

HIPPOLYTUS



Translated by Theodore Alois Buckley

Based on the myth of the eponymous son of Theseus, this tragedy was first produced for the City Dionysia of Athens in 428 BC and won first prize as part of a trilogy. Euripides first used events from the myth in an earlier play, *Hippolytus Veiled*, which is now lost, like many of the great tragedian's works. Scholars believe this first play failed with audiences due to a scene where a shamelessly lustful Phaedra directly propositions Hippolytus, causing much scandal for the playwright. This failure prompted Euripides to revisit the myth, this time offering a much more even-handed and psychologically complex treatment of the characters than is commonly found in traditional retelling of myths.

The play is set in Troezen, a coastal town in the north-eastern Peloponnese. Theseus, the king of Athens, is serving a year's voluntary exile after having murdered a local king and his sons. His illegitimate son Hippolytus, whose mother is the Amazon Hippolyta, has been trained here since childhood by the king of Troezen, Pittheus. As the play opens, Aphrodite, the Goddess of love, explains that Hippolytus has sworn chastity and refuses to revere her. Instead, he honours the Goddess of the hunt, Artemis. This has led her to initiate a plan of vengeance on the young man. When Hippolytus went to Athens two years previously, Aphrodite inspired Phaedra, Hippolytus' stepmother, to fall in love with him, setting into action the events that will lead to the play's tragic outcome.



'The Death of Hippolytus' by Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, 1860

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THE ARGUMENT.

Theseus was the son of Othra and Neptune, and king of the Athenians; and having married Hippolyta, one of the Amazons, he begat Hippolytus, who excelled in beauty and chastity. When his wife died, he married, for his second wife, Phædra, a Cretan, daughter of Minos, king of Crete, and Pasiphaë. Theseus, in consequence of having slain Pallas, one of his kinsmen, goes into banishment, with his wife, to Trœzene, where it happened that Hippolytus was being brought up by Pittheus: but Phædra having seen the youth was desperately enamored, not that she was incontinent, but in order to fulfill the anger of Venus, who, having determined to destroy Hippolytus on account of his chastity, brought her plans to a conclusion. She, concealing her disease, at length was compelled to declare it to her nurse, who had promised to relieve her, and who, though against her inclination, carried her words to the youth. Phædra, having learned that he was exasperated, eluded the nurse, and hung herself. At which time Theseus having arrived, and wishing to take her down that was strangled, found a letter attached to her, throughout which she accused Hippolytus of a design on her virtue. And he, believing what was written, ordered Hippolytus to go into banishment, and put up a prayer to Neptune, in compliance with which the god destroyed Hippolytus. But Diana declared to Theseus every thing that had happened, and blamed not Phædra, but comforted him, bereaved of his child and wife, and promised to institute honors in the place to Hippolytus.

The scene of the play is laid in Trœzene. It was acted in the archonship of Ameinon, in the fourth year of the 87th Olympiad. Euripides first, Jophon second, Jon third. This Hippolytus is the second of that name, and is called ΣΤΕΦΑΝΙΑΣ: but it appears to have been written the latest, for what was unseemly and deserved blame is corrected in this play. The play is ranked among the first.

HIPPOLYTUS.

VENUS.

Great in the sight of mortals, and not without a name am I the Goddess Venus, and in heaven: and of as many as dwell within the ocean and the boundaries of Atlas, beholding the light of the sun, those indeed, who reverence my authority, I advance to honor; but overthrow as many as hold themselves high toward me. For this is in sooth a property inherent even in the race of the Gods, that “they rejoice when honored by men.” But quickly will I show the truth of these words: for the son of Theseus, born of the Amazon, Hippolytus, pupil of the chaste Pittheus, alone of the inhabitants of this land of Trœzene, says that I am of deities the vilest, and rejects the bridal bed, and will have nothing to do with marriage. But Dian, the sister of Phœbus, daughter of Jove, he honors, esteeming her the greatest of deities. And through the green wood ever accompanying the virgin, with his swift dogs he clears the beasts from off the earth, having formed a fellowship greater than mortal ought. This indeed I grudge him not; for wherefore should I? but wherein he has erred toward me, I will avenge me on Hippolytus this very day: and having cleared most of the difficulties beforehand, I need not much labor. For Phædra, his father’s noble wife, having seen him, (*as he was going once from the house of Pittheus to the land of Pandion, in order to see and afterward be fully admitted to the hallowed mysteries,*) was smitten in her heart with fierce love by my design. And even before she came to this land of Trœzene, at the very rock of Pallas that overlooks this land, she raised a temple to Venus, loving an absent love; and gave out afterward, that the Goddess was honored with her temple for Hippolytus’s sake. But now since Theseus has left the land of Cecrops, in order to avoid the pollution of the murder of the sons of Pallas, and is sailing to this land with his wife, having submitted to a year’s banishment from his people; there indeed groaning and stricken with the stings of love, the wretched woman perishes in secret; and not one of her domestics is conscious of her malady. But this love must by no means fall to the ground in this way: but I will open the matter to Theseus, and it shall become manifest. And him that is our enemy shall the father kill with imprecations, which Neptune, king of the ocean, granted as a privilege to Theseus, that he should make no prayer

thrice to the God in vain. But Phædra dies, an illustrious woman indeed, yet still [she must die]; for I will not make her ill of that high consequence, that will hinder my enemies from giving me such full vengeance as may content me. But, as I see the son of Theseus coming, having left the toil of the chase, I will depart from this spot. But with him a numerous train of attendants following behind raise a clamor, praising the Goddess Dian with hymns, for he knows not that the gates of hell are opened, and that this day is the last he beholds.

HIPPOLYTUS, ATTENDANTS.

HIPP. Follow, follow, singing the heavenly Dian, daughter of Jove; Dian, under whose protection we are.

ATT. Holy, holy, most hallowed offspring of Jove, hail! hail! O Dian, daughter of Latona and of Jove, most beauteous by far of virgins, who, born of an illustrious sire, in the vast heaven dwellest in the palace of Jove, that mansion rich in gold.

HIPP. Hail, O most beauteous, most beauteous of virgins in Olympus, Dian! For thee, my mistress, bear I this wreathed garland from the pure mead, where neither does the shepherd think fit to feed his flocks, nor yet came iron there, but the bee ranges over the pure and vernal mead, and Reverence waters it with river dew. Whosoever has chastity, not that which is taught in schools, but that which is by nature, for this description of persons it is lawful thence to pluck, but for the evil it is not lawful. But, O my dear mistress, receive this wreath to bind your golden tresses from a pious hand. For to me alone of mortals is allowed this privilege. With thee I am both present, and exchange words with thee, hearing thy voice, but not seeing thy countenance. But may I finish the last turn of my course of life, even as I began.

ATT. O king, (*for the Gods alone ought we to call Lords,*) will you hear somewhat from me, who advise you well?

HIPP. Most certainly, or else I should not seem wise.

ATT. Knowest thou then the law, which is established among men?

HIPP. I know not; but what is the one, about which thou askest me?

ATT. To hate haughtiness, and that which is disagreeable to all.

HIPP. And rightly; for what haughty mortal is not odious?

ATT. And in the affable is there any charm?

HIPP. A very great one indeed, and gain with little toil.

ATT. Dost thou suppose that the same thing holds also among the Gods?

HIPP. Certainly, forasmuch as we mortals use the laws of the Gods.

ATT. How is it then that thou addressest not a venerable Goddess?

HIPP. Whom? but take heed that thy mouth err not.

ATT. Venus, who hath her station at thy gates.

HIPP. I, who am chaste, salute her at a distance.

ATT. Venerable is she, however, and of note among mortals.

HIPP. Different Gods and men are objects of regard to different persons.

ATT. May you be blest, having as much sense as you require.

HIPP. No one of the Gods, that is worshiped by night, delights me.

ATT. My son, we must conform to the honors of the Gods.

HIPP. Depart, my companions, and having entered the house, prepare the viands: delightful after the chase is the full table. — And I must rub down my horses, that having yoked them to the car, when I am satiated with the repast, I may give them their proper exercise. But to your Venus I bid a long farewell.

ATT. But we, for one must not imitate the young, having our thoughts such, as it becomes slaves to give utterance to, will adore thy image, O Venus, our mistress; but thou shouldest pardon, if any one having intense feelings of mind by reason of his youth, speak foolishly: seem not to hear these things, for Gods must needs be wiser than men.

CHOR. There is a rock near the ocean, distilling water, which sends forth from its precipices a flowing fountain, wherein they dip their urns; where was a friend of mine wetting the purple vests in the dew of the stream, and she laid them down on the back of the warm sunny cliff: from hence first came to me the report concerning my mistress, that she, worn with the bed of sickness, keeps her person within the house, and that fine vests veil her auburn head. And I hear that she this day for the third keeps her body untouched by the fruit of Ceres, [which she receives not] into her ambrosial mouth, wishing in secret suffering to hasten to the unhappy goal of death. For heaven-possessed, O lady, or whether by Pan, or by Hecate, or by the venerable Corybantes, or by the mother who haunts the mountains, thou art raving. But thou art thus tormented on account of some fault committed against the Cretan huntress, profane because of unoffered sacred cakes. For she goes through the sea and beyond the land on the eddies of the watery brine. Or some one in the palace misguides thy noble husband, the chief of the Athenians, by secret concubinage in thy bed. Or some sailor who put from port at Crete, hath sailed to the harbor most friendly to mariners, bringing some message to the queen; and, confined to her couch, she is bound in soul by sorrow for its sufferings. But wretched helplessness is wont to dwell with the wayward constitution of women, both on account of their throes and their loss of reason. Once through my womb shot this thrill, but I invoked the heavenly Dian, who gives easy throes, who presides over the bow, and to me she came ever much to be blessed, as well as the other Gods. But lo! the old nurse is bringing her out of the palace before the gates; and the sad cloud upon her brows is increased. What it can possibly be, my soul desires to know, with what can be afflicted the person of the queen, of color so changed.

PHÆDRA, NURSE, CHORUS.

Alas! the evils of men, and their odious diseases! what shall I do for thee? and what not do? lo! here is the clear light for thee, here the air: and now is thy couch whereon thou liest sick removed from out of the house: for every word you spoke was to come hither; but soon you will be in a hurry to go to your chamber back again: for you are soon changed, and are pleased with nothing. Nor does what is present delight you, but what is not present you think more agreeable. It is a better thing to be sick, than to tend the sick: the one is a simple ill, but with the other is joined both pain of mind and toil of hands. But the whole life of men is full of grief, nor is there rest from toils. But whatever else there be more dear than life, darkness enveloping hides it in clouds. Hence we appear to dote on this present state, because it gleams on earth, through inexperience of another life, and the non-appearance of the things beneath the earth. But we are blindly carried away by fables.

PHÆ. Raise my body, place my head upright — I am faint in the joints of my limbs, my friends, lay hold of my fair-formed hands, O attendants — The dressing on my head is heavy for me to support — take it off, let flow my ringlets on my shoulders.

NUR. Be of good courage, my child, and do not thus painfully shift [the posture of] your body. But you will bear your sickness more easily both with quiet, and with a noble temper, for it is necessary for mortals to suffer misery.

PHÆ. Alas! alas! would I could draw from the dewy fountain the drink of pure waters, and that under the alders, and in the leafy mead reclining I might rest!

NUR. O my child, what sayest thou? Wilt thou not desist from uttering these things before the multitude, blurting forth a speech of madness?

PHÆ. Bear me to the mountain — I will go to the wood, and by the pine-trees, where tread the dogs the slayers of beasts, pursuing the dappled hinds — By the Gods I long to cheer on the hounds, and by the side of my auburn hair to hurl the Thessalian javelin bearing the lanced weapon in my hand.

NUR. Wherefore in the name of heaven, my child, do you hanker after these things? wherefore have you any anxiety for hunting? and wherefore do you long for the fountain streams? for by the towers there is a perpetual flow of water, whence may be your draught.

PHÆ. O Dian, mistress of Limna near the sea, and of the exercises of the rattling steeds, would that I were on thy plains, breaking the Henetian colts.

NUR. Wherefore again have you madly uttered this word? at one time having ascended the mountain you set forth with the desire of hunting; but now again you long for the colts on the wave-beaten sands. These things demand much skill in prophecy [to find out], who it is of the Gods that torments thee, O lady, and strikes mad thy senses.

PHÆ. Wretch that I am, what then have I committed? whither have I wandered from my sound mind? I have gone mad; I have fallen by the evil influence of some God. Alas! alas! unhappy that I am — Nurse, cover my head again, for I am ashamed of the things I have spoken: cover me; a tear trickles down my eyes, and my sight is turned to my disgrace. For to be in one's right mind causes grief: but madness is an ill; yet it is better to perish, nothing knowing of one's ills.

NUR. I cover thee — but when in sooth will death cover my body? Length of life teaches me many things. For it behooves mortals to form moderate friendships with each other, and not to the very marrow of the soul: and the affections of the mind should be dissoluble, and so that we can slacken them, or tighten. But that one soul should feel pangs for two, as I now grieve for her, is a heavy burden. The concerns of life carried to too great an extent, they say, bring rather destruction than delight, and are rather at enmity with health. Thus I praise what is in extreme less than *the sentiment of* "Nothing in excess;" and the wise will agree with me.

CHOR. O aged woman, faithful nurse of the queen Phædra, we see indeed the wretched state of this lady, but it is not clear what her disease is: but we would wish to inquire and hear from you.

NUR. I know not by my inquiries; for she is not willing to speak.

CHOR. Nor what is the origin of these pangs?

NUR. You come to the same result; for she is silent with regard to all these things.

CHOR. How feeble she is, and wasted away as to her body!

NUR. How could it be otherwise, seeing that she has abstained from food these three days?

CHOR. From the violence of her calamity is it, or does she endeavor to die?

NUR. To die; but she fasts to the dissolution of her life.

CHOR. An extraordinary thing you have been telling me, if this conduct meets the approbation of her husband.

NUR. [He nothing knows,] for she conceals this calamity, and denies that she is ill.

CHOR. But does he not guess it, looking into her face?

NUR. [How should he?] for he is out of this country.

CHOR. But do you not urge it as a matter of necessity, when you endeavor to ascertain her disease and the wandering of her senses?

NUR. I have tried every thing, and have made no further advances. I will not however abate even now from my zeal, so that you being present may bear witness with me, how I behave to my mistress when in calamity — Come, dear child, let us both forget our former conversations; and be both thou more mild, having smoothed that contracted brow, and altered the bent of your design; and I giving up that wherein I did not do right to follow thee, will have recourse to other better words. And if indeed you are ill with any of those maladies that are not to be mentioned, these women here can allay the disease: but if it may be related to men, tell it, that the thing may be mentioned to physicians. — Well! why art thou silent? It doth not behoove thee to be silent, my child, but either shouldst

thou convict me, if aught I say amiss, or yield to words well spoken. — Say something — look hither — O wretch that I am! Ladies, in vain do we undergo these toils, while we are as far off from our purpose as before: for neither then was she softened by our words, nor now does she give heed to us. Still however know (*now then be more obstinate than the sea*) that, if thou shalt die, thou wilt betray thy children, who will have no share in their paternal mansion. I swear by the warlike queen the Amazon, who brought forth a lord over thy children, base-born yet of noble sentiments, thou knowest him well, Hippolytus.

PHÆ. Ah me!

NUR. This touches thee.

PHÆ. You have destroyed me, nurse, and by the Gods I entreat thee henceforth to be silent with respect to this man.

NUR. Do you see? you judge well indeed, but judging well you are not willing both to assist your children and to save your own life.

PHÆ. I love my children; but I am wintering in the storm of another misfortune.

NUR. You have your hands, my child, pure from blood.

PHÆ. My hands are pure, but my mind has some pollution.

NUR. What! from some calamity brought on you by any of your enemies?

PHÆ. A friend destroys me against my will, himself unwilling.

NUR. Has Theseus sinned any sin against thee?

PHÆ. Would that I never be discovered to have injured him.

NUR. What then this dreadful thing that impels thee to die?

PHÆ. Suffer me to err, for against thee I err not.

NUR. Not willingly [dost thou do so,] but 'tis through thee that I shall perish.

PHÆ. What are you doing? you oppress me, hanging on me with your hand.

NUR. And never will I let go these knees.

PHÆ. Ills to thyself wilt thou hear, O wretched woman, if thou shalt hear these ill.

NUR. [Still will I cling:] for what greater evil can befall me than to lose thee?

PHÆ. You will be undone. The thing however brings honor to me.

NUR. And dost thou then hide what is useful, when I beseech thee?

PHÆ. *Yes*, for from base things we devise things noble.

NUR. Wilt not thou, then, appear more noble by telling it?

PHÆ. Depart, by the Gods, and let go my hand!

NUR. No in sooth, since thou givest me not the boon that were right.

PHÆ. I will give it; for I have respect unto the reverence of thy hand.

NUR. Now will I be silent: for hence is it yours to speak.

PHÆ. O wretched mother, what a love didst thou love!

NUR. That which she had for the bull, my child, or what is this thou meanest?

PHÆ. Thou, too, O wretched sister, wife of Bacchus!

NUR. Child, what ails thee? thou speakest ill against thy relations.

PHÆ. And I the third, how unhappily I perish!

NUR. I am struck dumb with amazement. Whither will thy speech tend?

PHÆ. *To that point*, whence we have not now lately become unfortunate.

NUR. I know not a whit further of the things I wish to hear.

PHÆ. Alas! would thou couldst speak the things which I must speak.

NUR. I am no prophetess so as to know clearly things hidden.

PHÆ. What is that thing, which they do call men's loving!

NUR. The same, my child, a most delightful thing, and painful withal.

PHÆ. One of the two feelings I must perceive.

NUR. What say'st? Thou lovest, my child? What man!

PHÆ. Him whoever he is, that is born of the Amazon.

NUR. Hippolytus dost thou say?

PHÆ. From thyself, not me, you hear — this name.

NUR. Ah me! what wilt thou go on to say? my child, how hast thou destroyed me! Ladies, this is not to be borne; I will not endure to live, hateful is the day, hateful the light I behold. I will hurl myself down, I will rid me of this body: I will remove from life to death — farewell — I no longer am. For the chaste are in love with what is evil, not willingly indeed, yet still [they love.] Venus then is no deity, but if there be aught mightier than deity, that is she, who hath destroyed both this my mistress, and me, and the whole house.

CHOR. Thou didst hear, O thou didst hear the queen lamenting her wretched sufferings that should not be heard. Dear lady, may I perish before I come to thy state of mind! Alas me! alas! alas! O hapless for these pangs! O the woes that attend on mortals! Thou art undone, thou hast

disclosed thy evils to the light. What time is this that has eternally awaited thee? Some new misfortune will happen to the house. And no longer is it obscure where the fortune of Venus sets, O wretched Cretan daughter.

PHÆ. Women of Trœzene, who inhabit this extreme frontier of the land of Pelops. Often at other times in the long season of night have I thought in what manner the life of mortals is depraved. And to me they seem to do ill, not from the nature of their minds, for many have good thoughts, but thus must we view these things. What things are good we understand and know, but practice not; some from idleness, and others preferring some other pleasures to what is right: for there are many pleasures in life-long prates, and indolence, a pleasing ill, and shame; but there are two, the one indeed not base, but the other the weight that overthrows houses, but if the occasion on which each is used, were clear, the two things would not have the same letters. Knowing them as I did these things beforehand, by no drug did I think I should so far destroy these *sentiments*, as to fall into an opposite way of thinking. But I will also tell you the course of my determinations. After that love had wounded me, I considered how best I might endure it. I began therefore from this time to be silent, and to conceal this disease. For no confidence can be placed in the tongue, which knows to advise the thoughts of other men, but itself from itself has very many evils. But in the second place, I meditated to bear well my madness conquering it by my chastity. But in the third place, since by these means I was not able to subdue Venus, it appeared to me best to die: no one will gainsay this resolution. For may it be my lot, neither to be concealed where I do noble deeds, nor to have many witnesses, where I act basely. Besides this I knew I was a woman — a thing hated by all. O may she most miserably perish who first began to pollute the marriage-bed with other men! From noble families first arose this evil among women: for when base things appear right to those who are accounted good, surely they will appear so to the bad. I hate moreover those women who are chaste in their language indeed, but secretly have in them no good deeds of boldness: who, how, I pray, O Venus my revered mistress, look they on the faces of their husbands, nor dread the darkness that aided their deeds, and the ceilings of the house, lest they should some time or other utter a voice? For this bare idea kills me, friends, lest I should ever be discovered to have disgraced my husband, or my children, whom I brought forth; but

free, happy in liberty of speech may they inhabit the city of illustrious Athens, in their mother glorious! For it enslaves a man, though he be valiant-hearted, when he is conscious of his mother's or his father's misdeeds. But this alone they say in endurance compeers with life, an honest and good mind, to whomsoever it belong. But Time, when it so chance, holding up the mirror as to a young virgin, shows forth the bad, among whom may I be never seen!

CHOR. Alas! alas! In every way how fair is chastity, and how goodly a report has it among men!

NUR. My mistress, just now indeed thy calamity coming upon me unawares, gave me a dreadful alarm. But now I perceive I was weak; and somehow or other among mortals second thoughts are the wisest. For thou hast not suffered any thing excessive nor extraordinary, but the anger of the Goddess hath fallen upon thee. Thou lovest — what wonder this? with many mortals. — And then will you lose your life for love? There is then no advantage for those who love others, nor to those who may hereafter, if they must needs die. For Venus is a thing not to be borne, if she rush on vehement. Who comes quietly indeed on the person who yields; but whom she finds haughty and of lofty notions, him taking (*how thinkest thou?*) she chastises. But Venus goes through air, and is on the ocean wave; and all things from her have their birth. She it is that sows and gives forth love, from whence all we on earth are engendered. As many indeed as ken the writings of the ancients, or are themselves ever among the muses, they know indeed, how that Jove was formerly inflamed with the love of Semele; they know too, how that formerly the lovely bright Aurora bore away Cephalus up to the Gods, for love, but still they live in heaven, and fly not from the presence of the Gods: but they acquiesce yielding, I ween, to what has befallen them. And wilt thou not bear it? Thy father then ought to have begotten thee on stipulated terms, or else under the dominion of other Gods, unless thou wilt be content with these laws. How many, thinkest thou, are in full and complete possession of their senses, who, when they see their bridal bed diseased, seem not to see it! And how many fathers, thinkest thou, have aided their erring sons in matters of love, for this is a maxim among the wise part of mankind, “that things that show not fair should be concealed.” Nor should men labor too exactly their

conduct in life, for neither would they do well to employ much accuracy in the roof wherewith their houses are covered; but having fallen into fortune so deep as thou hast, how dost thou imagine thou canst swim out? But if thou hast more things good than bad, mortal as thou art, thou surely must be well off. But cease, my dear child, from these evil thoughts, cease too from being haughty, for nothing else save haughtiness is this, to wish to be superior to the Gods. But, as thou art in love, endure it; a God hath willed it so: and, being ill, by some good means or other try to get rid of thy illness. But there are charms and soothing spells: there will appear some medicine for this sickness. Else surely men would be slow indeed in discoveries, if we women should not find contrivances.

CHOR. Phædra, she speaks indeed most useful advice in thy present state: but thee I praise. Yet is this praise less welcome than her words, and to thee more painful to hear.

PHÆ. This is it that destroys cities of men and families well governed — words too fair. For it is not at all requisite to speak words pleasant to the ear, but that whereby one may become of fair report.

NUR. Why dost thou talk in this grand strain? thou needest not gay decorated words, but a man: as soon as possible must those be found, who will speak out the plain straightforward word concerning thee. For if thy life were not in calamities of such a cast, I never would have brought thee thus far for the sake of lust, and for thy pleasure: but now the great point is to save thy life; and this is not a thing deserving of blame.

PHÆ. O thou that hast spoken dreadful things, wilt thou not shut thy mouth? and wilt not cease from uttering again those words most vile?

NUR. Vile they are, but better these for thee than fair; but better will the deed be (*if at least it will save thee*), than the name, in the which while thou boastest, thou wilt die.

PHÆ. Nay do not, I entreat thee by the Gods (*for thou speakest well, but base are [the things thou speakest]*) go beyond this, since rightly have I surrendered my life to love; but if thou speak base things in fair phrase, I shall be consumed, [being cast] into that [evil] which I am now avoiding.

NUR. If in truth this be thy opinion, thou oughtest not to err, but if thou hast erred, be persuaded by me, for this is the next best thing thou canst do. I have in the house soothing philters of love (*and they but lately came into my thought*); which, by no base deed, nor to the harm of thy senses, will rid you of this disease, unless you are obstinate. But it is requisite to receive from him that is the object of your love, some token, either some word, or some relic of his vest, and to join from two one love.

PHÆ. But is the charm an unguent or a potion?

NUR. I know not: wish to be relieved, not informed, my child.

PHÆ. I fear thee, lest thou should appear too wise to me.

NUR. Know that you would fear every thing, *if you fear this*, but what is it you are afraid of?

PHÆ. Lest you should tell any of these things to the son of Theseus.

NUR. Let be, my child, I will arrange these matters honorably, only be thou my coadjutor, O Venus, my revered mistress; but the other things which I purpose, it will suffice to tell to my friends within.

CHORUS, PHÆDRA.

CHOR. Love, love, O thou that instillest desire through the eyes, inspiring sweet affection in the souls of those against whom thou makest war, mayst thou never appear to me to my injury, nor come unmodulated: for neither is the blast of fire nor the bolt of heaven more vehement, than that of Venus, which Love, the boy of Jove, sends from his hands. In vain, in vain, both by the Alpheus, and at the Pythian temples of Phœbus does Greece then solemnize the slaughter of bulls: but Love, the tyrant of men, porter of the dearest chambers of Venus, we worship not, the destroyer and visitant of men in all shapes of calamity, when he comes. That virgin in Æchalia, yoked to no bridal bed, till then unwedded, and who knew no husband, having taken from her home a wanderer impelled by the oar, her, like some Bacchanal of Pluto, with blood, with smoke, and murderous hymeneals did Venus give to the son of Alcmena. O unhappy woman,

because of her nuptials! O sacred wall of Thebes, O mouth of Dirce, you can assist me in telling, in what manner Venus comes: for by the forked lightning, by a cruel fate, did she put to eternal sleep the parent of the Jove-begotten Bacchus, when she was visited as a bride. For dreadful doth she breathe on all things, and like some bee hovers about.

PHÆ. Women, be silent: I am undone.

CHOR. What is there that affrights thee, Phædra, in thine house?

PHÆ. Be silent, that I may make out the voice of those within.

CHOR. I am silent: this however is an evil bodement.

PHÆ. Alas me! O! O! O! oh unhappy me, because of my sufferings!

CHOR. What sound dost thou utter? what word speakest thou? tell me what report frightens thee, lady, rushing upon thy senses!

PHÆ. We are undone. Do you, standing at these gates, hear what the noise is that strikes on the house?

CHOR. Thou art by the gate, the noise that is sent forth from the house is thy care. But tell me, tell me, what evil, I pray thee, came *to thine ears*?

PHÆ. The son of the warlike Amazon, Hippolytus, cries out, abusing in dreadful forms my attendant.

CHOR. I hear indeed a noise, but can not plainly tell how it is. The voice came, it came through to the door.

PHÆ. But hark! he calls her plainly the pander of wickedness, the betrayer of her master's bed.

CHOR. Alas me for thy miseries! Thou art betrayed, dear mistress. What shall I counsel thee? for hidden things are come to light, and thou art utterly destroyed ——

PHÆ. O! O!

CHOR. Betrayed by thy friends.

PHÆ. She hath destroyed me by speaking of my unhappy state, kindly but not honorably endeavoring to heal this disease.

CHOR. How then? what wilt thou do, O thou that hast suffered things incurable?

PHÆ. I know not, save one thing; to die as soon as possible is the only cure of my present sufferings.

HIPPOLYTUS, PHÆDRA, NURSE, CHORUS.

HIPP. O mother earth, and ye disclosing rays of the sun, of what words have I heard the dreadful sound!

NUR. Be silent, my son, before any one hears thy voice.

HIPP. It is not possible for me to be silent, when I have heard such dreadful things.

NUR. Nay, I implore thee by thy beauteous hand.

HIPP. Wilt not desist from bringing thy hand near me, and from touching my garments?

NUR. O! by thy knees, I implore thee, do not utterly destroy me.

HIPP. But wherefore this? since, thou sayest, thou hast spoken nothing evil.

NUR. This word, my son, is by no means to be divulged.

HIPP. It is more fair to speak fair things to many.

NUR. O my child, by no means dishonor your oath.

HIPP. My tongue hath sworn — my mind is still unsworn.

NUR. O my son, what wilt thou do? wilt thou destroy thy friends?

HIPP. *Friends!* I reject the word: no unjust person is my friend.

NUR. Pardon, my child: that men should err is but to be expected.

HIPP. O Jove, wherefore in the name of heaven didst thou place in the light of the sun that specious evil to men, women? for if thou didst will to propagate the race of mortals, there was no necessity for this to be done by women, but men might, having placed an equivalent in thy temples, either in brass, or iron, or the weighty gold, buy a race of children, each for the consideration of the value paid, and thus might dwell in unmolested houses, without females. But now, first of all, when we prepare to bring this evil to our homes, we squander away the wealth of our houses. By this too it is evident, that woman is a great evil; for the father, who begat her and brought her up, having given her a dowry sends her away in order to be rid of the evil. But the husband, on the other hand, when he has received the baneful evil into his house, rejoices, having added a beautiful decoration to a most vile image, and tricks her out with robes, unhappy man, while he has been insensibly minishing the wealth of the family. But he is constrained; so that having made alliance with noble kinsmen, he retains with [seeming] joy a marriage bitter to him: or if he has received a good bride, but worthless parents in law, he suppresses the evil that has befallen him by the consideration of the good. But his state is the easiest, whose wife is settled in his house, a cipher, but useless by reason of simplicity. But a wise woman I detest: may there not be in my house at least a woman more highly gifted with mind than woman ought to be. For Venus engenders mischief rather among clever women, but a woman who is not endowed with capacity, by reason of her small understanding, is removed from folly. But it is right that an attendant should have no access to a woman, but with them ought to dwell the speechless brute beasts, in which case they would be able neither to address any one, nor from them to receive a voice in return. But now, they that are evil follow after their evil devices within, and the servants carry it forth abroad. As thou also hast, O evil woman, come to the purpose of admitting me to share a bed which must not be approached — a father's. Which impious things I will wash out with flowing stream, pouring it into my ears: how then could I be

the vile one, who do not even deem myself pure, because I have heard such things? — But be well assured, my piety protects thee, woman, for, had I not been taken unawares by the oaths of the Gods, never would I have refrained from telling these things to my father. But now will I depart from the house, *and stay* during the time that Theseus is absent from the land, and will keep my mouth silent; but I will see, returning with my father's return, how you will look at him, both you and your mistress. But your boldness I shall know, having before had proof of it. May you perish: but never shall I take my fill of hating women, not even if any one assert, that I am always saying this. For in some way or other they surely are always bad. Either then let some one teach them to be modest, or else let him suffer me ever to utter my invectives against them.

CHORUS, PHÆDRA, NURSE.

CHOR. Oh unhappy ill-fated fortune of women! what art now or what words have we, having failed as we have, to extricate the knot caused by [these] words?

PHÆ. We have met a just reward; O earth, and light, in what manner, I pray, can I escape from my fortunes? and how, my friends, can I conceal my calamity? Who of the Gods will appear my succorer, or what mortal my ally, or my fellow-worker in unjust works? for the suffering of my life that is at present on me comes hardly to be escaped. I am the most ill-fated of women.

CHOR. Alas! alas! we are undone, lady, and the arts of thy attendant have not succeeded, and it fares ill with us.

PHÆ. O thou most vile, and the destruction of thy friends, what hast thou done to me! May Jove, my ancestor, tear thee up by the roots, having stricken thee by his fire. Did not I tell thee (*did not I foresee thy intention?*) to be silent with regard to those things with which I am now tormented? but thou couldst not refrain; wherefore I can no longer die with glory: but I must now in sooth employ new measures. For he, now that his mind is made keen with rage, will tell, to my detriment, thy errors to his father, and will fill the whole earth with the most vile reports. Mayst thou

perish, both thou and whoever else is forward to assist friends against their will otherwise than by honorable means.

NUR. Lady, thou canst indeed blame the evil I have wrought; for that which gnaws upon thee masters thy better judgment; — but I too have somewhat to say in answer to these things, if thou wilt admit it: I brought thee up, and have a kind affection toward thee; but, while searching for medicine for thy disease, I found not that I wished for. But if I had succeeded, I had been surely ranked among the wise; for we have the reputation of sense according to our success.

PHÆ. What? is this conduct just, and satisfactory to me, to injure me first, and then to meet me in argument?

NUR. We talk too long — I did not behave wisely. But even from this state of things it is possible that thou mayest be saved, my child.

PHÆ. Desist from speaking; for before also thou didst not well advise for me, and didst attempt evil things. But depart from my sight, and take care about thyself; for I will settle my own affairs in an honorable manner. But you, noble daughters of Trœzene, grant thus much to me requesting it, bury in silence what you here have heard.

CHOR. I swear by hallowed Dian, daughter of Jove, that I will never reveal to the face of day one of thy evils.

PHÆ. Thou hast well spoken: but one kind of resource, while I search around me, do I find for my present calamity, so that I may make the life of my children glorious, and may myself be assisted as things have now fallen out. For never will I disgrace the house of Crete at least, nor will I come before the face of Theseus having acted basely, for one's life's sake.

CHOR. But what irremediable evil art thou then about to perpetrate?

PHÆ. To die: but how, this will I devise.

CHOR. Speak words of better omen.

PHÆ. And do thou at least advise me well. But having quitted life this day, I shall gratify Venus, who destroys me, and shall be conquered by bitter love. But when I am dead, I shall be an evil to another at least, so that he may know not to exult over my misfortunes; but, having shared this malady in common with me, he shall learn to be modest.

CHOR. Would that I were under the rocks' vast retreats, and that there the God would make me a winged bird among the swift flocks, and that I were lifted up above the ocean wave that dashes against the Adriatic shore, and the water of Eridanus, where for grief of Phaethon the thrice wretched virgins let fall into their father's billow the amber-beaming brightness of their tears: and that I could make my way to the shore where the apples grow of the harmonious daughters of Hesperus, where the ruler of the ocean no longer permits the passage of the purple sea to mariners, dwelling in that dread bourn of heaven which Atlas doth sustain, and the ambrosial founts stream forth hard by the couches of Jove's palaces, where the divine and life-bestowing earth increases the bliss of the Gods. O white-winged bark of Crete, who didst bear my queen through the perturbed ocean wave of brine from a happy home, thereby aiding her in a most evil marriage. For surely in both instances, or at any rate from Crete she came ill-omened to renowned Athens, when on the Munychian shore they bound the platted ends of their cables, and disembarked on the continent. Wherefore she was heartbroken with the terrible disease of unhallowed love by the influence of Venus; and now that she can no longer hold out against the heavy calamity, she will fit around her the noose suspended from the ceiling of her bridal chamber, adjusting it to her white neck, having revered the hateful Goddess, and embracing an honorable name, and ridding from her breast the painful love.

FEMALE SERVANT, CHORUS, THESEUS.

SERV. Alack! alack! run to my succor all that are near the house — My mistress the wife of Theseus is hanging.

CHOR. Alas! alas! the deed is done: the queen is indeed no more — she is suspended in the noose that hangs there.

SERV. Will ye not haste? will not some one bring a two-edged sword, with which we may undo this knot around her neck?

SEMICHOR. My friends, what do we? does it seem good to enter the house and to free the queen from the tight-drawn noose?

SEMICHOR. Why we? Are not the young men-servants at hand? The being over-busy is not a safe plan through life.

SERV. Lay right the wretched corpse, pull her limbs straight. A grievous housekeeping this for my master!

CHOR. The unhappy woman, as I hear, has perished, for already are they laying her out as a corpse.

THES. Know ye, females, what noise this is in my house? a heavy sound of my attendants reached me. For the family does not think fit to open the gates to me and to hail me with joy as having returned from the oracle. Has any ill befallen the aged Pittheus? His life is now indeed far advanced; but still he would be much lamented by us, were he to leave this house.

CHOR. This that has happened, Theseus, extends not to the old; the young are they that by their death will grieve thee.

THES. Alas me! is the life of any of my children stolen from me?

CHOR. They live, but their mother is dead in a way that will grieve thee most.

THES. What sayest? My wife dead? By what fate?

CHOR. She suspended the noose, wherewith she strangled herself.

THES. Wasted with sorrow, or from some sudden calamity?

CHOR. Thus much we know — *nothing further*; for I am but just come to thy house, Theseus, to bewail thy evils.

THES. Alas! alas! why then have I my head crowned with entwined leaves, who am the unhappy inquirer of the oracle? Servants, undo the bars of the gates; unloose the bolts, that I may behold the mournful spectacle of my wife, who by her death hath utterly undone me.

CHOR. Alas! alas! unhappy for thy wretched ills: thou hast been a sufferer; thou hast perpetrated a deed of such extent as to throw this house into utter confusion. Alas! alas! thy boldness, O thou who hast died a violent death, and, by an unhallowed chance, the act committed by thy wretched hand. Who is it then, thou unhappy one, that destroys thy life?

THES. Alas me for my sufferings! I have suffered, unhappy wretch, the extreme of my troubles — O fortune, how heavy hast thou come upon me and my house, an imperceptible spot from some evil demon! the wearing out of a life not to be endured; and I, unhappy wretch, perceive a sea of troubles so great, that never again can I emerge from it, nor escape beyond the flood of this calamity. What mention making can I unhappy, what heavy-fated fortune of thine, lady, saying that it was, can I be right? For as some bird thou art vanished from my hand, having leaped me a sudden leap to the realms of Pluto. Alas! alas! wretched, wretched are these sufferings, but from some distant period or other receive I this calamity from the Gods, for the errors of some of those of old.

CHOR. Not to thee alone, O king, have these evils happened; but with many others thou hast lost an excellent wife.

THES. In the shades beneath the earth, I unhappy wish, dying, to dwell in darkness, reft as I am of thy most dear company, for thou hast destroyed rather than perished — What then do I hear? whence came the deadly chance, lady, to thine heart? Will any speak what has happened, or does my royal palace contain to no purpose the crowd of my attendants? — Alas me on thy account! unhappy that I am, what grief in my house have I seen, intolerable, indescribable! but — we are undone! my house left desolate, and my children orphans.

CHOR. Thou hast left us, thou hast left us, O dear among women, and most excellent of those as many as both the light of the sun, and the star-visaged moon of night behold. O unhappy man! how great ill doth the

house contain! with tears gushing over, my eyelids are wet at thy calamity. But the woe that will ensue on this I have long since been dreading.

THES. Alas! alas! What I pray is this letter suspended from her dear hand? does it mean to betoken some new calamity? — What, has the unhappy woman written injunctions to me, making some request about my bridal bed and my children? Be of good courage, hapless one; for no woman exists, who shall enter the bed and the house of Theseus. But lo! the impressions of the golden seal of her no more here court my attention. Come, let me unfold the envelopments of the seal, and see what this letter should say to me.

CHOR. Alas! alas! this new evil in succession again doth the God bring on. To me indeed the condition of life will be impossible to bear, from what has happened; for I consider, alas! as ruined and no more the house of my kings. O God, if it be in any way possible, do not overthrow the house; but hear me as I pray, for from some quarter, as though a prophet, I behold an evil omen.

THES. Ah me! what other evil is this in addition to evil, not to be borne, nor spoken! alas wretched me!

CHOR. What is the matter? Tell me if it may be told me.

THES. It cries out — the letter cries out things most dreadful: which way can I fly the weight of my ills; for I perish utterly destroyed. What, what a complaint have I seen speaking in her writing!

CHOR. Alas! thou utterest words foreboding woes.

THES. No longer will I keep within the door of my lips this dreadful, dreadful evil hardly to be uttered. O city, city, Hippolytus has dared by force to approach my bed, having despised the awful eye of Jove. But O father Neptune, by one of these three curses, which thou formerly didst promise me, by one of those destroy my son, and let him not escape beyond this day, if thou hast given me curses that shall be verified.

CHOR. O king, by the Gods recall back this prayer, for hereafter you will know that you have erred; be persuaded by me.

THES. It can not be: and moreover I will drive him from this land. And by one or other of the two fates shall he be assailed: for either Neptune shall send him dead to the mansions of Pluto, having respect unto my wish; or else banished from this country, wandering over a foreign land, he shall drag out a miserable existence.

CHOR. And lo! thy son Hippolytus is present here opportunely, but if thou let go thy evil displeasure, king Theseus, thou wilt advise the best for thine house.

HIPPOLYTUS, THESEUS, CHORUS.

HIPP. I heard thy cry, my father, and came in haste; the thing however, for which you are groaning, I know not; but would fain hear from you. Ha! what is the matter? I behold thy wife, my father, a corpse: this is a thing meet for the greatest wonder. — Her, whom I lately left, her, who beheld the light no great time since. What ails her? In what manner died she, my father, I would fain hear from you. Art silent? But there is no use of silence in misfortunes; for the heart which desires to hear all things, is found eager also in the case of ills. It is not indeed right, my father, to conceal thy misfortunes from friends, and even more than friends.

THES. O men, who vainly go astray in many things, why then do ye teach ten thousand arts, and contrive and invent every thing; but one thing ye do not know, nor yet have investigated, to teach those to be wise who have no intellect!

HIPP. A clever sophist this you speak of, who is able to compel those who have no wisdom to be rightly wise. But (*for thou art arguing too refinedly on no suitable occasion*) I fear, O father, lest thy tongue be talking at random through thy woes.

THES. Alas! there ought to be established for men some infallible proof of their friends, and some means of knowing their dispositions, both who is true, and who is not a friend, and men ought all to have two voices, the one

true, the other as it chanced, that the untrue one might be convicted by the true, and then we should not be deceived.

HIPP. Has some one then falsely accused me in your ear, and am I suffering who am not at all guilty? I am amazed, for your words, wandering beyond the bounds of reason, do amaze me.

THES. Alas! the mind of man, to what lengths will it go? what will be the limit to its boldness and temerity? For if it shall increase with each generation of man, and the successor shall be wicked a degree beyond his predecessor, it will be necessary for the Gods to add to the earth another land, which will contain the unjust and the evil ones. — But look: ye on this man, who being born of me hath defiled my bed, and is manifestly convicted by the deceased of being most base. — But, since thou hast come to this attaint, show thy face here before thy father. Dost thou forsooth associate with the Gods, as being an extraordinary person? art thou chaste and uncontaminated with evil? I will not believe thy boasts, attributing (*as I must, if I do believe*) to the Gods the folly of thinking evil. Now then vaunt, and with thy feeding on inanimate food retail your doctrines upon men, and having Orpheus for your master, revel it, reverencing the emptiness of many letters; *which avail you not*; since you are caught.

But such sort of men I warn all to shun; for they hunt with fair-sounding words, while they devise base things. She is dead: dost thou think this will save thee? By this thou art most detected, O thou most vile one! For what sort of oaths, what arguments can be more strong than what she says, so that thou canst escape the accusation? Wilt thou say that she hated thee, and that the bastard race is hateful forsooth to those of noble birth? A bad housewife then of life you account her, if through hatred of thee she lost what was most dear to her. But wilt thou say that there is not this folly in men, but that there is in women? I myself have known young men who were not a whit more steady than women, when Venus disturbed the youthful mind: but their pretense of manliness protects them. Now however, why do I thus contend against thy words, when the corse, the surest witness, is here? Depart an exile from this land as soon as possible. And neither go to the divine-built Athens, nor to the confines of that land

over which my sceptre rules. For if I thus suffering by thee be vanquished, never will the Isthmian Sinis bear witness of me that I killed him, but will say that I vainly boast. Nor will the Scironian rocks, that dwell by the sea, confess that I am formidable to the bad.

CHOR. I know not how I can say that any of mortals is happy; for the things that were most excellent are turned back again.

HIPP. Father, thy rage indeed, and the commotion of thy mind is terrible; this thing, however, though it have fair arguments, if any one unravel it, is not fair. But I am unadorned with phrase to speak to the multitude, but to speak to my equals and to a few, more expert: but this also has consistency in it; for those, who are of no account among the wise, are more fitted to speak before the rabble. But yet it is necessary for me, since this calamity has come, to unloose my tongue. But first will I begin to speak from that point where first you attacked, as though you would destroy, and as though I should not answer again. Dost thou behold this light and this earth? In these there is not a man more chaste than me, not even though thou deny it. For, first indeed, I know to reverence the Gods, and to have such friends as attempt not to be unjust, but those, to whom there is modesty, so that neither they give utterance to evil thoughts, nor minister in return base services to those who use their friendship: nor am I the derider of my associates, O father, but the same man to my friends when they are not present, and when I am with them. But of one thing by which thou thinkest to crush me, I am pure; for to this day my body is undefiled by the couch of love; and I know not the deed except hearing of it by report, and seeing it in a picture, nor even am I forward to look at these things, having a virgin mind. And perhaps my modesty persuades you not. Behooves it thee then to show in what manner I lost it. Did this woman's person excel in beauty all women? Or did I hope to rule over thine house, having thy bridal bed as carrying dowry with it? I must in that case have been a fool, and not at all in my senses. But did I do it as though to reign were pleasant to the modest? By no means indeed is it, except monarchy have destroyed the minds of men who are pleased with her. But I would wish indeed to be first victor in the Grecian games, but second in the state ever to be happy with the most excellent friends. For thus is it possible to be well circumstanced: but the absence of the danger gives greater joy than

dominion. One of my arguments has not been spoken, but the rest you are in possession of: for, if I had a witness such as myself am, and were she alive during my contention, you would know the evil ones, searching them by their works. But now I swear by Jove, the guardian of oaths, and by the plain of the earth, that never touched I thy bridal bed, nor ever wished it, nor conceived the thought. Else may I perish inglorious, without a name, and may neither sea nor earth receive the flesh of me when dead, if I be a wicked man. But whether or no she have destroyed her life through fear, I know not: for it is not lawful for me to speak further. Cautious she was, though she could not be chaste; but I, who could be, had the power to no good purpose.

CHOR. Thou hast said sufficient to rebut the charge, in offering the oaths by the Gods, no slight proof.

THES. Is not this man then an enchanter and a juggler, who trusts that he will overcome my mind by his goodness of disposition, after he has dishonored his father?

HIPP. I too very much wonder at this conduct of yours, my father; for if you were my son, and I your father, I should slay you, and not punish you by banishment, if you had dared to defile my wife.

THES. How fitly hast thou said this! yet thou shalt not so die, as thou hast laid down this law for thyself; for a quick grave is easiest to the miserable man; but wandering an exile from thy country's land to foreign realms, thou shalt drag out a life of bitterness; for this is the reward for the impious man.

HIPP. Ah me! what wilt thou do? wilt thou not even await time as evidence against me, but wilt thou banish me from the land?

THES. Ay, beyond the ocean, and the place of Atlas, if any way I could, so much do I hate thee.

HIPP. Without having even examined oath, or proof, or the sayings of the seers, wilt thou cast me uncondemned from out the land?

THES. This letter here, that waiteth no seer's observations, accuses thee faithfully; but to the birds that flit above my head I bid a long farewell.

HIPP. O Gods, wherefore then do I not ope my mouth, who am destroyed by you whom I worship? — And yet not so — for thus I should not altogether persuade those whom I ought, but should be violating to no purpose the oaths which I have sworn.

THES. Alas me! how thy sanctity kills me! Wilt not thou go as quick as possible from thy country's land?

HIPP. Whither then shall I unhappy turn me; what stranger's mansion shall I enter, banished on this charge?

THES. His, who delights to entertain defilers of women, and those who dwell with evil deeds.

HIPP. Alas! alas! this goes to my heart, and almost makes me weep: if indeed I appear vile, and seem so to thee.

THES. Then oughtest thou to have groaned, and owned the guilt before, when thou daredst to wrong thy father's wife.

HIPP. O mansions, would that ye could utter me a voice, and bear witness whether I be a vile man!

THES. Dost fly to dumb witnesses? this deed, though it speak not, clearly proves thee vile.

HIPP. Alas! would that I could look upon myself standing opposite, to that degree do I weep for the evils which I suffer!

THES. Thou hast accustomed thyself much more to regard thyself, than to be a just man, and to do what is righteous to thy parents.

HIPP. O unhappy mother! O wretched natal hour! may none of my friends ever be illegitimate.

THES. Servants, will ye not drag him out? did you not hear me long ago pronounce him banished!

HIPP. Any one of them shall touch me to his cost however; but thou thyself, if it be thy desire, thrust me out from the land.

THES. I will do this, unless thou wilt obey my words, for no pity for thy banishment comes over me.

HIPP. It is fixed, as it seems; alas, wretch that I am! since I know these things indeed, but know not how to say them. O most dear to me of deities, daughter of Latona, thou that assortest with me, huntest with me, we shall then indeed be banished illustrious Athens: but farewell O city, and land of Erectheus. O plain of Trœzene, how many things hast thou to employ the happy youth! Farewell! for I address thee, beholding thee for the last time — Come youths of this land my companions, bid me farewell, and conduct me from the land, for never shall you see a man more chaste, even though I seem not to my father.

CHORUS.

Surely the providence of the Gods, when it comes into my mind, greatly takes away sorrow: but cherishing in my hope some knowledge, I am utterly deficient, when I look on the fortunes and on the deeds of men, for they are changed in different manners, and the life of man varies, ever exceeding vague. Would that in answer to my petitions fate from the Gods would give me this, prosperity with riches, and a mind unsullied by griefs. And be my character neither too high, nor on the other hand infamous. But changing my easy habits with the morrow ever may I lead a happy life; for no longer have I an unperturbed mind, but I see things contrary to my expectations: since we have seen the brightest star of Grecian Minerva sent forth to another land on account of his father's rage. O sands of the neighboring shore, and mountain wood, where with the swift-footed dogs he went to slay the wild beasts, accompanying the chaste Dian! No more shalt thou mount the car drawn by the team of Henetian steeds, restraining with thy foot the horses in their exercise on the course round Limna. And the sleepless song that used to dwell under the bridge of the chords shall cease in thy father's house. And the haunts of the daughter of Latona in the

deep wood shall be without their garlands: and the contest among the damsels for thy bridal bed has died away by reason of thy exile. But I, for thy misfortunes, shall endure with tears a fortuneless fortune. O unhappy mother, thou hast brought forth in vain! Alas! I am enraged with the Gods. Alas! alas! united charms of marriage, wherefore send ye the unhappy one, guilty of no crime, away from his country's land — away from these mansions?

But lo! I perceive a follower of Hippolytus with a sad countenance coming toward the house in haste.

MESSENGER, CHORUS.

MESS. Ye females, whither going can I find Theseus, king of this land? If ye know, tell me: is he within this palace?

CHOR. The [king] himself is coming out of the palace.

MESSENGER, THESEUS, CHORUS.

MESS. I bring a tale that demands concern, of thee and of thy subjects, both those who inhabit the city of the Athenians, and the realms of the Trœzenian land.

THES. What is it? Has any sudden calamity come upon the two neighboring states?

MESS. To speak the word — Hippolytus is no more. He views the light however for a short moment.

THES. *Killed?* By whom? Has any come to enmity with him, whose wife, as his father's, he has forcibly defiled?

MESS. His own chariot slew him, and the imprecations of thy mouth, which thou didst put up to thy father, the ruler of the ocean, concerning thy son.

THES. O ye Gods! and O Neptune! how truly then wert thou my father, when thou didst duly hear my imprecations! Tell me too, how did he

perish? in what way did the staff of Justice strike him that disgraced me?

MESS. We indeed near the wave-beaten shore were combing out with combs the horses' hair, weeping, for there had come a messenger saying, that Hippolytus no longer trod on this land, having from thee received the sentence of wretched banishment. But he came bringing to us on the shore the same strain of tears: and an innumerable throng of his friends and companions came following with him. But at length after some time he spake, having ceased from his groans. "Wherefore am I thus disquieted? My father's words must be obeyed. My servants, yoke to my car the harnessed steeds, for this city is for me no more." Then indeed every man hastened, and sooner than one could speak we drew up the horses caparisoned before our master; and he seizes with his hands the reins from off the bow of the chariot, mounting with his foot sandaled as it was. And first indeed he addressed the Gods with outstretched hands: "Jove, may I no longer exist, if I am a base man; but may my father perceive how unworthily he treats me, either when I am dead, or while I view the light." And on this having taken the whip in his hands he struck the horses both at once: and we the attendants followed our master by the chariot close to the reins, along the road that leads straightway to Argos and Epidauria, but when we came into the desert country, there is a certain shore beyond this land which slopes even down to the Saronic Sea, from thence a voice like the subterraneous thunder of Jove sent forth a dreadful groan appalling to hear, and the horses pointed their heads erect and their ears toward the sky, and on us there came a vehement fear, whence possibly the voice could come: but looking toward the sea-beaten shore we beheld a vast wave pillared in heaven, so that the view of the heights of Sciron was taken from mine eye: and it concealed the Isthmus and the rock of Æsculapius. And then swelling up and splashing forth much foam around in the ocean surf, it moves toward the shore, where was the chariot drawn by its four horses. But together with its breaker and its tripled surge, the wave sent forth a bull, a fierce monster; with whose bellowing the whole land filled resounded fearfully: and to the lookers-on a sight appeared more dreadful than the eyes could bear. And straightway a dreadful fear comes over the steeds. But their master, being much conversant with the ways of horses, seized the reins in his hands, and pulls them as a sailor pulls his oar, having fixed his body in an opposite direction to the reins. But they,

champing with their jaws the forged bits, bare him on forcibly, heeding neither the hand that steered them, nor the traces, nor the compact chariot: and, if indeed holding the reins he directed their course toward the softer ground, the bull appeared in front, so as to turn them away maddening with fright the four horses that drew the chariot. But if they were borne to the rocks maddened in mettle, silently approaching the chariot he followed so far, until he overthrew it and drove it backward, dashing the felly of the wheel against the rock. And all was in confusion, and the naves of the wheels flew up, and the linch-pins of the axles. But the unhappy man himself entangled in the reins is dragged along, bound in a difficult bond, his head dashed against the rocks, and torn his flesh, and crying out in a voice dreadful to hear, "Stop, O ye that have been trained up in my stalls, do not destroy me. Oh unhappy imprecation of my father! Who will come near and save a most excellent man?" But many of us wishing so to do failed through want of swiftness: and he indeed freed, in what manner I know not, from the entanglements of the reins, falls, having the breath of life in him, but for a very short time. And the horses vanished, and the woeful monster of the bull I know not where in the mountain country. I am indeed the slave of thy house, O king, but thus much never shall I at least be able to be persuaded of thy son, that he is evil, not even if the whole race of women were hung, and though one should fill with writing all the fir of Ida, since I am confident that he is virtuous.

CHOR. Alas! alas! The calamity of new evils is consummated, nor is there refuge from fate and from what must be.

THES. Through hate of the man, who has thus suffered, I was pleased with this account; but now, having respect unto the Gods, and to him, because he is of me, I am neither pleased, nor yet troubled at these ills.

MESS. How then? Must we bring him hither, or what must we do to the unhappy man to gratify thy wishes! Think; but if thou take my advice, thou wilt not be harsh toward thy son in his misfortunes.

THES. Bear him hither, that seeing him before my eyes that denied he had defiled my bed, I may confute him with words, and with what has happened from the Gods.

CHOR. Thou, Venus, bendest the stubborn mind of the Gods, and of mortals, and with thee he of varied plume, that darts about on swiftest wing; and flies over the earth and over the loud-resounding briny ocean; and Love charms to subjection, on whose maddened heart the winged urchin come gleaming with gold, the race of the mountain whelps, and of those that inhabit the sea, and as many things as the earth nourisheth, which the sun doth behold scorched [with its rays,] and men: but over all these things thou, Venus, alone holdest sovereign rule.

DIANA, THESEUS, CHORUS.

DI. Thee, the noble son of Ægeus, I command to listen; but it is I, Diana, daughter of Latona, who am addressing thee: Theseus, wherefore dost thou, wretched man, take delight in these things, seeing that thou hast slain in no just way thy son, being persuaded by the lying words of thy wife in things not seen? But the guilt that has seized on thee is manifest. How canst thou, shamed as thou art, refrain from hiding thy body beneath the dark recesses of the earth? or from withdrawing thy foot from this suffering, by changing thy nature, and becoming a winged creature above? Since among good men at least thou hast not a part in life to possess. Hear, O Theseus, the state of thy ills. Even though I gain no advantage from it, yet will I torment thee; but for this purpose came I to show thee the upright mind of thy son, that he may die with a good reputation, and thy wife's passion, or, in some sort, nobleness; for, gnawed by the stings of that deity most hateful to us, as many as delight in virginity, she became enamored of thy son. But while she endeavored by right feeling to conquer Venus, she was destroyed not willingly by the means employed by the nurse, who having first bound him by oaths, told thy son her malady. But he, as was right, obeyed not her words; nor, again, though evil-entreated by thee, did he violate the sanctity of his oaths, being a pious man. But she, fearing lest her conduct should be scrutinized, wrote a false letter, and by deceit destroyed thy son, but nevertheless persuaded thee.

THES. Ah me!

DI. My tale torments thee, Theseus, but be still, that having heard what follows thou mayest groan the more — Knowest thou then that thou receivedst from thy father three wishes with a certainty of their being

granted? Whereof one thou hast expended, O most evil one, on thy son, when thou mightest have done it on some of thine enemies. Thy father then that dwelleth in the ocean, gave thee as much as he was bound to give, because he promised. But thou both in his eyes and in mine appearest evil, who neither didst await nor examine proof, nor the voice of the prophets, didst not leave the consideration to length of time, but, quicker than became thee, didst vent thy curses against thy son and slay him.

THES. Mistress, let me die!

DI. Thou hast committed dreadful deeds, but nevertheless, it is still possible even for thee to obtain pardon for these things. For Venus willed that these things should be in order to satiate her rage. But among the Gods the law is thus — None wishes to thwart the purpose of him that wills anything, but we always give way. Since, be well assured, were it not that I feared Jove, never should I have come to such disgrace, as to suffer to die a man of all mortals the most dear to me. But thine error, first of all thine ignorance frees from malice; and then thy wife by her dying put an end to the proof of words, so as to persuade thy mind. Chiefly then on thee these ills are burst, but sorrow is to me too; for Gods rejoice not when the pious die; the wicked however we destroy with their children and their houses.

CHOR. And lo! the unhappy man there is coming, all mangled his young flesh and auburn head. Oh the misery of the house! such double anguish coming down from heaven has been wrought in the palaces!

HIPPOLYTUS, DIANA, THESEUS, CHORUS.

HIPP. O! O! O! Unhappy I was thus foully mangled by the unjust prayers of an unjust father — I am destroyed miserably. Ah me! ah me! Pains rush through my head, and the spasm darts across my brain. Stop, I will rest my fainting body. Oh! oh! O those hateful horses of my chariot, things which I fed with my own hand, ye have destroyed me utterly and slain me. Oh! oh! by the Gods, gently, my servants, touch with your hands my torn flesh. Who stands by my side on the right? Lift me up properly, and take hold all equally on me, the unblessed of heaven, and cursed by my father's error — Jove, Jove, beholdest thou these things? Lo! I, the chaste, and the

reverencer of the Gods, I who in modesty exceed all, have lost my life, and go to a manifest hell beneath the earth; but in vain have I labored in the task of piety toward men. O! O! O! O! and now the pain, the pain comes upon me, loose unhappy me, and let death come to be my physician. Destroy me, destroy the unhappy one — I long for a two-edged blade, wherewith to cut me in pieces, and to put my life to an eternal rest. Oh unhappy curse of my father! the evil too of my blood-polluted kinsmen, my old forefathers, bursts forth upon me; nor is it at a distance; and it hath come on me, wherefore, I pray, who am nothing guilty of these ills? Alas me! me! what can I say? how can I free my life from this cruel calamity? Would that the black and nightly fate of Pluto would put me wretched to eternal sleep!

DI. Oh unhappy mortal, with what a calamity art thou enthralled! but the nobleness of thy mind hath destroyed thee.

HIPP. Let be. O divine breathing of perfume, for, even though being in ills, I perceived thee, and felt my body lightened of its pain. The Goddess Dian is in this place.

DI. Oh unhappy one! she is, to thee the most dear of deities.

HIPP. Mistress, thou seest wretched me, in what state I am.

DI. I see; but it is not lawful for me to shed a tear down mine eyes.

HIPP. Thy hunter, and thy servant is no more.

DI. No in sooth; but beloved by me thou perishest.

HIPP. And he that managed thy steeds, and guarded thy statutes.

DI. *Ay*, for the crafty Venus hath so wrought.

HIPP. Ah me! I perceive indeed the power that hath destroyed me.

DI. She thought her honor aggrieved, and hated thee for being chaste.

HIPP. One Venus hath destroyed us three.

DI. Thy father, and thee, and his wife the third.

HIPP. I mourn therefore also my father's misery.

DI. He was deceived by the devices of the Goddess.

HIPP. Oh! unhappy thou, because of this calamity, my father!

THES. I perish, my son, nor have I delight in life.

HIPP. I lament thee rather than myself on account of thy error.

THES. My son, would that I could die in thy stead!

HIPP. Oh! the bitter gifts of thy father Neptune!

THES. Would that the prayer had never come into my mouth.

HIPP. Wherefore this wish? thou wouldst have slain me, so enraged wert thou then.

THES. For I was deceived in my notions by the Gods.

HIPP. Alas! would that the race of mortals could curse the Gods!

DI. Let be; for not even when thou art under the darkness of the earth shall the rage arising from the bent of the Goddess Venus descend upon thy body unrevenged: by reason of thy piety and thy excellent mind. For with these inevitable weapons from mine own hand will I revenge me on another, whoever to her be the dearest of mortals. But to thee, O unhappy one, in recompense for these evils, will I give the greatest honors in the land of Trœzene; for the unwedded virgins before their nuptials shall shear their locks to thee for many an age, owning the greatest sorrow tears can give; but ever among the virgins shall there be a remembrance of thee that shall awake the song, nor dying away without a name shall Phædra's love toward thee pass unrecorded: — But thou, O son of the aged Ægeus, take thy son in thine arms and clasp him to thee; for unwillingly thou didst destroy him, but that men should err, when the Gods dispose events, is but to be expected! — and thee, Hippolytus, I exhort not to remain at enmity

with thy father; for thou perceivest the fate, whereby thou wert destroyed. And farewell! for it is not lawful for me to behold the dead, nor to pollute mine eye with the gasps of the dying; but I see that thou art now near this calamity.

HIPP. Go thou too, and farewell, blessed virgin! But thou easily quittest a long companionship. But I give up all enmity against my father at thy request, for before also I was wont to obey thy words. Ah! ah! darkness now covers me over mine eyes. Take hold on me, my father, and lift up my body.

THES. Ah me! my son, what dost thou, do to me unhappy?

HIPP. I perish, and do indeed see the gates of hell.

THES. What? leaving my mind uncleansed from thy blood?

HIPP. No in sooth, since I free thee from this murder.

THES. What sayest thou? dost thou remit me free from the guilt of blood?

HIPP. I call to witness Dian that slays with the bow.

THES. O most dear, how noble thou appearest to thy father!

HIPP. O farewell thou too, take my best farewell, my father!

THES. Oh me! for thy pious and brave soul!

HIPP. Pray to have legitimate sons like me.

THES. Do not, I prithee, leave me, my son, but be strong.

HIPP. My time of strength is past; for I perish, my father: but cover my face as quickly as possible with robes.

THES. O famous realms of Athens and of Pallas, of what a man will ye have been bereaved! Oh unhappy I! What abundant reason, Venus, shall I have to remember thy ills!

CHOR. This common grief to all the citizens hath come unexpectedly.
There will be a fast falling of many tears; for the mournful stories of great
men rather obtain.