

Agamemnon

Agamemnon is a confusing tale of the people that are waiting for the soldiers to get home from the Trojan war. Most of the play is the chorus singing about many of the things that happened during the war. The play also shows the disrespect the men had for women in that time period.

In front of Agamemnon's palace, a watchman wishes his shift would end. He is tired and wants to sleep but he must stay awake. He awaits news from Queen Clytemnestra.

The Chorus of Argive elders enters, singing of the war. They sing of the gods, asking for them to help them win the war, and of the great army. They anxiously await the news from the Queen.

In the song, they tell how Agamemnon killed his child. He sacrificed his daughter to Apollo so that Apollo would make the winds blow for his armies ships. The chorus thinks that deed was horrible, but had to be done for the good of the country.

The leader asks Clytemnestra if she's heard any news. He doesn't like being ruled by a woman and treats her somewhat rudely. He only listens to her because of his loyalty to his King. She tells the leader that the army has taken Troy. The leader is skeptical and asks her to repeat herself several times. The Queen gets angry and tells him she is not a "credulous girl."

When the leader asks how Clytemnestra found out the city was taken so quickly, she tells him that one God delivered the message to another and so on. He yet again asks her, which makes it seem he thinks she is a young girl with little sense. When the leader finally accepts her answer, he belittles her again by saying it was "worthy of a wise man's utterance." Although the Queen has power while the King is gone, it means almost nothing to the leader because she is female.

The chorus, hearing the news, sing again. They thank the Gods for their help. They sing of sinful, childish Paris and Helen, bringer of war, and the shame they should feel.

A Herald tells everyone basically the same thing the Queen said. The leader finally believes it's the truth, since a man spoke the words. Everyone is happy and awaits the army's return.

Agamemnon is welcomed home by the chorus. They sing of how proud they are of him. Agamemnon feels he's done justice. His wife seems to forget the pain over her dead child and welcomes him home. He is humble and rejects all the praise. He doesn't want the Gods to envy him.

Agamemnon brought a slave back with him, Cassandra. Clytemnestra tells her that she's lucky to be alive and should be happy to be a slave. The leader tries to get Cassandra out of the chariot but she won't move, she only chants. She chants to the Gods and puts a curse on Agamemnon.

This play is very confusing, mainly due to the chorus. They sing vaguely of the war, and it's very hard to interpret. This play does show the way women were treated at that time. Although the Queen was in charge, she was looked down on because she was a woman.

