

KORYPHAIOS OF WOMEN
 brought water to douse your pyre. Tit for tat.
 KORYPHAIOS OF MEN
 You'll douse my fire? Nonsense!
 KORYPHAIOS OF WOMEN
 You'll see, when the fact is plain.
 KORYPHAIOS OF MEN
 have the torchlight here. Perhaps I should barbecue
 you.
 KORYPHAIOS OF WOMEN
 you have any soap, I could give you a bath.
 KORYPHAIOS OF MEN
 A bath from those
 polluted hands?
 KORYPHAIOS OF WOMEN
 Pure enough for a washing young bridegroom.
 KORYPHAIOS OF MEN
 enough of that insolent sp.
 KORYPHAIOS OF WOMEN
 It's merely freedom of speech.
 KORYPHAIOS OF MEN
 stop that screeching!
 KORYPHAIOS OF WOMEN
 You're helpless outside of the jury-box.
 KORYPHAIOS OF MEN
 Urge women, torches at the ready, into a charge.
 ... fire ...

KORYPHAIOS OF WOMEN
 The women empty their pitchers over the men.
 And cauldron bubble.
 KORYPHAIOS OF MEN
 like his traps, soaked and routed.
 Arrrrgh!
 KORYPHAIOS OF WOMEN
 Goodness!
 What seems to be the trouble? Too hot?
 KORYPHAIOS OF MEN
 Hot, hell! Stop
 What do you think you're doing?
 KORYPHAIOS OF WOMEN
 If you must know, I'm gardeni-
 Perhaps you'll bloom.
 KORYPHAIOS OF MEN
 Perhaps I'll be right off the vine
 I'm withered, frozen, shaking ...
 KORYPHAIOS OF WOMEN
 Of course. But, providential
 The sap should rise eventually.

Shivering, the Chorus of Men retreats in utter defeat.
 A Commissioner of Public Safety* enters from the left, fol-
 lowed quite reluctantly by a squad of police—four Skythian
 archers. He surveys the situation with disapproval.

COMMISSIONER
 Fire, eh? Females again—spontaneous combustion
 of lust. Suspected as much.
 Rubadubdubbing, incessant
 incontinent keening for wine, damnable funeral

foofaraw for Adonis resounding from roof to roof—
heard it all before . . .

*Savagely, as the Koryphaios of Men tries to interpose a
remark.*

and WHERE?

The ASSEMBLY!

Recall, if you can, the debate on the Sicilian Question:
That bullbrained demagogue Demostratos (who will rot,
I trust)
rose to propose a naval task force.

His wife,
writhing with religion on a handy roof, bleated
a dirge:

"BEREFT! OH WOE OH WOE FOR ADONISI!"

And so of course Demostratos, taking his cue,
outblatted her:

"A DRAFT! ENROLL THE WHOLE OF
ZAKYNTHOS!"

His wife, a smidgin stewed, renewed her yowling:

"OH GNASH YOUR TEETH AND BEAT YOUR
BREASTS FOR ADONISI!"

And so of course Demostratos (that god-detested blot,
that foul-lunged son of an ulcer) gnashed tooth and nail
and voice, and bashed and rammed his program through.
And THERE is the Gift of Women:

MORAL CHAOS!

~~KORYPHAIOS OF MEN
Save your breath for actual felonies, Commissioner
see what's happened to us! I need your consultations,
these we pass over, to your majesty:
We're flooded
with indignity from those bitches' pitchers—
bladder-brats. Our cloaks are soaked!~~

COMMISSIONER

Useless. Your suit won't hold water. Right's on their side.
For female depravity, gentlemen, WE stand guilty—

we, their teachers, preceptors of prurience, accomplices
before the fact of fornication. We sowed them in sexual
license, and now we reap rebellion.

The proof?

Consider. Off we trip to the goldsmith's to leave
an order:

"That bangle you fashioned last spring for my wife
is sprung. She was thrashing around last night, and the
prong
popped out of the bracket. I'll be tied up all day—I'm
boarding the ferry right now—but my wife'll be home.
If you get the time, please stop by the house in a bit
and see if you can't do something—anything—to fit
a new prong into the bracket of her bangle."

And bang.

Another one ups to a cobbler—young, but no apprentice,
full kit of tools, ready to give his awl—
and delivers this gem:

"My wife's new sandals are tight.

The cinch pinches her pinkie right where she's
sensitive.

Drop in at noon with something to stretch her cinch
and give it a little play."

And a cinch it is.

Such hanky-panky we have to thank for today's
Utter Anarchy: I, a Commissioner of Public
Safety, duly invested with extraordinary powers
to protect the State in the Present Emergency, have
secured

a source of timber to outfit our fleet and solve
the shortage of oarage. I need the money immediately . . .
and WOMEN, no less, have locked me out of the
Treasury!

Pulling himself together.

—Well, no profit in standing around.

To one of the archers.

Bring
the crowbars. I'll jack these women back on their
pedestals!