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*Title:* The Arbitration

*Date of first publication:* 1945

*Author and Translator:* Gilbert Murray (1866-1957)

*Author:* Menander (341-290 BCE)

*Date first posted:* August 5 2012

*Date last updated:* August 5 2012

Faded Page eBook #20120806

This ebook was produced by: James Wright & the Online Distributed Proofreading Canada Team at <http://www.pgdpCanada.net>

# THE ARBITRATION

The *Epitrepontes* of Menander

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*Uniform with this volume*

## EURIPIDES

ALCESTIS (*24th Thousand*)  
BACCHÆ (*29th Thousand*)  
ELECTRA (*54th Thousand*)  
HIPPLYTUS (*38th Thousand*)  
IPHIGENIA IN TAURIS (*32nd Thousand*)  
MEDEA (*33rd Thousand*)  
RHESUS (*9th Thousand*)  
THE TROJAN WOMEN (*39th Thousand*)

## ARISTOPHANES

THE FROGS (*24th Thousand*)

## SOPHOCLES

ŒDIPUS, KING OF THEBES (*24th Thousand*)  
THE ANTIGONE

## AESCHYLUS

AGAMEMNON (*14th Thousand*)  
THE CHOËPHOROE (*5th Thousand*)  
THE EUMENIDES (*4th Thousand*)  
THE SUPPLIANT WOMEN (SUPPLICES) (*4th Thousand*)  
PROMETHEUS BOUND (*4th Thousand*)  
THE SEVEN AGAINST THEBES (*4th Thousand*)  
THE PERSIANS

THE ORESTEIA (*Collected Edition*)

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THE RAPE OF THE LOCKS  
The *Perikeiromenê* of Menander

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# THE ARBITRATION

The *Epitrepontes* of Menander

THE FRAGMENTS TRANSLATED AND

**GILBERT MURRAY, O.M.**

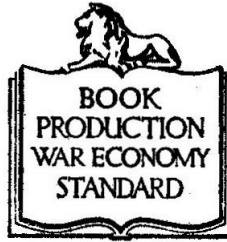
FORMERLY REGIUS PROFESSOR OF GREEK

*London*

**GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN LTD**

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FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1945



THE PAPER AND BINDING OF THIS  
BOOK CONFORM TO THE AUTHORIZED  
ECONOMY STANDARDS

*Printed in Great Britain by*  
UNWIN BROTHERS LTD., LONDON AND WOKING

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Menander, the most famous representative of the "New Comedy," was born in 342 B.C., about 140 years after Euripides, 80 years after Plato, 40 after Aristotle, a contemporary of Epicurus and Zeno the Stoic.

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**INTRODUCTION**

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## INTRODUCTION

There is great fascination in the fragments of Menander. I find it not merely in the ease and "Attic salt" of his style, or the subtle and kindly realism of his characters. There is a charm even in his conventionalities—the situations and stage tricks, now old-fashioned, which he caught at a moment when they were still young and fresh. But most of all I am attracted by his philosophy of life, ironic and yet tender, which seems to express the mind of the sensitive and highly civilized society in which he lived. It needed some fortitude in a fourth-century Athenian to keep his head and his temper in a war-ridden world where Athens' best hopes lay in ruins and men must be content, not too bitterly, to "live not as we would, but as we can."

In *The Arbitration* especially, the actual dramatic interest of the fragments preserved to us kept me wondering and trying to guess how the story was worked out, till at last I was writing the missing scenes and making up a complete play. Like the Homeric rhapsodes or "singers of stitched songs," I have "stitched" wherever possible and only invented when forced to it.

The plays are certainly actable on a modern stage. My earlier attempt, of whose faults I am more conscious now than when I made it, has been performed in several places and shown that it can amuse an audience. The present attempt is perhaps more ambitious, both because *The Arbitration* is a more serious and mature work than *The Rape of the Locks*, and because the gaps are harder to fill.

Free and natural as it is in outward appearance, there can be little doubt that the New Comedy, like all or almost all Greek drama, was in its essence the performance of a religious ritual. It took the form of what we may call a Nativity Play, celebrating the annual discovery, when all the earth seems dead, of that Renewal of Life which we think of as the New Year or the Spring, but which was to the Greeks a Being far more personal. This ritual in its simplest shape, still to be found in some Easter celebrations in Italy and Eastern Europe, used the symbol of a divine babe or lamb or young animal to typify the new life. Its birth or arrival was the gist of the celebration. At another stage, represented by Euripides' *Ion* and several fragmentary Greek tragedies, the rite has developed into drama, and the birth into a heroic myth. An outcast baby, found in the wild woods, and perhaps suckled by a mare, a cow, or some wild animal, is really the son of a god and a royal maiden and, after suitable adventures or sufferings, is duly "recognized" and accepted as the king or hero-founder of his tribe. The baby, though its presence is essential, is no longer the centre of interest. It is either allowed to relapse into the background or else its Recognition is delayed till the divine child is old enough to be a mysterious hero. Another unintended result of this dramatization is that the god is made to play a somewhat questionable part. We may see him at his best in a magnificent hymn in Aeschylus' *Suppliant Women* (verses 524-600), where the heroine's sufferings form

an element in a high, inscrutable purpose, and a virgin birth by the touch of the divine hand gives life to a miraculous child "perfect in blessedness"; at his worst probably in the *Ion*, where Apollo well deserves the curses which his deserted victim hurls at him in his own temple precinct. We know of no tragedies of this type after the *Ion*. It may well be that the divine ravisher was increasingly felt to be an unsuitable and indeed an impious figure. At any rate, the ritual was about this time transferred from the tragic to the comic stage, and the story brought down to a human level. In New Comedy the outcast babe is the fruit of some forbidden or secret amour, and the Recognition exalts him not to divinity but merely to wealth and fortune. The place of the god is taken, to use Aelian's contemptuous words, by "Menander's young puppies misconducting themselves at midnight festivals" (*Hist. Nat.* VII, 19).

The transference was not an entire success. Piety indeed was saved; but the more human and lifelike the general story became, the harder it was to feel much sympathy for the baby's father, who nevertheless has to be something like the hero of the play. In this play, for instance, it is hard to combine the Charisius whom we see and whom his friends describe to us with the tipsy rioter who did violence to Pamphile. His scene of repentance and bitter self-reproach—all of it, I hasten to add, the work of the real Menander makes him forgivable, but still not easy to understand. We might come nearer to understanding if we listened to what Callisto had to say on the subject, or indeed if we reflected on the actual proceedings of those all-night festivals once universal throughout Europe, from ancient dances in worship of some Artemis or Dionysus to the May-day junketings of eighteenth-century England. Most, if not all, of them might have accepted as their motto the famous refrain of the *Pervigilium Veneris*:

Cras amet qui numquam amavit, quique amavit cras amet.<sup>[1]</sup>

*The Arbitration* is among the most frequently quoted of Menander's plays. It belongs to his later style. It is less farcical than either the *Locks* or the *Samian Woman*, which is the only other play about which we have enough left to form a judgement. It has more of the smooth long speeches, in conversational style with a quiet undercurrent of wit, which were so highly appreciated in antiquity. On the other hand, the plot is richer, more romantic, and more skilfully developed; there is much deeper emotional tension. In character also, though the female parts in Menander are always good, the two earlier plays have no one comparable to Habrotonon.

As for my own work, although the extant fragments of papyrus probably cover rather more than half the play, considerably more if we count the long passages where only two or three letters at the beginning or end of a line have been preserved, I found it much harder than in the *Locks* to conjecture the rest of the plot with any approach to confidence. I have only tried to observe Menandrian conventions and, as far as I can hope to understand it, the Menandrian spirit.

I have used chiefly the texts of Jensen and Koerte; have often consulted Mr. Frost's scholarly translation; and in matters of interpretation must express my deep obligations to the masterly treatise of Wilamowitz. On one important and doubtful problem (v. p. [123](#)) I have accepted an attractive guess of Professor D. S. Robertson.

### Footnote

"To-morrow let him love who never has loved, and he who has loved let him love to-morrow."

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## CHARACTERS

CHARISIUS, *a Young Athenian*

PAMPHILÊ, *Wife to Charisius*

ONÊSIMUS, *Personal Servant to Charisius*

SMÎCRINÊS, *Father to Pamphilê*

SÔPHRONÊ, *Nurse to Pamphilê*

CHAERESTRATUS, *Next-door-Neighbour to Charisius*

SÎMIAS, *Older Friend to Chaerestratus*

HABROTONON, *or, for short, HABRO, Harp-player at Chaerestratus's House*

CÂRION, *Cook at Chaerestratus's House*

SYRISCUS, *a Charcoal-burner*

DÂVUS, *a Shepherd*

CALLISTO, *an Arcadian nymph transformed into a Bear by Artemis*

*An old Duenna in charge of HABROTONON, Guests at House of CHAERESTRATUS,  
SYRISCUS'S Wife and a Baby.*

[THE SCENE *is the country near Athens. A tree in the foreground; the House of CHARISIUS  
(A) back Left, that of CHAERESTRATUS (B) back Right.*]

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## ACT I

CÂRION, *the Cook, with ONÊSIMUS.*

CÂRION

The man who entertains this dancing girl,  
Only just married, isn't he? That's odd.

ONÉSIMUS

Yes, not so long. Five months and thirteen days.

CÂRION

A daughter of old Smîcrinês, they say?  
Young and attractive, eh?

ONÉSIMUS

Well, that depends  
On taste. But yes, no doubt she has been admired,  
Not only by her husband.

CÂRION

Eh? Who else?

Tell me.

ONÉSIMUS

I can't. I've absolutely sworn  
To keep the whole thing secret.

CÂRION

Yes, quite right.  
That's what I always do; swear secrecy,  
And then, to show you know what "secret" means,  
Tell them another secret of your own.  
There's hardly a house I cook for, where I don't  
Worm out the family troubles. For my art's sake  
I must. Unless I know their state of mind  
How can I give my clients what they want?  
Come, out with it! I've got these innocents' dinner  
All planned. I'm quite free.

ONÉSIMUS

Well, in confidence,  
I don't mind telling you.

CÂRION

I'll pay you back,  
Trust me, with scandals quite as rich as yours.  
All knowledge comes in useful.

ONÉSIMUS

In my case  
It certainly has. You see, I found it out  
Two weeks back, while the master was away  
At Ephesus. No one in the house but me  
Knows anything. . . . Ah, there's old Sôphronê,



Her nurse.

*[Enter SÔPHRONÊ, walking slowly.*

She must be in it. But she can't  
Do much. And we've forbidden her to hold  
Any communication with her mistress.

*[SÔPHRONÊ stops; touches her eyes with her fingers; then hitches her  
cloak up by lifting her right arm in the air.*

Well, Sôphronê, who are you looking for?

SÔPHRONÊ

The master. Has he come yet?

ONÊSIMUS

Smîcrinês?

No. You be off! You know the rule. No message.  
No mischief.

SÔPHRONÊ

I am going.

*[Exit SÔPHRONÊ.*

CÂRION

What's all this?

Do you give orders?

ONÊSIMUS

I and the Young Master.

You see, as soon as ever he came back,  
I asked to have a word with him alone,  
And told him. Didn't he go up in smoke!  
He's awfully grateful, though.

CÂRION

You told him what?

ONÊSIMUS

It puts me in a different position  
From all the others. I'm his confidant.  
He's grateful to me.

CÂRION

What for?

ONÊSIMUS

Why, because

I told him.

CÂRION

Told him what?

ONÉSIMUS

Besides, I'm there  
To watch; the mistress doesn't know I know.

CÂRION

You know what?

ONÉSIMUS

There's no pleasure in the world  
Like knowing everything there is to know,  
Especially when no one knows you know it.

CÂRION

What is it, man? What do you know?

ONÉSIMUS

I'll tell you.  
[*Whispers in CÂRION'S ear.*]

CÂRION

Impossible!

ONÉSIMUS

It's true.

CÂRION

How does he take it?

ONÉSIMUS

He's furious, and of course can't say a word.  
That's the worst thing. He's got to keep it dark.

CÂRION

Good God! Then that explains these harp-players  
And banquets! . . . It's all frightfully upsetting  
For me. I need a whole new bill of fare.  
I planned a feast for lovers; just a gay,  
Light-hearted, liquid, joyous, merrymaking,  
And now . . . He really loved his wife, you say?

ONÉSIMUS

He did, devotedly. Not now, of course;  
No; now we act together, he and I,  
We watch and punish her as she deserves.

CÂRION

That's it. The man is thinking of his wife  
The whole time. It's all done to punish her.  
God bless me, it's a banquet of revenge,  
Dark, bitter, fierce.           *[He sits down, ruminating.]*

ONÉSIMUS

Well, what's your story?

CÂRION

Story?

ONÉSIMUS

You promised me a story as good as mine.

CÂRION

Man, I can't think of stories. I have duties  
To think of. That's enough.

ONÉSIMUS

You promised me

A scandal.

CÂRION

Did I?—oh, well; old Telônes  
Is bankrupt. Will that do?

ONÉSIMUS

Why no; I never  
Heard of the man. That's no good.

CÂRION

Callicles  
Is said to have a second wife in Smyrna.  
I can't do more for you. I must get to work.

ONÉSIMUS

Some details, please!

CÂRION (*ruminating*)

A bitter resinous sauce

With salted tunny; an old fighting cock  
With mustard; no, with some Arabian spice  
That burns. Oh, how my master Labdacus  
Would have enjoyed this problem. I must take  
Plenty of time . . . Good Lord, the guests arriving  
Already!

ONÉSIMUS

Here! You haven't paid your debt.  
*[Exeunt into House B.]*

*[Enter from the town SÍMIAS and CHAERESTRATUS.]*

SÍMIAS

I wish you'd think again, Chaerestratus,  
Why should you lend your house, day after day,  
To help Charisius to neglect his wife  
And waste his substance on this dancing girl?

CHAERESTRATUS

She's not a dancing girl; she's a musician;  
A good musician, too, and well behaved.  
I like him, Símiás, and I like the girl,  
And if he wants my house . . . They make a noise,  
Those lads, but do no harm; besides, you're there,  
And you'd make any place respectable.  
You know Charisius hardly looks at her.

SÍMIAS

While you do nothing else.

CHAERESTRATUS

He doesn't mind . . .  
That's what annoys me. First, the man deserts  
His own wife. So far I don't criticize.  
I have no wife, and his I never met.  
For all I know, she may be just the sort  
No reasonable man could help deserting.  
But then he goes out of his way to hire  
This elegant, well-mannered harp-player,  
And treats her with contempt—at any rate  
With stark bad manners, hardly speaks to her . . .

SÍMIAS

Why should he? She's a slave, a hired companion.

CHAERESTRATUS

A slave, a hired . . . Oh yes. I know these girls;  
They're all humbugs and liars. It's their business. . . .

Still, this one has good manners.

SIMIAS

All the same,  
Why should you let Charisius have your house  
To revel in? The thing's discreditable  
To both of you, and seemingly no pleasure  
To anyone.

CHAERESTRATUS

Why? Well, I hardly know.  
I couldn't well refuse him. Certainly  
I never saw a drearier diner out.  
If in his own house he was drearier still,  
I only wonder why it's not his wife  
Does the deserting. If she came and asked me,  
I'd let the unfortunate woman have this house  
To revel in till she died.

SIMIAS

Then all the more . . .

CHAERESTRATUS

Why do I do it? Why? Because I like it.  
Who wouldn't like it? It's a constant pleasure—  
Free gratis, too—to see Habrotonon,  
Study her movements, listen to her music,  
Sometimes to talk with her. Come. In we go.

*[Exeunt into House B.]*

*[Enter CHARISIUS, gloomy, from his own house. He speaks off.]*

CHARISIUS

Porter! I shall be out again this evening;  
And if your mistress asks . . . if anyone  
Who calls wishes to know where he can find me,  
I am at a drinking party with some friends.  
Say we expect the same young harp-player,  
A very fine musician, whom we all  
Greatly admire . . .

*[Enter HABROTONON with DUENNA.]*

DUENNA

There, darling, you hear that!  
You can't say you're neglected, when they all  
Admire you so. . . . Charisius, here she is,  
Fresh as a rose, and tuned like her own harp!  
Come, ducky, speak to him.

HABROTONON (*stiffly*)

Good evening, Sir.

CHARISIUS (*stiffly*)

Good evening. Go in, please. You'll find them waiting,  
I'll follow afterwards.

[*Exit HABROTONON to House B. CHARISIUS waits.*

DUENNA

Lovely she is, just lovely. . . . And the bill,  
Twelve drachmae for to-night. (*trying it on*)  
And then the night  
That you forgot, five days ago.

CHARISIUS

Forgot?

Did I?

DUENNA

You did indeed, and I don't wonder.  
No thought you had for anything but her.  
Twice you forgot. That's three nights altogether.  
Thirty-six drachmae.

[*Enter ONÉSIMUS.*

CHARISIUS

Here you are.

ONÉSIMUS

What's that?

[*CHARISIUS gives money and exit to House B. DUENNA takes the money  
and puts it in her mouth.*

DUENNA

Good-night, Sir. Blessings on you.

ONÉSIMUS

You old fraud!

Stop!

DUENNA (*with mouth full*)

There were three nights he forgot to pay.  
He knows he did. He admits it.

ONÉSIMUS

Every night

You had your money. He sent me myself.  
To pay you, and I did. Spit out that cash!  
Out with it, quick. It's no good gobbling at me.  
[Exit, pursuing DUENNA.]

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## PROLOGUE

[Enter the Nymph CALLISTO, wearing a bearskin with the head and jaws over her head.]

Are we alone? My mistress, Artemis,  
Nowhere about? No; if she were, I'd hear  
Far off the clanging of that silver bow.  
No doubt she's off on the Arcadian hills,  
Playing her regular part, always the same!  
How well I know it all: The Huntress bright  
Who roams a virgin through the virgin woods,  
Fleet as the winds and free; lover of all  
The young wild forest life, the kids and fawns,  
And pards, and us poor bears, and everything,  
And shows her love, combined with marksmanship,  
By shooting us! Just like these goddesses!  
No reasoning power! No common sense at all!  
Nothing but charm of manner and good looks!  
And such a mass of fads! To think that I  
In old days believed everything she said,  
Took all her ways as models to adore;  
Yes, and should do so still, and still be just  
As narrow, if I'd never been a bear!

It's that that saved me. You must know me now;  
Callisto, once beloved of Artemis.  
Her chosen friend, and virginal as she  
Until. . . . Well, really, was I much to blame?  
They never think, these virgin goddesses;  
It pleases them to stay eternally  
Unloved, and then they fly into a rage  
When we poor nymphs are different. If she wished  
All of us Oreads to be like herself,  
Why did she set us dancing, those long nights,  
In ecstasy and longing, on till dawn  
Through the dark woods? Others were roaming, too,  
Young gods, and fauns, and satyrs, all half-drunk  
With songs and moonlight. What could she expect?  
She wouldn't listen. She went wild with rage,  
And, seeking out some awful punishment,  
Some lesson I should learn and not forget,  
Transformed me on the spot, and sentenced me  
To fourteen years' hard labour as a Bear.  
I did learn lessons! It's an education

Beyond the Schools, to have been a real she-bear.  
I roamed the Arcadian forests, fed on fruits  
And honeycomb, had fresh cubs every spring,  
Suckled them, licked them into shape, and then  
Forgot them and had others. I accepted  
Simple things simply. All my ways became  
Just what the Stoic, Zeno, recommends,  
Self-serving, with no master and no slave:  
I had no vain desires; I asked for no  
Rare food, or costly wine; no cooks, no clothes,  
No purse, no pride; and never cared at all  
What other she-bears said or thought of me.  
Those fourteen innocent years have taught me lessons  
I've not forgotten, lessons utterly  
Beyond her comprehension. She has never  
Learnt anything at all. She still keeps up  
The same old ways, the same old Festivals,  
The same old dances by the same old moon.  
She calls on all her votaries to attend  
And then, of course, as anyone might guess,  
Sometimes the same thing happens as with me,  
And all these gods and mortals lose their wits,  
And women suffer! So it has happened here.  
This innocent girl herself, this Pamphilê,  
Goes mad with fear. Her baby is snatched away  
By that old Nurse and hidden like a crime,  
From husbands, fathers, and all murderous males.  
She dares not speak. Her secret shuts her off  
From all she loves. She watches day by day  
There, at the window, for a silent sign  
The Nurse gives, passing by without a word:  
"I have seen him;" "He is safe;" "In danger;" "dead."

*[For the first sign she touches her eyes; for the second lifts her right arm; for danger, arms round waist; for dead, arms straight down.]*

Alas, these humans! Always overwise  
And harassed by the strange laws they devise  
For their own torment; always surfeited  
With fears more painful than the things they dread;  
Always so eager that the strong shall wreak  
For every sin due vengeance on the weak,  
And most on women. If they ever knew  
The truth . . . but who could show them what is true,  
As now they are? The book of life that I  
In my green forest read so innocently  
And wisely, they have never understood. . . .  
Poor baby, I would help it if I could.

*[Exit CALLISTO. Enter from the House B CHAERESTRATUS.]*

CHAERESTRATUS (*speaking off*)

All right. I have no wish to interrupt.



I'll walk about outside. I like fresh air.  
And if there's any billing to be done  
Or cooing, I have not the slightest wish  
To bill nor yet to coo.

*[Enter from House A SmîCRINÊS.*

SMÎCRINÊS *(to the Porter)*

No, I'll not wait.  
When he returns you'll tell him that I called.  
The thing's past understanding. When his father  
First made proposals to me, I enquired  
Most carefully about him. They all told me  
Charisius was a god-fearing young man,  
The makings of a frugal son-in-law  
And a good husband.

CHAERESTRATUS *(aside)*

It's old Smîcrinês,  
The father-in-law. I wonder what he's heard.

SMÎCRINÊS

I can't think what the Devil's come to him.  
Dinners and drinking parties every night!  
A famous cook engaged at goodness knows  
What fee! And then the wine the fellow drinks!  
It just amazes me. It's not so much  
The intoxication; it's the awful price:  
So much a spoonful! I can't understand  
How any conscience can consent to it.

CHAERESTRATUS *(aside)*

I thought so. Obviously he has heard some talk.  
Now he'll come raging in to stop all these  
Love-feasts! It's not my business, but I think  
He'll go back sorry he came.

SMÎCRINÊS

My daughter brought him  
Four talents, and he doesn't choose to be  
Her housemate. He lives out. He's paying twelve  
Drachmas a day to that old madam!

CHAERESTRATUS

Yes.  
Twelve is the price. He's got his details right.

SMÎCRINÊS

Twelve for one day! Enough to keep a man  
A month and six days!

CHAERESTRATUS

How exact! Two obols  
A day; the dole that keeps a slave in gruel  
And leaves him hungry!

*[Enter SIMIAS from House B.]*

SIMIAS

Hi, Chaerestratus,  
Your absence will be noticed.

CHAERESTRATUS

My dear man,  
Do you see?

SIMIAS

Who's that?

CHAERESTRATUS

The father of the bride.  
Doesn't he scowl; like a philosopher  
Gone pessimist.

SIMIAS

No wonder. The poor man  
Is worried about your harpist. He's afraid  
The lawful wife indoors may find herself  
Turned out and her place taken.

CHAERESTRATUS

If you'd heard him  
Growling just now!

SMICRINÈS

How everything combines  
To thwart me! My wife dead; one daughter lost  
I did hope I could guard the livelihood  
Of this one that remains.

SIMIAS

How did he get  
His information! I suppose some servant  
Has told him things. If we could ward him off  
For just a day or two we'd have a chance  
To get Charisius to give up these follies  
And be himself again. You'll have to help.

CHAERESTRATUS

I can't refuse my house, but, short of that,  
I'll help. I rather hate the whole affair.

SĪMIAS

You told me you enjoyed it.

CHAERESTRATUS

So I do;  
But somehow. . . . Well, let's put an end to it.  
It's easy enough. Why shouldn't I, right now  
Go up to him and tell him the whole story;  
Or, better still, invite him to come in  
And see things for himself. Let the old fool  
Burst if he wants to.

SĪMIAS

Silence on your life!  
That would wreck everything beyond repair.  
Don't talk so.

SMĪCRINĒS (*rising*)

I'll go home.

CHAERESTRATUS

Yes, do, by all means:  
Or, better still, to the Devil.

SMĪCRINĒS

I'll go home,  
I want first to make certain of the facts  
About my daughter's treatment; then I'll think  
Calmly what line to take about the man.

[*Exit*

SĪMIAS

Ought we to warn Charisius that he's here?

CHAERESTRATUS

Yes, rather. What an old pest! That's the way  
To break a household up.

SĪMIAS

I only wish  
He'd break up others. [*Singing heard off*

CHAERESTRATUS

Others?

SIMIAS

And begin

By one next door.

CHAERESTRATUS

Do you mean mine?

SIMIAS

Yes, my friend,

Yours. But meantime let's warn Charisius.

CHAERESTRATUS

Mine? . . .

But let's go in. I see a noisy crowd  
Making this way, young lads and not too sober.  
It's better not to meet them.

SIMIAS

Can you help it?

Unhappy man, these are our fellow-guests!

*[Exeunt into House.]*

CHORUS OF REVELLERS

I long to be a loony,  
A laughing, leaping loony;  
As mad as all those others  
Renowned in tragic story,  
Who run so wild and moony  
On murdering their mothers.  
I don't know which the best is,  
Alcmaeon or Orestes;  
They both get rather gory  
When murdering their mothers.  
I don't want all the bother  
Of murdering my mother.  
I don't want blood and slaughter;  
Red wine is what I'm after;  
It's wine I want and laughter,  
With no allaying water.  
Oh, when the night is moony,  
And springtime soft and spoony,  
It's then I'll be a loony,  
With no allaying water,  
A laughing, leaping loony  
With no allaying water!

*[They straggle into the House.]*

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## ACT II

ONÉSIMUS *alone.*

ONÉSIMUS

A slippery business, all the life of man!  
Take me, now. All my duties summed together,  
My fatherland, my refuge and my law,  
My judge of every right and every wrong,  
Is just my master. And, God only knows  
How slippery *he* is! Still, we stand together,  
We two. We're partners now in my discovery.  
As soon as he got back from Ephesus,  
I went straight up, took him aside, and told him.  
So naturally he's grateful—Naturally,  
He must be grateful. . . . This old man, of course,  
Annoys us and will soon annoy us more.  
No doubt his daughter's told him half the story,  
Young Habro and the cook and the rare wines,  
And what they all cost, and lots more as well.  
I don't suppose she said one word about  
Her own affair, which started all the trouble.  
All right, it's up to me. If the old man  
Knew everything, of course he'd take our side,  
But can we tell him? Obviously we can't,  
A husband can't proclaim his own dishonour.  
Impossible! . . . Well, since I'm not allowed  
To let the man know what he doesn't know,  
I've got to make him un-know what he knows.  
That's a bit puzzling.

[*Enter SMÍCRINÈS from House A.*  
Oh, good morning, Sir.

SMÍCRINÈS

Look here, rogue; are you honest?

ONÉSIMUS

That is hardly  
For me to say, Sir. You might ask my master.

SMÍCRINÈS

I'd sooner ask your mistress. I've just come  
From talking to her, and I have some questions  
To put to you.

ONÉSIMUS

Ah, yes, Sir! These young wives;  
They're sensitive. They do exaggerate,  
Their feelings are so strong. You can't believe  
All that a young wife says.

SMICRINÈS

Ah, that's so, is it?  
They lie like troopers to defend their husbands?  
I thought as much. No, come; tell me the truth,  
I've heard unpleasant stories in the town . . .

ONÉSIMUS

About our mistress?

SMICRINÈS

No, you fool, about  
Your master.

ONÉSIMUS

Oh, I'm glad, Sir. Then there's nothing  
To worry about. Of course you need not heed them,  
People in Athens would say anything,  
Just for the pleasure of inventing.

SMICRINÈS

Ah;  
That's what *she* says.

ONÉSIMUS

She does? (*To himself.*) Good business! Yes,  
Of course she does!—I heard some talk myself  
About these parties the young man next door  
Is giving.

SMICRINÈS

What? It's not my son-in-law  
Who gives them?

ONÉSIMUS

Oh, no, no! Of course it's young  
Chaerestratus, who lives there. He's unmarried  
And rich, and, I'm afraid, Sir, not quite wise.  
He's lost his head over a pretty girl  
Who plays the harp.

SMICRINÈS

They say my son-in-law

Is always there?

ONÉSIMUS

Why, yes, Sir; pretty often.  
He felt . . . we both felt . . . we could be some use  
To his young friends by keeping things decorous,  
And seeing he's not cheated. He's so helpless.

SMICRINÈS

Keep them decorous, does he? Doesn't he  
Stay out all night? The porter said. . . .

ONÉSIMUS

Oh, no, Sir!  
When he's been late, I've let him in myself.  
He's not the man to enjoy that kind of thing.

SMICRINÈS

Now, once for all, who is it pays the bills?  
Is it my son-in-law?

ONÉSIMUS

What an idea!  
My master!—Oh, I see how that's got round.  
Quite often it's arranged that I myself  
Should overlook the bills, to see our host  
Is not being cheated. Some one must have seen me,  
And thought, of course, it was my master's money.

SMICRINÈS

Thanks, my good fellow. You're an honest man.  
You've taken a great burden off my mind.  
I'll tell my daughter I did wrong to doubt her.

*[Exit to House.]*

ONÉSIMUS

How easy lying is! And how convenient!  
And think what trouble people give themselves  
Telling the truth! To know it and not tell it  
Is my plan—Well, we've got young Pamphilê  
Fixed. If she tells of us we tell of her.  
I'll go and let the master know he's safe.

*[Exit, as DĀVUS and SYRISCUS, followed by SYRISCUS'S WIFE carrying a baby, enter. As ONÉSIMUS goes off, SYRISCUS catches at him.]*

SYRISCUS

Here! Wait a moment.

ONÉSIMUS

No. I'm busy.

[*Exit.*

DĀVUS (*to Syricus*)

Stop!

SYRISCUS

You won't face justice!

DĀVUS

You're blackmailing me,  
Confound you! . . . You can't have what isn't yours.

SYRISCUS

We need an arbitrator.

DĀVUS

Oh, all right.  
For God's sake find one.

SYRISCUS

Who do you think would do?

DĀVUS

I don't mind. Anyone . . . It serves me right.  
Why did I give him anything?

SYRISCUS

Look there.

[SMĪCRINĒS *comes out of the House.*

Will that man do?

DĀVUS

All right.

SYRISCUS

Excuse me, Sir,  
But might I ask you, if you'd be so kind,  
To spare us a few moments of your time?

SMĪCRINĒS

You? What about?

SYRISCUS



We are having a dispute,  
A matter of business.

SMICRINÈS

Well, what's that to me?

SYRISCUS

We want an honest judge to arbitrate  
Between us. If there's nothing to prevent you,  
Do be our judge.

SMICRINÈS

You'll come to a bad end,  
You two; rascals in goatskins walking round  
And arguing points of law!

SYRISCUS

Yes, Sir, but still . . .

The thing's quite short and easy to explain.  
Please, father, as a kindness! In God's name

*[In a rhetorical manner.]*

I beg you, don't reject us. At all times  
And in all regions Justice should prevail,  
And, in the common interest of mankind,  
'Tis the concern of all who pass to see  
Justice upheld.

DĀVUS (*to himself*)

Not half an orator,  
This chap I've got mixed up with! Why on earth  
Did I go shares?

SMICRINÈS

You promise to accept  
My judgement?

SYRISCUS

Yes, whatever it may be.

SMICRINÈS

All right, I'll hear the case. Why shouldn't I?  
Come, you who've not said anything, begin.

DĀVUS

I'll start a bit back, just to make things clear,  
Before he came in. I was with my sheep  
Alone, up in the wood beyond those farms.

About a month ago it was; I found  
A baby laid out with a necklace on him  
And stuff like this.

SYRISCUS

That's what it's all about.

DĀVUS

He says you're not to speak!

SMICRINÈS

You'll have my stick  
About you if you talk before your turn.

DĀVUS

And quite right too!

SMICRINÈS

Go on.

DĀVUS

I'm going on.  
I picked it up and took it home to rear  
As mine. At least, that's what I meant at first;  
Then, in the night came second thoughts, the kind  
That always come at night. "Why should I take  
To nursing babies? How can I afford it?  
Do I really want more worries than I've got?"  
Well, that's how I was feeling when, at dawn,  
Again I took the sheep out, and this man  
Came to the same place . . . he's a charcoal-burner . . .  
To saw some stumps. I'd known him well before.  
We fell to talking and he saw that I  
Was in bad spirits. "Why so glum," he said,  
"What's wrong, mate?" Well, I couldn't hold my tongue!  
I told him the whole business, how I'd found  
The baby and picked it up; and, straight away,  
Before I'd finished speaking, he began  
Begging me, breaking it at every point,  
"Oh, Dâvus, as you hope for any luck,  
Give me that baby. Do! Fortune will bless you,  
And set you free! I have a wife," he said,  
"Who had a baby, and it died." He meant  
That woman there, who's carrying the baby.

SMICRINÈS

You begged him, you?

SYRISCUS

I did, Sir.

DĀVUS

The whole day

He kept on worrying at me, till at last  
I agreed and gave it, and he went away  
Showering his blessings on me. Why, he took  
And kissed my hands!

SMICRINĒS

You kissed his hands?

SYRISCUS

I did.

DĀVUS

So off he went; and now he suddenly  
Comes at me, with his wife, and makes a claim  
To all the stuff . . . just odds and ends, no value . . .  
I found there with the baby, and complains  
Because I keep it and won't give it him.  
I say he should be thankful that he's got,  
Out of my find, the share he asked me for.  
He has no right to come cross-questioning me  
Whether I gave him everything I found.  
Suppose he'd been there and we'd found the things  
Together, why, we'd only have gone halves;  
Each would have had his share. . . . And now, good Lord,  
When you weren't there and I found everything  
That was found, you must have the lot, and I  
Nothing at all!

There's only one thing more,  
I gave you something that was mine to give;  
Well, if you like it, keep it; if you don't,  
Or if you've changed your mind, then give it back.  
That isn't cheating me nor yet yourself.  
But first to accept my gift with thanks, and then  
Come bullying to take everything I've got,  
It can't be done. That's all I have to say.

SYRISCUS

He's finished?

SMICRINĒS

Yes, you heard. He's finished.

SYRISCUS

Good.

I follow on. He and he only found  
The baby. What he says is quite correct.  
That's how it happened, father. I deny  
Nothing. I begged and prayed him for the child,  
And got it. All quite true. But then a shepherd,  
One of his mates, to whom he'd talked about it,  
Brought me the news that with the child he'd found  
Some ornaments. To claim those ornaments  
Here comes the owner. . . . Pass the baby, wife . . .  
This person, Dâvus, asks you for his clothes,  
Necklets and tokens of identity.  
They were put out, he says, for him to wear,  
And not for you to swallow. That's his claim,  
And I, his legal representative . . .  
You made me so by giving him to me . . .  
Endorse that claim. That is the point, your Honour.  
And, as I see it, all you have to do  
Is to pronounce due judgement about these  
Gold trinkets or whatever else they are;  
Should they be kept, according to the gift  
Of the unknown mother, till the child can use them,  
Or handed to this robber of the child,  
As being first finder of what isn't his?  
Do you ask me why I didn't claim the things  
The first day, when I asked him for the baby?  
Because I had no right to speak for him  
At that time. I've not come to claim the things  
Now for myself. No "going halves" for me;  
No "finding's keeping." If your finding leaves  
An innocent person wronged, I call it theft.  
Besides, Sir, think: this child may prove to be  
Of higher birth than ours. If he's brought up  
Among day-labourers, won't he think their ways  
Common and fly to his own natural bent:  
Seek some high-class adventure, carry arms,  
Hunt lions or run races in the Games?  
You've often seen the tragedies, I'm sure;  
You know the sort of thing. One . . . Neleus, was it?  
And Pelias . . . you remember? . . . They were found  
By an old goatherd, in a goatskin, just  
Like mine; and when he saw they were his betters  
He told them all the story, how he found them  
And took them in; then he produced a bag  
All crammed with tokens of identity,  
Which taught them the whole truth about themselves  
And turned the one-time goatherds into kings.  
Had Dâvus found that bag, why he'd have sold  
The tokens in the hope of making, say,  
Some dozen drachmas, and those splendid princes  
Would, all their lives, have not known who they were!  
It can't be right that I should have the baby  
To rear and feed, while Dâvus grabs the tokens,  
The sole clue to its future, and destroys them.  
By tokens before now men have been saved

From marrying their sisters; men have found  
Their mothers in distress and rescued them;  
One woman saved her brother—all through tokens!  
And life is full of pitfalls, which a man  
Can only avoid by looking far ahead  
And using all the clues available.  
"If you don't like it, give it back," he says,  
And counts that a strong point. No. Quite unfair!  
We prove you're bound in justice to disgorge  
The baby's clues, and you reply by claiming  
To take the baby himself, and so be free  
To play the rogue with everything of his  
That chance may have preserved. There. That's my case.  
Give judgement, Sir, as you consider just.

SMICRINÈS

That's easy. Everything that was laid out  
Beside the baby is the baby's own.  
That's my decision.

DÁVUS

Good; and what about  
The baby itself?

SMICRINÈS

By Zeus, I can't award  
The baby to the man who is trying to rob it.  
The baby must be his who brought it help  
And stopped you when you meant to do it wrong.

SYRISCUS

God bless you, Sir!

DÁVUS

No, damn it! That's too bad!  
Too bad, by Zeus the Saviour! I who found  
Everything, must be stripped of everything?  
My whole find going to the fool who found  
Nothing! You mean, I've got to give them up?

SMICRINÈS

That's my decision.

DÁVUS

It's a shocking judgement.  
Plague take me, it's a scandal!

SMICRINÈS

Come, be quick.

DĀVUS

Lord Zeus, what treatment!

SYRISCUS

Here, let's see the things.  
Untie that bag. I know that's where you keep them . . .  
Please, wait a bit, Sir, till he gives them up.

DĀVUS

Why did I ever trust this man to judge?

SMĪCRINĒS

Quick, jailbird! Hand them over.

DĀVUS

It's a scandal!  
A scandal! (*He hands over the wallet.*)

SMĪCRINĒS

Got them all?

SYRISCUS

I think I have,  
Unless he swallowed some of them while I  
Was pleading, and he knew that he was caught.

DĀVUS

I couldn't have believed it!

SYRISCUS

Thank you, Sir.  
Good-bye. I wish all judges were like you.  
[*Exit* SMĪCRINĒS.]

DĀVUS

The unfairness of it all! By Hercules,  
I never heard of such a shocking judgement.

SYRISCUS

You tried to cheat.

DĀVUS

Oh, you impostor, you!

You'll keep them for the baby, I don't think!  
I'll watch you night and day.

SYRISCUS

Oh, take a walk!

Amuse yourself!

[*Exit DĀVUS.*]

Now, wife, pick up these trinkets  
And take them in to the master. We'll stay here  
To-night; then home, after the rents are paid,  
To-morrow. First, though, for a proper list.  
You've got a box? No box? Well, fold your dress  
To hold them. (SYRISCUS *and his WIFE sit down and examine the tokens.*)

[*Enter from House B ONĒSIMUS.*]

ONĒSIMUS

Never was a slower cook  
Seen in this world! By this time yesterday  
They were half through dessert.

SYRISCUS

This seems to be  
A sort of cock, a stout one. Take it, wife.  
A gold thing set with stones. A double axe.

ONĒSIMUS

Hello, what's this? (*Comes and looks over SYRISCUS's shoulder.*)

SYRISCUS

A queer gold-plated ring,  
Gold upon iron. The seal a bull or goat,  
I can't say which. But here's the artist's name;  
Kleostratus, the inscription says.

ONĒSIMUS

Let's look!  
[ONĒSIMUS *seizes the ring.*]

SYRISCUS

Humph! Who the devil . . .

ONĒSIMUS

It is!

SYRISCUS

What is?

ONÉSIMUS

This ring.

It's it!

SYRISCUS

It's what? I don't know what you mean.

ONÉSIMUS

This is Charisius's, my master's ring.

SYRISCUS

You're cracked.

ONÉSIMUS

The one he lost.

SYRISCUS

Put down that ring,

Confound you!

ONÉSIMUS

Let you keep our ring? I like that.  
Where did you get it from?

SYRISCUS

By all the gods,  
This is too bad! That's what it is to try  
To save the treasures of an orphan child.  
Everyone's first thought is to grab at them.  
Put down that ring, I tell you.

ONÉSIMUS

Are you joking?  
I swear by all the gods, this is my master's.

SYRISCUS

I'd sooner have my throat cut, any day  
Than let this man . . . All right. My mind's made up.  
I'll go to law with all the thieves in Greece,  
One after the other. It's the baby's stuff,  
Not mine . . . A golden twist. Here, take it, wife.  
Some torn red silk. Yes; take them all inside.

*[Exit WIFE to House B.]*

Now what have you to say to me?

ONÉSIMUS



To say?  
This ring's Charisius's. It's this, he told me,  
He lost once on a spree.

SYRISCUS

Oh, well, I serve  
His friend next door. So keep it if you like,  
Yourself, or let me have it to produce  
When wanted.

ONÉSIMUS

H'm. I'd like to keep the thing.

SYRISCUS

It's all the same to me. I think we're bound  
For the same house here, aren't we?

ONÉSIMUS

Yes; but now  
They're having company. It mightn't be  
Quite tactful to reveal all this just now  
To the young master. Will to-morrow do?

SYRISCUS

To-morrow'll do. I'm ready to submit  
The whole dispute to any judge you like,  
One speech each side. I've not done badly that way  
Already. No more charcoal stumps for me!  
I'll take to law suits. It's the only way  
For honest men to live their lives to-day.

*[Exeunt both into House B.]*

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### ACT III

ONÉSIMUS *alone.*

That ring! I've started off five times or more  
To show it to the Master. Then somehow  
When I've come up and got him to myself,  
I daren't . . . I sometimes doubt if it was wise  
To tell him the other thing. "God damn the rogue  
Who told me!" is what he mutters to himself  
When he's alone. I've heard him. Yes, quite often  
He says that . . . H'm, suppose he made it up

With her? Well, that would be the end of me!  
To have told her secret, fatal! Bad enough  
Even to have known it. . . . Yes, I am sure it's best  
To make no further trouble. Why, even now  
We're in for a quite fairly devilish row.

[Enter HABROTONON *from the House of* CHAERESTRATUS.

HABROTONON (*speaking off*)

Excuse me, gentlemen! . . . I beg you, Sir,  
You only cause me annoyance . . . Well, if ever  
A helpless girl was made a laughing stock!  
They said the man had fallen in love with me;  
It's not love, it's repulsion; something quite  
Inhuman! He won't even let me sit  
At the same table. I must keep far off!

ONÉSIMUS (*musings over the ring*)

Return it to the man I got it from?  
That's hardly sensible.

HABROTONON

The wretched man,  
What is he wasting all that money for?  
For all he has got from me, I'm qualified  
To carry the holy basket to the Goddess,  
Lord save us! "Free from contact with a male  
For three days."

ONÉSIMUS

What on earth am I to do?  
I ask you; what on earth?

[Enter SYRISCUS *from the House of* CHARISIUS. HABROTONON *begins to take notice.*

SYRISCUS

Where can he be?  
I've hunted for him everywhere inside (*seeing ONÉSIMUS*).  
Hullo! Look here, mate. Either give me back  
That ring or show it to the man you mean  
To show it to. Let's get the business settled.  
I can't wait longer.

ONÉSIMUS

See, man; it's like this.  
It really does belong . . . so much I know  
For certain . . . to Charisius. But I somehow  
Don't like to show it him. It's much the same  
As telling him he's the father of that baby

The ring was found with.

SYRISCUS

How do you mean, you fool?

ONÉSIMUS

He lost it last year at the Tauropolia;  
So much we know. There was an all-night dance,  
Women as well as men. One can but think  
He gave it as a present to some girl  
He got mixed up with. I suppose it's she  
Who had this baby and left it in the wood.  
If one could find the girl, and then produce  
This ring, it would be clinching; but not now.  
To show it now would only make suspicion  
And trouble.

SYRISCUS

It's your business, anyhow,  
Not mine. But if you're trying to put me off,  
Or if you expect to make me pay you something  
To get it back, you make a great mistake.  
I don't go halves in anything!

ONÉSIMUS

All right.

Who asked you to?

SYRISCUS

I've got a job in town  
Just now, but when it's finished, I'll come back  
And see what's to be done.

[*Exit* SYRISCUS.]

HABROTONON

Onésimus,  
Is it the child the woman there indoors  
Is nursing, that this charcoal-burner found?

ONÉSIMUS

Yes, so he says.

HABROTONON

It's such a pretty creature!  
Poor child!

ONÉSIMUS

And lying beside it was this ring,  
My master's.

HABROTONON

What an awful thing! Just think!  
That baby is your master's son, your own  
Young master. You can't mean to leave him there  
In slavery! You could be hanged for that.

ONÉSIMUS

I don't know what to do. I've just explained,  
Nobody knows the mother.

HABROTONON

And you say  
He lost the ring at last year's Tauropolia?

ONÉSIMUS

They'd all of them been drinking, so the boy  
Said who attended him.

HABROTONON

He must have wandered  
Away alone, and fallen upon some girl  
Fresh from the women's midnight dance—Why, once  
A thing like that happened when I was there.

ONÉSIMUS

When you were there?

HABROTONON

Yes, that was last year, too.  
I had come to play the harp at what they call  
The Younger Girls' dance, and this girl was there  
Among them, laughing. I could join their play  
Myself then. At that time I didn't know  
What a man was.

ONÉSIMUS (*ironically*)

Says you!

HABROTONON (*indignant*)

By Aphrodite,  
I swear!

ONÉSIMUS

This girl, you don't know who she was?

HABROTONON

I could find out. I know she was a friend  
Of some one in my party.

ONÉSIMUS

Did you hear  
Her father's name?

HABROTONON

No, I know nothing more.  
I am sure I'd know her if we met again.  
My goodness, she was pretty! And, they said,  
From a rich house.

ONÉSIMUS

Most likely it's the same.

HABROTONON

I don't know. She was with us, but strayed off.  
Then later, all of a sudden, back she came  
Running, in tears, tearing her hair. She'd spoilt  
A lovely mantle, soft Tarentine silk;  
It was all tatters.

ONÉSIMUS

Did she have this ring?

HABROTONON

She may have had. She didn't show it me.  
I won't invent things.

ONÉSIMUS

What am I to do?

HABROTONON

That's your look-out . . . But if you're sensible,  
And ask for my advice, you'll go and show him  
His ring. Suppose that girl was a free maiden.  
He can't be left not knowing what he's done.

ONÉSIMUS

First, let us find out who the woman was.  
There, Habro, that's a job for you and me  
Together.

HABROTONON

No, I couldn't; not until  
I really know for certain who the man was  
Who wronged her. I should be afraid to go  
And tell those ladies I was with a story  
That might be false. That ring may well have been  
A pledge that one of his companions took,  
And then lost. Or he may have been at dice  
And put the ring up as a stake; or perhaps  
He owed some debt and had no cash, and so  
Paid with the ring. Hundreds of things like that  
Happen at drinking bouts. Until I know  
The man who wronged her I don't want to seek  
That girl out or spread any kind of gossip  
To anyone.

ONÉSIMUS

No; I'm afraid you're right.  
Then, what the Devil . . .

HABROTONON

Look, Onésimus.  
What do you say to this? The thought has just  
Struck me. Suppose . . . suppose I make the whole  
Adventure mine. I'll take the ring and go  
In there to play to them.

ONÉSIMUS

Go on. Explain.  
Though I can guess.

HABROTONON

He'll see it on my finger.  
He'll ask me where I got it; and I'll say,  
"At last year's Tauropolia, when I was  
An innocent girl." All that that other girl  
Went through I'll tell as happening to myself . . .  
I know it well enough!

ONÉSIMUS

Magnificent!

HABROTONON

Then, if it strikes a chord in him, he'll come  
Bursting to question me . . . He's tipsy, too;  
He'll blurt out the whole story without waiting  
For me to speak. I'll just say "Yes" to all  
He says, and never risk making mistakes

By speaking first.

ONÉSIMUS

Oh, good! Better than good!

HABROTONON

I'll hang my head and all that, and just murmur  
The obvious things. It's safe enough. "How cruel  
You were to me! A cave-man!"

ONÉSIMUS

Capital!

HABROTONON

And "Oh, how violently you threw me down!"  
And "That poor cloak I ruined"! That's the kind  
Of talk. But first of all I'll go indoors  
And get the baby, and drop a tear, and kiss it,  
And ask the woman where she got it.

ONÉSIMUS

Glory!

HABROTONON

And bring it in; and then the final stroke;  
"So now you are a father!" and I show him  
The foundling.

ONÉSIMUS

Oh, Habrotonon, what cheek!  
What devilry!

HABROTONON

If once we have the proof,  
And know that he's the father, then we'll make  
Inquiries at our ease to find the mother.

ONÉSIMUS (*suspiciously*)

There's one thing you've not mentioned. You'll be given  
Your freedom. If he once believes that you're  
The mother of his child he'll have you freed.

HABROTONON (*musings*)

I don't know. Oh, I wonder!

ONÉSIMUS

You don't know?  
Don't you? Look here, do I get any good  
From all this?

HABROTONON

Yes, by the Two Goddesses!  
However it ends, I owe it all to you.

ONÉSIMUS

Ah, but suppose, when once you've caught your man,  
You leave things, and forget about the true  
Mother; that leaves me planted.

HABROTONON

Why should I  
Do that? Do you think I'm pining for a baby?  
If only I could be free! Oh, God in heaven,  
After all this, that's the reward I pray for!

ONÉSIMUS

I hope you get it.

HABROTONON

You accept my plan?

ONÉSIMUS

With all my heart. And if you do try on  
Some funny business, there'll be time enough  
To fight you. Trust me, I'll know what to do.  
Just for the present, though, I'll wait and see.

HABROTONON

You do agree, then?

ONÉSIMUS

I agree.

HABROTONON

Then quick,  
Give me the ring.

ONÉSIMUS

There!

HABROTONON



Thanks. O blessed Goddess,  
Persuasion, hear me! Teach me how to tell  
My story right, and may the end be well!

[*Exit* HABROTONON.

ONÉSIMUS

By Jove, she has initiative, that girl!  
She finds there isn't any road to freedom  
Through love; that's a blind alley; so she turns  
The opposite way. . . . Yes, I suppose I'll always  
Remain a slave. A moonstruck, drivelling ass!  
Can't think ahead! . . . Of course, if she has luck  
I might get something. . . . That'd be only fair . . .  
Fair? What a calculation, to expect  
Fair dealing from a woman! You poor fool!  
I only hope there's no new trouble brewing . . .  
The mistress, too. She's in a slippery place.  
They may find, any time, some free man's daughter  
Was mother to that baby. If they do,  
He'll marry her in a twinkling, and dismiss  
Our Pamphilê to her father. In that case,  
I'm nicely saved out of the wrath to come . . .  
Well, I've kept clear this time! And after this  
I abjure all meddling. Catch me ever again  
Poking my nose in other folks' affairs,  
Or telling tales—I give you leave to cut  
My tonsils out! . . . But who's this coming up?  
Oh, Smîcrinês again; back from the city;  
And showing signs of mental perturbation! (*amused*)  
I shouldn't wonder if he'd heard some news  
Not fully in accord with what I told him.  
I'd better vanish quietly and pretend  
Not to have seen him. Yes, and first find out  
For certain what young Habro's been about.

[*Exit* ONÉSIMUS *as* SMÎCRINÊS *enters*.

SMÎCRINÊS

I hate this gossip. I believe they want  
To make a fool of me. "Never at home;  
Drunken; extravagant;" I don't believe it.  
The city is humming with that sort of scandal.  
Well, this time I'm determined to find out  
The actual truth of the matter. For three nights  
They said, he hasn't slept at home; he's drinking,  
And bringing open shame upon his parents  
With some disreputable harpist girl.  
And yet that honest fellow I talked with here  
Assured me that he had really lived at home  
These last three days, and any previous trouble  
He had had with Pamphilê had quite blown over.  
He struck me as truthful. Pest! How can I tell  
Which to believe? I didn't like those people

In Athens. They enjoyed tormenting me,  
Knowing I hate extravagance. They grinned  
Into my face and rattled off this story  
Of special cooks and feasts and dancing girls  
And dice and noise and laughter. Very likely  
They made it all up, just to worry me.  
If so, well, I won't let it. After all  
That servant knew the facts. One man who knows  
Is worth a hundred gossips. And besides  
I have another witness, who knows all  
And cares for me, and for my property,  
And her own happiness. My daughter says  
All's well. I must believe my only child.

[*Guests burst tumultuously out of CHAERESTRATUS'S House.*]

But what's all this? The party breaking up?  
I warned Charisius not to get mixed up  
With people of that sort. That man next door's  
Impossible. How could he ever hope  
To keep him straight?

CÂRION (*off*)

I won't be just turned out  
Like this, Sir! You're insulting my profession.

[*Enter CÂRION, pushed out by SÎMIAS.*]

SÎMIAS

Go, go. The party's finished.

CÂRION

What? Before  
They've tasted my best sauce? It isn't decent.  
You'll never get another cook to make  
Such sauces—all this fuss about a baby!

SÎCRINÈS

Quite a *recherché* feast that man next door  
Is giving!

CÂRION

Insult upon insult! No;  
I won't endure it. Off they slink and leave  
Their food untouched. I swear if ever again  
They give a feast and one of them comes begging  
For a good cook . . . well, they can go to Heaven  
And get one!

SÎCRINÈS

Tell me, Cook; what's happening here?

CĀRION

What's happening? Why they're making me a jest  
In Athens, all because that stupid girl  
Breaks in with, first, her ring and, next, her baby,  
And upsets everyone, and vows it's his.  
And he's struck dumb and has acknowledged it,  
And no one knows which way to look; and so  
They're all gone, leaving me a laughing-stock.

SMĪCRINĒS

All gone?

CĀRION

Charisius and the harping girl  
Are there alone, and that infernal baby.

SMĪCRINĒS

Charisius? Why's he there?

CĀRION

The party's spoilt,  
And when a party's spoilt the whole town thinks  
The cook's to blame.

SMĪCRINĒS

Charisius? But why Charisius? Why

CĀRION

First, they said I took too long  
Preparing. Every self-respecting Cook  
Needs time.

SMĪCRINĒS

You said Charisius. You must mean  
The host, Chaerestratus.

CĀRION

Of course I mean  
The host, the father of this wretched baby;  
His name's Charisius, and that's his house,  
Next door. Then, secondly, they laid my things  
In the wrong order . . .

SMĪCRINĒS

Oh, get out! Get out!

CĀRION

What? I protest.

[SMĪCRINĒS *drives* CĀRION *out*.

SMĪCRINĒS

Then those who lied to me  
Were my own household! The loud streets and gutters  
Spoke the bare truth, and not quite all the truth.  
Damnation! . . . But this simplifies the case.  
I'll send my agent to insist at once  
That he restores my daughter and her dowry.  
She's still quite young. I'll find her a good husband  
In spite of them. This daughter I can save.

[*Enter* CHAERESTRATUS *and* SĪMIAS.

CHAERESTRATUS

O Hercules, enough! Where's SĪmias?  
Let's get away at once. . . . By Helios, yes,  
I liked that girl, and I don't understand  
Charisius. I don't like it.

SĪMIAS

Nor do I.

I always told you so.

SMĪCRINĒS

Thank God my daughter  
Is childless! How much harder it would be  
To take her back if she had borne that man  
A child . . . (*going up to them*) Excuse me, Sirs, I think you both  
Were dining with Charisius. Is it true  
This friend of yours gave here, day after day,  
A series of continuous drinking-bouts  
In a hired house? He was ashamed, I hear,  
To show his face at home, but not ashamed  
To breed a bastard from a prostitute . . .

CHAERESTRATUS

No, you're in error, Sir. This house is mine.  
The mother of that child is a musician  
Of charm and talent. If your son-in-law  
Displeases you, no doubt you have every right  
To take your daughter home and break the marriage,  
But that's no reason to come meddling here  
Using strong language . . .

SĪMIAS

Hush! (*to SMICRINÈS*) I think you wrong  
Charisius. I know nothing of this amour  
He seems to have had, but I'm quite sure it's finished.  
His manner to this girl . . . we all have noticed . . .  
Is most reserved. He's an unhappy man,  
Of that I'm sure. I beg you to think well  
Before you add to his unhappiness.

SMICRINÈS

Think about *him*? Why, wouldn't that be meddling  
And interfering, just the things your friend  
Objects to? He would sooner I went home  
Taking my daughter with me? Very good.  
That's what I've come to do; that's why I summon  
You two men, in accordance with the law,  
To bear true witness how Charisius lives,  
And how he has clearly shown himself unworthy  
To be my daughter's husband. Is that clear?

SIMIAS

I beg, before you ask us, Smîcrinês,  
You'll make quite sure it's what you really wish.  
I have known Charisius many years. I know  
His nature, and am sure that these last days  
Something has made him mad, unlike himself.  
Speak to him as a father. All the shame  
You heap upon Charisius will spring back  
And strike your innocent daughter.

SMICRINÈS

These last days!  
When did he get this harping girl with child?  
What was his nature then? It's not my nature  
To leave my daughter wedded to a rake  
Who wastes her dowry on his harping girls  
And cooks.

SIMIAS

I tell you he is not like that.  
He simply hates the sort of thing men call  
A life of pleasure; "Drunk with so-and-so";  
"Fifty gold Darics on a single feast . . ."  
"This girl to-night and that to-morrow." No,  
It's not his style. He has a natural pride,  
I know, which makes him feel that sort of life  
Disgusting.

SMICRINÈS

He has deceived you, as he once  
Did me. But not again; no, not again

Or call me no Athenian! What, that man  
My son-in-law? Him and his natural pride!  
I hope it chokes him. What does he expect?  
To live upon her dowry, and spend his days  
Drunk in the tavern where he found that slut,  
And live with her, thinking that we don't know,  
And take his little bastard for his heir . . .

SIMIAS

Good-bye, Sir. That's enough.

*[Exit SIMIAS and CHAERESTRATUS.*

SMICRINÈS

I must be calm.

It's strange how they defend him. It may be  
He once was honest. It must be that woman,  
That harping harlot, has corrupted him,  
She and her brat . . . I'll have her whipped from Athens!

*[Enter SYRISCUS.*

SYRISCUS

It's rather a delicate business; here's my wife,  
Insists that I must see that harper girl  
And find if Dâvus really gave us all  
The trinkets. . . . Ah, that kind old gentleman  
Who helped me so! I'm sure he'd introduce me . . .  
Allow me to congratulate you, Sir;  
True happiness is to make others happy,  
And that you have done indeed. It's all your work;  
That poor lost baby saved, the father found  
Both re-united to the lovely mother,  
All thanks to you!

SMICRINÈS

Infernal impudence!  
Who sent you here to mock me? Out, you dog!

SYRISCUS

Help! Help! What have I done? This is a case  
For arbitration—peaceful arbitration . . .

*[Exit SMICRINÈS, driving SYRISCUS before him.]*

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## ACT IV

SMICRINÈS and PAMPHILÈ come out of CHARISIUS'S House, talking.

SMICRINÈS

For you, my child, I am making the whole business  
As easy as possible. You take no part  
In the discussion; you make no complaint,  
No charges. Nobody need hear a word  
Of his own wasteful conduct or the wrongs  
He has done to *you*. All that I don't discuss.  
My case is amply strong enough without it.  
"I gave my daughter to this man believing  
He was a man of substance; now I find  
He is not in a position to support her,  
And take her back. Who wouldn't?"—As for you,  
My dear, don't be afraid that you'll be left  
Stranded. I know a man of good position,  
A friend to me, steady and well-connected,  
Who'll marry you at once.

PAMPHILÈ

Oh, father, stop!

Please—though I feel it's really you, not I,  
Who ought to say all this. You are so much wiser  
Than I, and put things better. But this time  
I think it's I who see what's right and true.  
If he's committed some great public crime,  
That's for the law to deal with, not for me.  
But if it's only something personal  
To me, it's odd that I've not noticed it.  
I don't know what it is. No doubt I'm stupid;  
A woman seldom has the brains to judge  
Of public things, but surely in her own  
Sphere, where she's touched herself, she is fairly sharp.  
I don't feel wronged; but if you think I am,  
Please tell me what he has done! I only know  
The old accepted law for man and wife;  
That, all life long, he should be kind to her,  
And she, all life long, do what pleases him.  
Well, Father, I have always found him just  
The husband that I wished, and everything  
That has pleased one of us has pleased the other.  
I call that a good husband—but he's ruined,  
You say; so now you mean to change me over  
To one with property enough to save me  
From all my troubles. Has he enough for that?  
Where will you find such riches as can ever  
Repay me for the man you take away?  
And what of justice, what of decency,  
If I who was full partner in his wealth  
Am not allowed to share his poverty?  
As for this man who means to marry me—  
(Which God forbid, and which while I have will  
And strength left in me, he shall never do!)

Suppose he, too, has losses, do you mean  
To pass me on to a third? And if he fails,  
To a fourth? How far do you intend to go,  
Handing me round for your experiments  
On Fortune? . . . Father, when I was a girl,  
It was your business to decide what husband  
To give me to. The choice was yours to make.  
But once you've chosen and I have left your house—  
My marriage is my own; and if I now  
Judge wrongly it's my own life that I wreck.  
Father, I beg you by our hearth and home,  
Don't take me from this man into whose arms  
You gave me. I ask simply what is fair  
And kind. If you refuse, well, you'll have got  
Your way by force, and I must try to bear  
My lot without being utterly ashamed.

SMICRINÈS

My child, I am saving you from certain ruin.

PAMPHILÈ

"Saving"! But if your saving is a thing  
You can't persuade me to, it's more a slave  
You make me than a daughter.

SMICRINÈS

My dear child,

Is it a case for arguing and persuading?  
Isn't it obvious? Don't the facts themselves  
Cry out? However, if you want me also  
To argue, I'll just put a point or two.  
First, child, your marriage is already wrecked,  
Wrecked both for him and you. It's possible  
He may enjoy himself, but certainly  
You won't. You'd wish to be a loving wife?  
You'll never be allowed. He doesn't want you.  
If you persist in staying, do you mean him  
To keep two houses? One for his new fancy  
And one for you? He won't like the expense.  
Everything doubled. All the household feasts,  
Two Thesmophoria parties—very costly—  
Two Skira feasts. Meantime, try to imagine  
Your own life. Don't we know what it will be?  
"Excuse him for to-day: urgent affairs  
At the Piraeus." Off he goes, and doesn't  
Come back, and you'll be hurt. You'll wait alone  
Hour after hour, not dining till he comes;  
You fasting while he's drinking with that girl!  
God bless me, even now he has left the house  
To join his harp-player. All right, I say;  
You leave it too, for ever!



PAMPHILÈ

May I speak?

I know Charisius. What I said about him  
Just now is really true. He has never been  
Unkind to me before. Something has changed him  
In these last weeks. It may be I've displeased him  
In some way I don't know. Some day he'll speak  
About it and perhaps I can explain,  
And be a better wife, and he'll forgive me . . .  
At least, he may. And then he'll change again  
And be himself. For me, I am quite content  
To wait and hope. To go on as we are  
At least a year or two will not use up  
My dowry. I can live quite modestly.  
And save on the housekeeping. I love my husband  
And want to keep him.

SMICRINÈS

Can you hope to keep him?

Does *he* want to keep *you*? You have a rival.  
More than a rival.

PAMPHILÈ

Only a dancing girl!

All young men have these fancies . . . though I never  
Thought that *he* would; fancies that come and go;  
Sudden, not lasting things. I am not afraid.

SMICRINÈS

It's not an equal battle, Pamphilè,  
An honest woman matched against a whore:  
They have the odds all round; they cheat and lie;  
They have no shame; they flatter and deceive  
In ways you never dream of; they know more;  
They know the world, they know men's weaknesses . . .

PAMPHILÈ

I am more to him than a dozen dancing girls!

SMICRINÈS

Ah, but it's not a dozen. It's just one;  
One only, and she the mother of his child.  
He acknowledges the boy, accepts her word,  
And next thing, I suppose, will set her free  
And lodge her in this house. . . . You have no child.

PAMPHILÈ (*collapsing*)

Father, I'll go. This woman has more right

Than I have. She'll do better than I've done.  
Send Sôphronê to help me, and I'll follow.

SMICRINÈS

Good, child; I knew that you'd be reasonable.  
I'll fetch her; an old Nurse can give the sort  
Of comfort that you need.

PAMPHILÈ (*embarrassed*)

Leave special orders  
That she is to be admitted.

SMICRINÈS

Special orders?

PAMPHILÈ

I mean, the porter might not understand.  
He might not let her in.

SMICRINÈS

Not let her in?  
Bless me, I never heard such impudence.  
I'll bring her here myself. I'll let them see  
You have a father and a home and friends.  
[Exit SMICRINÈS.]

PAMPHILÈ

Friends, have I? Is there one that I can trust?  
No one but Sôphronê; and there's no comfort  
In her. If only she had had the courage  
To help me at the first to tell Charisius!  
But no; she said it was a thing all men  
Are merciless about. It hurts their pride  
Somehow. . . . Why can't they leave it to the Goddess?  
Our sin is against her, not against them.  
One might have thought that, if he knew, he'd feel  
Pity, as I should for another girl  
So battered. . . . But of course I don't know how  
A man would feel, and Sôphronê was sure.  
"Hide everything," she said; "Hide everything.  
Hide most of all the child, and never dream  
Of seeing him again. It's the only way  
To save his life." Oh, I've grown almost blind  
With weeping. . . . If I only had a mother  
Or sister; I could tell my sister best.  
She would have understood. But now . . . no sister  
No child, no husband, none that I dare speak to . . .  
And Artemis, they say, never forgives.

*[She sits, forward L, pondering. Enter HABROTONON from House R., carrying the baby, wrapped in a torn crimson silk shawl. The two women do not see each other.]*

HABROTONON

I'll take him with me and search—What, whimpering, is he?  
Poor mite! I've no idea what's wrong with him.

*[Sits, back near House.]*

PAMPHILÈ

Is there no merciful god to pity me?

HABROTONON

Dear pretty, never mind! We'll find your mother;  
We'll search the city for her.

PAMPHILÈ (*rising*)

Well, I'll go.

*[She moves slowly towards the House; HABROTONON sees her for the first time, and stares.]*

HABROTONON (*rising*)

Lady! One moment!

PAMPHILÈ

Did you call me?

HABROTONON

Yes.

Please look at me, and see if you remember  
Something.

*(PAMPHILÈ gazes at her.)*

It is! It's she! Oh, I'm so glad.

PAMPHILÈ

Who are you? What do you mean?

HABROTONON

Give me your hand.

Poor darling; tell me, did you go last year  
To see the Tauropolia in a red  
Tarentine silk?

PAMPHILÈ (*her eyes on the baby's shawl*)

Woman, where did you get  
That baby?

HABROTONON

Do you recognize the shawl?  
My dear . . . My dear, don't be afraid of me!

PAMPHILÉ

That's not your own child?

HABROTONON

No; I've passed it off  
As mine . . . oh, not to do his mother wrong,  
But to get time to find her. And I have!  
I've found you! You're the girl I saw that night!

PAMPHILÉ (*bursts into tears, then grasping her*)

The man! Who was that man?

HABROTONON

Charisius.

PAMPHILÉ

No! . . .  
Oh, bless you! Do you know it? Are you sure?

HABROTONON

Certain. But you: you came out of his house.  
Aren't you his wife?

PAMPHILÉ

Yes.

HABROTONON

Happy, happy woman!  
Some merciful god has pitied both of you.  
*[Knocks are heard on the door of House L.]*  
Stop! Someone next door knocking! Take me in.  
Here! To this house. I'll tell you everything.

*[Exeunt into House R.]*

*[Enter ONÉSIMUS from House L.]*

ONÉSIMUS

He's dotty! Upon my word he's going mad!  
He *is* mad! No, but really, by the Gods,  
He's off his head, Charisius, I mean,  
My master. It's a cardiac paroxysm  
Of the Black Gall, or something. I don't see

How else you can explain it. There he stood  
Just now, ever so long, against the door,  
Peering and listening, while just outside  
Old Smîcrinês was grumbling to his daughter  
All, I suppose, about this mess of ours.  
As men of the world, I hardly like to tell you  
How he kept changing colour: "O my sweetest,"  
He cried. "What things you say!" and beat his head—  
His own head! Then again, after a bit,  
"God help me, what a wife I have had and lost!"  
Then, when he'd heard all that there was to hear,  
And crept away at last to his own room,  
What groans and tearing of the hair! Just one  
Continuous raving! "Blackguard that I am,"  
He kept on, "when I had done a thing like that,  
And made myself the father of a bastard,  
To feel no pity, show no spark of mercy  
To her in just the same plight! Barbarous!  
Utterly heartless!" He's in such a state,  
Half-mad, cursing himself and looking murder,  
It's dangerous. I am all shrivelled up with fear.  
As he is now, if he caught sight of me,  
Who first obliged him with the information  
About that baby, he might kill me dead.  
No one has seen me slip out of the house,  
But where to go to now, or what to think . . .  
Ah! Someone coming out! I'm lost, I'm done for!  
O Zeus the Saviour, save me if you can!

*[Hides in the branches of the tree R.*

*[Enter CHARISIUS.*

CHARISIUS

Am I a paragon? Always with an eye  
For how things look! Such a discerning judge  
Of honour and dishonour! So correct  
And irreproachable in private life!  
Some Power above has given me just the medicine  
I needed, just the right appropriate thing  
To make me see my vileness! "What," it says,  
You miserable creature, puffed with pride  
And fine words, so you can't forgive your wife  
For—what? For being wronged, not doing wrong.  
I'll make you see yourself in the same mess,  
Blundering. I'll show you her all love and kindness  
To you, and you all angry pride to her.  
That ought to teach you what you are: pig-headed,  
Hard-hearted, and most wretched all at once.  
You heard her with her father? How like you!  
"I am the partner of his life," she said:  
"I cannot run away from the misfortune  
That's fallen upon him." Now, my high and mighty  
Barbarian, what do you mean to do with her? . . .  
Go, clasp her to your heart; beg her forgiveness!

Or may all Furies . . . ! H'm. Of course there'll be  
Her father too. He's sure to be hot-headed  
And violent when he knows. Oh, damn her father!  
I'll tell him bluntly: "My good Smîcrinês,  
Let me alone. My wife's not leaving me.  
Why make these storms and bully Pamphilê? . . ."

[ONÊSIMUS, *peering round, falls out of tree with a crash.*

What? You again? What are you doing here?

ONÊSIMUS

Oh, this is quite bad; very bad. Ye Gods  
Above me, help! Don't leave me in this soup!

CHARISIUS

You dirty dog, have you been skulking here  
And listening?

ONÊSIMUS

No; I swear. I've just come out  
This moment.

CHARISIUS

Is there nothing one can keep  
From you? I catch you hiding everywhere,  
Onêsimus, listening to every word. . . .

ONÊSIMUS

Isn't it natural I should try to hide  
When you go round, like murder and damnation?

CHARISIUS

Here, rogue, I'll teach you to know everything.

[ONÊSIMUS *runs away*; CHARISIUS *pursues him*.

[*Enter from the House* HABROTONON.

HABROTONON

Stop! Or you'll show that you yourself know nothing.

CHARISIUS

Who's this? You?—What have you to do with this?  
Why aren't you in the house, minding that baby?

HABROTONON

I have given it to its mother. It's not mine.

CHARISIUS

Not yours? Not?—How? Was that whole tale a fraud  
Of you two knaves?—Keep off, I'll see you later.

HABROTONON

Which will you do, send me away, or listen  
To what we have to say, and learn the truth?

CHARISIUS

The truth . . . from two false disobedient slaves?

HABROTONON

Yes, hidden truth by a slave's trick revealed.

ONÉSIMUS

I was so frightened, Master. I just wanted  
To experiment on you, to find you out . . .

CHARISIUS

To find me out . . . to experiment on me?

ONÉSIMUS

The woman made me. I take my oath she did.  
[*Clasps CHARISIUS'S knees.*]

CHARISIUS

Don't pull me about, you rogue!

HABROTONON

Don't beat the man!  
Listen! It's great news. Listen!—Your own wife,  
No poor strange girl, is mother to that child.

CHARISIUS

I wish to God it could be so.

HABROTONON

It is.  
So may Demeter love me!

CHARISIUS

Fairy tales.  
You're telling me!

HABROTONON

A fairy tale come true!

CHARISIUS

That boy is Pamphilê's? An hour ago  
You told me it was mine.

HABROTONON

Yes. So it is.

CHARISIUS

And Pamphilê's? Habro, I'm serious.  
Don't wing me with false hopes.

HABROTONON

The wings will bear you.  
I told you I was at the Tauropolia  
Last year, and that I saw—all that was true—  
A girl alone, who ran out of the darkness  
Weeping and terrified . . .

CHARISIUS

Brute that I was!

HABROTONON

I did not know her name, but I remembered  
Her face.

CHARISIUS

You ought to have told me this before!

HABROTONON

How could I tell you till I knew myself?

CHARISIUS

Yes, I see that.

HABROTONON

I had no clue, no guess,  
Who the girl was, till now at your own door  
I have seen her.

CHARISIUS, *deeply moved, sits silently thinking.*

ONÉSIMUS

There! I told you long ago  
She'd had a baby . . .





We mustn't seem to avoid a friend in trouble.  
The child is his. He gave the girl his word  
For that before a dozen witnesses.  
There's no way out. Well, you must just remain  
A good friend to Charisius—Good, remember,  
And true! That girl is not a common slave;  
In heart and character she's a free woman.  
Besides, she's now the mother of his child.  
Therefore, Halt! No more ogling of the harpist!

CHAERESTRATUS

Why should you think I need all this advice?  
I've no desire to ogle anyone,  
Nor offer anyone condolences,  
Nor yet congratulations. I'd just sooner  
Be left alone. You go to him.

SIMIAS

All right.  
I'll do my best to find some words of comfort  
For poor Charisius and his bonny boy!  
Well, here goes! (*seeing* HABROTONON) Prudence, prudence!

[*As he goes into the House, HABROTONON enters and is going towards  
the House when CHAERESTRATUS speaks.*]

CHAERESTRATUS (*stiffly*)

Pray allow me,  
To offer you my warm congratulations.  
I hear you are promised freedom.

HABROTONON

Thank you, Sir,  
That is so.

CHAERESTRATUS

And perhaps still further honours?

HABROTONON

What higher honour is there?

CHAERESTRATUS

Marriage?

HABROTONON

No;  
I have not heard of any.

CHAERESTRATUS

But that child . . .

HABROTONON

Is with his mother. I'm just going to her.

CHAERESTRATUS

His mother?

HABROTONON

Pamphilê.

CHAERESTRATUS (*amazed*)

Has Pamphilê  
Bought it, or what? You said the child was yours.

HABROTONON

I had my reasons.

CHAERESTRATUS

Then that rigmarole  
You told . . .

HABROTONON

Has served its purpose. Now we know  
Not all of it was true.

CHAERESTRATUS

A lie to make him  
Believe the child was yours!

HABROTONON

Yes. Slaves are good  
At lying. It's our chief accomplishment.

CHAERESTRATUS

You did him a great wrong! Made him confess  
The child was his!

HABROTONON

It was. The ring proved that.  
And when I once knew that, I had the clue  
To find its mother.

CHAERESTRATUS

But why should you find her?  
If she was found you lost all claim upon him.  
You were no more the mother of his child;  
Why should he set you free?

HABROTONON

I took that risk.

CHAERESTRATUS

That risk! The risk of being held a slave  
For ever!

HABROTONON

What a slave I should have been,  
And worse, if I had tried to hide the truth?

CHAERESTRATUS

I never knew a slave before who felt  
In that way.

HABROTONON

Why, what else was there to do?  
Slave as I am, and hungering to be free,  
I have a woman's heart. How could I leave  
That child cast out and helpless, a free child  
Born of a gentle house? Or how could I  
Forget that wronged girl at the midnight feast?  
Great liars as we slaves are, we can be honest.

CHAERESTRATUS

You had your freedom safe, and took the risk  
Of losing it again!

HABROTONON

Safe, would you say?  
No; any chance might have upset my story  
And covered me with shame.

[Enter MAID from House R. with tray.

Are those the tokens?

You're taking them to the mistress? Leave them here.  
I'll take them (*exit* MAID). Think how deadly these would be  
Against me! Look, except Charisius' ring,  
They are all her things, not mine (*looking through them*).

I never wore  
Gold chains and precious stones . . . though once I had  
A silver cup like that . . . rather like that.

CHAERESTRATUS

You, as a child?

HABROTONON

Oh, I was quite a baby.  
It had my name engraved, like Pamphilé's  
On this.

CHAERESTRATUS

It looks as if there'd been some name  
Cut out here; and then Pamphilé's inscribed  
Above it.

HABROTONON

Oh, of course the cup is hers!  
I never meant to claim it. I don't even  
Remember properly what mine was like.

CHAERESTRATUS (*looking at the cup*)

There was some name; but not Habrotonon.

HABROTONON

Habrotonon! Who'd give a child a name  
Like that, a poor hired slave-performer's name,  
Like "Pegs-and-strings" or "Catgut"? No; I had  
A real name once.

CHAERESTRATUS

What was it?

HABROTONON

I don't know.  
Some grown-up name. They never called me by it . . .  
They called me . . . Oh, just silly baby names.

CHAERESTRATUS

What was your father's name?

HABROTONON

How should I know?  
I called him Dadda. I was very little.

CHAERESTRATUS (*with the cup*)

A K I can make out, and perhaps an L;  
Kle, Kleo—

HABROTONON

Kleo— No; I'm only guessing.  
I half thought . . . That's enough! I can quite see  
What you expect; you think I'm going to tell you  
The usual slave's romance, how I was born  
Quite free and rich, but captured in the wars  
Or lost at sea. You won't believe a word!  
Why should you? I've no shred of proof to back  
My fables.

CHAERESTRATUS

I believe your every word.  
I know you are free at heart, too true, too proud  
For tricks that one can pardon in a slave.  
But do try to remember. Any detail  
Might give us clues . . .

HABROTONON

I haven't any clues!  
I knew so little. I can just remember  
Men fighting in the streets. I lost my doll.  
And a man came and took me by the hand  
And said: "Come on, my dear. The other children  
Are waiting." So he took me to the Gate,  
And there there was a crowd, and I was put  
Among the smallest girls, and we were sold  
Quickly, in bunches, to the slave-dealers.  
Then later I was taught to play the harp  
And given that stupid name . . . Oh, it's all useless.  
I don't know where it was. I don't remember  
My father's name. Most likely I never knew it.  
I have no proofs.

CHAERESTRATUS

What need have I of proofs?  
Charisius is your guardian? I propose  
To-day to ask him his ward's hand in marriage.

HABROTONON

No, no! I need some time to think; to learn  
How to be free; to sit and taste my freedom;  
Lie on the ground and whisper to the Earth  
"Free, Mother, free at last!" No more unclean,  
No more a coward! I want to wash my body,  
And clean my soul of slavish fears and stains;  
And be no more, in my own thoughts, as yours,  
That harp-girl who was hired to smile and play,  
Be kissed and revel at some drunken feast,  
Or else be beaten. I want time to breathe . . .  
—I must take in these things to Pamphilê.

[*She picks up the tray. Enter from House SIMIAS; behind him ONÉSIMUS,*

*a large drinking cup in his hands, watches with interest.*  
CHAERESTRATUS *tries to hold HABROTONON, but she slips by into the House.*

CHAERESTRATUS

But listen. Stay a moment.

SIMIAS

What's all this?

Chaerestratus, I warned you!

CHAERESTRATUS

Yes, you did!

You did! But wasn't that some time ago?

Hasn't there been a change?

SIMIAS (*taken aback*)

Why, so there has.

I always said that girl ought to be free.

And if she's free . . . But you're so hasty. Come,

Let's talk it over.

[*Exeunt together to House B.*]

ONËSIMUS

There he goes again!  
After the harping girl! Well, I don't mind.  
That girl's too clever for me. I can never  
Quite make her out . . . I must say she's played fair  
About our partnership. I've got full pardon  
For everything, and special thanks for finding  
That baby. I've not got liberty, like her.  
But, Lord, why should I want it? She'll go free,  
And lodge alone and work and weave and sew,  
Eat little, wear cheap clothes, and sometimes get  
On her good days a chance to play that harp  
At temples: no more banqueting for her!  
I like a big house, plenty of good grub,  
Plenty of people, lots of news and gossip,  
And secrets to find out. Besides I'm now  
A privileged and powerful person, I'm  
Trusted with secrets! . . . She's a pretty baggage  
No doubt. Chaerestratus is quite right there.  
Ah, what it is to have a temperate  
Abstemious mind! (*takes a long drink*) If he'd had half my chances,  
I bet he never could have kept his hands  
Off such a girl. I can, by Jove, and will.  
Here comes . . . Hullo! I'll have a lark with him.

[*Exit.*]

[*Enter SMICRINËS and Sôphronê, arguing.*]

SMÎCRINËS

That's what you think? Plague take me, Sôphronê,  
If I don't break your head! You'll scold me too,  
Like all the others? Hasty, am I? Hasty,  
Claiming my daughter back, you god-forsaken  
Old reptile? Do you want me to sit smiling  
While her egregious husband wolfs up all  
Her dowry? And just talk and talk in hopes  
To save my property? You're like the rest . . .  
No, sharp's the word! So no more talk from you.  
I've no dispute with anyone except  
My daughter. As for you, I brought you here  
Simply to make my daughter change her mind,  
And be obedient—quickly—Sôphronê,  
On our way home . . . I think you saw that pond  
In passing . . . in that pond I mean to duck you  
All night until you choke, or may I never  
Know happiness again! I only want you  
To see I'm right and not keep picking quarrels.  
H'm, I must knock. The blessèd door is barred.  
Ho, boys, there! Porter! Someone hurry up  
And open. Why the Devil can't they hear me?

[*Enter ONËSIMUS (still with the cup).*]

ONËSIMUS

Who's knocking at the door? Oh, Smîcrinês  
The furious, come to fetch his precious dowry  
And daughter!

SMÎCRINËS

Yes, you infernal jackanapes.

ONËSIMUS

How right you are! One sees you have a brain  
Both philosophic and executive,  
Good for abduction, good for burglary;  
Splendid, by Hercules!

SMÎCRINËS

O Gods and devils!

ONËSIMUS

Gods? So you think the Gods have time to apportion  
The appropriate bane and blessing, day by day,  
To each man? . . . Do you really, Smîcrinês?

SMÎCRINËS

What are you talking about?



ONÉSIMUS

Let me explain.

It's simple. There are cities in the world,  
At least a hundred thousand. In each city  
Say, thirty thousand citizens. The Gods,  
You think, keep watch on each of these, all day  
And every day, giving them all their due  
Of good and evil?

SMICRINÈS

What's all this?

ONÉSIMUS

I think

That works the Gods too hard. "Then don't they care  
For human kind at all?" Of course they do.  
They've billeted on every citizen  
A special guardian, called his Temperament.  
He's our unsleeping watchman. Use him wrong,  
He'll plague you; right, and he's your preservation.  
(You've never read psychology? Of course not.)  
Our Temperament, why it's the God who guides  
Each one of us, the cause of all our troubles  
And pleasures. If you wish for happiness  
Implore this God not to go doing things  
Absurd or inconsiderate.

SMICRINÈS

What, you rascal?

It's doing something inconsiderate now,  
My temperament?

ONÉSIMUS

Your temperament's the plague  
Of your whole life.

SMICRINÈS

Infernal impudence!

ONÉSIMUS

Well, really, do you think it a good thing  
To abduct one's daughter from her husband? Really?

SMICRINÈS

Who says it's a good thing? It's only a thing  
That must be done.

ONÉSIMUS

You see? The man maintains  
A bad thing is a thing "that must be done."  
Who sends him mad if not his Temperament?  
However, it so happens that, before  
You had time to do this bad thing, a pure chance  
Has saved you. You've come just in time to find  
Peace signed and those old troubles all washed out.  
Let this be a lesson to you, Smícrinês.  
Don't let me ever catch you again behaving  
So violently! Come in now; no more talk  
Of grievances, and welcome to your arms  
Your grandson.

SMÍCRINÊS

Grandson, you infernal rogue?

ONÊSIMUS (*laughing helplessly*)

You wooden-head, you thought you were so clever,  
Like lots of other fathers! That's the way  
You watch over a marriageable girl!  
No wonder we've strange babies to bring up,  
Miraculous five-monthers!

SMÍCRINÊS

I don't know

What you are talking about.

ONÊSIMUS

The old woman does,  
Unless I am much mistaken . . . Sôphronê,  
The Tauropolia; it was there my master  
Found her alone; she had somehow lost the choir  
She played in, and . . . you understand?

SÔPHRONÊ

Of course.

ONÊSIMUS

And now there's been a mutual recognition,  
And all's well.

SMÍCRINÊS

What does he mean, you wicked woman?

SÔPHRONÊ

"So Nature willed, who, heeding not man's laws  
Invented women for this very cause."

SMICRINÈS

Have you gone mad?

SOPHRONÈ

Must I recite a whole  
Tragic oration from Euripides?  
I will if you can't see.

SMICRINÈS

It makes me sick,  
Your tragic stuff. You see only too well  
What this man means?

SOPHRONÈ

Of course. I knew it all.

ONÈSIMUS

You bet your life. She knew it long ago,  
That old nurse.

SMICRINÈS

I'm disgraced.

SOPHRONÈ

Not you, unless  
You choose to assume you are.

SMICRINÈS

It's terrible!

SOPHRONÈ

There never was a grander stroke of luck,  
If this man's story is true. Our baby's father . . .

ONÈSIMUS

Is certainly Charisius. He admits it.

SMICRINÈS

Is that the word? Of course it's his; and now  
The scoundrel dares to claim that Pamphilè's  
Its mother, so as not to lose my dowry.  
He's welcome to his bastards. But my daughter  
Is different. She has always been obedient,  
And good. I don't believe a word of it.

SÔPHRONÈ

I know the child was hers.

SMÎCRINÈS

What reason have I  
To trust your word?

SÔPHRONÈ

Ask Pamphilê herself.

SMÎCRINÈS

She loves that scoundrel. She'd say anything  
To win him back to her. How do I know  
You're not all in a plot to torture me  
And save Charisius?

SÔPHRONÈ

Have you seen the tokens?  
[*Calling to the House.*  
Habrotonon, kindly bring those tokens out.  
[*HABROTONON brings them on the tray.*  
These were the things set out beside the baby  
When he was found. I know: I put them there;  
I kept close watch upon him all the time,  
And these are what I took from Pamphilê.

SMÎCRINÈS (*examining them*)

They're not all hers. I never saw that ring.

SÔPHRONÈ

Charisius' ring, that is.

SMÎCRINÈS

This silver cup,  
This wasn't Pamphilê's.

HABROTONON

Not hers? I wonder  
Can it be really mine?

SMÎCRINÈS

Yours? This cup yours?  
This was my elder daughter's cup.

HABROTONON

I am sorry.  
I thought it looked like . . . May I look again?  
[SMICRINÈS *snatches it up.*  
I know mine had my name engraved inside it.

SMICRINÈS

What name?

HABROTONON

I don't know. I was very little.  
Some grown-up name. They never called me by it.

SMICRINÈS

You don't know your own name. Perhaps you know  
Your mother's name?

HABROTONON

We only called her Mother.

SMICRINÈS

Where did your father live?

HABROTONON

It was some island,  
I think.

SMICRINÈS

Some island: which? (HABROTONON *is silent*)  
I never heard  
A feebler piece of fraud. I should have thought  
In your profession you'd acquire more skill.

HABROTONON

No, it's no good. It was a baby world  
I lived in.

SMICRINÈS

That's enough. Back to your quarters!  
One bastard grandchild's quite enough for me,  
Without a harping slave-girl for a daughter.

[HABROTONON *turns away, discomfited.* SÔPHRONÈ *has been looking  
closely at her.*

SÔPHRONÈ

Grasshopper!

HABROTONON (*turning suddenly*)

Grasshopper! Who calls me that?  
Who is it? . . . Sôpho! No! You can't be Sôpho.

SÔPHRONÊ (*embraces* HABROTONON)

Grasshopper darling!

SMÎCRINÊS

Stop! We have no proof!

SÔPHRONÊ

Be quiet, you stupid man! Haven't you said  
Enough of harsh things you'll be sorry for?

ONÊSIMUS

Great Gods! Chaerestratus must know of this!  
*[Exit to House B.*

SÔPHRONÊ

What happened, child, the day we lost you? Can you  
Remember anything?

HABROTONON

A little. I  
Was with my mother.

SÔPHRONÊ

On the temple steps.  
I left you while we tried to find a boat.

HABROTONON

Then suddenly she was gone. I couldn't find her.

SMÎCRINÊS

I found her.

HABROTONON

Yes; and then a man came up  
Smiling and said, "Come, dear; the other children  
Are waiting."

SÔPHRONÊ

So you went with him?

HABROTONON

Why, yes.

SMICRINÈS

Why did you go with him?

HABROTONON

He took my hand.  
Besides, he sounded kind. Only I lost  
My doll.

SMICRINÈS

I know. I found it by her body.

HABROTONON

And so he brought us to the slave-dealers  
Down by the quay, and sold us.

SMICRINÈS

Oh, my child!

Forgive me. I have wronged you. I am old  
And bitter, and see all things through a blur  
Of loss and anger and bewilderment.  
So many evil things I have seen and suffered.  
By wars and wicked men: all whom I loved  
Lost but one daughter, whom I sought to save  
Too harshly, from dishonour—Sôphronê,  
Take this great news to Pamphilê.

[SÔPHRONÊ *and* HABROTONON *go in together.*

Great wrongs

They have suffered, both, but who dares speak the word  
Dishonour? Both I count as innocent  
And honourable women.

[*Re-enter* SÔPHRONÊ, *with* HABROTONON, PAMPHILÊ *and* CHARISIUS. PAMPHILÊ  
*carrying the Baby.*

Clearista,  
You shall be free by nightfall. I shall pay  
Your price this afternoon.

CHARISIUS

Excuse me, Sir,  
This lady has done me a service past all counting,  
And I have promised faithfully myself  
To pay her ransom.

[*Enter* CHAERESTRATUS *with* ONÉSIMUS.

SÔPHRONÊ

Well, be quick about it.

Whoever it is. Her owners mustn't hear  
This story, or they'll raise her price beyond  
Your worst foreboding.

CHAERESTRATUS

Quite the contrary.  
Leave this to me. I have some little knowledge  
Of the Attic courts. I'll call upon these rascals  
And face them with the charge that "by mere fraud  
And violence they detain in slavery  
A free-born body." They'll give in at once.  
They must.

SMICRINÈS

What a remarkable young man!  
Such knowledge of the law and such good sense  
Combined! (*to CHARISIUS*) My son-in-law, this man speaks well;  
Who is he?

CHAERESTRATUS

Sir, your second son-in-law,  
With your permission! [*Takes HABROTONON'S arm.*]

SMICRINÈS

This is all too much  
For me to understand. Yes; I'm bewildered.  
Clearista, what say you?

HABROTONON

Well, this time Yes.  
I am dreaming: how can I refuse a dream?  
Is this still you and I? So changed we seem  
And moved to a new world. Can this be me  
And yonder Sôpho and here Pamphilê,  
And father? A new world!

PAMPHILÈ

And where will you  
Place him to whom the world is really new,  
The man new-born, a symbol of that breath  
Each year by which the race is snatched from death?  
He has no past: his morning sweeps away  
All clouds.

SMICRINÈS

Nay, child, there is a yesterday  
Always. Past evil leaves a stress of dread  
Under all joy. Have not our sages said,  
When wounded men, lulled to oblivion deep



By that Egyptian poppy, slowly creep  
Toward sense again, the first thing that they know  
Is pain, for pain is life? Each infant so  
By his first wailing makes good prophecy,  
For man 'tis pain to live and pain to die.

SÔPHRONÊ

Pain first, but after . . . wonder, longing, strife,  
Adventure, hopes and fears; all these are life;  
Defeat, success, the worship of some truth  
Or phantom, all the battle-joys of youth,  
And ways of thought that, as youth fades, may still  
Fill age with fragrance. Man, for good or ill,  
And all his race, is even as this child  
I saved, a frail thing, homeless in the wild,  
Part pain, part hope, all daring; and who knows  
Whence here it came or whither hence it goes?  
For this the Man-Babe lives, these things to do  
And suffer; thus he makes the world anew  
At each new birth, still facing to a day  
Unknown, and still the hero of his play.

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NOTES

The scene is an open space with two Houses at the back, as usual in the New Comedy. The tree makes it easier for two people to be on the stage together without seeing each other—a situation which often occurs.

The conceited and pedantic Cook is a regular New Comedy character, and so is the valet or personal attendant, a cunning rogue, stupid and not over-honest, but genuinely devoted to his young master.

As to the names, they come from the stock of New Comedy. As in Restoration Comedy, they have meanings more or less suitable to the character; Pamphilê, "*All-dear*"; Onêsimus, "*Helpful*"; Sôphronê, "*Prudence*." Habrotonon, meaning something like "*softly or delicately tuned*," is a name suited to a harpist's profession. The two slave names Syriscus and Dâvus mean respectively, "*Little Syrian*" and "*Davian*," the Davi being a nomad tribe in Asia. Charisius has a suggestion of "*Pleasantness*," Smîcrinês a suggestion of "*meanness*." The names, however, are all real names taken from ordinary life; they are not artificial inventions like "*Lady Wishfor't*," "*Sir John Brute*," or "*Sneerwell*," in English comedy.

ACT I

p. 14. Sôphronê, as we shall see in Act V, is a silent person who gets her way. She has more brains and more experience than the others.

p. 19. Chaerestratus is not a "young puppy," but an interesting character. He is torn

between his obvious, though unspoken, love for Habrotonon, and his dislike of getting mixed up in a rowdy party or a dishonourable intrigue.

p. 23. Small coins were usually carried in the mouth or the hand. (See Blaydes on Aristophanes, *Eccles.* 818.) For bulkier things a fold of the gown could be girded up as a pocket.

p. 24. PROLOGUE.—Menander's Prologues seem generally to have come in this position, as second scenes after a first scene meant to rouse curiosity and require explanation. In parody of the tragic prologue, they are generally spoken by non-human characters with a touch of the absurd about them, like the goddess Ignorance in the *Rape of the Locks*. Callisto's account of herself here is roughly in agreement with the story told by Hygînus and others, though no one seems to have mentioned the "fourteen years' hard labour." Elsewhere she either remained a bear or became a constellation.

p. 26. "all murderous males." By ancient law the father had an absolute right to decide whether the child presented to him should or should not be reared. If it proved to be the illegitimate child of his wife its chances would be small.

p. 27. Smîcrinês (from *smikros*, "small") is said to have been a name used in Comedy for misers. This Smîcrinês has some miserly traits but is in general like one of the regular "cross old men." He becomes progressively humanized as the play proceeds.

p. 28. Four talents, in gold about £960, was quite a large dowry for the time. Polemo in the *Locks* was pleased with three. The purchasing power of money was vastly greater than now, and 10 per cent. a usual rate of interest. Two obols a day was the regular "dole" for a pauper. See Tarn in *The Hellenistic Age* (Cambridge, 1932).

p. 29. "Some pessimist philosopher." Philosophy was, for various reasons, a matter of great general interest at the time. Menander is said to have been a close friend of Epicurus.

p. 32. "Young lads, and not too sober." This is the cue for the entry of a Chorus of professional Dancers, performing a sort of ballet as an *entr'acte*. The Chorus in the New Comedy had ceased to be an integral part of the play. The song supplied here is based on a famous lyric in the style of Anacreon. The youths are garlanded and wild but not tipsy. They may be so when the revel breaks up in Act III.

## ACT II

p. 34. These soliloquies, intended partly to reveal character, partly just to keep the audience informed, however unrealistic they seem to us, were a favourite device of Menander's, and show one side of his art.

p. 34. Young Habro: I venture, in accordance with a common Greek custom, to shorten Habrotonon's name.

pp. 38-53. This scene, which has given the play its name, is fortunately preserved in full on the papyrus, together with the rest of the Act. Dâvus is a rough rustic; Syrisus a more brainy and polished oriental; but both are poor slaves in goatskin cloaks.

p. 45. Nêleus and Pelias: Both were heroes of tragedies of the Nativity Play type. To our taste this speech is obviously too long. To the original audience there was

amusement in the references to tragedy and also in the surprising rhetorical fluency of the charcoal-burner.

p. 49. "After the rents are paid." Apparently Syriscus and Dâvus were tenants of Charisius and had come up for a rent-day.

p. 52. "His friend next door. . . . The same house." Did the two neighbouring villas have their slave-quarters in common?

#### ACT III

p. 54. Note how Onêsimus is constantly shifting from one extreme to another, from over-confidence to terror, from belief in his own cleverness to suspicion that he has made a fool of himself. See, for example, his changes on pp. 65 and 84, or the last words in Act IV, p. 92.

It is in this Act that Habrotonon's character first becomes visible. She is a free-born and courageous girl, now a slave. She has learned enough of the impudence and cynicism of her trade, to be able to use them when necessary, but essentially her feelings towards the exposed baby, the wronged girl and the tipsy and ill-mannered young man, are those of a free woman, womanly, self-respecting, and generous. Menander treats with a curious reticence the tragedy which forms the background of Habrotonon. It is indicated by a phrase or two, like "I know it well enough" on p. 61, and the mention of her innocence at the time of last year's Tauropolia, but does not come out clearly, if I read the author's intention right, till the end of the play. The real slave, Onêsimus, is incapable of understanding her.

p. 54. Habrotonon apparently came away at some early stage of the dinner, and returned to the company during dessert, though, owing to Cârion's inordinate delays dessert had not yet been reached.

"Free from contact": in the strict sense. He had not even shaken hands with her.

p. 56. Tauropolia. This is the first mention of a feast called Tauropolia in Attica. It seems to refer to the festival of Artemos Tauropolos at Brauron, in which we happen to know that there was a dance or performance of young girls—over the age of ten—pretending to be bears.

p. 57. "That this charcoal-burner found." Habrotonon did not know it was the shepherd who really found the baby.

p. 59. Tarentine. A "Tarentine" was a light, almost diaphanous wrap made of the byssus, or fine linen of South Italy. The word is also applied to silk.

p. 61. "I know it well enough." Evidently Habrotonon's owners had not made her go out as a *hetaira* to banquets until quite lately. This fits in with the intensity of her feelings about the unknown girl at the Tauropolia and about slavery in Act V.

p. 72. Daric. A Persian gold coin with a head of Darius.

#### ACT IV

pp. 75 ff. A curious critical question arises about the opening of this Act. There is a gap in our text of about 23 lines in one place and about 94 later, just before Habrotonon's entrance. It must have contained Smîcrinês's scene with his daughter, persuading her to leave her husband. Now it so happens that on a papyrus published

by Weil in 1879 there is a speech of 44 lines in which a young wife pleads with her father not to make her leave her husband. It is headed in the papyrus "Euripides," and seems to have been set as a school exercise. It is certainly not Euripides, and almost certainly came from some play of the New Comedy. Professor D. S. Robertson has made the very attractive suggestion that it comes from this play and this place. The fit is not perfect; but the situation is extremely similar; and the line of pleading is just what Pamphilê might well have used. Her speech gives a fine picture of a loving and dutiful wife, according to the ideas of Menandrian Athens, but of course one must also remember her secret. She knows that there is an excuse for Charisius which must not be mentioned.

p. 78. The Thesmophoria and Skira were two of the great Athenian festivals. It seems curious that they should bulk so large in the supposed expenses of Charisius, but that is characteristic of ancient Greek life, or indeed that of any simple society; a very frugal daily life with great outbursts on the important festivals.

pp. 82 ff. This recognition scene must be taken slowly and involves a good deal of silent acting. It is a characteristic of Menander's style to alternate scenes in which the language is everything with others in which little is said and much indicated.

p. 84. "As men of the world." Onêsimus frankly addresses the audience. This deliberate breach of the illusion is a trick that has lasted on from Aristophanes to modern farce.

p. 84. In the stage convention doors usually opened outwards. You knocked to warn people in the street.

p. 85. The bitter self-reproach of Charisius is interesting and shows the vast gulf between the moral ideas of Menander and those of Wycherley or Congreve. He is ashamed of his own action; at the same time it makes him understand his wife's. She had been carried away by the excitements of the Midnight Revel, as he was, and also was far less a free agent.

pp. 87 ff. Habrotonon speaks with calm, almost with authority; Charisius is angry and bewildered; Onêsimus utterly frightened.

#### ACT V

p. 98. "Pegs-and-strings or Catgut." See p. [117](#). "Habrotonon" was a name denoting her profession as a slave musician. Her real name, we find, was Clearista.

p. 100. The slave dealers. They would naturally gather round a besieged or sacked town to buy up prisoners of war or children whose parents were lost or could not take care of them. Xenophon tells how Agêsilaus, King of Sparta, made arrangements for protecting such children and old people when he took a town (*Ages. I. 21*).

p. 100. A free woman would normally have a "guardian" of some sort, to be responsible for her before the law. As Habrotonon had no husband or older male relation it seems that Charisius, if he had bought her and set her free, would act.

p. 101. "work and weave and sew." The virtuous free woman without a family was apt to have a hard life, as we see from Terence.

pp. 103 ff. Onêsimus, presumably under the influence of his wine, proceeds to talk philosophy. Philosophers were a strong influence in Athens at the time.

p. 111. "Grasshopper." The Greek name of the cicada, "Tettix," was sometimes given to children. We even hear of men so called.

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**Transcriber's Notes:-**

Pg 18 Omitted character name, "C̄ARION", inserted before dialogue "Man, I can't think of stories."

Minor punctuation errors and omissions corrected.

[The end of *The Arbitration* by Gilbert Murray]