

## EPISODE 7 – Triumph for the Trojans?

CD 2 tracks 3-5

total running time: 15:17

### *Hector's wife begs him not to fight* (⊕ 7:32)

On the rocky crag on Mount Ida, Zeus looked at his golden scales and he saw the Greek luck sinking down towards Hades' halls, and he saw the Trojan luck soaring up into the skies. And, in that moment, in the city of Troy, Hector, the eldest son of King Priam, woke up with his heart soaring in his breast. He leapt out of bed. He kissed his wife Andromache, still asleep on the  
5 bed. He pulled on his clothes and his armour. He ran out of his palace. He sent lieutenants to all corners of the city, waking warriors, and soon the air was thick with the sound of the sharpening of swords, the greasing of axles, the harnessing of horses to chariots, the seizing of helmets and shields, the buckling of breastplates and belts and greaves.

And, if I could sing, I would sing of Hector himself, striding this way and that way. The leather  
10 rim of his bossed shield slung onto his back, tapping the nape of his neck and the backs of his ankles, as he exalts and encourages his men. And soon the whole city was humming.

And Hector made his way down towards the city gates and, as he was walking, he saw coming towards him his wife, Andromache, and, walking behind her, a nursemaid with their little son, Astyanax, in her arms. And, when Andromache saw Hector, she ran forwards and she threw  
15 her hands around his neck, and she said, "Sweet Hector, this courage will be the death of you. Achilles is a wild animal. He is a savage beast. In his ravaging the coast from the Black Sea to the Nile, he has killed all seven of my brothers. He has killed my father. He has killed my mother. The city that gave me birth is nothing more than a pile of crumbling, blood-soaked rubble. Hector, do not make me a widow as well as an orphan."

20 And Hector said, "Andromache, what can I do? If a man is guarding his sheep on the slopes of Mount Ida and he finds himself surrounded by wolves or by thieves, does he turn tail and run? Or does he stand firm and fight? I am my father's son. I am our son's father. This land from Mount Ida to the sea, from the river Scamander to the river Xanthus, is my inheritance. As I am father of this family, one day I will also be father of this land."

25 And Andromache looked at him and she said, "Then who are you married to? Me or the land?"  
And Hector said, "Both, my love."

And he reached and he took the baby from the nursemaid's hand, his little son, Astyanax. But, as he lifted him, the baby wrinkled up his face, and he opened his mouth and he screamed, and tears were spurting out of his eyes. And Andromache smiled through her tears and she  
30 said, "Sweet Hector, it is your helmet that frightens him."

And she reached and she lifted the great bronze helmet, with its nodding plume of horsehair, from Hector's head, and she set it onto the ground at his feet. And Hector lifted his little baby son and he pressed his nose against the baby's nose, and the tears turned to bubbling laughter. And Hector lifted his son high above his head and he said, "Great father Zeus, may  
35 this child grow up to be greater than his father!"

And Zeus, on the rocky crag on Mount Ida, was watching and smiling fondly. But he did not bow his head in assent.

And Hector gave the baby to Andromache and he reached down, and he picked up his helmet and he put it onto his head. And he said, “Andromache, nobody, whether hero or coward, can  
40 avoid his fate. Even Zeus can only watch as the scales of luck either rise or fall.”

And he made his way down towards the gate. And he hadn't gone far when his brother, Paris, caught up with him, like some great bull that's been locked in the barn all winter and with the first strength of spring, when the barn doors are thrown open, the bull goes dancing and skipping across the flowery fields. So it was that Paris caught up with Hector, and Hector put  
45 his arm around his brother's neck and kissed him.

And then he went down to his golden chariot and there were his horses, stamping and steaming and champing at the bit. And he stroked the horses' faces with the back of his hand and he said, “My beauties, today is your chance to repay me for all those mornings when my wife, Andromache, has given you honeyed wheats before she brought me my own breakfast.”

50 And he climbed up into the car of his chariot, and he turned and he faced the great Trojan army, massed inside the city walls. He said, “Today we ride against the Greeks. Great father Zeus is on our side. I feel it in my bones. We will drive them before us and, when we reach their flimsy, futile palisade, our horses' hooves will kick it down and, when we reach their hollow ships, the watchword will be fire!”

55 And there was a tremendous cheer from the Trojan army. The great bronze Scaean gates were thrown open and, with a whirring of wheels and a creaking of chariots, a neighing of horses, a shouting of men, a thundering of hooves and feet, the Trojan army poured across the plain and, with a crash of bronze against bronze, the Trojans met the Greeks.

And, if I could sing now, I would sing of Hector, as his charioteer whipped the horses to a  
60 gallop, every cell of his body poised, immaculate. I would sing of Hector, cutting down Greeks like ripe corn, leaving them in swathes six deep, twelve deep, behind him. And behind Hector, the Trojan army driving the Greeks before them. And, when they reached the palisade, the Trojan horses kicked it down, as a little boy on the seashore might kick down a sandcastle. And the Greek hearts turned to water and they fled.

65 And, if I could sing now, I would sing of the menace in Hector's eyes, flickering beneath the bronze rim of his helmet. I would sing of the menace in the tilt of his helmet on his temples, as he fought.

### ***Trojan successes upset Hera (☉ 4:15)***

The Greeks, to their horror, saw their palisade, their wooden fence, come toppling down, as though some god had stomped on it. And, through the breach, there came a chariot. Behind the chariot, a surge of brazen Trojans, each one brandishing a flaming torch. Those Trojans,

they kicked over the burial mounds they found. They gutted the Greeks who could not run  
5 away, the Greek wounded. They threw spears at fleeing Greek backs.

The Greeks, they formed a line in front of their ships. They fought with whatever they could find, with sticks, with staves, with stones, with rocks. Menelaus was aboard one of the ships, cracking Trojan heads with a great oar. But soon there arose from one of those ships black smoke.

10 Not far away, in his hut, Achilles listened to the crackling flames. He listened to the screams of the dying Greeks. He smiled to himself. He picked up a silver harp and he began to play.

On the high slopes of Mount Olympus, Hera and Athene watched the smoke rising from the Greek ships, and the blood drained from their faces. Something had to be done. The ox-eyed queen of heaven made her way into her palace. She closed the door behind herself. She took  
15 off her clothes. She washed herself from head to foot, and then she rubbed scented oils into her skin, and she found a shimmering robe. She threw it over her shoulders; she clasped it at the throat with a golden clasp. And then she set off in search of Aphrodite, the goddess of love.

And when she found her, she said, "Aphrodite, dear child, I wonder if you would do me a favour, if you're not too angry with me for siding with the Greeks."

20 And Aphrodite said, "What favour?"

And Hera said, "I wonder if you would be kind enough to lend me your belt of love and desire because, you see, the sky and the earth have fallen out with one another. They do nothing but argue and bicker and quarrel and fight. Maybe, if I could lend them your belt, I could make peace between them."

25 And Aphrodite said, "Well, it would be unkind of me not to lend you my belt for such an important task." And she unclasped it and she gave it to Hera. And Hera took it from her. And, as soon as Hera was out of sight, she tied it around her own waist and she descended from the heavens, down and down and down to the rocky crag where Zeus was sitting, watching the smoke rising from the Greek ships.

30 And suddenly, out of the corner of his eye, he saw his wife and he said, "Hera, never have I been filled with such desire, such longing for a mortal or an immortal." And he drew her towards him and he unclasped the golden clasp. And Hera said, "Zeus! What? Here? Now? But we might be seen! Think how gossiping tongues would wag!"

And Zeus said, "Hera, I will cover us with a golden cloud." And he brought down a cloud that  
35 dripped golden dew onto the grass. And there they lay down together and they wrapped their arms around each other, and they kissed. And Zeus, smiling, relaxed, fell asleep in her arms.

And, as soon as he was asleep, Hera laid him tenderly down onto the grass. She leapt to her feet; she drew the shimmering robe over her shoulders; she clasped it with the golden clasp and, invisible, she made her way down from the mountain, straight to the Greek camp.

40 Invisible, she moved through the Greek camp, until she found Patroclus. And she filled Patroclus with sudden courage.

***Patroclus borrows Achilles' armour* (Ⓞ 3:30)**

Patroclus ran through the screams and smoke down to where the breakers crash and drag, down to Achilles' hut. He ran inside. There was Achilles strumming a harp, as though this day was like any other. Patroclus said, "Achilles, listen. The ships are burning. Agamemnon, Menelaus, Odysseus – all of them have been wounded. Prince Hector of Troy is unstoppable!  
5 If you will not fight today, lend me your armour. Let me wear it. You know, the very sight of it will put the Trojans to flight."

And so Patroclus begged to bring about his own death.

Achilles smiled. He said, "Very well then. Wear my armour! Ride in my chariot! Lead my army! You can be Achilles today. Drive the Trojans out of the camp. But be careful. You know Apollo  
10 loves this city. If you were to threaten it, he would punish you and his punishments are awful and swift."

And so, for the first time, Patroclus took Achilles' well-made greaves and strapped them onto his legs. He put on Achilles' golden breastplate, covered in shimmering, silver stars. He put on Achilles' helmet with its black, nodding horsehair plume, bristling with terror. And then he said,  
15 "My friend, you have entrusted these precious things to me. I will give that thing that I value most to you for safekeeping, until I return."

And then Patroclus took from his finger the wonderful golden ring. The golden ring, carved in the shape of a curling arrow, whose sharp point touched its feathered tail. That ring, Achilles had given him years before. Patroclus took it off and gave it to Achilles. Achilles put it onto his  
20 finger. Patroclus climbed into the car of Achilles' chariot, and he set forth.

And the Trojans, torching the Greek ships, suddenly saw Achilles. They saw Achilles in his golden armour. They saw Achilles with his matchless Myrmidons behind him, and they were terrified. They dropped the torches they were holding. They ran in all directions. No word of Hector's would rally them. They climbed over the shattered palisade. They escaped to save  
25 their own skins.