

The Trojan Women
Euripides 485/4-406 B.C.

POSEIDON

*Lo! From the depths of salt Aegean floods I, Poseidon, come, where
choirs of Nereids trip in the mazes of the graceful dance; for since the
day that Phoebus and myself with measurement exact set towers of stone
about this land of Troy and ringed it round, never from my heart hath
passed away a kindly feeling for my Phrygian town, which now is
smouldering and o'erthrown, a prey to Argive prowess. For, from his home
beneath Parnassus, Phocian Epeus, aided by the craft of Pallas, framed a horse
to bear within its womb an armed host, and sent it within the
battlements, fraught with death; whence in days to come men shall tell
of "the wooden horse," with its hidden load of warriors. Groves forsaken stand and
temples of the gods run down with blood, and at the altar's very base, before the god who
watched his home, lies Priam dead.*

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HECUBA Awakening
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*Ye swift-prowed ships, rowed to sacred Ilium o'er the deep dark sea,
past the fair havens of Hellas, to the flute's ill-omened music and the
dulcet voice of pipes, even to the bays of Troyland (alack the day!),
wherein ye tied your hawsers, twisted handiwork from Egypt, in quest of
that hateful wife of Menelaus, who brought disgrace on Castor, and on
Eurotas foul reproach; murderess she of Priam, sire of fifty children,
the cause why I, the hapless Hecuba, have wrecked my life upon this
troubulous strand. Oh that I should sit here o'er against the tent of
Agamemnon Forth from my home to slavery they hale my aged frame, while
from my head in piteous wise the hair is shorn for grief. Ah! hapless
wives of those mail-clad sons of Troy! Ah! poor maidens, luckless
brides, come weep, for Ilium is now but a ruin; and I, like some
mother-bird that o're her fledglings screams, will begin the strain; how
different from that song I sang to the gods in days long past, as I
leaned on Priam's staff, and beat with my foot in Phrygian time to lead
the dance!*

Enter CHORUS OF CAPTIVE TROJAN WOMEN.

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CASSANDRA

Bring the light, uplift and show its flame! I am doing the god's

service, see! I making his shrine to glow with tapers bright. O Hymen, king of marriage! blest is the bridegroom; blest am I also, the maiden soon to wed a princely lord in Argos. Hail Hymen, king of marriage! Since thou, my mother, art ever busied with tears and lamentations in thy mourning for my father's death and for our country dear, I at my own nuptials am making this torch to blaze and show its light, in thy honour, O Hymen, king of marriage! Grant thy light too, Hecate, at the maiden's wedding, as the custom is. Nimble lift the foot aloft, lead on the dance, with cries of joy, as if to greet my father's happy fate. To dance I hold a sacred duty; come, Phoebus, lead the way, for 'tis in thy temple mid thy bay-trees that I minister. Hail Hymen, god of marriage! Hymen, hail! Come, mother mine, and join the dance, link thy steps with me, and circle in the gladsome measure, now here, now there. Salute the bride on her wedding-day with hymns and cries of joy. Come, ye maids of Phrygia in raiment fair, sing my marriage with the husband fate ordains that I should wed.

CHORUS

Hold the frantic maiden, royal mistress mine, lest with nimble foot she rush to the Argive army.