

Phaedra Character

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Major Characters

- **Phaedra (the woman struck by forbidden love):** Wife of Theseus and stepmother of Hippolytus. She becomes entangled in a forbidden and destructive love. Unable to control her emotions, she confesses her love to Hippolytus. When rejected, she falsely accuses him, bringing dishonor upon him. In the end, when the truth is revealed, she commits suicide in remorse. Phaedra symbolizes human emotion, desire, and uncontrolled passion.
- **Hippolytus (chaste and devoted to purity):** Son of Theseus. He is devoted to hunting, chastity, and the worship of the goddess Diana. His disdain for women and strict morality forces him to reject Phaedra's love. But he is destroyed by false accusations. He symbolizes loyalty, chastity, and the innocent youth ruined by unjust blame.
- **Theseus (king and father):** King of Athens, husband of Phaedra, and father of Hippolytus. Returning from his journey to the underworld, he believes his wife's false accusation. In anger, he calls upon the god Neptune to curse his son. Theseus symbolizes blind rage, rashness, and misguided judgment.
- **Nurse:** Phaedra's nurse. She is the first to know about Phaedra's secret love and tries to dissuade her with advice. But in the end, she weakens and helps Phaedra confess her passion. She represents reason, warning, but also human weakness.
- **Chorus:** Repeatedly emphasizes Stoic moral lessons and the instability of human life. They reflect on love, passion, fate, and the control of the gods. The Chorus serves as a moral judge for the audience.

Minor Characters

- **Neptune:** Father of Theseus and god of the sea. By answering Theseus' prayer, he becomes the cause of Hippolytus' death. He symbolizes the power of fate and the cruelty of the gods.
- **Messengers:** They narrate the terrifying events of the play (such as the death of Hippolytus) to the audience. They heighten the drama and horror of the play.
- **Attendants/Servants:** The palace servants make the royal atmosphere realistic.

- **Venus (goddess of love):** Although she does not appear directly on stage, her influence is felt throughout the play. It is said that Phaedra's forbidden love is the result of Venus' curse and the blind power of love. She symbolizes uncontrolled passion and desire.
- **Diana (goddess of chastity and the hunt):** Worshiped by Hippolytus. Diana symbolizes female chastity, purity, and nature. Her influence on Hippolytus is deep, and this is what makes Phaedra's love fail.
- **Companions of Hippolytus:** They accompany him in hunting and highlight his chastity, love of nature, and devotion to Diana.
- **Guards & Attendants:** They create the atmosphere of the royal palace. At times, they carry out the orders of Theseus and Phaedra, making the scenes more realistic.

Couples and Connections

- **Phaedra and Theseus:** Husband-wife relationship, but lacking love and trust.
- **Phaedra and Hippolytus:** A stepmother-stepson relationship, which turns into forbidden love and causes tragedy.
- **Theseus and Hippolytus:** Father-son relationship. But false accusations break their trust and bring ruin.

Symbolism of Characters

- **Phaedra:** Symbol of desire, passion, and uncontrolled will.
- **Hippolytus:** Symbol of chastity, moral firmness, and the innocent victim of injustice.
- **Theseus:** Symbol of blind paternal rage and flawed judgment.
- **Nurse:** Symbol of caution and human weakness.
- **Chorus:** Symbol of Stoic moral lessons and the irresistible power of fate.