

## THE GOLDEN ASS, BOOK I

me to the gallows. Wherefore, I returned to my chamber and there devised with myself in what violent sort I should finish my life. But when I saw that fortune would minister unto me no other instrument than my bed, I said: 'O bed, O bed, most dear unto me at this present, which hast abode and suffered with me so many miseries, judge and arbiter of such things as were done here this night, whom only I may call to witness for my innocence, render (I say) unto me some wholesome weapon to end my life that am most willing to die.' And therewithal I pulled out a piece of the rope wherewith the bed was corded, and tied one end thereof about a rafter which stood forth beneath the window, and with the other end I made a sliding knot and stood upon my bed to cast myself from aloft into destruction, and so put my neck into it. But when I pushed away with my foot that which supported me beneath, so that the noose when my weight came upon it might choke the passage of my breath, behold suddenly the rope being old and rotten burst in the middle, and I fell down tumbling upon Socrates that lay nigh me, and with him rolled upon the floor. And even at that very time the ostler came in crying with a loud voice, and said: 'Where are you that made such haste at deep night, and now lie wallowing and snoring abed?' Whereupon (I know not whether it was by our fall or by the harsh cry of the ostler) Socrates (as waking out of a sleep) did rise up first and said: 'It is not without cause that strangers do speak evil of all such ostlers, for this caitiff in his coming in, and with his crying out, I think under colour to steal away something, hath waked me, that was beside very weary, out of a sound sleep.'



“Emergo laetus atque alacer insperato gaudio perfusus, et ‘Ecce, ianitor fidelissime, comes et pater meus et frater meus, quem nocte ebrius occisum a me calumniabar,’ et cum dicto Socraten deosculabar amplexus: at ille odore alioquin spurcissimi humoris percussus, quo me Lamiae illae infecerant, vehementer aspernatur: ‘Apage te’ inquit ‘Fetorem extremae latrinae,’ et causas coepit huius odoris comiter inquirere. At ego miser afficto ex tempore absurdo ioco in alium sermonem intentionem eius denuo derivo et iniecta dextra ‘Quin imus’ inquam ‘Et itineris matutini gratiam capimus.’ Sumo sarcinulam et pretio mansionis stabulario persoluto capeamus viam.

- 18 “Aliquantum processeramus et iam iubaris exortu cuncta collustrantur, et ego curiose sedulo arbitrabar iugulum comitis, qua parte gladium delapsum videram, et mecum ‘Vesane,’ aio ‘Qui poculis et vino sepultus extrema somniasti. Ecce Socrates integer, sanus, incolumis. Ubi vulnus? Spongia ubi? Ubi postremum cicatrix tam alta, tam recens?’ et ad illum ‘Ne’ inquam ‘Immerito medici fidi cibo et crapula distentos saeva et gravia somniare autumant: mihi denique quod poculis vesperi minus temperavi, nox acerba diras et truces imagines obtulit, ut adhuc me credam cruore humano aspersum atque impiatum.’



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“Then I rose up joyful, as I hoped not to be, with a merry countenance, saying: ‘Behold, good ostler, my friend, my companion and my brother whom thou being drunken in the night didst falsely affirm to be murdered by me.’ And therewithal I embraced my friend Socrates and kissed him; but he smelling the stink wherewith those hags had embrued me, thrust me away and said: ‘Away with thee with thy filthy odour,’ and then he began gently to enquire how that noisome scent happened unto me, but I (with some light jest feigning and colouring the matter for the time) did break off his talk into another path, and take him by the hand and said: ‘Why tarry we? Why leave we the pleasure of this fair morning? Let us go.’ And so I took up my packet, and paid the charges of the house, and we departed.

“We had not gone a mile out of the town but it was broad day, and then I diligently looked upon Socrates’ throat to see if I could espy the place where Meroe thrust in her sword, and I thought with myself: ‘What a madman am I, that (being overcome with wine yesternight) have dreamed such terrible things! Behold, I see Socrates is sound, safe and in health. Where is his wound? Where is the sponge? Where is his great and new cut?’ And then I spake to him and said: ‘Verily it is not without occasion that physicians of experience do affirm, that such as fill their gorges abundantly with meat and drink shall dream of dire and horrible sights, for I myself (not restraining mine appetite yesternight from the pots of wine) did seem to see in this bitter night strange and cruel visions, that even yet I think myself sprinkled and wet with human blood’; whereunto Socrates laughing, made answer and said:



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Ad haec ille subridens 'At tu' inquit 'Non sanguine sed lotio perfusus es, verum tamen et ipse per somnium iugulari visus sum mihi. Nam et iugulum istum dolui et cor ipsum mihi avelli putavi et nunc etiam spiritu deficior et genua quatior et gradu titubo et aliquid cibatus refovendo spiritu desidero.' 'En' inquam 'Paratum tibi adest ientaculum,' et cum dicto manticam meam humero exuo, caseum cum pane propere ei porrigo, et 'Iuxta platanum istam residamus' aio.

- 19 "Quo facto et ipse aliquid indidem sumo, eumque avidè esitantiem aspicio aliquanto intentiore macie atque pallore buxè deficientem video. Sic denique eum vitalis color turbaverat ut mihi prae metu, nocturnas etiam Furias illas imaginanti, frustulum panis quod primum sumpseram, quamvis admodum modicum, mediis faucibus inhaereret, ac neque deorsum demere neque sursum remeare posset. Nam et crebritas ipsa commeantium metum mihi cumulabat: quis enim de duobus comitum alterum sine alterius noxa peremptum crederet? Verum ille, ut satis detruncaverat cibum, sitire impatienter coeperat; nam et optimi casei bonam partem avidè devoraverat, et haud ita longe radices platani lenis fluvius in speciem placidae paludis ignavus ibat argento vel vitro aemulus in colorem. 'En' inquam 'Explere latice fontis lacteo.' Assurgit ille et oppertus paululum planiorem ripae marginem complicitus in genua appronat se avidus affectans



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‘Nay, thou art not wet with the blood of men, but thou art embrued with stinking filth: and verily I myself dreamed this night that my throat was cut and that I felt the pain of the wound, and that my heart was pulled out of my belly, and the remembrance thereof makes me now to fear, and my knees do tremble that I totter in my gait, and therefore I would fain eat somewhat to strengthen and revive my spirits.’ Then said I: ‘Behold, here is thy breakfast,’ and therewithal I opened my scrip that hanged upon my shoulder, and gave him bread and cheese, and ‘Let us sit down,’ quoth I, ‘Under that great plane-tree.’

“Now I also ate part of the same with him: and while I beheld him eating greedily, I perceived that he wore thin and meagre and pale as boxwood, and that his lively colour faded away, as did mine also, remembering those terrible furies of whom I lately dreamed, in so much that the first morsel of bread that I put in my mouth (which was but very small) did so stick in my jaws that I could neither swallow it down nor yet yield it up; and moreover the number of them that passed by increased my fear, for who is he, that would believe that one of two companions die in the high way without injury done by the other? But when that Socrates had eaten sufficiently he wore very thirsty, for indeed he had well nigh devoured a whole good cheese, and behold there was behind the roots of the plane-tree a pleasant running water which went gently like to a quiet pond, as clear as silver or crystal, and I said unto him: ‘Come hither, Socrates, to this water and drink thy fill as it were milk.’ And then he rose, and waiting a little he found a flat space by the river and kneeled down by the side of the bank in



poculum : necdum satis extremis labiis summum aquae rorem attigerat, et iugulo eius vulnus dehiscit in profundum patorem, et illa spongia de eo repente devolvitur eamque parvus admodum comitatur cruor: denique corpus exanimatum in flumen paene cernuat, nisi ego altero eius pede retento vix et aegre ad ripam superiorem attraxi, ubi defletum pro tempore comitem misellum arenosa humo in amnis vicinia sempiterna contexi. Ipse trepidus et eximie metuens mihi per diversas et avias solitudines aufugi et quasi conscius mihi caedis humanae relictæ patria et Lære ultroneum exilium amplexus nunc Aetoliam novo contracto matrimonio colo.”

- 20 Haec Aristomenes. At ille comes eius, qui statim initio obstinata incredulitate sermonem eius respuebat, “Nihil” inquit “Hac fabula fabulosius, nihil isto mendacio absurdius,” et ad me conversus “Tu autem” inquit “Vir, ut habitus et habitudo demonstrat, ornatus, accredis<sup>1</sup> huic fabulae?” “Ego vero” inquam “Nihil impossibile arbitror, sed utcumque fata decreverint, ita cuncta mortalibus provenire: nam et mihi et tibi et cunctis hominibus multa usu venire mira et paene infecta, quae tamen ignaro relata fidem perdant. Sed ego huic et credo Hercule et gratas gratias memini, quod lepidae fabulae festivitæ nos avocavit; asperam denique ac prolixam viam sine labore ac taedio evasi. Quod beneficium etiam illum vectorem meum credo laetari: sine fatigatione

<sup>1</sup> So Petschenig for the MSS' *accedis*.



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his greedy desire to drink ; but he had scarce touched the water with his lips when behold, the wound of his throat opened wide, and the sponge suddenly fell into the water and after issued out a little remnant of blood, and his body (being then without life) had fallen into the river, had not I caught him by the leg, and so with great ado pulled him up. And after that I had lamented a good space the death of my wretched companion, I buried him in the sands to dwell for ever there by the river. Which done, trembling and in great fear I rode through many outways and desert places, and as if culpable of murder, I forsook my country, my wife and my children, and came to Aetolia, an exile of my own free will, where I married another wife."

This tale told Aristomenes, and his fellow which before obstinately would give no credit unto him, began to say : " Verily there was never so foolish a tale, nor a more absurd lie told than this " ; and then he spake unto me, saying : " Ho, sir, what you are I know not, but your habit and countenance declareth that you should be some honest gentleman, do you believe his tale ? " " Yea, verily," quoth I, " Why not ? I think nothing impossible ; for whatsoever the fates have appointed to men, that I believe shall happen. For many things chance unto me, and unto you, and to divers others, wonderful and almost unheard of, which being declared unto the ignorant be accounted as lies. But verily I give credit unto his tale, and render entire thanks unto him in that (by the pleasant relation of this pretty tale) he hath distracted us so that I have quickly passed and shortened this long and weariful journey, and I think that my horse also was delighted with the same, and I am brought me to the gate of this city without any



sui me usque ad istam civitatis portam non dorso illius sed meis auribus provecto."

21 Is finis nobis et sermonis et itineris communis fuit: nam comites utrique ad villulam proximam laevorsum abierunt. Ego vero quod primum ingressu stabulum conspicatus sum, accessi, et de quadam anu caupona illico percontor "Estne" inquam "Hypata haec civitas?" Adnuit. "Nostine Milonem quendam e primoribus?" Arrisit et "Vere" inquit "Primus istic perhibetur Milo, qui extra pomerium et urbem totam colit." "Remoto" inquam "Loco, parens optima, dic oro et cuiatis sit et quibus deversetur aedibus?" "Videsne" inquit "Extremas fenestras, quae foris urbem prospiciunt et altrinsecus fores proximum respicientes angiportum? Inibi iste Milo deversatur ampliter nummatus et longe opulentus, verum extremae avaritiae et sordis infimae infamis homo, foenus denique copiosum sub arrabone auri et argenti crebriter exercens, exiguo Lare inclusis et aerugini semper intentus, cum uxorem etiam calamitatis suae comitem habeat. Neque praeter unicam pascit ancillam et habitu mendicantis semper incedit."

Ad haec ego risum subicio: "Benigne" inquam "Et prospicue Demeas meus in me consuluit, qui peregrinaturum tali viro conciliavit, in cuius hospitio nec fumi nec nidoris nebulam vererer," et cum dicto modico secus progressus ostium accedo et ianuam firmiter oppessulatam pulsare vocaliter incipio.



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pain at all, not so much by his back, as by mine own ears."

Thus ended both our talk and our journey, for they two turned on the left hand to the next village, and I rode up to the first inn that I saw, and I espied an old woman, of whom I enquired whether that city was called Hypata or no, who answered: "Yes." Then I demanded whether she knew one Milo, one of the first men of the city, whereat she laughed, and said: "Verily it is not without cause that Milo is accounted first in the city, for he dwells altogether without the boundary." To whom I said again: "I pray thee, good mother, do not mock, but tell me what manner of man he is, and where he dwelleth." "Marry," quoth she, "Do not you see those bay windows, which on the one side look out upon the city, and the doors on the other side to the next lane: there Milo dwells, very rich both in money and substance, but by reason of his great avarice and covetousness he is evil spoken of, and he is a man that liveth all by usury, and lending his money upon pledges of silver and gold. Moreover he dwelleth in a small house and is ever counting his money, and hath a wife that is a companion of his extreme misery, neither keepeth he any more in his house than one only maid, and he goes apparelled like unto a beggar."

Which when I heard I laughed with myself and thought: "In faith, my friend Demeas hath served me well and with forethought, which hath sent me, being a stranger, unto such a man, in whose house I shall not be troubled either with smoke or with the scent of meat," and therewithal I rode to the door, which was fast barred, and knocked aloud and cried. Then there came forth a maid which said: "Ho,



Tandem adulescentula quaedam procedens "Heus tu" inquit "Qui tam fortiter fores verberasti, sub qua specie mutuari cupis? An tu solus ignoras prater aurum argentumque nullum nos pignus admittere?" "Meliora" inquam "Ominare, et potius responde an intra aedes erum tuum offenderim." "Plane;" inquit "Sed quae causa quaestionis huius?" "Litteras ei a Corinthio Demea scriptas ad eum reddo." "Dum annuntio," inquit "Hic ibidem me opperimino," et cum dicto rursum foribus oppessulatis intro capessit. Modico deinde regressa patefactis foribus "Rogat te" inquit. Intuli me eumque accubantum exiguo admodum grabatulo et commodum cenare incipientem invenio: assidebat pedes uxor et mensa vacua posita, cuius monstratu "En" inquit "Hospitium." "Bene" ego, et illico ei litteras Demeae trado. Quibus properiter lectis "Amo" inquit "Meum Demean, qui mihi tantum  
23 conciliavit hospitem," et cum dicto iubet uxorem decedere utque in eius locum assidam iubet, meque etiam nunc verecundia cunctantem arrepta lacinia detrahens "Asside" inquit "Istic: nam prae metu latronum nulla sessibula ac ne sufficientem supellectilem parare nobis licet."

Feci, et "Sic ego te" inquit "Etiam de ista corporis speciosa habitudine deque hac virginali prorsus verecundia generosa stirpe proditum et recte conicerem, sed et meus Demeas eadem litteris pronuntiat. Ergo brevitatem gurgustioli nostri ne spernas peto. Erit



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sirrah, that knocks so fast, in what kind of sort will you borrow money; know you not that we use to take no pledge unless it be either gold or silver?" To whom I answered: "I pray thee, maid, speak more gently, and tell me whether thy master be within or no." "Yes," quoth she, "That he is; why do you ask?" "Marry," said I, "I am come from Corinth, and have brought him letters from Demeas his friend." Then said the maid: "I pray you tarry here till I tell him so," and therewithal she closed the doors and went in, and after a while she returned again, and said: "My master desireth you to come in"; and so I did, where I found him sitting upon a very little bed, just going to supper, and his wife sat at his feet, but there was no meat upon the table; and, pointing at it, "Behold," said he, "Your entertainment." "Well," quoth I, and straightway delivered to him the letters which I brought from Demeas: which when he had quickly read, he said: "Verily, I thank my friend Demeas very much, in that he hath sent me so worthy a guest as you are": and therewithal he commanded his wife to sit away, and bade me sit in her place, and when I was about refusing by reason of courtesy, he pulled me by the garment and willed me to sit down. "For we have," quoth he, "No other stool here, nor other great store of household stuff for fear of robbing."

Then I (according to his commandment) sat down: and he fell into communication with me, and said: "Verily I conjecture (and rightly) by the comely feature of your body, and by the maidenly shamefastness of your face, that you are a gentleman born, as my friend Demeas hath no less declared the same in his letters: wherefore I pray you, take in good part our poor lodgings, and behold, yonder chamber



tibi adiacens et ecce illud cubiculum honestum receptaculum : fac libenter deverseris in nostro. Nam et maiorem domum dignatione tua feceris et tibi specimen gloriosum arrogaris, si contentus Lare parvulo Thesei illius cognominis patris tui virtutes aemulaveris, qui non est aspernatus Hecales anus hospitium tenue” : et vocata ancillula, “Fotis,” inquit “Sarcinulas hospitis susceptas cum fide conde in illud cubiculum, ac simul ex promptuario oleum unctui et lintea tersui et cetera huic eidem usui profer ociter et hospitem meum produc ad proximas balneas : satis  
 24 arduo itinere atque prolixo fatigatus est.” His ego auditis mores atque parsimoniam ratiocinans Milonis, volensque me artius ei conciliare, “Nihil” inquam “Rerum istarum, quae itineris ubique nos comitantur, indigemus. Sed et balneas facile percontabimur. Plane quod est mihi summe praecipuum, equo, qui me strenue pervexit, faenum atque hordeum acceptis istis nummulis tu, Fotis, emitto.”

His actis et rebus meis in illo cubiculo conditis pergens ipse ad balneas, ut prius aliquid nobis cibatus prospicerem, forum cupidinis peto inque eo piscatum opiparem expositum video et percontato pretio, quod centum nummis indicaret, aspernatus viginti denariis praestinaui. Inde me commodum egredientem continuatur Pythias condiscipulus apud Athenas Atticas meus, qui me post aliquam multum temporis amanter agnitum invadit, amplexusque ac comiter deosculatus



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hard by is at your commandment, use it as your own ; then you shall both magnify our house by your deigning and shall gain to yourself good report, if, being contented with a humble lodging, you shall resemble and follow the virtuous qualities of your good father's namesake Theseus, who disdained not the slender and poor cottage of old Hecale." And then he called his maid, which was named Fotis, and said : " Carry this gentleman's packet into the chamber and lay up safely, and bring quickly from the cupboard oil to anoint him, and a towel to rub him, and other things necessary ; and then bring my guest to the nearest baths, for I know he is very weary of so long and difficult travel." These things when I heard, I partly perceived the manners and parsimony of Milo, and (endeavouring to bring myself further in his favour) I said : " Sir, there is no need of any of these things, for they are everywhere my companions by the way ; and easily I shall enquire my way unto the baths, but my chief care is that my horse be well looked to, for he brought me hither roundly, and therefore, I pray thee, Fotis, take this money and buy some hay and oats for him."

When this was done and all my things brought into the chamber, I walked towards the baths, but first I went to the provision market to buy some victuals for my supper, whereas I saw great plenty of fish set out to be sold, and so I cheapened part thereof, and that which they first held at an hundred pieces, I bought at length for twenty pence : which when I had done and was departing away, Pythias, one of mine old companions and fellow at Athens, fortunèd to pass by, and viewing me a good space, in the end brought me kindly to his remembrance, and gently came and



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“ Mi Luci,” ait “ Sat Pol diu est quod intervisimus te, at Hercule exinde cum a Vestio<sup>1</sup> magistro digressi sumus. Quae autem tibi causa peregrinationis huius ? ”

“ Crastino die scies : ” inquam “ Sed quid istud ? Voti gaudeo : nam et lixas et virgas et habitum prorsus magistratui congruentem in te video.” “ Annonam curamus,” ait “ Et aedilem gerimus, et si quid obsonare cupis, utique commodabimus.” Abnuebam, quippe qui iam cenae affatim piscatum prospexeramus : sed enim Pythias visa sportula, succussisque in aspectum planiorem piscibus, “ At has quisquillas quanti parasti ? ” “ Vix ” inquam “ Piscatori extorsimus accipere viginti denarios.” Quo audito statim arrepta dextera postliminio me in forum cupidinis reducens “ Et a quo ” inquit “ Istorum nugamenta haec comparasti ? ” Demonstro seniculum : in angulo sedebat. Quem confestim pro aedilitatis imperio voce asperrima increpans “ Iam iam ” inquit “ Nec amicis quidem nostris vel omnino ullis hospitibus parcitis, quod tam magnis pretiis pisces frivolos indicatis et florem Thessalicae regionis ad instar solitudinis et scopuli edulium caritate deducitis ? Sed non impune : iam

<sup>1</sup> The name, whatever it is, has been corrupted in the MSS to *Dstio*. Other suggestions are *Dositheo* and *Clytio*.



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kissed me, saying : " O my dear friend Lucius, it is a great while past since we two saw each other, and moreover, from the time that we departed from our master Vestius I never heard any news of you ; I pray you, Lucius, tell me the cause of your peregrination hither." Then I answered and said : " I will make relation thereof unto you to-morrow : but what is this ? Verily I think that you have obtained your own desire, whereof I am right glad. For I see these servitors that follow you, and these rods or verges which they bear : and this habit which you wear, like unto a magistrate." Then answered Pythias : " I bear the office and rule of the clerk of the market, and therefore if you will aught for your supper, speak and I will purvey it for you." Then I thanked him heartily and said I had bought fish sufficient already for my dinner, but Pythias, when he espied my basket, took it and shook it, so that the fish might come to view, and demanded of me what I paid for all my sprats. " In faith," quoth I, " I could scarce enforce the fishmonger to sell them for twenty pence " ; which when he heard, he seized my hand and brought me back again into the market, and enquired of me of whom I had bought such wretched stuff. I shewed him the old man which sat in a corner, whom straightway (by reason of his office) he did greatly blame, and said : " Is it thus that you serve and handle strangers ? And especially our friends ? Wherefore sell you this fish so dear which is not worth a halfpenny ? Now perceive I well that you are an occasion to make this place, which is the flower of all Thessaly, to be forsaken of all men and reduce it into an uninhabitable rock, by reason of your excessive prices of victuals ; but assure yourself that you shall not escape without punish-



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enim faxo scias quemadmodum sub meo magisterio mali debent coerceri," et profusa in medium sportula iubet officialem suum insuper pisces inscendere ac pedibus suis totos obterere. Qua contentus morum severitudine meus Pythias, ac mihi ut abirem suadens, "Sufficit mihi, o Luci," inquit "Seniculi tanta haec contumelia." His actis consternatus ac prorsus obstupidus ad balneas me refero, prudentis condiscipuli valido consilio et nummis simul privatus et cena, laetusque ad hospitium Milonis ac dehinc cubiculum me reporto.

- 26 Et ecce Fotis ancilla "Rogat te" inquit "Hospes." At ego iam inde Milonis abstinentiae cognitor excusavi comiter, quod viae vexationem non cibo sed somno censerem diluendam. Isto accepto pergit ipse et iniecta dextera clementer me trahere adoritur: ac dum cunctor, dum modeste renitor, "Non prius" inquit "Discedam quam me sequaris," et dictum iureiurando secutus iam obstinationi suae me ingratissimum oboedientem perducit ad illum suum grabatulum, et residenti "Quam salve agit" inquit "Demeas noster? Quid uxor? Quid liberi? Quid vernaculi?" Narro singula. Percontatur accuratius causas etiam peregrinationis meae; quas ubi probe protuli, iam et de patria nostra et eius primoribus



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ment, and you shall know what mine office is, and how I ought to punish such as do offend." Then he took my basket and cast the fish on the ground, and commanded one of his servants to tread them all under his feet; so doing was Pythias well pleased with the severity he shewed in his office, and bade me farewell, and said that he was content with the shame and reproach done unto the old caitiff. So I went away, all amazed and astonished, towards the baths, considering with myself, and devising of the strong hand of that so prudent companion of mine, Pythias, whereby I had lost both my money and my meat: and there, when I had washed and refreshed my body, I returned again to Milo's house, and so got into my chamber.

Then came Fotis immediately unto me, and said that her master desired me to come to supper, but I (not ignorant of Milo's abstinence) prayed courteously that I might be pardoned, since I thought best to ease my weary bones rather with sleep and quietness than with meat. When Fotis had told this unto Milo, he came himself and took me by the hand to draw me gently with him, and while I did hold back and modestly excuse me, "I will not," quoth he, "Depart from this place until such time as you shall go with me," and to confirm the same he bound his words with an oath, whereby with insistence he enforced me all against my will to follow him and he brought me into his chamber, where he sat me down upon the bed, and demanded of me how his friend Demeas did, his wife, his children, and all his family; and I made him answer to every question; and specially he enquired the causes of my peregrination and travel; which when I had declared, he yet busily enquired of the state of my country, and the chief citizens, and



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ac denique de ipso praeside scrupulosissime explorans, ubi me post itineris tam saevi vexationem sensit fabularum quoque serie fatigatum in verba media somnolentum desinere ac nequicquam, defectum iam, incerta verborum salebra balbutire, tandem patitur cubitum concederem. Evasi aliquando rancidi senis loquax et famelicum convivium somno, non cibo, gravatus, cenatus solis fabulis et in cubiculum reversus optatae me quieti reddidi.



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principally of our Lieutenant and Viceroy. And when he perceived that I was not only wearied by my hard travel but also with talk, and that I fell asleep in the midst of my tale, and further that I spake nothing directly or advisably, but babbled only in imperfect words, he suffered me to depart to my chamber. So escaped I at length from the prattling and hungry supper of this rank old man, and being heavy with sleep and not with meat (as having supped only with talk) I returned unto my chamber and there betook me to my quiet and long-desired rest.



## LIBER II

1 Ut primum nocte discussa sol novus diem fecit, et somno simul emersus et lectulo, anxius alioquin et nimis cupidus cognoscendi quae rara miraque sunt, reputansque me media Thessaliae loca tenere, quo artis magicae nativa contamina totius orbis consono ore celebrentur, fabulamque illam optimi comitis Aristomenis de situ civitatis huius exortam, suspensus alioquin et voto simul et studio, curiose singula considerabam. Nec fuit in illa civitate quod aspiciens id esse crederem quod esset, sed omnia prorsus ferali murmure in aliam effigiem translata, ut et lapides quos offenderem de homine duratos, et aves quas audirem indidem plumatas, et arbores quae pomerium ambirent similiter foliatas, et fontanos latices de corporibus humanis fluxos crederem. Iam statuas et imagines incessuras, parietes locuturos, boves et id genus pecua dicturas praesagium, de ipso vero caelo et iubaris orbe subito venturum oraculum.



## BOOK II

As soon as night was past and the new day began to spring, I fortunèd to awake and rose out of my bed as half amazed, and indeed very desirous to know and see some marvellous and strange things, remembering with myself that I was in the midst part of all Thessaly, where, by the common report of all the world, is the birthplace of sorceries and enchantments, and I oftentimes repeated with myself the tale of my companion Aristomenes whereof the scene was set in this city ; all agog moreover (being moved both by desire and my own especial longing) I viewed the whole situation thereof with care. Neither was there anything which I saw there that I did believe to be the same which it was indeed, but everything seemed unto me to be transformed into other shapes by the wicked power of enchantment, in so much that I thought the stones against which I might stumble were indurate and turned from men into that figure, and that the birds which I heard chirping, and the trees without the walls of the city, and the running waters were changed from men into such feathers and leaves and fountains. And further I thought that the statues and images would by and by move, and that the walls would talk, and the kine and other brute beasts would speak and tell strange news, and that immediately I should hear some oracle from the heaven and from the ray of the sun.



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2 Sic attonitus, immo vero cruciabili desiderio stupidus, nullo quidem initio vel omnino vestigio cupidinis meae reperto cuncta circumibam tamen, dum luxum nepotalem simulantia<sup>1</sup> ostiatim singula pererro, repente me nescius forum cupidinis intuli; et ecce mulierem quampiam frequenti stipatam famulitione ibidem gradientem accelerato vestigio comprehendo: aurum in gemmis et in tunicis, ibi inflexum, hic intextum, matronam profecto confitebatur. Huius adhaerebat lateri senex iam gravis in annis, qui, ut primum me conspexit, "Est" inquit "Hercule Lucius," et offert osculum et statim incertum quidnam in aurem mulieris obganniit. "Quin" inquit "Etiam ipse parentem tuam accedis et salutas?" "Vereor" inquam "Ignotae mihi feminae," et statim rubore suffusus deiecto capite restiti. At illa obtutum in me conversa "En" inquit "Sanctissimae Salviae matris generosa probitas. Sed et cetera corporis execrabiliter ad regulam sunt congruentia: inenormis proceritas, succulenta gracilitas, rubor temperatus, flavum et inaffectedatum capillitium, oculi caesii quidem sed vigiles et in aspectu micantes, prorsus aquilini, os quoquoersum floridum, speciosus et immeditatus incessus."

3 Et adiecit "Ego te, O Luci, meis istis manibus educavi; quidni? Parentis tuae non modo sanguinis, verum alimoniarum etiam socia; nam et familia Plutarchi ambae prognatae sumus, et eandem nu-

<sup>1</sup> There is here a gap in the MSS which has been filled in by a later hand. These three words are fairly near the meaningless MSS' reading, and can be construed.



## THE GOLDEN ASS, BOOK II

Thus being astonished and dismayed, nay dumb-founded with the longing that did torment me, though I found no beginning nor indeed any trace to satisfy my curious desire, I went nevertheless from door to door, and at length, like some luxurious person strolling at my ease, I fortunèd unawares to come into the market-place, where I espied a certain woman accompanied with a great many servants, walking apace, towards whom I drew nigh and viewed her precious stones set with gold and her garments woven with the same in such sort that she seemed to be some noble matron: and there was an old man which followed her: who (as soon as he had espied me) said: "Verily this is Lucius," and then he came and embraced me, and by and by he went unto his mistress, and whispered in her ear, and came to me again, saying: "How is it, Lucius, that you will not salute your dear cousin and friend?" To whom I answered: "Sir, I dare not be so bold as to take acquaintance of an unknown woman." Howbeit as half ashamed with blushes and hanging head I drew back, she turned her gaze upon me and said: "Behold how he resembleth the same noble dignity as his modest mother Salvia doth; behold his countenance and body agreeing thereto in each point, behold his comely stature, his graceful slenderness, his delicate colour, his hair yellow and not too foppishly dressed, his grey and quick eyes shining like unto the eagle's, his blooming countenance in all points, and his grave and comely gait." And moreover she said: "O Lucius, I have nourished thee with mine own proper hands, and why not? For I am not only of kindred unto thy mother by blood, but also her foster-sister; for we are both descended of the line of Plutarch, sucked the same



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tricem simul bibimus, et in nexu germanitatis una coaluimus: nec aliud nos quam dignitas discernit, quod illa clarissimas, ego privatas nuptias fecerimus. Ego sum Byrrhaena illa, cuius forte saepicule nomen inter tuos frequentatum educatores retines. Accede itaque hospitium fiducia, immo vero iam tuum proprium Larem." Ad haec ego, iam sermonis ipsius mora rubore digesto, "Absit" inquam "Parens, ut Milonem hospitem sine ulla querela deseram; sed plane quod officiis integris potest effici, curabo sedulo: quoties itineris huius ratio nascetur, numquam erit ut non apud te devertar."

Dum hunc et huiusmodi sermonem altercamur, paucis admodum confectis passibus ad domum Byrrhaenae pervenimus. Atria longe pulcherrima columnis quadrifariam per singulos angulos stantibus attolerabant statuas, palmaris deae facies, quae pinnis explicitis sine gressu, pilae volubilis instabile vestigium plantis roscidis delibantes,<sup>1</sup> nec ut maneant inhaerent, et iam volare creduntur. Ecce lapis Parius in Dianam factus tenet librata totius loci medietatem, signum perfecte luculentum, veste reflatum, procursu vegetum, introeuntibus obvium et maiestate numinis venerabile: canes utrimquesecus deae latera muniunt, qui canes et ipsi lapis erant; his oculi minantur, aures rigent, nares hiant, ora saeviunt et sicunde de proximo latratus ingruerit,

<sup>1</sup> Colvin's emendation for the MSS' *decitantes*. Helm suggests *detinentes*.



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paps, and were brought up together as sisters in one house; and further there is no other difference between us two, but that she is married more honourably than I: I am the same Byrrhaena whom you have perhaps often heard named as one of those that reared you. Wherefore I pray you to come with all confidence to my house—nay, use it as your own.” By whose words my blushes had time to disperse, and I said: “God forbid, cousin, that I should forsake mine host Milo without any just and reasonable cause, but verily I will do as much as I may without hurt to the duties of a guest, and as often as I have occasion to pass by your house I will come and see how you do.”

While we went talking thus together, in a very few steps we came to her house; and behold the court of the same was very beautiful set with pillars quadrangularwise, on the top whereof were placed carven statues and images of the goddess of Victory, so lively and with such excellency portrayed and with wings spread forth, their dewy feet just poised upon motionless globes, that you would verily have thought that they had flown, and were hovering with their wings hither and thither. There also the image of Diana, wrought in white marble, stood in the midst of all, holding all in balance, which was a marvellous sight to see, for she seemed as though the wind did blow up her garments, striding briskly forward, so that she was now to encounter with them that came into the house, a goddess very venerable and majestic to see: on each side of her were dogs made also of stone, that seemed to menace with their fiery eyes, their pricked ears, their wide nostrils and their grinning teeth, in such sort that if any dogs in the neighbourhood had bayed and barked, you



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eum putabis de faucibus lapidis exire, et, in quo summum specimen operae fabrilis egregius ille signifex prodidit, sublatis canibus in pectus arduis pedes imi resistunt, currunt priores. Pone tergum deae saxum insurgit in speluncae modum, muscis et herbis et foliis et virgulis et sicubi pampinis et arbusculis alibi de lapide florentibus: splendet intus umbra signi de nitore lapidis. Sub extrema saxi margine poma et uvae faberrime politae dependent, quas ars aemula naturae veritati similes explicuit; putes ad cibum inde quaedam, cum mustulentus autumnus maturum colorem afflaverit, posse decerpi, et si fontem, qui deae vestigio discurrens in lenem vibratur undam, pronus aspexeris, credes illos ut rure pendentes racemos inter cetera veritatis nec agitationis officio carere. Inter medias frondes lapidis Actaeon curioso obtutu in deam sursum proiectus, iam in cervum ferinus et in saxo simul et in fonte loturam Dianam opperiens visitur.

- 5 Dum haec identidem rimabundus eximie delector, “Tua sunt” ait Byrrhaena “Cuncta quae vides”; et cum dicto ceteros omnes sermone secreto decedere praecipit. Quibus dispulsis omnibus, “Per hanc” inquit “Deam, O Luci carissime, ut anxie tibi metuo et



## THE GOLDEN ASS, BOOK II

would have thought the sound came from their stony throats. And moreover (which was a greater marvel to behold) the excellent carver and deviser of this work had fashioned the dogs to stand up fiercely with their former feet ready to run, and their hinder feet set firmly on the ground. Behind the back of the goddess was carved a stone rising in manner of a cavern, environed with moss, herbs, leaves, sprigs, green branches, and boughs of vines growing in and about the same, and within the image of the statue glistened and shone marvellously upon the stone; under the brim of the rock hung apples and grapes polished finely, wherein art (envying nature) shewed its great cunning: for they were so lively set out that you would have thought that now autumn, the season of wine, had breathed upon them the colour of ripeness, and that they might have been pulled and eaten; and if, bending down, thou didst behold the running water, which seemed to spring and leap under the feet of the goddess, thou mightest mark the grapes which hung down and seemed even to move and stir like the very grapes of the vine. Moreover amongst the branches of the stone appeared the image of Acteon looking eagerly upon the goddess: and both in the stream and in the stone he might be seen already beginning to be turned into a hart as he waited to spy Diana bathe.

And while I was greatly delighted with exploring the view of these things, Byrrhaena spake to me and said: "Cousin, all things here be at your commandment." And therewithal she willed secretly the residue to depart from our secret conference, who being gone she said: "My most dear cousin Lucius, I swear by this goddess Diana that I do greatly fear for your safety, and am as careful for you



ut pote pignori meo longe provisum cupio ; cave tibi, sed cave fortiter, a malis artibus et facinorosis illecebris Pamphiles illius, quae cum Milone isto, quem dicis hospitem, nupta est : maga primi nominis et omnis carminis sepulchralis magistra creditur, quae surculis et lapillis et id genus frivolis inhalatis omnem istam lucem mundi sideralis imis Tartari et in vetustum chaos submergere novit. Nam simul quemque conspexerit speciosae formae iuvenem, venustate eius sumitur et illico in eum et oculum et animum detorquet : serit blanditias, invadit spiritum, amoris profundi pedicis aeternis alligat. Tunc minus morigeros et viles fastidio in saxa et in pecua et quodvis animal puncto reformat, alios vero prorsus extinguit. Haec tibi trepido et cavenda censeo : nam et illa urit perpetuum et tu per aetatem et pulchritudinem capax eius es.” Haec mecum Byrrhaena satis anxia.

- 6 At ego curiosus alioquin, ut primum artis magicae semper optatum nomen audivi, tantum a cautela Pamphiles afui ut etiam ultro gestirem tali magisterio me vel ampla cum mercede tradere et prorsus in ipsum barathrum saltu concito praecipitare. Festinus denique et vecors animi, manu eius velut catena quadam memet expedio et, “Salve” propere addito, ad Milonis hospitium perneciter evolo ; ac dum amenti



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long before, as if you were mine own natural child ; beware I say, beware of the evil arts and wicked allurements of that Pamphile that is the wife of Milo, whom you call your host, for she is accounted the most chief and principal magician and enchantress of every necromantic spell : who, by breathing out certain words and charms over boughs and stones and other frivolous things, can throw down all the light of the starry heavens into the deep bottom of hell, and reduce them again to the old chaos. For as soon as she espieth any comely young man, she is forthwith stricken with his love, and presently setteth her eye and whole affection on him : she soweth her seed of flattery, she invadeth his spirit, and entangleth him with continual snares of immeasurable love. And then if any accord not to her filthy desire, so that they seem loathsome in her eye, by and by in a moment she either turneth them into stones, sheep, or some other beast as herself pleaseth, and some she presently slays and murders ; of whom I would you should earnestly beware. For she burneth continually, and you, by reason of your tender age and comely beauty, are capable of her fire and love.”

Thus with great care Byrrhaena charged me, but I nevertheless, that was curious and coveted after such sorcery and witchcraft, as soon as I heard its name, little esteemed to beware of Pamphile, but willingly determined to bestow abundance of money in learning of that teacher, and even to leap of my own accord into that very pit whereof Byrrhaena had warned me, and so I waxed mad and hasty, and wresting myself out of her company, as out of links or chains, I bade her farewell, and departed with all speed towards the house of mine host Milo. Then as I hastened by the way like one bereft of wit, I reasoned thus with



similis celero vestigium, "Age" inquam "Luci, evigila et tecum esto: habes exoptatam occasionem et voto diutino potiris. Fabulis miris<sup>1</sup> explere pectus, aufer formidines pueriles, comminus cum re ipsa naviter congregere, et a nexu quidem venerio hospitis tuae tempera et probi Milonis genialem torum religiosus suspice; verum enimvero Fotis famula petatur enixe. Nam et forma scitula et moribus ludicra et prorsus argutula est. Vesperi quoque cum somno concederes, et in cubiculum te deduxit comiter, et blande lectulo collocavit, et satis amanter cooperuit, et osculato tuo capite quam invita discederet vultu prodidit, denique saepe retrorsa respiciens substitit. Quod bonum felix et faustum itaque, licet salutare non erit, Fotis illa temptetur."

- 7 Haec mecum ipse disputans fores Milonis accedo et, quod aiunt, pedibus in sententiam meam vado. Nec tamen domi Milonem vel uxorem eius offendo, sed tantum caram meam Fotidem: suis parabat viscum fartim concisum et pulpam frustatim consectam et abacum<sup>2</sup> pascuae iurulentae et quod naribus iam inde ariolabar, tucetum perquam sapidissimum. Ipsa linea tunica mundule amicta et russea fasceola praenitente altiuscule sub ipsas papillas succinctula, illud cibarium vasculum floridis palmulis rotabat in circulum et in orbis flexibus crebra succutiens et simul membra sua leniter illubricans, lumbis sensim vibrantibus, spinam mobilem quatiens placide decenter undabat. Isto aspectu defixus obstupui et

<sup>1</sup> MSS *miseris*. *Milesiis* and *mysticis* have both been proposed.

<sup>2</sup> The best MS seems to read *ambacu pascuae iurulenta*, from which no meaning can be extracted. The suggestion given in the text is tolerably near and makes fair sense.



## THE GOLDEN ASS, BOOK II

myself: "O Lucius, now take heed, be vigilant, have a good care, for now thou hast time and place to satisfy thy longing, and mayest gain the desire thou hast so long nourished and fill thy heart with marvels. Now shake off thy childishness and come close to this matter like a man, but specially temper thyself from the love of thine hostess, and abstain from violation of the bed of worthy Milo; but strongly attempt to win the maiden Fotis, for she is beautiful, wanton and pleasant in talk. Nay yester-eve when thou wentest to sleep, she brought thee gently into thy chamber, and tenderly laid thee down in thy bed, and lovingly covered thee, and kissed thy head sweetly, and shewed in her countenance how unwillingly she departed, and cast her eyes oftentimes back and stood still; then good speed to thee; then hast thou a good occasion ministered unto thee, even if it betide thee ill, to prove and try the mind of Fotis."

Thus while I reasoned with myself, I came to Milo's door persevering still in my purpose, but I found neither Milo nor his wife at home, but only my dear and sweet love Fotis mincing pigs' meat as if for stuffing, and slicing flesh, and making pottage for her master and mistress, and I thought I smelled even from thence the savour of some haggis very sweet and dainty. She had about her middle a white and clean apron, and she was girded high about her body beneath her breasts with a girdle of red shining silk, and she stirred the pot and turned the meat with her fair and white hands, in such sort and with such stirrings and turning the same that her loins and hips did likewise gently move and shake, which was in my mind a comely sight to see. These things when I saw I was half amazed, and stood



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mirabundus steti, steterunt et membra quae iacebant ante. Et tandem ad illam “Quam pulchre quamque festive” inquam “Fotis mea, ollulam istam cum natibus intorques! Quam mellitum pulmentum apparas! Felix et certius beatus cui permiseris illuc digitum intingere!” Tunc illa lepida alioquin et dicacula puella “Discede” inquit “Miselle, quam procul a meo foculo discede. Nam si te vel modice meus igniculus afflaverit, ureris intime nec ullus extinguet ardorem tuum nisi ego, quae dulce condiens et ollam et lectulum suave quaterere novi.’

- 8 Haec dicens in me respexit et risit. Nec tamen ego prius inde discessi, quam diligenter omnem eius explorassem habitudinem. Vel quid ego de ceteris aio? Cum semper mihi unica cura fuerit caput capillumque sedulo et publice prius intueri et domi postea perfrui, sitque iudicii huius apud me certa et statuta ratio, vel quod praecipua pars ista corporis in aperto et perspicuo posita prima nostris luminibus occurrit, et quod in ceteris membris floridae vestis hilaris color, hoc in capite nitor natus operatur: denique pleraeque indolem gratiamque suam probaturae lacinias omnes exuunt, amicula dimovent, nudam pulchritudinem suam praebere se gestiunt, magis de cutis roseo rubore quam de vestis aureo colore placiturae. At vero (quod nefas dicere, ne quid sit ullum huius rei tam dirum exemplum) si cuiuslibet eximiae pulcherrimaeque feminae caput capillo spoliaveris et faciem nativa specie nudaveris, licet illa caelo deiecta,
- 60



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musings with myself, and my courage came then upon me which before was scant. And I spoke unto Fotis at last, and said : "O Fotis, how trimly, how merrily, with shaking your hips you can stir the pot, and how sweet do you make the pottage. O happy and thrice happy is he to whom you give leave and license to dip his finger therein." Then she, being likewise witty and merrily disposed, gave answer : "Depart, I say, wretch, from me ; depart from my fire, for if the flame thereof do never so little blaze forth it will burn thee inwardly, and none can extinguish the heat thereof but I alone, who know well how with daintiest seasoning to stir both board and bed."

When she had said these words she cast her eyes upon me and laughed, but I did not depart from thence until such time as I had viewed her in every point : but why should I speak of other things ? When as it hath always been my chief care both abroad to mark and view the head and hair of every dame and afterwards delight myself therewith privately at home, and this is my firm and fixed judgement, for that is the principal part of all the body, and is first open to our eyes ; and whatsoever flourishing and gorgeous apparel doth for the other parts of the body, this doth the natural and comely beauty set forth on the head. Moreover there be divers, that (to the intent to shew their grace and loveliness) will cast off their partlets and habiliments, and do more delight to shew the fairness and ruddiness of their skin in beauty unadorned than to deck themselves up in raiment of gold. But, though it be a crime unto me to say it, and I pray there may be no example of so foul a thing, know ye that if you spoil and cut off the hair of any woman or deprive her of the natural colour of her face, though she were never



mari edita, fluctibus educata—licet, inquam, Venus ipsa fuerit, licet omni Gratiarum choro stipata et toto Cupidinum populo comitata et balteo suo cincta, cinnama fragrans et balsama rorans, calva processerit, placere non poterit nec Vulcano suo.

- 9 Quid cum capillis color gratus et nitor splendidus illucet et contra solis aciem vegetus fulgurat vel placidus renitet, aut in contrariam gratiam variat aspectum, et nunc aurum coruscans in lenem mellis deprimitur umbram, nunc corvina nigredine caeruleos columbarum collis flosculos aemulatur, vel cum guttis Arabicis obunctus et pectinis arguti dente tenui discriminatus et pone versum coactus amatoris oculis occurrens ad instar speculi reddit imaginem gratiores? Quid cum frequenti subole spissus cumulat verticem vel prolixa serie porrectus dorsa permanat? Tanta denique est capillamenti dignitas, ut quamvis auro, veste, gemmis, omnique cetero mundo exornata mulier incedat, tamen, nisi capillum distinxerit, ornata non possit audire.

Sed in mea Fotide non operosus sed inordinatus ornatus addebat gratiam. Uberes enim crines leniter remissos et cervice dependulos ac dein per colla dispositos sensimque sinuato patagio residentes paulisper ad finem conglobatos in summum verticem nodus as-

10 trinxerat. Nec diutius quivi tantum cruciatum volup-



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so excellent in beauty, though she were thrown down from heaven, sprung of the seas, nourished of the floods, though she were Venus herself, accompanied with the Graces, waited upon by all the court of Cupids, girded with her beautiful scarf of love, sweet like cinnamon and bedewed with balsam; yet if she appeared bald she could in no wise please, no, not her own Vulcan. O how well doth a fair colour and a brilliant sheen upon the glittering hair! Behold it encountereth with the beams of the sun like swift lightning, or doth softly reflect them back again, or changeth clean contrary into another grace. Sometimes the beauty of the hair, shining like gold, resembles the colour of honey; sometimes, when it is raven black, the blue plume and azure feathers about the necks of doves, especially when it is anointed with the nard of Arabia, or trimly tuffed out with the teeth of a fine comb; and if it be tied up in the nape of the neck, it seemeth to the lover that beholdeth the same as a glass that yieldeth forth a more pleasant and gracious comeliness. The same is it if it should be gathered thick on the crown of the head, or if it should hang down scattering behind on the shoulders of the woman. Finally, there is such a dignity in the hair, that whatsoever she be, though she never be so bravely attired with gold, silks, precious stones, and other rich and gorgeous ornaments, yet if her hair be not curiously set forth, she cannot seem fair.

But in my Fotis not her studied care thereof but rather its disorderliness did increase her beauty: her rich tresses hung gently about her shoulders, and were dispersed abroad upon every part of her neck hanging from the nape, and fell fairly down enwound in a kerchief, until at last they were trussed up upon



tatis eximiae sustinere, sed pronus in eam, qua fine summum cacumen capillus ascendit, mellitissimum illud saviū impressi. Tum illa cervicem intorsit, et ad me conversa limis et morsicantibus oculis “Heus tu, scholastice,” ait “Dulce et amarum gustulum carpis. Cave ne nimia mellis dulcedine diutinam bilis amaritudinem contrahas.” “Quid istic” inquam “Est, mea festivitas, cum sim paratus vel uno saviolo interim recreatus super istum ignem porrectus assari?” et cum dicto artius eam complexus coepi saviari. Iamque aemula libidine in amoris parilitatem congermanescenti mecum, iam patentis oris inhalatu cinnameo et occursantis linguae illisu nectareo prona cupidine adlibescenti, “Pereo,” inquam “Immo iam dudum perii, nisi tu propitiaris.” Ad haec illa rursum me deosculato “Bono animo esto,” inquit “Nam ego tibi mutua voluntate mancipata sum, nec voluptas nostra differetur ulterius, sed prima face cubiculum tuum adero. Abi ergo ac te compara, tota enim nocte tecum fortiter et ex animo  
11 proeliabor.” His et talibus obgannitis sermonibus inter nos discessum est.

Commodum meridies accesserat, et mittit mihi Byrrhaena xeniola, porcum opimum et quinque galinulas et vini cadum in aetate pretiosi. Tunc ego vocata Fotide, “Ecce” inquam “Veneris hortator et armiger Liber advenit ultro. Vinum istud hodie sorbamus omne, quod nobis restinguat pudoris ignaviam et alacrem vigorem libidinis incutiat. Hac



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her crown with a knot : then I, unable to sustain the torture of the great desire that I was in, ran upon her and kissed very sweetly the place where she had thus laid her hair upon her crown, whereat she turned her face and cast her sidelong and rolling eyes upon me, saying : “ O scholar, thou hast tasted now both honey and gall ; take heed that the sweetness of thy pleasure do not turn into the bitterness of repentance.” “ Tush ! ” quoth I : “ My sweetheart, I am contented for such another kiss to be broiled here upon this fire ” ; wherewithal I embraced her more closely and began to kiss her. Then she embraced and kissed me with like passion of love, and moreover her breath smelled like cinnamon, and the liquor of her tongue was like sweet nectar. Wherewith when my mind was greatly delighted, I said : “ Behold, Fotis, I am yours and shall presently die, nay, I am already dead, unless you take pity upon me,” which when I had said, she eftsoons kissed me and bade me be of good courage. “ And I will,” quoth she, “ Satisfy your whole desire, and it shall be no longer delayed than until night, when as (assure yourself) I will come to your chamber ; wherefore go your ways and prepare yourself, for I intend valiantly and courageously to encounter with you this night.” Thus when we had lovingly talked and reasoned together, we departed for that time.

When noon was just now come Byrrhaena sent unto me a present of a fat pig, five hens, and a flagon of old wine and rare. Then I called Fotis and said : “ Behold how Bacchus, the aider and abettor of Venus, doth offer himself of his own accord ; let us therefore drink up this wine, that we may do utterly away with the cowardice of shame and get us the courage of



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enim sitarchia navigium Veneris indiget sola, ut in nocte pervigili et oleo lucerna et vino calix abundet."

Diem ceterum lavacro ac dein cenae dedimus: nam Milonis boni concinnaticiam mensulam rogatus accubueram quam pote tutus ab uxoris eius aspectu, Byrrhaenae monitorum memor, et perinde in eius faciem oculos meos ac si in Avernum lacum formidans deieceram, sed assidue respiciens praeministrantem Fotidem inibi recreabar animi; cum ecce iam vespera lucernam intuens Pamphile, "Quam largus" inquit "Imber aderit crastino," et percontanti marito qui comperisset istud, respondit sibi lucernam praedicere. Quod dictum ipsius Milorisu secutus, "Grandem" inquit "Istam lucernam Sibyllam pascimus, quae cuncta caeli negotia et  
12 solem ipsum de specula candelabri contuetur." Ad haec ego subiciens, "Sunt" aio "Prima huiusce divinationis experimenta, nec mirum licet modicum istum igniculum et manibus humanis laboratum, memorem tamen illius maioris et caelestis ignis velut sui parentis, quid is esset editurus in aetheris vertice divino praesagio et ipsum scire et nobis enuntiare. Nam et Corinthi nunc apud nos passim Chaldaeus quidam hospes miris totam civitatem responsis turbulentat, et arcana fatorum stipibus  
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pleasure, for the voyage of Venus wanteth no other provision than this, that the lamp may be all the night replenished with oil, and the cups filled with wine."

The residue of the day I passed away at the baths, and then to supper, for I was bid by the worthy Milo, and so I sat down at his little table, so neatly furnished, out of Pamphile's sight as much as I could, being mindful of the commandment of Byrrhaena, and only sometimes I would cast mine eyes upon her, as if I should look upon the lakes of hell; but then I (eftsoons turning my face behind me, and beholding my Fotis ministering at the table) was again refreshed and made merry. And behold, when it was now evening and Pamphile did see the lamp standing on the table, she said: "Verily we shall have much rain to-morrow," which when her husband did hear, he demanded of her, by what reason she knew it. "Marry," quoth she, "The light on the table doth shew the same": then Milo laughed and said: "Verily we nourish and bring up a Sibyl prophetess in this lamp, which doth divine from its socket of celestial things, and of the sun itself, as from a watch-tower."

Then I mused in my mind and said unto Milo: "Of truth now is my first experience and proof of divination, neither is it any marvel, for although this light is but a small light and made by the hands of man, yet hath it a remembrance of that great and heavenly light as of its parent, and by its divine spirit of prophecy doth both know and shew unto us, what he will do in the skies above: for I knew among us at Corinth a certain man of Assyria, who by his answers set the whole city in a turmoil, and for the gain of money would tell every man his



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emerendis edicit in vulgus : qui dies copulas nuptiarum affirmet, qui fundamenta moenium perpetuet, qui negotiatori commodus, qui viatori celebris, qui navigiis opportunus ; mihi denique proventum huius peregrinationis inquirenti multa respondit et oppido mira et satis varia : nunc enim gloriam satis floridam, nunc historiam magnam et incredundam fabulam et libros me futurum."

- 13 Ad haec renidens Milo "Qua" inquit "Corporis habitudine praeditus quove nomine nuncupatus hic iste Chaldaeus est?" "Procerus" inquam "Et suffusculus, Diophanes nomine." "Ipse est," ait "Nec ullus alius : nam et hic apud nos multa multis similiter effatus non parvas stipes, immo vero mercedes opimas iam consecutus fortunam scaevam, an saevam verius dixerim, miser incidit. Nam die quadam cum frequentis populi circulo consaeptus coronae circumstantium fata donaret, Cerdo quidam nomine negotiator accessit eum diem commodum peregrinationi cupiens : quem cum electum destinasset ille, iam deposita crumena, iam profusis nummulis, iam dinumeratis centum denarium, quos mercedem divinationis auferret, ecce quidam de nobilibus adolescentulus a tergo arrepens eum laciniaprehendit et conversum amplexus exosculatur artissime. At ille ubi primum consaviatus eum iuxtim se ut assidat effecit, et attonitus repentinae visionis stupore et praesentis negotii quod gerebat oblitus,



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fortune: to some he would tell the days they should marry; to others he would tell when they should build, so that their edifices should continue; to others when they should best go about their affairs; to others when they should travel by land; to others when they should go by sea; and to me (enquiring of my journey hither) he declared many things strange and variable. For sometimes he said that I should win glory enough, sometimes that mine should be a great history, sometimes an incredible tale and the subject of books."

Whereat Milo laughed again, and enquired of me of what stature this man of Assyria was, and what he was named. "In faith," quoth I, "He is a tall man and somewhat black, and he is called Diophanes." Then said Milo: "The same is he and no other, who likewise hath declared many things unto many of us, whereby he got and obtained no small profit, indeed much substance and treasure, but fell at length, poor wretch, into the hands of unpropitious fate, or I might say fate unfaithful. For being on a day amongst a great assembly of people, to tell the bystanders their fortune, a certain merchant called Cerdo came unto him, and desired him to tell when it should be best for him to take his voyage, the which when he had done, Cerdo had already opened his purse and already poured forth his money and counted out a hundred pence to pay him for the pains of his soothsaying; whereupon came a certain young nobleman from behind and took Diophanes by the garment, and turned him about and embraced and kissed him close, and Diophanes kissed him again and desired him to sit down by him. And being astonished with this sudden chance, he forgot the present business that he was doing, and said:



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infit ad eum 'Quam olim equidem exoptatus nobis advenis?' Respondit ad haec ille alius, 'Commodum vespera oriente: sed vicissim tu quoque, frater, mihi memora quemadmodum exinde ut de Euboea insula festinus enavigasti, et maris et viae confeceris iter.'

14 Ad haec Diophanes ille Chaldaeus egregius, mente viduus necdum suus, 'Hostes' inquit 'Et omnes inimici nostri tam diram immo vero Ulixeam peregrinationem incidant. Nam et navis ipsa qua vehebamur, variis turbinibus procellarum quassata, utroque regimine amisso, aegre ad ulterioris ripae marginem detrusa praeceps demersa est, et nos omnibus amissis vix enatavimus. Quodcunque vel ignotorum miseratione vel amicorum benivolentia contraximus, id omne latrocinalis invasit manus, quorum audaciae repugnans etiam Arignotus unicus frater meus sub istis oculis miser iugulatus est.' Haec eo adhuc narrante maesto Cerdo ille negotiator correptis nummulis suis, quos divinationis mercedi destinaverat, protinus aufugit. Ac dehinc tunc demum Diophanes expergitus sensit imprudentiae suae labem, cum etiam nos omnes circumsecus astantes in clarum cachinnum videret effusos. Sed tibi plane, Luci domine, soli omnium Chaldaeus ille vera dixerit, sisque felix et iter dexterum porrigas."

15 Haec Milone diutine sermocinante tacitus ingemescebam, mihiq̃ue non mediocriter suscensebam



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‘O dear friend, you are heartily welcome; I pray you when arrived you, whom we have looked for so long, into these parts?’ Then answered he: ‘Just this last evening; but, brother, I pray you tell me of your sudden coming from the Isle of Euboea, and how you sped by the way, both of sea and land?’ Whereunto Diophanes, this notable Assyrian, not yet come unto his mind but half amazed, gave answer and said: ‘I would to God that all our enemies and evil-willers might fall into the like dangerous peregrination, as troublesome as Ulysses’ was, for the ship which we were in (after that it was by the waves of the sea and by the great tempest tossed hither and thither, in great peril, and after that both the rudders brake alike in pieces) was but just brought to the further shore, but sunk utterly into the water, and so we did swim and hardly escaped to land with loss of all that we had: and after that, whatsoever was given unto us in recompense of our losses, either by the pity of strangers or by the benevolence of our friends, was taken away from us by a band of thieves, whose violence when mine only brother Arignotus did essay to resist, he was cruelly murdered by them before my face.’ While he was still sadly declaring these things, the merchant Cerdo took up his money again, which he had told out to pay for the telling of his fortune, and ran away: and then Diophanes coming to himself perceived what he had done, how his imprudence had ruined him, and we all that stood by laughed greatly. But surely, I pray that unto you, O Lucius; did Diophanes tell the truth, if to you alone, and may you be happy, and have a prosperous journey.”

Thus Milo reasoned with me, but I groaned within myself and was not a little sorry that I had by my



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quod ultro inducta serie inopportunarum fabularum partem bonam vesperae eiusque gratissimum fructum amitterem; et tandem denique devorato pudore ad Milonem aio "Ferat suam Diophanes ille fortunam et spolia populorum rursum conferat mari pariter ac terrae, mihi vero fatigationis hesternae etiamnunc saucio da veniam maturius concedam cubitum," et cum dicto facesso, et cubiculum meum contendo, atque illic deprehendo epularum dispositiones satis concinuas. Nam et pueris extra limen, credo ut arbitrio nocturni gannitus ablegarentur, humi quam procul distratum fuerat, et grabatulum meum astitit mensula cenae totius honestas reliquias tolerans, et calices boni, iam infuso latice semipleni, solam temperiem sustinentes, et lagoena iuxta orificio caesim dehiscente patescens facilis hauritu, prorsus gladiatoriae Veneris antecenia.

- 16 Commodum cubueram, et ecce Fotis mea, iam domina cubitum reddita, laeta proximat rosaserta et rosa soluta in sinu tuberante: ac me pressim deosculato et corollis revincto ac flore persperso arripit poculum ac desuper aqua calida iniecta porrigit bibam, idque modico prius quam totum exsorberem clementer invadit ac relictum pullulatim labellis minuens meque respiciens sorbillat dulciter. Sequens et tertium inter nos vicissim et frequens alternat poculum, cum ego iam vino madens nec animo



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own doing turned him into such a vein of talk so unseasonably, that I was like to lose a good part of the night, and the sweet pleasure thereof, but at length I boldly swallowed my shame and said unto Milo: "Let Diophanes farewell with his evil fortune, and disgorge again to sea and land that spoil that he wins from all nations, for I verily do yet feel the weariness of my travel of yesterday; wherefore I pray you pardon me, and give me license, being very tired, to depart early to bed," wherewithal I rose up and went to my chamber, where I found all manner of meats finely prepared, and the servants' bed (so that they should not hear, methinks, our tattling of the night) was removed far off without the chamber door. By my bed a table was set, all covered with no small store of such meats as were left at supper, generous cups were filled half full with liquor, leaving room only for enough water to temper and delay the wine, the flagon stood ready prepared, its neck opened with a wide and smooth cut, that one might the easier draw from it, and there did nothing lack which was necessary for the preparation of Venus.

Now when I was just entered into the bed, behold my Fotis (who had brought her mistress to sleep) drew nigh, with bunches of rose garlands and rose blooms in her apron, and she kissed me closely and tied a garland about my head, and cast the residue about me. Which when she had done, she took up a cup of wine, and tempered it with hot water, and proffered it me to drink, and before I had drunk up all, she gently pulled it from my mouth, and sipping it slowly and looking upon me the while, she drank that which was left, and in this manner we emptied the pot twice or thrice together. Thus when I had



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tantum verum etiam corpore ipso ad libidinem inquires, alioquin et petulans et iam saucius paulisper inguinum fine lacinia remota impatientiam Veneris Fotidi meae monstrans, "Miserere," inquam "Et subveni maturius: nam, ut vides, proelio, quod nobis sine fetiali officio indixeras, iam proximante vehementer intentus, ubi primam sagittam saevi Cupidinis in ima praecordia mea delapsam excepi, arcum meum et ipse vigorate tetendi<sup>1</sup> et oppido formido ne nervus rigoris nimietate rumpatur. Sed ut mihi morem plenius gesseris, in effusum laxa crinem et capillo  
17 fluente undanter ede complexus amabiles." Nec mora, cum omnibus illis cibariis vasculis raptim remotis, laciniis cunctis suis renudata, crinibus quam dissolutis ad hilarem lasciviam in speciem Veneris quae marinos fluctus subit pulchre reformata, paulisper etiam glabellum feminal rosea palmula potius obumbrans de industria quam tegens verecundia, "Proeliare," inquit "Et fortiter proeliare, nec enim tibi cedam nec terga vortam. Comminus in aspectum, si vir es, derige et grassare naviter et occide moriturus. Hodierna pugna non habet missionem." Haec simul dicens, inscenso grabatulo super me sessim residens ac crebra subsiliens, lubricisque gestibus mobilem spinam quatiens, pendulae Veneris fructu me satiavit, usque dum lassis animis et marcidis artubus defatigati simul ambo corruimus inter mutuos amplexus animas anhelantes. His et huiusmodi colluctationibus ad confinia lucis usque pervigiles egimus, poculis interdum lassitudinem refoventes et libidinem incitantes et voluptatem integrantes: ad cuius noctis exemplar similes astruximus alias plusculas.

18 Forte quadam die de me magno opere Byrrhaena contendit apud eam cenulae ut interesssem, et cum

<sup>1</sup> So Bursian for the MSS' *vigor attetendit*.



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well replenished myself with wine, and was now ready not only in mind but also in body, I shewed to Fotis my great impatience and said : " O my sweetheart, take pity upon me and help me : for as you see, I am prepared unto the battle now approaching which yourself did appoint without the herald's aid, for after that I felt the first arrow of cruel Cupid within my breast I bent my bow very strong, and now fear (because it is bended so hard) lest the string should break : but that thou mayest the better please me, unbrace thy hair and come and embrace me lovingly " ; wherewithal she made no long delay, but set aside all the meat and wine, and then unapparelled herself and unattired her hair, presenting her amiable body unto me in manner of fair Venus, when she goeth under the waves of the sea. " Now," quoth she, " Is come the hour of jousting, now is come the time of war, wherefore shew thyself like unto a man, for I will not retire, I will not fly the field ; see then thou be valiant, see thou be courageous, since there is no time appointed when our skirmish shall cease." In saying these words she came to me, and embraced me sweetly, and so we passed all the night in pastime and pleasure, and never slept till it was day ; but we would ever refresh our weariness and provoke our pleasure by drinking of wine. In which sort we pleasantly passed many nights following.

It fortun'd on a day that Byrrhaena desired me to sup with her, and she would in no wise take any



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impendio excusarem, negavit veniam. Ergo igitur Fotis erat adeunda deque nutu eius consilium velut auspiciū petendum: quae quanquam invita quod a se ungue latius digrederer, tamen comiter amatoriae militiae brevem commeatum indulxit. Sed "Heus tu" inquit "Cave regrediare cena maturius: nam vesana factio nobilissimorum iuvenum pacem publicam infestat: passim trucidatos per medias plateas videbis iacere, nec praesidis auxilia longinqua levare civitatem tanta clade possunt. Tibi vero fortunae splendor insidias, contemptus etiam peregrinationis poterit afferre." "Fac sine cura" inquam "Sis, Fotis mea: nam praeter quod epulis alienis voluptates meas anteferrem, metum etiam istum tibi demam maturata regressione. Nec tamen incommitatus ibo: nam gladiolo solito cinctus altrinsecus ipse salutis meae praesidia gestabo." Sic paratus cenae me committo.

- 19 Frequens ibi numerus epulorum et utpote apud primatem feminam flos ipse civitatis. Mensae opipare citro et ebore nitentes, lecti aureis vestibibus intecti, ampli calices variae quidem gratiae sed pretiositatis unius. Hic vitrum fabre sigillatum, ibi crystallum impunctum, argentum alibi clarum et aurum fulgurans et succinum mire cavatum et lapides ut bibas, et quicquid fieri non potest, ibi est. Diribitores plusculi splendide amicti fercula copiosa



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excuse. Whereupon I must go unto Fotis to ask counsel of her as of some divine, who (although she was unwilling that I should depart one foot from her company) yet at length she gave me license to be absent for a while from amorous debate, saying: "Look you, beware that you tarry not long at supper there, for there is a rabble of well-born youths that disturbeth the public peace, and you may see many murdered about in the streets, neither can the armies of the governor, for that they are afar off, rid the city of this great plague. And they will the sooner set upon you, by reason of your high station and for that they will disdain you being a foreigner." Then I answered and said: "Have no care for me, Fotis, for I esteem the pleasure which I have with thee above the dainty meat that I eat abroad, and I will take away that fear that you have by returning again quickly. Nevertheless, I mind not to go without company, for I have here my sword by my side, whereby I hope to defend myself."

And so in this sort I went to supper, and behold I found at Byrrhaena's house a great company of strangers, the very flower of the citizens, for that she was one of the chief and principal women of the city. The tables (made of citron-wood and ivory) were richly adorned, the couches spread with cloth of gold, the cups were great and garnished precious in sundry fashion, but were of like estimation and price: here stood a glass gorgeously wrought, there stood another of crystal finely chased, there stood a cup of glittering silver, and here stood another of shining gold, and here was another of amber artificially carved, and precious stones made to drink out of; finally, there were all things that might never be found. A crowd of servitors brought orderly the



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scitule subministrare, pueri calamistrati pulchre induciati gemmas formatas in pocula vini vetusti frequenter offerre.

Iam illatis luminibus epularis sermo percrebruit, iam risus affluens et ioci liberales et cavillus hinc inde; tum infit ad me Byrrhaena: "Quam commode versaris in nostra patria? Quod sciam, templis et lavacris et ceteris operibus longe cunctas civitates antecellimus, utensilium praeterea pollemus affatim. Certe libertas otioso, et negotioso quidem advenae Romana frequentia, modesto vero hospiti quies villatica; omni denique provinciae voluptarii secessus  
20 sumus." Ad haec ego subiciens: "Vera memoras, nec usquam gentium magis me liberum quam hic fuisse credidi. Sed oppido formido caecas et inevitabiles latebras magicae disciplinae: nam ne mortuorum quidem sepulchra tuta dicuntur sed ex bustis et rogis reliquiae quaedam et cadaverum praesegmina ad exitiabiles viventium fortunas petuntur; et cantatrices anus in ipso momento choragii funebris praepeti celeritate alienam sepulturam antevortunt." His meis addidit alius: "Immo vero istic nec viventibus quidem ullis parcitur: et nescioqui simile passus ore undique omnifariam deformato truncatus est." Inter haec convivium totum in licentiosos cachinnos effunditur, omniumque ora et obtutus in unum quempiam angulo secubantem conferuntur: qui cunctorum



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plentiful meats in rich apparel, the pages curled and arrayed in silk robes did fill great gems made in form of cups with ancient wine.

Then one brought in candles and torches : and when we were sat down and placed in order we began to talk, to laugh and be merry. And Byrrhaena spoke to me, and said : " I pray you, cousin, how like you our country ? Verily I think there is no other city which hath the like temples, baths and other commodities as we have here : further we have abundance of household stuff, we have freedom for him that will rest, and when a busy merchant cometh, he may find here as many as at Rome ; but for a stranger that will have quiet there is peace as at a country-house : and in fine, all that dwell within this province (when they purpose to solace and repose themselves) do come to this city."

Whereunto I answered : " Verily you tell truth, for I have found no place in all the world where I may be freer than here ; but I greatly fear the blind and inevitable hits of witchcraft, for they say that not even the graves of the dead are safe, but the bones and slices of such as are slain be digged up from tombs and pyres to afflict and torment such as live : and the old witches as soon as they hear of the death of any person do forthwith go and uncover the hearse and spoil the corpse before ever it be buried."

Then another sitting at the table spoke and said : " In faith you say true, neither yet do they spare or favour the living. For I know one not far hence that was cruelly handled by them and hath suffered much with all manner of cutting of his face" ; whereat all the company laughed heartily, and looked upon one that sat apart at the board's end, who being amazed at all their gazing and angry withal,



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obstinatione confusus indigna murmurabundus cum vellet exsurgere, "Immo mi Thelyphron" Byrrhaena inquit "Et subsiste paulisper et more tuae urbanitatis fabulam illam tuam remetire, ut et filius meus iste Lucius lepidi sermonis tui perfruatur comitate." At ille "Tu quidem domina" ait "In officio manes sanctae tuae bonitatis: sed ferenda non est quorundam insolentia." Sic ille commotus; sed instantia Byrrhaenae, quae eum adiuratione suae salutis in-  
21 gratis cogebat effari, perfecit ut vellet, ac sic aggeratis in cumulum stragulis et effultus in cubitum sub-erectusque in torum porrigit dexteram, et ad instar oratorum conformat articulum duobusque infimis conclusis digitis ceteros eminus porrigens et infesto pollice subrigens infit Thelyphron:

"Pupillus ego Mileto profectus ad spectaculum Olympicum, cum haec etiam loca provinciae famigerabilis adire cuperem, peragrata cuncta Thessalia fuscis avibus Larissam accessi. Ac dum singula pererrans, tenuato admodum viatico, paupertati meae fomenta conquiro, conspikor medio foro procerum quendam senem: insistebat lapidem claraque voce praedicabat, si qui mortuum servare vellet, de pretio liceretur; et ad quempiam praetereuntium 'Quid hoc' inquam 'comperior? Hicine mortui solent aufugere?' 'Tace' respondit ille, 'Nam oppido



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murmured somewhat and would have risen from the table had not Byrrhaena spoken to him and said: "I pray thee, friend Thelyphron, sit still, and according to thy accustomed courtesy declare unto us thy story, to the end that my son Lucius may be delighted with the pleasantness of thy tale." To whom he answered: "Ah dame, you are always the same in the office of your bounty and thoughtfulness, but the insolence of some is not to be supported." This he said very angrily, but Byrrhaena was earnest upon him and conjured him by her own life that he should, how unwilling soever, tell his tale, whereby he was enforced to declare the same: and so (lapping up the end of the table-cloth into an heap) he leaned with his elbow thereon, and sat up upon the couch and held out his right hand in the manner of an orator, shutting down the two smaller fingers and stretching out the other three, and pointing up with his thumb a little, and said:

"When I was a young man I went from the city called Miletus to see the games and triumphs called Olympian, and being desirous also to come into this famous province, after that I had travelled over all Thessaly, I fortunèd in an evil hour to come to the city Larissa, where, while I went up and down to view the streets, to take some relief for my poor estate (for I had spent near all my money) I espied a tall old man standing upon a stone in the midst of the market-place, crying with a loud voice, and saying that if any man would watch a dead corpse that night he should be rewarded and a price be fixed for his pains. Which when I heard I said to one that passed by: 'What is here to do? Do dead men use to run away in this country?' Then answered he: 'Hold your peace; for you are but a babe and a



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puer et satis peregrinus es, meritoque ignoras Thes-  
saliae te consistere, ubi sagae mulieres ora mortuorum  
passim demorsitant, eaque sunt illis artis magicae  
22 supplementa.' Contra ego 'Et quae, tu' inquam  
'Dic sodes, custodela illa feralis?' 'Iam primum'  
respondit ille 'Perpetem noctem eximie vigilandum  
est exertis et inconnivis oculis semper in cadaver  
intentis, nec acies usquam devertenda, immo ne  
obliquanda quidem, quippe cum deterrimae ver-  
sipelles in quodvis animal ore converso latenter  
arrepant, ut ipsos etiam oculos solis et Iustitiae  
facile frustrentur; nam et aves et rursum canes et  
mures, immo vero etiam muscas induunt. Tunc  
diris cantaminibus somno custodes obruunt: nec satis  
quisquam definire poterit quantas latebras nequissimae  
mulieres pro libidine sua comminiscuntur. Nec  
tamen huius tam exitiabilis operae merces amplior  
quam quaterni vel seni ferme offeruntur aurei.  
Ehem, et quod paene praeterieram, si qui non  
integrum corpus mane restituerit, quicquid inde  
decerptum deminutumque fuerit, id omne de facie  
sua desecto sarcire compellitur.'

23 "His cognitis animum meum commasculo, et illico  
accedens praeconem 'Clamare' inquam 'Iam desine:  
adest custos paratus, cedo praemium.' 'Mille' inquit  
'Nummum deponentur tibi. Sed heus iuvenis, cave  
diligenter principum civitatis filii cadaver a malis  
Harpyiis probe custodias.' 'Ineptias' inquam 'Mihi