

# ALEXANDER - SON OF THE GODS by DAMIAN BRANT

## CAST LIST

### MALES:

ALEXANDER III  
HEPHAESTION  
PTOLEMY  
CRATERUS  
PARMENION  
CLEITUS  
CALLISTHENES  
NICANOR  
ANAXARCHUS  
NICCINAS  
ANTIPATER  
OXYARTES

### FEMALES:

WIFE OF DARIUS  
STATERIA  
DRYPETIS  
BARSINE  
AMASTRINE  
ROXANE  
WOMEN OF PERSIA - AT LEAST THREE

The cast size is 12 men, 9 women with extra soldiers, if desired, for the physical theatre sections.

The play lasts approx. one hour.

The play is like a Greek tragedy in its intention. It shows the rise and fall of Alexander, focusing on the difference between the great leader of men that he was at first to his fall into a kind of madness as he comes to believe himself a god. Written in blank verse, it is not difficult despite this to find a fluidity to the speeches. Like Greek tragedy, the play lends itself to a physical theatre approach and there is room for plenty of this.

## EXTRACT ONE

*Time of the play: 333 BC and following....*

### **Scene 1: The Battle of Issus**

*On stage are: Alexander, Hephaestion, Ptolemy, Craterus, Parmenion, Cleitus, Callisthenes and other soldiers*

ALEXANDER  
Gentlemen of war, for many leagues have  
We marched. We have faced many dangers and  
Many foes. What then is another one  
To us? To we who are from Macedon?

Though now we face our greatest foe,  
So now shall our courage be the greater,  
Our resolve be the stronger, our fighting  
Spirit the mightier and our weapons  
More deadly. The struggle yet to come shall  
Be no struggle for we of Macedon.  
We soldiers bred and soldiers born -  
Have we not been schooled in the art of war?  
We are graduates of war. And war is  
Glory to us and glory is our war.  
Today we fight the Persians... aye, those  
Same Persians whose bygone ancestors,  
But two hundred years since, did ravage our  
Sacred Greece - try to destroy with sword and  
Fire our blessed, beloved nation.  
But we survived; we survived to revenge!  
Today shall be our vengeance! Darius,  
Their unworthy king and the rest of the  
Persians shall beg for mercy at the  
Feet of the soldiers of Macedon.  
His soldiers are used to luxury,  
They are weak of spirit and weak of mind.  
We are all free men whilst they all are slaves.  
We fight for our own. True, we have foreign  
Troops: Illyrians, Thracians, but these  
Are the best soldiers in all of Europe,  
Except for we of Macedonia.  
Yes, the Persians do have Greek soldiers  
In their service, but they fight for money.  
Our soldiers fight for Greece, for honour  
And for Macedon. Triumph will be ours!  
And if you doubt this, gentlemen, think then -  
That they have as their supreme commander  
Darius. You - you have Alexander!  
SOLDIERS  
Alexander! Alexander! Alexander! Alexander!  
HEPHAESTION  
Phalanx! Battle order! Phalanx, advance!

*Drums. The phalanx advances.*

## EXTRACT TWO

CLEITUS

My lord, the enemy is within range  
Of our missiles. Shall we loose them now?

ALEXANDER

You are keen, young soldier. Tell me,  
What is your name and who is your father?

CLEITUS

I am Cleitus, the son of Dropides.

ALEXANDER

Cleitus, son of Dropides, I like your  
Hunger. You shall fight at my side today.

CLEITUS

I am honoured my lord, but who shall lead  
My squadron troops into the hot battle?

ALEXANDER

Niccinas shall command them.

CLEITUS

No, my lord.

Respecting your majestic self, I must  
Command my own troops. I cannot desert  
Them at this time of glory and of war.

ALEXANDER

Niccinas will command them. By serving  
Me you do not desert but transfer them.

CLEITUS

If you command me to stay by your side,  
I shall do so, for as you are my king  
And general, it is my duty.

But as a soldier you must know that  
My place, like a wolf with a hunting pack,  
Is with my troops, in bloodthirsty battle.

ALEXANDER

Indeed, I do, Cleitus. So, like the beast,  
Run to the hounds which await their leader.  
You are a Macedon and I respect  
You for it. Go to your troops, keen Cleitus.

CLEITUS

I go, my lord.

ALEXANDER

Hephaestion,

That is why we shall be victorious.

HEPHAESTION

My lord?

ALEXANDER

Men like Cleitus, Hephaestion.

The enemy is at hand. Give the order to attack.

HEPHAESTION

Battle speed! Advance! Attack speed! Advance!  
Engagement speed! Advance! Phalanx, engage!

*Drums quicken...*

### EXTRACT THREE

*Enter the Persians:- Wife of Darius, Drypetis, Stateria, Barsine and others*

CALLISTHENES

And nowhere, a more lamentable sight,  
Daughters and wife of the king who took flight.  
There is the mother, racked with pain and guilt,  
As her country crumbles, they suffer, they wilt.

WIFE OF DARIUS

My children, my children, Oh, my children,  
Look you upon this carnage and know that  
Persia, Oh great Persia is dead.  
Oh, my dear children, weep with me and with  
Your tears wash away all recollections,  
Fond memories of once great Persia.  
For as your miserable tears do flow  
So in abject misery flows the blood  
Of the sons of your royal, native home.

Their blood shall nourish this confounded soil  
And grow grasses for Greek feet to trample,  
Stamping on your noble Persian kin,  
Even in death. Lament this vision.

Oh my dearest, dear children, know this and  
Add more salt water to your already  
Purging eyes, that before the conqueror can  
Suppress a nation he must first  
Suppress the mothers of that nation -  
That is you, my children. Look now not  
For husbands with Persian blood, for you  
Shall have none. You were the future mothers  
Of the nation of Persia but  
Now your children will be born of Greek seed.

STATERIA

Mother, tell me, why did my father flee?  
Is he a coward that he should run so?

WIFE OF DARIUS

When the leopard rules he is most mighty,  
But when against the lion, he must flee.

STATERIA

But mother, does not a leopard have teeth  
With which to bite? And claws with which to scratch?  
And a throat with which to roar defiance?

WIFE OF DARIUS

You understand not the ways of the world.

STATERIA

I understand that a leopard can bite,  
Scratch and roar. What else should I understand?

WIFE OF DARIUS

The leopard cannot defeat the lion.

STATERIA

Ay, mother, but it can fight, can it not?

WIFE OF DARIUS

Child, you are too young to understand this.  
You cannot know, nor do not know, what is.

STATERIA

And what is? My father fled from battle!

He left his wife and he left his children

At the mercy of Alexander Greek!

You are right, mother, I am very young  
And I know very little of the world, for sure,  
Yet all there is to know, mother, I know.

BARSINE

Stateria, my sister, is not false.

If our father cared for any of us,

He could not have run so chastised away.

DRYPETIS

Tell us, how could he have lost the battle?

Our strong Persian soldiers were five

To every Macedonian trooper.

Did his cowardice keep him so far from

The action that our numbers mean nought?

WIFE OF DARIUS

The gods were against us. At any odds  
We could not have won this battle, never.

DRYPETIS

Then the gods favoured Alexander.

Could it be the gods hate Persia so?  
WIFE OF DARIUS  
Such a deed as Alexander has done,  
Such a deed as this today, makes gods...

#### EXTRACT FOUR

CALLISTHENES  
You have done extremely well, young Cleitus.

CLEITUS

I merely did what a soldier does.

CALLISTHENES

Aye, and earned the praise of Alexander  
And a place as a Companion.

CLEITUS

It is an honour to serve Macedon  
Under Alexander, the General.

CALLISTHENES

And such unsought honours breed enemies.  
Watch Hephaestion, for he always was  
Alexander's favourite. He is not,  
As you and I with sense may truly be,  
Fixed in his temper. This will make him shake.  
Know you, where the stones are dangerous loose,  
A wise man treads carefully. Do you so.

*Callisthenes exits.*

CLEITUS

I do not understand his words of care.  
I did save the life of Alexander  
But did so as a soldier, and not  
For any favour thought of nor reward.  
The honour Alexander grants to me  
Comes from his desire to thank a comrade.  
There is no debt to be paid nor favour  
To return. I shall never use such deed  
In favour of myself nor as a tool  
In argument, better to serve my cause,  
Or persuade the will of Alexander.  
Why then would Hephaestion feel such threat  
At my new-found Companion status?  
So in thought I go to consider still.  
My wounds do cry for a surgeon's skill.

*Cleitus exits.*

#### EXTRACT FIVE

CALLISTHENES

Alexander, do you hear yourself speak?  
Do you forget so easily all that  
Your tutor, Aristotle, did teach you?...  
...Now, Alexander, you warrant all praise  
You receive as a most worthy leader,  
Most kingly of kings, but you are not a god.

And you, Anaxarchus, you who were brought here  
To the presence of our king to speak truth,  
You of all men should have been first to speak  
As I am speaking to Alexander,  
And not encourage these wild fantasies.  
You should have silenced any talk of this.  
Why, even Herakles was not given  
Divine rights while he lived. Why then our king?  
Alexander, pray you listen to me.  
I know that we are in a foreign land,  
We must think foreign thoughts, but I tell you,  
Remember it was for glory of Greece  
That you conquered Asia. Think this too:  
What when you return home? Do you intend  
To force Greeks, who love their liberty,  
To prostrate in this Persian manner?  
Or will this shameful duty be laid on  
The unfortunate Macedons alone?  
You are a man, Alexander, not god.  
Patroclus was a better man than you  
By far, but still death did not spare his life.  
You are a man, Alexander, a man!

*The courtiers prostrate themselves before Alexander, then kiss him. Callisthenes attempts to kiss Alexander.*

ALEXANDER  
You must prostrate yourself before you kiss.  
CALLISTHENES  
No, Alexander, I will not prostrate.  
ALEXANDER  
Then you'll receive no blessing nor a kiss.  
CALLISTHENES  
And so I must leave one kiss the poorer...

## EXTRACT SIX

ALEXANDER  
Cleitus, ever you have been a true friend.  
Do not anger me with biting insults.  
You know what I have done surpasses all  
And, Cleitus, know for sure, I am a god.  
CLEITUS  
But you are not a god, Alexander.  
Truth is, you would be nothing without me.  
Have you forgotten the Issus battle?  
Can you have forgotten so easily?  
This is the hand that saved you on that day.  
ALEXANDER  
Guards! Guards! Answer me! Why do they not come?  
Ha! Have I no royalty but the name?  
Then give me a spear and I will answer.

*They hold him.*

ALEXANDER

What is this? Gentlemen, leave go your hands.

CLEITUS

You are no god, Alexander. No god.

This is the hand that saved you on that day.

*Cleitus is dragged out.*

ALEXANDER

Let loose your hands. By father Zeus, am I to be treated

Like a peasant and not like a dread king?

And am I not your true king and your god?

You suffer me to listen to insults.

Come back, brave Cleitus and have your reply.

ANTIPATER

Cleitus is returning.

ANAXARCHUS

All hold the king.

ALEXANDER

Stay your hands, gentlemen. By all the gods,

I'll slay any man that dares to touch me.

CLEITUS

Here! here I am mighty Alexander!

Show me now how you are so like a god.

ALEXANDER

Come close. Now go to meet my father - Zeus.

*He stabs him. Cleitus dies.*

ALEXANDER

Zeus, Dionysus, and all the Greek gods

Have mercy on me. I have slain Cleitus.

In doing so I slay part of myself.

Leave me, leave me all of you. Go quickly.

I'll hold this noble man once in my arms.

Go! For I am a murderer of friends!

CALLISTHENES

Alexander wept, three days and three nights

For Cleitus was his star that shone so bright.

And he took no water and took no food

So dark and depressed was his killing mood.

'Cleitus, Cleitus, Cleitus!' ever he cried.

But no one answered, his prayers were denied.

Alexander, the great killer of friends.

Lord of all Asia, setter of trends.

Alexander the Greek, strong as an ox.

Alexander the Great - son of the gods?

