

SOR JUANA INÉS DE LA CRUZ

LOVE IS THE GREATER LABYRINTH

Translated by the UCLA Working Group on the *Comedia* in Translation and Performance:

Marta Albalá Pelegrín
Paul Fitzgibbon Cella
Barbara Fuchs
Sarah Grunnah
Richard Huddleson
Rafael Jaime
Saraí Jaramillo
Rachel Kaufman
Robin Kello
Laura Muñoz
Javier Patiño Loira
Amanda Riggle
Rhonda Sharrah
Cheché Silveyra
Aina Soley Mateu
Samantha Solis
Elizabeth Warren

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The Comedia in Context

The “Golden Age” of Spain offers one of the most vibrant theatrical repertoires ever produced. At the same time that England saw the flourishing of Shakespeare on the Elizabethan stage, Spain produced prodigious talents such as Lope de Vega, Tirso de Molina, and Calderón de la Barca. Although those names may not resonate with the force of the Bard in the Anglophone world, the hundreds of entertaining, complex plays they wrote, and the stage tradition they helped develop, deserve to be better known.

The *Diversifying the Classics* project at UCLA brings these plays to the public by offering English versions of Hispanic classical theater. Our translations are designed to make this rich tradition accessible to students, teachers, and theater professionals. This brief introduction to the *comedia* in its context suggests what we might discover and create when we begin to look beyond Shakespeare.

Comedia at a Glance

The Spanish comedia developed in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. As Madrid grew into a sophisticated imperial capital, the theater provided a space to perform the customs, concerns, desires, and anxieties of its citizens. Though the form was influenced by the Italian troupes that brought *commedia dell'arte* to Spain in the sixteenth century, the expansive corpus of the Spanish comedia includes not only comic plays, but also histories, tragedies, and tragicomedies. The comedia is as diverse as the contemporary social sphere it reflects.

While the plays offer a range of dramatic scenarios and theatrical effects, they share structural and linguistic similarities. Roughly three thousand lines, they are usually divided into three different *jornadas*, or acts. Plots move quickly across time and space, without much regard

for the Aristotelian unities of action, time, and place. The plays are written in verse, and employ different forms for different characters and situations: a lover may deliver an ornate sonnet in honor of the beloved, while a servant offers a shaggy-dog story in rhymed couplets. The plays' language is designed for the ear rather than the eye, with the objective of pleasing an audience.

The *comedia* was performed in rectangular courtyard spaces known as *corrales*. Built between houses of two or three stories, the *corral* offered seating based on social position, including space for the nobles in the balconies, women in the *cazuela*, or stewpot, and *mosqueteros*, or groundlings, on patio benches. This cross-section of society enjoyed a truly popular art, which reflected onstage their varied social positions. A *comedia* performance would have included the play as well as songs, dances, and *entremeses*, or short comic interludes, before, after, and between the acts. As the first real commercial theater, the *corral* was the place where a diverse urban society found its dramatic entertainment.

What's At Stake on the Comedia Stage?

Comedias offer a range of possibilities for the twenty-first century reader, actor, and audience. The plays often envision the social ambitions and conflicts of the rapidly-growing cities where they were performed, allowing a community to simultaneously witness and create a collective culture. In many *comedias*, the anonymity and wealth that the city affords allow the clever to transcend their social position, while wit, rather than force, frequently carries the day, creating an urban theater that itself performs urbanity. An important subset of comedias deal with topics from national history, exploring violence, state power, the role of the nobility, and religious and racial difference.

The comedia often examines social hierarchies that may be less rigid than they first appear. Whether the dominant mode of the play is comic, tragic, historical, or a mixture, its dramatic progression often depends on a balancing act of order and liberty, authority and transgression, stasis and transformation. Individuals disadvantaged by class or gender often challenge the social hierarchy and patriarchy by way of their own cleverness. The *gracioso* (comic sidekick), the *barba* (older male blocking figure), and the lovers appear repeatedly in these plays, and yet are often much more than stock types. At their most remarkable, they reflect larger cultural possibilities. The comedia stages the conflicting demands of desire and reputation, dramatizing the tension between our identities as they are and as we wish them to be.

Among the many forms of passion and aspiration present in the comedia, female desire and agency are central. In contrast to its English counterpart, the Spanish stage permitted actresses to play female roles, thus giving playwrights the opportunity to develop a variety of characters for them. While actresses became famous, the powerful roles they played onstage often portrayed the force of female desire. In Lope's *The Widow of Valencia*, for example, the beautiful young widow Leonarda brings a masked lover into her home so as not to reveal her identity and risk her reputation or independence.

The presence of actresses did not diminish the appeal of the cross-dressing plot. One of Tirso's most famous plays, *Don Gil of the Green Breeches*, features Doña Juana assuming a false identity and dressing as a man to foil the plans of her former lover, who is also in disguise. Dizzying deceptions and the performance of identity are both dramatic techniques and thematic concerns in these plays. Gender, like class, becomes part of the structure the *comedia* examines and dismantles, offering a powerful reflection on how we come to be who we are.

Remaking Plays in Our Time

In Lope's witty manifesto, the *New Art of Making Plays in Our Time*, he advises playwrights to stick to what works onstage, including plots of honor and love, strong subplots, and—whenever possible—cross-dressing. For Lope, the delight of the audience drives the process of composition, and there is little sense in a craft that does not entertain the public. Lope's contemporaries followed this formula, developing dramas that simultaneously explore the dynamics of their society and produce spectacle. For this reason, early modern Hispanic drama remains an engaging, suspenseful, often comic—and new—art to audiences even 400 years later.

The *Diversifying the Classics* project at UCLA, engaged in translation, adaptation, and outreach to promote the comedia tradition, aims to bring the entertaining spirit of Lope and his contemporaries to our work. Rather than strictly adhering to the verse forms of the plays, we seek to render the power of their language in a modern idiom; rather than limiting the drama as a historical or cultural artifact, we hope to bring out what remains vibrant for our contemporary society. Given that these vital texts merit a place onstage, we have sought to facilitate production by carefully noting entrances, exits, and asides, and by adding locations for scenes whenever possible. Although we have translated every line, we assume directors will cut as appropriate for their own productions. We hope that actors, directors, and readers will translate our work further into new productions, bringing both the social inquiry and theatrical delight of the comedia to future generations of audiences.

A Note on the Playwright

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz was born in Mexico in the mid-seventeenth century (c.1650), the illegitimate daughter of a Spanish father and a *criolla* mother (Mexican-born, but of Spanish descent). She showed an early love of learning, mastering Latin, Greek, and Nahuatl (an indigenous language of central Mexico) at a young age, and pursued the study of philosophy, religion, the arts, and other subjects throughout her life.

Eventually she entered a convent in order to continue her intellectual pursuits free from the constraints of marriage, and soon distinguished herself as a prolific author and scholar. Her works were published and performed widely, as far away as Spain and the Philippines, and she was hailed in her lifetime as “la Décima Musa”—“the Tenth Muse.” However, her fame was also met with controversy, especially her outspoken critiques of the misogynistic culture that limited the opportunities for women in her time.

For many years Sor Juana was affiliated with the court of the Viceroy of New Spain, producing entertainments for religious festivals and state events on commission, in addition to poetry on proto-feminist themes. *Love is the Greater Labyrinth* (*Amor es más laberinto*) is one of only three full *comedias* we have from her. She wrote the play for the new viceroy’s birthday celebration on January 11, 1689 with her collaborator, Juan de Guevara, a priest and author about whom little else is known today.

The play shows Sor Juana’s grasp of the courtly mores of her day and lightly pokes fun at some of their excesses, transposed to ancient Greece, while at the same time offering the kind of spectacular entertainment (with musical interludes, masked balls, and swordfights) then in fashion with her patrons. It also demonstrates her education and Baroque style, featuring intricate verse forms in the original Spanish and complex poetic conceits which make use of everything

from Neoplatonic love theory to philosophical paradoxes and classical allusions. The labyrinthine plot and its complicated tonal shifts show an author confident in her powers and well-versed in the *comedia* tradition pioneered by Spanish luminaries such as Lope de Vega and Pedro Calderón de la Barca.

Sor Juana died of a plague in 1695, having been forced at the end of her life to give up her studies, but leaving behind a substantial body of work which continues to live on and find new audiences.

Introduction

Rhonda Sharrah and Aina Soley Mateu

Like the Minotaur itself, *Love is the Greater Labyrinth* (*Amor es más laberinto*, 1689) is a chimerical mix of elements, skillfully weaving the myth of Theseus and the Cretan labyrinth with threads of romance, humor, and sociopolitical commentary. The play demonstrates the variety and playfulness of Baroque drama in the late seventeenth century and provides a dazzling showcase for the pen of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, the famous Mexican philosopher, poet, playwright, and nun. The result is a mythological play that finds its Greeks acting suspiciously like seventeenth-century courtiers, matching wits and swords in messy love pentangles as their servants crack sly metatheatrical jokes behind their backs. The plot moves nimbly between emotional registers, from a ranting tyrant spewing death threats one moment to a flirtatious musical interlude at a masked ball the next, as Sor Juana explores the epic consequences of emotion run amok. This new translation of *Love is the Greater Labyrinth*, her final play, provides the English theatrical canon with another example of Sor Juana's timeless brilliance.

THE PLOT

After defeating Athens in war, **Minos**, the tyrannical ruler of Crete, institutes a yearly tribute of fourteen Athenian youths to be sacrificed to the Minotaur, a beast that lives deep inside the labyrinth in his palace. **Teseo**, prince of Athens, is selected as one of the tributes, chosen by lots. He is taken to Crete as a prisoner, accompanied by his servant, **Tuna**. Minos is delighted by this opportunity to avenge his beloved dead son, Androgeus, killed in Athens. Neither the

intervention of Athens' ambassador, **Licas**, nor Teseo's account of his own heroic deeds soften Minos' desire for bloodthirsty vengeance.

Meanwhile, the two princesses of Crete, **Fedra** and **Ariadna**, both fall in love with Teseo at first sight. They decide to save him from his fate. Fedra tells Teseo not to lose hope, since Fortune might yet save him. She stops short of confessing that she loves him, mindful of decorum, but he falls for her as well. Ariadna overhears this, becomes jealous, and decides that she will save Teseo before her sister does, in order to redirect his love towards her.

Baco, the prince of Thebes who has been courting Ariadna, overhears her talking about how she loves the man who is courting her sister (meaning Teseo), and wrongly deduces she is talking about **Lidoro**, the prince of Epirus who has been unsuccessfully wooing Fedra. Baco's servant **Vinny** suggests that Baco should make Ariadna jealous by pretending to court Fedra. Baco reluctantly attempts this, until Lidoro walks in and jealously challenges him to a fight. Minos interrupts them and Fedra makes up a story to cover for them, as the act ends with asides from everyone about their tortured feelings (along with Vinny's mockery for their dramatic behavior).

As Act II opens, Teseo has been led into the labyrinth, presumably to his death, but Minos remains overcome by grief over his son and thirst for vengeance. Unbeknownst to him, Teseo has escaped the labyrinth thanks to Ariadna's thread. Ariadna and Fedra organize a masked ball at the temple of Diana in Minos' honor. Each sends her servant with a gift for Teseo, so they can recognize him at the dance. Fedra sends **Laura**, with a sash, while Ariadna sends **Cintia**, with a feather. Teseo and Tuna have a talk about both women courting Teseo—Teseo feels indebted to Ariadna because she saved his life, but he loves Fedra, so he decides to go with his feelings. He takes the sash and gives the feather to Tuna.

Once at the ball, Teseo overhears Fedra asking about the sash, approaches her, and they dance. Baco recognizes Ariadna by her dress, approaches her, and they dance. Lidoro mistakes the servant Laura for Fedra and dances with her. Tuna has Ariadna's feather, but while dancing with Cintia, he drops it on the floor. Baco picks it up and recognizes it as Ariadna's. Baco thinks Ariadna has given the feather to Lidoro because of what he overheard earlier. Baco wears the feather, and Ariadna, believing he is Teseo, arranges a meeting with him later that night. Lidoro sees Teseo talking to Fedra and thinks he is Baco, since he is under the impression Baco is courting Fedra. Everyone but the princesses (and their servants) still believe Teseo is dead. Meanwhile, Fedra arranges a meeting with Teseo later that night.

The dance ends, and Ariadna and Fedra, separately, wait outside in the garden for Teseo. When Teseo arrives, he runs into Ariadna. Because it's dark, he thinks she is Fedra and begins a romantic conversation with her, in which they both confess their feelings without ever mentioning each other's names. Fedra overhears them and believes that Teseo loves Ariadna. Teseo, however, eventually refers to Ariadna as "divine Fedra" and Ariadna realizes his mistake. Ariadna decides to pretend to be Fedra and rejects Teseo harshly, much to his confusion.

Baco arrives, thinking he is going to meet Ariadna, and both Ariadna and Teseo leave, afraid her father Minos is about to discover them. Baco sees Fedra and mistakes her for Ariadna in the dark. Fedra, for her part, thinks Baco is Teseo and decides to be cruel to him to test his devotion. Ariadna, returning, sees Baco talking to Fedra and assumes he is Teseo, causing her to feel further betrayed. However, as she overhears their discussion, she realizes that Fedra was the person who sent Teseo the sash as a token, and this mysterious man with the feather—her own token—is someone else. Ariadna, then, comprehends that Teseo has chosen Fedra over her.

Teseo, also eavesdropping, soon realizes that Fedra thinks she is talking to him instead of Baco, so he decides to interrupt their conversation and Baco's attempts to woo her.

Teseo leaps out of hiding and begins to fight Baco, as the two princesses call for their servants to bring a light. Teseo and Tuna flee into the labyrinth to avoid being discovered just as Lidoro, drawn by the sound of swords clashing, enters and begins to fight Baco himself. Laura and Cintia enter with the torches, and all the characters remaining onstage finally recognize each other. Fedra and Ariadna are relieved Teseo has escaped and attempt to deflect attention from their own compromising position outside at night by chastising Lidoro and Baco for their indecorous behavior. Lidoro and Baco privately swear vengeance on each other, and each character closes the act lamenting that they are now truly caught in the labyrinth of love.

Act III begins with Baco seeking to challenge Lidoro to a duel, because he now believes Lidoro is courting both sisters. While Baco's servant Vinny is on his way to Lidoro with a letter bearing the challenge, he runs into Tuna. Vinny thinks Tuna serves Lidoro, and gives him the letter, assuring him Lidoro will reward him for his services. Secretly, Vinny hopes to avoid being punished as the messenger delivering bad news. Tuna assumes the letter is from one of the two princesses, and Vinny, hoping to encourage him to take over the delivery, tells him it is from Fedra. Tuna is excited about his upcoming reward.

Before Tuna can find Lidoro, Teseo enters and assumes Tuna is bringing him a letter from Fedra. When Teseo reads it, however, he finds it is a challenge to a duel and assumes it was intended for him. He takes out his anger on Tuna (just as Vinny feared) and goes to fight Baco in the garden, leaving the letter behind. Tuna, who can't read, thinks Fedra must have named Lidoro in what he believes is a love letter, causing Teseo's anger. Nonetheless, Tuna still hopes for a reward from someone, so he reseals the letter and goes off again to find Lidoro.

Meanwhile, Baco is delayed from going to the duel by Minos, who has news that Athens, outraged by Teseo's supposed death by Minotaur, is sending an army to destroy Crete in revenge. They leave to discuss the situation just before Teseo arrives at the garden for the duel. Lidoro, who has finally received Baco's challenge, arrives as well. They each mistake the other for Baco and begin to fight. Teseo kills Lidoro, but then realizes he will be in great danger if he is found next to Lidoro's body, so he flees the scene. Baco comes back and finds Lidoro dead. The captain of the guards, **Tebandro**, and his soldiers enter to find Baco next to Lidoro's body, and Baco's letter to him challenging him to a duel over the princesses. Despite Baco's efforts to deny his involvement, Tebandro accuses him of murder and leaves to notify King Minos, since only he can arrest a foreign prince such as Baco. Baco decides to escape Crete to avoid being sentenced for a murder he didn't commit. He heads for the harbor, where he has ships ready.

Ariadna enters, with Tuna at her heels updating her that it was Teseo who killed Lidoro. Ariadna fears this will lead to Teseo's execution and resolves to help him escape and flee with him, since she will be blamed for helping him escape the labyrinth in the first place. She continues to hold out hope that he will reward her assistance and ingenuity by marrying her. She tells Tuna to go find Teseo and bring him to the balcony facing the gardens, and they leave.

Fedra and Teseo enter, with Teseo explaining to Fedra that he had to kill whom he thought was Baco (still not knowing it was really Lidoro), as he had somehow discovered that Teseo was still alive and in love with Fedra. Though still indebted to Ariadna, Teseo declares his love for Fedra and asks her to go back with him to Athens, where they will both be safe. Fedra agrees, finally declaring her love for him but still careful to maintain decorum, and tells him to hire an Athenian boat that she will pay for with her jewels. They agree to meet in the garden, and Teseo leaves.

Baco enters to bid farewell one last time at Ariadna's window. Ariadna comes out on the balcony and, mistaking him for Teseo, tells him they must depart at once since he is wanted for murder. Baco is unsure why Ariadna has had a change of heart and wants to be with him now, but decides to go along with this stroke of luck. As Baco is waiting for Ariadna to come down from the balcony to the garden, he runs into Fedra who is there to meet Teseo. Mistaking each other for the one they are waiting for, they leave together. Teseo arrives just in time to meet Ariadna, whom he mistakes for Fedra, and they also leave for the harbor together.

Tuna appears, chasing Teseo to deliver Ariadna's message. Fedra and Baco, who are walking ahead of Teseo and Ariadna, hear them approaching and hide. Tuna addresses Teseo by name, so that Fedra realizes the man she is hiding with cannot be Teseo. Ariadna realizes that Teseo has mistaken her for Fedra, while Baco realizes he is not with Ariadna. Fedra calls for Teseo's help, since she thinks she is being kidnapped by a stranger. Teseo and Baco start fighting and, in the darkness and confusion, Fedra and Ariadna switch places while trying to locate the real Teseo.

Vinny enters, chased by Tebandro and some guards, and they all stumble upon Baco and Teseo's fight. Tebandro and the guards try to stop the fighting, as King Minos arrives and orders everyone to be arrested. Upon realizing his daughters were fleeing with two strange men, Minos becomes furious. Baco reveals himself and intervenes on behalf of Ariadna. Teseo, although surprised because he thought Baco was dead, also reveals himself to save Fedra. This causes a general shock as all present (except for Fedra, Ariadna, and Tuna) believed Teseo had been killed in the labyrinth. Minos, in his wrath, orders all of them executed, including his daughters for their immoral behavior.

Just then, soldiers rush in to inform Minos that Athenians have breached the palace and Crete's fall is imminent. Licas, the Athenian ambassador, returns and declares he will kill Minos to avenge Athens' prince, but Teseo reveals himself and announces he intends to spare Minos' life because the king's daughters saved him from the Minotaur. With this gesture of mercy, Minos' insatiable desire for revenge finally dies, and he agrees to let Teseo marry Fedra. Ariadna, realizing she has no hope of marrying Teseo, settles for Baco, who is cleared of Lidoro's murder. Vinny and Tuna ask for Cintia and Laura's hands, respectively. The End!

REMAKING THE MYTH

In *Love is the Greater Labyrinth*, Sor Juana freely adapts the Greek myth of Theseus and the Cretan Minotaur, adding and subtracting elements of the story in order to fill out her intricate love plot and make it into the kind of witty, modern entertainment her courtly audience would enjoy. Her adaptation choices enhance both the roles of the female characters and the political significance of the conflicts, which scholars have interpreted as Sor Juana's subtle warning against the temptations of tyranny directed to the newly arrived Viceroy Gaspar de la Cerda y Mendoza, and, perhaps, the male religious and secular authorities who sought to repress her voice throughout her life.

The basic setting and background of the action follows the myth fairly closely. King Minos of Crete has gone to war with Athens to avenge the death of his son Androgeus. As the victor, Minos demands a yearly tribute of Athenian youths to sacrifice to the Minotaur, a fierce beast that is half-bull, half-man. Minos sends the sacrifices into the bloodthirsty Minotaur's lair, a labyrinth so complex that no one could ever find their way out, doubly ensuring his victims' doom. Theseus (Teseo), the prince of Athens, finally arrives and defeats the monster, ending

Minos' reign of terror. All this is present in the play, but Sor Juana tellingly omits some details, such as the misogynistic implications of the Minotaur's birth, while adding and amplifying others, including the agency of the Cretan princesses, Ariadne (Ariadna) and Phaedra (Fedra).

The myth provides an origin for the Minotaur which portrays uncontrolled female sexuality as a threat to order and humanity itself. After King Minos refuses to sacrifice a pure white bull to the ocean god Poseidon, the offended god makes Minos' wife Pasiphaë fall in love with the bull. She then gives birth to the monstrous Minotaur, which wreaks havoc in the kingdom until Theseus kills it, having already proved his manly prowess by seducing Minos' daughter Ariadne and procuring her help. The play, however, makes no mention of Pasiphaë or the Minotaur's birth. The monster instead becomes a symbol of Minos' unchecked rage and barbarity, which the king has allowed to undermine his own humanity.

In this he is contrasted with Prince Teseo, whose rationality and mercy are emphasized. In Act I, Teseo narrates his life story with a focus on victories over bloodthirsty villains and beasts who terrorized citizens with their excessive appetites and moods (Corynetes, Creon, Sciron, Procrustes, etc. – ll. 452-513). Teseo displays his selfless virtue and self-control when he recounts his aid to his friend Pirithous, whose wife was abducted by centaurs. Even when Teseo briefly succumbs to the temptation to abduct the beautiful Helen, he swiftly returns her. He says he was moved by pity to “restore her to her land and her family,” even when “[he] had in [his] grasp / the prize of her beauty.” He calls this “that greatest of victories: / to triumph over myself” (ll. 533-42). He also notes that he eschewed “a tutor in courtly manners” and preferred instead to gain distinction through his actions rather than his noble birth (ll. 418-26). He eloquently sets forth a theory of the natural state of freedom in man, displaying the good judgment befitting a hero associated with Athens, the city ruled by the goddess of wisdom, Athena.

Teseo's most famous triumph in myth is slaying the Minotaur and escaping the labyrinth, so an audience member might expect to see this heroically reenacted during the climax of the play. Instead, Sor Juana subverts expectations by placing the battle entirely offstage between acts. The labyrinth and its monster are often mentioned, but never explicitly shown. (A production may choose to have a dumb show or some other depiction of the battle in between Act I and Act II, or maintain the somewhat tongue-in-cheek withholding of the monster-fighting spectacle.) It becomes clear through this unexpected swerve in the narrative that the play is more interested in emotional, rather than physical, challenges, and heroism of a different sort.

Scholars suggest the comparison between Teseo and Minos could have been designed by Sor Juana to impart political and moral advice to the incoming viceroy. Minos, of course, is the ranting, over-emotional, vengeful tyrant that no enlightened ruler would ever want to emulate. Teseo, on the other hand, behaves valiantly but selflessly, offering himself as a sacrifice for his people in the beginning and finally showing extraordinary mercy to Minos, which ends the cycle of violence and inaugurates a new age for the kingdom. Teseo also distinguishes himself through his constant concern for the courtesy and gratitude he owes to the female characters. Throughout the play, Teseo mostly follows the princesses' lead—first with Ariadna's life-saving plan to escape the labyrinth and then with Fedra's remarkably assertive attempts to arrange an amorous rendezvous with him. This is opposed to Minos, who rages about his daughters' supposedly lost virtue and goes to nearly fatal lengths to avenge his tarnished patriarchal honor. Nonetheless, Minos' grief over his dead son is his driving motivation throughout, which makes him somewhat sympathetic. His lack of self-control has driven him away from being the "generous king" and "glorious lawgiver" that Teseo describes in the beginning (ll. 344-50), but once his "desire for revenge is undone by [Teseo's] reason" he may be able to return to that earlier self (l. 3178).

The addition of Fedra to the Cretan section of the story is another major change. In the myth, Ariadne is indeed in love with Theseus and helps him in the hopes that he will marry her. He takes her off the island with him, only to abandon her on another island, Naxos, where she then catches the eye of Dionysus (Bacchus, or Baco here), the god of wine. Dionysus makes Ariadne his bride while Theseus later marries her sister, Phaedra (though their marriage also ends tragically, due to Phaedra's deceit and adultery). In the play, Fedra is present from the beginning and there is a genuine love triangle (plus some other complications with the princesses' suitors, Lidoro and Baco).

There is also a greater emphasis on comparison between the two sisters. Ariadna proves herself to be resourceful and assertive by saving Teseo and attempting to advance their relationship, drawing scholarly comparison to a female author figure who pulls the strings of the plot. However, Fedra is in the end a better match for Teseo because she shows the kind of emotional self-restraint that he praises in the beginning and embodies at the end when he spares her father's life. Ariadna is more volatile throughout, but she is not a villain, nor is she punished, except by not getting the man she wants. Baco, though no longer a god, proves his devotion to Ariadna throughout the play despite various setbacks and seems to be a good match for her. In the end, they return to their status quo at the beginning, with Ariadna charmed by Baco's "handsome looks / [which] lead [her] bit by bit / to return his fine affections" (ll. 131-3).

Sor Juana uses the myth of the labyrinth loosely, as a source of larger-than-life characters to populate her world and as a metaphor for the overwhelming and disorienting power of love, for good or ill. For theaters today, it can offer design inspiration for productions (palaces, temples, robes and laurels, labyrinth motifs) and establish intertextual connections with other mythological plays, which were a robust genre in Spanish *comedia* drawn from a well of cultural

references shared across Europe (see Theseus in another tale of confused, wandering lovers: *A Midsummer Night's Dream*). Sor Juana's playful attitude toward adapting the classics is matched by her metatheatrical engagement with the audience, as discussed below.

METATHEATRICAL PLAY

Theater was a very popular diversion in seventeenth-century Spain, and people from all backgrounds would often gather at the *corrales de comedia* to watch the latest play. The audience was well acquainted with recurring themes, plots and characters, and plays often contained self-referential remarks or jokes written with this sophisticated audience in mind. Characters would comment on the action, make judgements about a situation, or make jokes that broke the fourth wall. Much of this metatheatrical play falls to the *gracioso*, who often voices what the author assumed would be the thoughts of the audience.

The *gracioso* is the hero's sidekick, belonging to a lower class than the protagonist and usually portrayed as their servant. *Graciosos* are often characterized as street smart or at least the ones in charge of cracking self-aware jokes. In *Love is the Greater Labyrinth*, the role of the *gracioso* is embodied by Tuna and, to a lesser extent, Vinny. Both of these characters take turns commenting on the development of the play in a metatheatrical key, as if momentarily realizing they exist within a performance. Thus, Vinny complains in Act I about having to enter the stage with his master Baco, only to be sidelined: "Oh that I might have my revenge, / for having to keep my mouth shut. / I came on stage and didn't say a word!" (ll. 616-8). Similarly, Vinny is the one to notice at the end that "the lackeys and maids were left in the wings, / with no time for love-plots" (ll. 3239-40), referencing the fact that, although *comedias* often feature servants parodically mirroring the love scenes of the upper-class characters, *Love is the Greater Labyrinth*

leaves little space for the development of such a subplot (although Tuna is a constant flirt). Vinny points this out in a tongue-in-cheek gesture that successfully, and swiftly, ties up the romance of all four servants. It is a last-minute arrangement, true, but its metatheatricality makes it an entertaining flourish at the end.

The main voice for the audience is, without a doubt, Tuna. His remarks, especially at the beginning of Act II, anticipate what spectators might expect in that section of the play. After the first act, which closely follows the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur, *Love is the Greater Labyrinth* shifts completely into full farcical mode, with plenty of misunderstandings, masked balls, and secret meetings under the cover of darkness, all of which lead to mistaken identities and unexpected consequences. When Teseo receives both Fedra's and Ariadna's invitations to the dance, Tuna muses: "This must be the second act / of this comedy of love, / where the beauties come in pairs" (ll. 1327-9). He also predicts the mix-ups that will take place in the aforementioned ball, when Teseo gives Ariadna's feather to Tuna himself: "They've got a big party planned, / where princes and nobles will mingle / in masks, costumes and finery, / so no one will know who they are" (ll. 1186-9). And he is right: for the remainder of the play, the main characters rarely know whom they speak to at any given moment, a situation often exacerbated by their self-conscious performance of courtly love conventions, such as when Baco responds to Fedra asking who he is with a complicated metaphor of himself as a sunflower, rather than simply stating his name (ll. 2822-7).

Tuna observes the events on stage and shares his conclusions with Teseo, yet this role as a partial spectator also connects him with the audience, placing him in a liminal space between performance and reality. The *gracioso*, despite his lower status, proves he sees more clearly than the upper-class characters through his metatheatrical sense, and delights the audience by pointing

out tropes they too would recognize, proving their own discernment. At the same time, by speaking through Tuna and Vinny, Sor Juana demonstrates her grasp of conventions of the stage.

Throughout the play Sor Juana cleverly mixes the mythical and the modern, subtly commenting on her contemporary society while winking at humanity's perennial foibles. With metatheatrical humor and a fresh take on a classical story, *Love is the Greater Labyrinth* is a lively display of Sor Juana's impressive learning and her keen eye for the eternally relevant complexities of life and love, from ancient Greece to colonial Mexico and all the way to today.

PRODUCTION HISTORY

The play originally premiered on January 11th, 1689, celebrating the appointment of Gaspar de la Cerda y Mendoza as viceroy of New Spain, as Mexico was known under Spain's imperial rule. The play was also performed in 1708 in Manila, then part of the Spanish East Indies, at royal festivities celebrating the birth of Prince Luis Felipe of Spain.

In 2018, an adaptation of *Amor es más laberinto* by Gilberto Guerrero, Paola Izquierdo and Ortos Sayuz, was presented at the Benito Juárez Theatre and at the cultural center Foro Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, both in Mexico City. In 2019, the Almagro Festival hosted a production by the Mexican theater company Teatro de la Rendija. This same company also performed *Amor es más laberinto* in Mexico City in 2020, as a part of the Mexican Compañía Nacional de Teatro's initiative *En compañía de la compañía*. In September 2021, a Zoom reading of this English translation, directed by Melia Bensussen, was performed as part of a series presented by Diversifying the Classics and Red Bull Theater in New York, which also included an online reading of the play's original Spanish text by Repertorio Español.

ABOUT THIS TRANSLATION

The original text used for this translation is based on two editions of *Amor es más laberinto*:

Vern Williamsen (1998) and Celsa Carmen García Valdés (2010).

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Pronunciation Guide

Each vowel in Spanish has just one sound. They are pronounced as follows:

a – AH e – EH i – EE o – OH u – OO

The underlined syllable in each word is the accented one.

Minos: Mee-nohs

Ariadna: Ah-ree-ahd-nah

Fedra: Feh-drah

Teseo: Teh-seh-oh

Baco: Bah-koh

Lidoro: Lee-doh-roh

Licas: Lee-kahs

Tebandro: Teh-bahn-droh

Laura: Low-rah (ow as in ouch)

Cintia: Seen-tee-ah

infanta: een-fahn-tah

Characters:

MINOS, king of Crete
ARIADNA, princess, his daughter
FEDRA, princess, his daughter
TESEO, prince of Athens
TUNA, Tesco's servant, a *gracioso*
BACO, prince of Thebes
VINNY, Baco's servant
LIDORO, prince of Epirus
LICAS, ambassador of Athens
TEBANDRO, captain of the guard
LAURA, Fedra's servant
CINTIA, Ariadna's servant
GUARDS & SOLDIERS
CHORUSES & MUSICIANS

Love is the Greater Labyrinth

ACT I

SCENE 1

*Enter ARIADNA and FEDRA, princesses, and LAURA and CINTIA, their servants.
CHORUSES sing offstage*

CHORUS 1	<i>Behold the beauty of Fedra, the loveliness of Ariadna. More than one can triumph in the contest of Love. Love leaves no destruction in its wake, yet bestows victories as it takes shape.</i>	
ARIADNA	Who has requested this music, Cintia?	
CINTIA	Who could it be but Lidoro, the prince of Epirus and Baco, the prince of Thebes, who serve you so extravagantly, and vie to express their longing, singing their sorrows in the voice of another? And since you and Fedra are sisters in both blood and beauty, they celebrate you with equal praises, unlike those fools who believe they can praise one by offending the rest.	10
FEDRA	That is courtly and gallant. But now they sing again. Listen.	20
CHORUS 2	<i>In Prince Teseo, Fortune reveals that surrender requires no battle. Love leaves destruction in its wake, yet bestows no victories as it takes shape.</i>	
ARIADNA	What's this? What sad voices, singing as one, contradict what came before?	
CHORUS 1	<i>When sovereign beauties display their brilliance, neither is vanquished, both are victorious.</i>	30

FEDRA	How different are the feelings these harmonies express: those ones sing of suffering for love, while these actually suffer as they sing.	
CHORUS 2	<i>Teseo dies so cruelly, so great is his woe, none other should triumph where he cannot go.</i>	
ARIADNA	How proud he looks! His fierce defiance proves this punishment is unfit for one so noble.	40
CHORUS 1	<i>Beauty such as theirs could never be surpassed. They rival only each other, each her sister's match.</i>	
FEDRA	A fine composition. Their claim couldn't be more precise, nor the argument more sound.	50
CHORUS 2	<i>The hero bemoans not death, but only dishonor. Oh, for one of such high birth to face a death so common!</i>	
ARIADNA	Well said. A noble soul laments an unsuitable death more than death itself.	
ARIADNA & CHORUS 2	<i>Love leaves destruction in its wake, yet bestows no victories as it takes shape.</i>	
FEDRA & CHORUS 1	<i>Love leaves no destruction in its wake, yet bestows victories as it takes shape.</i>	60
ARIADNA	Why these sorrowful verses?	
LAURA	They warn of this citadel, which begins with a palace and ends in a labyrinth so intricate that though your feet might trace it, your mind will never grasp it.	

No one has ever escaped
the confusion of its rooms,
all indistinguishable. 70
Their architect designed them
with such clever artifice
that they meld into each other.
Each one seems like the others,
all the same, yet each distinct.
It serves as a prison
where your father takes his revenge
on the Athenians,
offering the Minotaur—
that monster of contradictory form— 80
a feast of human blood.¹
Yet that prison needs no gate
beyond the labyrinth itself.
Fortune turned its wrath
against Athens this year,
so that a sad fate befell its prince.
His family grieves
as your father prepares to deliver him
to that wild monster.
They expected a young man 90
blessed with so many graces
to live a blissful life,
or at least to die a death
worthy of his martial disposition
and illustrious deeds.
Yet this is what the Fates have made of him:
though he ruled a kingdom yesterday,
today he must be a morsel for some brute.
And so, their voices curse the injustice of Fortune,
the only reason for his death. 100

LAURA
& CHORUS 2

*Love leaves destruction in its wake,
yet bestows no victories as it takes shape.*

ARIADNA

Oh what pain your words cause me!
There is no nobility without mercy.
What is this force
that so draws my soul
to his tragedy?
How is it enough to move me?
Yet how could it be otherwise,

¹ Minotaur: a half-man, half-bull creature who eats people and lives in the Cretan labyrinth. See the introduction for its origin and the mythological source for the play.

	when misery gives rise to mercy? The noblest of breasts, the most tender of hearts, would never know mercy without misfortune. Laura, when was this prince brought here?	110
LAURA	Yesterday, with all the majesty of one about to be crowned. The king has not seen him yet. The Athenian ambassador must hand him over soon.	120
FEDRA	Oh inhuman fate!	
CINTIA	Here comes your father now, in the company of the princes, to receive the captive.	
FEDRA	Let us wait here, Ariadna, to see such a strange sight.	
ARIADNA	I'll do so happily, yet not to see the Athenian prisoner so abused by fate, but so I may speak to Baco, whose handsome looks lead me bit by bit to return his fine affections.	130
FEDRA	I wouldn't say that of Lidoro, whose tender longings drive me away the more he tries to bring me close. His flattery is ever so tiresome, and I've never led him on. A suitor pays a lady compliments, then expects her to be forever in his debt, even if his flattery falls flat. It is out of all proportion, and offensive to boot. He would have me show him love or else appear ungrateful.	140

Enter King MINOS, Princes BACO and LIDORO, VINNY,² servant, and TEBANDRO, captain

² Vinny's name in Spanish is "Racimo" which means "cluster or bunch." This is a pun referring to grapes and his affiliation with his master Baco, who shares a name with the Greek god of wine (Bacchus).

MINOS Daughters!

LIDORO & BACO Divine beauties!

MINOS	My love for you both is so great that I cannot be content unless you share my happiness.	150
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ARIADNA & FEDRA

ARIADNA

And now that we have thanked you,
to what do we owe the pleasure
of your visit and renewed affection?
Ever since my brother,
in whom you had placed all your love
and hopes for the kingdom,
died at the hands of the cunning Athenians,
your voice has never been without lament,
or your face without grief.

160

MINOS

Precisely. And so, Ariadna,
you may well imagine
the reason why I now rejoice.
Only vengeance brings respite
to one so wronged.
My son died in Athens.³
(Oh, my beloved boy!
There's no shame now
in crying over your death,
as revenge is finally within reach.)
My victory over Athens
may finally placate my fury.
Three years ago, my just wrath
so threatened their city that,
in addition to other concessions,
I forced them to hand over
as a yearly tribute
seven fine damsels
and seven noble youths,
selected for this fate
from across the kingdom,

170

180

³ Androgeus: Minos' son, Fedra and Ariadna's brother who died in Athens. Myths vary as to the nature of his death—sometimes it is treachery, sometimes an accident, sometimes in battle. Minos blames the Athenians for the loss, whatever the cause.

	with no exceptions made, even for the prince or his sisters. I send my most trusted ministers to Athens every year to draw lots and force those who are selected to come to Crete, where my fury has prepared a grave for them in the bowels of the Minotaur. And although so many deaths might have tempered my fury, those young lives cut short have never been enough. Although they fed the beast, they left me hungrier for revenge: an eye for an eye, and a crown for a crown. Today the balance is restored. Fortune, which now favors Crete while it scorns Athens, has tipped the scales and caused their prince's downfall. And so one prince's death will, at last, repay the death of the other. Athens must not boast of a prince when Crete goes without. Let Teseo die, and with him the hopes of his vile homeland, which his courage had sustained, as well it might. And so I cherish my wrath, which destroys an entire kingdom by slitting one throat.	190 200 210
ARIADNA	May you live for many years, the edge of your steel undulled by the wisdom of your white hairs.	
FEDRA	And may all who once witnessed your bloodline offended now see how only Teseo's blood can satisfy your blood wronged.	220
BACO	My lord, I regret that such mighty victories will leave less for my valor to do on your behalf.	

LIDORO	Not I, my lord: your deeds are the shining example that will teach me how to achieve my own triumphs.	
MINOS	Exalted princes, I cannot express how much I owe you for your good wishes. My debt to you is so great that it will never be satisfied until I can grant your just rewards.	230
BACO	Great lord, your promise is enough for me. A man's word is as good as gold.	
MINOS	Tebandro, let us speak alone.	
TEBANDRO	What is your command?	
	<i>MINOS and TEBANDRO speak privately</i>	
LIDORO	Oh noble Fedra, at least look at me. I don't ask this on my own behalf, for my affection is so selfless that it would renounce any speck of comfort for your sake. It's only that I know how you relish my pain and so I request your attention so you can properly savor it.	240
FEDRA	I appreciate your efforts to please me, but you are mistaken if you think that I enjoy your anguish. A woman who doesn't yield to love may choose to remain aloof without seeming ungrateful.	250
LIDORO	If that is the case, my lady, I can at least serve without offending, even if I don't deserve you. It would be presumptuous to think I could. My soul finds solace in knowing that you tolerate my service, even if you won't reward it.	

FEDRA I could not have put it better myself. 260
 We are agreed, then,
 that one who loves without being tiresome
 avoids becoming a bother.

LIDORO This gives me hope, my lady...

FEDRA What?

LIDORO That I might be happily spurred on by your—

FEDRA Stop, don't say another word.
 Permission is not the same
 as encouragement.

LIDORO I was too forward. I apologize. 270
 I spoke of hope when it should not even be named.
 But know that my hope is not so lowly
 that it pursues only what it can reach.
 Although my hope doesn't expect a thing,
 there is hope that lives on
 by losing all hope.

MINOS *and* TEBANDRO *return*

MINOS Tebandro, have the prince brought in at once.

TEBANDRO *goes to the side to get Prince TESEO, LICAS, ambassador, and TUNA, servant*

LICAS Here at your feet is the Athenian ambassador,
 whose fortune has brought him
 to this unfortunate point 280
 on this singular mission.
 I bring my own prince as your tribute,
 though it pains me.
 I would gladly choose death
 over this duty, if only I could.

MINOS Rise.
 I want to offer you
 all the courtesies
 due to an ambassador.

LICAS I acknowledge your courtesy, 290
 yet I cannot accept it.
 My prince is here,

	and it's not fitting for his servant to receive honors in his presence, especially when he is a prisoner. I could never enjoy the privileges of my position while he suffers this misfortune.	
MINOS	Well said. Bring Teseo closer. I did not plan to meet him face to face. To gaze upon a king is not a gift usually granted to prisoners. However, just this once I will make an exception, prompted by his fame. I want to see the prince and hear of his deeds from his own mouth. I will savor my vengeance more when I behold the magnificent offering I sacrifice on its altar.	300 310
TUNA	Some favor! He's really showing us his good side.	
LICAS	Come closer, Your Highness, the king awaits.	
TESEO	Oh, tyrant fortune! Behold your prisoner, my lord.	
MINOS	Although you are a captive, in my benevolence I shall treat you as a free man... at least for a short while.	320
TUNA	And I am Tuna, come to kiss your bloody paws. I'll be the side dish, unless you change your mind.	
ARIADNA	<i>(Aside)</i> How handsome he is! What a tragedy! If only I could grant his freedom!	
FEDRA	<i>(Aside)</i> The very sight of him moves my soul.	330

If only I could buy his freedom,
I'd gladly give my life for it!

MINOS Teseo, give us an account
 of your heroic deeds.

TESEO An account of my misfortunes, you mean.
But since you wish to hear them,
listen closely.

MINOS

Go on.

FEDRA *(Aside)* May heaven save you!

ARIADNA (*Aside*) May heaven help you! 340

TESEO

Listen well, so that you may learn
from Fortune's extreme highs and lows
how I lose and you win.
Generous king of Crete,
whose glorious feats exceed
the archives of time.
Glorious lawgiver,
whose righteous rule
dictates laws to the world,
and decrees unto the depths of hell— 350
your justice, courage,
righteousness, and zeal
would breathe harmony
into chaos itself.
You, whose venerated laws
will be remembered forever,
so that through them
you will reign beyond death.⁴
Although you know who I am,
I want to speak my name again, 360
lest it be lost to oblivion,
for no one will acknowledge
a man on the wrong side of Fortune.
I am prince and heir to Athens:
once its ruler, now its tribute.
But what if I am a prince?
I am not merely a ruler—
I am Teseo.
Being born a great prince

⁴ In some myths Minos becomes a judge of the dead in the Underworld after his own death.

is mere chance, 370
 a result of my bloodline
 rather than my merits.
 I do not value what I owe another,
 not even my father,
 over what I owe myself.
 Although most would say
 it's lesser to be a soldier
 than a prince,
 I stand by the former.
 From a brave soldier 380
 a great king may come,
 but just being a king
 does not make a good soldier.
 Listen and I will explain:
 valor cannot be inherited,
 as kingdoms may be.
 And here is the proof:
 when all men were born equal,
 Might commanded the world.
 The distinctions we now see 390
 between king and vassal,
 between noble and peasant,
 have no other source.
 It strains reason to believe
 men would, of their own volition,
 subject themselves to another's yoke
 and let another take the reins.
 Man was born to command
 and can only be subjected by force.
 No sane man would choose that state, 400
 nor would any fool endure it.
 The wise man lives by his own laws,
 while the fool is satisfied
 to abide by his ignorance.
 Fools use arrogance
 to cover for their flaws.
 Only courage is mighty enough
 to set men apart,
 though born equal
 and of the same distinction. 410
 Although cut from the same cloth,
 some serve as slaves
 and others rule as masters.
 Thus, though I owe the gods
 for the privilege of being high-born,

it is not arrogance to take pride
 in my bravery over my birth.
 Listen and I will explain:
 when my beard first came in,
 a sign of my valor and judgment, 420
 I chose not to join
 the refined youth of Athens,
 the very picture of elegance.
 Instead, I chose Hercules as my companion.⁵
 I sought a mentor in the art of war,
 not a tutor in courtly manners.
 Among many other victories
 achieved in his company,
 my most remarkable triumph
 was defeating the Amazons.⁶ 430
 Conquering a woman
 is the greatest feat of all:
 to overcome an enemy who both
 beguiles you with her gaze
 and battles you with her steel!
 Even when she lacks beauty,
 her womanhood alone
 gives her the advantage.
 For beyond her own courage,
 my pity and respect 440
 are both on her side.
 And that's not all:
 having triumphed over a woman,
 one must enjoy one's conquest
 with a certain grace.
 This requires a proud heart in battle
 and a humble one in triumph.
 Victory is tarnished
 if what was gained
 with so much danger 450
 is enjoyed with contempt.
 In Epidauros, I took the life
 of the beastly son of Vulcan,
 whom the people call Corynetes.⁷
 In Marathon, I killed the bull
 that brought destruction to your kingdom,

⁵ Hercules: Greek hero and demi-god, son of Zeus, with superhuman strength.

⁶ Amazons: legendary female warriors who were often opponents of the Greeks in myth. In some versions, Theseus (Theseus) defeats and/or marries the Amazon queen Hippolyta.

⁷ Corynetes, Creon, Sciron, Procrustes, Sinis: Theseus summarizes his most famous heroic encounters with various monsters, bandits, and tyrants from myth.

sacrificing it in Athens.
 I freed the great city of Thebes
 from the oppression of fierce Creon,
 who, at odds with all human laws, 460
 would not allow proper burial for the dead.
 I also slayed merciless bandits:
 first Sciron, then Procrustes,
 who craftily welcomed unwitting travelers
 to his inhuman bed,
 and turned a place of respite
 into a cruel rack for torture.
 If they were too long,
 he would cut off the excess,
 and if too short, 470
 he would brutally stretch them
 out of all proportion,
 until their torn nerves
 and shattered bones
 occupied the bed's full measure.
 So all bodies had to conform,
 as this tyrant had decreed.
 No less cruel was Sinis,
 who barbarously abused
 the strength Heaven gave him 480
 to offend Heaven itself.
 (Oh blind human reason,
 what won't your errors attempt!)
 He would violently force two trees,
 far from each other,
 to kiss the ground
 with their uppermost boughs.
 To these he would tie a traveler
 and then release the branches.
 Rebounding, they broke apart so suddenly 490
 that the soul could not quite grasp
 where its body had gone.
 Yet Heaven sent my strong arm
 to punish him at last,
 a warning that although those slights
 might be tolerated at first,
 they would be punished in the end.
 I will not even tell you
 of my amazing victory

at the wedding of my friend Pirithous,⁸ 500
 when the fierce centaurs,
 debased by wine
 and incited by desire,
 tried to steal his wife.
 No, I will not sing my own praises.
 What else could I have done?
 A true friend is like oneself,
 not “another self”—
 that implies a separation.
 Any offense to my friend 510
 obviously offends me, too.
 And so, I fought those centaurs
 like an aggrieved and jealous husband.
 My victory, therefore,
 was no proof of valor,
 but rather of how jealousy
 will make any man brave.
 To please this same friend,
 who ruled over my actions
 as over my affections, 520
 I descended to the underworld,
 where, despite three-headed Cerberus⁹
 standing guard above,
 I tried to steal Pluto’s wife.
 Though I did not succeed,
 I did not lose my laurels,
 for the attempt itself is worthy of praise.
 But my greatest triumph, my lord,
 was to steal Helen herself,¹⁰
 whose beauty so moved me. 530
 Yet this was not what proved my valor,
 though I risked much to steal her away.
 Rather, when I had in my grasp
 the prize of her beauty
 and the satisfaction of my desires,
 I was moved by her tears
 and obliged by her pleas
 to restore her to her land and her family.
 My love could only weep

⁸ Pirithous: King of the Lapiths and friend of Theseus. When Pirithous attempted to abduct Persephone (the god Pluto’s wife) with Theseus’s help, both men were struck immobile and became trapped in the Underworld. Theseus was eventually rescued by Hercules, but Pirithous had to remain as a punishment.

⁹ Cerberus: Monstrous dog with three heads that guards the Underworld, ruled over by the god Pluto.

¹⁰ Helen: Daughter of the god Zeus and the mortal Leda, considered in myth the most beautiful woman in the world. Her subsequent abduction by Paris was the cause of the Trojan War. See introduction for more on this episode.

as my valor achieved 540
that greatest of victories:
to triumph over myself.
These are the marvels and wonders
that Fame sings of me, my lord,
not to speak of many other deeds
I will not recount here,
for either they are known all too well,
or I can scarcely recall them.
I never kept a list,
and so neglected to count them— 550
I simply carried them out.
This is who I have been, great lord,
though now, exposed to your rage,
I find myself nothing more than a prisoner.
Let my pride, my noble blood,
my glory and my trophies,
satisfy you in your anger
so that my fatherland may be free
of the painful burden
of this unfortunate tribute. 560
I will die happy
if my death can free Athens
from this inhuman servitude.

MINOS

I'm most impressed,
but I will not yield.
Tebandro, take him to the labyrinth.
Come, princes.

LICAS

Your Majesty, cruelty should not touch
such a noble person.
Though you wish to avenge 570
the death of your son,
killing Teseo will not bring him back.
When his kingdom accepted
these harsh terms at their defeat,
who would have thought
their prince would pay?
But now this fierce cruelty falls on him.
Though he offers no resistance,
he hoped his worth might merit
clemency from you. 580
Had he chosen to fight,
we would all have met our deaths
before this prince surrendered.

Yet when he demonstrates
he'd keep his word over his life,
why, then, for the sake of revenge,
does your Majesty wish
to repay his trust with cruelty?
I seek forgiveness on my knees,
my lord, for if you forgive him, 590
you are all the more nobly avenged.
You shall have twice the satisfaction.
There is no harsher punishment
for a noble man than to be forgiven.
Convinced of his error,
he lives on in the shame
of receiving favor from one he offended.
So, my lord, grant the prince his life,
for if only you spare him,
the whole of Athens will be at your service. 600

FEDRA (*Aside*) Perhaps my father will pardon him
given what he has heard.

ARIADNA (*Aside*) Perhaps he'll choose one reason,
of the many offered.

TUNA (*Aside*) How can this old geezer
dig his heels in like this!

MINOS Princes, come with me.
Tebandro, do as I said.

BACO I am coming.
(*Aside*) What cruelty! 610

LIDORO I will follow.
(*Aside*) What harshness!

Exit MINOS, BACO, and LIDORO

ARIADNA (*Aside*) Oh that I might meet my end,
instead of him!

FEDRA (*Aside*) Oh that I might die in his place!

VINNY (*Aside*) Oh that I might have my revenge,
for having to keep my mouth shut.
I came on stage and didn't say a word!

Exit VINNY

TEBANDRO (To TESEO) Prince, I shall await you outside,
for you must now say your sad goodbyes. 620
I do not wish to be in the way.

Exit TEBANDRO

LICAS Wait, my lord.
I can barely find the words.
Must an heir to Athens
be thus scorned?
Must my prince and I
suffer such tyranny?
Woe to any who places his trust
in his enemy's tender mercies!
But why do I cry, 630
when there is no way forward
amid such terrible sorrows?
Why exhaust myself with pleas
when it brings no remedy?
By God, unjust king,
as you murder him now,
you will pay with your own life
for this satisfaction that you take.
My anger will to Athens,
with my desire for revenge, 640
to enlist the warriors
who will avenge their prince.
Then strong Athens
will punish daring Crete.
Though I cannot grant him life,
I may at least avenge his death.
Prince, if the king's revenge
can still be delayed,
and I can free you in the end,
your resolve at this moment 650
will crown all your deeds!

Exit LICAS

TUNA That's some reassurance, sire.
You just let yourself be hanged,
and I'll take care of the rest.

TESEO, FEDRA, TUNA, and LAURA remain. ARIADNA and CINTIA move to the side¹¹

FEDRA (Aside) The prince is alone now.

TESEO What misery!

FEDRA (Aside) Do I dare speak to him?

TESEO For all my courage
to have come to this!

FEDRA (Aside) I will approach him. 660
Oh great sorrow!
Now that he must die,
let my pity at least serve
as condolence for his loss.
Decorum does not prevent
consoling one so afflicted,
not when he is entirely helpless
and can find no mercy.

FEDRA moves closer

(To TESEO) Oh prince, 670
if pity can find purchase
in a foreign breast,
know that I suffer for your sake.
I am a princess of Crete,
and though you offended my family,
you will owe more to my mercy
than this courtesy I now show.
I want to find a way to free you.
I would much rather give you aid
than my condolences.

ARIADNA Look, Cintia, 680
Fedra is over there with Teseo—
how it pains me!
Let us listen to see
whether she speaks of pity
or of love.

TESEO (To FEDRA) Lady, I thank you for your pity.

¹¹ Character groups often move to a separate stage area, whether because they are hiding or eavesdropping, or just because there are multiple groups of characters on stage at once. This could be staged with a door or a curtain (mentioned in the original stage directions), or by indicating a separate space in some other fashion.

	How could mercy not rain down from such a heaven as you? I am so grateful to you, lovely princess, I only wish I could live, to put my life at your service. Yet since my life is at an end, and I cannot repay the kindness you offer, receive my shame instead. I have nothing else to give you.	690
FEDRA	Let not this misfortune destroy your confidence, oh prince, for where there is life there is hope. Fortune's wheel never stands still, and though you are now so low, it may turn once again before your days are over. A remedy for such woe may yet come between the neck and the blade.	700
ARIADNA	I can tell she wants to free him, but I will prevent it.	
CINTIA	Why, my lady?	
ARIADNA	Because I must free him first.	
TESEO	(To FEDRA) How will I ever repay such outsize favor? No gratitude could ever suffice. Oh, how I wish my life were mine, so I could place it at your feet. Even if I were not condemned, I would die for you! You take the prize, my sweet assassin. In stealing away my soul, you take my life as well.	710 720
ARIADNA	See, Cintia, how taken he is, and how he woos her in return?	
CINTIA	Hush, my lady, he's just grateful.	

TUNA	A fine death you choose, my lord. No bells ever tolled for those who die of love. I must say, if you allow me, I'd also like to die of this thing that you call death.	730
	And I'd like it to come quickly, in all its violent pain, for dying of love is like dying of laughter. <i>(To LAURA)</i> Especially because I've found in you just the one to do me in.	
LAURA	That bull will take care of you, and pluck your soul clean out.	
TUNA	Why would I want a bull, with this pretty heifer right here?	740
LAURA	And who are you?	
TUNA	They call me Tuna.	
LAURA	The bull will take care of this one: meat is what he feeds on.	
TUNA	Good thing I'm a fish, then.	
LAURA	He is a relentless butcher.	
TUNA	A butcher's no problem, as long as he's no fisherman.	
FEDRA	Prince, since you will be the last of the seven tributes offered up to this cruel monster today on my father's command, do not lose hope, for in that time there may appear some way to save your life. I will do all I can to find it. You must believe me— your life matters more to me than you can ever know.	750
TESEO	But why, my lady?	760

FEDRA	Don't ask me why. It is wrong to try to decipher that which I do not declare. If you happen to draw your own conclusions based on observation, and they happen to favor you, so be it, but do not ask me to confirm them for you.	
	TESEO and TUNA <i> speak aside</i>	
TUNA	Make her yours, sir! She is so far gone already she may help you escape the cruel danger you face.	770
TESEO	Oh Tuna, I dare not!	
TUNA	So you're going to play hard to get? I did not think you such a lady. Let yourself be loved at least. Pretend she is Prince Fedra and you the Princess Tesea.	
TESEO	Will you let me alone?	780
TUNA	I will, I will. I am not the princess, I don't want to hold on to you.	
TESEO	(To FEDRA) In that case, my lady, I will give free rein to my thoughts.	
FEDRA	Do as you will, as long as you do not seek confirmation, which I ordered you not to do.	
TESEO	Well, then, I shall keep my conclusions secret. My heart will feel what my lips may never speak.	790
FEDRA	Then we may leave it at that. Farewell, now,	

	for I should not be seen speaking to you.	
TESEO	Then farewell, my lady.	
FEDRA	Farewell.	
TESEO	But listen!	
FEDRA	What is it?	800
TESEO	Since you granted license to my thoughts, you should give free rein to yours as well. To obey you, I will not disclose my longing, but I hope it echoes in you.	
FEDRA	Farewell, prince.	
TESEO	But my lady, why will you not answer me?	810
FEDRA	It's for your own good.	
TESEO	For my own good?	
FEDRA	Yes, because if I answer, I must say no. Only by remaining silent can I spare you this scorn. The absence of rejection is tacit acceptance.	
TESEO	Then farewell, my lady.	
FEDRA	Farewell.	820
TESEO	<i>(Aside)</i> How divine!	
FEDRA	<i>(Aside)</i> How gallant!	
	<i>Exit TESEO and FEDRA</i>	
TUNA	Are you listening, Laura?	

LAURA	What might Mr. Tuna want?	
TUNA	I want your laurels to garnish my pickled tuna.	
LAURA	You move too fast.	
TUNA	What's wrong with right away?	
LAURA	What's wrong, you ask me? Don't you know it would take the labor of a thousand years to wear me down?	830
TUNA	A thousand years, you say? Well excuse me, then. I'm no Methuselah in love. ¹²	
LAURA	Then you will give up?	
TUNA	At once.	
LAURA	Don't you see that all this disdain was meant to test a lackey's loyalty, if loyalty isn't something that all lackeys lack?	840
TUNA	That's all very well, but see that you do not feign ladyship again. There's more scullery smoke than fine airs to you.	
LAURA	Then goodbye, you rascal.	
TUNA	Goodbye, scrubber superior.	
<i>Exit TUNA and LAURA</i>		
ARIADNA	What's this, unjust heavens, what is it that I suffer but cannot define? Feelings this deep can hardly be spoken!	850

¹² Methuselah: Said to be the longest-lived of all figures in the Bible.

Scarcely had I felt your arrows,
 tyrant Love, which pierce most
 the one who most resists,
 when I knew their pain
 went beyond a mere wound.
 No, I did not believe
 you would pierce my courageous heart, 860
 nor that the delicate gold
 of your wingèd dart
 would be adorned
 with my carmine blood.
 Nor even that your deception
 could persuade my pride
 that triumph could ever come
 from such surrender.
 Were I free from jealousy,
 even servitude might be a happy state. 870
 Yet now I feel, in giving up
 the kingdom of my free will
 to that charming Athenian,
 that I die for one
 who would not die for me.

CINTIA What are you saying, my lady?
 Come back to your senses.
 There is no helping one
 who gives herself over to such feelings.

ARIADNA I will be the one to set him free. 880
 I have a scheme to help him get away.
 Though he may love Fedra,
 I adore him,
 and my love will not allow me
 to ignore his unhappiness.

CINTIA How will you free him?

ARIADNA Through means so subtle
 that by a single thread
 he shall triumph and live.
 In the fight, he will bring 890
 that fierce monster to heel.

BACO enters at the side

BACO *(Aside)* Unless desire deceives me,

that was Ariadna's voice I heard
in a sad lament.
Since she has not heard me,
I will listen from here,
so I may find out what pains her.

CINTIA My lady, take comfort,
 for though the one
 you've crowned your king 900
 may love your sister,
 there must be some way
 to make him leave her
 and desire you instead.

BACO *(Aside)* Her sister's suitor!
 What is this?
 Woe is me, seeking to know
 what I do not wish to hear!

CINTIA But do you not love Baco?

ARIADNA How can you ask me that, 910
 seeing how I burn,
 how I perish,
 how I've surrendered
 to the man who courts Fedra,
 so that I'm about to lose my mind?
 Enough advice, then.
 Willful lovers won't be deterred.
 If you want to please me,
 help me find the means
 to get what I want. 920

CINTIA Come, my lady.
 Of course you prefer
 the one you love
 to the one who loves you.

Exit ARIADNA and CINTIA. BACO remains and his servant VINNY enters

BACO How can I witness such a thing,
 and yet go on living?
 I must have no soul to feel with,
 no life left to lose.
 How can I love such a tyrant,
 who freely pursues her sister's suitor? 930

It must be Lidoro, of course!
To suffer an injury such as this!
Oh ungrateful creature!
If you must leave me,
couldn't you at least choose a man
who loves you in return?
You are so ungrateful,
and yet my anger is so noble
that I feel more pity than jealousy
at the harm you do yourself. 940

VINNY Well shouted, sir!
Now calm down
and don't lose your senses—
though if Love itself is madness,
what can you expect
from the god of wine in love?
If I may say so,
there is little difference in your case
between being bullheaded
and being cuckolded, 950
though of course, I imagine,
those horns on your head
must be very troublesome.¹³

BACO Fool! Bold villain! (*Grabs him*)
How can I calm down?

VINNY Stop, sir!
If you squeeze too tight,
my grapes will burst.
Besides, I've thought of a solution
that will bring your love to fruition. 960

BACO What are you thinking?

VINNY If you woo Fedra,
you'll be avenged on Ariadna.

BACO You're mad!

VINNY Does it sound so bad?
Court her lovely sister instead.
Two wrongs might make a right.

¹³ Referring to an early idiom about husbands with unfaithful wives who were said to "grow horns."

BACO	I will do so at once. Though I might seem as mad as you, no one should be shocked when a madman takes a fool's advice. Come then. If I can find Fedra, I'll make a show of my love.	970
VINNY	Here she comes now, a fly falling into your honeypot.	
	<i>Enter FEDRA</i>	
FEDRA	<i>(Aside)</i> Perhaps some servant of Teseo's stayed behind, who might tell me... But there's Baco. I hope he hasn't seen me.	
VINNY	My lord, go make your move, don't let her fly away.	980
BACO	I'm afraid I will miss the mark, Vinny.	
VINNY	What does it matter? Take a shot, practice makes perfect. Imagine you're a poet in the middle of a play, and though you're not in love, you must imagine one who is. Speak of suns and stars, sleepless nights, infatuations, fears, silences and cares, hopeless devotions— all those things that play well at court. You'll see how you hit the mark.	990
BACO	Here I go. <i>(To FEDRA)</i> Oh beautiful miracle, divine Cupid himself lays down at your feet. A fire as pure as yours requires no less a sacrifice than that winged boy.	1000
FEDRA	...Thank you, Prince Baco. That's very nice.	

As Ariadna's sister,
I accept this tribute on her behalf.

LIDORO *enters at the side*

LIDORO	(<i>Aside</i>) Look at me, following Fedra again, a glutton for punishment. Rejection is irresistible for the unhappy lover. But I see she's occupied with the prince of Thebes. I won't come out just yet, for then another would witness her frank disdain for me. It's bad enough I must suffer this heartache without having someone else witness it.	1010
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BACO	(<i>To FEDRA</i>) You mustn't doubt the sincerity of my adoration, nor should your esteem for Lidoro make you disdain me.	1020
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FEDRA	Since when do I care about Lidoro?
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LIDORO	(<i>Aside</i>) What's this? Oh jealousy! These are the dregs of my poison cup.
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FEDRA	(<i>To BACO</i>) And you, prince, do you not serve Ariadna?
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BACO	Do not speak that name! Do not force me to be rude, or break the laws of courtesy. It's true that at first, for reasons of state, I let it be known I courted her, but after seeing you... (<i>Aside</i>) Oh heavens, how can I do this? (<i>Aloud</i>) what sane man could ever resist... (<i>Aside</i>) How can I so offend what I adore? (<i>Aloud</i>) ...and not surrender to you?	1030
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LIDORO *comes forward, taking out his sword*

LIDORO	(<i>Aloud</i>) Such faults can only be avenged with steel!	1040
BACO	I'm ready to punish this affront!	
FEDRA	What a disaster! What is going on here? Guards, guards!	
VINNY	(<i>Aside</i>) By God, they're both so on edge! All this just to make a point? What if my master's head is split open? If he gets tapped, it will be blood that spills out, not wine—more's the pity!	1050
<i>Enter MINOS. BACO and LIDORO sheathe their swords</i>		
MINOS	What is this?	
BACO & LIDORO	Nothing, sir.	
MINOS	Fedra, what happened here?	
FEDRA	They were both offended... (<i>Aside</i>) I must dissemble! (<i>Aloud</i>) ...over an exchange that unexpectedly became heated. They were comparing their lineages and the size of their estates. It turned into a dispute as they both tried to claim the laurels. One thing led to another, argument by argument at such a fever pitch, that, determined at all costs... well, you saw what they came to.	1060
MINOS	Given that there is no real insult here, I beg you both to cease this reckless violence.	1070
LIDORO	My lord, for my part, it is over, as you command.	
BACO	This is all too easy to obey, my lord.	

I am not angry with Lidoro,
nor am I offended.

MINOS Then come with me, princes.

BACO As you wish.

FEDRA (*Aside*) There is much to fear.

MINOS (*Aside*) There is much to unravel.

LIDORO (*Aside*) I die of jealousy and offense. 1080

BACO (*Aside*) I rage with fury and jealousy.

VINNY (*Aside*) And I die of laughter,
at the sight of such fine folk
brought so low.

LIDORO (*Aside*) I fear the volcano in me
will soon erupt.

BACO (*Aside*) I fear this passion
will burst from my lips.

MINOS (*Aside*) I fear this fight
may lead to greater harm. 1090

FEDRA (*Aside*) I fear Baco will stand
in the way of my love.

VINNY (*Aside*) I fear I may have to
drink my fill of my master's wine.

END OF ACT I

ACT II

SCENE 1

Enter MINOS and TEBANDRO

MINOS	In this dark cave of horrors, my insatiable desire for vengeance seeks to assuage my pain most severe, the worst of all torments, this terrible legacy of loss and hate that tyranny has wrought.	1100
TEBANDRO	Teseo's death will give Your Majesty satisfaction for the death of your son. The Minotaur will have his fill as Teseo meets his end in the labyrinth. His misfortune will pay the debt in full: a life for a life at the hands of a bull.	
MINOS	I offer up a prince of Athens, and yet my grief still runs so deep I can hardly stay afloat amid the waves of anguish. I'm sinking in a sea of never-ending torments. Drowning in sorrow, I lose all sense.	1110
TEBANDRO	Fate now dictates the end of this great prince in a frenzy of violence, to a chorus of laments. In those games at which he excelled, his life will tragically be ended. Of highest rank, in parts unmatched, a lightning bolt unsurpassed. In all these contests he was, without fail, enough to make bravery itself quail.	1120
MINOS	What does his courage matter when Fortune envies his happiness, an enemy as monstrous and inhuman as it is treacherous and tyrannical? The happiest man cannot avoid it. Envy craves what it does not have. Driven wild with mad hopes, it slakes its thirst with horrible vengeance.	1130

And so now with this tribute,
a living feast for a starving brute
in its labyrinthine darkness,
echoing with fear,
resounding with terror,
my endless fury consumes
these wretched lives.

TEBANDRO Your Majesty may yet find peace
with the news I bring today. 1140

MINOS Oh Tebandro,
if only I could find relief
from this unending grief!

TUNA peeks in from the side

TUNA (*Aside*) With my head poking out like this,
I'm more tortoise than tuna.

MINOS Teseo must die!

TUNA (*Aside*) What a crazy thing to say!
This rabid king aims to slay.

MINOS My fury knows no bounds:
I am all wrath, all lightning. 1150

TUNA (*Aside*) He's on fire!

TEBANDRO Your Majesty should find some diversion.

TUNA (*Aside*) No, let him talk!
Let it eat him up.
The king is in such a state,
maybe he'll let something slip.

TEBANDRO The princesses are preparing
an entertainment for Your Majesty
at the temple of Diana.
Temper this anger that rules over you. 1160
Reason must counter the accidents of fate,
to keep suffering in its place.

MINOS I will attend, Tebandro,
and try to calm this great torment.

Exit TEBANDRO and MINOS. TUNA comes forward

TUNA This is great!
 Now that the king is off to see
 what those two princesses are up to,
 it's time to come out into the sun!
 I'm in a labyrinth of my own here.
 I pray that everything will turn out all right. 1170
 This horrible prison is a study in gloom—
 the portrait of darkness and shadows is well done,
 and yet it's missing a touch of color.
 All right, time for my master now.
 Come out, come out, wherever you are.

Enter TESEO, coming from the labyrinth

TESEO Tuna!

TUNA Sir, listen closely,
 have I got a scheme for you!
 You could be dancing away the evening
 with Ariadna and Fedra! 1180
 Go on, no point in putting it off til later,
 where's my reward?
 Give me what you'd like to get
 and not what you'd like to give.

TESEO Dancing?

TUNA Yes! They've got a big party planned,
 where princes and nobles will mingle
 in masks, costumes, and finery,
 so no one will know who they are.
 You can drop the princely stuff 1190
 and dress as a dancer.
 I beg of you, sir, hop to it!

TESEO How can I be so happy and unhappy all at once?
 My heart is caught in the crossfire of love.
 Fedra, to whom I gladly surrender my devotion,
 hints that she loves me
 and so persuades me to affection.
 Meanwhile Ariadna, to whom I owe
 no less than life itself, also loves me,
 and if I do not surrender to her heavenly beauty, 1200

	I will show myself an ingrate. She was the instrument of my escape and helped me put the Minotaur to death. What noble heart could receive such a gift and not repay the debt? I find myself in a labyrinth still, surrounded by doubts, with no signs pointing the way. Ariadna's love provided that merciful thread which my courage followed— she saved my life. But it was Fedra who wished me to pretend to be Ariadna's suitor so I could gain my freedom. What a rare and generous act of love, for Fedra to endure such an insult for my sake! She set aside her feelings to protect me, and allowed her sister to show me affection. Fedra is a cunning tactician. She weighs her sorrows against her politic ends. When she insisted I give Ariadna my attentions, she knew she would win my love in the end, all without showing her hand.	1210
TUNA	They could still tie you to the death of the Minotaur, just by following the thread, but you did such a fine job the king doesn't even know it happened.	
TESEO	But tell me, how did you find out about the dance this evening?	1230
TUNA	I heard Tebandro telling the king that Ariadna and Fedra wish to celebrate him to distract from their own sorrows, and have arranged one of those fancy dances that palace types like.	
TESEO	If only I were a better dancer.	
TUNA	There will be thousands of princes swanning around.	
TESEO	I have just the thing to wear.	1240

A prince, though a prisoner,
never packs light.

TUNA Well, it didn't take much work
to persuade you.

TESEO Oh, to dance with Fedra!

TUNA I hope she dances to your tune.

TESEO You think she will?

TUNA It's obvious!
I can see which way
the wind is blowing, 1250
and you have a fine air about you.

Enter LAURA, veiled

LAURA I've come looking for Teseo,
but if my eyes don't deceive me,
this is Tuna I see here.
You there, good sir!

TUNA This clever maid
must have a hook
to catch me with.

TESEO She's looking for you.
Go to her. 1260

TUNA She's out looking for men
and I should go to her?
No chance!
Well...all right, here I go.
What do you want from me, my queen?

LAURA Call your master.

TUNA But he's so uptight,
and you can let loose with me.

LAURA Look, I'm in a hurry here.

TUNA I prefer to take it slow. 1270

LAURA	You aren't making this easy, Mr. Gallant.	
TUNA	If you're easy, I'm easy.	
LAURA	Hey, Teseo!	
TUNA	Hay is for horses. Mind your p's and q's if you want an answer.	
TESEO	Tell me, my lady, what you would have of me. I promise to obey.	
LAURA	I ask that you wear this sash so you can be recognized by the one who makes this request.	1280
TESEO	What do you mean?	
LAURA	Wear it to the dance where she expects to see you.	
TESEO	She's expecting me?	
TUNA	Yes sir, it's a done deal— you are getting a summons.	
TESEO	I was not aware that prisoners were granted such liberties. Is this bail, then?	1290
TUNA	(To LAURA) I'm at your service here, ready to take liberties.	
LAURA	You, my servant?	
TUNA	Don't get upset. I think I can serve your purposes.	
LAURA	Goodbye, I must go.	
TUNA	Stay with me! I mean, if you please. Don't throw me away like a wilted corsage.	1300

LAURA Don't waste your flowery language on me.

TUNA Though I shower you with compliments,
the ladies have always found me
more flagrant than fragrant.

TESEO May I know to whom I owe such favor?

LAURA Let's just say it's a princess.

TUNA A princess?
That's good enough for me!
Bring on the sash.

1310

TESEO Stop that.

TUNA Tie me up!

TESEO Which princess?

LAURA Come closer: it's Fedra.
Goodbye and God keep you.
Go to the dance
and she'll come find you
by the room that faces the garden,
the one next to the labyrinth.

Exit LAURA

TESEO What luck!

1320

TUNA She's like the wind in a veil.
She sure puts the wind in my sails.
If I'm not drawn and quartered first,
I'll let her blow me away.

Enter CINTIA, veiled

CINTIA You there, good sir!

TUNA What is this I see?
This must be the second act
of this comedy of love,
where the beauties come in pairs.

CINTIA	Call your master. I have an important message for him.	1330
TUNA	And what's that to me?	
TESEO	I'm ready to obey, my lady. Do not hesitate to command me.	
CINTIA	A lady requests that you wear this feather as a mark of her favor.	
TUNA	A decorated chicken!	
CINTIA	She invites you to the dance.	
TESEO	(<i>Aside</i>) Though it is a masked ball, if I wear this lady's favor, my feelings will be revealed. (<i>To CINTIA</i>) Won't you tell me who wishes to test my obedience? Must you conceal her identity?	1340
CINTIA	I have said enough.	
TUNA	Not so: she might be ugly, in which case, who cares?	
TESEO	What have I done to deserve such exalted favor?	
CINTIA	Let's just say it's a princess.	1350
TUNA	If a princess is an <i>infanta</i> ¹⁴ and all men are born infants, does that make me a prince too?	
TESEO	Stop, you fool.	
TUNA	You call this nonsense? I'm trying to make something of myself here.	
CINTIA	Goodbye, I cannot stay any longer. It's late and my lady awaits me.	
TESEO	Who?	

¹⁴ Infanta (and "infante"): Title given to the daughters and sons of a king in Iberia.

CINTIA	The princess Ariadna.	1360
TUNA	Bless her, she speaks more clearly now...	
CINTIA	A suitable room has been prepared so that the two of you may converse, far from this labyrinth. Goodbye.	
TESEO	Wait a moment.	
CINTIA	Goodbye, goodbye, I must go. It's late.	
<i>Exit CINTIA</i>		
TESEO	Tuna, what do you say to this?	
TUNA	What I say is get ready. Both <i>infantas</i> ? All this infantry will require your big guns.	1370
TESEO	They both expect me, but I am just one man.	
TUNA	Are you not a man endowed with many talents?	
TESEO	Fedra's sash has quite a pull on me.	
TUNA	Ariadna's feather might sweep you away.	
TESEO	I will just wear the sash.	1380
TUNA	Feathers are lost to the wind...	
TESEO	But what if I am recognized?	
TUNA	But what if we make a mess of it?	
TESEO	I will risk my life, come what may.	
TUNA	I have no plans to die today!	

TESEO	I can half-see a way out.	
TUNA	We're more than half-cooked.	
TESEO	Is this not a masked ball?	
TUNA	Yes, they hide their faces so they can show their true colors.	1390
TESEO	Well, you must swoop in and crash the party.	
TUNA	Then it will all come crashing down!	
TESEO	I will wear the sash and you the feather, and together we'll make quite the pair.	
TUNA	What do I look like, some kind of witch? You can't tar and feather me on a whim.	
TESEO	He who loves a lady fears nothing.	1400
TUNA	He who serves sure does.	
TESEO	I will have my way.	
TUNA	Others will have their way with me.	
TESEO	But what if the king finds out?	
TUNA	The moment he finds out...	
TESEO	What will he do?	
TUNA	For God's sake, it won't be pretty! He will minotaur us again.	
TESEO	The princesses are lovely.	
TUNA	Sure, but their old man is a killer.	1410
TESEO	Oh, if only I can succeed in this endeavor!	
TUNA	Oh, if only I can pluck some favor while I'm at it!	

TESEO Oh, to be worthy of Fedra!

TUNA Oh, to have Ariadna at my feet!

Exit TESEO and TUNA

SCENE 2

Enter VINNY

VINNY *(To the audience)* I must tell you:
my master, Baco, makes it clear
with how he treats me
that there is a god...of wine.
I don't know what he means
by coming to the dance, 1420
or why such a stick-in-the-mud
is even at a party.
I'm always on the go,
trying to keep up with his affairs.
Though he dresses me nice,
he squeezes me dry.
His affairs leave no room for mine.
He takes everything for himself
and leaves me the dregs.
Though I want to serve Laura, 1430
and even get a little free with her,
my master keeps me tied up.
She does the dishes in this palace,
to judge from her hands.
Though she might be a little tough,
she'd make a tasty dish herself.
It's almost time for the party.
Now let's see who dances with whom.

Music and singing comes from inside

MUSIC *Behold Fedra and Ariadna:
two beautiful suns rise. 1440
They make heaven envious,
outshining Dawn with their eyes.
Their graceful movements
trace a bright path of light.*

Enter MINOS, TEBANDRO, and MUSICIANS, accompanied by the sound of instruments; FEDRA, ARIADNA, CINTIA, and LAURA enter together with masks and hats with feathers; TESEO, LIDORO, BACO, and TUNA enter together; the ladies on one side of the stage and the gentlemen on the other side. The king is seated and the rest remain standing.

MINOS	What a splendid spectacle, fine clothes and fine looks on all sides.	
MUSIC	<i>Confidence trusts in good fortune, and applauds its work with pride. The bliss that fortune chooses always has luck on its side.</i>	1450
FEDRA	Your Majesty, please allow us to wear these masks for the sake of modesty. They will make the celebration more free and natural.	
ARIADNA	It is for custom rather than adornment. Disguises are the fashion whenever courtiers celebrate at the palace.	
MINOS	It is my great pleasure to grant your wish.	1460
TESEO	Your approval crowns this great event with happiness.	
BACO	I add my due respects, as is only right.	
LIDORO	I need never fear in your gracious presence.	
TUNA	(To ARIADNA) Lady, I would throw myself at your feet, but you wouldn't want a man who can't stand firm.	1470
MUSIC	<i>Although favor may hide, when bliss arrives at last, only those who recognize it enjoy it before it's passed.</i>	
FEDRA	Who among these dancers	

. is wearing my sash?

TESEO *(Aside)* Her sash?
This must be Fedra.
How fortunate!

TESEO *goes to FEDRA and takes her by the hand. They dance downstage and bow*

(To FEDRA) I have found a way out. 1480
I am released from the trap
of redoubled devotion.
My fortunes turn to happiness.

FEDRA I never lost my faith, to your credit,
and will now follow your lead.
I am so glad you have turned
to me once again.

MUSIC *Venus herself imitates
these sovereign ladies.
Their loveliness illuminates
a miracle of beauty.* 1490

BACO *(Aside)* From her dress,
this must be Ariadna.
What am I waiting for?
I will take her by the hand,
and with her, my good fortune.

BACO *takes ARIADNA by the hand, and they dance the same steps*

(To ARIADNA) I so admire your beauty.
And yet I must tell you
that the courtly thing to do
is to bestow your reverence 1500
on the one dancing with you.

ARIADNA I cannot think of such things,
I'm keeping to the measure,
and rather well too.
Surely it's enough that I follow
step for step.

MUSIC *When opportunity arises,
take fortune by the hand.
The chance to turn one's luck*

comes but once in life's long dance. 1510

LIDORO
(*Aside*) Can my luck be so great?
Could this be Fedra
who moves with such grace?
I am sure of it.
I must ask her to dance.

LIDORO takes LAURA by the hand, and they dance the same steps

(*To LAURA*) Your bright eyes enthrall me
with their unending light.
Their dancing glances
ensnare my heart.

LAURA
I am only too glad
to grant you this dance.
How could I say no? 1520

MUSIC
*When luck is wanting,
misstep and you're out of place.
But do not fear,
just catch up and save face.*

TUNA
(*Aside*) Dancing with this lady
takes everything I've got.
At least I look the part in this get-up.

TUNA takes CINTIA by the hand, and they dance like the others

(*To CINTIA*) I'm glad to dance,
but when I see how you step,
and I mean no disrespect,
I'm afraid I don't measure up. 1530

CINTIA
You cut such a fine figure
that you are easily a match
for any dancer here.
Just don't step on any toes.

The music plays and everyone dances. TUNA's feather falls and BACO picks it up

BACO
(*Aside*) What is this feather?
I know I have seen it before,
in Ariadna's hair.
I am beside myself with jealousy. 1540

I will wear it myself to see
if it was meant to show Lidoro favor.
Go slow, my jealousy,
until I see if I am right.

BACO *puts the feather in his hat*

FEDRA *(Aside)* Now that I am sure he is Teseo,
for he is wearing the sash,
I will arrange to meet with him in private.
(Whispers to TESEO) Teseo, I will await you tonight.

TESEO How can I deserve such favor? 1550

ARIADNA *(Aside)* This must be Teseo
wearing the feather.
(Whispers to BACO) Prince, I will wait for you tonight.

BACO Could there be any greater bliss?

ARIADNA There will be, if you wear the feather.

BACO *(Aside)* Aha! I burn with jealousy.
She must have given it to Lidoro
as the mark of her favor.

TUNA *(Aside)* God, I'm tired!

LIDORO *(Aside)* That must be Baco and Fedra
whispering over there. 1560
How can I suffer so
and yet not take my revenge?

TESEO *(Aside)* Though Fedra's words are measured,
her smoldering eyes
strike lightning in my heart.

BACO *(Aside)* One born unhappy
should never aspire to bliss.
It is a slight to the stars
to try to resist. 1570

MINOS These are fitting gallantries for our court,
as lords and ladies display their charms.
They gather reverently for this ritual,
making their offerings on the altar of love.

.	(<i>Aside</i>) Those two must be Baco and Lidoro, princes of high degree. I'm sure of it, it must be them. (<i>Aloud</i>) You must believe me when I say how happy I am to have found relief from the sorrow and misfortune that tyrannized me.	1580
TESEO	Sir, this entertainment is most delightful for having consoled you.	
MINOS	How could any torment withstand such festivities?	
MUSIC	<i>In all that I do not know, sometimes confidence I feign, so that the forces of desire may yield the hope I claim.</i>	
TESEO	What a good refrain. Let me try to explain what it means.	1590
BACO	It's so close to my heart, it's as if they sing it for me.	
LIDORO	Let's make a game of it. ¹⁵	
TUNA	Well if they're going to play, let's hear the four of them so we don't miss a beat.	
TESEO	<i>In all that I do not know, sometimes confidence I feign, so that the forces of desire may yield the hope I claim.</i> (<i>To FEDRA</i>) Although it relieves my pain, your favor is but an illusion, for an unfortunate man can never find favor. To think I might is a mistake, a trick of my desire. Yet at the sight of you I am moved to oppose my fate,	1600

¹⁵ This courtly game of poetic invention allows the couples to show off their refinement and flirt at the same time. Their responses reveal their real insecurities and desires in a coded way, without King Minos catching on. The song lyrics also ironically comment on the mistaken identities and entanglements already in motion.

	though I may be much deceived <i>in all that I do not know.</i>	1610
FEDRA	(To TESEO) Though doubt may accuse you, love makes your case, and so I recover my hope and certainty. Despite this turn of events and your shifting loyalties, with loving and true faith, <i>sometimes confidence I feign.</i>	
BACO	(To ARIADNA) My despair is such that it may never fade. Another had to lose your favor for me to even find it. And so I can find no rest, even as I wear it now. Though I may hope, it is unclear how this path, by leading to some remedy, <i>may yield the hope I claim.</i>	1620
ARIADNA	(To BACO) It's not easy to find the words to spurn another, but once you do, the real challenge is knowing how to hold back. There's no use resisting. When it's time to defend myself, I find my strength in <i>the forces of desire.</i>	1630
MINOS	These are noble conceits, urbane and delicate, and wise all around. Let the music resume so that we may proceed. The rest should not miss out, for they have not mis-stepped.	1640
MUSIC	<i>In all that I do not know, sometimes confidence I feign, so that the forces of desire may yield the hope I claim.</i>	
LIDORO	(To LAURA) Though I am undeserving of love's sweet triumph,	

	yet desire leads me on, so that I must be wary of <i>all that I do not know.</i>	1650
LAURA	(To LIDORO) Blind hope and quiet despair cannot sustain me. Though it may not be true, <i>sometimes confidence I feign.</i>	
TUNA	(To CINTIA) My good fortune, alas, is all imagination. My desire seeks it out, not so I may possess it, but so it <i>may yield the hope I claim.</i>	1660
CINTIA	(To TUNA) With such good reasoning, it stands to reason I should reward you, if not in deed, then with <i>the forces of desire.</i>	
MINOS	That's enough. You have enlivened the celebration with your gracious efforts, and now you must rest.	
TESEO	How considerate of Your Majesty. See how the night begins to unfurl its black cloak.	1670
FEDRA	(<i>Aside</i>) Oh Love, let me find relief and the happiness I await.	
ARIADNA	(<i>Aside</i>) Oh my tormented thoughts, let me find a remedy for you.	
LIDORO	(<i>Aside</i>) Oh my sorrows, death cannot come soon enough.	
TESEO	(<i>Aside</i>) Oh Fortune, let us go in haste, so I can savor my rewards at leisure.	1680
<i>All exit except TUNA and VINNY</i>		
TUNA	(<i>Aside</i>) Am I all alone? No, I lie. There's that fellow over there, giving himself airs.	

A servant, I'm sure of it.
I must find out what he's up to.
(To VINNY) Hey, would you mind?
I don't know who you answer to,
but could you answer a few questions?

TUNA *takes off his hat and discovers the feather is missing*

What's this? Where's the feather?
Oh God, I've been robbed!
Now the gallant who took it up
will leave his mark everywhere.¹⁶ 1690

VINNY I already have a master.

TUNA Who is that?

VINNY It's Baco.

TUNA How you can stand to serve him
when he's always falling down drunk?

VINNY How can you speak like that?

TUNA It's the only style I know.
Doesn't serving Baco
leave you high and dry? 1700

VINNY High and dry? Why?

TUNA Because he drinks like a fish
and leaves you the dregs.
(*Aside*) I need to get away from this fool.
It's getting dark.
(To VINNY) Goodbye!

VINNY I'll come with you.

TUNA Hurry up then, if you're free.

VINNY Of course I'm free.
It's not like you're going to pay me.
We're off! 1710

TUNA You mustn't, really.

¹⁶ A pun about writing with feather quills, with a double entendre implied.

VINNY	I must go with you.	
TUNA	It'll be in vain.	
VINNY	Enough with the niceties.	
TUNA	Niceties? Niceties are just nice ties.	
VINNY	Not another step!	
TUNA	Where would I go? I won't move.	1720
VINNY	And I'll stay with you.	
TUNA	You should go... straight to hell.	

Exit TUNA and VINNY

SCENE 3

Enter FEDRA and ARIADNA, each from their own side, without seeing each other

FEDRA

(*Aside*) The shadows which come overwhelm any light
which might bring me comfort or new sight.
As it approaches, I turn away more and more
from a danger I feel at my fingertips' touch
but do not trust. If my desire is fearful and yet finds hope,
urged on by rising flights of fancy which approach, 1730
and to the night I entrust my fortune,
rehearsing in shadow what I fear to attempt—
anyone as haunted as I by a burden
so heavy and a suffering so endless
can only await a death that comes and comes again.
I feel that waiting is the death of the ordinary
for it stands at the core of all contrary to life
and will vex me still even beyond death.

ARIADNA (*Aside*) The cloak of the night, laden with tinted shadows
and made of a heavy labyrinth laden with dread, 1740
haunts my fearful thoughts and yet descends
no deeper than my own dark labyrinth extends.

Tinged with the same tragic colors,
the night, without light, paints the sad trials
that I, without rest, have painted myself.
Wellspring of relief and torment,
my love is a wound that craves,
more alive and penetrating in its reach
as I feel its grasp grow.
To live while dying—my torment has taken my soul 1750
as its lover, and not until death will they part.

FEDRA (Aside) Oh, how hope draws out the hours,
as past torments linger in the soul.

ARIADNA (Aside) Oh, how the night weaves together
shadows and horrors,
confusion and fear—
all signs my death is near.

FEDRA (Aside) If I live but to die of bliss,
it is only because love's greatest triumph
lies in surrender. 1760

ARIADNA (Aside) My misfortune brings me misery
that is so pleasant it makes me seek out
further injury to remedy my sorrows.

FEDRA (Aside) I crave this torment and pain
like I thirst for water,
drinking every last drop
until there's nothing left.

ARIADNA (Aside) My pain is such a constant companion
that I cannot imagine leaving it behind.

FEDRA (Aside) No happiness could mean as much 1770
as this happy sorrow.
The last thing I need
is this love I must have.

ARIADNA (Aside) I will wait for Teseo.

FEDRA (Aside) In Teseo my love will meet its match.

ARIADNA (Aside) He should be here any moment.

FEDRA (Aside) Has he not found his way here?

This was the place we agreed on,
by the cunningly designed door
through which he escaped that prison. 1780
Here will my happy love find him at last,
as fate finally turns kind.

ARIADNA (Aside) I left Fedra behind.
I want no other witnesses
to my amorous passion
than my own sighs of love.

FEDRA (Aside) I fear Ariadna will notice my absence.
And yet only without her
can I find some release.

Enter TESEO, apart from the others

TESEO (Aside) It'll soon be time 1790
for the divine Fedra to appear,
a sight as wondrous
as the sun coming out at night.
I will await her here,
for she said she would be expecting me tonight.
How much longer?
This is such torment!
But wait, I think I hear the gentle rustle
of her gown coming this way.

ARIADNA (Aside) What is that shape there 1800
in the darkness?

TESEO (Aside) Either my desire is playing tricks on me,
or I hear a noise.

ARIADNA (Aside) Oh, if only it were him!
I can hardly believe it.

TESEO (Aside) I will speak to her.

ARIADNA (Aside) I will speak to him.

FEDRA (Aside) I hear steps over there.
Could it be Teseo?

ARIADNA (Aside) It is my love, 1810
or I'm seeing things.

TESEO	(<i>To</i> ARIADNA) Only a coward lets unreasonable fear hold him back from reaching the greatest heights.	
ARIADNA	(<i>Aside</i>) What holds me back now, oh Love?	
TESEO	I fly close to the Sun, blinded by its light. Oh beautiful sun, to whom the black abyss of night offers its quiet reverence. I am a lovesick moth, circling your flame. What a sweet pyre I've built for myself, an Icarus to your rays, as I happily melt! ¹⁷ Oh how delicious is death, when caused by such heat!	1820
ARIADNA	(<i>Aside</i>) These courtesies are best left unanswered. A knowing heart needs no words.	1830
TESEO	Since you will not speak, although I suffer so, I beg you to at least listen to my pleas. Do not lock up your ears, though you keep my soul captive.	
ARIADNA	(<i>Aside</i>) To give credit to such words is in everyone's best interest. It ensures the bonds of love pay back what they owe.	
FEDRA	(<i>Aside</i>) Oh Love, is this Tesco and Ariadna? What is this cruel knife you have placed at my throat so I may die by its blade?	1840
TESEO	(<i>To</i> ARIADNA) A storm floods my breast. I am an unfortunate ship with a ballast of heavy thoughts	

¹⁷ Icarus: Son of Daedalus, architect of the Cretan labyrinth. Icarus flew too close to the sun with the wax wings his father had made for him and as they melted, he fell to his death. Often an allegorical figure of hubris or overreaching ambition.

	and sighs for sails. Though love but teases with its whip, how its blows do sting as my heart flirts with death.	1850
FEDRA	<i>(Aside)</i> It's an insult to my love that I can even bear such blows. But softly, my torments, let's go bit by bit, for my love must withstand the sorrows I cannot resist. I may endanger my love if I risk it all now. To snub him would be unworthy of that love, though to speak might compromise my virtue. And so, my sorrows, I must leave you behind! Oh, let my lips spout their poison! Yet could I really utter such words and risk what I love? No, Love, that will not do. But what to do instead? Bear it somehow.	1860
TESEO	<i>(To ARIADNA)</i> My heart is at once as poor in joys as it is rich in sorrows. Enough, divine Fedra.	1870
ARIADNA	<i>(Aside)</i> What is this I hear? Oh, ingrate! I will lose my mind at such cruel disdain.	
TESEO	Will you not respond?	
ARIADNA	<i>(Aside)</i> Who has ever found herself in such a tight spot? I must pretend to be Fedra. Oh, to be tested as a martyr to love!	1880
FEDRA	<i>(Aside)</i> Did someone call my name? Yes, I think so. The clear echo of my wretched name does not bode well. That is Ariadna,	

who has found with Teseo
the love that escapes me.

[illegible]

TESEO When someone worships you,
 offering his soul as a sacrifice,
 the thing to do is accept it.
 It's to your own credit, not mine.

ARIADNA That is more insult than courtesy.
 I would not accept such an offering,
 except to be free of you.

TESEO I do not understand you.

ARIADNA	If you cannot make sense of the content, or study my words closely, then at least work on your style, you ignorant fool.	1900
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TESEO

What is this, my lady?
If my ship has run aground
on the shoals of misery,
it must be the will of Fortune.
Although loving you makes me
like the towering pine
at the peak of its strength, 1910
whose vain splendor
is dashed by lightning;
like the flower nourished by dawn's light
and drained of life by evening,
born but to die again;
like the sun in its blue cradle,
whose blazing red ruby soon fades
into the topaz of twilight;
like the meadow with its lush green mantle
turned to dust under a summer blaze; 1920
like the crystal waters whose summer dance,
that harmonious flow,
is stilled by icy winter:
I embrace it all.
I am that ship in stormy waters,
that towering pine of misguided pride,

my love the tender flower,
my pain the harsh summer sun,
my burning soul the lightning bolt,
my tears the crystal waters. 1930
For, to my sorrow,
I am now met with a winter's freeze,
a shoal before the harbor,
a sad twilight for my blazing sun,
withering looks for my flower,
no regard for my youthful strength.
All of these obstacles,
harsh tutors for my love,
will seem sweet to me
once they have refined my style. 1940

LAURA and BACO enter at the side

LAURA Come in now,
this is the place agreed upon.

BACO Gladly, and I will repay
the courtesies offered me.

LAURA Come in,
and I will tell my mistress at once
that you are here.
(*Aside*) Teseo is not the only one
who will have to reward me.

Exit LAURA

BACO (*Aside*) Among the shadows I seek the light, 1950
like an eagle that dares stare at the sun,
for I have been called here
by the lovely Ariadna tonight.

ARIADNA I hear steps over there.

TESEO I hear a sound over there.

ARIADNA I am lost if they see me.

TESEO If they see me, all is lost.

BACO (*Aside*) I will approach,
for according to the signs

that must be my guiding star there,
lighting the way to happiness.
That must surely be Ariadna. 1960

BACO approaches FEDRA

(*To FEDRA*) Oh sun most divine,
let not the shadows hide you
like those spots that sully
the face of the sun.
To obey you will be my greatest joy,
as it has taken centuries
for us to get to this point.
I am your servant. 1970

FEDRA (*Aside*) Is this Teseo?
I must find out.
(*To BACO*) I did not expect you here.

BACO What do you mean?

FEDRA I mean I did not expect you here.

BACO I know, to my great sorrow,
that only Lidoro is worthy
of your favors.

FEDRA (*Aside*) Teseo must have found out
that Lidoro attempts to woo me. 1980
(*To BACO*) You are not only neglectful,
but also too bold.

ARIADNA (*To TESEO*) I must close that door,
for my father is still awake.
Wait here.

TESEO What is this I hear?
Must you go?
How am I to bear this?

Exit ARIADNA

(*Aside*) There are people here now.
Will she add insult to injury? 1990
I am determined to avenge this offense
though it may reveal my jealousy.

I will hide here to see
what she will do next.

TESEO *hides*

FEDRA (*Aside*) With disdain, with rejection,
I will test his devotion.
 (*To BACO*) Be off with you.

BACO How could I refuse you?

TESEO	(<i>Aside</i>) This must be Fedra who has heard me come in. Now she is the one who holds my life by a thread. What was the point of Ariadna's scheme? Oh you sly basilisk, ¹⁸ though you avert your lethal eyes, you have killed me by the ear!	2000
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FEDRA (To BACO) Since my eyes have found you
so loving in your surrender,
there is no need for me to hear you out.
Off with you. 2010

BACO I do not understand what you are saying.

ARIADNA *enters at the side*

ARIADNA *(Aside)* Perhaps just one more quiet word with Teseo.

BACO (*Aside*) This calls for some guile.
 (*To FEDRA*) When you honored me so greatly
 by granting me this feather,
 tell me, what was your intention?

ARIADNA (*Aside*) This is worse and worse.
 That must be Fedra,
 and Teseo, that bold man
 who is speaking with her there. 2020
 I was wrong to leave,
 but my vengeance must be my defense.
 Teseo must believe he is speaking to me.
 I wish I could send lightning
 to smite him now

¹⁸ Basilisk: Legendary monster with a snake-like form whose eyes could turn people to stone.

as I once sent the feather
to honor him!

FEDRA (To BACO) I? A feather?
What madness.
Is a sash the same as a feather? 2030

TESEO (Aside) Did she say a sash?
Is this real?
Is that Fedra assuming she speaks to me?
Clearly that is the case.

ARIADNA (Aside) My feather in the hand of another
reveals that Teseo has deceived me.
What a liar! What a treacherous lover!

FEDRA (Aside) I must protect Teseo
by getting him out of here.
I will change my tune. 2040
(To BACO) I have simply been testing you.

Enter CINTIA

CINTIA (To ARIADNA) Lady, this is Fedra, I tell you.

ARIADNA What do you mean?

TESEO (Aside) That voice said Fedra is here.
What am I waiting for then?
Death to this vile traitor!

TUNA enters at the side

TUNA (Aside) I'll just sneak into this place bit by bit.
It's dark as hell.
My master has not shown yet.

BACO (To FEDRA) I would sacrifice anything for you. 2050
No one can stop me.

TESEO reveals himself with his sword drawn

TESEO (Aloud) Except for me!

FEDRA Oh rash fool, who are you
who so dares to trespass?

BACO I will take care of him.

TESEO You will see how this tongue of steel
speaks of the wrong you have done to me.

BACO and TESEO fight

FEDRA Laura!

ARIADNA Cintia, come quickly!

FEDRA Bring torches! 2060

TESEO *(Aside)* If I don't fall back,
I will risk my life and my lady both.

LIDORO enters at the side

LIDORO *(Aside)* Caught off guard
while I sought to catch a glimpse of Fedra,
I heard the clashing of swords
and came to see what's going on.
(Aloud) What's all this?

LIDORO comes forward, and fights with BACO

TUNA My master is in a fix.
My lord!

TESEO Tuna, is that you? 2070

TUNA There are many fish in the sea,
but Tuna, that's me.

TESEO The labyrinth must now
be our sanctuary.
Let us hurry away,
they are bringing torches!

TUNA God, isn't this wonderful!
Hurry! If they see us,
it won't look good.

TUNA and TESEO go into the labyrinth. LAURA and CINTIA bring torches

LAURA	My lady, here are the torches.	2080
CINTIA	What now?	
BACO	What is this I see? Lidoro, can it be you?	
LIDORO	Can this be Baco? And the enemy he was fighting, where did he go? Surely we are under some spell.	
FEDRA	<i>(Aside)</i> The respect I command must serve me in this pass.	
ARIADNA	<i>(Aside)</i> The decorum I am owed must serve as a remedy.	2090
FEDRA	<i>(Aside)</i> Oh, I fear they have seen us!	
ARIADNA	<i>(Aside)</i> No one has seen Teseo. He is a lucky man!	
FEDRA	<i>(Aside)</i> I will get us out of this tight spot with my anger. <i>(Aloud)</i> Lidoro, what brings you here?	
ARIADNA	<i>(Aloud)</i> And you, Prince Baco, madly profaning this sacred space?	
BACO	My lady, I am ever...	2100
LIDORO	My lady, your words...	
BACO	... at your service. That is why I am here.	
LIDORO	...are my command.	
ARIADNA	My father will surely punish this brazen wrong.	
LIDORO	<i>(Aside)</i> What is happening to me?	
BACO	<i>(Aside)</i> What's happened to me? I must exact my vengeance on Lidoro.	

	<i>(Aloud)</i> Bearing news from Athens, I've come to see His Majesty.	2110
LIDORO	They have written me too, with the same news.	
LAURA	<i>(Aside)</i> What a coincidence, this excuse cuts both ways.	
BACO	<i>(Aside)</i> That was my line!	
LIDORO	<i>(Aside)</i> His excuse has saved me.	
FEDRA	And what, pray tell, does your conveyance of such news have to do with your trespass here?	2120
BACO	I heard a noise in the palace.	
LIDORO	That same ruckus brought me here, too.	
BACO	<i>(Aside)</i> Lidoro has lost his mind, and I am consumed with jealousy.	
LIDORO	<i>(Aside)</i> Who could that hidden figure have been, fighting with Baco? Was I just dreaming?	
FEDRA	<i>(Aside)</i> Only if Teseo escapes can I find good fortune.	
ARIADNA	<i>(Aside)</i> With Teseo far from harm's reach, I have nothing to fear.	2130
LIDORO	<i>(Aside)</i> Tell me, sweet gnawing vengeance, how can I satisfy you?	
BACO	<i>(Aside)</i> Soon, my innermost pangs, you shall have relief.	
FEDRA	<i>(Aside)</i> Help me, oh sufferings, keep the memory of this love alive.	
LIDORO	<i>(Aside)</i> To love you despite this risk...	
BACO	<i>(Aside)</i> Determined despite myself...	

FEDRA	(<i>Aside</i>) Defying my destiny...	2140
ARIADNA	(<i>Aside</i>) Determined now...	
BACO	(<i>Aside</i>) ...to embrace death...	
LIDORO	(<i>Aside</i>) ...to endure suffering...	
BACO	(<i>Aside</i>) ...as a lover.	
LIDORO	(<i>Aside</i>) ...as one conquered.	
FEDRA	(<i>Aside</i>) Yet I will prove in my anguish...	
ARIADNA	(<i>Aside</i>) Yet I will show in my madness...	
FEDRA & ARIADNA	(<i>Aside</i>) ...amid all this confusion, love is the greater labyrinth.	

END OF ACT II

ACT III

SCENE 1

VINNY *enters with a letter in his hand*

VINNY Heavens! How is it that I find myself 2150
 with a master of such strange mind?
 He is the only lord of Thebes,
 where he has taverns and public houses
 in which you can eat a whole horse
 and drink like a fish.
 Yet he has come to Crete
 to present himself as a suitor.
 With all this wine and love freely flowing,
 he's got everyone seeing double,
 thinking he is both Bacchus and a lover. 2160
 And now, simply because he's jealous,
 he tasks me with delivering
 this damned challenge to Prince Lidoro.
 But my fear has granted me prophetic powers.
 I wasn't born yesterday, after all.
 If I bring him this letter,
 Lidoro will blame the messenger.
 I should find a pageboy to carry it instead.
 Before Lidoro cuts me to ribbons,
 I'll have his guts for garters. 2170

TUNA *enters*

TUNA *(Aside)* I have a message for Fedra,
 but I fear someone may see me.
 Yet it doesn't matter,
 no one will recognize me.
 The palace is a sea of faces
 constantly coming and going,
 like tides rolling in and out,
 so no one remembers a face.
 If they ask me anything,
 I'll simply reply that I'm on my way in, 2180
 or on my way out.
 After all, they can't even tell
 whether they're coming or going themselves.
 A playwright would say
 they're just bit players.

VINNY *(Aside)* Just the pawn I needed.

	May Fortune smile on me now as I set the scene! (<i>To TUNA</i>) Pardon me, good sir?	
TUNA	What do you want with me?	2190
VINNY	Who are you?	
TUNA	A bit of a bit player.	
VINNY	Whom do you serve?	
TUNA	Lord Bits and Pieces.	
VINNY	And who is this lord?	
TUNA	Me, myself, and I.	
VINNY	Sounds fishy to me.	
TUNA	No fish here, sir. Only Tuna.	
VINNY	You lie.	2200
TUNA	What are you saying? Do you mean to offend the long and noble dynasty of the Bits and the Pieces?	
VINNY	I know you serve Lidoro. (<i>Aside</i>) I'll make him deliver the letter.	
TUNA	It is true, sir, I do serve Lidoro. What of it? (<i>Aside</i>) I guess I can play the part. What harm could come of it?	2210
VINNY	So, you really serve Lidoro?	
TUNA	Just like fish goes with chips.	
VINNY	Then take this to him, and you will have a handsome reward.	

TUNA	A reward? Well, I'll be battered and fried if this isn't from some princess or another.	
VINNY	<i>(Aside)</i> This is a bit fishy— now he wants to play Cupid. <i>(To TUNA)</i> But of course! It's from Fedra's very hand. <i>(Aside)</i> He'll take the bait now. <i>(To TUNA)</i> Farewell.	2220
<i>Exit VINNY</i>		
TUNA	Bye then. That couldn't have gone any better. Imagine if I get a gold chain or a diamond for delivering this letter. The princes of Epirus wouldn't be any less generous than the princes of Spain, would they? ¹⁹ They won't lead me by the nose— no, they'll cover me with chains. I'm off to find Lidoro.	2230
<i>Enter TESEO</i>		
TESEO	Tuna, what letter have you got there? Have you seen Fedra? Is that from her perhaps?	
TUNA	<i>(Aside)</i> It's from the devil himself, who's got me in his clutches. No way out now. I'll have to say it is for him.	2240
TESEO	What's wrong with you, Tuna?	
TUNA	<i>(To TESEO)</i> I'm wondering if you might have a little gem as a reward for me. Surely such a letter merits as much.	
TESEO	Hand it over. The wax is so fresh that I can get into this letter without even leaving a mark.	

¹⁹ A winking metatheatrical remark aimed at the audience.

Reads the letter

“Prince, I have discovered
that you have tricked me
by courting both princesses.
Since you offend my love on the one hand
and my honor on the other,
I am left with no choice
but to seek satisfaction.
I shall await you in the garden. Baco.” 2250

What is this?
You wretch,
are you trying to trick me? 2260

TESEO hits TUNA

TUNA
That’s my head!
Wait, my lord.
I am just a bony tuna fish,
not some rubbery octopus
for you to tenderize.
Is this how you thank me?

TESEO
This is what your treachery deserves,
you scoundrel.
But my fury distracts me
from punishing the one
who has truly offended me. 2270

Exit TESEO

TUNA
Be gone and do not hurry back.
Who, in the name of God,
goes looking for chains,
only to be torn to ribbons?
Fedra must have named Lidoro in her letter,
and treated him with courteous favors.
And so my master,
transformed into a vile beast,
wants me to pay for what Lidoro owes him. 2280
But the letter is right here.
It must have fallen from that hand
so eager to beat me.
Oh, if only I knew how to read,

all its madness would be revealed!
But it was meant for Lidoro,
and is in good enough shape to seal again,
so nobody need be the wiser.
By God, I'll take it to Lidoro!
Better luck next time, right? 2290
Everyone gets the stick at some point
and I've had my turn already,
so where's the carrot?

Exit TUNA

SCENE 2

Enter BACO and MINOS

BACO	My lord, I am at your service.	
MINOS	I value your discretion, and have something to ask you.	
BACO	<i>(Aside)</i> Heavens, the king will prevent me from meeting Lidoro for the challenge. <i>(To MINOS)</i> What does Your Majesty require of me? Your wish is my command. 2300 <i>(Aside)</i> If only I could take my leave!	
MINOS	Prince, no sooner had Teseo's death given me a taste of vengeance for the wrong done to me, then my spies brought me news from Athens. As word of their prince's fate reached the city, it set the kingdom in an uproar. Every last citizen vowed to take up arms, promising not to return until they had reduced Crete to ash and embers. 2310 And so they set sail in a fleet so large that the sea became a crowded city and the land a desert. Now I must prepare my defenses, taking care that it seem like prudence and not fear. My people must not assume I will be defeated just because I show concern. But come with me. I will show you the letters	

and we'll decide on a strategy accordingly. 2320
These matters require careful thought
and swift action.

BACO
Let us go.
(*Aside*) What will Lidoro think of my delay?
Yet I must follow the king.
If this should harm my reputation,
my courage will later make amends.

Exit MINOS and BACO

SCENE 3

Enter TESEO

TESEO
I am tired of waiting for my enemy.
This is far more tedious than fighting!
How could Baco have known the whole story— 2330
how Ariadna gave me freedom,
how Fedra showed me love?
But wait, someone is coming.
I'd better see who it is.

Enter LIDORO with the letter

LIDORO
(*Aside*) My honor requires a response
to this letter I just received.
Baco is trying to drive me mad.
He is now accusing me
of the very thing he has done.
He courts Fedra, despite my love for her, 2340
then he calls me a traitor
and claims I court Ariadna.
Is he trying to fool me?
He hopes to excuse his offense
by claiming I've done the same.
But I've done nothing to him,
and he is in the wrong.
And so he must die for his deeds,
in spite of his words.
Ah, there is someone over there. 2350

TESEO
Who goes there?

LIDORO (Aside) It must be Baco.

TESEO (Aside) No doubt it's Baco.

LIDORO Prince.

TESEO Come then, once and for all!
Fight me now.
Since you know who I am,
I am certain it is you.

TESEO and LIDORO fight

LIDORO What courage!

TESEO Nice move! 2360

LIDORO You're a brave man.

TESEO And an honorable one.

LIDORO If I did not have my own valor,
I would envy yours.

TESEO You've nothing to envy.
You're like Hercules himself.

LIDORO I am just trying to defend my good name.
Alas! I fear you have killed me.

LIDORO falls

TESEO Heavens, I'll be in great danger
if they find out I've killed this man. 2370
They wanted my own life,
and now I've taken another.
I must go at once.
That's the only solution.

Exit TESEO, then BACO enters

BACO How tedious that was!
I don't know how I could stand it.
The king's fears are not my own,
and though he desired my opinion
of his every last plan,

	he just droned on like a fly. But why is everything so quiet? There's no one here. Could it be that Lidoro got tired of waiting and just left? But what's this? By the faint light of the moon I see a man shuddering in agony. Who could it be? Good Heavens!	2380
VOICE	(<i>Offstage</i>) The noise came from the gardens. <i>Enter TEBANDRO and GUARDS</i>	2390
TEBANDRO	The voices come from over there, and they don't lie— there's a man hiding behind his cloak, with another at his feet, either wounded or dead. (<i>To GUARDS</i>) See who they are.	
GUARD	(<i>To BACO</i>) We must detain you.	
BACO	I can barely restrain my anger. (<i>Reveals his face</i>) It's me, Tebandro. I am Prince Baco. I've only just arrived and seen what you see now.	2400
TEBANDRO	Your word is enough for me, sir, but we must see who this is.	
BACO	Yes, do so.	
TEBANDRO	Good Heavens, what is this I see? It is Lidoro, prince of Epirus, drawing his last breath and covered in his own blood!	
BACO	Heavens, how could this have happened?	2410
TEBANDRO	Sir, you killed him with your own hands, and now you are surprised?	
BACO	It can't have been me	

when I am this surprised.
I would never disown my culpability
and turn a crime into a vile deed.

TEBANDRO Prince, everyone at court knew
of the bad blood between you two,
whatever the reason for it.
And who else but you would have dared
to kill a man such as him? 2420

One of the GUARDS arrives with the letter

GUARD This letter was there on the ground.
It was probably Lidoro's
and may give some hint
of what just happened.

TEBANDRO Well said.
I want to see what it says.
Bring a light.

GUARD Here you are.

TEBANDRO *(Reads)* "Prince, I have discovered
that you have tricked me
by courting both princesses.
Since you offend my love on the one hand
and my honor on the other,
I am left with no choice
but to seek satisfaction.
I shall await you in the garden. Baco." 2430

You see how things stand, Prince Baco.
We hadn't the slightest clue
about this crime, did we? 2440

And now we have evidence to spare.
Yet I am just an officer
with no jurisdiction over you.
My duty is only to notify the king
of what has occurred.
Should he ask for your whereabouts,
I'll reply I haven't seen you,
though you are hardly a man
who can hide for long.
(To GUARDS) You there, remove the body. 2450

Exit TEBANDRO *and* GUARDS

BACO

What dire straits,
to be suddenly convicted
of a crime I am not guilty of!
The letter I wrote Lidoro
to challenge him to a duel
is the main proof against me.
Will anyone believe
that I am not guilty
when my name is right there
on the letter itself? 2460
What a bind,
at once innocent and condemned
for a crime I did not commit!
To claim I succeeded in my intent
to take revenge on Lidoro
would put me in grave danger,
and it would not be true.
I cannot do such a thing
just to satisfy their mad conjectures.
Yet even if I say I didn't do it, 2470
the letter bears fearsome witness against me.
Though I wrote those words,
I cannot unsay them.
Besides, I shouldn't bring dishonor upon myself
by telling a truth that no one will believe.
Since there is no remedy
and my mind cannot find any proof to deny it,
any claim to contest it,
I must leave Crete at once.
I have ships at the ready. 2480
They will save me from risking
not only my life in this foreign kingdom,
but also my estates back in Thebes,
which Epirus would attack
as soon as they got word
their prince had died at my hand.
Farewell, oh beguiling Crete.
This palace holds more than one labyrinth.

Exit BACO

SCENE 4

Enter ARIADNA and TUNA

TUNA	So that's where we find ourselves, my lady. This much is clear: Lidoro is dead and the palace is up in arms.	2490
ARIADNA	And Teseo was the one who killed him?	
TUNA	No question. When I saw him heading down to the gardens, armed and fierce, I hid and followed him, then saw how he killed Lidoro. And besides, he was just here, showing clear signs of his guilt: rushing about and breathing heavily, his blade dripping blood, his face pale and wild, his lips silent yet speaking volumes, his color so drained that it seemed all the blood had run from his face to his sword. That's how I left him.	2500
ARIADNA	Do you know why they were fighting?	
TUNA	No, my lady.	2510
ARIADNA	Wretched is the one who adores him! A life so artfully saved is now as good as lost. If they detain him, there will be no thread left with which I might draw out his life. I fear they will arrest him. Then a cruel blade will sever his life's thread, which I already extended once. My skill equaled the three Fates. ²⁰ Yet though I lengthened his life, now this blade will cut it short. Better to fly from this cruel occasion. By fleeing with him, I'll spare his life,	2520

²⁰ Fates: Greek goddesses who measure and cut the threads of each person's lifespan.

and mine with his.
If I trust in him, that will redeem us both.
Love tells me Teseo will behave honorably,
given what I have done for him.
Tuna, go tell Teseo to come to me at once.

TUNA	I'll move so fast I'll leave your desire in the dust. Only your wit can save us now. We will find life in the skillful web you weave. A thread in the hand is worth two in the bush, as they say. In case my master is out, what should I say?	2530
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ARIADNA	Tell him to stay away to avoid any scandal, given what has happened. Even the labyrinth is no longer safe for him. I will be on the balcony facing the gardens.	2540
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TUNA	Very good then.	
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Exit TUNA

ARIADNA	My love for Teseo breeds fear for his death. If only I could die first, and evade the continual torment of seeing his pain and nervously awaiting his last breath. A thousand times my fear gains new depths as I imagine the sharp edge of a blade nearing his gentle neck, yet unscathed, and so, dying of fright, I picture his death. And yet, all these dangers do not pain me as much as imagining a greater threat: that I have given my life to a treacherous soul, who would repay me with death.	2550
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Exit ARIADNA

SCENE 5

Enter TESEO and FEDRA

FEDRA

What? You killed Baco?

TESEO

My lady, how can my lips deny
what my bloody hand cannot hide?
I received a note from him, 2560
in which he avowed his jealous passion
and his bold desire to act upon his anger.
He claimed that, for pleasure or for vanity,
I courted both you and your sister,
offending his honor in the one case
and his love in the other.
I don't know how he found out about us,
though I am sorry he did.
I met his challenge,
fortune favored my sword: 2570
in short, I killed him,
and that's all there is to say.
Now listen to why I am here.
My dear and most lovely Fedra,
since the moment I first saw you,
I offered you my soul.
I was so beside myself
that not even my longing was my own,
it was all for you.
Since I was yours all at once, 2580
there was no more for me to do,
and so you owe me nothing
for what you entirely possessed.
This was the greatest sign of love:
that having fallen for you so completely,
I could do no more.
You also know how Ariadna,
whether from nobility or mercy,
spun such webs to set me free,
with sharp skill and generous actions, 2590
that if my soul were still my own
it would not suffice to repay her.
Especially when she is adorned with such beauty.
She was as gracious to me
as one less favored might have been.
You know well that in those duels
women fight with each other
it's considered a low blow
to woo with all your charms.
This is why beautiful women 2600
are well known for their disdain.

They make sure everyone knows
 their beauty is more than enough.
 And so... what's this?
 Have I offended you
 by praising her loveliness?
 Excuse my oversight,
 and don't take it as an insult
 when I owe her so much.
 I must at least acknowledge her charms, 2610
 since I cannot return her love.
 A lover can show his devotion
 without being rude to another woman.
 And if all this does not convince you,
 consider I have come now
 to beg something of you,
 since Ariadna's clever design
 will not save me now.
 Whoever told Baco of our love 2620
 will surely tell others,
 and they will realize
 it was I who killed him.
 This will redouble the risk.
 The one who told him of my love
 may know he then challenged me,
 and from there may easily deduce
 what happened, leaving me
 no comfort for my sorrows,
 no refuge from my troubles.
 Don't think it is the threat 2630
 to my life that scares me.
 I'd count myself lucky
 if I were the only one in danger.
 But now both you and Ariadna
 may be swept away
 by these waves of misfortune
 that threaten death and dishonor.
 Only by fleeing can we avoid the risk
 and set ourselves free.
 Beautiful Fedra, 2640
 if you love me as you claim,
 if you are moved by my pleas,
 if you feel for my sorrows,
 then let us go to Athens.
 From there it will be easier
 to obtain your father's pardon.
 Although he opposes us now,

I am sure that once I take up arms,
he will see fit to relent.
Many things are granted in war
that are denied in peace.
If you go with me, they will think
you set me free out of love,
and that will free Ariadna
of any lingering suspicion.
She alone will wear the crown of Crete,
while you rule over Athens
and my soul—in truth, the better prize.
What do you say to this?

FEDRA Teseo, you anticipate my every wish. 2660
I blush to say the reasons
to flee with you are so obvious
that I was almost compelled
to suggest it myself.
Your plea saved me from speaking first.
I don't know why words of love
always sound better when the man speaks them,
but all a woman needs to do
to be heroic in love
is to concede the motion. 2670
To be the one to propose it
dims beauty and damages honor.
And she who pleads with her lover,
even when she knows he adores her,
may not be denied,
but will not be admired.
There are so many rules
governing a lady's decorum
that, to protect her honor,
no matter how much she loves, 2680
she should merely suggest
that she is vanquished,
rather than fall on her knees.
But no matter—
take my life and myself.
Having declared my love to you,
there is no more to say.

TESEO How you draw me to you!
 Let me kiss your feet.

FEDRA	Rise from the ground.	2690
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There is no reason for that
when you are the master of my soul.

TESEO When you shower ever greater favors upon me,
is it any wonder my devotion should grow?
Goodbye, my love,
I must get ready.

FEDRA Come as soon as you have found a ship
for us to sail away on.
There are always so many of them in the port.
There must be one from your kingdom among them 2700
for you to hire with my jewels.
They won't know you in your disguise.

TESEO I'm off.

FEDRA When you return, don't enter the palace.
I'll be watching for you
near this door to the garden
so that no one will hear us.

TESEO Goodbye, my treasured one.
Since you are a goddess,
make my hours away from you 2710
pass quickly.

FEDRA Even if I could,
what would be the point?
If all those hours were compressed
into a single instant,
time without you would still be
an eternity of anguish.

Exit TESEO and FEDRA

SCENE 6

Enter BACO, cloaked

BACO When I find myself convicted of a crime
without having committed it;
when I confront Lidoro's death 2720
without knowing who killed him,
thus preventing the vengeance of my steel;

when, to free myself from danger,
I must flee from Crete at once,
readying a ship to save my life,
then I see what the love
of an ungrateful woman can do,
she who kills with her disdain and beauty.
Though I forswear her forever,
I must return to her palace once more
to say goodbye at the bars of her window.
Bending to my pleas,
they might lend a kind ear
to what my love has wrought.

2730

Enter ARIADNA above, on a balcony

ARIADNA (Aside) The longer Teseo takes,
the more my anguish grows.
If waiting by itself is death,
what of the one who waits and doubts?
But if my eyes don't deceive me,
nor those dark shadows confuse me,
a man is coming this way.

2740

BACO (Aside) Someone has opened a window.
I must come near.

ARIADNA (Aside) Someone is coming.
It must be him.
(Aloud) Is it you, my lord?

BACO (Aside) I will pretend to be the one she asks for.
(Aloud) It is.

ARIADNA What took you so long, my lord,
when my breast shudders with so much fear,
ever since I learned of Lidoro's unjust death
at your hands?

2750

BACO (Aside) Heavens!
What is this I hear?
She who speaks must know who I am.
Who could she be?

ARIADNA And although I don't know the cause,
I'm sure it was for the love of Fedra,
my sister, whose beauty you court,

despite my love and devotion. 2760

BACO
(*Aside*) Good heavens, this is Ariadna,
and she accuses me of being false to her,
perhaps because of that foolish scheme
to court Fedra.
But how is it, when she is furious
over the death of her lover Lidoro,
that she scolds me so jealously,
rather than lamenting her sorrows?

ARIADNA
Yet now is not the time for jealous conjectures,
but for some remedy to these present dangers. 2770
Now that Lidoro is dead,
no skill of mine can secure your life
or my honor, tossed by waves of risk.
Let us escape from this danger,
flee from that fury.
Discretion is the better part of valor.
There are so many ships in the port.
Find one, my prince, for us to sail away on.

BACO
(*Aside*) Heavens, can such good fortune be mine?
Ariadna, as cruel as she was, 2780
has now become so loving
that she ventures to follow me?
But did I not hear from her own mouth
that she loved—oh I wish I could forget it!—
my great enemy?
How can she now insist that she loves me?
Yet what are these obstacles
that my pain keeps inventing?
Didn't she seem at first to bend
and even show signs of loving me? 2790
Can't it be that some occasion
prompted her to this change?
The mettle of love is often tested
in the crucible of jealousy.
And anyway, were this not so,
how could I continue to blame one
who has resolved to follow me?
Although it troubles my heart
to suspect she once loved Lidoro,
it is just foolish conjecture. 2800
Such courtesies annoy, but do not offend,
they may blot, but do not tarnish.

I resolve to enjoy the very heavens in her beauty.
Now that Lidoro is dead,
no suspicion need worry me.

ARIADNA What are you thinking?
Why do you not answer?

BACO (*Aloud*) My lady, there are plenty of ships
all ready to sail, and I have one prepared.
Let us seize this opportunity. 2810
We must go at once,
while nothing stands in our way.

ARIADNA Then wait, I'm coming down.
Dark night, protect my love,
since you always come to the aid of love!

Exit ARIADNA. BACO goes to the door below to wait, through which FEDRA appears

FEDRA *(Aside)* My God, how resolute and courageous is Love,
which forces a woman to such reckless action,
making her leave her homeland
and abandon her honor to follow a man!
That must be Teseo approaching. 2820
(Aloud) Is it you, my lord?

BACO Who could it be
 but this gallant sunflower
 so attuned to your rays,
 that even when your light
 is obscured by shadows,
 it can find the sun at night?

FEDRA Let's go, before my father finds out
that Lidoro died by your hand.

BACO	Follow me, then.	2830
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BACO and FEDRA move to the side. Enter TESEO from another side, approaching the door

TESEO The ship is ready in the port.
Love is so eager it will suffer no delay.
Fedra said she would be waiting at this door.
I must go to her.

Enter ARIADNA through the same door

ARIADNA

(*Aside*) What troubled steps
I take in my confusion!
It's no surprise—
my conscience makes me falter.
But if the dreadful night
does not deceive me,
someone approaches there.
I must speak up.
Yet I am in such turmoil,
I can barely find the words.

2840

TESEO *(Aside)* By God, she's waiting at the door.
What courage can equal hers?
(To ARIADNA) My lady.

ARIADNA Who is it? What now?

TESEO	It is I, who take my very being from my love for you. Were I not yours, I would not be myself.	2850
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ARIADNA Then let us go at once,
 for I've heard noise from the palace,
 and don't know what it might be.

TESEO Let's go.

Enter TUNA

TUNA I'm out of breath, all tired out
from looking for my master.
That tricky prince,
he's gone when you need him 2860
and haunts you when you don't.
I'll tell Ariadna,
who is out on the balcony
taking the night's cool air.
She's running hot and cold
from what Teseo does to her.
But there goes a man—
no, there's two of them.
wait, there's more.
From the rib of each, 2870
a woman has been born.

BACO (To FEDRA) Two figures are coming, my lady.
Let's wait over here
until they've passed by.

FEDRA If I must.

BACO and FEDRA stand to one side while ARIADNA and TESEO pass in front of them.
TUNA approaches TESEO

ARIADNA Hurry, Teseo.

TUNA (Aside) Someone said Teseo.
Has my master gotten here before me
and taken the princess?
I guess he's already plucked her from her father. 2880
Might as well run off with her now.
I need to be careful as I get closer.
(To TESEO) Psst. Is that you, sir?

TESEO That's Tuna.
What do you want?

TUNA Tell me who you are.
Until I know if you are you,
I can't say if I'm me.

TESEO I am Teseo.
Is that enough? 2890

FEDRA (Aside) He said Teseo.
But isn't Teseo who I'm with?

TUNA Then tell me, sir, by God,
where have you been all night?
Ariadna sent for you
and I couldn't find you anywhere.

BACO (Aside) Who said Ariadna?

TESEO I was at the port to see
if any ships were sailing for Athens.
My valor will leave Crete in the shadows, 2900
for in Fedra I carry off the sun.

TUNA So it's Fedra, not Ariadna,

who you're taking with you?

ARIADNA *(Aside)* Oh, you traitor! You fool!
It's obvious he loves Fedra.
He even calls me by her name.
What swift punishment
for my rash decision!

BACO (*Aside*) They're asking whether this is Fedra,
and not Ariadna.
What is going on?

2910

FEDRA *(Aside)* Someone asked whether Fedra
 or Ariadna was being carried off,
 but who is asking?

ARIADNA (To TESEO) Let's go,
before the king's wrath catches up to us.

TESEO Come, my lovely Fedra.

ARIADNA I'm Ariadna, not Fedra.
Your ingratitude should not confuse us again.

BACO (*Aside*) Heavens, what is this? 2920
 I can ignore it no longer.
 (*To FEDRA*) Ariadna, wait here
 while I see who that is.

TESEO God help me, how can this be?
So you are not Fedra?

ARIADNA No, I am Ariadna.

BACO (*Aside*) What's this I hear?
Heavens above!

FEDRA (*Aside*) And I am Fedra, not Ariadna.
 I've been tricked into running away
 with this man I don't even know,
 while Teseo takes my sister,
 also by mistake.
 I must alert him at once.
 (*Aloud*) Teseo, my lord, my husband!²¹

²¹ Marriage vows exchanged in private had the force of an actual marriage before the Church began trying to enforce public unions instead. Fedra indicates that she considers her and Teseo already married.

This thief here steals away your Fedra!

TESEO My honor will not stand for this!
Die at my hand, you traitor!

BACO You are the one who must die!
My honor tells me you tricked Ariadna 2940
into leaving with you.

ARIADNA (*Aside*) What harsh fortune!

FEDRA (*Aside*) If that is Teseo,
I must go to him.

ARIADNA (*Aside*) Heaven help me!
In this horrendous darkness
I can't tell which of the two is Teseo.

FEDRA and ARIADNA switch partners. VINNY enters, running

VINNY Where can I hide?
For my service to Baco
I'll be the low-hanging fruit. 2950

Enter TEBANDRO and GUARDS

TEBANDRO (*To GUARDS*) Kill him if he resists.
The king has ordered it.

VINNY Who says a brisk pace
means I'm resisting arrest?

TEBANDRO What's going on here?
Once again, two reckless men
are dueling in the gardens.
Who are you that dare
disturb this sacred space?
(*To GUARDS*) Arrest them. 2960

TESEO You do not know my fighting spirit.

BACO You do not know my fighting hands.

TEBANDRO Kill them, then.
What are you waiting for?

TESEO *(Aside)* If I don't fight them off,
I'll lose my life and Fedra both.

BACO *(Aside)* If I don't defend my honor,
I'll lose Ariadna and my life.

BACO and TESEO fight the GUARDS

FEDRA *(Aside)* Oh tyrannical heavens, give me death
and put an end to the life that so offends you! 2970

ARIADNA *(Aside)* If my miserable life
is the target of your fury,
then aim for my heart.

GUARD Are you resisting the law?

Enter MINOS

MINOS What's this?
In the palace, to hear such quarrels
and witness such brawls?

TEBANDRO My lord, these two men here are to blame.
They stubbornly resist the rule of law.

MINOS Well then, arrest them at once, 2980
or kill them if you must.

TEBANDRO And also these ladies,
over whom they must have been fighting.

MINOS Dueling over women?
Arrest them as well.

TESEO It's impossible to escape.
We're surrounded on all sides.

MINOS See who those women are.

ARIADNA Goodness, my life is over!

FEDRA Goodbye, miserable life! 2990

TEBANDRO reveals FEDRA and ARIADNA's faces

MINOS

What is this I see?
My daughters? No longer,
when they behave in such common ways.
Such fury burns within me
that my breath is turned to fire.
Oh, what insult! What suffering!
If only I could tell them of my pain
without having to name their shame!
How can I even bear to speak of you,
you treacherous monsters,
you ungrateful instruments of my dishonor,
you portraits of my shame?
How could I find you—
what torment!—
in such a state—
what humiliation!—
in disguise—
what indecency!—
and alone with two men?
Speak. You won't respond?
Tell me, what kind of villains spare my life
only to rob me of my honor?
Speak, traitors.
Don't be held back now by modesty.
If it could not stop you from the deed,
it should not stop you from speaking of it.

3000

3010

ARIADNA

My lord...
(*Aside*) Fear has turned me to ice.

FEDRA

My lord...
(*Aside*) I am turned to marble by fear.

3020

ARIADNA

If through my fault...

BACO

(*Aside*) What am I waiting for?
How can I not reveal who I am
when Ariadna is in such danger?

BACO reveals himself

(*Aloud*) My lord, it is just to punish
the one and only culprit, and I am that.
Pursued with courtly flattery,
persuaded by loving pleas,
and obliged by tender cries,

	Ariadna merely followed me.	3030
ARIADNA	<i>(Aside)</i> What's this I hear? When have I ever followed Baco? Good heavens. But I must be silent. Perhaps his efforts will save me from this danger.	
TESEO	<i>(Aside)</i> What's this? How can Baco be alive when I already killed him?	
FEDRA	<i>(Aside)</i> I cannot believe he's alive.	
MINOS	I realized at once that you, Prince Baco, must have been responsible for this beastly offense against me. Who else but you would dare sully my honor? You, who have set your sights so high and now stoop so low. But your death will serve as an example to other rash fools, as I avenge Lidoro and restore my honor.	3040
TESEO	<i>(Aside)</i> If Baco is willing to face death for his love, my courage must not seem the weaker. I wouldn't want everyone to see him embracing danger while I run from it.	3050
	<i>TESEO reveals himself</i>	
	<i>(Aloud)</i> My lord, if, for Ariadna's sake, Baco is willing to face death, Teseo must do no less for Fedra.	
FEDRA	What have you done?	
ARIADNA	<i>(Aside)</i> What's this I see? He will risk death for Fedra? Then let him die. I will no longer be blind to his ingratitude. It has turned my love into hate.	3060
BACO	<i>(Aside)</i> What? Teseo, alive? And in love with Fedra?	

I thought he was dead!
She must have saved him.

TEBANDRO (*Aside*) Can this be real?

TUNA	They're all frozen in disbelief. He frightens them more now that he's come back to life than when they thought he was dead.	3070
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VINNY If Lidoro came back too,
it'd be the day of the dead²² on Crete.

MINOS

I am so astounded I can barely move,
not even to avenge this great offense.
You are still alive?
What misplaced compassion freed you,
despite your treachery?
I can hardly believe it.
I am too astonished to give vent to my wrath. 3080
Just when I think I have laid my anger to rest,
you reappear, like a Hydra with its many heads,²³
bringing my wrongs back to life.
Why do you provoke me so?
Wasn't it enough to deepen my pain
by outwitting my rage, you traitor?
Did you have to destroy my honor, too?
What else will you attempt against my noble blood,
now that you have spilled it in Athens
then insulted it in Crete? 3090
What else will you plot against me?
First you spilled my son's blood with murderous intent,
and now you add this insult to that injury
by stealing my own daughters away?
But my merciless fury will punish you,
every last one of you!
If only I can ensure your downfall,
my own will be a small price to pay.
Let the world witness how my blood
will cleanse the stain upon my honor, 3100
which my own blood has offended.
Those who have insulted me must die,
as did the only one who honored me.
I will kill all of you,

²² The original Spanish is “el Día de los Finados,” or All Souls’ Day.

²³ Hydra: Many-headed serpent of Greek mythology, said to grow two new heads for every one cut off.

including Baco, that traitor,
who abducted Ariadna and slew Lidoro.
You have all done wrong in equal measure,
and so you will share the same fate:
you will all be put to death.
Take them away.

3110

BACO What harsh fury!

TESEO Could I suffer any greater torment?

ARIADNA His cruelty is unmoved by our pleas.

FEDRA His severity is unswayed by our misery.

MINOS Die, so I may restore that honor
which you have attempted to destroy!

TESEO How could he do this?

VINNY This is crushing me!

ARIADNA Sorrow, silence, and death!

FEDRA Love, death, and silence!

3120

Drums sound and CINTIA and LAURA enter, frightened, along with two SOLDIERS

SOLDIER 1 My lord, why so slow to respond?
Crete will soon be destroyed,
and you are in imminent danger.

SOLDIER 2 Enemy troops have stealthily breached
the palace from the shore
and occupy it now.
Athens, spurred by the death of its prince,
seeks vengeance on every side.
My lord, they'll be here soon—
save yourself.

3130

MINOS Oh, fickle fate!
Who has ever seen the like?
I must pay for my offenses,
when I am the one offended?

LAURA This tumult and distress portend our ruin.

CINTIA Having acted so freely,
I'd hate to be a captive now.

Enter LICAS, dressed as a general, with Athenian SOLDIERS

LICAS My anger will not be appeased
until I find the king
and make him pay with his life 3140
for the bloody tyranny
that took Teseo's.

TEBANDRO Cursed heavens!
There's no escape now!

LICAS Is that the king I see?
You will die at my hands!

FEDRA Teseo!

TESEO There's no need to prompt me—
I will do what I must,
and not because you ask it of me. 3150

MINOS Will no one help me?

TESEO I will, my lord.
Stop, Licas.
There is no need to avenge me
when I'm not dead.
Look! I'm Teseo.
I'm alive.

LICAS What a blessed sight, my lord!
How is this possible?

TESEO In their compassion, 3160
the princesses set me free.
(*Aside*) Mentioning only Ariadna
would cause suspicion,
and it wouldn't be honorable
to vaunt affection I can't repay.

LICAS The king did not pardon you?

TESEO (*Aloud*) It was his daughter,

which amounts to the same thing.
After all, the king gave life
to the one who saved mine. 3170
And if that were not reason enough,
I would still choose to show mercy,
to signal my rare excellence.
There is greater valor in forgiveness
than in punishment.
And so, Licas, order our soldiers to retreat.

MINOS Teseo, how can I ever repay you?
My desire for revenge is undone by your reason,
and I am too ashamed to even look at you!

TESEO	Though it would be proper to decline your offer, some things are more important than propriety. At times, decorum must give way to desire.	3180
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MINOS What are you waiting for?
Ask away!
My entire kingdom is yours.

TESEO I desire an even greater prize, my lord:
the divine Fedra,
whose beauty is the only reward I seek.

MINOS She's yours.

ARIADNA (*Aside*) So he will marry Fedra? 3190
 Oh, the ingratitude!
 My hopes are finally dead.
 There's no helping it now—
 I must accept Baco's attentions.
 (*Aloud*) My lord,
 now that your wrath has cooled
 and you've pardoned my sister,
 I too kneel before you to beg forgiveness,
 and to declare it was not Baco,
 but Teseo, who killed Lidoro. 3200

MINOS But what about the evidence,
Baco's challenge to him?

ARIADNA Let a witness tell the story, my lord.
 Speak, Tuna.

TUNA	That's my cue. Thank you, Saint Lucia, for this chance to say what I saw!²⁴ That's right, my lord. In my eagerness for a reward, I delivered the letter I thought came from Fedra to the wrong person.	3210
VINNY	Say no more— I too should confess. I was scared to deliver it, so I gave the letter to Tuna. I was behind the whole mess.	
TUNA	As I was taking it to Lidoro, in the hopes of a nice reward, misfortune brought my master into my path. He read it so quickly, I never knew what it said. But since the seal was still fresh, I closed it up again and delivered it to Lidoro, entirely in the dark. Then I saw him fuming on his way to the park, while my master, Teseo—	3220
MINOS	I've heard enough. Ariadna, give your hand to Baco. And Fedra, give yours to Teseo, with all the gratitude you owe him.	3230
FEDRA	My hand, my prince.	
TESEO	I receive it with my soul, which is entirely yours.	
ARIADNA	And my hand is yours, Baco.	
BACO	It is my greatest prize, my lady.	
VINNY	The lackeys and maids were left in the wings, with no time for love-plots, but Cintia, I'm here if you want to follow suit.	3240

²⁴ Saint Lucia (or Lucy): Patron saint of the blind, so an ironic saint for Tuna to call on here.

- CINTIA I do. We'd be fools not to.
- TUNA Laura, we wouldn't want to be left
 with nothing but hard feelings.
- LAURA You're right.
 A catch like me shouldn't be left adrift
 while everyone else pairs off.
 Take my hand.
- TEBANDRO And so the pen is spent
 and begs your pardon for the play it wrote,
 against the author's better judgment.
 It only meant to please,
 and knew not what it did.²⁵

END OF THE PLAY

²⁵ A traditional final apology for the proceeding play, employing modesty tropes typical of the form.