

Hostage Situations in Euripides

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1) *Orestes* 1105 (Pylades)

Ἐλένην κτάνωμεν, Μενέλεω λύπην πικράν.

Let us kill Helen – that will be a bitter pain to Menelaus!

2) *Orestes* 1149-52 (Pylades)

ἦν δ' οὖν τὸν Ἑλένης μὴ κατάσχωμεν φόνον,
πρήσαντες οἴκους τοῦσδε κατθανούμεθα.
ἐνὸς γὰρ οὐ σφαλέντες ἔξομεν κλέος,
καλῶς θανόντες ἢ καλῶς σεσφασμένοι.

But if we do not accomplish the murder of Helen,
then we will burn the house and perish.
Having accomplished either goal, we will attain glory
whether by dying nobly, or being nobly saved.

3) *Orestes* 1163-74 (Orestes)

ἐγὼ δὲ πάντως ἐκπνέων ψυχὴν ἐμὴν
δράσας τι χρήζω τοὺς ἐμοὺς ἐχθροὺς θανεῖν,
ἴν' ἀνταναλώσω μὲν οἷ με προύδοσαν,
στένωσι δ' οἵπερ κάμ' ἔθηκαν ἄθλιον.
Ἀγαμέμνονός τοι παῖς πέφυχ', ὃς Ἑλλάδος
ἦρξ' ἀξιωθείς, οὐ τύραννος, ἀλλ' ὅμως
ῥώμην θεοῦ τιν' ἔσχε: ὄν οὐ κατασχυνῶ
δοῦλον παρασχῶν θάνατον, ἀλλ' ἐλευθέρως
ψυχὴν ἀφήσω, Μενέλεω δὲ τεῖσομαι.
ἐνὸς γὰρ εἰ λαβοίμεθ', εὐτυχοῖμεν ἄν,
εἴ ποθεν ἄελπος παραπέσοι σωτηρία
κτανοῦσι μὴ θανοῦσιν: εὐχομαι τάδε.

But since I am going to perish utterly
I want to die having done something to my enemies
in order that I destroy in requital those who betrayed me
and that those who have made me wretched may lament.
I am, you know, the son of Agamemnon, who
was thought worthy to lead Greece – not as tyrant, yet
he held some power of a god. This man I will not shame
by submitting to a slavish death. Rather, like a free man
I will give up my life, but take vengeance on Menelaus.
But should we achieve one thing, we would be lucky,
if perchance an unexpected salvation should befall us
killing but not being killed. I pray for this!

4) *Orestes*, 1191-99 (Electra)

Ἑλένης θανούσης, ἦν τι Μενέλεός σε δρᾷ
ἢ τόνδε κάμῃ — πᾶν γὰρ ἐν φίλον τότε —
λέγ' ὡς φονεύσεις Ἑρμιόνην: ξίφος δὲ χρὴ
δέρη πρὸς αὐτῇ παρθένου σπάσαντ' ἔχειν.
κἂν μὲν σε σώζῃ μὴ θανεῖν χρήζων κόρην
Ἑλένης Μενέλεως πτῶμ' ἰδὼν ἐν αἵματι,
μέθες πεπᾶσθαι πατρὶ παρθένου δέμας:
ἦν δ' ὄξυθύμου μὴ κρατῶν φρονήματος
κτείνειν σε, καὶ σὺ σφάζε παρθένου δέρην.

With Helen dead, if Menelaus does something to you
or Pylades here and me – for we are of a piece in amity –
say that you will kill Hermione. The sword you must
draw and hold upon the very throat of the maiden.
And if Menelaus saves you, not wishing his girl to die,
having seen Helen lying in a pool of blood,
allow the father to take the maiden's body back.
But if he cannot conquer his fierce mind
and consigns you to death, then you cut the girl's neck!

5) *Orestes* 1594-98 (Menelaus and Orestes)

[OR] οὐ φευζόμεσθα: πυρὶ δ' ἀνάγομεν δόμους.

[MEN] ἦ γὰρ πατρῶον δῶμα πορθήσεις τόδε;

[OR] ὡς μή γ' ἔχῃς σύ, τήνδ' ἐπισφάζας πυρὶ.

[MEN] κτεῖν': ὡς κτανὼν γε τῶνδ' ἐμοὶ δώσεις δίκην.

[OR] ἔσται τάδε.

[MEN] ἄ ἄ, μηδαμῶς δράσης τάδε.

[OR] We will not attempt escape. We will light the house on fire!

[MEN] You will really burn down your ancestral house?

[OR] Yes, to make sure you never possess it, and I will slaughter this girl on the fire.

[MEN] Go ahead, kill her! But having done so, you will pay the price for these deeds!

[OR] Okay, here goes!

[MEN] Ah! Ah! Don't do it!

6) *Orestes* 1616-20 (Menelaus and Orestes)

[MEN] πέπονθα δεινά.

[OR] τότε γὰρ ἦσθ' ἀνωφελής.

[MEN] ἔχεις με.

[OR] σαυτὸν σύ γ' ἔλαβες κακὸς γεγώς.
ἀλλ' εἴ, ὕφαπτε δώματ', Ἥλέκτρα, τάδε:
σύ τ', ὧ φίλων μοι τῶν ἐμῶν σαφέστατε,
Πυλάδη, κάταιθε γείσα τειχέων τάδε.

[MEN] I have suffered terrible things.

[OR] Yes, since you did not help me before.

[MEN] You have me.

[OR] You caught yourself, by being base.
Well then, Electra, light this house on fire!
And you, truest of all my friends,
Pylades, burn the coping of these walls!

7) *Speed* (1994)



The beautiful Sandra Bullock, cloaked in dynamite.

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