

# The tragedy of the trojan women essay sample



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

In the beginning of *The Trojan Women* by Euripides, the city of Troy has been sacked, and Poseidon brings attention to Hecuba crying at the entrance of Troy. Poseidon lists the events unbeknownst to Hecuba, including her daughter Polyxena being killed by the Greeks in a sacrifice at Achilles' tomb, Priam and Hecuba's children are dead, and Apollo left Cassandra mad (Apollo made her his prophetess). Then enters Athena, who wants to bring joy to the Trojans and give the Greeks a bitter journey home. Poseidon and Athena agree to cause havoc on the Greeks' journey home and then leave. Hecuba knows the Greek ships are waiting offshore ready to take her and the other Trojan women away to slavery. The chorus enters and asks Hecuba what might happen to them. Hecuba thinks they will be auctioned off to the Greeks. Talthybius gives Hecuba and the chorus information on who they were all assigned to. He tells Hecuba that Cassandra was taken by Agamemnon as his concubine, Polyxena has been assigned to Achilles' tomb as an attendant, Andromache to the son of Achilles, and she is going to Odysseus.

Cassandra enters with a burning torch and prophesies Agamemnon's wife, Clytemnestra, will murder both her and Agamemnon. Talthybius is disgusted at Cassandra's words and tells Hecuba to get ready to go on Odysseus' ship. Cassandra responds by saying Hecuba will die in what is left of Troy, and she will join her mother in the underworld as a victor because she will have destroyed the house of Atreus. Hecuba faints and then asks where Polyxena is. Andromache enters with her son, Astyanax, and tells Hecuba about Polyxena's fate as a sacrifice at Achilles' tomb. Andromache tells Hecuba she believes Polyxena's fate is far better than hers, and she would rather be

dead than to live in misery. As Andromache and Hecuba finish speaking, Talthybius enters and tells Andromache the Greeks have decided to kill Astyanax. Andromache curses the Greeks, and Talthybius takes Astyanax away. Menelaus enters and he says he did not come to Troy to take back Helen but to exact revenge on Paris, the man who stole Helen from him. He says he will take Helen back to Greece, where he will hand her over to be killed in retribution for all the deaths she caused.

Helen enters and wants to defend herself. At first, Menelaus does not like the idea, but then Hecuba says she wants to hear them and they allow Helen to explain herself. As Helen explains herself, the fact that she blames Hecuba for all of what has happened is clear. She claims herself as the savior of Greece, using the Judgement of Paris as the convincing factor. She claims she and her beauty saved Greece from a foreign ruling. She even goes as far as saying Aphrodite was responsible for the war because she was the one who promised Paris Helen in the Judgment. After Paris' death, she tried to escape Troy unsuccessfully and was forced to marry Deiphobus. Hecuba responds by saying Hera and Athena would never allow any foreigner to rule their cities.

She counters Helen's accusation that Aphrodite was the cause by saying it was Helen's own indecency and greed that led to her arrival in Troy. Hecuba also says instead of trying to escape, even with her help, Helen refused to leave. Hecuba and Menelaus agree to kill Helen. Menelaus leaves with Helen and Talthybius enters with Astyanax's corpse on Hector's shield.

Andromache has left with Neoptolemus, but she has requested Astyanax be buried in Hector's shield and wrapped with robes and garlands. Talthybius

has already washed the corpse in the river Scamander, and he offers to dig the grave, so the Greeks and their “ prizes” can be on their way. The Trojan women grieve over Astyanax’s death and then bury his body. Talthybius re-enters and tells the women Troy is to be burned down. Hecuba laments and is taken to Odysseus. The Trojan Women ends when the Trojan Women witness Troy being burned to the ground.