

Excerpt from Splendid Productions' 'The Oresteia'
By Aeschylus
Adapted by Kerry Frampton



PROLOGUE

Fury 2 The Prologue.

Furies **Where we set out the background information for the play.**

Fury 3 The story we will tell you happened

Furies **thousands of years ago in Ancient Greece.**

Fury 1 It is a myth.

Fury 2 It is old and past, and yet it is a story that we tell ourselves

Furies **again (they rewind) and again (rewind) and again.**

Fury 1 Wonderful!

Fury 2 Lovely!

Fury 3 Fine!

Furies **Nice!**

In the following section they switch between describing the family group and inhabiting it.

Furies **Here are the family at the centre of our narrative.**
A happy family, united by marriage, power and blood:

Fury 2 (becoming Agamemnon) The father, Agamemnon.

Fury 1 (becoming Clytemnestra) The mother: Clytemnestra.

Fury 3 (becoming Iphigenia) Three children: Iphigenia, Electra and Orestes.

Clytemnestra cradles the imaginary infant Orestes. They look at him.

Furies **He's a baby.**

The Furies step out of the family portrait and observe it.

Furies **They look respectable and content don't they?**
Well, let's take a closer look.

They step back into the family portrait.

Fury 2 The father, Agamemnon is King of Mycenae...

Furies **(aside)...a powerful Greek city...**

Fury 2 ...commander of the Greek army and beloved of his people.

Furies **(as people of Mycenae, lovingly) Beloved!**

Fury 1 passes imaginary baby Orestes to Iphigenia who places him in an imaginary crib.

Fury 1 His wife Clytemnestra is a

Furies **Spartan princess.**

Fury 3 (aside) Spartans are the alpha females of ancient Greece.

Fury 2&3 (stepping back to admire her) Wow.

Furies **(returning to their family places, Orestes is passed back into Clytemnestra's arms) A perfectly matched, gorgeously powerful pair of specimens.**

Fury 3 Look at them! So happy with their

Furies **three beautiful, perfectly bred children, what could possibly go wrong?**

They laugh indulgently.

Furies **What could possibly go wrong? THIS.**

They rewind into their family positions.

Fury 2 A father, Agamemnon kills his eldest daughter...

Fury 3 (as Iphigenia, shocked) Iphigenia!

Fury 2 (as Agamemnon) For my people!
(Sacrificing Iphigenia) Blind, stab, disembowel!

Fury 1 (as Clytemnestra) No!

Fury 3 (as Iphigenia, horrified) Daddy! (Mimes her disembowelment) Dead.
(She becomes Electra, covering her eyes) Electra.

Fury 2 (as Agamemnon) "Off to War!" (He walks in a circle) One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten years...

Over the ten year count, Electra and the imaginary Orestes grow up.

Fury 1 (as Clytemnestra, while Agamemnon circles) He will pay!

Fury 2 (as Agamemnon) I'm back!

Fury 3 (as Electra, delighted) Daddy!

Fury 2 (as Agamemnon, to Electra) Lecky, you've grown!
High five! (They high five.)

Fury 1 So his wife Clytemnestra kills him. (As Clytemnestra, taking an imaginary axe)
Grab, lift... This is for my daughter! Axe!

In slow motion they watch as the axe strikes Agamemnon in the face.

Fury 2 (full speed, as Agamemnon) Face!

Fury 3 (as Electra, horrified) Daddy!

Fury 2 (as Agamemnon) Dead.

Fury 1 (throwing imaginary axe) Fling...

The imaginary axe hits an imaginary audience-member.

Furies **(apologetically) Oooh, sorry!**

Fury 1 Clytemnestra is queen (becomes Clytemnestra as queen.)

Fury 2 (becoming grown-up Orestes) and her children grow up

Fury 3 (becoming grown-up Electra) and kill her.
(Grabbing Clytemnestra by the hair) Hair, grab!

Fury 2 (as Orestes, grabbing imaginary sword) Sword, throat!

Fury 2&3 (as Orestes and Electra) This is for my father!

Orestes shoves the imaginary sword down Clytemnestra's throat.

Fury 1 (as Clytemnestra, imaginary sword in throat) Dead.

Fury 2 removes the sword and throws it away. It hits another imaginary audience-member

Furies **(apologetically) Oooh, sorry!**

Fury 2 This is a Greek Tragedy so there isn't a happy ever after.

Furies **Rewind!**

The Furies replay all the action of the preceding scene at high speed and in reverse, until they return to the family portrait where it began.