

a judgment on his murderous
violence. [260]

— Impossible! A mother's blood, once shed,
soaks in the earth and can't come back again

—
the flowing stream moves through the
ground,
then disappears forever.

— No. You must pay me back.

I'll suck your
blood.

320

Drinking your living bones sustains me—
I feed upon your pain.

— Though it wears me out, I'll drag you
down,
still living, to the world below. And there
you'll pay for murdering your mother.

— You'll see there other human criminals
who've failed to honour gods and
strangers, [270]
who've abused the parents they should love.
They all receive the justice they deserve.

— Hades, mighty god of all the
dead, 330
judges mortal men below the ground.
His perceptive mind records all things.

ORESTES

My misery has been my teacher—
I know that men are cleansed in many ways,
that sometimes it's appropriate to speak,
sometimes to stay silent. And in this case
a wise master has ordered me to speak.
Blood on my hands is dormant now, fading
— [280]

polluting stains from my mother's murder
have been washed away. When they were
fresh, 340

Apollo in his temple cleansed my guilt—
slaughtering pigs to make me pure again.



START HERE

It's a long story to describe for you,
right from the start, all the men I've seen,
ones I've stayed with, then left unharmed.
Time destroys all things which age with
time.

Now, with full reverence and holy speech,
I invoke Athena, this country's queen.
I beg her help. Let her appear unarmed.
She'll win true allies in me, my
land, 350 [290]
the Argive people. We'll trust her forever.
No matter where she is—in Libya,
in some region by the springs of Triton,
her birthplace, with her covered feet at rest,
or on the move, assisting those she loves,
or whether, like some bold commander
in the Phelegraeon plain, battle site
of gods and giants, she surveys the field—
I pray she'll come, for she's a goddess
and hears me, even though she's far
away. 360
May she come here. May she deliver me.

← END HERE

CHORUS LEADER

But Apollo's power will not save you—
nor will Athena's. You're slated to
die [300]
abandoned and alone, without a sense
of heartfelt joy, a bloodless criminal
crucked dry by demons, just a shade—no
more.

[Orestes makes no answer.]

What? You ignore my words and won't
reply,
you, a victim fattened up for me,
my consecrated girl? You'll not perish
on my altar—no, I'll eat you
alive. 370

[Orestes continues to remain silent.]

All right then, hear our song, a spell to chain
you.