



Jean Racine

## ANDROMACHE, PHAEDRA, ATHALIAH

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## INTRODUCTION

### Translating Racine

Three hundred or so years after Jean Racine's death in 1699, the best reason for offering a new translation of his work may also seem the most ironic: that his plays continue to appear untranslatable. Indeed, there could be few better summaries of his current position within the English-speaking world than the opening words of L.P. Hartley's *The Go-Between*: 'The past is a foreign country: they do things differently there.' Between Racine and us, the countless separations of time, of place, of human perception and behaviour, seem to generate a sense of cultural remoteness that is almost unbridgeable. On the one hand, the scrupulous structures, controls and symmetries of literary expression in 17th century France; on the other, the erosion of all pattern and shape in a post-modernist world accelerating beyond a millennium. If ever there were an illustration to prove the impossibility of all translation, this might well be it. In that foreign country – France – in that other time – the 1660s to 1690s – they did things differently.

But, attempting the impossible, any translation of Racine immediately confronts the fundamental question of how to translate such a world, as its decorous surface is seen to belie primitive depths, into an English that is imaginatively persuasive to a contemporary audience and readership? The pit-falls are obvious. An undue stress upon the stylisation and formalities of Racine's expression may lead to a rendering that is self-consciously 'literary' – a style of polished cadence and knowing fluency, rather than direct urgency and reality. Conversely, an over-emphasis upon the simple, lived force of his utterance may lead to a translation that has contemporary and even colloquial relevance, but that lacks any sense of historical context or positioning. Even a diplomatic compromise between these extremes may fail, producing an unconvincing hybrid style that lurches between the 'formal' and the 'ordinary' from line to line. But if these are the difficulties, what kind of English do the new translations on this site embrace?

## INTRODUCTION

Five specific features of Racine's language (rhyme, rhythm, syntax, diction, and image) are worth exploring in response to the question:

### *Rhyme*

One immediate and major feature to be confronted in translating Racine is whether to retain or discard the rhyming couplets in which his plays are written. Certainly, there are a number of advantages in retaining such a rhyme-scheme. The sound-world evoked clearly signals that the plays are indeed a historical, and not a contemporary, utterance; and the drama is unambiguously positioned within past time. The couplets draw attention, also, to the shaped *form* of the expression, which can often be tellingly counterpointed against content that is tense with uncertainty or irresolution. In Richard Wilbur's words, 'irrational leaps of the self-deceiving mind' can often be sharply highlighted by the 'contrasting coherence of the form, which embodies an ideal of high and orderly consciousness'. Then again, the rhyming couplet, in Racine's hands, evokes subtle effects of suspension and advance, containment and movement. The ear is temporarily held within the sound-world of each rhyme (*fidèle/nouvelle*, *adouci/ici*, *funeste/Oreste*, *perdu/rendu*), but is also drawn forward in anticipation of the next rhyme, and so on. Nor is such a pattern entirely inflexible. Although *enjambement* is rare, lines and rhymes can be broken up between characters to achieve an almost colloquial register, as for instance in the conversations between Phèdre and Œnone, or Athalie and Joas.

For all these advantages, though, the handicaps are more substantial. The English language is not rich in rhymes; and whether in conscious or unconscious recognition of this, English tragedy has never adopted rhyme as a natural aural tradition. The distinctive strengths of the rhyming couplet have always been most tellingly deployed for satiric and comedic effects, and in poetry rather than drama. It is difficult, too, to avoid the feeling of 'jog-trot' – of an emphatic sound pattern being repeated time after time. Then again, even in the best of such translations, it is hard not to sense moments of contrivance, even palpable artificiality, as syntax or meaning is wrenched by the exigencies of rhyme. Perhaps most damaging, though, is the erosion of tonal consistency that can accompany the rhyming couplet:

Where are you going? What's your hurry for?

...

To speak with Hector at his sepulchre.

If it's true she's lifted to the throne of Caesar,  
If Titus *has* spoken, *has* chosen, I'll...leave her.

And how he heard me! How, with many a shift,  
The brute pretended not to catch my drift!

It is undoubtedly unjust to extract such couplets so baldly from the translations of which they are a part. Yet their appearance (and they are not the only examples) in recent rhymed versions by three distinguished writers shows how easily hard-won tonal effects can be weakened. The decision to adopt an unrhymed scheme in this translation, therefore, is an attempt to capitalise upon a natural dramatic tradition in English, where flexibility, richness and appropriateness in the choice of the end-word for each line are paramount. The absence of rhyme, indeed, serves only to foreground more important aural effects, notably the rhythm and metre of the verse.

### *Rhythm*

Racine's plays are famously written in alexandrines, twelve-syllable lines that were first used in the late twelfth-century epic *Le Roman d'Alexandre*, and that later became the standard metrical form for French neo-classical tragedy. In addition to end-rhymes, the alexandrine also contains a caesura, normally corresponding with some measure of phrasal pause, and generally occurring in mid-line after the sixth syllable. There is consequently a sense of balance between the two halves of the line (hemistiches). The alexandrine is not unaccented; but it is the syllabic count that fashions the metrical pattern, and that differentiates the pulse so markedly from the strongly accented nature of much English verse. In terms of overall aural impact, the line generates a sense of control and regularity, without strong stress, yet with scope for expansiveness in its twelve-syllable length.

However, although two recent translations (by C.H. Sisson and Robert David MacDonald) have sought to reproduce this expansiveness (with an

eleven-syllable and a hexameter line, respectively), few versions have followed the example. Pope's well-known comment continues to bite ('A needless Alexandrine ends the song, / That, like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along'). The weight and ponderousness of the metre in English are a substantial disadvantage, evoking as they do a stately *largo di molto* rather than any more vibrant pulse. As a result, this translation adopts an iambic pentameter line, with very occasional contractions to a tetrameter or expansions to a hexameter when metrical variety, dramatic effect, or unusually compacted meaning in the original seemed to warrant it. The pentameter not only distils and concentrates Racine's lines yet further, but also speaks to the force of native aural tradition. Just as the alexandrine is the fundamental voice of French neo-classical tragedy, English drama is no less embedded in the pulse and rhythms of blank verse.

### *Syntax*

Racine's syntax embraces a striking range between simplicity and complexity. At one extreme, there are direct, declarative sentences that would pass unnoticed in ordinary, modern speech: 'que veut-il?', 'il n'est plus temps', 'je ne la cherchais pas', 'c'en est trop', 'qu'ont-ils fait!', 'j'entends'. Slightly more formal, though still retaining a basic simplicity of construction, are a number of lines where repetition of a crucial introductory word – pronoun, conjunction or preposition – creates an effect of accumulating power and urgency (as, to take a single instance, in Hermione's passionate reminder to Pyrrhus of her sacrifices: 'j'ai dédaigné...je t'ai cherché...j'y suis encor[e]...je leur ai commandé...j'attendais...j'ai cru...je t'aimais'. Slightly more formal, though still clear in pattern, are those lines where oppositions and contrasts are presented in syntactic balance: 'épouser ce qu'il hait, et perdre ce qu'il aime', 'prête à partir, et demeurant toujours', 'il faut ou périr ou régner', 'ils ne se verront plus / ils s'aimeront toujours!'. In terms of translation into English, it is relatively easy to express these repetitions and balances in a similarly transparent sentence construction. More problematic, however, are the many complex expressions of subordination, where parataxis gives way to shifting and often subtle relationships between different phrases and clauses. Consider for a moment the way in which Josabet discusses her planned escape with the boy-king Joas:

Je suis prête: je sais une secrète issue  
 Par où, sans qu'on le voie, et sans être aperçue,  
 De Cédron avec lui traversant le torrent,  
 J'irai dans le désert où jadis en pleurant,  
 Et cherchant comme nous son salut dans la fuite,  
 David d'un fils rebelle évita la poursuite.  
 (*Athalie*, III, vi)

After the syntactic simplicity of 'je suis prête', this modulates into a complicated and highly wrought sentence in which subordinate clause is piled upon subordinate clause, normal word order is inverted, and main verb forms are replaced by present participles. It would of course be possible to render such complication into English:

I am ready. I know a secret way out,  
 By which, without them seeing him, undetected,  
 Crossing the torrent of Cedron, taking him with me,  
 I will go into the desert where, once, weeping,  
 And like us seeking to find safety in flight,  
 David escaped from a rebellious son.  
 (trans. C.H. Sisson)

This is faithful to Racine's syntax, no doubt, but it raises several questions about the cost of such fidelity for the rhythmic fluency and intelligibility of the rendering. Wherever passages like these occur – and there are many examples in *Andromaque*, *Phèdre* and *Athalie* – the solution offered in this translation is to 'naturalise' the expression by drawing upon the force of shorter sentences, the urgency of main verb forms:

I am prepared. I know a secret way –  
 We won't be noticed, seen at all –  
 We'll cross the torrent Cedron hand in hand  
 And reach the desert where king David wept.  
 He looked for safety in his flight – like us –  
 In order to escape his rebel son.

The diction and especially the biblical allusions here ensure that the relative formality of the tone is not lost; but it is expressed through a

simpler and more direct sentence structure. In this way, the wide variations between ease and studiedness in Racine's syntax are translated into a broad but single compass of English, where uncomplicated construction prevails.

### Diction

It has long been recognised that Racine draws upon a noticeably restricted lexicon in his plays. Shakespeare, it is calculated, deploys nearly 30,000 different words in his complete work; the Authorised Version about 6,500. By contrast, Racine's entire works comprise only just over 4,000 – and of these, nearly 500 are classified in the concordance as 'mots du théâtre tragique', in other words specialised, 'literary' terms with little or no currency outside French neo-classical drama. The three plays in this volume have a range of between 1,400 and 1,700 different words. Diction is consequently concentrated within a relatively narrow compass of key motifs, terms that accrue in emphasis both through ceremonial repetition and through the shifting contexts of meaning in which they are placed. The effects are subtle. On the one hand, words such as 'gloire', 'amour', 'cœur', 'ciel', 'jour', 'charme', 'yeux', 'sang', 'cruel', generate a sense of a primary and primal language, a vocabulary of fundamental conditions. These are the bed-rock terms that anchor human response, articulating characters' concerns with an almost ritualistic inevitability. But however basic such words, they are not invulnerable to change. Indeed, they are terms that are subject to constant opposition, dissimulation, misperception, and varied construction. 'Les yeux', to take a single instance, both see and do not see, both betray and are betrayed, generate both sight and insight, or alternatively sight and blindness. It is Phèdre's eyes that are dazzled and then blurred by the sight of Hippolyte ('je le vis... je pâlis à sa vue... mes yeux ne voyaient plus'), only later to prove blind to the love between him and Aricie ('par quel charme ont-ils trompé mes yeux?'). For the lovers, however, seeing is a liberation, a confirmation ('ils se voyaient avec pleine licence'), even in a place ('le fond des forêts') that is ostensibly dark and 'unseeing'. In these and similar ways, the key words in Racine both stabilise and undermine, and never more than when they speak of elemental things.

In the translation of these basic terms, modern English has one incomparable resource: its rich stock of simple, vigorous, almost always monosyllabic, words that are derived from Old English and Germanic roots. The stock addresses primary experience: love, birth, see, go, blood, death, hand, live, lips, man, wife, and so forth. Drawing upon the force of

such vocabulary, this translation seeks to convey the solidity of Racine's utterance, the concrete, specifically-experienced details of his characters' lives. Recourse to this kind of expression is particularly necessary when dealing with the key terms, the *mots précieux*, of his *langue galante*. Rarely can words like 'gloire', 'honneur', 'cœur', 'âme', be translated literally and at the same time effectively. 'Glory', for instance, needs to be more specifically rendered: into 'name' or 'good name', 'reputation', 'renown', 'fame', 'prestige'. Not all such translations can depend upon Old English derivatives, of course; but they all draw abstract or generic terms into a more specified and solidified world. And far from eroding the formalised qualities of Racine's style, such 'specification' serves only to highlight the tension between surfaces and depths that haunts his work. Against the polished, fluent surfaces of civilised behaviour – the known and accepted generalities of 'gloire' or 'honneur' or 'âme' – there is always the persistent pull downwards, towards a deeper and more individual anarchy.

### Image

Just as the relative restrictedness of Racine's lexicon has been widely recognised, so too has the relative dearth of imagery in his work. The world he evokes is one that is coolly lit, with little sensuous richness or colour. Even where simile and metaphor occur, they tend to be of a conventional kind (love as a fire, a fruit, a battle, a hunt, and so forth). Confronted with these difficulties, several modern translations have sought to leaven a spare, undecorated style with imported imagery. Where such inventions are carefully fashioned, seeming part of a natural and irresistible extension of expression, they may perhaps be justified. But only too easily, they can take on an independent imaginative life, discernibly removed from the original. Consider a single example:

Eh bien! Filles d'enfer, vos mains sont-elles prêtes?  
Pour qui sont ces serpents qui sifflent sur vos têtes?  
À qui destinez-vous l'appareil qui vous suit?

Aha, Infernal Daughters! Quite prepared?  
Who are your snakes for, ladies? Who gets snared  
By all these creatures bringing up the rear,  
Your promenading beasts, your zoo of fear?  
(trans. Douglas Dunn)

As a rendering of Orestes' maddened words at the end of *Andromaque*, the image of 'promenading beasts' and the metaphor of the 'zoo of fear' have undoubted poetic life; but whether that life is Racinian is more questionable. And this one illustration could be multiplied many times, in translations that decorate and embellish, whether intermittently or sustainedly, rather than hold the original text in steady, unrefracted gaze.

Recognising the dangers of such elaboration, this translation tries to convey the spare, economic use that Racine makes of image, metaphor and symbol. Indeed, the very fastidiousness of his treatment serves only to enhance the effectiveness of the imagery that does occur. Sometimes, it is contained within one or two lines:

Look...the temple roof is whitening with the dawn.

...

Amid the banners burns the glow of fires.

...

I see the urn of doom slip from your hands.

...

I only see its towers walled up with ash,  
A river red with blood, deserted fields,  
A boy in chains.

More often, though, some of the key words discussed earlier (light, darkness, blood, fire) form networks of association, image-clusters that radiate from the physical to the metaphoric, and from outer to inner worlds. Light, to take the most famous example, draws together *jour/lumière/soleil/clarté/ciel/éclaircir/flammé*, as well as its opposite *nuage/mort*. Racine's sparseness, in other words, does not inhibit resonance; and a major feature of this translation is the attempt to achieve that subtle verbal balance between austerity and reverberation.

These major features of rhyme, rhythm, syntax, diction and image are, of course, only part of the complex totality that is Racine's language. It is a language that embraces extraordinary range: from the coolly statuesque to the intensely passionate, from transparency to opaqueness, from simple declarative modes of utterance to complex interrogative modes that subvert and undermine. If there is an English into which this world could

be translated, I have believed it to be an English that is a-historical, even timeless, in its directness and simplicity. It is a language of hard yet resonant clarity. It is free both of incongruous colloquialism and of unconvincing archaism. It strikes a middle path between ordinariness and formality. Wherever possible, it elects the mono- rather than the multi-syllable, the Old English root before the Latinate or Romance, the iambic before the trochaic or any other metre. It chooses the end-stopped line of noun, verb and object in preference to *enjambement* and sophisticated hypotaxis. Above all, it is an English grounded in the rhythms and cadences of the human voice, as it celebrates its loves or simply breaks in pain. The infinite subtleties with which even a single line can be spoken (discriminations of pitch and tone, accent and pause, speed and intensity) are of course far beyond the written word to convey, though they will be known instinctually to all good actors and readers. Nevertheless, every line in this translation has been written to be *spoken* and *heard*. On a practical level, this emphasis will explain the frequent contractions between pronoun and verb (I'm, she'll, we're), which may appear slightly colloquial to the eye, yet which in fact sound natural and unforced to the ear. But on a much larger scale, the speaking and hearing of Racine's lines point to one of his abiding concerns, a concern that draws him into a contemporary context with unequivocal force. Voice, and the death of voice, are supreme issues for him. It is speech that defines human reality. Through the speaking of words, or through listening to the silence that always lies in wait, his characters confront central issues of power and authority, of love, passion and infatuation, of simple human survival in the face of pitiless odds. And for all the deflections and dissimulations that words afford, the perception that finally persists is both clear-eyed and unflinching. There are no escape routes offered, no facile conclusions, no murmured easy redemption to assuage the common pain. Of all French, possibly of all European, tragedians, Racine is the one who stares into the whiteness of the sun, and who never blinks.

In the course of translating these plays, I have been very conscious of my indebtedness to those translators who have paved the way, not only by indicating paths to follow but – equally important – by signalling what have seemed less profitable routes. It is always invidious to select particular names for mention, many of whom are listed in the 'further reading and links' section; but the late John Cairncross' translations yielded many insights, to the extent of providing several phrases and, occasionally, even whole lines that could not be bettered. An article by Kevin Jackson in *The Independent* (3 February 1990), to which Neil Bartlett, Sian Evans, Alan Hollinghurst and Eric Korn contributed

different versions of a passage from *Phèdre*, provided an invaluable starting-point. Other debts go even further back. I hope that the shade of the late Lloyd Davies would approve how a certain adolescent's view of the arch-Romantic Hugo as infinitely preferable to the classical Racine has now matured. Peter Cobb will recall sessions tutoring the same adolescent in translating Jules Romains. Christopher Gill gave a vital push as final drafts were completed, and Gaylord Meech was a constant partner. More recently, Michael Hawcroft provided much helpful advice; and Tom Griffith proved an exemplary general editor, efficient and supportive in all that he did.

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## CHRONOLOGY

- 1639 Born, the son of a minor civil servant, in La Ferté-Milon, some sixty miles east of Paris. Baptised on 22 December.
- 1641 His mother dies, 28 January.
- 1642 His father remarries, only to die three months later, on 6 February. Racine and his sister are cared for by their paternal grandmother, Marie des Moulins.
- 1643 Enters the abbey of Port-Royal, where his aunt, Agnes des Moulins, is a nun, and begins to be instructed in the doctrines of Jansenism.
- 1649 Begins studies at the Petites Écoles de Port-Royal.
- 1653–5 Continues studies at the Collège de Beauvais, which has strong links with Port-Royal.
- 1658–9 Completes studies at the Collège d'Harcourt in Paris. Begins to turn away from religion and to become involved in literary affairs. Meets La Fontaine.
- 1661 Disappointed by the rejection of two pieces for the theatre, goes to stay with his uncle, a vicar-general in Uzès, hoping to be offered a church living. Hopes gradually fade.
- 1663 Returns to Paris. Granted an official state allowance in recognition of his *Ode sur la Convalescence du Roi*, Louis XIV. Is now able to live independently. Becomes acquainted with the critic Boileau, the beginning of a long friendship.

## CHRONOLOGY

- 1664 Gains the support of Molière, whose theatre company produces his first play, *La Thébaïde*, though without great success.
- 1665 Second play, *Alexandre le Grand*, produced in Molière's theatre, but then transferred by Racine to a rival company, who perform it to great acclaim. Serious argument and split with Molière.
- 1667 *Andromaque* performed in November, and is a huge success. Secretly marries the actress who plays the lead, Mlle du Parc.
- 1668 *Les Plaideurs*, his only comedy, is performed, but fails. Mlle du Parc found poisoned.
- 1669 *Britannicus* produced, meeting with hostility from Corneille.
- 1670 *Bérénice*, presented within a week of Corneille's *Tite et Bérénice*, but to far greater acclaim.
- 1672 *Bajazet*.
- 1673 *Mithridate*. Elected to the Académie Française.
- 1674 *Iphigénie*.
- 1677 *Phèdre*.  
Marries Catherine de Romanet, for financial advantages rather than for love. Jointly appointed with Boileau as Historiographer Royal to Louis XIV. Officially reconciled with religion, and with Port-Royal and Jansenism in particular.
- 1678–87 Accompanies the king and the army on a number of journeys – to Yprès, Alsace, Luxemburg.
- 1688 Commissioned by Madame de Maintenon to write a play suitable for the girls of Saint-Cyr, a school under her patronage.
- 1689 *Esther* performed.

## CHRONOLOGY

- 1691      *Athalie* performed privately before Louis XIV and Madame de Maintenon by the girls of Saint-Cyr.
- 1691–3    Accompanies the king to the sieges of Mons and Namur.
- 1692      His seventh and last child, Louis, born on 2 November.
- 1695–7    Writes a history of Port-Royal.
- 1697–8    Relations with the king and with Madame de Maintenon appear to cool, for uncertain reasons.
- 1699      Dies in Paris on 21 April. Is buried at Port-Royal. Twelve years later (1711), his ashes are transferred to Saint-Étienne-du-Mont.



Jean Racine

ANDROMAQUE

ANDROMACHE

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## A MADAME

MADAME,

Ce n'est pas sans sujet que je mets votre illustre nom à la tête de cet ouvrage. Et de quel autre nom pourrais-je éblouir les yeux de mes lecteurs, que de celui dont mes spectateurs ont été si heureusement éblouis? On savait que VOTRE ALTESSE ROYALE avait daigné prendre soin de la conduite de ma tragédie; on savait que vous m'aviez prêté quelques-unes de vos lumières pour y ajouter de nouveaux ornements; on savait enfin que vous l'aviez honorée de quelques larmes dès la première lecture que je vous en fis. Pardonnez-moi, MADAME, si j'ose me vanter de cet heureux commencement de sa destinée. Il me console bien glorieusement de la dureté de ceux qui ne voudraient pas s'en laisser toucher. Je leur permets de condamner l'*Andromaque* tant qu'ils voudront, pourvu qu'il me soit permis d'appeler de toutes les subtilités de leur esprit au cœur de VOTRE ALTESSE ROYALE.

Mais, MADAME, ce n'est pas seulement du cœur que vous jugez de la bonté d'un ouvrage, c'est avec une intelligence qu'aucune fausse lueur ne saurait tromper. Pouvons-nous mettre sur la scène une histoire que vous ne possédiez aussi bien que nous? Pouvons-nous faire jouer une intrigue dont vous ne pénétriez tous les ressorts? Et pouvons-nous concevoir des sentiments si nobles et si délicats qui ne soient infiniment au-dessous de la noblesse et de la délicatesse de vos pensées?

On sait, MADAME, et VOTRE ALTESSE ROYALE a beau s'en cacher, que, dans ce haut degré de gloire où la Nature et la Fortune ont pris plaisir de vous élever, vous ne dédaignez pas cette gloire obscure que les gens de lettres s'étaient réservée. Et il semble que vous ayez voulu avoir autant d'avantage sur notre sexe, par les connaissances et par la solidité de votre esprit, que vous excellez dans le vôtre par toutes les grâces qui vous environnent. La cour vous repréde comme l'arbitre de tout ce qui se fait d'agréable. Et nous qui travaillons pour plaire au public, nous n'avons plus que faire de demander aux savants si nous travaillons selon les règles. La règle souveraine est de plaire à VOTRE ALTESSE ROYALE.

## TO MADAME

[Henrietta of England, Duchess of Orleans]

MADAME,

It is not without good cause that I place your renowned name at the head of this work. With what other name could I dazzle my readers' eyes than the one with which my audiences have been so happily dazzled? It was known that YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS had deigned to participate in the making of my tragedy. It was known that you had given me several insights so as to add fresh ornamentation to it. It was known, lastly, that you had honoured it with some tears at my first reading it to you. Forgive me, MADAME, if I dare boast of this happy beginning to its fortune. It is a wonderful consolation for the severity of those who would not let themselves be moved by it. I will allow them to condemn *Andromache* as much as they want, provided I am allowed to appeal against all their quibbling to YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS' heart.

But, MADAME, it is not only with the heart that you judge the quality of a work. It is with an intelligence that cannot be deceived by false appearances. Could we stage a story that you did not know as thoroughly as us? Could we make up a plot whose motivations you would not fathom? Could we create such noble and sensitive feelings that were not infinitely beneath the nobility and sensitivity of your own thoughts?

It is known, MADAME, and YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS cannot keep this secret, that in the high and glorious rank to which nature and fortune have been pleased to raise you, you do not look down on the obscure reputation that men of letters have kept as their own preserve. And you seem to have wished to outshine our sex as much by your knowledge and sound judgment as by all the outstanding graces that surround yours. The Court regards you as the arbiter of everything that is pleasant and tasteful. And we, who work to please the public, no longer have to ask the scholars whether we work according to the rules. The sovereign rule is to please YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS.

Voilà sans doute la moindre de vos excellentes qualités. Mais, MADAME, c'est la seule dont j'ai pu parler avec quelque connaissance; les autres sont trop élevées au-dessus de moi. Je n'en puis parler sans les rabaisser par la faiblesse de mes pensées, et sans sortir de la profonde vénération avec laquelle je suis,

MADAME,

DE VOTRE ALTESSE ROYALE,

Le très humble, très obéissant, et très fidèle serviteur,

RACINE.

No doubt this is the least of your excellent qualities. But, MADAME, it is the only one I can speak of with some knowledge. The others are far above me. I cannot speak of them without diminishing them by the poverty of my thought, and without departing from the deep respect with which I am

MADAME,

YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS'

Most humble, obedient and faithful servant

RACINE

## PREMIÈRE PRÉFACE

Virgile au troisième livre de l'*Enéide* (c'est Énée qui parle)

Littoraque Epiri legimus, portuque subimus  
 Chaonio, et celsam Buthroti ascendimus urbem...  
 Solemnes tum forte dapes, et tristia dona...  
 Libabat cineri Andromache, Manesque vocabat  
 Hectoreum ad tumulum, viridi quem cespitem inanem,  
 Et geminas, causam lacrymis, sacraverat aras...  
 Dejecit vultum, et demissa voce locuta est:  
 'O felix una ante alias Priameia virgo,  
 Hostilem ad tumulum, Trojae sub mœnibus altis,  
 Jussa mori, quae sortitus non pertulit ullos,  
 Nec victoris heri tetigit captiva cubile!  
 Nos, patria incensa, diversa per aequora vectae,  
 Stirpis Achilleae fastus, juvenemque superbum,  
 Servitio enixae tulimus, qui deinde secutus  
 Ledaeam Hermionem, Lacedaemoniosque hymenaeos...  
 Ast illum, ereptae magno inflammatus amore  
 Conjugis, et scelerum Furiis agitatus, Orestes  
 Excipit incautum, patriasque obtruncat ad aras.'

Voilà, en peu de vers, tout le sujet de cette tragédie. Voilà le lieu de la scène, l'action qui s'y passe, les quatre principaux acteurs, et même leurs caractères. Excepté celui d'Hermione dont la jalousie et les emportements sont assez marqués dans l'*Andromaque* d'Euripide.

Mais véritablement mes personnages sont si fameux dans l'antiquité, que, pour peu qu'on la connaisse, on verra fort bien que je les ai rendus tels que les anciens poètes nous les ont donnés. Aussi n'ai-je pas pensé qu'il me fit permis de rien changer à leurs mœurs. Toute la liberté que j'ai prise, c'a été d'adoucir un peu la féroce de Pyrrhus, que Sénèque, dans sa *Troade*, et Virgile, dans le second de l'*Enéide*, ont poussée beaucoup plus loin que je n'ai cru le devoir faire.

## FIRST PREFACE

In the third book of the *Aeneid*, Virgil writes (Aeneas is speaking):

*[We sailed along the coast of Epirus, until we reached  
 The port of Chaonia, and climbed up to the city of Buthrotes...  
 Andromache was pouring out her offerings of grief  
 In ritual sacrifice to Hector's ashes. She called  
 Upon his spirit at his empty tomb on a green mound,  
 Where she had sanctified two altars, as a place to mourn...  
 She looked downcast, and quietly said:  
 'Happiest of women must Priam's virgin daughter be,  
 Sentenced to die upon an enemy's grave beneath the towering  
 Battlements of Troy. She did not have to bear the choice of lottery,  
 Nor satisfy a conqueror's lust as captive slave.  
 Yet I have left my home in flames, have sailed across the seas  
 In harshest slavery, to suffer all the arrogance  
 Of Achilles' young son, who soon left me to wed  
 A Spartan called Hermione, the grand-daughter of Leda...  
 Orestes, though, still tortured by the Furies for his crime,  
 Burned hot with passion for the wife that Pyrrhus planned to steal.  
 He caught him by surprise, and killed him at the altar of his home.*

Here, in a few lines, is the entire subject of this tragedy. Here is the setting, the events that occur, the four main actors, and even their characters – apart from Hermione, whose jealousy and passions are fairly clearly defined in Euripides' *Andromache*.

But really my characters are so well known from antiquity that, however little you know them, it will be obvious that I have depicted them as the poets of old have handed them down to us. I have not felt authorised to change anything in their behaviour. The only liberty I have taken is to tone down Pyrrhus' fierceness a little, which Seneca in *The Troades*, and Virgil in the second book of the *Aeneid*, depicted much more strongly than I thought I ought to do.

Encore s'est-il trouvé des gens qui se sont plaints qu'il s'emportât contre Andromaque, et qu'il voulût épouser une captive à quelque prix que ce fût. J'avoue qu'il n'est pas assez résigné à la volonté de sa maîtresse, et que Céladon a mieux connu que lui le parfait amour. Mais que faire? Pyrrhus n'avait pas lu nos romans. Il était violent de son naturel, et tous les héros ne sont pas faits pour être des Céladons.

Quoi qu'il en soit, le public m'a été trop favorable pour m'embarrasser du chagrin particulier de deux ou trois personnes qui voudraient qu'on réformât tous les héros de l'antiquité pour en faire des héros parfaits. Je trouve leur intention fort bonne de vouloir qu'on ne mette sur la scène que des hommes impeccables mais je les prie de se souvenir que ce n'est point à moi de changer les règles du théâtre. Horace nous recommande de peindre Achille farouche, inexorable, violent, tel qu'il était, et tel qu'on dépeint son fils. Aristote, bien éloigné de nous demander des héros parfaits, veut au contraire que les personnages tragiques, c'est-à-dire ceux dont le malheur fait la catastrophe de la tragédie, ne soient ni tout à fait bons ni tout à fait méchants. Il ne veut pas qu'ils soient extrêmement bons, parce que la punition d'un homme de bien exciterait plutôt l'indignation que la pitié du spectateur; ni qu'ils soient méchants avec excès, parce qu'on n'a point pitié d'un scélérat. Il faut donc qu'ils aient une bonté médiocre, c'est-à-dire ilne vertu capable de faiblesse, et qu'ils tombent dans le malheur par quelque faute qui les fasse plaindre sans les faire détester.

Some people, though, have complained that he loses his temper with Andromache and that he wanted to marry a captive whatever the price. I admit he is not responsive enough to his mistress's wishes, and that Celadon knew 'perfect love' better than him. But what can one do? Pyrrhus had not read our novels. He was naturally violent. And all heroes are not cut out to be Celadons.

Whatever the truth, public reaction has been too favourable for me to worry about the personal distress of two or three individuals who would like to reform all the heroes of antiquity and make them perfect heroes. It is a fine intention to want only faultless men portrayed on the stage; but I ask these critics to remember that it is not for *me* to change the rules of the theatre. Horace recommends us to depict Achilles as fierce, inexorable, violent – just as he was, and just as his son is portrayed. And Aristotle, far from asking for perfect heroes, asks on the contrary that tragic characters (that is, those whose misfortunes make up the catastrophe of the tragedy) should be neither totally good, nor totally wicked. He does not want them to be completely good, because punishing a virtuous man would excite indignation rather than pity in the audience. Nor should they be entirely evil, because nobody can feel pity for a wicked man. They should therefore be of average goodness – that is, their virtues should be open to weakness, and they should fall into misfortune through some flaw that makes them pitiable rather than detestable.

## SECONDE PRÉFACE

Virgile au troisième livre de l'*Énéide* (c'est Énée qui parle)

Littoraque Epiri legimus, portuque subimus  
 Chaonio, et celsam Buthroti ascendimus urbem...  
 Solemnes tum forte dapes, et tristia dona...  
 Libabat cineri Andromache, Manesque vocabat  
 Hectoreum ad tumulum, viridi quem cespitem inanem,  
 Et geminas, causam lacrymis, sacraverat aras...  
 Dejecit vultum, et demissa voce locuta est:  
 'O felix una ante alias Priameia virgo,  
 Hostilem ad tumulum, Trojae sub mœnibus altis,  
 Jussa mori, quae sortitus non pertulit ullos,  
 Nec victoris heri tetigit captiva cubile!  
 Nos, patria incensa, diversa per aequora vectae,  
 Stirpis Achilleae fastus, juvenemque superbum,  
 Servitio enixae tulimus, qui deinde secutus  
 Ledaeam Hermionem, Lacedaemoniosque hymenaeos...  
 Ast illum, ereptae magno inflammatus amore  
 Conjugis, et scelerum Furiis agitatus, Orestes  
 Excipit incautum, patriasque obtruncat ad aras.'

Voilà, en peu de vers, tout le sujet de cette tragédie, voilà le lieu de la scène, l'action qui s'y passe, les quatre principaux acteurs, et même leurs caractères, excepté celui d'Hermione dont la jalousie et les emportements sont assez marqués dans l'*Andromaque* d'Euripide.

C'est presque la seule chose que j'emprunte ici de cet auteur. Car, quoique ma tragédie porte le même nom que la sienne, le sujet en est cependant très différent. Andromaque, dans Euripide, craint pour la vie de Molossus, qui est un fils qu'elle a eu de Pyrrhus et qu'Hermione veut faire mourir avec sa mère. Mais ici il ne s'agit point de Molossus: Andromaque ne connaît point d'autre mari qu'Hector, ni d'autre fils qu'Astyanax. J'ai cru en cela me conformer à l'idée que nous avons

## SECOND PREFACE

In the third book of the *Aeneid*, Virgil writes (Aeneas is speaking):

*Littoraque Epiri legimus, portuque subimus  
 Chaonio, et celsam Buthroti ascendimus urbem...  
 Solemnes tum forte dapes, et tristia dona...  
 Libabat cineri Andromache, Manesque vocabat  
 Hectoreum ad tumulum, viridi quem cespitem inanem,  
 Et geminas, causam lacrymis, sacraverat aras...  
 Dejecit vultum, et demissa voce locuta est:  
 "O felix una ante alias Priameia virgo,  
 Hostilem ad tumulum, Trojae sub moenibus altis,  
 Jussa mori, quae sortitus non pertulit ullos,  
 Nec victoris heri tetigit captiva cubile!  
 Nos, patria incensa, diversa per aequora vectae,  
 Stirpis Achilleae fastus, juvenemque superbum,  
 Servitio enixae tulimus, qui deinde secutus  
 Ledaeam Hermionem, Lacedaemoniosque hymebaeos...  
 Ast illum, ereptae magno inflammatus amore  
 Conjugis, et scelerum Furiis agitatus, Orestes  
 Excipit incautum, patriasque obtruncat ad aras."*

[translated above]

Here, in a few lines, is the entire subject of this tragedy. Here is the setting, the events that occur, the four main actors, and even their characters – apart from Hermione, whose jealousy and passions are fairly clearly defined in Euripides' *Andromache*.

This is practically the only feature that I have borrowed from this writer. Although my tragedy has the same title as his, the subject matter is entirely different. In Euripides, Andromache fears for the life of Molossus, a son she had borne Pyrrhus and whom Hermione wished to kill, together with his mother. Here, though, Molossus does not enter the picture. Andromache has had no other husband but Hector, and no other son but Astyanax. In depicting her so, I felt I

maintenant de cette princesse. La plupart de ceux qui ont entendu parler d'Andromaque ne la connaissaient guère que pour la veuve d'Hector et pour la mère d'Asryanax. On ne croit point qu'elle doive aimer ni un autre mari, ni un autre fils; et je doute que les larmes d'Andromaque eussent fait sur l'esprit de mes spectateurs l'impression qu'elles y ont faite, si elles avaient coulé pour un autre fils que celui qu'elle avait d'Hector.

Il est vrai que j'ai été obligé de faire vivre Asryanax un peu plus qu'il n'a vécu; mais j'écris dans un pays où cette liberté ne pouvait pas être mal reçue. Car, sans parler de Ronsard, qui a choisi ce même Asryanax pour le héros de sa *Franciade*, qui ne sait que l'on fait descendre nos anciens rois de ce fils d'Hector, et que nos vieilles chroniques sauvent la vie à ce jeune prince, après la désolation de son pays, pour en faire le fondateur de notre monarchie?

Combien Euripide a-t-il été plus hardi dans sa tragédie d'*Hélène*! il y choque ouvertement la créance commune de toute la Grèce: il suppose qu'Hélène n'a jamais mis le pied dans Troie, et qu'après l'embrasement de cette ville, Ménélas trouve sa femme en Égypte, d'où elle n'était point partie; tout cela fondé sur une opinion qui n'était reçue que parmi les Égyptiens, comme on le peut voir dans Hérodote.

Je ne crois pas que j'eusse besoin de cet exemple d'Euripide pour justifier le peu de liberté que j'ai prise. Car il y a bien de la différence entre détruire le principal fondement d'une fable et en altérer quelques incidents, qui changent presque de face dans toutes les mains qui les traitent. Ainsi Achille, selon la plupart des poètes, ne peut être blessé qu'au talon, quoique Homère le fasse blesser au bras, et ne le croie invulnérable en aucune partie de son corps. Ainsi Sophocle fait mourir Jocaste aussitôt après la reconnaissance d'Œdipe; tout au contraire d'Euripide qui la fait vivre jusqu'au combat et à la mort de ses deux fils. Et c'est à propos de quelques contrariétés de cette nature qu'un ancien commentateur de Sophocle remarque fort bien 'qu'il ne faut point s'amuser à chicaner les poètes pour quelques changements qu'ils ont pu faire dans la fable; mais qu'il faut s'attacher à considérer l'excellent usage qu'ils ont fait de ces changements, et la manière ingénieuse dont ils ont su accommoder la fable à leur sujet.'

was conforming to the idea that we have of this princess nowadays. Most of those who have heard of Andromache hardly know her other than as Hector's widow and Asryanax' mother. We do not believe she should love another husband or another son. And I doubt her tears would have made the impression they did on my audiences, had they been shed for a son other than the one she bore Hector.

It is true that I have had to make Asryanax live a little longer than he did. But I write in a country where such a liberty could not be taken amiss. Quite apart from Ronsard, who chose this same Asryanax as the hero of his *Franciade*, everyone knows that our kings of old are meant to be descended from this son of Hector, and that our ancient chronicles save the life of this young prince, after his country is laid waste, so as to make him founder of our monarchy.

How much bolder Euripides was in his tragedy *Helena*. There, he openly flouts the common belief of all of Greece. He supposes Helen never set foot in Troy – that after the city was set on fire, Menelaus finds his wife in Egypt, which she had never left. And all this based on a view that was accepted only by the Egyptians, as can be seen in Herodotus.

I do not think I need this example from Euripides to justify the slight liberty I have taken. There is a world of difference between destroying the very foundations of a story and changing some of the incidents, which are in any case altered by everyone who portrays them. So Achilles, according to most poets, can be wounded only in the heel, although Homer depicts him wounded in the arm, and never considers any part of his body invulnerable. Sophocles has Jocasta dying immediately after Oedipus' realisation, totally opposite from Euripides, who keeps her alive until the fight between her two sons and their death. It is because of differences like this that an old commentator on Sophocles justly remarks: 'we should not delight in quibbling with poets about the few changes they may have made to the story; we ought to concentrate on the excellent use they have made of these changes, and the ingenious way they have adapted the story to their subject'.

ANDROMAQUE

## ACTEURS

ANDROMAQUE, veuve d'Hector, captive de Pyrrhus

PYRRHUS, fils d'Achille, roi d'Épire

ORESTE, fils d'Agamemnon

HERMIONE, fille d'Hélène, accordée avec Pyrrhus

PYLADE, ami d'Oreste

CLÉONE, confidente d'Hermione

CÉPHISE, confidente d'Andromaque

PHÉNIX, gouverneur d'Achille, et ensuite de Pyrrhus

SUITE D'ORESTE

*La scène est à Buthrot, ville d'Épire, dans une salle du palais de Pyrrhus.*

ANDROMACHE

## CAST

ANDROMACHE, Hector's widow, captive of Pyrrhus

PYRRHUS, son of Achilles, king of Epirus

ORESTES, son of Agamemnon

HERMIONE, Helen's daughter, betrothed to Pyrrhus

PYLADES, friend of Orestes

CLEONE, Hermione's confidante

CEPHISA, Andromache's confidante

PHOENIX, mentor of Achilles, and subsequently of Pyrrhus

ORESTES' RETINUE

*The scene is set at Buthrotes, a town in Epirus, in a room in Pyrrhus' palace.*



## ACTE 1 SCÈNE 1

*Oreste, Pylade*

ORESTE

Oui, puisque je retrouve un ami si fidèle,  
 Ma fortune va prendre une face nouvelle;  
 Et déjà son courroux semble s'être adouci  
 Depuis qu'elle a pris soin de nous rejoindre ici.  
 Qui l'eût dit, qu'un rivage à mes vœux si funeste  
 Présenterait d'abord Pylade aux yeux d'Oreste?  
 Qu'après plus de six mois que je t'avais perdu,  
 A la cour de Pyrrhus tu me serais rendu?

PYLADE

J'en rends grâce au ciel qui, m'arrêtant sans cesse,  
 Semblait m'avoir fermé le chemin de la Grèce  
 Depuis le jour fatal que la fureur des eaux  
 Presque aux yeux de l'Épire écarta nos vaisseaux.  
 Combien, dans cet exil, ai-je souffert d'alarmes!  
 Combien à vos malheurs ai-je donné de larmes,  
 Craignant toujours pour vous quelque nouveau danger  
 Que ma triste amitié ne pouvait partager!  
 Surtout je redoutais cette mélancolie  
 Où j'ai vu si longtemps votre âme ensevelie.  
 Je craignais que le ciel, par un cruel secours,  
 Ne vous offrît la mort que vous cherchiez toujours.  
 Mais je vous vois, Seigneur; et si j'ose le dire,  
 Un destin plus heureux vous conduit en Épire:  
 Le pompeux appareil qui suit ici vos pas  
 N'est point d'un malheureux qui cherche le trépas.

ORESTE

Hélas! qui peut savoir le destin qui m'amène?  
 L'amour me fait ici chercher une inhumaine.

## ACT 1 SCENE 1

*Orestes, Pylades [with Orestes' retinue]*

ORESTES

Pylades, oh my dear, dear friend. You're here.  
 My fortune has begun to change.  
 At last its anger seems to be less fierce;  
 It's taken pains to reunite us here.  
 Who would have thought I'd find you – and so soon –  
 And in a place so hostile to me now.  
 To think that you've been lost for six long months,  
 And now come back to me at Pyrrhus' court.

PYLADES

I thank the gods. They would not let me pass,  
 And seemed to close the road to Greece – all since  
 That fateful day when raging seas within  
 The sight of Epirus made our ships part.  
 I felt so anxious while I was away.  
 I kept on grieving for your wretchedness,  
 Always afraid of some new danger facing you  
 That my poor friendship could not share.  
 But most of all, I feared that dark, sad mood  
 In which I've seen your mind caught up so long.  
 I was afraid the gods would cruelly help  
 And let you have the death you've always sought.  
 But you are here, my lord. And dare I say  
 A brighter fortune brings you now to Epirus.  
 The pomp and splendour of this retinue  
 Do not suggest a man who wants to die.

ORESTES

Who can foretell where destiny may lead?  
 Love for a cruel woman draws me here.

Mais qui sait ce qu'il doit ordonner de mon sort,  
Et si je viens chercher ou la vie ou la mort?

PYLADE

Quoi? votre âme à l'amour en esclave asservie  
Se repose sur lui du soin de votre vie?  
Par quel charme, oubliant tant de tourments soufferts,  
Pouvez-vous consentir à rentrer dans ses fers?  
Pensez-vous qu'Hermione, à Sparte inexorable,  
Vous prépare en Épire un sort plus favorable?  
Honteux d'avoir poussé tant de vœux superflus,  
Vous l'abhorriez; enfin vous ne m'en parliez plus.  
Vous me trompiez, Seigneur.

ORESTE

Je me trompais moi-même!  
Ami, n'accable point un malheureux qui t'aime.  
T'ai-je jamais caché mon cœur et mes désirs?  
Tu vis naître ma flamme et mes premiers soupirs.  
Enfin, quand Ménélas disposa de sa fille  
En faveur de Pyrrhus, vengeur de sa famille,  
Tu vis mon désespoir; et tu m'as vu depuis  
Traîner de mers en mers ma chaîne et mes ennuis.  
Je te vis à regret, en cet état funeste,  
Prêt à suivre partout le déplorable Oreste,  
Toujours de ma fureur interrompre le cours,  
Et de moi-même enfin me sauver tous les jours.  
Mais quand je me souvins que parmi tant d'alarmes  
Hermione à Pyrrhus prodiguait tous ses charmes,  
Tu sais de quel courroux mon cœur alors épris  
Voulut en l'oubliant punir tous ses mépris.  
Je fis croire et je crus ma victoire certaine;  
Je pris tous mes transports pour des transports de haine.  
Détestant ses rigueurs, rabaissant ses attraits,  
Je défiais ses yeux de me troubler jamais.  
Voilà comme je crus étouffer ma tendresse.  
En ce calme trompeur j'arrivai dans la Grèce,

Who knows what fate that love may bring  
Or if I come to find my life or death?

PYLADES

How can your mind be so enslaved by love  
To make the main care of your life of it?  
What spell could make you so forget its pain  
And once again agree to be its slave?  
Hermione in Sparta would not yield.  
You think she'll act more favourably in Epirus?  
You were ashamed of making all those vows in vain.  
You came to loathe her, would not speak of her.  
You have deceived me.

ORESTES

I've deceived myself.  
My dearest friend, don't overwhelm me now.  
When did I hide my heart's desires from you?  
You saw my love at birth, the yearning so.  
And then, when Menelaus gave his daughter's hand  
To Pyrrhus, who'd avenged his family,  
You witnessed my despair. You've seen me since,  
Dragging my chain of grief from sea to sea.  
In this dark mood, I saw you were prepared –  
Against my will – to stay with me throughout,  
To break up all those fits of rage,  
And save me from myself each day.  
When I remembered, in that turmoil then,  
Hermione give Pyrrhus all her charms,  
You know the rage that overwhelmed my heart.  
I tried for vengeance by forgetting her.  
I made myself believe that I had won.  
I took each frenzy as a fit of hate.  
I damned her rigidity, disparaged all her charm,  
And challenged her to trouble me again.  
My tenderness was stifled, so I thought.  
The calm deceived. I came to Greece.

Et je trouvai d'abord ses princes rassemblés,  
 Qu'un péril assez grand semblait avoir troublés.  
 J'y courus. Je pensai que la guerre et la gloire  
 De soins plus importants rempliraient ma mémoire;  
 Que mes sens reprenant leur première vigueur,  
 L'amour achèverait de sortir de mon cœur.  
 Mais admire avec moi le sort dont la poursuite  
 Me fit courir alors au piège que j'évite.  
 J'entends de tous côtés qu'on menace Pyrrhus;  
 Toute la Grèce éclate en murmures confus;  
 On se plaint qu'oubliant son sang et sa promesse  
 Il élève en sa cour l'ennemi de la Grèce,  
 Astyanax, d'Hector jeune et malheureux fils,  
 Reste de tant de rois sous Troie ensevelis.  
 J'apprends que pour ravir son enfance au supplice  
 Andromaque trompa l'ingénieux Ulysse,  
 Tandis qu'un autre enfant, arraché de ses bras  
 Sous le nom de son fils fut conduit au trépas.  
 On dit que peu sensible aux charmes d'Hémione  
 Mon rival porte ailleurs son cœur et sa couronne.  
 Ménélas, sans le croire, en paraît affligé  
 Et se plaint d'un hymen si longtemps négligé.  
 Parmi les dé plaisirs où son âme se noie,  
 Il s'élève en la mienne une secrète joie:  
 Je triomphe; et pourtant je me flatte d'abord  
 Que la seule vengeance excite ce transport.  
 Mais l'ingrate en mon cœur reprit bientôt sa place:  
 De mes feux mal éteints je reconnus la trace;  
 Je sentis que ma haine allait finir son cours,  
 Ou plutôt je sentis que je l'aimais toujours.  
 Ainsi de tous les Grecs je brigue le suffrage.  
 On m'envoie à Pyrrhus; j'entreprends ce voyage,  
 Je viens voir si l'on peut arracher de ses bras  
 Cet enfant dont la vie alarme tant d'États.  
 Heureux si je pouvais, dans l'ardeur qui me presse,  
 Au lieu d'Astyanax, lui ravir ma princesse!  
 Car enfin n'attends pas que mes feux redoublés  
 Des périls les plus grands puissent être troublés.  
 Puisque après tant d'efforts ma résistance est vaine

Straightway, I found her princes gathering,  
 Troubled, it seemed, by dangers of great weight.  
 I joined their cause. I thought that war and fame  
 Would fill my mind with greater things –  
 That once my senses were restored to health,  
 Love would at last have vanished from my heart.  
 But marvel at the ways of fate. It hounded me  
 Right to the trap I wanted to avoid.  
 I hear that Pyrrhus now is threatened from all sides.  
 All Greece explodes with murmuring and doubt.  
 He has forgotten, they complain, both blood and vows,  
 And brings up in his court the enemy of Greece.  
 Astyanax is Hector's young, unhappy son,  
 The last of many kings now buried under Troy.  
 To save the boy from death, I'm told  
 Andromache deceived the cunning Ulysses.  
 Another child was snatched up from her arms,  
 And taken for her son, and killed.  
 It's said that Pyrrhus shuns Hermione  
 And that he takes his heart and crown elsewhere.  
 Her father doubts it still, and yet seems grieved,  
 Complains about a wedding day so long delayed.  
 Her mind seems drowned in so much hurt,  
 And yet a secret joy floods up in mine.  
 I've won. At first, I erringly believed  
 Revenge alone had made for such delight.  
 But in my heart, she soon regained her place.  
 I saw the mark of love that would not die.  
 I felt my hate had run its course  
 Or rather...knew I loved her still.  
 And so I canvassed all the Greeks; I'm named  
 Ambassador to Pyrrhus. I've come to see  
 If I can take away from him that boy  
 Whose mere existence troubles many states.  
 And yet, my love is so intense I want  
 To take Hermione before the child.  
 And it's increased. You can't expect to find  
 It threatened by the greatest dangers now.  
 I've tried so hard. But holding out is vain.

Je me livre en aveugle au destin qui m'entraîne.  
 J'aime: je viens chercher Hermione en ces lieux,  
 La fléchir, l'enlever, ou mourir à ses yeux.  
 Toi qui connais Pyrrhus, que penses-tu qu'il fasse?  
 Dans sa cour, dans son cœur, dis-moi ce qui se passe.  
 Mon Hermione encor le tient-elle asservi?  
 Me rendra-t-il, Pylade, un bien qu'il m'a ravi?

PYLADE

Je vous abuserais si j'osais vous promettre  
 Qu'entre vos mains, Seigneur, il voulût la remettre.  
 Non que de sa conquête il paraisse flatté;  
 Pour la veuve d'Hector ses feux ont éclaté;  
 Il l'aime. Mais enfin cette veuve inhumaine  
 N'a payé jusqu'ici son amour que de haine;  
 Et chaque jour encore on lui voit tout tenter  
 Pour fléchir sa captive, ou pour l'épouvanter.  
 De son fils qu'il lui cache il menace la tête,  
 Et fait couler des pleurs qu'aussitôt il arrête.  
 Hermione elle-même a vu plus de cent fois  
 Cet amant irrité revenir sous ses lois,  
 Et de ses vœux troublés lui rapportant l'hommage,  
 Soupirer à ses pieds moins d'amour que de rage.  
 Ainsi n'attendez pas que l'on puisse aujourd'hui  
 Vous répondre d'un cœur si peu maître de lui:  
 Il peut, Seigneur, il peut, dans ce désordre extrême,  
 Épouser ce qu'il hait, et punir ce qu'il aime.

ORESTE

Mais dis-moi de quel œil Hermione peut voir  
 Son hymen différé, ses charmes sans pouvoir.

PYLADE

Hermione, Seigneur, au moins en apparence,  
 Semble de son amant dédaigner l'inconstance,  
 Et croit que trop heureux de fléchir sa rigueur

I give myself up blindly to this ecstasy.  
 I love Hermione. I've come to find, to move,  
 To take her off, or die in front of her.  
 You know Pyrrhus. What will he do, you think.  
 Tell me what's happening in his court, his heart.  
 Does my Hermione still capture him?  
 Will he give back the good thing that he took?

PYLADES

I would deceive you if I dared to say  
 That he will ever give her up to you.  
 Not that his conquest has not charmed him much.  
 Andromache has kindled all his fire;  
 He loves her. But till now she's been unmoved.  
 She's answered all his love with hate.  
 And yet each day he risks his all  
 To woo his captive or to frighten her.  
 He keeps her son from her, threatens his life,  
 And makes her cry such tears...which he then stops.  
 Hermione herself has seen this angry man  
 Come back to her a hundred times.  
 He'll bring the tokens of a troubled heart,  
 Sigh at her feet, yet more with rage than love.  
 So don't expect a prompt response  
 From one so little master of himself.  
 His frenzies go so far, he could, my lord,  
 Could wed the one he hates, and lose his love.

ORESTES

But tell me how Hermione looks at  
 Her marriage now. Her charm has lost its power.

PYLADES

Hermione, at least to public view,  
 Seems to despise his broken promises.  
 She thinks he'll be so glad to be less cruel,

Il la viendra presser de reprendre son cœur.  
 Mais je l'ai vue enfin me confier ses larmes;  
 Elle pleure en secret le mépris de ses charmes.  
 Toujours prête à partir, et demeurant toujours,  
 Quelquefois elle appelle Oreste à son secours.

ORESTE

Ah! si je le croyais, j'irais bientôt, Pylade,  
 Me jeter...

PYLADE

Achevez, Seigneur, votre ambassade.  
 Vous attendez le roi: parlez, et lui montrez  
 Contre le fils d'Hector tous les Grecs conjurés.  
 Loin de leur accorder ce fils de sa maîtresse,  
 Leur haine ne fera qu'irriter sa tendresse.  
 Plus on les veut brouiller, plus on va les unir.  
 Pressez, demandez tout, pour ne rien obtenir.  
 Il vient.

ORESTE

Eh bien! va donc disposer la cruelle  
 A revoir un amant qui ne vient que pour elle.

## SCÈNE 2

*Pyrrhus, Oreste, Phœnix*

ORESTE

Avant que tous les Grecs vous parlent par ma voix,  
 Souffrez que j'ose ici me flatter de leur choix,

He'll come and beg her take his love again.  
 But she's confided me with all her tears.  
 She cries in secret – her charm is spurned –  
 Ready to leave, but always staying on.  
 Sometimes she calls Orestes to her aid.

ORESTES

If I thought that, I'd go at once, my friend,  
 I'd throw myself...

PYLADES

Complete your mission here, my lord.  
 Wait for the king. Speak to him. Show him now  
 How all the Greeks cast Hector's son aside.  
 Far from securing them the boy,  
 Their hatred will arouse his tenderness.  
 The more they're set at odds, the more they'll be as one.  
 Press your demands – so that they'll be refused.  
 He's coming.

ORESTES

Go. Prepare Hermione  
 To see me soon. I only came for her.

*[Pylades leaves. Pyrrhus and Phoenix enter.]*

## SCENE 2

*Pyrrhus, Orestes, Phœnix*

ORESTES

Pyrrhus,  
 Before I speak to you for all of Greece –  
 And I am proud that they have chosen me –

Et qu'à vos yeux, Seigneur, je montre quelque joie  
 De voir le fils d'Achille et le vainqueur de Troie.  
 Oui, comme ses exploits nous admirons vos coups.  
 Hector tomba sous lui, Troie expira sous vous;  
 Et vous avez montré, par une heureuse audace,  
 Que le fils seul d'Achille a pu remplir sa place.  
 Mais, ce qu'il n'eût point fait, la Grèce avec douleur  
 Vous voit du sang troyen relever le malheur,  
 Et vous laissant toucher d'une pitié funeste,  
 D'une guerre si longue entretenir le reste.  
 Ne vous souvient-il plus, Seigneur, quel fut Hector?  
 Nos peuples affaiblis s'en souviennent encor.  
 Son nom seul fait frémir nos veuves et nos filles,  
 Et dans toute la Grèce il n'est point de familles  
 Qui ne demandent compte à ce malheureux fils  
 D'un père ou d'un époux qu'Hector leur a ravis.  
 Et qui sait ce qu'un jour ce fils peut entreprendre?  
 Peut-être dans nos ports nous le verrons descendre,  
 Tel qu'on a vu son père embraser nos vaisseaux,  
 Et, la flamme à la main, les suivre sur les eaux.  
 Oserai-je, Seigneur, dire ce que je pense?  
 Vous-même de vos soins craignez la récompense,  
 Et que dans votre sein ce serpent élevé  
 Ne vous punisse un jour de l'avoir conservé.  
 Enfin de tous les Grecs satisfaites l'envie,  
 Assurez leur vengeance, assurez votre vie;  
 Perdez un ennemi d'autant plus dangereux  
 Qu'il s'essaiera sur vous à combattre contre eux.

## PYRRHUS

La Grèce en ma faveur est trop inquiétée.  
 De soins plus importants je l'ai crue agitée,  
 Seigneur, et sur le nom de son ambassadeur,  
 J'avais dans ses projets conçu plus de grandeur.  
 Qui croirait en effet qu'une telle entreprise  
 Du fils d'Agamemnon méritât l'entremise;  
 Qu'un peuple tout entier, tant de fois triomphant  
 N'eût daigné conspirer que la mort d'un enfant?

I ought to say how glad I am to see  
 Achilles' son, the conqueror of Troy.  
 We marvel at his exploits, and your deeds.  
 Hector brought down by him, and Troy by you.  
 And you have shown, by wondrous daring deeds,  
 Only Achilles' son could take his place.  
 And yet he did not do what Greece now sadly  
 Sees you do: restore the destiny of Troy.  
 You've let yourself show pity for the dead  
 And keep an orphan from that war alive.  
 You do recall, my lord, who Hector was.  
 Our poor, weak people still remember him.  
 His very name still makes our widows, young girls, shake.  
 There are no families the breadth of Greece  
 Who won't demand his wretched son explain  
 The fathers and the husbands that were killed.  
 And who knows what this son will do one day?  
 Perhaps we'll see him sail upon our ports,  
 Just as we saw his father burn our ships  
 And drive them out to sea, fire in his hand.  
 So shall I dare to tell you what I think?  
 You fear the recompense for all your care:  
 That one fine day, this poison you've brought up  
 Won't punish you for keeping him alive.  
 Answer the longing of all Greece.  
 Ensure their vengeance, and secure your life.  
 You'll kill an enemy. He's dangerous.  
 He'll plan his strike on you by fighting them.

## PYRRHUS

The Greeks are too much worried for my sake.  
 I thought they were concerned with greater cares,  
 My lord. And their ambassador's renown  
 Made me expect much grander, weightier plans.  
 Who would have thought that such an enterprise  
 Would need the help of Agamemnon's son?  
 That a whole people, crowned with victory,  
 Would stoop to plot against a young child's life?

Mais à qui prétend-on que je le sacrifie?  
 La Grèce a-t-elle encor quelque droit sur sa vie?  
 Et seul de tous les Grecs ne m'est-il pas permis  
 D'ordonner d'un captif que le sort m'a soumis?  
 Oui, Seigneur, lorsqu'au pied des murs fumants de Troie  
 Les vainqueurs tout sanglants partagèrent leur proie,  
 Le sort, dont les arrêts furent alors suivis  
 Fit tomber en mes mains Andromaque et son fils.  
 Hécube près d'Ulysse acheva sa misère;  
 Cassandre dans Argos a suivi votre père;  
 Sur eux, sur leurs captifs, ai-je étendu mes droits?  
 Ai-je enfin disposé du fruit de leurs exploits?  
 On craint qu'avcc Hector Troie un jour ne renaisse;  
 Son fils peut me ravir le jour que je lui laisse:  
 Seigneur, tant de prudence entraîne trop de soin;  
 Je ne sais point prévoir les malheurs de si loin.  
 Je songe quelle était autrefois cette ville  
 Si superbe en remparts, en héros si fertile,  
 Maîtresse de l'Asie; et je regarde enfin  
 Quel fut le sort de Troie, et quel est son destin.  
 Je ne vois que des tours que la cendre a couvertes,  
 Un fleuve teint de sang, des campagnes désertes,  
 Un enfant dans les fers; et je ne puis songer  
 Que Troie en cet état aspire à se venger.  
 Ah! si du fils d'Hector la perte était jurée,  
 Pourquoi d'un an entier l'avons-nous différée?  
 Dans le sein de Priam n'a-t-on pu l'immoler?  
 Sous tant de morts, sous Troie, il fallait l'accabler.  
 Tout était juste alors: la vieillesse et l'enfance  
 En vain sur leur faiblesse appuyaient leur défense;  
 La victoire et la nuit, plus cruelles que nous,  
 Nous excitaient au meurtre, et confondaient nos coups.  
 Mon courroux aux vaincus ne fut que trop sévère.  
 Mais que ma cruauté survive à ma colère?  
 Que malgré la pitié dont je me sens saisir,  
 Dans le sang d'un enfant je me baigne à loisir?  
 Non, Seigneur: que les Grecs cherchent quelque autre proie;  
 Qu'ils poursuivent ailleurs ce qui reste de Troie:  
 De mes inimitiés le cours est achevé;

Who do they say that I should hand him to?  
 Does Greece still have some say upon his life?  
 Am I, alone among the Greeks, not now allowed  
 To keep a prisoner given me by fate?  
 Oh yes, my lord. Beneath the smoking walls of Troy,  
 The blood-caked conquerors shared out their spoils.  
 The will of fate was carried through.  
 It gave me Andromache and her son.  
 Ulysses drew Hecuba, at her sorrow's end.  
 Cassandra went to Argos with your father.  
 Did I extend my claims to them, their prisoners,  
 And try to eat the fruit of all their deeds?  
 You fear that Hector's son will one day rebuild Troy.  
 Will take from me the life I've given him.  
 My lord, such prudence shows too much concern.  
 I cannot see troubles so far ahead.  
 I dream of what that city was in time  
 Gone by, her soaring ramparts, heroes numberless,  
 Mistress of Asia. And now I look at what  
 The fate of Troy will be, its destiny.  
 I only see its towers walled up with ash,  
 A river red with blood, deserted fields,  
 A boy in chains. I cannot think  
 That Troy will dream of vengeance in that state.  
 If death for Hector's son was sworn indeed,  
 Why has it been delayed a whole long year?  
 You could have killed him then – at Priam's breast –  
 And covered him with all the dead of Troy.  
 All things then were just. Old people, children,  
 Relied upon their frailty in vain.  
 The victory, the night – they were more cruel than us –  
 Excited us to random, murderous blows.  
 My rage against the vanquished was too harsh.  
 But that my cruelty should outlast that rage,  
 That I should feel some pity taking hold  
 Yet bathe at leisure in a young child's blood –  
 No, my lord. The Greeks must find some other prey.  
 Let them pursue the dregs of Troy elsewhere.  
 My enmities have run their course.

L'Épire sauvera ce que Troie a sauvé.

ORESTE

Seigneur, vous savez trop avec quel artifice  
Un faux Astyanax fut offert au supplice  
Où le seul fils d'Hector devait être conduit.  
Ce n'est pas les Troyens, c'est Hector qu'on poursuit.  
Oui, les Grecs sur le fils persécutent le père;  
Il a par trop de sang acheté leur colère,  
Ce n'est que dans le sien qu'elle peut expirer,  
Et jusque dans l'Épire il les peut attirer.  
Prévenez-les.

PYRRHUS

Non, non. J'y consens avec joie!  
Qu'ils cherchent dans l'Épire une seconde Troie;  
Qu'ils confondent leur haine, et ne distinguent plus  
Le sang qui les fit vaincre et celui des vaincus.  
Aussi bien ce n'est pas la première injustice  
Dont la Grèce d'Achille a payé le service.  
Hector en profita, Seigneur; et quelque jour  
Son fils en pourrait bien profiter à son tour.

ORESTE

Ainsi la Grèce en vous trouve un enfant rebelle?

PYRRHUS

Et je n'ai donc vaincu que pour dépendre d'elle?

ORESTE

Hermione, Seigneur, arrêtera vos coups:  
Ses yeux s'opposeront entre son père et vous.

Epirus will keep alive what Troy has saved.

ORESTES

My lord, you know too well the trick by which  
A false Astyanax was tortured to the death  
That had been kept for Hector's son alone.  
It is not Troy, it's Hector Greece pursues.  
We're visiting the father's sins upon  
His son. He's bought our wrath from so much blood,  
A wrath his blood alone can make subside.  
He still can draw the Greeks to Epirus...  
Prevent a war.

PYRRHUS

Oh no, I welcome it.  
Let them all seek another Troy in Epirus.  
Their hatred's all confused. They'll not sort out  
The blood of conquered men from conquerors.  
This, after all, is not the only time  
That Greece has ill repaid Achilles' deeds.  
Hector once turned that to account, my lord.  
One day his son may do the same.

ORESTES

So Greece should find in you a fractious child?

PYRRHUS

Did I win battles to depend on Greece?

ORESTES

My lord, Hermione will stop you still...  
She'll stand between you and her father now.



PYRRHUS

Hermione, Seigneur, peut m'être toujours chère,  
 Je puis l'aimer, sans être esclave de son père;  
 Et je saurai peut-être accorder quelque jour  
 Les soins de ma grandeur et ceux de mon amour.  
 Vous pouvez cependant voir la fille d'Hélène:  
 Du sang qui vous unit je sais l'étroite chaîne.  
 Après cela, Seigneur; je ne vous retiens plus,  
 Et vous pourrez aux Grecs annoncer mon refus.

## SCÈNE 3

*Pyrrhus, Phœnix*

PHŒNIX

Ainsi vous l'envoyez aux pieds de sa maîtresse?

PYRRHUS

On dit qu'il a longtemps brûlé pour la princesse.

PHŒNIX

Mais si ce feu, Seigneur, vient à se rallumer?  
 S'il lui rendait son cœur, s'il s'en faisait aimer?

PYRRHUS

Ah! qu'ils s'aiment, Phœnix! J'y consens. Qu'elle parte.  
 Que charmés l'un de l'autre ils retournent à Sparte!  
 Tous nos ports sont ouverts et pour elle et pour lui.  
 Qu'elle m'épargnerait de contrainte et d'ennui!

PYRRHUS

Hermione, my lord, can still be close to me.  
 I need not be her father's slave for that.  
 And some day I may find a way to match  
 The call of glory with the claims of love.  
 You may however see Queen Helen's child.  
 I know how close your blood-ties are.  
 That done, my lord, I shall not hold you here.  
 Tell all the Greeks that I've said no.

*[Orestes leaves, with his retinue. Pyrrhus and Phoenix remain.]*

## SCENE 3

*Pyrrhus, Phœnix*

PHOENIX

So then, you've sent him to his mistress' feet.

PYRRHUS

He's yearned for her a long while, so they say.

PHOENIX

And if the fire should burn again, my lord?  
 If he should give his heart, become beloved...?

PYRRHUS

Then let them love, Phoenix. She may leave. Agreed.  
 Let them go back to Sparta arm in arm.  
 Our ports are open to them both.  
 How much constraint and worry I'd be spared...

PHENIX

Seigneur...

PYRRHUS

Une autre fois je t'ouvrirai mon âme:  
Andromaque paraît.

## SCÈNE 4

*Pyrrhus, Andromaque, Céphise*

PYRRHUS

Me cherchiez-vous, Madame?  
Un espoir si charmant me serait-il permis?

ANDROMAQUE

Je passais jusqu'aux lieux où l'on garde mon fils.  
Puisqu'une fois le jour vous souffrez que je voie  
Le seul bien qui me reste et d'Hector et de Troie,  
J'allais, Seigneur, pleurer un moment avec lui:  
Je ne l'ai point encore embrassé d'aujourd'hui.

PYRRHUS

Ah, Madame! les Grecs, si j'en crois leurs alarmes,  
Vous donneront bientôt d'autres sujets de larmes.

ANDROMAQUE

Et quelle est cette peur dont leur cœur est frappé,  
Seigneur? Quelque Troyen vous est-il échappé?

PHOENIX

My lord...

PYRRHUS

Another time I'll tell you everything.  
Andromache is coming.

*[Andromache and Cephisa enter.]*

## SCENE 4

*Pyrrhus, Andromache, Cephisa*

PYRRHUS

My lady...? so would  
It be too much to hope you looked for me?

ANDROMACHE

I'm on my way to where my son is kept  
Since you allow one sight of him a day –  
The single good I'm left of Hector's Troy.  
I go, my lord, to cry with him a while.  
I haven't held him yet today.

PYRRHUS

If their alarm can be believed, the Greeks  
Will soon provide you further cause for tears.

ANDROMACHE

What is this fear that strikes their hearts,  
My lord? Some Trojan has escaped from you...?

PYRRHUS

Leur haine pour Hector n'est pas encore éteinte.  
Ils redoutent son fils.

ANDROMAQUE

Digne objet de leur crainte!  
Un enfant malheureux qui ne sait pas encor  
Que Pyrrhus est son maître, et qu'il est fils d'Hector.

PYRRHUS

Tel qu'il est, tous les Grecs demandent qu'il périsse.  
Le fils d'Agamemnon vient hâter son supplice.

ANDROMAQUE

Et vous prononcerez un arrêt si cruel?  
Est-ce mon intérêt qui le rend criminel?  
Hélas! on ne craint point qu'il venge un jour son père;  
On craint qu'il n'essuyât les larmes de sa mère.  
Il m'aurait tenu lieu d'un père et d'un époux;  
Mais il me faut tout perdre, et toujours par vos coups.

PYRRHUS

Madame, mes refus ont prévenu vos larmes.  
Tous les Grecs m'ont déjà menacé de leurs armes,  
Mais dussent-ils encore, en repassant les eaux,  
Demander votre fils avec mille vaisseaux,  
Coutât-il tout le sang qu'Hélène a fait répandre,  
Dussé-je après dix ans voir mon palais en cendre,  
Je ne balance point, je vole à son secours.  
Je défendrai sa vie aux dépens de mes jours.  
Mais parmi ces périls où je cours pour vous plaire,  
Me refuserez-vous un regard moins sévère?  
Hâi de tous les Grecs, pressé de tous côtés,

PYRRHUS

Their enmity for Hector has not died.  
They fear his son.

ANDROMACHE

A fitting cause for dread...!  
A poor young boy who doesn't even know  
That Hector is his father, you his lord.

PYRRHUS

For what he is, all Greece demands his death.  
Orestes is here to hasten it on.

ANDROMACHE

And you'll decree such cruelty? His death?  
Is it because of me he's made a criminal?  
It's not his father's vengeance that they fear.  
They fear one day he'll dry his mother's tears.  
He would have been a father, husband, to me – both.  
But I must lose the world, and still because of you.

PYRRHUS

I have said no, my lady, to prevent  
Your tears. All Greece has threatened me with war.  
But were they now to cross the seas again  
And with a thousand ships demand your son,  
Were it to cost each drop of blood that flowed  
For Helen, and ten years, my palaces ablaze –  
I would not hesitate. I would help him.  
I would defend his life before my own.  
I face these dangers for your sake,  
So might you look on me with gentler eyes?  
I'm hated by all Greece, attacked on every side.

Me faudra-t-il combattre encor vos cruautés?  
 Je vous offre mon bras. Puis-je espérer encore  
 Que vous accepterez un cœur qui vous adore?  
 En combattant pour vous, me sera-t-il permis  
 De ne vous point compter parmi mes ennemis?

## ANDROMAQUE

Seigneur, que faites-vous, et que dira la Grèce?  
 Faut-il qu'un si grand cœur montre tant de faiblesse?  
 Voulez-vous qu'un dessein si beau, si généreux,  
 Passe pour le transport d'un esprit amoureux?  
 Captive, toujours triste, importune à moi-même,  
 Pouvez-vous souhaiter qu'Andromaque vous aime;  
 Quels charmes ont pour vous des yeux infortunés  
 Qu'à des pleurs éternels vous avez condamnés?  
 Non, non; d'un ennemi respecter la misère,  
 Sauver des malheureux, rendre un fils à sa mère,  
 De cent peuples pour lui combattre la rigueur,  
 Sans me faire payer son salut de mon cœur;  
 Malgré moi, s'il le faut, lui donner un asile :  
 Seigneur, voilà des soins dignes du fils d'Achille.

## PYRRHUS

Hé quoi! votre courroux n'a-t-il pas eu son cours?  
 Peut-on haïr sans cesse? et punit-on toujours?  
 J'ai fait des malheureux, sans doute; et la Phrygie  
 Cent fois de votre sang a vu ma main rougie;  
 Mais que vos yeux sur moi se sont bien exercés!  
 Qu'ils m'ont vendu bien cher les pleurs qu'ils ont versés!  
 De combien de remords m'ont-ils rendu la proie!  
 Je souffre tous les maux que j'ai faits devant Troie.  
 Vaincu, chargé de fers, de regrets consumé,  
 Brûlé de plus de feux que je n'en allumai,  
 Tant de soins, tant de pleurs, tant d'ardeurs inquiètes...  
 Hélas! fus-je jamais si cruel que vous l'êtes?  
 Mais enfin, tour à tour, c'est assez nous punir:  
 Nos ennemis communs devraient nous réunir.

Must I fight off your cruelties as well?  
 I offer you my hand. Might I still hope  
 You would accept a man who worships you?  
 I fight your cause. I ask to be allowed  
 Never to count you with my enemies.

## ANDROMACHE

My lord, what do you do? What will Greece say?  
 So great a heart, and yet such weaknesses...?  
 You want so fine, so generous a plan  
 To seem the fancy of a man in love?  
 I am a captive – mournful, anxious in myself –  
 How can you want me to return this love?  
 What magic can you find in these sad eyes  
 That you've condemned to everlasting tears?  
 No, no. Respect the sorrow of an enemy.  
 Save those in need, and give me back my son.  
 A hundred nations will be cruel to him, fight that.  
 But do not make me buy his safety with my heart.  
 Give him a refuge now, in spite of me.  
 These are the proper duties of Achilles' son.

## PYRRHUS

So then, your anger hasn't run its course...  
 Can hatred be unceasing...punish for all time?  
 I've made men scream; and Phrygia has seen  
 My hands drenched in your blood a hundred times.  
 But how well trained your eyes have been on me.  
 How much they've cost me all the tears they've shed.  
 How much remorse has preyed on me through them.  
 I've suffered all the pain I caused to Troy.  
 Destroyed, weighed down in chains...and such regrets...  
 And burning with more fires than I once lit.  
 So many cares, and tears, and troubled love...  
 I never was as cruel as you are now.  
 We've taken turns enough in punishing.  
 Our common enemies should join us close.

Madame, dites-moi seulement que j'espère,  
 Je vous rends votre fils, et je lui sers de père;  
 Je l'instruirai moi-même à venger les Troyens;  
 J'irai punir les Grecs de vos maux et des miens.  
 Animé d'un regard, je puis tout entreprendre:  
 Votre Ilion encor peut sortir de sa cendre;  
 Je puis, en moins de temps que les Grecs ne l'ont pris,  
 Dans ses murs relevés couronner votre fils.

ANDROMAQUE

Seigneur, tant de grandeurs ne nous touchent plus guère.  
 Je les lui promettais tant qu'a vécu son père.  
 Non, vous n'espérez plus de nous revoir encor,  
 Sacrés murs que n'a pu conserver mon Hector!  
 A de moindres faveurs des malheureux prétendent,  
 Seigneur: c'est un exil que mes pleurs vous demandent.  
 Souffrez que, loin des Grecs, et même loin de vous,  
 J'aie caché mon fils, et pleurer mon époux.  
 Votre amour contre nous allume trop de haine.  
 Retournez, retournez à la fille d'Hélène.

PYRRHUS

Et le puis-je, Madame? Ah! que vous me gênez!  
 Comment lui rendre un cœur que vous me retenez?  
 Je sais que de mes vœux on lui promet l'empire;  
 Je sais que pour régner elle vint dans l'Épire;  
 Le sort vous y voulut l'une et l'autre amener:  
 Vous, pour porter des fers, elle, pour en donner.  
 Cependant ai-je pris quelque soin de lui plaire?  
 Et ne dirait-on pas, en voyant au contraire  
 Vos charmes tout-puissants, et les siens dédaignés,  
 Qu'elle est ici captive et que vous y régnez?  
 Ah! qu'un seul des soupirs que mon cœur vous envoie,  
 S'il s'échappait vers elle y porterait de joie.

ANDROMAQUE

Tell me no more than...I may hope. I'll give  
 You back and be a father to your son.  
 I'll teach him how to take revenge for Troy.  
 I'll punish Greece for all your pain and mine.  
 Lit by your glance, I can take on the world.  
 Your Ilium can rise from ashes still.  
 In less time than the Greeks demolished it,  
 I'll build its walls again, and crown your son.

ANDROMACHE

Such noble things can scarcely touch me now.  
 I promised them to him before his father died.  
 The sacred walls that Hector could not save  
 Must not now hope to look on us again.  
 Unhappy people ask for smaller gifts,  
 My lord. I plead with you for banishment.  
 Let me go far from Greece, and far from you,  
 And hide my son and mourn my husband's death.  
 Your love will bring us too much hate.  
 Go back. Go back to Helen's daughter now.

PYRRHUS

How can I, lady? Oh, you torture me.  
 How can I give her back the heart you've won?  
 I know I promised she'd command my every wish.  
 I know she came to Epirus to rule.  
 Fate willed you both to come together here,  
 For you to be in chains that she'd put on.  
 But have I taken pains to pleasure her?  
 Would you not say the opposite is true –  
 Your charm all powerful, hers disdained,  
 That she is captive here, and you are queen?  
 Oh, if one single sigh my heart sends you  
 Escaped to her, what joy she'd feel.

ANDROMACHE

Et pourquoi vos soupirs seraient-ils repoussés?  
 Aurait-elle oublié vos services passés?  
 Troie, Hector, contre vous, révoltent-ils son âme?  
 Aux cendres d'un époux doit-elle enfin sa flamme?  
 Et quel époux encore! Ah! souvenir cruel!  
 Sa mort seule a rendu votre père immortel;  
 Il doit au sang d'Hector tout l'éclat de ses armes,  
 Et vous n'êtes tous deux connus que par mes larmes.

PYRRHUS

Eh bien, Madame, eh bien! il faut vous obéir:  
 Il faut vous oublier, ou plutôt vous haïr.  
 Oui, mes vœux ont trop loin poussé leur violence  
 Pour ne plus s'arrêter que dans l'indifférence;  
 Songez-y bien: il faut désormais que mon cœur,  
 S'il n'aime avec transport, haïsse avec fureur.  
 Je n'épargnerai rien dans ma juste colère:  
 Le fils me répondra des mépris de la mère;  
 La Grèce le demande, et je ne prétends pas  
 Mettre toujours ma gloire à sauver des ingrats.

ANDROMAQUE

Hélas! il mourra donc. Il n'a pour sa défense  
 Que les pleurs de sa mère et que son innocence.  
 Et peut-être après tout, en l'état où je suis,  
 Sa mort avancera la fin de mes ennuis.  
 Je prolongeais pour lui ma vie et ma misère;  
 Mais enfin sur ses pas j'irai revoir son père.  
 Ainsi, tous trois, Seigneur, par vos soins réunis,  
 Nous vous...

PYRRHUS

Allez, Madame, allez voir votre fils.  
 Peut-être, en le voyant, votre amour plus timide  
 Ne prendra pas toujours sa colère pour guide.  
 Pour savoir nos destins j'irai vous retrouver.  
 Madame, en l'embrassant, songez à le sauver.

So why should all your wooing be repulsed?  
 Has she forgotten everything you've done?  
 Do Troy and Hector make her blame you so,  
 Her husband's ashes still demand her love?  
 And what a husband... Memory is cruel.  
 Your father's immortality came from his death.  
 He owed his warrior's renown to Hector's blood.  
 The two of you are known now only through my grief.

PYRRHUS

And so, my lady, so I must obey.  
 I must forget you – better, start to hate.  
 My needs have been too violent, gone too far  
 To come to rest in mere indifference.  
 Think carefully. From now, my heart denied  
 The ecstasies of love, must hate in rage.  
 I will spare nothing from this rightful wrath.  
 Your son will answer for his mother's scorn.  
 Greece wants him. So. I do not mean to use  
 My fame in saving thankless people's lives.

ANDROMACHE

So he will die... He has his mother's tears,  
 His innocence alone, to save him now.  
 But in my state...perhaps when all is done  
 His death will hasten on the end of grief.  
 I've gone on living, hurting so, for him.  
 But now I'll see his father in his steps.  
 And then all three of us, united by your care,  
 My lord, we'll...

PYRRHUS

Go, lady. See your son.  
 The sight of him may make your love less fierce –  
 It won't take anger always as its guide.  
 I'll come back soon to learn our fate.  
 But think to save him as he cuddles in your arms.

## ACTE 2 SCÈNE 1

*Hermione, Cléone*

HERMIONE

Je fais ce que tu veux. Je consens qu'il me voie.  
 Je lui veux bien encore accorder cette joie.  
 Pylade va bientôt conduire ici ses pas;  
 Mais si je m'en croyais, je ne le verrais pas.

CLÉONE

Et qu'est-ce que sa vue a pour vous de funeste?  
 Madame, n'est-ce pas toujours le même Oreste  
 Dont vous avez cent fois souhaité le retour,  
 Et dont vous regrettiez la constance et l'amour?

HERMIONE

C'est cet amour payé de trop d'ingratitude  
 Qui me rend en ces lieux sa présence si rude.  
 Quelle honte pour moi, quel triomphe pour lui,  
 De voir mon infortune égaler son ennui!  
 Est-ce là, dira-t-il, cette fière Hermione?  
 Elle me dédaignait; un autre l'abandonne.  
 L'ingrate, qui mettait son cœur à si haut prix,  
 Apprend donc à son tour à souffrir des mépris?  
 Ah dieux!

CLÉONE

Ah! dissipez ces indignes alarmes:  
 Il a trop bien senti le pouvoir de vos charmes.  
 Vous croyez qu'un amant vienne vous insulter?  
 Il vous rapporte un cœur qu'il n'a pu vous ôter.  
 Mais vous ne dites point ce que vous mande un père?

## ACT 2 SCENE 1

*Hermione, Cleone*

HERMIONE

I'll do, then, what you want. I will see him.  
 Indeed, I'm glad to give such joy to him.  
 Pylades will soon bring him here... and yet  
 If I thought more, I should not speak to him.

CLEONE

But why should seeing him bring any harm?  
 So is this not the same Orestes still,  
 For whose return you've yearned a hundred times,  
 Whose love and constancy you so much missed?

HERMIONE

It's just that love for which I gave small thanks  
 That makes his being here so hard to bear.  
 The shame for me, and triumph now for him,  
 That my small hurts should equal his distress.  
 Is this the proud Hermione? he'll ask.  
 She spurned me once; and now she's spurned.  
 She was untouched and overprized her love,  
 And now she's learning how to suffer scorn.  
 Oh god...

CLEONE

Stop all these fears. They're not deserved.  
 He's felt too well the power your magic holds.  
 You think a lover comes to laugh at you?  
 He brings a love to you he can't shake off.  
 What has your father ordered, though? Please say.

HERMIONE

Dans ses retardements si Pyrrhus persévère,  
A la mort du Troyen s'il ne veut consentir,  
Mon père avec les Grecs m'ordonne de partir.

CLÉONE

Eh bien, Madame, eh bien! écoutez donc Oreste.  
Pyrrhus a commencé, faites au moins le reste.  
Pour bien faire il faudrait que vous le prévinsiez.  
Ne m'avez-vous pas dit que vous le haïssiez?

HERMIONE

Si je le hais, Cléone! Il y va de ma gloire,  
Après tant de bontés dont il perd la mémoire;  
Lui qui me fut si cher, et qui m'a pu trahir,  
Ah! je l'ai trop aimé pour ne le point haïr!

CLÉONE

Fuyez-le donc, Madame; et puisqu'on vous adore...

HERMIONE

Ah! laisse à ma fureur le temps de croître encore.  
Contre mon ennemi laisse-moi m'assurer.  
Cléone, avec horreur je m'en veux séparer.  
Il n'y travaillera que trop bien, l'infidèle!

CLÉONE

Quoi? vous en attendez quelque injure nouvelle?  
Aimer une captive, et l'aimer à vos yeux,  
Tout cela n'a donc pu vous le rendre odieux?  
Après ce qu'il a fait, que saurait-il donc faire?  
Il vous aurait déplu, s'il pouvait vous déplaire.

HERMIONE

If Pyrrhus perseveres in his delays  
And won't allow the Trojan boy to die,  
My father orders me to leave with Greece.

CLEONE

So then, Orestes should be listened to.  
You must at least complete what Pyrrhus has begun.  
To do it well, you must forestall him now.  
Have you not said how much you hated him?

HERMIONE

Hate him – the honour of my name demands no less.  
So many kindnesses he now forgets...  
He was so dear to me, and then betrayed...  
I loved him far too much to stop my loathing now.

CLEONE

Avoid him then. And since Orestes yearns...

HERMIONE

Oh, give my anger time to grow still more.  
Let me be sure against this enemy.  
I want to part from him quite horrified.  
His faithlessness must work its power.

CLEONE

So are you waiting for some further hurt?  
He loves a prisoner, before your eyes.  
Does that not make him odious enough?  
What else is needed after all he's done?  
He would have hurt you more if he'd known how.



## HERMIONE

Pourquoi veux-tu cruelle, irriter es ennuis?  
 Je crains de me connaître en l'état où je suis.  
 De tout ce que tu vois tâche de ne rien croire;  
 Crois que je n'aime plus, vante-moi ma victoire;  
 Crois que dans son dépit mon cœur est endurci,  
 Hélas! et, s'il se peut, fais-le moi croire aussi.  
 Tu veux que je le fuie? Eh bien! rien ne m'arrête :  
 Allons; n'envions plus son indigne conquête:  
 Que sur lui sa captive étende son pouvoir.  
 Fuyons... Mais si l'ingrat rentrait dans son devoir!  
 Si la foi dans son cœur retrouvait quelque place;  
 S'il venait à mes pieds me demander sa grâce;  
 Si sous mes lois, Amour, tu pouvais l'engager!  
 S'il voulait... Mais l'ingrat ne veut que m'outrager.  
 Demeurons toutefois pour troubler leur fortune,  
 Prenons quelque plaisir à leur être importune;  
 Ou, le forçant de rompre un nœud si solennel,  
 Aux yeux de tous les Grecs rendons-le criminel.  
 J'ai déjà sur le fils attiré leur colère;  
 Je veux qu'on vienne encor lui demander la mère.  
 Rendons-lui les tourments qu'elle m'a fait souffrir :  
 Qu'elle le perde, ou bien qu'il la fasse périr.

## CLÉONE

Vous pensez que des yeux toujours ouverts aux larmes  
 Se plaisent à troubler le pouvoir de vos charmes,  
 Et qu'un cœur accablé de tant de déplaisirs  
 De son persécuteur ait brigué les soupirs?  
 Voyez si sa douleur en paraît soulagée.  
 Pourquoi donc les chagrins où son âme est plongée?  
 Contre un amant qui plaît pourquoi tant de fierté?

## HERMIONE

Hélas! pour mon malheur, je l'ai trop écouté.  
 Je n'ai point du silence affecté le mystère:

## HERMIONE

This cruelty...why do you torture me?  
 I fear to see myself...the state I'm in.  
 Each thing you see, try not to trust.  
 Believe I've ceased to love, and cry out 'victory'.  
 Believe my heart is stone, despite itself,  
 And if you can, make me believe it too.  
 You want me to avoid him? Nothing keeps me here.  
 Let's cease to envy victories so ill-deserved,  
 And let his prisoner extend her power.  
 Let's leave... If, though, he felt his conscience prick,  
 If honesty could find some place in him,  
 If he could ask forgiveness on his knees,  
 If love could bind him so to my desire,  
 If he but wished... He wants to outrage me.  
 So why not stay to spoil their happiness?  
 Let's find some pleasure being troublesome,  
 Force him to break a holy bond,  
 Make him a criminal in all Greeks' eyes.  
 I have already drawn their anger on  
 The son. Now let them seek his mother too.  
 I'll give her back the pain she's made me bear.  
 Let her kill him, or he lead to her death.

## CLEONE

Her eyes are always full of tears – will she  
 Delight to undermine your charm and power?  
 You think a heart so overwhelmed with cares  
 Will crave her persecutor's pain?  
 See if her sadness is relieved by that.  
 Why the despair in which her mind is sunk?  
 Why does her lover meet with so much pride?

## HERMIONE

I've listened to him – to my grief too much.  
 I didn't feign the mystery of quiet,

Je croyais sans péril pouvoir être sincère.  
 Et sans armer mes yeux d'un moment de rigueur,  
 Je n'ai pour lui parler consulté que mon cœur.  
 Et qui ne se serait comme moi déclarée  
 Sur la foi d'un amour si saintement jurée?  
 Me voyait-il de l'œil qu'il me voit aujourd'hui?  
 Tu t'en souviens encor, tout conspirait pour lui:  
 Ma famille vengée, et les Grecs dans la joie,  
 Nos vaisseaux tout chargés des dépouilles de Troie,  
 Les exploits de son père effacés par les siens,  
 Ses feux que je croyais plus ardents que les miens,  
 Mon cœur, toi-même enfin de sa gloire éblouie,  
 Avant qu'il me trahît, vous m'avez tous trahie.  
 Mais c'en est trop, Cléone, et quel que soit Pyrrhus,  
 Hermione est sensible, Oreste a des vertus;  
 Il sait aimer du moins, et même sans qu'on l'aime,  
 Et peut-être il saura se faire aimer lui-même.  
 Allons. Qu'il vienne enfin.

CLÉONE

Madame, le voici.

HERMIONE

Ah! je ne croyais pas qu'il fût si près d'ici.

## SCÈNE 2

*Hermione, Oreste, Cléone*

HERMIONE

Le croirai-je, Seigneur, qu'un reste de tendresse  
 Vous fasse ici chercher une triste princesse?

But thought I could be honest without harm.  
 Not for one moment did I look aloof.  
 I spoke to him directly, from the heart.  
 Who would have not confessed like me  
 On love's great faith so honourably sworn?  
 Did he then see me as he sees me now?  
 You still remember it – the world was his:  
 My family avenged, Greece overjoyed,  
 Our ships weighed down with all the spoils of Troy,  
 His father's exploits quite eclipsed by his,  
 His passion that I thought burned fiercer than my own,  
 My heart, and you, too, dazzled by his fame...  
 Before his treachery, you'd all betrayed me too.  
 It's all too much, Cleone. Whatever Pyrrhus is,  
 Orestes has his virtues, I'm aware.  
 He isn't loved, but knows what love can be.  
 Perhaps he'll find the way to be beloved.  
 So let him come.

CLEONE

My lady, he is here.

HERMIONE

I did not think he was so close to us.

*[Orestes enters.]*

## SCENE 2

*Hermione, Orestes, Cleone*

HERMIONE

My lord...should I believe that some last tenderness  
 Makes you seek out a princess in her pain?

Ou ne dois-je imputer qu'à votre seul devoir  
L'heureux empressement qui vous porte à me voir?

## ORESTE

Tel est de mon amour l'aveuglement funeste.  
Vous le savez, Madame, et le destin d'Oreste  
Est de venir sans cesse adorer vos attraits,  
Et de jurer toujours qu'il n'y viendra jamais.  
Je sais que vos regards vont rouvrir mes blessures,  
Que tous mes pas vers vous sont autant de parjures:  
Je le sais, j'en rougis; mais j'atteste les dieux,  
Témoins de la fureur de mes derniers adieux,  
Que j'ai couru partout où ma perte certaine  
Dégageait mes serments et finissait ma peine.  
J'ai mendié la mort chez des peuples cruels  
Qui n'apaisaient leurs dieux que du sang des mortels:  
Ils m'ont fermé leur temple; et ces peuples barbares  
De mon sang prodigué sont devenus avarés.  
Enfin je viens à vous, et je me vois réduit  
A chercher dans vos yeux une mort qui me fuit.  
Mon désespoir n'attend que leur indifférence:  
Ils n'ont qu'à m'interdire un reste d'espérance.  
Ils n'ont, pour avancer cette mort où je cours,  
Qu'à me dire une fois ce qu'ils m'ont dit toujours.  
Voilà depuis un an le seul soin qui m'anime.  
Madame, c'est à vous de prendre une victime  
Que les Scythes auraient derobée à vos coups,  
Si j'en avais trouvé d'aussi cruels que vous.

## HERMIONE

Quittez, Seigneur, quittez ce funeste langage.  
A des soins plus pressants la Grèce vous engage.  
Que parlez-vous du Scythe et de mes cruautés?  
Songez à tous ces rois que vous représentez.  
Faut-il que d'un transport leur vengeance dépende?  
Est-ce le sang d'Oreste enfin qu'on vous demande?  
Dégagez-vous des soins dont vous êtes chargé.

Should I ascribe to conscience alone  
This joyful eagerness to meet me here?

## ORESTES

It is the deadly blindness of my love –  
As well you know, my lady. I'm fated  
To keep returning to adore your charm  
And keep on swearing that I'll not come back.  
I know your glance will open up the wounds,  
That every step to you is strewn with treachery.  
I know. I blush. And yet I call the gods  
As witness to my frenzied, last good-bye.  
I ran to every place where certain death  
Would free me from my vows and end my pain.  
I begged for death from those most pitiless,  
Whose gods were calmed by human blood alone.  
The heathens closed their shrines to me, became  
Like misers with the blood I offered them.  
I've come at last to you, reduced  
To seeking in your look the death that slips me by.  
Indifference is all my wretchedness expects.  
Your eyes have just to banish each last hope.  
To hasten on the death I crave, they need  
Just say once more what they have always said.  
A year, you've been the only one to rouse my heart.  
It's now for you to take a victim's life  
The Scythians would have hidden from your blows,  
Had I found them as merciless as you.

## HERMIONE

Please stop, my lord. Please stop this talk of death.  
All Greece now needs you for more grave concerns.  
Why speak of Scythia and my cruelty?  
Think of the many kings you represent.  
Must all their vengeance rest on fits of love?  
Is it your blood they ask you for?  
You must discharge the duties that you have.

ORESTE

Les refus de Pyrrhus m'ont assez dégagé,  
Madame: il me renvoie, et quelque autre puissance  
Lui fait du fils d'Hector embrasser la défense.

HERMIONE

L'infidèle!

ORESTE

Ainsi donc, tout prêt à le quitter,  
Sur mon propre destin je viens vous consulter.  
Déjà même je crois entendre la réponse  
Qu'en secret contre moi votre haine prononce.

HERMIONE

Hé quoi? toujours injuste en vos tristes discours,  
De mon inimitié vous plaindrez-vous toujours?  
Quelle est cette rigueur tant de fois alléguée?  
J'ai passé dans l'Épire où j'étais reléguée:  
Mon père l'ordonnait; mais qui sait si depuis  
Je n'ai point en secret partagé vos ennuis?  
Pensez-vous avoir seul éprouvé des alarmes?  
Que l'Épire jamais n'ait vu couler mes larmes?  
Enfin, qui vous a dit que malgré mon devoir  
Je n'ai pas quelquefois souhaité de vous voir?

ORESTE

Souhaité de me voir! Ah! divine Princesse...  
Mais, de grâce, est-ce à moi que ce discours s'adresse?  
Ouvrez vos yeux: songez qu'Oreste est devant vous,  
Oreste si longtemps l'objet de leur courroux.

HERMIONE

ORESTES

Pyrrhus said no. That is discharge enough,  
Lady. He sends me back. Some other force  
Makes him take up defence of Hector's son.

HERMIONE

The treachery...

ORESTES

And so, I'm ready now to leave.  
I came to talk about...my life...to you.  
Already, though, I seem to hear the words  
Your hatred speaks against me, secretly.

HERMIONE

This heavy-hearted talk is so unjust.  
You still complain that I'm your enemy.  
What is this hurt alleged so many times?  
I went in banishment to Epirus.  
My father ordered it. Who knows if since  
I've not in secret shared your pain?  
You think that you alone have been distressed,  
And that I never wept in Epirus?  
Who told you, then, there were not times  
I hoped to see you, despite my conscience?

ORESTES

You hoped to see me...ah Hermione...  
Are those words really meant for me? Tell me.  
Open your eyes, and look who stands here now –  
This is Orestes. They've raged at me so long.

HERMIONE

Oui, c'est vous dont l'amour, naissant avec charmes,  
 Leur apprit le premier le pouvoir de leurs armes;  
 Vous que mille vertus me forçaient d'estimer;  
 Vous que j'ai plaint, enfin que je voudrais aimer.

ORESTE

Je vous entends. Tel est mon partage funeste:  
 Le cœur est pour Pyrrhus, et les vœux pour Oreste.

HERMIONE

Ah! ne souhaitez pas le destin de Pyrrhus:  
 Je vous haïrais trop.

ORESTE

Vous m'en aimeriez plus.  
 Ah! que vous me verriez d'un regard bien contraire!  
 Vous me voulez aimer, et je ne puis vous plaire;  
 Et l'amour seul alors se faisant obéir,  
 Vous m'aimeriez, Madame, en me voulant haïr.  
 O dieux! tant de respects, une amitié si tendre...  
 Que de raisons pour moi, si vous pouviez m'entendre!  
 Vous seule pour Pyrrhus disputez aujourd'hui,  
 Peut-être malgré vous, sans doute malgré lui:  
 Car enfin il nous hait; son âme ailleurs éprise  
 N'a plus...

HERMIONE

Qui vous l'a dit, Seigneur, qu'il me méprise?  
 Ses regards, ses discours vous l'ont-il donc appris?  
 Jugez-vous que ma vue inspire des mépris,  
 Qu'elle allume en un cœur des feux si peu durables?  
 Peut-être d'autres yeux me sont plus favorables.

ORESTE

Oh yes. Your love was born beneath their spell.  
 You made them understand the power they had.  
 Your countless virtues forced me to respect.  
 I pitied you...but then I wished to love.

ORESTES

So now I see. This is my share of grief.  
 Your heart says Pyrrhus and your reason me.

HERMIONE

Oh do not yearn for Pyrrhus and his fate.  
 I'd hate you far too much.

ORESTES

You'd love me more.  
 You'd look at me with far, far different eyes.  
 You want to love me, and yet I cannot please.  
 But love can make itself obeyed alone.  
 You'd love me even as you tried to hate.  
 Dear God, so much esteem, such tenderness...  
 Reason is on my side, if you would hear.  
 You are alone in fighting Pyrrhus' cause,  
 Despite yourself perhaps, no doubt despite him too.  
 Deep down he hates you. And his is now  
 Elsewhere...

HERMIONE

Who says he's lost regard for me?  
 His looks, his words – have they then told you that?  
 You think the sight of me inspires such scorn,  
 It's kindled in his heart so brief a fire?  
 But other men may see me differently...

ORESTES

Poursuivez: il est beau de m'insulter ainsi.  
 Cruelle, c'est donc moi qui vous méprise ici?  
 Vos yeux n'ont pas assez éprouvé ma constance?  
 Je suis donc un témoin de leur peu de puissance?  
 Je les ai méprisés? Ah! qu'ils voudraient bien voir  
 Mon rival comme moi mépriser leur pouvoir!

HERMIONE

Que m'importe, Seigneur, sa haine, ou sa tendresse?  
 Allez contre un rebelle armer toute la Grèce;  
 Rapportez-lui le prix de sa rébellion;  
 Qu'on fasse de l'Épire un second Ilion.  
 Allez. Après cela direz-vous que je l'aime?

ORESTE

Madame, faites plus, et venez-y vous-même.  
 Voulez-vous demeurer pour otage en ces lieux?  
 Venez dans tous les cœurs faire parler vos yeux.  
 Faisons de notre haine une commune attaque.

HERMIONE

Mais, Seigneur, cependant, s'il épouse Andromaque?

ORESTE

Hé, Madame!

HERMIONE

Songez quelle honte pour nous,  
 Si d'une Phrygienne il devenait l'époux.

ORESTE

Et vous le haïssez? Avouez-le, Madame,  
 L'amour n'est pas un feu qu'on renferme en une âme;

Go on. A fine response to taunt me so.  
 What cruelty... it's me who's scorned you, then?  
 Haven't your eyes seen proof of constancy?  
 Aren't I a witness to their blindness now?  
 Have I despised them? How they'd love to see  
 My rival, if he scorned their power like me.

HERMIONE

Whether he loves or hates, I do not care.  
 Go. Arm all of Greece against this rebel.  
 Bring home the price of his revolt to him.  
 Let Epirus be made a second Troy.  
 Will you still say I love him after that?

ORESTES

Do more, my lady. Come to Greece yourself.  
 You want to stay a hostage in this place?  
 Come, let your eyes speak out to every heart.  
 Let's fuse our hatred in a joint attack.

HERMIONE

But what if he should wed Andromache?

ORESTES

What?

HERMIONE

Think of the disgrace for us  
 If he now took a Phrygian as his wife.

ORESTES

And you hate him? Admit it, my lady.  
 Love's not a flame that's locked within the soul.

Tout nous trahit, la voix, le silence, les yeux,  
Et les feux mal couverts n'en éclatent que mieux.

## HERMIONE

Seigneur, je le vois bien, votre âme prévenue  
Répand sur mes discours le venin qui la tue,  
Toujours dans mes raisons cherche quelque détour,  
Et croit qu'en moi la haine est un effort d'amour.  
Il faut donc m'expliquer; vous agirez en suite.  
Vous savez qu'en ces lieux mon devoir m'a conduite;  
Mon devoir m'y retient; et je n'en puis partir  
Que mon père ou Pyrrhus ne m'en fasse sortir.  
De la part de mon père allez lui faire entendre  
Que l'ennemi des Grecs ne peut être son gendre.  
Du Troyen ou de moi faites-le décider:  
Qu'il songe qui des deux il veut rendre, ou garder;  
Enfin qu'il me renvoie, ou bien qu'il vous le livre.  
Adieu. S'il y consent, je suis prête à vous suivre.

## SCÈNE 3

ORESTE [*seul*]

Oui, oui, vous me suivrez, n'en doutez nullement;  
Je vous réponds déjà de son consentement.  
Je ne crains pas, enfin, que Pyrrhus la retienne:  
Il n'a devant les yeux que sa chère Troyenne;  
Tout autre objet le blesse; et peut-être aujourd'hui  
Il n'attend qu'un prétexte à l'éloigner de lui,  
Nous n'avons qu'à parler: c'en est fait. Quelle joie  
D'enlever à l'Épire une si belle proie!  
Sauve tout ce qui reste, et de Troie, et d'Hector,  
Garde son fils, sa veuve, et mille autres encor,  
Épire, c'est assez qu'Hermione rendue

Each thing betrays us – silence, voice, the eyes.  
A fire half-covered must burst out the more.

## HERMIONE

I see things very well. Your mind's made up.  
You pour the poison killing you on all my words.  
You always try to twist the things I say.  
You think the hate is me is fuelled by love.  
So then, I must explain. Then you can act.  
You know that duty brought me to this place.  
Duty now keeps me here. I cannot leave  
Unless permitted by my father or the king.  
So in my father's name, make Pyrrhus understand  
No enemy of Greece can be his son-in-law.  
He must decide – the Trojan boy or me.  
Which does he want to keep, and which to lose?  
He has to send me back, or give the boy to you.  
Good bye. If he agrees, I'll follow you.

*[Hermione and Cleone leave.]*

## SCENE 3

ORESTES [*alone*]

Oh yes, you'll follow me, beyond a doubt.  
I can already tell you he'll agree...  
I'm not afraid of Pyrrhus holding her.  
His eyes are only for Andromache –  
All other things cause pain. Today perhaps,  
A pretext's all he wants to cast her off.  
We only have to speak. Then done. The joy  
To steal so fine a prey from Epirus.  
Oh Epirus, protect what's left of Hector's Troy,  
And keep his son and widow, thousands more...  
It is enough Hermione comes back

Perde à jamais tes bords et ton prince de vue.  
Mais un heureux destin le conduit en ces lieux.  
Parlons. A tant d'attraits, Amour, ferme ses yeux!

## SCÈNE 4

*Pyrrhus, Oreste, Phœnix*

PYRRHUS

Je vous cherchais, Seigneur. Un peu de violence  
M'a fait de vos raisons combattre la puissance,  
Je l'avoue; et depuis que je vous ai quitté,  
J'en ai senti la force et connu l'équité.  
J'ai songé comme vous qu'à la Grèce, à mon père,  
A moi-même, en un mot, je devenais contraire,  
Que je relevais Troie, et rendais imparfait  
Tout ce qu'a fait Achille, et tout ce que j'ai fait.  
Je ne condamne plus un courroux légitime,  
Et l'on vous va, Seigneur, livrer votre victime.

ORESTE

Seigneur, par ce conseil prudent et rigoureux,  
C'est acheter la paix du sang d'un malheureux.

PYRRHUS

Oui, mais je veux, Seigneur, l'assurer davantage:  
D'une éternelle paix Hermione est le gage;  
Je l'épouse. Il semblait qu'un spectacle si doux  
N'attendît en ces lieux qu'un témoin tel que vous:  
Vous y représentez tous les Grecs et son père,  
Puisqu'en vous Ménélas voit revivre son frère.  
Voyez-la donc. Allez. Dites-lui que demain

And never sees your shores or king again.  
But there he is – good luck has brought him here.  
I'll speak. To all her charms, love, close his eyes.

*[Pyrrhus and Phoenix enter.]*

## SCENE 4

*Pyrrhus, Orestes, Phoenix*

PYRRHUS

I've looked for you, my lord. Yes, I admit...  
I was too stubborn – tried to fight the power  
Of reasoned arguments. I've felt the force  
Of them since leaving you – their equity.  
Like you, I thought that I'd begun to fight  
All Greece, my father, and indeed myself.  
I was rebuilding Troy, and spoiling all  
That Achilles had done, all that I'd done myself.  
Your anger was deserved. You're not to blame.  
The Trojan boy will soon be given you.

ORESTES

These counsels are both wise and rigorous, my lord.  
You've bought the peace, but with a poor boy's blood.

PYRRHUS

Quite so. I want, though, to secure it more.  
Hermione's the guarantee of lasting peace.  
We're marrying. It seemed so sweet a sight  
Would only need a witness such as you.  
You'll represent all Greece, her father too,  
Since Menelaus will see his brother live in you.  
So go and see her then. Tell her I expect



J'attends, avec la paix, son coeur de votre main.

ORESTE

Ah dieux!

## SCÈNE 5

*Pyrrhus, Phœnix*

PYRRHUS

Eh bien, Phœnix, l'amour est-il le maître?  
Tes yeux refusent-ils encor de me connaître?

PHŒNIX

Ah! je vous reconnais, et ce juste courroux,  
Ainsi qu'à tous les Grecs, Seigneur, vous rend à vous.  
Ce n'est plus le jouet d'une flamme servile:  
C'est Pyrrhus. C'est le fils et le rival d'Achille,  
Que la gloire à la fin ramène sous ses lois,  
Qui triomphe de Troie une seconde fois.

PYRRHUS

Dis plutôt qu'aujourd'hui commence ma victoire.  
D'aujourd'hui seulement je jouis de ma gloire,  
Et mon cœur, aussi fier que tu l'as vu soumis,  
Croit avoir en l'amour vaincu mille ennemis.  
Considère, Phœnix, les troubles que j'évite,  
Quelle foule de maux l'amour traîne à sa suite,  
Que d'amis, de devoirs, j'allais sacrifier;  
Quels périls... Un regard m'eût tout fait oublier.  
Tous les Grecs conjurés fondaient sur un rebelle;

Tomorrow, from your hand, her heart – and peace.

ORESTES

Dear God...

*[He leaves.]*

## SCENE 5

*Pyrrhus, Phoenix*

PYRRHUS

So Phoenix, am I ruled by love?  
You still refuse to see me as I am?

PHOENIX

I recognise you, yes. Your rage – so just –  
Restores you to yourself and all the Greeks.  
You're not the plaything of some fawning love.  
You're Pyrrhus now – Achilles' rival and his son –  
You've been brought back to glory's power.  
You'll triumph over Troy a second time.

PYRRHUS

Say rather that my victory begins today.  
I revel in that glory only now.  
You've seen my heart so patient. Now it's proud.  
I feel I've crushed a thousand enemies in love.  
Just think, Phoenix, the troubles I'll avoid,  
The host of pains that love brings in its train,  
The friends, the duties I'd have sacrificed,  
The risks... and all forgotten by a single glance,  
All Greece's plots hurled down upon this rebel king.

Je trouvais du plaisir à me perdre pour elle.

PHŒNIX

Oui, je bénis, Seigneur, l'heureuse cruauté  
Qui vous rend...

PYRRHUS

Tu l'as vu, conmie elle m'a traité.  
Je pensais, en voyant sa tendresse alarmée,  
Que son fils me la dût renvoyer désarmée.  
J'allais voir le succès de ses embrassements:  
Je n'ai trouvé que pleurs mêlés d'emportements.  
Sa misère l'aigrit; et toujours plus farouche  
Cent fois le nom d'Hector est sorti de sa bouche.  
Vainement à son fils j'assurais mon secours:  
C'est Hector, disait-elle, en l'embrassant toujours;  
Voilà ses yeux, sa bouche, et déjà son audace;  
C'est lui-même; c'est toi, cher époux, que j'embrasse.  
Et quelle est sa pensée? attend-elle en ce jour  
Que je lui laisse un fils pour nourrir son amour?

PHŒNIX

Sans doute. C'est le prix que vous gardait l'ingrate.  
Mais laissez-la, Seigneur.

PYRRHUS

Je vois ce qui la flatte:  
Sa beauté la rassure, et malgré mon courroux,  
L'orgueilleuse m'attend encore à ses genoux.  
Je la verrais aux miens, Phœnix, d'un œil tranquille.  
Elle est veuve d'Hector, et je suis fils d'Achille :  
Trop de haine sépare Andromaque et Pyrrhus.

PHŒNIX

I did delight at losing all for her.

PHOENIX

My lord, I bless the timely cruelty  
That brings you back...

PYRRHUS

Look how she treated me.  
I saw I'd roused a mother's fears. I thought  
Her son would send her back to me disarmed.  
I went to see her joy in cuddling him,  
And al I found were tears and fits of rage.  
She was embittered by her pain. She raved – more wild –  
And shouted Hector's name a hundred times.  
I undertook to help her son – but all in vain.  
'It's Hector', she would say, and hold him tight.  
'There are his eyes, his lips, that daring look of his.  
It's him...it's you, dear husband, I hold now.'  
What thoughts race through her mind? Does she expect  
I'll let her keep her son to feed her love?

PHOENIX

Of course. That is the price ingratitude will ask.  
Leave her, my lord.

PYRRHUS

I see what flatters her.  
Her beauty reassures. Despite my rage,  
She's proud. She still expects me at her feet.  
I'd see her fall at mine quite unperturbed.  
She's Hector's widow. I'm Achilles' son.  
We're separated by a sea of hate.

PHOENIX

Commencez donc, Seigneur, à ne m'en parler plus.  
 Allez voir Hermione, et content de lui plaire,  
 Oubliez à ses pieds jusqu'à votre colère.  
 Vous-même à cet hymen venez la disposer.  
 Est-ce sur un rival qu'il s'en faut reposer?  
 Il ne l'aime que trop.

PYRRHUS

Crois-tu, si je l'épouse,  
 Qu'Andromaque en son cœur n'en sera pas jalouse?

PHŒNIX

Quoi! toujours Andromaque occupe votre esprit?  
 Que vous importe, Ô dieux! sa joie, ou son dépit?  
 Quel charme, malgré vous, vers elle vous attire?

PYRRHUS

Non, je n'ai pas bien dit tout ce qu'il lui faut dire :  
 Ma colère à ses yeux n'a paru qu'à demi;  
 Elle ignore à quel point je suis son ennemi.  
 Retournons-y. Je veux la braver à sa vue,  
 Et donner à ma haine une libre étendue.  
 Viens voir tous ses attraits, Phœnix, humiliés.  
 Allons.

PHŒNIX

Allez, Seigneur, vous jeter à ses pieds.  
 Allez, en lui jurant que votre âme l'adore,  
 A de nouveaux mépris l'encourager encore.

PYRRHUS

Je le vois bien, tu crois que prêt à l'excuser  
 Mon cœur court après elle et cherche à s'apaiser.

Then make a start. Don't talk of her again.  
 Go to Hermione. Please her. Be glad.  
 Forget your anger, even, at her feet.  
 You should prepare her to be wed.  
 You cannot trust that task to a rival  
 Who's deep in love...

PYRRHUS

If I wed her, you think  
 Andromache will not be jealous deep at heart?

PHOENIX

Andromache! She's always in your mind.  
 Her joys, her heartaches – God, why should you care?  
 What magic draws you to her still, despite yourself?

PYRRHUS

I've not yet said to her all I must say.  
 She's only seen a half of all this rage.  
 She does not know how much I am her enemy.  
 Let us go back. I'll brave her to her face  
 And give my hatred freer range.  
 Come, Phoenix. See. I'll humble her, her charms...

PHOENIX

So throw yourself before her feet, my lord.  
 Go. Swear the homage of your heart to her,  
 And spur her on to still more fits of scorn.

PYRRHUS

I understand. You think my heart forgives  
 Too readily, tries to placate, runs after her.

PHŒNIX

Vous aimez, c'est assez.

PYRRHUS

Moi l'aimer? une ingrate  
 Qui me hait d'autant plus que mon amour la flatte?  
 Sans parents, sans amis, sans espoir que sur moi;  
 Je puis perdre son fils, peut-être je le doi;  
 Etrangère... que dis-je? esclave dans l'Épire,  
 Je lui donne son fils, mon âme, mon empire,  
 Et je ne puis gagner dans son perfide cœur  
 D'autre rang que celui de son persécuteur?  
 Non, non, je l'ai juré, ma vengeance est certaine:  
 Il faut bien une fois justifier sa haine.  
 J'abandonne son fils. Que de pleurs vont couler!  
 De quel nom sa douleur me va-t-elle appeler!  
 Quel spectacle pour elle aujourd'hui se dispose!  
 Elle en mourra, Phœnix, et j'en serai la cause.  
 C'est lui mettre moi-même un poignard dans le sein.

PHŒNIX

Et pourquoi donc en faire éclater le dessein?  
 Que ne consultiez-vous tantôt votre faiblesse?

PYRRHUS

Je t'entends. Mais excuse un reste de tendresse.  
 Crains-tu pour ma colère un si faible combat?  
 D'un amour qui s'éteint c'est le dernier éclat.  
 Allons. A tes conseils, Phœnix, je m'abandonne.  
 Faut-il livrer son fils? faut-il voir Hermione?

PHŒNIX

Oui, voyez-la, Seigneur, et par des vœux soumis,  
 Protestez-lui...

PHOENIX

You are in love. That is enough.

PYRRHUS

Love her?  
 The more I love, the more she hates. She has  
 No parents, friend – no hope apart from me.  
 I could destroy her son. Perhaps I should.  
 A foreigner in Epirus...a slave...  
 I offer her her son, my love, my very throne,  
 And yet her trustless heart won't let me win  
 A nobler rank than that of torturer.  
 Oh no...I've sworn that my revenge will come.  
 I need for once to justify her hate.  
 Her son shall be abandoned. Ah, what tears  
 There'll be, what names she'll call me in her grief.  
 How great a scene is being set up now.  
 It will kill her, Phoenix...I'll be the cause.  
 I will have stabbed the dagger through her heart.

PHOENIX

But why announce the plan so publicly?  
 Why aren't you guided by how weak you've been?

PYRRHUS

You're right. You must forgive the afterglow.  
 You fear my anger makes too weak a fight.  
 This is the final brilliance of a dying love.  
 So come, Phoenix. I'm in your hands... shall I  
 Give up the boy? And see Hermione?

PHOENIX

Yes, see her. And in your heart's humility,  
 Vow to her...

ANDROMAQUE

PYRRHUS

Faisons tout ce que j'ai promis.

ANDROMACHE

PYRRHUS

What I've promised, I will do.

## ACTE 3 SCÈNE 1

*Oreste, Pylade*

PYLADE

Modérez donc, Seigneur, cette fureur extrême.  
Je ne vous connais plus; vous n'êtes plus vous-même.  
Souffrez...

ORESTE

Non, tes conseils ne sont plus de saison,  
Pylade; je suis las d'écouter la raison.  
C'est traîner trop longtemps ma vie et mon supplice :  
Il faut que je l'enlève, ou bien que je périsse.  
Le dessein en est pris, je le veux achever.  
Oui, je le veux.

PYLADE

Eh bien! il la faut enlever.  
J'y consens. Mais songez cependant où vous êtes.  
Que croira-t-on de vous, à voir ce que vous faites?  
Dissimulez: calmez ce transport inquiet;  
Commandez à vos yeux de garder le secret.  
Ces gardes, cette cour, l'air qui vous environne,  
Tout dépend de Pyrrhus, et surtout Hermione.  
A ses regards surtout cachez votre courroux.  
O dieux! en cet état pourquoi la cherchiez-vous?

ORESTE

Que sais-je? De moi-même étais-je alors le maître?  
La fureur m'emportait, et je venais peut-être  
Menacer à la fois l'ingrate et son amant.

## ACT 3 SCENE 1

*Orestes, Pylades*

PYLADES

You must restrain this awful rage, my lord.  
I do not know you. You're beside yourself.  
Just let...

ORESTES

The time for your advice has gone,  
Pylades. I'm tired of hearing reason.  
The pain...my life...they've dragged on much too long.  
I must elope with her, or else I'll die.  
My mind's made up. I mean to see it through.  
I will do it.

PYLADES

Well then, elope you must.  
Agreed. But meanwhile, think of where you are.  
What will they think to see you act like this?  
Pretend. This frenzied rage... Calm down.  
And force your eyes to keep their secrets close.  
These guards, this court, the air you breathe, depend  
On Pyrrhus, even more Hermione.  
Conceal your rage from her above all else.  
Why did you look for her in such a state?

ORESTES

Who knows? Could I control myself that time?  
Some...rage swept over me. Perhaps I went  
To threaten both of them – her, her sweetheart...

PYLADE

Et quel était le fruit de cet emportement?

ORESTE

Et quelle âme, dis-moi, ne serait éperdue  
Du coup dont ma raison vient d'être confondue?  
Il épouse, dit-il, Hermione demain;  
Il veut pour m'honorer la tenir de ma main.  
Ah! plutôt cette main dans le sang du barbare...

PYLADE

Vous l'accusez, Seigneur, de ce destin bizarre;  
Cependant tourmenté de ses propres desseins,  
Il est peut-être à plaindre, autant que je vous plains.

ORESTE

Non, non, je le connais, mon désespoir le flatte,  
Sans moi, sans mon amour, il dédaignait l'ingrate;  
Ses charmes jusque-là n'avaient pu le toucher:  
Le cruel ne la prend que pour me l'arracher.  
Ah dieux! c'en était fait: Hermione gagnée  
Pour jamais de sa vue allait être éloignée,  
Son cœur, entre l'amour et le dépit confus,  
Pour se donner à moi n'attendait qu'un refus,  
Ses yeux s'ouvraient, Pylade. Elle écoutait Oreste,  
Lui parlait, le plaignait. Un mot eût fait le reste.

PYLADE

Vous le croyez.

ORESTE

Hé quoi? ce courroux enflammé  
Contre un ingrat...

PYLADES

Some...rage – what was the point?

ORESTES

Name me  
A man who'd not be left distraught  
At such a blow. My reason reels from it.  
Tomorrow, so he says, he'll wed Hermione.  
He'll honour me and take her from my hand.  
Sooner my hand in his barbaric blood...

PYLADES

My lord, you blame him for this twist of fate,  
And he's tortured by his own designs.  
Perhaps he should be pitied, just like you.

ORESTES

I know him...No. He's gratified by my despair.  
He'd throw her off if not for me, my love.  
She's cast no magic over him, not once.  
He woos her just to take her from me now.  
Dear God, what fate... had she been won, she would  
Have gone for ever from his sight.  
Her heart was muddled by both love and scorn,  
Was waiting for his 'no' to come to me.  
Her eyes were opening. She listened to me,  
Talked, and pitied... there needed just one word.

PYLADES

You think so?

ORESTES

Why her blazing rage against  
The cold he showed...?

## PYLADE

Jamais il ne fut plus aimé.  
 Pensez-vous, quand Pyrrhus vous l'aurait accordée,  
 Qu'un prétexte tout prêt ne l'eût pas retardée?  
 M'en croirez-vous? Lassé de ses trompeurs attraits,  
 Au lieu de l'enlever, fuyez-la pour jamais.  
 Quoi? votre amour se veut charger d'une furie  
 Qui vous détestera, qui toute votre vie,  
 Regrettant un hymen tout prêt à s'achever,  
 Voudra...

## ORESTE

C'est pour cela que je veux l'enlever.  
 Tout lui rirait, Pylade, et moi, pour mon partage,  
 Je n'emporterais donc qu'une inutile rage?  
 J'irais loin d'elle encor tâcher de l'oublier?  
 Non, non, à mes tourments, je veux l'associer.  
 C'est trop gémir tout seul. Je suis las qu'on me plaigne.  
 Je prétends qu'à mon tour l'inhumaine me craigne,  
 Et que ses yeux cruels, à pleurer condamnés,  
 Me rendent tous les noms que je leur ai donnés.

## PYLADE

Voilà donc le succès qu'aura votre ambassade:  
 Oreste ravisseur!

## ORESTE

Et qu'importe, Pylade?  
 Quand nos États vengés jouiront de mes soins,  
 L'ingrate de mes pleurs jouira-t-elle moins?  
 Et que me servira que la Grèce m'admire,  
 Tandis que je serai la fable de l'Épire?  
 Que veux-tu? Mais s'il faut ne te rien déguiser,  
 Mon innocence enfin commence à me peser.

## PYLADES

She never loved him more.  
 If he'd have let her go, you think some pale  
 Pretext would not have kept her back?  
 Trust me... you should grow tired of her deceptive charm.  
 Rather than take her, shun her for all time.  
 If not, this love of yours will take a shrew  
 Who'll loathe you all your life, regret  
 She did not grasp this marriage now,  
 And want...

## ORESTES

That's why I want to take her now.  
 If not, the world will smile of her; but me –  
 I'll take away a futile rage, and go  
 Far, far from her to seek forgetfulness.  
 Oh no. I want her to be part of all my pain.  
 Suffering alone's too much. I'm tired of pity.  
 I want her heartlessness to fear me too,  
 Those callous eyes to be condemned to weep  
 And give me back the names I gave them once.

## PYLADES

So this is how your embassy will end –  
 Orestes, kidnapper.

## ORESTES

So what of that?  
 If Greece enjoyed the vengeance that I brought,  
 Would she enjoy my tears the less?  
 And Greece's loud applause – how would that serve  
 If people jeered at me in Epirus?  
 What should I do? I'll hide the truth no more.  
 This innocence begins to weight me down.



Je ne sais de tout temps quelle injuste puissance  
 Laisse le crime en paix, et poursuit l'innocence.  
 De quelque part sur moi que je tourne les yeux,  
 Je ne vois que malheurs qui condamnent les dieux.  
 Méritons leur courroux, justifions leur haine,  
 Et que le fruit du crime en précède la peine.  
 Mais toi, par quelle erreur veux-tu toujours sur toi  
 Détourner un courroux qui ne cherche que moi?  
 Assez et trop longtemps mon amitié t'accable:  
 Évite un malheureux, abandonne un coupable.  
 Cher Pylade, crois-moi, ta pitié te séduit.  
 Laisse-moi des périls dont j'attends tout le fruit.  
 Porte aux Grecs cet enfant que Pyrrhus m'abandonne.  
 Va-t'en.

PYLADE

Allons, Seigneur, enlevons Hermione.  
 Au travers des périls un grand cœur se fait jour.  
 Que ne peut l'amitié conduite par l'amour?  
 Allons de tous vos Grecs encourager le zèle.  
 Nos vaisseaux sont tout prêts, et le vent nous appelle.  
 Je sais de ce palais tous les détours obscurs;  
 Vous voyez que la mer en vient battre les murs.  
 Et cette nuit sans peine une secrète voie  
 Jusqu'en votre vaisseau conduira votre proie.

ORESTE

J'abuse, cher ami, de ton trop d'amitié.  
 Mais pardonne à des maux dont toi seul as pitié;  
 Excuse un malheureux, qui perd tout ce qu'il aime,  
 Que tout le monde hait, et qui se liait lui-même.  
 Que ne puis-je à mon tour dans un sort plus heureux...

PYLADE

Dissimulez, Seigneur, c'est tout ce que je veux.  
 Gardez qu'avant le coup votre dessein n'éclate:

I do not know what unjust power in every age  
 Leaves crime in peace yet hunts down innocence.  
 Wherever in my life I turn my eyes,  
 I only see the pain that damns the gods.  
 So why not earn their anger, justify their hate  
 And have the fruits of crime before its punishment?  
 But you keep turning on yourself  
 The rage that's meant for me. You wrong yourself.  
 My friendship's weighed you down enough – too long –  
 Leave me to all my sadness and my guilt.  
 Pity has won you over, dear Pylades.  
 Leave me these dangers. I'm prepared for them.  
 Take to the Greeks this boy that Pyrrhus has.  
 Go now.

PYLADES

Oh no, let's go and take Hermione.  
 Best courage is revealed when most's at risk.  
 What cannot friendship do when led by love?  
 Let's go and fire the hearts of all your Greeks.  
 Our ships are ready, the winds are calling.  
 I know each secret winding in this place.  
 You see the waves crash down against its walls.  
 Tonight, with ease, a secret passageway  
 Will take your prey aboard your ship.

ORESTES

You're much too good a friend. I'm using that.  
 Forgive this pain that you alone show pity for.  
 Pardon a wretched man who ruins all he loves,  
 Whom everybody hates, who hates himself.  
 In happier times, what could I not have done...?

PYLADES

Pretend, my lord, that's all I ask. Take care  
 Your plan's not known before you strike. Forget

Oubliez jusque-là qu'Hermione est ingrate;  
Oubliez votre amour. Elle vient, je la voi.

ORESTE

Va-t'en. Réponds-moi d'elle, et je réponds de moi.

## SCÈNE 2

*Hermione, Oreste, Cléone*

ORESTE

Eh bien? mes soins vous ont rendu votre conquête.  
J'ai vu Pyrrhus, Madame, et votre hymen s'apprête.

HERMIONE

On le dit; et de plus on vient de m'assurer  
Que vous ne me cherchiez que pour m'y préparer.

ORESTE

Et votre âme ses vœux ne sera pas rebelle?

HERMIONE

Qui l'eût cru, que Pyrrhus ne fût pas infidèle?  
Que sa flamme attendrait si tard pour éclater?  
Qu'il reviendrait à moi, quand je l'allais quitter?  
Je veux croire avec vous qu'il redoute la Grèce,  
Qu'il suit son intérêt plutôt que sa tendresse,  
Que mes yeux sur votre âme étaient plus absolus.

ORESTE

Hermione's ungratefulness till then.  
Forget your love. Ah, I see her coming.

ORESTES

Then go. Answer for her. I'll answer for myself.

*[Pylades leaves. Hermione and Cleone enter.]*

## SCENE 2

*Hermione, Orestes, Cleone*

ORESTES

So then, my efforts give you Pyrrhus back,  
My lady. I've seen him. Your wedding night draws close.

HERMIONE

So I am told. What's more, I am assured  
You sought me out only to tell me so.

ORESTES

And you will not resist what he desires?

HERMIONE

Who wouldn't think he wasn't treacherous  
When love has held so long to blossom forth,  
And he comes back as I am leaving him?  
Like you, I want to think he fears the Greeks,  
Led by self-interest more than tenderness –  
But that I have a greater hold upon his heart.

ORESTES

Non, Madame, il vous aime, et je n'en doute plus.  
 Vos yeux ne font-ils pas tout ce qu'ils veulent faire?  
 Et vous ne vouliez pas sans doute lui déplaire.

HERMIONE

Mais que puis-je, Seigneur? On a promis ma foi.  
 Lui ravirai-je un bien qu'il ne tient pas de moi?  
 L'amour ne règle pas le sort d'une princesse:  
 La gloire d'obéir est tout ce qu'on nous laisse.  
 Cependant je partais, et vous avez pu voir  
 Combien je relâchais pour vous de mon devoir.

ORESTE

Ah! que vous saviez bien, cruelle... Mais, Madame,  
 Chacun peut à son choix disposer de son âme.  
 La vôtre était à vous. J'espérais; mais enfin  
 Vous l'avez pu donner sans me faire un larcin.  
 Je vous accuse aussi bien moins que la fortune.  
 Et pourquoi vous lasser d'une plainte importune?  
 Tel est votre devoir, je l'avoue; et le mien  
 Est de vous épargner un si triste entretien.

### SCÈNE 3

*Hermione, Cléone*

HERMIONE

Attendais-tu, Cléone, un courroux si modeste?

CLÉONE

La douleur qui se tait n'en est que plus funeste.

He is in love with you. I have no doubt.  
 Haven't your eyes done all they wished to do?  
 You could not want to give displeasure now...

HERMIONE

What can I do? My faithfulness is pledged.  
 Should I now steal from him I gift I did not give?  
 Princess's fates are not resolved by love.  
 Obedience – that crown – is all that's left to us.  
 And yet I was to leave with you... You saw  
 How easily my sense of duty failed...

ORESTES

How much you understand...you torture me...  
 Our love can be bestowed at our own choice.  
 Your love was yours. I hoped. But in the end,  
 You gave him it. I didn't have to steal.  
 I blame you much, much less than fate.  
 So why upset you now with these complaints?  
 You have your duty. I know that. Mine is  
 To spare you all this painful talk.

*[He leaves.]*

### SCENE 3

*Hermione, Cleone*

HERMIONE

Did you expect, Cleone, such mild rage?

CLEONE

The grief that does not speak is full of death.

Je le plains d'autant plus qu'auteur de son ennui,  
Le coup qui l'a perdu n'est parti que de lui.  
Comptez depuis quel temps votre hymen se prépare;  
Il a parlé, Madame, et Pyrrhus se déclare.

HERMIONE

Tu crois que Pyrrhus craint? Et que craint-il encor?  
Des peuples qui dix ans ont fui devant Hector?  
Qui cent fois effrayés de l'absence d'Achille,  
Dans leurs vaisseaux brûlants ont cherché leur asile,  
Et qu'on verrait encor, sans l'appui de son fils,  
Redemander Hélène aux Troyens impunis?  
Non, Cléone, il n'est point ennemi de lui-même,  
Il veut tout ce qu'il fait, et s'il m'épouse, il m'aime.  
Mais qu'Oreste à son gré m'impute ses douleurs:  
N'avons-nous d'entretien que celui de ses pleurs?  
Pyrrhus revient à nous. Eh bien, chère Cléone,  
Conçois-tu les transports de l'heureuse Hermione?  
Sais-tu quel est Pyrrhus? T'es-tu fait raconter  
Le nombre des exploits... mais qui les peut compter?  
Intrépide, et partout suivi de la victoire,  
Charmant, fidèle, enfin, rien ne manque à sa gloire.  
Songe...

CLÉONE

Dissimulez. Votre rivale en pleurs  
Vient à vos pieds sans doute apporter ses douleurs.

HERMIONE

Dieux! ne puis-je à ma joie abandonner mon âme?  
Sortons: que lui dirais-je?

SCÈNE 4

I pity him. The more so since he's caused his pain.  
The blow that's brought him down he struck alone.  
Think how much time your wedding's been prepared.  
Orestes talks... Pyrrhus makes up his mind.

HERMIONE

Could Pyrrhus have his fears, you think? What of?  
People who fled from Hector ten whole years,  
Who trembled countless times when Achilles was gone,  
And sought a sanctuary in their burning ships?  
Who'd still be seen, without his son's support,  
Asking again for Helen from unpunished Troy?  
No. His only enemy is himself.  
What he wants he does. If he weds me, he loves me.  
Orestes' free to blame his grief on me.  
But must we always talk about his woes?  
So Pyrrhus will come back to me. Oh Cleone,  
You can't conceive the soaring joy I feel.  
You know who Pyrrhus is. You must have heard  
How many deeds... but who can count them all?  
Fearless, followed by constant victory,  
Charming, and faithful to the end. A stainless name.  
Think...

CLEONE

Disguise your mood. Look, your rival's here  
In tears, no doubt to bring her grief to you.

HERMIONE

So can't I now be lost in all this joy?  
Let's leave. What should I say to her?

*[Andromache and Cephisa enter.]*

SCENE 4

*Andromaque, Hermione, Cléone, Céphise*

## ANDROMAQUE

Où fuyez-vous, Madame?  
 N'est-ce pas à vos yeux un spectacle assez doux  
 Que la veuve d'Hector pleurante à vos genoux?  
 Je ne viens point ici, par de jalouses larmes,  
 Vous envier un cœur qui se rend à vos charmes.  
 Par une main cruelle, hélas! j'ai vu percer  
 Le seul où mes regards prétendaient s'adresser.  
 Ma flamme par Hector fut jadis allumée;  
 Avec lui dans la tombe elle s'est enfermée.  
 Mais il me reste un fils. Vous saurez quelque jour,  
 Madame, pour un fils jusqu'où va notre amour;  
 Mais vous ne saurez pas, du moins je le souhaite,  
 En quel trouble mortel son intérêt nous jette,  
 Lorsque de tant de biens qui pouvaient nous flatter,  
 C'est le seul qui nous reste, et qu'on veut nous l'ôter.  
 Hélas! lorsque lassés de dix ans de misère,  
 Les Troyens en courroux menaçaient votre mère,  
 J'ai su de mon Hector lui procurer l'appui.  
 Vous pouvez sur Pyrrhus ce que j'ai pu sur lui.  
 Que craint-on d'un enfant qui survit à sa perte?  
 Laissez-moi le cacher en quelque île déserte;  
 Sur les soins de sa mère on peut s'en assurer,  
 Et mon fils avec moi n'apprendra qu'à pleurer.

## HERMIONE

Je conçois vos douleurs. Mais un devoir austère  
 Quand mon père a parlé, m'ordonne de me taire.  
 C'est lui qui de Pyrrhus fait agir le courroux.  
 S'il faut fléchir Pyrrhus, qui le peut mieux que vous?  
 Vos yeux assez longtemps ont régné sur son âme;  
 Faites-le prononcer: j'y souscrirai, Madame.

*Andromache, Hermione, Cleone, Cephisa*

## ANDROMACHE

You're going then...?  
 Isn't this sweet enough a sight for you,  
 With Hector's widow weeping at your feet?  
 I've not come here with tears of jealousy,  
 To envy you a heart that you have charmed.  
 I've seen a vicious hand strike down  
 The only man I ever wished to see.  
 My love was lit by Hector long ago.  
 It's with him now, shut up inside his tomb.  
 But yet my son is left. One day you'll know  
 How very far a mother's love will go.  
 And yet, I hope at least you'll never know  
 The anguish I've been made to feel for him.  
 So many things could give me joy, but he's  
 The one good left they want to take away.  
 When ten long years of war had worn Troy down  
 And maddened it to seek your mother's life,  
 I knew I could rely on Hector's help for her.  
 You can win Pyrrhus now as I did him.  
 Why fear a living child when Hector's dead?  
 Please, let me hide him on some desert isle.  
 You can rely upon the care I'll give.  
 All he can learn from me is how to weep.

## HERMIONE

I feel your pain. But when my father speaks,  
 Duty's restraints demand that I keep quiet.  
 He is the one who's kindled Pyrrhus' rage.  
 If Pyrrhus must be swayed, who better now  
 Than you? You've ruled his heart a long, long while.  
 Make him decide. I will abide by that.

*[She leaves with Cleone.]*

ANDROMAQUE

SCÈNE 5

*Andromaque, Céphise*

ANDROMAQUE

Quel mépris la cruelle attache à ses refus!

CÉPHISE

Je croirais ses conseils, et je verrais Pyrrhus.  
Un regard confondrait Hermione et la Grèce...  
Mais lui-même il vous cherche.

SCÈNE 6

*Pyrrhus, Andromaque, Phœnix, Céphise*

PYRRHUS [*à Phœnix*]

Où donc est la princesse?  
Ne m'avais-tu pas dit qu'elle était en ces lieux?

PHŒNIX

Je le croyais.

ANDROMAQUE [*à Céphise*]

Tu vois le pouvoir de mes yeux!

ANDROMACHE

SCENE 5

*Andromache, Cephisa*

ANDROMACHE

The scorn she pours as she says no!

CEPHISA

I'd trust her counsel. Try to see the king.  
One look for you would rout her and all Greece.  
Ah see... he's looking for you now.

*[Pyrrhus enters, accompanied by Phoenix.]*

SCENE 6

*Pyrrhus, Andromache, Phoenix, Cephisa*

PYRRHUS, *to Phoenix*

Where is she then?  
Hermione – you told me she was here.

PHOENIX

I thought she was.

ANDROMACHE, *to Cephisa*

You see my eyes have power.

PYRRHUS

Que dit-elle, Phœnix?

ANDROMAQUE

Hélas! tout m'abandonne.

PHŒNIX

Allons, Seigneur, marchons sur les pas d'Hermione.

CÉPHISE

Qu'attendez-vous? Rompez ce silence obstiné.

ANDROMAQUE

Il a promis mon fils.

CÉPHISE

Il ne l'a pas donné.

ANDROMAQUE

Non, non, j'ai beau pleurer, sa mort est résolue.

PYRRHUS

Daigne-t-elle sur nous tourner au moins la vue?  
Quel orgueil!

ANDROMAQUE

Je ne fais que l'irriter encor.  
Sortons.

PYRRHUS

PYRRHUS

What does she say, Phoenix?

ANDROMACHE

Oh no, now all is lost.

PHOENIX

Let's go and find Hermione, my lord.

CEPHISA

Why are you waiting? Break the silence. Speak.

ANDROMACHE

He promised me my son.

CEPHISA

But hasn't given him.

ANDROMACHE

No, no. I cry in vain. His death is fixed.

PYRRHUS

So won't she deign to look at me, at least?  
The pride...

ANDROMACHE

I only make him angrier.  
Let's go.

PYRRHUS

Allons aux Grecs livrer le fils d'Hector.

ANDROMAQUE

Ah! Seigneur, arrêtez! Que prétendez-vous faire?  
Si vous livrez le fils, livrez-leur donc la mère.  
Vos serments m'ont tantôt juré tant d'amitié!  
Dieux! ne pourrai-je au moins toucher votre pitié?  
Sans espoir de pardon m'avez-vous condamnée?

PYRRHUS

Phœnix vous le dira, ma parole est donnée.

ANDROMAQUE

Vous qui braviez pour moi tant de périls divers!

PYRRHUS

J'étais aveugle alors; mes yeux se sont ouverts.  
Sa grâce à vos désirs pouvait être accordée;  
Mais vous ne l'avez pas seulement demandée:  
C'en est fait.

ANDROMAQUE

Ah! Seigneur, vous entendiez assez  
Des soupirs qui craignaient de se voir repoussés.  
Pardonnez à l'éclat d'une illustre fortune  
Ce reste de fierté, qui craint d'être importune.  
Vous ne l'ignorez pas: Andromaque, sans vous,  
N'aurait jamais d'un maître embrassé les genoux.

PYRRHUS

Non, vous me haïssez et dans le fond de l'âme  
Vous craignez de devoir quelque chose à ma flamme.  
Ce fils même, ce fils, l'objet de tant de soins,

Then let's surrender Hector's son to Greece.

ANDROMACHE

No, stop, my lord. What is it that you'd do?  
If you give up my son, give me up too.  
Just now, you swore such friendship to me. Swore!  
Can I not touch some pity now, at least...  
Have you condemned me quite? No hope of pardon then?

PYRRHUS

Phoenix will tell you. I've given my word.

ANDROMACHE

You were to brave so many risks for me...

PYRRHUS

Then I was blind. My eyes are open now.  
He could have well been saved, as you desired.  
And yet you didn't even ask for it.  
The judgment's made.

ANDROMACHE

You understood too well.  
I was afraid my grief would be repulsed.  
Forgive this remnant from a glorious past,  
This legacy of pride that will not beg.  
You are aware that, but for you,  
I never would have kissed a master's foot.

PYRRHUS

Oh no, you hate me. Deep down in your heart,  
You fear to owe my love one single thing.  
Even your son, the boy you love so much –



Si je l'avais sauvé, vous l'en aimeriez moins.  
 La haine, le mépris, contre moi tout s'assemble;  
 Vous me haïssez plus que tous les Grecs ensemble.  
 Jouissez à loisir d'un si noble courroux.  
 Allons, Phœnix.

ANDROMAQUE

Allons rejoindre mon époux.

CÉPHISE

Madame...

ANDROMAQUE

Et que veux-tu que je lui dise encore?  
 Auteur de tous mes maux, crois-tu qu'il les ignore?  
 Seigneur, voyez l'état où vous me réduisez.  
 J'ai vu mon père mort et nos murs embrasés,  
 J'ai vu trancher les jours de ma famille entière,  
 Et mon époux sanglant traîné sur la poussière,  
 Son fils seul avec moi réservé pour les fers.  
 Mais que ne peut un fils? Je respire, je sers.  
 J'ai fait plus: je me suis quelquefois consolée  
 Qu'ici plutôt qu'ailleurs le sort m'eût exilée;  
 Qu'heureux dans son malheur, le fils de tant de rois,  
 Puisqu'il devait servir, fût tombé sous vos lois.  
 J'ai cru que sa prison deviendrait son asile.  
 Jadis Priam soumis fut respecté d'Achille:  
 J'attendais de son fils encor plus de bonté.  
 Pardonne, cher Hector, à ma crédulité.  
 Je n'ai pu soupçonner ton ennemi d'un crime;  
 Malgré lui-même enfin je l'ai cru magnanime.  
 Ah! s'il l'était assez pour nous laisser du moins  
 Au tombeau qu'à ta cendre ont élevé mes soins;  
 Et que finissant là sa haine et nos misères,  
 Il ne séparât point des dépouilles si chères!

If I had saved him, you would love him less.  
 Hatred, contempt – against me all unite.  
 You hate me much more than the whole of Greece.  
 Savour at leisure such majestic wrath!  
 Phoenix?

ANDROMACHE

Let's go to where my husband is.

CEPHISA

My lady...

ANDROMACHE

What more can I say to him?  
 You think he doesn't know my pain. He made it.  
 My lord, you see now what you've brought me to?  
 I've seen my father die, our walls ablaze,  
 I've seen each member of my family cut down,  
 My bleeding husband dragged out through the dust,  
 His only son kept now in chains for me.  
 But sons have strength. I've lived a slave for him –  
 And done much more: even consoled myself  
 That fate had brought me here and not elsewhere,  
 That if he had to serve, this son of kings  
 Would find some fortune as your slave.  
 I thought his prison might become a sanctuary.  
 The pleas of Priam won Achilles' ear.  
 I hoped for yet more kindness from his son.  
 Forgive, dear Hector, such credulity.  
 I couldn't think your enemy so criminal.  
 I thought him great of heart despite himself.  
 If only he would let us stay at least  
 Beside the tomb my love has built for you.  
 He'd end his hatred and our pain  
 If he would let our bodies mingle there.

PYRRHUS

Va m'attendre, Phœnix.

## SCÈNE 7

*Pyrrhus, Andromaque, Céphise*

PYRRHUS *[continue]*

Madame, demeurez.

On peut vous rendre encor ce fils que vous pleurez.  
 Oui, je sens à regret qu'en excitant vos larmes  
 Je ne fais contre moi que vous donner des armes.  
 Je croyais apporter plus de haine en ces lieux.  
 Mais, Madame, du moins tournez vers moi les yeux:  
 Voyez si mes regards sont d'un juge sévère,  
 S'ils sont d'un ennemi qui cherche à vous déplaire.  
 Pourquoi me forcez-vous vous-même à vous trahir?  
 Au nom de votre fils, cessons de nous haïr.  
 A le sauver enfin c'est moi qui vous convie.  
 Faut-il que mes soupirs vous demandent sa vie?  
 Faut-il qu'en sa faveur j'embrasse vos genoux?  
 Pour la dernière fois, sauvez-le, sauvez-vous.  
 Je sais de quels serments je romps pour vous les chaînes,  
 Combien je vais sur moi faire éclater de haines.  
 Je renvoie Hermione, et je mets sur son front,  
 Au lieu de ma couronne, un éternel affront.  
 Je vous conduis au temple où son hymen s'apprête.  
 Je vous ceins du bandeau préparé pour sa tête.  
 Mais ce n'est plus, Madame, une offre à dédaigner:  
 Je vous le dis, il faut ou périr ou régner.  
 Mon cœur, désespéré d'un an d'ingratitude,  
 Ne peut plus de son sort souffrir l'incertitude.  
 C'est craindre, menacer et gémir trop longtemps.

PYRRHUS

Phoenix, go now and wait.

*[Phoenix leaves.]*

## SCENE 7

*Pyrrhus, Andromache, Cephisa*

PYRRHUS

My lady, stay.

The son you mourn may still be given back.  
 I fear that rousing you to tears  
 Will simply arm you more against me now.  
 I'd thought to bring here greater hate.  
 At least, my lady, look at me.  
 How far now do I seem a callous judge,  
 An enemy who seeks to do you harm?  
 Why force me to betray you in this way?  
 Let's stop the hatred, in your son's own name.  
 It's me who pleads with you to save him now.  
 So must my pleas now beg you for his life?  
 Must I now kneel to you for his own sake?  
 For the last time, save him now, save yourself.  
 I'm breaking vows for you, vows with strong chains –  
 I know the hatred that will tumble down.  
 I'll send Hermione away, set on her head  
 Not my royal crown but everlasting shame.  
 I'll take you to the shrine – her wedding is prepared –  
 I'll place her wedding band around your head.  
 You cannot scorn this offer, my lady.  
 No more. I tell you, either die or reign.  
 My heart despairs – a year's ingratitude –  
 I can no longer bear uncertainty.  
 It's been too long for fears and threats and groans.

Je meurs si je vous perds, mais je meurs si j'attends.  
 Songez-y: je vous laisse, et je viendrai vous prendre  
 Pour vous mener au temple, où ce fils doit m'attendre.  
 Et là vous me verrez soumis, ou furieux,  
 Vous couronner, Madame, ou le perdre à vos yeux.

## SCÈNE 8

*Andromaque, Céphise*

CÉPHISE

Je vous l'avais prédit, qu'en dépit de la Grèce  
 De votre sort encor vous seriez la maîtresse.

ANDROMAQUE

Hélas! de quel effet tes discours sont suivis?  
 Il ne me restait plus qu'à condamner mon fils.

CÉPHISE

Madame, à votre époux, c'est être assez fidèle:  
 Trop de vertu pourrait vous rendre criminelle;  
 Lui-même il porterait votre âme à la douceur.

ANDROMAQUE

Quoi, je lui donnerais Pyrrhus pour successeur?

CÉPHISE

Ainsi le veut son fils, que les Grecs vous ravissent.  
 Pensez-vous qu'après tout ses mânes en rougissent?  
 Qu'il méprisât, Madame, un roi victorieux,

I'll die if I lose you. But I'll die if I wait.  
 Remember that. I'll leave you now. I'll come  
 To take you to the temple where your son will wait.  
 And there you'll find me, quiet or wild with rage.  
 I'll either crown you, or kill him in your sight.

*[He leaves. Andromache and Cephisa remain.]*

## SCENE 8

*Andromache, Cephisa*

CEPHISA

I told you you'd control your destiny  
 Again, in spite of all the Greeks.

ANDROMACHE

And what's the dreadful outcome of your words...?  
 I can do nothing but condemn my son.

CEPHISA

It is enough to honour Hector's name.  
 But too much virtue could become a crime.  
 Hector himself would counsel carefulness.

ANDROMACHE

And give him Pyrrhus to succeed him? No.

CEPHISA

Your son the Greeks will take would want it so...  
 Would Hector's ghost blush so if that should be?  
 Would he despise a king in victory

Qui vous fait remonter au rang de vos aïeux;  
 Qui foule aux pieds pour vous vos vainqueurs en colère,  
 Qui ne se souvient plus qu'Achille était son père,  
 Qui dément ses exploits et les rend superflus?

## ANDROMAQUE

Dois-je les oublier, s'il ne s'en souvient plus?  
 Dois-je oublier Hector privé de funérailles,  
 Et traîné sans honneur autour de nos murailles?  
 Dois-je oublier son père à mes pieds renversé,  
 Ensanglantant l'autel qu'il tenait embrassé?  
 Songe, songe, Céphise, à cette nuit cruelle  
 Qui fut pour tout un peuple une nuit éternelle;  
 Figure-toi Pyrrhus les yeux étincelants,  
 Entrant à la lueur de nos palais brûlants;  
 Sur tous mes frères morts se faisant un passage,  
 Et de sang tout couvert échauffant le carnage;  
 Songe aux cris des vainqueurs, songe aux cris des mourants,  
 Dans la flamme étouffes, sous le fer expirants;  
 Peins-toi dans ces horreurs Andromaque éperdue :  
 Voilà comme Pyrrhus vint s'offrir à ma vue,  
 Voilà par quels exploits il sut se couronner,  
 Enfin voilà l'époux que tu me veux donner.  
 Non, je ne serai point complice de ses crimes;  
 Qu'il nous prenne, s'il veut, pour dernières victimes.  
 Tous mes ressentiments lui seraient asservis.

## CÉPHISE

Eh bien, allons donc voir expirer votre fils:  
 On n'attend plus que vous. Vous frémissez, Madame?

## ANDROMAQUE

Ah! de quel souvenir viens-tu frapper mon âme!  
 Quoi, Céphise, j'irai voir expirer encor  
 Ce fils, ma seule joie, et l'image d'Hector?  
 Ce fils que de sa flamme il me laissa pour gage?

Who raised you back to your ancestral rank?  
 Who trod your angry conquerors underfoot,  
 Forgot he was Achilles' son,  
 Denied his exploits, made them meaningless?

## ANDROMACHE

Should I forget them if they've slipped his mind?  
 Should I forget that Hector, without burial,  
 Was dragged dishonoured round our walls? Should I  
 Forget my father falling at my feet  
 And bloodying the altar that he clutched?  
 Remember, Cephisa... that dreadful night  
 That was perpetual night for our whole race.  
 Imagine Pyrrhus then, his eyes ablaze,  
 His path lit up by palaces of fire,  
 Picking his way through all my brothers...dead...  
 Inciting yet more carnage, drenched in blood.  
 Think of the victors' shouts, the screams of men  
 Choked by the flames, and dying by the sword.  
 Imagine me among this horror, crazed.  
 This is how Pyrrhus first appeared to me.  
 These are the acts that made him king.  
 This is the husband that you offer me.  
 I will not be accomplice to his crimes.  
 We'll be the final victims if he wants  
 And all my anger can be chained by him.

## CEPHISA

Then we must go to watch your young son die.  
 They're waiting just for you... You shudder...

## ANDROMACHE

Oh,  
 With what a memory you've moved my soul,  
 Cephisa. I go to see my young son die,  
 Sweet Hector's image, and my only joy...  
 The son he gave as token of his love.

Hélas! je m'en souviens, le jour que son courage  
 Lui fit chercher Achille, ou plutôt le trépas,  
 Il demanda son fils, et le prit dans ses bras:  
 Chère épouse, dit-il en essuyant mes larmes,  
 J'ignore quel succès le sort garde à mes armes;  
 Je te laisse mon fils pour gage de ma foi:  
 S'il me perd, je prétends qu'il me retrouve en toi.  
 Si d'un heureux hymen la mémoire t'est chère,  
 Montre au fils à quel point tu chérissais le père.  
 Et je puis voir répandre un sang si précieux?  
 Et je laisse avec lui périr tous ses aïeux?  
 Roi barbare, faut-il que mon crime l'entraîne?  
 Si je te hais, est-il coupable de ma haine?  
 T'a-t-il de tous les siens reproché le trépas?  
 S'est-il plaint à tes yeux des maux qu'il ne sent pas?  
 Mais cependant, mon fils, tu meurs si je n'arrête  
 Le fer que le cruel tient levé sur ta tête.  
 Je l'en puis détourner, et je t'y vais offrir?  
 Non, tu ne mourras point, je ne le puis souffrir.  
 Allons trouver Pyrrhus. Mais non, chère Céphise,  
 Va le trouver pour moi.

CÉPHISE

Que faut-il que je dise?

ANDROMAQUE

Dis-lui que de mon fils l'amour est assez fort...  
 Crois-tu que dans son cœur il ait juré sa mort?  
 L'amour peut-il si loin pousser sa barbarie?

CÉPHISE

Madame, il va bientôt revenir en furie.

ANDROMAQUE

Eh bien, va l'assurer...

That memory... the day he bravely went  
 To find Achilles, but instead found death.  
 He asked to see his son. He hugged him tight.  
 He dried my tears and said, 'My darling wife,  
 I cannot know what fate will do to me.  
 I leave my son as token of my faith.  
 If I am killed, he must recover me in you.  
 If you keep sweet remembrance of our life as one,  
 Show to my son how much you cherished me.'  
 How can I see such precious blood be shed  
 And let his forebears die with him? So must  
 My crime drag him down too, you barbarous king?  
 If I hate you, is he made guilty too?  
 Has he condemned you for his family's death?  
 Has he complained of pain he does not feel?  
 And yet, my son, you'll die unless I stop  
 The sword that animal hangs over you.  
 I could prevent it. But I give you up...  
 You will not die. I could not bear your death.  
 We must find Pyrrhus. No, no... Cephisa,  
 You find him for me now.

CEPHISA

What should I say?

ANDROMACHE

You tell him that I love my son enough...  
 You think that in his heart he's sworn his death?  
 Could love take barbarousness so far?

CEPHISA

He'll soon come back, my lady, mad with rage.

ANDROMACHE

Go and assure him then.

CÉPHISE

De quoi? de votre foi?

ANDROMAQUE

Hélas! pour la promettre est-elle encore à moi?  
O cendres d'un époux! ô Troyens! ô mon père!  
O mon fils, que tes jours coûtent cher à ta mère!  
Allons.

CÉPHISE

Où donc, Madame, et que résolvez-vous?

ANDROMAQUE

Allons sur son tombeau consulter mon époux.

CEPHISA

Of what? Your promises?

ANDROMACHE

It's still for me to promise him?  
My husband's ashes...oh Trojans...father...  
How dearly then I buy your life, my son.  
I'll go.

CEPHISA

But where, my lady? What have you resolved?

ANDROMACHE

I'll go to speak to Hector in his tomb.

## ACTE 4 SCÈNE 1

*Andromaque, Céphise*

CÉPHISE

Ah! je n'en doute point : c'est votre époux, Madame,  
 C'est Hector qui produit ce miracle en votre âme.  
 Il veut que Troie encor se puisse relever,  
 Avec cet heureux fils, qu'il vous fait conserver.  
 Pyrrhus vous l'a promis. Vous venez de l'entendre,  
 Madame: il n'attendait qu'un mot pour vous le rendre.  
 Croyez-en ses transports: père, sceptre, alliés,  
 Content de votre cœur, il met tout à vos pieds.  
 Sur lui, sur tout son peuple il vous rend souveraine.  
 Est-ce là ce vainqueur digne de tant de haine?  
 Déjà contre les Grecs plein d'un noble courroux  
 Le soin de votre fils le touche autant que vous.  
 Il prévient leur fureur, il lui laisse sa garde;  
 Pour ne pas l'exposer, lui-même il se hasarde.  
 Mais tout s'apprête au temple. Et vous avez promis.

ANDROMAQUE

Oui, je m'y trouverai. Mais allons voir mon fils.

CÉPHISE

Madame, qui vous presse? Il suffit que sa vue  
 Désormais à vos yeux ne soit plus défendue.  
 Vous lui pourrez bientôt prodiguer vos bontés,  
 Et vos embrassements ne seront plus comptés.  
 Quel plaisir d'élever un enfant qu'on voit croître  
 Non plus comme un esclave élevé pour son maître,  
 Mais pour voir avec lui renaître tant de rois!

ANDROMAQUE

## ACT 4 SCENE 1

*Andromache, Cephisa*

CEPHISA

My lady, there can be no doubt. Hector  
 Has worked this miracle within your heart.  
 He wishes Troy to rise again in strength,  
 And with your favoured son whom he keep safe.  
 Pyrrhus has sworn. You heard him speak yourself.  
 He only waits one word to give him back.  
 Believe his rapture. Father, allies, crown –  
 He'll put them at your feet for joy of you.  
 He'll make you empress of himself, his realm.  
 Is this a victor who deserves such hate?  
 He's full of anger now against the Greeks.  
 He cares as much about your son as you.  
 He sees their rage ahead, leaves him his guard.  
 He puts himself at risk to shield the boy.  
 The temple's all prepared. You gave your word...

ANDROMACHE

I will be there. But first I'll see my son.

CEPHISA

But why the hurry? Isn't it enough  
 That now he won't be kept from seeing you.  
 Soon you can pour your tenderness on him,  
 Not have to count each time you cuddle him.  
 The joy to raise a child and see him grow,  
 Not subject to a master as a slave,  
 But as a rebirth of so many kings!

ANDROMACHE

Céphise, allons le voir pour la dernière fois.

CÉPHISE

Que dites-vous? O dieux!

ANDROMAQUE

O ma chère Céphise,  
Ce n'est point avec toi que mon cœur se déguise.  
Ta foi, dans mon malheur, s'est montrée à mes yeux;  
Mais j'ai cru qu'à mon tour tu me connaissais mieux.  
Quoi donc? as-tu pensé qu'Andromaque infidèle  
Pût trahir un époux qui croit revivre en elle,  
Et que de tant de morts réveillant la douleur,  
Le soin de mon repos me fit troubler le leur?  
Est-ce là cette ardeur tant promise à sa cendre?  
Mais son fils périssait; il l'a fallu défendre.  
Pyrrhus en m'épousant s'en déclare l'appui;  
Il suffit: je veux bien m'en reposer sur lui.  
Jc sais quel est Pyrrhus: violent, mais sincère;  
Céphise, il fera plus qu'il n'a promis de faire.  
Sur le courroux des Grecs je m'en repose encor:  
Leur haine va donner un père au fils d'Hector.  
Je vais donc, puisqu'il faut que je me sacrifie,  
Assurer à Pyrrhus le reste de ma vie;  
Je vais en recevant sa foi sur les autels,  
L'engager à mon fils par des nœuds immortels.  
Mais aussitôt ma main, à moi seule funeste,  
D'une infidèle vie abrègera le reste,  
Et sauvant ma vertu, rendra ce que je doi,  
A Pyrrhus, à mon fils, à mon époux, à moi.  
Voilà de mon amour l'innocent stratagème;  
Voilà ce qu'un époux m'a commandé lui-même;  
J'irai seule rejoindre Hector, et mes aïeux.  
Céphise, c'est à toi de me fermer les yeux.

CÉPHISE

Let's go to see him for the final time.

CEPHISA

What are you saying? Oh God...

ANDROMACHE

My dear Cephisa,  
I've never tried to hide my heart from you.  
Through all my pain, you've shown your faithfulness.  
And yet I thought you knew me better. Yes.  
So did you think I'd turn unfaithful now,  
Betray a husband who's alive in me?  
Would I wake up the grief of countless dead  
And gain my peace of mind by haunting theirs?  
Is that the love I promised to his ghost?  
His son though will soon die. I have to guard...  
By marrying me, Pyrrhus becomes his shield.  
That is enough. I put my trust in him.  
I know what Pyrrhus is: hot-headed but sincere.  
He will do more than he has promised to.  
I can rely on Greece's violent rage.  
Their hate will give a father to my son.  
And so I have to sacrifice myself  
And pledge my life to Pyrrhus till I die.  
When he has sworn his solemn vows to me,  
I'll bind him to my son by ties that outlast time.  
And then, when I'm alone, I'll kill myself.  
I'll cut the rest off of my faithless life.  
I'll save my honour, pay back what I owe  
To Pyrrhus, son, and husband, and to me.  
This is the simple plan I've made – through love.  
It's what my husband ordered me to do.  
I'll go to Hector and my forbears quite alone.  
Cephisa, you will have to close my eyes.

CEPHISA



Ah! ne prétendez pas que je puisse survivre.

ANDROMAQUE

Non, non, je te défends, Céphise, de me suivre.  
Je confie à tes soins mon unique trésor.  
Si tu vivais pour moi, vis pour le fils d'Hector.  
De l'espoir des Troyens seule dépositaire,  
Songe à combien de rois tu deviens nécessaire.  
Veille auprès de Pyrrhus; fais-lui garder sa foi:  
S'il le faut, je consens qu'on lui parle de moi;  
Fais-lui valoir l'hymen où je me suis rangée;  
Dis-lui qu'avant ma mort je lui fus engagée,  
Que ses ressentiments doivent être effacés,  
Qu'en lui laissant mon fils, c'est l'estimer assez.  
Fais connaître à mon fils les héros de sa race;  
Autant que tu pourras, conduis-le sur leur trace:  
Dis-lui par quels exploits leurs noms ont éclaté,  
Plutôt ce qu'ils ont fait que ce qu'ils ont été;  
Parle-lui tous les jours des vertus de son père,  
Et quelquefois aussi parle-lui de sa mère.  
Mais qu'il ne songe plus, Céphise, à nous venger:  
Nous lui laissons un maître, il le doit ménager.  
Qu'il ait de ses aïeux un souvenir modeste :  
Il est du sang d'Hector, mais il en est le reste;  
Et pour ce reste enfin j'ai moi-même, en un jour,  
Sacrifié mon sang, ma haine, et mon amour.

CÉPHISE

Hélas!

ANDROMAQUE

Ne me suis point, si ton cœur en alarmes  
Prévoit qu'il ne pourra commander à tes larmes.  
On vient. Cache tes pleurs, Céphise, et souviens-toi  
Que le sort d'Andromaque est commis à ta foi.  
C'est Hermione. Allons, fuyons sa violence.

You shouldn't think I could survive...

ANDROMACHE

I will not have you follow me.  
I place my greatest treasure in your care.  
You've lived for me. Now live for Hector's son.  
You'll be the only guardian of all Troy's hopes.  
Just think how many kings have need of you.  
Watch over Pyrrhus. Make him keep his word.  
But speak to him of me, if that must be,  
And stress the worth our marriage had.  
Tell of my pledge to him before I died,  
So his resentment may be quelled. I've prized  
Him well enough to leave my son with him.  
Make my son learn the heroes of his race  
And try to make him follow in their steps.  
Tell him the deeds that glorify their names,  
And rather what they did than who they were.  
Speak of his father's goodness every day  
And tell him sometimes of his mother too.  
But never let him dream avenging us.  
He'll have a master. He must handle him.  
Don't let him boast about his ancestors.  
He is of Hector's blood, last of his line;  
And for that line, within a single day,  
I've sacrificed my blood, my hate, my love.

CEPHISA

No, no...

ANDROMACHE

Don't follow me. You're too upset.  
You know you can't control your tears.  
Some one is coming. Don't cry. Remember  
I trust my life to your good care. It is  
Hermione. Avoid her anger. Come.

## SCÈNE 2

*Hermione, Cléone*

CLÉONE

Non, je ne puis assez admirer ce silence.  
 Vous vous taisez, Madame, et ce cruel mépris  
 N'a pas du moindre trouble agité vos esprits?  
 Vous soutenez en paix une si rude attaque,  
 Vous qu'on voyait frémir au seul nom d'Andromaque?  
 Vous qui sans désespoir ne pouviez endurer  
 Que Pyrrhus d'un regard la voulût honorer?  
 Il l'épouse, il lui donne avec son diadème  
 La foi que vous venez de recevoir vous-même;  
 Et votre bouche encor muette à tant d'ennui,  
 N'a pas daigné s'ouvrir pour se plaindre de lui?  
 Ah! que je crains, Madame, un calme si funeste!  
 Et qu'il vaudrait bien mieux...

HERMIONE

Fais-tu venir Oreste?

CLÉONE

Il vient, Madame, il vient. Et vous pouvez juger  
 Que bientôt à vos pieds il allait se ranger;  
 Prêt à servir toujours sans espoir de salaire,  
 Vos yeux ne sont que trop assurés de lui plaire.  
 Mais il entre.

## SCENE 2

*Hermione, Cleone*

CLEONE

I am astonished at your silence now.  
 You do not speak. His cruelty, contempt –  
 They've not upset your spirits in the least.  
 You bear his harsh attacks so peaceably,  
 And yet the name Andromache still makes you shake.  
 You couldn't stand that Pyrrhus honoured her  
 With one brief glance without despair.  
 He's marrying her, giving with his diadem  
 The pledge that you have just received yourself.  
 And still your lips are dumb at so much pain.  
 Will they not open and complain of him?  
 But I'm afraid... so ominous a calm.  
 It would be better...

HERMIONE

Orestes – you've sent for him?

CLEONE

He's on his way, my lady. And you see  
 How eagerly he comes to kneel to you.  
 He'll serve you constantly, without reward.  
 Your eyes are all too sure of pleasing him.  
 He's here.

*[Orestes enters.]*

## SCÈNE 3

*Oreste, Hermione, Cléone*

ORESTE

Ah! Madame! est-il vrai qu'une fois  
Oreste en vous cherchant obéisse à vos lois?  
Ne m'a-t-on point flatté d'une fausse espérance?  
Avez-vous en effet souhaité ma présence?  
Croirai-je que vos yeux à la fin désarmés  
Veulent...

HERMIONE

Je veux savoir, Seigneur, si vous m'aimez.

ORESTE

Si je vous aime? ô dieux! mes serments, mes parjures,  
Ma fuite, mon retour, mes respects, mes injures,  
Mon désespoir, mes yeux de pleurs toujours noyés,  
Quels témoins croirez-vous, si vous ne les croyez?

HERMIONE

Vengez-moi, je crois tout.

ORESTE

Eh bien! allons, Madame:  
Mettons encore un coup toute la Grèce en flamme;  
Prenons, en signalant mon bras, et votre nom,  
Vous la place d'Hélène, et moi d'Agamemnon.  
De Troie en ce pays réveillons les misères,  
Et qu'on parle de nous ainsi que de nos pères.  
Partons, je suis tout prêt.

## SCENE 3

*Orestes, Hermione, Cleone*

ORESTES

My lady, is it true for once  
That I have met your wish by coming here?  
I haven't been deceived by cheating hope?  
Do you indeed now want my company?  
Can I believe that you're disarmed at last  
And want...

HERMIONE

I want to know, my lord, if you love me.

ORESTES

If I love you... Dear God, the oaths, the treacheries,  
My flight, return, respect, my injuries,  
Despair, these eyes for ever weeping tears –  
What evidence will you believe, if not all this?

HERMIONE

Avenge me – I'll believe it all.

ORESTES

Then come.  
Let's strike a blow to set all Greece on fire.  
Let's shout my strength and your renown aloud.  
You will be Helen, Agamemnon me.  
We'll waken all Troy's sufferings in this land.  
They'll speak of us as of our ancestors.  
Let's go. I'm all prepared.

HERMIONE

Non, Seigneur, demeurons:  
 Je ne veux pas si loin porter de tels affronts.  
 Quoi! de mes ennemis couronnant l'insolence,  
 J'irais attendre ailleurs une lente vengeance,  
 Et je m'en remettrais au destin des combats,  
 Qui peut-être à la fin ne me vengerait pas?  
 Je veux qu'à mon départ toute l'Épire pleure.  
 Mais si vous me vengez, vengez-moi dans une heure.  
 Tous vos retardements sont pour moi des refus.  
 Courez au temple. Il faut immoler...

ORESTE

Qui?

HERMIONE

Pyrrhus.

ORESTE

Pyrrhus, Madame?

HERMIONE

Eh quoi! votre haine chancelle?  
 Ah! courez, et craignez que je ne vous rappelle.  
 N'alléguez point des droits que je veux oublier;  
 Et ce n'est pas à vous à le justifier.

ORESTE

Moi, je l'excuserais? Ah! vos bontés, Madame,  
 Ont gravé trop avant ses crimes dans mon âme.  
 Vengeons-nous, j'y consens. Mais par d'autre chemins :  
 Soyons ses ennemis, et non ses assassins;

HERMIONE

No, stay, my lord.  
 I'd not take such affronts so far afield.  
 I'd crown my enemies' insulting pride  
 By waiting for a slow revenge elsewhere.  
 I might expose myself to risks of war  
 Which might not in the end leave me avenged.  
 When I depart, I want all Epirus to mourn.  
 If you'll avenge me, do it now – this hour.  
 If you delay, you have rejected me.  
 Run to the temple. We must sacrifice...

ORESTES

Who?

HERMIONE

Pyrrhus.

ORESTES

Pyrrhus?

HERMIONE

What's that? Your hatred's wavering?  
 Run there. Fear lest I call you back.  
 Don't now make claim to rights I would forget.  
 It's not for you to justify his life.

ORESTES

Would *I* excuse him? Your kindnesses, my lady,  
 Have carved his crimes too deeply in my heart.  
 Avenge ourselves, agreed, but in another way.  
 Let's be his enemies, not murderers.

Faisons de sa ruine une juste conquête.  
 Quoi! pour réponse aux Grecs porterai-je sa tête?  
 Et n'ai-je pris sur moi le soin de tout l'État,  
 Que pour m'en acquitter par un assassinat?  
 Souffrez, au nom des dieux, que la Grèce s'explique,  
 Et qu'il meure chargé de la haine publique.  
 Souvenez-vous qu'il règne, et qu'un front couronné...

## HERMIONE

Ne vous suffit-il pas que je l'ai condamné?  
 Ne vous suffit-il pas que ma gloire offensée  
 Demande une victime à moi seule adressée;  
 Qu'Hermione est le prix d'un tyran opprimé,  
 Que je le hais, enfin, Seigneur, que je l'aimai?  
 Je ne m'en cache point: l'ingrat m'avait su plaire,  
 Soit qu'ainsi l'ordonnât mon amour ou mon père,  
 N'importe; mais enfin réglez-vous là-dessus.  
 Malgré mes vœux, Seigneur, honteusement déçus,  
 Malgré la juste horreur que son crime me donne,  
 Tant qu'il vivra, craignez que je ne lui pardonne.  
 Doutez jusqu'à sa mort d'un courroux incertain:  
 S'il ne meurt aujourd'hui, je puis l'aimer demain.

## ORESTE

Eh bien, il faut le perdre, et prévenir sa grâce;  
 Il faut... Mais cependant que faut-il que je fasse?  
 Comment puis-je si tôt servir votre courroux?  
 Quel chemin jusqu'à lui peut conduire mes coups?  
 A peine suis-je encore arrivé dans l'Épire,  
 Vous voulez par mes mains renverser un empire;  
 Vous voulez qu'un roi meure, et pour son châtiment  
 Vous ne donnez qu'un jour, qu'une heure, qu'un moment.  
 Aux yeux de tout son peuple, il faut que je l'opprime?  
 Laissez-moi vers l'autel conduire ma victime.  
 Je ne m'en défends plus; et je ne veux qu'aller  
 Reconnaître la place où je dois l'immoler.  
 Cette nuit je vous sers. Cette nuit je l'attaque.

He can be overthrown by just defeat.  
 Should I respond to Greece by killing him?  
 Have I assumed a mission from the state  
 Only to pay it off by murdering?  
 In the gods' names, let Greece explain its case.  
 Then let him die weighed down with public hate.  
 Remember that he's king; his head is crowned...

## HERMIONE

It's not enough for you I've damned him, then?  
 Not enough my name has been insulted –  
 Looks for a victim killed for me alone?  
 That I am now the prize of stifling tyranny,  
 That I now loathe the man I once adored?  
 I won't pretend. He gave me great delight.  
 Whether my heart, my father, is to blame –  
 No matter now. Decide that for yourself.  
 Despite the shameful way I've been betrayed,  
 Despite the horror that his crime excites,  
 While he still lives, fear lest I pardon him.  
 Suspect this wavering anger till he's died.  
 If he's not dead today, tomorrow I may love...

## ORESTES

He must be killed before your pardon, then.  
 He must... And yet what must I do? How best  
 To help your anger here and now?  
 How can I strike directly at him now?  
 I've barely just arrived in Epirus  
 And you want me to overthrow a state.  
 You want a king to die; and for this death,  
 A day, an hour, a moment's all you give.  
 He must be killed before his people's eyes.  
 So let me lead him to the shrine.  
 I shall resist no more. I only want  
 To go and see the place where I must kill.  
 Tonight I'll serve you well, and strike him down.

## HERMIONE

Mais cependant ce jour il épouse Andromaque.  
 Dans le temple déjà le trône est élevé.  
 Ma honte est confirmée, et son crime achevé.  
 Enfin qu'attendez-vous? Il vous offre sa tête:  
 Sans gardes, sans défense il marche à cette fête;  
 Autour du fils d'Hector il les fait tous ranger;  
 Il s'abandonne au bras qui me voudra venger.  
 Voulez-vous malgré lui prendre soin de sa vie?  
 Armez avec vos Grecs tous ceux qui m'ont suivie;  
 Soulevez vos amis. Tous les miens sont à vous :  
 Il me trahit, vous trompe, et nous méprise tous.  
 Mais quoi? Déjà leur haine est égale à la mienne:  
 Elle épargne à regret l'époux d'une Troyenne.  
 Parlez: mon ennemi ne vous peut échapper.  
 Ou plutôt, il ne faut que les laisser frapper.  
 Conduisez, ou suivez une fureur si belle;  
 Revenez tout couvert du sang de l'infidèle;  
 Allez: en cet état soyez sûr de mon cœur.

## ORESTE

Mais, Madame, songez...

## HERMIONE

Ah! c'en est trop, Seigneur.  
 Tant de raisonnements offensent ma colère.  
 J'ai voulu vous donner les moyens de me plaire,  
 Rendre Oreste content; mais enfin je vois bien  
 Qu'il veut toujours se plaindre, et ne mériter rien.  
 Partez: allez ailleurs vanter votre constance,  
 Et me laissez ici le soin de ma vengeance.  
 De mes lâches bontés mon courage est confus,  
 Et c'est trop en un jour essayer de refus.  
 Je m'en vais seule au temple, où leur hynen s'apprête,  
 Où vous n'osez aller mériter ma conquête.

## HERMIONE

But yet today he weds Andromache.  
 The throne's already raised up in the shrine.  
 My shame is known by everyone. His crime's complete.  
 What are you waiting you? He offers you his head.  
 He goes to his great feast...no guards, defence...  
 He'll make them all draw up round Hector's son.  
 He'll give in to the power of my revenge.  
 Will you protect his life in spite of him?  
 Arm with your Greeks all those who've followed me.  
 Collect your friends. All mine are on your side.  
 Me he's betrayed, you deceived – he's despised us all.  
 Already now, their hate's as strong as mine.  
 They're loath to spare a Trojan woman's lord.  
 So speak. My enemy cannot escape.  
 In fact you only have to let them strike.  
 Just lead or follow all their frenzied rage  
 And come back covered in the traitor's blood.  
 Go, then you can be certain of my love.

## ORESTES

But think, my lady...

## HERMIONE

This is too much, my lord.  
 Your reasons, reasons, reasons, insult me.  
 I've tried to find you ways of pleasing me,  
 And making you content. But now I see  
 You'll always be complaining, worth nothing.  
 So go. Boast of your constancy elsewhere  
 And leave me here to take my own revenge.  
 My mind's awash with feeble kindnesses;  
 It can't be cleaned up in a single day.  
 I'll walk alone then to the wedding shrine  
 Where you daren't go to win my hand.

Là, de mon ennemi je saurai m'approcher.  
 Je percerai le cœur que je n'ai pu toucher,  
 Et mes sanglantes mains, sur moi-même tournées,  
 Aussitôt, malgré lui, joindront nos destinées,  
 Et tout ingrat qu'il est, il me sera plus doux  
 De mourir avec lui que de vivre avec vous.

ORESTE

Non, je vous priverai de ce plaisir funeste,  
 Madame: il ne mourra que de la main d'Oreste.  
 Vos ennemis par moi vont vous être immolés,  
 Et vous reconnaîtrez mes soins, si vous voulez.

HERMIONE

Allez. De votre sort laissez-moi la conduite,  
 Et que tous vos vaisseaux soient prêts pour notre fuite.

#### SCÈNE 4

*Hermione, Cléone*

CLÉONE

Vous vous perdez, Madame. Et vous devez songer...

HERMIONE

Que je me perde ou non, je songe à me venger.  
 Je ne sais même encor, quoi qu'il m'ait pu promettre,  
 Sur d'autres que sur moi si je dois m'en remettre :  
 Pyrrhus n'est pas coupable à ses yeux comme aux miens,  
 Et je tiendrais mes coups bien plus sûrs que les siens.  
 Quel plaisir de venger moi-même mon injure,

I know how best to go up to my enemy  
 And stab the heart that I could never touch.  
 I'll turn my blood-drenched hands against myself  
 At once. Our destinies will join in spite of him.  
 Cruel though he is, it will be sweeter far  
 To die with Pyrrhus than to live with you.

ORESTES

No, I'll relieve you of that deathly joy,  
 My lady. He'll die by my hand alone.  
 No one but me will kill your enemies.  
 You may then recognise my service, if your care.

HERMIONE

Then go. Leave me to steer your destiny.  
 And have your ships be ready for our flight.

*[Orestes leaves.]*

#### SCENE 4

*Hermione, Cleone*

CLEONE

You face defeat, my lady. You must think...

HERMIONE

Defeat or not, I dream now of revenge.  
 He promises – and yet I'm still not sure  
 If I can trust in others but myself.  
 Pyrrhus is not so guilty in his eyes as mine.  
 And I would strike more surely than would he.  
 The pleasure to avenge my injury myself,

De retirer mon bras teint du sang du parjure,  
 Et pour rendre sa peine et mes plaisirs plus grands,  
 De cacher ma rivale à ses regards mourants!  
 Ah! si du moins Oreste, en punissant son crime,  
 Lui laissait le regret de mourir ma victime!  
 Va le trouver: dis-lui qu'il apprenne à l'ingrat  
 Qu'on l'immole à ma haine, et non pas à l'État.  
 Chère Cléone, cours: ma vengeance est perdue  
 S'il ignore en mourant que c'est moi qui le tue.

CLÉONE

Je vous obéirai. Mais qu'est-ce que je voi?  
 O dieux! qui l'aurait cru, Madame? C'est le roi.

HERMIONE

Ah! cours après Oreste; et dis-lui, ma Cléone,  
 Qu'il n'entreprenne rien sans revoir Hermione!

## SCÈNE 5

*Pyrrhus, Hermione, Phœnix*

PYRRHUS

Vous ne m'attendiez pas, Madame, et je vois bien  
 Que mon abord ici trouble votre entretien.  
 Je ne viens point armé d'un indigne artifice  
 D'un voile d'équité couvrir mon injustice:  
 Il suffit que mon cœur me condamne tout bas,  
 Et je soutiendrais mal ce que je ne crois pas.  
 J'épouse une Troyenne. Oui, Madame, et j'avoue  
 Que je vous ai promis la foi que lui voue.  
 Un autre vous dirait que dans les champs troyens

To draw my hand back, soaked in traitor's blood,  
 And then increase my pleasure and his pain  
 And keep my rival from his dying eyes.  
 As he kills him, Orestes must at least  
 Leave him the sorrow that he died my prey.  
 Find him. Tell him to let the traitor know  
 My hatred's burying him, not the state's.  
 Cleone, run. My vengeance is quite lost  
 Unless he knows that *I* have murdered him.

CLEONE

I'll do that, yes. But what is that – oh God...  
 Who would have thought, my lady? It's the king.

HERMIONE

Run to Orestes. Tell him, Cleone,  
 Not to do a thing until he's seen me.

*[Cleone leaves. Pyrrhus enters.]*

## SCENE 5

*Pyrrhus, Hermione, Phoenix*

PYRRHUS

You weren't expecting me. I see  
 My being here has interrupted you.  
 I haven't come to mouth some worthless sham,  
 To veil my hurtful deeds with justice now.  
 Enough my heart's condemned me to the pit,  
 And I could ill maintain a thing I did not think.  
 I'm marrying a Trojan wife. Yes, I confess  
 I've given her the promises I made to you.  
 But some might say that, on the plains of Troy,



Nos deux pères sans nous formèrent ces liens,  
 Et que sans consulter ni mon choix ni le vôtre,  
 Nous fûmes sans amour engagés l'un à l'autre;  
 Mais c'est assez pour moi que je me sois soumis.  
 Par mes ambassadeurs mon cœur vous fut promis;  
 Loin de les révoquer, je voulus y souscrire:  
 Je vous vis avec eux arriver en Épire,  
 Et quoique d'un autre oeil l'éclat victorieux  
 Eût déjà prévenu le pouvoir de vos yeux,  
 Je ne m'arrêtai point à cette ardeur nouvelle;  
 Je voulus m'obstiner à vous être fidèle:  
 Je vous reçus en reine, et jusques à ce jour  
 J'ai cru que mes serments me tiendraient lieu d'amour.  
 Mais cet amour l'emporte. Et par un coup funeste  
 Andromaque m'arrache un cœur qu'elle déteste.  
 L'un par l'autre entraînés nous courons à l'autel  
 Nous jurer, malgré nous, un amour immortel.  
 Après cela, Madame, éclatez contre un traître,  
 Qui l'est avec douleur, et qui pourtant veut l'être.  
 Pour moi, loin de contraindre un si juste courroux,  
 Il me soulagera peut-être autant que vous.  
 Donnez-moi tous les noms destinés aux parjures:  
 Je crains votre silence, et non pas vos injures,  
 Et mon cœur soulevant mille secrets témoins  
 M'en dira d'autant plus que vous m'en direz moins.

## HERMIONE

Seigneur, dans cet aveu dépouillé d'artifice,  
 J'aime à voir que du moins vous vous rendiez justice,  
 Et que voulant bien rompre un nœud si solennel,  
 Vous vous abandonniez au crime en criminel.  
 Est-il juste après tout qu'un conquérant s'abaisse  
 Sous la servile loi de garder sa promesse?  
 Non, non, la perfidie a de quoi vous tenter  
 Et vous ne me cherchez que pour vous en vanter.  
 Quoi? Sans que ni serment ni devoir vous retienne  
 Rechercher une Grecque, amant d'une Troyenne?  
 Me quitter, me reprendre, et retourner encor

Our fathers forged those bonds without us there.  
 Your wishes were not sought, nor mine.  
 The pact that joined us did not speak of love.  
 Yet I agreed to it – and that's enough.  
 My heart was promised you by my ambassadors.  
 Far from disowning, I endorsed their words.  
 I saw you come with them to Epirus.  
 By then, another woman had won me –  
 A foretaste of the power that you would hold.  
 I did not cling, though, to that latest love.  
 I tried to will myself to faithfulness.  
 I welcomed you as queen, and until now,  
 I thought my vows could take the place of love.  
 But love has carried all. By deadly fate,  
 Andromache has won a heart she loathes.  
 We run swept up together to the shrine  
 To swear eternal love despite ourselves.  
 So burst out now against my treachery.  
 I grieve at it, and yet I wish it so.  
 Don't hold the anger back – it's just –  
 I'll be relieved perhaps as much as you.  
 Fling all the names for perjurers at me.  
 I fear your silence, not the words of hate.  
 Conscience will call a thousand secret witnesses  
 And tell me all the more, the less you say.

## HERMIONE

So you confess, my lord – and honestly.  
 I'm glad you can do justice to yourself, at least.  
 You're now set firm to break a solemn bond  
 And take up crime just like a criminal.  
 Why after all should conquerors bow down  
 Beneath that slavish law of keeping faith?  
 No, something in treachery beckons you.  
 You came here just to boast of it to me.  
 So...neither vow nor duty holds you back...  
 You love a Trojan, seek a Grecian's hand.  
 You leave me, take me back, and then return

De la fille d'Hélène à la veuve d'Hector?  
 Couronner tour à tour l'esclave, et la princesse,  
 Immoler Troie aux Grecs, au fils d'Hector la Grèce?  
 Tout cela part d'un cœur toujours maître de soi,  
 D'un héros qui n'est point esclave de sa foi.  
 Pour plaire à votre épouse, il vous faudrait peut-être  
 Prodiguer les doux noms de parjure, et de traître.  
 Vous veniez de mon front observer la pâleur,  
 Pour aller dans ses bras rire de ma douleur.  
 Pleurante après son char vous voulez qu'on me voie;  
 Mais, Seigneur, en un jour ce serait trop de joie;  
 Et sans chercher ailleurs des titres empruntés,  
 Ne vous suffit-il pas de ceux que vous portez?  
 Du vieux père d'Hector la valeur abattue  
 Aux pieds de sa famille expirante à sa vue,  
 Tandis que dans son sein votre bras enfoncé  
 Cherche un reste de sang que l'âge avait glacé;  
 Dans des ruisseaux de sang Troie ardente plongée,  
 De votre propre main Polyxène égorgée  
 Aux yeux de tous les Grecs indignés contre vous,  
 Que peut-on refuser à ces généreux coups?

## PYRRHUS

Madame, je sais trop à quels excès de rage  
 La vengeance d'Hélène emporta mon courage.  
 Je puis me plaindre à vous du sang que j'ai versé;  
 Mais enfin je consens d'oublier le passé.  
 Je rends grâce au ciel que votre indifférence  
 De mes heureux soupirs m'apprenne l'innocence.  
 Mon cœur, je le vois bien, trop prompt à se gêner,  
 Devait mieux vous connaître et mieux s'examiner.  
 Mes remords vous faisaient une injure mortelle.  
 Il faut se croire aimé pour se croire infidèle.  
 Vous ne prétendiez point m'arrêter dans vos fers:  
 Je crains de vous trahir peut-être je vous sers.  
 Nos cœurs n'étaient point faits dépendants l'un de l'autre;  
 Je suivais mon devoir et vous cédiez au vôtre;  
 Rien ne vous engageait à m'aimer en effet.

From Helen's daughter to Hector's widow;  
 You'll crown the slave, the princess, turn by turn,  
 Deliver Troy to Greece, then Greece to Hector's son –  
 This shows a man who's master of himself,  
 A hero, slave to nothing like his word.  
 To please your bride, perhaps I ought to add  
 The dear, sweet names of traitor, perjurer.  
 You came to see the whiteness in my face,  
 Then run into her arms and mock my grief.  
 You want to see me weeping by her chariot.  
 That would be too much joy, though, for one day.  
 Need you seek titles borrowed from elsewhere?  
 Aren't those you've won enough for you?  
 Hector's old father – honour, name destroyed  
 Before his family, dying as they watched.  
 You plunged your sword deep in his chest,  
 Searching some drop of blood long chilled by age.  
 And Troy ablaze, engulfed in streams of blood.  
 Polyxenes – his throat cut out by you  
 In front of all the outraged Greeks. How could  
 The greatness of these deeds be put in doubt?

## PYRRHUS

I know only too well the insane rage  
 That vengeance for Helen carried me to.  
 I could reproach you with the blood I've shed,  
 But I am willing to forget the past.  
 I thank the gods that your indifference  
 Has made my sweetest yearnings innocent.  
 I see my heart's too quick to blame itself.  
 It should have known you better, known myself.  
 And my remorse offends you mortally.  
 To think yourself betrayed, you must think that you're loved.  
 You never claimed to hold me like a slave.  
 I feared betraying you. Perhaps I helped you there.  
 Our hearts were never made to join.  
 I did my duty. You did yours.  
 Nothing ever forced you to give me love.

## HERMIONE

Je ne t'ai point aimé, cruel? Qu'ai-je donc fait?  
 J'ai dédaigné pour toi les vœux de tous nos princes,  
 Je t'ai cherché moi-même au fond de tes provinces.  
 J'y suis encor, malgré tes infidélités,  
 Et malgré tous mes Grecs honteux de mes bontés.  
 Je leur ai commandé de cacher mon injure;  
 J'attendais en secret le retour d'un parjure;  
 J'ai cru que tôt ou tard, à ton devoir rendu,  
 Tu me rapporterais un cœur qui m'était dû.  
 Je t'aimais inconstant, qu'aurais-je fait fidèle?  
 Et même en ce moment, où ta bouche cruelle  
 Vient si tranquillement m'annoncer le trépas,  
 Ingrat, je doute encor si je ne t'aime pas.  
 Mais, Seigneur, s'il le faut, si le ciel en colère  
 Réserve à d'autres yeux la gloire de vous plaire,  
 Achevez votre hymen, j'y consens; mais du moins  
 Ne forcez pas mes yeux d'en être les témoins.  
 Pour la dernière fois je vous parle peut-être.  
 Différez-le d'un jour, demain vous serez maître.  
 Vous ne répondez point? Perfide, je le voi,  
 Tu comptes les moments que tu perds avec moi.  
 Ton cœur, impatient de revoir ta Troyenne,  
 Ne souffre qu'à regret qu'un autre t'entretienne.  
 Tu lui parles du cœur, tu la cherches des yeux.  
 Je ne te retiens plus, sauve-toi de ces lieux,  
 Va lui jurer la foi que tu m'avais jurée,  
 Va profaner des dieux la majesté sacrée.  
 Ces dieux, ces justes dieux n'auront pas oublié  
 Que les mêmes serments avec moi t'ont lié.  
 Porte au pied des autels ce cœur qui m'abandonne.  
 Va, cours; mais crains encor d'y trouver Hermione.

## HERMIONE

Me give you love? What do you think I've done?  
 I scorned the hands of all our kings for you.  
 I sought you out myself, deep in these lands.  
 I am still here, despite your faithlessness,  
 Despite the Greeks ashamed at my humility.  
 I ordered them to hide my injury.  
 I waited for a perjurer's return.  
 I thought that, one day soon, duty would call  
 And you would bring me back the heart that's mine.  
 I loved you faithless. What would I not have done  
 If you'd kept faith? Your callous lips pronounce  
 My death with such a calm. Yet even now,  
 I doubt I do not love you still.  
 But if it must be so, if heaven's rage  
 Gives others now the glory of your love,  
 Be married then. I will consent. Don't force  
 Me, though, at least, to witness it.  
 This is the last time that we'll speak, perhaps.  
 Wait just a day. You will be master then...  
 You don't respond... I see your treachery.  
 You count the minutes that you've lost on me.  
 You cannot wait to see your Trojan love again.  
 You cannot bear to hear another's words.  
 You speak your heart to her, your eyes seek hers.  
 I'll hold you back no more. Leave this place now.  
 Go, swear to her the vow you swore to me.  
 Profane the great gods' sacred majesty.  
 Those gods, those righteous gods will not forget  
 That once, the selfsame vows bound you to me.  
 Take to the shrine the heart that leaves me now.  
 Go quickly now. Fear lest you find me there.

*{She leaves.}*

ANDROMAQUE

SCÈNE 6

*Pyrrhus, Phœnix*

PHŒNIX

Seigneur, vous entendez. Gardez de négliger  
Une amante en fureur, qui cherche à se venger.  
Elle n'est en ces lieux que trop bien appuyée:  
La querelle des Grecs à la sienne est liée;  
Oreste l'aime encore. Et peut-être à ce prix...

PYRRHUS

Andromaque m'attend. Phœnix, garde son fils.

ANDROMACHE

SCENE 6

*Pyrrhus, Phoenix*

PHOENIX

You heard, my lord. Don't underestimate  
A lover scorned who looks for her revenge.  
She's much too well supported in this place.  
The cause of Greece is tied with hers.  
Orestes still loves her. Perhaps that price...

PYRRHUS

Andromache is waiting. Guard her son.

## ACTE 5 SCÈNE 1

HERMIONE [*seule*]

Où suis-je? Qu'ai-je fait? Que dois-je faire encore?  
 Quel transport me saisit? Quel chagrin me dévore?  
 Errante, et sans dessein, je cours dans ce palais.  
 Ah! ne puis-je savoir si j'aime, ou si je hais?  
 Le cruel! de quel œil il m'a congédiée!  
 Sans pitié, sans douleur au moins étudiée.  
 L'ai-je vu se troubler et me plaindre un moment?  
 En ai-je pu tirer un seul gémissment?  
 Muet à mes soupirs, tranquille à mes alarmes,  
 Semblait-il seulement qu'il eût part à mes larmes?  
 Et je le plains encore? Et pour comble d'ennui  
 Mon cœur, mon lâche cœur s'intéresse pour lui?  
 Je tremble au seul penser du coup qui le menace,  
 Et prête à me venger, je lui fais déjà grâce.  
 Non, ne révoquons point l'arrêt de mon courroux:  
 Qu'il périsse. Aussi bien il ne vit plus pour nous.  
 Le perfide triomphe, et se rit de ma rage:  
 Il pense voir en pleurs dissiper cet orage;  
 Il croit que toujours faible et d'un cœur incertain,  
 Je parerai d'un bras les coups de l'autre main.  
 Il juge encor de moi par mes bontés passées.  
 Mais plutôt le perfide à bien d'autres pensées :  
 Triomphant dans le temple, il ne s'informe pas  
 Si l'on souhaite ailleurs sa vie, ou son trépas.  
 Il me laisse, l'ingrat! cet embarras funeste.  
 Non, non, encore un coup, laissons agir Oreste.  
 Qu'il meure, puisque enfin il a dû le prévoir,  
 Et puisqu'il m'a forcée enfin à le vouloir.  
 A le vouloir? Hé quoi? C'est donc moi qui l'ordonne?  
 Sa mort sera l'effet de l'amour d'Hermione?  
 Ce prince, dont mon cœur se faisait autrefois,  
 Avec tant de plaisir, redire les exploits,  
 A qui même en secret je m'étais destinée

## ACT 5 SCENE 1

HERMIONE [*alone*]

Where am I? What have I done? Shall I do?  
 What's holding me? What pain eats through at me?  
 I dart all through the palace, aimlessly.  
 So don't I know now if I love or hate?  
 I've been cast off – that cruelty in his eyes –  
 No pity, grief – not even feigned. And did  
 I see him soften for a moment – care?  
 Did I draw out one single groan from him?  
 I cried distressed. He stood there, dumb, unmoved.  
 He did not seem to share my grief at all.  
 And I still pity him! But there's worse pain.  
 My heart, my cowardly heart, still takes his side.  
 I tremble just to think... that deathly blow...  
 Revenge is now so close. Will I still pardon him?  
 I won't revoke the aim of all this rage.  
 Let him now die. He's not alive to me.  
 The traitor triumphs, mocks and scorns my hurt.  
 He thinks he'll see this storm dissolve in tears.  
 He thinks me always wavering and weak,  
 That with one hand I'll stop the other's blows.  
 He judges me by kindnesses now past.  
 But no...he'll take a different view, for sure.  
 He triumphs at the shrine. What does he care  
 If life or death is wished on him elsewhere?  
 He leaves me, devil, with that ghastly choice.  
 No, just one strike more. Let Orestes act,  
 And let him die. He must have known, have seen  
 It all. He forced me into willing it...  
 To willing it? Have I commanded it?  
 So will the end of all my love be death?  
 Pyrrhus... in other times, my heart would fill  
 With such an ecstasy to hear his deeds.  
 I felt that I was his, even if secretly,

Avant qu'on eût conclu ce fatal hyménée,  
Je n'ai donc traversé tant de mers, tant d'États,  
Que pour venir si loin préparer son trépas,  
L'assassiner, le perdre? Ah! devant qu'il expire...

## SCÈNE 2

*Hermione, Cléone*

HERMIONE

Ah! qu'ai-je fait, Cléone? Et que viens-tu me dire?  
Que fait Pyrrhus?

CLÉONE

Il est au comble de ses vœux,  
Le plus fier des mortels, et le plus amoureux.  
Je l'ai vu vers le temple, où son hymen s'apprête,  
Mener en conquérant sa nouvelle conquête,  
Et d'un œil où brillaient sa joie et son espoir,  
S'enivrer, en marchant, du plaisir de la voir.  
Andromaque, au travers de mille cris de joie,  
Porte jusqu'aux autels le souvenir de Troie.  
Incapable toujours d'aimer et de haïr,  
Sans joie, et sans murmure elle semble obéir.

HERMIONE

Et l'ingrat? Jusqu'au bout il a poussé l'outrage?  
Mais as-tu bien, Cléone, observé son visage?  
Goûte-t-il des plaisirs tranquilles et parfaits?  
N'a-t-il point détourné ses yeux vers le palais?  
Dis-moi, ne t'es-tu point présentée à sa vue?  
L'ingrat a-t-il rougi lorsqu'il t'a reconnue?

Before my fatal marriage was arranged.  
I've crossed so many seas, so many lands,  
Have come so far – just to prepare his death.  
To murder, kill him. Oh, before he dies...

*[Cleone enters.]*

## SCENE 2

*Hermione, Cleone*

HERMIONE

What have I done, Cleone? what have you come  
To say? Is Pyrrhus now...

CLEONE

He's at the height  
Of joy, proudest of men, most deep in love.  
I saw him lead his conquest as a conqueror  
Towards the temple where his marriage was prepared.  
His eyes were bright with joy and hope,  
Made drunk with happiness to see her there.  
Amid a thousand shouts of joy, Andromache  
Took to the shrine the memory of Troy.  
She cannot love, but neither can she hate.  
She followed joyless, uncomplainingly.

HERMIONE

And Pyrrhus pressed the outrage to the end?  
So did you carefully observe his face?  
Did he enjoy a peaceful, perfect bliss?  
Didn't he glance towards the palace once?  
Tell me, didn't you show yourself to him?  
Did he not blush on recognising you?

Son trouble avouait-il son infidélité?  
A-t-il jusqu'à la fin soutenu sa fierté?

CLÉONE

Madame, il ne voit rien. Son salut, et sa gloire  
Semblent être avec vous sortis de sa mémoire.  
Sans songer qui le suit, ennemis ou sujets,  
Il poursuit seulement ses amoureux projets.  
Autour du fils d'Hector il a rangé sa garde,  
Et croit que c'est lui seul que le péril regarde.  
Phœnix même en répond, qui l'a conduit exprès  
Dans un fort éloigné du temple et du palais.  
Voilà, dans ses transports, le seul soin qui lui reste.

HERMIONE

Le perfide! Il mourra. Mais que t'a dit Oreste?

CLÉONE

Oreste, avec ses Grecs, dans le temple est entré.

HERMIONE

Hé bien? à me venger n'est-il pas préparé?

CLÉONE

Je ne sais.

HERMIONE

Tu ne sais? Quoi donc? Oreste encore,  
Oreste me trahit?

CLÉONE

Oreste vous adore.

His faithlessness caused some distress...?  
Or did he keep his arrogance to the end?

CLEONE

He does not see at all. His safety, fame,  
Seem to have fled his memory with you.  
He doesn't know who's with him – friend or foe –  
He's set his mind on thoughts of love alone.  
He's placed his guard round Hector's son,  
He thinks that danger eyes the boy alone.  
Phoenix has care of him. He's taken him  
On orders to some fort far from this place.  
In his great ecstasy, that is his one concern.

HERMIONE

The treachery... he'll die. What did Orestes say?

CLEONE

He went into the temple with his Greeks.

HERMIONE

He's ready to avenge me then...?

CLEONE

I can't say...

HERMIONE

You cannot say! Orestes...  
Will he betray me too?

CLEONE

He worships you.

Mais de mille remords son esprit combattu  
 Croit tantôt son amour, et tantôt sa vertu.  
 Il respecte en Pyrrhus l'honneur du diadème;  
 Il respecte en Pyrrhus Achille, et Pyrrhus même;  
 Il craint la Grèce, il craint l'univers en courroux.  
 Mais il se craint, dit-il, soi-même plus que tous.  
 Il voudrait en vainqueur vous apporter sa tête;  
 Le seul nom d'assassin l'épouvante et l'arrête.  
 Enfin il est entré, sans savoir dans son cœur  
 S'il en devait sortir coupable, ou spectateur.

## HERMIONE

Non, non, il les verra triompher sans obstacle,  
 Il se gardera bien de troubler ce spectacle.  
 Je sais de quels remords son courage est atteint:  
 Le lâche craint la mort, et c'est tout ce qu'il craint.  
 Quoi? sans qu'elle employât une seule prière,  
 Ma mère en sa faveur arma la Grèce entière?  
 Ses yeux pour leur querelle, en dix ans de combats,  
 Virent périr vingt rois qu'ils ne connaissaient pas?  
 Et moi je ne prétends que la mort d'un parjure,  
 Et je charge un amant du soin de mon injure,  
 Il peut me conquérir à ce prix, sans danger,  
 Je me livre moi-même, et ne puis me venger?  
 Allons: c'est à moi seule, à me rendre justice.  
 Que de cris de douleur le temple retentisse;  
 De leur hymen fatal troublons l'événement,  
 Et qu'ils ne soient unis, s'il se peut, qu'un moment.  
 Je ne choisirai point dans ce désordre extrême:  
 Tout me sera Pyrrhus, fût-ce Oreste lui-même.  
 Je mourrai; mais au moins ma mort me vengera,  
 Je ne mourrai pas seule, et quelqu'un me suivra.

## SCÈNE 3

His mind, though, rages with a thousand doubts.  
 He trusts now in love, now in virtuousness.  
 In Pyrrhus, he reveres the kingly crown,  
 Reveres Achilles in him, and the man himself.  
 He fears the Greeks; he fears the whole world's wrath.  
 But most of all, he says he fears himself.  
 He wants to triumph, bring you Pyrrhus' head.  
 A single word – 'assassin' – makes him shrink.  
 He went in finally, not knowing in his heart  
 If he would leave a guilty man, or innocent.

## HERMIONE

He'll not prevent their triumph, no. He'll take  
 Good care not to disturb the scene.  
 I know with what remorse his heart is filled.  
 The coward fears death, and that he all he fears.  
 Without a single plea, my mother roused  
 The whole of Greece to arms, to fight her cause.  
 In ten long years of war, she saw some twenty kings  
 She did not know die in that fight. And I,  
 I only want a treacherous man to die.  
 I ask a lover to redress my wrong.  
 He'll win me – and no danger – at that price.  
 I give myself and still am not avenged.  
 Who'll give me justice? Me. Just me alone.  
 The shrine will echo with their screams of grief.  
 I'll interrupt their awful ceremony.  
 If possible, they only will be joined one breathe...  
 I'll strike out blindly in a frenzied rage.  
 The whole world – Orestes even – will be Pyrrhus.  
 I'll die, but die at least avenged. I shall  
 Not die alone. Someone will follow me.

*[Orestes enters.]*

## SCENE 3



*Oreste, Hermione, Cléone*

ORESTE

Madame, c'en est fait, et vous êtes servie:  
 Pyrrhus rend à l'autel son infidèle vie.

HERMIONE

Il est mort?

ORESTE

Il expire; et nos Grecs irrités  
 Ont lavé dans son sang ses infidélités.  
 Je vous l'avais promis; et quoique mon courage  
 Se fit de ce complot une funeste image,  
 J'ai couru vers le temple, où nos Grecs dispersés  
 Se sont jusqu'à l'autel dans la foule glissés.  
 Pyrrhus m'a reconnu. Mais sans changer de face,  
 Il semblait que ma vue excitât son audace,  
 Que tous les Grecs bravés en leur ambassadeur  
 Dussent de son hymen relever la splendeur.  
 Enfin, avec transport prenant son diadème,  
 Sur le front d'Andromaque il l'a posé lui-même:  
 Je vous donne, a-t-il dit, ma couronne et ma foi,  
 Andromaque, régnez sur l'Épire et sur moi.  
 Je voue à votre fils une amitié de père,  
 J'en atteste les dieux, je le jure à sa mère:  
 Pour tous mes ennemis je déclare les siens,  
 Et je le reconnais pour le roi des Troyens.  
 A ces mots, qui du peuple attiraient le suffrage,  
 Nos Grecs n'ont répondu que par un cri de rage;  
 L'infidèle s'est vu partout envelopper,  
 Et je n'ai pu trouver de place pour frapper.  
 Chacun se disputait la gloire de l'abattre.  
 Je l'ai vu dans leurs mains quelque temps se débattre,  
 Tout sanglant à leurs coups vouloir se dérober,

*Orestes, Hermione, Cleone*

ORESTES

It's done, my lady, now. You have been served.  
 Pyrrhus gives up his faithless life to God.

HERMIONE

He's dead...

ORESTES

He's dying. Our Greeks were frenzied –  
 They've washed out all his treachery with his blood.  
 I promised you his death. Although my mind  
 Was haunted by the horror of the plot,  
 I ran towards the temple. Our Greeks had scattered  
 And slipped up to the altar in the crowds.  
 Pyrrhus caught sight of me, but did not flinch.  
 His recklessness seemed fired by seeing me:  
 That all of Greece was flaunted in its envoy there  
 And had enhanced the splendour of the rites.  
 At last, he took his crown ecstatically  
 And placed it on Andromache himself.  
 'I give you now', he said, 'my faith and crown.  
 Andromache, you reign in Epirus and me.  
 I swear a father's kindness to your son.  
 The gods are witness of this oath to you.  
 His enemies I now declare are mine.  
 I recognise him as the Trojans' king.'  
 But then these words, at which the people cheered,  
 Drew from our Greeks a howl of rage.  
 The traitor was surrounded on all sides.  
 I couldn't find a place from which to strike.  
 They fought to have the honour of the blow.  
 I saw him struggling in their hands awhile,  
 Trying to hide all bleeding from their blows.

Mais enfin à l'autel il est allé tomber.  
 Du peuple épouvanté j'ai traversé la presse  
 Pour venir de ces lieux enlever ma princesse,  
 Et regagner le port, où bientôt nos amis  
 Viendront couverts du sang que je vous ai promis.

HERMIONE

Qu'ont-ils fait!

ORESTE

Pardonnez à leur impatience:  
 Ils ont, je le vois bien, trahi votre vengeance.  
 Vous vouliez que ma main portât les premiers coups,  
 Qu'il sentît en mourant qu'il expirait pour vous;  
 Mais c'est moi dont l'ardeur leur a servi d'exemple:  
 Je les ai pour vous seule entraînés dans le temple,  
 Madame, et vous pouvez justement vous flatter  
 D'une mort que leurs bras n'ont fait qu'exécuter.  
 Vous seule avez poussé les coups...

HERMIONE

Tais-toi, perfide.  
 Et n'impute qu'à toi ton lâche parricide.  
 Va faire chez tes Grecs admirer ta fureur,  
 Va, je la désavoue, et tu me fais horreur.  
 Barbare, qu'as-tu fait? Avec quelle furie  
 As-tu tranché le cours d'une si belle vie?  
 Avez-vous pu, cruels, l'immoler aujourd'hui,  
 Sans que tout votre sang se soulevât pour lui?  
 Mais parle: de son sort qui t'a rendu l'arbitre?  
 Pourquoi l'assassiner? Qu'a-t-il fait? A quel titre?  
 Qui te l'a dit?

ORESTE

O dieux! Quoi? ne m'avez-vous pas

Beside the altar, finally, he fell.  
 I pushed the horror-stricken crowd aside  
 To come and take you from this place. We must  
 Regain the port. Our friends will soon come there,  
 All covered with the blood I promised you.

HERMIONE

What have they done?

ORESTES

Forgive their hastiness.  
 They have betrayed your vengeance. I see that.  
 You wanted me to strike the first death blows,  
 So that he'd know he died because of you.  
 I was the one whose zeal, though, guided them.  
 I drew them to the temple just for you,  
 My lady. Take rightful pride in a death  
 Their strength of arms has simply carried out.  
 Alone you dealt him every blow...

HERMIONE

Enough!  
 You cowardly parricide. You are to blame.  
 Go flaunt your bravery to the Greeks.  
 Go. I disown you. Go. You sicken me.  
 You barbarian...what have you done? What madness  
 Made you cut a glorious life so short?  
 How could you kill him now...you vicious men...  
 And all your blood not rise for him?  
 Tell me. Who gave you power to choose his fate?  
 Why murder him? What did he do? What right?  
 Who told you to?

ORESTES

God, didn't you yourself,

Vous-même, ici, tantôt, ordonné son trépas?

HERMIONE

Ah! fallait-il en croire une amante insensée?  
 Ne devais-tu pas lire au fond de ma pensée?  
 Et ne voyais-tu pas dans mes emportements  
 Que mon cœur démentait ma bouche à tous moments?  
 Quand je l'aurais voulu, fallait-il y souscrire?  
 N'as-tu pas dû cent fois te le faire redire,  
 Toi-même avant le coup me venir consulter,  
 Y revenir encore, ou plutôt m'éviter?  
 Que ne me laissais-tu le soin de ma vengeance?  
 Qui t'amène en des lieux où l'on fuit ta présence?  
 Voilà de ton amour le détestable fruit:  
 Tu m'apportais, cruel, le malheur qui te suit.  
 C'est toi dont l'ambassade, à tous les deux fatale,  
 L'a fait pour son malheur pencher vers ma rivale.  
 Nous le verrions encor nous partager ses soins;  
 Il m'aimerait peut-être, il le feindrait du moins.  
 Adieu. Tu peux partir. Je demeure en Épire:  
 Je renonce à la Grèce, à Sparte, à son empire,  
 A toute ma famille; et c'est assez pour moi,  
 Traître, qu'elle ait produit un monstre comme toi.

#### SCÈNE 4

ORESTE [*seul*]

Que vois-je? Est-ce Hermione? Et que viens-je d'entendre?  
 Pour qui coule le sang que je viens de répandre?  
 Je suis, si je l'en crois, un traître, un assassin.  
 Est-ce Pyrrhus qui meurt? et suis-je Oreste enfin?  
 Quoi? j'étouffe en mon cœur la raison qui m'éclaire.  
 J'assassine à regret un roi que je révère,

Just here, not long ago, command his death?

HERMIONE

How could a frantic lover be believed?  
 You should have read my deepest thoughts.  
 Did you not see in all my rage  
 My heart belied my words at every turn?  
 If I'd wished it, even, need you obey?  
 You should have made me say it endlessly,  
 Have come to seek advice before you struck,  
 Then come again, or else avoided me.  
 You should have let me have my own revenge.  
 What brings you here where you are shunned?  
 So here's the ghastly outcome of your love.  
 You've brought the evil following you to me.  
 It is your embassy that's killed us both,  
 That made him choose my rival, to his grief.  
 We might have seen him share his heart.  
 He might have loved me...or pretended to.  
 Good bye. You can now go. I'll stay in Epirus.  
 I'll give up Greece, and Sparta – home and all  
 My family... It is enough for me  
 That it's produced a monster such as you.

[*She leaves.*]

#### SCENE 4

*Orestes [alone]*

What do I see...? Hermione? And hear...?  
 The blood that I've just spilt flows out for whom?  
 If she is right, I am a traitor, murderer.  
 Is Pyrrhus dead? Am I Orestes still?  
 I've put the light of reason out inside my mind.  
 I kill unwillingly a king whom I revere.

Je viole en un jour les droits des souverains,  
 Ceux des ambassadeurs, et tous ceux des humains;  
 Ceux même des autels, où ma fureur l'assiège:  
 Je deviens parricide, assassin, sacrilège.  
 Pour qui? pour une ingrate, à qui je le promets,  
 Qui même, s'il ne meurt, ne me verra jamais,  
 Dont j'épouse la rage. Et quand je l'ai servie,  
 Elle me redemande et son sang et sa vie!  
 Elle l'aime! et je suis un monstre furieux!  
 Je la vois pour jamais s'éloigner de mes yeux.  
 Et l'ingrate, en fuyant, me laisse pour salaire  
 Tous les noms odieux que j'ai pris pour lui plaire!

## SCÈNE 5

*Oreste, Pylade, Soldats d'Oreste*

PYLADE

Il faut partir, Seigneur. Sortons de ce palais,  
 Ou bien résolvons-nous de n'en sortir jamais.  
 Nos Grecs pour un moment en défendent la porte;  
 Tout le peuple assemblé nous poursuit à main-forte;  
 Aux ordres d'Andromaque ici tout est soumis,  
 Ils la traitent en reine, et nous comme ennemis.  
 Andromaque elle-même, à Pyrrhus si rebelle,  
 Lui rend tous les devoirs d'une veuve fidèle,  
 Commande qu'on le venge, et peut-être sur nous  
 Veut venger Troie encore et son premier époux.  
 Allons. N'attendons pas que l'on nous environne :  
 Nos Grecs nous rejoindront; et tandis qu'Hermione  
 Tient encore le peuple autour d'elle arrêté.  
 Voilà notre chemin, sortons en sûreté.

ORESTE

I violate within one day the rights  
 Of sovereigns, ambassadors, all humankind –  
 Even the altars where he was besieged.  
 I am a parricide, murderer, sacrilege.  
 Who for? That 'lady' whom I promised him,  
 Who even if he lives won't see me now...?  
 I wed her rage! And when I'd done her will,  
 She asks me give her back his life again.  
 She loves him. And I am monstrous, animal...  
 I see her go for ever from my sight,  
 And as she runs, she leaves me as reward  
 Each loathsome name I've earned by pleasing her.

*[Pylades enters, with Orestes' soldiers]*

## SCENE 5

*Orestes, Pylades, Orestes' soldiers*

PYLADES

My lord, we must set off. Leave this palace;  
 Or else decide never to try again.  
 Our Greeks still hold the gates for now  
 But mobs are seeking us – they're strongly armed.  
 Andromache rules everyone who's here.  
 She is their queen, and we are enemies.  
 Once she fought the king, but now she gives him  
 Every respect a faithful widow owes,  
 Commands he be revenged, and may on us  
 Wreak vengeance yet for Hector and for Troy.  
 Let's leave. Don't wait to be surrounded. Quick.  
 Our Greeks will join us soon. Hermione  
 Still holds the crowds' astonishment.  
 Here is the path. Our safety is in flight.

ORESTES

Non, non, c'est Hermione, amis, que je veux suivre.  
A son dernier arrêt je ne puis plus survivre.  
Partez: j'ai fait le crime, et je vais l'expier.

PYLADE

Hermione, Seigneur? Il la faut oublier.  
Quoi! toujours l'instrument et l'objet de sa rage,  
Cherchez-vous chez les morts quelque nouvel outrage?  
Et parce qu'elle meurt faut-il que vous mouriez?

ORESTE

Elle meurt? Dieux! qu'entends-je?

PYLADE

Eh quoi? vous l'ignoriez?  
En rentrant dans ces lieux nous l'avons rencontrée  
Qui courait vers le temple, inquiète, égarée.  
Elle a trouvé Pyrrhus porté sur des soldats  
Que son sang excitait à venger son trépas.  
Sans doute à cet objet sa rage s'est émue.  
Mais du haut de la porte enfin nous l'avons vue,  
Un poignard à la main, sur Pyrrhus se courber,  
Lever les yeux au ciel, se frapper et tomber.

ORESTE

Grâce aux dieux! Mon malheur passe mon espérance.  
Oui, je te loue, ô ciel! de ta persévérance.  
Appliqué sans relâche au soin de me punir,  
Au comble des douleurs tu m'as fait parvenir.  
Ta haine a pris plaisir à former ma misère;  
J'étais né pour servir d'exemple à ta colère,  
Pour être du malheur un modèle accompli.  
Hé bien, je meurs content, et mon sort est rempli.  
Où sont ces deux amants? Pour couronner ma joie,  
Dans leur sang, dans le mien, il faut que je me noie;

No, it is Hermione I must follow, friends.  
I can't survive her last decree. So go.  
It was my crime. I will atone for it.

PYLADES

You must forget Hermione, my lord.  
You can't still be the means and object of her rage,  
Seeking some new affront among the dead?  
Because she's dying, must you die?

ORESTES

She's dying...God, what do I hear?

PYLADES

So you don't know?  
We met her as we came back to this spot,  
Running towards the temple, wild, distraught.  
She'd just found Pyrrhus, carried by his guard.  
His blood inflamed them to avenge his death.  
Her frenzy was so roused to see him so...  
And then we saw her from our vantage point  
Bend over Pyrrhus, dagger in her hand,  
And raise her eyes to heaven, stab herself, and fall.

ORESTES

Thanks to the Gods...! I never hoped such grief...  
The heavens be praised...! such steadfastness  
Applied without respite to punish me.  
You've made me touch the depths of such despair.  
Your hatred savoured making all my pain.  
So I was born to illustrate your wrath,  
To be the perfect form of wretchedness.  
Well then, I die content. My fate's fulfilled.  
Where are the lovers now? To crown my joy, I have  
To drown myself in blood – in theirs and mine.

L'un et l'autre en mourant je les veux regarder:  
Réunissons trois cœurs qui n'ont pu s'accorder.  
Mais quelle épaisse nuit tout à coup m'environne?  
De quel côté sortir? D'où vient que je frissonne?  
Quelle horreur me saisit? Grâce au ciel j'entrevois.  
Dieux! quels ruisseaux de sang coulent autour de moi!

PYLADE

Ah! Seigneur!

ORESTE

Quoi, Pyrrhus, je te rencontre encore?  
Trouverai-je partout un rival que j'abhorre?  
Percé de tant de coups comment t'es-tu sauvé?  
Tiens, tiens, voilà le coup que je t'ai réservé.  
Mais que vois-je? A mes yeux Hermione l'embrasse!  
Elle vient l'arracher au coup qui le menace.  
Dieux, quels affreux regards elle jette sur moi!  
Quels démons, quels serpents traîne-t-elle après soi?  
Eh bien, filles d'enfer, vos mains sont-elles prêtes?  
Pour qui sont ces serpents qui sifflent sur vos têtes?  
A qui destinez-vous l'appareil qui vous suit?  
Venez-vous m'enlever dans l'éternelle nuit?  
Venez, à vos fureurs Oreste s'abandonne.  
Mais non, retirez-vous, laissez faire Hermione:  
L'ingrate mieux que vous saura me déchirer,  
Et je lui porte enfin mon cœur à dévorer.

PYLADE

Il perd le sentiment. Amis, le temps nous presse.  
Ménageons les moments que ce transport nous laisse.  
Sauvons-le. Nos efforts deviendraient impuissants  
S'il reprenait ici sa rage avec ses sens.

So in their death, I want to see them both.  
Let's join three hearts that could not be as one...  
What is this sudden darkness round me now...thick dark...  
I must escape... I'm shuddering...where from?  
The horror seizes me... Thank God, I can just glimpse...  
Great God, what streams of blood race all around.

PYLADES

My lord!

ORESTES

What, Pyrrhus? We meet once more...?  
I'll find my hated rival everywhere...?  
How are you living...pierced with such deep cuts?  
Take this...this is the blow I kept for you.  
What do I see? She kisses him...Hermione...  
She's come to snatch him from my deadly blow.  
O God, how terribly she looks at me.  
What fiends and snakes does she draw after her?  
Daughters of Hades, are you ready now?  
Who'll meet those snakes that hiss above your heads?  
Your train of followers – who'll meet that fate?  
You'll take me off to everlasting night...?  
Come then...I'm yours. I'm yours – for all your rage.  
But no, go back, and leave it to Hermione.  
She'll tear me piece by piece more viciously than you.  
I bring my heart to her...to be devoured at last...

PYLADES

He's losing consciousness. The time is vital, friends.  
His seizure gives us moments now to try  
To save him. Our efforts will be all in vain  
If, when he wakes, his madness wakens too.

Jean Racine

PHÈDRE

PHAEDRA

[www.tclt.org.uk](http://www.tclt.org.uk)

## PRÉFACE

Voici encore une tragédie dont le sujet est pris d'Euripide. Quoique j'aie suivi une route un peu différente de celle de cet auteur pour la conduite de l'action, je n'ai pas laissé d'enrichir ma pièce de tout ce qui m'a paru le plus éclatant dans la sienne. Quand je ne lui devrais que la seule idée du caractère de Phèdre, je pourrais dire que je lui dois ce que j'ai peut-être mis de plus raisonnable sur le théâtre. Je ne suis point étonné que ce caractère ait eu un succès si heureux du temps d'Euripide, et qu'il ait encore si bien réussi dans notre siècle, puisqu'il a toutes les qualités qu'Aristote demande dans le héros de la tragédie, et qui sont propres à exciter la compassion et la terreur. En effet, Phèdre n'est ni tout à fait coupable, ni tout à fait innocente. Elle est engagée par sa destinée, et par la colère des dieux dans une passion illégitime dont elle a horreur toute la première. Elle fait tous ses efforts pour la surmonter. Elle aime mieux se laisser mourir que de la déclarer à personne. Et, lorsqu'elle est forcée de la découvrir, elle en parle avec une confusion qui fait bien voir que son crime est plutôt une punition des dieux qu'un mouvement de sa volonté.

J'ai même pris soin de la rendre un peu moins odieuse qu'elle n'est dans les tragédies des Anciens, où elle se résout d'elle-même à accuser Hippolyte. J'ai cru que la calomnie avait quelque chose de trop bas et de trop noir pour la mettre dans la bouche d'une Princesse, qui a d'ailleurs des sentiments si nobles et si vertueux. Cette bassesse m'a paru plus convenable à une nourrice, qui pouvait avoir des inclinations plus serviles, et qui néanmoins n'entreprend cette fausse accusation que pour sauver la vie et l'honneur de sa maîtresse. Phèdre n'y donne les mains que parce qu'elle est dans une agitation d'esprit qui la met hors d'elle-même, et elle vient un moment après dans le dessein de justifier l'innocence, et de déclarer la vérité.

Hippolyte est accusé, dans Euripide et dans Sénèque, d'avoir en effet violé sa belle-mère: *vim corpus tulit*. Mais il n'est ici accusé que d'en avoir eu le dessein. J'ai voulu épargner à Thésée une confusion qui l'aurait pu rendre moins agréable aux spectateurs.

Pour ce qui est du personnage d'Hippolyte, j'avais remarqué dans les Anciens qu'on reprochait à Euripide de l'avoir représenté comme un philosophe exempt de toute imperfection. Ce qui faisait que la mort de ce jeune Prince causait beaucoup plus d'indignation que de pitié.

## PREFACE

Here is another tragedy whose subject is taken from Euripides. Although I have followed a slightly different path from him in terms of plot, I have taken every opportunity to enhance my play with everything that seemed to me most striking in his. Even if I owed him only the idea of Phaedra's character, I could claim that I owed him what is probably the most persuasive play I have written. I am not surprised that this character should have had such a great success in Euripides' day, and that it should still be so successful in our time, since it has all the qualities that Aristotle requires in a tragic hero – that is, the ability to arouse pity and terror. Phaedra is, in fact, neither entirely guilty nor totally innocent. She is involved, through her fate and through the anger of the gods, in a criminal passion, at which she is the very first to be horrified. She makes every effort to overcome it. She would rather die than admit it to anyone. And when she is forced to reveal it, she speaks with such confusion that it is clear her crime is a punishment of the gods, rather than an impulse of her own will.

I have even taken pains to make her rather less odious than in classical tragedies, where she decides on her own to accuse Hippolytus. I felt that that slander was something too low and too foul to be put in the mouth of a princess, whose feelings were otherwise so noble and virtuous. Such lowness seemed to me more appropriate to a nurse, who might have a more slavish attitude, and who would make this false accusation only to save the life and honour of her mistress. Phaedra agrees to it only because she is so disturbed as to be beside herself. She re-appears a moment later to clear the accused and declare the truth.

In Euripides and Seneca, Hippolytus is accused of having actually raped his stepmother: *vim corpus tulit* [he took her by force]. But here he is accused only of having had the intention. I wanted to spare Theseus a mental turmoil which might have made him less sympathetic to the audience.

As far as Hippolytus' character is concerned, I had noticed that in classical times Euripides was criticised for having portrayed him as a philosopher free of all imperfection. The young prince's death, consequently, generated indignation much more than pity.



J'ai cru lui devoir donner quelque faiblesse qui le rendrait un peu coupable envers son père, sans pourtant lui rien ôter de cette grandeur d'âme avec laquelle il épargne l'honneur de Phèdre, et se laisse opprimer sans l'accuser. J'appelle faiblesse la passion qu'il ressent malgré lui pour Aricie, qui est la fille et la sœur des ennemis mortels de son père.

Cette Aricie n'est point un personnage de mon invention. Virgile dit qu'Hippolyte l'épousa et en eut un fils après qu'Esculape l'eut ressuscité. Et j'ai lu encore dans quelques auteurs qu'Hippolyte avait épousé et emmené en Italie une jeune Athénienne de grande naissance, qui s'appelait Aricie, et qui avait donné son nom à une petite ville d'Italie.

Je rapporte ces autorités, parce que je me suis très scrupuleusement attaché à suivre la fable. J'ai même suivi l'histoire de Thésée telle qu'elle est dans Plutarque.

C'est dans cet historien que j'ai trouvé que ce qui avait donné occasion de croire que Thésée fût descendu dans les enfers pour enlever Proserpine, était un voyage que ce Prince avait fait en Epire vers la source de l'Achéron, chez un roi dont Pirithous voulait enlever la femme, et qui arrêta Thésée prisonnier après avoir fait mourir Pirithous. Ainsi j'ai tâché de conserver la vraisemblance de l'histoire, sans rien perdre des ornements de la fable qui fournit extrêmement à la poésie. Et le bruit de la mort de Thésée, fondé sur ce voyage fabuleux, donne lieu à Phèdre de faire une déclaration d'amour, qui devient une des principales causes de son malheur, et qu'elle n'aurait jamais osé faire tant qu'elle aurait cru que son mari était vivant.

Au reste, je n'ose encore assurer que cette pièce soit en effet la meilleure de mes tragédies. Je laisse aux lecteurs et au temps à décider de son véritable prix. Ce que je puis assurer, c'est que je n'en ai point fait où la vertu soit plus mise en jour que dans celle-ci. Les moindres fautes y sont sévèrement punies. La seule pensée du crime y est regardée avec autant d'horreur que le crime même. Les faiblesses de l'amour y passent pour de vraies faiblesses. Les passions n'y sont présentées aux yeux que pour montrer tout le désordre dont elles sont cause: et le vice y est peint partout avec des couleurs qui en font connaître et haïr la difformité. C'est là proprement le but que tout homme qui travaille pour le public doit se proposer. Et c'est ce que les premiers poètes tragiques avaient en vue sur toute chose. Leur théâtre était une école où la vertu n'était pas moins bien enseignée que dans les écoles des philosophes.

I felt I should give him some weakness that would make him slightly guilty towards his father, without however detracting in any way from that largeness of spirit which lets him spare Phaedra's honour, and be attacked without accusing her. What I call weakness is the passion he feels, despite himself, for Aricia, who is the daughter and sister of his father's deadly enemies.

Aricia is not a character I have invented. Virgil says that Hippolytus married her, and had a son by her, after Aesculapius had brought him back to life. I have also read in some writers that Hippolytus married and took to Italy a young Athenian girl of noble birth, who was called Aricia, and who gave her name to a small Italian town.

I cite these authorities because I have been scrupulous in seeking to follow the classical account. I have even followed the story of Theseus as related in Plutarch.

It was in this historian that I found what gave rise to the belief that Theseus went down to the underworld to abduct Proserpine. It was a journey undertaken in Epirus by the prince towards the source of Acheron, to visit a king whose wife Pirithous wanted to abduct. Having put Pirithous to death, the king kept Theseus prisoner. In this way, I have tried to retain the credibility of the story without losing any of the decorations of the legend, which provide a rich source of poetry. The rumour of Theseus' death, generated by this legendary journey, gives Phaedra the opportunity to confess a love that becomes one of the main reasons for her downfall, and that she would never have dared to speak had she believed her husband was still alive.

For the rest, I do not as yet dare to assert that this play is indeed the best of my tragedies. I leave it to readers and time to decide its true worth. What I can affirm is that in no other play of mine is goodness so clearly shown. The slightest faults are severely punished. The mere thought of crime is regarded with as much horror as the crime itself. Weaknesses caused by love are treated as genuine weaknesses. Passions are portrayed only to show all the turmoil they cause. Vice is depicted throughout in colours that bring out its ugliness and hatefulness. That is really the aim which everybody working for the public ought to have in mind. It is what the earliest tragedians aimed for above all else. Their theatre was a school where goodness was taught no less well than in the schools of the philosophers.

Aussi Aristote a bien voulu donner des règles du poème dramatique; et Socrate, le plus sage des philosophes, ne dédaignait pas de mettre la main aux tragédies d'Euripide. Il serait à souhaiter que nos ouvrages fussent aussi solides et aussi pleins d'utiles instructions que ceux de ces poètes. Ce serait peut-être un moyen de réconcilier la tragédie avec quantité de personnes célèbres par leur piété et par leur doctrine, qui l'ont condamnée dans ces derniers temps et qui en jugeraient sans doute plus favorablement, si les auteurs songeaient autant à instruire leurs spectateurs qu'à les divertir, et s'ils suivaient en cela la véritable intention de la tragédie.

Aristotle was happy to lay down rules for drama, and Socrates, the wisest of philosophers, was not above contributing to Euripides' tragedies. One could wish that modern works were as sound and full of useful teaching as those of these poets. That would perhaps be a way of reconciling to tragedy many people famous for their piety and doctrines, who have recently condemned it. They would no doubt judge it more favourably if writers thought as much about teaching their audiences as amusing them, and thereby followed the real purpose of tragedy.

PHÈDRE

ACTEURS

THÉSÉE, fils d'Égée, roi d'Athènes

PHÈDRE, femme de Thésée, fille de Minos et de Pasiphaé

HIPPOLYTE, fils de Thésée, et d'Antiope, reine des Amazones

ARICIE, princesse du sang royal d'Athènes

ŒNONE, nourrice et confidente de Phèdre

THÉRAMÈNE, gouverneur d'Hippolyte

ISMÈNE, confidente d'Aricie

PANOPE, femme de la suite de Phèdre

Gardes

*La scène est à Trézène, ville du Péloponnèse*

PHAEDRA

CAST

THESEUS, son of Aegeus, king of Athens

PHAEDRA, Theseus' wife, daughter of Minos and Pasiphae

HIPPOLYTUS, son of Theseus and Antiope, queen of the Amazons

ARICIA, princess of the blood royal of Athens

OENONE, Phaedra's nurse and confidante

THERAMENES, Hippolytus' tutor

ISMENE, confidante of Aricia

PANOPE, one of Phaedra's waiting-women

Guards

*The scene is set in Troezen, a town in the Peloponnese*

## ACTE 1 SCÈNE 1

*Hippolyte, Théràmène*

## HIPPOLYTE

Le dessein en est pris, je pars, cher Théràmène,  
 Et quitte le séjour de l'aimable Trézène.  
 Dans le doute mortel dont je suis agité  
 Je commence à rougir de mon oisiveté.  
 Depuis plus de six mois éloigné de mon père,  
 J'ignore le destin d'une tête si chère;  
 J'ignore jusqu'aux lieux qui le peuvent cacher.

## THÉRAMÈNE

Et dans quels lieux, Seigneur, l'allez-vous donc chercher?  
 Déjà pour satisfaire à votre juste crainte,  
 J'ai couru les deux mers que sépare Corinthe.  
 J'ai demandé Thésée aux peuples de ces bords  
 Où l'on voit l'Achéron se perdre chez les morts.  
 J'ai visité l'Élide, et laissant le Ténare,  
 Passé jusqu'à la mer qui vit tomber Icare.  
 Sur quel espoir nouveau, dans quels heureux climats  
 Croyez-vous découvrir la trace de ses pas?  
 Qui sait même, qui sait si le roi votre père  
 Veut que de son absence on sache le mystère?  
 Et si lorsque avec vous nous tremblons pour ses jours,  
 Tranquille, et nous cachant de nouvelles amours,  
 Ce héros n'attend point qu'une amante abusée...

## HIPPOLYTE

Cher Théràmène, arrête, et respecte Thésée.  
 De ses jeunes erreurs désormais revenu,  
 Par un indigne obstacle il n'est point retenu;  
 Et fixant de ses vœux l'inconstance fatale,  
 Phèdre depuis longtemps ne craint plus de rivale.

## ACT 1 SCENE 1

*Hippolytus, Theramenes*

## HIPPOLYTUS

So, it's decided then. Theramenes,  
 I have to end this pleasant stay in Troezen.  
 I'm haunted by my fear about the king.  
 I am ashamed at all my idleness.  
 My father has been gone six months or more;  
 He's dear to me, and yet I do not know his fate  
 Nor where in all the world he might be now.

## THERAMENES

Where would you go, my lord, to look for him?  
 I've tried to ease your fear. It's merited.  
 I've scoured the seas that Corinth cuts in two,  
 Asked after Theseus along those shores  
 Where Acheron flows downwards to the dead.  
 I've been to Elis, passed by Tenaros,  
 And sailed the seas where Icarus once fell.  
 What fresh new hope makes you believe you'll find  
 Some trace of him in more congenial spots?  
 Indeed, who knows if the king your father  
 Wishes the secret for his absence to be known.  
 While we here worry for his life, might he  
 Not be at ease, hiding his latest love away,  
 Just waiting to seduce a girl...

## HIPPOLYTUS

Enough, Theramenes. You owe respect.  
 He's put the errors of his youth aside.  
 Those shameful faults no longer weigh him down.  
 Phaedra has curbed the wanderings of his heart.  
 She has no fears of any rivals now.

Enfin en le cherchant je suivrai mon devoir,  
Et je fuirai ces lieux que je n'ose plus voir.

THÉRAMÈNE

Hé depuis quand, Seigneur, craignez-vous la présence  
De ces paisibles lieux, si chers à votre enfance,  
Et dont je vous ai vu préférer le séjour  
Au tumulte pompeux d'Athènes et de la cour?  
Quel péril, ou plutôt quel chagrin vous en chasse?

HIPPOLYTE

Cet heureux temps n'est plus. Tout a changé de face  
Depuis que sur ces bords les dieux ont envoyé  
La fille de Minos et de Pasiphaé.

THERAMÈNE

J'entends. De vos douleurs la cause m'est connue,  
Phèdre ici vous chagrine, et blesse votre vue.  
Dangereuse marâtre, à peine elle vous vit,  
Que votre exil d'abord signala son crédit.  
Mais sa haine sur vous autrefois attachée,  
Ou s'est évanouie, ou s'est bien relâchée.  
Et d'ailleurs, quels périls vous peut faire courir  
Une femme mourante, et qui cherche à mourir?  
Phèdre atteinte d'un mal qu'elle s'obstine à taire,  
Lasse enfin d'elle-même, et du jour qui l'éclaire,  
Peut-elle contre vous former quelques desseins?

HIPPOLYTE

Sa vaine inimitié n'est pas ce que je crains.  
Hippolyte en partant fuit une autre ennemie.  
Je fuis, je l'avouerai, cette jeune Aricie,  
Reste d'un sang fatal conjuré contre nous.

THÉRAMÈNE

I am in duty bound to look for him.  
I have to leave here now. I dare not stay.

THERAMENES

But when did you begin, my lord, to fear  
This peaceful place? You loved it as a boy.  
You've liked it better here, I know, than all  
The pomp and noise of Athens and the court.  
What danger drives you out – or is it grief?

HIPPOLYTUS

Those days of joy have gone. All is now changed  
Since the great gods sent Phaedra to these shores,  
The child of Minos and of Pasiphae.

THERAMENES

I know. I know the reason for your hurt.  
The sight of Phaedra here distresses you.  
She was a dangerous stepmother. She'd scarcely seen  
Than banished you. That marked her influence.  
But all the hate that once was fixed on you  
Has vanished now, at least has grown much less.  
Besides, what threat from her could make you leave,  
A dying woman, reaching out to die?  
Some sickness has seized hold – she will not say –  
She's weary of herself and of the light  
Of day. How could she plan to do you harm?

HIPPOLYTUS

It's not her vain hostility I fear.  
I go to keep a different enemy away.  
Let me confess – I run from young Aricia,  
Last of that deadly blood-line sworn our foe.

THERAMENES

Quoi! vous-même, Seigneur, la persécutez-vous?  
Jamais l'aimable sœur des cruels Pallantides  
Trempa-t-elle aux complots de ses frères perfides?  
Et devez-vous haïr ses innocents appas?

HIPPOLYTE

Si je la haïssais, je ne la fuirais pas.

THÉRAMÈNE

Seigneur, m'est-il permis d'expliquer votre fuite?  
Pourriez-vous n'être plus ce superbe Hippolyte,  
Implacable ennemi des amoureuses lois,  
Et d'un joug que Thésée a subi tant de fois?  
Vénus, par votre orgueil si longtemps méprisée,  
Voudrait-elle à la fin justifier Thésée?  
Et vous mettant au rang du reste des mortels,  
Vous a-t-elle forcé d'encenser ses autels?  
Aimeriez-vous, Seigneur?

HIPPOLYTE

Ami, qu'oses-tu dire?  
Toi qui connais mon cœur depuis que je respire,  
Des sentiments d'un cœur si fier, si dédaigneux,  
Peux-tu me demander le désaveu honteux?  
C'est peu qu'avec son lait une mère amazone  
M'ait fait sucer encor cet orgueil qui t'étonne.  
Dans un âge plus mûr moi-même parvenu,  
Je me suis applaudi, quand je me suis connu.  
Attaché près de moi par un zèle sincère,  
Tu me contais alors l'histoire de mon père.  
Tu sais combien mon âme attentive à ta voix  
S'échauffait aux récits de ses nobles exploits,  
Quand tu me dépeignais ce héros intrépide  
Consolant les mortels de l'absence d'Alcide,

Oh no, my lord, would you torment her too?  
Pallas's sons were cruel, but she was kind.  
She never knew about her brothers' plots.  
How could you hate the grace of innocence?

HIPPOLYTUS

If I felt hate, I should not run from her.

THERAMENES

Then could I guess the reason for your flight?  
Might you no longer be the proud Hippolytus,  
Relentless enemy of all love's laws  
And bonds that Theseus bore so many times?  
You've scorned the power of Venus for so long.  
Could she have vindicated him at last,  
And made you join the rest of humankind,  
Forced you to worship at her shrine?  
Might you not be in love?

HIPPOLYTUS

Take care, old friend.  
You've known my feelings since I first drew breath.  
Don't ask me to deny in shame the pride  
And high resolve that's in my heart.  
My mother was an Amazon. Her milk  
Gave me this vaunted pride. Yet what of that...  
When I grew up, became a man, I too  
Endorsed it as my own true self.  
Your faithful friendship bound you close to me.  
You'd tell me of my father's history.  
You knew how much I'd hang upon your words,  
Would glow at stories of his marvellous deeds.  
You drew for me a Theseus without fear –  
Consoling humans for the loss of Hercules –

Les monstres étouffés, et les brigands punis,  
 Procruste, Cercyon, et Scirron, et Sinnis,  
 Et les os dispersés du géant d'Épidaure,  
 Et la Crète fumant du sang du Minotaure.  
 Mais quand tu récitais des faits moins glorieux,  
 Sa foi partout offerte, et reçue en cent lieux,  
 Hélène à ses parents dans Sparte dérobée,  
 Salamine témoin des pleurs de Péribée,  
 Tant d'autres, dont les noms lui sont même échappés,  
 Trop crédules esprits que sa flamme a trompés;  
 Ariane aux rochers contant ses injustices,  
 Phèdre enlevée enfin sous de meilleurs auspices;  
 Tu sais comme à regret écoutant ce discours,  
 Je te pressais souvent d'en abrégier le cours.  
 Heureux! si j'avais pu ravir à la mémoire  
 Cette indigne moitié d'une si belle histoire!  
 Et moi-même à mon tour je me verrais lié?  
 Et les dieux jusque-là m'auraient humilié?  
 Dans mes lâches soupirs d'autant plus méprisable,  
 Qu'un long amas d'honneurs rend Thésée excusable,  
 Qu'aucuns monstres par moi domptés jusqu'aujourd'hui  
 Ne m'ont acquis le droit de faillir comme lui.  
 Quand même ma fierté pourrait s'être adoucie,  
 Aurais-je pour vainqueur dû choisir Aricie?  
 Ne souviendrait-il plus à mes sens égarés,  
 De l'obstacle éternel qui nous a séparés?  
 Mon père la réprouve et par des lois sévères  
 Il défend de donner des neveux à ses frères;  
 D'une tige coupable il craint un rejeton.  
 Il veut avec leur sœur ensevelir leur nom,  
 Et que jusqu'au tombeau soumise à sa tutelle,  
 Jamais les feux d'hymen ne s'allument pour elle.  
 Dois-je épouser ses droits contre un père irrité?  
 Donnerai-je l'exemple à la témérité?  
 Et dans un fol amour ma jeunesse embarquée...

THÉRAMÈNE

Ah, Seigneur! si votre heure est une fois marquée,

Who strangled monsters, punished those who'd robbed –  
 Procrustes, Sciron, Sinis, Cercyon,  
 The bones he scattered of the Epidaurus giant,  
 And all Crete reeking with the Minotaur's blood.  
 But other things you told me of – less glorious –  
 His honour pledged, believed so many times:  
 Helen in Sparta stolen from her home,  
 And Salamis, where Periboea wept,  
 So many more, whose names he then forgot,  
 Too credulous by far, all duped by him.  
 Ariadne left crying to the rocks,  
 And Phaedra kidnapped, though for better ends.  
 You know I heard these tales with pain.  
 I often urged you cut them short,  
 Happy to blot out from my memory  
 The vilest half of such a history.  
 So is it now my turn to be caught up?  
 The gods would humble me to that extent?  
 My cowardly cries would bring far more contempt.  
 Crowded with honours, Theseus is excused.  
 But no wild monster ever tamed by me  
 Has given me the right to fail like him.  
 Even suppose my pride were to be quelled,  
 Would I choose that Aricia should master me?  
 My wandering senses scarcely could forget  
 The everlasting obstacle between us both.  
 My father disapproves of her. Strict laws forbid  
 Her bearing children to her brothers' line.  
 He fears the offspring from so false a stock.  
 He wants to kill their name with hers.  
 She is his ward till death. He has decreed  
 The wedding torch shall never light for her.  
 Should I take up her cause, incense the king  
 And give a lesson in foolhardiness?  
 I'd launch my youth on reckless love...?

THERAMENES

Ah but my lord – once fate has stamped our hour,

Le ciel de nos raisons ne sait point s'informer.  
 Thésée ouvre vos yeux en voulant les fermer,  
 Et sa haine irritant une flamme rebelle,  
 Prête à son ennemie une grâce nouvelle.  
 Enfin d'un chaste amour pourquoi vous effrayer?  
 S'il a quelque douceur, n'osez-vous l'essayer?  
 En croirez-vous toujours un farouche scrupule?  
 Craint-on de s'égarer sur les traces d'Hercule?  
 Quels courages Vénus n'a-t-elle pas domptés!  
 Vous-même où seriez-vous, vous qui la combattez,  
 Si toujours Antiope à ses lois opposée  
 D'une pudique ardeur n'eût brûlé pour Thésée?  
 Mais que sert d'affecter un superbe discours?  
 Avouez-le, tout change. Et depuis quelques jours,  
 On vous voit moins souvent, orgueilleux et sauvage,  
 Tantôt faire voler un char sur le rivage,  
 Tantôt savant dans l'art par Neptune inventé,  
 Rendre docile au frein un coursier indompté.  
 Les forêts de nos cris moins souvent retentissent.  
 Chargés d'un feu secret, vos yeux s'appesantissent.  
 Il n'en faut point douter, vous aimez, vous brûlez;  
 Vous périssez d'un mal que vous dissimulez.  
 La charmante Aricie a-t-elle su vous plaire?

HIPPOLYTE

Théramène, je pars, et vais chercher mon père.

THÉRAMÈNE

Ne verrez-vous point Phèdre avant que de partir,  
 Seigneur?

HIPPOLYTE

C'est mon dessein, tu peux l'en avertir.  
 Voyons-la, puisque ainsi mon devoir me l'ordonne.  
 Mais quel nouveau malheur trouble sa chère Cénone?

Heaven no longer cares to know our reasonings.  
 Theseus had hoped to close your eyes, but opened them.  
 His hate has fanned a rebel fire,  
 Given his enemy a fresh, new grace.  
 Besides, why should you fear so chaste a love?  
 If there is sweetness, why not savour it?  
 You still believe in being scrupulous?  
 Why fear to follow in the steps of Hercules?  
 What heart of steel has Venus not made tame?  
 You fight her; where though would you be yourself  
 Had not Antiope, who fought her laws,  
 Still burned for Theseus with a shameless lust?  
 But what is served by lofty utterance?  
 Admit it, all is changed. For some days now,  
 You've been less often seen, in such wild pride,  
 Racing a chariot at the water's edge,  
 Or showing all your skills in Neptune's art,  
 Curbing an untamed stallion to the bit.  
 The woods halloo less often with our cries.  
 Your eyes are heavy, full of secret fire.  
 There is no doubt. Love's burning you.  
 You're suffering from a pain you want to hide.  
 Has fair Aricia enchanted you?

HIPPOLYTUS

Theramenes, I go to find the king.

THERAMENES

Will you not see Phaedra before you leave,  
 My lord?

HIPPOLYTUS

I mean to, yes. Let her be told.  
 I'll see her soon, since duty says I must.  
 But there's Oenone. What latest sadness...?



PHÈDRE

SCÈNE 2

*Hippolyte, Œnone*

ŒNONE

Hélas, Seigneur! quel trouble au mien peut être égal?  
La reine touche presque à son terme fatal.  
En vain à l'observer jour et nuit je m'attache.  
Elle meurt dans mes bras d'un mal qu'elle me cache.  
Un désordre éternel règne dans son esprit.  
Son chagrin inquiet l'arrache de son lit.  
Elle veut voir le jour; et sa douleur profonde  
M'ordonne toutefois d'écarter tout le monde...  
Elle vient.

HIPPOLYTE

Il suffit, je la laisse en ces lieux  
Et ne lui montre point un visage odieux.

SCÈNE 3

*Phèdre, Œnone*

PHÈDRE

N'allons point plus avant. Demeurons, chère Œnone.  
Je ne me soutiens plus, ma force m'abandonne.  
Mes yeux sont éblouis du jour que je revoi,  
Et mes genoux tremblants se dérobent sous moi.

PHAEDRA

SCENE 2

*Hippolytus, Oenone, Theramenes*

OENONE

My lord, what grief can equal this? The queen  
Is all but touching now her hour of death.  
I've stayed and watched her day and night in vain;  
She's dying in my arms from sickness she won't name.  
Some constant turmoil riots in her mind;  
A restless sorrow tears her from her bed.  
She yearns to see the light. But pain wracks her.  
She orders me to keep out everyone...  
But here she comes...

HIPPOLYTUS

Enough, I must leave now,  
So that she does not see a face she loathes.

*[Hippolytus and Theramenes leave. Phaedra enters.]*

SCENE 3

*Phaedra, Oenone*

PHAEDRA

Let's not go further, Oenone. Let's rest.  
I can't stand up. I've lost my strength.  
My eyes are dazzled blind by all this light.  
My legs are trembling...give way under me.

Hélas! [*elle s'assied*]

ŒNONE

Dieux tout-puissants, que nos pleurs vous apaisent!

PHÈDRE

Que ces vains ornements, que ces voiles me pèsent!  
Quelle importune main, en formant tous ces nœuds,  
A pris soin sur mon front d'assembler mes cheveux?  
Tout m'afflige et me nuit, et conspire à me nuire.

ŒNONE

Comme on voit tous ses vœux l'un l'autre se détruire!  
Vous-même condamnant vos injustes desseins,  
Tantôt à vous parer vous excitiez nos mains.  
Vous-même rappelant votre force première,  
Vous vouliez vous montrer et revoir la lumière;  
Vous la voyez, Madame, et prête à vous cacher,  
Vous haïssez le jour que vous veniez chercher?

PHÈDRE

Noble et brillant auteur d'une triste famille.  
Toi, dont ma mère osait se vanter d'être fille,  
Qui peut-être rougis du trouble où tu me vois,  
Soleil, je te viens voir pour la dernière fois.

ŒNONE

Quoi! vous ne perdrez point cette cruelle envie?  
Vous verrai-je toujours, renonçant à la vie,  
Faire de votre mort les funestes apprêts?

PHÈDRE

Dieux! que ne suis-je assise à l'ombre des forêts!

*She sits.*

OENONE

May our tears soften you, all-powerful Gods.

PHAEDRA

These silly ornaments, these veils – the weight of them.  
Whose meddling hand has tied up all these knots,  
Arranged my hair so carefully across my brow?  
All things distress and hurt. They plot to hurt.

OENONE

*[aside]* Her every wish conflicts against the rest.  
*[to her]* But you yourself just said your plan was wrong.  
Just now, you urged me decorate your hair.  
You summoned all your old strength up  
And wanted to be shown the light again.  
You see it here; and now you want to hide.  
You hate the daylight that you came to find.

PHAEDRA

You dazzling founder of this wretched family,  
My mother dared to boast she was your child.  
Perhaps you blush to see me so distressed.  
Sun-god, I see you for the final time.

OENONE

Won't you give up this desperate desire?  
Am I to see you giving up on life,  
Preparing for a mournful, tragic death?

PHAEDRA

I should be sitting in the forests' shade.

Quand pourrai-je au travers d'une noble poussière,  
Suivre de l'œil un char fuyant dans la carrière?

ŒNONE

Quoi, Madame!

PHÈDRE

Insensée, où suis-je? Et qu'ai-je dit?  
Où laisse-je égarer mes vœux et mon esprit?  
Je l'ai perdu. Les dieux m'en ont ravi l'usage.  
Œnone, la rougeur me couvre le visage,  
Je te laisse trop voir mes honteuses douleurs,  
Et mes yeux malgré moi se remplissent de pleurs.

ŒNONE

Ah! s'il vous faut rougir, rougissez d'un silence  
Qui de vos maux encore aigrit la violence.  
Rebelle à tous nos soins, sourde à tous nos discours,  
Voulez-vous sans pitié laisser finir vos jours?  
Quelle fureur les borne au milieu de leur course?  
Quel charme ou quel poison en a tari la source?  
Les ombres par trois fois ont obscurci les cieux,  
Depuis que le sommeil n'est entré dans vos yeux;  
Et le jour a trois fois chassé la nuit obscure,  
Depuis que votre corps languit sans nourriture.  
A quel affreux dessein vous laissez-vous tenter?  
De quel droit sur vous-même osez-vous attenter?  
Vous offensez les dieux auteurs de votre vie.  
Vous trahissez l'époux à qui la foi vous lie,  
Vous trahissez enfin vos enfants malheureux,  
Que vous précipitez sous un joug rigoureux.  
Songez qu'un même jour leur ravira leur mère,  
Et rendra l'espérance au fils de l'étrangère,  
A ce fier ennemi de vous, de votre sang,  
Ce fils qu'une Amazone a porté dans son flanc,  
Cet Hippolyte...

When will my eyes see through these swirls of dust  
And catch a racing chariot in its course...?

OENONE

My lady?

PHAEDRA

I'm mad. Where am I? What have I said?  
My reason, my desires – where did they go?  
They're lost. The gods have taken them away.  
My face is flushed, Oenone. So, I've let  
You see my shameful grief too much.  
I cannot help...my eyes fill up with tears.

OENONE

If you must blush, blush for your silence then.  
It merely fires the fury of your pain.  
You thrust our care aside, you're deaf to all we say –  
So you will end your life without concern...?  
What madness cuts it short in middle age?  
What spell – what poison – has dried up its source?  
The shades of night have blacked the skies three times  
Since your eyes last were overcome by sleep.  
The day has driven dark night out three times,  
But still your body faints for lack of food.  
What terrifying plan tempts you so now?  
What right have you to try to kill yourself?  
You wrong the gods, the source of all your life,  
Betray your husband, whom you wed in faith,  
Not least betray your children into grief.  
You will force them to such cruel slavery.  
Remember, the very day their mother dies  
Will give fresh hope to the outsider's son,  
To that fierce enemy of yours, your blood,  
The boy an Amazon bore in her womb,  
Hippolytus...

PHÈDRE

Ah dieux!

ŒNONE

Ce reproche vous touche?

PHÈDRE

Malheureuse, quel nom est sorti de ta bouche?

ŒNONE

Eh bien, votre colère éclate avec raison.  
 J'aime à vous voir frémir à ce funeste nom.  
 Vivez donc. Que l'amour, le devoir, vous excite.  
 Vivez, ne souffrez pas que le fils d'une Scythe,  
 Accablant vos enfants d'un empire odieux,  
 Commande au plus beau sang de la Grèce et des dieux.  
 Mais ne différez point, chaque moment vous tue.  
 Réparez promptement votre force abattue,  
 Tandis que de vos jours prêts à se consumer,  
 Le flambeau dure encore, et peut se rallumer.

PHÈDRE

J'en ai trop prolongé la coupable durée.

ŒNONE

Quoi! de quelques remords êtes-vous déchirée?  
 Quel crime a pu produire un trouble si pressant?  
 Vos mains n'ont point trempé dans le sang innocent?

PHÈDRE

Grâces au ciel, mes mains ne sont point criminelles.

PHAEDRA

No, god...

OENONE

I make my point...?

PHAEDRA

You wretched woman! What name did you speak?

OENONE

At last! You burst with anger – justly so.  
 It's good to see you shudder at his name.  
 So, live. Let love and duty urge you on.  
 Live. Don't let a Scythian woman's son  
 Chain up your children in vile slavery  
 And rule the finest blood of Greece and all  
 The gods. But don't delay. Each moment kills.  
 Gather the strength you've lost again at once.  
 The fire of life is nearly dead. Yet it  
 Still flickers and can burst alive in flame.

PHAEDRA

I have prolonged my guilty life too much...

OENONE

What is this guilt that's tearing you apart?  
 What crime could ever bring so sharp a pain?  
 You've never stained your hands with guiltless blood.

PHAEDRA

I thank the gods my hands have done no wrong.

Plût aux dieux que mon cœur fit innocent comme elles!

ŒNONE

Et quel affreux projet avez-vous enfanté,  
Dont votre cœur encor doit être épouvanté?

PHÈDRE

Je t'en ai dit assez. Épargne-moi le reste.  
Je meurs, pour ne point faire un aveu si funeste.

ŒNONE

Mourez donc, et gardez un silence inhumain.  
Mais pour fermer vos yeux cherchez une autre main.  
Quoiqu'il vous reste à peine une faible lumière,  
Mon âme chez les morts descendra la première;  
Mille chemins ouverts y conduisent toujours,  
Et ma juste douleur choisira les plus courts.  
Cruelle, quand ma foi vous a-t-elle déçue?  
Songez-vous qu'en naissant mes bras vous ont reçue?  
Mon pays, mes enfants, pour vous j'ai tout quitté.  
Réservez-vous ce prix à ma fidélité?

PHÈDRE

Quel fruit espères-tu de tant de violence?  
Tu frémiras d'horreur si je romps le silence.

ŒNONE

Et que me direz-vous, qui ne cède, grands dieux!  
A l'horreur de vous voir expirer à mes yeux?

PHÈDRE

Quand tu sauras mon crime, et le sort qui m'accable,  
Je n'en mourrai pas moins, j'en mourrai plus coupable.

Would God my heart were innocent as them.

OENONE

So what vile plan have you conceived  
That your whole heart remains still terrified?

PHAEDRA

I've said enough. Spare me the rest.  
I'm dying... the dreadful secret's safe with me.

OENONE

Then die. Stay silent. It's not natural.  
But look for someone else to close your eyes.  
The light just flickers for you now, and yet  
My soul will go down first to meet the dead.  
A thousand open roads can take us there.  
My grief will choose the shortest way. You are  
So cruel. When did I ever break your trust?  
I took you in my arms when you were born.  
I left my home, my children – all for you.  
Is this the prize you give for faithfulness?

PHAEDRA

Why all this rage? What do you hope to gain?  
If I spoke out, you'd shudder in such dread...

OENONE

What could you say, great gods, that could be worse  
Than see you die before my eyes?

PHAEDRA

But if you knew my crime – this hopeless fate –  
I should still die, but yet more full of guilt.

ŒNONE

Madame, au nom des pleurs que pour vous j'ai versés,  
Par vos faibles genoux que je tiens embrassés,  
Délivrez mon esprit de ce funeste doute.

PHÈDRE

Tu le veux. Lève-toi.

ŒNONE

Parlez. Je vous écoute.

PHÈDRE

Ciel! que lui vais-je dire? Et par où commencer?

ŒNONE

Par de vaines frayeurs cessez de m'offenser.

PHÈDRE

O haine de Vénus! ô fatale colère!  
Dans quels égarements l'amour jeta ma mère!

ŒNONE

Oublions-les, Madame. Et qu'à tout l'avenir  
Un silence éternel cache ce souvenir.

PHÈDRE

Ariane, ma sœur, de quel amour blessée,  
Vous mourûtes aux bords où vous fûtes laissée?

ŒNONE

OENONE

By all the tears that I have wept for you,  
These helpless limbs I hold so close,  
You must relieve me from this awful doubt.

PHAEDRA

As you wish. Stand up.

OENONE

Tell me. I'm listening.

PHAEDRA

What can I say to her? Where to begin?

OENONE

Stop terrifying me so needlessly.

PHAEDRA

How Venus hates... that deadly rage she has...  
The frenzy that she threw my mother in...

OENONE

You must forget. Until the end of time  
Eternal silence hide that memory.

PHAEDRA

My sister Ariadne – love wounded you –  
They left you dying on an alien shore.

OENONE

Que faites-vous, Madame? Et quel mortel ennui  
Contre tout votre sang vous anime aujourd'hui?

PHÈDRE

Puisque Vénus le veut, de ce sang déplorable  
Je pérís la dernière, et la plus misérable.

ŒNONE

Aimez-vous?

PHÈDRE

De l'amour j'ai toutes les fureurs.

ŒNONE

Pour qui?

PHÈDRE

Tu vas ouïr le comble des horreurs.  
J'aime... A ce nom fatal, je tremble, je frissonne.  
J'aime...

ŒNONE

Qui?

PHÈDRE

Tu connais ce fils de l'Amazone,  
Ce Prince si longtemps par moi-même opprimé.

ŒNONE

Hippolyte! Grands dieux!

What else, my lady? What deadly grieving  
Drives you on still to rage against your race?

PHAEDRA

Venus will have it so, and so I'll die,  
The last, most wretched member of this tainted line.

OENONE

Are you in love?

PHAEDRA

Its fury burns through me.

OENONE

Who with?

PHAEDRA

Now you will hear the horror to the full.  
I love...the name is death...I'm shuddering...  
I love...

OENONE

Who?

PHAEDRA

You know the Amazon woman's son...  
The young prince I've oppressed so long...?

OENONE

Hippolytus! O God...

PHÈDRE

C'est toi qui l'as nommé.

CENONE

Juste ciel! tout mon sang dans mes veines se glace.  
O désespoir! ô crime! ô déplorable race!  
Voyage infortuné! rivage malheureux!  
Faillait-il approcher de tes bords dangereux!

PHÈDRE

Mon mal vient de plus loin. A peine au fils d'Égée  
Sous les lois de l'hymen je m'étais engagée,  
Mon repos, mon bonheur semblait être affermi,  
Athènes me montra mon superbe ennemi.  
Je le vis, je rougis, je pâli à sa vue.  
Un trouble s'éleva dans mon âme éperdue;  
Mes yeux ne voyaient plus, je ne pouvais parler,  
Je sentis tout mon corps et transir et brûler.  
Je reconnus Vénus, et ses feux redoutables,  
D'un sang qu'elle poursuit tourments inévitables.  
Par des vœux assidus je crus les détourner,  
Je lui bâtis un temple, et pris soin de l'orner.  
De victimes moi-même à toute heure entourée,  
Je cherchais dans leurs flancs ma raison égarée.  
D'un incurable amour remèdes impuissants!  
En vain sur les autels ma main brûlait l'encens.  
Quand ma bouche implorait le nom de la déesse,  
J'adorais Hippolyte, et le voyant sans cesse,  
Même au pied des autels que je faisais fumer,  
J'offrais tout à ce dieu, que je n'osais nommer.  
Je l'évitais partout. O comble de misère!  
Mes yeux le retrouvaient dans les traits de son père.  
Contre moi-même enfin j'osai me révolter.  
J'excitai mon courage à le persécuter.  
Pour bannir l'ennemi dont j'étais idolâtre,

PHAEDRA

You said his name.

OENONE

Dear God, the blood is frozen in my veins.  
Despair...the crime...this tainted family...  
It was an ill-starred journey to this tragic land.  
Why did I step ashore this dangerous coast?

PHAEDRA

The pain goes further back. I'd scarcely pledged  
My marriage vows to Aegus' son –  
My peace of mind, my happiness, seemed safe, secure –  
Then Athens showed my wondrous enemy to me.  
I saw him. Blushed. Then paled to look at him.  
Some trembling surged. It blurred my mind.  
My eyes no longer saw, I couldn't speak.  
I felt my body freeze and burn all through.  
Then I knew Venus – her appalling fires –  
The fated tortures of a race she hounds.  
I thought to keep her off by constant prayers;  
I built a shrine to her, embellished with care;  
Victims were sacrificed at every hour.  
I gazed at them in search of my lost mind.  
They could not heal. Love was incurable.  
My hands burned incense at her shrine in vain.  
But even as my lips intoned her name,  
I prayed Hippolytus. I saw him everywhere,  
Even beside the altars that I kept alight.  
I offered to a god I dare not name – the world.  
I shunned him everywhere – and yet the worst of all,  
I kept on seeing him in Theseus' face.  
At last I dared to fight myself.  
I worked my feelings up to torture him,  
To banish now the enemy I adored.



J'affectai les chagrins d'une injuste marâtre,  
 Je pressai son exil, et mes cris éternels  
 L'arrachèrent du sein et des bras paternels.  
 Je respirais, Œnone; et depuis son absence,  
 Mes jours moins agités coulaient dans l'innocence.  
 Soumise à mon époux, et cachant mes ennuis,  
 De son fatal hymen je cultivais les fruits.  
 Vaines précautions! cruelle destinée!  
 Par mon époux lui-même à Trézène amenée  
 J'ai revu l'ennemi que j'avais éloigné.  
 Ma blessure trop vive aussitôt a saigné.  
 Ce n'est plus une ardeur dans mes veines cachée;  
 C'est Vénus toute entière à sa proie attachée.  
 J'ai conçu pour mon crime une juste terreur.  
 J'ai pris la vie en haine, et ma flamme en horreur.  
 Je voulais en mourant prendre soin de ma gloire,  
 Et dérober au jour une flamme si noire.  
 Je n'ai pu soutenir tes larmes, tes combats,  
 Je t'ai tout avoué, je ne m'en repens pas,  
 Pourvu que de ma mort respectant les approches  
 Tu ne m'affliges plus par d'injustes reproches,  
 Et que tes vains secours cessent de rappeler  
 Un reste de chaleur, tout prêt à s'exhaler.

## SCÈNE 4

*Phèdre, Œnone, Panope*

## PANOPE

Je voudrais vous cacher une triste nouvelle,  
 Madame. Mais il faut que je vous la révèle.  
 La mort vous a ravi votre invincible époux,  
 Et ce malheur n'est plus ignoré que de vous.

I played the cruel stepmother full of hate.  
 I urged his exile. My constant pleading  
 Tore him from his father's arms and heart.  
 I breathed again, Oenone. With him now gone,  
 My days flowed by less troubled, free of guilt.  
 I hid my grief, submitted to my husband's will,  
 And nursed the children of his fateful bed.  
 Fate is so cruel. Precaution was in vain.  
 Theseus himself brought me to Troezen's shores.  
 And so I saw again the man I'd sent away.  
 The wound was opened, bled again at once,  
 And now no yearning hidden in the blood.  
 Venus with all her might clawed at her prey.  
 I realise the horror of my crime.  
 My life is cursed, my passion terrible.  
 I wanted by my death to save my name  
 And hide so dark a love from light of day.  
 I couldn't bear your tears, your battling.  
 I've told you everything. I don't regret it now.  
 Only – please spare me as I start to die.  
 Don't hurt me now with undeserved reproach.  
 Your help must stop. It's all in vain. Don't fan  
 This last faint heat quite ready now to die.

*[Panope enters.]*

## SCENE 4

*Phaedra, Oenone, Panope*

## PANOPE

My lady? I've such grievous news for you.  
 I want to hide it. I must though tell you.  
 Theseus has been torn from you... by death...  
 You are the only one who does not know.

ŒNONE

Panope, que dis-tu?

PANOPE

Que la reine abusée  
En vain demande au ciel le retour de Thésée,  
Et que par des vaisseaux arrivés dans le port,  
Hippolyte son fils vient d'apprendre sa mort.

PHÈDRE

Ciel!

PANOPE

Pour le choix d'un maître Athènes se partage.  
Au Prince votre fils l'un donne son suffrage,  
Madame, et de l'État l'autre oubliant les lois,  
Au fils de l'étrangère ose donner sa voix.  
On dit même qu'au trône une brigue insolente  
Veut placer Aricie, et le sang de Pallante.  
J'ai cru de ce péril vous devoir avertir.  
Déjà même Hippolyte est tout prêt à partir,  
Et l'on craint, s'il paraît dans ce nouvel orage,  
Qu'il n'entraîne après lui tout un peuple volage.

ŒNONE

Panope, c'est assez. La reine qui t'entend,  
Ne négligera point cet avis important.

## SCÈNE 5

*Phèdre, Œnone*

OENONE

What did you say, Panope? No...

PANOPE

The queen  
Asks heaven for Theseus' return in vain.  
His son Hippolytus has learned his death  
From ships arriving in the port.

PHAEDRA

Dear God...

PANOPE

For choice of ruler Athens is now split.  
One group swears loyalty to the prince your son.  
The other now rejects the state's own laws  
And dares support the foreign woman's son.  
It's even said that devilish plots  
Will crown Aricia and the Pallas line.  
I thought it right to warn you of this threat.  
Hippolytus is ready to set sail.  
If he appears in this new storm, I fear  
He'll draw a fickle people to his side.

OENONE

Enough, Panope. The queen has heard you.  
She will not fail to heed this vital news.

*[Panope leaves.]*

## SCENE 5

*Phaedra, Oenone*

## CENONE

Madame, je cessais de vous presser de vivre.  
 Déjà même au tombeau je songeais à vous suivre.  
 Pour vous en détourner je n'avais plus de voix.  
 Mais ce nouveau malheur vous prescrit d'autres lois.  
 Votre fortune change et prend une autre face.  
 Le roi n'est plus, Madame, il faut prendre sa place.  
 Sa mort vous laisse un fils à qui vous vous devez,  
 Esclave, s'il vous perd, et roi, si vous vivez.  
 Sur qui dans son malheur voulez-vous qu'il s'appuie?  
 Ses larmes n'auront plus de main qui les essuie.  
 Et ses cris innocents portés jusques aux dieux,  
 Iront contre sa mère irriter ses aïeux.  
 Vivez, vous n'avez plus de reproche à vous faire.  
 Votre flamme devient une flamme ordinaire.  
 Thésée en expirant vient de rompre les nœuds  
 Qui faisaient tout le crime et l'horreur de vos feux  
 Hippolyte pour vous devient moins redoutable,  
 Et vous pouvez le voir sans vous rendre coupable.  
 Peut-être convaincu de votre aversion  
 Il va donner un chef à la sédition.  
 Détrompez son erreur, fléchissez son courage.  
 Roi de ces bords heureux, Trézène est son partage.  
 Mais il sait que les lois donnent à votre fils  
 Les superbes remparts que Minerve a bâtis.  
 Vous avez l'un et l'autre une juste ennemie.  
 Unissez-vous tous deux pour combattre Aricie.

## PHÈDRE

Eh bien! à tes conseils je me laisse entraîner.  
 Vivons, si vers la vie on peut me ramener,  
 Et si l'amour d'un fils, en ce moment funeste,  
 De mes faibles esprits peut ranimer le reste.

## OENONE

I'd ceased, my lady, urging you to live.  
 I'd thought to go with you down to the tomb.  
 I couldn't say enough to turn you back.  
 But this new sadness dictates different plans.  
 Your fortune's changed, takes on another face.  
 The king is dead, and you must take his place.  
 He leaves a son. Your duty lies with him,  
 A slave without you; if you live, a king.  
 On whom should he rely now in his grief?  
 His tears will not be dried by other hands.  
 His guiltless cries, borne upward to the gods,  
 Will bring ancestral anger down on you.  
 So live. You need accuse yourself no more.  
 Your love becomes an ordinary love.  
 Theseus has broken by his death the bonds  
 That made a crime, a horror, of your love.  
 Hippolytus is less now to be feared.  
 You now may see him guiltlessly.  
 If he believes you hate him still, he could  
 Perhaps become the focus of revolt.  
 Correct his error. Melt his courage down.  
 He rules these happy shores, Troezen's his share,  
 And yet he knows the law gives to your son  
 The soaring ramparts that Minerva built.  
 You two both have a common enemy:  
 Unite in strength against Aricia.

## PHAEDRA

I'll let myself be drawn to your advice.  
 I'll live, if I can now be brought to life,  
 If love for my son in this darkened time  
 Can fire the dying embers of my soul.

## ACTE 2 SCÈNE 1

*Aricie, Ismène*

ARICIE

Hippolyte demande à me voir en ce lieu?  
 Hippolyte me cherche, et veut me dire adieu?  
 Ismène, dis-tu vrai? N'es-tu point abusée?

ISMÈNE

C'est le premier effet de la mort de Thésée.  
 Préparez-vous, Madame, à voir de tous côtés  
 Voler vers vous les cœurs par Thésée écartés.  
 Aricie à la fin de son sort est maîtresse,  
 Et bientôt à ses pieds verra toute la Grèce.

ARICIE

Ce n'est donc point, Ismène, un bruit mal affermi?  
 Je cesse d'être esclave, et n'ai plus d'ennemi?

ISMÈNE

Non, Madame, les dieux ne vous sont plus contraires  
 Et Thésée a rejoint les mânes de vos frères.

ARICIE

Dit-on quelle aventure a terminé ses jours?

ISMÈNE

On sème de sa mort d'incroyables discours.  
 On dit que ravisseur d'une amante nouvelle  
 Les flots ont englouti cet époux infidèle.  
 On dit même, et ce bruit est partout répandu,

## ACT 2 SCENE 1

*Aricia, Ismene*

ARICIA

Hippolytus has asked to see me here?  
 Hippolytus now wants to say good-bye?  
 Is that the truth, Ismene...no mistake?

ISMENE

This is the first result of Theseus' death.  
 Prepare to see flying from everywhere  
 The people Theseus kept away from you.  
 At last you are the mistress of your fate.  
 The whole of Greece will soon be at your feet.

ARICIA

It's not an idle rumour then?  
 I'm not a slave, have no more enemies?

ISMENE

The gods are not against you now, my lady.  
 Theseus has joined your brothers' ghosts below.

ARICIA

But do they say what exploit caused his death?

ISMENE

Fantastic tales of it are springing up.  
 Some say that while he ravished yet another girl,  
 The waves engulfed him in his faithlessness.  
 Others – and this is widely spread – say

Qu'avec Pirithoüs aux enfers descendu  
 Il a vu le Cocyte et les rivages sombres,  
 Et s'est montré vivant aux infernales ombres;  
 Mais qu'il n'a pu sortir de ce triste séjour,  
 Et repasser les bords qu'on passe sans retour.

ARICIE

Croirai-je qu'un mortel avant sa dernière heure  
 Peut pénétrer des morts la profonde demeure?  
 Quel charme l'attirait sur ces bords redoutés?

ISMÈNE

Thésée est mort, Madame, et vous seule en doutez.  
 Athènes en gémit, Trézène en est instruite,  
 Et déjà pour son roi reconnaît Hippolyte.  
 Phèdre dans ce palais tremblante pour son fils,  
 De ses amis troublés demande les avis.

ARICIE

Et tu crois que pour moi plus humain que son père  
 Hippolyte rendra ma chaîne plus légère?  
 Qu'il plaindra mes malheurs?

ISMÈNE

Madame, je le croi.

ARICIE

L'insensible Hippolyte est-il connu de toi?  
 Sur quel frivole espoir penses-tu qu'il me plaigne,  
 Et respecte en moi seule un sexe qu'il dédaigne?  
 Tu vois depuis quel temps il évite nos pas,  
 Et cherche tous les lieux où nous ne sommes pas.

ISMÈNE

That he's gone down to hell with Pirithous,  
 Seen Cocytus along its dark, sad banks,  
 Appeared alive before those hellish shades,  
 But that he cannot leave that mournful place,  
 Recross the river from which none returns.

ARICIA

But could a living man, before his final hour,  
 Go deep down to the dwellings of the dead?  
 What charm could draw him to those fearful shores?

ISMENE

Theseus is dead, my lady. Only you doubt that.  
 Athens is mourning. Troezen has the news,  
 Already hails Hippolytus as king.  
 Here in this palace, Phaedra trembles for her son  
 And asks her anxious friends for their advice.

ARICIA

You think Hippolytus will be more kind  
 Than Theseus was to me? Loosen the chains,  
 Pity my distress?

ISMENE

I do, my lady.

ARICIA

You know Hippolytus? That heart of stone?  
 Why should you think that he will pity me,  
 Respect in me alone a sex he scorns?  
 You've seen how long he has avoided me.  
 He goes to all the places I avoid.

ISMENE

Je sais de ses froideurs tout ce que l'on récite.  
 Mais j'ai vu près de vous ce superbe Hippolyte.  
 Et même, en le voyant, le bruit de sa fierté  
 A redoublé pour lui ma curiosité.  
 Sa présence à ce bruit n'a point paru répondre.  
 Dès vos premiers regards je l'ai vu se confondre.  
 Ses yeux, qui vainement voulaient vous éviter,  
 Déjà pleins de langueur ne pouvaient vous quitter.  
 Le nom d'amant peut-être offense son courage,  
 Mais il en a les yeux, s'il n'en a le langage.

## ARICIE

Que mon cœur, chère Ismène, écoute avidement  
 Un discours qui peut-être a peu de fondement!  
 O toi! qui me connais, te semblait-il croyable  
 Que le triste jouet d'un sort impitoyable,  
 Un cœur toujours nourri d'amertume et de pleurs,  
 Dût connaître l'amour, et ses folles douleurs?  
 Reste du sang d'un roi, noble fils de la terre,  
 Je suis seule échappée aux fureurs de la guerre.  
 J'ai perdu dans la fleur de leur jeune saison  
 Six frères, quel espoir d'une illustre maison!  
 Le fer moissonna tout, et la terre humectée  
 But à regret le sang des neveux d'Érechthée.  
 Tu sais, depuis leur mort, quelle sévère loi  
 Défend à tous les Grecs de soupirer pour moi.  
 On craint que de la sœur les flammes téméraires  
 Ne raniment un jour la cendre de ses frères.  
 Mais tu sais bien aussi de quel mil dédaigneux  
 Je regardais ce soin d'un vainqueur soupçonneux.  
 Tu sais que de tout temps à l'amour opposée,  
 Je rendais souvent grâce à l'injuste Thésée  
 Dont l'heureuse rigueur secondait mes mépris.  
 Mes yeux alors, mes yeux n'avaient pas vu son fils.  
 Non que par les yeux seuls lâchement enchantée  
 J'aime en lui sa beauté, sa grâce tant vantée,  
 Présents dont la nature a voulu l'honorer,

I know what's said about his iciness.  
 I've seen this haughty man, though, close to you.  
 As I watched him, the talk of all his pride  
 Increased my curiosity in him.  
 His manner did not seem to match the talk.  
 One glance from you, and he became confused.  
 He tried to shun your gaze – in vain. His eyes  
 Were very soft, could not be kept off you.  
 Perhaps the name of lover hurts his pride.  
 But yet he has the eyes of one, if not the tongue.

## ARICIA

How greedily, Ismene, I listen  
 To all you say, however wrong it is.  
 You know me well. Could you believe that I –  
 This sad plaything of unpitying fate,  
 My heart for ever fed on hurt and tears –  
 Would ever know the maddening pain of love?  
 Last of a royal line – my father was earth's son –  
 I have alone escaped the curse of war.  
 I lost six brothers in the flowering  
 Of their youth...oh the hope my blood-line had for them  
 The sword cut down them all. The moistened earth  
 Was made to drink Erechtheus' nephews' blood.  
 And since they died, you know how harsh a law  
 Forbids all Greeks to sympathise with me.  
 They fear my love could one day challenge them,  
 Could fire my brothers' ashes into life.  
 And yet you know how scornfully I've viewed  
 The care of my suspicious conqueror.  
 You know I was a constant enemy of love.  
 I used to thank that tyrant Theseus.  
 His harshness sorted well with my contempt.  
 But then my eyes...I had not seen his son.  
 It isn't that my eyes have been beguiled  
 And love him for his handsomeness, his much praised grace.  
 Those gifts good fortune has bestowed on him,

Qu'il méprise lui-même, et qu'il semble ignorer.  
 J'aime, je prise en lui de plus nobles richesses,  
 Les vertus de son père, et non point les faiblesses.  
 J'aime, je l'avouerai cet orgueil généreux  
 Qui jamais n'a fléchi sous le joug amoureux.  
 Phèdre en vain s'honorait des soupirs de Thésée.  
 Pour moi, je suis plus fière, et fuis la gloire aisée  
 D'arracher un hommage à mille autres offert  
 Et d'entrer dans un cœur de toutes parts ouvert.  
 Mais de faire fléchir un courage inflexible,  
 De porter la douleur dans une âme insensible,  
 D'enchaîner un captif de ses fers étonné,  
 Contre un joug qui lui plaît vainement mutiné;  
 C'est là ce que je veux, c'est là ce qui m'irrite.  
 Hercule à désarmer coûtait moins qu'Hippolyte,  
 Et vaincu plus souvent, et plus tôt surmonté  
 Préparait moins de gloire aux yeux qui l'ont dompté.  
 Mais, chère Ismène, hélas! quelle est mon imprudence!  
 On ne m'opposera que trop de résistance.  
 Tu m'entendras peut-être, humble dans mon ennui,  
 Gémir du même orgueil que j'admire aujourd'hui.  
 Hippolyte aimerait? Par quel bonheur extrême  
 Aurais-je pu fléchir...

ISMÈNE

Vous l'entendrez lui-même.  
 Il vient à vous.

## SCÈNE 2

*Hippolyte, Aricie, Ismène*

HIPPOLYTE

He despises or is unconscious of.  
 I love, I prize, far nobler wealth in him:  
 His father's virtues, not his weaknesses.  
 Let me confess. I love the marvellous pride  
 That never has been humbled by love's yoke.  
 Phaedra can boast of Theseus' sighs in vain.  
 I have more pride. I scorn the easy prize  
 Of tributes paid to thousands more besides,  
 Of love that's given out to everyone.  
 And yet to make a steel-hard courage bend,  
 To make a heart that has no feelings hurt,  
 To put a startled prisoner in chains  
 Who fights against a yoke he loves in vain –  
 It's *that* I want. That rouses me.  
 Hercules was often beaten, routed –  
 That would mean less than with Hippolytus  
 Would yield less glory to the eyes that broke him in.  
 But Ismene, this is all foolishness.  
 His fierce resistance will be all too strong.  
 You yet may hear me, humbled by my grief,  
 Lament the very pride I now admire.  
 Hippolytus in love? What edge of ecstasy  
 Would I have touched...?

ISMENE

Hear him himself.  
 He's coming now.

*[Hippolytus enters.]*

## SCENE 2

*Hippolytus, Aricia, Ismene*

HIPPOLYTUS

Madame, avant que de partir,  
 J'ai cru de votre sort vous devoir avertir.  
 Mon père ne vit plus. Ma juste défiance  
 Présageait les raisons de sa trop longue absence.  
 La mort seule bornant ses travaux éclatants  
 Pouvait à l'univers le cacher si longtemps.  
 Les dieux livrent enfin à la Parque homicide  
 L'ami, le compagnon, le successeur d'Alcide.  
 Je crois que votre haine, épargnant ses vertus,  
 Écoute sans regret ces noms qui lui sont dus.  
 Un espoir adoucit ma tristesse mortelle.  
 Je puis vous affranchir d'une austère tutelle.  
 Je révoque des lois dont j'ai plaint la rigueur,  
 Vous pouvez disposer de vous, de votre cœur.  
 Et dans cette Trézène, aujourd'hui mon partage,  
 De mon aïeul Pitthée autrefois l'héritage,  
 Qui m'a sans balancer reconnu pour son roi,  
 Je vous laisse aussi libre, et plus libre que moi.

ARICIE

Modérez des bontés dont l'excès m'embarrasse.  
 D'un soin si généreux honorer ma disgrâce,  
 Seigneur, c'est me ranger, plus que vous ne pensez,  
 Sous ces austères lois, dont vous me dispensez.

HIPPOLYTE

Du choix d'un successeur Athènes incertaine  
 Parle de vous, me nomme, et le fils de la reine.

ARICIE

De moi, Seigneur?

HIPPOLYTE

Je sais, sans vouloir me flatter,  
 Qu'une superbe loi semble me rejeter.

Lady, before I leave,  
 It's only right that you should know your fate.  
 My father's dead. I rightly feared  
 The reasons why he was away so long.  
 Death could alone have stopped his marvellous deeds  
 And hidden him from all the world so long.  
 The gods gave up to murderous fate at last  
 The friend, companion, heir of Hercules.  
 I hope your hate will spare his qualities  
 And won't resent the honours that he won.  
 One hope can soften, though, my grief:  
 I can release you from his guardianship.  
 It was too strict. I will revoke his penal laws  
 Which I deplore. Your life is yours, as is your heart.  
 And in Troezen here, which is now mine –  
 My great grandfather Pittheus' legacy –  
 Which has proclaimed me king with one accord,  
 I leave you free – much freer than myself.

ARICIA

Your kindness is too much. I blush at it.  
 You treat me now so generously  
 And tie me – more than you'd believe, my lord –  
 To those harsh laws from which you've set me free.

HIPPOLYTUS

Athens is uncertain whom to choose as heir.  
 They talk of you, of me, of the queen's son.

ARICIA

Of me, my lord?

HIPPOLYTUS

I don't deceive myself.  
 I know the rigid law that bars me, so it seems.



La Grèce me reproche une mère étrangère.  
 Mais si pour concurrent je n'avais que mon frère,  
 Madame, j'ai sur lui de véritables droits  
 Que je saurais sauver du caprice des lois.  
 Un frein plus légitime arrête mon audace.  
 Je vous cède, ou plutôt je vous rends une place,  
 Un sceptre, que jadis vos aïeux ont reçu  
 De ce fameux mortel que la terre a conçu.  
 L'adoption le mit entre les mains d'Égée.  
 Athènes par mon père accrue, et protégée,  
 Reconnut avec joie un roi si généreux,  
 Et laissa dans l'oubli vos frères malheureux.  
 Athènes dans ses murs maintenant vous rappelle.  
 Assez elle a gémi d'une longue querelle,  
 Assez dans ses sillons votre sang englouti  
 A fait fumer le champ dont il était sorti.  
 Trézène m'obéit. Les campagnes de Crète  
 Offrent au fils de Phèdre une riche retraite.  
 L'Attique est votre bien. Je pars, et vais pour vous  
 Réunir tous les vœux partagés entre nous.

## ARICIE

De tout ce que j'entends étonnée et confuse  
 Je crains presque, je crains qu'un songe ne m'abuse.  
 Veillé-je? Puis-je croire un semblable dessein?  
 Quel dieu, Seigneur, quel dieu l'a mis dans votre sein?  
 Qu'à bon droit votre gloire en tous lieux est semée!  
 Et que la vérité passe la renommée!  
 Vous-même en ma faveur vous voulez vous trahir?  
 N'était-ce pas assez de ne me point haïr?  
 Et d'avoir si longtemps pu défendre votre âme  
 De cette inimitié...

## HIPPOLYTE

Moi, vous haïr, Madame?  
 Avec quelques couleurs qu'on ait peint ma fierté,  
 Croit-on que dans ses flancs un monstre m'ait porté?

My mother is a foreigner, and Greece  
 Objects. But if my only rival were  
 My stepbrother, I'd take clear precedence  
 And would be saved the folly of the law.  
 What holds me back is more legitimate.  
 I hand or, rather, give you back  
 A sceptre that your ancestors received  
 From that great man who was the earth's own son.  
 Adoption placed it in Aegus' hands.  
 Once Theseus had made Athens great and safe,  
 She hailed him as her noble king with joy  
 And left your brothers in obscurity.  
 Now Athens calls you back within her walls.  
 This endless feud has made her grieve enough.  
 Your family's blood has now been spilled enough.  
 The furrowed fields from which it sprang are drenched.  
 Troezen is now mine. The lands of Crete  
 Will make a rich retreat for Phaedra's son.  
 But Attica is yours. I'll set out now  
 To unify the votes that still are split.

## ARICIA

All this amazes, troubles me. I fear...  
 I almost fear...a dream's deceiving me.  
 Am I awake? Can I believe all this?  
 My lord, what god inspired you with this plan?  
 Your fame is justly spread throughout the world  
 And yet the truth surpasses your renown.  
 You would betray yourself to favour me...?  
 Ceasing to hate me would have been enough,  
 Keeping your heart so long a time  
 From old hostilities...

## HIPPOLYTUS

I, hate you, my lady?  
 Whatever has been said about my pride,  
 Do you all think some monster gave me birth?

Quelles sauvages mœurs, quelle haine endurcie  
Pourrait, en vous voyant, n'être point adoucie?  
Ai-je pu résister au charme décevant...

ARICIE

Quoi, Seigneur?

HIPPOLYTE

Je me suis engagé trop avant.  
Je vois que la raison cède à la violence.  
Puisque j'ai commencé de rompre le silence,  
Madame, il faut poursuivre. Il faut vous informer  
D'un secret que mon cœur ne peut plus renfermer.  
Vous voyez devant vous un Prince déplorable,  
D'un téméraire orgueil exemple mémorable.  
Moi, qui contre l'amour fièrement révolté,  
Aux fers de ses captifs ai longtemps insulté,  
Qui des faibles mortels déplorant les naufrages,  
Pensais toujours du bord contempler les orages,  
Asservi maintenant sous la commune loi,  
Par quel trouble me vois-je emporté loin de moi!  
Un moment a vaincu mon audace imprudente.  
Cette âme si superbe est enfin dépendante.  
Depuis près de six mois, honteux, désespéré,  
Portant partout le trait dont je suis déchiré,  
Contre vous, contre moi, vainement je m'éprouve.  
Présente je vous fuis, absente je vous trouve.  
Dans le fond des forêts votre image me suit.  
La lumière du jour, les ombres de la nuit  
Tout retrace à mes yeux les charmes que j'évite,  
Tout vous livre à l'envi le rebelle Hippolyte.  
Moi-même pour tout fruit de mes soins superflus,  
Maintenant je me cherche et ne me trouve plus.  
Mon arc, mes javelots, mon char, tout m'importune.  
Je ne me souviens plus des leçons de Neptune.  
Mes seuls gémissements font retentir les bois,

What barbarous customs, frozen hate,  
Would not be melted at the sight of you?  
Could I resist the dazzling spell...

ARICIA

My lord?

HIPPOLYTUS

I've gone too far, I see.  
Reason has given way to violence.  
And yet...I have begun to speak my thoughts.  
I must go on. I have to tell  
A secret that I can no longer hide.  
You see a pitiable prince in front of you,  
A haunting illustration of rash pride.  
I used to be a rebel against love.  
I've long despised the chains her captives wore.  
I used to mourn the shipwrecks of weak men  
And thought to see such storms from safe on shore.  
But now I'm subject to the common law,  
Swept troubled far away from my true self.  
A single moment overcame my pride  
And made my strutting mind subservient.  
For nearly six whole months – in shame, despair –  
I've borne the arrow tearing me apart.  
I've fought against you and myself in vain.  
I shun your presence, seek you when you're gone.  
Your image haunts me in the deepest woods.  
The light of day, the shadows of the night,  
All conjure up the spell from which I run.  
Each single thing surrenders me to you.  
And the result of all this fruitless care...?  
I seek myself and cannot find the man.  
My bow, my spears and chariot, all trouble me.  
I can't recall the lessons Neptune taught.  
The woods now echo with my cries alone.

Et mes coursiers oisifs ont oublié ma voix.  
 Peut-être le récit d'un amour si sauvage  
 Vous fait en m'écoutant rougir de votre ouvrage.  
 D'un cœur qui s'offre à vous quel farouche entretien!  
 Quel étrange captif pour un si beau lien!  
 Mais l'offrande à vos yeux en doit être plus chère.  
 Songez que je vous parle une langue étrangère,  
 Et ne rejetez pas des vœux mal exprimés,  
 Qu'Hippolyte sans vous n'aurait jamais formés.

## SCÈNE 3

*Hippolyte, Aricie, Théramène*

THÈRAMÈNE

Seigneur, la reine vient, et je l'ai devancée.  
 Elle vous cherche.

HIPPOLYTE

Moi!

THÉRAMÈNE

J'ignore sa pensée,  
 Mais on vous est venu demander de sa part.  
 Phèdre veut vous parler avant votre départ.

HIPPOLYTE

Phèdre? Que lui dirai-je? Et que peut-elle attendre...

ARICIE

My steeds are idle, do not know my voice.  
 Perhaps to speak of such a haunted love  
 Will make you blush to hear what you have done.  
 I offer you my love so clumsily...  
 How strange a prisoner for one so fair...  
 Yet that should make the offering more prized.  
 Remember that I speak a foreign tongue.  
 Please, don't reject these graceless words.  
 I never would have said them but for you.

*[Theramenès enters.]*

## SCENE 3

*Hippolytus, Aricia, Theramenès, Ismene*

THERAMENES

My lord, Phaedra is here. I came ahead.  
 She wants to speak.

HIPPOLYTUS

With me?

THERAMENES

I don't know why.  
 Her messenger has come to ask for you.  
 She has to speak to you before you go.

HIPPOLYTUS

What can I say to her? What can she want?

ARICIA

Seigneur, vous ne pouvez refuser de l'entendre.  
 Quoique trop convaincu de son inimitié,  
 Vous devez à ses pleurs quelque ombre de pitié.

HIPPOLYTE

Cependant vous sortez. Et je pars. Et j'ignore  
 Si je n'offense point les charmes que j'adore.  
 J'ignore si ce cœur que je laisse en vos mains...

ARICIE

Partez, Prince, et suivez vos généreux desseins.  
 Rendez de mon pouvoir Athènes tributaire.  
 J'accepte tous les dons que vous me voulez faire.  
 Mais cet empire enfin si grand, si glorieux,  
 N'est pas de vos présents le plus cher à mes yeux.

#### SCÈNE 4

*Hippolyte, Théràmène*

HIPPOLYTE

Ami, tout est-il prêt? Mais la reine s'avance.  
 Va, que pour le départ tout s'arme en diligence.  
 Fais donner le signal, cours, ordonne, et revien  
 Me délivrer bientôt d'un fâcheux entretien.

#### SCÈNE 5

*Phèdre, Hippolyte, Œnone*

You cannot say you will not listen now.  
 However much you know she is your enemy,  
 You owe some shade of pity for her grief.

HIPPOLYTUS

You go away. Must I too leave not knowing if  
 I have offended who I most adore?  
 Or if the heart I leave now in your hands...

ARICIA

Go now. And follow through your generous plan.  
 Make Attica pay homage to my power.  
 I will accept the gifts you've offered me.  
 Yet this great empire, glorious thought it is,  
 Is not your dearest present, in my eyes.

*[She and Ismene leave.]*

#### SCENE 4

*Hippolytus, Theramenes*

HIPPOLYTUS

Theramenes, is all now ready? There's the queen.  
 Go, make everyone prepare to sail at once.  
 Give them the signal, quick. And hurry back  
 To save me from an awkward interview.

*[Theramenes leaves. Phaedra and Oenone enter.]*

#### SCENE 5

*Phaedra, Hippolytus, Oenone*

PHÈDRE [*à Œnone*]

Le voici. Vers mon cœur tout mon sang se retire.  
J'oublie, en le voyant, ce que je viens lui dire.

ŒNONE

Souvenez-vous d'un fils qui n'espère qu'en vous.

PHÈDRE

On dit qu'un prompt départ vous éloigne de nous,  
Seigneur. A vos douleurs je viens joindre mes larmes.  
Je vous viens pour un fils expliquer mes alarmes.  
Mon fils n'a plus de père, et le jour n'est pas loin  
Qui de ma mort encor doit le rendre témoin.  
Déjà mille ennemis attaquent son enfance,  
Vous seul pouvez contre eux embrasser sa défense.  
Mais un secret remords agite mes esprits.  
Je crains d'avoir fermé votre oreille à ses cris.  
Je tremble que sur lui votre juste colère  
Ne poursuive bientôt une odieuse mère.

HIPPOLYTE

Madame, je n'ai point des sentiments si bas.

PHÈDRE

Quand vous me haïriez je ne m'en plaindrais pas,  
Seigneur. Vous m'avez vue attachée à vous nuire;  
Dans le fond de mon cœur vous ne pouviez pas lire.  
A votre inimitié j'ai pris soin de m'offrir.  
Aux bords que j'habitais je n'ai pu vous souffrir.  
En public, en secret, contre vous déclarée,  
J'ai voulu par des mers en être séparée.  
J'ai même défendu par une expresse loi  
Qu'on osât prononcer votre nom devant moi.

PHAEDRA, *to Oenone, at the back of the stage*

Oenone, there he is. My heart... the blood  
Is racing... I see him... forget my words...

OENONE

Think of your son. You are his only hope.

PHAEDRA

They say you leave us very soon, my lord.  
I've come to add my tears for what you mourn.  
I've come to speak a mother's fears to you  
My son is fatherless; the day is  
Not far off when he will see my death as well.  
He is a child. A thousand enemies attack,  
And you alone can help in his defence.  
But dark remorseful shadows haunts my mind.  
I fear I've made you deaf to all his cries.  
I fear your righteous anger at my crimes  
Will soon be persecuting him.

HIPPOLYTUS

My feelings, lady, could not sink so low.

PHAEDRA

If you did hate me, I could not complain,  
My lord. You've seen me hot to do you harm.  
And yet you could not read my deepest heart.  
I've taken pains to nourish your hostility.  
I would not have you present where I lived,  
Opposed you both in public and alone.  
I wanted all the seas to keep you far from me.  
I even censored, by express decree,  
The speaking of your name when I was there.

Si pourtant à l'offense on mesure la peine,  
Si la haine peut seule attirer votre haine,  
Jamais femme ne fut plus digne de pitié,  
Et moins digne, Seigneur, de votre inimitié.

HIPPOLYTE

Des droits de ses enfants une mère jalouse  
Pardonne rarement au fils d'une autre épouse,  
Madame. Je le sais. Les soupçons importuns  
Sont d'un second hymen les fruits les plus communs.  
Toute autre aurait pour moi pris les mêmes ombrages,  
Et j'en aurais peut-être essuyé plus d'outrages.

PHBDRE

Ah, Seigneur! que le ciel, j'ose ici l'attester,  
De cette loi commune a voulu m'excepter!  
Qu'un soin bien différent me trouble, et me dévore!

HIPPOLYTE

Madame, il n'est pas temps de vous troubler encore.  
Peut-être votre époux voit encore le jour;  
Le ciel peut à nos pleurs accorder son retour.  
Neptune le protège, et ce dieu tutélaire  
Ne sera pas en vain imploré par mon père.

PHÈDRE

On ne voit point deux fois le rivage des morts,  
Seigneur. Puisque Thésée a vu les sombres bords,  
En vain vous espérez qu'un dieu vous le renvoie,  
Et l'avare Achéron ne lâche point sa proie.  
Que dis-je? Il n'est point mort, puisqu'il respire en vous.  
Toujours devant mes yeux je crois voir mon époux.  
Je le vois, je lui parle, et mon cœur... Je m'égare,  
Seigneur, ma folle ardeur malgré moi se déclare.

But if the penalty should match the crime,  
If hate alone should draw your hate on me,  
No woman is more worthy of your sympathy,  
Nor less, my lord, of your hostility.

HIPPOLYTUS

A mother jealous of her children's rights  
Seldom forgives another mother's son.  
I know that well. And troubling suspicions  
Are often spawned in second marriages.  
Another woman would have felt the same  
Distrust, and even made me suffer more.

PHAEDRA

Ah no, my lord. The gods, I can here swear,  
Have made me stand outside the common law.  
Far different care eats at me, weighs me down.

HIPPOLYTUS

This is no time to hurt you any more:  
Theseus perhaps may even yet survive.  
The gods may let him back for pity's sake.  
Neptune will shelter him. His guardian god  
Will not be deaf to all my father's prayers.

PHAEDRA

No human visits twice the shores of death,  
My lord. Theseus has seen those dark, dark banks.  
You hope a god will send him back in vain.  
Hungry Acheron does not drop its prey.  
And yet, he is not dead. He breathe in you.  
I see my husband here...before my eyes...  
I see him, speak to him; my heart... I'm lost...  
This frenzy, passion, bursts in spite of me.

## HIPPOLYTE

Je vois de votre amour l'effet prodigieux.  
 Tout mort qu'il est, Thésée est présent à vos yeux.  
 Toujours de son amour votre âme est embrasée.

## PHÈDRE

Oui, Prince, je languis, je brûle pour Thésée,  
 Je l'aime, non point tel que l'ont vu les enfers,  
 Volage adorateur de mille objets divers  
 Qui va du dieu des morts déshonorer la couche;  
 Mais fidèle, mais fier, et même un peu farouche,  
 Charmant, jeune, traînant tous les cœurs après soi,  
 Tel qu'on dépeint nos dieux, ou tel que je vous voi.  
 Il avait votre port, vos yeux, votre langage,  
 Cette noble pudeur colorait son visage,  
 Lorsque de notre Crète il traversa les flots,  
 Digne sujet des vœux des filles de Minos.  
 Que faisiez-vous alors? Pourquoi sans Hippolyte  
 Des héros de la Grèce assembla-t-il l'élite?  
 Pourquoi trop jeune encor ne pûtes-vous alors  
 Entrer dans le vaisseau qui le mit sur nos bords?  
 Par vous aurait péri le monstre de la Crète  
 Malgré tous les détours de sa vaste retraite.  
 Pour en développer l'embarras incertain  
 Ma soeur du fil fatal eût armé votre main.  
 Mais non, dans ce dessein je l'aurais devancée.  
 L'Amour m'en eût d'abord inspiré la pensée.  
 C'est moi, Prince, c'est moi, dont l'utile secours  
 Vous eût du Labyrinthe enseigné les détours.  
 Que de soins m'eut coûtés cette tête charmante!  
 Un fil n'eût point assez rassuré votre amante.  
 Compagne du péril qu'il vous fallait chercher,  
 Moi-même devant vous j'aurais voulu marcher.  
 Et Phèdre au labyrinthe avec vous descendue,  
 Se serait avec vous retrouvée, ou perdue.

## HIPPOLYTE

## HIPPOLYTUS

I see the wondrous power of your love.  
 Though he is dead, Theseus is here to you.  
 Your soul is set on fire still by his love.

## PHAEDRA

Yes, prince, I ache, I burn for Theseus.  
 I love him still, but not as he's been seen in hell,  
 The fickle worshipper of countless things  
 Coming to shame the couch of Hades' god.  
 But faithful, proud, even a little shy,  
 Charming, and young, the spinner out of hearts,  
 As gods are painted... as I see you now.  
 He had your bearing, eyes; he talked like you.  
 His face flushed red with modesty  
 That time he crossed the seas and came to Crete,  
 A fitting man for Minos' daughters' prayers.  
 But what were you doing then? Why gather  
 All the finest men in Greece, and not Hippolytus?  
 Why could you not, for all your youth, have  
 Joined the ship that brought him to our shores?  
 You would have killed the minotaur of Crete,  
 Despite the twists and turns of his great maze.  
 My sister would have given you the thread  
 To find your way through all those tangled paths.  
 But no, I would have been in front of her.  
 Love would have fired me with the thought at once.  
 I would have helped, my lord, I would have taught  
 You all the windings of the labyrinth.  
 What pain your charm, your face, have cost...  
 A thread would not have set my heart at rest.  
 I would have shared the dangers facing you,  
 I would have wanted to go first...down, down...  
 And in the labyrinth with you, I would  
 Have found my way, or else been doomed.

## HIPPOLYTUS

Dieux! qu'est-ce que j'entends? Madame, oubliez-vous  
Que Thésée est mon père, et qu'il est votre époux?

PHÈDRE

Et sur quoi jugez-vous que j'en perds la mémoire,  
Prince? Aurais-je perdu tout le soin de ma gloire?

HIPPOLYTE

Madame, pardonnez. J'avoue en rougissant,  
Que j'accusais à tort un discours innocent.  
Ma honte ne peut plus soutenir votre vue,  
Et je vais...

PHÈDRE

Ah! cruel, tu m'as trop entendue.  
Je t'en ai dit assez pour te tirer d'erreur.  
Eh bien, connais donc Phèdre et toute sa fureur.  
J'aime. Ne pense pas qu'au moment que je t'aime,  
Innocente à mes yeux je m'approuve moi-même,  
Ni que du fol amour qui trouble ma raison  
Ma lâche complaisance ait nourri le poison.  
Objet infortuné des vengeances célestes,  
Je m'abhorre encor plus que tu ne me détestes.  
Les dieux m'en sont témoins, ces dieux qui dans mon flanc  
Ont allumé le feu fatal à tout mon sang,  
Ces dieux qui se sont fait une gloire cruelle  
De séduire le cœur d'une faible mortelle.  
Toi-même en ton esprit rappelle le passé.  
C'est peu de t'avoir fui, cruel, je t'ai chassé.  
J'ai voulu te paraître odieuse, inhumaine.  
Pour mieux te résister, j'ai recherché ta haine.  
De quoi m'ont profité mes inutiles soins?  
Tu me haïssais plus, je ne t'aimais pas moins.  
Tes malheurs te prêtaient encor de nouveaux charmes.  
J'ai languï, j'ai séché, dans les feux, dans les larmes.

Dear god, what do I hear? Do you forget  
That Theseus is my father? You're his wife.

PHAEDRA

What makes you think I have forgotten that?  
You think I've lost all caring for my name?

HIPPOLYTUS

Forgive me. Look...I blush. You spoke in innocence.  
I'm sure I misinterpreted your words.  
I'm so ashamed...I cannot look...I'll go.

PHAEDRA

Don't be so cruel... you understand me all too well.  
I've said enough to make it clear as day.  
You shall know me, in all my wild desires.  
I love you. But don't for one moment think  
That I believe these feelings to be innocent.  
It hasn't been complacency that's fed  
The poison of mad love that haunts my mind.  
I am the victim of the vengeful gods.  
I loathe myself much more than you can hate.  
The gods are witness. They kindled the flame  
In me that has been death to my whole family.  
These gods have gloried cruelly in their power  
To tempt a feeble human being's heart.  
Remember all the past – the ways I tried  
To shun you for your cruelty, drove you away.  
I tried to seem inhuman to you – vile.  
I sought your hate the better to resist.  
What good were all these vain attempts?  
You hated me the more. I didn't love you less.  
Your spell was even stronger as you hurt.  
I yearned, dried up inside, in fire and tears.



Il suffit de tes yeux pour t'en persuader,  
 Si tes yeux un moment pouvaient me regarder.  
 Que dis-je? Cet aveu que je te viens de faire,  
 Cet aveu si honteux, le crois-tu volontaire?  
 Tremblante pour un fils que je n'osais trahir,  
 Je te venais prier de ne le point haïr.  
 Faibles projets d'un cœur trop plein de ce qu'il aime!  
 Hélas! je ne t'ai pu parler que de toi-même.  
 Venge-toi, punis-moi d'un odieux amour.  
 Digne fils du héros qui t'a donné le jour,  
 Délivre l'univers d'un monstre qui t'irrite.  
 La veuve de Thésée ose aimer Hippolyte!  
 Crois-moi, ce monstre affreux ne doit point t'échapper.  
 Voilà mon cœur. C'est là que ta main doit frapper.  
 Impatient déjà d'expier son offense  
 Au-devant de ton bras je le sens qui s'avance.  
 Frappe. Ou si tu le crois indigne de tes coups,  
 Si ta haine m'envie un supplice si doux,  
 Ou si d'un sang trop vil ta main serait trempée,  
 Au défaut de ton bras prête-moi ton épée.  
 Donne.

ŒNONE

Que faites-vous, Madame? Justes dieux!  
 Mais on vient. Évitez des témoins odieux,  
 Venez, rentrez, fuyez une honte certaine.

## SCÈNE 6

*Hippolyte, Théràmène*

THÉRAMÈNE

Est-ce Phèdre qui fuit, ou plutôt qu'on entraîne?

Simply by looking, you would know that's true,  
 If for one moment you could look at me.  
 What have I said? Confessed it all to you,  
 So full of shame. You think I've done this willingly?  
 I'm trembling for a child I can't betray.  
 I came to beg you not to hate my son.  
 How weak a goal when I'm so full of love  
 I cannot speak of anyone but you.  
 Have your revenge. Punish this hateful love.  
 Be worthy of the man who gave you life,  
 And rid the universe of this vile thing.  
 Theseus' widow dares to love his son!  
 The awful monster must not get away.  
 Here is my heart, the spot where you must strike.  
 I feel it yearning upwards to your arms,  
 Impatient now to expiate its crime.  
 Kill me. You think I am too vile to kill...?  
 Your hate would grudge me such an easy death –  
 If blood as foul as mine would soil your hands,  
 If you won't strike, then let me have your sword.  
 Give me it!

OENONE

What are you doing? God.  
 Someone's coming. We can't have witnesses.  
 Come, let's go in quick. Hide the disgrace.

*[Phaedra and Oenone leave. Theramenes enters.]*

## SCENE 6

*Hippolytus, Theramenes*

THERAMENES

My lord, could that be Phaedra rushing off?

Pourquoi, Seigneur, pourquoi ces marques de douleur?  
Je vous vois sans épée, interdit, sans couleur?

HIPPOLYTE

Théramène, fuyons. Ma surprise est extrême.  
Je ne puis sans horreur me regarder moi-même.  
Phèdre... Mais non, grands dieux! qu'en un profond oubli  
Cet horrible secret demeure enseveli.

THÉRAMÈNE

Si vous voulez partir, la voile est préparée.  
Mais Athènes, Seigneur, s'est déjà déclarée;  
Ses chefs ont pris les voix de toutes ses tribus.  
Votre frère l'emporte, et Phèdre a le dessus.

HIPPOLYTE

Phèdre?

THÉRAMÈNE

Un héraut chargé des volontés d'Athènes  
De l'État en ses mains vient remettre les rênes.  
Son fils est roi, Seigneur.

HIPPOLYTE

Dieux, qui la connaissez,  
Est-ce donc sa vertu que vous récompensez?

THÉRAMÈNE

Cependant un bruit sourd veut que le roi respire.  
On prétend que Thésée a paru dans l'Épire.  
Mais moi, qui l'y cherchai, Seigneur, je sais trop bien...

HIPPOLYTE

Or dragged away? ...My lord, you look so ill.  
Where is your sword? You're speechless...deathly pale.

HIPPOLYTUS

Theramenes, we have to go. I've not the words...  
I have become a horror to myself.  
Phaedra...Oh no, great gods, entire forgetfulness  
Must keep this secret dark for all eternity.

THERAMENES

If you must leave, the ships are all prepared.  
But Athens has already cast its vote.  
Its leaders have consulted all the tribes;  
Your brother carries them. Phaedra has won.

HIPPOLYTUS

Phaedra?

THERAMENES

A herald authorised by Athens' will  
Has placed the reins of state within her hands.  
Her son is king, my lord.

HIPPOLYTUS

Dear gods, you know  
Her nature. Is it her virtue you reward?

THERAMENES

But still, vague rumours say the king's alive.  
Theseus, it's claimed, was seen in Epirus.  
But I was there in search of him. I know...

HIPPOLYTUS

N'importe, écoutons tout et ne négligeons rien.  
Examinons ce bruit, remontons à sa source.  
S'il ne mérite pas d'interrompre ma course,  
Partons, et quelque prix qu'il en puisse coûter,  
Mettons le sceptre aux mains digne de le porter.

No matter now. Listen to everything.  
Track all these rumours down now to their source.  
If breaking off my plans is not worthwhile,  
We'll leave; but at whatever cost,  
We'll place the sceptre soon in better hands

## ACTE 3 SCÈNE 1

*Phèdre, Cénone*

PHÈDRE

Ah! que l'on porte ailleurs les honneurs qu'on m'envoie.  
 Importune, peux-tu souhaiter qu'on me voie?  
 De quoi viens-tu flatter mon esprit désolé?  
 Cache-moi bien plutôt, je n'ai que trop parlé.  
 Mes fureurs au dehors ont osé se répandre:  
 J'ai dit ce que jamais on ne devait entendre.  
 Ciel! comme il m'écoutait! par combien de détours  
 L'insensible a longtemps éludé mes discours!  
 Comme il ne respirait qu'une retraite prompte!  
 Et combien sa rougeur a redoublé ma honte!  
 Pourquoi détournais-tu mon funeste dessein?  
 Hélas! quand son épée allait chercher mon sein,  
 A-t-il pâli pour moi? Me l'a-t-il arrachée?  
 Il suffit que ma main l'ait une fois touchée,  
 Je l'ai rendue horrible à ses yeux inhumains,  
 Et ce fer malheureux profanerait ses mains.

CÉNONE

Ainsi dans vos malheurs, ne songeant qu'à vous plaindre,  
 Vous nourrissez un feu qu'il vous faudrait éteindre.  
 Ne vaudrait-il pas mieux, digne sang de Minos,  
 Dans de plus nobles soins chercher votre repos,  
 Contre un ingrat qui plaît recourir à la fuite,  
 Régner, et de l'État embrasser la conduite?

PHÈDRE

Moi régner! moi, ranger un État sous ma loi!  
 Quand ma faible raison ne règne plus sur moi.  
 Lorsque j'ai de mes sens abandonné l'empire,  
 Quand sous un joug honteux à peine je respire,

## ACT 3 SCENE 1

*Phaedra, Oenone*

PHAEDRA

Oh take away these honours that they send.  
 Stop bothering. You want me to be seen?  
 How could you hope to soothe my crying heart?  
 Better to hide me now. I've said too much.  
 My frenzy's dared to spread itself abroad;  
 I've spoken things that never should be heard.  
 God! and how he listened... How many twists  
 And turns he made to miss my meaning.  
 How much he longed to run off there and then.  
 And how he blushed, to add to all my shame.  
 Why did you hold me back? I planned to die.  
 Oh, when his sword was pointed at my breasts,  
 Did he turn pale for me, snatch it away?  
 It was enough my hand had touched it once.  
 I'd made it filthy in his eyes.  
 The wretched sword would soil his hands.

OENONE

You cry and only think of what gives pain.  
 You fan a fire that ought to be put out.  
 Your father is king Minos; ought you not  
 To seek some peace of mind in higher things?  
 Control this thankless boy who runs away,  
 And undertake the business of the state.

PHAEDRA

I reign? I rule a people, rule a state,  
 When I'm too weak to rule myself?  
 When I have lost control of how I feel?  
 When I am choking at this yoke of shame?

Quand je me meurs!

CENONE

Fuyez.

PHÈDRE

Je ne le puis quitter.

CENONE

Vous l'osâtes bannir, vous n'osez l'éviter.

PHÈDRE

Il n'est plus temps. Il sait mes ardeurs insensées.  
De l'austère pudeur les bornes sont passées.  
J'ai déclaré ma honte aux yeux de mon vainqueur  
Et l'espoir malgré moi s'est glissé dans mon cœur.  
Toi-même rappelant ma force défaillante,  
Et mon âme déjà sur mes lèvres errante,  
Par tes conseils flatteurs tu m'as su ranimer,  
Tu m'as fait entrevoir que je pouvais l'aimer.

CENONE

Hélas! de vos malheurs innocente ou coupable,  
De quoi pour vous sauver n'étais-je point capable?  
Mais si jamais l'offense irrita vos esprits,  
Pouvez-vous d'un superbe oublier les mépris?  
Avec quels yeux cruels sa rigueur obstinée  
Vous laissait à ses pieds peu s'en faut prosternée!  
Que son farouche orgueil le rendait odieux!  
Que Phèdre en ce moment n'avait-elle mes yeux!

PHÈDRE

Cenone, il peut quitter cet orgueil qui te blesse.

When I am dying?

OENONE

Escape.

PHAEDRA

I cannot leave him.

OENONE

You dared to banish him. Dare avoid him.

PHAEDRA

It's all too late. He's seen how mad I am with love.  
I've gone beyond all bounds of modesty.  
I've voiced my shame to him. He's conquered me.  
Despite myself, hope still creeps in my heart.  
You summoned up my failing strength yourself,  
Just as my soul was hovering on my lips.  
You stroked me so and brought me back to life.  
You let me glimpse that I could worship him.

OENONE

I may be guilty for your pain, or not.  
What would I not have done to save your life?  
If ever insults, though, offended you,  
Can you forget his arrogance?  
How cruelly he stared, stiff and severe,  
And left you almost prostrate at his feet.  
How odious that savage pride he showed.  
Why could you not then see him through my eyes?

PHAEDRA

He may let go the pride that angers you.

Nourri dans les forêts, il en a la rudesse.  
 Hippolyte endurci par de sauvages lois  
 Entend parler d'amour pour la première fois.  
 Peut-être sa surprise a causé son silence,  
 Et nos plaintes peut-être ont trop de violence.

CENONE

Songez qu'une barbare en son sein l'a formé.

PHÈDRE

Quoique Scythe et barbare, elle a pourtant aimé.

CENONE

Il a pour tout le sexe une haine fatale.

PHÈDRE

Je ne me verrai point préférer de rivale.  
 Enfin, tous ces conseils ne sont plus de saison,  
 Sers ma fureur, Cénone, et non point ma raison.  
 Il oppose à l'amour un cœur inaccessible.  
 Cherchons pour l'attaquer quelque endroit plus sensible.  
 Les charmes d'un empire ont paru le toucher.  
 Athènes l'attirait, il n'a pu s'en cacher.  
 Déjà de ses vaisseaux la pointe était tournée,  
 Et la voile flottait aux vents abandonnée.  
 Va trouver de ma part ce jeune ambitieux,  
 Cénone. Fais briller la couronne à ses yeux.  
 Qu'il mette sur son front le sacré diadème;  
 Je ne veux que l'honneur de l'attacher moi-même.  
 Cédons-lui ce pouvoir que je ne puis garder.  
 Il instruira mon fils dans l'art de commander.  
 Peut-être il voudra bien lui tenir lieu de père.  
 Je mets sous son pouvoir et le fils et la mère.  
 Pour le fléchir enfin tente tous les moyens.  
 Tes discours trouveront plus d'accès que les miens.

Brought up in forests, he is raw like them.  
 Some savage laws have hardened him. But now  
 For the first time he hears us speak of love.  
 Perhaps surprise has silenced him.  
 Perhaps we are reproaching him too much.

OENONE

Remember that a savage suckled him.

PHAEDRA

A Scythian savage – and yet she cared.

OENONE

He has a deadly hatred for our sex.

PHAEDRA

I shall then see no rival take my place.  
 But all advice from you is much too late.  
 Help my heart's frenzy, not my reason now.  
 If he is sealed impervious to love,  
 We must attack him in a weaker place.  
 He seemed attracted by the thought of power.  
 Athens excited him; he couldn't hide that fact.  
 He ships were turned in that direction,  
 Their bulging sails all streaming in the wind.  
 Find this ambitious boy for me, Oenone,  
 And hold a dazzling crown up to his eyes,  
 A sacred diadem upon his head.  
 I only want to place it there myself.  
 I'll yield the power I cannot keep to him.  
 He'll teach my son the best ways to command.  
 Perhaps he'll be a father to the boy.  
 Mother and son I'll give up to his might.  
 Try every means, in short, to win him round;  
 He'll listen to your words much more than mine.

PHÈDRE

Presse, pleure, gémis, plains-lui Phèdre mourante,  
Ne rougis point de prendre une voix suppliante.  
Je t'avouerai de tout, je n'espère qu'en toi.  
Va, j'attends ton retour pour disposer de moi.

SCÈNE 2

PHÈDRE [*seule*]

O toi qui vois la honte où je suis descendue,  
Implacable Vénus, suis-je assez confondue?  
Tu ne saurais plus loin pousser ta cruauté,  
Ton triomphe est parfait, tous tes traits ont porté.  
Cruelle, si tu veux une gloire nouvelle,  
Attaque un ennemi qui te soit plus rebelle.  
Hippolyte te fuit, et bravant ton courroux,  
Jamais à tes autels n'a fléchi les genoux.  
Ton nom semble offenser ses superbes oreilles.  
Déesse, venge-toi. Nos causes sont pareilles.  
Qu'il aime. Mais déjà tu reviens sur tes pas,  
Œnone? On me déteste, on ne t'écoute pas.

SCÈNE 3

*Phèdre, Œnone*

ŒNONE

Il faut d'un vain amour étouffer la pensée,  
Madame. Rappelez votre vertu passée.  
Le roi, qu'on a cru mort, va paraître à vos yeux,

PHAEDRA

Beg him, and cry, and moan. Portray me at death's door.  
Don't blush, don't be afraid to plead for me.  
I'll sanction all you say. You are my only hope.  
Go now. I'll wait for you to know my fate.

[*Oenone goes.*]

SCENE 2

*Phaedra* [alone]

So then, no pity, Venus, yet? You see the depths  
To which I've sunk. Is this now low enough?  
You could not be more cruel than this.  
You've won completely now: the arrows all struck home.  
You want more fame for all your savagery?  
Why not take on a man who'll fight you more?  
Hippolytus runs from you, braves your rage.  
He's never knelt before your shrine.  
It seems your name offends his scornful ear.  
Goddess, have your revenge. Our causes are the same.  
Make him love me... [*Oenone enters.*] Oenone, why so quick...?  
He hasn't listened to you...loathes me still?

SCENE 3

*Phaedra, Oenone*

OENONE

Give up all thoughts of love, my lady, now.  
You need to summon up the courage you once had.  
You will soon see...the king we thought was dead.

Thésée est arrivé. Thésée est en ces lieux.  
Le peuple, pour le voir, court et se précipite.  
Je sortais par votre ordre, et cherchais Hippolyte,  
Lorsque jusques au ciel mille cris élancés...

PHÈDRE

Mon époux est vivant, Œnone, c'est assez.  
J'ai fit l'indigne aveu d'un amour qui l'outrage.  
Il vit. Je ne veux pas en savoir davantage.

ŒNONE

Quoi?

PHÈDRE

Je te l'ai prédit, mais tu n'as pas voulu.  
Sur mes justes remords tes pleurs ont prévalu.  
Je mourais ce matin digne d'être pleurée.  
J'ai suivi tes conseils, je meurs déshonorée.

ŒNONE

Vous mourez?

PHÈDRE

Juste ciel! qu'ai-je fait aujourd'hui!  
Mon époux va paraître, et son fils avec lui.  
Je verrai le témoin de ma flamme adultère  
Observer de quel front j'ose aborder son père,  
Le cœur gros de soupirs, qu'il n'a point écoutés,  
L'œil humide de pleurs, par l'ingrat rebutés.  
Penses-tu que sensible à l'honneur de Thésée,  
Il lui cache l'ardeur dont je suis embrasée?  
Laissera-t-il trahir et son père et son roi?  
Pourra-t-il contenir l'horreur qu'il a pour moi?  
Il se tairait en vain. Je sais mes perfidies,

Theseus has come. Theseus is here.  
The people rush and fling themselves at him.  
You ordered me to find Hippolytus  
When shouts and cries are thrown up to the skies...

PHAEDRA

My husband is alive, Oenone. Enough now...  
I have confessed a love that fouls his name.  
He is alive. I want to hear no more.

OENONE

What?

PHAEDRA

I told you, but you would not hear.  
Your tears were stronger than the guilt I felt.  
I might have died this morning worthy of those tears.  
I followed your advice, and die now in great shame.

OENONE

You die?

PHAEDRA

Dear God, what have I done today?  
My husband and his son will soon be here.  
I'll see the witness to adulterous love  
Inspect me as I dare approach the king,  
My heart so great with sighs he would not listen to,  
My eyes so wet with tears he spurned with scorn.  
He's sensitive to Theseus' fame. Will he  
Conceal the love ablaze in me from him?  
Will he betray his people and his king,  
Hold back the loathing that he has for me?  
His silence would not help. I know my treachery,



Œnone, et ne suis point de ces femmes hardies,  
 Qui goûtant dans le crime une tranquille paix  
 Ont su se faire un front qui ne rougit jamais.  
 Je connais mes fureurs, je les rappelle toutes.  
 Il me semble déjà que ces murs, que ces voûtes,  
 Vont prendre la parole, et prêts à m'accuser  
 Attendent mon époux pour le désabuser.  
 Mourons. De tant d'horreurs qu'un trépas me délivre.  
 Est-ce un malheur si grand que de cesser de vivre?  
 La mort aux malheureux ne cause point d'effroi.  
 Je ne crains que le nom que je laisse après moi.  
 Pour mes tristes enfants quel affreux héritage!  
 Le sang de Jupiter doit enfler leur courage.  
 Mais quelque juste orgueil qu'inspire un sang si beau,  
 Le crime d'une mère est un pesant fardeau.  
 Je tremble qu'un discours, hélas! trop véritable,  
 Un jour ne leur reproche une mère coupable.  
 Je tremble qu'opprimés de ce poids odieux,  
 L'un ni l'autre jamais n'ose lever les yeux.

## ŒNONE

Il n'en faut point douter, je les plains l'un et l'autre.  
 Jamais crainte ne fut plus juste que la vôtre.  
 Mais à de tels affronts, pourquoi les exposer?  
 Pourquoi contre vous-même allez-vous déposer?  
 C'en est fait. On dira que Phèdre trop coupable,  
 De son époux trahi fuit l'aspect redoutable.  
 Hippolyte est heureux qu'aux dépens de vos jours,  
 Vous-même en expirant appuyez ses discours.  
 A votre accusateur, que pourrai-je répondre?  
 Je serai devant lui trop facile à confondre.  
 De son triomphe affreux je le verrai jouir,  
 Et conter votre honte à qui voudra l'ouïr.  
 Ah! que plutôt du ciel la flamme me dévore!  
 Mais ne me trompez point, vous est-il cher encore?  
 De quel œil voyez-vous ce prince audacieux?

## PHÈDRE

Oenone. I'm not a daring woman  
 Who finds great peace of mind amid my crimes,  
 Who feigns a face that never blushes red.  
 I know my madnesses, recall them all.  
 Already now, these walls, I think, these vaults  
 Will start to speak. They're ready to accuse.  
 They only want my husband here – and then they'll tell.  
 Please death release me from such horrors now.  
 Is it so great a hurt to cease to breathe?  
 Death cannot frighten those who live in pain.  
 The name I leave behind is all I fear.  
 What dreadful legacy for my poor sons.  
 The blood of Jupiter should swell their souls;  
 But yet, whatever pride is felt from blood  
 So fine, a mother's sin is hard to bear.  
 I shudder that some words – words all too true –  
 Will blame them one day for my guilt.  
 I fear they'll be so crushed by that foul load  
 That they will never dare to raise their eyes again.

## OENONE

No doubt of it. I pity both of them.  
 Your fears are more than justified.  
 But why expose them to this shame and pain?  
 And why incriminate yourself? That will prove all.  
 They'll say that Phaedra was so full of guilt  
 She fled her wounded husband's eyes in fear.  
 Hippolytus will thrill at your expense  
 To see you dead, and so confirm his tale.  
 Accuse he will – and how can I respond?  
 I'll be too easily confused in front of him.  
 I'll see him revelling in his vile success,  
 Telling your shame to all who want to hear.  
 I'd sooner be destroyed by heaven's fire.  
 But tell me the truth...is he so dear, still?  
 How do you look upon this daring prince?

## PHAEDRA

Je le vois comme un monstre effroyable à mes yeux.

ŒNONE

Pourquoi donc lui céder une victoire entière?  
 Vous le craignez... Osez l'accuser la première  
 Du crime dont il peut vous charger aujourd'hui.  
 Qui vous démentira? Tout parle contre lui.  
 Son épée en vos mains heureusement laissée,  
 Votre trouble présent, votre douleur passée,  
 Son père par vos cris dès longtemps prévenu,  
 Et déjà son exil par vous-même obtenu.

PHÈDRE

Moi, que j'ose opprimer et noircir l'innocence!

ŒNONE

Mon zèle n'a besoin que de votre silence.  
 Tremblante comme vous, j'en sens quelques remords.  
 Vous me verriez plus prompt affronter mille morts.  
 Mais puisque je vous perds sans ce triste remède,  
 Votre vie est pour moi d'un prix à qui tout cède.  
 Je parlerai. Thésée aigri par mes avis,  
 Bornera sa vengeance à l'exil de son fils.  
 Un père en punissant, Madame, est toujours père.  
 Un supplice léger suffit à sa colère.  
 Mais le sang innocent dût-il être versé,  
 Que ne demande point votre honneur menacé?  
 C'est un trésor trop cher pour oser le commettre.  
 Quelque loi qu'il vous dicte, il faut vous y soumettre,  
 Madame, et pour sauver notre honneur combattu,  
 Il faut immoler tout, et même la vertu.  
 On vient, je vois Thésée.

PHÈDRE

He is a fearful horror to my eyes.

OENONE

Then why allow him total victory?  
 You're still afraid. Then dare accuse him first  
 Before he charges you with that same crime.  
 Who'll contradict? It's all against him now –  
 He gladly gave his sword to you,  
 Your anguish now, your past distress,  
 Theseus warned a long time by your cries,  
 His banishment that you yourself obtained.

PHAEDRA

So am I then to brand a guiltless man?

OENONE

I only need your silence to succeed.  
 I'm trembling now – like you. I feel remorse.  
 I'd sooner undergo a thousand deaths.  
 I'll lose you, though, without this remedy;  
 I prize your life beyond the world...  
 I'll speak. Theseus will be incensed. He'll curb  
 His vengeance, though, to banishing his son.  
 A father when he disciplines remains  
 A father still. A modest punishment will serve  
 His rage. Even if guiltless blood is shed,  
 Your honour's threatened, demands that price.  
 You dare not put so rare a prize at risk.  
 Whatever it dictates must be obeyed,  
 My lady. To keep your honour safe,  
 All – even goodness – must be sacrificed.  
 Someone is coming. That's Theseus...

PHAEDRA

PHÈDRE

Ah! je vois Hippolyte.  
Dans ses yeux insolents je vois ma perte écrite.  
Fais ce que tu voudras, je m'abandonne à toi.  
Dans le trouble où je suis, je ne puis rien pour moi.

SCÈNE 4

*Thésée, Hippolyte, Phèdre, Œnone, Théramène*

THÉSÉE

La fortune à mes yeux cesse d'être opposée,  
Madame, et dans vos bras met...

PHÈDRE

Arrêtez, Thésée,  
Et ne profanez point des transports si charmants.  
Je ne mérite plus ces doux empressements.  
Vous êtes offensé. La fortune jalouse  
N'a pas en votre absence épargné votre épouse,  
Indigne de vous plaire, et de vous approcher,  
Je ne dois désormais songer qu'à me cacher.

SCÈNE 5

*Thésée. Hippolyte, Théramène*

THÉSÉE

Quel est l'étrange accueil qu'on fait à votre père,

PHAEDRA

And Hippolytus...  
I see my ruin written in his hard  
Cold eyes. Do what you will. I'm in your hands.  
The turmoil that I'm in... I cannot help myself...

*[Theseus enters, with Hippolytus and Theramenes.]*

SCENE 4

*Theseus, Hippolytus, Phaedra, Oenone, Theramenes*

THESEUS

My fate has turned from darkness now,  
My lady. Here in your arms...

PHAEDRA

No, Theseus.  
Don't desecrate the charm of your delight.  
I am no longer worthy of such gentleness.  
You have been sinned against. You were away  
And jealous fortune did not spare your wife.  
I am not fit to please you, or come close.  
My only thought now is to hide.

*[She leaves with Oenone.]*

SCENE 5

*Theseus, Hippolytus, Theramenes*

THESEUS

So why this strangest welcome to me now,

Mon fils?

HIPPOLYTE

Phèdre peut seule expliquer ce mystère.  
Mais si mes vœux ardents vous peuvent émouvoir,  
Permettez-moi, Seigneur, de ne la plus revoir,  
Souffrez que pour jamais le tremblant Hippolyte  
Disparaisse des lieux que votre épouse habite.

THÉSÉE

Vous, mon fils, me quitter?

HIPPOLYTE

Je ne la cherchais pas,  
C'est vous qui sur ces bords conduisîtes ses pas.  
Vous daignâtes, Seigneur, aux rives de Trézène  
Confier en partant Aricie, et la reine.  
Je fus même chargé du soin de les garder.  
Mais quels soins désormais peuvent me retarder?  
Assez dans les forêts mon oisive jeunesse  
Sur de vils ennemis a montré son adresse.  
Ne pourrai-je en fuyant un indigne repos,  
D'un sang plus glorieux teindre mes javelots?  
Vous n'aviez pas encore atteint l'âge où je touche,  
Déjà plus d'un tyran, plus d'un monstre farouche  
Avait de votre bras senti la pesanteur.  
Déjà de l'insolence heureux persécuteur,  
Vous aviez des deux mers assuré les rivages,  
Le libre voyageur ne craignait plus d'outrages.  
Hercule respirant sur le bruit de vos coups,  
Déjà de son travail se reposait sur vous.  
Et moi, fils inconnu d'un si glorieux père,  
Je suis même encor loin des traces de ma mère.  
Souffrez que mon courage ose enfin s'occuper.  
Souffrez, si quelque monstre a pu vous échapper,  
Que j'apporte à vos pieds sa dépouille honorable,

Hippolytus?

HIPPOLYTUS

Phaedra alone can solve the mystery.  
But if my burning wishes move you still,  
Allow me never to set eyes on her again.  
Allow me...I'm shaking...to disappear  
For ever from the places where she is.

THESEUS

You're leaving me?

HIPPOLYTUS

I did not seek her out.  
You were the one who brought her to these shores.  
And when you left, my lord, you deigned to trust  
Aricia and your queen in Troezen.  
You even placed them both within my care.  
But what care now should keep me here?  
I've wasted youth enough and all my skill  
On paltry animals that roam the woods.  
It's time to leave this shameful idleness  
And stain my javelins with finer blood.  
Before you'd reached the age that I am now,  
More than one tyrant, one wild beast,  
Had felt your arm, the strength it had.  
You were the scourge of tyranny by then.  
You'd made the shorelines of two seas quite safe,  
So travellers could roam and fear no harm.  
Hercules caught his breath at what you'd done  
And handed all his labours on to you.  
And I, this glorious father's unknown son,  
Am outstripped even by my mother's deeds.  
Allow my courage now to find its work.  
If some inhuman thing escaped your sword,  
Let me throw down its carcass at your feet.

Ou que d'un beau trépas la mémoire durable,  
Éternisant des jours si noblement finis,  
Prouve à tout l'avenir que j'étais votre fils.

## THÉSÉE

Que vois-je? Quelle horreur dans ces lieux répandue  
Fait fuir devant mes yeux ma famille éperdue?  
Si je reviens si craint, et si peu désiré,  
O ciel! de ma prison pourquoi m'as-tu tiré?  
Je n'avais qu'un ami. Son imprudente flamme  
Du tyran de l'Épire allait ravir la femme.  
Je servais à regret ses desseins amoureux;  
Mais le sort irrité nous aveuglait tous deux.  
Le tyran m'a surpris sans défense et sans armes.  
J'ai vu Pirithoüs, triste objet de mes larmes,  
Livré par ce barbare à des monstres cruels,  
Qu'il nourrissait du sang des malheureux mortels.  
Moi-même il m'enferma dans des cavernes sombres,  
Lieux profonds et voisins de l'empire des ombres.  
Les dieux, après six mois, enfin m'ont regardé.  
J'ai su tromper les yeux de qui j'étais gardé.  
D'un perfide ennemi j'ai purgé la nature;  
A ses monstres lui-même a servi de pâture.  
Et lorsque avec transport je pense m'approcher  
De tout ce que les dieux m'ont laissé de plus cher;  
Que dis-je? Quand mon âme à soi-même rendue  
Vient se rassasier d'une si chère vue,  
Je n'ai pour tout accueil que des frémissements.  
Tout fuit, tout se refuse à mes embrassements.  
Et moi-même éprouvant la terreur que j'inspire,  
Je voudrais être encor dans les prisons d'Épire.  
Parlez. Phèdre se plaint que je suis outragé.  
Qui m'a trahi? Pourquoi ne suis-je pas vengé?  
La Grèce à qui mon bras fut tant de fois utile,  
A-t-elle au criminel accordé quelque asile?  
Vous ne répondez point. Mon fils, mon propre fils,  
Est-il d'intelligence avec mes ennemis?  
Entrons. C'est trop garder un doute qui m'accable.

Or let the memory of a glorious death  
Eternalise a life that ended well  
And prove to all the world I was your son.

## THESEUS

What's this? What horror has spread through this place  
To make my family run from me so distraught?  
If I come home so feared, so undesired,  
Why, heaven, did you free me from my goal?  
I only had one friend. So mad in love,  
He tried to steal the wife of Epirus' king.  
Reluctantly, I helped him in his scheme.  
But fate was angry, blinded both of us.  
The tyrant-king surprised me – I'd no arms –  
And I saw Pirithous, a sight for tears,  
Thrown to such beasts by that barbarian,  
Who fed them on the blood of tortured men.  
He shut me up in stifling, pitch-dark caves,  
Deep in the earth, close to the kingdom of the dead.  
It was six months before the gods took heed  
And I could trick the eyes that watched me close.  
Then I purged nature of a treacherous man  
And made him serve as food for his own beasts.  
And when – with joy – I thought to come back here,  
To everything the gods had made most dear –  
Where are the words? – my soul was mine again.  
I came to feast upon so dear a sight...  
And then I find my welcome is a shuddering!  
You all run off, repulsing my embrace.  
I feel inside a horror I inspire.  
I'd gladly be back now in my own gaol.  
Speak. Phaedra tells of great wrong done to me.  
Who has betrayed me? Why aren't I avenged?  
Has Greece, so often helped by my strong arm,  
Now granted sanctuary to the criminal?  
You don't reply...? My son, my only son,  
Have you had dealings with my enemies?  
I must go in. I cannot bear this crushing doubt.

PHÈDRE

Connaissons à la fois le crime et le coupable.  
Que Phèdre explique enfin le trouble où je la voi.

SCÈNE 6

*Hippolyte, Théràmène*

HIPPOLYTE

Où tendait ce discours qui m'a glacé d'effroi?  
Phèdre toujours en proie à sa fureur extrême,  
Veut-elle s'accuser et se perdre elle-même?  
Dieux! que dira le roi? Quel funeste poison  
L'amour a répandu sur toute sa maison!  
Moi-même, plein d'un feu que sa haine réprouve,  
Quel il m'a vu jadis, et quel il me retrouve!  
De noirs pressentiments viennent m'épouvanter.  
Mais l'innocence enfin n'a rien à redouter.  
Allons, cherchons ailleurs par quelle heureuse adresse  
Je pourrai de mon père émouvoir la tendresse,  
Et lui dire un amour qu'il peut vouloir troubler  
Mais que tout son pouvoir ne saurait ébranler.

PHAEDRA

I must know both the crime and criminal.  
Phaedra must tell me now what troubles her.

*[He leaves.]*

SCENE 6

*Hippolytus, Theramenes*

HIPPOLYTUS

His words...they make me freeze with fear...  
Phaedra is gripped by wild and utter rage –  
Will she accuse herself, destroy her life?  
Dear God, what will he say? What poison now  
Has love spread through this family?  
He used to find a passion in me that  
His hate condemned. He finds it in me still.  
Some dark foreboding terrifies my heart.  
Yet nothing, surely, need be feared by innocence.  
Come, let's try to find a happier way  
To touch my father's tenderness once more.  
I'll tell him of a love he may oppose  
But which, for all his power, he will not shake.

*[He leaves with Theramenes.]*

## ACTE 4 SCÈNE 1

*Thésée, Œnone*

## THÉSÉE

Ah! qu'est-ce que j'entends? Un traître, un téméraire,  
 Préparait cet outrage à l'honneur de son père?  
 Avec quelle rigueur, Destin, tu me poursuis!  
 Je ne sais où je vais, je ne sais où je suis.  
 O tendresse! ô bonté trop mal récompensée!  
 Projet audacieux! détestable pensée!  
 Pour parvenir au but de ses noires amours,  
 L'insolent de la force empruntait le secours.  
 J'ai reconnu le fer, instrument de sa rage,  
 Ce fer dont je l'armai pour un plus noble usage.  
 Tous les liens du sang n'ont pu le retenir!  
 Et Phèdre diffèrait à le faire punir!  
 Le silence de Phèdre épargnait le coupable!

## ŒNONE

Phèdre épargnait plutôt un père déplorable.  
 Honteuse du dessein d'un amant furieux,  
 Et du feu criminel qu'il a pris dans ses yeux,  
 Phèdre mourait, Seigneur, et sa main meurtrière  
 Éteignait de ses yeux l'innocente lumière.  
 J'ai vu lever le bras, j'ai couru la sauver.  
 Moi seule à votre amour j'ai su la conserver;  
 Et plaignant à la fois son trouble et vos alarmes,  
 J'ai servi, malgré moi, d'interprète à ses larmes.

## THÉSÉE

Le perfide! il n'a pu s'empêcher de pâlir.  
 De crainte en m'abordant je l'ai vu tressaillir.  
 Je me suis étonné de son peu d'allégresse.  
 Ses froids embrassements ont glacé ma tendresse.

## ACT 4 SCENE 1

*Theseus, Oenone*

## THESEUS

My son's a reckless traitor then, Oenone,  
 Prepared to soil his father's name. That's what I hear.  
 How harshly, fate, you haunt me still.  
 I don't know where I am, or where to go.  
 The tenderness, the kindness repaid so...  
 The boldness of his plan...the filthy thoughts...  
 He shamelessly took on the help of force  
 To gain the object of his dark, dark love.  
 I recognised the sword he drew on her,  
 The sword I gave him for a nobler use.  
 But all those blood-ties could not hold him back.  
 And Phaedra would put off his punishment?  
 Her silence would help spare a guilty man?

## OENONE

She spared, rather, your wretchedness, my lord.  
 This lover's raving schemes, the guilt and fire  
 That burned out in his eyes – she felt such shame...  
 She was dying, my lord. Her murderous hand  
 Tried to put out the guiltless light of life.  
 I saw her raise her arm. I ran to rescue her.  
 I knew, though, how to keep her for your love.  
 I've pitied both her pain and your alarm.  
 I've tried to give some reason for her tears.

## THESEUS

He has betrayed... No wonder he turned pale.  
 As he came up, I saw him wince with fear.  
 I was astonished that he showed no joy.  
 His cold embrace froze all my tenderness.

Mais ce coupable amour dont il est dévoré  
Dans Athènes déjà s'était-il déclaré?

CENONE

Seigneur, souvenez-vous des plaintes de la reine.  
Un amour criminel causa toute sa haine.

THÉSÉE

Et ce feu dans Trézène a donc recommencé?

CENONE

Je vous ai dit, Seigneur, tout ce qui s'est passé.  
C'est trop laisser la reine à sa douleur mortelle.  
Souffrez que je vous quitte et me range auprès d'elle.

## SCÈNE 2

*Thésée, Hippolyte*

THÉSÉE

Ah! le voici. Grands dieux! à ce noble maintien  
Quel œil ne serait pas trompé comme le mien?  
Faut-il que sur le front d'un profane adultère  
Brille de la vertu le sacré caractère?  
Et ne devrait-on pas à des signes certains  
Reconnaître le cœur des perfides humains?

HIPPOLYTE

Puis-je vous demander quel funeste nuage,  
Seigneur, a pu troubler votre auguste visage?

But had this sinful love that eats him up  
Already shown itself in Athens, then?

OENONE

Remember how the queen complained, my lord.  
The guilty love gave rise to all her hate.

THESEUS

And here in Troezen, the passion flamed again?

OENONE

My lord, I've told you all I know.  
The queen must not be left in deathly grief.  
Allow me now to leave and go to her.

*[She leaves, as Hippolytus enters.]*

## SCENE 2

*Theseus, Hippolytus*

THESEUS

Ah, there he is. Great god. What eyes would not  
Be taken in like mine at such nobility.  
Why must a vile adulterer's face shine bright  
With all the sacred look of virtuousness?  
There should be sure and certain signs  
To recognise the hearts of treacherous men.

HIPPOLYTUS

My lord, I have to ask, what deadly cloud  
Could cast such shadows on my sovereign's face?



N'osez-vous confier ce secret à ma foi?

THÉSÉE

Perfide, oses-tu bien te montrer devant moi?  
 Monstre, qu'a trop longtemps épargné le tonnerre,  
 Reste impur des brigands dont j'ai purgé la terre!  
 Après que le transport d'un amour plein d'horreur  
 Jusqu'au lit de ton père a porté sa fureur,  
 Tu m'oses présenter une tête ennemie,  
 Tu parais dans des lieux pleins de ton infamie,  
 Et ne vas pas chercher sous un ciel inconnu  
 Des pays où mon nom ne soit point parvenu.  
 Fuis, traître. Ne viens point braver ici ma haine,  
 Et tenter un courroux que je retiens à peine.  
 C'est bien assez pour moi de l'opprobre éternel  
 D'avoir pu mettre au jour un fils si criminel,  
 Sans que ta mort encor honteuse à ma mémoire,  
 De mes nobles travaux vienne souiller la gloire.  
 Fuis. Et si tu ne veux qu'un châtiment soudain  
 T'ajoute aux scélérats qu'a punis cette main,  
 Prends garde que jamais l'astre qui nous éclaire  
 Ne te voie en ces lieux mettre un pied téméraire.  
 Fuis, dis-je, et sans retour précipitant tes pas,  
 De ton horrible aspect purge tous mes États.  
 Et toi, Neptune, et toi, si jadis mon courage  
 D'infames assassins nettoya ton rivage,  
 Souviens-toi que pour prix de mes efforts heureux,  
 Tu promis d'exaucer le premier de mes vœux.  
 Dans les longues rigueurs d'une prison cruelle  
 Je n'ai point imploré ta puissance immortelle.  
 Avare du secours que j'attends de tes soins,  
 Mes vœux t'ont réservé pour de plus grands besoins.  
 Je t'implore aujourd'hui. Venge un malheureux père.  
 J'abandonne ce traître à toute ta colère.  
 Étouffe dans son sang ses désirs effrontés.  
 Thésée à tes fureurs connaîtra tes bontés.

HIPPOLYTE

Can't you confide the secret to my trust?

THESEUS

You hypocrite! How dare you come before me now?  
 You animal...the lightning strike's been too long spared.  
 You foul remains of all the thieves I purged the earth.  
 Your appetite for gross and filthy lust  
 Has brought you frenzied to your father's bed –  
 And you dare show your loathsome face to me...?  
 You come here steeped in filth and vice.  
 You haven't sought some foreign sky,  
 A country where my name has never reached...?  
 Get out, you traitor. Don't brave my hatred  
 And tempt a rage I can now scarce restrain.  
 I share enough of everlasting shame  
 For having brought so vile a son to life,  
 Without your death dishonouring my name  
 And tarnishing the glory of my work.  
 Get out. You will not care for instant punishment  
 To add you to the libertines that I have killed.  
 Make sure the sun that shines on us never  
 Detects you setting foot in here again.  
 I said get out. At once. Never come back.  
 Just cleanse my kingdom of your hideous face.  
 And Neptune, you – if in the past I dared  
 To clear vile murderers from off your shores –  
 Remember the reward for my success:  
 You swore to grant the chief of my desires.  
 Through all the tortures of that cruel gaol,  
 I never called upon your timeless power.  
 I carefully saved up the help you owed,  
 Reserved it for much greater need.  
 I call upon you now. I grieve. Give me revenge.  
 I hand this traitor over to your wrath.  
 Drown all his foul desires in his own blood.  
 I'll recognise your favours by your rage.

HIPPOLYTUS

D'un amour criminel Phèdre accuse Hippolyte?  
 Un tel excès d'horreur rend mon âme interdite;  
 Tant de coups imprévus m'accablent à la fois  
 Qu'ils m'ôtent la parole, et m'étouffent la voix.

## THÉSÉE

Traître, tu prétendais qu'en un lâche silence,  
 Phèdre ensevelirait ta brutale insolence.  
 Il fallait en fuyant ne pas abandonner  
 Le fer qui dans ses mains aide à te condamner.  
 Ou plutôt il fallait, comblant ta perfidie,  
 Lui ravir tout d'un coup la parole et la vie.

## HIPPOLYTE

D'un mensonge si noir justement irrité,  
 Je devrais faire ici parler la vérité,  
 Seigneur. Mais je supprime un secret qui vous touche.  
 Approuvez le respect qui me ferme la bouche;  
 Et sans vouloir vous-même augmenter vos ennuis,  
 Examinez ma vie et songez qui je suis.  
 Quelques crimes toujours précèdent les grands crimes.  
 Quiconque a pu franchir les bornes légitimes,  
 Peut violer enfin les droits les plus sacrés.  
 Ainsi que la vertu, le crime a ses degrés,  
 Et jamais on n'a vu la timide innocence  
 Passer subitement à l'extrême licence.  
 Un jour seul ne fait point d'un mortel vertueux  
 Un perfide assassin, un lâche incestueux.  
 Élevé dans le sein d'une chaste héroïne,  
 Je n'ai point de son sang démenti l'origine.  
 Pitthée estimé sage entre tous les humains,  
 Daigna m'instruire encore au sortir de ses mains.  
 Je ne veux point me peindre avec trop d'avantage;  
 Mais si quelque vertu m'est tombée en partage,  
 Seigneur, je crois surtout avoir fait éclater  
 La haine des forfaits qu'on ose m'imputer.

Phaedra accuses me of sinful love?  
 The horror is too much...my soul is numb.  
 So many unexpected blows at once...  
 Words fail me. My voice is drowned.

## THESEUS

Traitor. You hoped that Phaedra'd be a coward,  
 Keep quiet about your brutal violence.  
 You should not, as you fled, have left your sword.  
 It's in her hands, and helps to prove your guilt.  
 Better have capped your treachery with one fell blow  
 And taken speech and life from her.

## HIPPOLYTUS

I'm outraged – rightly – at so black a lie.  
 I ought, my lord, to let the truth speak now  
 But I'll hold back a secret touching you.  
 Agree now to respect my silences  
 If you don't want to worsen all your pain.  
 Look at my life; consider who I am.  
 Great crimes are always heralded by lesser ones.  
 Whoever oversteps the bounds of law  
 Can in the end outrage the holiest rules.  
 Just as with goodness, crime has its degrees.  
 Shy innocence has never yet been seen  
 To change to total licence at a stroke.  
 A single day can't change an honest man  
 Into a traitor, killer, lustful coward.  
 A good, courageous mother brought me up.  
 I never have betrayed that source of life.  
 And Pittheus, who's thought the wisest of all men,  
 Taught me still further when I'd left her care.  
 I do not want to paint myself as god,  
 But if some goodness is my heritage,  
 I think I've shown with blinding force, my lord,  
 My hatred of the crime that they accuse me of.

C'est par là qu'Hippolyte est connu dans la Grèce.  
 J'ai poussé la vertu jusques a la rudesse.  
 On sait de mes chagrins l'inflexible rigueur.  
 Le jour n'est pas plus pur que le fond de mon cœur  
 Et l'on veut qu'Hippolyte épris d'un feu profane...

THÉSÉE

Oui, c'est ce même orgueil, lâche, qui te condamne.  
 Je vois de tes froideurs le principe odieux.  
 Phèdre seule charmait tes impudiques yeux.  
 Et pour tout autre objet ton âme indifférente  
 Dédaignait de brûler d'une flamme innocente.

HIPPOLYTE

Non, mon père, ce cœur (c'est trop vous le celer)  
 N'a point d'un chaste amour dédaigné de brûler.  
 Je confesse à vos pieds ma véritable offense.  
 J'aime, j'aime, il est vrai, malgré votre défense.  
 Aricie à ses lois tient mes vœux asservis;  
 La fille de Pallante a vaincu votre fils.  
 Je l'adore, et mon âme à vos ordres rebelle,  
 Ne peut ni soupirer, ni brûler que pour elle.

THÉSÉE

Tu l'aimes? Ciel! mais non, l'artifice est grossier.  
 Tu te feins criminel pour te justifier.

HIPPOLYTE

Seigneur, depuis six mois je l'évite, et je l'aime.  
 Je venais en tremblant vous le dire à vous-même.  
 Hé quoi? De votre erreur rien ne vous peut tirer?  
 Par quel affreux serment faut-il vous rassurer?  
 Que la terre, le ciel, que toute la nature...

THÉSÉE

That's what my name is known for throughout Greece.  
 I've held up virtue to the point of boorishness.  
 I'm known for rigid, grave severity.  
 Daylight is not more pure than my heart's core.  
 And yet they want me raptured by unholy love.

THESEUS

It's just this pride, you coward, that damns you now.  
 I see the reason why you've been so cold.  
 Phaedra alone could charm your lustful eyes.  
 For all things else your heart became indifferent,  
 Refused the warmth of innocent desires.

HIPPOLYTUS

Father, it's far too much to hide the truth from you.  
 I have not scorned to feel a guiltless love.  
 I'll tell my true offence – here, at your feet.  
 Despite your ban, I am indeed in love.  
 Aricia has captured me quite utterly.  
 Pallas's daughter holds your son a slave.  
 I worship her. In spite of your command,  
 My soul is all on fire for her alone.

THESEUS

You love her? God, the sham is grosser yet.  
 You feign a crime to justify yourself.

HIPPOLYTUS

For six months now I've shunned and worshipped her.  
 I came all fearful here to tell you so.  
 Will nothing tear you from your fallacies?  
 What dreadful oath will satisfy you, then?  
 May earth, the sky, the whole of nature...

THESEUS

Toujours les scélérats ont recours au parjure.  
Cesse, cesse, et m'épargne un importun discours,  
Si ta fausse vertu n'a point d'autre secours.

HIPPOLYTE

Elle vous paraît fausse, et pleine d'artifice;  
Phèdre au fond de son cœur me rend plus de justice.

THÉSÉE

Ah! que ton impudence excite mon courroux!

HIPPOLYTE

Quel temps à mon exil, quel lieu prescrivez-vous?

THÉSÉE

Fusses-tu par delà les colonnes d'Alcide,  
Je me croirais encor trop voisin d'un perfide.

HIPPOLYTE

Chargé du crime affreux dont vous me soupçonnez,  
Quels amis me plaindront quand vous m'abandonnez?

THÉSÉE

Va chercher des amis dont l'estime funeste  
Honore l'adultère, applaudisse à l'inceste;  
Des traîtres, des ingrats sans honneur et sans loi,  
Dignes de protéger un méchant tel que toi.

HIPPOLYTE

Vous me parlez toujours d'inceste et d'adultère!  
Je me tais. Cependant Phèdre sort d'une mère,

Foul men have always had recourse to perjury.  
Stop, stop. Spare me this self-regarding talk.  
Can't your cheap virtue call on other help?

HIPPOLYTUS

It may seem cheap and full of guile to you,  
But Phaedra in her heart has been more just.

THESEUS

My anger's boiling at your shamelessness!

HIPPOLYTUS

What period for my exile is prescribed? What place?

THESEUS

Beyond Alcide's pillars far might you sail  
And still I'd find your treachery too close.

HIPPOLYTUS

Charged with the crime that you suspect me of,  
What friends will mourn if you abandon me?

THESEUS

Then search out friends who value such dark things,  
Who clap at incest, cheer adultery:  
Betrayers, scum without honour, outside the law,  
Fit to protect a vicious man like you.

HIPPOLYTUS

You harp on incest and adultery.  
I will keep quiet. But Phaedra's mother, now...

PHÈDRE

Phèdre est d'un sang, Seigneur, vous le savez trop bien,  
De toutes ces horreurs plus rempli que le mien.

THÉSÉE

Quoi! ta rage à mes yeux perd toute retenue?  
Pour la dernière fois, ôte-toi de ma vue.  
Sors, traître. N'attends pas qu'un père furieux  
Te fasse avec opprobre arracher de ces lieux.

SCÈNE 3

THÉSÉE [*seul*]

Misérable, tu cours à ta perte infaillible.  
Neptune, par le fleuve aux dieux mêmes terrible,  
M'a donné sa parole, et va l'exécuter.  
Un dieu vengeur te suit, tu ne peux l'éviter.  
Je t'aimais. Et je sens que malgré ton offense,  
Mes entrailles pour toi se troublent par avance.  
Mais à te condamner tu m'as trop engagé.  
Jamais père en effet fut-il plus outragé?  
Justes dieux, qui voyez la douleur qui m'accable,  
Ai-je pu mettre au jour un enfant si coupable?

SCÈNE 4

*Phèdre, Thésée*

PHÈDRE

PHAEDRA

Phaedra is from a race, as well you know,  
Fuller in all these horrors than my own.

THESEUS

Has your insanity lost all control?  
For the last time, get out – out of my sight.  
Get out, you traitor, now, before I start  
To tear you from this place in shame.

*[Hippolytus leaves.]*

SCENE 3

THESEUS [*alone*]

Run off, you boy of tears, to certain death.  
Along the river dreaded even by the gods,  
Neptune gave me his word. It will be kept.  
A god of vengeance follows you. You won't escape.  
I loved you once. Despite your crime, I feel  
My body wracked for you and for your fate.  
But you have forced me to condemn you now.  
What father has been ever so outraged?  
O God, you see my overwhelming pain.  
Can I have given life to this vile child?

*[Phaedra enters.]*

SCENE 4

*Phaedra, Theseus*

PHAEDRA

Seigneur, je viens à vous pleine d'un juste effroi.  
 Votre voix redoutable a passé jusqu'à moi.  
 Je crains qu'un prompt effet n'ait suivi la menace.  
 S'il en est temps encore, épargnez votre race.  
 Respectez votre sang, j'ose vous en prier.  
 Sauvez-moi de l'horreur de l'entendre crier;  
 Ne me préparez point la douleur éternelle  
 De l'avoir fait répandre à la main paternelle.

THÉSÉE

Non, Madame, en mon sang ma main n'a point trempé.  
 Mais l'ingrat toutefois ne m'est point échappé.  
 Une immortelle main de sa perte est chargée.  
 Neptune me la doit, et vous serez vengée.

PHÈDRE

Neptune vous la doit! quoi! vos vœux irrités...

THÉSÉE

Quoi! craignez-vous déjà qu'ils ne soient écoutés?  
 Joignez-vous bien plutôt mes vœux légitimes.  
 Dans toute leur noirceur retracez-moi ses crimes.  
 Échauffez mes transports trop lents, trop retenus.  
 Tous ses crimes encor ne vous sont pas connus.  
 Sa fureur contre vous se répand en injures.  
 Votre bouche, dit-il, est pleine d'impostures.  
 Il soutient qu'Aricie a son cœur, a sa foi,  
 Qu'il l'aime.

PHÈDRE

Quoi, Seigneur!

THÉSÉE

Il l'a dit devant moi.

My lord, I've come to you... I'm terrified...  
 I've heard the awful things that you have said.  
 I fear your threat will soon be carried out.  
 If there is still time left, then spare your son.  
 Respect your flesh and blood, I beg of you.  
 Don't let me hear the horror of his cries.  
 Don't lay the everlasting pain on me  
 Of having made a father let blood flow.

THESEUS

My hands have not been reddened in his blood,  
 But his obscenity has not gone free.  
 His death is charged into a god's own hands.  
 Neptune owes me it. You will be avenged.

PHAEDRA

Neptune owes you it? Have raging prayers from you...

THESEUS

Do you already fear they have been heard?  
 Better you voice the same. They're justified.  
 Give me the darkest details of his crime.  
 Stir up my anger – gone too slow and stale –  
 You do not yet know all his wickedness.  
 His frenzy has insulted you, your name.  
 He says your mouth speaks nothing but deceit.  
 He claims Aricia has won his heart and faith,  
 That he loves her.

PHAEDRA

My lord...

THESEUS

He told me to my face.

Mais je sais rejeter un frivole artifice.  
 Espérons de Neptune une prompte justice.  
 Je vais moi-même encore au pied de ses autels,  
 Le presser d'accomplir ses serments immortels.

## SCÈNE 5

PHÈDRE [*seule*]

Il sort. Quelle nouvelle a frappé mon oreille?  
 Quel feu mal étouffé dans mon cœur se réveille?  
 Quel coup de foudre, ô ciel! et quel funeste avis!  
 Je volais tout entière au secours de son fils,  
 Et m'arrachant des bras d'Enone épouvantée.  
 Je cédaï au remords dont j'étais tourmentée.  
 Qui sait même où m'allait porter ce repentir?  
 Peut-être à m'accuser j'aurais pu consentir.  
 Peut-être, si la voix ne m'eût été coupée,  
 L'affreuse vérité me serait échappée.  
 Hippolyte est sensible, et ne sent rien pour moi!  
 Aricie a son cœur, Aricie a sa foi!  
 Ah, dieux! lorsqu'à mes vœux l'ingrat inexorable  
 S'armait d'un œil si fier, d'un front si redoutable,  
 Je pensais qu'à l'amour son cœur toujours fermé,  
 Fût contre tout mon sexe également armé.  
 Une autre cependant a fléchi son audace.  
 Devant ses yeux cruels une autre a trouvé grâce.  
 Peut-être a-t-il un cœur facile à s'attendrir.  
 Je suis le seul objet qu'il ne-saurait souffrir.  
 Et je me chargerais du soin de le défendre!

## SCÈNE 6

But I know how to deal with worthless sham.  
 I hope that Neptune will judge soon.  
 I'll go to plead again before his shrine;  
 I'll urge him to fulfil his binding oath.

[*He leaves.*]

## SCENE 5

PHAEDRA [*alone*]

He's gone. ...Such news to burst upon my eyes...  
 What smouldering flame begins to blaze again...?  
 It's lightning from the sky...the deadly news.  
 I'd run – one thought alone – to save his son.  
 I'd torn myself from pale Oenone's arms,  
 Surrendered to the guilt that tortured me.  
 Who knows how far repentance would have led?  
 I might have soon accused myself.  
 Had not the words stuck in my throat, I might  
 Have let the terrifying truth escape.  
 And so Hippolytus can feel. But not for me.  
 Aricia has his heart, his trust... Dear God,  
 The times he was so graceless to my pleas.  
 He stared with such proud eyes, so stern a face,  
 I thought his heart for ever closed to love,  
 Against all women uniformly armed.  
 And yet another woman breaks his pride,  
 Finds favour in those callous eyes.  
 Perhaps he has a heart that can be moved,  
 And I'm the only thing he cannot stand.  
 And I took on the task of his defence...

[*Oenone enters.*]

## SCENE 6

PHÈDRE

*Phèdre, Œnone*

PHÈDRE

Chère Œnone, sais-tu ce que je viens d'apprendre?

ŒNONE

Non. Mais je viens tremblante, à ne vous point mentir.  
J'ai pâli du dessein qui vous a fait sortir.  
J'ai craint une fureur à vous-même fatale.

PHÈDRE

Œnone, qui l'eût cru? J'avais une rivale.

ŒNONE

Comment?

PHÈDRE

Hippolyte aime, et je n'en puis douter.  
Ce farouche ennemi qu'on ne pouvait dompter,  
Qu'offensait le respect, qu'importunait la plainte,  
Ce tigre, que jamais je n'abordai sans crainte,  
Soumis, apprivoisé, reconnaît un vainqueur.  
Aricie a trouvé le chemin de son cœur.

ŒNONE

Aricie?

PHÈDRE

Ah, douleur non encore éprouvée!  
A quel nouveau tourment je me suis réservée!  
Tout ce que j'ai souffert, mes craintes, mes transports,

PHAEDRA

*Phaedra, Oenone*

PHAEDRA

Oenone, you know what I have learned?

OENONE

No. And yet I'm trembling, if truth were told.  
I paled – went white – to think why you had gone.  
I was afraid that you would kill yourself.

PHAEDRA

Who would have thought? I have a rival now.

OENONE

What?

PHAEDRA

Hippolytus is in love, there is no doubt.  
That wild, unconquerable enemy,  
Offended by respect, annoyed by tears,  
Whom I could never meet without some fear,  
Submits, quite tamed, salutes his vanquisher.  
Aricia has found the way into his heart.

OENONE

Aricia!

PHAEDRA

What deeper sadness can be yet endured...?  
What latest torture is reserved for me?  
All I've endured – the fears, the ecstasies.



La fureur de mes feux, l'horreur de mes remords,  
 Et d'un refus cruel l'insupportable injure  
 N'était qu'un faible essai du tourment que j'endure.  
 Ils s'aiment! par quel charme ont-ils trompé mes yeux?  
 Comment se sont-ils vus? Depuis quand? Dans quels lieux?  
 Tu le savais. Pourquoi me laissais-tu séduire?  
 De leur furtive ardeur ne pouvais-tu m'instruire?  
 Les a-t-on vus souvent se parler, se chercher?  
 Dans le fond des forêts allaient-ils se cacher?  
 Hélas! ils se voyaient avec pleine licence.  
 Le ciel de leurs soupirs approuvait l'innocence.  
 Ils suivaient sans remords leur penchant amoureux.  
 Tous les jours se levaient clairs et sereins pour eux.  
 Et moi, triste rebut de la nature entière,  
 Je me cachais au jour, je fuyais la lumière.  
 La mort est le seul dieu que j'osais implorer.  
 J'attendais le moment où j'allais expirer,  
 Me nourrissant de fiel, de larmes abreuvée;  
 Encor dans mon malheur de trop près observée,  
 Je n'osais dans mes pleurs me noyer à loisir,  
 Je goûtais en tremblant ce funeste plaisir,  
 Et sous un front serein déguisant mes alarmes,  
 Il fallait bien souvent me priver de mes larmes.

CENONE

Quel fruit recevront-ils de leurs vaines amours?  
 Ils ne se verront plus.

PHÈDRE

Ils s'aimeront toujours!  
 Au moment que je parle, ah, mortelle pensée!  
 Ils bravent la fureur d'une amante insensée.  
 Malgré ce même exil qui va les écarter,  
 Ils font mille serments de ne se point quitter.  
 Non, je ne puis souffrir un bonheur qui m'outrage,  
 C'enone. Prends pitié de ma jalouse rage.  
 Il faut perdre Aricie. Il faut de mon époux

This raging love, the horrors of remorse,  
 Him saying no, the injury I couldn't bear –  
 These were mere foretastes of my torment now.  
 Those two in love? What spell deceived me, then?  
 How did they see each other? Where? Since when?  
 You knew. Why did you let me be misled?  
 You could have told me of their furtive love.  
 Weren't they seen talking? Look for each other?  
 They must have tried to hide deep in the woods...?  
 Ah, so they met in total liberty...?  
 Heaven approved their innocent desires.  
 They walked the ways of love without remorse.  
 Each day for them dawned cloudless and serene;  
 And I, rejected by all living things,  
 Have hidden from the day and shunned the light.  
 Death was the only god I dared implore.  
 I waited for the moment I would die.  
 I fed on gall, I drank my tears. And yet,  
 My misery was close, so closely watched,  
 I was not even free to drown in grief.  
 This deathly pleasure...shaking at the taste...  
 I hid my pain behind a calm facade  
 And often had to stay without my tears.

OENONE

What can they hope to gain from such a love?  
 They'll never meet again.

PHAEDRA

They'll always be in love.  
 Now as I speak – I die to think the thought –  
 They brave my fury – a queen outraged.  
 Despite the exile that will sever them,  
 They swear a thousand oaths never to part.  
 I cannot bear a joy that wracks me so.  
 Pity my raging jealousy.  
 Aricia must die. Theseus's rage

Contre un sang odieux réveiller le courroux.  
 Qu'il ne se borne pas à des peines légères.  
 Le crime de la sœur passe celui des frères.  
 Dans mes jaloux transports je le veux implorer.  
 Que fais-je? Où ma raison se va-t-elle égarer?  
 Moi jalouse! et Thésée est celui que j'implore!  
 Mon époux est vivant, et moi je brûle encore!  
 Pour qui? Quel est le cœur où prétendent mes vœux?  
 Chaque mot sur mon front fait dresser mes cheveux.  
 Mes crimes désormais ont comblé la mesure.  
 Je respire à la fois l'inceste et l'imposture.  
 Mes homicides mains promptes à me venger,  
 Dans le sang innocent brûlent de se plonger.  
 Misérable! et je vis? Et je soutiens la vue  
 De ce sacré soleil dont je suis descendue?  
 J'ai pour aïeul le père et le maître des dieux.  
 Le ciel, tout l'univers est plein de mes aïeux;  
 Où me cacher? Fuyons dans la nuit infernale.  
 Mais que dis-je? Mon père y tient l'urne fatale.  
 Le sort, dit-on, l'a mise en ses sévères mains.  
 Minos juge aux enfers tous les pâles humains.  
 Ah! combien frémira son ombre épouvantée,  
 Lorsqu'il verra sa fille à ses yeux présentée,  
 Contrainte d'avouer tant de forfaits divers,  
 Et des crimes peut-être inconnus aux enfers?  
 Que diras-tu, mon père, à ce spectacle horrible?  
 Je crois voir de ta main tomber l'urne terrible,  
 Je crois te voir cherchant un supplice nouveau,  
 Toi-même de ton sang devenir le bourreau.  
 Pardonne. Un dieu cruel a perdu ta famille.  
 Reconnais sa vengeance aux fureurs de ta fille.  
 Hélas! du crime affreux dont la honte me suit,  
 Jamais mon triste cœur n'a recueilli le fruit.  
 Jusqu'au dernier soupir de malheurs poursuivie,  
 Je rends dans les tourments une pénible vie.

CENONE

Hé! repoussez, Madame, une injuste terreur!

Against her odious race must be revived.  
 A trifling punishment will not suffice.  
 Her brothers' crimes are far surpassed by hers.  
 This jealous frenzy... I *will* implore the king...  
 What am I doing? Have I lost my mind?  
 Me jealous? *I* implore the king?  
 He's my husband. Still alive... yet I burn...  
 Who for? Whose heart holds my desires?  
 Each word I mouth, my hair stands up on end.  
 From now my sins will overflow the brim.  
 I stink of incest and deceit.  
 These murderous hands, so eager for revenge,  
 Are burning to be drenched in guiltless blood.  
 I appall and yet I live. I must still bear the gaze  
 Of holiness, the sun from which I came.  
 My ancestor is father, master of the gods.  
 The sky and all the universe is full of them.  
 Where can I hide? In darkest, hellish night...?  
 Useless words... my father holds the urn there.  
 They say fate placed it in his ruthless hands.  
 Minos is judge in hell of pale humanity.  
 What shuddering will seize his ghost  
 To see his daughter stand before his eyes,  
 Forced to confess so many heinous crimes,  
 Crimes even unknown, perhaps, in hell.  
 What, father, will you say to that foul sight?  
 I see the urn of doom slip from your hands,  
 I see you seeking out new punishment,  
 The executioner of your own blood.  
 Forgive me. Venus now has doomed your race.  
 You see her vengeance in your daughter's rage.  
 The shame of hideous crimes pursues me still.  
 My heart is broken, but never ate the fruit.  
 The hurt will haunt me to my dying breath.  
 I place upon the rack a life of pain.

OENONE

You must resist these needless fears.

Regardez d'un autre œil une excusable erreur.  
 Vous aimez. On ne peut vaincre sa destinée.  
 Par un charme fatal vous fûtes entraînée.  
 Est-ce donc un prodige inouï parmi nous?  
 L'amour n'a-t-il encor triomphé que de vous?  
 La faiblesse aux humains n'est que trop naturelle.  
 Mortelle, subissez le sort d'une mortelle.  
 Vous vous plaignez d'un joug imposé dès longtemps.  
 Les dieux même, les dieux, de l'Olympe habitants,  
 Qui d'un bruit si terrible épouvantent les crimes,  
 Ont brûlé quelquefois de feux illégitimes.

## PHÈDRE

Qu'entends-je? Quels conseils ose-t-on me donner?  
 Ainsi donc jusqu'au bout tu veux m'empoisonner,  
 Malheureuse! voilà comme tu m'as perdue.  
 Au jour, que je fuyais, c'est toi qui m'as rendue.  
 Tes prières m'ont fait oublier mon devoir.  
 J'évitais Hippolyte, et tu me l'as fait voir.  
 De quoi te chargeais-tu? Pourquoi ta bouche impie  
 A-t-elle en l'accusant, osé noircir sa vie?  
 Il en mourra peut-être, et d'un père insensé  
 Le sacrilège vœu peut-être est exaucé.  
 Je ne t'écoute plus. Va-t'en, monstre exécration.  
 Va, laisse-moi le soin de mon sort déplorable.  
 Puisse le juste ciel dignement te payer;  
 Et puisse ton supplice à jamais effrayer  
 Tous ceux qui, comme toi, par de lâches adresses,  
 Des princes malheureux nourrissent les faiblesses,  
 Les poussent au penchant où leur cœur est enclin,  
 Et leur osent du crime aplanir le chemin;  
 Détestables flatteurs, présent le plus funeste  
 Que puisse faire aux rois la colère céleste.

CENONE [*seule*]

Ah! dieux! pour la servir, j'ai tout fait, tout quitté,  
 Et j'en reçois ce prix! je l'ai bien mérité.

Your fault might well be seen to have just cause.  
 You are in love. We cannot master fate.  
 A fatal magic swept you off your feet.  
 Is that so new or strange a thing?  
 Are you the only one to fall in love?  
 Humanity is all too frail.  
 You are human. You must accept that fate.  
 You blame a bondage forged so long ago.  
 Even the gods who live on Olympus,  
 Who punish crime so terrifyingly,  
 Have sometimes burned with wrong desire.

## PHAEDRA

You dare to offer this advice to me?  
 Right to the end you try to poison me,  
 You awful thing! It's you who's ruined me.  
 I tried to end my life. You brought me back.  
 You begged, and I forgot the duty that I had.  
 I shunned Hippolytus. You made me speak to him.  
 What have you done? Why did your wicked mouth  
 Accuse him so and blacken his whole life?  
 He still may die. His father's outraged  
 Sacrilegious prayer may still be heard.  
 I won't listen. You obscenity! Get out.  
 Get out! Just leave my wretched fate to me.  
 May heaven be just, reward you properly!  
 Just let your punishment for ever terrify  
 All those like you who feed so skilfully  
 The weaknesses of ill-starred kings.  
 You urge them down the slopes of their desires.  
 You level out the path to sin for them.  
 Foul flatterers – the deadliest gift  
 The anger of the gods can give to kings.  
 [*She leaves.*]

OENONE, *alone*

Dear God, to serve her I left home, did everything...  
 But this is the reward that I deserve...

## ACTE 5 SCÈNE 1

*Hippolyte, Aricie*

ARICIE

Quoi! vous pouvez vous taire en ce péril extrême?  
 Vous laissez dans l'erreur un père qui vous aime?  
 Cruel, si de mes pleurs méprisant le pouvoir,  
 Vous consentez sans peine à ne me plus revoir,  
 Partez, séparez-vous de la triste Aricie.  
 Mais du moins en partant assurez votre vie.  
 Défendez votre honneur d'un reproche honteux,  
 Et forcez votre père à révoquer ses vœux.  
 Il en est temps encor. Pourquoi, par quel caprice  
 Laissez-vous le champ libre à votre accusatrice?  
 Éclaircissez Thésée.

HIPPOLYTE

Hé! que n'ai-je point dit?  
 Ai-je dû mettre au jour l'opprobre de son lit?  
 Devais-je, en lui faisant un récit trop sincère,  
 D'une indigne rougeur couvrir le front d'un père?  
 Vous seule avez percé ce mystère odieux.  
 Mon cœur pour s'épancher n'a que vous et les dieux.  
 Je n'ai pu vous cacher, jugez si je vous aime,  
 Tout ce que je voulais me cacher à moi-même.  
 Mais songez sous quel sceau je vous l'ai révélé.  
 Oubliez, s'il se peut, que je vous ai parlé,  
 Madame. Et que jamais une bouche si pure  
 Ne s'ouvre pour conter cette horrible aventure.  
 Sur l'équité des dieux osons nous confier.  
 Ils ont trop d'intérêt à me justifier;  
 Et Phèdre tôt ou tard de son crime punie,  
 N'en saurait éviter la juste ignominie.  
 C'est l'unique respect que j'exige de vous.  
 Je permets tout le reste à mon libre courroux.

## ACT 5 SCENE 1

*Hippolytus, Aricia*

ARICIA

How can you in this danger still keep quiet?  
 Your father loves you still. You'll keep him ignorant?  
 It's cruel to hold my grief so cheap, agree  
 So easily to never see me more.  
 Then go. Leave me to all my wretchedness.  
 But if you go, at least protect your life.  
 You must defend your name from smears and shame  
 And force your father to retract his curse.  
 There is still time. What whim, capriciousness,  
 Makes you let Phaedra have an open field?  
 Explain to Theseus.

HIPPOLYTUS

What more is there to say?  
 Should I have brought the outrage in his bed  
 To light? Should I have told so frank a tale  
 As make his face turn scarlet with the shame?  
 This awful secret you alone now know.  
 I've opened up my heart to you...the gods.  
 Judge if I love. I couldn't hide from you  
 Things I would keep secret from myself.  
 Remember, though – you've sworn to secrecy.  
 If possible, forget the things I've said.  
 Your lips are clean. They should not tell  
 The story of this foul affair.  
 We must dare trust the justice of the gods.  
 They have some interest in clearing me.  
 Sooner or later, Phaedra will receive  
 The odium her crime deserves. She won't escape.  
 But this now – this is all I ask of you.  
 The rest of things can face my rage.

Sortez de l'esclavage où vous êtes réduite.  
 Osez me suivre. Osez accompagner ma fuite.  
 Arrachez-vous d'un lieu funeste et profané  
 Où la vertu respire un air empoisonné,  
 Profitez pour cacher votre prompte retraite,  
 De la confusion que ma disgrâce y jette.  
 Je vous puis de la fuite assurer les moyens,  
 Vous n'avez jusqu'ici de gardes que les miens,  
 De puissants défenseurs prendront notre querelle.  
 Argos nous tend les bras, et Sparte nous appelle;  
 A nos amis communs portons nos justes cris.  
 Ne souffrons pas que Phèdre assemblant nos débris  
 Du trône paternel nous chasse l'un et l'autre,  
 Et promette à son fils ma dépouille et la vôtre.  
 L'occasion est belle, il la faut embrasser.  
 Quelle peur vous retient? Vous semblez balancer?  
 Votre seul intérêt m'inspire cette audace.  
 Quand je suis tout de feu, d'où vous vient cette glace?  
 Sur les pas d'un banni craignez-vous de marcher?

## ARICIE

Hélas! qu'un tel exil, Seigneur, me serait cher!  
 Dans quels ravissements, à votre sort liée  
 Du reste des mortels je vivrais oubliée!  
 Mais n'étant point unis par un lien si doux  
 Me puis-je avec honneur dérober avec vous?  
 Je sais que sans blesser l'honneur le plus sévère,  
 Je me puis affranchir des mains de votre père.  
 Ce n'est point m'arracher du sein de mes parents,  
 Et la fuite est permise à qui fuit ses tyrans.  
 Mais vous m'aimez, Seigneur. Et ma gloire alarmée...

## HIPPOLYTE

Non, non; j'ai trop de soin de votre renommée.  
 Un plus noble dessein m'amène devant vous.  
 Fuyez vos ennemis, et suivez votre époux.  
 Libres dans nos malheurs, puisque le ciel l'ordonne,

Throw off the slavery that's ground you down.  
 Dare follow me. Be with me in my flight.  
 Leave far behind this deadly, obscene place  
 Where goodness breathes a foul, polluted air.  
 We can exploit the turmoil that's been spread  
 By my disgrace to cover up your flight.  
 I can make sure that you will get away.  
 The only guards you have are my own men.  
 Powerful defenders will support our cause.  
 Argos holds out its arms, and Sparta calls.  
 Let's take our rightful claims to friends we share.  
 Phaedra must not gain profit from our fall –  
 She'd drive us both far from my father's throne  
 And give her son what has been stripped from us.  
 This is our chance. Let's seize it with both hands...  
 What holds you back? You seem to hesitate.  
 It's only for your sake I urge this plan.  
 When I am all on fire, why are you ice?  
 Are you afraid to share an exile's life?

## ARICIA

Such banishment, my lord, would be so sweet.  
 I'd share your life and be in such delight  
 Forgotten by the rest of humankind.  
 But we are not yet joined in that dear bond.  
 How in all honour can I go with you?  
 I know I can escape your father's hands  
 And do no harm to honour's strictest codes.  
 I would not then be breaking family ties;  
 To flee a tyrant is within the law.  
 You love me, though, my lord...I fear my name...

## HIPPOLYTUS

No, no. I care too much for your good name.  
 I've come here with a better plan.  
 Escape your enemies. Come with me as my wife.  
 For all the pain that heaven decrees, we're free.

Le don de notre foi ne dépend de personne.  
 L'hymen n'est point toujours entouré de flambeaux.  
 Aux portes de Trézène, et parmi ces tombeaux,  
 Des princes de ma race antiques sépultures,  
 Est un temple sacré formidable aux parjures.  
 C'est là que les mortels n'osent jurer en vain.  
 Le perfide y reçoit un châtiment soudain.  
 Et craignant d'y trouver la mort inévitable,  
 Le mensonge n'a point de frein plus redoutable.  
 Là, si vous m'en croyez, d'un amour éternel  
 Nous irons confirmer le serment solennel.  
 Nous prendrons à témoin le dieu qu'on y révère.  
 Nous le prions tous deux de nous servir de père.  
 Des dieux les plus sacrés j'attesterai le nom.  
 Et la chaste Diane, et l'auguste Junon  
 Et tous les dieux enfin témoins de mes tendresses  
 Garantiront la foi de mes saintes promesses.

ARICIE

Le roi vient. Fuyez, Prince, et partez promptement.  
 Pour cacher mon départ je demeure un moment.  
 Allez, et laissez-moi quelque fidèle guide,  
 Qui conduise vers vous ma démarche timide.

## SCÈNE 2

*Thésée, Aricie, Ismène*

THÉSÉE

Dieux, éclairez mon trouble, et daignez à mes yeux  
 Montrer la vérité, que je cherche en ces lieux.

ARICIE

We do not need the world to pledge our faith.  
 Torches do not light up all marriage vows.  
 At Troezen's gates, among the tombs,  
 The ancient vaults for princes of my line,  
 A sacred temple stands. It's feared by all who lie.  
 No human dare swear falsely in that place,  
 For perjurers receive immediate punishment.  
 They face the certainty of death in there.  
 False oaths have no more dreaded check  
 There, if you trust me, we will go and vow  
 Our solemn oath to everlasting love.  
 The god who's worshipped there will swear for us.  
 We'll pray he'll be a father to us both.  
 I'll call the holiest gods as witnesses.  
 And chaste Diana, Juno the renowned,  
 And all the gods that witness my dear love  
 Will guard the sanctity of what I swear.

ARICIA

The king is coming. Quick. You must go now.  
 I'll stay a while to cover up my flight.  
 Go now; but leave me someone I can trust  
 To take me to you...nervously...

*[Hippolytus leaves. Theseus enters.]*

## SCENE 2

*Theseus, Aricia, Ismene*

THESEUS

O God, lighten this darkness in my soul;  
 Let my eyes see the truth I'm searching for.

ARICIA

Songez à tout, chère Ismène, et soyez prête à la fuite.

## SCÈNE 3

*Thésée, Aricie*

THÉSÉE

Vous changez de couleur, et semblez interdite,  
Madame! que faisait Hippolyte en ce lieu?

ARICIE

Seigneur, il me disait un éternel adieu.

THÉSÉE

Vos yeux ont su dompter ce rebelle courage;  
Et ses premiers soupirs sont votre heureux ouvrage.

ARICIE

Seigneur, je ne vous puis nier la vérité.  
De votre injuste haine il n'a pas hérité.  
Il ne me traitait point comme une criminelle.

THÉSÉE

J'entends, il vous jurait une amour éternelle.  
Ne vous assurez point sur ce cœur inconstant.  
Car à d'autres que vous il en jurait autant.

ARICIE

Have everything prepared, Ismene, for our flight.

*[Ismene leaves.]*

## SCENE 3

*Theseus, Aricia*

THESEUS

Your colour changes so... You seem struck dumb,  
My lady. What was Hippolytus doing here?

ARICIA

He came to say a last goodbye, my lord.

THESEUS

So you have tamed his stubbornness.  
The first time that he yearns is due to you.

ARICIA

I can't deny the truth of that, my lord.  
Your hate of me was not passed on to him.  
He didn't treat me as a criminal.

THESEUS

I understand. He's sworn eternal love.  
But don't rely upon that wavering heart.  
He's sworn the same to other girls as well.

ARICIA

Lui, Seigneur?

THÉSÉE

Vous deviez le rendre moins volage.  
Comment souffriez-vous cet horrible partage?

ARICIE

Et comment souffrez-vous que d'horribles discours  
D'une si belle vie osent noircir le cours?  
Avez-vous de son cœur si peu de connaissance?  
Discernez-vous si mal le crime et l'innocence?  
Faut-il qu'à vos yeux seuls un nuage odieux  
Dérobe sa vertu qui brille à tous les yeux?  
Ah! c'est trop le livrer à des langues perfides.  
Cessez. Repentez-vous de vos vœux homicides;  
Craignez, Seigneur, craignez que le ciel rigoureux  
Ne vous haïsse assez pour exaucer vos vœux.  
Souvent dans sa colère il reçoit nos victimes,  
Ses présents sont souvent la peine de nos crimes.

THÉSÉE

Non, vous voulez en vain couvrir son attentat.  
Votre amour vous aveugle en faveur de l'ingrat.  
Mais j'en crois des témoins certains, irréprochables.  
J'ai vu, j'ai vu couler des larmes véritables.

ARICIE

Prenez garde, Seigneur. Vos invincibles mains  
Ont de monstres sans nombre affranchi les humains.  
Mais tout n'est pas détruit; et vous en laissez vivre  
Un... Votre fils, Seigneur, me défend de poursuivre.  
Instruite du respect qu'il veut vous conserver,  
Je l'affligerais trop, si j'osais achever.  
J'imite sa pudeur, et fuis votre présence  
Pour n'être pas forcée à rompre le silence.

He what?

THESEUS

You should have made him less disloyal.  
How could you bear to be a part of it?

ARICIA

And how could you allow such dreadful smears  
To blacken out the honour of his life?  
Have you so little knowledge how he feels?  
Can you so little tell a crime from innocence?  
Must you alone discern this loathsome cloud  
Hiding his goodnesses, which shine so bright to all?  
I will not give him up to evil tongues.  
Stop and repent your murderous prayers.  
Fear, my good lord. Fear lest the gods feel harsh,  
Hate you enough to grant what you have asked.  
They often rage and take our sacrifice.  
They often punish us for all our sin.

THESEUS

You try to cover up his crime in vain.  
Love makes you blind to all his treachery.  
But I have witnesses I trust, beyond reproach.  
I've seen real tears...real tears have flowed...

ARICIA

Take care, my lord. You're undefeated still.  
You've freed mankind from countless murderers,  
But all are not destroyed. You've left alive  
Just one... Your son forbids me speak of it.  
I know the reverence he has for you;  
I should offend too much were I to tell.  
I'll follow his restraint and leave you now  
Before I'm forced to make the silence speak.



## SCÈNE 4

THÉSÉE [*seul*]

Quelle est donc sa pensée? Et que cache un discours  
 Commencé tant de fois, interrompu toujours?  
 Veulent-ils m'éblouir par une feinte vaine?  
 Sont-ils d'accord tous deux pour me mettre à la gêne?  
 Mais moi-même, malgré ma sévère rigueur,  
 Quelle plaintive voix crie au fond de mon coeur?  
 Une pitié secrète et m'afflige, et m'étonne.  
 Une seconde fois interrogeons Œnone.  
 Je veux de tout le crime être mieux éclairci.  
 Gardes. Qu'Œnone sorte et vienne seule ici.

## SCÈNE 5

*Thésée, Panope*

PANOPE

J'ignore le projet que la reine médite;  
 Seigneur. Mais je crains tout du transport qui l'agite.  
 Un mortel désespoir sur son visage est peint.  
 La pâleur de la mort est déjà sur son teint.  
 Déjà de sa présence avec honte chassée  
 Dans la profonde mer Œnone s'est lancée.  
 On ne sait point d'où part ce dessein furieux.  
 Et les flots pour jamais l'ont ravie à nos yeux.

## SCENE 4

*[She leaves.]*THESEUS [*alone*]

What does she mean? What lies behind her words?  
 She starts, then stops, then starts again, then stops.  
 So what's their aim? To trick and baffle me...?  
 Have they agreed to put me on the rack...?  
 For all my harsh severity, I still...  
 What mournful voice cries deep down in my heart?  
 Some secret pity grieves and harrows me.  
 Œnone must be questioned once again.  
 I want to have more light shed on the crime.  
 Guards, tell her to come here. And by herself.

*[Panope enters.]*

## SCENE 5

*Theseus, Panope*

PANOPE

I do not know what plan the queen has in her mind,  
 My lord; and yet I fear the fits that wrack her so.  
 Deadly despair is written on her face,  
 The ghastliness of death has paled her cheeks.  
 Œnone has been driven out in shame,  
 And hurled herself deep down into the sea...  
 We'll never know what caused this awful act.  
 The waves have taken her for ever from our sight.

THÉSÉE

Qu'entends-je?

PANOPE

Son trépas n'a point calmé la reine,  
 Le trouble semble croître en son âme incertaine.  
 Quelquefois pour flatter ses secrètes douleurs  
 Elle prend ses enfants et les baigne de pleurs;  
 Et soudain renonçant à l'amour maternelle,  
 Sa main avec horreur les repousse loin d'elle.  
 Elle porte au hasard ses pas irrésolus.  
 Son œil tout égaré ne nous reconnaît plus.  
 Elle a trois fois écrit, et changeant de pensée  
 Trois fois elle a rompu sa lettre commencée.  
 Daignez la voir, Seigneur, daignez la secourir.

THÉSÉE

O ciel! Œnone est morte, et Phèdre veut mourir?  
 Qu'on rappelle mon fils, qu'il vienne se défendre,  
 Qu'il vienne me parler, je suis prêt de l'entendre.  
 Ne précipite point tes funestes bienfaits,  
 Neptune. J'aime mieux n'être exaucé jamais.  
 J'ai peut-être trop cru des témoins peu fidèles.  
 Et j'ai trop tôt vers toi levé mes mains cruelles.  
 Ah! de quel désespoir mes vœux seraient suivis!

SCÈNE 6

*Thésée, Théramène*

THÉSÉE

THESEUS

She's drowned...

PANOPE

Her dying has not calmed the queen;  
 The turmoil seems to grow and eat her mind.  
 Sometimes, as if to ease her secret pain,  
 She'll hug her children tight, bathe them in tears.  
 Then suddenly, she turns against her mother's love  
 And pushes them away in dreadful fear.  
 She wanders aimlessly, this way then that.  
 Her eyes are wild, seem not to see us there...  
 Three times she has begun to write, then changed  
 Her mind, and three times torn the letter up.  
 Agree to see her now. She must be helped, my lord.

THESEUS

O god...Oenone's dead...and Phaedra wants to die...  
 Call back my son. Let him defend himself  
 And speak to me. I'll listen to him now.

*[Panope leaves. Theseus remains alone.]*

Neptune, don't hurl your deadly gift on him.  
 Much better to have never heard my prayer...  
 Perhaps I trusted witnesses who lied,  
 And raised these callous hands to you too soon.  
 Oh that my prayer should end in such despair...

*[Theramenes enters.]*

SCENE 6

*Theseus, Theramenes*

THESEUS

Théramène, est-ce toi? Qu'as-tu fait de mon fils?  
 Je te l'ai confié dès l'âge le plus tendre.  
 Mais d'où naissent les pleurs que je te vois répandre?  
 Que fait mon fils?

THÉRAMÈNE

O soins tardifs et superflus!  
 Inutile tendresse! Hippolyte n'est plus.

THÉSÉE

Dieux!

THÉRAMÈNE

J'ai vu des mortels périr le plus aimable,  
 Et j'ose dire encor, Seigneur, le moins coupable.

THÉSÉE

Mon fils n'est plus? Hé quoi! quand je lui tends les bras,  
 Les dieux impatients ont hâté son trépas?  
 Quel coup me l'a ravi? Quelle foudre soudaine?

THÉRAMÈNE

A peine nous sortions des portes de Trézène,  
 Il était sur son char. Ses gardes affligés  
 Imitaient son silence, autour de lui rangés.  
 Il suivait tout pensif le chemin de Mycènes.  
 Sa main sur ses chevaux laissait flotter les rênes.  
 Ses superbes coursiers, qu'on voyait autrefois  
 Pleins d'une ardeur si noble obéir à sa voix,  
 L'œil morne maintenant et la tête baissée  
 Semblaient se conformer à sa triste pensée.  
 Un effroyable cri sorti du fond des flots  
 Des airs en ce moment a troublé le repos;  
 Et du sein de la terre une voix formidable

Theramenes, it's you? Where is my son?  
 I trusted him to you while yet a child.  
 You're crying... oh, why weep these tears?  
 Where is he now?

THERAMENES

You care too late. It's needless now.  
 The tenderness is useless... Hippolytus is dead.

THESEUS

Oh god...

THERAMENES

I've seen the best of human beings die...  
 And the most innocent, I dare to say.

THESEUS

My son is gone...? When I would hold him in my arms,  
 The gods made haste to speed his death? What blow  
 Has snatched him...what sudden thunder...?

THERAMENES

We'd scarcely ridden through the gates of Troezen.  
 He drove his chariot; his guards, downcast,  
 Copied his silence as they marched beside.  
 Lost in thought, he took the Mycenae road,  
 Letting his horses' reins hang loosely in his hand.  
 Those splendid stallions, which in times gone by  
 Obeyed his voice with eagerness and pride,  
 Now had dulled eyes, their heads bowed down,  
 As if agreeing with his bitter thoughts.  
 Then all at once, from deep below the waves,  
 A ghastly cry shattered the stillness in the air.  
 From the earth's bowels, another fearful voice

Répond en gémissant à ce cri redoutable.  
 Jusqu'au fond de nos cœurs notre sang s'est glacé.  
 Des coursiers attentifs le crin s'est hérissé.  
 Cependant sur le dos de la plaine liquide  
 S'élève à gros bouillons une montagne humide.  
 L'onde approche, se brise, et vomit à nos yeux  
 Parmi des flots d'écume un monstre furieux.  
 Son front large est armé de cornes menaçantes,  
 Tout son corps est couvert d'écailles jaunissantes.  
 Indomptable taureau, dragon impétueux,  
 Sa croupe se recourbe en replis tortueux.  
 Ses long mugissements font trembler le rivage.  
 Le ciel avec horreur voit ce monstre sauvage,  
 La terre s'en émeut, l'air en est infecté,  
 Le flot, qui l'apporta, recule épouvanté.  
 Tout fuit, et sans s'armer d'un courage inutile,  
 Dans le temple voisin chacun cherche un asile.  
 Hippolyte lui seul digne fils d'un héros,  
 Arrête ses coursiers, saisit ses javelots,  
 Pousse au monstre, et d'un dard lancé d'une main sûre  
 Il lui fait dans le flanc une large blessure.  
 De rage et de douleur le monstre bondissant  
 Vient aux pieds des chevaux tomber en mugissant,  
 Se roule, et leur présente une gueule enflammée,  
 Qui les couvre de feu, de sang et de fumée.  
 La frayeur les emporte, et sourds à cette fois,  
 Ils ne connaissent plus ni le frein ni la voix;  
 En efforts impuissants leur maître se consume.  
 Ils rougissent le mors d'une sanglante écume.  
 On dit qu'on a vu même en ce désordre affreux  
 Un dieu qui d'aiguillons pressait leur flanc poudreux.  
 A travers des rochers la peur les précipite.  
 L'essieu crie, et se rompt. L'intrépide Hippolyte  
 Voit voler en éclats tout son char fracassé.  
 Dans les rênes lui-même, il tombe embarrassé.  
 Excusez ma douleur. Cette image cruelle  
 Sera pour moi de pleurs une source éternelle.  
 J'ai vu, Seigneur, j'ai vu votre malheureux fils  
 Traîné par les chevaux que sa main a nourris.

Groaned out aloud to that appalling cry.  
 Our blood froze to the bottom of our hearts.  
 The stallions listened, manes all bristling.  
 And then, along the far edge of the sea,  
 A liquid mountain rose, a boiling mass.  
 The surge roared in, broke up and spewed  
 In front of us a raging monster in the foam.  
 Its head is massive, armed with fearful horns,  
 And its whole body sheathed in yellow scales.  
 An untamed bull, some hell-hound out of mind,  
 Its crupper rippling into writhing folds.  
 Its long-drawn bellows rumble down the shore.  
 The skies look on this monster, horror-struck.  
 The earth heaves up, the air is poisonous,  
 The wave that brought it in recoils appalled.  
 Bravery was useless, would not protect. We fled,  
 All taking refuge in the temple close at hand.  
 Hippolytus alone, a hero's son,  
 Reined in his horses, seized his spears,  
 Thrust at the monster and, with careful aim,  
 Made a huge wound there – deep, deep in its side.  
 The animal writhes up in pain and rage,  
 Falls roaring at the horses' feet,  
 Rolls over, coils; its flaming jaws  
 Spew smoke and blood and fire all over them.  
 They're terrified, they bolt, they do not hear.  
 They're no more held by bridles or his voice.  
 Their master tries and tries but all in vain,  
 Their bits are reddened with a foam of blood.  
 In the stampede, some say they even saw  
 A god digging his spurs into their dusty flanks.  
 Fear sends them hurtling off across the rocks.  
 The axle screams and snaps. Hippolytus  
 Sees his chariot smashed, fly all to bits.  
 He falls, gets tangled in the reins...  
 Forgive my tears. I cannot bear the sight...  
 The image stays... a source of lasting grief.  
 I watched, my lord, I watched your helpless son  
 Dragged by the horses that his hands had fed.

Il veut les rappeler, et sa voix les effraie.  
 Ils courent. Tout son corps n'est bientôt qu'une plaie.  
 De nos cris douloureux la plaine retentit.  
 Leur fougue impétueuse enfin se ralentit.  
 Ils s'arrêtent, non loin de ces tombeaux antiques,  
 Où des rois ses aïeux sont les froides reliques.  
 J'y cours en soupirant, et sa garde me suit.  
 De son généreux sang la trace nous conduit,  
 Les rochers en sont teints. Les ronces dégouttantes  
 Portent de ses cheveux les dépouilles sanglantes.  
 J'arrive, je l'appelle, et me tendant la main  
 Il ouvre un œil mourant, qu'il referme soudain.  
 Le ciel, dit-il, m'arrache une innocente vie.  
 Prends soin après ma mort de la triste Aricie.  
 Cher ami, si mon père un jour désabusé  
 Plaint le malheur d'un fils faussement accusé,  
 Pour apaiser mon sang et mon ombre plaintive,  
 Dis-lui qu'avec douceur il traite sa captive  
 Qu'il lui rende... A ce mot ce héros expiré  
 N'a laissé dans mes bras qu'un corps défiguré,  
 Triste objet, où des dieux triomphe la colère,  
 Et que méconnaîtrait l'œil même de son père.

## THÉSÉE

O mon fils! cher espoir que je me suis ravi!  
 Inexorables dieux, qui m'avez trop servi!  
 A quels mortels regrets ma vie est réservée!

## THÉRAMÈNE

La timide Aricie est alors arrivée.  
 Elle venait, Seigneur, fuyant votre courroux,  
 A la face des dieux l'accepter pour époux.  
 Elle approche. Elle voit l'herbe rouge et fumante.  
 Elle voit (quel objet pour les yeux d'une amante)  
 Hippolyte étendu, sans forme et sans couleur.  
 Elle veut quelque temps douter de son malheur,  
 Et ne connaissant plus ce héros qu'elle adore,

He calls to them, but terrifies them more.  
 They gallop on, his body one huge wound...  
 The plain re-echoes with our cries of grief.  
 At last, their violent panic eases up;  
 They stop not far from those ancestral tombs  
 Where all his forebears rest, the cold remains of kings.  
 I run there breathless, with his guard behind.  
 The fresh tracks of his blood show us the way.  
 The rocks are drenched with it. The dripping thorns  
 Catch bleeding tufts and shocks of hair.  
 I reach him, speak his name. He gives his hand,  
 Opens his dying eyes, then straightway closes them.  
 He says, 'I'm innocent. The gods, though, take my life.  
 Take care of poor Aricia when I'm dead.  
 And if my father ever learns the truth,  
 Dear friend, and mourns his wretched, slandered son,  
 To quiet my blood and grieving shade,  
 Tell him to treat her gently in his care,  
 To give her back...'. Last words. He died, heroically,  
 And left his mangled corpse all in my arms.  
 What piteous emblem of the gods' triumphant wrath,  
 His father, even, would not recognise.

## THESEUS

My son... I have destroyed my dearest hope.  
 The gods do not relent; they've served me all too well.  
 What can my life be now but deathly grief?

## THERAMENES

Then nervously, Aricia came near.  
 She wanted to avoid your rage, my lord,  
 And marry him before the gods.  
 She came...and saw the reeking, blood-red grass  
 And there – what kind of sight for loving eyes –  
 Hippolytus was stretched, disfigured, white...  
 She could not first believe the tragedy;  
 She didn't recognise the man she loved.

Elle voit Hippolyte, et le demande encore.  
 Mais trop sûre à la fin qu'il est devant ses yeux,  
 Par un triste regard elle accuse les dieux,  
 Et froide, gémissante, et presque inanimée,  
 Aux pieds de son amant elle tombe pâmée.  
 Ismène est auprès d'elle. Ismène toute en pleurs  
 La rappelle à la vie, ou plutôt aux douleurs.  
 Et moi, je suis venu, détestant la lumière  
 Vous dire d'un héros la volonté dernière,  
 Et m'acquitter, Seigneur, du malheureux emploi,  
 Dont son cœur expirant s'est reposé sur moi.  
 Mais j'aperçois venir sa mortelle ennemie.

## SCÈNE 7

*Thésée, Phèdre, Théràmène, Panope, Gardes*

## THÉSÉE

Eh bien! vous triomphez, et mon fils est sans vie.  
 Ah que j'ai lieu de craindre! et qu'un cruel soupçon  
 L'excusant dans mon cœur, m'alarme avec raison!  
 Mais, Madame, il est mort, prenez votre victime.  
 Jouissez de sa perte injuste, ou légitime.  
 Je consens que mes yeux soient toujours abusés,  
 Je le crois criminel, puisque vous l'accusez.  
 Son trépas à mes pleurs offre assez de matières,  
 Sans que j'aie chercher d'odieuses lumières,  
 Qui ne pouvant le rendre à ma juste douleur,  
 Peut-être ne feraient qu'accroître mon malheur.  
 Laissez-moi loin de vous, et loin de ce rivage,  
 De mon fils déchiré fuir la sanglante image.  
 Confus, persécuté d'un mortel souvenir,  
 De l'univers entier je voudrais me bannir.  
 Tout semble s'élever contre mon injustice.

She looked at him, and yet still asked for him.  
 But finally, convinced that it is him,  
 She looks in pain, accusing all the gods.  
 Then cold and moaning, almost without life,  
 She falls unconscious by her lover's side.  
 Ismene's there, Ismene all in tears;  
 She brings her back to life, or more to grief...  
 And I...can't bear the sunlight any more... I came  
 To tell you of a hero's final wish.  
 I've now fulfilled, my lord, the saddest task  
 That he entrusted to me as he died.

*[Phaedra is seen, Panope with her.]*

But there's his enemy to death. Phaedra.

## SCENE 7

*Theseus, Phaedra, Theramenes, Guards*

## THESEUS

So then, you've won. My son is dead.  
 What cause I have for fear...for rankling doubt  
 That pardons him but fills me with alarm...  
 My lady, he is dead. Your victim. Take.  
 Savour his loss, deserved or not.  
 I am prepared to stay deceived;  
 Since you've accused him, I believe his guilt.  
 His death is ample reason for my tears  
 Without my seeking worse enlightenment.  
 That could not ease my grief and bring him back,  
 And might do nothing but increase the pain.  
 Far from these shores, and far from you, let me  
 Escape the bloody image of my tortured son.  
 I'm stunned...tormented by this memory of death.  
 I long for exile from the whole, wide world.  
 All nature rises up against my crime.

L'éclat de mon nom même augmente mon supplice.  
 Moins connu des mortels je me cacherais mieux.  
 Je hais jusques au soin dont m'honorent les dieux.  
 Et je m'en vais pleurer leurs faveurs meurtrières,  
 Sans plus les fatiguer d'inutiles prières.  
 Quoi qu'ils fissent pour moi, leur funeste bonté  
 Ne me saurait payer de ce qu'ils m'ont ôté.

PHÈDRE

Non. Thésée, il faut rompre un injuste silence;  
 Il faut à votre fils rendre son innocence.  
 Il n'était point coupable.

THÉSÉE

Ah père infortuné!  
 Et c'est sur votre foi que je l'ai condamné!  
 Cruelle, pensez-vous être assez excusée...

PHÈDRE

Les moments me sont chers, écoutez-moi, Thésée.  
 C'est moi qui sur ce fils chaste et respectueux  
 Osai jeter un œil profane, incestueux.  
 Le ciel mit dans mon sein une flamme funeste.  
 La détestable Œnone a conduit tout le reste.  
 Elle a craint qu'Hippolyte instruit de ma fureur  
 Ne découvrit un feu qui lui faisait horreur.  
 La perfide abusant de ma faiblesse extrême,  
 S'est hâtée à vos yeux de l'accuser lui-même.  
 Elle s'en est punie, et fuyant mon courroux,  
 A cherché dans les flots un supplice trop doux.  
 Le fer aurait déjà tranché ma destinée,  
 Mais je laissais gémir la vertu soupçonnée.  
 J'ai voulu, devant vous exposant mes remords,  
 Par un chemin plus lent descendre chez les morts.  
 J'ai pris, j'ai fait couler dans mes brûlantes veines  
 Un poison que Médée apporta dans Athènes.

The greatness of my name adds to the pain:  
 Were I less known, I'd find a better hiding place.  
 I loathe the honours, even, of the gods.  
 I'll go away to mourn their murderous gift.  
 I'll weary them no more with useless prayers.  
 Whatever they may do to me, no gift  
 Can ever give me back what I have lost.

PHAEDRA

No, Theseus... I must break this silence. It's not just.  
 I must give back your son his innocence.  
 He was not guilty...

THESEUS

Oh, I am now doomed...  
 It was your word that made me punish him!  
 The cruelty... how will you be forgiven?

PHAEDRA

Each moment's precious to me. Listen, Theseus.  
 I was the one who on your pure and honoured son  
 Dared look with vile, incestuous eyes.  
 The gods lit up my heart with deadly lust;  
 Oenone, horribly, did all the rest.  
 She feared Hippolytus, once told of my mad love,  
 Would make it public, he would loathe it so.  
 She broke my trust, exploited my weak state,  
 And rushed to make him guilty in your sight.  
 She's found her punishment. She fled my rage  
 And found too calm a death beneath the waves.  
 I should by now have perished by the sword.  
 Suspicion fell on goodness – and I let it grow.  
 I wanted, though, to tell you my remorse  
 And go down to the dead a slower way.  
 I've taken – it's flowing through my veins, on fire –  
 A poison that Medea brought to Greece.

Déjà jusqu'à mon cœur le venin parvenu  
 Dans ce cœur expirant jette un froid inconnu;  
 Déjà je ne vois plus qu'à travers un nuage  
 Et le ciel, et l'époux que ma présence outrage;  
 Et la mort à mes yeux dérochant la clarté  
 Rend au jour, qu'ils souillaient, toute sa pureté.

PANOPE

Elle expire, Seigneur.

THÉSÉE

D'une action si noire  
 Que ne peut avec elle expirer la mémoire!  
 Allons; de mon erreur, hélas! trop éclaircis,  
 Mêler nos pleurs au sang de mon malheureux fils.  
 Allons de ce cher fils embrasser ce qui reste,  
 Expier la fureur d'un vœu que je déteste.  
 Rendons-lui les honneurs qu'il a trop mérités.  
 Et pour mieux apaiser ses mânes irrités,  
 Que malgré les complots d'une injuste famille  
 Son amante aujourd'hui me tienne lieu de fille.

Already now, it's reached my heart  
 And spreads out now such cold I never knew.  
 I see now only through a mist  
 The heavens and the husband I've defiled.  
 Death steals the brightness from my eyes,  
 And gives back daylight...all its purity...

PANOPE

She is dying, my lord.

THESEUS

Would that the memory  
 Of this dark deed would die as well.  
 But come... now my mistake is all too clear,  
 Our tears must mingle in my son's sad blood.  
 I must embrace his dear remains  
 And expiate my mad, appalling prayer,  
 Give him the honour he was surely owed.  
 And to appease the anger of his soul,  
 Let his beloved, despite her family's crime,  
 Become my daughter from this day.



**JEAN RACINE**

**PHAEDRA**

translated and adapted for radio

by

TIM CHILCOTT

**CAST**

THESEUS, son of Aegeus, king of Athens

PHAEDRA, Theseus' wife, daughter of Minos and Pasiphae

HIPPOLYTUS, son of Theseus and Antiope, queen of the Amazons

ARICIA, princess of the blood royal of Athens

THERAMENES, Hippolytus' tutor

OENONE, Phaedra's nurse and confidante

ISMENE, Aricia's confidante

PANOPE, one of Phaedra's waiting-women

*The scene is set in Troezen, a town in the Peloponnese*

*PHAEDRA AS RADIO DRAMA*

THE ACOUSTIC OF THE PLAY

If, as has been suggested in the Introduction, sound and voice are supreme issues for Racine, there could be few more natural modern media for his work than radio drama. Without the distractions of sight – physical appearance, gesture, visual perspective, scenery, and so forth – sound can both concentrate and release the listener's imagination with unparalleled force.

Racine sets *Phaedra* in the ancient Greek town of Troezen, on the shores of the Aegean Sea. In this translation for radio, the Greek setting is heard as a constant background to the action. After the opening sounds of wind and sea, the prevailing physical atmosphere is one of suffocating summer heat – blinding, enclosed, claustrophobic. Although there is sometimes a distinction between interior and exterior acoustics – cool, sharp footsteps on marble contrasting with the buzz of cicada and grasshopper – the differences are often blurred. At times, outside sounds invade the palace hall, where the action takes place, with an almost preternatural intensity. The human actors both reflect and heighten this atmosphere. They are often close to each other, and to the microphone. They audibly perspire. During extended declarations by one, the person addressed can be heard breathing, or murmuring, or responding wordlessly. Against the stately, formal rhythms of their speech, the characters speak intimacies that terrify themselves. Their whispers crack a world open.

*Exterior acoustic. Fade up sound of wind and heavy sea swell crashing on to pebbled beach. Hold for several seconds, then fade back for credits.*

*After credits, cross fade to sea heard at a distance, as from a considerable height. The wind is now much fainter. Hold for a few moments, then cross fade to the sound of cicadas in a middle distance, held throughout the scene. Away, the sound of large double doors opening and closing. Men's footsteps are heard coming towards microphone, at first echoing on marble, then quieter as they reach a balcony.*

HIPPOLYTUS

So, Theramenes, it's decided then.  
I have to end this pleasant stay in Troezen.  
I'm haunted by my fear about the king.  
I am ashamed at all my idleness.  
My father has been gone six months or more;  
He's dear to me, and yet I do not know his fate  
Nor where in all the world he might be now.

THERAMENES

Where would you go, my lord, to look for him?  
I've tried to ease your fear. It's merited.  
I've scoured the seas that Corinth cuts in two,  
Asked after Theseus along those shores  
Where Acheron flows downwards to the dead.  
I've been to Elis, passed by Tenaros,  
And sailed the seas where Icarus once fell.  
What fresh new hope makes you believe you'll find  
Some trace of him in more congenial spots?

Indeed, who knows if the king your father  
Wishes the secret for his absence to be known.  
While we here worry for his life, might he  
Not be at ease, hiding his latest love away,  
Just waiting to seduce a girl...

HIPPOLYTUS

Enough, Theramenes. You owe respect.  
He's put the errors of his youth aside.  
Those shameful faults no longer weigh him down.  
Phaedra has curbed the wanderings of his heart.  
She has no fears of any rivals now.  
I am in duty bound to look for him.  
I have to leave here now. I dare not stay.

THERAMENES

But when did you begin, my lord, to fear  
This peaceful place? You loved it as a boy.  
You've liked it better here, I know, than all  
The pomp and noise of Athens and the court.  
What danger drives you out – or is it grief?

HIPPOLYTUS

Those days of joy have gone. All is now changed  
Since the great gods sent Phaedra to these shores,  
The child of Minos and of Pasiphae.

THERAMENES

I know. I know the reason for your hurt.  
The sight of Phaedra here distresses you.  
She was a dangerous stepmother. She'd scarcely seen

Than banished you. That marked her influence.  
But all the hate that once was fixed on you  
Has vanished now, at least has grown much less.  
Besides, what threat from her could make you leave,  
A dying woman, reaching out to die?  
Some sickness has seized hold – she will not say –  
She's weary of herself and of the light  
Of day. How could she plan to do you harm?

HIPPOLYTUS

It's not her vain hostility I fear.  
I go to keep a different enemy away.  
Let me confess – I run from young Aricia,  
Last of that deadly blood-line sworn our foe.

THERAMENES

Oh no, my lord, would you torment her too?  
Pallas's sons were cruel, but she was kind.  
She never knew about her brothers' plots.  
How could you hate the grace of innocence?

HIPPOLYTUS

If I felt hate, I should not run from her.

THERAMENES

Then could I guess the reason for your flight?  
Might you no longer be the proud Hippolytus,  
Relentless enemy of all love's laws  
And bonds that Theseus bore so many times?  
You've scorned the power of Venus for so long.  
Could she have vindicated him at last,

And made you join the rest of humankind,  
Forced you to worship at her shrine?  
Might you not be in love?

HIPPOLYTUS

Take care, old friend.

You've known my feelings since I first drew breath.  
Don't ask me to deny in shame the pride  
And high resolve that's in my heart.  
My mother was an Amazon. Her milk  
Gave me this vaunted pride. Yet what of that...  
When I grew up, became a man, I too  
Endorsed it as my own true self.  
Your faithful friendship bound you close to me.  
You'd tell me of my father's history.  
You knew how much I'd hang upon your words,  
Would glow at stories of his marvellous deeds.  
You drew for me a Theseus without fear –  
Consoling humans for the loss of Hercules –  
Who strangled monsters, punished those who'd robbed –  
Procrustes, Sciron, Sinis, Cercyon,  
The bones he scattered of the Epidaurus giant,  
And all Crete reeking with the Minotaur's blood.  
But other things you told me of – less glorious –  
His honour pledged, believed so many times:  
Helen in Sparta stolen from her home,  
And Salamis, where Periboea wept,  
So many more, whose names he then forgot,  
Too credulous by far, all duped by him.  
Ariadne left crying to the rocks,  
And Phaedra kidnapped, though for better ends.

You know I heard these tales with pain.  
 I often urged you cut them short,  
 Happy to blot out from my memory  
 The vilest half of such a history.  
 So is it now my turn to be caught up?  
 The gods would humble me to that extent?  
 My cowardly cries would bring far more contempt.  
 Crowded with honours, Theseus is excused.  
 But no wild monster ever tamed by me Has  
 given me the right to fail like him. Even  
 suppose my pride were to be quelled,  
 Would I choose that Aricia should master me?  
 My wandering senses scarcely could forget  
 The everlasting obstacle between us both.  
 My father disapproves of her. Strict laws forbid  
 Her bearing children to her brothers' line.  
 He fears the offspring from so false a stock.  
 He wants to kill their name with hers.  
 She is his ward till death. He has decreed  
 The wedding torch shall never light for her.  
 Should I take up her cause, incense the king  
 And give a lesson in foolhardiness?  
 I'd launch my youth on reckless love...?

THERAMENES

Ah but my lord – once fate has stamped our hour,  
 Heaven no longer cares to know our reasonings.  
 Theseus had hoped to close your eyes, but opened them.  
 His hate has fanned a rebel fire,  
 Given his enemy a fresh, new grace.  
 Besides, why should you fear so chaste a love?

If there is sweetness, why not savour it?  
 You still believe in being scrupulous?  
 Why fear to follow in the steps of Hercules?  
 What heart of steel has Venus not made tame?  
 You fight her; where though would you be yourself  
 Had not Antiope, who fought her laws,  
 Still burned for Theseus with a shameless lust?  
 But what is served by lofty utterance?  
 Admit it, all is changed. For some days now,  
 You've been less often seen, in such wild pride,  
 Racing a chariot at the water's edge,  
 Or showing all your skills in Neptune's art,  
 Curbing an untamed stallion to the bit.  
 The woods halloo less often with our cries.  
 Your eyes are heavy, full of secret fire.  
 There is no doubt. Love's burning you.  
 You're suffering from a pain you want to hide.  
 Has fair Aricia enchanted you?

HIPPOLYTUS

Theramenes, I go to find the king.

THERAMENES

Will you not see Phaedra before you leave,  
 My lord?

HIPPOLYTUS

I mean to, yes. Let her be told.  
 I'll see her soon, since duty says I must.

*Sound of double doors opening and closing quickly and loudly.*

But there's Oenone. What latest sadness...?

*Sound of woman's steps running across marble towards microphone. Oenone is breathless for a moment, then recovers.*

OENONE

My lord, what grief can equal this? The queen  
Is all but touching now her hour of death.  
I've stayed and watched her day and night in vain;  
She's dying in my arms from sickness she won't name.  
Some constant turmoil riots in her mind;  
A restless sorrow tears her from her bed.  
She yearns to see the light. But pain wracks her.  
She orders me to keep out everyone...

*Sound of door opening.*

But here she comes...

*Hippolytus starts.*

HIPPOLYTUS

Enough, I must leave now,  
So that she does not see a face she loathes.

*Sound of Theramenes and him walking off quickly down a gravel path. Sound of cicadas fades down as slight echo acoustic of the hall increases. The double doors close slowly. Oenone returns into the hall.*

PHAEDRA

Let's not go further, Oenone. Let's rest.  
I can't stand up. I've lost my strength.  
My eyes are dazzled blind by all this light.  
My legs are trembling...give way under me.

*Sound of a chair scraping on the marble. She sits down with effort.*

OENONE

May our tears soften you, all-powerful Gods.

PHAEDRA

These silly ornaments, these veils – the weight of them.  
Whose meddling hand has tied up all these knots,  
Arranged my hair so carefully across my brow?  
All things distress and hurt. They plot to hurt.

OENONE

*[aside]* Her every wish conflicts against the rest.  
*[to her]* But you yourself just said your plan was wrong.  
Just now, you urged me decorate your hair.  
You summoned all your old strength up And  
wanted to be shown the light again. You see  
it here; and now you want to hide. You hate  
the daylight that you came to find.

PHAEDRA

You dazzling founder of this wretched family,  
My mother dared to boast she was your child.  
Perhaps you blush to see me so distressed.  
Sun-god, I see you for the final time.

*Sound of Oenone sitting down. Now close to Phaedra.*

OENONE

Won't you give up this desperate desire?  
Am I to see you giving up on life,  
Preparing for a mournful, tragic death?

PHAEDRA

I should be sitting in the forests' shade.  
When will my eyes see through these swirls of dust  
And catch a racing chariot in its course...?

OENONE

My lady?

PHAEDRA

I'm mad. Where am I? What have I said?  
My reason, my desires – where did they go?  
They're lost. The gods have taken them away.  
My face is flushed, Oenone. So, I've let  
You see my shameful grief too much.  
I cannot help...my eyes fill up with tears.

OENONE

If you must blush, blush for your silence then.  
It merely fires the fury of your pain.  
You thrust our care aside, you're deaf to all we say -  
So you will end your life without concern...?  
What madness cuts it short in middle age?  
What spell – what poison – has dried up its source?  
The shades of night have blacked the skies three times

Since your eyes last were overcome by sleep.  
The day has driven dark night out three times,  
But still your body faints for lack of food.  
What terrifying plan tempts you so now?  
What right have you to try to kill yourself?  
You wrong the gods, the source of all your life,  
Betray your husband, whom you wed in faith,  
Not least betray your children into grief.  
You will force them to such cruel slavery.  
Remember, the very day their mother dies  
Will give fresh hope to the outsider's son,  
To that fierce enemy of yours, your blood,  
The boy an Amazon bore in her womb,  
Hippolytus...

PHAEDRA

No, god...

OENONE

I make my point...?

PHAEDRA

You wretched woman! What name did you speak?

OENONE

At last! You burst with anger – justly so.  
It's good to see you shudder at his name.  
So, live. Let love and duty urge you on.  
Live. Don't let a Scythian woman's son  
Chain up your children in vile slavery  
And rule the finest blood of Greece and all

The gods. But don't delay. Each moment kills.  
Gather the strength you've lost again at once.  
The fire of life is nearly dead. Yet it  
Still flickers and can burst alive in flame.

PHAEDRA

I have prolonged my guilty life too much...

OENONE

What is this guilt that's tearing you apart?  
What crime could ever bring so sharp a pain?  
You've never stained your hands with guiltless blood.

PHAEDRA

I thank the gods my hands have done no wrong.  
Would God my heart were innocent as them.

OENONE

So what vile plan have you conceived  
That your whole heart remains still terrified?

PHAEDRA

I've said enough. Spare me the rest.  
I'm dying... the dreadful secret's safe with me.

OENONE

Then die. Stay silent. It's not natural.  
But look for someone else to close your eyes.  
The light just flickers for you now, and yet  
My soul will go down first to meet the dead.  
A thousand open roads can take us there.

My grief will choose the shortest way. You are  
So cruel. When did I ever break your trust?  
I took you in my arms when you were born.  
I left my home, my children – all for you.  
Is this the prize you give for faithfulness?

PHAEDRA

Why all this rage? What do you hope to gain?  
If I spoke out, you'd shudder in such dread...

OENONE

What could you say, great gods, that could be worse  
Than see you die before my eyes?

PHAEDRA

But if you knew my crime – this hopeless fate –  
I should still die, but yet more full of guilt.

OENONE

By all the tears that I have wept for you,  
These helpless limbs I hold so close,  
You must relieve me from this awful doubt.

PHAEDRA

As you wish. Stand up.

*Sound of chair scraping. Oenone stands, now a little away.*

OENONE

Tell me. I'm listening.



PHAEDRA

*[to herself]* What can I say to her? Where to begin?

OENONE

Stop terrifying me so needlessly.

PHAEDRA

How Venus hates... that deadly rage she has...

The frenzy that she threw my mother in...

OENONE

You must forget. Until the end of time

Eternal silence hide that memory.

PHAEDRA

My sister Ariadne – love wounded you –

They left you dying on an alien shore.

OENONE

What else, my lady? What deadly grieving

Drives you on still to rage against your race?

PHAEDRA

Venus will have it so, and so I'll die,

The last, most wretched member of this tainted line.

OENONE

Are you in love?

PHAEDRA

Its fury burns through me.

OENONE

Who with?

PHAEDRA

Now you will hear the horror to the full.

I love...the name is death...I'm shuddering...

I love...

OENONE

Who?

PHAEDRA

You know the Amazon woman's son...

The young prince I've oppressed so long...?

OENONE

Hippolytus! O God...

PHAEDRA

You said his name.

OENONE

Dear God, the blood is frozen in my veins.

Despair...the crime...this tainted family...

It was an ill-starred journey to this tragic land.

Why did I step ashore this dangerous coast?

PHAEDRA

The pain goes further back. I'd scarcely pledged

My marriage vows to Aegus' son –  
 My peace of mind, my happiness, seemed safe, secure –  
 Then Athens showed my wondrous enemy to me.  
 I saw him. Blushed. Then paled to look at him.  
 Some trembling surged. It blurred my mind.  
 My eyes no longer saw, I couldn't speak.  
 I felt my body freeze and burn all through.  
 Then I knew Venus – her appalling fires –  
 The fated tortures of a race she hounds.  
 I thought to keep her off by constant prayers;  
 I built a shrine to her, embellished with care;  
 Victims were sacrificed at every hour.  
 I gazed at them in search of my lost mind.  
 They could not heal. Love was incurable.  
 My hands burned incense at her shrine in vain.  
 But even as my lips intoned her name,  
 I prayed Hippolytus. I saw him everywhere,  
 Even beside the altars that I kept alight.  
 I offered to a god I dare not name – the world.  
 I shunned him everywhere – and yet the worst of all,  
 I kept on seeing him in Theseus' face.  
 At last I dared to fight myself.  
 I worked my feelings up to torture him,  
 To banish now the enemy I adored.  
 I played the cruel stepmother full of hate.  
 I urged his exile. My constant pleading  
 Tore him from his father's arms and heart.  
 I breathed again, Oenone. With him now gone,  
 My days flowed by less troubled, free of guilt.  
 I hid my grief, submitted to my husband's will,  
 And nursed the children of his fateful bed.

Fate is so cruel. Precaution was in vain.  
 Theseus himself brought me to Troezen's shores.  
 And so I saw again the man I'd sent away.  
 The wound was opened, bled again at once,  
 And now no yearning hidden in the blood.  
 Venus with all her might clawed at her prey.  
 I realise the horror of my crime.  
 My life is cursed, my passion terrible.  
 I wanted by my death to save my name  
 And hide so dark a love from light of day.  
 I couldn't bear your tears, your battling.  
 I've told you everything. I don't regret it now.  
 Only – please spare me as I start to die.  
 Don't hurt me now with undeserved reproach.  
 Your help must stop. It's all in vain. Don't fan  
 This last faint heat quite ready now to die.

*Sound of doors opening. Panope's voice, at first away, hesitant, then coming forward.*

PANOPE

My lady? I've such grievous news for you. I  
 want to hide it. I must though tell you.  
 Theseus has been torn from you... by death...  
 You are the only one who does not know.

OENONE

What did you say, Panope? No...

PANOPE

The queen  
 Asks heaven for Theseus' return in vain.

His son Hippolytus has learned his death  
From ships arriving in the port.

PHAEDRA

Dear God...

PANOPE

For choice of ruler Athens is now split.  
One group swears loyalty to the prince your son.  
The other now rejects the state's own laws  
And dares support the foreign woman's son.  
It's even said that devilish plots  
Will crown Aricia and the Pallas line.  
I thought it right to warn you of this threat.  
Hippolytus is ready to set sail.  
If he appears in this new storm, I fear  
He'll draw a fickle people to his side.

OENONE

Enough, Panope. The queen has heard you.  
She will not fail to heed this vital news.

*Sound of footsteps going away. Double doors open and close. Oenone now close to  
Phaedra and to microphone.*

OENONE

I'd ceased, my lady, urging you to live.  
I'd thought to go with you down to the tomb.  
I couldn't say enough to turn you back.  
But this new sadness dictates different plans.

Your fortune's changed, takes on another face.  
The king is dead, and you must take his place.  
He leaves a son. Your duty lies with him,  
A slave without you; if you live, a king.  
On whom should he rely now in his grief?  
His tears will not be dried by other hands.  
His guiltless cries, borne upward to the gods,  
Will bring ancestral anger down on you.  
So live. You need accuse yourself no more.  
Your love becomes an ordinary love.  
Theseus has broken by his death the bonds  
That made a crime, a horror, of your love.  
Hippolytus is less now to be feared.  
You now may see him guiltlessly.  
If he believes you hate him still, he could  
Perhaps become the focus of revolt.  
Correct his error. Melt his courage down.  
He rules these happy shores, Troezen's his share,  
And yet he knows the law gives to your son  
The soaring ramparts that Minerva built.  
You two both have a common enemy:  
Unite in strength against Aricia.

PHAEDRA

I'll let myself be drawn to your advice.  
I'll live, if I can now be brought to life,  
If love for my son in this darkened time  
Can fire the dying embers of my soul.

*Sudden increase in sound of cicadas, seeming to invade and resonate within the hall's  
acoustic. The noise is very loud. Hold for several moments, then fade down to*

*background as exterior acoustic alone. Sound of two women's footsteps over gravel path approaching microphone.*

ARICIA

Hippolytus has asked to see me here?  
Hippolytus now wants to say good-bye?  
Is that the truth, Ismene...no mistake?

ISMENE

This is the first result of Theseus' death.  
Prepare to see flying from everywhere  
The people Theseus kept away from you.  
At last you are the mistress of your fate.  
The whole of Greece will soon be at your feet.

ARICIA

It's not an idle rumour then?  
I'm not a slave, have no more enemies?

ISMENE

The gods are not against you now, my lady.  
Theseus has joined your brothers' ghosts below.

ARICIA

But do they say what exploit caused his death?

ISMENE

Fantastic tales of it are springing up.  
Some say that while he ravished yet another girl,  
The waves engulfed him in his faithlessness.  
Others – and this is widely spread – say

That he's gone down to hell with Pirithous,  
Seen Cocytus along its dark, sad banks,  
Appeared alive before those hellish shades,  
But that he cannot leave that mournful place,  
Recross the river from which none returns.

ARICIA

But could a living man, before his final hour,  
Go deep down to the dwellings of the dead?  
What charm could draw him to those fearful shores?

ISMENE

Theseus is dead, my lady. Only you doubt that.  
Athens is mourning. Troezen has the news,  
Already hails Hippolytus as king.  
Here in this palace, Phaedra trembles for her son  
And asks her anxious friends for their advice.

ARICIA

You think Hippolytus will be more kind  
Than Theseus was to me? Loosen the chains,  
Pity my distress?

ISMENE

I do, my lady.

ARICIA

You know Hippolytus? That heart of stone?  
Why should you think that he will pity me,  
Respect in me alone a sex he scorns?  
You've seen how long he has avoided me.

He goes to all the places I avoid.

ISMENE

I know what's said about his iciness.  
I've seen this haughty man, though, close to you.  
As I watched him, the talk of all his pride  
Increased my curiosity in him.  
His manner did not seem to match the talk.  
One glance from you, and he became confused.  
He tried to shun your gaze – in vain. His eyes  
Were very soft, could not be kept off you.  
Perhaps the name of lover hurts his pride.  
But yet he has the eyes of one, if not the tongue.

ARICIA

How greedily, Ismene, I listen  
To all you say, however wrong it is.  
You know me well. Could you believe that I –  
This sad plaything of unpitying fate,  
My heart for ever fed on hurt and tears – Would  
ever know the maddening pain of love? Last of a  
royal line – my father was earth's son – I have  
alone escaped the curse of war.  
I lost six brothers in the flowering  
Of their youth...oh the hope my blood-line had for them  
The sword cut down them all. The moistened earth  
Was made to drink Erechtheus' nephews' blood.  
And since they died, you know how harsh a law  
Forbids all Greeks to sympathise with me.  
They fear my love could one day challenge them,  
Could fire my brothers' ashes into life.

And yet you know how scornfully I've viewed  
The care of my suspicious conqueror.  
You know I was a constant enemy of love.  
I used to thank that tyrant Theseus.  
His harshness sorted well with my contempt.  
But then my eyes...I had not seen his son.  
It isn't that my eyes have been beguiled  
And love him for his handsomeness, his much praised grace.  
Those gifts good fortune has bestowed on him,  
He despises or is unconscious of.  
I love, I prize, far nobler wealth in him:  
His father's virtues, not his weaknesses.  
Let me confess. I love the marvellous pride  
That never has been humbled by love's yoke.  
Phaedra can boast of Theseus' sighs in vain.  
I have more pride. I scorn the easy prize  
Of tributes paid to thousands more besides,  
Of love that's given out to everyone.  
And yet to make a steel-hard courage bend,  
To make a heart that has no feelings hurt,  
To put a startled prisoner in chains  
Who fights against a yoke he loves in vain –  
It's *that* I want. That rouses me.  
Hercules was often beaten, routed –  
That would mean less than with Hippolytus  
Would yield less glory to the eyes that broke him in.  
But Ismene, this is all foolishness.  
His fierce resistance will be all too strong.  
You yet may hear me, humbled by my grief,  
Lament the very pride I now admire.  
Hippolytus in love? What edge of ecstasy

Would I have touched...?

*Sound of doors opening.*

ISMENE

Hear him himself.

He's coming now.

*The doors close. Hippolytus' steps come nearer, stopping a little away from the microphone.*

HIPPOLYTUS

Lady, before I leave,

It's only right that you should know your fate.

My father's dead. I rightly feared

The reasons why he was away so long.

Death could alone have stopped his marvellous deeds

And hidden him from all the world so long.

The gods gave up to murderous fate at last

The friend, companion, heir of Hercules.

I hope your hate will spare his qualities

And won't resent the honours that he won.

*He moves closer to the microphone.*

One hope can soften, though, my grief:

I can release you from his guardianship.

It was too strict. I will revoke his penal laws

Which I deplore. Your life is yours, as is your heart.

And in Troezen here, which is now mine –

My great grandfather Pittheus' legacy –

Which has proclaimed me king with one accord,

I leave you free – much freer than myself.

*Aricia moves towards microphone.*

ARICIA

Your kindness is too much. I blush at it.

You treat me now so generously

And tie me – more than you'd believe, my lord –

To those harsh laws from which you've set me free.

HIPPOLYTUS

Athens is uncertain whom to choose as heir.

They talk of you, of me, of the queen's son.

ARICIA

Of me, my lord?

HIPPOLYTUS

I don't deceive myself.

I know the rigid law that bars me, so it seems.

My mother is a foreigner, and Greece

Objects. But if my only rival were

My stepbrother, I'd take clear precedence

And would be saved the folly of the law.

What holds me back is more legitimate.

I hand or, rather, give you back

A sceptre that your ancestors received

From that great man who was the earth's own son.

Adoption placed it in Aegus' hands.

Once Theseus had made Athens great and safe,

She hailed him as her noble king with joy  
And left your brothers in obscurity.  
Now Athens calls you back within her walls. This  
endless feud has made her grieve enough. Your  
family's blood has now been spilled enough.  
The furrowed fields from which it sprang are drenched.  
Troezen is now mine. The lands of Crete  
Will make a rich retreat for Phaedra's son.  
But Attica is yours. I'll set out now  
To unify the votes that still are split.

ARICIA

All this amazes, troubles me. I fear...  
I almost fear...a dream's deceiving me.  
Am I awake? Can I believe all this?  
My lord, what god inspired you with this plan?  
Your fame is justly spread throughout the world  
And yet the truth surpasses your renown.  
You would betray yourself to favour me...?  
Ceasing to hate me would have been enough,  
Keeping your heart so long a time  
From old hostilities...

HIPPOLYTUS

I, hate you, my lady?  
Whatever has been said about my pride,  
Do you all think some monster gave me birth?  
What barbarous customs, frozen hate  
Would not be melted at the sight of you?  
Could I resist the dazzling spell...

ARICIA

My lord?

HIPPOLYTUS

I've gone too far, I see.  
Reason has given way to violence.  
And yet...I have begun to speak my thoughts.

*Very close now to microphone.*

I must go on. I have to tell  
A secret that I can no longer hide.  
You see a pitiable prince in front of you,  
A haunting illustration of rash pride.  
I used to be a rebel against love.  
I've long despised the chains her captives wore.  
I used to mourn the shipwrecks of weak men  
And thought to see such storms from safe on shore.  
But now I'm subject to the common law,  
Swept troubled far away from my true self.  
A single moment overcame my pride  
And made my strutting mind subservient.  
For nearly six whole months – in shame, despair –  
I've borne the arrow tearing me apart.  
I've fought against you and myself in vain.  
I shun your presence, seek you when you're gone.  
Your image haunts me in the deepest woods.  
The light of day, the shadows of the night,  
All conjure up the spell from which I run.  
Each single thing surrenders me to you.  
And the result of all this fruitless care...?

I seek myself and cannot find the man.  
 My bow, my spears and chariot, all trouble me.  
 I can't recall the lessons Neptune taught.  
 The woods now echo with my cries alone.  
 My steeds are idle, do not know my voice.  
 Perhaps to speak of such a haunted love  
 Will make you blush to hear what you have done.  
 I offer you my love so clumsily...  
 How strange a prisoner for one so fair...  
 Yet that should make the offering more prized.  
 Remember that I speak a foreign tongue.  
 Please, don't reject these graceless words.  
 I never would have said them but for you.

*Doors open. Theramenes distant, then approaching the microphone.*

THERAMENES

My lord, Phaedra is here. I came ahead.  
 She wants to speak.

HIPPOLYTUS

With me?

THERAMENES

I don't know why.  
 Her messenger has come to ask for you.  
 She has to speak to you before you go.

HIPPOLYTUS

What can I say to her? What can she want?

ARICIA, *a little away*

You cannot say you will not listen now.  
 However much you know she is your enemy,  
 You owe some shade of pity for her grief.

HIPPOLYTUS

You go away. Must I too leave not knowing if  
 I have offended who I most adore?  
 Or if the heart I leave now in your hands...

ARICIA

Go now. And follow through your generous plan.  
 Make Attica pay homage to my power.  
 I will accept the gifts you've offered me.  
 Yet this great empire, glorious thought it is,  
 Is not your dearest present, in my eyes.

*Ismene and she leave, footsteps receding over marble, then the gravel path. From the opposite direction, doors are heard opening.*

HIPPOLYTUS

Theramenes, is all now ready? There's the queen.  
 Go, make everyone prepare to sail at once.  
 Give them the signal, quick. And hurry back  
 To save me from an awkward interview.

*Theramenes leaves quickly, steps receding over marble, then gravel. Phaedra and Oenone away from microphone.*

PHAEDRA, *to Oenone*

Oenone, there he is. My heart... the blood



Is racing... I see him... forget my words...

OENONE

Think of your son. You are his only hope.

PHAEDRA, *louder*

They say you leave us very soon, my lord.

I've come to add my tears for what you mourn.

*Sound of her approaching Hippolytus and microphone.*

I've come to speak a mother's fears to you

My son is fatherless; the day is

Not far off when he will see my death as well.

He is a child. A thousand enemies attack,

And you alone can help in his defence.

But dark remorseful shadows haunts my mind.

I fear I've made you deaf to all his cries.

I fear your righteous anger at my crimes

Will soon be persecuting him.

HIPPOLYTUS

My feelings, lady, could not sink so low.

PHAEDRA

If you did hate me, I could not complain,

My lord. You've seen me hot to do you harm.

And yet you could not read my deepest heart.

I've taken pains to nourish your hostility.

I would not have you present where I lived,

Opposed you both in public and alone.

I wanted all the seas to keep you far from me.

I even censored, by express decree,

The speaking of your name when I was there.

But if the penalty should match the crime,

If hate alone should draw your hate on me,

No woman is more worthy of your sympathy,

Nor less, my lord, of your hostility.

HIPPOLYTUS

A mother jealous of her children's rights

Seldom forgives another mother's son.

I know that well. And troubling suspicions

Are often spawned in second marriages.

Another woman would have felt the same

Distrust, and even made me suffer more.

PHAEDRA

Ah no, my lord. The gods, I can here swear,

Have made me stand outside the common law.

Far different care eats at me, weighs me down.

HIPPOLYTUS

This is no time to hurt you any more:

Theseus perhaps may even yet survive.

The gods may let him back for pity's sake.

Neptune will shelter him. His guardian god

Will not be deaf to all my father's prayers.

PHAEDRA, *very close to microphone*

No human visits twice the shores of death,

My lord. Theseus has seen those dark, dark banks.

You hope a god will send him back in vain.  
Hungry Acheron does not drop its prey.  
And yet, he is not dead. He breathes in you.  
I see my husband here...before my eyes...

I see him, speak to him; my heart... I'm lost...  
This frenzy, passion, bursts in spite of me.

HIPPOLYTUS

I see the wondrous power of your love.  
Though he is dead, Theseus is here to you.  
Your soul is set on fire still by his love.

PHAEDRA, *back a little from microphone*

Yes, prince, I ache, I burn for Theseus.  
I love him still, but not as he's been seen in hell,  
The fickle worshipper of countless things  
Coming to shame the couch of Hades' god.  
But faithful, proud,. even a little shy,  
Charming, and young, the spinner out of hearts,  
As gods are painted... as I see you now.  
He had your bearing, eyes; he talked like you.  
His face flushed red with modesty  
That time he crossed the seas and came to Crete,  
A fitting man for Minos' daughters' prayers.  
But what were you doing then? Why gather  
All the finest men in Greece, and not Hippolytus?  
Why could you not, for all your youth, have  
Joined the ship that brought him to our shores?  
You would have killed the minotaur of Crete,  
Despite the twists and turns of his great maze.

My sister would have given you the thread  
To find your way through all those tangled paths.  
But no, I would have been in front of her.  
Love would have fired me with the thought at once.  
I would have helped, my lord, I would have taught  
You all the windings of the labyrinth.  
What pain your charm, your face, have cost...  
A thread would not have set my heart at rest.  
I would have shared the dangers facing you,  
I would have wanted to go first...down, down...  
And in the labyrinth with you, I would  
Have found my way, or else been doomed.

HIPPOLYTUS

Dear god, what do I hear? Do you forget  
That Theseus is my father? You're his wife.

PHAEDRA

What makes you think I have forgotten that?  
You think I've lost all caring for my name?

HIPPOLYTUS

Forgive me. Look...I blush. You spoke in innocence.  
I'm sure I misinterpreted your words.  
I'm so ashamed...I cannot look...I'll go.

PHAEDRA

Don't be so cruel... you understand me all too well.  
I've said enough to make it clear as day.  
You shall know me, in all my wild desires.  
I love you. But don't for one moment think

That I believe these feelings to be innocent.  
 It hasn't been complacency that's fed  
 The poison of mad love that haunts my mind.  
 I am the victim of the vengeful gods.  
 I loathe myself much more than you can hate.  
 The gods are witness. They kindled the flame  
 In me that has been death to my whole family.  
 These gods have gloried cruelly in their power  
 To tempt a feeble human being's heart.  
 Remember all the past – the ways I tried  
 To shun you for your cruelty, drove you away.  
 I tried to seem inhuman to you – vile.  
 I sought your hate the better to resist.  
 What good were all these vain attempts?  
 You hated me the more. I didn't love you less.  
 Your spell was even stronger as you hurt.  
 I yearned, dried up inside, in fire and tears.  
 Simply by looking, you would know that's true,  
 If for one moment you could look at me.  
 What have I said? Confessed it all to you,  
 So full of shame. You think I've done this willingly?  
 I'm trembling for a child I can't betray.  
 I came to beg you not to hate my son.  
 How weak a goal when I'm so full of love  
 I cannot speak of anyone but you.  
 Have your revenge. Punish this hateful love.  
 Be worthy of the man who gave you life,  
 And rid the universe of this vile thing.  
 Theseus' widow dares to love his son!  
 The awful monster must not get away.  
 Here is my heart, the spot where you must strike.

I feel it yearning upwards to your arms,  
 Impatient now to expiate its crime.  
 Kill me. You think I am too vile to kill...?  
 Your hate would grudge me such an easy death –  
 If blood as foul as mine would soil your hands,  
 If you won't strike, then let me have your sword.  
 Give me it!

OENONE

What are you doing? God.

*Sound of struggle, at the same time as steps on the gravel, approaching quickly.*

Someone's coming. We can't have witnesses.  
 Come, let's go in quick. Hide the disgrace.

*Phaedra and Oenone's steps recede. Doors open and close rapidly. Sound of Theramenes' steps into the hall from outside.*

THERAMENES

My lord, could that be Phaedra rushing off?  
 Or dragged away? ...My lord, you look so ill.  
 Where is your sword? You're speechless...deathly pale.

HIPPOLYTUS

Theramenes, we have to go. I've not the words...  
 I have become a horror to myself.  
 Phaedra...Oh no, great gods, entire forgetfulness  
 Must keep this secret dark for all eternity.

THERAMENES

If you must leave, the ships are all prepared.  
But Athens has already cast its vote.  
Its leaders have consulted all the tribes;  
Your brother carries them. Phaedra has won.

HIPPOLYTUS

Phaedra?

THERAMENES

A herald authorised by Athens' will  
Has placed the reins of state within her hands.  
Her son is king, my lord.

HIPPOLYTUS

Dear gods, you know  
Her nature. Is it her virtue you reward?

THERAMENES

But still, vague rumours say the king's alive.  
Theseus, it's claimed, was seen in Epirus.  
But I was there in search of him. I know...

HIPPOLYTUS

No matter now. Listen to everything.  
Track all these rumours down now to their source.  
If breaking off my plans is not worthwhile,  
We'll leave; but at whatever cost,  
We'll place the sceptre soon in better hands

*Sudden increase in sound of cicadas, reverberating loudly through the hall. Hold for several moments, then fade down to middle distance.*

*Doors open and close. Phaedra and Oenone approach from some way off.*

PHAEDRA

Oh take away these honours that they send.  
Stop bothering. You want me to be seen?  
How could you hope to soothe my crying heart?  
Better to hide me now. I've said too much.  
My frenzy's dared to spread itself abroad;  
I've spoken things that never should be heard.  
God! and how he listened... How many twists  
And turns he made to miss my meaning.  
How much he longed to run off there and then.  
And how he blushed, to add to all my shame.  
Why did you hold me back? I planned to die.  
Oh, when his sword was pointed at my breasts,  
Did he turn pale for me, snatch it away?  
It was enough my hand had touched it once.  
I'd made it filthy in his eyes.  
The wretched sword would soil his hands.

OENONE

You cry and only think of what gives pain.  
You fan a fire that ought to be put out.  
Your father is king Minos; ought you not  
To seek some peace of mind in higher things?  
Control this thankless boy who runs away,  
And undertake the business of the state.

PHAEDRA

I reign? I rule a people, rule a state,  
When I'm too weak to rule myself?  
When I have lost control of how I feel?  
When I am choking at this yoke of shame?  
When I am dying?

OENONE

Escape.

PHAEDRA

I cannot leave him.

OENONE

You dared to banish him. Dare avoid him.

PHAEDRA, *close to microphone*

It's all too late. He's seen how mad I am with love.  
I've gone beyond all bounds of modesty.  
I've voiced my shame to him. He's conquered me.  
Despite myself, hope still creeps in my heart.  
You summoned up my failing strength yourself,  
Just as my soul was hovering on my lips.  
You stroked me so and brought me back to life.  
You let me glimpse that I could worship him.

OENONE

I may be guilty for your pain, or not.  
What would I not have done to save your life?  
If ever insults, though, offended you,  
Can you forget his arrogance?  
How cruelly he stared, stiff and severe,

And left you almost prostrate at his feet.  
How odious that savage pride he showed.  
Why could you not then see him through my eyes?

PHAEDRA, *back a little from microphone*

He may let go the pride that angers you.  
Brought up in forests, he is raw like them.  
Some savage laws have hardened him. But now  
For the first time he hears us speak of love.  
Perhaps surprise has silenced him.  
Perhaps we are reproaching him too much.

OENONE

Remember that a savage suckled him.

PHAEDRA

A Scythian savage – and yet she cared.

OENONE

He has a deadly hatred for our sex.

PHAEDRA

I shall then see no rival take my place. But  
all advice from you is much too late. Help  
my heart's frenzy, not my reason now. If he  
is sealed impervious to love,  
We must attack him in a weaker place.  
He seemed attracted by the thought of power.  
Athens excited him; he couldn't hide that fact.  
His ships were turned in that direction,  
Their bulging sails all streaming in the wind.

Find this ambitious boy for me, Oenone,  
And hold a dazzling crown up to his eyes,  
A sacred diadem upon his head.  
I only want to place it there myself.  
I'll yield the power I cannot keep to him.  
He'll teach my son the best ways to command.  
Perhaps he'll be a father to the boy.  
Mother and son I'll give up to his might.  
Try every means, in short, to win him round;  
He'll listen to your words much more than mine.  
Beg him, and cry, and moan. Portray me at death's door.  
Don't blush, don't be afraid to plead for me.  
I'll sanction all you say. You are my only hope.  
Go now. I'll wait for you to know my fate.

*Sound of Oenone's steps receding, doors opening and closing. Phaedra very close to microphone, alone.*

So then, no pity, Venus, yet? You see the depths  
To which I've sunk. Is this now low enough?  
You could not be more cruel than this.  
You've won completely now: the arrows all struck home.  
You want more fame for all your savagery?  
Why not take on a man who'll fight you more?  
Hippolytus runs from you, braves your rage.  
He's never knelt before your shrine.  
It seems your name offends his scornful ear.  
Goddess, have your revenge. Our causes are the same.  
Make him love me...

*Doors open. Oenone returns, breathless, approaching quickly.*

Oenone, why so quick...?  
He hasn't listened to you...loathes me still?

OENONE  
Give up all thoughts of love, my lady, now.  
You need to summon up the courage you once had.  
You will soon see...the king we thought was dead.  
Theseus has come. Theseus is here.  
The people rush and fling themselves at him.  
You ordered me to find Hippolytus  
When shouts and cries are thrown up to the skies...

PHAEDRA  
My husband is alive, Oenone. Enough now...  
I have confessed a love that fouls his name.  
He is alive. I want to hear no more.

OENONE  
What?

PHAEDRA  
I told you, but you would not hear.  
Your tears were stronger than the guilt I felt.  
I might have died this morning worthy of those tears.  
I followed your advice, and die now in great shame.

OENONE  
You die?

PHAEDRA

Dear God, what have I done today?  
 My husband and his son will soon be here.  
 I'll see the witness to adulterous love  
 Inspect me as I dare approach the king,  
 My heart so great with sighs he would not listen to,  
 My eyes so wet with tears he spurned with scorn.  
 He's sensitive to Theseus' fame. Will he  
 Conceal the love ablaze in me from him?  
 Will he betray his people and his king,  
 Hold back the loathing that he has for me?  
 His silence would not help. I know my treachery,  
 Oenone. I'm not a daring woman  
 Who finds great peace of mind amid my crimes,  
 Who feigns a face that never blushes red.  
 I know my madnesses, recall them all.  
 Already now, these walls, I think, these vaults  
 Will start to speak. They're ready to accuse.  
 They only want my husband here – and then they'll tell.  
 Please death release me from such horrors now.  
 Is it so great a hurt to cease to breathe?  
 Death cannot frighten those who live in pain.  
 The name I leave behind is all I fear.  
 What dreadful legacy for my poor sons.  
 The blood of Jupiter should swell their souls;  
 But yet, whatever pride is felt from blood  
 So fine, a mother's sin is hard to bear.  
 I shudder that some words – words all too true –  
 Will blame them one day for my guilt.  
 I fear they'll be so crushed by that foul load  
 That they will never dare to raise their eyes again.

OENONE

No doubt of it. I pity both of them.  
 Your fears are more than justified.  
 But why expose them to this shame and pain?  
 And why incriminate yourself? That will prove all.  
 They'll say that Phaedra was so full of guilt  
 She fled her wounded husband's eyes in fear.  
 Hippolytus will thrill at your expense  
 To see you dead, and so confirm his tale.  
 Accuse he will – and how can I respond?  
 I'll be too easily confused in front of him.  
 I'll see him revelling in his vile success,  
 Telling your shame to all who want to hear.  
 I'd sooner be destroyed by heaven's fire.  
 But tell me the truth...is he so dear, still?  
 How do you look upon this daring prince?

PHAEDRA

He is a fearful horror to my eyes.

OENONE

Then why allow him total victory?  
 You're still afraid. Then dare accuse him first  
 Before he charges you with that same crime.  
 Who'll contradict? It's all against him now –  
 He gladly gave his sword to you,  
 Your anguish now, your past distress,  
 Theseus warned a long time by your cries,  
 His banishment that you yourself obtained.

PHAEDRA

So am I then to brand a guiltless man?

OENONE

I only need your silence to succeed.  
I'm trembling now – like you. I feel remorse.  
I'd sooner undergo a thousand deaths.  
I'll lose you, though, without this remedy;  
I prize your life beyond the world...  
I'll speak. Theseus will be incensed. He'll curb  
His vengeance, though, to banishing his son.  
A father when he disciplines remains  
A father still. A modest punishment will serve  
His rage. Even if guiltless blood is shed,  
Your honour's threatened, demands that price.  
You dare not put so rare a prize at risk.  
Whatever it dictates must be obeyed,  
My lady. To keep your honour safe,  
All – even goodness – must be sacrificed.

*Indistinct noises off. Doors open.*

Someone is coming. That's Theseus...

PHAEDRA

And Hippolytus...

I see my ruin written in his hard  
Cold eyes. Do what you will. I'm in your hands.  
The turmoil that I'm in... I cannot help myself...

*Theseus enters, with Hippolytus and Theramenes. Doors close. Footsteps towards microphone.*

THESEUS

My fate has turned from darkness now,  
My lady. Here in your arms...

PHAEDRA

No, Theseus.

Don't desecrate the charm of your delight.  
I am no longer worthy of such gentleness.  
You have been sinned against. You were away  
And jealous fortune did not spare your wife.  
I am not fit to please you, or come close.  
My only thought now is to hide.

*Sound of her steps, and Oenone's, receding quickly over marble, then gravel.*

THESEUS

So why this strangest welcome to me now,  
Hippolytus?

HIPPOLYTUS

Phaedra alone can solve the mystery.

But if my burning wishes move you still,  
Allow me never to set eyes on her again.  
Allow me...I'm shaking...to disappear  
For ever from the places where she is.

THESEUS

You're leaving me?

HIPPOLYTUS



I did not seek her out.  
 You were the one who brought her to these shores.  
 And when you left, my lord, you deigned to trust  
 Aricia and your queen in Troezen.  
 You even placed them both within my care.  
 But what care now should keep me here?  
 I've wasted youth enough and all my skill  
 On paltry animals that roam the woods.  
 It's time to leave this shameful idleness And  
 stain my javelins with finer blood. Before  
 you'd reached the age that I am now, More  
 than one tyrant, one wild beast,  
 Had felt your arm, the strength it had.  
 You were the scourge of tyranny by then.  
 You'd made the shorelines of two seas quite safe,  
 So travellers could roam and fear no harm.  
 Hercules caught his breath at what you'd done  
 And handed all his labours on to you.  
 And I, this glorious father's unknown son,  
 Am outstripped even by my mother's deeds.  
 Allow my courage now to find its work.  
 If some inhuman thing escaped your sword,  
 Let me throw down its carcass at your feet.  
 Or let the memory of a glorious death  
 Eternalise a life that ended well  
 And prove to all the world I was your son.

THESEUS, *close to microphone*

What's this? What horror has spread through this place  
 To make my family run from me so distraught?  
 If I come home so feared, so undesired,

Why, heaven, did you free me from my goal?  
 I only had one friend. So mad in love,  
 He tried to steal the wife of Epirus' king.  
 Reluctantly, I helped him in his scheme.  
 But fate was angry, blinded both of us.  
 The tyrant-king surprised me – I'd no arms –  
 And I saw Pirithous, a sight for tears,  
 Thrown to such beasts by that barbarian,  
 Who fed them on the blood of tortured men.  
 He shut me up in stifling, pitch-dark caves,  
 Deep in the earth, close to the kingdom of the dead.  
 It was six months before the gods took heed  
 And I could trick the eyes that watched me close.  
 Then I purged nature of a treacherous man  
 And made him serve as food for his own beasts.  
 And when – with joy – I thought to come back here,  
 To everything the gods had made most dear –  
 Where are the words? – my soul was mine again.  
 I came to feast upon so dear a sight...  
 And then I find my welcome is a shuddering!  
*[louder, slightly back from close microphone]*  
 You all run off, repulsing my embrace.  
 I feel inside a horror I inspire.  
 I'd gladly be back now in my own gaol.  
 Speak. Phaedra tells of great wrong done to me.  
 Who has betrayed me? Why aren't I avenged?  
 Has Greece, so often helped by my strong arm,  
 Now granted sanctuary to the criminal?  
 You don't reply...? My son, my only son,  
 Have you had dealings with my enemies?  
 I must go in. I cannot bear this crushing doubt.

I must know both the crime and criminal.  
Phaedra must tell me now what troubles her.

*His steps recede. Doors open and close.*

HIPPOLYTUS

His words...they make me freeze with fear...  
Phaedra is gripped by wild and utter rage –  
Will she accuse herself, destroy her life?  
Dear God, what will he say? What poison now  
Has love spread through this family?  
He used to find a passion in me that  
His hate condemned. He finds it in me still.  
Some dark foreboding terrifies my heart.  
Yet nothing, surely, need be feared by innocence.  
Come, let's try to find a happier way  
To touch my father's tenderness once more.  
I'll tell him of a love he may oppose  
But which, for all his power, he will not shake.

*Sound of steps receding. Cross face to sudden increase in buzz of cicadas, as before.  
Hold for several moments, then fade back to middle distance.*

*Theseus and Oenone approaching on the gravel path.*

THESEUS

My son's a reckless traitor then, Oenone,  
Prepared to soil his father's name. That's what I hear.  
How harshly, fate, you haunt me still.  
I don't know where I am, or where to go.

The tenderness, the kindness repaid so...  
The boldness of his plan...the filthy thoughts...  
He shamelessly took on the help of force  
To gain the object of his dark, dark love.  
I recognised the sword he drew on her,  
The sword I gave him for a nobler use.  
But all those blood-ties could not hold him back.  
And Phaedra would put off his punishment?  
Her silence would help spare a guilty man?

OENONE

She spared, rather, your wretchedness, my lord.  
This lover's raving schemes, the guilt and fire  
That burned out in his eyes – she felt such shame...  
She was dying, my lord. Her murderous hand  
Tried to put out the guiltless light of life.  
I saw her raise her arm. I ran to rescue her.  
I knew, though, how to keep her for your love.  
I've pitied both her pain and your alarm.  
I've tried to give some reason for her tears.

THESEUS

He has betrayed... No wonder he turned pale.  
As he came up, I saw him wince with fear.  
I was astonished that he showed no joy.  
His cold embrace froze all my tenderness.  
But had this sinful love that eats him up  
Already shown itself in Athens, then?

OENONE

Remember how the queen complained, my lord.

The guilty love gave rise to all her hate.

THESEUS

And here in Troezen, the passion flamed again?

OENONE

My lord, I've told you all I know.

The queen must not be left in deathly grief.

Allow me now to leave and go to her.

*Her steps recede on the gravel path. Sound of doors opening and closing far off. Theseus starts.*

THESEUS, *close to microphone*

Ah, there he is. Great god. What eyes would not

Be taken in like mine at such nobility.

Why must a vile adulterer's face shine bright

With all the sacred look of virtuousness?

There should be sure and certain signs

To recognise the hearts of treacherous men.

*Hippolytus' steps on marble come closer.*

HIPPOLYTUS

My lord, I have to ask, what deadly cloud

Could cast such shadows on my sovereign's face?

Can't you confide the secret to my trust?

THESEUS

You hypocrite! How dare you come before me now?

You animal...the lightning strike's been too long spared.

You foul remains of all the thieves I purged the earth.

Your appetite for gross and filthy lust

Has brought you frenzied to your father's bed –

And you dare show your loathsome face to me...?

You come here steeped in filth and vice.

You haven't sought some foreign sky,

A country where my name has never reached...?

Get out, you traitor. Don't brave my hatred

And tempt a rage I can now scarce restrain.

I share enough of everlasting shame

For having brought so vile a son to life,

Without your death dishonouring my name

And tarnishing the glory of my work.

Get out. You will not care for instant punishment

To add you to the libertines that I have killed.

Make sure the sun that shines on us never

Detects you setting foot in here again.

I said get out. At once. Never come back.

Just cleanse my kingdom of your hideous face.

And Neptune, you – if in the past I dared

To clear vile murderers from off your shores –

Remember the reward for my success:

You swore to grant the chief of my desires.

Through all the tortures of that cruel gaol,

I never called upon your timeless power.

I carefully saved up the help you owed,

Reserved it for much greater need.

I call upon you now. I grieve. Give me revenge.

I hand this traitor over to your wrath.

Drown all his foul desires in his own blood.

I'll recognise your favours by your rage.

HIPPOLYTUS

Phaedra accuses me of sinful love?  
The horror is too much...my soul is numb.  
So many unexpected blows at once...  
Words fail me. My voice is drowned.

THESEUS

Traitor. You hoped that Phaedra'd be a coward,  
Keep quiet about your brutal violence.  
You should not, as you fled, have left your sword.  
It's in her hands, and helps to prove your guilt.  
Better have capped your treachery with one fell blow  
And taken speech and life from her.

HIPPOLYTUS

I'm outraged – rightly – at so black a lie.  
I ought, my lord, to let the truth speak now  
But I'll hold back a secret touching you.  
Agree now to respect my silences  
If you don't want to worsen all your pain.  
Look at my life; consider who I am.  
Great crimes are always heralded by lesser ones.  
Whoever oversteps the bounds of law  
Can in the end outrage the holiest rules.  
Just as with goodness, crime has its degrees.  
Shy innocence has never yet been seen  
To change to total licence at a stroke.  
A single day can't change an honest man  
Into a traitor, killer, lustful coward.  
A good, courageous mother brought me up.

I never have betrayed that source of life.  
And Pitheus, who's thought the wisest of all men,  
Taught me still further when I'd left her care.  
I do not want to paint myself as god,  
But if some goodness is my heritage,  
I think I've shown with blinding force, my lord,  
My hatred of the crime that they accuse me of.  
That's what my name is known for throughout Greece.  
I've held up virtue to the point of boorishness.  
I'm known for rigid, grave severity.  
Daylight is not more pure than my heart's core.  
And yet they want me raptured by unholy love.

THESEUS

It's just this pride, you coward, that damns you now.  
I see the reason why you've been so cold.  
Phaedra alone could charm your lustful eyes.  
For all things else your heart became indifferent,  
Refused the warmth of innocent desires.

HIPPOLYTUS, *close to microphone*

Father, it's far too much to hide the truth from you.  
I have not scorned to feel a guiltless love.  
I'll tell my true offence – here, at your feet.  
Despite your ban, I am indeed in love.  
Aricia has captured me quite utterly.  
Pallas's daughter holds your son a slave.  
I worship her. In spite of your command,  
My soul is all on fire for her alone.

THESEUS

You love her? God, the sham is grosser yet.  
You feign a crime to justify yourself.

HIPPOLYTUS

For six months now I've shunned and worshipped her.  
I came all fearful here to tell you so.  
Will nothing tear you from your fallacies?  
What dreadful oath will satisfy you, then?  
May earth, the sky, the whole of nature...

THESEUS

Foul men have always had recourse to perjury.  
Stop, stop. Spare me this self-regarding talk.  
Can't your cheap virtue call on other help?

HIPPOLYTUS

It may seem cheap and full of guile to you,  
But Phaedra in her heart has been more just.

THESEUS

My anger's boiling at your shamelessness!

HIPPOLYTUS

What period for my exile is prescribed? What place?

THESEUS

Beyond Alcide's pillars far might you sail  
And still I'd find your treachery too close.

HIPPOLYTUS

Charged with the crime that you suspect me of,

What friends will mourn if you abandon me?

THESEUS

Then search out friends who value such dark things,  
Who clap at incest, cheer adultery:  
Betrayers, scum without honour, outside the law,  
Fit to protect a vicious man like you.

HIPPOLYTUS

You harp on incest and adultery.  
I will keep quiet. But Phaedra's mother, now...

Phaedra is from a race, as well you know,  
Fuller in all these horrors than my own.

THESEUS

Has your insanity lost all control?  
For the last time, get out – out of my sight.  
Get out, you traitor, now, before I start  
To tear you from this place in shame.

*Hippolytus walks off quickly. Sound of doors opened and banged close. Theseus, close to microphone, alone.*

Run off, you boy of tears, to certain death.  
Along the river dreaded even by the gods,  
Neptune gave me his word. It will be kept.  
A god of vengeance follows you. You won't escape.  
I loved you once. Despite your crime, I feel  
My body wracked for you and for your fate.  
But you have forced me to condemn you now.

What father has been ever so outraged?  
O God, you see my overwhelming pain.  
Can I have given life to this vile child?

*Doors open. Phaedra speaks, away.*

PHAEDRA

My lord, I've come to you... I'm terrified...  
I've heard the awful things that you have said.  
I fear your threat will soon be carried out.  
If there is still time left, then spare your son.  
Respect your flesh and blood, I beg of you.  
Don't let me hear the horror of his cries.  
Don't lay the everlasting pain on me  
Of having made a father let blood flow.

THESEUS

My hands have not been reddened in his blood,  
But his obscenity has not gone free.  
His death is charged into a god's own hands.  
Neptune owes me it. You will be avenged.

PHAEDRA, *closer to*

Neptune owes you it? Have raging prayers from you...

THESEUS

Do you already fear they have been heard?  
Better you voice the same. They're justified.  
Give me the darkest details of his crime.  
Stir up my anger – gone too slow and stale –  
You do not yet know all his wickedness.

His frenzy has insulted you, your name.  
He says your mouth speaks nothing but deceit.  
He claims Aricia has won his heart and faith,  
That he loves her.

PHAEDRA

My lord...

THESEUS

He told me to my face.  
But I know how to deal with worthless sham.  
I hope that Neptune will judge soon.  
I'll go to plead again before his shrine;  
I'll urge him to fulfil his binding oath.

*Sound of footsteps receding. The doors close. Phaedra, alone, close to microphone*

PHAEDRA

He's gone. ...Such news to burst upon my eyes...  
What smouldering flame begins to blaze again...?  
It's lightning from the sky...the deadly news.  
I'd run – one thought alone – to save his son.  
I'd torn myself from pale Oenone's arms,  
Surrendered to the guilt that tortured me.  
Who knows how far repentance would have led?  
I might have soon accused myself.  
Had not the words stuck in my throat, I might  
Have let the terrifying truth escape.  
And so Hippolytus can feel. But not for me.  
Aricia has his heart, his trust... Dear God,  
The times he was so graceless to my pleas.

He stared with such proud eyes, so stern a face,  
I thought his heart for ever closed to love,  
Against all women uniformly armed.  
And yet another woman breaks his pride,  
Finds favour in those callous eyes.  
Perhaps he has a heart that can be moved,  
And I'm the only thing he cannot stand.  
And I took on the task of his defence...

*Footsteps on gravel, then entering the hall. Oenone speaks, away.*

PHAEDRA

Oenone, you know what I have learned?

OENONE, *approaching*

No. And yet I'm trembling, if truth were told.  
I paled – went white – to think why you had gone.  
I was afraid that you would kill yourself.

PHAEDRA

Who would have thought? I have a rival now.

OENONE

What?

PHAEDRA

Hippolytus is in love, there is no doubt.  
That wild, unconquerable enemy,  
Offended by respect, annoyed by tears,  
Whom I could never meet without some fear,  
Submits, quite tamed, salutes his vanquisher.

Aricia has found the way into his heart.

OENONE

Aricia!

PHAEDRA

What deeper sadness can be yet endured...?  
What latest torture is reserved for me?  
All I've endured – the fears, the ecstasies.  
This raging love, the horrors of remorse,  
Him saying no, the injury I couldn't bear –  
These were mere foretastes of my torment now.  
Those two in love? What spell deceived me, then?  
How did they see each other? Where? Since when?  
You knew. Why did you let me be misled?  
You could have told me of their furtive love.  
Weren't they seen talking? Look for each other?  
They must have tried to hide deep in the woods...?  
Ah, so they met in total liberty...?  
Heaven approved their innocent desires.  
They walked the ways of love without remorse.  
Each day for them dawned cloudless and serene;  
And I, rejected by all living things,  
Have hidden from the day and shunned the light.  
Death was the only god I dared implore.  
I waited for the moment I would die.  
I fed on gall, I drank my tears. And yet,  
My misery was close, so closely watched,  
I was not even free to drown in grief.  
This deathly pleasure...shaking at the taste...  
I hid my pain behind a calm facade

And often had to stay without my tears.

OENONE

What can they hope to gain from such a love?  
They'll never meet again.

PHAEDRA

They'll always be in love.

*Gradual increase in sound of cicadas as Phaedra speaks, until noise is almost deafening.  
Her voice rises correspondingly in intensity.*

Now as I speak – I die to think the thought –  
They brave my fury – a queen outraged.  
Despite the exile that will sever them,  
They swear a thousand oaths never to part.  
I cannot bear a joy that wracks me so.  
Pity my raging jealousy.  
Aricia must die. Theseus's rage  
Against her odious race must be revived.  
A trifling punishment will not suffice.  
Her brothers' crimes are far surpassed by hers.  
This jealous frenzy... I *will* implore the king...  
What am I doing? Have I lost my mind?  
Me jealous? *I* implore the king?  
He's my husband. Still alive... yet I burn...  
Who for? Whose heart holds my desires?  
Each word I mouth, my hair stands up on end.  
From now my sins will overflow the brim.  
I stink of incest and deceit.  
These murderous hands, so eager for revenge,

Are burning to be drenched in guiltless blood.  
I appall and yet I live. I must still bear the gaze  
Of holiness, the sun from which I came. My  
ancestor is father, master of the gods. The  
sky and all the universe is full of them.  
Where can I hide? In darkest, hellish night...?  
Useless words... my father holds the urn there.  
They say fate placed it in his ruthless hands.  
Minos is judge in hell of pale humanity.  
What shuddering will seize his ghost  
To see his daughter stand before his eyes,  
Forced to confess so many heinous crimes,  
Crimes even unknown, perhaps, in hell.  
What, father, will you say to that foul sight?  
I see the urn of doom slip from your hands,  
I see you seeking out new punishment,  
The executioner of your own blood.  
*[now almost screaming]* Forgive me.

*Sudden cut-back of cicadas to middle distance. She recovers some of her composure.*

Venus now has doomed your race.  
You see her vengeance in your daughter's rage.  
The shame of hideous crimes pursues me still.  
My heart is broken, but never ate the fruit.  
The hurt will haunt me to my dying breath.  
I place upon the rack a life of pain.

OENONE

You must resist these needless fears.  
Your fault might well be seen to have just cause.



You are in love. We cannot master fate.  
 A fatal magic swept you off your feet.  
 Is that so new or strange a thing?  
 Are you the only one to fall in love?  
 Humanity is all too frail.  
 You are human. You must accept that fate.  
 You blame a bondage forged so long ago.  
 Even the gods who live on Olympus,  
 Who punish crime so terrifyingly,  
 Have sometimes burned with wrong desire.

PHAEDRA

You dare to offer this advice to me?  
 Right to the end you try to poison me,  
 You awful thing! It's you who's ruined me.  
 I tried to end my life. You brought me back.  
 You begged, and I forgot the duty that I had.  
 I shunned Hippolytus. You made me speak to him.  
 What have you done? Why did your wicked mouth  
 Accuse him so and blacken his whole life?  
 He still may die. His father's outraged  
 Sacrilegious prayer may still be heard.  
 I won't listen. You obscenity! Get out.  
 Get out! Just leave my wretched fate to me.  
 May heaven be just, reward you properly!  
 Just let your punishment for ever terrify  
 All those like you who feed so skilfully  
 The weaknesses of ill-starred kings.  
 You urge them down the slopes of their desires.  
 You level out the path to sin for them.  
 Foul flatterers – the deadliest gift

The anger of the gods can give to kings.

*Footsteps recede quickly. Doors open and slam shut. Oenone alone, close to microphone.*

OENONE

Dear God, to serve her I left home, did everything...  
 But this is the reward that I deserve...

*Reverberating sound of cicadas, suddenly loud, as before. Hold for several moments,  
 then fade back to middle distance.*

*Footsteps approaching on gravel. Hippolytus, Aricia.*

ARICIA

How can you in this danger still keep quiet?  
 Your father loves you still. You'll keep him ignorant?  
 It's cruel to hold my grief so cheap, agree  
 So easily to never see me more.  
 Then go. Leave me to all my wretchedness.  
 But if you go, at least protect your life.  
 You must defend your name from smears and shame  
 And force your father to retract his curse.  
 There is still time. What whim, capriciousness,  
 Makes you let Phaedra have an open field?  
 Explain to Theseus.

HIPPOLYTUS

What more is there to say?  
 Should I have brought the outrage in his bed  
 To light? Should I have told so frank a tale  
 As make his face turn scarlet with the shame?  
 This awful secret you alone now know.

I've opened up my heart to you...the gods.  
 Judge if I love. I couldn't hide from you  
 Things I would keep secret from myself.  
 Remember, though – you've sworn to secrecy.  
 If possible, forget the things I've said.  
 Your lips are clean. They should not tell  
 The story of this foul affair.  
 We must dare trust the justice of the gods.  
 They have some interest in clearing me.  
 Sooner or later, Phaedra will receive  
 The odium her crime deserves. She won't escape.  
 But this now – this is all I ask of you.  
 The rest of things can face my rage.  
 Throw off the slavery that's ground you down.  
 Dare follow me. Be with me in my flight.  
 Leave far behind this deadly, obscene place  
 Where goodness breathes a foul, polluted air.  
 We can exploit the turmoil that's been spread  
 By my disgrace to cover up your flight.  
 I can make sure that you will get away.  
 The only guards you have are my own men.  
 Powerful defenders will support our cause.  
 Argos holds out its arms, and Sparta calls.  
 Let's take our rightful claims to friends we share.  
 Phaedra must not gain profit from our fall –  
 She'd drive us both far from my father's throne  
 And give her son what has been stripped from us.  
 This is our chance. Let's seize it with both hands...  
 What holds you back? You seem to hesitate.  
 It's only for your sake I urge this plan.  
 When I am all on fire, why are you ice?

Are you afraid to share an exile's life?

ARICIA

Such banishment, my lord, would be so sweet.  
 I'd share your life and be in such delight  
 Forgotten by the rest of humankind.  
 But we are not yet joined in that dear bond.  
 How in all honour can I go with you?  
 I know I can escape your father's hands  
 And do no harm to honour's strictest codes.  
 I would not then be breaking family ties;  
 To flee a tyrant is within the law.  
 You love me, though, my lord...I fear my name...

HIPPOLYTUS

No, no. I care too much for your good name.  
 I've come here with a better plan.  
 Escape your enemies. Come with me as my wife.  
 For all the pain that heaven decrees, we're free.  
 We do not need the world to pledge our faith.  
 Torches do not light up all marriage vows.  
 At Troezen's gates, among the tombs,  
 The ancient vaults for princes of my line,  
 A sacred temple stands. It's feared by all who lie.  
 No human dare swear falsely in that place,  
 For perjurers receive immediate punishment.  
 They face the certainty of death in there.  
 False oaths have no more dreaded check.  
 There, if you trust me, we will go and vow  
 Our solemn oath to everlasting love.  
 The god who's worshipped there will swear for us.

We'll pray he'll be a father to us both.  
I'll call the holiest gods as witnesses.  
And chaste Diana, Juno the renowned,  
And all the gods that witness my dear love  
Will guard the sanctity of what I swear.

*Sound of the doors opening in the distance. Aricia starts.*

ARICIA

The king is coming. Quick. You must go now.  
I'll stay a while to cover up my flight.  
Go now; but leave me someone I can trust  
To take me to you...nervously...

*Hippolytus' footsteps away on the gravel. Theseus in the hall in the middle distance.*

THESEUS

O God, lighten this darkness in my soul;  
Let my eyes see the truth I'm searching for.

ARICIA

Have everything prepared, Ismene, for our flight.

*Ismene's steps quickly away on the gravel.*

THESEUS

Your colour changes so... You seem struck dumb,  
My lady. What was Hippolytus doing here?

ARICIA

He came to say a last goodbye, my lord.

THESEUS

So you have tamed his stubbornness.  
The first time that he yearns is due to you.

ARICIA

I can't deny the truth of that, my lord.  
Your hate of me was not passed on to him.  
He didn't treat me as a criminal.

THESEUS

I understand. He's sworn eternal love. But  
don't rely upon that wavering heart. He's  
sworn the same to other girls as well.

ARICIA

He what?

THESEUS

You should have made him less disloyal.  
How could you bear to be a part of it?

ARICIA

And how could you allow such dreadful smears  
To blacken out the honour of his life?  
Have you so little knowledge how he feels?  
Can you so little tell a crime from innocence?  
Must you alone discern this loathsome cloud  
Hiding his goodnesses, which shine so bright to all?  
I will not give him up to evil tongues.  
Stop and repent your murderous prayers.

Fear, my good lord. Fear lest the gods feel harsh,  
Hate you enough to grant what you have asked.  
They often rage and take our sacrifice.  
They often punish us for all our sin.

THESEUS

You try to cover up his crime in vain.  
Love makes you blind to all his treachery.  
But I have witnesses I trust, beyond reproach.  
I've seen real tears...real tears have flowed...

ARICIA

Take care, my lord. You're undefeated still.  
You've freed mankind from countless murderers,  
But all are not destroyed. You've left alive  
Just one... Your son forbids me speak of it.  
I know the reverence he has for you;  
I should offend too much were I to tell.  
I'll follow his restraint and leave you now  
Before I'm forced to make the silence speak.

*Footsteps away in the hall. Doors open and close. Theseus alone, close to microphone.*

THESEUS

What does she mean? What lies behind her words?  
She starts, then stops, then starts again, then stops.  
So what's their aim? To trick and baffle me...?  
Have they agreed to put me on the rack...?  
For all my harsh severity, I still...  
What mournful voice cries deep down in my heart?  
Some secret pity grieves and harrows me.

Oenone must be questioned once again.  
I want to have more light shed on the crime.  
Guards, tell her to come here. And by herself.

*Quick steps over gravel, then into the hall. Panope approaches.*

PANOPE

I do not know what plan the queen has in her mind,  
My lord; and yet I fear the fits that wrack her so.  
Deadly despair is written on her face,  
The ghastliness of death has paled her cheeks.  
Oenone has been driven out in shame,  
And hurled herself deep down into the sea...  
We'll never know what caused this awful act.  
The waves have taken her for ever from our sight.

THESEUS

She's drowned...

PANOPE

Her dying has not calmed the queen;  
The turmoil seems to grow and eat her mind.  
Sometimes, as if to ease her secret pain,  
She'll hug her children tight, bathe them in tears.  
Then suddenly, she turns against her mother's love  
And pushes them away in dreadful fear.  
She wanders aimlessly, this way then that. Her  
eyes are wild, seem not to see us there... Three  
times she has begun to write, then changed Her  
mind, and three times torn the letter up.  
Agree to see her now. She must be helped, my lord.

THESEUS

O god...Oenone's dead...and Phaedra wants to die...  
Call back my son. Let him defend himself  
And speak to me. I'll listen to him now.

*Panope's steps away.*

Neptune, don't hurl your deadly gift on him.  
Much better to have never heard my prayer...  
Perhaps I trusted witnesses who lied,  
And raised these callous hands to you too soon.  
Oh that my prayer should end in such despair...

*Doors open slowly.*

Theramenes, it's you? Where is my son? I  
trusted him to you while yet a child.  
You're crying... oh, why weep these tears?  
Where is he now?

*Doors close. Theramenes slowly approaches.*

THERAMENES

I've seen the best of human beings die...  
And the most innocent, I dare to say.

THESEUS

My son is gone...? When I would hold him in my arms,  
The gods made haste to speed his death? What blow  
Has snatched him...what sudden thunder...?

*In the speech that follows, sound effects, which begin quietly in a middle distance, gradually increase in volume, complexity and nearness until they are terrifyingly close, almost drowning Theramenes' screamed words. Although the sounds need not follow the narrative details in slavish imitation, they should evoke the following:*

*Sound of horses, at first slowly moving, hooves on pebbled road, then increasingly frantic and violent.*

*Accompanying sound of chariot wheels, squeaking slowly at first, then faster and faster until axles break.*

*Deep, echoing, terrifying cries of the monster, and the sound of a massive sea surge that brings it ashore.*

*Sound of a human pulse, accentuated, close to, racing faster and faster.*

*Noise of earthquake, rocks falling, gases hissing, fires roaring.*

*Human voices shouting, screaming uncontrollably.*

THERAMENES

We'd scarcely ridden through the gates of Troezen.  
He drove his chariot; his guards, downcast,  
Copied his silence as they marched beside. Lost  
in thought, he took the Mycenae road, Letting his  
horses' reins hang loosely in his hand. Those  
splendid stallions, which in times gone by  
Obeyed his voice with eagerness and pride,  
Now had dulled eyes, their heads bowed down,  
As if agreeing with his bitter thoughts.

Then all at once, from deep below the waves,  
A ghastly cry shattered the stillness in the air.  
From the earth's bowels, another fearful voice  
Groaned out aloud to that appalling cry.  
Our blood froze to the bottom of our hearts.  
The stallions listened, manes all bristling.  
And then, along the far edge of the sea,  
A liquid mountain rose, a boiling mass.  
The surge roared in, broke up and spewed  
In front of us a raging monster in the foam.

Its head is massive, armed with fearful horns,  
And its whole body sheathed in yellow scales.  
An untamed bull, some hell-hound out of mind,  
Its crupper rippling into writhing folds.  
Its long-drawn bellows rumble down the shore.  
The skies look on this monster, horror-struck.  
The earth heaves up, the air is poisonous,  
The wave that brought it in recoils appalled.

Bravery was useless, would not protect. We fled,  
All taking refuge in the temple close at hand.  
Hippolytus alone, a hero's son,  
Reined in his horses, seized his spears,  
Thrust at the monster and, with careful aim,  
Made a huge wound there – deep, deep in its side.

The animal writhes up in pain and rage,  
Falls roaring at the horses' feet,  
Rolls over, coils; its flaming jaws  
Spew smoke and blood and fire all over them.

They're terrified, they bolt, they do not hear.  
They're no more held by bridles or his voice.  
Their master tries and tries but all in vain,  
Their bits are reddened with a foam of blood.  
In the stampede, some say they even saw  
A god digging his spurs into their dusty flanks.  
Fear sends them hurtling off across the rocks.  
The axle screams and snaps. Hippolytus  
Sees his chariot smashed, fly all to bits.  
He falls, gets tangled in the reins...  
Forgive my tears. I cannot bear the sight...  
The image stays... a source of lasting grief.  
I watched, my lord, I watched your helpless son  
Dragged by the horses that his hands had fed.  
He calls to them, but terrifies them more.  
They gallop on, his body one huge wound...  
The plain re-echoes with our cries of grief.  
At last, their violent panic eases up;

*Gradual fade down of all sounds.*

They stop not far from those ancestral tombs  
Where all his forebears rest, the cold remains of kings.  
I run there breathless, with his guard behind.  
The fresh tracks of his blood show us the way.  
The rocks are drenched with it. The dripping thorns  
Catch bleeding tufts and shocks of hair.  
I reach him, speak his name. He gives his hand, Opens  
his dying eyes, then straightway closes them. He says,  
'I'm innocent. The gods, though, take my life. Take  
care of poor Aricia when I'm dead.

And if my father ever learns the truth,  
Dear friend, and mourns his wretched, slandered son,  
To quiet my blood and grieving shade,  
Tell him to treat her gently in his care,  
To give her back...'. Last words. He died, heroically,  
And left his mangled corpse all in my arms.  
What piteous emblem of the gods' triumphant wrath,  
His father, even, would not recognise.

*Complete fade out of all background sound, including cicadas. Theseus, very close to microphone.*

THESEUS

My son... I have destroyed my dearest hope.  
The gods do not relent; they've served me all too well.  
What can my life be now but deathly grief?

THERAMENES

Then nervously, Aricia came near.  
She wanted to avoid your rage, my lord,  
And marry him before the gods.  
She came...and saw the reeking, blood-red grass  
And there – what kind of sight for loving eyes –  
Hippolytus was stretched, disfigured, white...  
She could not first believe the tragedy;  
She didn't recognise the man she loved.  
She looked at him, and yet still asked for him.  
But finally, convinced that it is him,  
She looks in pain, accusing all the gods.  
Then cold and moaning, almost without life,  
She falls unconscious by her lover's side.

Ismene's there, Ismene all in tears;  
She brings her back to life, or more to grief...  
And I...can't bear the sunlight any more... I came  
To tell you of a hero's final wish.  
I've now fulfilled, my lord, the saddest task  
That he entrusted to me as he died.

*Sound of doors opening. Cicadas again in the middle distance.*

But there's his enemy to death. Phaedra.

*Sound of her footsteps approaching. Theseus now a little away from the microphone, addressing her.*

THESEUS

Whatever they may do to me, no gift  
Can ever give me back what I have lost.

*Sudden increase in sound of cicadas, seeming again to reverberate preternaturally in the hall.*

PHAEDRA

No, Theseus... I must break this silence. It's not just.  
I must give back your son his innocence.  
He was not guilty...

THESEUS

Oh, I am now doomed...  
It was your word that made me punish him!  
The cruelty... how will you be forgiven?

PHAEDRA, *close to microphone*

Each moment's precious to me. Listen, Theseus.  
 I was the one who on your pure and honoured son  
 Dared look with vile, incestuous eyes.  
 The gods lit up my heart with deadly lust;  
 Oenone, horribly, did all the rest.  
 She feared Hippolytus, once told of my mad love,  
 Would make it public, he would loathe it so.  
 She broke my trust, exploited my weak state,  
 And rushed to make him guilty in your sight.  
 She's found her punishment. She fled my rage  
 And found too calm a death beneath the waves.  
 I should by now have perished by the sword.  
 Suspicion fell on goodness – and I let it grow.  
 I wanted, though, to tell you my remorse  
 And go down to the dead a slower way.  
 I've taken – it's flowing through my veins, on fire –  
 A poison that Medea brought to Greece.  
 Already now, it's reached my heart  
 And spreads out now such cold I never knew.  
 I see now only through a mist  
 The heavens and the husband I've defiled.  
 Death steals the brightness from my eyes,  
 And gives back daylight...all its purity...

*Cicadas suddenly very loud. Hold for a few moments, then cut back just as suddenly.*

PANOPE

She is dying, my lord.

THESEUS

Would that the memory  
 Of this dark deed would die as well.  
 But come... now my mistake is all too clear,  
 Our tears must mingle in my son's sad blood.  
 I must embrace his dear remains  
 And expiate my mad, appalling prayer,  
 Give him the honour he was surely owed.  
 And to appease the anger of his soul,  
 Let his beloved, despite her family's crime,  
 Become my daughter from this day.

*Cross fade cicadas to faint wind and sea, heard as at the beginning from a considerable height. Hold for a few moments, then cross fade to heavy sea swell crashing down on to pebbled beach.*

*Credits*



Jean Racine

ATHALIE

ATHALIAH

[www.tclt.org.uk](http://www.tclt.org.uk)

## PRÉFACE

Tout le monde sait que le royaume de Juda était composé des deux tribus de Juda et de Benjamin, et que les dix autres tribus qui se révoltèrent contre Roboam, composaient le royaume d'Israël. Comme les rois de Juda étaient de la maison de David, et qu'ils avaient dans leur partage la ville et le temple de Jérusalem, tout ce qu'il y avait de prêtres et de lévites se retirèrent auprès d'eux, et leur demeurèrent toujours attachés. Car depuis que le temple de Salomon fut bâti, il n'était plus permis de sacrifier ailleurs, et tous ces autres autels qu'on élevait à Dieu sur des montagnes, appelés par cette raison dans l'Écriture les hauts lieux, ne lui étaient point agréables. Ainsi le culte légitime ne subsistait plus que dans Juda. Les dix tribus, excepté un très petit nombre de personnes, étaient ou idolâtres ou schismatiques.

Au reste ces prêtres et ces lévites faisaient eux-mêmes une tribu fort nombreuse. Ils furent partagés en diverses classes pour servir tour à tour dans le temple, d'un jour de sabbat à l'autre. Les prêtres étaient de la famille d'Aaron, et il n'y avait que ceux de cette famille, lesquels pussent exercer la sacrificature. Les lévites leur étaient subordonnés, et avaient soin entre autres choses du chant, de la préparation des victimes et de la garde du temple. Ce nom de lévite ne laisse pas d'être donné quelquefois indifféremment à tous ceux de la tribu. Ceux qui étaient en semaine avaient, ainsi que le grand prêtre, leur logement dans les portiques ou galeries dont le temple était environné, et qui faisaient partie du temple même. Tout l'édifice s'appelait en général le lieu saint. Mais on appelait plus particulièrement de ce nom cette partie du temple intérieur où était le chandelier d'or, l'autel des parfums et les tables des pains de proposition. Et cette partie était encore distinguée du Saint des Saints, où était l'arche, et où le grand prêtre seul avait droit d'entrer une fois l'année. C'était une tradition assez constante que la montagne sur laquelle le temple fut bâti était la même montagne où Abraham avait autrefois offert en sacrifice son fils Isaac.

J'ai cru devoir expliquer ici ces particularités, afin que ceux à qui l'histoire de l'Ancien Testament ne sera pas assez présente n'en soient point arrêtés en lisant cette tragédie. Elle a pour sujet Joas reconnu et mis sur le trône; et j'aurais dû dans les règles l'intituler Joas. Mais la plupart du monde n'en ayant entendu parler que sous le nom d'Athalie,

## PREFACE

Everyone knows that the kingdom of Judah comprised the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and that the ten other tribes who revolted against Rehoboam constituted the kingdom of Israel. As the kings of Judah were from the house of David, and as the town and temple of Jerusalem were part of their territory, all the priests and Levites went back there and remained constantly attached to these places. For, after the temple of Solomon had been built, sacrifices were no longer allowed anywhere else; and all the other altars that were raised to God in the mountains – for that reason called in the Scriptures the high places – were not acceptable to Him. So the legitimate religion survived only in Judah. The ten tribes, apart from a tiny number of people, were either idolaters or schismatics.

Moreover, these priests and Levites themselves made up a very numerous tribe. They were divided into various groups to serve in the temple in turn, from one sabbath to the next. The priests were from the family of Aaron, and only those of this family could perform sacrifices. The Levites were subordinate to them, and were responsible, among other things, for the singing, the preparation of sacrifices, and guarding the temple. However, the name of Levite is sometimes applied indiscriminately to all members of the tribe. Those who were on duty lodged, like the high-priest, in the covered arcades or galleries that surrounded the temple, and that were actually part of it. The whole building was generally called the holy place; but this name was more specifically applied to the part of the inner temple that housed the golden candlestick, the incense altar, and the tables where the show-bread was laid. And this part was distinguished in turn from the Holy of Holies, where the ark was, and which only the high-priest had the right to enter once a year. There was a fairly continuous tradition that the mountain on which the temple was built was the same as the one on which Abraham had once offered his son Isaac as a sacrifice.

I thought I ought to explain these details here, so that those who are not sufficiently familiar with Old Testament history are not held up in reading the tragedy. Its subject is the recognition of Joash and his restoration to the throne. According to the rules, I should have called it *Joash*. But since most people have only heard of it by the name

je n'ai pas jugé à propos de la leur présenter sous un autre titre, puisque d'ailleurs Athalie y joue un personnage si considérable, et que c'est sa mort qui termine la pièce. Voici une partie des principaux événements qui devancèrent cette grande action.

Joram roi de Juda, fils de Josaphat, et le septième roi de la race de David, épousa Athalie fille d'Achab et de Jézabel, qui régnaient en Israël, fameux l'un et l'autre, mais principalement Jézabel, par leurs sanglantes persécutions contre les prophètes. Athalie, non moins impie que sa mère, entraîna bientôt le roi son mari dans l'idolâtrie et fit même construire dans Jérusalem un temple à Baal, qui était le dieu du pays de Tyr et de Sidon, où Jézabel avait pris naissance. Joram, après avoir vu périr par les mains des Arabes et des Philistins tous les princes ses enfants à la réserve d'Ochosias, mourut lui-même misérablement d'une longue maladie qui lui consuma les entrailles. Sa mort funeste n'empêcha pas Ochosias d'imiter son impiété et celle d'Athalie sa mère. Mais ce prince, après avoir régné seulement un an, étant allé rendre visite au roi d'Israël frère d'Athalie, fut enveloppé dans la ruine de la maison d'Achab; et tué par l'ordre de Jéhu, que Dieu avait fait sacrer par ses prophètes, pour régner sur Israël, et pour être le ministre de ses vengeances. Jéhu extermina toute la postérité d'Achab, et fit jeter par les fenêtres Jézabel, qui selon la prédiction d'Elie, fut mangée des chiens dans la vigne de ce même Naboth qu'elle avait fait mourir autrefois pour s'emparer de son héritage. Athalie ayant appris à Jérusalem tous ces massacres, entreprit de son côté d'éteindre entièrement la race royale de David, en faisant mourir tous les enfants d'Ochosias ses petits-fils. Mais heureusement Josabeth sœur d'Ochosias, et fille de Joram, mais d'une autre mère qu'Athalie, étant arrivée lorsqu'on égorgeait les princes ses neveux, elle trouva moyen de dérober du milieu des morts le petit Joas encore à la mamelle, et le confia avec sa nourrice au grand prêtre son mari qui les cacha tous deux dans le temple, où l'enfant fut élevé secrètement jusqu'au jour qu'il fut proclamé roi de Juda. L'histoire des Rois dit que ce fut la septième année d'après. Mais le texte grec des *Paralipomènes* que Sévère Sulpice a suivi, dit que ce fut la huitième. C'est ce qui m'a autorisé à donner à ce prince neuf à dix ans, pour le mettre déjà en état de répondre aux questions qu'on lui fait.

Je crois ne lui avoir rien fait dire qui soit au-dessus de la portée d'un enfant de cet âge qui a de l'esprit et de la mémoire. Mais quand j'aurais

*Athaliah*, I felt it undesirable to present it with a different title. Besides, Athaliah plays so important a role in it, and the play ends with her death. Here now are some of the major events that led up to this great action.

Joram, king of Judah and son of Jehoshaphat, and the seventh king of the house of David, married Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel who reigned in Israel. Both of them were notorious – especially Jezebel – for their bloody persecution of the prophets. Athaliah was no less ungodly than her mother. She soon dragged her husband into idolatry, and even had a temple to Baal built in Jerusalem. Baal was the god of Tyre and Sidon, where Jezebel was born. Joram saw all the princes, his children, perish at the hands of the Arabs and Philistines – Ahaziah apart – and himself died wretchedly from a long illness that ate up his bowels. His horrible death, though, did not stop Ahaziah following his godlessness and his mother Athaliah's. But having reigned only a year, this prince went to visit the king of Israel, Athaliah's brother, and was caught up in the ruin of the house of Ahab. He was killed on Jehu's orders, whom God had anointed through his prophets to rule over Israel and execute His vengeance. Jehu exterminated all Ahab's posterity, and had Jezebel thrown down from the windows of her palace. As Elijah had foretold, she was eaten by the dogs in Naboth's vineyard – the same Naboth that she had once killed to seize his inheritance. In Jerusalem, Athaliah heard of all these massacres, and decided for her part to exterminate completely the royal line of David by killing all Azariah's children, her grandchildren. But fortunately, Jehoshabeath – who was Azariah's sister and Joram's daughter, though by a different mother than Athaliah – arrived just as her nephews' throats were being cut. She managed to carry little Joash off from amidst the dead. He was still suckling. She entrusted him, with his nurse, to the high-priest, her husband, who hid both of them in the temple. There, the child was brought up secretly till the day he was proclaimed king of Judah. The Book of Kings says that that was seven years afterwards. But the Greek text of the Book of Chronicles, that Severus Sulpicius followed, says that it was eight. This is what has allowed me to make Joash nine or ten years old, so that he would be in a position to answer the questions he is asked.

I don't think I have made him say anything that is beyond a boy of that age who is intelligent, and who has a good memory. Even if I

été un peu au-delà, il faut considérer que c'est ici un enfant tout extraordinaire, élevé dans le temple par un grand prêtre, qui le regardant comme l'unique espérance de sa nation, l'avait instruit de bonne heure dans tous les devoirs de la religion et de la royauté. Il n'en était pas de même des enfants des Juifs que de la plupart des nôtres. On leur apprenait les saintes Lettres, non seulement dès qu'ils avaient atteint l'usage de la raison, mais, pour me servir de l'expression de saint Paul, dès la mamelle. Chaque Juif était obligé d'écrire une fois en sa vie de sa propre main le volume de la Loi tout entier. Les rois étaient même obligés de l'écrire deux fois, et il leur était enjoint de l'avoir continuellement devant les yeux. Je puis dire ici que la France voit en la personne d'un prince de huit ans et demi, qui fait aujourd'hui ses plus chères délices, un exemple illustre de ce que peut dans un enfant un heureux naturel aidé d'une excellente éducation, et que si j'avais donné au petit Joas la même vivacité et le même discernement qui brillent dans les reparties de ce jeune prince, on m'aurait accusé avec raison d'avoir péché contre les règles de la vraisemblance.

L'âge de Zacharie, fils du grand prêtre, n'étant point marqué, on peut lui supposer, si l'on veut, deux ou trois ans de plus qu'à Joas.

J'ai suivi l'explication de plusieurs commentateurs fort habiles, qui prouvent par le texte même de l'Écriture, que tous ces soldats à qui Joïada, ou Joad, comme il est appelé dans Josèphe, fit prendre les armes consacrées à Dieu par David, étaient autant de prêtres et de lévites, aussi bien que les cinq centeniers qui les commandaient. En effet, disent ces interprètes, tout devait être saint dans une si sainte action, et aucun profane n'y devait être employé. Il s'y agissait non seulement de conserver le sceptre dans la maison de David, mais encore de conserver à ce grand roi cette suite de descendants dont devait naître le Messie. 'Car ce Messie tant de fois promis comme fils d'Abraham, devait aussi être le fils de David et de tous les rois de Juda.' De là vient que l'illustre et savant prélat [M. de Meaux] de qui j'ai emprunté ces paroles appelle Joas le précieux reste de la maison de David. Josèphe en parle dans les mêmes termes. Et l'écriture dit expressément que Dieu n'extermina pas toute la famille de Joram, voulant conserver à David la lampe qu'il lui avait promise. Or cette lampe qu'était-ce autre chose que la lumière qui devait être un jour révélée aux nations?

L'histoire ne spécifie point le jour où Joas fut proclamé. Quelques interprètes veulent que ce fût un jour de fête. J'ai choisi celle de la

have gone a little too far, it must be borne in mind that he is a quite exceptional child. He has been brought up in the temple by a high-priest who sees him as the only hope of his nation, and who has taught him all the duties of religion and kingship from an early age. It was not the same with the children of the Jews as it is with most of ours. They were taught the holy scriptures, not simply when they were able to use reason, but (to quote Saint Paul's words) at their mother's breast. Every Jew was obliged, once in his life, to write out the entire volume of the law in his own hand. Kings were even obliged to write it out twice, and were ordered to have it continually before their eyes. I may note at this point that France sees today, in a prince of eight and a half who is her dearest delight, a splendid example of what natural talent supported by excellent education can do in a child. If I had given little Joash the same vitality and discernment that shine through our young prince's responses, I should have rightly been accused of having sinned against the laws of probability.

Since there is no indication about the age of Zechariah, the high priest's son, we are free to suppose that he is two or three years older than Joash.

I have followed the explanation of several very learned commentators who prove from the text of the Scripture itself that the soldiers whom Jehoiada (or Joad as he is called in Josephus) roused to arms – the arms consecrated to God by David – were all priests and Levites, as were the five captains who commanded them. As these interpreters say, everything had to be holy in so holy an action, and no heathen could be employed in it. It was a question not merely of keeping the sceptre in the house of David, but of preserving the line of descendants from that great king, from which the Messiah was to be born. 'The Messiah, so often promised as the son of Abraham, was also to be the son of David and of all the kings of Judah'. It is for this reason that the renowned and learned prelate from whom I have borrowed these words calls Joash the precious survivor of the house of David. Josephus speaks of him in the same terms; and the Scriptures state explicitly that God would not exterminate the entire family of Joram, as He wished to keep alight for David the lamp that He had promised him. What else could this lamp be than the light that was to be revealed one day to the world?

History does not specify on what day Joash was proclaimed. Some commentators argue it was a feast day. I have chosen the Pentecost,

Pentecôte, qui était l'une des trois grandes fêtes des Juifs. On y célébrait la mémoire de la publication de la loi sur le mont de Sinai, et on y offrait aussi à Dieu les premiers pains de la nouvelle moisson; ce qui faisait qu'on la nommait encore la fête des prémices. J'ai songé que ces circonstances me fourniraient quelque variété pour les chants du chœur.

Ce chœur est composé de jeunes filles de la tribu de Lévi, et je mets à leur tête une fille que je donne pour sœur à Zacharie. C'est elle qui introduit le chœur chez sa mère. Elle chante avec lui, porte la parole pour lui, et fait enfin les fonctions de ce personnage des anciens chœurs qu'on appelait le coryphée. J'ai aussi essayé d'imiter des Anciens cette continuité d'action qui fait que leur théâtre ne demeure jamais vide; les intervalles des actes n'étant marqués que par des hymnes et par des moralités du chœur, qui ont rapport à ce qui se passe.

On me trouvera peut-être un peu hardi d'avoir osé mettre sur la scène un prophète inspiré de Dieu, et qui prédit l'avenir. Mais j'ai eu la précaution de ne mettre dans sa bouche que des expressions tirées des prophètes mêmes. Quoique l'Écriture ne dise pas en termes exprès que Joïada ait eu l'esprit de prophétie, comme elle le dit de son fils, elle le représente comme un homme tout plein de l'esprit de Dieu. Et d'ailleurs ne paraît-il pas par l'Évangile qu'il a pu prophétiser en qualité de souverain pontife? Je suppose donc qu'il voit en esprit le funeste changement de Joas, qui après trente ans d'un règne fort pieux, s'abandonna aux mauvais conseils des flatteurs, et se souilla du meurtre de Zacharie, fils et successeur de ce grand prêtre. Ce meurtre commis dans le temple, fut une des principales causes de la colère de Dieu contre les Juifs, et de tous les malheurs qui leur arrivèrent dans la suite. On prétend même que depuis ce jour-là les réponses de Dieu cessèrent entièrement dans le sanctuaire. C'est ce qui m'a donné lieu de faire prédire tout de suite à Joad et la destruction du temple et la ruine de Jérusalem. Mais comme les prophètes joignent d'ordinaire les consolations aux menaces, et que d'ailleurs il s'agit de mettre sur le trône un des ancêtres du Messie, j'ai pris occasion de faire entrevoir la venue de ce Consolateur, après lequel tous les anciens justes soupiraient. Cette scène, qui est une espèce d'épisode, amène très naturellement la musique, par la coutume qu'avaient plusieurs prophètes d'entrer dans leurs saints transports au son des instruments. Témoin cette troupe de prophètes, qui vinrent au-devant de Saül avec

which was one of the three great feast days of the Jews. It celebrated the proclamation of the law on Mount Sinai, and God was offered the first loaves from the new harvest, which is why the day is also called the feast of the first-fruits. I felt that these circumstances would help to give me some variety for the songs of the chorus.

The chorus is made up of girls from the tribe of Levi, and I have put at their head a girl I portray as Zechariah's sister. She is the one who introduces the chorus to her mother. She sings with them, speaks for them, in a word acts like the character called coryphaeus in classical choruses. I have also tried to copy old writers in their continuity of action, which means their stage is never empty, the intervals between the acts being marked only by the hymns and moral reflections of the chorus, which relate to what is happening.

I may perhaps be thought a little bold to have dared to put on the stage a prophet inspired by God, and who foretells the future. But I have been careful to put in his mouth only expressions taken from the prophets themselves. Although the Bible does not explicitly say that Jehoiada had the gift of prophecy, as it does of his son, it portrays him as a man full of the spirit of God. Besides, does it not seem from the gospel that he could prophesy in his capacity as high-priest? I assume therefore that he can see in his mind's eye the deadly change in Joash who, after thirty years of godly rule, surrenders to the evil advice of flatterers, and defiles himself by the murder of Zechariah, son and successor of the high-priest. This murder, committed in the temple, was one of the main reasons for God's anger against the Jews, and for all the misfortunes that subsequently followed. It is even claimed that, from that day on, God's responses fell entirely silent in the sanctuary. It is this that gave me grounds for having Jehoiada predict immediately afterwards the destruction of the temple and the ruin of Jerusalem. But, since the prophets usually add consolation to threats, and since, besides, the point at issue is putting one of the Messiah's ancestors on the throne, I have taken the opportunity of giving a glimpse of the coming of this comforter, for whom all righteous people of ancient times longed. This scene, which is a kind of episode, very naturally calls for music, following the custom of several prophets who went into their holy raptures to the sound of instruments. Witness the band of prophets who came to Saul with

des harpes et des lyres, qu'on portait devant eux; et témoin Élisée lui-même, qui étant consulté sur l'avenir par le roi de Juda et par le roi d'Israël, dit comme fait ici Joad: *Adducite mihi psaltem*. Ajoutez à cela que cette prophétie sert beaucoup à augmenter le trouble dans la pièce, par la consternation et par les différents mouvements où elle jette le chœur et les principaux acteurs.

harps and lyres carried before them. Witness Elisha himself. Asked about the future by the king of Judah and the king of Israel, he said (as Jehoiada does here), *Adducite mihi psaltem [bring me a minstrel]*. Furthermore, this prophecy does much to increase the tension in the play, through the consternation and the different emotions into which it throws the chorus and the main actors.

ATHALIE

## ACTEURS

JOAS, roi de Juda, fils d'Ochosias

ATHALIE, veuve de Joram, aïeule de Joas

JOAD, autrement Joiada, grand-prêtre

JOSABET, tante de Joas, femme du grand-prêtre

ZACHARIE, fils de Joad et de Josabet

SALOMITH, soeur de Zacharie

ABNER, l'un des principaux officiers des rois de Juda

AZARIAS, ISMAEL, et les trois autres chefs des prêtres et des Lévites

MATHAN, prêtre apostat, sacrificateur de Baal

NABAL, confident de Mathan

AGAR, femme de la suite d'Athalie

Troupe de prêtres et de Lévites

Suite d'Athalie

La Nourrice de Joas

Chœur de jeunes filles de la tribu de Lévi

*La scène est dans le temple de Jérusalem, dans un vestibule  
de l'appartement du grand-prêtre*

ATHALIAH

## CAST

JOASH, king of Judah, son of Ahaziah

ATHALIAH, Joram's widow and Joash's grandmother

JEHOIADA, the high-priest

JEHOSHABEATH, Joash's aunt and wife of the high-priest

ZECHARIAH, the son of Jehoiada and Jehoshabeath

SALOMITH, Zechariah's sister

ABNER, one of the chief officers of the kings of Judah

AZARIAH, ISHMAEL, and the other three leaders of the priests and Levites

MATTAN, an apostate, high-priest of Baal

NABAL, Mattan's confidant

HAGAR, waiting-woman to Athaliah

TROOP OF PRIESTS AND LEVITES

ATHALIAH'S ATTENDANTS

JOASH'S NURSE

CHORUS OF GIRLS FROM THE TRIBE OF LEVI

*The scene is set in the temple of Jerusalem, in a hall within the high-priest's  
apartments.*

## ACTE 1 SCÈNE 1

*Joad, Abner*

ABNER

Oui, je viens dans son temple adorer l'Éternel.  
 Je viens, selon l'usage antique et solennel,  
 Célébrer avec vous la fameuse journée  
 Où sur le mont Sina la loi nous fut donnée.  
 Que les temps sont changés! Sitôt que de ce jour  
 La trompette sacrée annonçait le retour,  
 Du temple, orné partout de festons magnifiques,  
 Le peuple saint en foule inondait les portiques.  
 Et tous devant l'autel avec ordre introduits,  
 De leurs champs dans leurs mains portant les nouveaux fruits,  
 Au Dieu de l'univers consacraient ces prémices.  
 Les prêtres ne pouvaient suffire aux sacrifices.  
 L'audace d'une femme arrêtant ce concours,  
 En des jours ténébreux a changé ces beaux jours.  
 D'adorateurs zélés à peine un petit nombre  
 Ose des premiers temps nous retracer quelque ombre.  
 Le reste pour son Dieu montre un oubli fatal,  
 Ou même s'empressant aux autels de Baal,  
 Se fait initier à ses honteux mystères,  
 Et blasphème le nom qu'ont invoqué leurs pères.  
 Je tremble qu'Athalie, à ne vous rien cacher,  
 Vous-même de l'autel vous faisant arracher,  
 N'achève enfin sur vous ses vengeances funestes,  
 Et d'un respect forcé ne dépouille les restes.

JOAD

D'où vous vient aujourd'hui ce noir pressentiment?

ABNER

Pensez-vous être saint et juste impunément?

## ACT 1 SCENE 1

*Jehoiada, Abner*

ABNER

I come to worship God here in his shrine,  
 To follow old and solemn ritual  
 And celebrate that famous day with you,  
 When holy law was given us on Sinai.  
 How times have changed. The sacred trumpet then  
 Had scarcely sounded out the day's return  
 Than crowds of worshippers streamed through  
 The temple doors. Garlands were everywhere.  
 They walked up row by row, up to the shrine,  
 Bearing the harvest of their fields, first-fruits  
 That they would consecrate to God. The priests  
 Were all too few to make the sacrifice.  
 And now a reckless queen has stopped the crowds  
 And changed those days of joy to darkest night.  
 A tiny group of faithful worshippers  
 Dares still keep up some shadow of those days.  
 The others have forgotten God;  
 They even crowd around the shrine of Baal.  
 They've quickly learned his shameful mysteries;  
 They curse the name their fathers once invoked.  
 I won't disguise my fear... Athaliah  
 Will have you dragged off from the shrine itself  
 And so revenge herself on you at last.  
 The vestiges of forced respect will go.

JEHOIADA

Where does this black foreboding come from now?

ABNER

You think to stay a just and holy man, untouched?



Dès longtemps elle hait cette fermeté rare  
 Qui rehausse en Joad l'éclat de la tiare.  
 Dès longtemps votre amour pour la religion  
 Est traité de révolte et de sédition.  
 Du mérite éclatant cette reine jalouse,  
 Hait surtout Josabet votre fidèle épouse.  
 Si du grand prêtre Aaron Joad est successeur,  
 De notre dernier roi Josabet est la sœur.  
 Mathan d'ailleurs, Mathan, ce prêtre sacrilège,  
 Plus méchant qu'Athalie, à toute heure l'assiège;  
 Mathan de nos autels infime déserteur,  
 Et de toute vertu zélé persécuteur.  
 C'est peu que le front ceint d'une mitre étrangère,  
 Ce lévite à Baal prête son ministère.  
 Ce temple l'importune, et son impiété  
 Voudrait anéantir le Dieu qu'il a quitté.  
 Pour vous perdre il n'est point de ressorts qu'il n'invente:  
 Quelquefois il vous plaint, souvent même il vous vante.  
 Il affecte pour vous une fausse douceur,  
 Et par là de son fiel colorant la noirceur,  
 Tantôt à cette reine il vous peint redoutable,  
 Tantôt voyant pour l'or sa soif insatiable,  
 Il lui feint qu'en un lieu que vous seul connaissez,  
 Vous cachez des trésors par David amassés.  
 Enfin depuis deux jours, la superbe Athalie,  
 Dans un sombre chagrin paraît ensevelie.  
 Je l'observais hier, et je voyais ses yeux  
 Lancer sur le lieu saint des regards furieux;  
 Comme si dans le fond de ce vaste édifice  
 Dieu cachait un vengeur armé pour son supplice.  
 Croyez-moi, plus j'y pense, et moins je puis douter  
 Que sur vous son courroux ne soit prêt d'éclater,  
 Et que de Jézabel la fille sanguinaire  
 Ne vienne attaquer Dieu jusqu'en son sanctuaire.

## JOAD

Celui qui met un frein à la fureur des flots  
 Sait aussi des méchants arrêter les complots.

For ages now, she's loathed your rare, unswerving faith  
 That lends fresh brilliance to your diadem.  
 For ages now, your love of godly things  
 She's treated as disloyalty and revolt.  
 She's envious of any striking grace,  
 Hates most Jehoshabeath – your faithful wife.  
 If you succeed our high-priest Aaron now,  
 Your wife will be our last king's sister then.  
 And then... Mattan. That sacrilegious priest,  
 Worse than Athaliah, surrounds her day and night.  
 He's godlessly deserted all our faith  
 And persecutes what's good so eagerly.  
 It scarcely matters that he ministers  
 To Baal, a foreign mitre on his head.  
 This temple troubles him. The heretic  
 Just wants to crush the God he has renounced.  
 There's nothing he won't do to ruin you.  
 Sometimes, he'll pity you; often, he'll praise.  
 He'll feign some kindly sympathy for you,  
 And then, to hide the blackness of his gall,  
 He'll paint you to the queen as dangerous.  
 Sometimes, seeing her fevered thirst for gold,  
 He claims that you alone know of the place  
 Where you've concealed the treasures David left.  
 But for the last two days, Athaliah's pride  
 Has seemed enshrouded in some dark distress.  
 I watched her yesterday, and saw her gaze  
 Upon this sacred spot so furiously –  
 As if, in this vast building's deepest place,  
 God hid his vengeance, armed to strike her down.  
 The more I think of it, the less I doubt  
 That all her rage won't soon explode on you.  
 The daughter of Jezebel thirsts for blood.  
 She'll even strike at God inside his sanctuary.

## JEHOIADA

He who can calm the raging of the seas  
 Can also foil the plots of wicked men.

Soumis avec respect à sa volonté sainte,  
 Je crains Dieu, cher Abner, et n'ai point d'autre crainte.  
 Cependant je rends grâce au zèle officieux  
 Qui sur tous mes périls vous fait ouvrir les yeux.  
 Je vois que l'injustice en secret vous irrite,  
 Que vous avez encor le cœur israélite.  
 Le ciel en soit béni. Mais ce secret courroux,  
 Cette oisive vertu, vous en contentez-vous?  
 La foi qui n'agit point, est-ce une foi sincère?  
 Huit ans déjà passés, une impie étrangère  
 Du sceptre de David usurpe tous les droits,  
 Se baigne impunément dans le sang de nos rois,  
 Des enfants de son fils détestable homicide,  
 Et même contre Dieu lève son bras perfide.  
 Et vous, l'un des soutiens de ce tremblant État,  
 Vous nourri dans les camps du saint roi Josaphat,  
 Qui sous son fils Joram commandiez nos armées,  
 Qui rassurâtes seul nos villes alarmées,  
 Lorsque d'Ochosias le trépas imprévu  
 Dispersa tout son camp à l'aspect de Jéhu:  
 Je crains Dieu, dites-vous, sa vérité me touche.  
 Voici comme ce Dieu vous répond par ma bouche:  
 Du zèle de ma loi que sert de vous parer?  
 Par de stériles vœux pensez-vous m'honorer?  
 Quel fruit me revient-il de tous vos sacrifices?  
 Ai-je besoin du sang des boucs et des génisses?  
 Le sang de vos rois crie, et n'est point écouté.  
 Rompez, rompez tout pacte avec l'impiété.  
 Du milieu de mon peuple exterminatez les crimes,  
 Et vous viendrez alors m'immoler des victimes.

## ABNER

Hé que puis-je au milieu de ce peuple abattu?  
 Benjamin est sans force, et Juda sans vertu.  
 Le jour qui de leur roi vit éteindre la race  
 Éteignit tout le feu de leur antique audace.  
 Dieu même, disent-ils, s'est retiré de nous.  
 De l'honneur des Hébreux autrefois si jaloux,

I follow and revere his holy will.  
 I fear my God, Abner, fear God alone.  
 And yet I'm grateful for the deep concern  
 That keeps you watchful to the risks I run.  
 I know injustice wounds you deep inside,  
 That you are still an Israelite at heart.  
 May God be praised. But does this inner rage,  
 This idle goodness, satisfy you now?  
 Can faith that does not act remain sincere?  
 Eight years ago, a godless foreign queen  
 Usurped King David's sceptre and his rights.  
 She's drenched in our kings' blood and goes unpunished still,  
 Murders most horribly the children of her son.  
 She even lifts her wicked hand against our God.  
 And you, a pillar of this tottering state,  
 Who were brought up in king Jehoshaphat's camp,  
 Who led our armies when his son was king,  
 Who reassured our frightened towns alone  
 When Azariah's unexpected death  
 Scattered his camp as Jehu came in sight –  
 'I fear God', you say, 'his truth touches me'.  
 This is God's answer to you, through my lips.  
 'So why parade a passion for my law?  
 You think to honour me with barren vows?  
 What have I gained from all your sacrifice?  
 Do I have need of goats' and heifers' blood?  
 Your dead kings' blood cries out, and is not heard.  
 Break off all covenants with godlessness.  
 And from my people's midst cast out all crime.  
 Then you will bring me sacrifice indeed'.

## ABNER

What can I do with this downtrodden race?  
 Benjamin has no strength left. Judah no virtue.  
 The day that saw their line of kings destroyed  
 Destroyed the fire of all their ancient bravery.  
 'God has abandoned us', they say. Our God  
 Who once was jealous of the Jews' great name

Il voit sans intérêt leur grandeur terrassée,  
 Et sa miséricorde à la fin s'est lassée.  
 On ne voit plus pour nous ses redoutables mains  
 De merveilles sans nombre effrayer les humains.  
 L'arche sainte est muette, et ne rend plus d'oracles.

## JOAD

Et quel temps fut jamais si fertile en miracles?  
 Quand Dieu par plus d'effets montra-t-il son pouvoir?  
 Auras-tu donc toujours des yeux pour ne point voir,  
 Peuple ingrat? Quoi, toujours les plus grandes merveilles  
 Sans ébranler ton cœur frapperont tes oreilles?  
 Faut-il, Abner, faut-il vous rappeler le cours  
 Des prodiges fameux accomplis en nos jours?  
 Des tyrans d'Israël les célèbres disgrâces,  
 Et Dieu trouvé fidèle en toutes ses menaces;  
 L'impie Achab détruit, et de son sang trempé  
 Le champ que par le meurtre il avait usurpé;  
 Près de ce champ fatal Jézabel immolée,  
 Sous les pieds des chevaux cette reine foulée;  
 Dans son sang inhumain les chiens désaltérés,  
 Et de son corps hideux les membres déchirés;  
 Des prophètes menteurs la troupe confondue,  
 Et la flamme du ciel sur l'autel descendue;  
 Élie aux éléments parlant en souverain,  
 Les cieux par lui fermés et devenus d'airain,  
 Et la terre trois ans sans pluie et sans rosée;  
 Les morts se ranimants à la voix d'Élisée;  
 Reconnaissez, Abner, à ces traits éclatants,  
 Un Dieu, tel aujourd'hui qu'il fut dans tous les temps.  
 Il sait quand il lui plaît faire éclater sa gloire,  
 Et son peuple est toujours présent à sa mémoire.

## ABNER

Mais où sont ces honneurs à David tant promis,  
 Et prédits même encore à Salomon son fils?  
 Hélas! nous espérons que de leur race heureuse

Now sees our greatness overcome, unmoved.  
 His pity is exhausted finally.  
 No longer do we see his powerful hands  
 Strike terror in mankind by countless miracles.  
 The sacred ark is dumb, and speaks no oracles'.

## JEHOIADA

But what age ever saw such miracles?  
 When did God show his power by greater deeds?  
 Such cold thanks from a people who have eyes  
 That will not see. Can all the greatest miracles  
 Burst on your ears and yet not shake your hearts?  
 Must I recall those tales for you, Abner –  
 The famous wonders witnessed in our time?  
 The well-known shame that Israel's tyrants faced –  
 Our God found faithful in the threats he made.  
 The godless Ahab killed, the land that he'd  
 Usurped by murder drenching in his blood.  
 And, near those fields, queen Jezebel killed too,  
 Crushed underfoot beneath her horses' hooves.  
 The dogs went wild, lapped up her monstrous blood,  
 And tore her twisting body limb from limb.  
 That troop of lying prophets thunderstruck  
 As fire from heaven breathed down on the shrine.  
 Elijah's voice, commanding all the elements,  
 Sealing the heavens, turning them to bronze.  
 The earth three years with neither rain nor dew,  
 The dead awakening to Elisha's voice.  
 In all these wondrous signs, Abner, you see  
 A God who is today as he has always been.  
 He can let shine his glory when he wills.  
 His people are forever in his mind.

## ABNER

But where are all the honours promised so  
 To David, even more to Solomon his son?  
 We used to hope an endless line of kings

Devait sortir de rois une suite nombreuse,  
Que sur toute tribu, sur toute nation,  
L'un d'eux établirait sa domination,  
Ferait cesser partout la discorde et la guerre,  
Et verrait à ses pieds tous les rois de la terre.

JOAD

Au promesses du ciel pourquoi renoncez-vous?

ABNER

Ce roi fils de David, où le chercherons-nous?  
Le ciel même peut-il réparer les ruines  
De cet arbre séché jusque dans ses racines?  
Athalie étouffa l'enfant même au berceau.  
Les morts après huit ans, sortent-ils du tombeau?  
Ah! si dans sa fureur elle s'était trompée,  
Si du sang de nos rois quelque goutte échappée...

JOAD

Eh bien? Que feriez-vous?

ABNER

O jour heureux pour moi!  
De quelle ardeur j'irais reconnaître mon roi!  
Doutez-vous qu'à ses pieds nos tribus empressées...  
Mais pourquoi me flatter de ces vaines pensées?  
Déplorable héritier de ces rois triomphants,  
Ochosias restait seul avec ses enfants.  
Par les traits de Jéhu je vis percer le père,  
Vous avez vu les fils massacrés par la mère.

JOAD

Je ne m'explique point. Mais quand l'astre du jour  
Aura sur l'horizon fait le tiers de son tour,

Would rise and grow from such a blessed race,  
That one of them would gain dominion  
Throughout all nations, every tribe –  
That he would make all war and discord cease,  
And see the earth's great kings fall at his feet.

JEHOIADA

Then why the doubt in heaven's promises?

ABNER

David's royal son – where should we look for him?  
Can even heaven revive the poor remains  
Of this old tree that's withered to the roots?  
Athaliah smothered the baby at its birth.  
Can bodies eight years dead rise from the tomb?  
If only in her madness she had been deceived...  
If just one drop of that child's blood escaped...

JEHOIADA

Then you'd have...?

ABNER

I would have kissed the day,  
And gone to greet my king in joy.  
And at his feet our eager tribes – imagine them...  
But why delude myself? The thoughts are vain.  
The sole successors of these glorious kings  
Were tragic Azariah and his sons.  
I saw the father speared by Jehu's dart.  
You saw the mother massacre the sons.

JEHOIADA

I can reveal no more. But when the sun  
Has traced a third of its day's course,

Lorsque la troisième heure aux prières rappelle,  
Retrouvez-vous au temple avec ce même zèle.  
Dieu pourra vous montrer par d'importants bienfaits,  
Que sa parole est stable, et ne trompe jamais.  
Allez pour ce grand jour il faut que je m'apprête,  
Et du temple déjà l'aube blanchit le faite.

ABNER

Quel sera ce bienfait que je ne comprends pas?  
L'illustre Josabet porte vers vous ses pas.  
Je sors, et vais me joindre à la troupe fidèle  
Qu'attire de ce jour la pompe solennelle.

## SCÈNE 2

*Joad, Josabet*

JOAD

Les temps sont accomplis, Princesse; il faut parler  
Et votre heureux larcin ne se peut plus celer.  
Des ennemis de Dieu la coupable insolence  
Abusant contre lui de ce profond silence,  
Accuse trop longtemps ses promesses d'erreur.  
Que dis-je? Le succès animant leur fureur,  
Jusque sur notre autel votre injuste marâtre  
Veut offrir à Baal un encens idolâtre.  
Montrons ce jeune roi que vos mains ont sauvé,  
Sous l'aile du Seigneur dans le temple élevé.  
De nos princes hébreux il aura le courage,  
Et déjà son esprit a devancé son âge.  
Avant que son destin s'explique par ma voix,  
Je vais l'offrir au Dieu par qui règnent les rois.  
Aussitôt, assemblant nos lévites, nos prêtres,

And when the third hour calls us all to prayer,  
Come back then to the shrine with this same zeal.  
And God will show to you by special goodnesses  
His word is true. It never will deceive.  
Go now. I must prepare for this great day.  
Look...the temple roof is whitening with the dawn.

ABNER

What will this goodness be? I do not understand.  
But look, Jehoshabeath comes this way.  
I'll go and mingle with the faithful folk  
Who've been drawn here by all the ritual.

*[He leaves. Jehoshabeath enters.]*

## SCENE 2

*Jehoiada, Jehoshabeath*

JEHOIADA

My dearest wife, the time has come to speak.  
We can conceal your joyous theft no more.  
God's enemies – their guilt and insolence –  
Exploit this deepening silence. Far too long  
They have accused his promises of deceit.  
Still more, success has made them mad.  
Upon our altar, Athaliah now plans  
To offer pagan incense up to Baal.  
Let's show the young king whom you've saved  
And brought up in the temple in God's care.  
He'll have the courage of our Hebrew kings.  
He is already wise beyond his years.  
Before I speak and tell him of his destiny,  
I'll offer him to God, the King of kings.  
I'll call our levites, priests, together now,

Je leur déclarerai l'héritier de leurs maîtres.

JOSABET

Sait-il déjà son nom et son noble destin?

JOAD

Il ne répond encore qu'au nom d'Éliacin,  
Et se croit quelque enfant rejeté par sa mère,  
A qui j'ai par pitié daigné servir de père.

JOSABET

Hélas! de quel péril je l'avais su tirer!  
Dans quel péril encore est-il prêt de rentrer!

JOAD

Quoi? Déjà votre foi s'affaiblit et s'étonne?

JOSABET

A vos sages conseils, Seigneur, je m'abandonne.  
Du jour que j'arrachai cet enfant à la mort,  
Je remis en vos mains tout le soin de son sort.  
Même de mon amour craignant la violence,  
Autant que je le puis, j'évite sa présence,  
De peur qu'en le voyant, quelque trouble indiscret  
Ne fasse avec mes pleurs échapper mon secret.  
Surtout j'ai cru devoir aux larmes, aux prières,  
Consacrer ces trois jours et ces trois nuits entières.  
Cependant aujourd'hui puis-je vous demander  
Quels amis vous avez prêts à vous seconder?  
Abner, le brave Abner viendra-t-il nous défendre?  
A-t-il près de son roi fait serment de se rendre?

JOAD

And then proclaim to them their masters' heir.

JEHOSHABEATH

So does he know his name? His destiny?

JEHOIADA

He answers only to Eliacin.  
He thinks he is a child his mother has cast out,  
That I'm his father out of pity's sake.

JEHOSHABEATH

Oh no, the danger that I saved him from...  
So what fresh danger does he now confront?

JEHOIADA

You're losing faith already? Wondering?

JEHOSHABEATH

I yield to your wise counsels, then, my lord.  
The day I snatched the child from death,  
I put his fate entirely in your hands.  
I feared the fierceness of my love. As much  
As I could do, I've shunned the boy,  
In case I saw him, fussed too much and then  
Let out the secret with my tears.  
I've spent these last three days and three whole nights  
In duty bound, in weeping and in prayer.  
But now today, I have to ask what friends  
Are ready to support our cause.  
Abner is brave – he'll come to our defence?  
He's sworn to rally to his king?

JEHOIADA

Abner, quoiqu'on se pût assurer sur sa foi,  
Ne sait pas même encor si nous avons un roi.

JOSABET

Mais à qui de Joas confiez-vous la garde?  
Est-ce Obed? Est-ce Ammon que cet honneur regarde?  
De mon père sur eux les bienfaits répandus...

JOAD

A l'injuste Athalie ils se sont tous vendus.

JOSABET

Qui donc opposez-vous contre ses satellites?

JOAD

Ne vous l'ai-je pas dit? Nos prêtres, nos lévites.

JOSABET

Je sais que près de vous en secret assemblé  
Par vos soins prévoyants leur nombre est redoublé;  
Que pleins d'amour pour vous, d'horreur pour Athalie,  
Un serment solennel par avance les lie  
A ce fils de David qu'on leur doit révéler.  
Mais quelque noble ardeur dont ils puissent brûler,  
Peuvent-ils de leur roi venger seuls la querelle?  
Pour un si grand ouvrage, est-ce assez de leur zèle?  
Doutez-vous qu'Athalie, au premier bruit semé  
Qu'un fils d'Ochosias est ici renfermé,  
De ses fiers étrangers assemblant les cohortes,  
N'environne le temple, et n'en brise les portes?  
Suffira-t-il contre eux de vos ministres saints,  
Qui, levant au Seigneur leurs innocentes mains,  
Ne savent que gémir, et prier pour nos crimes,  
Et n'ont jamais versé que le sang des victimes?

The loyalty of Abner is assured.  
He does not know, though, that we have a king.

JEHOSHABEATH

So who will you entrust to guard the boy?  
Will Obed have the honour? or Amnon?  
The favours that my father showered on them...

JEHOIADA

They've all sold themselves to Athaliah.

JEHOSHABEATH

Then who will stand against her followers?

JEHOIADA

Haven't I said? Our levites, all our priests.

JEHOSHABEATH

I know you've secretly assembled them.  
Your foresight has redoubled all their ranks.  
I know they love you, fear Athaliah,  
And that they've made a binding vow to serve  
This son of David whom they've yet to know.  
But yet, despite this noble, burning zeal,  
Can they alone avenge our king's great cause?  
Is zeal enough for such an enterprise?  
You think Athaliah will catch the merest hint  
That Azariah's son is sheltered here,  
And won't call in her puffed-up, foreign hordes,  
Surround the temple and smash down the doors.  
How could your holy priests resist that force?  
They'd raised their guiltless hands to God  
And simply mourn and pray for all our sins.  
They've shed no blood apart from sacrifice.

Peut-être dans leurs bras Joas percé de coups...

## JOAD

Et comptez-vous pour rien Dieu, qui combat pour nous?  
 Dieu, qui de l'orphelin protège l'innocence,  
 Et fait dans la faiblesse éclater sa puissance;  
 Dieu, qui hait les tyrans, et qui dans Jezraël  
 Jura d'exterminer Achab et Jezabel;  
 Dieu, qui frappant Joram, le mari de leur fille,  
 A jusque sur son fils poursuivi leur famille;  
 Dieu, dont le bras vengeur, pour un temps suspendu,  
 Sur cette race impie est toujours étendu.

## JOSABET

Et c'est sur tous ces rois sa justice sévère,  
 Que je crains pour le fils de mon malheureux frère.  
 Qui sait si cet enfant, par leur crime entraîné,  
 Avec eux en naissant ne fut pas condamné?  
 Si Dieu le séparant d'une odieuse race,  
 En faveur de David voudra lui faire grâce?  
 Hélas! l'état horrible où le ciel me l'offrit,  
 Revient à tout moment effrayer mon esprit.  
 De princes égorgés la chambre était remplie.  
 Un poignard à la main, l'implacable Athalie  
 Au carnage animait ses barbares soldats,  
 Et poursuivait le cours de ses assassinats.  
 Joas laissé pour mort frappa soudain ma vue.  
 Je me figure encor sa nourrice éperdue,  
 Qui devant les bourreaux s'était jetée en vain  
 Et faible le tenait renversé sur son sein.  
 Je le pris tout sanglant. En baignant son visage,  
 Mes pleurs du sentiment lui rendirent l'usage.  
 Et soit frayeur encore, ou pour me caresser,  
 De ses bras innocents je me sentis presser.  
 Grand Dieu! que mon amour ne lui soit point funeste.  
 Du fidèle David, c'est le précieux reste.  
 Nourri dans ta maison en l'amour de ta loi,

But in their arms, perhaps, a Joash pierced by swords...

## JEHOIADA

So God who fights for us does not now count?  
 God who protects the orphan's innocence,  
 Who makes his power shine out among the weak.  
 God who hates the tyrant, and who in Jezrael  
 Swore to wipe out Ahab and Jezebel.  
 Who struck their daughter's husband, Joram, down,  
 And has pursued the family through his son.  
 Whose vengeful arm, held still now for a time,  
 Is always stretched above this godless race.

## JEHOSHABEATH

It's just such heavy justice to these kings  
 I fear for my unhappy brother's son.  
 Who knows is Joash wasn't caught up in their crime  
 And wasn't damned with them by being born?  
 Or will God mark him out from all his hated race  
 And show him mercy now for David's sake?  
 His awful state when heaven showed me him  
 Keeps flooding back...to harrow me - my mind.  
 The room was full of princes, throats cut out.  
 Athaliah had a dagger in her hand.  
 She urged her bestial troops to kill, quite merciless,  
 And leapt into the butchery herself.  
 Then suddenly, I noticed Joash, left for dead.  
 I still can see his nurse – distraught –  
 She'd thrown herself before the murderers in vain  
 And held him feebly clasped against her breast.  
 I picked him up, all bleeding. I washed his face.  
 My tears brought back some sense of touch to him.  
 Whether in fear or else a sign of love,  
 I felt him press me with his childish hands.  
 Dear God, don't let my love make for his death.  
 He is the precious jewel of David's faith.  
 Your house has brought him up, taught him your law.



Il ne connaît encor d'autre père que toi.  
 Sur le point d'attaquer une reine homicide,  
 A l'aspect du péril si ma foi s'intimide,  
 Si la chair et le sang se troublant aujourd'hui,  
 Ont trop de part aux pleurs que je répands pour lui,  
 Conserve l'héritier de tes saintes promesses,  
 Et ne punis que moi de toutes mes faiblesses.

## JOAD

Vos larmes, Josabet, n'ont rien de criminel.  
 Mais Dieu veut qu'on espère en son soin paternel.  
 Il ne recherche point, aveugle en sa colère,  
 Sur le fils qui le craint, l'impiété du père.  
 Tout ce qui reste encor de fidèles Hébreux  
 Lui viendront aujourd'hui renouveler leurs vœux.  
 Autant que de David la race est respectée,  
 Autant de Jézabel la fille est détestée.  
 Joas les touchera par sa noble pudeur,  
 Où semble de son sang reluire la splendeur.  
 Et Dieu par sa voix même appuyant notre exemple,  
 De plus près à leur cœur parlera dans son temple.  
 Deux infidèles rois tour à tour l'ont bravé.  
 Il faut que sur le trône un roi soit élevé,  
 Qui se souvienne un jour qu'au rang de ses ancêtres,  
 Dieu l'a fait remonter par la main de ses prêtres,  
 L'a tiré par leur main de l'oubli du tombeau,  
 Et de David éteint rallumé le flambeau.  
 Grand Dieu! si tu prévois qu'indigne de sa race,  
 Il doive de David abandonner la trace;  
 Qu'il soit comme le fruit en naissant arraché,  
 Ou qu'un souffle ennemi dans sa fleur a séché.  
 Mais si ce même enfant, à tes ordres docile,  
 Doit être à tes desseins un instrument utile;  
 Fais qu'au juste héritier le sceptre soit remis.  
 Livre en mes faibles mains ses puissants ennemis;  
 Confonds dans ses conseils une reine cruelle.  
 Daigne, daigne, mon Dieu, sur Mathan et sur elle  
 Répandre cet esprit d'imprudence et d'erreur,

He knows no other father but yourself.  
 If an attack upon this murderous queen  
 And sight of danger makes my faith less strong –  
 If flesh and blood are so unnerved today,  
 Are too much with me in the tears I shed –  
 Keep safe the heir of all your promises.  
 For all my weakness, punish me alone.

## JEHOIADA

Jehoshabeath – your tears are innocent.  
 But God our father bids us trust in him.  
 He isn't blind with rage, trying to wreak  
 A father's godlessness upon his righteous son.  
 All those remaining of the faithful Jews  
 Will come today to swear their vows again.  
 As much as David's line is here revered,  
 Athaliah is as much abhorred.  
 Joash will touch them with his modesty;  
 The glory of his blood shines there again.  
 God will support us with his voice.  
 He'll speak out in his temple to their hearts.  
 Two faithless kings have braved his rage in turn.  
 But now a king must sit upon the throne  
 Who will recall how, by his priests' own hands,  
 The Lord restored him to his ancient place,  
 Preserved him from the grave's oblivion  
 And so rekindled David's guttering torch.  
 But if, great God, you think he'll shame his race,  
 That it's his fate to disown David's ways,  
 Let him be like the fruit that's picked too young  
 When violent winds have dried up all the flower.  
 But if the child obeys your laws,  
 Becomes the instrument of your design,  
 Restore the sceptre to its rightful heir.  
 Put in these weak, old hands his powerful enemies.  
 Upset the counsels of that vicious queen.  
 Grant me, my God – instil in Mattan and in her  
 That reckless, blinded arrogance that is

De la chute des rois funeste avant-coureur.  
L'heure me presse. Adieu. Des plus saintes familles  
Votre fils et sa sœur vous amènent les filles.

## SCÈNE 3

*Josabet, Zacharie, Salomith, le Chœur*

## JOSABET

Cher Zacharie, allez, ne vous arrêtez pas,  
De votre auguste père accompagnez les pas.  
O filles de Lévi, troupe jeune et fidèle,  
Que déjà le Seigneur embrase de son zèle,  
Qui venez si souvent partager mes soupirs,  
Enfants, ma seule joie en mes longs déplaisirs;  
Ces festons dans vos mains, et ces fleurs sur vos têtes,  
Autrefois convenaient à nos pompeuses fêtes.  
Mais hélas! en ce temps d'opprobre et de douleurs,  
Quelle offrande sied mieux que celle de nos pleurs?  
J'entends déjà, j'entends la trompette sacrée,  
Et du temple bientôt on permettra l'entrée.  
Tandis que je me vais préparer à marcher,  
Chantez, louez le Dieu que vous venez chercher.

## SCÈNE 4

*Le Chœur*

TOUT LE CHŒUR [*chante*]

The deadly herald of the fall of kings.  
The time is short. Goodbye. There, look. Your children bring  
The daughters of the holy families.

*[He leaves as Zechariah, Salomith, and the Chorus enter.]*

## SCENE 3

*Jehoshabeath, Zechariah, Salomith, The Chorus*

## JEHOSHABEATH

Dear Zechariah, go now. Don't delay.  
Stay close now with your father in his walk.  
Daughters of Levi, young and faithful band –  
Our God already lights you with his zeal.  
You have so often come to share my tears.  
You are the only joy in this long pain.  
Those garlands in your hands, flowers on your head –  
They suited once our glorious festivals.  
But in these days of shame and suffering,  
What fitter offering than our tears?  
But listen...there...the sacred trumpet sounds.  
The temple doors will soon be open now.  
I must make ready for the ritual,  
So sing and praise the God you've come to find.

*[She leaves.]*

## SCENE 4

*The Chorus*

FULL CHORUS *sings*

Tout l'univers est plein de sa magnificence.  
 Qu'on l'adore, ce Dieu, qu'on l'invoque à jamais.  
 Son empire a des temps précédé la naissance.  
 Chantons, publions ses bienfaits.

UNE VOIX [*seule*]

En vain l'injuste violence  
 Au peuple qui le loue, imposerait silence,  
 Son nom ne périra jamais.  
 Le jour annonce au jour sa gloire et sa puissance.  
 Tout l'univers est plein de sa magnificence.  
 Chantons, publions ses bienfaits.

TOUT LE CHŒUR [*répète*]

Tout l'univers est plein de sa magnificence.  
 Chantons, publions ses bienfaits.

UNE VOIX [*seule*]

Il donne aux fleurs leur aimable peinture.  
 Il fait naître et mûrir les fruits.  
 Il leur dispense avec mesure  
 Et la chaleur des jours, et la fraîcheur des nuits;  
 Le champ qui les reçut, les rend avec usure.

UNE AUTRE

Il commande au soleil d'animer la nature,  
 Et la lumière est un don de ses mains.  
 Mais sa loi sainte, sa loi pure  
 Est le plus riche don qu'il ait fait aux humains.

UNE AUTRE

O mont de Sinaï, conserve la mémoire  
 De ce jour à jamais auguste et renommé,  
 Quand sur ton sommet enflammé,

The whole, wide world is his magnificence.  
 Adore this God and always speak his name.  
 He ruled before the very birth of time.  
 Let us proclaim his kindnesses.

FIRST SOLOIST

These unjust, violent men in vain  
 Would silence those who praise our God.  
 His name will never fade or die.  
 Day speaks to day his glory and his power.  
 The whole, wide world is his magnificence.  
 Let us proclaim his kindnesses.

FULL CHORUS

The whole, wide world is his magnificence.  
 Let us proclaim his kindnesses.

FIRST SOLOIST

He gives such lovely colours to the flowers.  
 He makes the fruits give birth and ripens them.  
 He gives according to their need  
 The heat of day, the coolness of the night.  
 The fields then give them back a hundredfold.

SECOND SOLOIST

He bids the sun make nature all alive;  
 Its light falls as his gift from his own hand.  
 And yet his law, his pure and holy law,  
 Is far the richest gift he gives to us.

THIRD SOLOIST

Mount Sinai, keep the memory bright  
 Of that great day until the end of time,  
 When on the summit, ringed with fire,

Dans un nuage épais le Seigneur enfermé  
Fit luire aux yeux mortels un rayon de sa gloire.

Dis-nous, pourquoi ces feux et ces fclairs,  
Ces torrents de fumée, et ce bruit dans les airs,  
Ces trompettes et ces tonnerre?  
Venait-il renverser l'ordre des éléments?  
Sur ses antiques fondements  
Venait-il ébranler la terre?

#### UNE AUTRE

Il venait révéler aux enfants des Hebreux  
De ses préceptes saints la lumière immortelle.  
Il venait à ce peuple heureux  
Ordonner de l'aimer d'une amour éternelle.

#### TOUT LE CHŒUR

O divine, ô charmante loi!  
O justice, ô bonté suprême!  
Que de raisons, quelle douceur extrême  
D'engager à ce Dieu son amour et sa foi!

#### UNE VOIX [*seule*]

D'un joug cruel il sauva nos aïeux,  
Les nourrit au désert d'un pain délicieux.  
Il nous donne ses lois, il se donne lui-même:  
Pour tant de biens il commande qu'on l'aime.

#### LE CHŒUR

O justice! ô bonté suprême!

#### LA MÊME VOIX

Des mers pour eux il entrouvrit les eaux,  
D'un aride rocher fit sortir des ruisseaux.  
Il nous donne ses lois, il se donne lui-même.

Wrapped in a heavy cloud, the Lord let shine  
A glorious ray of light on human eyes.

The lightning, all those flames...so tell us why...  
The rushing streams of smoke, the murmurs in the air,  
The trumpets, thunderclaps?  
Was it to tear apart the order of all things?  
To shock the earth deep down,  
Down to its very core?

#### FOURTH SOLOIST

He came to show the children of the Jews  
The everlasting light of holy law.  
He came to bid this blessed race  
To love him with a changeless love.

#### FULL CHORUS

Such holy, pleasing law.  
Such justice, best of goodnesses.  
How very sweet and right it is to pledge  
Our love and faithfulness to God.

#### FIRST SOLOIST

He saved our fathers from a cruel yoke  
And fed them in the desert sweetest bread.  
He gives his laws, he gives himself to us.  
He bids us love him for such kindnesses.

#### FULL CHORUS

Such justice, best of goodnesses.

#### FIRST SOLOIST

He parted wide the waters of the sea,  
Made streams flow forth from barren rocks.  
He gives his laws, he gives himself to us.

Pour tant de biens, il commande qu'on l'aime.

## LE CHŒUR

O divine, ô charmante loi!  
Que de raisons, quelle douceur extrême  
D'engager à ce Dieu son amour et sa foi!

UNE AUTRE VOIX [*seule*]

Vous qui ne connaissez qu'une crainte servile,  
Ingrats, un Dieu si bon ne peut-il vous charmer?  
Est-il donc à vos cœurs, est-il si difficile  
Et si pénible de l'aimer?  
L'esclave craint le tyran qui l'outrage.  
Mais des enfants l'amour est le partage.  
Vous voulez que ce Dieu vous comble de bienfaits,  
Et ne l'aimer jamais?

## TOUT LE CHŒUR

O divine, Ô charmante loi!  
O justice, ô bonté suprême!  
Que de raisons, quelle douceur extrême  
D'engager à ce Dieu son amour et sa foi!

He bids us love him for such kindnesses.

## FULL CHORUS

Such holy, pleasing law.  
How very sweet and right it is to pledge  
Our love and faithfulness to God.

## ANOTHER SOLOIST

You who know nothing but a slavish fear,  
Cannot so good a God enchant your soul?  
How is it in your hearts so difficult,  
So hard to give him love?  
Slaves cower beneath the tyrant's whip,  
But children always share in love.  
You want the Lord to lavish kindnesses  
And yet not give your love to him?

## FULL CHORUS

Such holy, pleasing law.  
Such justice, best of goodnesses.  
How very sweet and right it is to pledge  
Our love and faithfulness to God.

*[Salomith and the Chorus remain as Jehoshabeath enters.]*

## ACTE 2 SCÈNE 1

*Josabet, Salomith, le Chœur*

JOSABET

Mes filles, c'est assez; suspendez vos cantiques.  
 Il est temps de nous joindre aux prières publiques.  
 Voici notre heure: allons célébrer ce grand jour,  
 Et devant le Seigneur paraître à notre tour.

## SCÈNE 2

*Zacharie, Josabet, Salomith, le Chœur*

JOSABET

Mais que vois-je? Mon fils, quel sujet vous ramène?  
 Où courez-vous ainsi tout pâle et hors d'haleine?

ZACHARIE

O ma mère!

JOSABET

Eh bien quoi?

ZACHARIE

Le temple est profané.

JOSABET

## ACT 2 SCENE 1

*Jehoshabeath, Salomith, The Chorus*

JEHOSHABEATH

Daughters, enough for now. Your songs must end.  
 It's time for us to join in public prayer.  
 It's now for us to celebrate this day  
 And in our turn appear before the Lord.

*[Zechariah rushes in.]*

## SCENE 2

*Jehoshabeath, Zechariah, Salomith, The Chorus*

JEHOSHABEATH

But what's all this? Zechariah, why are you back?  
 Where are you running? You're pale - out of breath.

ZECHARIAH

Dear mother...

JEHOSHABEATH

What?

ZECHARIAH

The temple...sacrilege...

JEHOSHABEATH

Comment?

ZACHARIE

Et du Seigneur l'autel abandonné.

JOSABET

Je tremble. Hâtez-vous d'éclaircir votre mère.

ZACHARIE

Déjà, selon la loi, le grand prêtre mon père,  
Après avoir au Dieu qui nourrit les humains,  
De la moisson nouvelle offert les premiers pains,  
Lui présentait encore entre ses mains sanglantes  
Des victimes de paix les entrailles fumantes.  
Debout à ses côtés le jeune Éliacin,  
Comme moi, le servait en long habit de lin;  
Et cependant, du sang de la chair immolée,  
Les prêtres arrosaient l'autel et l'assemblée.  
Un bruit confus s'élève, et du peuple surpris  
Détourne tout à coup les yeux et les esprits.  
Une femme... Peut-on la nommer sans blasphème?  
Une femme... C'était Athalie elle-même.

JOSABET

Ciel!

ZACHARIE

Dans un des parvis aux hommes réservé,  
Cette femme superbe entre le front levé,  
Et se préparait même à passer les limites  
De l'enceinte sacrée ouverte aux seuls lévites.  
Le peuple s'épouvante et fuit de toutes parts.  
Mon père... Ah, quel courroux animait ses regards!  
Moïse à Pharaon parut moins formidable.

What?

ZECHARIAH

The Lord's own altar – no-one's there...

JEHOSHABEATH

I'm trembling. What has happened? Tell me, quick.

ZECHARIAH

As high-priest, father had observed the law,  
And had just offered up the first new harvest loaves  
To God who feeds all humankind.  
His blood-stained hands were holding up to him  
The reeking entrails of the sacrifice.  
The young Eliacin stood close to him,  
Was serving in his linen robe like me.  
The priests were sprinkling on the shrine  
And worshippers the blood of sacrifice.  
And then this noise rose up. The people were amazed.  
Their eyes and minds were suddenly caught by  
A woman...but can I name her and not blaspheme?  
A woman, yes...it was Athaliah.

JEHOSHABEATH

Dear God...

ZECHARIAH

Into a square reserved for men alone,  
She entered, proud, her head held high.  
She would have even crossed the boundaries  
Of sacred courts where only priests may go.  
The people scattered everywhere, quite terrified.  
My father, though...the rage burned in his eyes.  
Moses to Pharaoh must have seemed less terrible.

Reine, sors, a-t-il dit de ce lieu redoutable,  
 D'où te bannit ton sexe et ton impiété.  
 Viens-tu du Dieu vivant braver la majesté?  
 La reine alors sur lui jetant un œil farouche,  
 Pour blasphémer sans doute ouvrait déjà la bouche.  
 J'ignore si de Dieu l'ange se dévoilant,  
 Est venu lui montrer un glaive étincelant.  
 Mais sa langue en sa bouche à l'instant s'est glacée,  
 Et toute son audace a paru terrassée.  
 Ses yeux comme effrayés n'osaient se détourner.  
 Surtout, Éliacin paraissait l'étonner.

JOSABET

Quoi donc? Éliacin a paru devant elle!

ZACHARIE

Nous regardions tous deux cette reine cruelle,  
 Et d'une égale horreur nos cœurs étaient frappés.  
 Mais les prêtres bientôt nous ont enveloppés.  
 On nous a fait sortir. J'ignore tout le reste,  
 Et venais vous conter ce désordre funeste.

JOSABET

Ah! de nos bras sans doute elle vient l'arracher,  
 Et c'est lui qu'à l'autel sa fureur vient chercher.  
 Peut-être en ce moment l'objet de tant de larmes...  
 Souviens-toi de David, Dieu qui vois mes alarmes.

SALOMITH

Quel est-il, cet objet des pleurs que vous versez?

ZACHARIE

Les jours d'Éliacin seraient-ils menacés?

'Queen', he shouted, 'leave this place of dread.  
 Your sex and godlessness both keep you out.  
 Will you confront the majesty of God?'  
 The queen looked up at him ferociously,  
 Opened her mouth to blaspheme certainly...  
 An angel of the Lord may have appeared  
 And showed a flaming sword – I do not know –  
 Her tongue, though, froze that instant in her mouth  
 And all her arrogance seemed drained from her.  
 Her eyes looked terrified. She dared not turn away.  
 She seemed above all haunted by Eliacin.

JEHOSHABEATH

What! she's seen Eliacin?

ZECHARIAH

We both of us were looking at the queen.  
 Our hearts were beating fast, quite horrified.  
 But quick as light, the priests had circled round  
 And made us leave. What followed I don't know.  
 I came to tell you of the dreadful scene.

JEHOSHABEATH

She's come to snatch him from our arms. I know.  
 He is what brought her raging to the shrine.  
 But even now, the boy I cry for here...  
 Remember David, Lord. You know my fear...

SALOMITH

Who is it then? The cause of all these tears?

ZECHARIAH

Eliacin – is he in danger now?



SALOMITH

Aurait-il de la reine attiré la colère?

ZACHARIE

Que craint-on d'un enfant sans support, et sans père?

JOSABET

Ah! la voici. Sortons. Il la faut éviter.

## SCÈNE 3

*Athalie, Agar, Abner, suite d'Athalie*

AGAR

Madame, dans ces lieux, pourquoi vous arrêter?  
Ici tous les objets vous blessent, vous irritent.  
Abandonnez ce temple aux prêtres qui l'habitent.  
Fuyez tout ce tumulte, et dans votre palais  
A vos sens agités venez rendre la paix.

ATHALIE

Non, je ne puis, tu vois mon trouble, et ma faiblesse.  
Va, fais dire à Mathan qu'il vienne, qu'il se presse,  
Heureuse, si je puis trouver par son sceours  
Cette paix que je cherche, et qui me fuit toujours!

*[elle s'assied]*

SALOMITH

So is the queen annoyed with him?

ZECHARIAH

Why should she fear a child who's fatherless?

JEHOSHABEATH

Ah, there she is. We must avoid her. Come.

*[They all leave. Athaliah, Abner, Hagar, and Athaliah's retinue enter.]*

## SCENE 3

*Athaliah, Abner, Hagar, Athaliah's Retinue*

HAGAR

Your majesty...why linger any more?  
Here everything offends and angers you.  
So leave this temple to the priests who live in it.  
Escape the turmoil. Come to your palace  
And find some peace to calm your troubled mind.

ATHALIAH

I cannot leave. You see my helplessness.  
Tell Mattan to come here. Make him be quick.  
I'd have such joy if he could help me find  
The peace I yearn for. It still escapes.

*[Hagar leaves.] She sits.*

ATHALIE

SCÈNE 4

*Athalie, Abner, etc.*

ABNER

Madame, pardonnez si j'ose le défendre.  
Le zèle de Joad n'a point dû vous surprendre.  
Du Dieu que nous servons, tel est l'ordre éternel.  
Lui-même il nous traça son temple et son autel,  
Aux seuls enfants d'Aaron commit ses sacrifices,  
Aux lévites marqua leur place et leurs offices,  
Et surtout défendit à leur postérité,  
Avec tout autre dieu toute société.  
Hé quoi! vous de nos rois et la femme et la mère!  
Êtes-vous à ce point parmi nous étrangère?  
Ignorez-vous nos lois? Et faut-il qu'aujourd'hui...  
Voici votre Mathan, je vous laisse avec lui.

ATHALIE

Votre présence, Abner, est ici nécessaire.  
Laissons là de Joad l'audace téméraire,  
Et tout ce vain amas de superstitions,  
Qui ferment votre temple aux autres nations.  
Un sujet plus pressant excite mes alarmes.  
Je sais que dès l'enfance élevé dans les armes,  
Abner a le cœur noble, et qu'il rend à la fois  
Ce qu'il doit à son Dieu, ce qu'il doit à ses rois.  
Demeurez.

SCÈNE 5

*Mathan, Athalie, Abner, etc.*

ATHALIAH

SCENE 4

*Athaliah, Abner, Athaliah's Retinue*

ABNER

Forgive me, queen, if I dare speak for him.  
Jehoiada's zeal should not have caused surprise.  
This is God's order to the end of time.  
He has marked out his temple and his shrine,  
Entrusted sacrifice to Aaron's sons,  
Assigned the Levites roles and offices,  
Above all ordered their posterity  
Never to follow after other gods.  
You are the wife and mother of our kings,  
You can't have turned a stranger to our ways...  
Do you not know our laws? And must you now...  
But here's your Mattan. I'll leave you both.

ATHALIAH

Your presence, Abner, is still needed here.  
Forget Jehoiada's rash audacity  
And that vain heap of superstitious faith  
That bars all other nations from your shrine.  
A much more urgent question stirs my fears.  
From childhood you've been reared to fight. I know  
Your heart is loyal. You give what's due to God  
And what is owing to his kings. Stay now.  
Mattan...?

*[Mattan enters.]*

SCENE 5

*Mattan, Athaliah, Abner, Athaliah's Retinue*

## MATHAN

Grande reine, est-ce ici votre place?  
 Quel trouble vous agite, et quel effroi vous glace?  
 Parmi vos ennemis que venez-vous chercher?  
 De ce temple profane osez-vous approcher?  
 Avez-vous dépouillé cette haine si vive...

## ATHALIE

Prêtez-moi l'un et l'autre une oreille attentive.  
 Je ne veux point ici rappeler le passé,  
 Ni vous rendre raison du sang que j'ai versé.  
 Ce que j'ai fait, Abner, j'ai cru le devoir faire.  
 Je ne prends point pour juge un peuple téméraire.  
 Quoi que son insolence ait osé publier,  
 Le ciel même a pris soin de me justifier.  
 Sur d'éclatants succès ma puissance établie  
 A fait jusqu'aux deux mers respecter Athalie.  
 Par moi Jérusalem goûte un calme profond.  
 Le Jourdain ne voit plus l'Arabe vagabond,  
 Ni l'altier Philistin, par d'éternels ravages,  
 Comme au temps de vos rois, désoler ses rivages,  
 Le Syrien me traite et de reine et de sœur,  
 Enfin de ma maison le perfide oppresseur,  
 Qui devait jusqu'à moi pousser sa barbarie,  
 Jéhu le fier Jéhu tremble dans Samarie.  
 De toutes parts pressé par un puissant voisin  
 Que j'ai su soulever contre cet assassin,  
 Il me laisse en ces lieux souveraine maîtresse.  
 Je jouissais en paix du fruit de ma sagesse.  
 Mais un trouble importun vient depuis quelques jours  
 De mes prospérités interrompre le cours.  
 Un songe (me devrais-je inquiéter d'un songe?)  
 Entretient dans mon cœur un chagrin qui le ronge.  
 Je l'évite partout, partout il me poursuit.  
 C'était pendant l'horreur d'une profonde nuit.

## MATTAN

Great queen, is this the place for you?  
 What care can trouble you, terror chill your heart?  
 What do you look for here among your enemies?  
 You dare come near this god-forsaken shrine?  
 Have you forgotten all that violent hate?

## ATHALIAH

Listen, both of you. Listen carefully.  
 I do not mean to summon up the past  
 Nor yet to justify the blood that I have shed.  
 What I have done, Abner, I thought I had to do.  
 I will not have a reckless mob as judge,  
 Whatever insults that they dare to shout.  
 I have been justified by heaven itself.  
 I've built my power on brilliant victories.  
 My name commands respect from sea to sea.  
 Through me, Jerusalem enjoys a lasting peace.  
 The Jordan sees its banks laid waste no more  
 By wandering Arabs or proud Philistines  
 In constant raids, as in your old kings' time.  
 I'm held by Syria as a sister, as a queen.  
 And last – that lawless traitor to my house,  
 Who would have forced his barbarousness on me –  
 Jehu, proud Jehu, trembles in Samaria.  
 The murderer's beset on every side  
 By powerful neighbours I've stirred up.  
 He leaves me sovereign mistress here.  
 The fruits of statecraft savoured so in peace...  
 But now for several days, a haunting care  
 Has stolen in upon my happiness.  
 A dream – should I be troubled by a dream? –  
 Keeps up this gnawing worry in my heart.  
 I put it out of mind. It haunts me still.  
 During the horror of a black, black night,

Ma mère Jézabel devant moi s'est montrée,  
 Comme au jour de sa mort pompeusement parée.  
 Ses malheurs n'avaient point abattu sa fierté.  
 Même elle avait encor cet éclat emprunté,  
 Dont elle eut soin de peindre et d'orner son visage,  
 Pour réparer des ans l'irréparable outrage.  
 Tremble, m'a-t-elle dit, fille digne de moi.  
 Le cruel Dieu des Juifs l'emporte aussi sur toi.  
 Je te plains de tomber dans ses mains redoutables,  
 Ma fille. En achevant ces mots épouvantables,  
 Son ombre vers mon lit a paru se baisser.  
 Et moi, je lui tendais les mains pour l'embrasser.  
 Mais je n'ai plus trouvé qu'un horrible mélange  
 D'os et de chairs meurtris, et traînés dans la fange,  
 Des lambeaux pleins de sang, et des membres affreux,  
 Que des chiens dévorants se disputaient entre eux.

ABNER

Grand Dieu!

ATHALIE

Dans ce désordre à mes yeux se présente  
 Un jeune enfant couvert d'une robe éclatante,  
 Tels qu'on voit des Hébreux les prêtres revêtus.  
 Sa vue a ranimé mes esprits abattus.  
 Mais lorsque revenant de mon trouble funeste,  
 J'admirais sa douceur, son air noble et modeste,  
 J'ai senti tout à coup un homicide acier  
 Que le traître en mon sein a plongé tout entier.  
 De tant d'objets divers le bizarre assemblage  
 Peut-être du hasard vous paraît un ouvrage.  
 Moi-même quelque temps honteuse de ma peur  
 Je l'ai pris pour l'effet d'une sombre vapeur.  
 Mais de ce souvenir mon âme possédée  
 A deux fois en dormant revu la même idée.  
 Deux fois mes tristes yeux se sont vu retracer  
 Ce même enfant toujours tout prêt à me percer.

My mother Jezebel appeared to me,  
 Grandly arrayed as on the day she died.  
 All her misfortunes had not crushed her pride.  
 Her looks still had that borrowed sheen  
 With which she painted and adorned her face  
 To hide the unrelenting ravages of time.  
 'Tremble', she said, 'true daughter that you are.  
 The cruel Jewish God will beat you too.  
 You'll fall – I pity you – into his dreadful hands,  
 My daughter'. As she said those terrifying words,  
 Her ghost appeared to bend over my bed.  
 I reached out with my hands to kiss her face  
 And found them clutching at a loathsome mess  
 Of bones and putrid flesh dragged through the mud,  
 And blood-soaked rags and hideous, shattered limbs  
 That ravenous dogs tore from each other's jaws.

ABNER

Dear God...

ATHALIAH

Then in the turmoil there appeared  
 A young boy covered in a dazzling robe  
 Like those in which the Hebrew priests are seen.  
 The sight of him restored my broken mind.  
 I was recovering from that dead despair  
 And wondering at his gentle modesty,  
 When all at once I felt a murderous blade  
 He'd treacherously plunged into my heart.  
 This mixture of such strange and different things  
 May seem to be the work of chance to you.  
 I was ashamed for some time of my fear;  
 I thought it came from darkest fantasy.  
 And yet my mind was haunted by the memory.  
 Twice as I've slept, I've had the dream again.  
 Twice now my harrowed eyes have seen this boy.  
 And always he's about to stab at me.

Lasse enfin des horreurs dont j'étais poursuivie  
 J'allais prier Baal de veiller sur ma vie,  
 Et chercher du repos au pied de ses autels.  
 Que ne peut la frayeur sur l'esprit des mortels!  
 Dans le temple des Juifs un instinct m'a poussée,  
 Et d'apaiser leur Dieu j'ai conçu la pensée.  
 J'ai cru que des présents calmeraient son courroux,  
 Que ce Dieu, quel qu'il soit, en deviendrait plus doux.  
 Pontife de Baal, excusez ma faiblesse.  
 J'entre. Le peuple fuit. Le sacrifice cesse.  
 Le grand prêtre vers moi s'avance avec fureur.  
 Pendant qu'il me parlait, ô surprise! ô terreur!  
 J'ai vu ce même enfant dont je suis menacée,  
 Tel qu'un songe effrayant l'a peint à ma pensée.  
 Je l'ai vu. Son même air, son même habit de lin,  
 Sa démarche, ses yeux, et tous ses traits enfin.  
 C'est lui-même. Il marchait à côté du grand prêtre.  
 Mais bientôt à ma vue on l'a fait disparaître.  
 Voilà quel trouble ici m'oblige à m'arrêter,  
 Et sur quoi j'ai voulu tous deux vous consulter.  
 Que présage, Mathan, ce prodige incroyable?

MATHAN

Ce songe, et ce rapport, tout me semble effroyable.

ATHALIE

Mais cet enfant fatal, Abner, vous l'avez vu.  
 Quel est-il? De quel sang? Et de quelle tribu?

ABNER

Deux enfants à l'autel prêtaient leur ministère.  
 L'un est fils de Joad, Josabet est sa mère.  
 L'autre m'est inconnu.

MATHAN

I grew so weary of these awful fears,  
 I was about to pray to Baal to guard my life  
 And find some peace upon his altar steps.  
 What terror cannot do inside the mind...  
 And yet some instinct drove me to the Jews' own shrine.  
 I thought I might appease their God.  
 I thought that presents might assuage his rage,  
 Whatever God he was, and he'd be kind.  
 High priest of Baal, forgive my weakness there.  
 I entered. People fled. The sacrifice was stopped.  
 The chief priest came raging up to me  
 And as he screamed...I shook in fear...  
 I saw the very boy who'd threatened me  
 Just as I'd seen him in that awful dream.  
 I saw him there – same look, same linen robe,  
 His walk, his eyes, his features all the same.  
 It was the boy. Walking beside the priest.  
 But in a trice they made him disappear.  
 You see the turmoil now that keeps me here.  
 That's why I wanted to consult you both.  
 What, Mattan, does this awful omen mean?

MATTAN

The dream and what you've said are full of fear.

ATHALIAH

Abner, this deadly child, you've seen him too.  
 What is he like? What is his race, his tribe?

ABNER

Two boys were serving at the shrine. One was  
 Jehoiada's son. His mother is Jehoshabeath.  
 I do not know the other boy.

MATTAN

Pourquoi délibérer?  
De tous les deux, Madame, il se faut assurer.  
Vous savez pour Joad mes égards, mes mesures,  
Que je ne cherche point à venger mes injures,  
Que la seule équité règne en tous mes avis.  
Mais lui-même après tout, fût-ce son propre fils,  
Voudrait-il un moment laisser vivre un coupable?

ABNER

De quel crime un enfant peut-il être capable?

MATHAN

Le ciel nous le fait voir un poignard à la main.  
Le ciel est juste et sage et ne fait rien en vain.  
Que cherchez-vous de plus?

ABNER

Mais sur la foi d'un songe  
Dans le sang d'un enfant voulez-vous qu'on se plonge?  
Vous ne savez encor de quel père il est né,  
Quel il est.

MATHAN

On le craint, tout est examiné.  
A d'illustres parents s'il doit son origine,  
La splendeur de son sort doit hâter sa ruine.  
Dans le vulgaire obscur si le sort l'a placé,  
Qu'importe qu'au hasard un sang vil soit versé?  
Est-ce aux rois à garder cette lente justice?  
Leur sûreté souvent dépend d'un prompt supplice.  
N'allons point les gêner d'un soin embarrassant.  
Dès qu'on leur est suspect on n'est plus innocent.

ABNER

Why hesitate?  
My queen, you must detain them both. You know  
Jehoiada has my due respect.  
I do not seek revenge for injuries.  
Justice alone determines my advice.  
Would he himself desire a guilty life  
To be one moment spared, even his only son's?

ABNER

But what crime can a child be guilty of?

MATTAN

Heaven has shown him, dagger in his hand.  
Heaven is wise and just, does naught in vain.  
What more to ask?

ABNER

But yet to trust a dream...  
To drench ourselves in children's blood for that...  
You don't know even who his father is,  
Or who he is.

MATTAN

He's feared. That is enough.  
If he's from family of honoured name,  
His glorious rank should hasten on his death.  
If fate has put him in the common throng,  
What matter lowly blood is spilt by chance?  
Is such slow, cautious justice fit for kings?  
Their safety often rests on swift despatch.  
We should not hinder them by being scrupulous.  
Whoever they suspect is from that time condemned.

ABNER

Hé quoi, Mathan? D'un prêtre est-ce là le langage?  
 Moi, nourri dans la guerre aux horreurs du carnage,  
 Des vengeances des rois ministre rigoureux,  
 C'est moi qui prête ici ma voix au malheureux.  
 Et vous, qui lui devez des entrailles de père,  
 Vous, ministre de paix dans les temps de colère,  
 Couvrant d'un zèle faux votre ressentiment,  
 Le sang à votre gré coule trop lentement?  
 Vous m'avez commandé de vous parler sans feinte,  
 Madame. Quel est donc ce grand sujet de crainte?  
 Un songe, un faible enfant, que votre œil prévenu  
 Peut-être sans raison croit avoir reconnu.

ATHALIE

Je le veux croire, Abner; je puis m'être trompée.  
 Peut-être un songe vain m'a trop préoccupée.  
 Eh bien! il faut revoir cet enfant de plus près,  
 Il en faut à loisir examiner les traits.  
 Qu'on les fasse tous deux paraître en ma présence.

ABNER

Je crains...

ATHALIE

Manquerait-on pour moi de complaisance?  
 De ce refus bizarre où seraient les raisons?  
 Il pourrait me jeter en d'étranges soupçons.  
 Que Josabet, vous dis-je, ou Joad les amène.  
 Je puis, quand je voudrai, parler en souveraine.  
 Vos prêtres, je veux bien, Abner, vous l'avouer,  
 Des bontés d'Athalie ont lieu de se louer.  
 Je sais sur ma conduite et contre ma puissance  
 Jusqu'où de leurs discours ils portent la licence.  
 Ils vivent cependant, et leur temple est debout.  
 Mais je sens que bientôt ma douceur est à bout.  
 Que Joad mette un frein à son zèle sauvage,

Is this, Mattan, the language of a priest?  
 I've been brought up in all the carnages of war,  
 The strict executor of kings' revenge,  
 And yet it's me who pleads the poor child's cause.  
 And you who owe a father's love to him –  
 A minister of peace in angry times –  
 You hide resentment with this hollow zeal.  
 Too slowly for your liking does blood flow.  
 You ordered me, Athaliah, to speak my mind.  
 So what is then this massive cause for fear?  
 A dream? A little boy that you'd prejudged  
 And thought mistakenly you recognised?

ATHALIAH

That may well be. I could have been deceived.  
 Perhaps I've been obsessed by empty dreams.  
 Then I must see this boy much closer to.  
 I must have time to look, to gaze on him.  
 Let them be brought before me, both of them.

ABNER

I fear –

ATHALIAH

You will not fail to do my will...?  
 What reasons could there be for saying no?  
 You might inspire the strangest doubts in me...  
 Jehoshabeath, Jehoiada, brings them here.  
 I can when I so wish speak as a queen.  
 Let me be frank, Abner. Your priests have cause  
 Enough to recognise my kindnesses.  
 I know the lengths to which they've spoken out  
 Against my conduct and my power.  
 And yet they live. Their temple's standing still.  
 But soon, I think, my patience quite runs out...  
 Jehoiada should curb his zeal

ATHALIE

Et ne m'irrite point par un second outrage.  
Allez.

SCÈNE 6

*Athalie, Mathan, etc.*

MATHAN

Enfin je puis parler en liberté.  
Je puis dans tout son jour mettre la vérité.  
Quelque monstre naissant dans ce temple s'élève,  
Reine. N'attendez pas que le nuage crève.  
Abner chez le grand prêtre a devancé le jour.  
Pour le sang de ses rois vous savez son amour.  
Et qui sait si Joad ne veut point en leur place  
Substituer l'enfant dont le ciel vous menace,  
Soit son fils, soit quelque autre...

ATHALIE

Oui, vous m'ouvrez les yeux.  
Je commence à voir clair dans cet avis des cieux.  
Mais je veux de mon doute être débarrassée.  
Un enfant est peu propre à trahir sa pensée.  
Souvent d'un grand dessein un mot nous fait juger.  
Laissez-moi, cher Mathan, le voir, l'interroger.  
Vous cependant allez, et sans jeter d'alarmes,  
A tous mes Tyriens faites prendre les armes.

SCÈNE 7

ATHALIAH

And not provoke me with a fresh affront.  
Go.

*[Abner leaves.]*

SCENE 6

*Athaliah, Mattan, Athaliah's Retinue*

MATTAN

So now I can speak out at last,  
Reveal the pure, unvarnished truth.  
Some monster in this shrine is being born.  
Oh queen, don't wait until the storm bursts forth.  
Abner was with Jehoiada before the dawn.  
You know how much he loves his line of kings.  
Perhaps he wants to put now in their place  
The boy with whom the heavens threaten you.  
Either his son, or else some...

ATHALIAH

You open my eyes.  
I now begin to see what heaven warns.  
But still I must be rid of all my doubts.  
A child is little used to hide his thoughts.  
One word will often tell a grand design.  
Let me, dear Mattan, see and question him.  
Meanwhile, you go. Raise no alarm.  
Just see my Tyrian soldiers have their arms.

*[Mattan leaves. Jehoshabeath and Abner enter, together with Joash, Zechariah and Salomith. Two Levites, the Chorus and Athaliah's retinue also enter.]*

SCENE 7



*Joas, Josabet, Athalie, Zacharie, Abner, Salomith,  
deux Lévites, le Chœur, etc.*

JOSABET [*aux deux Lévites*]

O vous, sur ces enfants si chers, si précieux,  
Ministres du Seigneur, ayez toujours les yeux.

ABNER [*à Josabet*]

Princesse, assurez-vous, je les prends sous ma garde.

ATHALIE

O ciel! plus j'examine et plus je le regarde,  
C'est lui. D'horreur encor tous mes sens sont saisis.  
Épouse de Joad, est-ce là votre fils?

JOSABET

Qui? Lui, Madame?

ATHALIE

Lui.

JOSABET

Je ne suis point sa mère.  
Voilà mon fils.

ATHALIE

Et vous, quel est donc votre père?  
Jeune enfant, répondez.

JOSABET

*Joash, Jehoshabeath, Athaliah, Zachariah, Abner,  
Salomith, Two Levites, The Chorus, Athaliah's Retinue*

JEHOSHABEATH, *to the two Levites*

Oh ministers of God, keep careful watch  
On these two boys. They're very dear to us.

ABNER, *to Jehoshabeath*

Be reassured. I'll take good care of them.

ATHALIAH

Dear God, the more I look, the more I gaze...  
It's him. New horror...seizes...grips my mind.  
Jehoshabeath, is this your son?

JEHOSHABEATH

Who, him?

ATHALIAH

Yes, him.

JEHOSHABEATH

He's not my child.  
*She points to Zachariah.* That is my son.

ATHALIAH, *to Joash*

So who then is your father?  
Tell me, little boy.

JEHOSHABEATH

Le ciel jusqu'aujourd'hui...

ATHALIE

Pourquoi vous pressez-vous de répondre pour lui?  
C'est à lui de parler.

JOSABET

Dans un âge si tendre  
Quel éclaircissement en pouvez-vous attendre?

ATHALIE

Cet âge est innocent. Son ingénuité  
N'altère point encor la simple vérité.  
Laissez-le s'expliquer sur tout ce qui le touche.

JOSABET [*tout bas*]

Daigne mettre, grand Dieu, ta sagesse en sa bouche.

ATHALIE

Comment vous nommez-vous?

JOAS

J'ai nom Éliacin.

ATHALIE

Votre père?

JOAS

Je suis, dit-on, un orphelin,  
Entre les bras de Dieu jeté dès ma naissance,  
Et qui de mes parents n'eus jamais connaissance.

Until today the heavens...

ATHALIAH

Why hurry to reply for him so fast?  
It's up to him to speak.

JEHOSHABEATH

But he's so young.  
What explanation can you hope to have?

ATHALIAH

He's at the age of innocence – naive.  
He won't distort the simple truth.  
So let him talk about what touches him.

JEHOSHABEATH *aside, quietly*

Dear Lord, please place your wisdom on his lips.

ATHALIAH

What is your name?

JOASH

Eliacin.

ATHALIAH

Your father?

JOASH

I'm an orphan, so they say –  
Thrown on God's mercy since my birth.  
I've never known just who my parents were.

ATHALIE

Vous êtes sans parents?

JOAS

Ils m'ont abandonné.

ATHALIE

Comment? Et depuis quand?

JOAS

Depuis que je suis né.

ATHALIE

Ne sait-on pas au moins quel pays est le vôtre?

JOAS

Ce temple est mon pays, je n'en connais point d'autre.

ATHALIE

Où dit-on que le sort vous a fait rencontrer?

JOAS

Parmi des loups cruels prêts à me dévorer.

ATHALIE

Qui vous mit dans ce temple?

JOAS

Une femme inconnue,

ATHALIAH

You have no parents?

JOASH

They abandoned me.

ATHALIAH

So how? Since when?

JOASH

Since I was born.

ATHALIAH

But don't you know what country you are from?

JOASH

This temple is my home. I have no other one.

ATHALIAH

Where do they say they found you first of all?

JOASH

With cruel wolves about to eat me up.

ATHALIAH

Who brought you to this shrine?

JOASH

A lady...I don't know.

Qui ne dit point son nom, et qu'on n'a point revue.

ATHALIE

Mais de vos premiers ans quelles mains ont pris soin?

JOAS

Dieu laissa-t-il jamais ses enfants au besoin?  
Aux petits des oiseaux il donne leur pâture,  
Et sa bonté s'étend sur toute la nature.  
Tous les jours je l'invoque et, d'un soin paternel,  
Il me nourrit des dons offerts sur son autel.

ATHALIE

Quel prodige nouveau me trouble et m'embarrasse?  
La douceur de sa voix, son enfance, sa grâce  
Font insensiblement à mon inimitié  
Succéder... Je serais sensible à la pitié?

ABNER

Madame, voilà donc cet ennemi terrible.  
De vos songes menteurs l'imposture est visible,  
A moins que la pitié qui semble vous troubler  
Ne soit ce coup fatal qui vous faisait trembler.

ATHALIE [*à Joas et à Josabet*]

Vous sortez?

JOSABET

Vous avez entendu sa fortune.  
Sa présence à la fin pourrait être importune.

ATHALIE

She didn't say her name. I haven't seen her since.

ATHALIAH

When you were very small, who cared for you?

JOASH

But does God ever let his children want?  
He gives the little birds their daily bread.  
His goodness stretches out to all the world.  
So every day I pray to him. His father's care  
Gives me my food, gifts offered at his shrine.

ATHALIAH

Another miracle to trouble me...?  
The sweetness of his voice, his childish grace,  
Make hatred imperceptibly give way  
To... Can I be feeling pity now?

ABNER

So this boy is the fearful enemy?  
Your dreams have lied. It's clear they're false –  
Unless the deadly blow that made you shake  
Was not this sense of pity haunting you.

ATHALIAH, *to Joash and Jehoshabeath*

You're leaving?

JEHOSHABEATH

You've heard his story. He might  
Be bothersome if he stayed longer now.

ATHALIAH

Non. Revenez. Quel est tous les jours votre emploi?

JOAS

J'adore le Seigneur. On m'explique sa loi.  
Dans son livre divin on m'apprend à la lire,  
Et déjà de ma main je commence à l'écrire.

ATHALIE

Que vous dit cette loi?

JOAS

Que Dieu veut être aimé;  
Qu'il venge tôt ou tard son saint nom blasphémé;  
Qu'il est le défenseur de l'orphelin timide;  
Qu'il résiste au superbe, et punit l'homicide.

ATHALIE

J'entends. Mais tout ce peuple enfermé dans ce lieu,  
A quoi s'occupe-t-il?

JOAS

Il loue, il bénit Dieu.

ATHALIE

Dieu veut-il qu'à toute heure on prie, on le contemple?

JOAS

Tout profane exercice est banni de son temple.

ATHALIE

Quels sont donc vos plaisirs?

Come back... What do you do, then, every day?

JOASH

I worship God. I'm taught his laws. I'm taught  
How I can read them in his holy book.  
I've started now to write them out myself.

ATHALIAH

What does it say, this law?

JOASH

That God wants love.  
If we blaspheme his name, he'll be avenged.  
That he'll protect us orphans, who are weak.  
That he'll put down the proud, and punish murderers.

ATHALIAH

I see. But all the people shut up here,  
What do they do?

JOASH

They praise and bless the Lord.

ATHALIAH

Does God want prayer and contemplation all the time?

JOASH

All pagan things are banished from the shrine.

ATHALIAH

What do you like to do?

JOAS

Quelquefois à l'autel,  
Je présente au grand prêtre ou l'encens ou le sel.  
J'entends chanter de Dieu les grandeurs infinies.  
Je vois l'ordre pompeux de ses cérémonies.

ATHALIE

Hé quoi? Vous n'avez point de passe-temps plus doux?  
Je plains le triste sort d'un enfant tel que vous.  
Venez dans mon palais, vous y verrez ma gloire.

JOAS

Moi des bienfaits de Dieu je perdrais la mémoire?

ATHALIE

Non, je ne vous veux pas contraindre à l'oublier.

JOAS

Vous ne le priez point.

ATHALIE

Vous pourrez le prier.

JOAS

Je verrais cependant en invoquer un autre.

ATHALIE

J'ai mon dieu que je sers. Vous servirez le vôtre.  
Ce sont deux puissants dieux.

JOASH

Sometimes I give  
Some salt or incense to the high priest at the shrine.  
I hear God's boundless greatness sung aloud.  
I see the solemn order of his rites.

ATHALIAH

But don't you have some nicer ways to pass the time?  
I'd pity any boy like you so harsh a life.  
Come to my palace. See the wonders there.

JOASH

But I'd forget God's kindnesses.

ATHALIAH

I'd never force you to forget.

JOASH

But you don't pray to him.

ATHALIAH

Yet *you* could pray.

JOASH

I'd see you praying to another God.

ATHALIAH

I'd serve my God, and you'd serve yours.  
They both are powerful Gods.

JOAS

Il faut craindre le mien,  
Lui seul est Dieu, Madame, et le vôtre n'est rien.

ATHALIE

Les plaisirs près de moi vous chercheront en foule.

JOAS

Le bonheur des méchants comme un torrent s'écoule.

ATHALIE

Ces méchants, qui sont-ils?

JOSABET

Hé, Madame! excusez  
Un enfant...

ATHALIE [*à Josabet*]

J'aime à voir comme vous l'instruisez.  
Enfin, Éliacin, vous avez su me plaire.  
Vous n'êtes point sans doute un enfant ordinaire.  
Vous voyez, je suis reine, et n'ai point d'héritier.  
Laissez là cet habit, quittez ce vil métier.  
Je veux vous faire part de toutes mes richesses.  
Essayez dès ce jour l'effet de mes promesses.  
A ma table, partout, à mes côtés assis,  
Je prétends vous traiter comme mon propre fils.

JOAS

Comme votre fils?

ATHALIE

JOASH

Mine must be feared.  
He is the only God. Yours is nothing.

ATHALIAH

You'd so enjoy yourself were you with me.

JOASH

The joy of wicked men flows past like streams.

ATHALIAH

Who are the wicked, then?

JEHOSHABEATH

Oh queen, forgive  
A child...

ATHALIAH, *to Jehoshabeath*

I like the way you've taught the boy.  
Eliacin, I'm very pleased with you.  
It's clear you are no ordinary child.  
You see, I'm queen, and yet I have no heir.  
Take off that robe. Give up these paltry tasks.  
I want you now to share in all my wealth.  
This very day, you test my promises.  
At table, everywhere, sit close to me.  
I mean to treat you as my own dear son.

JOASH

Your son?

ATHALIAH

Oui. Vous vous taisez?

JOAS

Quel père  
Je quitterais! et pour...

ATHALIE

Eh bien ?

JOAS

Pour quelle mère!

ATHALIE [*à Josabet*]

Sa mémoire est fidèle, et dans tout ce qu'il dit  
De vous et de Joad je reconnais l'esprit.  
Voilà comme infectant cette simple jeunesse  
Vous employez tous deux le calme où je vous laissez.  
Vous cultivez déjà leur haine et leur fureur.  
Vous ne leur prononcez mon nom qu'avec horreur.

JOSABET

Peut-on de nos malheurs leur dérober l'histoire?  
Tout l'univers les sait. Vous-même en faites gloire.

ATHALIE

Oui, ma juste fureur, et j'en fais vanité,  
A vengé mes parents sur ma postérité.  
J'aurais vu massacrer et mon père, et mon frère,  
Du haut de son palais précipiter ma mère,  
Et dans un même jour égorger à la fois,  
Quel spectacle d'horreur! quatre-vingts fils de rois?  
Et pourquoi? Pour venger je ne sais quels prophètes,

Yes, why...you do not speak.

JOASH

But what  
A father I should leave, for...

ATHALIAH

For?

JOASH

...what a mother.

ATHALIAH

His memory is good. In all he says,  
I recognise Jehoiada's hand and yours.  
So this is how you poison trusting youth  
And put the peace I left you with to use...  
You foster both their hatred and their rage.  
Only with horror do you speak my name.

JEHOSHABEATH

How can we hide the story of our grief?  
The whole world knows. You boast of it yourself.

ATHALIAH

I have good cause for rage – I'm proud of it –  
I have avenged my parents' death on all my race...  
I saw my father and my brother killed,  
My mother hurled down from the palace walls;  
Within one day, some eighty sons of kings,  
Their throats slit out... The horror...in that sight...  
And why? So that some obscure prophets then,



Dont elle avait puni les fureurs indiscretes.  
 Et moi reine sans cœur, fille sans amitié,  
 Esclave d'une lâche et frivole pitié,  
 Je n'aurais pas du moins à cette aveugle rage  
 Rendu meurtre pour meurtre, outrage pour outrage,  
 Et de votre David traité tous les neveux,  
 Comme on traitait d'Achab les restes malheureux?  
 Où serais-je aujourd'hui, si domptant ma faiblesse  
 Je n'eusse d'une mère étouffé la tendresse,  
 Si de mon propre sang ma main versant des flots  
 N'eût par ce coup hardi réprimé vos complots?  
 Enfin de votre Dieu l'implacable vengeance  
 Entre nos deux maisons rompit toute alliance.  
 David m'est en horreur, et les fils de ce roi  
 Quoique nés de mon sang, sont étrangers pour moi.

JOSABET

Tout vous a réussi? Que Dieu voie, et nous juge.

ATILALIE

Ce Dieu depuis longtemps votre unique refuge,  
 Que deviendra l'effet de ses prédictions?  
 Qu'il vous donne ce roi promis aux nations,  
 Cet enfant de David, votre espoir, votre attente...  
 Mais nous nous reverrons. Adieu, je sors contente,  
 J'ai voulu voir, j'ai vu.

ABNER [à Josabet]

Je vous l'avais promis,  
 Je vous rends le dépôt que vous m'avez commis.

## SCÈNE 8

*Joad, Josabet, Joas, Zacharie, Abner,*

Whose raging fury she had curbed, might be avenged?  
 And me – a loveless daughter, heartless queen,  
 A slave to pity, like a shallow coward –  
 Should I have not paid back this blinding rage  
 At least with crime for crime, and death for death,  
 And treated all your David's race just as  
 You treated Ahab's wretched sons.  
 Where would I be today if I'd been tamed  
 And not choked back a mother's tenderness?  
 If I'd not poured my son's own blood in streams  
 And not killed off your plots at one fell stroke?  
 So then, the ruthless vengeance of your God  
 Broke every friendly pact that we had made.  
 I shudder so at David's name... His royal sons  
 Are of my blood. But they are strangers now.

JEHOSHABEATH

You've had success. But God will see and judge.

ATHALIAH

This God – he's been your refuge for so long –  
 What will become of all his prophecies?  
 So let him give the world this promised king,  
 This David's son, for whom you wait in hope.  
 We'll meet again. Goodbye. I leave content.  
 I wished to see. And I have seen. [*She leaves.*]

ABNER, *to Jehoshabeath*

I promised you.  
 And now I'll give you back what I was trusted with.

## SCENE 8

*Jehoiada, Jehoshabeath, Joash, Zechariah, Abner,*

*Salomith, Lévites, le Chœur*JOSABBT [*à Joad*]

Avez-vous entendu cette superbe reine,  
Seigneur?

JOAD

J'entendais tout, et plaignais votre peine.  
Ces lévites et moi prêts à vous secourir  
Nous étions avec vous résolus de périr.  
[*A Joas, en l'embrassant*]  
Que Dieu veille sur vous, enfant dont le courage  
Vient de rendre à son nom ce noble témoignage.  
Je reconnais, Abner, ce service important.  
Souvenez-vous de l'heure où Joad vous attend.  
Et nous, dont cette femme impie et meurtrière  
A souillé les regards et troublé la prière,  
Rentrons, et qu'un sang pur par mes mains épanché  
Lave jusqu'au marbre où ses pas ont touché.

## SCÈNE 9

*Le Chœur*

UNE DES FILLES DU CHŒUR

Quel astre à nos yeux vient de luire?  
Quel sera quelque jour cet enfant merveilleux?  
Il brave le faste orgueilleux,  
Et ne se laisse point séduire  
A tous ses attraits périlleux.

*Salomith, Levites, The Chorus*JEHOSHABEATH, *to Jehoiada*

So did you hear this puffed-up queen, my lord?

JEHOIADA

I heard it all. I pitied all your pain.  
These Levites at my side were all prepared  
To help. We were resolved to die with you.  
*to Joash, embracing him*  
May God watch over you. Your courage, child,  
Has borne a noble witness to his name.  
Abner, I thank you for the help you gave.  
I will expect you. Don't forget the time.  
And us – we've had our eyes defiled, our prayers  
Disturbed all by this godless, murderous queen –  
Let us go in. And let the pure blood I have shed  
Wash even the marble that her feet have touched.

*[They all leave apart from the Chorus.]*

## SCENE 9

*The Chorus*

ONE OF THE CHORUS

What star has newly gleamed on us?  
What will this wondrous child grow up to be?  
For he defies her pride and all its show  
And will not be seduced  
By all its dangerous spells.

## UNE AUTRE

Pendant que du dieu d'Athalie  
Chacun court encenser l'autel,  
Un enfant courageux publie  
Que Dieu lui seul est éternel,  
Et parle comme un autre Élie  
Devant cette autre Jézabel.

## UNE AUTRE

Qui nous révélera ta naissance secrète,  
Cher enfant? Es-tu fils de quelque saint prophète?

## UNE AUTRE

Ainsi l'on vit l'aimable Samuel  
Croître à l'ombre du tabernacle.  
Il devint des Hébreux l'espérance et l'oracle.  
Puisses-tu, comme lui, consoler Israël!

UNE AUTRE [*chante*]

O bienheureux mille fois  
L'enfant que le Seigneur aime,  
Qui de bonne heure entend sa voix,  
Et que ce Dieu daigne instruire lui-même!  
Loin du monde élevé, de tous les dons des cieux  
Il est orné des sa naissance;  
Et du méchant l'abord contagieux  
N'altère point son innocence.

## TOUT LE CHŒUR

Heureuse, heureuse l'enfance  
Que le Seigneur instruit et prend sous sa défense!

LA MÊME VOIX [*seule*]

## A SECOND

While crowds rush up to worship at  
The shrine of Baal, her god,  
A brave young boy declares  
That God alone endures.  
He speaks now in Elijah's voice  
Before this second Jezebel.

## A THIRD

Who will reveal your secret birth to us,  
Dear child? Are you some holy prophet's son?

## A FOURTH

Sweet Samuel was seen as he grew up  
Within the tabernacle's shade  
To be the Hebrews' hope and guide.  
May you, like him, wipe Israel's tears away.

A FIFTH *singing*

He's blessed a thousand times,  
The child who's loved by God,  
Who early hears his voice  
And who is taught by him.  
Brought up beyond the world, he's graced  
With all of heaven's gifts from birth.  
The plagues of those who sin  
Can never taint his innocence.

## FULL CHORUS

The greatest joy is with that child  
Whom God instructs and will defend.

THE FIFTH, *alone*

Tel en un secret vallon  
 Sur le bord d'une onde pure  
 Croît à l'abri de l'aquilon  
 Un jeune lis, l'amour de la nature.  
 Loin du monde élevé, de tous les dons des cieux  
 Il est orné dès sa naissance;  
 Et du méchant l'abord contagieux  
 N'altère point son innocence.

## TOUT LE CHŒUR

Heureux, heureux de fois  
 L'enfant que le Seigneur rend docile à ses lois!

UNE VOIX [*seule*]

Mon Dieu, qu'une vertu naissante  
 Parmi tant de périls marche à pas incertains!  
 Qu'une âme qui te cherche et veut être innocente,  
 Trouve d'obstacle à ses desseins!  
 Que d'ennemis lui font la guerre!  
 Où se peuvent cacher tes saints?  
 Les pécheurs couvrent la terre.

## UNE AUTRE

O palais de David, et sa chère cité,  
 Mont fameux, que Dieu même a longtemps habité,  
 Comment as-tu du ciel attiré la colère?  
 Sion, chère Sion, que dis-tu quand tu vois  
 Une impie étrangère  
 Assise, hélas! au trône de tes rois?

## TOUT LE CHŒUR

Sion, chère Sion, que dis-tu quand tu vois  
 Une impie étrangère  
 Assise, hélas! au trône de tes rois?

Just as in a secret vale  
 Beside a crystal stream,  
 A budding lily, nature's dearest love,  
 Grows sheltered from the cold north wind.  
 Brought up beyond the world, he's graced  
 With all of heaven's gifts from birth.  
 The plagues of those who sin  
 Can never taint his innocence.

## FULL CHORUS

He's blessed a thousand times  
 The child whom God makes humble to his law.

## A SOLOIST

O Lord, that goodness from its birth  
 Should through such danger walk unsure.  
 That souls that yearn for you, that would be pure,  
 Are checked in their desire.  
 How many enemies make war on them.  
 Where can your saints then hide?  
 The men of sin possess the earth.

## ANOTHER SOLOIST

Palace of David, city that he loved,  
 The famous mount where God himself has lived,  
 How have you drawn down heaven's rage?  
 Beloved Zion, what have you to say?  
 You see this godless foreigner –  
 Her seated now upon your royal throne.

## FULL CHORUS

Beloved Zion, what have you to say?  
 You see this godless foreigner –  
 Her seated now upon your royal throne.

LA MÊME VOIX [*continue*]

Au lieu des cantiques charmants  
 Où David t'exprimait ses saints ravissements,  
 Et bénissait son Dieu, son Seigneur, et son père;  
 Sion, chère Sion, que dis-tu quand tu vois  
     Louer le dieu de l'impie étrangère,  
 Et blasphémer le nom qu'ont adoré tes rois?

UNE VOIX [*seule*]

Combien de temps, Seigneur, combien de temps encore  
 Verrons-nous contre toi les méchants s'élever?  
 Jusque dans ton saint temple ils viennent te braver.  
 Ils traitent d'insensé le peuple qui t'adore.  
 Combien de temps, Seigneur, combien de temps encore  
 Verrons-nous contre toi les méchants s'élever?

## UNE AUTRE

Que vous sert, disent-ils, cette vertu sauvage?  
     De tant de plaisirs si doux  
     Pourquoi fuyez-vous l'usage?  
 Votre Dieu ne fait rien pour vous.

## UNE AUTRE

Rions, chantons dit cette troupe impie;  
 De fleurs en fleurs, de plaisirs en plaisirs,  
     Promenons nos désirs.  
 Sur l'avenir insensé qui se fie.  
 De nos ans passagers le nombre est incertain.  
 Hâtons-nous aujourd'hui de jouir de la vie,  
     Qui sait si nous serons demain!

## TOUT LE CHŒUR

Qu'ils pleurent, Ô mon Dieu, qu'ils frémissent de crainte  
 Ces malheureux, qui de ta cité sainte

THE SAME SOLOIST *continues*

Instead of those enchanting songs  
 That David sang to you in purest joy,  
 Blessing his God, his father and his lord,  
 Beloved Zion, what have you to say?  
     You see them praise this godless foreigner's Lord,  
 Blaspheme the name your kings adored.

## A SOLOIST

How long, O Lord, how long must we still see  
 The men of evil rise against your law?  
 They challenge you in your own holy shrine.  
 They call us mad, all we who worship you.  
 How long, O Lord, how long must we still see  
 The men of evil rise against your law?

## ANOTHER SOLOIST

What good has outcast virtue done,  
     They ask. Why run away from all  
     These pleasures...sweet to taste?  
 Your God does nothing for you now.

## ANOTHER SOLOIST

Let's sing and dance, say all this godless crowd.  
 Desire can flit  
     From flower to flower, one pleasure to the next.  
 To trust the future is insanity.  
 We do not know how long we'll live,  
 So let's enjoy life now, today.  
     Who knows if we'll be here tomorrow.

## FULL CHORUS

Then let them weep, dear God, and shake with fear,  
 Those wretched sinners who will never see

Ne verront point l'éternelle splendeur.  
 C'est à nous de chanter, nous à qui tu révèles  
     Tes clartés immortelles;  
 C'est à nous de chanter tes dons et ta grandeur.

UNE VOIX [*seule*]

De tous ces vains plaisirs où leur âme se plonge,  
 Que leur restera-t-il? Ce qui reste d'un songe  
     Dont on a reconnu l'erreur.  
     A leur réveil, ô réveil plein d'horreur!  
     Pendant que le pauvre à ta table  
 Goûtera de ta paix la douceur ineffable,  
 Ils boiront dans la coupe affreuse, inépuisable,  
 Que tu présenteras au jour de ta fureur  
     A toute la race coupable.

TOUT LE CHŒUR

O réveil plein d'horreur!  
 O songe peu durable!  
 O dangereuse erreur!

Your holy city's everlasting light.  
 It is for us to sing, to whom you have revealed  
     The brightness of eternal life.  
 It is for us to sing your gifts and majesty.

ANOTHER SOLOIST

What will remain of all those vain delights  
 In which they drown their souls? Only a dream,  
     Whose falseness they will recognise  
     When they wake up – a waking terrified...  
     And while the poor man at your feast  
 Will taste such sweetness in your peace,  
 They'll drink that fearful, overflowing cup  
 That you will give upon the day of wrath  
     To all the guilty race.

FULL CHORUS

Such wakening full of dread,  
 A dream that vanishes,  
 What dangerous mistake...

*[The Chorus remain as Mattan and Nabal enter.]*

## ACTE 3 SCÈNE 1

*Mathan, Nabal, le Chœur*

MATHAN

Jeunes files, allez. Qu'on dise à Josabet  
Que Mathan veut ici lui parler en secret.

UNE DES FILLES DU CHŒUR

Mathan! O Dieu du ciel, puisses-tu le confondre.

NABAL

Hé quoi? Tout se disperse et fuit sans vous répondre?

MATHAN

Approchons.

## SCÈNE 2

*Zacharie, Mathan, Nabal*

ZACHARIE

Téméraire, où voulez-vous passer?  
Au-delà de ce lieu gardez-vous d'avancer.  
C'est des ministres saints la demeure sacrée.  
Les lois à tout profane en défendent l'entrée.  
Qui cherchez-vous? Mon père en ce jour solennel  
De l'idolâtre impur fuit l'aspect criminel,  
Et devant le Seigneur maintenant prosternée

## ACT 3 SCENE 1

*Mattan, Nabal, The Chorus*

MATTAN

Young girls, go now and tell Jehoshabeath  
That Mattan wants to talk to her alone.

ONE OF THE GIRLS

Mattan...! Dear Lord in heaven, grind him to dust.

NABAL

They scatter – look – run off without a word.

MATTAN

So let's go in.

*[The Chorus leaves. Zechariah enters.]*

## SCENE 2

*Zechariah, Mattan, Nabal*

ZECHARIAH

Stop. Where are you going?  
Be careful now. Don't come beyond this point.  
The holy ministers of God live here.  
The godless are forbidden here by law.  
You look for who...? My father on this holy day  
Avoids the sight of foul idolaters.  
My mother's worshipping before her God.

Ma mère en ce devoir craint d'être détournée.

MATHAN

Mon fils, nous attendrons, cessez de vous troubler.  
C'est votre illustre mère à qui je veux parler.  
Je viens ici chargé d'un ordre de la reine.

### SCÈNE 3

*Mathan, Nabal*

NABAL

Leurs enfants ont déjà leur audace hautaine.  
Mais que veut Athalie en cette occasion?  
D'où naît dans ses conseils cette confusion?  
Par l'insolent Joad ce matin offensée,  
Et d'un enfant fatal en songe menacée,  
Elle allait immoler Joad à son courroux,  
Et dans ce temple enfin placer Baal et vous.  
Vous m'en aviez déjà confié votre joie,  
Et j'espérais ma part d'une si riche proie.  
Qui fait changer ainsi ses vœux irrésolus?

MATHAN

Ami, depuis deux jours je ne la connais plus.  
Ce n'est plus cette reine éclairée, intrépide,  
Élevée au-dessus de son sexe timide,  
Qui d'abord accablait ses ennemis surpris,  
Et d'un instant perdu connaissait tout le prix.  
La peur d'un vain remords trouble cette grande âme,  
Elle flotte, elle hésite, en un mot elle est femme.  
J'avais tantôt rempli d'amertume et de fiel

She fears all interruptions to her prayers.

MATTAN

My son, we'll wait. Don't be concerned.  
It is your mother that I want to see.  
I've come here with an order from the queen.

*[Zechariah leaves.]*

### SCENE 3

*Mattan, Nabal*

NABAL

Even their children have this haughty air...  
What does Athaliah want to do?  
How is it that her plans are so confused?  
Jehoiada's pride has not pleased her,  
A deadly child has threatened her in dreams –  
She was about to sacrifice the priest in rage  
And then place Baal and you inside this shrine.  
You had already told me of your joy,  
And I had hopes to share so rich a prey.  
What makes her shift and change like this?

MATTAN

These last two days she has not been herself.  
She is no more that bold, clear-sighted queen  
Who towered above her timid female sex,  
Who overwhelmed her startled enemies  
And knew how much it cost to let the moment pass.  
Fear of some vain remorse infects her mind.  
She drifts and hesitates. Becomes a girl.  
I'd filled her heart with poisonous bitterness –



Son cœur déjà saisi des menaces du ciel.  
 Elle-même à mes soins confiant sa vengeance  
 M'avait dit d'assembler sa garde en diligence.  
 Mais soit que cet enfant devant elle amené,  
 De ses parents, dit-on, rebut infortuné,  
 Eût d'un songe effrayant diminué l'alarme,  
 Soit qu'elle eût même en lui vu je ne sais quel charme,  
 J'ai trouvé son courroux chancelant, incertain,  
 Et déjà remettant sa vengeance à demain.  
 Tous ses projets semblaient l'un l'autre se détruire.  
 Du sort de cet enfant je me suis fait instruire,  
 Ai-je dit; on commence à vanter ses aïeux.  
 Joad de temps en temps le montre aux factieux,  
 Le fait attendre aux Juifs comme un autre Moïse,  
 Et d'oracles menteurs s'appuie et s'autorise.  
 Ces mots ont fait monter la rougeur sur son front.  
 Jamais mensonge heureux n'eût un effet si prompt.  
 Est-ce à moi de languir dans cette incertitude?  
 Sortons, a-t-elle dit, sortons d'inquiétude.  
 Vous-même à Josabet prononcez cet arrêt.  
 Les feux vont s'allumer, et le fer est tout prêt.  
 Rien ne peut de leur temple empêcher le ravage,  
 Si je n'ai de leur foi cet enfant pour otage.

## NABAL

Eh bien! pour un enfant qu'ils ne connaissent pas,  
 Que le hasard peut-être a jeté dans leurs bras,  
 Voudront-ils que leur temple, enseveli sous l'herbe...

## MATHAN

Ah! de tous les mortels connais le plus superbe.  
 Plutôt que dans mes mains par Joad soit livré  
 Un enfant qu'à son Dieu Joad a consacré,  
 Tu lui verras subir la mort la plus terrible.  
 D'ailleurs pour cet enfant leur attache est visible.  
 Si j'ai bien de la reine entendu le récit,  
 Joad sur sa naissance en sait plus qu'il ne dit.

She was already stunned by heaven's threats –  
 She'd trusted to my charge all her revenge,  
 Had told me urgently to call her guards.  
 Whether the boy they brought in front of her –  
 They say his parents had abandoned him –  
 Then made the terror of her nightmare fade,  
 Whether she saw a certain charm in him,  
 I found her rage uncertain, wavering.  
 She put off vengeance to another day  
 And all her plans seemed warring with themselves.  
 'I've found out now about this young boy's fate',  
 I said to her. 'His ancestry is boasted of.  
 Jehoiada shows him off to those  
 Who criticise, and uses lying oracles  
 To make the Jews expect another Moses.'  
 The words brought blushes to her face at once.  
 There never was a lie that worked so fast.  
 'Must I waste time in such uncertainty?',  
 She said. 'Enough of this anxiety.  
 You tell Jehoshabeath of this decree.  
 The fires will now be lit, the swords unsheathed.  
 Nothing can save their temples from the torch  
 Unless I have this child as hostage for their word.'

## NABAL

So...will they for a child they do not know,  
 Whom chance perhaps has thrown into their arms,  
 Will they allow the grass to wreath their shrine...?

## MATTAN

Ah, but recognise the proudest man alive.  
 Before Jehoiada will give a child  
 He's consecrated to his God to me,  
 You'll see him face the cruellest death.  
 Their great attachment to the boy is clear.  
 If I have understood the queen aright,  
 The priest knows more about him than he says.

Quel qu'il soit, je prévois qu'il leur sera funeste.  
 Ils le refuseront. Je prends sur moi le reste.  
 Et j'espère qu'enfin de ce temple odieux  
 Et la flamme et le fer vont délivrer mes yeux.

## NABAL

Qui peut vous inspirer une haine si forte?  
 Est-ce que de Baal le zèle vous transporte?  
 Pour moi, vous le savez, descendu d'Ismaël,  
 Je ne sers ni Baal, ni le dieu d'Israël.

## MATHAN

Ami, peux-tu penser que d'un zèle frivole  
 Je me laisse aveugler pour une vaine idole,  
 Pour un fragile bois, que malgré mon secours  
 Les vers sur son autel consomment tous les jours?  
 Né ministre du Dieu qu'en ce temple on adore,  
 Peut-être que Mathan le servirait encore,  
 Si l'amour des grandeurs, la soif de commander,  
 Avec son joug étroit pouvaient s'accommoder.  
 Qu'est-il besoin, Nabal, qu'à tes yeux je rappelle  
 De Joad et de moi la fameuse querelle,  
 Quand j'osai contre lui disputer l'encensoir,  
 Mes brigues, mes combats, mes pleurs, mon désespoir?  
 Vaincu par lui, j'entrai dans une autre carrière,  
 Et mon âme à la cour s'attacha toute entière.  
 J'approchai par degrés de l'oreille des rois,  
 Et bientôt en oracle on érigea ma voix.  
 J'étudiai leur cœur, je flattai leurs caprices,  
 Je leur semai de fleurs les bords des précipices.  
 Près de leurs passions rien ne me fut sacré.  
 De mesure et de poids je changeais à leur gré.  
 Autant que de Joad l'inflexible rudesse  
 De leur superbe oreille offensait la mollesse,  
 Autant je les charmais par ma dextérité,  
 Dérobant à leurs yeux la triste vérité,  
 Prêtant à leurs fureurs des couleurs favorables,

Whoever he may be, he'll be their death.  
 They won't surrender him. I'll do the rest  
 And hope that fire and sword will rid my eyes  
 Of all that odious shrine at last.

## NABAL

What can inspire so deep a hate in you?  
 Is it the passion that you feel for Baal?  
 I am from Ishmael's line, as well you know.  
 I do not serve the god of Israel nor Baal.

## MATTAN

You can't suppose, my friend, I'd blind myself  
 With wild zeal for an idol? For a piece  
 Of rotten wood that worms eat every day  
 Upon the shrine, in spite of me? The God  
 Who's worshipped here – I was his minister.  
 I'd still be serving him, perhaps,  
 If love of power, the thirst to be obeyed,  
 Could once have yielded to his narrow yoke.  
 There is no need, Nabal, to tell you of  
 My famous quarrel with Jehoiada, when  
 I dared to fight him for the censer's prize.  
 The intrigues, struggles, tears... and the despair.  
 He won. So I took up another path  
 And gave myself completely to the court.  
 I slowly came to have the ear of kings,  
 And soon my words became an oracle.  
 I read their hearts. I flattered every whim.  
 I sowed the edge of the abyss with flowers.  
 Nothing was sacred but their yearning blood.  
 I changed my principles to suit their taste.  
 Jehoiada's stern austerity  
 Grated upon their proud and honeyed ears  
 While I enthralled them with my skill.  
 I hid the painful truth from all their eyes.  
 I gave their lusts a rosy hue,

Et prodigue surtout du sang des misérables.  
 Enfin au dieu nouveau qu'elle avait introduit  
 Par les mains d'Athalie un temple fut construit.  
 Jérusalem pleura de se voir profanée.  
 Des enfants de Lévi la troupe consternée  
 En poussa vers le ciel des hurlements affreux.  
 Moi seul, donnant l'exemple aux timides Hébreux,  
 Déserteur de leur loi, j'approuvai l'entreprise,  
 Et par là de Baal méritai la prêtrise.  
 Par là je me rendis terrible à mon rival,  
 Je ceignis la tiare, et marchai son égal.  
 Toutefois, je l'avoue, en ce comble de gloire,  
 Du Dieu que j'ai quitté l'importune mémoire  
 Jette encore en mon âme un reste de terreur.  
 Et c'est ce qui redouble et nourrit ma fureur.  
 Heureux! si sur son temple achevant ma vengeance,  
 Je puis convaincre enfin sa haine d'impuissance,  
 Et parmi le débris, le ravage, et les morts,  
 A force d'attentats perdre tous mes remords.  
 Mais voici Josabet.

## SCÈNE 4

*Josabet, Mathan, Nabal*

MATHAN

Envoyé par la reine  
 Pour rétablir le calme et dissiper la haine,  
 Princesse, en qui le ciel mit un esprit si doux,  
 Ne vous étonnez pas si je m'adresse à vous.  
 Un bruit, que j'ai pourtant soupçonné de mensonge,  
 Appuyant les avis qu'elle a reçus en songe,  
 Sur Joad accusé de dangereux complots,  
 Allait de sa colère attirer tous les flots.

Especially their lavish way with victims' blood.  
 At last, Athaliah had a temple built  
 To the new god that she had introduced.  
 Jerusalem wept so to see itself blasphemed.  
 In consternation, Levi's children hurled  
 Such terrifying cries to heaven above.  
 I gave the timorous Jews some guidance, though.  
 I'd left their faith, and I approved the enterprise.  
 And so I earned the right to be Baal's priest.  
 I struck such terror in my rival's heart.  
 I wore a crown, and walked alongside him.  
 But I'll confess...bathed in this glory...yet  
 The haunting memory of the God I've left  
 Still casts a lingering terror on my soul.  
 This is what feeds and stokes the fire in me.  
 My joy will be to wreak revenge upon  
 His shrine and prove his hate has lost its power –  
 Among the wreckage, ravage, and the dead,  
 Lose all remorse by force of violence.  
 I see Jehoshabeath...

*[Jehoshabeath enters.]*

## SCENE 4

*Jehoshabeath, Mattan, Nabal*

MATTAN

The queen has sent me here,  
 To break down hate and re-establish peace.  
 Heaven has given you so sweet a soul,  
 You cannot be surprised I turn to you.  
 Some rumour – I suspect it is a lie –  
 Has backed up warnings she's received in dreams  
 About Jehoiada. He's charged with dangerous plots.  
 The floodtide of her rage is streaming out.

Je ne veux point ici vous vanter mes services.  
 De Joad contre moi je sais les injustices.  
 Mais il faut à l'offense opposer les bienfaits.  
 Enfin je viens chargé de paroles de paix.  
 Vivez, solennisez vos fêtes sans ombrage.  
 De votre obéissance elle ne veut qu'un gage.  
 C'est, pour l'en détourner j'ai fait ce que j'ai pu,  
 Cet enfant sans parents, qu'elle dit qu'elle a vu.

JOSABET

Éliacin!

MATHAN

J'en ai pour elle quelque honte:  
 D'un vain songe peut-être elle fait trop de compte;  
 Mais vous vous déclarez ses mortels ennemis,  
 Si cet enfant sur l'heure en mes mains n'est remis.  
 La reine impatiente attend votre réponse.

JOSABET

Et voilà de sa part la paix qu'on nous annonce!

MATHAN

Pourriez-vous un moment douter de l'accepter?  
 D'un peu de complaisance, est-ce trop l'acheter?

JOSABET

J'admiraïs si Mathan dépouillant l'artifice,  
 Avait pu de son cœur surmonter l'injustice,  
 Et si de tant de maux le funeste inventeur,  
 De quelque ombre de bien pouvait être l'auteur.

MATHAN

I do not want to boast about my services.  
 Jehoiada has not been fair to me.  
 But we must pay back evil acts with good.  
 And so I come to you with words of peace.  
 Live. Celebrate your feastdays as you will.  
 She wants one pledge alone of your obedience.  
 That is – I did my best to put her off –  
 That is the orphan boy she says she saw.

JEHOSHABEATH

Eliacin?

MATTAN

I am ashamed for her.  
 She makes too much, perhaps, of idle dreams.  
 But you'll confirm yourselves as deadly enemies  
 Unless you give this child to me at once.  
 She is impatient, waits for your reply.

JEHOSHABEATH

Is this the peace she sends you to announce?

MATTAN

Accept it. Don't hesitate a moment.  
 A small compliance – is that too high a price?

JEHOSHABEATH

I wondered if you'd shaken off your guile  
 And overcome your innate wickedness –  
 If after doing so much deadly harm,  
 You could create the slightest touch of good.

MATTAN

De quoi vous plaignez-vous? Vient-on avec furie  
 Arracher de vos bras votre fils Zacharie?  
 Quel est cet autre enfant si cher à votre amour?  
 Ce grand attachement me surprend à mon tour.  
 Est-ce un trésor pour vous si précieux, si rare?  
 Est-ce un libérateur que le ciel vous prépare?  
 Songez-y. Vos refus pourraient me confirmer  
 Un bruit sourd que déjà l'on commence à semer.

JOSABET

Quel bruit?

MATHAN

Que cet enfant vient d'illustre origine,  
 Qu'à quelque grand projet votre époux le destine.

JOSABET

Et Mathan par ce bruit qui flatte sa fureur...

MATHAN

Princesse, c'est à vous à me tirer d'erreur.  
 Je sais que du mensonge implacable ennemie,  
 Josabet livrerait même sa propre vie,  
 S'il fallait que sa vie à sa sincérité  
 Coûtât le moindre mot contre la vérité.  
 Du sort de cet enfant on n'a donc nulle trace?  
 Une profonde nuit enveloppe sa race?  
 Et vous-même ignorez de quels parents issu,  
 De quelles mains Joad en ses bras l'a reçu?  
 Parlez, je vous écoute, et suis prêt de vous croire.  
 Au Dieu que vous servez, Princesse, rendez gloire.

JOSABET

Méchant, c'est bien à vous d'oser ainsi nommer

Why the complaining? Do I come in rage  
 To snatch your Zechariah from your arms?  
 Who is this other boy you hold so dear?  
 Such strong attachment makes me curious too.  
 Is he so rare a treasure for you both?  
 The saviour heaven promised you?  
 Think carefully. If you say no, you may confirm  
 A rumour that's already noised abroad.

JEHOSHABEATH

What rumour?

MATTAN

That the boy's of noble birth,  
 And that your husband has great plans for him.

JEHOSHABEATH

And so this rumour's pandered to your rage...

MATTAN

It is for you to show me I am wrong.  
 I know you hate all lies, implacably –  
 That you'd give up your very life  
 If life and honesty would cost  
 A single syllable against the truth.  
 So there's no trace of where the boy comes from?  
 An utter darkness shrouds his birth?  
 You don't know who his parents were? The hands  
 That gave him up into your husband's arms?  
 Speak. I'm listening. I'm ready to believe.  
 Do honour, princess, to the God you serve.

JEHOSHABEATH

You vicious priest. How dare you name a God

Un Dieu que votre bouche enseigne à blasphémer.  
 Sa vérité par vous peut-elle être attestée,  
 Vous, malheureux, assis dans la chaire empestée  
 Où le mensonge règne et répand son poison,  
 Vous, nourri dans la fourbe et dans la trahison?

## SCÈNE 5

*Joad, Josabet, Mathan, Nabal*

JOAD

Où suis-je? De Baal ne vois-je pas le prêtre?  
 Quoi! fille de David, vous parlez à ce traître?  
 Vous souffrez qu'il vous parle? Et vous ne craignez pas  
 Que du fond de l'abîme entr'ouvert sous ses pas,  
 Il ne sorte à l'instant des feux qui vous embrasent,  
 Ou qu'en tombant sur lui ces murs ne vous écrasent?  
 Que veut-il? De quel front cet ennemi de Dieu  
 Vient-il infecter l'air qu'on respire en ce lieu?

MATHAN

On reconnaît Joad à cette violence.  
 Toutefois il devrait montrer plus de prudence,  
 Respecter une reine, et ne pas outrager  
 Celui que de son ordre elle a daigné charger.

JOAD

Eh bien, que nous fait-elle annoncer de sinistre?  
 Quel sera l'ordre affreux qu'apporte un tel ministre?

MATHAN

Whom you have taught your hearers to blaspheme?  
 How could his truth be known through you –  
 Sitting there in a seat of plague  
 Where lying reigns and spreads its poison round –  
 Who've fed on guile and treachery?

*[Jehoiada enters.]*

## SCENE 5

*Jehoiada, Jehoshabeath, Mattan, Nabal*

JEHOIADA

Where am I? No... is that Baal's priest?  
 Jehoshabeath, you're talking to that traitor?  
 You let him speak to you? Aren't you afraid  
 That sheets of flame won't burn you up at once  
 From the deep hell that opens at his feet?  
 That all these walls won't fall and crush you both?  
 What does he want, this enemy of God?  
 Why has he come to foul the air we breathe?

MATTAN

How like Jehoiada all this rage...  
 You ought to show more judgment at the least.  
 You should respect a queen, and not insult  
 The man she's charged with her commands.

JEHOIADA

So then, what evil news does she now send?  
 What ghastly orders do you...priest...bring?

MATTAN

J'ai fait à Josabet savoir sa volonté.

JOAD

Sors donc de devant moi, monstre d'impiété.  
De toutes les horreurs, va, comble la mesure.  
Dieu s'apprête à te joindre à la race parjure,  
Abiron et Dathan, Doëg, Achitophel,  
Les chiens, à qui son bras a livré Jézabel,  
Attendant que sur toi sa fureur se déploie,  
Déjà sont à ta porte et demandent leur proie.

MATHAN [*il se trouble*]

Avant la fin du jour... on verra qui de nous...  
Doit... Mais sortons, Nabal.

NABAL

Où vous égarez-vous?  
De vos sens étonnés, quel désordre s'empare?  
Voilà votre chemin.

## SCÈNE 6

*Joad, Josabet*

JOSABET

L'orage se déclare.  
Athalie en fureur demande Éliacin.  
Déjà de sa naissance et de votre dessein  
On commence, Seigneur, à percer le mystère.  
Peu s'en faut que Mathan ne m'ait nommé son père.

I've told your wife of what the queen has willed.

JEHOIADA

Then get out from my sight, you foul, black thing.  
Let all your horror pour down over us.  
God will now put you in the race of perjurers –  
Abiram, Dathan, Doeg, Achitophel.  
The dogs to whom he threw down Jezebel  
Just wait until his rage descends on you.  
They're at your door now, slaving for their prey.

MATTAN, *troubled*

Before the day has passed...we'll see which one of us  
Will... Let's leave, Nabal.

NABAL

You seem quite lost...  
What wildness stuns your senses now?  
This is the way.

[*They leave.*]

## SCENE 6

*Jehoiada, Jehoshabeath*

JEHOSHABEATH

The storm's about to break.  
Athaliah rages, will have Eliacin.  
Already now, the mystery of his birth  
And all your plans are being brought to light.  
Mattan came close to saying who his father was.

## JOAD

Au perfide Mathan qui l'aurait révélé?  
Votre trouble à Mathan n'a-t-il point trop parlé?

## JOSABET

J'ai fait ce que j'ai pu pour m'en rendre maîtresse.  
Cependant, croyez-moi, Seigneur, le péril presse.  
Réservez cet enfant pour un temps plus heureux.  
Tandis que les méchants délibèrent entre eux,  
Avant qu'on l'environne, avant qu'on nous l'arrache,  
Une seconde fois souffrez que je le cache.  
Les portes, les chemins lui sont encore ouverts.  
Faut-il le transporter aux plus affreux déserts?  
Je suis prête. Je sais une secrète issue  
Par où, sans qu'on le voie, et sans être aperçue,  
De Cédron avec lui traversant le torrent,  
J'irai dans le désert, où jadis en pleurant,  
Et cherchant comme nous son salut dans la fuite,  
David d'un fils rebelle évita la poursuite.  
Je craindrai moins pour lui les lions, et les ours...  
Mais pourquoi de Jéhu refuser le secours?  
Je vous ouvre peut-être un avis salutaire.  
Faisons de ce trésor Jéhu dépositaire.  
On peut dans ses États le conduire aujourd'hui,  
Et le chemin est court qui mène jusqu'à lui.  
Jéhu n'a point un cœur farouche, inexorable,  
De David à ses yeux le nom est favorable.  
Hélas! est-il un roi si dur et si cruel,  
A moins qu'il n'eut pour mère une autre Jézabel,  
Qui d'un tel suppliant ne plaignît l'infortune?  
Sa cause à tous les rois n'est-elle pas commune?

## JOAD

Quels timides conseils m'osez-vous suggérer?  
En l'appui de Jéhu pourriez-vous espérer?

## JEHOIADA

Who could have told that traitor then?  
Did your confusion not reveal too much?

## JEHOSHABEATH

I tried my utmost to remain composed.  
You must believe me, though – the danger's close.  
We must protect the boy for happier times.  
The wicked plot among themselves.  
Before they circle round, snatch him away.  
Let me now hide him for a second time.  
The gates and roads are open to him still.  
Should he taken to the desert wastes?  
I am prepared. I know a secret way –  
We won't be noticed, seen at all –  
We'll cross the torrent Cedron hand in hand  
And reach the desert where king David wept.  
He looked for safety in his flight – like us –  
In order to escape his rebel son.  
And so, I'm less afraid of lions and bears...  
Yet why refuse the help that Jehu gives?  
Let me suggest a useful plan for us.  
Why not make Jehu guardian of the boy?  
He could be taken to his states today.  
The journey there does not take long.  
Jehu's not fierce of heart, inexorable.  
The name of David's pleasing to his ear.  
There could not be so harsh and cruel a king,  
Unless his mother were another Jezebel,  
Who would not pity such a suppliant.  
Is not his cause the cause that all kings share?

## JEHOIADA

What timid counsel dare you offer me?  
You think to place your trust in Jehu's help?



## JOSABET

Dieu défend-il tout soin et toute prévoyance?  
 Ne l'offense-t-on point par trop de confiance?  
 A ses desseins sacrés employant les humains,  
 N'a-t-il pas de Jéhu lui-même armé les mains?

## JOAD

Jéhu, qu'avait choisi sa sagesse profonde,  
 Jéhu, sur qui je vois que votre espoir se fonde,  
 D'un oubli trop ingrat a payé ses bienfaits.  
 Jéhu laisse d'Achab l'affreuse fille en paix,  
 Suit des rois d'Israël les profanes exemples,  
 Du vil dieu de l'Égypte a conservé les temples.  
 Jéhu sur les hauts lieux enfin osant offrir  
 Un téméraire encens que Dieu ne peut souffrir,  
 N'a pour servir sa cause et venger ses injures,  
 Ni le cœur assez droit, ni les mains assez pures.  
 Non, non, c'est à Dieu seul qu'il nous faut attacher.  
 Montrons Éliacin, et loin de le cacher,  
 Que du bandeau royal sa tête soit ornée.  
 Je veux même avancer l'heure déterminée,  
 Avant que de Mathan le complot soit formé.

## SCÈNE 7

*Joad, Josabet, Azarias, suivi du Chœur  
 et de plusieurs Lévites*

## JOAD

Eh bien, Azarias, le temple est-il fermé?

## AZARIAS

## JEHOSHABEATH

Does God forbid all forethought and concern?  
 Don't we offend by so much confidence?  
 He uses humans for his sacred ends.  
 So didn't *he* put arms in Jehu's hands?

## JEHOIADA

Jehu was chosen in God's own wisdom.  
 I see you place your trust in him, but he's  
 Repaid his benefits in cruel forgetfulness.  
 He leaves the feared Athaliah in peace,  
 Follows the godless paths of Israel's kings  
 And leaves the shrines of Egypt's gods untouched.  
 He dares to offer in the highest shrine  
 A blasphemous incense God cannot abide.  
 His heart's not true. His hands aren't pure enough  
 To serve God's cause and take revenge for wrong.  
 No, no. We must hold fast to God alone.  
 We must not hide but show Eliacin,  
 Place on his head the royal diadem.  
 I'll even now advance the destined hour  
 Before Mattan can finalise his plot.

*Azariah enters, followed by the Chorus and several Levites.*

## SCENE 7

*Jehoiada, Jehoshabeath, Azarias*

## JEHOIADA

So, Azariah, is the temple closed?

## AZARIAH

J'en ai fait devant moi fermer toutes les portes.

JOAD

N'y reste-t-il que vous, et vos saintes cohortes?

AZARIAS

De ses parvis sacrés j'ai deux fois fait le tour.  
Tout a fui. Tous se sont séparés sans retour,  
Misérable troupeau qu'a dispersé la crainte,  
Et Dieu n'est plus servi que dans la tribu sainte.  
Depuis qu'à Pharaon ce peuple est échappé,  
Une égale terreur ne l'avait point frappé.

JOAD

Peuple lâche en effet, et né pour l'esclavage,  
Hardi contre Dieu seul! Poursuivons notre ouvrage.  
Mais qui retient encor ces enfants parmi nous?

UNE DES FILLES DU CHŒUR

Hé! pourrions-nous, Seigneur, nous séparer de vous?  
Dans le temple de Dieu sommes-nous étrangères?  
Vous avez près de vous nos pères et nos frères.

UNE AUTRE

Hélas! si pour venger l'opprobre d'Israël,  
Nos mains ne peuvent pas, comme autrefois Jahel,  
Des ennemis de Dieu percer la tête impie,  
Nous lui pouvons du moins immoler notre vie.  
Quand vos bras combattront pour son temple attaqué,  
Par nos larmes du moins il peut être invoqué.

JOAD

I saw the doors locked up myself.

JEHOIADA

The holy priests and you are all who're left?

AZARIAH

I've twice gone round the sacred courts.  
The people all ran off. They won't be back.  
A wretched flock of sheep scattered by fear.  
Only the holy priesthood now serve God.  
Terror like this last struck the Jews  
When they escaped from Pharaoh's hands.

JEHOIADA

A race of cowards indeed, and born for slavery.  
Bold against God alone. Our work, though, must go on.  
And yet these children... who keeps them here?

ONE OF THE MAIDENS OF THE CHORUS

How could we part from you, my Lord? Are we  
Now strangers in the temple of our God?  
Our fathers, brothers – all are at your side.

ANOTHER MAIDEN

If to avenge the shame of Israel,  
Our hands can't pierce, as Jael did of old,  
The wicked hands of all God's enemies,  
We can at least give up our lives to him.  
So when you fight to save his shrine from harm,  
We can at least invoke him with our tears.

JEHOIADA

Voilà donc quels vengeurs s'arment pour ta querelle,  
 Des prêtres, des enfants, ô Sagesse éternelle!  
 Mais si tu les soutiens, qui peut les ébranler?  
 Du tombeau quand tu veux tu sais nous rappeler.  
 Tu frappes, et guéris. Tu perds et ressuscites.  
 Ils ne s'assurent point en leurs propres mérites,  
 Mais en ton nom sur eux invoqué tant de fois  
 En tes serments jurés au plus saint de leurs rois,  
 En ce temple où tu fais ta demeure sacrée,  
 Et qui doit du soleil égaler la durée.  
 Mais d'où vient que mon cœur frémit d'un saint effroi?  
 Est-ce l'Esprit divin qui s'empare de moi?  
 C'est lui-même. Il m'échauffe, il parle. Mes yeux s'ouvrent,  
 Et les siècles obscurs devant moi se découvrent.  
 Lévités, de vos sons prêtez-moi les accords,  
 Et de ses mouvements seconde les transports.

LE CHŒUR [*chante au son de toute la symphonie des instruments*]

Que du Seigneur la voix se fasse entendre,  
 Et qu'à nos cœurs son oracle divin  
 Soit ce qu'à l'herbe tendre  
 Est au printemps la fraîcheur du matin.

JOAD

Cieux, écoutez ma voix. Terre, prête l'oreille.  
 Ne dis plus, ô Jacob, que ton Seigneur sommeille!  
 Pécheurs, disparaissez: le Seigneur se réveille.

[*ici recommence la symphonie, et  
 Joad aussitôt reprend la parole*]

Comment en un plomb vil l'or pur s'est-il changé?  
 Quel est dans le lieu saint ce pontife égorgé?  
 Pleure, Jérusalem, pleure, cité perfide!  
 Des prophètes divins malheureuse homicide.  
 De son amour pour toi ton Dieu s'est dépouillé.  
 Ton encens à ses yeux est un encens souillé.

Wisdom beyond all time... you see the troops  
 Who arm themselves for you? Children and priests.  
 But who will shake them if you're by their side?  
 If you should wish, you could recall us from the tomb.  
 You strike and cure, you kill and bring to life.  
 They cannot be secure in their own worthiness  
 But in your name, invoked so many times,  
 In oaths you swore to their most holy kings,  
 And in this temple where your sacred dwelling is  
 And which will last for ever like the sun.  
 Yet why the holy dread that shakes my heart...?  
 Is this God's spirit seizing me? It is.  
 He makes me warm. He speaks to me. My eyes  
 Now see the unborn centuries unfold.  
 Levites, give me your music's harmonies  
 To voice this movement's ecstasy.

THE CHORUS *sings to the accompaniment of the whole orchestra*

So let the voice of God be heard,  
 And let his holy word upon our hearts  
 Be as the freshness of the dawn  
 Upon new grass in spring.

JEHOIADA

Heaven, hear my voice. Listen, earth.  
 Jacob, no longer say your God sleeps on.  
 Sinners, fly from our sight. The Lord awakes.

*Here the orchestra begins afresh, and Jehoiada at once begins to speak again.*

How is pure gold transformed to common lead?  
 Who is the priest who's killed in this most holy place?  
 Weep, weep, Jerusalem - city of treachery -  
 The tragic murderer of prophets of the Lord.  
 Your God has torn his love for you away.  
 Your incense in his eyes is now obscene.

Où menez-vous ces enfants, et ces femmes?  
 Le Seigneur a détruit la reine des cités.  
 Ses prêtres sont captifs, ses rois sont rejetés.  
 Dieu ne veut plus qu'on vienne à ses solennités.  
 Temple, renverse-toi, cèdres, jetez des flammes.  
 Jérusalem, objet de ma douleur,  
 Quelle main en ce jour t'a ravi tous tes charmes?  
 Qui changera mes yeux en deux sources de larmes  
 Pour pleurer ton malheur?

AZARIAS

O saint temple!

JOSABET

O David!

LE CHŒUR

Dieu de Sion, rappelle,  
 Rappelle en sa faveur tes antiques bontés.

*[la symphonie recommence encore, et  
 Joad un moment après l'interrompt]*

JOAD

Quelle Jérusalem nouvelle  
 Sort du fond du désert brillante de clartés,  
 Et porte sur le front une marque immortelle?  
 Peuples de la terre, chantez.  
 Jérusalem renaît plus charmante, et plus belle.  
 D'où lui viennent de tous côtés  
 Ces enfants qu'en son sein elle n'a point portés?  
 Lève, Jérusalem, lève ta tête altière.  
 Regarde tous ces rois de ta gloire étonnés;  
 Les rois des nations devant toi prosternés,  
 De tes pieds baisent la poussière.

These women, children here – where are they being led?  
 The Lord has lain the queen of cities low:  
 Its kings rejected, and its priests in chains.  
 God now wants no-one at his festivals.  
 Temple, collapse; and cedar tree, spurt flame.  
 I grieve for you, Jerusalem.  
 Whose hands have ravaged all your charm this day?  
 Who'll make my eyes two springs of tears  
 To weep your tragedy?

AZARIAS

Oh holy temple...

JEHOSHABEATH

David...

CHORUS

God of Zion,  
 Recall your ancient kindnesses to it.

*The orchestra begins again. After a moment, Jehoiada  
 interrupts it.*

JEHOIADA

What new Jerusalem arises now  
 From desert wastes, ablaze with light,  
 And bears an everlasting seal upon her brow?  
 Sing, peoples of the earth.  
 Jerusalem is born again more brilliant, lovelier.  
 Where do they come from now on every side,  
 These children whom she did not bear?  
 Lift up, Jerusalem, lift up your head.  
 See all these kings astonished by your fame.  
 The kings of nations now bow down to you  
 And kiss the dust from off your feet.

Les peuples à l'envi marchent à ta lumière.  
 Heureux! qui pour Sion d'une sainte ferveur  
     Sentira son âme embrasée.  
 Cieus, répandez votre rosée,  
 Et que la terre enfante son Sauveur.

JOSABET

Hélas! d'où nous viendra cette insigne faveur,  
 Si les rois de qui doit descendre ce Sauveur...

JOAD

Préparez, Josabet, le riche diadème, .  
 Que sur son front sacré David porta lui-meme.  
 [aux Lévites]  
 Et vous, pour vous armer, suivez-moi dans ces îieux  
 Où se garde caché, loin des profanes yeux,  
 Ce formidable amas de lances et d'épées,  
 Qui du sang philistin jadis furent trempées,  
 Et que David vainqueur, d'ans et d'honneurs chargé,  
 Fit consacrer au Dieu qui l'avait protégé.  
 Peut-on les employer pour un plus noble usage?  
 Venez, je veux moi-même en faire le partage.

## SCÈNE 8

*Salomith, le Chœur*

SALOMITH

Que de craintes, mes sœurs, que de troubles mortels!  
     Dieu tout-puissant, sont-ce là les prémices,  
     Les parfums et les sacrifices  
 Qu'on devait en ce jour offrir sur tes autels?

The nations vie to walk within your light.  
 Happy all those who feel their souls ablaze  
     With Zion's holy zeal.  
 Heaven, now shed your dew, and let the earth  
 Give its redeemer birth.

JEHOSHABEATH

How can this special favour come to us  
 If all the kings from whom the Saviour descends...

JEHOIADA

Jehoshabeath, prepare the diadem  
 That David wore upon his brow.  
*to the Levites*  
 And Levites, now be armed – come, follow me  
 To where lies hidden, far from godless eyes,  
 A fearful arsenal of swords and spears  
 That once were drenched with blood of Philistines.  
 Victorious David, crowned with years,  
 Had consecrated them to God his saviour.  
 Could they be put to nobler use?  
 Come, I'll share the weapons out myself.

*[They all leave apart from Salomith and the Chorus.]*

## SCENE 8

*Salomith, The Chorus*

SALOMITH

This fear, my sisters, all these deathly cries.  
     Are these, almighty God, the first-fruits,  
     The scents and sacrifice  
 That should be placed upon your shrine today?

## UNE FILLE DU CHŒUR

Quel spectacle à nos yeux timides!  
 Qui l'eût cru, qu'on dût voir jamais  
 Les glaives meurtriers, les lances homicides,  
 Briller dans la maison de paix?

## UNE AUTRE

D'où vient que, pour son Dieu pleine d'indifférence,  
 Jérusalem se tait en ce pressant danger?  
 D'où vient, mes sœurs, que pour nous protéger,  
 Le brave Abner au moins ne rompt pas le silence?

## SALOMITH

Hélas! dans une cour, où l'on n'a d'autres lois  
 Que la force et la violence,  
 Où les honneurs et les emplois  
 Sont le prix d'une aveugle et basse obéissance,  
 Ma sœur, pour la triste innocence,  
 Qui voudrait élever la voix?

## UNE AUTRE

Dans ce péril, dans ce désordre extrême,  
 Pour qui prépare-t-on le sacré diadème?

## SALOMITH

Le Seigneur a daigné parler,  
 Mais ce qu'à son prophète il vient de révéler,  
 Qui pourra nous le faire entendre?  
 S'arme-t-il pour nous défendre?  
 S'arme-t-il pour nous accabler?

## TOUT LE CHŒUR CHANTE

## ONE OF THE MAIDENS OF THE CHORUS

This is an awful sight for guiltless eyes.  
 Who would have thought that we would ever see  
 Such deadly swords and murderous spears  
 Gleam brilliant in this house of peace?

## ANOTHER MAIDEN

Now all these dangers press, how can Jerusalem  
 Stay silent, indifferent to its God?  
 Sisters, why at least, to guard us all,  
 Does Abner fail to speak? He has great heart.

## SALOMITH

In courts that have no other laws  
 But force and violence,  
 Office and honours are  
 The prize for blind and crawling deference.  
 Sisters, who will speak up  
 For mourning innocence?

## ANOTHER MAIDEN

In this danger – all this turmoil –  
 For whom do they prepare the sacred diadem?

## SALOMITH

The Lord has deigned to speak.  
 But to his prophet what has he revealed  
 Who can explain to us?  
 Does he now arm to shield us all?  
 Or does he arm to crush us down?

THE WHOLE CHORUS *sings*

O promesse! ô menace! ô ténébreux mystère!  
 Que de maux, que de biens sont prédits tour à tour!  
 Comment peut-on avec tant de colère  
 Accorder tant d'amour?

UNE VOIX [*seule*]

Sion ne sera plus. Une flamme cruelle  
 Détruira tous ses ornements.

UNE AUTRE VOIX

Dieu protège Sion. Elle a pour fondements,  
 Sa parole éternelle.

LA PREMIÈRE

Je vois tout son éclat disparaître à mes yeux.

LA SECONDE

Je vois de toutes parts sa clarté répandue.

LA PREMIÈRE

Dans un gouffre profond Sion est descendue.

LA SECONDE

Sion a son front dans les cieux.

LA PREMIÈRE

Quel triste abaissement!

LA SECONDE

Quelle immortelle gloire!

Both promises and threats. The darkest mystery.  
 The ills and blessing prophesied in turn.  
 How can such rage be reconciled  
 With so much love?

A SINGLE VOICE

Zion will be no more. A cruel fire  
 Will burn its beauties to the ground.

ANOTHER VOICE

Zion God will protect. It rests so deeply now  
 Upon his everlasting word.

THE FIRST VOICE

I see its brilliance fade before my eyes.

THE SECOND VOICE

I see its light spread everywhere.

THE FIRST VOICE

Zion now plunges down a bottomless pit.

THE SECOND VOICE

The head of Zion towers up to the skies.

THE FIRST VOICE

The depth of her disgrace.

THE SECOND VOICE

A glory without end.

## LA PREMIÈRE

Que de cris de douleur!

## LA SECONDE

Que de chants de victoire!

## UNE TROISIÈME

Cessons de nous troubler. Notre Dieu quelque jour  
Dévoilera ce grand mystère.

## TOUTES TROIS

Révérans sa colère;  
Espérons en son amour.

## UNE AUTRE

D'un cœur qui t'aime,  
Mon Dieu, qui peut troubler la paix?  
Il cherche en tout ta volonté suprême,  
Et ne se cherche jamais.  
Sur la terre, dans le ciel même,  
Est-il d'autre bonheur que la tranquille paix  
D'un cœur qui t'aime?

## THE FIRST VOICE

Those cries of agony.

## THE SECOND VOICE

Those songs of victory.

## A THIRD VOICE

We should not be disturbed. One day, our God  
Will tear aside the veil of this great mystery.

## ALL THREE VOICES

We must revere his wrath,  
And trust his love.

## ANOTHER VOICE

My God, who can disturb the peace  
Of one whose heart is turned to you?  
It seeks your highest will in everything  
And never seeks itself.  
On earth, in heaven itself,  
Can any joy surpass that sweetest peace  
Of hearts that love the Lord?

*[Salomith and the Chorus remain as Joash, Jehoshabeath,  
Zechariah and a Levite enter.]*



## ACTE 4 SCÈNE 1

*Joas, Josabet, Zacharie, Salomith, un Lévite, le Chœur*

SALOMITH

D'un pas majestueux, à côté de ma mère,  
Le jeune Éliacin s'avance avec mon frère.  
Dans ces voiles, mes sœurs, que portent-ils tous deux?  
Quel est ce glaive enfin qui marche devant eux?

JOSABET [*à Zaharie*]

Mon fils, avec respect posez sur cette table  
De notre sainte loi le livre redoutable.  
Et vous aussi posez, aimable Éliacin,  
Cet auguste bandeau près du livre divin.  
Levite, il faut placer, Joad ainsi l'ordonne,  
Le glaive de David auprès de sa couronne.

JOAS

Princesse, quel est donc ce spectacle nouveau?  
Pourquoi ce livre saint, ce glaive, ce bandeau?  
Depuis que le Seigneur m'a reçu dans son temple,  
D'un semblable appareil je n'ai point vu d'exemple.

JOSABET

Tous vos doutes mon fils, bientôt s'éclairciront.

JOAS

Vous voulez essayer ce bandeau sur mon front?  
Ah! Princesse, gardez d'en profaner la gloire.  
Du roi qui l'a porté respectez la mémoire.  
Un malheureux enfant aux ours abandonné...

## ACT 4 SCENE 1

*Joash, Jehoshabeath, Zechariah, Salomith, A Levite, The Chorus*

SALOMITH

Here comes Eliacin – my brother too.  
He walks majestically, my mother by his side.  
What do they carry, sisters, in those veils?  
What is the sword that's borne in front of them?

JEHOSHABEATH, *to Zechariah*

My son, place on this table carefully  
The dreaded book of all our holy law.  
And you too, dear Eliacin, place by  
The sacred book this wondrous diadem.  
Levite, Jehoiada orders you to put  
The sword of David there beside his crown.

JOASH

Princess, this spectacle...it's strange to me.  
Why bring the holy book, the sword, the diadem?  
Since God received me in his temple here,  
I've never seen a scene like this.

JEHOSHABEATH

My son, your doubts will soon be cleared away.

JOASH

You want to try this diadem upon my head?  
Take care we don't profane its holiness.  
We must respect the king who wore it once,  
That little boy they gave up to the bears...

JOSABET [*lui essayant le diadème*]

Laissez, mon fils, je fais ce qui m'est ordonné.

JOAS

Mais j'entends les sanglots sortir de votre bouche!  
Princesse, vous pleurez! Quelle pitié vous touche?  
Est-ce qu'en holocauste aujourd'hui présenté,  
Je dois, comme autrefois la fille de Jephté,  
Du Seigneur par ma mort apaiser la colère?  
Hélas! Un fils n'a rien qui ne soit à son père.

JOSABET

Voici qui vous dira les volontés des cieux.  
Ne craignez rien. Et nous, sortons tous de ces lieux.

## SCÈNE 2

*Joad, Joas*

JOAS [*courant dans les bras du grand-prêtre*]

Mon père!

JOAD

Eh bien, mon fils?

JOAS

Qu'est-ce donc qu'on prépare?

JOAD

JEHOSHABEATH, *trying the diadem on him*

Let me, my son. I must do what I'm told.

JOASH

There's sobbing in your voice, though. I can tell.  
You're crying, yes. What is it moves you so?  
Is it because I'm like a sacrifice today?  
Like Jephthah's daughter, all dressed up  
To quell God's rage by my own death?  
A father can demand the world from his own son.

JEHOSHABEATH

Here is the man who'll tell you heaven's will.  
Don't be afraid. The rest of us will go.

*[All leave apart from Joash, as Jehoiada enters.]*

## SCENE 2

*Joash, Jehoiada*

JOASH, *running to the high-priest's arms*

Father.

JEHOIADA

And so, my son?

JOASH

What is all this?

JEHOIADA

Il est juste, mon fils, que je vous le déclare.  
 Il faut que vous soyez instruit, même avant tous,  
 Des grands desseins de Dieu sur son peuple et sur vous.  
 Armez-vous d'un courage et d'une foi nouvelle.  
 Il est temps de montrer cette ardeur et ce zèle,  
 Qu'au fond de votre cœur mes soins ont cultivés,  
 Et de payer à Dieu ce que vous lui devez.  
 Sentez-vous cette noble et généreuse envie?

JOAS

Je me sens prêt, s'il veut, de lui donner ma vie.

JOAD

On vous a lu souvent l'histoire de nos rois.  
 Vous souvient-il mon fils, quelles étroites lois  
 Doit s'imposer un roi digne du diadème?

JOAS

Un roi sage, ainsi Dieu l'a prononcé lui-même,  
 Sur la richesse et l'or ne met point son appui,  
 Craint le Seigneur son Dieu, sans cesse a devant lui  
 Ses préceptes, ses lois, ses jugements sévères,  
 Et d'injustes fardeaux n'accable point ses frères.

JOAD

Mais, sur l'un de ces rois s'il fallait vous régler,  
 A qui choisirez-vous, mon fils, de ressembler?

JOAS

David, pour le Seigneur plein d'un amour fidèle,  
 Me paraît des grands rois le plus parfait modèle.

JOAD

It's only right, my son, that I should say.  
 You must be told, before them all,  
 Of God's great plan for you and for his race.  
 You must be armed with courage and new faith.  
 Now is the time to show that burning zeal  
 I've taken care to plant deep in your heart,  
 And pay to God all that you owe to him.  
 So do you feel such generous desire?

JOASH

I'm ready, if he wants, to give my life.

JEHOIADA

You've often heard the story of our kings.  
 Do you recall, my son, to what strict laws  
 A king fit to be crowned must hold himself?

JOASH

A king who's wise – so God himself has said –  
 Does not rely on riches or on gold.  
 He fears the Lord his God; and keeps in front of him  
 His precepts, sternest judgments, and his laws.  
 He doesn't weigh his brothers down with unjust loads.

JEHOIADA

But if you had to mould yourself on one  
 Of them, who would you choose to be like most?

JOASH

David was full of faithful love for God.  
 He seems the best example of a king.

JEHOIADA

Ainsi dans leurs excès vous n'imiterez pas  
L'infidèle Joram, l'impie Ochosias?

JOAS

O mon père!

JOAD

Achevez, dites, que vous en semble?

JOAS

Puisse périr comme eux quiconque leur ressemble.  
Mon père, en quel état vous vois-je devant moi?

JOAD [*se prosternant à ses pieds*]

Je vous rends le respect que je dois à mon roi.  
De votre aïeul David, Joas, rendez-vous digne.

JOAS

Joas? Moi?

JOAD

Vous saurez par quelle grâce insigne,  
D'une mère en fureur Dieu trompant le dessein,  
Quand déjà son poignard était dans votre sein,  
Vous choisit, vous sauva du milieu du carnage.  
Vous n'êtes pas encore échappé de sa rage.  
Avec la même ardeur qu'elle voulut jadis  
Perdre en vous le dernier des enfants de son fils,  
A vous faire périr sa cruauté s'attache,  
Et vous poursuit encor sous le nom qui vous cache.  
Mais sous vos étendards j'ai déjà su ranger  
Un peuple obéissant et prompt à vous venger.

And so you would not follow faithlessness  
And evil then, like Joram, Ahaziah...?

JOASH

Father...

JEHOIADA

Go on. Say what you feel.

JOASH

Whoever is like them should lose his life.  
Father, why do you fall before my feet?

JEHOIADA [*throwing himself at Joash's feet*]

This is the reverence I owe my king.  
Be worthy of David, your forefather.

JOASH

Me?

JEHOIADA

You'll learn by what a special grace  
God thwarted mad Athaliah's design.  
Her dagger was already in your heart,  
But he chose you, and rescued you from death.  
You haven't yet escaped her rage.  
With the same passion that she tried to kill  
Her son's last child in you, she cruelly  
Stays obsessed that you shall die. She still  
Pursues you now, despite your altered name.  
Under your banner, though, I have drawn up  
A faithful people ready for revenge.

Entrez, généreux chefs des familles sacrées,  
Du ministère saint tour à tour honorées.

## SCÈNE 3

*Joas, Joad, Azaries, Ismael,  
et les trois autres chefs des Lévites*

JOAD [*continue*]

Roi, voilà vos vengeurs contre vos ennemis.  
Prêtres, voilà le roi que je vous ai promis.

AZARIAS

Quoi, c'est Éliacin?

ISMAEL

Quoi, cet enfant aimable...

JOAD

Est des rois de Juda l'héritier véritable,  
Dernier né des enfants du triste Ochosias,  
Nourri, vous le savez, sous le nom de Joas.  
De cette fleur si tendre et sitôt moissonnée,  
Tout Juda, comme vous, plaignant la destinée,  
Avec ses frères morts le crut enveloppé.  
Du perfide couteau comme eux il fut frappé.  
Mais Dieu d'un coup mortel sut détourner l'atteinte,  
Conserva dans son cœur la chaleur presque éteinte,  
Permit que des bourreaux trompant l'œil vigilant,  
Josabet dans son sein l'emportât tout sanglant,  
Et n'ayant de son vol que moi seul pour complice,

Heads of the sacred families, who hold  
The holy ministry in turn, come forward now.

*[Azariah, Ishmael, and the three other chiefs of the Levites, enter.]*

## SCENE 3

*Joash, Jehoiada, Azarias, Ishmael,  
and the three other chiefs of the Levites*

JEHOIADA

These will avenge you on your enemies.  
Priests, here is the king I promised you.

AZARIAH

Eliacin?

ISHMAEL

This lovely child...?

JEHOIADA

...Is the true heir of all of Judah's kings,  
The last-born child of sad Ahaziah,  
Brought up as Joash, as you know.  
All Judah mourned like you the fate  
Of this frail flower cut down so soon.  
You thought that he had shared his brothers' deaths.  
A traitor's knife struck him like them,  
But God then warded off the deadly blow  
And kept a trace of warmth still in his heart.  
He let my wife elude the murderers,  
Carry him off all bleeding on her breast.  
I was accomplice to the theft alone

Dans le temple cachât l'enfant et la nourrice,

JOAS

Hélas! de tant d'amour et de tant de bienfaits,  
Mon père, quel moyen de m'acquitter jamais?

JOAD

Gardez pour d'autres temps cette reconnaissance.  
Voilà donc votre roi, votre unique espérance.  
J'ai pris soin jusqu'ici de vous le conserver,  
Ministres du Seigneur, c'est à vous d'achever.  
Bientôt de Jézabel la fille meurtrière  
Instruite que Joas voit encor la lumière,  
Dans l'horreur du tombeau viendra le replonger.  
Déjà sans le connaître elle veut l'égorger.  
Prêtres saints, c'est à vous de prévenir sa rage.  
Il faut finir des Juifs le honteux esclavage,  
Venger vos princes morts, relever votre loi,  
Et faire aux deux tribus reconnaître leur roi.  
L'entreprise sans doute est grande et périlleuse.  
J'attaque sur son trône une reine orgueilleuse,  
Qui voit sous ses drapeaux marcher un camp nombreux  
De hardis étrangers, d'infidèles Hébreux.  
Mais ma force est au Dieu dont l'intérêt me guide.  
Songez qu'en cet enfant tout Israël réside.  
Déjà ce Dieu vengeur commence à la troubler.  
Déjà trompant ses soins j'ai su vous rassembler.  
Elle nous croit ici sans armes, sans défense.  
Couronnons, proclamons Joas en diligence.  
De là, du nouveau prince intrépides soldats,  
Marchons en invoquant l'arbitre des combats,  
Et réveillant la foi dans les cœurs endormie,  
Jusque dans son palais cherchons notre ennemie.  
Et quels cœurs si plongés dans un lâche sommeil,  
Nous voyant avancer dans ce saint appareil,  
Ne s'empresseront pas à suivre notre exemple?  
Un roi que Dieu lui-même a nourri dans son temple,

And in the temple hid both nurse and child.

JOASH

Father, how can I ever pay you back  
For so much love, so many benefits?

JEHOIADA

Keep all your thanks now for another time.  
Here then is your new king, your only hope.  
I've carefully protected him for you till now.  
The last act is for you, the ministers of God.  
Quite soon, the murderous queen Athaliah  
Will learn that Joash here is still alive.  
She'll come to plunge him back into the tomb.  
Already now, not knowing him, she wants his throat.  
God's holy priests, you must forestall her rage.  
The shameful slavery of the Jews must end.  
Avenge your princes' deaths, restore your law,  
And force both tribes to recognise their king.  
No doubt, the task is great and perilous.  
I now attack a puffed up queen upon her throne.  
Beneath her banners march a countless horde  
Of brazen foreigners and turncoat Jews.  
But God is all my strength. His interest, my guide.  
Remember. In this child all Israel lives.  
Already our avenging God begins  
To trouble her. I've brought you here in spite of her.  
She thinks we have no arms, and no defence.  
Let us proclaim and crown young Joash now.  
Then, valiant soldiers of our new-found prince,  
Let's march and call upon the Lord of Battles' name.  
Let's kindle faith again in slumbering hearts,  
And in her palace seek our enemy.  
What hearts so plunged in cowardly sleep  
Will see us march out in this holy band  
And not run up at once to follow us?  
A king raised in his shrine by God himself,

Le successeur d'Aaron de ses prêtres suivi,  
 Conduisant au combat les enfants de Lévi  
 Et dans ces mêmes mains des peuples révérees,  
 Les armes au Seigneur par David consacrées!  
 Dieu sur ses ennemies répandra sa terreur.  
 Dans l'infidèle sang baignez-vous sans horreur.  
 Frappez et Tyriens, et même Israélites.  
 Ne descendez-vous pas de ces fameux lévites  
 Qui, lorsque au dieu du Nil le volage Israël  
 Rendit dans le désert un culte criminel,  
 De leurs plus chers parents saintement homicides,  
 Consacrèrent leurs mains dans le sang des perfides,  
 Et par ce noble exploit vous acquirent l'honneur  
 D'être seuls employés aux autels du Seigneur?  
 Mais je vois que déjà vous brûlez de me suivre.  
 Jurez donc, avant tout, sur cet auguste livre,  
 A ce roi que le ciel vous redonne aujourd'hui,  
 De vivre, de combattre, et de mourir pour lui.

## AZARIAS

Oui, nous jurons ici pour nous, pour tous nos frères,  
 De rétablir Joas au trône de ses pères,  
 De ne poser le fer entre nos mains remis,  
 Qu'après l'avoir vengé de tous ses ennemis.  
 Si quelque transgresseur enfreint cette promesse,  
 Qu'il éprouve, grand Dieu, ta fureur vengeresse:  
 Qu'avec lui, ses enfants de ton partage exclus,  
 Soient au rang de ces morts que tu ne connais plus!

## JOAD

Et vous à cette loi, votre règle éternelle,  
 Roi, ne jurez-vous pas d'être toujours fidèle?

## JOAS

Pourrais-je à cette loi ne pas me conformer?

Aaron's successor, followed by his priests,  
 Leading the sons of Levi on to war,  
 And in their hands, the arms revered by all  
 That David consecrated to the Lord.  
 God will spread terror on his enemies.  
 Bathe bravely in the blood of infidels.  
 Strike at the Tyrians, even the Israelites.  
 Are not your forebears those famed Levites who,  
 While fickle Israel in the wilderness  
 Worshipped the Nile's own god so sinfully,  
 Murdered their dearest family in holy zeal  
 And sanctified their hands in traitors' blood?  
 By such a noble act, they won for you the right  
 To serve the altars of the Lord alone.  
 Yet even now, I see, you burn to follow me.  
 Then swear upon this holy book, before all else,  
 To this young king whom God today gives back  
 To you – to live and fight and die for him.

## AZARIAH

We swear for all our brothers and ourselves  
 To set King Joash on his fathers' throne  
 And not lay down the arms that we now bear  
 Until he's been revenged on all his enemies.  
 If anyone should fail to keep this pledge,  
 Let him, great God, feel your avenging wrath.  
 Let him, his children, lose their heritage,  
 Be like the dead whom you no longer know.

## JEHOIADA

And you, my king, will swear your constant faith  
 To this great law, your everlasting rule?

## JOASH

How could I not be guided by that law?

## JOAD

O mon fils, de ce nom j'ose encor vous nommer,  
 Souffrez cette tendresse, et pardonnez aux larmes  
 Que m'arrachent pour vous de trop justes alarmes.  
 Loin du trône nourri, de ce fatal honneur,  
 Hélas! vous ignorEz le charme empoisonneur.  
 De l'absolu pouvoir vous ignorez l'ivresse,  
 Et des lâches flatteurs la voix enchanteresse.  
 Bientôt ils vous diront que les plus saintes lois,  
 Maîtresses du vil peuple obéissent aux rois;  
 Qu'un roi n'a d'autre frein que sa volonté même;  
 Qu'il doit immoler tout à sa grandeur suprême;  
 Qu'aux larmes, au travail le peuple est condamné,  
 Et d'un sceptre de fer veut être gouverné;  
 Que s'il n'est opprimé, tôt ou tard il opprime.  
 Ainsi de piège en piège et d'abîme en abîme,  
 Corrompant de vos mœurs l'aimable pureté,  
 Ils vous feront enfin haïr la vérité,  
 Vous peindront la vertu sous une affreuse image.  
 Hélas! ils ont des rois égaré le plus sage.  
 Promettez sur ce livre et devant ces témoins,  
 Que Dieu fera toujours le premier de vos soins,  
 Que, sévère aux méchants, et des bons le refuge,  
 Entre le pauvre et vous vous prendrez Dieu pour juge;  
 Vous souvenant, mon fils, que caché sous ce lin,  
 Comme eux vous fûtes pauvre, et comme eux orphelin.

## JOAS

Je promets d'observer ce que la loi m'ordonne.  
 Mon Dieu, punissez-moi, si je vous abandonne.

## JOAD

Venez, de l'huile sainte il faut vous consacrer.  
 Paraissez, Josabet, vous pouvez vous montrer.

## JEHOIADA

My son – I still dare call you by that name –  
 Bear with my tenderness. Forgive the tears  
 That my just cares for you force from me now.  
 You've been brought up far from the throne. You do not know  
 The poisoning magic of its deadly spell.  
 How boundless power intoxicates, or how  
 The soothing voice of flatterers beguiles.  
 Soon they will tell you that the holiest laws,  
 Which rule the common throng, must bow to kings.  
 That kings are held back only by their will,  
 That to their greatness everything must yield,  
 That people are condemned to tears and toil  
 And must be governed by a rod of iron.  
 If not held down, they will themselves oppress.  
 And so from snare to snare, from pit to pit,  
 They'll foul the lovely pureness of your ways;  
 They'll paint you goodness with a hideous face  
 And in the end will make you hate the truth.  
 The best of kings have been depraved by them.  
 Swear on this book, before these witnesses,  
 That God will always be your first concern;  
 That you will scourge the wicked and protect the good,  
 That you'll take God as judge between the poor and you.  
 Remember once that in this linen coat,  
 Like them, you were an orphan – like them, poor.

## JOASH

I swear to follow what the law commands.  
 Punish me, God, if I abandon you.

## JEHOIADA

You must be hallowed now with holy oil.  
 Come in, Jehoshabeath. You may appear.

*[Jehoshabeath and Zeachariah enter, together with Salomith  
 and the Chorus]*



## SCÈNE 4

*Joas, Joad, Josabet, Zacharie,  
Azarias, etc., Salomith, le Chœur*

JOSABET [*embrassant Joas*]

O Roi, fils de David!

JOAS

O mon unique mère!  
Venez, cher Zacharie, embrasser votre frère.

JOSABET [*à Zacharie*]

Aux pieds de votre roi prosternez-vous, mon fils.

JOAD [*pendant qu'ils s'embrassent*]

Enfants, ainsi toujours puissiez-vous être unis!

JOSABET [*à Joas*]

Vous savez donc quel sang vous a donné la vie?

JOAS

Et je sais quelle main sans vous me l'eût ravie.

JOSABET

De votre nom, Joas, je puis donc vous nommer.

JOAS

## SCENE 4

*Joash, Jehoiada, Jehoshabeath, Zechariah, Salomith, Azarias, Ishmael, the  
three other chief of the Levites, The Chorus*

JEHOSHABEATH, *embracing Joash*

My king. The son of David.

JOASH

You are my mother then...  
Embrace your brother, Zechariah. Come.

JEHOSHABEATH, *to Zechariah*

My son, bow down before your new king now.

JEHOIADA, *while they embrace*

My children, may you always be as one.

JEHOSHABEATH, *to Joash*

So do you know the blood that gave you life?

JOASH

And who too would have killed me but for you.

JEHOSHABEATH

Then I can call you, Joash, by your name.

JOASH

Joas ne cessera jamais de vous aimer.

LE CHŒUR

Quoi, c'est la...

JOSABET

C'est Joas.

JOAD

Écoutons ce lévite

## SCÈNE 5

*Joas, Josabet, Joad etc. Un Lévite*

UN LÉVITE

J'ignore contre Dieu quel projet on médite,  
Mais l'airain menaçant frémit de toutes parts.  
On voit luire des feux parmi des étendards.  
Et sans doute Athalie assemble son armée.  
Déjà même au secours toute voie est fermée.  
Déjà le sacré mont où le temple est bâti  
D'insolents Tyriens est partout investi.  
L'un d'eux en blasphémant, vient de nous faire entendre  
Qu'Abner est dans les fers, et ne peut nous défendre.

JOSABET [à Joas]

Cher enfant, que le ciel en vain m'avait rendu,  
Hélas! pour vous sauver j'ai fait ce que j'ai pu.  
Dieu ne se souvient plus de David votre père.

I'll never stop from loving you.

THE CHORUS

What's that?

JEHOSHABEATH

Joash.

JEHOIADA

A Levite. Quick. Report.

*[A Levite enters.]*

## SCENE 5

*Joash, Jehoiada, Jehoshabeath, etc., a Levite*

A LEVITE

There is some plot against the Lord – I don't know what –  
But threatening bronze blares out on every side.  
Amid the banners burn the glow of fires.  
I'm sure Athaliah has drawn her army up.  
All paths to help have been already closed.  
The sacred hill on which the temple stands  
Is now besieged by sneering Tyrians.  
One cursed our God and said that Abner now  
Is held in chains. He cannot help us now.

JEHOSHABEATH, *to Joash*

Dear son, God gave you back to me in vain.  
I have done all I could to save your life.  
God has forgotten your father, David.

JOAD [*à Josabet*]

Quoi! vous ne craignez pas d'attirer sa colère  
 Sur vous et sur ce roi si cher à votre amour?  
 Et quand Dieu de vos bras l'arrachant sans retour,  
 Voudrait que de David la maison fût éteinte;  
 N'êtes-vous pas ici sur la montagne sainte,  
 Où le père des Juifs sur son fils innocent  
 Leva sans murmurer un bras obéissant,  
 Et mit sur un bûcher ce fruit de sa vieillesse,  
 Laissant à Dieu le soin d'accomplir sa promesse,  
 Et lui sacrifiant avec ce fils aimé,  
 Tout l'espoir de sa race en lui seul renfermé?  
 Amis, partageons-nous. Qu'Ismaël en sa garde,  
 Prenne tout le côté que l'orient regarde.  
 Vous, le côté de l'ourse, et vous, de l'occident.  
 Vous, le midi. Qu'aucun par un zèle imprudent,  
 Découvrant mes desseins, soit pretre, soit lévite,  
 Ne sorte avant le temps et ne se précipite,  
 Et que chacun enfin d'un même esprit poussé,  
 Garde en mourant le poste où je l'aurai placé.  
 L'ennemi nous regarde en son aveugle rage  
 Comme de vils troupeaux réservés au carnage,  
 Et croit ne rencontrer que désordre et qu'effroi.  
 Qu'Azarias partout accompagne le roi.  
 [*à Joas*] Venez, cher rejeton d'une vaillante race,  
 Remplir vos défenseurs d'une nouvelle audace.  
 Venez du diadème à leurs yeux vous couvrir,  
 Et périssez du moins en roi, s'il faut périr.  
 Suivez-le, Josabet.

[*à un lévite*] Vous, donnez-moi ces armes.  
 Enfants, offrez à Dieu vos innocentes larmes.

SCÈNE 6

JEHOIADA, *to Jehoshabeath*

Aren't you afraid to draw his anger down  
 On you, and on this king so dear to you?  
 Even if God took him for ever from your arms  
 And willed the overthrow of David's house,  
 Aren't we now standing on the sacred heights  
 Where Abraham raised up his steadfast hands  
 Above his guiltless son without complaint.  
 He laid the fruit of his old age upon the pyre,  
 Let it to God to keep his promises.  
 In this loved son, he sacrificed to him  
 The last surviving hope of his own line.  
 Friends, we must split up. Ishmael, you guard  
 The whole side facing to the east.  
 You, take the north. And you the west. You guard  
 The south. And no-one now in careless haste  
 Reveals my plan, Levite or priest.  
 You must not rush out before it's time.  
 Each man must be moved by the one same mind,  
 Guard to the death the place I've given him.  
 The enemy is watching us in blinding rage,  
 Like some poor cattle waiting to be killed.  
 They think they'll find us fearful and confused.  
 Azariah, stay close to Joash constantly.  
 [*to Joash*] Joash, you are the heir of this brave race.  
 Fill with new daring those defending you.  
 Put on your diadem before their eyes.  
 Die as a king at least, if you must die.  
 Stay with him, Jehoshabeath.  
 [*to a Levite*]

Levite, give me those arms.  
 Children, offer to God your guiltless tears.

[*All leave apart from Salomith and the Chorus.*]

SCENE 6

*Salomith, le Chœur*TOUT LE CHŒUR [*chante*]

Partez, enfants d'Aaron, partez.  
 Jamais plus illustre querelle  
 De vos aïeux n'arma le zèle.  
 Partez, enfants d'Aaron, partez.  
 C'est votre roi, c'est Dieu, pour qui vous combattez.

UNE VOIX [*seule*]

Où sont les traits que tu lances,  
 Grand Dieu, dans ton juste courroux?  
 N'es-tu plus le Dieu jaloux?  
 N'es-tu plus le Dieu des vengeances?

## UNE AUTRE

Où sont, Dieu de Jacob, tes antiques bontés?  
 Dans l'horreur qui nous environne,  
 N'entends-tu que la voix de nos iniquités?  
 N'es-tu plus le Dieu qui pardonne?

## TOUT LE CHŒUR

Où sont, Dieu de Jacob, tes antiques bontés?

UNE VOIX [*seule*]

C'est à toi que dans cette guerre  
 Les flèches des méchants prétendent s'adresser.  
 Faisons, disent-ils, cesser  
 Les fêtes de Dieu sur la terre;  
 De son joug importun délivrons les mortels.  
 Massacrions tous ses saints. Renversons ses autels.  
 Que de son nom, que de sa gloire  
 Il ne reste plus de mémoire;

*Salomith, The Chorus*WHOLE CHORUS *sings*

Sons of Aaron, go forth now.  
 A greater cause has never  
 Steeled your forebears' zeal.  
 Sons of Aaron, go forth now.  
 It is your king, your God, for whom you fight.

FIRST VOICE *alone*

Where are the thunderbolts you hurl,  
 Great God, in your just wrath?  
 Are you a jealous God no more?  
 No more the God of vengeances?

## ANOTHER VOICE

Where, God of Jacob, is your kindness shown of old?  
 In all the horror round us now,  
 Do you hear nothing but the sound of sin?  
 Are you no more a God who pardons us?

## WHOLE CHORUS

Where, God of Jacob, is your kindness shown of old?

ANOTHER VOICE, *alone*

It is at you that, in this war,  
 The arrows of the wicked aim.  
 'Let us now end', they say,  
 'God's festivals on earth.  
 Let us deliver humans from his weary yoke,  
 Slaughter his saints, smash down his shrines,  
 And of his name and glory,  
 Blot out all trace,

Que ni lui, ni son Christ ne règnent plus sur nous.

#### TOUT LE CHŒUR

Où sont les traits que tu lanées,  
Grand Dieu, dans ton juste courroux?  
N'es-tu plus le Dieu jaloux?  
N'es-tu plus le Dieu des vengeances?

#### UNE VOIX [*seule*]

Triste reste de nos rois,  
Chère et dernière fleur d'une tige si belle,  
Hélas! sous le couteau d'une mère cruelle  
Te verrons-nous tomber une seconde fois?  
Prince aimable, dis-nous si quelque ange au berceau  
Contre tes assassins prit soin de te défendre;  
Ou si dans la nuit du tombeau  
La voix du Dieu vivant a ranimé ta cendre.

#### UNE AUTRE

D'un père et d'un aïeul contre toi révoltés,  
Grand Dieu, les attentats lui sont-ils imputés?  
Est-ce que sans retour ta pitié l'abandonne?

#### LE CHŒUR

Où sont, Dieu de Jacob, tes antiques bontés?  
N'es-tu plus le Dieu qui pardonne?

#### UNE DES FILLES DE CHŒUR [*sans chanter*]

Chères sœurs, n'entendez-vous pas  
Des cruels Tyriens la trompette qui sonne?

#### SALOMITH

J'entends même les cris des barbares soldats,

That neither he nor Christ reign over us'.

#### WHOLE CHORUS

Where are the thunderbolts you hurl,  
Great God, in your just wrath?  
Are you a jealous God no more?  
No more the God of vengeances?

#### A VOICE, *alone*

Sad heir of all our kings,  
The last dear blossom of so fair a stem.  
Are we to see you fall a second time  
Beneath a cruel mother's knife?  
Tell us, sweet prince, was there some angel at your crib  
Who cared to save you from your murderers?  
Or in the darkness of the tomb,  
Did God's own living voice bring back your life?

#### ANOTHER VOICE

His father's and his forebears' sins – great God,  
Must their revolt be visited on him?  
So has your mercy left him now for ever more?

#### CHORUS

Where, God of Jacob, is your kindness shown of old?  
Are you no more a God who pardons us?

#### ONE OF THE MAIDENS, *speaking*

Dear sisters, can't you hear  
The Tyrians' awful trumpet sound?

#### SALOMITH

I even hear the blood-filled soldiers' cry

Et d'horreur j'en frissonne.  
Courons, fuyons, retirons-nous  
A l'ombre salulaire  
Du redoutable sanctuaire.

And shudder all with fear.  
Run quickly. Hide away  
In the safe shadows  
Of the feared sanctuary.

*[Salomith and the Chorus remain, as Zechariah enters.]*

## ACTE 5 SCÈNE 1

*Zacharie, Salomith, le Chœur*

SALOMITH

Cher Zacharie, eh bien? Que nous apprenez-vous?

ZACHARIE

Redoublez au Seigneur votre ardente prière.  
Peut-être nous touchons notre heure dernière.  
Pour l'horrible combat, ma sœur, l'ordre est donné.

SALOMITH

Que fait Joas?

ZACHARIE

Joas vient d'être couronné.  
Le grand pretre a sur lui répandu l'huile sainte.  
O ciel! dans tous les yeux quelle joie était peinte  
A l'aspect de ce roi racheté du tombeau!  
Ma sœur, on voit encor la marque du couteau.  
On voit paraître aussi sa fidèle nourrice,  
Qui, cachée en un coin de ce vaste édifice,  
Gardait ce cher dépôt, et n'avait de ses soins  
Que les yeux de ma mère, et que Dieu pour témoins.  
Nos lévites pleuraient de joie et de tendresse  
Et mêlaient leurs sanglots à leurs cris d'allégresse.  
Lui parmi ces transports, affable, et sans orgueil,  
A l'un tendait la main, flattait l'autre de l'œil,  
Jurait de se régler par leurs avis sincères,  
Et les appelait tous ses pères ou ses frères.

SALOMITH

Ce secret au dehors est-il aussi semé?

## ACT 5 SCENE 1

*Zechariah, Salomith, The Chorus*

SALOMITH

So Zechariah, what can you report?

ZECHARIAH

Strengthen, cry out, your heartfelt prayers to God.  
Our final hour may well be close to us.  
The order has been given for the awful fight.

SALOMITH

And Joash?

ZECHARIAH

He's just been crowned.  
The high priest has anointed him with oil.  
O heaven...what joy lit up in every eye  
To see this king delivered from the dead.  
You still could see the marks the knife had made.  
His faithful nurse has also now appeared.  
She'd hid herself deep down in this great house,  
Guarding the treasure given to her care,  
God and my mother her sole witnesses.  
Our Levites wept for tender, loving joy,  
Mingling their sobs with gladness in their cries.  
Amid this joy, he stood – charming, no pride –  
Shook hands with one, smiled then at another,  
Swore to be guided by their true advice,  
And called each one each father or his friend.

SALOMITH

So has the secret now been spread outside?

## ZACHARIE

Ce secret dans le temple est encor renfermé.  
 Des enfants de Lévi la troupe partagée  
 Dans un profond silence aux portes s'est rangée.  
 Tous doivent à la fois précipiter leurs pas,  
 Et crier pour signal: Vive le roi Joas!  
 Mais mon père défend que le roi se hasarde,  
 Et veut qu'Azarias demeure pour sa garde.  
 Cependant Athalie un poignard à la main  
 Rit des faibles remparts de nos portes d'airain.  
 Pour les rompre, elle attend les fatales machines,  
 Et ne respire enfin que sang et que ruines.  
 Quelques prêtres, ma sœur, ont d'abord proposé  
 Qu'en un lieu souterrain par nos pères creusé  
 On renfermât du moins notre arche précieuse.  
 O crainte, a dit mon père, indigne, injurieuse!  
 L'arche, qui fit tomber tant de superbes tours,  
 Et força le Jourdain de rebrousser son cours,  
 Des dieux des nations tant de fois triomphante,  
 Fuirait donc à l'aspect d'une femme insolente?  
 Ma mère auprès du roi, dans un trouble mortel,  
 L'oeil tantôt sur ce prince, et tantôt vers l'autel,  
 Muette, et succombant sous le poids des alarmes,  
 Aux yeux les plus cruels arracherait des larmes.  
 Le roi de temps en temps la presse entre ses bras,  
 La flatte... Chères sœurs, suivez toutes mes pas.  
 Et s'il faut aujourd'hui que notre roi périsse,  
 Allons, qu'un même sort avec lui nous unisse.

## SALOMITH

Quelle insolente main frappe à coups redoublés?  
 Qui fait courir ainsi ces lévites troublés?  
 Quelle précaution leur fait cacher leurs armes?  
 Le temple est-il forcé?

## ZACHARIE

## ZECHARIAH

It's still been kept within the temple's bounds.  
 The sons of Levi have been split in group  
 And stand in total silence at the doors.  
 They must rush forward at a single stroke  
 And shout the signal then, 'Long live the king!'  
 Father will not allow the king to risk himself.  
 He's told Azariah to stay as guard.  
 Meanwhile, Athaliah, a dagger in her hand,  
 Mocks the weak ramparts of our doors of bronze.  
 She waits for her machines of death to smash  
 Them down. She's breathing ruin and our blood.  
 Some priests had first of all proposed  
 To hide our sacred ark at least, deep in  
 Some hollow that our fathers had dug out.  
 'The fear's unworthy, cheap', my father said,  
 'The ark that has brought down so many towers  
 And forced the Jordan to retrace its course,  
 So often conqueror of foreign gods,  
 Must it now flee a woman's arrogance?'  
 My mother, near the king, in deadly fear  
 With one eye on her boy, one on the shrine,  
 Was dumb. But then she broke beneath the weight of cares  
 And would have drawn tears from the cruellest eyes.  
 From time to time, the king hugged her so close  
 To comfort her... Dear sisters, follow me.  
 If our king must be killed today, then come  
 And let us join him in the selfsame fate.

## SALOMITH

What tyrant's hand knocks harder at the door?  
 Why do these Levites run about confused?  
 They hide their arms. Why the precaution?  
 So has the shrine been forced?

## ZECHARIAH



Dissipez vos alarmes.  
Dieu nous envoie Abner.

## SCÈNE 2

*Abner, Joad, Josabet, Zacharie, Salomith,  
Ismael, deux Lévites, etc.*

JOAD

En croirai-je mes yeux,  
Cher Abner? Quel chemin a pu jusqu'en ces lieux  
Vous conduire au travers d'un camp qui nous assiège?  
On disait que d'Achab la fille sacrilège  
Avait, pour assurer ses projets inhumains,  
Chargé d'indignes fers vos généreuses mains.

ABNER

Oui, Seigneur, elle a craint mon zèle et mon courage.  
Mais c'est le moindre prix que me gardait sa rage.  
Dans l'horreur d'un cachot par son ordre enfermé,  
J'attendais que le temple en cendre consumé,  
De tant de flots de sang non encore assouvi  
Elle vînt m'affianchir d'une importune vie,  
Et retrancher des jours qu'aurait dû mille fois  
Terminer la douleur de survivre à mes rois.

JOAD

Par quel miracle a-t-on obtenu votre grâce?

ABNER

Don't be afraid  
Abner's been sent. By God.

*[Jehoiada, Jehoshabeath, Abner, Ishmael, and two Levites, enter.]*

## SCENE 2

*Jehoiada, Jehoshabeath, Zechariah, Salomith,  
Abner, Ishmael, two Levites, The Chorus*

JEHOIADA

Can I believe my eyes?  
Dear Abner...What path could bring you here  
Across the enemy camp besieging us?  
Ahab's accursed daughter – they said she'd  
Weighed these goodly hands with shameful irons,  
To be assured of her inhuman plans.

ABNER

She feared my courage and my zeal, my lord.  
But that's the least her rage reserved for me.  
She ordered me imprisoned in the darkest cell.  
I waited till the temple had been burnt to ash.  
Still unassuaged by all those seas of blood,  
She came to free me from the pain of life  
That should have been cut short a thousand times  
From grief at living longer than my kings.

JEHOIADA

What miracle obtained your pardon, then?

ABNER

Dieu dans ce cœur cruel sait seul ce qui se passe.  
 Elle m'a fait venir, et d'un air égaré,  
 Tu vois de mes soldats tout ce temple entouré,  
 Dit-elle. Un feu vengeur va le réduire en cendre,  
 Et ton Dieu contre moi ne le saurait défendre.  
 Ses prêtres toutefois, mais il faut se hâter,  
 A deux conditions peuvent se racheter:  
 Qu'avec Éliacin on mette en ma puissance  
 Un trésor, dont je sais qu'ils ont la connaissance,  
 Par votre roi David autrefois amassé,  
 Sous le sceau du secret au grand prêtre laissé.  
 Va, dis-leur qu'à ce prix je leur permets de vivre.

JOAD

Quel conseil, cher Abner, croyez-vous qu'on doit suivre?

ABNER

Et tout l'or de David, s'il est vrai qu'en effet  
 Vous gardiez de David quelque trésor secret,  
 Et tout ce que des mains de cette reine avare  
 Vous avez pu sauver et de riche et de rare,  
 Donnez-le. Voulez-vous que d'impurs assassins  
 Viennent briser l'autel, brûler les chérubins,  
 Et portant sur notre arche une main téméraire,  
 De votre propre sang souiller le sanctuaire?

JOAD

Mais siérait-il, Abner, à des cœurs généreux  
 De livrer au supplice un enfant malheureux,  
 Un enfant, que Dieu même à ma garde confie,  
 Et de nous racheter aux dépens de sa vie?

ABNER

Hélas! Dieu voit mon cœur. Plût à ce Dieu puissant  
 Qu'Athalie oubliât un enfant innocent,

God knows alone what happened in that cruel heart.  
 She sent for me. She said distractedly,  
 'You see that temple circled by my troops.  
 Avenging swords will crust it into dust.  
 Your God can't save it from me now.  
 But still his priests – if you make haste –  
 Can make amends on two conditions:  
 I want Eliacin. And in my hands I want  
 The treasure that I'm sure they know about.  
 It was amassed by your king David once,  
 Left with the high priest, sworn to secrecy.  
 Go, tell them, at this price I'll let him live.

JEHOIADA

So what course should we take? What do you think?

ABNER

All David's gold – if it is true indeed  
 You've kept some secret treasure of the king –  
 And all that's rich and rare that you have saved  
 From the grasp of this avaricious queen,  
 Give her it. You want foul murderers  
 To smash the altar, burn the cherubim,  
 To smear their reckless hands upon the ark  
 And foul the sanctuary with your own blood?

JEHOIADA

But Abner, is it right that virtuous men  
 Should send a poor, unhappy boy to death –  
 A boy whom God himself entrusted to my care –  
 To buy our ransom with his life?

ABNER

God sees my heart. Would that his power would make  
 Athaliah forget this guiltless child,

Et que du sang d'Abner sa cruauté contente  
 Crût calmer par ma mort le ciel qui la tourmente!  
 Mais que peuvent pour lui vos inutiles soins?  
 Quand vous périrez tous en périra-t-il moins?  
 Dieu vous ordonne-t-il de tenter l'impossible?  
 Pour obéir aux lois d'un tyran inflexible,  
 Moïse par sa mère au Nil abandonné,  
 Se vit, presque en naissant, à périr condamné;  
 Mais Dieu le conservant contre toute espérance,  
 Fit par le tyran même élever son enfance.  
 Qui sait ce qu'il réserve à votre Éliacin,  
 Et si lui préparant un semblable destin,  
 Il n'a point de pitié déjà rendu capable  
 De nos malheureux rois l'hommeicide implacable?  
 Du moins, et Josabet, comme moi, l'a pu voir,  
 Tantôt à son aspect je l'ai vu s'émouvoir.  
 J'ai vu de son courroux tomber la violence.  
 Princesse, en ce péril, vous gardez le silence!  
 Hé quoi? Pour un enfant qui vous est étranger,  
 Souffrez-vous que sans fruit Joad laisse égorger  
 Vous, son fils, tout ce peuple, et que le feu dévore  
 Le seul lieu sur la terre où Dieu veut qu'on l'adore?  
 Que feriez-vous de plus, si des rois vos aïeux  
 Ce jeune enfant était un reste précieux?

JOSABET [*tout bas à Joad*]

Pour le sang de ses rois vous voyez sa tendresse.  
 Que ne lui parlez-vous?

JOAD

Il n'est pas temps, Princesse.

ABNER

Le temps est cher, Seigneur, plus que vous ne pensez.  
 Tandis qu'à me répondre ici vous balancez,  
 Mathan près d'Athalie étincelant de rage

Her cruelty rest content with my own life,  
 And so placate the heaven that tortures her?  
 What can your vain concern, though, do for him?  
 When you all perish, will he die the less?  
 Is God not ordering you a hopeless task?  
 Once – to obey a tyrant's callous laws –  
 Moses was left beside the river Nile,  
 And was condemned to death almost at birth.  
 But God protected him, against all hope,  
 And made the tyrant bring him up himself.  
 Who knows what God may do for your Eliacin?  
 He may prepare a matching fate for him.  
 He may yet touch the murderess of our  
 Unhappy kings with tears of sympathy.  
 At least – Jehoshabeath saw it too –  
 She has been moved at seeing him.  
 I saw the violence of her rage die down.  
 Jehoshabeath, there's danger and you do not speak.  
 So for a child who is a stranger here,  
 You'll let Jehoiada waste the lives  
 Of you, his son, these priests, and let the fire  
 Burn down the only place on earth where God  
 Desires to be adored? Would you do more  
 If this boy were the final jewel of all your kings?

JEHOSHABEATH, *aside to Jehoiada*

You see his deep devotion to his kings.  
 Why not speak out?

JEHOIADA

It's not yet time.

ABNER

The time's much later than you think, my lord.  
 While you here hesitate in your reply,  
 Mattan is with Athaliah, white with rage,

Demande le signal, et presse le carnage.  
 Faut-il que je me jette à vos sacrés genoux?  
 Au nom du lieu si saint, qui n'est ouvert qu'à vous,  
 Lieu terrible, où de Dieu la majesté repose,  
 Quelque dure que soit la loi qu'on vous impose,  
 De ce coup imprévu songeons à nous parer.  
 Donnez-moi seulement le temps de respirer.  
 Demain, dès cette nuit, je prendrai des mesures  
 Pour assurer le temple, et venger ses injures.  
 Mais je vois que mes pleurs et que mes vains discours  
 Pour vous persuader sont un faible secours.  
 Votre austère vertu n'en peut être frappée.  
 Eh bien! trouvez-moi donc quelque arme, quelque épée  
 Et qu'aux portes du temple où l'ennemi m'attend,  
 Abner puisse du moins mourir en combattant.

## JOAD

Je me rends. Vous m'ouvrez un avis que j'embrasse.  
 De tant de maux, Abner, détournons la menace.  
 Il est vrai, de David un trésor est resté.  
 La garde en fut commise à ma fidélité.  
 C'était des tristes Juifs l'espérance dernière,  
 Que mes soins vigilants cachaient à la lumière.  
 Mais puisqu'à votre reine il faut le découvrir,  
 Je vais la contenter, nos portes vont s'ouvrir.  
 De ses plus braves chefs qu'elle entre accompagnée  
 Mais de nos saints autels qu'elle tienne éloignée  
 D'un ramas d'étrangers l'indiscrète fureur.  
 Du pillage du temple épargnez-moi l'horreur.  
 Des prêtres, des enfants lui feraient-ils quelque ombre?  
 De sa suite avec vous qu'elle règle le nombre.  
 Et quant à cet enfant si craint, si redouté,  
 De votre cœur, Abner, je connais l'équité.  
 Je vous veux devant elle expliquer sa naissance.  
 Vous verrez s'il le faut remettre en sa puissance,  
 Et je vous ferai juge entre Athalie et lui.

## ABNER

Begging her word to start the massacre.  
 So must I throw myself before your feet?  
 By that most holy place where only you  
 May go, the fearful home of God's own majesty –  
 However harsh these terms may seem to you,  
 We must ward off this unexpected blow.  
 Just give me time to catch my breath.  
 Tomorrow – no, tonight – I will take steps  
 To make the temple safe, avenge the sacrilege.  
 But I can see that tears and argument  
 Help little in persuading you.  
 Your cast-iron virtue won't be moved by them.  
 So find some weapon for me then, some sword.  
 The enemy is waiting at the temple doors –  
 I can at least die there a soldier's death.

## JEHOIADA

I give in... I'll take the course that you propose.  
 We must fend off the threat of so much harm.  
 It's true that David's treasure is still here.  
 It was entrusted to my faithful care –  
 The final hope of all the suffering Jews.  
 I hid it carefully from light of day.  
 But since it must be shown now to your queen,  
 I'll satisfy her. Our doors will open.  
 Let her come in with all her bravest chiefs.  
 She'll keep the mindless fury of a mob  
 Of foreigners, though, from our holy shrine.  
 Spare me the horror of the temple sacked.  
 Would children give offence to her, or priests?  
 She must agree with you the number that she brings.  
 As for this boy, so feared and dreaded here,  
 I know you are a just and righteous man.  
 I will explain his birth to you in front of her.  
 You'll see if he should then be given up to her.  
 I'll make you judge between Athaliah and him.

## ABNER

Ah! je le prends déjà, Seigneur, sous mon appui.  
Ne craignez rien. Je cours vers celle qui m'envoie.

## SCÈNE 3

*Joad, Josabet, Ismaël, Zacharie, etc.*

JOAD

Grand Dieu, voici ton heure, on t'amène ta proie.  
Ismaël, écoutez.  
*[il lui parle à l'oreille]*

JOSABET

Puissant maître des cieux,  
Remets-lui le bandeau dont tu couvris ses yeux,  
Lorsque lui déroband tout le fruit de son crime,  
Tu cachas dans mon sein cette tendre victime.

JOAD

Allez, sage Ismaël, ne perdez point de temps.  
Suivez de point en point ces ordres importants.  
Surtout, qu'à son entrée, et que sur son passage,  
Tout d'un calme profond lui présente l'image.  
Vous, enfants, préparez un trône pour Joas.  
Qu'il s'avance suivi de nos sacrés soldats.  
Faites venir aussi sa fidele nourrice,  
Princesse, et de vos pleurs que la source tarisse.  
*[A un lévite]*  
Vous dès que cette reine, ivre d'un fol orgueil  
De la porte du temple aura passé le seuil,  
Qu'elle ne pourra plus retourner en arrière,

I'll take him now, my lord, into my care.  
Don't be afraid. I'll hurry back to her.

*[He leaves]*

## SCENE 3

*Jehoiada, Jehoshabeath, Zechariah, Salomith,  
Ishmael, two Levites, The Chorus*

JEHOIADA

Great God, here is your hour. Your prey comes here.  
Listen, Ishmael.  
*[He whispers to him]*

JEHOSHABEATH

Great lord of heaven,  
Put back the blindfold on her eyes. With it,  
You hid the harmless victim at my breast  
And stole the whole fruit of her crime from her.

JEHOIADA

So go, Ishmael. There's no time now to lose.  
Follow these crucial orders point by point.  
Above all – as she comes in and makes her way –  
The sight she sees must be of total calm.  
You children, prepare a throne for Joash.  
He must walk forth and lead his priestly soldiers on.  
His faithful nurse must come forth too.  
And no more crying now, Jehoshabeath.  
*[to a Levite]*  
Levite...this queen is drunk with maddened pride.  
The moment she has crossed the temple doors  
And has no chance of going back again,

Prenez soin qu'à l'instant la trompette guerrière  
 Dans le camp ennemi jette un subit effroi.  
 Appelez tout le peuple au secours de son roi.  
 Et faites retentir jusques à son oreille  
 De Joas conservé l'étonnante merveille.  
 Il vient.

## SCÈNE 4

*Joas, Joad, Josabet, troupes de Prêtres et de Lévités, etc.*

JOAD [*continue*]

Levites saints, prêtres de notre Dieu,  
 Partout, sans vous montrer, environnez ce lieu,  
 Et laissant à mes soins gouverner votre zèle,  
 Pour paraître attendez que ma voix vous appelle.  
 [*ils se cachent tous*]  
 Roi, je crois qu'à vos vœux cet espoir est permis,  
 Venez voir à vos pieds tomber vos ennemis.  
 Celle dont la fureur poursuivit votre enfance  
 Vers ces lieux à grands pas pour vous perdre s'avance.  
 Mais ne la craignez point. Songez qu'autour de vous  
 L'ange exterminateur est debout avec nous.  
 Montez sur votre trône, et... Mais la porte s'ouvre,  
 Permettez un moment que ce voile vous couvre.  
 [*il tire un rideau*]  
 Vous changez de couleur, Princesse?

JOSABET

Ah! sans pâlir  
 Puis-je voir d'assassins le temple se remplir?  
 Quoi! ne voyez-vous pas quelle nombreuse escorte...

Make sure that blaring trumpets sound at once  
 And terrorise the enemy off-guard.  
 Call all the people to their king's support.  
 Just keep for ever ringing in their ears  
 The wondrous miracle that Joash lives.  
 He's here.

*[Ishmael leaves. Priests, Levites, and Joash, enter.]*

## SCENE 4

*Jehoiada, Jehoshabeath, Joash, Priests, Levites, etc.*

JEHOIADA *continues*

You holy Levites, priests of God,  
 Surround this place, but do not show yourselves.  
 All passion now must be controlled by me.  
 Wait till I tell you to appear.  
 [*They all hide*]  
 My king – I think you may now hope for this –  
 Come, see your enemies fall at your feet.  
 The queen whose rage has haunted you throughout  
 Your youth, is striding here to kill you now.  
 Don't be afraid of her. Remember, all around,  
 The angel of the Lord stands guarding us.  
 Sit on the throne up there...the door, it's opening...  
 I'll draw this curtain down in front of you.  
 [*He draws a curtain.*]  
 Jehoshabeath, you're white...

JEHOSHABEATH

Should I see killers in this shrine and not  
 Turn white? You see how many she has brought...?

JOAD

Je vois que du saint temple on referme la porte.  
Tout est en sûreté.

## SCÈNE 5

*Athalie, Joas, caché derrière le rideau, Joad,  
Josabet, Abner, suite d'Athalie*

ATHALIE [à Joad]

Te voilà, séducteur,  
De ligues, de complots pernicieux auteur,  
Qui dans le trouble seul a mis tes espérances,  
Éternel ennemi des suprêmes puissances.  
En l'appui de ton Dieu tu t'étais reposé.  
De ton espoir frivole es-tu désabusé?  
Il laisse en mon pouvoir et son temple et ta vie.  
Je devrais sur l'autel où ta main sacrifie  
Te... Mais du prix qu'on m'offre il faut me contenter.  
Ce que tu m'as promis songe à l'exécuter.  
Cet enfant, ce trésor, qu'il faut qu'on me remette,  
Où sont-ils?

JOAD

Sur-le-champ tu seras satisfaite.  
Je te les vais montrer l'un et l'autre à la fois.  
[*le rideau se tire*]  
Paraissent, cher enfant, digne sang de nos rois.  
Connais-tu l'héritier du plus saint des monarques,  
Reine? De ton poignard connais du moins ces marques.  
Voilà ton roi, ton fils, le fils d'Ochosias.  
Peuples, et vous Abner, reconnaissez Joas.

JEHOIADA

I see the temple door is closing now.  
All is secure.

*[Athaliah enters with her attendants, together with Abner.]*

## SCENE 5

*Athaliah, Joash hidden behind the curtain, Jehoiada,  
Jehoshabeath, Abner, Athaliah's attendants*

ATHALIAH, to Jehoiada

So there you are, you scum,  
You vicious seed of secret pacts and plots.  
You hoped there would be chaos – nothing less –  
The lasting enemy of total power.  
You placed reliance in your God's support.  
What futile hope. So are you disabused?  
He's left your life and temple in my power.  
So on the altar where you sacrifice,  
I ought... But I will take the prize that's offered me.  
What you promised me – turn your mind to that,  
This boy, the treasure that you will give up,  
Where are they?

JEHOIADA

I'll satisfy you straight away.  
I'll show you both of them together. Now.  
[*The curtain is drawn back*]  
Dear child, stand forth, the true blood of our kings.  
So do you know our holiest monarch's heir?  
You'll know at least the marks your dagger left.  
Here is your king, and Ahaziah's son.  
Do homage now to Joash. Abner, all of you.

ABNER

Ciel!

ATHALIE [*à Joad*]

Perfide!

JOAD

Vois-tu cette Juive fidèle  
Dont tu sais bien qu'alors il suçait la mamelle?  
Il fut par Josabet à ta rage enlevé.  
Ce temple le reçut, et Dieu l'a conservé.  
Des trésors de David voilà ce qui me reste.

ATHALIE

Ta fourbe à cet enfant, traître, sera funeste.  
D'un fantôme odieux, soldats, délivrez-moi.

JOAD

Soldats du Dieu vivant défendez votre roi.

*[ici le fond du théâtre s'ouvre. On voit le dedans du temple,  
et les Lévites armés sortent de tous côtés sur la scène]*

ATHALIE

Où suis-je? O trahison! ô reine infortunée!  
D'armes et d'ennemis je suis environnée.

JOAD

Tes yeux cherchent en vain, tu ne peux échapper,  
Et Dieu de toutes parts a su t'envelopper.  
Ce Dieu que tu bravais en nos mains t'a livrée.

ABNER

God.

ATHALIAH, *to Jehoiada*

Traitor.

JEHOIADA

You see this faithful nurse  
Whose teats he was then sucking, as you know?  
Jehoshabeath saved him from your rage.  
This temple took him in, and God looked after him.  
All David's treasures – this is what remains.

ATHALIAH

Your treachery will be this young boy's death.  
Soldiers – so save me from this loathsome ghost.

JEHOIADA

Troops of the living God, defend your king.

*[The back of the stage opens, to show the inside of the temple.  
Armed Levites emerge from all sides on to the stage.]*

ATHALIAH

Where am I? It's treason... I am ill-starred...  
I am surrounded quite by arms and enemies.

JEHOIADA

You look around in vain. You can't escape.  
Our God has closed you in on every side.  
The God you fought against has given you to us.



Rends-lui compte du sang dont tu t'es enivrée.

ATHALIE

Quoi? La peur a glacé mes indignes soldats?  
Lâche Abner, dans quel piège as-tu conduit mes pas?

ABNER

Reine,  
Dieu m'est témoin...

ATHALIE

Laisse là ton Dieu, traître,  
Et venge-moi.

ABNER [*se jetant aux pieds de Joas*]

Sur qui? Sur Joas! sur mon maître!

ATHALIE

Lui Joas? Lui ton roi? Songez, méchants, songez  
Que mes armes encor vous tiennent assiégés.  
J'entends à haute voix tout mon camp qui m'appelle.  
On vient à mon secours. Tremblez, troupe rebelle.

## SCÈNE 6

*Ismaël, Joas, Joad, Athalie, etc.*

ISMAEL [*à Joad*]

Seigneur, le temple est libre et n'a plus d'ennemis.  
L'étranger est en fuite, et le Juif est soumis.

You're drunk on blood – account to him for that.

ATHALIAH

So fear has chilled my worthless soldiers' hearts.  
Abner, you coward. You've trapped me here.

ABNER

Queen,  
God is my witness...

ATHALIAH

Forget your God!  
Give me revenge!

ABNER, *throwing himself at Joash's feet*

On who? Joash? my king?

ATHALIAH

Joash? your king? Think, traitors, think –  
My armies hold you here besieged.  
I hear my soldiers calling for me now.  
They've come to rescue me. You rebels, tremble now!

*[Ishmael comes back.]*

## SCENE 6

*Ishmael, Joash, Jehoiada, Athaliah, etc.*

ISHMAEL, *to Jehoiada*

My lord, the temple's cleared. The enemy has gone.  
The foreigners run off, the Jews submit.

Comme le vent dans l'air dissipe la fumée,  
 La voix du Tout-puissant a chassé cette armée.  
 Nos lévites, du haut de nos sacres parvis,  
 D'Ochosias au peuple ont annoncé le fils,  
 Ont conté son enfance au glaive dérobée,  
 Et la fille d'Achab dans le piège tombée.  
 Partout en même temps la trompette a sonné.  
 Et ses sons, et leurs cris dans son camp étonné  
 Ont répandu le trouble et la terreur subite,  
 Dont Gédéon frappa le fier Madianite.  
 Les Tyriens, jetant armes et boucliers,  
 Ont par divers chemins disparu les premiers.  
 Quelques Juifs éperdus ont aussi pris la fuite.  
 Mais de Dieu sur Joas admirant la conduite  
 Le reste à haute voix s'est pour lui déclaré.  
 Enfin d'un même esprit tout le peuple inspiré,  
 Femmes, vieillards, enfants, s'embrassant avec joie,  
 Bénissent le Seigneur, et celui qu'il envoie.  
 Tous chantent de David le fils ressuscité.  
 Baal est en horreur dans la sainte cité.  
 De son temple profane on a brisé les portes.  
 Mathan est égorgé.

## ATHALIE

Dieu des Juifs, tu l'emportes!  
 Oui, c'est Joas, je cherche en vain à me tromper.  
 Je reconnais l'endroit où je le fis frapper.  
 Je vois d'Ochosias et le port et le geste.  
 Tout me retrace enfin un sang que je déteste.  
 David, David triomphe, Achab seul est détruit.  
 Impitoyable Dieu, toi seul as tout conduit.  
 C'est toi, qui me flattant d'une vengeance aisée,  
 M'as vingt fois en un jour à moi-même opposée,  
 Tantôt pour un enfant excitant mes remords,  
 Tantôt m'éblouissant de tes riches trésors,  
 Que j'ai craint de livrer aux flammes, au pillage  
 Qu'il règne donc ce fils, ton soin et ton ouvrage;  
 Et que pour signaler son empire nouveau

Her army has been driven off by God's own voice  
 As smoke is scattered in the air by wind.  
 Our Levites from the sacred courts on high  
 Have now proclaimed to all Joash as king.  
 They've told his childhood rescue from the sword,  
 And Ahab's daughter fallen in the trap.  
 The trumpets sounded everywhere at once.  
 The blasts, the enemy's astounded cries,  
 Spread forth the chaos and the sudden fear  
 That Gideon hurled upon the Midianites.  
 The Tyrians threw their arms and shields aside  
 And disappeared the first by various paths.  
 Some panic-stricken Jews took flight as well.  
 But all the rest have gazed in awe at God's  
 Great plan, and cried aloud for Joash as their king.  
 In short, the people speak now with a single mind.  
 Women, old men and children joyously embrace  
 And bless the Lord, and him the Lord has sent.  
 All sing of David's son brought back to life.  
 In this our holy city, Baal is loathed.  
 His obscene temple's doors are smashed.  
 Mattan's throat is cut.

## ATHALIAH

God of the Jews, you've won.  
 It's Joash, yes. I can't deceive myself.  
 I recognise the spot I had him stabbed.  
 It's Azariah's bearing, gestures, looks.  
 All conjures up a blood that I detest.  
 And David triumphs. Ahab is destroyed.  
 You pitiless God! Alone, you fashioned this.  
 You flattered me with sweet revenge, set me  
 Against myself a score of times a day,  
 Arousing my remorse now for a child,  
 Now dazzling me with riches and with gold  
 I feared to pillage, throw into the flames.  
 Then let him reign, this son, your handiwork;  
 And as a sign of his new power, tell him

On lui fasse en mon sein enfoncer le couteau.  
Voici ce qu'en mourant lui souhaite sa mère.  
Que dis-je souhaiter? Je me flatte, j'espère,  
Qu'indocile à ton joug, fatigué de ta loi,  
Fidèle au sang d'Achab, qu'il a reçu de moi,  
Conforme son aïeul, à son père semblable,  
On verra de David l'héritier détestable  
Abolir tes honneurs, profaner ton autel,  
Et venger Athalie, Achab, et Jézabel.

JOAD

Qu'à l'instant hors du temple elle soit emmenée;  
Et que la sainteté n'en soit point profanée.  
Allez, sacrés vengeurs de vos princes meurtris,  
De leur sang par sa mort faire cesser les cris.  
Si quelque audacieux embrasse sa querelle,  
Qu'à la fureur du glaive on le livre avec elle.

## SCÈNE 7

*Joas, Joad, Josabet, Abner, etc.*

JOAS

Dieu, qui voyez mon trouble et mon affliction,  
Détournez loin de moi sa malédiction,  
Et ne souffrez jamais qu'elle soit accomplie.  
Faites que Joas meure, avant qu'il vous oublie.

JOAD [*aux Lévites*]

Appelez tout le peuple, et montrons-lui son roi,  
Qu'il lui vienne en ses mains renouveler sa foi.  
Roi, prêtres, peuple, allons, pleins de reconnaissance,

To plunge his knife deep in my heart.  
His dying mother wishes this for him.  
Wishes, did I say? I'm proud to hope  
He'll not endure your chains – your laws will tire –  
That he'll keep faith with Ahab's blood in me,  
That like his grandfather, his father too,  
He will be seen as David's loathsome heir  
Who'll crush your honour, desecrate your shrine,  
And so avenge Athaliah, Ahab, Jezebel.

JEHOIADA

Drag her outside the temple's bounds at once  
So that its sanctity is not profaned.  
Sacred avengers of your murdered kings,  
Go, quiet the mourning of their blood with her own death.  
And any man who dares take up her cause,  
Deliver to the fury of the sword with her.

*[Athaliah is dragged away by the priests and Levites.]*

## SCENE 7

*Joash, Jehoiada, Jehoshabeath, Abner, etc.*

JOASH

My god, you see my deeply troubled heart,  
Turn all her evil words far, far away  
From me. Don't let them ever come to pass.  
If ever I forget you, let me die.

JEHOIADA, *to the Levites*

Call all the people. Let them see their king.  
Let them renew their homage to his throne.  
King, priests, people – let us affirm with thanks

De Jacob avec Dieu confirmer l'alliance,  
 Et saintement confus de nos égarements,  
 Nous rengager à lui par de nouveaux serments.  
 Abner, auprès du roi reprenez votre place.  
 Eh bien? de cette impie a-t-on puni l'audace?

## SCÈNE 8

*Un Lévite, Joas, Joad, etc.*

## LE LÉVITE

Le fer a de sa vie expié les horreurs.  
 Jérusalem longtemps en proie à ses fureurs,  
 De son joug odieux à la fin soulagée,  
 Avec joie en son sang la regarde plongée,

## JOAD

Par cette fin terrible, et due à ses forfaits,  
 Apprenez, roi des Juifs, et n'oubliez jamais  
 Que les rois dans le ciel ont un juge sévère,  
 L'innocence un vengeur, et l'orphelin un père.

The covenant that Jacob made with God.  
 We are ashamed that we have strayed,  
 And bind ourselves to him with renewed vows.  
 Abner, take up your place again beside the king.

## SCENE 8

*A Levite, Joash, Jehoiada, etc.*

JEHOIADA, *to the Levite*

So, have you punished now that godless queen?

## THE LEVITE

The sword has purged the horror of her life.  
 So long a prey for all her rage, Jerusalem  
 Is freed at last from hateful slavery,  
 And sees her lying in her blood with joy.

## JEHOIADA

From this black end, which all her crimes deserved,  
 Be warned, King of the Jews. Never forget  
 That in God's heaven, kings have a testing judge,  
 The child is safe, the orphan finds a home.

## GLOSSARY

Racine frequently alludes to classical and biblical figures, as well as places, in *Andromache*, *Phaedra* and *Athaliah*. The main references are summarised below.

|                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Aaron</b>      | the older brother of Moses, gifted as a speaker and prophet. As the first high-priest, he created the most important priestly class, the 'sons of Aaron'.                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Abiram</b>     | a little known character, the son of Eliab, who with his brother Dathan joined in rebellion against Moses. He was swallowed up by the earth as punishment.                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Acheron</b>    | derived from the Greek word for 'affliction', the river Acheron, into which the Cocytus (q.v.) flowed, was one of the four main rivers of the underworld. To cross it, Charon the ferryman had to be paid. Its source above ground was in the mountains of Epirus in north-west Greece.   |
| <b>Achilles</b>   | the son of Peleus and Thetis, who alone was destined to conquer Troy (q.v.) and to die doing so. He killed Hector (q.v.) in single combat beneath the walls of the city, but was himself killed by an arrow shot by either Apollo or Paris into his vulnerable heel. Pyrrhus was his son. |
| <b>Achitophel</b> | a treacherous adviser to King David and later his rebel son Absalom. He hanged himself once his treachery was discovered.                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Aegeus</b>     | king of Athens, and father of Theseus.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Agamemnon</b>  | husband to Clytemnestra and father of Orestes, he sought to sacrifice his own daughter, Iphigenia, to appease the gods. In revenge, Clytemnestra murdered him in his bath.                                                                                                                |

## GLOSSARY

|                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Ahab</b>      | husband of Jezebel (q.v.) and father to Athaliah. He recognised the rights of religions and gods other than the Jewish; hence his condemnation by Hebrew prophets and priesthood.                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Alcide</b>    | another name for Hercules (q.v.). Alcide's pillars, which were one of the limits of the known ancient world, are today's Straits of Gibraltar.                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Amazon[s]</b> | the daughters of Mars, god of war, renowned for their prowess as fighters and haters of men.                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Amnon</b>     | a biblical name for an imaginary character, similar to Obed (q.v.).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Antiope</b>   | a famous Amazon, abducted by Theseus, by whom she bore Hippolytus.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Argos</b>     | a city in the Peloponnese, just south of Mycenae (q.v.).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Ariadne</b>   | the daughter of Minos (q.v.), and Phaedra's sister, she fell in love with Theseus, for whom she provided the ball of thread to lead him safely out of the Labyrinth after he had killed the Minotaur. She was taken but then abandoned on the island of Naxos by Theseus, who preferred her sister Phaedra. |
| <b>Ark, the</b>  | the chest of wood overlaid with gold containing the tablets of God's law. It was placed in the holiest part of the sanctuary.                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Astyanax</b>  | Hector's son, who was saved from death by his mother Andromache pretending that another child was him.                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Attica</b>    | the region surrounding Athens.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Azariah</b>   | two different figures bear this name: first, the son of Ahab (q.v.) and Jezebel (q.v.) who maintained the idolatrous traditions of his father; second, the son of Athaliah and father of Joash.                                                                                                             |
| <b>Baal</b>      | a collective name given by the Hebrews to numerous pagan gods.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

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| <b>Benjamin</b>  | the youngest son of Jacob. The tribe of Benjamin was one of the smallest, and with the tribe of Judah, made up the kingdom of Judah.                                                                                                            |
| <b>Cassandra</b> | daughter of the Trojan King Priam, she was given the gift of foretelling the future by Apollo. But he took from her at the same time the power of persuasion, so that she remained destined for ever not to be believed.                        |
| <b>Cedron</b>    | the Cedron is a fast-flowing steep-sided stream, its valley separating Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives. Beyond it is the wilderness between Jerusalem and Jericho.                                                                           |
| <b>Celadon</b>   | the hero of Honoré d'Urfé's <i>L'Astrée</i> , who became a symbol of the constant lover.                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Cercyon</b>   | an Arcadian fighter and bandit, he forced travellers to wrestle with him, and killed the vanquished. He was in turn killed by Theseus.                                                                                                          |
| <b>Cocytus</b>   | the river of lamentation, which flowed into the Acheron (q.v.), and became one of the rivers of the underworld.                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Corinth</b>   | the town and isthmus separating the Ionian and the Aegean seas.                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Dathan</b>    | like his brother Abiram (q.v.), a character little known apart from his rebellion against Moses. Like Abiram, he was swallowed up by the earth as punishment.                                                                                   |
| <b>David</b>     | chosen by God to replace Saul, he became, despite his faults, the greatest of all Hebrew kings, and founded the dynasty that bears his name. He reigned for forty years. He brought the ark (q.v.) to Jerusalem, and was the father of Solomon. |
| <b>Diana</b>     | a goddess associated particularly with light, mountains and woods. She was the Roman form of the Greek Artemis, who was similarly identified with hunting, and also with chastity.                                                              |

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| <b>Doeg</b>       | following Saul's command, he massacred eighty-five Hebrew priests in revenge for their alliance with King David (q.v.).                                                                                                        |
| <b>Elijah</b>     | the Hebrew prophet who challenged the followers of Baal (q.v.) to invoke their god for fire at a sacrifice, at the same time as he prayed for the same. They were killed upon their failure.                                   |
| <b>Elis</b>       | a province of Greece on the western shore of the Peloponnese.                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Elisha</b>     | prophet and disciple of Elijah, he brought a young boy back to life, one of many miracles and cures he is credited with.                                                                                                       |
| <b>Epidauros</b>  | the giant of Epidauros was Periphetes, who clubbed passing travellers to death for their flesh. He was killed by Theseus.                                                                                                      |
| <b>Epirus</b>     | the north-western region of Greece.                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Erechtheus</b> | found as an abandoned child by Athene, who protected him, Erechtheus became king of Athens, and introduced the solemn cult of Athena to the city.                                                                              |
| <b>Gideon</b>     | one of the Hebrew judges, he saved Israel from the Midianites, a hostile tribe, by terrifying them with the sound of his army's trumpets, making it seem much larger than it was.                                              |
| <b>Hades</b>      | the underworld. The god of Hades was Pluto, whose wife, Persephone, Theseus was thought to have gone down to the underworld to abduct. The daughters of Hades were the Erinnyes or Furies, who exacted vengeance on murderers. |
| <b>Hector</b>     | son of King Priam (q.v.), and husband of Andromache, he was supreme commander of the Trojan army, and inflicted                                                                                                                |

numerous defeats upon the Greeks until he was killed by Achilles (q.v.) outside the walls of Troy. His son was Astyanax.

**Hecuba** wife of Priam (q.v.), and mother of Hector (q.v.).

**Helen** the daughter of Leda and Zeus or Tyndareus. Renowned for her beauty, she was abducted by Theseus, but was returned and married Menelaus. Later, Paris fell in love with her, and also abducted her, an act that precipitated the Trojan war.

**Hercules** famed for his physical strength and endurance, he undertook 'the twelve labours' in order to atone for the crime of mistakenly killing his family. After the labours, he went on to many further feats and achievements, and was finally admitted to the gods' home on Mount Olympus as an Immortal. See also under Alcide.

**Icarus** imprisoned with his father Daedalus in the labyrinth on Crete, he escaped by making wings fixed with wax. In his rashness, though, he flew too close to the sun, the wax melted, and he fell into the sea that now bears his name.

**Ilium** another name for Troy (q.v.).

**Ishmael** son of Abraham. Ishmael's descendants, forming numerous Arab tribes, were however later classed among Israel's enemies, and there were frequent wars between them.

**Jacob** the son of Isaac and Rebecca, he obtained his father's blessing by deception, thereby depriving his brother Esau of his birthright. He was given the name Israel, a name later applied to the twelve tribes who were descended from his twelve sons. His name also became synonymous with the entire Hebrew people.

**Jehoshapat** the fourth king of Judah (q.v.), who reigned from 870-848 B.C. His son was Joram (q.v.).

**Jehu** chosen by God through Elisha to avenge his enemies, he destroyed the worshippers of Baal (q.v.), but nonetheless finally fell to temptation and sin. He had become king of Israel by usurping the throne and killing Joram (q.v.), Jezebel (q.v.), and their family.

**Jepthah** he sacrificed his daughter to honour a promise made to God, in order to secure victory over the Ammonites, enemies of his people.

**Jerusalem** capital city of the Hebrews, founded by David (q.v.), where Solomon (q.v.) built the temple. The new Jerusalem is the Church, as recorded in the Apocalypse.

**Jezebel** the wife of Ahab (q.v.) and mother of Athaliah. She was responsible for the death of Naboth, and was in turn killed by Jehu (q.v.), as foretold by Elijah (q.v.).

**Jezrael** a town in the kingdom of Israel, close to the capital Samaria (q.v.).

**Joram** two different figures bear this name: first, the king of Israel who was the second son of Ahab and Jezebel; second, the king of Judah (q.v.), who reigned from 848-841 B.C., and who married Athaliah. His father was Jehoshapat (q.v.).

**Jordan** the river that flows into the Sea of Galilee, and then southwards from Galilee into the Dead Sea.

**Judah** Jacob's (q.v.) fourth son, who gave his name to the tribe descended from him. The kingdom of Judah stood in opposition to the kingdom of Israel, after the schism.

**Juno** the sister of Jupiter (q.v.), and one of the greatest of the gods, she was goddess of light and of childbirth.

**Jupiter** the greatest of the Roman gods, associated with light, creativity and heavenly phenomena, as well as the just protector of city and state. Minos (q.v.), Phaedra's father, was said to be descended from him.

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|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Levi</b>       | Jacob's third son, who gave his name to the tribe of Levites descended from him.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Medea</b>      | renowned for her skills as a magician, she helped Jason seize the Golden Fleece and lived with him for ten years before he abandoned her. She cut the throats of the children she had had by him, and fled to Athens.                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Menelaus</b>   | the Greek king, husband of Helen (q.v.), whose abduction by Paris caused the Trojan War. She was returned to him and reconciled after the fall of Troy.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Midianites</b> | one of the Arab tribes often at war with the Jews. They were defeated by Gideon (q.v.).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Minerva</b>    | another name for Athene, who had been born out of Zeus' skull. She was goddess of wisdom, and became the chief protector of Athens.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Minos</b>      | One of the three sons of Zeus and Europa, he was king of Crete, and married Pasiphae (q.v.), who conceived the Minotaur (q.v.). Renowned for his wisdom and justice, he became judge of the dead in the Underworld.                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Minotaur</b>   | a monster with a human body and bull's head, born to Pasiphae (q.v.) after she had conceived a passion for a bull. Feeding only on human flesh, provided every year by adolescents from Athens, the minotaur was imprisoned in the Labyrinth constructed by Daedalus (q.v.). He was finally killed by Theseus.                                                                                                   |
| <b>Moses</b>      | one of the greatest figures of the Hebrew people, hidden as a baby in the bulrushes and brought up by Pharaoh's daughter. He was called by God to be the saviour of Israel, and led its people safely through the Red Sea. He received the ten commandments from God on Mount Sinai (q.v.), as well as instructions for making the Ark (q.v.). Upon his death at a great age, he was succeeded by Joshua (q.v.). |
| <b>Mycenae</b>    | a city in the Peloponnese, some twenty miles south of Corinth, renowned for its grandeur and luxury.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

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| <b>Neptune</b>     | god of the sea, the son of Chronos and the brother of Zeus. His favourite animal was the horse, which he taught human beings to train. He was guardian god to Theseus.                                           |
| <b>Nile</b>        | the great river of Egypt, where Moses (q.v.) was found by Pharaoh's daughter.                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Obed</b>        | like Amnon (q.v.), a biblical name for an imaginary person.                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Olympus</b>     | the mountain rising from the shores of the Aegean Sea to over 9,000 feet, famed as the home of the Gods.                                                                                                         |
| <b>Pallas</b>      | the brother of Aegeus (q.v.), whose sons, the Pallantids, tried to take power from Aegeus when he failed to produce a successor. Some fifty in number, they were killed by Theseus. Pallas' daughter was Aricia. |
| <b>Pasiphae</b>    | wife of Minos (q.v.), and mother of Phaedra, she also bore the Minotaur (q.v.) after conceiving a passion for a bull.                                                                                            |
| <b>Periboea</b>    | after having been abducted and then abandoned by Theseus, she married Telemon, king of Salamis.                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Pharaoh</b>     | the generic title given to the kings of Egypt.                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Philistines</b> | the Jews' long-time enemies, fought against by Samson and David (q.v.) especially.                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Phrygia</b>     | a country in north-western Asia Minor.                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Pirithous</b>   | close friend of Theseus, with whom he had a number of adventures, including a battle against the Amazons (q.v.) and the abduction of the young Helen (q.v.).                                                     |
| <b>Pittheus</b>    | Theseus' grandfather, who founded the city of Troezen. He was renowned for his wisdom.                                                                                                                           |



GLOSSARY

|                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Polyxena</b>   | the daughter of Priam (q.v.) and Hecuba (q.v.). She had been betrothed to Achilles, but he had died before their marriage. Her throat was cut by Pyrrhus.                                                        |
| <b>Priam</b>      | king of Troy, father to Hector (q.v.) and Paris.                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Procrustes</b> | a famed giant who forced his captives on to a bed of iron, stretching them if they were too short, and cutting off their limbs if they were too long. Theseus made him undergo the same treatment.               |
| <b>Salamis</b>    | a town and island in the Saronic Gulf, about fifteen miles west of Athens.                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Samaria</b>    | capital of the kingdom of Israel.                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Samuel</b>     | judge of the Hebrews. Pledged to the service of God from childhood, he consecrated Saul, and then David, as kings.                                                                                               |
| <b>Sciron</b>     | a legendary bandit who forced travellers to wash his feet. When they bent down to do so, he would kick them over a cliff into the sea, where they were devoured by a monstrous turtle. He was killed by Theseus. |
| <b>Scythian</b>   | a nomadic tribe, known for its cruelty and savagery.                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Sinai</b>      | the mountain on which God gave Moses (q.v.) the ten commandments.                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Sinis</b>      | a legendary bandit who tied his victims to the branches of sprung pine-trees, which he then released. Theseus forced him to undergo the same torture.                                                            |
| <b>Solomon</b>    | son of King David (q.v.), and renowned for his wisdom and justice.                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Sparta</b>     | the capital city of Lacedaemon, the home of Menelaus (q.v.). It was often at war with Athens.                                                                                                                    |

GLOSSARY

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|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Syria</b>   | a reference to Hazael, king of Syria, who wrought destruction over a vast part of Israel. Heavy tributes had to be paid by both Jehu (q.v.) and Joash.                                                                                                         |
| <b>Tenaros</b> | a promontory on the southern coast of the Peloponnese, corresponding to today's Cape Matapan.                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Troezen</b> | a town by the Aegean sea in the eastern Peloponnese.                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Troy</b>    | also called Ilium, Troy was a rich, well-fortified city on the coast of Asia Minor near the Hellespont, the western narrows of the waterway from the Black Sea to the Aegean. After the death of Hector (q.v.), it fell to the Achaeans under Achilles (q.v.). |
| <b>Tyrians</b> | soldiers from Tyre, a major seaport and trading centre on the Eastern Mediterranean coast. Its wealth and beauty were corrupted by its prince, who was denounced by Ezekiel.                                                                                   |
| <b>Ulysses</b> | the Latin form of Odysseus, and symbol of the eternal wanderer who confronted many dangers and adventures in his long journey home to Ithaca. He was known for his cunning, determination, industry, and unwavering courage.                                   |
| <b>Venus</b>   | the goddess of love, also known as Aphrodite. Venus is the daughter of Zeus and Dione.                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Zion</b>    | the name of the citadel that dominated all of Jerusalem, and on whose hill the temple stood. The name 'Zion' soon became symbolic for the Holy City.                                                                                                           |

## FURTHER READING AND LINKS

### FURTHER READING

#### Original texts

For those who wish to examine further the original texts of Racine's plays, the best complete edition is

*Théâtre complet*, eds. Jacques Morel and Alain Viala, 2nd ed. Paris: Garnier, 1995.

Editions specifically concerned with *Andromaque*, *Phèdre*, and *Athalie* include

*Andromaque*, eds. R.C. Knight and H.T. Barnwell. Geneva: Droz, 1977.

*Phèdre*, ed. Richard Parish. Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 1996.

*Athalie*, ed. Peter France. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966.

#### Translations

There are a number of translations, almost always of a selection of plays. The only version to present a translation of all the plays is

Solomon, Samuel *Jean Racine: Complete Plays*, 2 vols. New York: Random House Modern Library, 1969.

The following offer English versions of *Andromaque*, *Phèdre* and *Athalie*, specifically, though only occasionally are the translations placed against the French original.

## FURTHER READING AND LINKS

- |                       |                                                                                                                                       |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Boswell, Robert Bruce | <i>Phaedra</i> . Players Press, 1993.                                                                                                 |
| Cairncross, John      | <i>Iphigenia, Phaedra, Athaliah</i> . Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics, 1963.                                                          |
| Cairncross, John      | <i>Andromache, Britannicus, Berenice</i> . Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics, 1967.                                                     |
| Chilcott, Tim         | <i>Racine: Three Plays. Andromache, Phaedra, Athaliah</i> . Ware: Wordsworth Classics, 2000.                                          |
| Dillon, George        | <i>Three Plays</i> [Andromache, Britannicus, Phaedra]. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1961.                                       |
| Dunn, Douglas         | <i>Andromache</i> . London: Faber and Faber, 1990.                                                                                    |
| Fowlie, Wallace       | <i>Phaedra</i> , in <i>Classical French Drama</i> . New York: Bantam Books, 1962.                                                     |
| Harrison, Tony        | <i>Phaedra Britannica, after Jean Racine</i> , 1975.                                                                                  |
| Henderson, Robert     | <i>Six Plays by Corneille and Racine</i> [Andromache, Britannicus, Phaedra, Athaliah], ed. Paul Landis. New York: Random House, 1931. |
| Hughes, Ted           | <i>Phèdre</i> , London: Faber and Faber, 1998.                                                                                        |
| Knight, R.C.          | <i>Phaedra</i> . Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1971.                                                                         |
| Knight, R.C.          | <i>Four Greek Plays</i> [Andromache, Iphigenia, Phaedra, Athaliah]. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, [1982].                    |
| Korn, Eric            | <i>Andromache</i> [Old Vic Theatre Collection, vol.1]. London: Applause Theatre Book Publishers, 1988.                                |
| Lowell, Robert        | <i>Phaedra</i> . London: Faber and Faber, 1963.                                                                                       |

#### FURTHER READING AND LINKS

- MacDonald, R.D.      *Phaedra*, in *Landmarks of French Classical Drama*, ed. David Bradby. London: Methuen, 1991.
- Muir, Kenneth        *Five Plays* [Andromache, Britannicus, Berenice, Phaedra, Athaliah] New York: Hill and Wang, 1960.
- Neugroschel, Joachim   *Andromache*. New York: American R.D.M. Corp., 1966.
- Neugroschel, Joachim   *Phaedra*. New York: American R.D.M. Corp., 1966.
- Raine, Craig            '1953'. London: Faber and Faber, 1990.
- Rawlings, Margaret    *Phaedra*. London: Faber and Faber, 1963.
- Rose, Julie             *Phedra*. London: Nick Hern Books, 2001.
- Sisson, C.H.            *Britannicus, Phaedra, Athaliah*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.
- Wilbur, Richard        *Andromache*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1984.
- Wilbur, Richard        *Phaedra*. San Diego: Harvest/Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987.

#### LINKS

There is currently [2003] no single web-site devoted exclusively to Racine and his works. But an entry for 'Jean Racine/Racine dramatist/French classical drama...' in the major web search engines yields numerous selective sites.