

again...
...the daughter
...the water

KORYPHAIOS OF WOMEN

Noticing for the first time the Chorus of Men, still busy at their firepots, she cuts off a member of her Chorus who seems about to continue the song.

Hold it. What have we here? You don't catch true-blue patriots red-handed. These are authentic degenerates, male, taken *in flagrante*.

KORYPHAIOS OF MEN

Oops. Female troops. This could be upsetting. I didn't expect such a flood of reserves.

KORYPHAIOS OF WOMEN

Merely a spearhead. If our numbers stun you, watch that yellow streak spread. We represent just one percent of one percent of This Woman's Army.

KORYPHAIOS OF MEN

Never been confronted with such backtalk. Can't allow it. Somebody pick up a log and pulverize that brass.
Any volunteers?

There are none among the male chorus.

KORYPHAIOS OF WOMEN

Put down the pitchers, girls. If they start waving that lumber, we don't want to be encumbered.

KORYPHAIOS OF MEN

Look, men, a few sharp jabs will stop that jawing. It never fails.
The poet Hipponax swears by it.*

Still no volunteers. The Koryphaios of Women advances.

KORYPHAIOS OF WOMEN

Then step right up. Have a jab at me.

Free shot.

KORYPHAIOS OF MEN

Advancing reluctantly to meet her.

Shut up! I'll peel your pelt. I'll pit your pod.

KORYPHAIOS OF WOMEN

The name is Stratyllis. I dare you to lay one finger on me.

KORYPHAIOS OF MEN

I'll lay on you with a fistful. Er—any specific threats?

KORYPHAIOS OF WOMEN

Earnestly.

I'll crop your lungs and reap your bowels, bite by bite, and leave no balls on the body for other bitches to gnaw.*

KORYPHAIOS OF MEN

Retreating hurriedly.

Can't beat Euripides for insight. And I quote:
*No creature's found
so lost to shame as Woman.**

Talk about realist playwrights!

KORYPHAIOS OF WOMEN

Up with the water, ladies. Pitchers at the ready, place!

KORYPHAIOS OF MEN

Why the water, you sink of iniquity? More sedition?

KORYPHAIOS OF WOMEN

Why the fire, you walking boneyard? Self-cremation?

KORYPHAIOS OF MEN

I brought this fire to ignite a pyre and fricassee your friends.

KORYPHAIOS OF WOMEN
I brought this water to douse your pyre. 'Tis for fat.
KORYPHAIOS OF MEN
You'll douse my fire? Nonsense!
KORYPHAIOS OF WOMEN
You'll see, when the facts soak in.
KORYPHAIOS OF MEN

KORYPHAIOS OF MEN
I have the torch right here. Perhaps I should barbecue
you.
KORYPHAIOS OF WOMEN
If you have any soap, I could give you a bath.
KORYPHAIOS OF MEN

KORYPHAIOS OF WOMEN
A bath from those
polluted hands?

KORYPHAIOS OF WOMEN
Pure enough for a blushing young bridegroom.
KORYPHAIOS OF MEN

KORYPHAIOS OF MEN
Enough of that insolent lip.
KORYPHAIOS OF WOMEN

It's merely freedom of speech.
KORYPHAIOS OF MEN

I'll stop that screeching!
KORYPHAIOS OF WOMEN

You're helpless outside of the jury-box.
KORYPHAIOS OF MEN

Urging his men, torches at the ready, into a charge.
Burn, fire, burn!

KORYPHAIOS OF WOMEN
As the women empty their pitchers over the men.
And cauldron bubble.
KORYPHAIOS OF MEN
Like his troops, soaked and routed.
Arrgh!

KORYPHAIOS OF WOMEN

Goodness,
What seems to be the trouble? Too hot?

KORYPHAIOS OF MEN

Hot, hell! Stop it!
What do you think you're doing?

KORYPHAIOS OF WOMEN

If you must know, I'm gardening.

Perhaps you'll bloom.

KORYPHAIOS OF MEN

Perhaps I'll fall right off the vine!

I'm withered, frozen, shaking . . .

KORYPHAIOS OF WOMEN

Of course. But, providentially,

you brought along your smudgepot.

The sap should rise eventually.

Shivering, the Chorus of Men retreats in utter defeat.

Heaped quite reluctantly by a squad of police . . . approval.
COMMISSIONER
Fire, eh? Fearful again—spontaneous combustion
of just the kind feared as much.
Rubadubdubbing, and
without license for wine, dappable funeral