Iphigenia at Aulis
by Euripides

Cast: AGAMEMNON: Commander of the Greek army
OLD MAN: A manservant
CHORUS: Women of Chalcis
MENELAUS: Brother of Agamemnon, Helen’s ex.
CLYTEMNESTRA: Agamemnon’s wife.
IPHIGENIA: Agamemnon’s daughter.
ORESTES: His son. Omitted in this version.
MESSENGER:
ACHILLES: Commander of army group Myrmidons.

Notes:

This text was prepared for a particular production and contains omissions from the received text. It is not a translation but a conversion of academically sound translations into my own words. Some of the omissions are of passages that scholars posit are not written by Euripides. The main omission is a *deux ex machina* ending where a messenger explains that Iphigenia did not die but was replaced by a fawn on the altar. There is also omission of text written by Euripides. The received text contains two opening scenes which are concatenated in translation. One is a long explanatory speech which I have omitted. The other is a dynamic dialogue between Agamemnon and the Old Servant. I think Euripides would have preferred this as it was an important dramatic innovation. It was his last play and it is possible that he died before he tidied up his papers.
Iphigenia at Aulis.

PROLOGUE

OLD MAN, AGAMEMNON

AG: Old man, come out here in front of the tent.

OLD: I’m coming. What new plans now King Agamemnon?

AG: Hurry up now.

OLD: I am hurrying. Old age is sleepless, that makes my eyes sharp.

AG: Well tell me, what’s that star in the sky?

OLD: That’s Sirius, next to the seven Pleiades. It sails right through the middle of the heavens.

AG: (Aside) No voice yet of waking bird nor of the seas whisper. Deep is the hush of winds asleep on River Euripus.

OLD: Why have you been pacing up and down outside your tent my Lord Agamemnon? Everything’s quiet over at Aulis. There’s no activity from the guards on the ramparts of the fort. Can’t we go inside’?

AG: I envy you old man. I envy anyone who is able to pass without peril through life, obscure and unknown. Least of all I envy the mighty.

OLD: But the life of the mighty is crowned with glory.

AG: That glory is snared with danger. The rewards of office might be sweet but they are friends to dismay. An enterprise can clash with the will of the gods and life is overturned, or the greed of malignant men can rend the web of your desire.

OLD: These are no words for a king. Agamemnon, your father Atreus begat you but did not begat a life of ease for you. You are made a man and born to joy and sorrow. That is the will of the gods and you must accept it.

(Change of mood) But you’ve turned up your lamp and you’ve been writing a letter. You’re still holding it in your hand. You cross things out, seal it up and then break the seal. You throw things to the ground. Hot tears stream from your eyes and you look crazy, full of despair. What is this strange affliction? Why don’t you tell me? You can talk to a good and loyal servant. I was given to your wife as part of the dowry and went to the wedding. Old Tyrndareus selected me because I was honest.
AG: Here, take the letter and go home with it to Argos.
This is a confidential message, but I shall read it to you as you are loyal to my wife and house.

OLD: Yes tell me, so what I say shall agree with what is written.

AG: (Reads)
Dear Clytemnestra, Child of Leda,
I write subsequent to my previous,
Do not sent your daughter to the calm shore of Aulis enfolded in the wing of the Gulf of Euboea. Our daughter’s wedding feast must wait another season.

OLD: But when Achilles hears that he has lost his betrothed won’t his anger well up fierce against you and your wife. There is danger here don’t you think?

AG: Achilles has only lent his name to our plans without his knowledge. He knows nothing of a marriage nor that I have told my wife that I would give my daughter as his bride

OLD: This is a terrible thing my Lord Agamemnon.
You offered your daughter in marriage to the son of the goddess and now you bring her here as a victim for sacrifice.

AG: Ai ai ai, I’m out of my mind. I fall into darkness.
Get on your way now, as fast as you can, forget that your feet are old.

OLD: I shall hurry my Lord.

AG: Don’t rest by forest springs, don’t be lulled by soft sleep.

OLD: Have no fears.

AG: When you come to the fork in the road look carefully both ways in case you miss a carriage passing that would bring Iphigenia down to the Greek ships. And if you meet her and her escort make them turn back. Take the reins and shake them, send them back to Argos and the walls built by gigantic Cyclops.

OLD: I shall my Lord.

AG: Now, go out by the gate.

OLD: But when I tell them these things what will make your wife and daughter believe what I say?

AG: This seal. Keep it. It made the seal on the letter.
Now go, the four horded chariot of the sun shines to light the dawn.
Go, and save me from these troubles.

Exit old man.
No living person has luck and success to the end. No man is born without grief.

Exit Agamemnon
PARADOS.

CHORUS

I have sailed through the running surge    /Strophe
of River Euripus
and across the narrow strait
to the sand of sea-bound Aulis
I have come from my city called Chalcis
sea surrounded
nurse to the fountain,
shining Arethusia
I have come to see the noble Greeks
like gods in their oared ships
a thousand galleys sent by the kings
Fair-haired Menelaus
and noble born Agamemnon
as our men tell us
all come here
to seek out Helen at Troy
Helen, whom Paris
the herdsman prince
stole from the reedy banks
of River Eurocas
claimed as a gift from Aphrodite
beside the spray veiled fountain
when she sought the prize
in a contest of beauty
with Hera and Pallas Athena

I came running fast    /anti-strophe
through the Goddess Artemis grove
my cheeks blushed red
the roses of shame
for I wanted to see
the fence of Greek shields
the battle armour by the tents
the thronging horses
and I saw the two Ajaxes together
one the son of Oileus
the other the son of Telamon
Pride of Salamis
I saw Protesilius and Palamedes,
heir of sea-god Poseidon,
sitting together playing draughts
delighted in the maze of skill
And Diomedes who rejoiced
as he hurled the discus.
Nearby was Neriones born of warlike Mars
   a wonder to men
Leasrtes son come from the island
   of mountains
and with him came Nireus
   most handsome of the Greeks.

There was Achilles born of Thetis,
   trained by Chiron
with feet as fast as the wind
   of the rushing storm,
racing over sand and shingle
   in full armour
matching in a contest of speed
   with a chariot of four
and leading the race.
The charioteer was Emeloso
   Pheres heir,
he cried out loudly
   and whipped his horses
with their gold-wrought hits
   and bridles.
The yoke horses in the centre
   were dappled grey
   with snow-flecked manes
The trace horses on the outsides
   were bays with spotted fetlocks
   sweeping past the turn
And beside the chariot rail
   and singing hubs
Achilles, still sheathed in armour,
   hurled himself on.

[The remainder of this chorus not given]
SCENE ONE

OLD MAN, MENALAUS, AGAMEMNON, MESSENGER

ENTER OLD MAN AND MENALAUS WITH LETTER

OLD: Menelaus, this is an outrage you have no right.

MEN: Stand back. You’re too loyal to your master.

OLD: Well if that’s a fault I’m proud of it.

MEN: If you don’t keep your place I’ll make you pay for it.

OLD: You had no right to open the letter I was carrying.

MEN: And you had no right to carry a letter which betrayed all Greece.

OLD: You can argue the toss with the others. Give me the letter back.

MEN: I’ll never give it back.

OLD: And I’ll never let it go.

MEN: You’ll feel my truncheon, I’ll beat you to a pulp.

OLD: Go on, it would be glory to die for my Lord.

MEN: Let go. You talk too much for a slave.

OLD: Help, master, help, this man’s got your letter. He’s taken it from me by force. Agamemnon, he doesn’t know what is right.

ENTER AGAMEMNON

AG: Hey what’s all this shouting and brawling right, outside my door?

OLD: He doesn’t know …. (what is right.)

MEN: Listen to me first. I have the right.

AG: All right then Menelaus, what’s this quarrel all about and why do you have so hold him like that?

MEN RELEASES OLD. BUSINESS AS OLD EXITS.

MEN: Look me in the eye and then I’ll start my story.

AG: Our father was called Atreus, the fearless, do you think I’m afraid of facing you?
MEN: You see this letter? It carries a message of treason.

AG: I see it. Give it to me.

MEN: Not before I’ve shown it to all the Greeks.

AG: What? Did you dare to break the seal and read what you had no right to?

MEN: Yes I did, to your great sorrow. Now I know your secret plot.

AG: Where did you find him? Oh God do you have no honour?

MEN: On the road from Argos. I was watching to see if your child was coining to the camp.

AG: You certainly have no honour. Why would you spy on my affairs?

MEN: I wanted to. I’m not a slave to your desires.

AG: This is an outrage. Am I not permitted to manage my own family business?

MEN: No, your mind is too shifty. You vacillate between one plan and another, hour by hour.

AG: How carefully you frame your lies. I despise your smooth snake tongue.

MEN: Now Agamemnon, an untrue heart is false to friends and a thing of wrong. I want to ask you a few guest ions but don’t get angry and turn you face from the truth, I won’t press you too hard. Have you forgotten the time when you were eager to command the Greek armies for the conqest of Troy? You pretended to be indifferent but you desired it greatly. Do you remember how humble you were, clasping hands with the motley, holding open house, allowing even the lowest to speak to you by name? You used these tricks and stratagems to purchase favour in the market, but when at last you won power, you changed, you were no longer at home to your friends. A man of worth should not change his face when power comes. He should use his fortune to help his allies. That’s my first criticism. And then, when you caste here to Aulis with the host of the Greek army, you were suddenly confounded by an unfavourable wind sent by the gods. The Greeks were impatient to disband the ships and go home. How sad and bewildered you were, afraid that you might not captain the thousand ships nor fill Troy’s plain with spears. So you called me and asked me to find a way to avoid losing your command and the glory attached to it. Then the High Priest Calchas said that if you sacrificed your daughter on the alter in Artemis Grove then the Greek ships would sail. At that you were glad and happily promised to slaughter the child. You straightaway sent a letter to your wife, without being compelled by us. You said bring the child here to marry Achilles. That was your pretext. You can’t deny it, this sky witnessed
your words. Now turning your thoughts around in secret you have changed the message saying that you will not kill your daughter.

Thousands of men go like you, struggle mightily up the pinnacle of power and then fall to disgrace either by the stupid will of others or by their own incompetence. It’s Greece I feel sorry for, sad Greece.

After all this high ambition she shall be mocked by a tribe of effete barbarians, because of you and your daughter.

In the army noble breeding doesn’t make a leader. In politics a leader must be astute, but a general needs a mind.

CHORUS: It’s terrible to watch two brothers quarrelling. A battle of their angry words.

AG: Now I have hard words for you, not many, but I won’t raise my brows in contempt and I’ll be moderate in what I say since you are my brother.

Noblemen should show proper respect.

But tell me, why do you breathe so heavily, why are your eyes bloodshot, and why do you make these threats? Who has wronged you?

What do you want?

Do you desire a virtuous wife?

I can’t give you that, you had one, but you ruled her badly.

I am innocent, why should I pay wages for your sins? Or are you jealous of my advancement?

No, you want to hold a beautiful woman in your arms, and for that you’ll throw reason and honour to the wind. False pleasures are vile.

I made a bad decision, does it mean I’m crazy if I make a wise one?

The gods did you a favour by ridding you of a wicked wife, and now you want her back. That’s crazy.

And all those other cast off infatuated suitors for her hand who made an oath to Tyrndareus, they are ready to join you in this folly, but you are not in control of them, they were lead on-by the goddess Hope.

But in heaven there is a light that can see oaths bound in evil, sworn under compulsion.

So I shall not slay my children.

And you shall not succeed in punishing your wanton wife against Justice.

If I were to commit this indecent act, against the child I fathered I would weep all night and pass all day in misery.

There you are, a few words but easy to understand. You may chose insanity but I shall order my affairs with decency.

CHORUS: This is different from what you said before.

But your decision to save the child is right.

MEN: Now I have no friends.

AG: Not if you seek to destroy them.

MEN: Then how do you know you are our father’s son?

AG: I’m your brother when you’re sane:
MEN: Don’t friends feel their friends sorrow?

AG: Speak as a friend, not as a foe, then ask me.

MEN: So you will not help Greece in her trouble.

AG: I say that some god has driven you and Greece mad.

MEN: Boast of your sceptre then, you are a traitor to me. I shall find other means and other friends.

ENTER A MESSENGER

MESS: King of the Greeks, Agamemnon. (BOWS AND SCRAPES) I am here to bring you your daughter Iphigenia and her mother who is with her, Queen Clytemnestra.

Now after weary travel the ladies rest and bathe their feet in a free flowing stream. And we have turned the horses loose to graze the green meadow. I’ve come running on ahead to inform you.

The news has spread fast and the whole company knows that the child is coming, in fact crowds from the camp have already run down for a sight of her. Everyone wants to see the famous.

But now they are saying: ‘Is it a marriage?’ or ‘What happens now?’ or ‘Has the king sent for her out of love?’

But others are saying ‘Men make the marriage offering to Artemis, the Queen of Aulis, but who shall be the bridegroom?’

Come, prepare baskets of barley for offertory, put garlands on our heads. King Menelaus strike up the bridal hymn and let the flutes sing through the tents to the sound of dancing feet for today is the maid’s dawn to happiness.

AG: Thank you for your news. You may go now. As to the rest, it is as the fates decree.

EXIT MESSENGER.

What can I say? Where can I start?
I’ve fallen into the pit.
Fate has won, she is far too cunning for all my schemes. Men of low birth are fortunate, they may weep freely and speak out of their grief.
Kings feel the same but are ruled by convention; they must obey the whims of the masses.
So I am ashamed to weep in the depth of my grief, but also I am ashamed not to.
And what am I going to say to my wife, how can I look her in the eye?
After all I did tell her to come to give the bride away. She’ll find out what I’ve done, she’ll know she brought the virgin here to marry death.
And the girl, I can hear her cry ‘Father, will you kill me, is this my dowry? Is this the fate for all you love?’
Oh Paris, it is your sin with Helen that caused this grief.

CHORUS: I come from another world, but I can understand the misfortune of a king.
MEN: My brother, let me hold your hand.


MEN: No, I’ll swear by our grandfather Pelops and our father Atreus, I’ll tell you the truth in my heart. I saw the tears streaming from your eyes and my pity brought tears from mine. I withdraw what I said. I don’t hate you anymore. I ask you not to kill the child, or put my interests before yours. It wouldn’t be tight that you should weep and I should be happy or that your child should die so that mine would see the sun. What do I want? Couldn’t I find a perfect marriage elsewhere if I wanted it? Could I cast aside a well loved brother to win, back Helen? That would be throwing good money after bad. I was stupid and childish until was brought down to earth and saw what it meant to kill a child. I thought of our kinship and I felt sorry for the girl, doomed to death for the sake of my marriage. But what has Helen got to do with her? Disband the host brother, let it go from Aulis, and so stop drowning your eyes in tears or asking me to weep. I want no part in the oracles concerning her fate, I’ll give you my share of those. And so I’ve turned around my words, given them the opposite sense, and I’ve changed because I love you, brother. It’s not the way of a bad man to find the better part.

CHORUS: A noble speech, worthy of your ancestor Tantalus, the son of Zeus:

AG: Thank you Menelaus, you have spoken the truth worthily, more than I could hope for. Brothers may quarrel, over a woman, or for an inheritance, something to be abhorred, for kinship heightens bitterness. But now we are tangled in the net of fate which inevitably leads to the death of the child.

MEN: What do you mean? Who will force you to kill her?

AG: The whole of the Greek army.

MEN: No. Not if you send her back to Argos...

AG: I might do it in secret, but I cannot...

MEN: What? You fear the mob too much.

AG: Kalchas will tell them of his prophecy.
MEN: Not if he is dead, that won’t be hard to do.

AG: I curse this ambitious breed of prophets.

MEN: Useless, without value, while alive;

AG: And there’s something I fear. Don’t you feel it?

MEN: How can I if you don’t explain it?

AG: Odysseus, he knows all this.

MEN: He can’t hurt you or me.

AG: He’s shifty, a partisan to the mob.

MEN: And ruled by ambition too, that is dangerous.

AG: Don’t you think he will stand up before the assembly of the Greeks and tell them of Kalchas’ prophecies? Of how I promised Artemis her victory and then reneged. He’ll arouse then in anger and urge them to kill us both, and Iphigenia. Even if I escape to Argos they will come there, destroy the walls and raze the city to the ground.

This is my despair, I-am caught in a web woven by the gods.

But do one thing for me Menelaus, go to the army and make sure that Clytemnestra hears nothing of this until after I have sent my child to hell that I may commit this crime amidst fewest tears.

And you, ladies from Chalcis, hold your peace also.

EXEUNT.
CHORUS 1

CHORUS:  They are blessed who drink of Aphrodite and temper passions fire,
blessed are they who escape the pain of golden haired Eros’ shafts,
one which brings rapture and the other ruin.
On beautiful goddess of love keep my heart free from unworthy desire
May I drink I from your cup and remain modest at heart.

Men are all different and so are their lives yet the truth is always straight taught by clear lessons.
Humility is wisdom, by its grace we see the way of virtue
and from virtue comes honour which brings eternal fame.
The quest of virtue is wonderful, it leads to modesty in women and to the discipline of citizens which makes the city great.

You came back Cowherd Paris, to Mount Ida’s snowy heifers,
where you played barbarian tunes on the Phrygian flute, echoes of Olympus.
Full-udder kine grazed when the goddesses came forth for you to judge their beauty.
Your decision sent you to Greece to the palace inlaid with ivory and the light of Helen’s eyes.
You took Aphrodite’s wanton passion and from this rose the quarrel that led these Greek ships and spears’ upon the sack of Troy.
SCENE TWO
CLYTEMNESTRA. IPHIGENIA, AGAMEMNON, CHORUS

CHORUS: Blessed is the fortune or the great
      Look here comes the king’s daughter, Iphigenia, and our queen Clytemnestra,
      daughter of Tyrndareus
      Their ancestors were great
      And it is a momentous occasion that brings them here, Those who are great in power
      and wealth seem like gods to ordinary mortals

ENTER IPHIGENIA AND CLYTEMNESTRA (PLUS ATTENDANTS)

We are strangers here and welcome you who are strangers also,

CLY: I shall think of that as a good omen
     I have brought this girl here in the hope of a happy marriage.

ENTER AGAMEMNON

Come over here by me Iphigenia, like a good girl should.
Show these strangers why I have reason to be happy.
Now here comes your dear father.
Give him your greetings

IPH: Mother, don’t be angry if I run from you. I want to be the first to hug him.

CLY: My reverend Lord Agamemnon. You asked us to come and here we are.

IPH: I wanted to be the first to put my arms around you father after such a long time. I have
     missed not seeing you. Don’t be angry mother.

CLY: That’s all right child. Of all the children I bore your father you were always the one
     that loved him most.

IPH: I am so happy to see you father, after such a long time.

AG: And I am happy to see you. You speak for us both Iphigenia.

IHP: What a wonderful thing for you to have brought me here to you.

AG: I don’t know what to say

IPH: But your eyes look worried. Are you really happy to see me?

AG: Kings, and generals have many worries.

IPH: Oh forget them for now, forget them, I am here, put them aside and be with me.
AG: I’m all yours now. I’m nowhere else.

IPH: Don’t frown then, and don’t look so serious if you love me.

AG: You see, how happy I am to look at you.

IPH: But you have tears in your eyes.

AG: We shall be separated for a long time.

IPH: I don’t understand what you mean, dear father.

AG: You seem to understand. That makes me even sadder.

IPH: Then I’ll speak foolish words, if that makes you happy.

AG: Yes do. (ASIDE) Keeping silent, that’s the pain.

IPH: Stay home with your children father.

AG: I want to, but I can’t always do what I want. That’s what makes me unhappy;

IPH: I wish there were no more spears, and none of this trouble with Menelaus.

AG: (ASIDE) Those wrongs, they will destroy others, and then me.

IPH: Father you’ve been here a long time in this Gulf of Aulis.

AG: I can’t send the army on its way, there’s something that’s stopping me.

IPH: Where do they say the Trojans live father?

AG: In a country where Priam has a son called Paris. I wish he’d never been born.

IPH: And you are going all that way there father, and leaving me behind?

AG: And so are you daughter, a long voyage, leaving your father.

IPH: If only you were allowed to take me with you.

AG: You must think of your father on your own long voyage.

CLY: And who was his heir?

AG: Peleus. He married Thetis, one of the daughters of Peleus, the sea god.

CLY: Did the gods bless this marriage or did he take her against their will.

AG: Zeus made the betrothal and Peleus gave her away.
CLY: Where did they marry? Was it under the heaving waves?

AG: At the sacred foot of Pelion where Chiron lives.

CLY: In the country of the centaurs?

AG: All the gods came to the marriage and the wedding breakfast.

CLY: And was it Thetis or Peleus that brought Achilles up.

AG: It was Chiron, to prevent him from learning the evil ways of men.

CLY: A wise teacher, and Peleus was wise in sending the boy to him.

AG: This is the man who will be your daughter’s husband.

CLY: He seems acceptable. Whereabouts in Greece does he come from?

AG: From Phthia, on the river Apidanos.

CLY: Is that where he will take our daughter?

AG: That is for him to decide.

CLY: They have my blessing. When will the marriage be?

AG: At full moon. That is the most propitious time.

CLY: Have you killed the goddesses sacrifice for the child?

AG: I shall. It is being arranged.

CLY: And afterwards you will hold the marriage feast?

AG: When I have made the required offerings to the gods.

CLY: And where shall I prepare the woman’s banquet?

AG: Here, by the proud sterns of the Greek ships.

CLY: Here? Well I suppose there’s no other choice. I hope good comes of it.

AG: You know what to do. Just do it.


AG: The in the presence of the bridegroom we men… (will do)

CLY: We men? Will you do my duty in this marriage?
AG: I will give away your child, with the help of the army.

CLY: And where will I be when this happens?

AG: Home in Argos, taking care of your daughters.

CLY: Leaving the child behind? Who will raise the bridal torch?

AG: I shall provide a suitable bridal torch

CLY: That’s not the custom. You see nothing wrong in that’?

AG: It’s not right for you to stray hero, mingling with common soldiers

CLY: It is right that I should give my children in marriage. I am their mother.

AG: It is not right for our children to be left alone at home.

CLY: They are well looked after and quite safe.

AG: Do what I say.

CLY: No, by the goddess Artemis I won’t.
You take care of the business outside the home. I’ll look after what happens within,
and I’ll see to the preparations of my daughter’s wedding.

EXIT CLYTEMNESTRA

AG: It was no good.
I tried to send my wife out of sight but I failed.
I contrive plots, I lay plans to deceive my dear ones but I am confounded everywhere.
Now I must go to Kalchas who performs our sacrifices and find out what it is the
goddess demands, even if it is doom for me and trouble for Greece.
A wise man should never marry a wife who is not good and faithful.
Chorus 2

CHORUS: The host of Greeks in their galleys with their armour
will come to the silver swirling waters of Simois
and the plain below Troy, Illium, sacred to Apollo.
And there Cassandra, laurel crowed, tosses her sunlit golden hair,
her soul shaken by the storm of the gift of prophecy bestowed by the god.

On the ramparts of the towers of Troy the Trojan soldiers stand
while Ares in his armour of bronze bourne by the proud oared galleys approaches the harbours of Simois:
The god of war comes for Helen, sister of Zeus’s twin sons who are stars in heaven, to take her from Priam, a prize of Greek shields, spears and labour in battle.

He will girdle with slaughter the stone walled city, bend back their heads and slit their throats, drag the corpses through the dust of destruction.
The women will wail (oi oi) tears of grief Priam’s woman and Zeus-daughter Helen for husband forsaken.
O women of Chalcis may this never happen to our children or theirs, may we never be like the golden women of Lydia who stand by the loom and wail:
“Who will grip the braids
   of my shining hair,
who will cause my eyes
   to flood a shower of tears,
who will pluck me a flower
   from my country’s ruin?
[The unlikely tale
   tells that Zeus
transformed to a slender-necked swan
   fathered Helen by Leda.
Perhaps this is a senseless fable
   told out of season
from the book of the Muses.”]
SCENE THREE
ACHILLES, CLYTEMNESTRA, OLD MAN

ACH: Where is the commander of the Greeks?
Won’t one of you servants go and tell him that Achilles, the son of Peleus, is waiting
for him at his door?
I can tell you having to tarry here by the straits of Euripus is not the same for all of us.
Some of us have no wives so our houses are left empty while we sit waiting by the
shore.
Others have left their wives and children at home all because the gods have put
Greece into a frenzy with fighting this war.
I’ll tell you of my complaints with all this, the others can say what they like.
I left my land Pharsalia and my father Peleus and I came here only to be becalmed by
light winds.
I have trouble maintaining discipline among my troops, the Myrmidons.
They come up to me day after day and complain about the delay saying:
“Achilles what is keeping us here? How much longer do we have to wait for this
march on Troy? Do what you came to do or else lead the army home. Don’t wait for
the sons of Atreus.”

ENTER CLYTEMNESTRA

CLY: Son of the Nereid goddess, I heard your voice from inside the tent so I’ve come out to
greet you.

ACH: Oh queen of modesty, who is this attractive woman?

CLY: It’s not surprising that you don’t know me, we’ve never met. But I praise your respect
for modesty.

ACH: Who are you? Why have you come to the Greek camp? You are a woman among
armed men.

CLY: I am the daughter of Leda, Clytemnestra. My husband is Agamemnon.

ACH: Brief and to the point. But I shouldn’t be seen talking to a woman.

CLY: Wait, don’t run away. Give me your hand and let this be the beginning of a happy
betrothal.

ACH: What do you mean? Touch your hand?
How could I face Agamemnon if I touched what is forbidden to touch?

CLY: It is perfectly all right, son of Thetis, since you are about to marry my daughter.

ACH: Marry your daughter? What are you talking about? I don’t know what to say. Have
you gone crazy?
CLY: I know, it’s natural for men to be shy when faced with talk of marriage, and new relatives.

ACH: Dear lady, I have never courted your daughter. The Sons of Atreus have never spoken to me of marriage.

CLY: What does this mean? I am amazed by what you say. You must find my words strange also.

ACH: We must both find out the explanation. There must be some truth beneath all this.

CLY: I have been deceived. I have been preparing for a marriage that doesn’t exist. I am crushed with shame.

ACH: Perhaps someone is fooling us. I wouldn’t take any notice of it.

CLY: I will go. I’ve been humiliated. Someone’s made me a liar. I can’t look you in the face any more.

ACH: Goodbye my lady. I shall go in and talk to your husband.

OLD: (AT THE DOOR) Wait there stranger. Grandson of Aikos, and son of the goddess. I want to talk to you, and you too, daughter of Leda.

ACH: Who’s that calling through the doorway, he sounds upset.

OLD: I am a slave. I cannot say otherwise. It is my lot.

ACH: Whose slave? You’re not one of mine. I have no part of Agamemnon’s possessions.

OLD: I belong to that lady in front of the tent. I was given to her by her father.

ACH: Well tell me why you wanted me to stay.

OLD: Is there anyone else here beside you and her?

ACH: We are alone. Come out here and speak.

OLD: Those that I pray for, may fate and my foresight save you.

ACH: You words sound ominous, and the message seems important.

CLY: Don’t wait to kiss my hand. What have you got to say?

OLD: You know me lady. You know of my devotion to you and your children.

CLY: I know you’ve been a servant, in the palace for a long time.
OLD: I came to King Agamemnon as part of your dowry.

CLY: Yes, you came with us to Argos and you've been with me till now.

OLD: Yes, and I am more loyal to you than to your husband.

CLY: Well tell us. What is this secret of yours?

OLD: (PAUSE) Your daughter. Her father intends to kill her ‘with his own hand.


OLD: It’s true. He will slit her white throat with a knife.

CLY: How terrible. Has he gone mad?

OLD: No. He’s sane about everything except you and your child. He’s lost his reason there.

CLY: Why? What demon could drive him to such a horror?

OLD: The oracle of Kalchas is the demon. It must happen before the ships may sail.

CLY: What terror is coming for me and the child whose father would kill her? Sail where?

OLD: To the Dardanelles so that Menelaus might bring Helen back.

CLY: So the fates have woven Iphigenia’s death into Helen’s homecoming.

OLD: Now you know it all. He intends to sacrifice your daughter to Artemis.

CLY: And the marriage, that was a pretext which brought me here?

OLD: Yes. The king knew that you would bring her gladly to marry Achilles.

CLY: Oh daughter, you have come here with your mother to your death.

OLD: The child’s fate is terrible. So is yours. Agamemnon has done a monstrous thing.

CLY: I am helpless. I am lost. I cannot hold back these streams of tears.

OLD: You have reason for tears in losing the child.

CLY: Where did you learn this old man? How did you find out about these things?

OLD: I was sent to you with a second letter, subsequent to the first one.

CLY: Was that telling me again to bring the girl here to die or asking me not to?
OLD: Telling you not to. At that moment he was in his right mind.

CLY: If you had such a letter why did you not deliver it?

OLD: Menelaus took it from me. All your troubles come from him.

CLY: Son of Thetis and Peleus have you heard all this?

ACH: I hear the story of your grief. I do not take lightly the way I have been involved in the matter.

CLY: They are going to kill my child. They tricked us with this talk of marriage.

ACH: I am also angry with Agamemnon. It is not a small thing.

CLY: Son of a goddess, I not immortal but I am not ashamed to clasp your knees. What good would pride do me now? I would do anything to save my daughter. Son of a goddess, save us in our despair. Protect the maiden that was betrothed to you even though falsely. I put a bridal garland on her head for you, I brought her here to be married and now I am leading her to her death. You will be shamed if you do not protect her. Even though you were never married to her you were called her husband. I implore you by your beard, by your right hand, by your own mother. Achilles, it was your name that has brought my undoing now you must clear it. There is no altar where I can take refuge except your knees. No friend to help me here. You have heard of Agamemnon savagery. I am a woman in a camp of sailors who are undisciplined and ready for crime. If you can bring yourself to stretch out your hand we are saved, if not our life is ended.

CHORUS: There is a power in motherhood, a potent spell. All mothers will risk any suffering for their children.

ACH: Your words draw out my pride, If the orders of the sound of Atreus are just I will obey them. if not I will refuse. But whether here or in Troy I shall remain free and fight the enemy as a hero should. But you madam, have suffered terrible wrongs at the hand of those you love. I shall cover you with the shield of compassion, as far as I am able. Your child, who was once called my bride, shall never be slaughtered by her father. I shall not be a tool in his covert intrigues. If I were my name would be her butcher as sure as if I had drawn the sword, My own blood would be tainted with murder if the maiden die as a result of this marriage to me. She has been brutally used. It fills me with rage to think how she has been treated. I would be the basest of the Greeks, a nothing, lower than Menelaus, no son of my
father but some demon’s offspring, if I should let my name do your husband’s murder.
I swear by Ocean-cradled Nereus, the father of my mother, that King Agamemnon shall not touch your daughter, not even the hem of her robe.
this prophet Kalchas shall find a bitter taste in the barley and holy water before sacrifice.
What is a prophet?
Someone who utters one truth in a flock of lies if he’s lucky, and if he’s not everyone forgets.
I’m not saying this because I want a bride.
There are many girls I could marry.
But I will not suffer this insult from King Agamemnon.
He should have a asked me before he used my name to lure her here.
It was chiefly through trust in me that Clytemnestra brought her daughter here.
Perhaps I might have granted the use of my name for the sake of Greece so the ships could sail.
I would not have refused to help my brothers in arms in a common cause.
But these commanders treat me as a nobody.
They honour me or shun me as they desire.
My sword will be stained with blood if anyone attempts to take your daughter from me before we sail to Troy.
Be calm.
I have come to you as a great god.
Well I may not be one, but I will be to save her.

CHORUS: You speak worthily, son of Peleus.
Words worthy of the dread sea-goddess and you.

CLY: How can I find the right praise, neither full of flattery or so meagre you are offended. Men of worth hate those who flatter.
I am ashamed to thrust my woes on you, they are my concern, not yours. Still a good man will help those in trouble even though free from affliction himself. Take pity on us, our plight deserves it.
At first I thought you would be my son, an empty dream. But now that my child is threatened with death it would be a bad omen for any marriage of yours if you did not protect yourself.
But why do I implore you, you have spoken well from start to finish. My child will be saved if you can save her.
Would you like her to come and clasp your knees?
True, it is not seemly for a maiden, but if you wish she shall come and lift her innocent eyes to you.
If I could convince you without her coming I would refer her to remain inside yet modesty bows to necessity.

ACH: Don’t bring her here for me to see.
Why should we risk the gossip of fools.
An army crowded together thrives on rumour and malicious stories.
It is all the same whether you beseech me or not.
Believe me, it is important for me to save you from disaster.
You may count on this; I never lie.  
May I die if I deceive you, and live only if I save the maid.

CLY: May you be blessed all your days for helping those in distress.

ACH: Listen, we must lay plans.

CLY: Tell me, I need no urging to listen.

ACH: Let us try to make her father see reason.

CLY: He’s too cowardly. He’s afraid of the army.

ACH: Reason is a stronger wrestler than fear.

CLY: A cold hope. but tell me what I should do,

ACH: First plead with him not to kill his daughter.  
If he refuses come back to me but if he yields to your plea I shall no longer have to be involved as this yielding is your salvation,  
If this comes about by reason there will be no breach in my friendship with Agamemnon, no trouble with the army and no violence with weapons.  
So all will turn out well for you and your dear ones, and I shall not be required to act.

CLY: You are most astute, I shall do as you say.  
But if I fail in my hope where and how shall I see you?  
Where shall I go in my sorrow be find your hand to help?

ACH: I will keep watch in the right place.  
You will riot have to be stared at hunting wild-eyed through she troops.  
Tyrndareus should not suffer shame, he was a great man of Greece.

CLY: As you say. You lead I shall follow,  
If there are gods they shall reward your integrity.  
If there are no c1uds does anything matter?
CHORUS THREE

CHORUS: Oh what sound of Libyan flutes  
of lyres leading the dance  
the pealing of reeds in the pipes  
all raised in the bridal song.  
The muses came to Pelion  
with gold sandaled feet  
  stamping the ground  
and bright hair flowing  
  to the feast of the gods  
  and the marriage of Peleus  
And their voices sang praise  
  of Thetis and Aikos’ son  
over the hills of the Centaurs  
  and through the woods of Pelion.  
There Trojan Ganymede, Dardanus’ child  
the darling of Zeus  
poured libations of wine  
  from the golden bowl  
while the daughters of Nereus danced  
  their intricate dance  
on the white sands of the shore.

Then came the centaurs riding  
leaf-crowned with pine spears  
to the gods feast and bowls filled  
  with the gift of Eacohas.  
And they cried “Daughter of Nereus  
you shall bear a great son,  
a light burning bright  
  for Thessaly”  
so said Phoebus the prophet.  
  And foretelling Cheiron said:  
“He will come with his army,  
the Myrmidons with spears,  
and sail to the land of Troy  
  to burn Priam’s glorious city.  
He shall wear the golden armour  
  wrought by Hephastus  
a gift from has mother  
  Thetis the sea goddess.”  
So the gods blessed the marriage  
of noble Peleus  
and the most favoured  
of Nereus’ daughters.
The Greeks will weave a crown
for you Iphigenia
and set it on your lovely hair
for sacrifice
like tho innocent heifer
spotted white on red
led down from mountain caves
to sacrifice,
they will slit your throat,
blood stains the knife.

You were not reared to hear
the strain of the shepherd’s pipe
but nursed by your mother’s side
as a bride to the heir of a king.

Where is the fine face of modesty?
or virtue’s strength
now that men have put justice behind them
and blasphemy has power
when lawlessness rules the law
and no-one fears God?
SCENE FOUR

CLYTEMNESTRA, AGAMEMNON, IPHIGENIA, ACHILLES

CLY: I have come from the pavilion looking for my husband. He left our tent and has been away for a long time. My unhappy child now weeps her heart out, first moaning soft, then crying out loud, for she has heard of the death her father plans for her. I talk of Agamemnon, here he comes now. Soon he will be found guilty of this terrible crime against his daughter.

ENTER AGAMEMNON

AG: I am pleased to find you now outside our tent, Daughter of Leda. I want to talk to you. Things that it is better a young bride should not hear.

CLY: What thing fits this time so well?

AG: Send for the child to join me here, but first listen: the purified waters are prepared and the barley to throw in the cleansing fire; and victims ready to sacrifice their dark blood to Artemis before the marriage rite.

CLY: You give these thing fair names but I can find nothing good to say about what you intend to do. (CALLS) Come out here daughter, you know what your father intends.

ENTER IPHIGENIA

Here she is, she does what you tell her but as far as I am concerned I shall speak for her as well as me.

AG: Why are you crying child? Why do you look at the ground and hide your eyes from me?

CLY: Where can I start in this tale of sorrows?

AG: What has happened? Why do you both look at me in so much trouble and terror?

CLY: Answer my question husband, like a man.

AG: What question? You have no need to command me.

CLY: Your child, and mine. Do you mean to murder her?

AG: What a horrible question. That’s a vile accusation.

CLY: Forget that. Answer my question.

AG: If you ask a fair question you will get a fair answer.
CLY: This is the only question I ask. Answer it.

AG: (EMOTES) Destiny of the gods. An evil demon from hell.

CLY: And mine, and hers. One destiny for the three of us.

AG: Who have I wronged?

CLY: You ask me this? Have you lost your mind?

AG: (ASIDE) I am destroyed, my secret is found out.

CLY: I know it all, I know exactly what you mean to do. Your silence and your groans are your confession. Just tell me briefly.

AG: I shall be silent. Why should I lie and add shame to my misfortune?

CLY: Listen carefully then, I shall tell you clearly without prevarication. My first reproach is that you wed me by force, you killed my husband, Tantalus. You tore my baby from my breast and dashed him against the stony ground. And when my two brothers, sons of Zeus, came on horseback in white armour to make war on you, you went down on your knees to my father, Old Tyndareus, and he saved you life. So you kept me for your bed. After this I became reconciled to you and your house, you will acknowledge that, I became a chaste and modest wife seeking to increase your family so that your homecomings had gladness and your journeys joy. It is rare for a man to win such a good wife, there are many unworthy women. I gave you a son and three daughters, and now you would tear one from me. If any man ask you why do you kill your own daughter what answer will you give? Or must I speak for you? I kill her, you must say, so that Menelaus can have Helen back. Our child of beauty is the price of that wanton bitch, and so we shall buy the things we loath with the things we love most...

But think, if you leave me and go to war and your absence is stretched over the years how do you think I shall keep your house when I see always her empty chair, her empty room and, mourn her absence in lonely tears; I shall cry out ‘Child, he that fathered you killed you, he and no other, by no other hand.’...

This is the crime and vendetta you bestow upon your house...

There needs little excuse now for I and the children left to give you what you deserve when you return home. No, by the gods, do not force me to betray you and do not betray me. If you sacrifice her what prayer can you utter? What blessing can you ask if you kill the child? If you leave the house in shame won’t the return be evil? How can I ask heaven to bless you, the gods would be fools to bless the killers of children. And when you come home after the war will you embrace your children? God forbid.
Do you think that any child of yours would look you in the face knowing you had sent a sister to her death?
Talk to me. Have you taken these things into account?
Or do you want want to brandish spears and lead armies?
Why don’t you ask your Greeks if they wish to murder the child and sail for Troy.
Let them vote on whose daughter it is that should die or let Menelaus kill his daughter for his mother’s sake.
You wish to take the child of a loyal wife while the child of the whore lives.
Tell me, have I spoken well and to the point?
If so then don’t be crazy any more, be wise and repent.
Do not kill the girl, she is your daughter, and mine.

CHORUS: Listen to her Agamemnon and save the child.
No one can say that this is not right.

IPH: Father, I wish I had the tongue of Orpheus so I could charm with song the stones to follow me, or beguile with eloquence anyone I wished. But my tears are my only argument.
I can offer my body, which my mother bore, as the garland of a worshipper twined around your knees.
Do not take my life before its time.
The light is sweet, do not lead me to the dark..
I was the first person to call you father and the first to be called child, the first to sit on your knee.
We kissed each other: and you told me that one day you would see me happy in my husband’s home, a flower blooming for you and your prestige.
And I twined my fingers in your beard and said ‘Father, when you are old you can come and live with me as repayment for all your care and love.’
I can remember that conversation now, but you have forgotten and have decided you want to kill me.
Think of your forebears, and this mother who suffered labour at birth for me, and now a deeper pain.
What have I to do with the marriage of Paris and Helen?
Father, look at me, look me in the eyes, give me a kiss, so that if you don’t hear what I say, I may have one sweet memory of you in death.
These words are my plea, I must win life from you. This life is light for all to see and death below is shadows.
Those who wish for death are mad, a miserable life is better than a glorious death.

CHORUS: Oh guilty Helen, the agony on this family comes from your wanton love.

AG: I know what deserves pity and what doesn’t.
I love my children, I’d be insane if I didn’t.
It’s terrible to do this thing, yet terrible not to.
I must do it.
Look. at this fleet of ships and the armies with their Greek kings in bronze armour.
They cannot sail to the towers of Illium nor sack the famous citadel at Troy unless I make you the victim of this sacrifice, as the prophet Kalchas said.
A strange passion has seized the reeks and urges them to sail to Troy and halt the rape of Greek wives.
If I annul the divine will of the goddess they’ll come to Argos and kill us all.
I am not Menelaus’ slave, I have come here to serve Greece and she demands this sacrifice. I have no power to refuse.
Oh child, Greece asks us now for her freedom.

EXIT AGAMEMNON

CLY: Friends, what shall I do?
Daughter, why must you die?
Your father betrays you and runs away.

IPH: Grieve for me mother,
the same sad song sent by fate
falls on us both.
I shall never see the light of the sun again.
Oh. Oh.
In a snow filled valley near Troy,
seen over by the high slopes
of Ida
Priam tore his child front mothers breast
The child was Paris
Paris of Ida
left to die
but nurtured by herdsmen, raised with the kine.
If they had not reared him
to watch the silver springs
and the nymphs in their fountains
by the rich meadows painted
with roses and hyacinths,
for goddesses to gather.
It was there that Pallas Athena came
and seductive Aphrodite
and Hera
and with them Hermes the messenger of God.
Aphrodite who kindles passion,
Pallas proud of her spear
and Hera the wife of Zeus
came to have their beauty judged
to bring me death
and the Greeks glory
I am the first sacrifice
for the towers of Illiam,
He who fathered me
has left me
to die alone
and I curse you Helen who brought me to this end.
If only Aulis had never opened
her enfolded bay
to the bronze beaked ships
with wings of pine
or the breath of Zeus had not blown on Euripus.
He blows sweetly
on some men’s sails
making them happy
to others with vile fate he brings delay.
We are creatures of toil
living for a day
and our destiny is cruel
Oh mother what bitter sorrow
you have brought to Greece.

CHORUS: I pity you for your fate, it should never have found you out.

IPH:   Mother, I see men coming.

CLY:   Achilles son of the goddess, in whose name you were brought here?

IPH:   Women open the door, I want to hide

CLY:   Why do you run away child?

IP:    I would be ashamed to see him.

CLY:   Why?

IP:    My unlucky marriage.

CLY:   It’s no time for delicate feelings. Stay here. Don’t be shy, If we may…

ENTER ACHILLES

ACH:   Unhappy daughter of Leda...

CLY:   That is what I am.

ACH:   The Greeks are shouting. They want something terrible.

CLY:   What are they shouting?

ACH:   About your daughter.

CLY:   Your words start badly.

ACH:   They say she must be sacrificed.

CLY:   Did no-one speak against them?

ACH:   Yes. I did, and I was in danger.

CLY:   Danger of what?

ACH:   Being stoned to death.
CLY: For trying to save my daughter?

ACH: Yes, for that.

CLY: Who would have dared to raise a hand against you?

ACH: All the Greeks.

CLY: But you have your own division, the Myrmidons. Didn’t they take your side?

ACH: They were the first to threaten me.

CLY: We are lost daughter.

ACH: They said that I was foolish about this marriage;

CLY: What did you say?

ACH: That they were not to kill the bride....

CLY: A righteous answer...

ACH: ...Whom her father had promised to me.

CLY: And brought her here from Argos.

ACH: Their voices drowned me out.

CLY: The rabble is a terrible thing.

ACH: But I will defend you.

CLY: You? Alone? Against the whole army?

ACH: I have men here carrying my armour.

CLY: May the gods bless your courage.

ACH: They will.

CLY: And my daughter will not be sacrificed?

ACH: Not while I live.

CLY: Will they come here to take the girl?

ACH: Thousands of them, led by Odysseus.

CLY: Odysseus?
ACH: Yes.

CLY: Did he offer to do it, or did the army choose him?

ACH: They chose him, he consented.

CLY: A vile choice, to be an accomplice to murder.

ACH: I will stop him.

CLY: If she resists will he drag her away?

ACH: By her fair hair.

CLY: What shall I do then?

ACH: Hold her to you.

CLY: Will that stop them from killing her?

ACH: It will come to this...

IPH: Mother, listen to me, you are wrong to be angry with father. It’s hard not to accept what is inevitable. We should thank this stranger-friend for his willingness to help us, but we should not let the army be stirred up against him. It wouldn’t help us and he might come to harm. Now listen to the thought that has caught my mind. I am resolved to die. And having decided to do this I want to do it with glory putting aside all weak thoughts. Look me in the eyes mother and see how right I am. All the strength and all the people of Greece have turned to me. Whether these ships sail and whether Troy falls depends on me. I will be the one that protects our women if ever the barbarians come near. When they’ve paid for the corruption of having Helen, who Paris carried away, they will never be bold enough to rape the well-born wives of Greece. I can win all these good things by dying. Because of me Greece will be free and I will be famous. You brought me into the world for the sake of everyone in the country not just for yourself. Thousands of warriors have picked up shields, thousands more have taken hold of oars in their ships when they saw their country wronged and each of them will fight and die for Greece. Should my one little life stand in the way of all Greece? Would there be any Justice in that? What could I say to those who are ready to die? There is another thing, it would not be right for this man here to fight the whole army for the sake of one woman. It would be better if a thousand women die so that one man could see the sun.
And if Artemis demands my body as offertory, I am a mortal, how can I oppose the goddess?
I give my life to Greece.
Take me, kill me and bring down Troy.
That will be my memorial, that will be my wedding, my children and the meaning to my life.
Mother it is the Greeks who must rule the barbarians. They were born to be slaves, we were born to be free.

CHORUS: Young woman, what you have said is noble, it is the goddess and it is Destiny that are corrupt.

ACH: Daughter of Agamemnon, if I could win you for my wife it would prove a god wanted me to be happy.
I envy Greece because you belong to her, not me.
What you have said is worthy of our country.
You have renounced conflict with the will of the gods and have chosen the path that must be.
As for me, the more clearly I see your noble nature, the more I desire you as a bride.
I want to save you, I want to take you home with me, I call my mother, Thetis, as a witness.
It would grieve me more than anything if I could not pit myself against the Greeks to save you.
Think, death is a fearful thing.

IPH: I’ll say this as one past hope and fear.
Helen will cause enough death in conflict for the sake of her body.
Do not kill or die for me my stranger-friend, let me save Greece if that is what I can do.

ACH: Oh great spirit, what more is there for me to say?
It is a noble-hearted decision to die.
Yet later you may change your mind and I want you to know that I shall keep, my word.
I shall have these arms by the altar ready, not to take your life, but to save it.
Even when the knife is at your neck it will not be too late to accept my offer.
If you reconsider I shall not let you die because of a moment’s recklessness.
I will now take these arms and go to the temple of the goddess and wait there until you come.

EXIT ACHILLES

IPH: Mother, why are you weeping silently?

CLY: I have enough reason, with a broken heart.

IPH: Don’t do it, don’t take my courage from me. Will you...

IPH: Do not put on mourning or cut a lock off your hair, as is done for the dead.

CLY: Do you mean, I have lost you?

IPH: No. I am saved. My name will be your glory.

CLY: And you mean to say, am not to mourn for you?

IPH: No funeral mound is to be heaped up for me.

CLY: No. It is the dead we mourn not the grave.

IPH: The altar of the goddess will be my tomb.

CLY: What you say is true’ daughter’, I shall obey.

IPH: I am blessed by fortune. It was I who could bring help to Greece.

CLY: And what shall I say to your sisters?

IPH: Do not dress them in mourning either.

CLY: Do you have a message of love for them?

IPH: Say good-bye to them, and bring my brother Orestes up to be a man, for my sake.

CLY: Is there something I can do that would bring you pleasure?

IPH: Don’t hate lay father.

CLY: He will run a fearful course because of you.

IPH: He destroyed me for the sake of Greece against his will.

CLY: He used unkingly guile, unworthy of a son of Atreus.

IPH: Who will lead me to the altar. I won’t be dragged by my hair.

CLY: I shall go with you...

IPH: No, that would not be right.

CLY: ...holding you by the hand.

IPH: Mother, listen to me. It would be better for both of us if you stay here. One of my father’s servants can lead me to the meadow where I am to be killed.

CLY: My child you are going.
IPH: I shall never come back.

CLY: Leaving your mother...

IPH: As you see. It is hard...

CLY: Wait, don’t leave me...

IPH: No. Do not cry for me.
Women, join me in a hymn to Artemis, the daughter of Zeus and to celebrate my fate.
Let the army keep reverent silence.
Bring baskets of barley for the cleansing fire.
Let my father circle the altar.
I bring salvation and victory to Greece.
Lead me on for the sack and destruction of Troy.
Put a garland wreath on my hair and a crown on my head.
Let me approach the altar of Artemis drenched with purifying water.

Dance, dance in honour of blessed goddess Artemis.
With the blood of my sacrifice I will cleanse the fateful curse.
I give you my tears now mother for in that holy place I cannot weep.
Now women join in praise of Artemis in her temple.
Over Chalcis Strait and in the Narrows of Aulis spears are fiercely brandished in my name.
My motherland Mycenae, you fostered me.

CHORUS: Do you call on Perseus’ Tower built by the Cyclops?

IPH: Motherland Greece you are a light I shall die for.

CHORUS: Your glory will never die.

IPH: Glorious light of day, I go to another place.
I go away from here, to dwell out of time.
Goodbye.
Farewell my life, farewell.

EXEUNT CLYTEMNESTRA AND IPHIGENIA.
EXODOS

CHORUS: See the girl who walks
to the altar of the goddess
that Troy may be razed
and the Trojans die.
See her walk
with garlands in her hair
her body drenched
with lustral water.
When she goes to the altar
of the bloody-minded goddess
blood streams
from the lovely neck
slit by the sacrificial blade.

Your father shall wash you
with purifying water.
The mighty army of the Greeks
await you
they eagerly desire your death
so they might sail to Troy.
Now hail Artemis
golden daughter of Zeus
as prosperity comes
from this maiden’s death.

Goddess, who enjoys blood,
guide the Greek armies
to the tower of Troy
there to give victory
to Greek spears and Agamemnon,
and for him a crown of glory eternal.