

Dramatic Interpretation

Boys

OJCL 2018

Source: Adapted from *The Bacchae* by Euripides translated by Kenneth Cavander

Speaker: Herdsman

Audience: Pentheus, the king of Thebes

Scene: Dionysus has come to Thebes and has driven the women mad.

We decide to lay in ambush for the women

In the undergrowth,

We hide in the leaves,

We wait.

The hour for the rites approaches...

The sticks with ivy begin to beat out a rhythm.

It gets in your blood, that rhythm.

“Iacchos!” they howl in unison,

“Bromios!”

“Son of Zeus!”

The whole mountain sways to that one beat, beat, beat:

Everything’s running, running, Agave is racing towards me, she’s coming near, nearer, almost touches me, I leap

out- I wanted to catch her, you see- I jump from my

safe hiding place and-

She calls the women to hunt us

We turn and run-

If we hadn’t we would have been torn to shreds

By the Bacchae...

As it is they descend on our heifers grazing

In the long grass. They have nothing in their hands,

Those women- nothing metal. But imagine you see

One of them, just with her hands, tearing a young

Well-grown heifer in two, while it screams...

Others have found full-grown cows and are wrenching them

Limb from limb. Ribs, hooves, toss

Up in the air, drop to the ground. Parts

Of our animals hang from branches of pine trees,

Dripping there, blood spattering the leaves.

Bulls with surging horns, invincible

Till now, are tripped, sprawl full length

On the ground, while a mob of hands, girls’

Hands, rip them apart. Faster than you can

Blink your royal eyes the flesh is peeled

Off their bones.

-It was a terrible sight to see, master...

This power, master, whoever he is, whatever

He is... let him into Thebes! He

Is great.

Dramatic Interpretation

Girls

OJCL 2018

Source: Adapted from *Lavinia* by Ursula K. Le Guin

Speaker: Lavinia

Audience: none

Scene: Lavinia's father, Latinus, has just promised her to Aeneas in marriage.

My father let silence fall again, "Oracles, you say, bade you come to this country," he said. "I will tell you that your coming also was foretold. If your chief Aeneas seeks alliance, I will ask him to come to my city and offer me his hand. My only daughter is bidden by our oracle to marry a stranger, a man who, even as the oracle spoke, was coming to us. I think your lord Aeneas is the man. And if my mind sees truly, this marriage is what I wish. So bid him come." He stood up and I backed away quietly through the door I had come in.

To hear myself promised as part of a treaty, exchanged like a cup or a piece of clothing, might seem as deep an insult as could be offered to a human soul. But slaves and unmarried girls expect such insults, even those of us who have been allowed liberty enough to pretend we are free. My liberty had been great, and so I had dreaded its end. So long as it could end only with Turnus or the other suitors, I had felt that insult, that bondage awaiting me, the only possible outcome. I had been the dove tied to the pole, flapping its silly wings as if it could fly, while the boys below shouted and pointed and shot as it till at last an arrow struck.

I felt nothing of that entrapment now, that helpless shame. I felt the same certainty I had seen in my father's eyes. Things were going as they should go, and in going with them I was free. The string that tied me to the pole had been cut. For the first time I knew what it would be to fly, to take my wings across the air, across the years to come, to go, to go on.

"I will marry him," I said in my heart, as I went through the rooms of the Regia. "I will make him my husband, and bring the gods of his house here to join with the gods of mine. I will bring him home."