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THE RAPE OF THE LOCKS

The *Perikeiromenê* of
Menander

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THE ORESTEIA (*Collected Edition*)

THE RAPE OF THE LOCKS

The *Perikeiromenê* of Menander

THE FRAGMENTS TRANSLATED AND
THE GAPS CONJECTURALLY
FILLED IN

BY

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P R E F A C E

One of the most conspicuous gaps in our salvage of Greek literature is the loss of the plays of Menander, the most famous representative of the "New Comedy." Born in 342 B.C., about 140 years after Euripides, 80 years after Plato, 40 after Aristotle, he was a contemporary of Epicurus and Zeno the Stoic. Like Sophocles he wrote over a hundred plays. Like Euripides he was not successful with the official judges, but attained, over their heads as it were, immense and lasting fame throughout the Hellenic world. Anthologies are extant purporting to give famous apophthegms and "single verses" of Menander. The quotations from him collected in Kock's *Comicorum Fragmenta* number over 1,100. The Roman stage of the first century B.C. subsisted entirely on translations or adaptations of the New Comedy somewhat blunted or coarsened to suit Roman taste, and Terence in particular based himself on Menander. Indeed, if Aeschylus is called the inventor of tragedy, Menander or his older contemporary, Philémon, may be considered the inventor of polite comedy in the modern sense.

At the beginning of this century it looked as if the great gap was perhaps going to be filled. Papyrus manuscripts began to be discovered in Egypt, and in 1907 M. Lefèvre of the French Institute in Cairo published one containing 34 pages of Menander. Five plays were represented, none of them complete or nearly complete. The find was extremely tantalizing. One could at last appreciate the charm of Menander's style, the "Attic salt" of the dialogue, the sensitiveness of the character-drawing. Scholars hoped eagerly for further discoveries, and a few turned up, but they gave us no complete play and did little towards filling our lacunae. At last, I am half ashamed to say, I was unable to resist the temptation to patch up by conjecture—or at times by sheer invention—the missing parts of at least one play and to see what the result looked like. I wanted one in which the characters seemed attractive and the plot amusing and fairly clear, and ultimately chose not the *Epitrepontes* or *Arbitration*, which is much the best preserved, but the *Perikeiromenê*, a title which is difficult to translate. "The Shorn Woman" is simply incorrect. I have tried "He Clips her Hair"; Mr. Frost has "The Shearing of Glycera." On Mr. Bernard Shaw's suggestion, I have ventured on "The Rape of the Locks." About half the play is genuine Menander and half my conjectural restoration. I deliberately refrain from indicating which is which or what grounds I have had for particular suggestions. This is not a work of exact scholarship.^[1]

I have written at some length about Menander in my book on Aristophanes and need add little here. To ancient critics Menander's art seemed the very summit of naturalness and closeness to life. "O Menander, O Life," cries one of them, "which of you has imitated the other?" They could hardly have thought otherwise. They saw him in contrast both to the wild extravagances of the Old Comedy and to the heroic legends and "large utterance" which formed the theme and the method of tragedy. Menander's characters are ordinary men and women, not divine nor heroic nor even royal. His incidents are such as occur in real life, or at least did occur in the real life of that stormy and distressful age, when the successors of Alexander were fighting for the great Conqueror's inheritance. His dialogue does no violence, either in diction or order of words, to the ordinary usage of conversation. Yet on a modern reader, accustomed to a drama which has for centuries been striving towards realism, the effect will be very different. Menander will come more into the class of polished and artificial comedians, the class of Congreve and Sheridan, of Molière and Beaumarchais.

He uses without scruple various stage devices which seem to us unnatural and old-fashioned: prologues, asides, soliloquies, eavesdroppings, "strawberry marks" and "recognitions." Moreover he writes in verse, accurate verse, with specific licences to differentiate it from the verse of tragedy, but no irregularities or lapses into prose. In one scene indeed the verse is actually tragic, a change which I have tried to indicate by turning from blank verse to the rhymed couplet. More than this, we have at times to remember that ancient comedy, like tragedy, was a *Sacer Ludus*, a "Sacred Play," performed on the festival of Dionysus and in his consecrated precinct. If we regard Dionysus as in essence a Year Daemon or Vegetation Spirit of the type made familiar by the *Golden Bough* or Miss Harrison's *Themis*, then, broadly speaking, comedy showed his "Kômos" or marriage revel, tragedy his sacrificial death. The ritual, as we know it from various sources, has a number of recurrent items, among them a Year-Baby of unknown parentage who is ultimately recognized as the divine or royal being that he really is, a Contest, a Victory and a Marriage Revel with appropriate indications of fertility. After that point comedy ceases, and tragedy with its sequence of Pride and Punishment begins.

The Old Comedy of Cratînus and Aristophanes was essentially a Kômos, a wild phallic dance sublimated into a great work of art, but still showing signs of its origin. The New Comedy expurgated drastically the grosser elements of the Old, but, unless I am mistaken, seems to have kept the essentials of the Dionysiac Fertility Ritual. We find habitually in Menander a mysterious foundling baby or alternatively a pregnant heroine who bears a child to an unknown or secret father; sometimes instead of one baby there are twins. At the end the baby is always "recognized," which causes a "Peripeteia," or reversal of fortune. There is always a Revel, always a final Marriage or pair of Marriages; very often there is some wrecking or threatened wrecking of a house, as Dionysus in the tradition wrecked the houses of Lycurgus and Pentheus. This is not the place to elaborate these suggestions or to discuss the similar incidents of ritual origin which had already found a place in Euripides.

The monotonous recurrence of these exposed babies and violated maidens in the New Comedy has always been a puzzle to critics. Was there some peculiar lack of inventive power in these successive generations of highly original dramatists? Or again, was the age which produced Aristotle and the great Stoic moralists so totally lost to social decency that seductions and exposures were the rule rather than the exception and all children of any importance were foundlings? Neither explanation seems adequate. It is true, no doubt, the exposure of children was in ancient times legally permissible, and consequently roused little moral condemnation. By the ordinary *patria potestas* the father had a right to rear or refuse to rear any child born to him, and one must recognize that in times of great distress most populations try, in one way or another, to avoid the economic burden of children. These facts must be borne in mind. They would explain an occasional foundling, but not an omnipresent foundling. At most they made it easier for the incidents of the traditional ritual to be accepted on the stage without criticism. The workings of tradition in all the art that we, in our arrogant modern manner, call "creative"—the Greeks said "imitative"—are extremely subtle. When strongest they are unconscious. We merely do without question the thing we are in the habit of doing. Consciousness comes in when there is some clash between the tradition and the artist's own desires. It is impossible to estimate the degree of such clash or such consciousness in Menander. Are we to imagine him taking his Year-Babies and Revels and Recognitions and Reversals as unquestioningly as we take the details of our Nativity Plays or our festoons of holly and mistletoe at Christmas, or on the contrary, as rebelliously murmuring to himself: "I could make a better play without all this ritual lumber, but I suppose the Priest of Dionysus would object"? He stood no doubt somewhere between, but it would need

a bold man to say exactly where!

CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY

PHILINUS, *a crabbed Old Man*

PATAECUS, *a kindly Old Man*

THE GODDESS IGNORANCE

POLEMO, *a Colonel of Light Infantry*

SÔSIAS, *a Corporal, his Batman*

GLYCERA, *beloved by Polemo*

MOSCHIO, *a Young Man*

DAVUS, *Moschio's Servant*

DORIS, *Glycera's Maid*

MYRRHINË, *a rich Lady, adoptive Mother of Moschio*

HABRÔNIS, *a Dancer*

Some SOLDIERS, a COOK, a PORTER.

[*The scene is a street in Corinth showing two houses; to the right POLEMO'S house, to the left MYRRHINË'S. An exedra, or open-air seat, to the left, a tree to the right.*]

ACT I AND PROLOGUE

A street in Corinth; two houses at the back; PATAECUS and PHILÎNUS meeting.

PHILÎNUS

Whither away, Pataecus?

PATAECUS

On an errand
Bequeathed me by my young friend, Polemo,
The light-armed Captain; you remember him,
Philînus? When he started for the war
He asked me to befriend young Glycera,
His housemate. So I call from time to time
To see her.

PHILÎNUS

Bah, these soldiers! Off they go,
Fighting and plundering, and come back weighed down
With prize-money and spoils, while honest men
Can't give their daughters dowries. This young man
Can leave a house and an expensive whore
Behind him . . .

PATAECUS

No, no, no! It's not like that,
She's a good modest girl, but, by the law,
Not being a proved Corinthian citizen,
She can't be a Corinthian's legal wife.
I wish more of our modern wives were like her.
She is wrapped up in her man and he in her;
Never a cloud between them.

PHILÎNUS

All the luck
Goes to these alien wenches. There she is,
Semi-respectable, no class at all,
No dowry, no relations, and she gets
Husband and house and, bless me, something like
A fortune from the wars. Look at my daughter:
Of old Corinthian family, a girl
Thrifty, severe, hard-working, well-behaved,
Strong-armed, a perfect helpmeet for some young
Idle Corinthian. But there's nothing doing.
Most of us honest men have been made poor
Through all these wars. I have no dowry now
To give her, and no dowry means no husband.

PATAECUS

It's a hard case, Philinus, and I'd like
To hear more, but I have to pay my visit
To Glycera here. But if I had a son,
A son who needed to be kept in order . . .

PHILINUS

She'd do that!

PATAECUS

lack of dowry would not be
An obstacle.

PHILINUS

Ah well, go in and see
Your paragon of women.

*[Exit PHILINUS; as PATAECUS comes back towards the House. Enter
SÔSIAS.*

SÔSIAS

It must be
This house.—Excuse me, Sir; is this the house
Of Chîliarch Polemo?

PATAECUS

Polemo's house
It is. Why do you call him chîliarch?
Have you fresh news of him?

SÔSIAS

You heard of our
Last battle, when the enemy was standing
In that walled town? Polemo scaled the wall,
Burst on them like a fury—have you seen
Him fighting? It's worth seeing—shaped the attack
Till, with stiff fighting in the streets, we took
The whole place, house by house. For that he was
Promoted chîliarch. Our regiment there
Wanted to hold a big feast in his honour,
But he . . . you know him . . . only longed to see
The smoke of his own chimneys and his young
Penelope—I think that's what he called her.
She's never long out of his thoughts.

PATAECUS

And he,
I wager, never out of hers at all.

SÔSIAS

He sent me on in front, to say all's well.
He's close behind.

PATAECUS

That's news for Glycera.

(calling)

Ho there, within!—She'll make his feast at home.
She'll need a cook and flowers and things.—Come in.

[The PORTER has opened the door; they go in. Enter MOSCHIO prowling.]

MOSCHIO

I am sure she looked at me with interest. Yes,
I think she smiled. It wasn't quite a smile.
A look of expectation; that's more like it.
Of expectation. That means even more.
She's too discreet to smile. She has to be
With that infernal soldier, damned discreet.
I liked that look. It wasn't quite the sort
That girls put on just to protect themselves.
But who comes here? I'd better not be seen.

[Exit.]

[Enter PATAECUS with GLYCERA in the doorway.]

GLYCERA

You're sure he's a good cook?

PATAECUS

The very best.

The priest of Dionysus always hires him,
And I know where to find him.

GLYCERA

Then good-bye

Till supper. *(calling)* Doris, we must have some roses
For garlands. See if you can find a shop
Still open. . . . I can scarce believe it true.
Oh, these long months of waiting! Polemo
Away in peril; and my brother here,
My only kinsman, known and yet unknown,
Not to be spoken to, not to be greeted,
Not knowing me . . .

[Enter MOSCHIO. He runs up and embraces her.]

MOSCHIO

My dear, at last I've caught you!

[*Surprise, hesitation, and acquiescence of GLYCERA. Enter POLEMO (helmet, chlamys and sword). He stands amazed.*

POLEMO

By all the gods!

MOSCHIO

My stars! We'll finish this
Another time. (*runs.*)

POLEMO

Stop, Sir! You'll finish it
With me and now!
[*Enter PATAECUS and COOK. MOSCHIO escapes.*

COOK

Look out, sir! Mind my pies!
[*POLEMO turns on GLYCERA.*

POLEMO

Who is this insolent scoundrel?

GLYCERA

He's not that.

POLEMO

Who is he?

GLYCERA

Oh, I can't say who he is! (*weeps*)

POLEMO

Why are you weeping? . . . Because I've come home?
Because I've interrupted you? Because . . .

GLYCERA

O Polemo, darling! Trust me. I can't speak.

POLEMO

He said you'd speak with him another time.

GLYCERA

Oh, why am I not free? Oh, Polemo, wait!
Trust me and let me think.

POLEMO

Think out your lie!

Go on. You've only a stupid soldier here,
Quite easy to deceive.

GLYCERA

O Polemo!

POLEMO

Who is this man? You know him?

GLYCERA

Yes; I know. . .

I can't say.

POLEMO

Oh, if I could have your life!
I've killed those who deserved it less than you.

[He seizes her hair and with one stroke of his sword cuts it off.]

The cut hair stays in his hand but the gold circlet which held it falls to the ground. POLEMO stands horrified at his own action; then picks up the circlet. SÔSIAS appears in the doorway. Enter DORIS with flowers.

DORIS

O mistress! Your poor hair! Savage, keep off!

GLYCERA

Polemo!

POLEMO

Sôsius, come! Back to the Camp.
Back anywhere from this accursed town.

[Exit with SÔSIAS.]

PATAECUS (To COOK)

There'll be no feast to-night.

COOK

I understand
Quite. We've intruded on a family scene.
Nothing unusual, Sir; nothing unusual.
Good day.—Oh, what a story this will make!

[Exeunt.]

PROLOGUE

IGNORANCE

You wonder who I am? A goddess I,
Most active and immortal, Ignorance.
You doubt my power? Think of the thousand things
You all remember, mischiefs, bits of luck,
Horrors of shame that haunt you in the night,
The crockery you've broken, the wild deeds
Of daring—all my work, all done because
You did not know something you might have known.

You understand? Well, I have come to explain
Some things not known by those unfortunates
Whose antics you've just seen. Some years ago
A widowed woman walking in a wood
Just outside Corinth by the Arcadian Gate
—Her name was Melito—heard a sound, and saw,
Close to a spring, an altar and a tree,
A baby boy and girl. Well wrapped they were
And laid on a long robe. So, pitying them,
Poor as she was, she took both infants home
And nursed them. Later she resolved to keep
The girl-child as her own, but gave the boy
To a rich lady living in that house
Across the way, who longed to have a child.
And the years passed, and wars came, and the long
Anguish of Corinth deepened; Melito
Grew bitter poor. The girl—whom you've just seen—
Being now grown up and passionately loved
By a young fiery soldier of this town—
You saw him too—to him she gave the girl
As her own daughter. Then, as her strength failed,
Foreseeing that for her some rest from life
Was not far off, she called the girl apart
And told her all: said how she had rescued her,
Gave her the robe she had lain upon, and showed her
Her unknown brother. If she were in need
Some time, 'mid life's uncertainties, she said,
There was her only kinsman. And besides—
She pretty and young, he rich and full of pranks,
And her protector often far away—
Who knew what might go wrong between those two
With me, the Immortal Ignorance at work?

Well, the good woman died, and not long since
Our soldier bought this house; so Glycera lives
Close neighbour to her brother, but has spoken
No word to him. Let him enjoy, she says,
The gifts that Fortune brings; 'tis not for her
To cloud his happy confidence in life.
One day, however, he caught sight of her
And, being far from bashful, as I said,

He hangs about the house. Now just last night
She chanced to send her maid out on a message,
And Moschio—well, you saw him. She, of course,
Knowing it was her brother, hesitated;
And just then up her soldier came and saw!
The rest you have heard or seen. Now, all this fire
I kindled for the sake of things to come.
The soldier first must fall in a blind rage—
That was my work; he's not like that by nature;
The process of Discovery must begin,
And, at long last, these children find their home.

Were any of you offended? Did you find
This scene too brutal? Pray you, think again.
A bad thing may, if Providence so will,
Change into good. Be kind to us this day,
My friends, and your goodwill will save the play.

[Exit IGNORANCE. Enter from the Country SÔSIAS.

SÔSIAS

Our hero of yesterday, the man of blood,
The one who won't let girls have any hair,
Has laid him down to weep! I left his mates
Eating his lunch to show their sympathy
And help him take the business less to heart.
And, since he has no other way to learn
What's happening here, he sent me home to fetch
His cloak—on purpose, just to make me walk
And walk; not that he needs it in the least.

DORIS (*coming out from POLEMO'S house*)

Yes, mistress. I'll go over there and see.

SÔSIAS

It's Doris. How she's grown. How well she looks!
These creatures live a life, that's pretty clear!
Well, I'll be off.

[Exit.

DORIS (*at door of MYRRHINÊ'S house*)

There's nobody outside;
I'd better knock. (*Knocks*) I'm sorry for the girl
Who's mated with a soldier. Savages,
The best of them! Not one a girl can trust.
Poor mistress! Shamefully they've treated her.
(*Calling*) Ho there, within! . . . How pleased he'll be to hear
That she's still crying! That's just what he wanted.
Oh, porter, please take word to Myrrhinê
Someone is here who'd like to speak with her
And beg her earnestly . . .

PORTER

Who shall I say?

DORIS

Say, one in great distress, one whom she knows
Or used to know. . . . Oh, will she come for that?

PORTER

Oh yes, she'll come for that.

*[Exit into house. DORIS crosses to POLEMO'S house where
GLYCERA comes to door.]*

DORIS

Mistress, she's coming.
Don't be afraid. Good fortune go with you!
[Exit.]

[Enter MYRRHINÉ.]

MYRRHINÉ

Who is it wants me?—You are the young woman
Who lives next door?

GLYCERA

You know me, Myrrhiné.

MYRRHINÉ

No, not at all; except that once or twice
I have seen you pass.

GLYCERA

Then how did Moschio know me?

MYRRHINÉ

My son has many acquaintances of whom
He tells me nothing.

GLYCERA

But who could have told him,
Except you, who I am?

MYRRHINÉ

I really cannot
Know all the girls my son knows.

GLYCERA

But he kissed me!

MYRRHINÉ

Nor all he kisses.

GLYCERA

He ran up and smiled
And held me in his arms; I saw at once
He knew I was his sister. (MYRRHINÉ *startled*.) I stood still
And dared not speak; and now, Oh, now my husband
Has cast me off. He flew into a rage
And drew his sword and—see!—cut off my hair,
To leave me in public shame! So easily
I could have told him all, but I had vowed
To Melito I would not . . .

MYRRHINÉ

Melito!

What Melito?

GLYCERA

You knew her. Melito,
My foster mother; just outside the wall
Her garden lay, by the Arcadian Gate.
She, when she gave me in marriage, told me all
Her story and yours and mine and Moschio's,
And bade me hold it as a secret, never
To be revealed, except by your consent.
I gave my word.

MYRRHINÉ

You were the other child,
The one she kept? The girl?

GLYCERA

Yes, Moschio's sister.
I am sure he knew. He seemed so confident.

MYRRHINÉ

He seemed so, did he? H'm. No doubt he was!
My poor, poor, girl, come to me. You were brave
And true to keep that promise. I must help
Both you and him. Moschio never thinks
Nor cares nor questions. He just does his pleasure.
I've never told him he was not my son,
Nor dare I tell him now, both for his sake
And mine, but for his chiefly. There is no one
Loves him but me. There's no one he obeys

Or cares for except me. If Moschio
Ever suspected I was not his mother,
I dare not think how it would break the one
Tie that still holds him.

GLYCERA

Yet he must be told

That I'm his sister.

MYRRHINÉ

Yes, he must. That's clear.
The best will be to say that you're my daughter.
It's nearly true. You're just the same to me
As Moschio is. If one of those two babes
Has long been mine, why, let me own them both.
Your husband, dear, is different. Obviously
He must be told the truth.

GLYCERA

I never wish
To see that man again (*weeps*).

MYRRHINÉ

That is as may be.
But for your own sake, for your reputation,
We must not leave him thinking as he thinks,
Or speaking as he very likely speaks,
About you now.

GLYCERA

I don't care what he thinks.
Never one moment was I false to him.

MYRRHINÉ

Well, for the present, dear, come in with me.
We'll find some way of treating that poor hair.
How it comes back to me: that scented garden
And those two babes! It was a worthless son
I chose: I might have had a precious daughter.
[Exeunt into house L. Enter DAVUS. He knocks.]

DAVUS

Boys! Moschio wants his armour.

PORTER

Wants his armour?

What armour?

DAVUS

That old gorgon-plated stuff,
His grandfather's, in the Athenian war.

PORTER

What does he want that for? Off to the wars
Is he?

DAVUS

That's his affair. Bring it.

PORTER

Not all?

DAVUS

Yes, all; greaves, breastplate, helmet, shield—yes, shield
Particularly; also sword and spear.

[PORTER *goes in.*

Gone to the wars? Not we. We've gone to hiding.
We won't come near this house until we know
If Polemo's lurking round here. If he is,
We won't go out of doors except in armour.
That I must find out first. If the road's clear,
We'll come straight home. . . . Ah, Doris! She could tell me.

[DORIS *comes out from POLEMO'S house.*

Well, Doris, what's the news? Where's Polemo?

DORIS

Gone, and good riddance! Somewhere out of town
To his own farm, and she, poor girl, has come
To stay with Myrrhinê.

DAVUS

With Myrrhinê?
She's staying in our house? Say that again.

DORIS

Yes, Myrrhinê quite loved her at first sight.
She saw how innocent she was, how brave
She'd been about some promise, and how much
She needs protection and a woman's care.
She's homeless otherwise. . . . The man's a savage.
Cut off her hair indeed! 'Twas not her fault.
How could she help it if a wild young rogue
Rushed up and seized her? Polemo himself
Should have protected her. . . . Well, he'll be sorry.

He always is.

[*Goes into MYRRHINÉ'S house.*

DAVUS

So that's the way things lie!
I could not have believed it. Polemo gone,
And Glycera here!

[*Servants come out with armour.*

Armour? No; take it back.

Take it all back. We want no armour now.
Back, boys! My stars, our mistress is a brick.
She's lodging his girl here, in our own house!
That's what I call a mother! I must find
Our hopeful son and heir. It's time for him
To fly home like the wind, it seems to me.

ACT II

The Act starts with a mimetic Dance of MOSCHIO and DAVUS, illustrating changes of emotion.

MOSCHIO

Yes, Davus, often before now I've found the messages you brought
Were far from true. A knave you are, with humbug in your every thought;
But if you're cheating me this time . . .

DAVUS

Hoist me and flog me, if it's so!

MOSCHIO

That's far too mild!

DAVUS

Then do your worst; destroy me as a foreign foe.
But if, when you go home, you find the girl there, if my story's true,
What have you then to say for me, who managed the whole thing for you,
And poured out floods of moving words to make the girl come here, to make
Your mother think of all you'd wish, and give her lodging for your sake?
What about me?

MOSCHIO

What sort of life would please you?

DAVUS

Let me think a bit.

MOSCHIO

Isn't a mill the best of trades? (The sort they tread is what you'd fit.)

DAVUS

Too hard and brainy.

MOSCHIO

Then why not take charge of foreign policy,
And organize the Allied Camps?

DAVUS

No foreign soldier camps for me!
They slit a poor Director's throat if once they catch him stealing things.

MOSCHIO

Be a contractor! Then you'll steal quite safely. A good contract brings
Profits of eighty-five per cent.

DAVUS

A general dealer's shop would please
Me greatly; or I might, perhaps, sit in the market selling cheese.
A small shop suits my station, and I'd like it, Master. I'm no fool.
I never wanted to be great.

MOSCHIO

A shop, rogue? What's the ancient rule?
"No honey-dealing girl, thank God, shall reach a virtuous old age."

DAVUS

To fill my belly, that's the thing I really like; and that's the wage
I ask for when my task is done.

MOSCHIO

A very moderate request.
All right. Prepare from this time forth to peddle cheeses and be blest.

DAVUS

"So much for hopes," they say, "and now for business."
Well, we know she's here.
You want her. Good, go boldly in, young master.

MOSCHIO

Yes, I must; that's clear.
My business is to soothe her fears and comfort her, and laugh the while
At this confounded chiliarch man: him and his plumes!

DAVUS

Ay, that's the style!

MOSCHIO

Davus, you go in first, and cast your eye round; be a general scout.
Discover what she's doing now; see if my mother's in or out.
And how they seem to feel about my coming. You're the man to know,
Without my telling, how to work that sort of thing.

DAVUS

Good. Off I go.
[Exit DAVUS to the house.]

MOSCHIO

I'll walk about and wait for you in front here, Davus . . . Yes, I thought
Last night, when I ran up to her, she did show feeling of some sort.
She didn't run away. She put her arms out; let me take a kiss.
It really seems I'm not amiss to look at; yes, and not amiss
To talk to. By the Blessed Maid, the wenches like me, all almost!
But, holy Nemesis don't listen! This is not a time to boast.

[DAVUS *comes out.*

DAVUS

Hist, Moschio! She's washed and dressed, and sitting in her chair.

MOSCHIO

The duck!

DAVUS

Your mother's moving round about, busy with some domestic truck,
I don't know what. But lunch is there, and from their general look I guess
They're only waiting till you come.

MOSCHIO

Women do somehow like me, yes.
You didn't tell them, I suppose, that I was with you?

DAVUS

I did not.

MOSCHIO

You'd better go and tell them now.

DAVUS

Then right about! Just see me trot.

[*Exit.*

MOSCHIO

She's certain to feel shy, of course, at seeing me come up. At worst
She'll draw the veil across her face. That's quite the custom.

I shall first

Go straight up to my mother, kiss her, make her feel my cause her own,
Pay court to her in every way and keep my eyes on her alone.
She's helped me in all this as if it was her own desires at stake. . . .
Ah, some one knocking at the door. (DAVUS *comes out crestfallen.*)

Why, boy, what is it? What can make
Him come so slow?

DAVUS

Me come so slow? I don't know where I am. That's flat.
I told your mother you were here to see her. "Davus, none of that!"

She cried; "How has he heard? Did you go chattering to him, when for mere Protection the girl fled to me?" I said I had. "A bad New Year," She answered, "on all rogues like you! But now, I'm busy. Get along. Don't hinder me." What can it mean? Our whole hope suddenly gone wrong! Your mother's anything but pleased to know you're here.

MOSCHIO

You scoundrel, you!
How you've abused me!

DAVUS

I? Not I. Your mother, Sir. . .

MOSCHIO

It's surely true
She fled here of her own free will? Then wasn't it to me she fled?
You told me you persuaded her to come to me!

DAVUS

Who says I said
That I persuaded her to come? Oh, never, master dear, not I!
They couldn't have misled you more than by suggesting such a lie.

MOSCHIO

You never told me, I suppose, what floods of words you used to make
My mother welcome Glycera here with us, expressly for my sake?

DAVUS

Well, as to that, you see, I said . . . Yes, I remember.

MOSCHIO

You believed
My mother took her to please me?

DAVUS

I can't say. Perhaps I was deceived.
I did try to persuade her, yes, I did.

MOSCHIO

All right.
(*He picks up a stick which is lying under the tree.*) Come nearer.

DAVUS

Where?

MOSCHIO

Within my reach.

DAVUS

No, Moschio, please! You ought to know one thing . . . I swear . . .
One moment, wait!

MOSCHIO

You talk mere humbug.

DAVUS

No, so help me! that I don't,
If you'll just listen. It may be—I've always thought—perhaps she won't
Like to surrender at a rush, all anyhow. Don't you suppose
She feels she ought to know you first, to talk, to know what you propose.
It's not a mere flute-girl, you know, or wretched creature from the street
You've got there.

MOSCHIO

Ah, that seems like sense you're talking.

DAVUS

Test it, I entreat.
You know, I think, how proud she is. You know she's left her house. You know
At least that isn't "humbug." Think; if just for a few days you'll go
Away, I know who'll pine for you. 'Twas really as a secret I
Was told so, but by now I see you ought to know.

MOSCHIO

Where shall I tie
You up till I come back? You see, you're sending me a longish walk.
You had one gleam of sense, but now again it's simply rot you talk.

DAVUS

I can't think while you fluster me. But all right.
Change your plan and go
Discreetly in and meet them.

MOSCHIO

While you bolt for foreign parts?

DAVUS

Quite so!
I've heaps of money, haven't I, to pay my journey? Better still,
Let's go together. You and I can get the whole thing fixed.

MOSCHIO

I will.
Your last suggestion suits me.

DAVUS

Ugh! By Heracles, I'm still distraught
And sick with fright. These blessed things are not so simple as I thought!

[*Exeunt MOSCHIO and DAVUS into MYRRHINÉ'S house. Enter SÔSIAS from the country, DORIS from the house R.*]

SÔSIAS

This time he's sent me for his sword and cloak,
Just to find what she's doing and bring back
The latest news. 'T would be a joke to tell him
I found the lover here in our own house.
How he would jump and come here with a run!
Only I'm sorry for him. I never saw
A man so miserable, not in my worst
Of nightmares.—What a wretched welcome home!

[*Exit into POLEMO'S house.*]

DORIS

(*watching*) Ha! Here's the batman. H'm, that's rather awkward.
Apollo, yes; quite awkward even now,
And what it all will come to I can't think.
Suppose the Master comes back from the farm
Too soon and finds us, what a storm there'll be!

[*Re-enter SÔSIAS, shouting to the servants in POLEMO'S house.*]

SÔSIAS

You let her go, you god-forsaken swine!
You let her out of doors!

DORIS

He's coming back.
In a rage too. I'd better slip aside. [*Conceals herself.*]

SÔSIAS

Gone! Gone next door! Oh, I see what it means.
She's gone to join her lover, leaving us
To scratch our heads and swear. I see it all.

DORIS

You see! You're great at seeing what's not there!
You ought to be the regimental prophet.

SÔSIAS

By Jove, I'll knock.

[Knocks furiously; DAVUS comes nonchalantly to the door.]

DAVUS

Who's this unfortunate?
What do you want? Where are you trying to get to?

SÔSIAS

Do you live here?

DAVUS

May be. What's that to you?

SÔSIAS

Have you all lost your senses, in God's name?
Detaining a free woman here against
Her guardian's orders, under lock and key?
How dare you?

DAVUS

What a morbid mind you have,
A nasty narking mind, to think such things!

SÔSIAS

Do you imagine we've no guts, that we're
Not men?

DAVUS

Oh, yes. Quite ordinary men;
Shilling-a-day men.

SÔSIAS

Are we? Soon we'll get
A pound-a-day man here to lead us; then
We'll easily smash your crowd.

DAVUS

Lord Hercules,
What rude behaviour!

SÔSIAS

One word! You confess
You have her here?

DAVUS

Trot off, my man!

SÔSIAS

We have
A witness . . . he's just gone . . . who swears you have her.

DAVUS

We don't take lodgers here.

SÔSIAS

We'll have you howling
Before long. Who do you think you're playing with?
What is your game? We'll take this wretched place
By storm in half an hour. Get ready! Arm
Your lady-killer!

DAVUS

Poor man, how much time
You lose, imagining the lady's here!

SÔSIAS

Our boys, before you can so much as spit,
Will have the whole place wrecked—our light-armed squad,
Whom you call "shilling-a-day men."

DAVUS

I was joking.
I'm sorry I called you that. I know that really
You're what I call a . . . louse.

SÔSIAS

This in a town,
A civilized town!

DAVUS

I tell you, we've not got her.

SÔSIAS

Oh, oh!
Wait till I get my spear!

DAVUS

Go to the Devil
And get it. Meantime, while you show the symptoms
Of lunacy, excuse me.

[DAVUS goes in. DORIS comes forward.]

DORIS

Sôsius!

SÔSIAS

Doris, if you come near me, I shall do you
Some serious mischief. You're the most to blame
For all this.

DORIS

Sôsius, for mercy's sake,
Try to explain to him; say, in sheer terror,
She fled for refuge to some married woman . . .

SÔSIAS

Terror? Some married woman?

DORIS

Yes. She's gone
To Myrrhinê, next door. If that's not so,
May all my prayers go wrong!

SÔSIAS

Oh quite. She's gone
Next door, where, by pure chance, her sweetheart lives.

DORIS

O Sôsius, I know what's in your mind.
Don't do it, please!

SÔSIAS

Out of my way, girl; out!
You want me to tell lies to my poor master.
I'll go to him at once. I'll tell him all.
Oh, this will make him mad. I'll get her back.
I'm not afraid of you foul kidnappers.
I'll gather a few men and storm your house.
We know the trick; we learnt it in the wars.

[*Exit SÔSIAS. Enter PATAECUS.*]

PATAECUS

That's a wild man! . . . Doris, I hear your mistress
Has taken refuge here with Myrrhinê;
I came to speak with her.

DORIS

He's worse than wild;
He knows that Moschio's here and thinks my mistress
Has run to join him.—Oh, the man's gone mad!—

Or else that Moschio holds her prisoned here
Against her will. He swears he'll storm the house,
And take my mistress back to Polemo.
He's gone now to his regiment to collect
His band of city-stormers.

PATAECUS

Moschio here?

How came he here? He must be sent away
At once. He puts us in a false position.
Of course, if Polemo comes he needs but knock;
The door will open. We are all his friends;
Why all this talk of storming?—Moschio, here!

[Enter MOSCHIO from house.]

Young man, your presence fills this house with danger.
Take yourself off. And quick. Leave us in peace.

MOSCHIO

Go off? How can I? That man's dangerous.
His batman's just been raging round the house.
He'd kill me in the street. I'm not afraid
Of people like myself, but he's accustomed
To killing men. I'm not. I'm quite prepared
To box with him, or wrestle, or play quoits,
Or swim, or anything that's civilized.

PATAECUS

Young man, I cannot force you. None the less
I plainly warn you; if he finds you here,
He well may make you fight him. If you go,
Your house, your mother and this innocent girl
Your folly has endangered, will be safe.

MOSCHIO

She smiled at me, I swear she smiled at me.
Well, anyhow—I've got some armour here,
Old hoplite stuff. If I went out in that,
I could defend myself against him. Yes,
I might; but, glory, what a fool I'd look
Walking about the streets! No; I'll go in.
I'll keep in the back room and make no noise.
I'll not disturb you. Possibly I'll arm
And fight him. But I first must think it out. . . .
It's not your business anyhow.

[Exit into house.]

PATAECUS

Young man,
You need a father, or a wife, or both.

ACT III

Enter SÔSIAS, a drinking flask in his hand.

SÔSIAS

I haven't dared to tell him what she's done.
He doesn't know she's here. He doesn't know
She's left his house at all. He sits there brooding
Over that thin gold headband that she wore.
It fell off with her hair. I just began
"My Chîliarch," I said, "you ought to know
What that damned girl's been doing"; out he flared
And said I treated her with disrespect.
"Well, Glycera . . ." I began; at that he stopped me;
He never wished to hear that name again.
"Quite right," I said; "she's not the girl for you.
And never was." "Be silent, man," he roared;
"I don't deserve her, savage that I've been."
If he can't help himself it's up to me
To help him. So I've left my own girl there
To keep watch, while I slipped away and called
The light-armed squad to join me. If he wants
His girl back, well, I mean to get her back.
It's one short military operation.
I've sent them just to have a drink or two
To prime them. I shall be in sole command.
In sole command! "A storming party led
By Corporal Sôsius." I like the sound.
They'll soon be here. Yes, I must do this job
In style. I'll make a speech before the battle
Like those old generals in Thucydides
Or Homer. The great leaders always do it.
(*Murmuring*) "Soldiers of Corinth, in whose veins the blood
Yet courses of Bellerophon the brave,
Of Glaucus and of what's-his-name, I mean
Gongylus. . . ."

[*Enter HABRÔNIS.*

HABRÔNIS

Gracious! What's he up to now?

[SÔSIAS *taken aback.*

SÔSIAS

Is that Habrônis? Why, you sinful woman!
Why have you left your post? Didn't I tell you
To keep incessant watch on Polemo?

HABRÔNIS

Yes, and I couldn't do it. So I came

To let you know. He simply didn't want me.
I only bored him.

SÔSIAS

You should not have bored him.
I said, "Amuse him."

HABRÔNIS

He was not amused.

SÔSIAS

I said, "Get him to talk."

HABRÔNIS

He wouldn't talk.

SÔSIAS

I said, "Stay there."

HABRÔNIS

He told me to get out.
He called me names; said I revolted him.

SÔSIAS

No doubt you did. It's odd, though, all the same
To long for one girl and detest another,
When there's so little difference anyhow.

[Singing is heard off.]

Well, here you are; but you'll be out of place.
We're going to fight.

[Enter the SQUAD dancing and singing.]

—They're drunker than I meant.—

We have a stern task. You can never face
The work these hard men do.

HABRÔNIS

Well, I can dance
Better than that.

SÔSIAS

But not quite the same style.

HABRÔNIS

I can sing, too, much better.

SÔSIAS

Can you blow
A trumpet? We might need a trumpeter.

HABRÔNIS

Of course I can.

SÔSIAS

Give her that trumpet, man!
And me that bowl! (*drinks*) Attention, Storming Party!
Listen! Make ready for the zero hour.

Soldiers of Corinth, if in you the blood
Yet courses of Bellerophon the brave,
Of glorious Whatyoumaycall'em, Thingumahoy,
And all that lot, you'll take this house by storm
And save, as Perseus saved Andromeda,
(That's right, I think) the captive Glycera
From a worse monster. . . .

POLEMO (*entering*)

Corporal, what's all this?
[*Collapse of SÔSIAS.*]
What are you doing here? Why did you leave
The farmhouse?

SÔSIAS

Well, I thought, Sir, it might help
To get things right again between you two,
If . . .

POLEMO

Corporal, that's enough. You'll interfere
No more in my affairs. Listen to me.
I've come here, asking to see Glycera,
To tell her that I know I've done her wrong,
And ask forgiveness.

SÔSIAS

Well, I hope you'll find her.

[*POLEMO goes to his own house, knocks and speaks to Servant inside.*]

POLEMO

I wish to see your mistress . . . Gone away?
Where has she gone to? Moschio's house, just here?
(*To SÔSIAS*) Who's Moschio? I know no one of that name.

SÔSIAS

She does though. And you've seen him once yourself.

Last night, here at your door.

POLEMO

Last night? That man!
She's left me for that scoundrel? No, no, no;
It can't be.

SÔSIAS

Well, he's got her, that I know.
I don't know if she went of her free will,
I know she's there, and he won't let her go.
I found that out this morning, when I went
To see her, and they drove me from the door.

POLEMO (*in deep anger*).

You should have told me this.

SÔSIAS

A dozen times
I tried to tell you, but you wouldn't hear.
I couldn't make you listen. So instead
I took the only course there was to take.
We've come to take her back by force, to do
The thing you wouldn't do.

POLEMO

By all the gods,
I will though. . . . Keep my wife against her will!
I'd like to see him. Wait there. I'll just knock
And ask at once to see her. If she comes,
All right; I'll deal with Master Moschio later.
If not, by Bacchus, does the idiot think
His walls will keep me out? That rotten roof
Will soon be blazing. (*Knocking*) Ready with your poles!
We'll break the door down. Ho, within! Within!

SÔSIAS

Hurrah, boys! That's the talk! Line up to charge!
The torches will come later.

[*Trumpet and turmoil.*]

PATAECUS (*at door, quite calm*)

Polemo?

That's good. I hope you come to apologize.

POLEMO (*taken aback*)

Pataecus, you! You with my enemies?

PATAECUS

Enemies? Nonsense. I came here at once
To comfort Glycera, poor child. She fled
To Myrrhinê, the mistress of this house,
For refuge from your violence. And no wonder.
—But who are all these creatures? Are they yours?
Bid them be quiet.

POLEMO

What of Moschio?
That's what I want to know. Did Glycera fly
To Moschio's arms?

PATAECUS

No, no.

SÔSIAS

Yes, yes, she did!

Break in the door!

POLEMO

Or does he hold her here
By brute force?

PATAECUS

Not at all.

SÔSIAS

Yes, yes, he does.

[*Trumpet.*

We know he does! Oh, God! Break in the door.

POLEMO

Enough! Be silent, Sôsius! Stop that trumpet!
I am all lost. I want to understand,
Pataecus. She is here of her free will?

PATAECUS

Of her free will. She has fled to Myrrhinê.

POLEMO

Fled of her own free will! I wasn't fit
For her to live with. . . . Not fit? Yes; she's right

SÔSIAS (*excitedly protesting*)

He comes out of that house! The man is bribed!
Mark what I say. He will betray the army.

PATAECUS

(To SÔSIAS) Bless you, be off and go to bed. No more
Sieges and stormings. You are not quite well . . .
Now, Chîliarch, I address myself to you
As being less intoxicated.

POLEMO (*shocked*)

Less?
Intoxicated? I? I drank perhaps
One glass. I knew all this was bound to come,
Worse luck! So I made ready for the worst.

PATAECUS

I understand. Now please take my advice.

POLEMO

What would you have me do?

PATAECUS

Ah, that's the tone!

I will explain at once.

SÔSIAS

Habrônîs, quick
The trumpet; loud!
[She blows the trumpet to drown PATAECUS' words.]

PATAECUS

Please send this man indoors
And all his followers with him.

SÔSIAS

Master, don't!
You're spoiling the whole war. He is making truce
Just when we ought to take the place by storm.
He'll be the death of us, Pataecus will.
No generalship!

POLEMO

For God's sake, man, get out.

SÔSIAS

I am going. But I thought you meant to do

Some deed of war. Habrônis knows them all,
Stormings and feints, and trips and grips and clips.
Don't you, you tart? (*Indignation of HABRÔNIS.*)

Offended? bah, not you.
My chicken! You don't mind.

[*Exit noisily with HABRÔNIS and CHORUS.*]

PATAECUS

Now, Polemo,
If this occurrence was the sort of thing
You and your friends describe; or if again
The girl in question were your lawful wife . . .

POLEMO

Pataecus! What a thing to say!

PATAECUS

You know,
It makes some difference.

POLEMO

Sir, I regard
That lady as my wife and always have!

PATAECUS

You need not shout. Who gave away the bride?

POLEMO

Gave her to me? Who? She herself.

PATAECUS

Quite so.
No doubt at that time she was pleased with you.
Now she is not. She has left your house because
You did not treat her suitably.

POLEMO

What's that?
That hurts me worse than anything you have said.
I only want her to come back to me.

PATAECUS

Oh, you're in love I know. But don't you see
That makes this conduct all the more demented.
What is it that you're aiming at? What slave
Is it you claim to take possession of?
The lady you pursue is her own mistress.

The only course open to one like you,
In love and trouble, is to plead with her.

POLEMO

This man who came, while I was at the war,
And stole my wife—has he not done me wrong?

PATAECUS

Of course he has, and you can lodge a charge
Against him, if you bring the affair to court.
But if you break the peace you'll be arrested
And fined. This is a case not for assault
And battery, but, in due time, for the law.

POLEMO

But now, to-day, I can do nothing to him?

PATAECUS

No, now to-day there's nothing to be done.

POLEMO

I don't know what to say. By Mother Earth
I don't, except . . . I'll go and hang myself. . . .
Pataecus! She has left me! Glycera
Has left me! . . . If you think it's the best thing,
Pataecus . . . you have always been her friend
And talked with her before now . . . do go in
And plead with her. Be my ambassador.
Do, please!

PATAECUS

Why, certainly. In my opinion
That's the best course.

POLEMO

You can speak, I suppose?
I never could.

PATAECUS

Yes, moderately.

POLEMO

You must!
It's most important. It's the only thing
To save the situation. Make her know . . .
If ever I have really done her wrong . . . (*breaks off*)
If henceforth I don't always do my best . . . (*breaks off*)

You say I didn't treat her as a wife.
It isn't true. She had in every way
The treatment of a high Corinthian lady.
Just come and see the robes I have bought her!

PATAECUS

Thanks,

Not now.

POLEMO

(fishing in his breast and finding the little gold circlet)

Just look at this. Look, for God's sake,
Even at this, and you'll be sorry for me.

PATAECUS

(taking the circlet and looking at it closely)
God bless me!

POLEMO

Come inside. What gowns she had,
And how magnificent she looked in them! . . .
You had not seen that before?

PATAECUS *(thinking)*

Indeed I had,
Or something like it. It's a favourite pattern.

POLEMO

Why, yes; her little circlet was a thing
Worth looking at. But why do I bring up
The circlet? That's irrelevant.

PATAECUS

No, it's not.

POLEMO

You think not? But the things that you must see
Are what I gave her. Come.

PATAECUS

You lead the way.

I am coming.

[Exeunt into POLEMO'S house; as they go off MOSCHIO in full armour bursts in.]

MOSCHIO

Ho! Get out! Go to the Devil!
You've asked for it! You've come at me with spears . . .
Stormers? They couldn't storm a swallow's nest,
The sort of mean dogs that are skulking here.

[He peers nervously about, looking for an ambush
Where are they? People told me they'd collected
A squad of regular soldiers . . . A fine squad!
It's nothing but that measly Sôsius.

[Throws his shield and spear back into the house.
Of all the unlucky devils now alive—
And there's a bumper harvest of them now
In every town of Hellas, God knows why!—
I don't believe there's one in all the lot
As miserable as me. When I got home
I did none of the things I always do,
Didn't go near my mother, didn't call
Anyone in the house to speak to me;
I went straight to my bedroom, thinking hard,
And lay down flat. Then I sent Davus in
To tell my mother that I'd come—just that,
And nothing more. He found them all at lunch
And stayed there, gorging. So I waited on,
And told myself: "At any moment now
Mother will come from that delightful girl
And tell me on what conditions we may meet."
I thought and thought what I should say, or how
Explain it wasn't just pure cowardice
That made me run from Polemo, when in
Came Davus saying Sôsius was here,
And soldiers with him, to seize Glycera
Or burn the house down. "By the Gods," I thought,
"I'll show them! I'll show Glycera I can fight
As well as that damned Colonel. They're half armed;
They're silly-drunk. I'll take the lot of them.
Him and his plumes!" I stuck on that old armour,
And grabbed a spear and made a rush and shouted,
And when I looked round there was no one there.
I thought I saw the back of one old man
Creeping away somewhere behind a door.
I wonder if they'd laid an ambush somewhere.
I couldn't find one. . . . It's the sort of thing
That makes one look a fool . . . just when I wanted
To look the opposite! I never felt
More of a fool. *[Enter DAVUS.*

DAVUS

Congratulations, Sir!
A brilliant victory. Against odds! Superb!

MOSCHIO (*scarcely believing his ears*)

A victory, that? But there was no one there;
Was there?

DAVUS

Indeed no, not when you appeared
In arms. They scuttled at the sight of you.

MOSCHIO

They really had been there?

DAVUS

I swear they had,
Raging and storming.

MOSCHIO

Well, I'm glad of that.
I did see someone's back. But what about
This suit of armour, Davus? Didn't that
Somehow look silly?

DAVUS

Silly? Splendid, Sir!
A touch of the old heroes. All the household
Agreed with me. It looked so natural.

MOSCHIO (*aside*)

I wonder if he's lying? . . . Perhaps not.
Did anyone . . . did Glycera, for instance,
Say anything?

DAVUS

Well, no, Sir; not to me.
It wasn't necessary. Anyone
Could see their faces.

MOSCHIO (*aside*)

No; perhaps he's not.

DAVUS

Except . . . your mother, Sir, sent her warm thanks
For all you've done and wants you instantly
To leave the house before those men come back
Demanding vengeance.

MOSCHIO

That's all very well.
But things are changed. No, I won't leave the house
Until I've talked things out with Glycera.
Tell her I wish to speak with her; and if

You meet my mother, just explain. . . .

[Enter MYRRHINÉ.

MYRRHINÉ (*while DAVUS goes out*)

My son,

It's I who wish to speak with you . . . But take
That armour off. It looks ridiculous.
Dear me! You've got the breastplate back to front.

MOSCHIO (*hurt*)

Back to front, is it? It was well enough
The way I wore it when I put to flight
That storming party.

MYRRHINÉ

Storming party, you?
There wasn't any storming party left.

MOSCHIO

They'd gone before I came?

MYRRHINÉ

Of course they'd gone.
Pataecus turned them out.

MOSCHIO

That's just my luck!
I thirsted so for glory! I did really.
And Davus said . . . Oh, Lord! It's just my luck!
How could I know they'd gone?

MYRRHINÉ

It's just as well
They had. But that's not what I came about.
You had my message? You must leave at once.
It's safe now, and it's obvious you can't stay
While Glycera's in my house.

MOSCHIO

That's where you're wrong.
I can't go till I have seen her. It may be
I'm not much of a soldier; not much good
At buckling armour; but I have my points.
It stands to reason, when she's run away
On purpose to be near me. . . .

MYRRHINÉ

Moschio,
Haven't you caused enough distress already
To that poor girl?

MOSCHIO

Not if she loves me. No,
I've brought her happiness.

MYRRHINÉ

She does not love you.
I know she doesn't, and you have no ground
For fancying that she does.

MOSCHIO

No ground, you say?
I smiled at her and she returned the smile.
I went and kissed her, and she kissed me back.
I clasped her in my arms and she remained
Perfectly still. I call that ground enough.

[MYRRHINÉ *silent*.

I am sure she loves me, mother, and I know
That I love her. Mother, I mean to have her.

MYRRHINÉ

Don't talk like that. You know quite well her husband
Won't give her up.

MOSCHIO

I know he's not her husband.
I'm just as good a man for her as that
Haughty ill-tempered soldier.

MYRRHINÉ

No, no, no!
I tell you at once the thing's impossible.

MOSCHIO

But why? Are you afraid he'll come again
And burn the house down? Nonsense. There are laws
In Corinth. If he tries that sort of trick
He'll go to prison.

MYRRHINÉ

Listen, Moschio . . .
Oh, can't you trust me? When I say this thing's
Impossible I am saying what I know.
Don't make me speak of things which will cause pain

Hereafter.

MOSCHIO

If you want me to make way
For Polemo, I won't. I don't like soldiers.

MYRRHINÈ

It's more than that . . . Moschio, I have a secret
I thought to have kept hidden till my death.
I had a daughter once. My husband craved
To have a son and would not rear a daughter.
Your sister was exposed, but saved by strangers
And found again. And Glycera is she!

MOSCHIO (*sceptical*)

You say that Glycera is your daughter?

MYRRHINÈ

Yes.

MOSCHIO

Dear Lady, what a chequered life you've had!
You claim that Glycera is my sister?

MYRRHINÈ

Yes.

MOSCHIO

Yet we both know she's nothing of the kind.
Your daughter she may be. That would not make her
A sister of mine unless I were your son. . . .
You dear good loving woman, did you think
In all these years I hadn't found you out?
That your slaves never gossiped? That I saw
Those odd memorials of my babyhood
And never wondered why you kept such things
Sacred and hidden? "Just the kind," I thought,
"They leave with exposed children." Davus knew.

A momentary shock it was, no doubt,
But it soon passed. I know I'm not your son,
But, if it gives you pleasure, why, go on
And mother me by all means. It suits me.

MYRRHINÈ

Can you so cast me off without a tear?
Without one word of sorrow?

MOSCHIO

Not at all,
Mother; I couldn't bear to cast you off.
By all means keep the fiction up. Continue
To mother me. I like it. But meantime
I'll have a word with Glycera.

MYRRHINÈ

She will not
Receive you. [Exit.

MOSCHIO

Won't she? You and that old meddler,
Pataecus, will prevent her? Well, we'll see.
Davus! (*Enter DAVUS*) You took that word to Glycera?

DAVUS

To Doris, sir, who says that Glycera
Cannot receive you.

MOSCHIO

Cannot? Well, she shall.
Letters are risky, but she can't refuse
That old, old, symbol between secret lovers.
Get me an apple, Davus, and I'll prick
A message on the rind.

DAVUS

An apple, Sir?
They're not in season.

MOSCHIO

Get one all the same.

ACT IV

Enter PHILÎNUS. He knocks at POLEMO'S door. POLEMO himself comes out.

POLEMO

I am busy, Sir, and have but little time
To spare.

PHILÎNUS

Excuse me, Polemo, I came
To sympathize, to express my indignation.

POLEMO

What's that?

PHILÎNUS

I understand you have put away
That ill-behaved young woman? All alike,
The young things of this present generation,
They're all alike! You are living now alone?

POLEMO

Sir, I prefer not to discuss the subject.
Good day. *(Begins to go in.)*

PHILÎNUS

But stay, Sir. This is most important.
You cannot live alone. You need a wife.
No light companion like the one that's gone,
A true wife; one of citizenly birth,
Of character.

POLEMO

I do not, sir. That's enough.
[Is moving off when Enter DAVUS from MYRRHINÈ'S house.]

DAVUS

(talking off: the apple in his hand.)
He's persevering, if he's nothing else. *(reading.)*
"FROM MOSCHIO TO HIS LOVE." It's nicely pricked.

POLEMO *(leaping across)*

Rascal, what's that you've got?

DAVUS

Only an apple.

POLEMO

Give it to me.

DAVUS

I was just going to eat it.

POLEMO

What's written on it?

DAVUS

Written? On an apple?
Nobody writes on apples.

POLEMO

Give it here.
It's plain enough. "From Moschio to his love."
Why did you lie to me?

DAVUS

That's only pricked,
Not written; you said "written."

POLEMO

To what woman
Did Moschio send this letter? (*Holding DAVUS by the collar*)

DAVUS

I daren't say;
Not with him watching. Please, Sir, draw aside.
(*Whispering*) To that man's daughter.

POLEMO

To Philînus' daughter?

DAVUS

My master, Sir, is very light and fickle:
Now up, now down, he changes every day;
Last evening, well, we all saw who it was.
Who it may be to-morrow the gods know;
But just to-day . . . You have met the girl perhaps?

POLEMO

Philînus, here's a gift from Moschio,

Son of this house; an apple for your daughter.
[*Gives apple and exit.*]

PHILINUS (*reading*)

"From Moschio to" . . . How dare he? Yes; and you,
How dare you carry this outrageous thing,
Outrageous, to a well-bred modest girl?

DAVUS

I cannot disobey my master, Sir.

PHILINUS

Oh, these young men, these present-day young men!
The thing's an outrage. . . . Stay, though. Let me think.
"He who commits an outrage," that's the law,
"On a Corinthian virgin, must provide
Her dowry, or else marry her himself."
Yes, that's our city's law. A useful law!
Of course we need a proper legal outrage.
I wonder if this gift, though most outrageous,
Would count as one. If I delivered it
Myself, I fear it wouldn't.—Davus, Davus!
Here, take it. I'll not soil my hands with it.
Deliver it yourself. (DAVUS *takes it and goes.*) If he would take her,
O gods and goddesses, if he would take her,
I'd live in peace and call my soul my own! [*Exit.*]
[PATAECUS *and* GLYCERA *come from house.*]

PATAECUS

No, dear child, I've not finished. Let us bring
Our griefs to the fresh air under the sun,
As men who have at night had evil dreams
Will bring them out at dawn and lay them bare
To be soaked through with sunlight. I have learned
In these last years to know both you and him;
A childless widowed man, I have loved you both;
And now until you are reconciled I see
No happiness for either.

GLYCERA

I expect
No happiness. I have learnt my lesson; had
One bitter disappointment; and I hold
That is enough. How could I live with one
Who, knowing me, mistrusts me; knowing me
For years, believes me yet so false, so cheap,
So stupid? True enough, I cannot stay
In this house either with that foolish boy.
No matter. I am not helpless. I can weave
And spin.

PATAECUS

My dear, it need not come to that.
But think; when this proud man, this Chîliarch,
Prays, begs you to forgive him for this wrong
He did you.

GLYCERA

He might do it all again.
He changes so; all gentleness to-day,
To-morrow again blind fury. Shall I wait,
A woman with no rights, until he pleases
To turn me out?

PATAECUS

My dear child, you have read
Homer at school; I think you can repeat
The verses about Prayers; the Prayers that follow
Wrong-doing. Daughters of the most high God
Those Prayers are, weak things, broken-kneed, with eyes
Downcast and lips that scarce dare breathe the word
"Forgive." Yet he who scorns them, who denies
Forgiveness—you remember?—Zeus himself
Calls Atê the Remorseless to pursue
That man. All of us mortals need forgiveness.
We live not as we would but as we can.
Think, child, of that one thing: he asks forgiveness
And he forgives.

GLYCERA

What has he to forgive?
Where did I fail him? Did I give a thought
To any man but him; neglect his house,
Or waste his substance? You who knew me, know
If I had aught to hide. You know my thoughts
Were all of him. I ached for his return.
The expectation of it filled my heart.
I stood there waiting, longing . . . and he came!
Not only jealous; that I could forgive;
But brutal, brutal. To cut off my hair,
Make me a public spectacle of shame,
For men to mock at; a shorn woman, like
A branded slave! And then he generously
Forgives me! He has nothing to forgive.

PATAECUS

He did wrong. He was jealous. That he knows.
But think, what love is; would you be so fierce
Now, if you did not love him? Love and hate
Are always neighbours. Love is dogged by fear,
Uncertainty, suspicion. Think how long

He had been in camp; think how the camp would tell
Their tales of women's falseness, lovers hidden,
And husbands tricked. He thought, "My Glycera
Is not like other women!" Then he came;
He saw that kiss, saw the man fly, saw you
Bewildered, dumb, unable to explain . . .

GLYCERA

He ought to have trusted me.

PATAECUS

I think he would;
But next he found you fled, and in this house!

GLYCERA

And thought I had fled to Moschio? Dearest friend,
Think; was he not a madman to imagine
Such follies? Even if he had never known me,
How could he think it? I expected him,
Knew he was coming—what a time to choose
To meet a lover! I was at the door,
Outside the door, in public: what a place
For secret kisses! If I left his house,
Is he surprised at that? How could I stay?
Would any woman so insulted not
Fly to some neighbour? I chose Myrrhinê
Because . . . well, I had reasons. Myrrhinê
Some day will tell you more. But Polemo
Thinks that to catch some pestilent young man
I rushed off and deposited myself
Here in his mother's house. Just think of it!
If any plan like that were in my mind,
Dear friend, think, is it likely I would run
For shelter to his mother? Did I hope
To make him marry me: a stateless woman,
Discarded, without kinsmen, without dowry?
How likely! Did I want to be his mistress?
If that were it, wouldn't we both have tried
Our best to keep the wretched business hid
At least from this house? Was I such a fool
As to seek out the very thing that would
Make Myrrhinê hate me . . . and in your mind too
Leave a suspicion that will never die?
Is not the man ashamed to think such things?

And you, my friend, Pataecus! You came here
Accepting all he told you. You believed
I was that kind of woman!

PATAECUS

God forbid!

I only pray that you may show the man

How much he has wronged you. I believe your word.

GLYCERA

No, leave me. Let him find some other girl
To use his sword on.

PATAECUS

It was one mad moment.

GLYCERA

It was a wicked act. The sort of thing
No honourable man would think of doing,
Not to a slave girl.

PATAECUS

You were no slave girl.
You were a wife. In everything but law
You were his wife. I have just been shown the frocks
He gave you.

GLYCERA

They're not mine. They're his. He gave them,
And now takes them away.

PATAECUS

Listen, my dear.
He begs you to forgive him and come back.
He has sent me to persuade you. If I fail,
If you won't come, he bids you take away
Your wardrobe as it stands; and furthermore
If you should need a dowry . . .

GLYCERA

Let him keep
His dowry and his dresses. They will do
To clothe the next girl whom he wants to crop;
I hope she'll have done something to deserve it.

PATAECUS

Ah, child, that fierceness shows you love him still.
However, let that be. Don't talk of weaving
And spinning. There's my house: I have no daughter . . .

GLYCERA

My best friend! No, my only friend.

PATAECUS

Not quite.

But let that be.

GLYCERA

There is one thing I want;
It's quite my own. I had it when I came
To Polemo; a little cedar chest
With things my mother or my father left.
I have always kept them by me carefully.

PATAECUS

And so you wish . . .

GLYCERA

I wish to take them with me.

PATAECUS

You quite despair of making peace with him?
Think, my dear child, what in your heart you wish.

GLYCERA

I want you to go in and get that box!

PATAECUS

It shall be done. Child, this is no affair
For laughing. You should think of all the people
This touches.

GLYCERA

I know best what touches me.

PATAECUS

That's how you feel?—Well, where's the box?

GLYCERA

Don't trouble.

Doris will know. I'll call her.

(Speaking off.) Doris, please
Fetch me that casket with the embroidered robe
I gave you to take care of.

PATAECUS

Even now,
On my terms, Glycera, it's not too late
To admit him here, to plead his cause with you . . .

[Enter DORIS in tears, with the casket.]

Is that the casket, Doris? Let me look.

[He takes the casket, raises the lid, looks, and stands pondering.]

DORIS

Oh, Ma'am, I'm so unhappy!

GLYCERA

Silly girl!

Why should you cry?

DORIS

O mistress dear, don't leave us.
Or take me with you!

GLYCERA

How could I do that?
Like all that I once had, you are Polemo's
Not mine.

PATAECUS

What has come over me? O Zeus
The Saviour! Can a thing so strange be true? . . .
(To GLYCERA) Tell me, these all were yours?

GLYCERA

No, not the casket.
The casket Melito gave me, to keep safe
The robe, the only thing my parents left me.
But why?

PATAECUS

I have seen that pattern. Let me think.

[MOSCHIO, in the doorway, speaking off to DAVUS.]

MOSCHIO

I told you. That old man's got hold of her.
He's warning her against me. I must listen.

[He creeps behind them. GLYCERA comes up to PATAECUS.]

GLYCERA

What is it, dear? You are troubled?

PATAECUS

Let me see

That robe . . . No, I won't look. But take it out.
The centre is a golden sun with rays
Spreading.

GLYCERA

It is. I loved that as a baby.

MOSCHIO (*aside*)

Why, what's all this? Was she exposed like me?

GLYCERA

The colours are still fresh.

PATAECUS

No, I won't look.

A robe that I remember long ago
Was something like . . . There came next, I remember,
A goat or cow or some such animal.

GLYCERA

A stag, dear, not a goat.

PATAECUS

Well, it had horns,
I know. The third one was a wingèd horse.
(*Aside*) They are all my wife's work; my unhappy wife!

[*He sobs and goes to sit on the Exedra. GLYCERA goes to comfort him.*]

MOSCHIO

I see. It's not flatly impossible.
My mother . . . my real mother . . . may have had
A daughter too and secretly . . . God knows!
But if she did and this girl is my sister,
Good Lord, I'm in the devil of a mess!

PATAECUS

O Zeus, what more will rise from that past day?

GLYCERA

Go on. Ask what you wish and I will say.

PATAECUS

Where did these come from? Whose were they before?

GLYCERA

When I was found, these are the things I wore.

MOSCHIO

O Memory waken! Does some stormy sea
Sweep me toward my hour of destiny?

PATAECUS

Tell me, were you alone when you were found?

GLYCERA

A brother lay beside me on the ground.

MOSCHIO

In that one of my riddles finds its clue.

PATAECUS

How came you to be parted, he and you?

GLYCERA

Ask my own story; that I am free to tell.
The rest I could explain; I know it well,
But gave my word to speak no more of it.

MOSCHIO

Another detail there, that seems to fit.
She promised! To what marvels am I come!

PATAECUS

What happened first? How did you find a home?

GLYCERA

A woman passing saw us as we lay.

PATAECUS

What was the place like? Did she ever say?

GLYCERA

A spring, an altar, and a shadowing tree.

PATAECUS

So said the man who left you there to me.

GLYCERA

Who was he—he who left us there to die?

PATAECUS

A slave; but he who grudged you life was I.

GLYCERA

You! you abandoned your own child? Oh, why?

PATAECUS

My daughter, Fortune inconceivably
Mishandles men. That day the wife who bore
My babes died bearing them. The day before . . .

GLYCERA

Say on. I tremble for the thing unsaid.

PATAECUS

I lost all, I who was in comfort bred.

GLYCERA

In one day? How? Ah, God, what miseries!

PATAECUS

There perished on the wild Aegean seas
My great ship. All that I possessed was there.

GLYCERA (*aside*)

Was I one little boat dragged down with her?

PATAECUS

I had no courage, beggared, without wife
Or friend, to take that burden on my life.
And so, it seems of all earth's joys the best
Is lost to me . . . I know not of the rest.

GLYCERA

That will be shown.—There was a necklace too,
And a small jewelled star, to witness who
The children were.

PATAECUS

Show them.

GLYCERA

Those I can't show.

PATAECUS

Why not?

GLYCERA

My brother has the rest, you know.

MOSCHIO

The man's my father! . . . If I'd only known!

PATAECUS

Can you describe them?

GLYCERA

A sea-crimson zone . . .

PATAECUS

Yes, with a row of girls, a dancing line.

MOSCHIO

That clinches it. That old pricked belt of mine!

GLYCERA

A soft transparent veil, and then the small
Gold circlet that I used to wear. That's all.

[Enter DORIS, who rushes up and embraces GLYCERA.]

DORIS

Oh, mistress, dearest, I can't let you go.

GLYCERA

Oh, why do you all cling about me so?
I must go.

MOSCHIO *(coming up awkwardly from behind)*

Sir, if I might have a word.
I chanced to be back there, and overheard
Some chance remarks.

PATAECUS

Who's this? What have I done?

MOSCHIO

Who? Well, Sir; I'm afraid, Sir; I'm your son.

ACT V

DORIS *at POLEMO'S Door. The PORTER.*

PORTER

He won't come. He's too busy.

DORIS

I can wait.

PORTER

It's no good waiting. He won't speak to you.

DORIS

(giving a ring) Then give him this, and say I am waiting still.
It's dangerous, I know. He gave that ring
To be a sign between them; but I must
See him and let him know, or else he might
Do something desperate. *[Enter POLEMO.*

POLEMO

How dare you send
This ring? Did Glycera give it to you?

DORIS

No;

I stole it.

POLEMO

Stole it? You?

DORIS

Yes, to make sure
You'd listen to the word I bring from her.

POLEMO

You come from Glycera?

DORIS

Yes; I come from her.

POLEMO

What message does she send?

DORIS

She sent no message.

POLEMO

I'll not be played with, girl. How dare you come
With yeas and noes . . .

DORIS

O Polemo, you know her!
How could you ever think such things of her?
You knew her all these faithful years; you had
Her word—and wanted proof that she was true!

POLEMO

Stop, Doris. That's enough. I did her wrong.
I see it now, too late.

DORIS

It's not too late.

POLEMO

I cut her hair off. Brute! That's beyond pardon.

DORIS

It's not the hair. The hair can be arranged.

POLEMO

What is it then?

DORIS

How can she live with one
Who does not trust her?

POLEMO

Trust her? But I do.
She knows I trust her.

DORIS

Does she, when last night
You thought her false?

POLEMO

One moment I was mad.
Should that one moment outweigh all my life?

I know . . . even then I knew . . . I did her wrong.
O Doris, plead for me.

DORIS

We all are pleading,
I, Myrrhinê, Pataecus, her own heart . . .
(going) You're so nice, if you'd only keep your temper.
[Exit DORIS; SÔSIAS appears in doorway.]

SÔSIAS

Don't you believe that girl, Sir! Don't! I never
Try to believe Habrônis, nor she me.
Never. That's why we get along so well.

POLEMO

No, Sôsiâs, you're wrong. These endless wars
Ruin our tempers. Yes; it's what they call
The combative spirit. Always on our guard,
Always suspecting traps, we get to think
That everyone's an enemy. (Violently) Well, henceforth
I'll change. I'll be a lamb! [Exit into House.
[Enter from the other house MOSCHIO and GLYCERA.]

MOSCHIO

Of course he had
A perfect legal right. No one is bound
To rear a baby if he doesn't want to.
Suppose I had a baby: I don't know,
I don't know if I'd rear it.

GLYCERA

Well, you would,
If I was anywhere about! [Enter MYRRHINÊ.]

MYRRHINÊ

Ah, children,
Forget it! Let the memory of old pain
Fade as the actual pain fades. Why, you know
Our good Greek rule about the trophies raised
To mark a victory? Never must that mark
Be wrought of marble or enduring bronze
To make eternal boast; just a frail cross
In armour, never tended or repaired
Till in due time it falls, and the grass grows
Above it and new blossoms greet the spring,
And men forget a trophy once was there,
And what it meant, and all the evil done
By man on man. Only barbarians make
Those records hard, of everlasting stone,

Like their own hearts.

GLYCERA

O Myrrhinê, no more .
That hurt was done us eighteen years ago,
And grass has long grown over it. Besides,
How can we judge him? It may be he saved
Our lives when, ruined, without wife or home,
He left us by the altar and the spring,
Well furnished, if perchance some happier soul
Might pity us—as they did. I can not know
What he was then; I only know him now,
Wise, steadfast, full of love, a faithful friend.
For Polemo, well, if my father says
I must forgive him . . .

MOSCHIO

It's all right for me.
I bear no grudge, but if he tries again
To scold me . . . No, I hardly think he'll dare.
I don't mind you, my honorary mother;
I rather like being mothered, but a father . . .
A father's a bit thick. For Polemo,
Of course it's all blown over. I'll explain
That I'm her brother, and we'll laugh together
At all the fuss he's made. I'll do it now.

MYRRHINÊ

Be careful with him.

MOSCHIO

Yes. Go in, you two,
And leave me with him.

[*Exeunt MYRRHINÊ and GLYCERA.*

[MOSCHIO *knocks at the door of Polemo's house. To PORTER.*
Here, tell your master Moschio wants to see him.

POLEMO (*entering abruptly*).

You dare to show your face here?

MOSCHIO

Yes, I've come
Just to explain things. The fact is, my friend,
You've been too hasty.

POLEMO

Don't presume to call
Me "friend", but if you have come to apologize . . .

MOSCHIO

I said "to explain things"; no, the apologies
Will have to come from you. You did not know
That Glycera was my sister.

POLEMO

I did not,
Nor do I now.

MOSCHIO

She is though. She and I
Were foundlings; we were both exposed together
And rescued by a woman . . .

POLEMO

Where's the woman?

MOSCHIO

She's dead now.

POLEMO

Yes; I thought so. You remember
Her name?

MOSCHIO

Please don't confuse me . . . Melinê;
Yes, Melito.

POLEMO

You clumsy, cowardly, liar!
That kiss I saw was not a brother's kiss.
That was no brother who turned tail and fled;
That was no sister who stood pale and dumb
And dared not speak till she could hear you tell
Your story. Draw! (*draws his sword.*)

MOSCHIO

I can't. I've got no sword.
Pataecus, help!

POLEMO

Take this.

[*Hands MOSCHIO his own sword. Picks up the stick lying under the tree.*]

MOSCHIO

Pataecus will

Confirm it all.

POLEMO

The stick's enough for me.

[*They fight.*]

MOSCHIO

Pataecus! Glycera, help!

[*Enter PATAECUS from house.*]

PATAECUS

You frantic man!

Stop! Listen to reason. This man is my son;
And Glycera my daughter. He deserved

[*MOSCHIO escapes.*]

Your anger yesterday, and mine, and hers;
He thought she was a stranger; but she knew
It was her brother.

POLEMO

Why did she not speak?

You are all in league against me. You all tell
The same wild fable. You, Pataecus, too,
You double-faced old man, you, whom I trusted,
You, whom I chose for my ambassador
To win her back, have helped to steal her from me;
Opened your house, called her your daughter . . .

[*Enter GLYCERA, running forward.*]

GLYCERA

Father!

Take care. I know his rages. Polemo,
Would you strike *me* again? You have insulted
My brother and my father; here am I
Waiting.

POLEMO.

Oh, Glycera, is this story true?

GLYCERA.

Would you believe me if I said it was?

POLEMO.

Yes. Only speak.

GLYCERA.

All that my father said
Is true, though Moschio then knew nothing of it.
I did know, but I could not speak because
I had promised; and I keep my promises.

[*Exit GLYCERA, taking PATAECUS with her.*]

POLEMO (*alone*)

"She keeps her promises." I see what that
Must mean. She vowed she never would come back.
I've lost her again, I've lost her. And the friend
Who pled for me, who almost made her change,
Will speak for me no more. There's no one left
Whom I've not raged at and insulted. Fool!
It's easy in a battle; I can see
The place, the time, to strike or to hold back;
And here where all seemed plain and peaceful, here,
What have I done? Outraged the girl I love,

[*Enter MOSCHIO; seeing POLEMO, he watches for a chance to
slip into his house unseen.*]

Injured a friend, insulted an old man,
Assaulted a civilian. I'll go round—
I've no choice—and ask pardon, one by one,
From all of them; from Glycera, Myrrhinê,
Pataecus, yes, by Jove, and that young ass,
That feeble-minded coxcomb, Moschio!

MOSCHIO

No!

No, not me! Leave me out. Confound it all,
(*Coming frankly up*) I don't believe much in apologies;
They do no good. But I accept your words:
Ass, coxcomb, feeble-minded. Yes, that's me!

POLEMO (*after a pause giving his hand*)

Not worse than me. I don't know how it is;
Some people keep so wise, not just for moments—
I can do that—but steadily, right on,
Day after day. . . . They say it comes with age.

MOSCHIO

It's much the same with me. I sometimes have
Whole months of common sense, and I'm not often
Quite such an idiot as I've been to-day.
They say I'm worst when idle and in town.
I think they're right.

POLEMO

I always hate the town.

MOSCHIO

I love it. Still, I'll go back to the farm.

POLEMO

Why, so will I, and dig.

MOSCHIO

And dig.

POLEMO

And hoe.

MOSCHIO

And hoe.

POLEMO

And prune and sow.

MOSCHIO

And prune and sow.

One can't look all these people in the face,
Knowing . . . Oh, Lord! Here's Doris.

[Exit hurriedly.]

[Enter DORIS. She comes up to him silently.]

DORIS

Don't despair,
Master, I've nothing certain to report;
I'm listening to their talk, though, and am sure
She loves you. I suppose it was from pride
She would not yield, would not be whistled back
Fatherless, friendless, without dower or help.
That's all changed now.

POLEMO

You think . . . Oh, Doris, watch
And listen. Find if there is any hope . . .

[Exit DORIS. Enter COOK.]

What is it? Who are you?

COOK

Sir, I'm the cook
Engaged for last night's feast. Pataecus said
That dinner was postponed, but bade me come
Again to-day, in time for further orders.

POLEMO

There are no orders.

COOK

I've a tender sow
And several kinds of fish; fresh honey cakes,
Some snow . . .

POLEMO

On second thought, go in and wait.

[He goes.]

There's just a chance they'll let me celebrate
Her rise in fortune. I need make no claim.
She's found a father. . . . No. No chance at all.
Her father! I daren't face him, simply daren't!
After the things I've done, and said, and thought.
It's no good waiting here. She won't come back.
I'll just go to the farm, like Moschio
And dig and plough and sow . . .

[Re-enter DORIS.]

DORIS

Master, I've heard

Some news.

POLEMO

She's coming?

DORIS

No, I can't say that.

POLEMO

Well, what am I to do? How can I live
Without her? Oh, the cursed fool I've been!

DORIS

She's thinking; but I'm sure she'll come, if . . .

POLEMO

If?

DORIS

If once she knew you'd try from this time forth
To keep your temper.

POLEMO

Like the very Devil

I'll try! I will. Oh, this is more than good.
Go in and speak to her. . . . You're a good friend,
Doris. I'll set you free first thing to-morrow.
Wait! Let me tell you what to say. . . . She's gone.

[*Exit* DORIS.]

Ah, my infernal temper! Like a storm
It beat and crushed me . . . all because she kissed
Her brother! Not a lover! What a fiend
I was, a jealous fiend! Thought I was wronged,
And instantly went raging. And then wanted
To hang myself, of course! And quite right too.

[*Re-enter* DORIS.]

Oh, bless you, Doris! Did you hear them talk?
What were they saying? What's the news?

DORIS

Quite good.

She'll come to you.

POLEMO

She's not just teasing me?

DORIS

No, she was only dressing, and of course
Her father had to approve. Quick, you must give
A banquet of thanksgiving for the news
Of her good fortune.

POLEMO

Yes, by Zeus, you're right.
We've got the cook here. (*calling*) Ho, there! Kill that sow!

DORIS

You need the sacred basket and the blessing.

POLEMO

All that can wait. The great thing is the sow.
What's more, I'll get some garlands from an altar
And crown myself.

DORIS

Why, yes. That will improve you.
You'll look more festive.

POLEMO

Can't you bring her out?

DORIS

She was just coming with her father.

POLEMO

Him?

Him! I can't face him.

DORIS

Stop! He's run away.

[*Exit* POLEMO.]

A mere knock on a door's too much for him.

I'll go in too and see where I can help.

[*Exit* DORIS: *Enter* PATAECUS *and* GLYCERA.]

PATAECUS

I love to hear you say that: "I will help him
To keep us friends again." That's the true Greek,
When power is on your side to yield to justice.
Go someone and fetch Polemo.

POLEMO (*entering encouraged by* MOSCHIO)

No need.

I am coming of myself. I just went in
To arrange a sacrificial feast in thanks
That Glycera has found the friend she needed.

PATAECUS

Quite right. And now, mark what I have to say.

[POLEMO *waits downcast expecting to be scolded.*

(*Pause.*)

Attend.—I give this woman here to be
Your lawful wife.

POLEMO (*after a moment of speechless amazement*)

I take her.

PATAECUS

With her goes

A dowry of three talents.

POLEMO

That's good too.

PATAECUS

From this time forth, forget that you're a fighter,
And never again be rough to her you love.

POLEMO

Apollo help me! when it's all but been
The death of me this time, do you think it likely
I could be rough again? I have no word
For Glycera except: Dearest, forgive me!

GLYCERA

This time your violent temper was the spring
Of happy things for both of us.

POLEMO

That's true.

GLYCERA

So this time you are forgiven.

POLEMO

Come inside

And share the feast, Pataecus.

PATAECUS

Not just now.

I have another marriage on my hands.
For my son, Moschio, here I take to wife
Philînus' daughter.

MOSCHIO

What? O Earth and gods . . .

PATAECUS

Yes, Moschio, you do well to call on Earth;
Whate'er the gods do, she will grant your prayers.
Earth is the great physician; she can heal
All sorrows—hunger, thirst, high-flown desires
And discontents, the weariness of age,
The hopes and fears, self-torturing, of youth.
She has the balm to bring patience and peace.
A farm for you and your industrious bride
Is waiting now, up where the hills begin
And Earth, if hardly generous, yet is just.
Nothing she gives for nothing, but will pay
Fair wage for labour and return each year
All that is lent her. Stones are there and thorns,
But corn, too, olives—just a scent of wine,
Honey and figs, wild hares upon the hill,
And in the rocky places fragrant herbs
For relish, marjoram and mint and thyme.
And he who labours there sees, day by day,
Earth's noblest sights, the sunset and the dawn,

And feels her tidal and eternal bloom,
Dead and re-living, lost yet ever found,
Between the white peaks and the sunlit sea.

So, old and young, toward peace we wend our way,
Content if you, who have seen it, liked our play.

END



NOTES

THE NEW COMEDY.—This form of drama, which has had more influence on the subsequent history of the theatre than either tragedy or comedy of the classical fifth century type, reached its acme in Athens about 320-300 B.C., and completely dominated the stage for some centuries. I may repeat about it some remarks I made in a volume published by the Clarendon Press in 1912.^[2] After speaking of the rigid traditional shell within which Greek tragedy achieved its most poignant artistic beauty, I added: "At one period indeed it looked as if tragedy was beginning to move away from its stiffness. When Sophocles reminds modern critics of Shakespeare it is in part because he began, very cautiously and delicately, to do to tragedy just what we ourselves, nourished on the Elizabethan tradition, would naturally do. We should cut down the formal speeches. We should not compel every speaker to finish his verse. We should unhesitatingly drop the god and the prologue and sometimes do without the messenger. As for the Chorus, since we do not know how to use it, we should cut it out altogether, or, if that were impossible, cut it down to narrow limits. We should work up the drama pure and simple and forget the fixed lines of the ritual. We should get rid of the monotonous shadow of death. We should intermix tragedy and comedy. We should aim at entertainment, at variety, not at worship.

"There arose, after the fall of Tragedy, and of the old unmixed Comedy, a form of drama which did all these things. The New Comedy of Menander and his predecessors introduced all the simplifications and improvements which seem to a modern so obviously desirable. It developed an easy colloquial language, a flexible and unexacting metre. It left the Chorus quite outside the play, a kind of *entr'acte*, not worth writing down. It frankly abandoned religious ritual^[3] and heroic saga. It drew its material from the adventures and emotions of contemporary middle-class life, and boldly invented its own plots. And, as often happens in matters of this sort, Fate was ironical. Every single change seemed an obvious improvement and the total result was an irreparable loss. It led from the *Agamemnon* to the *Epitrepontes*."

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.—The normal background in Tragedy was a palace or temple, in the New Comedy a street with two or sometimes three houses of ordinary citizens.

The names are taken from ordinary life, but are generally significant. Davus is a common slave name, from a barbarian tribe; Sôsius ("helper") might be either slave or free; Polemo is derived from *polemos*, "war"; Moschio from *moschos*, a calf or young animal. Pataecus is curious; the "Pataikoi" were dwarfish little gods, used as mascots on the bows of Phoenician ships, and supposed to bring good luck, so the name has a suggestion of "Robin Goodfellow."

Menander's young men might almost come out of a Russian novel. He is always finding comic material in their inconsistencies, impulses, self-reproaches and self-distrusts. Polemo is a brave and generous soldier, subject to fits of jealous rage followed by extreme penitence and helpless timidity. Moschio's vanity and impudence are intermingled with sudden misgivings, his timidity with a reckless wish for glory, and his cheerful sophisticated reasoning with an awful suspicion that he is making a fool of himself. Fundamentally not a bad sort, he has been spoiled by Myrrhinê and obviously needs the discipline provided for him so abruptly at the end of the play. Even Sôsius, the tough non-commissioned officer with a great devotion to his young Commander, has his moments of mockery and of "showing off"; Davus, on the other hand, is consistently the tricky unprincipled valet, a type which became traditional in later comedy.

The women are less satirized and all come out as clear and sympathetic characters.

p. 15. *Chiliarch*.—Literally "commander of a thousand," a rank roughly corresponding to "colonel." Ancient armies were very small by our standards.

p. 15. *Penelope*.—Odysseus in the *Odyssey* (I, 58), when detained by beautiful goddesses, "only longed to see the smoke going up from his home," where Penelope was waiting.

p. 16. *The Cook*.—For any important entertainment it was usual to have in a professional cook. He forms a common character in the New Comedy.

p. 19.—It would need a very sharp sword and skilled swordsmanship to cut hair in this way, but Polemo possessed both, and we can hardly suppose that he carried scissors about with him.

p. 21. PROLOGUE.—In Menander the Prologue was usually the second scene. The idea seems to have been to start with an opening scene which would stimulate curiosity and then satisfy the curiosity with an explanatory Prologue, usually from the lips of some deified or personified abstraction. The name of the present goddess is hard to translate. *Agnoia* is not Ignorance as a general characteristic, but Ignorance of some particular fact, lack of the necessary information. Mr. Frost translates it "Misapprehension."

p. 21. *Long anguish of Corinth*.—Probably this refers to the period of Polyperchon's harsh government (315-309) and the capture of the city by Ptolemy and then by Cassander in 309, 308; if so, it would give us a rough date for the play. But "anguish" was only too frequent in Greek cities at this period.

p. 30.—Between Acts I and II there was a dance by professional dancers, not characters in the play. In the papyrus Davus says, "But I see some tipsy young men coming," and after his exit there is a note, "Chorus." I have omitted both. In Act III we have something like a tipsy Chorus composed of Sôsius's companions.

p. 31. ACT II.—This scene was probably accompanied by a flute. It was what the ancients called a "dance," in the sense that the actors' movements kept time to the music and their attitudes expressed their changing emotions.

The scene gives a typical presentation of the tricky servant who afterwards became such a traditional figure in comedy. He is the personal attendant and intimate companion of the young master, admitted to much familiarity, but at the same time liable to be beaten or, for a serious offence, sent away to hard labour in the mill or on the land.

In the mention of the Allied Camps, the unfortunate Director and the Contractor's profits we have evidently allusions to contemporary scandals unknown to us. The same applies to the phrase about the impossibility of a virtuous old age for the mistress of a honey shop.

p. 36. *Someone knocking*.—The door opened outwards. It was knocked by people coming out to warn passers-by as well as by those wanting to get in.

p. 42. *The regimental prophet*.—An ancient army had always a seer or prophet attached, something like a modern chaplain, who could interpret signs and omens.

p. 42. *Do you live here?*—Davus's answers are ambiguous, but not actually false. He does not normally live in Myrrhinê's house and had no hand in bringing Glycera

there.

p. 43. *Shilling-a-day men*.—Literally "men worth four obols," a private soldier's pay. A chiliarch, apparently, got four drachmae, six times as much.

p. 44. *Storm the house*.—See Preface, pp. 8, 9.

p. 50. ACT III.—Bellerophon was a Corinthian hero; Glaucus was his father. The Corinthian Gongylus joined with Gylippus in the relief of Syracuse. (Thuc. VII, 2.)

p. 50. *Habrônis*.—I have substituted this form of the name for the MS. "Habrotonon" as easier for English lips.

p. 51. *Drunker than I meant*.—See note at end of ACT I.

p. 60. *Come and see the robes I have bought her*.—A curious point. The sort of dresses Polemo bought for Glycera were such as suited a high-born Corinthian lady, not a low-class woman nor a courtesan. The coronet is really irrelevant, as it was Glycera's own.

p. 62. *Ho! Get out!*—The effect, apparently, is something like that of a man in helmet and gas mask, and holding a tommy-gun, rushing out to meet an enemy who is not there. Moschio's unluckiness seems to consist in his failure to see Glycera *plus* his failure to do battle on her behalf. He has twice made a fool of himself.

p. 63. *Stayed there gorging*.—The slave apparently ate in the dining-room.

p. 65. *Breastplate back to front*.—Like Pantacles in Aristophanes, who first put on his helmet and then tried to stick the plume in. (*Frogs*, 1037.)

p. 70. *Symbol between secret lovers*.—(cf. Theocritus II, 120; III, 10, etc.). A poem of Callimachus tells how Acontius sent to Cydippe an apple with the words "I will marry Acontius" pricked on it. She naturally read them out loud and, since she was in a sacred place at the time, that amounted to an oath and could not be broken.

p. 75. *Dreams shown to the sun*.—As the Nurse does in *Medea*, v. 58.

p. 76. *A shorn woman like a branded slave*.—The special sting lay in the fact that Glycera would now be conspicuous, bearing a permanent mark of her husband's displeasure, like the brand upon a slave who had committed a crime. People would conclude she had misbehaved herself. In itself a shorn head might merely be a sign of mourning or marriage rites. In another of Menander's plays, *Rhapizomenê*, "Her Ears are Boxed," the injury was less permanent, but gave rise to the same scenes of indignation and penitence as here.

pp. 84-88. *The Recognition Scene*.—The Recognition of the lost babe or babes is one of the most fixed points in the ritual tradition. In the original there is a change of metre, from the comic convention to the tragic; also a change of tone from realistic observation to romantic tradition. Hitherto the incidents are taken from real life and can be judged accordingly; now we are in an atmosphere like that of a poetical tragic myth. It is no good saying that things are improbable, because it is agreed: "That is what happened."

p. 86. *My great ship*.—It was of course the custom of merchants in antiquity and right on through the Middle Ages to put the whole of their capital into one ship. When their "ship came home" they were rich. If it failed to return they were ruined, as the father of "Beauty" was. The scene is, I think, meant to be genuinely moving, with a touch of mocking humour in the situation of Moschio.

p. 93. *Trophies*.—The trophy (*Tropaion*, "turning spot") must not be of permanent material; the victor must not repair it, and equally the vanquished must not tear it down. The occasional breaches of this rule gave rise to interesting arguments. For example, the Milesians once pulled down a trophy set up by Alcibiades on the ground that the fight it commemorated was not a real battle but only a raid from ships. (Thuc. VIII, 24.)

THE END

FOOTNOTES

The fragments of the *Perikeiromenê* so far discovered are: 1898 Oxyrhyncus Papyrus CCXI (51 vv.); 1907 Cairo Papyrus (324 vv.); 1908 Leipzig parchment (two sets of 60 vv. each); 1911 Heidelberg fragment (18 vv.).

English Literature and the Classics; Essays collected by G. C. Gordon, pp. 23 f.

An exaggeration; see Preface.

Transcriber's note:

Minor punctuation errors corrected.

[The end of *The Rape of the Locks* by Gilbert Murray]