

PERUSAL SCRIPT

THE TROJAN CHILDREN

by Mahonri Stewart



Newport, Maine

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THE TROJAN CHILDREN

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Order # 3280

ORIGINAL CAST

PANTHEROS.....	Jacob Nofchissey
LIGEIA.....	Abby Brown
CLEON.....	Chris Jones
CHARES.....	Ty Francom
NIKE.....	Aaliyah Lobendahn
SYNTYCHE.....	Kenzie Carlson
AGDA.....	Darci Ramirez
BABAK.....	Asa Faulconer
SOSTRATA.....	Zarah Green
ARES.....	Julio Lazarte
HESTIA / STHENO.....	London Sorensen
LELANTAS / FATE.....	Kendall Stein
EURYALE / FATE.....	Katelyn Cox
CEREBES / FATE.....	Adriu Lobendahn

ORIGINAL PRODUCTION TEAM

Director.....	Dr. J. D. Newman
Assistant Directors.....	Zahra Alnasser, Brennan Newkirk, Audrey Wilde
Production Stage Manager.....	Daniel Bunker
Assistant Stage Manager.....	Melissa Howarth
Costume Designer.....	Andrea Newmeyer
Run Crew.....	Rhett Brogan

THE TROJAN CHILDREN by Mahonri Stewart. Cast: 14 (8f, 5m, 1non-gender-specific) About an hour. Simple setting. Greek (or nondescript modern) costumes. After the fall of Troy, a group of refugee children must rely on their wits, their hearts, and the aid of the Greek goddess Hestia, if they are going to survive monsters, magic, and the terrible god of war Ares. Will they be able to unite and overcome their differences to make it to safety? Premiered by the Noorda Theatre for Children and Youth in 2015. **ORDER #3280**

CAST OF CHARACTERS:

THE TROJAN CHILDREN — *Their ages range from the very young, to early teenagers.*

AGDA (*female*)

BABAK (*male*)

CHARES (*male*)

CLEON (*male*)

LIGEIA (*female*)

NIKE (*female*)

PANTHEROS (*male*)

SOSTRATA (*female*)

SYNTYCHE (*female*)

THREE FATES

ARES - God of War

HESTIA - Goddess of Home and Hearth

LELANTAS - a female Titan

CERBERUS - the three headed dog

STHENO - one of the Gorgon Sisters

EURYALE - another (*MEDUSA being the more famous of the three*)

Mahonri Stewart is an award winning writer and educator. He has written over two dozen plays, most of which have been produced throughout the U.S. and Europe, including productions in Los Angeles, Scotland, and Switzerland. In 2004, his premiere play *Farewell to Eden* won the Kennedy Center's American College Theater Festival's National Playwriting Award (Second Place) and their National Selection Team Fellowship Award. Since then he has also received numerous other awards and honors and continues to expand his writing into various mediums, including screenplays, graphic novels, poetry, and novels. He received his MFA degree in Dramatic Writing from Arizona State University, where he wrote both the stage version of *Jimmy Stewart Goes to Hollywood*, as well as a screenplay version. He received his Bachelors degree in Theatre Arts from Utah Valley University. He's a former Playwright in Residence at the Noorda Regional Theater for Children and Youth.

THE TROJAN CHILDREN

Scene One:

The Ruins of Troy

AT RISE-- *There are the sounds of war. The THREE FATES appear.*

FATES: *(variously)* Troy had fallen!

(Lights appear on the TROJAN CHILDREN in pocket tableau's of panic.)

Despite the death of Achilles, the so-called Greek “heroes” made their triumph over Hector and Paris in Troy to re-claim the beautiful Helen. If only the Trojans had looked this gift horse in the mouth. Yet now the city of Troy had been taken over by the Greek army.

(ARES, appears in tableau, as if leading a charge of soldiers, sword outstretched.)

The gods of Olympus were not as high as they thought, debasing themselves to meddle in the petty fights of men. Ares, the god of war, did not care what a fight was about. He just wanted to be in the middle of it.

(The TROJAN CHILDREN change tableau's, running from soldiers, mourning lost family, etc.)

His spirit of blood spurred on the Greek army to forget mercy and to remember vengeance. They did not care who they hurt. They did not care how vengeance spilled over its hot liquid onto the innocent.

(The FATES gather around the TROJAN CHILDREN, reaching out to them tenderly)

There are many who think that we, the Fates, are forgetful. That there are those who escape our attention, being small as they are.

(The TROJAN CHILDREN shift their tableau's again, this time coming together, where they are represented in captivity)

We are here to tell you that we forget nothing. No person, no matter how small, escapes our notice, despite what pain they may be called to pass through.

(HESTIA, appears in mourning tableau's.)

And there are others who notice as well, even among the proud Olympians. Hestia, Goddess of the hearth, of family, of architecture, of state, of home... she, too, noticed. She, too, cared.

(The FATES disappear as ARES and HESTIA break out of their tableau's and turn to each other.)

HESTIA: Ares, please, let this stop! Hasn't there been enough horror?

ARES: Hestia? This is no place for you.

HESTIA: No place for me! Where else would I be?

ARES: Soft hearts don't belong here.

HESTIA: Sometimes I don't think you know when you're being insulting

ARES: This is a time for warriors, not for housewives!

HESTIA: It is the only place for me right now. Look!

(HESTIA waves her hand towards the tableaux of the TROJAN CHILDREN They are ragged and afraid.)

ARES: Children! Why should I care about a group of dirty children?

HESTIA: They had fathers who are now dead on the battlefield. They had mothers who were victims of the plunder of Troy and were either killed or taken captive. Those who once had happy families are now orphans.

ARES: Stay away from this...

HESTIA: When you kill fathers and mothers and leave children with no one to care for them, it is within my threshold that you have crossed.

ARES: All are the victims and spoils of War. Even the children.

HESTIA: No. The children, at least, should be spared.

ARES: They will be sold into slavery...

HESTIA: No..

ARES: They will have no more families, they will only servethe victors...

HESTIA: No.

ARES: Be content, Hestia.

HESTIA: No!

ARES: You must be content! War is my domain. Compared to my power, the hearth is a small kingdom.

HESTIA: I am a goddess. I am on the Council of Olympus, one of the Pantheon! Do not underestimate my power.

(ARES laughs.)

ARES: Power?

(ARES laughs again, more boisterously.)

What are you going to do, sweep me out of your house?

HESTIA: If you keep them, you make war with me.

ARES: Well then, you know how much I like a good war.

HESTIA: I am serious, Ares!

ARES: No. I can't take you seriously at all. I influence battalions, fleets, and armies. You influence mothers, maids, and children. I have swords, armor, shields, and spears. You have mops, aprons, tea cups, and cradles.

HESTIA: You have made an enemy today.

ARES: Excuse me if I don't tremble.

(Exit ARES. Frustrated, HESTIA turns to the TROJAN CHILDREN, unseen by them.)

HESTIA: Your fathers may be gone, your mothers may be gone, but I am not gone. The world is lonely, it is often cruel, but my hearth can be your home. In the absence of your families, I now bless you and make you family to each other.

(HESTIA blesses them each, touching their foreheads. PANTHERAS, however, resists the

touch, and pulls away. Exit HESTIA.)

Scene Two:

The Prison Camp of the Conquering Greek Army

AT RISE—We see the Trojan Children, who have gathered fearfully.

AGDA: We need to stay together.

PANTHEROS: What?

AGDA: All we have is each other.

PANTHEROS: We're going to be slaves. All we have is nothing.

SYNTYCHE: Quiet, or they'll beat us again.

AGDA: I don't see the guards.

SYNTYCHE: Quiet! Please...

AGDA: Where are the guards?

BABAK: Yeah, I don't see any guards.

AGDA: Right?

BABAK: Where are they?

NIKE: I can make a run for it.

LIGEIA: Wait, what if they come back and catch us?

NIKE: If I ran, they wouldn't be able to catch me. I'm faster than they are, especially when they're in that armor.

SYNTYCHE: They could be back any second.

CLEON: If I was a grown up, I'd show them something. And I'd be strong. Like Heracles. Smash all their helmets together.

NIKE: I'm going to run for it.

SYNTYCHE: Wait. Let's leave together.

NIKE: No, you'd all just slow me down.

PANTHEROS: She's right. We're all be better off on our own.

(SOSTRATA, the youngest, begins to cry.)

SOSTRATA: Please, don't leave me...

AGDA: Not everyone is better off on their own.

(AGDA picks up SOSTRATA and comforts her.)

PANTHEROS: What's wrong with her?

AGDA: Nothing's wrong with her. She's just... different.

PANTHEROS: Is she stupid or something?

AGDA: No! Just... simple. Beautifully simple. Innocent.

PANTHEROS: Then she's not even worth anything as a slave. The Trojans will probably just... get rid of her.

SOSTRATA: No!

AGDA: Shh... everything's going to be all right. What's your name, sweetie?

SOSTRATA: Sostrata.

AGDA: My name is Agda. No matter what, I'll stay with you, okay, Sostrata?

SOSTRATA: Okay, Agda

LIGEIA: Do you all think there is truly a chance for us to make our escape?

PANTHEROS: They're bound to re-catch some of us. But if we all bolt for it in different directions— some of us would get away.

CHARES: Yeah, the strong ones, the fast ones. While the others get caught and beaten again. No thanks.

CLEON: You already know you're not the strong one then, right? Coward ruins it for everyone else! Coward!

(CLEON pushes CHARES to the ground.)

CHARES: Hey!

SYNTYCHE: Leave him alone!

BABAK: Will everybody be quiet? Whatever we end up doing, we'll need to be quiet.

PANTHERAS: He's definitely right about that.

CHARES: What if we go in smaller groups?

LIGEIA: Now there is an idea. We can still split up, make it more difficult for them to catch us all... and then at that point at least we're not all alone.

AGDA: I'm with the girl who said we need to stay together.

PANTHEROS: No way. You're being ridiculous.

CHARES: Wait, what if we all met up again, once we're out of the city and safe? Break apart, but then come back together again?

NIKE: This kid is smart.

PANTHEROS: Are you falling for this, too?

NIKE: I know I can get out of here by myself, sure. But what then? All by myself... out there. I'd sure like some company.

PANTHEROS: Only the strong ones can survive. You look like a strong one to me. And I know I am.

BABAK: What makes you so special?

PANTHEROS: I'm a hunter. Trained by my— my father. He was the best in the city. I can take care of myself out there.

BABAK: But you want us to be your distraction while you get away, is that it? While you make your escape?

LIGEIA: The small group idea is still the best one.

SOSTRATA: I'm scared.

AGDA: No need to be scared, Sostrata. We're getting through this... together. Now this is what we're

going to do...

PANTHEROS: Wait, I'm the oldest. Who put you in charge?

AGDA: Shut up! You're slowing everything down with your stupid selfishness!

SYNTYCHE: Quiet. Remember to be quiet.

AGDA: The well is outside the North side of the city. Where all those trees are. We can hide in there for a while, if we need to. Everyone know how to get there?

(Everyone nods except SOSTRATA, who shakes her head.)

Don't you worry about a thing, Sostrata, I'll make sure you get there.

SOSTRATA: Okay.

AGDA: So we'll make three groups of three. Sostrata is with me. And...

BABAK: I'll go with you, too.

AGDA: Great.

CLEON: Just don't make me go with the coward.

CHARES: I'm not a coward

AGDA: All right, obviously you two shouldn't go together. What's your name, tough guy?

CLEON: Cleon.

AGDA: Cleon, how about you go with the hunter...

PANTHEROS: Pantheros.

AGDA: And how about you go with them, too... uhm, what's your name?

LIGEIA: Ligeia.

AGDA: Which leaves you three. Your names?

CHARES: Chares.

NIKE: Nike.

SYNTYCHE: Syntyche

AGDA: All right, Chares, Nike, and Syntyche, you're a group. Does everyone understand the plan?

SYNTYCHE: Look, I can see them coming now.

NIKE: Then time's up. We've got our groups, let's go.

AGDA: All right. Go!

(The TROJAN CHILDREN all dash off, their three groups going in different directions. Guard's voices are heard, yelling after them as they make their escape.)

Scene Three:

In another part of the woods around Troy

AT RISE--*LIGEIA, PANTHEROS, and CLEON. re-enter. They are all out of breath, but CLEON is having an especially hard time recuperating.*

PANTHEROS: We lost them!

LIGEIA: May the Gods be thanked.

PANTHEROS: Don't be ridiculous. We all only have our own arms and our own legs to rely on.

LIGEIA: How are you doing Cleon?

CLEON: I— I— I have never had to run so hard in my entire life.

LIGEIA: They almost apprehended us. We are very blessed. Blessed to run like the rivers down Olympus.

PANTHEROS: Do you always talk like that?

LIGEIA: Like what?

PANTHEROS: Like you're a priestess in a temple or something.

LIGEIA: That would be a noble duty.

PANTHEROS: All right, cubs, this is where we go our own ways.

LIGEIA: No, we all agreed...

PANTHERAS: *You* all agreed. I said I was going out on my own.

LIGEIA: But you said you are a hunter. You could be of so much help to everyone.

PANTHERAS: Not gonna to happen.

CLEON: Let me go with you.

PANTHERAS: I think we all just saw you can't keep up with me.

CLEON: That's— that's just my lungs. They hurt when I push myself too hard, but I've trained myself to deal with the pain. I promise I won't slow you down.

PANTHERAS: That's a promise you can't make. Good luck to you both.

CLEON: Wait...

PANTHERAS: Goodbye!

(Exit PANTHEROS.)

CLEON: Well, if he can make it on his own, so can I.

LIGEIA: Cleon, wait, don't go. Come with me to the rendezvous point.

CLEON: All those kids are just going to get themselves caught again... or worse.

LIGEIA: We're children, too.

CLEON: I'm stronger than most kids. I can handle it.

LIGEIA: But not very fast. And not very intelligent.

CLEON: Hey!

LIGEIA: We all have things to contribute to the greater whole, and we all have things we need assistance with.

CLEON: Pantheros was right. You talk weird.

LIGEIA: I guess that is what *I* contribute.

CLEON: So you gonna talk the Greeks to death?

LIGEIA: Don't underestimate me, I won't underestimate you.

CLEON: Pf. Whatever you say.

LIGEIA: Come with me. To glory. To freedom.

CLEON: Only if you shut up until we getthere.
(*LIGEIA nods. They both exit together.*)

Scene Four:

In another part of the woods around Troy

AT RISE--*CHARES, SYNTYCHE, and NIKE, running hard.*

CHARES: Here, hide here!
(*They hide, trying to quiet their breath. CHARES briefly looks around the corner and then ducks back into the spot. They whisper to each other.*)

They're still there. But they look confused.

SYNTYCHE: Did they see you?

CHARES: No, I don't think so.

NIKE: They're going to catch us, if we don't dosomething.

SYNTYCHE: Do? What on earth is there to do?

NIKE: I can lure them away.

SYNTYCHE: What? No, we're in this together.

NIKE: I'm faster than they are.

CHARES: They're *soldiers*.

NIKE: You gotta believe me... I'm faster. I've been training for a competition in Greece.

SYNTYCHE: If they catch you, they'll kill you.

NIKE: (*with a cocky, brave smile*) I'd like to see them try.

CHARES: Really, let's think about this...

NIKE: Thinking time is over. Now it's time to act. So I'm going to run that way, and then you two book it in the opposite direction towards the well. Agreed?

SYNTYCHE: *Not* agreed. *So* not agreed!

NIKE: I'll see you both soon.

(*NIKE dashes off, exiting.*)

SYNTYCHE: What is she doing?!

CHARES: Giving us a chance.

(*looks around the corner*)

They're after her.

(*beat*)

She *is* fast.

(*beat*)

Let's go.

(Exit CHARES and SYNTYCHE)

Scene Five :

In another part of the woods around Troy

AT RISE--AGDA, BABAK, and SOSTRATA enter. A well appears and they hide behind it.

BABAK: We got here. I can't believe we got here.

SOSTRATA: I'm scared.

AGDA: Nothing to fear, little strawberry. We got to where we wanted.

SOSTRATA: But where do we go now? We can't sleep here.

BABAK: No, we can't.

AGDA: One thing at a time. First we wait for everyone else.

BABAK: Now, Agda, wait a minute, let's be practical. I know you want everyone to stay together, but what if... what if someone gets caught and they tell the soldiers where we are.

AGDA: We told them we would be here.

BABAK: But what about Sostrata? Shouldn't we protect her?

AGDA: I—I told them I'd be here. But maybe you're right. You take her and I'll wait for them.

BABAK: Wait, no, that's not what I meant.

AGDA: Go into the forest, to Artemis's temple. Wait for us there.

BABAK: No, I'm not going to leave you.

AGDA: You were willing to leave the others, what's so different about me?

BABAK: I... yeah, I... well...

AGDA: Go, Babak. Take her with you.

SOSTRATA: No, Agda!

AGDA: It's okay, little strawberry. Babak will take care of...

SOSTRATA: No! I can be brave. Please, don't make me leave you.

(SOSTRATA hugs AGDA.)

AGDA: All right, little strawberry. All right.

BABAK: Both of you sit down and rest.

(BABAK goes to the well and brings them water to drink from.)

AGDA: Thank you.

BABAK: I... I hope you didn't think I was being a coward.

AGDA: You were thinking of Sostrata.

BABAK: No I wasn't. I was thinking of me.

AGDA: But then you thought of me. Why?

BABAK: I... I guess you don't recognize me.

AGDA: Should I?

BABAK: You and your mother used to deliver fruit to my parent's house.

AGDA: Oh! I'm sorry I don't remember...

BABAK: I looked forward to that delivery every week. I made sure my parents allowed me to take that delivery every week.

AGDA: I kind of do remember you now... the very big house.

BABAK: Uh, yeah, I guess so.

AGDA: I knew I was never going to live in a big house like that.

BABAK: Never say never. Maybe I'll build you a house like that.

AGDA: *(laughs)* Why would you build me a house?

BABAK: *(pause)* You know, I really admired how you took charge back there.

AGDA: Any of you could have done the same thing.

BABAK: No, I don't think all of us could have. Thank you for showing us a better way.

(Lights fade. End of scene.)

Scene Six:

In another part of the woods around Troy

AT RISE--SYNTYCHE, CHARES, and AGDA enter.

AGDA: You made it! But where's Nike?

SYNTYCHE: She distracted the soldiers so we could get away. I told her not to, but...

BABAK: Did she get caught?

CHARES: I don't think so. She was really fast.

SYNTYCHE: We'll wait for her then. For a while. She deserves that much.

AGDA: Agreed.

(Enter CLEON and LIGEIA.)

BABAK: Cleon and Ligeia are here!

CLEON: Wow. You all actually made it.

CHARES: Why so surprised?

CLEON: You're not survivors... especially you, Chares.

CHARES: Well, here I am surviving, aren't I?

CLEON: Must have caught a lucky break.

CHARES: I am a survivor!

CLEON: Where is Nike?

AGDA: And what about Pantheros?

LIGEIA: Pantheros made good on his word. He is a lone wolf that does not like running with a pack.

AGDA: That's what I was afraid of.

CHARES: He's selfish.

CLEON: He did what she thought he had to do.

CHARES: Nike did what she thought she had to do... to save us!

CLEON: And why didn't you save her?

CHARES: What?

CLEON: Why didn't you make the big sacrifice, you coward?

CHARES: She was faster...

CLEON: And what is it that you can do for anyone, Chares? What exactly do you add to this group?

SYNTYCHE: Okay, both of you stop this.

AGDA: She's right, let's calm down and...

CHARES: I'm not a coward.

CLEON: You let the girl do the hard part and then she...

SYNTYCHE: Really, we're in this together. We can't be...

CHARES: You weren't there...

CLEON: Yeah, if I had been, Nike would still be with us!

(CLEON pushes CHARES down.)

AGDA: Hey, stop that!

(CHARES scrambles back up and tackles CLEON)

SYNTYCHE: Yeah, both of you stop it!

(BABAK interferes in their tussle and separates them.)

SOSTRATA: Why are they fighting?

BABAK: This is not helping!

AGDA: *(looking in the distance)* Someone's coming.

BABAK: What?

CHARES: We need to run.

CLEON: See, he's a coward! There's lots of us. We can take a single soldier!

LIGEIA: Even if that were true, how many of us would die in the mean time?

SYNTYCHE: *(recognizing the person coming towards them)* You all can stop fighting now. Look who it is.

(Enter NIKE)

NIKE: Hey, glad to see so many of us made it.

Scene Seven:

Near a sacred well in the woods

AT RISE—*ARES enters in a fury. He moves towards the well, staring at it. ARES draws his sword and cuts it in half and then, with great heaves from him, the pieces of the well move into the wings. ARES then lifts his sword and cries out.*

ARES: By my authority as an Olympian, I call upon Father Zeus and Mother Hera to grant me aid! I need the swift and silent Titan, Lelantos!

(There is a lightning crash, the lights go dark, and the flicker back on to reveal LELANTAS.)

LELANTAS: Yeargh!

(Lelantas is revealed as much smaller than Ares had expected.)

ARES: You're Lelantas?

LELANTAS: Yes.

ARES: The Titan?

LELANTAS: Yes.

ARES: I remember you being... bigger.

LELANTAS: Being trapped in a volcano stunted my growth.

(Beat.)

Why have I been granted freedom from my prison?

ARES: You have no freedom. But if you want to be saved from that volcanic cell I plucked you from, then pledge to serve me.

(LELANTAS kneels.)

LELANTAS: Then I do so.

ARES: Do you know me?

LELANTAS: I know you are an Olympian, one of those who defeated me and my fellow Titans and have kept us imprisoned and in torment ever since.

ARES: I am Ares, the God of War. I spur men to kill, to maim, to engulf whole cities in fire.

LELANTAS: You talk as if you are proud of all that.

ARES: I am. But my work often—makes a lot of noise. Yet you, Lelantos, you command air and stealth. You are unseen and track the impossible prey. You are Quiet. You are Relentless. You are a Hunter. I need someone who can find small things. I need you to track a group of children...

LELANTAS: I am hunting children?!

ARES: If that is a problem, I can put you back where I found you.

LELANTAS: *(after a pause.)* I suppose I will somehow have to make peace with my conscience, then. Go on.

ARES: I do not want an unwilling soldier...

LELANTAS: My thirst for freedom makes me willing.

(ARES studies LELANTAS and then continues)

ARES: These children were stolen from me, set free by Hestia.

LELANTAS: She's an Olympian like you, isn't she?

ARES: She is nothing! A domestic creature that has no place with those of us who are more worthy.

(Dark, cavernous noises are made and CERBERUS enters, barking and howling horribly. ARES, with a black cry of his own, intimidating the dog into compliance.)

This the dark hound of the underworld, Cerberus. Hades lent him to me for a favor. He will be your hunting dog.

LELANTAS: I am certain he will come in handy.

ARES: Now I need to go. After the fall of Troy, there's been much to keep me busy.

(Exit ARES)

LELANTAS: Well, hound, we have a depressing assignment, don't we?

(LELANTAS crouches down, touching the earth and inspecting the ground.)

They are headed inland, to the East.

(CERBERUS smells something on the air, and whines at LELANTAS. LELANTAS conjures a wind, which we hear, and sniffs the air herself.)

You're right, there is one who went off alone. We'll seek him first, and then capture the rest of the flock. Their numbers shall make them easier to find.

(LELANTAS and CERBERUS stealthily exit.)

Scene Eight:

A hidden place in the forest

AT RISE--STHENO and EURYALE enter. Their sister was Medusa, and, like her, they have snakes for hair, brass hands, and fangs, but otherwise they are quite beautiful.

EURYALE: How much longer must we wander until we find peace, sister?

STHENO: It doesn't matter how long we wander, Euryale, we will never find peace, not among these people. They will see our hair, our hands, our teeth, and they will fear us and kill us. Like they did our dear sister Medusa.

EURYALE: Stheno, if they curse us, why don't we curse them? If they kill us, why don't we kill them?

STHENO: We tried vengeance and we received a dead sister from it.

EURYALE: Perseus was trespassing on our land, we were in the right!

STHENO: Right? Are we worried about who was right? Does that make it hurt any less?

EURYALE: It replaces the hurt, gives us purpose! Her head requires a price, and I will take it out of any mortal we meet.

STHENO: Remember, we were once like them. Rest here, Euryale. I'll find us some water. We can discuss this when I get back.

(Exit STHENO. EURYALE)

I've had enough discussion. I want payment. But, wait... voices.

(EURYALE hides. Enter the TROJAN CHILDREN. CLEON is out of breath.)

SYNTYCHE: Hey, are you all right?

CLEON: I'm fine.

CHARES: I'm sure it's okay if we take a rest.

CLEON: Yeah, you'd like that, wouldn't you?

CHARES: Actually, I might. I'm a little tired, too.

CLEON: I'm not tired!

AGDA: What's going on?

SYNTYCHE: Cleon's not feeling so good.

LIGEIA: He mentioned it before, when we were fleeing the guards. There is something wrong with his lungs. They hurt when he engages in strenuous activity.

CLEON: There's nothing wrong with me! And you still talk weird!

BABAK: No one here thinks any less of you...

CLEON: Why would I care what you thought of me? Let's keep going.

SOSTRATA: I'm tired.

AGDA: A rest would do us all good. That all right with you, Cleon?

(Beat.)

CLEON: Sure, if Sostrata needs it.

(They all sit. BABAK)

Agda, can I talk with you alone for a second?

AGDA: Sure.

SOSTRATA: Agda!

SYNTYCHE: Come and spend some time with me for a second, sweetie.

SOSTRATA: No, I need Agda.

SYNTYCHE: Oh, but I have a game I want to show you.

SOSTRATA: A game?

SYNTYCHE: Yeah, it's really fun.

SOSTRATA: Okay.

AGDA: Thanks, Syntyche.

(SOSTRATA goes and plays a game with SYNTYCHE. BABAK and AGDA go aside, separate from the rest of the TROJAN CHILDREN.)

BABAK: So what's the plan here?

AGDA: Well, to get as far away from Troy as possible.

BABAK: And then what? Do we know where we're going? Do we know how we're going to get there?

AGDA: We're going to be fine.

BABAK: Sure, maybe. But I'd like to have some sort of plan. Let's get aorganized.

AGDA: Aren't you the practical one? Do you have something in mind?

BABAK: We're going more inland, but there's nothing out there for a long time. Just a lot of wilderness. I think we should head back.

AGDA: Back? Back to Troy?

BABAK: No, not Troy. But to one of the other port towns. If we want to get as far away as we can, we need to sail away fromhere.

AGDA: And how are we going to do that?

(BABAK takes some gold coins out of his shoes and the lining of his clothes.)

That's gold! Well, that must have been uncomfortable...

BABAK: My parents gave them to me before they... well, my fatherwas a merchant. As I'm sure you could tell from our house, he is very rich. Well, he was.

AGDA: You could have bribed the guards to let you go.

BABAK: I could have. But where would have that left you?

(There is a hissing sound.)

NIKE: Does anyone else hear that?

CHARES: There must be a snake nearby. Everyone becareful.

CLEON: I'm not afraid of a snake!

EURYALE: Child, I shall teach you that there are many things to be afraid of.

AGDA: Who's there?

LIGEIA: Snakes... a woman's voice...

CLEON: Show yourself, coward!

LIGEIA: No, don't...

EURYALE: Coward, am I? Against a brood of children?

LIGEIA: Everyone, close your eyes!

AGDA: What?

LIGEIA: Trust me! Close your eyes!

(The TROJAN CHILDREN do so. EURYALE comes out of her hiding spot.)

EURYALE: I see you have a scholar with you who knows her history.

LIGEIA: She's a gorgon!

CLEON: What's a gorgon?

LIGEIA: A monster.

EURYALE: I'm not a monster.

LIGEIA: Their sister was Medusa! The Gorgons have snakes for hair, sharp fangs, and brass hands. If you look into their eyes, you turn to stone! So keep those eyes closed!

SOSTRATA: I'm scared...

EURYALE: You should be, little one. For I want to make a garden here, a beautiful sanctuary in the forest. I want you all to be statues to decorate it. Such lovely pieces of art you will all make. You'll

look like happy children playing in my garden.

SYNTYCHE: It's okay, Sostrata. Everything's going to be okay...

AGDA: We're not going to let anything happen to you, little strawberry.

CLEON: I'm not afraid of you...

BABAK: Cleon, don't be an idiot.

CLEON: She's not really a Gorgon.

LIGEIA: Yes, she is.

CLEON: My father said that all those impossible stories are fairy tales made up to scare children.

(EURYALE approaches CLEON until she is face to face with him.)

EURYALE: A fairy tale? You think my grief, my sister's death, and all that we went through was a fairy tale?

CLEON: All of it.

EURYALE: Well, you can try that theory. Open your eyes.

LIGEIA: Don't do it, Cleon!

CLEON: Ligeia, you think you're so smart, but look at what you believe! Kids' stories.

LIGEIA: You've got to trust me on this, Cleon!

CLEON: She wants us to keep our eyes closed, so she can take us. But if we open them, she's just one woman and there's lots of us.

LIGEIA: Keep your eyes closed!

CLEON: I'm not scared of her!

EURYALE: And yet you keep your eyes closed, Cleon. You talk big, but in your heart I really think you're afraid right now.

CHARES: Cleon, don't!

CLEON: Shut up, you coward! I'm not afraid!

(CLEON opens his eyes, gazes into EURYALE's eyes, and turns into stone.)

SYNTYCHE: Cleon? Cleon!

EURYALE: Anyone else want to prove their bravery?

(Enter STHENO, with water and berries.)

STHENO: Euryale, what have you done?

LIGEIA: Watch out, there's another one!

EURYALE: I am punishing them!

STHENO: What by Olympus could have these children done to you?

EURYALE: They are the children of mortality! They all have the mark upon them, the sin of humanity that killed our sister!

STHENO: They are innocents!

EURYALE: No one is innocent, Stheno, especially that impudent brat of a boy who dared make light of our sister's death. Children's story indeed!

STHENO: He did not deserve this.

EURYALE: Yes, he did..

STHENO: Just like our sister did not deserve what happened to her.

EURYALE: We were all punished for another's crime!

LIGEIA: And whose crime are we being punished for?

(turning back to the children, and particularly LIGEIA.)

EURYALE: Little Scholar, you want to spar words with me?

LIGEIA: You said you were punished for another's crime...

EURYALE: ... and thus I am tipping the scales back.

LIGEIA: No. You are just adding more weight to injustice's side.

EURYALE: You speak well. But you are like that cursed goddess of wisdom Athena: so coldly contemplative, so distantly judgmental, but not willing to come down off her mountain and look me in the eyes and see the pain and real injustice of it all. To see if even her wisdom can withstand my rage. You have not lived enough real life, little Scholar. you are too cold.

LIGEIA: Perhaps. But then maybe you are too hot. So on fire with your pain, you can't see how you are spreading the flames to others. Look at what you have done to Cleon. Look into *his* eyes again and see how you have extinguished his life.

(Nearly convinced by Ligeia's words, Euryale goes over to Cleon and looks into the eyes again, the full implication of what she has done finally settling in. There is a long pause.)

EURYALE: I see it, I see it now. I am sorry. So sorry.

LIGEIA: Is there no way we can save him?

STHENO: Not any easy way. The only way to save him would put another of you in danger.

LIGEIA: How?

STHENO: One of you would have to submit to our bite. The venom would make you sick, may even kill you, but our venom mixed with your warm, living blood would save your friend.

NIKE: Oh, I hate snake bites...

CHARES: I'll do it.

BABAK: Chares, think about this before you...

CHARES: No, I will do it!

STHENO: You must care for your friend very much.

CHARES: Actually, Cleon's kind of been a jerk to me. And he called me a coward.

EURYALE: Why would you help someone who has been cruel to you?

CHARES: He was always so sure I was scared, but I wasn't. He thinks that being brave has something to do with being able to win a fight, or being tough, or being on top. Sometimes being brave means being able to lose a fight so someone else can win. Maybe after this he'll see that I'm not a coward.

STHENO: You are indeed very brave, young one.

(STHENO gently takes CHARES' hand and bites it.)

CHARES: Ow! Yeah, that hurts!

STHENO: Now wipe your blood on the boy. It has to come from the open wound.

CHARES: But I can't open my eyes.

STHENO: Yes, you can. The poison makes you immune to our other curses.

(CHARES opens his eyes and looks at the two GORGONS.)

CHARES: Was your sister as beautiful as you two are?

EURYALE: Even more so.

CHARES: I feel sorry for what happened to her.

(CHARES goes over to CLEON and wipes the blood from his wound upon CLEON's cheek. CHARES then collapses and CLEON breathes in deeply, becoming flesh again.)

CHARES: I... I was...

(Seeing the GORGONS, CHARES looks away.)

EURYALE: You, too, are now immune to our curse.

(CHARES slowly, carefully looks at the Gorgons again.)

STHENO: Here take these berries and this water. You will all need the strength.

(Exit EURYALE and STHENO.)

LIGEIA: Are they gone?

CHARES: Yes.

(The rest of the TROJAN CHILDREN open their eyes.)

SYNTYCHE: Chares!

BABAK: Cleon, give him some of the water and berries!

CLEON: What? No, why should he get the first of...

BABAK: You still don't seem to understand that he just saved your miserable life!

(BABAK and SYNTYCHE take the water and the berries and start administering to CHARES.)

CLEON: What?

AGDA: You were turned to stone, Cleon.

CLEON: I know. But how did I...?

LIGEIA: It was Chares. He let himself be poisoned by their bite so that he could save you.

CLEON: He saved me?

AGDA: His poisoned blood brought you back.

CLEON: No, that's not possible...

LIGEIA: They said he may live...

CLEON: "May" live?

LIGEIA: Or... he may die.

CLEON: No. No!

(CLEON runs off, exiting.)

AGDA: Cleon!

NIKE: I'll go get him.

(NIKE dashes after him, exiting.)

15 MORE PAGES TO THE END OF THE SCRIPT