IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS

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Iphigenia in Tauris by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

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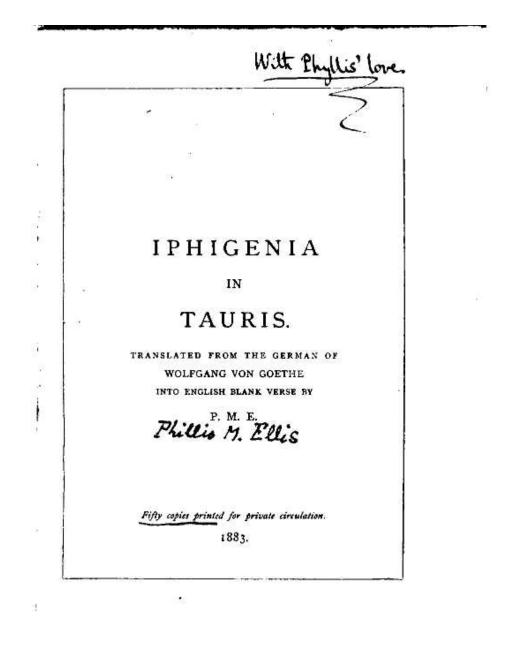
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JOHANN WOLFGANG VON GOETHE

IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS

Trieste



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ. THOAS, King of Tauris. IPHIGENIA. ORESTES. PYLADES. ARKAS, Messenger of the King. SCENE. The Grove before Diana's Temple.

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IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

ARGUMENT.

Iphigenia, daughter of Agamemnon, King of Mycenæ, having for many years been kept against her will as Priestess in Diana's Temple at Tauris, was at length delivered and brought back to Greece by her brother Orestes and his friend, Pylades, chiefly by means of her own truthfulness.

IPHIGENIA.

H ERE in your shadow, waving trees, I tread The ancient, holy, thickly wooded grove, Like as I do the sanctuary calm Of our dread goddess, with such shudd'ring awe As when for the first time I stepped therein, And to this place my spirit grows not used. For an Almighty Will to which I gave My being in submission, keeps me here Concealed through weary years, and I am still,

6	Iphigenia
	As at the first, a stranger.—Ah, from me
	The wide sea separates the souls I love,
1	And sometimes stand I day-long on the shore,
1	My full heart yearning to the land of Greece :
1	But to my sighs the waves but answer back,
	Moaning with hollow tones unto my grief.
ļ	Woe to that one who, far from ties of home,
1	Leadeth a lonely life, and from whose lips
	Is dashed the sweetest bliss by sorrow's hand.
	His thoughts rove ever to his father's halls,
	Where first upon him shone the sun from heaven
	Where, joined by bands of love, he sported free
	With children of the same dear parents born.
	The wisdom of the gods dispute I not,
٠	Yet pitcous methinks is woman's fate.
	Man ruleth all, in battle or at home,
	In a strange land to help himself is strong;
	Conquest rejoiceth, victory crowneth him,
	And lastly waiteth him a glorious death.
	What narrow bounds mark out the woman's lot !
	She in obeying a stern husband's will
- 5	Must find her consolation, e'en her joy.
	If in the distance adverse destiny
	Loometh upon her,-ah what misery !
	Thus Thoas keeps me here, -a noble man,
	Who fetters me with stern and sacred bands.
[O goddess ! with what shame I must confess

in Tauris.	7
That with reluctance calm I serve thee here,-	
Thee, my deliverer, to whose service free,	
My life should be devoted. Steadfastly,	
Diana, have I hoped in thee, and still do trust ;	
For thou hast taken me, the cast-off child	
Of a great king, within thy gentle arm.	
O daughter of Almighty Zeus, if thou	
Hast graciously received the beauteous gift	
Of Agamemnon, whom thou did'st oppress	
With anguish, asking for his daughter's life,	
And he his dearest to thine altar brought,-	
f thou hast led him from the levell'd walls	
Of Troy, back to the land of all his race,	
Unto his wife, his daughter, and his son—	
Then to my own-ah ! give me back once more,	
And save me, who from death thou saved'st once,	
From life upon this coast, a second death.	
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SCENE II.	
Iphigenia. Arkas.	
ARKAS.	
ING THOAS doth by me a greeting send	
▲ Unto the priestess of Diana's fane,	
This day will Tauris give her goddess thanks	
For new and glorious victories achieved.	

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8	Iphigenia
	The king draws near, the army follows him ;
	I hasten hither to announce it thee.
	IPHIGENIA.
	We are in readiness to welcome them,
	And on the sacrifice from Thoas' hand
	Our goddess bends a favourable eye.
	ARKAS.
	O that I also found the priestess' face,
	Thy face, oh, holy virgin, so beloved,
	Brighter and happier,-gladdening us all.
	Mysterious sorrow and reserve e'er shrouds
	Thine inmost soul, and vainly through long years
	Wait we a trusting word from out thy breast.
	Ah, long it is that I have seen thee thus ;
	Before thy glance, must ever awe inspire
	My shuddering heart? And still thy spirit's griet
	Rests ever in thy inmost bosom wrapp'd,
	As iron bands were forged around thy soul.
	Jphigenia.
	Know'st thou what exile is to the bereaved ?
	, ARKA6.
	Feel'st thou in this land exiled and alone?
	IPHIGENIA.
	Can foreign soil be as our native land?

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