

Euripides, from *The Bacchae*

The Bacchae tells the story of the introduction of the worship of the god Dionysus from Asia into Greece. But as Dionysus arrives in the Greek city of Thebes, he finds that the populace, led by its king, Pentheus, refuses to acknowledge his divinity. Dionysus sets out to punish the unfaithful, and “stings the female population of Thebes with daemonic frenzy, sending them to the mountains outside of the city where they celebrate his rites at last.”

DIONYSUS

Lo! I am come to this land of Thebes, Dionysus the son of Zeus, of whom on a day Semele, the daughter of Cadmus, was delivered by a flash of lightning.¹ I have put off the god and taken human shape, and so present myself at Dirce's springs and the waters of Ismenus. Yonder I see my mother's monument where the bolt slew her nigh her house, and there are the ruins of her home smouldering with the heavenly flame that blazeth still—Hera's deathless outrage on my mother. To Cadmus all praise I offer, because he keeps this spot hallowed, his daughter's precinct, which my own hands have shaded round about with the vine's clustering foliage.

Lydia's glebes, where gold abounds, and Phrygia have I left behind; o'er Persia's sun-baked plains, by Bactria's walled towns and Media's wintry clime have I advanced through Arabia, land of promise; and Asia's length and breadth, outstretched along the brackish sea, with many a fair walled town, peopled with mingled race of Hellenes and barbarians; and this is the first city in Hellas I have reached. There too have I ordained dances and established my rites, that I might manifest my godhead to men; but Thebes is the first city in the land of Hellas that I have made ring with shouts of joy, girt in a fawn-skin, with a thyrsus,² my ivy-bound spear, in my hand; since my mother's sisters, who least of all should have done it, denied that Dionysus was the son of Zeus, saying that Semele, when she became a mother by some mortal

¹Semele, Cadmus' daughter and Dionysus' mother, had an affair with Zeus. Hera, Zeus' wife, tricked Zeus into destroying Semele with a lightning bolt. Zeus took the infant Dionysus from his mother's womb as she was dying and sewed him into his thigh, where Dionysus continued to grow until he was delivered as a new-born infant.

²A *thyrsus* (pl. *thyrsoi*) is a hollow plant stalk, usually decorated with ivy, and carried as a symbol of Dionysus in the dancing celebrations (where it can acquire magical powers).

lover, tried to foist her sin on Zeus—a clever ruse of Cadmus, which, they boldly asserted, caused Zeus to slay her for the falsehood about the marriage. Wherefore these are they whom I have driven frenzied from their homes, and they are dwelling on the hills with mind distraught; and I have forced them to assume the dress worn in my orgies, and all the women-folk of Cadmus' stock have I driven raving from their homes, one and all alike; and there they sit upon the roofless rocks beneath the green pine-trees, mingling amongst the sons of Thebes. For this city must learn, however loth, seeing that it is not initiated in my Bacchic rites, and I must take up my mother's defence, by showing to mortals that the child she bore to Zeus is a deity. Now Cadmus gave his sceptre and its privileges to Pentheus, his daughter's child, who wages war 'gainst my divinity, thrusting me away from his drink-offerings, and making no mention of me in his prayers. Therefore will I prove to him and all the race of Cadmus that I am a god. And when I have set all in order here, I will pass hence to a fresh country, manifesting myself; but if the city of Thebes in fury takes up arms and seeks to drive my votaries from the mountain, I will meet them at the head of my frantic rout. This is why I have assumed a mortal form, and put off my godhead to take man's nature.

O ye who left Tmolus, the bulwark of Lydia, ye women, my revel rout! whom I brought from your foreign homes to be ever by my side and bear me company, uplift the cymbals native to your Phrygian home, that were by me and the great mother Rhea first devised, and march around the royal halls of Pentheus smiting them, that the city of Cadmus may see you; while I will seek Cithaeron's glens, there with my Bacchanals to join the dance.

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In this passage, a messenger describes to Pentheus the sights he has seen on Mount Cithaeron, where the Theban women—now Bacchantes, Dionysus' female adherents—have fled. Among them are Pentheus' mother Agave, and her sisters Autonoe and Ino.

MESSENGER

The sun had just risen and the earth was warming up as we drove our herds along the ridge to the high meadow, when I saw three bands of women: one led by Autonoe, one by your mother, Agave, and one by Ino.

They lay exhausted, some resting on fir branches, others sleeping among oak leaves. They were modest and composed, not drunk

with wine as you say, not dancing wildly to pipe music, or chasing Aphrodite in some ecstasy.

But then your mother must have heard the lowing of our cattle and, springing to her feet, let out a cry to stir the rest from their sleep. And one by one they woke, rubbing their eyes like children, and rose—tall and straight. What a sight it was: old and young, some still unmarried. What a sight. First they stretched back to loosen their hair and let it fall over their shoulders, and those whose fawn-skin straps had slipped in sleep, secured them again with snakes that licked at their cheeks. New mothers, who had left their babies behind at home, drew gazelles and wolf cubs to their swollen breasts and let them feed. They decked themselves with crowns of ivy, oak, and bryony. One woman struck her thyrsus on a rock and a spring of water shot out, bubbling. Another drove her fennel wand into the ground and the god released a jet of wine. Those who wanted milk simply tapped the earth with their fingers and a fountain started. Pure honey spurted and streamed from the tips of their wands. If you had been there, sire, you would have gone down on your knees and prayed to the very god you deny.

We herdsmen gathered in groups, talking and arguing about these extraordinary things we'd seen. Then a blow-in from the city, who clearly had a way with words, stood up and said: "You who live on the mountain pastures, what say we earn ourselves the gratitude of the king and hunt down Agave, Pentheus's mother, and drag her from the dance?" It seemed a good idea, so we lay in ambush, camouflaged with leaves. At the appointed time, the women came, waving their wands for the start of the ritual, calling on Bromius, Iacchus, son of Zeus,³ till the whole mountain and its creatures seemed as possessed as they were. And then the women ran, and the world ran with them. As it happened, Agave came leaping toward my hiding place, and as I stood to grab her she let out a shout: "Hounds that hunt with me, we are hunted now! Follow me! Follow me, and use your wands as weapons against these men!"

We fled. They would have torn us to pieces, those Bacchae. Instead, they turned—bare-handed—on our herd of grazing cattle. A single woman pulled a mewling calf in two, while others clawed apart a full-grown heifer. There were spread ribs and broken hooves flung everywhere, and pieces of flesh hung dripping from the trees. Great bulls, their power and fury tightening in their horns, lowered their heads to charge but were wrestled to the ground by countless female hands and flayed alive—faster, sire, than a blink of your royal eyes.

Then they rose like birds and swept over the plain that stretched below, cornfields watered by the river of Asopus. They swooped on Hysiae and Erythrae on the foothills of Cithaeron, scattering everything, turning it upside down. They snatched children from

their homes, and pillaged houses. Everything they threw on their backs stayed there: nothing, not even bronze or iron, fell to the earth. Flames danced in their hair but did not burn them. The furious villagers took up their weapons in defense and, sire, what happened next was dreadful to see. The men's spears of pointed metal drew no blood, while the flung wands of the women ripped open flesh, and the men turned and ran. Women routing men! Some god was here with them. The Bacchae then swung round and back to where they'd started, to the green woods, to the springs the god had made for them, and they washed their hands of the thick blood, while the snakes licked clean their spattered cheeks.

Whoever this god may be, sire, I would welcome him to Thebes. He is great in many ways—not least, I hear say, for his gift of wine to mortal men. Wine, which puts an end to sorrow and to pain. And if there is no wine, there is no Aphrodite, and without her no pleasure left at all.

CHORUS

Though I fear to speak my mind with freedom in the presence of my king, still must I utter this; Dionysus yields to no deity in might.

PENTHEUS

Already, look you! the presumption of these Bacchantes is upon us, swift as fire, a sad disgrace in the eyes of all Hellas. No time for hesitation now! away to the Electra gate! order a muster of all my men-at-arms, of those that mount fleet steeds, of all who brandish light bucklers, of archers too that make the bowstring twang; for I will march against the Bacchanals. By Heaven I this passes all, if we are to be thus treated by women.

[Exit MESSENGER.]

DIONYSUS

Still obdurate, O Pentheus, after hearing my words! In spite of all the evil treatment I am enduring from thee, still I warn thee of the sin of bearing arms against a god, and bid thee cease; for Bromius will not endure thy driving his votaries from the mountains where they revel.

PENTHEUS

A truce to thy preaching to me! thou hast escaped thy bonds, preserve thy liberty; else will I renew thy punishment.

DIONYSUS

I would rather do him sacrifice than in a fury kick against the pricks; thou a mortal, he a god.

PENTHEUS

Sacrifice! that will I, by setting afoot a wholesale slaughter of women 'mid Cithaeron's glens, as they deserve.

³Bromius and Iacchus are other names for Bacchus.

DIONYSUS

Ye will all be put to flight—a shameful thing that they with the Bacchic thyrsus should rout your mail-clad warriors.

PENTHEUS

I find this stranger a troublesome foe to encounter; doing or suffering he is alike irrepressible.

DIONYSUS

Friend, there is still a way to compose this bitterness.

PENTHEUS

Say how; am I to serve my own servants?

DIONYSUS

I will bring the women hither without weapons.

PENTHEUS

Ha! ha! this is some crafty scheme of thine against me.

DIONYSUS

What kind of scheme, if by my craft I purpose to save thee?

PENTHEUS

You have combined with them to form this plot, that your revels may on for ever.

DIONYSUS

Nay, but this is the compact I made with the god; be sure of that.

PENTHEUS

[Preparing to start forth] Bring forth my arms. Not another word from thee!

DIONYSUS

Ha! wouldst thou see them seated on the hills?

PENTHEUS

Of all things, yes! I would give untold sums for that.

DIONYSUS

Why this sudden, strong desire?

PENTHEUS

'Twill be a bitter sight, if I find them drunk with wine.

DIONYSUS

And would that be a pleasant sight which will prove bitter to thee?

PENTHEUS

Believe me, yes! beneath the fir-trees as I sit in silence.

DIONYSUS

Nay, they will track thee, though thou come secretly.

PENTHEUS

Well, I will go openly; thou wert right to say so.

DIONYSUS

Am I to be thy guide? wilt thou essay the road?

PENTHEUS

Lead on with all speed, I grudge thee all delay.

DIONYSUS

Array thee then in robes of fine linen.

PENTHEUS

Why so? Am I to enlist among women after being a man?

DIONYSUS

They may kill thee, if thou show thy manhood there.

PENTHEUS

Well said! Thou hast given me a taste of thy wit already.

DIONYSUS

Dionysus schooled me in this lore.

PENTHEUS

How am I to carry out thy wholesome advice?

DIONYSUS

Myself will enter thy palace and robe thee.

PENTHEUS

What is the robe to be? a woman's? Nay, I am ashamed.

DIONYSUS

Thy eagerness to see the Maenads goes no further.⁴

PENTHEUS

But what dress dost say thou wilt robe me in?

DIONYSUS

Upon thy head will I make thy hair grow long.

PENTHEUS

Describe my costume further.

⁴The Maenads, who make up the Chorus of the play, are the female followers of Dionysus, who have followed him from Phrygia in Asia Minor to Thebes.

DIONYSUS

Thou wilt wear a robe reaching to thy feet; and on thy head shall be a snood.

PENTHEUS

Wilt add aught else to my attire?

DIONYSUS

A thyrsus in thy hand, and a dappled fawnskin.

PENTHEUS

I can never put on woman's dress.

DIONYSUS

Then wilt thou cause bloodshed by coming to blows with the Bacchanals.

PENTHEUS

Thou art right. Best go spy upon them first.

DIONYSUS

Well, e'en that is wiser than by evil means to follow evil ends.

PENTHEUS

But how shall I pass through the city of the Cadmeans unseen?

DIONYSUS

We will go by unfrequented paths. I will lead the way.

PENTHEUS

Anything rather than that the Bacchantes should laugh at me.

DIONYSUS

We will enter the palace and consider the proper steps.

PENTHEUS

Thou hast my leave. I am all readiness. I will enter, prepared to set out either sword in hand or following thy advice.

[Exit PENTHEUS.]

DIONYSUS

Women! our prize is nearly in the net. Soon shall he reach the Bacchanals, and there pay forfeit with his life. O Dionysus! now 'tis thine to act, for thou art not far away; let us take vengeance on him. First drive him mad by fixing in his soul a wayward frenzy; for never, whilst his senses are his own, will he consent to don a woman's dress; but when his mind is gone astray he will put it on. And fain would I make him a laughing-stock to Thebes as he is led in woman's dress through the city, after those threats with which he menaced me before. But I will go to array Pentheus in those robes which he shall wear when he sets out for Hades' halls, a victim to his own mother's fury; so shall he recognize Dionysus, the son of Zeus, who proves himself at last a god most terrible, for

all his gentleness to man.

...

Pentheus goes to Mount Cithaeron to see what the women are doing, but Dionysus traps Pentheus in a tree and calls on the Maenads to punish the one who denounced and ridiculed them. In their unreasoning frenzy they tear Pentheus apart, limb from limb, led by Pentheus's mother, Agave, daughter of Cadmus.

[Enter Agave, cradling the head of Pentheus]

AGAVE

Asian Bacchae . . .

CHORUS

Why do you appeal to me?

AGAVE

[displaying the head] From the mountains I've brought home this ivy tendril freshly cut. We've had a blessed hunt.

CHORUS

I see it. As your fellow dancer, I'll accept it.

AGAVE

I caught this young lion without a trap, as you can see.

CHORUS

What desert was he in?

AGAVE

Cithaeron.

CHORUS

On Cithaeron?

AGAVE

Cithaeron killed him.

CHORUS

Who struck him down?

AGAVE

The honour of the first blow goes to me. In the dancing I'm called blessed Agave.

CHORUS

Who else?

AGAVE

Well, from Cadmus . . .

CHORUS

From Cadmus what?

AGAVE

His other children laid hands on the beast, but after me—only after I did first. We've had good hunting. So come, share our feast.

CHORUS

What? You want me to eat that with you? Oh you unhappy woman.

AGAVE

This is a young bull. Look at this cheek It's just growing downy under the crop of his soft hair.

CHORUS

His hair makes him resemble some wild beast.

AGAVE

Bacchus is a clever huntsman—he wisely set his Maenads on this beast.

CHORUS

Yes, our master is indeed a hunter.

AGAVE

Have you any praise for me?

CHORUS

I praise you.

AGAVE

Soon all Cadmus' people. . .

CHORUS

. . . and Pentheus, your son, as well.

AGAVE

. . . will celebrate his mother, who caught the beast, just like a lion.

CHORUS

It's a strange trophy.

AGAVE

And strangely captured, too.

CHORUS

You're proud of what you've done?

AGAVE

Yes, I'm delighted. Great things I've done—great things on this hunt, clear for all to see.

CHORUS

Well then, you most unfortunate woman, show off your hunting prize, your sign of victory, to all the citizens.

AGAVE

[addressing everyone] All of you here, all you living in the land of Thebes, in this city with its splendid walls, come see this wild beast we hunted down—daughters of Cadmus—not with thonged spears, Thessalian javelins, or by using nets, but with our own white hands, our finger tips. After this, why should huntsmen boast aloud, when no one needs the implements they use? We caught this beast by hand, tore it apart—with our own hands. But where's my father? He should come here. And where's Pentheus? Where is my son? He should take a ladder, set it against the house, fix this lion's head way up there, high on the palace front. I've captured it and brought it home with me.

[Enter Cadmus and attendants, carrying parts of Pentheus' body]

CADMUS

Follow me, all those of you who carry some part of wretched Pentheus. You slaves, come here, right by the house.

[They place the bits of Pentheus' body together in a chest front of the palace] I'm worn out. So many searches—but I picked up the body. I came across it in the rocky clefts on Mount Cithaeron, ripped to pieces, no parts lying together in one place. It was in the woods—difficult to search. Someone told me what my daughter'd done, those horrific acts, once I'd come back, returning here with old Tiresias, inside the city walls, back from the Bacchae. So I climbed the mountains once again. Now I bring home this child the Maenads killed. I saw Autonoe, who once bore Actaeon to Aristaeus—and Ino, she was with her there, in the forest, both still possessed, quite mad, poor creatures. Someone said Agave was coming here, still doing her Bacchic dance. He spoke the truth, for I see her there—what a wretched sight!

AGAVE

Father, now you can be truly proud. Among all living men you've produced by far the finest daughters. I'm talking of all of us, but especially of myself. I've left behind my shuttle and my loom, and risen to great things, catching wild beasts with my bare hands. Now I've captured him, I'm holding in my arms the finest trophy, as you can see, bringing it back home to you, so it may hang here.

[offering him Pentheus' head] Take this, father, let your hands

welcome it. Be proud of it, of what I've caught. Summon all your friends—have a banquet, for you are blessed indeed, blessed your daughters have achieved these things.

CADMUS

This grief's beyond measure, beyond endurance. With these hands of yours you've murdered him. You strike down this sacrificial victim, this offering to the gods, then invite me, and all of Thebes, to share a banquet. Alas—first for your sorrow, then my own. Lord god Bromius, born into this family, has destroyed us, acting out his justice, but too much so.

AGAVE

Why such scowling eyes? How sorrowful and solemn old men become. As for my son, I hope he's a fine hunter, who copies his mother's hunting style, when he rides out with young men of Thebes chasing after creatures in the wild. The only thing he seems capable of doing is fighting with the gods. It's up to you, father, to reprimand him for it. Who'll call him here into my sight, so he can see my good luck for himself?

CADMUS

Alas! Alas! What dreadful pain you'll feel when you recognize what you've just done. If you stay forever in your present state, you'll be unfortunate, but you won't feel as if you're suffering unhappiness.

AGAVE

But what in all this is wrong or painful?

CADMUS

First, raise your eyes. Look up into the sky.

AGAVE

All right. But why tell me to look up there?

CADMUS

Does the sky still seem the same to you, or has it changed?

AGAVE

It seems, well, brighter . . . more translucent than it was before.

CADMUS

And your inner spirit—is it still shaking?

AGAVE

I don't understand what it is you're asking. But my mind is starting to clear somehow. It's changing . . . it's not what it was before.

CADMUS

Can you hear me? Can you answer clearly?

AGAVE

Yes. But, father, what we discussed before, I've quite forgotten.

CADMUS

Then tell me this—to whose house did you come when you got married?

AGAVE

You gave me to Echion, who, men say, was one of those who grew from seeds you cast.

CADMUS

In that house you bore your husband a child. What was his name?

AGAVE

His name was Pentheus. I conceived him with his father.

CADMUS

Well then, this head your hands are holding—whose is it?

AGAVE

It's a lion's. That's what the hunters said.

CADMUS

Inspect it carefully. You can do that without much effort.

AGAVE

[inspecting the head] What is this? What am I looking at? What am I holding?

CADMUS

Look at it. You'll understand more clearly.

AGAVE

What I see fills me with horrific pain . . . such agony . . .

CADMUS

Does it still seem to you to be a lion's head?

AGAVE

No. It's appalling—this head I'm holding belongs to Pentheus.

CADMUS

Yes, that's right. I was lamenting his fate before you recognized him.

AGAVE

Who killed him? How did he come into my hands?

CADMUS

Harsh truth—how you come to light at the wrong moment.

AGAVE

Tell me. My heart is pounding in me to hear what you're about to say.

CADMUS

You killed him—you and your sisters.

AGAVE

Where was he killed? At home? In what sort of place?

CADMUS

He was killed where dogs once made a common meal of Actaeon.⁵

AGAVE

Why did this poor man go to Cithaeron?

CADMUS

He went there to ridicule the god and you for celebrating Dionysus.

AGAVE

But how did we happen to be up there?

CADMUS

You were insane—the entire city was in a Bacchic madness.

AGAVE

Now I see. Dionysus has destroyed us all.

CADMUS

He took offense at being insulted. You did not consider him a god.

AGAVE

Father, where's the body of my dearest son?

CADMUS

I had trouble tracking the body down. I brought back what I found.

AGAVE

Are all his limbs laid out just as they should be? And Pentheus, what part did he play in my madness?

CADMUS

Like you, he was irreverent to the god. That's why the god linked you and him together in the same disaster—thus destroying the house and me, for I've no children left, now I see this offspring of your womb, you unhappy woman, cruelly butchered in the most

⁵Actaeon was a great Theban hunter whom Artemis, according to myth, transformed into a deer after he stumbled upon her bathing—the hunter became the hunted. Actaeon was torn apart by his own hunting dogs.

shameful way. He was the one who brought new vision to our family.

[addressing the remains of Pentheus] My child, you upheld the honour of our house, my daughter's son. You were feared in Thebes. No one who saw you ever would insult me, though I was old, for you would then inflict fit punishment. Now the mighty Cadmus, the man who sowed and later harvested the most splendid crop—the Theban people—will be an exile, banished from his home, a dishonoured man. Dearest of men, even though, my child, you're alive no more, I count you among those closest to me. You won't be touching my cheek any more, holding me in your arms, and calling me "grandfather," as you ask me, "Old man, who's injuring or dishonouring you? Who upsets your heart with any pain? Tell me, father, so I can punish him—anyone who treats you in an unjust way." Now you're in this horrifying state, I'm in misery, your mother's pitiful, and all your relatives are in despair. If there's a man who disrespects the gods, let him think about how this man perished—then he should develop faith in them.

CHORUS LEADER

I'm sorry for you Cadmus—you're in pain. But your grandson deserved his punishment.

AGAVE

Father, you see how all has changed for me.⁶ [From being your royal and honoured daughter, the mother of a king, I'm now transformed—an abomination, something to fill all people's hearts with horror, with disgust—the mother who slaughtered her only son, who tore him apart, ripping out the heart from the child who filled her own heart with joy—all to honour this god Dionysus. But, father, give me your permission now to lay out here the body of my son, prepare his corpse for proper burial.

CADMUS

That's no easy task to undertake. His body, all the parts I could collect, lies here, in this chest, not a pretty sight. My own eyes can hardly bear to see him. But if you think you can endure the work, then, my child, begin the appropriate rites.

AGAVE

[removing Pentheus' limbs and placing them on the ground in front of her] Alas, for my poor son, my only child, destroyed by his mother's Bacchic madness. How could these hands of mine, which loved him so, have torn these limbs apart, ripped out his flesh. Here's an arm which has held me all these years, growing stronger as he grew into a man, his feet . . . O how he used to run to me, seeking assurance of his mother's love. His face was handsome, on the verge of manhood. See the soft down still resting on these lips, which have kissed me thousands of times or

⁶At this point, there is a major gap in the manuscript. The text here is reconstructed by the translator from what we know about the content of the missing portion.

more. All this, and all the rest, set here before us. Oh Zeus and all you Olympian gods . . .

[She cannot complete the ritual and collapses in grief] It makes no sense—it's unendurable. How could the god have wished such things on me?

CHORUS LEADER

[helping Agave get up] Lady, you must bear what cannot be borne. Your suffering is intense, but the god is just. You insulted him in Thebes, showed no respect—you've brought the punishment upon yourself.

CHORUS

What is wisdom? What is finer than the rights men get from gods—to hold their powerful hands over the heads of their enemies? Ah yes, what's good is always loved. So all praise Dionysus, praise the dancing god, god of our revelry, god whose justice is divine, whose justice now reveals itself.

[Enter Dionysus]

DIONYSUS

Yes, I am Dionysus, son of Zeus. You see me now before you as a god. You Thebans learned about my powers too late. Dishonouring me, you earn the penalty. You refused my rites. Now you must leave—abandon your city for barbarian lands. Agave, too, that polluted creature, must go into perpetual banishment. And Cadmus, you too must endure your lot.⁷ Your form will change, so you become a dragon. Your wife, Harmonia, Ares' daughter, whom you, though mortal, took in marriage, will be transformed, changing to a snake. As Zeus' oracle declares, you and she will drive a chariot drawn by heifers. You'll rule barbarians. With your armies, too large to count, you'll raze many cities. Once they despoil Apollo's oracle, they'll have a painful journey back again. But Ares will guard you and Harmonia. In lands of the blessed he'll transform your lives. That's what I proclaim—I, Dionysus, born from no mortal father, but from Zeus. If you had understood how to behave as you should have when you were unwilling, you'd now be fortunate, with Zeus' child among your allies.

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Agave and Cadmus take leave of each other, both cursed by the horrific events.

AGAVE

How I grieve for you, my father.

CADMUS

And I grieve for you, my child, as I weep for your sisters.

AGAVE

Lord Dionysus has inflicted such brutal terror on your house.

DIONYSUS

Yes. For at your hands I suffered, too—and dreadfully. For here in Thebes my name received no recognition.

AGAVE

Farewell, father.

CADMUS

My most unhappy daughter, may you fare well. That will be hard for you.

AGAVE

Lead on, friends, so I may take my sisters, those pitiful women, into exile with me. May I go somewhere where cursed Cithaeron will never see me, nor my eyes glimpse that dreadful mountain, a place far away from any sacred thyrus. Let others make Bacchic celebrations their concern.

[Exit Agave]

CHORUS

The gods appear in many forms, carrying with them unwelcome things. What people thought would happen never did. What they did not expect, the gods made happen. That's what this story has revealed.

[Exeunt Chorus and Cadmus, leaving on stage the remains of Pentheus' body]

⁷This is the end of the gap in the text.