

Pericles, Prince of Tyre

Sc.16

[A brothel sign.] Enter the Pander, his wife the Bawd, and their man Boulton

PANDER Boulton.

BOULT Sir.

PANDER Search the market narrowly. Mytilene is full of gallants. We lose too much money this mart by being wenchless. 5

BAWD We were never so much out of creatures. We have but poor three, and they can do no more than they can do, and they with continual action are even as good as rotten.

PANDER Therefore let's have fresh ones, whate'er we pay 10 for them. If there be not a conscience to be used in every trade, we shall never prosper.

BAWD Thou sayst true. 'Tis not our bringing up of poor bastards±±as I think I have brought up some eleven±±

BOULT Ay, to eleven, and brought them down again. But 15 shall I search the market?

BAWD What else, man? The stuff we have, a strong wind will blow it to pieces, they are so pitifully sodden.

PANDER Thou sayst true. They're too unwholesome, o' conscience. The poor Transylvanian is dead that lay 20 with the little baggage.

BOULT Ay, she quickly pooped him, she made him roast meat for worms. But I'll go search the market.

Exit

PANDER Three or four thousand chequins were as pretty a proportion to live quietly, and so give over. 25

BAWD Why to give over, I pray you? Is it a shame to get when we are old?

PANDER O, our credit comes not in like the commodity, nor the commodity wages not with the danger. Therefore if in our youths we could pick up some pretty 30 estate, 'twere not amiss to keep our door hatched. Besides, the sore terms we stand upon with the gods will be strong with us for giving o'er.

BAWD Come, other sorts offend as well as we.

PANDER As well as we? Ay, and better too; we offend 35
worse. Neither is our profession any mystery, it's no
calling. But here comes Boulton.

Enter Boulton with the Pirates and Marina

BOULT *[to the Pirates]* Come your ways, my masters, you
say she's a virgin?

A PIRATE O sir, we doubt it not. 40

BOULT *(to Pander)* Master, I have gone through for this
piece you see. If you like her, so; if not, I have lost my
earnest.

BAWD Boulton, has she any qualities?

BOULT She has a good face, speaks well, and has excellent 45
good clothes. There's no farther necessity of qualities
can make her be refused.

BAWD What's her price, Boulton?

BOULT I cannot be bated one doit of a hundred sesterces.

PANDER *(to Pirates)* Well, follow me, my masters. You 50
shall have your money presently. *(To Bawd)* Wife, take
her in, instruct her what she has to do, that she may
not be raw in her entertainment.

Exeunt Pander and Pirates

BAWD Boulton, take you the marks of her, the colour of her
hair, complexion, height, her age, with warrant of her 55
virginity, and cry 'He that will give most shall have
her first.' Such a maidenhead were no cheap thing if
men were as they have been. Get this done as I
command you.

BOULT Performance shall follow. 60

Exit

MARINA

Alack that Leonine was so slack, so slow.
He should have struck, not spoke; or that these pirates,
Not enough barbarous, had but o'erboard thrown me
To seek my mother.

BAWD Why lament you, pretty one? 65

MARINA That I am pretty.

BAWD Come, the gods have done their part in you.

MARINA I accuse them not.

BAWD You are light into my hands, where you are like

to live.

70

MARINA The more my fault
To scape his hands where I was like to die.

BAWD Ay, and you shall live in pleasure.

MARINA No.

BAWD Yes, indeed shall you, and taste gentlemen of all 75
fashions. You shall fare well. You shall have the
difference of all complexions. What, do you stop your
ears?

MARINA Are you a woman?

BAWD What would you have me be an I be not a woman? 80

MARINA

An honest woman, or not a woman.

BAWD Marry, whip the gosling! I think I shall have
something to do with you. Come, you're a young foolish
sapling, and must be bowed as I would have you.

MARINA The gods defend me! 85

BAWD If it please the gods to defend you by men, then
men must comfort you, men must feed you, men must
stir you up.

Enter Boul

Now, sir, hast thou cried her through the market?

BOULT I have cried her almost to the number of her hairs. 90
I have drawn her picture with my voice.

BAWD And I prithee tell me, how dost thou find the
inclination of the people, especially of the younger sort?

BOULT Faith, they listened to me as they would have
hearkened to their fathers' testament. There was a 95
Spaniard's mouth watered as he went to bed to her
very description.

BAWD We shall have him here tomorrow with his best
ruff on.

BOULT Tonight, tonight. But mistress, do you know the 100
French knight that cowers i' the hams?

BAWD Who, Monsieur Veroles?

BOULT Ay, he. He offered to cut a caper at the pro-
clamation, but he made a groan at it, and swore he
would see her tomorrow. 105

BAWD Well, well, as for him, he brought his disease
hither. Here he does but repair it. I know he will come

in our shadow to scatter his crowns of the sun.

BOULT Well, if we had of every nation a traveller, we
should lodge them all with this sign. 110

BAWD (*to Marina*) Pray you, come hither a while. You
have fortunes coming upon you. Mark me, you must
seem to do that fearfully which you commit willingly,
to despise profit where you have most gain. To weep
that you live as ye do makes pity in your lovers. Seldom 115
but that pity begets you a good opinion, and that
opinion a mere profit.

MARINA I understand you not.

BOULT (*to Bawd*) O, take her home, mistress, take her
home. These blushes of hers must be quenched with 120
some present practice.

BAWD Thou sayst true, i'faith, so they must, for your
bride goes to that with shame which is her way to go
with warrant.

BOULT Faith, some do and some do not. But mistress, if I 125
have bargained for the joint±±

BAWD Thou mayst cut a morsel off the spit.

BOULT I may so.

BAWD Who should deny it? (*To Marina*) Come, young
one, I like the manner of your garments well. 130

BOULT Ay, by my faith, they shall not be changed yet.

BAWD (*giving him money*) Boul't, spend thou that in the
town. Report what a sojourner we have. You'll lose
nothing by custom. When nature framed this piece she
meant thee a good turn. Therefore say what a paragon 135
she is, and thou reapest the harvest out of thine own
setting forth.

BOULT I warrant you, mistress, thunder shall not so awake
the beds of eels as my giving out her beauty stirs up
the lewdly inclined. I'll bring home some tonight. 140

[Exit]

BAWD Come your ways, follow me.

MARINA

If fires be hot, knives sharp, or waters deep,
Untied I still my virgin knot will keep.
Diana aid my purpose.

BAWD What have we to do with Diana? Pray you, will 145

you go with me?

Exeunt. [The sign is removed]