

IPHIGENIA IN AULIS.

(Adapted from Project Gutenberg and Florence M. Stawell by Dan Hodge)

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

AGAMEMNON. Nathan Foley

MENELAUS. Luke Moyer

ACHILLES. Gregory Isaac

MESSENGER. Adam Howard

IPHIGENIA. Becca Khalil

CLYTÆMNESTRA. Tai Verley

CHORUS. Peggy Smith

CHORUS. Stephanie Iozzia

AGAMEMNON.

Come.

SERVANT.

Coming, Sir.

AGAMEMNON.

What star is that?

SERVANT.

Sirius, midway between the heavens and the ocean, close to the seven Pleiads.

AGAMEMNON.

No sound of the birds,

No sound from the sea.

The hush of the winds

Broods over Euripus.

I wrote this letter in the night. Take it.

I beg my wife not to send our daughter here.

SERVANT

But, Achilles, sir.

When he discovers he has lost his bride,

His rage will make him leave the host.

AGAMEMNON

I only used his name. He has not heard

Aught of our plans or any word of marriage.

SERVANT

Sir.

AGAMEMNON

Here lie our men, all banded against Troy

To win back Helen to her rightful lord,

My brother, Menelaus. I lead the host –

This glorious host of men and ships.

Here we lie,

Becalmed at Aulis, helpless. In our need

We asked the prophet, and were told

That I must sacrifice my own dear child,

Iphigenia, then the ships could sail.

When I heard that,

I told my brother to dismiss the host:

I could not be my daughter's murderer.

But then my brother spoke and plied me hard.

And I, I yielded.

I sent a letter to my wife bidding her to send our girl

To wed Achilles, for he was too proud
To sail with me to Troy without our daughter
To his wife.
But, I have changed. I have repented me.
Scan all the crossways on your road,
And if you meet her, then turn back the steeds.

Exit SERVANT

CHORUS.

To the sands of the bay
Where the salt waves run
Over the narrows
We come, we come.

Ten thousand sail,
Across the sea to Troy.

Enter MENELAUS, beating the SERVANT

SERVANT

Help – Help.

MENELAUS

Come here, you bastard.

AGAMEMNON

What's this?

SERVANT

Help.

MENELAUS continues beating the SERVANT

AGAMEMNON

Stop. Stop. What's this?

MENELAUS

First look me in the face and then I'll speak.

AGAMEMNON

You think I dare not?

MENELAUS

You see this letter? You know what it says?

AGAMEMNON

It's mine. Give it to me.

MENELAUS

No. Not until

I show the army what you have written here.

AGAMEMNON

You broke the seal, then? You read what was not yours?

MENELAUS

Yes, to lay bare your guilt.

AGAMEMNON

Have you no shame?

And who set you to watch and spy on me?

MENELAUS

My own will set me.

AGAMEMNON

You dare – can I not steer this fleet myself?

MENELAUS

No, for you change and veer with every wind.

Do you remember when your heart was set

On this high command?

How suave you were, how friendly to every clown,

Doors open to the world, so affable,

Ready to talk with all.

And so you bought your power. But power won,

Oh, then you changed. You scarcely could be seen,

Your old friends, friends no more. We sailed to port

And lay becalmed, until the other men

Bid you dismiss the fleet, give up the post.

You came to me, you cried, "What can I do?

how keep the army, my command, my fame?"

Then prophets bade you sacrifice your child

To Artemis and she would send the wind.

And you were glad. You promised all they asked.

You wrote to her yourself, bidding your queen

To send your daughter fast.

AGAMEMNON

A good man should not rail.

How have I wronged you? What is it you want?

A lovely wife? I can not help you there.

You could not keep the one you had.

If I repent the evil thought I had,
Do you call me mad?
Enough. I will not slay my child to win
Unjust success for you, and for myself
Long nights and days of weeping bitter tears
For monstrous crime against mine own dear children.
Do as you like, I will not do this deed.
There is my answer, short and clear enough.

MENELAUS

Are you my brother?

AGAMEMNON

In good deeds, not in vile.

MENELAUS

Brothers should share their greifs.

AGAMEMNON

And when my child

Is dead, will you share mine?

MENELAUS

Will you not help Greece?

AGAMEMNON

Some God has sent Greece mad, and you with her.

MENELAUS

I'll turn to other means and other friends.

SERVANT

Captain.

I come to tell you they are close at hand.

Iphigenia, and her mother too,

The queen your wife, Clytemnestra.

The army knows they are here. Rumor runs quick.

And all the soldiers throng to see your daughter.

AGAMEMNON

How can I greet her? Look her in the face?

She has undone me, coming now, uncalled,

Coming to wed her daughter, full of love,

To find me now a murderer.

The rape of Helen has destroyed me.

MENELAUS

Brother, give me your hand.

AGAMEMNON

There. You have won.

MENELAUS

I cannot bid you slay your child for me.
Why should you mourn and I have joy thereby?
Why should I slay my brother, my own flesh,
And take back Helen, an ill gift for a good?
I was mad, blinded, till I looked and saw
What this thing meant. Yes, and I pity her,
Poor maid, my brother's child, if she should die
To win my wife. What's Helen to your daughter?
Disband the army. Send the host away.
That prophesy you heard about your child,
I'll none of it. I leave it all to you.

AGAMEMNON

Thank you, Menelaus, for this change,
Sudden and worthy of yourself. But I,
I am compelled to this dread slaughter now.

MENELAUS

But who can force you now to kill your child?

AGAMEMNON

The army. This great concourse of Greeks.

MENELAUS

Not if you send her back to Argos.

AGAMEMNON

Can you not hear the men, rising as one
Saying I promised I would give my child
And then drew back? Their rage would drive them on
To kill us, and then sacrifice the girl.
Or, if we fled to Argos, they would follow.
Do this one thing for me: Go to the army
And see that Clytemnestra shall not learn
Of what must be, until it is too late.

Exit MENELAUS

CHORUS

CLYTEMNESTRA

There's your father, girl.

IPHIGENIA

Father,

It is so long since you have been away.
How good it was for you to send for me.

AGAMEMNON

No, child, not good. And yet, there's good in it.

IPHIGENIA

Why? What is it? There's trouble in your face,
Your eyes are sad. You are not glad to see me.

AGAMEMNON

A general and a king has many cares.

IPHIGENIA

O, stay with me now. Send your cares away.

AGAMEMNON

Why, all my cares are only for your sake.

IPHIGENIA

Then smooth your face, unknit your brows and smile.

AGAMEMNON

I am as glad as I can be, my child.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Stay with your children, husband. Stay at home.

AGAMEMNON

I would I could; I cannot have my will.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Ruin take the army and your brother's wrongs.

AGAMEMNON

They will ruin others. They have ruined me.

IPHIGENIA

How long you have been here at Aulis Bay.

AGAMEMNON

And something holds me still from setting out.

IPHIGENIA

If you could take me on the journey too –

AGAMEMNON

There is another journey you must take,
And you will not forget your father there.

IPHIGENIA

Shall I go with my mother, or alone?

AGAMEMNON

Alone. Alone, severed from both of us.

IPHIGENIA

Well, conquer Troy and come back soon to me.

AGAMEMNON

I have a sacrifice to offer first.
Go find your uncle, child. It is not fit
For maidens to be seen.

IPHIGENIA goes

AGAMEMNON

Forgive me, my dear wife
If I seem too much moved, wedding our child
To young Achilles. It's a worthy match,
But fathers feel it when they lose their girls.

CLYTEMNESTRA

I have my feelings too. I shall shed tears,
I know, like you. But all such things must be,
And time will help us.

AGAMEMNON

Listen to me, wife: bear with me in this.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Do I not do so always? What's your wish?

AGAMEMNON

To give the bride myself.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Without her mother?

And where will you send me?

AGAMEMNON

Why, home to Argos.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Leaving her?

My eldest child? Who'll hold the marriage torch?

AGAMEMNON

I will.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Unheard of! You think naught of that?

AGAMEMNON

A naval camp is no fit place for you.

CLYTEMNESTRA

But fitting, and most fitting, I should be
At my own daughter's bridal.

AGAMEMNON

Good wife, be counseled.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Is that a way to speak to me?
Do your man's work and leave the home to me.

AGAMEMNON goes

CHORUS

They will come to the streams
Silver swift on Apollo's shores
Our host of Greeks,
Our ships of warriors.
There the wild Casandra
Will loose her laurelled hair,
And cry aloud when God
Cries to men through her.

Towered Troy shall be taken
In a closed ring of blood.
Red whelming waters.
Through the, through thee. thou fair faced child of the swan,
If it be, if it be
Not only an idle song.

Enter ACHILLES

ACHILLES

Where is the captain of the host of Greece?
How's this? A woman? So stately and so fair.

CLYTEMNESTRA

My name is Clytemnestra, Leda's daughter
And Agamemnon's wife.

ACHILLES

All thanks, great queen,
For your high courtesy, but I must go.
I should not talk with women.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Why should you go?
Stay here: give me your hand, and may the clasp
Be pledge of happy married days to come.

ACHILLES

I? Clasp your hand? Agamemnon would be raged.

I have no right.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Surely, the best of rights,

Wedding my daughter.

ACHILLES

Wedding your daughter? How?

CLYTEMNESTRA

I know it must be strange to meet new friends

Speaking of marriage on your wedding eve.

ACHILLES

I was no suitor to your daughter, lady.

CLYTEMNESTRA

What can this mean? Am I deceived then?

Have I been made to woo you for my daughter

Against your will?

ACHILLES

Someone, it seems, has played upon us both.

But let it pass, I care not overmuch.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Farewell. I cannot look you in the face,

Thus put to shame and made to speak a lie.

ACHILLES

I am shamed too, my queen. But I will go

And seek your husband to find out the truth.

SERVANT appears

SERVANT

Wait.

ACHILLES

Who calls?

CLYTEMNESTRA

We are alone. Come out and speak to us.

SERVANT

I have served your husband, our captain well.

Kept faith and never broke his trust, 'til now.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Tell me, and have no fear.

SERVANT

He means to kill your child. His child.

CLYTEMNESTRA

What?

ACHILLES

It cannot be.

SERVANT

As I do live and breathe, it's true.

CLYTEMNESTRA

But what's his purpose? What fury drives him on?

SERVANT

The prophets demand it for the fleet to sail.

CLYTEMNESTRA

And whither?

SERVANT

To Troy.

So Menelaus can get his wife again.

CLYTEMNESTRA

And so, for Helen's sake my girl is doomed?

SERVANT

Even as you say. He'll sacrifice the maid

To Artemis.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Then it was all a lie,

The marriage?

SERVANT

Yes. To lure you from your home.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Why, we are lost. My child and I.

I cannot stop my tears.

SERVANT

Let your tears have way.

CLYTEMNESTRA

You say it's true, old man. How do you know?

SERVANT

He sent me to you with another letter.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Bidding us to come, that he might murder her?

SERVANT

No, stopping you. He had relented then.

CLYTEMNESTRA

But how was it you did not give it me?

SERVANT

Menelaus seized it. He's the cause of all.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Young Achilles, do you hear these words?

SERVANT

Hard words to me, and harder still for you.

CLYTEMNESTRA

They used your name to lure my child to death.

ACHILLES

Ill done, my queen.

SERVANT

Ill done.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Achilles,

You see a wretched woman at your feet.

All pride has left me. What should I care for now

Except my daughter? Help me, Achilles.

Pity my need, and pity your poor bride,

Bride but in name, I know, yet none the less

I decked her for you, dreamt she would be yours,

Brought her to you, and brought her to her death.

You will be shamed if you desert her now,

Poor hapless maid, not yours, and yet called yours.

This is my only altar, at your feet.

I have no friend here else: you heard yourself

Of Agamemnon's cruelty – I stand

Alone, a helpless woman, as you see,

Among a crowd of sailors, hardened men,

Fierce men, if goaded. If you champion me,

You save us. If you stand aside, we die.

ACHILLES

My blood's on fire. All tyrants I detest,

Though I yield gladly to a tempered rule.

Lady, indeed you have been foully used,

Even at the hands where you should look for love,

And all the pity that a soldier can

I give you freely. Fear not for your child.

Mine she was called, and to the sacrifice

I will not yield her.

My name it was, though I touched not the steel,

Min which should slay your daughter. True, the cause
Is Agamemnon, yet I needs must bear
The stain of murder if she perish thus,
Betrayed and cheated through her trust in me.
I must count myself
The meanest man in all the host of Greece,
Viler than Menelaus, should I lend my name
To be accomplice to your husband's deed.
Never shall Agamemnon touch your child –
No, not the merest fringes of her robe.

CLYTEMNESTRA

I have no words – my words would seem to wild,
And yet, too poor where so great thanks are due.
I took you for a son, an empty hope,
Yes, and an evil omen for yourself
If she must die who once was called your bride,
My daughter. Never let that omen be.
But you have answered nobly, first and last,
And through your help, my daughter will be saved.
O, should I bring her here to kiss your hand?

ACHILLES

I would not have you bring her to me thus.
For we must shun the gossip of the crowd:
Scandal's the joy of an idle army.
Nor do I need more prayers to help you now;
It is my pride to save you and my joy.
And of one thing be sure: I keep my pledge.
If I play false and make but idle boast,
Death be my lot. But, if I save her, life.
Now hear my plan, and all may yet be well.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Say as you wish, in all I will obey.

ACHILLES

Let us persuade your lord to better thoughts.

CLYTEMNESTRA

He is a coward, and he fears the army.

ACHILLES

Plead with your husband for your daughter's life.
If he should still refuse you, turn to me.
But should he listen, good; I need not act.

You are safe without it. And I'd treat a friend
More fairly thus, nor should the army blame me
If I had won by reason, not by force,
While you yourself would have more peace at home
If all seemed done without me and done well.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Wise are your words. I will do as you say.
Yet, if we not accomplish what we hope,
Where shall I find you?

ACHILLES

I will keep watch myself, and wait for you.

CLYTEMNESTRA

So let it be. Surely one day the gods
Will bless you for your generous help to me.
If gods there are.

CHORUS

Far down by the well lit sand
Beside Aegean waters
Danced, circling hand in hand,
The Nereid maids,
The Sea King's fifty daughters.

IPHIGENIA enters to CLYTEMNESTRA and they talk under the CHORUS

AGAMEMNON enters

AGAMEMNON

Why do you weep, my girl? No smile for me?

CLYTEMNESTRA

Oh, which of all my wrongs shall I speak first?

AGAMEMNON

What is it?

CLYTEMNESTRA

Speak truth, my husband, in what I ask you now.

AGAMEMNON

No need to bid me: ask me what you will.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Your daughter, yours and mine, do you mean to kill her?

Answer my question.

AGAMEMNON

Such questions are not fit.

CLYTEMNESTRA

I have no others.

AGAMEMNON

O, my wretched fate.

CLYTEMNESTRA

And mine. And hers. All three thrice miserable.

AGAMEMNON

Betrayed. Betrayed. My secret has been sold.

CLYTEMNESTRA

I know. I have learnt all that you mean to do.

Your silence and your groanings, they confess,

They speak for you.

AGAMEMNON

See, I am silent. I'll not add lies to grief.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Then hear me now. I'll speak the naked truth,

No dark hints now. By force you wedded me,

I never loved you. Tantalus you slew,

My first dear husband; and my little son,

You tore him from my breast. And when my brothers,

The sons of God, flashed to me on their steeds,

My father pitied you, his suppliant,

Gave me to you for wife. And a true wife I was.

Yes, chaste and true, and cared well for your home.

Such wives are not so common.

Three girls I bore you and a son, and now

You rob me of the first. Your reason, pray,

If men should ask for it? O, I'll answer that.

To win back Helen. Your own child for a wanton.

If you do this, if you are long at Troy,

What will my heart be like, think you, at home,

When I look on my daughter's empty chair,

And empty room, sitting there all alone.

What will your wages be when you come back?

If once you killed your child, how could you pray?

What good thing ask for? Nor could I pray for you:

We make fools of the gods if we suppose

They can love murderers. If you come home,

Will you dare kiss your girls? Or they dare come,
That you may choose another for the knife?
Have you once thought of this? Are you a man?
You should have gone among the Greeks and said,
“You wish to sail for Troy? Good, then draw lots,
And see whose child must die.” That had been fair.
Or Menelaus should have slain his own –
Hermione for Helen. But I, the chaste,
I must be robbed and she come home in triumph
To find her daughter. Answer if I am wrong.
If not, give up this murder.

IPHIGENIA

Had I the voice of Orpheus, O my father,
If I could sing so that the rocks would move,
If I had words to win the hearts of all,
I would have used them. I have only tears.
See, I have brought them – they are all my power.
Why will you send me into the dark grave?
I was the first that sat upon your knee,
The first to call you father, first to give
Dear gifts and take them. All the talks we shared,
Oh, I remember every word we said,
But you forget them, and you wish my death.
Have pity, for your father Atreus’ sake
And for my mother’s: she suffered once
When I was born, and she must suffer now.
What can I have to do with Helen’s love?
How is it she has come to ruin me?
My father, look at me, and kiss me once,
That I may take this memory at least
Unto my grave with me, if I must die.

AGAMEMNON

I know the touch of pity, know it well.
I love my children, I am no madman, wife.
It is a fearful thing to do this deed,
Yet fearful not to do it. I am bound.

to IPHIGENIA

You see this host of ships and armed men?
They cannot reach the towers of Ilium,
They cannot take the far famed steep of Troy,

Unless I sacrifice you as they bid;
The prophets and the gods. And our Greeks are hot
To smite the foe, nor let them steal our wives.
If I refuse the Goddess, they will come
To Argos, kill your sisters, you and me.
I am no slave to Menelaus, now.
I do not bow to him, I bow to Hellas,
As bow I must, whether I will or no.
She is the greater. For her we live, my child,
To guard her freedom. Foreigners must not rule
Our land, nor tear our women from their homes.

AGAMEMNON exits.

CLYTEMNESTRA

O, my child. My dear child.
You must die. Your coward father is fled,
Has left you to the mercy of the men.

IPHIGENIA

Mother, my father has gone,
Left me, betrayed and alone.
I have seen Helen, her face was death.
I would that they had never come,
These hulking, crowded, murderous ships
To the shores of Aulis Bay.
Oh, mother, mother! Armed men are coming down.

Enter ACHILLES

ACHILLES

A cry goes through the army. A dread cry.

CLYTEMNESTRA

What for?

ACHILLES

Your daughter.

CLYTEMNESTR

Oh. That means the worst.

ACHILLES

It means her murder.

CLYTEMNESTRA

No man took her part?

ACHILLES

I did. I faced the mob.

CLYTEMNESTRA

What did they do?

ACHILLES

They tried to stone me.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Because you'd save my girl?

ACHILLES

Even so.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Who'd dare to lay a hand on you?

ACHILLES

All the army.

CLYTEMNESTRA

But your own countrymen?

ACHILLES

They were the first to turn against me.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Child, we are lost.

ACHILLES

Yet, I will save you.

CLYTEMNESTRA

One man against a host?

There's hope then my girl need not be slain?

ACHILLES

Not while I live.

CLYTEMNESTRA

They come to seize her here?

ACHILLES

Ten thousand strong: Odysseus leads them.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Self chosen was he, or elected? Which?

ACHILLES

Both.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Elected murderers.

ACHILLES

I'll keep him off.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Would he drag the girl
Against her will?

ACHILLES

What else can you expect?

CLYTEMNESTRA

What can I do?

ACHILLES

Hold her, and hold her fast.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Oh, God, if that can save her, she is safe.

ACHILLES

It's come to that now.

IPHIGENIA

Mother, let me speak!

This anger with my father is in vain,
Vain to use force for what we cannot win.
Thank our brave friend for all his generous zeal,
But never let us broil him with the host,
No gain to us, and ruin for himself.
I have been thinking, mother – hear me now.
I have chosen death. It is my own free choice.
I have put cowardice away from me.
Honor is mine now.
Our country, all of Hellas, looks to me,
On me the fleet hangs now, the doom of Troy,
Our women's honor all the years to come.
My death will save them, and my name be blest,
She who freed Hellas. You who bore your child,
It was for Greece you bore her, not yourself.
Think, thousands of our soldiers stand at arms,
Ten thousand men the ships, and all on fire
To serve their outraged country, die for Greece.
And is my one poor life to hinder all?
Could we defend that? Could we call it just?
The goddess needs my blood: can I refuse?
No. Take it, conquer Troy. This shall be
My husband and my children, and my fame.
Victory, mother, victory for the Greeks.
The foreigner must never rule this land,

Our own land. They are slaves and we are free.

ACHILLES

Iphigenia, I had been thrice blest

If you could be my bride.

I see your nature now, see what you are,

And thirst to win you further honors yet.

Come, I would help you, serve you all I can,

And take you to my home. I count it ill,

My shame, if I may not fight the Greeks

And save you. Think; death is a fearful thing.

IPHIGENIA

I will say one word, without fear or shame.

The face of Helen has roused war enough.

Die not because of me, slay none for me.

Let me save Hellas if I have the power.

ACHILLES

Hear what I have resolved. I will go hence,

And set my men about the altar's side

That I may save you should you change your mind.

Even you may find a meaning in my words

When the sharp steel is close upon your neck.

ACHILLES goes out.

IPHIGENIA

Are you crying?

CLYTEMNESTRA

I have cause.

IPHIGENIA

Do not weaken me. Grant what I ask.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Anything. I cannot do you wrong.

IPHIGENIA

I would not have you cut your hair for me

Nor wear black raiment.

CLYTEMNESTRA

What is it you say?

When you are lost –

IPHIGENIA

O, never speak like that.

I am saved. Saved. You will be proud of me.

CLYTEMNESTRA

I must not mourn?

IPHIGENIA

No place for mourning here,

No tomb.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Surely the slain have burial?

IPHIGENIA

The holy altar is my monument.

CLYTEMNESTRA

I will obey you, child. Your words are good.

IPHIGENIA

My lot is good. And I do good to Greece.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Is there no more that I can do to please you?

IPHIGENIA

Yes. Hate him not – my father and your husband.

CLYTEMNESTRA

He has an evil course to run for you.

IPHIGENIA

He offers me to Greece against his will.

CLYTEMNESTRA

By treachery unworthy of his house.

IPHIGENIA

Who will go with me, lead me to the place?

CLYTEMNESTRA

I will. Beside you.

IPHIGENIA

Listen, dear mother.

Stay here. That is far better for us both.

One of my father's men will go with me

To the fields of Artemis, where I must die.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Child, are you going?

IPHIGENIA

Yes. I will not come back.

CLYTEMNESTRA

You leave your mother?

IPHIGENIA

Yes, not as I would.

CLYTEMNESTRA

O, leave me not.

IPHIGENIA

I shall not shed a tear.

Now, sing the paeon for my destiny.

Sing to the child of Zeus, to Artemis,

Let the glad sound be heard by all the Greeks.

Let them lift baskets, light the fire,

And sow the seeds. Bid my father come

And touch the altar. I will bring this day

Victory and salvation to Greece.

CHORUS

Follow her now, the victor,

Follow the taker of Troy.

Crown her with a garland

And wash her for the rite.

SERVANT

My tidings, Queen, are of your daughter.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Say.

SERVANT

From first to last. The king,

Seeing his daughter coming for her death,

Groaned bitterly and turned his head away,

But she came up and stood beside him saying,

“My father, I am here to give my life

Willingly for my country, for our Greece.

Now lead me to the altar of the goddess

And sacrifice me as the seer bids.

For me, I pray now for your victory

And safe return unto our native land.

Therefore, let no man lay a hand on me.

I will stand quietly, I will not flinch.”

Such were her words and all the army wondered

At her great heart. And then the herald rose,

Stood in the midst, calling aloud for silence

And then they took the golden basket up,

Laying the sharp sword naked in the barley,
And crowned the maiden. Then Achilles came,
Lifted the basket, sprinkling all the shrine
And made libation, crying, "Artemis,
Guiding light in the darkness, now receive
The victim that we soldiers bring to thee,
This unstained body of a perfect maid.
And may there be no failing of the fleet:
Send us to Troy and let us take the town."
He spoke and all the host stood motionless,
Their eyes fixed on the girl. And the priest prayed,
Lifting the knife and gazing at her neck
To see where he should strike.
And all the Grecians of the host fell still
No breath to further this poor lack of wind.
The knife sank, the blood ran, and the host gave
Out a cry as one. The king, your husband
Did keep his gaze most fixed, and drank in all
The blood she let with sore and steadfast eyes.
Then they burned
The sacrifice to ashes and all prayed
For safe return. The king has sent me here
To tell you of the lot the gods have given
Unto your daughter and her deathless fame.
And I who saw it tell you, She has risen
Straight to the gods.
The ways of the gods no mortal can foresee:
They save the souls they love, and this one day
Has known your daughter's death, your daughter's life.
CLYTEMNESTRA
My child, risen to the gods?
What gods?

ENDING CHORUS

Behold.
Behold the conqueror of Troy.
She is crowned and made pure for a goddess' joy.
She goes to the dead,
With her white neck pierced, her blood running red.

The lustral waters waith,
Her father and the army wait
For the wind that shall waft them to high-towered Troy.
Come, let us call on Artemis,
Goddess of all gods great,
Virgin, huntress and queen,
That she bless them in this.