



**The Fury**  
From *Thyestes*  
By Seneca

Age Range: Adult

Style: Dramatic, Classical

Monologue:

“Don't hold back, Tantalus, you hateful spectre, drive this evil family mad. Make them outdo each other in sin, hack each other down, permanently enraged, in a blind fury. Make this frenzy pass down from the parents into generation after generation. I want to see them all committing new crimes constantly, even while being punished, and Atreus and Thyestes in turn driven out from this kingdom and then returning to it, and devastating this violent house. Let the ruler be ruined, and the ruined become ruler, loathed by all, himself included. Make brother fear brother, parent fear child, child fear father. Let children die shamefully, be conceived more shamefully. Make hostile wives threaten their husbands, make adultery the least of crimes in this palace of evil. Let them sail away to war and flood the whole world with blood. Let lust triumph over these mighty kings, and the heavens in horror extinguish their stars and sun. Convulse this house! Summon hatred, carnage, death! Pervade the palace! Let the children be slaughtered, Thracian-style. Why isn't Thyestes mourning them already? Why aren't Atreus' hands raised to strike them down? I want the fires lit now, the cauldrons bubbling, their bodies cut up, their blood befouling their uncle's floor, as the meal is prepared. You'll be a guest at that banquet of crime. Go and fill your famished belly: you're free for today from your punishment. You'll see Thyestes drinking their blood in his wine. Seneca, Thyestes 8 I've found a feast to repulse even you. (”

Play Synopsis:

This tragedy is concerned with the revenge that Atreus (king of Argos) took on his brother Thyestes, luring him back from exile, killing his three sons and serving them up as a meal to him. It takes the form of five acts separated by short odes in which the chorus comment on the action. The Fury (goddess of the Underworld) brings the tormented ghost of Tantalus (grandfather of Atreus and Thyestes) to Argos and compels it to drive the royal family mad with a murderous rage. Atreus psychs himself up to get his awful vengeance, recalling Thyestes' former crimes against him and forms his demented plan to bring his brother back and get him to eat his own children unwittingly. An attendant tries to restrain the king, but he brushes aside his objections and cows him into submission. Thyestes turns up at the palace with his children, suspicious of Atreus and his offer to share power, but craving the wealth and prestige that go with the throne. He allows his son to persuade him to meet with Atreus, and then allows the playacting Atreus to allay his fears and press a share of the kingship on him. He and his sons enter the palace with Atreus. A distraught messenger relates at length and in detail how Atreus

murdered Thyestes' sons as if they were sacrificial victims, then cut them up, cooked them and served them up to their father. Atreus comes on stage, exulting as Thyestes eats the terrible meal, and has the palace doors opened so that he can see him enjoying the luxurious feast. He toys with his brother, who feels a growing unease. Thyestes calls wildly and in vain on Jupiter to blast the killer, and the play peters out in frustration and an illogical exchange between the two brothers.

Read the Play Here:

<https://people.uncw.edu/deagona/lit/thyestes%20murgatroyd%20d1a.pdf>