

Aporia!

by

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Aporia: A Tale of *Sittlichkeit* and Allosensus

I. Introduction

“Perhaps one should not write, after all... perhaps it is just a (bad) habit.”¹
— Dmitri Nikulin, *Dialectic and Dialogue*

Marshall McLuhan once famously said that “the medium is the message.”² While he was referring to forms such as television and the feature film, the same heuristic can be applied to an academic discipline. Imagine, for a moment, a philosophical text. What does it look like? I’d be willing to wager that your conjured image is hundreds of pages long and full of abstract concepts and neologism. This, however, was not always the case. Some of the earliest examples of philosophical texts, such as the cosmogony of Parmenides or *De Rerum Natura*, were written in verse.

The works of Plato, progenitor of the western canon, were not treatises either. The very urtexts of philosophy were written in dialogue. Plato, originally a playwright before meeting his mentor Socrates, wrote what he knew. His philosophy appears in a conversational, even dramaturgical form, or as Dmitri Nikulin puts it: “apparently systematic doctrines of a mathematical ontology [that] are dialectical investigations reflecting oral dialogical discussions within the Academy.”³

Over the course of the next 2,500 years, however, the Modernist project (beginning for the purposes of this essay with Descartes) changed the dominant mode of philosophical discourse from the dialogue- which reigned supreme Plato’s native fourth century BCE- to the treatise in order to reflect a shift toward a monological subject capable of generating knowledge without an Other.

¹ Nikulin, Dmitrij Vladimirovič. *Dialectic and dialogue*. Stanford, Cal.: Stanford U Press, 2010. Print. P. xii

² McLuhan, Marshall. *Understanding media*. London: Sphere , 1973. Print. P. 19

³ Nikulin, Dmitrij Vladimirovič. *Dialectic and dialogue*. Stanford, Cal.: Stanford U Press, 2010. Print. P. 2-3

Another limiting factor of the Platonic Ideal of philosophy was the encroachment of rhetoric. In the fourth century BCE, philosophy had yet to calcify as a discipline, and early philosophical and rhetorical texts have large amounts of cross-pollination. Plato, during this time “conceived [philosophy] as a very exclusive vocation... precisely by designating certain modes of discourse and spheres of activity as non-philosophical,”⁴ the primary target of this exclusion was rhetoric. While this debate was, at least seemingly, put to rest with the death of Socrates, the conflict between rhetoric and philosophy persist into the contemporary era, and the issue of truth vs. persuasiveness is a refrain still echoed today in arenas as large as the United States Senate and as loud as it did in the Athenian Agora.

Thus, with this essay and its accompanying work, *Aporia! A Tale of Rhetoric and Philosophy*, I will provide an account and analysis of the debate that raged between rhetoricians and philosophers in the fourth century BCE. In the first portion of the essay, I will discuss the ability of a work of art to perform the work of philosophy. With the lens of Thomas Wartenberg’s *Film as Philosophy*, and Dmitri Nikulin’s work on dialogical philosophy, I will demonstrate that narrative work (specifically scripted narrative such as in film or theater) can indeed do the work of philosophy. In the next section, I will use a framework provided by Hegelian *sittlichkeit* analysis to chart the points of conflict in an ethico-cultural dispute, within a work of art, specifically *Aporia! A Tale of Rhetoric and Philosophy*. In the final section, I will return to Nikulin in order to discuss the resulting *Allosensus*⁵ of these two seemingly opposing cultural values that motivate the pursuit of rhetoric versus philosophy- and explicate why both have persisted centuries after their heyday in Athens.

⁴ Nightingale, Andrea Wilson. *Genres in dialogue: Plato and the construct of philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge U Pr., 2000. Print. P. 14

⁵ A third method for resolving dialog, in addition to consensus and dissensus. See Section III

While this essay will attempt to explain the philosophical underpinnings of *Aporia! A Tale of Rhetoric and Philosophy*, I consider it to be the least philosophically relevant portion of my project. I will proffer another guess as to the state of the reader of this essay. I would wager you are alone, reading this in a library or classroom, silently. Nikulin tells us that dialogue is “the art of being — the art of being with other human beings or the art of being human.”⁶

This is a project about dialogical philosophy, and that art of being is the goal I reach for with this project. The most philosophically significant thing you might do with this project is to talk about it with someone else, and truly do the work of philosophy yourselves. The next most important would be to see one of the accompanying productions, or a recording of, *Aporia! A Tale of Rhetoric and Philosophy* that I am mounting in conjunction with this document that would allow you to at least see dialogues in person, if you are not participating in them. After that would be reading my play itself, and finally reading this essay, but even if the only idea I successfully express in this essay is to live philosophy in dialogue with others, I would consider it a success.

II. Narrative Philosophy

“Storytelling reveals meaning without committing the error of defining it.”⁷
— Hannah Arendt, *Men in Dark Times*

There is little debate that literature can be philosophy. Camus’ *The Stranger* and Nietzsche’s *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* are indeed written by philosophers. Philosophers from Voltaire to Sartre have dabbled in the theater as well, and plays by Shakespeare, Shaw and Ibsen have all been considered philosophical.⁸ So, then, it comes as a surprise to learn that philosophers have a history of distance from the theater. Later in his life, Nietzsche thoroughly dismissed the works

⁶ Nikulin, Dmitri. *On Dialogue*. Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2006. Print. P. vii

⁷ Arendt, Hannah. *Men in dark times*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968. Print. P. 105

⁸ Puchner, Martin. "Afterword: Please Mind the Gap between Theatre and Philosophy." *Modern Drama* 56.4 (2013): 540-53. Web. 11 Apr. 2017. P. 540

of Wagner in his time, and Rousseau wrote repeatedly against actors. Plato himself spoke against the theater in both the *Ion* and *Republic*.⁹ What is it about dramatic writing that draws the ire of the philosophical community?

In this section of the essay, I will be addressing the four main objections to narratively-driven philosophy, both in the general and in the specific, and explicating the mode of the philosophical that is demonstrated by the accompanying work, *Aporia! A Tale of Rhetoric and Philosophy*, in accordance with Thomas Wartenburg's *Film as Philosophy*. While this text, as the title suggests, is intended to prove the worth of film as philosophy, none of the cited portions are specific to the medium of film itself, and may be applied to other instances of dramatic writing, such as theater.

The first objection to the thesis of narratives-as-philosophy is that of banality. This argument is little more than a facile dismissal of narrative art as incapable of presenting philosophical issues that are not trivial or banal.¹⁰ I will not spend much time on this argument other than to respond with Wartenburg's assertion that this objection depends on the critics "conception of philosophy... [T]hose... who see philosophy as addressing fundamental and often pressing concerns of human life will think it more natural that such issues find their way into all the popular arts."¹¹ This approach is contrasted with those who embrace analytical logic and truth-testing in order to practice philosophy as a "quasi-scientific" discipline.¹² This recalls my introduction wherein I have stated the purpose of this project is to engage in and encourage

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Wartenburg, Thomas E. "Film as Philosophy." *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy and Film* (2009): 549-59. Web. P. 567

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

others to engage in philosophy as a practice to be engaged in with others, rather than something solely read in books and papers.

The next objection is on the grounds of generality. This objection states that the aim of philosophy is to find general truths. Dramatic writing would, then, never be able to satisfy this requirement because a narrative is an inherently specific instance for or against whatever the theme of the work might be.¹³ This too is not the stated purpose of dramatic narrative. Narrative is a constitutive component of dialogue, and is what in fact separates it from a dialectic, so I believe it reasonable to judge them by the same standards with regards to their philosophical content.¹⁴

The response to this objection begins with Aristotle who in the *Poetics*, believes that a work of art “is something more scientific and serious than history, because poetry tends to give general truths while history gives particular facts.”¹⁵ Wartenburg when he says that a narrative work can be a work of philosophy for illustrating an “instance of general truth.”¹⁶ And in response to the retort of a single case not establishing a general truth, such philosophical contributions as Kripke’s *Naming and Necessity*¹⁷ or the Gettier problem which do not “*argue* for” their theories “as much as simply *present* [them]...”¹⁸ without acknowledgement of oppositional literature.

The third objection refers to imposition. This idea maintains that any philosophical content that a narrative work may contain is merely an interpretation imposed on it by a

¹³ Wartenburg, Thomas E. "Film as Philosophy." *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy and Film* (2009): 549-59. Web. P. 553

¹⁴ Nikulin, Dmitriy Vladimirovič. *Dialectic and dialogue*. Stanford, Cal.: Stanford U Press, 2010. Print. P. 84

¹⁵ Aristotle. *Poetics*. S.I.: W W Norton, 2016. Print. 1451b1

¹⁶ Wartenburg, Thomas E. "Film as Philosophy." *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy and Film* (2009): 549-59. Web. P. 554

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

charitable critic.¹⁹ This objection is the hardest to combat, as it cannot necessarily be proven false. Wartenburg boils this down to a case by case basis, on the axes of both the work itself and the interpretation thereof.²⁰ As even Wartenburg cannot disprove that objection for my own work, that will be up to the reader and the audience to decide.

The final objection is explicitness. In refuting this objection, I lay the groundwork for explaining the philosophical framework by which I intend to explicate the contribution to the discipline that I hope to achieve in my work. I leave it then with you, reading this essay, to deliberate on whether or not I have ascribed meaning where it is not.

This objection states that because a narrative contains an explicit falsehood (such as a fictional event or place) it cannot do the work of philosophy, even though they may contain explicit claims that are philosophically relevant and contributory. This is predicated on a belief that philosophy only contains true explicit claims and that a reader may have difficulty explicating which is true and which is false.²¹ My response to this is twofold. In the first place, many Platonic dialogues contain explicit falsehood, misrememberings, and further ambiguities as confusing as any film or play. Scholars to this day have competing theories on how much of many dialogs such as the *Symposium* actually happened. *The Republic* certainly did not, and was likely a series of lectures and conversations Plato had over the course of many years. If these dialogues are considered to be philosophy, then a different standard cannot be maintained for later works of dialogical philosophy.

¹⁹Wartenburg, Thomas E. "Film as Philosophy." *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy and Film* (2009): 549-59. Web. P. 555

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Wartenburg, Thomas E. "Film as Philosophy." *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy and Film* (2009): 549-59. Web. P. 554-5

Secondly, Wartenburg's rejoinder takes issue with this objection again on the grounds that it does not actually find fault with the work itself, but with interpretations of the work. It is not the purview of the critic to say what might be interpretable as true or false by a viewer.²² Wartenburg, continues that it is the responsibility of the critic or interpreter to "provide enough specificity and determinateness in a philosophical interpretation... so that the philosophy... is not inherently ambiguous."²³

In this work, I am both author and the first interpreter, so in the interest of eliminating ambiguity, I have provided a (provisional) framework by which I intend the philosophical content of my work to be determined. *Aporia! A Tale of Rhetoric and Philosophy* contains various modes of the philosophical. In accordance with Wartenburg's essay, *Aporia* both illustrates philosophical theories and makes philosophical claims.²⁴ The former is achieved through the text itself. Both of the rap battles that take place within the show are reproductions of Socratic dialogues, the first uses the *Gorgias* and the second an amalgam of various works including portions of the *Protagoras* and *Euthydemus*, among others, in the vein of the Cabinet Rap Battles in Lin-Manuel Miranda's *Hamilton*.²⁵ The latter is achieved through metatext. Using Protagoras as a surrogate for sophistry and Socrates as a synecdoche for philosophy, the play illustrates the Nikulinean concept of *Allosensus* between these conflicting cultural values. In order to analyze this metatext, I have engaged with Hegelian *sittlichkeit* analysis, as I will discuss in the next section of this essay.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Wartenburg, Thomas E. "Film as Philosophy." *The Routledge Companion to Philosophy and Film* (2009): 549-59. Web. P. 558-9

²⁵ Lin-Manuel Miranda, Christopher Jackson and Daveed Diggs. By Lin-Manuel Miranda and Ron Chernow. *Hamilton: Original Broadway Cast Recording*. Cast of *Hamilton*. Questlove, 2015. MP3. Cabinet Battle #1/2

The purpose of this section of the essay was not simply to justify the existence of this project. The debate of whether art can do the work of philosophy is a debate nearly as old as art and philosophy itself, and begins my departure from Platonic ideals of philosophy. The next section of this paper analyzes where the rhetorical and philosophical disciplines interacted in the fourth century BCE and the stratagems each employed to attempt to supersede the other in the minds of ancient Athenian citizens.

III. Rhetoric and Philosophy

“[T]he conflict is not between good and evil but between goods that are each making too exclusive a claim...”²⁶

—Excerpted from the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1999

Since the dawn of society, cultures have had values that were unique to their sociopolitical place in history. South Korea holds Confucianism as the basis for their lawmaking; the ancient Greeks were a culture that prized hospitality; even the United States has always held fast to an identity of rugged individualism. With all of these values floating around as potential guiding principles for a society, the people in these cultures have always needed a method for deciding which values were compatible with their nation. Enter Georg Wilhelm Frederic Hegel.

To Hegel, this decision is decided through conflict, and this applies to debate over values in a very specific way. Hegel has a term for the primordial soup that he believes all values are floating around in, called *sittlichkeit*. In *sittlichkeit*, conflicts come out of culture, are determined through strife, and are then thrust back into culture²⁷ The way this strife plays out is through art.

In art that also functions as value debate, the characters are not so much rounded, as they are mouthpieces for and embodiments of a particular point of view. Neither of the two is right, but at

²⁶ "Tragedy" *Encyclopedia Britannica*. 1999 ed. N.p.: n.p., n.d. N. pag. Web.

²⁷ Hegel, Georg W. F. *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics*. Place of publication not identified: Digireads Com, 2013. Print. P. 1209

the same time, neither one is wrong. Both embody a sound position that cannot coexist with the other.²⁸

For Hegel, the epitome of art worthy of analysis was the Greek tragedy, exemplified by his analysis of *Antigone* in his *Aesthetik*, which depicts the two values competing in Greek society as fidelity to the law and fealty to the gods. These two ethics were shown to be incompatible with the death of the title character, along with much of the cast of characters, “[t]he operation is a success because of, not in spite of, the fact that the patient dies.”²⁹

By contrast, however, *Aporia! A Tale of Rhetoric and Philosophy* is a comedy, and rather than dying, the hero of the piece, Protaginus of Crete, prospers and learns a valuable lesson about compassion. I have crafted my story in this manner for two reasons. The first is the nature of the debate, and the second is the nature of philosophy.

First, looking towards the nature of the debate. As quoted above, tragedy is a battle of two goods that are mutually exclusive. The debate about rhetoric and philosophy, however, is no such thing. While both disciplines, especially during this time, are incredibly important to the development of Western Civilization, each side’s search for primacy in Athens lead them to overreach.

Rhetoric’s overstepping is more obvious, “according to the project of rhetoric, a claim is right if the speaker can make it appear strong and persuasive.”³⁰ Rhetoric is most often characterized by tricks that can allow a rhetorician to convince interlocutors of things that the rhetorician knows to be untrue. As such, it is a poor way to arrive at an idea of truth and an even poorer way for a society to be construct their notion of truth.

²⁸ Hegel, Georg W. F. *Introductory Lectures on Aesthetics*. Place of publication not identified: Digireads Com, 2013. Print. P. 1212

²⁹ "Tragedy" *Encyclopedia Britannica*. 1999 ed. N.p.: n.p., n.d. N. pag. Web.

³⁰ Nikulin, Dmitrij Vladimirovič. *Dialectic and dialogue*. Stanford, Cal.: Stanford U Press, 2010. Print. P. 18

In *Aporia!* the rhetorical point of view is represented by Protaginus. Protaginus uses polysemy³¹, omission³² and other forms of deceit³³ to manipulate less skilled interlocutors into doing his bidding and paying him handsomely. Protaginus' spends a number in the first act, "Learning How to Lie" explaining the nature of his rhetorical trickery: "If you can control language, you can control reality."³⁴

This comes up against another flawed viewpoint, though one less-obviously so, dialogical philosophy itself. "According to dialogical philosophy, a claim is either right or wrong."³⁵ Unfortunately, Socratic elenchus cannot prove a right theory, only disprove a wrong one. Hegel himself "reproaches Plato for having elaborated and used a negative dialectic."³⁶ This holds true in many of Plato's early dialogues which leave the interlocutors in *Aporia* rather than with any definitive answers.

What this means is that, even under its own framework, Socratic elenchus is unable to make positive claims about truth, only dismiss negative ones. While this is a check on linguistic chicanery like rhetoric, it is not a basis for positive truth either. Philosophy in *Aporia!* is represented by Socrates himself. Socrates appears in the play as an antagonist to Protaginus. I purposefully avoid the word villain, because Socrates, like dialogical philosophy, acts as a check on bad speech craft. Socrates spends the play exposing rhetoricians for the charlatans they are, much like the real Socrates (or at least the Platonic one) did in Plato's dialogues. This, though, is in search of truth. One of the piece's final numbers, "I Went to Delphi" elaborates on this. "If

³¹ See Page 48

³² See Page 35

³³ See Page 48

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Nikulin, Dmitrij Vladimirovič. *Dialectic and dialogue*. Stanford, Cal.: Stanford U Press, 2010. Print. P. 18

³⁶ Nikulin, Dmitrij Vladimirovič. *Dialectic and dialogue*. Stanford, Cal.: Stanford U Press, 2010. Print. P. 61

answers are all in my mind/ I have no knowledge left to find."³⁷ Socrates knows that he knows nothing, but what he does not know is that his method of finding truth will never yield the satisfaction that he desires.

Thus, rather than depicting two approaches to the good that cannot coexist, the show represents two incompatible moral values on which I have placed no normative value. Neither is applied universally correctly or incorrectly in the context of the play. This would be moot. Both disciplines still exist, and both are used for both the seeking and the obfuscation of truth. This is why the play is a comedy. In a tragedy, a major error is made, damning the tragic hero to her fate. In comedy, however, a minor error is made, and thus is recoverable.³⁸ Protaginus begins as an ideologue for one side of the debate, as does Socrates, but as both come to realize the benefits of the other's discipline, the mistake is rectified and a non-tragic ending is reached.³⁹ This follows one of Aristotle's two ideal plots of recognition and reversal. This is the latter of Aristotle scholar Masahiro Kitano's comedic plot outlines: "the protagonist almost accomplishes mischief in an error of some kind, but in the nick of the time, recognition occurs and the deed is avoided."⁴⁰

Within the context of the play, Protaginus 'wins' the conflict between himself and Socrates.⁴¹ This brings me to the nature of philosophy at this time. Rhetoric's triumph represents the coming of modernism that would minimize dialogical philosophy. Beginning even with Aristotle who

³⁷ See Page 101

³⁸ Kitano, Masahiro. "Aristotle's Theory of Comedy:." Bulletin of Gunma Prefectural Women's University 22 (2001): 193-201. Web. P. 196

³⁹ See Page 101

⁴⁰ Kitano, Masahiro. "Aristotle's Theory of Comedy:." Bulletin of Gunma Prefectural Women's University 22 (2001): 193-201. Web. P. 197

⁴¹ See Page 101

wrote his philosophy in monological treatises, philosophy would begin to phase out the dialogue in favor of the treatise in only a few short generations.⁴²

By the time Descartes's *cogito* upends French philosophy, "a crisis of dialogue due to the solitariness of a single, self-isolating autonomous subject" had begun.⁴³ Schleiermacher, Schelling and Hegel continue this tradition, trying "to establish philosophy as *the* doctrine of science,"⁴⁴ because by this time science had displaced philosophy as Western society's dominant mode of discourse. Philosophy had distanced itself from rhetoric by embracing scientific truth-testing and logic, but in its rush to defeat rhetoric, philosophy killed dialogue. Later philosophical dialogues, such as Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* become little more than rhetorical exercises, wherein a correct answer is provided through an author surrogate. This is why Protaginus defeats Socrates in "The Final Confrontation," because philosophy has ceded the realm of drama and dialogue to rhetoric and fiction. Much like *Aporia!*, however, this confrontation was far from final.

IV. Allosensus & Conclusions

"Nothing can dwindle to nothing..."⁴⁵

— Titus Lucretius Carus, *De Rerum Natura*

In *Dialogue and Dialectic*, Nikulin illustrates a concept between the poles of consensus and dissensus called Allosensus. Allosensus is the desired outcome of a dialogue. Rather than dissensus, which is how the two interlocutors enter the dialogue, or consensus which necessarily involves the violence of one party dominating the other, Allosensus is a matter of recognition that allows the Self and the Other to coexist without threat of domination.⁴⁶ A dialogue can stop

⁴² Nikulin, Dmitriy Vladimirovič. *Dialectic and dialogue*. Stanford, Cal.: Stanford U Press, 2010. Print. P. 85

⁴³ Nikulin, Dmitriy Vladimirovič. *Dialectic and dialogue*. Stanford, Cal.: Stanford U Press, 2010. Print. P. xii

⁴⁴ Nikulin, Dmitriy Vladimirovič. *Dialectic and dialogue*. Stanford, Cal.: Stanford U Press, 2010. Print. P. 67

⁴⁵ Carus, Titus Lucretius, and W. H. D. Rouse. *De rerum natura*. London: W. Heinemann, 1959. Print. P. 13

⁴⁶ Nikulin, Dmitriy Vladimirovič. *Dialectic and dialogue*. Stanford, Cal.: Stanford U Press, 2010. Print. P. 78-9

and begin again at any point if Allosensus is reached, it is a recognition of “the difference of and from the other through a dialogical and unfinalizable unwrapping of the inexhaustible contents of one’s personal other.”⁴⁷

Since these dialogues are unpredictable and unfinalizable, they must be able to be stopped and begun at any point in time, and Allosensus ensures this possibility. Written dialogues, or even dramas, are meant to imitate oral dialogues. This is what Plato did in the Academy, and this is what I attempt to do with this piece. *Aporia*’s Allosensus, however, is metatextual.

Both rhetoric and philosophy remain disciplines rigorously studied by everyone from university students to world leaders, and as such it is impossible to name a clear victor in a battle between the two. Rhetoric holds its place in legal cases, business deals, and political speeches, but philosophy is invaluable as a logical tool and a methodology for questioning the nature of the universe. Even though neither are the currency by which the average person converses, each is a vital part of the subjective experience of most individuals.

Just because a winner cannot be declared, however, does not mean that the conflict within Athens is not worth study and reproduction. In my investigation of this issue, I expected to find that one of the two displaced the other as the dominant mode of discourse in Athens, and only in later years did the line become blurry, but this was not the case. Until Athens’ subjugation at the hands of the Peloponnesians, rhetoric and philosophy were both present in court cases, histories and dramas in equal measure.

The final scene of *Aporia!* is my attempt to depict this Allosensus. Protaginus has begun to set up schools of rhetoric around Greece, and even has Socrates supporting his enlightened sophistry, as well as monitoring him to keep him honest, when the Cretan Royal court returns to

⁴⁷ Nikulin, Dmitrij Vladimirovič. *Dialectic and dialogue*. Stanford, Cal.: Stanford U Press, 2010. Print. P.4-5

bring Protaginus back to his homeland. These Cretans represent the pull of rhetoric on Protaginus to bring him back to his ideological roots, but instead, Protaginus chooses to remain balanced, in the play represented by his love for his friends. In remaining with Socrates, he leaves the potential for future dialogue open, and remains in conversation with those around him.

Aporia directly translates to “without a path.”⁴⁸ I called the show this for a variety of reasons. First, because the show is about choices, it is full of lost characters trying to find their way in the world. It is also called Aporia because the audience is meant to wonder which ideological position- rhetoric or philosophy- will come out on top, but Aporia also refers to conversation. Dialogues, which as I’ve said are merely written and edited reproductions of conversations, often end in Aporia, and while the play seems to wrap up nicely, it leaves open the potential for an infinite number of future conversations, both within the text, and outside the theatre. This is my hope for those who watch *Aporia!* That they will engage in the process of philosophy themselves. So, now that you have read “Aporia! A Tale of Sittlichkeit and Allosensus,” please read *Aporia! A Tale of Rhetoric and Philosophy*, or watch it, or better still have a philosophically significant conversation with someone in your life, and find that the best place to be when searching for the truth is somewhere without a path.

⁴⁸ "Aporia." Oxford English Dictionary. Oxford English Dictionary. N.d. Web. 11 Apr. 2017.

Aporia! A Tale of Rhetoric and
Philosophy
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Characters

Protaginus- a disgraced advisor to the king of Crete, cum Athens latest rhetoric teacher

Elpinice- a well-educated social climber, wife of Junior

Socrates- Athens' greatest philosopher

Junior- a spoiled rich kid, son of Al, husband of Elpinice

Demosthenes- a wealthy heir robbed of his inheritance

Al- a disloyal general in charge of Athens' forces, father of Junior

Elenchus- A mouthy slave

Meletus- one of Protaginus' students

Anytus- one of Protaginus' students

Lycon- one of Protaginus' students

Dionysus- god of wine and the devil on your shoulder

Apollo- god of the sun and the angel on your shoulder

Isaeus- Athens' greatest attorney

Calicles- a rhetoric teacher

Aphobus and Therripides- Demosthenes' guardians

Ensemble Includes

A Greek Chorus

Cretans

Townspeople (including Job, the Bailiff and Judge Dracon)

Socrates' Followers (including Plato)

Calicles' Followers

Al's Servants

Trial Jurors

Al's Soldiers

Act One

Scene 1- Greek Amphitheater, 398 BCE

(AT RISE: The stage is dark. A single low note echoes through the theater. An ominous voice rings out)

DIONYSUS

In the beginning, there was darkness, cold and black. And out of the darkness--

APOLLO

--There was light.

(The stage lights come up, and we see APOLLO and DIONYSUS standing center-stage. Dionysus glowers at Apollo)

DIONYSUS

Apollo, don't interrupt me! *(Beat)* Where was I? *(Beat)* Oh, where was it?

(He looks around)

You made me lose my place. I should call you Prometheus, the way you're stealing my thunder.

APOLLO

Sorry, you know that light is kind of my thing. Just keep going, you're doing great.

DIONYSUS

Don't patronize me.

(Dionysus addresses the audience)

Okay, there we are. Then there was--

APOLLO

Music!

DIONYSUS

Gods Damn You!

(THE GREEK CHORUS enter standing in rows on risers. The open their mouths as if to sing)

Not yet! We're starting with my big number.

APOLLO

I think you mean our big number.

DIONYSUS

Fine, our number. Greetings one and all, I am Dionysus the god of wine and drama. Welcome to City Dionysia, the greatest festival in all of recorded history.

APOLLO

Which, to be fair, is only about ten years. Historicus just started writing things down pretty recently.

*(Dionysus gives Apollo a
withering glance)*

DIONYSUS

And you've already met Apollo.

APOLLO *(counting on his fingers)*
God of the light, the sun, archery, music, truth, healing, and
the little plastic bits at the ends of shoelaces.

DIONYSUS

Great dominions, all. Here at Dionysia, playwrights come from far
and wide to tell me tales of suspense, comedy, and honestly, a
surprising amount of incest.

(Dionysus shudders)

All in the hopes of having their name written down in the annals
of history.

APOLLO

History. It's so very mortal, isn't it?

DIONYSUS

There's one thing we can agree on. In this modern Age of
Pericles, the mortals have become obsessed with their records and
fame. They have begun to neglect their gods in favor of more
human pursuits, like Philosophy and Rhetoric and Ultimate
Frisbee. They have lost their path, or Aporia, as we say in
Greece.

NO. 1- APORIA

DIONYSUS

ALL GREECE, FROM THEBES TO CRETE
COME IN AND SEE MY PLAYS

CHORUS

APORIA!

DIONYSUS

ALL FREE, NO ENTRY FEE,
BUT EVEN SO THEY STRAY

CHORUS

APORIA!

DIONYSUS

I THINK I MIGHT LOSE THEM,
IF I DON'T ACT NOW
APOLLO, I MUST DRAW THEM IN,
BUT HOW DAMN IT HOW?

CHORUS

APORIA!

YOU'VE LOST YOUR PATH

APORIA!

YOU FELL OFF TRACK

APORIA!

DIONYSUS

LET'S GET THEM BACK!

CHORUS
APORIA! APORIA!

APOLLO
THEIR MINDS ARE OFF OUR SHRINES
AND THEY KNOW ALL OUR TRICKS

CHORUS
APORIA!

APOLLO
THEY'VE SEEN OUR EVERY SCENE
OUR KICKLINE'S GOT NO KICK
*(The chorus form a kick
line, hear this line and
then abandon it)*

CHORUS
APORIA!

APOLLO
I'M SORRY TO TELL YOU,
THEY'VE LAID DOWN THE LAW
A NEW DEUS EX MACHINA
DOESN'T SHOCK AND AWE

CHORUS
APORIA!
YOU'VE LOST YOUR PATH
APORIA!
YOU FELL OFF TRACK
APORIA!
FIND YOUR WAY BACK
APORIA! APORIA!

DIONYSUS
THEY WON'T BELIEVE IN ANY GODS
TO FREE THEM FROM THEIR PAIN
WHEN NONE OF OUR SKY DEMAGOGUES
WILL GRANT A PRAYER FOR RAIN
THEY WANT SOMETHING NEW,
WHAT DO I DO?
*(PROTAGINUS, ELENCHUS,
JUNIOR, DEMOSTHENES and
ELPINICE enter)*

PROTAGINUS
GODS HEED, I AM IN NEED
I WANNA RUN A GRIFT

CHORUS
APORIA!

ELENCHUS
PLEASE SAVE A HELPLESS SLAVE
BEFORE HE'S CAST ADRIFT

CHORUS
APORIA!

ELPINICE AND JUNIOR
WE'RE LOOKING FOR LOVE NOW

DEMOSTHENES AND PROTAGINUS
BUT MONEY WOULDN'T HURT

SOCRATES
I'M KEEPING THINGS HIGH-BROW

APOLLO
SO COME ON DOWN TO EARTH

CHORUS
APORIA!
MAKE HISTORY
APORIA!
MATTER TO ME
APORIA!
WHO COULD I BE?
APORIA! APORIA!

DIONYSUS
THEY CAN TRUST A DEITY
WHO CAN EMPATHIZE WITH LOSS
HUMANS JUST WANT TO BE FREE
TO PRETEND TO BE THE BOSS
NO MORE STANDING BY,
WE CAN TRY!

EVERYONE
APORIA! (4X)

*(The principles, except
for Dionysus and Apollo,
and the chorus, except
for BRENT exit)*

DIONYSUS
Thanks folks. So, Brent, our new intern found out what modern
audiences are into. Say hi, Brent.

*(Brent waves to the
crowd. He waves a little
too long)*

Calm down, Brent. It's not a big deal. Everyone knows your dad
just scored you a job running the festival's social media
accounts.

(Brent deflates)

So in an attempt to reach a more modern audience, we have decided
to tell a story about real people in real situations. This tale
in particular is about a disgraced advisor named Protaginus and
his friends finding a new place in the world.

APOLLO
And don't be surprised if you see a couple of gods hanging around
to help him along the way.

*(Apollo winks. Dionysus
notices and hits him)*

DIONYSUS

Come along you dim bulb, we've talked enough. Without further
ado, enjoy the festival.

(Blackout)

Scene 2- A crossroads outside of Crete

(An empty road. Paths extend in seemingly every direction. Signposts label some of the paths with the letters of famous fraternities, "Aen", "Psi Upsilon", etc. In the distance, beyond the sea, is Athens. Athens is glimmering white and we can almost make out some columns. A tumbleweed rolls across stage. PROTAGINUS is shoved onto stage left)

CRETANS

And stay out!

PROTAGINUS

You can't treat a king's advisor like this! It's not my fault we lost the war. Greek fire doesn't sound waterproof. How was I supposed to know water makes it get bigger? Anyone could have made that mistake!

(Protaginus knocks on the gates of the city)

PROTAGINUS *(cont'd)*

Well that's just great. What in Hades am I going to do now?

(Protaginus looks at the sign)

PROTAGINUS *(cont'd)*

Let's see. I bathe too often to go to Sparta, Thebes has exactly one bar, and I could never get a bid for Psi U. I don't know anywhere I'm not going to be completely miserable.

(Music begins to play. Protaginus, downtrodden, wanders the stage)

NO. 2- NOTHING TO LOSE

PROTAGINUS

GOD OF BEGINNING
FORGIVE ME MY SINNING
MY PROSPECTS ARE THINNING,
I FELL FROM YOUR PATH.

PISSED OFF SOME CRETANS;
I CARRIED THOSE CRETINS
UNTIL I WAS BEATEN,
AND SUFFERED THEIR WRATH.

IF THEY COULD GET PAST
THE MORALS THEY HELD FAST
THEIR KINGDOM WOULD GROW VAST
IF ONLY THEY'D KNOWN

PROPER INFLECTION
AND MISDIRECTION,
COULD SWING AN ELECTION
OR GET YOU A THRONE

SHOW ME WHERE TO GO, JANUS.
I DON'T CARE, YOU CHOOSE.

ANYWHERE ON THE PLANET,
CAUSE I'VE GOT NOTHING TO LOSE.

*(Protaginus is struck in
the face by a stone flyer
that reads "Free Speech
Legalized in Athens"
Eureka!)*

PROTAGINUS

MIRACLES HAPPEN,
IT'S ONWARDS TO ATHENS!
OH JANUS, MY CAPTAIN,
YOU'VE KEPT ME SAFE.

ENLIGHTEN THE GREECIANS,
CHARGE THOUSANDS A PIECE THEN,
TAKE MY GOLDEN FLEECE, AND
I'LL MAKE MY ESCAPE.

THE WEALTHY WILL FLOCK IN,
THE SENATORS KNOCKING,
TO PLACE ALL THEIR STOCK IN
MY EXCELLENT CARE

THANK YOU MY DOOR GOD,
I'LL SQUEEZE THEM FOR MORE, GOD
UNTIL EVEN YOU'RE AWED
THEY DON'T HAVE A PRAYER!

BETTER THAN IF I PLANNED IT
EUREKA, YOU'RE MY MUSE.
AS LONG AS I'VE GOT JANUS, BABY
I GOT NOTHING TO LOSE!

I GOT NOTHING TO LOSE!

This'll be easy. All I have to do is get a few of the Athenian senator's sons to learn rhetoric from me for a few days, and I'll have a couple thousand drachma in no time. Then, I leave before anyone's the wiser. Then I can finally retire. Just me, on a beach, sipping a daiquiri on the island of Lesbos...

*(Protaginus looks around
sheepishly)*

I hear the weather's nice.

I'VE GOT NOTHING TO LOSE!
(Protaginus exits)

Scene 3- The Streets of Athens

(The market square. Shops are littered throughout the stage, one advertising a "π/l sale". Another reads "Salt, \$1000/lb." TOWNSPEOPLE mill about, tending to their shops and conversing. ELENCHUS follows one TOWNSPERSON carrying three precariously stacked urns in his arms. Protaginus enters and begins window-shopping.)

TOWNSPERSON

Hurry along, Elenchus. We need to get those urns home before your mistress' mother arrives today.

ELENCHUS

I told you to avoid the Hippodrome, that twelve chariot pile up was horrific... horse bits everywhere.

(Elenchus shudders)

Ugh, these things are heavy. It wouldn't kill you to help, would it?

TOWNSPERSON

I suppose it wouldn't, but this is exactly what I bought you for. Quickly, you only have a few hours to clean the house and prepare dinner. And, now, I have to fit in a beating for your insolence.

(Elenchus stops. He drops all three pots, breaking them. Protaginus looks over to them)

ELENCHUS

What?

(The townspeople pulls out a sling. Elenchus cringes)

TOWNSPERSON *(turning around)*

Bad move, Elenchus. Those three pots were worth more than your life. I don't care how well you know the city, if you destroy my valuables, you're worthless as a slave.

(Protaginus perks up)

Now it looks as if I'm going to have to beat you to death. Hold still please. I don't want to make this unpleasant for either of us.

(Protaginus rushes over to Elenchus and the townspeople, putting himself between the two)

PROTAGINUS

Wait! Err... I mean, hold on there, citizen. Do you really want to beat your slave out here, in public, where everyone can see?

TOWNSPERSON

Sure, it will probably help my standing. And if it gets back to my wife that I beat him on the spot, she might not be as angry.

PROTAGINUS

Okay, but surely you don't want to kill him yourself. You shouldn't sully your hands with such dirty work.

TOWNSPERSON

Actually, it'll probably be thrilling. I haven't killed a man since I was a boy.

PROTAGINUS (*reaching*)

But, uh... today's a High Holy Day?

TOWNSPERSON

Of course, you're right! With all of this merriment, I forgot that Apollo would not approve of me beating a man to death. (*Beat*) Would you mind, terribly, stranger if...

PROTAGINUS

Not a problem. I'm Cretian, no sacrificing for me today.

TOWNSPERSON

Gods bless the Cretans. You and your heathen gods. Take care young man. And take good care of Elenchus.

(*Townsperson exits*)

PROTAGINUS (*decrecendo*)

Don't you worry, I'll make him eat the urns. And then I'll rip his limbs off and beat him with them, and then I'll set his feet on fire and let him put it out with his tears... Okay, he's gone.

ELENCHUS

What's going on here?

PROTAGINUS

I'm new in town, and I need someone to show me around. All the better if they can't ditch me when I ask a stupid question. I believe this qualifies as a life debt.

ELENCHUS

Ugh, another one. That's how I got into slavery in the first place! Although, into slavery, is a weird way to put it, I'm not like *into* slavery, but these things happen here.

PROTAGINUS

What do you mean by that?

ELENCHUS

Let's just say you didn't pick the luckiest guy in Athens as your guide.

(*Elenchus takes center stage*)

NO. 3- ALL OUTTA CHIPS

ELENCHUS

WHEN THE WHEEL SPINS RED,
I ALWAYS BET ON BLACK
TRY TO GET AHEAD,
AND I LAND ON MY BACK

FORTUNE NEVER SMILES,
BUT SHE'S QUICK TO LAUGH
FIRE IS THE TRIAL
FOR MY LATEST GAFFE

IT'S EITHER HAVE OR HAVE NOT
BE A TARGET OR BE A BIG SHOT

THIS TOWN'S A COINFLIP
AND I JUST LOST MY GRIP
TIME FOR ME TO CASH OUT,
AND I'M ALL OUTTA CHIPS
I'M ALL OUTTA CHIPS

TOWNSPERSON 1

MUST BE BORN UNLUCKY

TOWNSPERSON 2

SOMETHING IN MY STARS

TOWNSPERSON 3

THOUGH I MIGHT BE PLUCKY,

TOWNSPERSON 4

IT HASN'T GOT ME FAR

ELENCHUS

I'M PRETTY QUICK, ALTHOUGH
DON'T HAVE TO DO WITH BRAINS
THE SMARTEST MAN YOU KNOW
COULD END UP IN CHAINS

IT'S A HARD WAY TO LIVE
MIGHT FORGET, BUT I'LL NEVER FORGIVE

TOWNSPEOPLE

THIS TOWN'S A COINFLIP
AND I'VE BEGUN TO SLIP
TIME FOR ME TO CASH OUT,
AND I'M ALL OUTTA CHIPS
I'M ALL OUTTA CHIPS

(Calicles enters)

CALICLES

IN NATURE, THERE'S A REASON
THAT I HAVE THIS SILVER SPOON
I PLY MY TRADE ALL SEASON
EVERY MORNING AND NIGHT AND NOON
AND BEFORE MY VERSE IS FINISHED
YOU WILL SING A DIFFERENT TUNE
THESE DIMWITS TAKE MY CLINIC
AND THEY MAKE ME A TYCOON
I'M STRONG, AND THEY CAN SENSE IT
NOT A WORD THEY CAN IMPUGN
SO THEY ALL PAY MY EXPENSE, IT'S
GOOD WORK FOR AN AFTERNOON

ELENCHUS

THIS TOWN'S A COINFLIP
AND I JUST LOST MY GRIP
TIME FOR ME TO CASH OUT,
AND I'M ALL OUTTA CHIPS
I'M ALL OUTTA CHIPS

COMPANY

THIS TOWN'S A COINFLIP

CALICLES

AND I WON'T LOSE MY GRIP
COMPANY
TIME FOR ME TO CASH OUT,
AND I'M ALL OUTTA CHIPS
I'M ALL OUTTA CHIPS

ELENCHUS

I was free once, but I lost all of my money in a lawsuit. That charming character you saved me from got me off the street years ago, and I owed him my life, and now I guess I owe you. So what do you need a guide for?

PROTAGINUS

I'm here to start a rhetoric school. If I can teach the rich kids of Athens to argue, the upper crust will pay top dollar. Then, once I collect my first round of payments, I'm out of here.

ELENCHUS

Where to?

PROTAGINUS

Lesbos--

ELENCHUS (*interrupting*)

-- I've heard good things about the weather there.
(*Protaginus smiles*)

PROTAGINUS

Exactly. If you help me, then I'll set you free.

ELENCHUS

Deal, but I want to come with you. I want to go to Lesbos. No more debt, sandy beaches, and all the beautiful... "Weather" I can take in.

PROTAGINUS

Okay. So where would I go to drum up some students?

ELENCHUS

Well, there's only one place in town to do that, and we can go right now. I'll take you.

(*ELENCHUS and PROTAGINUS
exit*)

Scene 4- The Agora

(A colosseum-like arena. FOLLOWERS OF SOCRATES and FOLLOWERS OF CALICLES mill about. CALICLES stands stage right and SOCRATES not far from him. PROTAGINUS and ELENCHUS enter stage left. Calicles and Socrates warm up for a bout.)

PROTAGINUS

What is this place? I said I wanted to go somewhere to get students.

ELENCHUS

This is the Agora. It's intended to be a public place where ideas are shared, but lately it's become the top spot for rhetoricians to battle each other.

PROTAGINUS

Hey, it's that guy from earlier.

ELENCHUS (*gesturing*)

Yeah, that one's Calicles. He's big around here, quite the following, but he has some really questionable ideas about how people should treat each other.

PROTAGINUS

And what about the other guy?

ELENCHUS

That's Socrates. They call him the gadfly. He went to the Oracle at Delphi, who I don't believe in. You know she's just a seventeen year-old they give psychedelic drugs to? Giving acid to a kid just doesn't seem like the best way to predict the future.

PROTAGINUS

Elenchus, focus! What did the oracle say?

ELENCHUS

Right, sorry. The Oracle called Socrates the wisest of them all. Now he goes around to other rhetoricians and he destroys their businesses.

PROTAGINUS

By beating them in arguments?

ELENCHUS

Sort of. He kind of lets them beat themselves. All he usually does is ask questions. A lot of people find it really annoying.

PROTAGINUS

I can imagine.

*(Protaginus and Elenchus
exit stage left)*

NO. 4- PHILONIKITA (Socrates Vs Calicles)

PLATO

I want a clean Athenian dialogue. No paradoxes and no beard-pulling. The topic is, resolved: the strong have the right to rule over the weak. Each combatant will have two speeches to make

their case. Calicles will be taking the affirmative position, and therefore speaking first. Calicles, the floor is yours.

CALICLES

THIS ONE'S FOR MY BROTHERS WHO DON'T FOLLOW THE RULES
ALL THE MONEY AND JEWELS THAT WE PARTED FROM FOOLS
THE GODS GAVE ME THE TOOLS TO START WINNING SOME DUELS
GOOD LUCK KEEPING YOUR COOL, ONCE I TAKE YOU TO SCHOOL
THE AGORA'S MY ACADEMY AND CLASS IS IN SESSION
PUT YOUR DAMN HAND DOWN I GOT NO TIME FOR QUESTIONS
NATURAL MORALITY; SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST
I'M THE SICKEST RHETORICIAN, AND IT TIME FOR YOU TO WITNESS
YOU BUDDY UP TO SHEEP, WHILE I TAKE EM TO THE SLAUGHTER
GREAT GADFLY MEET THE SLY FLY-SWATTER
GOT A GANG OF FOLLOWERS, I CALL EM CALICLEAN
CHOIRS STRINGING UP THEIR LYRES, STARTED WRITING ME PAEANS
YOU ARE SEEING HERCULEAN FEATS OF LYRICAL PERSUASION
EVERY FIBER OF MY BEING SET TO RISE TO THE OCCASION
MY EXCELLENCE IS EVIDENT, SUPREMACY IS HEAVEN-SENT
YOUR DEFICIT IS DEFINITE, OF COURSE I'M ACTING ARROGANT

SOCRATES

ARE YOU DONE TALKING? COS I'VE HEARD ENOUGH
A RHETORICIANS WORDS ARE ALL SURFACE, MAKE UP
ANOTHER LIE TO REAPPLY BEFORE IT BREAKS UP
WE'RE EYE-TO-EYE, NOW SAY GOOD-BYE. IT'S TIME TO WAKE UP
YOU'RE DREAMING IF YOU STEP TO SOCRATES, I'M A LION
WENT TRIPLE PLAT FROM DISS TRACKS, ASK ION
BOUT TO BEAT YOU IN A BATTLE BABY BARELY EVEN TRYIN'
ATHENS ALWAYS ASKIN IF MY ADVERSARIES SATISFYING
WITH THE WINS I BEEN SUPPLYING, THE PHILOSOPHER'S UNTOUCHABLE
BUT I AM INCORRUPTIBLE, MY MORALS NOT ADJUSTABLE
EVERYBODY'S TRUSTABLE, AS LONG AS THEY'RE ACTING
ETHICALLY, COLLECTIVELY, NOT SELFISHLY EXTRACTING
EVERY SINGLE DAMN DRACHMA THEY CAN STUFF INTO A COIN PURSE
DOING SOMEONE DIRT IS WRONG, BUT DOING DIRT IS EVEN WORSE
YOU'RE BLACKENING YOUR SOUL, AND EVEN THOUGH YOU THINK IT'S
UNSEEN
WHEN YOU GET TO HADES, MAN I HOPE YOU BROUGHT SOME SUNSCREEN

CALICLES

GOT SOME RIGHT HERE, AND IT'S S-P-F-U
I'M BACK ON THE MIC TO UPSET YOUR WORLD VIEW
BOOT-STRAP COME UP, THE ONLY WAY WE'VE EVER KNOWN
IF YOU MAKE IT BIG IN ATHENS, THEN YOU DID IT ON YOUR OWN
BEMOAN A SYSTEM SET IN STONE OR
JOIN THE CAUSE, I'LL BE YOUR MENTOR
COME ON PHILOSOPHER, I DON'T NEED A GOSSIPER
TO TELL ME YOU'RE SECRETLY IN NEED OF A LOAN
YOUR ROBE IS DIRTY, YOU'RE WAY PAST THIRTY
I THINK YOU LIVE HERE, I KNOW YOU HEARD ME
YOU'RE THE BIGGEST JOKE FROM HERE TO THE ACROPOLIS
YOU CAN'T STOP THE POT SHOTS FROM OUT OF MY ESOPHAGUS
YOU THINK THAT YOU'RE THE CLEVEREST, YOU'RE NEVER GONNA WHETHER
THIS
YOU THINKING THAT YOU BETTER, IT'S NOT GONNA LAST FOREVER, KID
I'LL LEAVE YOU WITH SOME WISDOM YOU KNOW YOU COULD TRUST
THE STRONG DO WHAT THEY WILL, THE WEAK SUFFER WHAT THEY MUST

SOCRATES

STOP THE TALK, TAKE HEED OF THE PHILOSOPHER
AND WATCH THE SOC COCK BLOCK AN INTERLOCUTOR
PLATO, GET THIS ONE DOWN FOR POSTERITY
AFTER CALICLES RAMBLED INCOHERENTLY,
VOLUNTARILY USED MY PRIMARY DEXTERITY
TO GIVE THIS BULLY SOME MUCH NEEDED CLARITY
CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING, YOU'RE DEAD AND YOU'RE WALLOWING
IN TARTARUS, LOST, AND YOU'RE CONSIDERING BORROWING
A FEW GOLD COINS TO PAY CHARON THE BOATMAN
BUT NONE OF YOUR MARKS ARE SHARING THEIR TOKENS
TRY ALL YOUR TRICKS, BUT THERE'S NOTHING LEFT
YOU CAN CHEAT WEAK MORTALS, BUT YOU CAN'T CHEAT DEATH
THIS DISCURSIVE DISPERSAL THAT NEEDS NO REHEARSAL
SPITTING TRUTH THAT'S SO OUT THERE, IT'S ALL UNIVERSAL
BEING KIND TO THE WEAK IS THE REASON THAT YOU HATE ME
BUT I'M ON TO SOMETHING: I LET YOU DEBATE ME

*(The crowd applauds.
Socrates is the clear
victor)*

SOCRATES

Yet another rhetorician fails to live up to the might of philosophy. Plato, and anyone else that wishes to accompany me, let's go.

*(Socrates, Socrates'
followers, and some of
Calicles' followers exit
stage right. Elenchus and
Protaginus enter stage
left.)*

PROTAGINUS

That god stuff really plays here, huh?

ELENCHUS

You have no idea. That's kind of the cornerstone of most good argument. You have to appeal to the heavens.

PROTAGINUS

Noted. Well, time to go to work.

*(Protaginus cracks his
knuckles and turns to
Calicles' remaining
followers)*

Hey, that was pretty good, huh?

CALICLEAN FOLLOWER 1

Not really. Our teacher got destroyed. What are we going to do now?

CALICLEAN FOLLOWER 2

Well I guess it's back to pottery. It's too bad, I wasn't very happy with my urn-ings.

(Ba-dum-tish)

CALICLEAN FOLLOWER 3

I don't know what I'm going to do. I can't go back to herding goats. They replaced me with a dog.

CALICLEAN FOLLOWER 1

Isn't that just like dogs? Always stealing our jobs.

PROTAGINUS

I don't know, I think Calicles might still be on to something.

CALICLEAN FOLLOWER 2

What do you mean? Socrates ate him alive.

PROTAGINUS

Well, if Socrates won, doesn't that make him stronger? And what did he do as soon as he won? He took half of your classmates with him. Sounds very Caliclean to me.

CALICLEAN FOLLOWER 1

You know what? You're right. I'll go get him.

*(Caliclean follower 1
begins to leave. Elenchus
blocks his path)*

PROTAGINUS

Hold on a second, friend. Calicles was just defeated in Athens' most public forum. I don't think he has too much credibility anymore. It just so happens, however, that I am a rhetoric teacher. Name's Protaginus, I'm new in town.

*(Protaginus reaches out
his hand to shake. The
follower looks confused.
Protaginus puts his hand
down)*

CALICLEAN FOLLOWER 1

Protaginus, huh? Well you've definitely got the arguing down, but a rhetorician must also be wise. Are you?

PROTAGINUS

I'll let the great Greek Suidas answer that for me. "A serpent, unless it devours a serpent, will not become a dragon."

*(Protaginus holds for
applause that doesn't
come)*

CALICLEAN FOLLOWER 2

What does that mean? Who's the serpent here? Are we the serpent? And are you also a serpent? And who exactly is the dragon?

PROTAGINUS

I am the serpent. Calicles is the other serpent, and now I'm a dragon. Spread the word. Protaginus is starting the best rhetoric school in all of Athens, and at a great price. Only three talents a month.

*(The Caliclean followers
mumble to themselves and
exit stage right.
Protaginus and Elenchus
exit stage left)*

Scene 5- Junior's Chambers

(A young man's bedroom. Posters glorifying Hercules, Perseus, and Theseus like sports figures. A large bed sits stage right. ELPINICE lays on the bed reading a scroll while a SERVANT brushes her hair. She looks out the window every so often, clearly impatient. After a fashion, ALCIBIADES THE YOUNGER, AKA JUNIOR, enters)

ELPINICE

It's about time. Where in Hades have you been all day?

JUNIOR

I was at the baths with the boys. What's the matter honey?
(*Elpinice stands and walks over to Junior. She puts a finger on his chest*)

ELPINICE

What's the matter? You go out all day spending your father's money hanging around in those steam rooms, and you spend no time thinking about your future. *Our* future.

JUNIOR

I'm thinking about the future. What's for dinner? That's in the future.

ELPINICE

Where's your ambition? Where's your drive? Your father will go down in history as the leader of all of Athens' soldiers, and you're content to live in his shadow. I thought I married a man, or at least someone with some goals.

JUNIOR (*annoyed*)

I will not be spoken to that way. The way I spend my time is none of your concern. You're lucky that I married you. With your attitude, it's a wonder you had any suitors at all. People used to say that you're weren't the least interested in men.

ELPINICE (*to herself*)

Good thing you have enough interest for the both of us.

JUNIOR

What was that?

ELPINICE

Nothing, dear. I just wish you would take some initiative.
(*Elpinice starts to massage Junior's biceps*)
You're so brave and strong and smart. I just wish you would use all your talents for something, really make something of yourself and of us.

JUNIOR

I'm sorry, but that's just not who I am. I'm someone who likes to go with the flow. I want to kick back, relax, chill. Can't you understand that?

ELPINICE

No. When I was fourteen, my father traded me to you for fifty talents and a goat. I guess I assumed I would be marrying into a powerful, high-achieving family. Instead, I got you and (*shudders*) your father.

JUNIOR

Well, that's what happens. You assumed something because my name is Alcibiades, but I don't even go by that name.

ELPINICE

But it's such a fine name, and "Junior" is so... diminutive.

JUNIOR

Well, it's what I've chosen. You have to respect that. You're always raging against something, Elpinice. You need to calm down.

NO. 5- DON'T PUSH BACK

JUNIOR

YOU TELL ME YOUR LIFE IS SO TERRIBLE
BUT ARE YOU NOT CLEAN AND WELL-FED?
YOU TELL ME THIS HOUSE IS UNBEARABLE
BUT JUST WHERE DO YOU LAY YOUR HEAD?

IS SHE RIGHT, WELL JUNIOR, SHE'S GOTTA BE
ALL HER SERVANTS TELL HER SO
FACE IT BABY, YOU WON THE LOTTERY
IF YOU DON'T LIKE IT, WELL THEN YOU CAN GO.

DON'T PUSH BACK, WE'RE STUCK FOR ETERNITY
DON'T PUSH BACK, WE'LL BE DISGRACED
DON'T PUSH BACK, THEY'RE JUST MY FRATERNITY
DON'T PUSH BACK

ELPINICE

YOU CAN GIVE ME SLAVES, JEWELS, AND SAILING SHIPS
BUT MONEY CANNOT BUY YOU LOVE
LYING FACE LAUNCHED ONE THOUSAND EGO TRIPS
HELEN OF PLOY, SORRY OLD BOY
BUT THE JIG IS UP

(*ALCIBIADES enters*)

ELPINICE

Hello, General Alcibiades.

ALCIBIADES

Elpinice, please. How many times have I told you? You're family now. Call me Al.

(*Elpinice glowers, but recovers quickly*)

ELPINICE

Of course. My apologies, General Al. To what do we owe the pleasure of your visit?

ALCIBIADES

Well, what do you know about rhetoric?

ELPINICE

I know it's the last refuge of the man who cannot take lives with his own hands, so he uses it to take them with others.

ALCIBIADES

Exactly. Doesn't that sound useful?

(Elpinice frowns)

I was in the square when I heard about a new rhetoric teacher that's just moved into town. He's causing quite the stir. He's even disparaging Socrates.

ELPINICE

Well it's about time someone knocked that old windbag down a peg. So why the sudden interest in sophistry?

ALCIBIADES

Because Junior here is going to start taking lessons.

JUNIOR

Uhh... no I'm not.

ELPINICE *(ignoring him)*

Didn't you want Junior to go to the Gymnasium and become a solidier like you?

JUNIOR

Guys, I think I can decide my career for myself.

ALCIBIADES *(following suit)*

I did, but listening to these guys talk has convinced me. This is what Junior needs to do if he wants to be a real player in this town.

ELPINICE

So, you've talked to this man. What was his name again?

ALCIBIADES

I'm not sure, but the goat herder that I spoke to about him was very convincing.

ELPINICE *(dryly)*

I'm sure he was. Al, are you sure that this isn't you just going with the last thing that you heard someone say again?

ALCIBIADES

One time, I let a guy trick me into sacking Athens, damn Timon. Just that one time, and the Senate forgave me. Why can't you, Elpinice? Why can't you?

ELPINICE

Sorry General... I mean Al, I'm just making sure this is the best idea.

JUNIOR

What about me? Don't I get a say in any of this?

ALCIBIADES

No. I'm tired of you only going to the kitchen and the bathhouse. It's about time you found some direction. And why not as a lawyer? Or even a senator?

(Song resumes)

ALCIBIADES

YOU WILL BRING RESPECT TO THIS FAMILY
YOU WILL TAKE YOUR RIGHTFUL PLACE
YOU WILL LISTEN TO MY ANTISTROPHE
ROUSE WITH EVERY SPEECH, WIN EVERY CASE

ELPINICE

LOOK AT HOW THE TABLES HAVE TURNED AROUND

JUNIOR

FATHER YOU CAN'T BE SINCERE

ALCIBIADES

SORRY, JUNIOR, THIS TIME I STAND MY GROUND

ALL THREE

EVERYBODY STOP, NOW LISTEN HERE!

ALCIBIADES

DON'T PUSH BACK

JUNIOR

LET'S NOT BE HASTY, THOUGH

ALCIBIADES

DON'T PUSH BACK

JUNIOR

LET'S THINK THIS THROUGH

ALCIBIADES

DON'T PUSH BACK

JUNIOR

DAD, I DON'T WANT TO GO!

ALCIBIADES AND ELPINICE (TO JUNIOR)

DON'T PUSH BACK!

JUNIOR

That's it, I'm out of here! I'm going to the bathhouse.

ELPINICE

Have fun with your friends, and remember, don't push back!
*(Junior exits stage
right. Al and Elpinice
exit stage left)*

Scene 6- Outside Protaginus' School

(A dilapidated building. A hand-painted sign reads "Protaginus the Elder's Academy of Rhetoric: Fill yourself with more hot air than Aeolus." A fence sits on the right side of the stage. Protaginus and Elenchus stand in front of the building impatiently.)

PROTAGINUS

I never should have let you write the sign. And what's with the Protaginus the Elder stuff? I don't have a son.

ELENCHUS

It gives you some credibility. You look like a family man. Who doesn't trust someone who's proven at least two people like him?

PROTAGINUS

That's not a bad idea, but look at all the good it's doing us.
(A tumbleweed rolls by)

ELENCHUS

Give it some time, Rome wasn't built in a day. I know, I got contracted to build a support wall there. It took forever.

PROTAGINUS

We spent the last of my money on this shack. How do you know anyone is going to show up?

ELENCHUS

Patience.

(AL and JUNIOR enter.
Elenchus gestures, as if
to say "See?")

ALCIBIADES

You're going and that's final. We're already here anyway. Hello..
(Reading sign)

Protaginus...

(Brightens)

The Elder! So you know what a pain these ones can be, eh?

(Al gets Junior in a
headlock and gives him a
noogie. Elenchus nudges
Protaginus)

PROTAGINUS

Yeah... Kids.

ALCIBIADES

Can't live with 'em, can't strip them of their name and title and leave them as penniless wards of the city-state.

(Al breaks into laughter.
Protaginus and Elenchus
uncomfortably join him)

Either way, this is my son Alcibiades the Younger--

ELENCHUS (interrupting)

-- General Alcibiades. I didn't recognize you sir.

PROTAGINUS

General? Well it's wonderful to meet you, and your son.

ALCIBIADES

Well thank you. You come highly recommended. I hear from out of town. Where do you hail from again?

PROTAGINUS

Crete.

ALCIBIADES

Crete, what a lovely place. I did some work for their army a few years back when Athens was "otherwise engaged."

JUNIOR

You mean conquered by the Persians.

PROTAGINUS

And wasn't Crete aligned with the Persians then, against Athens?

ALCIBIADES (*embarrassed*)

I guess that might be *technically* true... Well, I think I should get going. Have a good time son, really get to learning.

(*Al makes a hasty exit*)

PROTAGINUS

Okay, kid. Get inside.

JUNIOR

Whatever.

(*Junior scoffs, and enters the school by exiting stage right.*)

PROTAGINUS

The general's son! We'll be out of here in no time.

ELENCHUS

And here come a few more.

(*MELETUS, ANYTUS, and LYCON enter. Lycon is distracted by something in the audience and trips, taking Meletus and Anytus with him. They get up, Meletus is the most stage right, Lycon in the center, and Anytus the most stage left. Meletus attempts to punch Lycon, but misses and instead hits Anytus. Anytus takes a swing at Meletus, but misses. Meletus sticks his tongue out at Anytus. Anytus runs at Meletus, but Lycon stumbles into*)

*his path and both
collapse.*

*Meletus and Anytus both
grab Lycon and throw him
over the fence. He rolls,
gets up, and the three
walk over to Protaginus
and Elenchus)*

PROTAGINUS

Well, hello boys.

Meletus

Anytus,

(Gestures to Anytus)

Lycon,

(Gestures to Lycon)

And Meletus,

(Gestures to himself)

Reporting for rhetorical duty, sir.

PROTAGINUS

What brings you guys to a rhetoric school? You seem more like...

ELENCHUS

Morons?

PROTAGINUS

I was going to say the athletic type.

ANYTUS

Our parents are tired of having us around. We need something to fill our afternoons. They paid in advance.

*(The three reach into
their robes and pull out
three large gold pieces
each)*

PROTAGINUS

That's good enough for me, get inside boys.

*(The three enter the
school by exiting stage
right. Beat. Demosthenes
enters. He is dressed in
a very shabby robe. He
jumps at the ground)*

DEMOSTHENES

Now I got you, you tasty little cockroach... damn, it's just a rock.

*(Demosthenes looks
skyward)*

C'mon guys, no help with the food situation? I'd settle for sucking on some moss.

(Demosthenes sighs)

NO. 6- WEALTHY

DEMOSTHENES

I DON'T ASK FOR MUCH
SOME FOOD AND A BED
A GENTLER TOUCH
WHEN BEATING MY HEAD

I'LL TAKE IT IN STRIDE
I'LL TAKE IT WITH CHEER
BUT WITH DRACHMA I'D
BE EATING THIS YEAR

IF I WERE WEALTHY I,
COULD AFFORD MY OWN SACRIFICE
IF I WERE WEALTHY THEN,
I COULD STOP CRASHING THEM

*(THREE TOWNSPEOPLE enter
and begin a sacrifice. As
they bow their heads and
kneel at the altar,
Demosthenes joins in next
to them. They open their
eyes and see him. They
throw him out of their
sacrificial area, then
two of them exit)*

THERE ARE OTHERS LIKE ME
THE CHRISTIANS HAVE JOB
HE PITIES DEMOSTHENES

JOB *(shaking his head)*

Only one robe!

DEMOSTHENES

I'M COVERED IN GRIME
MY SKIN'S ROUGH AS CHAFF
COMMIT ANY CRIME
JUST FOR A BATH

IF I WERE WEALTHY I'D,
HAND OUT COINS AS I WALK BY
WISH I WAS WEALTHY SO
I COULD GET THIS LEECH OFF MY TORSO

*(Demosthenes lifts up his
shirt. It has a large
black leech on it. He
pulls at it, but to no
avail. He winces and puts
the shirt down.)*

I CAN'T AFFORD TO DIE
AND I'M NOT SURE WHAT TO DO
I HIGHLY DOUBT THAT CHARON
WILL TAKE AN I-O-U

I COULD PRAY TO ZEUS AND ARES
INSTEAD OF MINOR IMPS AND FAIRIES
OFFERINGS TO MATTON,
THE GOD OF KNEADING DOUGH
MY GODS I NEED SOME DOUGH!

IF I WERE WEALTHY I,
COULD AFFORD MY OWN SACRIFICE
IF I WERE WEALTHY I'D,
HAND OUT COINS AS I WALK BY

WHEN I AM WEALTHY THEN
I'LL SHARE MY WEALTH WITH ALL MY FRIENDS
WILL NOONE HEAR MY PLEA
AND RIGHT THIS WRONG... SOMEBODY?

*(As the song ends,
Demosthenes approaches
Protaginus and Elenchus)*

DEMOSTHENES

Good morning, sir. My name is Demosthenes. I have a very important legal case coming up, and I wish to learn how to properly defend myself in a court of law.

*(Elenchus and Protaginus
share an "is he serious?"
look)*

ELENCHUS

Should I give him some money, see if he goes away?

PROTAGINUS

No, they're like pigeons. You feed them once, and they never stop coming back.

*(Very slowly to
Demosthenes)*

Get out of here! I don't have any change!

DEMOSTHENES

But, sir, I'm here for rhetoric lessons.

PROTAGINUS

I'm sure you are, and will you be paying in drachma or talents?

DEMOSTHENES

Well I can't pay *right now*, but-

PROTAGINUS

That's what I thought. Run along, you little trash fire.

*(Time stops. Music begins
to play. Apollo and
Dionysus enter)*

PROTAGINUS

What in Hades? Who are you guys?

DIONYSUS

You don't recognize us? Our faces are on every temple in town!

PROTAGINUS

Sorry, I'm not from around here.

APOLLO

Well, you used to be an advisor, think of us as *your* advisors.

PROTAGINUS

I don't need any advisors. I'm not taking a charity case.

NO. 7- IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE

APOLLO

IT WON'T TAKE MUCH TO BE NICE
SUCH A SMALL SACRIFICE
HE NEEDS HELP, DON'T REFUSE
IT'S JUST ONE MORE, WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO LOSE?

DIONYSUS

WHAT COULD HE BE THINKING, HAS THIS KID BEEN DRINKING?
NO ONE RIDES FOR FREE
HOLD IN YOUR POSITION, DON'T FORGET THE MISSION,
OR YOU'LL NEVER SEE
THAT ISLAND FULL OF WOMEN, I CAN SEE YOU GRINNING,
COS YOU KNOW I'M RIGHT
YOU CAN SIT AND WONDER OR YOU BRING THE THUNDER
GET THIS KID OUT OF MY SIGHT

APOLLO

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'D BE SO CRUEL
THE COST TO YOU IS MINISCULE
HE ONLY WANTS TO GO TO SCHOOL

DIONYSUS

TUNE OUT HIS FRUSTRATION, EVERY EDUCATION
NEEDS SOME SPONSORSHIP
YOUR ASPIRATION'S LOFTY,
THIS KID WOULD BE COSTLY?

*(Dionysus turns to
Apollo)*

MAN, YOU'VE GOT TO GET A GRIP

APOLLO

YOU NEVER DID HAVE COMMON SENSE

DIONYSUS

YOU CAN'T HOLD YOUR TONGUE, YOU RUIN ALL MY FUN
WELL NOT AGAIN

APOLLO

YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN SO ARROGANT

DEMOSTHENES

I JUST WANT TO SUE FOR MY INHERITANCE
(Music stops)

PROTAGINUS

What was that about an inheritance?

*(Apollo and Dionysus
continue fighting in the
background)*

DEMOSTHENES

Yeah, I'm trying to sue my guardians for my inheritance. My parents were incredibly wealthy, and they left my dad's brothers in charge of my estate. They've been squandering it and leaving me with nothing, so it's time I took control.

DIONYSUS

And when I died, you couldn't even be bothered to come to my funeral!

APOLLO

I knew you'd be back. What was Poseidon going to do without wine? I had money on you rising from the dead by the end of the week.

PROTAGINUS

Well, I don't usually do this sort of thing, but I think I could take you on. In exchange for a...

(Protaginus tests the waters)

...50% cut of the inheritance. When you win the case, of course.

DIONYSUS

Let's hear again how you invented the lute, because that story never gets old. And you wonder why we don't invite you to things anymore.

APOLLO

Oh, I'm sorry for being proud of *creating the concept of music*. Should I really bury the lead on that one? You're welcome, you ungrateful philistine.

DEMOSTHENES

You think I could win the case? No one's ever had that much confidence in me. Deal!

PROTAGINUS

Great, now get in there, kid.

(Demosthenes enters the school by exiting stage right.)

Elenchus, change of plans.

(Music starts up again)

PROTAGINUS

THIS IS GETTING EASY, STARTING TO FEEL SLEAZY,
GOING WITH THE FLOW
GETTING ME TO PAY DAY'S TURNED INTO A MELEE,
AND YOU KNOW I WON'T SAY NO

(Protaginus enters the school by exiting stage right)

Scene 7- Inside Protagninus' School

(A one room schoolhouse. The students all sit at desks facing stage left. Protagninus stands at a podium. Elenchus sits at a table near the front looking visibly bored. Protagninus begins to teach.)

PROTAGINUS

Okay, boys. I'm sure some of you are wondering just how it is that I got you here. And I bet you're dying to know about my little speech in the Agora.

DEMOSTHENES (*softly*)

Yes.

LYCON

Not really, we're just waiting for five o'clock.

DEMOSTHENES

Well, some of us actually want to be here.

JUNIOR

Well, some of us actually *paid* to be here.

(*Snickering from Meletus, Anytus, and Lycon. Junior bathes in the laughter*)

PROTAGINUS

Well, I'm going to make you a promise. Over the next six weeks- or until I can get (*counting on his fingers*) ten more students- I'm going to turn you into lean, mean, rhetoric machines.

ANYTUS (*flatly*)

I'm overcome with joy.

PROTAGINUS

You don't understand the power of rhetoric. Have you ever wanted to outsmart your parents to get out of things you don't want to do?

MELETUS

Yeah, rhetoric school.

PROTAGINUS (*angrily*)

That's it!

(*Fuming. Rushes at Lycon. Elenchus holds him back. He takes a deep breath and calms down*)

Sure, rhetoric school. What if I told you, rhetoric made it so that you don't have to do anything you don't want to? If you learn well from me, you will never have to come here again.

MELETUS

Now, I'm listening. How?

PROTAGINUS

I'm glad you asked.

NO. 8- LEARNING HOW TO LIE

PROTAGINUS

Don't you all see? This is your chance to be like gods? If you can control language, you control reality. Juries don't vote for the best argument, just the most persuasive. Say you were accused of bringing salt into Athens without paying taxes on it? Well, our bodies are 1% salt, so aren't we all smuggling salt every time we come into town. In fact, the prosecutor is smuggling salt right now!

(The students murmur in awe)

It's easy, watch.

THE LAW SAYS PATRICIDE'S A SIN
AN EPIC MORAL BLUNDER
BUT WHO WAS IT, FIRST KILT HIS KIN
BUT OUR VERY OWN GOD OF THUNDER?

SAY YOU OWE SOME LIVESTOCK,
A DONKEY AND A MARE
PAY IT BARREL, LOCK, AND STOCK
WITH A MULE, I'D SAY THAT'S FAIR

IT'S NOT LYING IF YOU'RE CLEVER
YOU'RE ONLY PUNISHED WHEN YOU'RE CAUGHT
LISTEN AND BE KNOWN FOREVER
AS THE BENDERS OF FREE THOUGHT

HISTORY IS NEW
AND WE'RE THE ONES WHO MAKE IT
WHO CARES IF IT'S TRUE
SO LONG AS WE CAN SHAPE IT

JUNIOR

SO THIS WORKS IN THE COURTROOM,
BUT DOES IT WORK AT HOME?

PROTAGINUS

FROM THE CRADLE TO THE TOMB, MY FRIEND
FROM ATHENS OUT TO ROME

"DOES THIS ROBE MAKE ME LOOK FAT?"
I FIND THAT QUESTION TRYING,
BUT ASK PRINCE PARIS 'BOUT ALL THAT
THERE'S BENEFITS TO LYING

RHETORIC IS JUST MY WAY
OF TELLING WORDS JUST WHAT TO DO
SERVE THEM WELL AND SOON YOU'LL SAY
THAT IT SEEMS THEY'RE SERVING YOU

PROTAGINUS AND STUDENTS

HISTORY IS NEW
AND WE'RE THE ONES WHO MAKE IT
WHO CARES IF IT'S TRUE
SO LONG AS WE CAN SHAPE IT

LEARNING HOW TO LIE! (4X)

Let's get started!

JUNIOR

SAY YOU OWE A MAN THREE TALENTS,
AND YOU JUST CAN'T FIND THE DOUGH
I CAN JUGGLE, SING, AND BALANCE
ON MY HEAD SO THERE YOU GO

MELETUS

IF YOU'VE JUST BEEN ACQUITTED

LYCON

SAY, FOR THROWING LOADED DICE

ANYTUS

GET OUT THERE, STAY COMMITTED

ALL THREE

THEY CAN'T TRY THE SAME CRIME TWICE

DEMOSTHENES

YOU WANT INTEREST ON YOUR LOAN?

WHAT A FOOLISH NOTION.

NOTHING GROWS, NOT EVEN WEALTH

JUST LOOK UNTO THE OCEAN

Because, like, there's always the same amount of water in the oceans and that never changes... Well, I suppose it does because of the water cycle, but that does eventually even out, except for water that gets trapped inland like Oxbow Lakes, so...

PROTAGINUS

YOU ARE ALL SO TERRIBLE

WORSE THAN I EXPECTED

IT WOULD TAKE A MIRACLE

TO GET ANY OF YOU ELECTED

Get out of my sight and go practice!

(The boys head into town. Junior comes upon a SHOPGIRL with a cart full of produce. He first seems hesitant to approach, but eventually does)

JUNIOR

MISS, YOU'RE PURE PERFECTION

COULD I ASK YOU FOR A DATE?

I COULDN'T TAKE REJECTION

SHOPGIRL

WHEN AND WHERE? I WON'T BE LATE!

(The two hug, and Junior grabs a date from the cart and exits. Demosthenes approaches a coughing ARISTOCRAT. He spies a dog, picks him up, avoiding a bite, and pushes him over to the aristocrat)

DEMOSTHENES

I SEE YOU'VE GOT A HEADCOLD
I CAN GUARANTEE IT STOPS
THIS DOG WILL LICK YOU WELL, I'M TOLD
IN A WEEK, OR TEN DAYS TOPS

(The aristocrat looks at Demosthenes expecting him to say more. He opens his mouth, but remains silent. The aristocrat pulls a coin out of his purse and pays him. Demosthenes exits. Meletus, Anytus, and Lycon approach a GOATHERD from three sides and overwhelm him)

MELETUS

YOUR CREATURE'S FUR IS SO DAMN THICK

ANYTUS

LIKE HE'S GOT ON A WINTER COAT

LYCON

ALLOW US THREE TO SHAVE HIM QUICK

GOATHERD

THANKS, THAT REALLY GETS MY GOAT

(The three take the goat and exit. The goatherd exits. The students return to Protaginus with their ill-gotten gains)

PROTAGINUS

I'm impressed. Let's keep going!

SHOULD YOU STICK TO YOUR LADY?
OR LET THOSE EYES MEANDER?
WELL DON'T LOOK DOWN TO HADES
COS OLYMPUS HAS THE ANSWER

ZEUS HAD TROUBLE KEEPING TRUE
HIS LIGHTNING BOLT WAS MIGHTY
THE LADIES GOT IN ON IT TOO
TAKE A LOOK AT APHRODITE

(Junior perks up during the last verse)

MELETEUS, ANYTUS, AND LYCON

THEY SAY THAT SPENDING YOUR WHOLE DAY

JUNIOR

AT THE HOT SPRINGS MAKES YOU WEAK

DEMOSTHENES

BUT LOOK FOR WHOM THAT HOT SPRING'S NAMED

ALL FIVE

IT'S GOOD OLD HERCULES

PROTAGINUS

You got it!

HISTORY IS NEW

AND WE'RE THE ONES WHO MAKE IT
WHO CARES IF IT'S TRUE
SO LONG AS YOU CAN FAKE IT

COMPANY
LEARNING HOW TO LIE! (4X)

STUDENTS AND TOWNSFOLK
LEARNING HOW TO LIE
LEARNING HOW TO LIE
LEARNING HOW TO LIE
LEARNING HOW TO LIE
LEARNING HOW TO LIE

HISTORY IS NEW
HISTORY IS LIES
LIE
LIE

PROTAGINUS
HISTORY IS NEW
AND WE'RE THE ONES WHO MAKE IT
WHO CARES IF IT'S TRUE
AS LONG AS WE CAN SHAPE IT
HISTORY IS NEW
AND WE'RE THE ONES WHO MAKE IT
WHO CARES IF IT'S TRUE
AS LONG AS YOU CAN FAKE IT

LEARNING HOW TO LIE
LEARNING HOW TO LIE
LEARNING HOW TO LIE
LEARNING HOW TO LIE
LEARNING HOW TO

COMPANY
LIE!

PROTAGINUS

What a great first six weeks, guys. You've made some great progress, and I hope that you've softened up a bit on rhetoric.

DEMOSTHENES

This has been the best time of my life.

JUNIOR

I hate to admit it, but this has been a really great time. Thank you, master.

PROTAGINUS

Please. Please. *Sir*. Well that's it for today, class.

*(All exit the school and
the stage)*

Scene 8- Outside Protaginus' School

(Junior talks to Elpinice stage right. Demosthenes talks to Elenchus and Protaginus stage left. Elpinice and Protaginus stand at the edges of the stage. Demosthenes and Protaginus are talking amongst themselves.)

JUNIOR

Thanks for picking me up. Did you bring me a snack?

ELPINICE

No, you child. I came here to see the man that's been teaching you these past few weeks. I've never seen you so excited about anything that didn't involve either cooking or massage oil.

JUNIOR

Well don't get ahead of yourself on that one. That's Protaginus over there. He's a genius. In fact, a lot of the students are starting to develop a crush on him.

(Junior and Elpinice begin talking to themselves. Demosthenes, Elenchus, and Protaginus are now clearly audible)

DEMOSTHENES

So, the case will be heard the day after tomorrow. You think I'm ready?

PROTAGINUS

More than ready. I have the utmost faith in you. This is going to be great for both of us. You'll get your inheritance back, and the school's going to look amazing.

DEMOSTHENES

And you're sure you won't be my co-counsel?

PROTAGINUS

At this point, you know Athenian law better than I do, and you'll be fine against whatever country bumpkin the city puts up against you.

DEMOSTHENES

Actually, my guardians put up a lot of my inheritance money to retain Isaeus.

PROTAGINUS

Who's Isaeus?

DEMOSTHENES

The greatest defense attorney in Athens.

PROTAGINUS

Well, that's not good. Maybe I...

(Protaginus looks across stage)

Who's that? With Junior?

ELENCHUS

I think that's his wife, Elpinice.

Elpinice..

PROTAGINUS

*(Demosthenes moves
directly in front of
Protaginus and waves his
arms)*

DEMOSTHENES

Umm, hey. Professor. Right here. Big legal case coming up. Your reputation and my financial future on the line. Remember? *(Beat)* I'm totally in love with you. Like not joking.

*(Protaginus moves him out
of the way)*

PROTAGINUS

I'm in love with you too, Elpinice.

NO. 9- MY WHOLE LIFE

PROTAGINUS

ALWAYS HAD A SCAM
ALWAYS MAKING MOVES
THOUGHT LOVE WAS A SHAM
UNTIL YOU

CAME HERE FULL OF GUILF
WAS SET IN MY WAYS

DEMOSTHENES

FOCUS, SIR, THE TRIAL'S
IN 2 DAYS

PROTAGINUS

I HAVE SPENT MY WHOLE LIFE CLIMBING LADDERS
NOW I KNOW THE ONLY THING THAT MATTERS

ELPINICE

YOU HAVE SET ME FREE
FEEL IT IN MY BONES

JUNIOR

COME ELPINICE
LET'S GO HOME

ELPINICE

NEVER STOOD A CHANCE
GOT HIM IN MY HEAD
STRANGE TO HAVE ROMANCE
THERE INSTEAD

ELPINICE

I HAVE SPENT MY WHOLE LIFE PUSHING CEILINGS
WORDS CANNOT DESCRIBE THE WAY I'M FEELING

PROTAGINUS

JUNIOR, IS THE PLAN

ELPINICE (*GESTURING*)
YOU SHOULD GO

PROTAGINUS
I CAN MAKE A PLAY

ELPINICE
SEE WHAT FOR

PROTAGINUS
HE CAN TAKE THE STAND

ELPINICE
ONE CAN'T KNOW

PROTAGINUS
FAR AWAY

ELPINICE
WHAT'S IN STORE

*(Junior and Elpinice walk
over to Protaginus,
Demosthenes, and
Elenchus)*

PROTAGINUS
THINK I HAVE A PLAN,

ELPINICE
WE'RE SO IN

PROTAGINUS
HAVEN'T SAID IT YET

ELPINICE
PLEASE GO ON

PROTAGINUS
JUNIOR IS OUR MAN

ELPINICE
TO HELP WIN?

PROTAGINUS
I'M DEAD SET

ELPINICE
I WAS WRONG

PROTAGINUS
WE CAN BE DISCREET

ELPINICE
I'M LISTENING

DEMOSTHENES
HOLD ON A SEC

PROTAGINUS

JUNIOR TRIES THE CASE

ELPINICE
NOW I SEE

DEMOSTHENES
BAD IDEA

PROTAGINUS
YOU AND I CAN MEET

ELPINICE
I LIKE THAT

DEMOSTHENES
MY FOOT IS DOWN

PROTAGINUS
AT YOUR PLACE

ELPINICE
I AGREE

DEMOSTHENES
YOU LISTEN HERE!

PROTAGINUS
I HAVE SPENT MY
WHOLE LIFE
CLIMBING LADDERS
NOW I KNOW THE
ONLY THING THAT
MATTERS.
EVERYTHING IN MY
LIFE HAS ALWAYS
FALLEN THROUGH.
BUT NEVER IN MY
LIFE HAVE I MET
SOMEONE LIKE YOU

ELPINICE
I HAVE SPENT MY
WHOLE LIFE PUSHING
CEILINGS.
WORDS CANNOT
DESCRIBE THE WAY
I'M FEELING.
EVERYTHING IN MY
LIFE HAS ALWAYS
FALLEN THROUGH.
BUT NEVER IN MY
LIFE HAVE I MET
SOMEONE LIKE YOU

DEMOSTHENES

THERE'S MORE AT
STAKE HERE!

THAT'S KIND OF
HURTFUL!

GUYS!

PROTAGINUS AND ELPINICE
SOMEONE LIKE YOU!

*(Elenchus enters counting
gold pieces)*

ELPINICE
This is wonderful news. We must celebrate. I insist you come to
the General's house for dinner tonight.

PROTAGINUS
I'm flattered. I'd be happy to come.

ELPINICE
And you must bring your amusing slave as well.

ELENCHUS *(looking up)*
Oh, uh... I'd be honored.

DEMOSTHENES
I'll be there. Where's the house?

ELPINICE

Well, I'll see you two tonight. Don't bring a thing.
*(Elpinice and Junior
ignore him and exit)*

DEMOSTHENES

Guys?

PROTAGINUS

To a general's? We wouldn't dream of it.

DEMOSTHENES

Anyone?

*(Protaginus and Elenchus
ignore him and exit)*

Come on! It's my case!

*(Demosthenes exits
hurriedly)*

Scene 9- Alcibiades' Grand Hall

(A grand hall. A large arched staircase adorns the back of the stage. A long dinner table sits center stage. At the top of the staircase stage right is a door to Junior's Chambers. Elpinice's are on the parallel left. Alcibiades chambers are in the center. Stage right is a kitchen and Stage left is the front door. Junior and Elpinice enter. SERVANTS mill about preparing the house. Al emerges from the kitchen wearing an apron.)

ALCIBIADES

I do wish the two of you would have given me some notice that we were having guests for dinner.

(Junior gives Elpinice a withering glance)

JUNIOR

Don't look at me. I really wasn't involved in the decision.

ALCIBIADES

I'm fine with the company; your teacher's gorgeous. I'd just like some more time to prepare dinner. This one has seven courses.

(Junior blushes)

It's nothing to be ashamed of son. Your old man was known to a few men in his day. And a few more now that your mother passed. Bless her soul.

ELPINICE

We should really focus on what this day is about.

ALCIBIADES *(flatly)*

Of course, of course. Junior, I am so proud of you. You really applied yourself these past few weeks, and now you're going to be in one of the most high profile cases of the year. Congratulations.

JUNIOR

I was thinking, dad. Are lawyers usually this inexperienced the first time they go to trial? And do they usually take on a case with this much money on the line?

ALCIBIADES

Well not usually. In fact-
(door)

(A knock is heard at the

Well, here's your teacher, we can ask him now.

(One of the servants opens the door. Protagninus and Elenchus enter)

Protagninus, welcome! And you've brought your slave, how charming! Where's your son?

PROTAGINUS

Got a babysitter. I had a feeling this was no place for children.
(Protagninus punches Al's arm. He pauses nervously)

AL (*grinning*)
Good guess. Come, sit, eat my food, and more importantly, drink my wine.

PROTAGINUS
You're too kind General Alcibiades.

ALCIBIADES
Please, call me Al. Everyone does.

PROTAGINUS
Al it is, then. The table looks great. When's dinner?

ALCIBIADES
Right now!

(Servants bring in trays of food as Alcibiades, Protaginus, Junior, Elpinice, and Elenchus sit at the table. Al at the head, Junior and Elenchus on one side, Protaginus and Elpinice on the other. Junior makes an effort to sit across from Protaginus. They begin eating)

PROTAGINUS
This is delicious.

ALCIBIADES
Thank you, old family recipe. Well, from one of my slave's families, anyway, but let's attend to a more serious matter... A toast! To Junior and his wonderful, charming, *beautiful* rhetoric teacher.

PROTAGINUS
If I didn't know better, Alcibiades, I'd say you were coming on to me.

ALCIBIADES
Who says I'm not?

PROTAGINUS
Okay then, well I'm from Crete. It's in the South, so people aren't usually so forward. I'm flattered, but I'll have to pass.
(Protaginus looks at Elpinice for slightly too long)

ELPINICE
Well, you know what they say. When in Athens...
(Elpinice looks at Protaginus for slightly too long)

ALCIBIADES

I couldn't agree more. Sometimes you never know just who will do it for you. I myself am deeply invested in both fair sexes.

ELENCHUS

There's a surprise.

ALCIBIADES

And why's that?

ELENCHUS

You're not loyal to anything.

ALCIBIADES

Please, it's the fourth century. Take those ideas back to Sparta where you found them. I just happen to enjoy whatever I enjoy right now.

ELENCHUS

Like Persia when Athens isn't doing so well?

ALCIBIADES

Well, I never...

ELPINICE

He has a point, Al. Aren't you worried about being remembered as a traitor?

NO. 10- WHERE YOUR LOYALTIES LIE

ALCIBIADES

They mock me, call me a traitor in the streets. Was Ephialtes a traitor when he showed Xerxes that mountain path? No, he was hedging his bets. Why was Benedict Arnold considered disloyal? He was loyal to his mother country. He was even called a Loyalist! Was Judas Iscariot? Okay, maybe that one was a little far.

WHERE YOUR LOYALTIES LIE
WHERE YOUR LOYALTIES LIE
I KNOW THAT MINE

DO THRIVE WHEN I'VE BEEN ON THE WINNING SIDE

CAUSE I'M ALIVE
I HAVE SURVIVED
AND NOW IT IS TIME FOR ME,
YOU SEE, TO BE THE ONE THAT'S GRINNING

I'M ON THE LINE AND IN THE FRAY
YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN, BE FREE
YOU'RE ALL THE SAME AS ME, YOU'LL SEE

WHERE YOUR LOYALTIES LIE
WHERE YOUR LOYALTIES LIE
OPPOSING FORCES,
BETS, DIVORCES, I JUST CAN'T DECIDE

A BETTER DEAL?
GO QUICK, TURN HEEL
IT PAYS TO KNOW
SO YOU CAN GO THE WAY THE WIND'S BEEN BLOWING

I'LL OVERSEE FROM OVERSEAS
K-I-A, THAT'S NOT OKAY
A WARRIOR DEATH, NO NOT TODAY

I have no loyalty to a country. Protagonus, surely you can understand that. I just go wherever the money is. I switched sides in a war, twice. Look it up. I watched a bunch of savages dismember an entire platoon after praying to their heathen god. So you can bet I got on my knees and prayed to that log myself. And, Junior, I love you son, but I would trade you for a can of beans in the right situation. What can I say? You've got to keep your options open.

THE ONLY WAY TO KEEP YOUR HIDE
IS KNOWING WHEN TO TAKE A DIVE
I'LL SURVIVE

(As the Music cycles through genres, the servants, Junior, and Elenchus join in the dance, adapting their style appropriately with each change. During the commotion, Elpinice writes a note on her napkin and slips it to Protagonus. She then exits to her chambers)

TAKE YOUR COURAGE, TAKE YOUR PRIDE
AND SHOVE IT ALL RIGHT DOWN INSIDE
HEED YOUR PRESERVATION DRIVE,
OR WHEN YOU DIE, I'LL TAKE YOUR BRIDE
KEEP THIS IN MIND, YOU WILL SURVIVE
MY LOYALTIES LIE WITH ME!

PROTAGINUS

Well, Al, you've definitely convinced me. I'm going to go use your bathroom.

(Protaginus ascends the stairs to Elpinice's chambers)

Scene 10- Elpinice's Chambers

(A lavish bedroom. Elpinice is stretched out on a large canopy bed positioned stage left. The door to the room is lightly stage-right of center stage. Protagninus comes up the stairs by entering stage right. Protagninus proceeds through the door.)

PROTAGINUS

I got your note. What's going on?

ELPINICE

I thought it prudent to get to know the man who has spent so much time with my husband.

PROTAGINUS

I thought we were all getting to know each other just fine downstairs at dinner.

ELPINICE

What can I say? I wanted a more *private* audience with you.

PROTAGINUS

Well, I'm more than happy to oblige.

ELPINICE

So, what's someone with such a command of argument doing teaching at a ramshackle school like yours?

PROTAGINUS (*weakly*)

Sharing my love of rhetoric?

ELPINICE

I don't think so. You're not from around here. If you'd had any clout, you would have used it to get a job at one of the larger Academies, and if you didn't, you wouldn't be so good at your job.

PROTAGINUS

What makes you think I'm good at my job?

ELPINICE

The whole town has heard about your little speech at the Agora, and Junior couldn't speak more highly of you. Despite his outward appearance, he's not a *total* idiot. If he and Al are both impressed, there must be something there.

PROTAGINUS

I think you may be reading a bit too much into this.

ELPINICE

I don't think so. 'Reading too much into it' would be writing Crete about any rhetoric teachers that have left the city and finding out about a royal advisor who was very recently banished.

PROTAGINUS (*shaken*)

You found out about that, did you?

ELPINICE

I did.

PROTAGINUS

Was this whole dinner a charade?

ELPINICE

It was. Now, you're going to tell me what you're doing in Athens.

PROTAGINUS

I don't know about that.

ELPINICE

Okay, fine. I'm sure if Al used his considerable resources to look into you, he wouldn't find a thing. JUNIOR!

PROTAGINUS

Alright, alright, just be quiet. I'll tell you.

ELPINICE

That's more like it.

PROTAGINUS

I'm just here to make some money teaching these kids a few tricks of the trade. I was going to get out of here after the first payment, but that Demosthenes kid has a huge inheritance, and he's paying me with it. I decided to stay for my cut, but now I find out that they've got the best lawyer in Athens for the defense. I'm going to get out of here before they tear those kids apart and I lose all of my business. I've got enough for two tickets out of here tomorrow.

ELPINICE

Okay, I'm coming with you.

PROTAGINUS

Like Hades you are. Why would I agree to that?

ELPINICE

I saw the way you looked at me outside the school. I know you've been thinking about it all night. I know exactly why you came up here.

(Junior enters. He walks up to the door and knocks)

JUNIOR

Elpinice! Is everything okay? And where's Protaginus? The bathroom's empty.

PROTAGINUS *(whispering)*

Well, what do we do now?

ELPINICE

I'm not feeling too well honey, could you get me the emetics. I feel like I need to vomit. And maybe some leeches?

JUNIOR

It's always something with you. I'll be right back.
(Junior exits)

ELPINICE

There, that should keep him busy for a little while.

PROTAGINUS

Sure, but that still leaves the biggest question of all? Why would you want to leave all of this? The house, the servants, the husband on the fast track to political power? What could you possibly want?

NO. 11- I DON'T LOVE MY HUSBAND, WHY NOT YOU

ELPINICE

I'M DONE. I GIVE UP, AND BELIEVE ME, I TRIED.
TO HOLD HIS INTEREST FOR YEARS, BUT I KNOW THAT HE LIED.
HE DECIDES OUR DIVIDE SHOULD BE SOMETHING TO HIDE,
BUT HE'LL LOOK FOR A MAN WITH HIS WIFE BY HIS SIDE.
NO RESPECT FOR HIS BRIDE: HE HAS INJURED MY PRIDE.
I DON'T WANNA STAY, NO MATTER WHAT HE PROVIDES
BUT YOU'VE BROKEN MY STRIDE, I'M AWOKEN NOW I'VE
COME ALIVE, AND I WON'T BE DENIED.

PROTAGINUS

DO YOU THINK ME SO DISHONEST?
THINK THAT I THINK YOU'RE UNTRUE?
THINK THAT I THINK US IMMODEST?
WELL THEN, I DO!

BUT, WE CANNOT ACT ON THESE FEELINGS.
YOUR HUSBAND'S RIGHT OUTSIDE THE DOOR.
AND WE'LL BE CAUGHT FOR SURE

ELPINICE

I DON'T LOVE MY HUSBAND, WHY NOT YOU!

I DON'T WANT TO FIND HIM
WITH HIS WHORES!

I SHOULD BE DESIRED,
NOT BARTERED OR ACQUIRED.
I DON'T THINK I CAN TAKE THIS ANYMORE!

PROTAGINUS (TO HIMSELF)

WHY DOES SHE THINK I'M HER
SAVIOR?
OR IS SHE PULLING MY STRINGS?
EITHER WAY HER NEW BEHAVIOR
COMPLICATES THINGS

THIS WAS SUPPOSED TO BE EASY,
GET PAID AND GET OUT IN A
WEEK.

BUT I'M WEAK! BUT I'M WEAK!

I KNOW THAT I'LL REGRET THIS.

ELPINICE (TO HERSELF)

I DON'T LOVE MY HUSBAND WHY
NOT YOU.

IT'S MAKING ME NAUSEOUS
I'M ALL OUT OF OPTIONS
I CAN'T GET REJECTED. HE'D
LEAVE ME DEJECTED?
COULD IT BE POSSIBLE THAT I
CHOSE WRONG?

WHEN HE GETS A PAYOUT, THAT
WOULD BE MY WAY OUT.
I'VE LEARNED THAT IT'S TIME
FOR A TURN, AND I FIND
THAT ATHENS IS SOMEWHERE
THAT I DON'T BELONG.

I THINK THAT I JUST MIGHT LOVE
YOU TOO!

SORRY I'M DEAD SET, KID.
I DON'T LOVE MY HUSBAND, I
LOVE YOU!

PROTAGINUS

Okay, meet me in front of the school tomorrow before the trial,
and we can go.

ELPINICE

See, was that so hard?

*(Junior barges in with
eels and a strange
looking powder)*

JUNIOR

So we're out of smelling salts, but the one you put in your mouth
should be fine... mast... uh sir.

*(Junior smiles, pleased
with himself)*

What are you doing in here? I thought you only had to go to the
bathroom.

PROTAGINUS

Well... I heard your wife in pain and I had to make sure she was
okay. Please, allow me to tend to this. You go back and
celebrate, you have earned it with all of your hard work.

JUNIOR *(placated)*

Sure thing. Thank you, sir.

*(Junior walks to the
doorway. He turns his
head back)*

Oh, uh, feel better, Elpinice.

*(Exits the room and then
stage)*

ELPINICE

See what I mean?

PROTAGINUS

Point taken. Noon, don't be late.

ELPINICE

I won't.

(Both exit)

Scene 11- The Streets of Athens

(Protaginus looks at the sun, this turns out to be too bright and he looks away)

PROTAGINUS

Where is she? We should have left by now.

(Elenchus, Junior, and Elpinice enter)

Elenchus, what are you doing with Elpinice?

ELENCHUS

I heard you get up early this morning. You weren't headed in the direction of the courthouse, so I figured you were on a special mission for the case. I thought I'd wake Junior and come find you. Elpinice insisted on coming.

(Protaginus looks at Elpinice. She shrugs)

So what were you doing, *master*?

PROTAGINUS

Uh... I was just praying to the gods for good fortune in the case today.

ELENCHUS

Of course, how thoughtful of you.

ELPINICE

Well, we'd better get to the court house.

ELENCHUS

Yes, let's all go, *together*.

ELPINICE

You and Junior go ahead. I want to speak to Protaginus.

ELENCHUS

Very well, ma'am. I'll tell the General to expect you shortly.

(Elenchus leads a very confused Junior offstage)

ELPINICE *(to Protaginus)*

He knows we were leaving. How does he know?

PROTAGINUS

Before you blackmailed me, I was taking him when I left instead. He's crafty, he must have put together that I only have enough for two tickets.

ELPINICE

Well, what do we do now?

PROTAGINUS

Change of plans, I guess we go watch. We can try for a night boat after they get creamed.

(Both exit)

Scene 12- The Floor of the Athenian Senate

(A courtroom. The judge's podium sits at the back of the stage, raised above the rest of the set. Two trial desks sit opposite each other center stage. Demosthenes sits at the desk stage left, drumming his fingers. A circle envelops the two desks. Outside of the desks is the JURY. Al sits on the Jury. ISAEUS, APHOBUS, and THERRIPIDES sit at the desk stage right talking about their strategy. ELENCHUS angrily enters and takes a seat in the gallery. Junior enters and takes a seat at Demosthenes' trial desk.)

JUNIOR

You got here early.

DEMOSTHENES

I've been here since last night. How was your party?

JUNIOR

Pretty great. That slave and I got incredibly wasted.

*(Demosthenes eyes him
incredulously)*

DEMOSTHENES

Is that a joke? This is the most important day of my life, and you're hungover?

JUNIOR

Relax, I don't get hungover. Besides, I'm still a little drunk.
(Demosthenes gasps)

DEMOSTHENES

I know everything's a big joke to you, but I have to win this case.

JUNIOR

I can take things seriously, in fact...

*(Protaginus and Elpinice
enter together. Junior
eyes them. Elpinice takes
her seat near Elenchus
who glares at her, and
Protaginus makes his way
to the desk)*

PROTAGINUS

Okay, you boys have nothing to worry about. This is going to go great. And if not, there are worse things in the world.

DEMOSTHENES

Worse than utter disgrace and financial ruin?

PROTAGINUS

Well, maybe not, but I'm sure it won't come to that. You must be as Orpheus in Hades. Don't look back, lest you lose your love forever.

DEMOSTHENES

What? Didn't Orpheus look back?

PROTAGINUS

Uhh... Exactly, learn from his mistake. Junior, how you feeling?

JUNIOR

Ready to win.

PROTAGINUS

Great. Demosthenes, how about you?

DEMOSTHENES

Honestly, not great. I'm not sure Junior was the right choice for this.

PROTAGINUS

Nonsense, there isn't anyone I have more confidence in... Is that Socrates in the jury?

JUNIOR

Yeah, my dad said he was here to check out how well-trained your students are. This is a pretty high profile case. Anyone who's anyone is in the gallery or talked their way onto the jury.

PROTAGINUS (*gulping*)

Well, I better go take my seat.

*(Protaginus takes a seat
between Elpinice and
Elenchus. Spotlight on
Socrates)*

NO. 12- THE GADFLY ON THE WALL

SOCRATES

Well, what have we today? That Protaginus has been making quite a stir in town. Let's see just how well his pupils will fare against Isaeus.

SOCRATES

I'M THE GADFLY ON THE WALL
FROM HERE I SEE IT ALL
EVERY ANGLE, BIG AND SMALL
MAKE WAY FOR THE GADFLY ON THE WALL

BAILIFF

ALL RISE FOR YOUR KRITE
THE HONEST JUDGE DRACON
FEAR HIM, HE IS MIGHTY
HIS HEART IS MADE OF STONE

JUDGE DRACON

ATHENS CITY COURT CASE
M-M-X-V-I
THE FACTS AT HAND, I WILL RETRACE
WITH MY JURY AT MY SIDE

I'VE BROUGHT UP SIX THOUSAND
OF YOUR BRIGHTEST COUNTRYMEN
TOLD THEM ALL TO CROWD AND
THE SIDE THAT'S BIGGER WINS

SO, LET'S BEGIN OUR CONTEST,

THE DEFENSE WILL SPEAK FIRST
BECAUSE, LET'S BE HONEST
YOU DON'T KNOW HOW GRECIAN TRIALS WORK

ISAEUS

I SAY, CITIZENS OF THE JURY
I'LL TRY TO MAKE THIS FAST
I KNOW YOU'RE IN A HURRY
AND UNCOMFORTABLE EN MASSE
BUT THIS SPENDTHRIFT HAS SQUANDERED
HIS VAST FORTUNE TO NEW LOWS
AND YOU'VE ALL SEEN HIM WANDER
THROUGH THE TOWN IN RATTY CLOTHES
HIS GUARDIANS DEFENSELESS
NOT A THING HE WON'T DESTROY

THERRIPIDES

SO WE'RE HERE TO ROB HIM SENSELESS
(Aphobus elbows him)

APHOBUS

ER, HE MEANS PROTECT OUR BOY

ISAEUS

NOW HE ASKS THIS ASSEMBLY
TO DO WHAT THEY ARE TOLD
BUT YOU WON'T TREAT HIM GENTLY
DON'T GIVE HIM HIS GOLD

DEMOSTHENES

STAND UP STRAIGHT THERE, JUNIOR
IT'S OUR TURN TO SPEAK
WE CANNOT LET THESE RUMORS
STAND WITHOUT A FAIR CRITIQUE

JUNIOR

DON'T YOU WORRY, URCHIN
WE'LL GET YOUR FORTUNE BACK
AND NOT A SINGLE PERSON
WILL STAND UP TO MY ATTACK

(He turns to address the jury)

PEOPLE WHO BEAR WITNESS
IT'S THE PLAINTIFF'S TURN TO SPEAK
AND YOU'D HAVE TO BE WITLESS
IF YOU DIDN'T VOTE FOR ME

(Audience boos. They don't like his hubris)

WHAT I MEAN TO SAY IS
MY CLIENT'S IN THE CLEAR
AND HERE UPON THIS DAIS...
DAD WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

ALCIBIADES

Hi son! I got called for jury duty... kind of a rocky start
(Many jurors move over to Isaeus' side)

SOCRATES
I'M THE GADFLY ON THE WALL
FROM HERE I SEE IT ALL
HISTORY, SHE HEARS MY CALL
HERE COMES THE GADFLY ON THE
WALL

ENSEMBLE
WALL
FROM HERE WE SEE IT ALL
HEAR MY CALL
HERE COMES THE GADFLY ON THE
WALL

SOCRATES
A rocky start indeed, but it looks like Protaginus' students
aren't the only ones on trial.

*(Elpinice, Elenchus and
Protaginus stand)*

ELPINICE
IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO CHOOSE

ELENCHUS
HOW COULD YOU NOT TELL ME ABOUT HER?

ELPINICE
PUT MY EGGS IN
THIS BASKET
GOT TAKEN TO TASK,
AND
I CANNOT RELAX, IS
HE STILL COMING
BACK?

PROTAGINUS
CONSORT OR
COMPANION, WHICH
DO I ABANDON?

ELENCHUS
HEY! YOU WERE
ABOUT TO DESERT ME
YOU KNOW THAT YOU
HURT ME, SO

ALL THREE
I CAN'T STAY, THIS IS TOO MUCH TO LOSE
(The trio sit)

SOCRATES
I'M THE GADFLY ON THE WALL
FROM HERE I SEE IT ALL
ALL THE FACTS THEY CAN RECALL
MAKE WAY FOR THE GADFLY ON THE
WALL

ENSEMBLE
WALL
FROM HERE WE SEE IT ALL
CAN RECALL
MAKE WAY FOR THE GADFLY ON THE
WALL

JUDGE DRACON
The defense may call its first witnesses.

ISAEUS
I call Therripides and Aphobus to the stand.
(The two move to center)

ISAEUS
I SAY, APHOBUS, THERRIPIDES
TESTIFY YOUR GREAT UNEASE
OF YOUR TIME WITH DEMOSTHENES
WHILE HE LIVED AS YOUR TRUSTEE

APHOBUS
WE FED HIM

THERIPPIDES
AND CLOTHED HIM

APHOBUS
HIS HOLDINGS, WE SOLD 'EM
SO HE COULD BE WEALTHY, AND FOR OUR DEVOTION
HE HUSTLED AND STRUGGLED AND DOUBLED HIS MUSCLE
AND SUED US BEFORE WE COULD MOUNT A REBUTTAL

SO WE STAND

THERIPPIDES

ON TRIAL

APHOBUS

THERIPPIDES
AND STILL IN

APHOBUS DENIAL

THAT ALL OF OUR EFFORTS

THERIPPIDES

APHOBUS
HAVE NOT BEEN WORTHWHILE

THERIPPIDES
HIS LIE MIGHT BEGUILE, BUT ALSO DELIVERS,
A MILE OF BILE FROM OUT OF MY LIVER

I say, defense rests.

ISAEUS

Next witness!

JUDGE DRACON

Uh... I call Demosthenes to the stand.

JUNIOR

(The two return to their desk, Demosthenes moves to center)

JUNIOR
OKAY, KID, FIRST QUESTION
DO YOU GET ENOUGH TO EAT?

DEMOSTHENES
NO SIR, FULL CONFESSION,
I LIVE OUTSIDE ON THE STREETS

JUNIOR
WELL WHAT ABOUT AFFECTION?
SURELY, THEY'VE PROVIDED SOME

DEMOSTHENES
WE HAVE NO CONNECTION
THEY ALWAYS TREATED ME LIKE SCUM

JUNIOR
WELL THEN, TELL ME ONE THING
HOW WOULD YOU SPEND ALL THAT CASH?

DEMOSTHENES

I'D LIVE JUST LIKE A KING
IF I COULD ONLY TAKE A BATH

(Junior's eyes widen)

JUNIOR

WOULD YOU PAY YOUR DEBTS OFF SOON?

DEMOSTHENES

AS QUICKLY AS I COULD
PROTAGINUS DESERVES HIS BOON
IF WE WIN, KNOCK ON WOOD

JUNIOR

Prosecution rests.

(The two smile at each other)

ISAEUS

That's it!

(He turns to the judge)

I'd like to ask the witness one question.

JUDGE DRACON

Sustained.

ISAEUS

Demosthenes, how did you pay for your counsel today?

DEMOSTHENES

The same way I paid for my rhetoric lessons, with a percent of my winnings, but I --

ISAEUS

-- From this trial? That you haven't even won yet?

DEMOSTHENES

Sure, but --

ISAEUS

-- I've got all I need. Proceed your honor.

(Demosthenes moves back to his desk)

JUDGE DRACON

I will now hear closing statements.

SOCRATES

I'M THE GADFLY ON THE WALL
FROM HERE I SEE IT ALL
HISTORY, SHE HEEDS MY CALL
MAKE WAY FOR THE GADFLY ON THE
WALL

ENSEMBLE

WALL
FROM HERE WE SEE IT ALL
HEED MY CALL
MAKE WAY FOR THE GADFLY ON THE
WALL

SOCRATES

I think I've seen enough.

ISAEUS

I SAY, GENTLEMEN OF THE JURY

I HOPE YOU SEE MY POINT OF VIEW
WE CAN'T LET THIS LITTLE PROFLIGATE
DO WHAT HE DID TO THEM TO YOU
TO HIS GUARDIANS AND ATHENS
HE'S A CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER
SO I ASK YOU WITH GREAT PASSION
WHO'S PROPOSITION'S STRANGER?
HE ASKS YOU FOR A FORTUNE
THAT HE'S PROMISED DOWN THE DRAIN
AND BECAUSE HE IS AN ORPHAN
HE ASKS IT WITH NO SHAME
I AM ONLY ASKING
THAT JUSTICE WILL BE DONE
SEARCH YOUR SOULS AND YOU ALL KNOW
THAT WE'VE ALREADY WON

*(Demosthenes and Junior
start to lose them. Most
of the remaining jurors
move away from Junior and
Demosthenes)*

JUNIOR

Dad!

ALCIBIADES

I'M SORRY, BOY
I DON'T ENJOY
GOING AGAINST YOU, BUT I KINDA SEE HIS POINT

JUNIOR *(to Demosthenes)*

Well, we lost dad.

DEMOSTHENES

Thanks for trying. I guess some things weren't meant to be.

JUNIOR

Maybe not. We've still got one more shot.

JUNIOR

YOU MAY SAY MY CLIENT
COUNTS HIS CHICKS BEFORE THEY HATCH
BUT I THINK HE'S DEFIANT
FOR REMAINING SO ATTACHED
TO A DREAM I THINK WE ALL HAVE
TO HOLD ON TO WHAT'S YOURS
AND EVEN IF HE PROMISED HALF,
THAT MONEY OPENS DOORS
HE'S LONG BEEN FORGOTTEN, AND I SPURNED HIM OFTEN
I THOUGHT HE WAS NO ONE AND MADE HIM FEEL ROTTEN
IGNORED HIM, MADE SURE IN HIS FACE SLAMMED THE DOOR
BUT NOW I HAVE MATURED, CAN'T YOU SEE THAT HE'S POOR?
AND YOU COULD RESTORE HIM TO PROMINENCE, DOMINANCE
MAKE SURE THAT HE'S GUARDIANS FACE THEIR FAIR CONSEQUENCE
POPULACE, AND I SAY THIS WITH CONFIDENCE
VOTE FOR DEMOSTHENES, VOTE WITH YOUR CONSCIENCES

COMPANY

WE'RE THE FLIES ALONG THE WALL
WE KNOW WE'VE SEEN SEE IT ALL
EVERY ANGLE, BIG AND SMALL

THE FLIES ALONG THE WALL
WE'RE THE FLIES ALONG THE WALL
WE KNOW WE'VE SEEN SEE IT ALL
EVERY ANGLE, BIG AND SMALL
THE FLIES ALONG THE WALL
WE'RE THE FLIES ALONG THE WALL
WE KNOW WE'VE SEEN SEE IT ALL
EVERY ANGLE, BIG AND SMALL
THE FLIES ALONG THE WALL

JUDGE DRACON

Has the jury reached a verdict?

*(Blackout. Socrates
whistles the first three
lines of the chorus, then
spotlight on him alone)*

SOCRATES

GADFLY ON THE WALL

INTERMISSION

Act Two

Scene 1- *Protaginus' Mind*

(AT RISE, Protaginus stands center stage under a spotlight. The crew builds the sets as he sings the first number of the suite)

I. **No. 13a** PICK YOUR POISON

PROTAGINUS

WHEN I WAS A BOY, ONE LESSON I LEARNED WELL
IS WORDS WERE LIKE BLACK MAGIC, AND IF YOU CONTROL THEIR SPELL
THE TRUTH BECOMES ELASTIC, TWISTED INTO ANYTHING
AND THAT IS HOW I FOUND MYSELF ADVISOR TO A KING
AND THAT IS HOW I FIND MYSELF WITH FIVE UNPRACTICED WARDS
AND TWO TICKETS TO PARADISE THAT I CANNOT AFFORD

PICK YOUR POISON
GETTING OUT IS MY BEST BET
PICK YOUR POISON
THEN WHY HAVEN'T I LEFT YET?

*(Apollo and Dionysus
enter)*

APOLLO

SOUNDS TO ME LIKE SOMEBODY GOT TOO INVOLVED

PROTAGINUS

IT WAS FUN, BUT NOW I'M DONE. I QUIT. THAT'S ALL.
I'M GONNA GET GOING BEFORE SOCRATES STOPS BY
IT'S BEEN REAL, BUT TELL THOSE KIDS GOODBYE

DIONYSUS

PICK YOUR POISON
SCYLLIA OR CHARYBDIS

APOLLO

YOU'LL DESTROY THEM
WHEN THEY FIND OUT YOU DID THIS
YOUR SCHOOL FALLS TO RUIN, JUST TO SAVE SOME FACE?
WHAT ABOUT YOUR STUDENTS AND THEIR CASE?

*(The stage lights open on
the INSIDE OF THE SCHOOL
where Demosthenes and
Junior are waiting)*

II. **No. 13b** MY GOOD FORTUNE

PROTAGINUS

CONGRATULATIONS, JUSTICE HAS PREVAILED

PROTAGINUS (TO APOLLO)

AFTER I WAS CERTAIN THEY WOULD FAIL

DEMOSTHENES

What was that?

PROTAGINUS

Nothing.

PROTAGINUS

ODDS NOT IN YOUR FAVOR

BUT YOU BOYS PULLED THROUGH
WHATEVER HAPPENS LATER
I AM PROUD OF YOU

JUNIOR

I HAD DOUBTS ABOUT THIS, THANK YOU SIR.
WE'D HAVE FAILED WITHOUT YOU, THAT'S FOR SURE

I'LL NEVER FORGET THIS
YOUR WISE WORDS STAY WITH ME
I CAN'T WAIT TO GO BACK HOME
AND CELEBRATE WITH MY ELPINICE

*(Awkward moment for
Protaginus. he offers
final congratulations and
leaves)*

DEMOSTHENES

MY GUARDIANS HAD GOT TO ME
I USED TO PLAY THE LOTTERY
I FEARED I'D DIE IN POVERTY
HOW CAN I THANK YOU PROPERLY?

JUNIOR

FEAR NOT, NEW CITIZEN
WE ONLY NEEDED WIT AND THEN
WE TOOK YOUR RICHES BACK AGAIN
AND NOW YOUR BAD LUCK'S AT AN END

DEMOSTHENES

NO MORE LOOKS OF DISRESPECT
NO MORE LOOKING DOWN

JUNIOR

NOW THEY'LL HAVE TO GENUFLECT
SINCE YOUR FORTUNE'S TURNED AROUND

DEMOSTHENES

WHEN WE FIRST MET, I THOUGHT YOU VAIN
A DADDY'S BOY; MADE ME INSANE
BUT NOW THE MORE I LOOK AT YOU
I SEE A NEW YOU SHINING THROUGH

JUNIOR

AND YOU WERE SOMEONE I DESPISED,
BUT WHEN I LOOK INTO YOUR EYES
I SEE SOMEONE UNFAIRLY CURSED

JUNIOR

BUT NOW YOUR FORTUNE'S
REVERSED

DEMOSTHENES

BUT NOW MY FORTUNE'S REVERSED

DEMOSTHENES

NO MORE LOOKS OF DISRESPECT
NO MORE LOOKING DOWN

JUNIOR

THEY WON'T KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT
YOUR FORTUNE'S TURNED AROUND

DEMOSTHENES
OUR FORTUNES TURNED AROUND

DIONYSUS
PICK YOUR POISON
YOU KNOW HE DOESN'T DESERVE
HER
PICK YOUR POISON

APOLLO
DON'T LET THIS GO ANY FURTHER

DIONYSUS
SURE YOU COULD STAY HERE
OR QUIT WHILE YOU'RE AHEAD
IF THEY CATCH YOU WITH THE
GIRL, YOU'RE DEAD

DEMOSTHENES AND JUNIOR
LET GO!

STAY HERE!

III. NO. 13C A BETTER DEAL

*(Dionysus takes
Protaginus to the docks.
He gives Elpinice gold
for their tickets to
Lesbos)*

DIONYSUS
All I'm saying is that you need to consider your options. If you stay, Socrates is eventually going to get to you. You lose the power, the money and Elpinice are sure to follow. If you go, however...

*(Elpinice walks through
the streets to the docks)*

ELPINICE
I'VE BEEN THINKING STRATEGICALLY
A woman in Athens, you gotta be
CAN'T MAKE DECISIONS ROMANTICALLY
I LOOK OUT FOR MYSELF

BORN A SLAVE TO MY AMBITION
EVER JOCKEYING FOR POSITION
AND NOW BY MY OWN ADMISSION
I KNOW THAT I NEED HIS HELP

MUCH AS I HATE TO ADMIT TO MYSELF
HE'S ALWAYS ON MY MIND
I DON'T WANT TO GET TOO ATTACHED,
BUT I MAY JUST HAVE FOUND MY MATCH

A BETTER DEAL THAT I'VE
BEEN SEARCHING FOR
MY ENTIRE LIFE
MY MOMENT HAS ARRIVED

(Elpinice arrives at the shore. BOATWOMAN is waiting)

ELPINICE (cont'd)

How much for two tickets to the isle of Lesbos?

Boatwoman

Seventy-five Drachma each.

(Elpinice pays the Boatwoman)

The boat leaves in three days at dawn. No swords, no Greek fire, and no urns with more than 4oz of liquid. Here's your pre-board pass. If you arrive an hour before the boat leaves, you won't have to take your sandals off.

ELPINICE

A BETTER DEAL THAT I'VE
BEEN SEARCHING FOR
MY ENTIRE LIFE
MY MOMENT HAS ARRIVED

ELPINICE

A BETTER DEAL THAT I'VE
BEEN SEARCHING FOR
MY ENTIRE LIFE
MY MOMENT HAS ARRIVED

CHORUS

PICK YOUR POISON!
PICK YOUR POISON!
PICK YOUR POISON!

ELPINICE

A BETTER DEAL THAT
I'VE
BEEN SEARCHING FOR
MY ENTIRE LIFE
MY MOMENT HAS
ARRIVED

CHORUS

PICK YOUR POISON!
PICK YOUR POISON!
PICK YOUR POISON!

DEMOS AND JR.

IT'S NEVER BEEN SO
CLEAR TO ME,
HOW MUCH I WANT
YOU NEAR TO ME.
WILL YOU STAY
RIGHT HERE WITH
ME?
OR YOU COULD
DISAPPEAR WITH ME.

[REPEAT CHORUS ONCE MORE. CHANGE ELPINICE LYRICS BELOW AND ADD FOURTH PART]

PROTAGINUS AND THE GODS

PICK YOUR POISON
HOW CAN I/HE BE DECISIVE
PICK YOUR POISON
WHEN MY/HIS SOUL IS IN CRISIS

ELPINICE

A BETTER DEAL THAT I'VE
BEEN SEARCHING FOR
MY ENTIRE LIFE
AND I MIGHT BE HIS WIFE

COMPANY

PICK YOUR POISON!

(Blackout)

Scene 2- Outside Protaginus' School

(Protaginus, Elenchus, and Elpinice enter amid a tumultuous argument)

ELENCHUS

I understand why you screwed me over before, but this is ridiculous. We have time now.

ELPINICE

No, we don't. If Socrates comes and destroys the school, then we have nothing left, and if anyone catches Protaginus with me, then...

ELENCHUS

They tar and feather his genitals, I know.

(Elpinice nods. Protaginus looks horrified)

PROTAGINUS

They do what?

ELENCHUS

That's not important now. You have a choice to make. You promised me that you would take me with you.

ELPINICE

When Protaginus leaves, Elenchus you'll be free. That sounds like a pretty sweet deal to me.

ELENCHUS

There's no way Al finds us in time.

(Elenchus turns to Protaginus)

This one is on you, man. You gotta choose. Your loyal companion, or a girl you just met who blackmailed you.

PROTAGINUS *(swayed)*

Well, when you put it like that...

ELPINICE

Or, you could take me instead.

(Elpinice poses seductively)

PROTAGINUS

That too is a very compelling argument.

ELENCHUS

Take her to Lesbos? That's like bringing sand to the beach, man.

PROTAGINUS

Another well-reasoned point.

ELPINICE

Think about it this way. Who needs this more? Elenchus is going to be free if you pick me, but if you pick him, I'm stuck married Junior for the rest of my life, and I don't know if you've picked up on this, but he's not really into women.

PROTAGINUS

Okay. I've heard enough. For what's best for everyone... and my genitals. I'm taking Elpinice. Elenchus...

ELENCHUS

I know, change of plans.

*(Elpinice and Protaginus
exit)*

...but I thought we were friends.

NO. 14 WHAT ABOUT ME?

ELENCHUS

IS THERE SOMETHING ON MY FACE?
THAT TELLS THEM PUT HIM IN HIS PLACE
SOMETHING IN MY EYES THAT SCREAMS
CRUSH HIS SELF-ESTEEM

LIKE A BOULDER UP A HILL,
IT'S STUPID, BUT I WILL
STRUGGLE TO THE TOP AND THEN
YOU PUSH ME DOWN AGAIN

I THOUGHT I FOUND A PATH
BUT I SHOULD HAVE DONE THE MATH
IT'S SO DAMN CLEAR WHEN SAID OUT LOUD
THREE'S ALWAYS BEEN A CROWD

WHAT ABOUT ME MAKES ME EASY TO IGNORE?
WHAT ABOUT ME LEAVES YOU ALWAYS WANTING MORE?
YOU COULD NEVER GET THIS FAR WITHOUT ME
YOU LEFT, BUT WHAT ABOUT ME?

IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN UNPLANNED
BUT MY LIFE IS IN MY HANDS
FREEDOM IS A NICE SURPRISE:
A BLESSING IN DISGUISE

I'VE JUST BEEN WASHED ASHORE
BUT I'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE
YOU WERE TOO BUSY WITH YOUR PLAN
TO SEE ME AS A MAN

YOU LEFT ME HERE TO ROT
BUT I KNOW YOU NEVER THOUGHT
OF WHAT I'D DO WHEN YOU WERE GONE
YOU WANT WAR, BRING IT ON

WHAT ABOUT ME MAKES ME EASY TO IGNORE?
WHAT ABOUT ME MAKES YOU THINK I COME UP SHORT?
I DIDN'T GIVE YOU ANY CAUSE TO DOUBT ME
YOU LEFT, BUT WHAT ABOUT ME?

*(Protaginus and Elpinice
enter)*

ELPINICE

Are you sure Elenchus is going to be all right?

PROTAGINUS

Yeah! He'll be fine. He knows this city like the back of his hand.
He'll be running the place in no time.

*(Protaginus and Elpinice
exit)*

ELENCHUS

YOU LET YOKO COME BETWEEN US
NOW I'M STUCK HERE, NICE JOB GENIUS
SHE SWEET-TALKED YOU, NOW YOU'RE THROWING
OUT THIS GREAT THING WE HAD GOING
SHE'S CREATED AWFUL TENSION
NOW I HAVE TO SEEK MY VENGEANCE
VERY SOON, YOU WILL REGRET THIS
BUT YOU WILL NEVER FORGET IT

WHAT ABOUT ME MAKES ME EASY TO IGNORE?
WHAT ABOUT ME LEAVES YOU ALWAYS WANTING MORE?
YOU COULD NEVER GET THIS FAR WITHOUT ME
YOU LEFT, BUT WHAT ABOUT ME?

WHAT ABOUT ME MAKES ME EASY TO IGNORE?
WHAT ABOUT ME MAKES YOU THINK I COME UP SHORT?
WHAT THE HELL GIVES YOU THE RIGHT TO DOUBT ME?
YOU'RE GONE, BUT WHAT ABOUT ME?

YOU'RE GONE, BUT WHAT ABOUT ME?

*(Elenchus comes out of
the song and looks
around)*

ELENCHUS

Well, I guess I'm on my own.

(Blackout)

Scene 3- The Streets of Athens

(A column, a waste bin and a bench are placed upon the stage. Plato walks down the street, alone from stage left. Socrates walks towards him from the other side of the stage. They stop and embrace.)

PLATO

Socrates. What news bear you from the trial of Protaginus' students? How did Isaeus triumph this time?

SOCRATES

He did not. The youth Demosthenes and the son of Alcibiades have triumphed over Isaeus.

SOCRATES FOLLOWER

Triumphed over Isaeus? But how is this possible? He's the best lawyer in Athens.

SOCRATES

Protaginus has obviously taught them very well, but he has much to learn. Plato, I aim to prove myself the greatest speaker in all of Athens. Take a letter to Protaginus' school and tell him of my intent to challenge him to rhetorical combat. Tomorrow. Sundown.

PLATO

I'll go at once, Socrates, but what will you do in the meanwhile?

SOCRATES

I have a few things to take care of with a certain friend of Protaginus'.

(The stage lights dim. Socrates sneaks behind the column. Elenchus enters from stage right. He sits on the bench and sighs. Socrates sidles closer to him, unseen. Elenchus looks towards Socrates, and he ducks behind the column. Elenchus turns away, and Socrates scampers behind the waste bin. Elenchus turns away again, and Socrates presses himself underneath the bench)

SOCRATES

Are you just going to take that?

ELENCHUS

What? Who said that?

SOCRATES

Never mind that. Are you just going to let Protaginus walk all over you?

ELENCHUS

Sure I'm mad, but what can I do?

(When Elenchus' back is turned, Socrates takes his place back behind the column)

NO. 15- THE WHISPER IN YOUR EAR

SOCRATES

I KNOW YOUR ONLY FRIEND BETRAYED YOU
SPEAK UP, FORMER SLAVE, WHAT SAY YOU?
SPENT YOUR TIME IN FAITHFUL SERVICE
DO YOU THINK THAT YOU DESERVE THIS?

NOW HE DINES WITH WINE AND WOMEN
CAN HIS CRIMES JUST BE FORGIVEN?
WILL YOU BRING YOUR BOY TO JUSTICE?
OR WILL HIS SOUL REMAIN CORRUPTED?

DREAM A DREAM
PLAN A PLAN
SCHEME A SCHEME
AND GET YOUR MAN

ELENCHUS

Who are you?

SOCRATES

JUST A WHISPER IN YOUR EAR

(Socrates and Elenchus exit on opposite sides of the stage, as it transforms into Junior's bedroom. Junior looks around the room. Elpinice keeps glancing at her packed bags tucked away in a corner of the room)

ELPINICE

Junior. I have something I think I should tell you.

JUNIOR

Can it wait until after school? I'm trying to get there early.
Have you seen my sandals?

ELPINICE

Junior, I don't think it can. We've had a lot of problems for a long time—
(Junior reaches under the bed)

JUNIOR

-- I found one!

So, you said you hadn't seen the other one? *(He holds it up)*

ELPINICE

No, I haven't. I'm trying to talk to you Alcibiades!
(Junior stops searching)

JUNIOR
I told you never to call me that!

ELPINICE
Well, it's not like you ever listen to me.

JUNIOR
Why are you always like this Elpinice? You're so serious all the time. Lighten up. Why can't you be like the guys at school? Protaginus, Meletus, Demosthenes... They all know how to have a good time.

ELPINICE
Lighten up?

JUNIOR
Yeah, is that so hard?

ELPINICE
SPENT MY LIFE PLANNING FOR OUR FUTURE
BUT YOU DON'T CARE, DO YOU JUNIOR?
BATH OR COURT, THERE'S NO EXCUSE
I WILL NOT SUFFER THIS ABUSE

SMARTEST PERSON IN EVERY ROOM
YOUR IGNORANCE WILL BE MY TOMB
WANT A WIFE WHO DOESN'T SPEAK?
WELL, WE'LL SEE HOW YOU FEEL NEXT WEEK

DREAMED A DREAM
PLANNED A PLAN
SCHEMED A SCHEME
I'LL GET MY MAN

NEVER HEARD IT QUITE SO CLEAR
HEED THE WHISPER IN YOUR EAR

ELENCHUS
NOW MY PLANS ARE TAKING FORM
ENJOY THE CALM BEFORE THE
STORM
I TOOK A HIT, BUT WON'T STAY
DOWN
GOOD LUCK GETTING OUT OF TOWN

ELPINICE
TOOK MY SHOT
TRIED MY BEST
GOT THESE THOUGHTS
OFF MY CHEST

ELENCHUS
DREAM A DREAM

ELPINICE
PLAN A PLAN

ELENCHUS
SCHEME A SCHEME

BOTH
GET YOUR MAN

NEVER HEARD IT QUITE SO CLEAR
HEED THE WHISPER IN YOUR EAR
THE WHISPER IN YOUR EAR

(Elpinice exits. As Elenchus comes out of the song, the stage has transformed into Al's place. Elenchus knocks on the door. Al answers in matching pajamas)

AL

Elenchus? What are you doing here so late? And where's Protaginus?

ELENCHUS

General Alcibiades, I have some bad news. It involves Protaginus and your daughter-in-law.

AL

Juicy. Get in here.

(Al pulls Elenchus inside and off-stage)

Scene 4- Streets of Athens

(A few vendors mill about the streets, hocking their wares)

TOWNSPERSON 1

Snake oil! Genuine snake oil!

TOWNSPERSON 2

Magic beans! Get your magic beans right here!

TOWNSPERSONS 3

Colored water in a bottle! I've got colored water in a bottle! What does it do? No idea, but I found it in a puddle outside of town, and it makes me lightheaded when I drink it! Try some today!

TOWNSPERSON 1

Hey, isn't that Demosthenes?

*(The three look on in awe
as Demosthenes enters
with pronounced swagger)*

No. 16- FINALLY WEALTHY

DEMOSTHENES

WALKIN' DOWN THE STREETS, WITH SOME MIDAS, ON A SHOPPING SPREE

TOWNSPERSON

Hey, looking good Demosthenes!

DEMOSTHENES

I OUGHTTA BE.

WON THE TOP CASE IN THE CITY-STATE, I CAN'T BE BEAT
THEY GRINDING TO A HALT, AND I'M GRINDING LIKE I'M MAKING WHEAT
YOU CAN'T COMPETE, IT'S NO CONCEIT, WHAT YOU HEARD IS ALL TRUE

I CAME UP THE HARD WAY: THE JUDGEMENT OF A LAWSUIT
HATER'S ALL GONE MUTE, THEY KNOW I'D CUT THEIR TONGUES OUT
CATCH ME AT THE MARKET, BUYING PRODUCE 'TILL THEY RUN OUT
AND GONE IS THAT CLOWN, ALWAYS GOT PUSHED AROUND
WOUND UP DOWN ON THE GROUND, NOW THE KID'S GOT RENOWN
HE'S SURROUNDED WITH SOUND FROM THIS TOWN THAT'S ASTOUNDED
AND CROWNED HIM THEY ALL CROWD AROUND HIM, THEY FOUND HIM
RECOUNTING HIS TALE WITH RESOUNDING DETAIL
ABOUT HOW HE PREVAILED, TILL HE RUNS OUT OF ALE

WITH ALL THIS MONEY, I
FOUND SOMETHING I CAN'T BUY
WITH ALL THIS GOLD I WON
CAN I TRUST ANYONE?

WEALTHY

NOW I'M WEALTHY
I DON'T THINK IT'S HEALTHY
TO BE THIS WEALTHY

URNS OUT TIME IS THE ONLY THING I CAN'T AFFORD
RELATIVES I'D NEVER GIVE A SECOND TO HAVE FORMED A HORDE
OF PARASITES THAT TRY TO BITE OFF ANY PIECE OF ME THEY CAN
TO FUND ANOTHER ONE OF ALL THEIR STUPID CONVOLUTED PLANS
BANK AN EXPEDITION TO THE OTHER SIDE OF EARTH

ENDORSE ALL YOUR POSITIONS? MAN WE HAVEN'T SPOKE SINCE BIRTH
WHAT AM I WORTH TO ALL THESE PEOPLE? DO THEY ONLY SEE
INHERITANCE?

COS EVERY MONEYED MAN IN TOWN IS STILL ACTING ARROGANT
I STARE AT THEM, AND WONDER HOW THEY SEE I DON'T BELONG
WAS JUNIOR REALLY SERIOUS OR STRINGING ME ALONG?
SO, WHETHER HE'S FAIR-WEATHER OR NOT I DON'T KNOW
BUT HE'S THE ONLY THING THAT I GOT, EVEN THOUGH

WEALTHY
NOW I'M WEALTHY
I FEEL LIKE I'M MELTING
NOW THAT I'M WEALTHY

WEALTHY
I'M FINALLY WEALTHY
YOUR BAT'S IN MY BELFRY
NOW THAT I'M WEALTHY

YOU'RE THE ONE I'M DREAMING OF
BUT MONEY CAN'T BUY ME LOVE

WEALTHY!

DEMOSTHENES

I gotta go find Junior.

*(Demosthenes exits.
Blackout)*

Scene 5- Junior's Chambers

(Junior and Elpinice sit on opposite ends of his bed. Both are lost in separate worlds of mooning over their new love)

JUNIOR

Isn't it a beautiful day?

(Junior sighs)

ELPINICE

You don't get too many like today.

(Elpinice sighs)

JUNIOR

It's one of those days where everything is right with the world.

(Elpinice sighs)

ELPINICE

And you can't imagine anything going wrong.

(Both sigh)

NO. 17 - TELL THEM

ELPINICE

HAVE YOU FELT A LOVE SO DEEP
YOU HAD TO SPEAK IN VERSE?
MY FORTUNETELLER SAID TO KEEP
THESE BAT BONES IN MY PURSE

(Elpinice pulls out bat bones)

BUT EVEN IF I DIDN'T
I'VE GOT LOVE SHE CAN'T PREDICT
BUT SHE SAID IF I DIDN'T
THEN I WOULD GET REALLY SICK

(Elpinice looks around, scared and returns them to her purse)

SOMEONE'S TOUCHED A PART OF ME
I THOUGHT NO ONE COULD REACH
EACH HUMOR'S BALANCED PERFECTLY,
WITHOUT A SINGLE LEECH
I'M DELIGHTED AND INSANE AS IF
THIS JOY IS ONLY MINE
LIKE CHECKING SUNDIALS IN THE RAIN
AND NOT LEARNING THE TIME

ELPINICE

I WAS SO CLOSE TO BEING MISREMEMBERED
YOU CAN'T BE BUYING EVERYTHING YOU READ
LEGENDS MAY TELL YOU OF THE LIFE THAT I SURRENDERED
TELL THEM THAT I CONCEDE
THAT I CONCEDE

JUNIOR

I'M HAVING TROUBLE BREATHING
AND MY STOMACH'S IN MY CHEST
MY SERVANTS KNOW THEIR BEATINGS
SIMPLY AREN'T AMONG MY BEST
WAS FEELING LIKE A ZERO, IS THAT

SOMETHING I CAN SAY?
I DON'T THINK WE HAVE NEGATIVES.
IT COULD GO EITHER WAY.

I WAS A MINUTE FROM A TRAGIC STORY
I WOULD HAVE SUFFERED, BY THE GODS ABOVE
PEOPLE TALK ABOUT THE LIFE THAT'S LIVED FOR GLORY
TELL THEM THAT I'M IN LOVE

ELPINICE

I WAS SO CLOSE TO BEING MISREMEMBERED
YOU KNOW NOBODY TAUGHT ME HOW TO READ?
LEGENDS MAY TELL YOU OF THE LIFE THAT I SURRENDERED
TELL THEM THAT I CONCEDE
THAT I CONCEDE

BOTH

SEARCHING FOR SOMETHING THAT MIGHT FULFILL ME

ELPINICE

IT'S NOT A TOPIC WE COULD
DISCUSS
IF I TELL HIM, THEN I THINK THAT
HE MIGHT KILL ME
YOU'RE MINE PROTAGINUS
PROTAGINUS

JUNIOR

SHE DIDN'T HAVE THE GOODS TO
MEET MY NEEDS
IF I TELL HER, THEN I THINK
THAT SHE MIGHT KILL ME
YOU'RE MINE DEMOSTHENES
DEMOSTHENES

*(Each looks at the other,
shocked)*

JUNIOR

Protaginus? I should have known that he wasn't just helping you
feel better that night!

ELPINICE

You're one to talk. Who are you even describing? Oh, it's that
poor kid, Demosthenes isn't it? You're sick. You know he's only
into you because you helped him get his money back. He was
mooning over Protaginus before he appointed you. You better hope
he doesn't get a job, or he'll fall in love with his boss and
leave you.

JUNIOR

That is it! I am tired of you disrespecting me in my own home.
You have forgotten your place. Guards!
(Servants come in and grab Elpinice)
This marriage is over. Until I get the papers to file for
divorce, you're staying here. I have had enough from you. I'm
going to see Demosthenes.

(Junior exits. Blackout)

Scene 6- Outside Protaginus' School
(Protaginus waits with all of his bags)

PROTAGINUS
She's late... What if something happened? *(Beat)* No, I can't think like that. She's smart... but how smart? Damn, am I going to throw it all away for her?

(Time stops. The gods enter once more)

NO. 18- IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE (Reprise)

APOLLO
I KNOW YOU'RE SCARED, TRUST AND WAIT
SHE'LL BE HERE, JUST HAVE FAITH
SHE SAID SHE'S IN LOVE WITH YOU
YOU KNOW YOU SHOULD SEE THIS THROUGH
(Apollo waits for Dionysus' verse to come in. Dionysus looks around briefly. He realizes, makes an "oh me," gesture and begins)

DIONYSUS
STARTING TO FEEL MANIC, NOW IT'S TIME TO PANIC
AND TO TAKE SOME STOCK
MAYBE SHE'S BEEN TAKEN, TIME TO SAVE YOUR BACON
IS IT SUCH A SHOCK?
NOW YOU GOTTA HURRY, YOU SHOULD START TO WORRY
'BOUT YOUR HARD-EARNED PRIZE
SHE'S GOT A HUSBAND, AND YOU OWE HER NOTHING
WHY ARE YOU SURPRISED?

APOLLO
YOU TWO ARE A PERFECT SET
IF YOU LEAVE, YOU'LL BE BESET
WITH GRIEF YOU WILL NOT SOON FORGET

DIONYSUS
I'M NOT OVERSTATING, EVERY SECOND WAITING
IS A TOTAL WASTE
FORGET ABOUT DEBATING, GET TO THE ESCAPING
WITH THE GREATEST HASTE

APOLLO
SHOW WHAT KIND OF MAN YOU ARE

DIONYSUS
DUDE, YOU'RE NOT A GOOD GUY, GO AND WAVE HER GOOD-BYE
YOU CAN STILL GO FAR-

PROTAGINUS
Okay, guys. I think I can take it from here.

I KNOW WHAT I'M GONNA CHOOSE
Plato, what are you doing here?

(Plato enters and time unfreezes)

PLATO

Protaginus, you have been formally challenged to face Socrates in the Agora.

PROTAGINUS

I don't have time for this. Can't you see I'm leaving? I have no desire to face Socrates. He can call himself the wisest man in Athens, I don't really care.

PLATO

That will in no way satisfy him. You must come to the Agora at once so that this matter can be settled once and for all.

PROTAGINUS

How many times do I have to say...?

(Protaginus notices Al enter accompanied by three soldiers)

No.

AL

Sorry, baby. Protaginus, you are under arrest for the crimes of adultery, corrupting the youth, and impersonating a rhetorician. You're facing possible life in prison, or even exile or death.

PROTAGINUS

Damn it.

AL

Plato, what are you doing here?

PLATO

Socrates has issued a challenge to Protaginus to defend his school of rhetoric against philosophy.

AL

Well, that sounds fun. Let's do that. Protaginus, you are hereby sentenced to trial by THE AGORA.

PLATO

Has he really committed these crimes? What proof do you have?
(Elenchus enters)

AL

We have Elpinice in custody; we tortured her for her confession. She was going to leave with him. They had two tickets to the ferry leaving in an hour.

PROTAGINUS

Elenchus, you bastard! Was this you? I'll kill you!
(Elenchus spits on the ground)

ELENCHUS

I hope they use quail feathers on your genitals!

*(Elenchus exits. The
soldiers drag Protaginus
away. Blackout)*

Scene 7- Streets of Athens

(Meletus, Anytus and Lycon stand next to each other bearing down on a scared towns person)

Just give us a beat. MELETUS

Okay, fine. TOWNSPERSON
(He begins beatboxing for four bars. Badly)

Stop. ANYTUS
(He does)
You're terrible. Lycon. Hit it.

(Lycon deftly beatboxes for four bars. It gives way to the band)

NO. 19- TRIO RAP

MELETUS
DOPEST MCS FROM THE LAUREL TO THE SANDALS
ANYTUS
MESS WITH US AND GET MORE THAN YOU CAN HANDLE
MELETUS
GOT THE BEST RHYMES

ANYTUS
FROM OLYMPUS
LYCON
DOWN TO HADES

MELETUS
GAME'S GOLD MEDAL

ALL
AIN'T THAT RIGHT LADIES?
(A woman walks by and turns her nose up at them. They shrug)

MELETUS
I'M MELETUS AND I WIN CASES
ANYTUS
VOTE ANYTUS, STAY IN HIS GOOD GRACES
LYCON
LISTEN TO LYCON, HE TELLS NO LIES
LIKE HOW HE GONNA GET BETWEEN THEM THIGHS

MELETUS
IT'S NOT SLANDEROUS
ANYTUS
COS WE DON'T FRONT, KIDS
LYCON

ALL
CALL US TANTALUS
COS YOU CAN'T TOUCH THIS!
(The three put out their arms in a "TA-DA" gesture. The towns person shakes his head and walks off)

MELETUS

Lycon, that's on you. You came in late on the last line.

LYCON

Me, your rhymes are the weakest in the whole performance.

MELETUS

Why you little...!

(Meletus charges Lycon, but misses and takes Anytus to the ground. Meletus gets up and rolls up his sleeves, but Anytus pulls him back down. The two begin wrestling on the ground. Lycon stops to laugh, but he is pulled into the fray by both of them. As they fight, Elenchus walks in whistling the melody of "What About Me")

ANYTUS *(from the ground)*

Hey, it's the teacher's slave. What's up?

ELENCHUS

I'm free now, so it's just Elenchus.

LYCON

Congratulations. Where's Protaginus?

(The three get to their feet)

ELENCHUS

He's going to trial for stealing Junior's wife.

MELETUS

That's pretty messed up. So are you taking over the school?
(Elenchus considers this)

ELENCHUS

I guess I am.

ANYTUS

Hey guys, we should defend him! If Demosthenes was able to beat Isaeus, we could definitely beat whoever Protaginus is up against.

(The trio agree with each other)

ELENCHUS

I'm gonna stop you right there. Protaginus is being tried in the Agora, against Socrates.

LYCON *(disappointed)*

Oh. Well. *(Beat)* back to street-performing then.
(The three pose)

ELENCHUS

Wait, hold on. You guys aren't coming back to class?

MELETUS

If Socrates beats Protaginus, no one is going to respect the school anymore.

ELENCHUS

But what about me?

ANYTUS

Well, you're free, but you don't have any money. Do you have any rich relatives you can sue?

ELENCHUS

No.

ANYTUS

Well, I'm out of ideas.

ELENCHUS

No, no, no, no! I have to find Junior.

*(Elenchus runs offstage
and Lycon goes back to
beatboxing. Blackout)*

Scene 8- Streets of Athens

(Elenchus runs down the street. Junior walks the other way in a huff. They bump into each other)

ELENCHUS

Oh, Junior. Thank Zeus I found you. Have you heard about Protaginus?

JUNIOR

Yeah, he stole my wife.

ELENCHUS

He's on trial right now. We have to save him.

JUNIOR

Save him? Tarr'd genitals are too good for him as far as I'm concerned.

ELENCHUS

How can you say that? He taught you everything you know, and he helped you win one of the biggest civil cases of all time. Your name is going down in history.

JUNIOR

Yeah, so he could scam on my wife while he was doing it.

ELENCHUS

That was not our original scam, I can assure you.

JUNIOR

What do you mean?

ELENCHUS

Oh, uh, never mind.

JUNIOR

Elenchus.

(Junior places his hands on his hips and sternly looks at Elenchus)

ELENCHUS

We were originally just going to take the money and run, but we both kind of got sidetracked.

JUNIOR

With my wife.

ELENCHUS

Not just your wife. Demosthenes' inheritance was a pretty big factor as well.

(Demosthenes enters)

DEMOSTHENES

What's this about my inheritance?

JUNIOR

Elenchus here was just telling me how he and Protaginus have been scamming us.

DEMOSTHENES

What's the scam?

JUNIOR

The whole thing, the school, the case. They never cared about us. They were just after my wife, and your inheritance.

DEMOSTHENES

Well, you don't like your wife, and I have my inheritance. Isn't that enough? What's the problem?

JUNIOR

It's not about Elpinice. I can't just have someone taking my wife. She's mine... Look, it's kind of a status thing. I wouldn't expect you to get it.

DEMOSTHENES

No, I get it. I'm just another one of your toys for you to play with while you're ignoring your wife. But I guess I know where you go home to.

JUNIOR

That's not what I'm saying at all. I just can't lose control of this too.

NO. 20- I'M SORRY

DEMOSTHENES

YOU GOTTA LEARN TO LET GO
DON'T LET HER SEE YOU SWEAT, BRO
MIGHT NOT BE WHAT YOU HAD IN MIND
WILL YOU LEAVE THAT GIRL BEHIND?

JUNIOR

I DON'T THINK YOU GET IT
NOT THAT I'M UPSET, IT'S
FOR FAR TOO LONG SHE'S GONE UNCHECKED
NOW LOOK AT THIS DISRESPECT

I'M SORRY I'M NOT WHAT YOU WANTED
I'M SORRY OUR LOVE WAS A SHAM
I'M SORRY I NEVER WROTE SONNETS
I'M SORRY THAT'S NOT WHO I AM

GOTTA BE MY OWN MAN
GOTTA MAKE A GAME PLAN
NO ONE ELSE PUSHES ME AROUND

DEMOSTHENES

JUNIOR, YOU GOTTA CALM DOWN

NOW YOU GOT A NEW GUY
HE NEEDS TO SEE YOU TRY
MAKE A CHOICE, I HAVE MY PRIDE
DID AL TEACH YOU TO DECIDE?

(Junior's eyes widen)

I'M SORRY, I'M TELLING THE TRUTH NOW

I'M SORRY FOR FINDING MY NERVE,
BUT YOU SENT OUR FRIEND TO THE HOOSEGOW
I'M SORRY, IT'S WHAT YOU DESERVE

DEMOSTHENES

I'M THE ONE YOU ASKED OUT
I'M NOT FROM THE BATH-HOUSE
BABY, YOU COMITT, NOW
OR WE CALL IT QUILTS, CHAO

JUNIOR

HOW COULD YOU THINK I'M
ANYTHING LIKE HIM?
I WON'T LET A GOOD THING GO
WOW, BABE, YOU MUST THINK I'M
REALLY DIM
OR IS IT THAT YOU DON'T KNOW?

JUNIOR

SORRY, I'LL BE WHAT YOU WANTED
I'M SORRY, DON'T WALK OUT THAT DOOR
I'M SORRY, I'LL WRITE YOU THOSE SONNETS
YOU'RE EVERYTHING I WANT AND MORE

BOTH

I'M SORRY, I'LL PAY MORE ATTENTION
BE BETTER THAN I WAS BEFORE
I'M SORRIER THAN I COULD MENTION
YOU'RE EVERYTHING I WANT AND MORE

YOU'RE EVERYTHING I WANT AND MORE

JUNIOR

So are we cool?

DEMOSTHENES

Yeah, I'm good.

ELENCHUS

Well what about me?

*(Both turn to him,
noticing someone else for
the first time in a
while)*

JUNIOR

What about you?

ELENCHUS

Protaginus abandoned me for Elpinice.

JUNIOR

That's rough, but it's not really our problem.

ELENCHUS

Well, he promised to get me out of here.

DEMOSTHENES

So, he sold you?

ELENCHUS

No. He freed me.

JUNIOR

That's great. You'll probably even get the school.

DEMOSTHENES

So, what's the problem? Where is Protaginus now?

ELENCHUS

He's on trial at the Agora, about to get his goose eggs feathered.

DEMOSTHENES

Then he deserves our support, don't you think, *Junior*.

Junior (mumbling)

Yeah, I guess so...

ELENCHUS

But I'm the one who got him sent there in the first place.

DEMOSTHENES

Then we'll support, and you can apologize. Come on.

ELENCHUS

Okay, but there's something we have to do on the way.

*(Demosthenes and Junior
lead Elenchus off-stage.
Blackout)*

Scene 9- The Agora

(Socrates' followers mill about. Socrates enters)

SOCRATES

Well done, Plato. Every portion of my plan is working perfectly.

PLATO

Of course Socrates, but why go to all of this trouble?

SOCRATES

Plato, I knew that charlatan Protaginus would not debate me in a fair contest of skill, so I had to engineer a situation in which I would be able to prove my prowess.

PLATO

But Socrates, why must you debate everyone of note in this town? It has not made you popular with the rhetoricians. And while the people like it now, Athenians are not known for their loyalty.

SOCRATES

These are volatile times. People need to know how to think. We are deciding now, how we will gather knowledge for years to come, and I must make sure that philosophy is more than just what college kids say between bong rips.

PLATO

What do you mean?

SOCRATES

Philosophy is a way of life for me. I question everything, the gods, artists, and most of all these rhetoricians. I cannot stop questioning any more than the leaves can stop changing, or you can stop writing down everything I say... Seriously, stop writing down everything I say.

(Plato stops)

PLATO

Sorry.

SOCRATES

Forgiven. Now, let me tell you a story.

NO. 21- I WENT TO DELPHI

SOCRATES

I WENT TO DELPHI, THE TEMPLE THEN I
ASKED THAT ORACLE "WHO'S THE WISEST OF THEM ALL?"
SHE SAID "IT'S YOU, SIR." I SAID "ARE YOU SURE?"
AND THAT MADE ME FEEL SMALL

I WENT TO DELPHI, I NEVER THOUGHT I
WOULD GET SOME NEWS LIKE THIS

SOCRATES' FOLLOWERS

SHOULDN'T YOU REJOICE?

SOCRATES

WITH NO ONE WISER, I'VE NO UPRISER

TO CONTRADICT MY VOICE

IF ANSWERS ARE ALL IN MY MIND
I HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE LEFT TO FIND

I WENT TO DELPHI, I COULDN'T DENY
THE FOOLS SURROUNDING ME

SOCRATES' FOLLOWERS
SOUND LIKE BRAYING SHEEP

SOCRATES
THE SENATE'S LAWSUITS, RELIGION'S FALSE TRUTHS
ECHO THROUGHOUT GREECE!

I WENT TO DELPHI, AND NOW I DECRY
DETRACTORS BIG AND SMALL

SOCRATES' FOLLOWERS
ARISTOPHANES

SOCRATES
THEY WOULD DISPELL ME, AND TRY TO TELL ME
PHILOSOPHY IS CHEAP

PRIESTS AND KINGS CANNOT DISPUTE ME
HOW COULD YOU HOPE TO REFUTE ME?

I WENT TO DELPHI, BECAME THE GADFLY
QUESTION PERSONIFIED

SOCRATES' FOLLOWERS
WISEST OF THEM ALL

SOCRATES
NO WORDS CAN SHOCK ME. I'LL JUST KEEP TALKING.
OF COURSE YOU'RE FEELING SMALL!

I WENT TO DELPHI

SOCRATES' FOLLOWERS
HE WENT TO DELPHI
THE ORACLE TOLD ME

SOCRATES' FOLLOWERS
WISEST OF THEM ALL

HE SEEKS A CHALLENGE. WHO HAS THE TALENT?
A GREAT DEBATING,
WORD CREATING,
INNOVATING,

SOCRATES
I'VE BEEN WAITING!
PLEASE MAKE ME FEEL SMALL!

SOCRATES

This city-state isn't big enough for the two of us. It's time to find out who the wisest truly is, Protaginus.
(*Blackout*)

Scene 10- The Agora, Later

(Protaginus is thrown into the Agora. Socrates' followers surround Socrates stage left. Al, soldiers, and townspeople watch)

SOCRATES

So, I see you have decided to join us.

PROTAGINUS

It was not by choice. Let's just get this over with.

SOCRATES

Soon, we will finally know which of us is truly the wisest.

AL

This debate between Socrates and Protaginus the Elder... Wait, where's your son? Do you even have a son?

(Protaginus doesn't answer)

I'll add that to the charges. The debate will serve as his trial for the crimes of adultery, corrupting the youth, and impersonating a rhetorician and lying about you son. The topic will be, resolved: rhetoric is a cheap manipulative trick. Socrates will take the affirmative position and thus speak first. Let the battle begin!

NO. 22- FINAL CONFRONTATION (Protaginus Vs Socrates)

SOCRATES

GLAD YOU COULD JOIN ME, TOO BAD IT WON'T BE FOR LONG
USE THAT ILL-GOTTEN COIN HE WON TO COMMISSION HIS SWAN SONG
ONCE HE'S GONE, WE CAN GET BACK TO WHAT MATTERS
MAKING MINDS STRONG, NOT PRACTICING WAYS TO FLATTER
WON'T CONVINC ME THAT WE'RE NOT LIVING ON A FLAT EARTH
AND I BELIEVE THAT THE TRUTH TRANSCENDS ALL MATTER
YOUR SPEECHES DISPENSE WITH AN IRRELEVANT ELEGANCE
BUT YOUR ETHICS ARE NEGLIGENT AND THEY NEED SOME DEVELOPMENT
BUT I PEEP GAME, WE NEVER THOUGHT YOUR KIDS COULD DO IT
WE WERE LAUGHING AT YOUR HUBRIS AND WE THOUGHT THAT YOU WERE
FOOLISH
WHO KNEW THAT THEY COULD PROVE IT, A LUCKY AMATEUR HANDLER
HAS MANAGED TO TAKE UP A DAY ON MY CALENDAR
THE TRUTH IS A PILLAR, IT'S NOT FILLER DISTILLED WHEN
YOU'RE REACHING FOR AMMO, WITHOUT A LIE TO DELIVER
YOU GOT NONE LEFT IN THE QUIVER, AND NOW IT'S MANO A MANO
AND EVERYONE HERE CAN SEE YOUR RHETORIC'S HOLLOW

PROTAGINUS

CHILL DETECTIVE, 'FORE YOU START WITH THAT INVECTIVE
I JUST OFFER PERSPECTIVE, SHOW THE TRUTH IS SUBJECTIVE
IF YOU WANNA BELIEVE EVERYTHING I EVER SOLD YOU
THEN NOBODY EVER TOLD YOU THAT THE WORLD WAS GONNA ROLL YOU
I OFFER A SERVICE, I SEE THAT YOU'RE NERVOUS
BUT LOOK AT MY KIDS, I'M GIVING THEM PURPOSE
ASK DEMOSTHENES, HE GOT HIS INHERITANCE
CAN SOCRATES DO THAT? IT'S WORTH A COMPAIRISON
MY LITTLE EXPERIMENT'S THE TALK OF THE CITY-STATE
AND ALL OF YOUR WITTY MATES ARE SAYING I'M PRETTY GREAT
SO BEFORE THIS COMMITTEE HATES, AND PUTS ME TO DEATH

YOU KNOW THAT YOU OWE MY RHETORIC SOME RESPECT
YOU'RE THROWING DIRT ON MY NAME BUT YOU SEE I'M STILL GOING
YOU SAW MY SCHOOL GROWING AND YOUR FEAR STARTED SHOWING
SO YOU GOT TO CROWING TO GET ME IN THIS RING, SEE
BUT I'M NOT STUCK IN HERE WITH YOU, YOU'RE STUCK IN HERE WITH ME

SOCRATES

THAT'S JUST PERFECT, I'M RIGHT WHERE I WANNA BE
CENTER STAGE IN THE AGORA DESTROYING A WANNABE
INSPECT YOUR KIDS, WHICH DO I SELECT?
THE ONES YOU NEGLECT OR THE FUTURES YOU WRECKED?
I WENT OUT AND CHECKED, DEMOSTHENES IS SPOILED ROTTEN
AND YOU STOLE JUNIOR'S WIFE, OR HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN?
YOUR GREED WAS SO WANTON, YOU ABANDONED YOUR FRIEND
YOU'RE BAD NEWS FOR ATHENS, AND WE CANNOT EXTEND
YOUR TENURE HERE, PERMANENT OR TEMPORARY
GOTTA END YOUR INFLUENCE BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY
ATHENS IS A SANCTUARY FOR NURTURING MINDS
BUT YOU POISON THE WELL WITH ANYTHING YOU CAN FIND
BUT IT LOOKS LIKE WE ALL FINALLY CAME TO OUR SENSES
TIRED OF THE LYING, THEFT, EXORBITANT EXPENSES
YOU MAKE MEN RICH, CAN'T ARGUE, IT'S TRUE
BUT LOOK AROUND, NO ONE'S HERE TO SUPPORT YOU

PROTAGINUS

THERE'S THAT SICKENING FEELING
I KNOW THAT I'M TO BLAME
NO MORE TIME FOR DEALING, JANUS
HADES IS CALLING MY NAME

ELENCHUS (*offstage*)

Protaginus!

PROTAGINUS

Really? I was being dramatic.

(*Elenchus enters*)

Elenchus, what are you doing here? Come to watch me die?

ELENCHUS

No, I'm a better person than you. I couldn't let them tar and feather your genitals. People usually die from that; it's a pretty embarrassing way to go.

PROTAGINUS

Why would you help me?

ELENCHUS

I decided I didn't want to be remembered as the guy who got his best friend killed.

(*Protaginus smiles*)

PROTAGINUS

Thanks. What took you so long to get here?

ELENCHUS

I had to make a stop first.

(*Elpinice enters*)

PROTAGINUS

Elpinice! Where have you been? I was waiting at the school for you!

ELPINICE

Junior set Al's guards on me when he found out about us. They locked me in my room. Elenchus helped me escape.

ELENCHUS (*sheepish*)

I just distracted the guards. You did all of the escaping.

ELPINICE

Covering yourself in goat feces was genius. So, how's the whole debate-thing going?

PROTAGINUS

Honestly, not great. I've got one more, but I'm really not feeling it. Maybe I should just let them take me to jail.

ELENCHUS

Don't forget tarring and feathering your pubic hair.

PROTAGINUS

How could I? You never seem to want to stop talking about it. I don't know; I just feel bad. I took you from Junior, and I took a ton of Demosthenes' inheritance. I'm not sure if I'm the kind of person Athens, or the world, needs running around.

(All five of Protaginus' students enter)

DEMOSTHENES

Protaginus, no. Don't throw the debate.

PROTAGINUS

Demosthenes, why? I stole from you.

DEMOSTHENES

You were the only one in town who took a chance on me. To me, that's worth all of my inheritance.

PROTAGINUS

What about you, Junior? I kind of stole your wife.

JUNIOR

I overreacted. I realize that you can offer her something I never could: actual interest. Plus, I've kind of got my own thing going here.

(Junior squeezes Demosthenes)

PROTAGINUS

You guys all feel this way?

(All seven nod)

PROTAGINUS

Well, okay.

JUNIOR

Father, stop the debate.

AL

No can do, son. This is getting too good. Protaginus, whatcha got?

PROTAGINUS

SECONDS ON THE CLOCK, AND LOOK WHO CAME THROUGH
NO ONE TO SUPPORT ME, HOW ABOUT MY WHOLE CREW
I'M SPITTING FOR MY LIFE AND I'M SPITTING FOR MY HONOR
IF I DON'T SPIT SOME MAGIC THEN I'M GONNA BE A GONER
PRIMA DONNA ALWAYS WANNA TEST THE LIMITS OF PHILOSOPHY
YOU SLINGING PROPAGANDA, BUT THERE'S NO WAY THAT YOU'RE STOPPING
ME

DON'T TELL ME HOW I GOTTA BE, I'M NOT ONE OF YOUR PROGENY
HONESTY MAY BE YOUR FAVORITE POLICY, BUT NOT FOR ME
I'M TELLING YOU IT'S RELATIVE, BUT YOU CAN'T SEE THE RELEVANCE
RELY ON RELEGATING ME TO RELICS, BUT YOUR SENTIMENT IS
LIMITED, I TAUGHT THE KIDS EVERYTHING THEY NEED TO KNOW
IF YOU CAN MAKE YOUR FOES LOOK FOOLISH, THEN I SAY YOU'RE GOOD TO
GO

AND EVEN THOUGH I TOOK HIS WIFE, NOW JUNIOR LEADS A BETTER LIFE
HE FOUND A LOVE THAT HE'LL STAY TRUE TO, THINK THAT'S SOMETHING
MORE THAN YOU DO

SOCRATES, I GOT NO BEEF, BUT YOU SHOULD KNOW THE TRUTH IS
REAL IMPORTANT, ALMOST AS MUCH AS HOW YOU USE IT
*(Elenchus, Elpinice and
the students all rush in
to hug Protaginus)*

JUNIOR

So, dad, who wins?

AL

Well... how could I resist that last speech? Protaginus is the
winner!

(All cheer)

ELPINICE

Al, are you sure that this isn't you just going with the last
thing that you heard someone say again?

AL

Nope, this time I'm certain.

*(Protaginus looks to
Socrates)*

PROTAGINUS

No hard feelings?

SOCRATES

To the contrary! Relative truth, this opens up a whole new world
for me. Plato, come, we have much to pontificate about.

(Socrates turns to exit)

But don't think this means we won't have a rematch.

PROTAGINUS

You know what? I'm looking forward to it.

*(Socrates and his
followers exit. Blackout)*

Scene 11- Outside Protaginus' School

(Time has jumped ahead one month. Protaginus sits in a chair, relaxing, in front of a much nicer school. Elpinice, Elenchus, Socrates, Al, Junior and Demosthenes are all onstage. The chorus as townspeople mill about)

PROTAGINUS

It's no Lesbos, but it's not too bad either. How are we doing, everybody?

ELENCHUS

Enrollment is through the roof.

DEMOSTHENES

We're encountering a little resistance on your mandatory attendance law, but Jr. and I are putting some pressure on the Senate.

(Demosthenes grabs Junior by the waist)

SOCRATES

Even I can't question these results.

AL

I've got something you can question.

(Al winks at Socrates suggestively)

JUNIOR

Dad!

ELPINICE

Calm down, Junior.

(She looks at Protaginus, she smiles. He smiles back, but less sure)

What's the matter?

PROTAGINUS

Nothing, it's just, my plans have changed a lot in the past month.

(Protaginus stands and takes center stage)

NO. 23- A PATH FOR ME

PROTAGINUS

GOD OF TRANSITION
ACCOMPLISHED MY MISSION
PLANS COME TO FRUITION
WHAT MORE COULD I ASK?

DEMOSTHENES AND JUNIOR

THE STUDENTS ARE FILLING YOUR SCHOOL NOW
YOU'VE LEFT THEM IN EXCELLENT HANDS

ELENCHUS

WE'VE REACHED AN UNDERSTANDING
WE TEACH WHILE YOU'RE EXPANDING

ELPINICE
WE'RE TAKING RHETORIC OVERSEAS
NO ONE'S A MATCH FOR OUR EXPERTISE

SOCRATES
FIRST SCHOOL VETTED BY SOCRATES

ELPINICE
I THINK WE'RE UP TO THE TASK

PROTAGINUS
A PATH FOR ME
AS FAR AS I CAN SEE
JANUS HEARD MY PLEA
HOW CAN I DISAGREE?

*(A squad of CRETANS
enter)*

ELENCHUS
Who are those guys?

PROTAGINUS
That's the Cretan royal court.

ELPINICE
What do you think they're doing here?

PROTAGINUS *(nervous)*
I don't know.

*(They addresses
Protaginus)*

CRETIAN 1
MAKE WAY FOR THE COURT OF THE CRETIAN KING
CRETIAN 2
THE NEWS WE BRING

CRETIAN 1
WILL MAKE YOU KISS THE RING
CRETIAN 2

PROTAGINUS WE'VE COME TO TAKE YOU BACK FROM DISGRACE
WE HEARD ABOUT YOUR CASE

CRETIAN 1
SO WE RACED TO ERASE
OUR MISTAKE SO WE CAN TAKE YOU OUT OF THIS PLACE
CRETIAN 2

SO WHATTA YA SAY? WE CAN DOUBLE YOUR PAY.
CRETIAN 1

NO DELAY, WE JUST NEED AN OKAY.
CRETIAN 2

Okay?

JUNIOR
Can somebody explain what's going on here?

CRETIAN 1
Protaginus was the advisor to the king, but we banished him after
his counsel lost Crete a major battle. We're here to pardon him
and take him home.

DEMOSTHENES
What if he doesn't want to go? You don't want to go, do you?

ELENCHUS

On the other hand, double the gold you're making here, and the ear of a king. I couldn't blame you.

PROTAGINUS

A PATH FOR ME
AS FAR AS I CAN SEE
JANUS HEARD MY PLEA
HOW CAN I DISAGREE?

ELPINICE

FAR AWAY FROM ME
HOW CAN THIS BE?
HOW CAN HE DISAGREE?

PROTAGINUS

Apollo? Dionysus? (*Beat*) I guess I'm on my own this time.

WHEN I WAS A KID I LEARNED TO TWIST MY WORDS
SWIRLING SYLLABLES THE ONLY WAY THAT YOU GET HEARD
BUT SOMETIMES THE WORLD IS BETTER IF YOU'RE SILENT
COS NOW I GOTTA SECOND CHANCE TO RULE OVER THAT ISLAND
BUT I'M TRYING REALLY HARD NOW TO BE A BETTER MAN
AND MY EYES ARE ON THE THRONE BUT THERE'S A SHAKING IN MY HANDS
I COULD BE A TYRANT, 'VISING WITH AN IRON FIST
BUT THESE GUYS ARE RELYING ON MY GUIDANCE, I RESIST
THE WILL TO POWER BUT MY WILL IS GROWING WEAKER
I COULD COUNCIL KINGS OF CRETE OR BE ATHEN'S GREATEST SPEAKER
I WAS BORN A CLEVER CREATURE, PEOPLE ALWAYS CALLED ME SMART
BUT I'VE NEVER HAD TO MAKE ANY DECISIONS WITH MY HEART
WHEN I THINK ABOUT THE MONEY, THEN IT FEELS LIKE I CAN CHOOSE
BUT THEN I THINK ABOUT MY FRIENDS, AND I GOT A LOT TO LOSE

COMPANY

WE'RE SORRY WE'RE NOT WHAT YOU CHOSE NOW
WE'RE SORRY YOU'RE HAVING YOUR DOUBTS
BUT YOU SHOULD JUST GO WITH YOUR CASH-COW
SO GO PACK YOUR THINGS AND GET OUT!

That's it!

I HAVE SOMETHING TO LOSE!

PROTAGINUS

A PATH FOR ME
AS FAR AS I CAN SEE
THERE'S NO WAY IT COULD BE
WITHOUT YOU NEXT TO ME

*(Protaginus grabs onto
Elpinice)*

PROTAGINUS

A PATH FOR ME
AS FAR AS I CAN SEE
THERE'S NO WAY IT COULD BE
WITHOUT YOU NEXT TO ME

COMPANY

A PATH FOR ME
AS FAR AS WE CAN SEE
THERE'S NO WAY IT COULD BE
WITHOUT YOU NEXT TO ME

PROTAGINUS

A PATH FOR ME
AS FAR AS I CAN SEE
THERE'S NO WAY IT COULD BE
I NEED YOU NEXT TO ME

COMPANY

A PATH FOR ME
AS FAR AS WE CAN SEE
THERE'S NO WAY IT COULD BE
I NEED YOU NEXT TO ME

COMPANY
APORIA!

Curtain

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