

To Students and Parents/Guardians,

While my class policy is usually "No Late Work"....these are strange times and call for some changes. Therefore, also as long as you complete your assignments, you will earn points. If you choose not to complete the assigned work, or choose not to finish all parts of the work, you will fail to earn all possible points. FULL CREDIT for work will be earned as long as you complete the work and turn it in.

All assignments will be posted on Google Classroom. All assignments will be turned in to Google Classroom or in hardcopy form to the bins provided at the high school.

If you need to reach me you can email me at [orvl\\_aduxbur@tccsa.net](mailto:orvl_aduxbur@tccsa.net) or contact me through Google Classroom. If you have a question about the reading or any worksheet, you can also contact me during my office hours on Google Classroom (through Meet) on Monday from 9am -10am & on Wednesday from 12pm-1pm (I will send out a code through Google Classroom).

Remember- If you ever need help or have a question: email or Google Classroom ... we can also set up an individual Google Meet if needed.

Below you will find a schedule of the novel readings as well as all the necessary worksheets attached. These sheets can be printed and completed or (you can complete the work on a google doc or on a piece of paper to be turned in through Google Classroom or dropped off in the bin at the high school (the front doors will be open from 10am - 12pm). Some students are completing the work and taking pictures to send me. Whatever works best for you!

#### **Week of May4-8**

1. Read The Great Families of Mythology: The House of Atreus. Take notes and then take the quiz. All readings and quiz questions are provided in Google Classroom (under Classwork) to be submitted right there.
2. Watch the Aeneid video clip and enjoy!

#### **Week of May11-15**

1. Read The Great Families of Mythology: Iphigenia Among the Taurians. Take notes and then take the quiz. All readings and quiz questions are provided in Google Classroom (under Classwork) to be submitted right there.

#### **Week of May 18-22**

1. Watch the movie Clash of the Titans (from 1981) you know the special effects are AWESOME!! This is a review of Perseus (from Miss Imber's time teaching class). There is a quiz under Classwork, you may want to look over the quiz before watching the movie so you know what you are looking for!



# The Great Families of Mythology

## The House of Atreus

*The chief importance of the story of Atreus and his descendants is that the fifth-century tragic poet Aeschylus took it for the subject of his great drama, the Oresteia, which is made up of three plays, the Agamemnon, the Libation Bearers, the Eumenides. It has no rival in Greek tragedy except the four plays of Sophocles about Oedipus and his children. Pindar in the early fifth century tells the current tale about the feast Tantalus made the gods and protests that it is not true. The punishment of Tantalus is described often, first in the Odyssey, from which I have taken it. Amphion's story, and Niobe's, I have taken from Ovid, who alone tells them in full. For Pelops' winning the chariot race I have preferred Apollodorus, of the first or second century A.D., who gives the fullest account that has come down to us. The story of Atreus' and Thyestes' crimes and all that followed them is taken from Aeschylus' Oresteia.*

The House of Atreus is one of the most famous families in mythology. Agamemnon, who led the Greeks against Troy, belonged to it. All of his immediate family, his wife Clytemnestra, his children, Iphigenia, Orestes and Electra, were as well-known as he was. His brother Menelaus was the husband of Helen, for whose sake the Trojan War was fought. It was an ill-fated house. The cause of all the misfortunes was held to be an ancestor, a King of Lydia named Tantalus, who brought upon himself a most terrible punishment by a most wicked deed. That was not the end of the matter. The evil he started went on after his death. His descendants also did wickedly and were punished. A curse seemed to hang over the family, making men sin in spite of themselves and bringing suffering and death down upon the innocent as well as the guilty.

**TANTALUS AND NIOBE** Tantalus was the son of Zeus and honored by the gods beyond all the mortal children of Zeus. They allowed him to eat at their table, to taste the nectar and ambrosia which except for him alone none but the immortals could partake of. They did more; they came to a banquet in his palace; they condescended to dine with him. In return for their favor he acted so atrociously that no poet ever tried to explain his conduct. He had his only son Pelops killed, boiled in a great cauldron, and served to the gods. Apparently he was driven by a passion of hatred against them which made him willing to sacrifice his son in order to bring upon them the horror of being cannibals. It may be, too, that he wanted to show in the most startling and shocking way possible how easy it was to deceive the awful, venerated, humbly adored divinities. In his scorn of the gods and his measureless self-confidence he never dreamed that his guests would realize what manner of food he had set before them. He was a fool. The Olympians knew. They drew back from the horrible banquet and they turned upon the criminal who had contrived it. He should be so punished, they declared, that no man to come, hearing what this man had suffered, would dare ever again to insult them. They set the arch-sinner in a pool in Hades, but whenever in his tormenting thirst he stooped to drink he could not reach the water. It disappeared, drained into the ground as he bent down. When he stood up it was there

again. Over the pool fruit trees hung heavy laden with pears, pomegranates, rosy apples, sweet figs. Each time he stretched out his hand to grasp them the wind tossed them high away out of reach. Thus he stood forever, his undying throat always athirst, his hunger in the midst of plenty never satisfied. His son Pelops was restored to life by the gods, but they had to fashion a shoulder for him out of ivory. One of the goddesses, some say Demeter, some Thetis, inadvertently had eaten of the loathsome dish and when the boy's limbs were reassembled one shoulder was wanting. This ugly story seems to have come down in its early brutal form quite unsoftened. The latter Greeks did not like it and protested against it. The poet Pindar called it a tale decked out with glittering lies against the word of truth. Let a man not speak of cannibal deeds among the blessed gods. However that might be, the rest of Pelops' life was successful. He was the only one of Tantalus' descendants not marked out by misfortune. He was happy in his marriage, although he wooed a dangerous lady who had been the cause of many deaths, the Princess Hippodamia. The reason men died for her was not her own fault, but her father's. This King had a wonderful pair of horses Ares had given him—superior, of course, to all mortal horses. He did not want his daughter to marry, and whenever a suitor came for her hand the youth was told he could race with her father for her. If the suitor's horses won, she would be his; if her father's won, the suitor must pay with his life for his defeat. In this way a number of rash young men met their death. Even so, Pelops dared. He had horses he could trust, a present from Poseidon. He won the race; but there is a story that Hippodamia had more to do with the victory than Poseidon's horses. Either she fell in love with Pelops or she felt the time had come to put a stop to that sort of racing. She bribed her father's charioteer, a man named Myrtilus, to help her. He pulled out the bolts that held the wheels of the King's chariot, and the victory was Pelops' with no trouble at all. Later, Myrtilus was killed by Pelops, cursing him as he died, and some said that this was the cause of the misfortunes that afterward followed the family. But most writers said, and certainly with better reason, that it was the wickedness of Tantalus which doomed his descendants. None of them suffered a worse doom than his daughter Niobe. And yet it seemed at first that the gods had chosen her out for good fortune as they had her brother Pelops. She was happy in her marriage. Her husband was Amphion, a son of Zeus and an incomparable musician. He and his twin brother Zethus undertook once to fortify Thebes, building a lofty wall around it. Zethus was a man of great physical strength who despised his brother's neglect of manly sports and his devotion to his art. Yet when it came to the heavy task of getting enough rocks for the wall, the gentle musician outdid the strong athlete: he drew such entrancing sounds from his lyre that the very stones were moved and followed him to Thebes. There he and Niobe ruled in entire content until she showed that the mad arrogance of Tantalus lived on in her. She held herself raised by her great prosperity above all that ordinary mortals fear and reverence. She was rich and nobly born and powerful. Seven sons had been born to her, brave and beautiful young men, and seven daughters, the fairest of the fair. She thought herself strong enough not only to deceive the gods as her father had tried to do, but to

defy them openly. She called upon the people of Thebes to worship her. "You burn incense to Leto." she said. "and what is she as compared with me? She had but two children, Apollo and Artemis. I have seven times as many. I am queen. She was a homeless wanderer until tiny Delos alone of all places on earth consented to receive her. I am happy, strong, great—too great for any men or gods, to do me harm. Make your sacrifices to me in Leto's temple, mine now, not hers." Insolent words uttered in the arrogant consciousness of power were always heard in heaven and always punished. Apollo and Artemis glided swiftly to Thebes from Olympus, the archer god and the divine huntress, and shooting with deadly aim they struck down all of Niobe's sons and daughters. She saw them die with anguish too great for expression. Beside those bodies so lately young and strong, she sank down motionless in stony grief, dumb as a stone and her heart like a stone within her. Only her tears flowed and could not stop. She was changed into a stone which forever. Night and day, was wet with tears. To Pelops two sons were born, Atreus and Thyestes. The inheritance of evil descended to them in full force. Thyestes fell in love with his brother's wife and succeeded in making her false to her marriage vows. Atreus found out and swore that Thyestes should pay as no man ever had. He killed his brother's two little children, had them cut limb from limb, boiled, and served up to their father. When he had eaten— Poor wretch, when she had learned the deed abhorrent, He cried a great cry, falling back—spewed out that flesh, called down upon that house a doom Intolerable, the banquet board sent crashing. Atreus was King. Thyestes had no power. The atrocious crime was not avenged in Atreus' lifetime, but his children and his children's children suffered.

**AGAMEMNON AND HIS CHILDREN** On Olympus the gods were met in fun assembly. The father of Gods and Men began first to speak. Zeus was sorely vexed at the mean way men perpetually acted toward the gods, blaming the divine powers for- what their own wickedness brought about, and that too even when the Olympians had tried to hold them back. "You all know about Aegisthus, whom Agamemnon's son Orestes has slain," Zeus said, "how he loved the wife of Agamemnon and killed him on his return from Troy. Certainly no blame attaches to us from that. We warned him by the mouth of Hermes. 'The death of the son of Atreus will be avenged by Orestes.' Those were Hermes' very words, but not even such friendly advice could restrain Aegisthus, who now pays the final penalty." This passage in the Iliad is the first mention of the House of Atreus. In the Odyssey when Odysseus reached the land of the Phaeacians and was telling them about his descent to Hades and the ghosts he encountered, he said that, of them all, the spirit of Agamemnon had most moved him to pity. He had begged him to say how he died and the chief told him that he was killed ingloriously as he sat at table, struck down as one butchers an ox. "It was Aegisthus," he said, "with the aid of my accursed wife. He invited me to his house and as I feasted he killed me. My men too. You have seen many die in single combat or in battle, but never one who died as we did, by the wine bowl and the loaded tables in a hall where the floor flowed with blood. Cassandra's death-shriek rang in my ears as she fell. Clytemnestra slew her over my body. I tried to life up my hands for her, but they fell back. I was

dying then." That was the way the story was first told: Agamemnon had been killed by his wife's lover. It was a sordid tale. How long it held the stage we do not know, but the next account we have, centuries later, written by Aeschylus about 450 B.C., is very different. It is a great story now of implacable vengeance and tragic passions and inevitable doom. The motive for Agamemnon's death is no longer the guilty love of a man and a woman, but a mother's love for a daughter killed by her own father, and a wife's determination to avenge that death by killing her husband. Aegisthus fades; he is hardly in the picture. The wife of Agamemnon, Clytemnestra, has all the foreground to herself. The two sons of Atreus, Agamemnon, the commander of the Greek forces at Troy, and Menelaus, the husband of Helen ended their lives very differently. Menelaus, at first the less successful, was notably prosperous in his later years. He lost his wife for a time, but after the fall of Troy he got her back. His ship was driven all the way to Egypt by the storm Athena sent to the Greek fleet, but finally he reached home safely and lived happily with Helen ever after. It was far otherwise with his brother. When Troy fell, Agamemnon was the most fortunate of the victorious chieftains. His ship came safely through the storm which wrecked or drove to distant countries so many others. He entered his city not only safe after peril by land and sea, but triumphant, the proud conqueror of Troy. His home was expecting him. Word had been sent that he had landed, and the townspeople joined in a great welcome to him. It seemed that he was of all men the most gloriously successful, after a brilliant victory back with his own again, peace and prosperity before him. But in the crowd that greeted him with thanksgiving for his return there were anxious faces, and words of dark foreboding passed from one man to another. "He will find evil happenings," they muttered. "Things once were right there in the palace, but no more. That house could tell a tale if it could speak." Before the palace the elders of the city were gathered to do their king honor, but they too were in distress with a still heavier anxiety, a darker foreboding, than that which weighed upon the doubtful crowd. As they waited they talked in low tones of the past. They were old and it was almost more real to them than the present. They recalled the sacrifice of Iphigenia, lovely, innocent young thing, trusting her father utterly, and then confronted with the altar the cruel knives, and only pitiless faces around her. As the old men spoke, it was like a vivid memory to them, as if they themselves had been there, as if they had heard with her the father she loved telling men to lift her and hold her over the altar to slay her. He had killed her, not willingly, but driven by the Army impatient for good winds to sail to Troy. And yet the matter was not as simple as that. He yielded to the Army because the old wickedness in generation after generation of his race was bound to work out in evil for him too. The elders knew the curse that hung over the house. . . . The thirst for blood ;It is in their flesh. Before the old wound Can be healed, there is fresh blood flowing. Ten years had passed since Iphigenia died, but the results of her death reached through to the present. The elders were wise. They had learned that every sin causes fresh sin; every wrong brings another in its train. A menace from the dead girl hung over her father in this hour of triumph. And yet perhaps, they said to each

other, perhaps it would not take actual shape for a time. So they tried to find some bit of hope, but at the bottom of their hearts they knew and dared not say aloud that vengeance was already there in the palace waiting for Agamemnon. It had waited ever since the Queen, Clytemnestra, had come back from Aulis, where she had seen her daughter die. She did not keep faith with her husband who had killed her child and his; she took a lover and all the people knew it. They knew too that she had not sent him away when the news of Agamemnon's return reached her. He was still there with her. What was being planned behind the palace doors? As they wondered and feared, a tumult of noise reached them, chariots rolling, voices shouting. Into the courtyard swept the royal car with the King and beside him a girl, very beautiful, but very strange-looking. Attendants and townspeople were following them and as they came to a halt the doors of the great house swung open and the Queen appeared. The King dismounted, praying aloud, "O Victory now mine, be mine forever." His wife advanced to meet him. Her face was radiant, her head high. She knew that every man there except Agamemnon was aware of her infidelity, but she faced them all and told them with smiling lips that even in their presence she must at such a moment speak out the great love she bore her husband and the agonizing grief she had suffered in his absence. Then in words of exultant joy she bade him welcome. "You are our safety," she told him, "our sure defense. The sight of you is dear as land after storm to the sailor, as a gushing stream to a thirsty wayfarer." He answered her, but with reserve, and he turned to go into the palace. First he pointed to the girl in the chariot. She was Cassandra, Priam's daughter, he told his wife—the Army's gift to him, the flower of all the captive women. Let Clytemnestra see to her and treat her well. With that he entered the house and the doors closed behind the husband and the wife. They would never open again for both of them. The crowd had gone. Only the old men still waited uneasily before the silent building and the blank doors. The captive princess caught their attention and they looked curiously at her. They had heard of her strange fame as a prophetess whom no one ever believed and yet whose prophecies were always proved true by the event. She turned a terrified face to them. Where had she been brought, she asked them wildly—What house was this? They answered soothingly that it was where the son of Atreus lived. She cried out, "No! It is a house God hates, where men are killed and the floor is red with blood." The old men stole frightened glances at each other. Blood, men killed, that was what they too were thinking of, the dark past with its promise of more darkness. How could she, a stranger and a foreigner, know that past? "I hear children crying," said wailed, ... Crying for wounds that bleed. A father feasted—and the flesh his children. Thyestes and his sons . . . Where had she heard of that? More wild words poured from her lips. It seemed as if she had seen what had happened in that house through the years, as if she had stood by while death followed death each a crime and all working together to produce more crime. Then from the past she turned to the future. She cried out that on that very clay two more deaths would be added to the list, one her own. "I will endure to die," she said, as she turned away and moved toward the palace. They tried to hold her back from that

ominous house, but she would not have it; she entered and the doors closed forever on her, too. The silence that followed when she had gone was suddenly and terribly broken. A cry rang out, the voice of a man in agony: "God! I am struck! My death blow—" and silence again. The old men, terrified, bewildered, huddled together. That was the King's voice. What should they do? "Break into the palace? Quick, be quick," they urged each other. "We must know." But there was no need now of any violence. The doors opened and on the threshold stood the Queen. Dark red stains were on her dress, her hands, her face. Yet she herself looked unshaken, strongly sure of herself. She proclaimed for all to hear what had been done. "Here lies my husband dead, struck down justly by my hand," she said. It was his blood that stained her dress and face and she was glad. He fell and as he gasped, his blood spouted and splashed me with a spray, a dew of death, sweet to me as heaven's sweet raindrops when the corn-land buds. She saw no reason to explain her act or excuse it. She was not a murderer in her own eyes, she was an executioner. She had punished a murderer, the murderer of his own child, who cared no more than if a beast should die when flocks are plenty in the fleecy fold. But he slew his daughter—slew her for a charm against the Thracian winds. Her lover followed her and stood beside her—Aegisthus, the youngest child of Thyestes, born after that horrible feast. He had no quarrel with Agamemnon himself, but Atreus. Who had had the children slaughtered and placed on the banquet table for their father, was dead and vengeance could not reach him. Therefore his son must pay the penalty. The two, the Queen and her lover, had reason to know that wickedness cannot be ended by wickedness. The dead body of the man they had just killed was a proof. But in their triumph they did not stop to think that this death, too, like all the others, would surely bring evil in its train. "No more blood for you and me," Clytemnestra said to Aegisthus. "We are lords here now. We two will order all things well." It was a baseless hope. Iphigenia had been one of three children. The other two were a girl and a boy, Electra and Orestes. Aegisthus would certainly have killed the boy if Orestes had been there, but he had been sent away to a trusted friend. The girl Aegisthus disdained to kill; he only made her utterly wretched in every way possible until her whole life was concentrated in one hope, that Orestes would come back and avenge their father. That vengeance—what would it be? Over and over she asked herself this. Aegisthus, of course, must die, but to kill him alone would never satisfy justice. His crime was less black than another's. What then? Could it be justice that a son should take a mother's life to avenge a father's death? So she brooded through the bitter days of the long years that followed, while Clytemnestra and Aegisthus ruled the land. As the boy grew to manhood he saw even more clearly than she the terrible situation. It was a son's duty to kill his father's murderers, a duty that came before all others. But a son who killed his mother was abhorrent to gods and to men. A most sacred obligation was bound up with a most atrocious crime. He who wanted only to do right was so placed that he must choose between two hideous wrongs. He must be a traitor to his father or he must be the murderer of his mother. In his agony of doubt he journeyed to Delphi to ask the oracle to help him, and Apollo spoke to



him in clear words bidding him, Slay the two who slew. Atone for death by death. Shed blood for old blood shed. And Orestes knew that he must work out the curse of his house, exact vengeance and pay with his own ruin. He went to the home he had not seen since he was a little boy, and with him went his cousin and friend Pylades. The two had grown up together and were devoted in a way far beyond usual friendship. Electra, with no idea that they were actually arriving, was yet on the watch. Her life was spent in watching for the brother who would bring her the only thing life held for her. One day at her father's tomb she made an offering to the dead and prayed, "O Father, guide Orestes to his home." suddenly he was beside her, claiming her as his sister, showing her as proof the cloak he wore, the work of her hands which she had wrapped him in when he went away. But she did not need a proof. She cried, "Your face is my father's face." And she poured out to him all the love no one had wanted from her through the wretched years: — All, all is yours, The love loved my father who is dead, The love I might have given to my mother, And my poor sister cruelly doomed to die. All yours now, only yours. He was too sunk in his own thought, too intent upon the thing he faced, to answer her or even to listen. He broke in upon her words to tell her what filled his mind so that nothing else could reach it: the terrible words of the oracle of Apollo. Orestes spoke with horror: — He told me to appease the angry dead. That who hears not when his dead cry to him, For such there is no home, no refuge anywhere. No altar fire burns for him, no friend greets him. He dies alone and vile. O God, shall I believe Such oracles? But yet—but yet The deed is to be done and I must do it. The three made their plans. Orestes and Pylades were to go to the palace claiming to be the bearers of a message that Orestes had died. It would be joyful news to Clytemnestra and Aegisthus who had always feared what he might do, and they would certainly want to see the messengers. Once in the palace the brother and his friend could trust to their own swords and the complete surprise of their attack. They were admitted and Electra waited. That had been her bitter part all through her life. Then the doors opened slowly and a woman came out and stood tranquilly on the steps. It was Clytemnestra. She had been there only a moment or so when a slave rushed out screaming, "Treason! Our master! Treason!" He saw Clytemnestra and gasped, "Orestes—alive— here." She knew then. Everything was clear to her, what had happened and what was still to come. Sternly she bade the slave bring her a battle-ax. She was resolved to fight for her life, but the weapon was no sooner in her hand than she changed her mind. A man came through the doors, his sword red with blood, whose blood she knew and she knew too who held the sword. Instantly she saw a surer way to defend herself than with an ax. She was the mother of the man before her. "Stop, my son," she said. "Look—my breast. Your heavy head dropped on it and you slept, oh, many a time. Your baby mouth, where never a tooth was, sucked the milk, and so you grew—" Orestes cried, "O Pylades, she is my mother. May I spare—" His friend told him solemnly: No. Apollo had commanded. The god must be obeyed. "I will obey," Orestes said. "You—follow me." Clytemnestra knew that she had lost. She said calmly, "It seems, my son, that you will kill your mother." He motioned her into the house.

She went and he followed her. When he came out again those waiting in the courtyard did not need to be told what he had done. Asking no questions they watched him, their master now, with compassion. He seemed not to see them; he was looking at a horror beyond them. Stammering words came from his lips: "The man is dead. I am not guilty there. An adulterer. He had to die. [Clytemnestra and Orestes] Illustration But she—Did she do it or did she not? O you, my friends. I say I killed my mother—yet not without reason—she was vile and she killed my father and God hated her." His eyes were fixed always on that unseen horror. He screamed, "Look! Look! Women there. Black, all black, and long hair like snakes." They told him eagerly there were no women. "It is only your fancy. Oh, do not fear." "You do not see them?" he cried. "No fancy. I—I see them. My mother has sent them. They crowd around me and their eyes drip blood. Oh, let me go." He rushed away, alone except for those invisible companions. When next he came to his country, years had passed. He had been a wanderer in many lands, always pursued by the same terrible shapes. He was worn with suffering, but in his loss of everything men prize there was a gain too. "I have been taught by misery," he said. He had learned that no crime was beyond atonement, that even he, defiled by a mother's murder, could be made clean again. He traveled to Athens, sent there by Apollo to plead his case before Athena. He had come to beg for help; nevertheless, in his heart there was confidence. Those who desire to be purified cannot be refused and the black stain of his guilt had grown fainter and fainter through his years of lonely wandering and pain. He believed that by now it had faded away. "I can speak to Athena with pure lips," he said. The goddess listened to his plea. Apollo was beside him. "It is I who am answerable for what he did," he said. "He killed at my command." The dread forms of his pursuers, the Erinyes, the Furies, were arrayed against him, but Orestes listened calmly to their demand for vengeance. "I, not Apollo, was guilty of my mother's murder," he said, "but I have been cleansed of my guilt." These were words never spoken before by any of the House of Atreus. The killers of that race had never suffered from their guilt and sought to be made clean. Athena accepted the plea. She persuaded the avenging goddesses also to accept it, and with this new law of mercy established they themselves were changed. From the Furies of frightful aspect they became the Benignant Ones, the Eumenides, protectors of the suppliant. They acquitted Orestes, and with the words of acquittal the spirit of evil which had haunted his house for so long was banished. Orestes went forth from Athena's tribunal a free man. Neither he nor any descendant of his would ever again be driven into evil by the irresistible power of the past. The curse of the House of Atreus was ended.

## IPHIGENIA AMONG THE TAURIANS

*I have taken this story entirely from two plays of Euripides, the fifth-century tragic poet. No other writer tells the story in full. The happy end brought about by a divinity, the deus ex machina, is a common device with Euripides alone of the three tragic poets. According to our ideas it is a weakness; and certainly it is unnecessary in this case, where the same end could have been secured by merely omitting the headwind. Athena's appearance, in point of fact, harms a good plot. A possible reason for this lapse on the part of one of the greatest poets the world has known is that the Athenians, who were suffering greatly at the time from the war with Sparta, were eager for miracles and that Euripides chose to humor them.*

The Greeks, as has been said, did not like stories in which human beings were offered up, whether to appease angry gods or to make Mother Earth bear a good harvest or to bring about anything whatsoever. They thought about such sacrifices as we do. They were abominable. Any deity who demanded them was thereby proved to be evil, and, as the poet Euripides said, "If gods do evil then they are not gods." It was inevitable therefore that another story should grow up about the sacrifice of Iphigenia at Aulis. According to the old account, she was killed because one of the wild animals Artemis loved had been slain by the Greeks and the guilty hunters could win back the goddess's favor only by the death of a young girl. But to the later Greeks this was to slander Artemis. Never would such a demand have been made by the lovely lady of the woodland and the forest, who was especially the protector of little helpless creatures. So gentle is she, Artemis the holy, To dewy youth, to tender nurslings, The young of all that roam the meadow, Of all who live within the forest. So another ending was given to the story. When the Greek soldiers at Aulis came to get Iphigenia where she was waiting for the summons to death, her mother beside her, she forbade Clytemnestra to go with her to the altar. "It is better so for me as well as for you," she said. The mother was left alone. At last she saw a man approaching. He was running and she wondered why anyone should hasten to bring her the tidings he must bear. But he cried out to her, "Wonderful news!" Her daughter had not been sacrificed, he said. That was certain, but exactly what had happened to her no one knew. As the priest was about to strike her, anguish troubled every man there and all bowed their heads. But a cry came from the priest and they looked up to see a marvel hardly to be believed. The girl had vanished, but on the ground beside the altar lay a deer, its throat cut. "This is Artemis' doing," the priest proclaimed. "She will not have her altar stained with human blood. She has herself furnished the victim and she receives the sacrifice." "I tell you, O Queen," the messenger said, "I was there and the thing happened thus. Clearly your child has been borne away to the gods." But Iphigenia had not been carried to heaven. Artemis had taken her to the land of the Taurians (today the Crimea) on the shore of the Unfriendly Sea—a fierce people whose savage custom it was to sacrifice to the goddess any Greek found in the country. Artemis took care that Iphigenia

should be safe; she made her priestess of her temple. But as such it was her terrible task to conduct the sacrifices, not actually herself kill her countrymen, but consecrate them by long-established rites and deliver them over to those who would kill them. She had been serving the goddess thus for many years when a Greek galley put in at the inhospitable shore, not under stern necessity, storm-driven, but voluntarily. And yet it was known everywhere what the Taurians did to the Greeks they captured. An overwhelmingly strong motive made the ship anchor there. From it in the early dawn two young men came and stealthily found their way to the temple. Both were clearly of exalted birth; they looked like the sons of kings, but the face of one was deeply marked with lines of pain. It was he who whispered to his friend, "Don't you think this is the temple, Pylades?" "Yes, Orestes," the other answered. "It must be that bloodstained spot." Orestes here and his faithful friend? What were they doing in a country so perilous to Greeks? Did this happen before or after Orestes had been absolved of the guilt of his mother's murder? It was some time after. Although Athena had pronounced him clear of guilt, in this story all the Erinyes hadn't accepted the verdict. Some of them continued to pursue him, or else Orestes thought that they did. Even the acquittal pronounced by Athena had not restored to him his peace of mind. His pursuers were fewer, but they were still with him. In his despair he went to Delphi. If he could not find help there, in the holiest place of Greece, he could find it nowhere. Apollo's oracle gave him hope, but only at the risk of his life. He must go to the Taurian county, the Delphipriestess said, and bring away the sacred image of Artemis from her temple. When he had set it up in Athens he would at last be healed and at peace. He would never again see terrible forms haunting him. It was a most perilous enterprise, but everything for him depended on it. At whatever cost he was bound to make the attempt and Pylades would not let him make it alone. When the two reached the temple they saw at once that they must wait for the night before doing anything. There was no chance by day of getting into the place unseen. They retreated to keep under cover in some dark lonely spot. Iphigenia, sorrowful as always, was going through her round of duties to the goddess when she was interrupted by a messenger who told her that the two young men, Greeks, had been taken prisoners and were to be sacrificed at once. He had been sent on to bid her make all ready for the sacred rites. The horror which she had felt so often seized her again. She shuddered at the thought, terribly familiar though it was, of the hideous bloodshed, of the agony of the victims. But this time a new thought came as well. She asked herself "Would a goddess command such things? Would she take pleasure in sacrificial murder? I do not believe it." she told herself. "It is the men of this land who are bloodthirsty and they lay their own guilt on the gods." As she stood thus, deep in meditation, the captives were led in. She sent the attendants into the temple to make ready for them, and when the three were alone together she spoke to the young men. Where was their home, she asked, the home which they would never see again? She could not keep her tears back and they wondered to see her so compassionate. Orestes told her gently not to grieve for them. When they came to the land they had faced what might

befall them. But she continued questioning. Were they brothers? Yes, in love, Orestes replied, but not by birth. What were their names? "Why ask that of a man about to die?" Orestes said "Will you not even tell me what your city is?" she asked: "I come from Mycenae," Orestes answered, "that city once so prosperous." "The King of it was certainly prosperous." Iphigenia said. His name was Agamemnon," "I do not know about him," Orestes said abruptly. "Let us end this talk." "No—no. Tell me of him." she begged. "Dead," said Orestes. "His own wife killed him. Ask me no more." "One thing more," she cried. "Is she—the wife—alive?" "No!" Orestes told her. "Her son killed her." The three looked at each other in silence. "It was just," Iphigenia whispered shuddering; just—yet evil, horrible." She tried to collect herself. Then she asked, "Do they ever speak of the daughter who was sacrificed?" "Only as one speaks of the dead," Orestes said. Iphigenia's face changed. She looked eager, alert. "I have thought of a plan to help both you and me." She said. "Would you be willing to carry a letter to my friends in Mycenae if I can save you?" "No, not I," Orestes said. "But my friend will. He came here only for my sake. Give him your letter and kill me." "So be it," Iphigenia answered. "Wait while I fetch the letter." She hurried away and Pylades turned to Orestes. "I will not leave you here to die alone," he told him. "All will call me a coward if I do so. No. I love you—and I fear what men may say." "I gave my sister to you to protect." Orestes said. "Electra is your wife. You cannot abandon her. As for me— it is no misfortune for me to die." As they spoke to each other in hurried whispers, Iphigenia entered with a letter in her hand. "I win persuade the King. He will let my messenger go, I am sure. But first—" she turned to Pylades—"I will tell you what is in the letter so that even if through some mischance you lose your belongings, you will carry my message in your memory and bear it to my friends." "A good plan," Pylades said. "To whom am I to bear it?" "To Orestes," Iphigenia said. "Agamemnon's son," She was looking away, her thoughts were in Mycenae. She did not see the startled gaze the two men fixed on her. "You must say to him," she went on, "that she who was sacrificed at Aulis sends this message. She is not dead—" "Can the dead return to life?" Orestes cried. "Be still," Iphigenia said with anger. "The time is short. Say to him, 'Brother, bring me back home. Free me from this murderous priesthood, this barbarous land. Mark well, young man, the name is Orestes.'" "Oh God, God," Orestes groaned. "It is not credible," "I am speaking to you, not to him," Iphigenia said to Pylades. "You will remember the name?" "Yes," Pylades answered, "but it will not take me long to deliver your message. Orestes, here is a letter. I bring it from your sister." "And I accept it," Orestes said, "with a happiness words cannot utter." The next moment he held Iphigenia in his arms. But she freed herself. "I do not know," she cried. "How can I know? What proof is there?" "Do you remember the last bit of embroidery you did before you went to Aulis?" Orestes asked. "I will describe it to you. Do you remember your chamber in the palace? I will tell you what was there." He convinced her and she threw herself into his arms. She sobbed out, "Dearest! You are my dearest, my darling, my dear one. A baby, a little baby, when I left you. More than marvelous is this thing that has come to me." "Poor girl," Orestes said, "mated to sorrow, as I

have been. And you might have killed your own brother." "Oh, horrible," Iphigenia cried. "But I have brought myself to do horrible things. These hands might have slain you. And even now—how can I save you? What god, what man, will help us?" Pylades had been waiting in silence, sympathetic, but impatient. He thought the hour for action had emphatically arrived. "We can talk," he reminded the brother and sister, "when once we are out of this dreadful place." "Suppose we kill the King," Orestes proposed eagerly, but Iphigenia rejected the idea with indignation. King Thoas had been kind to her. She would not harm him. At that moment a plan flashed into her mind, perfect, down to the last detail. Hurriedly she explained it and the young men agreed at once. All three then entered the temple. After a few moments Iphigenia came out bearing an image in her arms. A man was just stepping across the threshold of the temple enclosure. Iphigenia cried out, "O King, halt. Stay where you are." In astonishment he asked her what was happening. She told him that the two men he had sent her for the goddess were not pure. They were tainted, vile; they had killed their mother, and Artemis was angry. "I am taking the image to the seashore to purify it," she said. "And there too I will cleanse the men from their pollution. Only after that can the sacrifice be made. All that I do must be done in solitude. Let the captives be brought forth and proclaim to the city that no one may draw near to me." "Do as you wish," Thoas answered, "and take all the time you need. He watched the procession move off, Iphigenia leading with the Image, Orestes and Pylades following, and attendants carrying vessels for the purifying rite. Iphigenia was praying aloud: "Maiden and Queen, daughter of Zeus and Leto, you shall dwell where purity is, and we shall be happy." They passed out of sight on their way to the inlet where Orestes' ship lay. It seemed as if Iphigenia's plan could not fail. And yet it did. She was able indeed to make the attendants leave her alone with her brother and Pylades before they reached the sea. They stood in awe of her and they did just what she bade them. Then the three made all haste and boarded the ship and the crew pushed it off. But at the mouth of the harbor where it opened out to the sea a heavy wind blowing landward struck them and they could make no headway against it. They were driven back in spite of all they could do. The vessel seemed rushing on the rocks. The men of the country by now were aroused to what was being done. Some watched to seize the ship when it was stranded; others ran with the news to King Thoas. Furious with anger, he was hurrying from the temple to capture and put to death the impious strangers and the treacherous priestess, when suddenly above him in the air a radiant form appeared—manifestly a goddess. The King started back and awe checked his steps. "Stop, O King," the Presence said. "I am Athena. This is my word to you. Let the ship go. Even now Poseidon is calming the winds and waves to give it safe passage. Iphigenia and the others are acting under divine guidance. Dismiss your anger." Thoas answered submissively, "Whatever is your pleasure, Goddess, shall be done." And the watchers on the shore saw the wind shift, the waves subside, and the Greek ship leave the harbor, flying under full sail to the sea beyond.