

THE SATYRICON

by Gaius Petronius and Martin Foreman

CAST

Characters

PETRONIUS (M, 35-60)

TRIMALCHIO (M, 35-60)

ENCOLPIUS (M, 20s)

ASCYLTO (M, 20s)

GITON (M, under 20)

Actors (any sex / age)

identified as A B C D E when 21st century and their roles when 1st century

This is the original division of parts - it will change for the EGTG reading

A is also

AGAMEMNON (Act 1) / 1st SELLER (Act 1) / EUMOLPUS (Act 2)

B is also

CROWD (1) / LICHAS (1&2) / 2nd SELLER (1) / MAN (1) / SLAVE (1) / CONSTABLE (2) / SOLDIER (2)

C is also

CROWD (1) / INNKEEPER (1) / SAILOR (1&2) / WORSHIPPER (1) / STEWARD (1) / CHRYSIS (2)

D is also

CROWD (1) / OLD WOMAN (1) / 3rd SELLER (1) / QUARTILLA (1) / FORTUNATA (1) / SAILOR (2) /
PRIESTESS (2)

E is also

CROWD (1) / TRYPHAENA (1&2) / GIRL (1) / SLAVE (1) / CIRCE (2)

BLACK: dialogue

RED: spoken by all, except the last person to speak

BLUE: read by the director

GREY: ignore

SCENE 1: INTRODUCTION

As the audience enters and takes their seats, the CHARACTERS and ACTORS are on stage, warming up.

Drum roll

PETRONIUS Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to...

D Pssst!

PETRONIUS Ladies and gentlemen,

D Pssst!!!

PETRONIUS Excuse me. *(consults with D)* What is it?

D You've forgotten . . . *(inaudible)*

A *(to the other Actors)* "Ladies and gentlemen"! Have you seen them? I doubt they understand "ladies and gentlemen" except as stinking public toilets.

PETRONIUS *(to D)* Must I?

D If you don't, I'll walk.

PETRONIUS All right.

(to the audience) Ladies, gentlemen and non-binaries, welcome to The Satyricon.

My name is Gaius Petronius. I am an Arbiter - a judge - of elegance. Equivalent to, say, editor of *Vogue* - a commander in the Fashion Police. Strictly speaking, I *was* an arbiter. I've been dead for two thousand years. But my story . . .

ENCOLPIUS Hold on, it's my story. I'm the one that tells it. It's all about me and what happens to me.

PETRONIUS A minor point. I created you and I'm the one who put the words into your mouth.

ENCOLPIUS It's still my story. I want credit.

PETRONIUS And credit you shall get. Lights!

Spotlight on ENCOLPIUS

This, ladies, gentlemen - and non-binaries - is Encolpius.

Encolpius claims to have been a gladiator

ENCOLPIUS What do you mean "claims"?

PETRONIUS Throw him a trident and he'd stab his own foot with it.

ENCOLPIUS That only happened once!

PETRONIUS Let's be generous and call him a student, young, brash and with his eye on the main chance - although the main chance seldom has its eye on him.

ENCOLPIUS We'll see.

PETRONIUS Thank you, Encolpius.

continued . . .

PETRONIUS (cont) Next up is Ascyltos.
 ASCYLTOS At your service.
 PETRONIUS Ascyltos should be the gladiator.
 ASCYLTOS Fucking right.
 PETRONIUS If there's a fight, he'll be in the middle of it, and if there's a fight he probably started it.
 ASCYLTOS Who, me?
 PETRONIUS He says he's a student. He can't remember what he studies but he maintains the age-old tradition of getting drunk regularly. And if he ever does reach old age he'll proudly tell you he's a graduate of the University of Life.
 ASCYLTOS That it?
 PETRONIUS That'll do for now.
 Finally, there's Giton.
 GITON What am I supposed to do?
 PETRONIUS Strike a pose or take a bow.

GITON tries to do both and fails

What can I tell you about Giton? Well, he's sixteen years old and just discovered sex. What's the expression? Young, dumb and full of cum. That's all you need to know.
 GITON Sixteen? I'm not sixteen. I'm [AGE OF ACTOR]
 PETRONIUS The character is sixteen! Good grief! How many times have we gone through this in rehearsal? *(to audience)* What I was saying about dumb? Typecasting. *(to GITON)* Go away.
 I'd like to call them heroes, but they're not handsome or virtuous and if they've got brains they haven't yet learnt how to use them.
 ENCOLPIUS Thanks a bunch.
 PETRONIUS No matter, let's set them off on their adventures and hope they get through them unscathed. So, on with the Show.

Drum roll

Ladies , gentlemen and non-binaries, welcome to...
 E What about us?
 PETRONIUS What about...? I forgot. Lights
 That lot at the back are Actors. We'll bring them on when we need them for minor roles. Until then forget them.
 C Forget us? Thank you!
 B Fuck that!

PETRONIUS I say they're Actors, but that's giving them the benefit of the doubt. They're only here because we couldn't afford anyone better. We pay peanuts, you (*the audience*) get monkeys. They'll all play several characters, so pay attention and don't get confused when they turn up as different people in different scenes.

B For fuck's sake, get on with it!

PETRONIUS Indeed. Places, everyone.

Ladies, gentlemen, non-binaries, The Satyricon!

Extended drum roll as PETRONIUS withdraws, ENCOLPIUS leaps onto a podium and the ACTORS gather round. ASCYLTO loiters behind ENCOLPIUS. GITON wanders upstage.

Everyone freezes except PETRONIUS and GITON, who is picking his nose or scratching his backside.

SCENE 2: THE FORUM

PETRONIUS (cont) Well,. what are you waiting for?

C You haven't set the scene.

PETRONIUS I'm sorry. Our trio have just arrived in town. Encolpius has found his way to the Forum and, convinced as always that he has something important to say and people want to hear it, is haranguing the crowd.

Paragraph breaks allow for responses from the crowd. They are not impressed by Encolpius

ENCOLPIUS My friends!

Friends!

Romans!!

Countrymen!!!

(CROWD) D Mind your language!

ENCOLPIUS I said "countrymen".

(CROWD) D Oh, carry on.

ENCOLPIUS Countrymen, lend me your ears!

My friends, what use is education today?

Do students learn anything? No! All they know is how to pass exams.

Take oratory . . .

Oratory! rhetoric, reasoning.

In the old days Sophocles and Euripides dealt with real issues - real issues! - affecting people's lives. Now, teachers offer only platitudes and cliches and the same questions come up again and again.

I said, the same questions come up again and again. Plain-speaking Attic style is forgotten and everthing is Asiatic - all flourishes, no style, superficial.

(CROWD) B I like Asian food. Mind you, it can be a bit spicy.

ENCOLPIUS It won't last.

(CROWD) E What? Asian food? You're right. Half an hour after a Chinese I'm hungry again.

ASCYLLOS, bored, wanders off

ENCOLPIUS Modern style. Oratory. Poetry. It'll be forgotten in a generation. It's the teachers' fault. They're incompetent, lazy. Anything for a quiet life.

Teachers! It's their fault! Doing it the easy way got them where they are so why not pass it on?

AGAMEMNON Young man, nothing could be further from the truth. Stand aside.

The crowd are friendlier to Agamemnon

ENCOLPIUS Do you mind?

AGAMEMNON *(to ENCOLPIUS)* Not at all.

(to the CROWD) It's not the teachers' fault, it's the parents'.

Parents push their offspring too soon, too hard. No sooner is little Julius born than Mater and Pater are pushing him to succeed in public life so they can bask in his glory.

They don't understand that patience, dedication and hard work are essential for a serious grounding in life and education.

(CROWD) D That's very true. Who are you?

AGAMEMNON My name is . . . My name is . . . My name? *(panicking)* Help me out here!

PETRONIUS Agamemnon!

AGAMEMNON Agamemnon, father of Electra, her of the Electra Complex who wanted to kill her mother and marry her father, that Agamemnon?

(CROWD) C Who was King of Mycenae and who reluctantly led the Greek forces against Troy ...

(CROWD) B ... because his wife Clytemnestra was sister to the Helen who eloped to Troy with Paris ...

(CROWD) D ... the Helen whose face launched a thousand ships?

AGAMEMNON The Agamemnon who returned from Troy to find his wife ...

(CROWD) C ... the said Clytemnestra ...

(CROWD) E ... had taken Aegisthus for a lover and who was then killed?

(CROWD) D Who was Aegisthus?

(CROWD) B Who was then killed?

(CROWD) E Agamemnon was killed by Clytemnestra ...

(CROWD) C ... his wife ...

AGAMEMNON ... or Aegisthus ...

(CROWD) E ... his wife's lover.

ALL **Is he that Agamemnon?**

PETRONIUS No! That Agamemnon had been dead for hundreds of years. Of course he couldn't have been in the Forum. I wrote about another Agamemnon, a sophist.

(CROWD) C A what?

(CROWD) B He makes sofas?

AGAMEMNON Why on earth did you choose that name?

PETRONIUS Oh, never mind. Get on with it.

AGAMEMNON As I was saying, Young people have no stamina these days.
 They want everything to be easy, done for them.
 We should all be concerned. The future of Rome is at stake.
 In fact, so serious - so serious - is the situation that I have thrown off a poem.
 A poem - a song - that every youth, every adult, every statesman that sees the the danger to our nation should memorise.
 Ahem...
(sings)
 If you would an artist be,
 or, Heaven help us, politician,
 accept advice I give for free
 to help reach your ambition.
 The word you need is discipline.
 No drink and no frivolity.
 Avoid the stage and ev'ry sin,
 and leaders of the polity.
 Let your guide be Socrates,
 the wisest man who ever lived.
 Harken to Demosthenes,
 Use words as swords; be combative!
 Drink deep the lines of Homer's verse
 Take as your model Cicero
 Lest you create terse verse much worse
 Than that created long ago.

The CROWD cheers and surrounds AGAMEMNON

AGAMEMNON Thank you! Thank you!
 A-ga-mem-non. Two As, two Ms, two Ns.
 No, only one E.

The crowd disperse

ENCOLPIUS Hang on, where's Ascyltos?
 AGAMEMNON Who?
 ENCOLPIUS My friend; he was here a moment ago. And Giton?
 AGAMEMNON I have no idea.
 ENCOLPIUS I have to find them.
 Whatever it takes, wherever they are, no matter how lost they may be or how much
 time I spend, or whatever sacrifice I make, I must find them.
 AGAMEMNON It is your duty.
 ENCOLPIUS It is my task.
 AGAMEMNON Your burden.
 ENCOLPIUS My quest.
 AGAMEMNON Your obligation.
 ENCOLPIUS Commitment.
 AGAMEMNON Commission.
 ENCOLPIUS Pledge.
 AGAMEMNON It is your Odyssey!
 ENCOLPIUS My Odyssey! My own adventure.
 AGAMEMNON And you are the hero!
 ENCOLPIUS *(daydreaming)* The hero . . .
 AGAMEMNON Fare well, fair Ulysses.
 ENCOLPIUS Encolpius. Fare well, dark . . .
 AGAMEMNON Agamemnon.
 ENCOLPIUS Agamemnon. But not the Agamemnon, father of Electra . . .
 AGAMEMNON No, not that Agamemnon. Until we meet again.

SCENE 3: A STREET THEN A BROTHEL

ENCOLPIUS Now, was it that way I came? Or that way? We came out, turned left, then right - or
 was it second right? Giton was hungry and he was looking for . . .

ENCOLPIUS Are you sure?

OLD WOMAN Of course I'm sure. I've lived here all my life. You can trust me. I'm as honest as the day I was born. The ides of March, if I remember.

ENCOLPIUS Well . . . I don't recognise this place.

OLD WOMAN It's a bit dark here. Some of them like it like that.

ENCOLPIUS Some of who?

OLD WOMAN Clients.

ENCOLPIUS Ow!

OLD WOMAN Sorry, don't know my own strength. Just being friendly.

ENCOLPIUS What are you doing? Get off!

OLD WOMAN Thought you might like to thank me.

ENCOLPIUS Thank me? For what?

OLD WOMAN Bringing you home.

ENCOLPIUS This isn't home.

OLD WOMAN I'll get you there. Just a little business first.

ENCOLPIUS What business?

OLD WOMAN This business.

ENCOLPIUS I'm not interested.

OLD WOMAN That's what they all say, dearie. Just give me time to get down to it and you'll be in ecstasy.

ENCOLPIUS I'd rather be in my lodgings.

OLD WOMAN Just a couple of sesterces. It's worth it, I promise.

SFX Love-making, flagellation and other unidentifiable noises now loud

ENCOLPIUS fights off OLD WOMAN while prostitutes and clients gather round. Meanwhile, ASCYLLOS has wandered in at the other side of the building and is pursued by an old man. ASCYLLOS and ENCOLPIUS back into each other. Business whereby the two (mostly ASCYLLOS, with ENCOLPIUS not very helpful) fight everyone else and escape outside.

SCENE 4: THE STREET

ENCOLPIUS Where the fuck were you?

ASCYLLOS Around.

ENCOLPIUS Leaving me lost in a strange town.

ASCYLLOS You found some company.

ENCOLPIUS So did you.
 ASCYLLOS I didn't fancy yours.
 ENCOLPIUS Yours wasn't much better.
 We've got to find Giton.
 ASCYLLOS He'll turn up. He always does when he's hungry.
 ENCOLPIUS I don't know where he puts it.
 ASCYLLOS I know where it comes out.
 ENCOLPIUS I hope you don't. That's my affair, not yours.
 ASCYLLOS Whatever.
 ENCOLPIUS We've got to find him. Handsome boy lost in the city. Anything might happen to him.
 ASCYLLOS Like it almost happened to you.
 ENCOLPIUS I can look after myself. He can't.
 ASCYLLOS Don't be so sure.
 ENCOLPIUS We need to split up. You go one way, I'll go another. We'll meet up back up at the
 lodging.
 ASCYLLOS Right you are.
 ENCOLPIUS Hold it!
 ASCYLLOS What?
 ENCOLPIUS Where is the lodging?
 ASCYLLOS The sign of the Cooked Goose. Next to the barracks.
 ENCOLPIUS Right.
Exit ASCYLLOS
 The Cooked Goose. I hope that isn't a bad sign.
Enter GITON
 Giton!
 Where were you? I've been looking all over for you.
 GITON Where were you? You left me.
 ENCOLPIUS No, I didn't. One minute you were beside me, the next you were in that bakery. I
 went in, couldn't find you.
 GITON The baker's wife wanted to show me her baps in the back room.
 ENCOLPIUS What were they like?
 GITON Baps.

ENCOLPIUS Firm, thick and round?

GITON Yes, but I couldn't get my hands on them. She said I had to pay first.

ENCOLPIUS Some women are like that.

GITON I didn't have any money.

ENCOLPIUS If I gave it you, you'd spend it.

GITON So I stole them.

ENCOLPIUS Saved one for me?

GITON I was hungry.

I missed you. Where were you?

ENCOLPIUS In the Forum.

GITON Giving a speech? Doesn't sound like you missed me.

ENCOLPIUS I did. I was coming home to look for you.

GITON Took your time about it.

ENCOLPIUS I got delayed.

GITON What by?

ENCOLPIUS An old woman.

GITON What did she want?

ENCOLPIUS You don't want to know. Then I met Ascyltos.

GITON Oh, yeah. Ascyltos.

ENCOLPIUS What does that mean?

GITON Nothing.

He tried . . .

ENCOLPIUS He tried what?

GITON You know. Called me Lucretia. I'm not a girl.

ENCOLPIUS Thank the gods.

Did you let him?

GITON No! But he kept trying.

ENCOLPIUS Didn't you tell him to stop?

GITON I did, but he didn't.

ENCOLPIUS So?

GITON I said you'd beat him up.

ENCOLPIUS That stopped him.

GITON He burst out laughing. I said I didn't want to, 'cause you and me . . .

ENCOLPIUS Did he stop then?

GITON More or less.

ENCOLPIUS Did he?

GITON Yes!

ENCOLPIUS Sure you didn't want to?

GITON Yes, I don't! Didn't! Whatever.

ENCOLPIUS He's not bad-looking.

GITON I know, but, you and me . . . And he's rough, not like you.

ENCOLPIUS If it happens again, let me know.

GITON Okay.

ENCOLPIUS Shall we go?

GITON Where?

ENCOLPIUS Back home. It's this way.

GITON No, it isn't, it's this way.

ENCOLPIUS Are you sure?

SFX *faint trumpet*

GITON That's the soldiers' trumpet. Bedtime.

ENCOLPIUS Any time's bedtime with you.

The pair go off in the direction GITON indicates.

LIGHTING *fades to night, then a new morning .*

ASCYLLOS and INNKEEPER set up the inn; PETRONIUS takes a seat

SCENE 5: AN INN

ASCYLLOS Morning, Castor and Pollux. You finally got out of the sack.

ENCOLPIUS I've a bone to pick with you.

ASCYLLOS Chicken or duck? All I've got is stale bread.

ENCOLPIUS Don't be funny. Giton told me what you've been up to. No wonder you didn't come back last night.

ASCYLLOS I fell in with a couple of gladiators who'd got their freedom. The stories they told. The plans they had. Move to Sicily, get into the slave trade. Trouble is, they spent all their prize money on drink. Most of it. Some of it fell in my tunic. I mean, our need's as great as theirs.

ENCOLPIUS Stop changing the subject. You tried to have it off with Giton. Don't deny it.

ASCYLLOS I didn't say anything.

ENCOLPIUS He told me everything.

ASCYLLOS Did he?

ENCOLPIUS *(to GITON)* Didn't you?

GITON Yes, I did.

ENCOLPIUS *(to GITON)* But you didn't, did you?

GITON Didn't what?

ENCOLPIUS Do it. You didn't do it.

ASCYLLOS *(to GITON)* We didn't do it, did we?

GITON No!

ENCOLPIUS Are you sure?

GITON No! I mean yes! I mean . . .

ENCOLPIUS *(to ASCYLLOS)* Did you or didn't you try to have it off with him?

ASCYLLOS Aye, I did. But no I didn't. Have it off. You can't blame me. Look at him, he's as cute as Cupid and he's gagging for it. You'd gone off on one of your public speeches, could have been there for hours. What were we supposed to do? Count three-legged dogs or cats with one eye?

GITON I saw one this morning. Dog with one eye. Or was it a cat with three legs?

ENCOLPIUS Go and fuck some whore, not my boyfriend!

ASCYLLOS It was for his sake, not mine! He was the one who needed to get off. I was just going to help him out. Honest!

During the following LICHAS and TRYPHAENA enter and sit nearby. LICHAS places a robe on the seat beside him. The INNKEEPER serves them.

ENCOLPIUS You're unbelievable! You're my best friend. We've known each other since your Mum breast-fed me before she ran off with that Christian.

ASCYLLOS I thought he was a Mithraite.

ENCOLPIUS Whatever. Your Dad gave me work minding the pigs. Best job I ever had.

ASCYLLOS Only job you've ever had.

ENCOLPIUS We've been pals, mates, buddies all our lives. I've helped you, you've helped me, through thick and thin. And now I've got a boyfriend all of my own, you want to steal him from me.

ASCYLLOS I don't want to steal him. I just want to share him. We share everything else. Why not him?

ENCOLPIUS He doesn't want to be shared! Do you?

GITON Well . . . No.

ENCOLPIUS See, and I don't want to share him. So go and get your own boyfriend or girlfriend or whatever. Selfish prick.

ASCYLLOS Aye, well, all pricks are selfish, aren't they? We just follow where our pricks lead, do what they tell us. And my prick was telling me . . .

ENCOLPIUS Okay, okay, okay. Put your prick away and let's forget it.

ASCYLLOS I can't forget my prick. That's the fucking point!

Tension breaks in laughter

ENCOLPIUS Oh, Ascylos, my brother, I can't stay mad at you.

ASCYLLOS I can't either. Friends?

ENCOLPIUS Friends.

ASCYLLOS Giton?

GITON Whatever. You going to finish that bread?

They eat

TRYPHAENA Hello, boys. New in town?

ASCYLLOS) No.

ENCOLPIUS) Yes.

TRYPHAENA It's a bit confusing when you first get here, but you'll soon find your way around.

 You wouldn't be gladiators, by any chance?

ENCOLPIUS Well, I've always . . .

ASCYLLOS No, we're not.

LICHAS I'm sure you've seen action in the ring.

ASCYLLOS Whose ring?

ENCOLPIUS Actually, we're students.

TRYPHAENA You must be very bright.

ENCOLPIUS You could have heard me yesterday, in the Forum.

TRYPHAENA What were you doing there?

ENCOLPIUS Giving a lecture. About modern education.

TRYPHAENA It must have been fascinating.

ENCOLPIUS Agamemnon joined in.

LICHAS Agamemnon, father of Electra, her of the Electra Complex who wanted to kill her mother and marry her father, that Agamemnon?

EVERYONE ELSE NO!

- TRYPHAENA We should introduce ourselves. I'm Tryphaena. This is Lichas, he owns that ship in the harbour.
- ENCOLPIUS Impressive. I'm Encolpius.
- ASCYLLOS Ascylltos.
- TRYPHAENA And this Ganymede?
- GITON My name's not Ganymede. It's Giton.
- TRYPHAENA Delighted to meet you, Giton. I see you like baps.
- GITON I like buns too.
- LICHAS There's a coincidence. So do I.
- GITON First thing I remember is chewing my Mum's baps, first one, then the other. I like them when they're sticky.
- TRYPHAENA You must try mine sometime.
- LICHAS *(to ASCYLLOS)* And where were you? In the gymnasium? I'm sure you exercise regularly, but your friend here looks as if he's never been in a gym.
- ENCOLPIUS I never have time.
- LICHAS Make time. Start at home, basic exercises. Create a really strong core. Stand up. *(ENCOLPIUS is reluctant.)* Stand up! I'll show you.
- LICHAS starts to swivel his (own) hips.*
- Like this. Strengthens the back, the hips, the pelvic muscles. Especially good for the pelvis.
- ENCOLPIUS begins to swivel.*
- No! No! that's not right. Like this.
- LICHAS pulls ENCOLPIUS to him so they are swivelling crotch to crotch.*
- Change direction, change speed . . .
- TRYPHAENA *(to GITON)* I'd love to see your pelvic muscles working sometime.
- As they swivel, ENCOLPIUS finds and removes a pouch from LICHAS' belt or tunic. He extricates himself and they sit down.*
- TRYPHAENA (cont) What are you doing today, boys? I have a villa up in the hills, slaves catering to your every need. Why not join us? *(sniffs)* After you've been to the baths?
- ASCYLLOS We can't afford . . .
- TRYPHAENA A question of cash, is it?
- ENCOLPIUS kicks ASCYLLOS before he can say more.*
- ENCOLPIUS No, we're fine for money, thanks. We'd love to join you later.
- LICHAS Of course you will. Or I'll know the reason why.

TRYPHAENA Tryphaena's place. Ask anyone. They'll direct you. We'll lay on dinner. And then we'll lay . . . Well, we'll see.

LICHAS That's settled then. My dear, shall we go?

TRYPHAENA Till later, Ganymede. (*blows GITON a kiss*) You two as well.

Exit LICHAS and TRYPHAENA

ASCYLLOS What the fuck was that about? She was going to give us money!

ENCOLPIUS They already have given us money. Look! There's enough in there to feed us for a month.

ASCYLLOS Or him (*GITON*) for a couple of days.

ENCOLPIUS We'd better get out of here before they come back.

GITON (*mouth full, as usual*) What's that? (*the robe*)

ASCYLLOS They must have left it. (*feels it*) Good quality.

ENCOLPIUS Grab it and let's go!

Exit ENCOLPIUS, GITON, ASCYLLOS

INNKEEPER clears props and dismantles set

INNKEEPER What were you thinking?

PETRONIUS Excuse me?

INNKEEPER You were watching them. You weren't happy.

PETRONIUS I was trying to remember.

INNKEEPER Remember what?

PETRONIUS If I wrote that bit.

INNKEEPER What bit?

PETRONIUS That bit - Lichas and Tryphaena picking up the boys. So much of my work was lost. Other writers just fill the gaps with whatever comes into their heads.

INNKEEPER So you're Petronius!

PETRONIUS Yes.

INNKEEPER I've been longing to meet you.

PETRONIUS It feels like my work, but I'm not sure.

INNKEEPER You're the one telling these stories.

PETRONIUS Most of them.

INNKEEPER I've got a question.

PETRONIUS What is it?

INNKEEPER What about me?

PETRONIUS What about you?

INNKEEPER What happens to me, the innkeeper?

PETRONIUS Happens? Nothing.

INNKEEPER Nothing?

PETRONIUS No, you just slip back into the background and we never hear from you again. Well, not the innkeeper. We see the actor again.

INNKEEPER Have I got a name?

PETRONIUS No.

INNKEEPER A gender?

PETRONIUS Does it matter?

INNKEEPER Not really, but it still isn't fair.

PETRONIUS What isn't?

INNKEEPER All these characters come in then disappear and you wonder what happens to them and you never know.

PETRONIUS It can't be helped. You can't tell everyone's story.

INNKEEPER Like the slaves.

PETRONIUS What slaves?

INNKEEPER The slaves at Tryphaena's house. The ones who cater to every need. Will we meet them? Get to know their names? What their lives are like?

PETRONIUS No, they won't appear. They're just slaves.

INNKEEPER So they're not important. Slaves are never important.

PETRONIUS Oh they are, but not to this story. To themselves, to someone else. There'll be other slaves.

INNKEEPER Will we hear their stories?

PETRONIUS Maybe.

INNKEEPER Their names?

PETRONIUS I'm not sure.

INNKEEPER But whatever happens, people'll remember you.

PETRONIUS Yes.

INNKEEPER Just for telling stories.

PETRONIUS And for my work for the Emperor. And for the way I die.

INNKEEPER Ah.

PETRONIUS It's time for you to go. A bit of advice. Next time, serve fresher bread.

INNKEEPER But there isn't going to be a next time.

PETRONIUS No. Pity about that.

Exit PETRONIUS and INNKEEPER

SCENE 6: A FOREST

Enter ASCYLLOS, ENCOLPIUS and GITON

ENCOLPIUS I need a rest.

GITON I'm hungry.

ENCOLPIUS You're always hungry. We've got no food.

GITON Is there anything to eat in this silent, dark and deserted forest?

ENCOLPIUS Why are you telling me we are in a silent, dark and deserted forest?

GITON Don't know. Just seemed the right thing to say. We are in a silent, dark and deserted forest, aren't we?

ENCOLPIUS Stop saying that.

GITON Sorry.

I'm hungry.

ENCOLPIUS Stop saying that too.

GITON I'm a growing boy.

ENCOLPIUS Stop fucking growing! As soon as we get out . . .

GITON . . . of this silent, dark and deserted forest . . .

ASCYLLOS Say that one more time and you'll regret it.

GITON Thought you might have forgotten.

ENCOLPIUS As soon as we get out, I'll buy you something to eat.

ASCYLLOS is looking at the robe

ASCYLLOS Not my size. Might fit you (*ENCOLPIUS*). Try it on.

ENCOLPIUS takes off his tunic and pulls on the robe

ENCOLPIUS Does my bum look big in this?

GITON No.

ENCOLPIUS Pity.

SAILOR (off) They went that way!

GITON What's that?

LICHAS (off) When I get my hands on him . . .

ASCYLLOS Sounds like Lichas.

ENCOLPIUS He's not alone. I don't believe it. They followed us. Let's get out of this . . .

GITON . . . silent, dark and . . .

ENCOLPIUS whacks GITON across the back of the head as they and ASCYLLOS hurriedly exit, just before LICHAS and SAILOR enter.

LICHAS We've lost them. When I catch him . . .

SAILOR Nice piece of cloth was it, cap'n?

LICHAS Indian cotton. Well, I'll buy her another. Shame. He was a good-looking lad, that Encolpius. Face of an angel. You wouldn't believe he was capable of theft.

SAILOR Thought there were three.

LICHAS Encolpius was the ring-leader. The other two were nobodies. A boy, not bad-looking, couldn't stop eating; Tryphaena couldn't keep her eyes off him. The third one, Ascy-something, half-witted; all body, no brain.

SAILOR Can't trust landlubbers, I always say.

LICHAS Can't be helped.

 Well, I give up. Take the rest of the day off. See your girl.

SAILOR Thank you, cap'n.

They head off in different directions. SAILOR notices the tunic ENCOLPIUS left behind, picks it up and exits.

LICHAS feels in his tunic for the pouch.

LICHAS The bastard! When I get my hands on him...!

LICHAS exits.

SCENE 7: A MARKET PLACE

While ACTORS set up scene, PETRONIUS comes forward

PETRONIUS What can I say? I spent hour after hour, day after day scratching stories onto papyrus and less than half my work survived. All that's left is an episode here, an episode there. At least I know happens next, because I definitely wrote it. We're in a marketplace. Different town, same town? Don't remember. Doesn't matter, does it?

Enter ASCYLLOS, ENCOLPIUS in the robe, GITON

ASCYLLOS You look ridiculous. Take it off.

ENCOLPIUS It's cold.

ASCYLLOS It's the middle of summer.

ENCOLPIUS I'm cold.

ASCYLLOS No, you're not. You're shy.

ENCOLPIUS I'm not shy. My nipples are.

ASCYLLOS This is ancient Rome, for fuck's sake. No-one's nipples are shy. If they are, put on your tunic.

ENCOLPIUS I don't have it.

ASCYLLOS What?!

ENCOLPIUS I left it in the forest when we had to run.

ASCYLLOS But you kept the gold.

ENCOLPIUS Uh . . .

ASCYLLOS For fuck's sake! We've got no money?

GITON I'm hungry.

ASCYLLOS That's all we need.

GITON More than hungry. I'm starving.

ENCOLPIUS What're we going to do?

GITON I could die of hunger. Right now.

ASCYLLOS Go back and look for the tunic?

GITON You wouldn't even notice.

ENCOLPIUS We'd never find it.

GITON Or I could steal some food.

ASCYLLOS What do you suggest?

GITON We could sell the robe.

ENCOLPIUS We've got to think.

ASCYLLOS You could sell your arse. Wouldn't get much for it.

ENCOLPIUS` Thanks a bunch!

GITON Sell the robe?

ASCYLLOS Sell his (*GITON*) arse. Worth a bit more.

GITON How much do you think?

ENCOLPIUS` No! You're not selling his arse or any other part of him. Any more bright ideas?

GITON We could sell the robe.

ASCYLLOS Why don't we sell the robe?

ENCOLPIUS Sell the robe? Great idea! Why didn't I think of that?

GITON I've no idea.

ASCYLLOS Give it here.

ENCOLPIUS I'll model it.

ASCYLLOS Give it here!

While ASCYLLOS pulls the robe off ENCOLPIUS, on the other side of the stage SAILOR enters, carrying ENCOLPIUS' tunic, accompanied by GIRL

GIRL When're you off again?

SAILOR Back to sea? In a couple of days. Why?

GIRL Just wondering. What'll you bring back next time?

SAILOR Don't know. Don't know where we're going.

GIRL As long as it's worth more than that filthy tunic. Why're you keeping it?

SAILOR Thought I'd flog it.

GIRL Who'd buy it?

SAILOR Never know, someone might want it.

ASCYLLOS *(pointing out the tunic)* Look!

ENCOLPIUS Ye gods!

GITON Food?

ENCOLPIUS Not yet . . .

ASCYLLOS creeps up behind SAILOR and sniffs the tunic. The screwed-up expression on his face tells ENCOLPIUS that it is his. ASCYLLOS feels the tunic before rejoining the other two.

ASCYLLOS It's still there!

ENCOLPIUS We've got to get it back before he finds it.

GITON So your nipples can hide again.

ENCOLPIUS So that you can get some baps. I'll get your buns later.

GIRL *(to SAILOR)* Here, is that your captain?

SAILOR No, coincidence. A lot of people round here look the same as a lot of others. Someone told me there's an innkeeper near here with my face. Lucky bastard.

GIRL What, to have your face?

SAILOR To be an innkeeper.

ASCYLLOS How are we going to get it back?

ENCOLPIUS Ask for it. It's mine.

ASCYLLOS They won't just give it to you.

ENCOLPIUS Why not? They took it. It's mine. The law's on my side.

ASCYLLOS	Who's going to believe us? No-one knows us here.
ENCOLPIUS	I have an honest face.
ASCYLLOS	You have a stupid face. The law's no use. You have to bribe the judge.
GITON	Buy it off them.
ENCOLPIUS	We've got no money!
GITON	I thought you were selling the robe.
ASCYLLOS	No-one's buying.
ENCOLPIUS	Try again. Ask less.
ASCYLLOS	<i>(to the public)</i> Pure cotton. Price was three denarii. Sale today only two denarii. Once in a lifetime offer. Just two denarii for this beautiful piece of Egyptian clothing. Only one and a half denarii . . . Just off the boat from Spain.
SAILOR	Hold on. Where did you get that robe?
ASCYLLOS	Uh... Present. Got it from an admirer.
SAILOR	No you didn't. That belongs to my master, Cap'n Lichas.
ASCYLLOS	Never heard of him.
SAILOR	I'll have it back.
ASCYLLOS	Get your hands off!
GIRL	It's ours!
ENCOLPIUS	That's mine!
SAILOR	What is?
ENCOLPIUS	That tunic. Give it to me.
SAILOR	It's mine. I found it.
ENCOLPIUS	Where?
SAILOR	In a silent, dark and . . .
ENCOLPIUS	Got you! It's mine.
2nd SELLER	What's going on here?
<i>People gather round.</i>	
GIRL	Who are you?
2nd SELLER	The name's Asparagus. I sell vegetables.
SAILOR	This pair have stolen my cap'n's robe.
ENCOLPIUS	They've got my tunic I want it back.
GIRL	Thieves, all of them.

GITON These baps (*3rd SELLER's*) look good.

The pace quickens with overlapping dialogue.

ASCYLLOS We'll be on our way . . .

3rd SELLER Hands off!

GITON Ow!

ASCYLLOS . . . as soon as we get our tunic back.

ENCOLPIUS My nipples are cold.

SAILOR It's our robe!

GIRL Look at that one - shifty eyes.

GITON It's true about his nipples.

ASCYLLOS That's our tunic!

SAILOR Give it here!

ENCOLPIUS Can I have it, please?

Sudden silence

3rd SELLER So, you two want that old tunic and you two want that new robe?

ASCYLLOS, ENCOLPIUS, SAILOR, GIRL Aye! / Yes!

1st SELLER You really want that old, dirty, smelly, piece of clothing that looks as if it has wiped several arses and the gods know what else?

ASCYLLOS, ENCOLPIUS Yes!!

1st SELLER Why?

ASCYLLOS Well, you know.

1st SELLER No, I don't.

ASCYLLOS You explain.

ENCOLPIUS Because it's . . . You explain.

GITON Because I'm hungry.

1st SELLER And you're going to eat it? You poor boy.

GITON Yes. No. Because it's got . . .

ASCYLLOS . . . sentimental value!

ENCOLPIUS That's right, sentimental value. You see, his Dad set me to work with the pigs.

ASCYLLOS Fattest pigs this side of Pompeii.

3rd SELLER Smelliest too, it seems.

ENCOLPIUS And he gave me that tunic when I was but a lad.

ASCYLLOS Four years old, weren't you?
 1st SELLER Four years old? A bit big for you, wasn't it?
 ENCOLPIUS He said I'd grow into it.
 ASCYLLOS And he has.
 SELLER (B) What about this robe?
 SAILOR It belongs to my captain. You look just like him.
 2nd SELLER Do I? He's a lucky man.
 1st SELLER You (*ASCYLLOS & ENCOLPIUS*) don't mind giving it them?
 ASCYLLOS) Well . . .
 ENCOLPIUS) If we get . . .
 1st SELLER And you'll give them that tunic.
 SAILOR Suppose we could.
 1st SELLER So all's well then.
 2nd SELLER Hold on there.
 SAILOR What?
 2nd SELLER I work for the night watch.
 ASCYLLOS It's not night time.
LIGHTING *snaps to evening*
 2nd SELLER It is now.
 1st SELLER I thought you sold vegetables.
 2nd SELLER I'm plain-clothes.
 3rd SELLER I always wondered about him. Couldn't tell his artichokes from his aubergines.
 ASCYLLOS For fuck's sake. Just give us the tunic and we'll go.
 2nd SELLER Can't do that. According to regulation M M X X I, sub-section S P Q R, where there is a dispute over ownership all pertinent items must be brought before a magistrate. And according to paragraph gluteus maximus of the Moronic Code, I have the power to arrest anyone who objects.
 1st SELLER I swear he's making it up.
 2nd SELLER In short, I have to confiscate both items to present at court tomorrow and I need you all as witnesses.
 GIRL I can't be there. Got an all-night session up on the hill. Don't know when it will end.
 SAILOR Oh yeah? Who with?
 GIRL Bacchus and Priapus. Big ceremony.

ENCOLPIUS Favourite gods of ours, those two. Maybe we'll see you there.

GIRL No, you won't. Women only, no men allowed.

2nd SELLER That's enough. Hand over the garments.

ENCOLPIUS is about to do so but ASCYLLOS stops him.

ASCYLLOS For fuck's sake, bribe him!

ENCOLPIUS With what?

ASCYLLOS The money in the tunic.

ENCOLPIUS I haven't got the fucking tunic! That's the whole point.

(to 2nd SELLER) Will you listen to reason?

2nd SELLER How much is reason willing to pay?

ASCYLLOS) Can we pay in instalments?

SAILOR) Lichas won't like it.

ENCOLPIUS) *together* I'm sure there's a reasonable . . .

GITON) Just take it.

2nd SELLER) Hand them over or . . .

1st SELLER) The tunic's got to be his.

2nd SELLER) *together* . . . In the name of the law . . .

ASCYLLOS) *(to ENCOLPIUS)* You knee him in the balls . . .

GITON) Just take it!

1st SELLER) It stinks too much to be anybody else's.

ASCYLLOS) . . . throw the robe over his head and I'll grab it.

ENCOLPIUS) *together* Knee who in the balls?

GITON) Just take it!!

2nd SELLER) . . . I arrest you all.

GITON For fuck's sake!

With one hand GITON pulls the tunic out of SAILOR's hands while the other hand steals a bap from 3rd SELLER. GITON runs away, throwing the tunic to ENCOLPIUS while stuffing the bap in his mouth. SAILOR starts to chase after GITON and GIRL starts after ENCOLPIUS then they suddenly swap and SAILOR goes after ENCOLPIUS while GIRL tries to get hold of GITON. 3rd SELLER doesn't know who to go after. ASCYLLOS dangles the robe like a matador's cape in front of SAILOR or GIRL, who change direction to try and grab it. 2nd SELLER tries to catch everyone at once. 3rd SELLER gives up and joins 1st SELLER to watch the spectacle. Finally ASCYLLOS throws the robe up in the air so that both SAILOR and GIRL try to catch it and bump into each other. ASCYLLOS, ENCOLPIUS and GITON run off. 2nd SELLER, exhausted, collapses. SAILOR and GIRL try and pull the robe from each other then realise they have got what they wanted and exit.

3rd SELLER *(to 2nd SELLER)* You all right, love?

2nd SELLER pants heavily

1st SELLER That made my day.
 3rd SELLER Better than the circus and no animals hurt.
 1st SELLER You lost a bap.
 3rd SELLER I've still got a couple.
 1st SELLER Firm and round?
 3rd SELLER And nice and warm.
 1st SELLER I'll buy 'em.

All exit

SCENE 8 NIGHT WORSHIP

PETRONIUS I put that scene in for the Emperor. He enjoyed slapstick.
 A misunderstood young man, Nero. Good-looking, sensitive, interested in the arts.
 Decent singing voice. Even wrote poems. They weren't bad.
 Problem was, he became Emperor too young. Sixteen. Didn't know how to rule.
 Thought if he threw them bread and circuses everyone would be happy. Worked for a
 while but . . .
 Now, he's remembered as mad and vicious. Killed his mother, rejoiced when Rome
 burned. That's not true - he tried to save the city. As for killing his mother, well, he
 had his reasons. We all do.
 Next: Bacchus and Priapus. The god of wine and the god of fertility. Bacchus, fat,
 drunk and falling off a donkey. Priapus, the man with the enormous - and I mean,
 gigantic, huge, bigger than himself - genital organ.
 Some men say it's a torture because it never goes down. Some men say it's a blessing
 because it never goes down. Women, I believe, are equally divided on the matter.
 Once a year, women worship Bacchus and Priapus in secret. Men don't know what
 goes on at these ceremonies but many are keen to find out.

MAN You all get naked, don't you?
 QUARTILLA None of your business.
 MAN And drunk?
 GIRL Perhaps.
 MAN And you dance.
 WORSHIPPER It's a religious ceremony.
 MAN With your tits bobbing about.
 QUARTILLA Hand me that ribbon. Thanks.

MAN Can I come?

GIRL No.

MAN I'll keep very quiet.

QUARTILLA No.

MAN I won't tell anyone.

WORSHIPPER, QUARTILLA & GIRL No!

MAN I could come if I were a woman.

WORSHIPPER Yes.

MAN So I am a woman.

QUARTILLA No you're not.

MAN Yes I am.

GIRL No, you're not.

MAN If I say I'm a woman, I'm a woman. It's the law.

QUARTILLA No, it isn't.

MAN Well, it should be. Otherwise you're discriminating against me. I insist on coming with you. As a woman. Definitely a woman. Not a man.

QUARTILLA Come if you want. Call yourself what you like. And if we women see you, I promise you'll come home not so much as a woman but much less of a man.

WORSHIPPER, QUARTILLA and GIRL pick up enormous phalluses and set off chanting. MAN watches them, then picks up a veil and phallus and rushes after them.

ENCOLPIUS That's them. Let's go.

ASCYLLOS No. You heard what they said.

ENCOLPIUS Come on! It'll be fun.

ASCYLLOS I know what they do to men they catch. I want to stay a man a few years longer.

ENCOLPIUS Come on! A bunch of women. You big and strong, me a gladiator. No contest

ASCYLLOS You a gladiator?

ENCOLPIUS Flyweight. *(takes up a fake martial pose)*

ASCYLLOS laughs

ENCOLPIUS Just imagine - all these women, naked.

ASCYLLOS I am imagining.

ENCOLPIUS So what are we waiting for?

ASCYLLOS All right. If we don't get too close.

The women and MAN form a circle. The chanting gets stronger and the gestures obscene. ENCOLPIUS joins in while ASCYLLOS hangs back. At the peak the women throw themselves to the ground, as does ENCOLPIUS, who lands across GIRL. They all briefly lie still, then ENCOLPIUS tries to get up but GIRL pulls him back down by the groin.

ENCOLPIUS screeches.

WORSHIPPER What's that?
 GIRL A man. I have him.
 QUARTILLA A man!
 WORSHIPPER Punish him!
 MAN *(deep voice)* Castrate him! *(high-pitched voice)* Castrate him!

ASCYLLOS sees the ferocity of the women and runs away.

GIRL I know you.
 ENCOLPIUS No, you don't.
 WORSHIPPER Grab him!
 MAN I've got him.
 QUARTILLA No, you haven't. That's me.
 MAN Oh, right.
 WORSHIPPER Sounds like there's more than one man here.
 MAN *(high-pitched)* No, there isn't.
 GIRL Let's check.
 MAN I'm fine. Check her.

More confusion, at the end of which ENCOLPIUS and MAN break free and run away in opposite directions.

GIRL Don't worry, girls, I recognised one of them, a low-life, Encolpius, hangs around the market. We can deal with him.
 WORSHIPPER Like this? *(makes a cutting gesture)*
 GIRL Could be a waste of a good man - and it's over so quick.
 WORSHIPPER Can't leave him unpunished.
 QUARTILLA There's always the curse . . .
 WORSHIPPER Not the curse!
 QUARTILLA Yes, the curse. Begin.

The women form a circle; ENCOLPIUS is lured back by the sound.

WORSHIPPER Hubble, bubble, toil and . . .
 QUARTILLA Wrong curse!

WORSHIPPER Sorry.

As they chant ENCOLPIUS is at first intrigued then growing confusion / panic comes over him.

QUARTILLA Bacchus lord of song and wine

Priap' lord of this your shrine

WORSHIPPER Hear your faithful servants' prayer

GIRL Our loyalty to you we swear

ALL *Hear your faithful servants' prayer*

ALL *Our loyalty to you we swear.*

QUARTILLA Curse the man who saw us here

WORSHIPPER His sacrilege will cost him dear

GIRL What once stood proud must now lie low

WORSHIPPER What once was great must never grow

QUARTILLA Lust will come but never fire

GIRL Shame will always quench desire

ALL *Curse the man who saw us here*

His sacrilege will cost him dear

Lust will come but never fire

Shame will always quench desire

ENCOLPIUS collapses unconscious.

GIRL The curse is laid?

QUARTILLA The curse is laid.

GIRL Will he ever recover?

QUARTILLA That depends.

WORSHIPPER On what?

QUARTILLA On how desperate he is to get his manhood back.

WORSHIPPER Will he suffer?

QUARTILLA He will suffer. In many unpleasant ways.

GIRL He'll think he's going through hell

QUARTILLA He doesn't know what real hell is.

WORSHIPPER Few men do.

The women exit.

ENCOLPIUS What just happened? I thought . . . I was in agony. But now, I can't feel anything. It must have been a dream.

SCENE 9: TRIMALCHIO'S HOUSE

A What now?

PETRONIUS I was wondering about that. Originally I had Encolpius's ordeal here.

B Ordeal?

PETRONIUS To recover his manhood. I think he should wait. Anticipation is half the pleasure. For those watching.

ENCOLPIUS and GITON are on one side of the stage. They begin to make love but ENCOLPIUS is impotent.

I think we'll move on to Trimalchio's feast.

D Sounds like a plan.

PETRONIUS: The guests. We need Seleucus, Phileros, Ganymedes, Echion, Agamemnon . . .

AGAMEMNON I'm here!

PETRONIUS . . . Niceros, Plocamus. Then there're acrobats, slaves, chefs . . .

E Hold on! There are only five of us. Not enough for all these guests, slaves, entertainment . . .

PETRONIUS It's a feast. I wrote it big, over the top. Goes on for hours. Music, dancers.

E Can't be helped. Two or three guests maximum, a couple of slaves, no entertainment.

PETRONIUS No entertainment? What about food? We have, in no particular order, sausages, damsons, dormice...

The others crowd round, looking over his shoulder at the manuscript.

B peahen eggs. garden warblers . . .

C winged hare, sows' bellies . . .

A whole wild boar stuffed with live birds, suckling piglets . . .

D garnished pork, oysters, scallops, snails . . .

E We won't get half of that.

PETRONIUS I created a spectacle here!

E We'll do our best.

PETRONIUS Even in death the gods are punishing me. Who's Trimalchio?

A Gordon.

PETRONIUS Where is he?

TRIMALCHIO Here.

PETRONIUS All right. Get on with it.

The Actors set the scene centre stage and get into character. At the side ASCYLTIOS joins ENCOLPIUS and GITON.

TRIMALCHIO Where's that pisspot Agamemnon? Make yourself fucking useful. Find some guests. Pretty boys. I want some fresh arse tonight. Keep me entertained.

AGAMEMNON As you wish, sire.

TRIMALCHIO Wife? That all the jewellery you got?

FORTUNATA It's all you bought me this week.

TRIMALCHIO It'll have to do.

You. *(MALE SLAVE)* Pot. Number one.

FORTUNATA Can't you go outside?

TRIMALCHIO Can't be arsed.

FORTUNATA At least turn away.

SFX urinating - strong, then gap, then strong, then gap, then strong, then dribble

TRIMALCHIO shakes himself, peers down at the pot

TRIMALCHIO Don't like the look of that. Take it to the oracle. See how long I've got. Make sure she says at least twenty years.

MALE SLAVE wanders into the audience

MALE SLAVE Can you have a look at this?

TRIMALCHIO The oracle, I said. That lot wouldn't know what to do with it.

MALE SLAVE rushes offstage, there is the sound of flushing before he comes back with the empty pot.

TRIMALCHIO (cont) Right, I'm off for a nap.

TRIMALCHIO reposes at the back of the stage while final preparations take place centre stage, where FORTUNATA sits preening / drinking

ENCOLPIUS A dinner party, you said.

AGAMEMNON That's right.

ENCOLPIUS And we're invited?

ASCYLLOS Why us?

AGAMEMNON He said he wanted fresh . . .

ENCOLPIUS Fresh . . .?

AGAMEMNON . . . meat.

ENCOLPIUS He wants us to bring fresh meat?

AGAMEMNON No, he wants you to be . . .

GITON Will there be lots of food?

AGAMEMNON Three times as much as you can eat. And Falernian wine.

ENCOLPIUS The best in the Empire, they say.
 ASCYLLOS And we won't have to pay?
 AGAMEMNON Not with money.
 ASCYLLOS With what?
 AGAMEMNON Entertainment . . .
 ASCYLLOS Another tunic-lifter. I'm not going.
 GITON There's food!
 AGAMEMNON You won't regret it. Trimalchio's feasts are legendary.
 GITON I'm up for it!
 ENCOLPIUS You're always up for it.
 GITON And you're not.
 ENCOLPIUS I was just tired.
 GITON Never happened before.
 ENCOLPIUS The richest man in the Empire, you said? And he's inviting us? We have to go.
 ASCYLLOS All right, as long as there's wine.

They move towards the centre of the stage

GITON And food, lots of food.
 ENCOLPIUS Anything we should know about our host?
 AGAMEMNON He likes flattery. Obsequiousness.
 ASCYLLOS He wants us to grovel.
 AGAMEMNON A bit of grovelling always helps. A lot helps even more.
 STEWARD Welcome, honoured guests.
 MALE SLAVE barks loudly; *ENCOLPIUS starts*
 ENCOLPIUS What was that!?
 AGAMEMNON A picture of a barking dog. Realistic, wasn't it?
 GITON He almost shat his tunic.
 AGAMEMNON Fortunata, divine beauty! I crave indulgence in bringing to worship at your perfumed feet, Ascylltos, traveller from far off Asturia . . .
 ASCYLLOS Where?
 AGAMEMNON . . . and the scholar Encolpius, who only last week enthralled the Forum with his lecture on modern education, a topic on which I was able to correct his several errors with a little . . .
 ENCOLPIUS Several errors?

FORTUNATA Who's that (*GITON*)?
 AGAMEMNON A minion, divine beauty, servant to Encolpius.
 FORTUNATA A gift for Trimalchio?
 ASCYLLOS I knew it! Another fucking orgy. At least let's eat first.
 ENCOLPIUS Uuhh... This boy is, shall we say, used... I'm sure our host would prefer fresh . . . uh ...
 ASCYLLOS . . . meat!
 GITON Where do I sit?
 ENCOLPIUS At my feet. You pour my wine and I give you scraps off my plate.
 GITON Thanks a fucking bunch!
 FORTUNATA Stuff yourselves, boys. You don't know when he'll turn up.

The guests start to eat.

SFX fanfare

Enter TRIMALCHIO preceded by MALE SLAVE, STEWARD and FEMALE SLAVE walking backwards and throwing petals at his feet. TRIMALCHIO stops

SFX loud farts

TRIMALCHIO That's better.

Centre stage, facing the audience, snaps his fingers

Steward!

STEWARD Sire?

TRIMALCHIO Who am I?

STEWARD You are Gaius Pompeius Trimalchio, the wealthiest man in the Empire.

MALE SLAVE And one day you will die.

TRIMALCHIO Make sure it doesn't happen soon.

ENCOLPIUS His slave told him he was going to die?

AGAMEMNON Our host has someone tell him once a day, to remind him he's mortal.

(to FORTUNATA) What happened to the slave who told him before?

FORTUNATA Said it twice one day. Had to lose his life, or the gods would have taken his master. Pity. He had a nice arse. Good to hold on to.

The guests make to stand.

TRIMALCHIO Don't bother, lads. Make yourselves at home. How's the food?

ENCOLPIUS Excellent.

AGAMEMNON Beyond description.

ASCYLLOS No bad.
 GITON Don't know. Haven't had any yet.
 TRIMALCHIO And who are you?
 ENCOLPIUS My servant, sir, Giton.
 TRIMALCHIO Come over here, boy.

TRIMALCHIO picks meat and holds it up.

Try this.

GITON holds out a hand.

Nah. Take it from my mouth. With yours.

TRIMALCHIO puts the meat in his mouth. GITON looks back at ENCOLPIUS for guidance, then bites off the meat.

TRIMALCHIO laughs. EVERYONE JOINS IN

TRIMALCHIO Thought I'd bite him, didn't he? Away you go, lad, back to your master. Any time you want to eat, just come to me. You two, what are your names?
 ENCOLPIUS Encolpius, sir, at your service.
 ASCYLLOS Ascylltos.
 TRIMALCHIO How much land have you got? How many slaves? How much money?
 ENCOLPIUS We've got a pou . . .
 ASCYLLOS None, sir, we're poor men.
 TRIMALCHIO What's a poor man?

TRIMALCHIO laughs. EVERYONE JOINS IN

I admit it. I was once. Born a slave, inherited a small farm from my master for services rendered, if you get my drift. A bit of business here, a bit there and here I am, the richest man in the Empire bar the Emperor himself. You, Enky-whatever it is, you got education?

ENCOLPIUS Yes, sir, I have studied for many years.

TRIMALCHIO I don't need to study. I've got libraries instead - one Greek, one Latin. Where's education got you? Begging at my table for crumbs!

No need to thank me, I'm a generous, humble man. You won't find anyone more generous or humble than me, so drink to me everyone!

Right, where's the entertainment? Acrobats and horn-blowers?

STEWARD You said this would be a quiet affair, sire.

TRIMALCHIO Did I? Fuck that. I want dancing boys. You (*GITON*) dance for me. Well, come on!

GITON reluctantly gets up, starts to dance, then FORTUNATA stands, pushes GITON aside and dances lewdly.

AGAMEMNON *(to ENCOLPIUS and ASCYLTIOS)* She always does this. Thinks she still has a figure. Couldn't dance when she was young and can't dance now she's old and drunk.

TRIMALCHIO Plonk your arse, wife. Here, boy, come and have another piece of meat.

GITON I'm not hungry.

ENCOLPIUS You're always hungry!

GITON Not tonight.

TRIMALCHIO I said, come here, boy! Let's see what you're made of.

TRIMALCHIO starts to fondle GITON; FORTUNATA slaps him

FORTUNATA Dirty dog! Get your hands off him while I'm around. Don't know why you're feeling him. My boobs are bigger than his balls.

TRIMALCHIO Trouble is, they droop even lower. All right, boy, fuck off back to your master.

ASCYLTIOS *(to ENCOLPIUS)* What did I tell you?

TRIMALCHIO Pain in the arse, my beloved wife, but I couldn't do without her. Made her my heir and she's worth every penny.

Come on, stuff yourselves! The best food you'll get this year. Everything here comes from my land. Wine's from an estate I bought recently. Don't know where. They tell me it links my property between Rome and Venice.

SFX *fart*

I needed that. Haven't shat in days. Doctor's made me eat pomegranates and vinegar. Seems to be working.

SFX *loud fart*

That's better. Any of you need to go, don't hold it in. I've known people die because they were too embarrassed to admit that what goes in has to come out.

You *(MALE SLAVE)*, number two.

TRIMALCHIO goes offstage, followed by MALE SLAVE with chamber pot and towel; the others continue feasting.

SFX *shitting*

Business between ENCOLPIUS and GITON over food.

TRIMALCHIO and MALE SLAVE return

TRIMALCHIO What was it?

MALE SLAVE examines chamberpot.

MALE SLAVE Wild boar and uh... quince, sir.

TRIMALCHIO When did I have them?

MALE SLAVE The boar three days ago, sir. The quince yesterday.

TRIMALCHIO That's about right. Meat takes longer. You know what to do with it.

MALE SLAVE heads towards the audience with chamberpot, stops and takes it offstage, returning without the pot.

TRIMALCHIO (cont) Nothing like a good shit. Empty belly makes room for more food. Dung on the fields gives us food. Which turns into shit again.

AGAMEMNON Profound, sire, profound.

TRIMALCHIO But a fucking waste! Why don't we just eat shit and save the hassle of ploughing and harvesting?

AGAMEMNON Very profound, sire!

TRIMALCHIO Why don't we eat shit? You (*GITON*), I'll give you ten denarii to eat one of my turds.

GITON does not know how to react. ENCOLPIUS wonders whether to encourage him.

Changed my mind. Much better fertilising the asparagus. Tastes good, doesn't it?

Mind you, I have my limits. I never touch the mushrooms. It's where she (*FORTUNATA*) has her morning piss. Doesn't half smell strong. God knows where it comes from.

TRIMALCHIO laughs. EVERYONE JOINS IN

Tuck in, everyone. I'll lie down a while. Amuse yourselves.

TRIMALCHIO lies back and closes his eyes.

GITON (*loud whisper*) I'm still hungry!

ENCOLPIUS Here you are. (*to ASCYLLOS*) We'll go when he's (*GITON*) had enough.

ASCYLLOS Then we'll be here all night,

TRIMALCHIO (*sitting up abruptly*) You ever been dead?

ENCOLPIUS Beg pardon, sire?

TRIMALCHIO You ever been dead?

ASCYLLOS No-o.

TRIMALCHIO Me neither. Pity.

ENCOLPIUS Why?

TRIMALCHIO I'd like to know what people say about me after I'm gone. Nobody ever tells the truth to my face.

ENCOLPIUS Why not?

TRIMALCHIO I wouldn't like it. I'd get upset. I don't like to be upset. I prefer being calm, thoughtful.

ENCOLPIUS Much the best way to be.

TRIMALCHIO You know how people have - what do they call them? - fancy speeches at the funeral?

AGAMEMNON Eulogies, sire.

TRIMALCHIO That's right, eulogies. I won't hear mine.

ENCOLPIUS That's true.

TRIMALCHIO I was thinking, have the funeral now, so I can hear what people say about me.

AGAMEMNON Excellent idea, sire.

ASCYLLOS Right now?

TRIMALCHIO Why not?

GITON You want us to kill you?

ASCYLLOS and ENCOLPIUS are horrified

TRIMALCHIO Nah. I'll just pretend to be dead.

FORTUNATA It would give me some peace.

TRIMALCHIO lies back. After a pause:

TRIMALCHIO How come nobody's wailing? All my slaves. You rhetora-whatever-you-call-yourself, loving wife. Everyone. Should be shattered, heart-broken. Wail!

AGAMEMNON starts wailing extravagantly. The STEWARD and SLAVES join in. ENCOLPIUS and ASCYLLOS add their voices, then everybody does. GITON uses the opportunity to grab some food. The wails die down.

TRIMALCHIO *(not moving, eyes closed)* Well?

STEWARD Sire?

TRIMALCHIO The eu.. the eugory.. the fancy speech! Let's hear it.

STEWARD From whom, sire?

TRIMALCHIO All the nobs who come to my funeral.

STEWARD They're not here, sire. They haven't heard of your unfortunate demise. I'm sure they would be here if they could, sire. Perhaps your wife . . ?

FORTUNATA He was rich, he was my husband. He's dead. Will that do?

TRIMALCHIO Say something nice.

FORTUNATA He didn't beat me.

TRIMALCHIO How about the stuff I gave you?

FORTUNATA And he gave me some jewellery. He was conned by the jeweller but he never did have taste.

TRIMALCHIO You serious? I'll have him whipped.

FORTUNATA You can't. You're dead.

TRIMALCHIO Agamemnon. Earn your keep. Say something nice about me. Just the truth. I was the best, that kind of stuff.

AGAMEMNON	Oh, ye deities, cast your omnivident eyes down upon us poor mortals, bereft this day of the epitome, the zenith, the aristos, the earthbound helios . . .
TRIMALCHIO	What the fuck are you on about? Can't understand a fucking word. What's the point of a eu, a eur . . . of a fancy speech if the dead man can't understand it? You, Enky-what's-your-name. You're educated. Say something nice and make sure I fucking understand it.
ENCOLPIUS	Uh... beloved brethren
<i>FORTUNATA coughs</i>	
ENCOLPIUS (cont)	and sister. We, uh, are, uh, gathered today to commemorate the life and mourn the death of . . . the . . . celebrated, uh . . .
TRIMALCHIO	much-loved
ENCOLPIUS	. . . much-loved, uh, businessman, husband . . . father?
FORTUNATA	Not by me. About two dozen bastards here and there.
TRIMALCHIO	Thirty-seven at the last count.
ENCOLPIUS	. . . prolific father, respected statesman, celebrated philanthropist . . .
ASCYLLOS	host?
ENCOLPIUS	. . . generous host . . .
GITON	pervert?
ENCOLPIUS	. . . lover of youth . . .
AGAMEMNON	. . . sponsor of the arts . . .
ENCOLPIUS	. . . erudite . . .
TRIMALCHIO	What?
ENCOLPIUS	. . . scholar. Loved by all who knew him . . .
FORTUNATA	That's a laugh.
ENCOLPIUS	. . . honest . . .
<i>STEWARD chokes</i>	
ENCOLPIUS	. . . a fair master . . .
<i>SFX</i>	<i>Scream</i>
ENCOLPIUS	. . . whose passing we all grieve. Lucky the gods who welcome him into their midst. A place waits for him at the right hand of Jupiter. Minerva will seek his counsel, Ganymede be his cupbearer, Venus his constant companion, Mars his, uh, his . . .
ASCYLLOS	Bum-boy? Footstool?
AGAMEMNON	Shield-bearer!
TRIMALCHIO	That'll do. I'm getting bored. Why isn't everyone in uncontrollable grief? Shouldn't they throw themselves on my body and beg my soul not to leave them?

STEWARD Of course, sire.

TRIMALCHIO Not you! Wife!

FORTUNATA Must I?

TRIMALCHIO Second thoughts, no. Had enough of you in life to last eternity. Go count my money. How about the pretty boy?

ENCOLPIUS pushes GITON, still eating, onto TRIMALCHIO. TRIMALCHIO pinches his backside.

GITON Hey, you're supposed to be dead!

TRIMALCHIO You're right. A stiff can't be stiff. Get off me. How about the slaves? Freedom for any slave who shows his love for me after I'm dead.

MALE SLAVE and STEWARD, followed by FEMALE SLAVE, pile onto him wailing "Our dear master, why did he leave us?"

AGMEMNON As an honoured guest for many years, I can do no less.

AGAMEMNON lies carefully across TRIMALCHIO's face and wails perfunctorily.

The wailing gets louder and the bodies writhe, competing to smother TRIMALCHIO

TRIMALCHIO Get off me. I can't fucking breathe.

No respect any of you. You might have killed me.

FORTUNATA I thought that's what you wanted.

TRIMALCHIO They'll be fucking dead if they try that again.

(to guests) Why so glum? I've come back to life. Celebrate. Let's eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die.

MALE SLAVE is about to remind him that he will die, but holds himself back in time.

Not me, of course. I've sacrificed enough oxen at Jupiter's temple to get me another thirty years.

SLAVES are clearing tables.

Agamemnon, tell us a story. A good one.

AGAMEMNON Well, sire, in your honour, I could . . .

SFX Breaking dish

I could relate . . .

TRIMALCHIO What was that?

STEWARD Nothing, sire.

TRIMALCHIO Don't fuck with me. I know the sound of breaking pottery.

Someone broke a fucking plate. Who was it? Tell me now!

ASCYLLOS I'm sure it was an accident.

- TRIMALCHIO Was it you?
- ASCYLLOS Uh, no.
- TRIMALCHIO Good, because even though you're a guest if you broke a plate I would have your thumbs cut off to remind you not to be so fucking clumsy. *(to ENCOLPIUS and GITON)*
Was it one of you?
- ENCOLPIUS *(drunk)* I don't think it was. I've been eating from this plate and it's still quite whole and I think I'd know if I . . .
- TRIMALCHIO SHUT THE FUCK UP!
- Right, which one of you was it?
- No response*
- Kill them *(SLAVES)*.
- STEWARD Is that wise, sire? One new slave costs more than a plate. Two would be an extravagance.
- TRIMALCHIO I SAID, fucking kill them both. And you can add yourself if I hear any complaints.
- FORTUNATA There is no point in wasting two slaves.
- TRIMALCHIO I will waste as many slaves as I want. How many have I got?
- STEWARD At the last count, sire, one thousand eight hundred and fifty-two male, nine hundred and seventeen female. Not including suckling babes - currently about twenty - and thirty-three with various wounds and ailments who will be disposed of if they do not recover.
- TRIMALCHIO So, wife, I can waste two, twenty or two hundred and twenty of my slaves if I want to. They're my fucking property. I can do what I fucking like with them. *(to STEWARD)*
Can't I?
- STEWARD Indeed, sire.
- TRIMALCHIO *(to the other slaves)* I can do what I like with you, can't I?
- SLAVES Yes, sir, of course, sir.
- TRIMALCHIO So, what's it going to be? One of you or both of you? I ain't got all day. Who dropped the fucking plate?
- SILENCE, then*
- FEMALE SLAVE *(falling to her knees, terrified)* It was me, sir.
- TRIMALCHIO Right. Come over here, girl. Steward, how much did she cost me?
- STEWARD If I remember correctly, sir, she was an infant in a group that you bought with your second farm. She cost you nothing because she was not expected to survive.

The cast freezes as FEMALE SLAVE address the audience

FEMALE SLAVE My name is Daphne.

 Like my mother, I have always been a slave. When she died, I was sent to work in the kitchens.

 I was lucky. The head cook protected me. He did not rape me until I was twelve and he lets no other man touch me.

 He will buy his freedom next year and he will buy mine and our daughter's too. That is all I want, that is all I ever wanted. To be free.

The cast unfreezes

TRIMALCHIO How long has she worked for me?

STEWARD Fifteen years, sir.

TRIMALCHIO Not bad going if she cost me nothing. The plate, how much was it?

STEWARD From the third best set, sir. We have many others. A trifle, nothing more.

TRIMALCHIO Still more expensive than she was. I could have got more use out of it. And I didn't have to feed it. Now it's gone but she's still here and she's useless and costs me money to feed. I'd say I was losing out here.

STEWARD Yes, sir.

TRIMALCHIO Crucify her in the morning. Give her to the guards until then.

FEMALE SLAVE No! No!

MALE SLAVE makes to get hold of FEMALE SLAVE. Terrified for her life, she runs into the audience, begs them to save her. Eventually MALE SLAVE drags her back to the stage and forces her down at TRIMALCHIO's feet.

FEMALE SLAVE Please, my lord! Spare me! For the love of the gods, spare me!

TRIMALCHIO You'll meet the gods soon enough.

 I'm a fair man, an honest man, a generous man. Everyone knows that.

 I respect everyone and they respect me. Look after my property and I'll look after you. Destroy my property and that's the end of you. That's only fair, isn't it? Justice.

 Take her away.

SFX: a baby crying

FEMALE SLAVE Please sir, I beg you. I have a child.

TRIMALCHIO That is my child.

FEMALE SLAVE I bore her!

TRIMALCHIO All children of slaves are mine.

FEMALE SLAVE She needs me!

TRIMALCHIO Nobody fucking needs you except the guards who need your cunt!

FEMALE SLAVE Set us free! I beg you, set us free!

TRIMALCHIO You'll be free soon enough.

FEMALE SLAVE My baby! My daughter!

TRIMALCHIO A girl? Another useless mouth to feed. Give it to the dogs.

STEWARD Give . . . ?

TRIMALCHIO Give the brat to the dogs and get this bitch out of my sight.

FEMALE SLAVE is taken off screaming.

SFX: The sounds of her screams and the crying baby fade.

TRIMALCHIO reclines and looks around smiling as

LIGHTING TO BLACK: INTERVAL

ACT TWO

PETRONIUS is watching the Actors cleaning / setting the stage. ASCYLLOS, ENCOLPIUS and GITON are resting

- A You all right, love?
- E I'm okay. (*assuming that E played FEMALE SLAVE in previous scene*)
- D Tough scene, that.
- E Sometimes I can't get it out of my head. Especially the baby.
- C Take a rest. We'll finish this.
- E You sure?
- B Aye. Come for a drink afterwards.
- E Might do.
- B Would do you good.
- PETRONIUS (*thinking aloud*) I don't know where that slave came from. I didn't create her. I wrote a comedy, not a tragedy. People want to laugh, not cry.
- D You wrote about life - and all life comes to an end. Sometimes violently.
- PETRONIUS I suppose it does.
- Are we ready?
- C All yours.

SCENE 10: A LODGING-HOUSE

- PETRONIUS (*to audience*) Everyone back? Bladders empty? Sitting comfortably? Then I'll begin. We're in another town. Here's Encolpius where you'd expect - in the Forum, lecturing the crowd.

ENCOLPIUS silently making a speech to an invisible crowd

The crowd jeers

- PETRONIUS (cont) Back in the lodging-house, Ascylltos and Giton are doing what young men do. With a woman, with a man, or on their own depending on what's, so to speak, to hand.

ASCYLLOS and GITON embracing. PETRONIUS withdraws.

ENCOLPIUS gives the invisible crowd the finger and runs away.

ASCYLLOS and GITON still entwined. Enter ENCOLPIUS out of breath. For a few moments they do not notice each other.

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|----------------|
| ENCOLPIUS) | | You! |
| ASCYLLOS) | <i>together</i> | It's not . . . |
| GITON) | | You're back. |

ENCOLPIUS *(to ASCYLLOS)* Fuck off! Fuck off now! Get out of here! I never want to see you again.

ASCYLLOS Come on . . . !

ENCOLPIUS *(to GITON)* Who started it? Did you encourage him?

ASCYLLOS You weren't here . . .

ENCOLPIUS That's no fucking excuse! He's my boyfriend. I warned you off him before. Get the fuck out! Now!

ASCYLLOS It was just . . .

ENCOLPIUS You were my friend! My brother! My mate, my best pal! We shared everything! Everything! But not my fucking boyfriend!

ASCYLLOS Well, you haven't been fucking lately, have you?

ENCOLPIUS That's none of your fucking business!

ASCYLLOS Your business isn't fucking any more, is it?

ENCOLPIUS What've you been telling him?

GITON Nothing!

ASCYLLOS He doesn't need to. Last time I heard you moan "Jove! Jove! Jove!" was a month ago. The only time I hear him *(GITON)* "unh! unh! unh!" is when he's on his own. No wonder he's desperate. I was helping him out!

ENCOLPIUS attacks ASCYLLOS but ASCYLLOS has no problem holding him off.

ENCOLPIUS Why didn't you stop him?

GITON He's bigger than me.

ENCOLPIUS No, he isn't.

GITON He is where . . .

ENCOLPIUS *(to ASCYLLOS)* I want you out! Take what's yours and go.

ASCYLLOS What's mine? Nothing's mine. It's ours. Like you said, we share everything.

ENCOLPIUS Stop saying that! Take half of whatever and fuck off. Now!

ASCYLLOS hesitates, then stuffs a few things into a bag. ENCOLPIUS hugs GITON, smothering him. GITON's emotions are in confusion and not helped by the fact he can hardly breathe.

ASCYLLOS finds the pouch that had the gold.

ASCYLLOS Where's the money?

ENCOLPIUS It's gone! We spent it. You spent it. Mostly on wine.

ASCYLLOS Or Giton's baps.

What about him?

ENCOLPIUS What about him?

ASCYLLOS We're dividing everything. Half of him's mine.
(he pulls out a knife) Do we cut him top to bottom or across the middle?

GITON You're not serious!

ASCYLLOS Oh, I'm serious.

ENCOLPIUS Don't be a stupid cunt.

ASCYLLOS If you're kicking me out and I'm taking half of everything I get half of him.
(to GITON) Nothing personal, you understand.

GITON No, I don't understand.

ASCYLLOS Do you want the half with his head or the half with his cock? Easier than chopping him into left side and right.

ENCOLPIUS You're not serious. You are serious. I won't let you do this.

ASCYLLOS Get out of my way.

ENCOLPIUS Make me.

ASCYLLOS If I have to.

ENCOLPIUS You'll have to kill me first. Giton, find me a knife!

ASCYLLOS Don't make it worse. You'd just cut yourself.

ENCOLPIUS As long as I get you first.

ASCYLLOS Get out of the fucking way!

ENCOLPIUS NO!

GITON For fuck's sake, stop it! Are you both crazy? Are you going to kill each other then me?

ASCYLLOS If we have to.

ENCOLPIUS He's not taking you from me.

GITON Then kill me!

ENCOLPIUS What?

GITON What's the point, friends suddenly enemies? What's the point of anything if you can't trust anybody? One minute you're brothers, best pals, the next you want to kill each other. Or you want to kill me. Why wait? Kill me now! Get it over with. Saves time later. Here's my throat. Come on, both of you stick your knives in. Do it! Fucking do it! Now!

ASCYLLOS He's right.

ENCOLPIUS We should kill him?

ASCYLLOS No, we're brothers. We can't fight. I'm leaving.

ENCOLPIUS Then go.

ASCYLLOS Just one thing.
 ENCOLPIUS What?
 ASCYLLOS Giton decides whether he comes with me or stays with you.
 ENCOLPIUS That's easy. He'll stay with me.

GITON looks between them. ASCYLLOS is not threatening, but he still has the knife.

ENCOLPIUS (cont) Won't you?
 Won't you?

GITON gets up and joins ASCYLLOS

 No. No! You don't mean it.
 ASCYLLOS His choice. *(to GITON)* Come on.

GITON and ASCYLLOS walk out

ENCOLPIUS Come back. Please. Please. Come back.

ENCOLPIUS exits

SCENE 11: AN ART GALLERY

ACTORS stand / sit in poses representing statues / paintings; PETRONIUS enters

PETRONIUS Time passes. A week or two. Encolpius has looked everywhere for Giton but cannot find him. He wanders the town distraught. One day he enters a gallery of art.

PETRONIUS sits in the pose of Rodin's Thinker

EUMOLPUS and ENCOLPIUS enter from different directions. They contemplate the artworks and eventually come side to side.

EUMOLPUS By Apelles.
 ENCOLPIUS I'm sorry?
 EUMOLPUS This painting. It's by Apelles. Pliny calls him the greatest of all artists. Of course this is a copy.
 ENCOLPIUS Of course.
 EUMOLPUS Is there anything wrong?
 ENCOLPIUS Wrong?
 EUMOLPUS You're staring at me.
 ENCOLPIUS Aren't you Agamemnon?
 EUMOLPUS Agamemnon, father of Electra, her of the Electra Complex who wanted to kill her mother and marry her father, that Agamemnon?

- ENCOLPIUS No, not that Agamemnon. He's been dead for hundreds of years. Agamemnon the sophist.
- EUMOLPUS He makes sofas? My little joke. I have heard of that Agamemnon. I believe he looks like me but is much less handsome. Eumolpus, the poet, at your service.
- ENCOLPIUS Encolpius, the gladiator.
- EUMOLPUS Gladiator?
- ENCOLPIUS In training.
- EUMOLPUS You are wondering why I am poorly dressed.
- ENCOLPIUS Uh, no . . .

The artworks do not move their bodies, but their faces register their disapproval of the following.

- EUMOLPUS *(recites)* Merchant and mariner sailing the main
 Risk life to bring back treasure
 General and private fighting in Spain
 Return with gold without measure
 Flatterers dine with the richest of men
 Pimps get rich from lechery
 But those of us who live by our pen
 Always die in penury (*pen-yoo-uh-ry*).
(normal) There was a pun there.
- ENCOLPIUS I noticed.
- EUMOLPUS You were wondering how I live?
- ENCOLPIUS Again, no . . .
- EUMOLPUS I get work as a tutor. I have a reputation, you know.
- ENCOLPIUS I don't doubt it.
- EUMOLPUS My most recent post . . . You want to hear it?
- ENCOLPIUS Not partic . . .
- EUMOLPUS I was in Pergamum, lodging with a Treasury official. Boring man with an even duller wife, but a very handsome son in the flower of youth.
 Unfortunately, the parents disapproved of the Greek tradition of intimate liaisons between pupils and their tutors. You see the problem . . .
- ENCOLPIUS I . . .
- EUMOLPUS . . . and you want to hear how I solved it.

ENCOLPIUS yields to the inevitable. As EUMOLPUS tells the story the other actors come out of their poses.

- EUMOLPUS (cont) I had a cunning plan. I insisted vehemently that such relationships offended me. The boy's mother was so impressed by my principles that she begged me to safeguard her son's virtue by accompanying him everywhere and even sleeping in his room.
- ENCOLPIUS I can imagine what followed.
- EUMOLPUS No, I had no wish to conquer with force. Pleasure should not be taken if pleasure is not also given. One night when my beloved's eyes were closed but I knew he was awake, I prayed to Venus; if I might kiss the youth without his noticing, the next day I would give him two turtle-doves.
- The boy feigned sleep. My lips chastely brushed his. In the morning I rose early to purchase his doves - and I was not surprised that he expected my gift.
- That night I appealed to Cupid, if I may might caress his body without his waking, I would give him two fighting cocks.
- ENCOLPIUS An appropriate gift.
- EUMOLPUS I never thought of that.
- Anyway, to indicate his willingness, the youth began to snore loudly and flung his arms out wide. You can imagine what followed.
- ENCOLPIUS Unfortunately, I can.
- EUMOLPUS The next morning he was awake before me and impatient to receive the birds that he - in theory - did not know about. The gods are wise, I told myself, for both youth and tutor are reaping rewards.
- The third night, I promised Lord Jupiter that if I achieved my ultimate goal, I would give the boy two Arabian racehorses. Again the young man feigned sleep while I was in ecstasy. The next morning, however, I realised that even one racehorse was far beyond my meagre means and I returned from the market empty-handed.
- ENCOLPIUS *(getting up to go)* And that was that. Your secret was out, the boy was disappointed, he told his parents and you were dismissed.
- EUMOLPUS *(pulling him back down)* No, he said nothing. Perhaps, I thought, my seduction was not in vain. And for several nights before either of us slept I begged to repeat the experience. But each time he said "Go to sleep or I'll tell my father."
- ENCOLPIUS And that was that.
- EUMOLPUS No, temptation was too strong. One night I forced myself upon him.
- ENCOLPIUS You raped him. Again.
- EUMOLPUS In a manner of speaking. At first he cried out "Stop or I'll tell my father." but such was my skill in love I brought us both to the highest peak of pleasure.
- ENCOLPIUS And that was that.
- EUMOLPUS Would that it had been. Then the recriminations began. "What will my friends say?" he said. "I told them about the gifts you gave me. Now they'll laugh because you take my body and give me nothing in return."

ENCOLPIUS It is the Roman way.

EUMOLPUS "I'm a poor tutor." I told him. "I can't afford anything more."

ENCOLPIUS So he told his father.

EUMOLPUS No, he asked me to give him something that cost me nothing.

ENCOLPIUS What?

EUMOLPUS To do it again. I was tired. As you can see I am no longer young, but the boy was of an age that never tires of Cupid's caresses. He insisted. I can't, I said. If you don't, he threatened, he would tell his father. And so I gave in to his demand and we both reached ecstasy again. "Now let us sleep," I said, but he . . .

ENCOLPIUS I can guess.

EUMOLPUS "Do it again," he said, "or . . . "

ENCOLPIUS He would tell his father.

EUMOLPUS Indeed. And so I did what women often do and pretended joy. He, at least, was satisfied. At last, I thought, I could sleep but . . .

ENCOLPIUS Is there an end to this story?

EUMOLPUS He wanted it a fourth time, but I had had enough. "Go to sleep," I told him. "if you don't, I'll tell your father."

SFX weak cymbal-roll

The Actors assemble in different poses. ENCOLPIUS moves on, followed by EUMOLPUS

EUMOLPUS I have many more such stories. Once I . . .

ENCOLPIUS I don't remember this picture.

EUMOLPUS The sack of Troy. Let me explain it to you. In verse.

ENCOLPIUS Must you?

EUMOLPUS In tired Troy ten years have passed
 since Greece besieged the city.
 A wooden horse with wooden arse
 appears and looks quite pretty.
 Priest Laocoon cries "send it back!"
 His sons stand side by side.
 Then from the sea, heaving black,
 on waves two serpents ride,
 entwine the three in fearful death
 and something something something breath.

continued . . .

EUMOLPUS (cont) *(spoken)* I've forgotten that line. Anyway, it continues . . .

The Actors come out of their pose.

THE ACTORS Do we have to hear this? / The same rubbish every day. / Gives me a headache. / Get out. / etc

They threaten to strike EUMOLPUS, who runs off chased by the ACTORS. ENCOLPIUS and PETRONIUS remain, seated side by side.

SCENE 12: A BATHHOUSE

PETRONIUS Perhaps that scene was funnier on the page than on the stage.

ENCOLPIUS I'm not in the mood to laugh.

I still can't find him. Get him back for me.

PETRONIUS Giton? I can't help you. I don't know where he is. Characters take on a life of their own, make their own decisions. I merely observe.

They sit in silence.

ENCOLPIUS Why did you write The Satyricon?

PETRONIUS To make people laugh. Show them how ridiculous the Trimalchios and Fortunatas and Eumolpuses of the world are.

And vanity.

ENCOLPIUS Vanity?

PETRONIUS The Satyricon was my Odyssey.

ENCOLPIUS With me as Ulysses.

PETRONIUS Men on an endless journey but with no heroes or villains, no monsters or gods. Just life. In the gutter, not the stars.

ENCOLPIUS I don't want the stars or the gutter. I just want Giton . . .

PETRONIUS Ah, but does he want you? He's young, needs to see the world.

ENCOLPIUS He can see the world with me. Without him, I'm nothing.

B We're getting bored over here. Can we forget the self-pity?

ENCOLPIUS It's my story! Self-pity is part of who I am. Have you never been in love?

E Love is it, or lust?

ENCOLPIUS A bit of both, I suppose.

B Fucking get on with it!

ENCOLPIUS If it gets me back Giton . . .

PETRONIUS and ENCOLPIUS stand

A Which scene is it?
PETRONIUS Let's make it the bath-house.

The ACTORS get into position

D Why the bath-house?
PETRONIUS It's where men meet, do business of every kind. Women too, sometimes, of little modesty. Sooner or later, everyone goes to the bath-house.

PETRONIUS withdraws. GITON is leaning disconsolately against a wall.

ENCOLPIUS Giton!
He is about to run to GITON but checks himself.
(false nonchalant) You all right?

GITON No.

ENCOLPIUS No? What's wrong?

GITON Take me back!

ENCOLPIUS Why? You wanted to go with him.

GITON Only because . . .

ENCOLPIUS Because I can't get it up.

GITON No! Well . . .

ENCOLPIUS And he can get it up.

GITON Yes.

ENCOLPIUS So you're happy, fucking all day long.

GITON No! He's rough and selfish and too big and doesn't care if he hurts me or if I get off.

ENCOLPIUS But you chose him over me.

GITON I had to.

ENCOLPIUS Because he's fun to be with.

GITON No! Well, he is, but that's not why.

ENCOLPIUS Because he protects you.

GITON No.

ENCOLPIUS Because underneath that rough exterior there's a sensitive soul who loves nothing better than discussing poetry and theatre and satire and music.

GITON No!

ENCOLPIUS Then why?

GITON Because if I hadn't gone with him, he would have killed you.

ENCOLPIUS No, he wouldn't.

GITON He would. You saw the knife.
 ENCOLPIUS I've known him for years. He's not like that.
 GITON You saw how angry he was. I was afraid.
 ENCOLPIUS So afraid that a fortnight later you're still with him.
 GITON Where else was I to go?

ENCOLPIUS is torn between emotions.

ENCOLPIUS What're you doing here?
 GITON Waiting for him. He's wrestling with some Greek and I have to scrape the oil off him.
 Take me with you. Please!
 ENCOLPIUS You hurt me so much. I should fucking hate you.
 GITON I'm sorry. I'll never do it again.
 ENCOLPIUS Promise?
 GITON Promise.
 ASCYLLOS (off) Where is he? Where the fuck is he?
 ENCOLPIUS That's him. Choose. Now. Him or me.
 GITON You. Only you.
 ASCYLLOS (off) Giton, get your arse in here now!

ENCOLPIUS and GITON head off in different directions, then turn back for each other

EUMOLPUS (off) In tired Troy ten years have passed
 since Greece besieged the city.
 A wooden horse with wooden arse . . .

VOICES (off) SHUT UP!

ENCOLPIUS) Which way?
 GITON) *together* It's this way.

ASCYLLOS (off) Gitooooon!!!
 A (off) (*louder*) on the waves two serpents ride,
 entwine the three in fearful death

VOICES (off) SHUT THE FUCK UP!

As ENCOLPIUS and GITON exit, EUMOLPUS, pulling on his tunic, runs out of the bathhouse, chased by half-naked CONSTABLE

EUMOLPUS Philistines!
 CONSTABLE And don't come back unless you want your tongue cut out!

EUMOLPUS runs off; ASCYLLOS rushes out

ASCYLLOS Where did he go?
 CONSTABLE Who? The old man?
 ASCYLLOS No, the boy. My boy, Giton.
 CONSTABLE Didn't see him.
 ASCYLLOS I think I know where he'll be. Do you know where I can find a constable?
 CONSTABLE Funny you should ask.

Exit ASCYLLOS and CONSTABLE

SCENE 13: THE LODGING-HOUSE (as SCENE 10)

Enter ENCOLPIUS and GITON

ENCOLPIUS You all right?
 GITON Yes.
 ENCOLPIUS You want anything?
 GITON No.
 ENCOLPIUS Not even food?
 GITON No.
 ENCOLPIUS You must be ill.
 GITON Just tired.
SFX *hammering at the door*
 ENCOLPIUS Who's there?
 CONSTABLE (off) Open in the name of the law!
 ENCOLPIUS What law?
 CONSTABLE (off) Kidnapping. I have reason to believe that you have on the premises property
 belonging to another citizen.
 ENCOLPIUS What property?
 CONSTABLE (off) A slave by the name of Giton.
 ASCYLLOS (off) I know he's in there.
 ENCOLPIUS *(whisper, to GITON)* Hide!

GITON tries various places to hide

ENCOLPIUS (cont) *(loudly)* He isn't here!
 CONSTABLE (off) I need to inspect the premises.
 ENCOLPIUS You can't!

ASCYLLOS (off) It's me, your brother!
 ENCOLPIUS I don't have a brother.
 ASCYLLOS (off) Your best pal.
 ENCOLPIUS I don't have a best pal.
 ASCYLLOS (off) Come on! You can't still be mad at me.
 ENCOLPIUS Oh, I can. I fucking well can.
 CONSTABLE (off) Let us in or we'll break the door down.

SFX *sound of door almost breaking*

ENCOLPIUS All right, come in.

CONSTABLE attempts to enter but is blocked by ENCOLPIUS

ENCOLPIUS No-one here. You can see. Bye.
 CONSTABLE Hold on! Whose leg is that?
 ENCOLPIUS Leg? What leg? Oh that leg. It's mine. Spare, in case I break one. Ancient Rome, lots of accidents, never know when a spare leg comes in handy.
 CONSTABLE There are two of them.
 ENCOLPIUS It's good to have a spare of a spare.

CONSTABLE forces his way in, followed by ASCYLLOS. They look round, then CONSTABLE half pulls GITON out from his hiding place.

CONSTABLE *(to ASCYLLOS)* Is this him?
 ASCYLLOS Aye, I'd recognise that arse anywhere.

The rest of GITON comes out

CONSTABLE *(to ENCOLPIUS)* I arrest you on a charge of kidnapping.
 ENCOLPIUS Hold on! He came here of his own accord, didn't you?
 GITON Yes, I did.
 ASCYLLOS But you'd gone with me, hadn't you?
 GITON Yes, I had.
 ENCOLPIUS But you didn't want to, did you?
 GITON No. I didn't. Want what?
 ENCOLPIUS To go with him.
 GITON Yes, I didn't.
 CONSTABLE Didn't what?
 GITON Whatever. Can I get something to eat?

ENCOLPIUS Now you're hungry?!

CONSTABLE *(to ASCYLLOS)* Are you pressing charges?

ASCYLLOS and ENCOLPIUS look at each other

ASCYLLOS No, I'm not.

CONSTABLE Good, because I don't have time for this. I have two desperate, hardened, vicious, violent criminals to catch. They are said to be somewhere in the town.

ENCOLPIUS Anyone we know?

CONSTABLE Names of Ascylltos and Encolpius.

Predictable reaction from ASCYLLOS and ENCOLPIUS

GITON These two . .

ENCOLPIUS kicks him

GITON These two don't know them.

ENCOLPIUS What're they charged with?

CONSTABLE Theft.

ASCYLLOS Theft?

CONSTABLE A pouch of gold from sea-captain Lichas.

GITON I remember that . . .

ASCYLLOS kicks him

GITON . . . I don't remember anything.

ENCOLPIUS Hardened criminals?

CONSTABLE Either that or idiots. No-one steals from Lichas and lives.

ASCYLLOS If that's the case, they'll have long gone. Be half way to Gaul by now . . .

ENCOLPIUS . . . crossed the Channel . . .

ASCYLLOS . . . and freezing their balls off in Caledonia.

CONSTABLE If you see them, let me know. There's a reward in it.

GITON How much?

Both ASCYLLOS and ENCOLPIUS kick him

GITON (cont) Cause we don't need the money.

CONSTABLE exits

ENCOLPIUS You weren't thinking of betraying us, were you?

GITON I wasn't thinking.

ENCOLPIUS That's normal.

GITON I'm hungry.

ASCYLLOS That's even more so.

ENCOLPIUS We've got to get out of here before the Constable comes back.

GITON Can we eat first? There's an inn on the other side of the street.

ASCYLLOS Can't be seen together. I'll go and buy something.

ENCOLPIUS What with?

ASCYLLOS *(holding up another pouch)* Found this at the baths.

Are we all right?

ENCOLPIUS You and me? I suppose so.

He *(GITON)* says you treated him rough.

ASCYLLOS Didn't mean to. Just my way.

ENCOLPIUS He's sensitive. *(to GITON)* Aren't you?

GITON What?

ENCOLPIUS You're sensitive.

GITON Whatever.

ENCOLPIUS So leave him alone.

ASCYLLOS All right. I've had my fun. No harm done.

ENCOLPIUS For me it's more than fun! And I can't!

ASCYLLOS Still? It'll come back.

ENCOLPIUS It's in the hands of the gods.

ASCYLLOS Well, it's not in your hands. I'll get some food. Fried chicken ok? As soon as I get back, we'll leave.

ASCYLLOS exits; ENCOLPIUS and GITON start packing, then

SFX hammering at the door

ENCOLPIUS Who's that?

GITON scrambles to hide

EUMOLPUS *(off)* A wooden horse with wooden arse . . .

ENCOLPIUS What's he doing here?

opens the door

What're you doing here?

GITON comes out of hiding

EUMOLPUS I saw you walk off with a handsome young man - ah, this young man. I was sure he

continued . . .

- EUMOLPUS (cont) needed some tutoring. My rates are very reasonable and I disapprove very strongly of any intimacy between master and pupil.
- ENCOLPIUS You forget, you told me that story.
- EUMOLPUS So I did. That saves time. Young man, your mother must have been proud to bear you. The gods must worship nightly at your shrine. Will you sleep with me - or rather, not sleep with me? I will fill my poems with your praises. As your protector and teacher I will follow you everywhere, even without your permission.
- ENCOLPIUS No! No! No!
- GITON No, thanks.
- EUMOLPUS Ah well, I tried. No matter. I am leaving town tonight.
- ENCOLPIUS So are we. Where are you going?
- EUMOLPUS I have no idea. There is a ship sailing - the only one for at least a week and I have decided to take a cruise. Why don't you join me?
- ENCOLPIUS We can't afford it.
- EUMOLPUS Come as my slaves. I've never had slaves before.
- ENCOLPIUS It's an idea. You can take two?
- GITON Two?
- ENCOLPIUS Three.
- EUMOLPUS Three slaves? Why not? That makes me a wealthy man.
- ASCYLLOS enters with food, which GITON grabs.*
- ASCYLLOS What's he doing here?
- EUMOLPUS I came to offer my services.
- ASCYTOS You were in the baths. You weren't very popular.
- EUMOLPUS Ruffians. No concept of high art. You were very popular - at least part of you was.
- ENCOLPIUS He's leaving tonight. On a ship. We can go with him, get out of here.
(to EUMOLPUS) One condition. Keep your hands off him. *(GITON)*
- EUMOLPUS At my age, if at first you don't succeed, don't bother trying again.
- ENCOLPIUS And you. *(ASCYLLOS)*
- ASCYLLOS At my age, if at first you do succeed, move on to the next challenge.

SCENE 14 on next page

SCENE 14: A SHIP

ACTORS set up ship, singing as EUMOLPUS, ENCOLPIUS, ASCYLtos and GITON go below deck

WOMEN Come all you young fellows that follow the sea

MEN Hey ho, blow the man down

WOMEN Pay close attention and listen to me

MEN Hey ho, blow the man down

MEN I fought with Brutus at Quiberon Bay

WOMEN Hey ho, see the men drown

MEN Lost many a comrade on that fateful day

WOMEN Hey ho, see the men drown

WOMEN It's a short life and brutal on board a ship

MEN Hey ho, let the bell sound

WOMEN Terrible food and nowhere to shit

MEN Hey ho, let the bell sound

MEN We're only here cause we're down on our luck

WOMEN Hey ho, bring the boy round

MEN Our balls are on fire and there's no girl to fuck

WOMEN Hey ho, bring the boy round.

MEN But whatever the hardships that come to be,

WOMEN Hey ho, blow the man down

ALL There's no finer life than that lived at sea.

ALL Hey ho, blow the man down!!!

GITON *(groaning)* I'm hungry.

ENCOLPIUS *(groaning)* I feel sick.

ASCYLtos Can the two of you not shut up?

Enter EUMOLPUS

EUMOLPUS *(sings)* Our balls are on fire . . .

(spoken) Boys, boys, how are you?

ASCYLLOS	Fine.
GITON	Hungry.
<i>ENCOLPIUS retches</i>	
EUMOLPUS	I brought some food.
<i>GITON grabs it. ENCOLPIUS retches worse.</i>	
ASCYLLOS	What time is it?
<i>SFX</i>	<i>four bells</i>
EUMOLPUS	Six bells.
ASCYLLOS	Where have you been?
EUMOLPUS	Dining at the Captain's table. Excellent food.
<i>ENCOLPIUS retches</i>	
EUMOLPUS (cont)	Charming man. Name of Lichas.
ASCYLLOS	Who?
EUMOLPUS	Lady called Tryphaena. Beautiful. One of the richest in the empire.
ENCOLPIUS	Who??!!
EUMOLPUS	Lichas. Tryphaena.
ASCYLLOS	It's Lichas and Tryphaena we're running from!
EUMOLPUS	That's inconvenient.
ASCYLLOS	You're fucking right it's inconvenient.
ENCOLPIUS	We're dead men. Fates, you win!
GITON	Is there any more food?
ASCYLLOS	They must know we're aboard.
EUMOLPUS	No they don't. I said you were Goths. Spoke a weird language with unpronounceable names.
ENCOLPIUS	We've got to get off the boat.
ASCYLLOS	Before you throw up all over me or before they catch us?
EUMOLPUS	We're too far from land. You'd drown. Wait until we reach port. I got you on safely, I'll get you off.
ASCYLLOS	How?
ENCOLPIUS	<i>(weakly)</i> In a coffin.
ASCYLLOS	Bribe the helmsman. Say one of us is sick and you have to put in to land.
EUMOLPUS	Wouldn't work. Lichas would come to see the patient and spot you at once.

ASCYLLOS Some sort of disguise. I know. Ethiopians. You're a writer, you have ink. You can blacken us from head to toe.

EUMOLPUS I don't have enough for three of you.

GITON Blacken us?! Why not circumcise us and make us Jews? Or bore holes in our ears and we'll all be Arabs? I know! Cover us in chalk so we look like Gauls. Blue so we're Picts? That won't work, black, white or blue, the colour will run.

 I know! How about scarring us all over so we're unrecognisable? Or break our legs so we walk funny?

 Just throw us overboard. Drowning is quicker.

ASCYLLOS and ENCOLPIUS are amazed by this outburst from GITON

 What're you looking at me like that for? Anything more to eat?

ENCOLPIUS Don't mention food!

EUMOLPUS We'll just have to shave you.

ENCOLPIUS What?

EUMOLPUS Shave your skulls - so you really look like slaves. And brand your foreheads.

ASCYLLOS You're not branding my forehead or any other part of my body!

EUMOLPUS We'll use some kind of paint. Come up on deck. We'll do it by moonlight.

They move to another part of the stage where EUMOLPUS starts to paint their foreheads

LICHAS and TRYPHAENA enter

LICHAS I had the strangest dream last night. Priapus told me Encolpius was on board my ship.

TRYPHAENA Anyone would think we had slept together. I dreamt of Neptune. He told me Giton was here.

LICHAS If I could lay my hands on them . . .

TRYPHAENA Not Giton. I'm sure he's innocent.

LICHAS Hypnotised, I was, by Encolpius' good looks. Face of an angel, heart of a demon. Walked away with half-a-year's profits. I'd beat the living daylight out of him then throw him to the fishes.

TRYPHAENA There was a third one, wasn't there? Ascylltos. A sweet, gentle, harmless soul, obviously out of his depth. Is there more wine?

LICHAS Here.

TRYPHAENA Beautiful night. Full moon. Not a cloud in the sky.

On the other side of the stage, EUMOLPUS is about to shear ENCOLPIUS when he drops the blade.

LICHAS What's going on? Someone is shaving on my ship! Men!

TRYPHAENA About time. I like my men smooth.

SAILORS appear

LICHAS No-one cuts hair on a ship! It brings bad luck!

TRYPHAENA Oh.

EUMOLPUS I didn't know that.

ASCYLLOS Now we find out.

LICHAS Seize them. Flog them.

ASCYLLOS and SAILORS grab ENCOLPIUS and GITON

ENCOLPIUS Ascylos!

ASCYLLOS *(conspiratorial)* Leave this to me.

ASCYLLOS grabs a whip and lashes ENCOLPIUS lightly.

ENCOLPIUS Ow! *(on a sign from ASCYLLOS)* I mean AAAAGHHH!

1st SAILOR You hardly touched him.

ASCYLLOS Start light and build it up, I always say.

2nd SAILOR Got a point.

He takes the whip from ASCYLLOS and lightly taps GITON.

GITON Ow!

1st SAILOR He's a good-looking lad.

2nd SAILOR Pity to scar him . . .

1st SAILOR whips GITON lightly again

GITON Ow! Ow! Ow! Please stop!

TRYPHAENA I recognise that voice.

1st SAILOR *(handing whip to ASCYLLOS)* Have it back.

ASCYLLOS Thanks.

GITON It hurts!

TRYPHAENA It's Giton! Giton, my darling!

ASCYLLOS hits ENCOLPIUS harder

ENCOLPIUS That fucking hurt!

LICHAS That's Encolpius! On my ship!

ASCYLLOS raises the whip

Stop! Give me that! Hold him. *(ENCOLPIUS)*

TRYPHAENA Giton! I've missed you so much.

LICHAS Eumolpus! *(who has been trying to sneak away)* They're your slaves?

EUMOLPUS	No, no, no, no. The men I brought on board were Goths. Big, beefy types. Don't know where these three came from. Must have overpowered my poor, defenceless slaves and thrown them overboard.
LICHAS	Three? Ah yes. You (<i>ASCYLLOS</i>) were with them.
ASCYLLOS	Sure it wasn't someone who looked like me?
LICHAS	Where's my gold?
ENCOLPIUS	Gold?
ASCYLLOS	Gold?
EUMOLPUS	Gold?
TRYPHAENA	Gold?
LICHAS	The gold you stole from me.
ENCOLPIUS	I don't remember any gold. Do you remember any gold?
ASCYLLOS	I don't remember any gold.
GITON	I remember . . . (<i>ASCYLLOS and ENCOLPIUS kick him</i>) . . . there wasn't any gold.
ENCOLPIUS	That's right, no gold.
ASCYLLOS	There was a robe.
ENCOLPIUS	Yes, a robe. We found a robe. We gave it back as soon as we knew it was yours.
1st SAILOR	You tried to sell it.
ENCOLPIUS	Before we knew it was yours. We would have given you the money. If we'd sold it.
ASCYLLOS	But we didn't. Sell it.
GITON	I gave it back to you (<i>1st SAILOR</i>).
1st SAILOR	That's right, you did. Thought I'd seen you before.
TRYPHAENA	Giton, you are as honest as you are handsome. (<i>to 2nd SAILOR</i>) Let him go. I vouch for him.
1st SAILOR	Can I go ahead and whip this one? (<i>ENCOLPIUS</i>)
LICHAS	What for?
1st SAILOR	Shaving. Stowing away. Stealing your gold. Whatever you like. Long time since I flogged anyone.
LICHAS	If anyone flogs him it'll be me. It's tempting.
ENCOLPIUS	Never yield to temptation. You never know where it might lead.
LICHAS	I could throw him overboard. All three of them.
TRYPHAENA	Not Giton!

ENCOLPIUS I'd float. Light as a bubble, me. Wouldn't drown. Not worth it. Any other option?
Need an extra galley-slave, perhaps?

ASCYLLOS Two extra galley-slaves?

EUMOLPUS Why not pardon them?

LICHAS Pardon?

EUMOLPUS Look at them, begging for mercy.

ASCYLLOS and ENCOLPIUS drop to the ground in exaggerated prostration

Free men who allowed themselves to be imprisoned as slaves. Haven't they suffered enough? Starved of food.

GITON faints and is revived by TRYPHAENA

Branded as slaves. About to lose their hair.

ASCYLLOS is trying to rub off the paint.

I will sing your praises if you are merciful.

LICHAS If you start singing it'll be you who's flogged.

TRYPHAENA is covering GITON with kisses. ENCOLPIUS leaps up to separate them

ENCOLPIUS Get off him!

LICHAS *(pulling ENCOLPIUS)* Get off her!

TRYPHAENA *(to ENCOLPIUS)* Get off me!

While ASCYLLOS watches, the SAILORS try to pull everyone apart.

EUMOLPUS Surely we can resolve this like gentlemen.

LICHAS hits him

LICHAS I am resolving it like a gentleman.

General melee until

GITON Stop!

GITON is holding the knife against his crotch.

Stop or I'll cut it off!

LICHAS Are you mad?

ASCYLLOS At least it's not his throat this time.

TRYPHAENA My darling boy, don't!

GITON This is what you *(TRYPHAENA)* want, isn't it? Well, you won't get it, no-one'll get it, if everyone keeps fighting.

TRYPHAENA You can't disfigure that beautiful body!

ENCOLPIUS grabs the knife from GITON and holds it to his own throat.

- ENCOLPIUS Stop or I'll kill myself!
- EUMOLPUS Before or after Giton castrates himself?
- ASCYLLOS For fuck's sake. (*grabbing the knife; sarcastic*) Which bit of me should I cut?
- LICHAS (*to ENCOLPIUS*) I won't let you damage that beautiful body.
- ENCOLPIUS You were having me whipped.
- LICHAS That's different.
- ENCOLPIUS Not to me, it isn't.
- ASCYLLOS What about my beautiful body?
- 1st SAILOR If I flog it, will you hold it against me?
- TRYPHAENA I propose a truce. Do you agree?

Various grumbled assents

- EUMOLPUS I could write out terms.
- LICHAS Don't bother.
- EUMOLPUS Compose a poem?
- "Proud Giton hacks off cock and balls;
 By his side his lover falls."
- LICHAS Not if you value your life.
- TRYPHAENA Let us drink to a truce, then. Where did we leave the wine?

As lighting fades the cast reflect what PETRONIUS describes here, with LICHAS alternating aggression and affection with the still impotent ENCOLPIUS.

- PETRONIUS And so everyone calmed down. Food was eaten, wine was drunk. Days passed. Giton learnt the arts of love from Tryphaena in her chamber, while Lichas took his pleasure with Encolpius. Ascylltos made friends with and profited from the crew while Eumolpus composed more doggerel.

And The Ship Sailed On.

Until the storm came.

LIGHTING storm, lightening

SFX storm, thunder, crashing waves

As the storm gets worse LICHAS is tossed overboard; TRYPHAENA and SAILORS abandon ship together; GITON and ENCOLPIUS fall into the sea together. EUMOLPUS runs around like a headless chicken until ASCYLLOS hits him over the head and jumps into the waters with him.

SCENE 15: THE BEACH

LICHAS is lying face down centre stage. ENCOLPIUS and GITON are recovering from the storm.

PETRONIUS (cont) How many lives were lost each year to the sea? Only the gods know. In this case Tryphaena and the sailors survived but are no longer part of our story. Encolpius and Giton found themselves wet but alive on the shore.

ENCOLPIUS and GITON approach the body.

ENCOLPIUS Drowned. Poor wretch. Perhaps a wife waits for him. Perhaps a son. Or a father. Who loved him? Kissed him last? Where was he going? What was his future?

GITON It's Lichas.

ENCOLPIUS No.

GITON Aren't you glad he's dead? He had you whipped. He beat you. He used you.

ENCOLPIUS So now we should celebrate? No man should die before his time. Life is all we have. Without it we are nothing.

You gods, you bastards! Why give us life and hope and then destroy us?

We can't leave him like this. There's wood for the pyre. He died in water but he will go to the afterlife in fire.

An obol for Charon.

GITON hands ENCOLPIUS a coin which he places in LICHAS' mouth

LIGHTING & SFX dark, with fire

ENCOLPIUS (cont) Sit semper in pace anima tua.

The actor playing LICHAS gets up and walks away.

ENCOLPIUS and GITON exit

PETRONIUS Some live, some die, some disappear.

ASCYLLOS enters

ASCYLLOS What about me?

PETRONIUS Ascylos? I lost interest in you long ago. In my version you weren't even on the ship.

ASCYLLOS Yet here I am, alive and kicking. Where do I go now?

PETRONIUS No idea. You could follow the others. They went that way.

ASCYLLOS I have to. Encolpius is my brother.

PETRONIUS And Giton?

ASCYLLOS Cute but not my type. I only wanted him to wind up Encolpius.

PETRONIUS Such is friendship. I wish you luck.

ASCYLLOS wanders off

PETRONIUS (cont) Eumolpus!

EUMOLPUS enters

EUMOLPUS I'm on? Which scene is it?

PETRONIUS You're done. Not needed any more.

EUMOLPUS Done? But what about my other stories?

PETRONIUS It's out of my hands.

EUMOLPUS The Widow and the Soldier. It's so romantic.

PETRONIUS No time. Gone.

EUMOLPUS Can't I at least tell it quickly?

PETRONIUS No.

EUMOLPUS The one where my creditors have to turn cannibal?

PETRONIUS They can watch the film. Just go.

EUMOLPUS Go where?

PETRONIUS Into the past. Into imagination. Into nothingness . . .

EUMOLPUS exits, singing "Proud Giton hacks off cock and balls; by his side . . ."

SCENE 16: CROTON MARKET

PETRONIUS (cont) Fortune's wheel keeps turning. Even I could not avoid fate. Once I was Nero's favourite. An emperor should flaunt his wealth and I ensured his entertainments were popular. Some of his wealth even flaunted my way. Then came the fall.

I'm lucky, I suppose. Some of my stories survived. And my ghost lives on, inhabiting whatever body is to hand. This one is not bad. Older and thinner than I was when I died. A bit sepulchral, but better-looking than me. Unfortunately, I can't keep it; the owner wants it back.

SFX faint market sounds that fade during the ENCOLPIUS / GITON dialogue

Time for one last tale. We are in the market of a town called Croton and our young heroes - let's call them heroes now, they have gone through so much they deserve it - our heroes are doing what lovers always do when love eludes them. They quarrel.

ENCOLPIUS Where were you?

GITON Wandering around.

ENCOLPIUS You could have told me.

GITON Why? Do you care?

ENCOLPIUS I worry about you.

GITON I can look after myself.

ENCOLPIUS Are you mad at me?

GITON No.

ENCOLPIUS Look me in the eye and say that.

GITON Leave me alone!

ENCOLPIUS You really want me to?

GITON Yes. No. I want. . . I want us to fuck! We share a bed but it's like Socrates and Alcibiades: nothing happens.

ENCOLPIUS So much has been going on. No time. No energy.

GITON I've got energy.

ENCOLPIUS Of course you do, you're sixteen!

GITON I'm . . . ! How old am I?

ENCOLPIUS You'll always be sixteen to me. And I'm twenty-four. It's not so easy at my age.

GITON Right(!)

ENCOLPIUS Besides, you went off with Ascyltos that time. Then there was Tryphaena. I'm sure you've had others - women, men, the gods know what else.

GITON I'd rather have you.

ENCOLPIUS And me you.

GITON So show me! Now!!

ENCOLPIUS Here in the market?

GITON There is no market.

ENCOLPIUS You're right. Where did it go?

They look around

GITON It just disappeared.

They are both looking at the audience.

 There's no-one here.

ENCOLPIUS I don't like people watching. It feels like there are eyes on me.

GITON There's no-one. We're all alone.

ENCOLPIUS All right then.

They embrace and all seems well until

ALL (softly) What once stood proud must now lie low

 What once was great must never grow

GITON Again!

ENCOLPIUS I'm cursed.

GITON You keep saying that. Your love should be stronger than any curse.

ENCOLPIUS No love is stronger than a woman's curse.

GITON Then you're as weak as a woman. Fuck off.

GITON tries to walk away but ENCOLPIUS restrains him.

GITON (cont) Let me go.

ENCOLPIUS No.

GITON Let me go!

ENCOLPIUS Not like this.

GITON Let me go!!

GITON starts hitting ENCOLPIUS.

ENCOLPIUS I love you! I love you!

GITON Just words. All I get from you is words. Let me go! Let me fucking go!

GITON succeeds in pushing ENCOLPIUS away

I don't love you. You're weak, pathetic, sexless. There's nothing to love.

ENCOLPIUS Giton!

GITON Leave me alone! Fuck off! Just fuck off!

GITON exits

ENCOLPIUS Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck!

SFX the market in the background as CIRCE and her slave CHRYSIS enter; CIRCE sends CHRYSIS to ENCOLPIUS.

CHRYSIS Good day, young master.

ENCOLPIUS Good day to you.

CHRYSIS Cocky young fellow, aren't you?

ENCOLPIUS Cocky? I wish.

CHRYSIS I have a customer for you.

ENCOLPIUS A customer?

CHRYSIS My mistress. She goes for types like you. Low-lives. The dregs of society.

ENCOLPIUS That's flattering.

CHRYSIS She sees a mule-driver stinking of sweat and the juices start flowing. A hairy bare-arsed kitchen slave covered in grease is her idea of heaven.

ENCOLPIUS No accounting for taste.

CHRYSIS Me, on the other hand, I wouldn't touch a slave. I know where they've been. A nobleman, that's my fancy. I won't sit on the lap of anyone who hasn't got a pedigree as long as my arm.

ENCOLPIUS Do you have much luck?

CHRYISIS Now and then. Anyway, you wait here.

CIRCE comes over and CHRYISIS retreats

CIRCE I am Circe.

ENCOLPIUS You are enchanting.

CIRCE You are in the market, aren't you?

ENCOLPIUS *(looking around)* We both are.

CIRCE I mean for a girlfriend. I saw your boyfriend, but that's not a problem is it?

ENCOLPIUS Boyfriend? What boyfriend? Giton? A childhood fling. Over. Barely remember him.

CIRCE Don't his lips inflame you, doesn't his body arouse every passion in you?

ENCOLPIUS Long time ago . . .

CIRCE And me? Do my lips inflame you? My body arouse your passion? Take me in your arms. Show me your love.

ENCOLPIUS We're not alone.

CIRCE Yes, we are. No-one can see us. The market has gone.

ENCOLPIUS It has a habit of doing that.

CIRCE Your beloved boy is nowhere around.

She kisses him passionately and he responds; they become more physical until . . .

What's the problem? My kissing? No-one has complained before. My breath? I chewed mint all morning. My underarms? Do you think I didn't wash?

ENCOLPIUS No, it's . . .

CIRCE It must be fear of your boy that's keeping you limp.

ENCOLPIUS Afraid of Giton? *(laughs ruefully)*

ALL (softly)

Lust will come but never fire

Shame will always quench desire

ENCOLPIUS I am cursed.

CIRCE You are cursed? What about me? The time I took to wash and dress this morning, wasted. Look at my robe - filthy. Because some little pansy pretended he could satisfy me. Now I have to sacrifice to Venus to beg her forgiveness.

CIRCE storms off

ENCOLPIUS You, prick, where've you gone? I can hardly see you. Bastard! Traitor! What have I done to deserve this? No wonder you're hiding. You should be fucking ashamed. Except you're not fucking anything! You've lost me Giton and I can't even get you up for a girl. You're dragging me to hell when I should be in heaven. You're making me old when I'm still young. I should cut you off and throw you away.

CHRYSIS returns

- CHRYSIS Psst!
- ENCOLPIUS What is it?
- CHRYSIS My mistress apologises for her temper. She says you are in great danger. If a man cannot respond to someone as beautiful as she, he is as good as dead. She wishes to save you from a life without life.
- ENCOLPIUS How?
- CHRYSIS She bids you come to her tomorrow, but first you must follow these instructions to give you strength. Tonight you must eat onions and snail heads without seasoning. Then sleep long and alone. In the morning rise at leisure, oil yourself moderately, do not wash, then return here at this time. My mistress and the priestess will meet you. You will then sacrifice yourself at the altar of love.
- ENCOLPIUS Sacrifice??

But CHRYSIS has gone

LIGHTING reflects the passing of time. The PRIESTESS and CIRCE enter, make symbolic preparations with CHRYSIS assisting as required, ending with CIRCE spreading her legs. Meanwhile:

- ENCOLPIUS (cont) *(miming the actions)* Eat onions and snail heads? Yuch.
Sleep alone - well that's not difficult.
Rise, oil myself, do not wash *(sniffs his armpits)*.
Sacrifice myself? Why not? I have nothing left to live for.
- PRIESTESS Is the soldier ready for battle?
- ENCOLPIUS Uh . . .
- PRIESTESS Come forward, young man. Seek the god's favour.
- ENCOLPIUS Oh, Priapus, son of Bacchus, god of fields and fertility, hear my prayer.
Restore my strength, return my manhood. I shall not let your glory go unthanked. I shall sacrifice to you a horned goat, a litter of pigs, a cow with udder swollen with milk. The best wines will flood your temple and drunken young men displaying their virility will march in triumph round your shrine.
- PRIESTESS Amen! Unsheath the weapon. Let battle commence!

ENCOLPIUS attempts to make love to CIRCE but

- ALL *(loud)* His sacrilege will cost him dear
(louder) Lust will come but never fire
(loudest) Shame will always quench desire
- ENCOLPIUS No! No! Priapus, I beg you!

- CIRCE He is as good as dead.
- PRIESTESS Then we must try the second cure.
- ENCOLPIUS The second? What is that?
- PRIESTESS Satyrion. [*NOT "Satyricon"*]
She produces an evil-looking drink.
 Made of blood of goat, root of mandrake, Spanish fly and tiger's tooth.
 And two bulbs of garlic.
- ENCOLPIUS Tasty (!)
- PRIESTESS You must down it in one.
- ENCOLPIUS I'll try anything. (*drinks and retches*)
- PRIESTESS Oh Venus, take pity on your acolyte and bestow your grace on this pitiful wretch who seeks to serve her.
- CIRCE Do you feel anything?
- ENCOLPIUS Sick.
- PRIESTESS Do you feel anything?
- CIRCE (*her hand on ENCOLPIUS' groin*) No.
- PRIESTESS The gods demand more.
- ENCOLPIUS What?
- PRIESTESS Hold him.
- CHRYISIS holds ENCOLPIUS as PRIESTESS starts whipping him with a branch.*
- ENCOLPIUS Aagh!
- CIRCE My poor boy. What torment you are suffering. But it is nothing compared to the torment of my aching, empty thighs.
- ENCOLPIUS Aagh! Your torment is worse than mine? Ouch!
- CIRCE You have bewitched me. Without your love, without your body I cannot live.
- ENCOLPIUS OW! I'm sure you can. Stop! Please stop!
- PRIESTESS stops*
- CIRCE Are you in rut?
- ENCOLPIUS I'm in agony.
- PRIESTESS (*raising the branch*) We are only halfway through the treatment.
- ENCOLPIUS I'm in rut! I'm in rut!
- PRIESTESS We can see that you are not.

The beating continues. ENCOLPIUS yelps with pain.

CHRYSIS He has fainted.

CIRCE Slap him awake. If he will not honour me, he must honour the priestess.

CHRYSIS and CIRCE manoeuvre ENCOLPIUS, half-conscious, onto the PRIESTESS. He wakes to find himself (not) making love to her.

ENCOLPIUS Aagh! What nightmare is this?

PRIESTESS Bloody cheek. Get him off me.

She considers

We need the ultimate cure.

CIRCE What?

CHRYSIS What?

ENCOLPIUS What?

PRIESTESS *(drawing out a large leather dildo)* This.

ENCOLPIUS Not that! Not that!

PRIESTESS Do not worry, it is oiled.

ENCOLPIUS I'm still worried.

PRIESTESS With pepper seeds and nettle leaves.

ENCOLPIUS I'm not hungry!

PRIESTESS Hold him down.

The action begins. ENCOLPIUS screams.

ENCOLPIUS I'm going through hell!

CIRCE He thinks he's in hell.

PRIESTESS He doesn't know what real hell is.

CHRYSIS Few men do.

ENCOLPIUS continues screaming as

ALL WHAT ONCE STOOD PROUD MUST NOW LIE LOW

WHAT ONCE WAS GREAT MUST NEVER GROW

LUST WILL COME BUT NEVER FIRE

SHAME WILL ALWAYS QUENCH DESIRE

LIGHTING dims to black

SCENE 17: A LODGING HOUSE

ENCOLPIUS lying with his head in GITON's lap.

GITON You're awake.

ENCOLPIUS Where am I?

GITON At home.

ENCOLPIUS I had a bad dream. *(moves)* Aagh! It wasn't a dream.

GITON Keep still.

ENCOLPIUS How did I get here?

GITON We found you on the doorstep. Me and Ascylos.

ENCOLPIUS Where is he?

GITON Gone. Took his things with him.

ENCOLPIUS Gone where?

GITON Don't know. He said to seek new adventures.

ENCOLPIUS He'll be back. Eventually.

I thought you had left me.

GITON I'm sorry.

ENCOLPIUS I wouldn't blame you.

GITON I won't do it again. I missed you.

You won't leave me, will you?

ENCOLPIUS Never.

GITON Will we have more adventures?

ENCOLPIUS Of course we will. All our lives will be an adventure. Our adventures will never end.

GITON Promise?

ENCOLPIUS Promise.

GITON I need you.

ENCOLPIUS *(almost recovered)* I need you. But I can't . . .

GITON Doesn't matter. I can always get it elsewhere. There were these two girls yesterday...

ENCOLPIUS Better if you get it from me.

GITON Yes.

They lie together comfortably

ENCOLPIUS What's that noise?

GITON Young couple. Been at it all day. Lucky sods. You can see them through that hole in the wall.

ENCOLPIUS Let me see.

He stares at the audience

ENCOLPIUS (cont) She's pretty.

GITON *(looking in the same direction)* Nothing special.

ENCOLPIUS What about him?

GITON Wouldn't say no.

ENCOLPIUS *(turning his head in one direction)* What's he doing now?

GITON *(turning his head in the other direction)* I think she's got hold of his . . .

ENCOLPIUS *(turning his head in the opposite direction)* I didn't think anyone could do that.

GITON I can.

ENCOLPIUS Since when?

GITON That time on the ship. Tryphaena taught me.

ENCOLPIUS Really?

GITON I wanted to show you, but you . . .

The two of them are very close. ENCOLPIUS kisses GITON.

ENCOLPIUS But I . . . ?

GITON I didn't know if . . .

. . . if you . . .

if you could . . .

ENCOLPIUS Get it up?

For a long time I couldn't. But now . . .

Now . . .

GITON Now?

ENCOLPIUS What do you think?

GITON Definitely. *(laughs)* Just like before.

ENCOLPIUS Better than before! Much better than before! You'll see.

GITON Show me.

ENCOLPIUS I will.

Thank you, Priapus!

Blackout

SCENE 18: PETRONIUS' DINNER

GITON and ENCOLPIUS in post-coital sleep, watched by PETRONIUS

PETRONIUS Ah, youth. Wasted on the young.

SOLDIER enters; ENCOLPIUS and GITON wake up slowly

PETRONIUS (cont) Who are you?

SOLDIER An emissary from the emperor.

PETRONIUS How is the boy?

SOLDIER The emperor Nero is no boy.

ASCYLLOS wanders in

PETRONIUS He's only twenty-six. Compared to me he's a boy. He'll be dead by the time he's thirty.

SOLDIER You are likely to be dead before him. He has given orders to detain you.

PETRONIUS Ah. Do you know why?

SOLDIER Not my business, sir.

PETRONIUS I suspect that oaf Tigellinus has gained the divine ear. He was always jealous of me.

SOLDIER goes off. Over the next few lines the whole cast wander in

ENCOLPIUS Detained? What does that mean?

ASCYLLOS What do you think?

PETRONIUS Art lasts, life does not.

ENCOLPIUS Seriously? What will you do?

PETRONIUS Do? It is late in the day. Shall we dine?

GITON Eat?

ASCYLLOS You haven't stopped stuffing yourself!

GITON So?

PETRONIUS Nothing ostentatious. A few friends, some wine, good conversation. See what's left of Trimalchio's feast. Ascylltos, bring me a knife.

The cast quickly assemble a dinner, sit at table with PETRONIUS in the centre, reminiscent of the Last Supper.

Cheer up! We're not at a funeral. My last supper should be one to remember. Your health, everyone.

Mutters of "your health", "Cheers". Someone says "Long life" and is hissed by his neighbour.

Someone, say something. You, Actors, what did you think of the stories?

D A bit over the top, some of them.

B Fun to watch, fun to act.

C I'd do it again.

E That poor girl. I can't forget her.

PETRONIUS I don't know where she came from. Too depressing for my tastes.

Almost absent-mindedly, he cuts his wrists and blood begins to flow.

PETRONIUS (cont) And Ascyrtos on Lichas' ship. Shouldn't have been there. Why did they have to keep changing my story?

A You're not the only one. Think how Jane Austen and Agatha Christie feel, the way their books are mucked about.

D Better to be remembered poorly than not remembered at all. Who knows my name? Any of my names?

They eat.

A You're obsessed with copulation.

PETRONIUS It's what brings us into the world.

B Not the way you prefer it.

PETRONIUS True. Imagine if we kept having more and more children until the world overflowed with people.

D That will never happen.

PETRONIUS Let us hope not. Encolpius, what did you learn from the stories?

ENCOLPIUS Learn? Can't think of anything.

PETRONIUS Not even to steer clear of secret ceremonies?

I'm glad. You will live your adventures again and again. It's better if you don't remember what happened before.

Giton?

GITON *(busy eating)* What?

PETRONIUS What have you learnt?

GITON *(confused)* Unh?

PETRONIUS Perfect. May you remain forever sixteen.

GITON I'm . . . sixteen! Yes, I'll always be sixteen!

PETRONIUS *(laughs)* As long as you're old enough to enjoy life. That's all that matters.

Let me enjoy this moment. Bring me cloths.

ASCYLTOS brings him cloth and wraps them around his wrist

PETRONIUS (cont) Ascyrtos? I didn't expect you to be so solicitous.

ASCYLTOS You didn't, did you? You created me for nothing but fighting, drinking and fucking. But I care for people, look out for them. *continued . . .*

- ASCYLLOS (cont) You gave me a huge prick but no love. Encolpius gets Giton. I get men I don't want, almost never get a woman and spend half the time with aching balls and a permanent stiffie. You don't even have me wank and to top it off I disappear!
- PETRONIUS I'm sorry. But look what happens to Encolpius. The agony he has to go through before he gets his manhood back. You wouldn't want that.
- ASCYLLOS Why not? What's pleasure? Sensation. What's pain? Sensation. At least pain tells you you're alive. Give me pain, give me love, give me anything but oblivion.
- PETRONIUS It's a point of view.

Silence as the company eat - perhaps a quiet conversation in the background. From here on ENCOLPIUS, GITON and ASCYLLOS are oblivious to what is happening around them; if they talk, the audience cannot hear them. We see their relationships as at the beginning of the play - strong affection & flirting between ENCOLPIUS and GITON, bromance with ASCYLLOS.

- E What about us?
- PETRONIUS Us?
- E Women.
- PETRONIUS What about women?
- E Your stories are all about men.
- PETRONIUS Not true. There are plenty of women in them.
- E But men dictate what happens.
- PETRONIUS Again, not true. Tryphaena, Circe - you played them - took the initiative.
- E Forced to, in a man's world.

She gets up from the table and begins to change into modern clothes

How many women are sitting at this table? Women are half the world. Women want to hear women's stories. Ordinary women. All you've got are a model and a hag. How many women can identify with them?

- D Who's the hag?
- B Who's the model?
- E What can your stories tell me?
- PETRONIUS I don't know. Nothing that you don't want to hear.
- E You're just another dead white male.
- PETRONIUS Not yet, but you'll soon get your wish.
- PETRONIUS unties the cloths round his wrists. The blood begins to flow again.*
- C What about trans, non-binaries? You didn't include them.
- PETRONIUS Who?
- C Transgenders. Non-binaries - not one sex or the other.

PETRONIUS We didn't have them in my day. Just the occasional hermaphrodite.

C That's what you think.

A starts to change into modern clothes

A The stories had the ring of truth. Most of the time the men were driven by desire.

B Lust.

A And gluttony. And avarice. Power.

D It all comes down to the same in the end. Be in control. Be on top.

B is also getting changed.

B And the women?

D Careful!

D starts to change.

A They used men's desires to achieve their goals.

B Maybe they just wanted the same thing - to get laid.

D Maybe they had no choice. They were just trying to survive in a man's world.

E They didn't all survive.

PETRONIUS That's all any of us do. Try to survive. We don't always succeed.

A What do you think?

C Me?

E You must have an opinion.

C Someone once said only fools express opinions; the wise stay silent.

B Probably Socrates.

A "Let your guide be Socrates,
the wisest man who ever lived."

C is the last of the actors to get changed.

E What about Giton?

B What about him?

E Forced to have sex with all these men.

B And women.

PETRONIUS Nobody forces him.

D He's only sixteen!

GITON I'm . . .!

Everyone turns to him, but he does not finish the sentence and returns to the past.

E And that boy in Eumolpus' story. Stalked and seduced.

- A Sounded like he wanted it. Ask him how he feels.
- E He isn't here!
- A So don't assume you know how he feels.
- PETRONIUS Nero became emperor at sixteen. It's not the age, it's the situation. Giton is young, he's free . . .
- B . . . dumb and full of cum . . .
- PETRONIUS . . . let him do what he wants.
- E You wouldn't say that if he was a girl.
- A Why not? Girls want the same as boys, don't they?
- D Young people should be protected.
- C The idea of young keeps changing.
- A Everything changes, all the time. People will look back at these stories and maybe they'll be appalled by what was said and done - or maybe they'll laugh or maybe they'll just wonder at the complexity of human relationships. Some will claim to be guardians of morality and denounce those who went before. What they forget is that the generations who follow them will look back on their lives and see all the injustice and abuse that they don't see.
- B What are you going on about?
- A All I'm saying is the present always condemns the past - and the present will be the past one day.
- D You've gone all philosophical.
- A Well, what do I know? We're only actors, aren't we? Bring us on when you need us. Put words in our mouths. Then send us home and forget us. But some of us, we watch, we think.
- PETRONIUS It's only a story, a collection of stories. From long, long ago.

PETRONIUS slumps. As he dies GITON carries on eating, ENCOLPIUS begins to weep, ASCYLtos hesitates then checks the body and finds a pouch of money. The Actors bow in respect. Finally, all except PETRONIUS turn to the audience.

- ENCOLPIUS Ladies,
- GITON gentlemen,
- ASCYLtos and
- C non-binaries,
- ALL The Satyricon!

CURTAIN / BLACKOUT