

Pericles, Prince of Tyre

Sc.19

[A brothel sign.] Enter two Gentlemen

FIRST GENTLEMAN Did you ever hear the like?

SECOND GENTLEMAN No, nor never shall do in such a place
as this, she being once gone.

FIRST GENTLEMAN But to have divinity preached there±±
did you ever dream of such a thing? 5

SECOND GENTLEMAN No, no. Come, I am for no more
bawdy houses. Shall 's go hear the vestals sing?

FIRST GENTLEMAN I'll do anything now that is virtuous,
but I am out of the road of rutting for ever.

Exeunt

Enter Pander, Bawd, and Boul

PANDER Well, I had rather than twice the worth of her 10
she had ne'er come here.

BAWD Fie, fie upon her, she's able to freeze the god
Priapus and undo the whole of generation. We must
either get her ravished or be rid of her. When she
should do for clients her fitment and do me the kindness 15
of our profession, she has me her quirks, her reasons,
her master reasons, her prayers, her knees, that she
would make a puritan of the devil if he should cheapen
a kiss of her.

BOULT Faith, I must ravish her, or she'll disfurnish us of 20
all our cavalleria and make our swearers priests.

PANDER Now, the pox upon her green-sickness for me.

BAWD Faith, there's no way to be rid on't but by the way
to the pox.

Enter Lysimachus, disguised

Here comes the Lord Lysimachus, disguised. 25

BOULT We should have both lord and loon if the peevish
baggage would but give way to custom.

LYSIMACHUS How now, how a dozen of virginities?

BAWD Now, the gods to-bless your honour!

BOULT I am glad to see your honour in good health. 30

LYSIMACHUS You may so. 'Tis the better for you that your
resorters stand upon sound legs. How now, wholesome

iniquity have you, that a man may deal withal and
defy the surgeon?

BAWD We have here one, sir, if she would±±but there 35
never came her like in Mytilene.

LYSIMACHUS If she'd do the deed of darkness, thou wouldst
say.

BAWD Your honour knows what 'tis to say well enough.

LYSIMACHUS Well, call forth, call forth. 40

[Exit Pander]

BOULT For flesh and blood, sir, white and red, you shall
see a rose. And she were a rose indeed, if she had but±±

LYSIMACHUS What, prithee?

BOULT O sir, I can be modest.

LYSIMACHUS That dignifies the renown of a bawd no less 45
than it gives a good report to a noble to be chaste.

[Enter Pander with Marina]

BAWD Here comes that which grows to the stalk, never
plucked yet, I can assure you. Is she not a fair creature?

LYSIMACHUS Faith, she would serve after a long voyage
at sea. Well, there's for you. Leave us. 50

[He pays the Bawd]

BAWD I beseech your honour give me leave: a word, and
I'll have done presently.

LYSIMACHUS I beseech you, do.

BAWD *(aside to Marina)* First, I would have you note this
is an honourable man. 55

MARINA I desire to find him so, that I may honourably
know him.

BAWD Next, he's the governor of this country, and a man
whom I am bound to.

MARINA If he govern the country you are bound to him 60
indeed, but how honourable he is in that, I know not.

BAWD Pray you, without any more virginal fencing, will
you use him kindly? He will line your apron with gold.

MARINA What he will do graciously I will thankfully
receive. 65

LYSIMACHUS *(to Bawd)* Ha' you done?

BAWD My lord, she's not paced yet. You must take some
pains to work her to your maneÁge. *(To Boulton and Pander)*
Come, we will leave his honour and hers together. Go

thy ways.

70

Exeunt Pander, Bawd, and Boulton

LYSIMACHUS

Fair one, how long have you been at this trade?

MARINA What trade, sir?

LYSIMACHUS

I cannot name it but I shall offend.

MARINA

I cannot be offended with my trade.

Please you to name it.

LYSIMACHUS How long have you been
Of this profession?

75

MARINA E'er since I can remember.

LYSIMACHUS

Did you go to't so young? Were you a gamester
At five, or seven?

MARINA Earlier too, sir,
If now I be one.

LYSIMACHUS Why, the house you dwell in
Proclaimeth you a creature of sale.

80

MARINA

And do you know this house to be a place
Of such resort and will come into it?
I hear say you're of honourable blood,
And are the governor of this whole province.

LYSIMACHUS

What, hath your principal informed you who I am? 85

MARINA

Who is my principal?

LYSIMACHUS Why, your herb-woman;
She that sets seeds of shame, roots of iniquity.

[Marina weeps]

O, you've heard something of my pow'r, and so
Stand off aloof for a more serious wooing.

But I protest to thee, 90

Pretty one, my authority can wink

At blemishes, or can on faults look friendly;

Or my displeasure punish at my pleasure,

From which displeasure, not thy beauty shall

Privilege thee, nor my affection, which

95

Hath drawn me here, abate with further ling'ring.

Come bring me to some private place. Come, come.

MARINA

Let not authority, which teaches you
To govern others, be the means to make you
Misgovern much yourself. 100

If you were born to honour, show it now;
If put upon you, make the judgement good
That thought you worthy of it. What reason's in
Your justice, who hath power over all,
To undo any? If you take from me 105

Mine honour, you're like him that makes a gap
Into forbidden ground, whom after
Too many enter, and of all their evils
Yourself are guilty. My life is yet unspotted;
My chastity unstain'd ev'n in thought. 110
Then if your violence deface this building,
The workmanship of heav'n, you do kill your honour,
Abuse your justice, and impoverish me.

My yet good lord, if there be fire before me,
Must I straight fly and burn myself? Suppose this
house±± 115

Which too too many feel such houses are±±
Should be the doctor's patrimony, and
The surgeon's feeding; follows it, that I
Must needs infect myself to give them maint'nance?

LYSIMACHUS

How's this, how's this? Some more. Be sage.

MARINA *[kneeling]* For me 120

That am a maid, though most ungentle fortune
Have frank'd me in this sty, where since I came
Diseases have been sold dearer than physic±±
That the gods would set me free from this unhallowed
place,

Though they did change me to the meanest bird 125
That flies i'th' purer air!

LYSIMACHUS *[moved]* I did not think

Thou couldst have spoke so well, ne'er dreamt thou
couldst.

[He lifts her up with his hands]

Though I brought hither a corrupted mind,

Thy speech hath altered it,
[He wipes the wet from her eyes]

and my foul

thoughts

Thy tears so well hath laved that they're now white. 130
I came here meaning but to pay the price,
A piece of gold for thy virginity;
Here's twenty to relieve thine honesty.
Persever still in that clear way thou goest,
And the gods strengthen thee.

MARINA

The good gods preserve you! 135

LYSIMACHUS

The very doors and windows savour vilely.
Fare thee well. Thou art a piece of virtue,
The best wrought up that ever nature made,
And I doubt not thy training hath been noble.
A curse upon him, die he like a thief, 140
That robs thee of thy honour. Hold, here's more gold.
If thou dost hear from me, it shall be for thy good.

*[Enter Boulton standing ready at the door, making his
obeisance unto him as Lysimachus should go out]*

BOULT I beseech your honour, one piece for me.

LYSIMACHUS

Avaunt, thou damned door-keeper!
Your house, but for this virgin that doth prop it, 145
Would sink and overwhelm you. Away.

Exit

BOULT How's this? We must take another course with
you. If your peevish chastity, which is not worth a
breakfast in the cheapest country under the cope, shall
undo a whole household, let me be gelded like a spaniel. 150
Come your ways.

MARINA Whither would you have me?

BOULT I must have your maidenhead taken off, or the
common executioner shall do it. We'll have no more
gentlemen driven away. Come your ways, I say. 155

Enter Bawd and Pander

BAWD How now, what's the matter?

BOULT Worse and worse, mistress, she has here spoken
holy words to the Lord Lysimachus.

BAWD O, abominable!

BOULT She makes our profession as it were to stink afore 160
the face of the gods.

BAWD Marry hang her up for ever!

BOULT The nobleman would have dealt with her like a
nobleman, and she sent him away as cold as a snowball,
saying his prayers, too. 165

[PANDER] Boulton, take her away. Use her at thy pleasure.
Crack the ice of her virginity, and make the rest
malleable.

BOULT An if she were a thornier piece of ground than she
is, she shall be ploughed. 170

MARINA Hark, hark, you gods!

BAWD She conjures. Away with her! Would she had never
come within my doors.±±Marry, hang you!±±She's born
to undo us.±±Will you not go the way of womenkind?
Marry, come up, my dish of chastity with rosemary 175
and bays.

Exeunt Bawd and Pander

BOULT *[catching her rashly by the hand]* Come, mistress,
come your way with me.

MARINA Whither wilt thou have me?

BOULT To take from you the jewel you hold so dear. 180

MARINA Prithee, tell me one thing first.

BOULT Come, now, your one thing.

MARINA

What canst thou wish thine enemy to be?

BOULT Why, I could wish him to be my master, or rather
my mistress. 185

MARINA

Neither of these can be so bad as thou art,
Since they do better thee in their command.
Thou hold'st a place the paineÁd'st fiend of hell
Would not in reputation change with thee,
Thou damneÁd doorkeeper to ev'ry coistrel 190
That comes enquiring for his Tib.
To th' choleric fisting of ev'ry rogue
Thy ear is liable. Thy food is such
As hath been belched on by infected lungs.

BOULT What would you have me do? Go to the wars, 195

would you, where a man may serve seven years for the loss of a leg, and have not money enough in the end to buy him a wooden one?

MARINA

Do anything but this thou dost. Empty
Old receptacles or common sew'rs of filth, 200
Serve by indenture to the public hangman±±
Any of these are yet better than this.
For what thou professest a baboon, could he speak,
Would own a name too dear. Here's gold for thee.
If that thy master would make gain by me, 205
Proclaim that I can sing, weave, sew, and dance,
With other virtues which I'll keep from boast,
And I will undertake all these to teach.
I doubt not but this populous city will
Yield many scholars. 210

BOULT But can you teach all this you speak of?

MARINA

Prove that I cannot, take me home again
And prostitute me to the basest groom
That doth frequent your house.

BOULT Well, I will see what I can do for thee. If I can 215
place thee, I will.

MARINA But amongst honest women.

BOULT Faith, my acquaintance lies little amongst them;
but since my master and mistress hath bought you,
there's no going but by their consent. Therefore I will 220
make them acquainted with your purpose, and I doubt
not but I shall find them tractable enough. Come, I'll
do for thee what I can. Come your ways.

Exeunt. [The sign is removed]