**Patroclus** talks about his father being a king and thinking his son and wife are simple and disappointing.

When Patroclus is nine years old, his father takes him to a ceremony where the king of Sparta, **Tyndareus**, is ‘selling’ his daughter **Helen** to the person who brings the best gift. **Odysseus** suggests that Helen should choose her husband herself and that all the people in the room, who are arguing over Helen, have to swear an oath that they will always protect Helen and her husband if someone tries to take them apart. There is a lot of critics on this subject, but they eventually agree, and Helen chooses **Menelaos**.

Patroclus accidentally kills a child and has to be executed or exiled. His father chooses that he’ll be exiled, for that is much cheaper.

**There he eats and is trained to become a soldier, but the nights are endless because of the nightmares about the dead boy.**

He’s sent to **Peleus**, who fosters children. His son, **Achilles** welcomes him into the palace. There he eats and is trained to become a soldier, but the nights are endless because of the nightmares about the dead boy. The days are all the same. Patroclus becomes lonely, anxious and he feels guilty. He becomes amazed about Achilles. One night in the dinner room, Achilles sits at Patroclus’ table and joggles a few figs, after which he throws one to Patroclus. Peleus returns from a journey and summons Patroclus to him, asking for the reason he’s here. The rumour spreads like fire and he’s being ignored by everyone.

Patroclus does not show up for a few lessons. Achilles goes to check on him and Patroclus challenges him by asking him to lie to his father Peleus. Achilles refuses, but lets Patroclus train with him so he has an excuse. He later asks Peleus if Patroclus can be his companion. From then on, Patroclus sleeps in Achilles’ room. This lessens his nightmares about the dead boy.

Chapter Six

Achilles often visits his mother **Thetis**, who is a nymph/goddess. One morning, she wants to see Patroclus. When she sees him, she tells him that he’s mortal and thus unimportant. He understands that she does not like him being Achilles’ companion because she wants him to become a god. He talks about this with Achilles and he says he does not yet want to become a god. They then continue playing (‘We were only twelve, too young to brood.’)

Chapter Seven

They grow older, and next summer, they often hear moans from the other boys with serving girls. Not Achilles and Patroclus. Peleus tells Achilles and Patroclus a story about **Meleager** in Calydon, but Patroclus can only think about Achilles touching his nose that morning and they play while Peleus is speaking, which makes him angry. Achilles’ father suggests he chooses a girl. Patroclus starts to dream about being touched. During the day, he watches Achilles carefully and he thinks about his scent. On the beach, they kiss, but Achilles runs away. *‘Dear gods,* I think, *let him not hate me.* I should have known better than to call upon the gods.’ Thetis appears and says Patroclus can no longer see Achilles and that Achilles will be sent away. Achilles did not yet want to be taught by **Chiron**, but his mother had chosen differently. At dawn, he leaves.

Chapter Eight

After breakfast, not knowing what to do, Patroclus leaves too. He hesitates if he should take his mother’s lyre, however, if he did, he would not be able to leave unnoticed and he would not make it before dark to Chiron’s place. After a few hours he realizes that he is not going to make it to Pelion before dark. Then, he hears someone. It is Achilles with Chiron. Chiron let them both ride on his back, and they get to Pelion before dark. He has an impressive cave with crystal walls and bronze implements that are for surgery. Chiron gives them food and water and asks them both if they would like to learn medicine. They agree. Chiron lets them bathe in the nearby creak and tells Achilles his mother has sent him a message when they are warming up by the fire. Thetis wants Patroclus to go away since he is a useless mortal. However, Chiron, an older mythical creature, thinks Patroclus is worthy and should therefore stay. ‘Do not let what you gained this day so easily be lost.’

Chapter Nine

Chiron teaches them about plants, animals, the human body, constellations (sterrenbeelden). He also tells the story of Heracles who killed his wife and children in the grip of madness. Patroclus promises himself he will recognise Achilles, even in madness. About **Aesclepius** Chiron tells the legend that he knew the secrets of healing because he had spared a snake’s life and the snake whispered the wisdom to him. However, Chiron taught Aesclepius. Days slip by in idyll. One morning, Patroclus wakes up, finding Thetis outside. Chiron is not present. She threatens to harm him, then Chiron appears. He redirects Patroclus to the cave. He wakes Achilles and Achilles goes to Chiron and Thetis. By midday, they return. Winter comes and goes. Chiron learns them how to fight. Then, Chiron says Achilles has learnt all Chiron knows. He turns fourteen.

Days turn by and they’re 16 again. Patroclus starts to have more sexual thoughts and feelings for Achilles. On Achilles’ birthday, he gives him ripe figs and a statue he has carved. A night not long after, Achilles tells Patroclus his mother cannot see him there. When they lay in bed, they look at each other. They have sex. Achilles tells Patroclus he will be the only happy hero that has existed, because of him.

Next morning, they are summoned to Achilles’ father’s palace.

**"**

**"**

Next morning, they are summoned to Achilles’ father’s palace. They pack their things, Chiron waves them goodbye, and they leave. Patroclus expects the horses to talk, but of course they do not. They leave Pelion and hours later, they enter the palace. Thetis is present too, but she does not say anything to Patroclus. Helen has been kidnapped and Patroclus has sworn an oath that he would fight for her. Achilles states that **Menoitiades** is no longer his name, but Patroclus knows he has to fight. Peleus asks Achilles if he would like to lead the army because he has been at Pelion for long enough, longer than any other hero.

He refuses. They go to bed. The next morning, Patroclus searches for Achilles because he is gone. However, he cannot find him. When he asks Peleus, he uses supplication and Peleus tells him Thetis brought him to Scyros. **Phoinix** gives him more than enough money to go there by ship. When he arrives, he asks for Achilles. The princess of the island, **Deidameia**, says she will think about it and invites him for dinner and to watch the dance of the Deidameia’s women. Patroclus sees Achilles as one of the female dancers and makes a slight noise to make him notice him. When he does, he hugs him tightly, but Deidameia and her father **Lycomedes** are upset. When Lycomedes asks Achilles (‘**Phyrra’**, red haired, as she calls him) what is going on and he replies that Patroclus is his husband, Deidameia is completely crying. Deidameia confesses that Achilles is a man, which confuses Lycomedes. She threatens to tell everyone, but then Thetis appears. Achilles offers his apologies to Lycomedes but says they’ll leave. Deidameia confronts him that they’re married. Achilles was so naïve that he slept with Deidameia to make his mother tell Patroclus where he was, when in fact, she did not and now, Deidameia is pregnant and thus bound for life.

Chapter thirteen

Achilles is only training outside of the palace with Patroclus. One morning, when Achilles is visiting his mother, Patroclus is summoned to Deidameia’s chamber. She lures him into having sex with her, after humiliating him for being so skinny yet so attractive towards Achilles. She’s jealous and therefore rapes Patroclus. She leaves that day to begin her confinement, alone with a guard in a small house to ensure no one knows about her pregnancy. Patroclus feels pity for her.

Chapter fourteen

**Odysseus**, Prince of Ithica, brother of Agamemnon is on Scyros to recruit men for the war, thus Patroclus too. He denies it when Odysseus asks him if they had ever seen each other before, in fear of his promise of going to the war. At dinner, Odysseus and Lord **Diomedes**, King of Argos tease at each other. When Deidameia’s women dance, Odysseus plays a trick on them by giving them presents and suddenly a trumpet blows three times, indicating a disaster. All women flee, but one, Achilles, grabs a spear and is ready for attack. This way, Odysseus debunks Achilles and he and Patroclus have to go to war. His mother Thetis disturbs the meeting by saying that not only fame and luxury will be a reward for him if he goes to the war, but he will also die. He decides to go to war, because if he doesn't, him being a transvestite will be rumoured by Odysseus and Diomedes and it will harm his reputation. Patroclus joins him. Patroclus asks Thetis later that day on the cliffs when he is going to die, and she answers that **Hector** will die first.

Before Achilles and Patroclus leave to war, they have to tell Lycomedes that his grandson will be Thetis’. He wished he had never come and asks them to leave. On the ship, Odysseus tells that the prowpiece is his wife, **Penelope**. Diomedes’ father, Mighty **Tydeus**, is said to have eaten brains. Odysseus offends them when Achilles and Patroclus choose to sleep in one tent together. Patroclus suggests sleeping separately to avoid Achilles’ honour being darkened, but Achilles insists it will not matter to Phthians, because he is Aristos Achaion (best of Greeks). A few men are introduced: Menelaus, king of Sparta, his wife being Helen, **Ajax**, a huge man with a shield, the sons of king **Nestor** of Pylos. On the Trojan side: **Priam**, who is said to have fifty sons, of which Paris and the ten-year-old **Troilus** and Hector are amongst, and **Aeneas**, a cousin. Agamemnon is the king of Mycenae. His grandfather **Tantalus** is tortured with unsatisfied hunger and thirst, because he wanted more land on earth and therefore offered his son **Pelos**. Agamemnon and Menelaus are the first ones to break the prophecy. They arrive in Phthia, where Achilles is wide-known and everyone wants to see him, which makes Patroclus a little jealous. Achilles did not tell his father Peleus about the prophecy that he’ll die in the war, because he doesn’t want to make him grieve. The men of Phthia are said to be created by Zeus from ants. When hugging Peleus tightly, Patroclus regrets that he will never know how Achilles feels when he’s old. They depart towards Troy, with a stop in Aulis. Here, Achilles is again honored but he doesn’t kneel for Agamemnon, which makes him and Menelaus mad. They get a guide around because of this instead of Menelaus himself.

They’re supposed to leave the next morning. However, there’s no wind at night, neither the next morning. A month goes by and still no wind. There are fights and impatient soldiers. They talk to priest **Calchas,** who says **Artemis** is mad, so no wind. He advises a sacrifice, so they sacrifice a few animals. Still no wind. A marriage between Achilles, although already married, and Agamemnon’s daughter, **Iphigenia,** is arranged. However, Agamemnon sacrifices Iphigenia at the wedding, scaring Achilles, who has never seen someone being killed. Patroclus tries to comfort him. Human sacrifices aren’t common in the Greeks culture. They lie that Iphigenia knew of it. Patroclus goes to confront Odysseus, who says that they lied to **Clytemnestra**, the mother, to get her here. Odysseus, deviously, tells him that Achilles is a weapon, not a saviour, and he shall kill thousands of men in Troy. The armies split up, in order to not overwhelm the islands they pause at, but Diomedes stays with the Phthians, perhaps to make sure they don’t run away. One night, Patroclus and Achilles are talking about death of people, when Achilles sees an ‘hydros’ (water-snake) and kills it, because it is dangerous. Patroclus thanks him for seeing it. Achilles is no longer staring after that incident. They arrive at Troy and start to kill people. When they have made their camp, Achilles and Patroclus are called in for a meeting, in which they discuss that they’ll start with raids tomorrow with sun-up.

Patroclus feels like they shouldn’t be killing or harming innocent farmers, but doesn’t say anything about that. He feels guilty when Achilles comes back from the raids and shames him for it, but quickly regrets. Distribution is the act of selling things and later also girls to the people who deserve it most. When the first Anatolian farm girl is being sold, Patroclus asks Achilles to ask for her. He does so and receives her. Patroclus tries to calm the girl and gains her confidence when he kisses Achilles. She knows a few words Greek but not many. However, she gets her own tent and feels comfortable enough to say her name, **Briseis.** She teaches other girls Greek and Patroclus spends his days with them. When Achilles comes back, he leaves with him. Odysseus and Menelaus go to Troy for an embassy. They don’t want to give Helen, so they decide to start the war. Luckily, Patroclus only has to fight a few days and always under the protection of Achilles. On a free, festival day, Achilles talks with his mom and Briseis stays with Patroclus, in the woods. Achilles says his mother is afraid someone else will kill Hector, but he cannot imagine it, however, he does have his own imagination of killing Hector. Patroclus decides to help **Machaon**, a doctor, and his brother **Podalerius**, a nurse.

When Briseis tells about Hector and his wife, from Sicilia, Achilles realises he has killed almost the entire family of Hector’s wife. When the men began to argue about the length of the war and a rebellion starts to form, Achilles tells them they’re free to leave, but he’ll take their fame, glory and treasures. He won’t fight in a hopeless war, so they won’t either.

Patroclus starts to gain reputation as a good nurse. The start building a small town since they’ve been here for 7 years now. All the women chose husbands, except for Briseis, who is like an aunt. Thetis comes one morning in Achilles’ and Patroclus’ tent, to say that not Achilles, but ‘the best of the Myrmidons’ will die within 2 years and that Achilles must be careful. So they offer great sacrifices to **Apollo**, who is angry.

Achilles and Briseis decided to learn each other about medicines, Patroclus about how to heal people, Briseis about certain herbs. One time, they sit close to each other and Briseis tries to kiss Patroclus. He does not know what to do and kisses her back. She asks if he would like to have children with her. He discusses it with Achilles but already knows he doesn’t want to. He feels guilty he doesn’t like her back.

A month, after **Chryseis**, daughter of **Chryses**, is brought to the camp to be given to Agamemnon, Chryses tries to demand her back, since she is a servant of Apollo. Agamemnon refuses and humiliates Chryses. The plague starts that same day and hundreds of cattle and men die. Briseis, Machaon and Patroclus help to burn the bodies, but one day, Achilles steps forwards and confront Agamemnon. He refuses and snitches that Achilles has been dressing up as a woman. Achilles is really angry and doesn’t bargain when they take Briseis. Patroclus warns her, but she accepts her position that she’ll be raped. Patroclus, when Achilles is gone, goes to Agamemnon, slices his wrist for an oath: to tell Agamemnon that if he rapes Briseis, Achilles has all rights to kill him, because it was his gift. He cuts the tie around Briseis’ wrists and after Agamemnon tells him that he has betrayed Achilles, he leaves. When Achilles hears of this all, he is at first angry at Patroclus, but then understands that his actions were of hubris, arrogance. Patroclus tells him that he is no worse than himself, however, Achilles tells him that he done something terrible.

He has talked with his mother Thetis, and she has convinced **Zeus** that he will let the Greeks lose until Agamemnon begs to Achilles. Achilles won’t fight until then. Patroclus thinks about what he will answer to Chiron, who said that a friend and a stranger’s life are worth the same. He’s saved Briseis, he won’t also save Achilles. Patroclus goes to see Briseis at Agamemnon’s place, and speak Anatolian with her to communicate. That day, Achilles stays with Patroclus. Paris invites Menelaus for a duet to settle it once and for all. When Menelaus seems to win, suddenly, Paris is gone. Menelaus is harmed by an arrow, but not killed. Ajax has another duel with Hector this time and they are equal. Everyone whispers Achilles’ name, making him excited and ready to kill Hector, which will mean he’ll die soon too. The next day, an Anatolian civilisation called the Lycians are ready to help Troy. **Sarpedon**, son of Zeus, is among them and they win territory. They’re almost at the Greek camp.

Phoinix, Ajax and Odysseus come to offer Achilles rewards, but he refuses them. They are afraid that without Achilles, the Trojans will burn their ships and they won’t be able to get back home. Phoinix, Achilles’ nurse, tells him a story about **Meleager**, who was in a similar situation and lost all his respect due to not giving up on his honour. His wife **Cleopatra** agreed with him Patroclus fears everything will stop tomorrow and thinks of begging Achilles. He secretly visits Briseis, who considers begging Hector or Aeneas if they will ‘free’ her, but she rather claims Patroclus as her husband, to save him, too. He refuses.

Today, the walls have fallen, Ajax is killed and many more heroes, including Odysseus and Machaon, are seriously harmed. Patroclus does not want to be like Cleopatra for Meleager, so he makes Achilles dress him up in the armour of Achilles and goes to war. At first, it seems to work and he even kills Sarpedon. However, he gains too much arrogancy (hubris) and think he will be able to climb the Trojan walls unharmed. He sees Apollo, who pushes him back twice. Trojans have had the time to come towards him by then and he flees. Hector kills him.

Achilles cannot believe it Patroclus is dead, but when he does, he takes his body to their tent. Briseis is free now, but he doesn’t care. She says all he cares about is himself, and only now Patroclus is dead, he also cares about him. Thesis gives him more armour to kill Hector, because he now has Achilles’/Patroclus’ armour. The next day, grieving, Achilles tries to find Hector and Hector runs through the river (which is also a god) **Scamander**. Achilles cannot cross the river without fighting him, so he tries to, but he is no god, so he seems to lose the battle. Suddenly, he wins and Scamander goes to hide. He then kills Hector and instead of giving the body to Priam, like Hector said before he died, he goes with it around Troy, dragging it behind his chariot.

Priam goes to Achilles to beg for it, and sees Patroclus, asking if it was his friend. He answers philtatos. Priam says that men, even as enemies, should help each other. Achilles sends guides to guide Priam, with Hectors body, back to Troy. He burns Patroclus too and charges the other Greeks to bury their ashes together when Achilles dies. **Memnon** is a new ally of Troy, is killed by Achilles, just like a woman from the Amazons, **Penthesilea**, although Achilles wishes to die and had hoped she would kill him, and **Troilus**. Finally, Paris kills Achilles.

When Achilles is dead, he is buried with Patroclus. While Odysseus and Agamemnon think of a place for them, **Phyrrus,** son of Achilles, comes to them. He doesn’t want them to bury Achilles together with Patroclus. He also wants Briseis as his bed slave, thinking she was that to Achilles. When she disagrees on that, she tries to kill him with a knife but fails. While she runs into the sea and tries to swim away, Phyrrus kills her with a spear. Phyrrus kills Polyxena as a sacrifice for Achilles, however, Patroclus is horrified by this action. Patroclus comes to Odysseus to beg him to write his name too on the grave. Odysseus tries to convince Phyrrus, but he doesn’t want to. Then they all sail away. Patroclus speaks with Thetis, who comes to Achilles’ grave every single day. They share their memories. After, Thetis has inscripted Patroclus’ name and he can go to the underworld. ‘*In the darkness, two shadows, reaching through the hopeless, heavy dusk. Their hands meet, and light spills in a flood, like a hundred golden urns pouring out the sun.’*