



Thyestes
From *Thyestes*
By Seneca

Age Range: Adult, Young Adult

Style: Dramatic, Classical

Monologue:

“Earth and Sea, hear his wicked words! Hear him, you gods of heaven (wherever you've fled), and you powers of the Underworld! And you, Night, heavy with hell's black clouds, listen to my cry (I have been abandoned to you; you alone witness my misery). I won't pray for anything bad. I won't ask for anything for myself (how could anything help me now?). No, gods, my prayer will restore your standing. Jupiter, almighty ruler of the skies, sovereign lord of heaven's court, enfold the whole world with your dread storm-clouds, send wars of winds from every side, thunder violence from pole to pole, hurling your blazing bolts (full force!) with the hand of wrath that shattered the charging Giants! Avenge the daylight that was driven away! Fling lightning to replace the vanished sunlight! Don't waste time on a judgement. Count both brothers guilty, punish both of us, or just me. Yes, attack me! Transfix my chest with triple forks of flaming fire! The only way of getting my sons cremated is for me to be incinerated myself... (Feebly, when he sees that his prayer has gone unanswered) If nothing moves the gods above, and none of them punishes the wicked, then let this night last forever, and hide this massive crime with endless darkness. Sun-god, if you continue to absent yourself, that's all right with me.”

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.

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