

PLAUTUS:  
THE DARKER  
COMEDIES

Bacchides,  
Casina, and  
Truculentus



Translated from the Latin,  
with Introduction and Notes,  
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CASINA or  
THE LOT-DRAWERS



## LUST IN ACTION

The older Plautus got, some scholars think, the fonder he became of writing *cantica*. Since *Casina* has more *cantica* than any other of Plautus's works, it has been dated to 185 B.C., no more than a year or so before the playwright's presumed death in 184 / 183 B.C. One passage in the play offers more substantial evidence for a late date. When the plotting of the lecherous old man Lysidamus is exposed, he attempts to weasel out of the situation by blaming his conduct on Bacchantes, women in an ecstatic Dionysiac orgy. This ploy is immediately checked by his neighbor's wife, Myrrhina:

He's making that up!  
Everyone knows the Bacchic orgies  
aren't playing here now. (V.4)

This is perhaps an allusion to the worship of Dionysus at Rome, which was the subject of a decree by the senate in 186 B.C. (the *Senatus Consultum de Bacchanalibus*).

*Casina* is based on Diphilus's *Kleroumenoi*, or *The Lot-Drawers*, produced between 332 B.C. and 320 B.C. Only the title of Diphilus's play survives. The prologue of *Casina* says that Plautus called his play *Sortientes*, the Latin translation of Diphilus's Greek title, and it has been suggested that the title *Casina* dates only from the revival after Plautus's death.<sup>1</sup> But *Casina* is an appropriate title for the play we have because it is the characters' obsession either to save her or to ruin her that supplies all the energies of the drama.

*Casina* is a story of romance and hidden identities, with comic

peripety and recognition scenes forming the climax of the work. As is often the case, the play focuses only on the interesting consequences of earlier, less interesting actions. Many years before, a young girl (Casina) had been abandoned on the doorstep of Lysidamus and his wife Cleostrata. She was raised as a servant to the mistress of the household. Lysidamus's young son Euthynicus fell in love with her and hoped to marry her. But as the wedding drew near, Lysidamus wanted her for himself, and he contrived a fantastic plot in which he first sent Euthynicus off to the country and then arranged for his overseer Olympio to marry her instead. It is at this point that *Casina* opens. Lysidamus's wife Cleostrata opposes him with her slave Chalinus, who serves as a stand-in for Euthynicus. What begins as a conflict between father and son thus turns into a struggle between wife and husband, with slaves as the surrogate actors for the opposing parties. Cleostrata attempts to resolve the conflict by drawing lots with her husband. Unfortunately, Lysidamus wins. She and her servants then invent one scheme after another to cheat Lysidamus of his prize. After a thorough beating and public disclosure of all his sins, Lysidamus is at last reunited with his wife and their household more or less returns to normal. A brief epilogue tells us that Casina is in reality a free-born Athenian who will soon marry her former master Euthynicus.

Those who prefer Greek New Comedy to Roman have sometimes claimed that the Roman playwrights vulgarized their Greek models, coarsening what were originally refined and delicate comedies of manners to please the grosser tastes of the Roman audiences on which they depended for their livelihood.<sup>2</sup> But this Hellenic view of Roman comedy may not be correct. Many of the spectacular scenes of *Casina* have their parallels in Aristophanes (and probably also in the lost poets of Middle Comedy): homosexuality and transvestism (*The Women of the Thesmophoria*), denial of sex and war between the sexes (*Lysistrata*), and parodies of marriage ceremonies and wedding hymns (*Birds*, *Peace*). The bawdy episodes of *Casina* need by no means be attributed to Plautus's desire to pitch his comedy at a lower, "Roman" level. Diphilus's own play may have been, not a refined comedy of romance and recognition, but one of conflict between members of the family, between the generations, between husband and wife, and the slaves who represent them. More to the point, the farcical scenes of *Casina* are not simply Plautus's way of playing to the pit; they are episodes integral to the basic themes of

the play. The romance and recognition of Casina's true identity are only given passing mention in the prologue and epilogue. The heart of the play we have is a comic *agon*, or contest, between Lysidamus and forces protecting his son Euthynicus.

Although *Casina* is played by the usual repertory of the stock characters in New Comedy, the personality of Lysidamus is the key to the play's action. The rest of the players react to his character; indeed they exist as characters chiefly in reaction to him. The spectacular comic scenes of the play are spectacular responses to Lysidamus: the lot drawing (II.6), Pardalisca's mad scene (III.5), the mock wedding (IV.4), and Olympio's "messenger speech" (V.2). Lysidamus acts in complete reversal of the roles he ought to be playing as husband, father, and master of his own house. His sexual aggression is pervasive and indiscriminate, directed against not only Casina but his male slaves as well (II.8). He is an *amator*, but a *senex amator*: not simply the lover, but the old man as lover, and as slave to his passions he becomes a slave to his slave Olympio and then a slave to everyone he should master but cannot (III.8). He confuses social roles, and he also confuses sexuality. His desires give rise to a plot in which male identity is masked with female identity, as his sexual aggression is turned against him by the women of his house.<sup>3</sup>

Lysidamus's sexual fantasies, gluttony, and total abdication of the customary role of father, husband, and head of his household create an extraordinary pattern of images. The lot-drawing scene is a military encounter between the two parts of a household which should be joined together (II.6). Food is equated with sexual appetite, so that fish and other kinds of delicacies are mixed up in his imagination with his sexual appetite for Casina (II.8, III.6). The spice and fragrance of women, symbolized by such names as Casina (cinnamon) and Myrrhina (myrrh), find a counterimage in the stench of Lysidamus's body and his breath. He seeks to disguise himself with perfume, only to be repulsed first by his wife and then by his accomplice-slave Olympio (II.3, III.6). Sexual and gastronomic imagery become as one in Olympio's "messenger speech" about his wedding night with Casina, in which he tells of the "sword" he discovered in bed with his bride (V.2). The fantasy of the play is outrageous, but there is a logic to even the most frenzied scenes. Plautus's parody of tragedy is particularly well conceived. The mock wedding and nuptial couch of the male "Casina" are perversions of a real wedding, in response to Lysidamus's intended perversions

(IV.4). In her "mad scene" (III.5), Pardalisca describes a deranged Casina running about the house with a sword to slay her husband. Later, the long "messenger speech" of Olympio begins with his account of his search for that tragic heroine's sword and ends with his discovery of Chalinus's "sword" (V.2). But the sword that he grips is the phallus. The symbol of male dominance of the female brings about the complete overthrow of the male and becomes merely the phallus of comedy, an object of ridicule, not power.

It would seem that Lysidamus is very much the villain of the piece. Some critics have gone so far as to suggest that Cleostrata is one of the most morally attractive women in all of Plautus. She is busily defending her rights, as well as the rights of her son, and if romantic love were more central to the play this would be a reasonable interpretation of the character of Lysidamus and Cleostrata. But Plautus pushes the "barrier comedy" of thwarted young lovers completely out of his play. The obsessions of Lysidamus and the contests they inspire become the central theme. *Casina* thereby leads us to something more complicated than a restoration of Lysidamus and Cleostrata to their customary roles of husband, father, wife, and mother.

The opening lines of the two antagonists reveal much about their characters. Cleostrata is all sternness and imperatives:

*Lock* the doors to the pantry and *bring* the keys to me.

By contrast, Lysidamus is never in touch with the realities of a world for which he is responsible. He enters from the first lost in a lover's fantasy:

I believe that love  
surpasses everything,  
the gleaming stars.

The play can create powerful tensions in the sympathies of its audience. It is not insignificant that the husband and wife are more than once likened to Jupiter and Juno, that divine pair locked forever in resentful middle age (II.3 and II.6). On the one hand, we know that Lysidamus (Jupiter) is dead wrong and bound to be punished; on the other hand, the implacable Cleostrata (Juno) and her accomplices go so far in their humiliation of Lysidamus that an audience will find itself coming to a more sympathetic reaction to him than perhaps it expected. The effect in performance is that in

laughing at Lysidamus we come to feel a wry affection for him, even though we know that Cleostrata is upholding stern Roman (or Greek) virtues by her actions. In short, Cleostrata enjoys her anger and her stern morality, but Lysidamus has much more fun. The contrivances of Cleostrata, Pardalisca, and Chalinus are brilliant, and Olympio and Lysidamus are made complete fools; but those inventions and brilliant scenes are created in the first instance because of the obsessions of Lysidamus. His character creates the world of the drama, which, with a remarkable economy of invention and imagery, exists entirely in response to him.

In *Casina* we have not only a brilliant farce but the earliest version of a tale which Machiavelli much admired and adapted in *La Clizia* (1494). *Casina* also foreshadows the plot of Beaumarchais' *Le Mariage de Figaro* and thus, at still further remove, the collaboration of Mozart and Da Ponte in *Le Nozze di Figaro*.

# CASINA or THE LOT-DRAWERS

## CHARACTERS

### PROLOGUE

OLYMPIO, *slave and overseer of Lysidamus*

CHALINUS, *slave ally of Cleostrata*

CLEOSTRATA, *wife of Lysidamus*

PARDALISCA, *servant and maid of Cleostrata*

MYRRHINA, *wife of Alcesimus, friend of Cleostrata*

LYSIDAMUS, *old man, husband of Cleostrata*

ALCESIMUS, *old man, husband of Myrrhina*

CITRIO, *cook*

*Attendants to Olympio, Cleostrata, Pardalisca, and Citrio*

[*Scene: A street in Athens with the houses of Alcesimus and Lysidamus*]

### PROLOGUE

Kind greetings to all gathered in this place,  
beloved of Fides, sharing Fides' grace!

My truthful words deserve like courtesy:  
applause will show how fair you are to me.

[*Bows and continues*]

[Your drinker of a vintage wine is wise,  
as also he who ancient plays does prize—  
the plays of Classical antiquity,



well made for today's gross iniquity,  
with shows appearing daily thick and fast,  
like coins, each issue worth less than the last.  
And then there's the message many brought us:  
"We'd like to see another show by Plautus!"  
Perhaps one or two will know this play?  
No Romans here, eh? Then I'm bound to say,  
since only works of merit should survive,  
that none deserves more than this to be revived.  
So far did our flower of poets surpass the rest  
that from the first this one was judged his best.  
Poet may fallen be, not to rise again;  
yet what he wrote can teach, if not the man.  
So set your minds with ours in harmony  
and learn the purpose of our company.]<sup>1</sup>

No doubts or debts need any fear today,  
no chance you'll get in bill collector's way.  
Enjoy your games, from every debt be free:  
it's Siesta-fiesta officially!<sup>2</sup>  
Now, your tellers only check accounts, not funds;  
there'll be time enough tomorrow for their duns.  
So listen and forget all business claims;  
it's time to give our comedy some names.  
*Kleroumenoi* and later *Sortientes*<sup>3</sup>  
were titles fit for ancient audiences  
of Greeks and Romans—hardly your condition—  
say *The Lot-Drawers*, or *They Used Sortition*.  
To Athens Greek Diphilus first brought it,  
then Plautus wrote it out again, for plaudits.<sup>4</sup>

[Points to the house of *Lysidamus*]

Here dwells an old married man with spouse.  
Their only son lives with them in the house.  
He counts among his slaves a certain valet,  
a fellow sick today upon his pallet.  
That slave some sixteen years ago and more  
one morning saw a foundling at their door,  
a baby just left there by her mother.  
He asked her, could he take it to another?

No sooner was her quick consent made known  
than home he flew; would mistress like to own  
the child? She would. She raised her up so well  
the true maternity no one could tell.

This girl has reached an age where she can vex  
with charms the members of the other sex  
and throw her household into passion's throes.  
The father and his son are hard opposed  
to one another; legions both prepare,  
and both assume the other's unaware.  
The father first acquired his overseer's aid,  
a slave to pose as bridegroom to the maid.  
The son then got his carrier of arms  
to be his proxy, to enjoy her charms,  
to marry her and serve in master's stead;  
she then could transfer to her master's bed.  
But when his wife got wind of all this fun  
she promptly joined up forces with her son.  
Then, to change his son's erotic focus  
the father found him an exotic locus;  
without that filial impediment  
he now expects his love life's betterment.  
The son will still prevail: though absentee,  
he profits from a mother's loyalty.  
But don't expect the boy to come today.  
Plautus put a roadblock in his way.

I'm sure there are those here who shake their heads  
and ask, "What's this? You say that *slaves* can wed?  
A courtship and a marriage you propose?  
You're showing things no other nation knows!"  
Well, I assure you, in more southern climes  
such ceremonies happen all the time:  
among the Greeks and all peoples Punic,  
and Apulians, who wear our Roman tunic.<sup>5</sup>  
You know, it's *there* they take such pains to see  
more weddings for the slave than for the free!  
If any doubt this is the way things are,  
I'll wager honeyed wine, a brimming jar—  
provided judge be Carthaginians,

oh-so-trusty Greeks, or faithful Apulians.  
What's your pleasure? Does no one have a thirst?  
I thought so. Back to her I spoke of first,  
the maid whose good these plotting knaves so scorn.  
She'll be revealed a virgin, and free-born,  
a citizen of Athens, as you'll see,  
untouched by all our play's iniquity.  
Then, once our show is over—for a fee,  
of course—I absolutely guarantee  
that any man may have her at his side  
without the costly rituals due a bride.

[Turns to go; pauses]

In war, succeed; in business deals, excel!  
With these last words your Prologue says, "Farewell."

[Bows; exit]

### I.1

[The country slave Olympio stalks out of the house of Lysidamus, followed closely by the city slave Chalinus]

OLYMPIO

So you're not going to let me alone, are you?  
So I can't speak or think unless I have your say-so?  
Why the devil do you keep following me around?

CHALINUS

Because I've decided to follow you all the time,  
everywhere you go, just like your shadow.  
If you wanted to go to hell, I'd be right behind you!  
Now you, with your clever scheming tricks, just try to snatch  
Casina for your bride! I know you want to.

OLYMPIO

What's it to you?

CHALINUS

What's it to me, you shameless wretch?  
What's an underhanded overseer like you  
doing slinking into town?

OLYMPIO

I like to come to town.

CHALINUS

Why aren't you off in the country in your own province?  
Why don't you mind the office you're supposed  
to mind and keep yourself out of city affairs?  
You've come here to snatch *my* bride away.  
Go back to the country now! Back to your own province!

OLYMPIO

Chalinus, I haven't forgotten my duties.  
I left someone well in charge of things in the country.  
If I get what I came to town for,  
to marry the woman you're dying to have,  
that pretty little Casina, your fellow slave,  
I'll lead her off with me as my bride to the country  
and then I'll be secure enough *in the country*,

[Snarling]

in my own province.

CHALINUS: You're going to marry *her*? By Hercules, I'd rather hang  
myself than let you have her!

OLYMPIO: She's already my catch. Go ahead, stick your head in a  
noose.

CHALINUS: You summit of a dungheap! She's *your* catch?

OLYMPIO: You'll see soon enough.

CHALINUS: Damn you!

OLYMPIO: Just think of all the ways you'll suffer on my wedding  
day!

CHALINUS: What will you do to me?

OLYMPIO

What will I do to you?

First, you'll hold the wedding torch for my new bride.

Then you'll be a worthless good-for-nothing.<sup>6</sup>

Next, whenever you come to our farmhouse,

you'll get *one* jug, *one* path, *one* spring,  
*one* copper pail, and *eight* vats to fill!

AND if they aren't filled with water all the time,  
my whip will give you blisters that will be!

[Yanks Chalinus's head down by the hair]

I'll bend you so from carrying water



you'll be able to serve as a horse's crupper.  
After that—IN THE COUNTRY—you might eat a heap of hay,  
you might eat a pile of earth like an earthworm,  
but if you ask for anything else,  
Hunger herself won't be as hungry  
as I'll make you, IN THE COUNTRY!  
After that, when you're worn out,  
famished with hunger,  
I'll see you sleep the way you deserve to.

CHALINUS: And how will you do that?

OLYMPIO: You'll be squeezed up tight in the window where you can  
curse when I kiss her, when she says to me,

[In a squeaky voice]

"My soul-a-wollie, my Olympio,  
my life, my honey-bunny, my holiday,  
let me kiss your iddy-biddy eyes, my joy,  
my little sparrow, my cooing dove, my RABBIT!"  
While she says all this to me, you—villain—  
why, you'll scamper around like a mouse inside a wall.  
Now don't try to answer me. I'm going inside.  
Talking with you is such a bore!

[Stalks back into the house of Lysidamus]

CHALINUS: I'm coming after you, Olympio! I'll be damned if you do  
anything here without my knowing it.

[Follows after him]

## II.1

[Enter Cleostrata and Pardalisca from the house of Lysidamus]

CLEOSTRATA [sternly, to slaves inside the house]: Lock the doors to the  
pantry and bring the keys to me. I'm going next-door to the  
neighbors'. If my husband wants me for anything, you can  
reach me there.

PARDALISCA: The old man has ordered a meal to be fixed for him.

CLEOSTRATA: Hush! Keep quiet! Go inside! There won't be any  
cooking here today.

[Pardalisca goes back inside]

Since he's working against me  
and his own son to gratify *only* his desires,  
I'LL PAY HIM BACK WITH HUNGER,  
I'LL PAY HIM BACK WITH THIRST,  
WITH MALEDICTIONS  
WITH MALEFACTIONS  
I'LL FIX THAT LOVERBOY.

[Sweetly]

I'll torment him with language he won't like.

[Resumes her tirade]

I'll see to it that he lives the life he deserves:  
THAT HAYSTACK FROM HADES!  
THAT CHASER AFTER CHASTITY!  
THAT STABLE OF SCANDALS!

[Calms herself; rearranges her clothing, fusses with her hair]

Now I'll go next-door and complain about my bad luck.

[Door to Alcesimus's house opens]

But the door is opening! The very person I'm looking for is  
coming out. I don't think I left home soon enough.

## II.2

MYRRHINA [entering from house of Alcesimus, to servants in-  
side]: You women follow me. We're going next-door. You  
in there! Does anyone hear what I'm saying? I'll be next-door  
if my husband or anyone else asks for me.

[To audience, cheerfully]

When I'm at home by myself, I find it hard to work.

[To servants again]

Didn't I tell you to bring me my weaving?

CLEOSTRATA: Why, Myrrhina, hello.

MYRRHINA: Hello indeed. But tell me, why are you looking so sad?

CLEOSTRATA: It's the way women usually look who have a bad  
marriage. There's always plenty going wrong inside and  
outside the house. In fact, I was on my way to see you.

MYRRHINA: My goodness, I was just coming over to see you. But why are you so upset now? Whatever bothers you is just as much a bother to me.

CLEOSTRATA: And I *do* believe you. There's no neighbor I love more than you—and with good reason. I can't think of any other woman who has more of those good qualities I should like to have myself.

MYRRHINA: I'd like to know what's bothering you.

CLEOSTRATA: I'm treated like dirt in my own house.

MYRRHINA: Oh no! Why? *Please* tell me!

[*Aside*]

Especially since I don't understand what you're complaining about.

CLEOSTRATA: It's my husband! He treats me like dirt! I have lost the right to exercise my rights.

MYRRHINA [*puzzled*]: That's amazing, if what you say is true. Generally it's men who don't get their rights from their wives.

CLEOSTRATA: Nevertheless, against my will he's asked for my little serving girl—the one who belongs to me—the one I brought up at my own expense to give to his overseer. But he's in love with her himself!

MYRRHINA: Shh! Don't say another word!

[*Looks around apprehensively*]

CLEOSTRATA: But surely it's all right to talk now. We're alone.

MYRRHINA [*runs about and looks carefully up and down street; returns in a calmer mood*]: Why, so we are. Wherever did you get her? Surely it's not right for a decent woman to have private property behind her husband's back. Any woman who does has come by it either by stealing it from her husband or by selling herself on the street. It is my opinion that every single thing you own belongs to your husband.

CLEOSTRATA: And everything you've said was said against a friend!

MYRRHINA: Now, hush, you simpleton, and listen to me. Don't set yourself against him. Let him make love, let him do what he wants to, as long as you're well provided for at home.

CLEOSTRATA: Are you sure you're feeling well? What you're saying is clearly against your own best interests.

MYRRHINA: Silly! Always take care to avoid these words from your husband.

CLEOSTRATA: What words?

MYRRHINA [*in baritone*]: "Wife, I divorce you."

CLEOSTRATA: Shh! Be quiet!

MYRRHINA: What is it?

CLEOSTRATA [*hears the sound of Lysidamus's singing offstage*]: There!

MYRRHINA: Who is it? Who do you see?

CLEOSTRATA: It's my husband! Go inside! Please hurry!

MYRRHINA: I'll go, if that's what you want.

CLEOSTRATA: I'll have a free moment soon, and then I'll talk with you. Good-by for now.

MYRRHINA: Good-by.

[*Goes inside Alcesimus's house*]

### II.3

[*Lysidamus enters singing*]

LYSIDAMUS

*I believe that love  
surpasses everything,  
the gleaming stars.  
You can't name me anything with  
greater taste  
or greater charm.  
I simply have to marvel  
at those cooks with all their spices,  
they never seem to use  
this one,  
the best of all.  
I believe when love's the spice  
it's sure to please,  
no doubt at all.  
No dish can taste sweet or sour  
if love's not there.  
Whatever's rank and randy,  
it makes a piece of candy,  
it makes whatever's fell, swell,  
a grouch can be all charm and grace.*

[Descends from lyric mode; confides to the audience]

Nobody had to tell me this.  
I learned it all myself, at home.  
Now that I'm in love with Casina  
I surpass in charm Charm herself.  
I've gone around to all the perfume sellers.  
Wherever there's a nice perfume,  
I perfume, just to please her.  
And I *do* please her, as I see it.  
But my wife, because she's *alive*,  
is a torture to me.

[At last he sees Cleostrata]

Look at her standing there, scowling. I'll have to greet this  
bad piece of news in a mild-mannered way.<sup>7</sup>

[Pauses; fixes his face in a smile]

Oh my wife and my delight . . . what's up?

[Tries to embrace her]

CLEOSTRATA [*pushes him away*]: Go away! Take your hands off me!

LYSIDAMUS: Now, now, my Juno, it's not nice to be so mean to your  
Jupiter. Where are you going?

CLEOSTRATA: Leave me alone!

LYSIDAMUS: Stay here!

CLEOSTRATA: I'm not staying here!

LYSIDAMUS: Then I'll follow you!

CLEOSTRATA: Tell me, do you feel all right?

LYSIDAMUS: Certainly I feel all right. Oh, how I love you!

[Holds her in a locking embrace]

CLEOSTRATA: I don't want your love.

LYSIDAMUS: You won't get that wish.

CLEOSTRATA [*struggles to get free*]: You're killing me.

LYSIDAMUS [*aside*]: I wish you were telling the truth.

CLEOSTRATA [*overhears him; aside*]: I believe *that* well enough.

LYSIDAMUS: Now look this way, my sweet.

CLEOSTRATA: Yes, as sweet as you are to me.

[Sniffs]

Wherever did you get that perfume?

LYSIDAMUS [*aside, to audience*]: I'm done for! I'm caught for sure,  
poor me! Why did I wait so long to wipe it off my head? May  
Mercury the god of commerce ruin you, you perfume seller!  
You sold me the stuff!

CLEOSTRATA: You scoundrel! You gray-headed, unnatural gnat! I  
can hardly keep from telling you what you ought to know.  
Old as you are, to walk through the streets, reeking with  
perfume. You old fool!

LYSIDAMUS: Actually I was just helping a friend of mine while he  
was buying the perfume.

CLEOSTRATA [*aside*]: How quickly he made that one up!

[To *Lysidamus*]

Aren't you ashamed of yourself?

LYSIDAMUS: Say anything you want to about me.

CLEOSTRATA: What brothel have you been lying in now?

LYSIDAMUS: *Me*? In a brothel?

CLEOSTRATA: I know more than you think I do.

LYSIDAMUS: Well, then, what do you know?

CLEOSTRATA [*backs him down until he collapses into a heap on the  
floor*]: Of all old men, there is no old man more worthless  
than you are. Where have you come from, you rascal? Where  
have you been? What whorehouse were you visiting? Where  
were you drinking? Ye gods, you're drunk! Look how wrinkled  
your cloak is!

LYSIDAMUS: May the gods curse both of us with bad luck if I put so  
much as one drop of wine in my mouth today!

CLEOSTRATA [*unimpressed*]: Oh, by all means, do as you please.  
Drink, eat, squander our money.

LYSIDAMUS [*rising*]

Stop! That's enough for now, wife!

CONTROL YOURSELF!

YOU'RE GETTING A BIT SHRILL!

LEAVE YOURSELF SOMETHING TO NAG ME ABOUT TOMORROW!

[In a milder tone]

But tell me, now that you've calmed down, why don't you do  
what your husband asks you to do rather than fight him all  
the time?

CLEOSTRATA [*also in a milder tone*]: Why, whatever do you have in mind?

LYSIDAMUS: You ask? I have the maid Casina in mind. I have in mind to marry her to our overseer, an honest slave who can supply her well with wood, hot water, food, dresses, one who can rear the children she will bear . . .

[*Looks off into space, imagining the begetting of children; comes to and resumes*]

a better slave than the one you'd give her to, an armorbearer and a scoundrel, a man who doesn't have a single coin in his purse.

CLEOSTRATA: How strange that at your age you don't remember your duty.

LYSIDAMUS: Why do you say that?

CLEOSTRATA: Because if you acted properly and decently, you would let me look after the maids. That's my concern.

LYSIDAMUS: Why the devil do you want to give her to a shieldcarrier?

CLEOSTRATA: Because we clearly must support our only son.

LYSIDAMUS: He may be *our* only son, but he's no more an only son to me than I'm an only father to him.

[*Cleostrata starts to reply but thinks better of it*]

He ought to yield to my desires rather than to his.

CLEOSTRATA: You're asking for trouble, my good man. [*Aside*] He's sniffed me out, I see.

LYSIDAMUS: *Me?*

CLEOSTRATA: You. Why else would you be babbling? What are you so eager for?

LYSIDAMUS: That she be given to an honest slave rather than to a wicked slave.

CLEOSTRATA: What if I beg and plead with our overseer Olympio to let Chalinus have her for *my* sake?

LYSIDAMUS: But what if I beg that weaponcarrier to let Olympio have her? I think he would grant that request.

CLEOSTRATA [*appears resigned*]: Very well, then. Do you want me to call Chalinus outside for your instructions? You ask him, and I'll ask the overseer.

LYSIDAMUS: I'm game.

CLEOSTRATA: He's on his way. Now we'll find out which of us is more persuasive.

[*Goes into house*]

LYSIDAMUS: Now at last I can say it: may Hercules and all the gods ruin that woman! Ah, poor me, I'm tortured by love. She's opposing me on purpose. My wife has sniffed me out. That soldier-slave will have to be carefully watched in this affair. As for him! Would that all the gods and goddesses

[*Chalinus enters*]

ruin . . .

## II.4

CHALINUS [*steps on Lysidamus's line*]<sup>8</sup>: . . . YOU! Er, sir, your wife said that you called me.

LYSIDAMUS: Yes, I did indeed order you to be called.

CHALINUS [*in supremely bored tone*]: Tell me what you want done.

LYSIDAMUS: First of all, I want you to wipe that frown off your face! It's stupid for you to scowl at a person who packs a more powerful punch!

[*In a milder tone*]

I've thought for some time that you were a sensible and honest fellow.

CHALINUS: Yes, I know. If that's your opinion, then why not set me free?

LYSIDAMUS: I want to, indeed I do! But what I want done doesn't mean anything if you don't help by doing something too.

CHALINUS [*bored*]: I'd like to know what you would like done.

LYSIDAMUS: Listen, I'll tell you. I've promised to give Casina as a bride to our overseer.

CHALINUS: But your wife and son have promised her to me!

LYSIDAMUS: I know. But would you prefer to be a free bachelor now, or to live out your life with your children as a married slave? The choice is yours. Choose whichever terms you please.

CHALINUS: If I were a free man, I would live at my own expense. Now I live at yours. As far as Casina is concerned, I won't budge. She goes to no other man alive.

LYSIDAMUS [*loses patience*]: Go inside at once! Call my wife without delay. Bring out an urn with you, and water, and lots.

CHALINUS: All right.

LYSIDAMUS: By the gods, I'll parry this thrust of yours. If I can't get anything I want this way

[*Gestures threateningly with staff*]

at least I can draw a lot. That's how I'll fix you and your fellow citizens.

[*With a sneer*]

CHALINUS: You just wait. May I draw the winning lot. . .

LYSIDAMUS [*steps on Chalinus's line*]: . . . so you can die by agonizing torture!

CHALINUS: She'll marry me. Go ahead and hatch as many plots as you please.

LYSIDAMUS: Aren't you out of my sight yet?

CHALINUS [*nonchalantly*]: Can't stand the sight of me, eh? Still I'm well enough off.

[*Saunters into house*]

LYSIDAMUS [*to audience*]: Am I a poor wretch or am I not? Isn't everything going against me? Now I'm afraid my wife will ask Olympio not to marry Casina. If that happens, I'm ruined. A worthless old man. If she doesn't get her way, there's still a teensy bit of hope in the lot-drawing. But if *that* last chance trickles away,

[*In tragic style, à la Ajax*]

Why . . . then . . .  
my sword shall be made my bed  
and upon it shall I lie.

[*Collapses in a heap; enter Olympio from the house*]

But look! How nice! Here's Olympio.

[*Springs up*]

## II.5

OLYMPIO [*speaks loudly to Cleostrata within so that Lysidamus will hear*]: You may as well put me in a hot oven and bake me

until I'm brown as a biscuit, ma'am, as get what you want from me!

LYSIDAMUS [*aside*]: I'm saved! My hopes are saved, to judge from these words!

OLYMPIO [*continues to yell to Cleostrata inside*]: Why are you threatening me, ma'am, with your talk of freedom? Even if you and your son don't want to give it to me, even with both of you against me and totally opposed, I can become free for a very small fee.

LYSIDAMUS: What are you saying? Who are you fighting with now, Olympio?

OLYMPIO: The same woman you're always fighting with.

LYSIDAMUS: Oh, you mean my wife?

OLYMPIO: What do you mean, "my wife"?

[*Confidentially*]

You're like a hunter, you know. You spend your days and nights with a bitch.

LYSIDAMUS: What is she up to? What did she say to you?

OLYMPIO: She asks me—no, she *begs* me—not to marry Casina.

LYSIDAMUS: What did you say to her then?

OLYMPIO: I swore that I wouldn't give Casina away to Jupiter himself if he asked me.<sup>9</sup>

LYSIDAMUS: May the gods bless you for that!

OLYMPIO: Now she's all in a ferment, swollen up at me.

LYSIDAMUS: Gods, I wish she'd split right down the middle!

OLYMPIO: Gods, I believe she already did, if you're worth your salt as a husband!

[*Laughs at his own wit; Lysidamus winces*]

But—gods—your love *life* will be the *death* of me! Your wife hates me, your son hates me, the other slaves hate me . . .

LYSIDAMUS: What's any of that to you? As long as Jupiter here is on your side, these lesser gods won't amount to a fluff of flax.

OLYMPIO: Now that's a lot of nonsense! As if you didn't know how suddenly a mortal Jupiter can die! But when you're finally a *dead* Jupiter, when your kingdom has been turned over to the lesser gods, who will come to the aid of my back, my legs, or my head?

LYSIDAMUS: Your affairs are in better shape than you think *if* we succeed in seeing to it that I sleep with Casina.

OLYMPIO: I don't think that will ever happen. Your wife is dead set against giving her to me.

LYSIDAMUS: But this is what I'll do. I'll cast the lots into the urn and draw for you and Chalinus. I know where things stand now! We'll have to draw our swords and fight it out.

OLYMPIO: But what if the lot turns out the way you don't want it to?

LYSIDAMUS [*religiously*]: Don't be blasphemous! I trust in the gods. We'll put our faith in the lap of the gods.

[*Stares off into the heavens; Olympio surveys him up and down incredulously*]

OLYMPIO: I wouldn't buy what you've just said for a fiddle-dee-diddley-dee. All mortal men put their trust in the gods, but I still see many who put their trust in the gods deceived in the end.

LYSIDAMUS: Shh! Keep quiet.

OLYMPIO: What is it?

LYSIDAMUS: Look!

[*Points to house*]

Chalinus is coming out of our house with an urn and lots. Now we'll join battle with all our banners raised on high!

[*Lysidamus, Olympio, and servants march as if in formation; they take up position on one side of the stage*]

## II.6

[*Enter Chalinus, Cleostrata, and the other servants with urn, water, and lots; they march into formation on the opposite side of the stage*]

CLEOSTRATA [*in stiff, soldierly style*]: Tell me, Chalinus, what is it my husband wants me to do?

CHALINUS: I believe he wants to see you dead and burning outside the city gate.

CLEOSTRATA: I believe that *is* what he wants.

CHALINUS: I don't believe it at all. I know it for certain.

LYSIDAMUS [*overhearing the exchange*]: There's more cunning here than I thought. I seem to have a soothsayer in the house. Let's

lift our banners on high and go forth to oppose them. Follow me.

[*Marches up to Chalinus and Cleostrata*]

What are you doing here?

CHALINUS: Everything you asked for is here: wife, lots, water, and me.

OLYMPIO [*breaks in*]: With *you* here there's one thing more than I want.

CHALINUS: It well may seem that way to you. I'll sting you now, I'll pierce your little heart, you whipping post. You're already scared and sweaty.

LYSIDAMUS: Shut up, Chalinus.

CHALINUS: Take this fellow in hand!

OLYMPIO: No, you take *him* in hand! He's *used* to being taken in hand!

LYSIDAMUS [*getting things back under control*]: Bring the urn here. Give me the lots. Pay attention now.

[*Wheedling, to Cleostrata*]

I thought that you would see your way to granting me this favor, wife of mine, that Casina be married to me . . . even now I think so.

CLEOSTRATA [*startled*]: *She* be married to *you*?

LYSIDAMUS: Yes, to me—uh, no, I didn't mean to say that. I wanted to say "to me," but I said "to him."

[*He still doesn't have it right*]

I've got everything completely wrong.

CLEOSTRATA: Indeed you have, and you're not right yet.

LYSIDAMUS: Give her to him

[*Indicates Olympio*]

—No! Wait! To me! Ah, at last I'm back on the right road.

CLEOSTRATA: You run off it too often, my dear.

LYSIDAMUS [*dryly*]: That's what happens when you're trying so hard to get something. But now each of us, this fellow and me,

[*Indicates Olympio*]

recognizing your rights, asks you . . .

CLEOSTRATA: What?

LYSIDAMUS: Well, I'll tell you, my little honey: in reference to this matter of Casina, do this overseer of ours a favor.

CLEOSTRATA: By the gods, I won't do it, nor do I give it my approval.

LYSIDAMUS [*recoiling*]: Then I'll draw out the lots for both sides.

CLEOSTRATA: Who's stopping you?

LYSIDAMUS: I judge rightly that this is the best and fairest thing to do. Afterwards, if things turn out the way we want them to, why, we'll be happy. But if it should turn out some other way, we'll bear up with a calm heart.

[*To Olympio*]

Now take a lot. See what's written on it.

OLYMPIO [*after a long pause for scrutiny*]: One.

CHALINUS: That's not fair! He drew the lots before I did.

LYSIDAMUS [*to Chalinus*]: Now take this one, please.

CHALINUS: Give it to me.

OLYMPIO: Wait a minute! I just now thought of something. See if there is another lot down there in the water.

CHALINUS: You candidate for a whipping post! Do you think I'm like you?

LYSIDAMUS: There, there, that's nothing at all. Keep a level head.

OLYMPIO [*solemnly, in prayer*]: I pray that this turns out well for me, that fortune send . . .

CHALINUS: . . . A BIG DISASTER!<sup>10</sup>

OLYMPIO: I do believe that's how it will turn out for you! I know how loyal you are. But wait a minute. Are those lots made out of poplar or fir?

CHALINUS: Why does that worry you?

OLYMPIO: I'm afraid that they might be too light and float to the top.

LYSIDAMUS: Bravo!

[*Then remembers his proper role*]

. . . er, uh, be careful. Throw both lots down together here.

There you are. Wife, water!

OLYMPIO: Don't trust your *wife*!

LYSIDAMUS: Cheer up.

OLYMPIO: By the gods, I think she'll jinx the lots if she touches them!

LYSIDAMUS: Oh, be quiet.

OLYMPIO: I am quiet!

[*Loudly*]

I do call upon the gods . . .

CHALINUS: . . . THAT YOU WEAR AN IRON COLLAR AND BE TIED TO A WHIPPING POST.

OLYMPIO [*attempting to ignore Chalinus*]: . . . that it fall out to me by lot . . .

CHALINUS: . . . THAT YOU HANG UPSIDE-DOWN BY YOUR FEET!

OLYMPIO [*gives up*]: . . . AND THAT YOUR EYEBALLS BE BLOWN DOWN YOUR NOSE!

[*Chalinus retreats*]

What are you afraid of? The noose should be ready for you now.

LYSIDAMUS: Both of you, pay attention to me.

OLYMPIO: I'M QUIET!

LYSIDAMUS: Now, Cleostrata, so that you won't think unkindly of me or have any suspicions, I'll let you do it. Draw the lots.

OLYMPIO: You're ruining me!

CHALINUS: A bargain.

CLEOSTRATA [*to Lysidamus*]: Well done.

CHALINUS [*to Olympio*]: I pray to the gods that your lot fly out of the urn.

OLYMPIO: Oh, is that so? Because you're a runaway slave, you want everybody to be like you?

CHALINUS: I hope *your* lot is all mud. I hope it dissolves in the water just like the clay lots of Hercules' descendants.<sup>11</sup>

OLYMPIO: I hope *you* dissolve. You'll heat up soon enough when the whip is applied to you.

LYSIDAMUS: Please, Olympio, pay attention.

OLYMPIO: Sure, if this *scholar* here will let me.

LYSIDAMUS [*praying*]: May this prove to be good and fortunate for me.

OLYMPIO: Exactly! and good for me too!

CHALINUS [*aside, but loudly*]: No!

OLYMPIO: No, No! Yes!

CHALINUS: Oh no! Yes for me.  
CLEOSTRATA [*points to Chalinus*]: He will win. You'll be sorry.  
LYSIDAMUS: Smash that nuisance in the face! Come on, what's wrong?  
CLEOSTRATA: Don't you touch him!  
OLYMPPIO [*calmly, to Lysidamus*]: Should I hit him with my fist or give him a slap?  
LYSIDAMUS: Whichever you wish.  
OLYMPPIO [*strikes Chalinus*]: Take that!  
CLEOSTRATA: Why did you hit him?  
OLYMPPIO: Because my Jupiter ordered me to.  
CLEOSTRATA [*to Chalinus*]: Punch him back in the face!  
[*Chalinus strikes Olympio*]  
OLYMPPIO: I'm dead and buried with blows, Jupiter!  
[*To Lysidamus*]  
LYSIDAMUS [*to Chalinus*]: What did you hit him for?  
CHALINUS: Because my Juno here ordered me to.  
LYSIDAMUS [*to Olympio*]: We'll have to put up with this, I'm afraid. My wife seems to have the power.  
CLEOSTRATA: My man has just as much right to speak as yours does.  
OLYMPPIO: Then why did he spoil my prayer with evil omens?  
LYSIDAMUS: I advise you to beware of trouble, Chalinus.  
CHALINUS [*ruefully*]: Sound advice after all those fists in my face.  
LYSIDAMUS: Come now, wife, draw the lots. You two pay attention.  
[*Aside*]  
I don't know why I'm so afraid! I'm done for! My heart is all aflutter. It's about to leap out. My chest heaves from the labor.  
CLEOSTRATA: I've drawn the lot.  
LYSIDAMUS: Let's see it!  
CHALINUS: Am I done for now?  
OLYMPPIO: Well, show it. It's in my favor!  
CHALINUS: Why don't you drop dead?  
[*Grand pause; she throws the lot back in*]  
CLEOSTRATA: You *lost*, Chalinus.

LYSIDAMUS: The gods have smiled on us, Olympio. I'm thrilled!  
OLYMPPIO: Thanks to my Roman piety and my noble ancestors!  
LYSIDAMUS: Now go inside, wife. Prepare the marriage ceremony.  
CLEOSTRATA: I'll do as you command.  
LYSIDAMUS: You realize it's a long way to that farmhouse where he's to take the bride?

[*Points to Olympio*]

CLEOSTRATA: I realize that.  
LYSIDAMUS: Then go inside, and even if you don't want to, tend to this promptly.  
CLEOSTRATA: Very well.

[*Goes inside*]

LYSIDAMUS [*to Olympio*]: Let's go inside too, and see that they hurry.  
OLYMPPIO: Am I stopping you?

[*They go inside*]

LYSIDAMUS [*as he leaves*]: I certainly don't want to say anything else with this fellow around.

[*Chalinus is left alone on the stage, dejected*]

## II.7

CHALINUS [*solo*]: If I hanged myself now, I'd be wasting the effort. Besides the effort, I'd be going to the expense of a rope and giving my enemies a nice entertainment in the bargain. Why bother anyway? I'm already done for as it is. The lots beat me. Casina will marry the overseer. The worst thing is not that she goes to him but that the old man wanted her so badly to go to the overseer instead of to me. How the wretch trembled! How he scurried about! How he hopped up and down after that overseer stole the show!

[*Hears Lysidamus and Olympio approaching*]

Uh-oh. I'll go over here. I hear the doors opening. My well-wishers and friends are coming outside. From this ambush I'll ambush the both of them.

[*Draws to one side of the stage*]



II.8

[Enter Olympio, dressed in bridegroom's white, with Lysidamus]

OLYMPIO: Just let him come to the country! I'll send him back to you in town tied to a yoke like a charcoal seller.

LYSIDAMUS: That's just the thing to do.

OLYMPIO: I'll see that it's done and taken care of.

LYSIDAMUS: If Chalinus were at home, I'd send him with you to get food so I could pile more misery on top of the pain our enemy already suffers.

CHALINUS [goes flat against wall]: I'll draw back against this wall. I'll make like a crab. I've got to catch their conversation on the sly. One of them puts me on the rack, the other twists the screw. Just look at that rascal all dressed in bridegroom's white! That candidate for a whipping! I'll put off dying for now. I aim to send this fellow to Hades ahead of me.

[Freezes into position at one end of the stage; Olympio and Lysidamus are at the other]

OLYMPIO: How pleasant and obedient I've been to you! I've helped you get the thing you most desired. The woman you love will be with you today, and your wife won't know a thing about it.

LYSIDAMUS: Be quiet!

[Looks around]

May the gods love me, I just can't keep my lips off you. I can scarcely keep from kissing you to death. Oh darling!<sup>12</sup>

[Tries to embrace Olympio]

CHALINUS [aside]: What does he mean "kiss to death"? What's going on? What is this "Oh darling"?

[Lysidamus clutches Olympio]

Ye gods! I think this fellow wants to stretch his overseer's sphincter!

OLYMPIO [cringing]: Do you really love me now?

LYSIDAMUS: More than I love myself! Will you let me hug you?

CHALINUS [aside]: What? "Hug you"?

OLYMPIO [shuts eyes; grits teeth]: All right.

LYSIDAMUS [embraces him]: Touching you is as sweet as honey on my tongue!

[Lysidamus clasps Olympio from behind; bumps and grinds]

OLYMPIO: Not on my back, loverboy!

[Throws Lysidamus aside]

CHALINUS [delighted, aside]: So that's it! That's why he made him his overseer! Once when I escorted him home from a party, he wanted to do the same thing to me—make me his doorman and use my door.

[Gestures towards his rear]

OLYMPIO [trying to get control of situation]: What an obliging fellow I've been for you today! What a pleasure!

LYSIDAMUS: Indeed you have. As reward, as long as I live I'll always rate your interests above my own.

CHALINUS [aside]: If you ask me, these two will lock toes before the day is over. This old man seems to prefer grown-up boys.

LYSIDAMUS [suddenly shifts]: Oh, how I'll kiss Casina to death today! Oh the great times I'm going to have without my wife's knowing!

CHALINUS [aside]: Izzatso? Now we're back on the straight and narrow. The same fellow is panting with love for Casina. I'm dealing with men after all!

LYSIDAMUS: Oh, how I long to embrace her and make love!

OLYMPIO [greatly relieved]: But you need to let her get married first.

[Lysidamus struggles towards his house]

Where the devil are you off to now?

LYSIDAMUS [scarcely able to speak, rasping]: I'M IN LOVE.

OLYMPIO: I just don't see how it can happen today.

LYSIDAMUS: It can if you really believe you'll be a free man tomorrow.

CHALINUS [aside]: Now, here's something my ears will have to pay more attention to. I'll cleverly trap two boars in one bush.

LYSIDAMUS: There's a place all ready and waiting at my friend and neighbor's house here.

[Gestures towards Alcesimus's house]

I've entrusted him with the whole story of my love. He said he'd give me a room for it.

OLYMPIO: What about his wife? Where will she be?

LYSIDAMUS: I've fixed that quite nicely. My wife will call her over here for the wedding so she can keep her company and spend the night. I ordered this to be done, and my wife said she would do it. Myrrhina will sleep here. I'll see to it that her husband stays out of the house. You'll bring the bride to the country, all right, but the country will be here.

[Obscene gestures towards his crotch]

at least as long as it takes for me to consummate my marriage with Casina. Then tomorrow morning you'll take her to the country. Isn't that clever?

OLYMPPIO: Well planned.

CHALINUS [aside]: Go on, then, hatch your plots. You'll be sorry you wore out your wits on all this.

LYSIDAMUS: Now, do you know what you're supposed to do?

[Olympio nods and runs off; realizing that he does not know, then, he returns]

OLYMPPIO: Tell me.

LYSIDAMUS: Take this purse. Go off and buy food. Hurry, now! But I want it nice. The softest little tidbits, since she herself is the softest little titbit.

OLYMPPIO: All right.

LYSIDAMUS [licking his chops]: Buy fish: cuttlefish, squid, limpets, well-bred fish . . .

CHALINUS [interrupting, aside]: No, breaded fish if you're smart.

LYSIDAMUS: . . .and sole.

CHALINUS [again interrupting, aside]: Why buy only the sole when you could buy the whole sandal? With that we could tenderize your whole face, you dirty old man.

OLYMPPIO: Do you want any tongue fish?

[Wiggles tongue obscenely]

LYSIDAMUS: What do I need with that when I've got a wife at home already? She's my tongue fish. She never shuts up.

OLYMPPIO: When I get there, I can ask the fishmonger what I should buy.

LYSIDAMUS: That's a good idea. Now, be off! Money's no object. Buy plenty of food. Now I have to see my neighbor to make sure he'll do what I've asked him to.

OLYMPPIO: May I go now?

LYSIDAMUS: Yes.

[Exit Olympio; Lysidamus enters the house of Alcesimus]

CHALINUS [solo]: If I were freed three times over, it wouldn't keep me from plotting some horrible evil for those two today! I'm going to reveal everything to my mistress—the whole plot. I have my enemies in a trap. If she will do her duty, the whole contest will be ours. I'll pass those fellows at a pretty pace. The day is running our way: we the conquered have conquered. Now, inside to season what one cook has already seasoned one way, another way.

[Pauses]

What was once prepared will now be unprepared,  
and what was not prepared before will now be prepared.

[Scampers into the house of Lysidamus]

### III.1

[Enter Lysidamus with Alcesimus from Alcesimus's house]

LYSIDAMUS: Now, Alcesimus, we'll see whether you're a true friend or enemy.

Now the end in sight is sighted,  
now the decision is decided.

As for finding fault with why I'm in love,  
stash that away in your purse and save it.  
"Gray hair," you say? "Different ages"? Stash that away.  
"A man with a wife"? Stash that away too.

ALCESIMUS [cackling]: I've never seen a man more wretched from love than you.

LYSIDAMUS: See that your house is empty.

ALCESIMUS: Even the household slaves are gone. I ordered the maids to go over to your place.

LYSIDAMUS: Oh, how knowingly knowledgeable you are! But see that they do what any birds do who have to make a long migration: let them go cawing with their crops filled with goodies for a far-flung flight to the frontier.<sup>15</sup>

ALCESIMUS: I'll keep that in mind.

LYSIDAMUS: That's settled! You're really a clever fellow. You don't need a public decree to show your pedigree. Take care of everything here. I'm going off to the forum now. Then right back home.

ALCESIMUS: Have a nice trip.

LYSIDAMUS [*comes back*]: By the way, see to it that your house has its tongue in its cheek.

ALCESIMUS: What do you mean?

LYSIDAMUS: When I return, I won't have time for anything that needs depressing.

[*Cackles*]

ALCESIMUS: Whoeee! You're going to be cut down to size. You make too many puns.

LYSIDAMUS: What good would it be for me to be in love if I weren't smart and quick of wit?

[*Leaps up and down in delight*]

But see to it, now, that I don't have to go looking for you.

ALCESIMUS: I'll be here at home.

[*Lysidamus departs; Alcesimus goes into his house*]

### III.2

[*Cleostrata enters*]

CLEOSTRATA: So...SO! By the gods, *this* is what my lord and master begged for so eagerly! To hurry out to call my neighbor *there* over to my house here.

[*Points*]

That way their house could be empty and he could take Casina there. That's just why I'm *not* going to call her. What? Give those old wretches a chance at a free playroom? Those randy, rutting old rams!

[*Enter Alcesimus*]

But look! Here comes that pillar of the senate, the people's protector, my neighbor, the fellow who offered a free house to my husband. He's not worth a pinch of salt.

ALCESIMUS: I wonder why my wife hasn't been invited next-door

yet. She's been dressed up and sitting at home for some time, just waiting to be invited. But look! Here's her invitation.

Greetings, Cleostrata.

CLEOSTRATA: And greetings to you, Alcesimus. Where is your wife?

ALCESIMUS: She's waiting to see whether or not you'll invite her. Your husband asked me to send her to you to help you out. You want me to call her?

CLEOSTRATA: No, don't bother her if she's busy.

ALCESIMUS: Oh, she's free now...

CLEOSTRATA: Oh, I don't really care. I don't want to be a bother to her. I'll meet her later.

ALCESIMUS: Haven't you been getting ready for the marriage?

CLEOSTRATA: Yes, so much decoration and preparation.

ALCESIMUS: Don't you need a helping hand or two?

CLEOSTRATA: There's enough help at home. When it's time for the wedding I'll see her.

[*In sweetest possible tones*]

Now, farewell, and give my *very* best greetings to your wife.

[*Goes towards her house, but pauses to watch Alcesimus*]

ALCESIMUS [*aside, in desperation*]: Now what will I do? I've made a complete mess of everything! And all because of the business that dirty, toothless old goat got me into. I promised my wife's help, practically got her to wash dishes, for that disgrace of a man, who tells me his wife is going to invite her

[*Gestures towards his house*]

over there. And she

[*Points to Lysidamus's house*]

claims that she doesn't have a care in the world. I'd be surprised if this doesn't mean my neighbor's wife has sniffed him out. No, when I reckon up the accounts, if anything like that had happened, there would already be a claim against me. I'll go inside, then, and put my own ship into dry dock.

[*Goes into his house*]

CLEOSTRATA [*comes forward*]: Now there's a fellow who's been finely

fooled. How these wretches do rush around! Now that I've finished that one off, I wish that worthless, decrepit husband of mine would come out and take his turn at being made a fool. What I intend to do is start some kind of quarrel between those two.

[Enter *Lysidamus*]

Well, now look! Here he comes. With a look that solemn, you'd think he was an honest man.

### III.3

[Enter *Lysidamus* from forum, not seeing *Cleostrata*]

LYSIDAMUS: What a stupid thing to do, and *my* idea too! For any man in love to run off to the forum on business on the very day that he has something available to make love to! That's just what I did, fool that I am. I've wasted the day while I stood by as an advocate for a relative of mine. I'm delighted that he lost his case so that he didn't need my services for a trial today—too bad if he had anyway. Anyone who calls a counselor to counsel should first find out whether the counselor has his heart in it, body and soul—otherwise let him go home, solo.

[Sees *Cleostrata*]

But there's my wife in front of our house! Heaven help me! I'm afraid she's not deaf and has heard everything.

CLEOSTRATA [*aside*]: By the gods, I heard what you said, all right, you with your evil plotting.

LYSIDAMUS: I'll go nearer. How are you, my delight?

CLEOSTRATA [*sweetly*]: Why, dear, I've been waiting for you.

LYSIDAMUS: Is everything all arranged now? Are you going to bring over our neighbor's wife to help you?

CLEOSTRATA: I invited her, as you commanded me. But that comrade of yours, your excellent friend, has gotten a little annoyed with his wife. He says he won't send her if I invite her.

LYSIDAMUS: That's your worst fault: you're not very seductive, you know.

CLEOSTRATA: It's not a wife's duty, my dear husband, to entice other women's husbands. That's a job for whores. *You* go and invite her!

[*Lysidamus* is startled]

I want to look after what needs to be done inside our house, my darling husband.

LYSIDAMUS: Well, hurry up, then.

CLEOSTRATA: As you wish.

[*Aside, acidly*]

Now, by god, I'll throw a little fear into his heart. I'll have one miserable loverboy on my hands before this day's over!

[Goes inside]

### III.4

[Enter *Alcesimus* from his house]

ALCESIMUS [*to himself*]: I've come back to see whether our lover has come home yet from the forum. You know, the fellow who made a fool of me and my wife—the madman? But there he is in front of his house. By Hercules, I'll go right up to you.

LYSIDAMUS: And, by Hercules, I'm doing the same to you. What do you have to say for yourself, you worthless bum? What did I order you to do? What did I *plead* with you to do?

ALCESIMUS: What do you mean?

LYSIDAMUS: What a nice job you did emptying out your house for me! How carefully you brought your wife over to our house! Thanks to you, I'm ruined, and so are my chances.

ALCESIMUS: What do you mean? Why don't you go hang yourself? You just told me that your wife would invite my wife to come over.

LYSIDAMUS: But she said she had invited her, and she said *you* said you weren't going to send her.

ALCESIMUS: Well now,<sup>14</sup> she told me herself she didn't mind doing what was assigned her—that's her job.

LYSIDAMUS

Well, she ordered me to call her now.

ALCESIMUS

Well, as if I cared now.

LYSIDAMUS

Well now, you're ruining me.

ALCESIMUS

Well now, that's just fine.

Well now, I want you to . . . WELL NOW!  
do something pleasant, and do it willingly.  
You won't have any more "well nows"  
today than I will.

Well now! for the very last time,  
may the gods destroy you!

LYSIDAMUS

Well, NOW WHAT?

Will you send your wife over to my wife?

ALCESIMUS

You can marry her if you want to!  
You can go to hell and back  
a hundred times if you want to!  
With her, your wife, your girl friend!

Go on, now, and tend to your other business. I'll order my  
wife to cross over through our garden to visit your wife.

LYSIDAMUS: Now you're the kind of friend a man should really  
have.

[*Alcesimus goes into his house*]

What brought this love to my heart? Was it a Roman omen?  
What was it I did to offend Venus? Why does she make so  
many delays for me and my love?

[*Uproar, tragic, inside Lysidamus's house*]

What's that? Oh, oh. What is that uproar inside our house?

### III.5

[*Pardalisca comes onstage accompanied by groaning servants acting as a  
chorus: she declaims in the manner of tragic heroine*]<sup>15</sup>

PARDALISCA

*Undone I am! Alas I am undone!  
All of me in ruins! All, I say!  
Heart through fear stops beating,  
poor wretched limbs all atremble.  
Whence the aid of refuge, rescue, restoration?  
I know no source at hand.  
Such strange things have I seen within  
accomplished all in wondrous wise!*

*Oh new and unheard-of audacity!  
Be thou ware, Cleostrata! Oh take ye care!  
Take thyself from out her sight, I pray,  
lest she, rampant in her rage,  
bring some evil in thy way.*

*OH, SNATCH FROM HER THE SWORD  
THAT IS SO SORELY VEXED IN WITS!*

LYSIDAMUS [*stunned*]: Why, what can be the reason for her leaping  
out here so scared and out of breath? Pardalisca!

PARDALISCA

*I am undone . . .*

[*In a daze, looks about as if waking from nightmare*]

*But whence do mine ears acquire  
the tone of another's voice?*

LYSIDAMUS: Look over this way.

PARDALISCA

*Oh, master mine . . .*

LYSIDAMUS: What's the matter? Why are you so frightened?

PARDALISCA

*I am undone!*

LYSIDAMUS

What do you mean, *you are undone*?

PARDALISCA [*as if conjugating a verb*]

*I am undone . . . YOU are undone . . .*

LYSIDAMUS

Oh, no! *I too am undone!*

[*Catches the tragic strain*]

*Well, alas how so?*

PARDALISCA

*Woe be unto you!*

LYSIDAMUS: On the contrary, I would prefer woe apply to you.

PARDALISCA

*Hold me, please, lest I fall!*

LYSIDAMUS: Whatever is the matter? Tell me quickly!

PARDALISCA

*Hold up my bosom! Fan me, please, with your cloak!*

LYSIDAMUS [*aside*]: I'm afraid to find out what all this business may  
be about . . . unless she's pickled herself with the blossoms of  
Bacchus.

PARDALISCA: Please hold my ears.

[*Suggestively puckers her lips*]

LYSIDAMUS [*drops her to the floor*]: You can go from me straight to the cross! May the gods ruin your bosom, your ears, your head, and you! If I don't find out at once what this is all about, I'll scatter your brains all over the floor with this!

[*Threatens with his cane*]

You viper! You've done nothing but make a fool of me so far!

PARDALISCA [*persists in tragic style*]

*Oh, master mine . . .*

LYSIDAMUS [*mimics her angrily*]

What is it, *oh maidservant mine*?

PARDALISCA: You're too mean to me.

LYSIDAMUS: You're exactly right there. But tell me what this is all about, and do it in a few words. What is all that noise inside?

PARDALISCA: You shall know. Listen.

[*In matter-of-fact style*]

Your maid began to raise trouble inside our house. Yes, a great deal of trouble, and this is what she did

[*As an afterthought*]

—not at all befitting one of decent Greek upbringing.

LYSIDAMUS: Well, what did she do?

PARDALISCA [*slips back into tragic style; servants moan*]

FEAR FETTERS THE TALE OF MY TONGUE!

[*Clutches her throat*]

LYSIDAMUS: Can I *ever* learn from you what is going on?

PARDALISCA: I shall tell you.

[*Again in normal voice*]

Your servant, whom you want to give as a wife to your overseer.

[*Lapses back into tragic style*]

*She . . . within . . .*

LYSIDAMUS: *What within? What is it?*

PARDALISCA

*She follows the evil example of wicked women.*

*She threatens her husband, his life . . .*

[*Trails off, as if the prophetic vision is fading*]

LYSIDAMUS: Well, what does she threaten?

PARDALISCA

*Alas . . .*

LYSIDAMUS: What is it?

PARDALISCA

*She says she wants to deprive him of his life!*

*A sword . . .*

[*Again the "vision" fades*]

LYSIDAMUS: What?

PARDALISCA [*squints into the distance*]

*A sword . . .*

LYSIDAMUS: What about a sword?

PARDALISCA [*in a flat voice, disgusted at his obtuseness*]: She has one.

LYSIDAMUS: Heaven help me! Why does she have it?

PARDALISCA

*She's running through every room of the house.*

*She will let no one come near her.*

*That's why everyone is hiding under the chests,*

*under the beds. SPEECHLESS WITH TERROR THEY TREMBLE.*

[*The chorus of servants moans again*]

LYSIDAMUS: I'm dead and done for. What evil thing was it that came upon her so suddenly?

PARDALISCA [*with eyes open wide*]

*She's . . . gone . . . MAD . . .*

LYSIDAMUS: I believe I'm the unluckiest man who ever lived.

PARDALISCA

*Oh, if you only knew what words she said today!*

LYSIDAMUS: I would like to know them—today. What did she say?

PARDALISCA: Listen.

[*Back into tragic style*]

*By all the gods and goddesses she swore  
she'd slay him who this night did with her lie.*<sup>16</sup>

LYSIDAMUS: She'd kill me?<sup>17</sup>

PARDALISCA [*drops into normal voice, puzzled*]: Why, goodness me!  
Does this have anything to do with you?

LYSIDAMUS: Oops!

PARDALISCA: What is your concern with her?

LYSIDAMUS: I made a mistake. I wanted to say something else. My  
overseer . . .

PARDALISCA [*aside to audience*]: He knows full well he's off the road  
and on a detour!

LYSIDAMUS: She didn't really threaten me?

PARDALISCA [*in normal voice*]: She's more angry at you than at  
anyone else.

LYSIDAMUS: Why?

PARDALISCA [*briskly*]: Because you're marrying her to Olympio, she  
won't allow your life or her own life or that of her husband to  
be prolonged another day. I've been sent here to tell you.

[*Again, Cassandra-like*]

. . . *be on your guard!*

LYSIDAMUS: Oh gods, I'm ruined! Poor me.

PARDALISCA [*aside, to audience*]: You deserve to be.

LYSIDAMUS: There is not now, nor has there ever been, an old man  
in love more wretched than me.

PARDALISCA [*aside, to audience*]: I'm stringing him along so cleverly!  
Everything I've told him was nothing but a lie. My mistress  
and her friend from next-door invented this trick. I was sent  
to play it on him.

[*Resumes tragic pose*]

LYSIDAMUS: Now, see here, Pardalisca.

PARDALISCA: Yes, what is it?

LYSIDAMUS: There's something . . .

PARDALISCA: What?

LYSIDAMUS: There's something I want to ask you about.

PARDALISCA: You're delaying me.

LYSIDAMUS: And you're slaying me. But tell me, does Casina have  
the sword even now?

PARDALISCA: She does.

[*Brightly*]

In fact, she has *two*.

LYSIDAMUS: What! Two?

PARDALISCA: She says she'll kill you with one of them today, and  
then kill your overseer with the other.

LYSIDAMUS: I'm the deadest of all men alive. I think I'd better put  
on a breastplate. But what of my wife? Didn't she go up and  
take the swords away?

PARDALISCA: No one dares come near her.

LYSIDAMUS: Let her beg for them, then.

PARDALISCA: She is begging. But Casina refuses to cooperate in any  
way unless she knows that she won't be given to the overseer.

LYSIDAMUS: Well, she'll get married today even if she doesn't want  
to, for the simple reason that she doesn't want to. Why don't I  
finish what I started to do? She could marry *me*—I mean I  
wanted to say, our overseer.

PARDALISCA: You make that little error often enough, don't you?

LYSIDAMUS [*sarcastically*]: "FEAR FETTERS THE TALE OF MY TONGUE."  
But please get my wife to plead with her to put aside the  
sword and let me come back into the house.

PARDALISCA: I'll take the message.

LYSIDAMUS: Be sure you ask her.

PARDALISCA: I'll be sure to ask her.

LYSIDAMUS: And be sure to ask her winningly, as is your custom.  
But listen now:

[*In rapid, cheerful style, as Pardalisca scampers into house*]

*Get this done and on your foot  
a freedman's sandal shall be put,  
a ring of gold upon your hand  
and lots of gold at your command.*

PARDALISCA

*I'll see to it.*

LYSIDAMUS

*See that you do.*

*Get what I want.*

PARDALISCA

*I'll tell her true  
if I am not  
detained by you!*

LYSIDAMUS

*Be off, be off!*

*See that you do. Shoo!*

[*Exit Pardalisca*]

LYSIDAMUS [*sees Olympio returning*]: But look! My helper is returning with the goods. He's leading a parade.

### III.6

[*Enter Olympio and Citrio with a train of cooks, attendants, and food*]

OLYMPIO: See to it that you keep your thorns in line, you thief.

CITRIO: Why are these fellows thorns?

OLYMPIO: Whatever they touch they snare at once. If you go to take it back, they break right off. The same thing happens when they go anywhere. They do their masters double damage.

CITRIO: Oh, go on . . .

OLYMPIO: Wait a minute!

[*Sees Lysidamus*]

Now I'll dress myself up in grand, aristocratic style and go greet my master.

LYSIDAMUS: Good day, my fine fellow.

OLYMPIO: I must admit I am.

LYSIDAMUS: How are things going?

OLYMPIO: You're in love; I'm hungry and thirsty.

LYSIDAMUS: You've made quite an elegant entrance.

OLYMPIO: Ah, I don't need you today . . . make love on your own.

LYSIDAMUS [*draws near him*]: Wait a minute, you with all your airs.

OLYMPIO: Pee-yew! Your conversation stinks.

LYSIDAMUS: What's the matter?

OLYMPIO: This is the matter.

[*Points to provisions*]

LYSIDAMUS: Won't you come closer?

OLYMPIO [*like a street tough*]: Come on, man. Don't gimme a hard time!<sup>18</sup>

LYSIDAMUS [*advances again*]: You're gonna get it, see, if you don't come here.

OLYMPIO: OH ZEUS! OZONE! Would you please keep away from me? Do you want me to throw up right now?

[*Moves away*]

LYSIDAMUS: Wait . . .

OLYMPIO: What is it?

[*With mock wonder to the bystanders*]

Who is this man?

[*Points to Lysidamus*]

LYSIDAMUS: Why, I'm your master!

OLYMPIO: Whose master?

LYSIDAMUS: The one whose slave you are.

OLYMPIO: *Me* a slave?

LYSIDAMUS: Yes, *my* slave.

OLYMPIO: I'm not free? Think again, think again!

LYSIDAMUS [*tries to embrace him*]: Wait, stand still!

OLYMPIO: Stop that!

LYSIDAMUS [*suddenly remembers what he's really after*]: I am your slave.

OLYMPIO: That's much better.

LYSIDAMUS: I beg you, Olympio-lady, my father, my paterfamilias, my patron . . .

OLYMPIO: Ah . . . you *do* have taste!

LYSIDAMUS [*falls to his knees*]: I really am yours.

OLYMPIO: What do I need with such a worthless slave?

LYSIDAMUS: What now?

[*Swoons*]

How soon will you feed my desire?

OLYMPIO: I wish the dinner were finished cooking now.

LYSIDAMUS: Have these fellows go off and tend to it, then.

OLYMPIO [*to cooks*]: Quick, go inside and get the dinner ready. I'll go inside now myself. See to it that my meal is soured in sauce.

Oh, but I want to dine elegantly and neatly. None of that Roman-style fodder for me!<sup>19</sup>

[*They go inside; to Lysidamus*]

Are you still here? Why don't you go in?

LYSIDAMUS: You go. I'm staying here.

OLYMPIO: Is there anything else that might be keeping you back?

LYSIDAMUS: She . . .



[Points to Pardalisca's exit door]

says that Casina is inside the house with a sword. She says she's going to kill you and me.

OLYMPIO: Oh, sure. . . that's fine for her. They're fiddling over trifles. I know what those demons are like, all right. Why not go inside with me?

LYSIDAMUS: By the gods, I'm afraid something's wrong. You go inside, though. Find out what's going on.

OLYMPIO: My life is just as dear to me as yours is to you. Come along, now.

LYSIDAMUS [*reluctantly*]: If you say so. Here's company for you.

[*They enter the house*]

#### IV.1

[*Enter Pardalisca, laughing*]

PARDALISCA: By the gods, I don't believe they have as festive games at Nemea or Olympia as the gamey games we're playing inside on our household's old man and our overseer Olympio. Everybody's running around inside the house; the old man's shouting in the kitchen, urging on the cooks: "Why don't you get on with it? Why don't you produce the food if you're going to produce it? Hurry up! Dinner should have been cooked by now!" And the overseer is walking around with a wreath on his brow, all in white, scrubbed and dressed fit to kill. Those two women are dressing Chalinus, to give him in marriage to our overseer in place of Casina. But they've covered all this up very cleverly, as if they didn't know anything about what is going to happen. The cooks have seen to it that the old man won't eat. It's too clever for words! They're turning over the pots and throwing water on the fire. They're doing all of this at the request of the women. What they want to do is drive the old man out of the house without his dinner; once they're alone they can stuff their bellies. I know those greedy women. They can devour whole shiploads of food. But the door is opening.

#### IV.2

[*Enter Lysidamus from his house*]

LYSIDAMUS [*to Cleostrata, within*]: If you take my advice, wife, you women will go ahead and dine as soon as dinner is ready. I'll have my dinner in the country. I want to follow the new bridegroom and his new bride out there. I know only too well what wicked men can do. I don't want anyone running off with her. Have a good time. Now hurry and send the two of them out at once. We must get there while it's still light. I'll be back tomorrow. Tomorrow, wife, I'll have myself a banquet.

PARDALISCA [*aside*]: Just what I said would happen is happening. The women are kicking the old man outside without his supper.

LYSIDAMUS [*to Pardalisca*]: What are you doing here?

PARDALISCA: I'm going where my mistress sent me.

LYSIDAMUS: Oh, is that so?

PARDALISCA: I'm late.

LYSIDAMUS: What are you looking for here?

PARDALISCA: I'm not looking for anything.

LYSIDAMUS: Off with you! Here you are lingering around outside while everybody else is rushing around inside.

PARDALISCA: I'm off.

[*Goes to house*]

LYSIDAMUS: Then be off, you horrible whore!

[*She goes into the house*]

Has she gone at last? Now I can say what I please. A man in love needs no food, not even if he's hungry. But look who's coming now with nuptial wreath and bridal torch! My ally, my equal, my fellow hubby bridegroom, my overseer!

#### IV.3

[*Enter Olympio with flute player*]

OLYMPIO: This way, flute player. When they bring this new bride out of doors, fill the entire street with the sweet sound of my wedding song.

[*Sings*]

*Oh, wedding hymn,  
dear wedding hymn. . .*

LYSIDAMUS: What now, my savior?

OLYMPIO: I'm starving, by the gods, and I don't think I'm saving myself at all.

LYSIDAMUS: But I'm in love!

OLYMPIO: But I don't care, damn it. Love is food enough for you. As for me, my guts are already rumbling from starvation.

LYSIDAMUS: Now, why are those slowpokes delaying inside so? It's as though the more I rush around, the less gets done.

OLYMPIO: Then what if I sing the wedding song? Maybe that would make things go faster.

LYSIDAMUS: That's fine. Do it. I'll help you. We'll have a joint ceremony.

[*Flute gives clue*]

LYSIDAMUS AND OLYMPIO [*together, harmonizing*]:

*Oh wedding hymn, dear wedding hymn . . .*

[*Olympio keeps his note going during following speech*]

LYSIDAMUS: Gods, I'm ruined, wretch that I am. What does it matter if I bust a gut singing the wedding song? There's no chance I'll get to bust the gut I want to.

OLYMPIO [*stops singing*]: Indeed. If you were a horse, you'd be untamable.

LYSIDAMUS: How do you figure that?

OLYMPIO: You're too unbridled.

[*Lysidamus winces*]

LYSIDAMUS [*advances*]: Have you ever felt me to be too unbridled?

OLYMPIO [*backs off*]: Gods forbid! Wait! The door's opening. They're coming outside.

LYSIDAMUS: Ah, the gods want to save me after all!

PARDALISCA [*enters; to audience, noting Lysidamus's excitement*]: He has a whiff from afar of this male Casina.

#### IV.4

[*A bridal procession enters; Chalinus minces in, with veil over face; he is dressed as a bride, accompanied by servants, Cleostrata, and Myrrhina*]

PARDALISCA [*singing*]

*High over door's  
threshold lift high,*

*come, my young bride,  
lift your feet oh so high.*

*Long may you live,  
journey's begun,  
so may you outlive  
your man number one.*

*Waxing in power,  
winning in might,  
weaving your webs of  
widow's delight.*

*You'll beat your husband  
every time you fight him.  
Outtalk him,  
outshout him:  
that's now your custom.*

*He'll dress you well.  
Take all he owns.  
Both days and nights  
plot his next overthrow.*

[*The rest of the entourage join in*]

*Be sly, I pray,  
in every way.  
Keep this commandment,  
I . . .*

[*Olympio breaks in*]

OLYMPIO: She'll be up to her neck in trouble, and at once, if she makes the least little mistake!

LYSIDAMUS: Hush!

[*Indicates procession*]

OLYMPIO: I won't shut up.

LYSIDAMUS: What's the matter?

OLYMPIO: One wicked woman is waking wickedness in another.

LYSIDAMUS: You're going to undo everything that's been done.

That's what they hope and pray for: to undo all that we've done so far.

CLEOSTRATA: Come now, Olympio,

[*Suppresses laughter*]

take this wife from us whenever you wish.

OLYMPIO: Then give her to me, if you're going to do it today.

LYSIDAMUS [*to maids*]: You two go inside.

CLEOSTRATA [*suppressing laughter*]: And please treat this innocent, untouched maiden gently.

OLYMPIO: Certainly. Fare you well.

LYSIDAMUS: Go inside, you two, go inside.

CLEOSTRATA: Good day to you then.

[*The members of the procession go inside in gales of laughter*]

LYSIDAMUS: Is my wife inside yet?

OLYMPIO: She's in the house, don't worry.

LYSIDAMUS: Hooray! Whoopee! Now at long last I'm a free man.  
My little heart.

[*Draws near "Casina"*]

My little honey-woney . . . my little springy-wingy . . .

[*"Casina" giggles demurely in falsetto*]

OLYMPIO: Listen, if you have any sense, you'll keep clear of trouble.  
This girl is mine.

[*Tries to drag "Casina" off; she squeals*]

LYSIDAMUS: I know, but I get to have her first.

[*Drags her the other way; more squeals*]

OLYMPIO: You hold the wedding torch.

LYSIDAMUS: No, I'd rather hold *her* instead.

[*Holds "Casina"; more girlish squeals; Lysidamus prays to heaven*]

Oh Venus omnipotent, how many blessings you gave me  
when you gave me possession of her.

OLYMPIO: Oh, your tender little iddy-biddy bodikins!

[*"Casina" giggles again*]

my wittle wifey-poo.

[*"Casina" stomps on his foot*]

OUCH! What on earth!

LYSIDAMUS: What's the matter?

OLYMPIO [*hopping around*]: She stomped on my foot like an elephant!

LYSIDAMUS: Oh, keep quiet. No cloud is as downy as her breast.

OLYMPIO [*caresses "Casina's" breasts*]: Oh, what pretty little knobby-wobbies—

[*"Casina" elbows him in the stomach*]

Ouch! Oh misery!

LYSIDAMUS: What's wrong?

OLYMPIO: She struck me in the chest! She's got an elbow like a battering ram!

LYSIDAMUS: Now, Olympio, I ask you, why are you being so rough with her? When *I* touch this little belle, she's never bellicose.

[*"Casina" elbows him in the stomach*]

Ouch!

OLYMPIO: What's the matter with *you*?

LYSIDAMUS: My goodness, what a strong little thing she is! She almost laid me out with that elbow.

OLYMPIO: That means she wants to get laid out herself.

[*More giggles from "Casina" at this wit*]

LYSIDAMUS: What are we waiting for? Let's go in!

OLYMPIO: Come along sweetly, sweetly.

[*All three enter the house of Alcesimus; one last squeal from "Casina"*]

## V.1

[*Enter Myrrhina, Pardalisca, and Cleostrata from the house of Lysidamus*]

MYRRHINA: We've had a good time inside, and now we've come outside to see the wedding games. By the gods, never have I laughed as much as this. I don't think I'll ever laugh this much again as long as I live!

PARDALISCA: Wouldn't it be nice to know what Chalinus is doing? to know what the new bride is doing with *his* husband?

MYRRHINA: No playwright ever put together a plot craftier than the fabulous fable we've created.

CLEOSTRATA: I want to see the old man now with his face smashed in, to tell him no one more wicked ever lived—unless you think the man who offered him a room for his debauchery is wicked too. I want you to take over now, Pardalisca. Make a fool of any man who comes outside.

PARDALISCA: I'll do that gladly, just as I usually do.

CLEOSTRATA: Watch everything they do inside. Take your place behind me, now.

MYRRHINA: That way you can say what you want to as boldly as you please.

CLEOSTRATA: Quiet now, someone is coming out.

[*They hide in Cleostrata's doorway*]

## V.2

[*Enter Olympio from house of Alcesimus, disheveled*]<sup>20</sup>

OLYMPIO: Where can I run to? Where can I hide? How can I escape the disgrace? I don't know. My master and I have outdone ourselves with this marriage. I'm ashamed. I'm afraid. We're both of us laughing stocks. What a fool I am! Say, that's something new for me! A fellow embarrassed who has never embarrassed before.

[*Addresses audience*]

Now, pay attention while I tell you what happened to me. Listen closely. It's worth your trouble.

[*Throughout the speech Olympio mimes the events he describes*]

It's so ridiculous for you to hear, and me to repeat, what a disturbance I caused in there. After I'd led this new bride inside, I took her straight to the bedroom. It was as dark in there as the bottom of a well. Since the old man wasn't there yet, I said "Lie down." I got her in position, I propped her on a pillow, I softened her up, I said flattering things to her. That way I could have my wedding before the old man had his. I started off a little slow at first because I kept expecting the old man to surprise us. I asked her to kiss me, to get the ball rolling, so to speak. She knocked my hand away and

wouldn't even let me kiss her. But I pressed home eagerly. More than ever I was ready to enter Casina. I wanted to relieve the old man of that task. I shut the door so he wouldn't catch me by surprise.

CLEOSTRATA [*to Pardalisca*]: Come on, now, go over to him.

PARDALISCA [*goes over to Olympio*]: Tell me, where is that new bride of yours?

OLYMPIO [*startled to see witnesses onstage*]: Oh Hercules, I'm done for! The plot's discovered.

PARDALISCA: Then it's only fair you confess the whole thing, and in proper order. What happened inside? What did Casina do? Was she obedient enough for you?

OLYMPIO: It's *so* embarrassing!

PARDALISCA: Tell the whole thing in order, the way you started to.

OLYMPIO: Oh, it's *so* embarrassing!

PARDALISCA: Come, now, be bold! After you got in bed—I want you to tell me what happened.

OLYMPIO: It's *so* disgraceful!

PARDALISCA: Everybody who hears you will see to it that they are not corrupted by your tale.

OLYMPIO: It was so big . . .

PARDALISCA: You're stalling. Won't you go on?

OLYMPIO: I reached all the way under her dress, and I found . . .

PARDALISCA: What?

OLYMPIO: Oo-la-la!

PARDALISCA: What?

OLYMPIO: Um, um, um!

[*Shakes his head*]

PARDALISCA: What did you find?

OLYMPIO: Oh, the most *enormous* thing! I was afraid she might have a sword. I began to search for it. One thing I didn't need in bed under me was a sword. While I was searching to make sure she didn't have one, I put my hands on a . . . a . . . handle. But now that I think about it, she didn't have a sword: *that* would have been cold.

PARDALISCA: Do go on.

OLYMPIO: But it's *so* embarrassing!

PARDALISCA: It wasn't a *horse-radish*, was it?

OLYMPIO: No.

PARDALISCA: It wasn't a *cucumber*, was it?

OLYMPIO: By the gods, there's no telling what it was, except that it wasn't any kind of vegetable. One thing is clear: whatever it was, no blight had touched it. Yes indeed. Whatever it was, it was fully grown.

PARDALISCA: What happened then? Tell me.

OLYMPIO: I called softly to Casina. I said, "Please, little wifey mine, why are you rejecting me, your husband? It's really unfair, doing this to me. I'm the one who won you, you know." She didn't say a word. She covered the place where you are women with her dress. When I saw that pasture fenced off, I asked her to let me try another field. I asked her to be nice and roll over. She didn't let out a peep. She just lay there, never saying a thing. I tried to kiss her, tried to lift her lovely legs up in the air . . .

MYRRHINA [*aside, to audience*]: He's telling it all so charmingly, just as charmingly as can be, and the joke's on him!

OLYMPIO: I thought I might at least get a kiss from her. But the beard on her lips scratched my cheeks like a bristle. I got up on my knees at once, and she struck me in the chest with her feet! I fell headlong off the bed. She punched me in the face. That's when I ran out of there, without making so much as a sound, and wearing the very clothes I've got on. Now the old man can have a drink from the same cup I drank from.

PARDALISCA: That's perfect. But where is your little cloak?

OLYMPIO: I left it inside there.

PARDALISCA: Well, now, do you think you've had enough clever tricks played on you for one day?

OLYMPIO: And how! Oh no! the door's opening! I hope she's not following me!

### V.3

[*Enter Lysidamus from Alcesimus's house without his cloak*]

LYSIDAMUS [*noticing no one else, runs around in circles*]

*My shame sets me on fire*

*with my thwarted desire!*

*What more can I do*

*with my life all askew?*

*The very sight of my wife*

*would send me straight to the knife.*

*Why, I don't even dare look in her face!*

*I'm dead and done for, a total disgrace.*

*She's got me by the throat, plainly!*

*I'll struggle hard, but oh how vainly!*

[*Turns to audience*]

I wish I knew how to clear myself with her. And here I am, poor me, without a cloak, all because of the wedding I tried to have on the sly. Well, I suppose there's nothing else to do but confess. That's probably the best course now. I'll go inside and offer my back to my wife for a beating.

[*Starts to go inside, then turns back to audience*]

Or is there someone of you here who would like to do that job for me?

[*Resumes*]

I don't know what to do now, except to be like a wicked slave and run away from home. There's no salvation for these shoulders if I stay here.

[*Changes his mind again; turns back to house*]

Oh, that's all a lot of nonsense. Pay it no mind. By the gods, I'll get flogged. But if I deserve it, that doesn't mean I like it. I'll go off this way at once!

[*Starts to run away again, Chalinus comes running out of house, still dressed as a bride*]

CHALINUS: Stop right there, loverboy!

LYSIDAMUS: I'm doomed! I'm called back! I'll slip off now and pretend I didn't hear.

[*Starts to tiptoe away*]

### V.4

CHALINUS: Where do you think you're going? You want to imitate the degenerate ways of the Greeks, eh? Want to get under me again? Here's your chance. Go back into the bedroom if you want to. You're finished. Step this way now. I'll find a fair arbitrator for you—outside the courtroom.

[*Gestures with club*]

LYSIDAMUS: This is the end! That fellow will shave my shanks with that cudgel of his.

[*Turns in other direction*]

I'll have to escape this way. *That way* is blocked off by that bat-bearing ball buster.

[*Runs into Cleostrata*]

CLEOSTRATA: A very good day to you, loverboy.

LYSIDAMUS [*shrieks*]: Oh, no! My wife blocks the way! Now I'm between the altar and the sacrificial blade, and I don't know where I can flee. *Wolves* on one side,

[*Gestures towards Chalinus*]

*dogs* on the other.

[*Gestures towards Cleostrata*]

But the wolf is armed with a club. I think I'll have to reserve the old proverb and go this way. I hope a bitch's bark won't be as bad as a wolf's bite!

CLEOSTRATA [*blocks his way*]: What are you doing, you bigamist? Why, dear husband, where have you been? Why are you dressed like that? What have you done with your staff? Why don't you have on your cloak?

MYRRHINA: I believe he lost it in adultery, playing lecher with Casina.

LYSIDAMUS: I'm ruined!

CHALINUS: Aren't we going to go to bed now?

[*Throws off his disguise*]

*I am Casina!*

LYSIDAMUS: YOU! You can go to hell!

CHALINUS [*purses lips for a kiss*]: Don't you love me?

CLEOSTRATA: Come, now, answer me! What did you do with your cloak?

LYSIDAMUS [*desperately inventing*]: It was those...those...those women, wife! Yes! It was a Bacchic orgy!

CLEOSTRATA: A BACCHIC ORGY!

LYSIDAMUS [*hopefully*]: Yes, a Bacchic orgy, wife... .

MYRRHINA [*intervenes*]: He's making that up! Everyone knows the Bacchic orgies aren't playing here now.<sup>21</sup>

LYSIDAMUS [*aside*]: Damn! I'd forgotten that. But still, the Bacchic orgies... .

CLEOSTRATA: What about Bacchic orgies?

LYSIDAMUS: Well, if that can't happen here... .

CLEOSTRATA: You're afraid they might be here?

LYSIDAMUS: *Me?* Afraid? What a lie!

CLEOSTRATA: You're awfully pale, you know.<sup>22</sup>

LYSIDAMUS: I'm not afraid. Why, do you think I'm lying?

CLEOSTRATA: You're asking me?

LYSIDAMUS: Myrrhina, what should I say?

MYRRHINA: You know well enough.

LYSIDAMUS: This whole business has turned out pretty rotten for me.

OLYMPIO: By the gods, I'm tickled to death to know you had such a nice time at your wedding.

LYSIDAMUS: Shut up. I'm sick and tired of this game.

OLYMPIO: You started the game, old man.

LYSIDAMUS: You think it's a *game* to make a poor old man wretched and worry him to death?

CLEOSTRATA: Now, Olympio, tell him. Go on.

OLYMPIO: You wanted to cheat me. You wanted Casina all for yourself. I see that.

LYSIDAMUS: Won't you shut up?

OLYMPIO: No, by the gods, I won't shut up! You begged me over and over to take Casina to be my wife, but only so *you* could have her.

LYSIDAMUS [*innocently*]: I did that?

OLYMPIO: Oh, no, of course you didn't. It was Hector of Troy.

LYSIDAMUS: Ha! He'd have laid *you* out from the start!

[*To women, all innocence*]

Did I *really* do the things he said I did?

CLEOSTRATA: You have to ask?

LYSIDAMUS [*as if realizing the truth for the first time*]: Well, if I did it, I was wrong.

CLEOSTRATA: Come inside the house. If your memory fails you, I'll refresh it.

LYSIDAMUS: I think I'd rather take your word for all you say.

[Falls on his knees]

But, wife, grant pardon to your husband.

[Turns to Myrrhina]

Myrrhina, plead with Cleostrata for me.

[To company and audience]

If I ever fall in love with Casina after this, or if I ever begin to—not to speak of making love—if I ever hereafter do anything of the sort

[To Cleostrata]

you'll have every right, my wife, to string me up by my thumbs and give me a sound lashing.

MYRRHINA [*eagerly*]: Oh, I think *this* pardon ought to be granted!

CLEOSTRATA [*grimly*]: I'll do as you say.

[Turns to audience, brightly]

And the main reason I shall grant this pardon now, and with less reluctance, is to avoid making a long play even longer than it already is.

[Resumes her grim pose]

LYSIDAMUS: You're not angry?

CLEOSTRATA [*grimly*]: No, I'm not angry!

LYSIDAMUS: I can take you at your word?

CLEOSTRATA: That's what I *said*!

LYSIDAMUS: Ah, no one has a more charming wife than I have!

CLEOSTRATA: Come, now.

[To Chalinus]

Give him back his staff and cloak.

CHALINUS: Here you are.

[Hands them over; the company pauses; he turns to audience]

By the gods, what a terrible wrong was done me today! I married two husbands, and neither of them treated me the way a new bride should be treated.

[Steps forward to deliver epilogue]<sup>23</sup>

Dear spectators, to you I'll now confide  
what next will happen when we're inside.  
Casina's mystery will at last stand revealed:  
she's Alcesimus's daughter, long concealed!  
She'll wed Euthynicus, my master's boy.  
He's handsome and young and this play's last ploy.<sup>24</sup>

Each man who claps till his hands are made sore  
without his wife's knowledge may have any whore.  
But those who refuse now to applaud,  
instead of embracing some lovely young bawd  
can mate with a goat whose scent has been fixed  
with slime and bilge water drawn from a ditch.

[Exeunt omnes]

## NOTES

The translation is largely based on the text and commentary of W. Thomas MacCary and M. Wilcock, *Plautus: Casina* (Cambridge, 1976).

### INTRODUCTION: LUST IN ACTION

1. The prologue is more a mine of philological information than an effective introduction to the play. Prologue's comments about debased coinage and the revival of *Casina* long after Plautus's death have been taken as signs of a revival of the play anywhere from 155 B.C. to 133 B.C. See further remarks in the notes to the translation below.

2. For the earliest (and highly unfavorable) comparison of a Greek comic poet with his Roman imitator see Aulus Gellius, *The Attic Nights* (2.3), on Caecilius's adaptation of Menander's *Plokion* (*The Necklace*).

3. My interpretation of the play owes much to the commentary of MacCary and Wilcock and the illuminating analysis of Lysidamus's character by Jane M. Cody, "The *Senex Amator* in Plautus' *Casina*," *Hermes* 104 (1976): 453–476.

### CASINA

1. At the most conservative estimate, lines 5–22 of the prologue (here bracketed) could be omitted, since they come from a revival of the play. The prologue can be delivered in its entirety (and has been in the production of this script), but it will be

something of a tour de force for the actor who delivers it, conveying as it does the rather complicated message that the audience is about to see (1) an English translation of (2) an ancient revival after the playwright's death of (3) a comedy of Plautus which itself was an adaptation from (4) the original Greek comedy of Diphilus. In terms of theatricality, the main objection to the prologue is that it supplies a great deal of information which only *supplements* the play with a report about Diphilus and three characters (presumably central in his comedy) who never appear in *Casina*: the young lover Euthynicus, Casina, and the slave who discovered her and who was the key to revealing her identity. Thanks to the opening scene between Chalinus and Olympio, the play's action is intelligible without the prologue; and if a trimmer script were desired, it could be cut altogether.

2. Literally, the prologue invents a festival called the Alcedonia, a celebration of halcyon days.

3. *Kleroumenoi* is Greek for "men drawing lots" (the lot-drawing occurs in II.6); *Sortientes* is its Latin translation.

4. There is a learned pun in the original which is impossible to reproduce literally: Plautus is called the poet "with a barking name" (*cum latranti nomine* [line 34]) because the Latin adjective *plautus* means "flat-eared," like a beagle.

5. The Carthaginians and the Greeks were old enemies, notorious (to the Romans at least) for treachery. Some of the people of Apulia in southern Italy (the scene of many savage campaigns during the second Punic War) defected to Hannibal; hence the added sarcastic epithets, when the memory of those wars would have still been green.

6. This line has been suspected to be an interpolation or at least out of logical sequence, since Olympio is in the middle of a detailed enumeration of Chalinus's tasks. But it plays very well. Olympio is not a bright fellow, and his ideas often tumble out in no coherent manner.

7. Cleostrata and Lysidamus both play at their roles: she at her indignation, he at his sweetness and loyalty to his wife.

8. Chalinus's poorly concealed contempt for his master is evident from the beginning of the scene. His sentence begins with *te* (*te uxor aiebat tua*, line 279 in the Latin), "you." With proper timing it should sound like an alternate object of Lysidamus's curse, *di omnes deaeque perdant* (line 279). He later employs the same kind of wit in the lot-drawing scene (II.6), where he often interrupts Olympio in mid-sentence.

9. I.e., to Lysidamus. The mythological parallels of Lysidamus as Jupiter and Cleostrata as Juno are drawn several times (in this scene, II.3, and II.6).

10. Religious and juridical ceremonies had to proceed without ill omens or errors in the ritual. The slightest slip could lead to bad luck, wrong decisions, or some other unfavorable outcome. Olympio, understandably nervous, tries to ensure that Cleostrata has not rigged the urn and lots, while Chalinus, with the opposite aim in mind, constantly seeks to ruin Olympio's prayers for victory. Olympio is similarly preoccupied in the wedding ceremony in IV.4.

11. Obscure mythological allusions are rare in Plautus. The story is that the descendants of Hercules drew lots for the districts of the Peloponnese. Cresphontes and his nephews, sons of his brother Aristodemus, were to draw lots to see who should have Messenia. Cresphontes very much wanted to win, so his crafty brother Temenus made two lots of clay, one dried in the sun for his nephew and the other baked in fire for his brother. When the nephew's lot dissolved in the water, Cresphontes won with the terra-cotta lot. The parallel is apt for the scene, but the myth cannot be entirely explained for the benefit of the audience without spoiling Olympio's rejoinder to Lysidamus ("If this *scholar* here will let me"). Chalinus's line is a compromise between total obscurity and too much clarity.

12. Male and female slaves were subject to their master's pleasure, often from an early age. Plautus is not only exploiting this scene for its comic effects; confusion of sexual identity is a pervasive theme in *Casina*: Chalinus's disguise as Casina (IV.4) and Olympio's messenger speech about his experiences in the bedroom with the person he thinks is Casina (V.2).

13. Lysidamus's lines (523–524 in the Latin) are badly preserved but go something like this? "See to it that you follow the song the blackbird sings in his song: let them come 'with food or whatever,' as if they were marching to Sutrium." Sutrium was on the frontier of Latium and Etruria, and a quick march there during wars with Gauls and Etruscans led to the proverb *quasi eant Sutrium*, "As if they were going to Sutrium."

14. Alcesimus becomes quite incoherent in this scene, and his "Well nows" (*quin*) are ungrammatical and, as Lysidamus soon discovers, infectious.

15. This scene is a parody of the entrance of a heroine in high tragedy, very possibly a parody in particular of Andromache's lament in the *Andromache* of Plautus's contemporary Ennius. A fragment from that play reads:

What shall I seek for aid or refuge? Whither now  
by aid of flight or exile am I borne?  
Deprived am I of citadel and city!  
Whence to go? Where to plead?

Pardalisca employs both the meter and the diction of tragedy, as well as highly artificial figures of speech such as anaphora, alliteration, and assonance, all of which builds up into a splendidly overdone style. Note also that she slips in and out of the tragic style as she alternately plays her role and comments on Lysidamus's reactions to her tale. For a modern audience, bad Elizabethan tragedy (convoluted sentence structure, archaisms) is the high style to play against.

16. Now Casina is made to sound like one of the Danaids: the fifty sisters who killed their own husbands on their wedding night are the women of Aeschylus's *Suppliant Women*.

17. Lysidamus commits the same indiscretion in II.6.

18. For a moment Olympio speaks in Greek, and Lysidamus answers him in kind. Unlike French words sprinkled over English, Greek words in Plautine Latin are not a sign of pretensions to elegance but indicate a lapse into the kind of colloquial language one heard on the street in the Rome of Plautus's day. Greek is always spoken by lower-class characters in Plautus, and here it underscores the absurdity of Olympio's claim to be acting in fine aristocratic style.

19. Literally "none of that barbarian fodder," *barbaricus* (from Greek *barbarikos*) being the Greeks' regular word for non-Greeks, including Romans.

20. Olympio's long scene is a rival in brilliance to the mad scene of Pardalisca (III.5) and should be played as a parody of a messenger speech in tragedy. In essence, act 5, scs. 2–4, are scenes of *anagnoresis*, or recognition, though what is discovered is Chalinus's erection.

Many of the lines in this and the following pages are corrupt or lost beyond repair, but enough remains to construct a playable finale. For a translation faithfully reflecting the many *lacunae*, see Nixon's version in the Loeb edition.

21. Myrrhina may be alluding to a decree of the senate in 186 B.C. which banned the worship of the god Bacchus inside the city of Rome.

22. From this point down to Cleostrata's command to Olympio ("Olympio, tell



him! Go on"), the assignment of the parts, like the text, is uncertain. Olympio's repudiation of his former accomplice was perhaps longer and more colorful than what remains.

23. Some doubt has been raised about the speaker of this epilogue, but the lines surely belong to Chalinus. It is typical of Plautus's stagecraft to break the dramatic illusion by having one of the principals step forward to address the audience.

24. Chalinus is alluding to the plot of the original comedy by Diphilus, which was already the object of rather cavalier treatment in Prologue's outline of its story.

# TRUCULENTUS or THE SAVAGE SLAVE

