

## CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY

CHARINUS, son of DEMIPHO, and lover of PASICOMPSA  
ACANTHIO, slave of CHARINUS  
DEMIPHO, father of CHARINUS  
LYSIMACHUS, neighbour of DEMIPHO and father of EUTYCHUS  
A SLAVE of LYSIMACHUS  
EUTYCHUS, son of LYSIMACHUS and friend of CHARINUS  
PASICOMPSA, mistress of CHARINUS  
DORIPPA, wife of LYSIMACHUS  
SYRA, slave of DORIPPA  
A CATERER

## ARGUMENT I (ACROSTIC)

A young man was sent by his father on a business-trip; he purchases and brings home a nice-looking girl. After seeing her, the old man asks who she is; the slave pretends that she was bought as an attendant for the youth's mother. The old man falls in love with her, pretends to sell her, and hands her over to his neighbour; the neighbour's wife thinks that he's brought home a harlot. Then his friend brings Charinus back from exile after finding the girl.

## ARGUMENT II

A father sends his dissolute son off on a commercial venture. The son goes abroad, buys his host's serving-girl, with whom he is in love, and brings her home. He leaves his ship; his father comes, sees the girl, and falls madly in love. He inquires, "Whose is she?" The slave replies that she's an attendant whom the youth bought for his mother. The old man, looking out for Number One, begs his son to sell her to a friend of his; the son wants to sell her to his own friend. The son sets up their neighbour's son as proxy, the old man sets up the neighbour himself. The old man gets in first and buys the girl. The neighbour's wife catches the girl in the house, accuses her of being her husband's mistress, and kicks the old man out. The youthful merchant, in despair, decides to leave home, but is checked by his friend, who, aided by his father, prevails on the old man to give in to his son.

## INTRODUCTION

*The Merchant*, based upon a Greek comedy of the same name by Philémon, is generally considered one of the earliest of Plautus' plays and one which, like *The Casket*, reproduces most closely the language and the Greek original. It contains little of the robust humour and the elaborate lyrical structure so characteristic of Plautus' later work.

The plot of the comedy is relatively simple and has very little intrigue. There are no deceptions engineered by cunning slaves and no kidnapped daughters to be recognised at the end. The play resembles the *Casina* in that the action deals primarily with the attempt of a father (Demipho) to gain possession of the sweetheart of his son (Charinus). Demipho is successful and arranges for the girl to stay at the home of his neighbour Lysimachus, whose wife returns and accuses her husband of keeping a harlot in his house during her absence. Demipho is ridiculous as an aged lover, but cannot be considered so worthless an old reprobate as Lysidamus in the *Casina*, since he claims to be ignorant of his son's love for the girl. Demipho repents at the end and is forgiven without suffering any such ignominious treatment as was accorded to Lysidamus.

The play lacks the boisterous fun and burlesque conclusion of the *Casina* and has been considered by various critics as "dull and sordid," "one of the feeblest works of Plautus." Gilbert Norwood, on the contrary, maintains that it is the best of Plautus' plays, for the dramatist here is merely translating and so allows the splendour of the Greek original to shine forth unpolluted by his own bad workmanship. He says that *The Merchant* "comes near perfection in its own class . . . sparkling, sophisticated, immoral, light comedy. . . . It is buoyant, rapid, clear, sparkling in plot, dialogue and situations." Few critics will agree with Norwood's exaggerated claims for the comedy, but it is equally wrong to consider it "dull and sordid." Many of the faults which Norwood attributes to other plays of Plautus are present here, e.g. the protatic character used merely for purposes of exposition, weakness of characterisation (with the exception of the portrayal of Pasicompsa, the part and amusing courtesan), and an undramatic solution. It is true, however, that there is little padding and few irrelevant jests. The action

moves rapidly and many of the scenes are rich in humour arising from the situations. Among the most effective scenes are the sham auction between father and son in Act Two, the return of the neighbour's wife in Act Four, and the cook's amusing attempts to mollify her under the impression that she is Lysimachus' mistress. The scene of Charinus' farewell in Act Five, which Norwood considers "a marvellous blend of beauty, pathos, and absurdity," seems unnatural and pointless and as a mad scene is far inferior to the pretended madness of Menaechmus in *The Twin Menaechmi*.

Norwood is clearly wrong in exalting *The Merchant* above all the other plays of Plautus, but he has done a good service in bringing to the attention of readers the many excellent features of the play. P. J. Enk in his introduction to the comedy renders a sane judgment: when he rates *The Merchant* among the better plays of Plautus, but not among his best.

## THE MERCHANT

(SCENE:—A street in Athens in front of the houses of DEMPHO and LYSIMACHUS; there is an altar of Apollo before the home of DEMPHO.)

Act One. Scene I

(Enter CHARINUS from the house of DEMPHO.)

CHARINUS (to the audience): I'm now going to kill two birds with one stone: I'll tell you both the plot of our play and about my love affair. And I'm not going to do what I've seen other love-stricken characters in comedy do, when they tell their troubles to Night or Day, to Sun or Moon. Good heavens! They, I'm sure, don't give *that* for our mortal complaints, for our likes and dislikes. I'm going to tell my troubles to you, instead.

In Greek this play is called *The Merchant* of Philemon; it's just the same in Latin: *The Merchant* of Maccius Titus.

My father sent me off to Rhodes on business; it's now two years since I left home. There I fell in love with a girl of wondrous beauty. But I'll tell you how I got involved with her, if you'll lend me your ears, and have the kindness to pay strict attention. By George! I haven't quite followed the fashion of lovers here: I've set forth my facts badly from the very beginning.<sup>1</sup> Well, then, Love is usually accompanied by all these faults: care, sorrow, and excessive luxury (although this fault ruins not only the lover, but whomsoever it touches it affects with complete and utter ruin, and no one in the world ever set his heart on luxury beyond his means without causing himself great loss). But Love has in addition these faults which I omitted: insomnia, grief, mistakes, fear, and flight; then there's stupidity, folly, and thoughtlessness, insane inconsiderateness, immoderation, impudence, lust, and ill will; you'll also find there greed, laziness, insult, want, abuse, extravagance, multiloquence and pauciloquence: the one, because a lover often blurts out something useless and irrelevant at the most inopportune moment; the other, pauciloquence, I mention because no lover is

ever eloquent enough to speak to his own advantage. Now you mustn't be angry at me for my multiloquence; Venus bequeathed this to me on the day she sent me Love. But I must go back to that and finish my story.

To begin with, when I came of age and gave up childish pursuits, I fell violently in love with a courtesan here in Athens. Right away my father's cash began sneaking off into exile; the insistent pimp who owned the girl grabbed whatever he could lay his hands on. My father scolded night and day, shouting about the faithlessness and wickedness of pimps at the top of his voice, and complaining that his property was being ruined to enrich a pimp! At other times he'd mutter to himself; he'd shake his head and disown me as a son. He bawled through all the city, telling all to guard against lending me anything. Love, he said, had enticed more than one man to his ruin; I was a prodigal, reckless villain, who grabbed and spirited off from the house whatever I could; it was terrible, the way I, on account of my love affair, was squandering and ruining his honest acquisitions, the fruit of years of patient toil. He'd brought me up, he said, and I was turning out to be a reproach to him; if I weren't ashamed of such behaviour, I ought to die without regret. As for himself, he said, as soon as he grew up, he didn't devote himself, like me, to love affairs and idleness—he had no chance for that; his father kept him in check too tightly. He was kept busy at dirty jobs on the farm, and only saw the city once in four years, and even then, when once he'd seen the festival, was usually hustled back to the country by his father. There he was by far the most industrious member of the household, and his father kept on telling him: "You are ploughing for yourself; for yourself you harrow, for yourself you sow, for yourself you reap; for yourself your toil will be fruitful with joy." After his father left this mortal life, he said, he sold his farm and with the money equipped a three hundred-ton ship and shipped his cargoes for all ports, until he amassed his present fortune; I ought to do the same, if I were the man I ought to be.

When I realised that I was incurring the dislike of my own father and was annoying to the very man who ought to be pleased with me, daft with desire as I was, I made a violent effort to strengthen my resolve and said I'd go away on business, if he wished, and say goodbye to love to humour him. He thanked me and praised my spirit, but he jumped at my offer; he prepared a packetboat, purchased a cargo, loaded the vessel, when it was ready, and counted out a talent in cash from his own pocket. He sent along a slave who had been my attendant as a little boy, to keep an eye on me. When all was ready we cast off; we sailed to Rhodes, where I sold all my cargo on my own terms. I gained a considerable profit over and above the valuation my father

had set on the cargo, so I made a large amount of private profit for myself. While I was walking around the harbour there, an old friend of the family recognised me and asked me to dinner. I went, and enjoyed a jolly and sumptuous repast. When we went to bed, a girl came in to me—the prettiest girl I had ever seen. She spent the night with me, by my host's order. You can see for yourselves how much I liked her: in the morning I went to my host, begged him to sell her to me, and promised to be eternally grateful and always at his service in return for this kindness. To cut the story short, I bought her and yesterday brought her here; but I don't want my father to find out that I've brought her, so I left her and my slave in port on the ship. (*Looking off towards the harbour*) But what's this? I see my slave running up from the harbour. I forbade him to leave the ship. I'm afraid something's the matter!

## Act One. Scene II

(*Enter ACANTHIO running from the direction of the harbour.*)

ACANTHIO (*to himself, without seeing CHARINUS*): Use every effort; summon every ounce of energy to save young master; come on, come on, Acanthio; away with weariness; don't give in to indolence. (*Stops and pants loudly*) This is killing me; I'm completely winded—can't get my breath—and the streets are filled with people in my way. (*Staggering blindly*) One side, there; shove 'em away, push 'em in the gutter. That's the vilest of all customs in this town: if a man's in a hurry and running, no one has the decency to get out of his way. So now I've got to do three things at once, instead of the one I began: I've got to run and fight and argue all along the street.

CHARINUS (*aside*): What in the world makes him so anxious to take up sprinting? I'm worried: what can the matter be, and what's the news?

ACANTHIO (*still without seeing CHARINUS*): I'm getting nowhere. The more I stand here, the more critical our danger gets.

CHARINUS (*aside*): He's got some bad news, all right.

ACANTHIO (*trying to start running again*): My knees desert me; I can't run. (*Crying*) Oh, I'm done for; my guts have started a revolution and have seized my midriff. O God, I can't breathe—I'd make a wretched flute-player.

CHARINUS (*aside*): For heaven's sake, take the edge of your shirt and wipe the sweat off.

ACANTHIO (*to himself*): All the baths in the world will never wash away this tired feeling. But I wonder if master Charinus is at home or out?

CHARINUS (*aside*): This is torturing me! I want to know what this is, and be relieved of my fears.

ACANTHIO: Am I still standing here? Do I hesitate to smash the door to splinters? (*Runs up to door of DEMIPHO'S house and knocks*) Open up, someone! Where's master Charinus? Is he at home or out? (*Exasperated*) Won't anyone have the decency to come to the door?

CHARINUS (*to ACANTHIO*): Here I am, Acanthio, the man you're looking for.

ACANTHIO (*without seeing CHARINUS*): The service here is terrible!

CHARINUS (*approaching ACANTHIO*): What's the trouble with you?

ACANTHIO (*turning and recognising CHARINUS*): Plenty of trouble, master, for you and me too.

CHARINUS: What's the matter?

ACANTHIO: It's all up with us.

CHARINUS: Save that greeting for our enemies.

ACANTHIO: But it's been allotted to you.

CHARINUS: Tell me what the trouble is.

ACANTHIO: Take it easy; I need a rest. I've burst a blood-vessel for you, and I'm spitting blood.

CHARINUS (*impatiently*): Drink some Egyptian resin with honey; that will fix you up.

ACANTHIO: You just drink some hot tar; your troubles will be all over.

CHARINUS: I've never known a more irritable fellow than you.

ACANTHIO: I've never known a more insulting fellow than you.

CHARINUS (*soothingly*): But suppose I'm telling you what I think will cure you?

ACANTHIO: Away with cures like that; they bring pain with them.

CHARINUS: Tell me, is there any good which anyone can have without some evil in it, or which you can enjoy without taking some discomfort therein?

ACANTHIO: I don't know about that stuff: I never took a course in philosophy. All I know is that a good with a joker in it is a gift I don't yearn for.

CHARINUS: Come, Acanthio, give me your hand.

ACANTHIO: There; take it.

CHARINUS: Do you want to be obliging or not?

ACANTHIO: You can find that out from my actions: I've got a rupture from running for your sake, so you could learn promptly what I know.

CHARINUS: I'll make you a free man—in a few months.

ACANTHIO: You're wheedling me.

CHARINUS: Could I bring myself to tell you a falsehood about anything? Why, before I even speak, you know if I want to lie.

ACANTHIO: This talk of yours increases my fatigue; you're killing me!

CHARINUS (*impatiently*): Is this the way you oblige me?

ACANTHIO: What do you want me to do?

CHARINUS: Do? What I want.

ACANTHIO: Well then, what do you want?

CHARINUS: I'll tell you.

ACANTHIO: Tell me.

CHARINUS: But quietly, if you please.

ACANTHIO (*with a wink at the spectators*): Are you afraid of waking up the audience?

CHARINUS (*angrily*): Curse you!

ACANTHIO (*angrily*): And you—(*more calmly*) will curse the news I'm bringing you from the harbour.

CHARINUS: What are you bringing? Tell me.

ACANTHIO (*melodramatically*): Violence, Fear, Torture, Care, Brawls, and Want.

CHARINUS: The devil! Quite a treasure-chest of troubles you've brought. I'm a goner!

ACANTHIO: No, you're— (*He breaks off and leaves his sentence unfinished.*)

CHARINUS: I know; you'll say I'm a miserable wretch.

ACANTHIO: I said it—under my breath.

CHARINUS: What is this trouble?

ACANTHIO: Don't ask; it's a terrible misfortune.

CHARINUS: Please don't keep me in suspense any longer; I've been anxious too long.

ACANTHIO: Take it easy; there are several questions I want to ask before I get my—beating.

CHARINUS: Indeed you will get a beating unless you either speak up or get out.

ACANTHIO: Just look at that, will you? How he coaxes! He's as smooth as they come, when he sets his mind to it.

CHARINUS (*earnestly*): Heavens above! I beg and beseech you to tell me at once what it is; for I see I've got to humble myself to my own slave.

ACANTHIO (*with dignity*): And don't I seem to deserve it?

CHARINUS (*humbly*): Yes indeed.

ACANTHIO: So I supposed.

CHARINUS: Please tell me: the ship hasn't been wrecked, has it?

ACANTHIO: The ship's all right, don't worry.

CHARINUS: What about the gear and tackle?

ACANTHIO: They're quite sound, too.

CHARINUS: Why don't you tell me why you were running all over the town looking for me just now?

ACANTHIO: You keep interrupting me and take the words out of my mouth.

CHARINUS: I'll keep quiet.

ACANTHIO: Quiet, then! (*Conversationally*) I suppose that if I had any good news for you, you'd squeeze it right out of me, seeing how anxious you are for me to tell you the bad news you've got to hear.

CHARINUS (*in desperation*): For heaven's sake, I entreat you to disclose that bad news of yours.

ACANTHIO: I'll tell you, since you beg me to. Your father—

CHARINUS (*frightened*): What about my father?

ACANTHIO: And your mistress—

CHARINUS (*still more alarmed*): What about her?

ACANTHIO: Have met!

CHARINUS: Met? I'm ruined! (*After a pause*) Answer me this one question.

ACANTHIO: Ask anything you like.

CHARINUS: How could he see her?

ACANTHIO: With his eyes.

CHARINUS: In what way?

ACANTHIO: Popping right out of his head.

CHARINUS: Go to the devil! Are you being funny when my life's at stake?

ACANTHIO: How the devil am I being funny if I only answer your questions?

CHARINUS: Are you sure he saw her?

ACANTHIO: As sure as that you and I see each other.

CHARINUS: Where did he see her?

ACANTHIO: On board the ship, standing near her; he talked with her, too.

CHARINUS (*dramatically*): O father, you've killed me! (*Turning savagely on ACANTHIO*) You there—see here, you: why didn't you keep him from seeing her, you rascal!

ACANTHIO: Because we were busy at our own tasks—folding up and storing away the tackle. While we were doing this, your father rowed out in a little skiff and no one saw him until he boarded the ship.

CHARINUS: In vain, O Sea, have I escaped from your storms! I thought that now I was on land, in safety, but I see the wild waves driving me on the reef. (*To ACANTHIO*) Tell me what happened next.

ACANTHIO: When he saw the girl, he first asked whose she was.

CHARINUS: What did she say?

ACANTHIO: At once I ran up and interrupted; I said that you had bought her as a maid for your mother.

CHARINUS (*hopefully*): Do you think he believed you?

ACANTHIO (*scornfully*): What a question! But then the dirty old fellow tried to make her.

CHARINUS: Good heavens! My mistress?

ACANTHIO: Strange he didn't try to make *me*!

CHARINUS: Alas, my heart, my poor heart! Drop by drop, it melts away, like salt in water. It's all up with me!

ACANTHIO: You never spoke a truer word. (*More hopefully*) But that's all nonsense.

CHARINUS: What shall I do? I'm sure my father won't believe me if I say I bought her for my mother. Besides, it seems a crime to tell a falsehood to my father. Anyway, neither he nor anyone else would believe that I bought such a lovely girl for my mother.

ACANTHIO (*encouragingly*): Oh, hush, you silly fool! He'll believe you; why, he believed me.

CHARINUS (*miserably*): Oh, dear, I'm just afraid he'll be suspicious about the affair. Answer this question, please.

ACANTHIO: What is it?

CHARINUS: You don't think he suspected she was my mistress, do you?

ACANTHIO: No, he didn't seem to. Why, he believed everything I told him.

CHARINUS: You mean, you think he did.

ACANTHIO: No, he really did believe me.

CHARINUS: Alas, I'm done for, ruined completely! But why do I waste time in weeping here? Why not go to the ship? Come on.

ACANTHIO (*stopping him as he starts for the harbour*): If you go that way, you'll run up against your father; then he'll see you're frightened and distracted; straightway he'll stop you, ask you where you bought her, what you paid; he'll pump you while you're scared.

CHARINUS: I'll go this way, then. (*Starts off towards the city*) Do you think father has left the harbour?

ACANTHIO: Yes, that's why I ran on ahead: I didn't want him to catch you unawares and worm it out of you.

CHARINUS: Very good. (*They depart to the forum.*)

## Act Two. Scene I

(*Enter DEMIPHO from the harbour.*)

DEMIPHO (*to the audience*): It's wonderful how the gods make sport of us men, and wonderful are the dreams they send us in our sleep. For example, in this past night I was pretty active in my sleep and kept quite busy. I dreamed I bought a beautiful nanny-goat; now I didn't want the nanny-goat I already had at home to hurt her, or the two of them to fight if they were brought together, so after I'd bought her I dreamed I'd entrusted her to the keeping of a monkey. Then a little later that monkey came to me, cursed me roundly, and started a quarrel: he said that thanks to the coming of that nanny-goat he'd suffered considerable disgrace and loss; for the goat (he said) which I'd given him to keep, had immediately eaten up his wife's dowry. I thought it very strange that a goat should have eaten the dowry of a monkey's wife. But the monkey assured me that it was so, and finally announced that if I didn't hurry up and take that goat away from his house, he'd take her to my house and my wife. Now I seemed to have a great liking for that nanny-goat, but I didn't have any place to keep her; what was I to do? I was in torment. Meanwhile I dreamed a billy-goat came up to me and told me he'd stolen that nanny-goat from the monkey, and he began to laugh at me. And I was miserable, and could hardly stand the loss of my goat.

Now I can't discover how this dream applies to me; but I suspect I've already found out who that nanny-goat is and what it means. I went off at dawn to the harbour; when I'd transacted my business there, I saw the ship on which my son came from Rhodes yesterday. A fancy struck me, for some reason or other, to visit it; I boarded a skiff,

rowed out to the ship; and there I saw a stunning girl whom my son had brought as a maid for my wife. It was love at first sight—not the ordinary kind of sensible love, but the love of an absolute madman. I've been in love before, to be sure, in my youth, but never in the crazy sort of way that I am now. Well, I'm sure of this: I'm done for! You yourselves can see what I'm worth.

Well, this is how it is: the girl is that nanny-goat; but that monkey and billy-goat are bringing me some trouble, and I don't know who they are. But hush—here comes my neighbour out of his house.

Act Two. Scene II

(Enter LYSIMACHUS from his house, attended by a SLAVE.)

LYSIMACHUS (to his slave): I want that buck-goat castrated—the one that's been giving you so much trouble at the farm.

DEMIPHO (to himself): That's an ill-omened beginning; I don't like it. I'm afraid my wife may castrate me, like a goat, and play the part of the monkey, herself.

LYSIMACHUS (to the slave): Go out to the farmhouse and give those rakes to my overseer; see that you hand them over to Pistus himself, in person. And tell my wife that I have some business in the city, and not to look for me; say I've got to try three cases today. Go, and don't forget the message.

SLAVE: Anything else?

LYSIMACHUS: That's all. (The slave departs.)

DEMIPHO (approaching LYSIMACHUS): Good day, Lysimachus.

LYSIMACHUS: Well there, Demipho, good day. How are you? How's everything?

DEMIPHO: Pretty wretched.

LYSIMACHUS: God forbid.

DEMIPHO: But God does just this.

LYSIMACHUS: What is it?

DEMIPHO: I'll tell you, if you are interested and have nothing to do.

LYSIMACHUS: I am busy, Demipho, but if you want anything, I'm never too busy to oblige a friend.

DEMIPHO: I know how obliging you are; you needn't tell me. (Confidentially) How old do I seem to you?

LYSIMACHUS: Old enough for the undertaker; a senile, decrepit old man.

DEMIPHO: Take another look. I'm a boy, Lysimachus—seven years old.

LYSIMACHUS: Are you crazy? Calling yourself a boy!

DEMIPHO: It's true.

LYSIMACHUS: Oh, now I get what you mean; when a man is old, and loses his senses and his wits, people usually say he's in his second childhood.

DEMIPHO: No, I'm twice as strong as I ever was.

LYSIMACHUS: That's fine; I congratulate you.

DEMIPHO: Why, if you only knew—my eyesight's much keener than it was before.

LYSIMACHUS: Very good.

DEMIPHO: For something wicked, I mean.

LYSIMACHUS: Not so good.

DEMIPHO: Can I speak out to you, in confidence?

LYSIMACHUS: Trust me.

DEMIPHO: Pay attention.

LYSIMACHUS: I'll do so.

DEMIPHO: Today I started grammar-school, Lysimachus; already I know five letters.

LYSIMACHUS: Which five?

DEMIPHO (coolly): I L-O-V-E.

LYSIMACHUS: What, you, with that grey head, are in love, you worth-  
less dotard?

DEMIPHO: Whether it's grey or red or black, I love.

LYSIMACHUS: You're kidding me, Demipho.

DEMPHO: Cut my head off right on the spot, if I'm lying. Or, to prove I'm in love, take a knife: cut my finger, or my ear, or my nose, or lips; if I budge or feel the wound, you have my permission to slay me—  
(*with a lingering sigh*) with love.

LYSIMACHUS (*to the audience*): If you've never seen a picture of a lover, there's one for you. In my opinion, a senile, decrepit old man is just as good a lover as a mural.

DEMPHO: You're going to scold me, I suppose.

LYSIMACHUS: Scold you?

DEMPHO: There's no reason to be angry at me; many other distinguished men have done the same. 'Tis human to be in love, and it's human to be forgiving.<sup>2</sup> . . . Don't scold me; it wasn't my idea to fall in love.

LYSIMACHUS: Why, I'm not scolding you.

DEMPHO: I don't want to lose your good opinion because of this.

LYSIMACHUS: My good opinion? God forbid!

DEMPHO: Please think it over.

LYSIMACHUS: I've done so.

DEMPHO: Are you sure?

LYSIMACHUS: Don't be a nuisance. (*Aside*) The fellow's crazy with love. (*To DEMPHO*) Anything else?

DEMPHO: Farewell.

LYSIMACHUS (*starting to leave*): I'm in a hurry to get to the harbour; I've some business there.

DEMPHO: Have a good walk.

LYSIMACHUS: Good luck and good-bye. (*LYSIMACHUS departs.*)

DEMPHO: Good luck to you. (*To himself*) Why, I've got some business at the harbour, too. I'll go there now. (*Looking down the street*) But here's my son coming; excellent! I'll wait for him. I've got to see to this, how I can persuade him to sell the girl to me and not give her to his mother; he's brought her as a gift for her, I hear. But I must take care he doesn't notice that I've taken a liking to her.

## Act Two. Scene III

(*Enter CHARINUS, very disconsolate; he does not see DEMPHO.*)

CHARINUS (*to himself*): There's no more wretched man alive, I'm sure; everything's always going against me. No matter what I start out to do, I can never attain to my heart's desire; some nuisance always gets in my way, and thwarts my careful schemes. Alas! I got myself a mistress, to delight my heart, and paid a good price for her; I thought I could keep her without my father's knowledge. But he has found her out, has seen her, and ruined me. When he begins to question me, I've no idea what to say; a dozen ideas struggle in confusion in my head. I don't know what plan I can make; my mind is wandering and is so upset. At times my slave's plan pleases me, and then again I don't like it and don't believe that my father can be brought to think that I bought her for my mother. Well now, if I tell him the truth, and say that I bought her for myself, what will he think of me? And further, he'd take her away and send her abroad to be sold. I know how strict he is from my own experience. If this be love, I'd rather dig a trench than ever kiss a wench again.<sup>3</sup> He's already driven me out of the house once, for all my reluctance, and made me go off on a business trip; that's how I got into this mess. When the pain is greater than the pleasure, what charm is left? To no avail I hid her, buried her away, kept her out of sight; my father is a ferret,<sup>4</sup> you can't keep anything from him; nothing is so hallowed or so profane but that he puts his nose in it. I have no confidence in my fortunes, and no hope in my heart.

DEMPHO (*aside*): Why is my son talking to himself? He seems upset about something or other.

CHARINUS (*suddenly noticing DEMPHO*): Ye gods! Here's my father. I'll go up and speak to him. (*Approaching DEMPHO*) How goes it, father? (*Tries to escape into the house.*)

DEMPHO: Where have you been, and what's your hurry, son?

CHARINUS (*embarrassed*): Oh, it's all right, father.

DEMPHO: I hope so, but what's the matter with you? You're changing colour. Have you a pain somewhere?

CHARINUS: I feel a little queer, somehow; I didn't sleep very well last night.



DEMIPHO: You've been travelling by sea; your eyes aren't used to the land yet.

CHARINUS: I rather think—

DEMIPHO (*eager to finish with the subject*): Yes, indeed, that's it. It will leave you soon. That's why you're pale. You'd be wise to go lie down at home.

CHARINUS: I haven't time; I want to attend to some commissions first.

DEMIPHO: Do it tomorrow, or the day after tomorrow.

CHARINUS: I've often heard you say a wise man should attend to his commissions first of all.

DEMIPHO: Do so, then; I won't oppose your wishes.

CHARINUS (*aside*): I'm saved, if I can always count on that remark.

DEMIPHO (*aside*): Why is he taking counsel with himself, apart from me? But I have nothing to fear; he can't have found out that I'm in love with her. For I've done nothing stupid, like an ordinary lover.

CHARINUS (*aside*): Everything is still all right, by George! I'm quite sure he doesn't know about my mistress; if he knew it, he'd sing an other tune.

DEMIPHO (*aside*): Why not approach him about her?

CHARINUS (*aside*): Why don't I get out of here? (*To DEMIPHO*) I'm going to complete my friend's commissions, like a true friend.

DEMIPHO: No, wait a minute. There are a few little matters I want to ask about first.

CHARINUS: Tell me what you want.

DEMIPHO (*embarrassed, with some hesitation*): Have you kept well?

CHARINUS: Very well, all the time I was at Rhodes; but since I sailed back to port here, I've been a little upset, somehow.

DEMIPHO: Sea-sickness, I suppose; it will soon go away. (*Fidgeting with embarrassment*) But I say; did you bring a maid for your mother from Rhodes?

CHARINUS (*startled*): Yes, I did.

DEMIPHO: Well—what kind of a girl is she, in your opinion?

CHARINUS (*trying to appear indifferent*): Not bad.

DEMIPHO: Good character?

CHARINUS: I've never seen a better, to my knowledge.

DEMIPHO: Indeed, that's what I thought, when I saw her.

CHARINUS: What? Have you seen her, father?

DEMIPHO: Yes. But she's no good for us; I don't like her.

CHARINUS: Why not?

DEMIPHO (*hesitating*): Because—well, because her appearance doesn't suit our household. The only girl we need is one who can weave, grind the meal, split the wood, work at wool, sweep the house, take her beatings, and cook the family's meals every day. That girl couldn't do any of this.

CHARINUS: Exactly. That's why I bought her; she's a gift for mother.

DEMIPHO: Don't give her, and don't tell your mother you've brought her.

CHARINUS (*aside, with great delight*): The gods are on my side.

DEMIPHO (*aside*): He's slipping, bit by bit. (*Aloud*) But I forgot to mention this: it wouldn't be quite decent for her to accompany your mother, and I wouldn't permit it.

CHARINUS: Why?

DEMIPHO: Because it would be a disgrace for such a pretty figure to attend a respectable matron. When she'd walk down the street, everybody would look her over, stare at her, nod, wink, and whistle; they'd nudge her, yoo-hoo at her, and make a nuisance of themselves; they'd sing serenades at the door, and chalk the house with gallant verses. And people gossip so now, they'd accuse my wife and me of running an 'establishment.' We don't want that.

CHARINUS: Good heavens! You're quite right, and I agree with you. But what's to become of the girl?

DEMIPHO: That's all right. I'll buy your mother a stout, ugly wench, as befits a matron,—a Syrian or Egyptian; she'll grind and cook and spin and be cudgelled, and won't bring any scandal to our doors.

CHARINUS: What if I return the other girl to the seller?

DEMIPHO (*vehemently*): Not on your life!

- CHARINUS: He said he'd take her back if we didn't like her.
- DEMIPHO: There's no need for that; I don't want any lawsuits, or your credit to be hurt. I much prefer to take my loss, if necessary, rather than have any reproach or scandal over a woman originate in our family. I think I can sell her for you for a handsome sum.
- CHARINUS: Providing that you don't sell her for less than I paid, father—
- DEMIPHO (*interrupting*): Just keep quiet; there's an old man who commissioned me to buy her—I mean, one like her.
- CHARINUS (*desperately*): But a young man has commissioned me to buy one of her sort, exactly like her, father.
- DEMIPHO: I think I can sell her for twenty minae.
- CHARINUS (*hastily*): If I'd take them, he's already offered me twenty-seven minae.
- DEMIPHO: But I—
- CHARINUS: No, I say, I can—
- DEMIPHO (*angrily*): You don't know what I'm going to say; shut up! (*Looking down the street*) I can scrape up another three minae and make it thirty.
- CHARINUS: What are you looking at?
- DEMIPHO: At my customer.
- CHARINUS (*straining to see*): Where in the world is the fellow?
- DEMIPHO: There he is: I see him. He bids me add five more minae.
- CHARINUS: God damn him, whoever he is!
- DEMIPHO (*still gazing down the street*): He now signals to me to add six more minae.
- CHARINUS (*looking down the street in the other direction*): Seven more from my customer!
- DEMIPHO: By God, you'll never outbid me!
- CHARINUS: He offers to pay in gold, father.
- DEMIPHO: His offer's useless; I *will* have her!
- CHARINUS: But he promised first.

- DEMIPHO: I don't care.
- CHARINUS (*looking down the street again*): He bids fifty.
- DEMIPHO: He won't get her for a hundred! (*In a burst of rage*) Can't you stop trying to sell her against my wishes? You'll get an outrageous profit. That old man I'm buying her for is just crazy with love. You can name your own price.
- CHARINUS: But good heavens, the young man I'm buying her for is dying with love.
- DEMIPHO: The old man is much worse off, believe me.
- CHARINUS: The old man never was, and never will be, more crazy with love than that youth for whom I'm acting, father.
- DEMIPHO: Be quiet, I say. I'll attend to this affair properly.
- CHARINUS (*as a sudden thought strikes him*): I say!
- DEMIPHO: What is it?
- CHARINUS: I took her without legal title.
- DEMIPHO: He'll take her anyway. Forget it.
- CHARINUS: But you can't sell her legally.
- DEMIPHO: I'll think up something.
- CHARINUS (*trying another tack*): Besides, another fellow has a share in her. How do I know his mind, or whether he is willing to sell or not?
- DEMIPHO: I know he's willing.
- CHARINUS: Well, I'm sure there's someone who isn't willing.
- DEMIPHO: What do I care about that?
- CHARINUS: Because it's only fair that he should manage his own property.
- DEMIPHO: What do you say to—
- CHARINUS (*paying no attention*): That other fellow is joint owner of her; he's not here now.
- DEMIPHO (*amused*): You answer before I ask my question.
- CHARINUS: And you buy before I sell. I tell you, I don't know if he wants to give up possession or not.

DEMIPHO: What? If she is to be bought for that party who gave you the commission, then he'll be willing, but if I buy her for my party, then he won't be willing? Nonsense! Damn it! No one shall have her except the fellow I wish.

CHARINUS (*sullenly*): Is that your decision?

DEMIPHO: Do you suppose it isn't? Why, I'm going right away to the ship, and she'll be sold right there.

CHARINUS: Do you want me to go with you?

DEMIPHO: No, I don't.

CHARINUS: You're very unpleasant about it.

DEMIPHO: You'd better go attend to those commissions of yours.

CHARINUS: You're keeping me.

DEMIPHO: Blame me, then; say you did your best. Don't go to the harbour, I tell you.

CHARINUS: I hear you.

DEMIPHO (*aside*): I'll go to the harbour. I must take care he doesn't find out; I won't buy her myself, I'll commission my friend Lysimachus. He said some time ago he was going to the harbour; I'm holding myself up by standing here. (*DEMIPHO departs to the harbour.*)

CHARINUS: I'm done for! I'm ruined!

Act Two. Scene IV

(*Enter EUTYCHUS from his house; he is not perceived at first by CHARINUS.*)

CHARINUS (*wildly*): Pentheus was torn to shreds by the Bacchantes, they say; that was the merest trifle, I think, in comparison to the way I'm torn to pieces. Why do I live? Why not die? What good is left for me in life? My mind's made up: I'll go to a doctor and end my life with poison, since I've been bereft of that for which I desire to live. (*He starts to leave.*)

EUTYCHUS: Wait, wait, Charinus; please!

CHARINUS: Who calls me back?

EUTYCHUS: Eutyclus, your friend and companion, your next-door neighbour.

CHARINUS: You don't know how heavy a burden I have to bear.

EUTYCHUS: Yes I do; I heard from the doorway everything you said; I know all about it.

CHARINUS: What is it you know?

EUTYCHUS: Your father wants to sell—

CHARINUS: You've got the whole story.

EUTYCHUS: —your mistress—

CHARINUS: You know too much.

EUTYCHUS: —against your will.

CHARINUS: You know everything. But how do you know she's my mistress?

EUTYCHUS: You yourself told me yesterday.

CHARINUS: Pretty funny that, forgetting that I'd told you.

EUTYCHUS: It's no wonder.

CHARINUS: Now I want your advice. Tell me: by what method do you think it would be best for me to die?

EUTYCHUS: Won't you be still? Don't say that.

CHARINUS: What do you want me to say?

EUTYCHUS: Do you want me to put one over on your father?

CHARINUS: Of course I do.

EUTYCHUS: Do you want me to go to the harbour—

CHARINUS: Do I? Why, fly there!

EUTYCHUS: —and get the girl away from him with money?

CHARINUS: Why, pay her weight in gold!

EUTYCHUS: Where's the money?

CHARINUS: I'll beg Achilles to give me the gold with which Hector was ransomed.

EUTYCHUS: Are you crazy?

CHARINUS: If I were sane, I wouldn't take you for my doctor.

EUTYCHUS: No matter what he bids, do you want me to match it and buy her?

CHARINUS: You can add a thousand to whatever he bids.

EUTYCHUS: Oh, hush! (*Starts to leave*) Say! Where am I to get the money for you to pay when your father asks for it?

CHARINUS: It will be found; it will be discovered; something will turn up; you're killing me.

EUTYCHUS: I'm afraid of that, "something will turn up."

CHARINUS: Why don't you keep still?

EUTYCHUS: I'm mute.

CHARINUS: Are your orders sufficient?

EUTYCHUS: Can't you stop worrying?

CHARINUS: No, I can't.

EUTYCHUS: Good luck.

CHARINUS: No luck for me until you return.

EUTYCHUS: Better try to be sensible.

CHARINUS: Good-bye, good luck, and preserve me.

EUTYCHUS: I'll do so; wait for me at home.

CHARINUS: See that you come back soon with the spoils.

(*EUTYCHUS departs to the harbour; CHARINUS goes into his father's house. A short time is supposed to elapse before the next Act.*)

Act Three. Scene I

(*Enter LYSIMACHUS with PASICOMPSA from the direction of the harbour.*)

LYSIMACHUS: Like a friend in need, I've done my friend this service; as my neighbour asked, I've made this purchase. (*To the girl*) You're mine; come along. Don't weep; it's just too silly, to spoil such lovely

eyes. Why, as far as you're concerned, you ought to laugh rather than weep.

PASICOMPSA: Please, my dear old fellow, tell me—

LYSIMACHUS: Ask whatever you will.

PASICOMPSA: Why have you bought me?

LYSIMACHUS: Bought you? That you may do my bidding, (*with an amorous look*) just as I'll do whatever you bid.

PASICOMPSA: I'm resolved to do whatever I think you wish, as far as I can and know how.

LYSIMACHUS: No hard task shall be imposed on you, my dear.

PASICOMPSA: You see, dearie, I don't know how to carry heavy burdens or tend the sheep or nurse children.

LYSIMACHUS: If you're a good girl, you'll be well off.

PASICOMPSA: Oh dear! Then I'm ruined.

LYSIMACHUS: Why?

PASICOMPSA: Because where I come from, the naughty girls are usually well off.

LYSIMACHUS: You mean to say no woman is any good?

PASICOMPSA: Oh, no; it's not my way to say what everybody knows.

LYSIMACHUS (*aside*): By Jove, her conversation's worth more than I paid for her. (*Aloud*) I want to ask you one question.

PASICOMPSA: If you ask, I'll answer.

LYSIMACHUS: I say, what's your name?

PASICOMPSA: Pasicompsa.

LYSIMACHUS: You got your name from your appearance.<sup>5</sup> But see here, Pasicompsa! (*Leering, with an indecent gesture*) If you get a chance, could you thread a fine needle?<sup>6</sup>

PASICOMPSA: Oh, yes.

LYSIMACHUS: If you can deal with a fine thread, I'm sure you could handle a coarse one.

PASICOMPSA (*coolly*): As far as sewing goes, I'm not afraid of anyone of my own age.

LYSIMACHUS: I see you're a good girl, and plenty old enough, since you know your business, my girl.

PASICOMPSA: Oh, I've been well taught. I won't let anyone complain about my—work.

LYSIMACHUS: Well, that's just it. I'm going to give you a little lamb, just sixty years old, for your very own.

PASICOMPSA: So old, dearie?

LYSIMACHUS: It's of Greek stock. If you take good care of it, it will be very good; you can shear it very nicely.

PASICOMPSA: For your sake, I'll be very grateful for whatever is given me.

LYSIMACHUS (*adopting a more serious tone*): See here, my girl; don't fool yourself; you're not mine—don't imagine it.

PASICOMPSA: Why then, tell me, please, whose am I?

LYSIMACHUS: Your own master has bought you back; I bought you for him as he requested.

PASICOMPSA (*delighted, thinking CHARINUS is meant*): Ah, I'm coming back to life; he's kept his promise to me.

LYSIMACHUS: Cheer up; he'll set you free; he's crazy about you, and he never saw you before today.

PASICOMPSA: For mercy's sake, it's two years since he started this affair with me. Since I see you're his friend, I'll tell you about it.

LYSIMACHUS: What's that? For two years he's had an affair with you?

PASICOMPSA: Certainly; and we made a solemn promise to each other—I to him and he to me: neither of us would ever pet or sleep with any other man or woman.

LYSIMACHUS: Good heavens! Wouldn't he even sleep with his wife?

PASICOMPSA: Please, sir, is he married? He isn't and he shan't be!

LYSIMACHUS: I wish he weren't. By George, what a liar the man is!

PASICOMPSA: There's no young man I love better.

LYSIMACHUS: He's a mere child, you silly girl; for it wasn't long ago that his teeth fell out.

PASICOMPSA: What, his teeth?

LYSIMACHUS: Never mind. Come along please. (*To the audience*) He begged me to find a place for her in my house for one day, since my wife is at the country. (*They go into the house of LYSIMACHUS.*)

Act Three. Scene II

(*Enter DEMIPHO from the harbour.*)

DEMIPHO (*to himself*): At last I've succeeded in finding the road to ruin: I've bought a mistress without my wife or son knowing it. I've made up my mind to return to my old habits and indulge myself. I have but a short time of life left; why then, I'll enliven it with wine, women, and good living. It's much more fair that a man of my years should have a good time. When you're young, when your blood is vigorous, it's proper to devote your energies to making money; but when you finally reach old age, then you ought to take it easy and make love while you can; life itself is then pure profit. And I'm going to follow out my words with actions. Meanwhile I'll go look in at my house here. (*Pausing*) My wife is waiting for me at home; she's probably starving by now. She'll kill me with her nagging, if I go in. (*Making up his mind*) Well then, however it may be, I won't go home after all; I'll first stop in here to see my neighbour. I want him to rent a little apartment for me, where the girl can live. But here he comes out of his house.

Act Three. Scene III

(*Enter LYSIMACHUS from his house.*)

LYSIMACHUS (*to PASICOMPSA, within the house*): I'll bring him to you, if I meet him.

DEMIPHO (*with a jocular grin*): He means me.

LYSIMACHUS (*turning and seeing DEMIPHO*): Oh, I say, Demipho.

DEMIPHO: Is the girl at your house?

LYSIMACHUS: What do you think?

DEMIPHO: How about going in to see her?

LYSIMACHUS: What's your hurry? Wait.

DEMIPHO: What shall I do?

LYSIMACHUS: Just consider carefully what you ought to do.

DEMIPHO: Consider? Why, good heavens! *This* is what I ought to do, go right in to see her.

LYSIMACHUS: You think so, you mutton-head? Go into her?

DEMIPHO: What else?

LYSIMACHUS: First listen to me and pay attention: there's something else I think you ought to do first. If you go in there now, you'll want to hug her, chat with her, and kiss her.

DEMIPHO: You're a mind-reader; you know just what I'm going to do.

LYSIMACHUS: You'll be making a big mistake.

DEMIPHO: But if you love a girl—

LYSIMACHUS: So much the less. With your sallow complexion, your stinking breath, smelling like a goat, will you kiss a girl? Do you want to make her throw up? I'm sure you must be in love, to tell me such a plan as that.

DEMIPHO: Well then, how about doing this? If you agree, let's get a caterer to cook dinner for us at your house tonight.

LYSIMACHUS (*enthusiastically*): That's just what I'd advise. Now you're talking sensibly and not like a silly lover.

DEMIPHO: What are we waiting for? Why not go and look for some provisions, so we can have a party?

LYSIMACHUS: I'm right with you. And you'll find some place for her, if you're wise; not one day more will she spend in my house, after today. I'm afraid my wife will find her here if she returns from the country tomorrow.

DEMIPHO: Everything has been attended to; just come along. (*They depart to the forum.*)

Act Three. Scene IV

(*Enter CHARINUS from his father's house.*)

CHARINUS (*to himself*): How wretched and miserable I am! I can't relax a minute. If I'm at home, my mind is out of doors; if I'm out, my mind's at home: Love blazes up in my heart and soul; if my tears didn't prevent it, I'm sure my head would be on fire. I hold fast to hope, but I've lost my life; I don't know whether she'll return or not. If my father puts his threats into force, my life's gone off into exile; but if my friend carries out his promise, my life's not gone. But even if Eutychnus had gout in both feet, he could have come back from the harbour by now. He has that one bad fault: he's too slow for my wishes. (*Seeing EUTYCHUS approaching down the street*) But isn't that Eutychnus I see running up? It's he! I'll go to meet him. [O Lady Luck, mistress of men and gods, since you have brought me this longed-for hope, receive my thanks!] Now, what's he stopping for? Oh, damn it! I don't like his expression. He walks sadly (Oh, my heart's afire, I'm numb!), he shakes his head. Oh, Eutychnus!

(*Enter EUTYCHUS from the harbour.*)

EUTYCHUS: Well, Charinus!

CHARINUS: Before you catch your breath, tell me in one word: where am I? Here or with the dead?

EUTYCHUS: You're neither here nor with the dead.

CHARINUS (*joyfully*): I'm saved; I've become an immortal! He has bought her, he's neatly hoodwinked my father. There's no man alive better able to get what he's after. (*Slightly worried, as EUTYCHUS still looks glum*) Tell me, please; if I'm neither here nor in Hell, where am I?

EUTYCHUS (*mournfully*): Nowhere at all.

CHARINUS: I'm ruined! That remark has done for me.

EUTYCHUS: It's tiresome to keep on talking when you're busy.

CHARINUS: Whatever it is, come to the point.

EUTYCHUS: First of all: we're lost.

CHARINUS: Why don't you tell me something I don't know?

EUTYCHUS: Your girl's been disposed of.

CHARINUS: Eutychnus, you're guilty of a capital offence.

EUTYCHUS: Why?

CHARINUS: You're killing your best friend, and a free citizen.

EUTYCHUS: God forbid!

CHARINUS: You've plunged the knife in my throat; I'm going to fall.

EUTYCHUS: For heaven's sake, don't lose heart.

CHARINUS: I've none to lose. Go on; tell me some more bad news. To whom was she sold?

EUTYCHUS: I don't know. She'd already been handed over and led away when I reached the harbour.

CHARINUS: Alas for me! These are very mountains of burning misery you've been hurling on me. Go on, torture me, you butcher, since you've started.

EUTYCHUS: It's no more upsetting for you than it was for me.

CHARINUS: Tell me; who bought her?

EUTYCHUS: I don't know, I tell you.

CHARINUS: Well, is that what you call doing a favour for a friend?

EUTYCHUS: What do you want me to do?

CHARINUS: What you see me doing: die on the spot! Why didn't you ask for a description of the man who bought her? In that way the girl could have been traced. (*Weeping*) Oh, dear; oh, dear!

EUTYCHUS: Stop crying like that. What have I done?

CHARINUS: You've ruined me and my faith in you.

EUTYCHUS: God knows, it's not my fault.

CHARINUS: Fine! You call God to witness. Why should I believe you?

EUTYCHUS: Because you can control what you should believe, but I can't control what I have to tell you.

CHARINUS: You're clever enough at giving tit for tat, but when it comes to my commission, you're lame, blind, mute, crippled, and weak. You promised to put one over on my father; I supposed I was trusting my affair to a clever fellow, but he turns out to be a lump of earth.

EUTYCHUS: What was I to do?

CHARINUS: What were you to do? What a question! You should have made inquiries, asked who he was, where he came from, what his family was, whether he was a citizen or a foreigner.

EUTYCHUS: They said he was an Attic citizen.

CHARINUS: You should have found out where he lived, at least, if you couldn't find out his name.

EUTYCHUS: Everyone said they didn't know.

CHARINUS: Well, at any rate, you could have got a description.

EUTYCHUS: I did.

CHARINUS: What did they say he looked like?

EUTYCHUS: I'll tell you: he was grey-haired, knock-kneed, pot-bellied, big-mouthed, short, black-eyed, slanting-jawed, and a little flat-footed.

CHARINUS: That's not a man, but some chamber of horrors you're describing. Is there anything else you can say about him?

EUTYCHUS: That's all, as far as I know.

CHARINUS: Good God, that fellow with his slanting jaws has certainly hung one on my jaw! <sup>s</sup> I can't endure it! I've decided to go into exile. What state should I choose? Megara, Eretria, Corinth, Chalcis, Crete, Cyprus, Sicyon, Cnidus, Zacynthus, Lesbos, Boeotia?

EUTYCHUS: Why have you made that plan?

CHARINUS: Because love afflicts me.

EUTYCHUS: But tell me this: when you reach this destination which you're now choosing, if by chance you fall in love there and can't get your own way, will you go into exile again from there, and then again from the next place, if the same thing happens? What end will ever come to your exile, what limit to your flight? What country or what home can ever be lasting? Tell me that. Come then, if you leave this city, do you think you'll leave love here? If you're convinced that this will be so, if you're sure, if you're absolutely certain of it, how much better it would be for you to go off to the country somewhere and live there for awhile until your passion and love for her lose their hold on you.

CHARINUS: Are you through talking?

EUTYCHUS: I am.

CHARINUS: Your talking is useless. My mind's made up: I'm going home to greet my father and mother; then, without telling my father, I'll leave the country, or (*gloriously*) find some other plan. (*He goes into the house.*)

EUTYCHUS (*to himself*): How hastily he tore himself away and left! Oh, dear me! If he goes away, everyone will say it happened through my negligence. I'd better go hire a large force of private detectives to search for her. Then I'll go to the magistrates and beg them to give me search-warrants for all the precincts; there's no other course left to me now, I guess. (*He departs towards the forum.*)

Act Four. Scene I

(*Enter DORIPPA from the country.*)

DORIPPA: Since my husband sent me a message that he wasn't coming to the farm, I've followed my hunch and have come back to track down this fellow who runs away from me. (*Looking back*) But I don't see old Syra with me. Oh, there she comes at last. Hurry up!

(*Enter SYRA, very deliberately.*)

SYRA: I can't, for heaven's sake, with this heavy load I'm carrying.

DORIPPA: What load?

SYRA: My eighty-four years; add to that slavery, sweat, and thirst; and these bundles are a heavy burden too.

DORIPPA: Give me something to offer to this altar of our neighbour's. There, give me that laurel branch. Go on inside.

SYRA: I'm going. (*SYRA goes into the house of LYSIMACHUS.*)

DORIPPA (*approaching the altar in front of DEMIPHO'S house*): Apollo, grant, I pray, thy favour and thy mercy; grant safety and health to our household, and with thy mercy and kindness spare my son.

(*Enter SYRA hastily from the house.*)

SYRA: Oh, mercy me! Oh, dear, alas!

DORIPPA: Are you crazy? What are you crying about?

SYRA: O Dorippa, my poor Dorippa!

DORIPPA: What are you shouting for, if you please?

SYRA: There is some woman here, in the house.

DORIPPA: What's that? a woman?

SYRA: Yes, a harlot!

DORIPPA: Really?

SYRA: It was very smart of you not to stay in the country. The most stupid woman in the world could guess that she's the mistress of that fine husband of yours.

DORIPPA: Good heavens, I believe you're right.

SYRA: Come in with me, my lady Juno, to see your rival, your Alcmena.<sup>9</sup>

DORIPPA: My goodness, I'm coming just as fast as I can. (*They hurry into the house.*)

Act Four. Scene II

(*Enter LYSIMACHUS from the forum.*)

LYSIMACHUS (*to himself*): Isn't it troublesome enough that Demipho's in love, without his becoming a spendthrift too? Why, if he'd invited ten guests to dinner, he's still bought too much. But the caterer, just like a coxswain urging on his crew, kept urging him on. Well, I've hired the caterer myself. I wonder that he hasn't come, as I ordered. But who's this coming out from my house? The door's open. (*He retires.*)

Act Four. Scene III

(*Enter DORIPPA in great distress.*)

DORIPPA (*to herself*): There never was a more wretched woman than I, to be married to such a man! (*Crying*) Oh, dear me! Just look at the man! There's a fellow you can trust yourself and your possessions to, there's the fellow to whom I brought ten talents dowry! To think that I should see such a sight, to think that I should endure such an insult!



LYSIMACHUS (*aside*): Good Lord, I'm done for! My wife's come back from the country. I suppose she's seen the girl in the house. But I can't hear what she's saying from here; I'll move up closer.

DORIPPA (*to herself*): Oh, heaven help me!

LYSIMACHUS (*aside*): No, help me!

DORIPPA: I'm ruined.

LYSIMACHUS (*aside*): By Jove, I'm completely done for. She has seen her. The gods damn you, Demipho!

DORIPPA: So that's why my husband didn't want to come to the country.

LYSIMACHUS (*aside*): What can I do now, except go up and speak to her? (*Approaching DORIPPA with a pompous air*) Your husband bids his wife good day. Have our country-folk become ciftified?

DORIPPA (*savagely*): They act more decently than those who don't become countrified!

LYSIMACHUS (*pretending not to understand*): The country-folk haven't done anything wrong, have they?

DORIPPA: Not nearly so much as the city-folk, and (*threateningly*) they're not piling up nearly so much trouble for themselves, either!

LYSIMACHUS: Why, what wrong have the city-folk done? Tell me, I really want to know.

DORIPPA: You're pumping me, though you know all the time. (*Bluntly*) Who's that woman in there?

LYSIMACHUS (*innocently*): Oh, have you seen her?

DORIPPA: Yes, I have.

LYSIMACHUS: You want to know who she is?

DORIPPA: Yes, and I'll find out, too.

LYSIMACHUS (*in confusion*): You want me to tell who she is? She's—she is— (*Aside*) Oh, dear! I don't know what to say.

DORIPPA: You're stuck!

LYSIMACHUS (*aside*): Never saw a man more so.

DORIPPA: Why don't you tell me?

LYSIMACHUS: Why, if you'd let me—

DORIPPA: You should have told me long ago.

LYSIMACHUS: I can't, you interrupt me so; you jump on me as if I were guilty.

DORIPPA (*sarcastically*): I know; you're not guilty.

LYSIMACHUS: You can say that with every assurance.

DORIPPA: Then tell me.

LYSIMACHUS: I'll tell you. (*Hesitates for a long time.*)

DORIPPA: And yet, you've got to tell me.

LYSIMACHUS: She is— Do you want to know her name?

DORIPPA: You're talking nonsense; I've caught you in the act.

LYSIMACHUS: What act? She's the girl who— (*Pauses again.*)

DORIPPA: The girl who—*what*?

LYSIMACHUS: She— (*Another long pause.*)

DORIPPA: Bah!<sup>1</sup>

LYSIMACHUS: Well—if it weren't necessary, I shouldn't tell you.

DORIPPA: Don't you know who she is?

LYSIMACHUS: Oh, yes, I remember now; I've been made a referee in her case.

DORIPPA: A referee? Now I see; so now you've called her into a huddle with yourself!

LYSIMACHUS: No, it's this way: she's been deposited with me for safe-keeping.

DORIPPA (*sarcastically*): I understand.

LYSIMACHUS (*desperately*): It's not at all what you think.

DORIPPA: Quite prompt with denials, aren't you?

LYSIMACHUS (*aside*): This is too much for me. I'm stuck!

## Act Four. Scene IV

(Enter a CATERER with several attendants carrying baskets of provisions.)

CATERER (to his attendants): Come on there; hurry up, you! We've got to cook a dinner for a lovesick old man. And yet, on second thought, it's for ourselves we've got to cook it, not for the man who hired us. For if a man in love has his beloved, he takes this for food: seeing, hugging, kissing, talking; I'm sure we'll go back home well-laden. Come on here. (Noticing LYSIMACHUS) But there's the old fellow who hired us.

LYSIMACHUS (aside): Good God, here's the caterer!

CATERER (approaching LYSIMACHUS): Here we are.

LYSIMACHUS: Go away!

CATERER: What? Go away?

LYSIMACHUS: Hush! Go away!

CATERER: Go away?

LYSIMACHUS: Get out!

CATERER: Aren't you going to dine?

LYSIMACHUS: I'm fed up already.

CATERER: But—

LYSIMACHUS: Oh, damn it!

DORIPPA: I say, there; did these men for whom you're acting as referee send you these things too?

CATERER: Is this your mistress, the one you told me you were in love with, when you were buying the food?

LYSIMACHUS: Shut up!

CATERER (looking over DORIPPA with an appreciative air): A fine figure of a woman. She's a little old, though.

LYSIMACHUS: Go to the devil!

CATERER (apologetically): Oh, she's all right.

LYSIMACHUS: Well, you're all wrong!

CATERER (still trying to make up for his disparaging remark): I'm sure she's dandy in bed.

LYSIMACHUS: Won't you get out! I'm not the fellow who hired you.

CATERER (looking him over carefully): What's that? Oh, yes, indeed you are—the very one.

LYSIMACHUS (aside): God help me!

CATERER: Your wife's in the country; and you said you hated her like a snake.

LYSIMACHUS: I told you that?

CATERER: Yes indeed, you told me.

LYSIMACHUS (to DORIPPA): So help me God, I never said that, (with a meaningful wink at the CATERER) my dear wife.

DORIPPA: Do you still deny it? Why, it's plain as day that you hate me.

LYSIMACHUS: Of course I deny it.

CATERER (helpfully, to DORIPPA): Now, no; he didn't say he hated you, but his wife; and he said his wife was in the country.

LYSIMACHUS (to CATERER, in a low voice): This is she. Why are you such a nuisance?

CATERER: Because you said you didn't know me; but perhaps you're afraid of her.

LYSIMACHUS (aloud): And wisely, too; for she's my only sweetheart.

CATERER: Do you want to try my talents?

LYSIMACHUS: No.

CATERER: Give me my wages then.

LYSIMACHUS: Come back tomorrow; you'll get them. And now get out.

DORIPPA: Oh, Lord help me!

LYSIMACHUS (aside): Now I am learning the truth of that old proverb: it's a bad business to have a bad neighbour.

CATERER (to attendants): Why are we standing around here? Let's go. (To LYSIMACHUS) If you've got into trouble, it's not my fault.

LYSIMACHUS: Why, you're just killing me.

CATERER (*slyly*): I know what you want; you want me to get out of here, don't you?

LYSIMACHUS: Yes, indeed.

CATERER: We'll go. But—give me a drachma.

LYSIMACHUS: You shall have it.

CATERER: Well then, bid someone pay it to me now. It can be paid me while my attendants are setting down the provisions.

LYSIMACHUS: Won't you get out? Can't you stop making a nuisance of yourself?

CATERER (*to his attendants*): Come on; set the food down there at the feet of the old fellow. I'll have someone fetch these utensils by and by—tomorrow. Come along. (*The caterer and his attendants depart.*)

LYSIMACHUS (*hesitantly*): Perhaps you're wondering about that caterer—why he came and brought all this. I'll tell you what it is.

DORIPPA: I don't wonder at any of your ruinous and disgraceful actions. I won't put up with it—to be married like this and have whores taken into my house! (*Calling into the house*) Syra, go and ask my father in my name, to come back here with you.

(*Enter SYRA from the house.*)

SYRA: Yes, ma'am. (*She departs.*)

LYSIMACHUS (*desperately*): Please, my dear, you don't understand the affair. I'll swear a solemn oath that I never had anything to do with—has Syra left already? (*DORIPPA stalks into the house*) God damn it! Now *she's* gone too. Oh dear, oh dear! May all the devils in Hell ruin you, neighbour, with your mistress and love-life too! He's overwhelmed me with the most unfair suspicions, and stirred up my house against me. And my wife has a fierce temper. I'll go to the market and tell Demipho I'll drag the girl out into the street by the hair, unless he takes her off somewhere from my house. (*Calling into the house*) Hello there, wife! Even though you're mad at me, you'll have these provisions taken inside, if you're smart; we'll have a better dinner on them by and by. (*He departs to the forum.*)

Act Four. Scene V

(*Enter SYRA.*)

SYRA (*to herself*): My mistress sent me to her father's, but he's not at home; they said he'd gone to the country. I'll go now and tell her.

(*Enter EUTYCHUS, very discouraged.*)

EUTYCHUS (*to himself*): I'm worn out from searching through the city; I can't find a trace of that girl anywhere. (*Noticing SYRA*) But mother's returned from the country; I see Syra standing in front of the house. O Syra!

SYRA: Who calls me?

EUTYCHUS: Your master and foster-child.

SYRA: Greetings, my dear child.

EUTYCHUS: Has mother returned from the country already? Answer me.

SYRA: Yes, and lucky for the whole house, too.

EUTYCHUS: Why, what's the matter?

SYRA: That fine father of yours has brought a mistress into the house.

EUTYCHUS: How's that?

SYRA: When your mother returned from the country she found her at home.

EUTYCHUS: Wow! I didn't think father was like that. Is the woman still in the house?

SYRA: Yes.

EUTYCHUS: Come with me. (*He goes into the house.*)

Act Four. Scene VI

SYRA (*to herself*): My goodness! It's a harsh law that women live by, and much more unfair, poor things, than the men's. If a man secretly takes a harlot, and his wife finds it out, the man goes unpunished. But if a wife even goes out of the house without her husband's knowledge,

the man has grounds for divorce, and she's driven out. There ought to be the same law for husbands as for wives! For a good wife is satisfied with one husband; why shouldn't a man be satisfied with one woman? Goodness me, if men who secretly took harlots were punished in the same way as women who are divorced for committing some fault, I'll wager that more men would now be living alone than women. (*She goes into the house.*)

Act Five. Scene I

(*Enter CHARINUS from his father's house, with a sword, travelling clothes, and luggage.*)

CHARINUS (*tragically, addressing the door of his house*): O doorsills, above and below, hail and fare ye well. Today for the last time I lift my foot from mine ancestral home. All use, enjoyment, living, and nurture from this house have perished for me, have died, have passed away. Alas, I die! O ye gods of my hearth, gods of my parents, O Father Lar of this house, to you I entrust the care of my parents; see you guard them well. I shall seek another hearth and home, other household gods, another city, another state; for Attica makes me shudder. Where characters deteriorate day by day, where you cannot tell true friend from faithless foe, where your heart's desire is snatched away from you, such a state is undesirable even though you are offered a tyranny there.

Act Five. Scene II

(*Enter EUTYCHUS from the house of LYSIMACHUS.*)

EUTYCHUS (*to himself, without seeing CHARINUS*): O Lady Luck, mistress of men and gods, since you have brought me this longed-for hope, receive my thanks! What god is there who feels joy like mine? What I sought was at home; I have found there six good friends: Life, Friendship, Country, Joy, Sport, and Mirth. And in finding them I have sent to the devil these devilish fellows: Wrath, Enmity, Grief, Tears, Exile, Want, Loneliness, Folly, Destruction, and Obstinacy. O ye gods, just let me meet him soon!

CHARINUS (*to the audience, without seeing EUTYCHUS*): I am equipped, as you see; I cast away all pride. I am my own mesmate and orderly,

my own horse and groom, my own armour-bearer; I am my own commander-in-chief, and I'm the private too. I carry all I need. (*Tragically*) O Cupid, how mighty art thou! For by thy deeds, a man can reach the heights of confidence, and then again fall from security into despair!

EUTYCHUS (*to himself*): I wonder where I should go to find him.

CHARINUS: I'm determined to keep on seeking her, no matter where she's been taken. No river shall stay me, nor mountain nor sea; I fear no heat or cold, no wind or hail; I'll endure the rain, I'll suffer toil and sun and thirst. I'll not give in nor shall I rest by night or day until I find my mistress or my grave!

EUTYCHUS: I hear somebody's voice.

CHARINUS (*picking up his luggage and starting to leave*): Ye Saints who guard the traveller, watch over me, I pray.

EUTYCHUS (*noticing CHARINUS*): Ye gods, is that Charinus?

CHARINUS (*to the audience*): My fellow-citizens, farewell!

EUTYCHUS: Charinus, stop there.

CHARINUS: Who calls me back?

EUTYCHUS: Hope, Health, and Victory.

CHARINUS (*without turning*): What do you want of me?

EUTYCHUS: To go with you.

CHARINUS: Look for some other companion; these companions of mine have got me in their grip and won't let me go.

EUTYCHUS: Who are they?

CHARINUS: Care, Misery, Grief, Tears, and Sorrowing.

EUTYCHUS: Dismiss those companions; look here and come back.

CHARINUS (*resuming his journey*): If you want to talk to me, come along.

EUTYCHUS: Stop right there!

CHARINUS: You're a damn nuisance, to hold me up when I'm in a hurry. It's nearly sundown.

EUTYCHUS: If you'd hurry back here as fast as you're hurrying off there, you'd be better off: there's a fine stern wind over here; hard a-lee there! Here there's a nice, fair west wind; over there you have a foul

easterly. Here there's a calm; over there you're in the midst of white-caps. Put in to shore, Charinus; don't you see that black cloud and rain looming up on the port bow? Don't you see how the heavens are filled with sunlight on the other side?

CHARINUS (*stopping*): I'm superstitious; his words worry me. I'll go back to him.

EUTYCHUS: You're a smart fellow. O Charinus, just step here to meet me; approach and give me your hand.

CHARINUS: Take it. Have you got it?

EUTYCHUS: I have.

CHARINUS: Hold on.

EUTYCHUS: Where were you going just now?

CHARINUS: Into exile.

EUTYCHUS: And how did you expect to fare there?

CHARINUS: Miserably.

EUTYCHUS: Hush! Don't fear, I'll restore you to your former happiness. You shall hear just what you most want to hear, and what will make you happy. Stay right there; I'm coming to you as a true friend, with the best wishes in the world. Your mistress—

CHARINUS: What about her?

EUTYCHUS: I know where she is.

CHARINUS: You do, for heaven's sake?

EUTYCHUS: She's safe and sound.

CHARINUS: *Where's she safe and sound?*

EUTYCHUS (*teasing*): I know.

CHARINUS: I'd rather I knew.

EUTYCHUS: Can't you keep your mind calm?

CHARINUS: But what if it's all at sea?

EUTYCHUS: I'll bring it into a calm and safe haven. Don't worry.

CHARINUS (*more and more excited*): For heaven's sake, please tell me at once where she is, where you saw her. Why are you silent? Tell me. You're killing me with your silence!

EUTYCHUS: She's not far away from us.

CHARINUS: Well, just show her to me, if you see her.

EUTYCHUS: I don't see her now, but I saw her a moment ago.

CHARINUS: Why don't you let me see her?

EUTYCHUS: I shall.

CHARINUS: That "shall" is a long time for a lover.

EUTYCHUS: Are you still afraid? I'll show you everything. I've no better friend alive than the man who has her; there's no one I ought to like better.

CHARINUS: I don't give a damn about *him*; I'm asking about her.

EUTYCHUS: Well, I'm telling you about her. To be sure, I did forget just now to tell you where she is.

CHARINUS: Tell me, where is she?

EUTYCHUS: In our house.

CHARINUS: O lovely house—if you're telling me the truth—a well-built house, in my opinion! (*Suspiciously*) But why should I believe you? Did you see her, or is this hearsay?

EUTYCHUS: I saw her.

CHARINUS: Who took her to your house? Tell me.

EUTYCHUS (*embarrassed*): You're asking that?

CHARINUS: Yes, I am.

EUTYCHUS: It's nothing for you to feel ashamed of, Charinus. What does it matter to you who came with her?

CHARINUS: Oh, well, provided she is there.

EUTYCHUS: She is indeed.

CHARINUS: Make whatever wish you like in return for this information.

EUTYCHUS: What if I do make a wish?

CHARINUS: Then pray the gods to grant it.

EUTYCHUS: You're making fun of me.

CHARINUS: I'm saved at last, if I see her. (*Looking at his travelling clothes*) But why don't I throw away this get-up? (*Calling into his house*) Hey there! Someone come out here and bring me a coat.

EUTYCHUS: Ah, that's the way I like to see you.

(*Enter a slave from the house of DEMIPHO.*)

CHARINUS: You've come in the nick of time, my boy. (*He takes off his heavy travelling-coat*) Take this overcoat and stand here. If this story isn't true, I'll continue my journey.

EUTYCHUS: Don't you believe me?

CHARINUS: I believe everything you tell me. But why don't you take me in to see her.

EUTYCHUS: Wait a minute.

CHARINUS: Why should I wait?

EUTYCHUS: It's not time to go in.

CHARINUS: You're killing me!

EUTYCHUS: There's no need to go in now, I say.

CHARINUS: Answer me this: why not?

EUTYCHUS (*somewhat embarrassed*): She's not free.

CHARINUS: Why not?

EUTYCHUS: Because it isn't convenient for her.

CHARINUS (*sarcastically*): Really? It's not convenient for her, when she loves me and I love her? (*To himself*) The fellow's making a complete fool of me. I'm an idiot to believe him. He's holding me up. I'll put on my heavy-coat again. (*Removes his civilian coat.*)

EUTYCHUS: Wait a minute and listen to me.

CHARINUS: Take this coat, please, my boy. (*Hands coat to the slave.*)

EUTYCHUS (*desperately*): Mother's terribly angry at father because he brought a harlot into her house under her very nose, while she was in the country; she suspects that she's his mistress.

CHARINUS (*paying no attention*): I'm buckling my belt.

EUTYCHUS: Now she's looking into the matter.

CHARINUS: Now I've got my sword in hand.

EUTYCHUS: You see, if I take you in—

CHARINUS: Now for my water-bottle, and then away!

EUTYCHUS: Wait, wait, Charinus!

CHARINUS: You're wrong; you can't fool me that way.

EUTYCHUS: I don't even want to.

CHARINUS: Well then, why don't you let me proceed on my journey?

EUTYCHUS: I won't let you.

CHARINUS: I'm delaying myself. (*To the slave*) Go into the house, you! (*The slave goes in; CHARINUS dashes wildly to the front of the stage and strikes an attitude*) Now I've mounted my chariot; I've got the reins in my hands.

EUTYCHUS (*backing away timidly*): You're crazy!

CHARINUS (*wildly*): Now then, feet; spur yourselves and sprint for Cyprus, since my father orders my exile.

EUTYCHUS: You're silly; don't say that.

CHARINUS: I've determined to follow out my plan and undertake the task of tracking down my love.

EUTYCHUS: Why, she's at home.

CHARINUS: For yonder fellow tells nought but lies.

EUTYCHUS: I'm telling you the truth, I say.

CHARINUS (*dashing around the stage*): Now I've come to Cyprus.

EUTYCHUS (*timorously plucking at his mantle*): Just come with me to see the girl you're seeking.

CHARINUS (*paying no attention*): I've inquired, but did not find her.

EUTYCHUS: I don't care about mother's temper.

CHARINUS: I continue on my quest. Now I've come to Chalcis; I see there a friend from Zacynthus; I tell him why I've come; I ask him who has taken her and if he's heard who has her.

EUTYCHUS: Why don't you stop that nonsense and walk right into the house here with me?

CHARINUS: My friend tells me that Zacynthian figs aren't bad.

EUTYCHUS: That's no lie.

CHARINUS: But as for my mistress, he says he heard she was here in Athens.

EUTYCHUS: That Zacynthian is a regular Calchas.

CHARINUS: I board ship, set out for there. Now I'm home, I've returned from exile. (*Looking around and apparently noticing EUTYCHUS for the first time*) Greetings, my dear friend; how are you, Eutyachus? How are my parents? Mother and father well? Very kind of you to ask me; thank you very much. Tomorrow I'll dine with you; today I must dine at home. That's the way it ought to be.

EUTYCHUS (*a little overpowered*): Gracious! Are you dreaming? The fellow's crazy!

CHARINUS (*cheerfully*): Why then, hurry up and give me a treatment, like a good fellow.

EUTYCHUS: Follow me, please.

CHARINUS: I'm coming. (*They start for LYSIMACHUS' house.*)

EUTYCHUS: Take it easy, please; you're stepping on my heels. (*As*

CHARINUS *pays no attention*) Do you hear?

CHARINUS: I heard you long ago.

EUTYCHUS (*pausing at the door*): I want father to make up with mother; for now she's so angry—

CHARINUS (*impatiently*): Go on!

EUTYCHUS: —because of your—

CHARINUS: *Go on!*

EUTYCHUS: Well then, take care.

CHARINUS: Why don't you go on? I'll make her as gentle as Juno is to Jupiter—when she is gentle. (*They go into the house of LYSIMACHUS.*)

## Act Five. Scene III

(*Enter DEMIPHO and LYSIMACHUS from the forum.*)

DEMIPHO: As if you never did anything like this!

LYSIMACHUS: Never, by God! I took good care not to do anything. (*Plaintively*) Oh, dear, I'm nearly dead! My wife's just boiling over on account of that girl.

DEMIPHO: I'll get you out of it; she won't be angry.

LYSIMACHUS: Come along with me. But here's my son coming out.

## Act Five. Scene IV

(*Enter EUTYCHUS from his father's house.*)

EUTYCHUS (*speaking to CHARINUS within the house*): I'll go to father and tell him that mother has quieted down. I'll be right back.

LYSIMACHUS: I like that beginning. (*To EUTYCHUS*) How are you? What's new, Eutyachus?

EUTYCHUS: Good! You've both come in the nick of time.

LYSIMACHUS: What's the matter?

EUTYCHUS: Your wife has been appeased and calmed down. Give me your hands.

LYSIMACHUS (*shaking his son's hand*): God bless me!

EUTYCHUS (*to DEMIPHO*): As for you, I announce that you have no mistress.

DEMIPHO: God damn you! What business of yours is that, if you please?

EUTYCHUS: I'll tell you. Pay attention, both of you.

LYSIMACHUS: Why, we're both at your service.

EUTYCHUS (*impressively*): When men of noble birth have bad characters, it's their own fault if they suffer loss and disgrace their birth.<sup>1</sup>

DEMIPHO: That's very true.

LYSIMACHUS: It's for you that he says it.

EUTYCHUS: In this case it's even more true. (*To DEMIPHO*) It wasn't fair for you, at your age, to take away your son's mistress, when he'd bought her with his own money.

DEMIPHO (*in surprise*): What's that you say? Is she Charinus' mistress?

EUTYCHUS: As if he didn't know, the rogue!

DEMIPHO: But he said he'd bought her as a maid for his mother.

EUTYCHUS: So that's the reason *you* bought her, you young lover, you ancient Don Juan?

LYSIMACHUS: Bravo! Go on! I'll stand here on his other side, and we'll both load him with the remarks he deserves.

DEMIPHO (*weakly*): I'm a goner!

LYSIMACHUS: To harm his innocent son so!

EUTYCHUS: Yes indeed; and he was going into exile too, but I brought him home; for he really was going.

DEMIPHO: He was going?

LYSIMACHUS: Are you still talking, you goblin? At your age you ought to refrain from such practices.

DEMIPHO: I've done wrong; I admit it.

EUTYCHUS: Still talking, you goblin? At your age you ought to be free from such vices. Like the seasons of the year, each age has its fitting task; now, if it were the rule for old men to go with harlots, where in the world would our country be?

DEMIPHO: Oh, dear! I'm done for.

LYSIMACHUS: This sort of activity is more the practice of young men.

DEMIPHO: For mercy's sake, keep her for yourselves, bag and baggage.

EUTYCHUS: Give her back to your son.

DEMIPHO: Let him have her; as far as I'm concerned, he can have her as he likes.

EUTYCHUS (*ironically*): It's about time, since there's no chance for you to do anything else.

DEMIPHO: I'll suffer any punishment he wants for this injury; only do appease him for me, so he won't be angry at me. By Jove, if I'd only known, or if he'd told me even in jest that he loved her, I'd never have taken her away from him, since he loves her. Eutyclus, I beg you: you're his best friend; save me and come to my aid. I put my case into your hands; you'll find me eternally grateful for the kindness.

LYSIMACHUS (*ironically*): Beg him to pardon your mistake and your extreme youth.

DEMIPHO: Are you still at it? Bah! What a haughty prosecutor! I just hope some day the time will come when I can repay you in kind.

LYSIMACHUS: I've said good-bye to all that.

DEMIPHO: And so have I, from this moment on.

EUTYCHUS: Nonsense! You've got the habit now; you'll go right back to it.

DEMIPHO: For heaven's sake, haven't you had enough? Why, you can whip me into little pieces, if you like.

LYSIMACHUS: Right you are. But your wife will do that, when she finds out about this.

DEMIPHO (*frightened*): There's no need for her to know.

EUTYCHUS: All right. She won't find out; don't worry. Let's go in; this spot isn't well-chosen: while we are talking the passersby can learn all about your business.

DEMIPHO: By Jove, you're right. At the same time, our play will be shorter. Let's go.

EUTYCHUS: Your son is here at our house.

DEMIPHO: Excellent. We'll cross over to my house through the garden there.

LYSIMACHUS (*nervously*): Eutyclus, there's a little matter I want discussed before I step into the house.

EUTYCHUS: What is it?

LYSIMACHUS: Every man looks out for himself. Now answer this question: are you certain your mother isn't angry at me?

EUTYCHUS: I'm certain.

LYSIMACHUS: Just think a minute.



EUTYCHUS: I give you my word.

LYSIMACHUS: I'm content. (*After a pause*) Please, consider it again.

EUTYCHUS: Don't you believe me?

LYSIMACHUS: Oh, yes, I believe you, but I'm just so scared.

DEMIPHO: Let's go in.

EUTYCHUS: Wait. I move we pass a new law for old men before we go; let them keep and abide by the following law: (*in a formal, singing tone*)

"WHEREAS men over sixty years of age, whether married or single, do, with evil intent and malice aforethought, consort with harlots,

BE IT RESOLVED THAT in the future they shall be dealt with according to the law, as follows:

Item one: they shall be considered stupid.

Item two: they shall come to want, in so far as in us lies, when they have wasted their property and possessions.

FURTHER, BE IT RESOLVED THAT no one shall prevent a young son from falling in love or having a mistress, within decent limits. If anyone tries to prohibit this, he shall lose more than if he had openly provided the necessary cash.

This law is to be in force from this night on."

(*To the audience*) Fare you well; and if this law pleases you, young men, in honour of the old men you ought to give us a hearty applause.

## NOTES

1. The text is corrupt here.
2. There is a slight lacuna in the text at this point.
3. There is a play in the original between *arare*, "to plough," and *amare*, "to love."
4. The literal meaning is "a fly."
5. Pasicompsa, a Greek name, means literally "altogether charming."
6. The passage in the original plays on words taken from the task of weaving; the more familiar idea of threading a needle has been substituted.
7. These two verses seem out of place here; they occur again in lines 842-3.
8. There is a pun in the Latin on *mala*, "jaws," and *malum*, "evil."
9. Jupiter's love affair with Alcmena is treated by Plautus in his *Amphitryon*.