The Eunuch

(Eunuchus)

First performed in Rome at the Megalesian Games, April 161
INTRODUCTORY NOTE

At its first performance, *The Eunuch* was an unprecedented success on the Roman stage, being brought back for a second performance on the same day and awarded a considerable sum of money as a special reward. It is based on a play of the same name by Menander for which we have very little independent evidence; but Terence tells us in the prologue that he has added the characters of the parasite and soldier (Gnatho and Thraso) from another play by Menander, *The Toady*. A certain amount of this play has survived (in fragments, included as *The Flatterer* in the Oxford World’s Classics edition of Menander, pp. 232–40), but we are unable to reconstruct much of its plot in detail, and very little of what has survived overlaps with Terence’s play. It is likely that the purely episodic scenes of Gnatho’s entrance monologue (232–64) and Thraso’s boasting (391–433) derive from *The Toady*, but beyond that it is impossible to determine with confidence the extent to which these new characters have brought with them elements of plot or details of characterization. Particularly at the end of the play, where Gnatho dominates and Thraso is made an object of mockery, we cannot say in what respects Terence has had to adjust the ending of Menander’s *Eunuch* to fit these characters in.

The addition of these stock comic characters was no doubt a factor in the play’s original success. But it is also in general one of Terence’s liveliest plays, from the opening scene onwards; the interaction of the characters is dramatic, the action moves rapidly forwards, and there are also lively descriptions of off-stage action. However, it is one of these descriptions that brings us to a moral problem (for modern audiences) at the heart of the play. Chaerea, an impetuous 18-year-old boy, falls in love with Pamphila on seeing her in the street. He learns that she is being presented by Thraso as a gift to the prostitute Thais, with whom his own elder brother Phaedria is also in love, and that Phaedria is planning to give Thais a eunuch. Disguising himself as the eunuch, Chaerea has himself presented to Thais and is put in charge of Pamphila; before long he finds himself on his own with her and seizes the opportunity to rape her. He then escapes from Thais’ house and recounts his exploit to his friend Antipho (at 549–606); Chaerea is overjoyed and triumphant about the entire adventure, although we subsequently learn that he has torn Pamphila’s clothes and hair and left her in a flood of tears. To his further delight, it turns out that Pamphila, whom he had believed to be a slave-girl in the house of a prostitute, is in fact the daughter of a respectable Athenian family who had been kidnapped as a small child and sold into slavery. This means that he can marry her (once her identity has been established), an outcome with which he is more than satisfied.

Chaerea’s rape of Pamphila is the central action of the play; the disguise which enables him to carry it out is what gives the play its name, and his description of his exploit is the climax of the first half. At no stage does he express any regret for his brutality, nor is he made to suffer any more than the embarrassment of being seen in public dressed as a eunuch. It is easy to condemn his behaviour, to condemn Terence for making him the hero of his play, and to condemn the Roman audience for greeting it so enthusiastically. On the other hand, Chaerea is no heartless seducer but a young man who acts very much on impulse, knowing nothing of Pamphila’s background; it is unlikely that the deflowering of a prostitute’s slave-girl would have been felt by society at large (or by the predominantly male citizen audience) to be a serious offence, and it is not surprising that for Chaerea one aspect of the adventure is that it gives him a chance to play a trick on a prostitute (382–7). He gets his girl without having to pay for her, in circumstances that call for speedy action; from his perspective, it is an entertaining escapade, not a serious outrage. From the audience’s perspective, it is also relevant that Pamphila is really of Athenian citizen birth; if such a girl had acquiesced willingly in her seduction, that would have reflected very badly on her, and it is partly for the sake of her reputation that the playwright represents her as an unwilling victim. (See the section on ‘Ancient attitudes to rape’ towards the end of the Introduction for a fuller discussion of this point.)

The rape of Pamphila is also central to the plot-construction. The audience knows that Thais is trying to find Pamphila’s family, in the hope that she can make her own position at Athens more secure by helping some citizens. The fact that she has failed to protect the girl’s virginity will not be a point in her favour, and she herself
regards it as a disaster at 827 ff. However, in the end it leads to help from an unexpected quarter. Thais can identify the rapist, and he is very keen to marry Pamphila when he discovers she is a citizen. But Pythias’s determination to punish Parmeno for suggesting the exploit to Chaerea (910–1024) also leads indirectly to the intervention of Chaerea’s father, who would not otherwise have interested himself sufficiently to offer Thais his patronage and protection and allow her to continue her relationship with Phaedria. Thus Chaerea’s unpremeditated and irresponsible act leads to a happy outcome for himself, for Phaedria, and for Thais (and perhaps even, by ancient standards, for Pamphila); Thais achieves her aim, but not as a direct result of her own efforts. The rape is a necessary catalyst for this outcome.

Thais, like Bacchis in The Self-Tormentor, likes to be given expensive presents. But the play throws more emphasis on her genuine affection for Phaedria, her wish to help Pamphila, and her need to secure her own position. Although her motives are repeatedly suspected by other characters, the audience is invited to take a more sympathetic view of her: suspected by others of plotting deviously for her own selfish ends, she is in fact (or so it seems at first) one of the victims of Chaerea’s deception. She is not entirely selfish, and in her position she could not afford to be; but this does not prevent us from sympathizing with her, particularly when we see how unjustifiable are the suspicions of the other characters towards her.

Thraso and Gnatho are more straightforwardly comic characters, Thraso a traditional empty-headed and boastful soldier, Gnatho a parasite with the wit to feather his own nest at Thraso’s expense. In the final scene, it is Gnatho who strikes a deal with Phaedria and Chaerea which both further secures his own position and enables Thraso to enjoy continued access to Thais (though quite what this will involve in practice is, perhaps wisely, left rather vague). On the surface, this is an inclusive ending in which all the characters get what they desire; but the emphasis at the very end is on mockery of Thraso. Curiously, this ending has shocked some readers who appear not to have been particularly perturbed by the rape in the middle of the play: they have thought it inappropriate for Thais’ future to be decided for her in her absence, and they have felt it implausible that Phaedria (whom we have seen to be passionately possessive in his love for

Thais) should agree to share her with anyone. It was not unusual at Athens for a prostitute to be kept by a number of men at the same time (see the note on The Girl from Andros 87), but sharing with Thraso is not quite the ending to which Phaedria and Thais aspire. However, Terence’s ending acknowledges certain economic necessities to which Phaedria and Thais cannot afford to be indifferent, and we are not invited to see the ‘sharing’ as much of a threat to their happiness.

As noted at the beginning of the Introduction, The Eunuch is one of the plays (together with Plautus’ The Braggart Soldier) used by Udall in the seminal sixteenth-century comedy Ralph Roister Doister. Matthew Merrygreek’s monologue in the opening scene is modelled on Gnatho’s at 232–64; Roister Doister and Merrygreek attack the house of Dame Custance at the end of Act IV, in a scene reminiscent of The Eunuch 771–816; and the reconciliation at the end of Act V has something in common with the ending of Terence’s play. In general, the boastful soldier has been a popular figure in European comedy, but it is usually easier to detect echoes of The Braggart Soldier than of The Eunuch. The Swiss playwright Carl Zuckmayer caused a scandal in Germany in 1923 by putting on a very free adaptation of The Eunuch in Kiel, with contemporary references: it ran for one night only, since the performance resulted in the instant closure of the theatre by the police.
Characters

PHAEDRIA, a young Athenian citizen, in love with Thais
PARENO, a slave in the household of Phaedria and Chaerea
THAIS, a prostitute
GNATHO, a parasite, hanger-on of Thraso
PAMPHILA, a girl aged about 16, kidnapped in infancy and sold into slavery (non-speaking part)
CHAEREA, Phaedria's younger brother, aged 18–19, in love with Pamphila
THRASO, a mercenary soldier
A BLACK WOMAN, a slave (non-speaking part)
PYTHIAS, a slave-girl owned by Thais
CHREMES, a young Athenian citizen, brother of Pamphila
DORIAS, a slave-girl owned by Thais
ANTIPHO, a friend of Chaerea, aged 18–19
DORUS, an eunuch slave
SANGA, a slave owned by Thraso
SIMALIO
DONAX
SYRISCUS
SOPHRONA, a slave, former nursemaid in Chremes' household

Slaves owned by Thraso (non-speaking parts)

The Eunuch

Prologue
(spooken by one of the actors)

If there is anyone who is anxious to please as many good men as possible, and to offend as few as possible, this author enrolls himself among their number. And if there is someone who has thought that he was attacked rather harshly, he should think of it as a retaliation, not an attack, because he gave offence first—he's the man who by translating plays well and at the same time writing them badly has turned good Greek plays into bad Latin ones. Just recently he put on Menander's Apparition; and in his Treasure he made the defendant speak first, to show why the money was his, before the plaintiff made his speech showing how he came to own that treasure and how it found its way into his father's tomb! Next, in case he's deceiving himself and thinking 'I've finished the matter off now; there's nothing he can say against me', I warn him not to get it wrong, and to stop provoking me; I have much more, which he will be let off now, but which will be brought forward later if he continues to offend me as he has begun to do.

As for the play that we're now about to perform, The Eunuch by Menander, after the aediles had bought it, he fixed things so that he had a chance to look at it. When the officials were present, a run-through began.* He cried out that it was a theft, not an author, who had put the play on, but that he hadn't put one over on him all the same. He said that there was a play called The Toady by Naevius and Plautus, an old play, and that the characters of the parasite and the soldier had been lifted from it.

If that wrong has been done, it was done through the author's ignorance, not because he was keen to commit a theft. That this is so, you will now be able to judge. There's a play called The Toady by Menander;* in it there's a parasite (the Toady) and a boastful soldier. The author does not deny that he has transferred those characters to his Eunuch, from the Greek play; but he does utterly deny that he knew those plays had been written previously in Latin. And if he's not
allowed to use the same characters as someone else has used, how is it more allowable to show a running slave, to make his mothers good and his prostitutes bad, [a parasite gluttonous and a soldier boastful,] to write about a supposititious baby, the deception of an old man by a slave, love, hate, suspicion? In short, there's nothing said today that has not been said before. So it's right that you should acknowledge and allow it, if new writers do what old ones used to do.

Give us your attention, and concentrate in silence, so that you can really learn what *The Eunuch* is about.

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**The Eunuch**

*The play is set at Athens. The scene shows the exterior of two houses fronting a street, those of Thais and of Phaedria's family (on the right and left respectively, as seen from the audience). To the audience's left the street leads past the market to Thraso's house; to the right it leads past the houses of Antipho and Chremes to the countryside of Attica, where Phaedria's family has a farm.*

Enter Phaedria and Parmeno from their house. Phaedria is in the middle of an agitated debate with himself.

Phaedria  So what am I to do? Not go, even now when she sends for me herself? Or should I rather steel myself not to put up with the insults of tarts? She shut me out, she calls me back; should I go back? Not if she begged me!

(More reflectively) Well, if you could—nothing better or braver. However, if you make a start but don't carry it through like a man, and when you can't bear it, when no one asks you, without signing a truce, you go to her of your own accord, showing that you love her and can't stand it, then it's all over; you can go home; you've had it; she'll run rings round you when she realizes you're beaten. So, while there's time, think about it over and over again!

Parmeno (breaking in on Phaedria's thoughts) Sir, if a matter has no plan or control to it at all, you can't manage it according to a plan. Love contains all the following faults: wrongs, suspicions, enmities, truces, war, then peace again. These are uncertain things, and if you expected to make them certain by thinking about them you wouldn't get any further than if you worked on a method for being mad. And as for what you're thinking to yourself now when you're angry—'Me visit her? When she's let him in? When she's shut me out? When she didn't...—Just let me show her! I'd rather die! She'll find out what sort of man I am!—'she'll extinguish those words with one little crocodile tear that she's only just managed to squeeze out with desperate rubbing of her eyes; she'll be the one who accuses you, and you'll be the one to take the punishment.

Phaedria  How intolerable! Now I realize that she's wicked and I'm miserable. I'm sick of her, but I'm on fire with love; I'm dying, in full awareness and knowledge, alive and alert, and I don't know what to do!
PARMENO What is there to do but ransom yourself out of your captivity for as little as possible? If not for a small amount, at least for as little as you can—and don’t torture yourself.

PHAEDRIA Is that your advice?

PARMENO If you’re sensible, you won’t add troubles to those that love already contains, and you’ll put up properly with those that it does contain. (THAIS comes out of her house)

But look! She’s coming out herself. She’s the blight of our estate: she nips what we ought to reap!

THAIS (to herself, not seeing the others) Oh dear, I’m afraid Phaedria may have taken it rather hard and misinterpreted my behaviour in not letting him in yesterday.

PHAEDRIA (aside to PARMENO) Parmeno, I’m all of a shiver, I tremble all over, now that I’ve caught sight of her!

PARMENO (aside to PHAEDRIA) Cheer up! Draw nearer to this fire (indicating THAIS)—you’ll soon warm up more than enough!

THAIS Who’s speaking here? Oh! Are you here, Phaedria darling?

Why have you stayed here? Why didn’t you go straight inside?

PARMENO (aside) But not a word about the lockout!

THAIS (to PHAEDRIA) Why don’t you answer?

PHAEDRIA (with bitter sarcasm) Naturally because this door is always open to me, of course—because you put me first!

THAIS (ingratiatingly) Don’t go on about that!

PHAEDRIA What do you mean ‘Don’t’? O Thais, Thais, if only you and I had equal shares of love and felt it equally, so that either you were as upset as I am or I didn’t care at all about your behaving like that!

THAIS Please stop torturing yourself, my sweet, darling Phaedria! I certainly didn’t do it because I love or desire anyone more than you. But that was how things were: it had to be done.

PARMENO I suppose you were so much in love with him, poor girl, that you locked him out of your house—the way one does!

THAIS Is that what you’re up to, Parmeno? OK. (Turning to PHAEDRIA) But listen and I’ll tell you why I sent for you.

PHAEDRIA All right.

THAIS Tell me this first: is this man (pointing to PARMENO) capable of holding his tongue?
bought her as a present for me, without knowing anything at all about this whole story. He came back. Since he realized that I was carrying on with you as well, he's been busy thinking up reasons not to give her to me. He says that if he could be sure I was going to rank him above you, and if he wasn't afraid that once I'd got the girl I'd abandon him, then he'd be prepared to give her to me; but he says that's what he's afraid of.—But what I suspect is that he's fallen for the girl.

PHAEDRIA Anything more than that?*

THAIS No: I've made enquiries. Now, Phaedria darling, there are lots of reasons why I want to take her from him: first, because she was spoken of as my sister; also, so that I can restore and return her to her family. I'm on my own: I've got nobody here, no friend, no relative.* That's why I want to get some friends by doing someone a favour, Phaedria. Please help me in that—help me over the difficulties: let him be my leading man for these few days. (PHAEDRIA does not respond)

Aren't you going to answer?

PHAEDRIA You bitch! Do you expect me to answer at all when you behave like that?

PARMENO Bravo, our man! Three cheers! At last you've got properly upset: you're a man!

PHAEDRIA Didn't I realize what you were leading up to? (He imitates THAIS' voice) 'A small girl was kidnapped from here; my mother brought her up as if she were her own; she was spoken of as my sister; I want to take her from him, so that I can return her to her family.'—Of course what all these words of yours come down to is this, in the last resort: I'm shut out, he's let in! Why?—unless you love him more than me, and what you're afraid of now is that the girl he's brought with him might snatch that great man from you!

THAIS Me afraid of that?

PHAEDRIA Well then, what else is worrying you, may I ask? Is he the only one who gives you presents? Have you ever known my generosity towards you to be cut off? When you told me you wanted a slave-girl from Ethiopia, didn't I drop everything and look for one? Then you said you wanted a eunuch, because only the grandest ladies enjoy their services.—I found them; yesterday

I paid twenty minas* for the pair of them. Despised by you though I was, I remembered them. In return for doing that, am I rejected by you?

THAIS (appearing reluctantly to abandon her position) All right then, Phaedria: although I want to get her, and I think this is the way it can best be done, all the same, rather than have you as an enemy, I'll do what you tell me to.

PHAEDRIA If only you spoke from your heart and honestly when you said 'rather than have you as an enemy'? If I believed that was said sincerely, I could put up with anything!

PARMENO He's tottering; he's overcome by one remark—and how quickly!

THAIS Me not speaking from my heart? That's not fair! What have you ever wanted from me, even in fun, that you didn't get? And can't I get you even to agree for a mere two days to what I want?

PHAEDRIA Well, if it's for two days.—But don't let it turn into twenty days!

THAIS Certainly not more than two days or—

PHAEDRIA (interrupting) I don't care for that 'or'.

THAIS It won't happen. Please just agree to this.

PHAEDRIA (reluctantly) Clearly I must do what you want.

THAIS Thank you so much, darling; you are kind.

PHAEDRIA (resolutely) I shall go to the farm. There I'll torture myself for these two days. That's what I'm resolved to do: Thais must be obeyed! You, Parmeno, see that they're brought over here (referring to the Ethiopian girl and the eunuch).

PARMENO Certainly. (Exit into PHAEDRIA's house)

PHAEDRIA For these two days, Thais, farewell!

THAIS Darling Phaedria, farewell to you. (PHAEDRIA stays rooted to the spot) Nothing else you want, is there?

PHAEDRIA Anything I want? That when you're with that soldier of yours you should be absent in his presence; day and night you should love me, long for me, dream of me, want me, think of me, hope for me, delight in me, be with me entirely! In short, you be my soul, since I am yours! (Exit into his house, leaving THAIS alone on stage)

THAIS Oh dear, perhaps he doesn't really trust me and is judging me from other women's characters. I know what I'm doing, and
I certainly know this for a fact, that I haven’t made up any lies, and
that no one is dearer to my heart than this man Phaedria. And
whatever I’ve done in all this I’ve done because of the girl: I’m
almost certain I’ve found her brother now, and a very well-born
young man he is too; and he’s agreed to come to my house today.
I’ll go inside and wait till he comes. (Returns to her house. After
a short pause, Phaedria and Parmeno reappear from their
house; Phaedria is now ready to set off to his family’s farm in
the country)

Phaedria See that they’re brought over, as I said!

Parmeno I shall.

Phaedria But make sure!

Parmeno I shall.

Phaedria But quickly!

Parmeno I shall.

Phaedria Are your instructions clear enough?

Parmeno Oh what a question! As if it were difficult! If only you
could get hold of something as easily as this will go to waste,
Phaedria!

Phaedria I’m wasting away too at the same time, and that’s
dearer to me! Don’t be so upset about the other waste.

Parmeno I certainly won’t; I’ll do the job. No more instructions,
are there?

Phaedria Say as much as you can in praise of my present, and
put her off that rival as much as you can.

Parmeno (impatiently) Oh—! I’ll be sure to, even if you didn’t
tell me!

Phaedria I shall go to the farm and stay there.

Parmeno Good for you!

Phaedria (starts to head off right, then stops) But look here!

Parmeno What do you want?

Phaedria Do you think I can hold out and put up with it, and
not come back in the meantime?

Parmeno You? I certainly don’t think so! Either you’ll come
back at once, or else later, in the night, you’ll be driven here by
insomnia.

Phaedria I’ll work on the farm, so that I’m utterly exhausted
and go to sleep even if I don’t want to.
that was in business, a long time ago, in the old days; I’ve got a new way to catch my bird—in fact I was the first to invent this method. There’s a class of men who want to pass as outstanding in everything, but who aren’t; they’re the ones I hunt down. I don’t lay myself on as entertainment for them; I’m the one who laughs at their jokes, and I praise their wit at the same time. Whatever they say, I express my approval; if they then say the opposite, I approve of that too! If a man says no, I say no; if he says yes, I say yes. In short, I’ve given orders to myself to agree to everything. That’s the trade with much the fattest profits nowadays!

**Parmeno (aside)** Smart fellow! He turns men from fools into complete lunatics!

**Gnatho** While we were talking like this, in the meantime we arrived at the market, and up there rushed, glad to meet me, all the sellers of fancy foods, the tunny-sellers, butchers, cooks, poulterers, and fishmongers, who’ve profited from me both before and after I’d lost my property, and who often still do. They greeted me, invited me to dinner, welcomed me home. As for him, when the poor starving man saw that I was so respected and could earn my living so easily, then the fellow began to beg me to let him learn the trick from me. I told him to join my train, so that if possible, just as the schools of philosophers are named after the men themselves, so parasites will be called Gnathonists!

**Parmeno (aside)** Look what comes from lounging around and eating other men’s food!

**Gnatho** But I’d better get on and deliver this girl to Thais and invite her to come to dinner. (*He catches sight of Parmeno*) But I can see Parmeno in front of her door looking upset. He’s the slave of our rival. Everything’s all right; clearly the fellows here are having a chilly time. I think I’ll have some fun at this twit’s expense.

**Parmeno (aside)** These people think Thais is theirs thanks to this gift.

**Gnatho (with exaggerated politeness)** Gnatho bestows the most cordial greetings on his own very dear friend Parmeno. How’s things?

**Parmeno** Static.

**Gnatho** So I see. I trust you don’t see anything here that you’d rather not see.

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**Parmeno** You.

**Gnatho** I can believe that; but there’s nothing else, is there?

**Parmeno** Why on earth?

**Gnatho** Because you look upset.

**Parmeno** Not at all.

**Gnatho** Don’t be. But what’s your opinion of this piece of property? (*He points to Pamphila*)

**Parmeno** Not bad at all.

**Gnatho (aside)** I’m roasting this guy!

**Parmeno (aside)** How wrong he is!

**Gnatho** How much do you think Thais appreciates this gift?

**Parmeno** What you mean by that is that we’ve been thrown out of here. Look, everything goes up and down!

**Gnatho** I’ll give you peace and quiet for six whole months to come, Parmeno, so you don’t have to run to and fro or stay awake till dawn. Am I cheering you up at all?

**Parmeno (sarcastically)** Me? Gosh yes!

**Gnatho** That’s how I generally treat my friends.

**Parmeno** Jolly good!

**Gnatho** I’m keeping you. Perhaps you were on your way somewhere else.

**Parmeno** Nowhere.

**Gnatho** In that case would you mind doing a little something for me? See that I’m admitted to her presence.

**Parmeno (losing his patience)** Get on, then: go! This door is open to you now because you’re bringing her (*referring to Pamphila*).

**Gnatho (on the point of entering Thais’ house)** I don’t suppose there’s anyone you’d like to have called outside from here? (*Goes into the house with Pamphila and the slave-girl*)

**Parmeno (to the absent Gnatho)** Just let these two days go by! Now you’re in luck you can open this door with just one tiny finger; but I’ll make quite sure that in future you don’t get anywhere when you leap at it repeatedly with your feet!

**Gnatho (reappearing from Thais’ house)** Are you still standing here, Parmeno? I say (*ironically*), it couldn’t be that you’ve been left here on guard, could it, in case some go-between from the soldier happens to come running to her secretly? (*Exit left, in order to return to Thraso’s house*)
PARMENO (to GNATHO’s back) How cleverly you put it! Very surprising, of course, from a man who goes down well with a soldier! (Catches sight of CHAEREA approaching from the left) But I can see my master’s younger son approaching. I wonder why he’s left the Piraeus; he’s on public guard duty there at the moment.* It must be something serious—and he’s coming in a hurry; he’s looking around for something.

CHAEREA I’ve had it! The girl’s nowhere, and I’m nowhere, because I let her out of my sight. Where I’m to look, where I’m to search, who to ask, which way to go—I don’t know! My one hope is this: wherever she is, she can’t be kept hidden for long! What a beauty! From now on I wipe out all other women from my mind; I’m sick of these everyday figures!

PARMENO (aside) Now look! It’s the other one! He’s saying something about love. Oh their poor old father! Once this one gets going, you’ll say the other one was just fooling about and child’s play in comparison with the results of this one’s frenzy.

CHAEREA (still not seeing PARMENO) May the gods and goddesses destroy that decrepit man who held me up today! And me too, for stopping! And what’s more, for taking any notice of him! (He notices PARMENO) But here’s Parmeno! Hello!

PARMENO What are you upset about? Why are you all excited? Where have you come from?

CHAEREA Me? I really don’t know—I don’t know where I’ve come from or where I’m going to; I’ve completely lost track of myself!

PARMENO How’s that?

CHAEREA I’m in love!

PARMENO What!

CHAEREA Now’s your chance to show what sort of man you are, Parmeno. You know you’ve often promised me, ‘Chaerea, just find someone to love—leave it to me; you’ll see how useful I can be then’—when I brought all the food in the house to you secretly in your room!

PARMENO Come on, silly!

CHAEREA Yes you did! Now please make your promises come true—and this is certainly a case it’s worth exerting yourself for. The girl isn’t like our local girls, whose mothers take care to give them drooping shoulders, and to make them bind up their breasts so they look thin. If a girl’s a bit better made, they call her a prize fighter and put her on a diet; even when girls are well-endowed by nature, they make them as thin as a rush with their treatment. That’s what makes people fall for them! (The last words are spoken with disgust)

PARMENO What about this one of yours?

CHAEREA A different sort of look!

PARMENO Wow!

CHAEREA Her complexion’s natural, her body firm and juicy.

PARMENO Age?

CHAEREA Age? 16.

PARMENO The very flower!

CHAEREA Now make sure you get hold of this girl for me, whether by force or by stealth or by loan,* I don’t care how it’s done, as long as I get her!

PARMENO Look here, who does the girl belong to?

CHAEREA I haven’t the faintest idea.

PARMENO Where’s she from?

CHAEREA Just as little.

PARMENO Where does she live?

CHAEREA Can’t do that one either.

PARMENO Where did you see her?

CHAEREA In the street.

PARMENO How did you come to lose her?

CHAEREA That’s just what I was beefing about to myself as I came along just now; and I don’t think there’s a single other person who finds every piece of good fortune turning out more unfavourably for him. What accounts for my bad luck? I’m done for!

PARMENO What’s happened?

CHAEREA Listen: you know my dad’s relative and contemporary Archidemides?

PARMENO Of course.

CHAEREA While I was following the girl, he bumped into me.

PARMENO (drily) Most inconvenient.

CHAEREA No: quite disastrous! There are other things you can call ‘inconvenient’, Parmeno! I can honestly swear on oath that I haven’t set eyes on him for the whole of these last six or seven months, except for now when I could least have wished it and it
was least called for! Well? Isn't that some kind of evil omen? What do you say?

PARMENO (as before) Certainly.

CHAEREA Up he runs to me at once, and from quite far off too, all bent and shaking, with his lips hanging loose, and grunting away: 'Hey, hey! You there, Chaerea!', he said. I stopped. 'Do you know what I wanted to say to you?' 'Tell me,' 'Tomorrow I've got a case on.' 'Yes,' 'Make sure you tell your father to remember to turn up to support me in the morning.' While he said this, an hour passed away. I asked if there was anything else he wanted; 'That's fine,' he said. I left. When I looked over in this direction for the girl, she had just at that moment turned here into this street of ours.

PARMENO (aside) He must mean that girl, the one who was given as a present to her just now (gesturing towards Thais' house).

CHAEREA When I got here, she was nowhere to be seen.

PARMENO (to CHAEREA) There were some people accompanying the girl, presumably?

CHAEREA Yes, a parasite and a slave-girl.

PARMENO (triumphant) It's her! You can go home; say no more; the shouting's over!

CHAEREA You're not concentrating.

PARMENO Yes I am.

CHAEREA Really? Do you know who she is? Have you seen her?

PARMENO I've seen her; I know who she is; I know where she's been taken off to.

CHAEREA What! My dear Parmeno, you know her? And you know where she is?

PARMENO (indicating Thais' house) She was brought here to the tart Thais; she was given to her as a present.

CHAEREA Who's the wealthy man who can give her a present like that?

PARMENO The soldier Thraso, Phaedria's rival.

CHAEREA That's a hard part for my brother to play, by your account.

PARMENO Well, if you knew what present he's pitting against this present, you'd say so even more.

CHAEREA What ever is that? Tell me.

PARMENO A eunuch.
CHAEREA Well said! I've never seen better advice given. Come on, let's go inside right now. Dress me up, take me over, take me as quickly as possible!

PARMENO What are you up to? I was only joking!

CHAEREA Rubbish!

PARMENO I've had it! What have I done? Help! (CHAEREA starts to push him towards the house)
   Where are you pushing me? You're going to knock me over! Hey, listen! Stop!

CHAEREA Let's go!

PARMENO Won't you stop?

CHAEREA Certainly not!

PARMENO Just watch out that this isn't too hot-headed.

CHAEREA It certainly isn't. Let me do it!

PARMENO But look here, you'll get the bean; I'll get the shelling!* (impatiently) Oh—!

PARMENO We're committing an outrage!

CHAEREA Is it an outrage if I'm going to be taken into a tart's house and get my own back now on those torturers who quite despise us, boys like me, and always utterly torture us—and if I'm going to trick them just as we're tricked by them? Or should it rather be my dad who's tricked and deceived by me? Anyone who got to know about that would criticize it; but everyone would think this was treating the women as they deserve!

PARMENO All right: if you're determined to do it, I'll do it—but don't lay the blame at my door afterwards!

CHAEREA I won't.

PARMENO Is it an order?

CHAEREA An order? I insist; I command you! I won't ever try to pretend I'm not responsible. Follow me! (He leads into the house)

PARMENO (following indoors) I hope it turns out all right!

After a short pause, THRASO and GNATHO enter from the left

THRASO Very grateful to me Thais was, of course?

GNATHO Extremely.

THRASO Really? Is she pleased?

GNATHO Yes—but not so much by the present itself as by the fact that you gave it. She's really and truly cock-a-hoop over that! PARMENO reappears from his house

PARMENO (to the audience, referring to PHAEDRIA's presents for THAIS) I've come out here to keep watch, so that I can bring them over when the time's right. But here's the soldier! (He stays by the door, unseen by THRASO and GNATHO)

THRASO I do have that gift, to be sure: everything I do makes me popular.

GNATHO I've certainly noticed it.

THRASO The king,* for instance, always thanked me most profusely for everything I'd done. He didn't treat anyone else like that.

GNATHO A man with wit often uses his tongue to transfer to himself the fame that someone else has acquired with much labour. That's what you've got in you.

THRASO That's it!

GNATHO So as far as the king was concerned you were—

THRASO (interrupting) Of course.

GNATHO (unexpectedly varying the usual expression)—the fruit of his eye!

THRASO Yes. Entrusted his whole army to me, all his planning.

GNATHO Amazing!

THRASO And if ever he'd had enough of people, or if ever he'd got fed up with his work, when he wanted to relax, as if—you know what I mean?

GNATHO Yes: as if he wanted to spit his depression out of his mind—

THRASO You've got it! On such occasions he used to take me off to dine with him alone.

GNATHO Gosh! A choosy king, by your account!

THRASO No, this is what the man's like: keeps very select company.

GNATHO No, none at all, I think, if he lives with you!

THRASO Everyone envious of me. Snapped at me behind my back. I couldn't care less. Terribly envious of me, they were—but one quite excessively, the man he'd put in command of the Indian elephants. As he got more of a nuisance, I said 'I say, Strato, why are you so savage? Is it because you have beasts under your command?'

GNATHO Well spoken indeed! Clever! Wow! You slit the man's throat! What about him?

THRASO Struck dumb on the spot.
But of course!

Ye gods, what a wreck of a man! How pathetic!
And what a godless man the other one is!

What about that other time, Gnatho—the way I scored
off the Rhodian at dinner? (Gnatho, waits, as if eager to hear the
tale for the first time)
—Haven't I ever told you?

Gnatho
Never. But please do. (Aside to the audience) I've heard it
more than a thousand times!

This Rhodian I'm talking about, a young lad, was with
me at dinner. I happened to have a flashee with me. He began to
make up to her, and to poke fun at me. 'I say', I said to the fellow,
'You're very impertinent. Are you hunting for meat when you're a
hare yourself?'* (Gnatho roars with laughter)

What is it?

Gnatho
Clever! Smart! Fine! Al! Was that joke really yours? I
thought it was an old one.

Thraso
Had you heard it before?

Gnatho
Often; and it's reckoned to be one of the best.

Thraso
It's mine.

Gnatho
He was just a boy who spoke his mind without thinking;
what a pity he had to come up against your wit!

Parmeno (aside)
Well, god damn you!

Gnatho
Tell me, what about him?

Thraso
Crushed. Everyone present dying of laughter. In short,
they were all afraid of me from then on.

Gnatho
Quite right too.

Thraso
But look here, Thais suspects me of loving that girl:
should I clear myself?

Gnatho
Certainly not. On the contrary, you should increase her
suspicion all the more.

Thraso
Why?

Gnatho
Need you ask? You know how dreadfully it roasts you if
she ever speaks of Phaedria or if she praises him?

Thraso
I do indeed.

Gnatho
To stop that happening, this is the only remedy: when
she mentions Phaedria, you must mention Pamphila at once. If
ever she says 'Let's get Phaedria in to drink with us', you must say
'Let's call Pamphila out to sing for us'. If she praises his looks, you
must counter by praising hers. In short, give her tit for tat, so as to
cut her to the quick.

Thraso
Well, if she loved me, then your plan would help, Gnatho.

Gnatho
Since she longs for and loves the presents you give her,
she's been in love with you for ages, and it's been easy for ages to do
something to upset her. She's afraid all the time that you might one
day lose your temper and distribute somewhere else the harvest
which at the moment she reaps herself.

Thraso
You're quite right. That hadn't occurred to me.

Gnatho
You're joking! You just hadn't thought about it. Other-
wise you would have thought of the very same thing so much
better yourself, Thraso!

Thais
I thought I heard the soldier's voice just now—and there he
is. Hello, Thraso darling.

Thraso
Thais my darling, my hot-lips, how are you? Do you love
me for the lyre-player I gave you?

Parmeno (aside)
How charming! What a way to begin on his
arrival!

Thais (to Thraso)
Very much, as you deserve.

Thraso
Let's go to dinner, then. (Thais hesitates a moment, as she
is expecting Chremes to call on her and does not want to miss him)
Get a move on!

Parmeno (aside)
Look! Once again! Would you call him a
dreadfully human being?

Thais (to Thraso, recovering from her hesitation)
Whenever you
like. I won't hold you up.

Parmeno (aside)
I'll go up to them and pretend I'm just coming
out now. (Does so) Are you setting off somewhere, Thais?

Thais
Oh—Parmeno... How kind of you... Today I'm going
...(Tries to make it clear to Parmeno by gesture that his presence
is an embarrassment at this moment. But Parmeno refuses to play
the game)

Parmeno
Where?

Thais (aside to Parmeno)
What, can't you see him?
THRASE (impatiently) Are we off yet?

THRASE (to GNATHO) I'm off; you wait for her here.

PARMENO (sarcastically) It wouldn't do for a general to go through the street in the company of his girlfriend. (Exit right)

THRASE (to PARMENO's back, crushingly) Why should I waste words on you? You're just like your master!

GNATHO Ha ha ha!

THRASE What are you laughing at?

GNATHO At what you just said—and because I'm thinking of that joke about the Rhodian. (The door of THAIS' house starts to open)

But Thais is coming out.

THRASE (to GNATHO) Go ahead, run, make sure things are ready at home!

GNATHO OK (Exit left. THAIS reappears from her house, together with some slave-girls. PYTHIAS also appears at the door)

THAIS (to PYTHIAS) Be particularly careful, Pythias, if Chremes happens to come here, to ask him first of all to wait; if that doesn't suit him, to come back later; if he can't do that, bring him to me.

PYTHIAS I'll do so.

THAIS Oh and what was the other thing I wanted to say?—Ah yes: look after that girl with particular care. Make sure you stay at home.

THRASE (impatiently) Let's go!

THAIS (to the slave-girls) Follow me. (THAIS and the slave-girls go off left with THRASE. PYTHIAS goes back indoors. After a short pause, Chremes enters from the right, talking to himself)

CHREMES Yes, the more I think about it, this Thais is clearly going to do me a lot of harm. I could already see the first time she sent for me that she was cunningly trying to weaken my defences. Someone might ask 'What did you have to do with her?'—I didn't even know her. When I arrived, she thought up a reason for me to stay
there. She said she was giving a party following a sacrifice to
the gods* and had some serious business to discuss with me.
I suspected already that she was doing all this with malice
aforesight. She sat herself next to me, devoted herself to me,
tried to start a conversation. When it dried up, she came out
with her questions: how long ago had my father and mother died?
A long time ago, I said. Did I have a farm at Sunium? How far
from the sea? I guess she fancies it and hopes to grab it from me.
Finally, had I had a sister who’d disappeared from there as a child?
Had there been anyone with her? What had she had on her at the
time? Was there anyone who could identify her?—Why should she
ask me all these questions?—Unless perhaps she’s got the nerve to
claim she’s my sister who disappeared as a child all those years ago.
But my sister, if she’s alive, is 16, no older than that; Thais is a bit
older than I am. Now she’s sent for me again, begging me to come
urgently. Either she should say what she wants or she should stop
being a nuisance. I’m certainly not going to come a third time.

(Knocks on Thais’ door) Hey! Hey! Anyone in? It’s me, Chremes!

Pythias opens the door

Pythias Oh you darling man!

Chremes (aside) Didn’t I say they were laying traps for me?

Pythias Thais particularly asked for you to come back tomorrow.

Chremes I’m off to the farm.

Pythias Please do!

Chremes I can’t, I tell you.

Pythias In that case wait here in our house till she comes back
herself.

Chremes Certainly not.

Pythias Why, Chremes dear?

Chremes Will you go to hell?

Pythias If that’s your firm decision, please step over to where she is.

Chremes All right.

Pythias (calling into the house) Go along, Dorias! Take this man
quickly to the soldier’s. (Dorias appears and takes Chremes off
left. Pythias returns indoors. After a pause, Antipho enters
from the right)

Antipho (to the audience) Yesterday some of us lads down
in Pireaus agreed on today for a club dinner. We put Chaerea in
charge of it and handed over our deposits; the place and time were
fixed. The time’s gone past; there’s no sign of preparations at
the place we said; the fellow himself’s nowhere about, and I don’t
know what to say, or what to guess. Now the others have given me
the job of looking for him, so I’ll go to see if he’s at home. (Thais’
door opens. Chaerea looks out of it, still in oriental clothing)
Who’s this coming out of Thais’ house? Is it him or isn’t it? It
is! What has come over the fellow? What’s he dressed up like that
for? What the hell’s going on? I’m flabbergasted; I can’t guess. But
whatever it is, I’d like to try to find out from over here first. (Stays
on one side. Chaerea comes out cautiously, looking round)

Chaerea No one here, is there? No one. No one following me
from inside? No, no one. Can I at last let my joy burst out?
O Jupiter! Now, now is the time when I could put up with death,
so that life couldn’t spoil this joy with any sorrow! But to think
that there isn’t some busybody to come up to me now and follow
me wherever I go, battering me to death with questions—asking
me why I’m over the moon, why I’m so happy, where I’m going to,
where I’ve come out from, where I got hold of these clothes, what
I’m up to, whether I’m in my senses or off my head!

Antipho (aside) I’ll go up to him and do him this favour that I see
he wants done. (Does so) Chaerea, what are you over the moon
about? What’s the point of this clothing? What are you so happy
about? What are you up to? Are you in your right mind?—What
are you looking at me for? Why don’t you say something?

Chaerea Oh you wonderful fellow! My dear friend, hello! There’s
no one on earth I’d rather see just now than you!

Antipho Please tell me what’s going on!

Chaerea No, please listen, for god’s sake! You know this woman
my brother’s in love with?

Antipho Yes; I suppose you mean Thais.

Chaerea The very one.

Antipho I remember hearing about it.

Chaerea She was given a girl today as a present. Why should
I bother to shout about her looks or praise them to you, Antipho?
You know perfectly well what standards I set as an inspector of
beauty. I’ve fallen for her!

Antipho Oh really?
CHAEREA You'll say she beats all comers, I know you will, if you see her. To cut the story short, I'm in love with her. As luck would have it, there was a eunuch in our house that my brother had bought for Thais and who hadn't yet been taken over to her. So Parmeno, our slave, made a suggestion that I seized on.

ANTIPHO What was it?

CHAEREA You'll hear sooner if you keep quiet.—To change clothes with him and give orders to have myself taken there instead of him.

ANTIPHO Instead of a eunuch?

CHAEREA Yes.

ANTIPHO What on earth did you hope to gain by doing that?

CHAEREA What a question! To see her, to hear her, to be together with the girl I longed to be with, Antipho! No paltry reason, eh? No faulty reasoning? I was handed over to the woman. As soon as she'd got me, she was overjoyed and took me in to her house. She put me in charge of the girl.

ANTIPHO Who? You?

CHAEREA Me.

ANTIPHO Was that really safe?

CHAEREA She announced that no man was to go near her, and she ordered me not to leave her side but stay with her in the inner rooms, just the two of us together. I nodded, my eyes modestly towards the ground.

ANTIPHO (ironically) Poor man!

CHAEREA 'I, she said, 'am off to dinner'. She took some slave-girls with her; a few girls stayed to attend on my girl—they were apprentices. Immediately they got things ready for her to have a bath. I urged them to get a move on. While the preparations were going on, the girl sat in her room, looking up at a picture. The picture showed how Jupiter once sent down a shower of gold into Danae's lap, as the story goes.* I began to look at the picture myself too, and because he had got up to much the same trick once upon a time, my spirit rejoiced within me all the more, to think that a god had turned himself into a man and climbed secretly over another man's roof to seduce a woman through the skylight. And what a god!

'The one whose thunder echoing loud on high
Doth shake the topmost regions of the sky.'*

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ANTIPHO What happened next?

CHAEREA What do you mean 'What happened next?'; you joker?

ANTIPHO OK! I give in.

CHAEREA Was I going to lose the chance offered to me, so great an opportunity but so brief, so hoped for but so unexpected? If I had, then I really would have been what I was pretending to be!

ANTIPHO Quite so, quite so. But meanwhile what have you done about our dinner?

CHAEREA It's ready.

ANTIPHO Good for you. Where? At your place?

CHAEREA No, at Discus the freedman's.

ANTIPHO That's miles away—but all the more reason for us to get a move on. Change your clothes.

CHAEREA Where can I change? I've had it! My home is out of bounds now—I'm afraid my brother may be in there—and also 610 that my dad may have come back from the farm by now.

ANTIPHO Let's go to my house; that's the nearest place where you can change.

CHAEREA You're right; let's go. And at the same time I want to pick your brains about how I can get hold of that girl in the future.

WAS I, a mere man, not to do the same?—Indeed, I did it just the same way, and gladly! While I was thinking all this over, in the meantime the girl was summoned for her bath. She went, she washed, she returned. Then the girls settled her on a couch. I stood by, waiting to see if they had any orders to give me. One came along and said 'Hey, Dorus, take this fan and fan her like this, while we have our bath. When we've had our bath, if you want to, you can have one too.' I took the fan, with a show of reluctance.

CHAEREA She'd scarcely said that when they all rushed out of the room together and went off for their bath, making quite a noise—which is what happens when slaves are on their own. Meanwhile 600 the girl was overcome by sleep. I stole a glance at her sideways behind the fan, like this (imitates the action), surreptitiously. At the same time I looked round to make sure everything else was safe. I saw that it was. I bolted the door.
ANTIPHO OK. (Exeunt right. After a short pause, DORIAS enters from the left, holding some jewellery)

DORIAS I must say, from what I saw of him, I'm terrified that he'll kick up a rumpus, he's so furious, or do some violence to Thais. When that young man Chremes arrived, the girl's brother, she asks the soldier to tell them to let him in. That immediately makes him angry, but he doesn't dare say no. Then Thais insists that he invite him to join them. She did that because she wanted to keep him there—it wasn't the time to tell him what she wanted to about his sister. Reluctantly, he invited him; he stayed. Then she begins chatting to him at once. But the soldier thinks a rival has been brought in before his eyes, and he wants to get his own back on her. 'Hey, boy!', he says, 'Go and fetch Pamphila to entertain us here.' She cries out 'Certainly not! Her at a dinner-party?' The soldier insists; it turns into a row. Meanwhile she surreptitiously takes her jewels off and gives them to me to take away. That's a sign: as soon as she can, she'll get away from there, I know. (Enter PHAEDRIA from the right. He does not see DORIAS, who stays on her side of the stage)

PHAEDRIA While I was on my way to the farm, I began thinking about one thing after another, the way you do when you've got some trouble on your mind—and everything looked pretty bad. To cut the story short, while I was thinking these things over, I went past the farm without noticing. I'd gone a long way beyond it before I realized. I turned back again, feeling very low. When I'd come right back to the turning, I stopped. I began to think to myself 'What? Have I got to stay here for two days on my own without her?—Well, so what? There's nothing to be done.—What? Nothing? If there's no way for me to touch her, well, won't I even be able to look at her? If that's not allowed, at least this will be. Loving from the edge of the side-lines certainly isn't nothing.' I went past the farm deliberately this time. (PYTHIAS rushes out of THAIS' house)

But what's this? Why's Pythias rushing out all in a flap?

PYTHIAS (not seeing PHAEDRIA or DORIAS) Damn! Where can I find that wicked, irreligious man? Where can I look for him? To think that he could have dared to commit such an audacious deed as this!

PHAEDRIA (aside) Help! I don't like the sound of this!

PYTHIAS What's more, the villain, after he'd tricked her, actually tore all the poor girl's clothes, and tore her hair too!

PHAEDRIA What!

PYTHIAS If I could get hold of him now, I'd be so glad to let fly at his eyes with my nails, the murderer!

PHAEDRIA Clearly while I've been away there's been some sort of rumpus in the house. I'll go up to her. (Does so) What's up? What's the hurry? Who are you looking for, Pythias?

PYTHIAS Ah, Phaedria! Me? Who am I looking for? Why don't you buzz off where you deserve to go, you and your nice presents?

PHAEDRIA What's the matter?

PYTHIAS Are you asking me? That eunuch you gave us—what a rumpus he's started up! The girl the soldier had given to my mistress—he's raped her!

PHAEDRIA What are you talking about?

PYTHIAS I've had it!

PHAEDRIA You're drunk!

PYTHIAS This is the sort of drunkenness I'd wish on my enemies.

DORIAS (breaking in) What! Really, my dear Pythias, what ever sort of monstrosity was that?

PHAEDRIA (to PYTHIAS) You're out of your mind; how could a eunuch do that?

PYTHIAS I don't know who he was, but the facts speak for themselves about what he did. The girl herself is in tears, and when you ask her she can't bring herself to say what's up. As for that good fellow, he's nowhere to be seen. Damn it, I even suspect that he stole something as he left the house!

PHAEDRIA I'm flabbergasted! Where could that feeble creature have got? He can't have gone far: perhaps he's gone back to our house.

PYTHIAS Please go to see if he has.

PHAEDRIA You'll soon know for sure. (Goes into his house)

DORIAS Help! I'm dead! I've never even heard of such an unspeakable deed, my dear!

PYTHIAS Well, I had heard they were particularly keen on women but impotent. But it just didn't occur to me, damn it, or I'd have locked him up somewhere: I wouldn't have put him in charge of
The Eunuch

the girl. (Phaedria reappears, dragging Dorus from his house. Dorus is wearing Chaerea’s clothes)

Phaedria Come on out, you wicked creature! Still hanging back, are you, you runaway? Come out! To think what I paid for you!

Dorus (struggling) Please!

Phaedria Just look at how he’s screwed up his face, the villain! What do you mean by coming back here? What’s this change of clothes? Eh? (Turns to Pythias) If I’d been a minute later, Pythias, I wouldn’t have found him at home: he was all ready to escape.

Pythias Tell me, have you got the fellow?

Phaedria Of course I have.

Pythias Thank god for that!

Dorus That is a relief!

Pythias Where is he?

Phaedria What do you mean? Can’t you see him?

Pythias See him? Who, for heaven’s sake?

Phaedria This man, of course!

Pythias Who’s this fellow?

Phaedria The one who was brought over to your place today.

Pythias Not one of us has ever set eyes on him, Phaedria.

Phaedria Not set eyes on him?

Pythias Did you honestly think this was the man who was brought over to us?

Phaedria Well, I didn’t have anyone else.

Pythias Really! There’s no comparison between the two of them! That one looked handsome and noble.

Phaedria That’s what he looked like then, because he was dressed up in his colourful clothes. Now he looks ugly to you, because he hasn’t got them on.

Pythias Do stop! As if there was just a little difference! The one brought over to our place today was a young man, one you’d be glad to see yourself, Phaedria. This one’s an old man, sunken, senile, and soporific, and the colour of a wasp!

Phaedria What? What are you talking about? Are you going to reduce me to not knowing what I bought myself? (Turns to Dorus) Hey, you! Did I buy you?

Dorus Yes.

Pythias Now tell him to reply to me!

Phaedria Ask your question.

Pythias (to Dorus) Did you come to our house today? (Dorus shakes his head. Pythias turns to Phaedria) He says he didn’t. But that other one did, the 16-year-old one who Parmeno brought with him.

Phaedria (to Dorus) Come on then, clear this up for me first: where did you get those clothes you’re wearing?—Won’t you answer? You monstrous creature, aren’t you going to tell me?

Dorus Chaerea came.

Phaedria My brother?

Dorus Yes.

Phaedria When?

Dorus Today.

Phaedria How long ago?

Dorus Just now.

Phaedria Who with?

Dorus Parmeno.

Phaedria Had you met him before?

Dorus No.

Phaedria So how did you know he was my brother?

Dorus Parmeno said he was. He gave me these clothes.

Phaedria (aside) I’ve had it!

Dorus He put mine on himself. Then the pair of them left the house together.

Pythias Does that convince you that I’m sober and wasn’t telling you any lies? Does that satisfy you that the girl’s been raped?

Phaedria Come on, you ass, do you believe what he says?

Pythias Why should I have to believe him? The facts speak for themselves!

Phaedria (to Dorus, pushing him to one side of the stage) Move over there a bit, do you hear? A bit further still—that’s right. Now tell me again: Chaerea took your clothes off you?

Dorus He did.

Phaedria And put them on himself?

Dorus He did.

Phaedria And was brought over here instead of you?

Dorus Yes.
PHÆDRIA (pretending not to believe him) Great god above, what a wicked and audacious fellow!

PYTHIAS Oh no! Do you still not believe we've been most disgracefully tricked?

PHÆDRIA (to PYTHIAS) Of course you would believe what he says! (Aside) I don't know what to do! (To DORUS, whispering) Hey, say no this time! (Aloud) Can I chisel the truth out of you or not? Did you see my brother Chaerea?

DORUS No.

PHÆDRIA He can't admit the truth except under torture, I can see. Follow me in! One moment he says yes, the next he says no. (To DORUS, whispering) Beg me for mercy!

PYTHIAS I beg you, Phaedria!

PHÆDRIA (aloud) Go inside now! (Hits him)

DORUS Ow!

PHÆDRIA (pushing him into his house, aside to audience) I can't think how else to get away from here without looking ridiculous. (Aloud to DORUS) You've had it if you play any more tricks on me in here, you scoundrel! (Exeunt PHÆDRIA and DORUS)

PYTHIAS I'm sure Parmeno was behind this plot—sure as I'm alive!

DORIAS You're right.

PYTHIAS I'll find some way to pay him back in kind, you see if I don't! But what do you think I should do now, Dorias?

DORIAS About that girl, do you mean?

PYTHIAS Yes: should I say something about it, or should I keep quiet?

DORIAS If you've got any sense, you don't know what you do know, either about the eunuch or about the rape of the girl. That way you'll escape from all the trouble, and you'll do her a favour as well. Just say Dorus has left.

PYTHIAS That's what I'll do.

DORIAS (catching sight of CHREMES approaching from the left) But do I see Chremes? Thais will be here shortly.

PYTHIAS Why do you say that?

DORIAS Because when I left there a row had already started up between them.

PYTHIAS (referring to the jewellery DORIAS is holding) You take these jewels inside; I'll find out from him what's up. (DORIAS goes into THAIS' house)

CHREMES (drunk and dishevelled, his cloak trailing on the ground; not seeing PYTHIAS) Whoops! I've been taken in: the wine I drank has got the better of me. As long as I was sitting down, I thought I was perfectly sober; but since I got up neither my foot nor my brain's doing its job properly!

PYTHIAS Chremes!

CHREMES Who's that? Ah, Pythias! Wow! You look so much more beautiful to me now than you did before!

PYTHIAS Well, you certainly look a great deal more cheerful!

CHREMES True indeed is the saying: 'No arousal without carousel!'* But has Thais been back for long?

PYTHIAS Has she already left the soldier's?

CHREMES A long time ago, ages ago! There was an enormous row between them.

PYTHIAS Didn't she say anything to you about following her?

CHREMES No—except that as she left she nodded to me.

PYTHIAS Well, wasn't that enough?

CHREMES But I didn't realize that was what she meant—except for the fact that the soldier put me right where I hadn't quite understood: he pushed me out of the house! (Sees THAIS approaching from the left, accompanied by her slave-girls) But here she is! I wonder where I overtook her.

THAIS (to herself) I think he'll be here any minute to take her away from me: let him come! But if he lays one finger on her I'll tear his eyes out at once! I can put up with his tomfoolery and pompous speeches just as long as they are speeches. But if they turn into action he'll pay for it!

CHREMES Thais, I've been here for ages!

THAIS Oh my dear Chremes, you're the very person I was hoping to meet! Do you realize this rumpus was all because of you—in fact this whole affair is to do with you?

CHREMES With me? How? As if an affair of yours could—

THAIS (interrupting) Because it's in taking steps to return and restore your sister to you that I've had to put up with this behaviour and lots more like it.
CHREMES  Where is she?
THAIS  In my house.
CHREMES  Oh!
THAIS  Don't worry: she's been brought up the right way both for
      you and for her.
CHREMES  Really?
THAIS  Yes, that's the truth. I give her to you as a gift; I don't ask for
      any reward from you in return.
CHREMES  I am really grateful, Thais; the favour will be repaid to
      you as you deserve. (Noises are heard off left)
THAIS  But look out, or you'll lose her before you get her from me,
      Chremes! She's the girl the soldier's just coming to kidnap from
      me. Pythias, go in and bring out the box with her trinkets.
CHREMES (seeing THRASO and his followers approaching from the
      left)  Can you see him, Thais?(PYTHIAS and THAIS continue
      their discussion while CHREMES is talking)
PYTHIAS  Where's it kept?
THAIS  In the chest.—Get a move on, damn you! (PYTHIAS goes
      indoors)
CHREMES:—the soldier, I mean; look how many troops he's bring-
      ing with him against you. Help!
THAIS (to CHREMES)  Surely you're not frightened, are you, my
      dear fellow?
CHREMES  Get away with you! Me frightened? There's no one alive
      less frightened than me!
THAIS  Good! That's the way we want you!
CHREMES  I really don't like to think what sort of man you sup-
      pose I am!
THAIS  Well, just bear this in mind: the man you're dealing with is a
      foreigner, less influential than you, less well known, and with fewer
      friends here.
CHREMES  I know that. But it's silly to let something happen when
      you could avoid it. I'd rather take preventive action than get our
      own back on him after he's harmed us. You go off inside and bolt
      the door, while I run over to the main square: I want to get some
      people to come and support us in this rumpus. (Starts off right,
      planning to take a back route to the town centre, which lies to the left)
THAIS  Don't go!
THE EUNUCH

SANGA Me? I knew the courage of our general and the might of
our men. I knew this couldn't come off without bloodshed, and
how else was I going to wipe up the wounds?

THRASO Where are the others?

SANGA What the hell do you mean by 'others'? There's only
Sannio, and he's on guard-duty at home.

THRASO (to GNATHO) You draw these men up, I'll be behind the
front line: I'll give everyone the signal from there.

GNATHO (to the audience, but heard by THRASO) There's wisdom
for you: in drawing up his men, he's chosen a safe position for
himself.

THRASO I'm only doing what Pyrrhus used to do.*

CHREMES Do you see what he's up to, Thais? I was certainly right
to advise you to lock up your house.

THAIS He may seem to you to be a man now, but really he's a great
twit: don't be frightened.

THRASO (to GNATHO) What do you suggest?

GNATHO If only you could get hold of a sling now! Then you could
attack them under cover from over here, and they'd run away.

THRASO But look! I can see Thais herself.

GNATHO How soon do we charge?

THRASO Wait! The wise man should try everything before he
resorts to arms. You never know, she may do what I command
without any need for violence.

GNATHO Ye gods, what it is to be clever! I never meet you without
going away a wiser man!

THRASO Thais, first answer me this: when I gave you that girl, did
you say you would give yourself to me alone for these days?

THAIS So what if I did?

THRASO What a question! Didn't you bring your boyfriend in
right in front of my eyes?

THAIS (to the world at large) What can you do with that man?

THRASO And didn't you steal away secretly from me with him?

THAIS I felt like it.

THRASO Well then, give Pamphila back to me—unless you'd
rather I took her by force!

CHREMES Do you expect her to give her back to you? Do you
think you're going to touch her, you utterly—
THRAISO  Quite right!

GNATHO  Shall I dismiss the troops now?

THRAISO  Whenever you like. 

GNATHO  Sanga, as brave soldiers should, turn your mind now to hearth and home.

SANGA  I've been thinking about my saucepans for ages!

GNATHO  Good for you.

THRAISO  This way! Follow me! (Leads off left; the others all follow.

After a pause, THAIS and PYTHIAS reappear from their house)

THAIS  Damn you, are you going to carry on talking in riddles? 'I know—I don't know—he's gone—I heard about it, I wasn't there myself': won't you tell me clearly whatever it is you've got to say? The girl's clothes have been torn, she's in tears, and she won't say a word; the eunuch has gone.—Why? What's happened? Aren't you going to tell me?

PYTHIAS  (starting to cry)  What can I tell you? They say he wasn't an eunuch.

THAIS  Who was he then?

PYTHIAS  That Chaerea.

THAIS  What Chaerea?

PYTHIAS  That brother of Phaedria's—the one who's doing his military service.

THAIS  What are you talking about, you murderess?

PYTHIAS  But I know it for sure!

THAIS  But why did he come to us? Why was he brought over?

PYTHIAS  I don't know—but I think he'd fallen for Pamphila.

THAIS  What? No! I've had it! It's a disaster, if what you say is true. Can that be what the girl's crying about?

PYTHIAS  I think so.

THAIS  Tell me, you godless woman, were those the instructions I went to such lengths to give you as I left?

PYTHIAS  What was I supposed to do? I left her on her own with him, just as you told me to.

THAIS  You put a wolf in charge of a sheep, damn it! I'm really ashamed to have been taken in like that. What kind of fellow can he be? (CHÆREA comes into view from the right (= stage left), still dressed as a eunuch)

PYTHIAS  (seeing CHÆREA)  Sh! Quiet, madam, please! We're all right! We've got the fellow himself!

THAIS  Where is he?

PYTHIAS  There, on the left. Can you see him?

THAIS  Yes.

PYTHIAS  Have him seized as soon as possible!

THAIS  What'll we do with him, you idiot?

PYTHIAS  What could you do with him? How can you ask? Can't you see at a glance that he looks like a rogue? And if he doesn't, that shows how brazen he is!

CHÆREA  (not yet seeing THAIS and PYTHIAS)  At Antipho's place, both his mum and his dad were at home, as if they'd deliberately planned to make it impossible for me to get in without them seeing me. Meanwhile, as I was standing in front of their door, someone I knew came along. When I saw him, I took to my heels as fast as I could down an empty alleyway—and then down another, then another. All the time I was running away I was terrified someone would recognize me.—But is this Thais that I see? Yes, it is. I can't think what to do.—But why should I care? What can she do to me?

THAIS  Let's go up to him. (Pretends that she still thinks he is a eunuch) Dorus, my good fellow, hello! Look here, did you run away?

CHÆREA  (pretending to be a eunuch)  Madam, I did.

THAIS  And are you pleased with yourself for doing that?

CHÆREA  No.

THAIS  Do you expect to escape being punished?

CHÆREA  Let me off this one offence! If I ever commit another, you can kill me!

THAIS  You weren't afraid I would be a cruel mistress, were you?

CHÆREA  No.

THAIS  So what was it, then?

CHÆREA  I was afraid she would tell you what I'd done (indicating PYTHIAS).

THAIS  What had you done?

CHÆREA  Nothing much.

PYTHIAS  (breaking in)  What! Nothing much? You rogue! Do you think it's nothing much to rape a girl who's a citizen?
The Eunuch

CHAEREA I thought she was a slave, like me.

PYTHIAS 'A slave, like me!' The fiend! I can hardly control myself: I'm going to let fly at his hair! He even comes here specially to laugh at us!

THAIS (to PYTHIAS) Off you go; you're getting carried away.

PYTHIAS Why should I? (Sarcastically) I suppose I'd really have to pay damages to that crook if I did it, would I? Particularly when he admits he's your slave!

THAIS Let's put a stop to this. Chaerea, your behaviour was unworthy of you. It may be entirely proper for me to be insulted like that, but even so it wasn't proper for you to do it. And now I really can't think what to do about that girl. You've messed up all my plans: I can't return her to her family, as would have been right, and as I wanted to.—I wanted to get myself their lasting favour, Chaerea.

CHAEREA But I'm sure there will now be friendship between us for ever instead, Thais. It often happens that some event like this sparks off a really close relationship in spite of the bad start.

Perhaps some god was behind this!

THAIS Well, I'll certainly take it that way; I hope you're right.

CHAEREA Yes, please do. And there's one thing you must know: I didn't do this to insult you, but because I'm in love.

THAIS I know, and that's why I'm all the readier to forgive you now. I'm not so hard-hearted or so inexperienced that I don't know how powerful love can be, Chaerea.

CHAEREA My god, I love you too now, Thais!

PYTHIAS In that case, madam, I can see that you'd better watch out for him!

CHAEREA I wouldn't dare!

PYTHIAS I don't trust you at all!

THAIS (to PYTHIAS) Stop it!

CHAEREA (to Thais) Now I ask you to be my helper in this matter; I entrust and commit myself to your protection; I adopt you as my patroness, Thais; I beg you—I shall die if I don't get her as my wife!

THAIS Even if your father...? (Hesitates before completing the sentence)

CHAEREA What? Oh, he'll be happy, I'm quite sure, as long as she's a citizen.
CHREMES  Get a move on, will you, nanny?

SOPHRONA  I am moving.

CHREMES  So I see—but not forwards!

PYTHIAS (to CHREMES) Have you shown her nanny the trinkets yet?

CHREMES  Yes, all of them.

PYTHIAS  Tell me, what does she say? Does she recognize them?

CHREMES  Perfectly.

PYTHIAS  I'm really glad to hear it; I like that girl. Go inside; my mistress has been waiting for you indoors for ages. (CHREMES and SOPHRONA go into THAIS' house, leaving PYTHIAS on stage on her own. PARMENO comes into view from the right)

Look, I can see that good fellow Parmeno coming. Look at him sauntering along: would you believe it? I'm sure I'll be able to torture him the way I'd like to. I'll go inside to find out for certain about the identification. Then I'll come out and terrify this godless man! (Goes into THAIS' house)

PARMENO  I've come back to see how Chaerae's getting on here. If he's handled the affair smartly, ye gods, what praise Parmeno will win—what true praise! I'm not talking about the fact that I've achieved for him a love that could have been extremely difficult and extremely expensive, that I've got him the girl he was in love with in the house of a grasping tart—all without trouble, without expense, and without loss. (PYTHIAS reappears from THAIS' house but stays by the door, unnoticed by PARMENO)

No, what I think really wins me first prize is this: I've discovered a way for a young lad to get to know what tarts are like and how they behave, so that having got to know them early in his life he can despise them for the rest of it. When they're in public, you'd think nothing was ever more refined, nothing neater or smarter than the way they nibble at their food when they're with a boyfriend. If a lad can see how filthy, squalid, poor, and unattractive they are when they're on their own at home, how desperate they are for food, how they gobble up black bread dipped in yesterday's soup—if he realizes all that, it'll keep him on the straight and narrow!

PYTHIAS (aside) My god, I'll punish you for what you've said and done, you villain: you won't get away with playing tricks on us! (Rushes forward, as if coming out of the house) Oh gods in heaven, how dreadful! Oh, the poor boy! Oh wicked Parmeno, who brought him here!

PARMENO (aside) What's this?

PYTHIAS (as before) I do feel sorry for him. Oh dear! That's why I've run out of doors, so that I don't have to see it. What terrible punishments they say they're going to inflict on him!

PARMENO (still aside) Great god, what's this commotion? Could this be the end of me? I'll go up to her. (Does so) What are you talking about, Pythias? What's up? Who's going to be punished?

PYTHIAS  Can't you guess? What a nerve you've got! You've ruined that boy you brought over as a eunuch, you were so keen to play a trick on us!

PARMENO  Why do you say that? What's happened? Tell me!

PYTHIAS  Listen: that girl who was given as a present to Thais today—do you realize she's an Athenian citizen? And that her brother is extremely high-born?

PARMENO  I'd no idea.

PYTHIAS  Well, that's what she's turned out to be—and the poor boy raped her! When he discovered it had been done, her brother in a fit of violence—

PARMENO (interrupting) What did he do?

PYTHIAS  First he tied him up quite brutally.

PARMENO  What? Tied him up?

PYTHIAS  Yes, though Thais was begging him not to do it.

PARMENO  Really?!

PYTHIAS  And what's more he now threatens he's going to do to him what's done to adulterers*—something I've never seen done, and would rather not!

PARMENO  The nerve of the man! How can he dare do something so monstrous?

PYTHIAS  What do you mean, 'so monstrous'?

PARMENO  Can you think of anything more monstrous? Who ever saw anyone being taken as an adulterer in a tart's house?

PYTHIAS  I've no idea.

PARMENO  But here's something you'd all better have an idea about, Pythias: I announce and declare to you that he's the son of my master!

PYTHIAS (feigning astonishment) What? Really? Is he?
PARMENO Thais should not allow any violence to be inflicted on him! But in fact why don't I go inside myself? (Starts towards THAIS' house)

PYTHIAS (stopping him) Steady on, Parmeno! You may not be able to help him, and you may ruin yourself; they think you were behind everything that's happened.

PARMENO What can I do, then, damn it? Where can I start? (The boys’ FATHER comes into view from the right) And now look! I can see the old man coming back from the farm. Am I to tell him or not? I’ll tell him, damn it—though I know there's a whole lot of trouble lined up for me. But I've got to do it, to help Chaerea.

PYTHIAS You're quite right. I'll go inside; you tell him the whole story from the beginning. (Goes into THAIS' house)

FATHER (to the audience) Having a farm close to town gives me this advantage: I never get fed up either with the country or with the town; when I start to feel I've had enough of the one place, I move to the other. But is that our man Parmeno? Yes, it certainly is him. Who are you waiting for out here in front of the door, Parmeno?

PARMENO (pretending not to have noticed him before) Who's that? Oh! Welcome back, sir!

FATHER Who are you waiting for?

PARMENO (aside) I've had it! My tongue's glued up with fear.

FATHER What? What's up? What are you trembling for? Everything all right? Tell me!

PARMENO Sir, first of all I'd like you to realize what the facts are: whatever's happened here, it wasn't my fault!

FATHER What wasn't?

PARMENO You're quite right to ask: I should have told you what had happened first. Phaedria bought a eunuch as a present for this woman.

FATHER What woman?

PARMENO Thais.

FATHER He bought one? I've had it! How much for?

PARMENO Twenty minas.

FATHER Calamity!

PARMENO Next, Chaerea's in love with a lyre-player* here.

FATHER What? In love? Does he already know what a tart is? Has he come up to town? One disaster after another!

PARMENO Sir, don't look at me! It wasn't my idea!

FATHER Stop talking about yourself! You crook, as sure as I'm alive, I'll—! But first explain what on earth you're talking about.

PARMENO He was taken over to Thais here instead of the eunuch.

FATHER Instead of a eunuch?

PARMENO Yes. Then they seized him as an adulterer in the house and tied him up.

FATHER That's the end of me!

PARMENO Look at the nerve of the tarts!

FATHER There isn't anything else, is there? Any disaster? Any expense? Anything left over that you haven't told me?

PARMENO No, that's all.

FATHER I'd better get a move on: I'll break in on them here! (Rushes into THAIS' house)

PYTHIAS (to the audience) It's the best thing that's happened to me in ages! I couldn't have hoped for anything better—I mean the old man coming into our house just now, when he'd got it all wrong. I was the only one who saw the joke, because I knew what he was afraid of!

PARMENO (aside) What's this now?

PYTHIAS Now I've come out to find Parmeno.—But where on earth is he? (She looks round but does not at first see him)

PARMENO (aside) It's me she's looking for.

PYTHIAS But there he is: I see him. I'll go up to him. (Does so, still laughing)

PARMENO What's going on, you silly woman? What are you up to? What are you laughing about? Stop it!

PYTHIAS I'm dead! Oh dear, I've exhausted myself laughing at you!

PARMENO What for?

PYTHIAS Don't you know? I've never seen a more stupid man, and never shall! Oh, I can't tell you what fun you've given us indoors! And I used to think you were such a smart and clever
fellow! What? Did you have to go right ahead and believe what I told you? Wasn’t it enough for you that you’d egged the lad on to commit the crime? Did you actually have to report the poor boy to his father as well? What do you suppose his feelings were when his father saw him dressed up like that?—What’s the matter? Do you realize now that you’ve had it?

**Parmeno** What! What’s that you say, you bitch? Did you make it up?—Are you still laughing? Damn you! Do you think it was such a good joke to laugh at us?

**Pythias** Yes, brilliant!

**Parmeno** Well, if you get away with that—!

**Pythias** I believe you. But perhaps your threats are for later, Parmeno. For now, you’re the one who’s going to be strung up, for inciting the silly boy to notorious criminal behaviour and then reporting him: they’ll both punish you.

**Parmeno** I’m a dead man!

**Pythias** That’s your reward for the present you gave us. I’m off! (Goes back into Thais’ house)

**Parmeno** Damn it! I’ve given myself away and caused my own death, just like a shrew!*  

*Enter Thraso and Gnatho from the left. They do not notice Parmeno.*

**Gnatho** What now? What are you hoping for? What’s our plan in coming here? What are you up to, Thraso?

**Thraso** Me? I’ve come to surrender to Thais and do what she commands.

**Gnatho** Why not? Hercules was Omphale’s slave, wasn’t he?*

**Gnatho** A good precedent! I’d just like to see your head being softened up by her slipper! But there’s a noise from her door.* (The noise is made by Chaerea, who bursts out of Thais’ house still dressed as a eunuch)

**Thraso** I’ve had it! What the hell’s this? I’ve never seen him before now. Why has he jumped out here in such a hurry?

**Chaerea** (addressing the audience, without seeing anyone on stage) Citizens, is there anyone luckier than me alive today? No, not a single person. In my case the gods have clearly displayed all their power: so many good things have so suddenly come together for me!

**Parmeno** (aside) What’s he happy about?

**Chaerea** (catching sight of Parmeno) O my dear Parmeno, you who devised all my pleasures, you who set them in motion and brought them to fulfilment, do you know how happy I am? Do you know that my Pamphila has been found to be a citizen?

**Parmeno** (ruetfully) I have heard it.

**Chaerea** Do you know she’s engaged to me?

**Parmeno** Wonderful! Congratulations!

**Thraso** (to Gnatho) Do you hear what he’s saying?

**Chaerea** And then I’m happy because my brother Phaedria’s love affair is completely clear of the storms. We’ve become one household; Thais has asked my dad for his protection, she’s entrusted herself to our patronage and safekeeping.

**Parmeno** So Thais belongs totally to your brother?

**Chaerea** Certainly.

**Parmeno** (still unaware of Thraso’s presence) Now here’s another cause for rejoicing: the soldier will be driven out!

**Chaerea** Tell my brother about this as soon as possible, wherever he is!

**Parmeno** I’ll see if he’s at home. (Goes into their house)

**Thraso** (still unseen by Chaerea) Do you doubt in the slightest that I’ve had it for ever now, Gnatho?

**Gnatho** That’s what I think, without a doubt.

**Chaerea** (to the world at large) What should I mention first or praise most? Should I praise the man who advised me to do it, or me for having the courage to embark on it, or Fortune who guided it, who has packed so many things of such importance so conveniently into one day, or my father who’s so delightful and obliging? O Jupiter, I beg you, preserve these blessings for us!  

**Phaedria** (enters from his house, exclaiming) Ye gods, what an incredible story Parmeno’s just told me! But where’s my brother?

**Chaerea** He’s right here!

**Phaedria** I’m so happy!

**Chaerea** I can believe it. No one deserves to be loved more than this Thais of yours, brother: she’s been so much help to our whole household.
The Eunuch

PHAEDRIA What! Are you praising her to me? (THRASO and GNA Tho continue to converse separately, unseen by the others)

THRASO I've had it! The less hope there is, the more I love her.

I beg you, Gnatho—I pin my hopes on you!

GNA Tho What do you want me to do?

THRASO Make sure that I keep in with Thais somehow or other: beg them, or bribe them!

GNA Tho That's difficult.

THRASO If you want to do something, I know you can. If you do this, you can ask for any present you like as a reward from me: you'll get whatever you ask for.

GNA Tho Really?

THRASO Certainly.

GNA Tho If I achieve this, my request is that your house should be open to me whether you're there or not, and that there should always be a place for me without needing an invitation.

THRASO I promise.

GNA Tho I'll prepare for action! (As GNA Tho is about to move towards him, PHAE DRIA realizes that there is someone else on stage)

PHAEDRIA Who's that I hear over there? Oh—Thraso! (PHAEDRIA and CHAEREA move towards THRASO and GNATHO)

THRASO Hello.

PHAEDRIA (ignoring his greeting) Perhaps you don't realize what's been going on here.

THRASO Yes I do.

PHAEDRIA So why do I see you in this part of town?

THRASO I'm putting my trust in you.

PHAEDRIA I'll tell you how much you can trust us! Soldier, I give you due notice: if I ever come across you in this street after this, never mind about telling me 'I was looking for someone else, I was passing by here'—you've had it!

GNA Tho Hey, you can't say that!

PHAEDRIA I just did.

THRASO I don't recognize this arrogant manner of yours.

PHAEDRIA Well, that's how it is.

GNA Tho (to PHAE DRIA and CHAEREA) First listen a bit; when I've had my say, if you like it, act on it.

CHAEREA Let's listen.

GNA Tho You move away a bit over there, Thraso. (THRASO obeys; GNA Tho turns back to the other two)

First of all, I'd very much like you both to believe this: whatever I do here, I'm doing it above all for my own sake; but if it's to your advantage too, it's silly of you not to do it.

PHAEDRIA What is it?

GNA Tho I propose that you let the soldier in to share her.

PHAEDRIA What! Let him in?

GNA Tho Just think about it: you like living with her, Phaedria—in fact you're very keen on living with her—but you haven't got much to give her, and Thais must be given a lot. If you want someone to finance your love-life and meet all her demands without costing you a penny, there's no one more convenient or more useful to you. For a start, he's got the money to give, and no one gives more generously than he does. He's stupid, boring, and slow, and he snores night and day. And you needn't be afraid the woman will fall in love with him; you can easily drive him out whenever you like!

CHAEREA What shall we do?

GNA Tho What's more, there's this point, which I think the most important of all: there isn't a host anywhere who entertains better or more lavishly!

CHAEREA It rather looks as if we'll have to put up with that man, whether we like it or not!

PHAEDRIA I agree.

GNA Tho You're quite right. I've just got this one further request: please let me join your gang: I've been pushing this rock up the hill* for long enough now.

PHAEDRIA We'll let you join.

CHAEREA And gladly!

GNA Tho And I in return, Phaedria—and you too, Chaerea—present him to you: eat up his larder and have a good laugh at him!

CHAEREA Well said!

PHAEDRIA Just what he deserves!

GNA Tho Thraso, come and join us whenever you like.

THRASO (doing so) Please, tell me how we're getting on.
Gnatho. Need you ask? These people didn’t know you; after I’d shown them what you’re like, and praised you in line with your deeds and your merits, I got what we wanted.

Thraso. You’ve done well; thank you very much indeed. I’ve never yet been anywhere where they didn’t all adore me!

Gnatho (to Phaedria and Chaerea). Didn’t I tell you what he was like? Real chic!

Phaedria. He is just as you promised. Come this way.

(Phaedria leads the others off into Thais’ house, turning to address the audience as he does so) Goodbye, and please give us your applause!*