

PERSONAE

The Day's Air, DAIANEIRA, daughter of Oineus.

HERAKLES ZEUSON, the Solar vitality.

AKHELOÖS, a river, symbol of the power of damp and darkness,
triform as water, cloud and rain.

HYLLOS, son of Herakles and Daysair.

LIKHAS, a herald.

A messenger.

*A nurse, or housekeeper, old and tottery, physically smaller than
Daysair.*

IOLE, Tomorrow, daughter of Eurytus, a King.

Captive women.

Girls of Trachis.

WOMEN OF TRACHIS

DAYSAIR: "No man knows his luck 'til he's dead."
They've been saying that for a long time
but it's not true in my case. Mine's soggy.
Don't have to go to hell to find that out.

I had a worse scare about getting married than
[any
girl in Pleuron, my father's place in Aetolia.
First came a three-twisted river, Akheloös,
part bullheaded cloud, he looked like,
part like a slicky snake with scales on it
shining, then it would look like a bullheaded
[man
with water dripping out of his whiskers, black
[ones.

Bed with that! I ask you!

And Herakles Zeuson got me out of it some-
[how,
I don't know how he managed with that wet
[horror,
you might find out from some impartial
[witness
who could watch without being terrorized.

Looks are my trouble. And that
wasn't the end of trouble.

Herakles never gets sight of his children,

[DAYS.] like a farmer who sows a crop and doesn't
look at it again till harvest.
Always away on one assignment or another
one terror after another,
always for someone else.

We been outlawed ever since he kill'd Iphitz,
living here in Trachis with a foreigner,
and nobody knows where he is.

Bitter ache of separation brought on me,
ten months then five, and no news,
bitter childbirth in separation
worried for some awful calamity.
Black trouble may be connected with
this memo he left me.

I keep praying it doesn't
mean something horrible.

NURSE: If a slave be permitted, milady?
I've heard you worrying time and again about
[Herakles . . .
If I'm not speaking out of my turn, ma'am,
[you got
a fine lot of sons here, why not Hyllos
go look for his father?

He's coming now. There, hurrying!
If you felt like to tell him,
if . . .

DAYSAIR: See here, son, this slave talks sense,
more than some free folks.

HYLLOS: What's she say? Lemme hear.

DAYSAIR: No credit to you, that you haven't gone to look
[for your father.

HYLLOS: I've just heard . . . if it's true.

DAYSAIR: Heard what? That he's sitting around
somewhere or other.

HYLLOS: Farmed out last year to a woman in Lydia.

DAYSAIR: He's capable of anything, if . . .

HYLLOS: Oh, I hear he's got out of *that*.

DAYSAIR: Do they say he's alive or dead?

HYLLOS: They *say* he's in Eubœa,
besieging Eurytusville
or on the way to it.

DAYSAIR: You know he left some sort of forecast
having to do with that country?

HYLLOS: No, I didn't know that.

DAYSAIR: That it would be the end of him,
or that when he got
through with the job, he would live happy ever
[after.

It's on the turn of the wheel.
Don't you want to go and work with him?
If he wins we're saved,

[DAYS.] if he doesn't we're done for.

HYLLOS: Of course I'll go. I'd have gone before now
if I had known.
I've never worried very much about him
one way or the other. Luck being with him.
But now I'll go get the facts.

DAYSAIR Well, get going. A bit late,
but a good job's worth a bonus.

KHOROS:

Str. 1
(accompaniment
strings, mainly
cellos): PHOEBUS, Phoebus, ere thou slay
and lay flaked Night upon her blazing pyre,
Say, ere the last star-shimmer is run:
Where lies Alkmene's son, apart from me?
Aye, thou art keen, as is the lightning blaze,
Land way, sea ways,
in these some slit hath he
found to escape thy scrutiny?

Ant. 1 DAYSAIR is left alone,
so sorry a bird,
For whom, afore, so many suitors tried.
And shall I ask what thing is heart's desire,
Or how love fall to sleep with tearless eye,
So worn by fear away, of dangerous road,
A manless bride to mourn in vacant room,
Expecting ever the worse,
of dooms to come?

Str. 2 NORTH WIND or South, so bloweth tireless
wave over wave to flood.

Cretan of Cadmus' blood, Orcus' shafts err not.
What home hast 'ou now,
an some God stir not?

Ant. 2 PARDON if I reprove thee, Lady,
To save thee false hopes delayed.
Thinkst thou that man who dies,
Shall from King Chronos take
unvaried happiness?
Nor yet's all pain.

(drums, quietly
added to music) The shifty Night delays not,
Nor fates of men, nor yet rich goods and spoil.
Be swift to enjoy, what thou art swift to lose.
Let not the Queen choose despair.
Hath Zeus no eye (who saith it?)
watching his progeny?

DAYSAIR: You've found out, I suppose, and want to help
me stop worrying.
Hope you'll never go through enough to
understand how.
One grows up, gets fed. "Don't get sun-burnt."
"Don't get wet in the rain. Keep out of
[draughts,"
that's a girl's life till she's married.
Gets her assignment at night: something to
think about,
that is, worry about her man and the children.
You've seen my load, while it's been going on.
Well, here's another to wail about:
before King Herakles rushed off the last time,
he left an old slab of wood with sign writing on
[it.

