

*The Elders.* Prosperity in all men doth naturally crave more. Though the palace be pointed at by jealous fingers, none forbidding shuts fortune out with these words 'Enter no more'.

And so to the king the gods have given to take the town of Priam, and he comes honoured of heaven to his home: yet now if he must pay for the blood of those before, if adding death to deaths he is to crown the pile with yet other deaths in revenge, who hearing this could affirm that any mortal is born with fortune beyond harm?

*Agamemnon (within).* Oh, I am struck, deep-struck and mortally!

*Eld.* Silence! Who shrieks as wounded with a mortal stroke?

*Ag.* Again, oh again! Another stroke!

*Eld.* The deed, I doubt, is done, from the cries of the king. But let us give each other safe counsel, if we may.

*The Elders in succession.*

1. I give you mine own judgment, that we summon a rescue of the townfolk to the palace.

2. Nay, I think we had best dash in at once, and prove the deed by the dripping sword.

3. And I too am with this judgment so far<sup>1</sup>, that my vote is for action. It is no moment for delay.

4. There is occasion to beware. Their beginning betokens a plan to enslave the city.

5. Yes, because we linger! They, while she hesitates, tread her honour down and work unresting.

6. I know not what advice I may find to say. To a doer it belongs to advise about the doing.

7. I too am of like mind, for I see not how with words to raise up again the dead.

8. Are we to make death of life, thus yielding to the rule of those that have thus defiled a house?

9. Nay, 'tis intolerable, nay, death is better. It is a milder fate than to be enslaved.

10. Are we then indeed by inference from a cry to divine that the prince hath perished?

11. Best know the facts before we hear each other talk. Guessing and knowing are two things.

<sup>1</sup> Literally 'share a judgment *like* this'.