

The Iliad

Homer

ART / ADAPTATION BY **Alice Duke**

THE ILIAD AND THE ODYSSEY ARE SUCH TITANIC, endlessly influential monoliths of literature that it's easy to overlook their humble and hazy beginnings. Professor Ralph Hexter reminds us that the twin summits of Western literature started "as sung entertainment in the banquet halls of petty chieftains in Greece and around the Aegean basin during a time often called the Dark Age of Greece (roughly the years 1150-800 BCE)."

He continues: "No matter what role a bard named Homer had in the final shaping and polishing of the epics, the enduring strength of the two works lies in the facts that they are the living productions of entire cultures, the culmination of the narrative talent of who knows how many bards and audiences, each of which contributed in some way to the drama, the images, the wisdom—in short, the humanity to be discovered in these poems."

The Iliad relates events during several weeks in the final year of the decade-long siege of Troy by Greek soldiers, sometime in the twelfth or thirteenth century BCE. (There's

evidence that this war actually took place, though not everyone accepts this.) The war is being fought because Paris, the Prince of Troy, abducted the stunning Helen, wife of Menelaus, the King of Sparta. In Book Three, the portion being adapted here, Paris and Menelaus agree to settle the entire war with a personal duel (which is really how all wars should be fought—the two men with the beef slug it out; the winner's country is the victor). But, as is the case throughout *The Iliad*, gods and goddesses interfere with human events. . . .

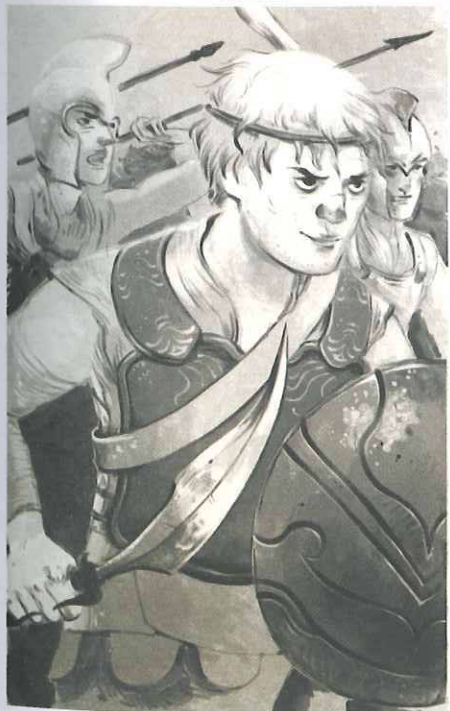
Alice Duke, who specializes in illustrations of the fantastic, originally started a full-color treatment of this pivotal segment of *The Iliad* but eventually opted for monochromatic tints in alternating shades, which give the piece an older and starker feel.

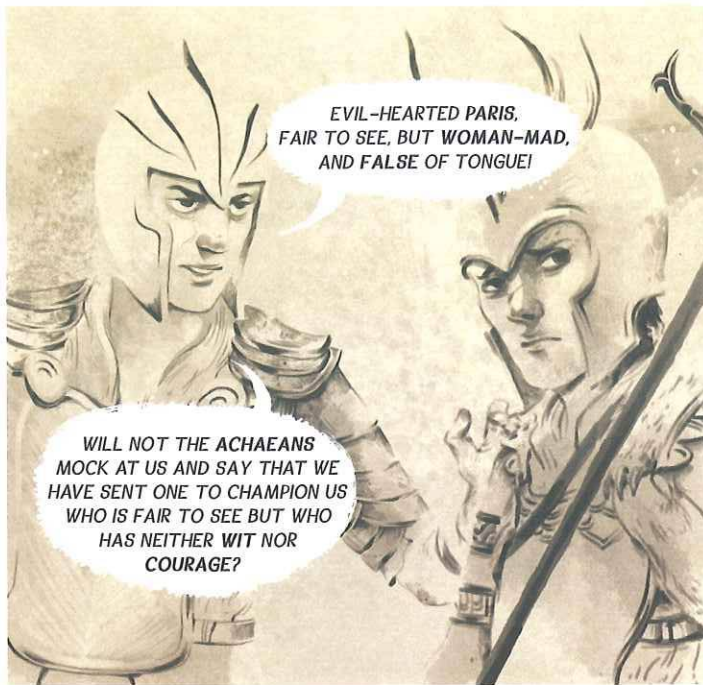
SOURCE

Hexter, Ralph. *A Guide to The Odyssey: A Commentary on the English Translation of Robert Fitzgerald*. Vintage, 1993.

HOMER'S
ILIAD
DRAWN BY ALICE DUKE

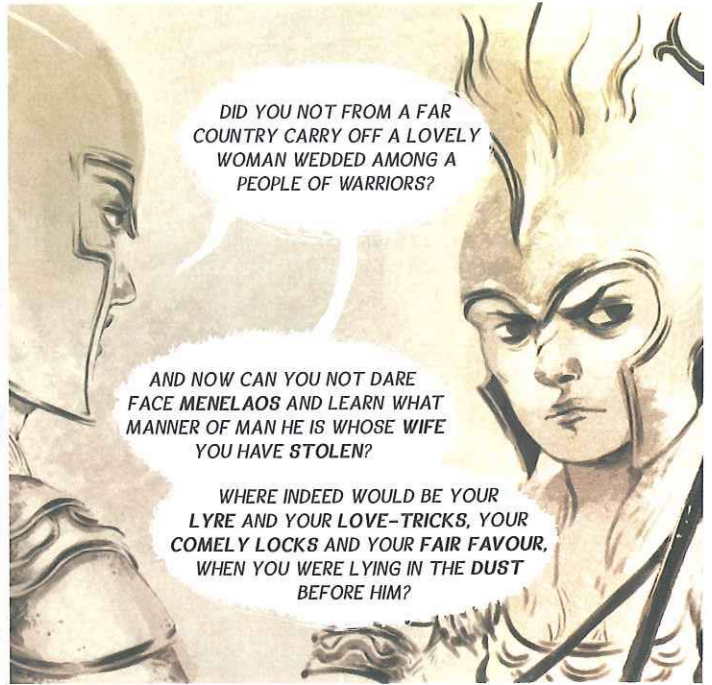
IN THE FINAL YEAR OF THE TROJAN WAR...





EVIL-HEARTED PARIS,
FAIR TO SEE, BUT WOMAN-MAD,
AND FALSE OF TONGUE!

WILL NOT THE ACHAEANS
MOCK AT US AND SAY THAT WE
HAVE SENT ONE TO CHAMPION US
WHO IS FAIR TO SEE BUT WHO
HAS NEITHER WIT NOR
COURAGE?



DID YOU NOT FROM A FAR
COUNTRY CARRY OFF A LOVELY
WOMAN WEDDED AMONG A
PEOPLE OF WARRIORS?

AND NOW CAN YOU NOT DARE
FACE MENELAOS AND LEARN WHAT
MANNER OF MAN HE IS WHOSE WIFE
YOU HAVE STOLEN?

WHERE INDEED WOULD BE YOUR
LYRE AND YOUR LOVE-TRICKS, YOUR
COMELY LOCKS AND YOUR FAIR FAVOUR,
WHEN YOU WERE LYING IN THE DUST
BEFORE HIM?



HEKTOR...
YOUR REBUKE IS
JUST.

IF YOU WOULD HAVE ME
DO BATTLE WITH MENELAOS,
BID THE TROJANS AND ACHAEANS
TAKE THEIR SEATS, WHILE HE AND I
FIGHT IN THEIR MIDST FOR HELEN
AND ALL HER WEALTH.

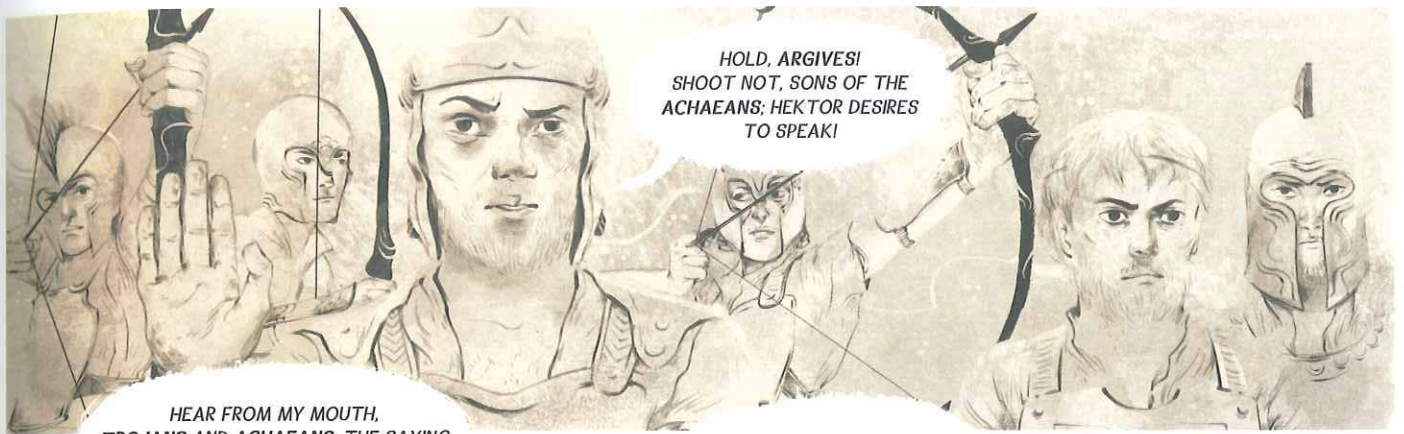


LET HIM WHO SHALL
BE VICTORIOUS AND PROVE TO
BE THE BETTER MAN TAKE THE
WOMAN AND ALL SHE HAS,
TO BEAR THEM TO
HIS HOME,

BUT LET THE REST
SWEAR TO A SOLEMN COVENANT
OF PEACE WHEREBY YOU TROJANS
SHALL STAY HERE IN TROY, WHILE THE
OTHERS GO HOME TO ARGOS
AND THE LAND OF THE
ACHAEANS.



HOLD!

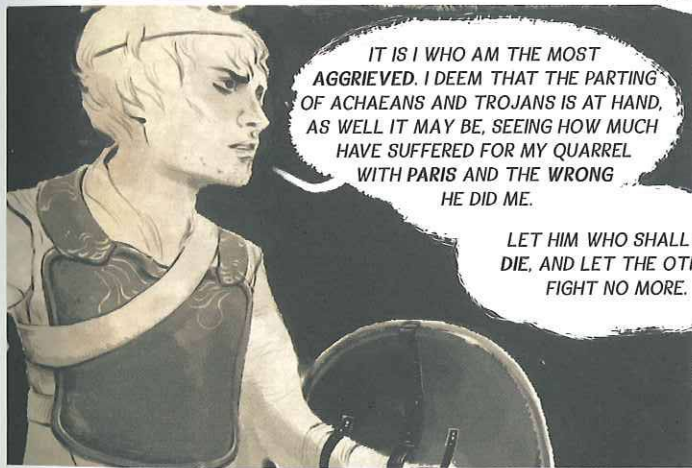


HOLD, ARGIVES!
SHOOT NOT, SONS OF THE
ACHAEANS: HEKTOR DESIRES
TO SPEAK!

HEAR FROM MY MOUTH,
TROJANS AND ACHAEANS, THE SAYING
OF PARIS, THROUGH WHOM THIS
QUARREL HAS COME ABOUT!

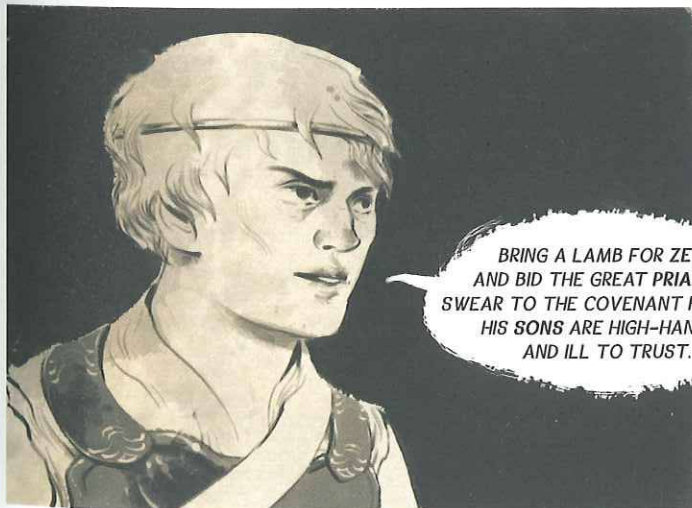
HE BIDS THE TROJANS
AND ACHAEANS LAY THEIR
ARMOUR UPON THE GROUND, WHILE HE
AND MENELAOS FIGHT IN THE MIDST OF
YOU FOR HELEN AND ALL
HER WEALTH.

LET HIM WHO SHALL
BE VICTORIOUS AND PROVE TO BE
THE BETTER MAN TAKE THE WOMAN
TO HIS OWN HOME, BUT LET THE
REST SWEAR TO A SOLEMN
COVENANT OF PEACE.

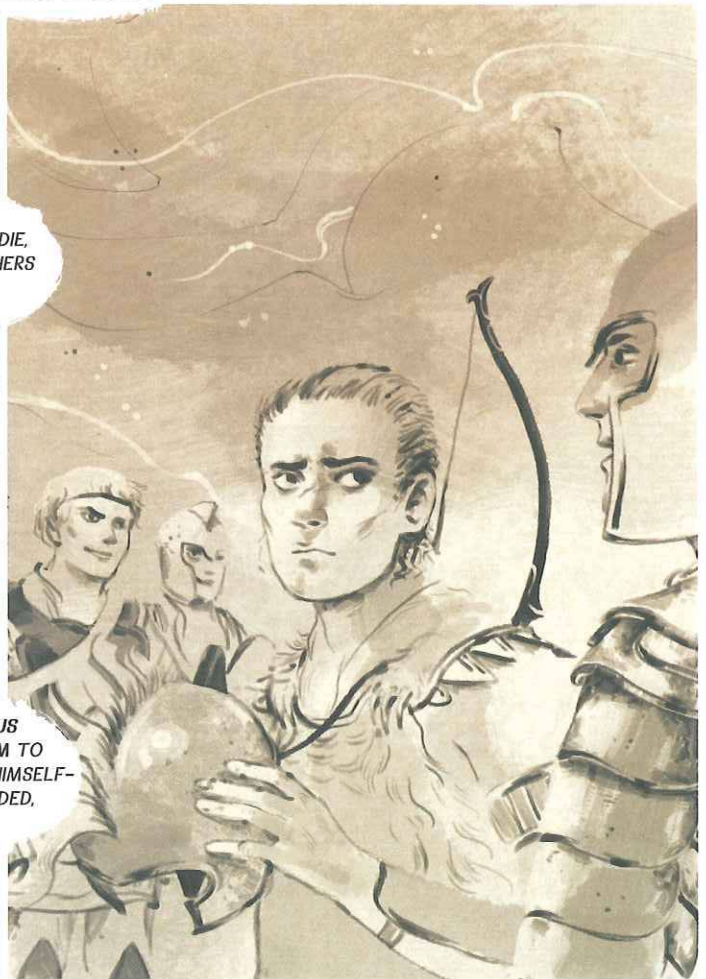


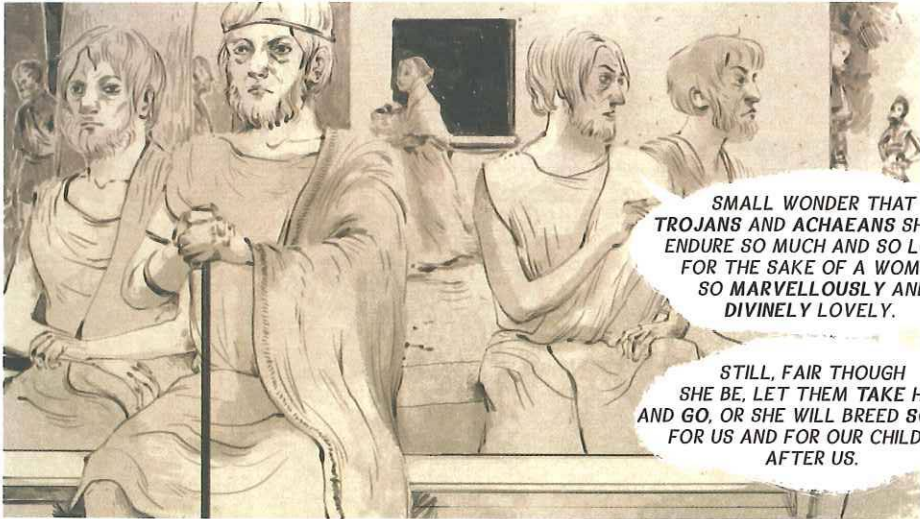
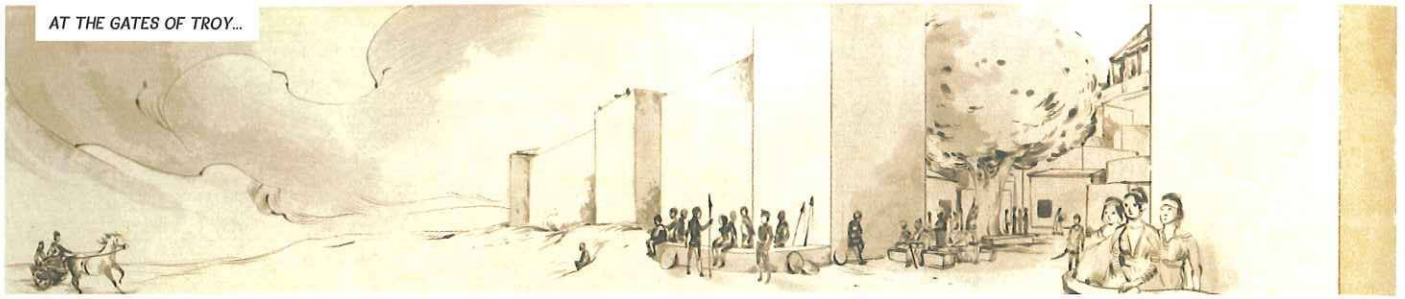
IT IS I WHO AM THE MOST
AGGRIEVED. I DEEM THAT THE PARTING
OF ACHAEANS AND TROJANS IS AT HAND,
AS WELL IT MAY BE, SEEING HOW MUCH
HAVE SUFFERED FOR MY QUARREL
WITH PARIS AND THE WRONG
HE DID ME.

LET HIM WHO SHALL DIE,
DIE, AND LET THE OTHERS
FIGHT NO MORE.



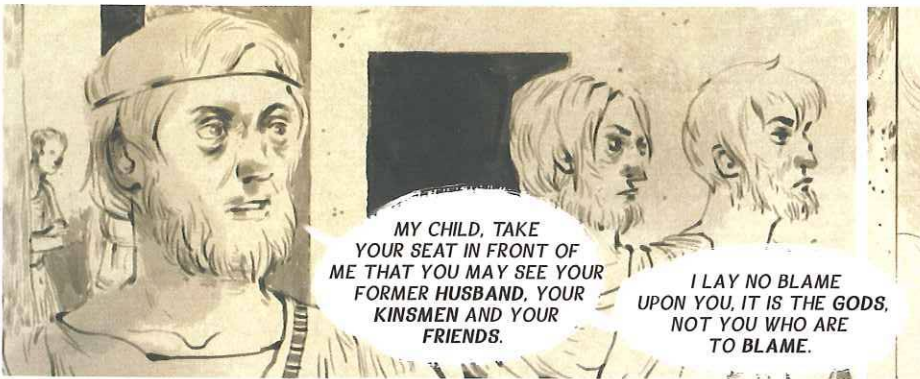
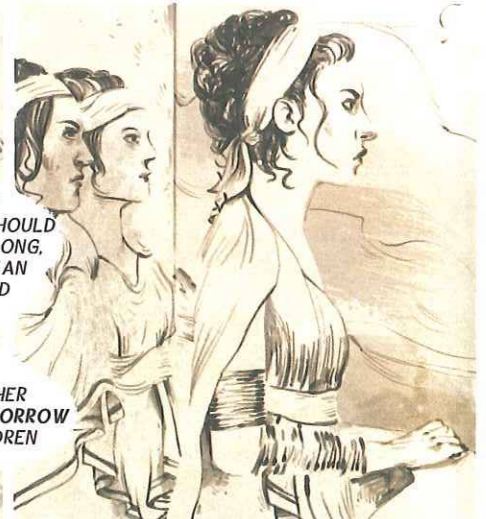
BRING A LAMB FOR ZEUS
AND BID THE GREAT PRIAM TO
SWEAR TO THE COVENANT HIMSELF—
HIS SONS ARE HIGH-HANDED,
AND ILL TO TRUST.





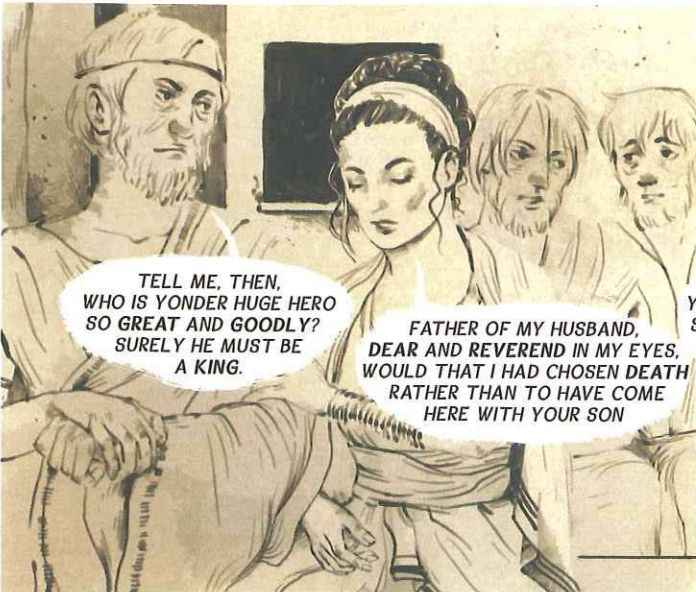
SMALL WONDER THAT TROJANS AND ACHAEANS SHOULD ENDURE SO MUCH AND SO LONG, FOR THE SAKE OF A WOMAN SO MARVELLOUSLY AND DIVINELY LOVELY.

STILL, FAIR THOUGH SHE BE, LET THEM TAKE HER AND GO, OR SHE WILL BREED SORROW FOR US AND FOR OUR CHILDREN AFTER US.



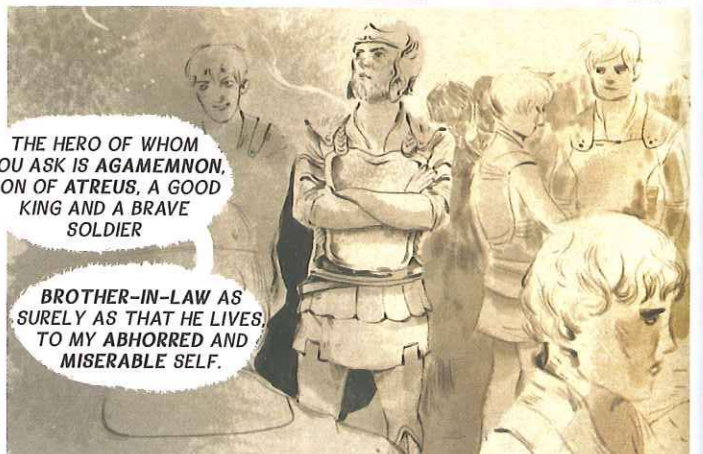
MY CHILD, TAKE YOUR SEAT IN FRONT OF ME THAT YOU MAY SEE YOUR FORMER HUSBAND, YOUR KINSMEN AND YOUR FRIENDS.

I LAY NO BLAME UPON YOU, IT IS THE GODS, NOT YOU WHO ARE TO BLAME.



TELL ME, THEN, WHO IS YONDER HUGE HERO SO GREAT AND GOODLY? SURELY HE MUST BE A KING.

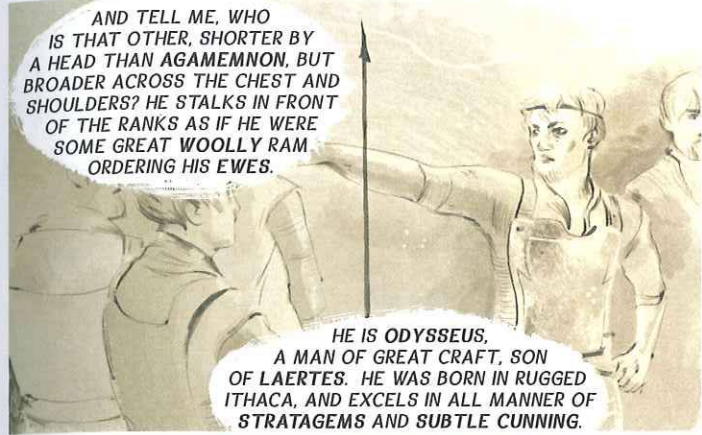
FATHER OF MY HUSBAND, DEAR AND REVEREND IN MY EYES, WOULD THAT I HAD CHOSEN DEATH RATHER THAN TO HAVE COME HERE WITH YOUR SON



THE HERO OF WHOM YOU ASK IS AGAMEMNON, SON OF ATREUS, A GOOD KING AND A BRAVE SOLDIER

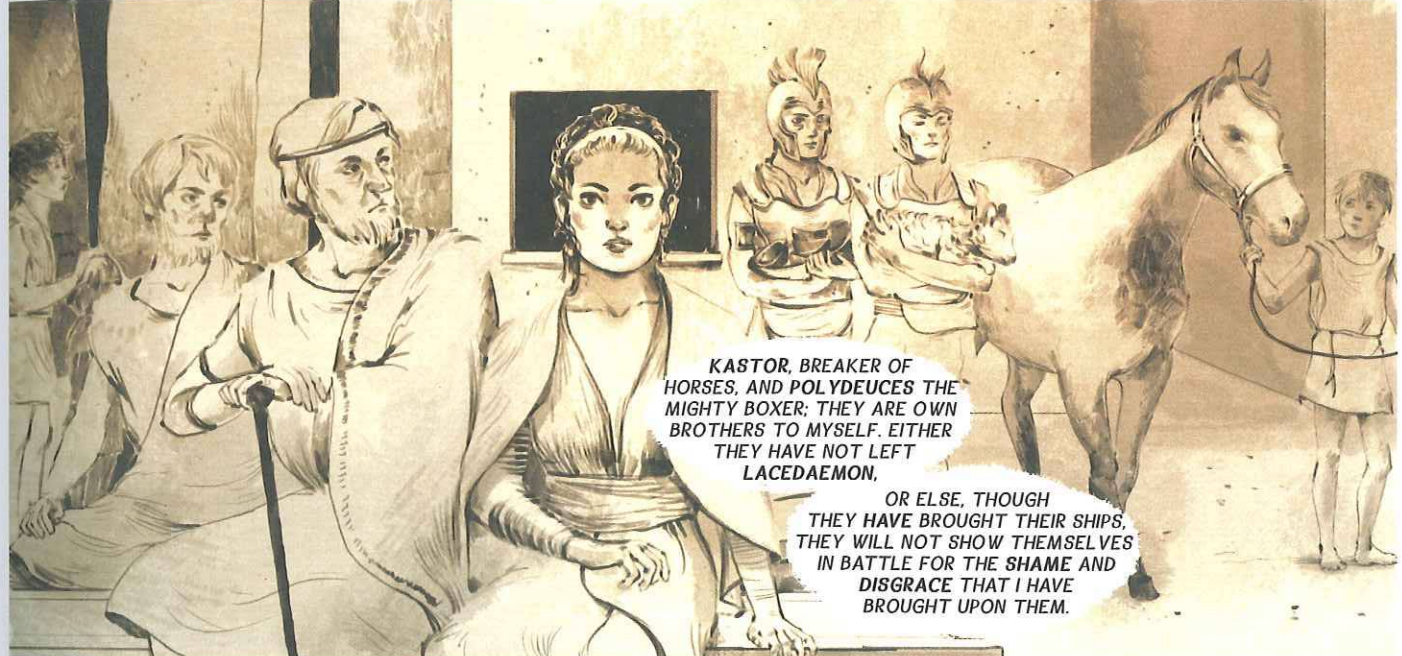
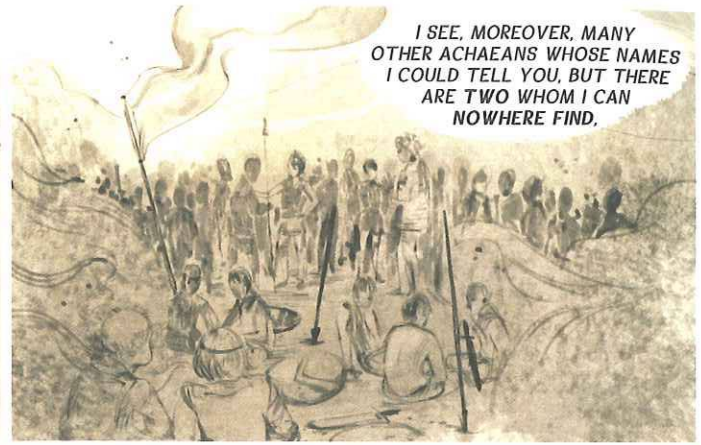
BROTHER-IN-LAW AS SURELY AS THAT HE LIVES, TO MY ABHORRED AND MISERABLE SELF.

AND TELL ME, WHO IS THAT OTHER, SHORTER BY A HEAD THAN AGAMEMNON, BUT BROADER ACROSS THE CHEST AND SHOULDERS? HE STALKS IN FRONT OF THE RANKS AS IF HE WERE SOME GREAT WOOLLY RAM ORDERING HIS EWES.



HE IS ODYSSEUS, A MAN OF GREAT CRAFT, SON OF LAERTES. HE WAS BORN IN RUGGED ITHACA, AND EXCELS IN ALL MANNER OF STRATAGEMS AND SUBTLE CUNNING.

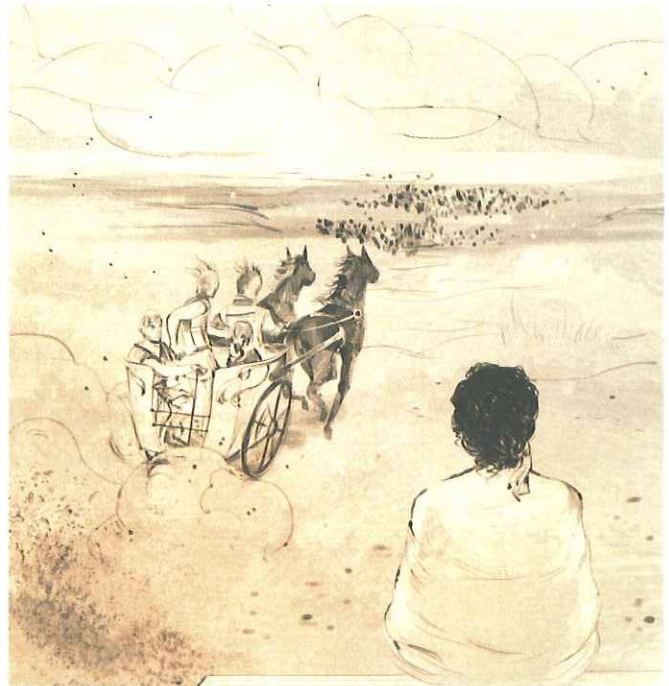
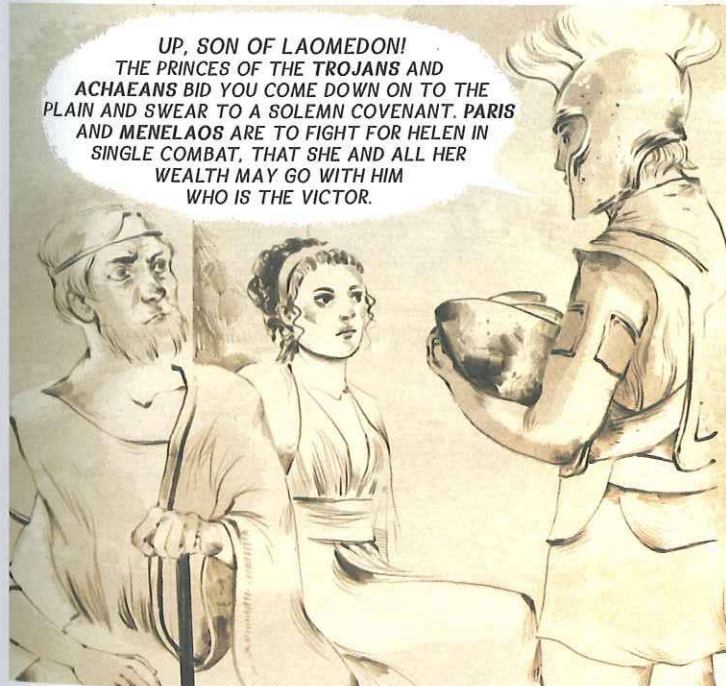
I SEE, MOREOVER, MANY OTHER ACHAEANS WHOSE NAMES I COULD TELL YOU, BUT THERE ARE TWO WHOM I CAN NOWHERE FIND.

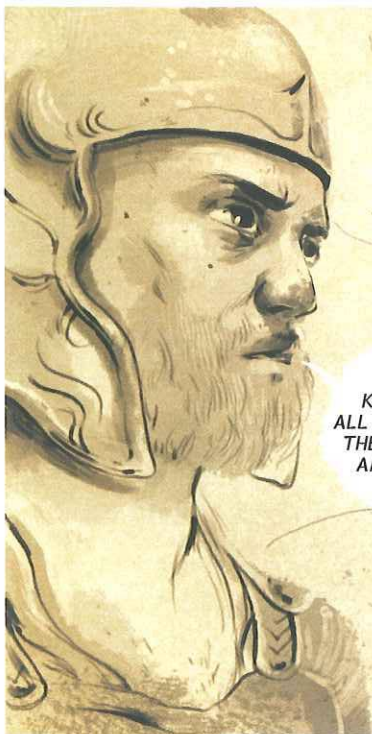
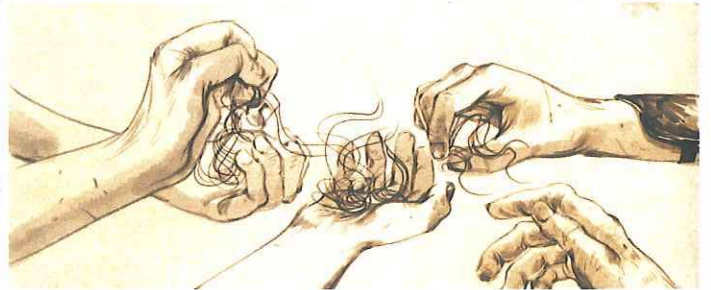


KASTOR, BREAKER OF HORSES, AND POLYDEUCES THE MIGHTY BOXER: THEY ARE OWN BROTHERS TO MYSELF. EITHER THEY HAVE NOT LEFT LACEDAEMON,

OR ELSE, THOUGH THEY HAVE BROUGHT THEIR SHIPS, THEY WILL NOT SHOW THEMSELVES IN BATTLE FOR THE SHAME AND DISGRACE THAT I HAVE BROUGHT UPON THEM.

UP, SON OF LAOMEDON! THE PRINCES OF THE TROJANS AND ACHAEANS BID YOU COME DOWN ON TO THE PLAIN AND SWEAR TO A SOLEMN COVENANT. PARIS AND MENELAOS ARE TO FIGHT FOR HELEN IN SINGLE COMBAT, THAT SHE AND ALL HER WEALTH MAY GO WITH HIM WHO IS THE VICTOR.





FATHER ZEUS, THAT RULEST IN IDA, MOST GLORIOUS IN POWER, AND THOU OH SUN, THAT SEEST AND GIVEST EAR TO ALL THINGS, EARTH AND RIVERS, AND YE WHO IN THE REALMS BELOW CHASTISE THE SOUL OF HIM THAT HAS BROKEN HIS OATH, WITNESS THESE RITES AND GUARD THEM, THAT THEY BE NOT VAIN.

IF PARIS KILLS MENELAOS, LET HIM KEEP HELEN AND ALL HER WEALTH, WHILE WE SAIL HOME WITH OUR SHIPS; BUT IF MENELAOS KILLS PARIS, LET THE TROJANS GIVE BACK HELEN AND ALL THAT SHE HAS; LET THEM MOREOVER PAY SUCH FINE TO THE ACHAEANS AS SHALL BE AGREED UPON, IN TESTIMONY AMONG THOSE THAT SHALL BE BORN HEREAFTER. AND IF PRIAM AND HIS SONS REFUSE SUCH FINE WHEN PARIS HAS FALLEN, THEN WILL I STAY HERE AND FIGHT ON TILL I HAVE GOT SATISFACTION.

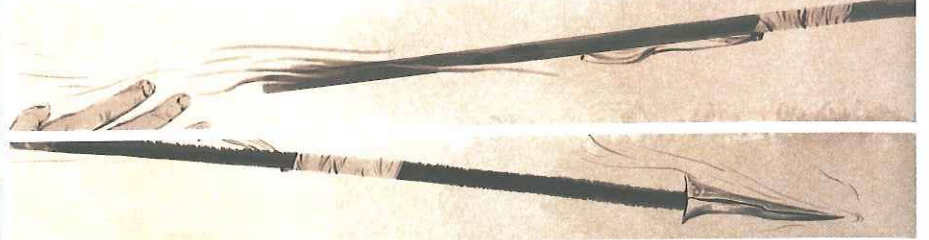
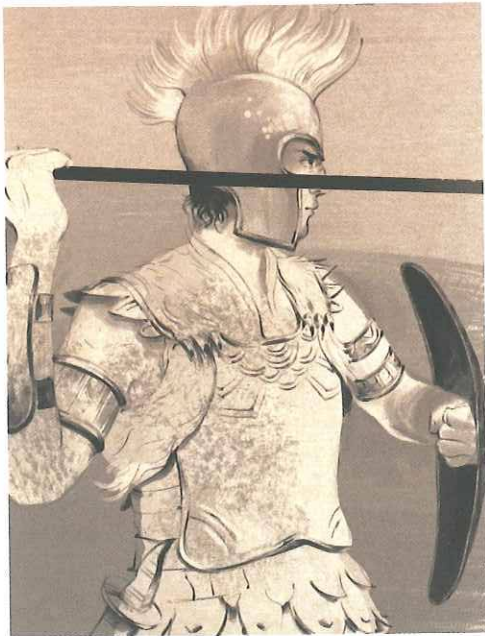
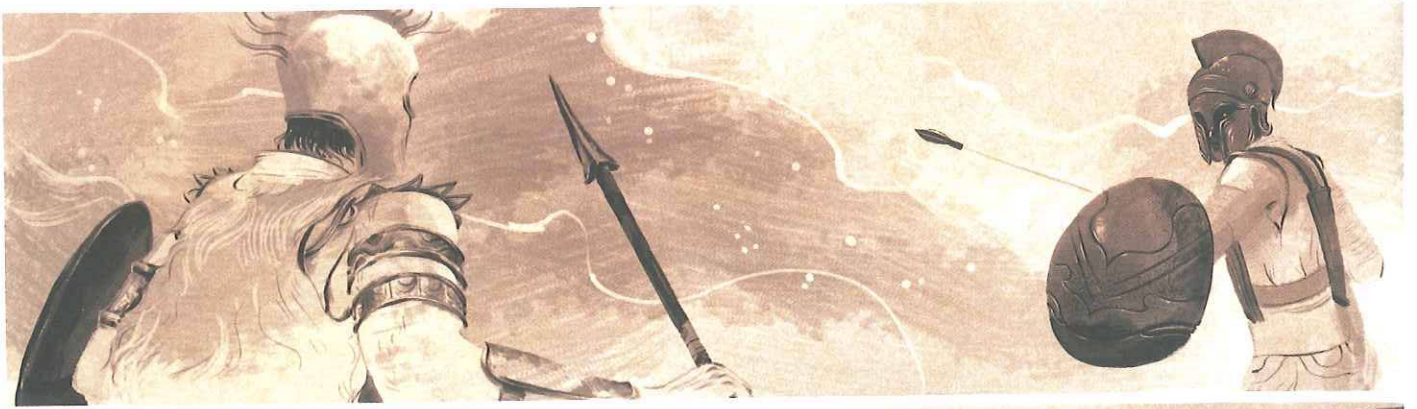




HEAR ME, TROJANS AND
ACHAEANS, I WILL NOW GO BACK TO
THE WIND-BEATEN CITY OF TROY:
I DARE NOT WITH MY OWN EYES
WITNESS THIS FIGHT BETWEEN
MY SON AND MENELAOS

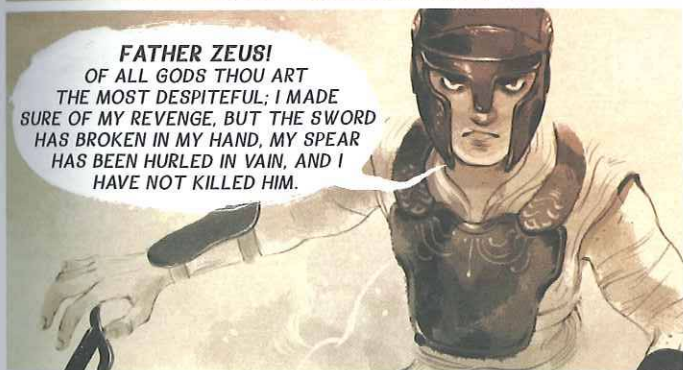
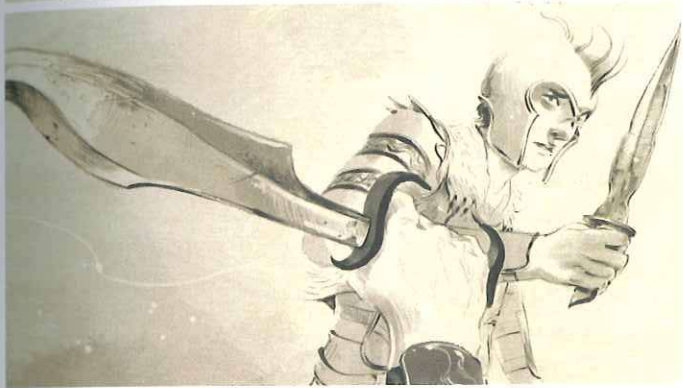
ZEUS AND THE OTHER
IMMORTALS ALONE KNOW
WHICH SHALL FALL.

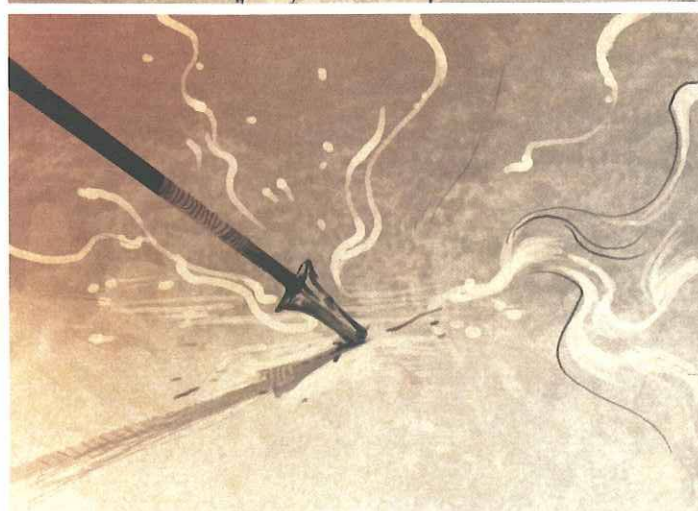
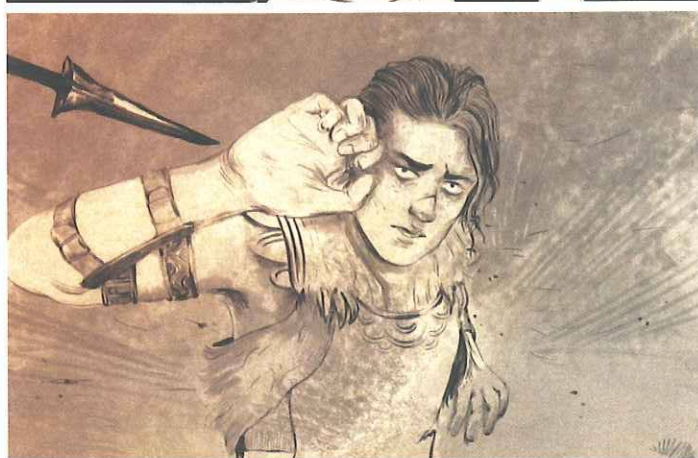
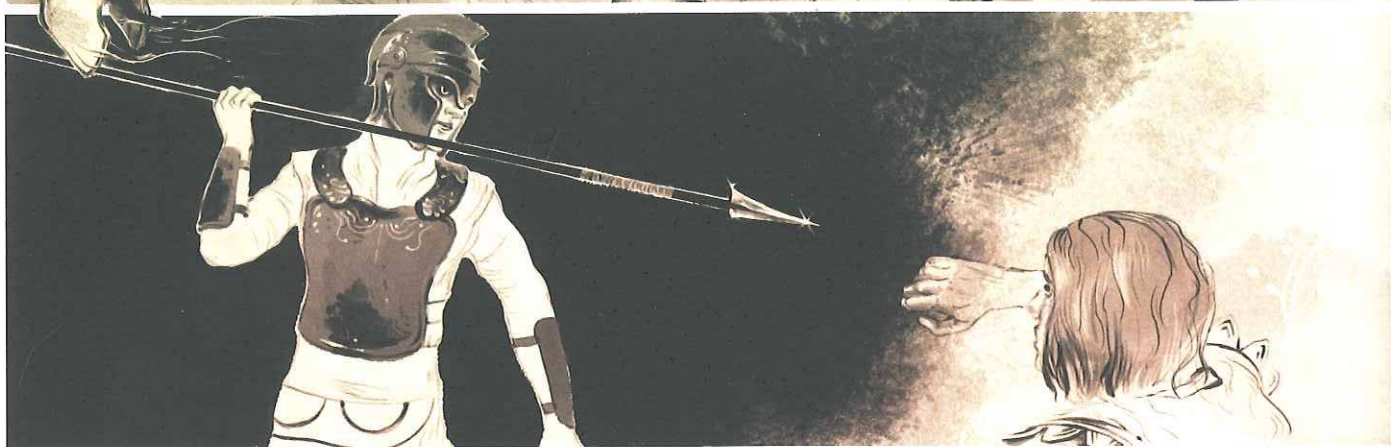


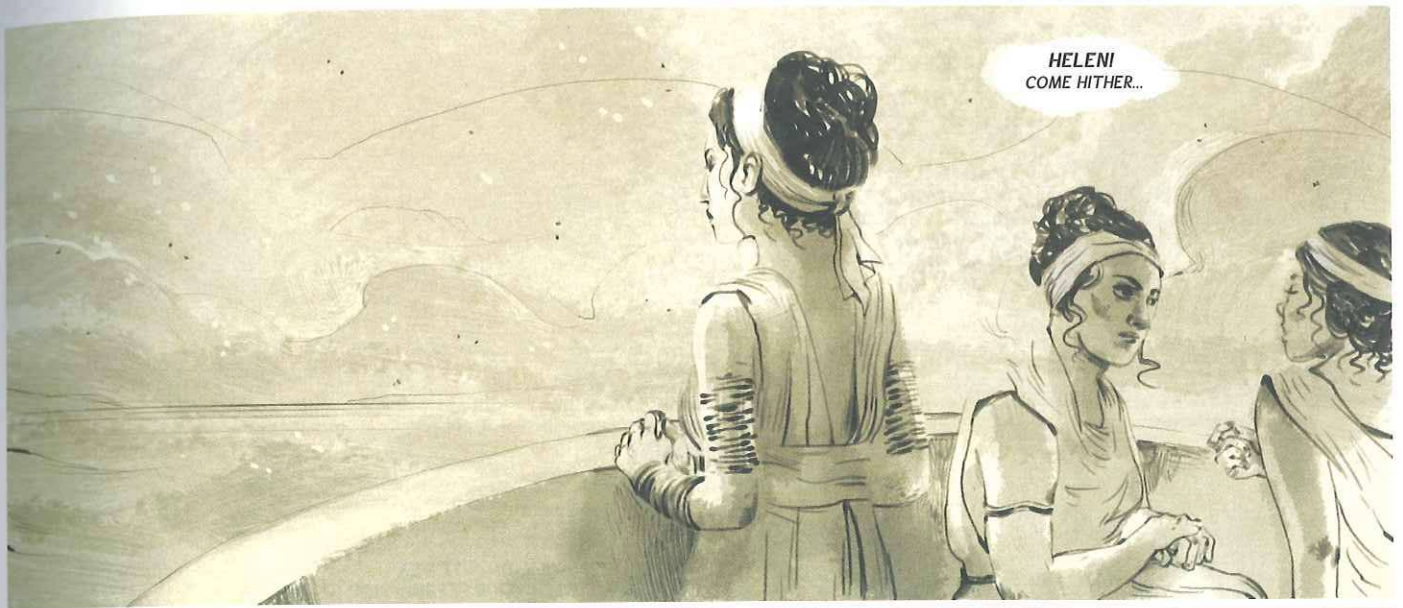


**KING ZEUS, GRANT ME REVENGE ON PARIS
WHO HAS WRONGED ME; SUBDUE HIM UNDER
MY HAND THAT IN AGES YET TO COME A MAN
MAY SHRINK FROM DOING ILL DEEDS IN THE
HOUSE OF HIS HOST**

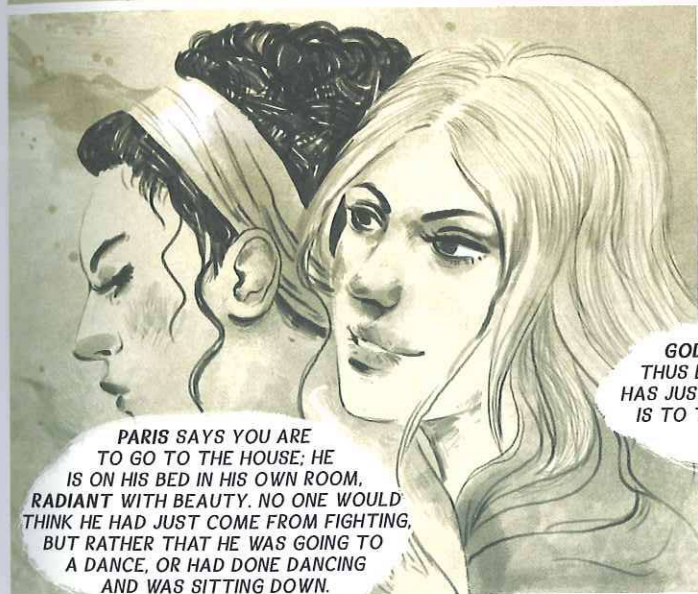




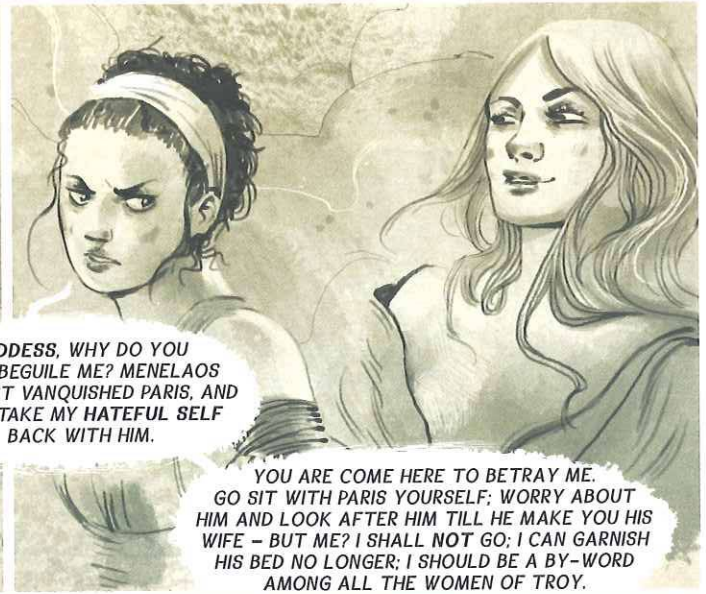




HELENI
COME HITHER...

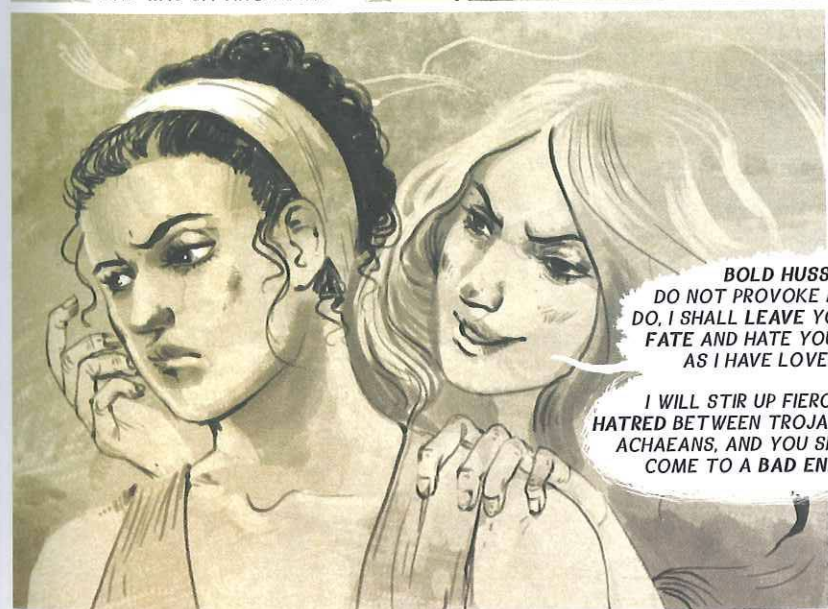


PARIS SAYS YOU ARE TO GO TO THE HOUSE; HE IS ON HIS BED IN HIS OWN ROOM, RADIANT WITH BEAUTY. NO ONE WOULD THINK HE HAD JUST COME FROM FIGHTING, BUT RATHER THAT HE WAS GOING TO A DANCE, OR HAD DONE DANCING AND WAS SITTING DOWN.



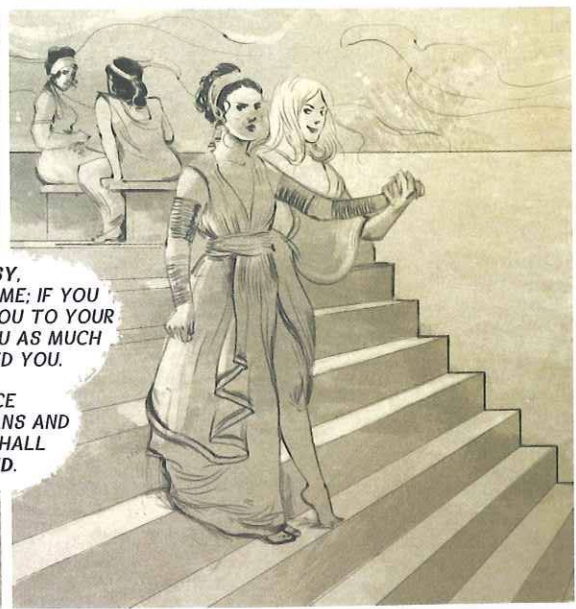
GODDESS, WHY DO YOU THUS BEGUILLE ME? MENELAOS HAS JUST VANQUISHED PARIS, AND IS TO TAKE MY HATEFUL SELF BACK WITH HIM.

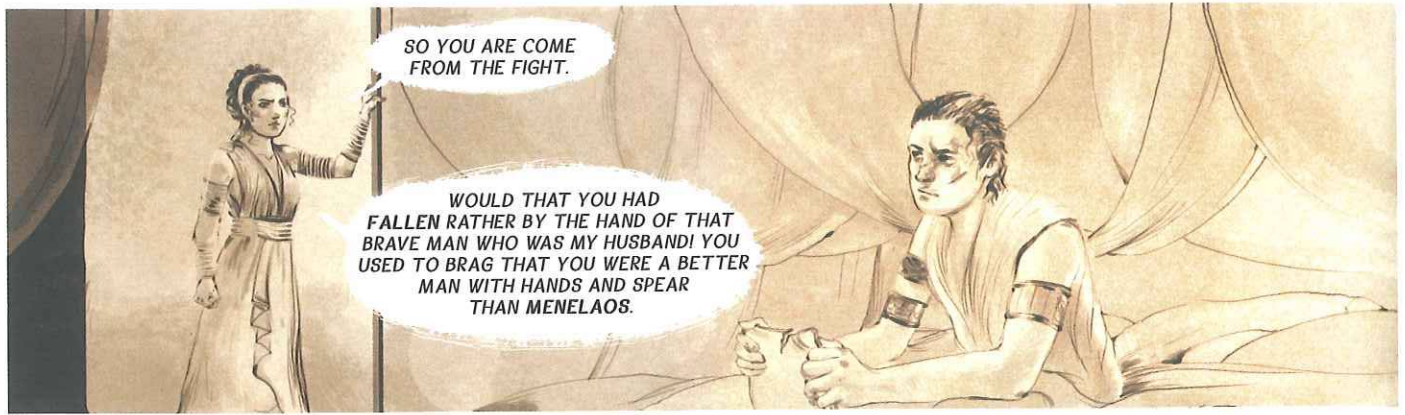
YOU ARE COME HERE TO BETRAY ME. GO SIT WITH PARIS YOURSELF; WORRY ABOUT HIM AND LOOK AFTER HIM TILL HE MAKE YOU HIS WIFE - BUT ME? I SHALL NOT GO; I CAN GARNISH HIS BED NO LONGER; I SHOULD BE A BY-WORD AMONG ALL THE WOMEN OF TROY.



BOLD HUSSY, DO NOT PROVOKE ME; IF YOU DO, I SHALL LEAVE YOU TO YOUR FATE AND HATE YOU AS MUCH AS I HAVE LOVED YOU.

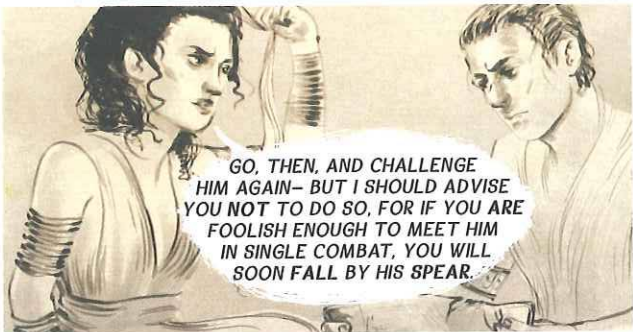
I WILL STIR UP FIERCE HATRED BETWEEN TROJANS AND ACHAEANS, AND YOU SHALL COME TO A BAD END.



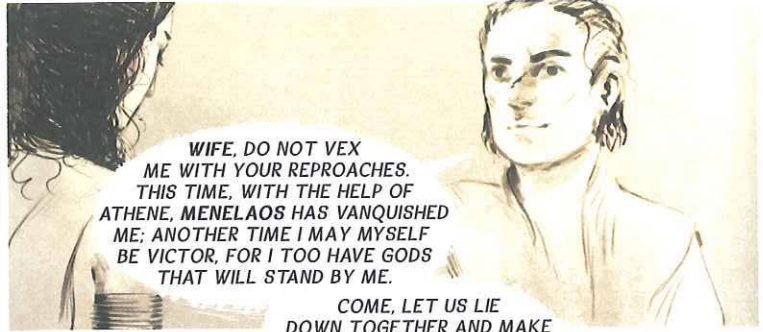


SO YOU ARE COME FROM THE FIGHT.

WOULD THAT YOU HAD FALLEN RATHER BY THE HAND OF THAT BRAVE MAN WHO WAS MY HUSBAND! YOU USED TO BRAG THAT YOU WERE A BETTER MAN WITH HANDS AND SPEAR THAN MENELAOS.

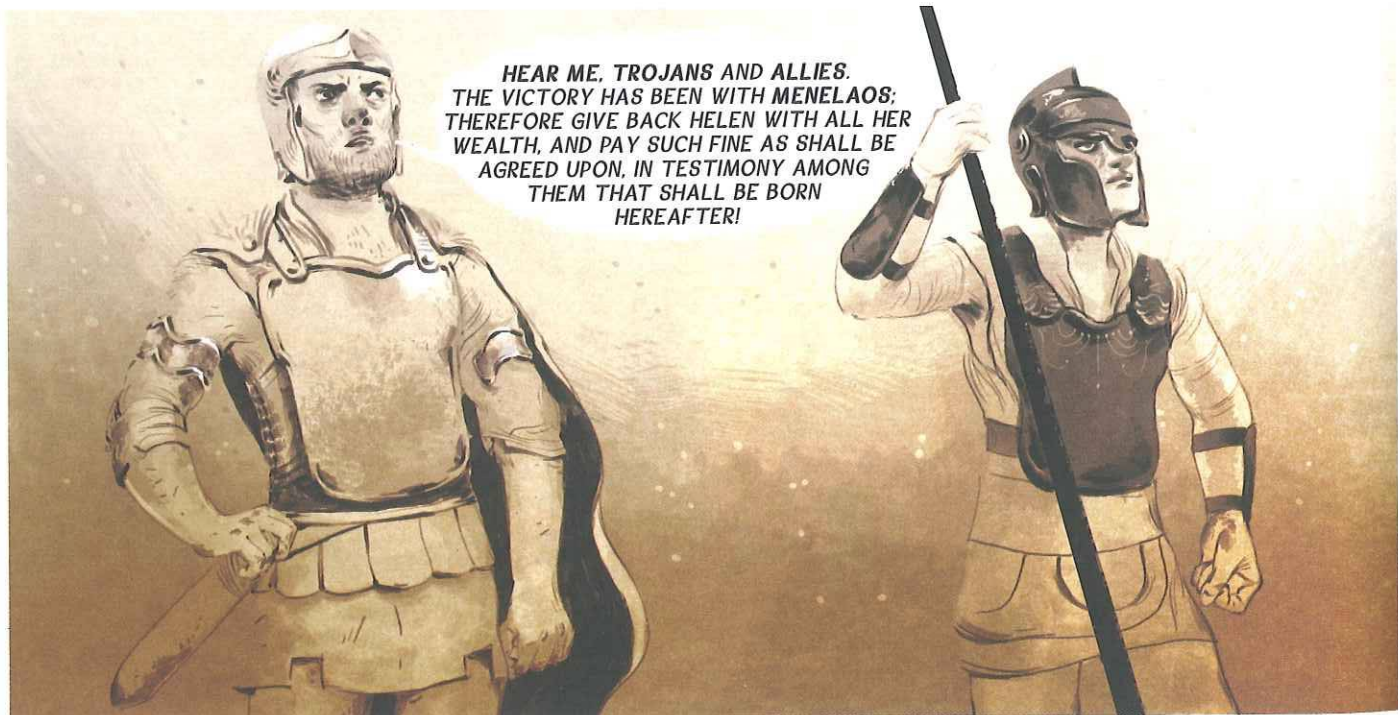


GO, THEN, AND CHALLENGE HIM AGAIN— BUT I SHOULD ADVISE YOU NOT TO DO SO, FOR IF YOU ARE FOOLISH ENOUGH TO MEET HIM IN SINGLE COMBAT, YOU WILL SOON FALL BY HIS SPEAR.



WIFE, DO NOT VEX ME WITH YOUR REPROACHES. THIS TIME, WITH THE HELP OF ATHENE, MENELAOS HAS VANQUISHED ME; ANOTHER TIME I MAY MYSELF BE VICTOR, FOR I TOO HAVE GODS THAT WILL STAND BY ME.

COME, LET US LIE DOWN TOGETHER AND MAKE FRIENDS. NEVER YET WAS I SO PASSIONATELY ENAMORED OF YOU AS AT THIS MOMENT...



HEAR ME, TROJANS AND ALLIES: THE VICTORY HAS BEEN WITH MENELAOS; THEREFORE GIVE BACK HELEN WITH ALL HER WEALTH, AND PAY SUCH FINE AS SHALL BE AGREED UPON, IN TESTIMONY AMONG THEM THAT SHALL BE BORN HEREAFTER!