

TERENCE HEAUTONTIMORUMENOS

PROLOGUE

Lest you should be astonished that you find
A part that is more commonly assigned
To a youth played by an old man, I will now
Explain to you and afterwards tell how
It is that that old man is I. We'll play
Heautontimorumenos today.

It was a wholly Grecian comedy
But now it's wholly Roman. You will see
A double plot made single. That it's new
And what its essence is I'll show to you.

10

The bard and who wrote it originally
I'd tell you if the great majority
Of you were not already quite aware
Of who they are and were. Now I will share
With you in just a few words why I learned
This part at all. The poet was concerned
That I should plead for him but shouldn't speak
The prologue. It's your judgment he would seek.

I am his advocate and hope to be

As eloquent in my advocacy

20

As he was clever in envisioning

The part I'll speak. But we've been listening

To poisonous dirt that he's contaminated

Countless Greek plays while he's scarcely created

But few in Latin. This he'll not deny

Nor rue and swears he'll do so by and by
 Again. Examples of good bards he shows
 And therefore plans to do the same as those.
 The vicious critic says he suddenly
 Took playwriting as his activity, 30
 Relying on the talents of his friends
 And not his own. So now our hope depends
 Upon your judgment, so I beg of you
 That our admirers' pleading rings more true.
 Allow the playwrights great prosperity
 For giving you the opportunity
 Of watching faultless plays that are brand-new,
 Lest he think this is said to that man who
 Tossed out upon his audience of late
 A servant running at a rapid rate 40
 Along the street. Why does he wish to play
 A maniac? He will have more to say
 About his peccadilloes after he
 Brings out some new ones, although he maybe
 Will end them. Favour me so that I may
 Be able to produce a silent play –
 No slave who's always rushing through the street,
 No greedy parasite, no shameless cheat,
 No mean pimp, angry dotard shall you see
 Upon the stage, with excess drudgery 50
 And too much shouting. For my sake concede
 That this is only fair, that I may need
 Less labour. Modern playwrights want to hire
 An "old man" actor, and, should it require

Hard work, they run to me. If it should be
An easier task, another company
Is sought. My style is pure: see how each part
Within the play is treated by my art.
If I have never thought to set a fee
Upon it, thinking It the apogee 60
Of gain to serve you in the best way I'm
Capable of, make me a paradigm
So that young playwrights might be keen to please
You, not themselves, with their abilities.

ACT I

SCENE I

Chremes:
Although our friendship's of a recent date –
In fact it's from when you bought an estate
Nearby – I value it considerably.
Your virtue, though, or else the fact that we
Are neighbours (which is something that I take
As being very close to friendship) make 70
May give you frank advice that It appears
That you are toiling quite beyond your years
And needs. Good lord, what do you hanker for?
You're sixty years of age, or maybe more:
And yet no-one in this locality
Is owner of a better property
Or one more valuable, and no-one

Has more slaves , yet you act as if you've none

In managing your affairs. When at cockcrow

I leave the house and in the evening go

80

Back home again, I see you every day

Upon your property, slaving away –

You dig, plough, carry, having no recess,

No heed for comfort, while no happiness

You reap, I'm sure. You'll say, though, you regret

How little work is done, but I would bet,

If you employed your slaves in what you do,

You'd flourish even more.

Menedemus:

Chremes, have you

Such leisure in your life that you can care

About the affairs of others but can spare

90

No leisure for your own?

Chremes:

I am a man:

There's nothing in humanity that can

Be foreign to me. If you'd take my view

Upon this matter, or perhaps if you

Wish to advise me, what's exemplary

I would embrace, but on the contrary,

Should it be wrong, I may attempt to sway

Your ardour for it.

Menedemus:

Well, I go my way,

You must go yours.

Chremes:

Would anyone crucify
Himself intentionally?

Menedemus:

Yes, that would I. 100

Chremes:

I would relieve you of your wretchedness.

I beg you, what's the cause of your distress?

Are these your just deserts?

Menedemus:

Oh god!

Chremes:

Don't weep!

Just tell me what's the matter, and don't keep

Anything back. Don't be afraid. Trust me.

For with instruction or with sympathy

Or anything at all I'll be your aid.

Menedemus:

You'd hear it all?

Chremes:

You heard the vow I made.

Menedemus:

Then here it is...

Chremes:

But set aside that rake

And take a breather.

Menedemus:

No!

Chremes:

For goodness' sake, 110

Why not?

Menedemus:

Leave me alone, and let me go

On working.

Chremes [taking the rake]:

No!

Menedemus:

But that's not fair!

Chremes:

Oh no!

That's heavy!

Menedemus:

It's what I deserve.

Chremes:

Have done

And tell your tale.

Menedemus:

Alright. I have a son,

My only one, a youth. What did I say?

"I have a son"? I had one, but today

I'm not so sure.

Chremes:

Why?

Menedemus:

Hither came to dwell

A poor Corinthian crone, and my son fell

For her young daughter, so much so that he

Thought of her as his wife. He kept from me

All this. When I found out, though, I began

To deal with him not like a gentleman
Should treat a love-sick youth, but in the way
That countless fathers would. For every day
I censured him: "Do you intend to go
On longer with this intrigue, even though
Your father lives, and have a mistress who
Will act as though your wife? Well, if you do
You don't know me, for you are doing wrong.

I'd like you to be called my son as long 130

As you are worthy, but once you should quit
Your worthiness, I'll find a way that's fit
To deal with you. Your one fault's an excess
Of idleness. There was no lustfulness
In me when I was your age. Penury
Drove me to Asia where prosperity
And martial glory I attained." It came
To this, that, hearing constantly the same
Harsh words, Clinia was overcome: so he
Decided I had more sagacity 140
Than he through age and kindness, and therefore
He went to Asia, joining in the war
To serve the king.

Chremes:

Really?

Menedemus:

I didn't know

That he had left. That was three months ago.

Chremes:

You're both to blame, although the step that he

Had taken displays his vitality.

Menedemus:

Then when I found out from those who had learned

About his leaving, sadly I returned,

Almost subdued with grief and misery.

I sat down while my servants ran to me; 150

They took my shoes off, then some others sped

To start to cook some food for me and spread

The couches. Each one in his way would try

To mitigate the grief I felt. When I

Saw this, I thought, "A multiplicity

Of servants pamper me exclusively!

So many maids to dress me! Opulence

For just one person makes but little sense.

My only son deserves this equally,

Or even more since he would fittingly 160

Enjoy it more, being young. Yet, like a brute,

I drove him far away: thus I'd impute

Any charge of sin against myself. For he

Is eking out a life of penury,

An exile, thanks to me; therefore I'll pay

The penalty I owe in every way

I can – I toil, make money, every shred

I save held for my son." I went ahead

With this commitment swiftly. You would find

That in my house there's nothing left behind - 170

My furniture and clothes I took away:

Only the maids and servants who could pay

Their keep by rustic labour did I yet

Hold on to: all the other ones I set
For auction and then sold. Immediately
I signed a bill to sell my property.
I scraped together then the modest sum
Of fifteen talents and would thereby come
To buy this farm. And here I toil away
Because I have resolved that every day
That I am full of misery, my boy
Is less distressed, and I should not enjoy
My life while working out here unless he
Safely returns and shares all this with me.

180

Chremes:

I think that you're affectionate to your son
And he'd be dutiful if there's someone
Who'd treat him rightly and judiciously.
For you have never known him adequately,
Nor he you, for when frankness is unknown
Between two people, that occurs. You've shown
No hint of how you valued him, and he
Meanwhile has never had the bravery
To show his trust in you, a thing that's due
To fathers. Should this have been done, then you
Would not feel wretched.

190

Menedemus:

True, I must confess.

My fault's the worsen, though.

Chremes:

Nevertheless,

I live in hope. I'm confident that he

Will, safe and sound, be with you presently

Menedemus:

May the gods grant it!

Chremes:

That they'll surely do.

Now, if you're free, I am inviting you

200

To my house that you'll keep me company

And celebrate the Bacchic rites with me.

Menedemus:

I can't.

Chremes:

Why not? I beg of you to spare

A little time. Your son would want you there

Though far away.

Menedemus:

No, it would not be right

That I, who drove him overseas to fight

And suffer hardships, ought myself to flee

Hardships as well.

Chremes:

You think so?

Menedemus:

Certainly.

Chremes:

Farewell, then.

Menedemus:

Farewell, too, to you [exit]

Chremes:

My eyes

Are wet with tears. I so much sympathize
With Menedemus. But because the light
Of day is fading, I have to invite
My neighbour Plania to dine with me.
I'll see if he's at home. [goes to Phania's door, returns]. They say that he
Is there already. It seems I delay
My guests. I must go in, then, straightaway.
What noise is this that's coming from inside
My house? Who's coming out? I'll step aside.

210

SCENE II

Clitipho [at the door, to Clinia within]:
There's nothing, Clinia, so far to fear:
They've not been long, and shortly she'll be here
With the messenger, I'm sure. Therefore subdue
That causeless worry that's tormenting you.

220

Chremes:

Who's that who's talking to my son?

Clitipho:

I see

My father coming. Dad, how happily
You're here. I wished to speak with you.

Chremes:

Oh, why?

Clitipho:
A man named Menedemus lives nearby.

D'you know him?

Chremes:

Very well.

Clitipho:

And do you know

He has a son?

Chremes:

I've heard he has, although

He went to Asia.

Clitipho:

He's not there now, dad:

He's at our house.

Chremes:

He's at our - ?

Clitipho:

Once he had 230

Got off his vessel, I immediately

Brought him to dinner. Since our infancy

We've always been close friends.

Chremes:

Ah, such elation

You bring me! How I wish my invitation

To Menedemus now was not declined!

His unexpected pleasure as we dined

Would have caused me delight. But it is not

Too late yet even now.

Clitipho:

Be careful what

You're doing There's no need.

Chremes:

Why?

Clitipho:

He's not clear

Yet what to do, since he's just landed here. 240

He's scared of everything, particularly

His father's wrath and how his girl might be

Disposed towards him. For his love's so great

That it caused this disturbance and his late

Journey to Asia.

Chremes:

Yes, I know.

Clitipho:

He sent

A slave to her in Rome. Our Syrus went

With him at my command.

Chremes:

And what has he

Said to you?

Clitipho:

That he is in misery.

Chremes:

Who could be more? The blessings that they say

Belong to men have all been snatched away - 250

Parents, a country in prosperity,

Comrades, relations, riches, family.

But everyone on earth is different –

He who knows how to use them is content

But he who doesn't suffers.

Clitipho:

Certainly

He's always been a glum old man, and he,
I fear, will stoop to angry wickedness.

Chremes:

What – Menedemus? [aside] Ah, I must suppress
The words I might have said, for it is clear
That Clinia will profit through his fear
Of Menedemus.

260

Clitipho:

What are you mumbling?

Chremes:

I'll tell you. He, in spite of everything,
Should have stayed home. It's possible he could
Have had too strict a father, but he should
Have borne it. For whomever can one bear
More than one's father? And it is not fair
That each one's humour be the same. But never
Was Menedemus too strict: fathers ever
Are equally severe – I mean those who
Are wise. They do not want their sons to woo
The ladies or dine out day after day;
They curb their pocket-money. This will pay,
However, in integrity. Once greed
Hampers the mind, though, it leads on to need
To filch. "Watch others," it is wisely said (and true),
"To gain what will be favourable to you."

270

Clitipho:

That's so, I think.

Chremes:

I'll go in to find out

What is for dinner. Meanwhile, look about,
Because we're at the shag-end of the day,
And see that you don't stray too far away. 280

ACT II

SCENE I

Clitipho [to himself]:
How wicked are all fathers to young men,
Judging that, once born, we should swiftly then
Become dotards and never do what we,
As youths, are partial to! They oversee
Us by their own desires of long ago,
Not now. If I should have a son, he'd know
A lenient father. I would find a way
Of finding out when he had gone stray
And pardon him. Mine, though, contrastingly,
By means of someone else, explains to me 290
His feelings. When he's in his cups he'll tell
Me of his wicked ways till I'm in Hell.
To gain what will be favourable," he'll say,
"To you, watch others." Oh- so- canny, eh?
That I'm deaf to it all he doesn't know.
My mistress' words are more portentous, though:
"Bring, this, bring that," she'll say. I've no reply
To this. No -one's more miserable than I.
This Clinia, though, with woes discomfited,
Has a sweetheart who's upright and well-bred, 300

No courtesan. Mine is notorious,
Outrageous, lofty, proud, presumptuous,
Tenacious. All I have to give her – well,
I always make a point never to tell
Her I have nothing. Father does not know
This ill luck I met with not long ago.

SCENE II

Clinia:

If my affair had granted me success,
By now she would be by my side, I'd guess.
I fear, though, that she has been led astray
While I was absent. For a huge array
Of things support the thoughts harassing me:
Her age, location, opportunity,
A worthless mother who has her in thrall
And counts gain the most precious thing of all.

Clitipho:

Clinia!

Clinia:

Oh!

Clitipho:

Take care no-one comes out
And sees you here.

Clinia:

I will. I live in doubt
And have a feeling that some dreadful thing
Will happen to me.

Clitipho:

Don't go settling

Upon something before you really know

The truth.

Clinia:

If she had not sustained some woe, 320

She would be here.

Clitipho:

She will be soon.

Clinia:

But when?

Clitipho:

It's far from here, you know. Besides, we men

Know well the traits of women, for when they

Make preparations to be on their way

A year goes by.

Clinia:

I'm scared, though.

Clitipho:

Courage! Here

Are Dromo and Syrus. They're getting near. [they step aside]

SCENE III

Syrus:

Really?

Dromo:

Yes. But while we drew out our chat,

We left the girls behind.

Clitipho [aside]

Did you hear that,

Clinia? She's arrived.

Clinia [aside]:

I hear, I see.

Oh, I'm so glad she got here finally.

330

Dromo:

She's brought with her so many maids, and so

It's no surprise that we have been so slow.

Clinia [aside]:

Maids? Ah, I'm dead!

Clitipho [aside]:

What?

Syrus:

Ah, so ponderous

A load they're travelling with! A shame on us

To let them lag!

Clinia [aside]:

Oh no!

Syrus:

Jewels of gold,

Clothes! It grows late and they have not been told

The way. How dumb of us! Go back! Be quick!

Clinia [aside]:

I had such hopes, but now I'm feeling sick.

Clitipho [aside]:

What's wrong?

Clinia [aside]:

You ask *that*? Maids, gold jewellery,
Clothes? She'd but one young maid just recently 340

When I departed. Whence do you surmise
She got all these?

Clitipho [aside]:

Ah, now I realize...

Syrus:

Ye gods, what mob is this? It's very plain
Our house is scarcely able to contain
Them all. What will they eat? What will they drink?
And is it possible that you could think
That none will undergo such misery
As that old man? Ah, those I wished to see
Are here.

Clinia:

Disloyal one, distractedly
I roamed, spurning my nationality 350
Because of you, but now you're prosperous,
Antiphila, leaving me comfortless
And in extreme disgrace; I've disobeyed
My father, and my attitude has made
Me sorrowful and ashamed. He lectured me
About the ways of women fruitlessly:
He couldn't wean me off her. Now, however,
I'll leave her. When it was worthwhile to sever
Our partnership I balked. No misery
Is more broadspread than mine.

Syrus [to himself]:

It seems that he 360

Was misled by our conversation here. [aloud]

Clinia, you've misjudged what we said, I fear,

About your girl. Her lifestyle and the way

She feels about you are the same today

As they have been, at least as we can guess.

Clinia:

Nothing would bring me greater happiness

Than knowing I was wrong.

Syrus:

Primarily,

Therefore, lest anything at all should be

Misread, the aged woman who they said

Had given birth to her had not. She's dead, 370

As I heard her say to the other one.

Clinia:

Who's that?

Syrus:

Wait. I will say what I've begun

To say, then tell you that.

Clinia:

But quickly, though!

Syrus:

First, when we came up the house, Dromo

Knocked on the door: a crone appeared. When she

Opened it, he hurried in immediately.

I followed. She then locked the door and went

Back to her wool-work. It was evident

What. once you'd left, what she was doing – we

Indeed came on her unexpectedly. 380

An opportunity was given us
To judge her daily course of life, for thus
A person's tendencies are manifest.
We found her working at her web and dressed
In mourning clothes, the reason, I surmise,
For this being the old lady's demise.
No gold; nor was she clothed extravagantly
(She'd clearly dressed herself); no trumpery
That some girls daub themselves with; and her hair
Was loose and long, tossed back with little care 390
Over her temples. Shush!

Clinia:

Please, don't make me
Full of pure exaltation fruitlessly.

Syrus:

The aged woman spun the woof; also
A little maid was weaving, covered, though,
In filthy rags, dirty and slovenly.

Clitipho:

If this is true, Clinia, take it from me
That you are the most fortunate of men.
You heard of how she lived there – surely, then,
The mistress must be safe, considering
Her confidante's condition. It's the thing 400
To bribe the maid when one's eager to see
The mistress.

Clinia:

Please, I beg, don't flatter me
By giving me false hope. What did she say

When you had mentioned me?

Syrus:

Well, straightaway,

When we said you had come back and that you

Were keen to see her once again, she threw

Her work aside and wept so copiously

That one could clearly see her ardency

For you.

Clinia:

I'm full of joy and scarce aware

Of where I am. You gave me such a scare

410

Before.

Clitipho:

I knew there were no grounds for fear.

But, Syrus, tell me what I wish to hear –

Who was the other one?

Syrus:

Your Bacchis. We

Will bring her.

Clitipho:

Where?

Syrus:

To our house, certainly.

Clinia:

What? To my dad's?

Syrus:

Yes.

Clitipho:

Ah, such shamelessness!

Syrus:

All deeds are always somewhat dangerous

If great and notable.

Clitipho:

You rogue, you try

To gain some praise at my expense, while I

Am lost if you make one mistake. What do

You plan to do?

Syrus:

Still –

Clitipho:

Still what?

Syrus:

Well, if you

420

Let me, I'll speak.

Clinia:

Let him.

Clitipho:

Well, go ahead.

Syrus:

The situation here, it could be said –

Clitipho:

What devious mischief is he now about

To spill?

Clinia:

Syrus, he's right. Now cut it out.

Get to the point.

Syrus:

I can't keep mum. You're so

Incredibly dishonest, Clitipho.

I can't abide it.

Clinia:

He should certainly

Be heard. [to Clitipho] Shut up!

Syrus:

You're yearning still to be

Your mistress' lover; you wish to procure

The cash to buy her gifts yet be secure 430

In getting it: that's wise beyond a doubt –

If you want something you must go without!

You may have her but not the money, too,

Or else the cash without her – which would you

Choose? My plan's fine and safe. For without fear

You'll have your mistress by your side right here

Within the house. The money you have vowed

To get her I will find, for, long and loud,

You've deafened me with pleas. What more am I

To do?

Clitipho:

If –

Syrus:

"If", you say? You by and by 440

Will find out I am right.

Syrus:

We will pretend

She's his. [pointing to Clinia]

Clitipho:

That's fine, but what do you intend

That he should do with his? Should it be said
She's his as well, as though we've not been fed
Enough disgrace?

Syrus:

No, she'll be sent away

To join your mother.

Clitipho:

Why?

Syrus:

If I should say

The reason, it would be a lengthy tale.

The reason's good, though.

Clitipho:

Gibberish! I fail

To see a solid reason why I ought

To take that risk.

Syrus:

Wait! Here's another thought 450

If you're afraid, which you may both agree

Is sound.

Clitipho:

Find something of that kind for me,

I beg.

Syrus:

No problem: I'll meet her and say

That she should be brought home again.

Clitipho:

Hey! Hey!

What's that you said?

Syrus:

I'll take away all fear

So you'll sleep comfortably on either ear.

Clitipho:

What shall I do now?

Syrus:

What are you to do?

The goods that –

Clitipho:

Syrus, say but what is true.

Be quick before you find that it's too late

And fruitless.

Clinia:

Yes, the gods provide your fate.

460

Enjoy it while you can: you never know –

Clitipho:

Syrus, I'm telling you –

Syrus:

Yes, off you go!

I'll do what I have said.

Clinia:

There may not be

Another chance.

Clitipho:

Yes, indubitably.

Syrus, I say. Syrus!

Syrus [to himself]:

He's all aglow. [to Clitipho]

What do you want?

Clitipho:

Come back.

Syrus:

I'm doing so.

Syrus:

What's up? Don't say that you don't like this, too!

Clitipho:

No, not at all, for I commit to you

Myself, my mistress and my reputation.

You are the judge: don't flirt with condemnation. 470

Syrus:

It's odd that you'd give me that admonition,

Clitipho, as though it were that my position

Is less at stake than yours. If we were met

With some misfortune, you yourself would get

Words flung at you; yours truly, though, would be

Horsewhipped. It's more important, then, for me

To take great care. Pretend she's his.

Clinia:

Indeed.

This circumstance necessitates some speed.

Clitipho:

I love you, Clinia

Clinia:

But there must be

No slip-ups on her part.

Clitipho:

She's perfectly 480

Prepared.

Clitipho:

But I'm amazed that with such ease

You have convinced one whose propensities

Include contempt of men of great acclaim.

Syrus:

My timing was appropriate when I came

To her (a vital thing): for there I met

A wretched soldier trying hard to get

Her into bed: she played him artfully

And by refusing stirred his ardency,

And thus she'd please you very much. You, though,

Will have to curb your rashness, for you know 490

How smart your father in such things can be

And I know of your disability

To check yourself: eschew equivocation,

Groans, hems, coughs, sidelong looks and cacchination.

Clitipho:

You will commend me.

Syrus:

Watch yourself.

Clitipho:

You'll be

Surprised at me.

Syrus:

Oh, look how speedily

The girls have caught us up!

Clitipho:

Oh, where are they?

Why do you hold me back?

Syrus:

You have to say

She's not your girl right now.

Clitipho:

I know the score –

She's at my father's, but I must –

Syrus:

No more! 500

Clitipho:

Let me.

Syrus:

I won't, I say.

Clitipho:

One moment –

Syrus:

No,

I won't allow it.

Clitipho:

Just to say hello?

Syrus:

Be wise! Take off!

Clitipho:

Alright. But he - ?

Syrus:

Will stay

Right here.

Clitipho:

The lucky man!

Syrus:

Be on your way.

SCENE IV

Bacchis:

Antiphila, you happily took care

To make sure that your manners matched those fair

Good looks of yours. For I am not a bit

Surprised if all men want you. For your wit

Is proven by your speech. For when I hear

Of you and all those other girls who sneer 510

Upon the mob, it's clear you're of a kind,

But we are not. You have to be inclined

To honesty. However, those whom we

Deal with will not allow us that. You see,

They court us for our looks – once those are gone,

Those lovers change direction and move on.

Unless we've saved up something, we must live

In poverty. But once you've pledged to give

Yourselves to just one man who markedly

Compares to you in manners, he will see 520

You as a partner. By this kindness

Your loving sympathies will coalesce,

And thus your love will show itself to be

Impervious to all calamity.

Antiphila:

I do not know of other women. I

Have always had an eagerness to try

To match my joy with his.

Clinia [aside]:

Therefore, my dear

Antiphila, I now have come back here.

When far away, my labours seemed to me

But slight except that I was forced to be

Far from your sight.

Syrus [aside]:

I do believe that's true.

Clinia [aside]:

Syrus, I am in Hell, I'm telling you.

How can I not possess her?

Syrus:

If I know

Your father, he will be the cause of woe

To you for some time.

Bacchis:

Who's that young man who

Is looking at us?

Antiphila [seeing Clinia]:

Oh, support me, do!

Bacchis:

What's wrong?

Antiphila:

I'm lost, I'm steeped in misery.

Bacchis:

Why are you gaping so?

Antiphila:

Whom do I see?

Clinia??

Bacchis:

Who?

Clinia:

Ah, my sweetheart, hello!

Antiphila:

My love, for whom I have been yearning so, 540

Greetings!

Clinia:

You're well?

Antiphila;

I'm full of happiness

That you have come safe home.

Clinia:

My eagerness

Has been rewarded. You're here! Go in, do:

The old man has been long awaiting you.

ACT III

SCENE I

Chremes [to himself]:

It's dawn already. Why do I delay

To knock upon my neighbour's door to say

His son is back? Of course, I am aware

The lad would not approve. But seeing him there

Thinking him gone, covered in misery,

Could I conceal unlooked-for ecstasy 550

When there's no danger? No. As far as I can
I'll do my best to help the poor old man.

My son succours his friend in his concerns
In friendship: thus it's right that in our turns
Old men like us should help each other, too.

Menedemus:

It seems that from my birth I have been due
Unhappiness, unless that common phrase
'Sorrow's removed by the advance of days'
Is wrong. My sorrow while my son's away
Grows greater still with every passing day.

560

The longer that he's far away from me,
The more I long for him.

Chremes [to himself]:

Aha, I see

Him coming from his house. Well, I shall go
And have a chat with him. Old friend, hello!
You'll revel in the news I have to tell.

Menedemus:

About my son?

Chremes:

Yes. He's alive and well.

Menedemus:

Where?

Chremes:

At my house.

Menedemus:

My son?

Chremes:

Oh yes indeed.

Menedemus:

My Clinia's back?

Chremes:

That's what I said.

Menedemus:

Then lead

Me to the boy, I beg of you.

Chremes:

Well, he

Does not want you to know and hopes to flee 570

Your sight due to his fault, and he's afraid

The old cold-bloodedness that you displayed

Will have increased.

Menedemus:

You didn't, then, reveal

That I have changed?

Chremes:

No.

Menedemus:

Why?

Chremes:

Because I feel

That if you should display some hesitancy,

You'd judge yourself and him exceedingly

Badly.

Menedemus:

I cannot help it. For too long

Have I been harsh.

Chremes:

 Your instincts are too strong

In both extremes – one day, too much largess,

And then the next, too much miserliness. 580

One side and then the other! Back then, you

Would not allow your Clinia to woo

A young lass who with little was content,

Happy with anything. Oh no, you sent

Him packing. After that, unwillingly

She started on a life of harlotry.

Now, since her life-style needs an outputting

Of lavish means, you'd give him anything.

Just listen now to her great recklessness –

She comes with her maidservants (in excess 590

Of ten in number) weighed down with a lot

Of clothes and golden cups. If she had got

A satrap for a lover, he would need

More than he could supply her with. Indeed

The same would go for you.

Menedemus:

 Is she inside?

Chremes:

Hah! I should know, for I had to provide

A meal for her and all her company

Of friends: one more would be the death of me.

There was a deal of wine – for tasting, though –

(Omitting many things). "Ah," she said, no! 600

Too sharp. I want a smoother one, good sir."

I uncorked every cask of wine for her.

The servants were constantly occupied,
And this was just one night! What would betide
You, do you fancy, if they constantly
Exploited you? You have my sympathy.

Menedemus:

Let him do what he likes. Let him consume,
Squander and waste, for I will give him room
For anything as long as he may live
With me.

Chremes:

If you've decided, then, to give 610

Such license to him, it is clear that you
Must hide your bounty.

Menedemus:

What, then, should I do?

Chremes:

Well, anything but what you have in mind;
Imburse him via someone you must find.
Allow yourself to be inveigled by
His servant, who's a tricky fellow. I
Notice the servants always wangling
Some scheme. Syrus is always whispering
To Dromo. They then tell the young men what
They've planned. To lose a talent through their plot 620
Is better than to lose a mina through
The other. But the money's not, for you,
The problem - it's a method that's risk-free
In giving him the money, for once he
Finds out your thoughts, that you would rather die

And lose your wealth than not have him close by,
Whew, what a window to debauchery
You will have opened! After that you'd be
Loath to exist. For when we dissipate
We, all of us, start to deteriorate. 630
He'll pounce upon whatever comes to hand
Whether it's good or bad. You'll not withstand
The ruin of him and your property.
You'll stop his funds and he will strive to see
Where he has most control of you, and he'll
Threaten to leave you.

Menedemus:

Ah, now you reveal

The truth of it.

Chremes:

I tossed and turned all night,

My eyes not closing, fretting how I might

Reclaim your son.

Menedemus:

Then give me your right hand

And pledge you'll help me.

Chremes:

I'm at your command. 640

Menedemus:

You know what I want you to do?

Chremes:

Tell me.

Menedemus:

Since you're aware they plan some trickery

To play upon me and are hurrying
To end the scheme, myself I'm hankering
To give him what he wants. I long to see
My son.

Chremes:

I'll help you. There's one difficulty –
Simus and Crito, who both live nearby,
Have a dispute on boundaries, and I
Will be their arbiter. I'll go and say
That, though I promised, I can't help today. 650
I'll come at once.

Menedemus:

Please do! [exit Chremes] [to himself] Such is the state
Of men that they more freely arbitrate
About the affairs of others than they do
About their own. Is it because we're too
Happy or sad within ourselves? For he
Is wiser in my case than I could be! [re-enter Chremes]

Chremes:

I shelved my meeting. Now unoccupied,
I'll help you. I'll get Syrus on my side
And tutor him. Oh look, there's someone who
Is coming from my house. I beg of you, 660
Take yourself home in case he should appear
Before us and perceive us talking here.

SCENE II

Syrus [to himself]:

Run everywhere! Yet money must be got.

The old man must be trapped.

Chremes [apart, overhearing]:

Hah! Did I not

Say they were planning this? This Syrus, though,

Is somewhat dull: this task, then, had to go

To Dromo.

Syrus [in a whisper]:

Who's that talking? I'm in fear

He might have heard me.

Chremes:

Syrus.

Syrus:

Yes, I'm here.

Chremes:

But doing what?

Syrus:

Alright. But I am shocked,

Chremes, that you're up early when you knocked 670

Back plenty yesterday.

Chremes:

I did not drink

Too much.

Syrus:

You didn't? Well, you are, I think,

An aged eagle, as goes the cliché.

Chremes:

Nonsense!

Syrus:

That courtesan is, I must say,
Agreeable.

Chremes:

Indeed.

Syrus:

Such comeliness!

Chremes:

Yes.

Syrus:

Not as in the past, I must confess,
But for these times quite satisfactory.
It's not at all remarkable to me
That Clinia dotes on her. His father, though,
Is niggardly, our neighbour here. D'you know
The man? As though not rich, his son has fled
Through want. Do you know it is as I said?

680

Chremes:

Of course I do. He should be tortured.

Syrus:

Who?

Chremes:

The young man's servant.

Syrus [to himself]:

Oh, I fear for you,

Syrus.

Chremes:

Oh such a mess!

Syrus:

But what was he

To do?

Chremes:

What?? He should use some trickery

To find something the youth could give his lass

To save the old man from this ticklish pass

Despite himself.

Syrus:

You jest!

Chremes:

That's what he should

Have done.

Syrus:

I ask you, do you think it's good 690

To cheat one's master?

Chremes:

Sometimes yes.

Syrus;

Quite so.

Chremes:

It's often been a cure for extreme woe.

The son would then have stayed.

Syrus [to himself]:

Well, whether he

Is joking or is speaking seriously

I don't know, but he's made me even more

Resolved to dupe him.

Chremes:

What's he waiting for?

To be sent off again once he cannot

Support her? Has he not another plot

To bilk the old man?

Syrus:

He's an imbecile.

Chremes:

Then for the young man's sake you ought to deal 700

With this.

Syrus:

Well, I can do that easily

At your command: for how it's usually

Done I know well.

Chremes:

So much the better.

Syrus:

I

Have never had a tendency to lie.

Chremes:

Then do it.

Syrus:

Think, though, if such things take place

Again, they're symptoms of the human race

And therefore may involve your Clitipho.

Chremes:

I hope that this will not be called for, though.

Syrus:

As do I. No transgression do I see

In him, however, but if there should be 710

Some in him, don't blame me. He's young, it's plain.

[aside] But if a chance presents itself again,

I'll have you!

Chremes:

We will see what we must do

If necessary. Well, be off with you!

Syrus:

I've never heard a more germane reply

From my own master, and I don't think I

Have had more leave to act perniciously.

Someone is coming out. Who could it be?

SCENE III

Chremes:

What does this mean? What are you doing, son?

Is this appropriate?

Clitipho:

What have I done?

720

Chremes:

Did I not see you put your hand just now

Upon that courtesan's bosom?

Syrus [to himself]:

Oh, I vow

I'm done for!

Clitipho:

Me??

Chremes:

I couldn't help but see,

So don't deny it. Such an injury

You do to him, for you could not restrain

Yourself! Such an affront to entertain
Your friend, then bed his mistress! Then last night
When in your cups you were so impolite.

Syrus [to himself]:

I've had it!

Chremes:

And annoying. Gods above,

I fear the outcome. I know those who love – 730

They rage about things that you'd not surmise.

Clitipho:

He trusts in me, though, you must realize,

That I'd not do such things.

Chremes:

Then be it so.

But certainly at least you ought to go
From them for some time. Passion stimulates
A lot of things. Your presence there frustrates
Their deeds. I've formulated a decree
From my own self: to no friend presently
Dare I reveal my secrets, Clitipho:

With one, his rank forbids it, while I'm so 740

Ashamed to tell another: it is thus

I don't seem foolish or indecorous;

See, then, he does the same. For we must know

Both when and where it's requisite to show

Complaisance.

Syrus [whispering to Clitipho]:

What's he said?

Clitipho [aside]:

I'm utterly

Undone!

Syrus:

You got those same dictates from me.

You've been both wise and prudent.

Clitipho:

Shush!

Syrus:

Alright.

Chremes [coming forward]:

Syrus, he shames me.

Syrus:

Yes indeed – with quite

Good cause. He galls me, too.

Chremes:

Persistent man!

Syrus:

It's true.

Clitipho:

I mayn't go near them?

Chremes:

Hah! You can

750

Find but one way for that.

Syrus [to himself]:

Ah! He'll betray

Himself before I've got the money. [aloud] Hey,

Chremes, will you not lend your ears to me,

Though acquiescing my stupidity?

Chremes:

What should I do?

Syrus:

Send him away.

Clinia:

But where

Am I to go?

Syrus:

Wherever! I don't care.

Just take a walk.

Clinia:

Where?

Syrus:

Ah! It's not as though

There aren't a thousand spots to choose. Just go!

Chremes:

He's right.

Clinia:

Syrus, for thrusting me away,

The devil extirpate you.

Syrus [to Clitipho]:

From this day

760

Don't stray so far. [to Chremes] What more do you assume

He'll do unless the gods should give you room

To watch, correct and warn him?

Chremes:

I'll take care

Of that.

Syrus:

But, master, this is your affair.

Chremes:

I'll do it.

Syrus:

If you're wise, you will, for he

Pays less attention day by day to me.

Chremes:

About what I alluded to around

Some days ago have you progressed or found

A fitting plan? Or are you not yet done?

Syrus:

You mean the trick I'll play? Yes, I've found one.

770

Chremes:

Good man! Tell me!

Syrus:

I will. As one thing, though,

Leads to another –

Chremes:

Look, I have to know.

Syrus:

That courtesan is bad.

Chremes:

So it would seem.

Syrus:

If you but knew! You ought to see the scheme

She's hatched. Nearby there was a Corinthian crone –

She gave her a thousand drachmas as a loan.

Chremes:

And then...?

Syrus:

She died, leaving her progeny,

A youthful girl, to be security.

Chremes:

I understand.

Syrus:

She's with your wife inside

The house.

Chremes:

And...?

Syrus:

She begs Clinia to provide

780

The money on the understanding she –

I mean the daughter – stand security.

She wants the full one thousand.

Chremes:

Will she, though?

Syrus:

What? Do you have your doubt? Yes, I think so.

Chremes:

What will you do?

Syrus:

What, I? I'll go to see

Menedemus and impart to him that she

Was brought from Caria as a captive, yet

Wealthy and noble: it's a likely bet,

Is she's redeemed, she'll make him rich as well.

Chremes:

You're wrong.

Syrus:

How?

Chremes:

He'll say, "I'll not have them sell 790

The maid to me."

Syrus:

Speak what I want to hear,

I beg.

Chremes:

It's just not possible, I fear.

Syrus:

No?

Chremes:

No.

Syrus:

But why, I wonder?

Chremes:

You'll hear more –

Wait! What's all that commotion at the door?

ACT IV

SCENE I

Sostrata:

Unless I am deceived, this is the ring

That I suspect it is, the very thing

That jeopardized my daughter.

Chremes [apart]:

Syrus, what

Is she talking about?

Sostrata:

Nurse, is it not

The same?

Nurse:

I said so when you showed it me.

Sostrata:

But, Nurse, have you perused it thoroughly?

800

Nurse:

I have.

Sostrata:

Go in, then, and if you have found

She's had her bath, tell me. I'll wait around

For Chremes.

Syrus [apart]:

Well, she wants you. You must see

Why: she's quite serious, so there must be

Some reason, and it frightens me.

Chremes:

Oh no,

It's sure to be some trifle, and she'll go

Around the houses with it.

Sostrata:

Look who's here!

Husband, hello.

Chremes:

Hello to you, my dear.

Sostrata:

I want to speak with you.

Chremes:

Then tell me why.

Sostrata:

Well, first I beg you not to think that I

810

Dared to defy your orders.

Chremes:

D'you believe,

Although that is incredible to conceive,

That I would think that? Nonetheless, I do.

Syrus [to himself]:

Ah, this excuse portends some fault.

Sostrata:

Do you

Recall when I was pregnant and you said

That, if I bore a girl, she'd not be bred

By us?

Chremes:

I know you bred her.

Syrus [to himself]: That's a fact,

And my young master has, through that one act,

Sustained a loss.

Sostrata:

Oh no, an elderly

And decent dame from Corinth was by me

820

Given the child to be exposed.

Chremes:

Could you

Commit such folly?

Sostrata;

Ahh! What did I do?

Chremes:

You ask that?

Sostrata:

It was done unwittingly.

Chremes:

You ignorantly and impudently

Do and say everything, I surely know.

How many misdemeanours do you show

In this affair! If you had wished to see

My orders carried out, you'd certainly

Have killed the child, not feigned that she was dead

In hopes that she might live. But, that being said, 830

I grant maternal love and sympathy.

Her future, though, you managed splendidly!

It's very clear our daughter was betrayed,

For this old woman might have plied her trade

By using her or sold her. I suppose

You reasoned in this way: "Anything goes

As long as she survives." Why would you mess

Around with those who know no righteousness?

For better or for worse, for loss or gain,

They look for only what they may attain. 840

Sostrata:

I own I sinned: you've made it clear to me.

You're older than I am, so here's my plea:

Forgive me that your justice may supply
Protection for my foolishness.

Chremes:

Well, I

Will gladly do so, but my easy way
Will, Sostrata, prompt you to go astray.
So tell me why.

Sostrata:

As women tend to be
An injudicious sex and terribly
Credulous, from my finger a ring I drew
When giving her the child and told her to
Expose her with it that she might possess
Something of ours.

850

Chremes:

A double thoughtfulness!

For you have saved yourself and her.

Sostrata:

See this –

The ring.

Chremes:

Where did you get it?

Sostrata:

From the miss

Whom Bacchis brought.

Syrus [to himself]:

Aha!

Chremes:

And what did she

Say?

Sostrata:

For safekeeping she gave it to me
Before she bathed. I took no note at first
But later recognized it. With a burst
I sought you.

Chremes:

Is there something that you feel
About the woman, or did she reveal
Some hint?

860

Sostrata:

I don't know unless you maybe
Ask her whence she came by it. Possibly
You'll find out everything.

Syrus [to himself]:

Ah, I am dead!
Too much too soon! For if what she has said
Is true, she's ours.

Chremes:

Now tell me if the crone
You gave the child still lives.

Sostrata:

That is unknown
To me.

Chremes:

Back then, what did she report to you?

Sostrata:

That she had done what I bade her to do.

Chremes:

So that we may conduct some scrutiny

About her, what's her name?

Sostrata:

It's Philtere.

870

Syrus [to himself]:

That's her! She must be safe, but I - not so!

Chremes:

Follow me in, dear Sostrata, Let's go.

Sostrata:

All has turned out beyond my expectation,

For I have been brim-full of trepidation

That you would be as harsh as you once were

When you were eager for exposing her.

Chremes:

Often one can't be what one wants to be

When circumstances are refractory.

A daughter now brings me such happiness;

In former days I wanted nothing less.

880

SCENE II

Syrus:

Unless I am deceived, my punishment

Is near: my forces in this incident

Are in dire straits, unless I can conceive

A plan to make the old man not believe

That she's his own son's mistress. Any hope

Of cash or fooling him makes me a dope.

If I escape unscathed, that means success

In my opinion. Ah, the distress
I feel to have my taste-buds suddenly
Deprived of such a juicy delicacy! 890
What shall I do or fabricate? Well then,
It seems that I will have to start again.
Nothing's so hard that cannot be found out
By seeking. What if I should set about
The case like this...? [thinks] No, that won't do. Or this...?
[thinks] No way. [thinks] Or this...? [thinks] No. Ah, marvellous!
I have it now. I think that I can claim
That I will get that money all the same.

SCENE III

Clinia:
Henceforth I cannot feel uneasiness
Now that I'm filled with such light-heartedness. 900
I'll show my father more frugality
Than even he would not suspect in me.
Syrus [to himself]:
I'm not mistaken: she has been located,
As I've just heard from him. [to Clinia] I'm so elated
That this turned out so well for you.

Clinia:

Syrus,

You've heard the news?

Syrus:

Isn't that obvious?

I've been here all this while.

Clinia:

But have you ever
Been told of anyone with such luck?

Syrus:

Never.

1000

May the gods prosper me, I do not take
Delight on my account but for her sake:
She's worth a thousand honours.

Syrus:

In my turn

Listen to me. Let's guard your friend's concern
And keep it safe. The old man must not know
A thing about his mistress.

Clinia:

Whoopee!

Syrus:

Oh

Shut up!.

Clinia:

Antiphila's going to marry me.

Syrus:

Still interrupting?

Clinia:

Ah, such jollity!

What can I do? Indulge me, though.

Syrus:

I will.

Clinia:

We're blest like gods.

Syrus:

It seems my labour still

1010

Is bootless.

Clinia:

Speak: I'll listen.

Syrus:

That's not true.

Clinia:

It is – I will.

Syrus:

Well, what I said to you

Is that your friend's involvement must also

Be kept concealed by us. For should he go

And leave Bacchis, my boss will comprehend

Immediately that she's his son's girlfriend.

However, if you take her, she will be

As safe and sound as she was formerly.

Clinia:

But this is sure to mar my chance to wed,

Syrus. For what could possibly be said

1020

By me to Father? Do you understand

My drift?

Syrus:

I do.

Clinia:

What tale, then, can be planned?

Syrus:

I would not have you say what is not true:

Tell him the truth.

Clinia:

Really?

Syrus:

Yes, say that you

Are keen to wed her, and the other one,
Called Bacchis, is the mistress of your son.

Clinia:

Oh yes, the course of action you advise
Is simply done and reasonable and wise.
You'll ask my father, then, not to disclose
All you've told me to Chremes, I suppose.

1030

Syrus:

No, tell the truth.

Clinia:

What? Are you quite insane?

Or drunk? You'd have betrayed him – that's quite plain.
How could he then be safe?

Syrus:

This strategy

Is perfect, and I am incredibly
Content with my dexterity to set
An ambush for the both of them – and yet
I told the truth. For it is ten to one,
Should Menedemus tell Chremes his son
Is her sweetheart, he'll not believe it's true.

Clinia:

But once again my hopes of marriage you
Have snatched away, because as long as he
Believes she's mine, he will not give to me
His daughter. It would seem your care is slight

1040

In my affairs while you are doing right

By him.

Syrus:

You rogue, d'you think I have in mind

To keep this up forever? No, you'll find

It's just one day until I have in hand

The money. Peace! No more will I demand.

Clinia:

Is that enough? What if he should descry

The truth? What happens then?

Syrus:

What if the sky

Should fall??

Clinia:

I am afraid.

Syrus:

Afraid? And yet

At any time you're able still to get

Out of it with the truth.

Clinia:

Alright, let's bring

Bacchis.

Syrus:

In good time here she's exiting.

SCENE IV

Bacchis:

I'm here because of Syrus' guarantee.

A fine imbroglio! He promised me
Ten minae. Should he dupe me once again,
His constant pleadings will all be in vain,
For I'll not come. However, when I say
I will be here and set the time of day, 1060
And Clitipho lives in hope, then I'll deceive
The man and not appear, and he'll receive
A beating.

Clinia [apart, to Syrus]:

Well, that's fair.

Syrus:

Was that in fun?

If I'm not careful, she'll see that it's done.

Bacchis [to herself]:

They're dreaming. Then I'll rouse them. [aloud] Did you hear
About Charinus' farm, Phrygia my dear,
That we were shown just now?

Phrygia:

Yes, that did I.

Bacchis:

He said it's on the right-hand side nearby.

Phrygia:

He did.

Bacchis:

Then haste there in your chaise, for he
Is keeping Bacchus' anniversary. 1070

Ayrus [apart, to Clinia]:

What is her plan?

Bacchis:

Say that against my will

I cannot go since I'm detained here still.

But tell him that I'll try some trickery

On them and go.

Syrus:

Ah, that's the death of me!

Wait, Bacchis. Where's she going? Make her stay.

Bacchis [to Phrygia]:

Go.

Syrus:

But the money's ready.

Bacchis:

I'll delay

My going, then.

Syrus:

You'll have it soon.

Bacchis:

When you

See fit, for I'm not pressing you.

Syrus:

But do

You know what you must do?

Bacchis:

What?

Syrus:

You must go

To Menedemus with your escort.

Bacchis:

Oh,

1080

What are you at, you piece of villainy?

Syrus:

I'm forging cash for you.

Bacchis:

Do you think me

So gullible?

Syrus:

But I've a plan in mind.

Bacchis:

Is there a piece of business of some kind

For us here?

Syrus:

No. I'll give you what indeed

Belongs to you.

Bacchis:

Alright, then, let's proceed.

Syrus:

Then follow me. [goes to the door] Hello there! Dromo!

Dromo:

Who

Wants me?

Syrus:

Syrus.

Dromo:

What is it?

Syrus:

I want you

To take Bacchis's train immediately

Into the house.

Dromo:

For what?

Syrus:

Don't question me. 1090

Let them take what they brought. Once they have gone,

The old man will have hopes to look upon

Fewer expenses. He's made a slight profit

But knows not what great loss is syphoned off it.

SCENE V

Chremes:

I'm fearful now for my old friend, for he

Is victim of a great calamity.

To feed her and her retinue! Yet I

Am certain that, till many days go by,

He will not feel it. How he longs to see

His son, but when this prodigality 1100

At home he sees, and not an end in sight,

He will be keen to see his son take flight

Once more. Here's Syrus, in good time.

Syrus [to himself]:

I'll go

And speak to him.

Cremes:

Syrus, hello.

Syrus:

Hello.

Chremes:

What is the matter?

Syrus:

For some time I've yearned

That you should be thrown in my way.

Chremes:

I've learned

You spoke with Menedemus.

Syrus:

Recently?

Oh yes, I wrapped it all up thoroughly.

Chremes:

Success?

Syrus:

Success!

Chremes:

Then I can hardly shirk

Patting you on the head, Syrus. Good work!

1110

I'll gladly recompense you.

Syrus:

How it came

Into my head you'd be surprised.

Chremes:

For shame!

You boast how it turned out according to

Your wishes?

Syrus:

No – what I tell you is true.

Chremes:

Well?

Syrus:

That Bacchis belongs to Clitipho

Clinia revealed to Menedemus: so

He took her thither so you might not be

Informed of it.

Chremes:

That's excellent.

Syrus:

Tell me

Your judgment.

Chremes:

Very good.

Syrus:

That's pretty fair.

But hear the final guide in this affair.

1120

He'll say he's seen your daughter – "She's a dish,"

He'll say of her, and now his only wish

Is to wed her.

Chremes:

What, she who recently

Was found?

Syrus:

The same, and he'll ask that she'll be

Given to him.

Chremes:

Why? I don't get it.

Syrus:

You

I think, are dim.

Chremes:

Yes, possibly that's true.

Syrus:

The marriage will beget hard currency
For trinkets and for clothes to – Do you see?

Chremes:

To buy them?

Syrus:

Yes, that's right.

Chremes:

But I deny

Them money and my leave for marriage.

Syrus:

Why?

1130

Chremes:

What? Give my money to a runaway?

Syrus:

Oh no, that isn't what I meant to say –

Merely *pretend*.

Chremes:

That's not the way I am.

Jam up your trickeries but do not jam

Me with them! Why on earth indeed would I

Betroth my daughter with an outright lie?

Syrus:

Why not?

Chremes:

Oh no!

Syrus:

It could have been well planned.

I started on this ruse at your command

Some days ago.

Chremes:

Ye, I believe so.

Syrus;

I

Am happy either way.

Chremes:

But please do try 1140

To finish this, yet in another way.

Syrus:

That must be done. But what you heard me say

About the cash that Bacchis is still owed –

She must be paid, but don't go down this road:

“What's that to me?” or “Was it lent to me?”

Or “Did I give an order?” or “Could she

Promise my daughter although I'd say no?”

A proverb people use, and aptly so,

Goes thus – ‘An extreme law will often lead

To extreme lawlessness.’

Chremes:

Oh no indeed, 1150

I won't.

Syrus:

Though others are at liberty,

You're not, albeit universally

You're thought well-placed.

Chremes:

Myself will be the one

To give it her.

Syrus:

No, let it be your son.

Chremes:

But why?

Syrus:

Because it's theorized that he

Loves her.

Chremes:

But why him, though?

Syrus:

Thus it will be

More plausible. I'll see to it my way.

He's here: get him the cash.

Chremes:

Soon as I may.

SCENE VI

Clitipho [to himself]:

Facility becomes laboriousness

When something's managed with unwillingness. 1160

My stroll, though not laborious, has made

Me weary. Now there's nothing I'm afraid

Of more than being pressured to take flight

Once more to some dread place, far from the sight

Of dear Bacchis. May all the deities

Confound you, Syrus, and your trickeries.

You're always planning strategies like that

To torture me.

Syrus:

Will you not leave me? Scat!

Glean your deserts. Your cheek has almost been

The ruin of me.

Clitipho:

Would that I had seen

1170

That ruin! You deserved it.

Syrus:

Did I so?

How's that? How glad I am I got to know

Of this before you got the cash from me.

Clitipho:

What would you have me say accordingly?

You fooled me, bringing her to me, although

I may not touch her.

Syrus:

I'm calm. D'you know

Her whereabouts?

Clitipho:

Our house.

Syrus:

No, that's not true.

Clinia:

Where, then?

Syrus:

She's at Clinia's.

Clitipho:

Then all is through

With me.

Syrus:

Cheer up! The money you'll transfer
To her – the money that you promised her. 1180

Clitipho:

You're babbling: where from?

Syrus:

Your dad.

Clitipho;

I see –

It seems that you are ridiculing me.

Syrus:

The facts will prove it.

Clitipho:

Oh, how I am blessed!

I love you, Syrus, deep within my breast.

Syrus:

Your father's here. Don't show surprise at why
These things occurred, and in good time comply
With what you hear. Do what he says and be
Withdrawn and try to speak infrequently.

SCENE VII

Chremes:

Where's Clitipho now?

Syrus [aside, to Clitipho]:

Say "Here".

Clitipho:

Here.

Chremes:

Did you tell

Him how things are?

Clitipho:

I told him pretty well 1190

Everything.

Chremes:

Take this money.

Syrus [aside, to Clitipho]:

Why stand still?

Are you a stone? Take it.

Clitipho:

Alright, I will.

Syrus [to Clitipho]:

Quick, follow me this way. [to Chremes] Here you must wait

Till we return, for we won't vacillate.

Chremes [to himself]:

My daughter has ten minae now from me
For board; ten more she'll have for finery,
And then two talents for her dowry. Oh,
How many good *and* bad things we must throw
At custom! Leaving my business behind,
I'm now obliged to look around and find 1200
Someone who must receive the property
That I've acquired through constant drudgery.

SCENE VIII

Menedemus:

Oh, I am now the happiest of men,

My son, since you have found yourself again.

Chremes [aside]:

He's wrong.

Menedemus:

Chremes, I want to speak with you.

Please help my son, as much as you can do,

And me and all my kin.

Chremes:

Tell me, I pray,

What should I do for you?

Menedemus:

This very day

I found your daughter.

Chremes:

What does that purport?

Menedemus:

My Clinia wants to marry her.

Chremes:

What sort

1210

Of man are you?

Menedemus:

What?

Chremes:

Has it slipped your mind

That we spoke of a scheme of such a kind

As to get cash from you?

Menedemus:

It hasn't.

Chremes:

Well,

The scheme's in motion now.

Menedemus:

Please, Chremes, tell

Me what you have just said. Is it not true

The woman in my house is your son's?

Chremes:

You

Believe what people say? It's also said

He wants a wife, and, once she's pledged to wed,

You'll give him money for her finery

And other things that are obligatory. 1220

Menedemus:

That's right – he'll get the cash.

Chremes:

Of course.

Menedemus:

Poor me!

It seems that I've been happy bootlessly.

I'd rather have him back than anything.

Therefore, Chremes, what answer shall I bring

So that he might not find out that I know

And take it badly?

Chremes:

"Take it badly"? Oh,

You spoil him, Menedemus.

Menedemus:

Let me, though,

Continue: I've begun, so let me go

Through all of this.

Chremes:

Tell him we met and say

That we have talked about the wedding-day. 1230

Menedemus:

I will. And...?

Chremes:

Let him leave it all to me;

I like my son-in-law; and, finally,

Tell him that she's betrothed

Menedemus:

That is indeed

What I have wanted.

Chremes:

Thus with greater speed

He may request it and more rapidly

You'll give it.

Menedemus:

That's my wish.

Chremes:

But as I see

The matter, you'll soon weary of your son.

So if you're wise, make sure your giving's done

Little by little and most cautiously.

Menedemus:

Right.

Chremes:

Go in; see how much he wants. I'll be

1240

At home if you need me.

Menedemus:

I will, that's true,

For you must know of everything I do.

ACT V

SCENE I

Menedemus [to himself]:

I know I'm not too clever, but this man,
My prompter, coach and tutor, surely can
Outdo me in his own stupidity.
Those epithets that can apply to me –
Dolt, fool, twit, lump of lead – you can't maintain
Apply to him, because his tiny brain
Surpasses all of them.

Chremes [to Sostrata, within]:

Wife, don't confound

The gods with thanks now that your child's been found. 1250

Perhaps you judge them by your frame of mind.

Thinking them dim; perhaps things of this kind

Have been said countless times. But here's the thing –

Why is my son with Syrus lingering

So long?

Menedemus:

Who's lingering?

Chremes:

Auspiciously

You've come, Menedemus. Now will you tell me

If what I said you passed on to your boy?

Menedemus:

Yes, all.

Chremes:

And he said...?

Menedemus:

Well, he yelled with joy,
As people do when they're about to wed. [Chremes laughs]

Menedemus>

Why laugh?

Chremes:

Some sly tricks came into my head 1260

That Syrus thought up.

Menedemus:

Oh?

Chremes:

That rascal can

Mould countenances.

Menedemus:

Are you saying, man.

That Clinia fakes delight?

Chremes:

Indeed.

Menedemus:

I, too,

Had the same thought.

Hremes:

He's sly!

Menedemus:

Still more would you

Think that if you knew more.

Chremes:

What's that you say?

Menedemus:

Well, lend you ears to what I tell you.

Chremes:

Stay.

What money have you squandered? When you said

To Clinia that he would soon be wed,

Dromo would have chimed in immediately

That you should add on cash for finery, 1270

Trinkets and maids.

Menedemus:

Oh no!

Chremes:

No?

Menedemus:

No, I say.

Chremes:

Not even your son?

Menedemus:

No. He would have today

To be the wedding-day.

Chremes:

Astonishing!

And Syrus, too? Did he say anything?

Menedemus:

Nothing.

Chremes:

I wonder why.

Menedemus:

I'm baffled, too,

Since all the rest is so well-known to you.

Your son, though, has been moulded perfectly

By this same Syrus, so that nobody

Could guess she's Clinia's girl.

Chremes:

What?

Menedemus:

I omit

Their warm embracing: I don't think of it.

1280

Chremes:

Could there be more tricks?

Menedemus:

Ach!

Chremes;

What's that you said?

Menedemus:

Into my house was brought a made-up bed

And it was placed right in the back.

Chremes:

And so...?

Menedemus:

Quick as a flash thither went Clitipho.

Chremes:

Alone?

Menedemus:

Alone.

Chremes:

Ye gods, I fear, I fear!

Menedemus:

Then Bacchis, too.

Chremes:

Alone?

Menedemus:

Alone.

Chremes:

Oh dear,

I'm done for!

Menedemus:

After that, they closed the door.

Chremes:

Did Clinia see that?

Menedemus:

How could he not? For

We were together.

Chremes:

Menedemus, she

Is my son's mistress. That's the death of me!

1290

Menedemus:

Why so?

Chremes:

My substance hardly will suffice

Them for ten days.

Menedemus:

Because he's being nice

To his friend?

Chremes:

Or *she*-friend!

Menedemus:

If he actually

Is paying it.

Chremes:

You think he might *not* be?

Is anyone so mild, do you surmise,

Or pliant that he'd wish to cast his eyes

On his own mistress as she - ?

Menedemus:

So that I

May be more easily persuaded, why

Shouldn't he? [laughs]

Chremes:

You laugh at me, as well you should.

I'm furious. So many things I could

Have known had I not been so stupid. Oh, 1300

What was it that I saw? I'm full of woe.

But, as I live, they shan't assuredly

Escape my vengeance. For immediately –

Menedemus:

Can't you control yourself? Where is your pride?

Am I not an exemplar?

Chremes:

I'm beside

Myself.

Menedemus:

Such claptrap! Such ignominy

To counsel others, have sagacity

Elsewhere while never ever succouring

Yourself.

Chremes:

What must I do?

Menedemus:

The very thing 1310

You said I didn't do: make it quite clear

That you're his father, make him volunteer

To leave all things to you and make him swear
He'll seek and ask of you nor look elsewhere
And leave you.

Chremes:

Oh, I'd rather he would go
Just anywhere than bring his father low
By his misdeeds. If I should still supply
My own resources, Menedemus, I
Will be reduced to hoeing fields.

Menedemus:

And so
Beware his nonsense: otherwise you'll show
Your temper but forgive him nonetheless,
Though with ill grace.

1320

Chremes:

You don't know what distress
I'm in.

Menedemus:

Well, I would like the pair to wed,
Unless you have another plan instead.

Chremes:

No, I approve the match.

Menedemus:

The dowry, too?
You're mute.

Chremes:

Do you say "dowry"?

Menedemus:

Yes, I do.
Chremes:

Ah!

Menedemus:

Do not fret if it's not generous:

The dowry's size is no big deal to us.

Chremes:

According to my means, two talents pay

The price, I thought. Indeed you'll have to say, 1330

If you would save me and my family,

The price is paid in its entirety.

Menedemus:

What's that?

Chremes:

Pretend surprise and ask him why

I am intent on doing this.

Menedemus:

Well, I

Don't know.

Chremes:

I'll mitigate the ribaldry

Abounding in him and make sure that he

Knows not which way is up.

Menedemus:

What's that you say?

Chremes:

Leave me alone and let me have my way.

Menedemus:

Alright, if that's your wish.

Chremes:

It is.

Menedemus:

Then so

Be it.

Chremes:

And now allow your son to go 1340

And get the bride. The other one I'll school

In children's language. Syrus...

Menedemus:

What? That fool?

Chremes:

I'll beat him well so he'll remember me

Forever, for he made a mockery

Of me. Ye gods, he'd never dare to act

Thus to a widow-woman – that's a fact!

SCENE II

Clitipho:

Menedemus, can my dad so suddenly

Lose the paternal love he had for me?

What crime did I commit? And was it so

Monstrous? Most youths act thus.

Menedemus:

It must, I know, 1350

Be tough on you: I, too, take it amiss –

As much as you. I can't account for this

But that I wish you well.

Clitipho:

Didn't you tell me

My father has been waiting here? [enter Chremes]

Menedemus:

Yes. See

Him there! [Menedemus enters the house]

Chremes:

My son, why are you blaming me?

What I've committed in this quandary

Was with an eye to your own shamelessness.

When I observed your casual carelessness,

And that you think that instant satisfaction

Has prime importance, shunning any action 1360

For future days, I thought to see you'd not

Want or possess the money that I've got.

When I was not allowed to give it you,

To whom particularly it was due,

I went to your close relatives that they

Could be your guardians and thus a stay

Against your folly: thus would you be fed

And clothed and have a roof above your head.

Clitipho:

Ye gods!

Chremes:

That way you'll be the heir to me

And Bacchis won't possess my property. 1370

Syrus:

I've had it! Ah, what misery have I

Unwittingly brought on!

Clitipho:

I want to die!

Chremes:

Learn how to live: then if continuing

To live upsets you, try the other thing.

Syrus

Will you allow me, master...?

Chremes:

Go ahead.

Syrus:

But is it safe to say what must be said?

Chremes:

Say on.

Syrus:

Well, this insane depravity

Has made my faults a liability

To him.

Chremes:

It's over You are off the hook,

So disregard it. You don't have to look 1380

Out for an altar or somebody who

Will be an intermediary for you.

Syrus:

So what's your plan?

Chremes:

I'm angry at no-one,

Not you, not him. And you, for what I've done,

Should not be angry either. [Chremes enters the house]

Syrus:

Ah, I see

He's gone. Would I had asked him –

Clitipho:

What?

Syrus:

- how we

May eat. We're cast adrift. You'll be fed by
Your sister for the moment.

Clitipho:

How am I

Reduced to fear of hunger?

Syrus:

While we live,

There's hope –

Clitipho:

What hope is that?

Syrus:

That it might give 1390

Us hunger.

Clitipho:

You make jokes in such a jam

As we are in?

Syrus:

Oh no! In fact I am

Thinking of it as I did recently,

Hearing your father. As it seems to me –

Clitipho:

Yes? Well?

Syrus:

It won't take long before I'm done. [he ponders]

Clitipho:

What is it, then?

Syrus:

I don't think you're their son.

Clitipho:

What? Are you mad?

Syrus:

I'll say what came to me

As I was thinking. Be the referee.

While they had you alone and all their joy

Was you, they cosseted their little boy. 1400

But now a daughter has been found as well:

They've thereby found a reason to expel

That boy.

Clitipho:

That's true.

Syrus:

Would he, then, be irate?

Clitipho:

I don't think so.

Clitipho:

However, contemplate

This fact: mothers defend their sons when they've

Done wrong, and when their fathers rant and rave,

They side with them: not here, though.

Clitipho:

Yes, that's true

Enough. So, Syrus, what am I to do?

Syrus:

Ask them about this doubt, but openly:

Then if it's true, they'll show their sympathy, 1410

And if it's not, you'll then find out whose son

You are.

Clitipho:

You counsel well: it shall be done.

Syrus [to himself]:

My plan's so opportune: the more despair
The lad feels, he'll more easily repair
The rift with Chremes. I don't even know
If he will wed: if not, no thanks will go
To me. Here comes the old man. I'll be gone.
Considering all that has been going on,
That he did not expel me straightaway
Surprises me. So now I'll go to pray
To Clinia's dad to be my intercessor.
My trust in Chremes couldn't be much lesser.

SCENE III

Sostrata:

Be careful that you do not wrong your lad,
Husband. I'm nonplussed that you could have had
A stupid thought like that.

Chremes:

Do you persist

And play the woman still? Do I insist
On being contradicted in this case?
But if I were to ask you face-to-face
What was my fault and why you're acting thus,
You would not know why you made such a fuss. 1430

Sostrata:

Not know?

Chremes:

"Know", then. Both phrases that I heard
Are just the same to you.

Sostrata:

It's quite absurd

To wish me mute about a vital matter

Like this.

Chremes:

I don't expect it: therefore chatter

Away! I'll do it, though.

Sostrata:

You will?

Chremes:

I will.

Sostrata:

But are you not aware of how much ill

You'll cause? It's thought he is a foundling.

Chremes:

Oh,

A foundling, do you say?

Sostrata:

They say it's so.

Chremes:

Admit it.

Sostrata:

Leave that to our enemies,

I beg of you. Would I admit that he's

1440

Not mine despite the fact that it's so clear

That he's my son indeed?

Chremes:

What? Do you fear

That you're unable to authenticate

His birth at any time?

Sostrat:

Because of late
My daughter has been found again?

Chremes:

Oh no,
But for a better reason – he is so
Like you in character – you easily
Could prove he's yours. Such similarity!
Your vices are alike. It's ten to one
No other woman could have borne your son. 1450
But here's the bashful man himself! Now you
Must study him and frame your point of view.

SCENE IV

Clitipho:

Mother, if I have ever gladdened you,
That you called me your son I beg you do
Remember. Pity, too, my misery.
But this I seek and long to hear – tell me
Who were my parents.

Sostrata:

Your opinion
Must not be that you're someone else's son.

Clitipho:
I am.

Sostrata [to Chremes]:

Is this your wish? [to Clitipho] My son, I swear
That we're your parents. After this, take care 1460
You'll never say those words again to me.

Chremes:

Take care that, if you fear me, I'll not see

Your tendencies again.

Clitipho:

What tendencies?

Chremes:

You want to know? I'll tell you all of these –

Sloth, trifling, gluttony, duplicity,

Extravagancy and debauchery.

Clitipho:

No parent says such things.

Chremes:

If from my head

You came, as did Minerva, so it's said,

From that of Jove, I still would not agree

To feel the shame from such profligacy.

1470

Sostrat:

The gods forbid!

Chremes:

I don't know what they'll do.

But I'll prevent it if I can. What you

Are seeking is your parents: you don't try

To learn what you are lacking – to comply

With what I say and guard what industry

Has earned me. That you brought, through trickery,

Before my eyes... Ah, I'd be in disgrace

To speak that dreadful thought before her face. [indicating Sostrata]

But you weren't even in a slight degree

Ashamed to speak thus.

Clitipho [to himself]:

This is killing me

1480

With shame, for I don't know where I can start
To find how I might tame his wrathful heart.

SCENE V

Menedemus [to himself]:

Chremes tortures the youth too cruelly.

I'll go and re-establish harmony.

Good timing – here they are.

Chremes:

Give the command,

My friend, to have my daughter sent for and

Conclude the bargain.

Sostrata:

Ah, my husband, no!

Clitipho:

Forgive me, father, for my faults.

Menedemus:

Do so,

Chremes.

Chremes:

Give Bacchis all my property?

I won't.

Menedemus:

We'll not allow it.

Clitipho:

Pardon me,

1490

I beg you, father.

Sostrata:

Do, Chremes, my dear.

Mendemus:

Don't be so harsh.

Chremes:

What, then, can I do here?

I cannot see it through.

Mendemus:

Ah, that is you

Precisely!

Chremes:

Then I'll do it, should he do

What I think fit.

Clitipho:

I'll do just anything:

Command me.

Chremes:

Wed!

Clitipho:

Dad!

Chremes:

I'm not listening.

Menedemus:

I'll make him do so.

Chremes:

He's still mum.

Clitipho:

I'm dead!

Sostrata:

You're stalling?

Chremes:

Whatever comes into his head

He'll do.

Menedemus:

He'll do it all.

Sostrata:

At first you'll find

It hard through ignorance, but then your mind

Will change and find it easier.

Clitipho:

I'll do

It, father.

Sostrata:

Therefore, son, I'll give to you

That beautiful young girl who's sure to please

You well – the daughter of Phanocrates,

Our neighbour.

Clitipho:

What? That red-haired, cat-eyed one

Who sports a hooked nose? No, it can't be done.

Chremes:

Picky! You'd think he'd want her.

Sostrata:

Well, alright,

There is another.

Clitipho:

Look, I think I might

Be left to choose if I am to be wed.

Sostrata:

Now that's commendable, my son. Well said!

1510

Clitipho:

The daughter, then, of Archonides here.

Sostrata:

I'm satisfied.

Clitipho:

One more word in your ear,

Father.

Chremes:

What?

Clitipho:

Pardon Syrus.

Chremes:

Be it so.

All:

Give your applause! Farewell! Now off you go!

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