

Introduction:

One of the most significant and ancient works of classical literature, Homer's Iliad has inspired many writers over the years by serving as a theme for numerous artistic endeavours and a source of material for critical thought.

❖ A Brief Outline of Book I of The Iliad:

The poet calls on the muse to help him in telling the account of Achilles and his rage at the beginning of Book I. Out of all the Achaeans who fought in the Trojan War, Achilles is considered the greatest Greek hero. The poet tells the tale that begins nine years after the conflict. Following their conquest of a Trojan village, the Achaeans abducted two stunning young ladies: Chryseis, the daughter of Chryses, an Apollo priest in the area, and Briseis. The most valiant warrior, Achilles, carried Briseis as his "prize," while Agamemnon claimed Chryseis for himself. Agamemnon was offered a large ransom by Chryses, the priest of Apollo, if he would deliver his daughter to the Greeks, but the Greek general turned down the offer. Chryses so pleaded with Apollo for help. Apollo delivered the plague to the Greek camps as a response, which led to the deaths of numerous Greek warriors. Following ten days of excruciating agony, Achilles summoned a gathering and requested the fortune-teller to disclose to the Greeks the true cause of their misery. The soothsayer Calchas, who according to the Iliad (P. 6) "past, present, and future held no secrets," then stood up and disclosed that it was a ruse orchestrated by the gods Apollo and Chryses. Agamemnon lost all control of his temper and demanded that Achilles give him his "prize," Briseis, or he would return Chryseis. Achilles was humiliated by

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Agamemnon's assertion, and they began to quarrel. Agamemnon threatened to remove Briseis from his tent, while Achilles threatened to leave the fight with his soldiers and head home. Achilles was enraged by this and was about to take out his sword to murder the Achaean leader when goddess Athene, summoned by the goddess Hera, intervened. Achilles was confronted by Athene, who calmed his rage. Ultimately, the battle was stopped by Athene's supervision and advisor Nestor's astute counsel. However, that evening, Agamemnon dispatched Chrysis to her father and dispatched some heralds to Achilles' camp in order to remove Briseis. Achilles then pulled away from his soldiers, started crying, and dialed Thetis, his mother, a sea nymph, to beg Zeus, the king of gods, to punish the Achaeans. Zeus owed the mother a favor, so she told him to talk to Zeus about the matter after learning all about the fight with the Achaean leader from his beloved child. It was the duty of Odysseus, the ship's navigator, to bring Chrysis back. Her father was ecstatic when he gave her back her Chrysis, and he prayed to Apollo to save the Achaeans from the epidemic. Apollo also did so. Twelve days later, as she had promised Achilles, Thetis, daughter of the Old Man of the Sea, went to Zeus. Zeus eventually consented to aid the Trojans, though initially he was hesitant because his wife Hera was siding with the Greeks. When Hera learned that her husband would aid the Trojans, she grew furious, but her son Hephaestus persuaded her not to start a gods' war over mankind.

