

Racine's *Andromache*

Dramatis Personae

Pyrrhus, son of Achilles, King of Epirus

Orestes, son of Agamemnon

Pylades, friend to Orestes

Andromache, widow of Hector, prize of Pyrrhus after the sack of Troy

Hermione, daughter of Helen and Menelaus, betrothed to Pyrrhus

Cleone, confidante to Hermione

Cephisa, confidante to Andromache

Phoenix, commander-in-chief and advisor to Pyrrhus

The scene is Buthrotes, a town on the coast of Epirus, in a room within Pyrrhus' palace.

Act I Scene I

Orestes, Pylades

ORESTES

Now, since I find my loyal friend once more,
My fortune will be set on some fresh course;
Already its very path appears milder,
Since it ensured we meet here together.
Who'd have thought shores fatal to my days
Would reveal Pylades to Orestes. gaze?
That after six months, with you lost to me,
At Pyrrhus court you'd be returned to me?

PYLADES

I give thanks to Heaven, whose stormy seas
Seemed to have closed for me the route to Greece,
Since that fatal day when roaring waters
Severed our fleet, in sight of Epirus.
In that parting what despair I suffered!
What tears I shed at the ills that gathered,
Fearing some new danger for you there,

One my saddened friendship could not share!
I dreaded above all that melancholy
That shrouded your spirit so entirely.
I feared lest Heaven, with a cruel hand
Might offer you the death you'd sought so long.
But here you are, my Lord; I dare say, thus,
That happier fate brought you to Epirus,
The pomp that here follows in your footsteps
Not that of some poor wretch who looks for death.

ORESTES

Alas, who knows what future leads me on?
Love made me seek KHU, the unkindest one.
But who knows what it orders for my fate,
And whether life or death to contemplate?

PYLADES

What! Your soul accepts love's slavery
Relying on that to set your being free?
By what spell, forgetful of your suffering,
Could you endeavor to revive this thing?
Will Hermione, in Sparta so inexorable,
Offer in Epirus a fate more favorable?
Your disregarded vows a source of shame,
You abhorred her; would not speak her name.
You deceived me, my lord.

ORESTES

I deceived myself.
Friend, do not crush this wretch, your second self.
Have I concealed my heart and my desires?
You saw my passion born, and its first fires.
When Menelaus bestowed his daughter
In Pyrrhus. favor, as family avenger,
You saw my despair; and you've seen me
Drag from sea to sea my chains, ennui.
In that sad state, I found you, no less,
Set to follow the miserable Orestes,
Always to calm the course of my rage,

Preserve to me the balance of my days.
When I recalled, amidst all our alarms,
How Hermione offered Pyrrhus her charms,
You know what anger in my heart was born:
I wished, in forgetting, to repay her scorn.
I thought to do so, thought my victory safe;
I took my transports for the pangs of hate;
Belittling her charms, loathing her disdain,
I defied her thus to trouble me again,
So, crushing tenderness, achieving peace,
Pure self-deception, I arrived in Greece,
To find our princes all assembled there
And some dark danger troubling the air.
I joined them, thinking fierce war and glory
Would prove more material to my story;
That, my mind regaining its old vigor,
Love would vanish from my heart the quicker.
But admire the machinations of fate
That returns me to the net I would escape.
I hear on every side they threaten Pyrrhus;
Greece echoes with confused murmurs;
They say, forgetting birth and loyalty,
He takes to heart an enemy of Greece,
Astyanax, Hector's wretched offspring,
The last of Troy's line of buried kings.
I hear, to stop her infant being seized,
Andromache tricked the wily Ulysses,
Another child, at Troy, snatched from her arm,
Taken for her son, thus came to harm.
Oblivious to Hermione the fair,
My rival hawks his heart and crown elsewhere.
Menelaus, not crediting it, complains
Of marriage long-delayed for all his pains.
Amongst these irritations to his soul,
In mine a secret joy arises whole.
I triumphed; priding myself above all
Vengeance alone answered to the call.
Yet my ungrateful heart soon rebelled,
There I found traces of the love I quelled.
I felt my hatred then had run its course,

Or rather that my love returned in force.
And so from every Greek I sought their vote.
They sent me to Pyrrhus, I agreed to go.
I come to discover if he'll now release
This child whose presence so alarms Greece.
Happier for me if I, in love's duress,
Win not Astyanax but my princess!
Do not expect that passions so renewed
By greatest perils could be now subdued.
Resistance proves vain, and all see plainly,
Blindly I follow now the fate that claims me.
I love; I seek Hermione on this coast,
To sway her, carry her off, or be lost.
You know Pyrrhus: how does he act to her?
His court, his heart: tell me what passes here.
Is Hermione still enthralled, Pylades?
Will he return what he has reft from me?

PYLADES

I would deceive you, if I dared suggest
He'd place her in your hands: mere foolishness:
Not that he seems enamored of his conquest;
His passion's stirred for Hector's widow: yes,
He loves her.
But that harsh widow, of late,
Merely repays his love for her with hate;
And every day he's seen to try her:
To sway his captive, or to terrify her.
He threatens her son's life, whom he hides,
And makes those tears flow, that he dries.
Hermione has known, a hundred times,
This angry lover thus renounce his crimes,
Of his troubled vows bringing her homage,
At her feet sighing, less from love than rage.
So don't anticipate some sign of health
From a mind so little master of itself.
In his wild disorder he may be moved
To wed where he hates, punish where he loves.

ORESTES

Tell me then how does Hermione see
This wayward lover, hostile to her beauty?

PYLADES

Hermione, at least apparently,
Seems to scorn her love's inconstancy,
Yet thinks, pleased to mitigate his harshness,
He'll seek yet to regain her tenderness.
But her tears I've seen revealed to me:
She mourns his scorn for her, secretly.
Prepared to go away, yet still she stays,
Sometimes calling Orestes to her aid.

ORESTES

Oh, if I thought so, I'd go, Pylades
And throw.

PYLADES

Complete, my lord, your embassy.
You'll see the king. Speak and tell the man
How all Greece speaks against Hector's son.
Far from yielding this child of his mistress,
Their hatred will inflame his tenderness.
The more you seek to part them, then the more
They'll unite: ask all, gain naught, implore.
He comes.

ORESTES

Well, go then! And that cruel one prepare
To see this lover, only here for her.

Act I Scene II

Pyrrhus, Orestes. Phoenix

ORESTES

All the Greeks speak to you through my voice,

Suffer me here to take pride in their choice,
And show before you, Sire, my proper joy
Seeing Achilles. son, victor at Troy.
Yes, we admired his exploits as your blows.
Hector fell to him, Troy to you bowed low;
And you proved, fortune showing you her face,
That Achilles. only son could take his place.
But Greece, in sadness now, sees you sparing,
As he would not have, Troy's hated offspring,
And sees you, touched by a fatal pity,
Shielding the remnants of that warlike city.
Have you forgot, Sire, who that Hector was?
Our race bereaved can still recall its loss.
His name makes widows, and our daughters weep;
There. S not a family in the whole of Greece
That does not seek revenge on that boy
For some man that Hector killed at Troy.
Who knows what he'll undertake some day?
Perhaps we'll see him disembark, I say,
To burn, as his father did, our fleet,
Torch in hand, chase it through the deep.
Do I dare tell you, Sire, what I think?
Fear reprisal now for what you.re doing,
Lest the snake you harbor at your breast
Punishes you one day for your caress.
Placate the Greeks, Sire, and avoid all strife,
Protect yourself from vengeance, save your life;
Destroy a foe, dangerous in the extreme,
Who'll test on you the means of fighting them.

PYRRHUS

Greece seems troubled by my undertakings.
I thought she cared for more important things,
And with you here as her ambassador,
Believed her plans might show more grandeur.
Who'd have thought, in such a humble scene,
Agamemnon's son is the go-between;
That a whole race, so often triumphant,
Works towards the death of one infant?
But to whom should I make sacrifice?

Has Greece the rights still over his life?
And alone of Greeks is it denied me
To dispose of a captive fate gave me?
Yes, my lord, beneath Troy's burning walls
The blood-stained victors shared their spoils,
And Fate, whose judgement men followed then,
Brought to my hands Andromache and her son.
Hecuba fell to Ulysses. share;
Cassandra followed your father there:
Have I claimed the right to their captives?
Sought to deny the fruits of their exploits?
You fear Hector and Troy again will rise,
His son slay me for granting him his life.
Such caution's called mere anxiety,
I see no such possibility.
I see it of another age, that place:
Its mighty ramparts, its heroic race,
Mistress of Asia; and I reflect
On Troy's fate, and what we might expect.
I see towers: cloaked in ash they stand,
A river stained with blood, an empty land,
A child among the flames; what is the chance,
That Troy in such a state aspires to vengeance?
Ah! If the death of Hector's son was planned,
Why wait a year to put the thing in hand?
Could you not burn him there at Priam's breast?
He should have died at Troy with all the rest.
All was approved of then: age, infancy
Made weakness their defense, but uselessly.
Victory, night, still crueler than we foes,
Urged us to murder, and confused our blows.
My wrath among the vanquished was severe.
But why should cruelty survive it here?
Why, despite pity welling, as it should,
Must I at will bathe in an infant's blood?
No sir. Let Greece seek another prize;
Let it seek elsewhere what Troy denies.
The course of all my enmity is run;
Epirus will save him, as Troy has done.

ORESTES

Sire, you well know with what deceit
A false Astyanax was sent to meet
The death that awaited Hector's son;
Hector they pursue not every Trojan.
Yes, Greeks hunt the son for the father;
With too much blood they bought their anger.
With that alone it will not be erased;
It will draw them to Epirus some day;
You can stop them.

PYRRHUS

I'd welcome them with joy:
Let them, in Epirus, seek a second Troy;
Let them entangle hatreds, not distinguish
The conqueror from those they'd punish.
It will not be the first act of injustice
With which Greece paid Achilles for his service.
Hector profited, my lord; some day
His son may profit in the selfsame way.

ORESTES

So, in you Greece finds a rebel ever?

PYRRHUS

Did I win to be dependent on her?

ORESTES

Hermione, Sire, will arrest your blows:
Between you and her father, interpose.

PYRRHUS

Hermione, my lord, is much the dearer
For my not playing slave to her father;
And perhaps some day I'll harmonize
The needs of love and grandeur in her eyes.
Yet you may go, visit Helen's daughter:
I know how close you are to each other.
Then, my lord, I'll no longer keep you,

Go: tell the Greeks how I've refused you.

Act I Scene III

Pyrrhus, Phoenix

PHOENIX

So you've sent him off to see his mistress?

PYRRHUS

They say he is enamored of the princess.

PHOENIX

And what if that flame should re-kindle, Sire?
If he pays court, if he makes love to her?

PYRRHUS

Ah! Let them love, Phoenix. And, let her go.
Let them, entranced, return to Sparta so.
Our ports are open, they're at liberty.
From her constraint and boredom set me free!

PHOENIX

Sire.

PYRRHUS

I'll share my heart with you another time:
Andromache is here.

Act I Scene IV

Pyrrhus, Andromache, Cephisa

PYRRHUS

Do you seek me, Madame?

Is so sweet a hope permitted me?

ANDROMACHE

I go where my captive son waits for me.
Since, once a day, you let me see my boy,
All that remains of Hector and of Troy,
I go now, Sire, to weep awhile with him:
I have not yet been today to visit him.

PYRRHUS

Ah! Madame, if all proves as it appears,
The Greeks will give you fresh cause for tears.

ANDROMACHE

What is this fear their hearts are gripped by, Sire?
Has some Trojan escaped their funeral pyre?

PYRRHUS

Their hatred for Hector is not yet dead:
They fear his son
Fit object of their dread!
A wretched child, who barely understands
He's Hector's son, Pyrrhus his guardian.

PYRRHUS

Such as he is, the Greeks demand his life.
Agamemnon's son hastens on the knife.

ANDROMACHE

And you'll accept so cruel a request?
Shall what I am condemn the guiltless?
They cannot fear he'll avenge his father;
They fear he'll dry the tears of a mother.
He might seem father, husband, yet to me;
But I lose all, and always by your deed.

PYRRHUS

Madame, my refusal forestalls your tears.
The Greeks may yet threaten me for years;

But, should they still, taking to the sea
With a thousand ships, ask him of me,
Though it cost what Helen caused to flow,
My palace burning in ten years or so,
I shall not waver: I'll be his defense;
I'll guard his life at my life's expense.
Now, with the risks I run for your pleasure,
Will you view me in less hostile measure?
Greek hatred presses on me from all sides,
Must I contest your cruelties besides?
I offer my sword. May I hope for more,
That you'll accept a heart that must adore?
Upholding your cause, will you permit me
To see you no longer as an enemy?

ANDROMACHE

Sire, what now? What will Greece make of this?
Shall so great a heart show fatal weakness?
Do you wish words, so fine and generous,
To seem the whim of one grown amorous?
Sad captive, irksome to myself I prove,
Do you now wish Andromache to love?
What charms for you can doomed eyes show,
That you've condemned to endless tears below?
No, no, respect your enemy's pain rather,
Ease my troubles: give my son his mother,
Fight the wars, a hundred tribes may start,
Without my paying for it with my heart,
Despite me, thus grant refuge to misfortune:
That would be worthy of Achilles. son.

PYRRHUS

What! Has your anger not yet run its course?
Will you hate forever, with eternal force?
I have done evil, doubtless; Phrygia
Saw my hands bathe in Trojan blood before.
But the power with which your eyes sway me,
For the tears they shed, makes me pay dearly!
With how much remorse are they repaid?
I suffer the ills I dealt at Troy, I say:

Vanquished and in chains, regret consumes me,
Burned by more fires than I lit around me,
Such cares, such tears, such unquiet ardor.
Alas! Was I ever as cruel as you are?
Yet enough of this mutual persecution;
Our common foes suggest our fusion.
Madame, tell me I may hope further,
I'll give you your boy, act as his father;
I'll teach him myself to avenge the Trojans;
Punish the Greeks for your ills and my own.
Fired by a look, I'll undertake it all:
Ilium will rise again from its fall;
More swiftly than the Greeks brought them down,
Within its risen walls your son I'll crown.

ANDROMACHE

Sire, we are scarcely moved by such grandeur:
It would be to promise what killed his father.
No, you may not hope to receive us more,
Sacred Walls that failed to guard my Hector.
Misfortune only seeks the smallest favors,
Sire: I ask only exile with my tears.
Far from Greeks, and far from you, allow
Me to hide my son, mourn my husband now.
Your love means hatred for us in the end:
Return, return to the daughter of Helen.

PYRRHUS

How, Madame? Ah, how you trouble me!
How grant her the heart that you stole from me?
I know my vows promised her an empire;
I know it was to reign she travelled here;
Fate brought you both, your destinies the same:
She to impose, and you to bear, the chains.
Yet have I cared in any way to please her?
Would you not declare, in seeing rather
Your charms in power and hers disdained,
That she was captive here, and that you reigned?
Oh! Let one of the sighs my heart sends you,
Flying towards her, bring her rapture too!

ANDROMACHE

And why should she fend your sighs away?
Does she forget the services you gave?
Do Troy, or Hector turn her heart against you?
To a husband's grave does she pay tribute?
And such a man! Ah, Memory, so cruel!
His death has made your father immortal.
He'll owe dead Hector fame, down the years,
You'll both be known only by my tears.

PYRRHUS

Well, lady, well, it seems I must obey:
I must forget you, or must rather hate.
Too long I've shown you love's violence
To lapse into a dull indifference.
Consider well: from now on, my heart,
If it must not love, must take hate's part.
I'll spare nothing in my righteous anger;
The son pays for the scorn of the mother;
Greece demands him; I'll not undertake
To waste my glory saving an ingrate.

ANDROMACHE

Alas! He'll die then. With no more defense
That a mother's tears and his innocence.
And perhaps after all, in my misery,
His death will hasten on the end for me.
I prolonged my life for him, but there,
Following him, I'll go see his father.
Thus all three, by you Sire, reconciled,
We'll thank you.

PYRRHUS

Go, Madame, go see your child.
Perhaps, on seeing him, your love, more wise,
Will cease to take mere anger for your guide.
To learn our future I will find you there.
Madame, embrace him and so learn to care.

Act II Scene I

Hermione, Cleone

I'll do as you wish. I consent to see him;
I'd still wish to grant that pleasure to him.
Pylades will soon conduct him here;
Yet, if I thought, I should take more care.

CLEONE

Why should the sight of him bring you unrest,
Madame, is he not the same Orestes yet
For whose return you so often sighed,
For whose love and loyalty you cried?

HERMIONE

It is that love, paid with ingratitude,
That makes me on his presence brood,
What shame for me; what victory is this
To see my own misfortune echo his!
Is that, he'll say, the proud Hermione?
She scorned me; another spurns her, see,
The ingrate, who set a price so on her heart,
Learns, in turn, to suffer and to part!
You Gods!

CLEONE

Oh, still these fears, all unworthy:
He has felt your power far too deeply.
You think a lover dares to insult you?
He'll reveal a heart that can't forsake you.
But what word comes from your father, say?

HERMIONE

If Pyrrhus perseveres in this delay,
If he will not see the Trojan slain,
My father says I must return again.

CLEONE

Well, Madame! Then listen to Orestes.

Pyrrhus began; you end it, at the least.
What he intends, you must anticipate.
Have you not said he fills your heart with hate?

HERMIONE

Hate him, Cleone! Honor asks it of me,
After such sweetness beyond memory.
He who held me so dear, to yet betray!
Oh! I have loved him too much not to hate.

CLEONE

Flee then, Madame; and since you are adored.

HERMIONE

Oh! Leave my anger time to grow the more;
Let me secure myself against my foe;
Cleone, I'll depart with venom so.
He'll know me all too well, the infidel!

CLEONE

What! You'll wait for fresh injury still?
To love that captive, here, before your eyes,
Has that not made him odious with his lies?
After what he's done, what's more to do?
If he can, surely he must displease you.

HERMIONE

Why irritate my wounds, you cruel girl?
I fail to know myself in the state I feel.
Seek to believe naught of what you see;
Yet believe I love not, praise my victory;
Believe my heart hardened despite itself,
Alas! If I can let me think so myself.
You'd have me flee? Well! Nothing stops us:
Come. Let's not envy his unworthy conquest;
Over him let his captive hold her sway.
We'll go. But what if he re-finds the way!
If his heart's loyalty seeks its true place!
If he sinks to his knees, begs for grace!

If Love, you should bend him to my law!
If he should. Yet he'd only harm me more.
Let's stay then and trouble their little fate;
Take pleasure in seeing them importunate;
Or, forcing him to break his solemn ties,
Make him seem criminal to all Greek eyes.
On the child already I've drawn their anger;
I want their next request to be the mother.
Let her feel the torments that I suffer;
She'll ruin him: let him be the death of her.

CLEONE

You think that eyes forever filled with tears
Could be the source of all your anxious fears,
That a heart overwhelmed with horror,
Covets the sighs of her persecutor?
See, does her sadness take comfort there?
Why then this sorrow that her soul must bear?
Why such coldness to a love who pleases?

HERMIONE

To my distress, I listened to his speeches.
I never looked for secrecy in silence:
I thought no danger lay in openness,
And, without gazing harshly at him,
I revealed my heart in speaking to him.
Who would not, as I, declare allegiance
To Love, with so devout a countenance?
Did he view me with the gaze he shows today?
Remember too, how all things went his way.
My family avenged, Greece filled with joy,
Our vessels laden with the spoils of Troy,
His father's exploits shadowed by his own,
His love that seemed more ardent in its tone
Than mine: blinded my Heart by fame that day,
Before he betrayed me, all you did betray.
Enough, Cleone, whatever Pyrrhus proves,
Hermione feels: Orestes has his virtues.
He loved at least, while I remained unmoved;
Perhaps he knows how to be beloved.

Well, let him see me.

CLEONE

Madame, here he is.

HERMIONE

Ah! I'd not thought he was as near as this.

Act II Scene II

HERMIONE

Should I believe, my lord, that tenderness
Sends you here to seek a sad princess?
Must one not attribute to simple duty
This happy zeal that brings you to me?

ORESTES

Such is my love's fatal blindness, truly.
You know, Madame, Orestes. destiny
Is forever to adore your loveliness,
Yet swear not to return, or be your guest.
I know your gaze once more will injure me,
My path toward you is so much perjury:
I know: I blush. Yet call on the Gods as well,
To witness the pain of that last farewell,
How I went everywhere where death does reign,
To annul my oaths, put an end to pain.
I sought my death among the fierce and cruel,
Who appease their Gods with mortal fuel:
They closed their temples to me; barbarous,
Of my free blood they seemed avaricious.
At last I come to you, and am reduced
To seeking, in your eyes, death that eludes.
Despair attends on their indifference:
They've only, to deny me hope at once,
To advance the final ending of my days,
To say again what they have said always.

You have been all that drove me, all the year.
It is for you to slay your victim here,
Whom they'd have slain, that Scythian crew,
If I'd found them to be as cruel as you.

HERMIONE

Cease, my lord, cease this morbid language.
With more pressing matters now engage.
Why talk of mine and Scythian cruelties?
Think of the many kings you must appease.
Must vengeance depend on your desires?
Is it Orestes' blood that fuels their fires?
Discharge yourself of the trust you bear.

ORESTES

Pyrrhus, by refusing, discharged it: there,
He dismisses me; some other nation
Obliges him to nurture Hector's son.

HERMIONE

The traitor!

ORESTES

So, all urging my departure,
I come to speak with you of my own future.
Though your reply is anticipated,
That which silently declares your hatred.

HERMIONE

Ah! Forever unjust in your sad speech,
Must you always assert my enmity?
Where's the harshness that you thus proclaim?
I came to Epirus, pawn in a game
Played by my father. But who knows whether
I am not your sorrows' secret sharer?
You think you alone knew hopes and fears?
That Epirus saw no traces of my tears?
Who says that I have not sighed to see
Your face, sometimes, in spite of duty?

ORESTES

Sighed to see me! Ah, Divine Princess.
Yet, is it me whom your words address?
Open your eyes: Orestes is before you,
Orestes, still object of your hatred too.

HERMIONE

Yes, it is you, whose love, born from their light
First taught me of my eyes. armed power outright;
You whose countless virtues claimed respect;
You whom I pitied, feeling love's effect.

ORESTES

I understand. Such is my wretched share,
Pyrrhus your heart, Orestes has your care.

HERMIONE

Ah! Do not yearn for Pyrrhus. destiny;
Then you'd know hate.

ORESTES

And yet, still, you. D love me.
Ah, see me as an enemy sees!
You'd love me, even though I cannot please;
And love alone, then, making you obey,
You'd love me, though longing thus to hate:
You Gods! Such deep respect, a love so tender.
Reasons to love me, if listen further!
You alone fight for Pyrrhus in this way.
Despite yourself: despite him too I say.
For he hates you now; his soul is smitten
No longer.

HERMIONE

Who says, my lord, that he scorns me?
Have you seen his look, or heard his speech?
Is scorn what men feel when gazing at me,
Do I light a flame that's quenched so swiftly?

Perhaps fresh eyes view me more favorably?

ORESTES

Go on: that's fine, insult me thus, and more.
Cruel woman, is it I who show you scorn?
Have your eyes not proved my loyalty?
Am I not witness to their potency?
I scorn them? Oh, they'd far rather see
My rival scorning their power, like me!

HERMIONE

What matter his hatred or his tenderness?
Go, rouse Greece against rebelliousness:
Bring on the reward for such rebellion;
Let them make Epirus a second Ilium,
Go. Do you think that this is love itself?

ORESTES

Madame, do more, return with me yourself.
Would you remain a hostage in these parts?
Come let your eyes speak to all men's hearts.
Join with our hatred in combined attack.

HERMIONE

And yet, my lord, if he marries Andromache?

ORESTES

Oh, Madame!

HERMIONE

Think of the shame, if that man
Were to wed himself to the Phrygian!

ORESTES

And you, then, hate him? Madame, confess
Love's not a flame close hidden in the breast:
Speech, silence, eye, each one is our betrayer,
Flames badly smothered only flare the higher.

HERMIONE

I see, my lord, your soul with prejudice
Poisons the words that tremble on my lips,
Seeks some fresh subtlety in what I say,
Thinking love lies there hidden by my hate.
I must be clear then, so you will take action.
You know duty brought me to this nation;
Duty holds me here: I cannot leave
Till Pyrrhus, or my father, so decree.
Let Pyrrhus know, no enemy of Greece
Can be my father's son-in-law, at least:
The Trojan boy or I, make him choose
Whom he wants to keep, and whom to lose;
Let him spurn me, or hand the child to you.
If he consents, then I shall follow suit.

Act II Scene III

Orestes

ORESTES

Yes, you'll follow me, no doubt of it:
I can hear him now consent to it.
There is no fear Pyrrhus wants this woman:
He only has eyes for his dear Trojan,
All others wound him now; and further
He only awaits a pretext to remove her.
We need but speak; it's done. Those eyes!
To steal from Epirus so fine a prize!
Keep what remains of Hector and of Troy,
Protect the rest, the widow and the boy,
Epirus: it's enough, Hermione,
Forget its coast and king, return with me.
Some happy fate led him to this shore.
We'll speak. Now, Love, seal his eyes once more.

Act II Scene IV

Pyrrhus, Orestes, Phoenix

PYRRHUS

I sought you, my lord. I was too violent
In countering your powerful argument,
I confess it so; since we discussed it,
I've felt its force and seen its justice.
I think, as you, I'd merely prove disloyal
To Greece, my father, all things royal,
In seeking to raise Troy, render undone
All that Achilles and myself had won.
I'll no longer oppose a rightful anger,
The child must remain here no longer.

ORESTES

My lord, this decision, strict and prudent,
Buys peace with the blood of a malcontent.

PYRRHUS

True, but I wish to make it more certain:
Hermione is the pledge of peace again.
I'll wed her. And that spectacle, so sweet
Awaits but your witness to prove complete.
You represent all Greece and her father,
Since in you Menelaus finds his brother.
See her: tomorrow, let her understand,
I'll accept peace, her heart from your hand.

ORESTES

Oh, You Gods!

Act II Scene V

Pyrrhus, Phoenix

PYRRHUS

Well, Phoenix, is Love still the master?
Do your eyes still doubt my very power?

PHOENIX

Oh! I know you; and this righteous anger
Returns you to that Pyrrhus of before.
No more the flicker of a servile flame:
Pyrrhus, Achilles. son and heir again,
Honor in the end shall see you climb
To triumph over Troy a second time.

PYRRHUS

Say rather, from today begins my glory.
Only this day do I taste victory;
And my heart, proud as once submissive,
Has slain, in Love, a thousand enemies.
Think, Phoenix, of the troubles I've escaped;
What crowd of ills follow in Love's wake;
The friends, the duties I might sacrifice; then
The perils. One glance and all's forgotten.
All the Greeks rising to fight one rebel,
I seeking, for her cause, to slay myself.

PHOENIX

Yes, Sire, I bless the fine severity
That brings you.

PYRRHUS

You saw how she treated me.
I thought, knowing her anxious tenderness,
Her child would bring her to me nonetheless.
I saw the outcome though of their embraces:
I had her tears and her angry faces:
Grief soured her; and ever more discreet,
Hector's name was all she would repeat.
In vain I offered to defend her son:

Hector is there,. she cried embracing him;
There: his eyes; his mouth, his bravery;
It's he; it's you, dear husband that I see..
What are her thoughts? That I'm so moved,
That I'll protect her son to win her love?

PHOENIX

Doubtless, ingratitude rewards you thus.
Forget her, Sire.

PYRRHUS

Oh, the pride she shows us,
Knowing her beauty; despite my anger,
And pride awaits me if I kneel before her.
With tranquil eye I'll see her at my knees.
She's Hector's widow, I son of Achilles:
Great hatred splits Andromache from Pyrrhus.

PHOENIX

Begin then Sire, by ceasing to talk thus.
Go to Hermione: content to please her,
At her feet relinquish all your anger.
Go and prepare her for her wedding.
Must it be left to a rival's doing?
He loves her deeply.

PYRRHUS

Think you, if I wed,
Andromache will be jealous of her bed?

PHOENIX

Andromache, forever in your mind!
What matter if it's joy or pain she find?
What spell, despite yourself, is in play?

PYRRHUS

No, I've not said to her all I must say:
She's only seen a fraction of my anger;
Not the extent of my wrath towards her.

Let us return. I'll see my feelings sated,
And grant there a free rein to my hatred.
Come, Phoenix, her humiliation see.
Come.

PHOENIX

Go, Sire, go, kneel there at her feet.
Go, and swear how your soul adores her,
Encourage her to bitter scorn once more.

PYRRHUS

I know you think that ready to forgive her
My heart seeks whatever peace she'll offer.

PHOENIX

You love: it is enough.

PYRRHUS

Love that ingrate?
When the more I love the more she'll hate?
Her friends, her relatives, their only good,
I can destroy her son; perhaps I should.
A stranger slave, in Epirus, she's become,
One who has my heart, a throne, her son;
Yet in her traitorous heart I only win
The role of one she persecutes on whim.
No, I forswear her, vengeance shall be mine:
I'll justify her hatred one last time.
I'll yield Greece her son. What tears will flow!
What pleas she'll make to me in her sorrow!
What drama we'll prepare for her this day!
She'll die of it, I'll be the cause, I say.
I'll be the dagger thrust into her breast.

PHOENIX

Then why show your intent to all the rest?
Why must you still indulge your weakness?

PYRRHUS

I hear. Forgive me this last tenderness.
Do you fear my wrath will fail the fight?
A dying love but shows its last poor light.
Come, Phoenix, with your counsel I agree.
Shall I yield the boy, go see Hermione?

PHOENIX

Yes, see her Sire, and with your vows submit,
Protest to her.

PYRRHUS

We'll do what we have promised.

Act III Scene I

Orestes, Pylades

PYLADES

My lord, you must control this fierce anger,
Your actions seem like those of a stranger.
Let me.

ORESTES

No, your words are out of season,
Pylades, I'm wearied by dull reason.
My life is dragged out now in suffering.
I must depart with her, or end this thing.
My plans are made, I shall complete them.
Yes, I wish it.

PYLADES

Well, take her with you then;
I agree. But think how they'll react.
What will men say, seeing how you act?
Dissimulate: they must not see you fret,
Let your eyes be guardians of your secret.
The guards, the court, the very air around you
Belong to Pyrrhus, and Hermione too.
Above all, hide your anger from her eyes.
You Gods! Why seek her out in this wise?

ORESTES

Who knows? Of myself, am I the master?
Fury transported me, and I came hither,
Perhaps to threaten her and her lover.

PYLADES

And the fruits of it, now you've recovered?

ORESTES

Tell me, what mind would not be overcome
By the blow that snatched away my reason?
He marries Hermione tomorrow;

I must give her to him, it's an honor.
Oh! Rather this barbarian I'll slay.

PYLADES

My lord, you accuse him though all is fate.
Yet, tormented by his inner fires,
I ought to pity his and your desires.

ORESTES_

No, I see he enjoys my suffering,
Without my love for her, he'd scorn the thing;
Until he knew it, he despised her charms:
He takes her to take her from my arms.
Oh, you Gods! Hermione being won,
From his sight forever might be gone.
Confused between love and vexation,
Her heart but awaited his permission;
Her eyes were opened; she listened, yes;
Spoke; pitied. A word ensured the rest.

PYLADES

You believed her.

ORESTES

What! That burning anger
Against the ingrate.

PYLADES

He was never loved more.
With you and Pyrrhus in accord, I say
Some ready pretext would have caused delay.
Think you not so? Then, leave deception here,
Don't take her with you, forever flee her.
What! Your love will batten on a fury
Who will detest you, and will weary
Your days, regretting this near marriage,
Who will.

ORESTES

That's why with her I'd take passage.
All smile on her; and I for my part pay
By leaving, and losing, in useless rage?
Go far from her, and try to forget her?
No, in my suffering I'll see her suffer.
No lonely weeping. Weary of her pity
I intend in turn she'll learn to fear me,
And her cruel eyes, when tears have flowed,
Will yield the compliments I there bestowed.

PYLADES

So here's the outcome of your embassy:
Orestes, the abductor!

ORESTES

Pylades,
If Greece, avenged, delights in my success,
Will she delight then in my sorrows less?
What reward then though Greece admires us,
If I become the jest of Epirus?
What do you wish? To conceal nothing,
My innocence now's a burdensome thing.
What is this ever unjust contrivance
That's blind to crime, but hunts down innocence?
Wherever I turn my eyes about me
I see ills to condemn the deities.
Let's merit their anger then, deserve their hate,
And taste the fruits of crime despite our fate.
But you, in error, why do you ever seek
To turn a wrath towards you meant for me?
Long enough my friendship's harmed you:
Avoid misfortune, flee the guilty too.
Dear Pylades, your sympathy's in error;
Leave me to await the fruits of danger.
Take to the Greeks the child Pyrrhus has freed.
Go now.

PYLADES

No, go seize Hermione.

In danger, the greatest hearts win through,
Led by Love what shall not friendship do?
Go to your Greeks and arouse their zeal:
Our ships are ready, fair winds we feel,
I know this palace and its winding halls;
You know the sea beats against its walls;
This very night, with ease, a secret way,
Come lead your prize to the outer bay.

ORESTES

Dear friend, I abuse your friendship, truly.
Forgive these sorrows you alone pity;
Excuse this wretch that loses all he loves,
Whom the world hates; whom hatred moves.
If only I in turn in happier days.

PYLADES

Dissemble, my lord, that's what , say.
Seek to conceal your plans behind a mask:
Forget Hermione's ungrateful acts;
Forget your love; she's here, show cunning, stealth.

ORESTES

Go. Answer for her, I'll answer for myself.

Act III Scene II

Hermione, Orestes, Cleone

ORESTES

So! My efforts have ensured your conquest.
I have seen Pyrrhus: marriage wins the rest.

HERMIONE

They say so: and moreover they assure me
That you only seek me to prepare me.

ORESTES

Your soul will not rebel then at his vows?

HERMIONE

Who'd have thought Pyrrhus would prove faithful now?
That love would make this late declaration?
That, as I leave, he'd declare his passion?
I thought like you he only feared the Greeks,
That he pursued his interests, not me,
That I held greater sway over your heart.

ORESTES

No, Madame; he loves you, I must not doubt.
Cannot your eyes do all they wish to do?
And doubtless he is not despised by you.

HERMIONE

What can I do, my lord? A promise made,
Can I take from him what's not mine to take?
Love does not rule the fate of a princess,
The glory of duty is all that we have left.
Yet I would leave, and you saw maybe
How far, for you, I strayed from my duty.

ORESTES

How clearly you see, cruel one, though you,
Like all, may give their heart to whom they choose.
Your heart's your own. I hoped, and yet I see,
In giving it you steal it not from me.
I accuse you much less than I rail at fate.
Why tire you with importunate debate?
Such is your duty, I accept; and mine
To spare you sorrow's speech at such a time.

Act III Scene III

Hermione, Cleone

HERMIONE

Did you expect so little show of anger?

CLEONE

A grief that's silent often lies deeper.
I pity him: author of his own sorrow,
The blow that hurts him is his own, I know.
Think how long your wedding's been delayed.
He but speaks, and Pyrrhus' mind is swayed.

HERMIONE

You think Pyrrhus fears? Whom should he fear?
Those who for ten long years fled Hector's spear;
Who, a hundred times, missing Achilles,
In their burning ships sought sanctuary,
And who without the actions of his son
Would still be asking high Troy for Helen?
No, Cleone, he's not his enemy:
He does what he wills; weds me, loves me.
Yet Orestes must impute his tears to me:
Is there naught to speak of but his misery?
Pyrrhus returns to me. Oh, dear Cleone,
Can you feel the joy that fills Hermione?
Do you know who he is? Have you heard tell
Of all his countless exploits, what befell?
Intrepid, winning victory everywhere,
Handsome, faithful too: no failings there.
Think.

CLEONE

Dissimulate. Your rival now, in tears,
Bringing her sorrows, doubtless, ventures here.

HERMIONE

You Gods! Can I not smile in privacy?
We'll go: why speak?

Act III Scene IV

Andromache, Hermione, Cleone, Cephisa

ANDROMACHE

Madame, why do you flee?
Is it not now a sweet sight to your eye
To witness Hector's widow kneel and cry?
I do not come to you with jealous tears
To mourn a man who your arts reveres.
Alas, those cruel hands, I saw them pierce
The only one whose love I might rehearse.
My heart by Hector long ago was lit;
Now, with him, the grave has buried it.
Yet my son remains. One day you'll know,
Madame, how for a son our tears must flow;
But you'll not know, such is not my thought,
What mortal trouble destiny has brought,
When of all the good it might have left me,
The sole remaining one, it steals from me.
Alas, when, left for ten long years to suffer,
The angry Trojans threatened your mother,
I begged my Hector to show her mercy.
You could beg Pyrrhus likewise to help me.
Why fear the child because he is a Trojan?
Let me hide him on some desert island.
You are assured, with all his mother's care,
My son will learn naught but weeping there.

HERMIONE

I know your sorrows. But austere duty,
A father's word, impose this silence on me.
It is he who has roused Pyrrhus' anger.
To sway Pyrrhus who than you is better?
Your eyes have long reigned over his heart.
Change his mind: I'll yield, for my part.

Act III Scene V

Andromache, Cephisa

ANDROMACHE

How scornfully the cruel girl denied us!

CEPHISA

I would heed her counsel, and see Pyrrhus.
One look might thwart Hermione and Greece.
Ah, he seeks you.

Act III Scene VI

Pyrrhus, Andromache, Phoenix, Cephisa

PYRRHUS (*To Phoenix.*)

No princess do I see.
You told me she was here, are these your lies?

PHOENIX

I thought so.

ANDROMACHE (*To Cephisa*)

See now the power of my eyes.

PYRRHUS

What said she, Phoenix?

ANDROMACHE

Alas! All forsake me.

PHOENIX

Sire, let us go follow Hermione.

CEPHISA

What are you waiting for? Break this silence.

ANDROMACHE

He's promised them my son.

CEPHISA

That's mere intent.

ANDROMACHE

No, no, I must weep, his death's decided.

PYRRHUS

Will she not see us, are we derided?

What pride!

ANDROMACHE

And I'd only annoy him more.

Go.

PYRRHUS

Let's give the Greeks this son of Hector.

ANDROMACHE_(7KURZLQJ_KHUVHOI_DW_
PYLADES¶_IHHW)

Oh, wait Sire! What is this that you would do?

Surrender him? Then yield his mother too.

Your words to me spoke of justice, amity!

Gods! Can I not at least move your pity?

Am I condemned without hope of pardon?

PYRRHUS

Phoenix will tell you, my word is given.

ANDROMACHE

You'd who'd defy great dangers, all for me!

PYRRHUS

I was blind then; now my eyes can see.
Faour might have followed your request;
But yet you never asked it of me yet.
The thing is done.

ANDROMACHE

Oh, Sire, you know enough of those sighs
That fear to let themselves be realized.
Pardon, that to the light of fallen fortune
Remains a pride that feared to presume.
You know this too: Andromache could kneel
To no other king but you, her heart reveal.

PYRRHUS

No, you detest me now; and your deep art
Fears to owe a thing to my fond heart.
That very son, the object of your care,
You'd love less for it, if I left him there.
Hatred and scorn, against me they gather;
You hate me more than all the Greeks together.
Enjoy your noble anger at leisure.
Come, Phoenix.

ANDROMACHE

Come, rejoin my dead lover.

CEPHISA

Madame.

ANDROMACHE (7R_

CEPHISA)

What would you have me say that I forgot?
Source of my ills, think you he knows it not?

(7R_

PYLADES)

Sire, see the state you reduce me to.
I saw my father die, my city too,
Witnessed the death of my whole family,
My husband dragged through the dust, all bloody,

His son, remaining, destined for the knife.
But what can a son not do? I breathe, have life.
More: to it I was sometimes reconciled,
Since here, not elsewhere, I was exiled;
That this son of kings, happy in servitude,
Since he must serve, was subject now to you.
I thought his prison was our sanctuary.
Once Priam found mercy before Achilles:
I sought, from his son, magnanimity.
Pardon, dear Hector, for my credulity.
I did not suspect your enemy of crime;
Despite himself, I thought he would be kind.
Oh, if only he might leave us two
In the tomb my care once raised for you,
That, ending there all misery and hate,
Ashes so dear might never separate.

PYRRHUS

Go, wait for me, Phoenix.

Act III Scene VII

Pyrrhus, Andromache, Cephisa

PYRRHUS (*Continuing*)

Madame, wait.
Your son can be saved, however late.
Oh, I regret, in causing you to weep
I only gave you arms to oppose me.
I thought to meet you filled with hate.
At least now turn towards me your gaze,
See if these eyes judge with severity,
Whether they are those of an enemy.
Why force me to spurn you once again?
Let hatred cease, in your own son's name.
It is I who seek to save him anew.
Must I, sighing, ask his life of you?

Must I kneel to you on his behalf?
For the last time, save him, save us both.
I know the vows, yes, the chains I break,
The hatred that will follow my .mistake..
Dismiss Hermione, and on her brow
I'll set lasting shame, and not a crown.
You shall I lead to her marriage-shrine,
And with her garlands your hair entwine.
This is no offer to despise, Madame:
You'll reign, or you will die out of hand.
My heart, racked by a year's ingratitude,
Won't tolerate prolonged incertitude.
Too many days of fear, threats, and hate:
I'll die if I lose you, die if I must wait:
Think then: I'll return, to lead you swiftly
To the temple where your child awaits me;
There, angry, or submissive if you're wise,
To crown you, or slay him before your eyes.

Act III Scene viii

Andromache, Cephisa

CEPHISA

I told you thus, and that in spite of Greece
You'd still be mistress of your destiny.

ANDROMACHE

Alas, the results of speech in action!
Now I am left to slay my only son.

CEPHISA

To your dead husband you prove too loyal:
Excess of virtue may be culpable.
He too would have wished you to be kinder.

ANDROMACHE

What! Give him Pyrrhus as his successor?

CEPHISA

So his son wishes, whom the Greeks now crave.
Do you think his shade blushes in the grave?
That he despises a victorious king
Who reinstates your ancestral ranking,
Who forcefully treads down the victors,
Who forgets Achilles was his father,
Who denies his exploits, all for you?

ANDROMACHE

Must I forget, because he chooses to?
Forget my Hector who lacked burial,
Dragged dishonored round the city wall?
Must I forget Priam, with his last breath,
Bloodying the altar he clutched in death?
Think, think, Cephisa, of that cruel night
That quenched a whole nation's living light.
Imagine Pyrrhus, with glittering eyes,
Caught in the glow of that burning prize,
Carving his passage over my dead kin,
Heated by the blood he wallowed in.
Think of the victor's cries, of the dying,
Burnt by the flames; slain to the sword's sighing.
See Andromache distraught amongst the horror:
That's how Pyrrhus looms in memory's mirror;
Those are the exploits with which he's crowned
This is the man to whom have me bound.
No, I'll not be accomplice to his crime;
Troy will yield him victims, one more time.
All of my hate would be enslaved by him.

CEPHISA

Well, then! Let's go and see them kill your son:
They only wait for you. Madame, you tremble?

ANDROMACHE

Oh! What memories now make me stumble!

What! Cephisa, shall I see him suffer
That child, my only joy, image of Hector?
That child he left me as the pledge he loved?
I recall how, that day when courage moved
Him to seek Achilles, or rather death,
He clasped his son to him, said with a breath,
.Dear spouse,. and wiped away my tears,
.Who knows what destiny will grant me here;
I leave the child as pledge that I was true:
If I die, I say he'll know me through you.
If my memory proves dear to his mother,
Show my son how you cherished his father..
And shall I see them shed blood so precious?
Shall I watch him die like his ancestors?
Barbarous king, must my crime be his?
Though I hate you, is my son not guiltless?
Has he reproached you for your murders?
Has he mourned ills that he did not suffer?
And yet, my child, you die if I instead
Do not arrest the sword above your head.
I could restrain them, and yet I reject it?
No, you shall not die: I'll not accept it.
Let us seek Pyrrhus. No, dear Cephisa,
Go seek him for me.

CEPHISA

What must I say?

ANDROMACHE

Tell him my love for my son is great.
Do you think he's sworn to his fate?
Could love commit such barbarity?

CEPHISA

Madame, he will soon return in fury.

ANDROMACHE

Well! Go tell him.

CEPHISA

What? Of your affection?

ANDROMACHE

Must I then pretend to that emotion?

O my husband's ashes! Trojans! Father!

O son, what your life will cost your mother!

Come.

CEPHISA

Where Madame, what do you now intend?

ANDROMACHE

At his tomb I'll go consult my husband.

Act IV Scene I

Andromache, Cephisa

CEPHISA

Oh, I doubt not it is your husband's art,
Hector's, this miraculous change of heart.
He hopes that Troy itself may yet renew
Restored by that happy child saved by you.
Pyrrhus has promised it. You have heard
Madame: he only now awaits your word.
Believe his vows: father, scepter, allies,
He lays all at your feet, won by your eyes.
He makes you his queen, his sovereign mate.
Now, does this victor deserve your hate?
Against the Greeks, already filled with anger,
He seeks your son's safety like a father:
He foresees their wrath, employs the Guard;
To keep him safe puts himself at hazard.
All's ready at the temple, and you're won.

ANDROMACHE

Yes, I will go. But let us see my son.

CEPHISA

Madame, why hurry? It should suffice you
That he will no longer be denied you.
Your love can show itself unbounded,
And kisses no longer shall be counted.
What joy to teach a child, see him grow,
No longer as a slave raised from below,
But as a king renew a royal line!

ANDROMACHE

Cephisa, let me yet see him this last time.

CEPHISA

What are you saying?

ANDROMACHE

Oh, my Cephisa,
My heart cannot hide from you, my dear.
Your faultless loyalty, acting to the letter,
And yet I thought you might know me better.
What? Could you think Andromache, untrue,
Would betray him who thought to live anew
Through her; revive the sorrows of the dead
And with my peace betray the tears shed?
Is that the loyalty to his dust projected?
Yet my son dies: he must be protected.
Pyrrhus by wedding me will act for him.
It is enough: I place my trust in him.
I know this Pyrrhus. Violent, but sincere,
Cephisa, he'll do what he promised here.
I rely too on the Greeks. unreasoning anger:
Their hate will grant Hector's son a father.
I go then, since I must be sacrificed,
To give to Pyrrhus what is left of life;
I go to hear his vows at the altar,
And bind him to my son all the deeper,
But then my hand, fatal now to me,
Will put an end to my disloyalty,
And, to my honor, pay the debt I owe
To Pyrrhus, son, self, and husband so.
Here is my love's guiltless stratagem;
Here's what my husband commands me then.
I'll join Hector, and my race likewise.
Cephisa, it's for you to close my eyes.

CEPHISA

Oh, don't think I'll survive you though.

ANDROMACHE

No, No, Cephisa, you must not follow.
To you I confide my dearest treasure:
If live, live for this child of Hector.
Sole sanctuary of Trojan hopes now, think
How vital you'll prove to that line of kings.
Watch Pyrrhus closely; see that he stays true:
You may speak of me still, if you must do.

Make him value this marriage; in a breath,
Remind him I was bound to him by death.
That his resentment must now flee him,
That, leaving him my son, I esteem him.
Let our son know of our heroic past;
As soon as you can, lead him on that path.
Tell him by what deeds they won fame there,
Of what they did, rather than whom they were;
Talk to him every day of his father,
And sometimes speak to him of his mother.
Let him not think of revenge some day:
We leave him to a master, he must obey.
Let him be tactful speaking of the past;
He is of Hector's line, yet he's the last;
And for this last I shall myself, today,
Sacrifice my blood, my love, my hate.

CEPHISA

Alas!

ANDROMACHE

Follow me not, though your heart, past fear,
May fail to prove the mistress of your tears.
Dry your eyes, they come, remember dear
Andromache's child's entrusted to your care.
Here's Hermione. Let's flee her violence.

Act IV Scene II

Hermione, Cleone

CLEONE

No I cannot over-praise your silence.
You are mute, Madame, and his malice
Troubles your thoughts not in the least.
Without a word you bear this new attack,
Who used to hate the name of Andromache!

You who despaired beyond all remonstrance,
When Pyrrhus honored her with but a glance!
He weds her; gives her, with the diadem,
The very pledges you received from him,
And yet your lips are mute, in all this pain,
Not deigning to part even to complain!
Oh, I fear Madame, this fateful peace!
It would be better.

HERMIONE

You've called Orestes?

CLEONE

He's on his way, Madame, and you will see
How swiftly he will kneel at your feet.
Forever ready to serve yet win no prize,
And only too enslaved by your fair eyes.
He's here.

Act IV Scene III

Orestes, Hermione, Cleone

ORESTES

Oh, Madame, is it true for once
Orestes, seeing you, finds acceptance?
Am I deceived by all the evidence?
Have you indeed sighed for my presence?
May I believe your eyes, at last disarmed,
Would.

HERMIONE

I must know if you still love my charms.

ORESTES_

Do I love you? My speeches, perjuries,
My flights, returns, vows and injuries,

My despair, my eyes yet drowned in tears,
What truer witness to true love appears?

HERMIONE

Avenge me, I'll believe.

ORESTES

We'll set aflame
All Greece, by brandishing my arms: your name.
Let us reclaim our rightful station,
You Helen's place, I that of Agamemnon.
Replay the fall of Troy in Epirus,
So that our fathers' fame embraces us.
On, I am ready.

HERMIONE

No, my lord, but stay:
I will not carry these affronts away.
What! Crown my enemies' bare insolence,
Go elsewhere, and await tardy vengeance,
Yield my destiny to chance encounters,
Which in the end may offer no redress?
Let Epirus weep at my going.
If avenge me, then no delaying.
All your procrastination harms us.
Run to the temple. Sacrifice.

ORESTES

Who?

HERMIONE

Pyrrhus.

ORESTES

Pyrrhus, Madame?

HERMIONE

What? Your hate fails too?
Oh, run now, fearful lest I recall you.

Invoke not rights I'd send to oblivion,
It's not for you to justify his actions.

ORESTES

I excuse him? You, Madame, for your part
Engraved his crimes too deeply on my heart!
We'll avenge, yes, but seek other means.
We'll be his enemies, not his assassins.
We'll make of his ruin rightful conquest.
What, then! Shall I take the Greeks his head,
And shall I here represent a nation,
Only to serve it through assassination?
By all the gods, let's have Greece justice,
And let him die charged by an angry public.
Remember that he reigns: a brow that's crowned.

HERMIONE

Is it not enough for you that I have found
Against him? That my offended honor
Demands a sacrifice, mine and no other;
That Hermione is a tyrant's prize;
That I loathe him; loved him for his lies?
I hide nothing: he knew how to please me,
Inspired by love, or my father's decree,
No matter; be beyond all their intent.
Despite my shameful disappointment,
Despite my just horror at his sin,
While he lives, fear lest I pardon him.
Until he's dead be doubtful of my mood:
If he dies not today, him I might still love.

ORESTES

Then I must slay him, and prevent that grace;
I must; yet what is it I must embrace?
How should I serve your anger so swiftly?
Where are the means that will so allow me?
I am scarcely arrived in Epirus,
And you would have me overturn it thus;
You'd have a king die, that punishment

To fall this day, this hour, this very moment.
I must destroy him while his people gather!
Let me conduct my victim to the altar,
I'll resist no longer; and go I will
To reconnoiter the place where I'll kill.
Tonight I'll serve you, tonight I'll attack.

HERMIONE

Yet it's today that he weds Andromache.
His throne's already placed in the temple;
My shame's confirmed: his victory. S total.
Why do you wait? He offers up his life:
Defenseless, unguarded, he takes a wife;
He ranges men around dead Hector's son;
Abandons himself to my foe, that Trojan.
Will you defend his life despite him then?
Arm your Greeks, and arm my loyal men;
Rouse your friends, all mine are at your call.
He betrays me, wrongs you; scorns us all.
What? Already they hate him as do I:
They'll gladly see a Trojan's husband die.
Tell them: my enemy cannot escape,
Or rather at their wish his wounds will gape.
Lead or follow their fury as you will;
Come, stained with the blood of that infidel;
Be certain, if you do, my heart is yours.

ORESTES

But think, Madame.

HERMIONE

Oh, enough my lord!
These endless reasons mock my anger.
The means to please me is what I offer,
And content Orestes; though now I see
He'll moan, yet not seek to be worthy.
Go: boast of your constancy elsewhere,
And leave the means of vengeance in my care.
By coward's kindness, courage is confused,

Today I have too often been refused.
I go to the temple where my marriage waits,
Where you dare not go to meet the Fates.
There, I'll know how to reach my enemy:
I'll pierce the heart that will not love me;
And my blood-stained hands acting swiftly
Will soon, despite him, merge our destinies;
Ungrateful as he is the sweeter view
Is die with him, than live on with you.

ORESTES

No, I'll rob you of that fateful pleasure,
Orestes hand alone shall end this matter.
Through me your enemies their lives will lose,
And you may acknowledge it as you choose.

HERMIONE

Go then. Make me mistress of your fate,
Prepare for our flight, as events dictate.

Act IV Scene IV

Hermione, Cleone

CLEONE

You'll destroy yourself, you should consider.

HERMIONE

May be so, but I'll play the avenger.
Yet I know not, though Orestes offers,
Whether to rely, in this thing, on others.
Pyrrhus has less guilt for him than me,
While my blows would fall more certainly.
What joy to avenge my own injury,
To stain my hand with blood of perjury,
And to make his pain, my pleasure, greater,
Hold back my rival from his dying murmur!

Oh, that Orestes, punishing the crime,
Might proclaim the hands that kill are mine!
Go find him: let him teach that foul ingrate
He dies through hatred, mine, and not the State.
Run, Cleone. Vengeance fails me still,
If he dies not knowing it's I who kill.

CLEONE

I'll obey, Madame. Yet who is coming?
You Gods: who'd credit this? It is the King!

HERMIONE

Oh, find Orestes; tell him, Cleone,
To act not till he sees Hermione.

Act IV Scene V

Pyrrhus, Hermione, Phoenix

PYRRHUS

You did not expect me, Madame, I see
My arrival has disturbed your reverie.
I do not come armed with base artifice
Equity's veil concealing my injustice;
It's enough my own heart condemns me;
And I ill sustain what I do not believe.
I wed a Trojan. Yes, and now aver
I promised you the loyalty I show her.
Others might say that in the Trojan field
Our fathers made the vows that I repealed,
And, without consulting son or daughter,
We were bound, loveless, to one another;
Yet I was pleased to do what I must do,
Emissaries promised my heart to you;
Far from denial, I wished it on us.
I saw you when you came to Epirus;
And though other eyes. winning light

Had anticipated your eyes, so bright,
I did not hold to that first ecstasy:
On you I wished to fix my loyalty,
Welcomed you as queen; sought to prove
My vows would bind me as firm as love.
But love has won; and with a fateful blow
Andromache snatched from me a heart she loathes.
Both entangled, we rush to the altar,
And swear, despite ourselves, to love forever.
So Madame, condemn me for a traitor,
A sad one, yet that wishes for no other.
Far then from restraining your just anger,
It will give solace to us both hereafter.
Call me the names reserved for perjurers:
I fear your silence, not your sharp arrows,
And my heart, a thousand times the witness,
Would accuse me more if you said less.

HERMIONE

My lord, in this speech free of artifice,
I'm pleased to find you do yourself justice,
So, wishing thus to break a solemn vow,
To crime you yield, play the criminal now.
Is it right conquerors should bow then,
To slavish laws, keeping promise given?
No, perfidy it is you must display,
And only seek me for your own self-praise.
What! When vows nor duty seem to speak,
Loving a Trojan, make love to a Greek?
Leave me; take me back; return once more
From Helen's child to the wife of Hector?
Offer the slave, the princess, your crown;
Burn Troy for Greeks, Greece for Hector's son?
All this displays your own self-mastery,
A hero who's not enslaved by loyalty!
To please your wife, perhaps better
Summon the names of traitor and perjurer!
You've come to view the pallor of my brow,
Then seek her arms, to mock my sadness now.
You'd see me weep behind her chariot;

But that would be too burdensome a lot;
Without borrowing titles from elsewhere
Can you not live with those you have here?
Hector's old father falling, wretchedly,
At the feet of his dying family,
When your hostile sword pierced his breast
Seeking, in frozen age, a blood-stained rest;
Burning Troy plunged in rivers of blood;
You slaying Polyxena where she stood,
In front of all the Greeks, their indignation:
How refuse one dealing such compassion?

PYRRHUS

Madame I know to what excess of rage
Greek revenge for Helen spurred my courage.
I could excuse myself for all that's lost,
But I'm prepared to bury all the past.
I thank the Gods that your indifference
Shows me my joyous sighs. innocence.
My heart, I find, all too fastidious,
Must learn to better know the two of us.
My remorse struck you as mortal injury;
One must know love to know disloyalty.
You did not mean to have me chained to you.
I fear to betray you, perhaps thus I serve you.
Our hearts are not dependent on each other;
I did my duty; you yielded to its brother.
Nothing obliged you to love me indeed.

HERMIONE

I never loved you? What then was my deed?
I scorned for you the vows of other princes,
I found myself adrift here in these provinces;
Still here, despite your infidelity,
My Greeks are ashamed of my mercy.
I ordered them to hide my injury;
I waited for a liar, silently;
I thought, sooner or later, that your duty
Would return to me the heart you owe me.
I loved you faithless; what might faith have done?

At the moment your cruel speech was come
So carefully to announce love's death,
I doubted if I did not love you yet.
But if it must be, if the Gods in anger
Grant to other eyes the sovereign power,
Marry the woman, yet though I consent,
Don't force my eyes to witness the event.
I speak to you for the last time it may be;
Postpone it a day; tomorrow we will see.
You answer not? Traitor, now I see you,
Counting these minutes where I delay you!
Your heart, impatient to see her again,
Merely regrets another complication.
Your heart speaks to hers, your eyes must meet.
I no longer hold you, her you must greet:
Go swear the vows to her you swore to me,
Go profane the temple's sanctity.
The Gods, the just Gods will not forget
That the same oaths were sworn me yet.
Take that heart that leaves me in despair.
Go, run. But fear to find Hermione there.

Act IV Scene VI

Pyrrhus, Pylades

PHOENIX

You heard, my Lord. Don't underestimate
This lover seeking vengeance: she's irate.
Yet she's not where friends can support her:
Her quarrel and the Greeks. twine together.
Orestes loves her still; perhaps that's one..

PYRRHUS

Andromache awaits me. Guard her son.

Act V Scene I

Hermione

HERMIONE

Where am I? What's done? What more awaits me?
What mood has gripped me? What grief devours me?
I wander, purposeless, about this place.
How can I know whether I love or hate?
Cruel! With what a look he dismissed me,
Without sorrow or a trace of pity!
Was he troubled about me for a moment?
For me, was there the smallest sigh present?
Deaf to my moans, calm, so it appears,
Did he even seem to register my tears?
And I mourn him; fill my cup to the brim;
My coward's heart is still involved with him,
I tremble at the menace of that blow,
And, verging on revenge, forgiveness show!
No, I'll not halt the course of my anger:
Let him die! He lives for me no longer.
Perfidious, he triumphs, scorns my rage,
He thinks this storm in tears will dissipate;
Believes that weak, and with a wavering heart,
One hand will ward off what the other starts.
And he still judges me by my past kindness.
Or rather other things his thoughts possess.
Triumphant in the temple, he'll not know
Someone elsewhere dreams the mortal blow.
He leaves me, then! Oh, sad predicament.
No, one act more: Orestes. fell intent.
Let Pyrrhus die, since he foresaw it,
And since he's forced me to desire it.
Desire it? What? Who chooses, is it I?
Through Hermione's love shall he die,
This prince, whose deeds in other days,
Gave my heart joy in so many ways,
To whom, in secret even, I was destined

Before they planned that fatal wedding,
For whom I crossed so many lands and seas,
Travelled so far to bring him to his knees,
To assassinate him? Oh, before he dies..!

Act V Scene II

Hermione, Cleone

HERMIONE

What have I done, Cleone? What say your eyes?
How is Pyrrhus?

CLEONE

With joy delirious,
Proudest of mortals and most amorous.
I saw him near the temple, there to wed,
Who as a conqueror his new conquest led;
And, with eyes where joy and hope shone,
Drunk with the sight of her, he strode along.
Andromache, midst a thousand cries of joy,
Bears to the altar memories of Troy:
Incapable of love or hate, I say,
Joyless and silent: seeming to obey.

HERMIONE

And the ingrate, will he end this outrage?
Paid you close attention to his visage?
Does he sip at pleasure's brimming chalice?
Did he look back once towards the palace?
Tell me, did you keep yourself in view?
Did the ingrate blush on seeing you?
Did anxiety reveal his faithlessness,
Is he proud to the end, now, confess?

CLEONE

He sees naught: safety and honor too

Seem to flee his memory, along with you.
Careless of who's by him, foe or subject
He merely pursues his amorous project.
He's ranged his guard round Hector's son,
Thinking the boy threatened, if anyone.
So Phoenix leads the lad to a far place:
Distant from the temple, and the palace.
That is Pyrrhus. only care today.

HERMIONE

Faithless, he dies! What did Orestes say?

CLEONE

Orestes entered the temple with his men.

HERMIONE

Ah! Was he ready to exact revenge?

CLEONE

I know not.

HERMIONE

You know not? Orestes too,
Orestes betrays me?

CLEONE

He adores you.
But a thousand things confuse his mind,
Now to love, now to honor, he is blind,
In Pyrrhus sees the virtue of the crown;
In Pyrrhus sees Achilles; in both, renown:
He fears Greece, and a hostile universe,
But fears himself, he claims, the very worst.
He'd bring you Pyrrhus. head, his victim,
Only the thought of murder prevents him.
Well, he has entered, not knowing whether
He'll be a murderer or mere spectator.

HERMIONE

Oh, he'll see them wed without obstacle;
He'll not trouble that fine spectacle.
I know what conscience stays men's spears:
The coward fears death, that's all he fears.
What! Without uttering a single cry
Did not my mother summon Greece to die?
Did not her eyes in those ten years of war,
Draw twenty kings to death, not hers before?
And I ask only a perjurer's death,
And charge a lover with his dying breath;
With ease he can, as his prize, now win me;
Shall I give myself, and none avenge me?
Come: she that deals justice must be I.
What cries of sorrow from that shrine will fly;
We'll end this fateful marriage with lament,
If they're joined, let it last one brief moment.
I'll distinguish none in that last frenzy:
All shall be Pyrrhus, Orestes, trust me.
I'll die; yet at least I'll be avenged so,
Some there will follow, I'll not die alone.

Act V Scene III

Orestes, Hermione, Cleone

ORESTES

Madame, it's done, yours was the knife:
Pyrrhus has yielded up his faithless life.

HERMIONE

He's dead?

ORESTES

Dying: and our Greeks, still angry,
Bathed him in blood, for his perjury.
I gave my promise; and yet my courage
Found in this plot a sad funereal image,

I ran to the temple, our Greeks had vowed
To reach the altar mingled with the crowd.
Pyrrhus saw me. But with calm expression,
Sight of me seemed to confirm his mission,
The Greeks defiant, their ambassador,
Only confirming his wedding splendor.
Then, with delight, lifting a royal crown,
He placed it thus on Andromache's brow:
.I give you,. he said, .my crown, my fealty,
Andromache; rule Epirus and me.
I pledge your son the love of a father;
Witness the Gods: I swear it to his mother.
I hold as enemies all those of this boy,
And recognize him now as King of Troy..
To words that thrilled his people, so I gauge,
Our Greeks responded with a cry of rage;
The man was hemmed in, Greeks about him,
And I could find no clear place to strike him.
Each sought the glory of his destruction.
I saw him struggle, in the heat of action,
Trying to escape all blood-wet from their blows;
Yet, at the altar at the last, brought low.
The crowd were stunned: I pushed through the press,
To reach, and take from here, my own Princess,
And gain the harbor, where our allies soon,
Will gather stained with blood they shed for you.

HERMIONE

What have they done!

ORESTES

Forgive their impatience:
They have, I know, forestalled your vengeance.
You wished my hand to strike the final blow,
So that your hand, in dying, he might know;
But my ardor served as their example:
For you I deployed them in the temple,
Madame: and you alone are honored
By a death they merely executed.
You alone struck the blows.

HERMIONE

Silence, traitor,
It's yours alone this cowardly murder.
Go let the Greeks admire your anger,
Go, I spurn it, you fill me with horror.
Barbarian, what have you done? Fury
Cuts short a life ever formed for glory!
Have you killed a man today? Then tell,
Did not one drop of blood in you rebel?
Speak. Who made you his fate's arbiter?
Why did you kill? On what grounds? What for?
Who told you to?

ORESTES

You Gods! What, did not you though,
Yourself, here beg his death an hour ago?

HERMIONE

Must one then credit every crazed lover?
Could you my deeper thought not discover?
Could you not see by my inner torment,
My heart spurred my speech in every moment?
Though I wished it, why must you then agree?
Did you have to make me say it endlessly?
Before the deed you came to question me,
To return again: or rather to avoid me?
Why not leave me then to my own vengeance!
Who brought you here where they shun your presence?
Of your love, this, the detestable fruit,
You bring me, the horror that follows you.
It's you whose embassy, fatal to us both,
Made him pursue my rival: to his loss.
We would be still the sharers of his heart;
Perhaps he'd have loved me yet; for his part.
Farewell. Go now. I'll stay in Epirus:
I renounce Greece; Sparta; all my house;
All my family; it is enough for me
That she produced you: you, monstrosity.

Act V Scene IV

Orestes

ORESTES

Was this Hermione? What did I hear?
For whom then did I play the murderer?
I am, it seems, the assassin who killed.
Is Pyrrhus dead? Am I Orestes still?
I quell the thought that makes all clear.
I've killed, alas, a king whom I revere;
I've violated rules of embassy,
The sanctity of kings, humanity,
The very altars where my fury raged:
A regicide, dealt murder; sacrilege.
For whom? She to whom I gave my word, she,
Who, if he'd not died, would have shunned me,
Whose cause I wed. And yet now he is dead,
She asks his blood and breath again, instead!
She loves him! And I'm the raging monster!
Far from my sight, I lose her now, forever!
Ungrateful, fleeing, leaves me for my prize,
Her slave, all the harsh names she can devise.

Act V Scene V

PYLADES

We must go, my Lord, quit this place
Or learn never to do so after this.
Our Greeks hold on awhile within the gate,
A crowd has gathered, armed now and irate.
All here submit themselves to Andromache:

They call her queen, us foes, whom they attack.
Andromache herself, who jibbed at Pyrrhus,
His loyal widow, now declares against us,
Calls out for vengeance, harshly would demand
Payment for Troy now, and her first husband.
Don't wait for them to gather. Come quickly,
Our Greeks are here; and while Hermione
Held the crowd there, suffered her arrest,
Here lay our road, the safest and the best.

ORESTES

No, my friends, Hermione I'll follow.
Her arrest steals from me my tomorrow.
Go: I caused the crime, and I will pay.

PYLADES

Hermione, my Lord, you must forsake.
What! Ever the tool and object of her rage,
Do you seek to do the dead fresh outrage,
Because she meets her death, must you die too?

ORESTES

Dead? You Gods! Who says it?

PYLADES

No one told you?
Returning here we met her, all distraught,
Running towards the temple; hearing naught.
She saw Pyrrhus, borne high by his men,
His blood inciting them to swift revenge.
Her frenzy was doubtless stirred by the sight.
For we saw her there, from the gate's height,
Dagger in hand, bow above Pyrrhus' head,
Look heavenwards, strike and fall as dead.

ORESTES

Wretchedness beyond all, you Gods! I bless,
I praise you, for your endless thoroughness.
Bent on scourging me my whole life through,

I touch the depths of agony, formed by you.
Your hatred, set on causing me despair;
I only served as object for your anger,
To become the model of a life's defeat.
Well! I die happy, and my fate complete.
Where are those lovers? This joy to crown,
I'll bathe now in their blood, and in my own,
I want to view them as I meet my sword.
Let's merge three hearts never in accord.
But what dark is this that now is rising,
Surrounding me? Why am I shivering?
What terror grips me? You Gods, I see.
Ah! What rivers of blood flow round me?

PYLADES

My lord!

ORESTES

Pyrrhus! Do I see you once more?
Must I always find the rival I abhor?
Pierced by blows, how have you survived?
Wait, wait! Heer's one you were denied.
What's this? Hermione embraces him?
She comes perhaps to save him from his sin?
You Gods! What poisoned looks fly from her!
What demons, what snakes, drag behind her!
Ah! Daughters of Hell, are you prepared?
Who are those snakes for, hissing in your hair?
Who is this destined for, infernal sight?
Do you come to take me to eternal night?
So, Orestes yields to you, the Furies.
Yet, turn back, leave me to Hermione:
She, more than you, knows how to rend me;
My heart she shall devour, I'll not defend me.

PYLADES

He loses consciousness, and time presses:
Employ the moments that this fit leaves us.
Save him now. Our effort will prove worthless,

If, sense returning here, his nightmares surface.

End.