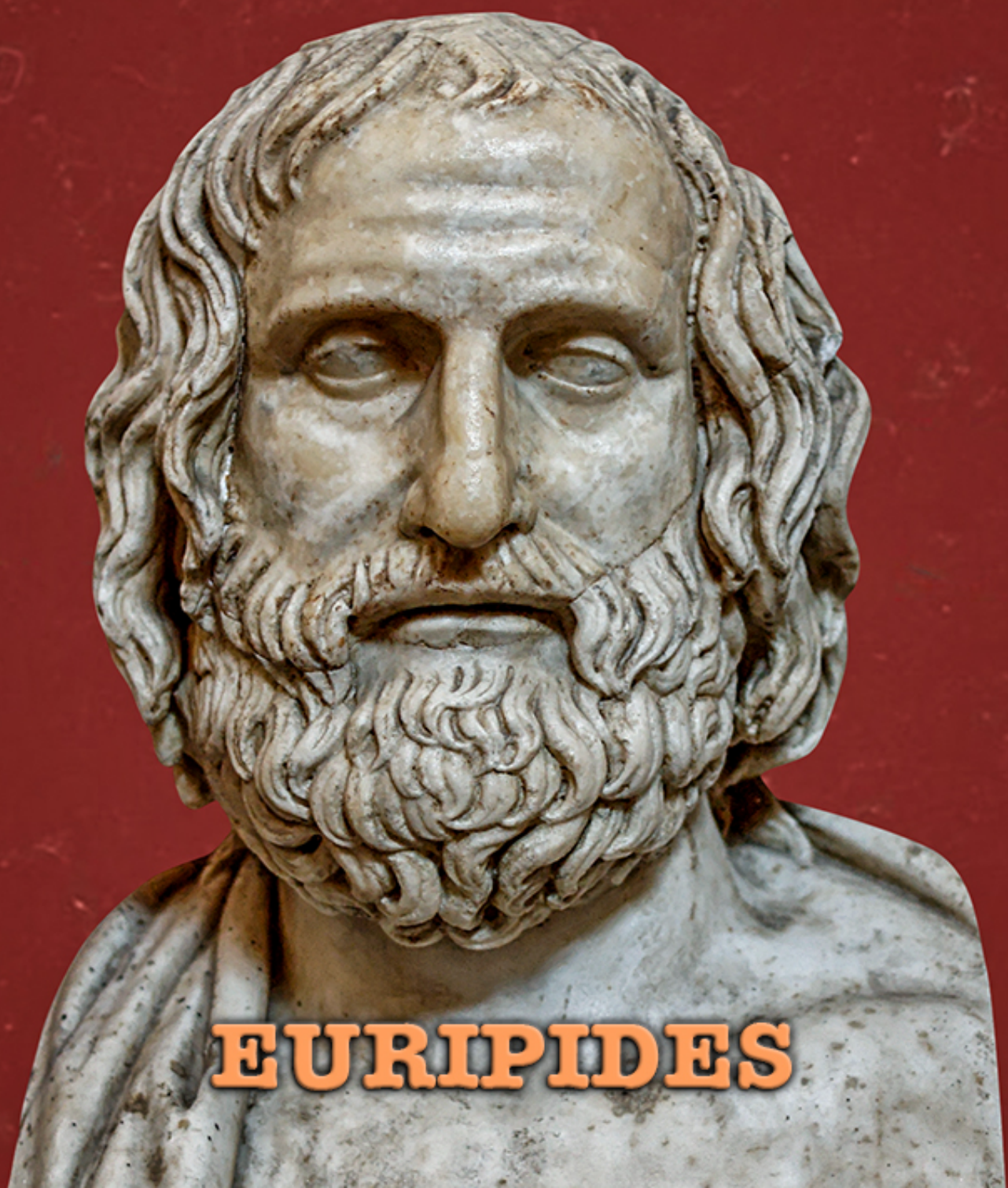


CLASSICS TO GO

**HIPPOLYTUS
THE BACCHAE**



EURIPIDES

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THE BACCHAE

Euripides

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Euripides, the youngest of the trio of great Greek tragedians was born at Salamis in 480 B.C., on the day when the Greeks won their momentous naval victory there over the fleet of the Persians. The precise social status of his parents is not clear but he received a good education, was early distinguished as an athlete, and showed talent in painting and oratory. He was a fellow student of Pericles, and his dramas show the influence of the philosophical ideas of Anaxagoras and of Socrates, with whom he was personally intimate. Like Socrates, he was accused of impiety, and this, along with domestic infelicity, has been supposed to afford a motive for his withdrawal from Athens, first to Magnesia and later to the court of Anchelaüs in Macedonia where he died in 406 B.C.

The first tragedy of Euripides was produced when he was about twenty-five, and he was several times a victor in the tragic contests. In spite of the antagonisms which he aroused and the criticisms which were hurled upon him in, for example, the comedies of Aristophanes, he attained a very great popularity; and Plutarch tells that those Athenians who were taken captive in the disastrous Sicilian expedition of 413 B.C. were offered freedom by their captors if they could recite from the works of Euripides. Of the hundred and twenty dramas ascribed to Euripides, there have come down to us

complete eighteen tragedies and one satyric drama, "Cyclops," beside numerous fragments.

The works of Euripides are generally regarded as showing the beginning of the decline of Greek tragedy. The idea of Fate hitherto dominant in the plays of his predecessors, tends to be degraded by him into mere chance; the characters lose much of their ideal quality; and even gods and heroes are represented as moved by the petty motives of ordinary humanity. The chorus is often quite detached from the action; the poetry is florid; and the action is frequently tinged with sensationalism. In spite of all this, Euripides remains a great poet; and his picturesqueness and tendencies to what are now called realism and romanticism, while marking his inferiority to the chaste classicism of Sophocles, bring him more easily within the sympathetic interest of the modern reader.

HIPPOLYTUS

OF EURIPIDES

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

THE GODDESS APHRODITE

THESEUS, *King of Athens and Trozên*
Minos, King of Crete, wife to Theseus
son of Theseus and the Amazon Hippolyte

PHAEDRA, *daughter of*

HIPPOLYTUS, *bastard*

THE NURSE OF PHAEDRA

A HENCHMAN OF HIPPOLYTUS

THE GODDESS ARTEMIS

AN OLD HUNTSMAN

A CHORUS OF HUNTSMEN

ATTENDANTS ON THE THREE ROYAL PERSONS

A CHORUS OF TROZENIAN WOMEN, WITH THEIR LEADER

The scene is laid in Trozên. The play was first acted when Epameinon was Archon, Olympiad 87, year 4 (B.C. 429). Euripides was first, Iophon second, Ion third.

APHRODITE

Great among men, and not unnamed am I,
The Cyprian, in God's inmost halls on high.
And wheresoe'er from Pontus to the far
Red West men dwell, and see the glad day-star,
And worship Me, the pious heart I bless,
And wreck that life that lives in stubbornness.
For that there is, even in a great God's mind,
That hungereth for the praise of human kind.

So runs my word; and soon the very deed
Shall follow. For this Prince of Theseus' seed,
Hippolytus, child of that dead Amazon,
And reared by saintly Pittheus in his own
Strait ways, hath dared, alone of all Trozên,
To hold me least of spirits and most mean,
And spurns my spell and seeks no woman's kiss,

But great Apollo's sister, Artemis,
He holds of all most high, gives love and praise,
And through the wild dark woods for ever strays,
He and the Maid together, with swift hounds
To slay all angry beasts from out these bounds,
To more than mortal friendship consecrate!

I grudge it not. No grudge know I, nor hate;
Yet, seeing he hath offended, I this day
Shall smite Hippolytus. Long since my way
Was opened, nor needs now much labour more.

For once from Pittheus' castle to the shore
Of Athens came Hippolytus over-seas
Seeking the vision of the Mysteries.
And Phaedra there, his father's Queen high-born;
Saw him, and as she saw, her heart was torn
With great love, by the working of my will.
And for his sake, long since, on Pallas' hill,
Deep in the rock, that Love no more might roam,
She built a shrine, and named it *Love-at-home* :
And the rock held it, but its face always
Seeks Trozên o'er the seas. Then came the day
When Theseus, for the blood of kinsmen shed,
Spake doom of exile on himself, and fled,
Phaedra beside him, even to this Trozên.
And here that grievous and amazed Queen,
Wounded and wondering, with ne'er a word,
Wastes slowly; and her secret none hath heard
Nor dreamed.

But never thus this love shall end!
To Theseus' ear some whisper will I send,
And all be bare! And that proud Prince, my foe,
His sire shall slay with curses. Even so
Endeth that boon the great Lord of the Main
To Theseus gave, the Three Prayers not in vain.

And she, not in dishonour, yet shall die.
I would not rate this woman's pain so high
As not to pay mine haters in full fee
That vengeance that shall make all well with me.

But soft, here comes he, striding from the chase,
Our Prince Hippolytus!—I will go my ways.—

And hunters at his heels: and a loud throng
Glorying Artemis with praise and song!
Little he knows that Hell's gates opened are,
And this his last look on the great Day-star!
[APHRODITE *withdraws, unseen by* HIPPOLYTUS
and a band of huntsmen, who enter from the left,
singing.
They pass the Statue of APHRODITE without notice.]

HIPPOLYTUS
Follow, O follow me,
Singing on your ways
Her in whose hand are we,
Her whose own flock we be,
The Zeus-Child, the Heavenly;
To Artemis be praise!

HUNTSMAN
Hail to thee, Maiden blest,
Proudest and holiest:
God's Daughter, great in bliss,
Leto-born, Artemis!
Hail to thee, Maiden, far
Fairest of all that are,
Yea, and most high thine home,
Child of the Father's hall;
Hear, O most virginal,
Hear, O most fair of all,
In high God's golden dome.

[*The huntsmen have gathered about the altar of ARTEMIS.*
HIPPOLYTUS now advances from them, and approaches the
Statue
with a wreath in his hand.]

HIPPOLYTUS
To thee this wreathed garland, from a green
And virgin meadow bear I, O my Queen,
Where never shepherd leads his grazing ewes
Nor scythe has touched. Only the river dews
Gleam, and the spring bee sings, and in the glade
Hath Solitude her mystic garden made.
No evil hand may cull it: only he
Whose heart hath known the heart of Purity,
Unlearned of man, and true whate'er befall.

Take therefore from pure hands this coronal,
O mistress loved, thy golden hair to twine.
For, sole of living men, this grace is mine,
To dwell with thee, and speak, and hear replies
Of voice divine, though none may see thine eyes.

Oh, keep me to the end in this same road!

[*An OLD HUNTSMAN, who has stood apart from
the rest, here comes up to HIPPOLYTUS.*]

HUNTSMAN

My Prince—for "Master" name I none but God—
Gave I good counsel, wouldst thou welcome it?

HIPPOLYTUS

Right gladly, friend; else were I poor of wit.

HUNTSMAN

Knowest thou one law, that through the world has won?

HIPPOLYTUS

What wouldst thou? And how runs thy law? Say on.

HUNTSMAN

It hates that Pride that speaks not all men fair!

HIPPOLYTUS

And rightly. Pride breeds hatred everywhere.

HUNTSMAN

And good words love, and grace in all men's sight?

HIPPOLYTUS

Aye, and much gain withal, for trouble slight.

HUNTSMAN

How deem'st thou of the Gods? Are they the same?

HIPPOLYTUS

Surely: we are but fashioned on their frame.

HUNTSMAN

Why then wilt thou be proud, and worship not..

HIPPOLYTUS

Whom? If the name be speakable, speak out!

HUNTSMAN
She stands here at thy gate: the Cyprian Queen!

HIPPOLYTUS
I greet her from afar: my life is clean.

HUNTSMAN
Clean? Nay, proud, proud; a mark for all to scan!

HIPPOLYTUS
Each mind hath its own bent, for God or man.

HUNTSMAN
God grant thee happiness.. and wiser thought!

HIPPOLYTUS
These Spirits that reign in darkness like me not.

HUNTSMAN
What the Gods ask, O Son, that man must pay!

HIPPOLYTUS (*turning from him to the others*).
On, huntsmen, to the Castle! Make your way
Straight to the feast room; 'tis a merry thing
After the chase, a board of banqueting.
And see the steeds be groomed, and in array
The chariot dight. I drive them forth to-day
[*He pauses, and makes a slight gesture of reverence to the
Statue on
the left. Then to the OLD HUNTSMAN.*]
That for thy Cyprian, friend, and nought beside!
[HIPPOLYTUS *follows the huntsmen, who stream by the central
door in
the Castle. The OLD HUNTSMAN remains*]

HUNTSMAN (*approaching the Statue and kneeling*)
O Cyprian—for a young man in his pride
I will not follow!—here before thee, meek,
In that one language that a slave may speak,
I pray thee; Oh, if some wild heart in froth
Of youth surges against thee, be not wroth
For ever! Nay, be far and hear not then:
Gods should be gentler and more wise than men!
[*He rises and follows the others into the Castle.*]

The Orchestra is empty for a moment, then there enter from right and

left several Trosenian women young and old. Their number eventually

amounts to fifteen.

CHORUS

There riseth a rock-born river,
Of Ocean's tribe, men say;
The crags of it gleam and quiver,
And pitchers dip in the spray:
A woman was there with raiment white
To bathe and spread in the warm sunlight,
And she told a tale to me there by the river
The tale of the Queen and her evil day:

How, ailing beyond allayment,
Within she hath bowed her head,
And with shadow of silken raiment
The bright brown hair bespread.
For three long days she hath lain forlorn,
Her lips untainted of flesh or corn,
For that secret sorrow beyond allayment
That steers to the far sad shore of the dead.

Some Women Is this some Spirit, O child of man?
Doth Hecat hold thee perchance, or Pan?
Doth she of the Mountains work her ban,
Or the dread Corybantes bind thee?

Others Nay, is it sin that upon thee lies,
Sin of forgotten sacrifice,
In thine own Dictynna's sea-wild eyes?
Who in Limna here can find thee;
For the Deep's dry floor is her easy way,
And she moves in the salt wet whirl of the spray.

Other Women Or doth the Lord of Erechtheus' race,
Thy Theseus, watch for a fairer face,
For secret arms in a silent place,
Far from thy love or chiding?

Others Or hath there landed, amid the loud
Hum of Piraeus' sailor-crowd,
Some Cretan venturer, weary-browed,

Who bears to the Queen some tiding;
Some far home-grief, that hath bowed her low,
And chained her soul to a bed of woe?

An Older Woman Nay—know yet not?—this burden hath always
lain

On the devious being of woman; yea, burdens twain,
The burden of Wild Will and the burden of Pain.
Through my heart once that wind of terror sped;
But I, in fear confessèd,
Cried from the dark to Her in heavenly bliss,
The Helper of Pain, the Bow-Maid Artemis:
Whose feet I praise for ever, where they tread
Far off among the blessèd!

THE LEADER

But see, the Queen's grey nurse at the door,
Sad-eyed and sterner, methinks, than of yore
With the Queen. Doth she lead her hither
To the wind and sun?—Ah, fain would I know
What strange betiding hath blanched that brow
And made that young life wither.

[*The NURSE comes out from the central door followed by
PHAEDRA,*
*who is supported by two handmaids. They make ready a couch
for PHAEDRA to lie upon.*]

NURSE

O sick and sore are the days of men!
What wouldst thou? What shall I change again
Here is the Sun for thee; here is the sky;
And thy weary pillows wind-swept lie,
By the castle door.
But the cloud of thy brow is dark, I ween;
And soon thou wilt back to thy bower within:
So swift to change is the path of thy feet,
And near things hateful, and far things sweet;
So was it before!

Oh, pain were better than tending pain!
For that were single, and this is twain,
With grief of heart and labour of limb.
Yet all man's life is but ailing and dim,
And rest upon earth comes never.
But if any far-off state there be,