

9.

Hector stands alone in front of the Skaian gates, waiting for Achilles.

He is dressed in Achilles' armor.

We hear his thundering heartbeat.

We hear his fearful breath.

In the background: sounds of ancient grievances and modern war.

CHORUS

Oh
 For
 God
 Sakes
 Hector
 Do
 Something!
 Don't just
 Stand
 There
 All alone at the gates
 Are you crazy?
 Summon
 Defences
 Gather
 Reinforcements
 Grab a
 gun
 An extra
 hand grenade and
 FIGHT.

(beat)

CHORUS

He's
 Obviously
 Not
 Listening
 Consumed
 With
 Fear
 Can you blame him?

Hector begins taking off his body armor.

What's he doing?

CHORUS

*Hector then takes off his shirt. Then
his pants.*

What's
He
Doing
Now?
Stripping?
What on Earth?
He's
Off
His
Fucking
Nut
We're
Doomed
To
Certain
Death.

CHORUS

Hector is down to his underwear.

Hold up.
Maybe
Someone should

CHORUS

Maybe
If
I
Steel his heart
Talk to him
I can
Figure
Out
What
In
Gods
Name
Our
Greatest Trojan Warrior
is
Planning
to
Accomplish
Standing
In
Front
Of
The

Skaian
 Gates
 in
 his-
 HECTOR!

HECTOR

Get back inside. It's not safe for you here.

CHORUS

And you? You're safe in your underwear?
 Balls to the wind?

HECTOR

Here's my thinking:
 I
 Don't want to die.
 I don't think
 Achilles does either.
 Although killing
 And by extension
 Dying
 Come easier to him than most.

CHORUS

Okay...

HECTOR

Perhaps if
 I appear to him in
 As humble a shape as possible
 Stripped of the
 Artifice and costumes of
 Men at war
 And instead simply as a
 man
 Like him
 Two men
 We can find something to talk about besides
 rampant slaughter.
 I realize how that sounds am I way
 Way off base here?

CHORUS

Um
 Yeah.
 Oh I'd say you're
 About as far off base as
 A man could get without being diagnosed with
 A physiological disorder
 This is ACHILLES here
 He is all beast when it comes to these things.
 And need I remind you that:
 you killed his lover.

HECTOR

Right.

CHORUS

You stripped him naked and dragged him through the muck.

HECTOR

I see your point.
And yet...
If I don't try and reason
If I assume the worst
What does that say about me?

CHORUS

Face facts:
When you consider the
Snail tail of filth and carnage he's
Left behind on the battlefield today
I think he's made it oh
Pretty clear that REASON is out the fucking window.
He's not stopping until
Your soul has
Been
Vomited
from your body
So, if you continue to *stand there*, my money is on a modest
two-bedroom two bath
in hell
For you and
Your wife and child.
Just talking out loud here.

HECTOR

I appreciate that. But
I'm frightened.
I can't fight Achilles and win.
It's not in the cards,
is it?

CHORUS

I'm not sure if
Achilles will care much
What you look like
What you're wearing
When he raises his heavy ashen spear and flings it at
your head.
He's thinking only one thing: revenge.

HECTOR

So you'd recommend-- what?

CHORUS

That you put your clothes back on.

HECTOR

And then what? To fight?

CHORUS

Pray.
To
whatever or
whoever
you pray to.
Whoever will listen.

HECTOR

I don't pray.

CHORUS

That's a problem.

Shit! I can see Achilles surging over the plain!
Let's go, ladies!

The chorus exits.

Hector gets dressed.

Priam, Hector's father, approaches. He has the kindest eyes and wears a sweater.

PRIAM

Hector...

HECTOR

Dad.

PRIAM

You're putting your clothes back on. That's good. What the hell were you doing?

HECTOR

I had a thought of...

PRIAM

Surrender?

HECTOR

No, never!

PRIAM

Why not?

HECTOR

You serious?

PRIAM

Have you lost your mind? Standing here all alone?

HECTOR

I know what it looks like.

PRIAM

It looks like suicide.

I know you- those are my eyes, those are my fists, that is my heart. We don't compare to Achilles and shouldn't try to.

You can't beat him. You can't.

Why not call for reinforcements?

HECTOR

It's me he's after. Why put more innocent men in his way.

PRIAM

I hear you, Hector, but this is ridiculous. Come inside.

HECTOR

No. It's... my destiny to face Achilles-

PRIAM

Don't give me that horse shit!

God damn him! God... damn it.

Priam breaks down.

HECTOR

Dad? People are watching.

PRIAM

He's robbed me of so many sons! So many sent off to internment camps, extradited to god knows where!

Your brothers Lycaon and Polydorus-

HECTOR

What about them?

PRIAM

They're missing, Hector.

HECTOR

Missing?

PRIAM

Yes. Neither reported back from the field. I can't find them among the remaining troops.

HECTOR

We should find them! We should go out and look-

Priam takes his son's arm and shakes his head.

A violent exchange of ammunition.

A predator drone falls from the sky—the effect is shocking, outrageous, but the men don't blink. It smokes.

Still holding his son's arm.

PRIAM

Troy needs you: alive. You're the reason the men keep fighting.

HECTOR

I am?

PRIAM

Helen is a symbol, an image in a magazine, it's you they fight for, Hector.

HECTOR

I... (stirred) I didn't know that.

PRIAM

Come back inside. Help with rescue and recovery, leave the fighting to those who won't be missed. Who knows, if we hold out another day-

A large explosion nearby.

HECTOR

You need to go inside now.

PRIAM

Hector!

HECTOR

Go.

PRIAM

Would you have me watch the rest of my sons put to death, my wife and daughters savaged in my own home, all I've built looted and destroyed? Your father, your *king*, fed to his own dalmatians, lapping their masters blood, devouring my crotch? Or, will you obey your father and *come inside*. Hector!

HECTOR

Please leave!

PRIAM

You fucking fool! What are you proving? And to who? Here!
Here!

Priam begins to tear out his hair.

PRIAM

You've driven your old man mad, how do you like that! Hair!
Hair! All for you! All for you!

HECTOR

Stop it!

PRIAM

There!

He tears out the last clump: he is now completely bald.

PRIAM

You've not only stolen your father's hair, you've broken his
heart. (delirious) I'm bald! I'm bald!

Hecuba, Hector's mother, runs in, having broken free from two attendants, who struggle to contain her. The top half of her dress hangs down, she holds one of her breasts in her hand, offering it to Hector.

HECUBA

HECTOR!

PRIAM

Get her inside!

HECUBA

HECTOR!! HECTOR!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

She is dragged off kicking and screaming. Priam exits too.

Again, Hector is left alone.

HECTOR

I'll offer Helen and her treasures, all the crap Paris stole.

(beat)

HECTOR

They were the cause of our fighting, right?

(beat)

HECTOR

I'll negotiate a settlement, reparations in the form of half the city, half of every dollar to the Achaeans. For we must be left with something, Achilles, enough to feed the refugees and begin to repay our debt, gain a foothold in the world economy, right?

(beat)

HECTOR

We'll build a wall in between us, to bring peace and order between nations. It won't be permanent.

(beat)

HECTOR

I could seduce him. Whisper to him. Suck on him.

(beat)

HECTOR

What am I doing this for? Why was I born with so many questions in my mouth?

Achilles approaches, drenched head to toe in blood. He wipes blood from his eyes.

The men take each other in.

HECTOR

What do you say... we call it even. Good old fashioned spit shake. Okay?

Achilles smiles a bloodthirsty smile.

Achilles howls like wolf.

Ajax, on an acoustic guitar, plays the opening to "God Damned" by Girls.

Hector's hands begin to shake, violently. He drops first his shield, then his spear.

ACHILLES

Run.

Hector runs away.