

Trojan Barbie

Christine Evans

A SAMUEL FRENCH ACTING EDITION

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TROJAN BARBIE was produced by the American Repertory Theater in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on March 28, 2009. The performance was directed by Carmel O'Reilly, with sets and costumes by David Reynoso, lighting by Justin Townsend, sound by David Remedios and dramaturgy by Gideon Lester and Katie Mallinson. The production stage manager was Chris De Camillis. The cast was as follows:

HECUBA	Paula Langton
POLLY X	Kaaron Briscoe
CASSANDRA	Nina Kassa
ANDROMACHE	Skye Noel
CLEA	Emily Alpren
ESME	Lisette Silva
HELEN	Careena Melia
LOTTE	Karen MacDonald
MICA	Renzo Ampuero
TALTHYBIUS/MAX	Carl Foreman
JORGE/MENELAUS/CLIVE/OFFICER IN BLUE	Jim Senti

CHARACTERS

The Trojans

HECUBA – Queen of Trojans; widow of Priam.

POLLY X – Hecuba's youngest daughter, age 15.

CASSANDRA – Hecuba's prescient daughter; late teens.

ANDROMACHE – Hecuba's daughter-in-law; Hector's widow; early 30s.

CLEA – Woman in the camp; CHORUS. Age can be flexibly cast.

ESME – Woman in the camp; CHORUS. Age can be flexibly cast.

ZOE – Woman in the camp; CHORUS. Age can be flexibly cast.

AYLA – Woman in the camp; CHORUS. Age can be flexibly cast.

The Others

HELEN – The face that launched, etc. Ageless.

LOTTE – An English tourist and doll repair expert. Age 35-50.

MICA – Camp guard; also assigned to local spin. 30s.

JORGE – Soldier from the conquering army. 20s. Latino.

MAX – Soldier from the conquering army. 20s. African-American.

MENELAUS – Helen's slighted husband; led the army that destroyed Troy. 30s or 40s.

CLIVE – Lotte's fantasy partner (actually a waiter.) Ageless and perfect.

OFFICER IN BLUE – Deus Ex Machina from the conquering army.

TALTHYBIUS – Diplomatic African gentleman; messenger from the conquering army. Age can be flexibly cast.

Note on double casting

The roles of **MENELAUS**, **CLIVE** and **OFFICER IN BLUE** may be played by the same actor. At the director's discretion, the same actor may also join the action as a **SOLDIER** (without lines) in Scenes Eleven and Fourteen.

If necessary, **MAX** and **TALTHYBIUS** may also be double-cast, but if resources permit, it's preferable to cast these as stand-alone roles.

SETTING

Mythic Troy; modern Troy; and Lotte's doll hospital in England.

TIME

The past, folded uneasily into the present.

AUTHOR'S NOTES

The Trojan women's camp is a barren space that suggests both ancient and modern war zones. The sparse presence of elements such as cyclone wire, plastic sheeting, or rusted corrugated iron sheets evokes contemporary refugee camps.

There are other spaces: a space of the gods where **POLLY X** and **CASSANDRA** at times appear; Lotte's doll hospital in England and the tourist café she visits in contemporary Troy.

There is a sense of an archaeological dig, as if time were stacked vertically in layers of ruin, with modernity at the top layer on the surface. Since layers of time collapse into one another in this play, it's best served by a flexible and evocative design, where discrete spaces can form and bleed into one another, rather than being "realistically" rendered.

Note on punctuation: A slash (/) indicates the interruption point in a line by the following speaker.

Note on Chorus: When all four women speak in unison, the line is designated as **CHORUS**. Smaller groups speaking in unison are designated by their names (eg. **ZOE**, **ESME** & **AYLA**).

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*This play is for Ciella Lee Williams
and all the girls dreaming up the new world:*

A love poem from the past to your future.

Scene One

(Lights up on LOTTE. We are in LOTTE's doll hospital workshop. Beside her are shelves of doll parts and broken dolls in various stages of repair – some are contemporary; others are older porcelain models. One shelf has a series of these older dolls sitting in a row, looking a little like the bodies from war photographs. Some stare out from empty eye sockets. Others are missing limbs, heads, hair. LOTTE is tidying up, getting ready for her trip away.)

LOTTE. Horse-hair. Acrylic hair. Sandpaper. Latex. Legs. Ball sockets. Eyelash glue... Damnit, I've run out of eyes again. Better re-order before I leave. *(to an eyeless doll)* Sorry.

(checking travel wallet) Now, what *mustn't* I forget...

Passport. Imodium. Aspirin. Cellphone charger!!!
Emergency numbers –

(turns to glossy brochure) “Claude's Cultural Tours for Singles – A Great Way to Meet People!” – People are nicer on holiday.

(shuffling through her brochure) “Romance in Rome”... no... “Catalan Cuisine”...same old, same old... Here we are! – “Tragedy in Troy!” *(reads from brochure)* “Troy is rich in history. The city has been razed and rebuilt nine times, each time resurrecting itself over the buried bones of its previous lives and deaths.” Mmm, that sounds cheerful... – Oh, cut it out, Lotte. You need to get more involved in life. I'm sure it will be lovely. *(to the dolls, firmly)* It will be lovely.

(Cross-fade from LOTTE space to POLLY X, who is in a separate, elevated space. POLLY and LOTTE are in different worlds. POLLY wears a school uniform.)

POLLY X. Everything stinks here. I hate it. It stinks because we have to use *gas* for cleaning. Even the hospitals. For cleaning floors, toilets, wounds, everything. You can't get soap any more. And since the fence, you can't even go out. There's nothing to do. It's foul. This whole country is like a poisoned stinky gas station just waiting for someone to throw a match. I am sooo over it.

Oh, I want to smell desert rain again. It hasn't rained for three years. It's probably because we're cursed.

Anyway. Before the fence, Mama took me to the museum so I would see our "Cultural Heritage." But it was all looted, except for the Contemporary Art. So – we had to look at *that* instead. The program said that "Transcendent Ideas of Beauty" are no longer what art is about. But actually, I just think we can't afford it. Like I said, it's hard to get stuff. So most of it was really ugly, and all made of broken things. Or things that really aren't supposed to be art. Like bottles and rags and old shoes and stuff just stuck together.

The most disgusting sculpture of all was called TROJAN RAT. It had yellow eyes, and it was crouching in a pool of dark stuff that looked like oil, or blood or something yukky. And it was hollow; you could see inside it because it was just made out of wire and plastic bags. Inside its belly it had a little white dining table, all tiny and perfect like real art. There was a family sitting round it, eating dinner.

But their house was bleeding and it was inside a rat.

Which had mean glittery eyes made of those yellow beer bottle tops that the soldiers leave lying around.

It made me feel sick but excited, too.

I didn't like it but I did. I didn't but I did.

Mama hated it. She said it was "decadent and defeatist."

I said, Well Hecuba, we are defeated.

She didn't say anything to that.

And then I decided: I *like* Modern Sculpture.

On the way home, I started thinking about things I could make out of my own broken stuff. Mostly what I've got is these –

(showing Barbie dolls)

Most of them are a bit messed up, or they're covered in scribble and stuff.

Which is OK for Modern Sculpture.

I'm going to get a big piece of pink cardboard. Helen says if you're nice to the soldiers, they'll get you stuff. And then I'm going to get all my dolls and nail them onto it. In the shape of a big heart. So when it's finished, it will be this huge heart, made of smashed up dolls. It will be sort of flat but sort of three-dimensional. It will be very, very scary. I'm going to hang it out the front of the women's tents.

And I'm calling it TROJAN BARBIE. And when it's done, me and Cassandra will rain down revenge on our enemies! We will smash them like dolls! Death to the invaders!

(Loud rock-music clip. We are in POLLY's Xena / Buffy the vampire slayer / Britney Spears fantasy. A huge pink heart materializes behind her. POLLY X stands and holds up a haphazard fistful of Barbies / Barbie parts, dances with them. Lights dim 'til she is a back-lit silhouette against the brilliant pink heart.)

(Then from offstage, through distorted megaphone, we hear:)

JORGE. Polly X. Polly X?

(Crossed spotlights, like stereo hunting lights, focus in blindingly on POLLY X.)

POLLY X. What? Who's that?

JORGE. Princess Polly Xena. We have orders to escort you to Achilles' tomb for the purposes of ritual sacrifice. Do not resist. Place your hands above your head. Drop your weapons.

(**POLLY X** *drops the dolls.*)

JORGE. Are you still a virgin?

POLLY X. What? – Fuck off!

(**MAX** and **JORGE** *approach* **POLLY X.**)

POLLY X. Mama! Mama, help! Help –

(*Hunting spotlights switch off. **POLLY** is a silhouette again. **JORGE** and **MAX** drag her off, covering her mouth to stifle her screams.*)

Scene Two

(HECUBA wakes with a start as POLLY screams. We are in the Lower World of the camp. There are tent walls or sheets hung upstage, making a scrim. They are back-lit and the bodies of women are visible in silhouette through them.)

HECUBA. POLLY! Polly X – ? – Clea? What was that? Zoe? Esme?

ESME. Nothing.

CLEA. A riot, maybe.

ZOE. Or thunder.

ESME. An old pot smashing.

CHORUS. Something breaking.

HECUBA. A heart cracking its own ribs with fear.
Something blind –

HECUBA/CHORUS. – beating against the bars of a cage.

HECUBA. I see my children mingling with the dead
Still bright with future, burning to rejoin us
Lighting the Underworld.
Close enough to feel their passing breath –
It's cold. It burns like metal on my neck.
Even rats take refuge from that wind.

(beat)

It's cold.

CLEA. Hecuba, you're dreaming on your feet again.

ESME. You need to sleep.

ZOE/AYLA. Sleep...

HECUBA. Sleep's too close to death, Esme.
We need to stay awake for the living.
Even when it seems hopeless.
But Gods, where was I?
Dreaming in the Underworld.
A hospital – a morgue? It's hard
to tell the difference these days.

ZOE. Hospitals have more blood. I think.

AYLA. And morgues have tags. They used to, anyway.

CLEA. Tied to the big toe. Or round a soldier's neck, the metal kind –

AYLA. – with numbers. Morgues are quieter.

AYLA/ZOE. Hospitals are noisy.

HECUBA. This was silent.

I remember sorting through the bodies

Heaped in random piles

And stashed in metal bins.

They're all in pieces

hopelessly mixed up –

An old man's ear, a girl's left hand

With dislocated thumb –

A white band on one finger, where

her wedding ring (torn off now)

had kept it from the sun

I've seen this place before

Or will again.

I'm searching for my children – Gods, my children!

All my boys – where are they?

Swallowed by the sea, or stabbed –

Left for rats to feast on.

(ESME and CLEA move to comfort HECUBA.)

ESME. Shh now. Shh.

HECUBA. All my boys.

(At the same time, lights half up on LOTTE, taking inventory in her doll hospital. She and HECUBA are shadows in each other's worlds.)

LOTTE. *(to her dolls)* All right you lot. Last call for orders!

Let's see... what else... wrist sockets, yes... hips... I think we're good for glue... now what about hair?

(LOTTE checks her inventory.)

LOTTE/HECUBA. – Hair, heads, legs, fingers –

HECUBA. – I can't find him. I can't find him!

LOTTE. I can't find anything in this mess.

ESME. Hecuba – please. Try to sleep.

(The CHORUS exchange glances, then AYL starts brushing HECUBA's hair. This quiets her, a little.)

LOTTE. Spring clean when I get back, promise – Eyes! Yes! I must reorder eyes. As for the rest – *(to dolls)* You'll just have to cope without me. I've got to pack.

“S.” Sun block. Hand sanitizer. Swimsuit. Sunglasses. Spare SIM card – Good. *(pause)* Mosquito-net? – Oh come on Lotte, it's not the Congo. Troy is in Europe – sort of.

CLEA. Perhaps it won't be so different, where we're going.

ESME. If we live, that is.

CLEA. Esme!!

ZOE. Perhaps it'll be warm. A Greek island...

ESME. Right.

CLEA. Well, comfort women have to live in comfort, don't they?

ESME. Yeah, but slaves don't. Probably end up in a sweat-shop –

AYLA. – with fourteen-hour shifts.

ESME. And in your “time off” you can service the boss

AYLA. Then scrub the floors

ZOE. And mind the children

AYLA. And sort the laundry

ESME. And do the wife's ironing.

CLEA. *(brightly)* Not that different from home really.

(This falls flat with the others. Beat.)

ESME. I think she's asleep.

(The WOMEN go behind the scrim.)

LOTTE. Toothpaste. Tylenol. Tampons. Travelers' checks. Tic-tacs. Tickets!! God.

(LOTTE's last line wakes HECUBA, though she doesn't know what woke her. LOTTE, agitated, searches for

tickets. Lights down on LOTTE.)

HECUBA. Polly? Is that you? Polly X? Cassandra!

(CASSANDRA dances out of the tent like a firecracker. She sings the first two lines of the chorus of "Get Me to the Church on Time.")*

HECUBA. Cassandra, thank the Gods.

CASSANDRA. Mother, crown my hair with flowers of war.

We're winning! That's what the blood star sings.

Look at him! Mars is winking at us.

Troy's his meat and drink –

– we're dripping down his chin

Like melted lard.

A blood-red eye in the sky

A Cyclops in love with disaster –

I'm so happy I could die.

HECUBA. Please. I need to ask you / something darling –

CASSANDRA. I will die! We all will.

Cities die, and take us with them.

Why is that such a problem?

HECUBA. Cassandra, where's Polly X?

CASSANDRA. She's around. You're showing the symptoms of depression. Or post-partum something or other.

What's that syndrome you get after your children die?

HECUBA. Oh, let me search in the sand. It's swallowed all my boys.

(HECUBA lies in the dirt as MICA enters. He has a clipboard and addresses the audience directly – who are townspeople outside the camp perimeter, waiting to know their fate. Perhaps they are ghosts.)

MICA. Friends, Allies, Townspeople.

What is the strategic plan for Troy? – You may well ask.

To think of "Troy" as a failed state, mired in civil war

*Please see Music Use Note on Page 3.

and ancient hatreds, is to take an unnecessarily negative view. We must look to the future. We must imagine Troy rebuilding itself over the bones and rubble of the past! Pulling itself back up by the crutches. I mean, by the bootstraps. – Any questions?

– Any English speakers out there today?

(beat)

They tell you you'll see the world.

They put you in sealed planes and tell you you're traveling, but somehow you always end up in Troy.

CASSANDRA. You always end up in Troy.

(A creepy beat. MICA isn't sure if CASSANDRA spoke.)

MICA. *(to CASSANDRA)* You!

CASSANDRA. You.

MICA. Get back over by the tents.

CASSANDRA. Is your Troy a ruin?

MICA. And no singing!

CASSANDRA. No singing?

MICA. Now!

CASSANDRA. Mama, when does a place become a ruin?

Does someone actually have to ruin it, like they did to us?

Is history a tide?

Or is it a machine? Organic – or invented?

Can a machine get pregnant?

I need to know these things.

The starting data affects my precognition.

HECUBA. Cassandra, please.

CASSANDRA. You never listen, Mama. I want to be a biologist of history.

(CASSANDRA sings the first two lines of the chorus of "Get Me to the Church on Time.")*

MICA. You! Second warning! *(returns to his captive audience)*

* Please see Music Use Note on Page 3.

Well, you see a lot. It's not a bad life.

"Join the world and see the army!"

I mean...the world. I mean...

(*seeing HELEN*) Wow.

(*HELEN sweeps on in make-up and in high heels. She holds a movie star pose in her own pink spotlight. We ache for the cigarette she doesn't have. The camp lights go on; the worlds come together. MICA is transfixed.*)

(*The CHORUS enter, in HELEN's wake.*)

HELEN. Does anyone have any Tylenol?

CLEA. (*aside to ESME*) Here we go.

HELEN. (*turning to MICA*) I wonder if you could possibly...?

MICA. Sorry, we only have supplies for our own forces.

(*HELEN looks at him.*)

MICA. But um – well, let's see.

(*He dashes off to hunt for Tylenol.*)

HELEN. Does anyone have any Perrier? The tank water tastes vile.

CLEA. She wants a drink, ladies.

ESME. It's thirsty work, Helen.

CHORUS. Destroying a city.

HELEN. Oh *please*.

ZOE. Yeah, no wonder she needs a drink.

ESME. I need a drink.

HELEN. I suppose you like drinking mud. Since you're wallowing in it. I prefer water.

ESME. Yeah, you want to keep your skin hydrated.

CLEA. Basic maintenance for you –

ZOE/AYLA. – Like keeping your gun oiled.

HELEN. That's right, blame the foreigner. You are such fucking losers. Jealousy is very unbecoming in women.

CLEA. And in men?

ZOE/AYLA. Lethal.

ESME. Speaking of drinking. I saw a little girl on the road

here. Almost naked. She was crying because she was
burned all over

From, what's that stuff –

AYLA. Yeah, with the pretty name –

ZOE. Sounds like –

ESME/CLEA. The stuff that's not napalm –

ZOE/AYLA. White phosphorus.

ESME. Right. – We're supposed to keep walking, right, and
not talk to the soldiers, but the burned girl's mother
falls at a soldier's feet and begs for water. This soldier
is a young guy, fresh off the plane, buzz-cut, pink neck.
He signals his commander and the guy says, "No deal,
we only have supplies – "

CHORUS. – "for our *own forces*."

HELEN. Your point is, exactly?

HECUBA. (*stirring from the dirt*) Ah, there you are. The face
that torched a thousand lives.

HELEN. Oh, you've woken up.

Well, I bow to you. You are the expert.

Nobody does suffering better than you.

HECUBA. And no-one unleashes it with cleaner hands than
yours.

HELEN. Really.

Well, I ask you all.

This Wailing Women routine:

We're in a camp. For *just women*.

Ergo, we will be dealing with men.

And if I might point out from my fairly extensive experience:

You'd do a lot better with a smile on your face and a
dab of lipstick.

– Just a suggestion.

CASSANDRA. I fucked a horse.

HECUBA. Cassandra, please.

CASSANDRA. I fucked a sea horse with a foaming mane.
It must have been Apollo.

HELEN. Why do I bother.

HECUBA. My poor darling girl. What will they do with you?

(MICA returns bearing gifts.)

ESME. *(referring to MICA and HELEN)* Here we go.

CASSANDRA. There's nothing wrong with me.

Relatively speaking.

I loved a god. I didn't start a war.

MICA. Back home we love God too.

HELEN. And we don't hold grudges.

CHORUS. Right.

MICA. Right! We barely remember our former enemies.

CASSANDRA. Forgotten, but not gone.

HELEN. *(to MICA)* I'd remember you.

MICA. *(to HELEN)* You're unforgettable.

CASSANDRA. Truth!

ESME. He's got a point there.

CLEA. Yeah. And I've tried.

ZOE. I haven't. I wrote her name in blood on my husband's shroud –

ZOE/AYLA. "Helen was here."

ZOE. An I.O.U. she'll pay the Furies –

CHORUS. the war bitch.

HELEN. *(to MICA)* You see what I have to put up with! They don't like foreigners! My head is splitting. Do you think...just two little Tylenol?

MICA. Don't tell anyone.

(MICA surreptitiously hands HELEN the Tylenol, and a little cup of water.)

HELEN. *(to the entire world)* Now, that's what I call Civilized –

CHORUS. – We've noticed.

HELEN. – It's not all revenge, revenge, revenge. So you date one guy on Tuesday and another on Friday and there's not a fucking war about it for the next ten years.

MICA. Right.

HELEN. You inhabit the present.

CASSANDRA. The present is pregnant with death.

Because the past fucked it already.

HELEN. For God's sake, lighten up, Cassandra.

Everything round here stinks like a fish in the sun.

It's old. It's rotten. It's all over except the re-runs.

CASSANDRA. I just said that already.

(HELEN sweeps out, followed by MICA. TALTHYBIUS enters. The CHORUS leaves, sensing trouble.)

TALTHYBIUS. *(to HECUBA)* Madam.

CASSANDRA. *(to TALTHYBIUS)* I fucked a horse. He was a lot bigger than you.

(CASSANDRA canters and dances lasciviously about the stage during the following. TALTHYBIUS keeps a wary eye on her.)

TALTHYBIUS. Madam. I think you remember me.

HECUBA. From better times. It's not good news, is it?

TALTHYBIUS. Well. That's the thing. There are two ways of looking at it. The glass is half-empty or it's half-full, I guess.

HECUBA. I used to complain that no-one ever reported the news from Troy. The world ignored us. But my Serbian friends used to say, if you're not in the news, rejoice.

Because every time we're in the world news, it's very bad news indeed. So.

TALTHYBIUS. Just think, Madam, in gentler times...

HECUBA. I don't think so, Talthybius.

(CASSANDRA makes horsey noises and obscene movements.)

TALTHYBIUS. I need to speak with you privately.

HECUBA. What is it?

TALTHYBIUS. Madam. We are all called upon to make sacrifices.

HECUBA. Spit it out, goddamn you. Where is my Polly X?

TALTHYBIUS. Polly X is...taken care of. Her problems are over; she's – she'll be an attendant.

In the Achilles museum gift shop.

HECUBA. Talthybius, I should like to see her.

TALTHYBIUS. First, Madam, we need to discuss Cassandra.

CASSANDRA. I can taste blood on my tongue. That means the future's being born.

It's trying to come up through my mouth.

HECUBA. No. NOOOOO! Not my Cassandra. Don't take her too! Aaaaaiiiiiieeeee!

TALTHYBIUS. Madam. Please, Madam, compose yourself.
(*aside*) Shit of a job. (*beat*)

I will give Cassandra time to prepare.

CASSANDRA. (*sane and deadly*) Oh, I'll be ready. Don't you worry.

Scene Three

(LOTTE appears high above the camp in a dim light, as if in the far distance of CASSANDRA's prescient vision. She is a little flustered, trying to get her bearings. She has a small practical travel roll-on suitcase. She is finding her way from the first [wrong] hotel, to the assigned hotel one block away. She has an inconveniently-sized fold-out map, which she consults several times before seeing the welcoming pink sign: Claude's Cultural Oasis. She makes towards it with purpose.)

Scene Four

(POLLY is sharing a bottle of beer with JORGE and MAX. She is drunk on three sips and feeling sophisticated and daring. They are in the zoo, at the cage of the tigers. There are several yellow bottle-tops strewn around them.)

POLLY X. Gimme that.

MAX. Nope. You've had enough.

JORGE. Little girls shouldn't drink.

MAX. Good girls don't drink.

POLLY X. Yeah, but I'm bad. – Weren't you supposed to be taking me somewhere?

To meet Achilles' ghost or go to a sacrifice or something? *(She giggles.)*

JORGE. Quick detour.

MAX. We are somewhere, honey. The Zoo.

JORGE. No point in rushing. Achilles' ghost can stay thirsty a bit longer.

MAX. Speaking of thirsty –

(MAX reaches for another beer.)

POLLY X. Ghosts don't get thirsty.

JORGE. You wish.

POLLY X. I don't care.

MAX. But you will.

JORGE. Shut up, Max. Let the girl have a drink.

(MAX holds the beer out to her.)

MAX. So, *how* bad are you?

POLLY X. Very.

MAX. I'll hold you to that.

(He passes her the beer.)

POLLY X. *(to JORGE)* Do you like Modern Sculpture?

JORGE. Sure.

POLLY X. All of it?

JORGE. What's not to like?

POLLY X. The stuff that's ripped up and shit like that. Like a house inside a rat with fat yellow eyes. And blood coming out the bottom. Stuff like that, that no one even wants to loot.

(beat)

JORGE. What's not to like?

(They look at the tigers.)

MAX. That's a fucking pussy cat, not a tiger. Call that a tiger, there's bigger tigers than that in Las Vegas.

POLLY X. I wanna go there!

JORGE. You gotta die first.

POLLY X. Why?

MAX. Because, Princess, Las Vegas is Heaven. You only go there when you're dead.

JORGE. Or un-dead. Like Elvis. That's where Buffy the Vampire Slayer's going to end up.

POLLY X. Actually I *am* a princess. If you cut me, you'll get oil on you, we're that rich.

JORGE. Not any more.

POLLY X. That was mean.

MAX. Yes it was. – Tonight you get to do everything you ever wanted to.

POLLY X. How come?

JORGE. Because ghosts are fucking assholes.

MAX. Because this is your party. Who knows, it could last three thousand years.

POLLY X. Oh great, so we'll drink flat beer and look at sad tigers. Why are we in the zoo?

JORGE. The only place away from barracks where you can have a beer without getting shot at.

POLLY X. That's sooooo brilliant!

MAX. We both thought of it.

(beat)

POLLY X. *(to JORGE)* I'm going to be an artist and do Modern Sculpture. Have you got any tattoos?

JORGE. Maybe.

POLLY X. Why are the tigers so sad?

JORGE. Combat stress.

POLLY X. His fur's all falling out.

JORGE. Yeah.

POLLY X. C'mon, show me your tats.

JORGE. Later!

(He opens another beer for her. Another yellow beer bottle top hits the ground.)

POLLY X. Hey! Don't litter.

(She picks up the beer bottle top.)

POLLY X. I'm going to make something with these.

JORGE. Yeah, like what?

POLLY X. Like a sculpture.

JORGE/MAX. A sculpture.

(They clink bottles.)

Scene Five

(**LOTTE** sits under a bright umbrella, writing a post-card, and sips frozen lemonade mixed with ouzo. She is a bit tipsy and has had a lot of sun.)

LOTTE. “Dear Auntie Flora,

I’m so glad you hassled me to get out of my rut. The light here is really beautiful, and the people aren’t all dreadful.” (*revising*) ... “the people are really very nice.”

(*to herself*)

Well, some of them.

Well, Clive.

He doesn’t say much but I think he has a Past.

You don’t want to pry of course.

The other day he asked me if I had “known sorrow.” It was such – it took me aback because it was such an odd way to put it. Not, are you sad, but have you – I fudged it of course and laughed and said well, you make the best of things, you move on –

Ah, he said. Just like that. ‘Ah.’ I felt so shallow.

But the next day was better, I was almost relaxed. Well, all the tour groups go to the same places every day, and you can’t talk about relics all the time can you. It’s so dusty and dry here. History’s fascinating – but bits of it stick in your throat and after a few hours, more than anything you just want a cool lemonade in one of those little Turkish cafes. It’s so easy to get dehydrated. And *lost*, my God.

Speaking of thirsty. Just yesterday we were walking round in circles trying to find the Delphic Oracle, but it’s confusing because there’s Athena’s shrine and the Gallipoli exhibit and half the signs are in Turkish. Anyway Clive and I got separated from the tour group and we were completely lost in *minutes*. We were absolutely parched, but the place was like a morgue – do they have siestas here? Not a fly moving – and the sea still as granite. It really could have been 5000 BCE.

LOTTE. (*cont.*) Finally after about *three centuries* we found a little girl, selling lemonade in just her underpants. She could hardly lift up the jug, she was so little. Of course it was luke-warm and sugary but at the time, honestly, it was pure ambrosia!

You know – it actually *is* a great way to meet people. At first you think, a cultural tour for singles, how dreary, how forced...

(**CLIVE** *obligingly appears in LOTTE's daydream, looking handsome and grave in a pink suit.*)

But after that kind of day, I think I could quite legitimately join Clive for a sunset glass of Sangria – conversation seems to flow more easily here than back at home. “The dusk in Turkey is really quite stunning.” “Yes, and especially at this time of year.” “Oh, have you visited in Winter”? – that kind of thing. And I’m sure in just a few days it will seem only natural, because you’re in Europe – sort of – to take a little stroll together before dinner –

(**CLIVE** *takes LOTTE's arm, bowing slightly, and they stroll.*)

– and anyway the dead can stay dead, because history’s all around us, in a shopworn and dusty silence, and perhaps it’s the wine, but it seems sad and quite lovely all at the same time, that you have to carve this space out of your schedule and pay thousands of pounds, and come all this way, just to walk slowly through the olive trees beside a nice man at sunset –

(**ANDROMACHE** *enters LOTTE's space, clutching a doll boy. She is elegantly dressed, upper-class, but her clothes are ripped, her shoes gone. ANDROMACHE barely registers LOTTE; she is in shock.*)

ANDROMACHE. Where am I?

LOTTE. (*jolted rudely from her reverie*) Pardon?

(*In the unkind light, we see that CLIVE is actually the waiter.*)

CLIVE. Do you need change, Ma’am?

LOTTE. Uh – no. No. Thank you.

(CLIVE leaves.)

ANDROMACHE. Where am I? I've been walking for ages and ages. Round in circles.

LOTTE. This is about a mile from the main bus station. Have you lost your tour group? I was wandering around myself yesterday/ for many hours...

ANDROMACHE. The bridges are all burning. I saw a soldier drag a boy, he must have only been ten, into an alley and beat him to death with a rifle butt. They painted red crosses on every door, and then shot up the houses. With people in them. A soldier came into the palace and shat on the carpet. The peacocks – all beheaded. The horses let loose, then shot and left for the vultures. – What makes someone do that? Do they think the horses hate them?

LOTTE. (*at a complete loss*) I don't know. That sounds terrible. Are you sure you're all right?

ANDROMACHE. Well. The city's been torched. My husband's gone. The women –

LOTTE. Perhaps you should sit down. Would you like some water?

(ANDROMACHE takes the water, and drinks the bottle in one gulp.)

LOTTE. You really have to be careful not to get dehydrated. It's terribly easy. Why, just the other day we were wandering around for *ages* / until we found...

ANDROMACHE. My broken city. Raped by the sword and flame. Ash and dust your shroud.

(beat)

LOTTE. It is sad, to think of the city being obliterated so many times. But on the other hand, if it wasn't, it wouldn't have got into history, would it, and we wouldn't be here.

ANDROMACHE. My mother in law said the same:

*We sacrificed for nothing. And yet,
had the gods not cursed this city and crushed us to dust and
ruin,
we should have vanished into darkness
and left no theme for poets
and the men yet to be born.*

LOTTE. (*deflated*) Well. She said it much better than me.

I mean no-one writes about ordinary boring places,
like Reading back home.

You really are lost, aren't you?

What a precious little doll. And in such good condition!

Where did/ you get him?

ANDROMACHE. My son is all I have left.

LOTTE. Oh.

Well, some people never get children in the first place.
Or husbands. – Though I do see a lot of children
through my work. We repair dolls, you see, and we have
“visiting hours” just like at a real hospital. The older
ones can watch if they want. The younger ones get too
upset, they think the dolls are alive, bless them...

But you know, the crazy thing is, once you've spent
thirty hours on a doll, you do come to feel that she's
alive, or – not exactly alive, but – latent, do you know
what I mean?

Sort of potentially alive, because they always might
become somebody, whereas we actually are, and that's
inevitably disappointing. You tick off, one by one, all
the things that don't seem likely to happen any more:
A child. Finding a man without serious Issues, or an ex-
wife and custody problems. Affording an apartment in
London, even an hour out East. A life in another country.

ANDROMACHE. There is no life in another country. You'll
always be a foreigner, stuck on the wrong side of the
looking-glass. – I just don't understand. I did every-
thing right. I ironed Hector's shirts. I stayed home and
cooked. I didn't sleep around.