

RHESUS

Chorus:

Away to Hector's quarters now! Is sleep
Still holding fast to you, you squires who keep
Watch on the prince, or you, you armour-clad
Warriors? For fresh tidings should be had
From those who in the fourth watch of the night
Were set to guard the mustered troops. [calling Hector] Alright,
Sit up or lean upon your arm! Unseal
That fierce eye from its slumber and reveal
Yourself! It's time to leave your lowly bed
Of scattered foliage, so go ahead
And listen!

10

Hector:

Who is this? A comrade? Speak!
The password! Who is coming here to seek
Me out?

Chorus:

The army's guard.

Hector:

But why such speed?

Chorus:

Have courage!

Hector:

I do. Is there, then, some deed
Of midnight ambush?

Chorus:

No.

Hector:

Why, therefore, do

You leave your post and rouse the troops? Have you
Some news? Do you not know how very near
The Argive army we're reposing here
Already armed?

Chorus:

Now it's those arms we need.

Go to your allies' camp! With greatest speed 20
Raise *them* to arms! To your own company
Dispatch a friend! Bridle the steeds! Who'll be
The one to go to rouse Panthus's son,
Polydamas, and who will be the one
To find Sarpedon, captain of the band
Of Lycians? Where's he that has in hand
Checking the sacrifices? Where are they
Who head the light-armed troops? Hasten away
And find the Phrygian archers! Go and string
Your bows!

Hector:

Your tidings are awakening 30

Both fear and confidence – nothing is clear.
Has Pan infested you with frenzied fear?
What does your noisy summons mean? What news
Can I announce you bring? For you confuse
Me with a wealth of words.

Chorus:

The Argive throng,

Hector, has kindled fires the whole night long.

Of Agamemnon's flocked by men, all bent

Has never been so scared – accordingly, 40

To tell you so that no opprobrium

Hector:

Despite your fearful news! The Greeks intend

Therefore, that keeps on burning through the night

Upon the battlefield while hungrily

Scatter the Argive warriors for good. 50

By vanishing I would determinedly

And slaughtered every Argive regiment.

Advantage of a heavenly lucky break

Of Heaven, persuaded me to wait until

The others, though, don't wait to understand 60

Has courage in the night. Without delay

We'll have to tell the army to awake
From slumber and give orders that they make
Themselves prepared to fight the enemy,
So that many an Argive man, as he
Leaps up aboard his vessel, shall be shattered
Across his back, the ladders being spattered
With blood. The others with tight shackles will
Be bound and learn our Phrygian fields to till. 70

Chorus:

Hector, you jump the gun, for we don't know
Whether our men are vanishing or no.

Hector:

Why else would they set fires, then?

Chorus:

I do

Not know, but I am fearful.

Hector:

Well, if you

Fear that, you'll be afraid of everything.

Chorus:

I've never seen an enemy kindling

A fire as large as that.

Hector:

But did they ever

Display such cowardice before? No, never!

Chorus:

So far, so good: what's left to do?

Hector:

That we

Must arm ourselves against the enemy. 80

Chorus:

Here comes Aeneas hastily: he's here

With news to tell his friends.

Aeneas:

Why, in such fear,

Hector, have all the watchmen made their way

To your bedside to hold some late parlay,

Disturbing all the army?

Hector:

Aeneas,

Put on your armour!

Aeneas:

What has come to pass?

Is there some secret stratagem at hand,

Concocted by the foe?

Hector:

The men disband

And board their ships.

Aeneas:

What certain proof is there

Of this?

Hector:

The whole night through their torches flare. 90

I don't think they will wait till break of day

But light their vessels' prows and sail away.

Aeneas:

Why are you armed, then?

Hector:

I will with my spear
Stop them as they're embarking in their fear,
And I will lay upon them heavily:
For we would be corrupt and cowardly
If we should let the Argives fly away
Unchallenged after all the ill that they
Have done to us.

Aeneas:

Would you were just as shrewd
As bold! Not everyone has been imbued 100
With universal knowledge. We're assigned
Our special gift – some have a prudent mind
While you have war. You are aroused to know
The foe are lighting torches – you would go
Across the ditches with your band of men
In the still night. But, this achieved, what then,
Supposing that you find that they're not gone
But staring at your company head-on?
Beware lest you are overthrown and so
Do not return: indeed how will you go 110
Across the palisades while scrambling?
How shall the charioteers manage to bring
Their chariots across the bridges when
The axles might be shattered? Even then
You'd have the son of Peleus yet to face,
Who'd not let you ignite the fleet or chase
The Argives, as you think: he's fierce as fire,
A mighty man. No, let the men retire,
Their shields nearby, for they are battle-spent.

Let's have a volunteer creep from his tent 120

And spy upon the foe; and if, in fact,
They plan to flee away, then let us act
And fall on them; but if their signalling
Is just a trap, that volunteer will bring
Tidings about the enemy's intent,
Which we'll debate. Thus stands my argument.

Chorus:

That's good. So turn your mind around! Embrace
This plan! Risky commands are hard to face.
What's better than to have a speedy spy
Approach the enemy's ships and find out why 130
They're causing such a great illumination
With torches in front of their naval station?

Hector:

Alright, since the majority agrees.
[to Aeneas] Go to our allies and instil some ease
In them because the troops may be upset
About our midnight council. I will get
Someone to spy upon the enemy,
And if I hear of any strategy
They're plotting, you'll learn of it face-to-face
From my own lips. However, just in case 140
They start to flee, wait for the trumpet's call,
For then I will not linger here but fall
Upon their ships.

Aeneas:

Quick then! Send out the spy!
For we debate in safety now,, and I

Will be right by your side should need arise.

What Trojan who is present to advise

The council volunteers to be that spy?

Who'll be that loyal man of Troy? For I

Can't serve my country and my company

Of men in everything.

Dolon:

I cheerfully 150

Will run the risk for Troy and be a spy

Upon the Argive fleet, and after I

Have learned of all their plans, I will return.

Hector:

You're Troy's friend, Dolon, for indeed you earn

That name. Your father was illustrious,

But you, my friend, have made him doubly thus.

Dolon:

But I should have some fitting compensation:

For better will be my participation

With apt reward.

Hector:

That's fair, and I accept

Your bid. And therefore name your price – except

My throne.

Dolon:

Oh, how laborious that would be!

Hector:

Then marry Priam's daughter, making me

Your brother-in-law.

Dolon:

That would be marrying
Above my station.

Hector:

Maybe gold's the thing
You want?

Dolon:

Oh no, I have no scarcity
Of gold.

Hector:

In all of Troy what may there be
That you desire?

Dolon:

Give me my booty when
The Greeks are overcome.

Hector:

So be it, then!
But don't ask for their admirals.

Dolon:

No, be
Their executioners, particularly 170
Menelaus.

Hector:

You want Ajax?

Dolon:

He can't till
A field who's well-brought up.

Hector:

Which of them will
You want for ransom?

Dolon:

As I said before,

I've gold enough.

Hector:

Alright then, from our store

Of booty come and choose.

Dolon:

I'd rather you

Nail up the spoils that everyone may view

Them on the shrines.

Hector:

What greater accolade

Would you request?

Dolon:

Achilles' horses – they'd

Be worth the risks a warrior takes in war.

Hector:

Ah, there our wishes are in conflict, for 180

They're deathless, born of deathless steeds, and they

Carry Achilles on his headlong way.

Poseidon tamed them, so they say, then he

Gave them to Peleus. But I will not be

The breaker of my word – Achilles' team

I'll give to you, a source of great esteem

To your household.

Dolon:

I thank you, and I say

That it's a greater accolade to pay

My deeds than any other. But you should

Not envy me, for there is much that's good 190

To gladden you as ruler of this land.

Chorus:

Your enterprise is great, your bounty grand.

You'll be a happy man if you succeed,

For glory comes from hard work. But indeed

To wed a ruler's child will also please.

Let Justice keep an eye on gods' decrees!

You have enough to render you content.

Dolon:

I'm going now but first, inside my tent,

I'll don appropriate clothes, and then I'll speed

Down to their fleet.

Chorus:

What clothing do you need 200

Instead of what you're wearing?

Dolon:

Clothes that fit

The task at hand and furtive steps.

Chorus:

Ah, it

Is good to listen to the wise. Tell me

What other things are high-priority?

Dolon:

A wolf-skin I will fasten on my back,

Its jaws over my head, and I will tack

Its fore-feet to my hands, my legs concealed

In its hind-feet. Thus, as a wolf revealed,

The enemy on all fours I'll confound

As I approach the pits and bars around 210

The ships. But when I reach a desert spot,
I'll walk upright. Such is my chosen plot.

Chorus:

May trickster Hermes take you safely there
And bring you back again! You are aware
Of what you have to do. Now all you need
Is luck.

Dolon:

I will return unscathed indeed.

I'll bring Odysseus' head (yes, him I'll slay)

Or Diomedes', for this will display

That I have seen them. I'll be back again

Before dawn, on my hand a bloody stain. 220

Chorus:

Archer Apollo, come this very night

And save this man by steering him aright,

Almighty god, you who once long ago

Raised up the walls of Troy! O may he go

Down to the ships, spy on the enemy,

Then turn and reach his father's sanctuary!

Then may he mount the chariot's that's driven

By steeds of Phthia, which had once been given

By Poseidon to Aeacus' progeny,

After the foe is routed thoroughly! 230

For he alone dared, for the Trojan land,

To eavesdrop on the foe down on the strand.

His spirit I admire – such bravery

Is rare once sunlight dies upon the sea,

The city in distress. Phrygia, though,
Still has a valiant few who'll meet the foe
Upon the battlefield. Does Mysia flout
Us as its allies? No, there is no doubt.
Which Argive will the wolf-like murderer slay
As he lies on his bed? May Dolon lay 240
Menelaus low, kill Agamemnon dead
And place in Helen's hands that leader's head
That she may grieve her evil kinsman, for
He came against my city, threatening war
With his armada. [enter Messenger]

Messenger:

 Such news as I bear,
My lord, in future may I also share
With you!

Hector:

 The rustic mind is frequently
Obtuse – to this inapt locality
You've doubtless come about your sheep, although
I now prepare for battle. Don't you know 250
The palace and my father's throne? That's where
You ought to tell your tale about the care
Of all your flocks.

Messenger:

 We are obtuse, I know,
We herdsmen – there's no question. Even so,
I bring great news.

Hector:

 Stop telling me of how

Your sheep are! I have spears to wield right now.

Messenger:

My very theme! A man, I have to say,

A chief of a great host, is on his way

To join you as your ally.

Hector:

Whence?

Messenger:

Thrace. Men

Say that he's Strymon's son.

Hector:

Say that again! 160

Is Rhesus coming here?

Messenger:

You heard me right:

Your hearing makes my message half as light.

Hector:

How has he come to Ida's meadowland,

A lengthy trek to wander, having spanned

The broad cart-track?

Messenger:

I cannot say aright,

Though I might guess at it. A raid by night

Is far from easy, for the plains are packed

With foes, although he frightened us in fact

Upon Mt. Ida, where we dwell, the place

First to be settled by the Trojan race. 270

Through a wood of savage beasts there came a tide

Of Thracian warriors who fiercely cried

Out loud. In fear we drove our flocks up high
In case some Argives should come sweeping by
To raid and sack our steading, until we
Picked up the sound of voices patently
Not Greek, which stayed our fear. For then I went
And asked in Thracian those who had been sent
To check the road, "Who leads you? What's the name
Of him who fathered him?" because they came 280
As allies to our city. I stood still
As soon as they had satisfied my will
To learn what I would know. Then I could see
Rhesus up high, like some divinity,
Upon his chariot. The steeds were linked
In unison by yokes of gold that blinked
Brighter than snow; there flashed a shield around
His back with figures set in gold, and bound
Before the steeds a gorgon of bronze, just like
That on the goddess' aegis, which could strike 290
Fear with its clanging bell. One could not tell
The number of the army very well –
Beyond belief, it was a sight to see:
Knights, light-armed troops, a massive company
Of archers, dressed in Thracian garb. The son
Of Peleus will find out he cannot run
From Rhesus or defeat him spear to spear.
Chorus:
Whenever all the gods buoy up with cheer
The people, fortune finds a happy end.
Hector:

Now fortune shines upon me, many a friend
Shows up, for Zeus is on our side. But we
Don't need those who, way back in history, 300
Refused to share the labours that we bore
When, driving all pell-mell, the god of war
Tore down our ship of state tempestuously.
Rhesus has shown what kind of amity
He has for Troy. He comes here to our feast,
Though absent when the hunters stalked the beast.

Chorus:

You're right to scorn such friends as those, but show
Welcome to those who wish to fight our foe.
For long we've kept Troy in security.
But are you sure you've caught the enemy? 310

Hector:

I am indeed - next day will make this clear.

Chorus:

Beware the future – luck will often veer
About.

Hector:

I hate a friend who comes too late
To bring his help, but let's accommodate
The man, since he is here, not as a friend
But as a guest. To him Heaven forbend
I should show gratitude!

Chorus:

To thrust aside
One's allies causes hatred.

Messenger:

But a tide
Of panic would swirl round the enemy
Through his mere presence.

Hector:

Yes, you counsel me 320

Correctly: I agree. Let Rhesus, then,
Clad in his golden armour, join our men.

Chorus:

Let Zeus's daughter nemesis arrest
A word that might offend, for what is best
Within my soul I'll say. For you are here,
Son of the river-god – we give you cheer
Because your father Strymon, he who flows
Beneath fair bridges, and your mother chose
To send us you. Rhesus, you were conceived
When the virgin maid Euterpe's breast received 330
Strymon. You are my Zeus, my god of light,
As on your dappled steeds you fill my sight.
My Troy, with the gods' aid, you now may sing
Of Zeus, our saviour. I'm left wondering
If my old city Troy shall spend its days
In drinking toasts and chorusing love's praise
Once more, the bewildering wine-cup passed around,
When those two sons of Atreus sail off, bound
For Sparta. Do this service for me, friend,
With your strong arms and weapons, and then wend 340
Your way back home. Rhesus, approach and wield
Full in Achilles' face your golden shield!
Raise It above your chariot's rail and drive

Your steeds on! Shake your lance! None will survive
To live on Hera's plain – no, they will die,
Slaughtered by sons of Thrace, and they will lie
In happy Troy. Hail, mighty prince! O Thrace,
You've bred a hero – just look at his face!
His strong frame's clad in golden armour. Heed
The bells upon his shield! A god indeed, 350
Euterpe's and Strymon's staunch progeny,
Who's here to aid you with his bravery. [enter Rhesus]

Rhesus:

Brave Hector, son of one who's just as brave,
Prince of this land of Troy, may the gods save
Your Highness! So at last I greet you. I
Rejoice at your success. You're camped nearby
The foe, I see. I'm here to help destroy
The walls and fire their fleet of ships for Troy.

Hector:

Euterpe's and Lord Strymon's progeny,
I'll speak out plain, for I inherently 360
Don't have a double tongue, so long ago
You should have helped us to resist the foe.
You cannot say that we did not invite
You here to help you put the foe to flight.
What messenger of Phrygian embassy
Did not go to you, asking urgently
For help? What fine gifts did we not convey
To you? Yet you continued to betray
Us to the Greeks, barbarians as you are,
Like us. Yet it was I who raised you far 370

Above your paltry principedom when to Thrace
I gave you as their lord, for, face to face,
Around Pangaeum in Paeonia's land,
I broke the Thracian chieftains' columns and
Gave you their people in captivity.
And yet you trampled on this courtesy
And came a laggard to our aid, while they
Who are no kin to us to make them stay
Have long been here, though many fell, now laid
In graves, no mean proof of their loyal aid. 380

Others upon their chariots still fight
With steadfast soul and brave the icy bite
Of winds and parching sun, not tipping
On couches as you do. This charge I bring
Against you face to face that you might see
How full of frankness Hector's tongue can be.

Rhesus:

I, too, am frank – straight to the point I go,
No double-dealing. I'm more full of woe
Than you to be an exile from my place
Of birth. The Scythians, who border Thrace, 390
However, warred against me on the day
Before I was about to make my way
To Troy. When I had reached the Euxine coast
Where I was to transport my Thracian host,
My spear poured gouts of blood in Scythia's land,
And in this butchery my Thracian band
Received a share. Thus I was powerless
To join your troops in Troy. Nevertheless,

As soon as I had gained a victory,
Taken their children as my surety 400
And fixed a yearly tribute they will pay
My house, I crossed the sea, then made my way
On foot through other nations' lands to here.
No, I don't hold carousals, as you jeer
About me, sleeping soft in gilded halls:
Oh no indeed – amid the frozen squalls
That vex Paeonia's shores and Thrace's sea,
With just a soldier's cloak I sleeplessly
Found out what suffering is: now I am here,
Tardy but not too late – in your tenth year 410
Of war you're fighting still, yet victory
Eludes you, for you're stumbling constantly,
Casting the dice of conflict with the foe.
One day will be enough for me to go
And sack those battlements and then attack
Their fleet and kill them all; then I'll go back
Next day to Thrace: thus will our grief end here.
Now none of you must raise a single spear,
For though I've come here somewhat tardily,
I'll slay those vaunting Argives utterly. 420

Chorus:

Hail, Zeus's splendid champion! O may
High-thronèd Zeus keep jealousy away
From you for your last speech! Never before
The Argive fleet brought such a man of war
As you. How will Achilles wield his spear
Against you? How will Ajax? May I hear,

My sovereign, that one day you will requite
The Argives with your fatal spear grasped tight!

Rhesus:

My lengthy absence I long to redress –
I speak to Nemesis – with great success. 430

When I have cleared this city of its foes
And you've picked out the first-fruits, I propose
To march on Greece and lay it waste that they
May in their turn experience dismay.

Hector:

Would I could banish this adversity,
Restoring our erstwhile security!
But sacking Argos and its pasture-land
Will never be an easy task in hand.

Rhesus:

The greatest chiefs of Greece, do they not say,
Are here?

Hector:

Yes, and I don't scorn them, for they 440

Are hard to drive away.

Rhesus:

When they are slain,
Is our task not then finished?

Hector:

Do not strain
To look at distant schemes, but try to see
What's here before your eyes.

Rhesus:

It seems to me

That you're content to suffer and to act

No more.

Hector:

Now listen, Rhesus, I in fact

Rule a great empire here. Choose your left wing,

Or right, or centre, and start marshalling

Your troops.

Rhesus:

Hector, alone I'll face the foe.

If you feel shame, from all your recent woe, 450

To share in firing Argive ships., then place

Me squarely with Achilles face-to-face,

His army, too.

Hector:

However eagerly

You wish it, you can't face the man.

Rhesus:

But he

Has sailed to Troy, they say – is it not thus?

Hector:

He's there indeed, but he is furious

And will not fight.

Rhesus:

Who after him has won

Renown among their troops?

Hector:

Diomedes, son

Of Tydeus, and Ajax, who are no less

Courageous than Achilles, I would guess. 460

Wily Odysseus, too, has boldly fought:
Of all the Greeks in Troy that man has wrought
The greatest outrage – in the darkness he
Took from her shrine Athena's effigy
Back to their fleet, and then, clad like a tramp,
He came to our ramparts from the enemy camp
And loudly cursed the Greeks, for he was sent
To spy on Ilium, and then he went
Back out once he had slain the guards. You'll see
Him always lurking by the sanctuary 470
Of Phoebus, plotting ambush. We must fight
A pest like that!

Rhesus:

 No brave man thinks it right
To kill a foe in secret, but he should
Slay the man face-to-face. So if I could
Catch him alive – this fellow who you say
Is plotting stealthy mischief – him I'll slay
And nail fast to the gates. Let vultures feed
Upon him! For that is the death indeed
That he deserves, considering his crime
Of temple-robbing.

Hector:

 Men, it's now the time 480
For slumber. To your quarters! [to Rhesus] I will show
You where you army should this evening go
To sleep apart from where our troops lie. Heed
Our password 'Phoebus'! If there should be need
Of it, recall it. Tell it to your men, too!

You must advance before us. Make sure you
Keep close watch. Let in Dolon, sent to spy
Upon the ships – if safe, he should be nigh
Our camp.

Chorus:

Who's next on guard? The stars descend,
The seven Pleiades in turn ascend 490

The sky. An eagle floats on high. Arise
At once! Go to the watch! Look at the skies –
That's moonlight. Dawn is almost here, for see!

There is a star foretelling it. Who's he
Who has first watch? Coroebus, who's the son
Of Mygdon. And then? The Paeonian
Unit roused the Cilicians, while we
Were roused by the Mysians. It's time to be
Rousing the Lycians. That sound I heard
Comes from the nightingale, that tuneful bird, 500

Who's in her blood-stained nest that rests beside
The river Simois. Her young one died,
Killed by her. Now she sings her threnody,
A song with such a piteous melody.

The flocks on Ida feed – I recognize
The pipe's notes in the night. Sleep charms my eyes,
For sleep's sweetest at dawn. Where is our scout,
Sent to the shore by Hector to check out
The foe? He's been so long away I dread
That he has been waylaid and now lies dead 510

Let's go and rouse the Lycian company
For the fifth watch as per the lottery. [enter Diomedes and Odysseus]

Odysseus:

Was that a clash of arms? Did you not hear?

Or is it just a ringing in my ear?

Diomedes:

No, it's a chariot's harness rattling.

I, too, felt fear before acknowledging

The sound of horses' chains.

Odysseus:

Better beware

Lest in the darkness you should, unaware,

Stumble upon the guard!

Diomedes:

I will indeed,

While moving in the gloominess, pay heed. 520

Odysseus:

If you should wake them accidentally,

Have you found out their password?

Diomedes:

Certainly.

I heard Dolon use 'Phoebus'.

Odysseus:

Ah, look here –

The foe have left this bivouac.

Diomedes:

That's queer.

Dolon said Hector slept here, I've no doubt,

For he's the reason that my sword is out.

Odysseus:

What can it mean? Have they withdrawn elsewhere?

Diomedes:

Perhaps they're plotting something new.

Odysseus:

That's fair

Enough, for Hector, since his victory,

Has grown audacious.

Diomedes:

What, then? What are we 530

To do? We have not found him in his bed.

Our prospects have been dashed.

Odysseus:

Then let us head

Down to the fleet as quickly as we can.

Some god, it would appear, harbours the man.

Therefore we must not struggle against fate.

Diomedes:

Then Paris or Aeneas, whom we hate

Most of all Phrygians, let's ferret out

And cut their heads off.

Odysseus:

No, There's serious doubt

You'll find them in the dark or, if you were

To do so, kill them without risk.

Diomedes:

A slur, 540

Though, could attach itself to us if we

Went to the ships and left the enemy

Unharmd.

Odysseus:

Unharm'd? What do you mean? We slew
That spy Dolon at anchor and withdrew
Their spoils and brought them here! Will you, then, sack
The whole camp?

Diomedes:

I concur, so let's go back,
And may Fate bless us!

Athena:

Ah, abandoning
The Trojan ranks, are you, and sorrowing
That Heaven won't allow you two to slay
Hector or Paris? Didn't you hear men say 550
That Rhesus has arrived to give Troy aid
In no mean way? If he survives this raid
Till dawn, the Argive fleet will utterly
Be wiped out, for there's no spear that will be
Able to stop it, neither Achilles' nor
That of Ajax. Rhesus, in outright war,
Will raze the palisades and, far and wide,
The onslaught of his lance shall range inside
The gates. So slaughter him and everything
Will then be yours. Leave Hector slumbering - 560
Don't slit his throat, for he'll find his demise
At someone else's hand.

Odysseus:

I recognize
Your voice, Athena, for you're always there
To help me in my troubles. Tell me where
He's sleeping; whereabouts does he abide?

Athena:

Nearby, not with his other troops – outside
The ranks he has his quarters until night
Gives way to day. Nearby, his steeds of white
Are tethered to his chariot – they're so
Easy to see in darkness, for they glow
Like swans. So slay their master and then bear
Them off as glorious spoils, for there's nowhere
Else that such horses can be seen.

Odysseus:

Then kill

The Thracians, Diomedes, or I will,
While you care for the horses.

Diomedes:

I will do

The killing, while I leave the steeds to you –
You're versed in tricks and have a ready wit
And one should place a man where he'll best fit.

Athena:

Ah, look! I see Paris is coming here.
Perhaps he's heard his enemies are near.

Diomedes:

Alone?

Athena:

Yes. He is coming, I surmise,
To Hector's bed to tell him there are spies
Around.

Diomedes:

I'll kill him!

Athena:

No, it's not decreed

That you should be his slaughterer. But speed
Upon your bloody mission! I'll pretend,
As Aphrodite, his ally, to lend
Him aid with bogus words. He does not know
The fate that's been decreed for him, although
He's nearby. [enter Paris]

Paris:

Brother, general, do you lie

Asleep? Wake up! An enemy is nigh - 590
A thief or spy, perhaps.

Athena:

Have cheer! For see

That Aphrodite's here to graciously
Watch over you, for how you fare in war
Is my concern, since I am grateful for
The honour and good service you showed me.
Now Troy's delighting in its victory,
To bring a powerful friend to you I came –
Euterpe's Thracian child, whose father's name
Is Strymon.

Paris:

You've been a kind friend indeed

To us, and I am sure when I decreed 600
You as the fairest I gave Ilium
The highest treasure life affords. I've come,
Hearing some tale has been disseminated
Among the guards about the camp – it stated

That Argive spies are here. One who said so
Had actually not seen them, another, though
He had, could not describe them. Thus I'm bent
On making my way now to Hector's tent.

Chorus:

Fear not! – all's peace. Hector's gone to decide
The sleeping-quarters.

Paris:

I am satisfied. 610

Unafraid, I'll man my post.

Athena:

Do so. For it

Cheers me to labour for your benefit.

And see that my allies are prosperous.

On your behalf see I'm solicitous. [exit Paris]

[aloud, to Odysseus and Diomedes]

I bid you sheathe your swords! The eagerness

That you display as warriors suppress!

Rhesus lies dead, his steeds taken away.

The foe know it as well, and therefore they

Are coming for you. You must hurry, then,

Down to the fleet. Why should you linger when 620

The storm is bursting on you? [enter Chorus, Odysseus and Diomedes]

Chorus:

Who's there? Hark!

Those warriors are the thieves who in the dark

Provoked this army. Come here, all of you!

I have them! What's your company? Where do

You come from?

Odysseus:

I won't tell you, for today

You'll die for what you did.

Chorus:

Will you not say

The password? Or shall I direct my sword

Straight at your heart?

Odysseus:

Halt! Be of good accord!

Chorus:

Strike, all of you! Come closer!

Odysseus:

Have you slain

Rhesus?

Chorus:

No, but you're here to slay –

Odysseus;

Remain 630

Right there!

Chorus:

No, no, lay on!

Odysseus:

No, do not slay

A friend!

Chorus:

The password?

Odysseus:

'Phoebus'.

Chorus:

Yes, you say

Aright. Men, stay your spears! Where have they gone?

Odysseus:

I saw them hereabouts.

Chorus:

Keep close upon

Their tracks, each one of you! Or possibly

Let's seek help. – Yet it would be strange if we

Disturbed our friends with wild alarms at night.

Who was that man that slipped out of our sight?

He'll boast of his escaping me. But how

Shall I possess the skill to catch him now? 640

To whom shall I compare that fellow who

Came fearlessly by night and passed straight through

Our army and the guard we set? Is he

From coastal Locris or from Thessaly?

Some island? And to which god does he pray? –

Is this Odysseus' doing? If one may

Guess from his former acts, it is. – Do you

Really believe that's true? – Of course I do. –

For us he is too bold an enemy. –

Who's that? – Odysseus. – Ah, your eulogy 650

Should not be wasted on a thief who plies

Such crafty weapons. – Once, with bleary eyes,

He came here, dressed in rags, his weapon kept

Beneath his cloak, and round about he crept

Just like some vagrant, begging for food, his head

All rough and squalid. Bitter words he said

About the sons of Atreus, as though he

Really opposed that royal family.

Would he had lost his life and thereby paid

His due before he came here. – I'm afraid 660

In spite of who he was, for it will be

Us Hector will blame for our laxity

As guards. – With what proof? – He'll suspect. – Are you

Afraid? What have we done? – They passed us - - Who?

Whoever they were. [enter a charioteer]

Charioteer:

Oh, cruel fate! Harsh woe!

Chorus:

Hush! Silence, all of you, and crouch down low!

Someone is entering our trap, maybe.

Charioteer:

Thrace suffers such a dreadful tragedy.

Chorus:

It's one of our allies. He seems to bring

Bad news.

Charioteer:

Great grief has come to us, o king 670

Of Thrace. Troy must be such a dreadful sight

To you.

Chorus:

Where are you? For the gloom of night

Has dulled my eyes and I can't clearly know

If you're an ally.

Charioteer:

Where am I to go

To find some chieftain of the Trojan race?

And where does Hector sleep? Whom must I face
Among the army captains to recount
My tale? Oh, what a terrible amount
Of grief we have! Dark deeds has someone wrought
On us. He's gone away now that he's brought 680
To every Thracian such a tight-wound ball
Of sorrow.

Chorus:

 It seems that upon us all
Calamity has fallen.

Charioteer:

 That is so:
We've lost our army and a treacherous blow
Has slain the king. I'm full of agony
From this deep wound. May death devour me!
Was shameful death the prize for bringing aid
To Troy for Rhesus and me?

Chorus:

 He doesn't shade
This news in riddles: oh no, the demise
That is the fate of Ilium's allies 690
Is clear in his report.

Charioteer:

 A deed of shame,
And evil too! If someone dies with fame,
If die he must, it causes bitterness
For him but, for his family, worthiness,
But we have met destruction foolishly
Without a modicum of dignity.

We were assigned our quarters and then told
The password by great Hector: then we rolled
Over to sleep, tired out. No watch was set
For night, our arms were not arranged, nor yet 700
Were whips hung ready for the steeds, for we
Were by the prince informed that finally
You were the masters now, encamping near
The ships, and so without a thought of fear
We settled down. Then I awoke to care
For all the horses' feed – nor did I spare
My hand – expecting that at break of day
We would be harnessing them for the fray.
Then through the murky gloom I saw two men
Roaming around the sleeping troops. And then 710
They saw I was awake and crouched down low
Then left. I'd shouted to them not to go
To the tents, for I believed that there might be
Some thieves among our allies' company.
Nothing from them! And so I said no more
But went back in to slumber as before.
In sleep a strange vision enveloped me –
The steeds I'd reared and driven formerly
With Rhesus I beheld, and each one bore
Some wolves upon its back and, what is more, 720
The wolves' tails lashed the horses' flanks and urged
Them on, and from those horses' nostrils surged
Furious snorts while in their fear they strove
To throw their riders off as on they drove.
I sprang up to defend them, for the night

With all these horrors gave me such a fright.
I raised my head and heard the sound of men
Who in their death-throes groaned aloud; and then
Warm streams of blood bespattered me beside
My murdered master as he also died. 730

Unarmed, I rose, and as I peered about
To find my sword, a warrior, strong and stout,
Stabbed me beneath the ribs. I felt its thrust,
Which caused a gaping wound. Down in the dust
I fell, and then the steeds and chariot
Got clean away. Ah! Ah! The pain I've got!
Too weak to stand, I'm such a pitiful sight.
I saw what happened; how the victims might
Have died, though, is a mystery to me,
Nor do I know who the killer might be. 740
It was our friends, though, I'm imagining.

Chorus:

No, charioteer of Thrace's hapless king,
Don't doubt us, for it was the enemy.
But Hector, learning of this tragedy,
Is here himself and he feels grief for you,
As well he should, for this mischance.

Hector:

You who

Caused this outrage, say how the enemy,
To your great shame, sent spies clandestinely
And spread destruction through the troops, and say
To me why you did not drive them away 750
When they first came or after they withdrew.

You'll pay the penalty – who else? Yes, you,
The guards! They're gone, unharmed, and heartily
They laugh at Phrygian cowardice and me,
Your leader. Listen, then – by Zeus I vow –
A whipping or the axe awaits you now,
Or call me coward.

Chorus:

But I sought you, lord,
To bring you tidings that the Argive horde
Set fire to the ships. I vow my eye
Was sleepless all night long – I swear this by 760
The springs of Simois! So please subdue
Your rage – I'm guiltless. If, however, you
Find any wrong in me, then bury me
Alive – I will not beg for sympathy.

Charioteer:

Why threaten *them*? Why twist my barbarous mind,
Barbarian? – yes, we are of a kind.
You did this! Neither those who have been slain
Nor those men merely wounded will maintain
That it was any other. You will need
A long speech that's ingenious indeed
To give to me sufficient proof you slew 770
Them for no other reason but that you
Wanted their horses. After forcefully
Insisting on their presence, instantly
You killed them. They died as soon as they came.
Paris found a more decent means to shame
A guest-friend's rights than you. Don't say a Greek

Has slaughtered us! Indeed how could he sneak
Through Trojan lines unseen? You and your men
Were camped before us. Who was wounded then, 780
Who slain, among your friends, when the enemy
Of whom you speak arrived? Well, it was we,
Far off, the wounded ones and those whose fate
Was sterner. No, I don't incriminate
The Argives. For what enemy could have found
In darkness Rhesus' bed upon the ground
Unless some god was showing him the way?
They had scant information. No, I say,
This was *your* plot!

Hector:

I've had, from way back when,
Dealings with allies, since Achaea's men 790
Came here, and they have never said to me
One harsh word – but there's such severity
In you. Though I may covet horses, may
That passion never make me want to slay
My friends! This is Odysseus' work – of those
Among the Argives who else would propose
And do a deed like that? I'm terrified
Of him and fear that Dolon may have died,
Too, at his hands – he vanished long ago
And still is absent here.

Charioteer:

I do not know 800
The man of whom you speak. Our enemies
Did not attack us.

Hector:

Think but as you please.

Charioteer:

Oh, may I die in Troy!

Hector:

You shall not die.

Enough are dead already.

Charioteer:

Where am I

To turn? My master's gone.

Hector:

You'll be assured

Of shelter in my house where you'll be cured.

Charioteer:

How shall a murderer's hands take care of me?

Hector:

He keeps on with his tale repeatedly!

Charioteer:

Curses on him! On you I fix no charge,

As you would have it. Justice is at large, 810

However.

Hector:

Take him off and carefully

Tend to him at my palace so that he

May find no fault! Go to the guards, the king

And all his elder statesmen, heralding

That all the dead must now be put to rest

Beside the road.

Chorus:

Oh, why is Troy distressed

After her great success? What will this bring

In future? Oh, what deity, my king,

Above our heads carries, as on a bier,

This new-slain corpse? I'm shuddering with fear. 820

Euterpe:

One of the Muses, honoured by the wise,

I'm here, having just seen the sad demise

Of my dear son, slain by an enemy.

There shall be paid a fitting penalty

By sly Odysseus, my son's killer. Oh,

I mourn you with my native strains of woe,

My darling son. Coming to Troy, you strode

Upon a sorrowful, ill-omened road,

In spite of all your father's earnest pleas

And all my warnings. Ah, such miseries! 830

Chorus:

Although I have no common ties of kin,

I grieve for the misfortune you are in.

Euterpe:

Cursed be Oeneus' son – Odysseus, too!

I've lost my lovely son. And I curse you,

The slut who left her home and sailed to Troy

With Paris, killing thus my darling boy.

So many cities lost their bravest men.

Philammon's son, first in your life and then

In death, you caused great wounds to injure me.

Your pride undid you, and your rivalry 840

With us, the Muses, once caused me to bear
My son. I crossed the river, which is where
I came too close to Strymon's fruitful bed.
That day we Muses climbed up to the head
Of Mt. Pangaeus with its soil of gold,
Where we made preparations to unfold
Our skill in trial with that bard of Thrace,
Wise Thamyras who often rained disgrace
Upon our craft. But now he cannot see –
We blinded him. At your nativity 850
I suffered shame, my maidenhead now rent.
So to your father Strymon you were sent,
Who'd not let mortals raise you, but instead
He chose the fountain-nymphs, and then you led
The Thracian folk, a leader among men.
While you sought bloody deeds in Thrace, why then
I did not fear your death but made taboo
Your travelling to Troy because I knew
Your forecast doom. Lord Hector's elders, though,
And countless embassies urged you to go 860
To Troy as ally. We blame only you,
Athena – no-one else had ought to do
With it, neither Odysseus nor the son
Of Tydeus, Diomedes. – no, no-one!
So do not think it has escaped my eyes.
And yet we sister Muses greatly prize
Your city – many a visit have we paid
To Greece. And it was Orpheus who displayed
To men his torch-lit mysteries, and he

Is Tydeus' cousin, and – listen to me! – 870

Musaeus, your most holy citizen,
The most advanced in learning of all men,
Was trained by us and Phoebus. Is this how
You have requited us? You see me now
Holding my murdered child and sorrowing.
To you, then, no more learned men I'll bring.

Chorus:

The Thracian charioteer berated us
With this man's death, but he's erroneous.

Hector:

I know: we clearly know how he had died –
Odysseus' machinations! When I spied 880

The Argive army here, at once I'd send
My allies heralds, begging them to lend
A hand to us. I did that. Duty-bound,
He came to share our toils. I have no ground
To want him dead. I'm ready now to frame
A tomb for him and with the pyre's flame
Burn many splendid garments – as a friend
He came here and we sorrow at his end.

Euterpe:

The earth shan't bury him, for I'll address
The bride of Hades with great earnestness 890

And I shall ask that giver of increase,
Goddess Demeter's daughter, to release
His soul. Indebted as she is to me,
I'll beg that she will prize the memory
Of Orpheus' friends. And now, though he forever

Will be to me as one who's dead and never
Will see me anymore, he will abide
In a land with veins of silver, deified,
Inside a cave, as Bacchus' seer once lay
Beneath Pangaeus, honoured every day 900
By those who worshipped him. I'll now feel less
The sorrow felt by the sea-goddess,
Whose son must also die. We sisters, then,
Must chant the dirge for you, as shall we when
Achilles dies and Thetis' misery
Is seen. Pallas, who slew you, shall not be
His saviour, for Apollo's aim is straight.
The grief a mother feels! The heavy weight
Of mortals' woes! Measure them accurately
And you'll discover that your life will be 910
A childless one.

Chorus:

His burial is due –
His mother must perform it. As for you,
Hector, the time is ripe for any plan
You have.

Hector:

Go bid our allies, every man,
To arm at once and yoke the steeds! Hold fast
The torch! Wait for the Etrurian trumpet's blast!
I hope to pass them and to set ablaze
Their ships and bring the sun's approaching rays
To all the Trojan army as a day
Of freedom.

Chorus:

Let us go, then, to array

Ourselves in arms and shout our lord's decree

To our allies! May God grant victory!

