

### **Book 19 Summary: Achilles returns to the battlefield**

Achilles reconciles with Agamemnon as he prepares to go back into battle to avenge Patroclus' death. Agamemnon gives Achilles the gifts he had promised to give him when he tried to induce Achilles to return to the battlefield back in book 9. This includes returning Briseis, the concubine Agamemnon took from Achilles when he had to return Chryseis to her father, Chryses. Before putting on the armor he has received from his mother, courtesy of Hephaestus, Achilles waits while the rest of the Greeks eat before heading into battle. Achilles, who is still mourning Patroclus, refuses food and broods over Patroclus' death at the hands of Hector. As Achilles heads towards the battlefield, he reproaches Patroclus' horses for allowing Patroclus to die. One of the horses responds by saying to Achilles that it was the will of the gods that Patroclus died, just as it is fated that Achilles will die.

### **Book 20 Summary: Zeus allows the gods to influence the battle**

As the Trojans and Greeks prepare to square off, Zeus fears that Achilles will instantly overpower the Trojans. In response to Achilles' return, Zeus rescinds his order to the gods to stay out of the battle and allows them to assist the mortals. Instead of jumping in, however, the gods initially decline to enter into the battle, preferring to stay on the sidelines and watch the battle.

Before taking up his seat on the sideline, Apollo tells the Trojan, Aeneas, to seek out Achilles and challenge him. Aeneas agrees and meets Achilles on the battlefield where Achilles almost kills him. Just as Achilles is about to stab Aeneas to death, Poseidon appears and at the last second saves Aeneas. As Aeneas is rescued and carried off the battlefield, Hector takes his place and is ready to challenge Achilles. Before charging Achilles, Apollo dissuades Hector from facing Achilles. Instead, Achilles dispatches with many Trojan warriors which makes it impossible for Hector to withstand

the urge to fight back. Hector attacks Achilles but Achilles powerfully defends himself and wounds Hector. Apollo comes to the rescue and removes Hector from the reach of Achilles.

**Book 21 Summary: Achilles slaughters the Trojans and clogs the river with the corpses**

Achilles demonstrates why he is the Greeks' best fighter as he attacks and kills countless Trojans, including Lycaon, one of Priam's sons. The river becomes so full of Trojan corpses that the river becomes clogged. The river, known to the gods as Xanthus and to mortals as Scamander, retaliates against Achilles and drags him down to a floodplain where Achilles almost drowns. Hera sends Hephaestus to rescue Achilles. Hephaestus sets the floodplain on fire and rescues Achilles.

In response, Ares and Aphrodite become angry at Hera and Athena. Athena defeats Ares and Aphrodite, which prompts Poseidon to challenge Apollo. Apollo counters by refusing to fight Poseidon over mere mortals. Artemis, Apollo's sister, rebukes her brother for not fighting. Hera steps into the fray and gets Artemis to back off.

As the gods fight, Priam takes account of all the bloodshed and loss on the Trojans' side. Priam opens the gates of Troy to allow the Trojans to retreat. Achilles in hot pursuit nearly enters the city but is stopped by Agenor, who is actually Apollo in disguise. This buys the Trojans enough time to escape within the city walls and escape Achilles.