



A Greek Tragedy

SCENE: A battlefield. The King Faces The Lawmakers, swords drawn. At stage rear is The Chorus.

Chorus: There stands our once-respected King,
Whose fathers cleft the wine-dark sea
To the orange groves of this Golden Land,
Poor but honest men, rich in Respect.
In his youth, he, too, was poor and honest,
Yet never was he asked to join the fray.
And thus he came to seek Respect
As though driven by The Furies.
To win that noble goal, he donned
The glittering armaments of Power
To strike down, like thunder-handed Zeus,
The enemies who bestrode his path,
And many fell, armor rattling,
In bloody battle along his way.

The King: Many defeats have I known.
But now I am The King!

Chorus: At last, hailed by all,
They crowned him King. Yet rested he not.
His guards he garbed in rich panoply,
And the people laughed.
His castles he built on every shore,
And the people envied.
His coffers he filed with gold,
And the people whispered.

The King: They laugh, they envy, they whisper,
But I am The King!

Chorus: Respect of mere mortals won,

On he drove, as if before the Gods of storm,
Seeking now Respect from those yet unborn,
Yea, from the Gods, themselves!

The King: I have stilled the chariots of Ares,
And brought my people peace.
In times to come I shall be known
As The King among Kings!

Chorus: Yet one by one, his loyal aides
Have fallen, pierced by vicious Rumor,
And now he stands alone—at bay.

The Lawmakers: We seek of you, our King,
The weapons to strike down many-tongued
Rumor,
Which divides our land and sullies even you,

The King: The weapons are mine alone.
Nor do I fear the poisoned shafts of Rumor,
Which only pierce the armor of the weak,
For I am The King!

The Lawmakers: The land lies neglected,
The people cry out in their sleep.
These weapons we must have.

The King: And I must think of Kings to come,
Whose power without these weapons
Would be turned to water.
For I shall be The King among these Kings!

The Lawmakers: To battle then!
And may Olympus smile upon our arms.

Chorus: So the final battle begins!
Yet hate not this ambitious King,
Rather, weep for him.
For, even now before the first swords clash,
He has lost.

He has lost the only prize he sought, Respect.
His flaw was that he strove too hard,
Offending by his hubris both men and Gods.
Stands he punished. Yet fights he on.