



WRATH OF ACHILLES

by Jack Fairey

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WRATH OF ACHILLES

**a play by
Jack Fairey**

CAST LIST:

ACHILLES - m
PATROCLUS - m
BRISEIS - f
THETIS - f

The original production of WRATH OF ACHILLES premiered in 2019 at the Mission Theatre in Bath before touring UK Fringe Festivals, including the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

ORIGINAL CAST:

*ACHILLES - Michael Ayiotis
BRISEIS - Laura Hannawin
PATROCLUS - Jack Fairey
THETIS - Amy Tickner*

SINGING CHORUS - Keir Buist, Tabitha Baines, Joe Malyan

ORIGINAL CREATIVE TEAM:

*Director - Joe Malyan
Costume Designer - Anne Thomson
Composer - George Jennings*

The original production was presented by Bedivere Arts Company. More information can be found at www.bediverearts.co.uk.

PROLOGUE

A tent during the Trojan War. THETIS enters, unseen. She speaks directly to the audience.

THETIS: Listen.
and hear of the wrath of Achilles, my son Achilles
who lies here dead
and of the one who lies dead with him.
Listen to the story of the one who was their friend,
homeland reduced to rubble,
life reduced to slavery.
Listen, mortals, to what you shall hear today,
and remember.

BRISEIS is pushed into the tent. She looks around her and then sits.

THETIS: The gods. The immortals. This is their story too.
Playing games with human lives.
They are gathered here, at the turning point of the war:
Artemis, goddess of the hunt.
Ares, god of war, and his lover Aphrodite.
They are here for a reckoning.
They are here because a decision must be made
That will cut the threads of fate.
A decision about a woman, a queen, a slave,
With the power to change it all.
Rejoice, Ares, in the war at Troy,
in your playground of violence and death.
For that is where the story begins,
On the bloodsoaked sands of Troy,
With an enslaved queen, defiant and alone.

SCENE ONE

PATROCLUS enters, carrying a dress. He pauses, looking at her.

PATROCLUS: Who untied your bonds?

She doesn't reply. She won't look at him. PATROCLUS holds out the dress.

This is for you.

-

It's a gift. It will be better if you put it on.

-

Briseis.

Lyrnessus was a beautiful city.

BRISEIS: Where is he?

PATROCLUS: He will be here soon.
Don't be scared. He's a good man.

BRISEIS: I saw him.
As he burned my city. Slaughtered my family.
I know exactly what he is.

PATROCLUS goes to exit.

And I know what you are, as well.
They talk of you. Patroclus. The right hand man.
The dog handler.

PATROCLUS: Be careful.

BRISEIS: Why? What else can you take from me?

PATROCLUS doesn't know how to respond. He exits. BRISEIS picks up the dress, and then throws it to the ground. She takes off her necklace, and unscrews a hidden cap in it. She pours a glass of wine, and pours in the contents of the necklace. Meanwhile, ACHILLES has entered the tent, and seen this occur. Before she can drink it:

ACHILLES: I see you helped yourself to wine.
Mind if I join you?

BRISEIS: I won't touch you.

ACHILLES: I'm not asking you too.

BRISEIS: I'd rather die.

ACHILLES picks up his lyre, and plays.

ACHILLES: Make yourself at home.

BRISEIS: I'm not staying here.

ACHILLES: Good luck making it across the battlefield.

BRISEIS: You won't stop me?

ACHILLES: No.
But the men will. And I can't stop them.

She goes to pick up the wine cup, but ACHILLES stops her. She laughs bitterly.

You should stay here. Just for a few days.
There's a tent on the far side of camp. I keep them safe. As comfortable
as I can.

BRISEIS: I'm glad our prison is comfortable.

ACHILLES: What do you want from me?
-
Soldiers have a strange sense of honour.
Widows are fair game. But if you've been... claimed.
They'll leave you be.

BRISEIS: You call that honour? Treating women as possessions, as objects?

ACHILLES: No-

BRISEIS: I could kill you, you know that? And I wouldn't think twice.

ACHILLES laughs.

What?

ACHILLES: Could you? Do you really believe that?

BRISEIS doesn't rely. He smiles slightly.

I know your people. Determined. Strong. Brave men and women
who fear a grave less than a prison.

He takes off her necklace, and picks up the wine.

Get some sleep, Briseis.

He drains the cup and exits. BRISEIS stares after him.

SCENE TWO

THETIS: Artemis, goddess of the hunt,
vowed to never let a man define her.
The mortals aren't so lucky.
Children forced into marriages
Women forced into servitude.
Their minds and hearts and souls forgotten
because all that matters is skin
skin and lips and eyes and flesh.

ACHILLES and PATROCLUS enter.

PATROCLUS: They're coming on well.

ACHILLES: They need to be better.

PATROCLUS: They're the best soldiers here, Achilles

ACHILLES: And they can be better.

PATROCLUS: Two more men came down with the plague today.

ACHILLES: So?

PATROCLUS: So are you going to see them?

ACHILLES: Do you remember that market town we used to travel to?

PATROCLUS: Achilles, it will boost morale-

ACHILLES: Pyrgos, I think it was.
There was a boy there. He used to play for money.

PATROCLUS: I don't recall.

ACHILLES: Don't give me that look.

PATROCLUS: What look?

ACHILLES: Would you rather stay here and talk to me, or spend an hour shaking the hands of sick men? Exactly. This boy. Every time, I'd go back to find him.

PATROCLUS: He must have been good.

ACHILLES: Not particularly. His playing was competent, his voice was scratchy and untrained.
But something about him kept me coming back.
Even now, I can't get his music out of my head.

PATROCLUS: Don't let the men hear you talking like that.
They'll be devastated to know their mighty Achilles has gone soft.

ACHILLES: Soft?
You're getting too confident, Patroclus. I preferred it when we were boys and you'd simply follow me around, doing my bidding.

PATROCLUS: No, you don't.

ACHILLES: No. You're right. I don't.
It was simpler back then, though.

PATROCLUS: We were boys. Now we're not.
Ten years. I barely even remember what it was like before.
Everything's changed.

ACHILLES: Not everything.
You're still at my side.

Beat. They smile.

Come on.

PATROCLUS: Where are we going?

ACHILLES: If I have to go and deal with these sick men, so do you.
At least with you there it might not be unbearably boring.

He exits. PATROCLUS smiles slightly, then follows.

