ELECTRA

A monologue from the play by Sophocles

ELECTRA: Hear, then, the course I am resolved upon.
Friends to stand by us even you must know
That none are left but us; but the Grave has taken
And reft them; and we two remain alone.
I, while I heard my brother was alive
And well, had hopes that he would come, one day,
To the requiting of his father's death;
But since he is no more, to you I look
Not to refuse, with me, your sister here,
To slay the author of that father's murder,
Ægisthus; (we need have no secrets, now.)
For wither--to what still surviving hope
Do you yet look, and suffer patiently?
Who for the loss of your ancestral wealth
Have cause for grieving, and have cause for pain
At all the time that passes over you,
Growing so old, a maiden and unwed.
And these delights no longer hope to gain
At any time; Ægisthus is too prudent
To suffer that your progeny or mine
Should see the light, to his own clear undoing!
While, if you will be guided by my counsels,
First, you shall have the praise of piety
From your dead sire and brother in the grave,
Next, shall be called hereafter, as at first,
Free, and obtain a marriage worthy of you
For all men pay regard to honesty.
And as for glory--see you not what glory
You will confer upon yourself and me,
If you should heed me? For what citizen
Or stranger who beholds us, will not greet
Our passing steps with praises such as these:
"Friends, look at those two sisters, who redeemed
Their father's house; who, prodigal of life,
Were ministers of slaughter to their foes
Who prospered well before; to them be worship,
To them the love of all men; at high feasts,
In general concourse, for their fortitude,
That pair let all men honour." Of us two
Such are the things that every man will say,
So that our glory shall not cease from us,
Living or dead. O, be persuaded, dear!
Succour your father's, aid your brother's cause,
Liberate me from evils, and yourself,
Remembering this, that a dishonoured life
Is shame to those who have been born in honour.