beginning of the Greeks' and Trojans' "longest day." The battle lasts from this book, 11, until book 18.
* **The Achaeans' fortune rises, then falls.**
* Notice the way Homer describes the Achaeans: "There Strife took her stand, raising her high-pitched cry, great and terrible, lashing the fighting fury in each Achaeans' heart--no stopping them now, **mad for war and struggle**." (11-14)
* The book begins with the *aristeia* of Agamemnon. (17-187)
* The Achaeans seem to have a rout over the Trojans, but Zeus had commanded that Hector stay out of the battle until Agamemnon is wounded. Then Hector's turn for victory will come. However, Hector's victory is ominously limited: "But soon as a spear or bowshot wounds the king [Agamemnon] and Atrides mounts his chariot once again, then I [Zeus] will hand Hector the power to kill and kill **till he cuts his way to the benched ships and the sun sinks and the blessed darkness sweeps across the earth."** Therefore, Hector's victory will be for just a half day, and then it will be all over for him.
* When finally Agamemnon takes a hit (295), Hector seizes the battlefield and slays many Achaeans.
* Diomedes is wounded.
* Even Odysseus sustains a wound, although Athena prevents it from being fatal.(515)

 **The Homeric Simile**

* Each book contains similes, but they are especially prevalent in books of battle.
* Similes are ordinarily considered the simplest of figures of speech with the terms of the comparison set out clearly (my love is like a red, red rose). But examine how the Homeric similes operate more complexly, with added details and a well-defined context. Use these as examples:
  + a mauling lion 132
  + birth pangs 315
  + Odysseus as an injured stag 558
  + A frustrated lion 644
  + a stubborn ass 656

**Does Homer take sides?**

* As you read Homer's description of the battle, do you discern whether he favors the Achaeans or the Trojans?
* What is your evidence?
* **Achilles observes**.
* From the ships, Achilles observes the Achaeans losing the battle.
* He calls for Patroclus. Notice the fateful line that introduces Patroclus: "Hearing Achilles, forth he [Patroclus] came from his shelter, striding up like the deathless god of war **but from that moment on his doom was sealed."** (714) Thus begins the movement toward the final doom of Patroclus and the resolution of the epic 12 books hence.

1. What goddess does Zeus send down to Odysseus’ ship? What do the Achaeans now

desire more than returning home?

1. Why are the gods angry with Zeus? How does he respond to their anger?
2. Why are the arms of Antiphus and Isus familiar to Agamémnon? Why does Homer

provide this information? (this is a great question). What did Achilles do earlier with these two? Why the change? Is this realistic? (line 120 ish)

1. This is getting very interesting. Why does Agamemnon say he will not spare Antimachus’ sons (Pisander and Hippolochus)? What does this reveal about the King’s character? To what element does Homer then compare him? (line 143). What motivates Agamemnon (the answer to this last part is politics)? Are politics a good reason for doing things? This is a great question interms of the current Ukraine impeachment deal with the Bidens, Pelosoi and Trump. There ordeal almost reads like a Greek tragedy.
2. An easy one for you. 😊 When does Zeus say he will give Hector the advantage in battle?
3. Why does the poet say that the death of Iphídamas is especially lamentable? (lines 255-288)
4. .Hector, Agamemnon, and Diomedes all say Zeus is responsible for their fates in battle. What does each man think about the hand of the divine?

I’ll do this one for you

*Agamemnon says that Zeus will not permit him glory on the battlefield on this occasion. Hector, having been forewarned by Iris, knows that Zeus is giving him a “great chance” (Line 330-337). Diomedes, like Agamemnon, states that Zeus has awarded the day to the Trojans. Agamemnon blames Zeus, Hector trusts Zeus too much, and Diomedes wisely admits the futility of fighting the god.*

1. What do Odysseus and Diomedes say to one another? Describe their relationship. Why is this significant?
2. This book focuses a lot on the reasons for war and the motivation of the individual. Do they matter? For example, Nestor tells a story from long ago. The gist is on line 910.
3. Whom does Patroclus encounter on his way back to Achilles? What request does the man make of him? How does this episode illustrate Patroclus’ character?

***The Iliad*-****Book 12 - The Trojans storm the rampart**

* **The wall. (they argued about walls in 725 BC) 😊**
* The wall is the focus of the entire book--will Hector breach it?
* The book begins with a magnificent look at the Achaean wall and trench, wounds made by the invaders in the earth. This long-lasting war--so important and significant to the participants at the time--has left no mark after the passing of time. "While Hector still lived and Achilles raged on and the warlord Priam's citadel went unstormed, so long the Achaeans' rampart stood erect. But once the best of the Trojan captains fell, and many Achaeans died as well while some survived, and Priam' high walls were stormed in the tenth year and the Argives set sail for the native land they loved--then, at last, Poseidon and Lord Apollo launched their plan to smash the rampart, flinging into it all the rivers' fury....**So in the years to come Poseidon and god Apollo would set all things to rights once more."** (13-42)
* Notice the simile applied to Hector: (50) he is a ferocious boar, yet the boar will be killed: "and his own raw courage kills him."
* **The Trojan seer Polydamas gives 1st advice.**
* Polydamas will give two pieces of advice in this book. The first is that the Trojans should not attempt to cross the trench around the Achaean wall in their chariots. They should get out and charge on foot.
* Hector follows this advice but Asius disagrees and attacks in his chariot. His men are slaughtered by the two spearmen up on the ramparts.
* Therefore, Polydamas's advice is correct in this instance.
* **The Trojan seer Polydamas gives 2nd advice.**
* 230: Polydamas sees an eagle fly by on the left--the sinister side. Polydamas takes that as an ill omen. He advises Hector to stop the attack.
* In this case, however, Hector rejects his advice--bad move!
* Hector rejects (281) Polydamas's advice and believes there is only one true advice, one not based on the flight of birds, and that is: "Fight for your country--that is the best, the only omen." This is one of the most famous lines of *The Iliad*. Hector's rejection of the seer's advice is a wrong, however. Although Hector seems to speak a noble line, this is the one time when Hector could have backed down without losing face (Mueller 43).
* Hector makes his fateful choice here, to ignore the omens and to fight for glory.
* **Sarpedon and Glaucus**
* Examine the lengthy simile on lines 348-358.
* Sarpedon's advice to Glaucus emphasizes and amplifies Hector's view of glory. Here is the heroic code: (374 ff)
  + "Ah my friend, if you and I could escape this fray and live forever, never a trace of age, immortal, I would never fight on the front lines again or command you in the field where men win fame. **But now, as it is, the fates of death await us, thousands poised to strike, and not a man alive can flee them or escape--so in we go for attack! Give our enemy glory or win it for ourselves!"**
  + This is one of the most famous passages in the entire *Iliad*. Notice that it is composed of two parts:
    - The social contract of the leader with his subjects (359-373). In the first part of Sarpedon's speech, he explains how subjects look up to their leaders, and the leaders must live up to their subjects' expectations. The leader is awarded the best cuts of meat, the best wine, because he then will fight the best.
    - In the second part (374-381), the leader faces death, and it is in the face of death that honor is won.

1. The book concludes with a thrilling description of Hector's success--he breaks through the wall. Compare what Sarpedon says here to what Hector said to his wife, Andromache, in 6.521-555. Is this striving for glory against all odds folly? (opinion)
2. We finally meet the Trojan leaders. List them here. Who are the commanders of the Trojans?
   * Hector
   * Polydamas
   * Aeneas
3. Why does the poet say it will be difficult for him to describe all the fighting?
4. What omen do the Trojans see as they try to breach the walls? How does Poulydamas interpret it? Line 230
5. What does Hector say in response to Polydamas’ prediction? What does this show us

about his character? (line 267)

1. What do Aeantes and the other soldier named Aeantes say to encourage the Achaens? (line 310) Do you think they are persuasive?
2. Who is the key to the Trojan leader’s successful breach of the wall? What god or goddess is behind him?
3. What are the evenly matched armies like? Who finally breaks the stalemate, and why?