

Iliad Quotations

Writer: Homer | Generated: Jan 26, 2026

"The rage of Achilles - sing it now, goddess." - (The Iliad, Book 1)

Explanation: The poet begins the epic with an invocation to the Muse, asking her to sing about Achilles's rage. This rage is the central theme of the Iliad and causes countless sorrows and deaths in the Trojan War.

"I will not stop killing Trojans until . . . I meet Hector and fight him man to man, and he kills me or I kill him." - (The Iliad, Book 20)

Explanation: Achilles declares his determination. His rage and desire for revenge drive him to fight Hector, even though he knows his own death is near. This shows the theme of fate, glory, and revenge.

"But the more Achilles kept looking, the more his rage at Hector grew." - (The Iliad, Book 22)

Explanation: Achilles, burning with grief for Patroclus, becomes more furious seeing Hector. His grief turns into uncontrollable rage. This shows how personal loss fuels destructive anger.

"Have pity on me; remember your father." - (The Iliad, Book 24, Priam to Achilles)

Explanation: Priam begs Achilles for Hector's body. He reminds Achilles of his own father to stir compassion. This moment shows human suffering breaking the barrier of enmity.

"Like the generations of leaves, the lives of mortal men." - (The Iliad, Book 6, Glaucus to Diomedes)

Explanation: Glaucus explains the brevity of human life. Just like leaves fall and grow again, human lives appear and vanish. This shows the theme of mortality.

“You ... were their greatest glory while you lived—now death and fate have seized you.”

– (The Iliad, Book 17, Menelaus to Patroclus)

Explanation: Menelaus mourns Patroclus, acknowledging his heroism. He was a source of glory, but death and fate end all human greatness. This blends glory with the inevitability of fate.

“Even the gods themselves can bend and change.” – (The Iliad, Book 16)

Explanation: The Iliad shows that the gods are not fixed or unchanging. They, too, feel anger, pity, and desire, and can shift sides in war. This reflects human-like qualities in the divine.

“And fate? No one alive has ever escaped it, neither brave man nor coward, I tell you—it’s born with us the day that we are born.” – (The Iliad, Book 6, Hector to Andromache)

Explanation: Hector comforts Andromache, saying no one can escape fate. Bravery or cowardice cannot change destiny. This highlights the Iliad’s theme of the inevitability of fate.

“Come, friend, you too must die. ... Even Patroclus died, a far, far better man than you.”

– (The Iliad, Book 21, Achilles to Lycaon)

Explanation: Achilles tells Lycaon that death spares no one. Even Patroclus, noble and strong, died. This shows Achilles’s merciless mood and the theme of universal mortality.

“Shall then the Grecians fly! O dire disgrace! ... No: let my Greeks, unmoved by vain alarms.” – (The Iliad, Book 5, Diomedes to the Greeks)

Explanation: Diomedes inspires the Greek warriors, calling retreat a disgrace. He urges them to fight bravely without fear. This reflects heroism and the importance of honor in battle.