

# Jenny Jenny GO GO GO

by Mark Jackson

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## Jenny Jenny GO GO GO

### DRAMATIS PERSONAE - 4 OR 3 WOMEN, 3 MEN.

*Jenny, thinks she's to be married.*

*Clarice, her mother, thinks she's coming to a wedding.*

*August, her father, really messed up on this one.*

*Alex, her betrothed - if he'd only known!*

*Cymon, an unexpected man Jenny meets unexpectedly.*

*Erin, mad but not without reason and has a scar on her face to prove it. Actor could double with the deer.*

*A deer, is living with an arrow lodged in its upper jaw. Actor could double with Erin.*

*Helen, either kidnapped or a traitor. Her messages are pre-recorded and should be done by an actor not also appearing on stage.*

### NOTES

*The play rattles its bones from the Iphigenia myth. She does not die in the end.*

*Helen's messages are adapted from Patty Hearst's recorded messages to her family during her 1974 kidnapping by the Symbionese Liberation Army. Other sources I consulted include Roxane Gay's *Bad Feminist* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2014), Chelsea Fagan's writings at [thoughtcatalogue.com](http://thoughtcatalogue.com), and John Dryden's 1700 epic poem, *Cymon and Iphigenia*.*

*Race should be considered when casting, and whether to play into or against various expectations. Different scenarios would have different impacts. What scenario makes sense in relation to where and when the play is being produced? Class should also be considered. That's tricky since it's not readily apparent on the surface and might require some questions. But it's worth considering.*

Regarding the scene "A Sandy Shore" between CYMON and JENNY: Having been alone from a very young age, CYMON has not at all been cultured by society and is free of received notions about gender, power, or other political or social constructs. Nor is he a "savage," that colonial concept that assumes certain norms. It is very important that CYMON'S sensual explorations of his body and of JENNY'S be motivated purely by curiosity, that HE is not at all aggressive or otherwise motivated by power. This is confusing for JENNY at first (and may likely be so for the audience) since it is not what she expects.

A slash (/) at the top of a line means it overlaps at a logical point in the previous line. A dash (-) at the top of a line means one should come in tightly to the previous line. Not every "... " is created equal.

Punctuation, its lack, and capitalization may not always be correct on the page. But these choices reflect emphasis in thought and intent.

Text in [brackets] are TBD alternates, cuts, or options.

## **SUNSET**

As the sun sets we hear the sound of drums rolling closer and gradually louder. As the night grows darker and the drums get louder, it's difficult to tell whether they are ancient drums or techno drums.

## **THE OASIS**

JENNY suddenly flings her head up out of a deep sink full of water. By her breathing it's clear she'd been holding herself under for a long time.

She's in a bathroom. In the background there's club music thumping like it's deep inside a giant head.

JENNY looks at herself in the mirror for a long, long time. Not finding any answers, JENNY dunks her head in the sink again.

ERIN comes in. Looks at JENNY for a moment. Vacillates as to whether or not to help her.

Suddenly JENNY flings her head up out of the sink. A moment while JENNY recovers.

ERIN

What are you doing?

JENNY

/ Oh! Where did you come from?

ERIN

I told you: I'm from all over.

JENNY

I thought I'd lost you.

ERIN

No.

JENNY

What can I do?

ERIN

Go home.

JENNY

*(clarifying)* To lose you.

ERIN

Good luck.

JENNY

Look it's been fun hanging out, it's very nice to have met you you seem edgy and cool and all that, but you're making me crazy and I'd like you to leave, thanks.

ERIN

It's gonna be a long night if you keep this up.

JENNY

Not so long. I've forgotten half of it already. Where are we?

ERIN

The Oasis.

JENNY

Huh! Hardly!

ERIN

It was your choice. We could have gone anywhere else. You look like you're gonna fall down.

JENNY

I'm gathering my second wind.

ERIN

You have no idea. No more dancing for tonight, okay?

JENNY

Yes more dancing. Until I pass out.

ERIN

Then why are you doing THAT-

JENNY

-Clear my head.

ERIN

-if you want to pass out?

JENNY

I have mixed feelings! Okay? Mixed feelings! Okay? Mixed feelings?

ERIN

I don't mix my feelings. There's only one feeling you need right now.

JENNY

No.

ERIN

One conviction to hold in your fist.

JENNY

It's not that simple.

ERIN

Is that how your father put it when he BECKONED you?

JENNY

I love Alex.

ERIN

You don't.

JENNY

I will.

ERIN

You won't.

JENNY

How would you know! Anyway you just met me. I spill my guts to you, put my trust in you as a stranger, and that gives you a right to an agenda?

ERIN

Who are we if not our convictions?

JENNY

Just because I'm a public figure doesn't make me public property. You don't get it. You don't WANT it to be complicated. It IS complicated.

ERIN

You've never even kissed him.

JENNY

No but I've always wanted to.

ERIN

You don't want to marry him.

JENNY

No I don't. But I love him.

ERIN

But you don't want to marry him.

JENNY

No!

ERIN

So don't marry him.

JENNY

It's not that simple.

ERIN

Ultimately your father doesn't matter.

*JENNY seems to either guffaw or be about to vomit or-?*

JENNY

Oh! Oh! My father doesn't matter? My Father Doesn't Matter. Where have YOU been?

ERIN

It's your life.

JENNY

It's all our lives. Don't you get that? I get it. I get it, and I get it. Both. YOU don't. (*decisively happy:*) And therefore: Dancing! Until I have an orgasm or fucking puke!

*JENNY shoves past ERIN and back into the club.*

*A dance floor. Massive music and dancing, sweaty and free and exciting and a bit scary but great. JENNY's dancing is insane - not just bopping around mindlessly but somehow a decisive explosion of determination to...*

*to what? When ERIN reluctantly joins in, she is slow like a predator cat in contrast to the room around her which is pumping like a massive rabbit's heart, with JENNY the aorta.*

*Eventually ERIN is moving near and around JENNY. As they dance:*

ERIN

What about your mother?

JENNY

She's beaming!

ERIN

She has no idea!

JENNY

My mother has a lot of ideas!

ERIN

Does she have any idea how you feel?

JENNY

She knows I've always been into Alex! She knows she loves his parents! She knows my father needs him! She knows it's good for everyone!

ERIN

Like I said! She has no idea! Yet!

JENNY

You're gonna tell her I don't want to marry Alex? She'll just look past you and put her hand on my shoulder! And she'll be right! I'll agree with her! I do agree with her!

ERIN

Then why are you here like this?

JENNY

I just got some shit to work out but that's normal! It's a big deal, marriage!

ERIN

Especially this marriage!

JENNY

Especially: this: MARRIAGE!

*A swell in the dancing, if you can believe it could get any bigger. At its peak a herd of deer fly through the club like a storm of locusts.*

*At the bar. JENNY punctuates most of her lines with a shot of something strong. By the end of the scene it should be amazing how much she has put back.*

JENNY (cont'd)

Besides. If what you want is for me to make my own decisions. I've done that. I came. I could have refused.

ERIN

Should have. Should have refused.

JENNY

I'm not you, Erin. I don't have your issues.

ERIN

Ah! That's what I am to you? Issues?

JENNY

-Look I'm sorry. I don't want to offend you. But I didn't live your life. What's important to you doesn't have to be important to me. And why is it so important to you that it be? My life will never fix yours.

ERIN

My life isn't broken.

JENNY

Oh! Right!

ERIN

Not since I found my purpose.

JENNY

Right and that's what?

ERIN

I am a divinity of retribution.

JENNY

Sweet.

ERIN

You have no purpose.

JENNY

-And when I find it it might not be yours.

ERIN

-But when you do finally embrace your purpose, You will be in a position to make things happen. You are In a Position: to Make Things Happen. To waste that is a crime.



JENNY

Against who.

ERIN

Everyone who ISN'T in your position. You have a responsibility-

JENNY

-To marry Alex! In two days! That's my responsibility for now, and I'll drink to THAT.

*ERIN slaps the shot glass out of JENNY'S hand, grabs her by the face and looks her straight in the eye. The loud music either disappears entirely or goes back deep inside the giant head.*

ERIN

I'm going to say this once. And what I'm going to say will involve things you already know. But you're going to listen anyway. What I'm going to say will also include questions, which you will consider rhetorical for the moment but one day you Will Answer Them. Otherwise you will continue answering to me; I'll follow you to the ends; Understand? Ahp! Rhetorical. ... Now. Why is it I have to grab your FACE, to make you pay attention? Something to think about. Also. Why am I someone who Grabs a Person's Face to ensure she pays attention? Because I know the power of grabbing faces. When my father grabbed my mother's face. She paid attention. When my father grabbed my face. I paid attention. I learned how to grab people by the face from my father. Now my father: he grabbed my mother's face and he grabbed my face for very different reasons than I now grab your face. With regard to my mother, he grabbed her face to hold her in place while he claimed his rights as a husband. You'd think I'd be grateful but I'd rather have been conceived under other circumstances. Later he grabbed my face because my mother had gone face first into hell, and my sweet little face reminded him of all his crimes. And whereas my mother could conceive me, my father couldn't conceive of anything but to push my sweet face in the pain of his regret. I understand him. But I don't agree with him. He should have found another way. He should have been a better man and left my face alone. But he didn't. Anything like that ever happen to you? You can answer that one.

JENNY

I'm sorry.

ERIN

It was a yes or no question.

JENNY

It was a rhetorical question and you know the answer is No.

ERIN

Good. Next. You got an education without having to get a job or take out a loan from Hades to pay for it. After classes, at night, you sat on a good mattress in the prepaid dorm room your parents rented for you so you could feel like One Of The People, and from your bed you blogged about feminism and how men should do this and men should do that, and while you were uploading all this an undocumented man was cleaning the bathroom stalls of your building and sending the money he makes across the border to his family. But this never complicated your thinking. Then one sunny weekend afternoon you shoplifted some lipstick because it felt exciting, not because your single father was a face-grabber who spent all his money on cheap wine and you needed that bag of chips you stole for dinner. So you are right. Things are complicated. There is so much that's wrong we can't begin to fix it all. But I'M doing what I can by grabbing your face and telling you not to marry a man you've never even kissed in order to keep your Father's approval ratings up, a numbers game that will inevitably shred several thousand women and children with shrapnel. Whereas YOU could use your Father's approval ratings to DO something with yourself, by which I mean do something for someone else.

JENNY

Why can't I marry Alex AND do something for someone else?

*ERIN slaps JENNY'S face lightly and re-grabs it, then:*

ERIN

If you have to marry anyone at all, why don't you marry someone you KNOW rather than someone you know OF? Secondly, if you marry him tomorrow you'll have gone straight from Father's Daughter to Husband's Wife. Be Jenny. Even for a minute. Just be Jenny. All on her own. Who is SHE? What can SHE do? Who IS this person?

JENNY

Are you asking me?

ERIN

I'm telling you.

JENNY

You haven't told me anything! Do WHAT for someone else? Huh? Tell me! Do WHAT for someone else? ...Huh? ...What!

*ERIN takes up one of JENNY's remaining shot glasses...*

ERIN

You better figure that out before you fall down.

*...and tosses down a shot, plants a kiss on JENNY's mouth, then fades into the dark and ominous dancing.*

*JENNY alone:*

JENNY

You don't know me. You don't know what I got. Up my sleeve. Daddy's little princess is gonna shake yer fury shit UP!

*The dancing now seems to tower over JENNY. SHE rises to it. She's amazing.*

*A jet plane rips by overhead and is quite suddenly destroyed by a jarring blast of wind that knocks the lights out in The Oasis.*

**ARGOS INTERNATIONAL - DEPARTURES**

*Jenny's mother, CLARICE, on the phone in a military airport VIP lounge.*

CLARICE

What's going on?

What was all that noise in the background then?

Well tell your sister not to worry, your Father will be home soon.

I know, Oliver, I wish you and Elly could have come too. It was so last minute.

I know, but under the circumstances. You understand. I'll make sure Jenny knows how much you wanted to be here. I'm sure she does know.

I'll tell your Father he'll be glad to hear that. Tell Elly he misses her too. Now Oliver my flight is going to leave soon so mama's going to say goodbye, okay?

I love you, darling.

Oliver did you hear me?

Will you tell your sister I love her too please.

(MORE)

CLARICE (cont'd)

Oliver did you hear me? Tell Elly I love her too?

Thank you.

Oliver you know you could tell mama YOU love HER every once in a while. Even better, try to beat me to it sometime will you? I'd kill anything for you. You know that.

Well I would. Don't make me prove it.

Thank you.

Goodbye sweetie.

*SHE hangs up. Her smile fades to a long-standing sadness that she's unfortunately rather accustomed to. After a moment she shakes it off with a deep breath, picks up her phone again and dials.*

CLARICE (cont'd)

Hello darling do you have a minute?

Well I'll make it quick. This is all happening so fast and I understand why but I want to make sure everything is beautiful for Genia. She has to have a beautiful wedding. Especially under the circumstances. She has to feel it's for her and anyway she's our first so I want it to be beautiful. Did you hire the people I suggested?

Are they on it? Have you seen what they're doing?

I know that, Gus, but Genia is your daughter. You have an entire fleet of people to strategize for you. Genia only has one father: You.

Gus?

August, can you hear me?

You know this is going to be stressful. It's terrible, really, if Alexander has to fly off for you before going on a honeymoon with Genia. Can't you do without him, at least on the first wave? What if something happens?

Of course I'm going to worry and I KNOW he's the best but he's about to be our daughter's husband.

(MORE)

CLARICE (cont'd)

What's that?

She seemed excited when she left, yes. How does she seem to you?

Oh she did. Well hopefully she had a good time. Have you seen her yet this morning?

Well it's good she gets some rest. Check in with her though when you see her.

I think she does love him yes. Or she wants to. She always has. But they have to get to know each other. (*confirming:*) And if you think he loves her too...?

I know. But he's not spent much time with her. The families have talked about this for years but that doesn't mean-

I'm not arguing they shouldn't get married. I know what a good thing it will be right now, for everyone. For you.

-Yes yes yes you don't need to defend yourself I'm on your side, but Genia-

She's OUR daughter, Gus. She is the nation's daughter but she's Our Daughter. On her wedding day, we Have to remember this.

I know but the way you talk sometimes I think it doesn't hurt to remind you. What do you want to be remembered for anyway, when all is said and done?

Well I don't think so. I think people ALSO remember leaders for their humanity. You're not just the leader of a nation; you're a father and a husband. People WILL remember that.

I'LL remember it. How about that.

Okay.

Soon, yes. I should board. I'll see you in a few hours. I love you.

I said I love you.

(MORE)

CLARICE (cont'd)

Honey I don't care WHO is in the office you can say I love you to your wife in front of them.

There. Did anyone jump ship? I doubt it. What is wrong with the men in this family.

Okay. Good luck. Remember what's important.

(good humored:) Blah blah. Goodbye.

*SHE hangs up. And again her smile fades to something uneasy. She stands there for a moment. A passenger jet rattles by overhead a bit too ominously and SHE looks up at it.*

#### **A SANDY SHORE**

*Sounds of the beach. The breeze is faint music. The atmosphere is either romantic or unsettling - hard to tell, not enough information.*

*JENNY is passed out. The sand next to her begins to move. SHE wakes up and notices. CYMON emerges carefully from underneath it, looking out at the sea intently and patiently. JENNY is looking at him. CYMON turns and looks at her. HE and JENNY stare at one another for a moment. JENNY slaps her cheek a few times. When she's done:*

CYMON

Ouch.

JENNY

-Oh! You're real.

CYMON

Why are you hitting yourself?

JENNY

Sorry. I didn't mean to disturb you. ...Is this your-? Are you a-?

CYMON

...What?

JENNY

Do you have somewhere to live?

CYMON

(of course:) Mm.

JENNY

Okay. I thought maybe you were-...

CYMON

...What.

JENNY

A Homeless. Or. Maybe.

*CYMON stares at JENNY. JENNY looks around to get her bearings.*

JENNY (cont'd)

Do you know this area? Do you live near here?

CYMON

I live in Aulis.

JENNY

Right. -Wait, are we not in Aulis?

CYMON

This is Aulis.

JENNY

Good! THAT woulda been... a trip.

*JENNY looks around, glad to be still in Aulis but discomfited by not knowing how she got here.*

CYMON

...Are YOU homeless?

JENNY

No. Hung over.

CYMON

"Hung over"?

JENNY

...From drinking?

*...CYMON stares at her a moment longer, then looks back out at the water. ...JENNY regards him for a moment, then looks out at the water too. A fighter jet zooms overhead and just as suddenly gets slapped upside the face by a fist of wind and goes down.*

JENNY (cont'd)

Ah! What the hell was that?

CYMON

Every time an Angry Plane flies over the water, now the wind hits it. I don't know why they keep trying. Waste of planes. Waste of pilots too. Stubborn.

JENNY

Should we do something?

CYMON

A boat always comes.

JENNY

That was so violent. I can't believe we just saw that happen. ...Now everything's quiet and beautiful again, like nothing just happened.

*CYMON hasn't moved. JENNY notes that. JENNY looks up and down the beach.*

JENNY (cont'd)

It's dangerous here. Right?

*CYMON doesn't move or respond.*

JENNY (cont'd)

...Did you happen to see another woman? This tall? \_\_\_\_\_ hair? Scar face? My friend, she was with me.

CYMON

There's a field of Angry Planes that way. Nobody comes here.

JENNY

Okay. Well. Nice to have met you. Can you tell me which way I should walk? To get somewhere?

CYMON

Where.

JENNY

Civilization.

CYMON

Where?

JENNY

*(to him but kinda to herself:)* ...Back to Argos.

CYMON

Maybe walk and you'll find it.



JENNY

(obviously:) Well. I'd take a plane. Huh!

*JENNY's laughing there with a half-hearted sarcasm.*

CYMON

I wouldn't take a plane.

*CYMON gestures in the direction the plane went down.*

JENNY

Yeah! ...Yeah.

*JENNY begins to feel overwhelmed. CYMON watches her.*

JENNY (cont'd)

Sorry. I think I'm still drunk. I had a long night. I've got to go.

*JENNY doesn't move.*

JENNY (cont'd)

...I don't want to get married where am I going?

CYMON

Sit there. There won't be another plane for a while. They're learning.

*JENNY sits down before she falls down.*

CYMON (cont'd)

Why are you wearing like that?

JENNY

I went out last night. Not very convenient for the beach. I didn't plan on coming here. ...Where DO you live?

CYMON

Aulis.

JENNY

Where in Aulis.

CYMON

Here.

JENNY

What on this beach?

CYMON

Mm.

JENNY

You didn't just crash here last night?

CYMON

I sleep here.

JENNY

What every night?

Mm.

JENNY

EVERY night. But you're not homeless.

*CYMON indicates the beach:*

CYMON

Aulis is my home. Since my mother went.

JENNY

You're mother...?

CYMON

Went.

JENNY

...Died?

*CYMON does not respond but keeps looking out at the ocean. HE pushes some sand over and around his legs.*

CYMON

...In some stories, children are animals, and mothers are earth.

JENNY

...Is she buried here?

CYMON

There.

*The ocean.*

CYMON (cont'd)

She died: there.

*CYMON has pointed carefully to the exact spot he's been keeping his eye on.*

JENNY

She drowned. ...I'm sorry.

*CYMON looks at her.*

CYMON  
You didn't do it.

JENNY  
...No.

CYMON  
She drowned herSELF.

JENNY  
That's terrible.

CYMON  
Mm. My father was from Chalcis across that water. He loved my mother. She loved him back. Their parents didn't like it, she said. He tried to swim to us here and he drowned. She swam out to where he drowned, and she drowned herself.

JENNY  
(*sincerely:*) Oh. At least it's romantic.

CYMON  
What?

JENNY  
I didn't- I'm sorry.

CYMON  
You didn't do it.

JENNY  
I know. I'm just saying. I feel bad. For you.

CYMON  
...What's "Romantic."

JENNY  
I didn't mean anything by it. I'm sorry for your loss.

CYMON  
What does "Romantic" mean.

JENNY  
Look I said I was sorry.

CYMON  
Six times. You didn't do anything. DID you do something?

JENNY  
-No I haven't done anything!

CYMON  
Then why are you sorry six times?

JENNY  
Eh- I just...

CYMON  
What's Romantic.

JENNY  
...You don't know what the word Romantic means.

CYMON  
(*sincerely:*) No.

JENNY  
...Romantic is. Foreign travel. Dancing. Surprise flowers.  
Certain songs. Finger tips. This beach is romantic. The ocean  
is romantic. I can see why you like to stare at it. ...What  
do you do normally?

CYMON  
Watch the water.

JENNY  
No I mean for a living.

CYMON  
I watch the water.

JENNY  
That's it?

CYMON  
...

JENNY  
Since she drowned?

CYMON  
Mm.

JENNY  
Every day.

CYMON  
Mm.

JENNY  
HOW old were you when she drowned?

*CYMON puts his hand at about how tall he was when his mother drowned.*

CYMON

About that much?

JENNY

You've been here Every Day since then.

CYMON

I don't want to miss her.

JENNY

It sounds like you do miss her.

*CYMON looks at JENNY abruptly, not sure what she means at first. Then he works it out.*

CYMON

I miss her, Mm. So I don't want to MISS her.

*Pointing toward the ocean.*

JENNY

Miss her do what?

CYMON

Be changed. Maybe she'll come back as a fish. Or a bird. Or some ocean thing.

*CYMON pronounces "some ocean thing" as if it meant "really beautiful."*

JENNY

I think if that was going to happen it would have by now.

*CYMON keeps his eyes on the ocean. But it's clear he didn't like what JENNY said.*

CYMON

My mother is the water and the sand. She covers me every night. And she washes me every day. And one day a God will bring her back as a bird or a fish. Something ocean.

JENNY

But if she's the water and the sand, then she's already been transformed.

CYMON

That's first. We're water, or sand, or air. Then we become animals. Then people. Then Gods.

(MORE)

CYMON (cont'd)

When she becomes an animal I'll be here to take care of her until she becomes a person again.

JENNY

You know...

*JENNY decides not to say what she was going to say:*

JENNY (cont'd)

Well. You're a very devoted son. You don't get lonely? You never want to go somewhere else, have fun...?

*CYMON scrunches up his brow a bit, keeps looking at the ocean.*

JENNY (cont'd)

Why do you say Nothing so much and just look away. Some people might think it's rude.

CYMON

I don't understand what you say sometimes.

JENNY

Well: You could TELL me that. Rather than leave me hanging.

*CYMON doesn't respond and looks at the ocean.*

JENNY (cont'd)

Oh I'm sorry, did you not understand that either?

CYMON

Hanging?

JENNY

Hanging? You don't know the phrase "leave me hanging?" Do you know what "leave me" means?

*CYMON doesn't respond and looks out at the ocean, having been affected by the question.*

JENNY (cont'd)

So that's a no?

CYMON

I know what "leave me" means.

*JENNY gets it.*

JENNY

Right. Sorr- Er, right... So. Leave Me Hanging, the phrase, means leaving me in suspense.

(MORE)

JENNY (cont'd)

Or, when you say something that makes someone curious, and then you don't tell them more and so they're waiting eagerly to hear the rest. "Hanging," by itself ALSO means when you hang something in the air, like from a branch or a ceiling. Or you can Hang someone. Because they did a bad thing. So you punish them. Or. You can be hanging on the edge of a cliff, which usually means by your fingers, holding on. You can be Hanging On For Dear Life, which could refer to any number of situations but usually a wild situation that someone or something else is in control of. That pilot was probably hanging on for dear life... You can Hang Out on a beach. Which is what you do. You can Let It All Hang Out, which means, you're just gonna be who you are, no apologies.

CYMON

Hung over for dear life?

JENNY

Huh! No. HANG on for dear life. Hung OVER is when you drink a LOT and you wake up the next morning on a beach feeling sick and strange.

CYMON

Hang over.

JENNY

Then it's a noun. You HAVE a Hang Over, noun. You ARE Hung Over, -adjective? Verb. ...You ever been hung over? Had a hang over? Probably not. It's not very Romantic.

CYMON

"Foreign travel. Dancing. Surprise flowers. Certain songs. Finger tips. This beach is romantic. The ocean is romantic."

JENNY

Good.

*CYMON looks at JENNY with what could be said to be a smile if one looked closely enough. CYMON looks at JENNY'S breasts.*

CYMON

My mother had those.

JENNY

Okay. So maybe I'll go.

*CYMON gently reaches toward JENNY with the apparent intent to draw her breasts to him. SHE shoves his hands away abruptly.*

JENNY (cont'd)

Hey! Excuse me! Asshole!

CYMON

...My mother had those.

JENNY

Fucking men want women to be their mothers or their whores.  
I'm not your stupid mother!

CYMON

...My mother is warm like sand, and strong like the ocean.  
She could snap you like twigs. You couldn't be my mother.

JENNY

I could be your mother. You can't snap me. I can Be a Mother.  
I notice you didn't say I couldn't be your whore. Men are  
born with rape in their knuckles and they think women are  
fruit for them to squeeze and crush. Hear that? I wrote that!  
That war plane? It was probably going out to bomb some women  
who didn't do anything but marry a mistake and bear his  
babies.

CYMON

I don't know what you're saying.

JENNY

You don't know shit. Grabbing me like I'm your slut.

CYMON

I don't know what slut is.

JENNY

Well don't expect me to teach you that one.

*CYMON looks back at the ocean.*

JENNY (cont'd)

Hey! Don't look away from me. I said don't expect me to teach  
you. Got it? I'm getting married. Hear me? ...So hands off.  
...Got it?

*...JENNY looks at the ocean for a moment. Then suddenly  
back to Cymon:*

JENNY (cont'd)

Do you know who I am? That was one of my father's planes. It  
was probably looking for me. Do you know what that means?

*CYMON considers JENNY for a moment.*



CYMON

I'm Cymon.

JENNY

...Call me Jenny.

*CYMON smiles as he looks at JENNY for another moment, then back to the ocean. JENNY looks at the ocean too.*

JENNY (cont'd)

...I'm getting married tomorrow.

*Still at the ocean.*

JENNY (cont'd)

...Have you had sex before?

*No answer or movement. JENNY looks at CYMON.*

JENNY (cont'd)

...Do you know what sex is?

*CYMON looks at JENNY, shakes his head.*

JENNY (cont'd)

When two people...

*JENNY laughs at the absurdity of explaining sex to this weirdo she's just met on a beach.*

JENNY (cont'd)

Uhm. When you tried to touch me? Some people do that when they want t'- have sex. They touch each other. And it feels good. Is the idea. I've never done it. -I'm not suggesting anything.

*CYMON is still looking at JENNY. CYMON reaches out gently and un-selfconsciously with one hand and touches one of JENNY's breasts. SHE keeps her eye on him and lets him do it for a moment before SHE...*

JENNY (cont'd)

Okay.

*...gently pushes his hand away. SHE's still got her eye on him. CYMON looks back to the ocean. After a moment CYMON puts his hand between his legs. JENNY stops him less gently with:*

JENNY (cont'd)

Okay.

CYMON

It's the good feeling to do like this.

JENNY

Yeah, I know what you're doing. Don't please.

CYMON

Why?

JENNY

Because it's disgusting.

*CYMON stops and squints a bit at her.*

JENNY (cont'd)

Disgusting? It means offensive. Rude. Not good. What you were doing.

CYMON

It's the good feeling.

JENNY

It may be the good feeling but it's rude, okay? ...Rude? Not good. NOT good.

*CYMON is confused. HE looks away, thinks, then tries touching himself to test her theory. JENNY watches motionless. What Cymon is doing starts to work.*

JENNY (cont'd)

Excuse me!

*CYMON continues. JENNY remains paralyzed. ...Eventually quietly:*

JENNY (cont'd)

Could you stop please.

*JENNY continues to watch as CYMON finishes. It seems very natural on him. Not at all like the movies JENNY has watched. CYMON considers for a moment, then:*

CYMON

You're wrong, it IS good. ...Try it.

JENNY

No!

*CYMON's attention goes back to the ocean. JENNY sits there in her stew of shock, curiosity, embarrassment, and excitement.*

JENNY (cont'd)

Do you do anything else but sleep, look at the water, and touch yourself?

CYMON

I eat.

JENNY

What?

CYMON

Plants in the water. Crabs. I always apologize to the crabs. In case they're someone's children.

JENNY

And this is what you've done since you were this high. Nothing else.

CYMON

I make stories. Like my mother used to tell.

JENNY

Do you have any memorized?

CYMON

Memorized?

JENNY

Could you tell me a story?

CYMON

...There was a crab. He had no mother or father. He went looking for something to eat. He met a great wave, and she said where are you going. He said I'm looking for something to eat. She said why don't you go to the sand and look for a deer. He went to the sand and found a deer. His claws could not hold it. And the deer said I'M looking for something to eat too. The crab took the deer to the water, and they ate plants until the sun went to sleep.

*JENNY claps lightly.*

JENNY

Thank you.

CYMON

Now you tell me one.

JENNY

Oh. I can't think of any. ...I could teach you a dance. ...Dance? It's when you move to music? ...Here:

*JENNY stands and puts out her hand. CYMON stands without taking her hand and stares at her. JENNY starts to teach him to dance.*

JENNY (cont'd)

Put this hand here. This hand here. Now we step like this. No. More like this. Good. No. Here. And then duh, duh, DUH.

*JENNY takes CYMON through a formal partner dance of some kind. CYMON is coordinated and very in his body but of course doesn't do anything conventional. HE starts to improvise a little with made up movements.*

JENNY (cont'd)

Oh! That's interesting. Ok. Here. Oh. Ok.

*The sounds of nature we've been hearing somehow make music to accompany JENNY and CYMON as they improvise weird movements like a kid would make. JENNY contributes a certain amount of formal structure and CYMON works off it in weird directions. THEY follow each other in this way and eventually end it.*

JENNY (cont'd)

That was great! Did you learn that? Did your mother teach you that?

CYMON

No.

JENNY

Well thank you. That was so fun.

*CYMON smiles and sits to watch the ocean again. JENNY is left standing alone on the dance floor, as it were. Standing there, SHE looks at him.*

JENNY (cont'd)

Cymon. If you wanted to touch me. You could. You can put your hands on me. If you want. Like you did earlier?

*CYMON looks at her.*

JENNY (cont'd)

Only if you want.

*CYMON gets up on his knees and walks on them to her. JENNY awkwardly puts her hands out for him to take. CYMON takes the finger tips of one of JENNY's hands and bites them lightly as if to test them.*

JENNY (cont'd)

Ow.

*It didn't hurt. From there CYMON moves his hands curiously and slowly over her body. Now and then he bites an odd place. Sometimes he smells her in long inhales. When his hands pass over her lips or breasts or genitals it's with the same curiosity as any other part of her. If at times he pulls at her strongly and it even hurts a bit, it's never aggressive and JENNY seems to recognize this. At some point in this CYMON pulls JENNY to the ground. By the end SHE is draped across HIS lap and they are both staring at the ocean. No sex has happened. But it's been very sensual.*

JENNY (cont'd)

I need to go. Do you want to come with me?

CYMON

I'm waiting for my mother to become a bird or a fish.

JENNY

You're a very devoted son. I would have thought someone like you would be feral.

CYMON

Feral?

JENNY

It means. A wild animal. Only not a nice animal like a crab or a deer. An animal that's been lonely and is scared and angry.

CYMON

Like the Angry Planes.

*The innocent irony of that isn't lost on JENNY:*

JENNY

Like the Angry Planes.

*JENNY and CYMON continue to watch the ocean together. JENNY closes her eyes. A wave washes away the sunlight and leaves only tiny stars. A shooting star falls at the sound of the next wave. And a third wave crests into a passenger jet rattling by overhead.*

#### **ARGOS INTERNATIONAL - ARRIVALS**

*CLARICE enters with her rolling suitcase and on her phone, not happy:*

CLARICE

I understand THAT. What I don't understand is why I was re-routed back to Argos, and why I wasn't told it was happening until we landed. So whatever meeting my husband is in you can interrupt it, we have our daughter's wedding to postpone and at the last minute that is no small task.

Young man, I KNOW you can deliver a message for me. I need to talk to my husband about our daughter's wedding. If I go back and forth through you it will take five times longer, no offense it's the nature of middle men. This wedding is happening tomorrow. WAS happening tomorrow, it's not happening without me. So please get in there and tell him to turn his fucking phone on.

I know you're just the messenger. BELIEVE me. And I actually do want you to use the word "fucking." "Turn your fucking phone on," that's what I want you to say to him got it?

He'll know who it's from immediately, you'll be fine.

-No don't write it down, you can remember this. "Turn your fucking phone on." To his face.

-Eh! To his face!

Thank you. Also I need you to get a hold of Iphigenia. I can't reach her either and that worries me. Contact her Detail and have them have her call me - DIRECTLY, I don't want a message through someone else I want to talk to HER. Okay?

Thank you. So I'm going to hang up with you now and if my husband doesn't call me within a few minutes time then I'll know you don't have the balls required to do your job.

Don't apologize. Deliver any message entrusted to you and you'll never have NEED to apologize. Of course if there is something you know that I should, and if THAT'S why this exchange has been so tediously complicated, then perhaps we have more to talk about?

You're sure? Clearly I don't care for delays so if there is something I'm going to find out eventually anyway and you know what it is just tell me now and save us both the consequences.

(MORE)

CLARICE (cont'd)

Because you've always been at least polite I'm going to trust that is true, thank you. I'll look forward to hearing from The King.

Thank YOU.

*CLARICE hangs up just as ALEX is coming by with his own rolling suitcase. HE looks like a cross between a high ranking military pilot and a rock star.*

CLARICE (cont'd)

Alexander!

ALEX

My Lady, whom do my eyes meet: A woman peerless in loveliness.

CLARICE

Oh be quiet and help me, Alexander. I was JUST en route to Aulis and my jet was turned back. My pilot said Bad Winds.

ALEX

Bad winds.

CLARICE

Yes, but there'd been no turbulence whatsoever. When I pointed that out, and also that he had the eyes of a liar, he told me it was "a high level military matter and all I have for you at the moment is Bad Wind." In a way he was right.

ALEX

Bad wind between here and Aulis?

CLARICE

Do you know what's going on?

ALEX

The Wind Problem only occurs over the Aegean Sea, as far as I know. Not a single plane at Aulis has been able to even cross the GULF without getting struck down immediately. But I've been given no update about problems over land. And I would have if there were any.

CLARICE

You're headed to Aulis now I assume.

ALEX

Yes, to meet with the King in just three hours, so with apologies my Lady I'm afraid I have to cut this short. He now says we'll be able to circumnavigate The Wind Problem by tomorrow evening, so, I anticipate a late night in the strategy room.

CLARICE

The strategy room? Alex,

*CLARICE takes ALEX's hand:*

CLARICE (cont'd)

you can strategize after tomorrow I think?

ALEX

AFTER tomorrow?

CLARICE

Get your rest tonight and I'll look forward to seeing you in the GROVE tomorrow evening, handsome as ever. I've been waiting to see you there for years. Not to embarrass you too much.

ALEX

I don't embarrass easily, my Lady.

CLARICE

I think you can call me Clarice now.

*ALEX steps closer to HER:*

ALEX

Clarice. I don't want to make assumptions.

CLARICE

About?

ALEX

About why you're holding my hand and planning to see me in the Grove tomorrow evening as handsome as ever.

CLARICE

...The wedding.

ALEX

...The wedding.

CLARICE

...I know it all came together very quickly. You don't have to be shy with me, I'm two hundred percent in favor of it, your mother is too, and I know Jenny is over the moon. So long as you care for Jenny and feel it's right for you as well...?

ALEX

You seem to be saying that this wedding is mine and Iphigenia's.



*CLARICE stares at ALEX for a moment, then gets on her phone and dials, then looks back at ALEX while she waits... No answer:*

CLARICE

Fucker.

*CLARICE dials another number.*

CLARICE (cont'd)

...So as it turns out you DON'T have the balls required to do your job. My husband hasn't called me and he's still not answering his phone. There's an axe with your neck's name on it if this doesn't change in ten, nine, eight, seven, six yes?

Thank you.

*CLARICE hangs up.*

CLARICE (cont'd)

Why are you going to Aulis.

ALEX

The King asked me to come immediately. There's a break in the Wind Problem and he believes we'll be able to move on Troy by tomorrow evening.

CLARICE

Fucker!

ALEX

...May I still call you Clarice?

CLARICE

-My husband didn't give you our daughter Genia's hand in marriage? and ask you to fly to Aulis for the wedding?

ALEX

No! Iphigenia's hand in marriage?

CLARICE

Yes her hand in marriage! This isn't why you're here? to get on a plane fly to Aulis and marry My Daughter!

ALEX

...This is the first I've heard of it. (*something between horror and happiness:*) I don't know what to say.

CLARICE

I know exactly what to say. And to whom. There's no Bad Wind between here and Aulis. The only bad wind is blowing through my husband's brain! When are you leaving.

ALEX

As soon as I board.

CLARICE

You're taking me with you. The King has lied to you, my husband has lied to me, and Genia's father has lied to her.

ALEX

There's something funny going on.

CLARICE

Funny? It's fucking hysterical!

*CLARICE turns and heads to board the plane. ALEX gestures as says after her:*

ALEX

Follow me!

*...and follows. Sound of a private jet passing in great haste above.*

## **A MEADOW**

*Sounds of a meadow. The breeze is faint music. The atmosphere is either contemplative or unsettling - hard to tell, not enough information.*

*JENNY stands in the middle of the meadow, her mind working slowly, split between nature and her thoughts.*

*A DEER with an arrow lodged in its upper jaw enters, stops and looks at JENNY. JENNY looks at the DEER.*

*...The DEER walks slowly around the meadow, scoping it out carefully with an eye and ear always on JENNY, who watches transfixed. Eventually the DEER stops and is looking fully at JENNY again.*

JENNY

Hello, deer.

DEER

Hello.

Whaaat? JENNY

I said hello. DEER

Are you someone? JENNY

I'm a deer. DEER

WERE you someone? JENNY

...I'm a deer. DEER

(to herself:) Am I STILL drunk? JENNY

You're lost. DEER

You're a deer. JENNY

I am. DEER

You have an arrow in your face. JENNY

I do. DEER

Does it hurt? JENNY

No. DEER

It looks like it hurts. JENNY

It used to. DEER

It doesn't hurt anymore? JENNY

DEER

Sometimes when it rains.

JENNY

How long has it been there?

DEER

I don't know. Long enough it only hurts when it rains.

JENNY

Can you eat?

DEER

Yes. Sometimes I use it to get small sticks out of the way. So. It can be useful.

JENNY

Wow. That's very positive. If I had an arrow in my face I'd be really upset.

DEER

Oh I was. But what are yuh gonna do.

JENNY

Can I help you take it out?

DEER

It won't come out.

JENNY

Let me try.

*JENNY steps toward the DEER with her hand out and the DEER immediately steps away, poised to bolt.*

JENNY (cont'd)

-No no. Don't be afraid. I'm not going to hurt you.

*...JENNY steps forward again, and again the DEER starts away. A beat. The DEER decides to leave at a brisk walk.*

JENNY (cont'd)

No, wait, it's okay I won't touch it, don't go.

*The DEER remains, but at a distance, and very alert.*

JENNY (cont'd)

I only wanted to help you.

DEER

...

JENNY

I can help you pull it out.

DEER

...

JENNY

I have thumbs. Opposable thumbs. I can grab it and try to pull it out.

DEER

That will hurt.

JENNY

But then you won't have an arrow in your face.

DEER

I'm used to it. Thank you.

JENNY

But you're so beautiful. It makes me sad.

DEER

...

JENNY

I just met this guy who told me a story about a deer. Maybe you know him? He lives on the beach? He's waiting for his mother? ...No? ...He told me his mother drowned when he was a kid, and he's been sitting on that beach ever since, waiting for her to come back as a fish or sea bird. That's why I asked if maybe YOU had been somebody once. I didn't want to tell him: only people of importance- or- not common people, are transformed by the Gods when they die. So his mother won't ever be coming back in the form of anything. He's wasted his life waiting for nothing. If she's not still at the bottom of the gulf, MAYBE over all the years she's gradually floated in with the tides and become part of the sand. Kind of gross, but. It's the best an Average Person can hope for. And it's not bad I'm not saying it's bad; it's just how it is. I felt bad for him. He was really nice.

*The DEER paws the ground and lets out a huff, maybe impatiently.*

JENNY (cont'd)

...Anyway he told me a story about a deer.

DEER

...

JENNY

You've stopped saying anything.

DEER

What do you want me to say?

JENNY

Do you have a name?

DEER

I'm a deer.

JENNY

I'm Iphigenia. You can call me Jenny if you want.

DEER

...

JENNY

Or not. ...Iphigenia means "strong born," so I've always been really healthy. Until now. YOU must be healthy, you seem to have a pretty thick skin anyway. ...Jenny is a nickname. My family and friends call me Jenny. My parents call me Genia most of the time. ...You really don't have to be afraid of me. I'm not going to hurt you, I promise.

DEER

One of you stuck THIS in me. He seemed friendly at first. Walked up to me slowly.

JENNY

I understand. Whoever he was, I'm not like him. I don't kill animals.

DEER

What do you eat?

JENNY

Well, okay, I eat meat. But I don't kill the animals. I don't go out hunting.

DEER

Everyone's got to eat.

JENNY

Are you being sarcastic?

DEER

No. It's true: Everyone has to eat. But I didn't want an arrow in my face.

JENNY

I don't understand why you won't let me help you pull it out then. I'm not trying to trick you. I actually want to do something to help.

DEER

It doesn't hurt anymore. It's not a problem for me.

JENNY

Wasn't it traumatic when it happened though? Having it stuck in your face doesn't remind you of it constantly? We could pull it out and throw it away and you wouldn't have to be living with this terrible memory stuck in your face at every waking moment.

DEER

I actually don't think about it that much.

JENNY

I can't believe that. You're not mad? Aren't you angry? It's not right you should have to live with an arrow in your Face. It's in your face. It would never occur to me to just live with that and not want to do something about it.

DEER

It occurred to you to make it.

JENNY

I didn't make it.

DEER

I don't have opposable thumbs. It never would have occurred to me to think up a thing like this.

JENNY

Okay but I didn't invent arrows. And I don't use them.

DEER

You said you eat animals.

JENNY

I eat Meat. Everyone has to eat. You said that.

DEER

I know. I guess I am still a bit mad.

JENNY

Well you have every right to be. If you know what the guy looked like we can try to find him and punish him.

DEER

I don't want to find him.

JENNY

We could show him what he did to you. The life you've had to live.

DEER

It's better to run away.

JENNY

I do not agree.

DEER

It is better. Your thumbs give you an advantage: you can make things like this and get one into me from far off. But if you were to get close enough, and I couldn't run away, I'd kick your brains out.

JENNY

...Have you ever done that?

DEER

A dog backed me into a corner once.

JENNY

Did you kill it?

DEER

No it ran away.

JENNY

Would you have killed it?

DEER

If it didn't run away. *I* couldn't run away. I was in a corner.

JENNY

...Do you have children? Baby deer?

DEER

I've had one. The man that came with the dog killed her.

JENNY

I'm sorry. I know how that must feel.

DEER

You don't have children.

JENNY

How do you know?

DEER

I'd smell it if you had.



JENNY

That's amazing.

DEER

You have opposable thumbs, I have a good nose. My eyes are better than yours too. And if you ever tried to kick me I'd win. The dog knew that; saw my legs were longer than its teeth.

JENNY

This is amazing. I don't understand how this is happening if I'm not still drunk and you were never Somebody.

DEER

Maybe you're starting to get it.

JENNY

What. ...Get what.

DEER

You don't bluff very well.

JENNY

Bluff? Like put up a bluff? I'm not bluffing anything.

DEER

Yes you are. Just not very well. You're scared. You don't have to pretend you're not, I can smell it. It can be useful to also show what you've got in you. But that doesn't mean you have to pretend anything.

JENNY

Bluffing and pretending are the same thing.

DEER

I'm doing my best, it's your language. By bluff I mean showing what you've got even though you're afraid. Showing your fear AND your strength. Not pretending you don't have one or the other.

JENNY

...

DEER

But I understand. Pretending to be you is easier than being you. You should try not pretending. It might hurt at first. Like birth.

JENNY

That's not encouraging.

DEER

It hurts to give birth.

JENNY

I know that.

DEER

-Oh? Tell me. Show me the scars.

JENNY

...

DEER

It's all right. It hurts to be born too.

JENNY

That I can know. Not that I remember, but I assume I cried.

DEER

Well we're not born laughing are we.

JENNY

No, we die laughing.

*The DEER gives a small playful nod before:*

DEER

That's the best thing you've said.

JENNY

It is? Why's that.

DEER

...

JENNY

Why is that the best thing I've said? We die laughing? That's GOOD?

*The DEER begins to walk away, sniffing for food, no longer seeming to care about JENNY.*

JENNY (cont'd)

Hey. ...Hey! We die laughing? ...That's good?! ...We Die Laughing?! ...That's a tragedy! ...Ha! Ha! Ha!? ...HA! HA! HA!?

*The DEER glances back at JENNY, without particular notice, as if she were anything else in the meadow. Then the DEER exits.*

*JENNY is alone.*

*The sun goes out. Stars are in the sky, moving across it as if in time laps, with the roar of a planet turning on its axis. Or maybe it's that an unusual number of stars are falling.*

**THE STRATEGY ROOM AT AULIS**

*A conference table with chairs. On the table are files, and a multimedia remote control device.*

*AUGUST is alone, his attention glued to his thoughts. HIS back is to CLARICE as SHE bursts in, followed by ALEXANDER.*

AUGUST  
(*sharply:*) I said I'd let you know when I was ready.

CLARICE  
Ready for what.

AUGUST  
Clarice.

CLARICE  
August.

AUGUST  
Alexander.

ALEX  
Sir.

AUGUST  
Clarice I didn't expect-

CLARICE  
...Finish.

AUGUST  
Let's not talk here, we'll go to my office, Alexander if you can give us a moment.

CLARICE  
I need more than a moment to talk to my husband. Alexander should hear what his King has to say. And I think the Strategy Room is a perfectly suitable place for this conversation. Close the door Alexander.

ALEX  
I'll close the door.

*ALEXANDER closes the door.*

AUGUST

Clarice-

CLARICE

-Where's Genia. ...Where is Genia.

AUGUST

Genia didn't come home last night-

CLARICE

-What?

AUGUST

-She's here now. She gave her Detail the slip. They couldn't find her, but she showed up here about an hour ago. I'm told she's all right.

CLARICE

You're told?

AUGUST

I haven't seen her yet myself.

CLARICE

You haven't- Where are your fucking priorities?

AUGUST

-I was about to see her just now before you-

CLARICE

/ Your daughter, the Nation's Daughter, disappears the night before her wedding and then "shows up" the next day and you haven't seen her yet? Where do we start, the beginning middle or end? All three seem equally incomprehensible.

AUGUST

Alexander, do you mind stepping out for a moment.

CLARICE

-Alexander is staying right here. He needs to know what's happening as much as I do.

AUGUST

What do you know already.

ALEX

That I'm marrying Iphigenia.

AUGUST

SHE told you?

CLARICE

-I'm sorry did I spoil your surprise? Were you hoping to tell him yourself that you hadn't called him here to Circumnavigate The Wind Problem? that the Move on Troy was just a little ruse to get Alexander here so you could ambush him with our daughter's hand in marriage? I'm so sorry. You should have told me Genia's wedding was a cat in a bag.

AUGUST

...

CLARICE

You can still congratulate him, August.

ALEX

Thank you, Sir.

AUGUST

Clarice, I'm not sure what you think is happening-

CLARICE

-Why didn't Alexander know about his wedding. Why was my jet turned back. Why is Genia here in Aulis.

AUGUST

It's complicated.

CLARICE

UN-complicate it.

AUGUST

I wish I could.

CLARICE

You can begin by answering my questions.

AUGUST

-Clarice, this is very difficult for me!

CLARICE

For you! -Tell me, Gus.

AUGUST

/-For all of us! It's difficult for all of us. But it's my job to make impossible decisions in impossible situations.

CLARICE

That's right, poor King Agamemnon, making decisions. Tell us what you've decided today, we're all ears aren't we Alexander.

ALEX

I would like to know what's happening, yes. I thought I was coming here to strategize an escalation of the Move on Troy, given updates on the Wind Problem.

AUGUST

That's why you're here.

CLARICE

And the wedding?

AUGUST

There is no wedding.

CLARICE

That's right.

ALEX

-Not even a small one?

CLARICE

Why is Genia here.

AUGUST

To answer that I have to explain what's been developing in Troy.

*CLARICE gestures "be my guest."*

AUGUST (cont'd)

Alexander, you are here to lead the first wave in the Move on Troy.

ALEX

Your wife's pilot said her flight was turned back due to Bad Winds over land between Argos and Aulis.

AUGUST

That was the official word he was given to relay, yes. The situation with Troy has been changing very fast. But Artemis has not budged. Her Winds still only affect the land and sea between Troy and Aulis, and any attempt to move around the Aegean, whether south or north, fails.

ALEX

And do we know yet WHY Artemis is punishing Greece?

AUGUST

...No.

CLARICE

Do you know?

AUGUST

-Clarice.

CLARICE

-August? I know your eyes and face.

AUGUST

...As I said: things in Troy have been changing very fast. We now know Helen WAS taken against her will initially but Has Since taken up with Paris and supports Troy's aggression against Greece.

CLARICE

-I can't believe that.

AUGUST

We now have proof.

CLARICE

-She loved Menelaus and would never betray Greece. Whatever the Trojans are telling you is nonsense.

AUGUST

Helen told us herself. She's been sending us messages through them.

CLARICE

Through THEM.

AUGUST

She's made her intentions very clear.

ALEX

What does she say?

CLARICE

-I don't believe it.

AUGUST

Clarice, Troy has attacked Greece already by taking Helen and demanding we release proven criminals. And if the truth about Helen - Helen, wife of the King's brother, Menelaus - if HELEN going over to Paris and supporting Troy reaches the Greek public, our position is entirely undermined in the eyes of our people and the world.

CLARICE

That's pride. You and your brother's pride.

AUGUST

It's politics, Clarice, I'm sorry to correct you. The Greek people have no idea what we do.

(MORE)

AUGUST (cont'd)

And really they don't want to know. What the Greek people have overwhelmingly communicated to us they DO want is for their dear Helen to be returned to them safe and sound. And so they support the Move on Troy. If the Move on Troy were merely to secure the Aegean for Greece they would NOT support it. They have no idea what security actually means OR what it takes. But if Paris has kidnapped the most popular young wife and mother in Greece? It's as if he took their own young wives and mothers. And they want him dead.

CLARICE

-I understand, August. Nevertheless. I know Helen.

AUGUST

Do you.

CLARICE

Better than you or Menelaus ever would.

AUGUST

Then I guess you'll take her word for it?

*With that AUGUST steps over to the conference table, picks up the remote control device, aims it and presses play. Helen's messages are either audio recordings we hear or video messages projected. Either way, her voice is agitated but she's keeping it very contained:*

HELEN (V.O.)

They put me in a closet. I didn't know it was a closet at first. I was afraid. An hour, maybe two hours, they opened the door and spoke to me. He said they were Trojan. And that I was going to be held as a prisoner of war. That I'd be safe as long as Troy was safe. That if I tried to escape I'd be killed. If I made any noise I'd be beaten. He said you had committed crimes against Troy.

*AUGUST fast forwards and the recording squeals. Now Helen's voice is less agitated:*

HELEN (V.O.)

Honey, I'm okay. I had a few scrapes. But they washed them. I'm not being starved or beaten. Or unnecessarily frightened. These people aren't just a bunch of nuts. They've been very honest with me. They're perfectly willing to die for what they're doing. I want to get out of here but the only way I'm going to is if we do it their way. I am a prisoner of war. So are the Trojans held in Argos. They want Greece to free any Trojan refugees held in Greece, as well as feed the Grecian poor who are their brothers and sisters. I just hope I can get back to you soon. I just hope that you'll do what they say and do it quickly.



*AUGUST fast forwards and the recording squeals. Helen's voice is contemplative:*

HELEN (V.O.)

My first memory of my parents or any kind of family life start when I was nine years old. They hired nurses or governesses to take care of us because they didn't want to do it themselves. Everything from my upbringing was trying to make me declare allegiance to my parents' values and ideas.

*Fast forward:*

HELEN (V.O.)

I guess I'll just tell you, my politics are different from before. And so this creates all kinds of problems for me in terms of a defense.

*Quick fast forward:*

HELEN (V.O.)

I've been given the choice of, one, being released in a safe area, or two, joining the forces of the Trojan Army. I have chosen to stay and fight. Those people who still believe that I'm brainwashed or dead, I see no reason to further defend my position. I am a soldier in the Trojan Army.

*Fast forward. Helen's voice is very confident and clear:*

HELEN (V.O.)

This is Helen. Life is very precious to me. But I have no delusions that going to prison in Greece would keep me alive. And I would never choose to live the rest of my life surrounded by pigs like Menelaus and Agamemnon. Paris is the gentlest, most beautiful man I've ever known. He is an incredibly patient, loving and dedicated person. Before I got a reading light in the closet Paris read to me himself. I had a lot of good feelings for him before I was accepted into the Army. Neither Paris nor I have loved anyone like we love each other.

*Quick fast forward:*

HELEN (V.O.)

You need to back off now, and do what's asked of you. And what's asked of you - to free innocent people and feed those who are starving - is what is right. Greece is a terrorist state.

*Fast forward. Helen's voice is deeply contemplative. Some space on the recording before:*

HELEN (V.O.)

...For someone my age I've been through an awful lot...  
Yeah...

*More silence... AUGUST stops the recording.*

CLARICE

...She's been raped. It's insulting to anyone who's ever been raped to suggest that it could turn into a seduction and a love affair afterward, it's outrageous. She's been brainwashed. ... August? She's been brainwashed. Helen is not a traitor. ... August.

AUGUST

-We can't know that until we get her back.

CLARICE

We can't know that?

AUGUST

No-

CLARICE

-YOU can't know that. YOU can't. You've never been a prisoner of war. You've never been starved and kept up for days and brainwashed.

AUGUST

And you?

CLARICE

-YOU've never been raped, August.

AUGUST

...I haven't.

*CLARICE holds HIS gaze. Tense moment. AUGUST takes HER hand lightly. THEY stand there together. AUGUST let's HER hand go.*

CLARICE

How does this end.

AUGUST

We don't know yet. Hopefully with Helen's return and rehabilitation.

CLARICE

But we don't know yet.

AUGUST

We don't.

CLARICE

And so now tell me: why is Genia here.

*A still silence of anticipation and readying before:*

AUGUST

...Artemis demanded my eldest daughter.

CLARICE

Our eldest daughter?

AUGUST

She's to be sacrificed at dawn.

*AUGUST checks his watch briefly. ALEX too.*

CLARICE

Why our daughter.

AUGUST

...

CLARICE

August?

AUGUST

...

CLARICE

Gus, did you do something.

AUGUST

...

CLARICE

Did you do something.

AUGUST

...I killed a deer.

CLARICE

...A what?

AUGUST

I killed a deer.

ALEX

A deer?

CLARICE

An ordinary deer?

AUGUST

Yes. Nothing special. Just a deer.

CLARICE

For what reason?

AUGUST

NO reason. That's why we're here. Always Have a Reason.

CLARICE

That's the lesson? As long as you have a reason?

AUGUST

-You don't want to understand this situation.

CLARICE

Explain it to me better.

AUGUST

You'll only hear one thing.

CLARICE

Take Genia out of this.

AUGUST

It's too late.

CLARICE

Not as long as she's alive.

AUGUST

I said you won't hear it. There's no point. Go home. I tried to spare you and send you back.

CLARICE

-Oh thank you.

ALEX

I can save her. The sacrifice will be mine. I will marry her. Even Artemis would not be so cruel as to take a new bride in the blush of love.

CLARICE

-Oh God.

AUGUST

-Thank you Alexander, I don't think Artemis, goddess of virginity, will consider your sacrifice of much weight.

ALEX

I don't get to marry Iphigenia?

CLARICE

No!

ALEX

My Name was used to lure her and you both. It was his secret plan that I unknowingly bomb her en route to Troy. My name will forever be written in her blood if she dies. I never thought of her as a wife before. If my hand can save her, now I am willing!

AUGUST

Sit down.

*ALEX does immediately.*

AUGUST (cont'd)

Clarice. Sooner or later they're going to make a mistake. And we'll get them.

ALEX

Yes we will.

*CLARICE is powerfully restrained:*

CLARICE

You listen to me now. And I'll speak plainly to your teeth. I married you like we were going to - I thought - marry Genia to Alexander: A sensible marriage, good for everyone. A celebration to decorate a war-weary country. That my first husband died for it, I've buried. That my father rescued you and I was the healing gift, I've come to agree was a blessing. Not just for the country, but for me too, Gus. I got to know you and to love you. You're a good man if at times bewildered. And I've embraced this life. And I've shared in the pride as we've worked to gradually, step by step, vertebrae by vertebrae, stand Greece back up in confidence. And yet now, after all this, you would consider for even one moment tearing our first daughter from us. If a single person - not "The People," not "Policy" - if a PERSON were to ask you why, why did you kill your daughter? You would look this individual in the face and say what. I killed her for Helen? I killed her for a bucket of ocean water drawn from a map? I killed her for your security, would you tell this person? Or would you say, To be frank, I killed her for MY security? For my weakness, and lack of imagination? ... If you do this thing and Artemis ends her wind, if you then disappear in a war you have no idea how long, with what heart do you expect me to live in Argos? With what lungs do you expect me to speak on your behalf? With what eyes will I look at your empty chair. I'll HAVE no eyes to look at hers. No heart to hold her absence. No lungs to scream in her empty room.

(MORE)

CLARICE (cont'd)

And then your high office will be a hovel, and her grave will be my house and my temple. And if her brother and sister hate you I will not discourage them. And if you die in a Trojan hail of shrapnel, I Will give you One tear, Gus - shed at Genia's grave and kept in a vile to be delivered to yours. The memory festering in that single tear will be my gift to you, if you die in a war made possible by our daughter, whose life was Demanded for a deer you killed for sport.

*CLARICE and AUGUST are staring at one another. ALEX is staring at them. The lights in the Strategy Room go out, leaving only a single harsh light on in AUGUST'S conscience.*

#### **TEMPLE OF ARTEMIS AT AULIS**

*A simple, open room that feels at once comfortable and unnerving. JENNY in a chair. Opposite her is another chair. The two chairs seem to be lit by a pool of natural light coming from above. In the outskirts of this light is a wide, circular alter. There is a beautiful white dress draped neatly on the altar. There is a main door behind the empty chair, and a secondary door one might not notice behind the chair JENNY sits in.*

*The secondary door opens revealing light for a moment and it's ALEX. By the way he slips in it's clear he's not supposed to be there.*

JENNY

Alexander!

ALEX

We don't have a long time. Your father will be here soon.

JENNY

You're not supposed to see the bride before the wedding.

ALEX

I wish that was a problem for us in this moment.

JENNY

What do you mean?

ALEX

I don't know what you know.

JENNY

...

ALEX

-What do you know?

JENNY

I don't know.

ALEX

What do you think you're here for.

JENNY

Here? To speak with my father I was told. But in Aulis? To marry you. I was told.

ALEX

I'm sorry to be your messenger then. This is not the circumstance in which I'd hope for us to get to know each other.

JENNY

What's happening?

ALEX

Iphigenia.

JENNY

Call me Jenny.

*HE tries...*

ALEX

...I can't say it.

*ALEX touches his throat:*

ALEX (cont'd)

It's stuck. Under the circumstances it feels strange to refer to you so casually.

JENNY

What circumstances, what's going on?

ALEX

I wish it wasn't me telling you this.

JENNY

Telling me WHAT?

ALEX

Please know that I was at least as surprised as I'm sure you were, if not more, to be told our families wished us to marry.

JENNY

Surprised in a bad way?

ALEX

A Yes or No can't answer that question. And I've had even less time than you to think about it.

JENNY

What do you mean, when did they tell YOU?

ALEX

I only found out from the Queen, your Mother, this morning.

JENNY

This morning?!

ALEX

Yes, and in the same moment that SHE realized we were NOT to be married.

JENNY

Wait, what?

ALEX

And it was all confirmed by the King, your father, just an hour ago.

JENNY

I have no idea what you're telling me. Could you please be less confusing?

ALEX

Confusion is a difficult thing to be clear about.

JENNY

...You're right this is a weird way for us to get to know each other.

ALEX

So please be patient. And please know I am here with only good intentions and too little time.

JENNY

Okay?

ALEX

I was summoned by the King, your father, to come to Aulis immediately, due to updates in the Wind Problem that, he said, had escalated the Move on Troy. At the airfield in Argos this morning, as I was about to board my plane, I met your mother, the Queen.

(MORE)



ALEX (cont'd)

Her own flight had just been turned back. SHE told me she'd been on her way here for our wedding, and I told her that was the first I'd heard of it.

JENNY

What the fuck.

ALEX

Yes, this is taking too long, there's so much to say but we don't have time. In short you were not brought here to marry me. But now, under the circumstances, and because if I am honest EVEN under the circumstances I felt surprised by my heart's own leap at the prospect, I am here to marry You - if you'll have me.

JENNY

-Woah, what?

ALEX

And I suggest you do have me, under the circumstances.

JENNY

...

ALEX

-Which are: that Artemis Will Not lift the Wind Problem until your father sacrifices to her his eldest daughter. That's why you're here. By which I mean here:

*And on that ALEX indicates the altar.*

JENNY

...

ALEX

Iphigenia.

JENNY

...

ALEX

Jenny.

JENNY

Why does Artemis want ME?

ALEX

Because your father killed a deer.

JENNY

...A deer?

ALEX

Yes.

JENNY

What deer.

ALEX

An ordinary deer, he said.

JENNY

...Was it a baby deer?

ALEX

I have no idea, I'm sorry we don't have time for the fine points. Your father will be here very soon to make our decision for us if we do not AND if we do not take action on it.

JENNY

You want us to get married? How does that help me?

ALEX

Only the top advisors closest to the King know what Artemis has demanded, and they support your sacrifice.

JENNY

They do?!

ALEX

-If I can get you out of here and us married, and we make it all public, then it will not only be a royal daughter who has been threatened with sacrifice for a War on Troy but also the bride of Achilles, son of Thetis Goddess of Water and Peleus King of Aegina. The Greek people will be outraged and not support the War on Troy. Your father will have no choice but refuse Artemis.

JENNY

But wait, what about Helen?

ALEX

Helen is a traitor to Greece.

JENNY

She is?

ALEX

Or brainwashed. There's still some debate. Let's not get into that. Iphigenia. Jenny. Will you marry me.

JENNY

...No.

ALEX

...Have you been listening?

JENNY

As best I CAN.

ALEX

-Your father is coming here to take your life.

JENNY

-And our marriage will save it?

ALEX

-For the moment, yes!

JENNY

-And when the moment has passed. And we're still married. We don't know each other.

ALEX

We've known each other for years.

JENNY

Known of!

ALEX

Jenny, under the circumstances-

JENNY

-The circumstances? What of these Circumstances am I to make sense of? And you haven't even ASKED about MY circumstances? My Father killed a deer? You want to know what I did with a deer today? Who I met on a beach? What happened to me at a dance club? I've got a few circumstances of my own!

*ALEX is holding himself together:*

ALEX

...Would you like to talk about them?

JENNY

...

*ALEX drops his head and begins to cry.*

JENNY (cont'd)

Wha-? now you're crying? Are you crying?

*Pulling himself out of it awkwardly:*

ALEX

Oh. I'm sorry. Ho. That was unexpected.

JENNY

Were you really crying?

ALEX

I, don't know what happened.

JENNY

...

ALEX

...Iphigenia? Jenny. We share something uncommon in common. Everyone knows who we are. And nobody knows us. I get so tired. I'd like to come home to someone and not be a national hero. I'm brilliant at flying planes, but not much else.

JENNY

Yesterday I would have sympathized with you.

ALEX

Why not today?

JENNY

Circumstances.

ALEX

...

JENNY

...

ALEX

*(very calmly)* If at the last minute, even the final second, you think of me for any reason, call my name and I will fly back through that door and crush your father if he stands between you and your life. I will not let you die. And you'll owe me nothing for it.

JENNY

Thank you.

ALEX

...

JENNY

...

*ALEX slips out through the secondary door. JENNY sits for a moment. SHE looks at the altar. SHE rises and stands before it. She touches the dress and feels its fabric.*

*The main door opens, and JENNY turns to lock. AUGUST steps in and closes the door behind him. THEY are still and staring for a moment before:*

AUGUST  
Hello Genia.

JENNY  
Hello Dad.

AUGUST  
I was worried about you.

JENNY  
I'm sorry.

AUGUST  
Come sit.

*AUGUST initiates their sitting, and JENNY complies hesitantly but with an eagerness. Now they're sitting opposite one another.*

AUGUST (cont'd)  
I'm told you're okay.

JENNY  
I am. I'm sorry I worried you. I just needed to- clear my head.

AUGUST  
I understand. Of course you're a very particular daughter. You sneaking out at night is a matter of national security.

JENNY  
I know. I'm sorry.

*...Neither of THEM is sure what to say...*

JENNY (cont'd)  
Are you going to tell me why we're here Dad?

*AUGUST is frozen for just a short beat before:*

AUGUST  
Things have been developing quickly with the situation in Troy.

JENNY  
How's Helen?

AUGUST  
I can't talk about Helen.

JENNY  
Is she dead?

AUGUST  
No.

JENNY  
Where's Mom.

AUGUST  
Your mother is here in Aulis.

JENNY  
For the wedding?

*AUGUST skips the tiniest beat before:*

AUGUST  
Yes.

JENNY  
And Alexander?

AUGUST  
Alexander is here, yes.

JENNY  
...

AUGUST  
...

JENNY  
And the Wind Problem?

AUGUST  
...It's still a problem.

JENNY  
What are you planning to do?

*AUGUST takes in a long slow deep breath for:*

AUGUST  
I'm here to check in on you; I'm glad you're all right. And then I'm going to leave and take care of some things. I want you to have some time for yourself. Someone will come to help you try on your dress. Okay?

JENNY

...

AUGUST

Genia? Is that okay?

JENNY

...That someone come help me with that dress?

AUGUST

Yes, and. That you have some time for yourself.

JENNY

-For what?

AUGUST

...For yourself.

JENNY

Dad I know I'm not here to marry Alex. I know I'm here because Artemis demanded you sacrifice your eldest daughter, to stop the wind so that Alex could lead your army in a war on Troy.

AUGUST

...

JENNY

...

AUGUST

...

JENNY

Do want to say anything?

AUGUST

There's so much. Words are-

JENNY

...Powerful. Words are powerful.

*JENNY enters into this next bit with remarkable sincerity and calm.*

JENNY (cont'd)

Dad, can you tell me... Why is it I so often don't stand up for myself. When men say things to me. When anyone, NOT just men, says or does something... unfair. "When you're older." "Don't worry yourself about it sweetie." "You're a girl." Pinches my chin, holds on to my handshake a bit too long, puts a hand on my waist.

(MORE)

JENNY (cont'd)

In the moment I never let these things sink in. Later my brain thinks wait a minute: why didn't I say anything? Why didn't my brain notice what my body did instantly? Why do I assume I Must be exaggerating. I Must be wrong. I Must have Misunderstood. I MAY have. But it can't be I ALWAYS misunderstand. I'm ALWAYS wrong. Sometimes it HAS to be that it's LIFE that's exaggerating things, not me, don't you think? And why then when I do stand up for myself is it So Frightening I have to make my tongue a fist and hurl it at people? Why am I angry at men, afraid of men, and afraid they'll leave? Can you tell me, Dad, why this is?

AUGUST

I don't know, Genia.

JENNY

...Nothing is of less importance to you than me. You've always had a perfectly legitimate reason to leave the room.

AUGUST

I'm the King, Genia, I-

JENNY

/ I'm your daughter, Dad. Raised by foreign women. They taught me, by example! that whenever I greet a line up of your dignitaries, for the sake of the nation my smile is more important than the shit they say to me.

AUGUST

We have a duty, everyone in our family, we have a responsibility.

JENNY

-I didn't ask for that.

AUGUST

-No, Genia, and you don't get to. No, we don't choose the life we're born into. Nobody, Nobody gets to choose that, no, you are right.

JENNY

And when do I start HAVING a choice, Dad.

AUGUST

-On the day you become aware of your responsibilities in life, whatever they may be. And from that dawn of awareness until the dusk of your death, You are responsible for maintaining And Acting upon that awareness. We all have responsibilities. And they are, by definition: to other people. That is in fact what a responsibility is: a duty, an obligation you have, to someone else. I am responsible to you as a father. I am responsible to Greece as a King.

(MORE)



AUGUST (cont'd)

To ask me to choose between these responsibilities is ridiculous. I am responsible to Both. And when I am faced with a choice - in which:...! sacrifices must be made...! for the greater good...! then I am responsible for making that choice! I am responsible. Whatever my advisors say. Whatever the people of Greece claim to want. Whatever my wife or my children wish that I would do. Whether a thing is ultimately in my control or not: I am responsible! ...I am responsible!

JENNY

...Was the deer you killed a baby deer?

AUGUST

How do you know about the deer?

JENNY

Was it a baby deer.

AUGUST

It was, yes.

JENNY

Did it have a dying wish?

AUGUST

It was a deer, Genia.

JENNY

So, you didn't ask.

AUGUST

No. I didn't.

JENNY

I have a wish.

AUGUST

Tell me.

JENNY

That speech you just made. I know you needed to say that. I expect your hope is that I will understand from what you said, what you DIDN'T say. My wish is for us to look into each other's eyes, and as we're looking, for you to hear, from your own mouth, what you're not saying. Grant me this wish.

AUGUST

-Iphigenia... Genia... Jenny.

JENNY

-Yes Dad. Father. King.

AUGUST

...

JENNY

...

AUGUST

...

*JENNY gets up and changes into the white dress, then stands in it defiantly before her seated father.*

JENNY

Grant me my wish.

AUGUST

...I am responsible-...

JENNY

...Say it:

AUGUST

-For your sacrifice.

JENNY

-No. What is my sacrifice. Say it. What am I sacrificing.

AUGUST

...Your life.

JENNY

Okay. Say it all:

AUGUST

...I am responsible for your life.

JENNY

-And once you've killed me, then what will you be responsible for.

AUGUST

Your sacrifice.

JENNY

-No. Say it, and in full.

AUGUST

...I will be responsible for your death.

JENNY

Good.

AUGUST

...Jenny. ...It's almost dawn.

*JENNY notices the light has changed.*

JENNY

Say goodbye.

*AUGUST lowers his face into his hands, overwhelmed. JENNY slips out immediately and decisively, disappearing through the secondary door behind her chair. Just as immediately the DEER enters through the main door behind AUGUST and strides directly toward him. AUGUST turns and looks up as the DEER is right on top of him. AUGUST ends up on his back on the ground with the DEER standing over him, hooves at his sides. On its final step the DEER lands a hoof adjacent to AUGUST'S head. THEY are caught in one another's respective headlights.*

DEER

Good morning.

**THE END**