

ELEKTRA'S MONOLOGUE

(Elektra comes out of the house)

Elektra: Alone! I'm all alone. My father's gone, his body dumped into the coldest chasm. *(pressed against the ground)* Agamemnon! Agamemnon! Where are you, father? Can't you find the strength to drag your royal body out to face me? *(softly)* This is the hour that belong to us, the hour when they slaughtered you so cruelly, your wife and he who took your place beside her, who sleeps beside her in your royal bed.

While you were in the bath, they struck. Your eye, drowned in blood, was blinded, and the bath bubbled with steaming blood. And then the coward grabbed you by the shoulders, dragged you dripping out of your own house, head first and limp, your lifeless legs trailing behind. One eye bloody, one still open, staring at the house. So shall I see you, walking step by step when you come back inside, with both eyes open, wide open, and a kingly wreath of royal purple set upon your brow, a wreath of purple blood that flows from your injury.

Agamemnon! Father! Come to your child! Do not leave me here alone! I beg a glimpse only, just like yesterday, just a shadow of you cast upon the wall!

Father! Agamemnon, your day is coming. As the heavens send water teeming down, so shall the throats of hundred thousands bleed out on thy grave! And blood from bound and shackled murderers stream out like wine from a thousand shattered flasks, and shall pool into streams, pool into a swollen lake, and their living lifeblood shall set it churning.

(solemnly) And we'll sacrifice the horses of your royal house, we'll drive them out to your grave and there they will sense death all around and whinny in the deadly air, and perish.

And we'll sacrifice the dogs who licked your royal feet, who hunted at your side, to whom you threw tasty tidbits. That is why their blood must flow, to serve you one last time.

And we, we your blood, your son Orest and both your daughters, we three, when all this is fulfilled and purple pavilions made of steaming blood rise up and glow in the blood red setting sun, then we shall dance, your children, rings 'round your grave.

(enthusiastically) Over the corpses cold I shall dance triumphantly step by step, and those who see my triumphant dance, or see just a silhouette bending like so, even from far away, they will all say that for our greatest monarch is a great pomp and circumstance put on by his own flesh and blood, and lucky is he whose children adore him and around his grave triumphantly dance royal victory dances. Agamemnon! Agamemnon!

FIRST CHRYSOTHEMIS SCENE

Chrysothemis: *(the younger sister, stands in the doorway)* Elektra!

(Elektra cringes then stares at Chrysothemis as if awakened from a dream)

E: Ah, there's that face!

C: (*standing pressed against the door*) How could my face provoke such hate?

E: What is it? Tell me? Talk! Unburden yourself, then go and leave me! (*Chrysothemis puts her hands up as if to defend herself*) Now you hold your hands up, just as our father lifted both his hands up when those two murderers attacked him at his bath {alt: with an ax}. What is it, daughter of my mother, child of Klytaemnestra?

C: They're planning something terrible for you.

E: The two old women?

C: Who?

E: Them, my mother and that old lily-livered coward, yes, Aegisth, the valiant ambush-murderer {alt: sneak attacker}, he who only does his manly deeds in bed. What is it that they plan?

C: They plan to throw you in a tower, where neither sun nor moonlight ever reaches you.

(*Elektra laughs*) I know they'll do it, I heard them say--

E: And how could you hear what they're saying?

C: (*softly*) Through the door, Elektra.

E: (*erupting*) Don't open any door inside that house! There's suffocation, ugh!, and strangulated rattling, and nothing else across that threshold! Don't open any door! Don't creep around. Sit at the door, like me, and wish the death and the damnation of both her and him.

C: I can't just sit there staring out at nothing, like you. I have a fire in my breast, compelling me to wander through the house. I can not linger anywhere, instead I go from one room to another, oh!, upstairs and down-, toward the sound of a voice, and I arrive, only to find an empty room.

I feel so terrified, my knees knock together day and night. I feel my throat get tied up in knots. I would cry but I cannot. I'm frozen solid! Sister, oh, have mercy!

E: On whom?

C: You did it, forged the iron shackles that keep me bound and captive. But for you, they'd let us leave this house. But for your hate, your unyielding, uncompromising hate that makes them tremble, oh, then they would surely let us out, out of this prison. Sister! I must get out!

I can't abide the thought that I'll grow old and die here! Or of dying before I've lived! I want to have babies before I'm old and gray. Yes, if they marry me to a peasant I will want to bear him children. With my body's heat I'd warm them on winter evenings, when the wind comes gusting down through the rafters! Do you not hear? Talk to me, Sister!

E: Poor little thing!

Chrysothemis: (*quivering*) Have pity on yourself and pity me! Who profits from such pain? Our father's dead and gone. Our brother's far away. We're still sitting here on our perches, two birds inside their cages, looking left and right and left. And no one comes, no brother, no message from our brother, not a message about a message... comes.

And every day tiny knives carve worry lines upon my brow. Outside of here the sun goes up and down, and women whom I knew as children, have swelled with blessings, can scarcely drag

themselves to fetch the water -- in an instant they are unburdened of their load. When they return to the wellspring, from the depths of their bodies, spills sweetest milk, and suckling it, a tiny infant, and the infant soon is grown.

I want to be wed, to be a wife and mother! I'd prefer death to living without living. (*breaks out sobbing*)

E: You're blubbering? Go inside where you belong! I hear a racket. (*derisive*) Might they be preparing for your wedding day? Do I hear screaming? They're all awake inside. It's childbirth --or bloody murder! They need some nice, fresh corpses for their pillows, so it must be murder!

C: Get out, take cover! Hide yourself from her. Just for today, stay out of her way. She's shooting death-rays from her eyes. She had a dream. (*noise of several people inside, approaching*) Get out of here. They're coming through the hallways. They're coming over here. She had a dream. What did she dream of? I don't know. I overheard the maids as they talked and they said she dreamed of Orest, of Orest our brother, and that she shouted out in her sleep as one cries out who's being choked. (*torches and shadows fill the hall to the right of the door*) They're coming now. The servants run ahead of her, driven on by fear. They're dragging beasts here, to sacrifice them. Sister, when she trembles is when she's scariest. (*urgently*) Only today, for this one hour, get out of her way!

E: Today I'll have a chat with my mother that she will not forget.

C: I cannot listen! (*runs stumbling away through the courtyard door*)