

## Wives of Returning Soldiers and War Trauma in Greek Tragedy

### 1. Euripides, *Heracles* 1105-1108

HP. ἔκ τοι πέπληγμαί· ποῦ ποτ' ὦν ἀμηχανῶ;  
ὦή, τίς ἐγγύς ἢ πρόσω φίλων ἐμῶν,  
δύσγνωιαν ὅστις τὴν ἐμὴν ἰάσεται;  
σαφῶς γὰρ οὐδὲν οἶδα τῶν εἰωθότων.

*Heracles* I am in shock. Where am I in my helplessness? Hey, who of my friends is near or far who can cure me of my ignorance? For I do not recognize clearly anything I am used to.

### 2. Aeschylus, *Persians* 603-606

AT. ἐμοὶ γὰρ ἤδη πάντα μὲν φόβου πλέα  
ἐν ὄμμασιν τάνταῖα φαίνεται θεῶν,  
βοᾷ δ' ἐν ὣσὶ κέλαδος οὐ παιώνιος·  
τοῖα κακῶν ἔκπληξις ἐκφοβεῖ φρένας.

*Atossa* For now, in my case, everything seems full of fear and before my eyes appear the hostilities of the gods, and in my ears a loud noise rings that does not heal. Such is the **shock** of misfortune that terrifies my mind.

### 3. Aeschylus, *Persians* 290-292

AT. σιγῶ πάλαι δύστηνος ἐκπεπληγμένη  
κακοῖς· ὑπερβάλλει γὰρ ἤδε συμφορὰ  
τὸ μήτε λέξαι μήτ' ἐρωτῆσαι πάθη.

*Atossa* I have been quiet for a long time in my misery, **shocked** by misfortune. For this catastrophe is so excessive that I can neither speak nor ask about what happened.

### 4. Sophocles, *Trachiniae* 21-25

ΔΗ. καὶ τρόπον μὲν ἂν πόνων  
οὐκ ἂν διείπομι· οὐ γὰρ οἶδ'· ἀλλ' ὅστις ἦν  
θακῶν ἀταρβῆς τῆς θέας, ὅδ' ἂν λέγοι·  
ἐγὼ γὰρ ἤμην ἐκπεπληγμένη φόβῳ  
μή μοι τὸ κάλλος ἄλλος ἐξεύροι ποτέ.

*Deianeira* As for the manner of their struggles, I could not describe them, for I do not know them. Whoever was sitting unafraid of the sight could tell this story instead. For I was sitting **shocked** with fear that my beauty would win me pain at some point.

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5. Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* 861-901

ΚΛ. τὸ μὲν γυναῖκα πρῶτον ἄρσενος δίχα  
ἦσθαι δόμοις ἔρημον ἔκπαγλον κακόν,  
πολλὰς κλύουσιν κληδόνας παλιγκότους·  
καὶ τὸν μὲν ἦκειν, τὸν δ' ἐπεσφύρειν κακοῦ  
κάκιον ἄλλο, πῆμα λάσκοντας δόμοις. 865  
καὶ τραυμάτων μὲν εἰ τόσων ἐτύγγανεν  
ἀνὴρ ὄδ', ὡς πρὸς οἶκον ὠχετεύετο  
φάτις, τέτρηται δικτύου πλέω λέγειν.  
εἰ δ' ἦν τεθνηκώς, ὡς ἐπλήθυνον λόγοι,  
τρισώματός τ' ἄν, Γηρυῶν ὁ δεύτερος, 870  
[πολλὴν ἄνωθεν, τὴν κάτω γὰρ οὐ λέγω,]  
χθονὸς τρίμοιρον χλαῖναν ἐξηύχει λαβεῖν,  
ἅπαξ ἐκάστω κατθανῶν μορφώματι.  
τοιῶνδ' ἕκατι κληδόνων παλιγκότων  
πολλὰς ἄνωθεν ἀρτάνας ἐμῆς δέξης 875  
ἔλυσαν ἄλλοι πρὸς βίαν λελημμένης.  
ἐκ τῶνδ' εἰ παῖς ἐνθάδ' οὐ παραστατεῖ,  
ἐμῶν τε καὶ σῶν κύριος πιστωμάτων,  
ὡς χρῆν, Ὀρέστης· μηδὲ θαυμάσης τόδε.  
τρέφει γὰρ αὐτὸν εὐμενῆς δορύξενος 880  
Στροφίος ὁ Φωκεύς, ἀμφίλεκτα πῆματα  
ἐμοὶ προφωνῶν, τὸν θ' ὑπ' Ἴλιῳ σέθεν  
κίνδυνον, εἴ τε δημόθρους ἀναρχία  
βουλήν καταρρίψειεν, ὡς τε σύγγονον  
βροτοῖσι τὸν πεσόντα λακτίσαι πλέον. 885  
τοιάδε μέντοι σκῆψις οὐ δόλον φέρει.  
ἔμοιγε μὲν δὴ κλαυμάτων ἐπίσσυτοι  
πηγαὶ κατεσβήκασιν, οὐδ' ἐνὶ σταγῶν.  
ἐν ὀψικοίτοις δ' ὄμμασιν βλάβας ἔχω  
τάς ἀμφί σοι κλαίουσα λαμπτηρουχίας 890  
ἀτημελήτους αἰέν. ἐν δ' ὄνειρασιν  
λεπταῖς ὑπαὶ κώνωπος ἐξηγειρόμην  
ῥιπαῖσι θύσσοντος, ἀμφί σοι πάθη  
ὀρώσα πλείω τοῦ ξυνεύδοντος χρόνου.  
νῦν ταῦτα πάντα τλάσ', ἀπενθήτω φρενὶ 895  
λέγοιμ' ἂν ἄνδρα τόνδε τῶν σταθμῶν κύνα,  
σωτήρα ναὸς πρότονον, ὑψηλῆς στέγης  
στύλον ποδῆρη, μονογενὲς τέκνον πατρί,  
καὶ γῆν φανεῖσαν ναυτίλοις παρ' ἐλπίδα,  
κάλλιστον ἡμᾶρ εἰσιδεῖν ἐκ χειμάτος, 900  
ὀδοιπόρῳ διψῶντι πηγαῖον ῥέος.

*Clytemnestra* First of all, for a woman to sit at home alone without her man is a terrible evil, as she hears many malignant reports: and one man comes, and another man in addition introduces another evil worse than the last, shouting out sorrow for the house. And as for wounds, if this man met with as many as report conducted into the house, he has been pierced with more holes to speak of than a fishing-net. But if he died as many deaths as rumors multiplied, he, with three bodies, a second Geryon, would boast that he had received a threefold cloak of earth, having died once for each form. Because of such hostile reports as these, others released many nooses from my neck from up above, when I was taken down by force. Because of these things, you know, our child does not stand nearby, the guardian of your pledges and mine, as he should have been, Orestes. Don't wonder at this. For our kindly ally, Strophius the Phocian, raises him, forewarning me of double disasters, both your own danger at Troy, and, if lawlessness voiced by the people should overthrow your command, as it is natural for mortals to kick a man more when he is down. Such an excuse, however, bears no deceit. Indeed, gushing springs of tears have dried up for me, and there is not a single drop left. But I have done harm to my eyes, late to bed, weeping over the beacon-watches for you that were always unheeded. And in dreams, I was awoken by the light buzzing of a droning gnat, seeing more disasters befall you than could happen in the time I slept. Now, having endured all these things, with a mind free from grief, I would say that this man is the guard-dog of the stables, the forestays, savior of the ship, firmly based pillar of a high roof, only-born son to his father, and land appearing to sailors beyond expectation, the most beautiful day to behold after a storm, a flowing stream to a thirsty traveler.