

Was hector of troy a coward or not essay examples

[Literature](#), [Poem](#)



There is no doubt that Hector is the mightiest and undisputed warrior in the Trojan army. Despite being slain by Achilles, he lays waste to the Achaean army while Achilles is absent. However, even though he appears to be a competent leader, there tend to be perceptible flaws in his leadership, especially toward the end of Homer's Iliad, when the Achaean army receives new strength when Patroclus and later Achilles himself joins them. It seems that Hector exhibits the trait of cowardice when he "turns coward and runs" (Erwin Cook lvi) from the Great Ajax twice in Book 17 of the Iliad, however, that is not the only moment when he reveals that he is indeed a coward. The fact that Achilles slays Hector is a moment that has most likely been anticipated by the reader for much of the epic. So by that time, the readers have probably already reached the conclusion that although Hector is dutiful, loyal, obedient and somewhat brash, he is also a coward, especially when the mighty Achilles is forced to chase him thrice around Troy. However, it is arguable that Hector's fateful moment of cowardice came considerably earlier in the Iliad. Indeed, it was cowardly of Hector to flee when he encountered Achilles, but the nobility of the fact that he at least stood up to battle Achilles deserves to be acknowledged too. He is certainly talking big by daring to hope that he might actually slay Achilles and he is tempting fate, but the fact that he ultimately accepts his fate is admirable and honorable. This leaves to wonder whether or not Hector really is a coward. The moment Hector reveals the true nature of his cowardice much early on in the Iliad, when he rebukes Paris for seducing Helen and bringing her to Troy. He refers to it as a big sorrow to Paris's father, and as a shameful thing to Troy, all the people of Troy, and to Paris himself. Hector even goes as far

as saying that Paris has wronged the people of Troy. He believes that the reason for the city's grief is because Paris brought stole Helen. The only time in the Iliad Homer describes Hector as happy is when he sees the chance to return Helen.

It becomes evident that Hector is afraid of cowardice when he admits that it would be deeply shameful for him if he withdrew from a battle, and ironically, that is what he eventually does when facing Achilles. However, despite the fact that he is supposed to defend the city even if it means giving up his own life, which he does, but he still seems to emphasize only on the cowardice. In fact, Hector ultimately fights because he has no choice left and there is no noble way for him to escape (Willcock 62). Cowardice is not a trait of a man who is certain that he shall never back down from a fight, unless he is already aware that he is a coward.

Hector is aware that it is not just for Helen to be kept within the walls of Troy, which becomes apparent from his actions and his contempt for Paris. He promptly baits Paris into dueling with Menelaus and even prompter to announce the terms of the duel to the Greeks. Hector wants to return Helen to the Greek, according to him, it is best for the city. However, it is cowardly of him that he obstinately continues to fight for the city even though there is no willingness to return Helen. Despite not being the king of Troy, there is no doubt that he was a favorite of Hecuba and Priam, the city's only hope, which means that he could have effectively brought them to change the city's official policy. Yet, he opts to rebuke Paris in private, while portraying himself as the dutiful, faithful, quiet defender of the city in public.

No doubt, readers will see Hector as an admirable and easily likeable man,

and indeed, he did possess plenty of noble qualities. However, despite being a bold warrior, cowardice was one of his flaws. Of course, Hector proves himself to be a coward more openly when he retreats from facing Achilles twice, however, some readers might not have noted his earlier instances of cowardice, as pointed out above. Whatever the case, Hector does appear to be a coward, to some extent, in Homer's Iliad.

Works Cited

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