



Iphigenia

at

Aulis

AUDITION PACK



# ABOUT THE PLAY

## Plot Summary

The Greek fleet assembles at the bay of Aulis in readiness to launch an attack on Troy, but the wind suddenly drops and the ships stand idle. The army blames its leader, Agamemnon. In danger of losing his command, he is presented with a solution: to sacrifice his daughter Iphigenia to the gods, in return for a favourable wind. Just how far will the leader go in order to save face and secure a military victory in the East?

Want a more detailed summary? Watch this:



## Our Production

We will transpose the story into a modern context, setting it in a departure lounge where the Greek Army is waiting impatiently to leave.



## Cast

**Agamemnon**, Commander-in-Chief of the Greek Army  
**Old Man**, Head of Customer Service  
**Menelaus**, brother of Agamemnon, husband of Helen  
**Clytemnestra**, wife of Agamemnon  
**Iphigenia**, their daughter  
**Achilles**, a Greek officer  
**Chorus**, tourists  
**Chorus**, customer service representatives  
**Messenger**  
**Soldiers**

# KEY DATES & INFORMATION

## Auditions

### **First Round (You only need to attend one):**

Monday 5th September, 12pm Deayton Theatre (for current Caterham students only)

**OR**

Tuesday 6th September, 4pm Deayton Theatre

- Chorus Workshop. Nothing to prepare.
  - Individual auditions. Memorise and prepare a monologue **(pg 5)**
- Choose a monologue which you think will best show off your skills. You are auditioning for a part in the production, not a specific role.

Please bring with you the form at the back of this pack.

### **Recalls:**

Friday 9th September, 4pm Deayton Theatre

- You will find out if you have been recalled on Wednesday 7th September.
- If you don't get a recall, you may still be considered for a part in the production, so don't panic!
- If you are recalled, you will not need to memorise anything new, however you should familiarise yourself with all the audition monologues and descriptions of the characters.
- In the recall audition, you may be asked to read another monologue, do some improvisation and/or work on a duologue with a partner.

## Rehearsals

Tuesdays and Fridays 4-5.45pm

Some Tuesday lunchtimes for leads

Some Sunday rehearsals (TBC)

## Key Production Dates

**Friday 18th November:** Tickets released for cast & crew

**Friday 25th November:** General ticket release

**Please do not audition unless you are available for the following:**

**Sunday 4th December:** 9-4, Tech Rehearsal. Whole cast & crew.

**Monday 5th December:** 8.30-6, Dress Rehearsal

**Tuesday 6th December:** 4-6, Notes from Dress Rehearsal & final fixes

**Thursday 8th December:** 7pm, Performance One

**Friday 9th December:** 7pm, Performance Two

# CHARACTER PROFILES

## Agamemnon

A weak-willed general who is torn between a love for his daughter and love for his position of power. He sees the war in Troy as his opportunity for greatness and to create a lasting legacy of military success. He is proud, arrogant and lacks any sense of morality. He will do what he needs to do to stay on top, and although he might weep bitterly at his dilemma, there is no doubt that he will choose military victory over family.

## Old Man

In the text, the Old Man is a servant of Agamemnon, however in our version they needn't be old or a man. They are the Head Customer Service Rep in the departure lounge, and their key responsibility is keeping Agamemnon and his army happy. We later learn, however, that they know Agamemnon's wife and are loyal to her. The Old Man is the one who tells her the truth about what is going to happen to her daughter, so there is a decision to be made about this character; are they serventile, weak and just doing as they're told, or do they have a backbone and are wanting to influence the events as they unfold?

## Menelaus

Menelaus, Agamemnon's brother, is both a shrewd political manipulator, and a blustering, prideful idiot. His ego has been seriously wounded by the loss of his wife; whether she went willingly or not, her disappearance makes him seem incapable of hanging on to the greatest 'prize' and he needs to make a show of strength to those who call him a leader. If that means his niece needs to be sacrificed, so be it. He will do whatever it takes to keep his fragile ego from being any more damaged, and he will try several tactics to keep up appearances. As long as he comes out of this mess looking like the hero, he'll be happy.

## Clytemnestra

Agamemnon's wife starts the play as the perfect political spouse, charming, gracious and a mistress of public relations. It soon becomes clear however that their marriage is a battleground, one based in a gruesome history and defined by mistrust and deception. When Clytemnestra learns of her husband's murderous plan, she becomes a raging fury, fighting like an animal to defend her young, frightening in the power and range of her emotions and prepared to do whatever it takes to save her daughter's life. She is a force to be reckoned with, and through the evil that has been done to her, eventually becomes a greater slayer than any of the men she has come across. This play lays the groundwork for the destructive vengeful monster she becomes.

## **Iphigenia**

An innocent, suffering victim, or a young extremist possessed by the brutality of war and intoxicated by the idea of martyrdom? Iphigenia goes from begging her father not to kill her, to giving an impassioned speech about how her death will bring glory to Greece. She is the embodiment of young zealots who willingly die for their country, religion or cause; who have been spurred on by blood thirsty soldiers and power hungry politicians, made to believe that their death will mean something. She is a victim, but one who desires praise, not pity.

## **Achilles**

Achilles is the comic relief in this tale. He is the greatest soldier in Greece, but he is also incredibly stupid and completely in love with himself. His image is the only thing that matters to him, and he is entirely unaware of any morality, dilemmas or consequences to his, or anyone else's actions. All that is at stake for him is own reputation, and his blustering self-importance makes for both hilarious and terrifying moments in the play.

## **Chorus**

**The Tourists-** Awestruck by the heroes of the Greek army before them, they excitedly observe the action unfold. Soon, however, they become disturbed and unsettled by what they see and hear. Not that they try to do anything about it. They are gossiping witnesses to tragedy; the people who slow down to observe an accident on a motorway and who post heartfelt hashtags on social media when there's a tragedy, patting themselves on the back for their meaningful words.

**Customer Service Reps-** They have seen it all before, and whilst they are keen to keep the army happy, they'll roll their eyes whilst they do it. Their comments are tinged with sarcasm and they just can't wait to go home and catch up on the latest episode of Love Island.

## **The Messenger**

A customer service rep who is still quite new and excited by the job. They want to please their superiors, get 5 star ratings from the waiting passengers, and perhaps even make friends with some of the heroic soldiers. A selfie with Achilles wouldn't go amiss...

## **Soldiers**

Brutish, fuelled by a desire for glory and desperate to get going, these are not soldiers fighting for a worthy cause, even if they have convinced themselves otherwise. They are bored of waiting, frustrated by the delays and trying to keep themselves entertained as they wait for their superiors to fix the situation. They're a noisy, uncivilised group who aren't bothered about causing a nuisance. Mostly non-speaking roles, with opportunities for individual characters and some dialogue.

# AUDITION MONOLOGUES

## TIPS:

- Choose a monologue that allows you to show off your range. Remember, you are not auditioning for a specific part, so just choose the monologue you think will show off your skills best! You can choose a male or female monologue.
- Read to a punctuation point and don't assume it's the end of a thought just because it's the end of a line.
- All of these monologues are spoken to another character or characters. Consider who you are addressing and decide where they are on stage with you.
- Make the most of this audition. Consider your voice, physicality, movement and staging. Don't just speak it- perform it!

**N.B** The monologues are not in chronological order within the play, so don't assume one comes before the other.

## Agamemnon

(He has just been told that his wife and children have arrived. Speaking to himself with Menelaus nearby and in earshot.)

God help me, what can I say  
Or do, in a situation like this?  
I'm a slave under the yoke,  
Chained and shackled! Bad luck has second-guessed me,  
Every move I make is countered, every tactic  
Outwitted by a better one. Nothing could be worse  
Than being caught in a trap as appalling as this.  
And what, in heaven's name, shall I say  
To my wife? How can I look her in the eyes?  
What possible expression can my face wear  
As it receives her, and welcome her to Aulis?  
I have troubles enough, she has made them  
Far worse by coming here uninvited.  
And then she'll find out soon enough,  
If I know her, what mischief I've planned..

## Menelaus

(Speaking to Agamemnon)

You've no character or resolution,  
You're quite capable of wickedness, and impossible  
To trust, even for your friends! I'm going  
To show you up for what you are- don't  
Turn away like that, it'll be the truth,  
Without any exaggeration- so don't dismiss it  
With a show of anger! You remember, I'm sure,  
When you were so keen to get the supreme command  
Of the Greek task-force against Troy,  
And how you wanted it!- There was no pretence  
About that! How very self-deprecating  
You were, eager to press the flesh  
With any uniform or suit, doors always open,  
A universal welcome; you always granted  
The pleasure of your company  
To anyone, even if they didn't want it,  
As if by sweet talk and glad-handing  
The whole country, you could buy the command  
In the open market. But then,  
When your appointment had been confirmed,  
Suddenly, you were a changed man!  
Friends were no longer friends, overnight.

## Achilles

(Speaking to Clytemnestra and the Chorus, about why he will help her)

It's not for the marriage I'm making all this fuss.  
Thousands of girls are desperate for the chance  
To get into bed with me. It's because  
King Agamemnon has insulted me!  
If he wanted to use my name as a snare  
To trap his own child, he should have asked my permission!  
It was my reputation that attracted Clytemnestra  
To bring her daughter here, not her husband's command.  
These generals treat me as a nonentity,  
As though whether they honour or shame me  
Were a matter of not the slightest concern  
To either of them! But anyone who tries  
To take your daughter away from me  
Will be practice meat for my iron sword,  
To see how bloodstains suit the blade  
Before I go to Troy! Don't be frightened.  
I know that I must seem like a god, and a very great one  
At that! In fact, I'm a man, not a god,  
Though by my actions I shall certainly become one!

## Clytemnestra

(Speaking to Agamemnon)

Then you listen to me, it's my turn now  
And there'll be no obscurity or riddling  
In what I have to say, just plain words,  
That you don't dare deny!  
You can appear as my principal witness  
When I say that I have been a model wife,  
Both personally to you, and in organising your house,  
Sexually modest, and utterly chaste,  
So that coming home has always been your greatest pleasure,  
And when you open your front door, the whole world can see  
Your good fortune demonstrated. Bad wives are commonplace,  
Never in short supply. But it's a lucky man  
That has such a wife as I have been to you.  
I have borne you three girls and, finally, this son;  
And now without feeling or conscience  
You will tear one of my girls from me,  
Like ripping flesh from my own body.  
And if anyone asks you why you will kill her,  
For what good reason, what will you say?  
Shall I say it for you? So that Menelaus  
Can have Helen back!

## Iphigenia

(Speaking to Clytemnestra, the chorus and the soldiers)

When you gave me birth, Mother, it was as a Greek woman,  
Part of the Greek nation, not just for yourself.  
There are ten thousand men here, armed to the teeth,  
Another ten thousand stripped at the oars,  
Ready to row- and why? Because  
Their fatherland, the beloved country,  
Has been wronged, and insulted, and for its sake  
They will dare anything, however dangerous,  
Against their enemies, and die for Greece  
If need be. How can my single life  
Stand against that? How could that be right?  
How could it be just? Could I say one word  
In my own defence? What arguments could I use?  
I dedicate my body  
As a gift for Greece. Take me. Sacrifice me,  
And then to Troy, plunder the whole city,  
When you leave it, leave a ruin! That will be  
My memorial.

**Please complete the form on the next page, cut it out and bring it with you to your audition.**



**Name:**

**Year:**

**Would you like to be considered for a lead role? (Please circle):**

Yes/No

**Would you be willing to be an understudy?**

This would require stepping in for a lead role if they are unable to perform. There is no guarantee that you would perform the role, but you may be expected to shadow some rehearsals and take on a big commitment at short notice, including learning some/most of the lines. Please note: You will only be considered for an understudy position if you are not cast in a lead role.

**(Please circle):** Yes/No

**By signing this form, you confirm that:**

- You are available on all the key dates listed
- You are able to attend rehearsals on Tuesdays and Fridays
- You understand there may be some Sunday rehearsals, which you will need to make every effort to attend
- You will inform Miss Guttner in plenty of time if you are going to be unable to attend a rehearsal
- You understand that if you miss several rehearsals without explanation, you may lose your place in the cast.

**Student signature:**

**Parent/Guardian signature:**

**Date:**

