



# THE MIMES OF THE COURTESANS

LUCIAN

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BY  
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The Mimes of the Courtesans By Lucian.

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have trampled on you; I am above you. I am above you. I have trampled on you; I am above you."

I did exactly what she told me, and now Phantias is back in my bed. And he passionately kisses me all over my body, something he always refused to do before.

MELITTA

Not a moment's delay, Bacchis! Find me immediately the Syrian witch. And you, Akis, prepare the bread and the sulfur and everything we shall need for a proper incantation.

---



## THE TERROR OF MARRIAGE

MYRTION, a young courtesan

PAMPHILOS, her boy lover

DORIS, her slave

### THE TERROR OF MARRIAGE

MYRTION

You are going to marry the daughter of Pheidon, the pilot. Possibly you have already married her. All your vows, all your tears, all your promises, have gone the way of smoke. You have forgotten Myrtion, now that I am in a family way--it is the eighth month. Yes, a big belly is all that is left me from your great love. Pretty soon I shall have to feed an infant, a fine job for a courtesan. For I will never destroy what I shall have brought forth, especially if it is a man-child. I shall name the child Pamphilos and keep him as my consolation. And one day your son will face you and reproach you for having deserted his unfortunate mother.

I know it is not a beautiful girl you have chosen as your wife. I saw her recently at the Thesmophorion games. She was with her mother. I did not think at that time I should lose my Pamphilos on account of such a creature. Why don't you inspect her more closely? Examine her face and her eyes. One of these days you might be sorry to have married a woman whose eyes squint. Indeed, they are like a fish's.

But you have seen Pheidon, your fiancée's father. Well, all one needs is to take a good look at his face; there is no need of seeing his daughter after that.

PAMPHILOS

But you are talking nonsense, Myrtion. How long must I hear you talk about pilots' daughters and marriages? Do I know if the bride in question is squint-eyed, snub-nosed or beautiful, or if Pheidon, the Alopekethian, (for it is of him you are talking, I believe) has an ugly daughter? He isn't even a friend of my father's. I recall they had a lawsuit recently over

some matter of navigation. I think he owed my father one talent and refused to pay; so that my father hailed him before the maritime court. He had a hard time making the pilot yield; Pheidon never paid the entire sum.

If I wanted to get married, would I have refused the hand of the daughter of Demea who was *strategus* last year (she is my first cousin on my mother's side) in order to marry the daughter of Pheidon, the pilot? Where have you garnered such queer news? Are these chimeras the inventions of your jealousy?

MYRTION

In that case it is not true you are getting married?

PAMPHILOS

You are either crazy or drunk, Myrtion. And strange to say, we had little to drink last night.

MYRTION (*Pointing at her slave*)

It is Doris who has worried me with such ideas. I sent her to buy some strips of wool for my belly and to make an offering to the Lokheia in my behalf, and she said she met Lesbia, and Lesbia-----Tell it yourself, Doris. Tell him what you have heard and seen. You are sure you haven't made up the story?

DORIS

May I be run over and crushed by a chariot, if I have told a lie! I never lie. When I was near the Prytaneion I bumped into Lesbia and she stopped me and said with a smile:

"I hear your mistress' fine lover, Pamphilos, is getting married. He is going to marry the daughter of Pheidon."

When I refused to believe it, she advised me to run down the street, Pamphilos's street, and I would surely see garlands and flute players and hear people singing the hymeneal chant.

MYRTION

And did you go to see?

DORIS

Certainly. And I found everything Lesbia mentioned..

PAMPHILOS

Now I understand your mistake. Lesbia did not actually fool you, Doris, and you have without doubt imparted the truth to my Myrtion. However, both of you permitted yourselves to become excited about nothing at all. The marriage feast you are talking about is not being celebrated in our house. I remember now that last night, upon my return home from your side, dear Myrtion, my mother happened to remark:

"Pamphilos, your friend Charmides, the son of our neighbor Aristainetos, is getting married to a good girl; he has curbed his wild desires and become respectable. Till when, son, will you continue with your shameful courtesans?"

I paid no attention to what my mother had to say. Those old folks will never understand. I went to bed. I left my home at sunrise this morning, so that I noticed absolutely nothing of what Doris was to see later. If you don't believe me, Doris, return and examine with care, not only the street, but also the door. You will see which door is decorated with garlands.

MYRTION

You have saved my life, Pamphilos. I would have strangled myself.

PAMPHILOS

It will never, never happen. I am not so foolish. I will never forget my Myrtion, especially when she carries a child of mine in her belly. How I would like to lie with you now! You are even more beautiful with your belly bulging big. Oh, Myrtion, let me!

MYRTION

Have me, dear Pamphilos! But lean lightly.

---

## THE LESBIANS

LEAINA, a player of the cithara

CLONARION, a young man

### THE LESBIANS

CLONARION

I have heard a queer thing said about you, Leaina. People say Megilla, the wealthy lady from Lesbos, is in love with you, as if she were a man, and that she--I can't explain how-----but----- . I have heard it said that the two of you couple up just like-----

LEAINA (*Abashed silence*)

CLONARION

What's the matter? You are blushing. Is it true then?

LEAINA

It is true, Clonarion. I am ashamed. It is so strange-----

CLONARION

By the great Adrasteia, you must tell me about it! What does that woman require of you? Exactly what do you do when you get into bed together?

LEAINA (*Abashed silence*)

CLONARION

Now I am sure you don't love me. If you did, you would not think of hiding such things from me.

LEAINA

I do love you, Clonarion. I love you more than anybody else. But this is such a strange matter. I am so ashamed. That woman is so terribly like a male.

CLONARION

I don't understand. Do you mean to say she is one of those man-like females of Lesbos who will not suffer in their beds the company of men, but prefer to find pleasure, instead, with other women, as if they themselves were men?

LEAINA

She is somewhat like that.

CLONARION (*With enthusiasm*)

In that case, Leaina, tell me everything, please! How did she seduce you, in the first place? And how was it that you let Megilla have her way with you? And what came after? Tell me everything, please!

LEAINA

You see, Megilla and Demonassa, the Corinthian, sweating and very hot, pulled off her false hair--I had never suspected her of wearing a wig. And I saw her head was smooth-shaven as that of a young athlete. I was quite scared to see this. But Megilla spoke up and said to me:

"Tell me, O Leaina, have you ever seen a better looking young man?"

"But I see no young man here, Megilla!" I told her.

"Now, now! Don't you effeminate me!" she reproved. "You must understand my name is Megillos. Demonassa is my wife."

Her words seemed so funny to me, Clonarion. I started to giggle. And I said:

"Can it be, Megillos, that you are a man and lived among us under the disguise of a woman, just like Achilles, who stayed among the girls hidden by his purple robe? And is it true that you possess a man's organs, and that you do to Demonassa what any husband does to his wife?"

"That Leaina," she replied, "is not entirely so. You will soon see how we shall couple up in a fashion that is much more voluptuous."

"In that case," I said, "you are not a hermaphrodite. They, I have been told, have both a man's and woman's organs."

"No," she said, "I am quite like a man."

"Ismenodora, the Boietian flute player, has told me about a Theban woman who was changed into a man. A certain good soothsayer by the name of Teiresias-----Did any accident like that happen to you by chance?"

"No, Leaina," she said. "I was born with a body entirely like that of all women, but I have the tastes and desires of a man."

"And do those desires of yours suffice you?" I asked, smiling.

"Let me have my own way with you, Leaina, if you don't believe me," she answered, "and you will soon see that I have nothing to envy men for. I have something that resembles a man's estate. Come on, let me do what I want to do and you will soon understand."

She pleaded so hard that I let her have her way. And you must understand that she made me a gift of a splendid necklace and several tunics of the finest linen. Then I embraced her and held her in my arms, as if she were a man. And she kissed me all over the body, and she set out to do what she had promised, panting excitedly from the great pleasure and desire that possessed her.

CLONARION

But exactly how did she manage it? What did she do? Tell me, Leaina! Tell me especially that!

LEAINA

Please, don't ask me for details. These are shameful things. By the Mistress of Heaven, I will never, never, tell you that!

---

## THE RETURN OF THE SOLDIER

PANNYCHIS, a courtesan

POLEMON, her former lover

PHILOSTRATOS, her new lover

DORCAS, her slave

### THE RETURN OF THE SOLDIER

DORCAS (*Runs in*)

Oh, mistress, we are lost! We are lost! Polemon is back from the war. He was wearing a purple cloak and was surrounded by many slaves. I did not get the opportunity to speak to him in person because, as soon as they caught sight of him, his friends rushed up to greet him. But I noticed at his side a person who had accompanied him abroad; you know whom I mean. And I asked the latter person:

"Tell me, Parmenon, have you got something for us? Has your master brought any worth-while gift from the war?"

PANNYCHIS

That was wrong. You shouldn't have used such words. You should have said instead: "You are safe, praised be the gods, especially Dzeus Xenios and Athena Stratia! The mistress has asked me to inquire how your master has gotten along and if both of you are in good health." And it would have sounded even better if you had added: "She hasn't ceased weeping for Polemon and thinking about him." That would have been much better.

DORCAS

Indeed, I did tell something like what you say as soon as I opened my mouth. But I didn't repeat my words, the exact words I used to Parmenon, because I wanted to warn you immediately what I have learned. When I came near Parmenon, I started this way:

"Is it possible, Parmenon, that your own and your master's ears did not tingle all thru this war? For the mistress hasn't stopped talking about both of you. She has shed tears every day since you left. And whenever anybody returns from the battle area and there is news of a great fight and many are killed, she tears her hair and beats her breasts. Indeed, any kind of war news makes her lament."

PANNYCHIS

Very good, Dorcas. You have spoken the right words.

DORCAS

Then I asked about gifts and such matters, and he replied: "Dorcas, we return in full magnificence."

PANNYCHIS

He did not begin by saying that Polemon still remembers me and that he hopes to find me alive and awaiting him?

DORCAS

In fact, Parmenon did mention several little things to that effect; but I found much more agreeable his account of his master's and his own good fortune. Parmenon spoke at length of great riches, of gold, fine raiments and slaves and ivory. It appears that they have so much money that they don't count it by pieces but by *medimnas*, and many are the *medimnas* they have brought along. Parmenon himself carries on his little finger a large polygonal ring in which is set a wonderful tri-colored stone.

Before I left him, he tried to tell me how they had crossed the Halys and killed a certain Tiridates, and how Polemon distinguished himself in a fight against the Pisidians. I ran to you to announce their return so that you may have time to decide what to do. Should Polemon arrive and find Philostratos here, he will-----Can you imagine what he might do?

PANNYCHIS

We must find some remedy for this queer situation. It would not be wise to desert Philostratos; he gave me six thousand drachmas the other day. And, besides, he is a merchant; he may give me much more later. On the



other hand, I can not refuse to receive Polemon when he returns with so much money. One must respect old loves. This Polemon is so jealous a man, it was hard to put up with him when he was poor. I can imagine what he will be like after such a successful war.

DORCAS

Here he comes!

PANNYCHIS

Oh, I am powerless! What shall I do? I can not think of a way out. Invent something, please. Invent a story immediately! I tremble, Dorcas! I tremble!

DORCAS

And there is Philostratos, too!

PANNYCHIS

Oh, what will become of me! May the earth open its mouth and swallow me

PHILOSTRATOS (*Coming near*)

I suggest we have a drink, dear Pannychis.

PANNYCHIS

(*Low*) Oh, miserable man, you have ruined me! (*Loudly*) Hail, Polemon! Why didn't you return sooner?

POLEMON

Who is the man who dares to ask Pannychis to drink with him?

PANNYCHIS (*Silent*)

POLEMON

You are silent. Very well. I have exerted myself to make the journey from Thermopylae to this city in five days' time in order to see this woman! Many thanks! I must have merited such a reception. From now on you are free to sponge on somebody else.

PHILOSTRATOS

And you, friend, who are you?

POLEMON

What! You haven't heard of Polemon of Steirieu, the Pandionide who was first a chiliarch and now commands his five thousand shields? Polemon, stranger, was the lover of this Pannychis when he still credited her with human feelings.

PHILOSTRATOS

All right, my captain of mercenaries! Learn that Pannychis is mine. She has already received from me six thousand drachmas and will get more as soon as I sell my cargo. Come along, Pannychis. Let our valiant chiliarch disport himself with the Odrysians.

DORCAS

My mistress is free. She will follow whomever she pleases

PANNYCHIS (*Low*)

What shall I do, Dorcas?

DORCAS

It is best to return inside. You can't remain near Polemon while he is in such a dudgeon. He will become even more jealous.

PANNYCHIS

All right. Let us go in.

POLEMON

I warn you that this is the last time you will drink together. It is not for play alone that I have survived so many a martial slaughter. I shall kill. My Thracians, Parmenon! Let the phalanx cut off this street from the rest of the metropolis! To the front, hoplites! Slingers and bowmen on the flanks! The rest to the rear of the column!

PHILOSTRATOS

You think you are talking to children, mercenary. Do you believe you frighten us? Ah, what grand words! Indeed, have you ever killed a rooster? Where did you see war? You may have mounted guard over some safe rampart; possibly not even that.

POLEMON

You will learn very soon where I saw war. Wait till you see us in arms!

PHILOSTRATOS

Come on then! Bring on your phalanx! I and this faithful Tibios will show you what can be done with stones and oyster shells. We'll make you run so hard that you won't know the why or whither of your hurry.

---

## THE LITTLE FLUTE PLAYER

COCHLIS, a courtesan

PARTHENIS, a flute player

### THE LITTLE FLUTE PLAYER

COCHLIS

Why the tears, Parthenis? Where do you hail from with your flutes all broken?

PARTHENIS

The soldier, the Aitolian, the big fellow, he beat me because he found me playing in the house of that Crocale woman. I was paid by Gorgos. Gorgos is his rival. And he broke my flutes and beat me and did all kinds of nasty things. And he turned over the table and threw himself on the *krater* and emptied it. And then he seized Gorgos, the farmer, by his hair and dragged him out of the banquet hall. And the soldier--I think Deinomachos is his name--and some of his comrades surrounded the farmer and beat him so hard. I don't know, Cochlis, if he'll ever recover. Blood flowed from his nostrils and his face was swollen and blue.

COCHLIS

Was the man insane or drunk? It sounds like the work of a drunkard.

PARTHENIS

I think it was jealousy, Cochlis, jealousy and too much love. Crocale asked the soldier for twelve hundred drachmas if he wanted to have her exclusively for himself. Deinomachos refused to give the sum, and she shut the door in his face and received instead Gorgos of Oinoe, a rich farmer who had been in love with her for some time. They drank together and I came to play the flute.

The banquet was going along fine. I had just finished a Lydian melody and the farmer had got up and danced, while the Crocale beat time with her palms, and everything was joyful, when all of a sudden there was a

noise and a shout and the front door burst off its hinges and eight young men rushed into the hall, the Megarian among them. Without stopping to explain, they overturned the table; and Gorgos, as I have said, was knocked down, kicked and beaten on his head. The Crocale woman succeeded in saving herself by running away to the house of her neighbor, the courtesan Thespias.

As for me, Deinomachos slapped me good and hard and called me "Ball of Smut" and threw my flutes in my face. Then two of his soldier friends tore my robe and tunic off my body and played with me. They slapped and beat me about my thighs till my nether part was burning red. Then they lifted their own tunics and made me sink down in their laps so that I felt very much ashamed. Then they obliged me to take . . . . . between my lips, saying: "Try a new melody, genial little flute player!"

Now I am bound for my master's house. I am going to tell him everything that happened. The farmer went to find friends in the city to help him bring the Megarian to justice.

#### COCHLIS

That is what you get out of those resplendent military love affairs--blows and lawsuits. To hear them talk they are all chiliarchs or hegemons. But when it comes to paying for services rendered--"Wait," they say, "Wait till I get paid. As soon as I receive my salary, you will surely be made happy."

Let those boasters carry themselves off to their wars! May they all be killed off! I believe I do best by not receiving any of that herd. All others are welcome: fishermen, sailors, farmers, they are all welcome. They don't know how to flatter, but they pay. Anyhow, those flaunters of plumes and tellers of martial tales are never serious lovers. What do they know about love!

---

## THERE IS A TIME FOR LYING

LEONTICHOS, an affectionate soldier

CHENIDAS, his comrade-in-arms

HYMNIS, an innocent young courtesan

### **THERE IS A TIME FOR LYING**

LEONTICHOS (*Bombastically*)

And what about the battle with the Galateans, Chenidas? Do you remember how I rode my white charger ahead of all our horsemen and how the Galateans, who are pretty brave fellows at that, trembled as soon as they saw me, so that not a warrior among them dared to face me. And then, throwing my javelin, I pierced their hipparchos and his mount. As for those that reassembled--for after their phalanx was broken, some Galateans reorganized as a square--I attacked them sword in hand. The sudden burst forward of my faithful steed knocked over the first seven. With a swing of my blade I hacked in halves the head of their chief. Our men then came up, but the enemy was already in flight.

CHENIDAS

And do you recall Paphlagonia, Leontichos? You did grand work in that country too. Do you remember how, single-handed, you engaged the Satrap himself?

LEONTICHOS

Thanks for reminding me of the event. The Satrap, you know, had the build of a giant. He was reputed to be an extraordinary swordsman, and held us Greeks in contempt. Now one afternoon he rode forward between the two armies and shouted: "Who wants to brave a fight with me?"

Fright seized our men. The lochages, the taxiarchs, and even our hegemon, who is far from cowardly (it was Aristachmos the Aitolian who commanded us then; he is handy with the javelin), all were rather nervous about the challenge. At that time I wasn't even a chiliarch. But in

a spontaneous fit of recklessness, pushing away those among my friends who tried to hold me back (for they had their doubts as to my safety, the barbarian Hercules seemed so formidable in his gilded armor, as he stood before our army shaking his huge plumed head and brandishing his enormous javelin), I----- I-----

**CHENIDAS**

I confess that I myself was among those who were worried about your safety, Leontichos. You remember how I tried to detain you, pleading with my beloved Leontichos not to sacrifice himself for our sake. Many of our Greeks would have found life unbearable without the comradeship of the brave Leontichos.

**LEONTICHOS**

But I, in a reckless burst to the fore, I advanced towards the haughty enemy. I was as well armed as the Paphlagonian; I, too, was harnessed in gold. Upon my appearance in view of all, a cry arose from both armies, for I was recognized, especially by my shield, my martial ornaments and helmet plume. Let us hear a word, Chenidas! Tell us now, whom did everybody compare me with?

**CHENIDAS**

By Dzeus, whom could we have compared you with at that moment, if not to Achilles, the son of Thetis and Peleus? How well your helmet suited you! And the purple of your cloak shone like--my, I can't think of what! Your shield made bolts of lightning in the air.

**LEONTICHOS**

And when we met--well, the barbarian was the first to draw blood. Oh! he scratched me a bit, below the knee, you know. But I--one well aimed blow and my reliable sarissee tore thru his heavy shield and wounded him in the chest. He fell at my feet, more from surprise than weakness. Then I stood on his body for a while. There was only one thing to do. Drawing my sword, I cut off the Satrap's head. Well, I gathered his collection of arms and returned to our side with the giant's head stuck on the spike of my sarissee. Blood from the dissevered head dripped on my own. You can imagine the applause that greeted me upon my return.

HYMNIS (*Nauseated*)

Ah, go away, you sickening Leontichos! What disgusting stories you tell!; Who could look at you, least of all applaud you, after that bloody mess? Do you believe I could force myself to sleep with you after your tales of killing and blood? I am going away.

LEONTICHOS

Please don't go. I'll pay you doubly; but don't go away.

HYMNIS

I can not go to bed with an assassin.

LEONTICHOS

Don't be afraid of me, Hymnis. All that happened in the country of the Paphlagonians. I am at peace right now.

HYMNIS

No, I don't want you. You are an abominable man. From the barbarian's head stuck on your sarissee blood dripped down on your own head. And you expect me to take an odious man like you in my arms and kiss you! By the Charites, never, never will I kiss you! A man like you is no better than an executioner.

LEONTICHOS

Ah, if you could see me in arms! I am sure you would fall in love with Leontichos.

HYMNIS

Why, only hearing your cruel tales is enough to make me feel sick at heart and hate you. I imagine seeing shadows about us; these must be the phantoms of your victims. Surely the poor chief whose head you had split in two is among them. And how I would feel if I saw the fight and the blood and the corpses stretched in the mud! I believe I'd die. I could never bear to see the smallest animal killed.

LEONTICHOS



What a dear little coward you are, Hymnis! I thought you would find my story amusing.

HYMNIS

Go and tell such stories to the Lemnians or the fifty daughters of Danais, if you find any. They will find them amusing. I will sleep in my mother's house tonight. Follow me, Grammis. Take good care of yourself this night, valiant chiliarch! And do not kill too many! (*She leaves.*)

LEONTICHOS

Stay, O Hymnis, stay!-----Oh, she is gone!

CHENIDAS

It is your own fault, Leontichos. You have scared the child with your cock-and-bull stories. I saw her turn yellow when you started your tale about the captain. And her eyes stood out and she shivered when you described how you cut off the Satrap's head.

LEONTICHOS

I thought she'd like me the more. But it was you who lost me altogether by putting in my head the idea of the duel.

CHENIDAS

I wanted to help you. But it was you, yourself, who made the story too horrible for the girl's tastes. You could have had your dirty Paphlagonian head without having it stuck on the end of a sarissee and without smearing yourself with the Satrap's blood.

LEONTICHOS

It is true. My story was a bit too strong for the likes of Hymnis. The rest, however, wasn't so badly imagined. Won't you help an old comrade in trouble, Chenidas? Please run after her. Persuade her to go to bed with me after all.

CHENIDAS

I'll tell her that you have invented those war stories in order to appear brave in her eyes.

LEONTICHOS

That would be too shameful, Chenidas.

CHENIDAS

Otherwise, I am sure, she will not return. I am afraid, my friend, that you must choose either to pass for a brave man and be hated, or to confess that you have lied beautifully and sleep tonight with pretty Hymnis. And by Aphrodite and Uranian, she is worth the shame of confession! The girl has a body like the dream of a well-fed soldier. Little, hard breasts like apples! Soft, resilient thighs that could unman the most gigantic of Satraps! And those dimples! Ah, Mother of Heaven, those dimples! The girl told you, Leontichos, before you started on your stories, of course, that she had a third dimple that was much more attractive. A third dimple! Ah, a third dimple! Oh, comrade, I know you will either humble yourself this evening or pass a sleepless night. I, myself, am to see Ampelis, who is, to all appearances, twice the age of the little Aphrodite whom my Mars has just scared away.

LEONTICHOS (*Very embarrassed*)

You are right. I must choose. But either alternative is hard on a fellow. However, my hand is for the sword. I prefer Hymnis. Run, therefore, Chenidas, and tell her that Leontichos has lied a little. Yes, tell her I have lied--but not altogether.

---

## AT NIGHT

TYPHAINA, a courtesan

CHARMIDES, a lover

### AT NIGHT

TYPHAINA

To hire a courtesan, pay her five drachmas, go to bed with her and then turn your back on her and weep and groan--that is a dirty trick to play on a woman with feelings. You found no pleasure in the wine at the banquet table and you were the only one not to eat. You were shedding tears; I could see that. And now you keep on sobbing like a whipped infant. Why all the humidity, Charmides? Don't hide anything from me! I'll at least carry away a bit of information from the one charming night I shall ever have passed at your manly side. I am sure I shall pass it without a wink of sleep and without

CHARMIDES

May Eros destroy me, Typhaina! I can no longer resist him. Eros is so cruel.

TYPHAINA

It isn't me that you love--that much is certain. I am but three inches away from you. We are both stark naked. And you don't seem to get excited over the fact. You repel me when I want to take you in my arms. Why, you have even dragged your clothes into bed and put the bundle as a dike between us, lest my fine emotions flow over and get you wet. Tell me: Who is the lady? Possibly I can help you. I am good at such little services.

CHARMIDES

Oh, you know her, and I think she knows you too. She is not an obscure courtesan, you understand.

TYPHAINA

Her name, Charmides?

CHARMIDES

It is Philemation, Typhaina.

TYPHAINA

Which? There are two of them, you know. Is it that girl from the Piræus who has just lost her maidenhead and is at present the mistress of Damyllos, the son of the Strategus? Or is it the woman that people have nicknamed "Pagis, the Snare"?

CHARMIDES

The latter. Hers is the bad genius that has captured me. I am obsessed by a passion for Pagis.

TYPHAINA

By Aphrodite! I wouldn't have come if I had known you called me in order to get even with that carcass of a Philemation. And now the cock has crowed thrice. I shall go my way.

CHARMIDES

Not so fast, Typhaina. If what you say of Philemation is true, I refer to the wig, her complexion and those queer spots, I can no longer bear to look at her.

TYPHAINA

Ask your mother. She might have seen her at the baths. As for her age, your grandfather, if he is still alive, will provide you with correct information.

CHARMIDES

In that case, there is little need of the dike you have joked about. Wait. I'll get my clothes out of the bed. Now, let us embrace and kiss, and we will couple up like good children. Goodbye, Philemation! My respects to your age and experience. Ah, what smooth thighs are yours, Typhaina! What joy must lie buried between them!

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## A POOR SAILOR'S LOVE

MYRTALE, a courtesan

DORION, her sailor friend

### A POOR SAILOR'S LOVE

DORION

You have impoverished me, Myrtale, and now you won't let me in. Before, when I brought you fine gifts from abroad, you called me your beloved, your man, your master. I was your all in all. But now that I am miserably flat, and you have found for yourself a rich merchant from Bithynia, you won't let me approach you. I sit on your doorstep and shed bitter tears while he enjoys your kisses and shares your warm bed. And now you tell me you will have a child by the fat merchant. (*He weeps.*)

MYRTALE

Ah, you suffocate me, Dorion. You say that you have showered me with gifts and that I have impoverished you. How many gifts have you given me, you wet-nosed sailor? Count how many!

DORION

Very well, Myrtale, I shall count my gifts and estimate the total value of the wealth I have handed over to you, Myrtale, as proof of my love and esteem. To start with, you have those shoes from Sikyone. That's two drachmas. You won't deny that the shoes were worth two drachmas?

MYRTALE

But you slept with me for two nights.

DORION

And when I returned from Syria, I brought you an alabaster full of Phœnician perfumes. By the tail of the great god Poseidon, that amounts to another two drachmas!

MYRTALE

And what about me? Didn't I give you, before you left for the same Syria, a little tunic reaching till the thighs for you to wear while rowing? Do you remember? The proreus Epioros forgot it one day in my rooms. Yes, the proreus Epioros himself slept with me. Must I remember a poor sailor's gifts?

DORION

He took the tunic away from me, your proreus. He saw me wearing the tunic on the shore at Samos, and he took it away from me--but only after a long struggle!

And didn't I bring you a lot of onions from Cyprus and five saperdes and four perches when we returned from the Bosphorus? And when we returned from Patares, ten breads packed in one bundle and an amphora of Carian figs and a pair of sandals embroidered with gold thread? Oh, you ingrate! Dorion, the sailor, has presented you with sandals embroidered with gold. And I remember now, a huge Cythonian cheese.

MYRTALE (*Contemptuously*)

Altogether five drachmas. Five drachmas, and possibly less.

DORION (*Sadly*)

Ah, Myrtale, it was all a sailor could afford. But now I am in charge of the right flank of rowers on our ship. Why do you look at me that way? And--remember!--at the last feast of Aphrodite, I left for your account a whole drachma at the feet of the goddess. Yes, a whole silver drachma! And I gave your mother two drachmas for shoes. Very often would I leave two oboles or four in the beckoning palm of the old Lyde. All that mounts up to a fortune for a sailor.

MYRTALE

Fish and onions, Dorion.

DORION

Well, what if it is fish and onions? I can't afford more. I wouldn't find amusement at the oar of a ship if I were rich. I have never brought more than a head of garlic to my own mother. But I'd like to know what great gifts the Bithynian has ever presented you with.

MYRTALE

Do you see this robe? It was he who bought it for me. And do your fish eyes perceive this heavy necklace?

DORION

That? Why you have had it for some time!

MYRTALE

The one you saw on me before was much thinner and had no emeralds. And look at these earrings and this rug! And yesterday he gave me two hundred drachmas, and he promised to pay the rent for us. This is not sandals from Patares or cheese from Cythion and a lot of worthless chatter about love, mournful sailor!

DORION

But you don't say how he is himself. You don't describe the man you prefer to me on account of his impossible riches. He is more than fifty years old. He is bald-headed. He is as red as a lobster. And you haven't noticed his teeth, I suppose. Where are his teeth, Myrtale? I ask you: Where are his teeth? And what grace is his? O Dioscores, what grace! It is most evident when he tries to sing and play the young fellow. An ass strumming on a lyre!

You can keep your Apollo! He is quite worthy of you. May you have a son that looks like the father! As for me, I'll find my Delphis or Kymbalion. Don't you worry! Your neighbor, the flute player, looks pretty good to me. Carpets, necklaces, gifts of two hundred drachmas aren't bad. You can't have a good-looking young man like me, but you must sleep with a sack of offal, insist on carpets, necklaces and rich gifts. We can't have everything, you know.

MYRTALE (*Ironically*)

Oh, happy will be the woman whom you choose as your beloved! For you will bring her Cyprian onions and cheese upon your return from Cythion.

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## A MOTHER'S ADVICE

PHILINNA, a courtesan

HER WISE MOTHER

### A MOTHER'S ADVICE

MOTHER

You must have been crazy yesterday, Philinna. What got into you during the banquet? Diphilos came weeping here this morning. He told me you had made him suffer. You were drunk. You rose from your couch in the middle of the meal and danced, though he had ordered you to remain at his side. After that you kissed his friend, Lamprias. And when Diphilos became angry, you left him altogether and took Lamprias in your arms and lay with him, while Diphilos choked with rage. And you did not sleep with him at night. You left Diphilos to his tears and anguish. You stretched yourself on another bed and sang all night so as to hurt him the more.

PHILINNA (*Furious*)

But he forgot to tell you what he did to me! If you knew everything, you would not be taking his side. He left me to talk to Thais, the mistress of Lamprias, who hadn't yet arrived. He saw that this made me unhappy. I beckoned for him to return to my side. Instead of coming back to me, he took hold of the tip of the lobe of Thais's ear and pulled her head backwards and gave her such a deep, sucking kiss that she could not free her lips from his for some time. I started to weep, but he only snickered and whispered all kinds of things to Thais. I am sure he was talking about me, because Thais regarded me and smiled. Then they heard Lamprias enter and they stopped kissing and separated. I went to lie down with Diphilos; I did not want to give him an excuse for further inattention.

Thais was the first to dance. She danced with her robe tucked up, so as to show her legs and thighs as if she were the only person around here having beautiful legs. When she had finished, Lamprias said not a word;



but Diphilos praised as much as he could the rhythm and movement of her dance, and said: "Her foot is wedded to the cithara!" and "A beautiful leg! By Adrasteia, a beautiful leg!" And he continued with many such sayings, as if he were referring to Sosandra of Kalamis and not to that Thais whom both of us know so well. Don't we see her in the baths?

Then Thais started to mock me and said: "If somebody at this symposium is not ashamed of her spindle legs, let her get up and dance, too!"

What else could I have done, mother? I got up and danced. I wasn't going to let everybody present believe that woman was right.

MOTHER

You are too touchy, child. You shouldn't take such things to heart.

PHILINNA

Well, everybody congratulated me on my fine dancing. Diphilos, however, remained lying on his back. He kept on looking at the ceiling till I was out of breath and could dance no longer.

MOTHER

And is it true that later you kissed Lamprias and that you rose from your couch and Diphilos's side to take Lamprias in your arms? You are silent. Indeed, that is unpardonable.

PHILINNA

I wanted to render him heartache for heartache.

MOTHER

And you did not sleep with him last night! You lay on another bed and sang while he was in tears. Apparently you don't understand, my daughter, that we are poor. You forget how much we have received from Diphilos. How could we have survived the last winter if Aphrodite hadn't sent him to us.

PHILINNA

Must I then bear all kinds of insults?

**MOTHER**

Rage all you want, daughter, but don't ever mock any lover of yours. You don't know that men stop loving when they are laughed at. You have always been too captious with that man. Take care we do not, as the proverb says, burst the rope by pulling it too taut.

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## ABANDONED

GLYKERA, THAIS - Courtesans

### ABANDONED

GLYKERA

By the way, Thais, do you remember the Arcanian, the soldier who used to live with Abrotonan and later fell in love with me? The fellow was always under the purple and *chlamys*. Do you know him?

THAIS

Yes, my little Glykera, I know him. He went to bed with me last year at the time of the feast of Demeter. What do you know about the man?

GLYKERA

That wicked Gorgona, who I thought was a friend of mine, played around him so shrewdly that she stole him from me.

THAIS

And now he no longer visits you? Gorgona has become his mistress, eh?

GLYKERA

Yes, Thais, and I am terribly hurt.

THAIS

That's bad, dear Glykera; but it can't be helped. Such things are to be expected among us hetairas. You ought not to worry about it and don't you speak ill of Gorgona. Abrotonan has said nothing bad about you in the same situation; you are still friends. But I wonder what that soldier sees in the woman. He must be slightly blind not to notice how little hair she has left. Her lips are livid, almost cadaverous, and her neck is thin. And she has bulging veins and a nose that is long, much too long. However, there is one attractive feature about her: she is tall and bears herself very erect. And then her rump, they say, is soft and white, and the

skin between her thighs is entirely hairless. It is as smooth as your face. And you will concede that she has a fascinating smile.

### GLYKERA

So you believe that it is for her beauty that the Arcanian loves her? You don't know, then, that her mother is the sorceress Chrysarion. The witch knows the Thettalian charms and can make the moon come down to earth. People say she flies in the air by night. It was the sorceress who must have turned the soldier's head. She has made him drink certain magic potions. And now that Gorgona hugs him between her legs.

### THAIS

And your voluptuous little legs, my Glykera, will hug another. But you may say good-bye to this man!

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## THE PHILOSOPHER

CHELODONION, a courtesan

DROSIS, her courtesan friend

NEBRIS, a slave

### THE PHILOSOPHER

CHELIDONION

So little Clinias has stopped visiting your house? I haven't seen him for some time.

DROSIS

It is true, Chelidonion. His master has shut him up in their rooms. He stops the boy from coming to see me.

CHELIDONION

Whom are you talking about? You don't mean Diotimos who is teaching at the gymnasium? Diotimos is a good friend of mine.

DROSIS

No; I refer to the most debauched of philosophers, Aristainetos.

CHELIDONION

You mean the long-faced, funereal man with the shaggy whiskers? He takes the little fellows for walks thru the Poikile.

DROSIS

Yes, that is the faker. I wish he'd die in a hurry! May the executioner drag him to his peace by his whiskers!

CHELIDONION

But how could a character like this false philosopher have seduced Clinias?

DROSIS

I don't know, Chelidonion. The boy hasn't set his foot in my street for the last three days; I am rather worried. It was I, you know, who taught him what woman is; and he hasn't slept with another woman since his first lesson. Having bad presentiments in regard to my Clinias, I sent Nebris, my slave, to see if he was at the Agora or in the Poikile. Nebris tells me she saw him walking with Aristainetos. She nodded to the boy from a distance, and Clinias blushed and was discomfited but did not look at her again. Then they reëntered the city. Nebris followed as far as the Dipylon, but, since they did not come out again, she returned without learning anything more.

You can imagine how worried I have been since then. I don't know what will become of the boy. I have always treated him fairly. At first I was afraid some other woman had got him and his love for me had turned to hate. It also seemed possible that his father forbade him to see his Drosis. This evening, however, Dromon, the boy's slave, came to me with this letter. Take it and read, Chelidonion. You can read, can't you?

#### CHELIDONION

Let us see now. The penmanship is not especially good. You can see this letter was written in a hurry. He writes:

*Oh, how much I love you, my Drosis! The gods, every one of them, will vouch for the degree of my affection. Know, therefore, that it is not by reason of dislike but by necessity that I have come to be separated from you. My father has intrusted me to Aristainetos to study philosophy, and my master has found out everything about the two of us and has scolded me severely, saying it was not meet for the son of Architeles and Erasicleia to carry on with a courtesan. He says that he will convince me that virtue is preferable to voluptuousness.*

#### DROSIS

May the imbecile suffer an apoplectic fit! Think of teaching such philosophy to a young man!

#### CHELIDONION

*So that I am forced to obey my master. He follows me wherever I go and guards me carefully and lets no woman approach me. He promises*

*me that if I learn his kind of wisdom and do what he requires of me, I shall, after some efforts, become a virtuous and happy man. I write this letter hurriedly. I hope no one is looking.*

*Be happy and think sometimes of your,*

*Lost forever,*

*CLINIAS.*

DROSIS

What do you think of the letter, Chelidonion?

CHELIDONION

The words of an uncultivated Scythian, Drosis. However, the last two lines suggest some possibilities. All in all, in my opinion, your Clinias will never become a great poet.

DROSIS

That's what I think, too. But I am dying for the little fellow's love. He is like a kitten. Dromon tells me that Aristainetos is reputed to have a weakness for young boys. That is, under the pretext of teaching them rhetoric and philosophy, the whiskered codger lives with the most handsome of his pupils. According to Dromon, Aristainetos has already had an interesting conversation with Clinias on the subject and promises to make the boy like to the gods. He reads to him of the love affairs that the old philosophers had with their disciples, and tells him that the gods don't interest themselves in women, but prefer the company of good philosophers like himself. However, Dromon threatens to complain to the boy's father.

CHELIDONION

Dromon is good. We ought to reward him, Drosis. DROSIS

I have already done it, though there is little need of a gift to win him to my side. My Nebris, you know, rather tickles the slave's fancy.

CHELIDONION

In that case, do not worry, Drosis. Everything will turn out fine. In my opinion you ought to leave an inscription on the part of the Ceramic wall where Architeles takes his daily walk. He will understand the danger his son is in and will save him from his doom.

DROSIS

But shall we be able to write without being seen?

CHELIDONION

It will be done at night, Drosis, with a piece of charcoal that we shall pick up on the way.

DROSIS

Fine! Stand with me, Chelidonion, in my fight against the pedant. We courtesans must not allow those whiskered philosophers to mislead the young generation.

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