

King Priam from *The Iliad*, by Homer

Oh, my son, what misery I have brought upon this realm!
The carnage that took place on the
Forever-bloodstained plains
Before the glittering towers of my once grand citadel
Was all a consequence of my deeds!
My selfish arrogance was the root of the mayhem!
Never before has one man been responsible for
A brutal bloodbath on such a scale.
How did this all come to pass, beloved Paris?
I could have prevented all of this!
Such lamentation do I feel!
We should be majestically feasting in my golden halls,
Yet here we are,
Perpetually incarcerated in the depths of Hades' dark dominion.
Why could I not simply relinquish your bewitching lover,
That perfidious Helen of Greece?
Ah, the wretchedness of human nature!
Pride, the eternal damnation of the human race,
Brought about our bloody downfall.
How I weep for my adored son, Hector and for my people!
As the Greek marauders with their stabbing bronze blades
Swept through my burning kingdom,
Butchering the women and children of Troy,
I was overcome by a torrent of self-loathing.
I had been conquered by the inherent darkness of humanity,
And my futility had doomed my people to an atrocious kismet.
I can do nothing now but deplore my past;
There is no hope, no salvation for me.
I shall forever drift mindlessly through the afterlife
With neither purpose nor happiness.
Oh, the bleak despondency of death!
I would do anything, perform any task for another chance,
Just one more moment,

One more breath of the sweet air over the generous land.

Yet I have squandered it all.

My son, I can do no more but warn those among the living

To live out their lives with honor

And to take advantage of each opportunity,

For there are no second chances.

Here I waste away in the underworld,

Eternally tormented by what could have been,

A casualty of the venomous disease of pride.