

FALLEN: EURIPIDES'S *THE TROJAN WOMEN* AS A FEMINIST EXPLORATION

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Abstract

Was the ancient Athenian Euripides actually a proto-feminist? Euripides's writings have long been coopted and adapted by different political groups as historic evidence of their causes. This paper investigates whether this ascribed label fits the ancient writer through historic evidence and philosophical dissections of his work as it relates to the original play, *Fallen*, a feminist revision of Euripides's *The Trojan Women*.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the people who have showed me how to be a feminist—
especially Nancy, Arthur and Patty Maye Ohanian.
Thank you for giving me strength, determination and support.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

“One day the story will change:
then shall the glory of women resound...
Reversing at last the sad reputation of ladies.”

Euripides, *Medea*

On 6 December 1938, Hallie Flanagan (Director of the Federal Theatre Project) appeared before the Senate House Committee of Un-American Activities to defend herself and the Project against the charge of Communism. Here follows an extract from her transcript:

Senator Starnes: I want to quote from your article "A Theater Is Born," on page 915 of the Theatre Arts Monthly, edition of November 1931: "Unlike any art form existing in America today, the workers' theaters intend to shape the life of this country, socially, politically, and industrially. They intend to remake a social structure without the help of money - and this ambition alone invests their undertaking with a certain Marlowesque madness." You are quoting from this Marlowe. Is he a Communist?

Mrs. Flanagan: I am very sorry. I was quoting from Christopher Marlowe.

Senator Starnes: Tell us who Marlowe is, so we can get the proper reference, because that is all we want to do.

Mrs. Flanagan: Put in the record that he was the greatest dramatist in the period immediately preceding Shakespeare.

Senator Starnes: Yes. Put that in the record because the charge has been made that this article of yours is entirely Communistic and we want to help you...Of course we had what some people call Communists back in the days of Greek Theatre.

Mrs. Flanagan: Quite true.

Senator Starnes: And I believe Mr. Euripides was guilty of teaching class consciousness also wasn't he?

Mrs. Flanagan: I believe that was alleged against all of the Greek dramatists.

Senator Starnes: So we cannot say when it began.

When analyzing archaic Greek texts, there is a desire in many people, as in Senator Starnes, to ascribe the views of modern peoples to the reasoning and creations of the ancient Greeks. In an attempt to connect a famous Greek piece to current perspectives, and to use those current perspectives to understand and analyze the text, the ascribing reader can dilute or ignore the cultural commentary inherently present in the piece; the same cultural commentary that made the piece relevant, hated or revered in its own time. As I found through my research on Euripides' *The Trojan Women*, this is very often the case with Euripides' famous relic play. Used often as a tool to explore anti-war sentiments and feminist points of view in the modern era, I set out to discover if Euripides was *actually* an anti-war, early feminist as many directors have argued or if his intentions have been manipulated by said artists throughout the millennia. Was "feminism," as the world understands it today, a relevant discourse during Euripides' time? What was the social perspective on gender in the Golden Age of Athens? Are these dominant discourses reflected in *The Trojan Women*? What can we learn about gender relations in this time from *The Trojan Women*? In approaching this play from a feminist perspective, can one draw a direct line from the dominant gender discourse of the time to the modern discussion of the same topic?

To begin discussing where Euripides' Women sit in relation to their country and time, one must first decide how to delineate and study the era:

...one useful model for negotiating such a [question] is Raymond Williams' tripartite division of culture into dominant, residual and emergent discourses, overlapping and coexistent. This dynamic model has the flexibility to include the persistence of tradition,

the governing consensus of the moment and the potential for future change immanent in the unresolved tensions of the present—or even actually present in the form of marginal or minority movements. To explore the possibility that there was a feminist movement in Periclean Athens, the model recognizes emergent discourses that do not conform with the dominant culture (the “Athenian world-view” so to speak), (Collits, 3).

The following section will discuss the emerging and diverse social discourses affecting life during the flourishing and changing Athens of the fourth and fifth-centuries.

Chapter Two: The Dominant Gender Discourse in Fourth and Fifth-Century Athens: How She Speaks Through Silence

“Of all creatures that can feel and think,
we women are the worst treated things alive,” Euripides’ *Medea*

There is no historic question that Athens of the fourth and fifth-century was a male dominated civilization. The citizen-male of Greek society was awarded many evolving and emerging benefits of his expanding cultural milieu (Carter, D.M). An increase in building and development in Athens, as well as the Athenian relocation of the Delian League¹, made the city-state wealthy and dominant. This bounty of cultural and financial riches attracted many an artist, scholar and philosopher to Athens. This was the time of development and innovation. Athens became the centre of Greek literature, philosophy and the arts. Some of the greatest figures of Western cultural and intellectual history lived in Athens during this period: the dramatists Aeschylus, Aristophanes, Euripides, and Sophocles, the philosophers Aristotle, Plato, and Socrates, the historians Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon, the poet Simonides and the sculptor Pheidias. The city blossomed and this period of social and political philosophy and art production became known as the “Golden Age of Athens,” (Mendelsohn, Daniel).

Citizen-males were allotted a large amount of political and social freedoms during this hegemonic governmental time period. They spoke openly at the Assembly, were educated both in and out of the home, owned land and lived comfortably, if modestly. They could vote and hold office, attend religious, social and theatre festivals and dictated the management and control of their residences. The citizen-male was even encouraged to gossip and share masculine

¹ The Delian League, founded in 478 BC, was an association of Greek city-states under the leadership of Athens, whose purpose was to continue fighting the Persian Empire after the Greek victory in the Battle of Plataea at the end of the Second Persian invasion of Greece.

information throughout the market and meeting places of the city-state. He was well cared for, educated, supported and free, both in the home and in the public arena, (Mendelsohn, Daniel).

But where were the women of this Golden Age? Their voices are silent in philosophical and artistic writings of the time as they were not well or publicly educated or allowed to participate in the discursive aspects of society.

The rights of *parrhesia* and *isegoria* that democratic reforms extended to adult citizen males in the Athenian polis, distinguishing them from the mass of non citizens, did not apply to citizen women. Instead, both Athenian and non Athenian literary texts universally praise female silence and verbal submission while equating women's talk with promiscuity and adultery...[and] promoted [female] silence in the public sphere... Women should not be the subject of conversation...[women] were not allowed to serve as witness in trials...nor permitted in court at all....the marketplace gossip of men reiterated in the courts played a critical role in policing women's behaviour in classical Athens... names of female infants were not inscribed anywhere on the lists of citizens...they could not hold office, own or dispose of property...or vote. In short, they were excluded from those speech acts which conferred upon males economic power and civic identity...an Athenian woman had to rely on her legal guardian, usually a father or a husband, to speak publicly... (McClure 20).

The women of this Golden Age of Athens were silent members of the populace. Their spheres of influence were relegated to the home, the rearing of children and exemplifying the silence and submission that was demanded of them during this time. They were poorly educated, if at all, and many women of the lower to upper classes would not have known how to read and write.

Exempted from this were the elite, well-trained and well-educated class of female companions; select prostitutes that were instructed in music, literature, poetry and art to make them more compatible to their male counterparts. These women enjoyed an amount of freedom that was rare in this day, accompanying men into the predominantly all male arenas of social life and speaking out about political issues. But even in this respected class of women, few if any texts survive

penned by a female hand. Studied historical texts are written by men *about* women-writings that proliferate female silence as a desired and proper facet of a functioning city-state. Laura McClure, in her book *Spoken Like A Woman*, introduces her approach to the Ancient Greek Female as follows:

The importance of gender for understanding...the “mental world” of the Greeks, has already been elucidated by many classical scholars. Whereas the earliest scholarship on women in antiquity focused on the status of women and the *realia* of their lives, the awareness that male-authored texts always mediate ancient views of gender and that the experience of ancient woman could not this be fully recovered compelled many feminist classical scholars to consider the conceptual foundations that inform the literary and mythical representation of women and how they intersect with social and political institutions...[this] focus from recovering women’s historical reality to understanding the conceptual framework behind their literary and mythic representation and relating it to the social and ideological context of democratic Athens...the increased attention to dramatic performance as a social institution...have radically altered how contemporary critics think about the meanings and functions of fourth- and fifth-century Athenian drama...The concept of gender as a social category that determines how power is distributed among various members of society further illuminates the link between [this] literary representation and social institutions, (McClure, 4-5).²

As McClure states, most surviving literary sources that feature dominant female presences are theatrical in nature. As she intones, in Athenian society the theatre was not just a place for entertainment; it served as a location for social, political and governmental practice as well as places of worship for celebrated deities. Dramatic performance was an established and respected social institution. Therefore one can look at plays as not just artistic expressions and works of art; these are living historical documents. In them one finds examples of tradition, ritual, social constructs, political discourse, class delineations and gender binaries. “...the structure of the

² Much of the information about gender identity in Ancient Athens, as I discovered, is written by male authors. This is a modern example of men interpreting women interpreted by men; a secondary focus of this paper. I have worked to cite as many female historians as possible. Please refer to the Works Cited for all publication and referred author information.

dramatic festival [even] resembled the courts in that poets competed before a mass audience for prizes awarded by judges while the theatre itself served as the site of special post festival assembly where various offences committed during the course of the festival, particularly disorderly conduct, were discussed, and other public business was transacted,” (McClure, 16). Even this festival structure continued to mimic every day Athenian life as women were not allowed to participate either on stage or off, much like in the assemblies and courts of the day.

Classical scholars have noted the predisposition for the dominant Golden Age thespians to write plays that feature, if not star, female characters. Females in fourth- and fifth-century Athenian Drama were present in both comedies and tragedies and, though the “silent woman” was socially demanded, many females represented onstage were verbose, persuasive and competent in the highly regarded Athenian style of rhetoric. This is the era that birthed Medea, Cassandra, Clytemnestra, Phaedra, Hecuba, Andromache, Helen and many more of the outspoken heroines of Greek drama. These are the women that have been viewed, with a reflective lens, to be modern in their presentation and liberated and empowered in their portrayal. In an time that praised the silent, demure woman, were not these women examples of “bad” Athenian women; outspoken and combative?

Given the preponderance of negative opinions voiced about women in the plays and their generally unflattering portrayal, it is hard to see tragic and comic plays as exemplars either of social realism or of ‘art’s ‘utopian tendency.’” Whereas some plays may represent women as speaking positively and authoritatively on behalf of the city or family...[this] drama more commonly depicts women’s speech, even when it takes a ritual form, as disruptive and subversive of social stability. Nonetheless, the very presence of women in tragic drama...and to a lesser extent, comedy, indicates how necessary was the part they played in the democratic equation, since through them male identity and social hierarchy was negotiated, (McClure, 6).

The citizen-male portrayal of women on stage was anachronistic to the general society demands of existing as female in fourth and fifth-century Athens. Though regarded as “less than” their male counterparts, and even in their citizenship were delineated as “less than” (“...the term that designates a woman of citizen status, *attike*, further underscores the different relation women had to the Athenian polis, since it denotes an inherited, familial connection rather than a political affiliation,” [McClure, 22]), their necessity in society is exemplified in their presentation on stage in the politically-representational theatrical realm. McClure further argues that women in fourth and fifth-century Athenian life were used blatantly as tools through which male identity was explored and social ladders were climbed.

If this is true, then the female presence on the Athenian stage was less an expression of reverence for the female and more of an illustration of how important an asset and accessory they were to male Athenian life. If the sphere of life is male, and if the aspects of life that make a citizen-male a participating member of society are male, then by extension the world of theatre itself was a male environment; a reflection onstage of a citizen-male dominated world. Women portrayed onstage were played by citizen-males, written by citizen-males, watched by citizen-males and judged by citizen-males. One should not, therefore, look to these plays as a true and balanced representation of the time but more as a example of male-cantered society.. One must look at the women within these plays as metaphorical representations; tools to explore the assumed roles and ascribe function of the day for both females and males alike.

With this conceit, the *female* being portrayed onstage could have been little more than an exaggerated representation of the feminine played by a citizen-male actor. These strong, empowered, female characters can be interpreted as amplified modern drag performances,

utilizing extreme exaggerations of female performative gender and speech to highlight the difference between men and women or to show the less than desirable characteristics of fictionalized females:

We should not discount the strong possibility that at least some of the female characters in the tragedies were so hyper-feminized that they would have been performed as what we could call “drag-queens...” Certain roles seem to require outrageous characterization... The incessant high tragic lamentations of Medea, Paedra or Helen, indeed most Euripidean female protagonists, demand to be played in the ‘grand-style... What was the logic behind this transvestite ritual theatre? Taking into account the performance demands created by an outdoor theatre that seated over 15,000, it is not likely that any actors could have relied on subtlety or nuance in their performances. The female would always have been exaggerated and overacted; audiences would have seen, not the feminine, but the hyped or hyper-feminine... Athenian audiences no doubt believed their male performers in drag better at playing the female than any woman could be. The “women” in Greek tragedy may have seemed more real to its male audiences than the women in real life... There is a very precise analogy for this experience and the function of a certain type of tragedy in fourth and fifth-century Athens—an all male audience creating, looking at and taking aesthetic pleasure in the excessive suffering, punishment and victimization of exaggerated and eroticized representations of the female, or the hyper-feminine. The patter of a female subjugated to extreme violence and put under unrelenting suffering obtains so much in Greek tragedy that it is logical to assume that such representations provided powerful, emotional excitation and maximum “aesthetic effect for its male audience. As Nancy Rabinowitz suggests, ‘Tragedy participates in a pornographic structure of representation, (Zelenak³, 38 - 40).

These cartoonish, “pornographic” representations must have had a use for the citizen-males consuming them inside of the Greek theatre, and a function for the citizen-males penning the female exaggerations. Blatant misogyny within fourth and fifth-century Athens could be one culprit. Women would have been thought promiscuous, untrustworthy and *un-female* for speaking like their literary counterparts. Female theatrical representations could have been written to rile or incite the ire of their male audiences. These depictions could have been

³ A male interpretation of this information.

subversive fantasies written to excite the arousal of their male audiences, an angry denigration of womanhood, a declaration of male superiority or even a joke, played out over and over again in front of the same patrons. Michael X. Zelenak in his book Gender and Politics in Greek Tragedy argues that:

Surprisingly, even though tragedy overdetermined gender in an exclusively male environment, unlike other rituals of male-bonding, the plays did not become venues of mere gender aggrandizement, denigration of the feminine or celebrations of male superiority. Quite the contrary, Greek tragedy characteristically indicated and seemingly punished gender *hubris*, most especially male gender *hubris*-that is being too masculine. The playwrights always sought the high moral ground in this respect. The acting out and resolution of symbolic gender antagonism and the punishment of gender *hubris* seems to have fulfilled some deep psychic need for Athenian males. It also might have masked or deflected the overt misogyny which many of them may have actually felt (Zelenak, 29).

Zelenak believes these representations could have even been for a cathartic expression, a morality tale of what happens when women, and even men, act against the prescribed ethicality of the city-state. It would then be close minded not to consider that the ritual theatrical festivals were used to reinforce the social moralities of the day. With this point of view, the exaggerated representation of women through theatre could have also been used as a threat; what becomes of the citizen-female when she is not controlled by the hegemonic male.

Regardless of the main function of women onstage during this time, their real life struggle was one in silence, once more metaphorical explored through this art form:

Even when female characters struggle with the conflicts generated by the particularities of their subordinate social position, their demand for identity and self-esteem are nevertheless designed primarily for exploring the *male* project of selfhood in the larger world as these impinge upon men's claims to knowledge, power, freedom, and self-sufficiency-not for some greater entitlement or privilege, as some have thought, that the female might gain for herself, not even for revising notions of what femininity might be

or mean...*functionally women are never an end to themselves, and nothing changes for them once they have lived out their drama on stage*, (Mendelsohn, 26).⁴

Much as in fourth and fifth-century Athenian life, the Greek depiction of “woman” in theatre is a cycle of male subjugation. Women onstage were used as tools to explore the male realm; the social, political and moral mores of the time. As the hegemonic ruling elite, the Athenian citizen-male used his discursive entertainment to state the obvious: fourth and fifth-century Greek women were, once again, to be silent, demure, and kept in the home far from the participation in civilized life. A proper Athenian woman was mother to many sons and available to care for the Athenian man as he went about his daily life; socializing, philosophizing, participating and being entertained.

⁴ A male interpretation of this information.

Chapter Three: Euripides and His Women: A Subversive Athenian or a Golden Age Feminist Voice?

“It is impossible to over-stress the power of Euripides’ imagination in this identification with the woman’s viewpoint-or the disturbing effect it must have had on the males in his fourth and fifth-century audience,” John Ferguson

If there was one author that stood as an outsider during the Golden Age of Athens, it was Euripides. An ardent political critic, a thorn in the side of his peers, mainly Aristophanes, and seemingly obsessed with the world of women and slaves, Euripides was both revelled and reviled throughout his time. His plays were often anti-war and critical of the established government. He worked to refocus the Greek tragedy by turning to those often left out of drama: women and slaves.

A critic of society, Euripides was a serious questioner of the values of his day. As a realist, he often placed modern ideas and opinions in the mouths of traditional characters. Up to the time of Euripides, the aristocracy were the only ones depicted on stage as worthy of serious consideration. Euripides felt for all classes of people and was particularly sensitive to the humanity of women and slaves. He studied female psychology with an acute eye and with unbelievably powerful perception. Euripides also could and did probe religious ecstasy, dreadful revenge, and all-consuming love. As a rationalist, Euripides was relentlessly attacked by conservative Aristophanes and accused of being an atheist. Euripides treated myths rationally and expected men to use their rational powers, (“Encyclopedia of World Biographies: Euripides”).

Because of this, many of Euripides eighteen surviving plays are considered quite modern and relevant today.

The debate over whether or not Euripides was an early prototype feminist has been argued among scholars of classical and feminist studies since the early twentieth century. Some notable recent discussions on this topic include Elenor J Heslin’s 1977 work *Euripides: The First*

Feminist and the works of Terry Collits and Audrey Wick. With modern twenty-twenty hindsight, the evidence is rather apparent. His plays predominantly feature women (Helen, Andromache, Medea, Hecuba, and Cassandra to name a few) and his lengthy and regular speeches for them are often impassioned, persuasive, eloquent and strong. He humanized these mythic characters and the language he penned for them was even more common and accessible than many of his contemporaries. Euripides' plays have not always been thought of in this light, however. It was long held that Euripides' was a chauvinist; a writer of gross exaggeration and hyperbole, taking pot-shots at the feminine and satirizing the women of his day.

Aristophanes accused Euripides of being a misogynist, claiming that he was slandering women by portraying them as vengeful, deceitful, baby-killing adulteresses. The charge of misogyny stuck until late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century feminists made Euripides' *Medea* a canonical text; feminist rallies in England and America often opened with reading a speech from the *Medea*. Still, male critics earlier this century charged that 'Euripides showed himself to be without pity for the vices and the transgressions of women,' and blithely unaware of the sexual nature of their metaphors, praised him in one category above all the other tragedians, namely that "Euripides penetrated still more deeply into the souls of women." The notion that Euripides was a misogynist because he slandered women by exposing their characteristic faults is itself based upon misogynist assumptions, (Zelenak, 100).⁵

Is it fair to examine work from the ancient Athenian cannon with such a modernist approach? In a culture of female subjugation and with the absence of reliable historical evidence (and, of course, reflecting on a time when the word "feminist" did not exist), it would be simplistic to assume outright that Euripides was, what the modern world would define as, a feminist. It is more reasonable to investigate the conflict between the general representation of

⁵ A male interpretation of this information.

women in existing documents and Euripides' repeated approach to their portrayal. This, I argue, was more an act of political subversion than an outright call to arms for women's liberation.

The above section discussed the dominant discourse on gender and women's roles in fourth and fifth-century Athens. Since most surviving documents representing women are theatrical, the focus of this paper has already turned to theatre during this Golden Age. The hyperbolic representation of women on stage in this period was used, predominantly, as metaphor. To this, Euripides is no exception. His female characters were used as vehicles to examine and explore what Euripides thought were the faults of his culture. Highly critical of many Athenian establishments, he often wrote about current events and the ramifications of governmental decisions. So why did Euripides use women to explore these topics?

Above all, [Euripides'] tastes reflect a very particular interest in the world of women: not real women, perhaps, but women-passive and active, pathetic and angry, suicidal and murderous-as symbols for emotional experiences, actions and energies that were culturally and ideologically prohibited to men. It has been the case that sometimes the playwright's prescient "psychological" handling of these feminine extremes threatens to absorb our attention to the exclusion of all other considerations, especially overtly political ones... Yet sometimes a slightly different dramatic perspective, and then a different purpose, are evident. From this dramatic perspective, the *polis* itself rather than human psychology (male or female) as it today appears to be the object of tragic examination. Accordingly the representation of feminine emotion and suffering should be seen as a means rather than an apparent theatrical end in itself-a means of critiquing, sometimes with mordant irony, the political decisions of powerful men in the real historical world, by showing the effects of those decisions on other: females, children, the weak, non-Greeks. Here it is difficult not to see this of Euripides' war plays such as *The Trojan Women*...[a] drama[sic] that even now seem[s] to be able to comment with devastating irony upon the destruction wreaked by political decisions made by men in the service of greedy, aggressive, or heroic impulses. It is no accident, moreover, that in the first "psychological" grouping, it is the women's activity...that has consistently fired the cultural imagination; in the second, "political grouping," it is their passivity, their suffering, that has become iconic, (Mendelsohn, 225).

Mendelsohn argues that a constant theme of male and female acts pepper Euripides' plays and that women serve as both the example and catalyst for actions of *government*. My argument is that this is not an act of inherent modern *feminism*, it is instead a series of *subversive acts against the status quo*. Euripides was changing the landscape, but not speaking directly to the agency and independence of women. Euripides was speaking more directly to the reform of the social and political in fourth and fifth-century Athens.

When considering Euripides' earliest extant drama, *Alcestis*, one can see the above points exemplified. First and foremost, the namesake character of the drama is Alcestis, wife of Admetos, who sacrifices herself as a good wife for her husband's misfortune. But first, she makes a fatal mistake: she speaks publicly in front of the citizen-male cohort of the Assembly. By taking a male role in the community, Alcestis' actions result in "a form of feminization that, from the (inevitably, in fourth and fifth-century Athens) masculine point of view, is at once more radical and less constructive...a feminization [of]...enforced passivity and de-heroization of the male protagonist," (Mendelsohn, 226). Here, the female invades the irrational assembly to give an impassioned speech to save her husband, by proxy removing his faulty masculinity and "feminizing" him in the eyes of fourth and fifth-century Athens. Further exploring gender roles in regards to the political, when Alcestis is returned, she cannot speak, an exaggeration of the silent women demanded throughout the civilization.

...the point is that the veiled wife/woman is nothing more than a token exchanged by two men in the male-bonding ritual of guest-friendship. Even if the silent woman is actually Alcestis, she remains what she was at the beginning of the play—a *recutio ad absurdum* of the Periclean model of the nameless, faceless, silent wife/woman, a sign invented and defined by the male imagination. Cedric Whiman gives a more poetic and metaphysical explanation of Alcestis' silence: "The dramatic point of Alcestis' reticence is clear and

effective: she has nothing to say...The *Alcestis* is tragedy, tragedy of the Return From Death to Death In Life...In other words, *Alcestis*' tragedy is that she is forced to come back to "life" and return to her role of wife/woman (Zelenak, 96).

Euripides may not have been what we would consider a feminist today, but there is little doubt that he was familiar with and sympathetic to the role women played in his Athens. He used his writing to explore the ramifications of societal demands on its citizens-male *and* female-and the implication of these requirements. Women were given a voice through his writing. Euripides gave his female characters a humanity and realism that sets them apart from the female characters of his contemporaries. Though they may have still been used as a vehicle to explore other aspects of Greek society, women in Euripides' plays were at least used to explore some of their own issues as well-not just the follies of the hegemony.

Euripides was not a feminist, yet he was not a chauvinist either. Euripides existed outside his time and in opposition to the prominent social and gender discourse of fourth- and fifth-century Athens. He was a writer who was sympathetic to the metaphorical power of the female but used the female to explore his polarizing social ideology, not their proposed social freedom.⁶ As his women were *tools* to be used as lessons for the male populace, to arouse both sexual desire and political ire, Euripides's writing was less an example of female forward thinking and more of a symptom of that Golden Athenian disease: "Female Repression."

⁶As a final note on the subject, it is worth recognizing that slaves also held a great fascination for Euripides. Was it the subjugation of both the female population and the slave population that held power for Euripides? The strength of using these populations as a tool for pulling down the powerful, male hegemony? It is a possibility.

Chapter Four: Euripides' *The Trojan Women*:
The Tragedy of War and the Destruction of Those Who Remain

“In the fourth century BCE the people of Pherae in northern Greece were oppressed by an inhumane tyrant named Alexander. He had murdered his own uncle, but his reputation for unusual cruelty rested especially on the way he treated his enemies. He buried them alive, or encased them in animal hides before setting his hunting dogs upon them. Moreover, when putting down rebellious cities he had twice surrounded all the men in full assembly and butchered every single one, including the youths. A man incapable of pity, or so it would seem. Yet the pathos of Euripidean tragedy proved too much even for him. At a production of *The Trojan Women* he felt compelled to leave the theatre abruptly, ‘because he was ashamed to have the citizens see him, who had never taken pity on any man that he had murdered, weeping over the sorrows of Hecuba and Andromache’ (Plutarch, *Life of Pelopidas* 29.4 – 6),” (Morwood, i).

The Trojan Women has had a varied and diverse history of acceptance since its first performance. It was first presented at the City Dionysia of 415 BCE, along with two other unconnected tragedies, *Alexandros* and *Palamedes*, and the comedic satyr play *Sisyphos*, all of which have since been lost to history. Euripides wrote *The Trojan Women* shortly after an Athenian Army attacked Melos, an island in the Aegean Sea (Morwood, xxv). The goal of this aggression was to establish an alliance against the City-State of Sparta and to reap tribute to the City-State of Athens. The Athenian Army overran the resisting residents of Melos, executing the men and taking women and children hostage. It is believed that Euripides wrote *The Trojan Woman* to take a stand against the happenings in Melos, using the Trojan War as a metaphor.

As stated in the previous section, Euripides was operating counter to the generally accepted ways of writing plays during his time. His plays, reflecting this and speaking out against the established governance and ways of life, were often critically unsuccessful in their time. Euripides often took third, or last, in the festival competitions; critically received characters and a departure from traditional plot structure are often sighted for his lack of success. *The*

Trojan Women, at its debut, saw a second place win. Held in low critical esteem from the Renaissance to the Twentieth Century (Morwood, xxiv), it wasn't until the last hundred years that the play was regularly performed. Renowned nineteenth century critic A. W. Schlegel stated the following about the play: "the accumulation of helpless suffering, without even an opposition of sentiment, at last wearies us, and exhausts our compassion" (22). He believed that the play had little substance and was full of "idle argument."

Why does Euripides' *The Trojan Women* boast such a rich and varied production record during the twentieth century, but a relatively scarce pre-twentieth-century performance history? This question is answered primarily by the fact that in the nineteenth century, *The Trojan Women* was overshadowed by Hector Berlioz's *Les Troyens* (a dramatization based in part on Book II of the Aeneid and composed in 1856-58), and suffered by association with Hecuba, considered then to be a particularly problematic text (in the Renaissance *Trojan Women* had been sidelined in favour of Hecuba in Erasmus' 1524 popular Latin translation). Further obscurity was ensured by early nineteenth-century criticism of the play for being episodic and without plot or action; for being a catalogue of lamentation; for lacking a hero; and generally for lacking the qualities of a tragedy worthy of Aristotelian praise. For example, A.W. von Schlegel, the leading German proponent of the so-called "damnatio of Euripides", indicted *The Trojan Women* for its disunity... Neither scholar considered (nor witnessed) the myriad ways in which the unity of *Trojan Women* could be expressed through live performance," (Willis, 3)⁷.

The Trojan Women has been performed around the world, in multiple languages, for centuries. What is more important to the play's timeline as it reflects the project to which this paper is attached, are the ways in which it has been adapted for different audiences and to pull out different themes from the original story.

In 1905, Gilbert Murray, an anti-war political thinker, classicist and writer, translated *The Trojan Women* for a London theatre performance. In several years he would go on to protest

⁷ Male Historian

World War I. In 1963, *Las Troyanas* was filmed in Mexico. The script was adapted by Angel Miguel Garibay and directed by Sergio Véjar. In 1965, philosopher and playwright Jean-Paul Sartre adapted the play and titled it *Les Troyennes* to reflect existentialist themes. It can be considered a response to the French-Algerian war and critique of European imperialism in Asia. In 1971, and as the Vietnam War raged, an American film version of *The Trojan Women* is released. Directed by Michael Cacoyannis and starring Vanessa Redgrave and Katherine Hepburn, the movie stays true to Euripides' original play. In 1984, *The Lost Women of Troy* is adapted and performed. Hanoah Levin, an Israeli playwright, adapts the play into Hebrew. It is produced and performed in Tel Aviv, amidst the Lebanon War. In 1995, playwright Ellen McLaughlin adapted the play, encapsulating universal themes but focusing on the Balkan War. It was staged and performed in New York City by Bosnian, Serb and Croatian refugees who had recently fled their homes. From 2003 to 2004, Brad Mays, a director, reimagined the play, referencing the Iraq War by incorporating faux CNN reports and other aspects. Performed at the ARK Theatre, Mays incorporated a multimedia perspective by simultaneously staging the production and filming it as a documentary. 2005 saw *The Trojan Women 2.0* by playwright Charles Mee. He adapted the play to incorporate 20th-century war perspectives, using direct quotes from Hiroshima and Holocaust survivors. Finally in 2011, writer Jocelyn Clarke adapts the play into a contemporary portrayal incorporating "flashes of the Russian Revolution, Holocaust, the Balkan Wars," and calls it *The Trojan Women: After Euripides* ("*The Trojan Women Over Time*")

At the turn of the twentieth century, scholars, notably Gilbert Murray and A.W. Verrall in Britain, and Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf in Germany, along with theatre

practitioners and members of the Fabian Society, rescued Euripides from the discard heap of the German damnatio. The liberation of *Trojan Women*, however, was achieved primarily because Professor Murray was the first to equate the Athenian and British empires, and to demonstrate, in both his scholarly work and political treatises, that this play could in performance be used not only to parallel, but also to critique, imperial behaviour in the colonies. Although no explicit parallels were suggested by actor-manager Harley Granville-Barker's production design, Murray's 1905 translation of *Trojan Women* was received by its Edwardian public as a play that exemplified his pro-Boer platform. Importantly for future revivals of the play, the efforts of Granville-Barker and his cast, composers, and designers, resulted in Euripides being elevated to the status of a 'new dramatist' and *Trojan Women*, along with the works of George Bernard Shaw, was shown to shed new light on contemporary social concerns...

The history of *The Trojan Women's* adaptation continues to be analyzed by Willis:

...In the second half of the century, the key figure is Jean-Paul Sartre, who, in performing an act of Derridean "treachery," took Murray's objective one step further by deliberately 'contaminating' the ancient text to form a new work that explicitly transformed *Trojan Women* into a modern anti-colonial/anti-war cri de coeur (*Les Troyennes*, 1965). Sartre's modifications of the ancient text challenged those scholars and theatre practitioners who believed in preserving the sanctity of the ancient text, and as such, his work paved the way for a new era of avant-garde interpretations in Europe and the United States. Although Murray and Sartre, as seminal figures in the production history of *The Trojan Women* on the twentieth-century stage, undoubtedly influenced and encouraged several generations of rich and varied productions, the play continues to be largely underestimated, misunderstood and often sidelined in scholarly discussions of ancient drama, in part this is because *Trojan Women* has been examined as a literary text, not as a text for performance... Many scholars seem to ignore or be unaware of the extensive performance history of the tragedy, particularly in the twentieth century, which reveals the extent to which the play has endured and inspired... (Willis, 4 – 5).

This thesis production, *Fallen*, continues the tradition of adapting and using *The Trojan Women* to reflect and highlight problems within society. *Fallen* confronts the issues of females in war, sexual assault, abuse, subjugation and ownership and control of the female body.

“I know that I am mad, but mother dearest, now, for this one time, I do not rave,”

- Cassandra, Euripides’ *The Trojan Women*

Fallen is a brand new, feminist reimagining of *The Trojan Women*. Set inside a twisted cabaret, the four main female characters (Helen, Hecuba, Andromache and Cassandra) and two choral members (Rose and Marina) perform for the men of Greece, hoping to raise their lot in the draw for wives and slaves. Concentrating on the gendered issues raised in the original text and modern experiences of women in war, the six women, when finally taking power from the controlling MC Talthybius, reveal their true stories of tragedy to the audience. Echoed by modern stories on the same topics, the universality of these historic and mythical struggles is highlighted and magnified. Based on a starting script and developed by the men and women of the cast, this story becomes funny, touching, absurd and devastating.

Though the details of this process can be found in the addendum journals attached to this paper, this section will go over the development process of *Fallen*.

Writing The Script

The first step in the process of making *Fallen* was creating the base script from which the cast would be working. I started generating the base script from the 2000 translation of *The Trojan Women* by James Morwood. Published by Oxford University Press in 2001, the translation not only provided a clear image of the main characters and plot, but translation is incredibly modern and contemporary in its dialogue. With this as a starting point, I broke the script down into character arcs and motivations and used these to construct her interpretation. She chose to set *Fallen* in a cabaret environment for a number of reasons. First and foremost, it

provided a recognizable format from which each character could explore her own story.

Secondly, a cabaret provides an appropriate environment for each character to explore her story through song. And thirdly, the history and practice of cabaret, vaudeville and burlesque played well into the subversive and feminist issues being highlighted in *Fallen*.

Cabaret As A Feminist Experiment

Many Western forms of entertainment, especially that from the late nineteenth through the early twentieth centuries, can be discussed as tools for steadily silencing female performers. Burlesque, which came officially to North America with *The British Blondes* visit to the US in the late 1800s, featured bawdy, outspoken, funny women onstage to tantalize the minds, humour, and arousal of the audiences (Appignanesi, 17). By the early days of Vaudeville, these women had been relegated to often silent roles opposite a verbose male partner onstage. The Ziegfield Follies began as a way to showcase the “ideal woman;” beautiful and available in their silent, dancing roles. Sexualized burlesque became the ultimate step of silencing women and reducing them to their role of provocateur (that is with the great exception of pornography, which this paper is purposefully leaving out as I do not believe it to be a brief point of discussion; the role of women in pornography is a thesis in and of itself). In burlesque, women were meant to be alluring and regularly did not speak or sing, reducing the body of their performance to their bodies themselves (Appignanesi, 123).

Fallen strives to take the silence of this performance tradition and turn it on its head by giving the performing women a chance to actually be heard; to give them a voice and a stage on which to speak. Each performance within the *Fallen* cabaret is a subversive nod to the stories of the women behind them, foisted upon them by the looming male presences. This becomes, then,

a cabaret of gender performativity as the male gaze demands. The women are forced to perform as they have been interpreted by the audience and the lone male, Talthybius; as female victims without agency. When their moment of power comes, however, they are able to take back some of the control of their situation and reveal the actual experiences that have shaped their lives. For example, Helen sings “Criminal” by Fiona Apple during her first, dictated performance. The first few lyrics of this song are as follows:

*I've been a bad, bad girl
I've been careless with a delicate man
And it's a sad, sad world
When a girl will break a boy just because she can*

*Don't you tell me to deny it
I've done wrong and I want to suffer for my sins
I've come to you 'cause I need guidance to be true
And I just don't know where I can begin*

*What I need is a good defence
'Cause I'm feeling like a criminal
And I need to be redeemed
To the one I've sinned against
Because he's all I ever knew of love*

Out of context, the song sounds like an apology for her actions and an admittance of wrong doing. But once the audience hears her story out of Talthybius’s control, the audience understands that Helen is as much a victim of war and subjugation as the rest of the women on the stage. She is given a voice in a time when voicelessness in the only language and silence could save her life.

Fallen’s goal is to constantly subvert expectations. When one thinks cabaret, one conjures images of a dark smoky room with females on display for their looks and their allure. What

happens when a cabaret is actually a platform to speak about the real issues affecting these female characters? The result will be a widening of understanding and a depth of new meaning not addressed in Euripides' original piece.

The Omnipresence of the Male Gaze

Casting the audience has become a corner stone for this production. Upon receipt of a ticket at the box office , each audience member is invited to play along as a male Greek General. The audience is routinely addressed as “gentlemen” and there are sound effects that continually mimic a crowded room of ravenous men. Here, we are playing with an adversarial relationship to the audience. The women are in conflict with all men-especially with the men in the audience as they have come to bid on the women as property. Here, we are confronting the idea of the male gaze, the positioning of the woman as object and the male as observer and owner. By casting those who are present *simply to observe* (the audience) as aggressors, we are heightening the relationship between the women onstage and the powerful metaphor of the performative male gaze. The women on stage routinely buck against this power structure and confront, deflate and deconstruct the observing eyes of the audience in a complicated and elegant conversation about the power of seeing and owning.

Script One

The first draft of *Fallen* took place from inside Cassandra's madness with Cassandra as the main character and all action in the plot happening around her. This was the predominant thought for the show until the first reading of the piece on November 30th, 2016. Though ultimately a good read, the show's focus was obviously in need of a change and a second

revision was in order. A copy of draft one of the script is attached in the appendix section of this paper.

Script Two

With the help of Assistant Director Katherine Doering and Dramaturg Meredith Jonaton, I rewrote and restructured *Fallen* focusing more on the characters in the original play and the feminist, gendered issues that affect each of them. This draft placed all the action within a performative cabaret and used the research to explore the performativity of gender within fourth- and fifth-century Athenian Culture. A copy of this final draft script is attached in the appendix section of this paper.

Casting *Fallen*

The next step in the process was casting the show. Casting for *Fallen* took place much earlier than in normal rehearsal processes as the cast would also be developing the piece. The production team for *Fallen* decided to cast the five main characters (Hecuba, Andromache, Cassandra, Helen and Talthybius) and two choral members. The chorus's purpose is to extend and echo the women's stories from the past into the present. The chorus will be developing individualized characters based around the five named characters in the piece. They will also round out the performance, doing routines like the four named women to explore the intentions of the original characters. The final casting for *Fallen* is as follows:

- Cassandra: Kyra Weichart
- Hecuba: Irena Huljak
- Andromache: Eilish Waller
- Helen: Julia Hussey
- Talthybius: Ben Siapas
- Chorus: Sierra Reilly and Coco Radau

Beginning Rehearsals

Rehearsals for *Fallen* began January 21st of 2017. The first month of rehearsals (the first thirteen rehearsals) will be development of the script and exploration of the characters. Starting in mid-February of 2017, rehearsal focus will move to rewriting and placing all of the additional parts of the script. March of 2017 will be straight rehearsals, leading to tech week and the show which takes place March 30th - April 2nd. The show will be taking place in the Vanier College Theatre on the York University Campus. Selected Rehearsal Journals can be found in the appendix section of this paper.

April 3rd 2017 - The Day After Closing

What worked here? What didn't work? Did we have a successful show? Was this what I thought it was going to be? To begin looking at *Fallen* with an honest eye, let's break it down:

1. The Script

The script still needs a lot of work. Though I believe it to be beautiful and compelling, there are holes and incongruous moments that I could only begin to see as the cast got off book and we moved from development into production-too late to make revisions and changes. For example, Hecuba pulls a knife on an audience of men. Wouldn't they simply take her down and stop her? Wouldn't they actually rush the stage? Yes. They would. This is a HUGE hole in the script. The script, in my opinion, is complicated and overwrought. I believe it can border on melodrama at points and is very frustrating to listen to. I would like to simplify the language and really begin to understand how to write for the different voices within the piece. In short, there are obvious problems with the script that need to be worked on in the next iterations.

2. The Actors

If there is one place I feel I really succeeded, it was in my work with the actors. I pushed them as much as they pushed me. We really, as a group, jelled and formed a company of artists. It was difficult, pushing these people as hard as I did. It was the first time I felt like I was bordering on pushing way too hard. But they kept asking for more and I was happy to keep pushing until they said stop. For example, Irena and I have a beautiful working dynamic where we feed off each

other in the rehearsal hall and I am able to challenge and lay into her hard when I need to. Some of our actors are rather inexperienced and I didn't feel like I could work with them in the same way. But it was a simple negotiation of skills and vocabulary that got us both to the point where we knew what was needed and required of each person. This is true with a performer like Sierra who is not usually an actor but was a welcomed addition to this piece. She and I did some dancing around each other for the first part of the rehearsal process. But as soon as we shared a working vocabulary and she relaxed into the process, she was the spark of innocence and energy the show needed. I believe this ability to work directly and efficiently with actors is a strength of mine and their amazing performances onstage were the proof.

3. The Production Elements

The elements of this production heightened and exaggerated the struggle of the women onstage. James McQuay's lighting design helped delineate the times when we were in the present and when we were deep in Cassandra's mind. The lighting was beautiful and moving throughout the piece and more than I could have asked for. The set—well, I designed the set. I liked it. It served its purpose but didn't heighten much except the transient nature of refugees. A real set design could have an amazing impact on the feeling of the show and the blocking and movement of the actors. The sound design was not exactly what I had envisioned. What I had envisioned would have cost thousands of dollars in new speakers and professional recordings. But I love our male actors who we recorded and their voices became such another character in the show, it was astounding.

4. The Audience Interaction

We bordered on immersion in this production, casting the audience as the ravenous male fans and directly addressed them throughout. But was this the right choice? Could we have divided and used the genders of the audience to divide and agitate them? Was what we did a way to play with immersive elements without doing a fully immersive piece or was it a cop out that let the audience off too easy? We will not know until we mount the piece again. I would like to take the attempts we made to involve the audience to the next level; dividing them up into different sections of the house, for instance, or to address only the men and ignore the women. There is much territory left to explore here and I am anxious to do so as soon as I get the chance.

5. The Third Movement

The movement piece at the end of the production seemed to fit anachronistically with the rest of the show. It was beautiful and intense, in my opinion, but didn't serve the show directly. It, instead, served the thesis of the production and almost hammered our points over the heads of the audience. There is something in this movement, however, to which I am truly attached. Is it the abstract nature of movement expression? Is it the current stories of women in turmoil? Is it the extension into today's world? The answer to all three of these questions is: yes. I need a choreographer to expertly express the way in which I want the actors to move and tell the stories that are transplanted and painted onto them by other women's words. To move forward, I would like to start there. I would also like to play with threading the movement piece throughout the entire show a bit better. We touched upon this in this incarnation but, in our next one, I would

like to take this idea further. That way the piece feels like a silent character throughout and it is not shocking or disorienting when that character takes centre stage at the end.

6. Our Message

Was our message heard? Did we communicate clearly with the audience? What, in fact, did our message become when filtered through the story of *The Trojan Women*? This is the biggest section to review before our next iteration of *Fallen*. I want to produce politicized theatre that invites an audience to engage and respond on an individual level. I believe that this is possible only when the questions in a production are posed without direct answers. I think we reached too far in this production, providing immediate answers for the audience through the text and movement as opposed to allowing them to form their answers in their own minds. This is both a problem with the writing and the execution of the piece itself. These are problems that lie on my hands and need to be addressed carefully on our next production. We need to be clear about what we are saying without dictating what the audience should be feeling or to what they are reacting. Through careful work with Meredith and attention to detail that more time will provide, I will be able to better finesse this piece into a subtle expression of message as opposed to using the heavy hand that was present in *Fallen* this time.

Though it has been millennia since its first showcase, *The Trojan Women* continues to see new incarnations and revisions. Though it is not inherently a feminist piece, its strong female presence can be refocused to highlight the struggle of the modern woman and to universally expound on the state of the feminine within the confines of war. Would Euripides be pleased with this manipulation of his work? As a political upstart and one who spent much of his career

bucking the system, I would like to believe that he would be excited that his work continues to have an impact in the changing social and political landscape.

Why revisit a classic instead of writing something all together new? My fascination with Greek Theatre aside, this has been a thought-out choice and a wonderful metaphor within the show. In Act Three, the movement piece, Cassandra tells a second story for the first time. The short passage reads as follows:

Once upon a time
There were ruins
That sparked the imagination
And held stories
From the future
One day
A girl stumbled upon them
And tripped
Falling down a long well
To the bottom
And there
With her reflection staring back at her
She saw them
The women that came before her
And those yet to be born
And she knew
What would happen
Like a mirror
Focused at a mirror
Infinity stretched in front of her eyes
And she knew

Like a mirror focused at a mirror, the injustices and persecution acted upon women in war repeat and have been repeating for millennia. *The Trojan Women's* themes of loss, subjugation, abuse, assault and more continue to plague women to this day. *Fallen* takes these themes and moves them into the early twentieth century. The modern application of these stories moves them even farther into the present and, at least in concept, the final movement piece and audio move them

even farther into the future. With this metaphor of eternal mirrors, we travel through history with these experiences uniting us through time. Therefore, the play itself is the first metaphor for the unending tribulations perpetrated upon women from long in the past to long into the future.

Fallen was successful in a way I didn't think was possible. We exceeded our monetary goals, were able to pay all our actors and are currently planning a second workshop production starting this summer. This is a show that means more to me than any show I have created before. It is a show about women, by women, for everyone. The development process was a challenge and a dream; the cast was supportive and dedicated; the audiences were receptive and excited. Where does this show go next? We are not sure. But we are working hard toward a single goal: That “...one day the story will change: then shall the glory of women resound...Reversing at last the sad reputation of ladies.” Euripides, *Medea*

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Department of the Greek Military
United Army of Agamemnon
Camped at Trojan Wall
Former Troy, Trojan Lands

From Deputy Chief of Staff to Agamemnon:
Talthybius, Soldier

To: Honourable Officers of the
Victorious Greek Military

Re: Division of Spoils of War -
IMMEDIATE DISTRIBUTION

In reward for your service and victory,
you are hereby invited to the auction of
the remaining spoils of war. Further
information on each salable item is
located below. Drachmas accepted at 10%
fee to Talthybius, host. All questions
to be directed to Talthybius, Deputy
Chief of Staff to Agamemnon (call sign:
VB4.562).

Items for Auction [Alphabetical]:

ANDROMACHE: PRINCESS OF TROY.
FORMER WIFE OF HECTOR, WARRIOR AND
PRINCE OF TROY. MOTHER TO ASTYNAX,
LAST SON OF TROY. 1,000 DRACHMAS.

CASSANDRA: PRINCESS OF TROY.
DAUGHTER OF LATE KING PRIAM AND
QUEEN HECUBA. PRIESTESS TO APOLLO.
1,300 DRACHMAS.

HECUBA: QUEEN OF TROY. FORMER WIFE
TO LATE KING PRIAM. MOTHER TO 20
FALLEN CHILDREN OF TROY.
500 DRACHMAS

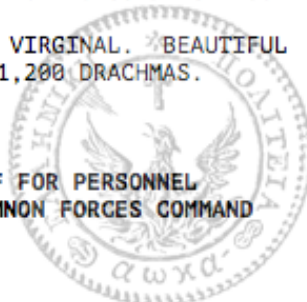
HELEN [OF TROY]: WIFE OF MENELAUS,
BROTHER TO AGAMEMNON. MOST ALLURING
WOMAN IN THE WORLD. 5,000 DRACHMAS.

MARINA: YOUNG, NEWLY WIDOWED.
FIGHTER AND LOVER. 1,200 DRACHMAS.

ROSE: YOUNG AND VIRGINAL. *BEAUTIFUL
AND CHARMING. 1,200 DRACHMAS.

DISTRIBUTION:

DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF FOR PERSONNEL
UNITED ARMY OF AGAMEMNON FORCES COMMAND



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300 DRACHMAS.

HECUBA: QUEEN OF TROY. FORMER WIFE
TO LATE KING PRIAM. MOTHER TO 20
FALLEN CHILDREN OF TROY.
500 DRACHMAS

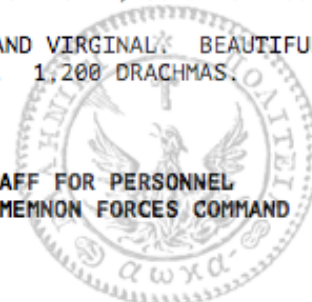
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Former Troy, Trojan Lands

From Deputy Chief of Staff to Agamemnon:
Talthybius, Soldier

To: Honourable Leaders and Officers
of the Victorious Greek Military

Re: **FALLEN ACTORS AND CREW**

MEMO: DIRECTOR'S NOTE

"One day the story will change:
then shall the glory of women
resound.. Reversing at last
the sad reputation of ladies."

Euripides, Medea

For centuries, the experiences of women have been silenced by politics, "morality," war, subjugation and the records and words of men. Through theatre, we can begin a real conversation about the experiences of women. It is my honour to try and make my mark in this way. Though our efforts tonight might be limited and small, I am proud to give voice to these historic characters. Thank you to the cast and crew for their help in developing this new play and to YOU for diving into our twisted, beautiful world: **FALLEN**.

SOUND DESIGNER: ADAM BROMLEY

Adam is a Swiss Army knife of the stage. Having experience in directing, acting, light and sound design, stage carpentry, stage managing, production managing and costuming. He is thrilled to be working on **Fallen** and to be reunited with his friends and colleagues from **Threads**.

FUNDRAISING: GENEVIEVE CANAVAN

Genevieve is in her third year at York University studying Devised Theatre and Playwriting. Past credits include performing in Vanier College Productions' **The Laramie Project** and **Rent**. She also assistant directed **Scorched** in the first semester and dramaturged the 2017 playGround show **You've Got to be Kidney Me!** Enjoy the show!

STAGE MANAGER: LYDIA CONNOR

Lydia is a third year theatre student at York University, specializing in stage design and theatre management. Her recent credits include Scenic Artist at Theatre@York for "**A Party for Boris**" and Assistant Head of Wardrobe at 4th Line Theatre for "**Hero of Hunter Street**". Enjoy the show Gentlemen!

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/CHOREOGRAPHER/MUSIC GURU/DANCE CAPTAIN: KATHERINE DOERING

Katherine is a devised theatre student who specializes in both writing and directing her own works, two of which were in this years playGround festival (Katherine and Sierra learn a little something about feminism and Debbie Varlen Plays The Continental). She is so honoured to have spent this year helping Theresa Ohanian's vision come to life along with the talents of every cast and crew member involved.

PRODUCTION MANAGER: KAIT GALLANT

Kait Gallant is thrilled to have watched **Fallen** come to life over the past few months. Currently she is working on **Silence S'il Vous Plait** for the Toronto Fringe Festival and **Inebriated** for the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. Kait thanks her parents and friends for their constant support in her artistic work.

HECUBA: IRENA HULJAK

Irena Huljak was in the Off-Broadway production "**Shakespeare in Space**" (Mint Theatre). She enjoyed roles such as **Mercutio** in "**Romeo and Juliet**" (Classical Theatre Brooklyn) and **Beatrice** in "**The Changeling**" (Annex Theatre). Recently she produced a web-series "**Open**". Some television credits include "**Warehouse 13**" and the new series "**Anne**".

HELEN [OF TROY]: JULIA HUSSEY

Julia Hussey is a Fredericton-born, Toronto-based actor and singer. She is a York Theatre alum and very happy to be back working with such an inspiring group of women and artists. Thank you, Theresa, for bringing us together, and thank YOU for joining us today.

DRAMATURGE: MEREDITH JONATAN

Meredith Jonatan is a Toronto-based performance artist and dramaturg.

Appendix C: Production Photos





AUDITIONS

<p>November 4th and 11th, 2016</p> <p>Atkinson Studio</p> <p>York University</p> <p>In Attendance:</p> <p>Theresa Ohanian, Director</p> <p>Katherine Doering, Assistant Director</p> <p>Kait Gallant, Production Manager</p>

November 3rd, 2016

Day Before First Audition

Auditions are always exciting; so many new people, trying each role on for size. It's an unending puzzle game; figuring out which person goes where and with whom. Katherine and I have a general understanding of what we are looking for in each named character. I created a chart to keep us focused and clear on the characteristics of each.

Character	TTW	Fallen	Needs To
Cassandra	Unhinged, Innocent, Destroyed	Funny, Child-like, Innocent, Energetic, Curious	Tell stories, sing, tap-dance poorly, Act
Hecuba	Protective, Royal, Heartbroken	Hostess, Perfect Mother, "Joan Crawford"	Act, Sing a little, Tell a joke
Andromache	Beautiful, Strong, Well-Spoken	Broken, Distant, Lamenting	Sing a little, monologize
Tathylbius	Serious, Militant, Direct	"Vaudevillian," Energetic, A Showman	Sings, Dances, "Hosts"
Helen	Sexy, Strong, Without Remorse	Sexy, Strong, "Cracks Showing"	MUST Sing and MAYBE Striptease. Burlesque

Character	TTW	Fallen	Needs To
Chorus	Lamenting, Mournful, Serious	Silly, Energetic, Full of Fun and Life	Sings, Dances,
Chorus	Lamenting, Mournful, Serious	Silly, Energetic, Full of Fun and Life	Sings, Dances,
Chorus	Lamenting, Mournful, Serious	Silly, Energetic, Full of Fun and Life	Sings, Dances,
Chorus	Lamenting, Mournful, Serious	Silly, Energetic, Full of Fun and Life	Sings, Dances,
Chorus	Lamenting, Mournful, Serious	Silly, Energetic, Full of Fun and Life	Sings, Dances,

Each audition will consist of a classical monologue to demonstrate the artists' abilities with classical text, a short interview and a demonstration of another talent - we have had people tell us they will be doing everything from singing to yo-yo-ing to rapping. It should be an interesting and entertaining audition!

For our chorus, we are looking for artists with varying talents who have a strong sense of individuality and a devising background. I will be directing the chorus to develop individual characters and skill sets for each character. I am hoping to find musicians, dancers, clowns and singers for the chorus.

We have over thirty people signed up to audition over the two scheduled days. Though some of the names on our list are familiar, after advertising on TAPA and Theatre Ontario, we have a slew of professionals from throughout the GTA. Our biggest concern at this moment is whether or not people unfamiliar with York will be able to find the Atkinson Studio! We have provided detailed directions, maps and will hang signs along the route from the bus circle to the studio.

Tomorrow brings only thoughts of excitement and an impending beginning of something really special. The script is a starting point - this process is about working with collaborators to create something unique and new. I am not just auditioning a cast tomorrow; I am auditioning peers that will work with me to solidify the ideas that have been knocking around in my brain since this project was conceived.

Tomorrow I am auditioning the heart and soul of the piece; the people inside of it.

FIRST READING

November 30th

Hybrid Cohort Showings

6:00PM

Atkinson Studio

York University

In Attendance:

Full Cast

Full Crew

November 30th 2016

Night After The Showing

Tonight was a disaster. The reading was horrible. The reaction to the reading was horrible. I have a lot to think about and don't really know what to write tonight. On a production note, we have made the decision that rehearsals will be Tuesday and Wednesday 6:30 - 10pm and Saturday 4:00 - 9pm throughout January. Megan Johnson has dropped out of the show. We are looking for a new Hecuba. An email has been sent out to Irena Huljik, an actor from the preliminary auditions who was unable to make the callbacks, to offer her the role.

December 1st 2016

The Day After

What happened that made last night so bad? Where did the show already go so wrong? Yes it was a mistake to do a straight reading of the script but, after doing so many segments in Solo Class, I figured

it was time to do a straight through reading. It was also for the benefit of the cast. Our first mistake was not requiring a rehearsal before the reading. If David Smukler's class has taught me anything this year, it is that we, as a generation, have trouble reading dry. That is why we spent so much of the semester doing just that; reading and practicing reading. I should have known better. But that is no excuse. The script, after hearing it aloud, is rough; a plot heavy clunky expression of the ideas I have in my head. How did I spin so far away from my original focus? Do I still know what my original focus was? Can I still feel the pull and reason for originally doing this piece? Are the themes still prevalent? Are the characters still singing to me? No. The answer is no. I have gotten too far inside my own head and I am *once again* writing outside myself - writing something in a voice that is not my own and not connected deeply to me.

I am petrified for conferences on December 5th. I am sure that this reading will be discussed in detail and, hopefully, my professors will help me sift through the drivel that is currently slipping out of my brain. Erika and Michael both spoke to me after the reading. Michael, in his very Michael way, was supportive and kind with his words - a touch of nicety that I needed right after my embarrassment. Erika, in her very Erika way, somehow validated the feelings I had right after the reading and already was ready to troubleshoot and brainstorm with me. I couldn't have asked for more support right after the reading. It was overwhelming to be sure but it is the most supported I have felt by the administration on the details of this project. This is not a complaint. I should make that clear. But much of this process has been done in a vacuum of my own imagination - I am not utilizing my crew enough. I have a dramaturg now (Meredith Jonaton) and I need to start relying on her and Katherine much more. My utter fear is that this becomes some kind of indulgent love letter written by me to Greek theatre or some kind of slapdash collage of hackneyed ideas. This idea is unique and clear to me - how do I translate that to the page?

I am pulling everything apart and starting over, fresh. I am going to refocus on what is important to the story and what is important to me. There is no need to feel beholden to the original script. I need to free myself from these imagined restraints.

I expressed my dissatisfaction in *the script* to my cast. They understand that by the time we begin rehearsals it will be much different. They have been asked to journal from their characters' points of view over the holidays. That will provide us with some material from which to work in the new year.

CONFERENCES

December 5th, 2016

Purple Passion Pit

York University

11:45am

In Attendance:

Theresa Ohanian, Director

Professors David Smukler, Erika Batdorf, Paul Lampert, Eric Armstrong

Conferences are always hard and this one was no different than usual for me. After the preliminary conversations about my performance in class (“Go deeper and more vulnerable, You’re asking the right questions, etc,”), the conversation turned to my reading and my thesis project. Erika had sent me the following email after the reading:

Hi Theresa,

Much of what I shared with you last night was felt by the group- not sure what she is saying, what is the plot? Who am I supposed to care about....Cassandra’s opening was alienating... no depth the the madness, bawdy humour with no depth etc...AND there was a great idea that emerged: What if SHE plays the whole thing? a solo...allowing her to go deeper and develop a clear through line? Playing all the characters? How does that sit? - Erika

The group discussion revolved around many of these points. I got frustrated and, when I can’t yell, I cry. Which is embarrassing. This idea of a solo performance was mentioned again and I expressed that this is not what I am aiming to do. But, after taking Paul’s advice and really *listening* and not just *hearing*, I think I understand what they are saying. If I approach the project with the simplicity and straightforwardness that writing for a solo performance requires, the project may be given the life and

breathe it deserves. The building blocks are here, I just built an over complicated, unusable tower with them.

Another beneficial point to come out my conferences is a feeling of freedom I have in regards to my schedule. I have a lot of time before I absolutely MUST begin rehearsing. If I am still writing and creating, the rehearsals scheduled in January can be just for me to use the studio and we can start really rehearsing in February. I have talked about this with Katherine. We can offer the cast first right of refusal for their roles, and open them up to take a gig in January if it comes down to it. I feel guilty disappointing the cast but I would rather give them a good show to work on then forcing them into a studio to save something unrealized.

PROCESS

December 10th 2016

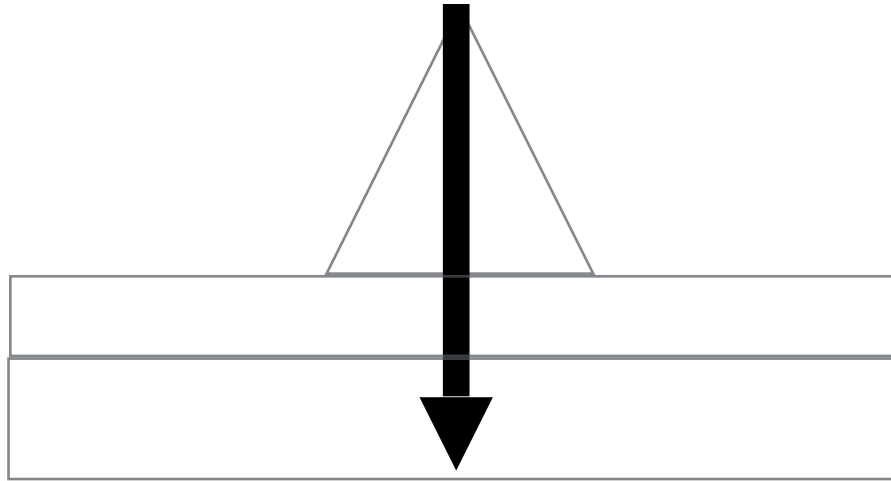
Since the conferences, I have put the play on the back burner and have been researching and working on my paper. It was a good decision, as I am learning so much about Euripides, *The Trojan Women* and Greek theatre of the fourth and fifth centuries. One incredible theory I read is that performative gender during this time period was full of gross exaggerations and, as one theorist stated, should be seen as drag performances. How interesting! I have a dramaturgical meeting with Meredith Jonaton on Tuesday and will be refocusing my efforts at that time on working on my play.

December 13th 2016

Meredith and I had a wonderful meeting! We discussed where the play could go and talked about visual structure. While my first draft structure looked like this (playing on the original plot)



And now we are looking at a sectional, character based format that is structured more like this:



I am planning on going back to the script to work on it now and will put the research I have on my thesis into the script in as many ways as possible to ground it in research. One main thing that Meredith and I talked about is the performative nature of gender in fourth and fifth century Athens and how that could affect our show. We want to concentrate on the feminist issues in the play and how to highlight them. We are going to use Talthybius as an MC for the cabaret and the chorus throughout the piece as echoes of the characters with names.

REHEARSALS

January 24, 2017 - Second Rehearsal

This was a very successful rehearsal. The exercises worked incredibly well and we had an amazing discussion. I am trying to guide the cast to discover their characters, hence the two meditation exercises. They proved themselves to work really well. We paused for discussion after every exercise and amazing things came up. We talked about plot and structure today as well and, again, amazing things came up. We are now thinking about having the women take over the show and change the purpose of the show to lampoon the audience for their complacency in what has happened to them. As one of the discussions got

away from my facilitation, I sent an email about how to properly conduct oneself during these debates. The rules included:

- Listen respectfully, without interrupting.
- Pose your statements as questions to the Director and AD.
- Listen actively and with an ear to understanding others' views.
- Criticize ideas, not individuals.
- Commit to learning, not debating.
- Comment in order to share information, not to direct.
- Avoid blame, speculation, and inflammatory language.
- Allow everyone the chance to speak.
- Avoid assumptions about any member of the class or generalizations about their process. Do not ask individuals to defend for their point of view.
- Remain attentive when others are talking

FALLEN Rehearsal Report

Date:	Tuesday, January 24, 2017		
Time:	4:00 P.M. – 7:45 P.M.		
Location:	CFT 138		
Attendance:	Coco, Sierra, Ben, Julia, Irena, Theresa, Katherine, Lydia, Meredith		
Not In Attendance:	Catherine, Eilish		
Exercise:	Character Visualization	Goal:	To begin developing characters
Exercise:	Story Mapping	Goal:	To brainstorm/question the plot/contents/deeper meaning
Exercise:	Reflection on "I am ___, therefore I am ___"	Goal:	Which confession about your character does not fit onto one of the lists discussed?
Exercise:		Goal:	
Rehearsal Accomplishments:	Lots of brainstorming for characters and the show!		
Summary of Rehearsal:	Mediation, journaling, discussion about play's future development and intentions		
Work for Next Rehearsal:	Continue thinking about your character		
Time of Next Rehearsal:	Wednesday, January 25 6:30 P.M. – 10 P.M.		
Location of Next Rehearsal:	CFT 138		
Notes:	Final draft of "Fallen" will be complete in 1 month		
Props List: (Ongoing)	Knife, 4 metal/wooden buckets		
Set List: (Ongoing)	Platform, old-fashioned microphone		
Sound: (Ongoing)	Katherine can you send me the music files?		

Thanks,

There is some concern about how Ben is attacking the subjects within this piece. I want to make sure to foster a healthy, inclusive environment without any of the language within the discussion offending anyone. I want to give Ben a voice - *especially* because he is the only man in the piece. But he can be a bit aggressive in conversation and I don't want any of the women to feel trampled. In a piece about gender, how do we tackle gender? I am hoping that my list of rules keeps some of this in check and I am going to try and moderate the discussions better.

February 1, 2017 - Sixth Rehearsal

Today was interesting. I worked on the script for a long time today and it is starting to transform again. I have moved up the immediacy of the women's situation by making the show a one time only exhibition and the auction will happen onstage at the end of the cabaret. I began rehearsal with introducing these changes and they were really well received by the cast. I then had them draft introductions for their characters to be read aloud by Talthybius during the intro dance. The cast's writing skills are really improving and I am now able to take some of their exact writing and put it directly into the piece. Eilish was visibly upset during the writing session today, and stayed after rehearsal to talk to me about it. She is feeling that we are moving through rehearsal almost too fast and she's becoming embarrassed when she is not producing material quick enough during rehearsal. She's feeling outside the group and occasionally attacked when the group is trying to support her, but instead is piling on top of her already shaken emotions. I suggested we do something social at the end of rehearsal on Saturday and that she stay in dialogue with me throughout the process to see where I can improve my leading to make everyone feel like part of the group. This is such a learning process for me and I appreciate the problem solving I have been given to tackle.

During the rest of rehearsal all was well. We generated more material tonight and even got the material up on its feet as an experiment. I am constantly worried that the cast is getting bored because of how unusual this process is BUT the feedback I am getting is that every rehearsal is exciting and challenging. That's my goal; to keep

FALLEN Rehearsal Report

Date:	Wednesday, February 1, 2017		
Time:	6:30 P.M. – 9:15 P.M.		
Location:	CFT 138		
Attendance:	Coco, Sierra, Ben, Julia, Eilish, Theresa, Katherine, Lydia, Meredith, Kait		
Not In Attendance:	Irena, Catherine		
Exercise:	Writing good/bad "dating" intros	Goal:	To discover what is uncomfortable to verbalize
Exercise:	Performing intros	Goal:	To practice the feeling of presenting
Exercise:	Research prompts given by Theresa	Goal:	To develop character
Exercise:		Goal:	
Rehearsal Accomplishments:	Investigating character's history further		
Summary of Rehearsal:	Getting your physical body ready to present		
Work for Next Rehearsal:	Add onto intros if needed, reread intros and writing assignment from Tues., Jan. 31		
Time of Next Rehearsal:	Saturday, February 4 4:00 P.M. – 9:00 P.M.		
Location of Next Rehearsal:	CFT 138		
Notes:			
Props List: (Ongoing)	Knife, 4 metal/wooden buckets, cue cards, plastic bowler hats		
Set List: (Ongoing)	Platform, vintage suitcases		
Sound: (Ongoing)	Katherine can you send me the music files?		
Costumes: (Ongoing)	Continue looking for modesty covers. Acadia did fittings of cast present at rehearsal		

Thanks,

pushing everyone a little more each rehearsal.

February 8 - Rehearsal Nine

Playground is in full swing and we are missing so many people at the moment because of it. Ok, not that many people but it sure feels like it. I am concentrating on the individual development of each character while we are missing people. I believe in the power of creating individual movement vocabulary for each actor informing the way their characters express themselves. I have asked each member of cast to find one line to one passage from the original text. They are then encouraged to translate the original into their own words. Finally, they are asked to boil the translation down to a single phrase. That phrase will be put to gesture based vocabulary that will be developed individually and as a group.

After Rehearsal

This rehearsal went really well! The movement vocabulary that was developed today was beautiful and emotive. I think the “third act” of *Fallen* is currently evolving because of today’s rehearsal. I would like to make the stories and the interviews in the third act an audio file mixed with a drone based song I have found. That composition will be the “music” that will play over a movement piece at the end of *Fallen*. I am taking a lot of what I learned from *THREADS* and roping it into the development here. I am excited and energized by this prospect!

February 25 - Rehearsal Fifteen

Today’s rehearsal was tedious but successful. I allowed each cast member to come up to me and pick apart the script with notes and criticism. It was... interesting. Opinions are like assholes, right? Everyone has them? But I didn’t get many criticisms from the cast. They are much more concerned with their individual character trajectories, which should not be surprising. Eilish had a great recommendation for a little more depth from her character. I am going to experiment with writing a short monologue for her. I

am also going to take some consideration from Kyra and rewrite her story a bit to make it a little darker.

That is what I am going to work on now!

Later

Andromache Monologue Rewrite

ANDROMACHE:

Give me my son.

TALTHYBIUS:

Get up.

You will get him when this is all over.

ANDROMACHE:

You took my husband.

Slit his throat at my feet

Let the blood wash off with my sons tears

My husband

Must not have been a man like you

My husband

Knew the word equal

We were equals

In birth

Wealth

Courage

And understanding

I do not delude myself

That I should be met with good fortune

Or the face of my husband

Should smile on me again.

But the illusion of him

In the face of my son

Will almost be pleasant

So give me my son

And let me fall into fiction

To ease my shattered soul

Cassandra Story Rewrite

There once was a princess

Locked in her own mind

She spent her days

Watching flowers wilt

And dancing in time with the dust

That made the toys on her shelves grey

One day

As ice melted on her window

She saw a prince

From a neighbouring kingdom

Rode to the gate of her palace

He had heard of her beauty

And the riches her stories held

And had come to take her home with him

To make them his own

Knowing that if she was taken

The stories in her head

Would scatter to the wind

She hid

Amidst her books
And lay quiet
As the prince
Continued to pound at the door
Complimenting the beauty
He had never seen
She search her shelves
For something with which to fight
In the pages of a book
Which told of summers
And sleepy kittens that got caught
Outside the tower walls
The princess found
A single match
The prince broke through the door
And began searching for the princess
The princess knew what she had to do
With shaking fingers
She took the match
And with a single move
She lit the flame across her cheek
The heat consuming the princess as it grew.
Through the fire, the princess
could see the prince's face.
He was angry of being denied his prize.
She screamed in silence, free and safe.
And her stories were downed by the flames.

March 10th - Rehearsal 20

There has been something really wrong about this show and I finally put my finger on it. I have been dictating so much of the blocking that the life has been sucked out of the show. These artists-I trust. Implicitly. So today, I had them run the whole show and said “FUCK THE BLOCKING!” What happened was an organized, beautiful chaos onstage that I have been trying to dictate the entire time. I am removing so much of the blocking this week that the actors can actually now breathe and play onstage. This has been the hardest thing I have done so far - so much of what I have developed has almost been like dance choreography; intricate and precise. What this show needs is an unpredictability throughout. This makes the women seem more dangerous, the men seem less of a passive threat and the show itself is now coming to life. This is the biggest lesson I have learned in this process: at some point you have to let go and let the actors take over. Especially in a show like *Fallen*, where the development and the presence of the characters is so based on the artists themselves. I wanted THESE people onstage so I must let them be PEOPLE not shills for my ideas. I cannot wait to see what happens next. And where the intricacies of what I’ve already developed still have a voice and a place. I am now thinking that the choreography developed by the female cast is a metaphor for what life was like before the Greeks came to Troy. So every time the repeated choreography is demonstrated is a moment of unity for the women; a moment of calm and understanding among them.

fallen

theresa ohanian

the home for wayward artists

draft one

Songs, Dancing, Preamble

Finally an announcement:

TATHYBIUS

Ladies of Troy and Gentlemen of Greece: put your hands together for our one our only, the woman with the looks of a goddess and the tongue of a god, Cassandra!

CASSANDRA

Thank you

Thank you so much for that wonderful introduction

I have to admit you guys, I was a little nervous backstage

So I said, hey, maybe I can just bring a couple of my friends

And they'll help me out

Ta Daa!

[She brings out Sock Puppets]

So once upon a time in a land far far away
Where darkness reigned
And the women were all repressed and shit
Lived a beautiful princess
And her name was - let's just say bitch princess
And bitch princess was the most beautiful girl in all the land
But she told every one that she wasn't conceited
But she really was
So one day, bitch princess decided that her life wasn't good enough and decided to go trailing for some
dick
She looked for dick high in the trees
She looked for dick low on the ground
She looked for dick under ever rock and in every nook and cranny
And boy, did bitch princess find a lot of dick
Just covered in dick
Just drowning in dick
But, after sucking half the kingdom dry
She waddled back to her palace
And she still was unhappy
Because she was Bitch Princessssssss
THAT'S WHEN THE EVIL KING RETURNS HOME!
Yes! Bitch princess is married!
What a whore!
(Oh No!)
The king was wrinkled and hairy
And everywhere he went
A line was drawn in the dirt
As he dragged his ancient balls behind him

“Bitch princess” said the king

“I love you!”

“Uh, huh” said bitch princess

Because bitch princess was also a liar!

The next day, bitch princess went out trolling again

But, ho, she was more than a little depressed

She couldn’t get happy

She wanted to travel to a magical place

Where unicorns roamed

And Lisa Frank inspired orgies took place every tuesday

And even the citizens were named after condoms

TROY!

(...*trojan condoms*)

All of a sudden

A man popped out from behind a bush

masturbating furiously

Just grabbing and grabbing at his hard dick

With his eyes crossed and his pants around his ankles

“Bitch princess!”

He groaned

“I have come to rescue you from the evil king and take you home with me to Troy”

For you see he was a prince of Troy

But like most royalty you can’t tell when their pants are down

“My hero” said bitch princess

And they moved in close

And his breath fell hot and foul on her neck

And she breathed in his salty cologne

And her strawberry lip gloss

Rubbed strawberry lines across his cheek
And their lips moved close together
For that one perfect first kiss...
He managed to shout
“I love you”
Just as he came a giant mountain
Of glitter and rainbows
All over bitch princess
And she knew they had fallen in love
And she shouts “I love you too!”
Because she’s crazy bitch princess
Just like Anne Coulter
So he picks her up
Slings her over his back
And carries her,
Sparkling like a spermicidal disco ball glowing in the sun
To his pimped out ship
Waiting in the harbor
To MY home
...and then they came.
The Evil King
and his dirty dragging balls
Sails for Troy with a thousand ships
And a hundred thousand men
All with their pants around their ankles
Jacking furiously
to Come for Bitch Princess

Meanwhile
After a three week coke binge
And more plowing than a spring field
She slips out from under the prince
She says “Oh my god, this place is so beautiful”
But it was probably more like (sniff) “oh my god this place is so beautiful”
And he says “snore”
And then she hears the alarms
And a thousand ships
And a hundred thousand men
All with their pants around their ankles
Jacking furiously
Land in Troy!
So all the Trojans
And the Durex and the Life Styles
Get their guns and their knives
And - very carefully -
Pull *their* pants down around *their* ankles
And start jacking furiously too!
So that now *TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND MEN*
ARE ALL JACKING FURIOUSLY OVER BITCH PRINCESS
And everyone’s jacking and pulling and stroking and choking
All throughout the land
And unicorns in the forest
Start masturbating
And the squirrels and the cats and the children
Just everyone jacking

And jacking

And jacking

UNTIL

EXPLOSION!

The whole kingdom ejaculates in one giant orgasm

Of guns and knives and ships and shit

And the prince is like “YA!”

And the evil king is like “Oh ya!”

And bitch princess is like “Eat my ass!”

And all of Troy collapses on its back

Breathing heavily like dogs

Sweaty, sticky, stinking dogs.

And bitch princess

Sees what she’s done

And knowing that all these men

Came for her

She runs into the unicorn woods

Like the bitch princess she is

And hides

And waits

Until today

So there’s a moral to this story - can you tell me what it is?

[Takes shout outs from the audience]

Shut up, shut up! Shut the fuck up!

The moral is -

HECUBA

Cassandra!

CASSANDRA

Uh oh

HECUBA

Cassandra!

CASSANDRA

uh oh

HECUBA

Cassandra!

CASSANDRA

Yes moma!

HECUBA

Cassandra! There you are!

CASSANDRA

Hello moma.

HECUBA

Oh hello [to audience]

Cassandra, dear, it is time to get ready.

CASSANDRA

Ready?

HECUBA

Ready for the party, dear.

CASSANDRA

Oh the party!

HECUBA

Yes the party dear!

A grand party so as a girl like you could never imagine!

Men dressed in stiff seer sucker suits

Women in taffeta and crinoline sharp enough to pop the water out of a balloon

And of course the king

CASSANDRA

The king!

HECUBA

The most striking king in all the land has come especially for you!

CASSANDRA

For me!

HECUBA

For you, my dear.

CASSANDRA

For me!

HECUBA

There will be that special moment when his eyes fall upon you and the lights come down low and the music will strike. That moment that leaves the two of you alone - you move closer to him. He moves closer to you. You can feel his tongue wagging for your lips. Your mouth curls open in a snarl to take him in and - chomp! And that's love.

CASSANDRA

That's love!

HECUBA

That's love. Now don't forget, your brothers will be waiting for you at the party.

CASSANDRA

The party!

HECUBA

The party. Now, toots along and go get ready.

*[CASSANDRA kisses her mother and turns to leave. A trumpet or a musical trill sounds.
A person is arriving]*

ALL

Someone is here!

Someone is here!

TALTHYBIUS

I am here!

ALL

He is here!

TALTHYBIUS

I am here. And I bring news.

[pulls out a newspaper]

ALL

He brings news!

TALTHYBIUS

[reading out headlines from today]

...oh and here we are!

Ships have been sighted out over the cliffs! They are almost here!

ALL

They are almost here!

TALTHYBIUS

Oh!

They come in ships a plenty

And wars they have but twenty

Their ships they creak

They are so bleak

The Greeks the Greeks the Greeks!

ALL

They come in ships a plenty

And wars they have but twenty

Their ships they creak

They are so bleak

The Greeks the Greeks the Greeks!

TALTHYBIUS

Agememnon came for glory

Menalaus's wife's a whorey

Troy's treasure they seek

On a winning streak

The Greeks the Greeks the Greeks!

ALL

Agememnon came for glory

Menalaus's wife's a whorey

Troy's treasure they seek

On a winning streak

The Greeks the Greeks the Greeks!

TALTHYBIUS

Now your sorry city's sacked

With a horse they did attack

Women are meek

Scared of mare o teak

The Greeks the Greeks the Greeks!

ALL

Now our sorry city's sacked

With a horse they did attack

Women are meek

Scared of mare o teak

The Greeks the Greeks the Greeks!

ALL

Ya!

TALTHYBIUS

Look!

[The ships enter the harbor. They are probably men or women with parasols walking a tight rope. Or ship lady hats]

ALL

Look!

[The ships perform. CASSANDRA is excited. She begins to perform with them. It ends. Everyone applauds. Applause begins to echo. It warps as if in a dream.]

HECUBA

Cassandra!

CASSANDRA

CASSANDRA!

CASSANDRA

...yes?

HECUBA

Go get ready dear.

CASSANDRA

What?

HECUBA

Go get ready dear.

CASSANDRA

Oh, yes.

HECUBA

For the party

CASSANDRA

The party

[We hear the call of song in the distance]

HECUBA

Go get ready dear.

CASSANDRA

What?

HECUBA

Go get ready dear.

CASSANDRA

Oh, yes.

HECUBA

For the party

CASSANDRA

The party

[We hear the call of song in the distance]

HECUBA

Go get ready dear.

CASSANDRA

Wait what?

HECUBA

Go get ready dear.

CASSANDRA

WHAT WAS THAT?

HECUBA

For the party

[We hear the call of song in the distance]

CASSANDRA

I heard it again.

HECUBA

Go get ready.

CASSANDRA

Moma stop it!

HECUBA

For the party.

CASSANDRA

Moma!

HECUBA

Go. Go. Go get ready.

[The song is getting closer]

CASSANDRA

[forcefully] MOTHER!

HECUBA

CASSANDRA, no!

[CASSANDRA moves to the back of the stage. She opens a door or a curtain. There is ANDROMACHE, keeling as in song]

CASSANDRA

Sister?

[ANDROMACHE sees the spot light and walks towards it. grasps for it on the ground. singing "Teddy Bear Picnic"].

ANDROMACHE

This is not home.

HECUBA

It is. Home.

CASSANDRA

[Going up to her, placing a hand on her] Sister

ANDROMACHE

[singing]

CASSANDRA

Sister, look at me.

ANDROMACHE

I want to play. I've forgotten how. My son plays. I watch him as if he is speaking a tongue lost long ago to some dusty old tome. Or fallen out of the ears of men who spoke it - dripped out as some viscous pooling blood.

CASSANDRA

Play sister.

[CASSANDRA pulls a teddy bear or a doll from ANDROMACHE'S robes or things. She starts to play with it. She tries to get ANDROMACHE to participate. It is rough going but eventually they are playing together in CASSANDRA'S world.]

CASSANDRA

Once upon a time in a land far far away Where darkness reigned
And the women were all repressed and shit...

HECUBA/ANDROMACHE

No!

CASSANDRA

ok....

Once upon a time in a land...really close.

Lived ... a queen.

And that queen had many children

All beautiful.

...Even the ones with giant throbbing-

HECUBA

CASSANDRA!

CASSANDRA

OOOOKAY. Even the *boy* ones.

And they all live in the palace at the top of the wall

And every night the queen kissed the tops of their flaxen heads

And the king read them tales about kittens who get caught outside the gates

And the sun rose every morning

And the moon rose every night

And everything was beautiful.

Once upon a time in a land...well...

ANDROMACHE

I like that one.

CASSANDRA

I am cold.

ANDROMACHE

Come here.

[HECUBA and ANDROMACHE hold CASSANDRA. She cuddles with the bear. They sing to her]

See the branches

See the leaves

With your Kalamata Olive eyes

In the vale I wait for you

To return to me in the morning

That was in the spring but see

It's spring again It's spring again

Even the fallen logs

Are alive with the moss of spring again.

[A trumpet or a musical trill sounds. A person is arriving]

ALL

Someone is here!

Someone is here!

TALTHYBIUS

I am here!

ALL

He is here!

TALTHYBIUS

I am here. And I bring news.

[pulls out a newspaper]

ALL

He brings news!

TALTHYBIUS

[reading out headlines from today]

...oh and here we are!

Bear has been named to a special post!

ALL

A special post!

TALTHYBIUS

A special post! Dragon of the wall!

ALL

Dragon of the wall!

TALTHYBIUS

Dragon of the wall! Let the ceremony begin!

ALL

Yay!

[A ceremony of the most serious gravity begins. There is ritual and dressing of bear.]

TALTHYBIUS

Ladies of Troy,

I present to you the great, beastly DRAGON!

ALL

Ahhh

CASSANDRA

He's beautiful!

ALL

And he can fly!

Fly Fly Fly!

[Bear begins to fly. All cheer and chant. They sing "Teddy Bear Picnic."]

A scream starts gently off stage and grows onto stage. The people scatter leaving CASSANDRA alone. A small spot. She is in darkness. Smoke. Rubble]

[Echoes of POSIDEON'S VOICES]

CASSANDRA

Come back

Please

[Echoes of POSIDEON'S VOICES and echoes of the following:]

TALTHYBIUS

It has been decided that this boy...None of the Achaeans will ever be his master.

HECUBA

Up, up oh unhappy woman

POSEIDON

it will be called by future generations the Wooden Horse, fraught with hidden spears of wood]

CASSANDRA (Hands over her ears)

Please!

I'm all alone

Come back!

[Echoes of POSEIDON'S VOICES. The scream]

POSIDEON'S VOICE

Not alone

CASSANDRA

No.

POSIDEON'S VOICE

You are not alone, Cassandra.

CASSANDRA

NO!

Go away. I don't want you.

POSIDEON'S VOICE

[whisper] I am here.

CASSANDRA

Go. Away. Please.

[Scream starts. Continues through monologue. CASSANDRA tries to make it stop]

CASSANDRA

STOP!

[noises cease onstage]

Thank you.

[confused as if she can't stop the words from coming out of her mouth]

Let me marry my bridegroom in the house of Hades. Yes, you ignoble men! You will be ignobly buried by dark, not in the light of day. As for me, they will fling out my naked corpse, and the ravines flowing with winter water will give me to the animals to feast on near my husband's grave, me, Apollo's servant! O garlands of the god who is dearest to me, you joyful emblems of his worship, fare you well. I have left the festivals in which I once found joy. Away with you! I tear you from my body - so that while my flesh is still pure I may give them to the winds to carry to you, O lord of prophecy. Apollo!

[the lights respond to her. they listen to what she is saying. a beat]

[as if remembering]

Hecuba, my mother

ALL

Broken

CASSANDRA

Married to Priam, my father

ALL

Dead

CASSANDRA

Love of her life.

ALL

Dead

CASSANDRA

Bushels of beautiful children.

ALL

Dead

CASSANDRA

Paris, my brother

ALL

Dead

CASSANDRA

Sails with Hector my brother,

ALL

Dead

CASSANDRA

Husband of Andromache

ALL

Broken

CASSANDRA

Paris sees Helen, the queen

ALL

Whore

CASSANDRA

Helen sees Paris

ALL

Dead

CASSANDRA

The earth stops

ALL

Dead

CASSANDRA

Paris, my brother

ALL

Dead

CASSANDRA

Takes Helen, the queen

ALL

Whore

CASSANDRA

To Troy

ALL

Troy....

[pause]

CASSANDRA

Agamemnon

ALL

Dying

CASSANDRA

Follows

ALL

[Making like the sea]

CASSANDRA

Menelaus

ALL

Dying

CASSANDRA

Follows

ALL

[Making like the sea]

CASSANDRA

They land

ALL

In Troy...

CASSANDRA

They fight

ALL

In Troy...

CASSANDRA

Die

ALL

In Troy...

CASSANDRA

For her

ALL

In Troy...

CASSANDRA

The Whore

ALL

Of Troy....

CASSANDRA

Father

ALL

Dead

CASSANDRA

Brother

ALL

Dead

CASSANDRA

Brother

ALL

Dead

CASSANDRA

Sister

ALL

Dead

CASSANDRA

City

ALL

Dead

CASSANDRA

Sister

ALL

Broken

CASSANDRA

Mother

ALL

Broken

CASSANDRA

Cassandra

ALL

Broken

ALL

Broken

ALL

Broken

ALL

Broken

ALL

Broken

ALL

Broken

ALL

Broken

CASSANDRA

STOP!

[Silence]

POSIDEON'S VOICE

[starts as a whisper]

I am Poseidon. I have come leaving the salt depths of the Aegean Sea where the dancing Nereids twirl their steps so gracefully. For since the time when Pheobus and I set up the stone circle of towers around this land of Troy with our straight rules, good will towards the city of Phrygians has never left my heart. Now it is smoking. Sacked by the Argive spear, it lies in ruins. For through Pallas' schemes, Epeius, a Phocian from Parnassus, fashioned a horse pregnant with arms and sent its deadly weight inside the towers...it will be called by future generations the Wooden Horse, fraught with hidden spears of wood/

[Immediate silence. lighting change. A toy wooden horse is rolled out onstage. CASSANDRA recovers slowly. Sees the horse.]

CASSANDRA

Hello.

Hello.

[she begins to play with him, slowly and despairingly at first. gradually joyously and with glee.]

A horse.

A story about a horse.

Once upon a time lived a horse.

And that horse was magical.

It loved a family so much.

That it stayed awake every night

To watch over them.

Then one night
The horse got stupid
It played with a different family
And ate all the other family's meat
And drank all the other family's wine
And became a fat fucking horse.
And that fat fucking horse
Kept eating
And kept drinking
Until it moved beyond its home in the stable
And kept eating
And kept drinking
Its big horsey teeth
Ate up all the horsey family
Ground through bones and sinew and flesh
Until the fine powder of person
Mixed with the hot liquid of blood
And made a paste flavored with rasp screaming and salt tears
The paste filled the horsey's mouth
Ran down his cheeks
And stained them red with death
and Dying
For hours he chewed
Until the fat fucking horse
Exhausted himself
And fell
Crushing the severed remains below
And lay, daed

Spent

spewing men and decaying organs

From its gluttonously cut throat.

And all throughout the land

Was silence

And last breaths

[She begins to breathe, slowly at first, then more loudly. A slow, discordant refrain of “See the branches” begins from backstage. CASSANDRA stands. A note holds, warps. She shoves her hands over her ears. The announcement trill. ALL rush onto stage.]

ALL

Someone is here!

Someone is here!

TALTHYBIUS

I am here!

ALL

He is here!

TALTHYBIUS

I am here. And I bring news.

[pulls out a newspaper]

ALL

He brings news!

TALTHYBIUS

[reading out headlines from today]

...oh and here we are!

She's coming!

ALL

She's coming!

TALTHYBIUS

She's coming and she's coming here!

ALL

Hurray!

TALTHYBIUS

She's coming and she's coming here! Now!

ONE

Let's get ready!

ALL

Let's get ready!

CHORUS

oooooooooooooooooooo!

She's the face that launched a thousand ships

You can write a poem about her hips

She's the witch with the golden lips

Helen you're our love!

She's the ass that bounces the whole day long

Her voice it scratches just like a song

I'd love to sniff that dirty thong

Helen you're our love!

Helen you're our love!

Helen you're our love!

We'd sacrifice a thousand men!

To Helen our dear love!

Her tits they call us, to be blunt

She'll suck the cock of the weakest runt

God, I'd love to love her cunt

Helen you're our love!

Helen you're our love!

Helen you're our love!

We'd beat off in a lion's den!

To Helen our dear love!

But gents its not so easy now

To other kings she surely bowed

Our love, she's hated more than a sow

Helen you're our love!

Helen you're our love!

Helen you're our love!

Oh Helen your hell's great ten!

Oh Helen our dear love!

ANNOUNCER

Ladies of Troy and Gentlemen of Greece: put your hands together for our one our only, the woman beautiful enough to topple an entire city and put balls of blue into the hands of the royals.... HELEN OF TROY

HELEN

[Sings Fiona Apple's "Criminal" as a lounge singer/strip tease.

When she is stripped, everyone cheers. Cheering turns into clawing and grabbing at HELEN.

They are now rabid fans. All her confidence is gone. She is eventually thrown forward. She is attacked and made to perform against her will. Her makeup is smeared. She cries and cries out. They are rabid fans. Against her will she is thrown on the platform and told to sing. Every time she tries to leave, she is forced back on the platform. They prompt her into singing..."]

HELEN

[shaking and crying]

I'm the face that launched a thousand ships

I'm the ass that bounces the whole day long

You can write a poem about my hips
I'm the Bitch with the golden tits
I'd love you to sniff my dirty thong
I'll suck the cock of the weakest runt
God, I'd love you to know my cunt
I'm Helen I'm your love...

ALL

[Silence, heavy breathing]

HELEN

I'm Helen, I'm your love
I'm Helen I'm your love
I'm Helen I'm your love...

*[CASSANDRA goes up to HELEN. Kisses her on the mouth. It lingers. Then she slaps her. Hard.
ALL pull CASSANDRA off of HELEN. They carry her back as ALL wrap up HELEN in white
cloth.]*

ANDROMACHE

If you go down in the woods today,
you better not go alone.

[ALL wrap HELEN in cloth then draw a mouth in lipstick on her face.]

It's lovely down in the woods today,
but safer to stay at home;

[They begin to cart off HELEN.]

If you go down in the woods today,
you're sure of a big surprise.

If you go down in the woods today,
you'd better go in disguise;

[They circle around CASSANDRA and sing and dance, repeating the song]

ALL

[throwing things at HELEN as she leaves.]

BOO! HISS

[The cast slowly, strangely turn on CASSANDRA. They freeze.]

CASSANDRA

[She tries to get their attention. No avail. She starts to tap dance. She is hesitant. Singing]

See the Branches see the leaves...

Hey.

Hey!

With your Kalamata Olive eyes...

POSEIDON'S VOICE

I am here.

CASSANDRA

No.

POSEIDON'S VOICE

[starts as a whisper] I am Poseidon. I have come leaving the salt depths of the Aegean Sea where the dancing Nereids twirl their steps so gracefully.

CASSANDRA

NO!

POSEIDON'S VOICE

For since the time when Pheobus and I set up the stone circle of towers around this land of Troy with our straight rules, good will towards the city of Phrygians has never left my heart. Now it is smoking.

CASSANDRA

SEE THE BRANCHES SEE THE LEAVES

WITH YOUR KALAMATA OLIVE EYES

IN THE VAIL I WAIT FOR YOU

TO RETURN TO ME IN THE MORNING

POSEIDON'S VOICE

Sacked by the Argive spear, it lies in ruins. For through Pallas' schemes, Epeius, a Phocian from Parnassus, fashioned a horse pregnant with arms and sent its deadly weight inside the towers...it will be called by future generations the Wooden Horse, fraught with hidden spears of wood...

CASSANDRA

Please.

HECUBA'S VOICE

Up, up oh unhappy woman. Lift your head and your neck from the ground. This is no longer Troy.

POSEIDON'S VOICE

Scamander echoes with many a howl from female captives as they are allotted their masters.

HECUBA'S VOICE

Up, up oh unhappy woman.

POSEIDON'S VOICE

Here is Hecuba, shedding a tear for many reasons

HECUBA's VOICE

What is there here that I do not mourn in my misery? Country, Children, Husband all are gone. Why should I be silent? Why should I not lament? How wretched I am in this heavy fate which makes me lie here as I do, my limbs spread low, stretched out on my back on the ground's hard bed.

CASSANDRA

SEE THE BRANCHES SEE THE LEAVES

WITH YOUR KALAMATA OLIVE EYES

IN THE VAIL I WAIT FOR YOU

TO RETURN TO ME IN THE MORNING

POSEIDON'S VOICE

The mortal who sacks cities and temples and tombs, the holy places of the dead, is a fool. Having given them to desolation, he himself meets destruction in time to come.

HECUBA'S VOICE

I beg you not to send the frenzied Cassandra outside to be shamed before the Argives in her madness.

CASSANDRA

THAT WAS IN THE SPRING IT SEEMS

ITS SPRING AGAIN ITS SPRING AGAIN

EVEN THE FALLEN LOGS

ARE ALIVE WITH THE MOSS OF SPRING AGAIN

POSEIDON'S VOICE

Troy, unhappy Troy

HECUBA'S VOICE

Troy, unhappy Troy

HECUBA/POSEIDON'S VOICE

You no longer exist

POSEIDON'S VOICE

Unhappy too are those that leave you. Both the living and the dead.

[Blackout. Spot DSC. HECUBA is lying in it. Throughout the next section, CASSANDRA watches all, unable to affect, change or stop it]

HECUBA

Up, unhappy woman. Lift your head and your neck from the ground. This is no longer Troy. We are no longer Troy's queen. Fortune has veered round. Endure it. What is there that I do not mourn in my misery? Country Children Husband - all are gone. Why should I be silent? Why should I not be silent? Why should I lament? How wretched I am in this heavy fate which makes me lie here as I do, my limbs spread low, stretched out on my back on the ground's hard bed. Alas for my face, alas for my forehead and my ribs, how I long to twist and turn my back and my spine now to one side of my body, now to the other. As I endlessly weep and lament. But even this is music to the wretched - to sing of their joyless woes. You ships' prows which went on swift oars over the purple sea to holy Illium by the way of the harbors of Greece with their good anchorage to the accompaniment of the flutes' hated paeon. Alas, in the bays of Troy in your quest for the hateful wife of Menelaus, that foul disgrace of Castor and shame to the Eurotas, the murderer of Priam, the father who sowed fifty children, the woman who has run me, Hecuba the wretched, aground on this ruin. Alas look at where I sit here in degradation near the tents of Agamemnon. I am being led away from my house, a poor old slave woman, my head pitifully ravaged as I lament my mourning. But oh, you sorrowful wives and ill-wedded daughters of the bronze-speared Trojans, Illium is smoldering, let us bewail it. Just as the mother-bird raises the cry for its nestlings, so shall I begin the chant, a very different measure from that which once I led to honor the Phrygians' gods as I led the dance with the loud-ringing stamp of my foot while Priam leant on his scepter.

CASSANDRA

Moma?

HECUBA

Ah! Ah! I beg you not to send the frenzied Cassandra outside to be shamed before the Argives in her madness. Do not add this distress to my griefs. Oh oh! Troy, unhappy Troy, you no longer exist. Unhappy too are those who leave you, both the living and the dead.

TALTHYBIUS

Hecuba - yes you know me for I made frequent journeys to Troy as a herald from the Achean army. I am Talthybius. You got to know me in those former time, lady, and now I have come to bring you fresh information.

HECUBA

It was this, dear women, that I feared long ago.

TALTHYBIUS

You have now been allocated, all of you, if that was what made you afraid.

HECUBA

Tell us.

TALTHYBIUS

Each woman was assigned to a different man. You were not allocated all together.

HECUBA

Who has been allotted my daughter, wretched Cassandra? Tell me.

TALTHYBIUS

King Agememnon took her. There was no ballot for her.

CASSANDRA

[Hands over her ears, screaming]

NOOOOOO!

HECUBA

To be the slave of a Spartan wife? I cry alas!

TALTHYBIUS

NO as a bride in a clandestine union.

CASSANDRA

[crying]

Stars shining bright above me...

HECUBA

What, the maiden of Phoebus, to whom the golden haired god have as her gift a life free from marriage?

TALTHYBIUS

Love for the god-inspired girl pierced Agamemnon's heart.

CASSANDRA

Night breezes seem to whisper they love me...

HECUBA

My child, throw down the holy branches and fling from your body the sacred garlands which bedeck you.

TALTHYBIUS

Indeed. After all isn't it a great thing for her to win a royal bed?

CASSANDRA

Birds singing in the Sycamore Trees...

[ANDROMACHE runs to HECUBA]

HECUBA

Andromache! Where is Polyxena?

ANDROMACHE

Your daughter Polyxena is dead. She was butchered at Achilles' tomb, a gift to a lifeless corpse.

HECUBA

There is no limit to misfortunes. They are beyond number. One woe treads on another's heel.

[CASSANDRA begins to laugh. She is watching the fun from before played out in front of her.]

CASSANDRA

If you go down in the woods today...

ANDROMACHE

I am being led off as plunder with my son. Nobility has utterly transformed and has turned to slavery.

HECUBA

Alas, my child, for your unholy sacrifice. Again I cry alas! What foul murder!

CASSANDRA

Be prepared for a big surprise...

TALTHYBIUS

Wife of Hector, the best of the Phrygians in days gone by, do not hate me. It is with great reluctance that I have to announce the common decision of the Danaans and the grandsons of Pelops.

ANDROMACHE

What is it? Your first words hint at bad news to come.

TALTHYBIUS

It has been decided that this boy...How can I bring myself to say it?

ANDROMACHE

Will have a different master from me? No!

TALTHYBIUS

None of the Achaeans will ever be his master.

ANDROMACHE

Then is he to be left here, a last trace of the Phrygians?

TALTHYBIUS

I do not know how I can easily tell you my bad news.

ANDROMACHE

I thank you for your consideration - unless you are bringing bad tidings.

TALTHYBIUS

They are going to kill your boy. There you know the worst.

ANDROMACHE

Alas. You bring me word of something even more appalling than my marriage.

TALTHYBIUS

Odysseus prevailed as he spoke among all the Greeks...

ANDROMACHE

O Sorrow! Sorrow! Our sufferings are beyond all measure!

TALTHYBIUS

Saying that they should not bring the son of a noble father to manhood...

ANDROMACHE

I pray that such views may win the day when it comes to his children.

TALTHYBIUS

And that they must throw him from the towers of Troy. But let this happen and you will appear the wiser.

Do not cling on to the child but grieve over your woes with a noble heart. You have no power - so do not delude yourself that you have. There is nowhere you can turn for help. No you must think about your

situation. Your city and your husband are no more. You are conquered and we are capable of fighting against a single woman. In view of all of this, I hope you will not fall in love with conflict or do soothing which will bring shame on yourself or rouse hostility, or fling curses at the Achaeans. For if you say anything which will anger the army, this boy of yours will not be buried or meet with compassion while if you keep quiet and bear your fortunes with a good grace, you will not leave his body behind unburied and you will find the Achaeans more sympathetic.

ANDROMACHE

[turning to the audience as if he is Astynax]

Oh my dearest one, my child so extravagantly honored, you will leave your wretched mother and die at your enemies' hands. Your father's courage has done you no good service. Oh my unhappy marriage bed, the wedding for which I came to Hector's halls long ago. It was not to bear a son to be slaughtered by the Danaans as a sacrificial victim. Oh my child, are you weeping? Are you conscious of your misfortune? Why have you grasped at me with your hands, clinging to my dress, falling under my protecting wings like a young bird? A deadly fall from a great height will break your neck and stop your breath. There will be no pity for you. Oh my baby, whom I hold in my arms, so dear to your mother. O the sweet fragrance of your sin. It was for nothing then that this breast suckled you in your swaddling clothes. All my labour was in vain, all the tasks that wore me down. Now you must embrace your mother. You never will again. Cling to the woman who gave you birth. Wind your arms around my back. Fasten your lips to mine. Take him. Carry him off. Fling him down. If that is what you have decided! Feast on his flesh. For it is the gods who are destroying us and we can find no way to ward off death from the boy. Hide away my wretched body. Fling it onto the ships. Yes, I am off to make a new marriage. I who has lost my son.

HECUBA

Unhappy Troy, you have lost countless men because of one woman and her hateful marriage.

TALTHYBIUS

[leading ASTYNAX away. BEAR?]

HECUBA

[held back]

Oh my child, son of my wretched son, your mother and I are being robbed of your life. There is no justice here. What am I to do? What service can I perform for you ill-fated boy? I can give you these blows to my head, these hands pounding my breast. I have power to do that. Woe for the city! I cry woe for you! What suffering remains for us to endure? What is there to stand in the way of our total destruction here and now?

[Movement piece. The crowd watches ASTYNAX climb the wall. And fly off of it. It should look like BEAR flying earlier, but solemn. CASSANDRA tells a story during]

CASSANDRA

Once upon a time in a land...really close.

Lived ... a queen.

And that queen had many children

All beautiful.

Even the *boy* ones.

And they all live in the palace at the top of the wall

And every night the queen kissed the tops of their flaxen heads

And the king read them tales about kittens who get caught outside the gates

And the sun rose every morning

And the moon rose every night

And everything was beautiful.

Once upon a time in a land this land.

HECUBA

My daughter?

CASSANDRA

And that queen had many children

All beautiful.

And they all live in the palace at the top of the wall

HECUBA

Cassandra?

CASSANDRA

And every night the queen kissed the tops of their flaxen heads

And the king read them tales about kittens who get caught outside the gates

And the sun rose every morning

And the moon rose every night

HECUBA

Cass-

CASSANDRA

And everything was beautiful.

Once upon a time in this land.

[HELEN appears, thrown onstage. The women advance on her. HECUBA moves to hold them back]

HECUBA

Women of Troy. Don't let her die without listening. She may speak in her own defense. And let me speak in opposition to her. For you know nothing of her wickedness in Troy. When you put together both sides of the debate, her death is inevitable. There will be no escape for her. So called Helen of Troy. What words to you speak to save your life?

ALL

Speak!

HELEN

[pointing to HECUBA, righting herself]

First, this woman gave birth to the start of our misfortunes when she gave birth to Paris. Secondly, old Priam brought destruction to Troy and on me when he failed to kill his son then and there - listen, please, to the truth of what happened next: the goddesses fought and Cypris expressed her admiration for my loveliness and promised to give me to him if she outdid the rival goddesses in beauty. She gave me to him; my second marriage fated by the gods. In view of this, cannot you see now how utterly wrong it would be to kill me? Paris married me by force, and in my home in Troy I suffered a bitter slavery. No victor's prize for me! DO you want to be superior to the Gods? Only a fool would wish for that. And you my fallen queen, are no fool.

HECUBA

I do not believe Cypris and Hera are to blame for your wrong doings. You, whose reputation sails before her. Why should the goddess Hera have conceived so great a desire to be beautiful? Was it so that she could win a better husband than Zeus? Don't try to give repeatability to your crime by making the goddesses out to be fools. You will certainly not convince intelligent people of this...what a ridiculous idea this is! That my son came with *CYPRIS* to your husband's house? Couldn't she have taken you to Troy while staying quietly in heaven? My son was outstandingly beautiful and when you saw him your

mind was utterly possessed by sexual passion. Every time men commit actions of uncontrolled immorality, that is the fault of Aphrodite. Enough of this. You say that my son took you off by force. Which of the Spartans witnessed this? Did anyone hear you shouting out for help? Then when you came to Troy

[The cast act out the following, in order.]

- *The anger of HECUBA*
- *The defence of ANDROMACHE*
- *The murder of ASTYNAX*
- *The return of HELEN*
- *The removal of HELEN*
- *The removal of ANDROMACHE*

[They strip CASSANDRA. Scrub her clean as she weeps. Dress her in Trojan Robes.]

[TALTHYBIUS gently grabs her hand. He leads her out of the theatre. The Women are weeping and waving.]

CASSANDRA

[Slow fade in lights throughout. Maybe audience blinders?]

Hold up the fire, display it, bring it here! I pay reverence - look upon me, look! - to this temple with my torches, O lord Hymenaeus, happy is the bridegroom, happy am I in my coming marriage to a king in Argos. Hymen, O Hymenaeus, lord! For you, mother, go one mourning my dead father and dear fatherland with tears and laments, while I light up the blaze of my torch to a gleaming radiance for my

marriage, giving light to you, O Hymenaeus, giving light to you, O Hecate, as is the custom when maidens wed. Swing your foot high, lead the dance, lead it - Euan. euoi! as for my father's happiest fortunes. Holy is the dance. Lead it Pheobus. It is in your temple that I make sacrifice, crowned with a garland of bay. Hymen, o Hymenaeus, Hymen! Dance mother, lead the dance, twirl your feet this way and that, join with me happily as I move mine! Oh sound out the wedding song in honor of the bride with songs and shouts of blessing. Come O daughters of the Phrygians with your lovely dresses, sing of the husband who is fated to share my marriage bed. Mother, deck my victorious head with garlands and rejoice in my marriage to a king. Escort me, and if I seem less than eager to you, push me along by force. For if Loxias exists, Agamemnon, the famous lord of the Achaeans, will marry me in a union more disastrous than Helen's. Yes, I shall kill for him, and I shall lay waste to his house in revenge for my brothers and my father. But I shall say no more of that. I shall not sing of the axe which will cut into my neck and others' necks as well and the agonies of matricide to which my marriage will lead and the ruin of the house of Atreus. No I shall show that our city here is happier than the Achaeans. I may have the god in me but nevertheless I shall stand outside my frenzy to say this much. In their hunt for Helen, the Greeks lost countless men - because of one woman one love affair. In a hateful cause, their clever general killed what was dearest to him, sacrificing for his brother his delight in children in his house, for the sake of a woman and that woman who had not been carried off by force. No she went willingly [...] As for Troy, the wives died as widows the fathers with no sons in their houses - they had brought up their children in vain. They died for their fatherland, and the corpses of any whom the spear took were carried to their homes by their friends. The earth of their native land embraced them and were shrouded by the hands of their families... Yes, anyone who is sane should avoid war. But if it comes to that, it is no shameful garland for his city if a man dies nobly, while if he dies ignobly, it brings disgrace. For these reasons, mother, you must not feel pity for our land or for my marriage. For by this union, I shall destroy my bitterest enemies, and yours. [...] Farewell, my mother. Do not shed a tear, O my dear fatherland and my brothers beneath the ground and our father who begat us, it will not be long before you greet me. I shall come among the dead as a victor. I shall have laid waste the house of the sons of Atreus, the men who have destroyed us.

Goodbye Mother.

Goodbye Sister

Goodbye you.

And you.

See the branches See the leaves

With your Kalamata Olive eyes

In this vale I wait for you

To return to me in the morning

That was in the spring but see

Its spring again! Its spring again!

Even the fallen logs

Are alive with the moss of spring again

[HECUBA is held back. She is struck by TALTHYBIUS. It is a scene of chaos. CASSANDRA is singing "See the Branches." The lights fade to black. The sound continues. EnD OF PLAY]

FALLEN

A New Play By Theresa Ohanian

Based on The Trojan Women by Euripides

Developed by The Original Cast

Draft Ten

Hecuba

Andromache

Cassandra

Helen

Talthybius

Marina

Rose

The show opens when the audience is let inside the theatre. Raucous fun music from the early 20th century is playing. The cast of women are washing and preparing for the show. Their attitude is sullen and nervous. The women are whispering their personal stories as they do so. TALTHYBIUS is in the audience, interacting with the patrons. Finally, the lights dim, the spot comes on TALTHYBIUS. There is a simple platform and a vintage microphone onstage.

NOTE: The audience is cast as a “Male Chorus” of Greek Soldiers. All their reactions are indented, italicized and bolded. In the first workshop production, these responses were done by sound design, with speakers surrounding the audience

TALTHYBIUS

(Addressing the Audience)

Welcome, Welcome, Gentlemen

To that haven of hope

That freedom from the fires

That silken seat among thorns

That last bastion of beauty

Alive amid the roguish rubble:

The Theatre.

This singular night

Before we set sail for lands far away

That we call home

We welcome the ladies

Of this fallen terrain

To grace the stage for one night only
To tantalize and delight
To fire up and ignite
That little greek engine inside all of you
That makes you powerful enough
To pull this land
Limb from Limb
And live to tell the tale.
Here among the bitter body of wasted lives That once was Troy
We, the victors, sit, together
Knees knocking in anticipation
To watch, together
The ultimate relics of this land
Perform, together
To buy, together
These amazing specimens
For our reward
Before spears sail on the seas
Back to their homes, together
After war, together
After death, together
After the after life, together

ALL TOGETHER

Tonight

(How nice)

Gentlemen and more gentlemen,

Let me pause for the briefest moment

To introduce myself:

I am Talthybius

Your brother, brother-in-arms

I served, as you did,

At the hip of the great

Agamemnon

Bravely and without

Thought for my own safety

During the ten year war

Slept on the ground

Watched death surround us

And here,

Under the lights

I bring you a night tonight

You will never forget

Now, gentlemen, listen with open ears

I need not tell *you*

Of the horrors of war

For it is you

Who have seen them

With your own two eyes

It was in a dark room

Much like this

That I

Sat behind clutched wine

Listened to the tales of woe

From a soldier much like yourselves

Death and Fighting and Death said he

Plague the territory

And you sir, only you

Know how to save me.

Cut through my heart

Said he

And end my pain

For it is likely I will never love again

I have seen

The face that launched a thousand ships
And poetry built upon golden hips
I have seen her, which is to love her
And for her I would murder again and again
So stop my hand, dear friend
And end my pain.

I took his hand in mine
And placed it over my chest
Into his eyes I looked
And saw the terror reflected there
And knew I had to do something to ease his wretchedness
So as the fires still burn
In this golden city
Allow me to cool your alarm
For the women we have
Are alluring and dangerous
but will never do you harm
They are here today
To prove their worth
And thank your honoured selves
For fighting fast and holding strong and

All the wars you've won
Lean back and relax
Sit, together
Sweat dripping in anticipation
Watch, together
The writhing glittering bodies on the stage
Perform, together
After war, together
After death, together
After the after life, together
ALL TOGETHER
Tonight
(How nice)

And now, gentlemen,
let me do you the honour
Of introducing, the Women of Troy

“Give Me A Man” begins

The women parade, choreographed, to TALTHYBIUS's introductions

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vRu-CNkeCOE>

TALTHYBIUS

This little hell raiser is a handful! At only sixteen, she tried to fight off our ranks with her kitchen knives. Newly widowed and ready for a husband, she's the lady that brings the big boobs and the bad jokes⁸ - gentlemen get up in arms for MARINA!

MARINA

(reading from a card)

Mmm...you all look so good.

GREEK MEN

Hoots and cheers

TALTHYBIUS

Next up, we have a beauty that shines from within. Always the life of the party, this firecracker can really light your wick. A young bloom plucked and ready for the taking, Gentlemen, let me introduce ROSE!

ROSE

(reading from a card)

It's all for you.

⁸ written by Coco Radau

GREEK MEN

Hoots and cheers

TALTHYBIUS

Keeping it going, we come to the royals

That once ruled this bloodied ground:

This little beauty

Was once a priestess for Apollo

And now she's up for grabs

So get those hands ready

And those billfolds out

I hope you like your bitches crazy, men

Because this one is loonier than a blind sage

The innocent, the lovely

Cassandra, Princess of Troy!

CASSANDRA

(reading from a card)

Let me show you how to love.

GREEK MEN

Hoots and cheers

TALTHYBIUS

Gentle sirs and surly gents

We've born-again this maiden for you

Saddened and quiet

But not just recently

Oh no sirs

Wife her now

Before she has the chance to say anything

This girly's tamed!

She's so quiet the boys say

She'll only open her mouth

When her husband makes her

Former Wife of Hector

And Princess of Troy

ANDROMACHE!

Give us a walk, girly.

Twirl!⁹

⁹ Written by Eilish Waller

ANDROMACHE

(reading from a card)

I want you all.

GREEK MEN

Hoots and cheers

TALTHYBIUS

She once

Graced the halls of the Palace

And called it her own

Second wife

To the Slave Born Priam

GREEK MEN

BOOO!

Calm, gentlemen!

It's time to teach this queen a lesson!

She's yours for the taking

If you don't mind a little lip

Fiery and ferocious

She's a force to be reckoned with
Gentlemen, we are truly honoured today
As we lay our eyes upon
Hecuba, the fallen Queen of Troy!

HECUBA

(reading from a card)

Come and get me, boys.

GREEK MEN

Hoots and cheers

"Give Me the Man" routine

TALTHYBIUS

But let's get started at the top

Drum Roll

Now, Gentlemen,
Let me tell you a tale
Of a gift from Gods

Her father was Zeus
And her mother a legendary beauty
Its almost unfair to have her
Step on the same stage as
the rest of these soon to be
Wives and Slaves
For her feet
Should only meet
Rose petals and diamond brick
Instead of these dusty old boards
It's the face that launched a thousand ships
And poetry that sings upon golden hips
The bitch that kisses with poisoned lips
The one the only
HELEN OF TROY!

GREEK MEN

Hoots and cheers

The curtain parts and HELEN is revealed. She's more done up than the rest of the women. When she's done, she disappears behind the curtain again.

HELEN sings “Criminal”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iTP6-m7JxTE>

The women sit behind her, watching in contempt.

HELEN

I've been a bad, bad girl

I've been careless with a delicate man

And it's a sad, sad world

When a girl will break a boy

just because she can

Don't you tell me to deny it

I've done wrong and I want

to suffer for my sins

I've come to you 'cause

I need guidance to be true

And I just don't know where I can begin

What I need is a good defence

'Cause I'm feeling like a criminal

And I need to be redeemed

To the one I've sinned against

Because he's all I ever knew of love

Heaven help me for the way I am

Save me from these evil deeds

before I get them done

I know tomorrow brings t

he consequence at hand

But I keep living this day l

Like the next will never come

Oh help me but don't tell me to deny it

I've got to cleanse myself of all these lies 'till I'm good enough for him

I've got a lot to lose and I'm

Bettin' high so I'm begging you

Before it ends just tell me where to begin

What I need is a good defence

'Cause I'm feeling like a criminal

And I need to be redeemed

To the one I've sinned against

Because he's all I ever knew of love

Let me know the way

Before there's hell to pay

Give me room to lay the law and let me go

I've got to make a play

To make my lover stay

So what would an angel say

The devil wants to know

What I need is a good defense

'Cause I'm feeling like a criminal

And I need to be redeemed

To the one I've sinned against

Because he's all I ever knew of love

What I need is a good defense

'Cause I'm feeling like a criminal

And I need to be redeemed

To the one I've sinned against

Because he's all I ever knew of love

TALTHYBIUS

Good Gods!

She's amazing!

Yowza!

CASSANDRA

Pushing past TALTHYBIUS to get to the mic

A rumbling is heard; a drone note. We move into slow motion. We hear whispers of the women's stories and CASSANDRA's fairy tale until the fairy tale breaks through and we hear it in full.

CASSANDRA

pouring out of her

There once was a princess

Locked in her own mind

She spent her days

Watching flowers wilt

And dancing in time with the dust

That made the toys on her shelves grey

One day

As ice melted on her window

She saw a prince

From a neighbouring kingdom

Ride to the gate of her palace

He had heard of her beauty

And the riches her stories held

And had come to take her home with him

To make them his own

Knowing that if she was taken

The stories in her head

Would scatter to the wind

She hid

Amidst her books

And lay quiet

As the prince

Continued to pound at the door

Complimenting the beauty

He had never seen/

*Immediate shift back into real time. TALTHYBIUS moves past CASSANDRA to regain
his position.*

TALTHYBIUS

Gentlemen, my sincerest apologies!

What I believe Cassandra is trying to say

Is that your future is as bright as your past.

CASSANDRA

That's not what/

TALTHYBIUS

/Hesitant though she seems, the story of

Neoptolomus's courageous victory over

The slave-born King Priam of Troy tends to overwhelm.

GREEK MEN

Cheering

TALTHYBIUS

Gentlemen and More Gentlemen

Let's travel back to that day...

Who could forget the epic gate of Neoptolomus, son of Achilles, as he marched through the pathetic spears tossed by Priam at the Alter of Zeus? Like a discarded tomato in the dirt, he abandoned his second choice of a wife. The powerful Hecuba has a noble heart, and quietly grieving her former spouse she years for a new man. Tell me, who here thinks himself eligible to soften a royal heart?¹⁰ Gentlemen, who can soften a royal heart?

GREEK MEN

Cheering from the crowd

TALTHYBIUS

I said gentlemen, Gentlemen, who can soften a royal heart?!

GREEK MEN

Cheering from the crowd

HECUBA starts at TALTHYBIUS and is held back

TALTHYBIUS

LET'S KEEP THIS NIGHT GOING!

GREEK MEN

¹⁰ written by Ben Siapas

Cheering from the crowd

TALTHYBIUS

Straight from the embers of

the Queen's chambers

Our second performer tonight

Graces her steps like the royalty she is

Priam's very own bitch

To perform here for you

Gentlemen, it is my honour to present

HECUBA the FALLEN QUEEN OF TROY!

HECUBA is forced onstage.

She reluctantly sings/lip synchs "I'm The Last of the Red Hot Mamas."

Chorus Enters, Choreographed

Upbeat, vampy music plays.

TALTHYBIUS

Now let's take a quick moment

To get to know some of our lesser known

Beauties tonight

Gentlemen and more Gentlemen,
Let me once again introduce
MARINA and ROSE!

Enter MARINA and ROSE¹¹

TALTHYBIUS

(vamping to the audience)

Hey there, ladies!

MARINA/ROSE

(reading from a card)

Hey there, Talthybius.

TALTHYBIUS

Now Marina, what's your idea

Of the perfect Greek date?

MARINA

(reading from a card)

¹¹ jokes written by Coco Radau, Sierra Reilly, Katherine Doering

I'd like to play Hydra-Go-Seek

Ratatat

GREEK MEN

Applause

TALTHYBIUS

Rose, what will make you

A great Greek woman?

ROSE

(reading from a card)

I'm always the centaur of attention.

Ratatat

GREEK MEN

Applause

TALTHYBIUS

Marina, what's your best feature?

MARINA

(reading from a card)

You Odyssey my eyes

Ratatat

GREEK MEN

Applause

TALTHYBIUS

Rose, what do you do before you go on a big date?

ROSE

(reading from a card)

I get a Hera appointment

Ratatat

GREEK MEN

Applause

TALTHYBIUS

Now, Marina, do you get many *SEAMEN* on your docks?

Ratatat

GREEK MEN

Laughter

MARINA

[slaps TALTHYBIUS]

TALTHYBIUS

(clapping, nervous)

Aren't they lovely?!

Take a bow ladies and get out of here!

GREEK MEN

Applause

The women bow, awkwardly. a pause

Go!

They leave

TALTHYBIUS

Gentlemen

Now we have a very special

Amusement for you tonight

This woman, royal by birth

Has a tragic tale.

Her beauty is almost incomparable

And her purity so true

That she swears Apollo himself

Fell in love with her

And hold onto your butts

She thinks she can tell the future!

Gentlemen, the innocent,

The lovely, the “all knowing” Cassandra!

CASSANDRA

CASSANDRA hesitates. She goes to the microphone. She is nervous. She alternates between telling her fairy tale and singing “She’s like the Swallow,” (<https://musescore.com/user/110630/scores/126647>). When CASSANDRA sings, she is more

beautiful than HELEN. When she speaks, we are in a trance and no one can touch her. A rumbling is heard; maybe a drone note.

CASSANDRA begins to sing as she is supposed to do

Hesitantly, with starts and stops

We hear the drone note start again

She hears it, snaps into action as the world slows around her.

CASSANDRA

There once was a princess

Locked in her own mind

She spent her days

Watching flowers wilt

And dancing in time with the dust

That made the toys on her shelves grey

One day

As ice melted on her window

She saw a prince

From a neighbouring kingdom

Ride to the gate of her palace

He had heard of her beauty
And the riches her stories held
And had come to take her home with him
To make them his own

Hysterically, pouring out of her

Knowing that if she was taken
The stories in her head
Would scatter to the wind
She hid
Amidst her books
And lay quiet
As the prince
Continued to pound at the door
Complimenting the beauty
He had never seen...

Turning to her mother, behind her

...momma?

CASSANDRA collapses. HECUBA begins running to her but she and The Other

Women move back into slow motion.

CASSANDRA

I see it, momma!

She laughs. The words pour out of her.

She can move in real time, while the others are in slow motion.

To the audience:

blood, so much blood.

down the stairs, out the door

blood, so much blood

there i am

holding my head

seeing him leave

his axe trailing red

all of us

gone below

you see me momma?

a queen of hearts

beating not
and my owner
bathing in his own red
his son laughing
me laughing
hades laughing
all laughing

She laughs

it's a joke, momma
do you hear it?
i am a joke
a warning
as i move from this life to the next

Pause

do not cry momma.
let your tears make you hard
for it is not me
that suffers

i see her
burning
like so many of our kin
do you see it, momma?
i do.
and you
flying across blue
to a place
that is a prison called home
oh, momma.
no
come back
or join me
below
momma?
i cannot see you anymore
but i know.
you will tell my secrets
so i live on
won't you momma?

She laughs

it's all a joke, momma
that we are telling
with no punchline
just keep saying
the same lines
over and over again
but it is us
that receives the punch
we line up
for the punch
and take it
as women do
momma!
they're laughing!
at me!
finally,
joy breaks cries
and they laugh
and tell my tale.
a punchline
for someone else's funny

it won't work, momma
what you have planned
we are all bound here
to stay forever
no matter who goes on
written in ink
to stain pages
for eternity

The princess search her shelves
For something with which to fight
In the pages of a book
Which told of summers
And sleepy kittens that got caught
Outside the tower walls
The princess found
A single match

The prince broke through the door
And began searching for the princess
The princess knew what she had to do
With shaking fingers

She took the match
And with a single move
She lit the flame across her cheek
The heat consuming the princess as it grew.

Through the fire, the princess
could see the prince's face.
He was angry of being denied his prize.
She screamed in silence, free and safe.
And her stories were downed by the flames.

men
pick our words
sing our songs
play act our lives
a joke.
momma, it's a joke!
a morality tale
to warn
and blame

Back into real time.

*It's a fray with TALTHYBIUS trying to carry off CASSANDRA
and HECUBA trying to pull him off of her.*

CASSANDRA yells to the audience:

Hey, YOU

Look at me! Look!

We are still here

For tonight

So stare at us

And laugh as we entertain

We soon will be thrown to the heavens

and made into stars

whose light will be reflected

for millennia

your daughters' daughters' daughters

will know our pain

and fight this fight again

and again

and again

and again

She's being carried off

TALTHYBIUS

laughing

Who doesn't like their lovers

A little on the crazy side?

Am I right, gentlemen?!

GREEK MEN

Cheering

Now gentlemen,

It is time for a sad tale.

The tale of the last Son of Troy

Little Astynax, son of Hector

Was no warrior like his father

Weak and pale,

He hid behind his nursery curtains

When the soldiers came to call

Like a wounded sparrow

Nesting in a tree

His mother

Fought as long and as hard

As Hector himself

But little Astynax

Cried feebly

For milk

And his mamma

Is this the man to come for us?

GREEK MEN

NO!

Is this the warrior

That will avenge the fallen Trojans?

GREEK MEN

NO!

IS THIS THE MAN, so frail and afraid,

that will come for us as we sleep

And steal

Concealed

Into our camp as we did through Troy's weak walls?

GREEK MEN

NO!

That's right!

We felled this would be King

And locked him up

So his cunning mother

Does as she's told.

She is strong

She is smart

She is quite a prize

And will go to the highest bidder

With the hardest heart!

Let me introduce you to the woman who wooed Hector

The mother of the last son in Troy

ANDROMACHE!

ANDROMACHE song "Since I Lost My Baby."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p3sql4c1BZk>

ANDROMACHE

The sun is shining, there's plenty of light

a new day is dawning sunny and bright
But after I've been crying all night
the sun is cold and the new day seems old
Since I lost my baby (since I lost my baby)
Since I lost my baby (since I lost my baby)
The birds are singing and the children are playing,
there's plenty of work and the bosses are paying
Not a sad word should our young hearts be saying, but fun is a bore,
and with money I'm poor
Since I lost my baby (since I lost my baby)
Since I lost my baby (since I lost my baby)
Next time I'll be kinder (next time I'll be kinder)
Won't you please help me find her (won't you please help me find her)
Someone just remind her (someone just remind her)
Of this love she left behind her (of this love she left behind her)
'Til I find her I'll be crying (Til' I find her I'll be crying)
Everyday I'm groing kinder, find her, please find her, find her
If I can find my baby
Been looking everywhere, baby I really really care
Determination is fading fast
Inspiration is a thing of the past
Can't see how my hope's gonna last

good things are bad, and what's happy is sad

Since I lost my baby (since I lost my baby)

Since I lost my baby (since I lost my baby)

I feel so bad (since I lost my baby)

I feel so sad (since I lost my baby)

TALTHYBIUS

Look at her.

Touching her

She's got the voice of an angel

And a courageous soul

Any woman who can woo a warrior

Would make a fine addition

To the house of a soldier

Grabbing ANDROMACHE and forcing her forward away from the mic

TALTHYBIUS

Gentlemen, the real show is about to begin!

You fought
You were wounded
Most of you died
You slept on the ground for ten years
For this moment
The moment where
You are given your reward
And my own pockets
Will not be as full as your homes
With the love and adoration
Of these beautiful women
Are you with me men?

GREEK MEN

Sound of cheering

Are you with me men?!

GREEK MEN

Sound of cheering

Then let's let the bidding begin!

For ANDROMACHE WIFE OF HECTOR!

Do I hear 1000 drachmas?

Sound of auction and bidding. Upbeat music (the same as the chorus introduction?) plays. The women go to Andromache and in the din tell her to be strong and not fight. Finally, a man in the audience wins. TALTHYBIUS goes to one of the suitcases, picks it up and hands it to her. A man wins the bid. We hear cheering.

TALTHYBIUS

Oh, sir.

You are a lucky man

Your fighting has earned you coin

And your reward is in your loin

GREEK MEN

Laughter.

TALTHYBIUS goes and gets ANDROMACHE'S bag.

Hands it to her.

So go, my lovely

And let him take his prize

ANDROMACHE, bag in hand, starts walking toward the audience.

HECUBA

screaming

No!

She pushes past the rest of the women to get to TALTHYBIUS. She pulls a dagger and places it to his throat. ANDROMACHE stops walking.

TALTHYBIUS

Shit.

SHIT!

Hecuba?

HECUBA

Do not speak.

You, gentlemen of Greece

You may not see me as Royalty anymore

But the end of my knife is king

So listen carefully

Or he dies by my hand

Tonight

She knocks out TALTHYBIUS with a blow to the head

CASSANDRA

Laughs and claps

The women tie up TALTHYBIUS

HECUBA

Do you not see

That we are not cattle

For branding and herding through life

As your spoils?

Listen to me

“Gentlemen of Greece”

We are the mares

That remain of Troy

And we run free

She pushes TALTHYBIUS, struggling against her,

to the women who bind his mouth and hands.

HECUBA

Our lives were filled with beauty
Of bay leaves and mint
That kissed our cheeks as
We made lives for our men
On windblown cliffs
Men that we loved
That loved us

My marriage was not perfect
But it was based on admiration
Priam took me into his heart
Before his bed
And swore loyalty and respect

Happy were we all
Before you came
“The greeks”
Riding a horse made of wood
Into my home

I watched
As you slaughtered
Every son of Troy
And danced
Bathed in our blood
Singing tunes of bravery
In celebration of your genocide¹²

Months have passed
And the decay of bodies
And fear
Run rank through my nose.
We have eaten the flesh
Of our brothers
To stop the screams of our stomachs
And have whispered the names
Of the fallen through tears
As we fall into dreamless sleeps
Or see our sons
In waking nightmares
As they fall again and again

¹² inspired by Irena Huljik

Women disappear from our tents

Every day

To be made slave

To those who call themselves

Conqueror

Being bought and sold

With less thought

Than simple dust

Being swept out the door

We have starved

Been beaten

Killed the tender parts of our souls

Just to survive

To be sold tonight

To the calloused hands of our enemy

We may be prisoners

But our minds are free

Those of us who can give birth

And raise sons

Can take them down

One by one

My sister

Andromache

Wife of my son

Will not fall into your hands tonight, sir

And neither will we.

The women are rubbing

Their makeup off

We will die

Before being forced onto your ships

To serve as wife and whore and slave

In your homes so far away

This is our land

Our home

Our body

Our spirit

Our breath

Our life

And we would rather

Be slit, split open

To stain the saturated ground once again

Than leave with any of you

TALTHYBIUS starts to stir.

HECUBA notices. Going to him.

HECUBA

But you all came for a show, didn't you?

DIDN'T YOU?!

GREEK MEN

No response

Ladies, let's give them a show...

The women pick up the still groggy TALTHYBIUS. They demand the music for "Give Me The Man." They push the bound TALTHYBIUS through the choreography to his gagged protests, laughing and making fun of him. They are getting their revenge by making him do what they had to do. The women place him into his reserved seat in the

audience. Throughout the next session he tries to untie himself. They each stop to introduce themselves in the mic, except this time, they are themselves, having a good time while they do so.

CASSANDRA screams suddenly, the music stops and all turn to her.

CASSANDRA

There once was a princess

Locked in her own mind

She spent her days

Watching flowers wilt

And dancing in time with the dust

That made the toys on her shelves grey

One day

As ice melted on her window

She saw a prince

From a neighbouring kingdom

Ride to the gate of her palace

He had heard of her beauty

And the riches her stories held

And had come to take her home with him
To make them his own

Knowing that if she was taken
The stories in her head
Would scatter to the wind
She hid
Amidst her books
And lay quiet
As the prince
Continued to pound at the door
Complimenting the beauty
He had never seen

CASSANDRA begins to sing “She’s Like the Swallow”

The women slowly join her.

ANDROMACHE

My son.
They took him.
Ripped him from my arms

Promising to give him back

When I have fulfilled their wishes

Please -

He's about

gesturing

This tall.

He's beautiful

Astynax

My baby

And smells like the sea

Please?

CASSANDRA

The princess search her shelves

For something with which to fight

In the pages of book

Which told of summers

And sleepy kittens that got caught

Outside the tower walls

The princess found

A single match

ROSE

Can you see me?

Through the lights?

Look at me, please?

And see me.

I am here, now.

Can you see me?

Please?

CASSANDRA

The princess search her shelves

For something with which to fight

In the pages of a book

Which told of summers

And sleepy kittens that got caught

Outside the tower walls

The princess found

A single match

The prince broke through the door

And began searching for the princess
The princess knew what she had to do
With shaking fingers
She took the match
And with a single move
She lit the flame across her cheek
The heat consuming the princess as it grew.

MARINA

I walk to the window
I see the ship in the harbour
I walk back
I sit, alone
I walk to the window
I see the ships in the harbour
I walk back.
I sit, alone
I walk to the window...

CASSANDRA

Through the fire, the princess
could see the prince's face.

He was angry of being denied his prize.

She screamed in silence, free and safe.

And her stories were downed by the flames.

HELEN approaches the microphone

HECUBA

Not. You.

HELEN

Hecuba, please. Let me speak.

HECUBA

(laughing, sarcastically)

Gentlemen!

Your whore wants to speak!

Should we let her?

Silence

It is because of her

That your brothers died

That you haven't seen your wives
And children in ten years
She's the reason you've slept on the ground
Bled for days
And have committed the atrocities
That pulled our world apart.
And now, she wants to speak.

The women begin to boo

CASSANDRA

Helen Helen
Queen of Troy
Lost her head
To a Trojan Boy
Followed him home
Now all alone
She'll say sorry but still play coy

ALL (circling her)

Helen Helen
Queen of Troy

Lost her head
To a Trojan Boy
Followed him home
Now all alone
She'll say sorry but still play coy

HELEN

STOP!
Please. Stop.
You see me as a villain
I understand
But I am as much a victim as you

HECUBA

You know nothing of our pain.
You stand here, "Helen of Troy"
As one of us.
But you are not like us.
You let your sex drive you
Let men fight over you
Delight in your promiscuity
Destroy lives

You have destroyed us.

Gentlemen of Greece

Look at the whore you have made.

HELEN

It wasn't my fault -

The Gods -

HECUBA

There are no gods left in Troy.

There is *no one* left in Troy

Except us.

Alone.

The women surround HELEN

CASSANDRA

Hecuba, my mother

ALL

Broken

CASSANDRA

Married to Priam, my father

ALL

Dead

CASSANDRA

Love of her life.

ALL

Dead

CASSANDRA

Bushels of beautiful children.

ALL

Dead

CASSANDRA

Paris, my brother

ALL

Dead

CASSANDRA

Sails with Hector my brother,

ALL

Dead

CASSANDRA

Husband of Andromache

ALL

Broken

CASSANDRA

Paris sees Helen, the queen

ALL

Whore

CASSANDRA

Helen sees Paris

ALL

Dead

CASSANDRA

The earth stops

ALL

Dead

CASSANDRA

Paris, my brother

ALL

Dead

CASSANDRA

Takes Helen, the queen

ALL

Whore

CASSANDRA

To Troy

ALL

Troy....

CASSANDRA

Agamemnon

ALL

Dying

CASSANDRA

Follows

ALL

Making sounds as if they were the sea

CASSANDRA

Menelaus

ALL

Dying

CASSANDRA

Follow

ALL

Making sounds as if they were the sea

CASSANDRA

They land

ALL

In Troy...

CASSANDRA

They fight

ALL

In Troy...

CASSANDRA

Die

ALL

In Troy...

CASSANDRA

For you

ALL

In Troy...

CASSANDRA

The Whore

ALL

Of Troy....

CASSANDRA

Father

ALL

Dead

CASSANDRA

Brother

ALL

Dead

CASSANDRA

Brother

ALL

Dead

CASSANDRA

Sister

ALL

Dead

CASSANDRA

City

ALL

Dead

CASSANDRA

Sister

ALL

Broken

CASSANDRA

Mother

ALL

Broken

CASSANDRA

Cassandra

ALL

Broken

CASSANDRA

All

ALL

Broken

ALL

Broken

ALL

Broken

ALL

Broken

ALL

Broken

ALL

Broken

HELEN

STOP!

You cannot blame these horrors on me.

I was taken

Out of my home

Away from my beloved husband

Who now sits in judgement of me

To kill me

I was shoved into the gloomy hold of a ship

I didn't know

And taken

Again and again

By a boy you call son

With my hands tied

And my eyes covered

My bare feet made their way from the dock

Led through bramble and brush

To his chamber

Where he held me.

As the city around me burned

And those I had called family

Arrived to be slaughtered

I watched

As each man I loved fell

Dead

On a ground that I do not know

But has become my name

Do not call me whore and sinner

It is I who is victim here

And who can now speak

Finally

As the gag your son put over my being

Died with him

So hear me, sisters

I am one of you.

Without home

Without life

Without love

And staring at my own death

So either kill me now

Or let me live as one of you

For the final moments before

Those men out there

Tear me limb from limb

Vengeance for ten years fought

Over my silenced sex.

Hecuba, you are wise.

Look at me.

And see this is not what I wanted

This is not what I asked for.

Look at me. Please.

These are the same eyes you see out of

This is the same air that stirs in your lungs

There is the same pain in my heart

And it is broken, as yours is

Into pieces shaped like home

She turns to the men in the audience

HELEN

See me, for the first time

Not as holes for you to fill

And breasts for you to own

I am a person

Taken

Held

Assaulted

Again and again

And still

I cannot atone

For your sins

With my words

So, Hecuba

Kneeling and pushing the dagger to her own throat

Kill me

KILL ME HECUBA

And remove the burden of my earthly body

From their eyes

Or take my words as your own

And know we tell the same story

With different breath

CASSANDRA

Going to her mother, moves the dagger off HELEN's throat and kisses her on the lips.

Maybe she cleans Helen's face? CASSANDRA pushes HELEN toward the mic.

HELEN

(hesitantly)

I am a woman, born from the

Egg of my mother and father

I am a woman, stolen by you from my home

A prisoner of war, not a prize.

I am a woman, alive.

My dear husband

I can see you though the lights

Your eyes are harsh

And your hands reach for my throat

I never wanted this.

I never wanted to leave you

Our daughter cries at night in an empty home

And now

You may kill me

To protect your honour

Save me

And take me home
But leave your hatred here
Or kill me on this unholy ground
And purge yourself of angst
With your sword in my breast.

GREEK MEN

Silence

Menelaus?

GREEK MEN

Silence

Please?

She realizes that he is not going to help her.

HECUBA puts her hand on HELEN'S shoulder.

TALTHYBIUS finally gets free

He interrupts onstage.

He takes the dagger, placing it in his back pocket.

Sheepish, hat in hand:

TALTHYBIUS

Gentlemen, gentlemen

Please excuse the slaves

Atop this stage

They know not what they say

And when you

TAKE THEM HOME TONIGHT

You will find them ready to obey

Isn't that right, ladies?

LADIES?!

They are silent. TALTHYBIUS quickly loses confidence in front of the silent crowd.

The show will go on.

Trying to threaten the women but throwing a near temper tantrum

THE SHOW WILL GO ON.

THE SHOW WILL GO ON!

You are here for us.
To show us your worth.
And to tickle our fancy.
This act
Of childish rebellion
Has as much affect on this crowd
As the sticks against spears
So back to your places, NOW
And do as you're told
Before we fall asleep
Listening to your drowsy stories
NOW!
PLAY THE MUSIC!
PLAY THE FUCKING MUSIC!

He begins to push the women into a rearrangement onstage for another number.

“Give me the man” comes back on.

The routine has broken down and is becoming something else.

ANDROMACHE trips near the apron of the stage.

TALTHYBIUS pushes her and demands she gets up.

It is a struggle.

Finally, meeting his eyes:

ANDROMACHE

Give me my son.

TALTHYBIUS

What?

ANDROMACHE

Give. Me. My. Son.

TALTHYBIUS

Get up.

You'll get him when this is over.

ANDROMACHE

You took my husband.

Slit his throat at my feet

Let the blood wash off with my sons tears

My husband

Must not have been a man like you
For he was more and
Knew the word equal
We were equals
In birth
Wealth
Courage
And understanding
I do not delude myself
That I should be met with good fortune
Or the face of my husband
Should smile on me again.
But the illusion of him
In the face of my son
Will almost be pleasant
SO GIVE ME MY SON
And let me fall into fiction
To ease my shattered soul

TALTHYBIUS

No.

ANDROMACHE

I will do no more

Until Astynax is in my arms again

So you push all you want

But I will not move

Until I see him

TALTHYBIUS

...

ANDROMACHE

I want to see my son!

TALTHYBIUS

You cannot.

A vote was taken among the generals

And it was declared

That we could not let the seed of rebellion

Grow among the ruins of Troy

ANDROMACHE

What - does that mean?

TALTHYBIUS

Your son
Sleeping and peaceful
Was mercifully set to flight
Out of his nursery window
To the bottom of the Trojan walls

ANDROMACHE

Screams.

TALTHYBIUS

Matter of fact

Sympathetic, almost

Do not cry.
It was an honourable death
And I, myself
Dug his grave
And laid it with the same petals
That bloom outside the window of my son
Far away at home
Do not weep, woman

This is the same rights as are given to soldiers
It should be great comfort to you
That he is not starving in the camps anymore
Eating the carrion of men felled before him
That he has joined his uncles and fathers
In the afterlife
And will grow strong there
Waiting for you.

The women are trying to comfort her.

TALTHYBIUS

What?

Turning his back to them.

He speaks to himself and the men of the audience.

TALTHYBIUS

Gentlemen, Gentlemen

Such trivial distraction

Let us -

Let us continue with -

Grabbing CASSANDRA

Cassandra!

Do I hear 300 drachmas?

The women tackle TALTHYBIUS from behind.

HECUBA is intent on killing him this time.

TALTHYBIUS

LADIES PLEASE!

All this hostility is misplaced!

I am just trying to help you

Raise your lots

So that your new homes

Are ones of happiness

And peace

You are all honoured

By these men

Who look on you

As their prize

For winning your war

It is a virtue
To sleep in the home
Of a Greek Soldier

HECUBA

It is these soldiers that ripped our homes from us! No honour comes from gracing theirs. And you, you “Greek Soldier,” are the worst of them all. Feigning the desire to help us, ally with us. You put our sex on display and let our enemies bid for us? There is no righteousness in your action, no pity in your heart.

The knife is pressed deeper into his chest.

TALTHYBIUS

Please! Hecuba!
Do not end me this way
Gentlemen, rise from you seats
And help me!

HECUBA

Turning to the audience

Yes, gentlemen
Come and get him

If you so want him to live

Silence. A pause.

TALTHYBIUS begins to laugh, hysterically.

TALTHYBIUS

Will no one stand up to a mere woman?!

HECUBA

I am a queen.

TALTHYBIUS

Not anymore.

HECUBA

Do not make those your last words.

TALTHYBIUS

Please,

Hecuba

Have mercy.

I am a mere lackey

Shuffled between

Fronts

With public news

I clean cloaks

Sweep dirt

Dig graves

And serve

Men who call me boy.

...I, am nothing.

No one

Without a second name

My parents were slaves

And I am as well

I can serve you

Help you.

Gesturing to the audience

It is them you want

The ones who killed your fathers

Husbands

Brothers

Sons

Daughters

Sisters

Mothers

Friends

Not me.

I was washing their blood

Off Agamemnon's cloak.

I was sweeping their bodies off the fields.

I was adorning hallowed graves

With blessed petals.

Thinking of my own wife

And children

So far away.

HECUBA relents, a bit

Show me the mercy

They cannot even spell

Let me return

Home.

Please.

Hecuba, please?

HECUBA takes a moment.

Finally she gets off TALTHYBIUS.

HECUBA

Then tell them we are leaving.

Without them.

He brushes himself off, starts to the mic.

Holds his hand out for the dagger.

HECUBA reluctantly hands it over

TALTHYBIUS

At the mic

Gentlemen.

A sincere apology.

It seems that this show has

gotten away from me.

The women of Troy

Have a different plan for tonight

Looking back at the women who are listening, hard.

But who the hell cares?

Questioning look from the women.

A pause, a knowing smile, then...

KILL THE LIGHTS!

BLACKOUT

LOCK THE DOORS!

Sound of locks locking and chains being pulled tight.

A chaos of people noises, footsteps, women screaming and action.

CASSANDRA's drone note.

SILENCE

CASSANDRA's "She's Like the Swallow"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SoWrBgtV3ps>

TALTHYBIUS exits in the dark.

Silence. Darkness. Breath.

Lighting Change

Abstracted movement.

This section of text is done as audio file.

Overlapping.

Multiple people tell CASSANDRA'S story.

All tell their own and the stories of real women affected by war.

The following is not the "script" of this section, but the information communicated.

The women realize there is no way out - except for death

CASSANDRA

Trying to comfort ANDROMACHE

Once upon a time

There were ruins

That sparked the imagination

And held stories

From the future

One day

A girl stumbled upon them

And tripped
Falling down a long well
To the bottom
And there
With her reflection staring back at her
She saw them
The women that came before her
And those yet to be born
And she knew
What would happen
Like a mirror
Focused at a mirror
Infinity stretched in front of her eyes
And she knew

HECUBA/MARINA

It was summer
Warm light on my face
I met you under a willow tree
You promised me forever
And gave me your word

HECUBA

A hero

MARINA

A husband

HECUBA

A warrior

MARINA

A father

HECUBA

A king

MARINA

A man

WOMAN

“First they came for my husband. The warning was frightening enough. One evening three years ago, we heard a knock on their door in northern Syria. It was midnight. Masked men entered and searched the apartment. Were they from Assad's military? Were they from the Islamic State? I

didn't know. I still doesn't know. A couple of months later, I came home from a long day of work at the salon. My husband, a carpenter, was supposed to pick me up, but he never showed. When I got home, I saw his half-eaten plate from lunch and his cell phone suspended in motion. They had returned. It was over. I knew they came. And I knew they wouldn't bring him back.” Naema, 34, Dohuk, Iraqi Kurdistan

HECUBA/MARINA

And they took you
Told me I'd never see you again
Took you from your home
As your City (Children) wept
Pulled them from your Legs (Breast)
and there
In front of our eyes
Took you
Father of my children
Fallen hero
Part of my soul

WOMAN

“My friend who came with me from Syria ran out of money in Turkey, so the smuggler’s assistant offered her to have sex with him [in exchange for a place on a boat]; she of course said no, and couldn’t leave Turkey, so she’s staying there.” Nahla, 20 Syria

HELEN

He came to me

Speaking sweetly

Speaking truths I needed to hear

I was in my chamber

Summer breezes waving the gauzy curtains

At calm

At peace

He must have watched me

For a while

Hidden outside the door

When he opened it

I startled

His hand stopped my scream

As his teeth bit into my neck

And his tongue licked its way across my face

Breath hot on my cheek

As his hands ripped bunches of my hair

To the floor

WOMAN

“Shortly after the birth of my sixth child, I went with my baby into the fields to collect the harvest. I saw two men approaching, wearing the uniform of the FDLR, a Rwandan militia. Fleeing them I ran into another man, who beat my head with a metal bar. I fell to the ground with my baby and lay still. Perhaps thinking he had murdered me, the man went away. The other two came and raped me, then they left me for dead.” Mathilde, Rwanda

ANDROMACHE

They say

Breathe Breathe Breathe

I want to scream, again

I grip my teeth tight

Push Push Push

They say

And you

You slip out of me

Twisting to free yourself

On my breast

Still wet

Still connected

Screaming

And then you knew

That your father is a warrior

And you must be too

You quiet

And open your eyes

And see me

Falling in love

With you

WOMAN

“When you lose a child, you lose your vision. You crawl through a nightmare of a fun house, lined with disfiguring mirrors and trap doors. At the time, I was three months pregnant with my fourth child. That was the only reason I didn't lie on top of my son's body, begging for my own life to be taken.” Wafaa, 36, Istanbul, Turkey

WOMAN

"I am so tired. Even when it's my turn to sleep, I can't. I am always afraid something might happen.” Samaher from Baghdad

ROSE

I was at a party

A summer evening in the city
With friends
At peace
He must have watched me
For a while
Hidden among people I knew
He followed me home
I fumbled with the keys
And he pushed in behind me
His hand stopped my scream
As his teeth bit into my neck
And his tongue licked its way across my face
Breath hot on my cheek
As his hands ripped bunches of my hair
To the floor

HELEN/ROSE

He pushed me down
And on my own bed
He took me

WOMAN

"Women and girls are not just killed, they are raped, sexually attacked, mutilated and humiliated.

Custom, culture and religion have built an image of women as bearing the 'honour' of their communities. Disparaging a woman's sexuality and destroying her physical integrity have become a means by which to terrorize, demean and 'defeat' entire communities, as well as to punish, intimidate and humiliate women,"

HELEN

When he was done

He bound my hands

Gagged my cries

My bare feet

Were forced from my rooms

Led through bramble and brush

To his home

Where he held me

WOMAN

"These boys they were my neighbours. I remember them as young boys when

I got married. One day he came to my house during the war and asked me to show him all the rooms in the house, and my son was playing in the garden when all of a sudden he took a knife and put it under my neck and asked me if I wanted to do it there by my own will or not, and at

that point I knew exactly what would happen. He beat me so I could not breathe, and he kicked me in my stomach. I lost consciousness, and when I regained consciousness he raped me and there was blood all over. When he saw what happened, he just left me alone. He went out and asked the two soldiers that were in front of the house if they wanted to come up and rape me too.”

WOMAN TWO

And did they?

WOMAN

No.

WOMAN TWO

Was this man in uniform or civilian clothes?

WOMAN

“He was in uniform. He said ‘halalite’ – in our jargon, that I would forgive him before God for raping me. But I will never forgive and I will never forget”. Azra - Sarajevo

ROSE

When he was done

He held me and thanked me

As tears slid down my face

And he left

Me alone

A prisoner in my own home

Alone

WOMAN

“Sometimes I think that since he is a man he can do the things that others have done to me. I never told my husband that I have been raped and that my daughter was as well. He does not know what happened to us, and I find excuses all the time to avoid having sex. I also worry about my daughter. She refuses to talk to me about this and has asked me to keep it a secret. She does not want anyone to know about it...She said it would bring back memories . . .I was raped more than a hundred times, I think. I was so destroyed I had to have an operation. I stayed there for two and a half months, and they came and took women and some never came back. They were killed.

WOMAN TWO

And your daughter was in the same camp?

WOMAN

“Yes. We were together the whole time. I only told my mother. She helped me get an abortion. It was not a proper abortion. I took medicines and different teas – I mean different grasses – and

one night I went to the toilet and felt that I lost the baby. I could not bear to have a baby whose father I didn't know, a baby made during those circumstances.” Ceca, Bosnia

HELEN/ROSE

While others called me whore

Prostitute

Harlot

I screamed my defence

But was drowned by their voices

A hand over my mouth

Alone

Again

WOMAN

“They attacked us at 05:00 and all of us went to a shelter in the forest and we spent seven days there. Around half the village was there. They surrounded us and shot from everywhere and two men were killed. After that, they took us to some barracks and from the first day they raped us. They asked about my husband and my brother and what kinds of weapons they had. I said that they had weapons but they, the enemy, took them away from them, and then they said I should take my clothes off. I asked them to kill me. I was not supposed to have my menstruation, but I immediately started bleeding all over my pants and clothes and then they said a bad word for a Muslim woman, that I was dirty. After that they let me go, but that was just before the real hell

started. The youngest woman who was there was only 14 years old. There were about 60 or 90 people there. I cannot tell exactly because there were not only people from my village. It must have happened over 100 times that I was raped. They raped me everywhere, in burnt-out houses and in different rooms in the concentration camp. Once I asked them to kill me, because I could not go back to my kids after this, but they did not do this. Every day there were different men, and usually they came in groups and they would take out some women and rape them and bring them back, and after that a new group came.” Danira - Bosnia

ANDROMACHE

My son

My son!

Come to me

Again

I see you

Beautiful

Reaching for me

I am here

I will be with you

Soon

Wait for me

Astynax

Wait for me

I will be with you

Soon

I love you

My son

I love you

One foot

My love

One foot in front of the other

Walk tall

My love

Your father is strong and so am I

Run

My love

They are coming

On sails made of storm winds

Hide

My love

Still in the ruffles of your nursery curtains

Hush

My love

Quiet as they call for you

Listen only to my voice

Momma loves you.

Hush now.

Hush.

Finally we hear CASSANDRA'S STORY again, echoed and in full.

CASSANDRA

There once was a princess

Locked in her own mind

She spent her days

Watching flowers wilt

And dancing in time with the dust

That made the toys on her shelves grey

One day

As ice melted on her window

She saw a prince

From a neighbouring kingdom

Ride to the gate of her palace

He had heard of her beauty

And the riches her stories held

And had come to take her home with him
To make them his own

Knowing that if she was taken

The stories in her head
Would scatter to the wind

She hid

Amidst her books

And lay quiet

As the prince

Continued to pound at the door

Complimenting the beauty

He had never seen

The princess search her shelves

For something with which to fight

In the pages of a book

Which told of summers

And sleepy kittens that got caught

Outside the tower walls

The princess found

A single match

The prince broke through the door
And began searching for the princess
The princess knew what she had to do
With shaking fingers
She took the match
And with a single move
She lit the flame across her cheek
The heat consuming the princess as it grew.

Through the fire, the princess
could see the prince's face.
He was angry of being denied his prize.
She screamed in silence, free and safe.
And her stories were downed by the flames.

CASSANDRA and the women are centre stage.

They are breathing hard together.

CASSANDRA lights a match as they take a deep breath in together.

On the exhale, the match is blown out and the stage is in darkness.

She screamed in silence, free and safe. And her stories were downed by the flames.

END OF PLAY.