

Book 7

514 ‘If we’re thinking about the effect of education – or the lack of it – on our nature, there’s another comparison we can make. Picture human beings living in some sort of underground cave dwelling, with an entrance which is long, as wide as the cave, and open to the light. Here they live, from b earliest childhood, with their legs and necks in chains, so that they have to stay where they are, looking only ahead of them, prevented by the chains from turning their heads. They have light from a distant fire, which is burning behind them and above them. Between the fire and the prisoners, at a higher level than them, is a path along which you must picture a low wall that has been built, like the screen which hides people when they are giving a puppet show, and above which they make the puppets appear.’

‘Yes, I can picture all that,’ he said.

515 ‘Picture also, along the length of the wall, people carrying all sorts of implements which project above it, and statues of people, and animals made of stone and wood and all kinds of materials. As you’d expect, some of the people carrying the objects are speaking, while others are silent.’

‘A strange picture. And strange prisoners.’

‘No more strange than us,’ I said. ‘Do you think, for a start, that prisoners of that sort have ever seen anything more of themselves and of one another than the shadows cast by the fire on the wall of the cave in front of them?’

b ‘How could they, if they had been prevented from moving their heads all their lives?’

‘What about the objects which are being carried? Wouldn’t they see only shadows of these also?’

'Yes, of course.'

'So if they were able to talk to one another, don't you think they'd believe that the things they were giving names to were the things they could see passing?'

'Yes, they'd be bound to.'

'What if the prison had an echo from the wall in front of them? Every time one of the people passing by spoke, do you suppose they'd believe the source of the sound to be anything other than the passing shadow?'

'No, that's exactly what they would think.'

- c 'All in all, then, what people in this situation would take for truth would be nothing more than the shadows of the manufactured objects.'

'Necessarily.'

- 'Suppose nature brought this state of affairs to an end,' I said. 'Think what their release from their chains and the cure for their ignorance would be like. When one of them was untied, and compelled suddenly to stand up, turn his head, start walking, and look towards the light, he'd find all these things painful. Because of the glare he'd be unable to see the
- d things whose shadows he used to see before. What do you suppose he'd say if he was told that what he used to see before was of no importance, whereas now his eyesight was better, since he was closer to what is, and looking at things which more truly are? Suppose further that each of the passing objects was pointed out to him, and that he was asked what it was, and compelled to answer. Don't you think he'd be confused? Wouldn't he believe the things he saw before to be more true than what was being pointed out to him now?'

'Yes, he would. Much more true.'

- e 'If he was forced to look at the light itself, wouldn't it hurt his eyes? Wouldn't he turn away, and run back to the things he *could* see? Wouldn't he think those things really were clearer than what was being pointed out?'

'Yes,' he said.

- 'And if he was dragged out of there by force, up the steep and difficult path, with no pause until he had been dragged right out into the sunlight,
- 516 wouldn't he find this dragging painful? Wouldn't he resent it? And when he came into the light, with his eyes filled with the glare, would he be able to see a single one of the things he is now told are true?'

'No, he wouldn't. Not at first.'

'He'd need to acclimatise himself, I imagine, if he were going to see things up there. To start with, he'd find shadows the easiest things to look

- at. After that, reflections – of people and other things – in water. The things themselves would come later, and from those he would move on to b the heavenly bodies and the heavens themselves. He'd find it easier to look at the light of the stars and the moon by night than look at the sun, and the light of the sun, by day.'

'Of course.'

'The last thing he'd be able to look at, presumably, would be the sun. Not its image, in water or some location that is not its own, but the sun itself. He'd be able to look at it by itself, in its own place, and see it as it really was.'

'Yes,' he said, 'unquestionably.'

- c At that point he would work out that it was the sun which caused the seasons and the years, which governed everything in the visible realm, and which was in one way or another responsible for everything they used to see.'

'That would obviously be the next stage.'

'Now, suppose he were reminded of the place where he lived originally, of what passed for wisdom there, and of his former fellow-prisoners. Don't you think he would congratulate himself on the change? Wouldn't he feel sorry for them?'

'Indeed he would.'

- d 'Back in the cave they might have had rewards and praise and prizes for the person who was quickest at identifying the passing shapes, who had the best memory for the ones which came earlier or later or simultaneously, and who as a result was best at predicting what was going to come next. Do you think he would feel any desire for these prizes? Would he envy those who were respected and powerful there? Or would he feel as Achilles does in Homer? Would he much prefer "to labour as a common serf, serving a man with nothing to his name," putting up with anything to avoid holding those opinions and living that life?¹

- e 'Yes,' he said. 'If you ask me, he'd be prepared to put up with anything to avoid that way of life.'

'There's another question I'd like to ask you,' I said. 'Suppose someone like that came back down into the cave and took up his old seat. Wouldn't he find, coming straight in from the sunlight, that his eyes were swamped by the darkness?'

¹ *Odyssey* 11.489–491. The ghost of Achilles is speaking to Odysseus in the underworld. The quotation is among those censored in Book 3 (386c).

‘I’m sure he would.’

And suppose he had to go back to distinguishing the shadows, in
 517 competition with those who had never stopped being prisoners. Before his eyes had grown accustomed to the dark, while he still couldn’t see properly – and this period of acclimatisation would be anything but short – wouldn’t he be a laughing-stock? Wouldn’t it be said of him that he had come back from his journey to the upper world with his eyesight destroyed, and that it wasn’t worth even trying to go up there? As for anyone who tried to set them free, and take them up there, if they could somehow get their hands on him and kill him, wouldn’t they do just that?’

‘They certainly would,’ he said.

- b ‘That is the picture, then, my dear Glaucon. And it fits what we were talking about earlier in its entirety. The region revealed to us by sight is the prison dwelling, and the light of the fire inside the dwelling is the power of the sun. If you identify the upward path and the view of things above with the ascent of the soul to the realm of understanding, then you will have caught my drift – my surmise – which is what you wanted to hear. Whether it is really true, perhaps only god knows. My own view, for what it’s worth, is that in the realm of what can be known the thing seen last, and seen with great difficulty, is the form or character of the good.
- c But when it is seen, the conclusion must be that it turns out to be the cause of all that is right and good for everything. In the realm of sight it gives birth to light and light’s sovereign, the sun, while in the realm of thought it is itself sovereign, producing truth and reason unassisted. I further believe that anyone who is going to act wisely either in private life or in public life must have had a sight of this.’

‘Well, I for one agree with you,’ he said. ‘As far as I can follow, at any rate.’

- d ‘Can you agree with me, then, on one further point? It’s no wonder if those who have been to the upper world refuse to take an interest in everyday affairs, if their souls are constantly eager to spend their time in that upper region. It’s what you’d expect, presumably, if things really are like the picture we have just drawn.’

‘Yes, it is what you’d expect.’

- e ‘And here’s another question. Do you think it’s at all surprising if a person who turns to everyday life after the contemplation of the divine cuts a sorry figure, and makes a complete fool of himself – if before he can see properly, or can get acclimatised to the darkness around him, he is compelled to compete, in the lawcourts or anywhere else, over the

shadows of justice or the statues which cast those shadows, or to argue about the way they are understood by those who have never seen justice itself?’

‘No, it’s not in the least surprising,’ he said.

- 518 ‘Anyone with any sense,’ I said, ‘would remember that people’s eyesight can be impaired in two quite different ways, and for two quite different reasons. There’s the change from light to darkness, and the change from darkness to light. He might then take it that the same is true of the soul, so that when he saw a soul in difficulties, unable to see, he would not laugh mindlessly, but would ask whether it had come from some brighter life and could not cope with the unfamiliar darkness, or whether it had b come from greater ignorance into what was brighter, and was now dazzled by the glare. One he would congratulate on what it had seen, and on its way of life. The other he would pity. Or if he chose to laugh at it, his laughter would be less absurd than laughter directed at the soul which had come from the light above.’

‘Yes. What you say is entirely reasonable.’

‘Well,’ I said, ‘if it’s true, there’s one conclusion we can’t avoid.

- c Education is not what some people proclaim it to be. What they say, roughly speaking, is that they are able to put knowledge into souls where none was before. Like putting sight into eyes which were blind.’

‘Yes, that is what they say.’

‘Whereas our present account indicates that this capacity in every soul, this instrument by means of which each person learns, is like an eye which can only be turned away from the darkness and towards the light by turning the whole body. The entire soul has to turn with it, away from what is coming to be, until it is able to bear the sight of what is, and in particular the brightest part of it. This is the part we call the good, isn’t it?’

- d ‘Yes.’

‘Education, then,’ I said, ‘would be the art of directing this instrument, of finding the easiest and most effective way of turning it round. Not the art of putting the power of sight into it, but the art which assumes it possesses this power – albeit incorrectly aligned, and looking in the wrong direction – and contrives to make it look in the right direction.’

‘Yes,’ he said. ‘It looks as if that is what education is.’

- e ‘So while the other things we call virtues of the soul may perhaps be quite close to the virtues of the body, since it’s true they are not there to start with, but are implanted by custom and habit, the virtue of rational thought is different. It seems that it really is made of some more divine

material, which never loses its power, but becomes useful and beneficial,
 519 or useless and harmful, depending on which way it is facing. Think of those people who have the reputation of being evil but clever. Have you never noticed the beady little eyes their souls have, how sharp they are at picking out the things they are after? This suggests that their soul has nothing wrong with its eyesight, but that it is coerced into the service of evil. The more acute its vision is, therefore, the more evil it does.'

'That's certainly true.'

'And yet,' I said, 'if this soul, the soul belonging to a nature of this sort, had been hammered into shape from earliest childhood, it might have had
 b struck from it the leaden weights of birth and of becoming. These cling to it as a result of eating, gluttony, and pleasures of that sort, and direct the gaze of the soul downward. If it had rid itself of these weights, and turned towards the truth, then the same soul, in the same people, would be able to see things which are true with the same clarity as it sees the things it is directed towards at the moment.'

'Very likely.'

'And isn't something else very likely?' I said. 'In fact absolutely certain, on the basis of the discussion so far? Neither those who are uneducated
 c and have no experience of the truth, nor those who are allowed to remain in education until their life's end, could ever manage the city properly. The uneducated ones lack that single mark in their life at which all their actions, whether in private life or in public life, must aim. The others, left to themselves, will never act, because they think they have emigrated while still alive to the islands of the blest.'²

'True,' he said.

'It is up to us, then, as founders of the city, to compel the best natures
 d to get as far as that study which we said earlier was the most important³ – to make that ascent, and view the good. And when they have made it, and seen all they need to see, we must not allow them to do what they are allowed to do at the moment.'

'What is that?'

'Remain there,' I said, 'and refuse to come back down again to the prisoners we were talking about, or share in their hardships and rewards – be they trivial or substantial.'

² The islands of the blest were in traditional belief a place reserved for the afterlife of heroes. Unlike Homeric shades, heroes were permitted to retain the full range of their faculties, and to engage after death, for eternity, in the activities they enjoyed in life. ³ 505a.

'That seems very unfair! Are we going to make them live a worse life when it is in their power to live a better one?'

- e 'Now it is your turn to forget, my friend, that the law does not exist for the exclusive benefit of one class in the city.⁴ Its aim is to engineer the benefit of the city as a whole, using persuasion and compulsion to bring 520 the citizens into harmony, and making each class share with the other classes the contribution it is able to bring to the community. The law is what puts people like this in the city, and it does so not with the intention of allowing each of them to go his own way, but so that it can make use of them for its own purposes, to bind the city together.'

'True,' he said. 'I had forgotten that.'

- 'In which case, Glaucon, you should bear in mind that we won't after all be doing an injustice to those who become philosophers in our city. There will be justice in what we say to them when we compel them to look b after and guard what belongs to other people. "It is fair enough," we shall say to them, "for philosophers in other cities not to take a share of the work in those cities. Their philosophy is a spontaneous growth, which arises despite the institutions of the particular city they live in. And what has developed naturally, indebted to nobody for its upbringing, is entitled to be unenthusiastic about paying anyone for its upbringing. But with you it's different. We produced you as guides and rulers both for yourselves and for the rest of the city – like leaders or kings in a hive of bees. You have been better and more fully educated than the rest, and are better able to play your part in both types of life. So you must go down, each of you c in turn, to join the others in their dwelling-place. You must get used to seeing in the dark. When you do get used to it, you will see a thousand times better than the people there do. You will be able to identify all the images there, and know what they are images of, since you have seen the truth of what is beautiful and just and good. In this way the government of the city, for us and for you, will be a waking reality rather than the kind of dream in which most cities exist nowadays, governed by people d fighting one another over shadows and quarrelling with one another about ruling, as if ruling were some great good. The truth is, I imagine, that the city in which those who are to rule are most reluctant to do so will inevitably be the city which has the best and most stable government, whereas the city with rulers of the opposite kind will have a government of the opposite kind.'"

⁴ Compare 420b, 465e–466a.

'Exactly,' he said.

'Will they disobey us, then, do you think, these people we have brought up? Will they refuse to do their share of work in the city, each group in its turn, even though they can still spend most of their time in each other's company, in the clear air above?'

e 'They can't possibly refuse. It's a just demand, and they are just people. But they will undoubtedly approach ruling, each one of them, as something unavoidable – just the opposite of the people who rule in every city at the moment.'

521 'That's right, my friend. It's like this. If you can find a better life than ruling for the people who are going to be your rulers, then your well-governed city becomes a possibility. It will be the only city ruled by those who are truly rich. Not rich in money, but in a good and wise life, the riches needed for good fortune. If you get beggars – people who are starved of good things in their own lives – going into public life because they believe that the good is something to be taken from there as plunder, then your city is not a possibility. Ruling becomes something to be fought over, and a war of this kind, domestic and internal, destroys both those involved in it and the rest of the city with them.'

'Very true,' he said.

b 'All right, then. Can you think of any life, apart from the life of true philosophy, which has a contempt for public office?'

'Good heavens, no.'

'But ruling must be courted only by those who are not in love with her. Otherwise they will have rival suitors to contend with.'

'Of course.'

'And if you are going to compel people to enter upon the guardianship of the city, who better than those who are wisest in these matters – in what will give the city the best government – and who have their own rewards and their own way of life, better than the political?'

'There is no one better,' he said.

c 'In that case, do you want us now to address the question how people like this are going to come into being, how you can bring them into the light of day, in the way some people are said to have ascended from Hades to the realm of the gods?'

'Of course I do.'

'We are not dealing here, by the looks of it, with something like the spin of a coin, but with the turning of a soul away from that day which is a kind

of night, and towards the true day which is the ascent to what is, and which we shall say is true philosophy.⁵

'Exactly.'

- 'Does that mean we should ask ourselves which subject of study has the power to do this?'

'Yes, of course.'

'Very well. Which subject, Glaucon, can act as a magnet to the soul, drawing it away from the world of becoming towards the world of what is? But even as I ask the question, I am reminded of something else. Didn't we say it was essential for these young men of ours, as a matter of course, to be warrior-athletes?⁶

'We did.'

'So the subject we are looking for must possess a second characteristic in addition to the first.'

'What is that?'

'It must be some use to military men.'

- c 'Yes,' he said, 'it must have that characteristic, if possible.'

'The education we gave them earlier on had a physical part and a musical part.'⁷

'It did.'

'Physical education busies itself with what comes to be and perishes. It presides over the growth and decay of the body.'

'Apparently.'

- 522 'So that, at any rate, cannot be the subject we are looking for.'

'No.'

'Could it, in that case, be the musical education we described earlier?'

'No,' he said. 'That, if you remember, was the counterpart to physical education. It trained the guardians by means of good habits, without giving them knowledge. Instead it used its qualities of harmony and rhythm to give harmony and rhythm to the guardians, and in its stories – those of them that were mythical, and those of them that were truer – it offered other qualities akin to these. But there was no subject of study in it which was any good for your present purpose.'

- b 'Thank you,' I said, 'for reminding me so exactly. It really didn't

⁵ In the game that Socrates uses for comparison here a shell or a fragment of pottery was spun in the air. It was painted white on one side (called 'day') and black on the other (called 'night'), and according to the side on which it landed one or other of two teams would chase or be chased. ⁶ 403e–404a, 416d–e, 422b.

⁷ Announced at 376e.

contain anything of the kind we are looking for. But then, my excellent Glaucon, what kind of subject would? The practical arts, I think we decided, are all demeaning.¹⁸

'They certainly are. But what other subject *is* there, apart from musical education, physical education and the practical arts?'

'All right,' I said. 'If we can't find a subject outside this range, let's find one which applies to all of them.'

c 'Such as?'

'Such as the one which is common to all arts, modes of thought and sciences, which these all make use of, and which is among the first things that everybody is obliged to learn.'

'What is that?'

'The small matter of distinguishing one, two and three. Number and calculation, in fact. Isn't it true of those that every art and science must necessarily get involved with them?'

'It certainly is,' he said.

'In which case,' I said, 'isn't the art of war necessarily involved with them?'

'Inevitably.'

d 'There's no doubt that in the tragedies Agamemnon's generalship is always shown up as utterly laughable by Palamedes. You remember Palamedes' claim that it was his invention of number which enabled him to deploy the army at Troy, and count the ships and the rest of the equipment. The suggestion is that these things had never been counted before, and that apparently Agamemnon, since he didn't know how to count, hadn't even known how many feet he had. Seriously, what sort of general do you think that would have made him?'

'A pretty strange one, I'd say – if what Palamedes said was true.'

e 'Shall we just say, then, that calculation and the ability to count are an essential subject of study for a man interested in warfare?'

'Absolutely essential, if he's to have any understanding of how to marshal his troops. Or if he's going to be any sort of human being at all, for that matter.'

'Well, then,' I said, 'do you feel the same way as I do about this subject?'

'What way is that?'

'It may well be that it is one of the subjects we are looking for, and that

523 its natural tendency is to lead us towards understanding, but that no one

¹⁸ 475e, 495d–e.

makes the right use of it as the perfect instrument for drawing them towards being.'

'What do you mean?'

'I'll try and explain,' I said, 'how it seems to me. If I distinguish in my own mind between things which lead in the direction we want, and things which don't, then you must keep an eye on them as well. You must say "yes" or "no," so that we can see with greater clarity whether my surmise is correct.'

'Show me the things you mean.'

b 'Very well. I'll show you – and I hope you can see – that among the things we perceive some do not invite the understanding to examine them, since they are adequately distinguished by perception, whereas others positively demand examination by the understanding, since perception produces no sound result.'

'You obviously mean objects appearing a long way off, and shadow-pictures.'⁹

'No, that's not quite what I mean.'

'What *do* you mean, then?' he asked.

c 'The ones which do not invite examination are the ones which do not at the same time result in an opposite perception. The ones which do result in their opposites I define as those which invite examination, since perception in these cases does not make one thing any more clear than its opposite, regardless of whether it lights upon it at a distance or close by. Let me give you a clearer example of what I mean. Here, we might say, we have three fingers: smallest, second and middle.'

'Yes.'

'Now, take it I'm talking about them as seen close up. Can you answer a question about them?'

'What question?'

d 'Each of them strikes us equally as a finger. It makes no difference whether you see it in the middle or at one end, whether it is dark or pale, thick or thin, or anything of that sort. None of these things would make the soul of an ordinary person feel impelled to ask the understanding what a finger *is*, since sight at no point indicates to it that the finger is also the opposite of a finger.'

⁹ 'Shadow-painting' was a technique for achieving the illusion of depth in two dimensions. It differed from perspective, but we are unsure how.

‘No, of course it doesn’t,’ he said.

‘So you couldn’t reasonably expect that sort of thing to appeal to or
e awaken the understanding.’

‘No, you couldn’t.’

‘What about the size of fingers – large or small? Does sight perceive
that in a satisfactory way? Does it make no difference to it whether the
finger is in the middle or at one end? It’s the same with touch, when it
perceives thick and thin, or soft and hard. And the other senses as well –
isn’t there something defective about the way they show us things like
524 this? Don’t we find the same thing with all of them? Isn’t the sense with
which we perceive what is hard, for example, bound to be also the sense
with which we perceive what is soft? Doesn’t it tell the soul that the same
thing is both hard and soft, when it feels it to be so?’

‘Yes, it does,’ he said.

‘Isn’t it bound to be in cases of this sort that the soul is confused? It
wonders what on earth this sense means by hard, if it can also describe
the same thing as soft? And what does the sense of light and heavy mean
by light and heavy, if it indicates that the heavy is light, and the light
heavy?’

b ‘Yes, the soul does find messages of this sort puzzling. They do need
examination.’

‘It’s natural, then, that a situation like this should be the first in which
the soul invites calculation and understanding to examine whether each
of the things it is getting messages about is one or two.’

‘Naturally.’

‘If it regards them as two, does it regard each of them as separate, and
one?’

‘Yes.’

‘In which case, if it regards each of them as one, but the two together
as two, it will understand the two as separate. If they weren’t separate, it
c would have understood them as one, not two.’

‘Correct.’

‘But sight also saw large and small – only not as separate, but rather as
some sort of mixture. Isn’t this our claim?’

‘Yes.’

‘Whereas understanding, in the course of trying to make all this clear,
was compelled to see large and small not as a mixture, but as separate. Just
the opposite of sight.’

'True.'

'Is it things like this which first prompt us to ask what large and small can possibly be?'

'It certainly is.'

'Which is why we called one an object of understanding, and the other an object of sight?'

d 'Absolutely right,' he said.

'Well, that's what I meant just now, when I said that some things invite thought to investigate, and others don't. Those which impinge upon the senses in conjunction with their own opposites I classified as inviting the understanding. Those which don't I classified as failing to arouse it.'

'I see what you mean now. And I think you're right.'

'What about number and the one? Which category do you think they come in?'

'I've no idea,' he said.

'You can work it out from what we've said so far. If the one can be seen
e in a satisfactory way – or grasped by some other sense – completely by itself, then it will not draw the understanding towards being in the way we described in our example about the finger. But if some sort of contradiction of it is always seen at the same time, so that it seems to be no more the one than its opposite, then there would be a need for someone to make a decision about it. In a case like this the soul within him would be driven in its confusion to start searching. It would arouse the capacity for
525 reflection within itself, and ask it what the one itself actually was. In this way studying the one would be one of those things which lead and direct us towards the contemplation of what is.'

'Right. And seeing the one does have exactly this effect. After all, we can see the same thing, at one and the same time, both as one and also as an infinite number.'

'Well, if this is true of the one,' I said, 'is it not also true of number in general?'

'Yes, of course.'

'And arithmetic and the theory of number are exclusively concerned with number.'

'Absolutely.'

b 'Clearly, then, the study of number is conducive to truth.'

'To a remarkable degree.'

'In which case it looks like being one of the subjects we are looking for. It is an essential part of a soldier's education, for the deployment of

troops, and of a philosopher's education, as he attempts to rise above becoming. He needs to make contact with being if he is ever to become capable of calculation or reasoning.'

'That is so,' he said.

'But our guardian is in fact both a soldier and a philosopher.'

'Of course.'

'So when we are framing our laws, Glaucon, this would be an ideal subject of study for us to demand. We should persuade those in the city c who are going to have a hand in the most important decisions to take up arithmetical reasoning and practise it – not as a hobby, but until they reach the contemplation of the nature of numbers by means of thought alone. And it shouldn't be for the sake of buying and selling, like tradesmen and dealers. No, it should be for military reasons, and for their very soul's sake, to make it easier to redirect it away from becoming and towards truth and being.'

'I couldn't agree more.'

d 'What is more,' I said, 'now that we've started talking about the study of calculation, I can see how complex it is, and how many uses it has for our present purposes, provided people do it with a view to knowledge, and not with a view to becoming some sort of dealer.'

'What are these uses?'

e 'The kind we were talking about just now. It gives the soul a strong lead in an upwards direction, compelling it to discuss the numbers themselves, and refusing to allow people to bring numbers with visible or tangible bodies into the discussion. You know what these mathematicians are like. If you try and make a division in the one itself, they laugh at you, and tell you you can't. The more you chop it up, the more they multiply it, so making sure that the one is always clearly the one, and never a number of different parts.'

'You are absolutely right,' he said.

526 'Suppose, Glaucon, you asked them the following question: "All right, then, if you're so clever, what *are* these numbers you are discussing – including the one as you assume it to be, with each and every unit being equal to every other unit, and containing no variation at all, and no subdivision into parts?" What do think their answer would be?'

'I think they'd say they are talking about the numbers which can only be thought about, and which it is impossible to approach in any other way.'

'Do you see, then, my friend, how truly essential this subject is likely

- b to be for us, since it clearly forces the soul to use pure thought as a way of reaching pure truth?’

‘Yes, that certainly is what it does,’ he said. ‘And very effectively.’

‘And here’s another question for you. Has it ever struck you that people with a natural gift for arithmetical reasoning are naturally quick at virtually all subjects? And those who are slow, if they get some education and training in this subject, do at least all go some way towards becoming quicker than they were before, even if they get nothing else out of it?’

‘Yes, that is so,’ he said.

- c ‘What is more, I’m inclined to think you won’t easily find any other subjects – you certainly won’t find many – which offer greater difficulty to the person learning them or doing them than this one does.’

‘No, you won’t.’

‘So for all these reasons we must include this subject, and our best people must be educated in it.’

‘I agree.’

‘Very well, then,’ I said, ‘that’s our first subject decided upon. For our second, let’s ask ourselves if the one which follows on from it is any use to us.’

‘Which do you mean? Geometry?’

‘Precisely that.’

- d ‘Well, the part of it which has a bearing on warfare is obviously some use. In setting up camp, occupying a position, assembling or deploying an army, and all the other manoeuvres involved in the battle itself or on the march, it makes an enormous difference whether someone has a knowledge of geometry or not.’

‘Yes,’ I said, ‘but for that sort of purpose you need only a very small part of geometry and arithmetic. What we must ask ourselves is whether

- e the main body of the subject, the part which goes beyond that, is going to contribute to helping us see the form or character of the good. And what *does* contribute, in our view, is anything which forces the soul to turn towards that place where lies the most blessed part of what is, which the soul must do everything it can to see.’

‘That is correct,’ he said.

‘So if geometry forces the soul to contemplate being, it is some use to us. If it forces it to contemplate becoming, then it is no use.’

‘That’s certainly our claim.’

- 527 ‘There’s one thing we can say which no one with the slightest acquain-

tance with geometry will challenge. It's a branch of knowledge whose character is the exact opposite of the terminology employed in it by those who practise it.'

'In what way?' he asked.

'Well, they're hard put to it for words to describe what they do – with laughable results, sometimes. All this squaring, extending and adding. They're full of utterances of that kind. Everything they say is in terms of

- b doing things, and practical applications, whereas the truth, I take it, is that this is a subject which is pursued entirely for knowledge's sake.'

'Absolutely.'

'And is there something else we have to agree on?'

'What is that?'

'That this knowledge is knowledge of what always is, not knowledge of what at some particular time comes to be, or perishes.'

'That's easily agreed,' he said. 'Geometrical knowledge *is* knowledge of what always is.'

'In that case, my noble friend, it is indeed something that draws the soul towards truth. It is an instrument which produces a philosophical way of thinking by directing upwards that part of us which we now, quite wrongly, direct downwards.'

'Yes, it does do that. More than anything else does.'¹⁰

- c 'More than anything else, then, you must tell the people in your Callipolis, your ideal city,¹¹ not to neglect geometry in any way. After all, even its secondary benefits are of considerable value.'

'What benefits are those?' he asked.

'The ones you mentioned, to do with war. And in any subject, come to that, if we're looking for an improved ability to learn, I think we can be confident there will be all the difference in the world between those with a grasp of geometry and those without.'

'Heavens, yes. All the difference in the world.'

'In which case, shall we make this the second subject for our young people?'

'Yes, let's,' he said.

- d 'And what about astronomy for our third subject? Don't you agree?'

¹⁰ The Greek here and in the next sentence could also mean 'To the highest degree possible'.

¹¹ 'Callipolis' means 'city of beauty', and was the name of some actual Greek cities, none of them grand or influential.

'Yes, I do. An increased awareness of the moon's cycle, or the season of the year, is useful not only in farming or sailing, but also, just as much, in commanding an army.'

'I can't help being amused,' I said, 'by your apparent fear that people will see no practical value in the subjects you are putting in your curriculum. The truth is that it is not at all easy – in fact, it is extremely hard –
 c to accept that it is these subjects which purify and rekindle that instrument in each person's soul which is destroyed and blinded by his other pursuits, and whose preservation is more important than the sight of a thousand eyes, since truth cannot be seen without it. Those who agree with you will find your ideas extraordinarily convincing. Those who've never become aware of the existence of this instrument in the soul will probably think you're talking nonsense, since they can see no benefit worth
 528 speaking of in these subjects. So make up your mind, here and now, which group you are talking to. Or are you talking to neither group, and constructing your arguments chiefly for your own benefit – though you would have no objection to others deriving what benefit they can from them?'

'Yes, that's what I would choose: to speak and ask and answer mainly for my own benefit.'

'In that case,' I said, 'it's time to retreat a little. We were wrong just now in what we took to be the next thing in order after geometry.'

'What did we take to be next?'

b 'After plane surfaces, we went on to rotating solids, before taking solids in isolation. But the thing which comes next, after the increase from one dimension to two, is the increase from two to three. I take it this concerns itself with cubic increase, and anything that has volume.'

'Yes. But solutions to these problems don't seem to have been found yet, Socrates.'

'There are two kinds of reason for that. In the first place, the solutions are difficult, and not pursued with any determination, since no city puts a high value on them. And in the second place, those looking for the solutions need a director or supervisor. They won't find the answers without one. Finding such a director is a problem, to start with. And even if you did find one, as things stand now, the people interested in this kind of enquiry would be too conceited to do what he tells them.'

c 'But if a whole city were to become joint-director, and put a high value on these studies, then the people trying to find the solutions would do what they were told. Systematic, energetic investigation would lead to

clear answers being found. Even now, when the subject is undervalued and belittled by most people – including those who pursue it, since they can give no reason why it is of value – it still has enough natural appeal to force its way forward in the face of all these handicaps. So it will be no d surprise if solutions are found.'

'Yes,' he said, 'the subject does have a remarkable natural appeal. But please explain something you said just now. You were taking geometry, presumably, to be the study of plane surfaces.'

'Yes.'

'And you began by putting astronomy after it, though you subsequently retreated from that position.'

'It was a question of more haste, less speed, I'm afraid. I was trying to get through things in a hurry. The next in order was the study of the e dimension of depth, but the study of that is in such a laughable state that I left it out, and put astronomy, which is solid bodies in motion, after geometry.'

'Correct,' he said.

'Let's make astronomy our fourth subject, then, not our third. Let's assume that the subject we are leaving out at the moment is only waiting for a city to get interested in it.'

'Fair enough. And since you accused me just now, Socrates, of praising astronomy for mundane reasons, let me praise it now for the reasons 529 which attract you to it. I think it's clear to everyone that astronomy compels the soul to look upwards, directing it away from things here and towards things up there.'

'Well, it may be clear to everyone,' I said, 'but it isn't clear to me. I don't think that's what it does at all.'

'What *do* you think it does, then?'

'As currently tackled by those leading us on the upward path to philosophy, I think its effect is entirely to direct the gaze downwards.'

'What do you mean?'

'I admire the freedom,' I said, 'with which you put forward your b personal view of the nature of the higher learning! Imagine someone lying on his back, looking at a decoration or pattern on a ceiling, and observing something about it. It sounds as if you would say he was studying the ceiling with his intellect, not his eyes. Well, you may be right, and I may be being naive, but as far as I'm concerned the only subject *I* can regard as making the soul look upwards is the one which concerns what is, what can *not* be seen. Anyone trying to learn about objects of perception by

gaping up at the sky or frowning down at his feet can never learn anything, I would say – since no object of perception admits of knowledge.

- c His soul is looking down, not up, even if he makes his observations lying on his back – whether on land or floating in the sea.'

'I plead guilty as charged,' he said. 'Your criticisms are quite justified. But if people are going to study astronomy in a way which will be useful for the purposes we have in mind, in contrast with the way it is studied nowadays, how *did* you mean them to study it?'

- d 'Like this. The decorations or patterns in the vault of heaven, since their workmanship appears in the realm of sight, can by all means be regarded as the most beautiful and perfect of visible objects. But they should also be regarded as falling far short of the true motions, those with which genuine velocity and genuine slowness, using true number and following in every case a true orbit, move relative to one another and cause the objects which they contain to move. These true motions are to be grasped by reason and thought, not by sight. Or would you disagree?'

'Certainly not,' he said.

- e 'Well, then, this heavenly pattern is to be used as a set of examples or models, as a way of learning about the true patterns. It's exactly like finding diagrams drawn and executed with great skill, by Daedalus or some other artist or draftsman. If you were an expert in geometry, you would no doubt think they were technically excellent when you saw them, but you would regard it as absurd to study them seriously in the expectation of finding in them the truth about things which are equal, or double, or in any other ratio.'

- 530 'Of course it would be absurd.'

- b 'Don't you think that's just how the true astronomer will feel when he looks at the motions of the stars? He will regard heaven and everything in it as having been put together by its maker as beautifully as such things can be put together. But as for the ratio of night to day, of these to the month, of the month to the year, or of the other stars to the sun, moon and one another, don't you think he'll regard as extremely odd anyone who believes that these things are always the same – never varying in any way, though they are corporeal and visible – and who makes a determined effort to learn the truth from them?'

'Yes, I do think he will, now that I hear you putting it like that.'

- c 'In which case,' I said, 'our approach to astronomy will be like our approach to geometry. It will be based on problems. If we want to take

part in true astronomy, and make the naturally rational part of the soul useful instead of useless, we shall forget about the heavenly bodies.'

'That's a much, much larger task you are requiring of us, compared with the way astronomy is done at the moment.'

'Yes, and if we are going to be any use as lawgivers, I think we shall have to impose the same requirements in other subjects as well. Can you suggest any other subjects that might be useful?'

'No, I can't,' he said. 'Not on the spur of the moment.'

'Well, I'm sure motion doesn't take just a single form. It takes several.

- d No doubt an expert could give you a comprehensive list. But there are two which are obvious even to us.'

'What are they?'

'The one we've just been talking about, and its counterpart.'

'What is its counterpart?'

'The chances are,' I said, 'that our ears can be fixed on harmonic motion in the same way as our eyes on astronomical motion. These may well be in some sense sister sciences. That's what the Pythagoreans say, and you and I agree with them, Glaucon. Or do we not?'

'We do.'

- e 'Very well. It's a massive task, so let's ask them what they have to say on the subject – and possibly other subjects as well. Meanwhile we will stick to our maxim throughout.'

'What maxim is that?'

'We should not allow the people for whose upbringing we are responsible ever to try and learn any pointless part of the subject, any part that is not constantly leading them to the goal that all things must reach – as 531 we were proposing in the case of astronomy just now. You must be aware that students of harmonics behave in more or less the same way. In trying to make comparative measurements of the harmonies and sounds which can be heard, they set themselves an endless task, just as the astronomers do.'

'Good god, yes,' he said. 'They certainly do. They make complete fools of themselves with their "close" intervals, applying their ears to the instrument as if they were eavesdropping on their neighbours. One group claims it can still distinguish an intermediate sound, and says this is the smallest interval which should be used as a unit of measurement. Others

- b disagree. They say the two sounds are the same. Both groups trust their ears in preference to their reason.'

'You mean the worthy individuals who make life a misery for their strings by torturing them and using pegs to stretch them on the rack. I

don't want to labour the metaphor – the plectrum striking and accusing, the strings refusing to speak or noisily defiant¹² – so I'll abandon it, and simply say that those aren't the people I mean. The people I'm talking about are the ones we said just now we would ask about harmonics. What c they do is the same as what the astronomers do. They look for the numerical ratios in these harmonies which can be heard, without ever rising above those to an approach based on problems. They don't investigate which ratios are harmonious, which are not, and why.'

'That would be a superhuman task,' he said.

'Well, it would certainly be a useful one, in the pursuit of the beautiful and the good. Pursued for any other reason it is useless.'

'Very likely.'

d 'It's my opinion,' I said, 'that if the investigation of all these subjects we've outlined arrives at what they have in common with one another, their kinship with one another, and if it can work out how they are related to one another, then it's not a pointless task. It's an activity which contributes to what we are trying to achieve. Otherwise it is pointless.'

'I agree. I have the same presentiment myself. But it's an enormous task you're proposing, Socrates.'

'And that's merely the prelude. Or don't you agree? Are we in any doubt that all these subjects are merely preludes to the main theme we have to learn?¹³ After all, you presumably don't regard people as dialecticians just because they are good at these subjects.'

e 'Good heavens, no,' he said. 'A very few perhaps of those I've ever come across.'

'And did you think that people who were incapable of explaining or understanding the basis of their subject were ever going to know any of the things we say they need to know?'

532 'Again, the answer is no.'

'Well, Glaucon, isn't this finally the true tune or theme which the study of dialectic plays? It is in the realm of thought, though the power of sight can imitate it, as when we said that sight attempts to look at animals themselves, and stars themselves, and even finally at the sun itself.¹⁴ In the same way, when someone tries to use dialectic to arrive at what each thing itself is, by means of reason, without using any of the senses, and does not give

¹² The metaphor is drawn from the lawcourts, where the evidence of slaves was taken under torture.

¹³ Socrates follows his discussion of harmonics with a musical metaphor, but the word *nomos*, 'theme' or 'tune', also means 'law'. ¹⁴ 516a–b.

- b up the attempt until he grasps what good itself is, by means of thought itself, then he has come to the true end or goal of the intelligible, just as the man in the cave, in our earlier example, came to the true end or goal of the visible.'

'Exactly,' he said.

'Very well. Isn't "dialectic" the name you give to this journey?'

'Of course.'

- 'And the release from chains?' I asked. 'The turning away from the shadows towards the images and the firelight? The upward path from the c underground cave to the daylight, and the ability there to look, not in the first instance at animals and plants and the light of the sun, but at their divine reflections in water and the shadows of real things, rather than the shadows of models cast by a light which is itself a shadow in comparison with the sun? All this practice of the sciences we have just outlined has precisely this power to direct the best element in the soul upwards, towards the contemplation of what is best among the things that are – just as earlier on the clearest element in the body was directed to the contemplation of what was brightest in the corporeal and visible region.'

- d 'Personally speaking, I accept that,' he said, 'though I find it extremely hard. But then again, in another way it is very hard *not* to accept. Still, this won't be our only opportunity to hear what you have to say on the subject. We shall often have to return to it in the future. So let's take it these things are as we have just said they are, and go on to the main theme e itself, and describe that in the same way we described the prelude. Tell us, how does it operate, this power of dialectic? Into what forms is it divided? And by what routes, again, does it progress? After all, it is these routes which can apparently take a man to the destination which is his place of rest after the road, and the end of his journey.'

533 'My dear Glaucon, you will not be able to follow me that far – though not for any want of enthusiasm on my part. From now on what you would be seeing would not be an image or model of what we are talking about, but the truth itself – at least as it seems to me. Whether it's precisely like this doesn't seem worth insisting on. But that there is something *like* this to see – that we must insist on, mustn't we?'

'Of course.'

'Do we insist also that the power of dialectic is the only power which can reveal this? That it reveals it to the person who is expert in the subjects we have just been talking about? And that it is impossible in any other way?'

'Yes, these are things we should insist on,' he said.

- b 'At the very least, then, no one will quarrel with us if we claim it is a distinct and separate inquiry which systematically and universally attempts, for each thing just by itself, to grasp what that thing is. All other arts and sciences, without exception, are directed either towards human opinions and desires, or towards creation or manufacture, or towards the care of things which are growing or being manufactured. As for the subjects which we said *did* grasp some part of what really is – studies in
- c geometry and the disciplines which go with geometry – we can now see that as long as they leave the assumptions they use untouched, without being able to give any justification for them, they are only dreaming about what is. They cannot possibly have any waking awareness of it. After all, if the first principles of a subject are something you don't know, and the endpoint and intermediate steps are interwoven out of what you don't know, what possible mechanism can there ever be for turning a coherence between elements of this kind into knowledge?'¹⁵

'None,' he said.

'Very well,' I said. 'The dialectical method is the only one which in its determination to make itself secure proceeds by this route – doing away

- d with its assumptions until it reaches the first principle itself. Dialectic finds the eye of the soul firmly buried in a kind of morass of philistinism. Gently it pulls it free and leads it upwards, using the disciplines we have described as its allies and assistants in the process of conversion. We have generally followed convention in calling these disciplines branches of knowledge, but they really need some other name. Something clearer than opinion, but more obscure than knowledge. We may have used the term
- e "thinking" at some point earlier on.¹⁶ But I don't think people need argue about names when they have as many important matters still to investigate as we have.'

'No, they needn't,' he said.

'We'll be happy enough, then, to do what we did before. We'll call the

- 534 first section or category knowledge, the second thinking, the third belief, and the fourth conjecture. Three and four taken together we can call opinion, and one and two taken together, understanding. We'll say that opinion has to do with becoming, whereas understanding has to do with being; that as being is to becoming, so understanding is to opinion; and as understanding is to opinion, so knowledge is to belief, and thinking is to

¹⁵ Socrates is recalling the description of geometry at 510c–511a.

¹⁶ 511d–e.

conjecture. As for the proportions holding between the objects in these categories, and the division of the objects of opinion or the objects of understanding into two parts, let's leave all that on one side, Glaucon. Otherwise it will overwhelm us with a discussion many times as long as the one we've had so far.'

- b 'Very well. But as far as the rest of it goes, I for one agree with what you say. As far as I can follow it, that is.'

'In which case, is "dialectician" the name you give to the person who grasps the explanation of the being of each thing? As for the person who has no explanation, will you say that to the extent that he is unable to give an account of it, to himself or to anyone else, he has no intelligent understanding of it?'

'Of course I will,' he said.

- c 'The same goes for the good. Anyone who cannot use reason to distinguish the form of the good from everything else, who cannot fight his way through all attempts to disprove his theory in his eagerness to test it by the standard of being rather than the standard of opinion, who cannot make his way through all these dangers with his explanation unscathed – won't you say that a person who is in this state knows neither the good itself nor any other good? That if at any point he does lay hold of some image of it, he does so using opinion, not knowledge? That he is dreaming and dozing away his life on earth, and that one day
- d he will come to Hades and go to sleep for good, without ever waking up here at all?'

'Yes, all that is exactly what I shall say. And with some emphasis.'

'These children of yours, then, for whom you are providing this theoretical upbringing and education – suppose one day you found yourself bringing them up in real life. If they had as little reason to them as incommensurable lines in mathematics,¹⁷ I don't imagine you would still allow them to be rulers in your city and exercise control over matters of the greatest importance.'

'No, I wouldn't,' he said.

'Will you enact a law, then, requiring them to have a particularly good grasp of that branch of education which will give them the ability to ask and answer questions in the most expert way?'

- e 'Yes. I will enact such a law – with your help.'

'Would you say, in that case, that dialectic sits as a kind of coping-stone

¹⁷ 'Incommensurable' lines are, in Greek, 'irrational' (*alogos*) lines.

on the top of our educational edifice, and that there is no other subject left which we'd be justified in putting on top of it? Do you think our list of subjects for study is now complete?

535 'I do,' he said.

'That just leaves you with the question of allocation, then. Who are we going to give these subjects to? And how are we going to give them?'

'Yes, that obviously needs to be decided.'

'Do you remember our selection of rulers earlier on? Do you remember the kind of people we selected?'¹⁸

'Of course I do.'

'Well, you can take it that in general those must be the natures we should select. We must choose the most steadfast, the bravest and as far

b as possible the best-looking. In addition, not only must we look for noble and virile character; we also need people with a natural talent for this kind of education.'

'What talent is that?'

'I tell you, they must be like razors when it comes to studying,' I said, 'and they must find learning easy. The soul gives up much more easily during hard study than it does during physical exercise, since when it is studying the pain is more its own – specific to it, not shared with the body.'

'True.'

'The person we are looking for must also have a good memory, great

c resilience and tremendous energy. How else, do you suppose, will anyone be prepared both to endure the physical hardships and to complete such an extensive course of study and training?'

'I don't suppose anyone will be prepared to. Not unless he is altogether exceptional.'

'The trouble at the moment,' I said, 'the reason why philosophy has fallen into disrepute, as I was saying a little while ago, is that the wrong kind of people are taking it up.'¹⁹ We didn't want bastard, or illegitimate, philosophers taking it up. We wanted legitimate philosophers.'

'What do you mean by "legitimate"?'

d 'Well, take love of hard work, for a start. It's no good having a gammy leg if you're going to take up philosophy. No good working really hard in one half of the subject, and doing no work in the other half. That's what

¹⁸ 374e–376c (character of guardians); 412b–414a (testing and selection of rulers from among the guardians); 485a–487a (character of philosophers, with retrospective summaries at 490c–d and 494b); 503a–504a (testing and selection of philosopher-rulers). ¹⁹ 495c–496a.

happens when you get someone who is athletic, fond of hunting, and ready to work hard in all branches of physical exercise, but with no love of learning, no love of listening, no love of enquiry – in fact, bone idle in all these subjects. And anyone whose love of hard work is one-sided in the opposite direction is just as lame.'

'Very true,' he said.

- c 'Then there's the question of truth. Won't we in the same way define a soul as crippled if it hates a deliberate lie, cannot bear to tell one itself, and gets furious when other people tell them, but is quite content to put up with falsehoods which are not deliberate, doesn't mind some deficiency in its knowledge being revealed, and wallows happily in ignorance like a wild pig?'

536 'We certainly will.'

'And when it comes to self-discipline, courage, greatness of spirit, and all the other parts of virtue, we should be particularly careful to distinguish the illegitimate from the legitimate. Individuals and cities who don't know how to look for these characteristics can't help using those who are lame and, for their need of the moment, illegitimate. As a result individuals choose the wrong friends, and cities the wrong rulers.'

'Yes, that's exactly how it is,' he said.

'This is an area where we have to proceed with extreme caution,' I said.

- b 'If the people we introduce to an education in such an important branch of knowledge and such an important discipline are sound of limb and sound of mind, then justice herself will have no fault to find with us, and we shall be the saviours of our city and its regime. But if we introduce people of a quite different character, we shall achieve entirely the opposite result, and expose philosophy to a further flood of ridicule.'

'That would certainly be something to be ashamed of,' he said.

'It would indeed. Meanwhile *I* seem to be making a bit of a fool of myself, here and now.'

'In what way?'

- c 'I forgot this is just a game we are playing, and I got rather carried away. My eye fell on philosophy as I was speaking, and I think I got annoyed when I saw her undeservedly covered in filth. I spoke with too much heat, as if I were angry with those responsible.'

'You didn't speak with too much heat. Not for this hearer's taste, anyhow.'

'Well, it was too much for the *speaker's* taste,' I said. 'And there's another point we don't want to lose sight of. In our original selection of

- d rulers we were choosing old men,²⁰ but this time that won't do. We must not believe Solon when he tells us how good the old are at learning things. They are worse at learning than they are at running. Great and repeated effort is always the province of the young.'

'Inevitably.'

'So arithmetic, geometry, and all the education our future rulers need as a preliminary to dialectic – these are things we should offer them while they are still children. But we shouldn't present these subjects as a compulsory syllabus they have got to learn.'

'Why is that?'

- e 'Because for a free man learning should never be associated with slavery. Physical exertion, imposed by force, does the body no harm, but for the soul no forced learning can be lasting.'

'True,' he said.

537 'In which case, my friend, when you're bringing children up, don't use compulsion in teaching them. Use children's games instead. That will give you a better idea what each of them has a natural aptitude for.'

'There is some sense in what you say.'

'Do you remember us saying that children should be taken to war, mounted on horseback, as spectators? And that if the situation allowed it they should be taken in close and given a taste of blood, like young hounds?'²¹

'Yes, I do,' he said.

- b 'Well, in all these situations – exertion, or study, or when exposed to danger – we should select those who seem quickest, and put them on a shortlist.'

'At what age?'

'When they are finished with their compulsory physical education, that being a period of two or three years when it is impossible for them to do anything else.²² Exhaustion and sleep are the enemies of study. Besides, the performance of each individual in physical training is one of the yardsticks – and an important one at that.'

'Of course.'

- c 'At the end of this period,' I said, 'the chosen few among the twenty-year-olds will win greater recognition than the others. They must now take a unified view of subjects that were all mixed up in the course

²⁰ 412c. ²¹ 466e–467e.

²² Eighteen-year-old males at Athens in Plato's time entered a two-year period of compulsory military training and guard duty at frontier posts.

of their education as children, so that they can get an overall picture of these subjects' kinship with one another and to the nature of what is.'

'Yes,' he said, 'there's no doubt that learning of that kind – for those who possess it – is the only sort of learning which can be relied on.'

'It's also the most important test of the dialectical and non-dialectical nature. Anyone who has this overall picture is dialectical. Anyone who doesn't have it is not.'

'I agree.'

- d 'In that case, this is something you will have to keep an eye open for. You will have to see which among them most possess this quality, and which are resolute in their studies as well as being resolute in war and the other activities expected of them. These are the ones, when they reach the age of thirty, whom you must choose from among the chosen, and promote to greater distinctions. You must use the power of dialectic as your yardstick to decide who is capable of giving up eyesight – and sense-perception in general – and progressing, with the help of truth, to that which by itself is. This is an area, my friend, where we must be very much on our guard.'

'Over what, in particular?'

- e 'Aren't you aware of the damage done at the moment in the name of dialectic?'

'What damage?' he asked.

'Its students are filled with what I suppose we'd call contempt for the law.'

'Yes, utter contempt.'

'Do you find it at all surprising that they should be like that?' I asked.
'Can't you find excuses for them?'

'What excuses?'

- 538 'It's like the supposed child of a large and influential family, brought up in the midst of great wealth and among numerous flatterers, who realises, when he grows up to be a man, that he is not the son of these people claiming to be his parents, but can't find the people who really were his parents. Can you hazard a guess at his attitude both to the flatterers and to those who made the substitution – first during the time when he didn't know about the substitution, and then during the time when he did know? Or would you like to hear my guess?'

'Yes, I would,' he said.

- b 'Very well. My guess is that during the time when he didn't know the truth he would have more respect for his father, mother and other

members of his supposed family than he would for those who flattered him. He would be unlikely to ignore their needs, unlikely to break the law at all in the way he treated them or spoke to them, and unlikely to disobey them in anything important. But he would disobey the flatterers.'

'Very likely,' he said.

'But then when he realised the truth, my guess is that it would all change. His respect and enthusiasm for his relatives would dwindle, and c he'd turn to the flatterers instead. He'd take their advice more than he did before, start living by their values, and spend his time quite openly in their company. Unless he was an exceptionally well-balanced character, he would completely lose interest in his former father and the rest of those who made themselves out to be his family.'

'Yes, that's exactly the kind of thing that would happen. But what's your comparison got to do with people who take up argument?'

'This. We all have strongly held beliefs, I take it, going back to our childhood, about things which are just and things which are fine and beautiful. They're like our parents. We've grown up with them, we accept their authority, and we treat them with respect.'

d 'That is so.'

'But then we have other habits which are opposed to these opinions. They bring us pleasure, flattering our soul and trying to seduce it. People with any sense pay no attention to them. They value the opinions they got from their parents, and those are the ones they obey.'

'True.'

'When someone like this encounters the question "What is the beautiful?", and gives the answer he used to hear from the lawgiver, and argument shows it to be incorrect, what happens to him? He may have many of his answers refuted, in many different ways, and be reduced to e thinking that the beautiful is no more beautiful or fine than it is ugly or shameful. The same with "just", "good", and the things he used to have most respect for. At the end of this, what do you think his attitude to these strongly held beliefs will be, when it comes to respect for them and obedience to their authority?'

'It's impossible for him to go on feeling the same respect for them, or obeying them.'

'In which case,' I said, 'if he no longer regards these opinions as his own, or worthy of respect, in the way he once did, and if he cannot find 539 the true opinions, where else can he possibly turn, except to the life that flatters him?'

'Nowhere else,' he said.

'I imagine he'll be thought to have changed from a law-abiding citizen into a criminal.'

'Bound to be.'

'Isn't that just what you'd expect to happen to people who take up argument in this sort of way? As I said a few moments ago, it entitles them to a large measure of forgiveness.'

'Yes, and pity,' he said.

'Very well, then. If you don't want your thirty-year-olds to qualify for this kind of pity, you will have to take the greatest possible care how you allow them to take up argument.'

'I certainly will.'

- b 'Isn't one very effective safeguard not to let them get a taste for argument while they are young? You can't have forgotten what adolescents are like, the first time they get a taste of it. They regard it as a kind of game to be constantly turning arguments into their opposites. They imitate those they hear proving other people wrong by going out and doing the same thing themselves. They're like puppies in the delight they take in tugging at anyone within reach, and tearing them to pieces with their arguments.'

'Yes, they really do overdo it, don't they?'

- c 'And when they have themselves often proved other people wrong, and often been proved wrong, they suffer a sudden and disastrous lapse into the state of not believing any of the things they believed before. The result is that they themselves come in for a lot of criticism in the eyes of the world – and so does everything to do with philosophy.'

'That's absolutely true,' he said.

- d 'An older man would refuse to take part in that kind of madness. He will imitate the person who chooses to employ dialectic in the search for truth, rather than the person who engages in a game of contradiction for entertainment's sake. He will be a more balanced person himself, and will make philosophy more respected, not less respected.'

'Rightly so.'

'Hasn't everything that has been said so far been said precisely with a view to making sure that only people with orderly and reliable natures are to be introduced to argument? Not like now, when anybody at all, however unsuitable, can go in for it.'

'Exactly,' he said.

'Is it enough if they devote themselves to argument, and nothing else,

continuously and energetically, in a training equivalent to their physical training in the gymnasiums, only twice as long?’

- e ‘Does that mean six years, or four?’ he asked.

‘It doesn’t really matter. Call it five. After that you will have to make them go back down into the cave we were talking about. You will have to compel them to hold military command, and any other position which is suitable for the young, so that others will not have an advantage over them

- 540 in practical experience. And even in these positions they must be on trial, to see if they will stand firm when they are pulled in different directions, or if they will to some extent give way.’

‘And how long do you think this stage should be?’

‘Fifteen years,’ I said. ‘Then, when they are fifty years old, those who have survived and been completely successful in every sphere, both in practical affairs and in their studies, should now be conducted to the final goal, and required to direct the radiant light of the soul towards the contemplation of that which itself gives light to everything. And when they

- b have seen the good itself, they must make that their model, and spend the rest of their lives, each group in turn, in governing the city, the individuals in it, and themselves. They can spend most of their time in philosophy, but when their turn comes, then for the benefit of the city each group must endure the trials of politics, and be rulers. They will regard it as a necessity rather than a privilege. In this way, after educating a continuous succession of others like themselves, and leaving them behind to take their place as guardians of the city, they will finally depart,
- c and live in the islands of the blest. The city will put up memorials to them, and institute sacrifices, at the public expense, honouring them as divine spirits, if the Pythian priestess permits – or if not, as divinely inspired and fortunate.’

‘What wonderful men you have fashioned as your rulers, Socrates. Just like a sculptor.’

‘Men *and women*, Glaucon. You mustn’t think that in what I have been saying I have had men in mind any more than women – those of them who are born with the right natural abilities.’

‘Quite right,’ he said. ‘Assuming, that is, that they are going to be equal partners with men in the way we described.²³

- d ‘Very well. Do you agree that our ideas about the city and its regime have not just been wishful thinking? What we want is difficult, but not

²³ 451c–466d.

impossible. However, it is possible only in the way we have described, when true philosophers – it might be a number of them, or it might be just one – become rulers in our city. They will show their contempt for what are now regarded as honours, believing them to be worthless and demeaning. They will set the highest possible value on what is right, and the honours resulting from it. Their most important and demanding guide will be justice. They will serve justice, watch over its growth, and in this way keep their city on the right lines.'

'How will they do that?' he asked.

541 'Let them send everyone in the city over the age of ten into the countryside. Then they can isolate these people's children from the values they hold at the moment – their parents' values – and bring the children up according to their own customs and laws, which are of the kind we described earlier. Don't you agree that this will be the quickest and simplest way for the city and regime we were talking about to come into being, making itself happy and bringing a large number of benefits to the nation in which it originates?'

b 'Yes. Much the quickest and simplest. I think you have given us a good idea, Socrates, of the way it would come about, if it ever did come about.'²⁴

'In that case,' I said, 'isn't our discussion of this city, and the corresponding individual, now complete? After all, I imagine it's pretty clear what we are going to say that individual should be like.'

'Yes, it is clear,' he said. 'And in reply to your question, I do think this subject of discussion is complete.'

²⁴ Banishing elements of a population from a city to the surrounding countryside was not without historic parallel (see pp. xv–xvii of the introduction), and in the Greek world in general populations were relocated with what to us would seem alarming frequency. But there was no historic parallel for removing a whole class of parents to the countryside without their children.

POETICS 6

Epic matches tragedy to the extent of being mimesis of elevated matters^a in metrical language; but they differ in that epic has an unchanging metre and is in narrative mode.^b They also differ in length: tragedy tends so far as possible to stay within a single revolution of the sun, or close to it, while epic is unlimited in time span and is distinctive in this respect (though to begin with the poets followed this same practice in tragedy as in epic). Epic and tragedy have some components in common, but others are peculiar to tragedy. So whoever knows about good and bad tragedy knows the same about epic, as epic's resources belong to tragedy,^c but tragedy's are not all to be found in epic.

VI We shall later discuss the art of mimesis in hexameters,^d as well as comedy.^e But let us now discuss tragedy, taking up the definition of its essence which emerges from what has already been said. Tragedy, then, is mimesis of an action which is elevated,^f complete, and of magnitude; in language embellished by distinct forms in its sections; employing the mode of enactment, not narrative; and through pity and fear accomplishing the

^a Or “characters”; for “elevated” see on 49b24.

^b Cf. the distinctions in chs. I–III; Homer's combination of narrative with personation (48a21–2) is here left aside.

^c Cf. 62a14–15.

^d I.e. epic; cf. 59a17.

^e The discussion of comedy is lost; cf. on 62b19, and see the Introduction at n. 5.

^f *Spoudaios*, the same adj. used for characters at e.g. 48a2; it denotes ethical distinction and gravity of tone. Cf. the Introduction.

ARISTOTLE

λόγον τὸν ἔχοντα ρύθμὸν καὶ ἀρμονίαν,¹ τὸ δὲ
 χωρὶς τοῖς εἴδεσι τὸ διὰ μέτρων ἔνια μόνον περαιώνε-
 30 σθαι καὶ πάλιν ἔτερα διὰ μέλους. ἐπεὶ δὲ πράττον-
 τες ποιοῦνται τὴν μίμησιν, πρῶτον μὲν ἐξ ἀνάγκης
 ἀν εἴη τι μόριον τραγῳδίας ὁ τῆς ὄψεως κόσμος·
 εἶτα μελοποιία καὶ λέξις, ἐν τούτοις γὰρ ποιοῦνται
 τὴν μίμησιν. λέγω δὲ λέξιν μὲν αὐτὴν τὴν τῶν
 μέτρων σύνθεσιν, μελοποιίαν δὲ ὁ τὴν δύναμιν
 35 φανερὰν ἔχει πᾶσαν. ἐπεὶ δὲ πράξεώς ἐστι μίμησις,
 πράττεται δὲ ὑπὸ τινῶν πραττόντων οὓς ἀνάγκη ποι-
 ούς τινας εἶναι κατά τε τὸ ἥθος καὶ τὴν διάνοιαν
 (διὰ γὰρ τούτων καὶ τὰς πράξεις εἶναι φαμεν ποιάς
 1450a τινας,² καὶ κατὰ ταύτας καὶ τυγχάνουσι καὶ ἀπο-
 τυγχάνουσι πάντες), ἔστιν δὲ τῆς μὲν πράξεως ὁ
 μῦθος ἡ μίμησις, λέγω γὰρ μῦθον τοῦτον τὴν σύν-
 θεσιν τῶν πραγμάτων, τὰ δὲ ἥθη, καθ' ὁ ποιούς
 5 τινας εἶναι φαμεν τοὺς πράττοντας, διάνοιαν δέ, ἐν
 ὅσοις λέγοντες ἀποδεικνύασίν τι ἡ καὶ ἀποφαίνονται
 γνώμην. ἀνάγκη οὖν πάσης τῆς³ τραγῳδίας μέρη
 εἶναι ἐξ, καθ' ὁ ποιά τις ἐστὶν ἡ τραγῳδία· ταῦτα δ'
 ἐστὶ μῦθος καὶ ἥθη καὶ λέξις καὶ διάνοια καὶ ὄψις
 10 καὶ μελοποιία. οἷς μὲν γὰρ μιμοῦνται, δύο μέρη
 ἐστίν, ὡς δὲ μιμοῦνται, ἔν, ἢ δὲ μιμοῦνται, τρία, καὶ
 παρὰ ταῦτα οὐδέν. τούτοις μὲν οὖν οὐκ ὀλίγοι

¹ ἀρμονίαν καὶ μέλος AB: καὶ μ. del. Tyrwhitt

² post τινας seq. πέφυκεν αἴτια δύο τῶν πράξεων εἶναι,
διάνοια [-an, A] καὶ ἥθος in AB: πέφυκεν . . . ἥθος secl. Else

³ τῆς B: om. A

POETICS 6

catharsis^a of such emotions. I use “embellished” for language with rhythm and melody, and “distinct forms” for the fact that some parts are conveyed through metrical speech alone, others again through song. Since actors render the mimesis, some part of tragedy will, in the first place, necessarily be the arrangement of spectacle;^b to which can be added lyric poetry and diction, for these are the media in which they render the mimesis. By “diction”^c I mean the actual composition of the metrical speech; the sense of “lyric poetry”^d is entirely clear. Since tragedy is mimesis of an action, and the action is conducted by agents who should have certain qualities in both character and thought (as it is these factors which allow us to ascribe qualities to their actions too, and it is in their actions that all men find success or failure), the plot is the mimesis of the action—for I use “plot” to denote the construction of events, “character” to mean that in virtue of which we ascribe certain qualities to the agents, and “thought” to cover the parts in which, through speech, they demonstrate something or declare their views. Tragedy as a whole, therefore, must have six components, which give it its qualities—namely, plot, character, diction, thought, spectacle, and lyric poetry. The media of the mimesis are two components, its mode one, and its objects three;^e there are no others. Now, these

^a The term (the most controversial in the work) is never defined; cf. the Introduction. ^b I.e. the visual aspects of the action, esp. the appearance of the agents; cf. the end of ch. VI and the start of ch. XIV. ^c *Lexis*: see chs. XIX-XXII.

^d *Melopoīa* covers the sung parts of tragedy. ^e This matches the components with chs. I-III’s scheme: media = diction, lyric poetry; mode = spectacle (i.e. enactment); objects = plot, character, thought.

ARISTOTLE

αὐτῶν¹ κέχρηνται τοῖς εἴδεσιν· καὶ γὰρ ὄψεις² ἔχει πᾶν ώς εἰπεῖν¹ καὶ ἥθος καὶ μῦθον καὶ λέξιν καὶ μέλος καὶ διανοιαν ὡσαύτως. μέγιστον δὲ τούτων
 15 ἔστιν ἡ τῶν πραγμάτων σύστασις. ἡ γὰρ τραγῳδία μίμησίς ἔστιν οὐκ ἀνθρώπων ἀλλὰ πράξεως³ καὶ βίου, καὶ εὐδαιμονία καὶ κακοδαιμονία ἐν πράξει
 20 ἔστιν, καὶ τὸ τέλος πρᾶξίς τις ἔστιν, οὐ ποιότης· εἰσὶν δὲ κατὰ μὲν τὰ ἥθη ποιοί τινες, κατὰ δὲ τὰς πράξεις εὐδαιμονες ἡ τούναντίον. οὔκουν ὅπως τὰ
 25 ἥθη μιμήσωνται πράττουσιν, ἀλλὰ τὰ ἥθη συμπεριλαμβάνουσιν διὰ τὰς πράξεις· ὥστε τὰ πράγματα καὶ ὁ μῦθος τέλος τῆς τραγῳδίας, τὸ δὲ τέλος μέγιστον ἀπάντων. ἔτι ἄνευ μὲν πράξεως οὐκ ἀν γένοιτο τραγῳδία, ἄνευ δὲ ἥθων γένοιτ' ἄν· αἱ γὰρ τῶν νέων
 30 τῶν πλείστων ἀήθεις τραγῳδίαι εἰσίν, καὶ ὅλως ποιηταὶ πολλοὶ τοιοῦτοι, οἷον καὶ τῶν γραφέων Ζεῦξις πρὸς Πολύγνωτον πέπονθεν· ὁ μὲν γὰρ Πολύγνωτος ἀγαθὸς ἥθογράφος, ἡ δὲ Ζεύξιδος γραφὴ οὐδὲν ἔχει ἥθος. ἔτι ἐάν τις ἐφεξῆς θῆ ρήσεις ἥθικὰς καὶ λέξει⁴ καὶ διανοίᾳ εὖ πεποιημένας, οὐ ποιήσει ὁ ἥν τῆς τραγῳδίας ἔργον, ἀλλὰ πολὺ μᾶλλον ἡ καταδεεστέροις τούτοις κεχρημένη τραγῳδία,
 35 ἔχουσα δὲ μῦθον καὶ σύστασιν πραγμάτων. πρὸς

¹ αὐτῶν ώς εἰπεῖν AB: ώς εἰπεῖν post πᾶν (a13) transpos.

Bywater

² ὄψεις rec.: ὄψις AB

³ πράξεως A: -εων B

⁴ λέξει καὶ διανοίᾳ Vahlen: λέξεις καὶ διανοίας AB

POETICS 6

have been used by a majority of poets as their basic elements,^a since practically every drama has items of spectacle, character, plot, diction, lyric poetry, and thought, alike. The most important of these things is the structure of events, because tragedy is mimesis not of persons^b but of action and life; and happiness and unhappiness consist in action, and the goal^c is a certain kind of action, not a qualitative state: it is in virtue of character that people have certain qualities, but through their actions that they are happy or the reverse. So it is not in order to provide mimesis of character that the agents act; rather, their characters are included for the sake of their actions. Thus, the events and the plot are the goal of tragedy, and the goal is the most important thing of all. Besides, without action there could be no tragedy, but without character there could be: in fact, the works of most of the recent poets are lacking in character, and in general there are many such poets (as with Zeuxis' relationship to Polygnotus among painters: Polygnotus is a fine depicter of character, while Zeuxis' painting contains no character).^d Again, if someone lays out a string of speeches that express character and are well composed in diction and thought, he will not achieve the stated function of tragedy; much more successful will be a tragedy which, though deficient in these other elements, has a plot and structure of events. In addition, tragedy's most

^a Text and sense are here greatly disputed; cf. 52b14.

^b I.e. not of personal qualities *per se*.

^c Of either drama or life: Ar. may mean both.

^d Zeuxis (late 5th cent.) pioneered new techniques of realism; cf. 61b12 (idealisation of human form). Polygnotus: see on 48a5.

ARISTOTLE

δὲ τούτοις τὰ μέγιστα οῖς ψυχαγωγεῖ ἡ τραγῳδία
 τοῦ μύθου μέρη ἔστιν, αἱ τε περιπέτειαι καὶ ἀναγνω-
 ρίσεις. ἔτι σημεῖον ὅτι καὶ οἱ ἐγχειροῦντες ποιεῖν
 35 πρότερον δύνανται τῇ λέξει καὶ τοῖς ἥθεσιν ἀκρι-
 βοῦν ἢ τὰ πράγματα συνίστασθαι, οἷον καὶ οἱ πρώ-
 τοι ποιηταὶ σχεδὸν ἄπαντες.

ἀρχὴ μὲν οὖν καὶ οἶον ψυχὴ ὁ μῦθος τῆς τραγῳ-
 δίας, δεύτερον δὲ τὰ ἥθη (παραπλήσιον γάρ ἔστιν
 καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γραφικῆς· εἰ γάρ τις ἐναλείψει τοῖς
 1450b καλλίστοις φαρμάκοις χύδην, οὐκ ἀν δομοίως εὐφρά-
 νειεν καὶ λευκογραφήσας εἰκόνα). ἔστιν τε μίμησις
 πράξεως καὶ διὰ ταύτην μάλιστα τῶν πραττόντων.
 τρίτον δὲ ἡ διάνοια· τοῦτο δέ ἔστιν τὸ λέγειν δύνα-
 σθαι τὰ ἐνόντα καὶ τὰ ἀρμόττοντα, ὅπερ ἐπὶ τῶν
 5 λόγων τῆς πολιτικῆς καὶ ρήτορικῆς ἔργον ἔστιν· οἱ
 μὲν γὰρ ἀρχαῖοι πολιτικῶς ἐποίουν λέγοντας, οἱ δὲ
 νῦν ρήτορικῶς. ἔστιν δὲ ἥθος μὲν τὸ τοιοῦτον ὃ
 δηλοῖ τὴν προαιρεσιν, ὅποιά¹ τις ἐν οἷς οὐκ ἔστι
 δῆλον ἢ προαιρεῖται ἢ φεύγει (διόπερ οὐκ ἔχουσιν
 10 ἥθος τῶν λόγων ἐν οἷς μηδ' ὄλως ἔστιν ὅ τι προαι-
 ρεῖται ἢ φεύγει ὁ λέγων), διάνοια δὲ ἐν οἷς ἀποδει-
 κνύουσί τι ὡς ἔστιν ἢ ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν ἢ καθόλου τι
 ἀποφαίνονται. τέταρτον δὲ τῶν μὲν λόγων ἡ λέξις·
 λέγω δέ, ὥσπερ πρότερον εἴρηται, λέξιν εἶναι τὴν
 διὰ τῆς ὀνομασίας ἔρμηνείαν, ὃ καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἐμμέ-
 τρων καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν λόγων ἔχει τὴν αὐτὴν δύναμιν.
 15 τῶν δὲ λοιπῶν ἡ μελοποία μέγιστον τῶν ἡδυσμά-

¹ ὅποιά τις AB: ὅποια τις Lat.

POETICS 6

potent means of emotional effect are components of plot, namely reversals and recognitions.^a A further pointer is that apprentice poets can achieve precision in diction and characterisation sooner than structure the events, as likewise with almost all the early poets.

Plot, then, is the first principle and, as it were, soul of tragedy, while character is secondary. (A similar principle also holds in painting: if one were to cover a surface randomly with the finest colours, one would provide less pleasure than by an outline of a picture.) Tragedy is mimesis of action, and it is chiefly for the sake of the action that it represents the agents.^b Third in importance is thought: that is, the capacity to say what is pertinent and apt, which in formal speeches is the task of politics and rhetoric. The earliest poets made people speak politically, present day poets make them speak rhetorically. Character is that which reveals moral choice—that is, when otherwise^c unclear, what kinds of thing an agent chooses or rejects (which is why speeches in which there is nothing at all the speaker chooses or rejects contain no character); while thought covers the parts in which they demonstrate that something is or is not so, or declare a general view. Fourth is the diction of the spoken sections: as stated earlier, I define diction as expression through choice of words—something which has the same capacity in both verse and prose. Of the remainder, lyric poetry is the greatest embellishment, while spectacle

^a See ch. XI for definitions.

^b The same principle as 50a16–17.

^c Sc. from the action; cf. 54a17–19.

ARISTOTLE

των, ἡ δὲ ὄψις ψυχαγωγικὸν μέν, ἀτεχνότατον δὲ καὶ
ῆκιστα οἰκεῖον τῆς ποιητικῆς· ἡ γὰρ τῆς τραγῳδίας
δύναμις καὶ ἄνευ ἀγῶνος καὶ ὑποκριτῶν ἔστιν, ἐπὶ δὲ
κυριωτέρα περὶ τὴν ἀπεργασίαν τῶν ὄψεων ἡ τοῦ
σκευοποιοῦ τέχνη τῆς τῶν ποιητῶν ἔστιν.

VII Διωρισμένων δὲ τούτων, λέγωμεν μετὰ ταῦτα
ποίαν τινὰ δεῖ τὴν σύστασιν εἶναι τῶν πραγμάτων,
ἐπειδὴ τοῦτο καὶ πρῶτον καὶ μέγιστον τῆς τραγῳδίας
ἔστιν. κεῖται δὴ¹ ἡμῖν τὴν τραγῳδίαν τελείας
καὶ ὅλης πράξεως εἶναι μίμησιν ἔχουσης τι μέγε-
θος· ἔστιν γὰρ ὅλον καὶ μηδὲν ἔχον μέγεθος. ὅλον
δέ ἔστιν τὸ ἔχον ἀρχὴν καὶ μέσον καὶ τελευτὴν.
ἀρχὴ δέ ἔστιν ὃ αὐτὸ μὲν μὴ ἐξ ἀνάγκης μετ' ἄλλο
ἔστιν, μετ' ἐκεῖνο δ' ἔτερον πέφυκεν εἶναι ἡ γίνε-
σθαι· τελευτὴ δὲ τούναντίον ὃ αὐτὸ μὲν μετ' ἄλλο
πέφυκεν εἶναι ἡ ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἡ ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πολύ, μετὰ
δὲ τοῦτο ἄλλο οὐδέν· μέσον δὲ ὃ καὶ αὐτὸ μετ' ἄλλο
καὶ μετ' ἐκεῖνο ἔτερον. δεῖ ἀρά τοὺς συνεστῶτας εὖ
μύθους μήθ' ὅπόθεν ἔτυχεν ἀρχεσθαι μήθ' ὅπου
ἔτυχε τελευτᾶν, ἀλλὰ κεχρῆσθαι ταῖς εἰρημέναις
ἰδέαις. ἐπὶ δ' ἐπεὶ τὸ καλὸν καὶ ζῷον καὶ ἄπαν
πρᾶγμα ὃ συνέστηκεν ἐκ τινῶν οὐ μόνον ταῦτα
τεταγμένα δεῖ ἔχειν ἄλλὰ καὶ μέγεθος ὑπάρχειν μὴ
τὸ τυχόν· τὸ γὰρ καλὸν ἐν μεγέθει καὶ τάξει ἔστιν,
διὸ οὔτε πάμμικρον ἀν τι γένοιτο καλὸν ζῷον
(συγχεῖται γὰρ ἡ θεωρία ἐγγὺς τοῦ ἀναισθήτου
χρόνου γινομένη) οὔτε παμμέγεθες (οὐ γὰρ ἄμα ἡ
θεωρία γίνεται ἄλλ' οἴχεται τοῖς θεωροῦσι τὸ ἐν καὶ

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VI

POETICS 7

is emotionally potent but falls quite outside the art and is not integral to poetry: tragedy's capacity is independent of performance and actors, and, besides, the costumier's^a art has more scope than the poet's for rendering effects of spectacle.

II Given these definitions, let us next discuss the required qualities of the structure of events, since this is the principal and most important factor in tragedy. We have stipulated that tragedy is mimesis of an action that is complete, whole, and of magnitude (for one can have a whole which lacks magnitude). A whole is that which has a beginning, middle, and end. A beginning is that which does not itself follow necessarily from something else, but after which a further event or process naturally occurs. An end, by contrast, is that which itself naturally occurs, whether necessarily or usually, after a preceding event, but need not be followed by anything else. A middle is that which both follows a preceding event and has further consequences. Well-constructed plots, therefore, should neither begin nor end at an arbitrary point, but should make use of the patterns stated. Besides, a beautiful object, whether an animal or anything else with a structure of parts, should have not only its parts ordered but also an appropriate magnitude: beauty consists in magnitude and order, which is why there could not be a beautiful animal which was either minuscule (as contemplation of it, occurring in an almost imperceptible moment, has no distinctness) or gigantic (as contemplation of it has no cohesion, but those who contemplate it lose a sense of

^a Responsible, above all, for mask-making.

¹ δῆ Bywater: δε AB

ARISTOTLE

τὸ ὄλον ἐκ τῆς θεωρίας), οἶνον εἰ μυρίων σταδίων εἴη
 ζῷον· ὥστε δεῖ καθάπερ ἐπὶ τῶν σωμάτων καὶ ἐπὶ¹
 τῶν ζῷων ἔχειν μὲν μέγεθος, τοῦτο δὲ εὐσύνοπτον
 5 εἶναι, οὗτο καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν μύθων ἔχειν μὲν μῆκος,
 τοῦτο δὲ εὔμνημόνευτον εἶναι. τοῦ δὲ μήκους ὄρος
 ὁ¹ μὲν πρὸς τοὺς ἀγῶνας καὶ τὴν αἴσθησιν οὐ τῆς
 τέχνης ἐστίν· εἰ γὰρ ἔδει ἐκατὸν τραγῳδίας ἀγωνί-
 ζεσθαι, πρὸς κλεψύδρας ἀν ἡγωνίζοντο, ὥσπερ ποτὲ
 καὶ ἄλλοτέ φασιν. ὁ δὲ κατ' αὐτὴν τὴν φύσιν τοῦ
 10 πράγματος ὄρος, ἀεὶ μὲν ὁ μείζων μέχρι τοῦ σύνδη-
 λος εἶναι καλλίων ἐστὶ κατὰ τὸ μέγεθος· ὡς δὲ
 ἀπλῶς διορίσαντας εἰπεῖν, ἐν ὅσῳ μεγέθει κατὰ τὸ
 εἰκὸς ἢ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον ἐφεξῆς γιγνομένων συμβαίνει
 εἰς εὐτυχίαν ἐκ δυστυχίας ἢ ἐξ εὐτυχίας εἰς δυστυ-
 15 χίαν μεταβάλλειν, ἵκανὸς ὄρος ἐστὶν τοῦ μεγέθους.

VIII Μῦθος δ' ἐστὶν εἶς οὐχ ὥσπερ τινὲς οἴονται ἐὰν
 περὶ ἔνα ἢ· πολλὰ γὰρ καὶ ἄπειρα τῷ ἐνὶ συμβαίνει,
 ἐξ ὧν ἐνίων οὐδέν ἐστιν ἔν· οὕτως δὲ καὶ πράξεις
 ἐνὸς πολλαί εἰσιν, ἐξ ὧν μία οὐδεμία γίνεται πρᾶξις.
 διὸ πάντες ἐοίκασιν ἀμαρτάνειν ὅσοι τῶν ποιητῶν
 20 Ἡρακληίδα Θησηίδα καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα ποιήματα
 πεποιήκασιν· οἴονται γάρ, ἐπεὶ εῖς ἦν ὁ Ἡρακλῆς,
 ἔνα καὶ τὸν μῦθον εἶναι προσήκειν. ὁ δ' Ὁμηρος
 ὥσπερ καὶ τὰ ἄλλα διαφέρει καὶ τοῦτ' ἔοικεν καλῶς

¹ ὁ add. Ellebodius

^a The ref. is obscure, but Ar.'s rejection of contingent conventions is clear.

POETICS 8

unity and wholeness), say an animal a thousand miles long. So just as with our bodies and with animals beauty requires magnitude, but magnitude that allows coherent perception, likewise plots require length, but length that can be coherently remembered. A limit of length referring to competitions and powers of attention is extrinsic to the art: for if it were necessary for a hundred tragedies to compete, they would perform them by water clocks, as they say happened once before.^a But the limit that conforms to the actual nature of the matter is that greater size, provided clear coherence remains, means finer beauty of magnitude. To state the definition plainly: the size which permits a transformation to occur, in a probable or necessary sequence of events,^b from adversity to prosperity or prosperity to adversity,^c is a sufficient limit of magnitude.

VIII

A plot is not unified, as some think, if built round an individual.^d Any entity has innumerable features, not all of which cohere into a unity; likewise, an individual performs many actions which yield no unitary action. So all those poets are clearly at fault who have composed a Heracleid, a Theseid, and similar poems: they think that, since Heracles was an individual, the plot^e too must be unitary. But Homer, in keeping with his general superiority, evidently grasped well, whether by art or nature, this

^b Probability and necessity: Ar.'s recurrent criteria of what makes "natural" sense within human lives.

^c On alternative directions of "transformation," see esp. chs. XIII–XIV.

^d I.e. unity of "hero" is not a sufficient (or even necessary) condition for unity of plot.

^e Sc. of H.'s life.

ARISTOTLE

ιδεῖν, ἥτοι διὰ τέχνην ἢ διὰ φύσιν· Ὁδύσσειαν γὰρ
 25 ποιῶν οὐκ ἐποίησεν ἄπαντα δσα αὐτῷ συνέβη (οἶν
 πληγῆναι μὲν ἐν τῷ Παρνασσῷ, μανῆναι δὲ προσ-
 ποιήσασθαι ἐν τῷ ἀγερμῷ), ὅν οὐδὲν θατέρου γενο-
 μένου ἀναγκαῖον ἦν ἢ εἰκὸς θάτερον γενέσθαι, ἀλλὰ
 περὶ μίαν πρᾶξιν οἴαν λέγομεν τὴν Ὁδύσσειαν
 συνέστησεν, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ τὴν Ἰλιάδα. χρὴ οὖν,
 30 καθάπερ καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἄλλαις μιμητικαῖς ἢ μία μίμη-
 σις ἐνός ἔστιν, οὗτῳ καὶ τὸν μῦθον, ἐπεὶ πράξεως
 μίμησίς ἔστι, μιᾶς τε εἶναι καὶ ταύτης ὅλης, καὶ τὰ
 μέρη συνεστάναι τῶν πραγμάτων οὗτως ὥστε μετα-
 τιθεμένου τινὸς μέρους ἢ ἀφαιρουμένου διαφέρεσθαι
 35 καὶ κινεῖσθαι τὸ ὅλον· ὃ γὰρ προσὸν ἢ μὴ προσὸν
 μηδὲν ποιεῖ ἐπίδηλον, οὐδὲν μόριον τοῦ ὅλου ἔστιν.

IX Φανερὸν δὲ ἐκ τῶν εἰρημένων καὶ ὅτι οὐ τὸ τὰ
 γενόμενα λέγειν, τοῦτα ποιητοῦ ἔργον ἔστιν, ἀλλ’
 οἷα ἀν γένοιτο καὶ τὰ δυνατὰ κατὰ τὸ εἰκὸς ἢ τὸ
 ἀναγκαῖον. ὁ γὰρ ἴστορικὸς καὶ ὁ ποιητὴς οὐ τῷ ἢ
 1451b ἔμμετρα λέγειν ἢ ἀμετρα διαφέρουσιν· εἴη γὰρ ἀν
 τὰ Ἡροδότου εἰς μέτρα τεθῆναι καὶ οὐδὲν ἥττον ἀν
 εἴη ἴστορία τις μετὰ μέτρου ἢ ἄνευ μέτρων· ἀλλὰ
 τούτῳ διαφέρει, τῷ τὸν μὲν τὰ γενόμενα λέγειν, τὸν
 5 δὲ οἷα ἀν γένοιτο. διὸ καὶ φιλοσοφώτερον καὶ
 σπουδαιότερον ποίησις ἴστορίας ἔστιν· ἢ μὲν γὰρ
 ποίησις μᾶλλον τὰ καθόλου, ἢ δ’ ἴστορία τὰ καθ’
 ἔκαστον λέγει. ἔστιν δὲ καθόλου μέν, τῷ ποίῳ τὰ
 ποῖα ἄττα συμβαίνει λέγειν ἢ πράττειν κατὰ τὸ

IX

POETICS 9

point too: for though composing an *Odyssey*, he did not include every feature of the hero's life (e.g. his wounding on Parnassus, or his feigned madness in the call to arms),^a where events lacked necessary or probable connections; but he structured the *Odyssey* round a unitary action of the kind I mean, and likewise with the *Iliad*. Just as, therefore, in the other mimetic arts a unitary mimesis has a unitary object, so too the plot, since it is mimesis of an action, should be of a unitary and indeed whole action; and the component events should be so structured that if any is displaced or removed, the sense of the whole is disturbed and dislocated: since that whose presence or absence has no clear significance is not an integral part of the whole.

IX It is also evident from what has been said that it is not the poet's function to relate actual events, but the *kinds* of things that might occur and are possible in terms of probability or necessity. The difference between the historian and the poet is not that between using verse or prose; Herodotus' work could be versified and would be just as much a kind of history in verse as in prose. No, the difference is this: that the one relates actual events, the other the kinds of things that might occur. Consequently, poetry is more philosophical and more elevated^b than history, since poetry relates more of the universal, while history relates particulars.^c "Universal" means the kinds of things which it suits a certain kind of person to say or do,

^a Wounding: described, but only as recollection, at *Od.* 19.392–466. The *Od.* never mentions Odysseus' madness, feigned to avoid joining the Trojan expedition.

^b Of greater ethical import (by philosophical standards); see on 49b24. ^c On history and particulars cf. 59a21–9.

ARISTOTLE

εἰκὸς ἢ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον, οὐ στοχάζεται ἡ ποίησις ὄνό-
 10 ματα ἐπιτιθεμένη· τὸ δὲ καθ' ἔκαστον, τί Ἀλκιβιά-
 δης ἔπραξεν ἢ τί ἔπαθεν. ἐπὶ μὲν οὖν τῆς κωμῳδίας
 ἥδη τοῦτο δῆλον γέγονεν· συστήσαντες γὰρ τὸν
 μῦθον διὰ τῶν εἰκότων οὗτω τὰ τυχόντα ὄνόματα
 ὑποτιθέασιν, καὶ οὐχ ὥσπερ οἱ ἰαμβοποιοὶ περὶ τὸν
 15 καθ' ἔκαστον ποιοῦσιν. ἐπὶ δὲ τῆς τραγῳδίας τῶν
 γενομένων ὄνομάτων ἀντέχονται. αἴτιον δ' ὅτι πιθα-
 νόν ἔστι τὸ δυνατόν· τὰ μὲν οὖν μὴ γενόμενα οὕπω
 πιστεύομεν εἶναι δυνατά, τὰ δὲ γενόμενα φανερὸν
 ὅτι δυνατά· οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἐγένετο, εἰ ἦν ἀδύνατα. οὐ
 20 μὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν ταῖς τραγῳδίαις ἐν ἐνίαις μὲν ἐν ἧ
 δύο τῶν γυνωρίμων ἔστιν ὄνομάτων, τὰ δὲ ἄλλα
 πεποιημένα, ἐν ἐνίαις δὲ οὐθέν, οἷον ἐν τῷ Ἀγάθω-
 νος Ἀνθεῖ.¹ ὁμοίως γὰρ ἐν τούτῳ τά τε πράγματα
 καὶ τὰ ὄνόματα πεποίηται, καὶ οὐδὲν ἥπτον εὐφραί-
 νει. ὥστ' οὐ πάντως εἶναι ζητητέον τῶν παραδεδο-
 μένων μύθων, περὶ οὓς αἱ τραγῳδίαι εἰσίν, ἀντέχε-
 25 σθαι. καὶ γὰρ γελοῖον τοῦτο ζητεῖν, ἐπεὶ καὶ τὰ
 γυνώριμα ὀλίγοις γυνώριμά ἔστιν, ἀλλ' ὁμως εὐφραί-
 νει πάντας. δῆλον οὖν ἐκ τούτων ὅτι τὸν ποιητὴν
 μᾶλλον τῶν μύθων εἶναι δεῖ ποιητὴν ἢ τῶν μέτρων,
 ὅσῳ ποιητὴς κατὰ τὴν μίμησίν ἔστιν, μιμεῖται δὲ
 τὰς πράξεις. καὶ ἄρα συμβῇ γενόμενα ποιεῖν, οὐθὲν
 30 ἥπτον ποιητής ἔστι· τῶν γὰρ γενομένων ἔνια οὐδὲν

¹ Ἀνθεῖ Welcker: ἀνθεῖ AB

^a Names denote particulars.

POETICS 9

in terms of probability or necessity: poetry aims for this, even though attaching names^a to the agents. A “particular” means, say, what Alcibiades did or experienced. In comedy, this point has by now^b become obvious: the poets construct the plot on the basis of probability, and only then supply arbitrary names; they do not, like iambic poets, write about a particular person.^c But in tragedy they adhere to the actual^d names. The reason is that the possible seems plausible: about the possibility of things which have not occurred we are not yet sure;^e but it is evident that actual events are possible—they could not otherwise have occurred. Yet even in some tragedies there are only one or two familiar names, while the rest are invented; and in certain plays no name is familiar, for example in Agathon’s *Antheus*:^f in this work, events and names alike have been invented, yet it gives no less pleasure for that. So adherence to the traditional plots of tragedy should not be sought at all costs. Indeed, to seek this is absurd, since even the familiar subjects are familiar only to a minority, yet nonetheless please everyone. It is clear from these points, then, that the poet should be more a maker^g of plots than of verses, in so far as he is a poet by virtue of mimesis,^h and his mimesis is of actions. So even should his poetry concern actual events, he is no less a poet for that, as there is nothing to prevent

^a Some time in the mid-4th cent.: see the Introduction.

^b See on 49b8.

^c I.e. supplied by the traditional myths (cf. 51b24–5); Ar. treats this, by simplification, as synonymous with historical fact.

^d The sentence characterises an ordinary mentality.

^e Nothing else is known about this work (*TrGF* I 161–2); Agathon was active c. 420–400. ^g *Poietēs* means both “maker” and “poet.” ^h Cf. 47b15.

ARISTOTLE

κωλύει τοιαῦτα εἶναι οīα ἀν εἰκὸς γενέσθαι καὶ δυνατὰ γενέσθαι, καθ' ὁ ἐκεῖνος αὐτῶν ποιητής ἔστιν.

τῶν δὲ ἀπλῶν¹ μύθων καὶ πράξεων αἱ ἐπεισοδιώδεις εἰσὶν χείρισται· λέγω δ' ἐπεισοδιώδη μύθον ἐν ὧ τὰ ἐπεισόδια μετ' ἄλληλα οὔτ' εἰκὸς οὔτ' ἀνάγκη εἶναι. τοιαῦται δὲ ποιοῦνται ὑπὸ μὲν τῶν φαύλων ποιητῶν δι' αὐτούς, ὑπὸ δὲ τῶν ἀγαθῶν διὰ τοὺς ὑποκριτάς.² ἀγωνίσματα γὰρ ποιοῦντες καὶ παρὰ τὴν δύναμιν παρατείνοντες τὸν μύθον πολλάκις διαστρέφειν ἀναγκάζονται τὸ ἐφεξῆς. ἐπεὶ δὲ οὐ μόνον τελείας ἔστὶ πράξεως ἡ μίμησις ἀλλὰ καὶ φοβερῶν καὶ ἐλεεινῶν, ταῦτα δὲ³ γίνεται καὶ μάλιστα⁴ ὅταν γένηται παρὰ τὴν δόξαν δι' ἄλληλα· τὸ γὰρ θαυμαστὸν οὔτως ἔξει μᾶλλον ἡ εἰ ἀπὸ τοῦ αὐτομάτου καὶ τῆς τύχης, ἐπεὶ καὶ τῷ ἀπὸ τύχης ταῦτα θαυμασιώτατα δοκεῖ ὅσα ὥσπερ ἐπίτηδες φαίνεται γεγονέναι, οἷον ὡς ὁ ἀνδριὰς ὁ τοῦ Μίτυος ἐν "Αργεὶ ἀπέκτεινεν τὸν αἴτιον τοῦ θανάτου τῷ Μίτυι, θεωροῦντι ἐμπεσών· ἔοικε γὰρ τὰ τοιαῦτα οὐκ εἰκῇ γίνεσθαι· ὥστε ἀνάγκη τοὺς τοιούτους εἶναι καλλίους μύθους.

X Εἰσὶ δὲ τῶν μύθων οἱ μὲν ἀπλοὶ οἱ δὲ πεπλεγμένοι· καὶ γὰρ αἱ πράξεις ὥν μιμήσεις οἱ μύθοι εἰσὶν ὑπάρχουσιν εὐθὺς οὖσαι τοιαῦται. λέγω δὲ ἀπλῆν

¹ ἀπλῶν AB (om. Arab.): ἀτελῶν Essen

² ὑποκριτάς AB: κριτάς rec.

³ δὲ A: om. B

⁴ μάλιστα καὶ μᾶλλον AB: καὶ μ. del. Ellebodius

POETICS 10

some actual events being probable as well as possible, and it is through probability that the poet makes his material from them.

Of simple^a plots and actions, the episodic are worst. By “episodic” I mean a plot in which the episodes follow one another without probability or necessity. Such plays are composed by bad poets through their own fault, and by good poets for the sake of the actors: for in composing show pieces,^b and stretching the plot beyond its capacity, they are often forced to distort the continuity. Given that the mimesis is not only of a complete action but also of fearful and pitiable matters, the latter arise above all when events occur contrary to expectation yet on account of one another. The awesome^c will be maintained in this way more than through show of chance and fortune, because even among chance events we find most awesome those which seem to have happened by design (as when Mitys’ statue at Argos killed the murderer of Mitys, by falling on him as he looked at it:^d such things *seem* not to occur randomly). And so, such plots are bound to be finer.

- X Plots can be divided into the simple and complex, since the actions which plots represent are intrinsically of these kinds. I call “simple” an action which is continuous,

^a The term is defined in ch. X; its occurrence here has been questioned.

^b Works designed to lend themselves to histrionic brilliance.

^c Awe (or “wonder”) will be aroused by something astonishing and suggestive of deeper significance: cf. 60a11–18.

^d Or “when he was visiting the festival”; the story is otherwise unknown, but M. (if the same) is mentioned at Dem. 59.33.

ARISTOTLE

μὲν πρᾶξιν ἥς γινομένης ὕσπερ ὄρισται συνεχοῦς
 15 καὶ μιᾶς ἀνευ περιπετείας ἡ ἀναγνωρισμοῦ ἡ μετά-
 βασις γίνεται, πεπλεγμένην δὲ ἐξ ἥς μετὰ ἀναγνω-
 ρισμοῦ ἡ περιπετείας ἡ ἀμφοῖν ἡ μετάβασίς ἔστιν.
 ταῦτα δὲ δεῖ γίνεσθαι ἐξ αὐτῆς τῆς συστάσεως τοῦ
 μύθου, ὕστε ἐκ τῶν προγεγενημένων συμβαίνειν ἢ
 20 ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἡ κατὰ τὸ εἰκὸς γίγνεσθαι ταῦτα· διαφέ-
 ρει γὰρ πολὺ τὸ γίγνεσθαι τάδε διὰ τάδε ἡ μετὰ
 τάδε.

XI Ἔστι δὲ περιπέτεια μὲν ἡ εἰς τὸ ἐναντίον τῶν
 πραττομένων μεταβολὴ καθάπερ εἴρηται, καὶ τοῦτο
 δὲ ὕσπερ λέγομεν κατὰ τὸ εἰκὸς ἡ ἀναγκαῖον, οἷον
 ἐν τῷ Οἰδίποδι ἐλθὼν ὡς εὑφρανῶν τὸν Οἰδίπουν καὶ
 25 ἀπαλλάξων τοῦ πρὸς τὴν μητέρα φόβου, δηλώσας
 ὅς ἦν, τούναντίον ἐποίησεν· καὶ ἐν τῷ Λυγκεῖ ὁ μὲν
 ἀγόμενος ὡς ἀποθανούμενος, ὁ δὲ Δαναὸς ἀκολου-
 θῶν ὡς ἀποκτενῶν, τὸν μὲν συνέβη ἐκ τῶν πεπρα-
 γμένων ἀποθανεῖν, τὸν δὲ σωθῆναι. ἀναγνώριστις
 δέ, ὕσπερ καὶ τοῦνομα σημαίνει, ἐξ ἀγνοίας εἰς
 30 γνῶσιν μεταβολή, ἡ εἰς φιλίαν ἡ ἔχθραν, τῶν πρὸς
 εὔτυχίαν ἡ δυστυχίαν ὄρισμένων· καλλίστη δὲ ἀνα-
 γνώριστις, ὅταν ἄμα περιπετείᾳ¹ γένηται, οἷον ἔχει ἡ
 ἐν τῷ Οἰδίποδι. εἰσὶν μὲν οὖν καὶ ἄλλαι ἀναγνωρί-
 σεις· καὶ² γὰρ πρὸς ἄψυχα καὶ τὰ τυχόντα ἔστιν³

¹ περιπετείᾳ γένηται Gomperz: περιπέτεια γένηται B:
 περιπέτειαι γίνονται A

² καὶ γὰρ . . . ἀναγνωρίσαι om. B

³ ἔστιν ὡς ὅπερ Spengel: ἔστιν ὕσπερ A

POETICS 11

in the sense defined,^a and unitary, but whose transformation^b lacks reversal and recognition; "complex," one whose transformation contains recognition or reversal or both. And these elements should emerge from the very structure of the plot, so that they ensue from the preceding events by necessity or probability; as it makes a great difference whether things happen because of, or only after, their antecedents.

XI

Reversal is a change to the opposite direction of events, as already stated,^c and one in accord, as we insist, with probability or necessity: as when in the *Oedipus* the person who comes to bring Oedipus happiness, and intends to rid him of his fear about his mother, effects the opposite by revealing Oedipus' true identity.^d And in the *Lynceus*,^e the one figure is led off to die, while Danaus follows with the intention of killing him, yet the upshot of events is Danaus' death and the other's survival. Recognition, as the very name indicates, is a change from ignorance to knowledge, leading to friendship or to enmity,^f and involving matters which bear on prosperity or adversity. The finest recognition is that which occurs simultaneously with reversal, as with the one in the *Oedipus*.^g There are, of course, other kinds of recognition too, since what has been stated^h occurs, after a fashion, in

^a In ch. VII's schema of beginning, middle, end.

^b Between prosperity and adversity; see on 51a13–14.

^c An unclear back ref.: 52a4, "contrary to expectation," is the likeliest point. ^d Soph. *OT* 924–1085; Ar. refers to two stages in the scene (cf. 989 ff, esp. 1002–3). ^e Probably Theodecetes'; see on 55b29. ^f See on 53b15. ^g Unclear: the reversal begins at Soph. *OT* 924 (cf. 52a24–6); Jocasta sees the truth by 1056, Oedipus only in the lead-up to 1182. ^h I.e. in the preceding definition.

ARISTOTLE

35 ώς ὅπερ εἴρηται συμβαίνει, καὶ εἰ πέπραγέ τις ἢ μὴ πέπραγεν ἔστιν ἀναγνωρίσαι. ἀλλ’ ἡ μάλιστα τοῦ μύθου καὶ ἡ μάλιστα τῆς πράξεως ἡ εἰρημένη ἔστιν· ἡ γὰρ τοιαύτη ἀναγνώρισις καὶ περιπέτεια ἡ ἔλεον ἔξει ἡ φόβον, οἶων πράξεων ἡ τραγῳδία μίμησις ὑπόκειται· ἔτι¹ δὲ καὶ τὸ ἀτυχεῖν καὶ τὸ εὐτυχεῖν ἐπὶ τῶν τοιούτων συμβήσεται. ἐπεὶ δὴ ἡ ἀναγνώρισις τινῶν ἔστιν ἀναγνώρισις, αἱ μέν εἰσι θατέρου πρὸς τὸν ἔτερον μόνον, ὅταν ἡ δῆλος ἄτερος τίς ἔστιν, ὅτε δὲ ἀμφοτέρους δεῖ ἀναγνωρίσαι, οἷον ἡ μὲν Ἰφιγένεια τῷ Ὀρέστῃ ἀνεγνωρίσθη ἐκ τῆς πέμψεως τῆς ἐπιστολῆς, ἐκείνου² δὲ πρὸς τὴν Ἰφιγένειαν ἄλλης ἔδει ἀναγνωρίσεως.

δύο μὲν οὖν τοῦ μύθου μέρη ταῦτ’ ἔστι, περιπέτεια καὶ ἀναγνώρισις· τρίτον δὲ πάθος. τούτων δὲ 10 περιπέτεια μὲν καὶ ἀναγνώρισις εἴρηται, πάθος δέ ἔστι πρᾶξις φθαρτικὴ ἡ ὁδυνηρά, οἷον οἱ τε ἐν τῷ φανερῷ θάνατοι καὶ αἱ περιωδυνίαι καὶ τρώσεις καὶ ὅσα τοιαῦτα.

XII Μέρη δὲ τραγῳδίας οἵς μὲν ώς εἴδεσι δεῖ χρῆσθαι πρότερον εἴπομεν, κατὰ δὲ τὸ ποσὸν καὶ εἰς ἀδιαιρεῖται κεχωρισμένα τάδε ἔστιν, πρόλογος ἐπεισόδιον ἔξοδος χορικόν, καὶ τούτου τὸ μὲν πάροδος τὸ δὲ στάσιμον, κοινὰ μὲν ἀπάντων ταῦτα, ὕδια δὲ τὰ ἀπὸ τῆς σκηνῆς καὶ κομμοί. ἔστιν δὲ πρόλογος μὲν μέρος ὅλον τραγῳδίας τὸ πρὸ χοροῦ παρόδου, ἐπ-

¹ ἔτι δὲ AB: ἐπειδὴ Vahlen

² ἐκείνου Bywater: -ω AB

POETICS 12

relation to inanimate and even chance things, and it is also possible to recognise that someone has or has not committed a deed. But the kind most integral to the plot and action is the one described: such a joint recognition and reversal will yield either pity or fear, just the type of actions of which tragedy is taken to be a mimesis; besides, both adversity and prosperity will hinge upon such circumstances. Now, because recognition is recognition between people,^a some cases involve only the relation of one party to the other (when the other's identity is clear), while in others there is need for double recognition: thus, Iphigeneia was recognised by Orestes through the sending of the letter, but for Iphigeneia to recognise his relation to herself required a further recognition.^b

These, then, are two components of the plot—reversal and recognition. A third is suffering. Of these, reversal and recognition have been explained, and suffering is a destructive or painful action, such as public deaths, physical agony, woundings, etc.

XII We spoke earlier^c of the components of tragedy that must be used as basic elements; but its formal and discrete sections are as follows: prologue, episode, exodos, choral unit (further divisible into parodos and stasimon). These are common to all plays, but actors' songs and komoi are special to some. The prologue is the whole portion of a tragedy prior to the chorus' parodos; an episode

^a Ar. ignores recognition of inanimate objects, mentioned above.

^b Eur. *IT* 727–841.

^c Cf. esp. 50a9–14.

ARISTOTLE

20 εισόδιον δὲ μέρος ὅλου τραγῳδίας τὸ μεταξὺ ὅλων χορικῶν μελῶν, ἔξοδος δὲ μέρος ὅλου τραγῳδίας μεθ' ὃ οὐκ ἔστι χοροῦ μέλος· χορικοῦ δὲ πάροδος μὲν ἡ πρώτη λέξις ὅλη¹ χοροῦ, στάσιμον δὲ μέλος χοροῦ τὸ ἄνευ ἀναπαίστου καὶ τροχαίου, κομμὸς δὲ θρῆνος κοινὸς χοροῦ καὶ ἀπὸ σκηνῆς. μέρη δὲ τραγῳδίας οἷς μὲν ὡς² εἴδεσι δεῖ χρῆσθαι πρότερον εἴπαμεν, κατὰ δὲ τὸ ποσὸν καὶ εἰς ἀ διαιρεῖται κεχωρισμένα ταῦτ' ἔστιν.

X
XIII Ὁν δὲ δεῖ στοχάζεσθαι καὶ ἀ δεῖ εὐλαβεῖσθαι συνιστάντας τοὺς μύθους καὶ πόθεν ἔσται τὸ τῆς τραγῳδίας ἔργον, ἐφεξῆς ἀν εἴη λεκτέον τοῖς νῦν εἰρημένοις. ἐπειδὴ οὖν δεῖ τὴν σύνθεσιν εἶναι τῆς καλλίστης τραγῳδίας μὴ ἀπλῆν ἀλλὰ πεπλεγμένην καὶ ταύτην φοβερῶν καὶ ἐλεεινῶν εἶναι μιμητικήν (τοῦτο γὰρ ἴδιον τῆς τοιαύτης μιμήσεώς ἔστιν), πρῶτον μὲν δῆλον ὅτι οὔτε τοὺς ἐπιεικεῖς ἄνδρας δεῖ μεταβάλλοντας φαίνεσθαι ἐξ εὐτυχίας εἰς δυστυχίαν, οὐ γὰρ φοβερὸν οὐδὲ ἐλεεινὸν τοῦτο ἀλλὰ μιαρόν ἔστιν· οὔτε τοὺς μοχθηροὺς ἐξ ἀτυχίας εἰς εὐτυχίαν, ἀτραγῳδότατον γὰρ τοῦτ' ἔστι πάντων, οὐδὲν γὰρ ἔχει ὥν δεῖ, οὔτε γὰρ φιλάνθρωπον οὔτε ἐλεεινὸν οὔτε φοβερόν ἔστιν· οὐδὲν τὸν σφόδρα πονηρὸν ἐξ εὐτυχίας εἰς δυστυχίαν μεταπίπτειν· τὸ μὲν γὰρ φιλάνθρωπον ἔχοι ἀν ἡ τοιαύτη σύστασις

¹ ὅλη Susemihl: ὅλου AB ² ὡς εἴδεσι rec.: om. AB

^a Usually accompanying their entrance onto the scene.

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is the whole portion of a tragedy between complete choral songs; the exodos is the whole portion of a tragedy following the final choral song. Of choral units, the parodos is the first complete utterance^a of the chorus; a stasimon is a choral song without anapaestic and trochaic rhythms;^b a kommos is a dirge shared between chorus and actors. We spoke earlier of the components of tragedy that must be used as basic elements, while its formal and discrete sections are the ones given.

XIII Next, after the foregoing discussion, we must consider what should be aimed at and avoided in the construction of plots, and how tragedy's effect is to be achieved. Since, then, the structure of the finest tragedy should be complex not simple,^c as well as representing fearful and pitiable events (for this is the special feature of such mimesis), it is, to begin with, clear that neither should decent men be shown changing from prosperity to adversity, as this is not fearful nor yet pitiable but repugnant,^d nor the depraved changing from adversity to prosperity, because this is the least tragic of all, possessing none of the necessary qualities, since it arouses neither fellow-feeling^e nor pity nor fear. Nor, again, should tragedy show the very wicked person falling from prosperity to adversity: such a pattern might arouse fellow-feeling, but not pity or fear, since the one is felt

^b Both do in fact occur in stasima; Ar. may be thinking of "recitative" units, such as the marching anapaests of choral parodoi, or trochaic tetrameters (see on 49a21).

^c In the senses defined in ch. X. ^d Cf. 53b39, 54a3.

^e *Philanthrōpia*: a disputed concept; it may entail either a broadly humane sympathy (even with some forms of merited suffering), or a basic sense of justice. Cf. 56a21.

ARISTOTLE

ἀλλ’ οὗτε ἔλεον οὗτε φόβον, ὁ μὲν γὰρ περὶ τὸν ἀνάξιον ἔστιν δυστυχοῦντα, ὁ δὲ περὶ τὸν ὅμοιον (ἔλεος¹ μὲν περὶ τὸν ἀνάξιον, φόβος δὲ περὶ τὸν ὅμοιον), ὥστε οὗτε ἐλεεινὸν οὗτε φοβερὸν ἔσται τὸ συμβαῖνον. ὁ μεταξὺ ἄρα τούτων λοιπός. ἔστι δὲ τοιοῦτος ὁ μήτε ἀρετὴ διαφέρων καὶ δικαιοσύνη μήτε διὰ κακίαν καὶ μοχθηρίαν μεταβάλλων εἰς τὴν δυστυχίαν ἀλλὰ δι’ ἀμαρτίαν τινά, τῶν ἐν μεγάλῃ δόξῃ ὅντων καὶ εὐτυχίᾳ, οἷον Οἰδίπους καὶ Θυέστης καὶ οἱ ἐκ τῶν τοιούτων γενῶν ἐπιφανεῖς ἄνδρες. ἀνάγκη ἄρα τὸν καλῶς ἔχοντα μῆθον ἀπλοῦν εἶναι μᾶλλον ἢ διπλοῦν, ὥσπερ τινές φασι, καὶ μεταβάλλειν οὐκ εἰς εὐτυχίαν ἐκ δυστυχίας ἀλλὰ τούναντίου ἐξ εὐτυχίας εἰς δυστυχίαν μὴ διὰ μοχθηρίαν ἀλλὰ 15 δι’ ἀμαρτίαν μεγάλην ἢ οἷον εἴρηται ἢ βελτίονος μᾶλλον ἢ χείρονος. (σημεῖον δὲ καὶ τὸ γιγνόμενον πρῶτον μὲν γὰρ οἱ ποιηταὶ τοὺς τυχόντας μῆθους ἀπηρίθμουν, νῦν δὲ περὶ ὀλίγας οἰκίας αἱ κάλλισται τραγῳδίαι συντίθενται, οἷον περὶ Ἀλκμέωνα καὶ Οἰδίπους καὶ Ὁρέστην καὶ Μελέαγρον καὶ Θυέστην καὶ Τήλεφον καὶ ὅσοις ἄλλοις συμβέβηκεν ἢ παθεῖν δεινὰ ἢ ποιησαι.) ἡ μὲν οὖν κατὰ τὴν τέχνην καλλίστη τραγῳδία ἐκ ταύτης τῆς συστάσεώς ἔστι. διὸ καὶ οἱ Εὐριπίδῃ ἐγκαλοῦντες τὸ αὐτὸν ἀμαρτάνουσιν

¹ ἔλεος . . . ὅμοιον om. B

^a *Hamartia*: the term, repeated at 53a16, could cover a range of possible factors in tragic agency. See the Introduction.

POETICS 13

for the undeserving victim of adversity, the other for one like ourselves (pity for the undeserving, fear for one like ourselves); so the outcome will be neither pitiable nor fearful. This leaves, then, the person in-between these cases. Such a person is someone not preeminent in virtue and justice, and one who falls into adversity not through evil and depravity, but through some kind of error;^a and one belonging to the class of those who enjoy great renown and prosperity, such as Oedipus, Thyestes,^b and eminent men from such lineages. The well-made plot, then, ought to be single^c rather than double, as some maintain, with a change not to prosperity from adversity, but on the contrary from prosperity to adversity, caused not by depravity but by a great error of a character either like that stated, or better rather than worse. (Actual practice too points to this. Originally, the poets recounted any and every story, but nowadays the finest tragedies are composed about only a few families, such as Alcmaeon, Oedipus, Orestes, Meleager, Thyestes, Telephus,^d and as many others as have suffered or perpetrated terrible things.) So the finest tragedy of which the art permits follows this structure. Which is why the same mistake^e is

^b T., King of Mycenae, was deceived by his brother, Atreus, into eating his own children; he also committed unwitting incest with his daughter, Pelopia. Cf. *OCD* s.v. Atreus.

^c The same Greek adj. as “simple” in ch. X; but the context dictates a separate sense here. ^d Alcmaeon: see on 53b24. Oedipus and Orestes: see e.g. ch. XI. Meleager: killed by the agency of his mother, Althaea, after he had killed her brother(s). Thyestes: see on 53a11. Telephus: Ar. may have in mind his unwitting killing of his uncles; cf. *OCD* s.v.

^e As made by those who prefer double plots (53a13).

ARISTOTLE

25 ὅτι τοῦτο δρᾶ ἐν ταῖς τραγῳδίαις καὶ¹ αἱ πολλαὶ
αὐτοῦ εἰς δυστυχίαν τελευτῶσιν. τοῦτο γάρ ἔστιν
ῶσπερ εἴρηται ὄρθον· σημεῖον δὲ μέγιστον· ἐπὶ γὰρ
τῶν σκηνῶν καὶ τῶν ἀγώνων τραγικώταται αἱ τοι-
αῦται φαίνονται, ἀν κατορθωθῶσιν, καὶ ὁ Εύριπίδης,
εἰ καὶ τὰ ἄλλα μὴ εὑ̄ οἰκονομεῖ, ἀλλὰ τραγικώτατός
30 γε τῶν ποιητῶν φαίνεται. δευτέρα δ' ἡ πρώτη λεγο-
μένη ὑπὸ τινῶν ἔστιν σύστασις, ἡ διπλῆν τε τὴν
σύστασιν ἔχουσα καθάπερ ἡ Ὁδύσσεια καὶ τελευ-
τῶσα ἐξ ἐναντίας τοῖς βελτίοσι καὶ χείροσιν. δοκεῖ
δὲ εἶναι πρώτη διὰ τὴν τῶν θεάτρων ἀσθένειαν· ἀκο-
λουθοῦσι γὰρ οἱ ποιηταὶ κατ' εὐχὴν ποιοῦντες τοῖς
35 θεαταῖς. ἔστιν δὲ οὐχ αὕτη ἀπὸ τραγῳδίας ἥδονὴ
ἄλλὰ μᾶλλον τῆς κωμῳδίας οἰκεία· ἐκεῖ γὰρ οἱ² ἀν
ἔχθιστοι ὥστιν ἐν τῷ μύθῳ, οἷον Ὁρέστης καὶ Αἴγι-
σθος, φίλοι γενόμενοι ἐπὶ τελευτῆς ἐξέρχονται, καὶ
ἀποθνήσκει οὐδεὶς ὑπ' οὐδενός.

1453b XIV "Εστιν μὲν οὖν τὸ φοβερὸν καὶ ἐλεεινὸν ἐκ τῆς
ὅψεως γίνεσθαι, ἔστιν δὲ καὶ ἐξ αὐτῆς τῆς συστά-
σεως τῶν πραγμάτων, ὅπερ ἔστὶ πρότερον καὶ ποιη-
τοῦ ἀμείνονος. δεῖ γὰρ καὶ ἀνευ τοῦ ὄρᾶν οὗτω συν-
εστάναι τὸν μῦθον ὥστε τὸν ἀκούοντα τὰ πράγματα
5 γινόμενα καὶ φρίττειν καὶ ἐλεεῖν ἐκ τῶν συμβαινόν-

X

¹ καὶ αἱ Knebel: καὶ A: αἱ B

² οἱ ἀν Bonitz: ἀν οἱ AB

POETICS 14

made by those who complain that Euripides does this in his plays, and that most^a end in adversity. For this, as explained, is the right way. And the greatest indication of this is that in theatrical contests such plays are found the most tragic, if successfully managed; and Euripides, even if he does not arrange other details well, is at least found the most tragic of the poets. Second-best is the structure held the best by some people: the kind with a double structure like the *Odyssey* and with opposite outcomes for good and bad characters. It is thought to be best because of the weakness of audiences: the poets follow, and pander to the taste of, the spectators. Yet this is not the pleasure to expect from tragedy, but is more appropriate to comedy, where those who are deadliest enemies in the plot, such as Orestes and Aegisthus,^b exit at the end as new friends, and no one dies at anyone's hands.

XIV

Now, what is fearful and pitiable can result from spectacle,^c but also from the actual structure of events, which is the higher priority and the aim of a superior poet. For the plot should be so structured that, even without seeing it performed, the person who hears the events that occur experiences horror^d and pity at what

^a Or, on a different textual reading, "many"; it is anyway unclear why Eur. should be singled out for such criticism.

^b Lover of Clytemnestra, Orestes' mother, with whom he plotted to kill her husband, Agamemnon. Ar. envisages a burlesque treatment which avoids the usual revenge killing of Aegisthus by Orestes.

^c See on 49b33.

^d Here, and only here, Ar. uses a verb which literally means to "shudder" with fear.

National
Theatre

Antigone



Sophocles

Translated by
Don Taylor

methuen | drama

SOPHOCLES

Antigone

translated by
DON TAYLOR

Methuen Drama

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SOPHOCLES

Antigone

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Foreword

Held up as the single greatest play about the tension between the individual and the state, Sophocles' *Antigone* has helped to shape the popular imagination. Traces of its dramatic DNA can be found in every story about standing up against the system. From *Robin Hood* to *Coriolanus* to *Star Wars*, Sophocles' format is still box office worldwide. Of course, we are all programmed to gun for David rather than for Goliath – but it is this play that first took that quirk of human nature and teased it out into a fully fledged, three-dimensional dramatic conflict. Thanks to Sophocles, one could argue, we all love an underdog.

Antigone herself, of course, is an underdog in more ways than one. She begins the play already a political exile, virtually the last remaining member of a diseased, disgraced royal household. Burying the body of her traitorous brother in defiance of the new king's edict, she isolates herself yet further by acquiring the status of outlaw. However, by far the most striking aspect of her relationship to the centre of power is the fact that she is a woman. The idea that a single young female agitator might be capable of bringing down a legitimate government is astonishing even by our own standards: to the ancient Greeks, it must have been electrifying. Sophocles' gesture in making his protagonist a sympathetic female terrorist is quite breathtakingly bold – indeed, it is a pitch that it is difficult to imagine being green-lit by any contemporary TV or movie studio. For his original all-male audience, two and a half thousand years ago, the experience of seeing the established order crumble at the touch of an unmarried teenage girl must have engendered the most thrilling kind of theatrical energy.

From a contemporary perspective, there is a further pleasure to be found in dealing with an ancient play that has a woman at its centre. Greek texts remain the building blocks of our imagination; their stories are still our stories, for the simple reason that as yet we have come up with few – if any – better. The experience of reading or watching a Sophocles text is like receiving a pure, adrenalised

story ‘hit’; their absolutely unapologetic, relentless drive towards their terrifying conclusions lends them a force which makes them the envy of every screenwriter. In a modern world where the ratio of male to female protagonists across theatre, film, television, gaming, and (perhaps most tellingly) children’s media remains quietly but staggeringly disproportionate, it is deeply satisfying to realise just how far ahead of the game Sophocles was. The second oldest play we have on record, *Antigone* arguably provides us with our template for telling stories about women. Sophocles gave us a girl to build our myths upon.

The most exciting thing about dissecting the text in the rehearsal room, though, has been the discovery that Antigone is not the only person operating at the edge of her abilities. She might be a David fighting a Goliath, but she is simply at one end of the spectrum: virtually every character we meet is battling against their own, equally significant monsters. The soldier, for example, is desperate to conquer the gut-wrenching fear which both paralyses his speech and threatens to end his life. Haemon struggles to match his father’s weight in order to have a chance of saving Antigone’s life. Ismene likewise rises to the challenge of overcoming her own terror, ultimately volunteering her own death in order to ease her sister’s; and Eurydice’s brief appearance sees her willing herself to face up to precisely the thing she is most frightened of.

Nowhere, of course, is Sophocles’ exploration of the David and Goliath paradigm more sophisticated than in the creation of the character of Creon. It is difficult for a modern audience to appreciate exactly the nature of the challenge the new king is being asked to accept. *Antigone* begins in the wake of an appalling civil war, the last in a chain of disasters to befall the broken city of Thebes. A Greek audience – familiar with the story from popular myth – would have understood that Creon, taking on the task of cleaning up the city after years of plague, conflict and centralized corruption, has been charged with a near impossible job. Thebes was, itself, an underdog city: if we imagine what it might have been like to live under Oedipus’ disastrous reign, we can begin to understand why whoever was to rule it next might legitimately believe that the only way to do so was with a rod of iron. If the *Oedipus* story gives us something like the ancient world version of original sin – the discovery of a black and

primal sin, rotting the city from within – then Antigone inevitably becomes the story of the attempt to suppress that sin. The need to pretend it never happened is the city's driving motive. Burying the problem – literally, in Creon's case – is then perhaps not so surprising a response. The city's terrible past is Goliath to Creon's David. The fact that he is so determined to stand up against the tendencies that first caused his city's downfall is, in itself, admirable. From a human point of view, it absolutely explains his determination to see his policy through – no matter what the cost might be.

Sophocles, then, gives his characters the most fantastically playable internal obstacles. In order to overcome them, actors must throw themselves into their arguments with the greatest possible force. His precise, agonizing manipulation of the tension between duty and desire lends the play a drive that most directors would kill to find in a playscript. Perhaps because of the fact that these plays were performed in masks, modern audiences tend to associate Greek plays with a lack of subtext: but this play, at least, is to a great extent a study of a set of individuals engaged in a struggle against themselves. It is often said that Shakespeare was the first writer truly to dramatise the mechanics of internal conflict: for my money, Sophocles was there two millennia before him.

Don Taylor's spare, muscular version is the ideal way in which to encounter this extraordinary play. His script serves as a clear pane of glass between us and these ancient characters: unfussy but always completely human, it allows us to hold hands with Sophocles' text in the most direct way possible.

Polly Findlay
2012

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Translator's Note

Sophocles English'd

'Bless thee, Bottom, bless thee, thou art translated,' cries the literary-minded Peter Quince, when he sees his noisy amateur actor friend's earnest bonce metamorphosed into a braying ass-head – and Shakespeare's pun is exact: translation – particularly the translation of poetry – involves a fundamental metamorphosis of form. A poem may be written in blank verse, rhyme royal or *terza rima*, but even closer to the heart of the matter is the language it is written in. The words themselves are the underlying form of a poem, because it is only in the actual and precise choice of words that meaning and association, and feeling and music and shape, and all the other elements that go to make up a poem – reside. That is why genuine translation, the lateral movement of something called a poem from one language across to another, is impossible. It can only be transformed, re-shaped in a quite new formal structure, ass-head instead of man-head: and then, if it is any good, it becomes pure ass, essentially asinine, with only the memory of the man remaining. A good poem translated, must become a good poem in its new language, not merely a memory of the old. When Brecht was up before the un-American activities committee, a committee-man solemnly read out a translation of one of Brecht's poems, as evidence of his Communist connections. 'Mr Brecht,' accused the committee-man, 'did you write this poem?' 'No,' replied Brecht, 'I wrote a very similar poem, in German.'

In fact, it is this dilemma that makes the impossible art of translation so endlessly rewarding. If it were simply a matter of transferring blocks of meaning from one language to another, we would programme our computers, and leave them to get on with it. But good translations, because they must live in their new linguistic surroundings, express as much of the translator as of the translated. We read Pope's Homer and Dryden's Virgil for Pope and Dryden, not Homer and Virgil: and who could deny that Tony Harrison's *Oresteia*, controversial as it is in its individuality, is as much a part of Tony Harrison's struggle to bring the northern voice into its own

in modern English poetry, as it is a version of Aeschylus?

The truth of the matter is that translations serve as many different purposes as there are translators, and at least four major kinds can be identified. The first is the literal translation, or crib, staff and companion of generations of students, good old indispensable Loeb. These are usually written in an execrable alien English, never spoken or even written anywhere else by the inhabitants of this planet, and full of words like ‘suppliant’, ‘filet’ and ‘hecatombs’, precise enough renderings of Greek and Roman realities, but utterly incomprehensible as lived English.

The second kind is the most ambitious, and the most common: the attempt to render as much of the poem as possible in the new language, trying to reproduce meaning, verse form, style, and even the musical movement of the original. This was attempted on an heroic scale by Dorothy L. Sayers’ version of *The Divine Comedy*, but it can easily collapse into a twisted unidiomatic mish-mash, a game for contortionists, tying an elegant human shape into ugly knots in the pursuit of the impossible.

In the third kind of translation, the translator allows himself a considerable amount of freedom, to express the spirit rather than the letter of the original text. His main concern is to recreate the feel and impact of the original as completely as he can, and he allows himself the freedom to travel quite far from the original writer’s literal meaning and style: but his overall intention remains to get as close to that original writer as he can, and he still sees himself as servant rather than master. Pope and Dryden might reasonably be described as translators of this kind, and Ezra Pound’s aggressively slangy version of *The Women of Trachis* joins that company in kind if not achievement.

The fourth kind, imitation, or re-composition, is effectively the creation of a new work, based on or inspired by an original text in another language, and it is here perhaps that the finest poetry is to be found – many hundreds of Elizabethan love sonnets, Johnson’s *London* and *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, imitated from Juvenal, Pope’s *Imitation of Horace*, and more recently, Robert Lowell’s *Imitations*. We can’t go to such poems for anything resembling a version of the original text, more often a perceptive commentary on the nature of the two cultures and ages compared: in Johnson’s case, with the insight of genius.

Where does my own translation of the Theban Plays stand? The answer is not quite in any of the four sections, though perhaps

nearer to the third than any other. What differentiates it from that third section, creating, in effect, a sub-section of its own, is that I have no Greek, and have worked from one specially commissioned literal translation, and a consideration of the work of many of my distinguished predecessors.

Of course, I did not sit down one bright morning and say to myself, 'I don't read a word of classical Greek, I'll translate Sophocles.' Wearing my other hat as a director, I was discussing with the BBC producer Louis Marks, the possibility of presenting some Greek tragedy on television. My main interest at that time was in setting up a production of Euripides' *The Trojan Women*. It hadn't occurred to me to suggest a trilogy of plays, because as a freelance I knew it was unlikely that I would succeed in getting even one Greek play onto television, let alone three. A few days later, Louis Marks rang me with the totally unexpected suggestion that we should tackle the whole *Theban Trilogy*, and my first reaction was somewhere between awe, delight and disbelief: but I soon grasped the point he had perceived, that there would probably be a greater chance of selling a project on this grand scale to the decision-makers in the BBC than there would be of selling them what in television parlance we would call a one-off Greek play. Louis Marks' instinct proved right. Though we were originally given the go-ahead only for *Antigone* – which had an effect on the translation – Louis' careful political instinct managed eventually, over a period of more than two years, to guide the Sophoclean trireme through the dangerous waters of BBC politics, and bring her safely to port.

We then considered what translation to use, and immediately we were confronted with a huge problem, crucial to the success of the whole project. We were both determined to present these wonderful plays, one of the cornerstones of European culture, in such a way as to reveal at least something of their stature, and why they have been considered the yardstick by which drama is measured for 2,500 years. In television, we were both well aware, the problem is enormously magnified by the fact that the vast majority of our audience would know nothing at all of classical Greek drama, and those who did know something of it would probably be prejudiced by the vulgar notion that it is gloomy, boring and out of date. We were quite determined not to talk down or sell Sophocles short. Our productions would have to be convincing and a pleasure to Greek scholars who have spent a life

studying the texts, and a thrillingly compelling new world opening up for viewers to whom Attic tragedy wasn't even a name.

Though television is a good medium for genuine dramatic poetry, it is merciless with any kind of stilted language, and it soon became clear to us that we could present none of the existing translations of the Sophoclean trilogy with the faintest chance of the particular kind of success we hoped for.

At this point, I decided that I ought to do the job myself. The playwright-translator without the original language is a not uncommon figure now, and in poetic drama, where the quality of the language is of the greatest importance, he has even more justification for his existence than in more naturalistic forms. The idea had already been mooted in our earliest discussions about *The Trojan Women*. At that time I had had sixteen of my own original TV plays presented, as well as nine stage plays in theatres around the country, and I had already written and directed the first TV play to be written in verse, *The Testament of John*, though it had not yet been transmitted. Louis Marks had himself been the producer on several of these plays, including *The Testament of John*, and he was very happy to agree with the idea. We discovered, to our amazement, that as far as our researches could probe, the whole *Theban Trilogy* had never been translated complete by a working playwright. It had been left to Greek scholars and poets to do the job. But these great works were written for public performance in a well-established and highly competitive theatre, by men who were themselves poets, singers, actors, composers and dancers, as well as directors of their own plays. That fact convinced me. It was surely time for a playwright to get a look in, even if he did have no Greek.

Before I set a word on paper, I bumped into my friend the actor Patrick Stewart. I mentioned that I was just about to begin translating Sophocles, and I was very surprised when he made a wry face and said he didn't much like Greek tragedy. I was astounded at this in so distinguished an actor, and one, too, so eminently well suited to Greek roles, and I said so. He replied that he had been in many productions, but had always found that the plays were difficult to act well because the actor found himself again and again involved in tremendous dramatic situations which were expressed in the most banal language, and that he himself could never find a satisfactory way of marrying the power of the situations to the poverty of the words. No more useful comment

could have been made to me as I began the huge project. I determined that whatever else I did, and however much of a limitation my lack of knowledge of the Sophoclean original was bound to be, I would at least make sure I gave the actors some decent English words to say.

About one thing I was quite clear from the beginning: that these plays are non-naturalistic poetic drama, at the very highest level of the art, certainly the equal of Shakespeare, and that the poverty-stricken speech of modern naturalism, particularly the film-based television variety, would have no place in my versions. That I would write in verse was not a matter of choice, but the point I started from.

When I wrote *The Testament of John*, I had already confronted the problem that faces every twentieth-century English writer attempting drama in verse, namely, what verse form to use. I was quite convinced that the standard iambic pentameter is no longer a possibility in drama. Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth and Keats have done all there is to be done with that particular music: for me, at least, their shadow is far too large. So I looked back at the last successful attempt to write verse drama in English, and saw T. S. Eliot. I find his drama very unsympathetic, nor do I see in it any evidence that he possessed those particular qualities which make a writer a playwright. He seems to me to be a part of that long tradition in English letters of major poets who were fascinated by the drama without having any aptitude for it, and the plays he wrote and had successfully performed, a triumph of sheer intellect, a great poet's attempt to do something for which he was fundamentally unsuited. But nevertheless, he had been the first poet-playwright to confront the problem of a suitable verse form for modern drama; he too had rejected the iambic pentameter, and whatever the limitations of his plays as plays, he had created many passages of fine dramatic verse: so I decided to try to use his form to serve my own purposes.

Eliot had created a verse line, loosely based on Anglo-Saxon poetry, but without the alliteration, a line consisting of four feet, in which each foot had to contain one strong beat, but could contain any number of weak ones. In doing so he created a verse movement close to the rhythms of natural speech, with something of the flexibility of prose, but which, with the regular beat of its four stresses, clearly defined a recognisable verse music. The problem this metre sets a writer, one which I have not overcome, is that

many lines remain ambiguous in stress, clear enough in the poet's mind perhaps, but capable of more than one kind of scansion. In spite of my strictures, the reader will find plenty of iambic pentameters in the five thousand-odd lines of verse in this book. But the experience of directing these translations suggests to me that the problem is an abstract one, more apparent than real. In the mouths of actors, it tends to disappear. The skill involved, as in all dramatic verse, is for the playwright's instinct for natural stress in dramatic English to coincide naturally and without strain with the formal pattern of the verse: and the freer that pattern, the finer the poet's ear must be. This was the metre I had attempted with *The Testament of John*, so it was natural that I should use it for the dramatic trimeters of Sophoclean tragedy. I decided not to be absolutely strict with myself, and to allow the occasional two- or three-footed line if I wanted it. But I tried to make sure that I only used the shorter line for positive effect, not simply because I couldn't think of any way of filling up the odd feet!

The lyric verse in these plays confronts the translator with his biggest problem, but here my experience as a theatrical practitioner helped me. As a director, I had already decided how I intended to present the choral odes. They had to create a quite new lyrical dramatic experience, utterly differentiated from the dramatic episodes. So Sophocles' formal odes would not be broken up, shared out between the chorus actors and spoken as individual lines, to make them seem as naturalistic as possible. I would use a chorus of twelve (Sophocles himself increased the number of the chorus from twelve to fifteen, but I decided upon twelve because it is divisible by six, four, three, two and one, and would therefore make more interesting formal groupings) and the characters would speak to the accompaniment of live specially composed music, in unison, as individuals, and in all the possible sub-groupings. My lyric verse had to be English lyric verse, with its own life and vitality, so this meant that my models had to be not the Greek originals, whose texture was beyond my comprehension anyway, but the masters of English lyric verse, Keats, Shelley, Marvell, Donne, Jonson, the Cavalier poets, the young Milton. I would try to write tightly rhyming verses, using metres and verse movements imitated from these masters, and I would strive most of all to make these odes convincing as dramatic lyrics in their own right. Where Sophocles in a chorus or choral dialogue repeated the metrical form of a strophe with an exactly similar antistrophe, so I would repeat

my lyric verses with meticulous accuracy, strictly reflecting metrical form and rhyme scheme. I would be particularly careful to avoid the use of thunderous full rhymes all the time, using half-rhyme, and even quarter-rhyme – the matching of final consonants only – to ensure flexibility and avoid musical banality. This was not an original decision, I knew. Many translators have tried to rhyme their choruses, using these or similar techniques. But I knew of none that had attempted it with the thoroughgoing concern for form that I intended: nor, indeed, any that were really good enough as English lyric verse. Yeats, of course, made famous versions of choruses from *Antigone* and *Oedipus at Colonus*, but they are a long way from Sophocles, Yeatsian poems in their own right, based on Sophoclean ideas, rather than usable translations.

But that strategic decision left a whole series of tactical questions unanswered. Lyric metres are used in Greek tragedy in a whole series of different ways, in the entry song of the chorus (*parados*) in the choral odes (*Stasima*), the choral dialogues (*kommoi*), in the *exodos*, which often takes the form of a choral dialogue, and even, in moments of excitement, within the dramatic episodes themselves. As a point of principle, I decided that whenever Sophocles used lyric verse, I would use my English lyric form, but I very soon discovered that this decision had considerable implications. Most of the greatest moments – one might almost say all of them – in these three plays are written by Sophocles in the form of choral dialogues, an interaction, in lyric verse, between the chorus and one or two of the main characters. Oedipus' re-entry blinded, his recital of his woes at Colonus, Antigone's farewell to the chorus, Antigone's and Ismene's threnody for the dead Oedipus, and Creon's dirge over his dead son and wife, are all cast by Sophocles in the form of *kommoi*, or formal choral dialogues, often with the most sophisticated poetic skill, in the exact repetition of metrical patterns from verse to verse, and in the breaking up of single lines between several voices. But these sections are usually translated either into prose, or into a loose free verse, with scarcely any differentiation made between them and the normal dramatic episodes. It immediately became clear that these sections represent the moments of the most intense grief and sorrow in the plays, and it is here that the poet has chosen to stylise his work most completely, to remove it utterly from the prosaic world of daily speech – which had little enough part in the world of Greek tragedy anyway – into the world of music, poetry and dance, a world in

which grief can be expressed in its purest, most essential form. The wrong kind of naturalism is the greatest danger for twentieth-century actors and directors when attempting the Greeks. That kind of thinking would require Oedipus simply to mutter ‘Christ, my eyes hurt’ and fall down the steps when he enters blinded. The very fact that he does not say that, but utters a lyric poem, to music, is the essence of the kind of play we are dealing with. Here, too, was the answer to the subversive question that Patrick Stewart had planted in my mind. A tremendous situation requires tremendous things to be said, requires a poem of despair or suffering, upon which the actor can launch himself, and take wing. So the choral dialogues too would have to be written in tightly rhyming lyric verse, and acted to music. The further I looked into this, the more interesting the idea became. It is not only moments of grief and sorrow that Sophocles renders in his *kommoi*, but moments of high drama, like the climax of the row between Oedipus, Creon and Jocasta in *Oedipus the King*, and Creon’s seizure of Oedipus in *Oedipus at Colonus*. These, too, most modern translations render in an informal, ‘naturalistic’ way, and these too I decided to translate into lyric verse, and act to music.

This decision had further implications. I had never intended to attempt to reproduce anything of Sophocles’ own verse movement, music or texture – indeed, as a non-Greek reader, it was impossible that I should. But the decision to render such a large part of the plays into lyric verse meant that the translation must necessarily become freer. In the irreconcilable conflict between a literal rendering of all the subtleties of Sophocles’ original, and the severe demands of English rhyming lyric verse, the needs of the latter would have to come first, if I was to avoid desperate convolutions and unidiomatic phraseology. My version of the choral odes and dialogues, if it was to do any sort of justice to Sophocles’ drama by creating passages of striking, and emotionally moving English, might have to do less than justice to his words. In practice this has meant the occasional use of metaphors not in the original, and the pursuit of ideas or the completion of concepts which Sophocles has not pursued or completed. Simply, there were times when I let my pen have its way, to complete the poem as my instinct told me it had to be completed, and the reader must be left to judge to what degree this is acceptable. Transformation is required, not transliteration. We need a new English poem, full of its own energy and vitality, not a pale reflection of the old.

*

Style was an equally crucial consideration, though here it was easier to see the road that had to be followed. We had decided on a new translation in the first place because we couldn't find one that was written in direct, modern theatrical English, the language employed by the best practitioners on the modern stage. We wanted no archaisms, no inversions, no puffing up of the emotions by Victorian rhodomontade. The great moments had to be earned, through a simple, strong, concrete, metaphorical English, with no vulgar indulgence of modernity or affectation of the ancient. The ambition was to make the language and the ideas expressed within it, as simple, direct and powerful as it must have been to its original spectators, and if this meant a simplification of mythological nomenclature, and the insertion of a few words or lines to make clear an idea that has not survived the journey of 2,500 years, so be it. Two simple examples will suffice. The Greek gods are invoked by many different names, expressing different elements of the same deity, but I have tended to use only one. Apollo remains Apollo, not Phoebus, the Delian, the Archer King, Loxias, or whatever. More importantly, in *Antigone*, all the original spectators would have known the horrific significance of a body remaining unburied – namely, that there was no chance of peace in the underworld until the correct rites had been performed. Creon is damning Polynices' eternal soul, as Hamlet or Isabella might have put it, as well as his body. Sophocles nowhere says this, because all his audience knew it, but I have inserted a line or two in the earlier part of the play to make the tragic issue quite clear.

The actual usage of words is always the most personal matter in any writer's style, and in this way my own verbal personality must be reflected in every line of the play. One of the clearest indications of this is perhaps in the use of certain modern words which in the purest sense would be considered anachronisms. Rumour, in *Colonus*, travels 'faster than an Olympic champion', and Eurydice in *Antigone* remarks that 'We are bred to stoicism in this family'. Zeno of Citium began to develop stoic philosophy a clear four generations after Sophocles' lifetime, and the Olympic Games began in the eighth century BC, many hundreds of years after the Heroic age. But the word 'stoicism' in modern English has nothing at all to do with the philosophy of Zeno. The word has become a part of general modern usage, representing endurance of an intense and uncomplaining kind; just as the phrase 'Olympic champion'

doesn't represent to us anything specifically Greek, nor even a specific modern champion, an Ovett or Coe, but the idea of world supremacy in sport: in this particular case, the fastest. People who object to such usages will probably also object to words like 'realpolitik', 'security police', and Antigone's description of Hades as 'that bleak hotel which is never short of a room': but I stand by my usages. In performance they work well, expressing in a vivid modern way an idea that does not seem un-Sophoclean. They are I suppose the standard-bearers or forlorn hope of my attack on the problem of style. My loyalty, as a translator of a text written for performance, must always be principally to the language being translated into, not the language being translated from. That is where my attempt will succeed or fail, not in the details of my treatment, or maltreatment, of the original.

One external factor had an effect on these translations. I was originally commissioned to translate all three plays, and I worked on them in story order, beginning with page one of *Oedipus the King*. Most of the problems of form and style were confronted within the process of translating the first play, but obviously I learned as I went along. I didn't feel that I had really learned how to translate the formal odes and choral dialogues until I was about halfway through *Colonus*, and when I looked back on the completed first draft, it seemed to me that *Antigone* was, by a long way, the best of the three, as by that time I was confident in what I was doing. In these first drafts, I had made no attempt to reproduce exactly the formal patterns of the choruses and choral dialogues. I had allowed my own verse forms to emerge naturally, and simply repeated them where repetition was required. The passages of stichomythia likewise, I kept as sharp as I could, but did not attempt to reproduce the formal one-line or two-line patterns of the original. My translations came out quite a lot longer than the originals, of course, but I had expected that. Part of the greatness of any poet lies in his compression of language, and I knew that that was one of many areas where I couldn't hope to be in Sophocles' league.

It was decided to produce *Antigone* first. In the light of advice from Geoffrey Lewis, my classical mentor, I made several crucial retranslations, but *Antigone* went into production much as originally drafted. A year passed before the next two plays were scheduled for production, and during that time I did a great deal of revision and retranslation. I had always been dissatisfied with the

first half of *Oedipus the King*, and while reworking it, I found that I was in fact capable of making versions of Sophocles' odes which were much closer to Sophocles' own length, and I soon discovered the delights of reproducing the stichomythia patterns exactly. When I moved onto *Oedipus at Colonus*, I was very conscious that I was courting disaster by letting the English play become too long. The original Greek text is the longest in the canon, and my first version sprawled to some two-and-a-half hours playing-time. So I took a deep breath and decided to attempt to do all the choruses, choral dialogues, and stichomythic passages in the same numbers and patterns of lines employed in the original Greek, which, although I could not read it, was always at my elbow, so that its formal patterns, or those of them that can be clearly seen on the page, were clear to me. My versions are still longer, of course, even when I employ exactly the same number of lines as the original Greek: but they are not so much longer as to threaten the plays' structure, and the formal patterns, in *Colonus* at least, are absolutely reproduced. In this formal respect, *Colonus* is the closest of the translations. *Oedipus the King* is almost as close, and *Antigone* is the freest of the three. [. . .]

'A poem,' as Auden said, 'is never finished. You simply stop working on it.' The needs of production gave me an unavoidable deadline, but all three plays have been allowed the luxury of some degree of retranslation after the productions. In the first two plays only the odd line or phrase has been changed, but in *Antigone*, the degree of reworking has been considerable.

Sophocles is one of us, not one of a lost them, buried in centuries of dust in forgotten libraries. He is alive now, he lives in our world, and because he is alive, his ideas have changed subtly over the centuries, as mankind has acquired more experience against which to measure his work. Because he was one of the greatest of theatrical artists his work stands up to this scrutiny of the succeeding generations, and as we bring to it our own experience, it becomes richer and more revealing. So there must be nothing archaeological about the act of translation, nothing of the creation of vanished historical epochs. We owe him the best, most idiomatic, up-to-date language we can manage, so that the burning immediacy and power of his art can strike us as powerfully as they struck his contemporaries. My main aim in making this new version of these much-translated works has been to make them

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seem that they were written not 2,500 years ago, but the day before
yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

Don Taylor
1986

ANTIGONE

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CHARACTERS

ANTIGONE }
ISMENE } the daughters of Oedipus
CREON, King of Thebes
HAEMON, his son
TEIRESIAS, a prophet, blind
A SOLDIER
A MESSENGER
EURYDICE, wife of Creon
CHORUS of Senators of Thebes
GUARDS
SOLDIERS
ATTENDANTS
TEIRESIAS' BOY

This translation was commissioned by BBC Television and first produced in the autumn of 1986, with the following cast:

ANTIGONE	Juliet Stevenson
ISMENE	Gwen Taylor
CREON	John Shrapnel
HAEMON	Mike Gwilym
TEIRESIAS	John Gielgud
SOLDIER	Tony Selby
MESSENGER	Bernard Hill
EURYDICE	Rosalie Crutchley
CHORUS	Patrick Barr, Paul Daneman, Donald Eccles, Robert Eddison, Patrick Godfrey, Ewan Hooper, Peter Jeffrey, Noel Johnson, Robert Lang, John Ringham, Frederick Treves, John Woodnutt
TEIRESIAS' BOY	Paul Russell
GUARDS	Chris Andrews, Steve Ausden, Leon Ferguson, Stephen Epressieux, Steve Ismay, Paul LeFevre, David Rogue, Steve Roxton
ATTENDANTS TO EURYDICE	Jeannie Downs, Vanessa Linstone
ATTENDANTS	Michael Eriera, David Fieldsend, William Franklyn-Pool, Paul Holmes, Jack Lonsdale, Bernard Losh, Graeme Sneddon

*Directed by Don Taylor
Produced by Louis Marks
Designed by David Myerscough-Jones
Music by Derek Bourgeois
Costumes by June Hudson*

The scene is set outside the royal palace of Thebes.

Enter ANTIGONE and ISMENE. They are both nervous and troubled. ANTIGONE looks round to be sure they cannot be overheard before speaking.

ANTIGONE. Ismene listen. The same blood
Flows in both our veins, doesn't it, my sister,
The blood of Oedipus. And suffering,
Which was his destiny, is our punishment too,
The sentence passed on all his children.
Physical pain, contempt, insults,
Every kind of dishonour: we've seen them all,
And endured them all, the two of us.
But there's more to come. Now, today . . .
Have you heard it, this new proclamation,
Which the king has made to the whole city?
Have you heard how those nearest to us
Are to be treated, with the contempt
We reserve for traitors? People we love!

ISMENE. No one has told me anything, Antigone,
I have heard nothing, neither good nor bad
About anyone we love – not since the battle
I mean, and the terrible news
That both our brothers were dead: one day,
One battle, and fratricide twice over,
Each brother cutting down his own flesh . . .
But the army from Argos retreated last night,
I have heard that. Nothing else
To cheer me up, or depress me further.

ANTIGONE. I thought you hadn't. That's why I asked you
To meet me here, where I can tell you everything
Without any risk of being overheard.

ISMENE. What is it then? More terrible news?

Something black and frightening, I can see that.

ANTIGONE. Well, what do you think, Ismene? Perhaps
You can guess. We have two brothers,
Both of them dead. And Creon has decreed
That a decent burial shall be given to one,
But not to the other. Eteocles, apparently,
Has already been buried, with full military honours,
And all the formalities due to the dead

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Meticulously observed. So that *his* rest
In the underworld among the heroes is assured.
But Polynices, who died in agony
Just as certainly as his brother did,
Is not to be buried at all. The decree
Makes that quite plain. *He* is to be left
Lying where he fell, with no tears,
And no ceremonies of mourning, to stink
In the open: till the kites and vultures
Catch the scent, and tear him to pieces
And pick him to the bone. Left unburied
There is no rest for him in the underworld,
No more than here. What a great king
Our Creon is, eh sister?
It's against us, you realise, and against me
In particular that he has published this decree.
And he'll soon be here himself, to make it public
To the senators, and anyone who may not have heard it.
He isn't bluffing. He means to act
To make it stick. The punishment
For anyone who disobeys the order
Is public stoning to death. So that's the news,
And you know it now. The time has come
For you too to stand up and be counted
With me: and to show whether you are worthy
Of the honour of being Oedipus' daughter.

ISMENE. Wait a minute Antigone, don't be so headstrong!

If all this is as you say it is,
What can I do, one way or the other?

ANTIGONE. Just say you will help me. Commit yourself.

ISMENE. To do what? Something dangerous?

ANTIGONE. Just to give me a hand to lift the body.

It's too heavy for me to move on my own.

ISMENE. To bury him you mean? In spite of the decree?

ANTIGONE. He is my brother. And like it or not

He's yours too. I won't betray him
Now that he's dead. No one will ever
Throw that in my face.

ISMENE. You must be mad!

Creon has publicly forbidden it.

ANTIGONE. He can't forbid me to love my brother.

He has neither the right nor the power to do that.

ISMENE. Have you forgotten what happened to our father?

Contempt and loathing from everyone,

Even from himself, that was his reward.

And blinded too, by his own hand.

And his mother-wife, as ill matched with him

As those two words are with each other,

She knotted a rope, and hanged herself.

And now our two brothers, both in one day

Caught in the same trap, claiming

Blood for blood and death for death

Each one at the expense of the other.

We are the last ones left, sister,

And what a death is promised for us,

More terrible than any, if we break the law

By defying the king, and the power of the State.

Think for a moment Antigone, please!

We are women, that's all. Physically weaker –

And barred from any political influence.

How can we fight against the institutionalised strength

Of the male sex? They are in power,

And we have to obey them – this time

And maybe in worse situations than this.

May god forgive me, and the spirits of the dead,

I have no choice! State power

Commands, and I must do as I am told.

When you are powerless, wild gestures

And heroic refusals are reserved for madmen!

ANTIGONE. Don't say any more. I won't ask again.

In fact, if you were to offer help now,

I would refuse it. Do as you please.

I intend to bury my brother,

And if I die in the attempt, I shall die

In the knowledge that I have acted justly.

What greater satisfaction than that,

For a loving sister to embrace a loving brother

Even in the grave: and to be condemned

For the criminal act of seeing him at peace!

Our lives are short. We have too little time

To waste it on men, and the laws they make.

The approval of the dead is everlasting,

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And I shall bask in it, as I lie among them.
Do as you please. Live, by all means.
The laws *you* will break are not of man's making.

ISMENE. I reverence them. But how can I defy
The unlimited power of the State? What weapons
Of mine are strong enough for that?

ANTIGONE. Fine. That's a good excuse. I'll go
And shovel the earth on my brother's body.

ISMENE. I'm frightened, Antigone. I'm frightened for you.

ANTIGONE. Don't be frightened for me. Fear for yourself.

ISMENE. For god's sake, keep it quiet. Don't tell anyone.

I'll keep our meeting secret.

ANTIGONE. Don't you dare!

You must tell everybody, shout it in the streets.

If you keep it secret, I shall begin to hate you.

ISMENE. There's a fire burning in you Antigone,

But it makes me go cold just to hear you!

ANTIGONE. I'm not doing it to please you. It's for him.

ISMENE. This obsession will destroy you! You're certain to fail!

ANTIGONE. I shall fail when I have failed. Not before.

ISMENE. But you know it's hopeless. Why begin

When you know you can't possibly succeed!

ANTIGONE. Be quiet, before I begin to despise you

For talking so feebly! *He* will despise you

Too, and justly. You can go now. Go!

If I'm mad, you can leave me here with my madness

Which will doubtless destroy me soon enough.

Death is the worst thing that can happen,

And some deaths are more honourable than others.

ISMENE. If you've made your mind up . . . Antigone, it's

madness . . .

Remember, I love you . . . whatever happens . . .

Exit ANTIGONE and ISMENE in opposite directions.

Enter the CHORUS OF THE SENATORS OF THEBES.

CHORUS. The life-giving sun has never shone

More brightly on the seven gates of Thebes

Than he shines this morning:

Never a more glorious dawning

Than this sunrise over Dirce's river,

When the army of the foreign invader

At first light

Made its panic-stricken flight,
And all its white shields and its bright weapons were gone.
Like a snowy eagle from the mountain crest it came
Shrieking down on our city,
The army of Argos, with a spurious treaty
To enforce Polynices' claim,
All its horsehair plumes nodding together
And a grinding of brass and a creaking of leather.

By our seven shuttered gates it waited,
Eyes glittering in dark helmets,
Swords drawn, spears couching.
But before the killing and burning,
The metallic taste of blood
And crashing stonework and blazing wood,
They turned and fled, the music of death
In their ears, at their backs, the dragon's breath.
Zeus had seen them, he who hates inflated
Pride, and the empty boast
Of the windbag, he heard their singing
As if the victory were theirs for the taking,
And he brought down his thunder on their glittering host,
Struck them with lightning, and sent them flying,
Scorched them, and burned them, and left them dying.

Down like a rock from the mountain crest
He came thundering to earth, the flame
Dashed from his hand,
The son of Thebes whose best hope of fame
Was to conquer his native land
And who failed in his quest.
For the war god gave us his word of command,
Like a battle chariot his terrible name
Ran them down where they stood, and they died in the dust.
Now, at each of our seven gates
A Theban defender waits
As seven champions bring their fame and armour to the fight:
And before the coming of night
Six have put their fame to the test,
Six have laid both fame and armour to rest
As a tribute at great Zeus' feet.

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At the seventh gate two brothers meet
Sharing their blood in death as in birth,
Each striking together,
Each laying the other
Dead on the earth.

There will be victory celebrations today
In this city of charioteers,
And singing in the streets.

There will be ceremonies of thanksgiving, and grateful tears
For the end of fighting, as the enemy retreats
And the time comes for relaxation and play.

Now, as all voices are raised, and the drum beats
The ecstatic god himself will appear,
Bacchus the drunkard, to take power for one day
In the city he calls his own. Time to dance all night,
To shake the foundations, till the faint light
Of dawn flushes the windows, and the lamps fade.

Now Creon is king. He made
The most of his fortune, and the gods' choice,
The son of Menoeceus. As the people rejoice
The new king enters to take his throne,
The responsibility his alone.

But why has he called us here, to debate
In emergency session
His public proclamation
So vital to the State?

CREON *enters, well-guarded by soldiers.*

CREON. Senators: our country, like a ship at sea,
Has survived the hurricane. The gods, who sent it,
Have navigated us into calmer waters now.

I have chosen to summon this assembly
Because I know I can trust you. Your predecessors
Were loyal and reliable in King Laius' time,
And when King Oedipus, in his exceptional wisdom,
Restored the fortunes of this city.

When tragedy struck him, and his rule was ended,
Your loyalty to the blood royal
Was never questioned, and you supported his sons:
Till they too were brought down,
In a single day, incestuously murdered,

Each brother shedding a brother's blood.
By that same bloodright, as next of kin,
I claim the throne, and all its power
Both city and kingdom. I claim it and hold it
From today, as mine by right.

There is no certain measure of a man's quality,
The depth of his intellect and the maturity of his judgement,
Until he is put to the supreme test
By the exercise of lawful power in the State.

My own opinion is well known:
The ruler who fears the consequences
Of his actions, or who is afraid to act openly,
Or take the good advice of his senators,
Is beneath contempt. Equally contemptible
Is the man who puts the interests of his friends,
Or his relations, before his country.

There is nothing good can be said of him.
Let me make it plain, before the gods,
Whose eyes are in every council chamber,
When I see any threat to this nation,
From whatever direction, I shall make it public.

No one who is an enemy of the State
Shall ever be any friend of mine.

The State, the Fatherland, is everything
To us, the ship we all sail in.
If she sinks, we all drown,
And friendship drowns with us. That's my policy:
A policy of service to the Commonwealth.

And in pursuance of that policy,
I have issued an official State decree
Concerning the sons of Oedipus.
Eteocles, who died fighting for his country,
And with exceptional bravery, we shall bury him
With all the honours and funeral ceremonies
Customary for a man who died a hero.

The other, the outcast, the exile –
His brother Polynices, who returned here
At the head of a foreign army, to destroy
His homeland, to burn down the city
And reduce the people to a condition of slavery,
Or kill them in the streets – I have ordered

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That he is to have no grave at all.
No one is to bury him, or mourn for him.
His body is to be left in the open, uncovered,
A stinking feast for the scavengers,
Dogs and crows, a sight to inspire terror.
I intend to make it quite plain
That never, under my administration,
Will people who commit crimes against the State
Reap any benefit from their actions: and at the expense
Of honest decent citizens too.
But people who serve the State, alive
Or dead, that makes no difference –
I shall honour them for their patriotism.

CHORUS. Son of Menoeceus, you are king now.

You have delivered your verdict and sentence
Upon the man who defended the city
And the man who attacked it, unambiguously.
The full power of the law is in your hands,
And it binds the dead, as well as the living.
We are all at your disposal.

CREON. Make sure

Then, that my orders are carried out.

CHORUS. Younger men than us should implement your policies.

CREON. I don't mean that. Polynices' body

Is already under guard.

CREON. What else

Must we do? What other responsibility
Do you lay upon us?

CREON. Not to intrigue

With dissidents, or subversive elements.

CHORUS. We are not mad sir. We know the law,

And the penalty for breaking it.

CREON. Which will be death. And be in no doubt

I shall enforce it. Because there are always men
Who can be bought, who will risk anything,
Even death, if the bribe is large enough

Enter a SOLDIER in a dusty uniform, struggling with the guards, who bring him before CREON. He is very frightened.

SOLDIER. My Lord Creon . . . sir! If I can hardly speak

For lack of breath . . . it's not 'cos I ran . . .

I kept on stopping, as a matter of fact,

Half a dozen times, and I hung about
 As much as I dared. I haven't thought about anything
 So much for a long time. 'Listen, don't hurry,'
 I said to myself, 'the chances are,
 Poor sod, you'll cop it when you get there.'
 But then I said to myself, you see,
 'Hang about,' I said, 'or rather, don't,
 Because if Creon hears this from somebody else,
 You're really in trouble.' So I hurried here
 As slow as I could, going round and round
 In circles, in my head, as well as with my feet!
 It's funny how long a mile can take you
 When you're thinking what I was thinking. However
 Duty called in the end, and I reckoned
 It would be safer to face it out.
 It may be unimportant, but I've come here,
 So now I'll tell you. If I'm punished for it
 The gods'll be behind it, that's for sure.
 So I wouldn't have escaped it anyway.

CREON. Talk sense, man. Why are you frightened?

SOLDIER. Well, first of all sir, for myself, like,

My own point of view . . . I never done it,
 And I didn't see who else done it neither.
 So I shouldn't be punished for it, should I?

CREON. Is there any need for all this preamble?

You take great care to dissociate yourself
 From what you say: it must be bad news.

SOLDIER. It is bad news sir: and I'm so scared.

I don't know how to put it for the best.

CREON. The plainest way. And then we can have done with you.

SOLDIER. Straight out with it then. The body's buried.

Someone or other. A handful of dust,
 That's all, dry dust, but properly sprinkled,
 You know, religiously – and then gone –
 Whoever it was.

CREON. Do you know what you're saying?

Who has dared to disobey my orders?

SOLDIER. No way of knowing sir, we've no idea!

There had been no digging, no spade marks or nothing.
 The ground's rock hard. No wheel tracks either,
 From a chariot, or cart, or anything.

14 Antigone

In fact, no clues of any kind at all,
Nothing to tell you who might have done it.
When the sentry taking the early turn
Discovered what had happened, and reported back,
We were all shattered, and scared stiff.
It was as though the body had disappeared –
Not buried in a proper grave, I don't mean,
But lightly covered with a layer of earth.
Almost as though some passing stranger
With a religious turn of mind, knowing
That being left unburied means everlasting
Anguish, and wandering without rest,
Had scattered a few handfuls. There was no tracks
Of animals either, not of dogs or anything,
Who might have gnawed at it, and covered it over
With their front legs, like they do a bone.
A real row started then, I can tell you.
We shouted at each other, and it could have been a fight,
There was no one there to stop us. Any one of us
Could have done it, we all suspected each other:
But we all denied it, and there was no evidence
To prove one man guilty rather than another.
So we all dared each other to swear
To go through fire and water, to hold
Red hot pokers in our hands, and call all the gods
As witnesses that we hadn't done it,
And didn't know anyone who had,
Or would even think of it, let alone do it.
And none of any of it got us nowhere.
Then one of the fellers had his say, and he
Scared us all shitless, I can tell you.
He said – and we knew he was dead right –
There was no way out of it, we had to do it
And take our chances – this feller said
'One of us lot must tell the King,
Because we can't just hide it, can we?'That's what he said. And we knew he was right.
So we decided we'd have to draw lots,
And, just my luck, I drew the short straw.
So here I am. And I don't like telling it
One little bit more than you like hearing it.

The bloke who brings bad news never gets a medal.

CHORUS. My Lord Creon, this policy of yours

Has worried me from the start. My political instinct
Tells me that this may be some sort of warning
Or sign, and perhaps from the gods.

CREON.

How dare you!

Shut your mouths, all of you, before I lose my temper!
And you, if you are a superannuated fool,
At least don't talk like one. Is it likely,
Remotely likely, that the gods will think twice
Over that pile of stinking meat?
By god, it's blasphemy even to suggest
That they would care a damn whether he was buried
Or not! Let alone grant him an honourable funeral
As though he were one of their principal supporters:
The man who came to burn down their temples,
Plunder their treasuries, pull down their statues
And bring destruction and contempt for their land and its laws.
Do the gods love criminals these days?
Oh no! They do not! But, gentlemen, there are men
In this city, and I have noted them,
A subversive faction, enemies of the State,
A cell of oppositionists, call them what you will,
Who reject the law, and my leadership!
They meet in secret, and nod and whisper
Their seditious talk, and they are behind this,
Any fool can see that. Their bribery
Has suborned my soldiers, and paid for
This demonstration against my authority!
Money, gentlemen, money! The virus
That infects mankind with every sickness
We have a name for, no greater scourge
Than that! Money it is that pounds
Great cities to piles of rubble, turns people
By the millions into homeless refugees,
Takes homeless citizens and corrupts them
Into doing things they would be ashamed to think of
Before the fee was mentioned, until there's no crime
That can't be bought – and in the end
Brings them into the execution chamber.
Well, whoever they are, these men

16 Antigone

Who have sold themselves, they'll find the price
Considerably higher than they thought it was!

CREON *speaks to the SOLDIER.*

You! Come here! Get this into your head!
By Zeus, my god, whose power I revere,
I swear to you, soldier, that either you will find
The man who buried Polynices' body
In defiance of my express command
And bring him here – the actual man
Who sprinkled the earth, no other will do,
Standing here, in front of me – or you, soldier,
Will die for it. And death, I promise you,
Will be the least of your punishments.
You will be made a public example –
And interrogated by the security police,
Kept standing, beaten across the feet,
The whole repertoire of special techniques
At which we excel so much – until
You confess the full range of this conspiracy,
Who paid you, how much, and for what purpose.
The choice is yours: and perhaps that indicates
Where your own best interests lie. Crimes
Against the State and its laws, you'll find,
Are very unprofitable in the end.

SOLDIER. Am I allowed to speak sir?

CREON. No!

Why should you speak! Every word you say
Is painful to me.

SOLDIER. Well, it can't be earache,
Can it sir, not what I said!
It must stick in your gullet. Or further down
Maybe, a sort of pain in the conscience.

CREON. Do you dare to answer me back: and make jokes
About my conscience?

SOLDIER. Me sir? No sir!
I might give you earache, I can see that.
I talk too much, always have done.
But the other pain, the heartburn, as it were,
It's the criminal causing that sir, not me.

CREON. You're not short of a quick answer either.

SOLDIER. Maybe not. But I didn't bury the body.

Not guilty to that sir.

CREON. But maybe guilty
Of selling your eyes for money, eh sentry,
Of looking the other way for cash?

SOLDIER. I think it's a shame sir, that an intelligent man
And as well educated as you are
Should miss the point so completely.

CREON. I'm not interested in your opinions!

If you fail to find this enemy of the State
And bring him here to me, you'll learn
That money, from whatever source,
Will certainly not save *your* life!

Exit CREON.

SOLDIER. Let's hope they find him, whoever he is.
But one thing I'm sure of: they won't find me.
I never thought I'd get out of here
Alive. And when I do get out,
Nothing will bring me back again.
I've had an amazing stroke of luck,
And I won't chance my arm a second time!

Exit the SOLDIER.

CHORUS. Is there anything more wonderful on earth,
Our marvellous planet,
Than the miracle of man!
With what arrogant ease
He rides the dangerous seas,
From the waves' towering summit
To the yawning trough beneath.
The earth mother herself, before time began,
The oldest of the ageless gods,
Learned to endure his driving plough,
Turning the earth and breaking the clods
Till by the sweat of his brow
She yielded up her fruitfulness.

The quick-witted birds are no match for him,
Neither victim nor predator
Among the beasts of the plain
Nor the seas' seething masses.
His cunning surpasses
Their instinct, his skill is the greater,

18 Antigone

His snares never fail, and his nets teem.
The wild bull of the savage mountain
And the magnificent stag who passes
Like a king through upland and glen,
The untamed horse with his matted tresses
Uncut on his neck, all submit to man,
And the yoke and the bit – and his power increases.

He has mastered the mysteries of language:
And thought, which moves faster than the wind,
He has tamed, and made rational.
Political wisdom too, all the knowledge
Of people and States, all the practical
Arts of government he has studied and refined,
Built cities to shelter his head
Against rain and danger and cold
And ordered all things in his mind.
There is no problem he cannot resolve
By the exercise of his brains or his breath,
And the only disease he cannot salve
Or cure, is death.

In action he is subtle beyond imagination,
Limitless in his skill, and these gifts
Are both enemies and friends,
As he applies them, with equal determination,
To good or to evil ends.
All men honour, and the State uplifts
That man to the heights of glory, whose powers
Uphold the constitution, and the gods, and their laws.
His city prospers. But if he shifts
His ground, and takes the wrong path,
Despising morality, and blown up with pride,
Indulges himself and his power, at my hearth
May he never warm himself, or sit at my side.
ANTIGONE is brought in by the guards, the SOLDIER is with her, a triumphant smile on his face.

CHORUS (*severally*). But wait! I can't believe my eyes!
Can this be true?
This is Antigone. I recognise
Her as clearly as I can see you.

Her father's destiny
 Was suffering and pain
 And on all his progeny
 Misfortunes rain.
 Child, did you openly disobey
 The new king's order
 And bury your brother?
 Do you have to manhandle her this way?

SOLDIER. We saw it! Actually burying the body,
 Caught him in the act, as they say, red-handed.
 Only it's not a him, it's a her. Where's the king?

CHORUS. Just returning now: when he's most needed.

Re-enter CREON.

CREON. What's all the noise? By the look of things
 I'm here not a moment too soon.

He sees ANTIGONE and the guards.

What has happened?

SOLDIER. Lord Creon, I reckon it's always unwise
 To swear oaths and make promises,
 Even to yourself. Second thoughts,
 Nine times out of ten, will have their say
 And end up by calling you a liar.
 It's no time at all since I promised myself
 I wouldn't be seen dead here again:
 You were that angry with me the last time,
 A right mouthful you gave me, more than enough
 Thanks very much. But you can't beat
 A real turn-up for the book, can you,
 There's nothing more enjoyable than a good win
 When you're expecting a towsing. So here I am
 Again, as the comic said, and my promises
 Not worth the air they was spoken with!
 This girl's your criminal. We caught her doing it,
 Actually setting the grave to rights.
 I brought her here, and there was no panic
 This time, I can tell you, no recriminations
 Or drawing lots! This job was all mine.
 I caught her, and I claim the credit for it.
 And now, she's all yours. Take her, and accuse her,
 Stone her to death, if you like. By rights,
 I'm free to go: and well shot of all of it.

20 Antigone

CREON. Where did you arrest her? Tell me the details.

SOLDIER. She was burying him. What else is there to say?

CREON. Are you out of your mind? Do you realise

The implications of what you are saying?

SOLDIER. Sir, she was burying the body, I saw her:

The body you ordered not to be buried.

I can't speak plainer than that.

CREON. Did you

Catch her in the act? Did you see her doing it?

SOLDIER. Well, gentlemen, it was like this.

As soon as I got back, remembering

All those threats, or promises you made me,

We brushed all the earth off the naked body,

Which was all wet and beginning to decay

By now, and we sat up on the ridge,

Well to the windward of the stink.

We all kept a sharp eye on each other,

Ready to nudge anyone who dropped off,

And tear him off a strip too. For hours

We sat there, till about midday.

The sun was smack overhead, blazing down,

And the heat was something terrible, I can tell you.

And then, it was as though a whirlwind blew up,

Definitely a twister it was, but localised, like,

And it raised up a dust storm, which swept across the plain,

Tore all the leaves off the trees, blotted out

The whole sky, and completely blinded us.

It seemed like some terrible manifestation

Of the gods, and you had to shut your eyes

To endure it at all. Then, suddenly it stopped,

And when the air cleared, we opened our eyes,

And saw this girl, standing there,

Beside the grave, and sort of wailing,

As though she were in pain, or maybe, anger:

Just like a bird who comes back to the nest

And finds the eggs smashed, or the fledglings gone.

That's what it sounded like. She was standing there,

Looking at the naked body, and screaming,

And cursing the monsters who had done such a thing -

Us, of course. And then she crouched down,

And picked up a few handfuls of the dry dust

And scattered it on him. She carried an urn,
 A small ceremonial bronze thing,
 And she poured from it, three times, on the dead body –
 Honey and wine and stuff in it, I suppose –
 All the proper ritual for a funeral, anyway.
 Soon as we saw that, we came charging down
 And arrested her on the spot. She wasn't
 Frightened or anything. She stood her ground.
 So then we formally charged her with the crime,
 This, and the one before. She admitted
 She'd done them both, and we were relieved
 To hear that, I can tell you. But sorry
 Too, at the same time. It's very nice
 To get out of trouble yourself. Not so nice
 When you drop someone else up to the neck in it,
 Someone you've got no quarrel with.
 But still. Your own life comes first, I reckon.
 You have to look after number one.

CREON. And you. You with your head down.

What do you say to this accusation?

Do you admit it? Are you guilty, or not?

ANTIGONE. Yes, I'm guilty. I don't pretend otherwise.

CREON. You, soldier, get out. You're cleared of all charges

Against you, and free to go back to your unit.

The SOLDIER seems about to speak, thinks better of it, and goes, much relieved.

Now, tell me, a simple yes or no.

Did you hear of my order forbidding the burial?

ANTIGONE. Of course I heard it. How could I not?

CREON. And yet you dared to disobey the law?

ANTIGONE. Yes, I did. Because it's your law,

Not the law of god. Natural justice,
 Which is of all times and places, numinous,

Not material, a quality of Zeus,

Not of kings, recognises no such law.

You are merely a man, mortal,

Like me, and laws that you enact

Cannot overturn ancient moralities

Or common human decency.

They speak the language of eternity,

Are not written down, and never change.

22 Antigone

They are for today, yesterday, and all time.
No one understands where they came from,
But everyone recognises their force:
And no man's arrogance or power
Can make me disobey them. I would rather
Suffer the disapproval and punishment
Of men, than dishonour such ancient truths.
I shall die, of course, some time,
Whether you make laws or not. If my death
Comes sooner rather than later, I shall welcome it.
My life has been misery – is misery now.
I shall be more than happy to leave it.
There will be no pain, and no despair
In that. But to leave my mother's son
Out there in the open, unburied,
That would have been unendurable,
I could not have borne it. Whereas this
I shall endure. By your judgement
Of course, I'm a fool. But by mine,
It's the judge, not the accused who's behaving foolishly.

CHORUS. This is her father speaking. Stubborn

Like him, she won't give way, not even
With the whole power of the State against her.

CREON. Well, we shall see. Any man can be broken,

And often the most committed and determined
Break soonest. Even iron, you know,
Left lying in the fire too long
Becomes over tempered, and will snap
As soon as a little pressure is applied.

You can break it in pieces. And the wildest horse
In the end submits to the bit and halter
Just like the rest. People without power,
Ordinary citizens, must necessarily obey
Those in authority over them.

This woman is very proud. That was obvious
In the first place when she broke the law,
And is even clearer now. She glories
In the crime she has committed, and insults me
To my face, as well as ignoring my decree.
If she is allowed to flout the law
In this way, all authority

In the State will collapse. I will not have that!
There will be no exchanging of roles here,
Me playing the woman while she plays the king!
She is my niece, my sister's child.
But I am the law. And that responsibility
Is above kinship. Were she even closer,
The closest, my own daughter, my duty
Would be plain. The law has its weapons,
And they will strike, at her,
And at her sister too – her accomplice,
I've no doubt, in this illegal act –
To the full extent of the punishment proscribed.
The other one, Ismene, bring her here.
I saw her in the corridor, talking to herself
And sobbing emotionally, like a madwoman!
Guilty consciences, you see, can never be hidden
Completely, the human face reveals
Conspiracies before they are enacted
Again and again. But there is nothing
More disgusting than the confessed criminal
Who tries to justify his actions,
As this woman has done here today.

ANTIGONE. What more do you want? Kill me, and have done with it.

CREON. Nothing more than your death. That'll be enough.

ANTIGONE. Then what are you waiting for? Nothing you say

Will be of the slightest interest to me,
And my arguments you will not listen to.
I've done what I said I'd do. I've buried my brother.
I aspire to no greater honour, and if
I am to be famous, let it be for that.
All these, these senators of yours,
They all agree with me in their hearts.
But there is no gag like terror, is there
Gentlemen? And tyrants must have their way,
Both in word and action, that's their privilege!

CREON. You are quite mistaken. None of the Thebans

Anywhere in the city, thinks as you do.

ANTIGONE. They all do! But they keep their mouths shut when

you're here!

CREON. Not at all! And you should be ashamed
Setting yourself up against the majority,

24 Antigone

Disregarding the will of the people!

ANTIGONE. I love my brother. I honour him dead

As I loved him living. There's no shame in that.

CREON. And the one he murdered? Wasn't he your brother?

ANTIGONE. My mother bore them both, and I loved them both.

CREON. If you honour one, you insult the other.

ANTIGONE. Neither of those dead men would say that.

CREON. Eteocles would. His brother was a traitor.

Does he merit no greater respect than that?

ANTIGONE. But he was not an animal. They both died

Together. And they were both men.

CREON. Yes, and the one died defending his country

While the other traitorously attacked it!

ANTIGONE. The dead have their rights, and we have our duties

Towards them, dictated by common decency!

CREON. And if good and bad are to be honoured equally,

Where are our values? Patriotism! Civic duty!

ANTIGONE. Death is another country. Such things

May not be valued there. May even be crimes.

CREON. An enemy is still an enemy. Dead or alive.

ANTIGONE. No, I was born with love enough

To share: no hate for anyone.

CREON. Very well. Share your love by all means,

Share it with the dead. I wish them well of it.

Women must learn to obey, as well as men.

They can have no special treatment. Law is law

And will remain so while I am alive –

And no woman will get the better of me . . .

ISMENE is brought in under guard. She has been crying, and looks gaunt and worn.

CHORUS (*severally*). Look Senators, Ismene, weeping for her sister!

Her face is raw with tears,

Flayed with misery!

Her loveliness is scarred now – this disaster

Darkens her fair skin with premonitions and fears

And flushes her cheeks with anguish, not beauty.

ISMENE is dragged before CREON.

CREON. And you! Snake! Slithering silently

About my house, to drink my blood

In secret! Both of you the same!

I looked the other way: and like terrorists

You laid undercover plans to destroy me.
Well, do you too confess your complicity
In this crime? Or protest your innocence?

ISMENE. Yes, I confess. If she will allow me
To say so. I was fully involved,
And if she is guilty, so am I.

ANTIGONE. No! That isn't justice! When I asked
For help, you refused me: and so I told you
I didn't want you, I'd do it alone.

ISMENE. But now that you're in danger, Antigone,
I'm proud to stand beside you in the dock.

ANTIGONE. The dead man knows who buried him. What use
Are people who are all words and no action?

ISMENE. Please, my sister, don't despise me!
Let me share the honour and die with you.

ANTIGONE. You've no right to claim the honour for doing
What you were afraid to do. One death
Will be enough. Why should you die?

ISMENE. Because life without you won't be worth living.

ANTIGONE. Ask Creon to protect you. He is your uncle.

ISMENE. Do I deserve such contempt? Do you enjoy
Making fun of me, sneering at my misery.

ANTIGONE. You're right. It's a reflection of my own pain,
If such bitter pleasures are all I have left.

ISMENE. Let me help you then. It's not too late.

ANTIGONE. Save your own life. Do that for yourself
Without any criticism from me: or envy.

ISMENE. For god's sake, Antigone, will you not allow me
Even to share my death with my sister?

ANTIGONE. No. I won't. You chose to live
When I chose to die: and that's the end of it.

ISMENE. But I wasn't afraid to speak! I warned you
That this would happen. I knew how it would be!

ANTIGONE. And most, the majority, would agree with you.
But some would be of my opinion.

ISMENE. But we're both in the wrong, and both condemned!

ANTIGONE. No, you must live. I have been dead
For a long time, inwardly. I am well suited
To pay honour to the dead, and die for it.

CREON. These women are neurotic, lunatics, both of them!
One of them going off her head before

26 Antigone

Our eyes, the other one born unbalanced.

ISMENE. Well, are you surprised! Anyone would crack,

The most tough-minded person, under such treatment.

CREON. You lost your senses when you allowed yourself
To be influenced by her lunacy.

ISMENE. There's no life for me here! Not without my sister!

CREON. Don't speak of her. She's as good as dead.

ISMENE. Will you kill the woman your son plans to marry?

CREON. There are other women: no lack of choice

For a young man. Other fields to plough.

ISMENE. But they're devoted to each other. You can't

Change love as you change your clothes!

CREON. No son of mine can marry a criminal.

ANTIGONE. Oh Haemon, when you hear how your father insults
you!

CREON. Let him hear. What does his mistress matter to me.

CHORUS. Lord Creon, you insult your own!

They are formally betrothed. Will you tear

The woman from your own son's arms?

CREON. Death parts all lovers, sooner or later.

CHORUS. If that's how the land lies, the poor child's doomed,
Her death warrant sealed and delivered.

CREON. By you, gentlemen, if you remember,

As well as by me. You heard the order,

Agreed it with me, if only by your silence,

Did you not, before the criminal was known?

We'll have no more shilly-shallying. Take them away,

Lock them up, and keep them under close guard.

It's time they understood they are women,

And their proper place in this society.

There's nothing like the immediate threat

Of death to soften up their rhetoric,

And make them look reality in the face.

ISMENE and ANTIGONE are dragged away by the guards. CREON
remains on stage during the following chorus.

CHORUS. They can call themselves lucky, the fortunate few

Who live their lives through

Never drinking from the bitter cup of pain.

But when one unlucky family

Incurs the gods' malignity

From generation to generation

They must swallow the bitter potion
 Again, and then again!
 Just as rollers crash, and seaspray whips
 On an exposed beach, and black clouds lower
 And the gale from the north screams through frozen lips,
 While the sea casts up from its depths a shower
 Of pebbles on the shore, and black sand
 From the chasms of ocean darkens the strand.

On every descendant of the ancient line
 Of Labdacus, divine
 And merciless retribution falls.
 In the unremembered past
 Some unforgiving Olympian cast
 The weight of his vengeance on the whole race,
 So that agony, destruction, disgrace,
 Destroy son and daughter, and darken their halls
 With tragedy. The cold hands of the dead
 Reach out for the living, and no one is spared.
 Another generation sheds its blood,
 New light is snuffed out, the young root bared
 For the same bloody axe. The characteristic sin
 Of Oedipus, arrogance, brings its bleak harvest in.

For Zeus is all-powerful, no man can match him,
 He never sleeps, as man must sleep,
 And time, which leaves its mark
 On fair complexions and dark,
 Can never engrave his face, or dim
 The brightness of his palace, where the gods keep
 Their ageless court, at the utmost peak
 Of sublime Olympus. Zeus is master there,
 And well did that wise man speak
 Who said that past and future time
 He holds in his hand by right,
 And that those who climb
 In their greatness or wickedness
 Beyond the permitted height
 He brings to destruction and despair.

But all men hope, and some have ambition,

28 Antigone

Far-ranging birds that never tire.
Those wings bear some men steadily onward,
But some others aimlessly swoop and glide
Down to frivolous pastures, landscapes of obsession,
Pathways to disaster, and the merciless fire.
And no man can claim to have understood
Hope or ambition, till the flames burn
Under his feet, and the once solid wood
Of his life is reduced to its last condition,
Ashes, and dust. A wise man said
From out of the depths of his inspiration,
When a man commits crimes, and is proud of the action,
A flaming sword hangs over his head:
No future but the grave, and a funeral urn.

HAEMON is seen approaching.

Creon, here comes your youngest son.
Is he desperate with grief
That his future bride
Should be so brutally denied,
And all his hopes of happiness gone?
For the last of your sons, what relief
From his consuming fears
And the bitter penance of tears?
Does he come to beg for mercy
For his beloved Antigone?

CREON. We shall know that from his own lips

Without any need of fortune-tellers.

HAEMON enters and the two men face each other. Both are aware of the delicacy and magnitude of the situation.

My dear son. I don't doubt you have heard
The news of our final decision, the condemnation
Of the woman you intended to marry. You come here,
I hope, not in any spirit of anger
Against your father, but understanding
That we are always comrades, and my love for you is unshaken.

HAEMON. I know I am your son, Father,

I understand the depth of your experience
In matters of State, and I try to follow
And benefit from it, whenever I can.
Any marriage would be worthless to me
That did not have your approval, and love.

CREON. Good fellow. Hang on to that! A father's opinion
Should always be influential with his son:
And fathers with young sons, when they pray for them,
Ask especially that they should grow up to be
Loyal, obedient, under pressure the first
To strike at their father's enemies,
Just as they are the first to support his friends.
A father whose sons yield no such profits
From the investment of his parenthood
Breeds grief and sorrow as his offspring,
And becomes himself a figure of fun,
Especially to his enemies. Don't be taken in,
Boy. Don't let any woman ensnare you
By exploiting her sexuality, or any of the attractions
That lure infatuated men into submission.
God help the lovesick fool who marries
A dominating woman. Passion never lasts,
And a cold bedroom breeds cold hearts,
Anger, and bitterness, for there's no hatred
So violent as the hatred of two people
Who were once in love. Get rid of her,
My boy, this girl's an enemy, no good
To you, or your best interests. Spit her out like poison!
Let her find herself a husband that suits her
Among the dead. Don't deceive yourself.
She has been openly apprehended
Performing a criminal act against the State.
She is a confessed traitor, and if I
Were to spare her life, I too would betray
The State, and its law, and everything I stand for.
I will not do it. And she must die.
Let her pray to Zeus till she drops,
Let her assert she stands for family love
And ancient virtues, and all the rest of it.
If I tolerate treachery in my own house,
Under my very nose, how can I crush subversion
Anywhere else in the city, or in the State
At large? A man who rules wisely
Within his own family, is more likely
To make sensible judgements in political matters
In his direction of the State. To pervert the law,

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To twist it to serve one's own ends
Or the interests of one's relations –
That cannot be allowed, neither in States,
Nor in families: and will not be allowed
By me, in any circumstances.
Unquestioning obedience to whomsoever the State
Appoints to be its ruler is the law
As far as I'm concerned, and this applies
To small things as well as great ones,
Just or unjust, right or wrong.
The man who is firm in his dealings with his family
Will be equally firm in power, his wisdom
Will be equally remarkable, whether as king,
Or indeed as subject. In times of war
And national danger, he will be the man
You can rely on, the man you would feel safe with
Fighting beside you in the front rank
When the battle becomes critical. Indiscipline,
Anarchy, disobedience, what greater scourge
Than that for humankind? States collapse
From within, cities are blown to rubble,
Efficient armies are disorganised,
And potential victory turned to disaster
And carnage, and all by disobedience,
Anarchy, indiscipline. Whereas the well-drilled regiment
That asks no questions stands firm,
Knows nothing, and needs to know nothing, and wins,
Thus saving the lives of millions of honest people.
Authority is essential in any State,
And will be upheld in this one, by me.
There will be no yielding to female fantasies,
Not by so much as an inch. And if we must be deposed,
Let it be by a man's hand, eh son?
Not by a conspiracy of women!
CHORUS. If an old man is fit to judge, Lord Creon,
You have spoken rationally, sensibly, and with the wisdom
Gathered from long experience.
HAEMON. Father, the most enviable of a man's gifts
Is the ability to reason clearly,
And it's not for me to say you are wrong,
Even if I were clever enough, or experienced enough,

Which I'm not. But it's also true to say
That some men think differently about these things,
And as your son, my most useful function,
It seems to me, is to keep you in touch
With what other people are thinking,
What they say, and do, and approve or disapprove of,
And sometimes what they leave unsaid.
The prospect of your disapproval is a great
Silencer of most men's tongues, and some things
Are never said, for fear of the consequences.
But I can sometimes hear what people whisper
Behind their hands: and everywhere, I hear sympathy
Expressed for this unfortunate girl,
Condemned, as she is, to a horrifying death
That no woman has ever suffered before,
And unjustly, in most people's eyes.
In burying her brother, who was killed
In action, she did something most people consider
Decent and honourable – rather than leaving him
Naked on the battlefield, for the dogs to tear at
And kites and scavengers to pick to the bone.
She should be given a medal for it,
Those same people say, and her name inscribed
On the roll of honour. Such things are whispered
In secret, Father, and they have reached my ears.
Sir, your reputation matters to me
As much as your good health and happiness do,
Indeed, your good name matters more.
What can a loving son be more jealous of
Than his father's reputation, and what could please
A father more than to see his son's concern
That people will think well of him?
Then let me beg you to have second thoughts,
And not be certain that your own opinion
Is the only right one, and that all men share it.
A man who thinks he has the monopoly
Of wisdom, that only what *he* says
And what *he* thinks is of any relevance,
Reveals his own shallowness of mind
With every word he says. The man of judgement
Knows that it is a sign of strength,

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Not weakness, to value other opinions,
And to learn from them: and when he is wrong,
To admit it openly and change his mind.
You see it when a river floods, the trees
That bend, survive, those whose trunks
Are inflexible, are snapped off short
By the weight of water. And a sailor in a storm
Who refuses to reef his sail, and run
With the wind, is likely to end up capsized.
I beg you Father, think twice about this.
Don't let your anger influence you. If a man
Of my age may lay some small claim
To common sense, let me say this:
Absolute certainty is fine, if a man
Can be certain that his wisdom is absolute.
But such certainty and such wisdom
Is rare among men: and that being so,
The next best, is to learn to listen,
And to take good advice when it is offered.

CHORUS. There's a lot of sense, my Lord Creon,
In what this young man has said: as indeed,
There was in everything that you said too.

The fact is, you are both in the right,
And there's a good deal to be said for either.

CREON. Is there indeed? Am I expected to listen
And take lessons in political tactics
At my age, from a mere boy?

HAEMON. I'm a man, Father, and my arguments are just.
They stand upon their merits, not my age.

CREON. Oh, they stand upon their merits do they? What merit
Is there, please tell me, in breaking the law?

HAEMON. If she'd done something shameful I wouldn't defend her.

CREON. She has brought the law into contempt! That's shameful!

HAEMON. Listen to the people in the street, Father,
The ordinary Thebans! They say she hasn't!

CREON. I have never based my political principles
On the opinions of people in the street!

HAEMON. Now you're the one who's speaking like a boy!

CREON. I'm speaking like a king. It's my responsibility,
And I will act according to my own convictions!

HAEMON. When the State becomes one man it ceases to be a State!

CREON. The State is the statesman who rules it, it reflects
 His judgement, it belongs to him!

HAEMON. Go and rule in the desert then! There's nobody there
 To argue with you! What a king you'll be there!

CREON. This boy of mine is on the woman's side!

HAEMON. Yes, if *you* are a woman, I am.
 I'm on your side Father, I'm fighting for you.

CREON. You damned impudent devil! Every word
 You say is against me. Your own father!

HAEMON. When I know you are wrong, I have to speak.

CREON. How am I wrong? By maintaining my position
 And the authority of the State? Is that wrong?

HAEMON. When position and authority
 Ride roughshod over moral feeling . . .

CREON. You're weak, and uxorious, and contemptible,
 With no will of your own. You're a woman's mouthpiece!

HAEMON. I'm not ashamed of what I'm saying.

CREON. Every word you have said pleads for her cause.

HAEMON. I plead for you, and for myself,
 And for common humanity, respect for the dead!

CREON. You will never marry that woman, she won't
 Live long enough to see that day!

HAEMON. If she dies,
 She won't die alone. There'll be two deaths, not one.

CREON. Are you threatening me? How dare you threaten . . .

HAEMON. No, that's not a threat. I'm telling you
 Your policy was misbegotten from the beginning.

CREON. Misbegotten! Dear god, if anything's misbegotten
 Here, it's my son. You'll regret this, I promise you.

HAEMON. If you weren't my father, I'd say you were demented.

CREON. Don't father me! You're a woman's plaything,
 A tame lap dog!

HAEMON. Is anyone else
 Allowed to speak? Must you have the last word
 In everything, must all the rest of us be gagged?

CREON. I must, and I will! And you, I promise you,
 Will regret what you have spoken here
 Today. I will not be sneered at or contradicted
 By anyone. Sons can be punished too.
 Bring her out, the bitch, let her die here and now,
 In the open, with her bridegroom beside her

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As a witness! You can watch the execution!

HAEMON. That's one sight I shall never see!

Nor from this moment, Father, will you

Ever see me again. Those that wish

To stay and watch this disgusting spectacle

In company with a madman, are welcome to it!

Exit HAEMON.

CHORUS. Lord Creon, an uncontrollable fury

Has possessed your son, and swept him off like a whirlwind.

A young man's anger is a terrifying thing!

CREON. Let him go and shout his head off about moral this

And decent that, till he raves himself senseless!

The two women are sentenced. It will take more than bluster

To reprieve them, I promise you.

CHORUS. Both of them sir?

You mean to put both of the sisters to death?

CREON. No. You are right. I can take advice.

The one who covered the body. Not the other.

CHORUS. And for the condemned one: what manner of death?

CREON. Take her to some lonely place, rocky,

And unfrequented by anyone. Find a cave

And wall her up in it. Bury her alive:

But with just enough food so that no guilt

For her death will fall either upon us or the State.

She'll have plenty of time to honour the gods

Of the dead there, since they receive

So many of her prayers. They will release her.

And she will learn that worshipping the dead

Is not the business of the living.

Exit CREON.

CHORUS. When the god of unbridled passion makes war

He always wins.

No force on earth can withstand

His powerful, merciless hand.

When the first flowers appear

In a young girl's cheek

The remorseless magic begins:

And then, from the deepest valley to the highest peak

His traps are set,

And no man's sins

Or virtues can keep him from the net.

The mania is universal. The gods themselves run mad.
Men lose their wits, and no one is spared.

When the madness strikes, no one is safe.
The maturest of men
Will commit follies and crimes
Undreamed of in saner times.
What else could provoke this strife
Between father and son, this family divided
And murderous anger between kin?
There is fire in a woman's eye, incited
By such consuming heat,
A man's mind can burn.
Aphrodite shares power with Zeus, her seat
Is at his right hand, her lightning
Strikes to the heart, and its power is frightening.
The doors open and ANTIGONE enters, heavily guarded. She is dressed in a plain white gown.

CHORUS. Yet how can we talk of justice
And the needs of the State
While we stand and watch this
Unendurable sight?
My eyes will have their way and weep,
Seeing Antigone, like a young bride
Going to her bedchamber, to marry the dead
And share their everlasting sleep.

ANTIGONE. In all my wanderings, gentlemen, this place
Has been my home. I was born in this city:
And now I begin my last journey.
I look up at the sun in its familiar sky
And feel its warmth on my face
Only to say goodbye.
In the daytime of my life, in mid-breath,
This security policeman, death,
Arrests me, as he arrests everyone, young and old
At home, or in the street. To the cold
Waters of darkness we come, never
To return across that silent river.
No wedding for me,
No music, no guests in the room:
My wedding gift is eternity
In a stone tomb,

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My dowry, for ever not-to-be,
Death my bridegroom.

CHORUS. But your action is famous,
In every street
Mouths whisper ‘Antigone’.
You go down to the dead
With the promise of glory ringing in your head
And nothing to devalue your beauty.
No sword has scarred you, plague visited:
Unmarked, untouched, you pass
From the dangerous light
Into the safety of eternal night,
Alive, alone, and free.

ANTIGONE. Do you remember the sad story
Of Tantalus’ daughter? She was a stranger
From Phrygia, unmarried, like me, in danger
Like mine. She was sentenced to die on the rock
Of Sipylus, and there was no glory
For her, only the endless shock
Of the elements, and the terrible place
Where she was imprisoned: the mountain’s embrace
Like fingers of ivy tying her down,
Enclosing, entombing her, and she all alone
While the snows blinded her, and the freezing rain
Whipped her to rags, and exposed her pain
To the naked sky.
What bitter tears she shed
As she slowly turned to stone, and the grey
Rock petrified her by inches, and she died.
Her story is mine. Today
I shall share her rocky bed.

CHORUS. But she was a goddess
Not born for death
Like the children of men
Whose desperate mortality
Is their only certainty.
Will it soothe your pain
To share her destiny,
Or soften your distress
As alive in the earth

You draw your last breath,
To live on in legend and stone?

ANTIGONE. This is a mockery! By everything
The city of our fathers has ever held sacred,
You landowners, you elder statesmen,
You rulers of Thebes, my dying
Is no joke! Am I a figure of fun
To be treated like a child, insulted and humiliated
As I leave you for ever?
Then, forests and meadows, and our Theban river,
Glittering pathway, ceaselessly flowing
From Dirce's death till now, flat lands
Thundering beneath our chariots, you
Must be my witnesses, my only friends
And mourners, as, victimised by an unjust law, I go
To my last home
In the living tomb,
To wait, while the slow darkness descends,
Cold and starving on my stony bed
Halfway between the living and the dead.

CHORUS. No one has ever dared
To go so far before
As you have dared to go.
Now you have stumbled, and stubbed your toe
And will shortly shed your blood
On the marble staircase of the law.
You carry your father's crimes
Like a millstone on your back:
Small wonder, in such times,
If the bones bend, or break.

ANTIGONE. Nothing more painful than that, the remembrance
Of my father's long agony, and the curse
On my suffering family from the beginning.
So much grief from the unlucky chance
Of the son finding the mother's bed, and worse
Than anything, the benighted offspring
Of that unspeakable marriage: and I,
With the others, share that terrible destiny.
Conceived in incest, no repentance
Can soften the punishment: the years
Pass, the agonies increase

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And there is no pity for our tears.
No marriage for me, for certain. I shall close
That book for ever,
As I meet my father
And mother in the shades. The weddings will cease.
Marriage to the woman of Argos finished my brother
And finished me too. One death breeds another.

CHORUS. To pay respect to the dead
Is praiseworthy, an act of love,
And religion must have its due:
But no civilised State can eschew
Authority. Laws must be obeyed,
Whether we approve or disapprove.
If you refuse to sanction
The power of the State
By indulging your obsession
You connive at your own fate.

ANTIGONE. Spare me your sympathy,
Weep no false tears,
I know the path that I must follow,
To the sunless country of eternal sorrow,
The bleak waters of eternity,
The unimaginable years.
No grief where none is felt. I shall go alone
And in silence to my house of stone.

Enter CREON, with his guards.

CREON. If death could be prevented by singing arias
About it, or other self-indulgent displays
Of grief, this performance would go on for ever,
I've no doubt. But I've had enough of it.
Take her away, lock her up
In her stone vault, with half a mountain
For a roof, then brick up the door! Let her die
There, if she chooses. Or if she prefers,
Let her stay alive in her grave, why not!
Because the grave's the only fit place for her,
Solitary confinement among the dead!
Whatever she does, there will be no guilt
On me, or on the State. Her death's her own.
But there's no place for her among the living.

ANTIGONE. To my grave then. My honeymoon bed.
My prison. My crypt, under the mountain.

My home for the rest of time. I shall meet
So many of my relations there:
We shall all be guests of the sad-faced queen
Of the shadows, Persephone, in that bleak hotel
That is never short of a room. I am the last,
The unhappiest, I think, and the youngest,
Booking in too soon. But my father will be there
To meet me at the door: my mother will smile,
And hug me close, as she always did:
And my brother. He will be glad to see me,
More than all the rest. At each fresh grave
My hands sprinkled the earth, at each
I poured the purifying water,
And made offerings. And for my beloved Polynices,
Whose broken body I set to rest,
I am rewarded with a shameful death.
There are some, I know, more thoughtful people,
Who respect my action. They must justify me.
Not for a husband, you understand,
Not even for a son would I have done this.
If the law had forbidden it, I would have bowed
My head, and let them rot. Does that
Make sense? I could have married again,
Another husband, and had more children
By him, if the first had died. Do you see?
Do you understand me? But my mother and father
Are dead. There will be no more brothers,
Never again. My love had to speak
At Polynices' grave, or nowhere.
And for that terrible crime, my dearest brother,
Creon sentences me to death,
Drags me here, and will shut me away
In a cavern under the mountain, a living death,
In silence and darkness and solitude.
I shall die unmarried, all those pleasures
Denied me, and motherhood denied
Too, no children to love me, to love:
And now, no friends. What moral law
Have I broken? What eternal truths
Have I denied? Yet now, not even a god
Can help me, and there's no man who will,

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I'm sure of that. No help, and no hope.
How can there be, when common decency
Has become a crime? If the gods in heaven
Have changed their minds, and this is the way
They order things now, I shall soon know it:
And I shall have learned my lesson the hard way.
But if some others are mistaken,
Let them be punished as I have been punished,
And suffer the injustice that I suffer!

CHORUS. She hasn't changed, even now. The anger
Inside her still blows like a hurricane.

CREON. The sooner she's got rid of, shut up
Out of harm's way, and forgotten, the better.
Tell those guards to get a move on, or they will regret it!

ANTIGONE. That word is my death.

CREON. And now it is spoken.
Don't comfort yourself with hope. There's none.

ANTIGONE. This is the land of my fathers: Thebes,
Built by a god. You see, senators,
My time has run out, there is no more left.
I am the last of the royal blood,
A daughter of kings. And I die *his* victim,
Unjustly, for upholding justice
And the humanity of humankind.

ANTIGONE *is led away by the guards.* CREON *remains on stage.*
CHORUS. Others have suffered, my child, like you:

Upon Danaë too
The same dreadful sentence was passed.
Far from the light of day
In a tower of brass she was shut away,
And that one single room,
Both prison and tomb
Became her wedding chamber at last.
Like you, she was a child of kings,
Yet in her womb the semen of Zeus
Descending in a golden shower
Made a mockery of the brazen tower.
Fate has its own momentum: when things
Must be, they will be. What use
Is power in the State, or wealth,
Massive armies, an unsinkable fleet?

Gods make their entrances by strength or stealth,
And no tombs or towers can keep them out.

The arrogant King Lycurgus discovered
Wisdom, when he angered
The god Dionysus with his railing.
That proud Edonian king
Was punished with madness, and long
Imprisoned in a rocky cell
To endure the private and particular hell
Of lunacy: till the healing
Silence soothed and re-ordered his brain.
He learned there the terrible power
Of the god he had challenged. Ecstasy
Is beyond man's understanding, a mystery
Deeper than reason, which overcomes pain,
And seeks truth in intoxication and terror.
Only a fool would attempt to stop
The Maenads in full flight,
Or silence their ecstatic singing. The sleep
Of reason is not darkness, but another kind of light.

And where the gloomy rocks divide the seas
In Thrace, by the Bosphorus,
The savage god Ares
Laughed to see the sons of Phineus
Blinded with a spindle. Nothing could placate
Their vengeful stepmother's hate.
Her bloody needle darkened their eyes for ever,
Blinding the children, as the gods had blinded the father.
From their mother's wedding day, their destiny
Was settled. Their wasted lives
They wept away in sightless misery.
Yet she was descended from the gods. In the echoing caves
Of the north wind she hallooed, as a child,
And on the open mountainside ran wild
With the horses. Man's fate is determined, will not be denied.
The child Antigone pays for the parents' pride.
Enter the blind man TEIRESIAS, accompanied by his boy. He looks exactly as he did in Oedipus the King. Nothing has changed, either in age or dress or manner.

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TEIRESIAS. Senators of Thebes – and your new king, Creon!

We have travelled together, my boy and I,
Sharing one pair of eyes between the two of us –
Which is the way blind men must make their journeys.

CREON. Teiresias! What news brings an old man so far?

TEIRESIAS. Important news, that can't wait:

And advice, which if you're wise, you'll listen to.

CREON. I've always listened: and acted upon it
More than once!

TEIRESIAS. And like a sensible captain
Who values his pilot, you've avoided the rocks.

CREON. I admit it. We all do. We're in your debt.

TEIRESIAS. Then for god's sake, listen to me now.

You're like a man balanced on a razor,
Likely to fall – or cut himself to pieces.

CREON. Are you serious? Any man would shudder
Hearing such things from your lips
That have foretold so many horrors . . .
Tell me what you mean.

TEIRESIAS. Oh yes, I intend to:
Everything my experience of forecasting the future
And understanding symbols has revealed to me,
I will make plain to you. I was sitting
In my usual seat, a place where I can hear
The singing and the secret language
Of the birds, and understand their meaning,
When I heard, quite unexpectedly,
A terrible new sound, like shrieking, or cries
Of anguish, hysterical twittering and whistling
Like the babble of a barbaric language
Only capable of expressing hatred
Or pain. By that, and the wild beating of wings,
I knew the birds were at war. Such sounds
Could mean nothing else. I could well imagine
Their bloodstained beaks and dripping claws,
And that thought disturbed me deeply. At once
I went to my altar to see what I could learn
From the sacrifice by fire. But nothing would burn.
A filthy liquid ran from the flesh
And dropped on the embers – and sizzled and bubbled
Among the ashes. Then the gall bladder burst,

Spurting stinking acid across the meat,
And all the fat melted, and was rendered down
Till the bone was left bare. I saw all this –
Or my boy saw it. He sees for me
What my eyes cannot, just as I see
Things to which other people are blind.
But in that filth I read nothing. The oracle
Was clogged with fat and decay –
And then . . . it was revealed. I understood
That you, King Creon, have decreed this filth
That chokes our altars. The blood and flesh
That decays and stinks there, is the blood and flesh
Vomited from the gullets of dogs
And carrion crows, the blood of Polynices,
The flesh of that unluckiest of the sons
Of Oedipus, still unburied,
And affronting more than our sense of smell.
The gods themselves are disgusted. They reject
Our prayers and sacrifices. How could they do otherwise?
How can the birds sing of anything
But horrors, blown out with this banquet
Of human blood, clogged and stinking,
Till their very beaks drip with it?
My son, listen to me. Any man
Can make a mistake, or commit a crime.
The man who can recognise what he has done,
See that he was mistaken, or morally wrong,
Admit it, and put it right, that man
Proves that it is never too late to become
Wise, and no one will condemn him.
But if he compounds his stupidity
With stubbornness, and an obstinate refusal
To face the facts, he is nothing but a fool.
Is there anyone more stupid than the stupid man
Who cannot see his own stupidity?
Polynices is dead. Don't revenge yourself
On his remains. You can kill a man once,
And once only. Is there any glory
To be gained by defeating a poor corpse?
This is good advice my son, sincerely offered
By someone who wishes you well . . . Take it . . .

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CREON. So that's your news, is it, old man.

I am to be the target, am I,
For everyone to shoot at? Well. I am wise too:
Wise to the ways of fortune-tellers,
And the buying and selling you all go in for.
And I'm to be the latest bargain
I see, I'm to be bought and sold
Like silver from the exchequer at Sardis, or gold
From India, I'm to be part of the trade!
Let me tell you this. There is not enough gold
In the world to buy a grave for that man!
If golden eagles should carry him up
By joints and shreds to Zeus,
And spew him in goblets on the marble floor
Of Olympus, not even that blasphemy
Would be enough to deflect me from my purpose:
Because I know that no single human act,
However much it may degrade the earth,
And the men who perpetrate or suffer it,
Can stain the purity of the ever-living gods!
But, let me tell you this, Teiresias,
A man can fall: he can fall like a stone,
Especially if he pretends to give good advice,
And wraps it up in a profound cloak
Of religiosity, when all the time
Naked self-interest, and the greed for profit
Are the only motives that matter to him!

TEIRESIAS. Are there any wise men left? Anywhere?

CREON. Goodness, how profound! Do you have any more

Thunderous platitudes to follow that one?

TEIRESIAS. Mature judgement cannot be bought.

No treasure is as valuable. And good advice
Is worth more than a fortune to any man.

CREON. And bad advice is worse than worthless,
A disease which infects the wisest of men!

TEIRESIAS. You describe your own symptoms exactly.

CREON. I refuse to become involved in a slanging match

Or quarrel with the recognised prophet of Thebes!

TEIRESIAS. And yet you insult me to my face. You say
My predictions are both false and dishonest.

CREON. That is because all fortune-tellers
Are money grubbers and charlatans.

TEIRESIAS. Kings too have been known to be acquisitive.

CREON. Do you realise the man you are talking to?

I am the king!

TEIRESIAS. You are the king, yes.

My good advice helped to make you one.

CREON. You've had your successes, I know that,

You've been proved right on more than one occasion.

But honesty's another matter. I've never trusted you.

TEIRESIAS. Don't provoke me to tell you everything.

The dark waters of prophecy are better left undisturbed.

CREON. Disturb them, I don't care! Say anything at all,

But say it honestly, not for cash!

TEIRESIAS. Are you really foolish enough to believe

That money has ever been my motive?

CREON. Because my integrity is not for sale!

TEIRESIAS. Listen Creon. This is the truth!

Before many more days, before the sun has risen

– Well, shall we say a few more times –

You will have made your payment, corpse

For corpse, with a child of your own blood.

You have buried the one still living: the woman

Who moves and breathes, you have given to the grave:

And the dead man you have left, unwashed,

Unwept, and without the common courtesy

Of a decent covering of earth. So that both

Have been wronged, and the gods of the underworld,

To whom the body justly belongs,

Are denied it, and are insulted. Such matters

Are not for you to judge. You usurp

Ancient rights which even the gods

Themselves don't dare to question, powers

Which are not in the prerogative of kings.

Even now, implacable avengers

Are on their way, the Furies, who rise up

From Hell and swoop down from Heaven,

Fix their hooks into those who commit crimes,

And will never let go. The suffering

You inflicted upon others, will be inflicted

Upon you, you will suffer, as they did.

46 Antigone

Have I been bribed, do you think? Am I speaking
For money now? Before very long,
Yes, it will be soon, there will be screaming
And bitter tears and hysterical crying
In this house. Men, as well as women.
Other cities too, other States,
Will turn upon you for the crime you have committed.
Dogs and vultures will swarm in their streets
Dropping fragments of the unburied man
At corners, on doorsteps, in the public squares.
They will smell the pollution, and turn to you,
Its author! That's all I have to say.
You made me angry, Creon, with
Your crude accusations. So I made you my target:
And like a good marksman, all my shots
Have hit the bull. You can feel them, can't you,
You can feel the pain, like an arrow, here!
Take me home now, boy. Leave him alone
To entertain some younger ears than mine
With his ridiculous outbursts. Either that
Or let him learn maturer judgement
And how a wise man controls his tongue.

Exit TEIRESIAS led by the boy. The CHORUS is appalled, and CREON is visibly shaken.

CHORUS. My Lord, he's gone, promising nothing

But disasters to come . . .
My hair grew grey in this city:
I was dark-haired here, and now I am white,
And in all that time I have never known
Any of his prophecies to be proved wrong.

CREON. Neither have I, man! . . . I know that much

As well as you . . . My mind's torn apart
Like a tug of war, one way, then the other . . .
How can I give way now? But how
Can I stand here like a fool, and wait
Stubbornly for whatever disaster may be coming?

CHORUS. Lord Creon . . . it's time to take good advice.

CREON. Give it then. Don't be afraid. I'll listen.

CHORUS. Release the woman from her underground prison:

And give honourable burial to the dead man.

CREON. Oh, so that's your advice! Total collapse,

Complete withdrawal! Do you all think that?

CHORUS. We do sir. And do it quickly, for heaven's sake!

The gods never move faster than when punishing men
With the consequences of their own actions.

CREON. How can I do it? It's unendurable

To deny every principle and every action
I have stood fast by. But I dare not stand
Against the iron laws of necessity.

CHORUS. Go on sir, do it now, and do it personally,

Not by proxy – with your own hands.

CREON. Yes . . . I'll go, myself, at once!

Somebody, everybody, bring spades and sledge-hammers
Out onto the mountain. I'm coming with you!

If I've changed my mind, I'll act upon it
With exactly the same determination.

I sentenced her, and I'll set her free,
Tear down the bricks with my own hands
If necessary. Perhaps it is wiser
To let the old laws stand. My fear
Tells me it is. And that's a voice
Every prudent man must listen to.

CREON *rushes off in near panic with his soldiers and attendants.*

CHORUS. Great god with many names,

Child of the thunder,
Whom Zeus conceived on Cadmus' daughter
Here in Thebes: Bacchus, Dionysus,
In Italy revered,
And in Demeter's mysterious Eleusis
Both praised and feared,
This is your native city, where the quiet river
Of Ismenus waters the meadows, where the fever
Of ecstasy possesses your womenfolk, your own
Thebes, where the dragon's teeth were sown.

The whole world worships you,
Wine god, intoxicator:

On the two-pronged mountain where the torches glitter
And the nymphs of Parnassus dance: by the pool
Where Castalia's suicide
Made the fountain magical, and the cool
Waters of prophecy reside.

48 Antigone

From the impenetrable slopes of Nysa, where the ivy runs wild
And the vines hang thick in your face, come home, Theban child,
Let the world sing its hymns in vain. In the Theban streets
'Hail,' we shout, 'Bacchus, hail.' And the city waits.

Your mother Semele died here,
Incinerated by the fire of the Universe,
Zeus in his splendour. Now in your city
Another disaster threatens, fear
Locks up our tongues, and, like a plague sore on the face,
The State's disease is made public. We have done wrong.
Now the first necessity
Is for healing. From Parnassus' rocky screes,
Or over the sighing waters of the endless seas
Come to us, healer, and heal. We have suffered too long.

All the stars of the galaxy
Whose hearts are fire, throb to your music,
And the remote voices of measureless night
Speak from the depths of their mystery.
Come, with your crazed followers, your lunatic
Women, the wild Maenads, authentic son
Of Zeus. Bring delight,
And dancing till we drop, bring rest, bring peace,
Bring healing and rebirth, let our anguish cease,
Ecstatic god, whose many names are one.

Enter the MESSENGER.

MESSENGER. Senators, listen! Descendants of Cadmus
Who founded our city, and Amphion, who built it,
Good people of Thebes! No man's life
Ever moves smoothly, according to plan.
Who can make judgements, say this is praiseworthy
In human existence, and this is to be despised
When chance rules everything? One moment a man
Rides high on his fortune, and the same moment
He crashes to the depths. Luck, like the tide,
Is certain to ebb, after the flow,
And no man can tell what will happen tomorrow.
Everyone, surely, envied Creon!
He had saved his country from its enemies,
Taken power as king, and his position

In the State was unchallenged. What's more,
 He ruled well, with a firm hand, and his son
 Was at his side, to help and succeed him.
 All that is over now. What life
 Can there be, when the things that make life pleasant
 Are all destroyed? A kind of death,
 Moving and breathing, but not living.
 That's how it is for him. Of course,
 He's rich, beyond accounting, he's a king
 Still, with all the pomp and circumstance
 That rank implies. But what's it worth
 When all the joy of life is gone?
 A shadow, a mockery, a vulgar pageant.
 Who can take pleasure in wealth or power
 When all happiness is dead in his heart?

CHORUS. More tragedy for this family? Tell us your news.

MESSENGER. They're both dead. And the living must take the
 blame.

CHORUS. Who killed them? Who's dead? What happened? Tell us!

MESSENGER. The king's son, Haemon. The royal blood
 Shed by a royal hand.

CHORUS. His father
 You mean? Or his own?

MESSENGER. His own held the sword.

But his father's actions drove it home.

CHORUS. The prophet warned us: and it all came true.

MESSENGER. That's how things are. It's in your hands now.

CHORUS. The doors are opening, look, here's Eurydice,
 Poor woman, Creon's wife. Does she know,
 Do you think? Has she come here by chance,
 Or because she has heard rumours about her son?

Enter EURYDICE with her women.

EURYDICE. Gentlemen . . . good friends. My ears caught something
 Of what you were saying, a few words
 As I opened the door. I was on my way
 To offer prayers to Pallas Athene:
 We had just drawn back the bolt, when I heard
 A few scraps of your conversation: enough
 To make me fear what all mothers fear:
 An accident, or some disaster to those we love.
 I almost fainted. My ladies-in-waiting

Caught me in their arms. Please, speak it out
Plainly, whatever it is. I can bear it.
We are bred to stoicism in this family.

MESSENGER. Dear Queen, whom we all respect . . . I was there,
I saw it all, and I'll tell you
Exactly what happened. There's no point
In trying to soften the blow now
Only to be proved a liar later.
It's best to tell the truth. I went
With the king, your husband, to the edge of the battlefield,
Where we saw the body of Polynices
Still lying where he fell, and in a terrible state:
The dogs had been at him. So we prayed –
First to Hecate, who haunts crossroads
And tombs, and the scenes of crimes committed
But not atoned for, and then to Pluto,
King of the Dead. We asked them to have pity
On him, and on us, and not to be angry.
Then we washed him, or what was left of him,
With holy water, cut fresh branches
To make a pyre, and burned the remains.
Then we shovelled a mound of his own Theban earth
Over the ashes, and when we had finished
We hurried off as fast as we could
To the prison cell furnished with stones
That served as a bridal suite for the girl
Married to death. But before we arrived,
One of the soldiers, with the unenviable job
Of guarding that god-forsaken place
Came running back to tell the king
That he'd heard a terrible noise, like screaming,
From inside the mountain. And as Creon got nearer
He heard it too – faint, but audible,
A kind of weird sobbing, or moaning,
Low and unearthly, as though grief were speaking
Its own naked language. The king groaned
Aloud, and we all heard him say
'Oh, god, this is what I was afraid of.
Am I a prophet too? This path
Up to the tomb, these last few steps,
Are the most agonising journey I shall ever make.'

I can hear my son's voice in there!
You, quickly, guards, anybody,
Get inside, squeeze between the rocks.
Where somebody has already forced an entrance,
Get into the main chamber of the cave
And tell me if it is my son's voice
I recognised, or whether the gods
Are playing some brutal game with me!'

So, we went in and looked, as the half-crazed king
Had told us to. And in the darkest corner
We saw her, strung up by the neck, hanging
From an improvised rope of twisted linen
Strips, torn from her own dress. Haemon
Was right beside her, cuddling her body
As it dangled there, sobbing broken-heartedly
At his wife's death, and the marriage bad luck
And his father's cruelty had made certain
Would never take place. When Creon saw them,
He staggered into the cave, groaning
Like an animal, and sobbed aloud, 'My boy,
My poor boy, what have you done?' And then,
'Have you gone mad, coming here? There's nothing
Here for you but death and annihilation
And despair. Come away from there, my son
Come out, for god's sake, I'm begging you,
Come away!' But the boy just looked at him,
And his eyes were terrifying, with an anger
Like I've never seen before. Without a word
He spat in his father's face, and drew
His sword, and lunged straight for the old man.
But Creon was quick, and skipped out of distance.
And the poor lad, hysterical with grief
And self-disgust, held his sword at arm's length
And plunged it between his own ribs.
And then, still conscious, he lifted the girl
Down into the crook of his arm
And cradled her there, in his own blood.
His breathing got harder and shorter, as his life
Flooded away before our eyes, like a fountain,
Soaking her body – so that her white cheeks
Flushed red again with the bloodstains.

EURYDICE turns and walks out, without hurry. Her women look round, uncertain, then follow her. Some of the CHORUS see the exit, and are disturbed. The MESSENGER does not see it, and continues telling his story to the rest of the CHORUS.

So now they're together, two corpses,
Joined in death. He got his marriage,
Poor lad, but it was solemnised in the grave
Where there are no celebrations.

They look like honeymooners, quietly sleeping
Side by side in one bed: evidence
Of the havoc man can bring upon man
By his own pig-headedness and arrogance.

CHORUS. That's strange . . . What do you make of it? . . . His wife
Has gone without a word: giving no indication
Of her own feelings, one way or the other . . .

MESSENGER. It scares me a bit . . . but I'm quite sure
She has good reason. A public demonstration
Of grief would be unlike her. She'll suffer
Like any other mother, for her son's death,
But in private, with her women. She'd never
Do anything foolish or indiscreet,
I'm sure of that. She's far too sensible.

CHORUS. I don't know. Her silence was unnerving,
Dangerously unlike what one would expect.
That sort of silence is sometimes more threatening
Than screaming and tears.

MESSENGER. I'll go in after her:
Just to make sure that grief doesn't tempt her
To anything silly, or excessive. You're right,
The silence was unnerving. She seemed to feel nothing:
And in my experience, that can be dangerous.

The MESSENGER goes in after the queen. As he does so, the doors open, and servants enter carrying the dead body of HAEMON on a bier, closely followed by the distraught CREON.

CHORUS. Look there! The king is coming:
But not alone.
A silent witness comes before him,
Dead as stone,
Unspeaking evidence that the crime
Like the grief, is all his own.
He suffers now for his wrongdoing.

CREON. Pain . . .

There was hatred inside me, the urge to destroy
 Drove me like a maniac, an insane
 Plunge towards death – your death my boy.
 See here, the killer and his victim!
 See here, the father and his son!
 I was responsible. My actions killed him.
 There is no blame for him, none.
 Blasted in the morning of your life,
 My hope, my joy,
 My hand powered the knife,
 My arrogance determined your fate.

CHORUS. You see the truth now, but you see it too late.

CREON. Suffering

Is the only schoolteacher.
 The gods have broken my back,
 Whipped me like a beast up this stony track
 And destroyed my self-respect.
 All pleasure, all rejoicing
 They have turned to anguish and weeping.
 Man is a naked mortal creature:
 Affliction is all he can expect.
Re-enter the MESSENGER.

MESSENGER. My Lord, you have suffered enough. But more
 Suffering is marked to your name.
 One agony lies here in the open,
 Another is waiting, the same
 Anguish redoubled, behind the door.

CREON. There can be nothing worse. My heart is broken.

MESSENGER. Your wife is dead, the mother of this slaughtered son.

Her wound is fresh, but the breath of life is gone.

CREON. Hades

Is deep, bottomless the abyss of the dead.
 Will you kill me too, or bring me to my knees
 To suffer longer: beating my head
 Insensible with pain? What can you say,
 Messenger of death with the sad face
 More than you've said already? My way
 Is towards the darkness, my case

54 Antigone

Can be no worse than it is. Can you kill me again?
I am dead already. Is there more blood,
More savagery, more hacking of flesh, more pain,
First the son, then the mother? No end to this grief?

CHORUS. There's no hiding it now. See for yourself.

The doors open to reveal EURYDICE dead.

CREON. Unending

Unendurable pain.

This is the second time I am forced to see
What no man's eyes should ever see,
Even once. Is this how it ends?
Or will there be more torture, more suffering?
A few moments ago my trembling
Arms embraced a dead son.

Now death has snatched the mother from my hands.

MESSENGER. It was there by the household shrine she collapsed,
Still holding the razor-sharp knife. And as darkness
Drew down its slow blinds, and her eyes closed,
She spoke of Megareus who died in the fulness
Of his youth, her elder boy. By his empty bed
She wept, and for the son whose life ended
Today, and with her last, dying breath,
Cursed you as his murderer, who drove him to this death.

CREON. I'm shaking! I shall go mad with this terror!

There must be a sword, somewhere,
A sharp, two-edged knife
To cut away my life.

Living is misery for me now, for ever.
When I look, I see blood everywhere.

MESSENGER. It's no more than the truth I've told.

Her last word

Was to blame you for both deaths, mother and son.

CREON. How did she die? Did she do it alone?

MESSENGER. She heard them weeping for Haemon, cried aloud,
And skewered herself under the heart with a sword.

CREON. She spoke the truth. All the guilt is mine!

I am the murderer. Make that plain.
Somebody, anybody, take me away:
I disgrace the decent light of day.

I am nothing now. I have become nothing.
Nothing can happen to a man who is nothing.

CHORUS. How can we judge for the best

In times like these?
Prompt action is safest.
What more is there to lose?

CREON. Where are you, my friend? Come you shadowy
Messenger who runs faster than the wind,
Wrap me in darkness, as a friend should!
Why waste another day? What good
Is daylight to me? Why should my misery
Darken the face of another dawn? Pull down the blind.

CHORUS. Tomorrow is a mystery. No man can say
What time will make plain. We live day by day.
The future is in greater hands than ours.

CREON. I am nothing. I want nothing. My last, simplest prayers.

CHORUS. No time for prayers now. Too late to pray.
What must come, will come, tomorrow, or today.

CREON. I am nothing. Take me then. The man
Who killed, without knowing it, his wife and son.
Where shall I go then? Left, or right?
All wrong turnings now. Into the night,
Darkness, hide me. There's blood on my hands. My head
Is split, my back is broken. I should be dead.

Exit CREON.

CHORUS. The key to human happiness
Is to nurture wisdom in your heart,
For man to attend to man's business
And let the gods play their part:
Above all, to stand in awe
Of the eternal, unalterable law.
The proud man may pretend
In his arrogance to despise
Everything but himself. In the end
The gods will bring him to grief.
Today it has happened here. With our own eyes
We have seen an old man, through suffering, become wise.
Exit the CHORUS.

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BY

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WALES PROFESSOR OF SANSKRIT IN HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Volume Nine

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS

Published by Harvard University

1905

THE LITTLE CLAY CART

[MRCCHAKATIKA]

A Hindu Drama

ATTRIBUTED TO KING SHŪDRAKA

SUD RAKA

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL SANSKRIT AND PRĀKRITS

INTO ENGLISH PROSE AND VERSE

BY

ARTHUR WILLIAM RYDER, PH.D.

INSTRUCTOR IN SANSKRIT IN HARVARD UNIVERSITY



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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

CHĀRUDATTA, a *Brahman merchant*

ROHASENA, *his son*

MAITREYA, *his friend*

VARDHAMĀNAKA, *a servant in his house*

SANSTHĀNAKA, *brother-in-law of King PĀLAKA*

STHĀVARAKA, *his servant*

Another Servant of SANSTHĀNAKA

A Courtier

ARYAKA, *a herdsman who becomes king*

SHARVILAKA, *a Brahman, in love with MADANIKĀ*

A Shampooer, who becomes a Buddhist monk

MĀTHURA, *a gambling-master*

DARDURAKA, *a gambler*

Another Gambler

KARNAPŪRAKA }
KUMBHILAKA } *servants of VASANTASENĀ*

VĪRAKA }
CHANDANAKA } *policemen*

GOHA }
AHINTA } *headsmen*

Bastard pages, in VASANTASENĀ's house

A Judge, a Gild-warden, a Clerk, and a Beadle

VASANTASENĀ, *a courtezan*

Her Mother

MADANIKĀ, *maid to VASANTASENĀ*

Another Maid to VASANTASENĀ

The Wife of CHĀRUDATTA

RADANIKĀ, *a maid in CHĀRUDATTA's house*

SCENE

UJJAYINĪ (*called also Avanti*) *and its Environs*

THE LITTLE CLAY CART



PROLOGUE

Benediction upon the audience

HIS bended knees the knotted girdle holds,
Fashioned by doubling of a serpent's folds;
His sensitive organs, so he checks his breath,
Are numbed, till consciousness seems sunk in death;
Within himself, with eye of truth, he sees
The All-soul, free from all activities.
May His, may Shiva's meditation be
Your strong defense; on the Great Self thinks he,
Knowing full well the world's vacuity.

And again:

May Shiva's neck shield you from every harm,
That seems a threatening thunder-cloud, whereon,
Bright as the lightning-flash, lies Gauri's arm.

2

Stage-director. Enough of this tedious work, which fritters away the interest of the audience! Let me then most reverently salute the honorable gentlemen, and announce our intention to produce a drama called "The Little Clay Cart." Its author was a man

Who vied with elephants in lordly grace;
Whose eyes were those of the chakora bird
That feeds on moonbeams; glorious his face
As the full moon; his person, all have heard,
Was altogether lovely. First in worth
Among the twice-born was this poet, known
As Shūdraka far over all the earth,—
His virtue's depth unfathomed and alone.

3

And again:

The Sāmaveda, the Rigveda too,
 The science mathematical, he knew;
 The arts wherein fair courtezans excel,
 And all the lore of elephants as well.
 Through Shiva's grace, his eye was never dim;
 He saw his son a king in place of him.
 The difficult horse-sacrifice he tried
 Successfully; entered the fiery tide,
 One hundred years and ten days old, and died.

4

And yet again:

Eager for battle; sloth's determined foe;
 Of scholars chief, who to the Veda cling;
 Rich in the riches that ascetics know;
 Glad, against the foeman's elephant to show
 His valor;—such was Shūdraka, the king.

5

And in this work of his,

Within the town, Avanti named,
 Dwells one called Chārudatta, famed
 No less for youth than poverty;
 A merchant's son and Brahman, he.

His virtues have the power to move
 Vasantasenā's inmost love;
 Fair as the springtime's radiancy,
 And yet a courtezan is she.

6

So here king Shūdraka the tale imparts
 Of love's pure festival in these two hearts,
 Of prudent acts, a lawsuit's wrong and hate,
 A rascal's nature, and the course of fate.

7

[*He walks about and looks around him.*] Why, this music-room of ours is empty. I wonder where the actors have gone. [*Reflecting.*] Ah, I understand.

Director. Mistress, I've been practising so long and I'm so hungry that my limbs are as weak as dried-up lotus-stalks. Is there anything to eat in the house or not?

Actress. There's everything, sir.

Director. Well, what?

Actress. For instance—there's rice with sugar, melted butter, curdled milk, rice; and, all together, it makes you a dish fit for heaven. May the gods always be thus gracious to you!

Director. All that in our house? or are you joking?

Actress. [Aside.] Yes, I will have my joke. [Aloud.] It's in the market-place, sir.

Director. [Angrily.] You wretched woman, thus shall your own hope be cut off! And death shall find you out! For my expectations, like a scaffolding, have been raised so high, only to fall again.

Actress. Forgive me, sir, forgive me! It was only a joke.

Director. But what do these unusual preparations mean? One girl is preparing cosmetics, another is weaving garlands, and the very ground is adorned with sacrificial flowers of five different colors.

Actress. This is a fast day, sir.

Director. What fast?

Actress. The fast for a handsome husband.

Director. In this world, mistress, or the next?

Actress. In the next world, sir.

Director. [Wrathfully.] Gentlemen! look at this. She is sacrificing my food to get herself a husband in the next world.

Actress. Don't be angry, sir. I am fasting in the hope that you may be my husband in my next birth, too.

Director. But who suggested this fast to you?

Actress. Your own dear friend Jūrnavriddha.

Director. [Angrily.] Ah, Jūrnavriddha, son of a slave-wench! When, oh, when shall I see King Pālaka angry with you? Then

you will be parted, as surely as the scented hair of some young bride.

Actress. Don't be angry, sir. It is only that I may have you in the next world that I celebrate this fast. [*She falls at his feet.*]

Director. Stand up, mistress, and tell me who is to officiate at this fast.

Actress. Some Brahman of our own sort whom we must invite.

Director. You may go then. And I will invite some Brahman of our own sort.

Actress. Very well, sir.

[*Exit.*

Director. [*Walking about.*] Good heavens! In this rich city of Ujjayinī how am I to find a Brahman of our own sort? [*He looks about him.*] Ah, here comes Chārudatta's friend Maitreya. Good! I'll ask him. Maitreya, you must be the first to break bread in our house to-day.

A voice behind the scenes. You must invite some other Brahman. I am busy.

Director. But, man, the feast is set and you have it all to yourself. Besides, you shall have a present.

The voice. I said no once. Why should you keep on urging me?

Director. He says no. Well, I must invite some other Brahman.

[*Exit.*

END OF THE PROLOGUE

ACT THE FIRST
THE GEMS ARE LEFT BEHIND



[Enter, with a cloak in his hand, *Maitreya*]
Maitreya.

YOU must invite some other Brahman. I am busy." And yet I really ought to be seeking invitations from a stranger. Oh, what a wretched state of affairs! When good Chārudatta was still wealthy, I used to eat my fill of the most deliciously fragrant sweetmeats, prepared day and night with the greatest of care. I would sit at the door of the courtyard, where I was surrounded by hundreds of dishes, and there, like a painter with his paint-boxes, I would simply touch them with my fingers and thrust them aside. I would stand chewing my cud like a bull in the city market. And now he is so poor that I have to run here, there, and everywhere, and come home, like the pigeons, only to roost. Now here is this jasmine-scented cloak, which Chārudatta's good friend Jūrnaviddha has sent him. He bade me give it to Chārudatta, as soon as he had finished his devotions. So now I will look for Chārudatta. [He walks about and looks around him.] Chārudatta has finished his devotions, and here he comes with an offering for the divinities of the house.

[Enter *Chārudatta* as described, and *Radanikā*.]

Chārudatta. [Looking up and sighing wearily.]

Upon my threshold, where the offering
Was straightway seized by swans and flocking cranes,
The grass grows now, and these poor seeds I fling
Fall where the mouth of worms their sweetness stains. 9

[He walks about very slowly and seats himself.]

Maitreya. Chārudatta is here. I must go and speak to him. [Approaching.] My greetings to you. May happiness be yours.

Chārudatta. Ah, it is my constant friend Maitreya. You are very welcome, my friend. Pray be seated.

Maitreya. Thank you. [He seats himself.] Well, comrade, here is a jasmine-scented cloak which your good friend Jūrnavriddha has sent. He bade me give it you as soon as you had finished your devotions. [He presents the cloak. *Chārudatta takes it and remains sunk in thought.*] Well, what are you thinking about?

Chārudatta. My good friend,

A candle shining through the deepest dark
Is happiness that follows sorrow's strife;
But after bliss when man bears sorrow's mark,
His body lives a very death-in-life.

10

Maitreya. Well, which would you rather, be dead or be poor?

Chārudatta. Ah, my friend,

Far better death than sorrows sure and slow;
Some passing suffering from death may flow,
But poverty brings never-ending woe.

11

Maitreya. My dear friend, be not thus cast down. Your wealth has been conveyed to them you love, and like the moon, after she has yielded her nectar to the gods, your waning fortunes win an added charm.

Chārudatta. Comrade, I do not grieve for my ruined fortunes. But

This is my sorrow. They whom I
Would greet as guests, now pass me by.
“This is a poor man's house,” they cry.

As flitting bees, the season o'er,
Desert the elephant, whose store
Of ichor¹ spent, attracts no more.

12

Maitreya. Oh, confound the money! It is a trifle not worth thinking about. It is like a cattle-boy in the woods afraid of wasps; it does n't stay anywhere where it is used for food.

¹ During the mating season, a fragrant liquor exudes from the forehead of the elephant. Of this liquor bees are very fond.

Chārud. Believe me, friend. My sorrow does not spring
 From simple loss of gold;
 For fortune is a fickle, changing thing,
 Whose favors do not hold;
 But he whose sometime wealth has taken wing,
 Finds bosom-friends grow cold.

13

Then too:

A poor man is a man ashamed; from shame
 Springs want of dignity and worthy fame;
 Such want gives rise to insults hard to bear;
 Thence comes despondency; and thence, despair;
 Despair breeds folly; death is folly's fruit.—
 Ah! the lack of money is all evil's root!

14

Maitreya. But just remember what a trifle money is, after all, and
 be more cheerful.

Chārudatta. My friend, the poverty of a man is to him
 A home of cares, a shame that haunts the mind,
 Another form of warfare with mankind;
 The abhorrence of his friends, a source of hate
 From strangers, and from each once-loving mate;
 But if his wife despise him, then 't were meet
 In some lone wood to seek a safe retreat.
 The flame of sorrow, torturing his soul,
 Burns fiercely, yet contrives to leave him whole.

15

Comrade, I have made my offering to the divinities of the house.
 Do you too go and offer sacrifice to the Divine Mothers at a place
 where four roads meet.

Maitreya. No!

Chārudatta. Why not?

Maitreya. Because the gods are not gracious to you even when
 thus honored. So what is the use of worshiping?

Chārudatta. Not so, my friend, not so! This is the constant duty
 of a householder.

The gods feel ever glad content
 In the gifts, and the self-chastisement,
 · The meditations, and the prayers,
 Of those who banish worldly cares.

16

Why then do you hesitate? Go and offer sacrifice to the Mothers.

Maitreya. No, I 'm not going. You must send somebody else. Any-way, everything seems to go wrong with me, poor Brahman that I am! It 's like a reflection in a mirror; the right side becomes the left, and the left becomes the right. Besides, at this hour of the evening, people are abroad upon the king's highway—courtezans, courtiers, servants, and royal favorites. They will take me now for fair prey, just as the black-snake out frog-hunting snaps up the mouse in his path. But what will you do sitting here?

Chārudatta. Good then, remain; and I will finish my devotions.

Voices behind the scenes. Stop, Vasantasenā, stop!

[Enter *Vasantasenā*, pursued by the courtier, by *Sansthānaka*, and the servant.]

Courtier. Vasantasenā! Stop, stop!

Ah, why should fear transform your tenderness?
 Why should the dainty feet feel such distress,
 That twinkle in the dance so prettily?
 Why should your eyes, thus startled into fear,
 Dart sidelong looks? Why, like the timid deer
 Before pursuing hunters, should you flee?

17

Sansthānaka. Shtop,¹ Vasantasenā, shtop!

Why flee? and run? and shtumble in your turning?
 Be kind! You shall not die. Oh, shtop your feet!
 With love, shweet girl, my tortured heart is burning,
 As on a heap of coals a piece of meat.

18

¹ The most striking peculiarity of *Sansthānaka*'s dialect—his substitution of *sh* for *s*—I have tried to imitate in the translation.

Servant. Stop, courtezan, stop!

In fear you flee
Away from me,
As a summer peahen should;
But my lord and master
Struts fast and faster,
Like a woodcock in the wood.

19

Courtier. Vasantasenā! Stop, stop!

Why should you tremble, should you flee,
A-quiver like the plantain tree?
Your garment's border, red and fair,
Is all a-shiver in the air;
Now and again, a lotus-bud
Falls to the ground, as red as blood.
A red realgar¹ vein you seem,
Whence, smitten, drops of crimson stream.

20

Sansthānaka. Shtop, Vasantasenā, shtop!

You wake my passion, my desire, my love.
You drive away my shleep in bed at night;
Both fear and terror sheem your heart to move;
You trip and shtumble in your headlong flight.
But Rāvana forced Kuntī² to his will;
Jusht sho shall I enjoy you to the fill.

21

Courtier. Ah, Vasantasenā,

Why should your fleeter flight
Outstrip my flying feet?
Why, like a snake in fright
Before the bird-king's might,
Thus seek to flee, my sweet?

¹ Red arsenic, used as a cosmetic.

² Here, as elsewhere, Sansthānaka's mythology is wildly confused. To a Hindu the effect must be ludicrous enough; but the humor is necessarily lost in a translation. It therefore seems hardly worth while to explain his mythological vagaries in detail.

Vasantasenā. Pallavaka! Parabhrītikā!

Sansthānaka. Mashter! a man! a man!

Courtier. Don't be a coward.

Vasantasenā. Mādhavikā! Mādhavikā!

Courtier. [Laughing.] Fool! She is calling her servants.

Sansthānaka. Mashter! Is she calling a woman?

Courtier. Why, of course.

Sansthānaka. Women! I kill hundreds of 'em. I'm a brave man.

Vasantasenā. [Seeing that no one answers.] Alas, how comes it that my very servants have fallen away from me? I shall have to defend myself by mother-wit.

Courtier. Don't stop the search.

Sansthānaka. Shqueal, Vasantasenā, shqueal for your cuckoo Parabhrītikā, or for your blosshom Pallavaka or for all the month of May! Who's going to save you when I'm chasing you?

Why shpeak of Bhīmasena? Or the shon
Of Jamadagni, that thrice-mighty one?
The ten-necked ogre? Shon of Kuntī fair?
Jusht look at me! My fingers in your hair,
Jusht like Duhshāsana, I'll tear, and tear.

29

Look, look!

My shword is sharp; good-by, poor head!
Let's chop it off, or kill you dead.
Then do not try my wrath to shun;
When you musht die, your life is done.

30

Vasantasenā. Sir, I am a weak woman.

Courtier. That is why you are still alive.

Sansthānaka. That is why you're not murdered.

Vasantasenā. [Aside.] Oh! his very courtesy frightens me. Come, I will try this. [Aloud.] Sir, what do you expect from this pursuit? my jewels?

Courtier. Heaven forbid! A garden creeper, mistress Vasantasenā, should not be robbed of its blossoms. Say no more about the jewels.

Vasantasenā. What is then your desire?

Sansthānaka. I'm a man, a big man, a regular Vāsudeva.¹ You musht love me.

Vasantasenā. [Indignantly.] Heavens! You weary me. Come, leave me! Your words are an insult.

Sansthānaka. [Laughing and clapping his hands.] Look, mashter, look! The courtezan's daughter is mighty affectionate with me, isn't she? Here she says "Come on! Heavens, you're weary. You're tired!" No, I have n't been walking to another village or another city. No, little mishtress, I shwear by the gentleman's head, I shwear by my own feet! It's only by chasing about at your heels that I've grown tired and weary.

Courtier. [Aside.] What! is it possible that the idiot does not understand when she says "You weary me"? [Aloud.] Vasantasenā, your words have no place in the dwelling of a courtezan,

Which, as you know, is friend to every youth;

Remember, you are common as the flower

That grows beside the road; in bitter truth,

Your body has its price; your beauty's dower

Is his, who pays the market's current rate:

Then serve the man you love, and him you hate.

31

And again:

The wisest Brahman and the meanest fool

Bathe in the selfsame pool;

Beneath the peacock, flowering plants bend low,

No less beneath the crow;

The Brahman, warrior, merchant, sail along

With all the vulgar throng.

You are the pool, the flowering plant, the boat;

And on your beauty every man may dote.

32

¹ A name of Krishna, who is perhaps the most amorous character in Indian story.

Vasantasenā. Yet true love would be won by virtue, not violence.
Sansthānaka. But, mashter, ever since the shlave-wench went into the park where Kāma's¹ temple shtands, she has been in love with a poor man, with Chārudatta, and she doesn't love me any more. His house is to the left. Look out and don't let her shlip out of our hands.

Courtier. [Aside.] Poor fool, he has said the very thing he should have concealed. So Vasantasenā is in love with Chārudatta? The proverb is right. Pearl suits with pearl. Well, I have had enough of this fool. [Aloud.] Did you say the good merchant's house was to the left, you jackass?

Sansthānaka. Yes. His house is to the left.

Vasantasenā. [Aside.] Oh, wonderful! If his house is really at my left hand, then the scoundrel has helped me in the very act of hurting me, for he has guided me to my love.

Sansthānaka. But mashter, it's pitch dark and it's like hunting for a grain of soot in a pile of shpotted beans. Now you shee Vasantasenā and now you don't.

Courtier. Pitch dark it is indeed.

The sudden darkness seems to steal
 The keenness of my sight;
 My open eyes, as with a seal,
 Are closed by blackest night.

33

And again:

Darkness anoints my body, and the sky
 Drops ointment of thick darkness, till mine eye
 Is all unprofitable grown to me,
 Like service done to them who cheat and lie.

34

Sansthānaka. Mashter, I'm looking for Vasantasenā.

Courtier. Is there anything you can trace her by, jackass?

Sansthānaka. Like what, for inshtance?

¹ Cupid.

Courtier. Like the tinkling of her jewels, for instance, or the fragrance of her garlands.

Sansthānaka. I hear the smell of her garlands, but my nose is stupefied so full of darkness that I don't see the sound of her jewels very clearly.

Courtier. [To *Vasantasenā*. *Aside.*] *Vasantasenā*,

'T is true, the night is dark, O timid maid,
And like the lightning hidden in the cloud,
You are not seen; yet you will be betrayed
By fragrant garlands and by anklets loud.

35

Have you heard me, Vasantasenā?

Vasantasenā. [To herself.] Heard and understood. [She removes the ankle-rings, lays aside the garlands, and takes a few steps, feeling her way.] I can feel the wall of the house, and here is a side-entrance. But alas! my fingers tell me that the door is shut.

Chārudatta [who is within the house]. Comrade, my prayer is done.
Go now and offer sacrifice to the Mothers.

Maitreya. No, I'm not going.

Chārudatta. Alas!

The poor man's kinsmen do not heed his will;
The friends who loved him once, now stand afar;
His sorrows multiply; his strength is nil;
Behold! his character's bright-shining star
Fades like the waning moon; and deeds of ill
That others do, are counted to him still.

36

And again:

No man holds converse with him; none will greet
With due respect the poor man when they meet.
Where rich men hold a feast, if he draw near,
He meets with scornful looks for looks of cheer.

Where vulgar throngs are gathered, 't is the same;
 His scanty raiment wakes his heartfelt shame.
 Five are the deadly sins¹ we knew before;
 Alas! I find the sixth is—to be poor.

37

And yet again:

Ah, Poverty, I pity thee, that so
 To me thou clingest, as thy dearest friend;
 When my poor life has met its woeful end,
 I sadly wonder, whither thou wilt go.

38

Maitreya. [Betraying his embarrassment.] Well, comrade, if I must go, at least let Radanikā go with me, to keep me company.

Chārudatta. Radanikā, you are to accompany Maitreya.

Radanikā. Yes, sir.

Maitreya. Mistress Radanikā, do you take the offering and the candle while I open the side-door. [He does so.]

Vasantasenā. It seems as if the door took pity on me and opened of itself. I will lose no time, but enter. [She looks in.] What? a candle? Oh dear, oh dear! [She puts it out with her skirt and enters.]

Chārudatta. What was that, Maitreya?

Maitreya. I opened the side-door and the wind came through all in a lump and blew out the candle. Suppose you go out by the side-door, Radanikā, and I will follow as soon as I have gone into the courtyard and lighted the candle again. [Exit.

Sansthānaka. Mashter! mashter! I 'm looking for Vasantasenā.

Courtier. Keep on looking, keep on looking!

Sansthānaka. [Does so.] Mashter! mashter! I 've caught her! I 've caught her!

Courtier. Idiot, you 've caught me.

Sansthānaka. You shtand right here, mashter, and shtay where you 're put. [He renews the search and seizes the servant.] Mashter!

¹ The five deadly sins are: the slaying of a Brahman, the drinking of wine, theft, adultery with the wife of one's teacher, and association with one guilty of these crimes.

mashter! I 've caught her! I 've caught her!

Servant. Master, you 've caught me, your servant.

Sansthānaka. Mashter here, shervant here! · Mashter, shervant; shervant, mashter. Now shtay where you 're put, both of you. [*He renews the search and seizes Radanikā by the hair.*] Mashter! mashter! Thish time I 've caught her! I 've caught Vasantasenā!

Through the black night she fled, fled she;

Her garland's shmeill betrayed her;

Like Chānakya caught Draupadī,

I caught her hair and shtayed her.

39

Courtier. Ah, proud to be so young, so fair!

Too high thy love must not aspire;

For now thy blossom-fragrant hair,

That merits richest gems and rare,

Serves but to drag thee through the mire.

40

Sansth. I 've got your head, girl, got it tight,

By the hair, the locks, and the curls, too.

Now shcream, shqueak, shqueal with all your might

“Shiva! Ishvara! Shankara! Shambhu!”¹

41

Radanikā. [*In terror.*] Oh, sirs, what does this mean?

Courtier. You jackass! It 's another voice.

Sansthānaka. Mashter, the wench has changed her voice, the way a cat changes her voice, when she wants shome cream of curdled milk.

Courtier. Changed her voice? Strange! Yet why so strange?

She trod the stage; she learned the arts;

She studied to deceive our hearts;

And now she practises her parts.

42

[Enter Maitreya.]

Maitreya. Look! In the gentle evening breeze the flame of the candle is fluttering like the heart of a goat that goes to the altar. [*He approaches and discovers Radanikā.*] Mistress Radanikā!

¹ These are all epithets of the same god.

Sansthānaka. Mashter, mashter! A man! a man!

Maitreya. This is right, this is perfectly right, that strangers should force their way into the house, just because Chārudatta is poor.

Radanikā. Oh, Maitreya, see how they insult me.

Maitreya. What! insult you? No, they are insulting us.

Radanikā. Very well. They are insulting you, then.

Maitreya. But they are n't using violence?

Radanikā. Yes, yes!

Maitreya. Really?

Radanikā. Really.

Maitreya. [Raising his staff angrily.] No, sir! Man, a dog will show his teeth in his own kennel, and I am a Brahman! My staff is crooked as my fortunes, but it can still split a dry bamboo or a rascal's pate.

Courtier. Have mercy, O great Brahman, have mercy.

Maitreya. [Discovers the courtier.] He is not the sinner. [Discovers Sansthānaka.] Ah, here is the sinner. Well, you brother-in-law to the king, Sansthānaka, you scoundrel, you coward, this is perfectly proper, is n't it? Chārudatta the good is a poor man now—true, but are not his virtues an ornament to Ujjayinī? And so men break into his house and insult his servants!

Insult not him, laid low by poverty;

For none are counted poor by mighty fate:

Yet he who falls from virtue's high estate,

Though he be rich, no man is poor as he.

43

Courtier. [Betraying his embarrassment.] Have mercy, O great Brahman, have mercy. We intended no insolence; we merely mistook this lady for another. For

We sought an amorous maiden,

Maitreya. What! this one?

Courtier. Heaven forbid!

one whose youth

Is in the guidance of her own sweet will;

Or Indradatta? or again, is he
 Shon of brave Rāma and of fair Kuntī?
 Or Dharmaputra? Ashvatthāman bold?
 Perhaps Jatāyu's shelf, that vulture old?

47

Courtier. Fool! I will tell you who Chārudatta is.

A tree of life to them whose sorrows grow,
 Beneath its fruit of virtue bending low;
 Father to good men; virtue's touchstone he;
 The mirror of the learned; and the sea
 Where all the tides of character unite;
 A righteous man, whom pride could never blight;
 A treasure-house, with human virtues stored;
 Courtesy's essence, honor's precious hoard.
 He doth to life its fullest meaning give,
 So good is he; we others breathe, not live.

48

Let us be gone.

Sansthānaka. Without Vasantasenā?

Courtier. Vasantasenā has disappeared.

Sansthānaka. How?

Courtier. Like sick men's strength, or like the blind man's sight,
 Like the fool's judgment, like the sluggard's might,
 Like thoughtless scoundrels' store of wisdom's light,
 Like love, when foemen fan our slumbering wrath,
 So did she vanish, when you crossed her path.

49

Sansthānaka. I'm not going without Vasantasenā.

Courtier. And did you never hear this?

To hold a horse, you need a rein;
 To hold an elephant, a chain;
 To hold a woman, use a heart;
 And if you have n't one, depart.

50

Sansthānaka. If you're going, go along. I'm not going.

Courtier. Very well. I will go.

[Exit.]

Sansthānaka. Mashter's gone, sure enough. [To *Maitreya*.] Well, you man with the head that looks like a caret, you manikin, take a sheat, take a sheat.

Maitreya. We have already been invited to take a seat.

Sansthānaka. By whom?

Maitreya. By destiny.

Sansthānaka. Shtand up, then, shtand up!

Maitreya. We shall.

Sansthānaka. When?

Maitreya. When fate is kind again.

Sansthānaka. Weep, then, weep!

Maitreya. We have wept.

Sansthānaka. Who made you?

Maitreya. Poverty.

Sansthānaka. Laugh, then, laugh!

Maitreya. Laugh we shall.

Sansthānaka. When?

Maitreya. When Chārudatta is happy once more.

Sansthānaka. You manikin, give poor little Chārudatta thish mes-shage from me. "Thish wench with golden ornaments and golden jewels, thish female shtage-manager looking after the rehearsal of a new play, thish Vasantasenā—she has been in love with you ever shince she went into the park where Kāma's temple shtands. And when we tried to conciliate her by force, she went into your houshe. Now if you shend her away yourshelf and hand her over to me, if you reshtore her at once, without any lawshuit in court, then I 'll be friends with you forever. But if you don't reshtore her, there will be a fight to the death." Remember:

Shmear a pumpkin-shtalk with cow-dung;
Keep your vegetables dried;
Cook your rice in winter evenings;

And be sure your meat is fried.
 Then let 'em shtand, and they will not
 Bothershomely shnell and rot.

51

Tell it to him prettily, tell it to him craftily. Tell it to him sho that I can hear it as I roosht in the dove-cote on the top of my own palace. If you shay it different, I 'll chew your head like an apple caught in the crack of a door.

Maitreya. Very well. I shall tell him.

Sansthānaka. [Aside.] Tell me, shervant. Is mashter really gone?

Servant. Yes, sir.

Sansthānaka. Then we will go as quickly as we can.

Servant. Then take your sword, master.

Sansthānaka. You can keep it.

Servant. Here it is, master. Take your sword, master.

Sansthānaka. [Taking it by the wrong end.]

My shword, red as a radish shkin,
 Ne'er finds the time to molder;
 Shee how it shleeps its sheath within!

I put it on my shoulder.

While curs and bitches yelp at me, I roam,
 Like a hunted jackal, home.

52

[*Sansthānaka and the servant walk about, then exeunt.*

Maitreya. Mistress Radanikā, you must not tell good Chārudatta of this outrage. I am sure you would only add to the poor man's sorrows.

Radanikā. Good Maitreya, you know Radanikā. Her lips are sealed.

Maitreya. So be it.

Chārudatta. [To *Vasantasenā*.] Radanikā, Rohasena likes the fresh air, but he will be cold in the evening chill. Pray bring him into the house, and cover him with this mantle. [He gives her the mantle.]

Vasantasenā. [To herself.] See! He thinks I am his servant. [She takes the mantle and perceives its perfume. Ardently to herself.] Oh, beautiful! The mantle is fragrant with jasmine. His youthful days are not wholly indifferent to the pleasures of the world. [She wraps it about her, without letting Chārudatta see.]

Chārudatta. Come, Radanikā, take Rohasena and enter the heart of the house.

Vasantasenā. [To herself.] Ah me unhappy, that have little part or lot in your heart!

Chārudatta. Come, Radanikā, will you not even answer? Alas!

When man once sees that miserable day,
When fate almighty sweeps his wealth away,
Then ancient friendships will no longer hold,
Then all his former bosom-friends grow cold.

53

Maitreya. [Drawing near to Radanikā.] Sir, here is Radanikā.

Chārudatta. Here is Radanikā? Who then is this

This unknown lady, by my robe
Thus clinging, desecrated,

Vasantasenā. [To herself.] Say rather “consecrated.”

Chārudatta.

Until she seems the crescent moon,
With clouds of autumn¹ mated?

54

But no! I may not gaze upon another’s wife.

Maitreya. Oh, you need not fear that you are looking at another man’s wife. This is Vasantasenā, who has been in love with you ever since she saw you in the garden where Kāma’s temple stands.

Chārudatta. What! this is Vasantasenā? [Aside.]

My love for whom—my fortune spent—
My wretched self in twain has rent,
Like coward’s anger, inward bent.

55

¹ Which look pretty, but do not rain. He doubtless means to suggest that the cloak, belonging to a strange man, is as useless to Vasantasenā as the veil of autumn clouds to the earth.

Maitreya. My friend, that brother-in-law of the king says—

Chārudatta. Well?

Maitreya. “This wench with golden ornaments and golden jewels, this female stage-manager looking after the rehearsal of a new play, this Vasantasenā—she has been in love with you ever since she went into the park where Kāma’s temple stands. And when we tried to conciliate her by force, she went into your house.”

Vasantasenā. [To herself.] “Tried to conciliate me by force”—truly, I am honored by these words.

Maitreya. “Now if you send her away yourself and hand her over to me, if you restore her at once, without any lawsuit in court, then I’ll be friends with you forever. Otherwise, there will be a fight to the death.”

Chārudatta. [Contemptuously.] He is a fool. [To himself.] How is this maiden worthy of the worship that we pay a goddess! For now

Although I bade her enter, yet she seeks
To spare my poverty, nor enters here;
Though men are known to her, yet all she speaks
Contains no word to wound a modest ear.

56

[Aloud.] Mistress Vasantasenā, I have unwittingly made myself guilty of an offense; for I greeted as a servant one whom I did not recognize. I bend my neck to ask your pardon.

Vasantasenā. It is I who have offended by this unseemly intrusion. I bow my head to seek your forgiveness.

Maitreya. Yes, with your pretty bows you two have knocked your heads together, till they look like a couple of rice-fields. I also bow my head like a camel colt’s knee and beseech you both to stand up. [He does so, then rises.]

Chārudatta. Very well, let us no longer trouble ourselves with conventions.

Vasantasenā. [To herself.] What a delightfully clever hint! But it would hardly be proper to spend the night, considering how I

came hither. Well, I will at least say this much. [*Aloud.*] If I am to receive thus much of your favor, sir, I should be glad to leave these jewels in your house. It was for the sake of the jewels that those scoundrels pursued me.

Chārudatta. This house is not worthy of the trust.

Vasantasenā. You mistake, sir! It is to men that treasures are entrusted, not to houses.

Chārudatta. Maitreya, will you receive the jewels?

Vasantasenā. I am much indebted to you. [*She hands him the jewels.*]

Maitreya. [*Receiving them.*] Heaven bless you, madam.

Chārudatta. Fool! They are only entrusted to us.

Maitreya. [*Aside.*] Then the thieves may take them, for all I care.

Chārudatta. In a very short time—

Maitreya. What she has entrusted to us, belongs to us.

Chārudatta. I shall restore them.

Vasantasenā. I should be grateful, sir, if this gentleman would accompany me home.

Chārudatta. Maitreya, pray accompany our guest.

Maitreya. She walks as gracefully as a female swan, and you are the gay flamingo to accompany her. But I am only a poor Brahman, and wherever I go, the people will fall upon me just as dogs will snap at a victim dragged to the cross-roads.

Chārudatta. Very well. I will accompany her myself. Let the torches be lighted, to ensure our safety on the highway.

Maitreya. Vardhamānaka, light the torches.

Vardhamānaka. [*Aside to Maitreya.*] What! light torches without oil?

Maitreya. [*Aside to Chārudatta.*] These torches of ours are like courtezans who despise their poor lovers. They won't light up unless you feed them.

Chārudatta. Enough, Maitreya! We need no torches. See, we have a lamp upon the king's highway.

57

Attended by her starry servants all,
And pale to see as a loving maiden's cheeks,
Rises before our eyes the moon's bright ball,
Whose pure beams on the high-piled darkness fall
Like streaming milk that dried-up marshes seeks.

[*His voice betraying his passion.*] Mistress Vasantasenā, we have reached your home. Pray enter. [*Vasantasenā gazes ardently at him, then exit.*] Comrade, Vasantasenā is gone. Come, let us go home.

58

All creatures from the highway take their flight;
The watchmen pace their rounds before our sight;
To forestall treachery, is just and right,
For many sins find shelter in the night.

[*He walks about.*] And you shall guard this golden casket by night, and Vardhamānaka by day.

Maitreya. Very well.

[*Exeunt ambo.*

his great festival is welcome when one is young. But tell me, mistress, is it a king, or a king's favorite, whom you worship?

Vasantasenā. Girl, I wish to love, not to worship.

Madanikā. Is it a Brahman that excites your passion, some youth distinguished for very particular learning?

Vasantasenā. A Brahman I should have to reverence.

Madanikā. Or is it some young merchant, grown enormously wealthy from visiting many cities?

Vasantasenā. A merchant, girl, must go to other countries and leave you behind, no matter how much you love him. And the separation makes you very sad.

Madanikā. It is n't a king, nor a favorite, nor a Brahman, nor a merchant. Who is it then that the princess loves?

Vasantasenā. Girl! Girl! You went with me to the park where Kāma's temple stands?

Madanikā. Yes, mistress.

Vasantasenā. And yet you ask, as if you were a perfect stranger.

Madanikā. Now I know. Is it the man who comforted you when you asked to be protected?

Vasantasenā. Well, what was his name?

Madanikā. Why, he lives in the merchants' quarter.

Vasantasenā. But I asked you for his name.

Madanikā. His name, mistress, is a good omen in itself. His name is Chārudatta.

Vasantasenā. [Joyfully.] Good, Madanikā, good. You have guessed it.

Madanikā. [Aside.] So much for that. [Aloud.] Mistress, they say he is poor.

Vasantasenā. That is the very reason why I love him. For a courtesan who sets her heart on a poor man is blameless in the eyes of the world.

Madanikā. But mistress, do the butterflies visit the mango-tree when its blossoms have fallen?

Vasantasenā. That is just why we call *that* sort of a girl a butterfly.

Madanikā. Well, mistress, if you love him, why don't you go and visit him at once?

Vasantasenā. Girl, if I should visit him at once, then, because he can't make any return—no, I don't mean that, but it would be hard to see him.

Madanikā. Is that the reason why you left your jewels with him?

Vasantasenā. You have guessed it.

A voice¹ behind the scenes. Oh, sir, a shampooer owes me ten gold-pieces, and he got away from us. Hold him, hold him! [To the fleeing shampooer.] Stop, stop! I see you from here. [Enter hurriedly a frightened shampooer.]

Shampooer. Oh, confound this gambling business!

Freed from its tether, the ace—

I might better say “ass”—how it kicks me!

And the cast of the dice called the “spear”

Proves true to its name; for it sticks me.

The keeper's whole attention

Was busy with the score;

So it took no great invention

To vanish through the door.

But I cannot stand forever

In the unprotected street.

Is there no one to deliver?

I would fall before his feet.

2

While the keeper and the gambler are looking somewhere else for me, I'll just walk backwards into this empty temple and turn goddess. [He makes all sorts of gestures, takes his place, and waits.

Enter Māthura and the gambler.]

¹ That of Māthura, the keeper of the gambling-house.

Māthura. Oh, sir, a shampooer owes me ten gold-pieces, and he got away from us. Hold him, hold him! Stop, stop! I see you from here.

Gambler. You may run to hell, if they'll take you in;
 With Indra, the god, you may stay:
 For there's never a god can save your skin,
 While Māthura wants his pay. 3

Māthura. Oh, whither flee you, nimble rambler,
 You that cheat an honest gambler?
 You that shake with fear and shiver,
 All a-tremble, all a-quiver;
 You that cannot trip enough,
 On the level ground and rough;
 You that stain your social station,
 Family, and reputation! 4

Gambler. [Examining the footprints.] Here he goes. And here the tracks are lost.

Māthura. [Gazes at the footprints. Reflectively.] Look! The feet are turned around. And the temple has n't any image. [After a moment's thought.] That rogue of a shampooer has gone into the temple with his feet turned around.

Gambler. Let's follow him.

Māthura. All right. [They enter the temple and take a good look, then make signs to each other.]

Gambler. What! a wooden image?

Māthura. Of course not. It 's stone. [He shakes it with all his might, then makes signs.] What do we care? Come, let's have a game. [He starts to gamble as hard as he can.]

Shampooer. [Trying with all his might to repress the gambling fever. Aside.] Oh, oh!

Oh, the rattle of dice is a charming thing,
 When you have n't a copper left;

It works like a drum on the heart of a king,
Of all his realm bereft.

5

For gamblers leap down a mountain steep—
I know I shall not play.

Yet the rattle of dice is as sweet as the peep
Of nightingales in May.

6

Gambler. My turn, my turn!

Māthura. Not much! it's my turn.

Shampooer. [Coming up quickly from behind.] Is n't it *my* turn?

Gambler. We've got our man.

Māthura. [Seizing him.] You jail-bird, you're caught. Pay me my ten gold-pieces.

Shampooer. I'll pay you this very day.

Māthura. Pay me this very minute!

Shampooer. I'll pay you. Only have mercy!

Māthura. Come, will you pay me now?

Shampooer. My head is getting dizzy. [*He falls to the ground. The others beat him with all their might.*]

Māthura. There [drawing the gamblers' ring] you're bound by the gamblers' ring.

Shampooer. [Rises. Despairingly.] What! bound by the gamblers' ring? Confound it! That is a limit which we gamblers can't pass. Where can I get the money to pay him?

Māthura. Well then, you must give surety.

Shampooer. I have an idea. [*He nudges the gambler.*] I'll give you half, if you'll forgive me the other half.

Gambler. All right.

Shampooer. [To *Māthura.*] I'll give you surety for a half. You might forgive me the other half.

Māthura. All right. Where's the harm?

Shampooer. [Aloud.] You forgave me a half, sir?

Māthura. Yes.

Shampooer. [To the gambler.] And you forgave me a half?

Gambler. Yes.

Shampooer. Then I think I 'll be going.

Māthura. Pay me my ten gold-pieces! Where are you going?

Shampooer. Look at this, gentlemen, look at this! Here I just gave surety to one of them for a half, and the other forgave me a half. And even after that he is dunning me, poor helpless me!

Māthura. [Seizing him.] My name is Māthura, the clever swindler, and you 're not going to swindle me this time. Pay up, jail-bird, every bit of my money, and this minute, too.

Shampooer. How can I pay?

Māthura. Sell your father and pay.

Shampooer. Where can I get a father?

Māthura. Sell your mother and pay.

Shampooer. Where can I get a mother?

Māthura. Sell yourself and pay.

Shampooer. Have mercy! Lead me to the king's highway.

Māthura. Go ahead.

Shampooer. If it must be. [He walks about.] Gentlemen, will you buy me for ten gold-pieces from this gambling-master? [He sees a passer-by and calls out.] What is that? You wish to know what I can do? I will be your house-servant. What! he has gone without even answering. Well, here 's another. I 'll speak to him. [He repeats his offer.] What! this one too takes no notice of me. He is gone. Confound it! I 've had hard luck ever since Chārudatta lost his fortune.

Māthura. Will you pay?

Shampooer. How can I pay? [He falls down. Māthura drags him about.] Good gentlemen, save me, save me! [Enter Darduraka.]

Darduraka. Yes, gambling is a kingdom without a throne.

You do not mind defeat at all;
 Great are the sums you spend and win;
 While kingly revenues roll in,
 Rich men, like slaves, before you fall.

7

And again:

You earn your coin by gambling,
 Your friends and wife by gambling,
 Your gifts and food by gambling;
 Your last cent goes by gambling.

8

And again:

My cash was taken by the trey;
 The deuce then took my health away.
 The ace then set me on the street;
 The four completed my defeat.

9

[*He looks before him.*] Here comes Māthura, our sometime gambling-master. Well, as I can't escape, I think I'll put on my veil.

[*He makes any number of gestures with his cloak, then examines it.*]

This cloth is sadly indigent in thread;
 This lovely cloth lets in a lot of light;
 This cloth's protective power is nearly fled;
 This cloth is pretty when it's rolled up tight.

10

Yet after all, what more could a poor saint do? For you see,

One foot I've planted in the sky,
 The other on the ground must lie.¹
 The elevation's rather high,
 But the sun stands it. Why can't I?

11

Māthura. Pay, pay!

Shampooer. How can I pay? [*Māthura drags him about.*]

Darduraka. Well, well, what is this I see? [*He addresses a bystander.*] What did you say, sir? "This shampooer is being maltreated by the gambling-master, and no one will save him"? I'll save him myself. [*He presses forward.*] Stand back, stand back!

¹ A humorously exaggerated reference to Indian ascetic practices.

[*He takes a look.*] Well, if this is n't that swindler Māthura. And here is the poor saintly shampooer; a saint to be sure,

Who does not hang with bended head
Rigid till set of sun,
Who does not rub his back with sand
Till boils begin to run,
Whose shins dogs may not browse upon,
As they pass him in their rambling.¹
Why should this tall and dainty man
Be so in love with gambling?

12

Well, I must pacify Māthura. [*He approaches.*] How do you do, Māthura? [*Māthura returns the greeting.*]

Darduraka. What does this mean?

Māthura. He owes me ten gold-pieces.

Darduraka. A mere bagatelle!

Māthura. [*Pulling the rolled-up cloak from under Darduraka's arm.*] Look, gentlemen, look! The man in the ragged cloak calls ten gold-pieces a mere bagatelle.

Darduraka. My good fool, don't I risk ten gold-pieces on a cast of the dice? Suppose a man has money—is that any reason why he should put it in his bosom and show it? But you,

You'll lose your caste, you'll lose your soul,
For ten gold-pieces that he stole,
To kill a man that's sound and whole,
With five good senses in him.

13

Māthura. Ten gold-pieces may be a mere bagatelle to you, sir. To me they are a fortune.

Darduraka. Well then, listen to me. Just give him ten more, and let him go to gambling again.

Māthura. And what then?

Darduraka. If he wins, he will pay you.

¹ See note on page 33.

Darduraka. [Aside.] I have made an enemy of the influential gambling-master Māthura. I had better not stay here. Besides, my good friend Sharvilaka told me that a young herdsman named Aryaka has been designated by a soothsayer as our future king. Now everybody in my condition is running after him. I think I will join myself to him. [Exit.]

Shampooer. [Trembles as he walks away and looks about him.] Here is a house where somebody has left the side-door open. I will go in. [He enters and perceives Vasantasenā.] Madam, I throw myself upon your protection.

Vasantasenā. He who throws himself upon my protection shall be safe. Close the door, girl. [The maid does so.]

Vasantasenā. What do you fear?

Shampooer. A creditor, madam.

Vasantasenā. You may open the door now, girl.

Shampooer. [To himself.] Ah! Her reasons for not fearing a creditor are in proportion to her innocence. The proverb is right:

The man who knows his strength and bears a load
Proportioned to that strength, not more nor less,
Is safe from stumbling and from sore distress,
Although he wander on a dreary road.

14

That means me.

Māthura. [Wiping his eyes. To the gambler.] Pay, pay!

Gambler. While we were quarreling with Darduraka, sir, the man escaped.

Māthura. I broke that shampooer's nose for him with my fist. Come on! Let's trace him by the blood. [They do so.]

Gambler. He went into Vasantasenā's house, sir.

Māthura. Then that is the end of the gold-pieces.

Gambler. Let's go to court and lodge a complaint.

Māthura. The swindler would leave the house and escape. No, we must besiege him and so capture him.

[*Vasantasenā gives Madanikā a sign.*]

Madanikā. Whence are you, sir? or who are you, sir? or whose son are you, sir? or what is your business, sir? or what are you afraid of?

Shampooer. Listen, madam. My birthplace is Pātaliputra, madam. I am the son of a householder. I practise the trade of a shampooer.

Vasantasenā. It is a very dainty art, sir, which you have mastered.

Shampooer. Madam, as an art I mastered it. It has now become a mere trade.

Madanikā. Your answers are most disconsolate, sir. Pray continue.

Shampooer. Yes, madam. When I was at home, I used to hear travelers tell tales, and I wanted to see new countries, and so I came here. And when I had come here to Ujjayinī, I became the servant of a noble gentleman. Such a handsome, courteous gentleman! When he gave money away, he did not boast; when he was injured, he forgot it. To cut a long story short: he was so courteous that he regarded his own person as the possession of others, and had compassion on all who sought his protection.

Madanikā. Who may it be that adorns Ujjayinī with the virtues which he has stolen from the object of my mistress' desires?

Vasantasenā. Good, girl, good! I had the same thought in mind.

Madanikā. But to continue, sir

Shampooer. Madam, he was so compassionate and so generous that now—

Vasantasenā. His riches have vanished?

Shampooer. I did n't say it. How did you guess it, madam?

Vasantasenā. What was there to guess? Virtue and money seldom keep company. In the pools from which men cannot drink there is so much the more water.

Madanikā. But sir, what is his name?

Shampooer. Madam, who does not know the name of this moon of the whole world? He lives in the merchants' quarter. He whose name is worthy of all honor is named Chārudatta.

Vasantasenā. [Joyfully rising from her seat.] Sir, this house is your own. Give him a seat, girl, and take this fan. The gentleman is weary. [*Madanikā* does as she is bid.]

Shampooer. [Aside.] What! so much honor because I mentioned Chārudatta's name? Heaven bless you, Chārudatta! You are the only man in the world who really lives. All others merely breathe. [*He falls at Vasantasenā's feet.*] Enough, madam, enough. Pray be seated, madam.

Vasantasenā. [Seating herself.] Where is he who is so richly your creditor, sir?

Shamp. The good man's wealth consists in kindly deeds;
All other wealth is vain and quickly flies.

The man who honors not his neighbor's needs,
Does that man know what honor signifies?

15

Vasantasenā. But to continue

Shampooer. So I became a servant in his employ. And when his wealth was reduced to his virtue, I began to live by gambling. But fate was cruel, and I lost ten gold-pieces.

Māthura. I am ruined! I am robbed!

Shampooer. There are the gambling-master and the gambler, looking for me. You have heard my story, madam. The rest is your affair.

Vasantasenā. Madanikā, the birds fly everywhither when the tree is shaken in which they have their nests. Go, girl, and give the gambling-master and the gambler this bracelet. And tell them that this gentleman sends it. [*She removes a bracelet from her arm, and gives it to Madanikā.*]

Madanikā. [Receiving the bracelet.] Yes, mistress. [*She goes out.*]

Māthura. I am ruined! I am robbed!

Madanikā. Inasmuch as these two are looking up to heaven, and sighing, and chattering, and fastening their eyes on the door, I conclude that they must be the gambling-master and the gambler. [Approaching.] I salute you, sir.

Māthura. May happiness be yours.

Madanikā. Sir, which of you is the gambling-master?

Māth. O maiden, fair but something less than shy,
With red lip wounded in love's ardent play,
On whom is bent that sweet, coquettish eye?

For whom that lisp that steals the heart away? 16

I have n't got any money. You'll have to look somewhere else.

Madanikā. You are certainly no gambler, if you talk that way. Is there any one who owes you money?

Māthura. There is. He owes ten gold-pieces. What of him?

Madanikā. In his behalf my mistress sends you this bracelet. No, no! He sends it himself.

Māthura. [Seizing it joyfully.] Well, well, you may tell the noble youth that his account is squared. Let him come and seek delight again in gambling. [Exeunt *Māthura* and the gambler.]

Madanikā. [Returning to *Vasantasenā*.] Mistress, the gambling-master and the gambler have gone away well-pleased.

Vasantasenā. Go, sir, and comfort your kinsfolk.

Shampooer. Ah, madam, if it may be, these hands would gladly practise their art in your service.

Vasantasenā. But sir, he for whose sake you mastered the art, who first received your service, he should have your service still.

Shampooer. [Aside.] A very pretty way to decline my services. How shall I repay her kindness? [Aloud.] Madam, thus dishonored as a gambler, I shall become a Buddhist monk. And so,

madam, treasure these words in your memory: "He was a shampooer, a gambler, a Buddhist monk."

Vasantasenā. Sir, you must not act too precipitately.

Shampooer. Madam, my mind is made up. [*He walks about.*]

I gambled, and in gambling I did fall,
Till every one beheld me with dismay.
Now I shall show my honest face to all,
And walk abroad upon the king's highway.

17

[*Tumultuous cries behind the scenes.*]

Shampooer. [Listening.] What is this? What is this? [Addressing some one behind the scenes.] What did you say? "Post-breaker, Vasantasenā's rogue elephant, is at liberty!" Hurrah! I must go and see the lady's best elephant. No, no! What have I to do with these things? I must hold to my resolution. [Exit.]

[Then enter hastily *Karnapūraka*, highly delighted, wearing a gorgeous mantle.]

Karnapūraka. Where is she? Where is my mistress?

Madanikā. Insolent! What can it be that so excites you? You do not see your mistress before your very eyes.

Karnapūraka. [Perceiving *Vasantasenā*.] Mistress, my service to you.

Vasantasenā. Karnapūraka, your face is beaming. What is it?

Karnapūraka. [Proudly.] Oh, mistress! You missed it! You didn't see Karnapūraka's heroism to-day!

Vasantasenā. What, Karnapūraka, what?

Karnapūraka. Listen. Post-breaker, my mistress' rogue elephant, broke the stake he was tied to, killed his keeper, and ran into the street, making a terrible commotion. You should have heard the people shriek,

Take care of the babies, as quick as you can,
And climb up a roof or a tree!

The elephant rogue wants the blood of a man.
Escape! Run away! Can't you see?

18

And:

How they lose their ankle-rings!
Girdles, set with gems and things,
Break away from fastenings!

As they stumble, trip, and blunder,
See the bracelets snap asunder,
Each a tangled, pearly wonder!

19

And that rogue of an elephant dives with his trunk and his feet and his tusks into the city of Ujjayinī, as if it were a lotus-pond in full flower. At last he comes upon a Buddhist monk.¹ And while the man's staff and his water-jar and his begging-bowl fly every which way, he drizzles water over him and gets him between his tusks. The people see him and begin to shriek again, crying "Oh, oh, the monk is killed!"

Vasantasenā. [Anxiously.] Oh, what carelessness, what carelessness!

Karnapūraka. Don't be frightened. Just listen, mistress. Then, with a big piece of the broken chain dangling about him, he picked him up, picked up the monk between his tusks, and just then Karnapūraka saw him, *I* saw him, no, no! the slave who grows fat on my mistress' rice-cakes saw him, stumbled with his left foot over a gambler's score, grabbed up an iron pole out of a shop, and challenged the mad elephant—

Vasantasenā. Go on! Go on!

Karnap. I hit him—in a fit of passion, too

He really looked like some great mountain peak.
And from between those tusks of his I drew

The sacred hermit meek.

20

Vasantasenā. Splendid, splendid! But go on!

Karnapūraka. Then, mistress, all Ujjayinī tipped over to one side,

¹ The shampooer, whose transformation is astonishingly sudden.

like a ship loaded unevenly, and you could hear nothing but “Hurrah, hurrah for Karnapūraka!” Then, mistress, a man touched the places where he ought to have ornaments, and, finding that he hadn’t any, looked up, heaved a long sigh, and threw this mantle over me.

Vasantasenā. Find out, Karnapūraka, whether the mantle is perfumed with jasmine or not.

Karnapūraka. Mistress, the elephant perfume is so strong that I can’t tell for sure.

Vasantasenā. Then look at the name.

Karnapūraka. Here is the name. You may read it, mistress. [*He hands her the mantle.*]

Vasantasenā. [Reads.] Chārudatta. [*She seizes the mantle eagerly and wraps it about her.*]

Madanikā. The mantle is very becoming to her, Karnapūraka.

Karnapūraka. Oh, yes, the mantle is becoming enough.

Vasantasenā. Here is your reward, Karnapūraka. [*She gives him a gem.*]

Karnapūraka. [Taking it and bowing low.] Now the mantle is most wonderfully becoming.

Vasantasenā. Karnapūraka, where is Chārudatta now?

Karnapūraka. He started to go home along this very street.

Vasantasenā. Come, girl! Let us go to the upper balcony and see Chārudatta. [*Exeunt omnes.*]

Maitreya. There are just two things that always make me laugh. One is a woman talking Sanskrit, and the other is a man who tries to sing soft and low. Now when a woman talks Sanskrit, she is like a heifer with a new rope through her nose; all you hear is "soo, soo, soo." And when a man tries to sing soft and low, he reminds me of an old priest muttering texts, while the flowers in his chaplet dry up. No, I don't like it!

Chārudatta. My friend, Master Rebhila sang most wonderfully this evening. And still you are not satisfied.

The notes of love, peace, sweetness, could I trace,

The note that thrills, the note of passion too,

The note of woman's loveliness and grace—

Ah, my poor words add nothing, nothing new!

But as the notes in sweetest cadence rang,

I thought it was my hidden love who sang.

4

The melody of song, the stricken strings

In undertone that half-unconscious clings,

More clearly sounding when the passions rise,

But ever sweeter as the music dies.

Words that strong passion fain would say again,

Yet checks their second utterance—in vain;

For music sweet as this lives on, until

I walk as hearing sweetest music still.

5

Maitreya. But see, my friend! The very dogs are sound asleep in the shops that look out on the market. Let us go home. [*He looks before him.*] Look, look! The blessed moon seems to give place to darkness, as she descends from her palace in heaven.

Chārudatta. True.

The moon gives place to darkness as she dips

Behind the western mountain; and the tips

Of her uplifted horns alone appear,

Like two sharp-pointed tusks uplifted clear,

6

Where bathes an elephant in waters cool,
Who shows naught else above the jungle pool.

Maitreya. Well, here is our house. Vardhamānaka, Vardhamānaka, open the door!

Vardhamānaka. I hear Maitreya's voice. Chārudatta has returned. I must open the door for him. [*He does so.*] Master, I salute you. Maitreya, I salute you too. The couch is ready. Pray be seated. [*Chārudatta and Maitreya enter and seat themselves.*]

Maitreya. Vardhamānaka, call Radanikā to wash our feet.

Chārudatta. [Compassionately.] She sleeps. Do not wake her.

Vardhamānaka. I will bring the water, Maitreya, and you may wash Chārudatta's feet.

Maitreya. [Angrily.] Look, man. He acts like the son of a slave that he is, for he is bringing water. But he makes me wash your feet, and I am a Brahman.

Chārudatta. Good Maitreya, do you bring the water, and Vardhamānaka shall wash my feet.

Vardhamānaka. Yes, Maitreya. Do you bring the water. [*Maitreya does so. Vardhamānaka washes Chārudatta's feet, then moves away.*]

Chārudatta. Let water be brought for the Brahman's feet.

Maitreya. What good does water do my feet? I shall have to roll in the dirt again, like a beaten ass.

Vardhamānaka. Maitreya, you are a Brahman.

Maitreya. Yes, like a slow-worm among all the other snakes, so am I a Brahman among all the other Brahmans.

Vardhamānaka. Maitreya, I will wash your feet after all. [*He does so.*] Maitreya, this golden casket I was to keep by day, you by night. Take it. [*He gives it to Maitreya, then exit.*]

Maitreya. [Receiving the casket.] The thing is here still. Is n't there a single thief in Ujjayinī to steal the wretch that robs me of my sleep? Listen. I am going to take it into the inner court.

Chārud. Such lax attention we can ill afford.

If we are trusted by a courtezan,

Then, Brahman, prove yourself an honest man,

And guard it safely, till it be restored. 7

[*He nods, repeating the stanza “The melody of song, the stricken strings:” page 44.]*

Maitreya. Are you going to sleep?

Chārudatta. Yes, so it seems.

For conquering sleep, descending on mine eyes,

First smites the brow with unresisted blow;

Unseen, elusive, like old age, she tries

To gather strength by weakening her foe. 8

Maitreya. Then let's go to sleep. [*He does so.*]

[*Enter Sharvilaka.¹*]

Sharv. I made an entrance for my body's round

By force of art and arms, a path to deeds!

I skinned my sides by crawling on the ground,

Like a snake that sloughs the skin no longer sound;

And now I go where my profession leads. 9

[*He gazes at the sky. Joyfully.*] See! The blessed moon is setting.

For well I know,

My trade would fain from watchmen's eyes be shrouded;

Valiant, I force the dwelling of another.

But see, the stars in deepest dark are clouded,

And the night shields me like a careful mother. 10

I made a breach in the orchard wall and entered. And now I must force my way into the inner court as well.

Yes, let men call it vulgar, if they will,

The trade that thrives while sleeps the sleepyhead;

Yes, knavery, not bravery, call it still,

To overreach confiding folk a-bed.

¹ The following scene satirizes the Hindu love of system and classification.

Far better blame and hissing, fairly won,
 Than the pay of genuflecting underlings;
 This antique path was trod by Drona's son,
 Who slew the sleeping, unsuspecting kings.

11

But where shall I make the breach?

Where is the spot which falling drops decayed?

For each betraying sound is deadened there.

No yawning breach should in the walls be made,
 So treatises on robbery declare.

Where does the palace crumble? Where the place
 That niter-eaten bricks false soundness wear?

Where shall I 'scape the sight of woman's face?
 Fulfilment of my wishes waits me there.

12

[*He feels the wall.*] Here is a spot weakened by constant sun and sprinkling and eaten by saltpeter rot. And here is a pile of dirt thrown up by a mouse. Now heaven be praised! My venture prospers. This is the first sign of success for Skanda's¹ sons. Now first of all, how shall I make the breach? The blessed Bearer of the Golden Lance² has prescribed four varieties of breach, thus: if the bricks are baked, pull them out; if they are unbaked, cut them; if they are made of earth, wet them; if they are made of wood, split them. Here we have baked bricks; ergo, pull out the bricks.

Now what shall be the shape I give the breach?

A "lotus," "cistern," "crescent moon," or "sun"?

"Oblong," or "cross," or "bulging pot"? for each
 The treatises permit. Which one? which one?

And where shall I display my sovereign skill,
 That in the morning men may wonder still?

13

In this wall of baked bricks, the "bulging pot" would be effective.
 I will make that.

¹ The patron saint of thieves.

² An epithet of Skanda.

At other walls that I have pierced by night,
 And at my less successful ventures too,
 The crowd of neighbors gazed by morning light,
 Assigning praise or blame, as was my due. 14

Praise to the boon-conferring god, to Skanda of immortal youth!
 Praise to him, the Bearer of the Golden Lance, the Brahman's
 god, the pious! Praise to him, the Child of the Sun! Praise to him,
 the teacher of magic, whose first pupil I am! For he found plea-
 sure in me and gave me magic ointment,

With which so I anointed be,
 No watchman's eye my form shall see;
 And edged sword that falls on me
 From cruel wounds shall leave me free. 15

[*He anoints himself.*] Alas, I have forgotten my measuring line.
 [Reflecting.] Aha! This sacred cord¹ shall be my measuring line.
 Yes, the sacred cord is a great blessing to a Brahman, especially to
 one like me. For, you see,

With this he measures, ere he pierce a wall,
 And picks the lock, when jewels are at stake.
 It serves as key to bolted door and hall,
 As tourniquet for bite of worm and snake. 16

The measuring is done. I begin my task. [*He does so, then takes a look.*] My breach lacks but a single brick. Alas, I am bitten by a snake. [*He binds his finger with the sacred cord, and manifests the workings of poison.*] I have applied the remedy, and now I am re-
 stored. [*He continues his work, then gazes.*] Ah, there burns a can-
 dle. See!

Though jealous darkness hems it round,
 The golden-yellow candle from its place
 Shines through the breach upon the ground,
 Like a streak of gold upon the touchstone's face. 17

¹ The sacrificial cord, which passes over the left shoulder and under the right arm, is worn constantly by members of the three upper castes.

[*He returns to his work.*] The breach is finished. Good! I enter. But no, I will not enter yet. I will shove a dummy in. [*He does so.*] Ah, no one is there. Praise be to Skanda! [*He enters and looks about.*] See! Two men asleep. Come, for my own protection I will open the door. But the house is old and the door squeaks. I must look for water. Now where might water be? [*He looks about, finds water, and sprinkles the door. Anxiously.*] I hope it will not fall upon the floor and make a noise. Come, this is the way. [*He puts his back against the door and opens it cautiously.*] Good! So much for that. Now I must discover whether these two are feigning sleep, or whether they are asleep in the fullest meaning of the term. [*He tries to terrify them, and notes the effect.*] Yes, they must be asleep in the fullest meaning of the term. For see!

Their breath first calmly rises, ere it sink;
 Its regularity all fear defies.
 Unmoving in their socket-holes, the eyes
 Are tightly closed, and never seem to wink.
 The limbs relaxed, at ease the bodies lie,
 I see their feet beyond the bedstead peep,
 The lighted candle vexes not the eye;
 It would, if they were only feigning sleep.

18

[*He looks about him.*] What! a drum? And here is a flute. And here, a snare-drum. And here, a lute. And reed-pipes. And yonder, manuscripts. Is this the house of a dancing-master? But no! When I entered, I was convinced that this was a palatial residence. Now then, is this man poor in the fullest meaning of the term, or, from fear of the king or of thieves, does he keep his property buried? Well, my own property is buried, too. But I will scatter the seeds that betray subterranean gold. [*He does so.*] The scattered seeds nowhere swell up. Ah, he is poor in the fullest meaning of the term. Good! I go.

Maitreya. [*Talking in his sleep.*] Look, man. I see something like

a hole in the wall. I see something like a thief. You had better take this golden casket.

Sharvilaka. I wonder if the man has discovered that I have entered, and is showing off his poverty in order to make fun of me. Shall I kill him, or is the poor devil talking in his sleep? [*He takes a look.*] But see! This thing wrapped in a ragged bath-clout, now that I inspect it by the light of my candle, is in truth a jewel-casket. Suppose I take it. But no! It is hardly proper to rob a man of good birth, who is as poor as I am. I go.

Maitreya. My friend, by the wishes of cows and Brahmans¹ I conjure you to take this golden casket.

Sharvilaka. One may not disregard the sacred wish of a cow and the wish of a Brahman. I will take it. But look! There burns the candle. I keep about me a moth for the express purpose of extinguishing candles. I will let him enter the flame. This is his place and hour. May this moth which I here release, depart to flutter above the flame in varying circles. The breeze from the insect's wings has translated the flame into accursèd darkness. Or shall I not rather curse the darkness brought by me upon my Brahmanic family? For my father was a man who knew the four Vedas, who would not accept a gift; and I, Sharvilaka, his son, and a Brahman, I am committing a crime for the sake of that courtezan girl Madanikā. Now I will grant the Brahman's wish. [*He reaches out for the casket.*]

Maitreya. How cold your fingers are, man!

Sharvilaka. What carelessness! My fingers are cold from touching water. Well, I will put my hand in my armpit. [*He warms his left hand and takes the casket.*]

Maitreya. Have you got it?

Sharvilaka. I could not refuse a Brahman's request. I have it.

¹ Sacred creatures.

Sharvilaka. [Prepares to strike down Radanikā, but first takes a look.] What! a woman? Good! I go. [Exit.]

Radanikā. [Recoiling in terror.] Oh, oh, a thief has cut a hole in the wall of our house and is escaping. I must go and wake Maitreya. [She approaches Maitreya.] Oh, Maitreya, get up, get up! A thief has cut a hole in the wall of our house and has escaped.

Maitreya. [Rising.] What do you mean, wench? "A hole in the wall has cut a thief and has escaped"?

Radanikā. Poor fool! Stop your joking. Don't you see it?

Maitreya. What do you mean, wench? "It looks as if a second door had been thrown open"? Get up, friend Chārudatta, get up! A thief has made a hole in the wall of our house and has escaped.

Chārudatta. Yes, yes! A truce to your jests!

Maitreya. But it is n't a jest. Look!

Chārudatta. Where?

Maitreya. Why, here.

Chārudatta. [Gazing.] What a very remarkable hole!

The bricks are drawn away below, above;
The top is narrow, but the center wide;
As if the great house-heart had burst with pride,
Fearing lest the unworthy share its love.

22

To think that science should be expended on a task like this!

Maitreya. My friend, this hole must have been made by one of two men; either by a stranger, or else for practice by a student of the science of robbery. For what man here in Ujjayinī does not know how much wealth there is in our house?

Chārud. Stranger he must have been who made the breach,
His customed harvest in my house to reap;
He has not learned that vanished riches teach
A calm, untroubled sleep.

He saw the sometime greatness of my home
 And forced an entrance; for his heart did leap
 With short-lived hope; now he must elsewhere roam,
 And over broken hopes must sorely weep. 23

Just think of the poor fellow telling his friends: “I entered the house of a merchant’s son, and found—nothing.”

Maitreya. Do you mean to say that you pity the rascally robber? Thinks he—“Here’s a great house. Here’s the place to carry off a jewel-casket or a gold-casket.” [*He remembers the casket. Despondently. Aside.*] Where is that golden casket? [*He remembers the events of the night. Aloud.*] Look, man! You are always saying “Maitreya is a fool, Maitreya is no scholar.” But I certainly acted wisely in handing over that golden casket to you. If I had n’t, the son of a slave would have carried it off.

Chārudatta. A truce to your jests!

Maitreya. Just because I’m a fool, do you suppose I don’t even know the place and time for a jest?

Chārudatta. But when did this happen?

Maitreya. Why, when I told you that your fingers were cold.

Chārudatta. It might have been. [*He searches about. Joyfully.*] My friend, I have something pleasant to tell you.

Maitreya. What? Wasn’t it stolen?

Chārudatta. Yes.

Maitreya. What is the pleasant news, then?

Chārudatta. The fact that he did not go away disappointed.

Maitreya. But it was only entrusted to our care.

Chārudatta. What! entrusted to our care? [*He swoons.*]

Maitreya. Come to yourself, man. Is the fact that a thief stole what was entrusted to you, any reason why you should swoon?

Chārudatta. [Coming to himself.] Ah, my friend,

Who will believe the truth?
 Suspicion now is sure.
 This world will show no ruth
 To the inglorious poor.

24

Alas! If envious fate before
 Has wooed my wealth alone,
 Why should she seek my store
 Of virtue as her own?

25

Maitreya. I intend to deny the whole thing. Who gave anybody anything? who received anything from anybody? who was a witness?

Chārudatta. And shall I tell a falsehood now?

No! I will beg until I earn
 The wherewithal my debt to pay.
 Ignoble falsehood I will spurn,
 That steals the character away.

26

Radanikā. I will go and tell his good wife. [*She goes out, returning with Chārudatta's wife.*]

Wife. [*Anxiously.*] Oh! Is it true that my lord is uninjured, and Maitreya too?

Radanikā. It is true, mistress. But the gems which belong to the courtezan have been stolen. [*Chārudatta's wife swoons.*] O my good mistress! Come to yourself!

Wife. [*Recovering.*] Girl, how can you say that my lord is uninjured? Better that he were injured in body than in character. For now the people of Ujjayinī will say that my lord committed this crime because of his poverty. [*She looks up and sighs.*] Ah, mighty Fate! The destinies of the poor, uncertain as the water-drops which fall upon a lotus-leaf, seem to thee but playthings. There remains to me this one necklace, which I brought with me from my mother's house. But my lord would be too proud to accept it. Girl, call Maitreya hither.

Radanikā. Yes, mistress. [She approaches *Maitreya*.] *Maitreya*, my lady summons you.

Maitreya. Where is she?

Radanikā. Here. Come!

Maitreya. [Approaching.] Heaven bless you!

Wife. I salute you, sir. Sir, will you look straight in front of you?

Maitreya. Madam, here stands a man who looks straight in front of him.

Wife. Sir, you must accept this.

Maitreya. Why?

Wife. I have observed the Ceremony of the Gems. And on this occasion one must make as great a present as one may to a Brahman. This I have not done, therefore pray accept this necklace.

Maitreya. [Receiving the necklace.] Heaven bless you! I will go and tell my friend.

Wife. You must not do it in such a way as to make me blush, *Maitreya*. [Exit.]

Maitreya. [In astonishment.] What generosity!

Chārudatta. How *Maitreya* lingers! I trust his grief is not leading him to do what he ought not. *Maitreya*, *Maitreya*!

Maitreya. [Approaching.] Here I am. Take that. [He displays the necklace.]

Chārudatta. What is this?

Maitreya. Why, that is the reward you get for marrying such a wife.

Chārudatta. What! my wife takes pity on me? Alas, now am I poor indeed!

When fate so robs him of his all,
That on her pity he must call,
The man to woman's state doth fall,
The woman is the man.

But no, I am not poor. For I have a wife

Whose love outlasts my wealthy day;
In thee a friend through good and ill;
And truth that naught could take away:
Ah, this the poor man lacketh still.

28

Maitreya, take the necklace and go to Vasantasenā. Tell her in my name that we have gambled away the golden casket, forgetting that it was not our own; that we trust she will accept this necklace in its place.

Maitreya. But you must not give away this necklace, the pride of the four seas, for that cheap thing that was stolen before we had a bite or a drink out of it.

Chārudatta. Not so, my friend.

She showed her trust in leaving us her treasure;
The price of confidence has no less measure.

29

Friend, I conjure you by this gesture, not to return until you have delivered it into her hands. Vardhamānaka, do you speedily

Fill up the opening with the selfsame bricks;
Thus will I thwart the process of the law,
For the blemish of so great a scandal sticks.

30

And, friend Maitreya, you must show your pride by not speaking too despondently.

Maitreya. How can a poor man help speaking despondently?

Chārudatta. Poor I am not, my friend. For I have a wife

Whose love outlasts my wealthy day;
In thee a friend through good and ill;
And truth that naught could take away:
Ah, this the poor man lacketh still.

(28)

Go then, and after performing rites of purification, I will offer my morning prayer. [Exeunt omnes.]

ACT THE FOURTH
MADANIKA AND SHARVILAKA

Maid.

[Enter a maid.]

I AM entrusted with a message for my mistress by her mother. Here is my mistress. She is gazing at a picture and is talking with Madanikā. I will go to her. [She walks about. Then enter Vasantasenā, as described, and Madanikā.]

Vasantasenā. Madanikā girl, is this portrait really like Chārudatta?

Madanikā. Very like.

Vasantasenā. How do you know?

Madanikā. Because my mistress' eyes are fastened so lovingly upon it.

Vasantasenā. Madanikā girl, do you say this because courtesan courtesy demands it?

Madanikā. But mistress, is the courtesy of a girl who lives in a courtesan's house, necessarily false?

Vasantasenā. Girl, courtesans meet so many kinds of men that they do learn a false courtesy.

Madanikā. But when the eyes of my mistress find such delight in a thing, and her heart too, what need is there to ask the reason?

Vasantasenā. But I should not like to have my friends laugh at me.

Madanikā. You need not be afraid. Women understand women.

Maid. [Approaching.] Mistress, your mother sends word that a covered cart is waiting at the side-door, and that you are to take a drive.

Vasantasenā. Tell me, is it Chārudatta who invites me?

Maid. Mistress, the man who sent ornaments worth ten thousand gold-pieces with the cart

Vasantasenā. Is who?

Maid. Is the king's brother-in-law, Sansthānaka.

Vasantasenā. [Indignantly.] Go! and never come again on such an errand.

Maid. Do not be angry, mistress. I was only sent with the message.

Vasantasenā. But it is the message which makes me angry.

Maid. But what shall I tell your mother?

Vasantasenā. Tell my mother never to send me another such message, unless she wishes to kill me.

Maid. As you will. [Exit.]

[Enter Sharvilaka.]

Sharv. Blame for my sin I laid upon the night;

I conquered sleep and watchmen of the king;
But darkness wanes, and in the sun's clear light
My light is like the moon's—a faded thing.

1

And again:

Whoever cast at me a passing look,
Or neared me, anxious, as they quickly ran,
All such my laden soul for foes mistook;
For sin it was wherein man's fear began.

2

Well, it was for Madanikā's sake that I did the deed of sin.

I paid no heed to any one who talked with serving-men;
The houses ruled by women-folk—these I avoided most;
And when policemen seemed to have me almost in their ken,
I stood stock-still and acted just exactly like a post.
A hundred such manœuvres did I constantly essay,
And by such means succeeded in turning night to day.

3

[He walks about.]

Vasantasenā. Girl, lay this picture on my sofa and come back at once with a fan.

Madanikā. Yes, mistress.

[Exit with the picture.]

Sharvilaka. This is Vasantasenā's house. I will enter. [He does so.]

For you, my timid maid, last night
I did the deed of sin.

5

Vasantasenā. His face is tranquil. It would be troubled, if he had sinned.

Madanikā. Oh, Sharvilaka! For a mere nothing—for a woman—you have risked both things!

Sharvilaka. What things?

Madanikā. Your life and your character.

Sharvilaka. My foolish girl, fortune favors the brave.

Madanikā. Oh, Sharvilaka! Your character was without a stain. You didn't do anything *very* bad, did you, when for my sake you did the deed of sin?

Sharv. The gems that magnify a woman's charm,
As flowers the creeping plant, I do not harm.
I do not rob the Brahman of his pelf,
Nor seize the sacrificial gold myself.
I do not steal the baby from the nurse,
Simply because I need to fill my purse.
Even as a thief, I strive with main and might
For just distinction 'twixt the wrong and right.

6

And so you may tell *Vasantasenā* this:

These ornaments were made for you to don,
Or so it seems to me;
But as you love me, never put them on
Where other folks may see.

7

Madanikā. But Sharvilaka, ornaments that nobody may see, and a courtesan—the two things do not hang together. Give me the jewels. I want to see them.

Sharvilaka. Here they are. [*He gives them to her with some uneasiness.*]

Madanikā. [*Examining the jewels.*] It seems to me I have seen these before. Tell me. Where did you get them?

Sharvilaka. What does that matter to you, Madanikā? Take them.
Madanikā. [Angrily.] If you can't trust me, why do you wish to buy my freedom?

Sharvilaka. Well, this morning I heard in the merchants' quarter that the merchant Chārudatta—

[*Vasantasenā and Madanikā swoon.*]

Sharvilaka. Madanikā! Come to yourself! Why is it that now

Your figure seems to melt in limp despair,
 Your eyes are wildly rolling here and there?
 That when I come, sweet girl, to make you free,
 You fall to trembling, not to pitying me? 8

Madanikā. [Coming to herself.] O you reckless man! When you did what you ought not to have done for my sake, you did n't kill anybody or hurt anybody in that house?

Sharvilaka. Madanikā, Sharvilaka does not strike a terrified man or a man asleep. I did not kill anybody nor hurt anybody.

Madanikā. Really?

Sharvilaka. Really.

Vasantasenā. [Recovering consciousness.] Ah, I breathe again.

Madanikā. Thank heaven!

Sharvilaka. [Jealously.] What does this “Thank heaven” mean, Madanikā?

I sinned for you, when love had made me pine,
 Although my house was good since time began;
 Love took my virtue, but my pride is mine.

You call me friend and love another man? 9

[Meaningly.] A noble youth is like a goodly tree;

His wealth, the fruit so fair;
 The courtezan is like a bird; for she
 Pecks him and leaves him bare. 10

Love is a fire, whose flame is lust,
 Whose fuel is gallantry,

Wherein our youth and riches must
Thus sacrificèd be.

11

Vasantasenā. [With a smile.] His excitement is a little out of place.

Sharvilaka. Yes!

Those men are fools, it seems to me,
Who trust to women or to gold;
For gold and girls, 't is plain to see,
Are false as virgin snakes and cold.

12

Love not a woman; if you ever do,
She mocks at you, and plays the gay deceiver:
Yet if she loves you, you may love her too;
But if she does n't, leave her.

13

Too true it is that

A courtezan will laugh and cry for gold;
She trusts you not, but waits your trustful hour.
If virtue and a name are yours, then hold!
Avoid her as you would a graveyard flower.

14

And again:

As fickle as the billows of the sea,
Glowing no longer than the evening sky,
A woman takes your gold, then leaves you free;
You 're worthless, like cosmetics, when you 're dry.

15

Yes, women are indeed fickle.

One man perhaps may hold her heart in trust,
She lures another with coquettish eyes,
Sports with another in unseemly lust,
Another yet her body satisfies.

16

As some one has well said:

On mountain-tops no lotuses are grown;
The horse's yoke no ass will ever bear;
Rice never springs from seeds of barley sown;
A courtezan is not an honest fair.

17

Accursed Chārudatta, you shall not live! [*He takes a few steps.*] *Madanikā.* [Seizing the hem of his garment.] O you foolish man! Your anger is so ridiculous.

Sharvilaka. Ridiculous? how so?

Madanikā. Because these jewels belong to my mistress.

Sharvilaka. And what then?

Madanikā. And she left them with that gentleman.

Sharvilaka. What for?

Madanikā. [Whispers.] That's why.

Sharvilaka. [Sheepishly.] Confound it!

The sun was hot one summer day;
I sought the shadow, there to stay:
Poor fool! the kindly branch to pay,
I stole its sheltering leaves away.

18

Vasantasenā. How sorry he seems. Surely, he did this thing in ignorance.

Sharvilaka. What is to be done now, *Madanikā*?

Madanikā. Your own wit should tell you that.

Sharvilaka. No. For you must remember,

Nature herself gives women wit;
Men learn from books a little bit.

19

Madanikā. Sharvilaka, if you will take my advice, restore the jewels to that righteous man.

Sharvilaka. But *Madanikā*, what if he should prosecute me?

Madanikā. No cruel heat comes from the moon.

Vasantasenā. Good, *Madanikā*, good!

Sharvilaka. *Madanikā*,

For what I did, I feel no grief nor fear;
Why tell me of this good man's virtues high?
Shame for my baseness touches me more near;
What can this king do to such rogues as I?

20

Nevertheless, your suggestion is inconsistent with prudence. You must discover some other plan.

Madanikā. Yes, there is another plan.

Vasantasenā. I wonder what it will be.

Madanikā. Pretend to be a servant of that gentleman, and give the jewels to my mistress.

Sharvilaka. And what then?

Madanikā. Then you are no thief, Chārudatta has discharged his obligation, and my mistress has her jewels.

Sharvilaka. But is n't this course too reckless?

Madanikā. I tell you, give them to her. Any other course is too reckless.

Vasantasenā. Good, Madanikā, good! Spoken like a free woman.

Sharvilaka. Risen at last is wisdom's light,

Because I followed after you;
When clouds obscure the moon by night,
'T is hard to find a guide so true.

21

Madanikā. Then you must wait here a moment in Kāma's shrine, while I tell my mistress that you have come.

Sharvilaka. I will.

Madanikā. [Approaches *Vasantasenā*.] Mistress, a Brahman has come from Chārudatta to see you.

Vasantasenā. But girl, how do you know that he comes from Chārudatta?

Madanikā. Should I not know my own, mistress?

Vasantasenā. [Shaking her head and smiling. Aside.] Splendid! [Aloud.] Bid him enter.

Madanikā. Yes, mistress. [Approaching *Sharvilaka*.] Enter, Sharvilaka.

Sharvilaka. [Approaches. With some embarrassment.] My greetings to you.

Vasantasenā. I salute you, sir. Pray be seated.

Sharvilaka. The merchant sends this message: "My house is so old that it is hard to keep this casket safe. Pray take it back." [He gives it to *Madanikā*, and starts to leave.]

Vasantasenā. Sir, will you undertake a return commission of mine?

Sharvilaka. [Aside.] Who will carry it? [Aloud.] And this commission is—

Vasantasenā. You will be good enough to accept *Madanikā*.

Sharvilaka. Madam, I do not quite understand.

Vasantasenā. But I do.

Sharvilaka. How so?

Vasantasenā. Chārudatta told me that I was to give *Madanikā* to the man who should return these jewels. You are therefore to understand that he makes you a present of her.

Sharvilaka. [Aside.] Ah, she sees through me. [Aloud.] Good, Chārudatta, good!

On virtue only set your heart's desire;
The righteous poor attain to heights whereto
The wicked wealthy never may aspire.

22

And again:

On virtue let the human heart be set;
To virtue nothing serves as check or let.
The moon, attaining unattainable, is led
By virtue to her seat on Shiva's head.

23

Vasantasenā. Is my driver there? [Enter a servant with a bullock-cart.]

Servant. Mistress, the cart is ready.

Vasantasenā. *Madanikā* girl, you must show me a happy face. You are free. Enter the bullock-cart. But do not forget me.

Madanikā. [Weeping.] My mistress drives me away. [She falls at her feet.]

Vasantasenā. You are now the one to whom honor should be

paid.¹ Go then, enter the cart. But do not forget me.

Sharvilaka. Heaven bless you! and you, Madanikā,

Turn upon her a happy face,
And hail with bended head the grace
That gives you now the name of wife,
As a veil to keep you safe through life.

24

[*He enters the bullock-cart with Madanikā, and starts away.*]

A voice behind the scenes. Men! Men! We have the following orders from the chief of police: “A soothsayer has declared that a young herdsman named Aryaka is to become king. Trusting to this prophecy, and alarmed thereat, King Pālaka has taken him from his hamlet, and thrown him into strict confinement. Therefore be watchful, and every man at his post.”

Sharvilaka. [Listening.] What! King Pālaka has imprisoned my good friend Aryaka? And here I am, a married man. Confound it! But no,

Two things alone—his friend, his wife—
Deserve man’s love below;
A hundred brides may forfeit life
Ere he should suffer so.

25

Good! I will get out. [*He does so.*]

Madanikā. [Folding her hands. Tearfully.] My lord, if you must, at least bring me first to your parents.

Sharvilaka. Yes, my love, I will. I had the same thought in mind. [*To the servant.*] My good fellow, do you know the house of the merchant Rebhila?

Servant. Certainly.

Sharvilaka. Bring my wife thither.

Servant. Yes, sir.

Madanikā. If you desire it, dear. But dear, you must be very careful. [*Exit.*]

¹ That is to say, You are now a legal wife, while I am still a courtesan.

they flutter in the breeze and seem to invite me to enter. Both sides are decorated with holiday water-jars of crystal, which are charming with their bright-green mango twigs, and are set at the foot of the pillars that sustain the portal. The doors are of gold, thickly set with diamonds as hard to pierce as a giant's breast. It actually wearies a poor devil's envy. Yes, Vasantasenā's house-door is a beautiful thing. Really, it forcibly challenges the attention of a man who does n't care about such things.

Maid. Come, sir, and enter the first court.

Maitreya. [Enters and looks about.] Well! Here in the first court are rows of balconies brilliant as the moon, or as sea-shells, or as lotus-stalks; whitened by handfuls of powder strewn over them; gleaming with golden stairways inlaid with all sorts of gems: they seem to gaze down on Ujjayinī with their round faces, the crystal windows, from which strings of pearls are dangling. The porter sits there and snoozes as comfortably as a professor. The crows which they tempt with rice-gruel and curdled milk will not eat the offering, because they can't distinguish it from the mortar. Show me the way, madam.

Maid. Come, sir, and enter the second court.

Maitreya. [Enters and looks about.] Well! Here in the second court the cart-bullocks are tied. They grow fat on mouthfuls of grass and pulse-stalks which are brought them, right and left, by everybody. Their horns are smeared with oil. And here is another, a buffalo, snorting like a gentleman insulted. And here is a ram¹ having his neck rubbed, like a prize-fighter after the fight. And here are others, horses having their manes put in shape. And here in a stall is another, a monkey, tied fast like a thief. [He looks in another direction.] And here is an elephant, taking from his drivers a cake of rice and drippings and oil. Show me the way, madam.

Maid. Come, sir, and enter the third court.

Maitreya. [Enters and looks about.] Well! Here in the third court

¹ "Rams in India are commonly trained to fight." WILSON.

are these seats, prepared for young gentlemen to sit on. A half-read book is lying on the gaming-table. And the table itself has its own dice, made out of gems. And here, again, are courtezans and old hangers-on at court, past masters in the war and peace of love, wandering about and holding in their fingers pictures painted in many colors. Show me the way, madam.

Maid. Come, sir, and enter the fourth court.

Maitreya. [Enters and looks about.] Well! Here in the fourth court the drums that maiden fingers beat are booming like the thunder; the cymbals are falling, as the stars fall from heaven when their merit is exhausted;¹ the pipe is discoursing music as sweet as the humming of bees. And here, again, is a lute that somebody is holding on his lap like a girl who is excited by jealousy and love, and he is stroking it with his fingers. And here, again, are courtezan girls that sing as charmingly as honey-drunken bees, and they are made to dance and recite a drama with love in it. And water-coolers are hanging in the windows so as to catch the breeze. Show me the way, madam.

Maid. Come, sir, and enter the fifth court.

Maitreya. [Enters and looks about.] Well! Here in the fifth court the overpowering smell of asafetida and oil is attractive enough to make a poor devil's mouth water. The kitchen is kept hot all the time, and the gusts of steam, laden with all sorts of good smells, seem like sighs issuing from its mouth-like doors. The smell of the preparation of all kinds of foods and sauces makes me smack my lips. And here, again, is a butcher's boy washing a mess of chitterlings as if it were an old loin-cloth. The cook is preparing every kind of food. Sweetmeats are being constructed, cakes are being baked. [To himself.] I wonder if I am to get a chance to wash my feet and an invitation to eat what I can hold. [He looks in another direction.] There are courtezans and bastard pages,

¹ Virtuous souls after death may become stars; but when their stellar happiness equals the sum of their acquired merit, they fall to earth again.

adorned with any number of jewels, just like Gandharvas¹ and Apsarases.² Really, this house is heaven. Tell me, who are you bastards anyway?

Pages. Why, we are bastard pages—

Petted in a stranger's court,
Fed on stranger's food,
Stranger's money makes us sport—
Not so very good.
Stranger women gave us birth,
Stranger men begot;
Baby elephants in mirth,
We're a bastard lot.

28

Maitreya. Show me the way, madam.

Maid. Come, sir, and enter the sixth court.

Maitreya. [Enters and looks about.] Well! Here in the sixth court they are working in gold and jewels. The arches set with sapphires look as if they were the home of the rainbow. The jewelers are testing the lapis lazuli, the pearls, the corals, the topazes, the sapphires, the cat's-eyes, the rubies, the emeralds, and all the other kinds of gems. Rubies are being set in gold. Golden ornaments are being fashioned. Pearls are being strung on a red cord. Pieces of lapis lazuli are being cleverly polished. Shells are being pierced. Corals are being ground. Wet bundles of saffron are being dried. Musk is being moistened. Sandalwood is being ground to make sandal-water. Perfumes are being compounded. Betel-leaves and camphor are being given to courtesans and their lovers. Coquettish glances are being exchanged. Laughter is going on. Wine is being drunk incessantly with sounds of glee. Here are men-servants, here are maid-servants, and here are men who forget child and wife and money. When the courtesans, who have drunk the wine from the liquor-jars, give them the mitten, they drink. Show me the way, madam.

¹ The choristers of heaven.

² The nymphs of heaven.

[*He looks in another direction.*] But madam, who is that in the expansive garment, sitting on the throne? She has shoes on her greasy feet.

Maid. Sir, that is my mistress' mother.

Maitreya. Lord! What an extensive belly the dirty old witch has got! I suppose they could n't put that superb portal on the house till after they had brought the idol in?

Maid. Rascal! You must not make fun of our mother so. She is pining away under a quartan ague.

Maitreya. [Bursts out laughing.] O thou blessed quartan ague! Look thou upon a Brahman, even upon me, with this thy favor!

Maid. Rascal! May death strike you.

Maitreya. [Bursts out laughing.] Why, wench, a pot-belly like that is better dead.

Drinking brandy, rum, and wine,
Mother fell extremely ill.
If mother now should peak and pine,
A jackal-pack would have its fill.

30

Well, I have seen Vasantasenā's palace with its many incidents and its eight courts, and really, it seems as if I had seen the triple heaven in a nut-shell. I have n't the eloquence to praise it. Is this the house of a courtezan, or a piece of Kubera's¹ palace? Where's your mistress?

Maid. She is here in the orchard. Enter, sir.

Maitreya. [Enters and looks about.] Well! What a beautiful orchard! There are any number of trees planted here, and they are covered with the most wonderful flowers. Silken swings are hung under the thick-set trees, just big enough for a girl to sit in. The golden jasmine, the shephālikā, the white jasmine, the jessamine, the navamallikā, the amaranth, the spring creeper, and all the other flowers have fallen of themselves, and really, it makes Indra's hea-

¹ The god of wealth.

ven look dingy. [*He looks in another direction.*] And the pond here looks like the morning twilight, for the lilies and red lotuses are as splendid as the rising sun. And again:

The ashoka-tree, whose twigs so merry
And crimson flowers have just appeared,
Seems like a battling mercenary,
With clotting crimson gore besmeared.

31

Good! Now where's your mistress?

Maid. If you would stop star-gazing, sir, you would see her.

Maitreya. [*Perceives Vasantasenā and approaches.*] Heaven bless you!

Vasantasenā. [*Speaking in Sanskrit.¹*] Ah, Maitreya! [*Rising.*] You are very welcome. Here is a seat. Pray be seated.

Maitreya. When you are seated, madam. [*They both seat themselves.*]

Vasantasenā. Is the merchant's son well?

Maitreya. Well, madam.

Vasantasenā. Tell me, good Maitreya,

Do friends, like birds, yet seek a shelter free
Beneath the modest boughs of this fair tree,
Whose leaves are virtues, confidence its root,
Its blossoms honor, good its precious fruit?

32

Maitreya. [*Aside.*] A good description by a naughty woman.

[*Aloud.*] They do, indeed.

Vasantasenā. Tell me, what is the purpose of your coming?

Maitreya. Listen, madam. The excellent Chārudatta folds his hands² and requests—

Vasantasenā. [*Folding her hands.*] And commands

Maitreya. He says he imagined that that golden casket was his own and gambled it away. And nobody knows where the gambling-

¹ This shows the excellence of Vasantasenā's education. Women, as an almost invariable rule, speak Prākrit.

² A gesture of respectful entreaty.

master has gone, for he is employed in the king's business.

Maid. Mistress, I congratulate you. The gentleman has turned gambler.

Vasantasenā. [Aside.] It was stolen by a thief, and he is so proud that he says he gambled it away. I love him for that.

Maitreya. He requests that you will therefore be good enough to accept in its place this necklace of pearls.

Vasantasenā. [Aside.] Shall I show him the jewels? [Reflecting.] No, not yet.

Maitreya. Why don't you take this necklace?

Vasantasenā. [Laughs and looks at her friend.] Why should I not take the necklace, Maitreya? [She takes it and lays it away. Aside.] How is it possible that drops of honey fall from the mango-tree, even after its blossoms are gone? [Aloud.] Sir, pray tell the worthy gambler Chārudatta in my name that I shall pay him a visit this evening.

Maitreya. [Aside.] What else does she expect to get out of a visit to our house? [Aloud.] Madam, I will tell him—[aside] to have nothing more to do with this courtezan. [Exit.]

Vasantasenā. Take these jewels, girl. Let us go and bring cheer to Chārudatta.

Maid. But mistress, see! An untimely storm is gathering.

Vasant. The clouds may come, the rain may fall forever,
The night may blacken in the sky above;
For this I care not, nor I will not waver;
My heart is journeying to him I love.

33

Take the necklace, girl, and come quickly. [Exeunt omnes.]

In thousand forms the tumbling clouds embrace,
 Though torn by winds, they gather, interlace,
 And paint the ample canvas of the sky. 5

The sky is black as Dhritarāshtra's face;
 Proud as the champion of Kuru's race,
 The haughty peacock shrills his joy abroad;
 The cuckoo, in Yudhishtira's sad case,
 Is forced to wander if he would not die;
 The swans must leave their forest-homes and fly,
 Like Pāndu's sons, to seek an unknown place. 6

[*Reflecting.*] It is long since Maitreya went to visit Vasantasenā.
 And even yet he does not come. [Enter Maitreya.]

Maitreya. Confound the courtezan's avarice and her incivility! To think of her making so short a story of it! Over and over she repeats something about the affection she feels, and then without more ado she pockets the necklace. She is rich enough so that she might at least have said: "Good Maitreya, rest a little. You must not go until you have had a cup to drink." Confound the courtezan! I hope I'll never set eyes on her again. [*Wearily.*] The proverb is right. "It is hard to find a lotus-plant without a root, a merchant who never cheats, a goldsmith who never steals, a village-gathering without a fight, and a courtezan without avarice." Well, I'll find my friend and persuade him to have nothing more to do with this courtezan. [*He walks about until he discovers Chārudatta.*] Ah, my good friend is sitting in the orchard. I'll go to him. [*Approaching.*] Heaven bless you! May happiness be yours.

Chārudatta. [*Looking up.*] Ah, my friend Maitreya has returned. You are very welcome, my friend. Pray be seated.

Maitreya. Thank you.

Chārudatta. Tell me of your errand, my friend.

Maitreya. My errand went all wrong.

Chārudatta. What! did she not accept the necklace?

Maitreya. How could we expect such a piece of luck? She put her lotus-tender hands to her brow,¹ and took it.

Chārudatta. Then why do you say “went wrong”?

Maitreya. Why not, when we lost a necklace that was the pride of the four seas for a cheap golden casket, that was stolen before we had a bite or a drink out of it?

Chārudatta. Not so, my friend.

She showed her trust in leaving us her treasure;
The price of confidence has no less measure.

7

Maitreya. Now look here! I have a second grievance. She tipped her friend the wink, covered her face with the hem of her dress, and laughed at me. And so, Brahman though I am, I hereby fall on my face before you and beg you not to have anything more to do with this courtezan. That sort of society does any amount of damage. A courtezan is like a pebble in your shoe. It hurts before you get rid of it. And one thing more, my friend. A courtezan, an elephant, a scribe, a mendicant friar, a swindler, and an ass—where these dwell, not even rogues are born.

Chārudatta. Oh, my friend, a truce to all your detraction! My poverty of itself prevents me. For consider:

The horse would gladly hasten here and there,
But his legs fail him, for his breath departs.
So men’s vain wishes wander everywhere,
Then, weary grown, return into their hearts.

8

Then too, my friend:

If wealth is thine, the maid is thine,
For maids are won by gold;

[*Aside.* And not by virtue cold. *Aloud.*]

But wealth is now no longer mine,
And her I may not hold.

9

¹ A gesture of respect.

Maitreya. [Looks down. Aside.] From the way he looks up and sighs, I conclude that my effort to distract him has simply increased his longing. The proverb is right. "You can't reason with a lover." [Aloud.] Well, she told me to tell you that she would have to come here this evening. I suppose she is n't satisfied with the necklace and is coming to look for something else.

Chārudatta. Let her come, my friend. She shall not depart unsatisfied. [Enter *Kumbhilaka*.]

Kumbhilaka. Listen, good people.

The more it rains in sheets,
The more my skin gets wet;
The more the cold wind beats,
The more I shake and fret.

10

[*He bursts out laughing.*]

I make the sweet flute speak from seven holes,
I make the loud lute speak on seven strings;
In singing, I essay the donkey's rôles:
No god can match my music when he sings.

11

My mistress Vasantasenā said to me "Kumbhilaka, go and tell Chārudatta that I am coming." So here I am, on my way to Chārudatta's house. [*He walks about, and, as he enters, discovers Chārudatta.*] Here is Chārudatta in the orchard. And here is that wretched jackanapes, too. Well, I'll go up to them. What! the orchard-gate is shut? Good! I'll give this jackanapes a hint. [*He throws lumps of mud.*]

Maitreya. Well! Who is this pelting me with mud, as if I were an apple-tree inside of a fence?

Chārudatta. Doubtless the pigeons that play on the roof of the garden-house.

Maitreya. Wait a minute, you confounded pigeon! With this stick I'll bring you down from the roof to the ground, like an over-ripe mango. [*He raises his stick and starts to run.*]

Chārudatta. You fool, in spring, in *vasanta*.

Maitreya. [Returns to *Kumbhilaka*.] You fool, in spring, in *va-*
santa.

Kumbhilaka. Now I'll give you another. Who guards thriving
villages?

Maitreya. Why, the guard.

Kumbhilaka. [Laughing.] Wrong!

Maitreya. Well, I'm stuck. [Reflecting.] Good! I'll ask Chārudatta
again. [He returns and puts the question to Chārudatta.]

Chārudatta. The army, my friend, the *senā*.

Maitreya. [Comes back to *Kumbhilaka*.] The army, you jackass, the
senā.

Kumbhilaka. Now put the two together and say 'em fast.

Maitreya. *Senā-vasanta*.

Kumbhilaka. Say it turned around.

Maitreya. [Turns around.] *Senā-vasanta*.

Kumbhilaka. You fool! you jackanapes! Turn the parts of the thing
around!

Maitreya. [Turns his feet around.] *Senā-vasanta*.

Kumbhilaka. You fool! Turn the parts of the word around!

Maitreya. [After reflection.] *Vasanta-senā*.

Kumbhilaka. She's here.

Maitreya. Then I must tell Chārudatta. [Approaching.] Well,
Chārudatta, your creditor is here.

Chārudatta. How should a creditor come into my family?

Maitreya. Not in the family perhaps, but at the door. *Vasantasenā*
is here.

Chārudatta. Why do you deceive me, my friend?

Maitreya. If you can't trust me, then ask Kumbhilaka here.
Kumbhilaka, you jackass, come here.

Kumbhilaka. [Approaching.] I salute you, sir.

Chārudatta. You are welcome, my good fellow. Tell me, is Vasantasenā really here?

Kumbhilaka. Yes, she's here. Vasantasenā is here.

Chārudatta. [Joyfully.] My good fellow, I have never let the bearer of welcome news go unrewarded. Take this as your recompense. [He gives him his mantle.]

Kumbhilaka. [Takes it and bows. Gleefully.] I'll tell my mistress.
[Exit.]

Maitreya. Do you see why she comes in a storm like this?

Chārudatta. I do not quite understand, my friend.

Maitreya. I know. She has an idea that the pearl necklace is cheap, and the golden casket expensive. She isn't satisfied, and she has come to look for something more.

Chārudatta. [Aside.] She shall not depart unsatisfied.

[Then enter the love-lorn Vasantasenā, in a splendid garment, fit for a woman who goes to meet her lover, a maid with an umbrella, and the courtier.]

Courtier. [Referring to Vasantasenā.]

Lakshmi¹ without the lotus-flower is she,

Loveliest arrow of god Kāma's bow,²

The sweetest blossom on love's magic tree.

See how she moves, so gracefully and slow!

In passion's hour she still loves modesty;

In her, good wives their dearest sorrow know.

When passion's drama shall enacted be,

When on love's stage appears the passing show,

A host of wanderers shall bend them low,

Glad to be slaves in such captivity.

12

¹ The goddess of wealth and beauty, usually represented with a lotus.

² Kāma's (Cupid's) arrows are flowers.

See, Vasantasenā, see!

The clouds hang drooping to the mountain peaks,
Like a maiden's heart, that distant lover seeks:
The peacocks startle, when the thunder booms,
And fan the heaven with all their jeweled plumes.

13

And again:

Mud-stained, and pelted by the streaming rain,
To drink the falling drops the frogs are fain;
Full-throated peacocks love's shrill passion show,
And nīpa flowers like brilliant candles glow;
Unfaithful clouds obscure the hostage moon,
Like knaves, unworthy of so dear a boon;
Like some poor maid of better breeding bare,
The impatient lightning rests not anywhere.

14

*Vasantasenā.*¹ Sir, what you say is most true. For
The night, an angry rival, bars my way;
Her thunders fain would check and hinder me:
“Fond fool! with him I love thou shalt not stay,
'T is I, 't is I, he loves,” she seems to say,
“Nor from my swelling bosom shall he flee.”

15

Courtier. Yes, yes. That is right. Scold the night.

Vasantasenā. And yet, sir, why scold one who is so ignorant of woman's nature? For you must remember:

The clouds may rain, may thunder ne'er so bold,
May flash the lightning from the sky above;
That woman little recks of heat or cold,
Who journeys to her love.

16

Courtier. But see, Vasantasenā! Another cloud,
Sped by the fickle fury of the air—
A flood of arrows in his rushing streams,
His drum, the roaring thunder's mighty blare,
His banner, living lightning's awful gleams—

¹ Throughout this scene, Vasantasenā's verses are in Sanskrit. Compare note 1 on page 73.

At Indra's bidding, pour their streams,
Until with silver cords it seems
That earth is linked with sky.

21

And look yonder!

As herds of buffaloes the clouds are black;
The winds deny them ease;
They fly on lightning wings and little lack
Of seeming troubled seas.

Smitten with falling drops, the fragrant sod,
Upon whose bosom greenest grasses nod,
Seems pierced with pearls, each pearl an arrowy rod.

22

Vasantasenā. And here is yet another cloud.

The peacock's shrill-voiced cry
Implores it to draw nigh;
And ardent cranes on high
Embrace it lovingly.

The wistful swans espy
The lotus-sweeter sky;
The darkest colors lie
On heaven clingingily.

23

Courtier. True. For see!

A thousand lotuses that bloom by night,
A thousand blooming when the day is bright,
Nor close nor ope their eyes to heaven's sight;
There is no night nor day.

The face of heaven, thus shrouded in the night,
Is only for a single instant bright,
When momentary lightning gives us sight;
Else is it dark alway.

Now sleeps the world as still as in the night
Within the house of rain where naught is bright,

Where hosts of swollen clouds seem to our sight
One covering veil of gray.

24

Vasantasenā. True. And see!

The stars are lost like mercies given
To men of evil heart;
Like lonely-parted wives, the heaven
Sees all her charms depart.
And, molten in the cruel heat
Of Indra's bolt, it seems
As if the sky fell at our feet
In liquid, flowing streams.

25

And yet again:

The clouds first darkly rise, then darkly fall,
Send forth their floods of rain, and thunder all;
Assuming postures strange and manifold,
Like men but newly blest with wealth untold.

26

Courtier. True.

The heaven is radiant with the lightning's glare;
Its laughter is the cry of myriad cranes;
Its voice, the bolts that whistle through the air;
Its dance, that bow whose arrows are the rains.
It staggers at the winds, and seems to smoke
With clouds, which form its black and snaky cloak.

27

Vasantasenā. O shameless, shameless sky!

To thunder thus, while I
To him I love draw nigh.

Why do thy thunders frighten me and pain?
Why am I seized upon by hands of rain?

28

O Indra, mighty Indra!

Did I then give thee of my love before,
That now thy clouds like mighty lions roar?
Ah no! Thou shouldst not send thy streaming rain,
To fill my journey to my love with pain.

29

Remember:

For Ahalyā's sweet sake thou once didst lie;
 Thou knowest lover's pain.
 As thou didst suffer then, now suffer I;
 O cruel, cease thy rain.

30

And yet:

Thunder and rain and lighten hundredfold
 Forth from thy sky above;
 The woman canst thou not delay nor hold
 Who journeys to her love.

31

Let thunders roar, for men were cruel ever;
 But oh, thou maiden lightning! didst thou never
 Know pains that maidens know?

32

Courtier. But mistress, do not scold the lightning. She is your friend,

This golden cord that trembles on the breast
 Of great Airāvata;¹ upon the crest
 Of rocky hills this banner all ablaze;
 This lamp in Indra's palace; but most blest
 As telling where your most belovèd stays.

33

Vasantasenā. And here, sir, is his house.

Courtier. You know all the arts, and need no instruction now. Yet love bids me prattle. When you enter here, you must not show yourself too angry.

Where anger is, there love is not;
 Or no! except for anger hot,
 There is no love.

Be angry! make him angry then!
 Be kind! and make him kind again—
 The man you love.

34

So much for that. Who is there? Let Chārudatta know, that

¹ The elephant of Indra. Indra is the god of the thunderstorm.

Maid. "Gambler, what luck this evening?"

Vasantasenā. Shall I dare to say it?

Maid. When the time comes, it will say itself.

Maitreya. Enter, madam.

Vasantasenā. [Enters, approaches Chārudatta, and strikes him with the flowers which she holds.] Well, gambler, what luck this evening?

Chārudatta. [Discovers her.] Ah, Vasantasenā is here. [He rises joyfully.] Oh, my belovèd,

My evenings pass in watching ever,
My nights from sighs are never free;
This evening cannot else than sever—
In bringing you—my grief and me.

37

You are very, very welcome. Here is a seat. Pray be seated.

Maitreya. Here is a seat. Be seated, madam. [Vasantasenā sits, then the others.]

Chārudatta. But see, my friend,

The dripping flower that decks her ear, droops down,
And one sweet breast
Anointed is, like a prince who wears the crown,
With ointment blest.

38

My friend, Vasantasenā's garments are wet. Let other, and most beautiful, garments be brought.

Maitreya. Yes, sir.

Maid. Good Maitreya, do you stay here. I will wait upon my mistress. [She does so.]

Maitreya. [Aside to Chārudatta.] My friend, I 'd just like to ask the lady a question.

Chārudatta. Then do so.

Maitreya. [Aloud.] Madam, what made you come here, when it is so stormy and dark that you can't see the moon?

Maid. Mistress, the Brahman is very plain-spoken.

Vasantasenā. You might better call him clever.

Maid. My mistress came to ask how much that pearl necklace is worth.

Maitreya. [Aside to *Chārudatta*.] There! I told you so. She thinks the pearl necklace is cheap, and the golden casket is expensive. She is n't satisfied. She has come to look for something more.

Maid. For my mistress imagined that it was her own, and gambled it away. And nobody knows where the gambling-master has gone, for he is employed in the king's business.

Maitreya. Madam, you are simply repeating what somebody said before.

Maid. While we are looking for him, pray take this golden casket. [She displays the casket. *Maitreya* hesitates.] Sir, you examine it very closely. Did you ever see it before?

Maitreya. No, madam, but the skilful workmanship captivates the eye.

Maid. Your eyes deceive you, sir. This is the golden casket.

Maitreya. [Joyfully.] Well, my friend, here is the golden casket, the very one that thieves stole from our house.

Chārudatta. My friend,

The artifice we tried before,
Her stolen treasure to restore,
Is practised now on us. But no,
I cannot think 't is really so.

89

Maitreya. But it is so. I swear it on my Brahmanhood.

Chārudatta. This is welcome news.

Maitreya. [Aside to *Chārudatta*.] I'm going to ask where they found it.

Chārudatta. I see no harm in that.

Maitreya. [Whispers in the maid's ear.] There!

Maid. [Whispers in *Maitreya*'s ear.] So there!

Chārudatta. What is it? and why are we left out?

Maitreya. [Whispers in *Chārudatta's* ear.] So there!

Chārudatta. My good girl, is this really the same golden casket?

Maid. Yes, sir, the very same.

Chārudatta. My good girl, I have never let the bearer of welcome news go unrewarded. Take this ring as your recompense. [*He looks at his finger, notices that the ring is gone, and betrays his embarrassment.*]

Vasantasenā. [To herself.] I love you for that.

Chārudatta. [Aside to *Maitreya*.] Alas,

When in this world a man has lost his all,
Why should he set his heart on longer life?
His angers and his favors fruitless fall,
His purposes and powers are all at strife.

40

Like wingless birds, dry pools, or withered trees,
Like fangless snakes—the poor are like to these.

41

Like man-deserted houses, blasted trees,
Like empty wells—the poor are like to these.
For them no pleasant hours serve happy ends;
They are forgotten of their sometime friends.

42

Maitreya. But you must not grieve thus beyond reason. [*He bursts out laughing. Aloud.*] Madam, please give me back my bath-clout.

Vasantasenā. *Chārudatta*, it was not right that you should show your distrust of me by sending me this pearl necklace.

Chārudatta. [With an embarrassed smile.] But remember, *Vasantasenā*,

Who will believe the truth?
Suspicion now is sure.
This world will show no ruth
To the inglorious poor.

43

Chārudatta. Do not rebuke the storm, my friend.

Let ceaseless rain a hundred years endure,

The lightning quiver, and the thunder peal;
For what I deemed impossible is sure:

Her dear-loved arms about my neck I feel.

48

And oh, my friend,

He only knows what riches are,

Whose love comes to him from afar,

Whose arms that dearest form enfold,

While yet with rain 't is wet and cold.

49

Vasantasenā, my belovèd,

The masonry is shaken; and so old

The awning, that 't will not much longer hold.

Heavy with water is the painted wall,

From which dissolving bits of mortar fall.

50

[*He looks up.*] The rainbow! See, my belovèd, see!

See how they yawn, the cloudy jaws of heaven,

As by a tongue, by forkèd lightning riven;

And to the sky great Indra's fiery bow

In lieu of high-uplifted arms is given.

51

Come, let us seek a shelter. [*He rises and walks about.*]

On palm-trees shrill,

On thickets still,

On boulders dashing,

On waters splashing,

Like a lute that, smitten, sings,

The rainy music rings.

52

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

ACT THE SIXTH
THE SWAPPING OF THE BULLOCK-CARTS

Maid.

[Enter a maid.]

IS N'T my mistress awake yet? Well, I must go in and wake her. [She walks about. *Vasantasenā* appears, dressed, but still asleep. The maid discovers her.] It is time to get up, mistress. The morning is here.

Vasantasenā. [Awakening.] What! is the night over? is it morning?

Maid. For us it is morning. But for my mistress it appears to be night still.

Vasantasenā. But girl, where is your gambler?

Maid. Mistress, after giving Vardhamānaka his orders, Chārudatta went to the old garden Pushpakaranda.

Vasantasenā. What orders?

Maid. To have the bullock-cart ready before daylight; for, he said, *Vasantasenā* was to come

Vasantasenā. Where, girl?

Maid. Where Chārudatta is.

Vasantasenā. [Embraces the maid.] I did not have a good look at him in the evening. But to-day I shall see him face to face. Tell me, girl. Have I found my way into the inner court?

Maid. You have found your way not only into the inner court, but into the heart of every one who lives here.

Vasantasenā. Tell me, are Chārudatta's servants vexed?

Maid. They will be.

Vasantasenā. When?

Maid. When my mistress goes away.

Vasantasenā. But not so much as I shall be. [Persuasively.] Here,

girl, take this pearl necklace. You must go and give it to my lady sister, his good wife. And give her this message: "Worthy Chārudatta's virtues have won me, made me his slave, and therefore your slave also. And so I hope that these pearls may adorn your neck."

Maid. But mistress, Chārudatta will be angry with you.

Vasantasenā. Go. He will not be angry.

Maid. [Takes the necklace.] Yes, mistress. [She goes out, then returns.] Mistress, his lady wife says that her lord made you a present of it, and it would not be right for her to accept it. And further, that you are to know that her lord and husband is her most excellent adornment.

[Enter Radanikā, with Chārudatta's little son.]

Radanikā. Come, dear, let 's play with your little cart.

Rohasena. [Peevishly.] I don't like this little clay cart, Radanikā. Give me my gold cart.

Radanikā. [Sighing wearily.] How should we have anything to do with gold now, my child? When your papa is rich again, then you shall have a gold cart to play with. But I 'll amuse him by taking him to see *Vasantasenā*. [She approaches *Vasantasenā*.] Mistress, my service to you.

Vasantasenā. I am glad to see you, Radanikā. But whose little boy is this? He wears no ornaments, yet his dear little face makes my heart happy.

Radanikā. This is Chārudatta's son, Rohasena.

Vasantasenā. [Stretches out her arms.] Come, my boy, and put your little arms around me. [She takes him on her lap.] He looks just like his father.

Radanikā. More than looks like him, he *is* like him. At least I think so. His father is perfectly devoted to him.

Vasantasenā. But what is he crying about?

Radanikā. He used to play with a gold cart that belongs to the son of a neighbor. But that was taken away, and when he asked

Vasantasenā. Bring me my things, girl. I must make myself ready.
[She does so.]

[Enter, driving a bullock-cart, *Sthāvaraka*, servant to *Sansthānaka*.] *Sthāvaraka.* *Sansthānaka*, the king's brother-in-law, said to me "Take a bullock-cart, *Sthāvaraka*, and come as quick as you can to the old garden *Pushpakaranda*." Well, I'm on my way there. Get up, bullocks, get up! [He drives about and looks around.] Why, the road is blocked with villagers' carts. What am I to do now? [Haughtily.] Get out of my way, you! Get out of my way! [He listens.] What's that? you want to know whose cart this is? This cart belongs to *Sansthānaka*, the king's brother-in-law. So get out of my way—and this minute, too! [He looks about.] Why, here's a man going in the other direction as fast as he can. He is trying to hide like a runaway gambler, and he looks at me as if I were the gambling-master. I wonder who he is. But then, what business is it of mine? I must get there as soon as I can. Get out of my way, you villagers, get out of my way! What's that? you want me to wait a minute and put a shoulder to your wheel? Confound you! A brave man like me, that serves *Sansthānaka*, the king's brother-in-law, put a shoulder to your wheel? After all, the poor fellow is quite alone. I'll do it. I'll stop my cart at the side-door to *Chārudatta*'s orchard. [He does so.] I'm coming! [Exit.] *Maid.* Mistress, I think I hear the sound of wheels. The cart must be here.

Vasantasenā. Come, girl. My heart grows impatient. Go with me to the side-door.

Maid. Follow me, mistress.

Vasantasenā. [Walks about.] You have earned a rest, girl.

Maid. Thank you, mistress.

[Exit.]

Vasantasenā. [Feels her right eye twitch¹ as she enters the cart.]

¹ A bad omen, in the case of a woman.

Why should my right eye twitch now? But the sight of Chāru-datta will smooth away the bad omen. [Enter *Sthāvaraka*.]

Sthāvaraka. I've cleared the carts out of the way, and now I'll go ahead. [*He mounts and drives away. To himself.*] The cart has grown heavy. But I suppose it only seems so, because I got tired helping them with that wheel. Well, I'll go along. Get up, bullocks, get up!

A voice behind the scenes. Police! Police! Every man at his post! The young herdsman has just broken jail, killed the jailer, broken his fetters, escaped, and run away. Catch him! Catch him!

[Enter, in excited haste, *Aryaka*, an iron chain on one foot. Covering his face, he walks about.]

Sthāvaraka. [To himself.] There is great excitement in the city. I must get out of the way as fast as I possibly can. [Exit.]

Aryaka. I leave behind me that accursèd sea

Of human woe and human misery,
The prison of the king.

Like elephants that break their chains and flee,

I drag a fettered foot most painfully

In flight and wandering.

1

King Pālaka was frightened by a prophecy, took me from the hamlet where I lived, fettered me, and thrust me into a solitary cell, there to await my death. But with the help of my good friend Sharvilaka I escaped. [*He sheds tears.*]

If such my fate, no sin is mine at least,

That he should cage me like a savage beast.

A man may fight with kings, though not with fate—

And yet, can helpless men contend with great?

2

Whither shall I go with my wretchedness? [*He looks about.*] Here is the house of some good man who has n't locked the side-door.

The house is old, the door without a lock,

The hinges all awry.

Some man, no doubt, who feels misfortune's shock
As cruelly as I.

3

I will enter here and wait.

A voice behind the scenes. Get up, bullocks, get up!

Aryaka. [Listening.] Ah, a bullock-cart is coming this way.

If this should prove to be a picnic rig,
Its occupants not peevishly inclined;
Some noble lady's waiting carriage trig;
Or rich man's coach, that leaves the town behind—
And if it empty be, fate proving kind,
'T would seem a godsend to my anxious mind.

4

[Enter *Vardhamānaka* with the bullock-cart.]

Vardhamānaka. There, I've got the cushion. Radanikā, tell mistress Vasantasenā that the cart is ready and waiting for her to get in and drive to the old garden Pushpakaranda.

Aryaka. [Listening.] This is a courtezan's cart, going out of the city. Good, I'll climb in. [He approaches cautiously.]

Vardhamānaka. [Hears him coming.] Ah, the tinkling of ankle-rings! The lady is here. Mistress, the nose-rope makes the bullocks skittish. You had better climb in behind. [*Aryaka* does so.] The ankle-rings tinkle only when the feet are moving, and the sound has ceased. Besides, the cart has grown heavy. I am sure the lady must have climbed in by this time. I'll go ahead. Get up, bullocks, get up! [He drives about. Enter *Vīraka*.]

Vīraka. Come, come! Jaya, Jayamāna, Chandanaka, Mangala, Phullabhadra, and the rest of you!

So calm, when the herdsman, slipping his tether,
Breaks jail and the heart of the king together?

5

Here! You stand at the east gate of the main street, you at the west, you at the south, you at the north. I'll climb up the broken wall here with Chandanaka and take a look. Come on, Chandanaka, come on! This way! [Enter *Chandanaka*, in excitement.]

Chandanaka. Certainly.

Vīraka. On whose authority?

Chandanaka. On Chārudatta's.

Vīraka. Who is Chārudatta, or who is Vasantasenā, that the cart should pass without inspection?

Chandanaka. Don't you know Chārudatta, man? nor Vasantasenā? If you don't know Chārudatta, nor Vasantasenā, then you don't know the moon in heaven, nor the moonlight.

Who does n't know this moon of goodness, virtue's lotus-flower,

This gem of four broad seas, this savior in man's luckless hour?

13

These two are wholly worshipful, our city's ornaments,
Vasantasenā, Chārudatta, sea of excellence.

14

Vīraka. Well, well, Chandanaka! Chārudatta? Vasantasenā?

I know them perfectly, as well as I know anything;

But I do not know my father when I 'm serving of my king. 15

Aryaka. [To himself.] In a former existence the one must have been my enemy, the other my kinsman. For see!

Their business is the same; their ways

Unlike, and their desire:

Like flames that gladden wedding days,

And flames upon the pyre.

16

Chandanaka. You are a most careful captain whom the king trusts. I am holding the bullocks. Make your inspection.

Vīraka. You too are a corporal whom the king trusts. Make the inspection yourself.

Chandanaka. If I make the inspection, that 's just the same as if you had made it?

Vīraka. If you make the inspection, that 's just the same as if King Pālaka had made it.

Chandanaka. Lift the pole, man! [*Vardhamānaka* does so.]

Aryaka. [To himself.] Are the policemen about to inspect me? And I have no sword, worse luck! But at least,

Bold Bhīma's spirit I will show;

My arm shall be my sword.

Better a warrior's death than woe

That cells and chains afford.

17

But the time to use force has not yet come. [*Chandanaka enters the cart and looks about.*] I seek your protection.

Chandanaka. [Speaking in Sanskrit.] He who seeks protection shall be safe.

Aryaka. Whene'er he fight, that man will suffer hurts,

Will be abandoned of his friends and kin,

Becomes a mock forever, who deserts

One seeking aid; 't is an unpardonable sin.

18

Chandanaka. What! the herdsman Aryaka? Like a bird that flees from a hawk, he has fallen into the hand of the fowler. [Reflecting.] He is no sinner, this man who seeks my protection and sits in Chārudatta's cart. Besides, he is the friend of good Sharvilaka, who saved my life. On the other hand, there are the king's orders. What is a man to do in a case like this? Well, what must be, must be. I promised him my protection just now.

He who gives aid to frightened men,

And joys his neighbor's ills to cure,

If he must die, he dies; but then,

His reputation is secure.

19

[*He gets down uneasily.*] I saw the gentleman—[correcting himself] I mean, the lady Vasantasenā, and she says "Is it proper, is it gentlemanly, when I am going to visit Chārudatta, to insult me on the highway?"

Viraka. Chandanaka, I have my suspicions.

Chandanaka. Suspicions? How so?

Vār. You gurgled in your craven throat; it seems a trifle shady.
 You said "I saw the gentleman," and then "I saw the lady."
 That's why I'm not satisfied.

Chandanaka. What's the matter with you, man? We southerners don't speak plain. We know a thousand dialects of the barbarians—the Khashas, the Khattis, the Kadas, the Kadatthobilas, the Karnātas, the Karnas, the Prāvaranas, the Drāvidas, the Cholas, the Chīnas, the Barbaras, the Kheras, the Khānas, the Mukhas, the Madhughātas, and all the rest of 'em, and it all depends on the way we feel whether we say "he" or "she," "gentleman" or "lady."

Vīraka. Can't I have a look, too? It's the king's orders. And the king trusts me.

Chandanaka. I suppose the king does n't trust *me*!

Vīraka. Is n't it His Majesty's command?

Chandanaka. [Aside.] If people knew that the good herdsman escaped in Chārudatta's cart, then the king would make Chārudatta suffer for it. What's to be done? [Reflecting.] I'll stir up a quarrel the way they do down in the Carnatic. [Aloud.] Well, Vīraka, I made one inspection myself—my name is Chandanaka—and you want to do it over again. Who are you?

Vīraka. Confound it! Who are you, anyway?

Chandanaka. An honorable and highly respectable person, and you don't remember your own family.

Vīraka. [Angrily.] Confound you! What is my family?

Chandanaka. Who speaks of such things?

Vīraka. Speak!

Chandanaka. I think I'd better not.

I know your family, but I won't say;
 'T would not be modest, such things to betray;
 What good's a rotten apple anyway? 21

Vīraka. Speak, speak! [*Chandanaka makes a significant gesture.*] Confound you! What does that mean?

Aryaka. [Takes it. Joyfully to himself.]

A sword, a sword! My right eye twitches fast.¹
Now all is well, and I am safe at last. 24

Chandanaka. Madam,

As I have given you a passage free,
So may I live within your memory.
To utter this, no selfish thoughts could move;
Ah no, I speak in plenitude of love. 25

Aryaka. Chandanaka is rich in virtues pure;
My friend is he—Fate willed it—true and tried.
I'll not forget Chandanaka, be sure,
What time the oracle is justified. 26

Chand. May Shiva, Vishnu, Brahma, Three in One,
Protect thee, and the Moon, and blessec Sun;
Slay all thy foes, as mighty Pārvatī
Slew Shumbha and Nishumbha—fearfully. 27

[Exit *Vardhamānaka*, with the bullock-cart. *Chandanaka* looks toward the back of the stage.] Aha! As he goes away, my good friend Sharvilaka is following him. Well, I've made an enemy of Vīraka, the chief constable and the king's favorite; so I think I too had better be following him, with all my sons and brothers.

[Exit.]

¹ A good omen, in the case of a man.

ACT THE SEVENTH

ARYAKA'S ESCAPE

Maitreya. [Enter Chārudatta and Maitreya]

HOW beautiful the old garden Pushpakaranda is.

Chārudatta. You are quite right, my friend. For see!

The trees, like merchants, show their wares;
Each several tree his blossoms bears,
While bees, like officers, are flitting,
To take from each what toll is fitting.

1

Maitreya. This simple stone is very attractive. Pray be seated.

Chārudatta. [Seats himself.] How Vardhamānaka lingers, my friend!

Maitreya. I told Vardhamānaka to bring Vasantasenā and come as quickly as he could.

Chārudatta. Why then does he linger?

Is he delayed by some slow-moving load?
Has he returned with broken wheel or traces?
Obstructions bid him seek another road?
His bullocks, or himself, choose these slow paces?

2

[Enter Vardhamānaka with the bullock-cart, in which Aryaka lies hidden.]

Vardhamānaka. Get up, bullocks, get up!

Aryaka. [Aside.]

And still I fear the spies that serve the king;
Escape is even yet a doubtful thing,
While to my foot these cursèd fetters cling.
Some good man 't is, within whose cart I lie,
Like cuckoo chicks, whose heartless mothers fly,
And crows must rear the fledglings, or they die.

3

I have come a long distance from the city. Shall I get out of the

cart and seek a hiding-place in the grove? or shall I wait to see the owner of the cart? On second thoughts, I will not hide myself in the grove; for men say that the noble Chārudatta is ever helpful to them that seek his protection. I will not go until I have seen him face to face.

'T will bring contentment to that good man's heart
To see me rescued from misfortune's sea.
This body, in its suffering, pain, and smart,
Is saved through his sweet magnanimity. 4

Vardhamānaka. Here is the garden. I 'll drive in. [*He does so.*] Maitreya!

Maitreya. Good news, my friend. It is Vardhamānaka's voice. Vasantasenā must have come.

Chārudatta. Good news, indeed.

Maitreya. You son of a slave, what makes you so late?

Vardhamānaka. Don't get angry, good Maitreya. I remembered that I had forgotten the cushion, and I had to go back for it, and that is why I am late.

Chārudatta. Turn the cart around, Vardhamānaka. Maitreya, my friend, help Vasantasenā to get out.

Maitreya. Has she got fetters on her feet, so that she can't get out by herself? [*He rises and lifts the curtain of the cart.*] Why, this is n't mistress Vasantasenā—this is Mister Vasantaseṇa.

Chārudatta. A truce to your jests, my friend. Love cannot wait. I will help her to get out myself. [*He rises.*]

Aryaka. [*Discovers him.*] Ah, the owner of the bullock-cart! He is attractive not only to the ears of men, but also to their eyes. Thank heaven! I am safe.

Chārudatta. [*Enters the bullock-cart and discovers Aryaka.*] Who then is this?

As trunk of elephant his arms are long,
His chest is full, his shoulders broad and strong,

where men seek pleasure, a bullock-cart will excite no suspicion.
Continue your journey then in the cart.

Aryaka. I thank you, sir.

Chārud. Seek now thy kinsmen. Happiness be thine!

Aryaka. Ah, I have found thee, blessed kinsman mine!

Chārud. Remember me, when thou hast cause to speak.

Aryaka. Thy name, and not mine own, my words shall seek.

Chārud. May the immortal gods protect thy ways!

Aryaka. Thou didst protect me, in most perilous days.

Chārud. Nay, it was fate that sweet protection lent.

Aryaka. But thou wast chosen as fate's instrument. 7

Chārudatta. King Pālaka is aroused, and protection will prove difficult. You must depart at once.

Aryaka. Until we meet again, farewell. [Exit.]

Chārud. From royal wrath I now have much to fear;

It were unwise for me to linger here.

Then throw the fetters in the well; for spies

Serve to their king as keen, far-seeing eyes. 8

[*His left eye twitches.*] Maitreya, my friend, I long to see Vasanta-senā. For now, because

I have not seen whom I love best,

My left eye twitches; and my breast

Is causeless-anxious and distressed. 9

Come, let us go. [*He walks about.*] See! a Buddhist monk approaches, and the sight bodes ill. [*Reflecting.*] Let him enter by that path, while we depart by this. [Exit.]

ACT THE EIGHTH

THE STRANGLING OF VASANTASENA

[Enter a monk, with a wet garment in his hand.]

Monk.

YE ignorant, lay by a store of virtue!
 Restrain the belly; watch eternally,
 Heeding the beat of contemplation's¹ drum.
For else the senses—fearful thieves they be—
 Will steal away all virtue's hoarded sum. 1

And further: I have seen that all things are transitory, so that now
I am become the abode of virtues alone.

Who slays the Five Men,² and the Female Bane,³
 By whom protection to the Town⁴ is given,
By whom the Outcaste⁵ impotent is slain,
 He cannot fail to enter into heaven. 2

Though head be shorn and face be shorn,
 The heart unshorn, why should man shave him?
But he whose inmost heart is shorn
 Needs not the shaven head to save him. 3

I have dyed this robe of mine yellow. And now I will go into the
garden of the king's brother-in-law, wash it in the pond, and go
away as soon as I can. [He walks about and washes the robe.]

A voice behind the scenes. Shtop, you confounded monk, shtop!

Monk. [Discovers the speaker. Fearfully.] Heaven help me! Here
is the king's brother-in-law, Sansthānaka. Just because one monk
committed an offense, now, wherever he sees a monk, whether it
is the same one or not, he bores a hole in his nose and drives him
around like a bullock. Where shall a defenseless man find a de-
fender? But after all, the blessed Lord Buddha is my defender.

¹ An allusion to the practice by which the Buddhists induced a state of religious ecstasy.

² The five senses. ³ Ignorance. ⁴ The body. ⁵ The conceit of individuality.

[Enter the courtier, carrying a sword, and *Sansthānaka*.]

Sansthānaka. Shtop, you confounded monk, shtop! I 'll pound your head like a red radish¹ at a drinking party. [He strikes him.] *Courtier*. You jackass, you should not strike a monk who wears the yellow robes of renunciation. Why heed him? Look rather upon this garden, which offers itself to pleasure.

To creatures else forlorn, the forest trees
 Do works of mercy, granting joy and ease;
 Like a sinner's heart, the park unguarded lies,
 Like some new-founded realm, an easy prize. 4

Monk. Heaven bless you! Be merciful, servant of the Blessèd One!

Sansthānaka. Did you hear that, shir? He 's inshulting me.

Courtier. What does he say?

Sansthānaka. Shays I 'm a shervant. What do you take me for? a barber?

Courtier. A servant of the Blessèd One he calls you, and this is praise.

Sansthānaka. Praise me shome more, monk!

Monk. You are virtuous! You are a brick!

Sansthānaka. Shee? He shays I 'm virtuous. He shays I 'm a brick. What do you think I am? a materialistic philosopher? or a water-ing-trough? or a pot-maker?²

Courtier. You jackass, he praises you when he says that you are virtuous, that you are a brick.

Sansthānaka. Well, shir, what did he come here for?

Monk. To wash this robe.

Sansthānaka. Confound the monk! My shishter's husband gave me the finesht garden there is, the garden Pushpakaranda. Dogs and jackals drink the water in thish pond. Now I 'm an arishtocrat, I 'm

¹ Used as an appetizer.

² The elaborate puns of this passage can hardly be reproduced in a translation.

Sansthānaka. Well, on one condition.

Courtier. And what is that?

Sansthānaka. He musht shling mud in, without making the water dirty. Or better yet, he musht make the water into a ball, and shling it into the mud.

Courtier. What incredible folly!

The patient earth is burdened by
So many a fool, so many a drone,
Whose thoughts and deeds are all awry
These trees of flesh, these forms of stone.

6

[*The monk makes faces at Sansthānaka.*]

Sansthānaka. What does he mean?

Courtier. He praises you.

Sansthānaka. Praise me shome more! Praise me again! [*The monk does so, then exit.*]

Courtier. See how beautiful the garden is, you jackass.

See yonder trees, adorned with fruit and flowers,
O'er which the clinging creepers interlace;
The watchmen guard them with the royal powers;
They seem like men whom loving wives embrace.

7

Sansthānaka. A good deshcription, shir.

The ground is mottled with a lot of flowers;
The blosshom freight bends down the lofty trees;
And, hanging from the leafy tree-top bowers,
The monkeys bob, like breadfruit in the breeze.

8

Courtier. Will you be seated on this stone bench, you jackass?

Sansthānaka. I am sheated. [*They seat themselves.*] Do you know, shir, I remember that Vasantasenā even yet. She is like an inshult. I can't get her out of my mind.

Courtier. [*Aside.*] He remembers her even after such a repulse. For indeed,

The mean man, whom a woman spurns,
 But loves the more;
 The wise man's passion gentler burns,
 Or passes o'er.

9

Sansthānaka. Shome time has passhed, shir, shince I told my shervant Sthāvaraka to take the bullock-cart and come as quick as he could. And even yet he is not here. I 've been hungry a long time, and at noon a man can't go a-foot. For shee!

The shun is in the middle of the shky,
 And hard to look at as an angry ape;
 Like Gāndhārī, whose hundred shons did die,
 The earth is hard dishtressedh and can't eshcape.

10

Courtier. True.

The cattle all—their cuds let fall
 Lie drowsing in the shade;
 In heated pool their lips to cool,
 Deer throng the woodland glade;
 A prey to heat, the city street
 Makes wanderers afraid;
 The cart must shun the midday sun,
 And thus has been delayed.

11

Sansthānaka. Yesshir,

Fasht to my head the heated shun-beam clings;
 Birds, flying creatures, alsho wingèd things
 Resht in the branches of the trees, while men,
 People, and pershons shigh and shigh again;
 At home they tarry, in their houses shtay,
 To bear the heat and burden of the day.

12

Well, shir, that shervant is n't here yet. I 'm going to shing shome-thing to passh the time. [*He sings.*] There, shir, did you hear what I shang?

Courtier. What shall I say? Ah, how melodious!

Sansthānaka. Why should n't it be malodorous?

Of nut-grass and cumin I make up a pickle,
Of devil's-dung, ginger, and orris, and treacle;
That's the mixture of perfumes I eagerly eat:
Why should n't my voice be remarkably shweet? 13

Well, shir, I'm jusht going to shing again. [He does so.] There, shir, did you hear what I shang?

Courtier. What shall I say? Ah, how melodious!

Sansthānaka. Why should n't it be malodorous?

Of the flesh of the cuckoo I make up a chowder,
With devil's-dung added, and black pepper powder;
With oil and with butter I shprinkle the meat:
Why should n't my voice be remarkably shweet? 14

But shir, the shervant is n't here yet.

Courtier. Be easy in your mind. He will be here presently.

[Enter *Vasantasenā* in the bullock-cart, and *Sthāvaraka*.]

Sthāvaraka. I'm frightened. It is already noon. I hope Sansthānaka, the king's brother-in-law, will not be angry. I must drive faster. Get up, bullocks, get up!

Vasantasenā. Alas! That is not Vardhamānaka's voice. What does it mean? I wonder if Chārudatta was afraid that the bullocks might become weary, and so sent another man with another cart. My right eye twitches. My heart is all a-tremble. There is no one in sight. Everything seems to dance before my eyes.

Sansthānaka. [Hearing the sound of wheels.] The cart is here, shir.

Courtier. How do you know?

Sansthānaka. Can't you shee? It shqueaks like an old hog.

Courtier. [Perceives the cart.] Quite true. It is here.

Sansthānaka. Sthāvaraka, my little shon, my shlave, are you here?

Sthāvaraka. Yes, sir.

Sansthānaka. Is the cart here?

Sansthānaka. Even if I do shay sho, you ought to be polite enough to shay "After you, mashter."

Courtier. After you, then.

Sansthānaka. Now I'll enter. Sthāvaraka, my little shon, my shlave, turn the cart around.

Sthāvaraka. [Does so.] Enter, master.

Sansthānaka. [Enters and looks about, then hastily gets out in terror, and falls on the courtier's neck.] Oh, oh, oh! You're a dead man! There's a witch, or a thief, that's sitting and living in my bullock-cart. If it's a witch, we'll both be robbed. If it's a thief, we'll both be eaten alive.

Courtier. Don't be frightened. How could a witch travel in a bullock-cart? I hope that the heat of the midday sun has not blinded you, so that you became the victim of an hallucination when you saw the shadow of Sthāvaraka with the smock on it.

Sansthānaka. Sthāvaraka, my little shon, my shlave, are you alive?

Sthāvaraka. Yes, sir.

Sansthānaka. But shir, there's a woman sitting and living in the bullock-cart. Look and shee!

Courtier. A woman?

Then let us bow our heads at once and go,
Like steers whose eyes the falling raindrops daze;
In public spots my dignity I show;
On high-born dames I hesitate to gaze.

15

Vasantasenā. [In amazement. Aside.] Oh, oh! It is that thorn in my eye, the king's brother-in-law. Alas! the danger is great. Poor woman! My coming hither proves as fruitless as the sowing of a handful of seeds on salty soil. What shall I do now?

Sansthānaka. Thish old shervant is afraid and he won't look into the cart. Will you look into the cart, shir?

Courtier. I see no harm in that. Yes, I will do it.

Sansthānaka. Are those things jackals that I see flying into the air, and are those things crows that walk on all fours? While the witch is chewing him with her eyes, and looking at him with her teeth, I'll make my escape.

Courtier. [Perceives *Vasantasenā*. Sadly to himself.] Is it possible? The gazelle follows the tiger. Alas!

16

Her mate is lovely as the autumn moon,
Who waits for her upon the sandy dune;
And yet the swan will leave him? and will go
To dance attendance on a common crow?

[*Aside to Vasantasenā*.] Ah, *Vasantasenā*! This is neither right, nor worthy of you.

Your pride rejected him before,
Yet now for gold, and for your mother's will

Vasantasenā. No! [*She shakes her head*.]

Courtier.

17

Your nature knows your pride no more;
You honor him, a common woman still.

Did I not tell¹ you to "serve the man you love, and him you hate"?

Vasantasenā. I made a mistake in the cart, and thus I came hither. I throw myself upon your protection.

Courtier. Do not fear. Come, I must deceive him. [*He returns to Sansthānaka*.] Jackass, there is indeed a witch who makes her home in the cart.

Sansthānaka. But shir, if a witch is living there, why are n't you robbed? And if it's a thief, why are n't you eaten alive?

Courtier. Why try to determine that? But if we should go back on foot through the gardens until we came to the city, to Ujjayinī, what harm would that do?

Sansthānaka. And if we did, what then?

¹ See page 13.

Courtier. Then we should have some exercise, and should avoid tiring the bullocks.

Sansthānaka. All right. Sthāvaraka, my shslave, drive on. But no! Shtop, shtop! I go on foot before gods and Brahmans? Not much! I 'll go in my cart, sho that people shall shee me a long way off, and shay "There he goes, our mashter, the king's brother-in-law."

Courtier. [Aside.] It is hard to convert poison into medicine. So be it, then. [Aloud.] Jackass, this is Vasantasenā, come to visit you.

Vasantasenā. Heaven forbid!

Sansthānaka. [Gleefully.] Oh, oh! To visit me, an arishtocrat, a man, a regular Vāsudeva?

Courtier. Yes.

Sansthānaka. This is an unheard-of piece of luck. That other time I made her angry, sho now I 'll fall at her feet and beg her pardon.

Courtier. Capital!

Sansthānaka. I 'll fall at her feet myshelf. [He approaches *Vasantasenā*.] Little mother, mamma dear, lishten to my prayer.

I fold my hands and fall before thy feet—

Thine eyes are large, thy teeth are clean and neat,

Thy finger-nails are ten—forgive thy shslave

What, love-tormented, he offended, shweet.

18

Vasantasenā. [Angrily.] Leave me! Your words are an insult! [She spurns him with her foot.]

Sansthānaka. [Wrathfully.]

Thish head that mother and that mamma kissed,

That never bent to worship god, I wist,

Upon thish head she dared to plant her feet,

Like jackals on the carrion they meet.

19

Sthāvaraka, you shslave, where did you pick her up?

Sthāvaraka. Master, the highway was blocked by villagers' wagons. So I stopped my cart near Chārudatta's orchard, and got out. And

Courtier. Certainly. Anything, unless it be a sin.

Sansthānaka. There's not a shnell of a shin in it, shir. Not a perfume!

Courtier. Speak, then.

Sansthānaka. Murder Vasantasenā.

Courtier. [Stopping his ears.]

A tender lady, gem of this our city,
A courtezan whose love was stainless ever—
If I should kill her, sinless, without pity,
What boat would bear me on the gloomy river? 23

Sansthānaka. I'll give you a boat. And beshides, in this deserted garden, who'll shee you murdering her?

Courtier. The regions ten,¹ the forest gods, the sky,
The wind, the moon, the sun whose rays are light,
Virtue, my conscience—these I cannot fly,
Nor earth, that witnesses to wrong and right. 24

Sansthānaka. Well then, put your cloak over her and murder her.

Courtier. You fool! You scoundrel!

Sansthānaka. The old hog is afraid of a shin. Never mind. I'll per-shuade Sthāvaraka, my shlave. Sthāvaraka, my little shon, my shlave, I'll give you golden bracelets.

Sthāvaraka. And I'll wear them.

Sansthānaka. I'll have a golden sheat made for you.

Sthāvaraka. And I'll sit on it.

Sansthānaka. I'll give you all my leavings.

Sthāvaraka. And I'll eat them.

Sansthānaka. I'll make you the chief of all my shervants.

Sthāvaraka. Master, I'll be the chief.

Sansthānaka. You only have to attend to what I shay.

Sthāvaraka. Master, I will do anything, unless it be a sin.

¹ The four cardinal points, the four intermediate points, the zenith, and the nadir.

Sansthānaka. There's not a smell of a shin in it.

Sthāvaraka. Then speak, master.

Sansthānaka. Murder Vasantasenā.

Sthāvaraka. Oh, master, be merciful! Unworthy as I am, I brought this worthy lady hither, because she mistook this bullock-cart for another.

Sansthānaka. You shlave, ain't I your mashter?

Sthāvaraka. Master of my body, not of my character. Be merciful, master, be merciful! I am afraid.

Sansthānaka. You're my shlave. Who are you afraid of?

Sthāvaraka. Of the other world, master.

Sansthānaka. Who is thish "other world"?

Sthāvaraka. Master, it is a rewarder of righteousness and sin.

Sansthānaka. What is the reward of righteousness?

Sthāvaraka. To be like my master, with plenty of golden ornaments.

Sansthānaka. What is the reward of shin?

Sthāvaraka. To be like me, eating another man's bread. That is why I will do no sin.

Sansthānaka. Sho you won't murder her? [*He beats him with all his might.*]

Sthāvaraka. You may beat me, master. You may kill me, master. I will do no sin.

A luckless, lifelong slave am I,
A slave I live, a slave I die;
But further woe I will not buy,
I will not, will not sin.

25

Vasantasenā. Sir, I throw myself upon your protection.

Courtier. Pardon him, jackass! Well done, Sthāvaraka!

Does this poor, miserable slave
Seek virtue's meed beyond the grave?

And is his lord indifferent?
 Then why are not such creatures sent
 To instant hell, whose sinful store
 Grows great, who know not virtue more? 26

And again:

Ah, cruel, cruel is our fate,
 And enters through the straitest gate;
 Since he is slave, and you are lord,
 Since he does not enjoy your hoard,
 Since you do not obey his word. 27

Sansthānaka. [Aside.] The old jackal is afraid of a shin, and the “lifelong shslave” is afraid of the other world. Who am I afraid of, I, the king’s brother-in-law, an arishtocrat, a man? [Aloud.] Well, shervant, you “lifelong shslave,” you can go. Go to your room and resht and keep out of my way.

Sthāvaraka. Yes, master. [To *Vasantasenā*.] Madam, I have no further power. [Exit.]

Sansthānaka. [Girds up his loins.] Wait a minute, *Vasantasenā*, wait a minute. I want to murder you.

Courtier. You will kill her before my eyes? [He seizes him by the throat.]

Sansthānaka. [Falls to the ground.] Shir, you’re murdering your mashter. [He loses consciousness, but recovers.]

I always fed him fat with meat,
 And gave him butter too, to eat;
 Now for the friend in need I search;
 Why does he leave me in the lurch? 28

[After reflection.] Good! I have an idea. The old jackal gave her a hint by shaking his head at her. Sho I’ll shend him away, and then I’ll murder *Vasantasenā*. That’s the idea. [Aloud.] Shir, I was born in a noble family as great as a wine-glass. How could I do that shin I shpoke about? I jusht shaid it to make her love me.

Sansthānaka. I 'll give you gold, I 'll call you shweet;
 My turbanned head adores your feet.
 Why not love me, my clean-toothed girl?
 Why worship such a pauper churl? 31

Vasantasenā. How can you ask? [She bows her head and recites the following verses.]

O base and vile! O wretch! What more?
 Why tempt me now with gold and power?
 The honey-loving bees adore
 The pure and stainless lotus flower. 32

Though poverty may strike a good man low,
 Peculiar honor waits upon his woe;
 And 't is the glory of a courtezan
 To set her love upon an honest man. 33

And I, who have loved the mango-tree, I cannot cling to the locust-tree.

Sansthānaka. Wench, you make that poor little Chārudatta into a mango-tree, and me you call a locusht-tree, not even an acacia! That's the way you abuse me, and even yet you remember Chārudatta.

Vasantasenā. Why should I not remember him who dwells in my heart?

Sansthānaka. Thish very minute I 'm going to shtrangle "him who dwells in your heart," and you too. Shtand shtill, you poor-merchant-man's lover!

Vasantasenā. Oh speak, oh speak again these words that do me honor!

Sansthānaka. Jusht let poor Chārudatta—the shon of a shlave—reshcne you now!

Vasantasenā. He would rescue me, if he saw me.

Sansthānaka. Is he the king of gods? the royal ape?
 Shon of a nymph? or wears a demon's shape?

The kingly deity of wind and rain?
 The offspring of the Pāndu-princes' bane?
 A prophet? or a vulture known afar?
 A shtatesman? or a beetle? or a shtar?

34

But even if he was, he could n't reshcue you.

As Sītā in the Bhārata
 Was killed by good old Chānakya,
 Sho I intend to throttle thee,
 As did Jatāyu Draupadī.

35

[*He raises his arm to strike her.*]

Vasantasenā. Mother! where are you? Oh, Chārudatta! my heart's longing is unfulfilled, and now I die! I will scream for help. No! It would bring shame on *Vasantasenā*, should she scream for help. Heaven bless Chārudatta!

Sansthānaka. Does the wench shpeak that rashcal's name even yet? [*He seizes her by the throat.*] Remember him, wench, remember him!

Vasantasenā. Heaven bless Chārudatta!

Sansthānaka. Die, wench! [*He strangles her.* *Vasantasenā* loses consciousness, and falls motionless.]

Sansthānaka. [*Gleefully.*]

Thish bashketful of shin, thish wench,
 Thish foul abode of impudence—
 She came to love, she shtayed to blench,
 For Death's embrace took every sense.
 But why boasht I of valorous arms and shtout?
 She shimpily died because her breath gave out.
 Like Sītā in the Bhārata, she lies.
 Ah, mother mine! how prettily she dies.

36

She would not love me, though I loved the wench;
 I shaw the empty garden, set the shnare,

And frightened her, and made the poor girl blench.

My brother! Oh, my father! This is where
You missed the shight of heroism shtout;
Your brother and your shon here blossomed out
Into a man; like Mother Draupadī,
You were not there, my bravery to shee.

37

Good! The old jackal will be here in a minute. I 'll shtep ashide and wait. [He does so.] [Enter the courtier, with Sthāvaraka.]

Courtier. I have persuaded the servant Sthāvaraka to come back, and now I will look for the jackass. [He walks about and looks around him.] But see! A tree has fallen by the roadside, and killed a woman in its fall. O cruel! How couldst thou do this deed of shame? And when I see that a woman was slain by thy fatal fall, I too am felled to the earth. Truly, my heart's fear for Vasanta-senā was an evil omen. Oh, heaven grant that all may yet be well! [He approaches Sansthānaka.] Jackass, I have persuaded your servant Sthāvaraka to return.

Sansthānaka. How do you do, shir? Sthāvaraka, my little shon, my shlave, how do you do?

Sthāvaraka. Well, thank you.

Courtier. Give me my pledge.

Sansthānaka. What pledge?

Courtier. Vasantasenā.

Sansthānaka. She 's gone.

Courtier. Where?

Sansthānaka. Right after you.

Courtier. [Doubtfully.] No, she did not go in that direction.

Sansthānaka. In what direction did you go?

Courtier. Toward the east.

Sansthānaka. Well, she went shouth.¹

Courtier. So did I.

¹ The region of Yama, god of death.

Courtier. You are an accursèd scoundrel!

Sansth. I'll give you countless wealth, a piece of gold,
A copper, and a cap, to have and hold.
And sho the fame of thish great deed shall be
A common property, and shan't touch me. 40

Courtier. A curse upon you! Yours, and yours only, be the deed.

Sthāvaraka. Heaven avert the omen! [*Sansthānaka bursts out laughing.*]

Courtier. Be enmity between us! Cease your mirth!
Damned be a friendship that so shames my worth!
Never may I set eyes on one so low!
I fling you off, an unstrung, broken bow. 41

Sansthānaka. Don't be angry. Come, let's go and play in the pond.

Courtier. Unstained my life, and yet it seems to me
Your friendship stains, and mocks my sinlessness.
You woman-murderer! How could I be
A friend to one whom women ever see
With eyes half-closed in apprehension's stress? 42

[*Mournfully.*] *Vasantasenā,*
When thou, sweet maid, art born again,
Be not a courtezan reborn,
But in a house which sinless men,
And virtuous, and good, adorn. 43

Sansthānaka. Firsht you murder *Vasantasenā* in my old garden Pushpakaranda, and now where will you run to? Come, defend yourshelf in court before my shishter's husband! [*He holds him back.*]

Courtier. Enough, you accursèd scoundrel! [*He draws his sword.*]

Sansthānaka. [*Recoiling in terror.*] Shcared, are you? Go along, then.

Courtier. [*Aside.*] It would be folly to remain here. Well, I will go and join myself to Sharvilaka, Chandanaka, and the rest. [*Exit.*]

Sansthānaka. Go to hell. Well, my little shon Sthāvaraka, what kind of a thing is thish that I 've done?

Sthāvaraka. Master, you have committed a terrible crime.

Sansthānaka. Shlave! What do you mean by talking about a crime? Well, I 'll do it thish way. [*He takes various ornaments from his person.*] Take these gems. I give 'em to you. Whenever I want to wear them, I 'll take them back again, but the resht of the time they are yours.

Sthāvaraka. They should be worn only by my master. What have I to do with such things?

Sansthānaka. Go along! Take these bullocks, and wait in the tower of my palace until I come.

Sthāvaraka. Yes, master.

[*Exit.*

Sansthānaka. The gentleman has made himshelf invisible. He wanted to save himshelf. And the shlave I 'll put in irons in the palace tower, and keep him there. And sho the shecret will be shafe. I 'll go along, but firsh I 'll take a look at her. Is she dead, or shall I murder her again? [*He looks at Vasantasenā.*] Dead as a door-nail! Good! I 'll cover her with thish cloak. No, it has my name on it. Shome honesht man might recognize it. Well, here are shome dry leaves that the wind has blown into a heap. I 'll cover her with them. [*He does so, then pauses to reflect.*] Good! I 'll do it thish way. I 'll go to court at once, and there I 'll lodge a complaint. I 'll shay that the merchant Chārudatta enticed Vasantasenā into my old garden Pushpakaranda, and killed her for her money.

Yesh, Chārudatta musht be shlaughtered now,
And I 'll invent the plan, forgetting pity;
The shacrificing of a sinless cow
Is cruel in the kindesht-hearted city.

44

Now I 'm ready to go. [*He starts to go away, but perceives something that frightens him.*] Goodnessh gracioush me! Wherever I go, thish damned monk comes with his yellow robes. I bored a hole

in his nose once and drove him around, and he hates me. Perhaps he 'll shee me, and will tell people that I murdered her. How shall I eshcape? [*He looks about.*] Aha! I 'll jump over the wall where it is half fallen down, and eshcape that way.

I run, I run, I go,
In heaven, on earth below,
In hell, and in Ceylon,
Hanūmat's peaks upon—
Like Indra's self, I go.

[*Exit.*] 45

[*Enter hurriedly the Buddhist monk, ex-shampooer.*]

Monk. I 've washed these rags of mine. Shall I let them dry on a branch? no, the monkeys would steal them. On the ground? the dust would make them dirty again. Well then, where shall I spread them out to dry? [*He looks about.*] Ah, here is a pile of dry leaves which the wind has blown into a heap. I 'll spread them out on that. [*He does so.*] Buddha be praised! [*He sits down.*] Now I will repeat a hymn of the faith.

Who slays the Five Men, and the Female Bane,
By whom protection to the Town is given,
By whom the Outcaste impotent is slain,
He cannot fail to enter into heaven. (2)

After all, what have I to do with heaven, before I have paid my debt to Vasantasenā, my sister in Buddha? She bought my freedom for ten gold-pieces from the gamblers, and since that day I regard myself as her property. [*He looks about.*] What was that? a sigh that arose from the leaves? It cannot be.

The heated breezes heat the leaves,
The wetted garment wets the leaves,
And so, I guess, the scattered leaves
Curl up like any other leaves.

46

[*Vasantasenā begins to recover consciousness, and stretches out her hand.*]

ACT THE NINTH

THE TRIAL

Beadle. [Enter a beadle.]

THE magistrates said to me “Come, beadle, go to the court-room, and make ready the seats.” So now I am on my way to set the court-room in order. [*He walks about and looks around him.*] Here is the court-room. I will enter. [*He enters, sweeps, and puts a seat in its place.*] There! I have tidied up the court-room and put the seats in readiness, and now I will go and tell the magistrates. [*He walks about and looks around him.*] But see! Here comes that arrant knave, the king’s brother-in-law. I will go away without attracting his attention. [*He stands apart. Enter Sansthānaka, in gorgeous raiment.*]

Sansth. I bathed where water runs and flows and purls;

I shat within a garden, park, and grove

With women, and with females, and with girls,

Whose lovely limbs with grace angelic move.

My hair is shometimes done up tight, you shee;

In locks, or curls, it hangs my forehead o’er;

Shometimes ’t is matted, shometimes hanging free;

And then again, I wear a pompadour.

I am a wonder, I ’m a wondrous thing,

And the husband of my shishter is the king.

2

And beshides, I ’ve found a big hole, like a worm that has crawled into the knot of a lotush-root, and is looking for a hole to creep out at. Now who was I going to accuse of thish wicked deed? [*He recalls something.*] Oh, yesh! I remember. I was going to accuse poor Chārudatta of thish wicked deed. Beshides, he ’s poor. They ’ll believe anything about him. Good! I ’ll go to the court-room and lodge a public complaint against Chārudatta, how he shtrangled

Vasantasenā and murdered her. Sho now I'm on my way to the court-room. [*He walks about and looks around him.*] Here is the court-room. I'll go in. [*He enters and looks about.*] Well, here are the sheats, all arranged. While I'm waiting for the magishtrates, I'll jusht sit down a minute on the grass. [*He does so.*]

Beadle. [*Walks about in another direction, and looks before him.*] Here come the magistrates. I will go to them. [*He does so.*]

[Enter the judge, accompanied by a gild-warden, a clerk, and others.]

Judge. Gild-warden and clerk!

Gild-warden and Clerk. We await your bidding.

Judge. A trial depends to such an extent upon others that the task of the magistrates—the reading of another's thoughts—is most difficult.

Men often speak of deeds that no man saw,
Matters beyond the province of the law;
Passion so rules the parties that their lies
Hide their offenses from judicial eyes;
This side and that exaggerate a thing,
Until at last it implicates the king;
To sum it up: false blame is easy won,
A true judge little praised, or praised by none.

3

And again:

Men often point to sins that no man saw,
And in their anger scorn the patient law;
In court-rooms even the righteous with their lies
Hide their offenses from judicial eyes;
And those who did the deed are lost to view,
Who sinned with plaintiff and defendant too;
To sum it up: false blame is easy won,
A true judge little praised, or praised by none.

4

For the judge must be

Learnèd, and skilled in tracing fraud's sly path,
And eloquent, insensible to wrath;

To friend, foe, kinsman showing equal grace,
 Reserving judgment till he know the case;
 Untouched by avarice, in virtue sound,
 The weak he must defend, the knave confound;
 An open door to truth, his heart must cling
 To others' interests, yet shun each thing
 That might awake the anger of the king.

5

Gild-warden and Clerk. And do men speak of defects in your virtue? If so, then they speak of darkness in the moonlight.

Judge. My good beadle, conduct me to the court-room.

Beadle. Follow me, Your Honor. [*They walk about.*] Here is the court-room. May the magistrates be pleased to enter. [*All enter.*]

Judge. My good beadle, do you go outside and learn who desires to present a case.

Beadle. Yes, sir. [*He goes out.*] Gentlemen, the magistrates ask if there is any here who desires to present a case.

Sansthānaka. [*Gleefully.*] The magishtrates are here. [*He struts about.*] I desire to present a cashe, I, an arishtocrat, a man, a Vā-sudeva, the royal brother-in-law, the brother-in-law of the king.

Beadle. [*In alarm.*] Goodness! The king's brother-in-law is the first who desires to present a case. Well! Wait a moment, sir. I will inform the magistrates at once. [*He approaches the magistrates.*] Gentlemen, here is the king's brother-in-law who has come to court, desiring to present a case.

Judge. What! the king's brother-in-law is the first who desires to present a case? Like an eclipse at sunrise, this betokens the ruin of some great man. Beadle, the court will doubtless be very busy to-day. Go forth, my good man, and say "Leave us for to-day. Your suit cannot be considered."

Beadle. Yes, Your Honor. [*He goes out, and approaches Sansthānaka.*] Sir, the magistrates send word that you are to leave them for to-day; that your suit cannot be considered.

And I am brother to the king—in law;
And the husband of my shishter is the king.

6

Judge. All this we know.

Why should you boast of this your noble birth?

'T is character that makes the man of worth;

But thorns and weeds grow rank in fertile earth.

7

State your case.

Sansthānaka. I will, but even if I was guilty, he would n't do anything to me. Well, my shishter's husband liked me, and gave me the besht garden there is, the old garden Pushpakaranda, to play in and look after. And there I go every day to look at it, to keep it dry, to keep it clean, to keep it blossoming, to keep it trimmed. But fate decreed that I shaw—or rather, I did n't *shee*—the proshtrate body of a woman.

Judge. Do you know who the unfortunate woman was?

Sansthānaka. Hello, magishtrates! Why should n't I know? A woman like that! the pearl of the city! adorned with a hundred golden ornaments! Shomebody's unworthy shon enticed her into the old garden Pushpakaranda when it was empty, and for a mere trifle—for her money!—shtrangled Vasantasenā and killed her. But *I* did n't—[*He breaks off, and puts his hand over his mouth.*]

Judge. What carelessness on the part of the city police! Gild-warden and clerk, write down the words "I did n't," as the first article in the case.

Clerk. Yes, sir. [*He does so.*] Sir, it is written.

Sansthānaka. [*Aside.*] Goodnessh! Now I 've ruined myshelf, like a man that shwallows a cake of rice and milk in a hurry. Well, I 'll get out of it thish way. [*Aloud.*] Well, well, magishtrates! I was jusht remarking that I did n't shee it happen. What are you making thish hullabaloo about? [*He wipes out the written words with his foot.*]

Judge. How do you know that she was strangled—and for her money?

Sansthānaka. Hello! Why should n't I think so, when her neck was swollen and bare, and the places where you wear jewels didn't have any gold on them?

Gild-warden and Clerk. That seems plausible.

Sansthānaka. [Aside.] Thank heaven! I breathe again. Hooray!

Gild-warden and Clerk. Upon whom does the conduct of this case depend?

Judge. The case has a twofold aspect.

Gild-warden and Clerk. How so?

Judge. We have to consider the allegations, then the facts. Now the investigation of the allegations depends upon plaintiff and defendant. But the investigation of the facts must be carried out by the wisdom of the judge.

Gild-warden and Clerk. Then the conduct of the case depends upon the presence of Vasantasenā's mother?

Judge. Precisely. My good beadle, summon Vasantasenā's mother, without, however, giving her cause for anxiety.

Beadle. Yes, Your Honor. [He goes out, and returns with the mother of the courtesan.] Follow me, madam.

Mother. My daughter went to the house of a friend to enjoy her youth. But now comes this gentleman—long life to him!—and says “Come! The judge summons you.” I find myself quite bewildered. My heart is palpitating. Sir, will you conduct me to the court-room?

Beadle. Follow me, madam. [They walk about.] Here is the court-room. Pray enter, madam. [They enter.]

Mother. [Approaching.] Happiness be yours, most worthy gentlemen.

Judge. My good woman, you are very welcome. Pray be seated.

Mother. Thank you. [*She seats herself.*]

Sansthānaka. [*Abusively.*] You're here, are you, you old bawd?

Judge. Tell me. Are you Vasantasenā's mother?

Mother. I am.

Judge. Whither has Vasantasenā gone at this moment?

Mother. To the house of a friend.

Judge. What is the name of her friend?

Mother. [*Aside.*] Dear me! Really, this is very embarrassing.

[*Aloud.*] Any one else might ask me this, but not a judge.

Judge. Pray do not be embarrassed. The conduct of the case puts the question.

Gild-warden and Clerk. The conduct of the case puts the question. You incur no fault. Speak.

Mother. What! the conduct of the case? If that is so, then listen, worthy gentlemen. There lives in the merchants' quarter the grandson of the merchant Vinayadatta, the son of Sāgaradatta, a man whose name is a good omen in itself—that name is Chārudatta. In his house my daughter enjoys her youth.

Sansthānaka. Did you hear that? Write those words down. My contention is with Chārudatta.

Gild-warden and Clerk. It is no sin for Chārudatta to be her friend.

Judge. The conduct of this case demands the presence of Chāru datta.

Gild-warden and Clerk. Exactly.

Judge. Dhanadatta, write as the first article in the case "Vasantasenā went to the house of Chārudatta." But must we summon the worthy Chārudatta also? No, the conduct of the case summons him. Go, my good beadle, summon Chārudatta,—but gently, without haste, without giving him cause for anxiety, respectfully, as it were incidentally,—with the words "The judge wishes to see you."

His long tongue quivers; four white fangs appear;
 His belly swells and coils. He slumbered here,
 This prince of serpents, till I crossed his path,
 And now he darts upon me in his wrath.

12

And more than this:

I slip, although the ground has felt no rain;
 My left eye, and my left arm throb again;
 Another bird is screaming overhead;
 All bodes a cruel death, and hope is fled.

13

Surely, the gods will grant that all may yet be well.

Beadle. Follow me, sir. Here is the court-room. Pray enter.

Chārudatta. [Enters and looks about.] How wonderfully splendid is the court-room. For it seems an ocean,

Whose waters are the king's advisers, deep
 In thought; as waves and shells it seems to keep
 The attorneys; and as sharks and crocodiles
 It has its spies that stand in waiting files;
 Its elephants and horses¹ represent
 The cruel ocean-fish on murder bent;
 As if with herons of the sea, it shines
 With screaming pettifoggers' numerous lines;
 While in the guise of serpents, scribes are creeping
 Upon its statecraft-trodden shore: the court
 The likeness of an ocean still is keeping,
 To which all harmful-cruel beasts resort.

14

Come! [As he enters, he strikes his head against the door. Reflectively.] Alas! This also?

My left eye throbs; a raven cries;
 A serpent coils athwart my path.
 My safety now with heaven lies.

15

But I must enter. [He does so.]

¹ Elephants were employed as executioners; and, according to Lallādikshita, the horses served the same purpose.

Judge. This is Chārudatta.

A countenance like his, with clear-cut nose,
Whose great, wide-opened eye frank candor shows,
Is not the home of wantonness;
With elephants, with horses, and with kine,
The outer form is inner habit's sign;
With men no less.

16

Chārudatta. My greetings to the officers of justice. Officials, I salute you.

Judge. [Betraying his agitation.] You are very welcome, sir. My good beadle, give the gentleman a seat.

Beadle. [Brings a seat.] Here is a seat. Pray be seated, sir. [Chārudatta seats himself.]

Sansthānaka. [Angrily.] You 're here, are you, you woman-murderer? Well! Thish is a fine trial, thish is a jusht trial, where they give a sheat to thish woman-murderer. [Haughtily.] But it 's all right. They can give it to him.

Judge. Chārudatta, have you any attachment, or affection, or friendship, with this lady's daughter?

Chārudatta. What lady?

Judge. This lady. [He indicates *Vasantasenā*'s mother.]

Chārudatta. [Rising.] Madam, I salute you.

Mother. Long life to you, my son! [Aside.] So this is Chārudatta. My daughter's youth is in good hands.

Judge. Sir, is the courtezan your friend? [Chārudatta betrays his embarrassment.]

Sansthānaka. He tries to hide the deed he did;

 He lies, from shame or fear;
 He murdered her, of her got rid
 For gold, and thinks the deed is hid;
 Not sho his mashter here.

17

Gild-warden and Clerk. Speak, Chārudatta. Do not be ashamed. This is a lawsuit.

Chārudatta. [In embarrassment.] Officials, how can I testify that a courtesan is my friend? But at worst, it is youth that bears the blame, not character.

Judge. The case is hard; then banish shame,
Though it oppress your heart;
Speak truth with fortitude, and aim
To set deceit apart.

18

Do not be embarrassed. The conduct of the case puts the question.

Chārudatta. Officer, with whom have I a lawsuit?

Sansthānaka. [Arrogantly.] With me!

Chārudatta. A lawsuit with you is unendurable!

Sansthānaka. Well, well, woman-murderer! You murder a woman like Vasantasenā who used to wear a hundred gems, and now you try deceitful deceivings to hide it!

Chārudatta. You are a fool.

Judge. Enough of him, good Chārudatta. Speak the truth. Is the courtesan your friend?

Chārudatta. She is.

Judge. Sir, where is Vasantasenā?

Chārudatta. She has gone home.

Gild-warden and Clerk. How did she go? When did she go? Who accompanied her?

Chārudatta. [Aside.] Shall I say that she went unobserved?

Gild-warden and Clerk. Speak, sir.

Chārudatta. She went home. What more shall I say?

Sansthānaka. She was enticed into my old garden Pushpakaranda, and was shtrangled for her money. Now will you shay that she went home?

Chārudatta. Man, you are crazy.

with him as a pledge was stolen by thieves at night, he gave in place of it a pearl necklace that was the pride of the four seas. And he should now, for a mere trifle—for her money!—do this sin? Oh, my child, come back to me, my daughter! [She weeps.] *Judge.* Noble Chārudatta, did she go on foot, or in a bullock-cart?

Chārudatta. I did not see her when she went. Therefore I do not know whether she went on foot, or in a bullock-cart.

[Enter Vīraka, in anger.]

Vīraka. My anger was so prodded to the quick
By that dishonoring, insulting kick,
And so I brooded, till at last the night
Unwilling yielded to the dawning light.

23

So now I will go to the court-room. [He enters.] May happiness be the lot of these honorable gentlemen.

Judge. Ah, it is Vīraka, the captain of the guard. Vīraka, what is the purpose of your coming?

Vīraka. Well! I was looking for Aryaka, in all the excitement about his escape from prison. I had my suspicions about a covered bullock-cart that was coming, and wanted to look in. "You've made one inspection, man, I must make another," said I, and then I was kicked by the highly respectable Chandanaka. You have heard the matter, gentlemen. The rest is your affair.

Judge. My good man, do you know to whom the bullock-cart belonged?

Vīraka. To this gentleman here, Chārudatta. And the driver said that Vasantasenā was in it, and was on her way to have a good time in the old garden Pushpakaranda.

Sansthānaka. Listen to that, too!

Judge. This moon, alas, though spotless-bright,
Is now eclipsed, and robbed of light;

The bank is fallen; the waves appear
Befouled, that once were bright and clear. 24

Vīraka, we will investigate your case here later. Mount the horse that stands before the court-room door, go to the garden Push-pakaranda, and see whether a woman has perished there or not.

Vīraka. Yes, sir. [He goes out, then returns.] I have been there. And I saw the body of a woman, torn by wild beasts.

Gild-warden and Clerk. How do you know that it was the body of a woman?

Vīraka. That I perceived from the traces of hair and arms and hands and feet.

Judge. Alas for the difficulties which are caused by the actions of men!

The more one may apply his skill,
The harder is the matter still;
Plain are indeed the law's demands,
Yet judgment insecurely stands
As some poor cow on shifting sands. 25

Chārudatta. [Aside.]

As bees, when flowers begin to blow,
Gather to sip the honey, so
When man is marked by adverse fate,
Misfortunes enter every gate. 26

Judge. Noble Chārudatta, speak truth!

Chārudatta. A mean and jealous creature, passion-blind,
Sets all his soul, some fatal means to find
To slay the man he envies ; shall his lies
By evil nature prompted, win the prize?
No! he is unregarded by the wise. 27

And more than this:

The creeper's beauty would I never blight,
Nor pluck its flowers; should I not be afraid

To seize her hair so lovely-long, and bright
 As wings of bees, and slay a weeping maid? 28

Sansthānaka. Hello, magistrates! How can you investigate the cashe with such partiality? Why, even now you let thish shcoundrel Chārudatta shtay on his sheat.

Judge. My good beadle, so be it. [*The beadle follows Sansthānaka's suggestion.*]

Chārudatta. Consider, magistrates, consider what you are doing! [*He leaves his seat, and sits on the floor.*]

Sansthānaka. [*Dancing about gleefully. Aside.*] Fine! The shin that I did falls on another man's head. Sho I 'll sit where Chārudatta was. [*He does so.*] Look at me, Chārudatta, and confessh that you murdered her.

Chārudatta. Magistrates!

A mean and jealous creature, passion-blind,
 Sets all his soul, some fatal means to find
 To slay the man he envies; shall his lies,
 By evil nature prompted, win the prize?
 No! he is unregarded by the wise.

(27)

[*Sighing. Aside.*]

My friend Maitreya! Oh, this cruel blow!
 My wife, thou issue of a spotless strain!
 My Rohasena! Here am I, laid low
 By sternest fate; and thou, thou dost not know
 That all thy childish games are played in vain.
 Thou playest, heedless of another's pain!

29

But Maitreya I sent to Vasantasenā, that he might bring me tidings of her, and might restore the jewels which she gave my child, to buy him a toy cart. Why then does he linger?

[*Enter Maitreya with the gems.*]

Maitreya. Chārudatta bade me go to Vasantasenā, to return her

Maitreya. [Aside to Chārudatta.] Why don't you simply say that she went home?

Chārudatta. Though I say it, it is not believed, so unfortunate is my condition.

Maitreya. But gentlemen! He adorned the city of Ujjayinī with mansions, cloisters, parks, temples, pools, and fountains, and he should be mad enough to commit such a crime—and for a mere trifle? [Wrathfully.] You offspring of a loose wench, you brother-in-law of the king, Sansthānaka, you libertine, you slanderer, you buffoon, you gilded monkey, say it before me! This friend of mine doesn't even draw a flowering jasmine creeper to himself, to gather the blossoms, for fear that a twig might perhaps be injured. How should he commit a crime like this, which heaven and earth call accursed? Just wait, you son of a bawd! Wait till I split your head into a hundred pieces with this staff of mine, as crooked as your heart.

Sansthānaka. [Angrily.] Listen to that, gentlemen! I have a quarrel, or a lawshuit, with Chārudatta. What right has a man with a pate that looks like a caret, to shplit my head into a hundred pieces? Not much! You confounded rascal! [*Maitreya raises his staff and repeats his words. Sansthānaka rises angrily and strikes him. Maitreya strikes back. During the scuffle the jewels fall from Maitreya's girdle.*]]

Sansthānaka. [Picks up the jewels and examines them. Excitedly.] Look, gentlemen, look! These are the poor girl's jewels! [Pointing to Chārudatta.] For a trifle like this he murdered her, and killed her too. [The magistrates all bow their heads.]

Chārudatta. [Aside to Maitreya.]

'T is thus my fate would vent its gall,
That at this moment they should fall,
These gems—and with them, I.

31

Maitreya. But why don't you simply tell the truth?

Chārudatta. My friend,

The king perceives with blinded eye,
Nor on the truth that eye will bend;
Though telling all, I cannot fly
A wretched and inglorious end.

32

Judge. Alas! Alas!

With Mars strives Jupiter, and dies;
Beside them both there seems to rise
A comet-planet¹ in the skies.

33

Gild-warden and Clerk. [Looking at the casket. To *Vasantasenā's mother.*] Madam, pray examine this golden casket attentively, to see whether it be the same or not.

Mother. [Examining the casket.] It is similar, but not the same.

Sansthānaka. Oh, you old bawd! You confessh it with your eyes, and deny it with your lips.

Mother. Away, you scoundrel!

Gild-warden and Clerk. Speak carefully. Is it the same or not?

Mother. Sir, the craftsman's skill captivates the eye. But it is not the same.

Judge. My good woman, do you know these jewels?

Mother. No, I said. No! I don't recognize them; but perhaps they were made by the same craftsman.

Judge. Gild-warden, see!

Gems often seem alike in many ways,
When the artist's mind on form and beauty plays;
For craftsmen imitate what they have seen,
And skilful hands remake what once has been.

34

Gild-warden and Clerk. Do these jewels belong to *Chārudatta*?

Chārudatta. Never!

Gild-warden and Clerk. To whom then?

¹ This refers to the fallen jewels.

Chārudatta. To this lady's daughter.

Gild-warden and Clerk. How did she lose them?

Chārudatta. She lost them. Yes, so much is true.

Gild-warden and Clerk. Chārudatta, speak the truth in this matter. For you must remember,

Truth brings well-being in its train;
Through speaking truth, no evils rise;
Truth, precious syllable!—Refrain
From hiding truth in lies.

35

Chārudatta. The jewels, the jewels! I do not know. But I do know that they were taken from my house.

Sansthānaka. Firsht you take her into the garden and murder her. And now you hide it by tricky trickinessh.

Judge. Noble Chārudatta, speak the truth!

Merciless lashes wait to smite
This moment on thy tender flesh;
And we—we can but think it right.

36

Chārudatta. Of sinless sires I boast my birth,
And sin in me was never found;
Yet if suspicion taints my worth,
What boots it though my heart be sound? 37

[*Aside.*] And yet I know not what to do with life, so I be robbed of Vasantasenā. [*Aloud.*] Ah, why waste words?

A scoundrel I, who bear the blame,
Nor think of earth, nor heaven blest;
That sweetest maid, in passion's flame—
But *he* will say the rest.

38

Sansthānaka. Killed her! Come, you shay it too. “I killed her.”

Chārudatta. You have said it.

Sansthānaka. Lishten, my mashters, lishten! He murdered her! No one but him! Doubt is over. Let punishment be inflicted on the body of thish poor Chārudatta.

They who pervert the king's true bent,
 The white crow's part who play,
 Have slain their thousands innocent,
 And slay, and slay, and slay.

41

My friend Maitreya, go, greet the mother of my son in my name
 for the last time. And keep my son Rohasena free from harm.

Maitreya. When the root is cut away, how can the tree be saved?

Chārudatta. No, not so.

When man departs to worlds above,
 In living son yet liveth he;
 Bestow on Rohasena love
 No less than that thou gavest me.

42

Maitreya. Oh, my friend! I will prove myself your friend by con-
 tinuing the life that you leave unfinished.

Chārudatta. And let me see Rohasena for a single moment.

Maitreya. I will. It is but fitting.

Judge. My good beadle, remove this man. [*The beadle does so.*] Who is there? Let the headsmen receive their orders. [*The guardsmen loose their hold on Chārudatta, and all of them go out.*]

Beadle. Come with me, sir.

Chārudatta. [*Mournfully repeats the verse, page 146, beginning "My friend Maitreya!" Then, as if speaking to one not present.*]

If you had proved my conduct by the fire,
 By water, poison, scales, and thus had known
 That I deserved that saws should bite my bone,

My Brahman's frame, more could I not desire.

You trust a foeman, slay me thus? 'T is well.

With sons, and sons' sons, now you plunge to hell! 43

I come! I come!

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

ACT THE TENTH

THE END

[Enter Chārudatta, accompanied by two headsman.]

Headsman. THEN think no longer of the pain;

T In just a second you 'll be slain.
We understand the fashions new
To fetter you and kill you too.
In chopping heads we never fail,
Nor when the victim we impale.

1

Out of the way, gentlemen, out of the way! This is the noble Chārudatta.

The oleander on his brow,
In headsman's hands you see him now;
Like a lamp whose oil runs nearly dry,
His light fades gently, ere it die.

2

Chārudatta. [Gloomily.]

My body wet by tear-drops falling, falling;
My limbs polluted by the clinging mud;
Flowers from the graveyard torn, my wreath appalling;
For ghastly sacrifice hoarse ravens calling,
And for the fragrant incense of my blood.

3

Headsman. Out of the way, gentlemen, out of the way!

Why gaze upon the good man so?
The ax of death soon lays him low.
Yet good men once sought shelter free,
Like birds, upon this kindly tree.

4

Come, Chārudatta, come!

Chārudatta. Incalculable are the ways of human destiny, that I am come to such a plight!

Red marks of hands in sandal paste
O'er all my body have been placed;

The man, with meal and powder strewn,
Is now to beast of offering grown.

5

[*He gazes intently before him.*] Alas for human differences!

[*Mournfully.*]

For when they see the fate that I must brave,
With tears for death's poor victim freely given,
The citizens cry "shame," yet cannot save,—
Can only pray that I attain to heaven.

6

Headsmen. Out of the way, gentlemen, out of the way! Why do you gaze upon him?

God Indra moving through the sky,¹
The calving cow, the falling star,
The good man when he needs must die,—
These four behold not from afar.

7

Goha. Look, Ahīnta! Look, man!

While he, of citizens the best,
Goes to his death at fate's behest,
Does heaven thus weep that he must die?
Does lightning paint the cloudless sky?

8

Ahīnta. Goha, man,

The heaven weeps not that he must die,
Nor lightning paints the cloudless sky;
Yet streams are falling constantly
From many a woman's clouded eye.

9

And again:

While this poor victim to his death is led,
No man nor woman here but sorely weeps;
And so the dust, by countless tear-drops fed,
Thus peacefully upon the highway sleeps.

10

Chārudatta. [*Gazes intently. Mournfully.*]

These women, in their palaces who stay,
From half-shut windows peering, thus lament,

¹ That is, the lightning.

Whom fortune favors, find
 That all the world is kind;
 Whose happy days are ended,
 Are rarely thus befriended.

15

Chārudatta. [Looks about him.]

Their faces with their garments' hem now hiding,
 They stand afar, whom once I counted friends:
 Even foes have smiles for men with Fortune biding;
 But friends prove faithless when good fortune ends. 16

Headsmen. They are out of the way. The street is cleared. Lead on the condemned criminal.

Chārudatta. [Sighing.]

My friend Maitreya! Oh, this cruel blow!
 My wife, thou issue of a spotless strain!
 My Rohasena! Here am I, laid low
 By sternest fate; and thou, thou dost not know
 That all thy childish games are played in vain.
 Thou playest, heedless of another's pain!

(ix. 29)

Voices behind the scenes. My father! Oh, my friend!

Chārudatta. [Listens. Mournfully.] You are a leader in your own caste. I would beg a favor at your hands.

Headsmen. From our hands you would receive a favor?

Chārudatta. Heaven forbid! Yet a headsman is neither so wanton nor so cruel as King Pālaka. That I may be happy in the other world, I ask to see the face of my son.

Headsmen. So be it.

A voice behind the scenes. My father! oh, my father! [*Chārudatta hears the words, and mournfully repeats his request.*]

Headsmen. Citizens, make way a moment. Let the noble Chārudatta look upon the face of his son. [*Turning to the back of the stage.*] This way, sir! Come on, little boy!

[Enter *Maitreya*, with *Rohasena*.]

Maitreya. Make haste, my boy, make haste! Your father is being led to his death.

Rohasena. My father! oh, my father!

Maitreya. Oh, my friend! Where must I behold you now?

Chārudatta. [Perceives his son and his friend.] Alas, my son! Alas, *Maitreya*! [Mournfully.] Ah, woe is me!

Long, too long, shall I thirst in vain
Through all my sojourn dread;
This vessel¹ small will not contain
The water for the dead.

17

What may I give my son? [He looks at himself, and perceives the sacrificial cord.] Ah, this at least is mine.

The precious cord that Brahmans hold
Is unadorned with pearls and gold;
Yet, girt therewith, they sacrifice
To gods above and fathers² old.

18

[He gives *Rohasena* the cord.]

Goha. Come, *Chārudatta*! Come, man!

Ahīnta. Man, do you name the noble *Chārudatta*'s name, and forget the title? Remember:

In happy hours, in death, by night, by day,
Roving as free as a yet unbroken colt,
Fate wanders on her unrestricted way.

19

And again:

Life will depart his body soon;
Shall our reproaches bow his head?
Although eclipse may seize the moon,
We worship while it seems but dead.

20

Rohasena. Oh, headsmen, where are you leading my father?

¹ Rohasena is himself conceived as the receptacle of the water which a son must pour as a drink-offering to his dead father. ² The Manes or spirits of the blessed dead.

Chārudatta. My darling,
 About my neck I needs must wear
 The oleander-wreath;
 Upon my shoulder I must bear
 The stake, and in my heart the care
 Of near-approaching death.
 I go to-day to meet a dastard's ending,
 A victim, at the fatal altar bending.

21

Goha. My boy,

Not we the headsmen are,
 Though born of headsman race;
 Thy father's life who mar,
 These, these are headsmen base.

22

Rohasena. Then why do you murder my father?

Goha. Bless you, 't is the king's orders must bear the blame, not we.

Rohasena. Kill me, and let father go free.

Goha. Bless you, may you live long for saying that!

Chārudatta. [Tearfully embracing his son.]

This treasure—love—this taste of heaven,
 To rich and poor alike is given;
 Than sandal better, or than balm,
 To soothe the heart and give it calm.

23

About my neck I needs must wear

The oleander-wreath,

Upon my shoulder I must bear
 The stake, and in my heart the care
 Of near-approaching death.

I go to-day to meet a dastard's ending,
 A victim, at the fatal altar bending.

(21)

[*He looks about. Aside.*]

Their faces with their garments' hem now hiding,
 They stand afar, whom once I counted friends:

carried Vasantasenā to the old garden Pushpakaranda, because she mistook my bullock-cart for another. And then my master, Sansthānaka, found that she would not love him, and it was he, not this gentleman, who murdered her by strangling.—But they are so far away that no one hears me. What shall I do? Shall I cast myself down? [*He reflects.*] If I do, then the noble Chārudatta will not be put to death. Yes, through this broken window I will throw myself down from the palace tower. Better that I should meet my end, than that the noble Chārudatta should perish, this tree of life for noble youths. And if I die in such a cause, I have attained heaven. [*He throws himself down.*] Wonderful! I did not meet my end, and my fetters are broken. So I will follow the sound of the headsmen's voices. [*He discovers the headsmen, and hastens forward.*] Headsmen, headsmen, make way!

Headsmen. For whom shall we make way?

Sthāvaraka. Listen, good gentlemen, listen! It was I, wretch that I am, who carried Vasantasenā to the old garden Pushpakaranda, because she mistook my bullock-cart for another. And then my master, Sansthānaka, found that she would not love him, and it was he, not this gentleman, who murdered her by strangling.

Chārudatta. Thank heaven!

26

But who thus gladdens this my latest morn,
When in Time's snare I struggle all forlorn,
A streaming cloud above the rainless corn?

Listen! do you hear what I say?

27

Death have I never feared, but blackened fame;
My death were welcome, coming free from shame,
As were a son, new-born to bear my name.

And again:

28

That small, weak fool, whom I have never hated,
Stained me with sin wherewith himself was mated,
An arrow, with most deadly poison baited.

Headsmen. Are you telling the truth, Sthāvaraka?

Sthāvaraka. I am. And to keep me from telling anybody, he cast me into chains, and imprisoned me in the tower of his palace.

[Enter *Sansthānaka.*]

Sansthānaka. [Gleefully.]

I ate a shour and bitter dish
Of meat and herbs and shoup and fish;
I tried at home my tongue to tickle
With rice-cakes plain, and rice with treacle. 29

[*He listens.*] The headsmen's voices! They shound like a broken brass cymbal. I hear the music of the fatal drum and the kettle-drums, and sho I shuppose that that poor man, Chārudatta, is being led to the place of execution. I musht go and shee it. It is a great delight to shee my enemy die. Beshides, I 've heard that a man who shees his enemy being killed, is sure not to have shore eyes in his next birth. I acted like a worm that had crept into the knot of a lotush-root. I looked for a hole to crawl out at, and brought about the death of thish poor man, Chārudatta. Now I 'll climb up the tower of my own palace, and have a look at my own heroic deeds. [*He does so and looks about.*] Wonderful what a crowd there is, to shee that poor man led to his death! What would it be when an arishtocrat, a big man like me, was being led to his death? [*He gazes.*] Look! There he goes toward the shouth, adorned like a young shteer. But why was the proclamation made near my palace tower, and why was it shtopped? [*He looks about.*] Why, my shlave Sthāvaraka is gone, too. I hope he has n't run away and betrayed the shcret. I musht go and look for him. [*He descends and approaches the crowd.*]

Sthāvaraka. [Discovers him.] There he comes, good masters!

Headsmen. Give way! Make room! And shut the door!

Be silent, and say nothing more!
Here comes a mad bull through the press,
Whose horns are sharp with wickedness. 30

Sansthānaka. Come, come, make way! [He approaches.] Sthāvaraka, my little shon, my shlave, come, let's go home.

Sthāvaraka. You scoundrel! Are you not content with the murder of Vasantasenā? Must you try now to murder the noble Chārudatta, that tree of life to all who loved him?

Sansthānaka. I am beautiful as a pot of jewels. I kill no woman!

Bystanders. Oho! you murdered her, not the noble Chārudatta.

Sansthānaka. Who shays that?

Bystanders. [Pointing to *Sthāvaraka*.] This honest man.

Sansthānaka. [Fearfully. Aside.] Merciful heavens! Why did n't I chain that shlave Sthāvaraka fasht? Why, he was a witnessh of my crime. [He reflects.] I'll do it thish way. [Aloud.] Lies, lies, good gentlemen. Why, I caught the shlave shteaing gold, and I pounded him, and murdered him, and put him in chains. He hates me. What he shays can't be true. [He secretly hands *Sthāvaraka* a bracelet, and whispers.] Sthāvaraka, my little shon, my shlave, take thish and shay shomething different.

Sthāvaraka. [Takes it.] Look, gentlemen, look! Why, he is trying to bribe me with gold.

Sansthānaka. [Snatches the bracelet from him.] That's the gold that I put him in chains for. [Angrily.] Look here, headsmen! I put him in charge of my gold-chest, and when he turned thief, I murdered him and pounded him. If you don't believe it, jusht look at his back.

Headsmen. [Doing so.] Yes, yes. When a servant is branded that way, no wonder he tells tales.

Sthāvaraka. A curse on slavery! A slave convinces nobody. [Mournfully.] Noble Chārudatta, I have no further power. [He falls at Chārudatta's feet.]

Chārudatta. [Mournfully.]

Rise, rise! Kind soul to good men fallen on pain!

Brave friend who lendest such unselfish aid!

Sansthānaka. [Aside.] But the citizens don't believe it. [Aloud.] Chārudatta, you jackanapes, the citizens don't believe it. Shay it with your own tongue, "I murdered Vasantasenā." [Chārudatta remains silent.] Look here, headsmen! The man won't shpeak, the jackanapes Chārudatta. Jusht make him shpeak. Beat him a few times with thish ragged bamboo, or with a chain.

Goha. [Raises his arm to strike.] Come, Chārudatta, speak!

Chārudatta. [Mournfully.]

33

Now am I sunk so deep in sorrow's sea,
I know no fear, I know no sadness more;
Yet even now one flame still tortures me,
That men should say I slew whom I adore.

[*Sansthānaka repeats his words.*]

Chārudatta. Men of my own city!

A scoundrel I, who bear the blame,
Nor seek in heaven to be blest;
A maid—or goddess—'t is the same—
But *he* will say the rest.

(ix. 30)

Sansthānaka. Killed her!

Chārudatta. So be it.

Goha. It's your turn to kill him, man.

Ahīnta. No, yours.

Goha. Well, let's reckon it out. [*He does so at great length*] Well, if it's my turn to kill him, we will just let it wait a minute.

Ahīnta. Why?

Goha. Well, when my father was going to heaven, he said to me, "Son Goha, if it's your turn to kill him, don't kill the sinner too quick."

Ahīnta. But why?

Goha. "Perhaps," said he, "some good man might give the money to set him free. Perhaps a son might be born to the king, and to celebrate the event, all the prisoners might be set free. Perhaps

an elephant might break loose, and the prisoner might escape in the excitement. Perhaps there might be a change of kings, and all the prisoners might be set free."

Sansthānaka. What? What? A change of kings?

Goha. Well, let's reckon it out, whose turn it is.

Sansthānaka. Oh, come! Kill Chārudatta at once. [*He takes Sthāvaraka, and withdraws a little.*]

Headsmen. Noble Chārudatta, it is the king's commandment that bears the blame, not we headsmen. Think then of what you needs must think.

Chārudatta. Though slandered by a cruel fate,
And stained by men of high estate,
If that my virtue yet regarded be,
Then she who dwells with gods above
Or wheresoever else—my love—

By her sweet nature wipe the stain from me! 34

Tell me. Whither would you have me go?

Goha. [Pointing ahead.] Why, here is the southern burying-ground, and when a criminal sees that, he says good-by to life in a minute. For look!

One half the corpse gaunt jackals rend and shake,
And ply their horrid task;
One half still hangs impaled upon the stake,
Loud laughter's grinning mask. 35

Chārudatta. Alas! Ah, woe is me! [*In his agitation he sits down.*]

Sansthānaka. I won't go yet. I'll jusht shee Chārudatta killed. [*He walks about, gazing.*] Well, well! He shat down.

Goha. Are you frightened, Chārudatta?

Chārudatta. [Rising hastily.] Fool!

Death have I never feared, but blackened fame;
My death were welcome, coming free from shame,
As were a son, new-born to bear my name. (27)

Goha. Noble Chārudatta, the moon and the sun dwell in the vault of heaven, yet even they are overtaken by disaster. How much more, death-fearing creatures, and men! In this world, one rises only to fall, another falls only to rise again. But from him who has risen and falls, his body drops like a garment. Lay these thoughts to heart, and be strong. [*To Ahīnta.*] Here is the fourth place of proclamation. Let us proclaim the sentence. [*They do so once again.*]

Chārudatta. Vasantasenā! Oh, my beloved!

From thy dear lips, that vied with coral's red,
Betraying teeth more bright than moonbeams fair,
My soul with heaven's nectar once was fed.
How can I, helpless, taste that poison dread,
To drink shame's poisoned cup how can I bear? (13)

[Enter, in great agitation, *Vasantasenā* and the *Buddhist monk.*]

Monk. Strange! My monkish life did me yeoman service when it proved necessary to comfort Vasantasenā, so untimely wearied, and to lead her on her way. Sister in Buddha, whither shall I lead you?

Vasantasenā. To the noble Chārudatta's house. Revive me with the sight of him, as the night-blooming water-lily is revived by the sight of the moon.

Monk. [Aside.] By which road shall I enter? [He reflects.] The king's highway—I'll enter by that. Come, sister in Buddha! Here is the king's highway. [Listening.] But what is this great tumult that I hear on the king's highway.

Vasantasenā. [Looking before her.] Why, there is a great crowd of people before us. Pray find out, sir, what it means. All Ujjayinī tips to one side, as if the earth bore an uneven load.

Goha. And here is the last place of proclamation. Beat the drum! Proclaim the sentence! [*They do so.*] Now, Chārudatta, wait! Don't be frightened. You will be killed very quickly.

Chārud. Though slandered by a cruel fate,
And stained by men of high estate,
If that my virtue yet regarded be,
Then she who dwells with gods above
Or wheresoever else—my love—
By her sweet nature wipe the stain from me! (34)

Monk and Vasantasesā. [Perceiving what is being done.] Good gentlemen! Hold, hold!

Vasantasenā. Good gentlemen! I am the wretch for whose sake he is put to death.

Goha. [Perceiving her.]

Who is the woman with the streaming hair
That smites her shoulder, loosened from its bands?
She loudly calls upon us to forbear,
And hastens hither with uplifted hands.

37

Vasantasenā. Oh, Chārudatta! What does it mean? [*She falls on his breast.*]

Monk. Oh, Chārudatta! What does it mean? [*He falls at his feet.*]

Goha. [Anxiously withdrawing.] Vasantasenā?—At least, we did not kill an innocent man.

Monk. [Rising.] Thank heaven! Chārudatta lives.

Goha. And shall live a hundred years!

Vasantasenā. [Joyfully.] And I too am brought back to life again.

Goha. The king is at the place of sacrifice. Let us report to him what has taken place. [*The two headsmen start to go away.*]

Sansthānaka. [Perceives *Vasantasenā*. In terror.] Goodness! who brought the slave back to life? This is the end of me. Good! I'll run away. [He runs away.]

Goha. [Returning.] Well, did n't we have orders from the king to put the man to death who murdered Vasantasenā? Let us hunt for the king's brother-in-law. [Exeunt the two headsmen.]

Chārudatta. [In amazement.]

Who saves me from the uplifted weapon's scorn,
When in Death's jaws I struggled all forlorn,
A streaming cloud above the rainless corn?

38

[He gazes at her.]

Is this Vasantasenā's counterfeit?
Or she herself, from heaven above descended?
Or do I but in madness see my sweet?
Or has her precious life not yet been ended?

39

Or again : Did she return from heaven,

That I might rescued be?
Was her form to another given?
Is this that other she?

40

Vasantasenā. [Rises tearfully and falls at his feet.] O noble Chārudatta, I am indeed the wretch for whose sake you are fallen upon this unworthy plight.

Voices behind the scenes. A miracle, a miracle! Vasantasenā lives.
[The bystanders repeat the words.]

Chārudatta. [Listens, then rises suddenly, embraces Vasantasenā, and closes his eyes. In a voice trembling with emotion.] My love!
You are Vasantasenā!

Vasantasenā. That same unhappy woman.

Chārudatta. [Gazes upon her. Joyfully.] Can it be? Vasantasenā herself? *[In utter happiness.]*

Her bosom bathed in streaming tears,
When in Death's power I fell,
Whence is she come to slay my fears,
Like heavenly magic's spell?

41

Vasantasenā! Oh, my belovèd!

Unto my body, whence the life was fleeting,
And all for thee, thou knewest life to give.
Oh, magic wonderful in lovers' meeting!

What power besides could make the dead man live? 42

But see, my belovèd!

My blood-red garment seems a bridegroom's cloak,
Death's garland seems to me a bridal wreath;

My love is near.

And marriage music seems the fatal stroke
Of drums that heralded my instant death;

For she is here.

43

Vasantasenā. You with your utter kindness, what can it be that you have done?

Chārudatta. My belovèd, he said that I had killed you.

For ancient hatred's sake, my mighty foe,
Hell's victim now, had almost laid me low.

44

Vasantasenā. [Stopping her ears.] Heaven avert the omen! It was he, the king's brother-in-law, who killed me.

Chārudatta. [Perceiving the monk.] But who is this?

Vasantasenā. When that unworthy wretch had killed me, this worthy man brought me back to life.

Chārudatta. Who are you, unselfish friend?

Monk. You do not remember me, sir. I am that shampooer, who once was happy to rub your feet. When I fell into the hands of certain gamblers, this sister in Buddha, upon hearing that I had been your servant, bought my freedom with her jewels. Thereupon I grew tired of the gambler's life, and became a Buddhist monk. Now this lady made a mistake in her bullock-cart, and so came to the old garden Pushpakaranda. But when that unworthy wretch learned that she would not love him, he murdered her by strangling. And I found her there.

Loud voices behind the scenes.

Unending victory to Shiva be,
Who Daksha's offering foiled;
And victory may Kārttikeya see,
Who Krauncha smote and spoiled;

Sharvilaka. I forced your house in manner base,
 And stole the gems there left behind;
 But though this sin oppress my mind,
 I throw myself upon your grace. 49

Chārudatta. Not so, my friend. Thereby you showed your faith in me. [*He embraces him.*]

Sharvilaka. And one thing more:

The very noble Aryaka,
 To save his family and name,
 Has slain the wretched Pālaka,
 A victim at the altar's flame. 50

Chārudatta. What say you?

Sharvilaka. 'T was your cart helped him on his way,
 Who sought the shelter of your name;
 He slew King Pālaka to-day,
 A victim at the altar's flame. 51

Chārudatta. Sharvilaka, did you set free that Aryaka, whom Pālaka took from his hamlet, and confined without cause in the tower?

Sharvilaka. I did.

Chārudatta. This is indeed most welcome tidings.

Sharvilaka. Scarcely was your friend Aryaka established in Ujjayinī, when he bestowed upon you the throne of Kushāvatī, on the bank of the Venā. May you graciously receive this first token of his love. [*He turns around.*] Come, lead hither that rascal, that villain, the brother-in-law of the king!

Voices behind the scenes. We will, Sharvilaka.

Sharvilaka. Sir, King Aryaka declares that he won this kingdom through your virtues, and that you are therefore to have some benefit from it.

Chārudatta. The kingdom won through my virtues?

Voices behind the scenes. Come on, brother-in-law of the king, and

reap the reward of your insolence. [*Enter Sansthānaka, guarded, with his hands tied behind his back.*]

Sansthānaka. Goodnessh gracious!

It came to pass, I ran away
Like any ass, and had my day.
They drag me round, a prisoner,
As if they 'd found a naughty cur.

52

[*He looks about him.*] They crowd around me, though I 'm a relative of the king's. To whom shall I go for help in my helplessness? [*He reflects.*] Good! I 'll go to the man who gives help and shows mercy to the shuppliant. [*He approaches.*] Noble Chārudatta, protect me, protect me! [*He falls at his feet.*]

Voices behind the scenes. Noble Chārudatta, leave him to us! let us kill him!

Sansthānaka. [*To Chārudatta.*] O helper of the helplessh, protect me!

Chārudatta. [*Mercifully.*] Yes, yes. He who seeks protection shall be safe.

Sharvilaka. [*Impatiently.*] Confound him! Take him away from Chārudatta! [*To Chārudatta.*] Tell me. What shall be done with the wretch?

Shall he be bound and dragged until he dies?
Shall dogs devour the scoundrel as he lies?
If he should be impaled, 't would be no blunder,
Nor if we had the rascal sawn asunder.

53

Chārudatta. Will you do as I say?

Sharvilaka. How can you doubt it?

Sansthānaka. Chārudatta! Mashter! I sheek your protection. Protect me, protect me! Do shomething worthy of yourshelf. I 'll never do it again!

Voices of citizens behind the scenes. Kill him! Why should the wretch be allowed to live?

[*Vasantasenā takes the garland of death from Chārudatta's neck, and throws it upon Sansthānaka.*]

Sansthānaka. You shlave-wench, be merciful, be merciful! I'll never murder you again. Protect me!

Sharvilaka. Come, take him away! Noble Chārudatta, say what shall be done with the wretch.

Chārudatta. Will you do as I say?

Sharvilaka. How can you doubt it?

Chārudatta. Really?

Sharvilaka. Really.

Chārudatta. Then let him be immediately—

Sharvilaka. Killed?

Chārudatta. No, no! Set free.

Sharvilaka. What for?

Chārud. The humbled foe who seeks thine aid,
Thou mayst not smite with steely blade—

Sharvilaka. All right. We will have the dogs eat him alive.

Chārudatta. No, no!

Be cruelty with kindness paid.

54

Sharvilaka. Wonderful! What shall I do? Tell me, sir.

Chārudatta. Why, set him free.

Sharvilaka. It shall be done. '

Sansthānaka. Hooray! I breathe again. [Exit, with the guards.]

Sharvilaka. Mistress Vasantasenā, the king is pleased to bestow upon you the title "wedded wife."

Vasantasenā. Sir, I desire no more.

Sharvilaka. [Places the veil¹ upon Vasantasenā. To Chārudatta.] Sir, what shall be done for this monk?

Chārudatta. Monk, what do you most desire?

Monk. When I see this example of the uncertainty of all things,

¹ A token of honorable marriage. Compare page 66.

EPILOGUE

MAY kine yield streaming milk, the earth her grain,
And may the heaven give never-failing rain,
 The winds waft happiness to all that breathes,
And all that lives, live free from every pain.

In paths of righteousness may Brahmans tread,
And high esteem their high deserving wed;
May kings in justice' ways be ever led,
And earth, submissive, bend her grateful head.

60

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

A LIST OF PASSAGES

IN WHICH THE TRANSLATION DEPARTS FROM PARAB'S TEXT

- 35.15 : Here *nirmitāḥ* is apparently a mere misprint for *nirjītāḥ*.
- 45.11 : The addition of *ut̄theda tti* seems almost necessary.
- 53.10; 54.9; 55.11; 62.7; 66.7 : In these passages I have substituted “shampooer” for “gambler,” to prevent confusion of the shampooer with the unnamed gambler.
- 57.13 : I have added the stage-direction *dyūtakaramandalīm krtvā*.
- 67.5 : Read *kam* for *kim*.
- 72.9 : Read *ajjo bandhanam samassāsidum* for Parab's *ajja bandhuano samsasadu*.
- 73.5 : We should probably read *bīhaccham* (*bībhatsam*) for *vīhattham*.
- 87.3 : The words *cikitsām krtvā* seem to be part of the text, not of the stage-direction.
- 97.13 : I regard *nayasya* as one word, not two (*na yasya*).
- 100.12 : Read *rakṣān* for *rakṣyān*.
- 114.5 : Read *naaranārī-* for *naranārī-*.
- 125.8–11 : These lines I have omitted.
- 126.4 : Read *accharīa-* (*āccarya-*) for *accharīdi-*.
- 170.8 : Read *eka-* for *ekā-*.
- 178.11 : Read *vaddhamānao* for *vaddhamānaa*.
- 184.9 : Read *a* (*ca*) for *ka*.
- 217.15 : Whatever *çavodiam* may be, I have translated it in accordance with Lallādīksita's gloss, *savestikam*.
- 226.2 : Apparently *khala-* is a misprint for *khana-*.
- 238.10 : Read *-ruciram* for *-racitam*.
- 259.16 : Read *udvīksya* for *udvījya*.
- 262.4 : Read *-bhājanam* for *-bhojanam*.
- 262.14 : Read *padicchidam* (*pratīṣṭam*) for *padicchidum*.
- 265.6 : Read *tvayā* for *mayā*.
- 284.14 : The words *atha vā* plainly belong to the text, not to the stage-direction.
- 287.2 : I take *paurāḥ* as part of the stage-direction.
- 288.3–292.9 : This passage I have omitted: compare page xii.