

Station C: Drama

An Excerpt from *Hecuba* by Euripides

Introduction: When the Greeks won the Trojan War, they destroyed the city of Troy and enslaved all of the Trojan women and children. Queen Hecuba (pronounced HEH-coo-bah) of Troy and her daughter Polyxena (pronounced POLL-ix-EE-nah) were among the captives. The Greek soldiers told Queen Hecuba that Polyxena was to be sacrificed to the Gods, to ensure the Greek ships a safe journey home.

(She stumbles painfully to the tent of captives, then cries out in terror to Polyxena within.)

Hecuba

O my child Polyxena,
step from the tent!
Come and hear the news
your wretched mother brings,
this news of horror
that touches your life!

(Enter from the tent Polyxena, a beautiful young girl.)

Polyxena

That terror in you voice!
That cry of fear
flushing me forth
like a bird in terror!

Hecuba

O my child! My baby...

Polyxena

Again that cry! Why?

Hecuba

I am afraid for you—

Polyxena

Tell me the truth, Mother.
No, I am afraid. Something
in your face frightens me.

Hecuba

O my child! My child—

Polyxena

You *must* tell me, Mother.

Hecuba

A dreadful rumor came.
Some Greek decree
that touches your life—

Polyxena

Touches my life how?
For God's sake, Mother,
speak!

Hecuba

—The Greeks,
in full assembly,
have decreed your death,
a living sacrifice
upon Achilles' (pronounced
ah-KILL-eez) tomb.

Polyxena

O my poor mother!
How I pity you,
this brokenhearted life
of pain!