

ADAPTED FROM THE EPIC POEM BY HOMER

THE ILLIAD



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5 of 8



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RATED T+



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Roy Thomas
Miguel Angel Sepulveda
Sandu Florea
Nathan Fairbairn

DIRECT EDITION

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THE ILLIAD

The Story So Far:

When **Helen**, queen of Sparta, was taken across the sea to the city of Troy (also called Ilium) by its prince, **Paris**, her husband **Menelaus** raised a large **Achaean** (Greek) force, led by his brother **King Agamemnon**, to bring her back. In the war's ninth year, Agamemnon offended proud **Achilles**, and that greatest of heroes vowed to fight no more till the matter was redressed. His goddess-mother **Thetis** persuaded **Zeus**, king of the gods, to favor the Achaeans in battle for a time.

At times, the Olympian gods took sides in the war—**Apollo** and **Aphrodite** favoring the Trojans, **Hera** and **Athena** the Argives (Greeks). At last Zeus forbade any gods to take part in combat, and he turned the tide of battle temporarily in favor of Troy and her allies. The Achaeans were driven behind their ship-wall, and pleas to Achilles to return to the fray fell on deaf ears. It seemed that **Hector**, Troy's greatest warrior, might burn the Achaeans' ships and doom the invaders...

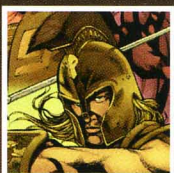
The Achaeans



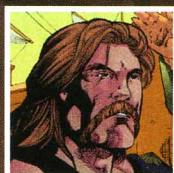
Agamemnon
King of Mycenae



Menelaus
King of Sparta



Achilles
Mightiest Achaean
Warrior



Ajax the Greater
Foremost Achaean
Warrior
after Achilles



Odysseus
King of Ithaca



Diomedes
Youngest Achaean
Commander

The Trojans



Priam
King of Troy



Paris
Son of Priam



Hector
Greatest Warrior
of Troy



Aeneas
Trojan Nobleman



Helen
Once Queen of Sparta -
now Helen of Troy

Writer

Roy Thomas

Penciler

Miguel Angel Sepulveda

Inker

Sandu Florea

Colorist

Nathan Fairbairn

Letterer

VC's Joe Caramagna

Special Thanks — **Allo, Suter, Nausedas, Ginter**

Cover

Paolo Rivera

Production

Rachel Pinnelas

Asst. Editor

Lauren Sankovitch

Editor

Nicole Boose

Senior Editor

Ralph Macchio

Editor in Chief

Joe Quesada

Publisher

Dan Buckley

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NOW ZEUS LEFT TROJANS
AND ACHAEANS TO THEIR
NEVER-ENDING TOIL, AND
TURNED HIS KEEN EYES
TO OTHER PEOPLES, IN
OTHER LANDS.

FOR HE DID NOT
BELIEVE THAT
ANY OF THE
IMMORTALS WOULD
DARE HELP EITHER
SIDE IN THE FRAY.

BUT POSEIDON,
GOD OF THE SEA,
PITIED THE ARGIVES...

...AND STRONG WAS
HIS ANGER AGAINST
HIS BROTHER ZEUS.

AS THE SEA OPENED A
PATH BEFORE HIS CHARIOT,
SEA-MONSTERS LEFT THEIR
LAIRS AND CAME GAMBOING
ABOUT HIM FROM EVERY
CORNER OF THE DEEP...



FOR THEY
KNEW THEIR
MASTER.



THUS DID HE
COME TO THE
ACHAEAN HOST...



...WHERE THE
TROJANS FOLLOWED
HECTOR LIKE A
STORM-CLOUD.

Today
we will take
the invaders'
ships--

--and their
lives!



THE SEA-GOD BEHELD THE TWO
AJAXES--THE GREATER AND THE
LESSER--FIGHTING SIDE BY SIDE...

You two can be the
saving of the Achaeans,
if you can hold
out here--

--where
furious Hector
leads them
like a pillar
of flame!



THUS SAYING, HE
STRUCK BOTH OF THEM
WITH HIS SCEPTER...



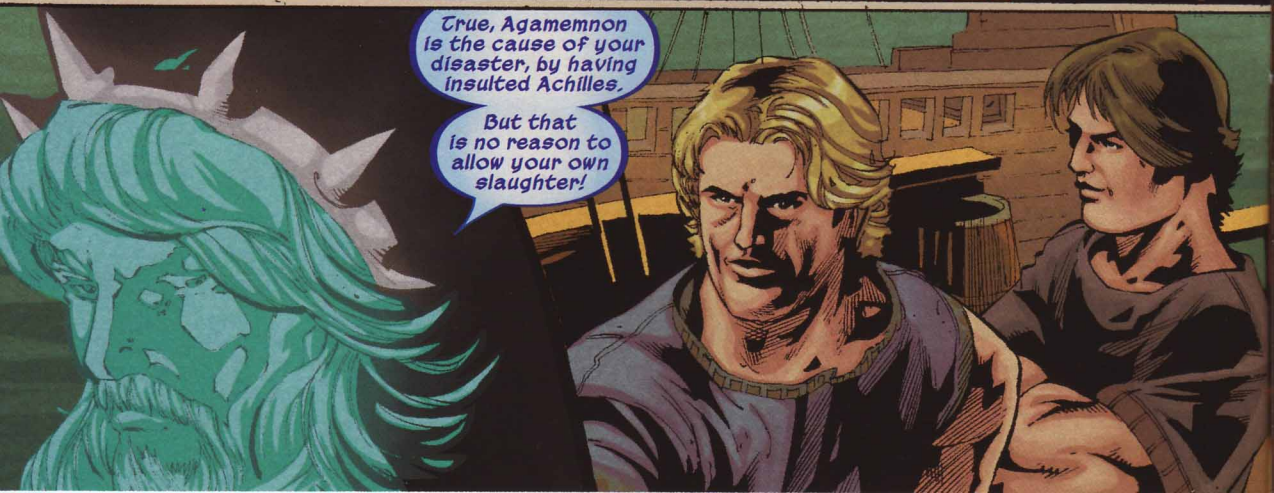
'Tis one of the gods who dwell on Olympus that has spoken to us!

I feel my strength increase-- my hands grasp my spear more firmly!



Now, more than ever, do I long to meet Hector--even in single combat!

Shame upon you, young Argives--if you save not your ships!



True, Agamemnon is the cause of your disaster, by having insulted Achilles.

But that is no reason to allow your own slaughter!

AT POSEIDON'S WORDS,
AROUND THE TWO AJAXES
THERE GATHERED STRONG
BANDS OF MEN OF WHOM
NOT EVEN ARES OR ATHENA
COULD HAVE MADE LIGHT.

THEY MADE A LIVING
FORCE--SPEAR TO
SPEAR, SHIELD TO
SHIELD, MAN TO MAN--

AND THEIR
HEARTS WERE
SET ON BATTLE.



TEUCER LOOSE ARROW
AFTER ARROW INTO
TROJAN RANKS FROM A
RAISED MOUND OF EARTH...



YET STILL
HECTOR
PRESSED
ON...

The
Achaeans
will not
check me for
long.

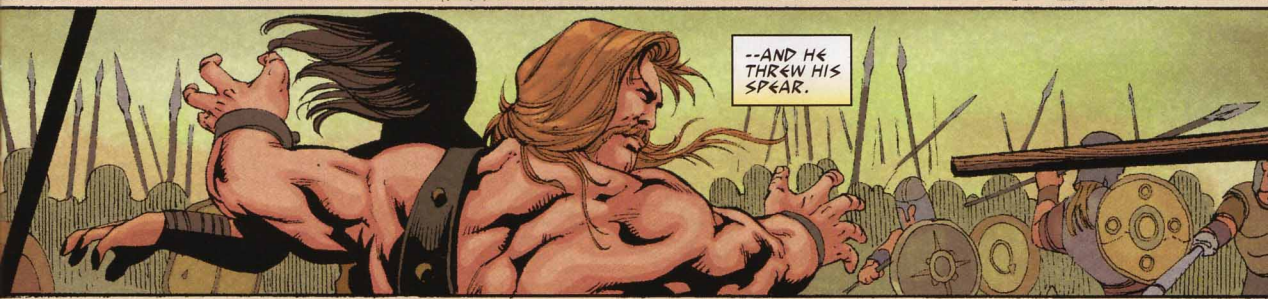
For Zeus
himself has
inspired my
onset!





AND AS GREAT
AJAX SLEW A
TROJAN--

--HE SAW HECTOR
CUTTING A PATH
THROUGH THE
ACHAEANS--



--AND HE
THREW HIS
SPEAR.



IT COULD NOT
GET PAST
HECTOR'S
SHIELD--

--THOUGH ITS
FORCE DROVE
HIM BACK!



MEANTIME, THE
LESSER AJAX WAS
WRATHFUL...

A severed
head--



--in
revenge--



--for
many an
Argive
death!

IN THE DUST AT
HECTOR'S FEET FELL
THE GRISLY MISSILE.



HECTOR THEN
TOOK AIM AT
THE ARCHER
TEUCER--

HAH!
I evade your
spear, son of
Priam!



BUT HE STRUCK
INSTEAD AMPHIMACHUS,
SON OF KTEATUS--

--AND GRANDSON
OF POSEIDON!



THE SEA-LORD WAS
ENRAGED TO SEE
AMPHIMACHUS FALL...

Idomeneus--what has
become of the threats
you once hurled at
the Trojans?

I would
not yield even
to Achilles in
hand-to-hand
fight!



THEN DID THE
WARRIOR-KING OF
CRETE LEAD THE
SONS OF HELLAS
AGAINST THE
TROJANS' LEFT WING--

HI-YAAAAA

--SPREADING PANIC
AS THEY BEHELD
HIM COMING ON,
STRONG AS FLAME!



NOW WOULD THE
TROJANS HAVE
BEEN DRIVEN IN
SORRY PLIGHT
FROM THE SHIPS...

BUT HECTOR
AND PARIS
RALLIED THEM.



AND THEN THE GREATER AJAX
STRODE OUT OF THE RANKS...

Hector! The
time is near
when you shall
pray Zeus and all
the gods--

--that your
steeds may be
swifter than hawks
as they bear you
back to your
city!

AND AS HE SPOKE,
AN EAGLE FLEW BY--AND
THE ARGIVES TOOK
HEART AT THE OMEN.



Ajax,
braggart and
false of tongue--
this day is great with
the destruction of
the Achaeans!

Your flesh
will glut our hounds
and birds of prey if
you dare await my
long spear!

MEANWHILE, BEHIND
THEIR HARD-PRESSED
LINES, MANY AN ACHAEAN
HERO-KING WAS TENDING
TO HIS WOUNDS:

MENELAUS,
GRAZED ON THE
FOREHEAD BY
A BATTLE-AXE...

ODYSSEUS, HIS
THIGH SLICED BY
A SPEAR...

DIOMEDES, WHOSE
FOOT HAD BEEN
PIERCED BY PARIS'
ARROW...

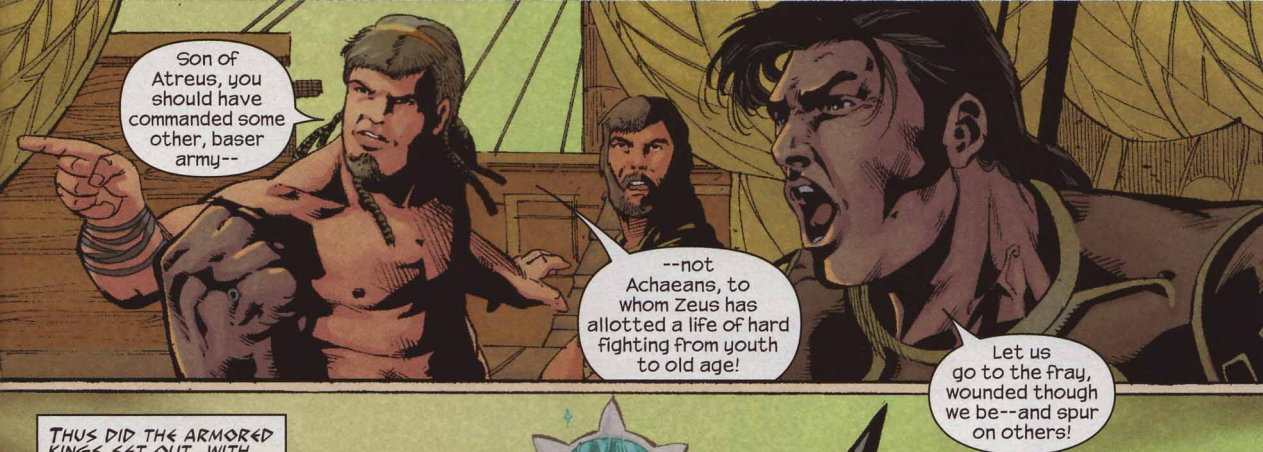
AGAMEMNON,
STRUCK BY ONE
TROJAN BROTHER
WHEN HE SLEW
THE OTHER.

Agamemnon!
The wall before our
ships is fallen--and the
fighting has reached
our ships!

Then,
Nestor, it must
be the will of Zeus
that the Achaeans
perish here, far
from Argos.

Perhaps
we can
escape ruin by
fleeing...





THUS DID THE ARMORED
KINGS SET OUT, WITH
POSEIDON GRANTING
THEM FRESH COURAGE...



...EVEN AS HERA,
WIFE OF ZEUS
LOOKED DOWN FROM
A PEAK OF OLYMPUS...

...AND WAS GLADDEN
BY THE SIGHT OF THE
SEA-GOD AIDING HER
FAVORED ARGIVES.



THEN SHE
TURNED HER
EYES TO ZEUS,
ON MOUNT IDA'S
CRESTS...

If I can
beguile my hated
husband...his brother
may continue putting
heart into the
Achaeans.

I shall
array myself in
rich attire...and
with ambrosial
scents...

...that
Zeus may wish
to embrace
me.

While he
is thus engaged,
a sweet sleep might
be made to steal
over his
eyelids.

Aphrodite,
dear child...
will you do as
I ask...

Or will
the goddess
of love refuse me,
because I favor the
Achaeans, you
the Trojans?

I cannot
refuse one
who sleeps in
the arms
of Zeus.

I go to
make peace between
the ancient god Oceanus
and his wife
Tethys...

And your
girdle radiates
the desire that steals
the judgment of
even the most
prudent.

Take it...
and whatever
your errand,
it will not be
in vain.



THEN DID HERA SPEED
NOT TOWARD OCEANUS,
BUT FAR OVER THE WAVES
OF THE SEA...

...TILL SHE
REACHED THE
CITY OF LEMNOS.



Sleep,
brother of
Death...

You who
lord it alike over
mortals and
immortals...



Do me
but one service,
and I shall
be grateful to
you forever
after.

What
does the queen
of goddesses
want?



Close Zeus'
eyes in slumber
while I clasp him in
my embrace...



...and my
son Hephaestus
will make you a
golden chair and
footstool.

Any
of the other
gods I would lull to
sleep without
compunction.

But I dare
not go near
Zeus unless he
bids me.



Once before, he would have cast me down into the sea, had not Night herself shielded me from his eyes.

But that was when you aided me against Hercules.

Mighty Zeus cares far less about the Trojans than he did about his own son.



Aid me, and I will marry you to one of the youngest of the Graces...

...Pasithea, whom you have ever wished to wed.

Pasithea...



Then swear it to me by the dread waters of the river Styx!

Lay one hand on the bounteous earth, and the other on the sheen of the sea, so that all the gods who dwell down below with Ouranos may be our witnesses...

...and know that Pasithea will be mine!



I do so swear--

And I invoke the Titans, who are gods of the nether world, to witness my oath!



SOON, HERA
STOOD ON
MOUNT IDA...

...WHILE SLEEP
PERCHED UPON A
TREE BRANCH, IN
THE SEMBLANCE
OF A BIRD...

Zeus--I
came to tell you
I am going to the
world's end, to
reconcile a quarrel
between Oceanus
and mother
Tethys.

AND THE GIRDLE OF
APHRODITE INFLAMED
THE DESIRE OF ZEUS.

You can
choose another
time to visit
Oceanus.

Never have
I been so
overwhelmed by
passion for goddess
or for mortal
woman...

...no, not
for the wife
of Ixion...

...or for
Semele...

...or for
Danaë, or the
daughter of
Phoenix...

...or
Demeter...

...or even
for lovely
Leto...





Now, Poseidon,
you may openly
help the
Achaeans...



...and give
the victory for
the short time
that Zeus shall lie
asleep in the
arms of Hera.



Argives! Will
you let Hector
take your ships and
cover himself with
glory--and all because
Achilles stands apart
from battle?

I will lead
you on--and all
Priam's legions will not
dare to hold out
against us!



DIOMEDEUS--
AGAMEMNON--
MENECLAUS--
ODYSSEUS--

WOUNDED THOUGH
THEY WERE, THEY
MARCHED WITH
POSEIDON...

AND MIGHTY WAS THE
UPROAR AS ACHAEAN AND
TROJAN FORCES MET.



MIGHTY HECTOR
AIMED HIS SPEAR
AT GREAT AJAX...



BUT IT WAS NOT
DESTINED TO GET
PAST HIS SHIELD.

Was it
some spiteful god
that protected
you?





We brought these stones to support the sides of our beached ships--



--but they can also fell a warrior!

AARRRGH

THEN DID HECTOR REEL
IN ALL DIRECTIONS...



BUT BEFORE THE
ACHAEANS COULD
REACH HIM...

...GLAUCUS, AENEAS,
AND SARPEDON BORE
HIM AWAY FROM
THE FIGHTING.



Surely
some god has
turned the tide of
battle against
us!

AS THE TROJANS
RETIRED, ZEUS
WOKE ON THE
CRESTS OF IDA...

I see,
Hera...

...you
mischief-making
trickster...

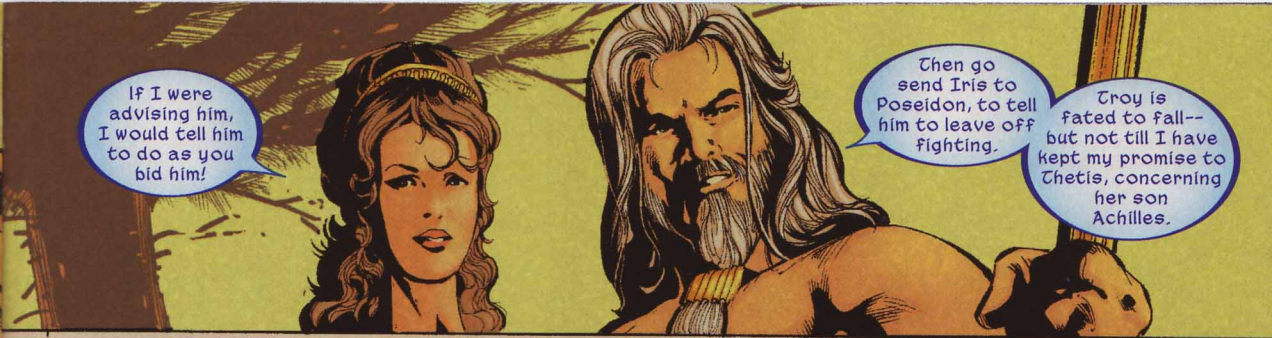
...that your
cunning has
stayed Hector from
fighting and has
caused the rout of
his host.

I am in
half a mind
to thrash
you--

--that you
may discover
how much you are
likely to gain by
these deceitful
embraces.

I swear,
Zeus--Poseidon
is not helping
the Achaeans
through any doing
of mine!

It
is all of
his own
motion.



If I were advising him, I would tell him to do as you bid him!

Then go send Iris to Poseidon, to tell him to leave off fighting.

Troy is fated to fall-- but not till I have kept my promise to Thetis, concerning her son Achilles.



SOON IRIS, FLEET AS THE WIND, APPROACHED THE GOD OF THE SEAS...

O Poseidon! Zeus bids you cease fighting--

--or else consider whether you are strong enough to hold your own against Zeus himself.



We were three brothers-- he and I and Hades, who now rules the world below.

We cast lots and divided the world into three parts--and Zeus should keep to his own!

Am I really to take this unyielding message to Zeus--or will you reconsider?



Goddess, your words are wise.

I will give way in spite of my displeasure.

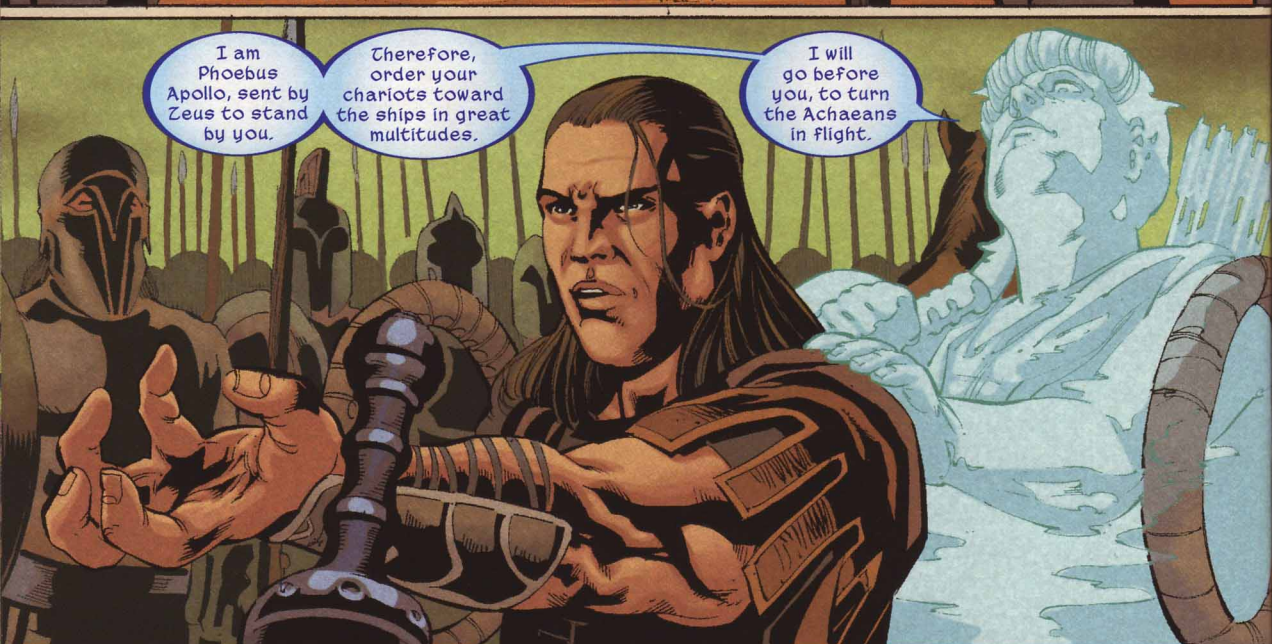
But let Zeus understand that, if he spares Troy in the end, he will incur my implacable resentment!

A comic book panel showing Hector, son of Priam, in full Trojan armor. He is sitting on the ground, looking down with a distressed expression, his hand to his face. In the background, other Trojan warriors in armor are visible, and a statue of a goddess stands on a pedestal.

MEANWHILE, APOLLO
DESCENDED BEHIND THE
TROJAN LINES NEAR
HECTOR, WHO HAD
JUST COME TO
HIMSELF AGAIN...

Hector,
son of Priam...
why are you here
away from the
others?

Which
of the gods
asks me
thus?

A comic book panel showing Hector in the foreground, looking towards the right with a determined expression. He is holding a sword. In the background, a translucent blue figure of Apollo is visible, looking back at Hector. Other Trojan warriors are in the background.

I am
Phoebus
Apollo, sent by
Zeus to stand
by you.

Therefore,
order your
chariots toward
the ships in great
multitudes.

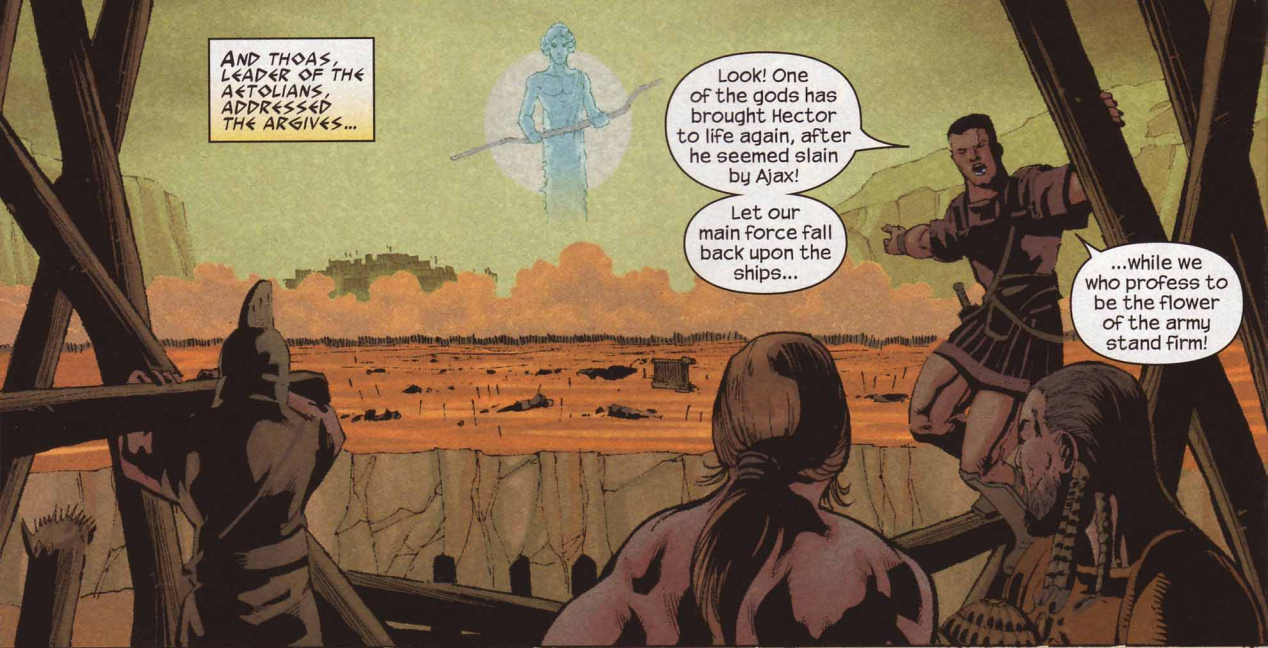
I will
go before
you, to turn
the Achaeans
in flight.

A comic book panel showing Hector in the foreground, shouting and leading his army. He is holding a sword high in his right hand and a reins in his left. Behind him, a large group of Trojan warriors in armor are following him, many holding spears.

AS APOLLO SPOKE,
HE INFUSED GREAT
STRENGTH INTO THE
SHEPHERD OF HIS
PEOPLE.

THEN DID
HECTOR
URGE HIS
HORSEMEN
ON...

...WHILE HE SPED
FORWARD AS FAST
AS HIS LIMBS
COULD TAKE HIM.



AND THOAS,
LEADER OF THE
AETOLIANS,
ADDRESSED
THE ARGIVES...

Look! One
of the gods has
brought Hector
to life again, after
he seemed slain
by Ajax!

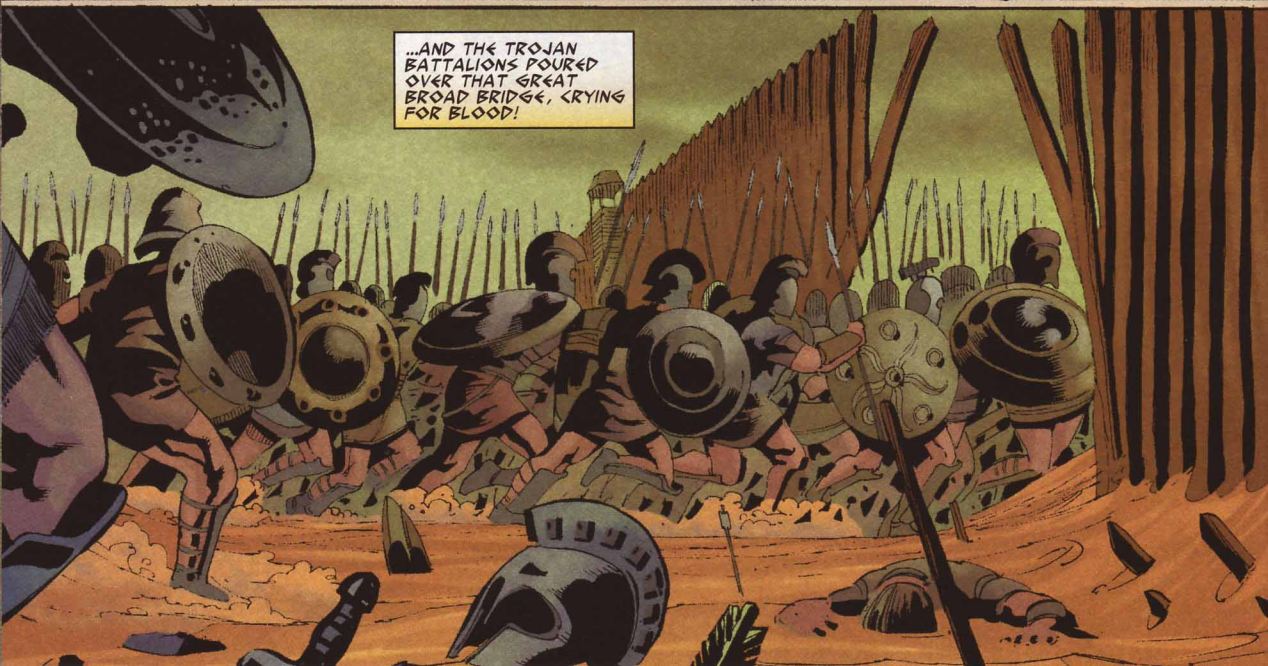
Let our
main force fall
back upon the
ships...

...while we
who profess to
be the flower
of the army
stand firm!



BUT WHO COULD STAND
AGAINST INVISIBLE APOLLO,
WHO KICKED DOWN THE
BANKS OF THE ACHAEAN
TRENCH IN ITS MIDDLE...

...SO THAT
EARTH FILLED
THE TRENCH...



...AND THE TROJAN
BATTALIONS POURED
OVER THAT GREAT
BROAD BRIDGE, CRYING
FOR BLOOD!



AS A WAVE BREAKS
OVER THE BULWARKS
OF A SHIP WHEN THE
SEA RUNS HIGH
BEFORE A GALE--

EVEN SO DID THE
TROJANS SPRING
OVER THE WALL
WITH A SHOUT--

--WITH
HECTOR IN THE
FOREFRONT!



Behold,
Trojans!

I have
seized the
stern of a ship
that brought many
an Achaean to
our shores--

--but will
never bear
them back to
their native
land!



AND
GREAT AJAX
SHOUTED
BACK--

Argive
heroes--
servants of
Ares--be
MEN!

We are
on the plain of
Troy, with the sea
behind us, and far
from our own
country!

Our only
salvation--is in
the might of our
hands!

NEXT:
THE RETURN
OF ACHILLES

THE GLOSSARY OF THE ILIAD

Allot – to assign as a portion, distribute

Ambrosial – exceptionally pleasing to taste or smell

Attire – clothes or apparel

Base – of little or no value; worthless; dishonorable

Beguile – to influence by trickery

Bounteous – giving freely; generous

Braggart – a person who does a lot of boasting or speaks often of self-importance

Bulwark – a solid wall-like structure raised for defense

Compunction – a strong uneasiness caused by a sense of guilt

Crest – the highest or culminating point; the peak

Enshroud – to conceal

Flee – to run away

Fray – a fight or battle

Gambol – to skip about, as in dancing or playing

Girdle – a belt, cord, sash, or the like, worn about the waist

Glut – to feed or fill to satiety

Grisly – horrible; gruesome

Implacable – impossible to appease or pacify

Infuse – to introduce into or instill

Keen – characterized by strength of perception; extremely sensitive or responsive

Perish – to suffer destruction or ruin

Plight – a condition or state of misfortune

Scepter – a rod or wand that serves as a symbol of regal or imperial power

Semblance – a likeness, image, or copy

Sheen – luster or brightness

Spur – to urge to go on

Stern – the rear part of a ship or boat

Styx – a river in the underworld in Greek mythology, over which the souls of the dead were ferried by Charon, and by which the gods swore their most solemn oaths

Thrash – to beat soundly in punishment

