

## TERENCE PHORMIO

### ARGUMENT

Chremes set sail, with brother Demipho,  
Who left his son in Athens - Antipho.  
He had a wife and daughter on the isle  
Of Lemnos; he was married, too, meanwhile,  
To a dame in Athens; he'd a son and heir  
Who lived in Athens also – that is where  
He loved a lutanist. The Lemnian wife  
To Athens came and it was there her life  
Came to an end. Since Chremes was elsewhere,  
The daughter paid the funeral rites, but there 10  
Did Antipho see her and desperately  
He fell in love and married her (this he  
Had brought about thanks to a servant). Then,  
On their return to Athens, the old men,  
Enraged, made a decision then to pay  
Thirty minas for the slave to take away  
The girl and have her married. With this sum  
The lutanist was bought and Phanium  
(That's Chremes' daughter) Antipho then might 20  
Keep, too, with her identity brought to light.

### PROLOGUE

Since that old poet can't draw me away  
From writing, forcing me to waste my day,  
By calumny he tries to frighten me  
From my pursuit – he says that previously  
My plays were poor in language, lacking flair,  
Since I had never written anywhere  
The tale of some mad youth seeing a hind  
Take flight from hounds and vowing to be kind  
In coming to her aid. But, had he known  
This play, when first presented, held its own 10  
More owing to the merits of the cast  
Than to its own, he'd have curtailed his blast  
Of censure. Should someone believe or say,  
If that old bard had not made his foray,

The new one's prologue would not have been made  
 Had there not been someone to be inveighed  
 Against, tell him: all those whose labour lies  
 In the dramatic arts may win the prize.  
 He'd drive me to the poorhouse; but if he  
 Had spoken civilly, then civilly 20  
 Would he have been addressed. But let him take  
 This tit-for-tat. This talk of him I'll make  
 An end of when the fellow makes an end  
 Of his offending. Now you must attend  
 To what I ask: I bring you a new piece  
 (It's called *Epidikazomenos* in Greece,  
 Though *Phormio* in Rome). This name will be  
 The name of the protagonist – it's he  
 Who mainly will advance the plot, should you  
 Approve my work. Now pay attention, do; 30  
 Be silently impartial, lest we know  
 Again the fate we knew some time ago –  
 A brawl caused our eviction from that place.  
 Thanks to the actor's merit and the grace  
 And candour that you manifested, too,  
 In backing him, we now are back with you.

I.i

Davus:  
 Geta, my fellow-citizen and staunch chum,  
 Came yesterday: a small residuum  
 Of his account for quite some time I'd let  
 Stay in my hands. He wanted it offset. 40  
 This have I done and now I'm on my way  
 To give it him. His master's son, they say,  
 Has wed: this tiny modicum, I'm sure,  
 He's scraped together so as to procure  
 A wedding gift. Why must the indigent  
 Always be giving to the opulent  
 Something? This wretch, degree by small degree,  
 Has from his ration scraped up selflessly  
 What *she* will take away with not a whit  
 Of thought to all the toil involved with it. 50  
 Besides, he will be forced to give another  
 After his mistress has become a mother,  
 Another on his birthday, then when they  
 Initiate him – these she'll take away,

The child a pretext only. Don't I see  
Geta?

I.ii

[Enter Geta]

Geta:  
Should a red-haired man inquire of me –

Davus:  
Stop there! He's here.

Geta:  
Oh, I've been trying to meet  
You, Davus.

Davus:  
Here's the cash – it's there, complete!  
Already counted!

Geta:  
I'm obliged to you  
For not neglecting the amount that's due,  
Especially since in the present mood,  
When being reimbursed, one's gratitude  
Should be immense.

60

Davus:  
Why are you so depressed?

Geta:  
With such alarm and peril am I stressed –  
You've no idea!

Davus:  
What's up?

Geta:  
You'll know at once –  
But keep it secret.

Davus:  
Out upon you, dunce!

You've seen my trust with cash, yet timidly  
You will not trust some secret thing with me.  
What would I gain from my deceit?

Geta:

O.K.,

Then listen.

Davus:

I'm all ears.

Geta:

Are you *au fait*

70

With the elder brother of our gentleman,  
One Chremes?

Davus:

Yes, of course.

Geta:

Alright, and can

You say you know Phaedria, his son?

Davus:

As well

As I know you.

Geta:

Well, then, my tale I'll tell:

Both old men travelled simultaneously,  
The one to Lemnos, while concurrently  
Our man went to Cilicia to stay  
With an old pal who, so that he might sway  
His friend, had sent him letters and a vow  
Of gold - a mountain's worth.

Davus:

He has that now –

80

Why add more?

Geta:

Quiet! That's his way.

Davus:

A king

Is what *I* should be!

Geta:

Both, abandoning  
Their sojourns, left me as a guardian  
To both their sons.

Davus:

An onerous duty, man!

Geta:

Ain't it the truth? My genius, I thought,  
In anger had forsaken me. I sought  
At first to thwart them. While my loyalty  
Remained, my back sustained some injury.  
But then I thought, "Why fight it?" I began,  
Therefore, to cater to their every plan.

90

Davus:

You knew the market price.

Geta:

Well then, our lad  
Phaedria at first got up to nothing bad.  
Soon he'd picked up a lutanist whom he  
Loved madly, but she lived in slavery  
To a foul pimp. Those fathers took great heed  
To give him nothing. Phaedria would feed  
His eyes on her and follow her about  
And take her to and from her school. Without  
A thing to do, we'd help the lad. The school  
Was opposite a barber's shop – we'd cool  
Our heels there usually to wait till she  
Came home again. Meanwhile, one day while we  
Sat there, a youth came weeping. In surprise  
We asked him why he had tears in his eyes.  
"Never," he said, "has poverty been so  
Grievous than now – I'm sunk so very low.  
Just now I've seen a wretched local maid  
Lamenting her dead mother, who was laid  
Out cold before her. There was not one friend,  
Acquaintance or relation who might tend  
To her, except one maid. My sympathy  
Was roused. She was a beauty." In short, we  
Were all moved. "Do you wish," said Antipho,  
"To visit her?" "I think we ought to go,"  
The other said. "Lead us." We went, we came,

100

110

We saw - she *was* a beauty. She could claim  
More beauty still, because her beauty there  
Was hardly heightened, for her feet were bare,  
Her hair dishevelled, her apparel mean;  
She was in tears, neglected; had there been  
No excess charm in her, her comeliness  
Would then have been reduced to nothingness.  
Now, he who loved the lutanist said, "Oh,  
She's nice enough." Our youth, though –

Davus:

Oh, I know –

Fell for her.

Geta:

Yes, and how! You'll see. Next day  
He went straight to the crone, beseeching, "Pray  
Let me have her." "This is unwarranted –  
She's an Athenian citizen," she said,  
"Well-born, well-bred. If you would marry her,  
Do so – but legally. If not, then, sir,  
No deal!" He, at a loss, had the desire  
To marry her but feared his absent sire.

Davus:

Why? Would he not have given him leave had he  
Returned?

Geta:

A girl of obscure pedigree  
And dowerless? No, never.

Davus:

In the end

What happened?

Geta:

There's a parasite, old friend,  
One Phormio, a self-assured young man  
(God curse him!)

Davus:

What did he do?

Geta:

Well, his plan

Was this: “the law states orphan girls must wed  
Their next of kin. I’ll say that’s you; that said,  
I will arraign you and pretend to be  
Her father’s friend; before the judges we  
Will cite her father, mother and how you  
Are kin to her; all this I’ll state as true  
(It’s suited to my purpose); no detail  
Of this will you refute; I shall prevail;  
Your father will return and we will row –  
So what? She’ll still be ours.”

140

Davus:

A witty vow!

Geta:

It worked – they came to court. A crushing blow!  
They wed.

Davus:

What’s that you say?

Geta:

You heard – you know.

150

Davus:

What’s to become of you?

Geta:

I honestly  
Don’t know, but I will with serenity  
Bear what the gods may send.

Davus:

A manly view!

Geta:

All of my hope is in myself.

Davus:

Well, you  
Have earned my praise for that.

Geta:

Perhaps I’ll see  
If someone will speak for me with this plea:  
“Forgive him this time, but, should he offend

160

He who taught  
The lutanist (well, he at least who brought  
Her to the school – and from it!) – how is he?

Davus:  
He hasn't much to give, maybe.

Davus:  
His father – is he here?

Davus:  
Your old man – when will *he* appear,  
You think?

Davus:  
Geta, is there anything more  
You want of me?

I.iii

[Enter Antipho and Phaedria]



Antipho:  
When thoughts of Dad's returning hither come  
Into my mind, Phaedria, I'm filled with terror.  
I should have waited for him – tactless error!

170

Phaedria:  
What's up?

Antipho:  
    You ask me that? – we were a team  
In this bold enterprise! Would that this scheme  
Had never crossed the mind of Phormio  
And he had not persuaded me to go  
Ahead with it – the spring of my distress.  
Then I would not have gained her. Oh, I guess  
I might have been uneasy for a spell  
But not tormented by this daily hell.

180

Phaedria:  
I hear you.

Antipho:  
    I expect him every hour –  
Then he will part us.

Phaedria:  
    Others' lack of power  
To gain their love brings them anxiety,  
While you lament a superfluity  
Of love. You have a surfeit, Antipho.  
Upon my life we all should seek to know  
A life like yours. O would that I were blessed  
To spend my life with her I love the best –  
Happy I'd be. Against your affluence  
Now weigh my paucity: at no expense  
You've gained a well-born, genteel girl, a wife  
Of stainless reputation – such a life  
Of joy except that equanimity  
Has passed you by. You'd find that quality  
If you dealt with that pimp as I have done.

190

Antipho:  
Still, Phaedria, *you* seem the lucky one.  
You may without restraint do what you please –  
Keep her or let her go. Neither of these  
May *I* do – I've no rights nor liberty.

But look, there's Geta hurrying to me.  
I dread the news he brings.

I.iv

[Enter Geta]

Geta: You're a dead man  
Unless you come up quickly with a plan,  
Geta. You're unprepared and evils loom.  
I don't know how to dodge my certain doom.  
If we don't act adroitly, grief will drop  
On me or on my master. I can't stop  
Folk knowing now about our brazenness.

Antipho: [to Phaedria]  
What's up with him?

Geta:  
To put to rights this mess  
I've very little time. My master's near  
At hand.

Antipho: [to Phaedria]  
What's all this mischief?

Geta:

He'll soon hear

210

Of it. What shall I do to stem his pique?  
I'll irritate him if I choose to speak,  
Provoke him if I'm silent; if I make  
Excuses, well, I might as well then bake  
A baked brick and try washing it. Oh hell!  
I'm so afraid, though discomposed as well  
For Antipho. He keeps me here – without  
The man I would have headed out  
And saved myself, avenging the old man  
For being crabby, grabbing what I can.

220

Antipho: [to Phaedria]  
How can he manage that?

Geta:

Where's Antipho?

Phaedria: [to Antipho]  
That's you!

Antipho:  
I fear he bears bad news.

Phaedria:  
Oh no,  
Are you quite sane?

Geta:  
I'm off home – usually  
He's there.

Phaedria: [to Antipho]  
Let's call him back.

Antipho:  
Stop instantly!

Geta:  
Whoever you are, I'll bow to your command.

Antipho:  
Geta!

Geta:  
The man I wanted – here at hand!

Antipho:  
Tell me your news, and in one word, I pray.

Geta:  
I will.

Antipho:  
Then speak.

Geta:  
Now at the harbour bay –

Antipho:  
My father?

Geta:

Yes, you've got it.

Antipho:

Then I'm dead.

Phaedria:

Nah!

Antipho:

What am I to do?

Phaedria: [to Geta]

What's that you said?

230

Geta:

I've seen his dad, your uncle.

Antipho:

Remedy

For this so sudden blow I cannot see.

O Phanium, if Fate takes me from you,

My life's not bearable.

Geta:

Here's what you do,

Therefore – be more alert, for Fortune backs

The brave.

Antipho:

I'm not myself.

Geta:

But, sir, the facts

Need you to be so now especially,

For if he senses your timidity,

Your father will assume some guilt in you.

Phaedria:

That's true.

Antipho:

I cannot change.

Geta:

What would you do

If faced with something else more burdensome?

240

Antipho:  
I'm even less equipped for that.

Geta:  
Come, come,  
You're useless. Phaedria, why do we stew  
In vain here, wasting time? I'm off.

Phaedria:  
Me too.

Antipho:  
What if I should adopt a certain air?

Geta:  
Don't be a fool.

Antipho:  
Look at me [adopts an air]. Is that fair  
Enough?

Geta:  
No.

Antipho:  
This? [adopts another air]

Geta:  
You're warmer.

Antipho:  
This? [adopts another air]

Geta:  
O.K.,  
Just keep to that: whatever he may say,  
Reply in kind. Don't let him agitate  
You with his bluster.

Antipho:  
Yes, I get it.

Geta:  
State  
That you were forced...

Phaedria:

...by law!

Geta:

You follow me?

Who is that old man down the street I see?

It's him!

Antipho:

I cannot stay.

Geta:

What's up with you?

Where are you off to, Antipho? Stay, do.

Antipho:

I know myself – and that offence of mine.

My Phamium – my life, too – I consign

To you. [exit]

Phaedria:

What now?

Geta:

You'll hear controversy

And, if I'm not mistaken, I will be

Strung up. Our own advice to Antipho,

Though, we must take.

Phaedria:

No "musts", man, let them go.

260

Just tell me what to do.

Geta:

Do you recall

Your words at the beginning of it all

In order to protect ourselves? The cause,

You said, was just and clear, within all laws,

Unanswerable.

Phaedria:

I do.

Geta:

That plea we need,

Unless there's something likelier.

Phaedria:

Indeed

I'll do my best.

Geta:

Go first. Right here I'll stay  
As back-up if you need my help.

Phaedria:

O.K.

II.i

[Enter Demipho]

Demipho: [to himself]

Is Antipho, then, wed against my will?  
Has he no shame? Does he not feel a chill  
At my authority? – authority??  
No, my *displeasure*. Such audacity!  
O Geta, rare advice!

270

Geta:

Right at the end  
He had to say that!

Demipho:

How will they defend  
Themselves, I wonder.

Geta: [aside]

Oh, I'll find a way.  
What next?

Demipho:

"I had to do it," will he say?  
"It was the law." Yes, yes, that's true.

Geta: [aside]

Indeed.

Demipho:

But knowingly, in silence, to concede  
The case – was *that* the law?

Phaedria:

He's pitiless!

Geta:

Hush, let me think.

Demipho:

I don't know, I confess, 280  
What I should do. It's all beyond belief,  
Unlooked-for. One should think upon one's grief  
In loss and risk when back from overseas –  
A son's offence, a wife's death, the disease  
Of a daughter – knowing it's all prevalent.  
Thus nothing new may cause bewilderment.  
What is beyond one's hopes one must believe  
Will turn to gain.

Geta:

Oh, no-one can conceive  
How much more wisdom can be found in me  
Than in my master. Each adversity 290  
Of mine I've pondered: should he reappear,  
He'll send me to the mill to grind, I fear,  
Beat me, put me in chains, force me to sweat  
Out in the fields – all this will not be met  
With wonder. What will unexpectedly  
Occur I'll count as gain. Now hastily  
Go to him; first off make him warm to you.

Demipho:

Why, Phaedria's approaching – my nephew.

Phaedria:

Uncle, hello.

Demipho:

Hello. Where's Antipho?

Phaedria:

I'm glad you're safely back.

Demipho:

Yes. Let me know 300



Your answer.

Phaedria:

He's nearby. He, too, is well.  
Is everything alright?

Demipho:

I wish!

Phaedria;

Well, tell  
Me what's the matter.

Demipho:

Oh, the nerve of you  
To ask me that! While I'm away, you two  
Contrive a lovely marriage!

Phaedria:

And that's got  
You mad?

Geta: [aside]

Nice acting, that!

Demipho:

How can I not?  
I long to get him in my sights that he  
Might learn that through his own delinquency  
His father's turned from mellow to severe.

Phaedria:

No sin has he committed, uncle dear,  
To cause your wrath.

310

Demipho:

They're in collusion – see!  
Know one, know all! It's a conspiracy!

Phaedria:

Not true.

Demipho:

When one's in trouble, to his aid  
There comes the other. They take turns to trade  
Support.

Geta:  
Well, there unwittingly he drew  
An accurate picture of them.

Demipho:  
Phaedria, you  
Would not have helped things if that had been so.

Phaedria:  
If any sin pertained to Antipho  
To harm his profit or his reputation,  
He should be punished in retaliation. 320  
But if for this poor youth there was a trap  
That had been laid by some designing chap  
Successfully, then who should we reprove,  
Ourselves or else the judges, who remove,  
Through envy, money from the rich and give  
It to the poor through pity?

Geta:  
As I live,  
I'd say he tells the truth – except I know  
The facts of these proceedings. Is there, though,  
A judge who knows your rights when you would say  
Nothing in your defence – like him?

Geta:  
When they 330  
Went to those judges, he performed the part  
Of a noble youth. He could not speak his heart –  
His modesty confused him in his fear.

Geta: [aside]  
Well, good for him! But what am I doing here?  
Approach the codger. [to Demipho] Sir, it gladdens me  
To see you safely back.

Demipho:  
Oh, fine trustee  
Of all my kin, good-day! I went away  
While trusting you to be my son's mainstay!

Geta:  
For some time now your censure have I heard,  
And we do not deserve it – not one word – 340

Particularly I – I've not been freed,  
As yet, and thus am not allowed to plead  
A case or be a witness. What did you  
Expect of me?

Demipho:

I own all that is true;  
Unused to lawsuits, he had cause to fear,  
And you're a slave, and yet, however near  
In kin she is to us, there was no need  
To marry her. The law enjoins, indeed,  
You may provide a dowry and then she  
May seek another. Why, instead, did he  
Bring home that pauper?

350

Geta:

No sure reason why,  
But he was broke.

Demipho:

He could have borrowed.

Geta:

Aye,  
Easily said!

Demipho:

At least on interest  
If all else failed.

Geta:

Oh, fine words! I'm impressed!  
Who'd lend him money while you live?

Demipho:

No way!  
She shan't reside with him one single day!  
She isn't worthy. I want you to show  
Me him, or where he lives.

Geta:

What, Phormio?

Demipho:

The man who'll speak for her.

Geta:

I'll bring him here.

Demipho:

Where's Antipho?

Geta:

Out somewhere.

Demipho:

Disappear

360

And find him, Phaedria. Bring him to me.

Phaedria:

I'm off.

Geta:

Yes, to Pamphila's, certainly.

Demipho:

I'll greet my household gods and then I'll walk

On to the forum so that I may talk

With friends and ask their help that I may be

Not unprepared when Phormio comes to me. [exit]

## II.ii

[Enter Phormio]

Phormio:

Fearing his father, he has gone away?

Geta:

That's right.

Phormio:

And Phormio's left alone, you say?

Geta:

Correct.

Phormio:

The old man's mad?

Geta:

Exceedingly.

Phormio: [to himself]

Upon you, Phormio, this catastrophe  
Now rests. You've hashed it up, the thing's a mess.  
Now you must swallow it. Come on.

370

Geta:

Oh yes,

I beg of you.

Phormio: [to himself]

If he should ask –

Geta:

In you

Lies all our hope.

Phormio: [to himself]

I wonder, will this do? –

He sends her back.

Geta:

You forced him!

Phormio: [to himself]

Yes, that's wise.

Geta:

Help us!

Phormio:

So bring his dad before our eyes.  
I've got it all mapped out.

380

Geta:

What is your plan?

Phormio:

He'll keep the girl and I will clear the man  
Of this offence and turn the old man's spleen  
Against myself.

Geta:

Brave friend! But I have been

So often anxious lest your bravery  
Should put us in the stocks.

Phormio:

That will not be.

I've checked the dangers and I know the way  
My feet must go. How many, would you say,  
- Both citizens and foreigners – have I  
Flogged – even fatally? Such things I try  
The more I know about them. Have you ever  
Heard of an action brought against me? Never. 390

Geta:

How come?

Phormio:

Because it's not for birds of prey  
The net is spread – they put us in harm's way.  
It's spread for those who cause *no* injury,  
For there lies profit, while profligacy  
Comes from the others. When there is something  
That can be gained, danger is threatening  
From others. But I have damn-all and they  
Know that. "They'll take you as their slave," you'll say. 400  
To feed a hungry guy? No, in my view  
He who won't benefit a person who  
May injure him is wise.

Geta:

He cannot be

Thankful enough for your benignity.

Phormio:

There's never gratitude enough, indeed,  
That one can give his patron who will feed  
Him free of charge when he comes, squeaky-clean,  
Anointed, from the baths where he has been  
At leisure, while the patron is with care  
And his expenses eaten up. While there  
Is everything to please you, he is sore. 410  
You laugh, you drink and settle down before  
The rest. You're served a banquet full of doubt –

Geta:

What do you mean by that?

You can't work out  
Which item is the best. When you have thought  
How choice and costly is the food he's bought,  
Must you not think that he's a god?

Look there –  
The old man is approaching. Have a care –  
First onset is the fiercest.

[Enter Demipho, Hegio, Cratinus, Crito]

Oh the scorn!  
Was there an outrage that was ever borne  
More heavily than this? I beg of you,  
Help me.

420

He's angry.

You, wait for your cue.  
I'll give him hell. God, Demipho disputes  
That Phanium is kin?

Yes.

And refutes  
That he knows who her father was?

That's true.

That is the man I spoke of. Follow, do.

Nor does he know who Stilpho was?

Agreed.

Phormio:

Because she was renounced in dire need,  
Her dad disowned and she disgraced. Oh hell,  
The fruits of greed! Badmouth my master? Well,  
You'll get a mouthful if you do.

430

Demipho:

Has he  
Come here on purpose just to lambast *me*?

Phormio:

Now just because the youth is unaware  
Of who her father was I will not bear  
Him any malice. For that man is old  
And poor and by hard toil keeps his household;  
He's chiefly out of town where he'd a plot  
Of land to cultivate (my father got  
It him). Meanwhile the old man says that he,  
His kinsman, has neglected him. And, gee,  
I've never seen a better man.

440

Geta:

Watch out –  
Mind what you say.

Phormio:

Get lost. There is no doubt  
That if I'd not admired him, then she  
Would not have garnered for her family  
My rancour – in a most ungenerous fashion  
He slights them now.

Geta:

Are you still in a passion,  
Cursing my master, swine, while he's away?

Phormio:

Well, he deserves it.

Geta:

Oh how dare you say  
Such things, you jailbird?

Demipho:

Geta!



Phormio:

Falsify

The laws, you thief, would you?

Demipho:

Geta!

Phormio: [aside]

Reply.

450

Geta:

Who is it? Oh!

Demipho:

Be quiet!

Geta:

Night and day

He would revile you while you were away -  
All lies - to his advantage.

Demipho:

Shush! I yearn,

With your permission, my good youth, to learn,  
If you are pleased to answer, who this chum  
You speak of was. Tell me - how did it come  
About that he said he and I were kin?

Phormio:

Oh yes, go on, pretend to reel it in  
As if you didn't know!

Demipho:

How could I do?

Phormio:

You know!

Demipho:

Well, if I do, you'll have to cue  
My memory.

460

Phormio:

You really do not know  
Your cousin on your mother's side?

Demipho:

Oh! Oh!

You're killing me. His name! Just tell it me!

Phormio:

His name?

Demipho:

Come on, speak up!

Phormio: [aside]

Calamity!

I can't recall.

Demipho:

Tell me.

Phormio:

Geta, d'you know

The name that only just a while ago

I told you? Tell it me. [to Demipho] I'll not tell you –

You know it well and now come here to screw

The facts from me.

Demipho:

I what?

Geta: [aside to Phormio]

Stilpho.

Phormio:

O.K.,

It's Stilpho.

Demipho:

What was that?

Phormio:

Stilpho, I say.

470

You know him.

Demipho:

I do *not* know him, nor do

I have a relative by that name.

Phormio:

Aren't you  
Ashamed? If he had left to you, however,  
Ten talents –

Demipho:  
Curse you!

Phormio:  
- you'd at once endeavour  
To trace the forebears in your ancestry  
Three generations back.

Demipho:  
Presumably,  
And then I would have told you how we two  
Were relatives. So now I'm asking you  
That question.

Geta: Well said, sir. [to Phormio] Watch out – you hear?

Phormio:  
My duty I've already made quite clear. 480  
Why did your son not prove it was untrue  
If such it was?

Demipho:  
Speak of my son, would you?  
He's just too dumb to waste words on.

Phormio:  
Well then,  
Since *you* are wise, go to the courts again  
For a retrial. You're preeminent  
Around here and alone can gain consent  
For that.

Demipho:  
Though wronged, I want no litigation  
Nor words from you – let's say she's a relation  
And rates a dowry. So take her away.  
Here's five minae.

Phormio:  
Oh very funny!

Demipho:

Pray,

490

Is that unfair? Or am I to obtain  
Not even this, which is my legal gain?

Phormio:

Are you allowed to treat her like a whore,  
Then pay her hire and send her packing or,  
Lest poverty disgrace her, mustn't she  
Nor rather wed her next-of-kin and be  
With just one man, which you would thwart?

Demipho:

Just so,

Her next-of-kin, yes. For what reason, though,  
Should she be ours?

Phormio:

A thing tried once, they say,

Can't be retried.

Demipho:

Oh no? I'll plug away

500

Till I succeed.

Phormio:

That's nonsense!

Demipho:

Leave me be.

Phormio:

To sum it up, you're nothing, sir, to me.  
Your son is damned, not you; your marrying days  
Are past.

Demipho:

Imagine what I say he says  
As well or both of them I'll ostracize.

Geta: [aside]

That's quite a passion.

Phormio:

You will be more wise.



I get it. [exit Phormio]

II.iv

Demipho:

What distress  
My son affords me. This whole nuptial mess  
Involves us both! And he's not here that I  
At least may hear his views. [to Geta] Begone and try  
To see If he's gone home or not.

Geta:

I go.

Demipho: [to the assistants] You see now how things stand. Look, Hegio,  
What should I do?

Hegio:

Cratinus knows, I feel,  
If you agree.

Demipho:

Cratinus, I appeal  
To you. 530

Cratinus:

You want my counsel?

Demipho:

Yes, I do.

Cratinus:

I think that you should do what favours you.  
Your son's deed in your absence now should be  
Put back to square one: thus will victory  
Be yours.

Demipho:

Now, Hegio, *your* evaluation.

Hegio:

I think he spoke with due deliberation.  
There are as many viewpoints, though, as folk –  
Each has his way – and one may not revoke,

I think, a carried law – it's wrong to try.

Demipho:  
Speak, Crito.

Crito:  
More discussion – that's what I  
Propose. Tough case! 540

Hegio:  
You need us anymore?

Demipho:  
No thank you. [exeunt assistants] I'm more shaky than before.

[Enter Geta]

Geta:  
They say he's not come back.

Demipho:  
Then I must stay  
And wait for Chremes, and what he will say  
In counsel I will follow. Now I'll go  
Down to the port to ask if any know  
When he'll return.

Geta:  
And I will go seek out  
Antipho so that he'll be in no doubt  
Of what occurred here. But look there – I see  
That he is coming, just propitiously. 550

### III.i

[enter Antipho]

Antipho:  
In many ways you're guilty, Antipho,  
For this dismay you're feeling – just to go  
Away and place your very sustenance  
In others! Did you think they could advance  
You better than yourself? For certainly

You should have entertained some sympathy,  
Despite how other matters stood, for her  
Who lives with you, in case she should incur  
Some harm through trusting you. Poor creature, she  
Has placed all of her hopes and property  
In you. 560

Geta:  
Master, we have for some large span  
Of time rebuked your absence.

Antipho:  
Just the man  
That I've been seeking.

Geta:  
I'm remiss as well,  
However.

Antipho:  
Tell me where my fortunes dwell.  
Has Dad guessed something?

Geta:  
No, not yet.

Antipho:  
Is there  
Yet hope?

Geta:  
I don't know.

Antipho:  
Ah! I'm in despair!

Geta:  
But Phaedria has risked both life and limb  
On your behalf.

Antipho:  
That's typical of him.

Geta:  
And Phormio has showed himself to be  
A man of energy.



Antipho:

What is it he

570

Has done?

Geta:

He gagged the old man in his gall.

Antipho:

Fine chap!

Geta:

I helped as well.

Antipho:

I love you all.

Geta:

That's how things stood; and they're still peaceful now.

Your father's waiting for your uncle.

Antipho:

How

Is that?

Geta:

He wants his help in this affair.

Antipho:

To see my uncle safe-arrived will scare

Me half to death. He said, from what I hear,

I am to live or die.

Geta:

Pheadria's near.

Antipho:

Where?

Geta:

Coming from "The Wrestling-House".

[Enter Phaedria and Dorio]

Phaedria:

Now see,

Dorio...

Dorio:

No!

Phaedria;

Let me speak one word...

Dorio:

No, leave me be.

580

Phaedria:

No, listen...

Dorio:

Look, I'm tired of hearing what  
I've heard a thousand times.

Phaedria:

The news I've got

Will please you.

Dorio:

I'm all ears..

Phaedria:

Can't I sway you

To stay three days? Where are you going to?

Dorio:

I wondered if you'd something new to tell.

Antipho:

I fear for this procurer.

Geta:

I as well.

Phaedria:

You don't believe me?

Dorio:

No, you're blabbering.

Phaedria:  
I promise.

Dorio:  
Crap.

Phaedria:  
Your kindness, you will find,  
Will bring you profit.

Dorio:  
You're out of your mind.

Phaedria:  
You *will* be glad.

Dorio:  
All dreams!

Phaedria:  
It won't take long  
To try it.

Dorio:  
You still sing the same old song.

Phaedria:  
You'll be my kinsman, father, friend...

Dorio:  
Oh, twitter  
Away!

Phaedria:  
To be so harsh, severe and bitter  
That you're not moved by prayers or sympathy!

590

Dorio:  
To be so black and thoughtless endlessly  
That you can use fine words and think you can  
Take her for nothing!

Antipho: [aside to Geta]  
I pity the man.

Phaedria:  
I'm done for.

Geta:  
Oh how well both men sustain  
Their characters.

Phaedria:  
How awful that the pain  
Of my distress occurred when Antipho  
Was being inconvenienced also.

Antipho:  
What is the matter, Phaedria?

Phaedria:  
Lucky you,  
My cousin.

Antipho:  
Lucky? I?

Phaedria:  
Of course, you who  
Possess your love and are not in the mess  
I find myself in now. 600

Antipho:  
Do I possess  
My love? Well, I am holding, as they say,  
A wolf by both its ears. I have no way  
Of knowing how to lose or keep her.

Dorio: [pointing to Phaedria]  
He  
Is in the same boat.

Antipho:  
Show yourself to be  
The pimp you are. What has he done?

The swine  
Has sold my Pamphila – that girl was mine!

Geta:

What? Sold her?

Antipho”

Sold her?

Phaedria:

Sold her.

Dorio: [sarcastically]

Shame! To buy

A wench with one’s own money!

Phaedria:

Nor can I

610

Get him to wait three more days and reverse

The deal so I may put into my purse

The cash my friends have promised me. If you

Have not been paid by then, you’ve license to

Wait not one hour more.

Dorio:

Oh, excellent!

Antipho:

It’s not a long time, Dorio. Consent –

He’ll pay you double for your gracious heart.

Dorio:

Words, words!

Antipho:

So will you tear their love apart

And take her from this city?

Dorio:

It’s not I

Nor you who do that.

Geta:

May the gods supply

620

You with your just deserts.

Dorio:

For months on end

Against my will I’ve stomached you, my friend –

Your vows, your tears, your failure to provide

The cash. But now I've found one who, dry-eyed,  
Will pay up. For your betters, now, make way.

Antipho:  
As I remember, though, there was a day  
Prescribed for payment.

Phaedria:  
Yes, that's true.

Dorio:  
Do I  
Deny that fact?

Antipho:  
Well, has that day passed by?

Dorio:  
No. *This* precedes it.

Geta:  
Oh, the perfidy!  
Aren't you ashamed?

Dorio:  
Not while it profits me. 630

Geta:  
You pile of shit!

Phaedria:  
You think that this is right?

Dorio:  
That's how I am. If that suits you, you might  
Make use of me.

Antipho:  
You'd toy with him, would you?

Dorio:  
Oh no, *he* toys with *me*. He always knew  
My character. I find he's not the same  
As he appears. He's played an artful game.  
I am not changed. Tomorrow at daybreak,  
However, the captain says he'll come to make

His payment. Phaedria, I will obey  
My own precept: whoever comes to pay  
Before the other wins the prize. Goodbye!

640

III.iii

Phaedria:  
What can I do? How, in a twink, can I  
Acquire the cash? I might as well be dead.  
I'm destitute! The cash was warranted  
Had I three days in hand.

Antipho:  
Geta, shall we  
Allow this man to suffer after he,  
As I have said, showed me such kindness?  
Let's pay him back.

Geta:  
That's honourable.

Antipho:  
Yes,  
And you're the one can do it.

Geta:  
In what way?

Antipho:  
Procure the cash.

Geta:  
I'm dying to, but say  
From where. 650

Antipho:  
My father's back.

Geta:  
I know. And so - ?

Antipho:  
A word to the wise will do.

Geta:

Then, Antipho,  
That's it?

Antipho:

It is.

Geta:

You counsel famously!  
Get lost! If I meet no adversity  
Through his marriage, shall I not rejoice? Yet you  
Would have me, for his sake, seek out anew  
More trouble.

Antipho:

Well, that's true.

Phaedria:

Look, have we met  
Before this, Geta?

Geta:

'Course we have, and yet  
That the old man is angry with us all  
Is no small matter – so are we to gall  
Him further? That would leave us no leeway  
For pleas.

660

Phaedria:

Some other man will take away  
My girl to some new place. So speak to me  
While you still have the opportunity.  
Look at me while I'm here.

Antipho:

So I may – what?

Phaedria:

I'll find whatever godforsaken spot  
She's taken to or die.

Antipho:

May you succeed,  
But careful! [to Geta] What support that he may need –  
Provide it.





Antipho:

Well, he's ready. Off you go,  
Load him with questions most courageously.  
He'll bear them; he's a loyal friend to me.

680

Geta:

Let's go at once, then.

Antipho:

Do you need me, too?

Phaedria:

No thanks. Go home and, please, I beg of you,  
Console that poor thing who, half-dead with fright,  
I'm sure is there.

Antipho:

I will, with more delight  
Than anything.

Phaedria:

How will you do this, though?

Geta:

Well, first begone. I'll tell you as we go.

#### IV.i

[Enter Demipho and Chremes]

Demipho:

Well, did you bring your daughter back, my brother,  
From Lemnos as you planned?

Chremes:

No.

Demipho:

Why?

Chremes:

Her mother,

690

Since I in Athens made a lengthy stay  
And since our girl was growing day by day  
And needed me, they say set off to see  
If she could find me, with her family.

Demipho:  
Hearing of this, then, why had you remained  
For such a long time there?

Chremes:  
I was detained  
By illness.

Demipho:  
Which was - ?

Chremes:  
You ask this of me?  
Old age itself, sir, is a malady.  
Their captain tells me, nonetheless, that they  
Alighted safely.

Demipho:  
While I was away  
How did my son get on? 700

Chremes:  
There is the danger –  
If I would wed my daughter to a stranger,  
I must disclose her family history.  
Now I've been certain that your loyalty  
To me is like mine to myself; if some  
Stranger, though, calls me Dad, he will be mum  
As long as we are friends; if he should go  
Against me, he'll know more than he should know;  
I fear my wife will learn this, in which case  
I'll have to leave my home, for in that place 710  
It's me alone on whom I can rely.

Demipho:  
I know – it worries me a lot, and I  
Shall never cease to try to bring about  
My promises to you.

[Enter Geta]

Geta:

Without a doubt  
I've never ever seen a slyer man  
Than Phormio – I asked him how we can  
Acquire the cash we need. I barely could  
Speak half my words before he understood.  
He laughed out loud and complimented me,  
720 Asked of the fellow's whereabouts, then he  
Thanked all the gods he was allowed to show  
That, having given aid to Antipho,  
He'd give no less to Phaedria. "Away,"  
I said, "Wait at the forum – I'll convey  
The old man thither." There he is, though, see!  
But who's the one behind him? It must be  
Phaedria's father. Great! What did I fear?  
Oh, what an idiot! Now two are here –  
Not one – for me to dupe. It's preferable  
730 To have two hopes, I think. I'll try to gull  
My first mark. If he bites, that's fine; if not,  
I'll see what from this other can be got.

IV.iii

[Enter Antipho, Demipho and Chremes]

Antipho:

At any time now Geta should be here.  
There's Chremes standing by my dad. I fear  
His influence upon him.

Geta:

I'll waylay  
Both of them. Chremes, I bid you good-day.

Chremes:

And I you, Geta.

Geta:

I am glad that you  
Are safely back.

Chremes:

I'm sure you are.

Geta:

How do  
Things stand?

Chremes:

Since I arrived, there have occurred  
Great changes, as is common.

Geta:

Have you heard  
About our Antipho?

740

Chremes:

Yes, everything.

Geta: [to Antipho]

You told him? Oh, a most disgraceful thing,  
Chremes!

Antipho:

I was discussing that just now  
With him.

Geta:

Well, I believe that I somehow  
Have racked my brains and found a remedy.

Chremes:

What is it?

Demipho:

Yes, what?

Geta:

Accidentally,  
After I left you, I met Phormio.

Chremes:

Who's he?

Demipho:

Her patron.

Chremes:

Ah yes, now I know.

Geta:

I thought I'd sound him out. I took the man  
Aside and said, "Why don't we, if we can,  
Settle the matter graciously and not  
Resort to devilry? My master's got  
A liberal nature; he hates litigation,  
Yet all his friends give one recommendation –  
To turn her out."

750

Antipho:

What *is* he trying to say  
And how will everything turn out today?

Geta:

"Will you say he'll incur a penalty  
If he ejects her? That's been scanned. You'll be  
In quite a sweat if you should undertake  
To take him on because - make no mistake –  
He's fluent. Say he's beaten – even yet  
His money, not his life, is under threat."  
I sense I've softened him. It's just we two,  
So I ask, "How much money, then, do you  
Require to drop this suit?"

760

Antipho: [aside]

He's wrong in the head!

Geta:

"If you should ask a moderate price," I said,  
"I'm sure, since he's a reasonable fellow, you  
Won't need to bandy three words with him."

Demipho:

Who

Told you to say that?

Chremes:

Well, this is a plan  
That could not have been better thought up, man.

770

Antipho:

I'm done for.

Chremes:

Well, go on.

Geta:

Initially

He raved.

Demipho:

What did he ask for?

Geta:

Totally

Too much.

Chremes:

*How much?*

Geta:

Well, let's say he's to pay

One whole talent...

Demipho:

To hell with him, I say.

Has he no shame?

Geta:

I asked him the same thing.

I said, "Suppose that he were marrying  
His only daughter off. That he has none  
Has been no use to him when there is one  
Demanding quite a sum." In brief, to skip  
His nonsense, these last words fell from his lip:  
"I from the first desired to have a wife,  
The daughter of a friend, to share my life,  
As is but right – I saw how burdensome  
Her life would be for a poor girl to come  
As slave into a rich man's family.  
But now I'm speaking with you openly,  
So – I desired a wife who'd bring some dough  
To pay off all my debts. If Demipho  
Pays what for my fiancée I'd be paid,  
There's none I'd rather marry than this maid."

780

790

Antipho:

Is this transgression or foolhardiness,  
Sense or stupidity? It's hard to guess.

Demipho:  
What if his debt should put him in harm's way?

Geta:  
For ten minae his land, I heard him say,  
Is mortgaged.

Demipho:  
I'll provide the cash, then. Let  
Him wed her.

Geta:  
There's another mortgage yet –  
His house for ten more.

Demipho:  
Ah, too much! Hellfire!

Chremes:  
Hush. He'll get them from me.

Geta:  
He must acquire  
A maid to serve his wife, and furniture,  
And pay the wedding costs. He can procure  
All this for ten more. 800

Demipho:  
That's it!! Let him bring  
Six hundred suits against me – he'll not wring  
A thing from me. The swine is mocking me!

Chremes:  
Be still. I'll pay this, too, as long as he  
Weds her we want for him.

Antipho:  
Geta, I'm dead!  
Your treachery has killed me.

Chremes:  
On my head  
Must be this loss and it is only just  
I bear the cost.



Geta:

He told me that I must  
Inform him straightaway that he might know  
That he can wed the lady and let go  
The other, since those other men agreed  
To pay directly.

810

Chremes:

He'll have her indeed!  
Let him announce that he breaks off the pact  
To wed the other.

Antipho:

May his life be racked  
With woe for it!

Chremes:

Well, incidentally  
I've brought some cash, which my wife's property  
Brings in as rent. I'll tell her you have got  
To have it.

IV iv

Antipho:

Geta.

Geta:

Yes, what is it?

Antipho:

What

Have you been up to?

Geta:

I've been diddling  
Those two old men.

Antipho:

Well, is that quite the thing?

820

Geta:

I don't know; that's what I was told to do.

Antipho:

You rogue, I ask of you one thing and you  
Answer me something else.

Geta:

What did you need

To know?

Antipho:

This is a pretty pass indeed –  
Your fault! To the divinities I pray –  
Above us and below the earth – that they  
Confound you. Lord, if you want something done,  
Ask him – from tranquil seas you'll find you'll run  
Onto the rocks. There's no less useful thing  
Than touching on this sore or mentioning  
My wife. My father hoped that he'd expel  
The maid. If Phormio takes the cash, then – hell,  
He'll marry her. What then?

830

Geta:

He won't.

Antipho:

I know,

But for our sake he will prefer to go  
To jail.

Geta:

But things will get worse, there's no doubt,  
If you recount the bad side. You leave out  
The good, which is: although, if they should pay  
The man, he'll marry her, just as you say,  
Allow some time for wedding preparations,  
For sacrifices and for invitations.  
Meanwhile will Phaedria's friends give what they swore  
They'd give – thus he'll repay it.

840

Antipho:

But wherefore?

What grounds will he present?

Antipho:

You ask that, when  
I've seen so many prodigies since then?  
A strange black dog entered the house, then through

Antipho:  
Would it were!

IV.v

Demipho:  
Be quiet. I'll watch out for any hoax.  
I'll not just part with this without some folks  
Are found as witnesses. To whom and why  
I give it I'll have stated.

Demipho:  
That's the very thing!  
So take me to him.

Chremes: [to Demipho]

And then go to my wife so that she may  
Call on the maid before she goes away.  
Tell her we're giving her to Phormio  
That we won't rouse her wrath, and that he's so  
Much better for her since he knows her well  
And that we did not shirk our duty. Tell  
Her we give him the sum he asked for.

Demipho:

What

The devil do you care?

Chremes:

I care a lot.

870

That you have done your duty will not do  
Unless common report approves it too.  
You see, I must get her acknowledgement  
As well as his lest she say she was sent  
Away.

Demipho:

Well, surely *I* can do that.

Chremes:

No,

Another woman's better.

Demipho:

Then I'll go

And ask her.

Chremes:

Let me think where I can find

Them both.

V.i

[Enter Sophrona]

Sophrona:

What can I do? I'm in a bind.

What friend is there to whom I can express  
My plans? Where is there help in my distress?

880

My mistress through my counselling, I fear,  
May suffer undeservedly. I hear  
The father of the youth took most amiss  
What has occurred.

Chremes:

But look here – who is this?  
A crone half-dead with fright has just appeared  
From Demipho's house.

Sophrona:

The poverty I feared,  
Although I thought the marriage was unsound,  
Forced me to see her safe.

Chremes:

Well, I'll be bound,  
Unless I'm tricked by sight or memory  
I see my daughter's nurse.

Sophrona:

Nor can we see –

890

Chremes:

What should I do?

Sophrona:

Her father.

Chremes:

Shall I go  
To her or wait till I more surely know  
What she is saying?

Sophrona:

If he's brought to light,  
I'll have no justification then for fright.

Chremes:

It's she! I'll speak to her.

Sophrona:

Who's speaking? Who?

Chremes:

Sophrona!

Sophrona:  
That's my name!

Chremes:  
Just turn round, do!  
It's I!

Sophrona:  
Oh heavens! Stilpho?

Chremes:  
No.

Sophrona:  
You say  
You're not him?

Chremes: [sotto voce]  
Step a little bit this way,  
Sophrona, please, and do not use that name  
With me.

Sophrona:  
You say that you are not the same  
As you said that you were? 900

Chremes:  
Shush!

Sophrona:  
What do you fear  
About this door?

Chremes:  
My shrewish wife is here  
Behind it. For that name deceptively  
I once used, hoping it imprudently  
Would not be blabbed abroad or that my wife  
Might not learn of it somehow.

Sophrona:  
On my life,  
That's why we fools could not discover you  
Around here.

Chremes:

Tell me, what have you to do  
With that household? Where are the ladies?

Sophrona:

Oh!

Chremes:

What's wrong? Are they still living?

Sophrona:

Well, although

910

The daughter's still alive, the mother died  
Of grief.

Chremes:

How sad!

Sophrona:

And as for me, I tried  
As best I might – although I am alone,  
An aged woman, indigent, unknown –  
To wed the maid to the young man who lives there.

Chremes:

You mean to Antipho?

Sophrona:

Yes, yes, I swear!

Chremes:

Has he two wives, then?

Sophrona:

No, just one.

Chremes:

But, hey,  
What about the other, who's his kin, they say?

Sophrona:

That's her!

Chremes:

What?

Sophrona:

It was done intentionally  
That they might wed without a marriage-fee. 920

Chremes:

Our trust in you's fulfilled, I have to say!  
How often do things turn out in a way  
You never dared to hope – by accident!  
On my return I found the very gent  
I wanted for my daughter. Demipho  
And I tried hard to make it happen so.  
Alone, with little help from us, has he  
Brought it about.

Sophrona:

What's to be done now? See –  
His father's back. He takes the news, they say,  
Extremely badly.

Chremes:

Never fear, but, pray, 930  
Let no-one know she's mine.

Sophrona:

I won't.

Chremes:

Now come  
Inside and you'll learn the residuum.

V.ii

[Enter Demipho and Geta]

Demipho:

It's our fault that we gain by falsity,  
Though we in others' eyes prefer to be  
Upright and generous. So, "Do not roam,"  
So goes the saying, "far beyond your home".  
It's not enough to bear an injury  
But money must be given, too, so he  
May live while thinking up some new offence?  
It's clear as crystal that, at our expense, 940



Those who take right and make it wrong derive  
Some benefit from it.

Demipho:

Geta, you and I've  
Been very foolish. Would we had an out  
By marrying her off.

Demipho:

Is there some doubt  
Of that?

Geta:

Well, as I know the man, he may  
Just change his mind.

Demipho:

What? Change it?

Geta:

"*May*," I say.

Demipho:

I'll take Chremes' advice and bring her hither  
And talk to her. Now, Geta, hurry thither.  
Tell her Nausistrata's about to call  
On her. [exit into house]

Geta:

Well, Phaedria's cash – We've got it all.  
The lawsuit's hushed up. We have taken care  
That she stay here for now. However, where  
Do we go now from here? The same old clay  
Still bogs you down. You borrow – then you pay.  
Just one day has been bought to stem the woe  
That looms on us. The snares much greater grow,  
So watch out. I'll go in now to persuade  
Young Phanium she should not be afraid  
Of Phormio or what he says.

950

V.iii

[Enter Demipho and Nausistrata]

Demipho:

Come now,  
Nausistrata! As is your wont, somehow  
Keep her content with us, and willingly  
Let her do what she must.

960

Nausistrata:

I will.

Demipho:

Help me  
As you did with the money.

Nausistrata:

Would I could  
But I can be less helpful than I should –  
It's Chremes' fault.

Demipho:

How so?

Nausistrata:

He's not maintained  
So well the farms my father had attained  
Industriously – two talents he'd accrue  
For them. Those men were poles apart.

Demipho:

What? Two?

Nausistrata:

Yes, even in hard times.

Demipho:

Phew!

Nausistrata:

Staggered?

Demipho:

Oh,  
Indeed!

Nausistrata:

I wish I'd been a man; I'd show –

970

Demipho:  
I'm sure you would –

Nausistrata:  
How –

Demipho:  
Save it, lady, do,  
For her – she's young and may be a match for you.

[Enter Chremes]

Nausistrata:  
I'll do your bidding. Chremes now I see  
Emerging from your house.

Chremes:  
The currency –  
Has it been settled, Demipho?

Demipho:  
I've seen  
To that in haste.

Chremes:  
I wish it hadn't been.  
Whoops, here's my wife – I've said too much, I fear.

Demipho:  
Why, Chremes?

Chremes:  
Everything's alright.

Demipho:  
Look here,  
Did you say why we're bringing her?

Chremes:  
Well, I  
Arranged the matter.

Demipho:  
What was her reply?

Chremes:

She'll not be brought.

Demipho:

Why?

Chremes:

They're so amorous,  
Each of the other.

Demipho:

So, what's that to us?

Chremes:

It means a lot. Moreover I have found  
She's kin to us.

Demipho:

What? Are you of sound mind?

Chremes:

It's true. I'm not being rash. My memory  
Is back.

Demipho:

You're raving!

Nausistrata:

Don't cause injury,  
Please, to a kinswoman.

Demipho:

But she is none.

Chremes:

Do not deny it; her father took on  
A different name – that's how you made a blunder.

Demipho:

Did she not know her father?

Chremes:

Oh, by thunder,  
She knew him.

980

Demipho: [aside]

Why, then, use another name?

Chremes:  
Why will you never listen? What's your game?  
You just won't understand.

Demipho:  
If you won't tell  
Me anything-

Chremes:  
I'm on the road to Hell!

Nausistrata:  
I wonder what this means.

Demipho:  
Well, I don't know.

Chremes:  
You'd like to? Well, by God, there's no-one so  
Kin to us both than her.

Demipho: God! In that case  
I'll trust you. Let us go now to her place  
To satisfy me one way or the other.

Chremes:  
Ah!

Demipho:  
What is it?

Chremes:  
I'm shocked that you – my brother –  
Should put so little trust in me.

990

Demipho:  
Would you  
Have me believe you, take it all as true?  
Alright, that's fair enough. What should we do  
With our friend's daughter?

Chremes:  
She'll do fine.

Demipho:

Do you  
Mean we should drop her, then?

Chremes:

Why not?

Demipho:

And she –  
The other one – should stay?

Chremes:

Obviously.

Demipho:

Nausistrata, then, you may go.

Nausistrata:

I'd say  
It's better for us all that she should stay  
Than what you first proposed, for in my eyes  
She was genteel.

Demipho:

But what can we surmise  
From all this? 1000

Chremes:

Did she close the door?

Demipho:

Just now.

Chremes:

The gods are kind. My daughter's made her vow  
In marriage to your son.

Demipho:

How can that be?

Chremes:

It's not too safe in this locality  
To tell.

Demipho:

Well, go in.

Chremes:

It would be amiss  
If either of our sons should learn of this.

V.iv

[Enter Antipho]

Antipho:

My brother's plans have turned out well – I'm glad,  
Even if my own affairs should turn out bad.  
How wise to think as he does, so that when  
Things go awry, to make them straight again 1010  
Is easy. He has got the money, he  
Is carefree. For myself, no remedy  
From this predicament can I procure.  
I'm fearful if it stays concealed, for sure,  
And shamed if it's revealed. Nor should I go  
Back home but for the chance that hope may show  
Me how to gain her. Now I wonder where  
I can find Geta so that he might share  
Advice upon the opportunity  
Of meeting with my father peril-free. 1020

V.v

[Enter Phormio]

Phormio:

The cash I got I gave the pimp. I brought  
The woman so that Phaedria, as he ought,  
Might keep her now she's free. There's yet one thing  
To do – to win some time for partying  
From those old men. The next few days I'll go  
Out on a bender.

Antipho:

But here's Phormio.  
What can you tell me?

Phormio:

What?

Antipho:

What Phaedria now

Will do, I mean. Did he inform you how  
He means to spend his honeymoon?

Phormio:

He'll play

Your part.

Antipho:

What part?

Phormio:

He plans to run away

1030

From his father and begs that you'll plead his case  
In due return – he's going to my place  
To have some drinks. "I'm going to the fair  
At Sunium," I'll tell the old men, "where  
I plan to buy the maid whom recently  
Our Geta mentioned": thus, when they don't see  
Me here, they won't believe I'm squandering  
Their money. Hey, what is that clamouring  
There at your door?

Antipho:

Well, see who's coming out.

Phormio:

It's Geta.

V.vi

[Enter Geta]

Geta:

Oh, what fortune's come about  
To bless my boss today.

1040

Antipho:



What does he mean  
By that, I wonder.

Geta:

We, his friends, have been  
Relieved of fear. But why do I delay  
In girding up my loins when on my way  
To tell him what has happened?

Antipho:

Do you know  
What he is on about?

Phormio:

Don't you?

Antipho:

Not so.

Phormio:

Nor I.

Geta:

I'm off to see the pimp 'cos they  
Are there.

Antipho:

Hey, Geta!

Geta:

Charming! Bid me stay  
When I've just set off!

Antipho:

Geta!

Geta:

At it still?  
You'll never vanquish me with your ill-will.

1050

Antipho:

Stop!

Geta:

Sod you!

Antipho:

No, sod *you*, you so-and-so,  
If you don't stop.

Geta:

                    This is someone I know  
Quite well if he addresses me that way.  
Is this the man I seek or not? Hey, hey,  
That is the man. Speak to him!

Antipho:

                    What's the matter?

Geta:

  Oh,  
Most blessed of all mortals, Antipho!  
The gods love you alone, that's plain as day.

Antipho:

I wish! But why should I trust what you say?

Geta:

It's not enough I plunge you in a sea  
Of pure delirium?

Antipho:

                    You're killing me.  
Look, you can shove your promises! Just tell  
Me what you've brought.

1060

Geta:

                    Ah, Phormio's here as well?

Phormio:

I'm here. Go on!

Geta:

                    O.K., then. When we paid  
You at the forum recently, we made  
Our way at once to Chremes, and meanwhile  
My boss sent me off to your wife.

Antipho:

                    Why?

Geta:

I'll

Not tell you that – it doesn't fit the case  
At hand. When I was headed for the place  
Where the women live, there ran to me that lad,  
Young Mida. He pulled on my cloak and bade  
Me turn around. "Why hold me back?" I said.  
"To see my mistress is prohibited,"  
He said. "Sophronia, just two ticks ago,  
Announced Chremes, the brother of Antipho.  
I, too, was there" On hearing this, I stole  
On tiptoe to the door, placed my ear-hole  
Against it as I held my breath and stood  
Right there and listened to them; and I could  
Hear every word this way.

1070

Phormio:

Well done, my boy.

Geta:

While there, I almost shouted out with joy  
On hearing splendid news.

1080

Antipho:

Which was - ?

Geta:

Well, guess.

Antipho:

I can't.

Geta:

A marvellous prodigiousness!  
That Phanium your wife's the progeny  
Of Uncle Chremes.

Antipho:

What?

Geta:

In secrecy  
He lived on Lemnos with her mother.

Phormio:

Oh,

Come on! As if the woman couldn't know  
Her father!

Geta:

No, there's cause. Can't you assume  
I heard all that they said inside that room  
From outside?

Antipho:

I have heard that tale before.

Geta:

And that you may believe it all the more – 1090  
Chremes, when he came back, soon exited  
The house with Demipho and both men said  
That you may have her.

Antipho:

Chop, chop, then.

Geta:

Alright.

[Exeunt Antipho and Geta]

Phormio:

What unexpected luck! A true delight  
To have a splendid opportunity  
To diddle those old codgers and to see  
Young Phaedria's money problems go away –  
He need not ask his confidants to pay.  
The cash he has will yet be paid outright 1100  
Regardless of their wants. I've brought to light  
A way to force it from them. I must take  
Upon me a new air. But now I'll make  
My way along this alley here and show  
Myself to them when they come out. Although  
I told them I was going to the fair,  
I was pretending – I'm not going there. [Exit]

V.vii

[Enter Demipho and Chremes]

Demipho:  
I thank the gods – with reason – heartily,  
Chremes, since things turned out successfully.  
We must meet Phormio soon lest he should blow  
The cash we need.

Phormio:  
I'll see if Demipho  
Is home so – 1110

Demipho:  
Phormio, we've come to you.

Phormio:  
Perhaps for the same reason.

Demipho:  
Yes, too true.

Phormio:  
That's what I figured. Why, though, are you here?

Demipho:  
Oh, don't be silly!

Phormio:  
Did you maybe fear  
I'd break my vow. I may be indigent  
But in one thing I've kept my true intent –  
To keep my word.

Chremes:  
Is she not, Demipho,  
Genteel, as I have said?

Demipho:  
Extremely so.

Phormio:  
I'm here to tell you that I'm standing by.  
Give me my wife, whenever you please, for I  
Postponed all of my business, as is fit, 1120  
On finding out how much you wanted it.

Demipho:  
He urged, though, that she not be given me.

“What would folk say if you did that?” said he.  
When the time was right, you didn’t give her; now  
To turn her out is shameful. Anyhow,  
Almost all his advice was literally  
What you yourself said face-to-face to me.

Phormio:  
What arrogant insults!

Demipho:  
How so?

Phormio:  
Oh, *you* know!  
I can’t now wed the other. How’ll I go  
And face her slighted self? 1130

Chremes:  
And then, I see  
That Antipho will not part company  
With her. [aside to Demipho] Say so.

Demipho:  
And then, I see that he –  
My son – won’t part with her. However, go  
Off to the Forum. Tell them, Phormio,  
That they’re to put the cash in my account.

Phormio:  
What, after I transferred the whole amount  
To those I owed it to?

Demipho:  
Alright, what now?

Phormio:  
If you will give me her and keep your vow,  
I’ll marry her. But if you wish that she  
Should stay with you, the cash remains with me.  
This craftiness I bear is a disgrace –  
I left the other girl to save *your* face, 1140  
And she gave just as much.

Demipho:  
Such swaggering!  
Get lost, you bum! We both know everything –

You think we don't?

Phormio:

You're galling me.

Demipho:

If she

Were given, would you wed her?

Phormio:

Why not see

That for yourself?

Demipho:

Your plan was that she might

Live with my son *chez vous*, is that not right?

Phormio:

What?

Demipho:

Will you give the cash?

Phormio:

Well, tell me straight,

Will you give me my wife?

Demipho:

The magistrate

Will sort you out!

Phormio:

If that's your attitude,

Let's go.

Demipho:

What will you do?

Phormio:

You think my mood

Is to protect the dowerless, you pair?

I serve the dowried, too.

Chremes:

What do we care?

Phormio:  
You don't. There is a lady whom I know –  
She lives just over there – whose husband –

Chremes:  
Oh!

Demipho:  
What's up?

Phormio:  
- was married to another wife  
On Lemnos.

Chremes:  
Now I've had it!

Phormio:  
They gave life  
To a girl whom he is raising secretly.

Chremes:  
I'm dead!

Phormio:  
I'm off to tell their history.

Chremes:  
Please don't.

Phormio:  
Oh, is it you?

Demipho:  
He's joking!

Chremes:  
Look,  
We'll spare you –

Phormio:  
Bull!

Chremes:  
Yes, let you off the hook  
For all the cash you have. Is that OK?



Phormio:  
I hear you. Why d'you mess with me this way,  
You idiots, with your stupid talk? "I'll not,  
I will, I'll not, I will. Take what I've got;  
No, give it back." What's said becomes unsaid,  
A bargain's now no bargain.

Chremes:  
[aside] Who has fed  
Him all this information?

Demipho:  
I don't know.  
I know for sure *I've* told nobody, though.

Chremes:  
A miracle!

Phormio:  
That's stumped them!

Demipho:  
For God's sake,  
Is he to bilk us of all that and make 1170  
Us laughingstocks? I'd rather snuff it. Be  
Steadfast with ready wit, for you can see  
News of your slip's got out; you can't conceal  
It from your wife. Better that we reveal  
What she will hear from others. Then we can  
Take our revenge upon this seedy man  
In our own way, Chremes.

Phormio:  
I'd best take care  
Or I am stuck. A gladiatorial air  
Is what these fellows have – they're setting out  
To challenge me.

Chremes:  
[to Demipho] And yet I feel some doubt 1180  
That she can be appeased.

Demipho:  
Cheer up! I'll see  
You're back in her good books. Remember – she

Who bore the child is dead.

Phormio:

Is thus your way  
Of dealing with me? Oh, well done, I say!  
Come on. Have you not galled me, Demipho,  
While hardly helping him? [pointing to and now addressing Chremes]. Is it not so?  
You did just what you felt like over there  
In Lemnos and you do not seem to care  
One bit for this fine lass – outrageously,  
In fact, you hurt her. Now you come to me 1190  
And beg forgiveness. I will make her so  
Incensed with you that you shan't quench her, though  
You shed huge tears.

Demipho:

May each divinity  
Cast plague on you! That such effrontery  
Exists in *any* man! It's a disgrace!  
He should be exiled to some desert place  
At public charge.

Chremes:

I'm at such an impasse  
I don't know how to handle it, alas!

Demipho:

I do – let's go to court.

Phormio:

No, here will do [pointing to the house].  
That is, if it is all the same to you. 1200

Chremes:

Go follow after him and hold him back  
While I call out the slaves.

Demipho:

Brother, I lack  
The strength to do it on my own. Help me  
And quickly.

Phormio:

[to Demipho, who seizes him] There's one charge of battery  
Against you.

Demipho:  
Sue me, then!

Phormio:  
And one for you,  
Chremes.

Chremes:  
Grab him.

Phormio:  
So this is what you'd do?  
Then I must speak. Nausistrata's come out.

Chremes:  
Just stop his filthy mouth. See there! – the lout  
Is strong.

Phormio:  
Nausistrata!

Demipho:  
Shut up!

Phormio:  
What, me? 1210

Demipho:  
Look, plant your fists into his gut if he  
Won't follow.

Phormio:  
Or gouge out an eye. Nothing  
Will stop me from a total reckoning.

V.viii

[Enter Nausistrata]

Nausistrata:  
Who's calling me? I ask you, Chremes, what  
Is this uproar?

Phormio:

Aha! The cat has got  
His tongue!

Nausistrata:

Who is this man? Now why don't you  
Reply?

Phormio:

Reply? He hasn't got a clue  
Of where he is.

Chremes:

Don't credit anything  
He says.

Phormio:

Touch him – if he's not shivering  
In a cold sweat, kill me.

Chremes:

It's nothing.

Nausistrata:

So  
What is he on about?

Phormio:

You soon will know. 1220  
Listen.

Chremes:

Will you believe him?

Nausistrata:

How can I  
Believe him since he hasn't spoken?

Phormio:

Why,  
The swine is mad with fright.

Nausistrata:

That cannot be  
Without some cause.

Chremes:

You think he frightens me?

Phormio:

Alright, since you're not frightened and what I'm  
About to say is nothing, p'raps it's time  
For *you* to say it.

Demipho:

Villain, shall he tell  
It at your say-so?

Phormio:

You've done very well  
For Chremes.

Nausistrata:

Husband, won't you speak?

Chremes:

But –

Nausistrata:

Yes?

But what?

Chremes:

There is no need.

Phormio:

For you, I guess,  
But here in Lemnos –

1230

Demipho:

What is that you said?

Chremes:

Shush!

Phormio:

Unbeknownst to you –

Chremes:

Ahh!

Phormio:  
Chremes wed  
Another.

Nausistrata:  
God forbid, sir!

Phormio:  
No, it's true.

Nausistrata:  
I'm done for!

Phormio:  
And he had a daughter, too –  
You never dreamed of such a thing.

Chremes:  
What can  
We do?

Nausistrata:  
By God, a wicked, evil man!

Phormio: [aside to Chremes]  
You've had it.

Nausistrata:  
Has there been a shabbier deed?  
Men grow too old for their own wives. I need  
To ask you, Demipho – it sickens me  
To talk to *him* - : are these the trips that he  
So often took? And is that why he stayed  
So long there and why those low prices made  
Our rents decline?

1240

Demipho:  
I don't deny that he  
Is culpable; however, he may be  
Pardoned.

Phormio:  
He's speaking to the dead.

Demipho:  
Not through

Neglect or hatred of you did he do  
These things. When drunk, some fifteen years ago,  
He wooed that poor young woman and then – lo!  
The girl was born, and from that moment on  
He never touched her. Now she's dead and gone - 1250  
The only problem left. Accordingly,  
I beg, bear this with equanimity  
As in all other things.

Nausistrata:

Why should I bear  
This stoically? I want the whole affair  
To end. I've had it. What's to hope for? Can  
I think that he will be a better man  
Now that he's old? Was he not old then, too,  
If old age makes men virtuous? And do  
I look more comely at my age? And so,  
What can you offer to me, Demipho, 1260  
To make me hope that he'll not go astray  
Again?

Phormio:

It's time for those who wish to stay  
For Chremes' funeral. I'll provide it. He  
Who wants to challenge Phormio will be  
A readied victim just like him. Alright,  
Let her forgive him. My revenge is quite  
Sufficient now, and she'll have every day  
Something to din into his ears.

Nausistrata:

So say –  
Was it *my* fault? Should I now, Demipho,  
Tell all I did in wedlock?

Demipho:

This I know 1270  
As well as you.

Nausistrata:

The blame, then, falls on me?

Demipho:

Of course not. But what has been done can't be  
Undone by harsh words. Pardon him. Regret,  
Beseeching, owning up have all been met.

What more d'you want?

Phormio: [aside]

But first I must attend  
To Phaedria and myself. [to Nausistrata] I urge you – lend  
Your ears to me before you recklessly  
Reply.

Nausistrata:  
What is it?

Phormio:  
By my strategy  
I wrested thirty minae from this man.  
I gave them to your son – that way he can  
Possess his girl; the pimp received the dough. 1280

Chremes:  
What's that you say?

Nausistrata:  
Well, doesn't it seem so  
Improper that your son, while young, should not  
Enjoy one mistress? You yourself had got  
Two wives! Have you no shame? How can you scold  
Your son? Well?

Demipho:  
He'll do as you wish.

Nausistrata:  
Now hold –  
I don't forgive nor will I guarantee  
A thing until I see my son: what he  
Decides I will abide by. I will do  
All he commands me.

Phormio:  
Nausistrata, you 1290  
Are a wise woman.

Nausistrata:  
Satisfied?

Demipho:  
Oh yes.



Chremes:  
I've got off pretty well, I must confess,  
Beyond my expectations.

Nausistrata: [to Phormio]  
Please tell me  
Your name.

Phormio:  
It's Phormio. Your family  
All know me well, and I'm a special pal  
To Phaedria.

Nausistrata:  
Then, Phormio, I shall  
Both say and do your bidding ever after.

Phormio:  
You're kind.

Nausistrata:  
You've earned it.

Phormio:  
Well, to cause my laughter  
And Chremes' tears, will you do this for me?

Nausistrata:  
Yes, what?

Phormio:  
Let me dine with you.

Nausistrata:  
Certainly. 1330

Phormio:  
Let's in.

Nausistrata:  
Where's Phaedria, our judge?

Phormio:  
I'll bring  
Him here.[to the audience] Farewell and let your plaudits ring.





