

## Iliad Book 24, Burial of Hector - End

As Dawn spread her yellow robes over all the earth,  
the two men drove their horses inside the city,  
weeping and groaning. The mules pulled in the corpse.  
No one noticed them, no man, no well-dressed woman,  
except Cassandra, a girl as  
beautiful 860  
as golden Aphrodite. She'd climbed  
up Pergamus. [700]  
She saw her father standing in his chariot,  
together with his herald, the town crier.  
In the mule cart she saw the corpse lying on the bier.  
With a scream, Cassandra cried out to all the city:

“See, men and women of Troy, come and see—  
look on Hector, if, while he was still alive,  
you would rejoice when he came back from war,  
for he was a great joy to all our city  
and its people.”

At Cassandra's

shout, 870  
no man or woman was left unaffected.  
There in the city all were overcome with grief  
beyond anyone's control. Close to the gates,  
they met Priam bringing home the body.  
First Hector's dear wife and his noble  
mother, [710]  
tearing their hair, ran to the sturdy wagon,  
trying to touch Hector's head. People crowded round,  
all weeping. They would have stayed there by the gates,  
shedding tears for Hector the entire day  
until the sun went down, but from the  
chariot 880  
the old man cried out to the crowd:

“Make way there—  
let the mules get through. There'll be time enough,  
once I've got him home, for everyone to weep.”

At Priam's words, the crowd moved back, making room.  
The wagon pushed on through. Once they'd got him home,

inside their great house, they laid him on a corded  
bed, [720]  
then placed singers there beside him, to lead their songs.  
They sang a mournful funeral dirge. Then the women  
began their wailing, led by white-armed **Andromache**,  
who held in her arms the head of man-killing  
Hector. 890

“My husband—you’ve lost your life so young,  
leaving me a widow in our home,  
with our son still an infant, the child  
born to you and me in our wretchedness.  
I don’t think he’ll grow up to adulthood.  
Before that, our city will all be destroyed.  
For you, who kept watch over for us, are dead.  
You used to protect our city, keeping  
its noble wives and little children  
safe. [730]  
Now, soon enough, they’ll all be carried  
off 900  
in hollow ships. I’ll be there among them.  
And you, my child, you’ll follow with me,  
to some place where you’ll be put to work  
at menial tasks, slaving for a cruel master.  
Or else some Achaean man will grab your arm  
and throw you from the wall—a dreadful death—  
in his anger that Hector killed his brother,  
or his father, or his son. For Hector’s hands  
made great numbers of Achaeans sink their teeth  
into the broad earth. In wretched  
warfare, 910  
your father was not gentle. So in our  
city [740]  
they now weep for him. O Hector, what sorrow,  
what untold grief you’ve laid upon your parents.  
What painful sorrows will remain for me,  
especially for me. As you were dying,  
you didn’t reach your hand out from the bed,  
or give me some final words of wisdom,  
something I could remember always,  
night and day, as I continue my lament.”

Andromache said this in tears. The women all wailed with her. 920

Then **Hecuba** took her turn in leading their laments:

“Hector, dearest by far of all my children,  
loved by the gods, as well, when you were living.  
Now, at your death, they still take care of  
you. [750]

When swift Achilles took my other sons,  
he’d ship them off across the boundless seas,  
to Samos, or Imbros, or foggy Lemnos.  
When his long-edged bronze took away your life,  
he dragged you many times around the mound  
for his comrade Patroclus, whom you  
killed. 930

Yet even so, he could not revive him.  
Now you lie here in our house, fresh as dew,  
like someone whom Apollo of the silver bow  
has just come to and killed with gentle arrows.”

As she spoke, Hecuba wept. She stirred them  
on [760]

to endless lamentation. **Helen** was the third  
to lead those women in their wailing:

“Hector—of all my husband’s brothers,  
you’re by far the dearest to my heart.  
My husband is godlike  
Alexander, 940  
who brought me here to Troy. I wish I’d died  
before that happened! This is the twentieth year  
since I went away and left my native land,  
but I’ve never heard a nasty word from you  
or an abusive speech. In fact, if anyone  
ever spoke rudely to me in the house—  
one of your brothers or sisters, some brother’s  
well-dressed wife, or your mother—for your  
father [770]

always was so kind, as if he were my own—  
you’d speak out, persuading them to  
stop, 950  
using your gentleness, your soothing words.  
Now I weep for you and for my wretched self,

so sick at heart, for there's no one else  
in spacious Troy who's kind to me and friendly.  
They all look at me and shudder with disgust."

Helen spoke in tears. The huge crowd joined in their lament.  
Then old Priam addressed his people:

"You Trojans,  
you must fetch some wood here to the city.  
Don't let your hearts fear any ambush,  
some crafty Achaean trick. For  
Achilles, 960  
when he sent me back from the hollow  
ships, [780]  
gave me his word they'd not harm us  
until the twelfth day dawns."

Priam finished.

The people hitched up mules and oxen to their wagons  
and then gathered before the city with all speed.  
For nine days they brought in wood, an immense amount.  
When the tenth dawn came, they brought brave Hector out,  
then, all in tears, laid his corpse on top the funeral pyre.  
They set it alight. When rose-fingered Dawn came up,  
they gathered around that pyre of glorious  
Hector. 970  
Once they'd all assembled there  
together, [790]  
first they doused the pyre with gleaming wine, every part  
that fire's strength had touched. His brothers and comrades  
collected Hector's ash-white bones, as they mourned him—  
heavy tears running down their cheeks—and placed them  
in a golden urn, wrapped in soft purple cloth.  
They quickly set the urn down in a shallow grave,  
covered it with large stones set close together,  
then hurried to pile up the mound, posting sentries  
on every side, in case well-armed  
Achaeans 980  
attacked too soon. Once they'd piled up the mound,  
they went back in, gathered together for a splendid feast,  
all in due order, in Priam's house, king raised by Zeus.  
And thus they buried Hector, tamer of horses.