

Dramatic Interpretation

Boys

OJCL 2016

Source: Adapted from *The Metamorphoses of Ovid* translated by Allen Mandelbaum (Book 14)

Speaker: Achaemenides

Audience: Macareus

Scene: Achaemenides, a Greek, tells a former comrade, Macareus of Neritus, about what befell him after he was left behind.

Aeneas kept my soul from ending in
the Cyclops' mouth; and even if I should
now leave behind the light of my life, I shall
be buried in a tomb, not in the guts
of Polyphemus. What fear took my heart
(if I, in panic, still had any soul
or senses left) when I saw you sail off
across the deep, deserting me!
Indeed, Ulysses' clamor almost wrecked
the ship on which you left. I saw it all:
I saw the Cyclops tear a giant rock
off from the mountainside; I saw him toss
that rock into the sea; he did not stop—
his massive arm kept flinging those great rocks
as from a catapult; and when, at last, you fled,
and sailing off, escaped atrocious death,
the groaning Cyclops prowled the slopes of Aetna;
and stretching out his bleeding arms, he cursed
the race of Greeks and howled: "Oh, would that chance
might bring Ulysses or one of his men,
so I could vent my wrath—could eat his guts
and tear his living flesh with these bare hands
and inundate my gullet with his blood
and feel his mangled members shuddering between my teeth!"
It's death I had before my eyes and yet
it was the least of my fears. And with my mind I still could see
that scene when he snatched two of my dear friends
and dashed them three and then four times against
the ground; and like a shaggy lion he crouched
over my comrades, bent on stuffing down
their flesh, white marrowed bones, their innards,
and their limbs still warm; and terror took my soul;
I paled with horror as I watched him crunch
and spit, and vomit chunks
of flesh mixed with wine. Such was the fate
I pictured for my sorry self. For days

Continued on next page...

on end, I hid; at every sound, I quaked;
I was afraid of death—but longed for it.
Alone and helpless, desperate, I ate
acorns and leaves and grass: I held at bay
starvation. There was nothing to await
but suffering and death until – at length—
I saw this ship from far off; and so I begged—
with signs and gestures—to be led away;
I hurried to the beach, and they took pity
on me; that Trojan ship received a Greek.

Dramatic Interpretation

Girls

OJCL 2016

Source: *The Metamorphoses of Ovid* translated by Allen Mandelbaum (Book 11)

Speaker: Aeolus' daughter, Alcyone

Audience: Her husband, Ceyx

Scene: King Ceyx wishes to travel to Clarus to consult an oracle of Apollo there, Alcyone pleads with her husband to take her with him.

What fault of mine has turned your mind awry?
Your care for me was once the first of things—
Where has that gone? My dearest one, are we
so distant now that you can tranquilly
leave your Alcyone alone? Long journeys—
Do those intrigue you now? When I am far,
am I more dear to you? But I should hope
that you will go by way of land. At least—
although I grieve—I will not have such need
to fear: I'll suffer but without despair.
It is the sea that haunts me: there is terror
in the drear image of its endless waters.
Lately, I saw some planks along the beach,
the shattered remnants of a wreck at sea:
and often I've seen tombs that bore a name,
although, within those tombs nobody lay.
And do not let illusions cozen you:
the father of your wife may be the son
of Hippotas—yes, Aeolus is one
who holds the winds as prisoner and may
whenever he so wills it, calm the waves.
But once the winds, unleashed, have reached the deep,
they can be curbed no more; there is no land,
there is no tract of water to withstand
their power: no thing then is safe from them.
They can harass the highest clouds of heaven;
And when contending winds collide, impact,
wind batters wind, and then red lightnings flash.
(As a child, I often saw those winds within
my father's house—I know them—and be sure
the more I know of them, the more I fear.)
But if no plea of mine can change your plan,
if you in truth must leave, then take me, too,
dear husband; let me journey out with you.
There storms will batter both of us, and I
will only have to fear what meets my eyes.
As one, we shall endure whatever comes;
as one, we'll sail the sea's immensity!