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Series: Miscellaneous Single Episodes

Show: Great Plays: The Trojan Women

Date: Oct 16 1938

CAST:

ANNOUNCER

BURNS MANTLE, commentator and narrator

HECUBA, dethroned queen

WOMAN 1

WOMAN 2

WOMAN 3

WOMAN 4

WOMAN 5

WOMAN 6

WOMAN 7

WOMAN 8

TALTHYBIUS, Greek herald

CASSANDRA, Hecuba's daughter

GIRL

ANDROMACHE, widowed princess

MENELAUS, Helen's husband; Spartan king

HELEN, of Troy; beautiful, dishonest

and the CHORUS

ANNOUNCER: Great Plays! -- landmarks in theatrical history -- broadcasts with stars from radio, stage, and screen.

MUSIC: FANFARE OF TRUMPETS AND ROLLING DRUMS ... THEN MAJESTIC STRINGS FOR INTRODUCTION ... THEN BEHIND ANNOUNCER--

ANNOUNCER: [The enthusiasm of the vast listening audience] for the eleven Great Plays which were presented last year has encouraged the National Broadcasting Company to open a new season in which twenty-eight masterpieces of the theater will be presented via radio in specially prepared adaptations. They will trace the development of the theater from ancient Greece down to modern Broadway.

In planning this series, the National Broadcasting Company received the assurance of cooperation from university presidents, the head of drama and English departments of the state universities, colleges, high schools, leaders in the Parent-Teacher's Association, Little Theater organizations, the National Thespian Society, and other groups -- many of which said they would organize to study and listen to the broadcasts.

To open the Great Plays, we are privileged to have with us the distinguished actress Miss Blanch Yurka in the leading role and Mr. Burns Mantle, outstanding American dramatic critic, and known throughout the country for his yearly volume of Broadway's best plays. He will act as commentator at today's production of "The Trojan Women," by Euripides. Mr. Mantle.

MR. BURNS MANTLE:Ladies and gentlemen, as the announcer has told you, We are about to start on a great playgoing adventure. We are going to have a series of Sunday theater parties, you and I. And we are, I hope, going to enjoy them. That is what the theater is for -- enjoyment. With the satisfaction of enjoyment, we may learn a little something, too, but chiefly we are going to have a good time.

Our first play, "The Trojan Women," by Euripides, was written twenty-three hundred years ago by perhaps the greatest of the Greek dramatists -- certainly the most understanding of them so far as women are concerned. And the play is still one of the outstanding indictments of the brutalities of war of all time. We can still do with a few words on this subject.

Our translation was prepared by Miss Edith Hamilton, who has put the Greek text into a simple modern idiom. Our acting company is headed by Miss Blanch Yurka, that brilliant daughter of Czechoslovakia, and a great tragic actress. You who are familiar with her Electra or her Ibsen repertory will not need to be reminded of that fact.

And now, if you are ready, we will pile into that most modern, most ancient, most dependable of flying machines, which is man's imagination, and fly back to the Theatre of Dionysus, which is in Athens. We arrive there four hundred and sixteen years before the birth of Christ.

MUSIC: TRANSITION FOR A FLIGHT THROUGH TIME AND SPACE TO ANCIENT GREECE ...
THEN IN BG

SOUND: OF HUGE THROGS OF MURMURING PEOPLE IN THE STADIUM ... THEN IN BG--

MANTLE: It is a bright, warm March day. The people we find are in a holiday mood. For three days they have been celebrating a religion that embraces devotions to the wine god. Business has been suspended. There is a moratorium on debts; no man may be dunned for what he owes during this festival. This naturally adds greatly to the gaiety of the occasion.

Great crowds are converging on the theater. They do not, however, have to rush; there are seats for thirty thousand. Here a community group leans forward in a body. There, a family group. Just beyond the family, you may see a number of prisoners with their guards. They have been released from prison so they may see the play. I trust there are no dramatic critics among them.

The stone seats of the theater, which you will be able to see much better if you close your eyes than if you keep them open, rise in a great semi-circle back of an open space on the ground level. The open space is called the orchestra. In the center is an altar erected to Dionysus, but often used as a prop in the play's action.

At the back is a low scene building and beyond that, the most beautiful of all backdrops, the great natural cyclorama of cloud-flecked blue skies.

MUSIC: OUT BEHIND--

SOUND: A MILD DISTURBANCE IN THE CROWD ... THEN MORE MURMURING, IN BG

MANTLE:

Just a moment. The ushers are having a little trouble finding room for several hundred guests of the state who could not afford the price of admission. But they manage to squeeze them in.

Now the leading actors and the members of the chorus are entering the orchestra and taking their places.

SOUND: DURING ABOVE, CROWD QUIETS

MANTLE: A great hush has fallen upon the audience. There are, we discover, several low huts at the sides of the orchestra near the scene house. In these are groups of captive women. The Greeks have taken Troy and the Trojan women -- their husbands slain, their children taken from them -- are waiting to be assigned to their captors. Far in the background, Troy, the walls in ruins, is slowly burning. Closest to us in the orchestra is Hecuba, the Trojan Queen. She lies prostrate on the ground. She is grieving for the King, whom she had seen cut down before her eyes. Her sons are dead. Mournfully, she awaits the coming of the conquerors. Slowly, as she struggles to rise, we hear her speak.

HECUBA: (WEARY, RESIGNED)
Up from the ground -- O weary head,
This is no longer Troy. And we are not the lords of Troy.
Endure. The ways of fate are the ways of the wind.
Country lost and children and husband.
Glory of all my house brought low.
Oh, I'll rock myself this way, that way,
to the sound of weeping, the song of tears.
O ships, O prows, swift oars,
over the dark, shining sea,
you found your way to our holy city,
and the fearful music of war was heard,
the war song sung to the flute and pipe
as you cast on the shore your cables.
And who am I that I await
here at a Greek king's door?
An old gray woman that has no home.
O wives of the bronze-armored men who fought,
and maidens, sorrowing maidens,
plighted to shame,
see? Only smoke left where was Troy.

MUSIC: MOURNFUL ... IN BG

HECUBA: (SOBS, TEARFUL)
Let us weep for her!
As a mother bird cries to her feathered brood,
so will I cry!

MUSIC: UP FOR MOURNFUL TRANSITION ... THEN IN BG

MANTLE: The door of one of the huts opens, and a woman steals out, then another, and another, and another.

WOMAN 1: Your cry, O Hecuba! Oh, such a cry!
What does it mean?

HECUBA: Look, child, there where the Greek ships lie.

WOMAN 2: They are moving. The men hold oars.

WOMAN 3: O God, what will they do? Carry me off
over the sea in a ship far from home?

HECUBA: You ask, and I know nothing,
but I think ruin is here.

WOMAN 4: Oh, we are wretched. We shall hear the summons.
Women of Troy, go forth from your home,
for the Greeks set sail!

HECUBA: (QUICKLY)
But not Cassandra, oh, not her.
She is mad. She's been driven mad. Leave her within!
O Troy, unhappy Troy, you are gone,
and we, the unhappy, leave you!

WOMEN: (WEEPING BRIEFLY)

WOMAN 5: (NERVOUSLY)
Out of the Greek king's tent,
trembling I come, O Queen,
to hear my fate from you.
Not death! They would not think of death
for a poor woman!

WOMAN 2: The sailors! They are standing on the prow!
Already they are running out the oars!

WOMAN 7: (WORRIED)
Has a herald come from the Greek camp?
Whose slave shall I be?

HECUBA: Wait for the lot drawing. It is near.

WOMAN 7:
Argos shall it be, or Phthia?
or an island of the sea?

HECUBA: (DESPAIRING)
I watch a master's door?
I a slave?
I nurse his children?
Once I was Queen in Troy.

WOMAN 4: Poor thing. What are your tears
to the shame before you?
The shuttle will still pass through my hands,
but the loom will not be in Troy.

WOMAN 8: My dead sons. I would look at them once more.
Never again.

MUSIC: OUT DURING ABOVE ... THEN SHARP TRUMPET FANFARE ... THEN OUT BEHIND--

SOUND:

HEAVY MARCHING OF APPROACHING SOLDIERS, THEN IN BG ... WOMEN MURMUR IN FEAR AND CONFUSION

WOMAN 2: (QUICKLY)
Look! A man from the Greek army,
A herald. Something strange has happened,
he comes so fast. To tell us -- what?
What will he say? Only Greek slaves are here,
Waiting for orders.

SOUND: MARCHING SOLDIERS STOP

TALTHYBIUS: You know me, Hecuba, I have often come
with messages to Troy from the Greek camp.
I am Talthybius. These many years you've known me.
I bring you news.

HECUBA: (WEARY) It has come, women of Troy. Once we only feared it.

TALTHYBIUS: The lots are drawn, if that is what you feared.

HECUBA: Who? Where? Thessaly? Phthia? Thebes?

TALTHYBIUS: A different man takes each. You're not to go together.

HECUBA: Then which takes which? Has anyone good fortune?

TALTHYBIUS: I know. But ask about each one, not all at once.

HECUBA: (TENSE)
My daughter, Cassandra -- who drew her? Tell me.

TALTHYBIUS: King Agamemnon chose her out from all.

HECUBA: (REALIZES)
Ohhhh! but of course -- to serve his Spartan wife.

TALTHYBIUS: No, no -- but for the king's own bed at night.

HECUBA: (HORRIFIED)
Oh, never! She is God's, a virgin, always!
That was God's gift to her for all her life!

TALTHYBIUS: He loved her for that same strange purity.

HECUBA: (BEAT, DEFEATED)
My other child you took from me just now?

TALTHYBIUS: (SPEAKING WITH CONSTRAINT)
Polyxena, you mean? Or someone else?

HECUBA: Polyxena. Who drew her?

TALTHYBIUS: They told her off to watch Achilles' tomb.

HECUBA: (PUZZLED)
To watch a tomb? My daughter?
That a Greek custom?
What strange ritual is that, my friend?

TALTHYBIUS:

(TOO SMOOTH)
Just think of her as happy -- all well with her.

HECUBA: (SUSPICIOUS)
Those words-- Why do you speak like that?
She is - alive?

TALTHYBIUS: (DETERMINED NOT TO SAY)
What happened was-- Well, she is free from trouble.

HECUBA: (SLOWLY EXHALES, WEARILY)
Then Hector's wife -- Andromache --
Where does she go, poor thing?

TALTHYBIUS: Achilles' son took her. He chose her out.

HECUBA: (BITTERLY)
And I, old gray head, whose slave am I,
creeping along with my crutch?

TALTHYBIUS: Slave of the King of Ithaca, Odysseus.

HECUBA: (SAVAGE WHISPER)
His slave?! Vile, lying man.
(INHALES, INCREASINGLY INTENSE)
I have come to this.
There is nothing good he does not hurt -- a lawless beast,
A double tongue, as false in hate as false in love.
Pity me, women of Troy!

WOMAN 7: You know what lies before you, Queen, but I--
What man among the Greeks owns me?

TALTHYBIUS: (CALLS) Soldiers, off with you! Bring Cassandra here. Be quick!

SOUND: A FEW SOLDIERS MARCH OFF

TALTHYBIUS: (TO REMAINING SOLDIERS)
You, men. We must give her to the chief,
into his very hand. And then these women here
to all the other generals.
(SUDDENLY TENSE)
But what's that --
that flash of light inside the hut?
Set fire to the huts?! Is that their plan,
these Trojan women? Burn themselves to death
rather than sail to Greece, Choosing to die instead?
(CALLS)
Open there, open the door!

HECUBA: No, no, there's nothing burning. It is my daughter, Cassandra. She is mad.

MUSIC: LIGHT AND LILTING ... FLUTE, LYRE, BELLS ... FOR CASSANDRA'S DANCE ...
THEN IN BG

MANTLE: The mad Cassandra enters from one of the huts. She wears the dress of a priestess, a wreath in her hair, a torch in her hand. She does not appear to see anyone as she dances, a little wildly, and talks as she

dances of her approaching marriage to Agamemnon, the conquering Greek who has laid the proud city low.

CASSANDRA: Lift it high -- in my hand -- light to bring!
I praise him! I bear a flame!
With my torch I touch to fire
this holy place!
Hymen, O Hymen!
Blessed the bridegroom,
blessed am I.
Hymen, O Hymen!
Mother, you weep
tears for my father dead,
mourning for the beloved
country lost.
I for my bridal here
lift up the fire's flame
to the dawn, to the splendor,
to you, O Hymen!
Fly, dancing feet!
Up with the dance!
Oh, joy, oh, joy!
Dance for my father dead.
Dance, mother, come.
Keep step with me.
Sing to the marriage god,
oh, joyful song!

MUSIC: OUT

WOMAN 2: (UNEASY)
Hold her fast, Queen, poor frenzied girl!
She might rush straight to the Greek camp!

HECUBA: (PATIENTLY)
Cassandra, give me your torch. You do not hold it straight.
You move so wildly. Your sufferings, my child,
have never taught you wisdom.
You never change. Here! Someone take the torch
into the hut. This marriage needs no songs
but only tears.

CASSANDRA: O mother, crown my triumph with a wreath.
Be glad, for I am married to a king.
Send me to him, and if I shrink away,
drive me with violence.
Agamemnon, the great, the glorious lord of Greece!
I shall kill him, mother, lay his house as low
as he laid ours, make him pay for all
he made my father suffer, brothers, and all!
All because he married me and so
pulled his own house down.
This town now-- Yes, mother,
it is happier than the Greeks. I - I know that I am mad,
but, mother dearest, now, for this one time
I do not rave.

One woman they came hunting, and one love,
Helen! -- and men by tens of thousands died.
 No man had moved Greek landmarks
 or laid siege to their high-walled towns.
 But those whom war took never saw their children.
 No wife with gentle hands shrouded them for their grave.
 The Greeks lie in a strange land. And in their homes
 are sorrows, too, the very same.
 That was the glorious victory they won.
 But we -- we Trojans died to save our people;
 no glory greater. All Trojans whom the spear slew,
 friends bore them home and wrapped them in their shroud
 with dutiful hands. The earth of their own land
 covered them. The rest, through the long days they fought,
 had wife and child at home, not like the Greeks,
 whose joys were far away.
 This truth stands firm: the wise will fly from war.
But if war comes, to die well is to win
 the victor's crown.
 The only shame is not to die like that.
 So, mother, do not pity Troy,
 or me upon my bridal bed.

TALTHYBIUS: (FURIOUS)
 Now if Apollo had not made you mad
 I would have paid you for these evil words.
 (GRUMBLED DISBELIEF, HALF TO HIMSELF)
 The great, who seem so wise, have no more sense
 than those who rank as nothing.
 Our king, the first in Greece, bows down
 before this mad girl, loves her, chooses her
 out of them all.
 (TO CASSANDRA)
 You, girl -- you know your mind is not quite right.
 So all you said against Greece and for Troy
 I never heard. The wind blew it away.
 Come with me to the ship now.
 (TO HECUBA, MOVING OFF)
 And you, Hecuba, follow quietly
 when Odysseus' men come.

CASSANDRA: (HAUGHTILY, THREATENING)
 Spread the sail! The wind comes swift!
 Those who bring vengeance -- three are they.
 And one of them goes with you on the sea.

HECUBA: (EXHALES WEARILY)

CASSANDRA: O Mother, my mother, do not weep. Farewell,
 dear city. Brothers, in Troy's earth laid. My father,
 a little time and I am with you.
 You dead, I shall come to you a victor.
 Those ruined by my hand who ruined us!
 Come, let us hasten to the marriage!

HECUBA: (GASPS, FAINTS)

CASSANDRA EXITS WITH MARCHING SOLDIERS

SOUND:

WOMAN 3: The Queen! The Queen! See? She is falling!

WOMAN 8: Oh, help! She cannot speak.
Miserable slaves, will you leave her on the ground,
old as she is? Up! Lift her up!

HECUBA: (WEAKLY)
Oh, let me be.

MUSIC: TRAGIC ... IN BG

HECUBA: I cannot stand. Too much is on me.
O God! Do I call to you? You did not help.
There is something that cries out for God
when troubles come.
Oh, I will think of good days gone,
days to make a song of,
crowning my sorrow by remembering.
We were kings, and a king I married.
Sons I bore him, many sons.
They were the best in all Troy.
No woman, Trojan, Greek, or stranger,
had sons like mine to be proud of.
I saw them fall beneath Greek spears.
Their father I saw fall murdered
upon the altar when his town was lost.
My daughters, maidens reared to marry kings,
are torn from me.
All gone -- no hope that I shall look upon
their faces any more, or they on mine.
And now the end -- no more can lie beyond --
an old, gray slave woman, I go to Greece.
I, who bore Hector --
upon the ground lay this old body down that once
slept in a royal bed; torn rags around me,
torn flesh beneath.
No son, no daughter, left to help my need,
and I had many, many!
Why lift me up? What hope is there to hold to?

MUSIC: UP FOR HOPELESS TRANSITION ... THEN OUT BEHIND--

MANTLE: The chorus has begun to circle the altar, walking with measured tread,
relating with a kind of tremulous resentment the story of the great
wooden horse that the Trojans, believing it to be a gift for the goddess
Athena, had innocently opened up the walls of Troy to receive and had
drawn in triumph through the streets. But when darkness fell, Greek
soldiers began pouring from that huge image, and soon these had opened
the gates and the Greeks were in possession of the city. Hear the story
of that catastrophe as the chorus and the women relate it:

MUSIC: DRUMS AND WORDLESS VOCAL BACKGROUND ... THE CHORUS SPEAKS IN UNISON,
ENUNCIATING CAREFULLY ... THEN THE WOMEN SPEAK BRISKLY AND URGENTLY,
WITH NO PAUSES BETWEEN LINES--

CHORUS: Sing me, O Muse, a song for Troy,
a strange song sung to tears,
a music for the grave.
Oh, lips, sound forth a melody
for Troy.

WOMAN 3: A four-wheeled cart brought the horse to the gates,
brought ruin to me,
captured, enslaved me.

WOMAN 4: Gold was the rein and the bridle,
deadly the arms within,
and they clashed loud to heaven as the threshold
was passed.

WOMAN 5: High on Troy's rock the people cried,
"Rest at last, trouble ended.
Bring the carven image in.
Bear it to Athena, fit
gift for the child of God."

WOMAN 6: Who of the young but hurried forth?
Who of the old would stay at home?
With song and rejoicing they brought death in!

WOMAN 7: All that were in Troy,
hastening to the gate,
drew that smooth-planed horse of wood
where the Greeks were hiding,
where was Troy's destruction,
gave it to the goddess,
gift for her, the virgin,
driver of the steeds that never die.

WOMAN 8: With ropes of twisted flax,
as a ship's dark hull is drawn to land,
they brought it to her temple of stone,
to her floor that soon would run with blood,
to Pallas Athena.

WOMAN 2: On their toil and their joy
the dark of evening fell,
but the lutes of Egypt still rang out
to the songs of Troy.

WOMAN 1: And girls with feet light as air,
dancing, sang happy songs.
The houses blazed with light
through the dark splendor,
and sleep was not.

MUSIC: OUT WITH--

GIRL: (SIMPLY, THEN INCREASINGLY INTENSE)
I was among the dancers.
I was singing to the maiden of Zeus.
A shout rang out in the town,

a cry of blood through the houses.
Then War came forth from his hiding place.
Around the altars they slaughtered us
Within on their beds lay headless men,
young men cut down in their prime.
This was the triumph crown of Greece.
We shall bear children for her to rear,
grief and shame to our country.

SOUND: DURING ABOVE, RUMBLING CHARIOT APPROACHES, CONTINUES IN BG ... WOMEN MURMUR BRIEFLY--

WOMAN 1: See! A chariot approaches, loaded with spoils!

WOMAN 2: It's Andromache, widow of Hector! She is holding her son Astyanax in her arms.

SOUND: CHARIOT SLOWS TO A STOP

WOMAN 3: Look, Hecuba, it is Andromache.
Her breast heaves with her sobs, and yet
the baby sleeps there, dear Astyanax,
the son of Hector.

WOMAN 8: O Andromache,
Most sorrowful of women, where do you go?
Beside you the bronze armor that was Hector's,
the spoil of the Greek spear, stripped from the dead.

ANDROMACHE: I go where my Greek masters take me.

HECUBA: Oh, our sorrow -- our sorrow.

ANDROMACHE: Why should you weep? This sorrow is mine.

HECUBA: O God -- gone -- happiness -- Troy -- noble sons, all lost.

ANDROMACHE: Oh, sorrow is here.
My tears fall for you.

HECUBA: Look and see the end--

ANDROMACHE: Of the house where I bore my children.

HECUBA: O children, your mother has lost her city,
and you -- you have left her alone.
Only grief is mine, and mourning.
The dead -- they have forgotten their pain.
They weep no more.

ANDROMACHE: Mother of him whose spear of old brought death
to Greeks unnumbered, you see what is here.

HECUBA: I see God's hand that casts the mighty down
and sets on high the lowly.

ANDROMACHE: Driven like cattle captured in a raid,
my child and I -- the free changed to a slave.
Oh, changed indeed.

HECUBA: It is fearful to be helpless. Men just now
have taken Cassandra -- forced her from me.

ANDROMACHE: And still more for you -- more than that.

HECUBA: Number my sorrows, will you? Measure them?
One comes. The next one rivals it.

ANDROMACHE: Polyxena lies dead upon Achilles' tomb--

HECUBA: (ANGUISHED EXCLAMATION)

ANDROMACHE: --a gift to a corpse, to a lifeless thing.

HECUBA: (DEVASTATED)
My sorrow! That is what Talthybius meant.
I could not read his riddle. Now, too plain. (WEEPS BEHIND--)

ANDROMACHE: I saw her there and left the chariot
and covered her dead body with my cloak
and beat my breast.

HECUBA: Murdered! My child!
Oh, cruelly slain!

ANDROMACHE: She has died her death, and happier by far
dying than I alive.

HECUBA: Life cannot be what death is, child.
Death is empty. Life has hope.

ANDROMACHE: (COMFORTING)
Mother, O mother, hear a truer word.
Now let me bring joy to your heart.
I say to die is only not to be,
and rather death than life with bitter grief.
They have no pain, they do not feel their wrongs.
She is dead, your daughter.

HECUBA: (SOBS)

ANDROMACHE: She does not know the wickedness that killed her.
When they captured me, Achilles' son would have me.
I shall be a slave to those who murdered!
O Hector, my husband, you were all to me --
wise, noble, mighty, in wealth, in manhood, both.
And you are dead, and I, with other plunder,
am sent by sea to Greece! A slave's yoke there!
(SOBS, THEN WEEPS BEHIND--)

HECUBA: (SOOTHING)
O dear child, let Hector be,
and let be what has come to him.
Your tears will never call him back.

SOUND: HEAVY MARCHING STEPS OF APPROACHING SOLDIERS ... THEN BEHIND--

HECUBA: I see Talthybius coming. Some new plan is here.

SOUND: SOLDIERS STOP

TALTHYBIUS: (MEASURED, DIPLOMATIC)
Wife of the noblest man that was in Troy,
O wife of Hector, do not hate me.
Against my will I come to tell you.
The people and the kings have all resolved--

ANDROMACHE: (INTERRUPTS) What is it? Evil follows words like those.

TALTHYBIUS: This child they order-- Oh, how can I say it?

ANDROMACHE: (ASTONISHED) Not that he does not go with me to the same master?

TALTHYBIUS: No man in Greece shall ever be his master.

ANDROMACHE: But -- leave him here? All that is left of Troy?

TALTHYBIUS: I don't know how to tell you. What is bad,
words can't make better.

ANDROMACHE: I feel you kind. But you have not good news.

TALTHYBIUS: Your child must die.

ANDROMACHE: (HORRIFIED EXCLAMATION)

TALTHYBIUS: There, now you know
the whole, bad as it is.
It was Odysseus had his way. He spoke
to all the Greeks.

ANDROMACHE: O God. There is no measure to my pain.

TALTHYBIUS: He said a hero's son must not grow up --
but from the towering wall of Troy be thrown.

ANDROMACHE: (HORRIFIED) No! (WEEPS WITH QUIET HYSTERIA BRIEFLY BEHIND--)

TALTHYBIUS: (REASONABLY)
Now, now let it be done. That's wiser.
Don't cling so to him. Bear your pain
the way a brave woman suffers.
You have no strength. Don't look to any help.
There's no help for you anywhere. Think -- think.
The city gone -- your husband, too. And you,
a captive and alone, one woman.
How can you do battle with us?
For your own good
I would not have you try, and draw
hatred down on you and be shamed.

ANDROMACHE: (EXHALES, RELENTS)
Go. Die, my Astyanax, my best beloved, my own,
in cruel hands, leaving your mother comfortless.
Your father was too noble. That is why
they kill you. He could save others.
He could not save you for his nobleness.
Weeping, my little one? There, there.

You cannot know what waits for you.
 Why hold me with your hands so fast, cling so fast to me?
 You little bird, flying to hide beneath my wings.
 And Hector cannot come -- he cannot come
 up from the tomb, great spear in hand, to save you.
 Not one of all his kin, of all the Trojan might.
 You little nothing
 curled in my arms, you dearest to your mother,
 how sweet the fragrance of you.
 Kiss me. Never again. Come closer, closer.
 (AGITATED)
 Put your arms around my neck.
 Now kiss me, lips to lips.
 O Greeks! You have found out ways to torture that are not Greek!
 A little child, all innocent of wrong,
 you wish to kill him!
 Quick! take my child! Seize him! Cast him down,
 if so you will. Feast on his flesh!
 God has destroyed me, and I cannot,
 I cannot save my child from death!
 Hide my head for shame and fling me
 into the ship!
 (HOPELESSLY)
 Oh, I have lost my child, my own.
 (WEEPS HORRIBLY, BRIEFLY BEHIND--)

TALTHYBIUS: (SOMBERLY)
 Come now.
 Come, boy, let go. Unclasp those loving hands, poor mother.
 Come now, up, boy, up, to the very height,
 where the towers of your fathers crown the wall
 and where it is decreed that you must die.
 A herald who must bring such orders
 should be a man who feels no pity,
 and no shame either, not like me.

HECUBA: What can I do for you, poor piteous child?
 Troy lost, now you. All lost.
 My cup is full. Why wait? For what?
 Hasten on, swiftly to the death!

TALTHYBIUS: Take him away, guard.

ANDROMACHE: No! (WEEPS HYSTERICALLY BEHIND--)

TALTHYBIUS: Take him away.

SOUND: SOLDIERS MARCH OFF

MANTLE: The soldiers have waited while Hecuba speaks. Now they follow Talthybius
 as he takes the infant Astyanax from its mother. One soldier stays
 behind to take Andromache to her chariot. As Hector's widow drives away,
 the chorus continues its lament, calling to mind the greater glories of
 the city's past.

MUSIC: WORDLESS VOCAL BACKGROUND ... CHORUS SPEAKS IN UNISON

CHORUS: Priam's land
lies ruined by Greek spearsmen.
Love, O Love,
once you came to the halls of Troy,
and your song rose up to the dwellers in heaven.

WOMAN 4: How did you then exalt Troy high,
binding her fast to the gods, by a union--

WOMAN 5: No -- I will not speak blame of Zeus.
But the light of white-winged Dawn, dear to men,
is deadly over the city this day,
shining on fallen towers.

WOMAN 6: And yet Dawn keeps in her bridal bower
her children's father, a son of Troy.
Her chariot bore him away to the sky.
It was gold, and four stars drew it.

CHORUS: Hope was high then for our town,
but the magic that brought her the love of the gods
has gone from Troy.

MUSIC: UP TO FILL A PAUSE ... JOINED BY MARCHING DRUMS, WHICH FADE IN TO
INDICATE THE APPROACH OF MENELAUS ... THEN OUT

MANTLE: And now comes the vengeful Menelaus. 'Twas he who, as the wronged
husband of Helen of Troy, fought this war to recover his beautiful wife.
She had, you will remember, fled his house in Greece with Paris, a
Trojan who had been Menelaus' guest. Helen, if we take the word of
Aeschylus, a brother Greek dramatist, was "a hell to men, a hell to
ships, and a hell to cities." It is to his bodyguard that Menelaus
speaks.

MENELAUS: How bright the sunlight is today --
this day, when I shall get into my power
Helen, my wife. For I am Menelaus,
the man of many wrongs.
I came to Troy and brought with me my army,
not for that woman's sake, as people say,
but for the man who from my house --
and he a guest there! -- stole away my wife.
Ah, well, with God's help he has paid the price,
he and his country, fallen beneath Greek spears.
I am come to get her -- wretch! I cannot
speak her name --
who was once my wife.
The men who fought and toiled to win her back
have given her to me, to kill -- or else,
if it pleases me, to take her back to Argos.
And it has seemed to me her death in Troy
is not the way. I will take her overseas,
with swift oars on the ship,
and there in Greece give her to those to kill
whose dearest died because of her!
(CALLS, TO SOLDIERS)

Attention! Forward to the huts!
Seize her and drag her out by that long blood-drenched hair!

SOUND: WOMEN MURMUR IN CONFUSION ... SOLDIERS FORCE THE DOOR OF ONE OF THE HUTS
... ALL FALL SILENT BEHIND--

HECUBA: Kill her, Menelaus!
(OMINOUS WARNING)
But shun her, do not look at her.
Desire for her will seize you, conquer you.
For through men's eyes she gets them in her power.
She ruins them -- and ruins cities, too.
Fire comes from her to burn homes,
magic for death. I know her, so do you
and all those who have suffered.

MUSIC: FOR HELEN ... FOREBODING, BEAUTIFUL ... THEN IN BG--

HELEN: (ENTERS WITH SWEET, INJURED DIGNITY)
Menelaus--

MENELAUS: (GASPS) Helen!

HELEN: Your men with violence have driven me from my room,
have laid their hands upon me.
Of course I know -- almost I know -- you hate me,
but yet I ask you, what is your decision,
yours and the Greeks? Am I to live -- or not?

MENELAUS: Nothing more clear. Unanimous, in fact.
Not one who did not vote you should be given me,
whom you have wronged, to kill you.

HELEN: Am I allowed to speak against the charge?
To show you if I die that I shall die
most wronged and innocent?

MENELAUS: I have come to kill you, not to argue with you.

HELEN: Then perhaps no matter if you think I speak
the truth or not, you will not talk to me,
since you believe I am your enemy.
Still, I will try to answer what I think
you would say if you spoke your mind,
and my wrongs shall be heard as well as yours.
Listen -- and learn.

MUSIC: GENTLY OUT

HELEN: This Paris, he was made the judge for three goddesses,
all yoked together in a quarrel.
First, Athena promised he should lead the Trojans
to victory and lay all Greece in ruins.
Second, Hera said if he thought her the fairest
she would make him lord of Europe and of Asia.
And last, Aphrodite. Well, she praised my beauty --
astonishing, she said -- and promised Paris
that she would give me to him if he judged

her the loveliest. Then, see what happened.
 Aphrodite won, and so my bridal brought
 all Greece great good. No strangers rule you,
 no foreign spears, no tyrants.
 Oh, it was well for Greece, but not for me,
 sold for my beauty and reproached besides
 when I deserved a crown.
 But to the point. Is that what you are thinking?
 Why did I go, steal from your house in secret?
 That man, Paris, or any other name you like to call him,
 when he came to me, Aphrodite,
 a mighty goddess, walked beside him.
 And you, poor fool, you spread your sails for Crete,
 left Sparta, left Paris in your house.

Ah, well. Not you but my own self I ask,
 what was there in my heart that I went with him,
 a strange man, and forgot my home and country?
 Punish Aphrodite.
 She is my absolution.
 When Paris died and went down to the grave
 I should have left his house, gone to the Greeks.
 Just what I tried to do -- oh, many times.
 I have witnesses -- the men who kept the gates,
 the watchmen on the walls. Not once, but often,
 they found me swinging from a parapet,
 a rope around this body, stealthily
 feeling my way down.
 The Trojans then no longer wanted me,
 but the man who took me -- and by force --
 would never let me go.
 My husband, must I die, and at your hands?
 You think that right? Is that your justice?
 I was forced -- by violence. I lived a life
 that had no joy, no triumph. In bitterness
 I lived a slave.
 Do you wish to set yourself above the gods?
 Oh, stupid, senseless wish!

WOMAN 3: (URGENT, TO HECUBA)
 O Queen, defend your children and your country.
 Her soft persuasive words are deadly.
 She speaks so fair and is so vile.
 A fearful thing.

HECUBA:
 Her goddesses will fight on my side while
 I show her for the liar that she is.
 Never make gods out fools to whitewash your own evil.
 No one with sense will listen to you.
 My son was beautiful exceedingly.
 You saw him -- your own desire was enough.
 It was my son. You saw him in his Eastern dress
 all bright with gold, and you were mad with love.
 Your luxuries, your insolent excesses --
 Menelaus' halls had grown too small for them!

Enough of that. By force you say he took you?
 You cried out? Where?! No one in Sparta heard you!
 And when you came to Troy, and on your track the Greeks,
 and death and agony in battle,
 if they would tell you, "Greece has won today,"
 you would praise this man here, Menelaus,
 to vex my son, who feared him as a rival.
 Then Troy had victories, and Menelaus
 was nothing to you. Looking to the successful side -- oh, yes,
 you always followed there.
 There was no right or wrong side in your eyes.
 Now you talk of ropes -- letting your body down
 in secret from the wall, longing to go.
 Who found you so?
 Was there a noose around your neck?
 A sharp knife in your hand? Such ways
 as any honest woman would have found,
 who loved the husband she had lost?
 Often and often I would tell you: Go,
 my daughter. My sons will find them other wives.
 I will help you. I will send you past the lines
 to the Greek ships. Oh, end this war
 between our foes and us. But this was bitter to you.
 In Paris' house you had your insolent way!
 You liked to see the Eastern men fall at your feet.
 These were great things to you.
 Look at the dress you wear, your ornaments.
 Is that the way to meet your husband?
 You should not dare to breathe the same air with him.
 Oh, men should spit upon you.
 Humbly, in rags, trembling and shivering,
 so should you come,
 with shame at last, instead of shamelessness,
 for all the wickedness you did.
 (TO MENELAUS)
 King, one word more and I am done.
 Give Greece a crown, be worthy of yourself.
 Kill her! So shall the law stand for all women,
 that she who plays false to her husband's bed
 shall die.

WOMAN 2: (IMPLORING, TO MENELAUS)
 O son of an ancient house, O King, now show
 that you are worthy of your fathers.
 Be strong. Be noble. Punish her!

MENELAUS: (IMPATIENTLY)
 I see it all as you do. We agree.
 She left my house because she wanted to.
 Her talk of Aphrodite --
 big words, no more.
 (TO HELEN)
 Go, Helen. Death is near.

HELEN: (WITH HORROR) No! (SHUDDERS)

MENELAUS: Men there are waiting for you. In their hands -- stones!

HELEN: No!

MENELAUS: Die! A small price for the Greeks' long suffering.
You shall not any more dishonor me.

HELEN: (DESPERATELY)
No! No! No-- On my knees -- see? I am praying to you.
It was the gods, not me. Oh, do not kill me.
Forgive.

HECUBA: (QUICKLY, TO MENELAUS)
The men she murdered. Think of those
Who fought beside you -- of their children, too.
Never betray them. Hear that prayer!

MENELAUS: (ROUGHLY)
Enough, old woman! She is nothing to me.
(TO SOLDIERS)
Men?! Take her to the ships and keep her safe until she sails.

HECUBA: But not with you! She must not set foot on your ship.

MENELAUS: (DRY)
And why? Her weight too heavy for it?

HECUBA: (AMUSED CHUCKLE, THEN WISELY, SLOWLY)
A lover once, a lover always.

MENELAUS: Not so [when what he loved has gone].
But it shall be as you would have it.
Not on the same ship with me. The advice is good.
And when she gets to Argos she shall die
a death hard as her heart.
So in the end she will become a teacher,
teach women chastity -- (CHUCKLE) -- no easy thing,
but yet her utter ruin will strike terror
into their silly hearts,
even women worse than she.

MUSIC: DRUMS AND WORDLESS VOCALS BACKGROUND ... CHORUS SPEAKS IN UNISON ...
WOMEN SPEAK BRISKLY AND DESPAIRINGLY

CHORUS: The sacrifice is gone, and the glad call
of dancers, and the prayers at evening to the gods
that last the whole night long.
My city is perishing,
ending in fire and onrushing flame.

WOMAN 2: O dear one, O my husband,
you are dead, and you wander
unburied, uncared for, while overseas
the ships shall carry me.

WOMAN 8: Children, our children.
At the gate they are crying, crying,
calling to us with tears,

"Mother, I am all alone.
They are driving me away
to a black ship, and I cannot see you."

WOMAN 3: Oh, if only, far out to sea,
the crashing thunder of God
would fall down, down on Menelaus' ship!
(WEEPS)

SOUND: MARCH OF APPROACHING SOLDIERS ... THEN IN BG--

MUSIC: OUT BEHIND--

WOMAN 1: Look! Talthybius approaches with his soldiers.

SOUND: MARCHING SOLDIERS STOP BEHIND--

WOMAN 2: He is carrying the dead boy, Astyanax. See? He gives the lifeless form
to Hecuba.

WOMAN 8: (HORRIFIED)
Look, unhappy wives of Troy,
the dead Astyanax.
They threw him from the tower as one might pitch a ball!

TALTHYBIUS: (CALMLY)
One ship is waiting, Hecuba.
The chief himself has sailed.
He went, and with him went Andromache.
She drew tears from me there upon the ship:
mourning her country, speaking to Hector's grave,
begging a burial for this, her child, your Hector's son,
who, thrown down from the tower, lost his life.
And this bronze-fronted shield, the dread of many a Greek,
which Hector used in battle,
that it should never, so she prayed,
hang in strange halls.
Andromache, this dead boy's mother,
she begged that he might lie upon this shield in his grave.
And in your arms she told me I must lay him,
for you to cover the body --
if you have anything, a cloak left --
and to put flowers on him if you could,
since she has gone. Her master's haste
kept her from burying her child.
So now, whenever you have laid him out,
we'll heap the earth above him, then
up with the sails!
Do all as quickly as you can. One trouble
I have saved you.
I let the water run on him and washed his wounds.
I am off to dig his grave now, break up the hard earth.
Working together, you and I,
will hurry the goal, oars swift for home.

HECUBA: (MOVED) Set the shield down -- the great round shield of Hector.

SOUND: SHIELD SET DOWN

HECUBA: I wish I need not look at it. Go, Talthybius.

SOUND: TALTHYBIUS AND SOLDIERS MARCH OFF ... FADE OUT BEHIND--

HECUBA: (MUSES)

You Greeks, your spears are sharp but not your wits.
You feared a child. You murdered him.
Strange murder. You were frightened, then? You thought
he might build up our ruined Troy? and yet
when Hector fought and thousands at his side,
we fell beneath you. Now when all is lost,
the city captured and the Trojans dead,
a little child like this made you afraid.

MUSIC: FOR A GRANDMOTHER'S LAMENT ... IN BG

HECUBA: Beloved child, what a death has come to you.
If you had fallen fighting for the city,
if you had known strong youth and love
and godlike power, if we could think
that you had known happiness -- if there is
happiness anywhere.
Poor little one. How savagely our ancient walls
have torn away the curls
your mother's fingers wound, and where she pressed her kisses.
Dear hands -- the same dear shape your father's had --
how loosely now you fall. And dear proud lips
forever closed. False words you spoke to me
when you would jump into my bed, call me sweet names,
and tell me, "Grandmother, when you are dead,
I'll cut off a great lock of hair and lead my soldiers all
to ride out past your tomb."
Not you, but I, old, homeless, childless,
must lay you in your grave, so young,
so miserably dead.
(WEEPS BRIEFLY)
What could a poet carve upon your tomb?
"A child lies here whom the Greeks feared and slew."
Ah, Greece should boast of that.
Child, they have taken all that was your father's,
but one thing, for your burying, you shall have,
the bronze-barred shield.
It kept safe Hector's mighty arm, but now
it has lost its master.
Come, bring such covering for the pitiful dead body
as we still have. God has not left us much
to make a show with. Everything I have
I give you, child.
Now on your body I must lay the raiment,
all that is left of the splendor that was Troy's.
And the dear shield of Hector, glorious in battle,
mother of ten thousand triumphs won,
it too shall have its wreath of honor.
Undying it will lie beside the dead.

MUSIC: OUT

WOMAN 5: You, O child, our bitter sorrow,
earth will now receive.
Mourn, O mother.

HECUBA: Mourn, indeed. Bitter tears.
Soon among the dead your father
will care for you.
I think those that are gone care little
how they are buried. [It is we, the living,
our vanity.]
Women, lift the shield with the body on it.
Carry it out.

MUSIC: AGITATED ... FOR THE BIG FIRE ... THEN IN BG

WOMAN 2: Oh, see, see!
On the crested height of Troy
fiery hands! They are flinging torches!
Can it be some new evil?!
Something still unknown?!

TALTHYBIUS: (SLIGHTLY OFF, YELLS TO MEN)
Captains, attention! You have been given charge
to burn this city! Do not let your torches sleep!
Hurry the fire on!
When once the town is level with the ground,
then off for home and glad good-by to Troy!
(TO WOMEN)
And you, (FADING IN CLOSER) you women --
I will arrange for you
as well, one speech for everything!
Whenever a loud trumpet call is sounded,
go to the Greek ships, to embark!
(QUIETER, TO HECUBA)
Old woman, I am sorriest for you.
Odysseus' men are here to get you.
Follow me.

HECUBA: (INCREASINGLY HYSTERICAL)
The end, then.
Troy is burning.
You were so proud a city, in all the East
the proudest!
They are burning you
and leading us away, their slaves!
Quick! Into the fire! Troy, I will die with you!

TALTHYBIUS: (TO SOLDIERS)
Lead her away! Hold her; don't be too gentle!
She must be taken to Odysseus!

WOMAN 5: Oh, terrible!
The fire lights the whole town up!
The inside rooms are burning!
The citadel -- it is all flame now!

WOMAN 3: Troy is vanishing!
War first ruined her --
and what was left is rushing up in smoke,
the glorious houses fallen!
First the spear and then the fire!

SOUND: FADE IN HOWLING WIND

HECUBA: O dwellings of the gods and dear city,
the spear came first, and now
only the red flame lives there!

WOMAN 2: The dust is rising, spreading out like a great wing of smoke.
I cannot see my house.

WOMAN 3: The name has vanished from the land,
and we are gone, one here, one there.
And Troy is gone forever!

MUSIC: OUT WITH--

SOUND: A GREAT LENGTHY CRASH! ... FALLING WALLS OF THE CITY ... THEN SILENCE

WOMAN 1: Earthquake and flood and the city's end!

HECUBA: Troy is fallen.

MUSIC: DRUM ROLL AND TRUMPET FANFARE

HECUBA: Farewell, my country, where my children lived.
Farewell, dear city.
On to the ships below.
(SLOWLY)
The Greek ships wait.

MUSIC: DRUM ROLL AND TRUMPET FANFARE AGAIN ... ORCHESTRA SWELLS TO FINALE ...
THEN GENTLY BEHIND MANTLE--

MANTLE: And so we come to the end of this great tragedy. Slowly, actors and
chorus are passing out through the entrances to the orchestra. The great
audience is standing, applauding, and cheering. Women are wiping tears
from their eyes and a little hysterically gathering their children about
them, ready to swear again that age-old oath of all the mothers of men
that there shall be no more wars if ever it is within their power to
prevent it.

MUSIC: UP TO FILL A PAUSE ... THEN IN BG--

ANNOUNCER: Mr. Burns Mantle, American drama critic, has just completed his
commentary on "The Trojan Women," first in the series of Great Plays.
This series has been arranged by Mr. Blevins Davis of the National
Broadcasting Company in close consultation with leading educators and
theater organizations throughout the country.

"The Trojan Women" was adapted and directed by Harry MacFayden. The
music was especially arranged for the play and conducted by Dr. Frank
Black. The members of the cast included: Hecuba, Blanch Yurka;
Andromache, Kay Strozzi; Helen of Troy, Florence Malone; Cassandra,
Selena Royle; Talthybius, Carl Benton Reid; Menelaus, Terry Mestayer;

the guard, Jerome Lessor. The study manual, part one -- listing the twenty-eight Great Plays and giving complete background material for the first twelve productions -- is now available for our radio audience at cost. The price is ten cents. Address your order with coin or stamps to Great Plays, National Broadcasting Company, Radio City, New York. We suggest that you consult your local library for reading material on the remaining plays of the series.

Next week at this same hour, "Everyman," a sixteenth century morality play, will be presented.

MUSIC: UP TO FILL PAUSE ... THEN BEHIND--

ANNOUNCER: "The Trojan Women" was an educational feature of the National Broadcasting Company, RCA Building, Radio City, New York.

MUSIC: PAUSE ... THEN NBC CHIMES