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.