

## Oracles and Omens

Imagine that you are the wise priest Nestor. You have studied the acts of the gods and goddesses and have learned to explain events that puzzle your fellow townspeople. As your neighbors come to you seeking advice, **write your own interpretation** of the gods' activities as you answer each of their queries. Use your knowledge and imagination!

1. Oh, will Zeus ever forgive me? I am Nellia, the fisherman's wife. Three days ago I failed to show hospitality to a beggar who came to my door. My husband has caught no fish since that day. Was the beggar a god in disguise? How can I right the wrong that I have done?

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2. I am the humble shepherd Nikos, who lives in the mountains near Athens. Yesterday I lost two of my prized ewes. This morning I saw a flock of large black birds circle my usual grazing area. Tell me, Nestor, does this mean that Apollo will grant me the return of my sheep?

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3. My name is Minnea. Two days ago my husband boasted that he runs faster than Hermes flies. The skies filled with jagged streaks of light and I heard a terrible roar from above. I fear that my husband has angered the gods with his bragging. What can I do to appease the gods?

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4. I am Kalos the Unhappy. I am in love with my neighbor's daughter, but she does not return my love. Today a pair of seabirds crossed my path, gathering grass for their nest. Could this mean that Aphrodite will favor me with my loved one's heart?

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5. I am Lemnos, the old iron merchant. For years I have been the most successful merchant in the agora [marketplace]. Now a young iron merchant has come to steal my customers. As I walked to the agora this morning, I saw an old dog and a young dog fighting over a bird's carcass [dead body]. Neither dog won; in fact, they each ended up with half the bird. What does this mean for my situation in the agora?

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Now pretend you are one of the townspeople. On the back of this sheet, **write another question for Nestor** (similar to one of those above), based on a natural event you have seen.

