TROJAN WOMAN

By

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2026 by Scott Carter Cooper

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Synopsis: Athena, Aphrodite, and Hera meet to discuss the story of Troy. As they squabble over Hecuba's reign, Gaia informs them she has decided the time has come for the Final Destruction of humanity but is persuaded to allow Hecuba to have one last chance to demonstrate that humanity is worth saving.

The Chorus drags in a chained Hecuba and Cassandra is brought to her. Cassandra has been offered freedom if she will support Menelaus's claim to the throne. She is persuaded to remain loyal to Hecuba and so is dragged to her death by the Chorus.
Andromache, nine months pregnant, is brought to Hecuba with news of dead family members. While she appears to be loyal to Hecuba, she has come to trap Hecuba into incriminating herself in order to save her unborn daughter. When Andromache fails, she is led away to her own death.

Finally, Helen is brought to Hecuba. Instead of signs of torture that Hecuba has endured, Helen is radiant, appearing to have switched her allegiance to Menelaus. She has no offer of freedom for Hecuba, only the length of time she is able to remain alive while entombed with one of the Chorus members so that she can witness the Final Destruction.

Gaia is skeptical, but the goddesses are elated to learn that although destruction will take place, they have proved their point, and humanity will have another chance to redeem itself. But Gaia soon dispels any rejoicing when she reveals the reprieve is not a blessing, but potentially an even worse curse. Humanity is sentenced to repeat all of its horrors until the end of time. Still, Hecuba is shown kindness by the Chorus member who will be entombed with her, and as a reward for that compassion, Four is granted the blessing of oblivion and will not be required to return to recreate her own sins.

Trigger Warning:
There is violence against women and children performed on stage, and even more graphic descriptions of violence in the dialogue.

Gods
Aphrodite, Goddess of Love: female, 30s
Hera, Goddess of Women: female, 40s
Athena, Goddess of War: female, 20s
Gaia, Mother Earth: female, 50s

Humans
Hecuba, Queen of Troy: female, 50s
Cassandra, Princess: female, teens
Andromache, Princess: female, 30s
Helen, Stolen Concubine: female, 20s

Chorus
One: female, 40s – The Brain
Two: female, 30s – The Snark
Three: female, 20s – The Muscle
Four: female, teens – The Heart

Notes on Casting:
At various points the CHORUS is called upon to provide underscoring using items that would be found in an abandoned office, such as waste baskets, empty cabinets, knocking on doors, clapping, stomping, etc.

The characters are described as female. The directors and producers of this play are expected to make casting decisions with a mission of diversity and inclusion, including race, age, and gender identity.

Ideally, a full cast of twelve would be utilized. However, if doubling is required to reduce the number of actors employed, this doubling scheme will reduce the cast to six actors:
Actor 1: ONE/GAIA
Actor 2: TWO/APHRODITE
Actor 3: THREE/HERA
Actor 4: FOUR/ATHENA
Actor 5: CASSANDRA/ANDROMACHE/HELEN
Actor 6: HECUBA

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SCENE 1

A dimly lit, abandoned office on a high floor of an urban tower. Debris is scattered; waste baskets, paper on the floor, broken chairs stacked to one side, obsolete filing cabinets, etc. The view from the floor-to-ceiling windows is a burning hellscape of destruction; punctuated by thunder, lightning, and an occasional siren. As the lights come up, three ethereal, beautiful female figures emerge from the rubble. They are ATHENA, APHRODITE, and HERA.

ATHENA. How many times are we going to let them do this to themselves?
APHRODITE. I told you she was no different. I told you.
HERA. No. I told you.
APHRODITE. The point is… the point… is… I thought it. OK? I thought it, you know? Before you said it, Hera, I thought it.
HERA. So what? I knew it. And then I said it. Remember? Aphrodite, stop pretending to be so stupid.
APHRODITE. I'm not pretending.
HERA. I know you remember.
APHRODITE. I don't.
HERA. That night Dionysus washed Poseidon's feet with that wine? Remember? Athena, back me up here. And then you said, "Oh look! Just like every other time the streets of Troy ran with the blood of those stupid humans." And then Poseidon laughed and laughed, and you thought it was because you were so hilarious, but really it was because Dionysus's tongue tickled between his toes. Then I said --
APHRODITE. All right. Fine. You said it. … But I thought it.
HERA. I said it because I knew it. You might have thought it, but I knew it.
ATHENA. She can still fix all of this.
APHRODITE. But she won't. She's just like all the men.

HERA. You never miss a chance to gloat.
APHRODITE. I told you --
HERA. No. I told you!
APHRODITE. I said it was a mistake right from the start. Remember? Dionysus was licking up that wine from between Poseidon's toes. You said… what you said. And then I said --
HERA. No! You said she wouldn't do it. I said she couldn't do it. Big difference. Big, big difference.
ATHENA. Coulda, woulda, shoulda. The point is, she was supposed to be great.
APHRODITE. But she wasn't. That's the trouble with you, Athena. You think women are superior to men, and they're just not. Whoever said what or when they said it: I was the only one who said it wouldn't, couldn't – and yes, shouldn't turn out any differently.
HERA. It might have if –
APHRODITE. All I did was nudge Paris in Helen's direction.
HERA. No. You nudged Hecuba. You told her a man would just take what he wanted. The problem is, Paris isn't a man. He's a boy in a man's body. Priam would never have given Paris an army just to take another man's wife. He knew who that boy was.
ATHENA. You said we wanted her to disrupt the patriarchy --
APHRODITE. Get her! "Disrupt the patriarchy!" I have never used that word in my life. I'm just fine with the patriarchy, thank you very much.
ATHENA. Well… She did something all of the men never even thought to do.
APHRODITE. And it didn't make a bit of difference, did it?
HERA. Just because none of the men before her saw that great big horse as a booby trap and she did, does not mean Hecuba is a genius.
ATHENA. I think it shows a great strategic military mind.
HERA. One that got all the men in her family killed, just like all the other times.
ATHENA. That ambush saved countless Trojan lives.
HERA and APHRODITE. For three lousy days!
APHRODITE. They're all still dead.
ATHENA. My point is, she's not finished. At this point in the narrative –

APHRODITE. Again, with the pretentious –
ATHENA. At this point in the narrative, Hecuba is still alive. Priam is always dead at this point. Paris? Hector? Achilles? All dead at this point when they had a chance to rule. That says something about her genius. She's not finished.
HERA. She looks pretty finished to me.
ATHENA. If her plan had worked, she would have saved those girls. It was a brilliant plan. And next time –
HERA and APHRODITE. There won't be a next time!
ATHENA. There will always be a next time. You know why?
APHRODITE. Why?
ATHENA. Dionysus is always going to make us do that stupid beauty contest because they always think that Paris is going to pick them as the most beautiful.
HERA. She has a point. Dionysus is so insecure about their looks.
APHRODITE. Well, we all know Paris is never going to pick them as the most beautiful.
HERA and ATHENA. No, he won't.
ATHENA. But it will give us another chance to get it right.
HERA. What makes you think Gaia is going to allow Hecuba to have another chance?
APHRODITE. Zeus has already tried to let the humans get it right, like a bajillion times.
ATHENA. Haven't they been through enough? We've all been through enough.
APHRODITE. Why is the goddess of war suddenly interested in the humans living in peace?
HERA. Why aren't you? Aren't you supposed to be all about peace and love and understanding?
APHRODITE. I asked you first.
HERA. I asked you second.
APHRODITE. All right! Let's go!
(As Hera and Aphrodite are about to face off, a very large golden apple rolls across the stage.)
ATHENA, APHRODITE, HERA. The apple.

HERA. It always comes back to that damn apple.
APHRODITE. What a bullshit prize. I am a goddess. Making me compete for an apple? That's just wrong.
ATHENA. I don't even like apples.
HERA. Well, if one of us didn't always cheat, it would be just a fun little contest, now wouldn't it?
APHRODITE. I've said for a long time Dionysus can't hold their wine.
HERA. Don't blame them.
APHRODITE. Who else is responsible? *(Athena and Hera give Aphrodite a pointed look.)* Don't give me that look. It's always Dionysus's idea. No matter what any of you say, Dionysus always convinces Zeus that this time it will be, "like… so intense!" And you two fools fall for it. Every time. Dionysus is just mean when they're drinking. Pissy and mean. And I'll say it: just like the two of you, a little jealous of me.
HERA. Please. You have some messed up connection to Paris, like you owe him or something, and you always use him to cheat.
APHRODITE. It's called a winning strategy. It's not my fault if you haven't figured out how to block it.
HERA. Bribing Paris with Menelaus's wife isn't a strategy!
APHRODITE. This isn't on me. If Hecuba hadn't put those girls in that wooden horse --
ATHENA. She had to! Those girls were being used as prizes for Menelaus's generals.
APHRODITE. Their fathers were fairly compensated.
ATHENA. It's not fair. We talk about seeing if a woman will do something a man wouldn't, and then when she does, she gets no support.
APHRODITE. That's something else the men never did. They never got their own people to turn against them.
HERA. She's got you there.
ATHENA. I do not concede that point. She changed the narrative --
APHRODITE. Narrative!
ATHENA. Yes. Narrative. She changed the narrative, then you had to go and drag Helen back into the whole mess. Just like you always do.
HERA. No one but Paris even likes Helen.
APHRODITE. Hecuba does.

HERA. Girl, what have you been smoking?
APHRODITE. As far as I'm concerned, this is all your fault.
HERA. Mine?
APHRODITE. And hers. You both know I'm going to make Paris fall in love with Helen. And you still agree to try to compete with my beauty every single time.
HERA. We hope against hope you'll change.
APHRODITE. I'm beautiful. I'm not deep, OK? It's a curse, really.
ATHENA. Maybe she's right. We should know better by now.
HERA. She is not right! If she didn't cheat, we all know Paris would choose me every time. Every. Single. Time. It's called mommy issues, so as the goddess of motherhood -- *(Athena and Aphrodite laugh.)* He would! Look at his devotion to Hecuba. Of course, he's going to pick me as the most beautiful. I am the original pick-me girl.
APHRODITE. Even I know that's not what that means. I am the goddess of love, Hera! Men are always going to pick me as the most beautiful.
ATHENA. Men love war every bit as much as they love sex. If you didn't cheat, they would always choose me as the most beautiful.
HERA. Men are nothing without a mother's love.
APHRODITE. Tell that to Oedipus. *(GAIA appears; a heavily shrouded gargoyle figure whose masked face is never fully seen. Gaia picks up the apple and displays it so all three goddesses must see it.)*
GAIA. There once was a magnificent city,
Destroyed by celestial committee.
The gods took no blame.
They thought it a game.
And now they wallow in self-pity.
ATHENA. You have to admit, oh Great Mother Earth,
They've never proved more worthy of rebirth.
GAIA. No, I don't.
ATHENA. Hecuba's always been a minor player.
We must be willing to answer her prayer.
GAIA. No, we don't.
ATHENA. Can't we, sweet Gaia, allow her some time?
To shift the patriarchal paradigm?

HERA. Girl, you gotta stop!
GAIA. No more time. *(Gaia makes the apple disappear.)*
Bicker, bicker, bicker.
I have come to make this plot thicker.
She's had her day.
That's all I'll say.
This time the end must come quicker.
HERA. Yes, mother. But next time --
GAIA. No next time!
ATHENA. But --
GAIA. No next time!!
ATHENA. You gave men scores of chances to succeed.
With just one failure women must concede?
APHRODITE. I don't believe humans can really change.
They lack our depth, our strength, our mental range.
HERA. Oh, look who is talking out of her ass.
We'll discuss this alone; you big bag of gas.
ATHENA. Mother.
If Hecuba has the ability to learn,
It might be worth letting humans return
One last time to strive for peace and love
Without our interventions from above.
GAIA. No more time.
ATHENA. Mother, if I may, I beg and beseech,
Indulge me, please. I have a little speech.
(Gaia silences Athena. She pantomimes a dramatic speech, unaware she's been silenced.)
GAIA. Why so still?
APHRODITE. Because they all are both just hateful and mean.
You wouldn't believe what I've heard and seen.
HERA. Mother, I --
APHRODITE. Man. Woman. They are all of them the same.
One more chance and they'll just ruin it all again.
GAIA. Now you. Speak.
HERA. There are two young women whom I believe

Could demonstrate worthy of a reprieve. *(Gaia releases her spell on Athena, who never realizes she's been silenced.)*
ATHENA. … there are two young women whom I believe
Could demonstrate the whole race is worthy of reprieve.
Cassandra and Andromache, they're named.
They're beyond fault and cannot be blamed.
Cassandra's quite young and done nothing yet…
(Gaia silences Athena again, who continues to speechify in pantomime.)
GAIA. This is your assessment? All yours?
HERA. I might have heard it from… somewhere.
(Again, Gaia releases Athena, who picks up mid-speech.)
ATHENA. …can we have this sacred blessing from you
So, these Trojan women can show what they can do?
GAIA. This cracked, gold mask I wear covers my shame.
It shields my broken heart, gives my eyes a
Privacy to inspect a tortured blame
You gods will never know. But I'm Gaia!
You and your dolls, these humans, expect me
To wave my hand and make everything right.
I'm tired. There's no reason to respect me.
We've failed. You look to me for insight.
Well, I've none. And you're nothing but pretty,
Petty little baubles who give no hope
To the grim clods who deserve no pity.
I have none for them! Absolution? Nope!
This adventure is done. The story's through.
Oblivion waits for me, them… and you.
ATHENA. With all due respect,
These women deserve a chance to show
That they have the capacity to grow.
But you know that.
With all due respect,
Zeus didn't usurp your authority.
No. You'd never yield your superiority.
With all due respect,

You have allowed all this to occur.
This is a test you've created for her.
With all due respect,
The only judgement left to you is war,
And that is what you created me for.
With all due respect,
War's the only language they all understand.
Love is too vague. Mother's a loaded term.
So, you have chosen war as the standard
By which you will make your resolve firm.
With all due respect,
How'm I doin'?
GAIA. Very well.
Destruction.
Salvation.
Either way.
I am Gaia, Mother of the Earth.
Men Build, but we protect those who give birth.
At the end of the day,
I won't walk away.
But you and your women must prove your worth.
I warn you.
My patience is short.
APHRODITE and HERA and ATHENA. You'll give us another chance?
GAIA. Begin. *(Athena, Aphrodite, and Hera resume their positions blending back into the space; watching, but invisible. Gaia also blends into the background, but in a superior position to the other deities. They remain throughout. If utilizing a smaller, double cast, some ritualized transformation would take place here.)*

SCENE 2

ENTER the CHORUS: ONE, TWO, THREE, and FOUR. There is something feral about them. They are dressed in drab, prison-guard type uniforms: skirts with movement, sensible shoes. Using heavy chains, they drag behind them a low, two-drawer file cabinet on wheels. Atop the cabinet is chained HECUBA, dressed in a tattered and soiled mother-of-the-groom type dress. She is haggard and unwashed. Exhausted.

CHORUS. Hear the report of Hecuba.
The ending is inevitable.
The last of her kind we've ever seen.
The first of her kind there ever has been.
She found the world inflexible,
Queen Hecuba,
Trojan queen at the end of the war.
Priam died defending his throne.
Hector was sent to fight the fights of his own.
Then Paris stole Helen, inflaming the war,
So, Menelaus declared his wife a whore.
Poor Helen
And Hecuba,
Trojan queen at the end of the war.

Hecuba was wise, really.
Ruled as best she could.
Hecuba was wise, really.
Ruled better than any man would.
But…
Four brides had been sold to four old men.
The grooms were foul, had gray hair, but then
These teenage brides were stolen away
By Hecuba, and no one could say
If this was a successful raid.
Oh, Hecuba.

Trojan queen at the end of the war.
The horse was small; the girls were scared.
The gray-haired men were not prepared.
A fire broke out, and then a bomb
Exploded the brides, shattered the calm.
Menelaus saw his chance, invading the city
His armies advanced without any pity
Upon the wedding of Paris and Helen.
Paris and Helen. Paris and Helen.
Paris and Helen. Paris and Helen.
ONE. Helen.
ONE and TWO. Helen.
ONE, TWO and THREE. Helen.
CHORUS. Helen! *(Two, Three, and Four exit.)*
ONE. Hear the cruel story of Hecuba.
And ponder how power has driven her mad.
The first of her kind we've ever seen.
The last of her kind there ever has been.
Men's egos destroyed, quick as a wink,
Queen Hecuba.
CHORUS. Trojan queen at the end of the war.
HECUBA. No!
ONE. They are all dead.
HECUBA. But --
ONE. Dead.
HECUBA. I can explain.
ONE. No.
HECUBA. But --
CHORUS. Lies.
HECUBA. Please.
ONE. You stand charged with war crimes.
HECUBA. Not guilty.
ONE. You've been convicted of ---
CHORUS. ---All! ---
ONE. --- of them.

HECUBA. Unjustly.
CHORUS. And now she awaits sentencing.
(The Chorus performs an increasingly menacing ritualized dance, accompanying themselves percussively. The dance stops when Hecuba stands atop the file cabinet while still in chains.)
HECUBA. Bring me water! *(One signals for Four to bring a bowl of water to Hecuba, who then tries to raise it to her lips. The chains prevent this. One, Two, and Three laugh. One indicates that Hecuba is to set the bowl down and to drink it from the floor.)*
TWO. Like a bitch. *(Hecuba begins to lap up the water.)*
ONE. That's enough. *(Four removes the bowl.)* Say thank you. *(Hecuba refuses to respond. Three slaps Hecuba.)*
ONE, TWO, and THREE. Bad, bad girl.
HECUBA. May I have some food? Please? *(From a file cabinet, Four produces a half-eaten bag of cookies, but before she can give them to Hecuba, Two takes the bag and crushes the contents, pouring the crumbs on the floor.)*
TWO. Clean it up.
HECUBA. How? *(Chorus claps four times, sharply.)* I don't understand. *(Again, the Chorus claps four times, sharply.)*
I don't… I don't know what that means. *(The Chorus continues to clap sharply, in bursts of four. Hecuba joins them, until she realizes that they want her to use her hands. When Hecuba begins to brush the broken cookies into a pile, the clapping stops.)* Now what?
THREE. You can't leave them there.
HECUBA. I don't have anything to put them in.
TWO. Figure it out.
HECUBA. But…
ONE, TWO, and THREE. Figure it out! Figure it out! Figure it out! Figure it out! Figure it out! Figure it out! Figure it out! Figure it out! …
(The chanting gets increasingly intense until Hecuba removes her shoes and sweeps the broken cookies and crumbs into them. Once the pile is cleared away, the chanting stops.)
HECUBA. Now what? *(One slides the shoe-filled cookies closer to Hecuba.)*

TWO. Like a bitch. *(Hecuba throws the shoes at Two. One, Two, and Three laugh at Hecuba. Hecuba throws the other shoe at Three.)*
HECUBA. I am not mad! *(When the laughter subsides, One gestures to Four, who finds a broom and sweeps up the cookies. She returns the shoes to Hecuba and then feeds her a candy bar.)*
HECUBA. Thank you.
CHORUS. How do you plead?
HECUBA. Not guilty.
ONE. That is not ---
CHORUS. --- in-no-cent!
HECUBA. They weren't supposed to be in any danger.
CHORUS. And yet they were.
HECUBA. I know how angry you must be.
CHORUS. Do you?
HECUBA. I'm a mother. I understand. I was trying to save them.
ONE *(addressing the audience.)* People! We have here a woman we put upon Priam's throne. Duly selected and elected by us so that she would protect the least among us. Did she do that?
CHORUS. No.
ONE. Four of our sisters were put in a wooden horse, to be stolen out of the city. That's sort of your thing, isn't it? Spiriting young women away?
HECUBA. They were being sold into marriage.
ONE. And you denied them the right to be married. Do not all women dream of marriage?
CHORUS. Yes!
HECUBA. They were just girls!
ONE. Which means they had been blessed by being selected for marriage early. You denied them this blessing.
CHORUS. Yes!
ONE. What do we call this?
CHORUS. Inhuman!
ONE. And?
CHORUS. Barbaric!
ONE. And?
CHORUS. Evil!

HECUBA. I'm not evil.
ONE. What is it when a person denies something to others that she, herself, enjoys?
HECUBA. Who says I enjoyed marriage?
TWO. You enjoyed its privileges.
THREE. And you denied it to them.
TWO. What is that smell you smell when somebody says you should do what they say, but not what they do?
ONE. You sat in a temple ---
CHORUS. ---witnessing---
ONE. ---the blessing of a---
CHORUS. ---tainted---
ONE. ---marriage, while stealing four brides and preventing them from tasting that same blessing for themselves. What do we call that, sisters?
CHORUS. Hypocrisy! Hypocrisy!... *(continuing as a chant underneath)*
THREE. That thing that makes the elite the ones to beat.
CHORUS. Hypocrisy!
TWO. That's right!
CHORUS. Hypocrisy!
TWO. When you wring your hands over the lawful marriage of four young women -
THREE. But send an army to steal the wife of another king…
TWO. What's that called?
CHORUS. Hypocrisy!
ONE. Those men had rights! They had signed, paid contracts with those families. Those young women –
HECUBA. They were just girls!
CHORUS. Women!
TWO. Those---
CHORUS. ---consecrated virgins!
TWO. Those---
CHORUS. ---men!---
TWO. ---exercised their rights and when they discovered that you had---
CHORUS. ---tainted … stolen … polluted---
TWO. ---their lawfully selected, elected brides---

CHORUS. ---in a dirty, wooden horse!
THREE. Did they have a choice?
CHORUS. No.
THREE. And so they---
CHORUS. ---burned!
THREE. That horse with those girls inside---
CHORUS. ---alive!
THREE. Those men had no choice but to burn their---
ONE. ---desecrated---
TWO. ---soiled---
CHORUS. ---women.
THREE. But whoever may have lit that match---
CHORUS. ---Hecuba is responsible!
ONE. And all she can offer as her defense is that she's a mother herself. How long has it been since you've even seen your daughter?
HECUBA. You've kept us prisoners for months.
CHORUS. How long?
HECUBA. I don't know.
ONE. I submit to you, good people, that a loving mother would know down to the minute how long she's been kept from her child. Don't you agree?
TWO, THREE, and FOUR. To the second.
ONE. And yet she remembers every detail of her own defense. Do you even remember what your children look like?
ONE. Hector?
FOUR. Rugged.
TWO. Virile.
THREE. Manly.
ONE. Paris?
FOUR. Soft.
THREE. Pale.
FOUR. Silky, touchable hair, with the sweetest eyes and a chest that would make a grown woman --
ONE. Enough!
TWO. Sorry.

ONE. All she need do to save herself and her family is to acknowledge Menelaus as her lord and master.
HECUBA. Bring me my daughter.
FOUR. Should we let her see her daughter?
THREE. Why?
FOUR. Compassion?
THREE. Compassion? *(One, Two, and Three laugh.)*
ONE, TWO, THREE. Has she ever shown compassion to any of us?
THREE. No!
ONE. Do we owe her anything?
CHORUS. No!
THREE. Then why show her compassion?
FOUR. Because if we're going to say we're better than she is, we have to be better than she is.
ONE. Bring her in. *(Two, Three, and Four exit.)*

SCENE 3

There's a beat of silence. Then Two, Three, and Four enter in formation with CASSANDRA, to the ominous sound of percussion. Cassandra, a puff of cotton candy snagged on a length of barbed wire, is fifteen but dressed in a child's party dress. She also wears a man's rugged watch. When she sees Hecuba, she runs to her mother.

CASSANDRA. Oh my god! Are you alright?
HECUBA. I'm fine.
CASSANDRA. You look awful.
HECUBA. Stand back. Let me get a good look at you. *(Cassandra models her dress.)*
You're wearing Daddy's watch.
CASSANDRA. Paris gave it to me.
HECUBA. They let you keep it?
CHORUS. Yes.
HECUBA. I think you've grown.

CASSANDRA. I look like a dork. I thought you were dead! Why didn't you text me or something?
HECUBA. Well…
CASSANDRA. Why is she chained to this thing? Which one of you did this to my mom?
HECUBA. Baby, I'm fine. I'm fine.
CASSANDRA. Can you talk to them? They won't let me stream anything.
HECUBA. That's not very nice, is it?
CASSANDRA. They took my phone. My tablet. Do you know they gave me an actual book to read?
HECUBA. Are you reading it?
CASSANDRA. Please. Why is she still wearing this dress? That's the dress you were wearing at the wedding. And I still hate it.
HECUBA. What's important is that you're safe.
CASSANDRA. Where's Andromache?
HECUBA. I don't know.
CASSANDRA. *(to Chorus.)* I can't wait to see what my brothers do to you when they -- *(The Chorus laughs.)* At least you've lost some weight.
HECUBA. Maybe a little.
CASSANDRA. Why are they doing this to us?
CHORUS. Helen.
HECUBA. I don't know.
CHORUS. Helen. Helen. Helen. Helen…
CASSANDRA. Shut up! *(There's a low growl from the Chorus. Cassandra barks back at them. The Chorus laughs.)*
CHORUS. *(whispered.)* Helen.
CASSANDRA. Take her! I hate Helen! We all hate her. Do whatever you want to her, just… just… Give me my phone! *(The Chorus laughs.)* Why doesn't Paris just give Helen back? Does he actually love that skank?
HECUBA. We don't call women skanks.
CASSANDRA. That one we do.
CHORUS. Yes.
HECUBA. It's complicated.
CASSANDRA. It's those girls, isn't it?
CHORUS. Women.

CASSANDRA. The oldest one was fifteen.
THREE. Old enough to be married.
CASSANDRA. I'm fifteen.
CHORUS. Exactly.
CASSANDRA. Gross. *(Three slaps Cassandra. As she does, One and Two clap at the same time, magnifying the sound of the slap.)*
THREE. You don't like being treated like a little girl, do you?
HECUBA. Don't talk to her.
CHORUS. You don't like being treated like a little girl, do you?
CASSANDRA. No.
THREE. You want to be treated like a woman, don't you?
HECUBA. Stop it.
THREE. Do you know who Menelaus is?
CASSANDRA. I know he's an asshole. I told you, didn't I, Mom? He's in my visions all the time. It's so annoying. He'd have to be an asshole to want that skank back. But no one ever listens to me. No. I'm just a kid.
HECUBA. Cassandra. Stop talking.
CASSANDRA. Oh, Mom.
CHORUS. Menelaus finds you very beautiful.
CASSANDRA. Please. He's like… thirty or something.
HECUBA. Stop this. She's just a…
CHORUS. His friends do too.
HECUBA. No!
TWO. Men have a way of becoming younger as women get older.
CASSANDRA. Misogyny much?
ONE. You don't know. You may find him very attractive.
TWO. Many women do.
HECUBA. I said stop it!
CASSANDRA. What about Skanky McSkankface?
CHORUS. What about her?
CASSANDRA. Why does everyone think she's so snatched? *(The Chorus laughs at Cassandra.)*
TWO. I can see why Menelaus likes you so much. You know you're beautiful---
CHORUS. --- don't you?

CASSANDRA. Does he think I'm more beautiful than Helen?
HECUBA. Cass –
CHORUS. Oh, yes.
HECUBA. She doesn't know what she's saying.
CASSANDRA. Stop treating me like I'm just a kid, Mother.
ONE. That's right---
CHORUS. ---Mother!
THREE. She's a woman.
CASSANDRA. If I'm a woman, then why did you make me wear this little-girl dress and do this to my hair? Is that Menelaus's thing? I bet it is, the perv. *(The Chorus taunts Cassandra with laughter. Stomping her foot.)* I'm not a little girl!
CHORUS. Prove it!
HECUBA. Cassandra, stop this.
CASSANDRA. Would I have to do anything gross?
CHORUS. Of course not.
HECUBA. If he touches her – *(The Chorus threatens Hecuba.)*
CHORUS. He won't touch her.
TWO. Unless you want him to.
CASSANDRA. What do I have to do?
CHORUS. Have you seen the new smart phones?
CASSANDRA. Mom?
HECUBA. That's enough.
ONE. Just make a little video and say Menelaus is King of Troy. Think you could do that?
HECUBA. I forbid it! *(The Chorus mocks Hecuba.)*
CASSANDRA. My brothers wouldn't like that.
THREE. Do this for Menelaus and your mother, Andromache, and her baby will go free.
CASSANDRA. Andromache is pregnant? I dreamed that, you know.
CHORUS. Yes.
CASSANDRA. Does Hector know?
CHORUS. Yes.
CASSANDRA. I'm the last to be told anything. Again. Thanks, Mom.
HECUBA. They're playing with you.

CASSANDRA. Ya think?
CHORUS. Do this one little thing for Menelaus…
CASSANDRA. Then he'll let us all go?
CHORUS. No. **(***As if by magic, the Chorus produces a glittering crown, the kind a child would think was beautiful.)*
CASSANDRA. Where did you get that?
CHORUS. You like it?
CASSANDRA. That was in my vision.
HECUBA. Not now, Cassandra.
CASSANDRA. I'm psychic, Mother! Deal with it.
CHORUS. All of Menelaus's princesses have one.
TWO. Pretty, isn't it?
CASSANDRA. It was in my vision.
ONE. Tell us about your dream, sweetie.
HECUBA. No!
THREE. We believe you're psychic, don't we?
TWO, ONE, and FOUR. Yes.
CHORUS. Tell us.
CASSANDRA. I was wearing that crown and everyone was looking at me.
CHORUS. Because you're beautiful.
HECUBA. I'm listening, baby. I'm listening. Tell me about your dream.
CHORUS. We're listening too.
THREE. We believe you.
CASSANDRA. In the vision, no one knows what to do, but I'm wearing a crown and everywhere I look, as far as I can see, everyone's listening to me.
CHORUS. Like in a meme.
CASSANDRA. A meme.
THREE. It would so go viral.
HECUBA. Memes aren't real.
CHORUS. This crown is. *(Cassandra reaches for the crown, but the Chorus keeps it just out of reach.)*
THREE. What were you saying? In your dream?
ONE and TWO. Vision! Isn't that right?

THREE. Yes. Vision. What were you saying in your vision?
CASSANDRA. It's very important.
FOUR. Of course it is.
ONE, TWO, THREE. Yes.
HECUBA. Cassandra, look at me! Don't look at them. Talk to me!
CASSANDRA. I don't want to talk anymore. I want to go back to my room. I want my phone.
CHORUS. *(Chanting.)* Tell her. Tell her. Tell her... *(The Chorus laughs, chanting continues.)*
HECUBA. Don't worry about them. Tell me… Talk to me about your visions. I believe you, honey.
CASSANDRA. I told you the one about the wooden horse, and the girls on fire, but you wouldn't listen to me.
HECUBA. I listened. I listened.
CHORUS. But did she believe you?
HECUBA. Of course, I believe you.
CASSANDRA. If you really listened to me, that would mean you knew those girls were going to be burned alive and you let it happen! Did you just let it happen? *(One, Two and Three make Four place the crown on Cassandra's head.)*
THREE. You're so beautiful.
CHORUS. More beautiful than Helen ever was.
THREE. Tell us about your visions, Princess.
CASSANDRA. Sometimes they're just … feelings.
CHORUS. Uh-huh.
CASSANDRA. I'm having that feeling now.
THREE. What's it like?
CASSANDRA. Kinda pink and a little scary.
CHORUS. Tell us more.
HECUBA. Cassandra, take that thing off your head.
CASSANDRA. This is mine!
CHORUS. Moms are mean---
THREE. ---aren't they?
HECUBA. Tell me your dream… visions, baby. Please. Tell me.
ONE. You look like a pretty, pretty princess.

CHORUS. Yes.
TWO. Menelaus wants you.
CASSANDRA. I think I know you. Do I know you?
FOUR. I don't know. Do you?
CASSANDRA. I think I've seen you before.
CHORUS. In a vision?
CASSANDRA. Maybe.
HECUBA. Don't listen to them.
THREE. Silence!
CASSANDRA. Did you ever have a crown like this, Mom?
HECUBA. Being a queen is more than wearing crowns.
THREE. Would you like to have power to go with that crown?
CASSANDRA. How?
THREE. Menelaus will make you one of his pretty, pretty princesses.
HECUBA. You're already a princess, Cassandra.
CASSANDRA. But Helen will be his queen, right?
CHORUS. Maybe.
THREE. If you're extra nice to him, maybe you can be queen.
HECUBA. Please, baby. Don't look at them. Cassandra, look at me. This is what Menelaus has done to your mother. Menelaus is a mean, jealous, petty little man.
CHORUS. Many men are.
ONE. Many women, too.
FOUR. Everyone thinks you're just an innocent little pawn.
CHORUS. A little girl.
THREE. But do this for Menelaus and you could be a mighty king's queen.
CHORUS. His queen.
CASSANDRA. Even more important than---?
CHORUS. ---even more important than her.
THREE. Were you ever more important than anyone before?
CASSANDRA. No.
TWO. Never more important than---
CHORUS. ---Hector?
CASSANDRA. No.

THREE. More important than---
CHORUS. ---Paris?
CASSANDRA. No.
CHORUS. More important than --
ONE. ---Hecuba? *(The Chorus has surrounded Cassandra.)*
CASSANDRA. Mommy?
ONE. Do this for---
CHORUS. ---Menelaus---
ONE. ---and he will be eternally grateful.
CHORUS. He will make you rich. Respected. He will listen to your every word.
THREE. You'll have a different crown for every day of the month.
CHORUS. Every day of the year!
THREE. Who listens to you now?
HECUBA. I'm listening! I'm always listening to you!
CASSANDRA. Don't patronize me.
THREE. Ooo, girl. That's a big word.
HECUBA. Cassandra. I love you.
CHORUS. We love you, too.
CASSANDRA. You don't even know what the word means.
HECUBA. Look at me.
CASSANDRA. No.
HECUBA. Cassandra, look at me.
CASSANDRA. I can't.
HECUBA. Why?
CASSANDRA. It hurts too much.
HECUBA. Then, just listen to me. Menelaus has me in chains, baby. I haven't changed my clothes in months. I only get to eat every other day. Baby, please look at me. I could have surrendered. They asked me to do everything they're asking you. They offered me everything they've offered you.
CASSANDRA. I don't believe you.
HECUBA. They did. And I refused. I'm doing all of this for you. Because I love you. Look at what that animal has done to your mother. Is it worth that crown? Look at me! *(Cassandra looks at her mother.)*

CASSANDRA. I can do this, Mom. If I do this, he'll listen to me. If I tell him to, he'll get you a new dress.
HECUBA. Cassie…
CASSANDRA. Don't tell me I'm just a kid.
HECUBA. I was going to say that I trust you to make the right decision.
CHORUS. Menelaus is waiting.
CASSANDRA. Mom? I saw Paris and Hector in the park. And we were happy. And Daddy was there. And then Andromache and… a baby! Of course. Now it makes sense. It's a girl, by the way.
HECUBA. Is it?
CASSANDRA. Hello? Psychic!
HECUBA. What's her name?
CASSANDRA. Don't know that. But we were all waiting for you.
HECUBA. That will be a beautiful day, baby.
CASSANDRA. You never showed up.
CHORUS. Come! *(The Chorus begins to usher Cassandra out. Cassandra stops them, removes the crown and gives it to Four. Cassandra rushes to Hecuba.)*
THREE. You've made an honorable choice. *(Two and Three fall upon Cassandra, tearing her from Hecuba and ultimately dragging her by her feet as she screams and claws to get back to Hecuba.)*
ONE. Are you ready to acknowledge Menelaus as your king?
HECUBA. Never. *(One exits after Cassandra. Sharp bang, off stage. One, Two, and Three return.)*

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