

EURIPIDES'
"Rhesus"

Circa 445BCE

Translated by
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Dramatis Personae:

Hektor

(A Prince of Troy)

Paris

(aka Alexandros, a Prince of Troy)

Aeneas

(Trojan Noble)

Dolon

(Trojan soldier)

Rhesus

(Chief of Thracian army)

Muse

(Rhesus' mother)

Chariot Driver

(To Rhesus)

Athena

(A goddess)

Odysseus

(One of the chiefs of the Greek army)

Diomedes

(Another of the chiefs of the Greek army)

Chorus of Trojan Guards

Herald

(Trojan shepherd)

SCENE ONE

Night.

Hektor's tent outside the walls of Troy.

The guards outside the tent are asleep. A little further the next shift of guards is also sleeping. They are all fully armed.

SL leads to the seashore where the Greeks are camped.

SR leads to Troy and the Trojan camps.

Fire can be discerned from the Greek camp.

The whole play takes place during the night and the stage should be filled with shadows created by the fires in the Greek camps. The Trojan camps (SR) have no fire.

The silence is suddenly broken by the agitated entry of the Chorus of Soldiers.

Chorus:

You lot there! Wake up!

Get me one of Hektor's guards or any one of his soldiers.

The guards wake up in fright and stand to attention.

Go inside and tell Hektor there's news he must hear!

Chorus:

We're the fourth watch who patrol our front line.

Some of the chorus gather around the entrance of the tent and shout through its flaps.

Chorus:

Hektor!

Hektor, wake up! Either sit up and listen or just lean on your elbow.

Chorus:

Come on, Hektor! Open those fearsome eyes of yours and come out!

Chorus:

Get off your bed of leaves, Hektor. You must hear our news immediately!

10

Hektor: *From within the tent*

Who is it? Friend or foe? What is the watchword? Speak quickly, now!

What men come to my sleeping quarters in the middle of the night? Speak!

Chorus:

This is the army's guards, Hektor!

Enter Hektor with a couple of his men. They are all fully armed and ready for battle.

Hektor:

What's all this rushing about? What's all this noise?

Chorus:

Fear not Hektor –

Hektor *Insulted*

Me? Fear? I fear nothing!

What is it, a night raid?

Chorus:

No, not a raid but –

Hektor:

Well then, what?

Why did you leave your post unattended, soldier?

Why rush over here with so much noise and wake up the whole camp if you have nothing to report?

20

Don't you know that the Greeks are camped just out there? Can't you see we're sleeping in full armour, to be ready for them?

Chorus:

Arm yourself, indeed, Hektor!

Arm yourself and go over to where our allies are sleeping.

Go and wake them up!

Chorus:

Order them to get themselves armed, Hektor. All of them!

Chorus:

Send some of your close mates to our soldiers and get them to get their horses reined and ready !

Chorus:

Who's going to Panthus' son?

Chorus:

What about Sarpedon, Europa's son, the leader of the Lycians?

Chorus:

Where are the men in charge of the sacrifices?

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Chorus:

Where are the leaders of the light armed forces?

Chorus:

And our archers? Where are the Phrygian archers?

Chorus:

Come, hurry up and put strings to your horned bows!

Hektor:

What? What are you saying?

Some of your words send fear and others courage.

There's nothing clear in them.

You haven't been stung by Pan's prick, have you? Cronus' son? Is that what made you so frightened?

You get up and leave your post unattended, rush over here and send the army into disarray with silly

stories!

What on earth are you telling us?

What am I to make of this odd report?

So many words and none of them say anything I can understand!

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Chorus:

Hektor, listen!

The Greeks have fires lit up everywhere, right through the whole night. You can see the moorings of all their ships from here and everyone is milling around Agamemnon's tent. There's noisy business taking place in there. It sounds like they're waiting for some important news. I've never seen this fleet get into such turmoil or panic.

I have come to you because I'm afraid of what they might have in store for us, not because I need to be told off by you!

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Hektor:

Ah! A rather frightening report! Still, you have come just at the right time.

It seems the Argives want to escape from me, run off, even while my eyes are watching them. They want to get away from our land in those ships of theirs under the wide cover of darkness. Now I know what all these fires are about!

Oh, gods! You have robbed me of my feast as you would rob a lion of its kill. A feast out of the whole Argive army – with this spear!

60

Had the rays of the Sun not vanished, I would have continued until my glorious spear had set fire to all their ships, destroyed all their tents and, with this murderous hand, slaughtered a horde of them!

My heart was urging me on, that's for certain! I wanted to keep up the pace the gods have given me and to go on killing through the night but the seers, our wise men who know the ways of the gods, convinced me to wait until the new light and then leave no Achaian alive.

But the Achaians! The Achaians don't listen to the words of my prophets.

Cowards feel mighty in the night!

70

Well then! We must rush! Wake up the army and get it armed, hurry!

Spear those cowards in their backs as they try to climb onto their ships!

Paint their ladder-bridges red with their own blood and if any of them survive, rope them all and teach them how to till our Phrygian fields!

Chorus:

Hold it, Hektor, don't be in such a rush!

We are not yet certain about what they are actually doing.

We don't know if they are really trying to escape.

Hektor:

What else would they be doing with all these fires?

Chorus:

I don't know, Hektor but I am a little afraid...

80

Hektor:

Afraid?

If you're afraid of a little thing like this then you'd be terrified of everything!

Chorus:

The Argives have never lit fires like that before.

Hektor:

Nor have they ever suffered such a devastating defeat as the one they suffered yesterday, either!

Chorus:

All thanks to you, Hektor, yes but now think of what we should do next.

Hektor:

What we should do next is simple. With enemies, my command is always, "grab a spear!"

Chorus: *Indicating within, SR*

Ah, here's Aeneas rushing towards us. Obviously he's got some news for us!

Enter Aeneas accompanied by his guard. SR

Aeneas:

Hektor, what is going on? Why have the night guards come here, to your camp, in such a panic?

What are you all talking about? The whole army is thrown into confusion!

90

Hektor:

Aeneas, get yourself fully armed and ready for an attack!

Aeneas:

Why? What's going on? Have you seen reports that the enemy is planning something secret during the night?

Hektor:

Yes, the Greeks are boarding their ships. They're getting away.

Aeneas:

What makes you say that? What have you seen, tell me!

Hektor:

They've been burning huge fires all night, Aeneas, so I don't think they'll still be here in the morning. Once they burn all their torches they'll jump aboard their well-benched ships and sail away for home.

Aeneas:

And you? What will you do? Why the spear in your hand?

100

Hektor:

I'll be using it against them while they're trying to jump aboard their ship.

Spear them hard, in the back. That should stop them. It'd be a great shame for us, a cowardly thing to do, to reject the good will of the gods who have handed to us these enemies. It'd be a shame to let them all go without a fight after they have caused us so much grief!

Aeneas:

Hektor, if only your eagerness to fight was combined with a wisdom to make good plans! But, I suppose, men can't be perfect at everything. Each of us has his own talent. Your talent is fighting, thinking is a talent that others have.

110

You saw the fires burning and you immediately thought that the enemy is leaving, so you now want to take your army there, trying to get through the deep moats in the middle of the night. Impossible! But, still, let us say you do manage to cross those moats. What if when you do that you are faced with the fact that the enemy is not sailing off but it is right there, in front you, all ready and fully prepared for your spears?

Hektor, if you lose that battle, you'll never make it back here again!

They've got pikes all around their camps. How would your defeated army get back through them again when they're retreating? And tell me also, how will your charioteers run over all those embankments they've got there, without getting their axles broken?

And even still, let us say you did win that battle. There would still be an Achilles there, Peleas' son, waiting just for you. And he's not going to let you set fire to the ships and he's not going to let you kill the Achaians the way you think you will.

121

That man is a raging fireball in battle! Towering courage!

Better still, I say, let our men rest quietly by their shields. They're exhausted from the battle. Let's just send a spy over there, to the enemy lines, some volunteer to check on them, see if they are really trying to escape and if we find that they are, well then we can charge at them. But if the Argives are using these fires to trick us, then we'll learn even more about our enemy's tactics and then respond appropriately.

That's what I think, my lord.

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Chorus: *To Hektor*

I think he's right. Best if you do as he says rather than what you think.

I hate it when the leadership of generals stands on unsafe ground.

Chorus:

It would be far safer if some fast-footed spy of ours rushes over to their ships and quickly see what our enemy is up to with all those fires in their camps.

Other members of the chorus nod their heads in agreement.

Hektor:

All, right, Aeneas, you win! The majority agrees with you.

Now, Aeneas, go and pacify our allies because the army might feel a bit uneasy if they hear we are having meetings like this in the night.

140

I'll send a spy myself, to check out what the Greeks are up to. Your camp is nearby, so if we hear

anything, you'll know about it quickly. But if we see that they're jumping aboard their ships, you'll know about it through a trumpet call. I won't be coming around to you. I'll be rushing over there this very night.

I'll be fighting the Greeks among their own ships.

Aeneas:

Right. Yes, now you're being sensible. Do send someone over there immediately.

As for me, when the time comes, you'll see me acting as bravely as you.

Exit Aeneas SR

A few seconds later:

Enter Dolon SR without Hektor noticing him.

149

Hektor:

Well then, men! You've heard what we need. Who among us Trojans will go to the Greek ships to spy on them?

Who will do this great service to our nation?

Who will agree to do this? I can't serve everyone all the time, both, Trojans and allies!

Dolon:

I will! I am willing to do it.

I'll take this risk for the sake of our country.

I will go to the ships of the Achaians, find out what they're planning to do and then come back here and tell you all about it. I promise you that I shall undertake this task.

Hektor:

Ah, our very own Dolon! Your name does justice to your nature, my wily friend. And a man who loves his country, too!

And a man who'll double the glory of his father's race!

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Dolon:

Yes, Hektor but do let me ask you, shouldn't a man's work be rewarded in some way? I will certainly work for my country and perform this task but a task is twice as sweetly done if there's a reward attached to it.

Hektor:

Quite right, quite right. I do not say otherwise. Name your reward, Dolon. Ask for anything except my throne.

Dolon:

Your throne? No, keep your throne, Hektor. I have no wish at all to be a king and protector of a city!

Hektor:

Ah! I know! Join our household. Marry one of Priam's daughters.

Dolon:

No, no marriage above my station, Hektor!

Hektor:

Gold then, Dolon. We have an abundance of that!

170

Dolon:

So do we, Hektor. We lack no wealth either.

Hektor:

What then, Dolon? What else can Troy offer you?

Dolon:

The reward will be given after we destroy the Greeks. I want a reward that can come only after we destroy them.

Hektor:

Name it. Anything except their chiefs.

Dolon:

They're all yours to slaughter Hektor! I won't be begging you for Menelaus' head!

Hektor:

Not Ajax, Oileus' son? You don't want him for a slave do you?

Dolon:

No, Hektor. The hands of nobles like Ajax are no good in the farms.

Hektor:

Do you want ransom? Which of the Greeks do you want for that?

Dolon:

No, no ransom either. I've told you already. We have enough gold.

Hektor:

We'll put you among the first to choose from the spoils. You can come and pick whatever you like.

180

Dolon:

Spoils?

No, you can hang those on the columns of the temples. Dedicate them to the gods.

Hektor:

Well, what's better than all these things I've offered you, Dolon? What more do you want from me?

Dolon:

Achilles' horses, Hektor. When one lets his life ride on the dice thrown by the gods, then the prize should be worthy of the effort.

Hektor:

Oh, no! Those horses, Dolon! You and I both love them!

Immortal beasts sired by immortals and ridden by the fast-footed Achilles, son of Peleus. They say that Poseidon himself, that god who's the lord of all horses and lord of all the sea – they say it was Poseidon who had given them to Peleus as a wedding gift.

But, I won't start renegeing on my promise now. I will give you Achilles' horses as well as his chariot. It will be a truly magnificent adornment to your house!

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Dolon:

Not only that but, if I do get these horses, I'll also be able to say that the Trojans have shown their appreciation of my bravery by rewarding me with this splendid gift.

And, of course, you should not be jealous of me, Hektor because, as the first hero of our nation, you will be able to get myriads of other things that will make you happy.

Chorus:

The task is huge, Dolon but so are the rewards.

Chorus:

If you succeed, Dolon, you'll be among the blessed!

Chorus:

Glory only comes with the pain of hard work.

Chorus:

Still, it wouldn't be a small prize, to be married into royalty, either.

200

Chorus:

So far as the gods are concerned, Justice herself will decide this but so far as mortals are concerned – well, you've got it all, Dolon!

Dolon:

Yes, well, I'll be off now. I'll go home first and change into clothes that are more appropriate for the task before I go down to the Argive ships.

Chorus:

Change into what sort of clothes, Dolon?

Dolon:

Clothes fit for a covert operation.

Chorus:

A wise man should teach others wise things. Tell us what you'll wear, Dolon.

Dolon:

Wolf skin on my back, with its gaping jaws over the top of my head, its forelegs over my shoulders and its hind legs around my feet.

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And, while I'm approaching the moat and the walls around their ships, I'll walk on all fours, to make it hard for the Greeks to detect me but when I'll get out into the open land, I'll stand up and walk on my two feet.

That's the trick I'll employ.

Chorus:

I hope Hermes, the god of thieves, Maia's son, will help you get there and back.

Chorus:

You've got your plan, Dolon, now all you need to do is to see it through!

219

Dolon:

I will get there safely, kill Odysseus and bring you his head as proof that I, Dolon have got to the Greek ships... Or... perhaps, I'll kill Diomedes, Tydeus' son.

In any case, I'll be back before the break of dawn with my hands dripping blood!

Exit Dolon SR

Exit Hektor to his tent.

Chorus:

Apollo!

God of Thymbra!

Chorus:

God of Delos!

Chorus:

Divine head!

Chorus:

You walk in the precincts of Lycia's shrine!

Chorus:

Son of Zeus!

Chorus:

Apollo, come now!

Come to us with your bow and arrows!

Now, this very night!

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Chorus:

Come and protect that man! Dolon, who has started on a journey to save the sons of Dardanus!

Chorus:

Apollo!

Mighty ruler!

Chorus:

Apollo!

You have built this city's walls!

Chorus:

Troy's ancient walls!

Chorus:

Help Dolon get to the gathered ships of our enemy, those Greeks, Apollo, those Greeks!

Help him spy upon the army of the Greeks and then let him return here safely.

Chorus:

Help him return to Troy! To the altars of his father's house!

Chorus:

And help him also defeat the Achaian army!

240

Chorus:

Help him ride triumphantly the chariot drawn by Achilles' horses! The horses of Phthia!

Chorus:

The horses that Poseidon himself, Lord of the sea, gave to Peleus, the son of Aeacus.

Chorus:

Grand Dolon success in his mission, Apollo for it is he, alone, who dared to go to the Greek ships and spy upon them on our behalf, for the sake of our country and his home.

Chorus:

Such courage!

Chorus:

When the wild and dark seas batter a country it is always hard to find such brave men.

250

Chorus:

Yet we have brave men amongst us! Brave Phrygian men, their heart bold and full of courage.

Chorus:

There is no Mysian, bravest of our allies, who'd scorn my company in battle!

Chorus:

Ha!

I wonder who'll be the Greek that our Dolon will kill, as he crawls about their camp, like a four-footed beast, sniffing at their tents!

Enter Hektor from his tent

Chorus:

He should kill Menelaus!

260

Chorus:

Agamemnon! Kill him, cut off his head and drop it in Helen's lap!

Chorus:

Let her mourn her beastly brother-in-law!

Chorus:

Agamemnon! The man who dared to come here, to the land of Troy, with his huge army and his thousand ships!

Enter a messenger SR. He is a shepherd.

Messenger: *To Hektor, happily excited*

My lord! If only I could always bring my lords such good news as those I have for you to hear now!

Hektor:

Ha! Stupid peasants and their stupid ways!

Look around you, peasant! Your masters are in full armour, ready for battle and you decided to come here, at this hour to give us news about your flocks of sheep!

Don't you know where my house is? Where my father's throne is located?

It's there you should go and talk of the welfare of your herds, not here!

This is the wrong place for such concerns.

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Messenger:

It's true, my Lord! We, peasants are stupid, one can't argue about that, my Lord but, nevertheless, I am bringing you good news!

Hektor:

Enough with the tales of peasants and the fortunes of their sheep!

Can you not see? We have spears in our hands and battles to fight!

Messenger:

Yes, my Lord but this is exactly what my news is about. Armies and suchlike.

There's a man, my Lord, a man, at the head of a huge army, an ally of ours, coming our way.

Hektor:

A man? From which country?

Messenger:

From Thrace, my Lord. His father's name is Strymon.

280

Hektor:

Rhesus? Are you telling me that Rhesus has come to Troy?

Messenger:

Yes, my Lord. That's what I mean. Thank you for making my message half as long and arduous!

Hektor:

But –

Why would he not come through the wide highways of our valleys and, instead come down through the gullies and the deep gorges of Ida to where you are?

Messenger:

I don't know for certain about that, my Lord, but I suppose I can guess, though.

I guess it would be a difficult job to drive an army into a country through the night if you know that the open meadows are swarming with enemy soldiers.

It was a frightening thing for us shepherds, who live on those rocks, high up on Mount Ida, to see that army, my Lord, that huge Thracian army, rolling in like a huge river, making so much noise, rolling and rolling all through the woods, woods swarming with wild beasts.

290

We were so frightened, we moved our sheep to the higher crags. At first we thought they were Greeks and we were afraid that they would rush out and pillage your herds, my Lord. We thought they'd run off with your sheep, as spoils of war, I mean. But then we heard voices. And the voices weren't in the Greek tongue, so we relaxed.

I walked right up to the scouts at the head of their army and spoke to them in their own tongue, in Thracian.

“Who’s your General?” I asked them, “What’s his father’s name? Who is this man who’s bringing this army of allies to Troy?”

300

And when I heard all I wanted to hear, I got up. That’s when I saw Rhesus. There he was, up on his chariot, looking like a god behind his Thracian horses.

The yoke that held the horses in place by the neck was made of gleaming gold. Horses whiter than snow!

From his shoulder hung a light shield with shining plates of gold embossed on it.

On the cheek-pieces of the horses there was embossed a glaring Gorgon –just like that on Athena’s Aegis. Bells hung from them and they made such a frightening noise!

310

And there are more men in this army than there are pebbles on Earth. Countless men!

A countless cavalry, countless the shields, hordes and hordes of bowmen and light-armed troops, all in their Thracian battle gear!

That’s the army of our allies that has come to the aid of Troy, my Lord Hektor.

Achilles will not be able to escape them. Not by running away nor by fighting them with his spear!

Chorus:

When the gods want to help the people, they can turn even a disaster into a joyful event!

Hektor:

Ha!

Now!

320

It’s now that my spear has done its work and Zeus sides with me, it’s now that I’m finding friends everywhere!

No, now I have no need of them! I have no need of those who were not my friends from the beginning of all this, from when belligerent Ares was blasting his winds of war against the sails of this ship, ripping them to shreds!

Rhesus has shown us just what sort of friend he is to our city!

When the hunters were hunting the beast, he and his spear were nowhere to be seen! Now, now that we’ve killed it, here he is, present at the feast!

Chorus:

Hektor! Of course, you have every right to protest and censure your friends but do let people come and help save our city, if they wish!

Hektor:

There’s enough of our own people to save it and we’ve been doing that well enough now for many years.

330

Chorus:

Are you that certain that you have totally destroyed our enemy, Hektor?

Hektor:

I am certain and it will be made clear when the gods bring us the new morning!

Chorus:

Look to the future, Hektor! The gods can topple everything!

Hektor:

Ah, how I despise people who arrive too late to help their friends!

Well then, since he is here, let him be received as a guest at my table but not as an ally to the war.

The sons of Priam owe him no gratitude.

Chorus:

Still, my lord, disdain towards allies, leads to all sorts of animosity.

Messenger:

My Lord if the enemy but just takes a glimpse of the man, they’ll get frightened!

Hektor: *Ponders over the situation for a minute and then decides. To the Chorus:*

Your advice is good.

To the Messenger:

And you’ve delivered me a timely report.

Well then! All right! Let Rhesus in his golden armour, as the report goes, enter our city as an ally!

Exit Messenger SR

Exit Hektor into his tent

Chorus:

Let Zeus’ daughter, Adrasteia, who punishes the conceited, keep my words safe from divine anger! I

will utter only such things as are anxiously waiting in my heart to be uttered.

Son of our river, Rhesus, you have arrived!

Chorus:

You have come near the palace that prays to Zeus, the god of Friendship and the palace welcomes you.

Chorus:

It has taken too long for your mother, the Muse, Pieria and for your father, Strymon, the river of many splendid bridges, to send you here.

351

Chorus:

It was this beautiful river, Strymon, himself, who wound his waters through the pure gulfs of your mother, the Muse, the melodious singer and with his seed she gave birth to you, a glorious youth.

Chorus:

I see you as if you were Zeus, giver of light, entering our city on a chariot behind your spotted mares.

Chorus:

Now, Phrygia, now Troy, my fatherland, now, with the help of the god, you may sing to Zeus, the god victory.

360

Chorus:

Will the day come, I wonder, when the old Troy will re-emerge?

The Troy with her lovers' secret hideaways, her joyful singing, her drinking parties where the wine was passed from hand to hand, drinking parties that lasted all day long?

Chorus:

Will the day come when the Atreus brothers leave our shores, leave us and head back for their own homes, in Sparta, after sailing through the wide ocean?

Chorus:

Ah, Rhesus, my friend! How I wish you could accomplish this dream of mine!

Chorus:

Accomplish it with your hand and with your spear, my friend, before you return home to Thrace!

370

Chorus:

Come, my friend! Appear before Achilles' face and raise your golden shield to him!

Chorus:

Swing it to the right across the opening of your chariot's rails!

Chorus:

Flash it at his eyes!

Chorus:

Urge fast your horses!

Chorus:

Shake your two-pronged spear at him!

Chorus:

No enemy shall escape you!

Chorus:

No enemy shall ever see the day when he can dance at the plains of the temple of Hera the Argive!

Chorus:

No, he shall die a death by a Thracian spear and this soil shall welcome the weight of his corpse and will take it with delight.

Enter Rhesus. An imposing figure with his full armour and glittering shield

380

Chorus:

Oh, Great King!

Chorus:

Great King!

Chorus:

Splendid King!

Chorus:

Oh, Thrace! What a magnificent man you have raised!

A truly glorious Prince!

Chorus:

Ah! Admire the golden armour that covers his body!

Chorus:

Ah! Listen to the boisterous clang of the bells that hang from the rims of his shield!

Chorus:

A god!

Chorus:

Oh, Troy, here's a god!

Chorus:

Ares himself, the god of war!

Chorus:

The son of our river, Strymon and a Muse!

Chorus:

Oh, Troy, this god has come to breath courage into your soul!

Enter Hektor from his tent.

388

Rhesus:

Noble Hektor!

Noble son of a noble father! King of this land!

This is a belated greeting I am addressing to you, I know but... but I am pleased that you are winning this war and your men are now very close to the enemy gates.

I am here to help you tear down their walls and set fire to their ships.

Hektor:

Rhesus!

Noble son of the Muse of melody and of the Thracian river Strymon!

My way is to always to tell the truth. I am not a two-faced man.

Your duty was to come here a long time ago and fight with all your might for Troy. Stop the Argive spears from destroying her.

399

And, no, you can't use the excuse that you were not invited and that's why you didn't come to see your friends any earlier, to help them in their hour of need!

We have sent to you numerous envoys and embassies of elders to try and persuade you to come and protect our city. We have even sent you rich gifts of honour!

But you! Even though you are of the same race as us, a barbarian from barbarian stock, you have betrayed us!

410

Yes, you have betrayed us to the Greeks by your delays!

Was it not this very hand of mine that has made you the great king of Thrace that you are now?

Had I not thrown myself against the shields of the bravest of men of Thrace and had I not smashed their lines around Pangaeum, in the land of the Paionians, you would still be one of their petty chieftains!

It was I who has made you the leader of those people and it was I who has delivered them to you to be your subjects.

And you? How did you repay me for that deed?

You have brushed it aside and, instead of showing us gratitude, you have left the task of coming to help your friends until it's too late, until their difficult days have passed.

There are men here, who are total foreigners, totally unrelated to us, men who've been here for a long time; some of them have even died here and their bodies lie in graves on our own soil –now that's real proof of their loyalty to us, to our Troy!

And there are others, too, brave men, in full armour and on battle chariots, who stand watch and endure the chilly winds or the unquenchable heat of Ares, the god of war. Men who are not idly resting in warm and comfortable couches, passing each other deep cups of draught, like you've been doing all this time.

420

There! I, Hektor speak like a free man and I speak only the truth.

I have made my complaints to you, personally and openly.

Rhesus:

Hektor, I am the same.

My words are straight, no double meaning in them. You'll find no forked paths in my speech.

My heart, Hektor, suffered even more than yours because I wasn't here. I grieved more painfully than you. But, as I was preparing to come over here, the Scythians, my neighbours, decided to attack me.

430

I was about to cross the hostile Black Sea with my men when, there, at the shore, the spear of war soaked the soil with much of our Thracian blood as well as that of the Skythians. That's what had stopped me from crossing over and heading for the plains of Troy, to come here and help you.

I won that war and then, afterwards, I took their children as hostages and set an annual tax for them to pay me. It was after I've completed those tasks, that I started off again for here. First I took to the sea with a ship, crossed over and then walked through all the other lands. I've neither slept in golden palaces nor drank those deep draughts you're prattling on about.

440

Instead, I had to put up with the icy blasts that hit the frozen sea across Thrace and Paeonia with only these clothes here for a blanket. Not a wink of sleep!

I know, I am late but there is still time!

You've been playing the dice of war against the Argives for the last ten years and you still have not won the war. All I ask you for is to give me the sunlight of a single day and I'll have those towers of theirs torn down, attack their dockyards and kill all the Greeks! All of them! And with that, I will have saved you a lot of pain, so, then, the next day, I'll leave Troy and head back home.

451

None of you will need to raise a shield, because, even though I'm a late arrival, with this spear I will kill all those Argives, all those Greeks who've been boasting so loudly about their bravery.

Chorus:

Yes!

Chorus:

Yes, Rhesus!

Chorus:

What a joy, your words give us, Rhesus! Obviously you were sent here by Zeus himself, to give us all this joy!

Chorus:

I hope Zeus will protect us from the anger of any of the other gods who may feel offended by your words, Rhesus.

460

Chorus:

A man like you, Rhesus! No war ship, no Greek ship of war, has ever brought a man better than you! Not ever before and not now!

Chorus:

I don't know how Achilles, or even Ajax, will be able to cope with your spear, my Lord!

Chorus:

Oh, Lord! If only I could be there to see it!

If only I could be there on the day when your killing hand and your bloody spear exact the righteous punishment!

Rhesus:

And, as a recompense for my long delay coming here, which has caused you such great offence, I'll give you another gift, provided, of course, the goddess Adrasteia approves of what I am about to say.

469

When we have freed Troy from the attacks of the Greeks and after you have made offerings to the gods from the best of the spoils, I want you, Hektor, you and I, together, to go to Greece and, with this spear, punish them, punish the whole country. Teach them all what it is to suffer!

Hektor:

I will be very thankful to the gods if I just get out of this disaster alive and well and get to rule beautiful Troy in safety again, as I did before. As for destroying Argos and the rest of Greece with your spear, well, I don't think that would be such an easy task.

Rhesus:

Don't people say that these men who came here are the finest Greece has to offer?

480

Hektor:

I see nothing wrong with them. It's been tough work fighting them.

Rhesus:

Well then, if we kill them all, all of this lot, won't that be the end of Greece?

Hektor:

Rhesus, forget about what's in the distance, focus of what's near!

Rhesus:

Hektor, I think you're happy to go on suffering like this, instead of doing something about it.

Hektor: *Dismissing the discussion.*

Listen, Rhesus. My power is large enough as it is here.

Now! You can camp whichever side of the field you want. Left, right, or in the middle of our other allies, if you like. Rest your shield and your men wherever you like.

Rhesus:

No, Hektor. I want to fight the Greeks all on my own.

However, if you think it a great embarrassment to have their ships suddenly, after ten years of hard fighting, burnt to cinders, if that is too embarrassing for you, then simply set me up to fight against Achilles and his army.

492

Hektor:

Not possible. You can't fight against him and his frenzied spear.

Rhesus:

Why not, he's here, isn't he? They say he has come to Troy as well.

Hektor:

He is but he had an argument with the generals and he has shut himself in his tent. He's not fighting.

Rhesus:

Well, who's the next best among them?

Hektor:

To my mind, Ajax is no lesser than Achilles, nor is the son of Tydeus; and Odysseus is a sly and bold rascal who's caused more pain to this city than any of the others.

500

One night he went over to the temple of Athena, stole her statue and took it back with him, to the Greek ships. Then, another time, he was sent here to spy on us so he dressed himself in rags and he walked around the city like a beggar, cursing and swearing at the Greeks. Got himself right inside the walls of the city. Then, on his way out, he killed all the sentries and all the guards at the gates.

He's always hanging around the temple of Thymbraean Apollo, just outside the city, waiting for a chance to ambush somebody.

I tell you, Rhesus, the monster we're fighting is thoroughly evil.

510

Rhesus:

Brave men fight the enemy out in the open, Hektor, not in secret.

This man you're talking about, this man who does all his fighting with sly tricks and in secret hiding places, I will catch him alive, impale him through his spine and set him up as a feast for the vultures outside the city.

That's the sort of death that a common thief and temple robber deserves.

Hektor:

Come, for now, go and rest. It's still dark. I'll show you where you and your army can settle for the night. It'll be separate from the rest of us.

521

Now, if we ever need it, the watchword is "Phoebus." Memorise it and tell all your men.

To the chorus

You men, go and keep guard at the front line and wait for Dolon who's gone to spy on the Greeks. If he's still unharmed, he'll be heading back towards our camps by now.

Exit all SR

SCENE TWO

Same time at the front line.

Two soldiers are asleep on the floor. One is keeping guard. He's obviously tired. He is examining the moon. Finally he is content. He kicks one of the sleeping soldiers first and then the other.

Soldier 1: As he kicks the sleeping soldier

Ey! Who's on guard now? Who's relieving me? It's time. The early constellations are diving and the Pleiades are high!

531

Look there! The Eagle is flying mid-sky!

Come on, get up! Get yourselves out of your beds!

It's time for your guard duty!

Look at that Moon! See how it shines?

It's almost Dawn! Morning almost! Come on!
Look! There's one of those stars that appear before Dawn!

Soldier 2: *Waking up*

Who's rostered to do the first shift?

Soldier 3: *Waking up*

Coroebus, I think. Mygdon't son. Or so they tell me.

540

Soldier 1:

Who's after him?

Soldier 3:

Corybus' men. The contingent from Paeonia. They woke up the Cilicians and the Mysians woke us up.

Soldier 1:

Well then, shouldn't be going over to wake up the Lycians? Didn't the roster put them as the fifth watch?

Sound of a Nightingale

Soldier 3:

Listen! Hear that nightingale? She's in her nest by the banks of our river, Simois.

Blood-stained nest that one! Killed her own child, she did.

More sounds of the Nightingale

Beautiful music!

Very sad. Mournful.

Sounds of sheep and the pipe of a shepherd

Soldier 2:

Ah! The sheep are out and about already, up on the hills of Ida.

Soldier 1:

I can hear the delightful music of the shepherd's flute. It's like a sweet lullaby.

Ah, how sweetly Sleep stretches herself over my eyelids the moment Dawn appears!

Soldier 2:

Where is that man that Hektor sent over to spy on the Greek ships?

Soldier 3:

Yeah, I'm beginning to worry about him. He's taking a long time to get back!

560

Soldier 1:

Perhaps he fell into some hidden ambush and they've killed him!

Soldier 2:

No idea. I'm very worried about him.

Soldier 1:

Well, I say let's go and wake up the Lycians. They're the fifth watch.

Exit all. SR

SCENE THREE

A few minutes later. The stage is empty.

Enter Odysseus and Diomedes, furtively, guardedly. Both have their swords drawn.

They have just killed Dolon so they are carrying some "spoils." Possibly Dolon's wolf skin and sword, shield, belt, etc.

Suddenly a sound of chains clashing against other metal is heard within.

Odysseus:

Diomedes, what was that noise?

Was that a clash of swords my ears picked up or was it something unimportant?

Diomedes:

Nothing important, Odysseus.

Some horse's harness hit against the rails of a chariot.

It got me frightened as well, at first but then I figured out what it was.

No, just the noise of a harness.

570

Odysseus:

Right...

Careful you don't bump onto any guards in the dark.

Diomedes:

I always walk carefully.

Odysseus:

But what if you do? What if you wake someone up, do you know the watchword they use?

Diomedes:

Yes, Odysseus, it's "Phoebus." Dolon told me.

Odysseus:

Look here! Enemy beds. No one in them!

Diomedes:

Yes, Dolon had told me there'd no one here.

This is where Hektor sleeps.

My sword is ready for him!

Odysseus: *They slowly enter Hektor's tent, check it out and come out again.*

I wonder what it means. Where do you think they might all be? Could they be setting up some ambush for us?

Diomedes:

Probably. Cooking up some scheme somewhere, no doubt.

Odysseus:

Now that Hektor is on a winning streak, nothing will stop him. He's become very daring, our Hektor!

580

Diomedes:

So, what do we do now, Odysseus?

The man is clearly not in his tent and so, well, there go our hopes of capturing him.

Odysseus:

I think we better hurry back to our ships.

This man is being protected by the same god that's giving him all these victories.

We better not go against Fate.

Diomedes:

Why don't we go over and, with these swords, cut off the head of Aeneas? As well as that of Paris, the Trojan I hate the most!

Odysseus:

Too dark, Diomedes! Too risky and too difficult to find them. This is their camping ground.

Diomedes:

But it's a shame to go back to the ships without inflicting some pain upon our enemy!

591

Odysseus:

What do you mean, some pain, Diomedes? We have caused great pain to the enemy. *Indicates the spoils.* Aren't these Dolon's belongings? Haven't we killed their precious Dolon who was spying on our ships? Did you expect we'd destroy their whole army tonight?

Diomedes:

All right then, I believe you. Let's go back and good luck in doing that!

Enter the goddess Athena who is not visible to the two men.

Athena:

Are you two leaving the Trojan camp? Is your heart disappointed because the gods did not permit you to kill Hektor and Paris?

The men nod in agreement

Well, listen!

Rhesus has come to Troy! And oh, with what great pomp! He came here as their ally.

600

Now... if that man survives this night, neither Ajax nor Achilles with their spears will be able to hold him back. He'll tear down all of your fences and all your fortifications and he'll cut down a wide path for himself, all the way down to your ships and then he'll destroy the lot of them!

However... if you manage to kill him... if you kill him, you win the lot! The war is yours!

So forget about Hektor and his tent and you, forget about chopping off his head. Hektor's death is destined to come from someone else's hand.

Odysseus: *Searching in the dark to see who's talking.*

Ah ha! It's my lady, Athena! Your voice! I hear it and I recognise it! You're always by my side, my Lady!

610

Always helping me, always there when I have some painful task to perform! Tell me, my goddess, where has this man, this Rhesus, set up his bed tonight? In what part of the Trojan camp is he stationed?

Athena:

Not far from here.

He's placed away from all the others, from all the Trojans. Hektor separated him from the rest, at least until Day takes over from Night.

He's easy to find. White horses are harnessed to Thracian chariots next to him and those horses shine like the wings of a swan, so you can see them in the dark. Kill their owner and they're yours to take home as spoils of war. Magnificent spoils! There's no place on Earth that has horses like them.

622

Odysseus:

Diomedes, either you kill the soldiers or you let me do that, while you take care of the horses.

Diomedes:

No, I'll take care of the killing and you take care of the horses. You're the one with the clever head, you know all the tricks. It's important that each man is asked to do what he's best at.

They hear footsteps and hide in the shadows

Athena: *Looking within*

Ah! I can see Paris Alexandros heading this way.

He must have heard from a guard that there are enemy soldiers in their midst.

It'd be some vague rumour.

630

Diomedes:

Is he alone or with friends?

Athena:

No, on his own. Looks like he's coming over to Hektor's tent to tell him there are spies around.

Diomedes: *Eager*

Well, then. Here's the man to slaughter!

Athena:

Diomedes, no! Your strength does not surpass that of Fate and this man's Fate declares that his death will not come by your hand but by that belonging to some one else. Now run! Run to the place where you are fated to slaughter someone else.

I'll stay here and make this man, who is my own personal enemy, think that I am his friendly little goddess, Aphrodite, who's come to help him with his troubles.

Enough, now! I have said all I wanted to say!

Paris, who's about to suffer, has heard nothing. He's close by but knows nothing.

Odysseus and Diomedes hide behind the tent.

Enter Paris

642

Paris: *Shouts*

Hektor!

Hektor, my Commander!

No response

Hektor, my brother, are you asleep?

There are enemy soldiers around... thieves, maybe, or spies!

No response. Goes and checks through the flaps of Hektor's tent.

Baffled not to find him there.

Athena: *Invisible to Paris*

Courage, Paris!

I, Aphrodite, love you and am always looking out for you!

I am watching over your war with interest and I will never forget the honour you have bestowed upon me and for which I thank you greatly.

The Trojan are winning and, to add to that pleasure, I have brought you a true ally!

He is a Thracian. The son of the song-loving Muse and, as they say, of the river Strymon.

Paris:

Yes, you have always stood by me and by my city, Aphrodite.

I am proud to say that the greatest deed I have done for Troy was to judge you the winner of the beauty contest.

I have heard –not clearly, I must admit- some rumour among the guards, that there are Greek spies in our camps. It's unclear. One guard says they're here but he hasn't seen them, another says he's seen them come but could tell me no more. It's all very vague.

And that's why I've come to speak with Hektor.

661

Athena:

Don't worry about a thing, Paris. There's nothing troublesome going on in the camp.

Hektor has just gone off to take the army of the Thracian allies to where they can set up camp for the night.

Paris:

Fine, Aphrodite. Your words have convinced me, so I'll just go back and stand guard at my spot. I am no longer worried.

Athena:

Go ahead, Paris, go and remember that I, Aphrodite, am watching over you all the time. I want nothing more than to see that my friends are happy and you will soon see proof of that.

Exit Paris SR

Now, you men! You, brave, brave, men!

Odysseus and Diomedes appear from behind the tent. Their swords are drawn.

Odysseus, son of Laertes, let your sharpened blade rest. Rhesus, the Thracian General has been killed. His horses now belong to you. However, the Trojans now know that you're here and they're on their way, so you better run off back to your ships, quickly!

Go, on, run for your lives! There's a whole tempest of them rushing this way!

Run! Save yourselves!

Athena vanishes.

From within we hear soldiers approaching. It is the chorus.

Odysseus and Diomedes are confused and they are rushing about trying to escape.

Chorus *Within*

Where? Where are they?

Chorus:

What's going on?

Enter Chorus. They have seen the two men.

Chorus:

Bowmen, your arrows! Shoot them!

Chorus:

Your arrows!

Chorus:

Your swords!

Chorus:

Kill them! Kill them!

Chorus:

Beat them up!

Chorus:

Who is that man?

Chorus:

Grab him!

Chorus:

And that one there!

Chorus:

Over here, men!

A scuffle ensues and one of the chorus grabs Odysseus, another, Diomedes.

680

Chorus:

I've got this one!

Chorus:

And I've got this one!

Chorus:

Damned thieves!

Chorus:

They've thrown the whole army into chaos!

Chorus: *The one who has Diomedes*

What company are you from?

Chorus: *The one who has Odysseus*

Where are you from? Which country?

Odysseus:
That is not for you to know! You hurt me even a little and today you will die!

Chorus:
What's the watchword? Tell me the watchword or you'll end up with a spear through your chest!

Odysseus:
Hold it! Calm down!

Chorus:
Get over here men! Beat him!

Odysseus:
Are you the one who killed Rhesus?

Chorus:
No, not Rhesus but I'll be the one who'll be killing you!

Odysseus:
Stop this!

Chorus:
No I won't!

Odysseus:
Stop! You're beating up a mate!

Chorus:
A mate? What's the watchword?

Odysseus:
Phoebus!

Chorus: *Bemused*
I... right. That's the word, all right. Men, stop your spears!

Back to Odysseus
Do you know where all our men have gone?

Odysseus: *Pointing towards SL*
We saw them taking that path there.

690

Chorus:
Come on, men. Everyone go after them!

Chorus:
Should we scream and shout?

Chorus:
And frighten our allies in the middle of the night? No, we better not.
The Chorus exits through SL which gives an opportunity for the two Greeks to sneak away. A few seconds later, the Chorus re-enters.

Chorus: *Seeing that the men have gone*
Ah! Who was that man who's just gone?

Chorus:
What's his name, that impudent man? He'll be going around, boasting that he's escaped my hands!

Chorus:
How are we going to find him now?

Chorus:
He looks familiar but I... I wonder who it is?

Chorus:
He's got very brave feet, that's for sure. Walking around in the dark, right through our ranks and all our sentries!

700

Chorus:
He's either some Thessalian or from some town around the coast of Locris.

Chorus:
Could be one of those men who live alone in some island or other.

Chorus:
Who was he?

Chorus:
Where on earth did he come from?

Chorus:
Where's his country?

Chorus:

Who is his god?

Chorus: *Suddenly he remembers*

Odysseus!

It's Odysseus, I'm certain! This is all the work of Odysseus! How could it not be?

Look at what he's done in the past!

Chorus:

Do you really think so?

Chorus:

Of course I do. Look at the nasty things he's done to us in the past. This is his sort of boldness all right!

Chorus:

Boldness? Who are you talking about, with your boldness?

Chorus:

Odysseus, of course!

Chorus: *Spits in disgust.*

To say Odysseus is bold is to praise him. Never praise a cunning, treacherous war thief!

He came over here once before. Right into the city.

Chorus:

His eyes were all sly-looking, dark. He was dressed in beggars' dirty rags, inside which he was hiding a sword. Filthy, stinking hair all over the place. He was pretending to be begging for his bread, just like a real beggar.

And there he was, the dirty scum, shouting all sorts of curses against the house of Atreus, against Menelaos and Agamemnon as if he was their enemy.

720

Chorus:

He should have been slaughtered before he set foot on Troy's soil!

Chorus:

Odysseus or not, I'm still worried. Hektor will blame us. We are the sentries.

Chorus:

What's he going to do?

Chorus:

He's going to curse us mercilessly!

Chorus:

But what for? What have we done?

Chorus:

What are you afraid of?

Chorus:

He will curse us because those two went right past us!

Chorus:

Who did?

Chorus:

Those two men! The men who paid the Trojan army a visit!

Chariot Driver: *(within. Highly distressed)*

Ah! Ah!

What a horrible disaster Fate has delivered us! Ah!

730

Chorus:

Hush! Everyone shut up. Take your posts!

Perhaps our nets have caught someone after all!

Enter Rhesus' chariot driver. SR

He is badly wounded

Chariot Driver:

Ah! Ah!

What a terrible disaster has struck the Thracians! Terrible! Terrible!

Chorus:

The poor sod, he's one of our allies!

Chariot Driver:

Ah!

How shocking is my Fate!

Oh, Rhesus! How shocking is your Fate, Rhesus, king of the Thracians!

How shocking the day that you thought of helping Troy!
How shocking the death that has taken you away, my lord!

Chorus:

Which of our allies are you, good man? I can't see you clearly in this darkness.

739

Chariot Driver:

Tell me, where can I find one of the Trojan Generals?

Where's the spot where Hektor sleeps? Where is it that he lies beneath his shield?

Take me to the General to whom I can report the awful thing we've just suffered.

Some man has caused us, Thracians, a shattering catastrophe, a catastrophe, as plain as day to see and then slipped away, disappeared from us completely!

Chorus:

From what this man is saying, it seems something terrible has happened to the Thracian army.

Chariot Driver:

Ah! Our army is destroyed!

Our King is dead!

All done by treachery!

750

Ah! Ah! My wounds hurt so much!

Ah! They are so deep!

Ah! Come death, take me!

Ah! Both, Rhesus and I came here to help Troy!

We came here to help her, to help Troy! So why does Fate declare that both of us should die in such a shameful way?

Chorus:

The poor soldier is using plain words.

His is clearly reporting a disaster which befell our allies.

They are devastated!

Chariot Driver:

Devastated, yes! And disgraced!

Devastated and disgraced together. A double disaster, a double disgrace.

If you are to die in battle, though it is painful for the man, it is an inspiration for those left behind and a glory to his house.

760

But us two, Rhesus and I, we two have fallen stupidly, for no good reason and with no glory!

Once Hektor told us the watchword and showed us where we should sleep, we just fell down and slept.

We were exhausted from the long march here. So we fell asleep.

And because our king was told that you, Trojans, had the upper hand in this war and you were just getting ready to attack the enemy ships in the harbour, we placed no guards anywhere in our camp and neither did we not gather all our arms together in any order. Even the horse goads, even them we didn't bother to put next to the chariot yokes. We just dropped down where we were, in no order at all and we fell asleep straight away.

770

Suddenly though, my heart jumped with concern about the horses. I got up and gave all the horses a generous feed because I knew they would be harnessed at Dawn and made ready for the battle.

Just then, in the deep darkness of the night, I saw two men, wandering about through our camp, suspiciously. I started walking towards them but they got frightened and shot through. I thought it was some allies trying to rob us, so I simply shouted at them, warned them never to come back.

They didn't answer back and I thought nothing more of it. I went back to my spot again and fell asleep.

780

Then I saw a dream. I saw the horses I've trained and drove on Rhesus' chariot. I saw them, just like people see things in dreams, and in this dream they had wolves, sitting on their backs, riding them and these wolves were using their tails as whips. The wolves were whipping the furry backs of these horses, to urge them forward. The horses, in their turn, went wild with fear. They reared back violently. Snorted angrily through their nostrils and fought back.

I jumped up terrified, as if to rush and defend the horses from the wild beasts. But the moment I raised my head up, I heard the groans of men, dying with pain and then a fast splash of fresh, hot blood hit me.

791

It was my king's blood. He was slaughtered and he was giving out his last breaths. I jumped up but I

had no spear nor sword in my hand and as I was fumbling about in the dark, trying to find a spear, some powerful man charged at me and struck me with his sword here, right by my side.

The gash of my wound is deep. I felt it as his blade dug into me.

I fell on my face in agony.

The men then took the horses and the chariot and ran away.

Ah! The pain!

My legs are giving way. I can't stand up any longer!

Ah!

800

He is helped by some of the chorus to sit on a nearby rock.

I know I saw a slaughter! I was there, I saw it but I don't understand how it happened. How it was that our men got slaughtered like that. I don't know who did it and how!

I strongly suspect though, that the murderers were allies!

Chorus:

Unfortunate driver of an unfortunate man!

No, do not distress yourself. Don't think like that. What you've suffered you've suffered in the hands of the enemy.

Ah! I can see Hektor coming now. He has obviously heard about this himself and I can tell he feels your pain.

Enter Hektor SR

Hektor:

You lot!

You have acted outrageously!

How is it that the spies have managed to go past you without you noticing?

Disgraceful stuff!

810

These spies have slaughtered, by sword, so many of our men without you bothering them at all! Not when they came in and not when they went out! Who else but you, could be responsible for this?

You are the guards of our army, our sentries!

They've escaped unharmed and laughing at us, at our cowardice! Laughing at the whole Phrygian army, at me, your General!

Be certain of this, though: I swear by Zeus, father of all, that for this deed you shall be dealt with, either with the whip or with the executioner's ax, or else, you can call Hektor a coward!

820

Chorus:

Oh, Hektor, No!

Great Hektor, defender of our city, no!

These men must have snuck in here when I had come to you with the warning that the Greeks were burning watch fires near their ships.

My lord I have not shut my eyes even for a minute during this night. Not to sleep nor to snooze. About that I swear by the springs of our river Simois.

My lord, I am not the one to blame for this disaster, so don't be angry with me and if you ever find that I had really done or even said something I shouldn't have, then I won't raise the slightest protest if you wanted to bury me alive!

832

Chariot Driver: *To Hektor, disgusted.*

Ha! Why are you threatening them and why are you trying to twist my words? You are a barbarian just like me. Neither of us is Greek. The person to blame is you and both, the dead as well as the wounded know it and they will blame no one else. You will need to make a huge speech to me, a speech that has a whole lot of very clever words in it, if you want to convince me that it wasn't you who has slaughtered these men, you and your own allies and they did it because they wanted to steal those horses!

840

Why else would you have begged your allies to come over here? Why else would you then have them killed?

So, they have come here and now they are dead. You have murdered them yourself.

Not even Paris has disgraced the hearth of hospitality so shamelessly. Not even he has murdered his allies. But you have!

Don't tell me that it was some Greeks who did it. How could they? How could they have passed through the dense lines of the Trojan army without them having been seen by anyone? You and the rest

of the Trojans were in front of us. Tell me then, which of your mates has been wounded or slaughtered by these Greek soldiers?

850

None! No, it was I and other Thracians who have suffered the wounds and the murder. Men who will no longer be able to see the light of day.

In plain words, Hektor, no Greek is to blame for this.

How could a Greek find his way to Rhesus' bed, through the darkness of the night, unless he had some god helping him, showing him where to go and where to look?

The Greeks didn't even know Rhesus was here. All this is your invention.

Hektor:

From the moment that the Greeks have set foot on this land, I had allies all around me and I have never been accused by any of them of anything. You are the first.

May the gods never let me desire horses so much that I would be willing to kill friends for them!

861

No, this is the work of Odysseus!

It is his doing all right. Who else among the Argives could think of, let alone do, anything like this?

And Dolon? I am really anxious about Dolon. Would Odysseus have got to him as well? He's been gone a long time. No sight of him anywhere!

Chariot Driver:

I don't know which Odysseus you're talking about. The hand that struck us was not that of an enemy.

Hektor:

By all means, think what you like, Thracian.

Chariot Driver:

Oh, Thrace! My homeland! I wish I could die there!

870

Hektor:

Don't wish death upon yourself. We have seen enough death already.

Chariot Driver:

I have lost my master!

Where can I turn to now?

Hektor:

You can turn to my house. There you will be welcomed and healed.

Chariot Driver:

How can I be healed by murderous hands?

Hektor:

Will this man not stop repeating himself?

Chariot Driver:

Curses to the murderer!

I make no charges against you, don't worry but Justice will do her work.

Hektor:

Take him away, men!

Take him to my house and treat him better than he would be treated anywhere else.

Some of the chorus help the driver walk and exit SR

To the chorus:

879

Go and tell Priam and all those in the tower to bury the dead men. Tell them to bury them just outside the city, on the highway that heads out of it.

Chorus:

Why is it that the gods bring us such misery after such victory? What are they up to?

Rhesus' mother, the Muse appears from above, holding the blood-spattered body of her dead son.

Chorus:

Ah, look, my Lord!

What goddess is this above us?

Chorus:

She's carrying the corpse of some newly slaughtered man!

Chorus:

What a frightening sight to behold!

890

Muse:

Don't be afraid to look, Trojans!

It is I, the Muse, the goddess most honoured by the wise men. One of the nine sisters.
I have come here because I saw my son shamefully murdered by his enemies.
Odysseus, the man who has murdered him will be punished appropriately in the near future.
I mourn your death, my son with my own words of grief.
I weep for you my son, my darling, the tears of a mother's grief!
What a journey you had my son, my darling, to this city!
What dreadful trip it was, my son, my darling, the trip which your father and I begged you not to take!
I mourn for you, my son, my darling!
I grieve for you with pain!
Chorus:
And I grieve for your son, dear Muse, even though I'm not a relative.

906

Muse:
Death to the son of Oeneus and death to the son of Laertes who has killed my noble son and left me childless!
Death, too, to the woman who abandoned her home in Greece to come and lie in a Phrygian bed and have you killed, my son, my darling!
Death to her who has emptied myriads of cities of their brave sons.
In life and in the halls of Hades, son of Philamon, you have heaped bitterness in my heart! It was your impertinence, Thamyris, the impertinence you have shown against the Muses by challenging them that has destroyed you and has made me the mother of this unfortunate boy.

920

It was when we, the Muses had all gathered on the golden mountain, Pangaeon, to take part in a contest of song and lyre against this Thracian singer, Thamyris. It was then, when I was trying to cross the waters and springs of Strymon that I entered his virile bed.
The Thracian singer, Thamyris, had lost the contest and his insults against our art had earned him the punishment of blindness.
But, you, my son, my darling son, when I had given birth to you, I felt a great shame towards my sisters because I was a virgin and so, I plunged you into the splendid swirling waters of your father. He, in turn, handed you to the nymphs of the springs. He allowed no mortal hands to touch you and take care of you.

930

These virgins had raised you, my son, raised you well and so you became the first of men. The King of the Thracians.
I had no fear that you'd die while you fought all those bloody battles for the sake of your own country, my son but I knew well your Fate with Troy. That's why I had advised you, I had warned you against coming here. Ever!
But, a constant stream of ambassadors and pleas from Hektor, had convinced you to come here and help your friend.
But, no, the cause of all this disaster is you, Athena!
Even though Odysseus and Diomedes committed the deed, the real culprit is you!

940

Don't think that I don't know this, Athena. You did this, even though my sister Muses and I often visit Athens, your city and honour it more than all the others.
It was Orpheus, Athena, this young man's cousin, who had initiated your city to your secret mysteries. Orpheus, Athena, the cousin of your victim here! The one you have murdered.
And Museus, too, Athena! Your city's most honoured and most respected citizen! He was trained by us, the Muses and by Phoebus Apollo. And the prize for all that is that here I am, now, with the corpse of my son in my arms, singing a dirge over his murder.
Ah! For this song, I need no other singer to accompany me.

950

Chorus:
You see, Hektor?
The Thracian chariot driver was wrong to accuse us of committing those murders!
Hektor:
That, I knew already. We needed no wise prophet to tell us that this was the work of Odysseus.
As for the accusations against me, how could I not act as I did?
The moment I saw the Greeks setting up camp on our soil, I sent heralds to all of my friends, asking them to help Troy. It's true, I've also sent some to Rhesus and he felt obliged to help me and that's why he came here. But his death fills me with great sorrow and so now I shall prepare the funeral he

deserves.

960

I will make a great heap of magnificent garments as burnt offerings on his pyre.

This king came to us as a friend but he has left us in dire misfortune.

Muse:

The black earth will not take my son.

I will ask the virgin Persephone, daughter of Demeter, giver of fruit, to let my son's soul remain here, on Earth. She is obliged to show me that she truly honours all the friends of Orpheus.

Of course, to me he will be just like any other man who has died and cannot see the light of day. He will never see me. He will never set eyes upon his mother and he will never approach her.

He will be a man-god.

970

He will live hidden in the caves of the silver-rich land, able to see sun light and acting as the prophet of Bacchus who has come to live among the crags of Pangaeon and be revered as a god by those who have the knowledge.

My grief will be felt less than that felt by Thetis, the sea goddess who, Fate declares will also lose her son, Achilles.

But first, my son, my sisters and I will sing the hymn of lament and then we'll sing another for Achilles, Thetis' boy who will not be saved by the goddess Athena, the goddess who has taken your life. Apollo's quiver contains an arrow reserved just for him, for Achilles.

980

Ah! The pains and misery that mortal parents must endure!

Anyone who thinks about these troubles will never have children! They will never give birth to them only to bury them!

The Muse with Rhesus' corpse disappears.

Morning is now breaking.

Chorus:

Rhesus' mother will mourn for her child but you Hektor, you must do what you think must be done.

We stand by your side. Tell us what to do. The day is now dawning.

Hektor:

Hurry then! Go to our allies and tell them to get ready. Tell them to harness their horses. And tell them to stand ready with torches in hand and to listen for the sound of the Tyrrhenian trumpet.

When I have crossed the moat and the Greek walls, I will set fire to their ships. Of that I am certain and I am certain that the first rays of today's sun will bring to us a day of freedom.

993

Chorus:

Come men! We must obey our King!

Let us pick our arms and go to deliver this command to our allies.

Perhaps the god who looks after us will grant us victory.

Exit all

END OF EURIPIDES'

"RHESUS"