


Otium

Section 3

Poem 13: The Dinner Invitation

Catullus, Carmen 13

Grammar Key

 Subject

 Object


 Verb

 Genitive

 Dative

 Ablative

 Preposition

 Conjunction

 Adverb

 Vocative

The Invitation (Lines 1-5)

1 Cēnābis¹ bene,² mī⁵ Fabulle,⁶ apud³ mē⁴

2 paucīs,⁷ sī⁹ tibi¹² dī¹⁰ favent,¹¹ diēbus,⁸

3 sī¹³ tēcum¹⁹ attuleris¹⁴ bonam¹⁵ atque¹⁶ magnam¹⁷

4 cēnam,¹⁸ nōn²⁰ sine²¹ candidā²² puellā²³

5 et²⁴ vīnō²⁵ et²⁶ sale²⁷ et²⁸ omnibus²⁹ cachinnīs.³⁰

Vocabulary

1 **cēnō, cēnāre** to dine

bene (adv.) well

apud (+ acc.) at the house of

2 **paucī, -ae, -a** few

dī (m.pl.) gods (= deī)

faveō, favēre (+ dat.) to favour

3 **afferō, attulī** to bring

bonus, -a, -um good

magnus, -a, -um great

4 **cēna, -ae** (f.) dinner

candidus, -a, -um radiant, beautiful

5 **vīnum, -ī** (n.) wine

sal, salis (m.) salt; wit

cachinnus, -ī (m.) loud laughter

Style Notes: Lines 1-5

1. Opening Promise — *cēnābis bene*

Line 1

Cēnābis bene... — "You will dine well"; generous promise, soon subverted

2. Vocative Address — *mī Fabulle*

Line 1

...mī Fabulle... — "my Fabullus"; affectionate, creates intimacy

3. Hyperbaton — *paucīs... diēbus*

Line 2

paucīs... diēbus — "in a few days"; split phrase adds vagueness

4. Colloquial Form — *dī*

Line 2

...sī tibi dī favent... — everyday form for *deī*; informal register

5. Conditional Twist — *sī... attuleris*

Line 3

sī... attuleris... — "if you bring"; the catch!

6. Emphatic Doubling — *bonam atque magnam*

Line 3

...bonam atque magnam cēnam — escalating demands

7. Litotes — *nōn sine*

Line 4

nōn sine candidā puellā — "not without a pretty girl"

8. Polysyndeton — *et... et... et*

Line 5

et vīnō et sale et omnibus cachinnīs — piling up demands

Catullus's Poverty (Lines 6-8)

6 haec⁴ sī,² inquam,¹ attuleris,³ venuste⁶ noster,⁷

7 cēnābis⁸ bene;⁹ nam¹⁰ tuī¹¹ Catullī¹²

8 plēnus¹⁵ sacculus¹³ est¹⁴ arāneārum.¹⁶

Vocabulary

6 **inquam** I say (parenthetical)

venustus, -a, -um charming

7 **nam** (conj.) for, because

8 **plēnus, -a, -um** (+ gen.) full of

sacculus, -ī (m.) little bag (dim.)

arānea, -ae (f.) cobweb

Style Notes: Lines 6-8

9. Double Meaning — sale

Line 5

...et sale... — "salt" AND "wit"; classic pun

10. Onomatopoeia — cachinnīs

Line 5

...omnibus cachinnīs — say it: ka-KHIN-nis!

11. Parenthetical — inquam

Line 6

...sī, inquam, attuleris... — "I say"; conversational

12. Neoteric Term — venuste

Line 6

...venuste noster — "our charming fellow"

13. Repetition — cēnābis bene

Lines 1, 7

cēnābis bene — phrase returns; now we know the joke

14. Self-Reference — tuī Catullī

Line 7

...tuī Catullī — "your Catullus"; mirrors mī Fabulle

15. Diminutive — sacculus

Line 8

...sacculus est... — "little money bag"; pathetic

16. Ironical Reversal — plēnus

Line 8

plēnus... arāneārum — "full of cobwebs"; fullness = emptiness!

What Catullus Offers (Lines 9-10)

9 sed¹ contrā² accipiēs³ merōs⁴ amōrēs,⁵

10 seu⁶ quid⁷ suāvis⁹ elegantius¹¹ -ve¹⁰ est:⁸

Vocabulary

9 **contrā** (adv.) in return
accipiō, -ere to receive
merus, -a, -um pure, unmixed
amor, -ōris (m.) love

10 **seu** (conj.) or if
suāvis, -e sweet
elegāns, -antis elegant, refined

Style Notes: Lines 9-10

<div>17. Pivotal Turn — sed contrā</div> <div>Line 9</div> <div>sed contrā accipiēs... — "but in return"; from material to spiritual</div> <div></div>
<div>18. Neoteric Values — merōs amōrēs</div> <div>Line 9</div> <div>...merōs amōrēs — "pure love"; authentic friendship offered</div> <div></div>
<div>19. Neoteric Terms — suāvius, elegantius</div> <div>Line 10</div> <div>...suāvius elegantiusve... — "sweeter or more elegant"</div> <div></div>

The Divine Perfume (Lines 11-14)

11 nam¹ unguentum³ dabō,² quod⁴ meae⁹ puellae¹⁰

12 dōnārunt⁸ Venerēs⁵ Cupīdinēs⁷ -que,⁶

13 quod¹⁵ tū¹³ cum¹² olfaciēs,¹⁴ deōs¹⁷ rogābis,¹⁶

14 tōtum²² ut¹⁹ tē²¹ faciant,²⁰ Fabulle,¹⁸ nāsum.²³

Vocabulary

11 **unguentum, -ī** (n.) perfume

puella, -ae (f.) girlfriend

12 **dōnō, dōnāre** to give, present

Venus, Veneris (f.) Venus

Cupīdō, -inis (m.) Cupid

13 **olfaciō, -ere** to smell

rogō, rogāre to ask, pray

14 **tōtus, -a, -um** whole, entire

nāsus, -ī (m.) nose

Style Notes: Lines 11-14

20. Gift of Perfume — unguentum

Line 11

nam unguentum dabō... — concrete gift after abstract values

21. Lesbia Reference — meae puellae

Line 11

...meae puellae — "my girlfriend"; almost certainly Lesbia

22. Plural Deities — Venerēs Cupīdinēsque

Line 12

...Venerēs Cupīdinēsque — "Venuses and Cupids"; Hellenistic plural

23. Sensory Verb — olfaciēs

Line 13

quod tū cum olfaciēs... — "when you smell it"; vivid

24. Comic Climax — tōtum... nāsum

Line 14

tōtum ut tē faciant... nāsum — THE PUNCHLINE!

25. Hyperbaton — tōtum... nāsum

Line 14

tōtum... nāsum — adjective and noun separated for emphasis

26. Ring Composition — Fabulle

Lines 1, 14

...Fabulle... — poem ends as it began; structural closure