

**PROLOGUE****Delphi, Before the Temple, morning***Pythia*

1. SOUND LARGE MILLING CROWD. DRUM BEAT. CROWD QUIETS DOWN.
2. PYTHIA  
In this my prayer, I hold Earth in highest honor, as the first of prophets among all gods. Then, after her came Themis. That goddess, so the legend goes, followed her mother at this seat of foretelling. Third in line, another Titan, Phoebe, child of Earth, was then assigned to occupy this throne. There was no force — Themis approved the change. Phoebe then bestowed it to the god who takes his name from her, Phoebus Apollo.
3.  
He came from Delos to live here on Mount Parnassus. A reverential escort came with him — children of the fire god, Hephaestus, road builders who tame the wilderness and civilize the land. As he marched here, people flocked to worship him, including their king and leader, Delphis. Then Zeus inspired in him prophetic skills, and set him on this throne as fourth in line. Here Apollo speaks for Zeus, his father.
4.  
My prayers begin with preludes to these gods. My words also give special prominence to the goddess who stands outside the shrine, Pallas Athena. I revere those nymphs inhabiting Corycia's rocky caves, where flocks of birds delight to congregate, where holy spirits roam.
5.  
Nor do I forget how Dionysus, ruler of this land, divine commander of Bacchic women, ripped Pentheus apart, as if he were a cornered hare. I also call upon the streams of Pleistus and Poseidon's power, and Zeus most high, who fulfills all things.
6.  
Now I take my seat on the sibyl's throne. May the gods favor me with insight! (to crowd) If any Greeks are here, let them draw lots and enter, each in turn, as is our custom. I will counsel them as the god inspires me.
7. SHE ENTERS TEMPLE. MILLING CROWD. SHE SCREAMS, BACK. CROWD OUT.
8. TENSE UNDERSCORE.
9. (crawling out of temple) Horrible! Unspeakable! Things too ghastly to behold drive me out of Apollo's shrine. My

1. PYTHIA cont'd strength is gone . . . I cannot stand and have to crawl on hands and knees — my legs just buckle under me . . . An old woman overcome with fear is nothing, a child.
2. As I was approached the garlanded inner shrine, I saw upon the center-stone a man the gods despise, seated like a suppliant, hands dripping blood. His one hand held a sword, his other an olive branch twined with tufts of wool, a mark of piety, large and white. I saw all that distinctly.
3. Before him on the benches something astonishing, on the benches groups of women sleeping — well, not exactly women. Gorgons — then again, not like Gorgons either. I once saw a picture of monstrous Harpies snatching food away from Phineas. But the ones inside have no wings. They are black and hideous, making loud rasping noises that terrify me. Foul pus seeped from their eyes. Their dress unfit in a holy place or even in men's homes.
4. Never have I seen a tribe like unto this company. No country that would claim them without regret. What will befall them I leave to far-seeing Apollo. For he has power to heal and purify.
5. MUSIC SEGUE TO BRIDGE.
- EPISODE ONE**  
**Inside the Temple**  
*Apollo, Orestes*
6. SOUND FADE UP RHONCHI OF SLEEPING FURIES.
7. ORESTES My lord Apollo, always just, be merciful as well. Your might prevails against all evil.
8. APOLLO I will not desert you. I will stand by you until the end. Close at hand or far away, I will keep your enemies at bay — just as now you see these frenzied creatures overcome with sleep — these loathsome hags, primeval spawns. They were born for evil deep within the blackest gloom of Tartarus. Olympian gods and men despise them.
9. You must keep on, never succumb, though they pursue you everywhere. Never tire nor give in to your pain. Once you reach Athena's city, take sanctuary in her temple and embrace her image. With people there to judge your cause and with the force of speech, we will find a way to free you from misfortune. For I was the one who urged you to slay your mother. Remember this — never surrender to fear.



1. CHORUS cont'd                      Our quarry slipped our nets. Escaped! Once sleep came over us, we lost our prey.
2.    Hermes, son of Zeus, upstart thief, in your youthful arrogance you trample on the ancient gods.
3.    You protect an unworthy suppliant, a godless man, a matricide!
4.    Who can claim justice in such theft?
5.    In my dreams, shame struck me like a racer's whip, when he urges his team with lashes. It stung me sharply under my heart. I can still feel it!
6.    These younger gods are ever forcing their rule beyond just boundaries. The throne drips blood, at its head and foot.
7.    I see Earth's center-stone defiled with blood, corrupted and acursed.
8.    The prophet soils his own hearth, pollutes the shrine himself. Against divine tradition, he honors human things.
9.    He sets aside decrees of fate established long ago.
10.     Though he inflict his pain on me, he will never free that man. Though he flee into the deepest recesses of the earth, he shall not escape.
11.     As he seeks to cleanse himself, he will meet the next avenger coming for his head.
12. MUSIC                                 STING.

## EPISODE TWO

### The Same

*Apollo, Chorus*

13. APOLLO                                 (entering) Out! I command you to leave this house at once — or else you'll feel my arrows' bite, winged snakes shot from a golden string. Then your agonies will choke you. You will spit out the black froth you suck from men, and vomit up the clotted blood of your victims.
14.    You are not fit to enter this sanctuary. No, you belong where heads are sliced away, eyes gouged out — where justice equals slaughter — where youthful men are ruined by castration, where others suffer mutilation, stoning —

1. APOLLO cont'd                    where men impaled on spikes scream without surcease.  
That is the sort of the feast you crave.
2.    Do you hear? For this the gods despise you. Your very  
appearance proclaims your character. Go haunt some  
blood-soaked lion's den, not infect this temple with your  
pollution. So leave this place, you flock without a shepherd,  
you herd the gods despise.
3. CHORUS                                Lord Apollo, listen now to us. You have not just abetted  
this crime — you did it all yourself. You bear all the guilt.
4. APOLLO                                What does that mean? Go on. Keep talking.
5. CHORUS                                You told that stranger to kill his mother.
6. APOLLO                                To avenge his father. Why is that wrong?
7. CHORUS                                Then you supported him, a murderer.
8. APOLLO                                And I instructed him to come back here to expiate his  
crime.
9. CHORUS                                Then why insult us, the ones who drove him here?
10. APOLLO                                You are not fit to enter here.
11. CHORUS                                We have a duty to perform.
12. APOLLO                                Duty? Duty to do what? Say it.
13. CHORUS                                We drive from their homes all those who slay their own  
mothers.
14. APOLLO                                What about a wife who kills her husband?
15. CHORUS                                That blood is not her own.
16. APOLLO                                What? You would ignore those pledges of Zeus to queen  
Hera? You scorn the strongest bonds between them. Your  
claim dishonors Aphrodite, too, goddess of love, from  
whom all men derive their greatest joys. With man and  
woman a marriage sealed by fate is stronger than any oath,  
and justice guards it. Now, if you are not concerned when  
one partner kills the other, then I say your torment of  
Orestes is unjust. I do not see why you come down hard to  
the one and indifferent to the other.
17.    But it is of no moment, for Athena will judge the right and  
wrong of this.

1. CHORUS I shall never free that outcast — never.
2. APOLLO Then go! Pursue him and bring yourself more trouble.
3. CHORUS You cannot curb my powers with your words.
4. APOLLO Your powers? Those I would not take, even as a gift.
5. CHORUS Of course not. They call you great already at the foot of Zeus' throne. But for my part, since I am called onward by a mother's blood, I'll hound this man with my own style of justice.
6. APOLLO And I shall defend my suppliant with all my power. For, with gods and men, were I to abandon him a terrible wrath will surely follow.
7. MUSIC BRIDGE.

**EPISODE THREE**  
**Temple of Athena, Athens**  
*Orestes, Chorus*

8. ORESTES Queen Athena, I have come by order of Apollo. I beg your kindness. Grant me sanctuary, a man accursed, an outcast. I do not seek forgiveness — my hands are clean — but my ardor is worn down, blunted by other homes and places, of all the well-trod roads. I have kept to Apollo's oracle. Crossing land and sea, I have reached this statue by your shrine at last. Here, goddess, I take my place and await the outcome of my trial.
9. SOUND FADE UP BUZZ AND HISS OF FURIES.
10. CHORUS Ah ha! Here we have that man's clear scent, a silent witness, but firm evidence. After him! Like hounds chasing a wounded fawn, we track him by the drops of blood he sheds. Man-killing work — the effort wearies me. My lungs are bursting. We have sought him everywhere, explored all the regions of the earth, crossed seas in wingless flight, moving on faster than any ship, always in pursuit. Now he is cornered here, cowering somewhere. I smell human blood — I could laugh for joy! Start looking for him! Seek him out again! Look everywhere. Block his escape. That matricide must pay!
11. (severally) There he is!

1. CHORUS cont'd                      Claiming sanctuary, at that statue of the eternal goddess, embracing it.
2.    He must want a trial, a judgment on his murderous violence.
3.    Impossible! A mother's blood, once shed, soaks in the earth and cannot emerge again — the flowing stream moves through the ground, then disappears forever.
4.    No. You must pay me back. I will suck your blood, and feed upon your pain.
5.    I will drag you down, still living, to the underworld. And there you will pay for murdering your mother.
6.    You will see there other human criminals who have dishonored gods and strangers, who have abused the parents they should love. They all receive the justice they deserve.
7.    Hades, mighty god of all the dead, judges mortal men below the ground. His sharp mind records all things.
8. ORESTES                                      I have been seasoned in adversity, and know the riddances of evil — when to speak and when be silent. And in this instance, a wise master has ordered me to speak. The blood on my hands is dormant now, fading — polluting stains of matricide have been washed away. When they were fresh, Apollo in his temple cleansed my guilt — slaughtering pigs to make me pure again. It is a long story to describe for you, right from the start, all the men visited and left unharmed.
9.    Time as it passes withers all things. Now, with full reverence and sanctity, I invoke Athena, queen of this land. I beg her help. Let her appear unarmed. She will win true allies in me, my land and people. We will trust her forever. No matter where she is — in Libya, in some region by the springs of Triton, her birthplace, with her sandled feet still or roving, assisting those she loves, or whether in Phlegra she surveys the plain like some bold commander — the goddess will hear me, though far away. May she come and grant me deliverance.
10. CHORUS                                      Neither Apollo nor Athena can save you. You are destined to die abandoned and alone, bereft of joy, a bloodless criminal sucked dry by demons, no more than a shell.

1. CHORUS cont'd  
What? You ignore my words and will not reply — you, a victim fattened up for me, my consecrated gift? You will not perish on any altar — no, I will eat you alive. (pause)  
All right then, hear our spell to chain you.  
  
**STASIMON ONE**
2. CHORUS  
Come, let us link our arms — Furies set to manifest our fearful art, to show our collective power to manipulate the lives of mortals.
3.  
We represent true justice. Our anger never works against a man whose hands are clean — all his life he stays unharmed. But those who trespass, as this one has, who seeks to hide his crimes — we harry them as testament to those they have slain. Blood avengers, relentless, we pursue them to the end.
4.  
Hear me, Mother Night, mother who gave birth to me so I could avenge the living and the dead. Leto's child, Apollo, dishonors me. He tears that man out of my hands, the hare who cowers there, who by rights must pay for his mother's blood.
5.  
Our frenzied call falls upon his head, our sacrificial victim — driving him to madness — wiping out his mind. This is the cry of Furies. It chains the soul, destroys its harmony, and withers mortal men.
6.  
Remorseless Fate gave allotted this work to us forever, a web spun for us alone, to cling to those who slaughter kindred — to plague them until they lie beneath the earth. And even then they are granted little peace.
7.  
These rights are ours from birth. The deathless gods may not touch us. We share no feasts with them, no fellowship — their unsullied robes take no part in our destiny.
8.  
That is what brings us here, eager to contest the charge, to challenge other gods, to make sure none of them usurps our prerogatives. There will be no trial — for Zeus despises us, considers us unworthy, refuses to deal with us because we trade in blood.
9.  
For I freely take upon myself the task to overthrow whole families if need be, when strife engenders murder. We relentlessly pursue that killer who spills blood of his blood. However strong, we wear him down.

1. CHORUS cont'd                    Those proud opinions people have, who raise themselves so high, who puff themselves to heaven, will dissolve in dishonor underground, when, robed in black, we spring.
2.    Leaping from the heights, we pound them with our feet — our force trips the runner as he sprints for home, a fate he cannot bear.
3.    His mind is so confused he does not sense his fall. Dark clouds of his defilement hover all around him. Murky shadows fall, enveloping his home. And Rumor spreads a tale of woe.
4.    Leaping from the heights, we stomp him with our feet — we trip the runner as he sprints for sanctuary, a fate he cannot bear.
5.    Such is our place in the eternal order of things — ever vigilant for human evil. Men cannot appease us. Feared and despised, we do our work. Split off from gods, with no light from the sun, we make the road hard for the sighted and the blind together.
6. SOUND                                    CHARIOT, HORSES FAR BACK, GALLOPING UP, UNDER:
7.    What man is not in awe or unafraid to hear of the power allotted me by Fate and ratified on high, mine from time immemorial to hold forever? And though I dwell below the earth in sunless gloom, I have my honor, too.
8. MUSIC                                    STING.

**EPISODE THREE**

**The Same**

*Athena, Leader, Orestes*

9. SOUND                                    CHARIOT PULLS UP, STOPS. HORSES NEIGH.
10. ATHENA                                    I have heard a cry from the distant banks of Scamander, where I was taking hold of land the Achaean leaders conceded to me, a great share of their spear-prize, dedicated to me solely and forever, a fine gift for the sons of Theseus.<sup>1</sup> I have come from there at my untiring pace, not flying on wings, but on my chariot yoked to swift horses.

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1. "Sons of Theseus," *i.e.*, the citizens of Athens.

1. ATHENA cont'd                    Here I see an unfamiliar crowd, strangers to this place, nothing I fear, but astonishing to see. Who are you? I'm talking to all those assembled here — the stranger crouching there beside my statue, and those of you like no one ever born, creatures no god has seen in goddesses, in form a thing unknown to mortal men. But to say such things about one's neighbor who have done no wrong is far from just and contravenes our customs.
2. CHORUS                             Daughter of Zeus, I will tell you everything — and briefly, too. We are immortal children of the Night. Below ground, where we dwell, we are called the Curses.
3. ATHENA                             Now I know your race and what to call you.
4. CHORUS                             But our powers — these you will quickly learn as well.
5. ATHENA                             Those I wish to learn. Please state them clearly.
6. CHORUS                             We hound out of their homes all those who kill.
7. ATHENA                             When the killer flees, where does he go?
8. CHORUS                             Where no one thinks of joy, for there is none.
9. ATHENA                             Your screams would drive this man to such a flight?
10. CHORUS                            Yes — he thought it right to kill his mother.
11. ATHENA                            Why? Was he forced to do it? Did he fear another person's anger?
12. CHORUS                            What can force a man to kill his mother?
13. ATHENA                            There are two sides to this dispute. I have heard only one.
14. CHORUS                            You need not put him under oath. He can neither deny the deed nor his guilt for it.
15. ATHENA                            You claim to be minions of justice, but act unjustly.
16. CHORUS                            How? Teach me. You clearly have a mind for fine distinctions.
17. ATHENA                            I say that no one should use oaths to let injustice triumph.
18. CHORUS                            Question him then. Judge for yourself.
19. ATHENA                            Are you prepared that I should be the one to do this, to pronounce a final verdict?

1. CHORUS  
Why not? We respect your worth, as you do ours.
2. ATHENA  
Stranger, have you anything to say in response? State your country, lineage, and circumstance. And then, defend yourself against their accusations, if you really trust the justice of your case. You cling to my statue, a sacred suppliant beside my hearth, doing what Ixion did so long ago. So speak to me. Address all this directly.
3. ORESTES  
Queen Athena, your last words express important doubts which I must first remove. I am not a suppliant in need of redemption. Nor have I fallen at your statue's feet with my hands defiled. On these two points I offer strong proof.
4.  
The laws hold that a criminal stained with blood guilt must hold silent until he is duly cleansed. I have already undertaken such rites at other shrines, both with burnt offerings and with water from flowing streams. So, as I say, there are no grounds for your misgivings here.
5.  
As for my family, you will know that soon enough. I am an Argive, son of Agamemnon. You may well ask his story — he is the man who put that naval force together. You worked with him to raze the Trojan citadel. When he came home, he died disgracefully, butchered by my mother, whose black heart snared him in devious hunting nets — these still exist, attesting to that slaughter in his bath.
6.  
I was in exile then. I returned and slew my mother — that I avow— to avenge the murder of my father, who I truly loved. For my deed, Apollo shares responsibility with me. He urged me to it, pointing out the cruel reprisals I would face if I failed to act against the murderers. Was what I did a righteous act or not? That you must decide. I will be satisfied, no matter how you render judgment.
7. ATHENA  
This is a grave matter, too complex for any mortal man to judge. It is not right even for me to decide such cases, where murder done in passion merits hard swift punishment. Above all, you come a suppliant here, purified and hence no danger to my shrine. Thus, in my city, I judge you innocent.
8.  
But these Furies have a purpose that cannot be ignored. If they fail to triumph in this case, they will spread their poisonous resentment — it will seep underground, infecting us, bring ever-lasting plague upon our land,

1. ATHENA cont'd something we cannot abide. So stands the case — two choices, both disastrous. Allow one to prevail, defeat the other?
  2. No, I see no way of resolving this. But since the judgment now falls on me, I shall appoint a human court to try this murder, a tribunal bound by oath. I shall establish it for all time. So, you two parties, summon your witnesses, set out your proofs, with sworn evidence to back your claims. Once I have picked the best men in Athens, I will return and preside. They will rule fairly in this case, bound by a sworn oath to act with justice.
  3. SOUND VANISHING EFFECT.
- STASIMON TWO**
4. CHORUS If his legal action triumphs, if now this matricide prevails, then newly set divine decrees will topple all order. Mortals will at once believe that everything is permitted. From now on parents can expect repeated blows of suffering inflicted by their children — now and forever.
  5. Furies who keep watch on men will bring no wrath to bear on human crimes — so then we set death loose everywhere, all forms of killing known to man. So one, seeing his neighbor's pain, will ask another, "Where does this end? When does our suffering diminish?" But the poor wretch can offer nothing — his remedies are vain, without effect.
  6. So when a terrible disaster strikes, let no one make the old appeal, "Justice, you Furies! Hear me, you powers on your thrones!" It may well happen soon — a father in despair, a mother in some new crisis, may scream out for pity. Now the edifice of justice falls.
  7. There are times when fear can lead to good. Such terror needs to stand guard, always ready to check the passionate heart. It profits men to learn control through suffering. For where is there a man or city — both alike in this regard — who still respects justice without a heart tempered by fear?
  8. It is wrong to praise a wanton life, or one too circumscribed. God, however wayward, favors moderation. And I say arrogance is surely born from sacrilege. From a healthy heart and mind comes the happiness men love, the joy they ask for in their prayers.

1. CHORUS cont'd I say it all, when I tell you this — Justice has an altar. Give it due reverence. Do not trample on it because self-interest sees advantages. Remember punishment will come — an outcome fixed and permanent. So each of you, above all else, should honor parents, pay them the deference you owe, respect all guests and strangers you welcome under your roof.
2. For happiness will never fail the man who follows justice, freely and without constraint. He will never be destroyed. But the reckless man who goes too far, who piles up riches for himself in any way he can and disregards all justice — I tell you this — in time he'll have to strike his sail, as storming torments break his ship, as his yardarm shatters.
3. He screams for help. But no one hears. Surrounded by churning seas he fights — in vain. Whirlpools suck him down, while heaven laughter at the sight of this heedless man — who once conceived himself impervious to harm — now helpless, panicked, unable to ride out the waves. He always lived for wealth — now that, too, smashes on the reef, the rock of Justice — he drowns, unseen and unlamented.
4. MUSIC BRIDGE.

#### EPISODE FOUR

#### The High Court of Athens

*Athena, citizens, Orestes, Apollo*

5. SOUND LARGE MILLING CROWD.
6. ATHENA Herald, blow the call for order! Raise that Etruscan trumpet, fill your lungs, let these people hear an ear-piercing blast.
7. MUSIC HORN.
8. SOUND CROWD QUIETS DOWN UNDER:
9. ATHENA Let us have silence! The whole city can hear my eternal laws. So can these litigants. Then all will see the justice in our verdict . . . Lord Apollo, you have your own domain. Tell me, what have you to do with this?
10. APOLLO I have come as a witness. That man, the accused, according to our customs, came a suppliant to my shrine, my hearth. I purified him of the blood he spilled. As his advocate, I share the blame arising from his mother's death. Start the

1. APOLLO cont'd trial. You understand procedure. Confirm that with a just decision.
2. ATHENA Let us begin. (to Furies) You Furies speak first. The plaintiff always opens our proceedings. Tell us the facts. Begin at the beginning — inform us clearly of the issues here.
3. CHORUS There are many of us, but we'll keep our speeches brief. (to Orestes) Answer our questions, as we put them one by one. First, tell us — did you kill your mother?
4. ORESTES Yes, I killed her. I never denied it.
5. CHORUS We take first fall. Three falls wins the match.
6. ORESTES You gloat, but your opponent is not yet pinned.
7. CHORUS Describe the murder for us. How did you kill her?
8. ORESTES I drew my sword and slit her throat.
9. CHORUS What persuaded you to do this?
10. ORESTES The orders of this god. He is my witness.
11. CHORUS The prophet ordered you to kill your mother?
12. ORESTES He did. And to this moment I have no regrets.
13. CHORUS But if the verdict lays its hands on you, you will change your story soon enough.
14. ORESTES I am confident. My father from his grave will send the help I need.
15. CHORUS So you trust the dead, and yet you killed your mother?
16. ORESTES I do, for she was guilty of two crimes.
17. CHORUS How so? Inform the judges on this point.
18. ORESTES She killed her husband and my father.
19. CHORUS But her death evens out the score for her. You are still living.
20. ORESTES When she was still alive, you did not hound her into exile. Why?
21. CHORUS She and her victim shared no common blood.



1. APOLLO cont'd has made no charms for that, though he can change all other things without pausing for breath.
2. CHORUS You plead to set this man free. But think of this — will he who shed his mother's blood, who spilled it on the ground, return to his father's house in Argos? Where are the public altars he can use, the family rites he can attend?
3. APOLLO I'll speak to that, as well. Make sure you note how right my answer is. That word "mother"— we give it to the one who bears the child. However, she is no parent, just a nurse to that new life embedded in her. The parent is the one who plants the seed, the father. Like a stranger for a stranger, she preserves the growing life, unless god injures it.
4. And I can offer proof for what I say — a man can have a child without a mother. My evidence is present in this room — Athena, child of Olympian Zeus. No dark womb nursed her. She sprang full grown from the head of her father. No mother, human or divine, can claim her.
5. Athena, as I know so many other things, I will make your city and your people great. That is why I sent this man a suppliant to your shrine, so he might prove himself, then place eternal trust in you, and you could win a new ally in him and his descendants, and thus create an everlasting bond with your people and his.
6. ATHENA Has each side said enough? Shall I now instruct the judges to cast their votes on the side of justice as they see it?
7. CHORUS Though we have already shot our final arrow, we will stay to hear the outcome.
8. ATHENA So be it. Now, as for you defendants, what can I do to avoid your censure?
9. APOLLO You have heard what you have heard. (to jurors) My friends, as you cast your ballots, make sure your hearts respect that oath you made.
10. ATHENA You citizens of Athens, you judges at the first trial ever held for murder, hear what I decree.
11. Now and forever this court of judges will convene here to serve Aegeus' people. This place, this Mount of Ares, is where Amazons once marched in force, enraged at Theseus. Here they pitched their tents. Then they built a new city on the heights, with lofty walls to match his own,



1. APOLLO  
Is it wrong to help a votary, especially when his need is great?
2. CHORUS  
You got those ancient goddesses drunk on wine, then had them into suspend the oldest rule of order we possess.
3. APOLLO  
You will soon lose this case as well. Then you can spew your venom and no one will be harmed.
4. CHORUS  
In your youthful indiscretion, you would slight my age. But I will await the verdict, see where this trial ends and see whether or not to visit my anger on this city.
5. ATHENA  
Now, members of the jury, do your job. Shake the ballots from the urns — and quickly.
6. SOUND JUDGES EMPTY URNS, COUNT BALLOT STONES, UNDER:
7. ORESTES  
Phoebus Apollo, how did they vote?
- APOLLO  
Shake out all ballots, friends.  
Count them fairly.
8. CHORUS  
Black mother Night, are you watching this?
- APOLLO  
Divide them with due care.  
Make no mistakes.  
Mere errors in reckoning can bring disaster.  
A single ballot cast can save this house.
9. ORESTES  
Now the result. Either the noose or the light.
10. CHORUS  
For us, either ruin or honor.
11. SOUND VOTE COUNTER WHISPERS RESULTS TO ATHENA.
12. ATHENA  
The division of the votes are equal. It is now my task to break the tie. And I award my ballot to Orestes.
13. CROWD REACTS.
14. Thus, this man stands now acquitted.
15. SOUND SENSATION IN THE CROWD.
16. ORESTES  
Pallas Athena, you have saved my house. I lost my homeland, and you have returned it back to me. Now all Greece can say, “This man is once again an Argive, restored to his people and his property, thanks to Pallas, thanks to Apollo, and most of all to all powerful Zeus, third god in this affair.” Faced with these advocates of my mother’s cause, he chose my father’s.

1. ORESTES cont'd                      Now I must turn toward home. But first I make this oath to your land and people for all time to come — Never will an Argive force march to this place with spears arrayed against you. If any man among my people violates this oath, I will bring his efforts to naught and destroy him, though I must rise from the grave to do it.
  
2.    But all those who keep this oath and honor Athena's city for all time — allies who fight on its behalf — such citizens will receive great favor.
  
3.    And so, farewell to you, Athena! Farewell to you, Athenians! May you always prove victorious against your foes, safe from harm and glorious in battle!
  
4. SOUND                                      VANISHING EFFECT.
  
5. CHORUS                                      You younger gods have wrenched the age-old laws out of my grasp, then trampled them underfoot. On us you heap dishonor and contempt. Now my anger turns against this land. How it will pay when I release my venom to ease my grief! I will saturate this ground. It won't survive. Contagion will stream from it, infecting greenery and children. That is justice! Blight will spread across the land, contaminate the soil, destroy the people.
  
6.    Should I just weep? Lick my wounds? This city has made us a mockery, a laughing stock! How can we endure such humiliation? We, Furies, daughters of Night, are dishonored, shamed, our powers cast aside!
  
7. ATHENA                                      But you've lost no honor here You are goddesses. Let not your anger lead you to excess, to blast this land of men past remedy. I trust in Zeus. Need I say that I am the only god who knows the keys to the storehouse for his lightning bolt. But there is no need for that.
  
8.    Rather accept my argument. Hurl no rash threats against this soil, turning it to a wasteland. Let your bitter, angry waves recede. Live here with me, receiving all honors. The first fruits of this fertile land are yours forever, all those offerings for heirs, for marriages — from this day forward they are yours. With all these things before you, you will agree that I am right.
  
9. CHORUS                                      That I should suffer thus! My ancient wisdom driven underground in contempt and shame. Rage consumes me! What agony is this that sinks into my ribs and pierces my

1. CHORUS cont'd heart? — O mother Night! The cunning of those gods, too sharp to overcome, steals all my ancient powers, and leaves me nothing.
2. ATHENA I will bear with your rage, for you are older, and thus your wisdom far exceeds my own. But Zeus gave me a fine intelligence as well. So let me tell you this — if you should go from here, a time will come when you will feel a lover's yearning for this place. By and bye, my citizens will grow in men's esteem. And you shall have your throne of honor before the house of Erechtheus. And such throngs will come to pay you homage as seen nowhere else in all the world.
3. Loose no hail of bloodshed on this my realm. Do not befoul the hearts of our youth, intoxicating them with wine-like rage — nor plant the hearts of fighting cocks in the people's breasts, compelling them to war among themselves. Let them battle in foreign lands where they'll find foes enough who lust for glory. I want no birds who fight in their own nest.
4. That is what I offer you. Confer blessings and we will bless you. Take your honored place in a land the gods all love.
5. CHORUS That I should suffer thus! My ancient wisdom driven underground in contempt and shame. Rage consumes me! What agony is this that sinks into my ribs and pierces my heart? — O mother Night! The cunning of those gods, too sharp to overcome, steals all my ancient powers, and leaves me nothing.
6. ATHENA I shall never tire of telling you of the gifts that await you here, so you can never say that I, a newer god, or the men who hold this land, failed to revere such ancient deities and barred our gates against you. No. But if you respect Persuasion — that sacred power whose soothing spell sits on my tongue — then you should stay. If you do not wish to do so, then you would do wrong to vent your anger on this city and injuring its people out of a spiteful rage. It is your choice. Take your just portion of this land, and full entitlement of honor.
7. CHORUS Queen Athena, this place you say is ours, what exactly is it?
8. ATHENA One free of pain and care. Why not accept?



1. CHORUS  
Hear me speak my blessing — let no winds destroy your trees nor scorching desert heat shrivel budding plants, no festering blight kill off the fruit. May Pan foster the fertility of the flocks, to every ewe twin lambs, all born in season. And may the fruit of the earth, the embedded lode, yield bountiful treasure, gift of the gods.
2. ATHENA  
Do you hear that, you guardians of my city? The blessings they will bring? They are powerful, the Furies, among immortal gods, among the dead below. Among living men they work their ends for all to see — for some a life of song, for others a life of tears.
3. CHORUS  
I forbid those deadly accidents that cut men down before their time. And all you gods with rightful powers, let our young girls all find husbands. Hear our prayers, you sacred Fates, our sisters, you children of the Night, who apportion all things justly, who have a place in every home, who bear a weight in every time, most honored everywhere among the gods.
4. ATHENA  
I am gratified to hear these love-filled blessings conferred upon this land. It pleases me that Persuasion kept watch on my tongue and lips, when I met their fierce refusal. Zeus, the patron god of our assemblies, has triumphed. Our struggle here for justice has left us ever victorious.
5. CHORUS  
I pray that man-killing faction may never roar aloud within the city. May its dust not drink the dark blood of our people, nor passions for revenge incite those civil wars that destroy the state. May they give joy for joy, united by their common love, united in their enmities — for that cures all human ills.
6. ATHENA  
Behold how they seek the road of gracious speech! From these fearful countenances I see great boons for my citizens. So treat them kindly, just as they are kind. Worship them forever. Thus you will keep your land and city on the path of justice, and thrive in everything you do.
7. CHORUS  
Rejoice! Rejoice amidst the prosperity you deserve!  
Rejoice, you who dwell with Zeus, who love the virgin goddess, as she loves you. You manifest wisdom in your generation, sheltered under Athena's wings, while Zeus looks on in awe.
8. ATHENA  
And you too rejoice. I shall lead the way and show you to your chambers, by sacred torchlight carried by your escort.

1. ATHENA cont'd                      Solemn offerings go with you as you hasten under the earth. Hold down the forces of destruction and send above the bearers of good fortune, that our city may ever prove victorious. And now you citizens, you children of Cranaus, king of this rock, lead our new residents for life away. May all citizens look on with favor at those who bring such favors to them.
  
2. CHORUS                                      Farewell, all those gods and men who live in the city of Pallas. Venerate our sojourn among you and you will never chafe against life's misfortunes.
  
3. SOUND                                      ESCORT GATHERS UNDER:
  
4. ATHENA                                      My gratitude to you for these words of blessing. Now I shall guide you down by blazing torchlight to your homes beneath the earth. With us goes this escort of women charged to guard my statue. It is only fitting. Let the most precious part of Theseus' land come forth — a noble assemblage of maidens, matrons and elders.
  
5. MUSIC                                      PROCESSIONAL UP, CONTINUE UNDER:
  
6. ATHENA                                      (to Escort) Vest these Furies with crimson robes and pay them homage. Then, follow with your torches, so these Eumenides, these Benevolent Ones, in the love they bear this land, can ever more bring our city strength and great good fortune.
  
7. ESCORT                                      (chanting) Move on with loyal escort,  
mighty children of the Night,  
children without children, no longer young,  
yet glorious in your honors.  
You citizens, nothing but blessings in your songs.
  
8.    Deep in those primeval caverns  
far underground, our sacrifices,  
the sacred honors we bestow on you  
will maintain our city's reverence.  
All of you, nothing but blessings in your songs.
  
9.    Come forward, sacred goddesses,  
benevolent and gracious to our land,  
come forward with the flaming torches,  
rejoicing as we move along our way.  
Now raise triumphal cries to crown our song!
  
10.    Peace now reigns forevermore  
between Athena's people and their guests.

