**Excerpts: *The Trojan Women*, by Seneca**

**HECUBA**

*(Troy has been burned and looted. The women of the Trojan royal family prepare to be taken as prizes by the conquering Greek warriors. Hecuba, queen of ruined Troy, looks on the destruction.)*

HECUBA: Anyone who trusts in royal power, anyone who rules supreme in a great palace without fear of the fickle gods, anyone who surrenders his trusting heart to happiness, should look upon me, and upon you, Troy. Never did Fortune give greater proofs of how unstable the place is where the proud stand. Overthrown and fallen is the pillar of mighty Asia, masterwork of the gods.1 …See, the walls, those lofty glories, lie piled in ruins on the charred buildings; flames throng the palace, and smoke rises across the entire breadth of Assaracus’ house. Yet the flames do not curb the conqueror’s greedy hands: Troy is plundered while she burns. The sky is obscured by the billowing smoke; as though enveloped in thick cloud, the daylight is black and befouled with Ilium’s ash. The conqueror stands insatiable in his anger and measures long-lingering Ilium with his gaze, and savagely refuses as yet to forgive the ten long years. He also shudders at her ruins, and though he sees her defeated, he cannot convince himself that her defeat is possible. Looters seize the Dardan spoils; those thousand ships cannot hold the plunder.

I call the gods to witness (hostile though they are to me), and the ashes of my country, and you, ruler of Phrygia,2 now buried beneath your whole realm, covered by Troy, and *your* spirit3—as long as you stood, Ilium stood—and you great flocks of my children, less mighty shades: all disasters that have happened, all evils that Phoebus’ priestess foretold in raving speech as the god denied her credence, I Hecuba saw first while great with child,4 and I voiced my fears; I was a futile prophetess before Cassandra. It was not the wary Ithacan5 that scattered firebrands among you, nor the Ithacan’s night-prowling companion,6 nor lying Sinon:7 that fire is mine, you are burning with my brands.

But why, lingering old age, lament the downfall of a city that is overthrown? Ill-fated one, face these fresh griefs; Troy by now is an old distress. I saw the accursed sacrilege of the king’s murder, and a crime committed at the very altar greater than the outrage of Ajax,8 when the ferocious fellow, 9 bending back the king’s head by the hair twisted in his cruel hand, buried his wicked blade in a deep wound. After he willingly received the deeply driven sword, it came out dry from the old man’s throat. Who could not have been appeased from savage slaughter by a man closing on the last climacteric of mortal life, and by the gods witnessing the scene, and by a kind of sanctity belonging to fallen kingship? Priam, famous father of so many princes, has no tomb; he lacks a funeral fire, while Troy burns.

Yet this is not enough for the gods above: even now the urn is casting lots, selecting a master for the daughters and daughters-in-law of Priam, and I shall follow—see, a worthless prize! One man betroths Hector’s wife to himself, another hopes for Helenus’ wife, another for Antenor’s; there is even someone who desires your bridal bed, Cassandra. My lot is feared, I alone frighten the Danaans.

Is your lamentation idle, my band of captive women? Strike your breasts with your hands, beat out the sounds of sorrow, and perform the funeral rites for Troy. For a long time now fateful Mt. Ida should have been reechoing, home of the cursed judge.10

1Troy’s walls were built by Neptune (Poseidon) and Apollo.

2Priam

3Hector

4Hecuba, while pregnant with Paris, had dreamed of giving birth to a blazing firebrand, a portent of Troy’s fall.

5Ulysses (Odysseus)

6Diomedes

7Sinon’s lies lulled the Trojans’ suspicions of the Wooden Horse.

8The outrage of Ajax was to drag Cassandra from sanctuary at Athena’s altar and rape her.

9Pyrrhus (Neoptolemus), Achilles’ son, slew Priam.

10An allusion to the Judgment of Paris.

**ANDROMACHE**

*(Andromache has attempted to hide her small son Astyanax from capture and death. Ulysses (Odysseus) threatens to destroy Hector’s tomb if she does not turn over her son, and now Andromache is torn between the memory of her husband and the future of her child.)*

ANDROMACHE: What can I do? My mind is torn by twin fears: on the one side is my son, on the other my dear husband’s ashes. Which will prevail? Witness the pitiless gods, and those true gods, the shades of my husband: I love nothing else, Hector, in my son but you. Let him live, to restore your features to life. But will the ashes be hurled from the tomb and sunk? Shall I allow the bones to be dispersed and scattered on the desolate waves? Better that this one should die. But can you, his mother, see him surrendered to monstrous murder, see him thrown whirling over the high battlements? I shall be able to, shall endure it, shall bear it, as long as my Hector is not tossed about after death by the victor’s hand. Yet this one can still feel injury, while death now safeguards the other. Why are you wavering? Choose which one you will save from injury. Can you hesitate, ungrateful woman? On one side is your Hector—but no, Hector is on both sides. This one still has consciousness, and perhaps will be an avenger for his dead father. Both cannot be protected. What are you to do? From the two, my heart, save the one the Danaans fear…

*(Ulysses (Odysseus) states his plan to destroy the tomb, and Andromache realizes that her son, whom she has hidden, will be crushed if the tomb is destroyed.)*

ANDROMACHE: …I fall at your knees as a suppliant, Ulysses, and grasp your feet with this hand which has touched no man’s feet before. Pity a mother; receive kindly and patiently my prayers of motherly love. The higher the gods have exalted your lofty station, the more gently you should tread on the fallen; gifts to the wretched are gifts to Fortune. So may your chaste wife’s1 bed behold you once again, and Laertes2 lengthen his years until he receives you home; so may that young man of yours3 welcome you, and exceeding you hopes in his natural gifts may he surpass his grandfather’s years and his father’s intellect. Pity a mother; my sole comfort in distress is this boy.

1His wife is Penelope, who stays faithful to Ulysses (Odysseus) for the 20 years he is gone.

2Ulysses’ father

3Ulysses’ son, Telemachus

**HELEN**

*(Helen views the destruction of Troy and the grief of its women, and she considers her own role in what has happened.)*

HELEN: Though great bitterness is irrational and unbending, and sometimes hates even its fellow sufferers, nevertheless I can defend my cause before a hostile judge—for I have suffered worse. Is Andromache in mourning for Hector, and Hecuba for Priam? Only Helen’s mourning for Paris has to be in secret. It is harsh, hateful, oppressive to endure slavery? I have long endured that yoke, ten years a prisoner. Is Ilium overthrown, your guardian gods fallen? It is hard to lose one’s country, but harder to be afraid of it. You are solaced by so large a companionship in suffering; I suffer the rage of both conqueror and conquered. Which woman each Greek would seize as slave has long hung in uncertainty; my master seized me immediately, without drawing lots. Was I the cause of the war, and of such disaster for Trojans? Believe this true, if a *Spartan* ship cut through *your* seas. But if I was plunder stolen by Phrygian sailors, a victorious goddess’ gift to her judge,1 Paris needs your forgiveness. My case certainly will have an angry judge: this decision awaits Menelaus.

1Helen was Paris’ reward.

**Bk XI:385-464 Odysseus tells his tale: The Ghost of Agamemnon**

          ‘When sacred [Persephone](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexOP.htm#Persephone) had dispersed the female spirits, the ghost of [Agamemnon](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexA.htm#Agamemnon), son of [Atreus](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexA.htm#Atreus), came sorrowing, and other ghosts were gathered round him, those who met their fate alongside him, murdered in [Aegisthus](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexA.htm#Aegisthus)’ palace. Drinking the black blood he knew me, and wept loudly, shedding great tears, stretching his hands out in his eagerness to touch me. But all his power and strength was gone, all that vigour his body one possessed.

          I wept when I saw him, and pitied him, and spoke to him with winged words: “Agamemnon, king of men, glorious son of Atreus, what pitiless stroke of fate destroyed you? Did [Poseidon](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexOP.htm#Poseidon) stir the cruel winds to a raging tempest, and swamp your ships? Or perhaps you were attacked in enemy country, while you were driving off their cattle and fine flocks, or fighting to take their city and its women?”

          He answered my words swiftly: “[Odysseus](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexOP.htm#Odysseus) of many resources, scion of [Zeus](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexRSTWZ.htm#Zeus), son of [Laertes](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexFGHILMN.htm#Laertes), Poseidon stirred no cruel winds to raging tempest, nor swamped my ships, nor was I attacked in enemy country. Aegisthus it was who engineered my fate, inviting me to his palace for a feast, murdering me with my accursed wife’s help, as you might kill an ox in its stall. I died wretchedly, and round me my companions were slaughtered ruthlessly, like white-tusked swine for a wedding banquet in the hall of some rich and powerful man, or at a communal meal, or a great drinking session. You yourself have witnessed the killing of men, in single combat or in the thick of the fight, but you would have felt the deepest pity at that sight, the floor swimming with blood where our corpses lay, by the mixing bowl and the heavily-laden tables. But the most pitiful cry of all came from [Cassandra](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexBCDE.htm#Cassandra), [Priam](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexOP.htm#Priam)’s daughter, whom treacherous [Clytemnestra](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexBCDE.htm#Clytaemnestra) killed as she clung to me. Brought low by Aegisthus’ sword I tried to lift my arms in dying, but bitch that she was my wife turned away, and though I was going to [Hades](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexFGHILMN.htm#Hades)’ Halls she disdained even to close my eyelids or my mouth. Truly there is nothing more terrible or shameless than a woman who can contemplate such acts, planning and executing a husband’s murder. I had thought to be welcomed by my house and children, but she with her mind intent on that final horror has brought shame on herself and all future women, even those who are virtuous.”

          To this I answered: “Indeed, from the very beginning, Zeus the Thunderer has tormented the race of Atreus, through women’s machinations! So many men died for [Helen](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexFGHILMN.htm#Helen)’s sake while Clytemnestra plotted in your absence.” I spoke, and he made answer swiftly: “So don’t be too open with your own wife, don’t tell her every thought in your mind, reveal a part, keep the rest to yourself. Not that death will come to you from wise [Penelope](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexOP.htm#Penelope), [Icarius](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexFGHILMN.htm#Icarius)’ daughter, she who is so tender-hearted, and circumspect. A newly wedded bride she was when we left for the war, with a baby son at her breast who must be a man now and prospering. His loving father will see him when he returns, and he will kiss his father as is right and proper. But that wife of mine did not even allow me to set eyes on my son before she killed me. Let me say this too, and take my words to heart, don’t bring your ship to anchor openly, when you reach home, but do it secretly, since women can no longer be trusted.

          Come tell me, in truth, have you heard if my son is still alive, maybe in [Orchomenus](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexOP.htm#Orchomenus) or sandy [Pylos](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexOP.htm#Pylos), or in [Menelaus](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexFGHILMN.htm#Menelaus)’ broad [Sparta](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexRSTWZ.htm#Sparta): that my noble [Orestes](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexOP.htm#Orestes) is not yet dead?” To this I answered: “Son of Atreus, why ask this of me? I cannot tell if he is dead or living, and it is wrong to utter empty words.”’

**Bk XI:465-540 Odysseus tells his tale: The Spirit of Achilles**

          ‘So we stood, exchanging words of sadness, grieving and shedding tears. And now the spirit of [Achilles](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexA.htm#Achilles) son of [Peleus](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexOP.htm#Peleus) appeared, and the spirits of [Patroclus](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexOP.htm#Patroclus) and peerless [Antilochus](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexA.htm#Antilochus), and [Ajax](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexA.htm#Ajaxgreater) who for beauty and stature was supreme among the [Danaans](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexBCDE.htm#Danaans), save only for Peleus’ flawless son. And the ghost of swift-footed Achilles, grandson of [Aeacus](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexA.htm#Aeacus), knew me, and spoke through the tears: “[Odysseus](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexOP.htm#Odysseus) of many resources, scion of [Zeus](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexRSTWZ.htm#Zeus), son of [Laertes](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexFGHILMN.htm#Laertes), what could your resolute mind devise that exceeds this: to dare to descend to [Hades](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexFGHILMN.htm#Hades), where live the heedless dead, the disembodied ghosts of men?”

          So he spoke, and I replied: “Achilles, son of Peleus, greatest of [Achaean](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexA.htm#Achaeans) warriors, I came to find [Teiresias](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexRSTWZ.htm#Teiresias), to see if he would show me the way to reach rocky [Ithaca](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexFGHILMN.htm#Ithaca). I have not yet touched [Achaea](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexA.htm#Achaea), not set foot in my own land, but have suffered endless troubles, yet no man has been more blessed than you, Achilles, nor will be in time to come, since we [Argives](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexA.htm#Argives) considered you a god while you lived, and now you rule, a power, among the un-living. Do not grieve, then, Achilles, at your death.”

          These words he answered, swiftly: “Glorious Odysseus: don’t try to reconcile me to my dying. I’d rather serve as another man’s labourer, as a poor peasant without land, and be alive on Earth, than be lord of all the lifeless dead. Give me news of my son, instead. Did he follow me to war, and become a leader? Tell me, too, what you know of noble Peleus. Is he honoured still among the [Myrmidons](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexFGHILMN.htm#Myrmidons), or because old age ties him hand and foot do [Hellas](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexFGHILMN.htm#Hellas) and [Phthia](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexOP.htm#Phthie) fail to honour him. I am no longer up there in the sunlight to help him with that strength I had on [Troy](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexRSTWZ.htm#Trojans)’s wide plain, where I killed the flower of their host to defend the Argives. If I could only return strong to my father’s house, for a single hour, I would give those who abuse him and his honour cause to regret the power of my invincible hands.”

          To this I answered: “Truly, I have heard nothing of faultless Peleus, but I can tell you all about [Neoptolemus](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexFGHILMN.htm#Neoptolemus), your resolute son, since you command me. I myself brought him from [Scyros](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexRSTWZ.htm#Scyros), in my well-made hollow ship, to join the bronze-greaved ranks of the Acheans. When we debated our plans before Troy he was always first to speak and his words were eloquent: only godlike [Nestor](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexFGHILMN.htm#Nestor) and I were more so. And when we fought with our bronze spears on the plains of Troy, he never lagged behind in the crowded ranks but always advanced far in the lead, yielding to no one in skill. Many were the men he killed in mortal combat. I could not count or name them, all those victims of his, killed as he fought for the Argives, but what a warrior that hero [Eurypylus](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexBCDE.htm#Eurypylus), son of [Telephus](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexRSTWZ.htm#Telephus) was, who fell to his sword, and Eurypylus’ Mysian comrades slain around him, all because of a [woman](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexA.htm#Astyoche)’s desire for gain.

Next to noble [Memnon](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexFGHILMN.htm#Memnon), he was the handsomest man I ever saw. Then again, when we Argive leaders climbed into the Horse that [Epeius](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexBCDE.htm#Epeius) made, and it fell to me to open the hatch of our well-made hiding place, or keep it closed, the other Danaan generals and counsellors kept on wiping the tears from their eyes and their limbs trembled, but he begged me endlessly to let him leap from the Horse, toying with his sword hilt and his heavy bronze spear, eager to wreak havoc on the Trojans. And when we had sacked [Priam](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexOP.htm#Priam)’s high city, he took ship with his share of the spoils and a noble [prize](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexA.htm#Andromache), and never a wound, untouched by the sharp spears, unmarked by close combat, something rare in battle, since [Ares](http://www.poetryintranslation.com/PITBR/Greek/OdindexA.htm#Ares), the God of War, is indiscriminate in his fury.”

When I had spoken, the spirit of Achilles, Aeacus’ grandson, went away with great strides through the field of asphodel, rejoicing at my news of his son’s greatness.’

**Excerpts: *Agamemnon*, by Aeschylus**

*(The play opens with Agamemnon’s return.* *Clytaemnestra outwardly appears to be happy at his arrival. She has prepared an opulent entry for him, but Agamemnon refuses it, fearing that the lavishness will tempt the gods to punish him. He eventually accepts her gift in order to be allowed inside the house. Clytaemnestra also invites Cassandra, Princess of Troy and Agamemnon’s captive, inside. Cassandra’s gift of prophecy precedes her; the members of Agamemnon’s house know who she is and pity her lot in life. They hear her prophecies and are confused by the future grief she sings of.)*

CASSANDRA  
                                       Aieee . . . the pains I feel.  
      The fearful labour pains of true prophecy  
      seize me, confuse me, as they start again,  
      full of foreboding. Look there—see those creatures,  
      young ones, sitting by the house, dark shapes,  
      like something from a dream? They’re like children  
      murdered by their loved ones . . . their hands are full,  
      clenching chunks of their own flesh as food,                         1440         
      their guts and inner organs . . . it’s all so clear . . .   
      that awful meal their own father tasted.  
      For all that, I say, revenge is on the way,  
      someone’s planning it, a craven lion,  
      a beast wallowing in bed, keeping watch,  
      waiting for my master to get back.  
      Yes, my master—since I must now bear  
      the yoke of slavery. That lord of war,  
      who led the fleet and ravaged Ilion,  
      has no idea what that cur is up to,                                          1450  
      what evil plans the hateful bitch is hatching,  
      as her tongue licks his hands in welcome,  
      ears perked up for joy, like treacherous Ate,                                      
      goddess who destroys. It’s outrageous—  
      the woman kills her man. What shall I call her?  
      What awful monster suits her? A snake?  
      An amphisbaena with a head at either end?  
      Or perhaps a Scylla living in the rocks,  
      preying on sailors, raging mother of hell,  
      who breathes relentless war on loved ones.                          1460  
      How that woman, in her audacity,   
      screamed out in triumph, like a battle cry,   
      pretending to enjoy his safe return!  
      Whether you credit what I say or not—  
      that doesn’t really matter. Why should it?  
     What will come will come. And soon enough,                                    
      as you stand here full of pity, you’ll say  
      Cassandra’s prophecies were all too true.

(*Cassandra also knows that she will die upon entering the house. At the end of this conversation, she goes willingly inside the house.)*

*(During the time that Cassandra has been speaking with the Chorus, Clytaemnestra has exacts her revenge on Agamemnon. While he is bathing, she stabs him three times. Once Cassandra is inside the house, she is also murdered by Clymtaemnestra. As she gives this speech, Clymtaemnestra is standing over the bodies covered in blood.)*

CLYTAEMNESTRA  
      Before this moment I said many things  
      to suit my purposes. I’m not ashamed        
      to contradict them now. How else could I  
      act on my hate for such a hateful man,  
      who feigned his love, how else prepare my nets  
      of agony so high no one could jump them?  
      I’ve brooded on this struggle many years,  
      the old blood feud. My moment’s come at last,  
      though long delayed. I stand now where I struck,                 1630  
      where I achieved what I set out to do.  
      I did all this. I won’t deny the fact.                                                        
      Round this man I cast my all-embracing net,  
      rich robes of evil, as if catching fish—  
      he had no way out, no eluding fate.  
      I stabbed him twice. He gave out two groans.  
      Then as his limbs went limp, I hit again,  
      a third blow, my prayerful dedication  
      to Zeus, underground protector of the dead.  
      He collapsed, snorting his life away,                                      1640  
      spitting great gobs of blood all over me,                                              
      drenching me in showers of his dark blood.  
      And I rejoiced—just as the fecund earth  
      rejoices when the heavens send spring rains,  
      and new-born flower buds burst into bloom.  
      That’s how things stand, old men of Argos.  
      Be joyful, if that’s how you feel. For me,  
      this is my triumph. If it were fitting  
      to pour libations on this corpse,  
      I’d pour my curses out—that would be just.                          1650  
      He filled the mixing bowls in his own house  
      with such destructive misery, and now

      he drinks it to the dregs. He’s home at last.

CHORUS LEADER  
      What you say I find incredible!  
      How can that tongue of yours gloat like this,  
      exulting over your dead husband?

CLYTAEMNESTRA  
      You’re testing me, as if I were some silly woman.  
      But my heart is fearless. Let me tell you   
      what you already know—then you can praise  
      or criticize me as you like. I don’t care.                                  1660  
      This man is Agamemnon, my husband.  
      He’s a corpse, the work of this right hand,  
      a work of justice. That’s how matters stand.

CHORUS LEADER  
      Woman, what earth-grown poison have you eaten,  
      what evil drink drawn from the surging sea,  
      that you’re so mad to risk the public voice,  
      the curses people mutter? You cast him off.  
      You cut him down. So now you’ll be thrown out,                               
      exiled from the city—a hateful thing  
      to your own people.

CLYTAEMNESTRA  
                                                        So now                                       1670  
      you’d sentence me to banishment,  
      send me from the city a thing accursed?  
      Back then you made no accusation  
      against this man lying here. He sacrificed  
      his own child, that dear girl I bore in pain,  
      to charm the winds from Thrace—and didn’t care.  
      To him she was a beast for slaughter.  
      He had flocks of them—his farms were full.  
      Shouldn’t you have banished him from Argos  
      in punishment for that polluting crime?                                1680         
      You’re strict enough when you pass judgment  
      on what I’ve done. So let me caution you—  
      I’m prepared to fight you head to head.  
      If you win, well then, you can govern me.  
      But if god lets me prevail, you old men  
      will learn, old as you are, to behave yourselves.

CHORUS LEADER  
      You’re too ambitious, far too arrogant.  
      Blood-drenched murder’s made you mad. That’s plain.  
      Your eyes are full of blood. Now stroke for stroke   
      you’ll pay for what you’ve done. You’ve lost your friends,   1690  
      you’ve lost your honour . . .

CLYTAEMNESTRA *[interrupting]*  
      Then hear this, too, the force behind my oath—  
      by that Justice I exacted for my child,  
      by Ate, goddess of destruction,  
      by the Fury to whom I offered up this man,  
      my hopes will never walk these halls in fear,  
      so long as Aegisthus stokes the blazing fires  
      in my hearth. And he’s as loyal to me now  
      as always, my shield, no man to trifle with.  
      He’ll boost my confidence. Here he lies,                                1700  
      the man who abused his wife, seduced  
      by every captive girl at Ilion—  
      and here she lies, his concubine, his spear prize,                                
      the faithful prophetess who shared his bed.  
      She also knew the rowing benches  
      where sailors sweat. They get what they deserve.  
      He’s dead. She, like a swan, sang her last song,  
      then died. Now she lies there, his sweetheart.  
      She’ll bring new thrills, fresh pleasures to my bed.

CHORUS  
      O that some Fate would soon come,                                      1710  
      free from suffering and quick,  
      bringing endless sleep,                                                                            
      our last eternal sleep,  
      now our gracious lord is dead.  
      For a woman’s sake  
      he suffered much, and now  
      by a woman’s hand he died.

      Alas for you, Helen, frantic woman.  
      On your own, beneath Troy’s walls,  
      you slaughtered many lives,                                                     1720  
      and more than many.  
      Now you wear your final garland—  
      one long remembered for the blood  
      which will never wash away.                                                                  
      Back then in this house  
      lived a spirit of strife,  
      a power that broke our king.

CLYTAEMNESTRA  
      Don’t torment yourself like this, invoking  
      death and fate, or redirect your rage  
      on Helen, as if she killed those men,                                      1730  
      all those Danaan lives, all by herself,  
      and brought us pain past remedy.

CHORUS  
      O spirit that falls upon this house,  
      on Menelaus, on Agamemnon,  
      descendants of Tantalus,  
      you overpower me  
      through these two sisters,                                                                      
      each with power like a man.  
      You consume my heart with grief.

Perched on his corpse                                                                1740  
      the hateful raven caws her song,  
      her harsh triumphal tune.

**Trojan War Aftermath**

Common Core Standards: RL 2 (theme); RL 3 (characterization); RL 4 (vocabulary); RL 6 (p.o.v.)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Character** | **Purpose/Focus of Speech** | **Characterization** | **Theme(s)** |
| Clytemnestra |  |  |  |
| Helen |  |  |  |
| Andromache |  |  |  |
| Cassandra |  |  |  |
| Hecuba |  |  |  |
| Achilles |  |  |  |
| Agamemnon |  |  |  |

**CONSTRUCTED RESPONSE**

Choose one of the excerpts and respond to the following Constructed Response question. Be sure to use the CR format: Topic Sentence, Supporting Details, and Concluding Sentence.

**How does the author use point of view to develop a theme?**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_