



the  
gracious  
sisters



World  
Premiere  
Wisconsin

*This play is part of World  
Premiere Wisconsin, a  
statewide festival celebrating  
new plays and musicals.*



TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH THEATER

PROUD CORNERSTONE MEMBER



UNITED PERFORMING ARTS FUND

## DEAR FIRST STAGE FRIENDS,

When archaeological intern Alice falls down an ancient Greek rabbit hole, she discovers the aftermath of a violent murder, with the goddesses of vengeance, or "Furies," chasing down the accused to exact bloody retribution. Athena, the goddess of wisdom (and war), persuades the Furies that the accused should have a fair trial before a jury. When the jury is divided in a split decision, all must come to terms with the balance of a desire for vengeance, and the need for grace.

Enjoy the show,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Coltyn Giltner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Coltyn Giltner  
Education Director  
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# ROOTS OF LANGUAGE

## PRACTICING PREFIXES & SUFFIXES

Nearly all of the languages around the world have their roots in languages spoken in ancient times. These ancient languages developed over time as communities grew and evolved, oftentimes splitting off to form new languages of their own! English, for example, has many root words from ancient Greek and Latin. Other languages spoken around the world today also have root words. Some languages share their roots with English, but many have different ones. We can observe language roots in what are called root words, which with the help of prefixes and suffixes we can create new words!

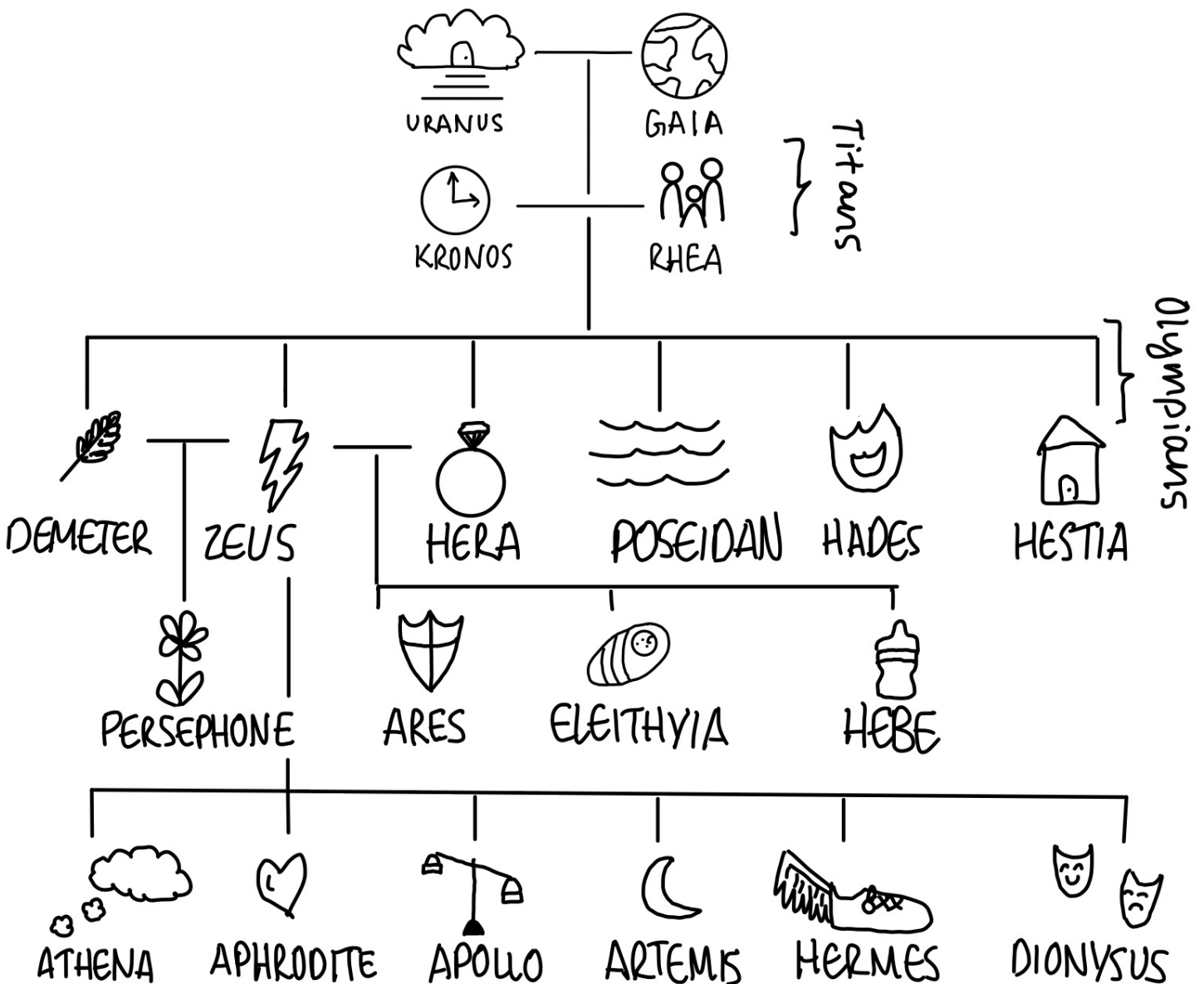
Using the Greek root words provided below, create a list of as many words as you can think of!

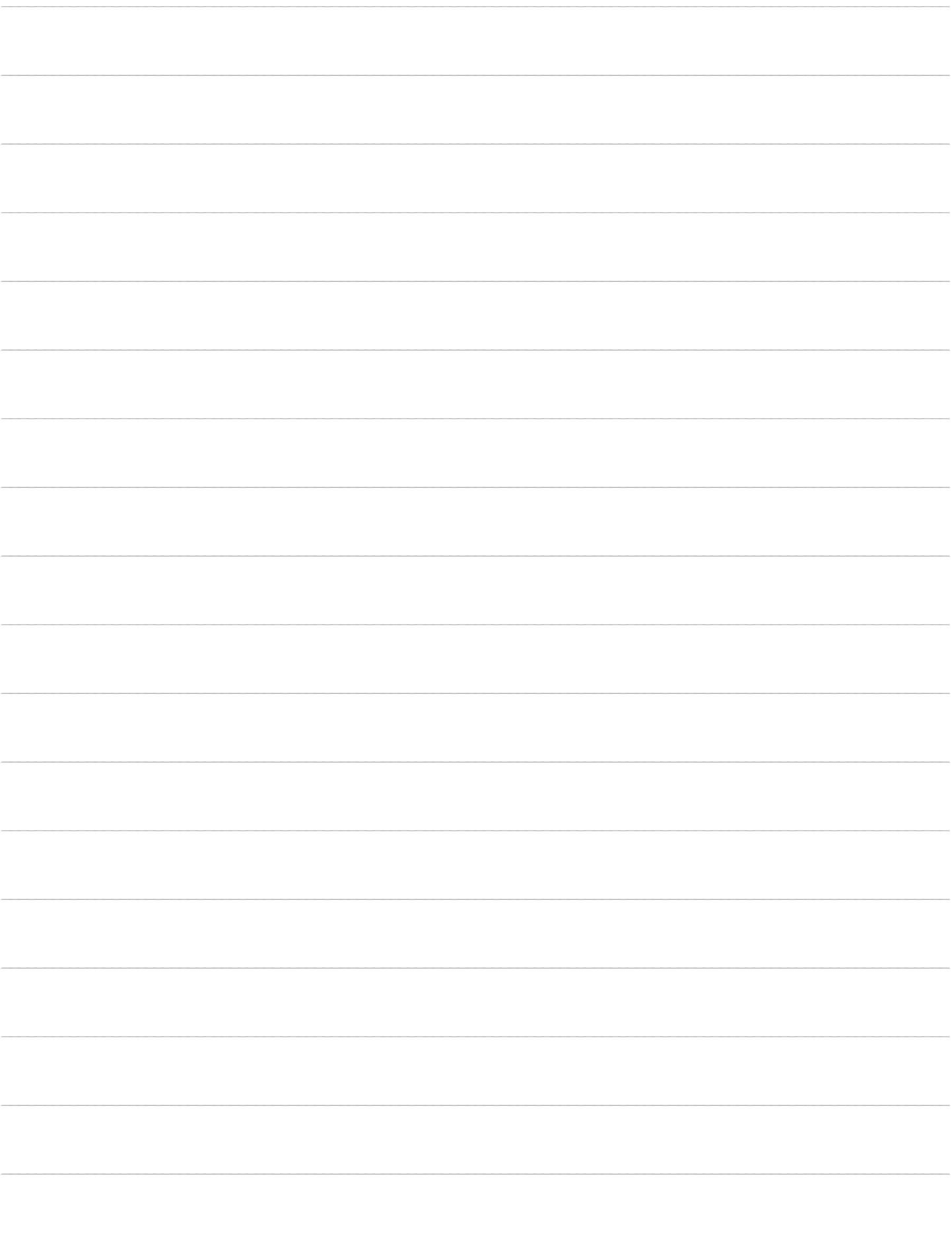
Greek Root (and meaning)	Words that use the root word!
<i>Example:</i> path ( <i>feel</i> )	<i>Example:</i> empathy, pathetic, apathy, psychopath, sympathetic, sympathy, telepathy, telepathic, pathos.
hydr- ( <i>water</i> )	
-graph ( <i>write</i> )	
sync- ( <i>together, with</i> )	
geo- ( <i>earth</i> )	
photo- ( <i>light</i> )	

# AN EPIC FAMILY TREE

## ACTIVITY

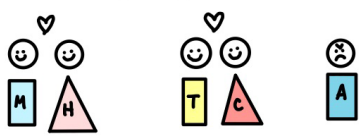
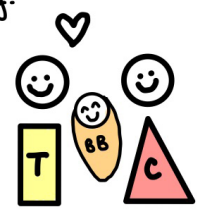
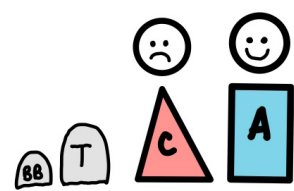
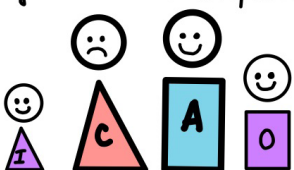
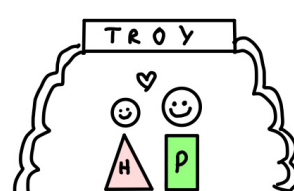
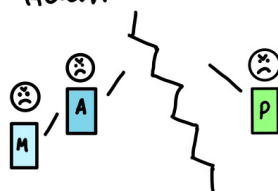
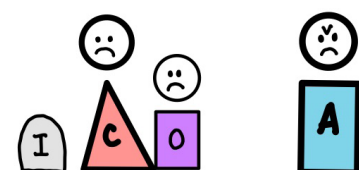
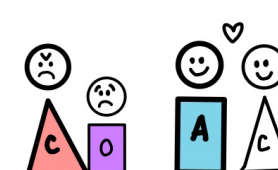
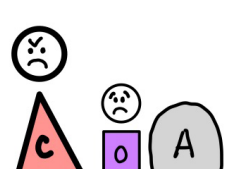

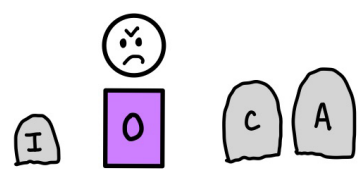
Much of Greek Mythology centers around the Greek Gods and Goddesses, including the stories presented in this play, *The Gracious Sisters*. Below, you will find a basic family tree outlining some of the lineage of some of the most popular figures in these myths. See if you can make an inference about what they might be the God of based on the symbols by their names! For many of these figures, the symbols represent only one of the many things they represent.





# AGAMEMNON & THE MURDER OF CLYTEMNESTRA

In this play *The Gracious Sisters*, there is lots of context that is important to understand the play, but isn't explicitly described in the text. One piece of this context is the story of Agamemnon and the murder of Clytemnestra. To understand this historical myth and the way it sets up the story in *The Gracious Sisters*, review this comic!

<p>① Two sisters, Helen and Clytemnestra, get married to Tantalus and Melanius. Melanius's brother Agamemnon is not married.</p> 	<p>② Clytemnestra and Tantalus have a baby boy.</p> 	<p>③ Agamemnon kills Tantalus and the baby and takes Clytemnestra for himself.</p> 
<p>④ Clytemnestra and Agamemnon have children, including a daughter Iphigenia and a son, Orestes.</p> 	<p>⑤ Helen runs away to the city of Troy to be with a man named Paris. (Some say she was stolen).</p> 	
<p>⑥ Agamemnon begins the Trojan War to avenge his brother Melanius who was left by Helen.</p> 	<p>⑦ Agamemnon sacrifices his daughter, Iphigenia during the war.</p> 	<p>⑧ Agamemnon brings home a new wife named Cassandra.</p> 
<p>⑨ Clytemnestra kills Agamemnon.</p> 	<p>⑩ Apollo approaches Orestes and tells him to kill Clytemnestra to avenge his father.</p> 	<p>⑪ Orestes kills his mother Clytemnestra.</p> 

After Orestes kills his mother, Clytemnestra, the furies begin to follow him in hopes that they will punish Orestes for killing his mother. This sets up the story we observe in *The Gracious Sisters*.

# CREATING NEW STORIES

## ACTIVITY

*The Gracious Sisters*, like many other stories we see in movies, books, and plays, is inspired by other stories, most notably, *Alice in Wonderland*! When an author takes inspiration from an existing story and creates their own new story to be performed in a different medium, (like making a movie based on a book) this is called adaptation!

Think of a story from when you were younger, then using the storyboard framework provided below, create an outline for how you would adapt this story to be a play. A good place to start is to figure out the beginning, middle and end of your story. This story does not need to be exactly like the original story, use the original as a starting place and let your creativity flow!

Beginning	Middle	End



# DEMOCRACY DISCUSSION

## ACTIVITY

Ancient Greece was one of the first democracies in the world! However, democracy in ancient Greece looked different from other democracies we see in the world today. Today, in America and other countries around the world, we have what is called a “Representative Democracy” where citizens 18 and older choose leaders to represent them by voting for them in elections. Those representatives then make laws for all citizens.

In ancient Greece, they had what was called a “Direct Democracy” which meant that all citizens (at that time only men were considered citizens) voted on each decision directly. There is some debate about whether representative democracy or direct democracy is better. Some might say that representative democracy is better because average citizens might not always have the knowledge or skills to make the best decisions about how to run a country. Some might say that a direct democracy is better because it can produce decisions that are more accurate to what all people truly want. What do you feel would be best to live under? A direct or a representative democracy? In this example, you can give the right to vote to anyone you see fit in either format. Consider the following questions:

1. What are some of the pros of a representative democracy? What are some of the cons?

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2. What might be some of the pros of a direct democracy? What might be some cons?

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# DEMOCRACY DISCUSSION

## ACTIVITY

3. In a representative democracy, what qualities do you think a successful leader might have? Can you give an example of someone you think would make a strong elected leader? Why?

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4. If your school were a direct democracy, and students were allowed to make the rules as they see fit, what impact do you think that might have? Why?

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5. All countries in the world, no matter how free their nations are, do not allow people under the age of 18 to vote. Do you think this is fair? What changes do you think would happen in America if children were given the right to vote?

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After you have written your responses, spend some time asking your friends and family what they think about these questions. After all, discussion was a big part of the culture of Ancient Greece! Pay close attention to the reasoning that other people provide for their answers. Think to yourself if their ideas challenge your way of thinking.

# DID YOU KNOW?



1. Theatre began in ancient Greece! Many cities during this time had theaters where plays would be presented regularly. Only men and boys were allowed to be actors during this period, and they used masks to show their character's expression!
2. Ancient Greece was mostly divided up into different city states. City states are smaller communities within a larger nation which govern themselves. While these communities were separated, they maintained a unified culture through their language, religion, and mythology.
3. In ancient times, many Greeks had superstitions about food, such as beans. There are many theories as to why this is the case, some people believe it was because Ancient Greeks thought beans contained the souls of the dead given their flesh-like texture, others say it was because beans gave people gas, and expelling gas was a loss of "the breath of life"!
4. There were many festivals in ancient Greece created to honor the gods. One of the most significant of these festivals was the very first Olympics which took place in 776 BC to honor the Greek god Zeus.
5. The Marathon, a long distance foot race with a distance of 26.2 miles or 49.152 kilometers, made its debut in the very first Olympics and still continues today!
6. Some of the most significant concepts in Western philosophy began in Ancient Greece. You might have heard of some of the philosophers who came up with these ideas, like Plato, Aristotle, or Socrates.
7. Some of the earliest depictions of a handshake came from Ancient Greece in the early 5th century B.C. At this time, a handshake was a sign of peace, and that each party did not have any weapons. This handshake looked different than they do now, however, as in that time, it was more of an arm grab.
8. Ancient Greece was one of the world's first examples of a formal democracy!
9. Unibrows were a sign of beauty and intelligence in Ancient Greece!
10. Many Ancient Grecian myths are still inspiring books, movies, and plays to this day!



# WHO SAID IT?

1. Holy Apollo. First the man in there, an abomination to god, sitting where suppliants do for purging, his hands dripping blood, his sword drawn, yet in his hand, an olive branch, and a fleece.
2. I thought it was the band.... *They Might be Gorgons*.....
3. I may be dead, but I'm not blind. You are here. Now. In this moment. And make no mistake, that's all any of us have.
4. Oh sisters, we have toiled, how we have toiled!
5. Got it. No reenactment. Enactment. Happening in real time before my eyes. All I understand is that I understand nothing.
6. Yet you have the nerve to chastise us?
7. And so cast away love? The source of mankind's greatest joy –
8. I won't forget your kindness, having inherited my father's kingdom.
9. Deadly to the living. Deadly to those who see not life. Deadly to those who see not light.
10. Women are for pleasure and for pain. The privilege of a woman is one she doesn't recognize. She feels emotion more deeply than men do. This is her gift.
11. I am the champion of men in all matters. But marriage, Gods forbid that I ever marry. I am my father's daughter. So I don't consider the slaying of a woman who first killed her husband, as the worst of crimes.
12. I stand with women. As should you. Women do not start the wars. Women do not seek destruction. I have read histories you do not know...

# RECOMMENDED READING

