

EUNUCHUS

Terence

Translated by Christopher Kelk

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PROLOGUE

If there are people eager to delight
As many good men as they can and slight
But few, our poet now enrolls his name
Among them, and if there's someone who'll blame
Him for harsh words, let that man bear in mind
That these are words of a responsive kind,
Not an attack; for he was first to be
The instigator as he literally
Translated plays, creating Latin verse
For good Greek plays, the idiom being worse. 10
Menander's *Apparition* recently
He published and the same man's comedy
Treasure in which someone is asked for gold –
Before the asker says it's his we're told
The reason why the former thinks it ought
To be his own and how the gold was brought
Into his father's tomb. From now on, though,
Let him not fool himself or ponder so:
"I'm done; there's nothing he can say to me."
I warn him to avoid inaccuracy 20
And quit provoking me. I've many more
Points, which for now I will forgive him for
But take up later should he continue
Offending me as he's begun to do.
After the aediles bought the play that we
Will now perform – Menander's comedy
Eunuchus – that man got a studied look
At it, and when the magistrates all took

Their seats, "A thief wrote this," he shouted out,
 "No poet, but he won't cause me to doubt
 His theft. It's *Colax*, penned by Naevius
 And Plautus, an old play that gave to us
 The parts of the soldier and the parasite."
 Is this a fault? No, it's an oversight
 The poet was no thief, but you may see
 Our play and be the judge, The comedy
Colax presents Menander's parasite
 And braggart soldier, which are lifted right
 Out of the Greek, which he does not gainsay,
 Although he does indeed gainsay that they 40
 Were known by him to have been turned into
 The Latin tongue. If it had been taboo
 For others to transcribe those parts, why then
 Could they display scurrying serving-men,
 Fine matrons, nasty whores, a parasite,
 A changeling child? Would it indeed be right
 To show a slave who's always keen to flout
 An old man over love or hate or doubt?
 Nothing is said that's not been said before
 In fact. It's only fair that you therefore 50
 Should know and pardon what our poets pen
 That our ancestors wrote. Attend me, then,
 And hold your peace so that you might find out
 What this *Eunuchus* play is all about.

ACT I

SCENE I

Phaedria:

What should I do, therefore? Should I not go
When she has sent for me? Or should I so
Behave myself as not to tolerate
A whore's affronts? She shut me out, of late
She called me back. No, should she beg and plead,
I will not go.

Parmeno:

If you don't go indeed, 60

You'll show great fearlessness; but once you start
And cannot hold out boldly, then lose heart,
While no-one asks you, and no harmony
Exists between you, you'll go willingly
To her, showing your love for her, and vow
That you can't bear her absence, that is how
Your goose is cooked. She'd jilt you should she see
You're done for. Therefore ponder carefully
While there's still time. Master, you cannot find
Prudence or tact in matters of this kind.

70

In love you'll always see harm, hesitation,
Antagonism, reconciliation,
War, and then peace at last. Should you endeavour
To make sense of such senseless things, you'd never
Succeed, no more than if you tried to be
Insane with reason. Now you're angrily
Thinking, "What? Should I go to her? She who

Received him, spurning me? Ah, why don't you
Leave me alone? I'd rather die; so she
Shall know the sort of man that I can be."

80

The tiny tears she squeezed out were untrue;
Her cheeks now dry, she'll start accusing you,
And you'll give in.

Phaedria:

Disgraceful! Now I see

She's villainous and I'm in misery.
She wearies me and yet I am aflame
For her; I'm still alive, yet all the same
I'm perishing. I don't know what to do.

Parmeno:

Well, with the least expenditure that you
Can manage free yourself from slavery –
If you can't manage it almost scot-free,
Escape as best you can and don't distress
Yourself.

90

Phaedria:

Is that what you advise?

Parmeno:

Oh yes,

If you are wise. Be sure, additionally,
Not to exacerbate love's misery
But handle well whatever it may bring.
But here's the cause of all our suffering,
For she is interrupting the delight
That we should be enjoying as our right.

SCENE II

Thais [to herself]:

Ye gods, I fear that Phaedria won't believe

Why yesterday I chose not to receive

100

Him at my house.

Phaedria [apart, to Parmeno]:

I'm trembling, Parmeno,

Just to cast eyes on her.

Parmeno [apart]:

Be cheerful, though.

Approach her fire: you'll soon be more aflame

Than you would need.

Thais:

Who's that? My love, you came

To me? Why linger? Why did you delay

To go in?

Parmeno [apart]:

Not one more word did she say

Of her rebuff.

Thais:

Such taciturnity!

Phaedria:

Of course, your doorway *always* welcomes me

And I'm your favourite beau!

Thais:

Forget all that.

Phaedria:

Forget it all? Thais, I tell you flat –

110

I would your love were equal to my own,

That this predicament would make you groan
As it does me or I'd not care a jot
About what you inflict on me.

Thais:

Do not

Torment yourself, my love. The reason why
I banned you from my house was not that I
Love someone more than you – oh no indeed.
It was because there was an urgent need
To do it.

Parmeno:

I believe you thoughtlessly

Banned him for love, as you do usually. 120

Thais:

Oh yes? [to Phaedria] But hear the reason why I call
You here.

Phaedria:

Go on.

Thais:

But tell me first of all

If he [pointing to Parmeno] can hold his tongue.

Parmeno:

You can be sure

I can. But on these terms I will secure
My pledge: although if what I hear that's true
I will keep mum about, yet if from you
I hear is fiction, I will let it out;
I'm full of cracks, I leak things like a spout.
If you desire your secret to remain
Just that, a secret, therefore tell the plain 130

And honest truth.

Thais:

My mother, a Samian,
Was an inhabitant of Rhodes.

Parmeno:

I can
Keep *that* a secret.

Thais:

Well then anyway,
A little baby girl was snatched away
In Attica: a certain merchant then
Gave her to Mother.

Phaedria:

What – a citizen?

Thais:

I think so, but we cannot rightly tell.
The names of both my parents she knew well.
The land and other things she didn't know,
And, with her tender years, she could not so. 140
The merchant said the thieves from whom he bought
The child told him that she'd been snatched and brought
From Sunium. Mother comprehensively
Instructed her and bred her as if she
Were her own daughter, and most people thought
That they were sisters. Then that merchant brought
Me here: he was the only friend I had.
He left me all that I possess.

Parmeno:

Too bad!
I spurn those statements – neither one is true.

Thais:

How so?

Parmeno:

One man was not enough for you - 150

He, too, [indicating Phaedria] gave you large gifts.

Thais:

He did indeed;

Allow me to continue, though, and heed

My words. The captain loved me now, but he

Took off for Caria, and subsequently

I met you. Since then you have been aware

Of how I cherish you and how we share

Much counsel.

Phaedria:

Parmeno won't leak that out.

Parmeno:

Oh, is it then a matter of some doubt?

Thais:

Please listen. Mother died just recently.

Her brother hankered after property: 160

He saw this beauteous maiden who could play

The lyre and hoped that folk would wish to pay

A decent price for her. Now luckily

This friend of mine was there and bought for me

This girl, suspecting nothing. He returned,

But when of our affection he had learned,

He thought up explanations why he should

Not give me her. He said that if he could

Be sure that he would be preferred by me

Over yourself and feel a certainty 170

That I'd not leave him, he would acquiesce
And give her, though he felt some fearfulness.
But as I see it, he is hungering
For the young girl.

Phaedria:

No more, though?

Thais:

Not a thing –

I asked about him. I want him away
From her for many reasons: for they say
That she's my sister and that, furthermore,
I should restore her to her comrades. For
I'm all alone - no friends, no family.
I wish to have some friends, so please help me
To make it easier. Give him a few
More days with me. What? No response from you?

180

Phaedria:

Vile woman! After what you've done, how can
I answer?

Parmeno:

Well done, master. You're a man!

You've had enough.

Phaedria:

Your drift I didn't know:

"A little girl was kidnapped; just as though
She were her own, my mother bred her; they
Say that we're sisters; I wish that I may
Restore her to her friends." All that you've said
Amounts to this: I'm out, and in my stead
He's in. And why? You love him more than me

190

And furthermore you have a fear that she
Who was brought here will snatch that man away
From you.

Thais:

I do?

Phaedria:

Well, what else can you say
You care about? Am I the only one
Who gave you gifts? In your opinion
Were those gifts banned? Did I not, when you said
You wished to have a serving-maiden, bred
In Ethiopia, immediately
Go off in search of one? When you told me 200
You wished to have a eunuch, too, since they
Are only used by queens, I went away
And found one. Twenty minae for the two
Of them I paid. Although abhorred by you
I can recall these things. My doing so
Makes you despise me.

Thais:

Phaedria, although
I wish her gone and think that it can be
Effected thus, I'll follow your decree
And save our friendship.

Phaedria:

How I wish that you
Meant those last four words! If I thought them true, 210
I'd suffer anything.

Parmeno [aside]:

How readily

One phrase defeats him!

Thais:

Do you think of me

As false? When you'd ask something in mere play

Of me, you finally would have your way,

Yet I'm unable to obtain from you

A mere two days.

Phaedria:

Well, if it's only two;

Don't let it stretch to twenty.

Thais:

No more, or –

Phaedria:

I don't like "or".

Thais:

No more, but I implore

This of you.

Phaedria:

What you wish for I must do.

Thais:

You're good to me – that's why I dote on you.

220

[to Parmeno] I'm going inland, where I'll crucify

Myself for two days, as I must. But I

Must mollify Thais. Now, Parmeno,

Make sure you get them back.

Parmeno:

I shall do so.

Phaedria:

For two days farewell, Thais.

Thais:

And to you

The same, love. Is there something more that you
Desire?

Phaedria:

Just that to you the captain be
Absent though present, that you dote on me
And feel a longing for me day and night;
Dream of me, wait for me and take delight 230
In me, hope for me, unconditionally
Be with me and in all things, finally,
Be mine as I am yours. [exeunt Phaedria and Parmeno]

Thais:

I fear he sees
In me, as he compares the qualities
Of other women, little probity.
I know myself indeed and certainly
I'm not deceptive, and there is no-one
Dearer to me than Phaedria. What I've done
Was always for the maid; I've virtually
Tracked down her brother, whose nobility 240
Is clear. He's coming to my house today:
I'll go in and until he comes I'll stay.

ACT II

SCENE I

Phaedria:

Have them brought here, in line with my decree.

Parmeno:

I will.

Phaedria:

With care.

Parmeno:

Alright.

Phaedria:

And speedily.

Parmeno:

Alright.

Phaedria:

Clear?

Parmeno:

What? You're asking that of me?

Would that you'd find something as easily

As this gift will be lost!

Phaedria:

Ah, I am lost

Myself – for I would fail at quite a cost.

Don't take it badly.

Parmeno:

Not at all – I'll do

Your bidding. Is there anything more that you

Would have me do?

Phaedria:

I'd have you prettify

The gift with words, as far as you may try

To do, and oust my rival.

Parmeno:

I could hold

That in my mind if you had never told

Me to remember.

Phaedria:

I intend to leave

And go inland and stay there.

Parmeno:

I conceive

That's a good plan.

Phaedria:

But wait!

Parmeno:

Yes? What?

Phaedria:

Do you

Believe that I am able now to screw

My courage to the sticking-place and stay

For two whole days?

Parmeno:

Well, no, I have to say.

260

You'll come back straight away or, as I'd guess,

You'll do so when you're plagued with sleeplessness.

Phaedria:

I'll work so hard that I'll be tired out

And sleep despite myself.

Parmeno:

I have no doubt

You'll still stay wide-awake, and then you'll be

More tired.

Phaedria:

No! You talk nonsensically.

I must discard this weakness from my mind –

I yield to it too much. Can I not find

The backbone, if I must, to stay away

Even for two whole days?

Parmeno:

What's that you say?

270

For three entire days? Think carefully.

Phaedria:

I am resolved. [exit]

Parmeno [to himself]:

What is this malady?

That love so changes men that they can show

Themselves so different that we hardly know

Them anymore! None was less fatuous,

More even-tempered and more serious

Than him. But who comes here? Why, it's Gnatho,

The captain's parasite, who's bringing – oh,

Such beauty! He has brought a gorgeous maid

To give Thais. Oh, how I'll seem to fade!

280

With this decrepit eunuch I'll seem crude.

She rivals Thais in her pulchritude. [stands aside]

SCENE II

Gnatho:

Immortal gods! How one man can surpass

Another! One is wise and one's an ass.

For just today this came into my mind –

I bumped into a fellow of my kind,

A splendid chap: but he had run right through

His father's property (I did that, too).

A filthy, worn man stood before my eyes,

Sick, old, in ragged clothes. "What means this guise?" 290

I asked. "I've lost my livelihood," he said.

"How I'm reduced! I might as well be dead.

All of my friends have now deserted me."

I'd been like him but felt contumely.

I said, "You sluggard, have you lost all hope

And, with your funds, all of your wits, you dope?

You see I've risen from that self-same place

And see now the complexion in my face,

My spruce appearance; see how I'm well-dressed.

I do not own a thing but I am blessed 300

With everything. Although I don't possess

A thing, I'm lacking nothing." "I profess

I cannot be a butt of jokes or be

Beaten," he said. "You think that's slavery?"

Said I. "How wrong you are! Some time ago

That class was called for, but today – oh no!

It's like bird-liming these days. I indeed

Was first to tread this path. There is a breed

Of men who strive to be the first of all

In everything, but are not: these I call
Into my court. These men don't laugh at me
But I laugh with them very willingly,
Admiring their wit: the things they say
I praise, but if they go the other way,
Denying what they've said, I praise that, too,
Denying what has been denied. Do you
Affirm a thing? Then I will. Finally,
I've trained myself in all things to agree –
A most productive calling.
Phaedria [apart, to audience]:

310

Ah, such skill!

He makes fools truly mad.

Gnatho:

While we were still

320

Talking, we reached the market. Promptly then
Fishmongers, sausage-makers, fishermen,
Sweet-makers, cooks and butchers happily
Ran to us. I had served them previously,
In good and bad times catering to them all –
And, often, now. They welcome me and call
Me to their house to dine. When this wretch sees
Me treated with such grand felicities
And that I gained my fare so easily,
The fellow begs that he might learn from me
This method, I say, "Be my follower then,
If you are able to." As all those men
Who teach philosophy give it its name
From their own names, it will be just the same
With my own set – the parasites will be

330

Gnathonics.

Parmeno [apart, to audience]:

Do you see how easily

One lives off other folk?

Gnatho[to himself]:

Ach, why delay

To take this maiden to Thais and say

That she should come for dinner? Ah, I see

Our rival's servant standing gloomily 340

Before Thais's door. So everything

Is fine: they've got a chilly welcoming,

I think. I'll rag the rogue.

Parmeno [to himself]:

Those men are sure

This gift will render Thais quite secure

For them.

Gnatho:

Sincerest greetings, Parmeno!

How are you doing?

Parmeno:

I am standing.

Gnatho:

So

I've noticed. Is there anything you see

That you aren't fond of?

Parmeno:

Yes, you.

Gnatho:

Obviously.

But what else?

Parmeno:

Why d'you ask?

Gnatho:

You seem so sad.

Parmeno:

I'm not sad in the least.

Gnatho:

Well, don't be, lad.

350

How do you like this slave?

Parmeno:

Not bad.

Gnatho [aside]:

I've got

The fellow.

Parmeno [aside, overhearing him]:

Oh, I know that you have not.

Gnatho:

How much will Thais like her?

Parmeno:

Thus you say

We're toast. Well, troubles happen every day.

Gnatho:

The next six months I'll give you, Parmeno,

Much comfort – no more running to and fro

Or watching till first light. That pleases you?

Parmeno:

What – me? It surely does.

Gnatho:

That's what I do

For friends.

Parmeno:

That's fine.

Gnatho:

Don't you have plans to go

Somewhere? I must be keeping you.

Parmeno:

Oh no!

360

Gnatho:

Then let me meet her.

Parmeno:

Look, the doors are wide-

Open so you can take the girl inside.

Gnatho:

You'd not have someone called out? [enters house with the girl]

Parmeno:

Only let

Two days go by: you who can easily get

Inside with one small finger soon will see

You'll kick and kick those doors, but fruitlessly.

Gnatho [coming from house]:

Are you yet standing here now, Parmeno?

Is there no sentinel that he might know

If any mediator might have sped

Between the captain and Thais?

Parmeno:

Well said:

370

There must be wondrous things that can delight

The captain. Someone, though, is in my sight –

My master's youngest son! It puzzles me

That he comes hither from Piraeus – he

Is there on guard. It's urgent, though, no doubt.

I wonder why he's looking all about.

SCENE III

Chaerea [to himself]:

I've had it! I've lost her. I'm lost as well

For letting her run off. I am in Hell!

Where should I look Or ask? Which way to go?

Aha, there is one expectation, though - 380

She can't be lost for long wherever she

May be. Oh, she has such resplendency!

I'll now cast other women from my mind:

I hate those beauties of the common kind.

Parmeno [to himself]:

Well, here's the other one. Now, there's something

He's on about: I think he's rambling

About love. Poor old man! You'd think *that* one

Spoke lucidly once this one has begun

To utter folly.

Chaerea [to himself]:

Ah, may purgatory

Take that old man who has just hampered me; 390

To Hell with me as well in that I give

A damn for him. Here's Parmeno, as I live.

Good-day.

Parmeno:

Why are you glum? Why in a hurry?

Where have you been?

Chaerea:

Oh, I'm in such a flurry

I've no idea whence I have come or on

What quest I am. I'm in oblivion.

Parmeno:

How?

Chaerea:

I'm in love.

Parmeno:

Ha!

Chaerea:

Now then, Parmeno,

Show me what sort of man you are. You know

You often promised me that, should I find

Someone to love, you'd show a willing mind.

400

For under cover in your cell I stored

My father's victuals.

Parmeno:

Look, I'm getting bored.

Your point?

Chaerea:

Make good your vow. If this affair

Is worthy of the task, put all your care

Into it. For this girl's not like those others

Who've been instructed by their anxious mothers

To keep their shoulders down, their bosoms bound,

To show their slenderness. If one is found

A tad too rounded, then they will declare

She's like a boxer and reduce her fare.

410

Their treatment, although they are vigorous,

Makes them seem thin as bullrushes to us,

So they're admired.

Parmeno:

And yours?

Chaerea:

A look that's new.

Parmeno:

Indeed?

Chaerea:

A frame that's firm, a genuine hue,
And full of juice.

Parmeno:

Her age?

Chaerea:

Sixteen.

Parmeno:

That's fine –

A very flower of youth.

Chaerea:

Make sure she's mine
By imprecation, force or secrecy,
For nothing else could matter much to me
So she is mine.

Parmeno:

Who owns her?

Chaerea:

I don't know.

Parmeno:

Where is she from?

Chaerea:

My answer is – ditto.

Parmeno:

Where does she live?

Chaerea:

I still don't know that now.

Parmeno:

Where did you see her?

Chaerea:

In the street.

Parmeno:

And how

Did you lose sight of her?

Chaerea:

That very thing

Gnawed at my mind as I was pondering

The problem as I walked. There is no-one

More cursed than me, I think. I'm quite undone.

Parmeno

What is the matter?

Chaerea:

You ask that of me?

Do you know of my dad's contemporary

And kinsman Archimenides?

Parmeno:

I do.

Chaerea:

He met me as I followed her.

Parmeno:

That's too

430

Untimely.

Chaerea:

Awful, rather. Parmeno,
Commonplace things in life are labelled so.
For six or seven months I'd safely swear
That I'd not seen the fellow anywhere
Till now, when I have very little need
Or urge to see him. Is that not indeed
A fatal blow?

Parmeno:

It surely is.

Chaerea:

He ran
Up to me from afar. Here was this man,
Bent, palsied, drooping-lipped, wheezing. "Hey! Hey!"
He said to me, "I've got something to say 440
To you." I stopped. He said, "Now, do you know
What I would have you do?" "Tell me." "I go
To court tomorrow." "And...?" "Well, at daybreak
Your father promised me that he would take
The witness stand. Remind him of his vow."
He went on, and an hour had passed by now.
And was there something else? I asked. "Oh no,"
He said, "that's everything. I've got to go."
I looked back for the girl, but meanwhile she
Had turned into this street here.

Parmeno [to himself]:

It would be 450
Astounding if by that he did not mean
The girl who's now a gift.

Chaerea:

She could be seen

Nowhere when I got back.

Parmeno:

I guess she might

Have had some servants?

Chaerea:

Yes, a parasite

And a maidservant.

Parmeno [to himself]:

Ah, I know this well.

[to Chaerea]

Your goose is cooked. You've been consigned to Hell.

Chaerea:

You talk of other things apparently.

Parmeno:

Oh no, I talk of this same quandary

Chaerea:

Have you, then, seen the girl? Tell me if you

Know who she might be.

Parmeno:

Yes, I have; I do.

460

I know she took her.

Chaerea:

Really?

Parmeno:

Yes.

Chaerea:

You know

Where she is at this moment, Parmeno?

Parmeno:

Yes, she was taken by Thais, for she

Was given her as a gift.

Chaerea:

Who could that be

Who could afford her?

Parmeno:

He's Captain Thraso,

Phaedria's rival.

Chaerea:

A good deal of woe

For my poor brother!

Parmeno:

You'd say there was more

If you but knew what gift *he* has in store

For her.

Chaerea:

What gift?

Parmeno:

A eunuch.

Chaerea:

You don't say!

You mean that creature she bought yesterday?

470

Parmeno:

Yes.

Chaerea:

Well, with gifts like that he'll certainly

Be kicked out. But I didn't know that she

Lived nearby.

Parmeno:

She came here not long ago.

Chaerea:

Ye gods, I'm done for, brimming full of woe.

I never saw her. Is she just as fair

As people say?

Parmeno:

Oh yes.

Chaerea:

But can't compare

With my girl?

Parmeno:

She's much fairer.

Chaerea:

Parmeno,

I long to have her. Please arrange it so.

Parmeno:

I'll strive to do my best in helping you.

Is there yet more that you would have me do? 480

Chaerea:

Where are you going?

Parmeno:

Home, that I might bring

These slaves to Thais at the ordering

Of Phaedria.

Chaerea:

Such serendipity

That eunuch has that he's destined to be

Her gift!

Parmeno:

Why's that?

Chaerea:

Well, he will be right there

Beside a fellow-slave who's passing fair.

He'll see her, talk with her, be with her, day

And night, sometimes take food with her; he may

Sleep near her even.

Parmeno:

What if you should be

That person?

Chaerea:

How could that be so? Tell me.

490

Parmeno:

Put on his garb.

Chaerea:

His garb? What then?

Parmeno:

Then feign

To be him.

Chaerea:

Ah, I hear you.

Parmeno:

I'll maintain

That you are he.

Chaerea:

I get it.

Parmeno:

Then you may

Enjoy all the advantages you say

That he enjoys – you'll eat with her and be

Beside her, touch her, play with her, maybe

Sleep next to her. None of those women knows

Who you might be, so you may easily pose

As a eunuch through your age and your physique.

Chaerea:

I've never seen a better plan: you speak

500

Wisely. So let's go in. Dress me and take

Me in immediately.

Parmeno:

What? You mistake.

I'm joking.

Chaerea:

Nonsense!

Parmeno:

Ah, what misery!

Why did I do this? Where are you pushing me?

You'll knock me down. Stop it.

Chaerea:

Come on, let's go.

Parmeno:

You still insist?

Chaerea:

I do, yes, Parmeno.

Parmeno:

I fear this is too hazardous a plot.

Chaerea:

I promise you it certainly is not.

Parmeno:

I'll smart for it.

Chaerea:

Ah!

Parmeno:

We're committing sin.

Chaerea:

Is it a sin that I should be let in

510

The house of a courtesan and thereby pay

Them back who torture us in every way

Due to our youth and cozen them as we

Ourselves were cozened by them constantly?

And is it right my father by some scheme

Was duped? To those who know this, it would seem

That I'm to blame, while everyone would see

The other as a good act.

Parmeno:

What are we

To do about it? If you must, then go

Ahead. Don't lay your criticism, though,

On me after the fact.

Chaerea:

No, certainly

I won't.

Parmeno:

You bid me, then?

Chaerea:

It's my decree,

My urging, my command. I'll never cede

My right. So follow me.

Parmeno:

May we succeed!

ACT III

SCENE I

Thraso:

Did Thais thank me largely?

Gnatho:

Oh, yes, she

Did that – a lot.

Thraso:

Was she in ecstasy?

Gnatho:

Well, not the gift itself but that it came
From you. Indeed at that she was aflame.

Parmeno [entering, apart]:

I'm here to spy: should opportunity

Arise, it is incumbent upon me

530

To take the gifts. The captain's here.

Thraso:

I guess

That everything I do brings thankfulness.

Gnatho:

I noticed.

Thraso:

Even the Great King used to say

"Thank you" for all my deeds. The rest? No way!

Gnatho:

Often a clever man like you will take

The fame earned by another's toil and make

It his.

Thraso:

That's very true.

Gnatho:

The King, then, in his sight

Has resolutely kept you –

Thraso:

Yes, that's right.

Gnatho:

To be a comrade.

Thraso:

Yes, he certainly

Entrusted all his troops and plans to me.

540

Gnatho:

Amazing!

Thraso:

When men bored him or he burned

With hate for business or, perhaps, he yearned

For respite, just as – do you get it?

Gnatho:

Yes,

Just as he wanted his unhappiness

To disappear...

Thraso:

You've got it. He'd take me

To be the sole man in his company.

Gnatho:

Ah, such a man of taste!

Thraso:

With very few

Thraso:

The man of whom I spoke
Just now was young, and he began to toy
With my mistress and snigger at me. "Oy,"
You louse," I said, "a hare and yet not done
With hunting game?" [Gnatho laughs] What's up?

Gnatho:

A clever one,

The very best of all that I've heard told.
Is it your own? For I had thought it old.

570

Thraso:

You know it?

Gnatho:

Yes, for it is said to be
Among the very best.

Thraso:

Well, actually,
It's mine.

Gnatho:

It's such a pity you should aim
It at an inconsiderate youth who came
From genteel kin.

Parmeno [apart]:

To Hell with you!

Gnatho:

What then?

Thraso:

Well, he was ruffled. All the other men
Round me were laughing fit to burst, although
They were afraid of me now.

Gnatho:

Rightly so.

Thraso:

Should I, then, go to Thais and remove
Her apprehensiveness that it might prove
I do not love the girl?

580

Gnatho:

Hell, no! Expand

Her doubts.

Thraso:

Why should I?

Gnatho:

Don't you understand?

If she should mention Phaedria and show
She likes him, to provoke you...

Thraso:

Now I know.

Gnatho:

Why, it's the only remedy. When she
Names Phaedria, then you immediately
Name Pamphila. Then if she should suggest
Inviting Phaedria to be her guest,
Say, "Let's have Pamphila sing at your soirée."
Should she praise Phaedria's looks, then straight away
Praise Pamphila's. And thus this tit-for-tat
Of yours will certainly be gnawing at
Her heart.

590

Thraso:

Well, if she loves me that will do
The trick, I think.

Gnatho:

The gifts she gets from you

And likes reveals her partiality

To you already. Thus she'll easily

Get vexed and always fear the gifts you bear

For her you'll angrily transfer elsewhere.

Thraso:

I never thought of that. Well said, Gnatho.

Gnatho:

Nonsense! You never thought of it? How so? 600

Had you not thought about it previously,

How did it come to you so readily?

SCENE II

Thais:

I thought I heard my captain's voice. Ah, here

You are. Good-day, Thraso.

Thraso:

Good-day, my dear.

Sweet, how are you? How much do you love me

For sending you that music-girl?

Parmeno [apart]:

Oh, he

Is so polite! Oh what a splendid start

In meeting her!

Thais

Much, bless your generous heart.

Gnatho:

Let's dine. Come on! Why are you standing there?

Parmeno [apart]:

That other one was born just for the fare

610

His gut can take.

Thraso:

I won't delay to go.

Whenever you wish.

Parmeno [apart]:

I'll go to them as though

I'm coming out. Are you going somewhere,

Thais?

Thais:

Parmeno, I'm off to take the air

Today.

Parmeno:

Where?

Thais [indicating Thraso]

Don't you see him?

Parmeno [apart]:

Yes, I do –

Unfortunately. [to Thais] Here are gifts for you

From Phaedria.

Gnatho:

Why stand there? Let's away.

Parmeno [to Thraso]:

Give her the gifts and pass the time of day

With her.

Thraso [sarcastically]:

Ah, they are splendid gifts, no doubt,

As good as mine.

Parmeno:

Well, you will soon find out.

[going to the door] Get them out now, as quickly as you can.

[to Thais] This one here is an Ethiopian.

Thraso:

Three minae.

Gnatho:

Hardly that much!

Parmeno:

Dorus, where

Are you? Come on outside [enter Phaedria, as the eunuch] This eunuch's rare,
Genteel and youthful.

Thais:

And good-looking, too.

Parmeno:

What do you have to say, Gnatho? Do you

Find fault with him? And what of you, Thraso?

Well, neither of them says a word, and so

They must like him. [to Thais] Test him in anything –

In literature, music, wrestling.

630

This eunuch has the same ability

As gentlefolk.

Thraso:

If opportunity

Arose, this eunuch, even sober I'd –

Parmeno:

The giver of this gift could not abide

Your living just for him; he'd not exclude

All others nor upon your thoughts intrude

With talk of fights nor show his scars to you

Nor stifle you as other people do;

When it's not inconvenient and when

You wish and when the time is right, why then 640

She will receive you.

Thraso [to Gnatho]:

Well, this servant's master

Must be a most deplorable disaster.

Gnatho:

No-one who had the means to buy another

Could suffer him, I'm sure of it

Thraso:

Just smother

Your words, worst of the worst! The man who could

Flatter that man unquestionably would

Pick food out of the ashes of the dead.

Thraso:

Well, shall we go?

Thais:

These folks must first be led

Inside; I'll give my orders, then come out.

Thraso [to Gnatho]:

Well, I'll be on my way. You, hang about 650

For her.

[Gnatho laughs]

It's wrong for generals to walk

Abroad with their mistresses.

Thraso:

I won't talk

To you! You ape your master. [Gnatho laughs] Why that roar

Of laughter?

Gnatho:

Something that you said before
About the Rhodian just came to me.

Here's Thais.

Thraso:

Go ahead immediately.

Make all things ready.

Gnatho:

Right.

Thais:

Pythias, make clear

That Chremes, if he should be coming here,

Should wait. If he can't do that easily,

He should come back, but bring him straight to me 660

If he cannot.

Pythias:

Right.

Thais:

What did I intend

To say? Ah yes, make sure that you attend

That maiden well and make sure you shall be

At home.

Thraso:

Well, let us go.

Thais:

And follow me.

SCENE III

Chremes [to himself]:

The more I think of it, the more I guess

That Thais plans to cause me much distress:
 I see that she besets me cunningly,
 Even that first time she requested me
 To be fetched to her (somebody may say
 “What business had you with her, then?” Well, hey, 670
 I’ve no idea). Then when I came she found
 Some pretext that I’d have to hang around.
 She said that she had made a sacrifice
 For business with me – I smelt a device.
 And then she lay beside me, focusing
 All her attention on me, essaying
 To speak with me. When conversation grew
 Awkward, she turned the subject in a new
 Direction: “How long is it since they died –
 Your mother and your father?” I replied, 680
 “A long time.” Did I own a property
 In Sunium? And how far from the sea?
 I think she wished to take the place from me
 Because she fancied it. Then, finally,
 Had I a little sister from that spot
 Who disappeared ? And who was with her? What
 Did she have on her? What did she intend
 With suchlike questions? Would she, then, pretend
 To be my sister? Such audacity!
 But if she’s still alive now, she would be 690
 Sixteen, no older. I am younger than
 Thais. As resolutely as she can,
 She calls for me. Let her say what she will
 And not be troublesome: by Heaven, I still
 Won’t come a third time. Hey! Hello! Hello!

Is someone there? It's Chremes.

Pythias:

He is so

Charming!

Chremes [apart]:

Traps, then, are set.

Pythias:

Most earnestly

Thais beseeches you that you should be

Her guest tomorrow.

Chremes:

No. I'm going to

The country.

Pythias:

Come, good sir, I beg of you.

700

Chremes:

It's quite impossible, I say.

Pythias:

Then stay

With us till she returns.

Chremes:

No, there's no way.

Pythias:

But why, Chremes?

Chremes:

You dreadful creature, leave.

Pythias:

Well, if you're still determined, she'll receive

You where she is.

Chremes:

I'll go there.

Pythias:

Dorias, see

Him to the captain's house immediately.

SCENE IV

Antipho [to himself]:

A few of us young fellows yesterday

At the Piraeus chose to while away

The time in feasting. Chaerea'd be the King

Of Revels, we decided. Each one's ring 710

Was pledged, both place and time arranged, and yet

The time's gone by and nothing has been set.

I can't find Chaerea and I don't know

What I should say or think. The others, though,

Commissioned me to seek him out. Therefore

I'll try his home. Who's there at Thais' door?

He's coming out. I wonder if it's he.

It is. But what is all that frippery

He's wearing? What's he up to? I can't say.

I'll have to suss him out farther away. 720

SCENE V

Chaerea [to himself]:

Is anybody here? No, there's no one.

Is someone dogging me? Ah good, there's none.

I now can give vent to my ecstasy.

I'm now prepared to die assuredly

So that my life may not be sullied by
Some mishap. Is there not now, though, some spy
Who follows me wherever I may be,
Intent on deafening and worrying me
To death by asking why this happiness,
This joyfulness, where did I get this dress, 730

Where I am going, whence, what is my end
In this, am I quite sane or round the bend?
Antipho [apart]:

I'll go and grant the favour that I see
He wants. [to Chaerea] Chaerea, what's this frippery?
Why are you wearing it? I'd love to glean
From you why you're so happy: what does it mean?
Are you insane? Why do you stare at me?
Why mute?

Chaerea:

I greet you, comrade, happily.

O joyful day! There's no-one anywhere
I'd rather see than you.

Antipho:

So you must share 740

With me what all this means.

Chaerea:

I beg of you,

Listen to me. You know the mistress who
Has taken my brother's fancy?

Antipho:

Certainly.

Her name's Thais, I think.

Chaerea:

Yes, that is she.

Antipho:

As I recall.

Chaerea:

Why should I, Antipho,
Extol to you her beauty since you know
That I judge beauty well? I've got it bad.

Antipho:

Really?

Chaerea:

If you'd seen her, you'd say she had
Exquisite looks, I know. What more to say?
I fell in love, Then, as is fortune's way, 750
There was a eunuch whom my brother bought
For his Thais, but no-one yet had thought
To send him on. A plan given to me
By Parmeno, my servant, rapidly
I took up.

Antipho:

Which was...?

Chaerea:

Quiet! You shall hear
It soon enough. For I should then appear
As him once we'd changed clothes.

Antipho:

But you would seem

A eunuch?

Chaerea:

Yes, that's right.

Antipho:

And from this scheme

You'd gain precisely what?

Chaerea:

What?? I would be

With her, hear her and see her constantly.

760

Is that a slight or trivial motivation?

Thais showed her to me. An invitation

Came next to stay within her house, and she,

Once she'd received me there delightedly,

Entrusted her...

Antipho:

To whom?

Chaerea:

Why, me.

Antipho:

Well then,

You're covered.

Chaerea:

She'd decided that no men

Should go near her and told me to abide

And sojourn with the maid alone inside

The inner rooms. I nodded, modestly

Looking upon the ground.

Antipho [sarcastically]:

Poor chap!

Chaerea:

Then she

770

Said, "I am off to dinner," and she swept

Off with some maids of hers; some few were kept

Behind, for they were basically trainees:

They organized her bath. I said to these,

“Be quick.” Within her room the maiden sat,

As this was going on, while gazing at

A painting representing Danaë

Into whose lap a shower of gold, they say,

Was sent. I looked at it in great delight

That Jupiter once used a similar sleight

780

By changing to a man and entering

Another person’s house and fashioning

A bogus shower so he could mislead

A woman. What god was it, though, indeed?

The one who smote high temples when he threw

His thunderbolt. Could I not do this, too,

Though just a mortal creature? Happily

I did it. I was in this reverie

When she was called to bathe, and so the maid

Went off to bathe, then came back. Then they laid

790

Her on a couch. I stayed expectantly,

Awaiting orders. One maid said to me,

“Pick up the fan and let us have some air

While we are bathing. Then, if you should care

To do so, bathe as well. With modesty

I took the fan.

Antipho:

I would have loved to see

Your cheeky face – a hulking mule like you

Holding a fan!

Chaerea:

Well, with no more ado

They rushed away to bathe with many a shout,
As maids do when the master's not about. 800
My maid was now asleep, and with a glance
I looked at her (you may call it askance,
Since it was through the fan). I looked around
To see if it was safe – it was, I found!
I locked the door.

Antipho:

And then...?

Chaerea:

“And then”, you ass?

Antipho:

I am, I know it.

Chaerea:

How could I let pass
This glorious, fleeting opportunity,
Longed-for yet seeming hopeless? I would be
The eunuch that I played if I rejected
This chance.

Antipho:

That's true. But what of the expected 810

Feast?

Chaerea:

It's all been prepared.

Antipho:

That's marvellous.

Where will it be? At your house?

Chaerea:

No, Discus,
Our freedman's, place.

Antipho:

That's far. We can't be slow.

We must move quickly. Change your dress.

Chaerea:

Where, though?

I'm done for! I'm an exile even where

I live: I fear my brother will be there.

My father may be back, too, from his land

Up-country.

Antipho:

Well, my house is close at hand.

Let's go there where you'll change your dress.

Chaerea:

Well said!

I wonder, too, if there is in your head

820

A plan that I may take up to possess

The girl I love.

Antipho:

I wish you all success.

ACT IV

SCENE I

Dorias:

From what I've seen, I am afraid today
That madman will incite a dreadful fray
Or harm Thais. For when the youth Chremes,
The maiden's brother, came here, she said, "Please,
Let him in, Captain." He immediately
Got angry but dared not refuse her plea.
She still insisted, wanting him to stay,
The time not being right for her to say 830
Some words about her sister. Moodily
He let in Chremes, and he stayed. Then she
Began to talk to him. The captain thought
That right before his eyes Thais had brought
A rival. Therefore, wishing to annoy
The woman, he then shouted out, "Hey, boy,
Fetch Pamphila to entertain us here."
Said Thais, "While we're banqueting? No fear!"
He kept on – it turned to controversy.
She then took off her golden jewellery 840
Behind his back for me to take away –
A sign that she'd be leaving straight away.

SCENE II

Phaedria [to himself]:

Country-bound, I began to ruminate

(I'm prone to do so when things aggravate
 My mind) on several themes. I came to see
 Each one of them most unhospitably.
 Why spell it out? While I was musing thus,
 I passed my villa in my heedlessness.
 I'd gone quite far, then twigged and turned around;
 As I was walking back again I found 850
 That I felt queasy. I stopped at my drive
 And reasoned with myself: "Oh man alive!
 Two days without her? And then? Nothing! What?
 Nothing at all? Will it become my lot
 Not even to touch her or to even see
 Her face? If it is not allowed for me
 To do the one, then it's but fair I may
 Yet do the other? Love that's faraway
 Outranks no love at all." I purposely
 Passed by my villa, as it seems to me. 860
 But how's this? Suddenly into my sight
 There hurries Pythias in such a fright.

SCENE III

Pythias [apart]:
 Where shall I find this wretch? Ah, to commit
 A dreadful thing like that!

Phaedria [apart]:

I fear what it
 Might be. I'm done for!

Pythias [apart]:

And, moreover, he,

Once he had made a perfect mockery
Of the maid, rent all her clothes, her hair.

Phaedria [apart]:

Ah!

Pythias:

Should

I have him here right now, I surely would
Fly at the villain's eyes and scratch them out.

Phaedria:

I don't know what that fray was all about 870

At home when I was absent [comes forward] Ah, what speed

You're making, Pythias! Whom do you need

To speak to?

Pythias:

Phaedria, away with you!

You and your fine gifts!

Phaedria:

Why, what's to do?

Pythias:

That eunuch that you gave us has created

Confusion here. He's gone and violated

The maid, the captain's gift.

Phaedria:

What's that you say?

Pythias:

I'm dead!

Phaedria:

You're *drunk*!

Pythias:

I wish *you* were that way,

Attacking me like that.

Dorias:

What monstrous act

Is this?

Phaedria:

You're mad: a eunuch can't in fact 880

Do that.

Pythias:

I don't know him, but what he's done
Speaks for itself. The maiden weeps: if one
Should ask her why, she doesn't dare reply.
The swine is nowhere to be found, and I
Suspect he's stolen something.

Phaedria:

But I'd guess

The bastard can't be far away, unless
He's gone back to our house.

Pythias:

Please go and see.

Phaedria:

I will and let you know immediately.

Dorias:

Ye gods, that is the grossest thing, my dear,
That in my life I've ever had to hear. 890
They love women, I hear, exceedingly
But can't perform with them; unfortunately
I erred. I should have barred him, I'm afraid,
Of ever going anywhere near the maid.

SCENE IV

Phaedria;

Come out, you beast! Resisting, eh, disgrace?

Dorus:

Please!

Phaedria:

Look at that – the swine screws up his face!

Why come back here? Why change your clothes? If I'd

Delayed a moment longer, he'd have hied

Away.

Pythias:

You've got him?

Phaedria:

Yes, I have.

Pythias:

Well done!

Dorus:

Fine!

Phaedria:

Where is he? I can't see anyone.

900

Phaedria:

You don't? He's here.

Pythias:

Who's here?

Phaedria:

This fellow.

Pythias:

Who

Is he?

Phaedria:

He who today was brought to you.

Pythias:

None of our maids have seen this man before.

Did you believe he was brought to our door?

Phaedria:

The only one.

Pythias:

There's no comparison

Between this fellow and the other one,

Who's handsome and genteel.

Phaedria:

He did seem thus

When dressed in fancy clothes: he's hideous

Without them now.

Pythias:

Hush! What a stupid thought!

The difference is huge. One youth was brought 910

To us whose face you would have loved to see.

This man is clapped-out, withered, dodderly

And weasel-coloured.

Phaedria:

What? Can this be true?

You've got me so I haven't got a clue

Of what I did. [to Dorus] Did I buy you?

Dorus:

You did

Indeed, sir.

Pythias:

In his turn, however, bid

Him answer me.

Phaedria:

Well, ask him.

Pythias:

[to Dorus] Did you come

To us this very day? [to the others] Remaining dumb,

He shakes his head. The other fellow, though,

Came here at sixteen years, with Parmeno. 920

Phaedria:

First ask me this: where did you get that dress?

You give me no reply. Such monstrousness!

Dorus:

Chaerea came.

Phaedria:

My brother?

Dorus:

Yes.

Phaedria:

But when?

Dorus:

Today.

Phaedria:

What time?

Dorus:

Just now.

Phaedria:

With whom?

Dorus:

Again –

With Parmeno.

Phaedria:

Did you know him before?

Dorus:

I'd never heard of him.

Phaedria:

But tell me more:

How did you know he was my brother, though?

Dorus:

I was myself informed by Parmeno,

Who gave to me this dress.

Phaedria:

Ye gods, I'm dead!

Dorus:

And then he dressed himself in mine instead;

930

And then they left together.

Pythias:

Well, you know

I'm sober and have told no lies, and so

It's clear the maid was ravished, yes?

Phaedria:

Do you

Believe that was this rogue has said is true?

Pythias:

Why should I not believe him? Look, the act

Speaks for itself, and that's a certain fact.

Phaedria [apart, to Dorus]:

Move this way just a little. Do you hear?

No, just a little closer. Yes, that's near

Enough. Did Chaerea take your dress from you?

Dorus:

He did.

Phaedria:

And did he put it on?

Dorus:

That's true.

940

And then instead of you he was brought here?

Dorus:

That's right.

Phaedria:

A most audacious man, I fear.

Pythias:

Do you not now believe the mockery

Imposed with this unworthy trickery

On us?

Phaedria:

It's not extraordinary, though,

That he believes the fellow. I don't know

What I should do. [aside to Dorus] Deny it all again.

[aloud] Can I not get the truth from you? Now then,

Did you see Chaerea?

Dorus:

No.

Phaedria:

He can't be

Brought to confess without some penalty,

950

I see. So follow me. First he agrees

But then denies [apart to Dorus] Ask pardon.

Dorus:

Phaedria, please

Forgive me.

Phaedria:

Go in. [kicks Dorus]

Dorus:

Ow!

Phaedria:

I do not know

Another honest way to dodge this blow.

I've had it! [aloud, pretending indignation] Even here you mess with me,

You swine!

Pythias:

All this is Parmeno's trickery,

As sure as I'm alive.

Dorias:

Indeed.

Pythias:

Today

I'm going to find a way to make him pay.

Dorias, what should I do, do you suppose?

Dorias:

About the maid?

Pythias:

That's right. Should I disclose

960

The truth or keep my mouth shut?

Dorias:

Well, if you

Are prudent, you won't know the facts you *do*

Know – of the eunuch and about the fact

The maid was ravished: so by this one act

You will be trouble-free and also do

A service for Thais. And therefore you

Must simply say Dorus has gone away.

Pythias:

Right.

Dorias:

Do I see Chremes? Coming this way

There is Thais.

Pythias:

Why is she here?

Dorias:

When I

Left here, I saw those two begin to fly

970

Into a spat. Take in these trinkets: thus

I'll find the origin of all this fuss.

SCENE V

Chremes:

I've been bamboozled – all that wine made me

Dizzy. While lying down, I felt to be

Quite sober. But when I got up, I'd find

The duties of my feet and of my mind

Were forfeited.

Pythias:

Chremes!

Chremes:

Who's that I hear?

Ah, Pythias! Indeed it's pretty clear

That you're more charming than you were before.

Pythias:

And you, too, have perked up a good deal more.

980

Chremes:

Without Ceres and Liber, it's well said,

Venus is cold. Was Thais well ahead

Of us here?

Pythias:

Has she left the captain?

Chremes:

Long

Ago. They had a row – quite a ding-dong

Affair.

Pythias:

But did she say nothing about

Your following her?

Chremes:

Nothing, but, setting out,

She gave a nod to me.

Pythias:

But was that not

Enough?

Chremes:

Well, I'm afraid I did not spot

Her drift till the captain made extremely clear

What I had missed. And then out on my ear 990

Was I expelled. But look here – it is she.

I wonder how she's here ahead of me.

SCENE VI

Thais [to herself]:

He'll soon be here, I think, to take away

My maid. Well, let him come. If he should lay
One finger on me, I immediately
I shall scratch his eyes out. His effrontery
And fancy words I'm able to endure
While they are just words, but you can be sure,
If they turn into actual deeds, then I'll
Have him assaulted.

Chremes:

Thais, for some while

1000

I've been here.

Thais:

I have been expecting you,

Chremes. Are you aware that this to-do

Is all your fault?

Chremes:

My fault? How can that be?

Because, while I was trying earnestly

To get your sister back, I've had to bear

All that and so much more.

Chremes:

But tell me where

She is.

Thais:

At my house.

Chremes:

Hah!

Thais:

She has been bred

Well, as have you yourself.

Chremes:

What's that you said?

Thais:

Its true. She's yours – and I require no fee

For her.

Chremes:

I give you thanks most earnestly, 1010

As you deserve.

Thais:

Take care, though, that you'll not

Find out you've lost the wench before you've got

Her safely – the captain will soon appear

To take the girl by force away from here

Go in the house, Pythias, and bring to me

The casket with the tokens.

Chremes:

Do you see

Him coming - ?

Pythias [to Thais]:

But where is it?

Thais:

Why are you

So slow? It's in the chest. Go – quickly, too. [Pythias goes in]

Chremes:

The captain's bringing such a troop of men.

Ye gods!

Thais:

Does that make you so nervous, then? 1020

Chremes:

Oh, get away with you! What - nervous? Me?

No man on earth's less so.

Thais:

Then let me see

The proof.

Chremes:

What kind of man is it you feel

I am?

Thais:

Look, he with whom you have to deal

Is foreign, too, and has less sway than you,

Is less well-known and here his friends are few.

Chremes:

I know, but it would be impetuous

To do what you may shun, better for us

To forestall rather than revenge once we

Receive an injury. Accordingly,

1030

Go in and lock the door, for I must hustle

Off to the forum – I must in this tussle

Have lawyers round me.

Thais:

Stay!

Chremes:

I should...

Thais:

No, stay!

Chremes:

I'll be back soon. Let me be on my way.

Thais:

There is no need, Chremes: just say that she

Is your true sister, in her infancy

You lost her but have found her once again,

Then show the tokens.

Pythias (giving the tokens):

They're here.

Thais:

Take them, then.

If he gets violent, summons him. You see

The plot?

Chremes:

Yes.

Thais:

Say it all judiciously.

1040

Chremes: I will.

Thais:

Gather up your cloak! [aside] I am undone!

My lawyer now himself has need of one.

SCENE VII

Thraso:

Shall I yield to this dreadful slur, Gnatho?

I'd rather die. Donax, Simalio,

Syriscus, follow me. Now straight away

I'll storm the house...

Gnatho:

Quite right.

Thraso:

...and snatch away

The girl.

Gnatho:

Ah, yes.

Thraso:

And I will beat her, too.

Gnatho:

Of course.

Thraso: Into the fray, then, Donax, you

Take your crowbar. Simalio, the left wing

Is yours, Syriscus, yours the right. Then bring 1050

The rest. Where's Sanga, the centurion

And thievish standard-bearer?

Sanga:

Here.

Thraso:

Go on,

You knave! A sponge to fight with?

Sanga:

Well, I knew

A leader's grit and soldiers' powers, too:

What else should I possess to wipe away

The blood?

Thraso:

Where are the others?

Sanga:

What? You say

The others, damn you? Only Sannio

Is left on guard at home.

Thraso:

Now you must go

And draw the troops up. In the centre line

I'll place myself and give you all the sign. 1060

Gnatho [aside]:

How wise! His troops drawn up, he then will find
A hiding-place.

Thraso:

A strategy of this kind
Pyrrhus once used. [Chremes and Thais appear at the window]
Chremes [to Thais]:

You see his ruse? My plan
To lock the door was good advice.

Thais:

The man
You think a hero shows himself to be
A paltry wretch full of stupidity.
Don't be alarmed.

Thraso [to Gnatho]:

What's your advice?
Thais [aside, to Chremes]:

A sling
For you to use would be the very thing –
Cast on the sly it would make them take flight.
Thraso:
There's Thais.

Gnatho:

When should we fall to?
Thraso:

Hold tight! 1070

We should try everything before we start
To fight. She may have had a change of heart
And do what I bade her to do without
Compulsion.

Gnatho:

You are wise, there is no doubt.

I always learn from you.

Thraso:

Primarily,

Thais, when you received the maid from me,

You said that you'd be my girl, did you not,

For some time?

Thais:

What's the point you're making?

Thraso:

What?

You who displayed a lover openly?

Thais:

And so...?

Thraso:

And left with him clandestinely?

1080

Thais:

My choice!

Thraso:

Give back the maid or I'll attack

You here and now.

Chremes:

What? Give Pamphila back

Or be assailed? What the - ?

Gnatho:

Watch what you say!

Thraso:

What do you mean by that? You say I may

Not touch what's mine?

Chremes:

Yours, rogue?

Gnatho:

You do not know

Whom you are cursing.

Chremes:

Why don't you just go?

You know the score? If you should start a brawl

Today, you may be sure that you'll recall

Forevermore the place, the day and me.

Gnatho:

You will regret making an enemy

1090

Of such a man as him.

Chremes:

I'll smash your head

If you don't sling your hook.

Gnatho:

What's that you said,

You dog? Is that your game, then?

Thraso:

Who are you,

What do you want and what have you to do

With her?

Chremes:

Well, first of all I have to tell

What you should know – that she's freeborn.

Thraso:

Like hell!

Chremes:

And she's from Attica.

Thraso:

Ye gods!

Chremes:

And she

Was born my sister.

Thraso:

Such effrontery!

Chremes:

I warn you, Captain, then, to pose no threat

At all to her. Now, Thais, I will get

1100

The nurse Sophrona to bring her and show

The tokens.

Thraso:

Are you issuing a veto

That I may not touch what is mine?

Chremes:

Too true!

Gnatho:

You hear? That's theft! Is that enough for you?

Thraso:

Thais, you say the same?

Thais:

Yes, go and find

Someone to answer you.

Thraso [to Gnatho]:

We're in a bind.

What should we do?

Gnatho:

Go back: she'll soon be here

To ask forgiveness.

Thraso:

Really?

Gnatho:

Have no fear.

I know a woman's mind: she will forgo

What you desire, but when you tell her "No",

1110

She longs for it.

Thraso:

Good thinking.

Gnatho:

Shall I, then,

Dismiss the troops?

Thraso:

Yes, as you will.

Gnatho:

As men

Of valour do, remember to take care

Of hearth and home.

Sanga:

For long my mind's been there

Among the pots and pans.

Gnatho:

What a mainstay

You've proved to be.

Thraso:

Now follow me this way.

ACT V

SCENE I

Thais:

What's all this foggy talk? "I am aware";

"I'm not"; "he's gone"; "I've heard"; "I wasn't there."

Be clear! The girl has had her garments rent,

And now she's all in tears and reticent. 1120

The eunuch's gone. Why? What's all this to-do?

Why mute?

Pythias:

Oh dear, what can I say to you?

They say he wasn't a eunuch after all.

Thais:

Then who?

Pythias:

That Chaerea.

Thais:

Can you recall

Which Chaerea it was?

Pythias:

That young man who

Is Phaedria's brother.

Thais:

What, you hag?

Pythias:

It's true.

Thais:

Why is he here? Who brought him?

Pythias:

I don't know,

Though he, I think, loves Pamphila.

Thais:

Oh woe!

If that's the truth! Is it because of this

She weeps?

Pythias:

I think so.

Thais:

Ah, you roguish miss!

1130

Did I not warn you, when I said adieu,

About this very thing?

Pythias:

What could I do?

She was entrusted, by your own decree,

To him alone.

Thais: You have unfortunately

Conveyed a wolf into a shepherd's fold.

I am so much ashamed that I have told

You to do that. What kind of man is he?

Pythias:

Mistress, be quiet! Bite your tongue! For we

Are saved. He's here.

Thais:

Where?

Pythias:

On the left. Do you

Not see the very man?

Thais:

Why, yes, I do.

1140

Pythias:

Have him arrested, then, immediately.

Thais:

And then do what?

Pythias:

Do you ask that of me?

Just look at him – ah, what an impudent face!

Do you not see he's chock-full of disgrace?

SCENE II

Chaerea [to himself]:

Both parents were at Antipho's, as though

On purpose, so that I could hardly go

Inside unseen. But then I saw someone

I knew approaching me, so, at a run,

I took off down some unfrequented street,

And then two more, in fear that I might meet

1150

Someone who'd recognize me. Ah, bad luck!

Is that not Thais? Yes, it is. I'm stuck.

What should I do? And yet why should I care?

What can she do to me?

Thais [to Pythias]:

Let's stop him there.

[to Chaerea] Dorus, good-day. Say, have you run away?

Chaerea:

Yes.

Thais:

Happy?

Chaerea:

No.

Thais:

You think you'll have to pay

The price for it?

Chaerea:

Forgive me this one sin:

If I commit another, do me in.

Thais:

My anger scared you?

Chaerea:

No.

Thais:

But...?

Chaerea:

That that one [indicating Pythias]

Might rat on me to you.

Thais:

What have you done?

1160

Chaerea:

Not much.

Pythias:

You say 'not much', you misery?

To rape a citizen??

Chaerea:

I thought that she

Was just a fellow-slave.

Pythias:

I hardly can

Restrain myself from flying at the man

And tearing at his hair. He's here to jeer

At us.

Thais [to Pythias]:

 You crazy thing, get out of here!

Pythias:

Why? If I did, I do believe I'd be

In debt to that hang-dog, especially

Since he has actually confessed to you

That he's your servant.

Thais [to Chaerea]:

 Chaerea, let's do 1170

Away with all of that. Unworthily

You've acted: if in the highest degree

I did deserve this outrage, all the same

Your profanation calls out for some blame.

Right now I don't know how to counsel you

About the maid, since you have made a stew

Of all my thoughts. How could I possibly

Restore the maid back to the company

Of all her friends, as would be fair and right,

As I had hoped to do? That way I might 1180

Do a service to myself.

Chaerea:

 I hope, Thais,

That henceforth there will be goodwill and peace

Between us. Circumstances of this kind

May start unhappily but then you'll find

They end in friendship. Some divinity

Perhaps decreed this.

Thais:

I will certainly

Accede to it.

Chaerea:

Be sure the explanation

Of my unworthy act was adoration

And not an urge to hurt you.

Thais:

Yes, I know –

That's why I pardon you. I am not so

1190

Callous or green that I'm oblivious

Of love's strength.

Chaerea:

Now I'm feeling amorous

Towards you, too.

Pythias:

Be careful, mistress, do!

Thais:

I wouldn't dare –

Pythias:

I don't have faith in you

In anything.

Thais:

Desist!

Chaerea:

Please succour me:

I put myself into your custody.

If I can't have her as my wife, I'll die.

Thais:

But if your father –

Chaerea:

Oh, he will comply

If she's a citizen.

Thais:

Then wait right here:

The brother of the maid will soon appear.

1200

He'll fetch the nurse who tended her when she

Was just a baby. And here will you be

To see him recognize her.

Chaerea:

Oh, I'll stay.

Thais:

And meanwhile, while Cremes is on his way,

Shall we go in?

Chaerea:

Oh yes!

Pythias [to Thais]:

What will you do?

Thais:

Why, what's the matter now?

Pythias:

I ask of you,

Will you allow him in there even now?

Thais:

Why not?

Pythias:

He'll cause some rumpus here, I vow.

Thais:

Shush!

Pythias:

You don't see this man's audacity.

Chaerea:

I won't do anything.

Pythias:

You cannot be

1210

Relied upon.

Chaerea:

Please keep me safe!

Pythias:

I'd dare

Not give you anything to keep, nor care

To keep *you* either. Go away!

Thais:

At last

Here comes the brother.

Chaerea:

Ah, the die is cast!

Let's go in, Thais. I'd not have him see

Me in this dress.

Thais:

Wherefore? Ignominy?

Chaerea:

Yes.

Thais:

But the maid –

Chaerea:

I'll follow: go in, please.

Pythias, stay here to usher in Chremes.

SCENE III

Pythias [to herself]:

What should I do? I wonder how I can

Pay back the villain who palmed off this man 1220

On us.

Chremes:

Quick, Nurse!

Sophrona:

I'm moving. Can't you see?

Chremes:

I can. It's not in the direction we

Are going, though.

Pythias:

Tell me now - have you shown

The nurse the tokens?

Chremes:

Yes.

Pythias:

And does she own

She recognizes them?

Chremes:

Yes, totally.

Pythias:

Good news: I hope it brings prosperity

To the maid. My mistress from some time ago

Has been expecting you. [Chremes and Sophrona go in] Look! Parmeno,

That splendid chap, is here. How leisurely

He moves! I hope that my ability 1230

Is equal to tormenting him. I'll go

Inside so that I may for certain know
Of the discovery. Then, back outside,
I'll make sure that he's truly terrified.

SCENE IV

Parmeno [to himself]:

I'm back to see what Chaerea's doing here.
If he's done well, he'll get a welcome cheer.
Despite the passion he feels for a maid,
Owned by a greedy whore, for which he paid
In spades, I've found a way to bring content
To him without cost or predicament. 1240
Then there's the other point, which I don't doubt
Crowns all my other deeds – I have found out
How young men may learn all the different ways
Whores may employ so that through all their days
They may loathe them. [enter Pythias, unseen] In them nothing is seen,
When they are out of doors, more neat or clean
Or elegant, and when they're going out
To dine with lovers, they will pick about
Food daintily, but see their filthiness
When home, their squalor and their neediness, 1250
Their sluttishness, their greed; they'll eat black bread
With yesterday's broth. A youth who has been fed
This knowledge is secure.

Pythias [apart]:

These sneers will I
Avenge so that you will not ever try
To ridicule us with impunity.

Ye gods, a wretched youth! Such villainy!

And cursed be he who brought him hither, too,

That scoundrel Parmeno!

Parmeno:

Why, what's to do?

Pythias:

I pity him. I left so that I may

Not see the foul examples that they say

They'll make of him.

Parmeno:

I'm done for! What a mess!

Well, I'll accost her. Pythias, confess

What this is all about! Say what was meant

By those "examples"!

Pythias:

What, you malcontent?

You've ruined the man who brought the youth to be

The eunuch, while you planned a mockery

Of us.

Parmeno:

What happened, then?

Pythias:

Well, did you know

The maid Thais was given not long ago

Today's a citizen, her brother, too,

A nobleman?

Parmeno:

I didn't.

Pythias:

Well, it's true -

1270

It has been proven. Chremes ravished her,
And when her brother found out what the cur
Had done, he furiously –

Parmeno:

Yes? Furiously

Did what?

Pythias:

Bound him.

Parmeno:

Bound him?

Pythias:

While pleadingly

Thais said, “Stop it.” He now, furthermore,
Threatened the punishment that’s laid out for
All rapists, something I don’t wish to see.

Parmeno:

How could he carry out such savagery?

Pythias:

Why savagery?

Parmeno:

Could it be otherwise?

Has anyone beheld before his eyes
A rapist in a strumpet’s house arrested?

Pythias:

I don’t know.

Parmeno:

But know this – it’s been attested
That he’s my master’s son.

Pythias:

It’s him?

Parmeno:

Don't let

Thais lay hands on him. But better yet,

I'll go inside.

Pythias:

Take care that you should do

Some injury to the man and find that you

Are injured equally, for everyone

Thinks that it's you who've caused all that's been done.

Parmeno:

What should I do or think up? Ah, I see

The old man from his country property. 1290

Should I tell him or not? I will, although

I shall get from this service many a blow.

But he must rescue him.

Pythias:

That's wisely done.

Go in! Tell them each instance, one by one!

SCENE V

Laches [to himself]:

Because my country-house is very near

I have the benefit never to fear

Boredom from town or country: when ennui

Takes over, I change my locality.

That's Parmeno, I think, there at the door.

I wonder now whom he is waiting for. 1300

Parmeno [pretending not to see him]:

Who's that? Master, I'm glad you're safely here.

Laches:

Whom are you waiting for?

Parmeno [aside]:

I'm stiff with fear.

Laches:

What's wrong? Why do you shake? Come on, tell me.

Parmeno:

Well, I will tell you in all honesty

I'm not to blame.

Laches:

In what? What do you mean?

Parmeno:

You well may ask. Indeed, I should have been

Up-front and told you all much earlier.

Phaedria bought a eunuch and to her [indicating Thais's house]

I was to give him.

Laches:

Her?

Parmeno:

Thais.

Laches:

I'll die!

What was the price she paid?

Parmeno:

Twenty minae.

1310

Laches:

Ye gods! A music-girl has hypnotized

Chaerea here.

Laches:

Has he not realized

A strumpet's function? And has he, then come
To town? A limitless continuum
Of troubles!

Parmeno:

Do not look at me like that,
Master – I didn't spur him on.

Laches:

You rat,
Don't talk about yourself! For as I live,
I'll – But whatever the facts may be, just give
An explanation.

Parmeno:

He was brought instead
Of the eunuch here.

Laches:

Instead?

Parmeno:

That's what I said. 1320

And he has been arrested since inside
The house for rape and he's securely tied.

Laches:

I'm done for!

Parmeno:

Well, there's the audacity
Of strumpets.

Laches:

Is there more iniquity
Or loss to tell me?

Parmeno:

That is all.

Laches:

I'll go

Inside at once. [enters the house]

Parmeno:

There's certainly much woe

Coming to me, although I had great need

To act that way. I'm glad, though, that indeed

These women, too, will weep because of me.

For the old man's been seeking endlessly 1330

Some stimulus or other that he might

Do them a bad turn. Now it's come to light.

SCENE VI

Pythias [to herself]:

It's been so long since anything at all

That's happened in my life has made me fall

About with mirth. The old man came into

The house, mistaken. I alone then knew

The thing he feared.

Parmeno [apart]:

What's this?

Pythias:

Now out I go

To have a word or two with Parmeno.

And yet where is the man I want to see?

Parmeno:

She's looking for me.

Pythias:

There he is – that's he. 1340

Parmeno:

What's up, you dolt? What are you laughing at?

What do you want?

Pythias:

Ah, I am knocked out flat

With laughing at *you*.

Parmeno:

Why?

Pythias:

You ask me why?

Ye gods, a more moronic man have I

Not seen or *will* see. I cannot express

How many hours of pure joyousness

You've caused inside the house. Yet formerly

I thought you clever. Did you instantly

Need to trust me? Or were you then content

Not only with that crime, by your assent

1350

Committed by the young man, but that you

Betray the fellow to his father, too?

How do you think his father felt when he

Observed his son dressed in that frippery?

You know you've had it?

Parmeno:

What, you bitch, were these

All lies? Are you still laughing? Does it please

Your heart to laugh at us?

Pythias:

Oh yes! I'll say!

Parmeno:

But do you think that you will get away

With this?

Pythias:

Yes.

Parmeno:

Oh but I will get you yet.

Pythias:

I think you will, but, Parmeno, your threat

1360

May wait till later on. Your penalty

Will be to hang, since for his felony

You made a youth remarkable and then

Betrayed him to his father. Both those men

Will make an example of you.

Parmeno:

Now I'm nought!

Pythias:

This prize is for that present that you brought.

Parmeno [to himself]:

I'm caught today just like a rat in a trap,

And, self-betrayed, I cannot beat the rap.

SCENE VII

Gnatho:

What hope have we? What is your plan, Thraso?

Thraso:

What is my plan? Well, I intend to throw

1370

Myself on Thais' mercy and to do

What she commands.

Gnatho:

Did I hear that from you?

Thraso:

Why should I do less, though, than Hercules

When serving Omphale?

Gnatho:

This tends to please

Me much. [aside] I'd rather see a slipper clout

Your head. That creak means someone's coming out.

Ah, what more mischief is there left to fear?

And why's that total stranger rushing here?

SCENE VIII

Chaerea [to himself, aloud]:

Citizens, who is more well-blessed than me

Today? No-one! For it is plain to see 1380

That I'm all-powerful. My thanks are owed

To all the gods, who've suddenly bestowed

So many blessings on me.

Parmeno [apart]:

Why is he

So happy?

Chaerea:

Parmeno, so dear to me,

My joys' creator, do you know the ground

Of my delight? My Pamphila's been found

To be a citizen.

Parmeno:

So they tell me.

Chaerea:

And she's betrothed to me.

Parmeno:

How joyously

1390

I hear your news.

Gnatho [apart, to Thraso]:

Did you hear what he said?

Chaerea:

My brother, too, I'm pleased to say, will wed

Thais. Our families are united now;

Thais herself has made a solemn vow

For Father's patronage: our custody

She now enjoys.

Parmeno:

Is Thais totally

Your brother's, then?

Chaerea:

Of course.

Parmeno:

Another thing

To laugh about! Now somebody will fling

The captain out.

Chaerea:

And therefore you must see

My brother knows, wherever he may be.

1400

Parmeno:

I'll check the house.

Thraso [apart, to Gnatho]:

Do you not think, Gnatho,

That I am done for good?

Gnatho:

Oh yes, that's so.

Chaerea [to himself]:

What should I mention first or notably
Commend? The man who gave advice to me
To act or me myself who had the pluck
To do the deed? Or should I praise Good Luck,
My constant guide, who crammed in just one day
So many boons? Or maybe, I should say,
My father's patience and kind-heartedness?
O Jupiter, I pray, keep safe and bless

1410

These boons! [enter Phaedria]

Phaedria [to himself]:

The things that I've heard recently
From Parmeno! But where's my brother?

Chaerea:

He

Is here.

Phaedria:

Oh, I'm so glad.

Chaerea:

I'm sure you are,

Brother. Thais is worthier by far
Than any other to be loved, for she
Is benefactress of our family.

Phaedria:

To me you praise her??

Thraso [apart]:

Ah, I am undone!

The less my hope, the more I love. The one
To rescue me, Gnatho, is only you.

I beg you, help me.

Gnatho [apart]:

What am I to do?

1420

Thraso [apart]:

By money or entreaties try to see

That I enjoy Thais in some degree.

Gnatho:

That's tough.

Thraso [apart]:

But, Gnatho, if to anything

You set your mind, I know you: if you bring

This off, ask me for anything that you

Desire – you'll have it.

Gnatho [apart]:

Is that true?

Thraso [apart]:

That's true.

Gnatho:

Keep your house open, whether you're there or not,

For me so that I always have a spot.

Thraso [apart]:

Done!

Gnatho [apart]:

I'll get ready, then.

Phaedria:

Who's that? Thraso!

Thraso:

Good-day to you.

Phaedria:

Perhaps you do not know

1430

What's happened.

Thraso:

Oh, I do know.

Phaedria:

Therefore why

Are you still here?

Thraso:

So that I may rely

On your goodwill.

Phaedria:

Goodwill? I tell you now

If I find you out here, though you may vow

You're seeking someone else who lives, maybe,

Near here, you're done for.

Gnatho:

That's unmannerly.

Phaedria:

So what?

Gnatho:

I didn't know that you could show

Such arrogance.

Phaedria:

What I've said shall be so.

Gnatho:

But listen to my words, for they are few,

And if you're pleased with what I say to you,

1440

Then act on them.

Phaedria:

Speak!

Gnatho:

Step this way, Thraso. [Thraso steps aside]

Now, first of all, I'd like you both to know
Explicitly that everything I do
I'm doing for myself, but if for you
It's also advantageous, it would be
Lunacy not to do it.

Phaedria:

So tell me.

Gnatho:

Take in the captain – that's what I suggest,
Though he's your rival.

Phaedria:

Take him in??

Gnatho:

Digest

The thought a little. Here with her you live
At little cost, but you've not much to give,
And she's high-maintenance, but he'll confer
Gifts to your love which you can't offer her.
There's no-one fitter for all this but he,
A man of means who gives most lavishly.
He's dim, slow, stupid, snores all day and night,
And you may have no fear your mistress might
Be smitten with the man, and therefore you
May oust him when you will.

1450

Chaerea [to Phaedria]:

What shall we do?

Gnatho:

I've thought of something else – additionally,
Nobody entertains more splendidly

1460

Than him.

Phaedria:

It would be most astonishing

If we can't use him, too.

Chaerea:

The very thing

I thought myself.

Gnatho:

Quite right! There's one thing still –

Take me in, too. That stone up that damned hill

I've rolled too long.

Phaedria:

We will.

Chaerea:

And gladly, too.

Gnatho:

I beg you, Phaedria, and, Chaerea, you,

Take him – after a taste of him I pass

Him on that you might show folks what an ass

He is.

Chaerea:

With pleasure.

Phaedria:

Yes, it's only fair.

Gnatho:

Thraso, when you're prepared, come out from there. 1470

Thraso:

What's up?

Gnatho

They didn't know of you, but when
I praised your deeds and character, well, then
I won them over.

Thraso:

Many thanks – well done!
It's always been the case that everyone
Loves me.

Gnatho [to Phaedria and Chaerea]:

Did I not say to you that he
Is master of Attic propriety?

Phaedria:

Indeed he is exactly as you say.

All:

Give your applause and then be on your way.