

gold dust woman

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*rock on, gold dust woman
take your silver spoon, dig your grave
heartless challenge
pick your path and i'll pray*

...

*well, did she make you cry
make you break down
shatter your illusions of love?
and is it over now, do you know how?
pick up the pieces and go home.
– fleetwood mac, "gold dust woman"*

*"gold dust woman" was my kind of symbolic look
at somebody going through a bad relationship,
doing a lot of drugs, and trying to make it.
trying to live. trying to get through it.
– stevie nicks, vh1 the making of rumours, 1997*

*to hell with you all: thus your fall pre-avenges me.
apollo's power now can hoard ruin for some other she.
i am divested, defrocked, disrobed; and he does this to me,
as he just watched while these robes brought me mockery,
as he just watched while his truths in my prophecies
destroyed every bond between me and my family—
destroyed so they cast me out wandering in penury,
destroyed so they shut me out dying in poverty.
and now apollo the prophet forecloses on me,
devises a fate that bristles lethality:
instead of the fatherland altar, awaiting me
is a chopping-block warm with the blood of the slaughtered he.
– aeschylus agamemnon trans. timothy chappell*

*“dear [cassandra],
i take it as the task of the translator
to forbid that you should ever lose your screams
– taken from anne carson, *antigonick**

content warnings.

themes of drug use, emotional abuse & manipulation, grief & loss, and sexual violence

characters.

the trojans

CASSANDRA, devoted groupie. dresses like stevie nicks.

ANDROMACHE (an-draw-mack-ee), cassandra's sister-in-law. wife of hector.

POLYXENA (pol-lex-ee-nah), youngest sister of cassandra. hecuba's favorite.

PARIS, older brother of cassandra. poor judgement. husband of helen.

HECTOR, oldest brother of cassandra. good judgement. husband of andromache.

PRIAM (pry-am), king of troy. father to cassandra.

HECUBA (heh-cube-ah), queen of troy. mother to cassandra.

the greeks

HELEN, spartan, cassandra's sister-in-law. stolen bride of paris.

MENELAUS (men-eh-lay-us), mycenaean, played by paris. wears a fake beard.

AGAMEMNON (ag-ah-mem-non), mycenaean, played by hector. wears a fake beard.

the gods

APOLLO, self-proclaimed god of music. lead rockstar. freakishly good at guitar hero.

PAN, god of the wild/rustic music. played by priam. drummer. absolutely feral energy. unspoken.

EUTERPE (yoo-ter-pee), muse of music and lyric poetry. played by hecuba. bassist. unspoken.

setting.

the city of troy if it was transformed to los angeles in the 1970s.

sex, drugs, and rock & roll, baby!

the walls, however, thrum with ancient, divine energy.

the walls of troy are a necessity. they must always loom in the background.

they *must* look ancient.

production notes.

cassandra *must* be played by a woman, but of any ethnicity.

apollo *must* be played by a man, preferably a white one.

all other characters are flexible, all ethnicities and genders must be considered.

a slash (/) indicates interruption.

0. XII. PREMONITION.

Enter CASSANDRA. Tear droplets drip down her cheeks, creating black torrents of mascara like viscera burning into the skin.

Her hair is wild and ratty, strands flying all around, and she has a feral look about her. A craziness in her eyes; an animal cornered before slaughter. She wears scarlet bands around her wrists, and a withered garland around her neck. Large gold hoops dangle from her ears.

Once a regal presence, a beautiful girl, Cassandra has been reduced to a shadow, some upside-down, twisted, turned, sick version of her old self.

*She hears voices.
She sees things she wishes she could not see.*

She walks in circles, paranoid, looking over her shoulder. Something — unseen? did she see something? — startles her.

*She collapses onto the ground.
Onto her knees.
Cassandra of Troy, screams — no: wails, or cries, or bellows — and beats at her breast.*

*She crawls to the side in a panic and turns on a...what is it?
A shadow?
A shade?
A ghost?
A fly on the wall?*

CASSANDRA

leave me be!

*Cassandra draws her knees to her chest,
squeezes her eyes shut, and plugs her ears.*

CASSANDRA

i do not see you
i cannot hear you

perhaps if i shout loud enough you'll startle!

...
GO AWAY!

She gets on her hands and knees.

CASSANDRA

GODS DAMN IT ALL I SAID GO AWAY

She stands. She paces.

CASSANDRA

they scatter like cockroaches
these visions
these dreams
these memories
these pasts
these presents
these futures
like cockroaches scatter
beetles scuttle
maggots slink
spiders skitter
they dissipate
but they always return
 rotten
 rotten
 rotten
she surely is rotten
a woman decomposing upright
her teeth are cracking because they nail her jaw shut
poor poor cassandra
poor poor wretched cassandra
she mourns the living for to her they are already dead
it is from their graves she can love them best

it is the living who turn on her
 who leave gaping wounds that never seem to heal right
 puckering yellow and green at their edges
 it is the living who fill her lungs with black bile
 until it pools over her lips like tar
 poor poor cassandra
 poor poor wretched cassandra
 there are snakes in her ears their forked-tongues flick and tickle her lobes
 it is an intimate affair
 perhaps they should be lovers but —
 they tell her horrible things
 they show her horrible wretched unbelievable things
 is she standing at the gates of troy?
 is she watching as flames engulf her home?
 reds—
 oranges—
 yellows—
 she always did prefer blue
 maybe a sweet purple
 never shades of gold
 never never
 perhaps once
 what is that saying?
déjà vu déjà su déjà vecu // already seen already known already lived

*Cassandra weaves her fingers into her hair,
 tugging at the roots.*

CASSANDRA

now cassandra stands at the gates of troy weeping for her home is burning once again
 smoke fills her lungs until her breath is pitch
 then cassandra stands at the thresholds of hell fingers curled tight around a lion statue
 the stench of blood-drops dripping from palace walls assaults her nostrils
 nobody listens to cassandra and every eve she burns
 every morn she is without blister
 the false prophetess this is what they whisper when she passes
 a girl who's regressed to madness at such a young age
 she is a vacancy
 an e c h o of what a girl might've been
 a pity a pity
 she has no grasp of reality they say
 a pity a pity
 they trickle rumors across their lips like leaves rustling their secrets in the trees

a pity a pity
 she's a liar
 a whore
 a victim
 a cautionary tale
 they speak as if she cannot hear them

Each shout is a slap to her face.

POLYXENA (O.S.)

CUT OUT HER TONGUE!

CASSANDRA

her mind is not all there, after all!

ANDROMACHE (O.S.)

PLUCK OUT HER EYES!

CASSANDRA

but she hears

HECUBA (O.S.)

STUFF HER EARS WITH COTTON!

*Cassandra wants to cry. Despair swells
 within her more fervent than ever.*

CASSANDRA

i hear
 i hear i see i feel
 my mind is not fragmentary
 but no one believes a fallen woman
 ...
 why does nobody ever listen to me?

*Cassandra wipes the mascara from her
 cheeks. She levels her gaze to the audience.*

CASSANDRA

Loving a God is not a death sentence.
 No, no. It is something far worse.

BLACKOUT.

I. SUMMER OF '72.

Still in Blackout. A record scratches and 1970s Rock and Roll starts to blare. Starts out Warbled. Wonky. Gold Dust Woman by Fleetwood Mac would be ideal, but otherwise something with high energy like Highway to Hell plays us into this scene. Grows louder and more clear, allowing for the stage to be set.

Lights up on a teenage girl's very retro styled bedroom: band posters, records, a record player, if you google "70s color scheme" that is the vibe. Cassandra rifles through a rack of clothing, scrutinizing every article and displeased by every one she comes across. HELEN sits near a vanity, doing POLYXENA'S makeup. Polyxena exudes contentment and excitement, parried with a restlessness of girlhood. On the bed, ANDROMACHE is already finished getting ready and she flips through a stack of magazines.

All in some minute way, dance to the music.

HELEN

Close your eyes, / Polyxena.

Polyxena squeezes them shut, as Helen's hand hovers over her face, clasping an eyeshadow brush. Cassandra groans at her clothes

CASSANDRA

/ No....

No....

No...

HELEN

Soften your / eyelids!

CASSANDRA

/ Definitely / not...

POLYXENA

/ Helen, I don't know what that / meansssss!

Cassandra pulls a shirt off the rack and raises it to her chest.

CASSANDRA

/ What about this one?

No response. She shifts from foot to foot, but no one acknowledges her. She places the shirt back on the rack.

HELEN

Don't scrunch or squeeze them shut, it'll crease!

Cassandra falls onto the bed beside Andromache with a woeful, dramatic flair.

CASSANDRA

Andromache, I have nothing to wear!

Andromache flips through her magazine. She doesn't even look up.

ANDROMACHE

Your velvet top, satin skirt, with the platform boots.

Cassandra shoots upright and pulls the articles of clothing Andromache suggested off the rack. She ponders it for a moment, running her fingers over the material, before nodding in approval. She disappears to change.

POLYXENA

Tonight is going to be absolutely Insane! Do they have concerts like this in Sparta or Argos?

At the mention of Argos, Andromache looks up warily. Helen fumbles.

ANDROMACHE

I'm sure Greece has rock and roll, Xee.

HELEN

Oh, we did.

(musing)

Actually, when we were girls, my sister Clytemnestra and my cousin Penelope would sneak beyond the palace gates to . Pen was always the cleverest of us. She could bypass the guards with such skill, you'd think her suited for a life of deception.

POLYXENA

You did not go with them?

HELEN

No.

POLYXENA

Well, why not?

HELEN

Penelope had the brains of Athena. Clytemnestra, the brazenness of Ares. I had beauty, but beauty alone could not call upon my courage. I always tried to be brave like them, but I did not wish to cause strife or discord in my disobedience.

*Andromache snorts, but Polyxena interrupts
before tensions can mount.*

POLYXENA

Aphrodite is not just the goddess of beauty, she's the goddess of love. Traveling here for love was a very brave thing to do.

ANDROMACHE

(under her breath)

It was selfish and now we walk among the damned.

*Helen hears. She bristles. Polyxena is
terrified of the mascara wand Helen grips
like one might a sword, one far too close to
her eyeballs for comfort.*

HELEN

Tell me, Andromache, what was I to do? Stay with a husband I didn't love anymore?
How is that fair to either one of us? Do I not owe it to myself to chase my own
happiness?

ANDROMACHE

Choosing to chase one's own happiness does not apply when it brings war with the whole
of Greece to someone else's doorsteps!

HELEN

...

POLYXENA

...

ANDROMACHE

...

*Enter Cassandra from the bathroom with a
flourish, a true disciple of Stevie Nicks. A
faint golden and pink glow, like a melting
sunset, creates a halo around her edges.*

CASSANDRA

Y'ALL BITCHES READY TO GO

(she shimmies)

APESHIT?

s i l e n c e
e c h o s .

BLACKOUT.

II. DON'T BE A GROUPIE.

*A banner unfurls. **APESHIT** is cleaved into it, either with ink, paint, or blades. Concert lights. **PAN** sits at his drums and **EUTERPE** fiddles with her bass. Then **APOLLO** strides out, his guitar strung across his body.*

Cassandra and Andromache smoke a joint in the alleyway beside the concert venue. Andromache rifles in her purse, hands something to Cassandra.

Crowd goes wild.

She pops it into her mouth like a piece of gum.

Apollo flashes his brilliant fucking smile and waves at the audience.

Polyxena drags Helen across the stage, she spies them. Cassandra and Andromache hurry to snuff out the physical trace of their weed.

The band starts to play.

they all exchange looks and hurry inside the venue.

*– **HECTOR** and **PARIS** trail shortly behind them*

– Hector wraps his arms around Andromache.

– Paris immediately pulls Helen into a dance.

– Polyxena fifth wheels.

– Cassandra's attention is fixated on Apollo.

*The music shifts. The crowd cheers.
APESHIT descends the metastage and join
the crowd partying.*

Apollo sees Cassandra.

*.
..
...*

They dance.

... --- ...

Everyone else falls away.

There is only Cassandra and Apollo.

*This is how it's always been.
This is how it will always be.*

This is all it will ever be.

Them, intertwined. Them, fused together.

Them, in love.

BLUEOUT.

III. BE MY MIDNIGHT MUSE.

Apollo and Cassandra tumble out of the venue, her leading. Drunkenly, they giggle.

APOLLO

What's your name?

She speaks as though there are clouds in her breath.

CASSANDRA

Cassandra

APOLLO

Cassandra.
I'm Apollo.

CASSANDRA

I know

Laughter.

APOLLO

I thought an introduction would still be po / lite.

CASSANDRA

/ I've been to a few of your shows before

APOLLO

Oh really?

CASSANDRA

Yeah
wait
no
that makes me sound like a total psycho
or insanely shallow

APOLLO

I don't think so.

CASSANDRA

Oh good... but...don't you worry that if you're with a fan they're only with you because they've idolized you and built you up into this magnificent creature? that perhaps they'll tire of what lies beneath the rockstar persona? that they're with you because you're a celebrity but not for anything of substance?

APOLLO

I wouldn't want someone who wouldn't be in the front row.

*Cassandra considers this. It satisfies her.
She smiles.*

CASSANDRA

Well, I wasn't in the *front* row, but...

Apollo chuckles, his hands snake around her waist. He leans in until their noses brush, until he is drinking in the air around her, stealing it, hoarding it. There is no air left for Cassandra, and she is breathless.

APOLLO

Close enough.

Just before he can kiss her, Cassandra pulls back slightly, a bundle of nerves.

CASSANDRA

Why apeshit?

APOLLO

...what?

CASSANDRA

Why is y'all's band called apeshit?

APOLLO

Well, there's me, Apollo, songwriter, guitarist, lead singer, there's Pan on the drums, and there's Euterpe on the bass. Apollo, Pan, Euterpe. A. P. E. Ape.

CASSANDRA

oh

*Cassandra foolishly feels disappointed,
something Apollo cannot stand.*

APOLLO

You know, it's actually a really funny story, how we came up with it. We were all in another dimension, high off our asses, like the universe is melting off the fucking walls high, and you know how like if you throw spaghetti at a wall and it sticks, it's done and ready to eat?

CASSANDRA

Wh / at

APOLLO

/ Well, we were throwing potential band names at each other just trying to see what would stick. Euterpe suggested Divinity of Sound, you know, since we're all gods of some sort of music, and she was saying that music is the divine form of sound, but then Pan, well Pan came in with the very thoughtful contribution of *who the fuck is going to want to scream the name DIVINITY OF SOUND when we come on stage?* And so I tossed out Pantheontera but Euterpe said that sounded pretentious, but I mean, c'mon, like *Divinity of Sound* doesn't? So then I start trying to mash together our names, see if something can come out of that like Apanterpe or Apoleuterpan...then suddenly Pan, Pan you know he just starts breaking down in this hysterical laughter, like he has to place his head between his knees and just convulses for a solid few minutes before he finally is able to cue us in on what he's finding so ridiculously funny, and he just points to me, then to himself, then to Euterpe and says "apeshit". And suddenly we're all gasping for breath, clutching our sides, face muscles sore from laughing. We actually told a whole bunch of people so by the time that we sobered up, everyone knew us as Apeshit. It was the spaghetti that stuck to the wall.

Cassandra blinks, staring at him for a moment.

CASSANDRA

So your band got its name because you all were super intoxicated and Apeshit made you laugh the most?

APOLLO

...Yes? But you know Pan never would've thought of it were / it not for me....

/ Cassandra interrupts him, bursting into a fit of her own laughter. Apollo trails off and grins. Yes, good, this is better. He wraps his arm around her, pulling her close to him, and presses a kiss to her forehead.

BLACKOUT.

IV. OMNIA VINCIT AMOR

An opulent dining room, suitable for kings and queens, adorned with a mouthwatering brunch spread. Towers of pancakes dripping with molten syrup, scrambled eggs galore, greasy bacon, a large pot of coffee — a delicious hangover cure. PRIAM sips coffee and read the paper while HECUBA fusses over Polyxena.

Enter Paris and Helen, sickeningly still in the honeymoon phase, who sit at the table and start serving themselves. Hecuba watches the latter with disdain and Polyxena takes the opportunity to escape her mother's grasp. Enter Hector and Andromache next. Hector sits beside Priam, while Andromache sits beside Hecuba.

HECTOR

What news, father?

PRIAM

Oh, just the same foreboding. Folk claiming they spied sails at the edge of the horizon.

Andromache and Hecuba both eye Helen and Paris. Paris throws his arm around his wife's shoulder and kisses her cheek.

ANDROMACHE

How long do you think we have before foreboding claims become our reality?

PRIAM

We're running on borrowed time, to be sure. I suspect we only have a couple days left.

PARIS

Psh, I say let them come! Let Menelaus try to break through Troy's walls! I should like to see him try to take Helen away from me.

HECUBA

Paris...

PARIS

(aside to Helen)

The gods Poseidon and Apollo themselves laid the bricks. Here, we are safe. Here, Hector won't let anything happen to us, won't you Hector?

Hector grounds his teeth, his attention lingering on his wife. Andromache shovels food anxiously upon her plate.

HECTOR

Of course not.

POLYXENA

I hear the Greeks dip their warriors in the river Styx by the ankles to make them invulnerable. / Paris, you should aim for their ankles.

HELEN

/ That's the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard.

Enter Cassandra, hair tousled, thick sunglasses covering her eyes.

CASSANDRA

I think I'm in love!

She winces at the volume of her own words, rubbing her temples. No one looks at her.

HECTOR

That's just gossip, Polyxena. A rumor started about Peleides so that we quake in our boots at the very mention of his name.

CASSANDRA

I met the most amazing boy last night

ANDROMACHE

I don't think we should underestimate Achilles, darling. They call him the best of the Greeks for a reason.

CASSANDRA

Basking in his attention was like basking in sunlight cast through the window

HECTOR

I have no doubt of his skill, Andy, I merely question his immortality.

CASSANDRA

I don't think I've met anyone more talented or more wonderful than him!
Gods, he's groovy.

HECUBA

Cassandra, please do not shout, we're trying to have a serious conversation.

*Cassandra's mouth shuts. She falls into her
chair and starts piling the greasiest, most
smothered foods she can on a plate.*

CASSANDRA

(dejected)

Yes mother...

HELEN

I've met Achilles once before, when the kings and princes of Greece gathered—

*She cuts herself off, and warily looks around
the table.*

HELEN

—for my hand...Achilles was just a boy.

ANDROMACHE

He's certainly not a boy anymore.

HELEN

But what I mean to say is that he's man and mortal just like us all.
You should not conflate him into something larger.

ANDROMACHE

I agree, we should not have to.

PRIAM

Andromache...please not at the table. Let's just enjoy each other's presence for a nice
family breakfast before we all go our separate ways for the day. My schedule is full of
micromanaging today and I'd really rather not get a head start.

PARIS

Yes, please Andromache, listen to my father. This is not a matter up for discussion.

ANDROMACHE

Stop acting as if we asked for this war! As if it was something that could not've been prevented. All for this woman who launched a thousand ships? Who left a husband and a daughter behind because Paris couldn't keep it in his pants? *This* is what we're supposed to die for?

PARIS

ANDROMACHE! ENOUGH!

*Cassandra clutches her pounding head.
Polyxena looks between them, wide-eyed,
like "oh shit." Priam tries to pluck earwax
from his ear canal. Hecuba buries her head
in her hands.*

PARIS

I love Helen, more than anything else in the world. My parents, your king and queen, can see this. Hector can see this. Polyxena can see this. Even Cassandra can see this.

CASSANDRA

Please do not involve me. Consider me blind.

PARIS

Why can't you? Why can't you defend me?

HECTOR

Because she's scared, Paris. We all are. I will fight and die for you brother, but I do not think you understand what it is you ask of us. You love her, and for that love, you will chase her to the ends of the earth, would take up arms against anyone who dared remove her from *your* arms. I would do the same for my wife, just as Menelaus does for his. You love her, yes, and, for the blood that runs thick through both of our veins, we will fight for you. But she was not yours to love, not yours to take, so do not berate Andromache for wanting to protect that which is hers, that which *she* loves.

*Cassandra gazes wistfully out the window,
chin in her palm.*

CASSANDRA

Omnia vincit amor.

Priam's brows furrow.

PRIAM

...What? What language is that? I've never heard it before.

*She startles. Someone asked her a question?
What madness is this? What witchcraft?*

CASSANDRA

I don't know. It's something someone said to me recently. Love conquers all, he said it means.

HELEN

Love conquers all.

*Helen likes the taste of the words on her
lips. She rolls the syllables across her teeth.
Cassandra blinks, as if shaking herself from
a trance, and stands.*

CASSANDRA

I'm gonna go.

Priam raises the coffee pot.

PRIAM

More coffee, anybody?

BLACKOUT.

V. EAT ME WHOLE.

Cassandra and Apollo lay shoulder to shoulder on his couch. Apollo sniffs and wipes at his nose and toys with his guitar while Cassandra rolls a joint on the table in front of them.

CASSANDRA

What was that phrase you said earlier?

APOLLO

Hm?

CASSANDRA

Omnia vincit amor

APOLLO

Oh yeah, that. Love conquers all.

CASSANDRA

What language is that? It's so foreign on my tongue.

APOLLO

Latin

CASSANDRA

What's Latin?

APOLLO

The language of a place beyond Troy and beyond Greece, and beyond your time.

CASSANDRA

Beyond my time. What's that supposed to mean?

APOLLO

It's a secret.

CASSANDRA

Oh, c'mon! Pleaaaaase! Tell me! You can't bring it up and then *not* explain!

APOLLO

Technically, *I* didn't bring it up.

CASSANDRA

Tomato tomato, you made it sound so ominous and esoteric.

*Apollo mimes his lips being zipped shut.
Cassandra stops rolling and shifts closer to
him, her palm cupping his jaw so that he is
forced to look at her.*

CASSANDRA

Secrets secrets are no / fun—

APOLLO

/ Oh alright! I'll tell you

Cassandra beams

APOLLO

If you promise to never do that again. It's childish.

CASSANDRA

I swear it!

Apollo juts out his pinky.

APOLLO

Pinky promise?

*Cassandra rolls her eyes, but laughs and
interlaces his pinky with her own. She gives
it a firm shake.*

CASSANDRA

Now look who's being childish.

APOLLO

Don't you dare insult the pinky swear, it is the most sacred of oaths.

*Cassandra smiles, and Apollo's arm loops
around her shoulder, pulling her closer into
his side.*

CASSANDRA

Jeez, I'm sorry. You're right. How dare I doubt it.

APOLLO

Thank you, I appreciate the apology.

CASSANDRA

Okay, enough of that. What's the secret?

APOLLO

I can...um...see the future.

Cassandra scoffs and goes back to rolling the joint.

CASSANDRA

Be serious, Apollo.

She finishes, lights it, and brings it to her lips.

APOLLO

I am! I can see the future.

Cassandra still looks skeptical. Apollo scooches away from her on the couch. Cassandra wraps her arms around her torso.

APOLLO

I can't believe you don't believe me.

He rakes his fingers through his hair.

APOLLO

"Be serious, Apollo" when have I not been serious? Do you really think I'd mess with you about this? It's serious shit, Cassandra. Serious, heavy, shit. Not some cheap little parlor trick, and certainly not a punchline for a joke.

CASSANDRA

Okay, okay I'm sorry.
I believe you, alright?

APOLLO

No you don't. I can see you don't. You think I'm crazy. I promise you I am not fucking crazy.

CASSANDRA

I don't think you're crazy!
It's just hard for me to wrap my head around
that's all.

APOLLO

The walls of Troy were literally built by gods, one of them me, and yet you don't believe that I can see the gods-damn future? What the fuck Cassie? Do you not trust me, is that it? Do you think I'd lie to you?

CASSANDRA

No, of course I do — I mean, don't — it's just...it just sounds ridiculous.
Not ridiculous, like I don't think *you're* ridiculous,
just the concept of someone being able to look into the future, you know?
Premonitions, fortune-telling,
it's very...fantastical.
The future is not something we have the right to know.
That is the work of the Fates and the Fates alone.
It's not something I dwell on.

APOLLO

Well what about the Oracle at Delphi?

CASSANDRA

I kind of assumed she was a sham.
A con-artist, you know?
Telling very vague things that could potentially apply to your life,
but could also apply to like a dozen of other people's.
You know, like all that astrology shit,
tarot cards,
palm readings,
they're really fun and all
but I don't put much weight into them.

APOLLO

Jesus fucking Christ I'm not talking about the stars or cards or palm readings or even the leaves at the bottom of a teacup. I'm talking about real concrete visions. Images of the future played like a movie behind my eyes. In fact, I know what happens to Troy. To your family. The Greeks are on their way, are they not? Everyone's talking about an upcoming war. I can show you all of it.

*Cassandra freezes. This captures her
attention.*

How?
CASSANDRA

You trust me right?
APOLLO

Of course
CASSANDRA

Do you love me?
APOLLO

Yes
CASSANDRA

Then, Cassandra of Troy, I give you my blessing.
APOLLO

Apollo kisses her. A golden glow erupts around them, as he transfers power into her.

His kiss has knock her mind and spirit out of her body. It fucking astral projects her into the cosmos where fate's web is a tapestry wrapped around the world. A thousand lifetimes, a thousand lifelines passing behind her eyes in a millisecond.

We don't see this, of course. It is meant only for Cassandra. This journey, we have no right to trespass upon. We will see only what she gives us.

Or perhaps it is a series of projections cast over her; clips from the movie Troy or A Star Is Born, something along those lines in a trippy VHS format. Like Echoes (Lost 1990(?) Psychedelic Art Film)

Regardless, we must feel it. In the tension in her body. In the way she gasps for air, hoarding as much as she can in her lungs. Her head flies back, throwing her body from Apollo's tender embrace.

*The light's flair around her while the world
darkens. Apollo, cast in shadow.*

*Everyone and everything halts.
Cassandra steps out of the action.*

VI. THE WORLD, FULLY UNFURLED.

Cassandra is like, and yet unlike, as we first saw her. She is not alone on the stage, and she has not yet dissolved into a shadow. Now, She is more confused, more concerned, than she is crazed and desperate. But madness has begun to crawl its atrophic way into her.

CASSANDRA

it is as he says
the future unfurls behind my eyes

the threads of fate
woven
the stars, they've
aligned
i see this, this path that
they've designed

(eyes yearning for the past ; eyes opened in the present ; eyes seeing the future)

the universe is a palimpsest
did you know that?
i didn't
it is story
written on top of story written on top of story written on top of story written
on and on and on until the ink bleeds together
until the story repeats itself
until it is all the same indecipherable crap
it is a paper crane your grandfather folded from a napkin
while you sat in one of those the faded booths in that old italian place
you remember, the one just down the street of your old house
it curves in on itself
it collapses
it rubs its flesh raw
it embraces you in its fondness

it shows me every moment
every choice every word every blink
that has led us to our doom.

like cattle to the slaughter
and it leads us further still.

mother, mother, where have you gone?
i can't see your shadow, this far above the sea

darling brother, will you remember how you taught me how to ride horses
when one is dragging your body by your ankles?

little sister, what are you saying?
i can't make out your words when you're gargling your own blood
would it comfort you to know that the same hand that dealt you this blow
did one to father as well, at least in death you have him

and we return to the horses
i've never despised them so
big ones , wooden ones
big horses made of wood

by our own hand the walls will fall
the best of the greeks won't take it after-all

*Cassandra staggers back into herself,
returning to Apollo's frozen embrace.*

VII. GIRLS AGAINST GOD.

*[Cassandra presses play on her lifetime.]
Returned to as she had been, light
illuminates everything as it had before.
Apollo resumes.*

APOLLO

Do you believe me now?

*He strokes her hair, petting her,
consoling her.*

CASSANDRA
(stunned)

yes

APOLLO

I told you I was telling the truth.

*Cassandra nods. But her mind is still
elsewhere. Horrified. Apollo remembers the
joint on the table. His eyes flair with the sun
as he delights in its presence.*

APOLLO

Are you going to smoke that?

*Cassandra stands in silence. Apollo shrugs,
and reaches over her, grabbing the weed. He
lights it, and inhales deeply.*

CASSANDRA
(still staring off in the distance)

i have to tell them

*Apollo perks up. Good, she's speaking
again.*

APOLLO

What was that?

CASSANDRA
my family, i have to tell them. apollo, i have to warn them

Her mind fully returns. She jerks into action, starting to gather her belongings. This is not what Apollo had in mind.

APOLLO

Cassie, wait, stop that —

CASSANDRA

no, i saw it!
i saw them all die
the greeks, they, they—
they kill them all
father, hector, polyxena, paris, too
mother dies by proxy.
death might've been kinder to andromache.

Apollo groans.

APOLLO

Do we really have to do this? Now that I've shown you what you want to see, can't we just smoke, put on a movie, maybe drop some acid, see where the night takes us?

He slides down slightly, positioning himself in what he hopes is a seductive manner.

CASSANDRA

are you fucking kidding me right now? i tell you i've just seen my entire family get **slaughtered** in some weird prophetic vision **YOU** induced and all you can think about is the next trip you take or sex you have?

APOLLO

I'd really like to skip past the whole freak out part, if it's all the same to you.

CASSANDRA

no it's fucking not! what the fuck did you do to me?
take it back! undo whatever weird godly bullshit you did to me.

Apollo grates his teeth. He stands menacingly. More God than rockstar now. He steps close to her. So close. Too close. His body radiates skin melting heat. It truly frightens Cassandra.

APOLLO

You should be *grateful*, Cassandra. I gave you a *gift*. The sooner you see that. The better. Everybody sees people die once their eye has been opened, such is the nature of the Fate's mortal thread. It has an end. It's tragic, yes. Boohoo. You'll get over it. But do you know how tedious it becomes to console people? To tell them that you humans live and die pitifully short lives. You are fucking mayflies, really, in the great expanse of things, in the great order of the cosmos. What were you doing with the time you had, anyways? What else did you have before I gave you this? Nothing. That's right. Nobody cared about you, Cassandra. Your parents, your siblings, These **people** you're trying to mourn don't give a shit about you. They don't even speak to you! You told me that yourself. It is as if you're not even there. You are a light fixture they pass by every day. I've seen your story play out, Cassandra, a thousand times I've had this conversation with a thousand people, just like you. And let me tell you something, You need me. I am *all* you have in this world. Because of me and this gift, they will notice you They will worship you and the knowledge I've unlocked for you

So be a smart girl and place an offering before your god's hearth
To thank him for answering your prayers.

Though her fear is palpable, Cassandra tries to remain firm. Cassandra gathers her belongings, slinging her purse over her shoulder. There are tears running down her cheeks.

APOLLO

Hey wait—

He reaches for her, fingers brushing over her sleeve, but she tears her arm away from him, hurrying to the door.

APOLLO

Cassie, hey, wait, I'm sorry. Please, just sit back down. It's been a long day. I'm tired. I just want to sit here with you for a bit.

She shakes her head, hurrying to the door while Apollo's chest heaves. But she pauses for a moment.

CASSANDRA

they really, mean it, don't they?

APOLLO

Mean what?

CASSANDRA

when they say "never meet your heroes?"
don't call me.
i don't want to see you again.

The door slams shut behind her.

APOLLO

Cassandra?

Beat. Shit. She's really gone.

APOLLO

CASSANDRA!

He runs after her.

BLACKOUT.

VIII. CASSANDRA, UNBOUND.

Inside the palace of Troy, Paris, Helen, Andromache, Polyxena, and Hecuba sit around a living room table playing Cluedo. Helen bleeds her cards, and Paris unabashedly looks. Hecuba moves her piece into the billiard room.

HECUBA

So...I say a person, a weapon, and a room?

ANDROMACHE

Yes, you're trying to ask questions to figure out who the murderer is.

HECUBA

Okay. I think it's Mrs. Peacock, with the...revolver, in the library.

PARIS

No, mom, you have to guess the room you're in.

HECUBA

What? I thought I just had to ask questions?

PARIS

Yes, you ask questions, but you have to be in the room you're guessing the crime happened in. You're in the Billiard Room, see? The library is beneath you.

HECUBA

Oh. Well, then I think it's Mrs. Peacock, with the revolver, in the billiard room. Can anyone prove me wrong?

It nearly goes around the entire circle with nobody having proof she's wrong, but Helen finally passes her a card. Hecuba puts on reading glasses, frowns, and then returns the card.

POLYXENA

Ahhh!! It's me now!!!

She considers her next moves with an intense somberness. Just as she reaches for her piece, Cassandra rushes in. Something is different about her.

Something oozes from her that they've never noticed before. Did she get a haircut? Is she wearing a new perfume? She commands their attention.

Like moths to a flame, they gravitate towards her.

CASSANDRA

mom! there you are. i need to talk to you.

She fully processes the scene in front of her.

CASSANDRA

...where are dad and hector?

HECUBA

In a war council

CASSANDRA

paris, why aren't you with them?

Paris huffs, indignant and wraps a protective arm around Helen.

PARIS

The whole war effort makes Helen nervous.
I was just going to play this round and then head off to meet them.

Cassandra looks to Helen like "is this true?" Helen just shrugs.

CASSANDRA

okay well i need to talk to mom and dad.

POLYXENA

Can we at least finish our game first?

CASSANDRA

xee, i'm sorry this is really urgent.

HECUBA

More urgent than the war? You're going to be waiting for a while before Priam is free.

CASSANDRA

it's *about* the war!

POLYXENA

Cassandra, you're / ruining my turn

ANDROMACHE

/ What do you mean "about / the war?"

PARIS

/ Can Polyxena just go? I wanna know who the killer is.

Polyxena beams and starts moving her piece.

CASSANDRA

oh, come on! if you want to know that bad,
it's colonel mustard, in the living room, with the rope.
now can i please at least talk to you, mom?

Everyone looks at her, stunned. Helen reaches for the envelope in the center of the board with great trepidation. She opens it, pulling out three cards, and her eyes widen.

HELEN

She's right.
Colonel Mustard. Rope. Living Room.

POLYXENA

Agh! Seriously Cassie? Way to ruin everything.

Hecuba readies to stand when Apollo storms in. Cassandra staggers back. Her family's confusion escalates.

CASSANDRA

how...how did you get in here?

APOLLO

I'm a God. Do you really think anybody is going to stop me?
Do you *really* think anybody could, even if they tried?

HECUBA

Cassandra, who is this?

POLYXENA

(in awe)

That's Apollo...

How do you two even know each other?

HELEN

Must've been at the concert!

PARIS

(aside to Helen)

Cassandra was at the concert?

*Apollo ignores all of them. They aren't even
on his radar. Mayflies, and all.*

APOLLO

I know what you're trying to do. I think it would be in your best interest to stop.

ANDROMACHE

Cassie...what is he talking about?

CASSANDRA

why would you show me if you didn't want me to tell anybody?

why would you do this to me if i couldn't change things?!

APOLLO

Because it doesn't matter!

Because you are driving me absolutely insane!

Gods, Cassandra sometimes I just want to

(he mimes strangling her)

UGH wring your neck!!!

Why can't you understand that it doesn't fucking matter.

Even if you say something,

Even if you do everything in your power to alter the course of Fate,

You'll just be shoving them in that direction.

*Cassandra steps towards Apollo, jabbing a
finger into his chest.*

CASSANDRA

it was **you** who told me you could show me what happens to troy
 it was **you** who told me these tormenting visions were a gift
 it was **you** who told me that, *for once in my gods damned life,*
 i would speak, and people would listen.
 why are you stopping me now?
 i am going to crumple under the weight of all these lives if i have to endure it alone.
 there are ghosts pressing against my skull,
 summoning splitting migraines with their efforts.
 i can't hold it all, apollo,
 it's too much.
 please.

*Apollo glances around the room, the family's
 presence finally irritating him. He says with
 dangerous calm:*

APOLLO

Everybody out.

PARIS

What—you can't

APOLLO

GET OUT.

*Everyone hurries out. Apollo holds onto
 Cassandra's arm. Tightly. She winces.*

LIGHTS DIM AROUND THEM.

IX. A LAMB AT LAMBING TIME

*Cassandra and Apollo, alone on the stage.
All the Rockstar charisma has drained from
Apollo, leaving him as sharp as a blade's
edge, all divine angles and immortal rage.
Cassandra tries to maintain her composure,
she does not wish to weep, not now, but the
tears burn behind her eyelids.*

APOLLO

I really didn't want it to come to this, I hope you know that.

*He pulls Cassandra close to him, she
writhes in his grasp, but he does not let go.*

APOLLO

I really didn't want you to think of me as the bad guy.
I'm not the bad guy, Cassandra.
I love you. I love you and you love me.

CASSANDRA

No!

APOLLO

(hushing her)
You do, you do!
You said so yourself.
Literally earlier today.
You can't turn it off just like that.

CASSANDRA

(softly, pleadingly)
nonono
nonono please
i don't i don't i don't
please stop.....

*He tries to cup her cheeks in his palms, tries
to be tender, but she moves her head out of
the way.*

APOLLO

Cassandra, please, baby, calm down. Take some deep breaths, okay? You're okay. You're safe. I love you. You love me. We're okay. Let's go, okay? I've got something I'm working on for the band that I want to show you. We can go back to how we were.

CASSANDRA

you're not hearing me
i'm not okay
i'm not safe

none of us are
 we all die
 except you
 untouchable you
 divine you
 cursed you

APOLLO

You love me. You **want** me. We're going to put all this behind us.

CASSANDRA

i don't think i know what love is
 passion, they say sets you aflame
 but the fire, it burns
 oh gods it burns
 is love supposed to blister my skin?
 is it supposed to fracture my mind?
 is it suppose to scorch my veins until
 i cradle my knees, lying on the floor
 in the fetal position
 i can't tell anymore, apollo
 please, i don't want it.
 take it back.
 i don't know what's mine anymore
 and what belongs to the past
 to the future

*Apollo passes a hand slowly over his face.
 Irritation oozes from every pore.*

APOLLO

You know—I've tried. I've *really* tried to just push past this. To get over myself, and my immortal pride, to brush off your lack of thanks for granting you the gift of prophecy as a state of shock. But—I can't stand it any longer, you ungrateful **bitch**. You know, thousands of people would kill for the sight you have! You **asked** me for this. I gave you what you asked for, and this is the thanks I get?
 It THROWN BACK IN MY FACE?

CASSANDRA

i didn't know it would be like this how could i know it would be like this?
 i thought you would share one moment and it would be done!

APOLLO

That's not how it fucking works! You were just using me, weren't you? Using me so that you'd be able to see the future. You'd get everything you ever wanted. And then you'd push me away. Deny that you wanted it. Deny that you asked for it. You manipulated me into caring about you. Into granting you this power.

CASSANDRA

what, no, that's not what i—

Apollo grabs Cassandra by the throat.

APOLLO

You tried to trick me. Did you really think that would work?
That *you* could ever out wit me????
I am the FUCKING God of the SUN, Cassandra!
I BUILT THESE WALLS WITH MY OWN HANDS!
I AM A SON OF MOTHERFUCKING ZEUS!
Who do you think you are?
To think you could ever scorn me?
YOU ARE NOTHING.

CASSANDRA

no i didn't please if you take back the gift we can all just go our separate ways
it will be like this never happened i won't talk about it with anyone i promise

APOLLO

WOULD YOU STOP SAYING THAT?
I can't take it back!
But you can't keep it.
Not as it is.

He spits in her mouth. Then releases her, nearly throwing her away from him. She crumples to the ground, sobbing.

APOLLO

You wanted people to hear you? To listen to you? To see you? Fine. They'll certainly hear you. They'll certainly see you. But they'll wish they couldn't. You'll know the paths they walk. Should you put it into words, your tongue will twist them into insanities. So, go ahead, talk about it all you wish. Tell them what happened here. Tell them what I did to you. See if they believe you.
Pray we never meet again, Cassandra.

Exit Apollo. For good. Thank fuck.

X. OH, HOW YOUR VOICE TREMBLES

Cassandra sits all alone. She brings her knees up to her chest and allows herself to weep. Sobs send tremors throughout her whole body, her head falls towards her chest. She rakes her fingers through her hair, pulling at it, ruining it.

Hecuba and Andromache enter. Seeing her crying, they both rush to her side, wrapping their arms around her, consoling her.

HECUBA

Cassandra, dear, what happened?

ANDROMACHE

Are you alright?

Cassandra curls in on herself, trying to make herself smaller, trying to take up less atmosphere. Maybe if she coils herself tight enough, she will disappear into the void.

HECUBA

Andromache, go start a pot of tea, would you?

Andromache nods and exits. Hecuba strokes Cassandra's back.

HECUBA

Come on, honey, talk to me. What's going on?

Cassandra lifts her head. Wilderness overtakes her, like ferns and vines growing over her bones. There is the madness we saw in her from the beginning.

CASSANDRA

Him. He...He....

HECUBA

He who?

CASSANDRA

He did this—He did this to me

HECUBA

That man that was with you?

*Cassandra flies into motion, she grabs her
mother's hands.*

CASSANDRA

we're all going to die mother. father, hector, paris, polyxena, you. me.

HECUBA

Well, Death comes to claim us all eventually. In our veins does not flow the ichor of the Gods. That is mortality, Cassandra. We will rest beneath the earth for eternity.

CASSANDRA

no you don't understand, mother. our doom looms on the horizon.
black sails blot out the sun, thousands of them.
by day break, there they will pepper our skies,
like plague sores.
it will be a decade before the walls fall,
but the walls *will* fall, mother.
i inhale and i taste smoke on my tongue already
i can feel the heat of the flames licking at my fingertips
phantom hands grab at my hair.
phantom blades kiss my neck
phantom men cast shadows across the floor.

HECUBA

Cassandra, this isn't funny.

CASSANDRA

am i laughing?

*She laughs, crazed, and Hecuba tears her
hands away from her daughter.*

CASSANDRA

i suppose i am

Enter Andromache, with a pot of tea.

ANDROMACHE

I wasn't sure which Cassandra liked best so I made chai. That's the calming one, right?

HECUBA

...Chamomile is the calming one.

ANDROMACHE

Shit.

Cassandra laughs again, she laughs because if she does not she will start to sob again. Regardless, her laughter turns into cries. Her shoulders hunch up and she covers her ears.

ANDROMACHE

Has she said anything?

HECUBA

Just some nonsense.

CASSANDRA

not nonsense! not nonsense! not nonsense!

HECUBA

Cassandra stop that, please.

CASSANDRA

i'm not crazy. He has reduced me thus.

ANDROMACHE

Who?

Cassandra grabs hold of Andromache

CASSANDRA

andy, you have always been more sister to me
you know i'm not crazy

ANDROMACHE

You're scaring me.

CASSANDRA

your son—
 he who burrows a sword in father's stomach,
 he who unzips the flesh at polyxena's throat,
 so her ruby tears may water a burial mound
 he will bash the life from your son before a hunger
 for revenge could grow in his chest cavity

ANDROMACHE

I haven't a son, you know this.
 What are you saying? What madness is this?

CASSANDRA

not madness! not madness! just cursed He.

HECUBA

Cassandra, stop it!

ANDROMACHE

Cassandra...have you taken anything?

HECUBA

You're on drugs?!

CASSANDRA

no!
 well, i did smoke a bit
 but this has nothing to do with that!

HECUBA

Oh this has everything to do with that.

Cassandra whirls back on her mother.

CASSANDRA

a parent should never outlive their children.
 my poor mother, the seed you'd sown,
 the fruit you bore,
 they are dust on the wind,
 they are the soot mixed in the rain,
 drenching the world in tar.

black-tipped stars stare down at you,
 they'll claim you turned into a she-dog
 barking your lamentations
 howling your requiems
 when you threw yourself into the sea.

ANDROMACHE

Why would you say such a thing?

HECUBA

Stop with these horrible lies!

CASSANDRA

i do not lie! please, you have to tell father.
 you have to tell hector.
 he must not challenge the one they call best of the greeks.
 he cannot go up against achilles.

HECUBA

STOP IT!

CASSANDRA

you have to believe me, please!
 please believe me!
 it cannot be as He says!
 you believe me, don't you?!
 we're all doomed!

Hecuba slaps Cassandra across the face.

HECUBA

That's enough! Do you hear me? **THAT'S ENOUGH.**

*Cassandra clutches her cheek, and stares at
 her mother in devastation.*

CASSANDRA
 (defeated)

no...
 mom....
 andromache...

ANDROMACHE

What kind of sick joke is this?

CASSANDRA

it's not a joke.

HECUBA

Stop lying.

CASSANDRA

i'm not lying! apollo / he—

ANDROMACHE
(incredulous)

/ Apollo?

*Hecuba seizes Cassandra by her arm, and
drags her across the stage.*

HECUBA

I think I've heard enough from you.
What happened to the sweet girl you once were?
I don't recognize this stranger before me.
Getting high, spouting lies, then trying to blame it on a God?
This is not the child I raised.
You are not my Cassandra.

*She shoves Cassandra into a separate room.
Onstage or off. Perhaps an actual room. She
locks the door. Cassandra bangs on it.*

CASSANDRA (O.S.?)

i'm telling the truth! i swear it!
mother?! andromache?! please!!
the greeks, they approach on swift winds!
winds paid for in blood.
by morn, they'll be at our shores.
mark my words!

*Hecuba and Andromache share an uneasy
look.*

BLACKOUT.

XI. NOTHING'S FAIR IN LOVE AND WAR

*Outside the gates of Troy, AGAMEMNON
and MENELAUS stand in ancient Greek
armor. They each hold spears and shields.
Seagulls caw. Waves crash.*

He's Agamemnon	MENELAUS
He's Menelaus	AGAMEMNON
King of the Mycenae	MENELAUS
King of Mycenaean Sparta	AGAMEMNON
Commander of the Greek Army	MENELAUS
<i>True</i> husband to Helen	AGAMEMNON
And here we stand	MENELAUS
at the gates of Troy	AGAMEMNON
At long last	MENELAUS

*Agamemnon sizes up the wall, stroking his
beard.*

Hah! Built by gods, my ass.	AGAMEMNON
I don't know, Aggy.....	MENELAUS

Menelaus knocks on the wall, testing it.

MENELAUS

This stone feels rock solid to me.

AGAMEMNON

Will it give us trouble?

MENELAUS

Oh most certainly

AGAMEMNON

Drat!

MENELAUS

No matter

AGAMEMNON

Here we stand

MENELAUS

My dear wifey, our daughter misses you

AGAMEMNON

A thousand ships at our stern.

MENELAUS

HEY HELEN! CAN YOU HEAR ME OVER THERE?

AGAMEMNON

All of Greece at our backs.

MENELAUS

HERMOINE CAN'T FIND HER MALIBU BARBIE DOLL!

AGAMEMNON

Troy is ripe for the taking.

MENELAUS

SHE WANTED ME TO ASK IF YOU REMEMBER WHERE
SHE PUT IT

*He pauses, staring up towards the ramparts,
waiting, waiting, waiting...*

AGAMEMNON

Menelaus—

Menelaus raises a hand to cut him off, still staring at the wall. He grows impatient.

MENELAUS

ARE YOU REALLY NOT GOING TO SHOW YOUR FACE?

Nobody shows. Menelaus gives Trojan walls two aggressively brandished middle fingers.

MENELAUS

WELL FUUUUCK YOU TOO, I GUESS!?

He thinks for a moment. Then whirls on the wall.

MENELAUS

SHOWYOURFACEORPARISHASASMALLDICK!

Helen does not show. Menelaus cackles furiously. A big, belly-deep cackle.

MENELAUS

I knew it! He didn't even have the guts to steal from me in the daylight.

AGAMEMNON

Would you cut that out?

MENELAUS

(annoyed)

I'm sorry, I thought we were here to get my wife back. I guess I forgot this was just the great King Agamemnon's ploy for his own fame, fortune, and power.

AGAMEMNON

Oh please, we're all here because we swore an oath, all us suitors of Greece. To you. To Helen. To defend Helen's husband from any who might seek to tear her from his arms. The fame and fortune is just an added perk.

MENELAUS

Well, we all know why we're here then.

AGAMEMNON

Yes. Our roles are clear.

Pan enters with his drum set. The brothers do not take notice.

MENELAUS

Soooo.....what now?

Then, Agamemnon, with the flair of Joaquin Phoenix's Commodus in Gladiator:

AGAMEMNON

Let the Trojan War begin!

Pan starts playing the war drums. It starts off as a very traditional battle music then begins to morph into an all-drums cover of a rock song.

END OF PLAY.