

Rhesus

Written by Euripides – Directed by Paul Lazzari



Synopsis (From Wikipedia)

In the middle of the night, Trojan guards on the lookout for suspicious enemy activity sight bright fires in the Greek camp. They promptly inform Hector, who almost issues a general call to arms before Aeneas persuades him this would be ill-advised. The best course, Aeneas argues, would be to send someone to spy on the Greek camp and see what the enemy is up to. Dolon volunteers to spy on the Greeks in exchange for Achilles' horses when the war is won. Hector accepts the offer and sends him out. Dolon leaves wearing the skin of a wolf, and planning on deceiving the Greeks by walking on all fours. Next, Rhesus, the king of neighboring Thrace, arrives to assist the Trojans soon after Dolon sets out. Hector berates him for coming so many years late, but accepts his arrival; Rhesus responds that he had intended on coming from the beginning, but had been sidetracked defending his own land from an attack by Scythians.

Meanwhile, making their way to the Trojan encampment with the intention of killing Hector, Odysseus and Diomedes run into Dolon and kill him. When they reach their destination Athena guides them to Rhesus' sleeping quarters instead of Hector's, warning them that they are not destined to kill Hector. Diomedes kills Rhesus and others, and Odysseus takes his prized horses, before making their escape. Rumors spread from Rhesus' men that there had been treachery and that Hector was responsible. Hector arrives and casts blame on the sentinels, for, pointing to the sly tactics indicating that the guilty party could only be Odysseus. The mother of Rhesus, one of the nine muses, then arrives and lays blame on all those responsible: Odysseus, Diomedes, and Athena. She also announces the imminent resurrection of Rhesus, who will become immortal but will be sent to live in a cave.



TL;DR

One night during the Trojan War, each side sends out a stealth team. The Thracian King Rhesus arrives to aid Troy. Some goddesses show up. Rhesus is killed by the Greek stealth team and they steal his horses.



Vision

I'd like to create a Rhesus where pillars of masculinity– Hector, Odysseus, Diomedes– wear grass-stained jorts, and fight with wooden swords. A Rhesus where the battlefield outside Troy is a patchy green lawn, and the horses that storm across it are nothing but stuffed toys. In a world of play, this tragedy's comedy and absurdity are highlighted. And the idea of Greek theater as high class or elitist is torn down. In less flowery words: I'd like to direct a production of Rhesus in a natural outdoor venue with an aesthetic of childish play. I would direct it to highlight the text's absurd elements. Props and set pieces would be crude toys. The audience would be on picnic blankets.

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Characters

Hektor	Trojan prince, Brother to Paris, A brash and proud hero
Paris	Trojan prince, Brother to Hektor
Aeneas	Trojan Noble, slow to a fight
Dolon	Eager Trojan soldier, an animal lover
Rhesus	Thracian king, chief of Thracian army, Muse's son
Muse	Goddess, Rhesus' mother
Chariot Driver	Rhesus' chariot driver, member of the Thracian army
Athena	Goddess, patron to Odysseus and Diomedes
Odysseus	Chiefs of the Greek army, clever
Diomedes	Chiefs of the Greek army, effective fighter
Chorus of Trojan Guards	
Herald/Messenger	Trojan Shepherd



Cast Size: 14?



Because of the text's cultural distance to our contemporary society (classical Athens, Greece vs 21st century Los Angeles, USA), and the actor's degree of separation from characters (actors playing childlike actors playing the characters of the play), this play will utilize informed gender-blind casting.

Characters will use the gendered language of the original text; at their core, the characters will remain either cis-gender men or cis-gender women (goddesses). Their physical presentation (including gender presentation) will be determined by the actors, the director, and the costume designer to best fit the text, characterization, and actor. The physical gender presentation of a character need not match their gendered textual representation.

Actors of any and all genders are encouraged to audition for roles of any gender that interest them. Roles will be cast based on ability and interest. Please inform us if being cast in any role/s would be dysphoric or excessively uncomfortable.



**Note/Statement on Gender in
Cast**

Chorus notes

- The chorus will be made up of 6 actors: Chorus A, B, C, D, E, and M
- A, B, and C are the core members. They play only Chorus and have more Chorus lines.
- D is also Dolon, and appears only until Dolon dies
- E also plays the Chariot Driver and is only Chorus in Act 1
- M also plays the Herald/Messenger and is only Chorus in Act 2

- The Chorus speaks alone as individual characters for most scenes
- In Chorus interludes (when the Chorus “steps forward”) they speak together more



Script



The greeks are in red. The Trojans are in Blue. The Thracians wear green and striped socks/arm warmers. Goddesses wear white cloaks. All are dressed in children's play-clothes with assorted grass and dirt stains. Bath towel *himations*. A graphic wolf shirt and a Wolf suit for Dolon. Elaborate cardboard helmets. Phrygian caps for the Trojans.

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Costumes



Toys, cardboard crafts and suburban household objects make up the horses and tokens of war used in this tale.

Pieces:

- Hobby Horses
- Cardboard/DIY weapons and shields
- A mug of tea

Properties



Theater: The green space and small outdoor stage behind old annenberg

“Hektor’s tent outside the walls of Troy.”

The greek camp is in the distance behind the audience

Matching theme of Childhood play, any objects should be constructed as if by children playing pretend.

We will not strictly follow the staging written in the script.

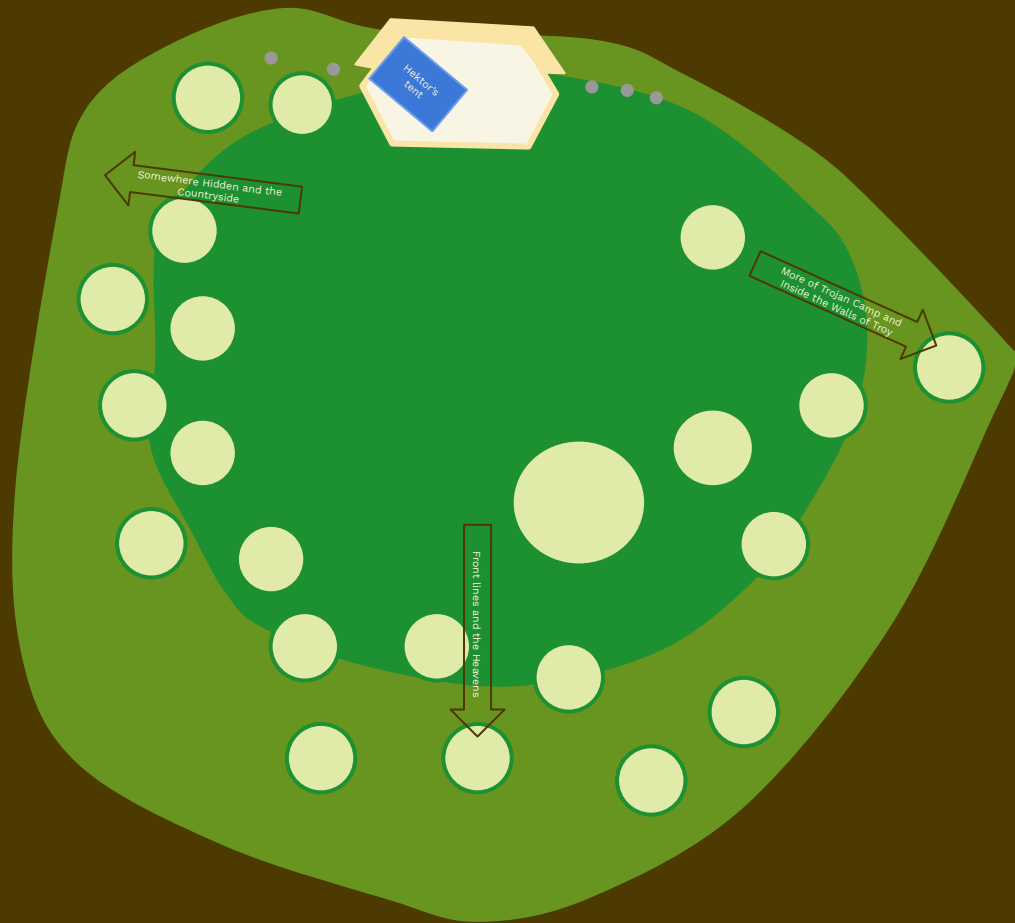
Pieces:

- Hektor’s Tent

Set



Stage Layout



The whole play takes place during one night. In each act, action is continuous. Actors, set, and the space should be lit so they can be seen, but the natural darkness of night should remain present. Behind the audience, the greek camp has many campfires lit.

Also we'll prolly want some flashlight choreo.

- Info from Billie Oleyar (Lighting Consultant and Designer)
 - Need lights from front
 - Bluish light to match night
 - Flashlights for wings?
 - Cheaper Dj lights for battery powered led's?

Lighting



Sound should be used sparingly and always mimicking the natural world or the realistic sounds of actors.

Pieces:

- Sounds of a Nightingale
- Sounds of sheep and the pipe of a shepherd
- Sounds of rustling horse tack

Sound



Production Calendar

- **First Production/Crew Meeting: Jan. 26th**
- **First Rehearsal: Jan. 27th**
- **Performances: Feb. 26, 27, and Mar. 1, 2**
- **Rehearsal Calendar (Subject to change)**





**Scene
Breakdown**

Act 1

Hektor sends Dolon on a stealth mission. Rhesus arrives.



Scene 1: Start to Aeneas' entrance

Action: A group of soldiers from the front line (Chorus A and E) arrive to Hektor's tent warning that the Greeks are planning something and urging Hektor to action.

Character/s: Hektor, Chorus A-E

Location: Outside Hektor's Tent

Time: 11pm -ish

Props: Weapons

Costumes:

Lighting:

Sound:

Other:

Blocking:

1. Hektor is inside tent, Chorus B, C, D sit outside
2. Chorus A, E enter from the front lines
3. Hektor enters from tent



Scene 2: Aeneas' Entrance to Aeneas' Exit

Action: Aeneas arrives and cautions Hektor. All agree to move forward with a stealth mission.

Character/s: Hektor, Chorus A-E, Aeneas

Location: Outside Hektor's tent

Time: Between 11pm and 12am

Props: Weapons, mug with tea

Costumes:

Lighting:

Sound:

Other:

Blocking:

1. Aeneas enters from inside the walls of Troy
2. Aeneas exits to the inside of the walls of Troy



Scene 3: Aeneas' Exit to Dolon's Exit

Action: Dolon volunteers for the mission, negotiates his prize and shares his plan with the Chorus

Character/s: Hektor, Chorus A-C, E, Dolon

Location: Outside Hektor's tent

Time: Between 11pm and 12am

Props: Weapons

Costumes: Wolf suit

Lighting:

Sound:

Other:

Blocking:

1. Dolon emerges from the chorus
2. Dolon begins to exit to the front lines
3. Hektor exits into tent



Scene 4: Dolon's exit to Mess.'s Entrance

Action: The Chorus fantasizes about Dolon's mission. Simultaneously, Dolon is attacked by Odysseus and ~~Diomedes~~.

Character/s: Chorus A-C, E, Dolon, Odysseus, ~~Diomedes~~, Hektor

Location: Outside Hektor's tent, and on the path to the front lines

Time: Between 11pm and 12am

Props: Weapons, fight weapons

Costumes: Wolf suit

Lighting:

Sound:

Other:

Blocking:

1. Chorus steps forward
2. Odysseus and Diomedes attack Dolon
3. Dolon fight back, loses
4. Hektor enters from tent
5. Odysseus and Diomedes drag Dolon off to somewhere hidden (they exit)



Scene 5: Mess.'s Entrance to Mess.'s Exit

Action: A Messenger arrives and informs Hektor that Rhesus is coming to aid in the war. Hektor acts proud.

Character/s: Hektor, Chorus A-C, E, Messenger

Location: Outside Hektor's tent

Time: Between 11pm and 12am

Props: Weapons

Costumes:

Lighting:

Sound:

Other:

Blocking:

1. Messenger enters from the countryside
2. Messenger exits to the countryside
3. Hektor exits into tent



Scene 6: Mess.'s Exit to Hektor's Entrance

(tent)

Action: The Chorus salivates over Rhesus: first in absentia, then not.

Character/s: Chorus A-C, E, Rhesus

Location: Outside Hektor's tent

Time: Midnight

Props: Weapons

Costumes:

Lighting:

Sound:

Other:

Blocking:

1. Chorus steps forward
2. Rhesus enters from the front lines



Scene 7: Hektor's Entrance (tent) to All's Exit

Action: Hektor greets Rhesus; they do passive aggression. All welcome Rhesus and Co.

Character/s: Hektor, Chorus A-C, E, Rhesus

Location: Outside Hektor's tent

Time: Midnight

Props: Weapons

Costumes:

Lighting:

Sound:

Other:

Blocking:

1. Hektor enters from tent
2. All exit to more of the Trojan camp (towards inside the walls of Troy)



Intermission

An intermission to stretch legs, and let the story
breathe.



Interlude

Trojan soldiers (Chorus) perceive the early hours, and worry about Dolon.



Scene 1

Action: Soldiers (Chorus) perceive the early hours, and worry about Dolon.

Character/s: Chorus A-C

Location: The front lines

Time: about 3 am

Props:

Costumes:

Lighting:

Sound: A nightingale's song, sheep, a shepherd's pipe

Other:

Blocking:

1. Chorus A stands guard, watching the front line
2. Chorus B and C snooze nearby
3. Chorus A kicks B and C awake
4. All exit to inside the walls of Troy



Act 2

Odysseus and Diomedes take on their own stealth mission. Rhesus is killed. All mourn, flee, and/or move on.



Scene 1: Start to Athena's Entrance

Action: Odysseus and Diomedes explore Hektor's tent on their own stealth mission.

Character/s: Odysseus, Diomedes

Location: Outside Hektor's tent

Time: About 3am

Props: Weapons

Costumes: Wolf suit

Lighting:

Sound: Horse tack rustling

Other:

Blocking:

1. The stage is empty
2. Odysseus and Diomedes enter from somewhere hidden with Dolon's stuff
3. Odysseus and Diomedes enter and exit tent



Scene 2: Athena's Entrance to Athena's Exit

Action: Athena counsels Odysseus and Diomedes against killing Hektor, Aeneas, or Paris, and to instead kill Rhesus. Paris enters and is fooled by Athena.

Character/s: Odysseus, Diomedes, Athena, Paris

Location: Outside Hektor's tent

Time: Between 3am and Dawn

Props: Weapons

Costumes: Wolf suit

Lighting:

Sound: Paris' footsteps

Other:

Blocking:

1. Athena enters (unseen) from the heavens
2. Paris is heard approaching
3. Odysseus and Diomedes hide
4. Paris enters from inside the walls of Troy
5. Paris exits to inside the walls of Troy
6. Odysseus and Diomedes come out of hiding
7. Athena exits to the heavens



Scene 3: Athena's Exit to All's Exit

Action: The Chorus nearly catches Odysseus and Diomedes, but are fooled.

Character/s: Odysseus, Diomedes, Chorus A-C, M

Location: Outside Hektor's tent

Time: Between 3am and Dawn

Props: Weapons

Costumes: Wolf suit

Lighting:

Sound:

Other:

Blocking:

1. The Chorus enters from more of the Trojan camp (A-C) and the front lines (M)
2. A scuffle
3. The Chorus secures Odysseus and Diomedes
4. The Chorus exits in all directions
5. Odysseus and Diomedes exit to more of the Trojan camp



Scene 4: Chorus' Entrance to C.D.' s Entrance

Action: The Chorus works out who has attacked the Trojan camp– who they let slip by.

Character/s: Chorus A-C, M

Location: Outside Hektor's tent

Time: Between 3am and Dawn

Props: Weapons

Costumes:

Lighting:

Sound:

Other:

Blocking:

1. The Chorus enters from all directions
2. The Chorus steps forward



Scene 5: C.D.' s Entrance to Hektor's Entrance

Action: The Chariot Driver recounts Rhesus' fate.

Character/s: Chorus A-C, M, Chariot Driver

Location: Outside Hektor's tent

Time: Between 3am and Dawn

Props: Weapons

Costumes:

Lighting:

Sound:

Other:

Blocking:

1. The Chariot Driver enters from more of the Trojan camp



Scene 6: Hektor's Entrance to Muse's Entrance

Action: Hektor argues with all about culpability.

Character/s: Chorus A-C, M, Chariot Driver, Hektor

Location: Outside Hektor's tent

Time: Between 3am and Dawn

Props: Weapons

Costumes:

Lighting:

Sound:

Other:

Blocking:

1. Hektor enters from the front lines
2. The Chariot driver exits to more of the Trojan camp



Scene 7: Muse's Entrance to End

Action: Muse enters with her son's corpse, laments. Hektor, and the Chorus pick up the pieces and prepare for more war.

Character/s: Chorus A-C, M, Hektor, Muse, Rhesus

Location: Outside Hektor's tent

Time: Nearly Dawn

Props: Weapons, horses

Costumes: Wolf suit

Lighting:

Sound:

Other:

Blocking:

1. Muse enters with Rhesus' body from the heavens
2. Muse exits with Rhesus' body to the heavens
3. Unseen: Odysseus and Diomedes sneak across the stage with Rhesus' horses\
4. All exit

