

Someday I'll Leave Troy

An Honors Thesis (THEA 434)

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Abstract

The Trojan War is one of the most recognizable myths in Western society. It has been explored and reinterpreted by countless artists and continues to be a source of inspiration. This project creates a plan for a series of performances that seek to look at the war itself and our process of reinterpreting it while asking why it holds such a strong grip on artists. By using two different structures of performance it takes both a birds-eye view and a ground-level perspective of the war. In this, we're able to see how echoes of its themes exist both in the world-shaking events that happen every day and in the smaller battles, we fight in our minds. Ultimately it finds that Troy stands firm because it exists as a war that can never end, but whose end was always perfectly clear.

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Process Analysis Statement

What is Troy? It seems like an easy question. It's a semi-historic city and the city of a mythical war. But that fails to mention so much. There's a reason we keep coming back to Troy. It represents something that we can't escape. There's the war for one. As has been said many times, war never changes and we've yet to find a way to stop doing it. However, the Trojan War is a story about a lot more than just a war. It's about humanity in a way that we often miss when looking at myths. The virtues and flaws of Achilles, Agamemnon, Ajax, and some people whose names don't start with A. It's about a past that wasn't a simpler time but one just as complex as the present. Layers of history and connected stories. It's impossible to track just one thread that makes the entire tapestry. Of course, the fact that the Iliad is among the oldest surviving works and is considered the pinnacle of a culture that Europe and the West love to reinvent, also gives it considerable weight.

To me though, Troy also has a more meta meaning. The Trojan War is ongoing. It never ended, never will, and never could. Homer doesn't end it. While the Trojan defeat is all but ensured without Hector, it's still ongoing. He doesn't start the war either, in fact, it's vital to know it's been going on for years by the time he starts depicting it. Of course, other authors have shown us the start and the end of it, but it's fascinating that the most influential source doesn't. The war can't end because it is humanity. This isn't to say that the natural state of humanity is war, you couldn't get farther from my beliefs than that. In the story of the Trojan War, we see the entirety of the human experience, in that struggle, we see our everyday lives taken to the extreme. This amplification allows us to see it and recognize our situation without the emotional challenge that comes with seeing oneself. So as long as there are humans we are living through the Trojan War.

Going a step further, if I may be a bit melodramatic, in my four years in Muncie I've felt as if I was living through the Trojan War. There were times I was a soldier on the front lines, just a nameless face struggling among countless others. Those were the times I felt far, far from home and knew that while I'd rather be there I had to fight this fight. There were times I was one of the heroes. I've had my moments of pride, rage, and victory. While not in combat my successes felt akin to an Aristeia. There were times I was a Trojan citizen. Trapped somewhere familiar. The walls that kept me safe made me feel like a prisoner. I feared how long the siege would last and what the world would be like afterward. There were times I was one of those left in Greece, hearing distant stories of what was happening to my loved ones with nothing but hope that they survived and fear of the world where they didn't. These experiences aren't unique, but the fact that we shared them only made it feel more like a massive war. Through my own experiences, I hope you can see where Troy lives every day. I know these feelings aren't going to leave me, I know the war will never end, so what else can I do but keep fighting?

This is a proposal for a five-month-long devised project that would have me and a group of actors and dramaturges face the Trojan War half as a performance and half as an archive. Originally I had planned on this being a series of performances to have been completed this semester, but as I started the initial planning it became clear I needed more time than was available to me and that this detailed plan was capstone material. My goal here isn't to retell Troy, though that is an aspect of it, but to explore the reasons why we keep coming back to it and to share a love for classic literature. I am not trying to say Troy is like Covid, or current American politics, or any real war. I am saying that Troy, and similar stories, can be a lens to examine the world. This is done through the two parallel plots. The one of Troy done in traditional performances invites the audience to join in and forces them to experience the

struggles of the soldiers and understand themselves through it. The other is of the Archivist, who is presented in the form of pre-show videos and tries to explain the story of Troy. As the Archivist continues their reliance on the story to avoid their own life becomes more apparent and their relationship to the work becomes considerably more difficult.

How To Read This Work

This project is a plan for a devised piece. All parts of the performance will be created by the performers and me in rehearsal instead of starting from an established script. I use the archivist as a research anchor and a loose outline of performances to guide where we might go. The process puts a focus on creating specific soldiers that we might see repeatedly and how they and their views on the war change over the years. All the planning documents are shown below and would be distributed to performers so they understand what will happen.

Presented first is a schedule. The performance is split into five, four-week cycles. Each cycle follows roughly the same schedule. If it needs to be it can be adjusted or changed to match the needs of the actors. For example, if a cycle uses the same cast as the previous cycle, week one can feature less time on character building and more on developing the script. You will notice the cycles are relatively loose on scheduling details. At the moment this is a hypothetical project and as such many of the details of this section may need to be changed to represent the needs of the environment I am working in. Part of why the Archivist work is done at the start of each cycle instead of having a cycle where I can finish that work before the episode work is because I want both to interact and by going back and forth we can change one if the other starts to demand it.

After the schedule, we get to the cycle of archivist and episodes, with six of each. The archivist text can be read as a long monologue. It's important to understand that while this is presented as a script I still aim to work with the Archivist to find how to make it fit their vocal patterns and find places where we can add further depth both to the descriptions and the character. You will also notice that while it is a script, staging recommendations, are left out since those are a place I particularly want to work with the actor on developing. The Archivist sections are intentionally dry and paint large heroes in broad strokes. While getting at the complexity of these stories it ultimately is meant to contrast the more specific episodes. The Archivist as a character is intended to be somewhat absent-minded and obsessive. They throw themselves into this project instead of facing the real issues in their life. When those issues come to face, they are forced to end the series without concluding the war. The Archivist scenes were first envisioned to be taking place in the future to ask how what we face today will be remembered, but I have no intention of confirming that until I can work with the performer.

The episode plans are considerably vaguer. They feature a setting and suggested location for the performance that might reflect that. Instead of acting like a script they take the form of an outline. They show how the action shifts around the stage and what the issues they might face are. I left these intentionally shorter than I want the performances to be because I want to make sure we feel free to add more to the episode instead of following my first vision to the end. Each new line represents a new idea. When a section goes to bullet points, it's meant to represent smaller more specific ideas that should be touched on as part of the larger conversation. I want to avoid putting these episodes in the past and instead view them as happening in the present at all times. While in the body of this thesis, the episodes take up considerably less space than the

archivist scripts, when fully developed they will be the main section of the performance with the archivist serving as supporting material.

I will admit missing in part are some logical elements, how long will rehearsals be, how will tickets work, how many actors are kept between performances and how many aren't. As I mentioned above this is a project that exists only in this thesis at the moment. Until I find an opportunity to put this plan into motion I want to avoid getting trapped by logistical concerns. How long it will take to find the opportunity is still in the air, but don't take the lack of logistics for a lack of belief in this project.

Cycle Schedule

Week 1- Characters and Context

- 2 days working on mythical context
 - 1 day with just the archivist
 - 1 day teaching the info to the entire group
- 2 days developing/furthering the characters we'll see
- 1 day focusing on putting character into the context

Week 2- Develop a script

- Work to turn the rough outline into a full episode
- By the end have a (somewhat) stable script
- Ideally loosely blocked by the end of the week

Week 3- setting

- Work on making sure the blocking works and getting it set

Week 4 Polish and perform

- Polish performance and perform at the end of the week
 - 1-3 performances per episode max
- Corresponding Archivist Video released at the start of the week

Archivist Script 1 (Introduction)

Troy. It's one of the most important places in antiquity. It's also a war that brought the city to its knees that has had an iron grip on artists across the centuries. What is it about Troy that we keep going back to it? Is it the legendary heroes and their deeds? The power of a siege and

divine warfare on our imaginations? Is it the romance of people turning the world upside down in the name of love? Maybe it's just the fact that there's a myriad of stories surrounding it so any story can be told within it. I, frankly, couldn't tell you. It's beyond my pay grade. But, I'm trying to figure it out. I'm trying to find an answer. I'm going through everything that's left and trying to find a way to make it all make sense.

What's left is the key there. While a lot of what we know, especially in the public consciousness, comes from Homer and the *Iliad*, a mostly complete source, there are a bunch of other sources about Troy that also exist, many of which we only have a few fragments left. There are some that we only know of through other people mentioning them. Time can be cruel. It's also worth mentioning that a lot of these sources are contradictory. I mean it's not like it was one person writing their personal experience, this is a range of authors each with their own bias and agenda. Everyone wrote for their own time and audience.

This is also where we get into the historicity of it all. To say the least, Troy and its war have a complex relationship with history. Most people can recognize that many of the elements of our records aren't what we might recognize as facts. While at the time of writing people would've accepted the involvement of gods and monsters, today we find that a little suspect. The records we have also have been primarily made for entertainment, not archives. This means any truth to what's said is hidden under a layer of poetry. So most people look to Troy primarily as a myth, however, there have been some people who think there is much more fact in these works. I'm looking at you Heinrich Schliemann. While there is more evidence today suggesting that there might've been a real conflict similar to the Trojan War, we can't say for certain one way or the other. I'll try to talk a little more about this later, but for now, just know that Troy's relation to history is complicated.

That begs the question, how am I going to tell you about it? I mean we tell myths and histories in a very different ways. Somewhat different. Well the line between them is shaky at best. Myths tend to be more sacred than history, but sometimes we treat history as sacred. These narratives have gods, giving them a sacred element either way. And while myth is often used to dismiss something as untrue, they are true to the group that holds them. It's fair to say that the authors of these narratives wouldn't have had a distinction between myth and history. This is also a pretty clear example of a blurry line. Sorry, that was an unnecessary tangent. I will avoid those in the future. That was a complex way of saying I'm going to be doing my best to take the perspective of the authors of these narratives. Seeing them as true, though possibly exaggerated or symbolic at moments. I'm trying to give you a neutral version of the story and staying to the original bias is as neutral as we can get, though I may include my own opinions I'll make them clear. But that's enough talking in circles. Let's get into it.

So before there was a war, there was a city. The city of Wilusa. Got you there. Thought I was going to say Troy didn't you? No Troy has two names, both of which have multiple forms. Wilusa was a Hittite name that would evolve into Ilios (which is why we have the Iliad and not the Troyad.) The site can also be referred to as Taruisa, which would eventually become Troia and then Troy. Confusing name tangents aside, Wilusa is a highly historic place with complex ties to the Hittite empire. The ruins we have of it are in Western Turkey right to the Northeast of the Aegean Sea. If the stories around the Trojan War were based on real events they likely came from the end of this period.

Now the Greek description of early Troy is a lot more interesting. There are a lot of details here so I'm going to try to be brief. Tros was a very powerful and rich man who founded the kingdom of Troy, which would later give its name to the city. He had a few children notably

Ganymede, cupbearer for the gods and original twink, and Ilus (the second) who matters to us. In these stories Ilus founded Ilium. Different authors disagree on how Ilium was founded including cows and magic statues that blind men. His son, Laomedon, did not name anything after himself that I'm aware of but *he was* a massive dick. After trying to overthrow Zeus, Poseidon and Apollo were forced to serve Laomedon and created the legendary walls of Troy. However, Laomedon promised the gods wages and refused to pay, leading both to curse the city. Apollo brought a plague and Poseidon threatened to use a sea monster. The only way to stop Poseidon was for Laomedon to sacrifice his daughter, Hesione. Fortunately, Heracles showed up at just the right time and offered to save her if he could have Laomedon's magical horses. Heracles was successful but Laomedon, having not learned a lesson about fair wages, refused to pay Heracles. So Heracles came back with an army and besieged Troy in a lesser-known Trojan prequel. During this war, Heracles killed Laomedon and most of his sons. Hesione, the daughter he saved earlier, chose a captive to save and she chose her one surviving brother Prodarces. She had to ransom him and because of that, they changed his name to Priam (a play on the word to buy). Priam would go on to have a lot of children (more than fifty, one of which, Paris, was prophesied to be the downfall of Troy and as such abandoned) and was the king of Troy during the war that people care about.

That's probably not the backstory you were expecting. After all, where's Helen, the face that launched a thousand ships, the actual reason behind the war? Patience. I know that's what you're looking for so I figured I'd start with a surprise. The fun thing here is it's still not Helen's time. Instead let's check in with the king of the gods, Zeus. Looking down from Olympus, he was starting to think there were too many humans lying around, particularly a lot with divine blood, and being the fearful and cruel god he was, he thought a major war would be a good way

to empty the place. He was particularly worried about prophecies about his sons overthrowing him and that the son of Thetis, a nymph he liked, would be greater than his father. Spurred on by one or both reasons (or neither for some authors), The nymph Thetis was betrothed to human king Peleus. Their wedding was a big affair with most of the gods being invited. However, Eris, the goddess of discord, was upset that she wasn't invited. In a move that demonstrated why she wasn't invited, she chucked a wedding gift in through the door, a golden apple addressed to the fairest. Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite all insisted the apple was for them and everyone else was too smart to say anything. Eventually, Zeus had a shepherd named Paris decide. He just happened to be the abandoned prince who was prophesied to be the downfall of Troy. Each of the goddesses tried to bribe him, Athena with wisdom and victory in battle, Hera with political power, and Aphrodite with the most beautiful woman in the world. Paris in a move that would define male psychology for millennia chose Aphrodite. Aside from pissing off two of the most powerful gods, this also set in motion the adventures that would see him return to Troy and be recognized as a prince. How convenient.

Now it's finally time for Helen. Kind of. We need to talk about her parents. She has four, more or less. So there's the King of Sparta, Tyndareus, and his wife Leda. They're getting it on and then later (or maybe earlier) in that night Zeus comes in as a swan and has a moment of unclear consent with Leda. Later she has two sets of twins, one fathered by Tyndareus and the other by Zeus. Helen falls into the Zeus side of the family. Now I said four parents and it's worth mentioning that some sources (called Apollodorus) claim embodiment of retribution, Nemesis was her mother. Confusing genetics aside Helen was the most beautiful woman in the world and everyone wanted to marry her. Tyndareus wasn't sure how to go about finding her a husband since whoever wasn't chosen was going to be pissed. So certified too-smart-for-his-own-good

king Odysseus of Ithaca suggested that all the suitors swear an oath to protect the marriage no matter who it was. Although the suitors weren't happy about this, it was the only chance they had at marrying Helen. Tyndareus choose Menelaus who was represented by his brother Agamemnon. So Menelaus married Helen and became king of Sparta (he also pissed off Aphrodite by forgetting a major sacrifice) and Agamemnon married Helen's mortal sister Clytemnestra, a marriage that I'm sure was healthy and fruitful.

Now our threads start to combine. Paris returned to his place as a prince of Troy and traveled to Sparta on a diplomatic mission while Menelaus was away at his uncle's burial. It was Aphrodite's time to live up to her bargain with Paris and she had Eros shoot Helen to make her fall in love with Paris. The two eloped and after a possible shipwreck in Egypt, they went to Troy. When Menelaus got home he launched an expedition to try to retrieve Helen peacefully. When that failed he had his brother, Agamemnon gathered all the suitors and asked that they live up to their oaths to protect the union. They gathered (with differing levels of support) at Aulis, ready to start a war.

That's where we're going to stop it for today. I know there's more but I'm running out of time and this seems like a good place to put a pause on it. I'll try to make the next one as soon as I'm able.

Episode 1 Outline (The Ships)

Location- A cramped wooden space. Ideally a little damp.

Open on a group of soldiers below decks. They're finally at Troy but there's been a standstill. In the quiet doubt reaches them.

Soldiers aren't sure why there's a holdup. They're worried something else has gone wrong.

Some believe this has to be because of the leaders. Agamemnon already stranded them at Aulis.

- He also got them out.
- Only because he knew we were going to riot.

Maybe we're going home?

- They already refused our emissaries.
- Pure numbers might change minds.
- They knew this was coming.

Maybe there was an ill omen.

- The gods have already been against this war.
- But the gods started it.
- They play dirty.
- Why do they do that? They're already stronger.

A soldier from above deck comes down and says no one wants to be the first person to get off since they will be the first to die.

Some suggestions about who should go first.

- Menelaus is the reason we're here.
- Without him, there isn't much of a reason to fight.
- If anyone can get around it it's Odysseus.
- The best way to avoid a prophecy is to not trigger it.
- Achilles is supposed to win glory in battle before he dies- if he's first maybe the rest of us will be safe until he does.
- He's too hungry for glory to risk it.

- It would be a lot less confusing if one of the Ajaxes died.
- Maybe they all agree with that fact.

Why don't one of us volunteers? It's not like we're going to make it back anyways.

- This isn't popular.
- For some reason the person who suggested it isn't jumping up either.
- They know the return is slim, especially with a prophesied 10 years here, but they're willing to try to last that long.
- The generals are too important to sacrifice like that one of us won't make a difference.
- There are 29 contingents surely someone can die.
- These are kings their death means more than just a regiment finding a replacement.
- If we sit here trojans are just going to set the ships on fire.

At this point, everyone wants someone to go down but isn't jumping for the opportunity.

The sounds of battle erupt outside and the soldiers scramble to get ready.

Now everyone asking who you think it was.

Maybe a spear pierces the ship with blood on it. Whoever it is is dead now.

Archivist Script 2 (Muster and Arrival)

So last time I made one of these we went through a lot of the lead-up to the war, primarily with the stories of the golden apple and the judgment of Paris and Helen's birth, suitors, and abduction. I said we'd pick up with the Greek forces massing in Aulis, but I want to take a few steps back and talk about a major figure that I somehow haven't mentioned yet. The best of the Greeks, Achilles.

What can I say about Achilles that hasn't already been said? Probably nothing. He is as well written about as anyone I know of and has been represented truly countless times across history. He symbolizes this heroic past and the strength of a warrior. Yet there's also a deep humanity inside of him. His rage and his grief live in all of us. Of all the figures of this war that artists keep digging up, he has had the least rest. All of this is to say, I'm glad I'm not an artist because the tapestry of work about him is so long it's probably more worthwhile to condense it than add on.

So Achilles was born to the mortal king Peleus and the Nymph Thetis. You might remember that they were the couple whose marriage was interrupted by Eris and her apple. So already he's tied into this messy story. There are two major prophecies about him, the first was that he'd be greater than his father (which is why the beautiful Thetis ended up with a mortal because Greek gods were a little scared of children rising up), and the second that he would either have a glorious and short life or a long and obscure one. These aren't usually both used in the same source, because the first tends to give away the choice of the second one.

We also need to talk about Achilles and his famous ankle. There's a well-known myth where he was dipped in the Styx to make him immortal, and a less known version where his mother tries to set him on fire to burn away the mortality, both of these leading to a mostly invulnerable form, save an ankle. The surviving sources for these stories are a bit later and Homer certainly doesn't show Achilles as mostly invulnerable so often purists will dismiss these stories. I'm not going to weigh in one way or the other, the pure popularity of the ankle-dipping story shows how complex canon can be in figuring all this out, and making definitive judgments is just a way of dismissing elements from the archive.

There are a few smaller stories about Achilles we won't talk about today like being trained by the centaur supreme, Chiron (not his official title but it's accurate), and growing up with Patroclus, a companion and possible lover, we'll get to their complex relationship later on. We just have one thing to bring up before going back to Aulis. Achilles's time on Skyros, which again does come from later sources, but it is still worth mentioning. As the suitors were gathering their forces, Achilles was not bound to fight but he was a skilled warrior itching to prove himself so it seemed likely he would join the war effort. His mother, fearing his death, convinced him to hide on the Island of Skyros disguised as a woman. While here he did fall in love with the princess and they had a child. However, Odysseus (who might've also tried to avoid going to war) and others had a hunch that Achilles was on Skyros and went to see if they could reveal him. They showed all the women magnificent gifts, most of them admiring the jewelry and clothes, while disguised Achilles marveled at the weapons and armor. Then they sounded the horn as if they were being attacked and while all the women ran away, Achilles grabbed a spear ready to fight, more or less revealing himself. It didn't take much convincing to get him to Aulis.

With everyone assembled, there was a bit of a problem. The winds just stopped. They couldn't sail out to Troy. Everyone was very upset and asked the priest Calchas what was going on. He revealed that the goddess Artemis was angry at the war leader Agamemnon for killing a sacred deer (or bragging, or killing a lay deer in a sacred grove). Fortunately, it was an easy fix; she just asked that he sacrifice his daughter Iphagenia. He was hesitant but had her sent to Aulis under the pretext of marrying our boy Achilles. Her mother also came along. While the exact fate of Iphagenia is debated (some saying she was sacrificed others saying she was saved and became one of many possible things) it did put a strain on that marriage and it gave the Greeks favorable

winds to Troy. This story also falls into the category of retold to death. Or at least retold to the point of almost death until a goddess saves you at the last minute.

On their way to Troy, the fleet made a lot of stops to resupply or just raid if the mood was right. This became important because it's when Philoctetes gets injured. Philoctetes was one of Helen's suitors and a friend of Heracles who got his bow. While on one of the islands they were visiting, he got bit by a snake. There are a lot of possibilities for why this happened and I don't want to go into all of them but for what was possibly his fault he had this terrible wound that would not heal. Odysseus suggested they abandon him somewhere since he couldn't fight with that wound and they left him on the island of Lemnos. He'll come back as important near the end of the war.

Finally, the Greeks got to Troy proper. Or the beaches outside of Troy proper. The Trojans were ready for a fight but there was a moment of tension because there was another prophecy that the first person to get off the boats would die. Odysseus tricked Protesilaus, leader of Phylacean forces, into jumping onto their shield claiming that wouldn't count. It counted. He died. But with that, the war could start. While the first battle saw losses on both sides it ultimately led to the Greeks pushing all the way to the walls of Troy. Of course, these were divinely made walls so penetrating them was a challenge and the first battles subsided with the Greeks making camp on the beach and settling in for what would be nine long years.

That's all that I have time for today. Don't worry I'll be back soon to talk about the war. It might've taken us a while to get this far but those first nine years are going to go fast, trust me.

Episode 2 Outline (Mutiny)

Location- A small space, possibly reminiscent of a traditional, small theatre

As people are coming in an actor/usher is checking passwords (given with a ticket but it's easy to get if you don't have it).

Actors populate the space before the proper start of the performance with nervous energy. People are angry but cautious. The room should have a dangerous charge.

At curtain mutiny, the leader takes the floor:

- Nine long years, no progress.
- Leaders take spoils and live in luxury, we eat scraps.
- It's dangerous but we have the numbers.
- We are not bound to be here- they are.
- Let them die for their honor we can still live.

Open the floor to let other soldiers speak- maybe find a way to invite the audience to join in?

- Talk about the beauty of their home and the comfort of familiarity.
- Loved ones, particularly family, and missing them (maybe a mention of feared unfaithfulness).
- Talk about the loss the war has brought on.
- Talk about the physical and mental strain of the war.
- Talk about the lack of supplies and spartan conditions.

Someone raises questions about the 10-year prophecy. Says they're close and that maybe the generals should be trusted. The mutineers should voice concerns but violence is a bad idea.

This person is immediately booed to hell. Possibly escorted out.

The leader asks that before they continue they swear an oath to secrecy, even if the group agrees not to follow through.

- Everyone swears it. Starting with actors and then giving the audience a chance to join.

Once this is done the leader is about to go over the plans. Starts to describe how they can surprise the generals when a whistle comes from someone by the doors.

The room is thrown into chaos. Someone says Achilles is coming and doesn't look happy. The actors scatter out of the theatre and encourage the audience to do the same.

Depending on the opportunity and needs maybe there can be a moment of regroup outside the theatre where Achilles was distracted by other soldiers. Asking everyone to keep the secret and stay alert for their next contact.

Archivist Script 3 (The First Nine Years)

It's been too long. I- uh... things have been a little messy on my end but I made a promise to finish this. To talk about Troy. This is important. I'm doing my best not to get distracted from it. Where did we leave off again? We talked about the origins of the war with the apple, goddesses, and Helen. Then we went on a trip to Troy. Between gathering reluctant heroes and pissing off more gods it took longer than the Greeks expected. Then we got to Troy with hesitation about leaving the ships and Protesilaus being the first to die.

We don't have as much information about the early war. It's funny I spent so much time getting up to this and now that the war started properly there seems to be a lot lacking. While the Greeks were trying to besiege Troy during this time, they weren't particularly good at it and never fully blocked the city off. It didn't help that the Greeks weren't a particularly organized force. While Agamemnon was in charge of the entire effort, the army was made up of

contingents from several independent City-States each with its own leaders. They were honor-bound to be here and help but when funding ran low they started to get distracted. A ten-year war is expensive and while Troy offered countless treasures its walls weren't going anywhere. So a lot of this early time was spent raiding nearby Trojan allies and putting strain on the region and keeping soldiers happy.

Among the most active during these raids were Achilles and his Myrmidons. While sources (unsurprisingly) disagree Achilles led the captures of as many as a dozen cities and another dozen islands. It's fair to say that's pretty successful. Notably, he raided the lands of Aeneas, who would later escape Troy and start the line of Rome. He also killed Troilus at this time and that was certainly a big deal.

Troilus was a prince of Troy, possibly its youngest. He had a close relationship with Apollo, being either his son (a fact King Priam was pretty chill about) or his lover. There was a prophecy that if he reached adulthood, or at least was 20 years old, Troy would not fall. So Achilles was guided to find him and kill him. Troilus, however, was very pretty (the perks of being possibly related to Apollo) and Achilles was filled with lust. Troilus refused the advances and fled into a temple of Apollo. Instead of waiting him out, Achilles entered the altar and killed Troilus there, an act that would enrage Apollo and was one of the earliest dominoes to Achilles's death. Don't kill a god's favorite person and definitely don't do it in a shrine to that god. Troilus takes on a somewhat metaphoric role in this story, mirroring the eventual fall of Troy. Some have gone as far as to say that this is when Troy's fate is sealed, both because of the prophecy and how he represents the beautiful lands of Troy, not to mention that his name appears to be related to at least Troy and if not that, and Illos.

That story reminds me there's one issue we need to discuss. These stories were written by people who didn't have... as developed a sense of consent as we have today. As such there are a lot of situations that turn our stomachs quite a bit. We see Achilles attempting to rape a child in this story and we're left wondering, isn't he supposed to be the hero? On one hand, this wasn't as strong a taboo, especially when divine beauty comes into play disgusting situations are unfortunately inevitable. On the other hand, Homer and others recognized that during times of war, people do terrible things and that this period of pillaging came with raping. While they certainly don't hold these people to the standards we'd hold them to today, they aren't given a free pass. Achilles is repeatedly presented as emotional, proud, and even childish. While he is a hero, he's far from perfect. He seems much more nuanced and frankly human than the pop culture depictions of him might lead you to believe. This often leads to an issue when reinterpreting these works about what to do with these moments. Featuring them is challenging for several reasons and can overshadow other moments, but ignoring them can be unauthentic to the original text. I can't be the one who declares what the perfect balance is. Where the line should be drawn on what we feature and what we don't. While I normally side with staying true to history, sometimes creating distance can be vital. In future installments when this topic comes up I'm going to avoid being blunt about it but I'm also not going to hide from it.

But back to the story. What comes next? It's... oh. During this period of raids, we meet our next two important women. Briseis and Chryseis. They were "looted" from Trojan allies. I'm glad we just had the consent talk because that applies heavily to these two. Capturing women as slaves was an unfortunate truth of this period of warfare. Their roles in the story come up a little bit later but I wanted to bring them up now because it gives you an idea about what was happening during these raids.

Anyways, I mentioned funding at the top of all this, this of course means wages for the soldiers but also food for the armies. Burning the surrounding fields was not helping them in this regard. Odysseus was sent to try to find more supplies that weren't in the active warzone but in a rare moment for him, he completely and utterly failed. Palamedes, after mocking and being challenged by Odysseus, went and succeeded. This did not sit well with Odysseus, especially since to get him to come Palamedes had threatened Odysseus's son. So Odysseus started a plot to get rid of Palamedes. Depending on the story he might've just pushed Palamedes into a river or a well, but neither of those seems like the flavor of dickishness that Odysseus is known for. An alternative story has him forging a letter suggesting Palamedes is in league with the Trojans and taking bribes. Which isn't taken well when it's discovered. The best part of this though is that Palamedes father, Nauplius, went to the front to demand justice for his son's death. When he was refused he went back to Greece and told all the Greek queens about the concubines being taken in Troy, which helped set up some spousal murders when the war ended.

Another major event that doesn't get a lot of attention is attempted mutiny. As supplies ran low, morale went with it. Nine years of fighting is a lot. While the forces were still large there were many losses and frankly, there was no actual progress made in breaking past the walls of Troy. There's little information about this mutiny. We know it caused problems but it was fairly easily solved with Agamemnon bringing a pair of Apollo's granddaughters who were able to create wheat and wine. It's interesting to see in a war so focused on princes and kings that there's a moment where the nameless masses rise and try to claim a part of the story. Despite that, they're pushed back down, both by their leaders and the people telling the stories. It also stands interesting because there's been a prophecy that Troy will fall in the tenth year of the war. They're so close. Maybe in that regard, the mutiny is foolish and the generals know better.

Maybe, but in the tenth year, we enter into some of the biggest and bloodiest conflicts of the war. It's when things start to get interesting. But it's probably better if we pick up next time with the first few books of the Iliad.

Episode 3 Outline (Plague)

Location- a large space separated from the outside world but close enough to sense it. Made into a makeshift medical tent.

There's an air of despair.

After waiting for long enough one of the sick soldiers asks about the healer.

The healer is also sick.

Someone comments this isn't how they were supposed to die.

Give a chance to reminisce about glorious battles and near-deaths.

- Glory or sickness doesn't matter. No one's going to remember any of us.
- I'd like my children to have a story to tell.
- Then make up something and ask the messenger to tell them that.
- There's no honor in lying.
- The dead don't have honor.

Someone points out they're only in this mess because Agamemnon was too proud.

- Some defend him, arguing he's earned some pride and that the priest was wrong to curse them.
- Others call this BS.

How bad do you think this needs to get for Agamemnon to change his mind?

- When all of us have it.

- Probably never
- Maybe if Menelaus gets it.

Someone suggests why don't they try to smuggle the girl out of the camp and get her to her dad.

- How would they avoid the guards?
- If caught, even if successful it's a death sentence.
 - And a dishonorable one at that.
- Besides, if Agamemnon didn't repent Apollo might not stop.

Odyessus could figure it out.

- He's trying to lay low after the trouble with Palamedes.
- Prick deserved it.

Who's going to get us out of this if not either of them?

they should've gone through with the mutiny. They could be home now.

- It never would've worked- Achilles alone could take on all of us.
- If there wasn't a chance why did Agamemnon send for those girls who made wine?
- To placate us.

The argument continues there's the question of if dying in a mutiny is honorable or not.

No one agrees but it matters in part if you're successful.

Maybe during this one of them dies? Everyone starts to freak out a little bit.

They mourn but this isn't entirely new.

As they are a messenger comes in and says Achilles is gathering everyone and that the rumor is he's about to stand up to Agamemnon.

No one cares, they're still processing the death.

Archivist Script 4 (Iliad Part 1)

This is later than I meant to make this but I- uh lost my notes. Things have been... you're not here for all of that. Sorry. You're here to hear about the Trojan War. After way too long talking about the setup, all the ways they got into it, and the first few uneventful years, we finally got to the part people care about, the *Iliad*. Among the most influential literary works in the world. Written by Homer who might not have been a real person and didn't write anything. He just said them. It's attributed to him, other people later wrote it and said he was the first to create it. This isn't where we should start today.

Last time I mentioned Chryseis, the woman Agamemnon had taken as his concubine. Well she had a father, shocking I know, Chryses, a priest of Apollo. He wasn't too happy with his daughter being taken and offered to buy her freedom. Agamemnon, being the proud war leader he was, refused. It's a bad idea to piss off a priest. It's especially bad if it's a priest of a god already annoyed at you. Chryses prays to Apollo for aid and Apollo sends a plague that spreads through the Greek camp like wildfire. This is very bad news. There's a loss of life that comes with a plague but there's also the fact that those inflicted aren't going to be helpful in a fight. With the supply issues we mentioned last time, treatment is going to be an issue (even by the standards of the period). Agamemnon is making no move to back down and after nine days of the disaster, Achilles organizes the troops to find a solution.

There's a really easy solution here. And with the number of troops (not to mention Achilles) demanding it, Agamemnon agrees to return Chryseis to her father, if he can take Achilles's concubine, Briseis. These women were considered war prizes and as such having one was a matter of honor, Agamemnon was able to maintain his by taking Achilles. And yes real human people are stand-ins for these men's honor during this argument. The women are shuffled

around and Apollo ends the plague. Achilles is *not* happy about what happened and we see some of his famous rage as he declares that he (or, importantly, his men) will not fight for Agamemnon.

Remember, Achilles was not bound to fight like many of the other leaders who were Helen's suitors (or representatives of suitors) so he could've turned and just left with his troops, but he still wanted that glory he was promised. So when Agamemnon didn't immediately come back to return to Briseis and apologize, Achilles prayed to his mother, Thetis, and asked her to convince Zeus to let the Greeks loose for a little while so they'd see how much they needed him. After a strangely sexual conversation, Zeus agrees and sends a dream to Agamemnon encouraging him to go on the attack.

However, our war leader decided to test the troops before this and suggested to the massed troops that they should just go home. Unsurprisingly after nine years of minimal progress and a very recent plague, caused by their leadership, people were ready to leave. They would've left if Odysseus, with some divine help, didn't convince them to stay (in part by beating up at least one person who called out Agamemnon bullshit). Once the army had settled they prepared to march on Troy.

The armies met outside the city and instead of immediately breaking out into the mass battle everyone wanted, Paris offered to have a winner-take-Helen duel with Menelaus. What did you think Agamemnon and Achilles would be the only ones who treated women like objects? Remember this is the man who took Helen and her original husband, so it makes some level of sense. They duel and it goes well until Paris is nearly beaten and Aphrodite decides to rush him away to Helen, interrupting the duel and leading to some confusion. The gods are tempted to let

the war end here but Athena ultimately convinces a Trojan archer to break the truce and we finally get the battle we've been waiting for.

I'm not going to go into too much detail here. It's a lot of names and who killed who and while it's important if I tried to explain it would just take way too long and I need to end this at some point. But in brief, we have a lot of fun with Diomedes, king of Argos and one of the greatest warriors at Troy, who's just on a spree killing Trojans left and right, to the point where he's told to not attack any gods he sees but he does so anyways, wounding Ares. We also get a view of inside Troy as Hector rallies the forces both inside and outside the city, including trying to get Paris to come and fight again. While we don't get many opportunities to look at the Trojans like this, there is a lot in this section. We get a clear view of how Hector is a pretty cool guy- Homer's words- and how central he is to the defense effort. We also get to see a little about what Helen is like and... She's complex in a very specific way. Specifically in the way someone who hates women might try to write a complex woman. She feels bad about having started the war and shows some complex, interesting emotions and yet lacks any agency. But the battle still rages outside the city until a truce is made to burn the bodies, also giving the Greeks a key opportunity to build some defensive architecture.

As the battle is about to begin again the gods convene to talk about the war and Zeus forbids further divine intervention. As the battle starts, things start to look rough fairly quickly. Athena and Hera aren't helping anymore so it makes it hard for the Greeks to hold their ground and they get pretty grateful they built that wall on their day off because they're pushed back to it. However, night falls about when they reach the walls so they pull back for the night but sit and watch ready for morning light.

Needless to say, the Greeks are freaking out a little bit. Agamemnon finally realizes that maybe he... Oh shit... That's today. This isn't a great place to leave it but I have to step away for a moment. Don't worry I'll get the next one out very, very soon.

Episode 4 Outline (The Attack)

Location- ideally outside or in a large tent (acting as a Myrmidon camp)

As we get closer to the start there are the sounds of battle growing in the distance.

There's still tension between the soldiers.

Someone tries to lift the mood. No dice.

Someone asks about the battle.

- Everyone wants to talk about it, no one wants to say anything.
- Trojans will break the walls soon.
- The defense is going to succeed. It has to.
- Maybe if Achilles would stop moping and let us do something.

This breaks the dam. Everyone has opinions on Achilles.

- Something he's being a child.
- Some think he's justified and that Agamemnon needs to apologize.
- Some remember Agamemnon sent a delegation last night.
- Some believe they're here to fight with or without Achilles.
- Others are more than happy to not have to fight.

At some point, someone suggests arming anyways and joining the fight without him.

- Who would lead them- none of them have the actual training.

- What would happen when they were found out?
 - Achilles would be PISSED.
 - Agamemnon and others might defend them.
 - Could even they stop the raging Achilles?
- They'd be found as they gathered their gear.
- But glory and success.
- Here it is safer than there.

As they're figuring that out a messenger arrives.

- They traveled to the line with Patroclus.
- It's not looking good.
- The push is about to breach the walls and get into the camp.

More chaos erupts.

- People say it's time for them to don their armor now.
- Others say they have to abide by the general.
- Mutiny seems appealing *again*.

Perhaps they get ready to defend their part of the camp.

- If they're armed the Trojans will mistake them for the line.
- If they're unarmed the Trojans will see easy targets.
- Trojans wouldn't attack unarmed people.
- Unarmed soldiers are more of a threat than some of the targets of the raids.

More word comes that the general is prepared to join the battle and that the troops should prepare.

Archivist Script 5 (Iliad Part 2)

I know I promised I'd make this soon and this isn't soo. I'm sorry. I've been trying my best I really have. But you're not here to watch me apologize and I've made you wait long enough. So last time we started the *Iliad*. We had to plague leading Achilles swearing not to fight and him praying to have the Greeks get their asses kicked for a little bit, followed by the most brutal battle yet and the push towards the Greek camp.

Realizing their defeat on their doorstep, Agamemnon swallows his pride and admits his mistake, sending a group to return Briseis to Achilles along with other gifts. While he's a gracious host he makes it clear that he is unwilling to return to the battle unless the Trojans threaten the ships with fire. He did accept all the gifts.

Since Achilles wasn't coming back to the fight Odysseus and Diomedes decided to slow down the Trojans with some subterfuge. When sneaking off, however, they encountered Dolon, a Trojan spy. Odysseus promised not to hurt him and got information about Dolon's mission and where some of the warriors were sleeping. Then Diomedes killed Dolon. This is a moment to remember that our heroes aren't always heroic. Using the information they gained, the duo went into a Trojan camp and assassinated some people.

Despite this effort to confuse them, the Trojan attack in the morning was brutal. Many of the big names are wounded like Agamemnon, Odysseus, and Diomedes. Though I'll admit at this point they all kinda deserved it. Achilles's companion Patroclus visited the battlefield to learn about the current status. While there he ran into Nestor, one of the oldest kings in the war who was known for his wisdom. Nestor begs Patroclus to either get Achilles on the battlefield or wear his armor and pretend to be him.

Not long after this Hector ignores a negative omen and breaks through the Greek gates, forcing them to their ships. Poseidon ignores Zeus's rule against interference to rally the Greeks and empower one of their warriors. A seer gives Hector one last warning to fall back. Quick lesson if you get a bad omen and a seer is beseeching you. Listen to them. It's a little weird that they had seers considering how few people seem to listen to them. Though I guess doing what you're told and having good things come of it isn't an inspired story.

Hera distracts Zeus for a little bit, allowing Poseidon to have even more direct interference and pushing the Trojans out of the camp. In the retreat, Hector faces a consequence for his actions and is wounded. However Zeus realizes what's going on, tells his wife that Troy is going to fall anyways so it doesn't matter who looks like they're winning, and calls back Poseidon. To make things more even send Apollo down to help the Trojans reach the ships again. I can only imagine what it must've been for a Trojan soldier to keep going back and forth like that.

At least one person had had enough of it. Patroclus is tired of watching the Greeks get butchered and begs Achilles to relent to fight. When that fails Patroclus takes Nestor's advice and convinces Achilles to let him do his armor and fight in his place. Achilles makes him promise that he'll not pursue them and that they will take Troy together.

This plan works. Despite not being the godly warrior Achilles, the sight of his armor, and the troops that followed were enough to swing the tide of the battle. Patroclus went on an absolute rampage killing several semi-notable Trojans. In the heat of battle, he decided to pursue and see how far they could push the Trojans back. In this, he killed Zeus's son Sarpedon and in a rare moment of self-control Zeus didn't interfere to stop it. Patroclus's rampage is only stopped by Hector. As Patroclus falls a brutal battle ensues to retrieve his body and armor.

When Achilles hears of Patroclus's fate he wails so loud that his mother hears it at the bottom of the ocean. He's encouraged to help retrieve Patroclus's body but has no armor. However, his screams of rage are enough to terrify the Trojan ranks and allow him to retrieve the body, his armor however is taken by Hector. As this happens night falls and the two sides return to their camps to prepare for the next day of the conflict.

In the morning Thetis came to visit her son who was thrown over the body of Patroclus in his grief. She offers him newly forged armor and we have a detailed description of his new pretty shield. Agamemnon apologizes and offers more gifts and Hera briefly gives one of Achilles's horses the ability to speak and prophesied his death, but neither gets much of a reaction out of the hero.

As the battle begins Zeus lifts the restrictions on divine interference but it doesn't seem to matter much to Achilles. There's a reason the *Iliad* starts by describing the rage of Achilles, this is it and it's brutal. At one point he clogs a river with bodies, leading to its god confronting him. Achilles won that fight, admittedly with divine aid, but he still fought a god and won. The Trojan warriors are forced to retreat into the city and its god-wrought walls.

Trying to end the brutality Hector ignores the advice of everyone around him and tries to face Achilles. However, the grieving warrior's rage is too much and Hector flees. When Achilles finally catches him, they have a brief duel ending in a way that shouldn't surprise anyone, Hector's dead. As he's dying he reminds Achilles that they're both fated to die here and that his death just seals Achilles's. After figuring that murder wasn't enough revenge, Achilles ties Hector's body to his chariot and rides around the city. I don't think I need to say but that's disrespectful and just unnecessary.

After that, they cremate Patroclus and hold funeral games in his honor and Achilles gives out the prizes. After that he is just lost to his grief while he continues to fight, he keeps Hector tied to his chariot in a move that just pisses everyone off. Zeus figures something needs to be done about it. So he has Apollo help send the Trojan king, Priam, and a cart full of gifts to the Greek camp without being noticed.

When Priam reaches Achilles, he falls to his knees and begs. Then something really interesting happens. Achilles starts to weep. This man so consumed by rage is just weeping and we have these two powerful people from opposite sides of the war who just understand each other for a moment. They've both lost the most important person in their lives. Achilles's anger starts to melt and he is seen and sees Priam. He gives Hector's body back, despite feeling like he's doing a disservice to Patroclus, and promises that the Trojans would have twelve days to mourn and bury Hector.

Priam returns his son home and we get to see his funeral. Many of the Trojan characters get to speak, including Helen who feels she's lost the one person who was kind to her in the middle of all this chaos. I don't think I can end this part better than Homer himself "And so the Trojans Buried Hector, breaker of horses"

It's me though, I need to add a little more detail to that. First of all, yes this is where it ends. There's more in the war of course. There are Amazons, Achilles's death, some finagling of prophecies, a famous bit involving a wooden horse, the sack of Troy, and course some very long returns that some might call odysseys. But we don't see that. There's such a big focus on fate during the *Iliad*. From the start, they keep talking about all these prophecies and what's fated to come. Hector's death is the last thing that confirms Troy will fall. After all, he is the breaker of

horses. Troy fell because of a horse. We don't need to see it to know. But I'm going to show you what happens anyway.

So as the fighting is about to begin Penthesilea, queen of the Amazons shows up with, you guessed it, an army of Amazons to fight for Troy. She was killing a whole bunch of people until she came up against Achilles, who ended up killing her only to realize she was beautiful and mourn her. This caused... Do you care? I mean I've been going into all this detail but none of it matters, does it? More people die there's a horse that's brought into the city. Having all of this doesn't help you, does it? I mean there are plenty of people who have the sources already. I'm just trying to make it available to you but what does that change? Knowing about Penthesilea the Amazon isn't going to make your life better. It's just a distraction. Filling the empty space. It exists in the story but that's not our world. It doesn't fill the part of my life she left.

I don't know what Troy is. It was a war, a city, a people. But now it just feels like a state of mind. Thinking that everything is happening and the gods aren't giving you any choice but this one. But that's not true, is it? Achilles could've avoided coming. He made his choice. He chose to die at Troy. To never leave. Once you board the ship to Troy can you ever go back? Getting there's enough of a challenge. Even if you win the war the return is just as much a disaster. Odysseus took another ten years to get home and found his land in shambles. Agamemnon was murdered by his wife when he got home. Ajax the Lesser never even got to see his home; he was destroyed on the way back. How will I get out of all of this any better? Shit. I'm going to sign off here. I'll try to make another episode to get to a conclusion but, we'll see what happens. Either way, thank you for taking this trip to Troy with me. I'm glad I had some company.

Episode 5 Outline (Priam)

Location- outside ideally some open and relatively remote space.

As a pre-show have the soldiers and audience go through some simple “drills”

When those are over the soldiers are given a chance to break and there is an immediate shift of energy- from reluctant compliance to chaotic questioning.

Everyone wants to know why they’ve been taken away from camp to train.

- haven’t they done enough already?
- Isn’t there going to be another battle today?
- Resting and healing make more sense than useless drilling.

Eventually, someone mentions a rumor that a Trojan emissary is visiting the camp today and they wanted soldiers away so they wouldn’t cause an incident.

- Some people aren’t happy with how little trust is put in them.

This leads to a discussion of is the emissary there to end the war.

- Any issues with them might stop peace talks.
- Achilles returning to the field has changed the tide in their favor.
- Hector’s corpse (can it still be called that?) has broken morale.

There’s a worry about Hector and what’s happening there.

- It’s good at scaring the Trojans.
- It’s disrespectful to him and the gods.
- Stealing Helen was disrespectful.
- Hector didn’t do that, he just defended his city.
- Those who defend Hector are Trojan sympathizers.

- Alternatively, anyone okay with the desecration of Hector's body hasn't imagined their own body being treated that way.
- He might be an enemy but he's also a husband and father.

Perhaps to break this up someone asks if the war is going to be over.

Everyone takes a moment to remember all the things they miss at home- family, food, and best of all beds.

As they continue they start to realize there are holes in their memories.

- They realize all their loved ones are ten years older- particularly terrifying for any parents in the group.
- Homes might be abandoned as well as marriages.
- Someone mentions they got the news their home was ravaged by plague and that their family is dead.

This could lead to a discussion of all they lost on the battlefield.

- Friends of course.
- But some feel like the fights follow them to their dreams.
- They wonder even if they leave this cursed land if the Trojan War will ever end for them.

As this happens they get a message- King Priam was just spotted leaving the camp.

There's a moment of rumors and hope before the rest of the news is broken-

- Hector's body was returned.
- They declared a 12-day truce for Troy to mourn.

There's a sense of disbelief- none of them have gotten time off to mourn those they knew.

Despite the losses, they're still unwilling to end this war.

12 days of peace only to have more violence and killing.

Perhaps someone remarks about how they will never leave Troy.

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