

THE TROJAN WOMEN

BY **EURIPIDES**

ENGLISH VERSION BY

AMLIN GRAY



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for Ellen Lauren

The Trojan Women received its world premiere at the Juilliard School, Drama Division (Richard Feldman, Acting Director; Katherine Hood, Managing Director) in New York City on February 9, 2018. The director was Ellen Lauren; the scenic design was by Narelle Sissons; the assistant scenic designer was Joshua Smith; the costume design was by James Schuette; the assistant costume designer was Emily Bono; the lighting design was by Dan Scully; the assistant lighting designer was Valerie Insardi; the original music and sound design were by Christian Frederickson; the associate producer was James Gregg; the dialect coach was Andrew Wade; the choreography was by Toney Goins; the Alexander technique coach was Carolyn Serota; the movement consultant was Barney O’Hanlon; the guest lecturer was J. Ed Araiza; the production stage manager was Ivan Dario Cano; and the stage managers were Taylor Suffridge and Mario E. Wolfe. The cast, in order of appearance, was as follows:

POSEIDON	Philip Stoddard
HECUBA	Leigha Sinnott
CHORUS	Alicia Crowder
	Manon Gage
	Hadley Robinson
TALTHYBIUS	Mike Hahalyak
CASSANDRA	Anna Tullis
ANDROMACHE	Libby McKnight
MENELAUS	Toney Goins
HELEN	Fala Chen

Dramatis Personae

POSEIDON, the god of Ocean

HECUBA

CHORUS of Trojan Women

TALTHYBIUS, the Greek herald

CASSANDRA, Hecuba's daughter

ANDROMACHE, Hecuba's daughter-in-law

MENELAUS, King of Sparta

HELEN, his estranged wife

GREEK SOLDIER(S)

Setting

Troy, between the vanquished city's walls and the anchored fleet of its Greek conquerors. Dawn. Queen Hecuba lies prostrate on the long war's one-time no man's land.

Note

In this version's first production, the chorus numbered three and the Greek soldier(s) one. Andromache's child was represented by a swaddled bundle; a young actor could, of course, assume the role.

Adaptor's Note

All Euripides' tragedies we have were composed entirely in verse of varying structure. This English version of his *Trojan Women* is mostly in blank verse, the first word of each line capitalized. The choruses are also in iambic pentameter, but rhymed. The last sixteen lines of Cassandra's role are in trochaic octameter, as in the Greek. For the rest, speeches where any line begins with a lowercase letter, though lineated, are prose.

THE TROJAN WOMEN

PROLOGUE

POSEIDON. The god of Ocean, I, Poseidon, stand
Between the salt Aegean and gone Troy.
Apollo and I built the city's walls,
Straight-ruled and towering, and ever since
I've loved this city, every structure, every stone.
It's smoking rubble now. Greek spears have brought
It low, Greek hands have ransacked, stripped it bare.
They had the favor of my niece Athena,
Who didn't share my tenderness for Troy
And tipped the scales against her with a trick.
Troy's sacred groves, blest precincts to us all,
Stand empty, desolate. Her holy shrines
Are clogged with corpses, slathered slick with blood.
King Priam, headless, lies along the steps
Of Zeus's altar, hacked to death at prayer.
Apollo's priestess, virginal Cassandra,
The headless king's last child left alive,
Was dragged from sanctuary as she hugged
Athena's statue. It lurched, tipped, and crashed.
My niece has lost her liking for the Greeks.
Their home return will be calamity.
Athena has made ready thunderbolts
With blazing flanks to fire the Argive ships.
Apollo will send plagues to strike their crews.
I'll raise up tempests, hailstorms and sea-sleet,
Whirlwinds, whirlpools, timber-splitting waves.
The westward reefs and islands will be strewn
With corpses, food for circling scavengers.
Some Greeks will make safe landfall even so,

Among them dazzling Helen, whose defection
From her Spartan husband sparked the war.
She's captive here among the women waiting
For assignment to the Argive chiefs,
Themselves now waiting for a favoring wind.
There founders Hecuba, the widowed queen,
Her nineteen children, all but one, erased.
Her phantom solace is that two remain,
But her Polyxena's been sacrificed,
A blood libation, at Achilles' tomb.
Her city's now a cipher to the gods.
The Greeks, who battered down its temples, torched
The tombs and sacred temples of its dead—
They'll find that, like the fool who swings
A club that circles sprawling past its prey,
They've brought their own destruction on themselves.

MONODY

HECUBA. Up, Hecuba. Lift your head.
Raise your neck from the dust.
What do I see? Not Troy.
There is no Troy.
There is no queen of Troy.
The tide has turned.
Tack round. A fool fixes her prow against the flood.
Yield to the breakers. Sail with the savage blast.
Ai, ai! Who could look on me and dare to hope?
A childless, manless woman, stateless, cityless.
Fate's laid me on a flinty bed.
My spine cries out in outrage,
my ribs protest, my screaming temples.
Why should I keep silent?
Why rail and storm?
Why bite my tongue?
Why speak?

Too many evils plunge at me.
I turn to one, another hits me broadside,
a torrent falls, a swamping swell erupts.
The Greek invaders navigated *their* sea.
They raped forbidden distance,
overreached to seize back Menelaus' wife,
Helen of Anywhere, my son's disastrous prize.
Still, I can roll from port to starboard.
Prow-ward, sternward, I can pitch and yaw,
dancing to danceless music,
measureless music of my lamentation.
Let some god put speech into my arms,
Put "No!" into my hands, my shoulders.
You wretched wives of Trojan warriors,
brides wedded now to loss, lament.
Lament. I'll lead the cry.
Not as, before, I led our song in honor of Troy's gods,
Feet beating praise as Priam,
leaning on his scepter, cheered us on.
You'll be my famished fledgling brood, screeching with hunger.
I'll be the mother bird,
grieving because I have no food to give.

PARADOS AND KOMMOS

CHORUS. Hecuba, what does your keening mean? We heard your
cries from inside the shelter.
As we bewailed our slavery, fresh terror shivered through us.
HECUBA. Ah, my poor children.
Has Cassandra woken up? Let her sleep on.
Her delirium, if she comes out, will shame us all before the Greeks.
CHORUS. *Apodooresthai!* What's to become of us?
HECUBA. The Greeks will take us to their country.
They'll cast lots for some of us;
the generals will single others out.
Oimoi talaina! Whose chattel will I be?

I who soon will walk on three legs and then crawl on four?
Is my fate to keep their door, to raise their children,
I who once ruled as queen?

CHORUS. *Io Io daimon!* This is the last time I shall look upon my
birthplace,
the home of my parents and *their* parents, back and back and back.
Never again will my regard sweep up Mount Ida's heavenly ascent.
Never again will I finesse the wooden shuttle
back and forth between the warp cords of a Trojan loom,
weaving a tunic for my child, a long cape for my husband,
a robe for my neighbor as she weaves a robe for me.
I'm to be freighted off to Greece and a Greek's bed.
A lackey, I'll draw water from Cyllene's brown streams, unfit to drink
even for slaves.

I'd rather live in Phello.

Deer wander its deep woods. White blackbirds perch in its giant oaks.
Or Thebes,

where once Amphion set his lyre on a stone.

Ever since, if you drop a pebble on it, the stone gives forth sweet music.
Or in Lefkada.

One of its caves lodges a statue of Demeter.

They say that autumn fruit laid at its feet stays fresh all year.

They say, too, that the western river Crathis dyes a woman's hair
red-gold.

Look. A Grecian messenger is headed here,
his footfalls punishing the ground in his great haste.
What fateful tidings does he bring?

FIRST EPISODE

TALTHYBIUS. You know I know you, Hecuba, you me.
Talthybius, the Argive herald, who
Came often to your lines on embassies.

HECUBA. He bore a white flag, ladies! *Ai!* No white flag now!
Aisa! This is what I've been afraid of for so long!

TALTHYBIUS. Was this your fear?—You've been assigned by lot.
HECUBA. *Paymonai!* To barren Phocis? To the landlocked land of
Cadmus?
Never to Sparta, blighted home of the *Greek* Helen,
more ruinous to us than all your army!
TALTHYBIUS. You've been allotted different ports of call—
Each one of you to serve a different man.
HECUBA. Who of Troy's women have the lightest lot?
TALTHYBIUS. Ask me by name in sequence, one by one.
HECUBA. My wretched, god-struck daughter, my Cassandra.
TALTHYBIUS. King Agamemnon takes her as his prize.
HECUBA. *Talayporeen!* To serve his wife, sister of Helen?
TALTHYBIUS. To be his concubine and share his bed.
HECUBA. No! She was marked out by Apollo.
He's wed her to prophetic frenzy.
She wears his garland as a virgin.
TALTHYBIUS. Our king's intoxicated with the girl.
HECUBA. Oh my child, throw down your consecrated laurel
branches, your sacred wreaths,
tear them off you, fling them far!
TALTHYBIUS. She'll share a king's bed. Isn't that a prize?
HECUBA. The girl you took from me—my youngest girl.
TALTHYBIUS. You mean Polyxena? Who do you mean?
HECUBA. Polyxena. Who's she been bound to?
TALTHYBIUS. The council ruled that—she attends Achilles' tomb.
HECUBA. My daughter an attendant at a tomb?
Is this some kind of custom with you Greeks?
TALTHYBIUS. All's well with her. Consider her content.
HECUBA. What are you saying? Is my girl alive?
TALTHYBIUS. Her fate has seen to her. Her cares are done.
HECUBA. What of my Hector's mate, wife of my first-born son,
wretched Andromache? What's to become of her?
TALTHYBIUS. Achilles' son has chosen her as his.



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3 men, 7 women (flexible casting)

After ten long years of war, the great city of Troy has fallen. Only the mothers, wives, and daughters of its slaughtered warriors survive. Nothing worse can befall them. Then it does, blow after blow. Their previous lives in ruins, the women find unimagined resources in each other and themselves. *The Trojan Women* is a thousands-year-old tale of courage, resilience, and hope in the face of utter devastation.

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