

EURIPIDES'
"ION"

Written between 414 and 412 BCE

Translated
by
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Dramatis Personae:

Ion

Servants to Apollo's temple and to Ion

(silent)

Hermes

Queen Kreusa of Athens

King Xuthus of Athens

(Husband of Kreusa)

Old Man

(Servant of Kreusa)

Slave of Kreusa

Priestess of Apollo

Goddess Athena

Chorus of Kreusa's maids

Servants of Xuthus

(silent)

Before Apollo's temple.

Stage Left, rocky caves above which one sees a dense bush of daphne. To the Right and deep into the distance, the mountain Parnassos. Lower to the front, a row of statues of swans, leading to the temple's entrance.

Early morning.

Enter Hermes holding a staff with two snakes entwined at its uppermost tip. Wings on his head and feet.

Hermes:

The great bronze shoulders of Atlas hold strong the huge vault above, the old home of the old gods. Atlas once consorted with one of the many, many goddesses and, from that union, Maia was born. Maia, in turn, turned to mighty Zeus and so, I was born.

Hermes, the servant to the immortals!

I have come here, to the land of Delphi, where Phoebos Apollo sits upon the world's navel and declares to the mortals their present and their future. He's always been doing that.

Now, there's a town in Greece –not the worst of them- that took its name from a goddess, the goddess Pallas Athena, she who holds a golden spear. And it was in that town, Athens, where Apollo forced himself upon Kreusa, Erechtheus' daughter.

10

This happened there (*points at the mountain behind him*), at the place called The Rock of Pallas Athena at the Northern foot of it, at the very edge of the city. The Lords call that place "Long Rocks."

Kreusa's father, of course, knew none of this because that's how Apollo wanted it, so the poor woman kept her heavy womb a secret, that is until the time of the birth arrived. Kreusa gave birth in the house but then, she took the baby, placed it in a small, deep and cute cradle and took it to the cave in which Apollo had raped her and there she left the baby to die.

20

As well, she kept Erechthonius' tradition and that of her own ancestors because Athena gave earth-born Erechthonius two snakes when she handed him to the daughters of Aglauros to look after. As for the snakes, it's an old custom of the house of Erechtheus to raise their children in cribs adorned with platted golden snakes.

And so, Kreusa placed around the neck of the child an ornament just like this one (*indicates the tip of his staff*) and whatever else she had, certain that it would die. Then she went away.

Now, my brother, Phoebos Apollo here, (*indicates the temple*) has given me the following order: "My brother, go to the people of the famous city, Athens –you know, the one protected by Athena, Zeus' daughter – go to the cave where Kreusa left the newborn baby pick it up, swaddles and all and bring it here, to Delphi, my seat of oracles. It's my baby, as you well know, so bring it here and put it by the temple's entrance. Then leave the rest to me."

That I did. Apollo is my brother after all! I took the child and its basket and placed it where he said, at the temple's entrance. Oh, I first opened the blankets a bit and left them open, so that it would be obvious to anyone who came across the basket, that there was a child in there.

Now, just as the sun was climbing onto his chariot for his daily journey the prophetess arrived at the temple. She took one look at the baby and wondered just how arrogant humans had become, abandoning an illegitimate child at the god's house. First she thought of taking the child further away from the altars and leaving it on the road but the hard feeling in her heart soon softened (aided of course, in no small measure by Phoebos) and so the child was not thrown on the road. She took it herself and raised it without knowing it was the god's child. Nor did she know who the mother was.

50

Not even the child knew who his parents were and so, while he was young he just played joyfully around the altars.

When he became a man, however, all the gods decided to make him the guard of all of Apollo's gold and the trusted treasurer of everything. Still, the young man, even in these palaces of the gods he lives a humble and honourable life.

As for Kreusa who bore the child in secrecy, she married Xuthus for this reason: The Athenians and the Chalcodontides, who live in Euboa began a fierce war against each other. Xuthus fought on the side of the Athenians and, at the end of the war, they gave him Kreusa to be his wife, in gratitude, even though he was a foreigner. Xuthus, in fact, was an Achaian –Aeolos' son and grandson to Zeus.

Now, the couple being married for many years but still without a child, came here, to Apollo's temple with one strong wish: to have children. And it doesn't look as if Apollo has forgotten his son and so he's helping them to achieve this strong wish of theirs which will happen like this: When Xuthus will enter the temple Apollo will give him his own son but convince him the boy is his... i.e., Xuthus' and that it was he, Xuthus, who had fathered him.

And so, when the young man goes to his mother's home, he'll be recognised by Kreusa and he'll receive the security that comes with a parental home and Apollo's rape will soon be forgotten. The boy will be called Ion by all the Greeks and his name will be given to many countries throughout Asia.

80

But now let me disappear into these daphne-covered caves to find out what has been ordained for the boy. I can see Apollo's son coming out to adorn the temple's columns with splendid branches of daphne. Oh, and let me be the first to announce that the gods will name him Ion.

Exit Hermes.

Enter Ion from among the bushes. He carries a bow and arrow and a quiver with arrows, and branches of daphne tied with ribbons to make a broom. On his head he wears a garland of daphne with ribbons again.

With him come some of the temple's servants, one of whom carries a golden water urn which he leaves behind for Ion who will later need it to sprinkle water onto the floor.

Ion: (*Declaiming seriously*)

The four-horse radiant chariot and the sun that lights the earth and scatters the stars into the sacred darkness are here.

And there (*indicating the mountain*) through Parnassos' pristine peaks he shines his brilliant light of yet another day's cycle for all the mortals.

90

And from dry Smyrna, too, the smoke rises to the roofs of the temples of Apollo.

And on the holy tripod sits Pythia, the priestess and gives her prophecies to the Greeks as they are sung in her ear by Apollo.

(*indicating his servants*) And you, priests of Apollo go to the Castalian streams and there, in its clear freshness, wash before you come back here at the temple.

And in your mouth let there be only words of virtue.

And when you utter your prophecies, you make sure that the words you address to those who have come to receive them, are exactly those which the god put into your mind.

Exit attendants.

100

And we, (*indicating himself and his servants*) since we have known how to care for this temple ever since we were very young, we will clean it with these beautifully bound holy branches.

And we shall clean the sacred floor with sprinklings of holy water.

And we shall use our bow and arrow to send away the birds that foul the sacred offerings.

We have no father nor mother and so, we serve Apollo's temple because he it is who has given us nurture.

He begins to sweep the floor around the temple's door, at times sprinkling it with water from the "golden" water urn.

110

You too, fresh branch of mountain daphne are the god's servant.

Come and sweep the entrance of his temple.

Come from the immortal gardens where the fresh waters of the holy springs ever moisten the god's ground, ever rushing, never ending, ever refreshing.

120

We sweep the holy ground all day long with adoration, all day long every day from the moment the un begins to emerge with his fast wings.

Come, come, come, bless you son of Leto!

Apollo, my Phoebos! It's a grand pleasure for me to serve you here at your palace where your every prophecy comes true.

130

My work is glorious because my hands work for gods and not for mere mortals.

Nor do I get tired, nor do I get exhausted since Phoebos is my parent and my father.

I bless him that he nurtures me and I call him father, Phoebos my father, Phoebos my benefactor here in his temple.

140

Glory, O glory, Joy and Glory

To you eternally o son of Leto!

It's time now to finish with this daphne broom and to use the golden urn and sprinkle Castalia's crystalline water. Me whose bed is free from sin.

150

May I continue to serve Phoebos Apollo like this for ever but if I don't, may I be taken by a good-hearted Fate.

Bird noises above distract his attention. Angrily:

Look, look there!

Here they are, the birds from Parnassos. They've left their nests and they're here!

He takes up his bow and an arrow and prepares to shoot.

No, don't come here! I told you not to come near the gates nor at the golden temples.

You! Eagle! Zeus' herald, whose beak is stronger than all the other birds! I'll get you with my arrow!

160

Ha! And here's another one. A swan is approaching the temple this time.

Hey, Swan! Why don't you take your red feet and go elsewhere because, even though your song is as sweet as Apollo's lyre, my arrow won't miss you!

Go! Fly off to the lake of Delos! Believe me or else your songs will turn bloody.

170

Ah! Look! What is this other bird?

Have you come to build a nest under the temple's gable?

Shoo! Shoo! Or else the song you'll hear will be from my bow and arrow.

Go on! Can you not hear me? Go off to the streams of Alfeios to deliver your eggs or by the sides of the Isthmus.

I don't want to see the golden gifts in the temple be messed up nor do I want to see Apollo's altars fouled.

Still, I'm reluctant to kill you because you deliver to the humans the messages of the gods.

180

But I better finish up here all the tasks I owe Phoebos. May I never cease working for him.

While Ion goes about "finishing up" the chorus enters. They are Kreusa's servants. They are either separated into two groups where the leader of each speaks or all speak alternately.

Chorus:

No, sacred Athens is not the only city where the streets and our gods' temples are graced with columns! Look here! See? Here too is this temple of Loxias Apollo, son of Leto where the sun shines the brilliant brow of his twin face.

(Indicating the pediment high on the temple)

190

Look! Look up there, dear! See the Lernaian Hydra killed by Hercules, the son of Zeus with his golden sickle?

200

Chorus:

I see; and I can also see near him yet another man who holds the blazing torch – is he the shield-lover, Iolaos the man who shares the same burdens as Hercules, the man who's being talked about on our weaves?

Chorus:

And look there! That hero upon the flying horse who cuts off three-bodied Chimera's life, the bitch whose every breath was a flame.

Chorus: *(She spins about for a moment)*

I let my gaze fall where it may –everywhere- Ah! Look there the great battle of the Giants drawn on the stone walls.

Chorus:

Yes, and oh, girls, look this way!

Chorus:

Yes, There's Pallas Athena shaking her Gorgon-painted shield at Encelaus?

210

Chorus:

Yes. I see her. She is indeed Pallas Athena, my goddess.

Chorus:

And there, look the thunderbolt, a flame on either end and Zeus' fearsome hand casting it from the sky!

Chorus:

I see him yes and with his fire he burns Mimantas.

And Bachus too, with his peace-making staff, weaved with ivy, strikes dead another Giant.

220

Chorus: *(To Ion)*

Hey you there! Can we, pale-footed women, cross over into the holy temple?

Ion:

No, no stranger may do so.

Chorus:

Well can I find out anything from you?

Ion:

Ask, what is it you want to know?

Chorus:

Is it true that the Earth's navel is inside Apollo's temple?

Ion:

It's all covered with ribbons and a whole lot of Gorgons all around it.

Chorus:

Yes, so I heard...

Ion:

If you burned the honey bread and have some question to ask of Apollo you may enter but you'd need to sacrifice sheep if you want to go deeper into the temple.

Chorus:

I understand. I won't trample on the god's laws. I'll just stand out here and watch the goings on from here.

230

Ion:

May your eyes see what is proper.

Chorus:

Our mistress gave us permission to look around here, in the god's precincts.

Ion:

Whose house do you serve?

Chorus:

My masters' roofs are in Athens. That's where they have their palaces. Ah, but here's my mistress.
Enter Kreusa, royally dressed, heading for the temple. Ion watches her with interest. She shows dignity and demeanour, though her eyes are lowered and with tears.

Ion:

Lady, from your dignified manners and dignified air I can easily sense who you are. One can work out a great deal about a mortal simply by appearance and you are a well-born woman.

240

Your lowered eyes and your gentle cheeks, covered with tears, though, make me wonder. What thoughts bring you to this temple, lady? This is a place where others come with joy to see the precincts of the god, why spill tears here?

Kreusa:

Friend, your observation about my tears does not declare you an ill-mannered man. They have covered my cheeks because when I saw this house of Apollo, my mind stirred up old memories.

250

It wondered back to my country, even though I am here.

(To the chorus) Dearest friends, how wretched we women are! What sins the gods commit! But what can we do? To whom can we turn for justice once the gods declared our mortal fate?

She sighs

Ion:

What secret sigh pains you, lady?

Kreusa:

Nothing... I've calmed down now. I've shot my arrow too rashly. Let none of this concern you.

Ion:

Who are you? Where are you from? Who is your father? By what name should we call you?

260

Kreusa:

My name is Kreusa. I am Erechtheus' daughter and my country is Athens.

Ion:

Oh! You are from a glorious country and from great parents. I respect you enormously my lady.

Kreusa:

That's how far runs my good fortune, friend. That far and no further.

Ion:

Lady, is it true what they say...

Kreusa:

Yes? What are you trying to ask?

Ion:

I mean, is it true that your father's grandfather has sprung from the Earth?

Kreusa:

Yes, but of what help is my ancestry to me now?

Ion:

And is it true that the goddess Athena grabbed him and brought him up from beneath the earth?

270

Kreusa:

That's true but with a virgin's hands. She was not his mother.

Ion:

And then, as the paintings show, she gave him to...

Kreusa:

...to the Cecropides, to raise him up secretly.

Ion:

They say that the goddess' girls opened his coffin.

Kreusa:

And that's why they were thrown off the great rock, meeting their bloody death.

Ion:

Amen to that. And what about what they say about... or are these just hollow words?

Kreusa:

What do you mean? Ask me, I've got plenty of time to spare.

Ion:

If your father has sacrificed your sisters.

Kreusa:

They were children and he managed to get the courage to sacrifice them for his country.

Ion:

How then did you alone manage to escape?

280

Kreusa:

I was still at my mother's breast. A newborn.

Ion:

And did the earth really open up and swallowed him?

Kreusa:

Poseidon's trident killed him.

Ion:

And that's the place they call The big Rocks?

Kreusa:

Why ask that? What memories you stirred up!

Ion:

Apollo's lightning and thunder, too, pays homage to them.

Kreusa:

Unjustly so. I wish I had never seen them.

Ion:

What? Do you dislike the things that Apollo likes?

Kreusa:

No, but the caves and I know his disgraceful acts.

Ion:

And so... which Athenian has made you his wife?

290

Kreusa:

Not an Athenian. No a local, no. He comes from another land, a stranger.

Ion:

Who? He must be of high birth though, surely.

Kreusa:

His name is Xuthus. He's Zeus' grandson and son of Aeolos.

Ion:

And how did that happen? A stranger marrying you, a local woman?

Kreusa:

There's a country near Athens called Euboa...

Ion:

With watery borders, they say.

Kreusa:

Yes. Xuthus helped the Cecropids to conquer it.

Ion:

Helped them and then married you?

Kreusa:

I was given as a war prize to him. Gift for his spear's work.

Ion:

So, are you here with him or have you come alone?

300

Kreusa:

Together but he's gone to the caves of Trophonios.

Ion:

Has he? Just as a visitor or is he after a prophecy?

Kreusa:

He wants to hear the same thing from both, Apollo as well as Trophonios.

Ion:

Have you come for matters regarding land or children?

Kreusa:

Though married for many years we are still barren?

Ion:

Have you not given birth yet? Are you still without a child?

Kreusa:

Phoebos knows well my lack of children.

Ion:

Poor woman! So lucky in all the other things, so unlucky in this.

Kreusa:

And you, young man? Who are you? How I envy your mother!

Ion:

I call myself Apollo's servant – and this I am, my Lady.

310

Kreusa:

Are you a gift by some city or have you been sold to the god?

Ion:

I don't know anything except the fact that they call me Apollo's son.

Kreusa:

Now it's my turn to feel sorry for you, my friend.

Ion:

I don't know who gave birth to me nor who my father is.

Kreusa:

Do you live here by the altars or elsewhere in a house?

Ion:

Here, at the god's house and wherever sleep takes me.

Kreusa:

Did you come to this temple young or as a grown man?

Ion:

Those who say they know tell me I came here as a baby.

Kreusa:

So the Delphic priestesses nurtured you with their milk?

Ion:

I have never known the breast. The woman who brought me up...

320

Kreusa:

Who is she you poor child? Ah, here, I've found troubles to add upon mine!

Ion:

She's the god's prophetess. She's like a mother to me.

Kreusa:

And yet here you are, a fully grown man. Who fed you?

Ion:

I ate from the scraps on the altars and whatever the strangers brought me.

Kreusa:

Poor mother whoever she was!

Ion:

Perhaps I was the product of some woman's sin.

Kreusa:

Still, you are well bred and you're so well dressed, too.

Ion:

These are gifts from the god for the work I do here.

Kreusa:

Have you never wished to search for your family?

Ion:

Never, dear Lady. I have no proof of it.

330

Kreusa:

How dreadful! Another woman has suffered the same fate as your mother.

Ion:

Which other woman? If only she shared my pain we'd be both very happy.

Kreusa:

It's for her I came here before my husband beats me to it.

Ion:

Looking for what? If I can dear lady, I'll help you.

Kreusa:

I want to hear a secret oracle from Phoebos Apollo.

Ion:

Tell me. I'll do the rest.

Kreusa:

Listen then and I will tell you, though... the goddess Shame prevents me.

Ion:

Then you'll achieve nothing because the goddess Shame is a lazy one.

Kreusa:

A friend of mine told me that she slept with Phoebus Apollo –

Ion:

A mortal lay with Phoebos? Don't say that, my dear friend!

340

Kreusa:

And she gave him a boy, keeping it a secret from her father.

Ion:

Never! Some man dishonoured her. That's why she's ashamed.

Kreusa:

Still, that's what she says and she's suffered from this secret most awfully.

Ion:

And what became of her if she had really coupled with the god?

Kreusa:

She took the child away from her house and she exposed it to the elements.

Ion:

And what of the child then? Is he alive? Where is he?

Kreusa:

That's what I came here to ask Apollo. No one else knows.

Ion:

Did he die? How?

Kreusa:

The woman believes that wild animals killed the child.

Ion:

What signs are there to prove that?

350

Kreusa:

When she went back to the place she had left it, the child was no longer there.

Ion:

Did she find any drops of blood there or on the road?

Kreusa:

She says she didn't though she had a good look everywhere.

Ion:

Has it been a long time since the boy was lost?

Kreusa:

If he were alive now he'd be about your height.

Ion:

The god has been unjust to him and to the mother a poor, miserable woman.

Kreusa:

True about the god. She had never had another child.

Ion:

But what if Apollo took it and raised it in secret?

Kreusa:

Still it wouldn't be fair to enjoy for himself what belongs to many.

Ion:

How shocking this is that my fate is so similar to this boy's!

360

Kreusa:

You, too, friend. I'm sure you feel for the poor mother.

Ion:

Don't drag me, dear lady, into a pain I have forgotten.

Kreusa:

I shall be quiet. Simply answer the questions I've asked you.

Ion:

Do you know what is the most difficult thing of all you ask?

Kreusa:

Poor woman. Every part of her life is in misery!

Ion:

But can the god pronounce an oracle if he wants to keep it a secret?

Kreusa:

He sits on a tripod for the whole nation.

Ion:

Yes, as for that, he does feel the shame. Don't embarrass him any further.

Kreusa:

The poor woman is shattered by her awful fate.

370

Ion:

You won't be able to find any god to prophesy about these things because if he is found to be bad in his own house, Phoebos quite rightly would do your prophet some harm. Leave it woman, because prophecies that hurt Apollo will not be made.

It would be stupid for us to demand that gods made the prophecies they didn't like, by sacrificing sheep on the altars or by studying the flight of the birds. This is how it is. If we force the gods to prophesy for us against their will, there would be no gain for us and we would benefit only if the prophecies come from them willingly.

380

Chorus:

There are as many calamities as there are mortals, only their shapes differ. As for eternal joy, you'll never find it.

Kreusa: (*Speaking towards the temple*)

O Phoebos Apollo! You are being just neither here, now, nor back there, then, to my friend whose words came to you through me; and you have saved neither your own child nor the mother to whom you owe a debt and who asks you – you, a prophet! Tell her so that she knows. Then if the child has died let her honour it with a tomb but if he's alive let him come before his mother's eyes.

390

But if the god desires me to forego this hope and not let me know the things I want, I shall do so.

She sees Xuthus in the distance. Noises of a number of men behind the scene

But I can see my noble husband, Xuthus, approaching. He's coming back from Trophonios' caves. Say nothing, my friend, of the things we spoke to my husband, in case he makes me feel ashamed for trying to find out things secretly.

Word should not reach the road to where we rule.

Men are very difficult to women and disaster will strike if the good and the bad of them get together.

We live such joyless lives.

Enter Xuthus and his servants.

400

Xuthus:

My first words are to you Apollo. Greetings! And greetings to you, too, dear wife. Have I made you concerned by being so late?

Kreusa:

No, not at all. You came just as I begun to do so. Tell me though what words do you have from Trophonios? How will the seed of children live in our marriage?

Xuthus:

He did not feel it was right that he should speak on this before Apollo but he did say that neither you nor I will be leaving the temple for home without a child.

410

Kreusa:

Glorious mother of Apollo! How happy we would be if that were so! And do let our previous words with your son turn for the better!

Xuthus:

Amen to that. Who speaks the god's words?

Ion: (*with the royal plural again*)

That is our role, friend, that is so far as those words that are uttered outside. Others take care of the words uttered inside and they are the best of Delphi, chosen by lot. They stand near the tripod.

Xuthus:

Very well. I have everything we need so I'll go into the temple. I've heard that a sacrifice has been already made on the altar on behalf of all the visitors.

420

I want to receive this propitious day, a prophecy from the god. And you, wife, adorn the altars with daphne branches and pray to the gods that I'll come back from the god's palace with good prophecies about a child.

Exit Xuthus

Kreusa:

I shall, I shall! Still, if Apollo wishes to correct some previous sins of ours and he does not wish to be wholly our friend, that too I will understand. He is a god and I will accept it.

Exit Kreusa

430

Ion:

I wonder why this woman denounced the god with so many shadowy words and innuendos? Is she really after a prophesy for a friend or is she hiding something from us which she must keep a secret? Still, she's Erechtheus' daughter. What do I care? What does all this have to do with me? Let me take the golden urn and go and bring some holy water to purify the temple. And to reproach Apollo. What is wrong with him? He rapes virgins and then abandons them. Begets children and then abandons them too – to die? No, Apollo. Do not abuse your great power. Seek only virtue.

440

If you have it that the mortal who sins gets punished by the gods, well then, how can you commit sins and not be punished yourselves?

And if you don't want to do this –for argument's sake- then make it legal for the mortals also to have illegal unions. Then you will see Poseidon and you, too, Zeus how your temples will empty as punishment for your crimes. You go off pursuing your own pleasure without a care for the consequences.

450

Why should people say that men are wicked for imitating acts the gods consider acceptable? No, it is the men's teachers one must blame!

Exit Ion with the urn

Chorus:

To you, goddess Athena I send this prayer. You have never felt the painful jolts of birth. You were born from Zeus' head with the help of the Titan Prometheus.

Chorus:

Virgin maid, Athena!

460

Chorus:

Come, fly here with a speedy wing, here to the temple of the Prophetess Pythia, blessed Athena, blessed goddess of victory, come down from the golden palaces of Olympus.

Chorus:

Fly through the byways and through the roads to where the navel of the earth is and where the prophetess stands by the tripod and utters her secret oracles.

470

Chorus:

You, daughter of Leto, two most virtuous virgins, sisters of Apollo.

Plead with your brother, goddess, that the ancient house of Erechtheus regains its old gift of fertility.

It's the greatest of good fates to have young children who'll in turn have theirs so that all their father's wealth is passed on to them.

480

Chorus:

Children are strength to the weak, a fountain to joy, and with weapons, saviours of their city.

I prefer to raise children than to have wealth, or a king's palace. I'd never want to live without children and those who prefer it that way, I despise. Wealth is meaningless to me without children.

490

Chorus:

O caves and throne of Pan!

O stone near the Long Rocks full of caves!
There where the triplet sisters Aglaurides stamp their feet in dance before the temples of Pallas Athena. There, Pan, at the crags, in your caves, you play your hymns with your flute's most agile melody just before the sun lights up the sky.

500

Chorus:

In there it was, where a young virgin who gave birth to Apollo's child and she, poor woman, threw it to the birds of prey, a bloody meal for the wild beasts, a shame for the raped girl.

Chorus:

This story was never told on the woven cloth, nor words were ever said of any child begotten by a god and who had a good life.

Enter Ion with the urn.

510

Ion:

Women, servants, you who are guarding the steps of this scented temple and are waiting for your master, Xuthus. Has he left the tripod of the oracles or is he still inside asking about his childlessness?

Chorus:

He's still in the temple, friend. We haven't seen him at the steps.

(noise from within the temple)

Ah, but he'll soon be here. I can hear the doors creaking.

Enter Xuthus from the temple

Xuthus: *(To Ion)*

Joy to you, my son! This is a matching word for what I have to say.

Ion:

I am overjoyed and you are wise, so we'll get along just fine.

Xuthus:

Give me your hand that I may kiss it and your body that I may hug it.

Ion:

Are you all right or has the god sent you out of your mind?

520

Xuthus:

Out of my mind? Could I be out of my mind if I want to kiss the most precious thing in my life?

(Xuthus tries to hug Ion but Ion pulls back)

Ion:

Careful you'll break the sacred garland!

Xuthus: *(Insisting)*

I just want to hug you not to seize you. Oh, I have found the one I love!

Ion:

Get back or I'll shoot you through your chest.

Xuthus:

Why repel me if you, too, found the one you love?

Ion:

It looks like I have to educate all the ignorant foreigners and madmen!

Xuthus:

Slaughter me and burn me. Then you'd be your father's murderer.

Ion: *(laughs)*

And which parent of mine are you? How can I not laugh when I hear such things?

530

Xuthus:

Don't do so. Let me explain.

Ion:

Explain what?

Xuthus:

That I am your father and you are my son.

Ion:

Who said?

Xuthus:

Apollo himself. He raised you while all along I was your father.

Ion:

No other witnesses?

Xuthus:
Apollo's word.
Ion:
You've got it wrong!
Xuthus:
I have no hearing problems.
Ion:
What did Phoebos say, exactly?
Xuthus:
What? Oh! He said that whoever meets me...
Ion:
Meet you where? How?
Xuthus:
Meet me as I go out of the temple...
Ion:
What will happen to the one you meet?
Xuthus:
He'll be my son.
Ion:
Your own son or a gift from someone else?
Xuthus:
A gift yes, but by my own seed.
Ion:
And so, was I the first you met as you were coming out?
Xuthus:
You and no one else, my boy!
Ion:
Wow, what luck!
Xuthus:
Same luck for both of us!

540

Ion:
Yes but hold on, by which mother am I your son?
Xuthus:
I've no idea!
Ion:
Didn't Phoebos tell you?
Xuthus:
I was so happy I forgot to ask.
Ion:
So then... Earth was my mother!
Xuthus:
The ground bears no children.
Ion:
Well then, how did I become your son?
Xuthus:
I don't know... I'll leave that to the god.
Ion:
Come let's touch on other things now.
Xuthus:
Yes, that would be best my boy.
Ion:
Right! You've had a... sinful union, right?
Xuthus:
Yes, with the stupidity of youth.
Ion:
Before you married Kreusa?
Xuthus:
No, much later.

Ion:
So, that's when you... begot me?
Xuthus:
The years seem to be about right.
Ion:
But how did I get here afterwards?
Xuthus:
I wish I knew to tell you.
Ion:
Such a long distance! How could I have made it?
Xuthus:
I can't fathom it either.
Ion:
Did you go to Pythia's Rock, earlier?
550
Xuthus:
Yes, at the Bacchanals.
Ion:
At whose house did you stay?
Xuthus:
Someone who... with the girl servants of the Delphic oracle
Ion:
You mean they had sex with you while dancing?
Xuthus:
They were Maenads!
Ion:
Were you sober or drunk?
Xuthus:
I was deep in Bacchic joy.
Ion:
So that's how I was planted!
Xuthus:
Fate, too, wanted it, my son.
Ion:
So, how did I end up here at the temple?
Xuthus:
The girl must have left you here.
Ion:
I'm not a slave's child, thank god!
Xuthus:
And so, my child, accept your father now!
Ion:
How can I not believe the god?
Xuthus:
You're absolutely right.
Ion:
What more could I ask for?
Xuthus:
Now you're seeing things as they truly are.
Ion:
Nothing more than to be the son of the son of Zeus!
Xuthus:
That's how it was meant to be for you.
560
Ion: (*Hugging Xuthus*)
Is this my father I'm truly hugging?
Xuthus:
Yes, if you truly believe in god.
Ion:
Greetings, my father!

Xuthus:

Oh, what joyous words you're giving me!

Ion:

What a holy day it is today!

Xuthus:

Holy indeed! A day that has blessed me!

Ion:

O, dear mother! When will I see you before me?

Now more than ever –whoever you are I want to know you.

But perhaps you're dead and we can't even hope to see you.

Chorus:

The joy of the palace is our joy too but how I wish that our mistress were also happy with children in the house of Erechtheus.

Xuthus:

My boy, the god acted wisely to have us find each other; me to find a son and you to find the father whom you never knew before.

570

I seek the same thing you do: to find your mother, the woman who gave you to me. But let us put our trust to Time and perhaps we shall find her. Now, leave the temple and your duties here and do as your father wishes: come with me to Athens because there awaits you great joy, much wealth and on top of all that, the mighty sceptre of your parents.

580

And no one will be able to say that you are poor or illegitimate...

Ion: *does not respond*

Xuthus:

You are quiet my son. Why lower your eyes to the ground like that? Why look so worried? Why turn your father's newly found joy into sadness?

Ion:

Things have a different appearance when one looks at them from near and then from afar. I, too feel great joy for having found you, father but you must learn what I have in my heart. They say that the famous people of Athens are Athens-born and not immigrants

590

I'll be going there with two burdens on my back: my father is a foreigner and I am a bastard and with these two shameful burdens and no strength with which to carry them, the Athenians will think of me as being worse than insignificant. And if I ever want to try and climb onto the tallest political throne of the city one day and try to become someone significant I will be despised by those who tried and failed because that's how it is: the man with less ability hates the man who has more.

600

And as for those who are intelligent and are able to succeed but do not try to get into politics, they'll be laughing at me for being the fool who doesn't take it easy in such a busy country. Then there are the politicians who have made a success of it. They will be using their intelligence and their voting power viciously against me to frustrate my wishes.

That's how it is, father. Those in power and leadership, will fight fearsomely all their competitors.

And then, father, I'll be entering your house and not mine, and be near a childless woman, a woman with whom you used to share her pain.

610

Now, however, she will be totally alone to carry that burden, so she, too, of course, will hate me and rightly so. She will be bitter for seeing me next to you full of joy, while she, childless looks on. So what do you do then? You must either abandon me to make her happy or you'll keep me and throw the whole house into turmoil. What murders, what murderous poisons don't the women find for the men in such circumstances! And then, I also feel very sad for your wife, father. There will be no children for her in her old age and this she certainly does not deserve, a woman from such noble parents, to be without children.

620

Besides, kingship is overrated. It is unjustly glorified. It has a sweet face but a dark and turbulent heart because how can one be happy, or blessed if he must always be afraid of murderers or people he can never trust?

Rather a happy commoner than a king who must humour the sly and hate the good, lest they slaughter him.

You may tell me that all these concerns are conquered by gold and that it is a wonderful thing to be

wealthy but I don't like to have my ears filled with condemnations while I'm holding onto wealth, nor do I want any troubles.

630

I prefer by far the measured life, measured and with no concerns.

Father, listen to the joys that I have here: Firstly, I have my peace –something which everyone loves. Few concerns and no one bad comes to bother me. Also, I never have to worry about this awful thing of having to hold my step and move across the road when confronted by lowlifes.

640

Then, praying to the gods and talking to the mortals I serve the happy folk and not the sad ones and make friends with them easily; and when one lot leaves, another comes and so I'm constantly talking with people and I'm always happy. As well, people should pray to be in my place, even if they have to do so reluctantly; I follow the law, I do my duty to the gods and this because this fits with my nature. So father, let me tell you that I consider this life to be far better for me than the one you offer me. Let me live alone. Living a humble life is as delightful as living a grand life.

Chorus:

You spoke wisely and it would be the best way for my beloved mistress also.

650

Xuthus:

Stop all this nonsense and learn how to enjoy happiness. Now that I found you, my son, I want to share a table with you and to make all the sacrifices I've neglected to make when you were born. I will invite you to my home, in Athens, as a friend and an observer, to a friendly feast and not as my son because I don't want to make my childless wife sad while I'm happy. When the time comes for me to hand you my city's sceptre, then I'll introduce you to her as my son.

660

I shall call you Ion because it is proper according to your Fate, since you were the first I met when I came out of the temple. Now call all your friends and invite them to the sacrifice before you leave Delphi.

And you, servants, keep silent and say nothing to my wife or else you'll die!

Ion:

I'm going but there's still something lacking from what Fate has declared for me: If I don't find the woman who gave birth to me father, my life will be unhappy and if there's one prayer that I can make it is that my mother is from Athens so that I will have the validity of the Athenian citizenship.

670

Whoever is in a foreign city will always remain a foreigner even if he becomes a legal citizen by word he will still lack the freedom of speech.

Exit Xuthus, Ion and Xuthus' attendants.

Chorus:

I can see my mistress crying and bitterly sighing when she sees her husband with a son and she without and alone.

680

Chorus:

Son of Leto, Phoebos Apollo, prophet! What song did your mouth sing in prophecy about this? Who was the child raised in your temple and who was his mother? This oracle of yours does not please me one bit, there's a trap hidden within it. I'm afraid that some day we'll come upon some great misfortune.

690

Chorus:

God's words are odd and odd the thoughts they give me: This boy is without doubt from a foreign land. Friends, how can we not yell this out most clearly to our mistress? She was Xuthus' friend in everything and had her hopes pinned on him but he betrayed her and gave her despair? Now she's in utter misery while he's rejoicing in good fortune.

700

Chorus:

Here she's is, falling into grey age but he doesn't care at all even about his friends. He came to our palace as a foreigner and cared only about building his own wealth, neglecting our mistress.

Chorus:

He neglected her totally, the wretch, the miserable wretch, the traitor! May the gods neglect him also and reject his holy sacrifices, for this whole century.

710

Chorus:

And no matter how many sacrifices he burns at the altars I shall show him who it is I love in our palace. Here they are now, the father and the new son at the altar at preparing for a feast.

Chorus:

There at the Parnassian great rocks whose peaks rip into the heavens, where Bacchus, holding the twin torches, dances lightly in the night with his nocturnal Maenads.

720

Chorus:

May he never enter the city and rather die in his youth because when a stranger enters our city he will cause us much grief.

Chorus:

Best that Erechtheus remains since he was our king first.

Enter Kreusa with the Old Man, who is almost blind, has a walking stick and is guided by Kreusa.

Kreusa:

Old man, you were my father's tutor when he was alive. Erechtheus himself. Go inside the temple and ask Lord Apollo on my behalf please if he has uttered a word about my hopes for children, a thing which will please both of us. Joy is sweet when it's shared by friends.

730

And if perhaps –god forbid- some terrible thing comes our way, I'll still find comfort in your understanding eyes. Even though I am your mistress, I respect you just as you used to respect my father when he was enjoying the sunlight.

Old Man:

Daughter, you're worthy of your worthy parents. You respect the customs and ethics of our city's ancient ancestors and you have never shamed them. Come, help me climb the steps to the temple. They are difficult for me so you'll have to be my support.

740

Kreusa:

Come, old man and watch your step.

Old Man:

Here we are. The foot is slow but the mind is nimble

Kreusa:

Hold onto the walking stick and come around this way.

Old Man:

Both, the stick and I are half blind.

Kreusa:

That's true, all right but careful you don't get exhausted by this walk.

Old Man:

Do you think I want to? Damned legs!

They've reached the temple's steps. Now Kreusa turns to the chorus.

Kreusa:

Dear women who work with me at my loom and with its shuttle; trusty servants one and all: What did Apollo say to my husband about our children? Speak because we deserve some happy news.

750

Chorus:

Dreadful, dreadful Fate!

Kreusa:

A bad beginning this!

Chorus:

Dreadful, dreadful Fate!

Old Man:

Will the oracles be bitter for my masters?

Chorus:

Ladies what should we do? What should we do? One dies for such things.

Kreusa:

Tell me, friends. What is this fear of yours?

Chorus:

Shall we speak? Shall we be silent? What can we do?

Kreusa:

Tell me! What is this disaster you have to tell me?

760

Chorus:

I must tell you my Lady even if death takes me twice over. It is not ordained for you to hold children into your arms nor hug them tightly against your breast.

Kreusa:

Oh! I wish I were dead!

Old Man:

Daughter!

Kreusa:

Ah, my friends! That's the end of my life! What a terrible Fate I have!

Old Man:

Yes, my daughter, we are done for.

Kreusa:

Ah! Wretched Fate! Wretched woman! What awful sadness pierces my heart!

Old Man:

Be strong, my girl!

Kreusa:

How can I not feel the sadness?

770

Old Man:

Wait until we learn...

Kreusa:

What more news can there be for me?

Old Man:

Let's wait and see if your husband suffered the same ill luck or is it just you it fell upon?

Chorus:

Old man, to him Apollo gave a son and now he's rejoicing away from our mistress.

Kreusa:

You give me one disaster upon another! Oh how can I endure this?

Old Man: *(to the chorus)*

The son you talked about, from what woman will he be born? Or is he born already?

780

Chorus:

He's born and fully grown already. Apollo gave the boy to Xuthus here in front of us.

Kreusa:

What did you say? Unspeakable! The unbelievable things you say!

Old Man:

For me, too!

Kreusa:

But how does the oracle go? Explain to me more clearly. Who is this young man?

Chorus:

Apollo gave Xuthus as his son the first person he met once he came out of the temple. That young man was he.

Kreusa:

Misery! Misery is ahead of me. I shall remain childless, in a deserted house my whole life. And what of the oracle?

790

Who was the young man who appeared before my husband? How and where did he first see him?

Chorus:

Did you not see the young man who was sweeping around here at the temple? That was the boy who became Xuthus' son.

Kreusa:

Ah, what pain! If only I could fly through the moist air and far into the stars, away from this land, Greece!

800

Old Man:

What name did his father give him? Do you know it or is it a secret and unknown?

Chorus:

Ion, he called him because he was the first to see when he came out of the temple.

Old Man:

And his mother? Who is it?

Chorus:

I don't know but let me tell you, old man, everything I do know: Xuthus has gone off without our mistress, to the holy tents to make sacrifices for the sake of the boy's birth and their friendship.

Chorus:

They will be sitting at the same table and rejoicing without her.

Old Man:

We've been betrayed, my Lady and I, too, feel your pain. Your husband has insulted us and, by deceit, he will try to throw us out of the halls of Erechtheus!

810

I'm not saying this because I hate your husband but because I love you more than him. He came to our city as a stranger, marry you and received your wealth while all the time, secretly he was begetting children with another woman. I say secretly and I'll show you how: he saw that you were without a child so he didn't want to live with you and suffer the same fate. So he took to his bed some slave and had a child with her which he sent away to the oracle here.

820

The boy was left here at the doorsteps of the god's temple to be raised as an abandoned child. When Xuthus finally learnt that the boy was fully grown he came to take him back, telling you that you came here supposedly because you were after a child. The story about the god telling Xuthus that he's met his son outside the temple is a lie. This is a story put out by Xuthus and not by Apollo. He had the child brought up in secret. If Xuthus was caught, he'd blame the god, if he was not he had a mind to make the boy king of Athens.

830

Even his name, Ion, he had it given to him long ago, not just today as if he had just shouted the happy syllables of surprise: Iiii On!

Chorus:

Oh, how I hate the sly men who commit an injustice and then they cover it up prettily with lies. I prefer a friend who is dull and honest rather than a clever crook.

Old Man:

And there's yet another thing you'll suffer and it is the worst. You'll be bringing into your house as a ruler a man without a mother, the son of some slave and a foreigner. It would have been an easier burden to carry if the boy was born of a noble woman and Xuthus had persuaded you that he had that child with her because you were barren.

840

Then you'd agree with him and even if that was unbearable for you he could have searched in the house of Aeolos for another woman to marry.

Come, my daughter, for all this you must do something. Some deed that befits your womanly nature. Either with a sword, or a plot or poisons, you must kill your husband and his son. Do that before they kill you. No, don't hesitate on this because by doing so you'll lose your own life. That's what happens when two enemies live in the same house: one or the other will die. I'll help you with this deed. I'll come and stab the boy while they're having their meal.

850

This way, if I die, I'll be paying back my debt to my masters who fed me all these years. Either that or I'll be sharing in their joy. Because only one thing brings shame to the slaves, a bad name but if the slave is good then he's no worse a man than the free ones.

Chorus:

Me, too, my lady. I want to have the same fate as him. Either die or live with honour.

860

Kreusa:

O soul of mine! How can I remain silent and how can I dismiss the shame! How can I bring to light the secret rape? What stops me? Who is my opponent in this contest of virtue? Is it not my husband who did the betraying here? I have no home nor any children and what hopes I had to bring the two together are now lost for ever. No matter how long I have kept the rape and the lamentable birth a secret I still did not manage to achieve it.

870

But no! I swear by the starry throne of Zeus and even by the goddess Athena, goddess of my High Rocks and by the shore of the holy lake, Triton. I will not keep my rape a secret. I will announce it and bring great relief to my breast.

Tears roll from my eyes and my soul aches by the evil doings of both men and immortals. What heartless betrayers they are I shall prove as I speak of my rape.

880

(Shouts at Apollo)

Apollo!

You and your seven-stringed lyre, made of lifeless horn!

You, the god who sings the lovely songs of the Muses!

You, son of Leto!

You I accuse before all!

You I accuse in the light of day!

You came to me with your shiny golden hair while I was gathering saffron flowers to adorn my breasts, a match for my golden gowns.

890

You grabbed my white arms and dragged me into the depths of the cave, to your bed and while I was crying for my mother, you raped me shamelessly, doing things that make Aphrodite's heart rejoice.

Then I, poor wretch bore you a boy which, being afraid of my mother, I left there on that same spot you raped me. Upon your own bed where you made me yours by stealth!

Luckless me!

900

O, yes!

It's you, Leto's son!

It's you I am addressing!

You who sings oracles by the side of your golden thrones and by the earth's centre, I will shout a groan in your ear!

910

Evil lover!

Our own son –yes, yours and mine! Our own son was taken by the vultures and I am left a deserted mother holding his swaddling clothes.

Look there, Apollo!

Look!

See? The whole of Delos hates you!

The daphne between the gentle shoots of the palm tree hates you!

There, look there, where, in a holy bed of matrimony, Leto lay with Zeus and gave birth to you.

920

Chorus:

What a huge chest of misery is opening wide! Big enough to make everyone weep bitter tears.

Old Man: *shocked at what he heard*

My daughter I see your face and I am filled with dire pity. Your story sends me hither and thither and I'm losing my wits. One minute I'm trying to empty our ship from all the evil and the next you send me a new wave of calamities from the stern. With all this suffering you're shouting, it seems to me you're heading on the wrong path, entering a new lot of disasters.

930

What are you saying? Of what are you accusing Phoebos Apollo? What child did you say you gave birth to and where in the city did you abandon it to have the vultures slaughter it? Tell me again from the start.

Kreusa:

Old friend, I am ashamed to tell you but I will speak.

Old Man:

If you do I will be able to understand better and share your pain.

Kreusa:

Well then, my old friend, listen. You know the cave at Kekrops' Rock, at the northern side? We call it the Long Rocks.

Old Man:

Yes, I know. Pan's cave where there are altars near by.

Kreusa:

Yes, there. What a dreadful fight I fought in there!

Old Man:

Dreadful fight? What do you mean? Your words bring tears to my eyes.

940

Kreusa:

In there, old friend I have suffered a humiliating rape, an unwanted marriage with Phoebos.

Old Man:

Oh, my daughter! Is that what I had noticed back then?

Kreusa:

I don't know but if you want the truth let me tell it.

Old Man:

That time when you were suffering the pangs of birth secretly?

Kreusa:

Yes. I was suffering then what I have revealed just now.

Old Man:

How did you manage to keep Apollo's rape a secret?

Kreusa:

I gave birth. Wait old friend and I'll tell you.

Old Man:

But where? Who was your midwife or did you give birth all on your own?

Kreusa:

Alone, yes. Inside the cave where he raped me.

950

Old Man:

But where is the child? So we can say that you, too, have a child.

Kreusa:

It is dead, old man. I left it alone with the beasts.

Old Man:

It died? But why didn't Apollo come to your aid?

Kreusa:

He didn't and so the poor boy is growing up in the underworld.

Old Man:

But who left the child there? Surely not you!

Kreusa:

Yes, it was me. In the dark I had covered it with my gown.

Old Man:

Has no one found out that you left the child there?

Kreusa:

Secrecy and Disaster are the only two who knew.

Old Man:

But with what courage did you leave your son in the cave?

Kreusa:

What courage, old man? I had cried and lamented a great deal.

Old Man:

Ah, poor wretch! What a mean soul you had but Apollo has an even meaner!

960

Kreusa:

If only you could see how the child stretched its little arms to me!

Old Man:

Looking for milk or your embrace?

Kreusa:

My embrace. Yet I torture it unjustly.

Old Man:

But what came over you to have it thrown out?

Kreusa:

I thought the god will come down to save it.

Old Man: *(covering his head with his garment in shame. Tearfully:)*

O, what a disastrous gale has hit at the joy of your home!

Kreusa:

Old man, why have you covered your head and why are you sobbing?

Old Man:

Because I see both you and your husband in misery.

Kreusa:

That's the way of the world. Nothing stays the same

970

Old Man:

But so much grief, Kreusa, don't let it takeover our emotions.

Kreusa:
Yes, old friend, but what can I do? The luckless always hesitate.

Old Man:
First exact justice from the god who did injustice to you.

Kreusa:
How can I, merely a mortal, argue with the great immortals?

Old Man:
Set fire to Apollo's holy temple!

Kreusa:
No, no, I'm too afraid to do this. I have enough problems already.

Old Man:
Try as much as you can. Put the knife to your husband!

Kreusa:
He has always been good to me. I don't have the heart.

Old Man:
Well then do it to the boy who came between you.

Kreusa:
How? If it were possible I'd do it. I'd prefer that.

980

Old Man:
Arm your servants with swords.

Kreusa:
Yes! I'm on my way but where can this happen?

Old Man:
In the holy tents where he's being host to his friend.

Kreusa:
The murder will be obvious there and the slaves are faint-hearted.

Old Man:
What you mean is that you're afraid! Well then, you think of something!

Kreusa:
Certainly. I have something which is both, clever as well as drastic.

Old Man:
I'm ready to work with you on both.

Kreusa:
Well then, listen. You know the old battle of the giants?

Old Man:
Yes, the one in Phlegra, where the Giants fought the gods.

Kreusa:
Precisely! That's where Earth gave birth to frightful Gorgon.

990

Old Man:
So that she would help her children fight the gods.

Kreusa:
And then Zeus' daughter, Athena killed her.

Old Man:
That's what I've been hearing for years now.

Kreusa:
Now Athena wears the gorgon's skin on her breast.

Old Man:
They call it the "Aegis of Pallas Athena"

Kreusa:
It got its name when she rushed into the war of the gods.

Old Man:
What fearful drawing did Athena's shield have on it?

Kreusa:
It's a breastplate defended by lots of snakes all around it.

Old Man:
And is this, my daughter harmful to your enemies?

Kreusa:
You must know Erichthonios, old man, or don't you? Of course you do.

1000

Old Man:

The man whom Earth produced as your forefather?

Kreusa:

When he was born, Pallas Athena gave him...

Old Man:

What? It seems there's something more you want me to hear.

Kreusa:

Well, she gave give him two drops of the Gorgon's blood.

Old Man:

And what effect will they have upon humans?

Kreusa:

The first drop is for killing, the second for healing.

Old Man:

And how did Athena attach these to baby Erichthonios' body?

Kreusa:

With a golden chain. Then, later, he gave it to my father.

Old Man:

And when your father died was the chain passed on to you?

Kreusa:

Yes, I wear it around my wrist.

1010

Old Man:

How does this double gift from the goddess work?

Kreusa:

The blood that dripped from the hollow vein...

Old Man:

Of what use is it? What are its powers?

Kreusa:

It prevents disease and nourishes life.

Old Man:

And what of the second drop? What does that do?

Kreusa:

It kills! It's the venom from the Gorgon's snakes.

Old Man:

Do you carry them mixed together or separately?

Kreusa:

Separately. Good and evil can't mingle.

Old Man:

Well, then my dear girl. You have all you need!

Kreusa:

With this, the boy will die and you will be his killer!

1020

Old Man:

Where? How? Tell me and I'll try and do whatever you say.

Kreusa:

In Athens, when he'll come to my house.

Old Man:

That's wouldn't be right... and you didn't like my suggestion either.

Kreusa:

What do you mean? Do you think that I'm afraid?

Old Man:

No, but they'll call you his murderer even if you didn't do it.

Kreusa:

You're right. They say that stepmothers hate their stepsons.

Old Man:

Let me kill him here where you can deny the murder.

Kreusa:

Ah! How happy I feel, even before the event!

Old Man:

Yes. You'll trick your husband by doing to him what he wants to do to you.

1030

Kreusa:

Do you know what to do now? You take this golden vial –it's an old work of the goddess-, you put it under your cape and go to where Xuthus is secretly performing the sacrifices. Once they've eaten and they're about to pour the libations to the gods, take it out and empty it into the young man's cup so that only he alone, drinks it. No one else except he who wants to rule my house drinks it. Once he does that, he'll never step foot in Athens. He'll stay there dead.

She gives him the vial.

Old Man:

Now you go to the house of the consuls where you will be looked after and I'll go and do as you've told me.

1040

Come now, old legs, come! Become young and active again! Defy your many years! Go to your mistress' enemy and kill him! Kill him and drive him out of the house. It's a good thing to honour the honourable if good fortune is with you but if you want to hurt your enemies, there's no law that will stand in your way.

Exit Kreusa and Old Man

Chorus:

Oh, Enodia, protector and guide of the traveller, Demeter's daughter, ruler of the ghosts of the day and night.

1050

Chorus:

Guide now the killing vial sent by my beloved mistress, full with the drops of blood, spilled from the once severed neck of the mortal Gorgon. Guide it, Enodia into the cup of him who wants to enter our house and let no stranger rule our city.

1060

Chorus:

Let its rulers be only the noble Erichthonians.

But if my lady's purpose and hope and daring are denied their success by Time then, she will either die with a sharp sword or a knot wound around her neck –sending away one pain with another. Thus she will descend to another type of world.

1070

Chorus:

Because a noble woman cannot endure to see her towers being ruled by strangers –not as long as she lives, nor as long as she can see the light of day.

Chorus:

I feel a great shame before the often sung Bacchus, if near the dancing springs of Kallihorisi the young man lying awake sees Iacchus at night holding the festival's torch, when the star-lit nations of the sky are dancing and the moon and the fifty daughters of Nereas strike up a dance in the sea and the endless streams of the rivers –they dance for the Kore of the golden wreath and for her glorious mother.

So Phoebos' beggar hopes to stomp rudely upon the labour of others and rule there.

1090

Chorus:

Look you who sing to every illicit love of ours all your cacophonous songs for our beds –

Chorus:

Look how I endure with respect the unjust loves of men and now let fall upon them every song of disdain and let the muses cast their evil tongues upon their beds

Chorus:

If he who is of Zeus' stock revealed a great disrespect and with my mistress at home he didn't sire children to share but rather gave the joy to another Aphrodite

Chorus:

And gave us a bastard child.

Enter Kreusa's Slave

Slave:

Women, where may I find Erectheus' daughter, Kreusa, my mistress? I've searched for her all over this town with no luck

Chorus:

Why, what's up fellow slave? What need speeds your foot and what news do you bring us?

1110

Slave:

We are being pursued. The authorities are searching for her to stone her to death!

Chorus:

What? What did you say? Have they caught us trying to kill Ion?

Slave:

Yes, that's right and now you'll be one of the first to be punished.

Chorus:

But how have they uncovered our secret plan?

Slave:

It's because the god did not want Justice to be polluted and so he made the impossible possible.

1120

Chorus:

But... how did he do this? I beg you, come, tell us because if you tell us that we must die then we shall happily do so –either that or we can still see the light of another day.

Slave:

After Xuthus and his new son, Ion left the shrine and went to the dinner and to the preparation of the sacrifices, Xuthus went alone to the place where a bacchic flame of the god leaps over the twin rocks of Dionysus. He wanted to sprinkle blood as birth offerings for Ion. Before he left, he told his son, "you stay here, my son and get the carpenters to make a tall tent all around this space.

1130

If I'm late returning from the sacrifices, let those of your friends who are here begin the feast without me." Xuthus then took the bulls and left.

Young Ion began to raise the elegant tents with no walls but with strong uprights. He took great care to keep the blazing sun away both at noon and in the final flames of the evening. He measured out a square of a hundred feet each way so that he could invite all of the people of Delphi.

Then Ion, took from the temple's storehouse the sacred, beautiful tapestries, stretched them over the uprights and made a huge shady awning out of them for everyone to see and marvel at.

1140

Of these tapestries Ion placed first the garments which Herakles, son of Zeus had dedicated to the temple. These were spoils that Herakles had gained from his war with the Amazons and on these garments were woven the following pictures: Heaven was gathering the stars into a circle in the sky and Helios was driving his horses towards the final blaze, dragging behind him the bright light of Esperos, the Evening star.

1150

Night, in her black robe was racing a chariot with two horses at the yoke and alongside of her ran the stars. The Pleiads were flying through the centre of Heaven and the swordsman, Orion, with the Bear above was turning her tail round the golden Pole. And the brilliant circle shone, cutting the month into two. The Hyades, a clear sign to the seafarers and the light carrier Dawn were sending away the stars. Then Ion ordered more tapestries to be spread, this time work by barbarians, upon which were painted, agile, speedy ships, enemies to our own Greek ships and animals mixed of nature, half horse, half centaurs, horsemen chasing stags or hunting wild lions.

1160

Also, near the entrance of the tent was painted a picture of Kekrops, snakes twirled all round him and his daughters next to him. This was a picture that someone from Athens had dedicated to the temple of Apollo.

Then Ion brought out great golden wine mixing bowls. A crier then, standing on his toes called out that all the people around the temple come and join in the feast with Ion. The tent was immediately and noisily filled with people who began putting garlands on their heads and eating from the lavish banquet, eating to their heart's delight.

1170

When the joy of eating had passed, our old man stood up in the centre of the banquet and with his antics raised much laughter from the banqueters. With great enthusiasm he began bringing water by the joyful to wash their hands. Then he burned myrrh incense and filled the golden cups, a chore he took upon himself alone.

1180

Then came the time for singing and for the drinking from the mixing bowl. That's when the old man called out, "take away these small cups and bring here the large ones so that our guests might get to the happy mood more quickly."

The slaves obeyed, bringing in the silver and golden cups. The old man chose one as if for the sake of

raising a toast of honour to the young man but into it he dropped the lethal poison from our mistresses' vial before handing it to Ion, hoping to kill the newfound son. No one had noticed this but just as Ion took the cup into his hand, one of the slaves uttered some sacrilegious words.

1190

The boy, being well educated in religious matters by the temple's seers, took these words to be an ill omen and so he emptied the contents of his cup onto the ground. Then he asked that a new cup be filled for him and told the others to do the same. There was silence throughout the tent. Then they all filled their cups with water and mixed it with the strong wine from Byblos. As this was taking place, a great band of noisy doves came flying into the tent. They live happily and undisturbed around Apollo's temple. Seeing that the cups were full, they dipped their feathery beaks into them and drank thirstily.

1200

For most of them, god's libation had no ill effect but one of them went and rested next to where Ion had spilled his poisoned wine. The poor bird dipped its beak into that wine and immediately it made an incomprehensible noise and its body shook violently like that of a wild Bacchant. All the banqueters were shocked at the bird's suffering and they watched it as it slowly died in agony with its taloned red legs becoming limp.

Then Ion, now called Xuthus' son by Apollo, jumped onto the table and, shooting his hands beyond his sleeves in anger, shouted:

1210

"Who among you tried to kill me? Tell me, old man because yours was the eagerness to serve the wine and from your hand it was I've received it!" Immediately he seized the old man by his aged arm and searched him so as to catch him in the act. Then, when the old man was forced to do so, he confessed the daring plan of Kreusa's murderous drink. Apollo's child then called the banqueters outside and, going before the rulers of the temple, he said,

1220

"Reverend Earth, daughter of Erechtheus, some stranger is trying to kill me with her poisons." The rulers then immediately voted overwhelmingly that Kreusa should die by stoning, since she tried not only to kill a man who was dedicated to the god but because by doing so, she desecrated the temple's precincts.

Now, the whole of Delphi is looking for our mistress, a woman who had decided to take such a vile path in such a vile way. She came to Apollo seeking children but now she has lost both, the children as well as her life.

Exit the Slave.

1230

Chorus:

There is no escaping death for unlucky me now! All this is now uncovered for all to see! The libations, made from Bacchus' vines mingled in common murderous purpose with the drops of the sliding serpent.

Chorus:

Uncovered for all to see –the victims go to Hades: me my life's misfortunes and my mistress' death will come by stoning.

How shall I run to escape?

Chorus:

Or how shall I hide in Earth's dark caves so that I won't fall dead with the stones?

1240

Chorus:

Shall I climb upon a four-horse chariot...

Chorus:

Or the stern of a ship?

If the god doesn't want to hide you there is no escape!

What more is there my lady for your heart to suffer?

Chorus:

And so, then, because we wanted to cause harm to others does not Justice now dictate we should suffer ourselves?

Enter Kreusa in extreme fear and out of breath

1250

Kreusa:

My dear servants, we are being pursued! We shall be killed! The Delphic oracle has condemned me and they will hand me to my death!

Chorus:

We are aware, poor woman the extent of your suffering.

Kreusa:

Where shall I escape? I only just now escaped from my house and ran here in secret to save myself from my enemies.

Chorus:

Where else? To the altar

Kreusa:

What would be the purpose of that?

Chorus:

Suppliants are not killed.

Kreusa:

But the law has condemned me to death!

Chorus:

Only if they can put their hands on you.

Disturbance of angry men within

Kreusa: *Looking in their direction*

There! Look! Hard-hearted men are running this way with swords at the ready!

Chorus:

Quickly, go sit upon the altar and if they kill you there the stain of your death will fall upon the head of the killer.

1260

Chorus:

Go, on, girl! Courage. It is your Fate!

Kreusa runs and stands at the steps of the temple. Her servants form a protective circle around her.

Enter Ion at the head of a number of armed and angry men. He charges towards the temple without noticing Kreusa.

Ion:

O, Kephisos! You bull-faced god and father! You who gave birth to a viper, to a dragon whose glance is a spitting blaze. A dragon who dares all. This woman is more dangerous than the gorgon's blood with which she tried to kill me. *He notices Kreusa.*

Ha! There she is! Seize her! Seize her and throw her from the peaks of Parnassus and let its rough crags comp her smooth, immaculate tresses!

I had the good fortune not to be murdered by a step-mother before I got to Athens.

1270

Here, among my friends, I got the measure of your soul –just how evil you are, just how much hatred you have for me! I know that if you had trapped me in your nets and shut me into your house, you'd waste no time in sending me to the halls of Hades. But now, neither Apollo's temple nor his altar will save you; and as for pity! Ha! Pity best belongs to me and to my mother who may not be here in body but she is in spirit.

He separates the chorus so that Kreusa is exposed

Look here! Look at this evil woman! Here she is, weaving one scheme upon another. She will kneel at the god's altar to avoid the payment due to her for the evil deeds she concocted for us.

Kreusa:

Don't you dare kill me here! Get back! In the name of the god who sees us and in my own name, get back!

Ion:

In your name? What thing in common could you possibly have with Phoebus Apollo?

Kreusa:

I give him my sacred body to guard.

Ion:

You were trying to poison to death the son of god!

Kreusa:

You are your father's son now, not Apollo's.

Ion:

But Apollo was my father when Xuthus was not.

Kreusa:

Yes, he was your father but now Apollo is my father.

1290

Ion:

But you do not revere him whereas I do.

Kreusa:

I wanted to kill the enemy of my house.

Ion:

But I have not come to your city with weapons.

Kreusa:

Yes you did. And you were trying to set fire to Erechtheus' halls

Ion:

What do you mean? With what torches, with what flames?

Kreusa:

You wanted to come into my house and take it by force.

Ion:

This is land which my father owns and which he'll give me.

Kreusa:

How could it possibly be that the son of Aiolos owns land in Athens?

Ion:

Xuthus won that land with weapons, not words.

Kreusa:

Our allies do not rule our land. No ally does.

1300

Ion:

So you would kill me because you are afraid of what might happen tomorrow!

Kreusa:

Yes, in case you get in first and kill me beforehand.

Ion:

You are envious of my father because you are without a child.

Kreusa:

And you? You would seize the house of a childless woman?

Ion:

Have I not a share of my father's land?

Kreusa:

Your share is a shield and a spear –that's all!

Ion:

Get away from the altar and the thrones of the god!

Kreusa:

Go and give orders to your mother, wherever she is, not to me!

Ion:

You were going to kill me and you still think the god will save you?

Kreusa:

If you dare kill me here, yes!

1310

Ion:

What? Are you happy to die upon god's wreaths?

Kreusa:

Yes, because I will cause misery to him who has caused misery to me.

Ion:

How dreadful it is that the god has given such awful laws to the mortals. Totally unwise. He should never accept evil people at his altar! He should rather drive them away. Nor should an evil hand touch the gods. Only the just. Those who have suffered injustice should be able to sit at the altar. How could it be right that both, the just and the unjust stand equal before god?

Ion tries to strike Kreusa but just then the Priestess appears from the temple. She is holding a cradle, tied with woollen ribbons.

1320

Priestess:

Hold on, my son! I have been chosen by all the priestesses to come out of the god's temple and save the laws of the oracular tripod.

Ion:

Greetings, my dear mother, who has not given birth to me.

Priestess:

Still, do call me "mother." I like that word.

Ion: *Indicating Kreusa*

She wanted to kill me! Did you know that? With poison!

Priestess:

I knew that but you, too, are excessively harsh. It is a sin.

Ion:

Have I no right to kill those who want to kill me?

Priestess:

Wives are always against children born before their marriage.

1330

Ion:

Yes, and we, too, feel the same way towards step mothers when they try to do us harm.

Priestess:

Don't be. When you leave this temple to go to your homeland...

Ion:

What do you advise me to do?

Priestess:

I advise you to go to Athens with a good Fate and a clean soul.

Ion:

A man has a clean soul when he has killed all his enemies.

Priestess:

Not you. Accept some of our words.

Ion:

Tell me. Your words have always been good to me.

Priestess:

See this here basket in my arms?

Ion:

Yes, I see an old basket tied with ribbons of wool.

Priestess:

I found you in this basket. You were a new born baby.

1340

Ion:

What? You've never told me this before!

Priestess:

I kept it a secret until now.

Ion:

How could you keep the fact that you found me a secret for so long?

Priestess:

The god wanted you to serve him at the temple.

Ion:

Does he not want me any more? How can I be sure of this?

Priestess:

Now that he has shown you who your father is he is sending you away.

Ion:

Did you keep this a secret because he had commanded you to do so or what?

Priestess:

From the earliest moment Apollo put it into my head...

Ion:

To do what? Come on, end this story!

Priestess:

To keep my findings to myself

1350

Ion:

What good or ill will this secret bring about for me?

Priestess:

In here I've hidden the infant clothes you were wearing when I've found you.

Ion:

Will I be able to find my mother with these clothes?

Priestess:

God wants it to happen now so you will. Of course, you couldn't before.

Ion:

Oh, what wonderful signs I am seeing today!

Priestess:

Take these now and look for your mother

She hands him the cradle

Ion:

Yes, I shall search the whole of Europe and Asia, from one end to the other.

Priestess:

That's for you to decide. It was I who has nurtured you, my son, by Apollo's will Now I return to you these things. The god allowed me to take them and hide them. **1360**

Why did he want it that way? I have no idea, nor does any other mortal know that I had them or where I had hidden them.

So now, let me kiss you like a true mother kisses her son. Now begin looking for your real mother wherever you think she might be. First of all see if it was not one of the Delphic maidens who gave birth to you and then abandoned you here at our temple. Or perhaps some Greek woman.

Now you know everything that we and the god who cared for you know.

She walks towards the temple's entrance and stands there.

Ion:

Tears fill my eyes as I think of the poor woman who gave birth to me in secret love. **1370**

She secretly cast me aside and never held me to her breast and so I lived nameless, like a slave in god's house. The god is beneficent but my Fate is heavy. I lacked my mother's arms the milk of her breast and the joy of youth. Poor mother also for she suffered the same hard Fate because she lacked her child's joy.

1380

Now, I shall offer this cradle to the god and ask him not to let me find things I don't want, because if my mother is a slave it would be better to be silent about it than to find her.

Turns to go towards the temple

O, Apollo, I bring to your temple...

Suddenly he stops.

What am I doing? Am I going against god's wise wishes? He has saved all these good signs of my mother's existence and I'm dedicating them back to him?

No, I must dare undo these ribbons and see what my inescapable Fate is.

1390

You, holy ribbons and covers, what have you hidden for me?

He searches into the cradle

Look at this! The cover of the cradle is still new by some miracle. For all its years mould has not touched the weave at all.

He is about to bring its contents out

Kreusa: *shocked at what she sees.*

What vision is this I see before me?

Ion:

You be quiet! I've suffered enough from you already!

Kreusa:

Me? Be quiet? How can I? You can't get angry at me because I can see there the very cradle in which I had you exposed as a newborn baby my son. In the caves of Kekrops, at the Long Rocks. Here! I'm leaving the altar even if it means my death!

She rushes to hug Ion and rest the cradle from him. She succeeds in both.

Ion:

Seize this mad woman! She jumped away from the altar and the statue. Tie her hands up!

Some of Ion's men seize her but she tightens her grip on both.

Kreusa:

Kill me if you wish but you'll achieve nothing by it. I have the cradle and I have what's in it.

Ion:

What dreadful trickery is this? She thinks she owns me!

Kreusa:

No, I have found my dearest friend.

Ion:

Me? Your dearest friend? You wanted to secretly murder me!

Kreusa:

Yes, the dearest friend my son, since a son is the dearest friend to a mother,

1410

Ion:

Enough of your schemes. Now I have caught you for certain.

Kreusa:

This is exactly what I wish, my son, to be caught by you, that's what I'm after.

Ion:

I wonder if that cradle is empty or if it really has anything.

Kreusa:

It has the clothes you were wearing when I had abandoned you that day.

Ion:

So, then, without looking, can you tell me what they are, one by one?

Kreusa:

Of course I can and if I can't, may I die!

Ion:

Speak then! There's truly something odd in your courage.

Kreusa:

There is the cloth which I weaved when I was a young girl.

Ion: *looks inside the cradle*

What does it look like? Young girls weave many cloths.

Kreusa:

Let's say, it's an unfinished effort of my shuttle.

He reveals the cloth

1420

Ion:

What is its design? You can't trick me with just that description.

Kreusa:

In the centre of the cloth there is a picture of a gorgon.

Ion: *shocked at the accuracy of the description*

Zeus! What angry Fate is pursuing me now?

Kreusa:

...and round the edge of the shield are snakes.

Ion:

Zeus! Here it is! This is the very cloth! I've found my baby clothes!

Kreusa:

Ah, the cloth I weaved when I was a young girl.

Ion:

Does it have another picture on it or is this as far as you can go with this?

Kreusa:

Something ancient. Two dragons with golden teeth. Athena's gift to my family. She asked us to raise out children in these clothes just as ancient Erechtheus did.

He takes out a small necklace.

1430

Ion:

And this golden ornament? What is that for?

Kreusa:

If it is that garland then it is the one I made for you that day. I've made it from an olive tree that the goddess Athena brought to the rock, a tree which is ever green and ever growing.

Certain now in the knowledge that Kreusa is his mother, Ion now embraces her. He strokes her cheeks affectionately.

Ion:

My dearest mother! What a joy it is to see you and to caress your cheeks!

Kreusa:

My son! You're a brighter light than the sun *Indicating the temple*: I'm sure the god will forgive me for saying this.

1440

Finally I hold you in my arms. This is a hope I always had but never thought it would be realised. I thought you were dead, in the halls beneath the earth with the goddess Persephone.

Ion:

I'm in your arms now mother. A dead man now alive.

Kreusa:

O, brilliant, expanding Ether! What should I cry out to you? Where does this joy come from? This is a joy I could have never hope for. Which god gives me this overwhelming happiness?

1450

Ion:

Mother, I could have thought that everything is possible, everything but that I am your son!

Kreusa:

I am still shaking with fear!

Ion:

Fear that though I'm in your arms, I'm not your son?

Kreusa:

So many years have passed without hope!

Directing the following to the priestess

Who brought this child into your arms?

Whose hands brought him to Apollo's temple?

Ion:

It was god's work but from now on we'll enjoy our good fortune just as we previously endured our misery.

1459

Kreusa:

My son, your birth was not without tears.

You were separated from me with much pain but now that my breath touches your sweet cheeks I enjoy the blessed good fortune.

Ion:

Mother, though you speak about yourself, you're using my words.

Kreusa:

I am no longer without child nor am I barren. Our house is widening, our land now has a king and Erechtheus is young again!

Ion:

Mother, my father should share in this joy I gave you.

1470

Kreusa:

What are you saying child? O, no! I am now going to be exposed and disgraced!

Ion:

What was that? Why?

Kreusa:

Your father is not who you think it is.

Ion:

O, no! Am I a bastard? Did you give birth to me when you were a young unmarried girl?

Kreusa:

My son, no torches nor dances accompanied the bed that brought you to your birth.

Ion:

So... I am from a humble family? Which one, mother?

Kreusa:

The slayer of the Gorgon, the goddess Athena knows!

Ion:

What? What do you mean by that, mother?

1480

Kreusa:

The goddess who lives in the olive groves of the Rock...

Ion:

Mother, your words are not clear. They're rather puzzling.

Kreusa:

Apollo... in the cave... in the cave where the nightingales sing...

Ion:

Apollo? Apollo? Why mention him?

Kreusa:

I mention him because he lay with me... in secret...

Ion:

Go on, mother. What you're saying brings joy to my heart.

Kreusa:

...and when the ninth month ended, I've given birth to you, Apollo's boy... in secret...

Ion:

Oh, what sweet words, if they are true!

Kreusa:

...and, like a mother, I clothed you in these baby clothes, a young girl's work, the faults of a shuttle that I used to have... and I didn't put you to my breast to suckle nor bathe you with my own hands but I've left you in a cave to die by the talons of birds of prey, to feast on you.

Ion:

Mother! What a dreadful thing you've done!

1500

Kreusa:

My fear and not my will made me do it!

Ion:

Ah, but I too! Did I not want to kill you also?

Kreusa:

Yes, harsh was our Fate then and harsh it is now. We roll constantly from joy to misery and the winds forever change. But enough of the past travails! They all end here! Now, my son, I sense a helpful wind has come and lifted us out of disaster!

1510

Chorus:

Let no one think that Fortune will not change direction when the right time comes!

Ion: *praying*

O, Fate! You who constantly change the luck of mortals! You give us misery one minute and joy the next. What extremity of fortune have I reached to try and kill my mother and so suffer unjustly? Are such events possible for a mortal to see within the span of just one day?

Prayer ended

Mother, in finding you I've found the sweetest finding; and your lineage gives me no shame.

He leads her a little away from the rest of the crowd

1520

Come with me, mother. I need to tell you many things, secret things, for your ears only. To have them covered by the darkness of silence.

Look here, mother! Could it be that you have suffered the error of those young virgins who do illicit love and then weigh the god with the blame? Is that because you're trying to escape that shame that you tell me I'm Apollo's son but in reality my father is just another mortal?

Kreusa:

I swear by Athena, goddess of victory, who once helped Zeus with her chariot in the battle against the Giants. Your father is no mortal my son. It is Lord Apollo, the one who nurtured you all these years.

1530

Ion:

Why then did he give his son away to another man? Why did he say I was Xuthus' son?

Kreusa:

He didn't say that. He only gave you to Xuthus just like any man would give his son to another as an heir to his property.

Ion:

Did the god speak the truth or were his prophecies all lies? This question alone bothers me, mother.

Kreusa:

Listen to what I just thought my son: The god is doing you an enormous favour by placing you in a noble house.

1540

If you were discovered to be the son of a god you'd never inherit our towers and our family's name. How could you, since I had not only kept the illicit sex a secret but I also tried to kill you? So for your own good he gave you to another father.

Ion: *aside*

I'm not accepting all this so easily. I'll go inside the temple and ask the god himself. Is he or is he not my father and is my father a mortal?

He heads towards the temple but is stopped by the goddess Athena (or her vision), at the highest point of the stage (the theologeion).

Ah! Look up there! Which goddess is that? Her face is like a blaze up against the sun.

1550

Mother, let us leave! We shouldn't look upon the gods unless the time is proper.

Athena:

Don't leave! I have not come to you as an enemy. I am your protector here and shall be in Athens. I have come from a land that carries my name. I am Pallas Athena and I am sent here by Apollo. He did not think it proper to come and stand before your eyes in case some reproach should stand between you.

So he sent me to utter his own words: It was she who gave birth to you and Apollo is your father.

1560

He has given you to Xuthus not to be his son but so that you would go into a king's house. But when all of this was revealed and afraid that you would be killed by your mother and she by you, he protected you by other means. The god intended to keep all this a secret and to announce it in Athens that Kreusa is your mother and Apollo is your father.

And now, closing my speech I wish you to listen to the oracles you came here to receive and the reason why I've yoked my chariot.

1570

Kreusa, take your son now and go to Kekrop's land, Athens and set him upon the throne. Since he is of the house of Erechtheus he has the right to rule in his own land and to win glory throughout Greece. He will have four sons, born of a single stock who will give their names to the four tribes who live on my Rock.

1580

The first son will be called Geleon. The second and third will give their names to the Hopletes, the Argades and the Aigores. In years to come, their children will build cities in the Cyclades islands and around the shores of the mainland and so give much power to my city. They will build colonies on the land opposite Europe and Asia. Those in Ionia will be called Ionians, taking the boy's name and they will earn great glory.

From you and Xuthus, Kreusa will be born a son by the name of Doros and from him will emerge the glorious city, Doris.

1590

Your second son, Achaïos, will be king of Pelops, near the shores of Rhium and the people there will be called by his name.

Apollo acted well in all of this.

Firstly he gave you a painless birth and one you could keep silent from everyone. Then, after you put the newborn into its baby clothes, he sent Hermes to rush it here and to raise him so that the baby would not die.

1600

And now, tell no one that he is your son, so that Xuthus might enjoy him as his own. As for you, Kreusa, take the blessings that belong to you and farewell. I promise you an end to your sorrows and joy from now on.

Ion:

O, daughter of Lord Zeus, Pallas Athena! I believe your words and now I know that I am the son of Apollo and of this lady here, something which I also believed earlier.

Kreusa:

And now do listen to me also:

I now praise Apollo whom I reproached before because I thought he had forgotten the child he gave me. I now embrace sweetly and bless the gates and shrine I once hated.

Athena:

And bless you for changing your mind about the god. Gods are always late but in the end they are just.

Kreusa:

My son, let us go home.

Athena:

Yes, do so and I will follow.

Ion:

Yes, goddess, you shall be a great protector.

Kreusa:

And a protector of my land.

Chorus:

Farewell, Apollo, son of Zeus and Leto.

Chorus:

Those who have a troubled house should show respect to the gods and they should have confidence in them because, in the end, they shall be rewarded, each according to his own worth.

Chorus:

As for those who are born evil, they'll never find happiness.

Exit All
END OF
EURIPIDES'
"ION"

