**Parados** – The royal palace in Thebes

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| |  |  | | --- | --- | |  | Enter the **CHORUS** of Theban elders | |  | **CHORUS** | |  | O ray of sunlight, | |  | most beautiful that ever shone | |  | on Thebes, city of the seven gates, | | 130 | you’ve appeared at last, | |  | you glowing eye of golden day, | |  | moving above the streams of Dirce, | |  | driving into headlong flight | |  | the white-shield warrior from Argos, | | 135 | who marched here fully armed, | |  | now forced back by your sharper power. | |  | **CHORUS LEADER** | |  | Against our land he marched, | |  | sent here by the warring claims | |  | of Polyneices, with piercing screams, | | 140 | an eagle flying above our land, | |  | covered wings as white as snow, | |  | and hordes of warriors in arms, | |  | helmets topped with horsehair crests. | |  | **CHORUS** | |  | Standing above our homes, | | 145 | he ranged around our seven gates, | |  | with threats to swallow us | |  | and spears thirsting to kill. | |  | Before his jaws had had their fill | |  | and gorged themselves on Theban blood, | | 150 | before Hephaistos’ pine-torch flames | |  | had seized our towers, our fortress crown, | |  | he went back, driven in retreat. | |  | Behind him rings the din of war— | |  | his enemy, the Theban dragon-snake, | | 155 | too difficult for him to overcome. | |  | **CHORUS LEADER** | |  | Zeus hates an arrogant boasting tongue. | |  | Seeing them march here in a mighty stream, | |  | in all their clanging golden pride, | |  | he hurled his fire and struck the man, | | 160 | up there, on our battlements, as he began | |  | to scream aloud his victory. | |

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| **CHORUS** | |
|  | The man swing down, torch still in hand, | |
|  | and smashed into unyielding earth— | |
|  | the one who not so long ago attacked, | |
| 165 | who launched his furious, enraged assault, | |
|  | to blast us, breathing raging storms. | |
|  | But things turned out not as he’d hoped. | |
|  | Great war god Ares assisted us— | |
|  | he smashed them down and doomed them all | |
| 170 | to a very different fate. | |
|  | **CHORUS LEADER** | |
|  | Seven captains at seven gates | |
|  | matched against seven equal warriors | |
|  | paid Zeus their full bronze tribute, | |
|  | the god who turns the battle tide, | |
| 175 | all but that pair of wretched men, | |
|  | born of one father and one mother, too— | |
|  | who set their conquering spears against each other | |
|  | and then both shared a common death. | |
|  | **CHORUS** | |
|  | Now victory with her glorious name | |
| 180 | has come, bringing joy to well-armed Thebes. | |
|  | The battle’s done—let’s strive now to forget | |
|  | with songs and dancing all night long, | |
|  | with Bacchus leading us to make Thebes shake. | |