

need to grieve for these things? The pain is past; so past for the dead, that they care not so much as to rise up any more. Ah why should we count the number of the slain, when the living suffer by fortune's persistency? A full release from chance is also, say I, something worth. And for us who are left of the Argive host, the gain on the balance overweighs the hurt, seeing that yon bright sun may proclaim in our honour, winging our fame over land and sea, 'Troy in old time was won by an Argive armament: and these are the spoils which, to the glory of the gods throughout Hellas, they nailed upon the temples for a monumental pride.' Hearing this, men must needs praise Argos and them that led her host; and the grace of Zeus that wrought it all shall be paid with thanks. And so I have said my say.

*Eld.* Defeat in argument I do not deny. To be teachable is a thing that ages not with age. But the household and Clytaemnestra, whom this news should most nearly interest, must share the gain with me.

*Clytaemnestra* (entering). My joy was uttered some while ago, when the first fiery messenger came in the night, telling that Ilium was taken and destroyed. Then there were some who found fault with me, and said, 'Art thou for a beacon persuaded to think that Troy is taken now? How like a woman's heart to fly up so high!' Thus they argued, proving my error. But for all that I would sacrifice; and by womanly ordinance the townsfolk one and all took up the loud cry of holy gladness and in the sacred temples stilled with feeding incense the fragrant flame.

And now, for the fuller tale, what need I to take it from thee? From the king himself I shall learn it all. Rather, that I may bring my revered lord with swift return to my loving reception—what light more sweet to the eyes of a wife than this, when she opens the gate to her husband, restored by heaven safe from war?—take thou back to my lord this message: let him come with all speed to the people that love him, come to find in his home the wife faithful, even such as he left her, a very house-dog, loyal to one and an enemy to his foes; aye, and in all else unchanged, having never broken seal at all in this long while. I know of pleasure or scandalous address from any other no more than of dyeing bronze. [*Exit.*]

*A Conspirator.* Self-praise like this, filled full with its truth, it doth not misbeseem a noble wife to sound.

*An Elder.* What she hath said and they admire thou by their plain comment dost understand.