

GREEK PERFORMANCE

CREON

Friends, countrymen, I learn King Oedipus hath laid against me a most grievous charge, and come to you protesting. If he deems that I have harmed or injured him in aught by word or deed in this our present trouble, I care not to prolong the span of life, thus ill-reputed; for the calumny hits not a single blot, but blasts my name, if by the general voice I am denounced false to the State and false by you my friends.

JOCASTA

Quick, maiden, bear these tidings to my lord. Ye god-sent oracles, where stand ye now! This is the man whom Oedipus long shunned, in dread to prove his murderer; and now he dies in nature's course, not by his hand. Hear this man, and as thou hearest judge what has become of all those awe-inspiring oracles.

MEDEA

Suffer me to abide this single day and devise some plan for the manner of my exile, and means of living for my children, since their father cares not to provide his babes therewith. Then pity them; thou too hast children of thine own; thou needs must have a kindly heart. For my own lot I care naught, though I an exile am, but for those babes I weep, that they should learn what sorrow means.

CHORUS

O hapless mother, surely thou hast a heart of stone or steel to slay the offspring of thy womb by such a murderous doom. Of all the wives of yore I know but one who laid her hand upon her children dear. But she, poor sufferer, flung herself into the sea because of the foul murder of her children, leaping o'er the wave-beat cliff, and in her death was she united to her children twain. Can there be any deed of horror left to follow this?

CHORUS

Who is he by voice immortal named from Pythia's rocky cell, doer of foul deeds of bloodshed, horrors that no tongue can tell? A foot for flight he needs, fleetier than storm-swift steeds, for on his heels doth follow, armed with the lightnings of his Sire, Apollo. Like sleuth-hounds too the Fates pursue.