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BOOK VII

*The Story of Jason and Medea*

So over the deep the Minyans went sailing.
 They had seen Phineus, dragging out his years
 In everlasting night, and Boreas' sons
 Had driven the Harpies from the poor old king.
 They suffered much, but came at last with Jason,
 Their brilliant leader, to the muddy waters
 Where Phasis meets the sea. They went to the king,
 Claiming the golden fleece, by Phrixus given,
 And heard the dreadful terms, enormous labors.
 And the king's daughter burned with sudden passion,
 And fought against it long, and when her reason
 Could not subdue her madness, cried: "Medea,
 You fight in vain; there is some god or other
 Against you. I am wondering whether this
 May be the thing called love, or something like it.

Why should my father's orders seem too cruel?
 They are too cruel! A fellow I have hardly
 Much more than seen may die, and I am fearful!
 What for? Unhappy girl, shake from the bosom
 This burning fire, if you can. If I could do it,
 I would be more sensible, but some new power
 Holds me against my will, and reason calls
 One way, desire another. I see, approving,
 Things that are good, and yet I follow worse ones.
 Why do you burn for a stranger, royal maiden?
 Why think of marriage into a foreign circle?
 This land can give you something to love. If he
 Should live or die, let the gods decide; but let him
 Live! That I can pray for, even without loving.
 What has he done? Only the cruel-hearted
 Would not be moved by Jason's youth, his manhood,
 His noble birth. And even if these were lacking,
 His beauty would move a heart of stone—at least
 It has moved mine. And if I do not help him,
 The bulls will blow their fiery breath upon him,
 The enemy he has sown in earth attack him,
 The greedy dragon snatch and seize upon him.
 And this, if I allow it, will prove me daughter
 Of tigress, stony-hearted, iron-hearted!
 Why can not I look on as he is dying,
 Disgrace my eyes by looking on? Why can not
 I urge the bulls against him, and the warriors
 Sprung from the earth, and the unsleeping dragon?
 God grant me better grace! But this is not

A question of praying, but doing. Shall I then
 Betray my father's kingdom, rescue a stranger,
 Who, saved, sails off without me, marries another,
 Leaves me to punishment? If he can do it,
 If he can place another woman above me,
 Then let him die, the ingrate! No! He could not,
 He does not look as if he could, his spirit
 Is noble, his body handsome. I need never
 Fear he would cheat me, or forget my service.
 And he will give me a promise, and the gods
 Will be our witnesses; I shall compel them.
 So, you are safe; why do you fear? Make ready,
 Dawdle no more. Jason will owe you, always,
 One thing, himself, and he will join you to him
 In marriage, and through all the Grecian cities
 The women all proclaim how you have saved him.
 Do I sail away, then, leave my sister here,
 My father, brother, native gods and country?
 My father, though, is a savage, and my land
 Is barbarous, and my brother is a baby,
 My sister is on my side; as for the gods,
 The greatest god is the one in my own spirit!
 I shall not leave great things, but go to meet them:
 Great things—a savior's title, and the knowledge
 Of better soil than ours, cities whose fame
 Thrives even here, civilization, culture,
 And one thing more, a man, Jason, my husband,
 For whom I would give up gladly all the riches
 The rich world holds. I shall be dear to Heaven

As Jason's wife, and my crown shall reach the stars.
 But what about those what-do-you-call-em mountains
 That clash in the midst of the sea? what about Scylla
 With sea-hounds barking in Sicilian waters?
 And what about Charybdis, dread of sailors,
 Sucking waves down, spitting them up? Ah, holding
 That which I love, and safe in Jason's arms,
 I shall be borne over long oceans; safe
 In his embrace, I shall fear nothing, nothing,
 Or, maybe, fear a little for his sake.
 You think of him as husband: are you married,
 Already, Medea? You had better be watching
 What evil you draw near, and flee from crime
 While still you may." And, as she finished speaking,
 Before her eyes stood Duty, Modesty,
 Devotion, and Love was ready for flight, and beaten.

She went to Hecate's old altar, hidden
 Deep in a shady forest; she was strong,
 Now, and the flame dying down, and she saw Jason,
 And the flame rose. Her cheeks grew red, her face
 Was burning: as a spark, under the ashes,
 Glows at a breath and catches on the tinder,
 So now her love, smoldering, almost dying,
 You might have thought, blazed into flame again
 As Jason stood before her. He was handsome,
 Resplendent in that light; no wonder she loved him.
 She looked at him, as if she had never seen him,
 Thought him a god, infatuated girl,
 And could not turn her face away. He spoke,

The stranger, took her hand, asked her to help him,
 Promised her marriage, and she answered, weeping:
 "I see what I am doing; I shall never
 Be fooled by ignorance of the truth, but love.
 I will help you, save you—only, keep your promise!"
 He swore he would, by the triple goddess' altar,
 By any power known to the grove; he swore
 By Jove, who sees all things, by his own dangers,
 His hope of victory, and she believed him,
 Gave him the magic herbs, gave him instruction
 In how to use them, watched him happily turning
 Back to his lodging.

And the next day came

And all the people gathered in the acres
 Sacred to Mars, from the high places watching,
 And in their midst the king himself, in crimson,
 Holding the ivory sceptre. And they came,
 Bronze-footed bulls, fire-breathers, withering grass
 From their hot breath. As furnaces roar loud,
 As stones in the limekiln hiss with water on them,
 Such was the seethe and snort and roar and rumble
 From those burnt chests and throats. But Jason went
 Forward to meet them, and they lowered their faces
 Toward him, most terribly; the horns tipped with iron
 Came toward him, and they pawed the ground and bellowed.
 The Minyans stiffened in fear, and Jason
 Moved in, and did not feel the fire, the panting.
 The herbs, it seemed, had too much virtue in them.
 His hand went out to stroke the hanging dewlaps,

To stroke and pet them, to put the yoke upon them,
 Over the shoulders, made them draw the plough
 Through fields that never before had known a furrow.
 The Colchians were stunned, but Jason's people
 Cheered, and his spirit responded to the cheering.
 From the bronze helmet he took serpent's teeth,
 Sowing the ploughland with them, and earth softened
 The poison-saturated seeds he planted.
 They grew, took on new forms, the way a baby
 Grows in the womb, in its slow time, and only
 Comes forth when fully formed, so, in the earth,
 Their pregnant mother, these forms of men were growing,
 And when they rose, they rose on teeming soil,
 Hundreds and hundreds, and what is even stranger
 Rose in full armor, brandishing their weapons,
 And the people saw them, aiming spears at Jason,
 And their hearts shook and faces paled. Medea
 Had made him safe, she knew, but she was frightened,
 Bloodless and cold, to see one man the target
 Of all those pitiless spears. The herbs might fail,
 The charm prove weak, and so she sang a spell,
 Called secret arts to her aid. But Jason, hurling
 A giant rock among them, turned their fury
 From him to each other, and the earth-born brothers
 Wounded and killed each other. And they cheered him,
 Colchians and Minyans both, and caught him
 In arms, to lift him shoulder-high, and held him
 With eager arms. Medea would have held him
 With eager arms, victorious, but Medea

Had to be modest; Medea would have held him
 With eager arms, but there were people watching,
 There might have been remarks. What she could do,
 She did, and that was look upon him, happy,
 Not saying a word, just looking, and in her heart
 Thanking the gods, the charms and spells they gave her.

One task was left, to put to sleep the dragon
 Who never sleeps, the monster with the crest,
 The triple tongue, the crooked fangs, the guardian
 Of the golden tree. And Jason sprinkled on him
 Juice from Lethaeon herbs, chanting, three times,
 Words that bring quiet slumber, and put to rest
 Most angry seas, and stop swift-flowing rivers.
 Then sleep came into those eyes, which never before
 Had known of sleep, and Jason won the spoil
 Of gold, and in his pride took with him also
 Another spoil, the woman who helped him win it,
 And so at last came home to Iolchos' harbor,
 A victor with a bride.

Thessalian mothers,
 Thessalian fathers, for their sons brought home
 In safety, brought their offerings, burned incense
 In the flames of the altars, sacrificed the victim
 With gilded horns, as they had vowed. But Aeson
 Was not among them in their great rejoicing.
 Aeson, the father of Jason, was old and dying,
 Sick, weary with the weight of years. And Jason
 Spoke to Medea: "O my wife, I owe you

My safety, surely, and my return: your gifts
 Were greater than my hopes; how can I ask
 More than the all you have given me? But still,
 I ask one thing, if spells of yours can do it,
 And what can spells of yours not do? Take from me
 Some of my years, and give them to my father."
 He wept, and Medea, moved by his devotion,
 Thought, for a moment, of another father,
 Her own, Aeetes, whom she had forsaken,
 Shown little enough devotion to. She answered:
 "That is a wicked thing to ask, my husband.
 I can not do it, and I would not do it,
 Even if I could, give any one else a portion
 Of Jason's life; it is wrong of you to ask me,
 And Hecate would never allow it, never.
 But I will try to give you something better,
 Greater, than you have asked for. By my art,
 Not by subtraction of your years, I will try
 To add days to your father's life, if only
 Hecate will stand by me."

So she waited
 Three nights till the moon came full and the round circle
 Shone brightly down on the world, and then she went
 Out of the house in flowing robes and barefoot,
 Hair streaming over her shoulders; all alone
 Into the midnight stillness, while the birds
 And beasts and men reposed in deepest slumber,
 With never a stir in the hedges, never a rustle
 In the silent leaves, never a motion of air,

Only the glitter of starlight. And she raised
 Her arms to the stars, three times, and turning thrice,
 Thrice sprinkled her head with quick-caught running water,
 Thrice cried a wailing call, and knelt, and prayed:
 "O Night, most true to mysteries, O stars
 Whose gold with the moon's silver shines and follows
 The fires of day, O Hecate, triple goddess,
 Witness and helper of magic art and charm,
 O Earth, provider of the herbs of magic,
 O winds, O little breezes, O streams, O mountains,
 O lakes, O groves, O gods of the groves, O gods
 Of night, come, help me, help me, help me!
 You have before this, when I wanted, seen me
 Make streams return to their sources, while their banks
 Wondered; you have seen me still the angry oceans,
 Rouse the calm waters, drive the clouds away
 Or marshal them together, exile winds,
 Recall them; you have seen me break the fangs
 Of serpents with my charms and incantations,
 Root up the rocks from the soil, root up the oak-trees,
 Move forests, shake the mountains, make earth rumble,
 Call ghosts from graveyards. I can make the moon
 Darken, the car of the Sun turn pale at my singing,
 The Dawn turn pale at my poisons. The flame of the bulls
 Cooled at my order, with your aid; the necks
 Bent to the weight of the yoke. You helped me turn
 The seed of the Dragon, the savage earth-born brothers,
 To fight among themselves; you lulled the Dragon
 To slumber he had never known; you brought

The golden prize back to the cities of Greece.
 What I need now is a potion by whose power
 Old age may turn to the bloom of youth, regaining
 The early years once more. And you will give it.
 The stars flash bright in answer, and my car,
 Drawn by the winged dragons, is ready and waiting."
 The car, as she was speaking, had descended
 From upper air. She stood there, for a moment,
 Stroking the necks of the dragons, and then mounted,
 Shook the light reins, went soaring high, high over
 Tempe, towards lands she knew. All herbs that Ossa,
 Pelion, Othrys, Pindus, and Olympus
 Produced, she studied, and the ones that pleased her
 She cut with the bronze sickle or pulled up
 With roots still clinging to them. Many grasses
 She took from many river-banks, among them
 An herb that gives long life, not yet made famous
 By what it did to Glaucus (but that, as someone,
 A long time later, said, is another story).

Nine days, nine nights, her car went on its journey,
 And she came home, with the dragons sleek and shining
 In bright new skins, though nothing but the odor
 Of the gathered herbs had touched their ancient bodies.
 Come home, Medea halted: she would not cross
 The threshold, enter the door; she would not let
 Her husband touch her; under the open sky
 She built twin altars of turf, the one on the right
 To Hecate, the one on the left to Youth.
 She covered these with vervain and with branches

Grown in the wildwood, and dug ditches near them,
 Performed her rites, cutting a black ram's throat,
 Soaking the ditches with his blood, with wine
 Poured out of bowls, with milk still warm, and calling
 The gods of earth to come, and the dark monarch
 Who, with his stolen bride, rules over the shades,
 To linger in the shadows, not to hasten
 To take an old man's spirit from his body.

So the long murmur of her prayers appeased them,
 Gods high and low, and then she told the people
 To bring King Aeson and his tired old body
 Out under the open sky, and made him slumber,
 Full-deep, and lying like a dead man there
 On a bed of herbs. And she made Jason go
 Far off, and made the household go far off,
 And told them not to look, not to profane
 Her mysteries by watching. They obeyed her.
 And she, with streaming hair, went stepping round
 The burning altar-fires, and dipped her torches
 Where the blood ran in the ditches, and she lit them
 With altar-flame, and over Aeson sprinkled
 Triple purification, using water
 Three times, and fire three times, and, three times, sulphur.

And all the while the brew in the bronze cauldron
 Boiled and frothed white; in it were root-herbs gathered
 From Thessaly's lonely vales, and seeds and flowers,
 Strong juices, and pebbles from the farthest shores
 Of oceans east and west, and hoar-frost taken

At the full of the moon, a hoot-owl's wings and flesh,
 A werewolf's entrails also, and the fillet
 Of fenny snake, the liver of the stag,
 Long-lived, the eggs, the head, of the crow whose years
 Run for nine generations. All of these
 Were in the cauldron, and a thousand others,
 Things without names, out of the world of mortals,
 And the barbarian woman stirred them well,
 Mixing them, top to bottom, with a branch
 Of olive, dry and dead, and the old dry branch,
 Stirring the brew, turned green, and green leaves sprouted
 Along its length, and suddenly it was loaded
 With olive fruit: wherever the scum spilled over
 And the hot drops fell on the ground, the ground turned green,
 Soft grasses grew and flowers broke into blossom.
 And when Medea saw this, she drew her knife,
 Cut Aeson's wrinkled throat, and let the blood
 Run out, all the old blood run out, and filled
 The veins with the new mixture. Aeson drank it
 With his own mouth, and through his wound, and strangely,
 Strangely, and quickly, his beard was black again,
 No longer gray, his flesh filled out, the waxen
 Complexion changed, the wrinkles all smoothed over,
 He walked as young men walk, and in his wonder
 Remembered the forgotten self, that Aeson
 Of forty years ago.

Bacchus had seen
 This marvel from the sky, and learning from it
 That his old nurses might be young again,

Implored Medea's aid, and the boon was granted.

Mischief is hard, it seems, to put an end to.
 Medea, feigning trouble with her husband,
 Fled, as a suppliant, to the house of Pelias,
 Whose daughters, since the king was old, received her
 With welcome, and she, in cunning ways, deceived them
 With a false show of friendship. She told them stories
 About her magic, dwelling on her prowess
 In making Aeson young, and Pelias' daughters
 Began to hope that by Medea's magic
 Their father might have green youth again. They pleaded,
 Begged her to name her price, how great, no matter.
 Medea seemed to take some time about it,
 Keeping them in suspense—a serious business—
 But finally gave her promise. "And" she said,
 "To give you better proof, I bid you bring me
 The oldest ram in the flock, and watch me make him
 A lamb again." A wooly ram was brought her,
 Worn down with years no man could count, the horns
 Curving around the hollow of his temples.
 She cut his skinny throat, and the blade of the knife
 Was hardly red, so little blood was in him.
 She threw the carcass in a deep bronze kettle
 With powerful herbs and juices, and the body
 Shrank, and the horns grew smaller, and the years
 Melted away, or seemed to, and a thin bleating
 Simmered inside the kettle, and out came jumping
 A little lamb, all skippety-hop, all eager
 To find a milky udder.

Pelias' daughters

Believed, if not their eyes, at least her promise,
 Urged action on her. And three days went by,
 Three nights went shining by, and Medea, slyly,
 Built a quick fire under another cauldron,
 But this had nothing but clear water in it,
 No powerful herbs at all. A sleep like death
 Held Pelias, held his guardians, a sleep like death
 Caused by her magic spells and incantations.
 The daughters, with Medea, entered the chamber,
 Standing around his bed. "You sluggish creatures,
 Why do you dawdle now?" Medea asked them.
 "Draw swords, let his old blood out: or how can I
 Fill up his veins with youth? It is in your hands,
 His life, his season. Where is your devotion?
 Where are your silly hopes? Perform your duty!
 Take his old age away: the sword can do it,
 The sword can let the old blood flow!" Each sister
 Struck with perverse devotion; never a one
 Could watch the blow strike home; each turned her eyes;
 Blind girls with cruel hands, they struck, and, bleeding,
 He had strength enough to raise himself a little,
 To try to leave the bed. "What are you doing,
 Daughters?" he cried, "What arms you to this purpose,
 A father's murder?" All their strength and spirit
 Failed them; what more he might have said Medea ended
 With the knife at the throat, and the mangled body drowning
 In the boiling water.

And this she would have paid for,

Had not her dragon car been there to take her
 Swift through high air, past Pelion's shade and Othrys,
 Regions well-known because of old Cerambus,
 Whom the nymphs helped in time of flood, uplifted
 On wings above the drowned world of Deucalion.
 She passed Aeolian Pitane on the left
 With its long dragon made of stone; she passed
 The grove of Ida, where Bacchus changed a bullock
 Into a deer, disguising his son's thieving.
 She passed the tomb, the little heap of sand
 Where Corythus' father lay, on over the fields
 Which Maera used to frighten with her barking,
 Over Eurypylus' city where the women
 (That was in Cos) wore horns when Hercules left them.
 Over Apollo's Rhodes she flew, and over
 The isles of Ialysus, whose eyes that blighted
 Everything with their gaze, were darkened and drowned
 Through the hate of Jove deep under Neptune's waters.
 And she went on, beyond Carthaea's ramparts,
 That ancient town on Cea, where Alcidamas
 -Would marvel, some day, that his daughter's body
 Could give birth to a dove. Then Hyrie's lake
 She saw, and Tempe; that was the place where Cygnus
 Became a swan. Phyllius, the story ran,
 Had taken orders from him, tamed wild birds
 And a lion at his bidding, and brought them to him,
 And Cygnus was not satisfied, and told him
 To tame a wild bull also, and he did it,
 But would not give the bull to Cygnus, angry

At having his love refused. "You will be sorry!"
 Cygnus cried out, and leaped from a cliff. All men
 Thought he had fallen, but on snowy wings
 He floated in mid-air. His mother, Hyrie,
 Knew nothing of it, melted away in tears,
 Became the pool that bears her name. Nearby
 Lies Pleuron, where Ophius' daughter, Combe, also
 Made use of wings to flee her murderous sons.
 Her voyage was almost over; she saw the island,
 Fertile Calaurea, sacred to Latona,
 Whose king and queen were changed to birds. Cyllene,
 Far down, was on her right; there Menephron
 Would, later, be the lover of his mother,
 Coupling like animals. Far off from there
 She saw Cephissus' river, the god whose grandson
 Apollo changed to a seal, and Eumelus' home
 Mourning a son, now bird, dweller in air.

At last, on snaky wings, she coasted down
 To Pieria's spring, where, in the earliest days,
 So legend had it, men were born from mushrooms.
 Jason, by then, had a new bride; Medea
 Killed her with burning poisons, and dyed the sword
 Red in her children's blood, a dreadful vengeance,
 And fled from Jason's fury, borne aloft,
 Once more, on dragon wings, and came to Athens,
 Where Periphas, Alycone, and Phene
 Were skimming the air, new swallows, on level wings.
 And Aegeus took her in; that was enough
 To be his doom, but he was not contented:

He made himself not only her host, but husband.

And now came Theseus, his son, a stranger
To his own father, though from sea to sea
Well-known as hero, but Medea loathed him.
She brewed a poison for him; she had brought it,
Long since, from Scythian shores: it once had dripped
From a dog's jaws, that Cerberus, the hound
Of Hell's dark caverns, Cerberus, the hound
Whom Hercules dragged up, in chains of iron,
While the great dog, fighting, turned his eyes away
From daylight's flashing radiance. All three throats
Bayed in his fury, and from his triple jowls
White foam dripped on the fields of green, and grew,
Men say, and thrived in the rich strong soil, and gained
The power to hurt. Such noxious weeds they are
They will even grow on rocks, and people call them
The flower of stoniness.

This was the poison
Aegeus, through the cunning of his wife,
Gave to his son to drink, a father, treating
His son, an enemy. He had taken the cup,
Raised it, when Aegeus noticed on his scabbard
Emblems familiar to him, and struck the death
From his son's lips, and once again Medea
Rode in a whirling cloud of magic darkness
Out of the reach of death.

The son was safe,
The father happy, though he trembled still

With horror at the close escape. He kindled
Fire on the altar, and he brought rich offerings
For all the gods, and the axe struck at the victims,
Great-muscled bulls, whose horns were tipped with gold.
No happier day had ever dawned in Athens,
With councillors and common folk together
Sharing in song and wine and celebration:
"Hail, Theseus, most mighty! Marathon
Gives praise for the killing of the bull from Crete,
And Cromyon's farmers owe their fearless tilling
To the work of your great hands, and Epidaurus
Adds praise for the death of that club-swinging menace,
The son of Vulcan; and Cephissus' river
Is happy for the slaying of Procrustes,
And Ceres' town, Eleusis, gives rejoicing
For Cercyon's death. Your merciful hand slew Sinis,
The strong, who bent the tops of pine-trees over
For catapults, with human bodies as missiles.
The way is safe and open to the walls
Of Lelege, with Sciron slain, that Sciron,
The robber-bandit, whose dismembered bones
Not earth nor ocean would give a place to rest in
Until they hardened into cliffs, still keeping
The name of Sciron. Theseus, if we counted
Your years, your deeds, the deeds would far outnumber
The tally of years. Hail, hero! In your honor
We give our public praise, we drain our goblets."
So all the palace rang with loud rejoicing,
Homage and laud, and never a trace of sorrow

In all the town.

War Between Crete and Athens

And yet—how often it happens!—

No joy is ever complete, and sorrow always
Intrudes on happiness, so, to Aegeus,
Rejoicing had an anxious cloud above it.
Minos was threatening war; he was strong in soldiers,
Stronger in sailors, strongest in thirst for vengeance
Over his son, Androgeos, slain. More allies
Were what he craved, and over the seas he found them:
Anaphe came to aid him, Astypalaea,
One drawn by promise, one by threat; Myconos,
Low-lying, and the chalky-fields of Cimolus,
Scyros, where thyme grows wild, and marble Paros,
Betrayed by Arne, who never lived to spend
Her treasonable gold, but now, black-footed,
Black-winged, a daw, still keeps her passion for it.

There were some islands which did not help the Cretans:
Tenos and Andros, Didymae, Oliaros,
Gyaros, Peparethos, shining with olives.
These Minos gave wide berth to, steering leftward
To a land once called Oenopia, but now
Aegina, named by Aeacus for his mother.
There a great crowd came pouring out to meet him,
Minos the famous: Telamon came, and Peleus,
A younger man than Telamon, and Phocus,
Younger than either, and Aeacus came with them,

Not young at all, but slow with the weight of years.
“Why have you come here, Minos?” And the question
Brought home to the ruler of a hundred cities
The grievance of the father. He made answer:
“I take up arms for my son’s sake; I beg you
Share my devoted soldiering. I ask
Rest for his troubled spirit.” Aeacus answered:
“You ask in vain, for there are things my city
Cannot and will not do. We are close to Athens,
There are strong bonds between us.” “Those strong bonds
Will cost you plenty,” Minos said, and left him;
It was better, he thought, to threaten war than wage it,
Wasting his strength too soon. The Cretan navy
Had hardly left Aegina, when a vessel,
Under full sail from Athens, came to the harbor
With Cephalus and the greetings of his country.
The young men knew him, though the time was long
Since they had seen him last; they gave him welcome,
Brought him to Aeacus. Here was a man
Worth looking at, still handsome, and he came
Bearing the olive-branch, an elder statesman,
With younger aides on left and right. Their names
Were Clytos and Butes, and they were sons of Pallas.

After the formal greetings, Cephalus told them
What the Athenians hoped for, and he mentioned
The old alliance, adding that not Athens
Alone, but all of Greece, was Minos’ target.
They needed little persuasion; Aeacus, resting
His hand on the sceptre, spoke: “Ask not our aid,

But, rather, take it. Count our forces surely
 Part of your own. We are strong, we prosper;
 I have the men, to meet my need, to face
 All enemies. We thank the gods we have not
 The least excuse for absence." "Be it so,"
 Cephalus answered, "and I pray your city
 May grow and prosper. I was very happy,
 As I came here, to see such fine young men
 Come out to meet me, but I remember others
 When I was here before, and now I miss them."
 Aeacus sighed: "A better fortune followed
 A sad beginning; I am very sorry
 I cannot mention one without the other.
 I will try to make the story brief. They are
 All bones and ashes, now, those men you ask for.
 How great a part of my fortunes perished with them!
 A dreadful plague came on our people. Juno
 Hated our land, named for a rival of hers,
 But this we did not know; we thought the cause
 Was mortal, and we fought with every resource
 Of medicine against it, but the evil
 Had too much strength for us. In the beginning
 Was darkness, and a murk that kept the summer
 Shut in the sullen clouds, four months of summer,
 Four months of hot south wind, and deadly airs.
 Fountains and lakes went dry, serpents came crawling
 Over deserted fields, thousands on thousands,
 Tainting our streams with poison. The animals
 Went first, the dogs and birds, the sheep and cattle,

The beasts of the wild woods. The unlucky farmer
 Stood in dumb wonder as the strong bulls stumbled,
 Fell, in the furrow, and the wool fell off
 The feebly bleating sheep, with wasted bodies.
 The race-horse, whose proud spirit used to bring him
 Home winner over the dust of the track, trains off,
 Trails off, to nothing, droops and sags in his stall.
 The boar forgets his raging, and the deer
 No longer trusts his swiftness, and the bear
 Lets the weak herds alone. A life in death
 Seizes them all. In woods and fields and highways
 Lie bodies rotting, and the air is all
 One smell of death. Even the very buzzards,
 Jackals, gray wolves, refused to touch this carrion.
 Contagion thickens, and the plague, grown stronger,
 Fastens on men, on the walls of the great city.
 Men's vitals seem to burn: the proof is given
 By a red flush and difficult breath; the tongue
 Thickens, and lips are cracked and dry; the sick
 Can not lie still in bed, they cannot bear
 The weight of covers over them; they try
 To get some coolness from the ground, and lie there,
 And get no coolness from the ground, which burns,
 Itself, from the heat of their fever. Even our doctors
 Fare as the others do, or worse; the nearer
 One comes to the sick, the greater his devotion
 In looking after others, the more quickly
 He comes to the share of death. As hope of safety
 Departs, men see no end, or one end only

To suffering; abandoned, they care for nothing,
 There is nothing to care for. So, with no compunction,
 They lie in the spring, the streams, any basin of water,
 In rabid thirst, cured only by death, not drinking.
 And many, too feeble to rise, die in the water
 And others drink that water. In delirium
 Many poor souls leap from their beds, and stagger
 Too weak to stand, and others, too weak for leaping,
 Roll out on the ground. They flee their household gods,
 Since no man's home is sacred. Each man's home
 Seems to him Death's abode. Since no man knows
 The cause, he blames his little habitation.
 You could see them walking along the roads, half lifeless,
 As long as they could totter; you could see them
 Sobbing, and lying on the ground, and rolling
 Their dull eyes upward with a last weak effort;
 You could see them holding out their arms to heaven,
 Breathing their last wherever death had seized them.

What was my feeling then? As any man would,
 I hated life and longed to join my people.
 Wherever I looked was a great heap of bodies
 Lying like rotten apples or wormy acorns.
 You see Jove's temple, from its great stairs rising?
 Who did not come there, bringing his silly incense?
 How many times a husband for his wife
 Prayed there, or father for son, and even in prayer
 Gone down to death before the prayer was finished,
 The incense in the dying hand still smoking!
 The sacrificial bulls, brought to the temples,

While priests were praying over them and pouring
 Wine over their horns, went down and never waited
 The sacrificial axe. I had this happen
 Myself, when I was making sacrifice
 To Jove, for kingdom and country and my sons.
 The victim bellowed, and before I touched it,
 Dropped dead, and had so little blood it barely
 Turned the knife red, and the entrails had no markings
 Of truth or the gods' will, for this corruption
 Ate even into the entrails. The temple doors
 Were choked with corpses, and the very altars
 Reeked with death's hateful smell. Some hung themselves
 Driving the fear of death away by death,
 By going out to meet it. No one buried
 The dead in the old way; there were too many.
 They lay on the ground, or high on funeral pyres
 Were stacked, all honorless. There was no honor
 By now for dead men; people fought for pyres,
 Stole fire to burn them with; there were no mourners.
 The souls, unmourned, went wandering out, the matrons,
 The brides, the old, the young. There was no more room
 For graves, there was no more wood for funeral pyres.

Stunned, shaken, I cried: 'Great Jove, unless men lie
 Calling you lover of Asopos' daughter,
 Aegina, whose name we have given to our country,
 If you are not ashamed of being our father,
 Give back my people to me, or strike me down
 To darkness with them!' And the thunder sounded,
 The lightning flashed, as if he heard. I took it

For favorable omen, a binding pledge.
 There was an oak nearby, a great tree spreading
 Its branches wide, a holy tree, a scion
 Of old Dodona, and I saw a column
 Of ants along its wrinkled bark, grain-bearers,
 Each with its tiny jaws holding its load,
 Keeping its path. I wondered at their numbers,
 Praying: 'O kindly Father, grant our people
 May equal theirs, and fill our empty walls!'

The leaves all rustled in the windless air,
 And I was frightened, but I kissed the ground,
 The tree; I did not dare admit that I
 Was hoping, but I was, and in my mind
 I kept my prayers alive, and night came on
 And sleep prevailed over our anxious bodies.
 I saw the oak again, and all those branches,
 And all those little, creatures, shaking, stirring
 With the same motion as before, and falling,
 The ants, grain-bearing, on the ground. They seemed
 Suddenly to grow larger, larger, always,
 To raise themselves, to stand upright, to lose
 Their wiry shape, their feet, and their black color,
 To take on human limbs and form. Sleep left me,
 And I thought little of my dream, lamenting
 The helplessness of the gods. But a noise sounded,
 Confusion in the palace, a stir, a murmur,
 And I thought I was hearing voices I had known
 Unheard for long in my hallucination,
 But Telamon came running, 'Father, father!'

He cried, flung open the door, 'There is more to see
 Than you could ever believe or dare to hope for!
 Come out!' I came, and with my waking eyes
 Saw men as I had seen them in my slumber,
 Coming to me, and greeting me as ruler.
 I offered thanks to Jove, and gave the city
 In shares to my new people, assigned them fields
 Forsaken by their previous possessors,
 And gave them a name, The Myrmidons, a title
 True to their origin. You have seen their bodies,
 And they still have their customary talents,
 Industry, thrift, endurance; they are eager
 For gain, and never easily relinquish
 What they have won. These men will follow you
 To the wars; you will find them, both in years and courage,
 Good steady men. When the east wind shifts to the south,
 They will be ready to sail."

The lingering day
 Ended in feasting, and the night in slumber,
 But the wind still blew from the east in the golden morning,
 There was no use spreading sail for the homeward voyage.
 The sons of Pallas, attending Cephalus,
 Went to the king, but Aeacus was sleeping,
 And Phocus was the one who gave them welcome
 As they drew near the threshold; the other princes
 Were marshalling the warriors. Into the court,
 Into the rich apartments, Phocus led them,
 And they sat down together, and Phocus noticed
 The javelin Cephalus carried, with head of gold,

And a shaft made out of a wood he did not know.
 There was a little idle conversation,
 Broken by Phocus. "I am fond of hunting,"
 He said, "I know the woods, but I have never
 Seen such a shaft; I am curious about it.
 Surely, if it were ash, it would be yellow,
 If it were cornel, knotty: what it comes from
 I do not know. I do know I have never
 Seen one more beautiful, or better balanced."
 One of the brothers answered: "You will wonder
 More at its use than at its beauty; always
 It flies unfailing to the mark you aim at,
 Chance never guides its flight, and it comes flying
 With blooded barb, back to the hand that flung it."
 Then Phocus, more than ever, kept asking questions:
*Why was it so? where did it come from? who
 Had been the giver of such a prized possession?*
 Cephalus answered all except one question,
What had it cost him? For a while, in silence,
 He grieved for his lost wife, and then, with tears,
 Began the story.

The Story of Cephalus and Procris

"This weapon makes me weep,
 It will make me weep, as long as ever I live.
 Would I had never owned it, the destruction
 Of my dear wife, of both of us together.
 Her name was Procris, or, if you have heard
 Of Orithyia, the ravished Orithyia,

My Procris was her sister, and, if you ask me,
 More worthy of ravishment than Orithyia.
 Her father, King Erectheus, joined her to me,
 Love joined her to me; people called me happy,
 And I was happy, or lucky, but the gods
 Had other ideas about it, or I might
 Be happy to this day. We had been married
 Only two months, and I was out one morning
 Spreading my nets for the wide-antlered deer,
 When the golden goddess of the morning saw me
 From the top of Mount Hymettus, where the flowers
 Are always blossoming. The golden goddess,
 The Dawn, who drives the shadows away, beheld me,
 Carried me off, against my will. She may
 Forgive me for telling the truth, but I loved Procris,
 I was in love with Procris, though Aurora
 Is surely lovely with the blush of roses
 Shining upon her, holding the double portals
 Of day and night, and nourished by the nectar.
 In silence and in speech I worshipped Procris,
 Kept talking, always, of her, of our marriage,
 Of our first night together, till the goddess
 Was angry at me. 'You ungrateful fellow!
 Stop your complaining! Keep your precious Procris!
 Still, if I know one thing about the future,
 You will come to wish that you had never had her!'
 And so she sent me home, in rage and anger,
 And as I went, I did a little thinking,
 Turning over, in my mind, the goddess' warning.

I began to be afraid: had Procris kept
 Her marriage vows? Her beauty and her youth
 Pointed one way, her character another.
 Still, I had been away; I was returning
 From one who was no paragon of virtue,
 And a man in love, besides, is always fearful.
 So I decided to give myself a reason
 To have a grievance; I would test her honor
 With costly gifts. In this Aurora helped me,
 Changing my form—I seemed to feel the change—
 And so, unrecognized, I came to Athens,
 Entered my house. The house itself seemed blameless,
 No sign of anything wrong, but only anxious
 For its lost master. Using a thousand ruses,
 All kinds of trouble, I came at last to Procris,
 And when I saw her, wanted to abandon
 The silly test. It was not easy for me
 Not to confess the truth, and not to kiss her
 As she deserved being kissed. She was sorrowful,
 But never was a woman lovelier
 In sorrow than Procris, longing for her husband.
 Imagine, Phocus, how beautiful she was,
 Her very sorrow most becoming to her!
 What use is there in telling you how often
 Her chastity rejected my temptations?
 ‘I keep myself for one,’ she would always tell me,
 ‘Wherever he is, I save my pleasure for him.’
 What more could any sensible man have wanted?
 I was not satisfied, I kept on fighting

To wound myself. I promised her a fortune
 For just one night, and as I doubled the promise
 I made her hesitate, and then, victorious,
 Wickedly so, exclaimed: ‘Ha, evil woman!
 I was no real seducer, but your husband,
 Both witness and detective!’ She said nothing,
 Never a word, but a shamed and beaten woman
 Fled from her treacherous husband and his house,
 And hating him and all the race of men
 Went wandering the mountains, all devoted
 To the worship of Diana, virgin huntress.
 I was lonely, and my passion burned the fiercer
 In loneliness; I pleaded for her pardon,
 Confessed that I had sinned and might have yielded,
 As she had, if such gifts were offered to me.
 There was, it seemed, some satisfaction for her
 In my confession: she came back to me,
 And so we spent delightful years together.
 As though the gift of her sweet self was nothing,
 She brought me more, a hunting hound Diana
 Had given her, swiftest of all in coursing,
 And the javelin you see here in my hands.
 The story of both gifts is worth repeating.

Oedipus, Laius’ son, had solved the riddle
 No man had fathomed, and the Sphinx lay broken,
 But a second monster loosed itself on Thebes,
 And all the country-dwellers fled in terror
 From that fierce beast that ravaged herds and people.
 We, young men all, came and spread wide our nets

Around the fields, but the monster overleapt them.
 We loosed the hounds; they might as well have followed
 Birds in the air, so then they came and asked me
 To turn my Laelaps loose (that was the name
 Of the hound that Procris gave me). He was straining
 Against the leash, against the strap that held him.
 We had hardly let him go when he was gone
 Out of our sight completely. The warm dust
 Still held his footprints, but we could not see him.
 No spear was ever swifter, no arrow ever,
 No leaden bullets from the curved sling flying.
 I climbed a hill-top, watched the strange pursuit:
 The beast was almost caught, in the grip of the jaws,
 Then gone again, not running straight, but doubling,
 Wheeling, eluding the charge, and Laelaps, after him,
 Has him, almost, then seems to have him, snapping
 At empty air. I got the javelin ready,
 Poised it, looked down a moment, to fit my fingers
 Into the thong, looked up, and saw—a wonder!—
 Two marble statues in the plain, one fleeing,
 One in pursuit, or so it seemed. Some god,
 If there was any god there, must have willed it
 That neither one should lose.”

As he fell silent,
 Phocus began to prompt him: “And the javelin?
 What could have been the matter with the javelin?”
 So Cephalus went on: “The matter, Phocus,
 Was that my grief began in happiness.
 What joy it is, oh son of Aeacus,

To call to mind that blessed time, those days
 When we were fortunate, she in her husband,
 I in my wife. We loved each other dearly,
 Even Jove’s embrace was less to her than mine was,
 And I would not have traded her for Venus,
 So equally each heart burned for the other.
 I was young then; I loved hunting; early mornings,
 When the sun came over the mountains, off I went
 To the deep woods, and no companions with me,
 No hound, no horse, no nets. I trusted fully
 In javelin alone, and when my hand
 Had all the game it needed, I came back
 To the cool shadows, and the stir of air
 From the cool valleys, waiting for the breeze,
 Wooing the breeze, that came to cool and rest me.
 I even gave the breeze a name. ‘Dear Aura,’
 For that was what I called her, I remember,
 ‘Dear Aura, come and comfort me; receive me
 In your most welcome graces, and allay
 The heat I burn with!’ And I may have added
 Further endearments (as my fate would have it),
 Saying, ‘You are my greatest joy, my comfort,
 My recreation, and I love the woods
 And solitudes because they bring you to me.
 How sweet your breath on lips and cheek! Dear Aura!’
 And someone overheard me, and thought Aura
 Was the name of a girl or a nymph, and that I loved her,
 And ran to Procris with a reckless story
 Of my unfaithfulness, told in a whisper.

How credulous love is! Procris believed it,
 Fell in a faint, revived, and called herself
 Unhappy, doomed unfairly, all the while
 Complaining of my faithlessness, and driven
 By nothing more than idle talk to fear
 Nothing at all, an empty name, no more,
 As if a living woman was her rival.
 Still, she would doubt, and hope, would not believe it,
 It would take more than a story to convince her,
 She said, she would not believe her husband guilty
 Until she caught him in the act.

Next morning

In the early light, I left the house again,
 Hunting, and sought the woods, and the hunt was good,
 And I lay resting on the grass, and called
 'Come to me, Aura!' And I thought I heard
 A sigh, or a moan, in answer. 'Dearest, come!'
 I cried, and the fallen leaves made a slight rustling.
 I thought I heard a beast and flung the javelin.
 It was Procris, not a beast, who cried in anguish.
 I knew her voice, rushed to the sound, and found her
 Dying, her clothes all bloodstained; she was trying,
 Poor thing, to pull from her wounded breast the weapon
 She once had given me. With loving arms
 I raised her body, so much dearer to me

Than was my own; I tore aside the robes,
 Bound up the wound, and tried to staunch the blood,
 Begging her not to leave me, with the guilt
 Of her death for my curse. Her strength was going,
 But in her dying effort she could manage
 To speak a little: 'By the gods
 Above, by my own gods, and by the bonds
 We shared in bed together, dearest husband,
 I beg you, if you ever had reason to love me
 As I love you, so much so that my love
 Has brought me death, never allow this Aura
 Inside our room!' And so I understood,
 Mistake, misunderstanding of the name,
 And made my explanation, but what good
 Was explanation then? She fell back dying,
 Her last strength going with her blood, but looking,
 While she could look at anything, at me,
 Whose lips took her last breath, unhappy spirit.
 And yet, her face seemed, almost, to be smiling.
 I think she died at peace."

The story ended

With every one in tears, as Aeacus
 Entered with both his sons, and the new soldiers
 Strong in their armor, for Cephalus to welcome.

GLOSSARY AND INDEX

The index that appeared in the print version of this title was intentionally removed from the eBook. Please use the search function on your eReading device to search for terms of interest. For your reference, the terms that appear in the print index are listed below.

SINCE THIS index is not intended as a complete mythological dictionary, the explanations given here include only important information not readily available in the text itself. Names in parentheses are alternative Latin names, unless they are preceded by the abbreviation *Gr.*; *Gr.* indicates the name of the corresponding Greek divinity. The index includes cross-references for all alternative names.

ACHAMENIDES. Former follower of Ulysses, rescued by Aeneas ACHELOUS. River god; rival of Hercules for the hand of Deianira ACHILLES. Greek hero of the Trojan War

ACIS. Rival of the Cyclops, Polyphemus, for the hand of Galatea

ACMON. Follower of Diomedes

ACOETES. A faithful devotee of Bacchus

ACTAEON

ADONIS. Son of Myrrha, by her father Cinyras; loved by Venus

AEACUS. King of Aegina; after death he became one of the three judges of the dead in the lower world

AEGEUS. King of Athens; father of Theseus

AENEAS. Trojan warrior; son of Anchises and Venus; sea-faring survivor of the Trojan War, he eventually landed in Latium, helped found Rome

AESACUS. Son of Priam and a nymph

AESCULAPIUS (*Gr.* Asclepius). God of medicine and healing; son of Apollo

AESON. Father of Jason; made young again by Medea

AGAMEMNON. King of Mycenae; commander-in-chief of the Greek forces in the Trojan War

AGLAUROS

AJAX. Son of Telamon; brave Greek warrior in the Trojan War

ALCMENA. Mother of Hercules

ALCYONE. Wife of Ceyx

ALTHEA. Queen of Calydon; mother and murderer of Meleager

AMMON. A spring in the Oasis of Siwa

ANAXARETE. A princess loved by Iphis, a youth of common birth

ANDROMEDA

ANIUS. King of Delos; priest of Apollo

APHRODITE. *See* Venus

APOLLO (Phoebus). God of music, poetry, medicine, and prophecy; also god of the sun

ARACHNE. A girl turned into a spider by Minerva

ARCADY. A pastoral region in the central Peloponnesus, Greece

ARCAS

ARDEA. City of Latium, turned into a heron

ARETHUSA. A woodland nymph changed into a fountain ARGUS. Hundred-eyed giant ordered by Juno to watch Io ARTEMIS. See Diana

ASCANIUS. SeeIulus

ATALANTA. A beautiful, swift-footed, warrior maiden

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METAMORPHOSES

ATHAMAS

ATHENA. See Minerva

ATLAS

AUGUSTUS. See Caesar

AURORA (*Gr.* Eos). Goddess of dawn

BACCHUS (*Gr.* Dionysus). God of wine

BATTUS

BAUCIS. Wife of Philemon; rewarded by Jove for hospitality to him

BOREAS. God of the north wind

BYBLIS

CADMUS

CAENEUS. The woman, Caenis, changed into a man by Neptune CAESAR. Family name of GaiusJulius and later of Augustus CALCHAS. Priest of Apollo

CALLIOPEThe Muse of eloquence and epic poetry

CALYDON . Ancient Greek city in Aetolia

CANENS. A river nymph; wife of Ficus

CASSANDRA. Daughter of Priam and Hecuba (she possessed prophetic power which no one would believe)

CAUNUS

CENTAUR. Monster with the head, trunk, and arms of a man, and the body and legs of a horse; offspring of Ixion

CEPHALUS. Husband of Procris, sister of Procne and Philomela CERES (*Gr.* Demeter). Goddess of agriculture, mother of Proserpina CEYX. Son of Lucifer; King ofTrachis

CHARYBDIS. Guardian of the whirlpool off the coast ofSicily

CHIONE. Daughter of Daedalion; loved by Apollo and Mercury

CHIRON. Wisest of all Centaurs, trainer of Achilles, Aesculapius, and Hercules

CINYRAS. Father of Adonis by his daughter, Myrrha

CIPUS

CIRCE. Enchantress who turned meninto beasts CLAROS. Town in Asia Minor, with an oracle of Apollo CLYMENE . Mother of Phaethon, son of

Apollo

CRONUS. **See** Saturn

CUMAE. Ancient city in southwestern Italy

CUPID. Son of Venus; god of love

CYANE. A nymph changed by Pluto into a pool; the pool

CYBELE (*Gr.* Rhea). Goddess of nature; sometimes considered mother of the gods

CYGNUS King of the Ligurians who turned into a swan and was placed among the stars. Son of Neptune; Trojan hero

CYLLARUS Handsome young centaur

CYPARISSUS

DAEDALION. Brother of Ceyx

DAEDALUS. Artist and inventor who built the labyrinth for King Minos in Crete DAPHNE. A nymph who evaded Apollo's advances by becoming a laurel tree

DEIANIRA. Second wife of Hercules, whom she accidentally killed

DELOS. Small island in the Aegean; birthplace of Diana and Apollo DELPHI. City in Greece, site of the famous oracle of Apollo DEMETER. **See** Ceres

DEUCALION. A son of Prometheus, he and his wife Pyrrha were the only survivors of the flood inflicted by Zeus because of man's wickedness

DIANA (*Gr.* Artemis). Sister of Apollo; goddess of the moon and of hunting; patroness of virgins

DIOMEDES. Greek hero in the Trojan War; founder of the city Arpi

DIONYSUS. **See** Bacchus

DRYOPE

METAMORPHOSES

ECHO

EGERIA. Wife of Numa

ENVY

ERYSICHTHON. King who was punished for scorning the gods

EUROPA. Phoenician princess EURYDICE. Wife of Orpheus EURYTUS. **A centaur**

EVENUS. Flooding river which nearly caused Hercules to lose his wife Deianira

FAUNUS. **See** Pan

GALANTHIS. Alcmena's maid, who was turned into a weasel

GALATEA. A Nereid, loved by Cyclops. Pygmalion's statue, turned into a live woman by Venus

GANYMEDE. Cupbearer to the gods

GLAUCUS. A sea-god

HECUBA. Wife of Priam; queen of Troy; mother of Hector, Paris, Polyxena, Polydorus

HERCULES. Son of Jove and Alcmena, who was known for his great strength

HERMAPHRODITUS

HERMES. *See* Mercury

HERSILIA. Wife of Romulus

HESPERIA. Daughter of Cebren, a river-god

HESTIA. *See* Vesta

HIPPODAME. Wife of Pirithous

HIPPOLYTUS. Son of Theseus; name changed to Virbius

HIPPOMENES. Winning suitor of Atalanta

HORA. Name of Hersilia, wife of Romulus, after her deification

HYACINTHUS

HYLONOME. Fairest of the female centaurs

IANTHE

ICARUS. Son of Daedalus

ILIA (Rhea Silvia). Mother of Romulus

INDIGES. Name of Aeneas after deification

INO. Sister of Bacchus' mother

IO. Daughter of Inachus; maiden loved by Jove, turned into a heifer to protect her from the jealousy of Juno

IPHIGENIA. Daughter of Agamemnon, who offered her as sacrifice to Diana

IPHIS. A girl in Crete. A youth of common birth in love with a princess, Anaxarete

IRIS. Goddess of the rainbow; assistant to Juno

ITYS. Son of Procne and Tereus

IULUS (Ascanius). Son of Aeneas; king of Latium and Alba

JASON. Leader of the Argonauts, who, with the help of Medea, got the Golden Fleece

JOVE (Jupiter; *Gr.* Zeus). Son of Saturn; chief of the gods, ruler of gods and men

JUNO (*Gr.* Hera). Wife of Jove; queen of the gods; goddess of marriage

JUPITER. *See* Jove

LAELAPS. Cephalus' hound, turned to stone during a chase

LAOMEDON. Founder of Troy; father of Priam LATONA (*Gr.* Leto). Mother of Apollo and Diana LATREUS. Centaur killed by Caeneus

LETO. *See* Latona

LEUCOTHOE LICHAS

LYCAON. A king of Arcadia, whom Jove turned into a wolf

MACAREUS. Greek warrior who traveled with Ulysses

MAENAD. Female follower of Bacchus

MARS. God of war

MEDEA. Sorceress who helped Jason get the Golden Fleece

MEDUSA

MELEAGER. An Argonaut, son of Althea, queen of Calydon

MEMNON. Trojan warrior; son of Aurora

MERCURY (*Gr.* Hermes). Messenger of the gods, agent of Jove

MIDAS. King of Phrygia

MINERVA (*Gr.* Pallas Athena). Goddess of wisdom, technical skill, and invention; patron goddess of Athens

MINOS. King of Crete; son of Zeus by Europa

MORPHEUS. God of dreams; son of the god of sleep

MYRMIDONS. A tribe of Thessalian warriors, transformed from ants into human beings

MYRRHA. In love with her father, Cinyras; mother of Adonis

MYSCELUS. Greek who founded the Italian town of Crotona

NARCISSUS

NEPTUNE (*Gr.* Poseidon). God of the sea

NESSUS. Centaur, who loved Deianira, wife of Hercules

NESTOR. Wise old counselor, who fought with the Greeks at Troy

NIOBE. Mother whose children were slain by Latona and Apollo because of her arrogance; she was turned into a stone by Jove

NUMA. King of Rome following Romulus

NUMICIUS. River-god in Latium, who purified Aeneas

OCYRHOE

ODYSSEUS. See Ulysses

ORITHYIA. Wife of Boreas

ORPHEUS. Musician whose music possessed magic power

OSSA. A mountain in Greece, in Thessaly near Pelion

PAEON. Son of Apollo; possessor of magic healing ability

PALLAS. See Minerva

PAN (Faunus). God of fields, forests, wild animals, flocks, and shepherds, represented with the legs, ears, horns, and beard of a goat

PANCHAIA. Island in the Arabian Sea, famous for perfumes

PARIS. Son of Priam; killer of Achilles; his kidnaping of Helen, wife of Menelaus, caused the Trojan War

PELEUS. Father of Achilles, by the goddess Thetis

PELIAS. King of Thessaly; uncle and guardian of Jason, murdered by Medea

PELION. A mountain in Greece, in Thessaly near Ossa

PENTHEUS

PERDIX. An inventor, turned into a partridge by Minerva to save him from the wrath of Daedalus

PERSEPHONE. See Proserpina

PERSEUS. Son of Zeus and Danae; slayer of Medusa PHAEDRA. Wife of Theseus; mother of Hippolytus PHAETHON. Son of Apollo

PHILEMON. Husband of Baucis; the couple were rewarded by Jove for their hospitality

PHILOMELA. Daughter of Pandion; transformed into a nightingale

PHOENIX. Legendary Egyptian bird which could renew its life after dying by fire

PICUS. Son of Saturn; father of Faunus; grandfather of Latinus; early king of Latium

PIRITHOUS. King of the Lapithae

PLUTO. God of the underworld, called Hades or Dis

POLYDORUS. Son of Priam, king of Troy; murdered by Polymestor

POLYMESTOR. King of Thrace during the Trojan War

POLYPHEMUS. A Cyclops, in love with Galatea

METAMORPHOSES

POLYXENA. Daughter of Priam who was betrothed to Achilles

POMONA. A wood-nymph in Latium

POSEIDON. See Neptune

PRIAM. Last king of Troy, who reigned during the Trojan War; father of Hector and Paris

PROCNE. Daughter of Pandion; wife of Tereus; transformed into a swallow

PROCRIS. Wife of Cephalus; sister of Procne and Philomela PROSERPINA (Gr. Persephone). Wife of Pluto; daughter of Ceres PYGMALION. King of Cyprus; sculptor; fell in love with a statue

PYRAMUS

PYRENEUS. King of Thrace

PYRRHA. See Deucalion

PYTHAGORAS. Greek philosopher and mathematician, 6th century B.C.

PYTHON. A huge serpent born soon after the flood; killed by Apollo

QUIRINUS. Name of Romulus after his deification

RHEA. See Cybele

RHEA SILVIA. See Ilia

ROME

ROMULUS. Legendary founder of Rome

SALMACIS. A fountain whose waters make men weak

SAMOS. Greek island off Asia Minor; birthplace of Pythagoras

SATURN (Gr. Cronus). God of agriculture; son of Uranus and father of Jove

SCYLLA. Daughter of King Nisus; lover of King Minos. Guardian of a dangerous rock in the Straits of Messina

SEMELE. Daughter of Cadmus; mother of Jove's son, Bacchus

SIBYL. A prophetess consulted by Aeneas

SYRIN X. Nymph chased by Pan; just as he caught her, she turned into reeds

TEMPE. A lovely valley, sacred to Apollo, located between Mounts Ossa and Olympus, in Thessaly, Greece

TEREUS. Descendant of Mars; husband of Procne

THEBES. Ancient city of Greece in Boeotia THEMIS. Goddess of law and justice THESEUS. Hero of Attica; son of Aegeus

THESSALY. Ancient region in northeastern Greece

THETIS. Mother of Achilles; chief of the Nereids

THISBE

THRACE. Ancient region of the Balkan Peninsula, between Macedonia and the Black Sea

TIMOLUS. Mountain in Lydia, Asia Minor TIRESIAS. Blind soothsayer of Thebes TISIPHONE. One of the Furies

TROY. Ancient city in northwestern Asia Minor; scene of the Trojan War

ULYSSES (*Gr.* Odysseus). One of the Greek chiefs in the Trojan War

URANIA. The Muse of astronomy

VENUS (*Gr.* Aphrodite). Goddess of love and beauty

VERTUMNUS. A satyr in love with the nymph Pomona

VESTA (*Gr.* Hestia). Goddess of the hearth and the hearth fire

VIRBIUS. *See* Hippolytus

VULCAN (*Gr.* Hephaestus). God of fire and metalworking; husband of Venus

ZEUS. *See* Jove