

ADELPHI

Terence

Translated by Christopher Kelk

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CONTENTS

PROLOGUE	3
ACT I.....	4
SCENE I	4
SCENE II	6
ACT II.....	12
SCENE I	12
SCENE II	17
SCENE III.....	21
SCENE IV.....	22
ACT III	26
SCENE I	26
SCENE II	27
SCENE III.....	32
SCENE V	43
ACT IV	45
SCENE I	45
SCENE II	47
SCENE IV.....	53
SCENE IV.....	54
SCENE V.....	56

SCENE VI.....	63
SCENE VII.....	63
ACT V.....	69
SCENE I.....	69
SCENE II.....	70
SCENE III.....	71
SCENE IV.....	76
SCENE V.....	78
SCENE VI.....	78
SCENE VII.....	79
SCENE VIII.....	81
SCENE IX.....	86

PROLOGUE

Our poet found critics dishonestly
Carpied at his play and every adversary
Disliked the piece that we're about to play,
Ans so there are some things he'd like to say
About himself so that *you* may decide
Whether one ought to honour him or chide.
Diphilus wrote *Synapothnescontes*
And it became the *Commorientes*,
Written by Plautus. In an early scene
Of the Greek play a courtesan had been 10
Nabbed by a youth, but Plautus took away
That part. Our poet, though, put in this play
That very part, translating word for word,
And this new play is ready to be heard.
Decide, then, if a theft has been committed
Or something was restored that was omitted
Before. Now what those nasty people say –
That noble men helped him to write the play –
The poet takes as splendid approbation
What they believe is an abomination, 20
Because he pleases all of those who please
Us all in our responsibilities,
In war, in peace, and show no vanity.
Now then, do not expect the plot from me.
The old men will repeat a part to you
And in the playing one more fragment, too.
And make sure, also, that your courtesy
Will swell the poet's skill and industry.

ACT I

SCENE I

Micio:

Hey, Storax! Aeschinus from last night's spread
Has not returned, and that, too, may be said 30
Of all the men sent after him. They say -
And rightly so – if you should stay away
Abroad for some time, it is better you
Are doing what your wife says that you do
Than what your doting parents may conceive
Of you. If you're abroad she will believe
You're having an affair, or at a bar
Or having fun and, when she's sad, you are
In clover. So, because my son's not here,
What am I to imagine and what fear 40
Must I embrace? Has he caught cold? Has he
Had a bad fall? Sustained some injury?
Alas, that any man could contemplate
A thing like that and think he's found a mate
He loves more than himself! However, he
Is not mine but my brother's progeny,
And from his youth he's been quite different.
I've lived a comfortable life in town, content
And – what they think a lucky thing – unmarried.
But to the contrary, he's always tarried 50
Out in the countryside laboriously
Though poor. He has a wife and progeny –

Two sons. The older I took in. I brought
Him up from infancy and always thought
Of him as my own son. I took my joy
In him, my only care. But that the boy
Might love me, too, I took great care. So I
Would give him presents and turn a blind eye
When he was naughty. My authority
In everything was not obligatory.

60

In other words, what other lads have done
And never told their folks, I trained my son
Never to hide from me. For those who lie
And double-cross their fathers by and by
Will do the same things much more easily
To others. For I think by charity
And sense of shame a child is more controlled
Than by dismay. My brother does not hold
This view. He often yells, "What's up with you,
Micio, spoiling him, letting him screw

70

And drink? Why cosset him financially?
You dress him much too well. Such idiocy!"
He's stricter than what's fair. For anyone,
As I believe, who thinks dominion
With force is stronger than that which is founded
On friendship errs. In this view I am grounded.
A man who's roughly-used is constantly
On guard, in fear that his iniquity
Will be found out: in hopes it stays concealed,
He to his old proclivities will yield.

80

He whom you treat, though, with consideration
Will always act out of his inclination.

Returning like for like, here or away,
He's just the same. This is a father's way –
Rather to train his son that he might make
His choices on his own terms than to quake
In fear of someone else. Accordingly
Fathers differ from masters. Therefore he
Who cannot do this will have to concede
He cannot govern children. And indeed 90
Is this not such man I speak of? Yes!
He's looking sad: he's scolding, then, I guess.
As usual. Ah, I am glad to see
You well, Demea.

SCENE II

Demea:

We meet happily:

You're just the man I want to see.

Micio;

You're sad!

But why?

Demea:

You ask me that when we've a lad

Like Aeschinus?

Micio:

[aside] I knew it! [to Demea] What's he done?

Demea:

You ask me what he's done? This lad, our son,

Who feels no shame at all, who has no awe

Of anyone, who thinks there is no law 100

That can restrain him? Well, I will pass by

If you perhaps did something out of need,
Do you want to be thanked for it? Indeed,
That's so unfair. If both of us had had
The means, we would have acted like our lad.
Were you a man, you'd let your other boy
Do likewise while his youth he can enjoy.
However, once he's seen the back of you,
He'll be of a more sober age to do
Those things.

130

Demea:

You drive me mad! So it's no crime

For youths to act like that?

Micio:

Time after time

You din my ears. Listen! You gave to me
Your son to be adopted, and so he
Became mine, so if he should fall from grace,
Then it's against me: therefore I will face
The greater part of blame. If he should dine
At banquets, smell of perfume, guzzle wine,
It's on my tab. To love is he inclined?
I'll give him funds, should I be of a mind
To help him. If I'm not, he'll probably
Be thrown out of his mistress' door. Has he
Broken some doors? They'll be repaired. He's torn
A garment? It will be resewn and worn
Once more. I'm rich enough, and so far it
Is not an inconvenience. So quit
Your talk or find an umpire. But I'll show
That you are most to blame in this.

140

Demea:

Oh! Oh!

Learn how to be father from someone

Who *is* one.

Micio:

He's indeed your natural son

150

But he is mine through my anxiety.

Demea:

You? Anxious?

Micio:

Ah, if you keep on at me,

I'm off!

Demea:

Ha! At it again!

Micio:

Am I to hear

The same old thing so often?

Demea:

He is dear

To me.

Micio:

To me as well. So let's take care
Of him, each dealing equally with his share
Since taking care of both is practically
Like taking back the lad you gave to me.

Demea:

Ah, Micio!

Micio:

I have that feeling, too.

Demea:

How can I answer? If it pleases you, 160

Then let him squander, spend, annihilate.

If I say more hereafter –

Micio:

Still irate,

Demea?

Demea:

Do I lack credibility?

Do I ask for him back? It bothers me:

I am not unrelated. Ah, I'm done

With meddling. I should take care of one

Of them, you say, and this I surely do.

He's as I wish, thank God. But as for you,

Your lad will learn in time. I do not care

To blame him anymore. [Exit]

Micio:

There's something there 170

In what he says, not all, though. Nonetheless

Something compels in me uneasiness,

Though I refused to show it – he's the kind

That, when I try to calm him down, I find

I counter and resist him steadily.

And yet, unlike most of humanity,

He takes it badly. But, should I increase

His anger or attempt to make our peace,

I'd be as mad as him. But Aeschinus

Has proved himself somewhat injurious 180

To me. What ladies of the night has he

Not screwed or given presents? Recently

(Perhaps it was though boredom of the lot

Of them) he said he wished to tie the knot.

I had great hopes at last the fieriness

Of youth had left him. Ah, such happiness!

But now the lad's up to his tricks once more

And I am resolute to know the score.

He may be at the forum. Off I go

Thither to find out what I need to know.

ACT II

SCENE I

Sannio:

You people, help a wretched man, I plead!

I'm innocent! Assist a man in need!

Aeschinus:

Stand still! Don't look back! There's nothing to fear.

That man will never touch you while I'm here.

Sannio:

In spite of all, I'll have her –

Aeschinus:

Though he's bad,

Another beating like the one he's had

He'll never risk.

Sannio:

To know my occupation,

Aeschinus, listen closely. My vocation

Is pimp.

Aeschinus:

I know.

Sannio:

A splendid man am I

As ever was seen. And when you, by and by,

200

Make your excuses that your injury

Has not been at my hands, believe you me

I'll prosecute my rights and you won't pay

With words for all the wrongs you did this day

To me. I know those tricks of yours – “O how

I wish this hadn't happened!: I will vow
You don't deserve this pain", when I in fact
Was treated with a most disgraceful act.

Aeschinus [to Parmeno]:

Quick! Through the door!

Sannio:

Hah, that won't help one bit.

Aeschinus [to the girl]:

Now then step in.

Sannio:

And that I won't permit. 210

Aeschinus:

Step this way, Parmeno, for over there
Is too far for our purposes. Take care
To stand near him. That's right. Now, never take
Your eyes away from me until I make
The sign that you should instantaneously
Punch him right in the jaw.

Sannio:

I'd like to see

Him make that move on me!

Aeschinus:

Now Parmeno,
Watch what will happen [to Sannio] Let the woman go! [Parmeno strikes him]

Sannio:

Ow! Ow!

Aeschinus:

He will repeat that blow unless
You're very careful.

Sannio:

Aeschinus:

I didn't give the sign, but that's OK.

Now go.

Sannio:

Aeschinus, what's this? Do you hold sway

Around here?

Aeschinus:

If I *did* hold sway, you'd be

Exalted.

Sannio:

What is it you want from me?

Aeschinus:

Nothing.

Sannio:

What? Do you know me?

Aeschinus:

Rather I

Don't want to.

Sannio:

Have I ever, on the sly,

Touched anything of yours?

Aeschinus:

You'd have to pay

With blows if you had done so.

Sannio:

Well then, say

What right you have to own the property

I paid for?

Aeschinus:

Better quit this mockery

230

Before the house because, if you abide

By this abuse, you will be borne inside

And whipped to death.

Sannio:

What, whipped? A man like me,

A freedman?

Aeschinus:

Yes.

Sannio:

O such depravity!

Is this the place where they say everyone

Has equal liberty?

Aeschinus:

If you are done

With raving, listen here!

Sannio:

I raved at you?

Or you at me?

Aeschinus:

Stop all that nonsense, do!

Stick to the point!

Sannio:

The point?

Aeschinus:

Do you want me

To speak of what concerns you?

Sannio:

Certainly.

240

As long as it's quite fair.

Aeschinus:

A pimp, indeed,

Wants me to speak of fair things!

Sannio:

I concede

That I'm a pimp, a common plague to youth,

A perjurer, a pest, and yet in truth

I've never caused you grief.

Aeschinus:

So far!

Sannio:

Let us

Go back to our first subject, Aeschinus.

Aeschinus:

For twenty you have bought her: may your deal

Not thrive! I'll pay you that.

Sannio:

What if I feel

Unwilling? Will you force me to?

Aeschinus:

Not me.

Sannio:

I feared you might.

Aeschinus:

A woman who is free,

250

I think, cannot be sold. I claim her through

Action of freedom. Think what you should do –

Accept the cash I'll pay or meditate

Upon the weight of law. Deliberate

Till I return.

Sannio:

It hardly staggers me
That men go quite insane from injury.
You threw me out, beat me, against my will
Took off the lass and caused me so much ill
With countless blows and, to make matters worse,

Insist you pay the same out of your purse 260
As I paid for the wench. Well, let it be,
Since he so well deserves to have her! He
Demands his due. Alright then, I consent.
If he gives me the money, I'm content.
I have a great suspicion, though, that when
He says he bought her, he'll bring several men
As witnesses forthwith to say that I
Sold her. As for the money, my oh my!
It's all a dream – "You'll have it soon", "Ah, come
Tomorrow." If he'd only pay the sum, 270
I could endure it, tough as it will be.
But I think this the true reality –
In this trade you must suffer each bad thing
In silence that young men are apt to bring
On you. I'll get no money, and if I'll
Give it the least reflection, it's futile.

SCENE II

Syrus [to Aeschinus within]:

Shush! I'll arrange it with him, and he'll be
Happy to take the cash. He'll think that he

Is dealt with fairly. [to Sannio] What's this, Sannio,
I hear about a touchy to-and-fro
You had with Master?

280

Sannio:

Never has there been
A more unequal fight than what I've seen
Today. We're tired out, I from the beating
That I received from him and he from treating
Me thus.

Syrus:

Whose fault is that, then?

Sannio:

But what can
I then have done?

Syrus:

Yield to the younger man.Syrus

Sannio:

After offering my jaw??

Syrus:

Do you not see
What I am saying? Look, occasionally
Neglecting cash brings splendid gain.

Sannio:

Oh, oh!

Syrus:

Were you afraid, you stupid do-and-so,
That if you paid a little tiny bit
And humoured him, he would not bolster it?

290

Sannio:

I don't buy hope with cash.

Syrus:

You'll never make

A fortune, then. You don't know how to take

A fellow in. Piss off!

Sannio:

I think that plan

Is better. Never such a cunning man

Am I not to prefer hard cash when I

Can get it.

Syrus:

Ah, your character I spy.

What are those twenty minae when compared

With humouring him? They say you have prepared 300

To go to Cyprus...

Sannio:

Uh-oh!

Syrus:

...and that you

Bought many things to take to Cyprus, too.

Your mind is wavering. When you return,

I hope you'll settle things.

Sannio:

Nowhere to turn!

I've had it. That's why they began this thing.

Syrus:

I've got the villain now – he's trembling.

Sannio:

He's cut me to the quick, the swine. I paid

For many wenches and on board I've laid

More things for Cyprus, and if I can't be

A vendor at the fair, I'm totally

310

Bugged. If I postpone the trip, why, then,

All will be lost when I come back again.

"You're back at last, then? Why the wait? And where

Have you been?" Better is it, then, to bear

The loss than wait so long and then pursue

The matter.

Syrus:

Have you reckoned up your due?

Sannio:

Your boss, then, will demand unworthily

To get the wench by using cruelty?

Syrus [aside]:

He's giving ground. [to Sannio] I've one proposal here:

See if it pleases you. Rather than fear

320

You'll lose it all, divide the sum in two.

He'll get the ten somehow.

Sannio [aside]:

Ah, what to do?

Poor wretch, am I in greater jeopardy

Of losing half of what was promised me?

He's shameless. Thanks to him I am in dread

Of forfeiting some teeth; my aching head

Is full of bumps and now, on top of that,

He's cheating me? [to Syrus] Alright, I tell you flat –

I'm going nowhere.

Syrus:

As you wish. Do you

Have a request before I leave?

Sannio:

I do -

330

In order that I don't seek legal aid,
Return the wench to me – for what I paid
For her at least. I know you never took
Advantage of my friendship. Therefore look
How grateful I can be.

Syrus:

I'll try. But see –

Here's Ctesipho. Why, he's in ecstasy
About his girl.

Sannio:

But I was asking you

About the payment.

Syrus:

Stay little, do.

SCENE III

Ctesipho:

You should be grateful, if you have a need,
For help from any man – more so, indeed,
If one's *obliged* to help you. Brother, brother,
How can I with sufficient spirit smother
You with my praise? One thing is clear to me –
That I can't honour you sufficiently
But that my praise will surely be outshone
By your deserts. For my opinion
Is that I'm luckier than any other
In that I've been provided with a brother

340

Possessing qualities that always go
Beyond all men's.

Syrus:

Ah, Ctesipho! Hello.

350

Ctesipho:

Syrus! Where's Aeschinus?

Syrus:

He waits for you

At home.

Ctesipho:

That's admirable!

Syrus:

What's to do?

Ctesipho:

I'll tell you. It's because of him that I
Still breathe. Oh, he is such a generous guy!
He thinks that everything must take its place
Behind my happiness. For the disgrace,
Discredit, my affair, foolhardiness –
He's taken all upon himself, no less.
What noise is at the door?

Syrus:

Don't make a fuss.

Stay here, stay here. For here comes Aeschinus.

SCENE IV

Aeschinus:

Where is the villain?

Sannio [aside]:

Is he seeking me?

Has he brought something? Hellfire! I can't see

A thing.

Aeschinus [to Ctesipho]:

A meeting most felicitous!

Brother, what's up? Don't be lugubrious.

All's well.

Ctesipho:

I'll not be sad. How could I be

With such a brother? I fear openly

To praise you more lest you believe that I

Flatter you.

Aeschinus:

You silly thing, put that thought by.

We know each other surely, Ctesipho,

By now, and yet it fills me full of woe

370

It almost came too late. We virtually

Were at the very point when remedy

Was hopeless even if all of mankind

Wished to help.

Ctesipho:

I was shamefaced.

Aeschinus:

Never mind –

That's folly, not shame. Such a little thing

That almost leads you to abandoning

Your country! So unspeakable! I pray

The gods may hinder it.

Ctesipho:

I went astray.

Aeschinus [to Syrus]:

And what did Sannio tell us finally?

Syrus:

He's pacified.

Syrus:

Then off I go to see

380

Him paid off at the Forum. Step inside

To her, Ctesipho.

Sannio [aside to Syrus]:

Come on, Syrus, decide!

Syrus:

Let's go because he's keen to be on his way

To Cyprus.

Sannio:

No, not so, but while I stay

I'm doing nothing.

Syrus:

Come, don't be afraid,

You'll get your cash.

Sannio:

All of it must be paid.

Syrus:

Yes, all Shush! Follow there.

Sannio:

I do.

Ctesipho:

Hey, hey,

Syrus. I beg of you, for God's sake pay

390

That dreadful man immediately, lest he

Gets angrier, and somehow it might be

Relayed to Dad, for then I'm totally done.

Syrus:

No problem. Cheer up. Go in and have fun

With her. Order the couches to be laid.

Get all things ready. Once the cash is paid,

I'll come back with provisions.

Ctesipho:

Do I pray.

Since all is fine, let's have a joyful day

ACT III

SCENE I

Sostrata:

Dear nurse, how will it end?

Canthara:

Very well, I trust.

Sostrata:

But, darling one, her birthing pains are just 400

Beginning.

Canthara:

You're in fright just now, as though

You've never given birth.

Sostrata:

I'm full of woe.

There's no-one here. I'm all alone, poor wretch!

Geta's not here, and there's no-one to fetch

The midwife or to send for Aeschinus.

Canthara:

He'll be here soon – he always visits us

And never skips a day.

Sostrata:

Sole consolation

To me is he.

Canthara:

Mistress, this situation

Is better for your daughter than it might

Have been, for she was in a dreadful plight. 410

Lucky indeed for such a man, for he

Has such a splendid personality
And such nobility. It's as you say
And therefore, o you gods, guard him, I pray.

SCENE II

[enter Geta]

Geta:

Our state's so awful that, if anyone
Looked for a remedy for what's been done
To me, my mistress and her girl, even so
They could not find one. I'm so full of woe!
So many griefs surround us suddenly,
Impossible to banish – poverty, 420
Betrayal, cruelty, torment, disgrace!
O what an age is this! Accursed race!
Such sin! Such villainy!

Sostrata:

Oh misery!

Here's Geta coming hither hastily,
Frightened.

Geta:

No oaths or promise can melt
Or move that evil man – he's never felt
Pity. The imminent delivery
Of that unhappy woman on whom he
Committed shameful violence has not
Affected him.

Sostrata [to Canthara aside]:

I just can't make out what 430

He's saying.

Canthara:

Let's get closer.

Geta:

Misery

Surrounds me. I am near insanity.

I'm furious. There is no better thing

That I could wish for but have Fortune fling

That family in my way that I may spew

My anger at them while this wound is new.

I'd suffer anything while I could take

My vengeance on them. First of all I'd shake

The life out of the dotard who produced

That beast. And then that Syrus who induced

440

The crimes that he committed I would rip

And tear in countless pieces. I would grip

Him by the middle, lift him and, head-first,

Hurl him that on the ground his brains might burst

And strew the earth. As for the stripling, I

Would tear his eyes out and then from some high

Precipice fling him, while the rest I'd rush

Upon, drive, drag, trample upon and crush.

But why do I delay? I have to tell

My mistress.

Sostrata:

Geta, stay.

Geta:

Oh, go to Hell,

450

Whoever you are.

Sostrata:

I'm Sostrata.

Geta:

Indeed?

Where are you? You are just the one I need

To see. How opportune!

Sostrata:

You seem in fright,

Geta. Just take a breath. What's up?

Geta:

I'm quite –

Sostrata:

Quite what?

Geta:

Undone. This is the end for us.

Sostrata:

Explain to me.

Geta:

Now –

Sostrata:

Now what?

Geta:

Aeschinus –

Sostrata:

Yes? Aeschinus?

Geta:

- Forsook our family.

Sostrata:

All's over for me, Geta. Why? Tell me.

He's got another wench.

Sostrata:

Aah!

Sostrata:

And it's not

A secret either: openly he got

460

Her from a pimp by stealth. Such robbery!

Sostrata:

Are you quite sure?

Geta:

Yes, unequivocally.

I saw the deed myself.

Sostrata:

How piteous!

What to believe? And whom? Our Aeschinus!

Our very life, on whom our hopes all lay,

Our comforts! He who swore that not one day

Would he survive without her by his side.

He also said that he would place his pride

And joy, his son, upon his father's knees

And thereby, in the hope of all his pleas,

470

He'd be allowed to wed her.

Geta:

Ah, don't cry,

Mistress, but think about what by and by

Should happen. Should we suffer silently

Or make it known?

Canthara:

This is insanity!

What? Make it known?

Geta:

Well, I am not too keen

Myself for that, and, first of all, we've seen

His views are different from ours. If we

Should make it known, he'll categorically

Deny it, I am sure. Your reputation

And daughter's traits will cause some hesitation 480

In others. But if he were to admit

His new affair, it'd not help her one bit.

We have to keep a silent pact.

Sostrata:

No way!

Geta:

What?

Sostrata:

I'll tell all.

Geta:

Be careful what you say,

Sostrata.

Sostrata:

This dilemma is the worst

That we could ever undergo. Look, first,

She hasn't got a dowry; secondly,

What almost counts as such has gone: for she

Is not a virgin and therefore cannot

Be wed. If he denies it, I have got 490

A ring that he has lost as confirmation.

Finally, since there's no disapprobation

Attached to her or me, I'll go ahead.

Geta:

What's that? Well, I agree with what you said
I think you're right.

Sostrata:

Quick! Fast as you can go,
Tell all this to her kinsman, Hegio,
Simulus' loyal friend, for he has shown
Respect to us.

Geta:

Yes, he and he alone!

Sostrata:

Canthara, call the midwife! Quick! Away!
Thus when we need her we may not delay.

500

SCENE III

Demea [to himself]:

I'm totally and utterly undone,
For I have heard that Ctesipho, my son,
Accompanied that Aeschinus when he
Took off the girl. This sorrow stays with me
If he can lead him to such dissipation.
Where can I pick up my investigation
Of him? He's in some cook-shop, I'll be bound.
Yes, I am sure that's where he will be found.
But here comes Syrus. Now I'll find out where
He is. But he is one of them – he'll swear
He doesn't know, if he believes, the swine,
That I am looking for him. Alright, fine,
I will not tell him.

510

Syrus [to himself]:

Just now we have been
To tell the old man all. I've never seen
A happier man.

Demea:

The fool!

Syrus:

He praised his son.
He gave me thanks although I was the one
Who told him of this project.

Demea [aside]:

I'll explode!

Syrus:

He counted out the money that was owed.
He even gave me half a mina, too.
I liked that.

Demea [aside]:

Huh! Go to this man if you
Want something nicely done!

520

Syrus:

I didn't see
You there, Demea. What's up?

Demea:

You ask me
What's up? Well, I'm astonished at the way
You live.

Syrus:

It's silly, I have got to say.
Go, Dromo, and clean all the other fish,
And let the largest eel to grace its dish
Play in the water for a while, and when

I'm back, it shall be boned. Not before then,
However.

Demea:

Ah, such sin!

Syrus:

It niggles me

As well. I rail against it frequently.

530

Look after the salt fish, Stephanio,

And make sure that you soak it nicely.

Demea:

Oh,

Does he have plans, or does he think that he

Should be commended that his progeny

He's ruined? O God, I foresee the day

When, fleeing poverty, he'll run away

And join the army.

Syrus:

It is wise to see

Not only what's before your face but be

Aware of what the future will betide.

Demea:

Do you still have the lutist?

Syrus:

She's inside.

540

Demea:

Then will he live with her?

Syrus:

I think so, yes.

He's mad!

Demea:

How can this be?

Syrus:

Well, at a guess,

Because his father's stupidly carefree

And treats the boy much too indulgently.

Demea:

My brother shames and grieves me.

Syrus:

There is too

Much – I can barely say the word, since you

Are here before me – inconsistency

Between you: you are undeniably

Clear-headed, he's a dreamer. So, would you

Give licence to that son of yours to do

550

Such things?

Demea:

Six months before he thought about

A deed like that I would have smelt it out.

Syrus:

You need not tell me of your watchfulness.

Demea:

May he continue in his righteousness.

Syrus:

Sons turn out as their fathers wish and pray.

Demea:

What of him now? Have you seen him today?

Syrus:

What, do you mean your son? [aside] I have a mind

To send him to the country. [to Demea] You should find

He's long been hard at work at the estate.

Demea:

You're sure?

Syrus:

I saw him off myself.

Demea:

That's great.

560

Demea:

I feared he loitered here.

Syrus:

He's furious

As well.

Demea:

Why?

Syrus:

He got very scurrilous

And used strong words down at the market-place

About the girl with his brother face-to-face.

Demea:

Really?

Syrus;

He did not mince the words that he

Let fly. He interrupted suddenly

The counting of the cash – "O Aeschinus,"

He shouted at his brother. "Scandalous!

A shame upon our house!"

Demea:

I'll weep with bliss.

Syrus:

"Not just the cash you squandered goes amiss

570

But your renown as well."

Demea:

Bless him, for he

Is like the ancients of our family.

Syrus:

Aha!

Demea:

He's full of words like that.

Syrus [aside]

Doggone,

He's heard such words at home to practise on!

Demea:

I work hard, missing nothing, for I school

My boy and order him to make a rule

Of looking at the lives, as in a glass,

Of everyone so that he may amass

Examples for himself. "Do this," I say.

Syrus:

That's very fine.

Demea:

"Avoid this."

Syrus:

That's the way!

580

Demea:

"Praise this."

Syrus:

Oh, that's well said.

Demea:

"This is a crime."

Syrus:

That's good.

Demea:

But then –

Syrus:

Ah, I don't have the time

To listen to you. I've bought some fish that I

Am partial to and must not over-fry –

A crime as great as all your maxims. Thus

To my co-slaves I am meticulous

With like precepts: "too salty", "burnt up quite",

"Needs much more washing", "these are done just right –

Do that next time" : as far as I am able

I coach them to prepare a perfect table.

590

And then I order them to scrutinize

Each dish, as in a mirror, and advise

Them what to do. Yes, they're monotonous,

Those things, but what would you require of us?

Men must be humoured. What more can there be

That you require?

Demea:

Well, more sagacity

From you.

Syrus:

Off to the country, then, are you?

Demea:

Yes, straightaway.

Syrus:

Well, what else could you do

In Rome when all your precepts none will heed?

Demea [aside]:

Yes, I'm off to the country, since indeed

600

That's where my boy is, whom I came to see,
For he's my one responsibility.
Since my own brother, then, would have it so,
Let him tend to the other one. Oho,
Who's that out there so barely in my sight?
My kinsman Hegio? If I see aright,
It surely is – a close friend I have had
For many years ever since I was a lad.
There aren't too many Romans nowadays
Like him – a man who's worthy of much praise 610
For virtue and reliability,
Who'll never undermine the citizenry.
I joy that there is yet some intimation
Of this race. In my life some jubilation
Exists. I'll stop him and find out if he
Is well and with him have some colloquy.

SCENE IV

Hegio:

O Geta! Gods above, such a disgrace!

It's true?

Geta:

It is indeed.

Hegio:

That from that race

Such outrage should ensue! Oh, Aeschinus,

There's never been a deed so scandalous 620

Committed by your father.

Demea [aside]:

Ah, I see

He's heard about the lusty girl and he
Is worried, though a stranger. Micio,
However, doesn't give a damn. Oh! Oh!
Would he were here to hear all this!
Hegio:

Unless

They do what's proper, they'll be in a mess.

Geta:

Now it's upon you all my hopes depend,
Hegio, since you are my only friend,
My father and protector. Simulus,
The old man, as he died, suggested us
To you. Without you we're in jeopardy.

630

Hegio:

Careful! Think hard what you have said to me.
Duty forbids me.

Demea [aside]:

I'll accost him. [to Hegio] Ho!

I bid you solemn greeting, Hegio.

Hegio:

Greetings, Demea. You're the very one
I wished to see.

Demea:

Why's that?

Hegio:

Your elder son,

Adopted by your brother, is no gent –
For he has acted like a decadent.

Demea:

Oh, what has he done now?

Hegio:

Were you acquainted

With my friend Simulus?

Demea:

Yes.

Hegio:

Well, he's tainted

640

Old Simulus's daughter.

Demea:

Hah!

Hegio:

No, stay!

You haven't heard the worst I have to say.

Demea:

What can be worse?

Hegio:

Much; we may have to bear

This somehow. Many things caused this affair –

Night, lust, wine, youth: that's normal. Then, when he

Accepted what he'd done, he wittingly

Went to the wench's mother, promising,

With tearful supplications, that he'd bring

Her to his home. Then he was exculpated,

The deed itself hushed up and tolerated.

650

She proved with child. Nine months have now gone past.

The worthy, should the gods be pleased, at last

Lives with the lutist, and he has forsaken

The other.

Demea:

Are you sure you're not mistaken?

Hegio:

The mother and the girl are here; the deed
Speaks for itself, while Geta is indeed
A splendid slave, industrious, for he
Supports them both and his whole family.
Take him and bind him. Question him.

Hegio:

Oh yes,

Demea, torture me. He will confess.

660

Take me to him.

Demea [aside]:

I'm shamed and do not know

What I should say in answer.

Pamphila [from inside Sostrata's house]:

I am so

Racked with distress. Lucina, succour me.

Hegio:

Has she gone into labour?

Geta:

Certainly.

Hegio

She begs your care, Demea, so concede
That which the law compels. I, then, must plead
To the gods that everything's done properly.
But if, Demea, you think differently,
I'll strive to defend both her and Simulus,
Who was my kinsman, for the two of us
Were reared together from our infancy
And served together in the military;

670

We suffered penury. Therefore I'll try
In every way to help them, even die
Before deserting them. Well?

Demea:

I'll go find

My brother, and what he should have in mind
I'll follow.

Hegio:

But the easier men may be
In life, the greater, too, their mastery,
Wealth, fortune, grandeur, so much more they should
Know justice if they wish to be thought good.

680

Demea:

Go, then, for everything will surely be
Done as it should be.

Demea:

You speak fittingly.

Lead me to Sostrata, Geta. [aside] They have heard
Warnings from me about what has occurred.
Would it would end now! This profligacy,
However, will lead to some tragedy.
I'm off to meet my brother and to vent
My feelings to him.

SCENE V

Hegio:

Sostrata, be content!

Try to console her. I will go to meet

Micio at the forum and repeat

690

All I have heard in order. Let him do
His duty if I find him willing to:
Let him reply, if h thinks differently,
To me so I can find some strategy.

ACT IV

SCENE I

Ctesipho:

My father's in the country, then, you say?

Syrus:

For some time now.

Ctesipho:

What news?

Syrus:

Working away

Down at the farm, I guess.

Ctesipho:

I would that he

Would tire himself out now so totally,

Provided he's still healthy, that he stays

In bed, too beat to rise, the next three days.

700

Syrus:

Or something even better!

Ctesipho:

Yes, quite so,

Because, as I began, I yearn to go

Further upon a binge that lasts all day.

Because the country's hardly far away

I hate it. Were it farther, he'd be caught

By overtaking night before he sought

To come back here. But when he can't find me

Out there, I'm certain he'll come hurriedly

Back here. He'll ask me where I've been and say

To me that I have not seen him today.

710

What shall I say?

Syrus:

Does nothing come to mind?

Ctesipho:

Nothing.

Syrus:

So much the worse! Can you not find

A client, friend, guest?

Ctesipho:

Yes. What then?

Syrus:

Well, you

Have dealings with them.

Ctesipho :

Always. That won't do.

Syrus:

It might.

Ctesipho:

During the day, but if I stay

The night here, what the blazes can I say

For an excuse? I wish it were the way

To be with friends at night as well as day.

Be easy, for his moods I know. When he

720

Is fulminating most ferociously,

I make him just as calm as any lamb.

Ctesipho:

How?

Syrus:

Since he likes to hear you praised, I am

Your worshipper, for then I itemize

Your virtues. Like a little boy, he cries

At once.

Ctesipho:

My virtues?

Syrus:

Yes. [coughs]

Ctesipho:

What's up?

Syrus:

Look there –

Talk of the devil. Here he comes. Beware!

Ctesipho:

My father?

Syrus:

Yes.

Ctesipho:

What should we do?

Syrus:

Just flee

Indoors and I will deal with him.

Ctesipho:

If he

Asks questions, you have not seen me: do you

Hear me?

Syrus:

When will you stop your hullabaloo?

730

SCENE II

Demea:

Oh what a state I'm in! For I have yet
Located Micio, and then I met
A farm employee who tells me my son
Isn't in the country. Ah, what's to be done?

Ctesipho [aside]:

Syrus.

Syrus [aside]:

Yes?

Ctesipho [aside]:

Does he seek me?

Syrus [aside]:

Yes.

Ctesipho [aside]:

I'm dead!

Syrus:

Stay calm!

Demea:

Damn! On what ill luck am I fed!

I cannot work it out at all, unless
I think that I'm born for unhappiness.
I am the first to feel our misery,
I am the first to act as Mercury
And spread the news, and I am he alone
Who takes to heart the mischief that is known
To happen.

740

Syrus [aside]:

He's a hoot! The first to know?

But he alone knows nothing.

Demea [aside]:

I will go,

Now I've returned, to see if I can find
My brother.

Ctesipho [aside]:

Syrus, I entreat you, mind

That he'll not end up rushing on us here.

Syrus [aside]:

Be quiet! I'll be cautious, never fear.

Ctesipho [aside]:

I'll never trust you, Syrus. I'll conceal
Myself with her in some storeroom – I feel
That's safest.

Syrus [aside]:

I'll get rid of him.

Demea:

Look here,

There's that rascalion Syrus.

Syrus [aloud]:

Oh, I fear

No-one could stay here if this is the case.

How many masters have I?? Oh, I face

Such grief!

Demea:

What does he want? Why does he fret?

Oh, tell me, sir, is my brother home yet?

Syrus:

“Sir”? What is up with you? I'm all at sea.

Demea:

What's up with *you*?

Syrus:

Can you ask that of me?

Ctesipho beat me up, the lute girl, too.

I'm almost dead.

Demea:

What's this I hear from you?

760

Syrus:

He split my lip. Look at it!

Demea:

Tell me why.

Syrus:

He said I recommended that he buy

The girl.

Demea:

Did you not say that recently

He set off for the country?

Syrus:

Certainly,

But he returned in fury, lashing out

At everyone. Indeed there is no doubt

He should feel shame that he had stooped to pound

An old man whom I used to lug around

When he was just a little lad.

Demea:

Bravo!

You take after your father, Ctesipho.

770

You are a mensch.

Syrus:

Bravo? Well, if he knows

What's good for him, he will repress his blows.

Demea:

He laid it on.

Syrus:

You bet! Most certainly!

To flagellate a wretched maid and me,

A mere slave, too afraid to hit him, too.

Demea:

He couldn't have done better – he thought you

Responsible. Is Micio in?

Syrus:

No.

Demea:

Oh,

I wonder where the man can be.

Syrus:

I know,

But I'll not tell you now.

Demea:

What's that you said?

Syrus:

You heard!

Demea:

Alright, then, I will smash your head.

780

Syrus:

Although I do not know his name, I know

Where he is.

Demea:

Where?

Syrus:

You know the portico

Down near the butcher's shop?

Demea:

Of course.

Syrus:

Go straight,

And when you reach that spot, you will locate

A slope, and soon a chapel you will see

Close to a narrow lane. A wild fig-tree

Stands there. You know it?

Demea:

Yes.

Syrus:

Then go straight through –

Demea:

It's not a thoroughfare.

Syrus:

Oh yes, that's true.

Silly me! Go back, then, to the portico.

It's closer, thus a shorter walk. You know

790

Wealthy Cratinus' house?

Demea:

Yes.

Syrus:

Once you've gone

Past that, go left and you will come upon

Diana's shrine upon the right. You'll see,

Before you reach the gate, a bakery

And joiner's shop beside the pond. He's there.

Demea:

And doing what?

Syrus:

Seats for the open air,
With stout oak legs, he makes.

Demea:

Oh, now I see!

For boozing! Charming! Bu what's stopping me
From going there? [exit]

Syrus:

You skeleton! Then go.

Oh, I will work you hard today, for so 800
He's earned it. Aeschinus intolerably
Lingers, the breakfast's spoiled offensively,
And love's zapped Ctesiphus. Now I'll take care
Just of myself. I'm off to snatch some fare –
The choicest bits I'll take and drink away
While bit by bit I'll lengthen out the day.

SCENE IV

Micio:

I don't see I'm worth praising, Hegio.

I do my duty; the redress I owe

For wrongs is paid, unless you think that I'm

The sort of man who reckons that a crime 810

Is done him if you go on endlessly

About whatever he has done, yet he

Is first to censure. I've not acted so,

And therefore do you give me thanks?

Hegio;

Heck, no!

You are just what you are. But I entreat –

Go to the young girl's mother and repeat

What I told you – the bad thoughts that exist
Are all because of that girl lutanist
And Ctesipho.

Micio:

Should you think that I ought
To do that, then let's go.

Hegio:

A kindly thought; 820
For you will have relieved the young girl's heart,
Who's drowned in grief and hardship, and your part
You'll have fulfilled. And I myself will tell
Her what you told me.

Micio:

No, I'll go as well.

Hegio:

Well done. All those who've landed in distress
Attract somehow an apprehensiveness.
All things they take as slurs and always feel
Neglected through their impotence. Reveal,
Therefore, all this yourself. You should!

Micio:

Quite.

Hegio:

Come into the house, then.

Micio:

Very good. 830

SCENE IV

Aeschinus:

My mind's in bits! How unexpectedly
Have I been struck by this adversity!
I don't know what to do or how to act;
My limbs are weak with fear, and that's a fact.
My mind is, too, for no counsel can see
A place there. Ah, however can I free
Myself from this distress? Such wariness
About me is abundant and, I guess,
This wariness is somewhat justified:
For Sostrata is confident that I'd
840 Purchased the girl just for myself alone.
This very thing was told me by the crone.
Sent for the midwife, accidentally
She met me. Of Pamphila "How is she?"
I asked, "Is her delivery close at hand?
Your errand now, am I to understand,
Refers to that?" She shouted out, "Just leave!
Your promises continue to deceive.
You've duped us long enough." I said to this,
850 "What's up?" She said, "Farewell, go, keep that miss
Who pleases you!" I saw immediately
The skepticism that they had of me.
But still I checked myself so that I said
Nothing about my brother that she'd spread,
That gossip. What was I supposed to say?
That she was for my brother? There's no way
That should be broadcast anywhere. And so
Forget it: for it possibly will go
No further. They won't trust my words, I fear.
860 So many probabilities are here

Against them. I carried her off, I paid
For her, I took her home. All this is laid
Against me, and it's true, I must concede.
Should I have told my father? For indeed
He might have let me wed her. I've been too
Lax. Aeschinus, now smell the coffee, do!
First thing to do, I'll go to them and clear
Myself. Here is the door. O gods, my fear
Is great whenever I begin to knock
Upon this door: it gives me such a shock.

870

Hello! It's Aeschinus. Someone inside,
Come out. There's someone coming. Then I'll hide.

SCENE V

Micio:

Sostrata, as I said, find Aeschinus
And tell him that the facts involving us
Are settled. [aside] Who's that knocking?
Aeschinus [aside]:

I'm undone!

Here is my father.

Micio:

Aeschinus, my son!

Aeschinus [aside]: What business has he here?

Micio:

Oh, did you knock?

[aside] He's silent. Why, then, I believe I'll mock

The boy a bit: he never lets me know

His secret. [to Aeschinus] Won't you answer me?

Aeschinus [confusedly]:

Oh, no, 880

It wasn't me, I think.

Micio:

It wasn't you?

Well, I *was* wondering what you had to do

Here. [aside] Oh, he's blushing – everything is fine.

Aeschinus:

What business have you here, Dad?

Micio:

None of mine,

But I have got a certain friend who brought

Me hither from the forum since he sought

Advice from me.

Aeschinus:

Why is that?

Micio:

Well, you see,

Some women live in dire poverty

Right here. I'm pretty certain you don't know

These women since it was not long ago

890

They moved here.

Aeschinus:

Ah, and so...?

Micio:

There is a girl

Who lives here with her mother.

Aeschinus:

Well, unfurl

Your story.

Micio:

Since the father's dead and he –
My friend – is next of kin, the laws decree
That he must marry her.

Aeschinus [aside]:

That's it – I'm dead!

Micio:

What's up?

Aeschinus:

Oh, nothing, truly. Go ahead.

Micio:

He's come to take her with him far away,
For he lives in Miletus.

Aeschinus:

Hah! You say

He's taking her?

Micio:

Right.

Aeschinus:

To Miletus?

Micio:

Yes.

Aeschinus [aside]:

O gods, I am chock-full of wretchedness.

900

[to Micio] What do they say?

Micio:

What would you reckon? Why,
Nothing. The mother hatched a seeming lie

That some man, though she doesn't give his name,
Fathered the boy she bore, and, since he came
Before my friend, he has priority.

Aeschinus:

Is that not justice?

Micio:

No.

Aeschinus:

No? Honestly?

Your friend should take her?

Micio:

Why not?

Aeschinus:

Father, you

Are harsh and pitiless, unworthy, too,

If I may speak my mind.

Micio:

Why so?

Aeschinus:

How can

You ask me that? How do you think that man

910

Who knew her first must feel, what misery

He must be in when he is here to see

Her snatched away? A shameful deed!

Micio:

Why say

Such things? Give reasons. Who gave her away?

And who betrothed her? To whom was she wed,

And when? Who brought all those things to a head?

Why marry someone who was meant to be

Another's wife?

Aeschinus:

But was it fair that she,
A nubile maid, should patiently delay
At home until a kinsman came her way
To claim her? Father, how could you defend
All that?

920

Micio:

Ridiculous! Why, in the end,
Should I decline to give my voice to one
For whom I'm here as advocate? My son.
What is all this to us? And how are they
Of any use to us? Come, let's away.
Why are you weeping?

Aeschinus:

Listen to me, do,
Father!

Micio:

I've heard all this, and I love you.
And therefore everything you do I heed
And am concerned about.

Aeschinus:

And so indeed,
Father, I hope to earn your love as long
As you may live, and so my grievous wrong
I rue, and I'm ashamed.

930

Micio:

Whole-heartedly
I do believe you, for well-known to me
Is your goodwill, and yet I fear that you

Are too unsympathetic. For where do
You think you live? My son, you have defiled
A girl upon whom you should not have *smiled*
Even. A massive sin, but human, too:
Others have often done the same as you.
But after doing it, did you take heed
Of what do and how? For if indeed
You shamed to tell me of it, how could I
Learn of it? Ten full months have since gone by.
You've put at risk yourself, your progeny,
And that poor girl. What did you honestly
Expect? That while you slept the gods would set
It all to rights and, just like that, you'd get
Her in your bed? I'd not wish you to be

940

As lax in other things. Look cheerily -
You'll have her.

950

Aeschinus:

What?

Micio:

Look cheerily, I said.

Aeschinus:

Look, father, are you messing with my head?

Micio:

Me? Why?

Aeschinus:

I do not know, but it's maybe
Because I yearn for her so desperately,
I fear it may not happen.

Micio:

Alright, go

On home and pray the gods will make it so.

Aeschinus:

That I may wed her now?

Micio:

That's what I say,

As soon as possible.

Aeschinus:

O father, may

The gods hate me if I do not love you

More than my eyes.

Micio:

More than the lady, too?

960

Aeschinus:

As well.

Micio:

How kind!

Aeschinus:

Where's the Milesian man?

Micio:

He's left, on board a ship. Quick as you can!

Aeschinus:

Pray to the gods yourself – I'm of a mind,

Father, that they will always be more kind

To you, for you're the better man.

Micio:

I'll head

Indoors to ready things. Do what I said.

If you are wise.

Aeschinus [aside]:

What is all this? Does he

Appear to be a father? Similarly,
Am I a normal son? If he had been
A brother or a buddy, I'd have seen
No more goodwill. Can he be loved? Should he
Be set within my bosom? Certainly.
Then all the more I need to be aware
Of the responsibility that his care
Demands. So I'll be prudent. Why delay
To go in and arrange my wedding-day?

SCENE VI

I'm spent with walking. May great Jove confound
Syrus for his directions. I've crept round
The town, the gate, the pond... Well, everywhere!
And I have found no joiner's building there.
No-one has seen my brother. I'll wait here,
Where he abides, until he should appear.

SCENE VII

Micio [to those within]:

I'll tell them we'll be quick.

Demea:

Look over there!

It's him! [to Micio] Micio, I have looked everywhere
For you for ages.

Micio:

Why?

Demea:

I've brought to you

Bad tidings of the youth.

Micio:

Aha!

Demea:

They're new,

And shattering!

Micio:

Oh yes??

Demea:

You do not know

The sort of man he is.

Micio:

I do.

Demea:

Oho,

You're dreaming. He defiled a citizen,

A virgin.

Micio:

Yes, I know.

Demea:

Alright, why, then,

Put up with it?

990

Micio:

Why not?

Demea:

Won't you go mad

And shout about it?

Micio:

No, I wish –

Demea:

A lad

Was born!

Micio:

The gods preserve the little one!

Demea:

The girl has nothing.

Micio:

So I've heard.

Demea:

Your son

Must marry her undowried, then?

Micio:

Of course.

Demea:

Then what will happen?

Micio:

Well, the case perforce

Demands it – she'll be brought here.

Demea:

That's the way

It must be done?

Micio:

What else am I to say?

Demea:

If it should not grieve you, you should pretend

It does.

Micio:

I have betrothed her – that's the end;

1000

The wedding is today; goodbye to fear!

That's what I ought to do.

Demea:

So does this cheer

You, Micio?

Micio:

No, if the present plight

Can't be avoided. If so, I will bite

The bullet. Life's a gamble. Should the die

Cheat you, what should turn up you have to try

To remedy by art.

Demea:

Ah, remedy!

Well, that has caused such prodigality –

A score of minae that was thrown away

Upon a lute-girl for whom we must pay

1010

To throw her out – if not for cash, then we

Must do the same for free.

Micio:

I disagree.

I have no wish to sell her.

Demea:

What, then, pray,

Is your intent?

Micio:

She at my house will stay.

Demea:

For God's sake! What? A lady of the night

With a true lady in one house?

Micio:

That's right.

Why not?

Demea:

You must be mad.

Micio:

I disagree.

Demea:

May the gods love me, your absurdity

I see – it's so that at your house there'll live

Someone to sing with.

Micio:

Why not?

Demea:

And you'll give 1020

Her lessons?

Micio:

Yes.

Demea:

You'll dance, too?

Micio:

Probably.

Demea:

Huh?

Micio:

And with you, if a necessity

Occurs.

Demea:

Aren't you ashamed?

Micio:

Just terminate

This rage. Instead, Demea, celebrate

The wedding of your son as you should do.

I'll meet with them and then come back to you.

Demea:

Ah, what a life is this! Such craziness!

A woman lives with you, quite dowerless,

A lute-girl, too. Such waste! This lavishness

Has landed that young man in such a mess!

1030

The old man's mad. Salvation couldn't, if she

Herself had craved this, keep her family.

ACT V

SCENE I

Syrus:

Dear little Syrus, you have delicately
Taken care of yourself. Exquisitely
You've done your duty. In the house I've dined
Sufficiently, and now I have a mind
To take a walk.

Demea [aside]:

Look who's come from within.

A fine example, that, of discipline!

Syrus [to himself]:

Here comes the old man. [to Demea] What's up? Why so sad?

Demea:

Rascal!

Syrus:

What's this? Wise maxims?

Demea:

If I had

1040

You as my servant –

Syrus:

You'd be rich and you

Would enhance your possessions.

Demea:

I would do

My best to show you off to everyone

As an example.

Syrus:

Why? What have I done?

Demea:

You ask me that? In all this disarray,
Which is not yet resolved, you drank away,
You villain, as if all were going well.

Syrus:

I wish I'd stayed inside now, truth to tell.

SCENE II

Dromo:

Syrus, hello. Go back to Ctesipho –
He wants you for some reason.

Syrus:

Leave me! Go! 1050

Demea:

What about young Ctesipho?

Syrus:

Nothing.

Demea:

Is he

Inside, you hang-dog?

Syrus:

No.

Demea:

Then what would be

The cause to mention him?

Syrus:

OK, alright,

It's someone else, a little parasite.

You know him?

Demea:

I will soon. [goes to the door]

Syrus [stopping him]:

What's up, though? Where

Are you about to go?

Demea [struggling]:

Will you forbear!

Get off me!

Syrus:

Please don't.

Demea:

Take your hands off me!

Or would you have your brains entirely

Knocked out? [rushes into the house]

Syrus:

He's gone. No boon-companion

For Ctesipho, indeed for anyone!

1060

The only thing for me to do is hide

In some dark place until these storms subside

And quieten down. Meanwhile I'll sleep and dream

Away the wine I've drunk. Yes, that's my scheme.

SCENE III

Micio:

Sostrata, everything, as I told you,

Has been prepared, just when you like. But who

Is beating down my door so forcefully?

Demea:

What shall I do? What will become of me?
How shall I frame my grievance? Shall I shout?
O sky, o earth, o sea!

Micio [aside]:

He has found out

1070

The whole thing and now yells it to the skies.

A quarrel will ensue. I must devise

A plan to help him, though.

Demea:

Ah, here is he

Who has defiled our common progeny.

Micio:

Calm down! Regain your wits!

Demea:

I have done so,

And all of my reproaches I've let go.

Let us resolve it all. Between us two –

And I believe it was proposed by you –

I was resolved you should not intercede

In dealings with my son and I would need

1080

To step away from care for Aeschinus.

Answer me.

Micio:

Yes, that was agreed by us.

Demea:

So why's he boozing at your house? And why

Is he *chez vous* at all? Why did you buy

A mistress for him? The fair-mindedness

That you have shown to me is so much less

Than I have shown to you. I don't take care

Of yours, and therefore it is only fair

You don't take care of mine.

Micio:

Your reasoning

Is not impartial.

Demea:

No?

Micio:

For everything

1090

Is shared by friends – an old precept that's true.

Demea:

Oh, smartly said! That just occurred to you,

Did it?

Micio:

If you don't mind, Demea, heed

These few words. First of all, then, you have need

To think about it if the recklessness

Of our two sons has caused you some distress.

Back then you brought them up according to

Your fiscal circumstances, because you

Thought both of them would be forced to get by

On what you had. And then you thought that I

1100

Should marry. Keep that ancient saw in mind –

Scrabble, be economical and find

Enough to leave to them: take that acclaim

Yourself, and let my worldly goods, which came

Surprisingly, be spent by them. There'll be

No diminution of that quantity.

Think of the whole of it as revenue.

Think carefully, Demea, for then you

Will save us four from great anxiety.

Demea:

It's not the cash but their morality 1110

I care about.

Micio:

No, wait. I am aware

Of what you're speaking of, Demea. There

Are many signs appearing in mankind

Where speculation you may easily find.

When two men do the same thing, you may say

Quite often, you may find that one man may

Be pardoned for it while the other one

May not, although the deed that they have done

Is no way different, but the other man

It is who's different. When these signs I scan, 1120

I'm confident that it will all turn out

As we would wish, for then I have no doubt

He's bright and skilled, displaying modesty

From time to time, possessing amity

For friends, pliant by nature: any day

That man may be reclaimed. And yet you may

Be apprehensive that he may disdain

Your interests. For as we grow old we gain

Wisdom In all things else, Demea. This

Is the one fault n which we are remiss; 1130

We're more solicitous than we should be

About our interests, and sufficiently

We sharpen them when old.

Demea:

The, Micio,

We must take care that they don't overthrow
Us both.

Micio:

Demea, shush! That will not be.
Expunge it from your mind. Attend to me
Today and smooth your brow.

Demea:

I must do so:

The time demands it. After that, I'll go
To the country with my son at break of day.

Micio:

I'll go tonight, I think. Cheer up, I say. 1140

Demea:

I'll take the girl with me.

Micio:

Then you'll have won,
For in that way you'll have detained your son.
See that you keep her, though.

Demea:

I will; I must.

She will be overwhelmed with flour-dust
And smoke and ashes, since I'll make her grind
And cook, so that at mid-day you would find
Her picking stubble, burnt and black as coal.

Micio:

That pleases me, for you are, bless my soul,
A wise man. Though he may be disinclined,
I'll force the boy to bed her.

Demea:

Do you find

That funny? You, indeed, a happy guy,
With such a temper! I think –

Micio:

My oh my,

He's at his tricks again.

Demea:

I'll stop – OK?

Micio:

Let's go in and prepare for the big day.

SCENE IV

Demea:

There never was a person so well-bred
And so refined but that into his head
Come new thoughts springing from experience
And age and custom, so that what you sense
You know you don't know and what you before
Believed was most important you abhor.

1160

That is the case with me, for I forsake
The rigid life I've lived as now I take
My final steps to death. Why? I can see
By my experience that clemency
And graciousness are best. Easily seen
By any is the difference between
My brother and myself. For he has spent
His life in sociability and content,
Mild, gentle, peaceable, for everyone
A ready smile. His race in life he's run
For his own self; the money that he's made

1170

Was for himself, and everyone has paid
Him great respect and loved him. As for me,
I have a boorish personality –
I'm rigid, self-denying and morose
As well as being truculent and close.
I married and two sons were born to us,
An added care. I was solicitous
To do the best for them. My greediness,
However, has brought me such wretchedness. 1180
But now, when to my dotage I have come,
All my hard work has brought their odium.
But he enjoys a father's cheer, for they
Adore him, while from me they run away.
They both confide in him. By him they say,
While I am desolate. For him they pray
That he may live. They wait impatiently
For my demise; with little outlay he
Has laboured hard to raise them and now they're
His own; the misery from all this I bear, 1190
The joy is his. Come on, then, let me see
If I am able to speak courteously
And act with kindness if he should invite
Me to be thus, and also I'd delight
In having friends who think a lot of me.
So if goodwill and generosity
Will get me that, I will not be behind
My brother, but if in this plan I find
I fail, I will not care too much, for I
Am older and thus sooner apt to die. 1200

SCENE V

Syrus:

Demea, your brother begs that you not stay
Too long away.

Demea:

Who's that? Syrus! Good-day!

How are you? How's it going?

Syrus:

Splendidly.

Demea:

That's great! [aside] I've said, right there, unnaturally,
Three greetings. [to Syrus] You're not an unworthy lad.
I'll offer you a service.

Syrus:

I am glad

And thank you.

Demea:

Ah, yes, Syrus, it is true.

And soon you'll find out how it profits you.

SCENE VI

Geta [to Sostrata, within]:

Mistress, I'm off to see them that they may
Send for the damsel, and without delay.

1210

Ah, here's Demea. Greetings to you!

Demea:

Who

Are you?

Geta:

Geta.

Demea:

Today I've learned that you
Are of great worth because undoubtedly
A slave who serves his master heedfully
Is splendid and this quality I've seen,
Geta, in you, and therefore am I keen,
If there should be an opportunity,
To aid you. [aside] There's the affability
I'm practising. It's going well.

Geta:

How fine

To think so, sir!

Demea [aside]:

The plebs will soon be mine!

1220

SCENE VII

Aeschinus:

They're killing me with nuptial machinations.

The day is wasted with their preparations.

Demea:

How goes it, Aeschinus?

Aeschinus:

Father, you're here?

Demea:

In nature, yes, and in paternal cheer.

More than my eyes I love you. Why don't you

Send for your wife?

Aeschinus:

That's what I yearn to do.

I'm waiting for the flute-girl, and I need

The wedding-singers.

Demea:

Come now, will you heed

An old man?

Aeschinus:

Why?

Demea:

Give no consideration

To all of that – the song, illumination 1230

From torches, flute-girls, crowds. For I decree

That you tear down, as quickly as can be,

The stone wall in the garden. Bring your spouse

Across that wall and set up just one house,

And bring the mother and the servants, too.

Aeschinus:

O dearest father, that I'll happily do.

Demea:

That's fine. [aside] He calls me "dearest"! Micio,

My brother, will be free to come and go

That way. He'll bring to us much company

At great expense. But what is that to me? 1240

I'm "dear" now and I will be liked. And so

Allow that Babylonian to go

And pay his twenty minae. [to Syrus] Off with you!

Do what I ordered!

Syrus:

What am I to do?

Demea:

Tear down the wall! [to Geta] And, Geta, off you go

And bring them all.

Geta:

Demea, you are so

Kind to my family, and therefore may

The gods bless you. [he leaves]

Demea:

Aeschinus, what d'you say?

I think that they deserve it.

Aeschinus: I agree.

Demea:

More suitable than that poor girl should be 1250

Brought through the streets in childbed.

Aeschinus:

I concur –

It's such a better way to carry her,

Father.

Demea:

Well, that's the way I show I care.

But Micio is coming out. Look there!

SCENE VIII

Micio:

My brother ordered it? So where is he?

[to Demea] Did you, then, order it?

Demea:

Why, certainly.

In all things I am anxious to unite,
Cherish and aid this family.

Aeschinus:

Alright.

I pray it may be so.

Micio:

I'm for it, too

Demea:

Indeed it is the thing we ought to do.

1260

She is his spouse's mother.

Micio:

Certainly.

And...?

Demea:

She's the very cream of modesty

And virtue...

Micio:

So they say.

Demea:

...and getting on

In years...

Micio:

I know.

Demea:

...her fertile days long gone,

And no-one to look after her, for she

Is all alone.

Micio [aside]:

So what's the relevancy

Of this?

Demea:

And therefore I believe it's fit

That you should wed he. [to Aeschinus] Try to see that it

Is done.

Micio:

Wed her?

Demea:

Yes.

Micio:

Me?

Demea:

Yes.

Micio:

Having fun,

Are you?

Demea [to Aeschinus]:

If you're a man, this will be done.

1270

Aeschinus:

Father –

Micio:

You crazy idiot! Would you heed

This man?

Demea:

It's all in vain; for it indeed

Cannot be otherwise.

Aeschinus:

Father, hear me,

I pray.

Micio:

Get lost! This is insanity.

Demea:

Oblige your son.

Micio:

Are you not quite insane?

I'm sixty-five! Would you have me attain

A time-worn wife? Tell me, is this your view?

Aeschinus:

Please, father – I have sanctioned this for you.

Micio:

You've sanctioned it, have you? Young lad, be free

With money that's your own.

Demea:

But what if he

1280

Should offer something more than that?

Micio:

As though

There could be more!

Demea:

Oblige me, please.

Aeschinus:

Don't go

Against us.

Demea:

Promise!

Micio:

Stop!

Aeschinus:

Please!

Demea:

Micio,

Be kind.

Micio:

 If you are so insistent, though
It's wrong, absurd, stupid and contrary
To how I live my life, then I agree.

Aeschinus:

Well said!

Demea:

 For this I love you, but –

Micio:

 What?

Demea:

 I

Will tell when you finally comply
With my request.

Micio:

 What's left?

Demea:

 Their next of kin,

Kin to us, too, is Hegio, who's in

1290

Dire financial straits, so we must try

To help him.

Micio:

 How?

Demea:

 A small farm lies nearby,

Which you lease out. Let's give it him.

Micio:

 It's small?

You're sure of that?

Demea:

Well, yes, but after all,
Even if it were big yet all the same
It should be done. The man is free from blame,
To her a father, one of us, and so
It's only fair. Something that's à propos
You said a while ago I now will say:
"A common vice when we are old and grey
Is selfishness." That blemish let us flee,
For it's well said, and it's obligatory
To heed it in our deeds.

1300

Micio:

He'll get what he
Deserves.

Aeschinus:

My father –

Demea:

We are family,
In mind and body.

Micio:

I'm so glad.

Demea [aside]:

Now I
Will foil you with your weapons by and by.

SCENE IX

Syrus:

Demea, I have done what you bade me
To do.

Demea:

Good man! You ought to be made free,

I think.

Micio:

Why?

Demea:

There are many grounds I can

Come up with.

Syrus:

O Demea, worthy man!

1310

I took care of both boys from babyhood;

I carefully taught them everything I could.

Demea:

That's clear. He catered for them furthermore,

Covertly bringing home to them a whore,

Providing morning feasts, no ordinary

Accomplishments.

Syrus:

O he's so kind to me.

Demea:

Lastly, he helped in purchasing today

The lute-girl, so it's only fair to pay

Him with his freedom. Other servants thus

Will be encouraged. Also, Aeschinus

1320

Agrees.

Micio [to Aeschinus]:

You do?

Aeschinus:

Yes.

Micio:

Well, if you agree –

Come hither, Syrus. I pronounce you free.

Syrus:

A generous deed! My thanks to everyone

And you, Demea, specially.

Demea:

Well done!

Aeschinus:

I second that.

Syrus:

Thank you. I would my wife

Could top this joy and also live a life

That's free.

Demea:

A splendid woman.

Syrus:

The first one

To nurse this man's first-born and your grandson.

Demea:

Then if she was the first to do that, she

Without a doubt should also be set free.

1330

Micio:

For doing that?

Demea:

Indeed. Her price will I

Pay you.

Syrus:

Demea, may the gods on high

Grant all your wishes.

Micio:

You've done well today,

Syrus.

Demea:

And furthermore you will outlay
Some pocket money for his present need.
He'll soon repay you.

Micio:

No.

Demea:

He is indeed
A worthy man.

Syrus:

Upon my word, I'll pay
It back. Please give it.

Aeschinus:

Father, do, I pray.

Micio:

I'll ponder it.

Demea:

He'll give the cash to you.

Syrus:

Great man!

Aeschinus:

Most kindly father!

Demea:

What's to do?

1340

Why have you changed your tune so suddenly?

Why this caprice, this liberality?

Demea:

I'll tell you. I will show you, Micio,

Your well-known easy-come and easy-go
Nature is not derived out of the way
You live your life or from a day-to-day
Feeling of good but from your tendency
To cosseting, pampering and flattery.
So, Aeschinus, since I have not revealed
My pleasant side to you, since I don't yield
To you in just or unjust things, I urge
You – let it go. Therefore be lavish, splurge,
Do what you will. But if you would be taught
About the faults to which you give no thought
Through youth but which you make so wantonly,
I'll be there to correct them presently.

1350

Aeschinus:

Then, father, we will leave it up to you,
For you know best what we will have to do.
But what is to be done with Ctesipho?

Demea:

He'll have his mistress. Thus I bid him go
And put an end to his frivolities.

Micio:

Fine!

All:

Folks, show your appreciation, please.