

“Such Pretty Work!” (Andromache)

Monologue from the play *No More Trojan Women* by Justy Fairfield

NOTE: Trailblazing English (TE) is used in this monologue. Actors agree not to substitute Conventional English words for TE terms as a condition for using this monologue, as stated on the “Permission to Perform My work” page of the author’s website at <https://stagepagan.com/permission-to-perform-my-work/>.

Character: Andromache, Daughter-in-Law to Hecuba, Queen of Troy

Setting: Before the ruined palace of Ancient Troy

Background: *Andromache has been in isolation with her young son, Astyanax, since the death of her spouse, Hector, in battle. She now appears before the Palace of Troy to tell Hecuba of a new sorrow.*

ANDROMACHE

A Greek soldier came to my apartment this morning —
to the happy home I once shared with Hector. — where we spoiled Astyanax together.
He introduced himself as Bulamachos. Well-named! – He was a bull of a man.
He said he had orders from Agamemnon to pay his respects to Hector’s widow.
I thought I knew what that meant! But, instead, he turned to Astyanax.

Asty screamed when he saw his fierce armor.
Remember, Hecuba, how he cried the day Hector donned his plumed helmet? —
as if he feared Daddy had been swallowed by some great feathered beast!
Hector removed it at once and swooped Asty up in his mantle,
assuring him he was safe. He never wore his helmet in front of Asty again.
He was a kind man, Hecuba — your son.
Troy’s deadliest warrior, yet a dear to his family!

The Greek was gruff. He snatched Astyanax up like a sack of flour
and moved quickly towards the archway.
‘Don’t forget his blanket!’ I called after him. ‘It gets so cold at night anymore.’

Remember this blanket, Hecuba?
You told me you had embroidered it when you were expecting Hector, your first-born.
You gave it to me when I was expecting Astyanax, my only born.
Was there really such a time when we had time for such pretty work?
I can’t remember!

What happy colors — gold of sand, green of hill, blue of sea. They’re all faded now.
I bet this red never made you think of blood. When you cradled Hector in your arms,
you foresaw for him a kingly future that you believed would be.
No Trojan mother now dares dream to the end of the day!

‘Don’t forget his blanket!’ I cried after the Greek. But he neither heeded nor halted. He carried Asty across the balcony to the balustrade and dangled him over its edge.

“What a glorious view of the battlefield your mommy had from this height! ”

he chimed. “Was she watching the day Achilles killed Daddy?”

He looked back at me, but I didn’t answer.

I should have answered!

“No matter,” he smiled. “She’s watching now!”

And he let Asty go...like a sack of flour.

He let my baby go!

(ANDROMACHE buries her face in the blanket. Pause.

She lifts her head and takes a deep breath.)

Look! Here’s a lock of Asty’s hair caught in the embroidery.

I had him wrapped in this blanket just last night.

Nothing can ever be right again!

(Pause. She brushes the tears away from her eyes.)

Have you made your decision yet, Hecuba? —

Whether to surrender at dusk or fight on to the death? —

For I have made mine!

(ANDROMACHE reveals a dagger.)

Oh, Hector!

Wrap our baby in your mantle this day!

Tonight, wrapped in a red mantle of my own and Greek blood dyed,

I shall join you both in Elysium!

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