

ACHILLES

A One-Act Tragedy

by Jon Lott

Dramatis Personae:

ACHILLES, legendary Greek warrior

PATROCLUS, companion of Achilles, Greek warrior

BRISEIS, the captive bride of Achilles

AGAMEMNON, leader of the Greek army

MENELAUS, Agamemnon's brother, from whom Helen was taken

ODYSSEUS, the cleverest Greek warrior

NESTOR, a wise old Greek warrior

PRIAM, King of Troy

HECTOR, Prince of Troy, Priam's eldest son

AJAX, a strong Greek warrior

HOMER, famous poet

GREEK SOLDIERS

TROJAN SOLDIERS

Scene:

The Greek camps near Troy

Time:

12th century BCE

Scene 1

On both ends of the stage there is a wooden torch burning. A large brown cloth, the inside of Achilles' tent, is stretched across the back, with a cloth flap as a doorway on both sides of the stage. There is a small bed with some pillows, and BRISEIS lies atop it, staring up. A javelin and a couple amphorae are nearby. A bronze cuirass is fixed upon a metal stand, along with a red-plumed helmet. Greaves hang below the breastplate, and on the back of the armor, a sword is hidden.

An old, bearded man is standing in the center-right of stage. HOMER is holding a gnarled wooden walking stick, and a cloth wrapped tightly around his eyes. As the fire crackles in the dark silence, a single overhead spotlight begins to shine upon HOMER.

HOMER

(strikes the stage thrice with his staff)

For nine years now the Greeks have laid siege here,
upon the coast of Troy, beneath its wall
and still foretold is one more bloody year,
when thousands more of men are still to fall.
Among these Greeks and Trojans, there's one man,
who, prophesied by priests, will end this war,
and with him, win the war for Greeks he can,
and send their valiant soldiers home from shore.
But Agamemnon, leader of the Greeks,
a King for some, and rich beyond compare,
has lost the girl he's had, so now he seeks
a prize replacement, delicate and fair.
And from Achilles, strongest of the rest,
he wants Briseis, young and pale and sweet,
among the brides abducted she was best,
and, brazen, widely proves his own conceit.
The consequence of Agamemnon's pride

HOMER (Cont.)

will cause Achilles to sit out the fight,
the Myrmidons will, from the battle, hide
and sit among the camp in royal slight.
Without these soldiers, Agamemnon knows,
he will not break the walls, too high and long
avenge fair Helen's theft, and slay his foes.
Begin the play as I now end my song...

(The spotlight fades and HOMER exits stage right.)

Scene 2

The inside of Achilles' tent is
illuminated.

ACHILLES enters stage left, wearing
sandals, a fancy Greek tunic, and
in a fit of rage. PATROCLUS enters
and BRISEIS sits up attentively.

ACHILLES

(pacing quickly)

I will not ever fight for that false king!
He can't insult me with this posturing!

PATROCLUS

(standing between ACHILLES and his armor)

Calm down, Achilles, think, relax, and breathe.

ACHILLES

You will not stand between me and my sheathe.

BRISEIS

What is it that has made you so upset?

ACHILLES

(turning violently to BRISEIS and then up to the sky)
This dog-face Agamemnon has a debt
With me and death and hundreds more besides!

PATROCLUS

The king wants you among his group of brides.

BRISEIS

But great Achilles, I will be your wife,
To you I dedicated my own life.

ACHILLES

What dedications matter to this king?
He always puts his hands on everything!

PATROCLUS

(placing his hand on Achilles' shoulder)
Could you for just one moment stop and think?
This girl could our nine-year effort sink.

ACHILLES

(wrenching Patroclus' hand away)
If I can't take you to be my own wife,
(draws sword from the sheathe)
Briseis, with my hand I'll take your life.

BRISEIS

As you command, Achilles, have it done,
(she kneels, offering her neck)
I won't be whore to that ignoble one!

PATROCLUS

Please stay your hand, companion, stay your blade
And spare us all of bloodshed, reckless made.
Nine years we fought for glory side by side,
And all to end 'cause one man wants your bride?

ACHILLES

(leveling his sword near Briseis)
Do you forget how this whole war began?
Some coward stole the woman of a man!

PATROCLUS

When Troy's walls fall and crumble to the sand,
and Helen's coward husband's made his stand,
and nobles die and treasures are made yours
and Priam's made to grovel on all fours,
when Trojan hero's spirits sink to shade,
and then that dumb, unrighteous debt is paid.
But I can feel the war is near its end,
and risking all for any bride or friend
it will not bring us closer to quiesce,
but it will bring us further from a peace.

ACHILLES

(breathing deeply, Achilles turns his blade away from Briseis)
Dear Patroclus, my rage you're softly coaching.

PATROCLUS

Hush hush, I hear the soldiers now approaching.

(Two GREEK SOLDIERS enter stage left, equipped fully in armor, each one wielding a sword and shield. They, thinking ACHILLES' already drawn sword means battle, shift into battle stance. PATROCLUS and BRISEIS shift to stage right.)

ACHILLES

(laughs derisively)

Do you think my sword means that I will fight?
I don't intend to shed your blood tonight.
But I could kill a hundred men like you,
with just my sword for you to be cut through,
and in your fancy armor, you'd be slain
A hundred Agamemnon soldiers' pain.
My argument lies with your wretch commander,
That filthy dog-face overproud philander.

GREEK SOLDIER #1

The king demands the woman to be brought.

(BRISEIS moves behind ACHILLES.)

ACHILLES

(sheathes sword, then shrugs)

Then I to Troy will not lead my onslaught.

GREEK SOLDIER #2

What are you saying? What is it you mean?

ACHILLES

I will not fight to capture Helen, queen.
And Agamemnon, Menelaus, both
will suffer, for I cancel now my oath.

GREEK SOLDIER #2

And you would coward home and leave this place?

ACHILLES

(shouting in GREEK SOLDIER #2's face)

What kind of king won't say this to my face?!
Go bring this so-called king my bride and speech,
I won't fight one more Trojan on this beach.

(ACHILLES turns his back to the soldiers, and strides to the edge of the stage, his face lit by the orange torchflame)

GREEK SOLDIER #1

As you say, great Achilles, we will go.
We'll end the war within a year, you know,
and when we storm the burning gates of Troy,
you won't be there, nor will your choirboy.

(gestures obscenely to PATROCLUS)

(GREEK SOLDIERS #1 and #2 lead BRISEIS off stage left. Fade to black.)

Scene 3

Scattered rocks and trees fill the stage. A strong backlight obscures the individual features of the characters on stage.

TROJAN SOLDIERS are cautiously moving from center stage to stage left. AGAMEMNON and MENELAUS enter, stage right.

AGAMEMNON

Push on and drive them to the river now,
We'll kill 'em like a sacrificial cow!

(GREEK SOLDIERS rush from behind AGAMEMNON and MENELAUS and begin fighting the TROJAN SOLDIERS. MENELAUS cuts down one.)

MENELAUS

That's twelve I've slain today, if I recall!

AGAMEMNON

By sunset we will soon have killed them all!

(A TROJAN SOLDIER cuts AGAMEMNON's arm, causing him to drop his sword. AGAMEMNON falls, but a GREEK SOLDIER intervenes and is killed defending his king. MENELAUS kills the TROJAN SOLDIER.)

MENELAUS

My injured brother, that one makes thirteen!
If this keeps up, I'll soon reclaim my queen!

AGAMEMNON

Can you not see I'm injured, cut my arm?
Defend your king and stay to ward off harm.

(The TROJAN SOLDIERS have driven off or killed all the GREEK SOLDIERS except one, #1, whose leg is injured. He is swinging his sword madly at two TROJAN SOLDIERS trying to close the distance to him.)

GREEK SOLDIER #1

My king, they've rallied backup forces here!
The tide has turned upon us Greeks I fear.

AGAMEMNON

We do not have the strength to match them now,
but let them rout us I will not allow.

GREEK SOLDIER #1

Fall back to camp. I will remain and stall,
And on the field alone, in glory, fall.

(AGAMEMNON scurries off stage right.)

MENELAUS

I will recount your bravery this day,
when I return to camp and here you stay.

(MENELAUS exits stage right.)

TROJAN SOLDIER #1

Yield, you Achaean. There is no way out.

GREEK SOLDIER #1

Yield now? This death is what my life's about!

(GREEK SOLDIER #1 lunges at TROJAN SOLDIER #1, but his blade is parried. TROJAN SOLDIER #2 kicks him down. GREEK SOLDIER #1 loses his blade and crawls to a dead soldier nearby. He grabs the fallen man's sword, and springs up to attack. TROJAN SOLDIER #2 dodges and cuts his side. GREEK SOLDIER #1 dies.)

TROJAN SOLDIER #1

He should've fled or begged for his own life.

TROJAN SOLDIER #2

He'd rather die out here by Trojan knife.

TROJAN SOLDIER #1

Let's strip the dead and bury them with speed,

TROJAN SOLDIER #2

With coin to sate the undead boatman's greed.

(TROJAN SOLDIERS #1 and #2 drag GREEK SOLDIER #1's body off stage. Fade to black.)

Scene 4

Inside a tent like Achilles'. A table is set up in the center, around which MENELAUS, AGAMEMNON ODYSSEUS, and NESTOR stand.

ODYSSEUS

The war has not of late been going well.
Three weeks have passed, three hundred Greeks now fell
in battle. And what have we in exchange?
Lost ground among the battlefield and range.
I know it stings to hear, my king, but still,
we cannot win without Achilles' skill.

AGAMEMNON

I do not wish to hear that. There's a way,
to shift the tides without him in the fray.

MENELAUS

I can't devise a plan to get this done.

AGAMEMNON

Old Nestor's mind has scheming just begun.

ODYSSEUS

Tell us, wise Nestor, what do you believe?

NESTOR

I have a thought, if someone can deceive.

AGAMEMNON

Get out with it, and tell us what you mean.
Have you concocted a new war machine?

ODYSSEUS

Oh that reminds me, king, a thought with force.
We could devise and build a wooden-

AGAMEMNON

Odysseus, I'll speak to you in kind.
But first I'll hear what Nestor has in mind.

NESTOR

Achilles will not fight for you, my king.
But I've devised a certain other thing.
His friend Patroclus wants to fight again
and rejoin soldiers, battle with real men.
He knows Achilles and his movements well,
can duplicate his style, who can tell

NESTOR (Cont.)

that boy apart from his companion, they
are of a height, hairlength, and size, I say.
And when the Myrmidons see Patroclus
adorned in famous armor, there's no fuss,
and happily they'll all rejoin the fight
thinking Achilles has outgrown his slight.
Inspired, all the Greeks will seize the day,
and chase the Trojan cowards all away.
And if Achilles, later, hears of that,
and acts again the sour, spoiled brat,
we'll send him home alone in his own ship
and empty-handed he'll go on that trip.

MENECLAUS

It is a clever plan, I will admit,
Can you convince Patroclus to do it?

NESTOR

Odysseus and I can sway his heart,
Your army on the morrow we can start.

AGAMEMNON

See that it's all arranged by end of day,
I want to march on Troy without delay.

Scene 5

On the beach, far away from camp.

ODYSSEUS and NESTOR spot PATROCLUS
practicing archery. They approach,
and PATROCLUS lowers his bow.

ODYSSEUS

Is that Patroclus shooting on the sand?

PATROCLUS

It is, Odysseus. I hunt on land.

NESTOR

Aiming for Trojans hidden in the bush?
Or other forces, poised in your ambush?

PATROCLUS

Just practice, Nestor. For when I return
to battle I'd prefer not to relearn
just how to aim an arrow and release
and bring great glory to us all and Greece.

ODYSSEUS

There is no glory but in battle, son.
And glory only comes after we've won.

(There is a great pause, as ODYSSEUS and NESTOR try to wait him
out. PATROCLUS eyes them somewhat suspiciously, and then slings
his bow across his shoulder.)

PATROCLUS

What is it that you've come to me to say?

NESTOR

And tell a former soldier anyway?

PATROCLUS

I will not fight until Achilles will.

ODYSSEUS

He surely his friend's stubbornness still.

NESTOR

And don't you yearn to fight the Trojans yet?

ODYSSEUS

It's been so long now I think he'll forget.

PATROCLUS

I want to fight, but not without my friend.
I did not start his anger, I can't end.

ODYSSEUS

Patroclus and Achilles suffer big,
bear witness to dead friends from our king pig,
that Agamemnon, he's a fat old fool,
and ugly as an ox, stiff as a mule.
But surely you can sympathize with me,
And all your fellow soldiers that you see,
each one is homesick, tired of this war,
each one here from a noble vow they swore.
I know Achilles will not fight again,
And our king won't cede his prize. What then?
A neverending stalemate on this plain?
What do we all from this endeavor gain?

PATROCLUS

What would you have me do, betray my friend?

ODYSSEUS

I'd have you not betray. Instead, pretend.

PATROCLUS

I do not understand your words. Explain.

ODYSSEUS

We would have you your ally's arms obtain,
and dress yourself in his golden breastplate,
his helmet, greaves, and sandals, his sword great,
and lead his troops to battle in his name,
and bring us, him, and yourself endless fame.
They will not follow anyone to fight.
If they think you're Achilles, they just might.

PATROCLUS

I am intrigued by this, I will confess,
to fight and be Achilles, to success.
But I cannot unless Achilles knows,
and on this plan, his blessing he bestows.

NESTOR

Then get his blessing, tell him of this plan.
And then impersonate that hero, man.

Scene 6

Inside Achilles' tent. The suit of armor is positioned under the light. The lights are low.

ACHILLES is sulking on his bed, polishing his sword with a cloth. PATROCLUS enters with his bow and arrows, setting them down near the stage left entrance.

ACHILLES

Oh Patroclus, I have resolved to leave
the shores of Troy, new deeds yet to achieve.
The Myrmidons and you and I will go
to new adventures we do not yet know.
This false king is not worthy of my sword.
This false kind is not worthy of my word.

PATROCLUS

And sentence all the Greek allies to die?

ACHILLES

If they are sentenced to, let arrows fly.
And if they triumph, let them touch the sky.
But I won't Agamemnon deify,
and I will not serve under a false king,
no matter what he has of his to bring,
when so unfairly he treats his own best,
and that's excluding how he treats the rest!
Two fates press on, until my day of death.
If I remain and lay siege here to Troy,
upon this field will be my final breath.
But if I voyage home, and see my boy,
and have no pride or glory in old age,
no deeds accomplished, suffered through my rage.

PATROCLUS

I can't abandon soldiers for nine years,
I've fought behind, and shared all hopes and fears,
and even though there's no one I love more,
I cannot leave the rest upon this shore.
Permit me, dear companion, to request
a plan to execute 'fore going west.
I fight as you and lead the men to clash
and fight the Trojans, stab and duck and slash,
and in your armor, shimmering and known,
and bring the men to victory as shown:
when, rallied to your legendary plate
and plume, the forces fight the city-state
as one, united, in its heart and cause
can seize the vict'ry from defeat's own jaws.

ACHILLES

Then wear my armor bravely, but obey:
there are two precepts to which you must stay.
The first is not to fight on the offense.
Stay where your cover is at its most dense.
And second, stay within sight of the coast,
where our own forces have advantage most.

PATROCLUS

I will obey conditions you have said,
or else risk greater odds of going dead.

ACHILLES

I will not go and sail from Troy until
you have returned from battle near the hill.

PATROCLUS
(leaping in joy)
Oh great Achilles! I will make you proud
and stand out past the soldiers in the crowd!

(ACHILLES and PATROCLUS excitedly press their foreheads together.
Fade to black.)

Scene 7

The battlefield.

PATROCLUS (dressed as ACHILLES) and
GREEK SOLDIER #2 and AJAX jump
proudly on stage right.

PATROCLUS
(pointing his spear across the stage)
The Trojans flee beyond the ships and more!

AJAX
Then let's give chase, commander! This is war!

GREEK SOLDIER #2
Achilles, after you we cannot fail!

AJAX
They're running! We can slaughter them wholesale!

PATROCLUS
Let's go and chase and not give any wait!
We'll chase them all to Tartarus' gate!

(a horn blows, and then a ripple of thunder)

AJAX
My gods! It sounds as Zeus is close nearby!

GREEK SOLDIER #2
He's watching overhead up in the sky!

(TROJAN SOLDIERS #1 and #2 enter stage left, followed by HECTOR.)

HECTOR
And so Achilles, legendary Greek,
You are the one I've come out here to seek.

PATROCLUS

Your fleeing forces don't inspire fear,
I think you're seeking noble combat here.
But when the dust has settled, winds are gone,
It will be you alone who's dead at dawn.

HECTOR

Soldiers, both Greek and Trojan all, step back.

PATROCLUS

And witness, not disturb, our great attack.

(PATROCLUS stabs at HECTOR with his spear, but HECTOR dodges.
PATROCLUS pushes the attack, but HECTOR avoids him.)

PATROCLUS (Cont.)

Will you duck every time that I come near?!

HECTOR

Then draw your sword and drop your coward spear!

PATROCLUS

So be it, Hector, fated Prince of Troy!
(PATROCLUS tosses the spear aside.)
Defeating you will be my all-time joy!

(PATROCLUS and HECTOR duel with their swords for a while.
PATROCLUS is knocked down, but manages to regain his footing and
upsets HECTOR's balance. HECTOR falls down, swinging desperately
at PATROCLUS.)

(HECTOR rises and charges PATROCLUS. The two of them fall hard
on the ground, each one holding the other's sword hand, trying to
wrestle it away. All the SOLDIERS watch in silent awe.)

(They both lose their swords, and begin pummeling and twisting
each other on the ground. PATROCLUS is still wearing the helmet
of ACHILLES. Reaching to the ground with a momentarily free
hand, HECTOR grabs PATROCLUS' discarded spear and brings it down
on PATROCLUS, who grabs HECTOR's wrist. HECTOR struggles to
bring the spear point down.)

PATROCLUS

Achilles will not die upon this field,
nor will I ever in this contest yield!

HECTOR

You have no strength or weapon or a shield.
You'll die from your old weapon I now wield!

(HECTOR, with a final burst of strength, pushes the spear into PATROCLUS' neck. PATROCLUS goes limp and all the SOLDIERS are briefly motionless.)

HECTOR (Cont.)

Goodbye, Achilles, fearsome, greatest Greek,
You were a noble fighter, but too weak
to stand against my skill and yet survive,
and where I go, Greek death will soon arrive.

(HECTOR slowly, almost tenderly, unclips PATROCLUS' armor and removes PATROCLUS' helmet, which really belong to ACHILLES, and gazes upon the face of his enemy.)

HECTOR

Who is this man to whom I've just laid claim?
He wore his weapons, armor, not his name.

AJAX

That is Patroclus! Patroclus is dead!

GREEK SOLDIER #2

(shouting off stage)

It's not Achilles! Patroclus is dead!

HECTOR

Where is Achilles? I will have him dead!

AJAX

He'll sooner have your rotten, Trojan head!
Hurry, you soldiers, save our friend's remains!
We will not lose his body on these plains!

(GREEK SOLDIER #2 rushes to the corpse of PATROCLUS, and he and AJAX fight HECTOR back from the corpse. HECTOR has ACHILLES' old armor, helmet, and weapon, though.)

HECTOR

Fall back, you Trojans. We will have the day,
And let those Greeks with shame escape away.
And tell Achilles I will end him, boy,
if he will duel me at the gates of Troy.

(HECTOR and TROJAN SOLDIERS #1 and #2 exit stage left.)

AJAX

Achilles will not sleep except in blood
of Trojan princes, women, crimson flood
will be unleashed upon deliverance
and on this world a rage unleashed, intense.

(AJAX heaves the body of PATROCLUS over his shoulder and exits
stage right with GREEK SOLDIER #2. Fade to black.)

Scene 8

Achilles' tent. The torches burn
low and dimly as ACHILLES reclines
impatiently on his bed.

AJAX stands at the edge of stage
left.

ACHILLES

I hear you outside. Step into the light,
Patroclus, brave and honored in the fight.

(AJAX enters, quietly and sadly)

ACHILLES (Cont.)

Oh Ajax! Where is Patroclus, my friend?

AJAX

My lord, Achilles, he has reached the end.

ACHILLES

He's dead, you're saying? Ajax, is he dead?!

AJAX

My lord, Achilles, that is what I've said.

(AJAX briefly exits stage left and returns with the body of
PATROCLUS.)

ACHILLES

(unintelligible grief screams)

Ohhh! Aaagh! Ahhh!
Who did this Ajax? Who must I now slay?
His killer's going to meet his death today!

AJAX

Achilles, it was Hector, Prince of Troy.

ACHILLES

Then Hector, Trojan Prince, I will destroy!
(more screaming)

(after some time passes in wailing)

AJAX

My lord, the Trojan prince he waits for thee,
Alone before the gates of Troy boldly.

ACHILLES

I will destroy him in a single duel
and drag around his body, lifeless fool,
And so dishonor Hector, Trojan prince,
And every other Trojan I see since.

(ACHILLES kneels beside PATROCLUS, placing a hand on his heart
Fade to black.)

Scene 9

Before the gates of Troy.

HECTOR is standing center stage,
wearing the armor and helmet of
ACHILLES, holding his sword and a
shield. ACHILLES enters stage
right, with new arms and armor.

ACHILLES

You killed Patroclus, Hector, prince of Troy?

HECTOR

I didn't think you'd have a trick decoy.

ACHILLES

No tricks remain, Prince Hector. This is it.

HECTOR

And either one of us, this death befit.
Will you consent to one agreement yet?
The winner lets his corpse's friends it get
To bury it with honors as is right?

ACHILLES

I make no pledges, Trojan. Let us fight.

(ACHILLES swipes his sword at HECTOR in a furious onslaught. At the end of this attack, ACHILLES slams HECTOR down with his shield. HECTOR slashes at ACHILLES' feet.)

HECTOR

And is it true your weakness is your heel?
You'll have to tell me soon how death does feel.

(HECTOR spins his shield back and knocks ACHILLES back a few feet. HECTOR climbs back up, his sword clashing with ACHILLES' blade.)

(ACHILLES and HECTOR continue fighting, neither one seeming to gain an edge. They circle each other, parrying blows, their swords dancing in mortal combat.)

ACHILLES

I will take back my arms and armor, too,
Unjustly stolen, greedily, by you.

HECTOR

You're drunk with anger, merciless with wrath,
Unquenched by killing, crazy for bloodbath.
You'd kill the world, if all the Fates allow

ACHILLES

No gods will save you from fate, Hector, now.

(ACHILLES bashes HECTOR again and again with his shield, eventually disrupting his balance again. But this time, when HECTOR falls, ACHILLES steps on his sword hand, kicking the sword loose. HECTOR slams ACHILLES with his shield, knocking him down.)

(Both men get up, HECTOR wielding just a shield. ACHILLES discards his shield, holding just the sword. He rushes HECTOR, but the prince deflects each stroke with his shield. HECTOR jabs at ACHILLES with his shield, but ACHILLES ducks and grabs the shield, wrenching it from HECTOR's grip.)

(ACHILLES smacks HECTOR with the other half of the shield, knocking him on his back. ACHILLES tosses the shield away.)

ACHILLES

Rise, Hector, I'll not slay you on your back.
I will not kill a dog with no attack.

(HECTOR, as he slides back, discovers a bronze spear point on the ground. Gripping it, he stands to fight ACHILLES.)

ACHILLES (Cont.)

Ah, now the weakling mongrel Trojan rises,
and he has got a number of surprises.

(HECTOR ducks and dodges ACHILLES' swipes as they move around. Eventually, HECTOR and ACHILLES grab each other's wrists, just as HECTOR and PATROCLUS did in their duel. HECTOR and ACHILLES are at a standstill, until ACHILLES suddenly drops his sword, using his free hand to quickly grab the spear point and jam it into HECTOR's chest. HECTOR falls with a heavy thud, clutching his chest.)

HECTOR

Return my body to King Priam please,
so my own father his dead son he sees
My spirit fades to shadows now and fog,

(ACHILLES picks up his sword and stands over HECTOR.)

ACHILLES

I will make no such promise to a dog.

(ACHILLES finishes off HECTOR, then removes his own armor and helmet from HECTOR. Wailing is heard from inside the walls of Troy, and ACHILLES looks up to the ramparts, raising his sword.)

ACHILLES (Cont.)

I am Achilles!

(Fade to black.)

Scene 10

Inside Achilles' tent.

HECTOR's body, barely clothed,
covered in red gashes, is laid out
on a low table in the tent.
ACHILLES is standing over the body,
next to his suit of armor.

(PRIAM enters stage left)

PRIAM

I've come alone, Achilles, you must trust.

Is there no end to your brutal bloodlust?

ACHILLES

No end to pain except what Hector met,
The living will remember; dead forget.

PRIAM

For weeks you've held the body of my boy,
my dear son, Hector, noble prince of Troy.
The ransom asked for waits not far away.
I hope it helps your fury to allay.

ACHILLES

Twelve days of mourning, I decide is fair
When we won't offer battle, that I swear
on gods and men and our loved one's pyres
and Hector's too, two funereal fires

PRIAM

That from our warring camps may light the night
and live in truce for time without a fight.

ACHILLES

But on the coming of the growing moon,
The morning after, war will restart soon
and on these fields the newer blood of men
will drench the roots of thirsty grass again.

PRIAM

Thank you, Achilles. I must now depart.
We each bear grief inside our troubled heart.

(PRIAM embraces ACHILLES for a long time next to the body of
HECTOR. Fade to black.)

THE END