

The meeting scene between PENTHEUS and DIONYSUS. Women may read this too so I can get an idea of your ability in back-and-forth dialogue.

PENTHEUS: [Moving up close to Dionysus, inspecting him carefully]
Untie his hands. I've got him in my nets. He's not fast enough to get away from me.
[Soldiers remove the chains from Dionysus' hands. Pentheus moves in closer]
Well, stranger, I see this body of yours is not unsuitable for women's pleasure—
that's why you've come to Thebes. As for your hair, it's long, which suggests that you're no wrestler.
It flows across your cheeks That's most seductive.
You've a white skin, too. You've looked after it, avoiding the sun's rays by staying in the shade,
while with your beauty you chase Aphrodite. But first tell me something of your family.

DIONYSUS: That's easy enough, though I'm not boasting. You've heard of Tmolus, where flowers grow.

PENTHEUS: I know it. It's around the town of Sardis.

DIONYSUS: I'm from there. My home land is Lydia.

PENTHEUS: Why do you bring these rituals to Greece?

DIONYSUS: Dionysus sent me—the son of Zeus.

PENTHEUS: Is there some Zeus there who creates new gods?

DIONYSUS: No. It's the same Zeus who wed Semele right here.

PENTHEUS: Did this Zeus overpower you at night, in your dreams? Or were your eyes wide open?

DIONYSUS: I saw him—he saw me. He gave me the sacred rituals.

PENTHEUS: Tell me what they're like, those rituals of yours.

DIONYSUS: That information cannot be passed on to men like you, those uninitiated in the rites of Bacchus.

PENTHEUS: Do they benefit those who sacrifice?

DIONYSUS: They're worth knowing, but you're not allowed to hear.

PENTHEUS: You've avoided that question skillfully, making me want to hear an answer.

DIONYSUS: The rituals are no friend of any man who's hostile to the gods.

PENTHEUS: This god of yours, since you saw him clearly, what's he like?

DIONYSUS: He was what he wished to be, not made to order.

PENTHEUS: Again you fluently evade my question, saying nothing whatsoever.

DIONYSUS: Yes, but then a man can seem totally ignorant when speaking to a fool.

PENTHEUS: Is Thebes the first place you've come to with your god?

DIONYSUS: All the barbarians are dancing in these rites.

PENTHEUS: I'm not surprised. They're stupider than Greeks.

DIONYSUS: In this they are much wiser. But their laws are very different, too.

PENTHEUS: When you dance these rites, is it at night or during daylight?

DIONYSUS: Mainly at night. Shadows confer solemnity.

PENTHEUS: And deceive the women. It's all corrupt!

DIONYSUS: One can do shameful things in daylight, too.

PENTHEUS: You must be punished for these evil games.

DIONYSUS: You, too—for foolishness, impiety towards the god.

PENTHEUS: How brash this Bacchant is! How well prepared in using language!

DIONYSUS: What punishment am I to suffer? What harsh penalties will you inflict?

PENTHEUS: First, I'll cut off this delicate hair of yours.

DIONYSUS: My hair is sacred. I grow it for the god.

PENTHEUS: And give me that thyrsus in your hand.

DIONYSUS: This wand I carry is the god's, not mine. You'll have to seize it from me for yourself.

PENTHEUS: We'll lock your body up inside, in prison.

DIONYSUS: The god will personally set me free, whenever I so choose.