

REESE WARNER

## Ariadne

### *Her Unhappy Teen Years*

Come see my house of monsters. Father's vicious,  
And all unloving since they slew my brother.  
For kicks, he now kills Athens' kids, and wishes  
For nothing but their full destruction. Mother,  
Unnoticed, sleeps with anything with balls.  
Her sick sad lust to fuck made my half-brother—  
Another monster—he's now locked in cells  
Which Daedalus had built. I had a lover,  
The cutest boy, but then he flew too near  
The sun, and so he's dead. A suicide?  
In this damned house, I think so. One long year  
Since he's been gone and still I haven't cried.  
But I'm a monster, too, it must be clear:  
Only the worst of monsters would stay here.

### *Theseus Arrives*

Meet Theseus: he's awfully cute. Is he  
The One? A princess \*can't\* just love some fool.  
It's like, I must maintain my dignity.  
And I have plans! Is he the hero who'll  
Take me away from here in proper fashion?  
Because I've got to leave this house, and soon.  
But it's not like I feel some kind of passion  
Hauling me off. He'd only be a tool.  
Maybe I'd learn to love him. That can happen.  
They say, love always enters at first sight—  
But is that true? With brain-dead Cupid stabbing  
His arrow in your heart? That can't be right.  
That's not the princess way! No! I'll decide.  
I will control the stuff I feel inside.

*Theseus Reveals His Plans*

It's so much worse than I first realized:  
 He'll kill us, each and every one, to finish  
 My father's terrorizing. Deep inside  
 My brain I know he's right, but still I languish  
 And will not yield to his righteous will.  
 Should terror be the end of terror? Banish  
 Such unheroic doubts! I will fulfill  
 His wishes—and my plans. And I will kill.  
 Mark it: the monster's dead. Killing's the thing  
 A hero does. It's slaves live on their knees!  
 I want a hero—well, then, I can't cling  
 To stupid bourgeois sensibilities.  
 He's asking for my help. He needs me now.  
 We'll kill whomever we have to, and go.

*In Love And On The Sea*

In happy love we float upon the sea,  
 The two of us at dusk in this our ship.  
 My lips can't keep from nibbling at his lip.  
 His valiant shoulder makes for me a lee  
 From the wet winds. He's all my family.  
 His goodness asks for my discipleship—  
 I give it gladly. Reason wills this trip:  
 There was no need for Cupid's archery.  
 Yet I do feel myself enchanted so,  
 Whom no false craft had any need to spell.  
 And why is this? I wish that I could know,  
 But this enchantment has my thinking quelled.  
 Perhaps the spell comes through the eyes, although,  
 Now in the dark, I'll love him just as well.

*Abandoned*

He might as well have killed me, now disgraced  
 Of his so lovely grace. I'll simply fold  
 Myself into myself, now that my hold  
 On my strong hero's lost. I've been defaced  
 Of his fair face. Look how his ship has raced  
 Away from me, so ugly now, so cold.

I'm left alone to die in this cold waste.  
 I once was chased, but now, perforce, am chaste.  
 But I must finish with this longful grieving.  
 It's useless to me now, and it must go.  
 I am no princess any longer; weaving  
 Will be my task, that skill all good girls know.  
 We take our grief, and yarn, and, interleaving  
 Both into cloth, produce a thing for show.

*She Meets Dionysus*

I'm hurting, and this clown gives me a wink.  
 He's sporting a silk shirt, his hair is curled,  
 He's way too thin. He offers me a drink.  
 As if. He almost looks like he's a girl:  
 He's just that precious. So he owns the place?  
 Alright, I'll drink his drink, and watch him twirl  
 His hair around his finger, off his face.  
 His face, now I see it, won't make me hurl.  
 "Why mourn a hero when a god's on tap?"  
 He jokes, but he's not funny. Still it's nice:  
 That hero shtick was such a piece of crap.  
 But I've been hurt. The new rule is: think twice.  
 And anyway, I need to do my work—  
 Not sit and drink with some rich bastard jerk.

*She Learns His Story*

He got his start exporting Balkan wines  
 And then expanded into club promotion:  
 Checking suburbanites behind rope lines,  
 So eager to get dancing. Now he's loaded.  
 He owns all kinds of vineyards everywhere,  
 And loves to travel. Sweetly he's devoted  
 To his dead mother. Really, it's not fair  
 He's such an awesome catch. He's so outmoded  
 He went and popped the question—on his knee!  
 What do I say? He's cool with my still working.  
 That's good. I've got a show in just three weeks,  
 And there's no way that I would don the burqa,  
 Even symbolically. A god-blessed mess.  
 It's true I trust him. Fuck. The answer's "Yes."

*Ariadne Is Exalted Into Heaven*

We've settled in Toronto, the U.N.  
 And I agree: it's simply heaven here.  
 And *Elle's* announced I've set this year's hot trend  
 With tweed; next season I'll try something sheer.  
 That god of mine's so handsome, tall, and rich—  
 Still other girls mistake him for a queer.  
 But I let them mistake—I'm such a bitch.  
 We'll be together now year after year  
 Forever. So, is it a spell or reason  
 That keeps us two together? I'm unsure.  
 Maybe it's just the moaning and the squeezing.  
 But anyhow, my troubles found their cure,  
 Those two plain things by which my heart is moved:  
 Work, and the easy comfort of my love.

*Epilogue: She Receives a Letter From Theseus*

Dear A.,

I saw your clothes show on TV  
 And it looked really nice, I thought, but then  
 You always said that I was fashion-free,  
 So I'm quite sure you don't want my endorsement.  
 They gave your email, so I thought I'd write,  
 Say hi, and say how glad I was that things,—  
 That everything worked out for you alright  
 After the way I left when you were sleeping.

I did feel bad, but it was something I  
 Just had to do. I thought my duty called.  
 Maybe it didn't, and my reason why  
 Was merely selfish. If that's so, I've paid.

So be the goddess you were meant to be.  
 Keep well. I love you still. Sincerely,

T.