

# **THE TWO WINE CASKS: Sketch of a comic opera by Voltaire**

Translated and adapted by Frank J. Morlock



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# **THE TWO WINE CASKS: Sketch of a comic opera by Voltaire**

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**Translated and adapted by Frank J. Morlock**

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Etext by Dagny

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**CHARACTERS:**

**GLYCERA**

**PRESTINE, little sister of Glycera**

**DAPHNIS**

**FATHER OF DAPHNIS**

**FATHER OF GLYCERA**

**GREGOIRE, priest of the temple of Bacchus, tavern-keeper/cook**

**PHEBE, a female servant of the temple**

Troupes of Young Men and Young Women

The action takes place in a temple dedicated to Bacchus.

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**ACT I**

The stage represents a temple with leaves, decorated with thyrsus, shells, vine branches, grapes. Between columns of foliage statues of Bacchus, Ariane, Silenus and Pan are seen. A huge buffet is placed before the altar; two fountains of wine spout in the background . Young lads and girls are hurrying to prepare everything for a celebration. Gregoire, one of the servants of Bacchus is preparing the feast. He's in a white and elegant jacket, carrying a thyrsus in his hand and wearing a crown of ivy on his head.

(A gay and sprightly overture; refrain, sad and terrible.)

**GREGOIRE:**

(singing)

Come on children, strive with each other.  
Young bachelors, young bachelorettes,  
Adorn this glorious altar.  
Bestir yourselves, lazy creatures that you are.  
Put this there,  
Make this buffet tidy,  
Think what you're doing.  
Come on children, strive with each other;  
Bestir yourselves, lazies that you are;  
Think that you are serving beauties and the gods.

**A SERVING GIRL:**

(speaking)

Eh! Take it easy, Mr. Gregoire,  
We are like you, of the temple of Bacchus.  
Like you, we are making him glorious.  
We are all very assiduous  
To serve Venus and Bacchus.  
The high priest of the temple is, no question, gone to drink.

(singing)

He will come back; act less important,  
Cause when the master's away,  
Master's valet holds sway.

**GREGOIRE:** Pardon, I am fretful.

**SERVING GIRL:** None of that here.

You are making fun of us.

**GREGOIRE:** Go, I've really got some worries.

We are awaiting the wedding, and my master ordered me  
To take his place,  
And to join the lovers who will be sent  
From all the adjoining regions to be married.  
Ah! I'm furious.

**SERVING GIRL:** What! this is the best piece of luck

That you could ever find:

These celebrations are always worth some gift to us.  
Nothing better could happen to you.  
I've seen more than one marriage.  
One party or the other  
Repents often enough

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The actions taken here.  
But the gentleman who marries them,  
Once he has their money, never repents of it.  
It's the lovable Daphnis, and the beautiful Glycera,  
Who are coming to give their hands to each other.  
How charming Daphnis is!

**GREGOIRE:**

(wrathfully) No, he's very villainous.

**SERVING GIRL:** How Daphnis has known how to please all our beauties!

**GREGOIRE:** He greatly displeases me.

**SERVING GIRL:** How handsome he is!

**GREGOIRE:** How ugly he is!

**SERVING GIRL:** Very honest lad, free-spender.

**GREGOIRE:** No.

**SERVING GIRL:** Is too!

How mean Gregoire is! Will you be telling me  
That the intended is lacking in beauty?

**GREGOIRE:** The intended?

**SERVING GIRL:** Yes, Glycera. They celebrate her, they adore her.

All Arcadia is enchanted with her.

**GREGOIRE:** Yes, the intended passes muster—she is pretty;

But she has a bad heart,  
Completely full of perfidy, ingratitude and pride.

**SERVING GIRL:** Glycera, a bad heart! Alas, she's goodness,

She's modest virtue, and full of complacency.

She's sweetness, patience,

And the purity of her morals

Silence even slander.

You seem spiteful to me.

Did you ever attempt

To pinch the beauty's heart?

By success one is flattered;

If the lady is not cruel.

You treat her as nymph and divinity.

If you are rebuffed,

You compose songs against her.

Come on, Master Gregoire, a bit less wrath.

Let's give a good reception to these two spouses.

Let the banquet be magnificent.

They are drinking unwatered wine here;

But don't go spoil our bacchic feast

By breaking open bad wine casks.

**GREGOIRE:** Huh? What are you saying there?

**SERVING GIRL:** I understand myself perfectly.

**GREGOIRE:** Little girl,

Tremble as this mystery may be revealed;

It's the secret of the gods, beware not to repeat it

As soon as it is told.

Learn that one dies the death quickly.

Cease your over-free speeches,

Contain your cursed tongue,

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And respect the gods and their inn-keepers.

(sings)

Come on, resume your work.

Indeed, let's serve these lucky lovers.

(aside)

Scorn and rage

Are tearing my feelings apart.

Let's hasten these lucky moments;

Courage, courage,

Beat, knock, all together now.

(the servants beat their hammers on copper castings that are used as ornaments)

Hang these festoons, spread these leaves;

Let these fine grapes, little cupids

Forever give us

Happy nights and fine days

Under these charming shadows.

I'm furious,

Furious,

I'll get even,

I'll punish them.

They'll pay me dearly for my outrage.

Let's hasten their happy moments.

Beat, knock, all together now.

I am furious,

Furious.

**SERVING GIRL:** Ah! I notice this wedding party

On the road in the distance.

Glycera's little sister

Is always in the lead.

She's up really early;

That rose is already in flower.

She's rushed her steps.

Here she is—wouldn't you say

She's the one getting married?

**PRESTINE:**

(rushing in hastily) Eh! what's going on!

Is nothing ready in the temple of Bacchus?

We remain tongue tied! Have our steps been wasted?

They're doing nothing here when there's so much to do!

My sister and her lover, my jolly father,

And Daphnis, too, women, girls and lads,

Are filing in, dancing and singing,

And here I see nothing visible.

Reply, Gregoire, reply.

Take me to the altar and to milord, the high priest.

**GREGOIRE:** I'm the high priest.

**PRESTINE:** You're joking.

**GREGOIRE:** I am, I say.

**PRESTINE:** You? You, priest of Bacchus?

**GREGOIRE:** And made for the job. What astonishment is yours?

**PRESTINE:** Well! So be it; I'd prefer it to be you than someone else.



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**GREGOIRE:** I am vice manager in this attractive spot.

I join lovers and I fix their meals.  
These two charming functions,  
So necessary to the world,  
Are no question the first.  
I hope someday, my little Prestine,  
To exercise them for you  
In this hallowed dwelling.

**PRESTINE:** Alas! very willingly.

**(DUO) GREGOIRE AND PRESTINE:**

In these beautiful parts, it's up to Gregoire;  
It's up to him to instruct  
In the fine art of loving and drinking;  
It's he who must reign.  
From mighty god the vermilion liquor comes;  
The temple is a cabaret;  
His altar is a buffet.  
Love awakes there  
with delight;  
Love sleeps there,  
Sleeps, sleeps,  
Under the beautiful trellised grapes.

**GREGOIRE:** I see our people coming;

Right now I'm going to assume  
My ceremonial robes.  
Gregoire must justify to all eyes  
The choice they made of him on this brilliant day.

**PRESTINE:** Go quick. Come forward father, father-in-law,

My adored sister, my dear brother-in-law,  
Ah! how slowly you walk.  
They say this grave appearance is decent.  
It's noble, it's graceful;  
But in your place,  
I'd move a little faster.

(Glycera's father and Daphnis' father, little old geezers shrivelled up, come in first, cane in hand, then Daphnis escorting Glycera and all the wedding party.)

**GLYCERA:**

(to Prestine)

Dear sister, excuse my dazzled senses.  
I stopped to look at Daphnis,  
I was beside myself in ecstasy, in delirium;  
And I had only one feeling;  
Go, all I can tell you,  
Is that I wish you the same.

**(DUO) THE TWO FATHERS:** Oh, how sweet it is, in our old age,

To be reborn in our family!  
My son—My daughter,  
Revive my languishing age;

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My winter shines  
With roses of their youth.  
Young folks, who want to have a laugh,  
Treat old geezers  
As dreamers and babblers.  
They're very wrong;  
Each aspires  
To his fate.  
Each demands of nature  
To die only with grey hair;  
And that those who make a hundred  
Be remembered in the papers.

**PRESTINE:** It's indeed a question of humming;  
Ah! I think you have enough other business.  
Do you know to what man they intend to give  
The duty of celebrating your amorous mysteries?  
To Gregoire.

**GLYCERA:**

(terrified) To Gregoire!

**DAPHNIS:** Eh! What do I care, great god!  
All is good to me, all is precious;  
Everything's the same here if my happiness approaches.  
If Glycera is mine, all the rest is foreign.  
What matter the time  
When I hear the time for surrender?  
Nothing can displease me, and nothing interests me:  
I don't see these games, this solemn meal,  
These priests of Marriage, this temple, this altar.  
I only see the goddess.

**(QUARTET) THE TWO FATHERS, DAPHNIS, GLYCERA:**

Daughter! My dear son! Glycera! My tender spouse!  
Let's all four love each other, love ourselves.  
Bright dawn be born of bliss,  
Be born, be hatched,  
An even sweeter day.  
Tender love, it's you that I implore,  
In all times you reign over us.  
Tender love, it's you that I implore,  
Let's all four love each other, love ourselves.

**PRESTINE:** They love to sing and that's their folly.  
Don't I get to take part?  
At the drop of a hat, these folks form a quartet.  
And I revere and admire 'em for it,  
But they sing, sometimes, having nothing to say.  
At the drop of a hat, they form a quartet.  
It's very pleasing to my ear,  
And if they asked me, I'd have made it a quintet.  
But they left me here, just thinking of themselves.

(sings)

The first husband that I will have,

THE TWO WINE CASKS: Sketch of a comic opera by Voltaire

Ah! great gods how I will sing.  
I'll neglect my self,  
I'll abandon myself.  
The first husband I shall have,  
Ah! great gods, how I will sing!

**PHEBE:**

(entering) Come inside, my handsome gentlemen,  
My beautiful lady.

(to Glycera aside)

My beautiful lady, at least be careful.

**DAPHNIS:** Go, I will care for her, fear nothing, my good woman .

(places a purse in her hand)

**PHEBE:** What two charming spouses we've got here!

Watch out for yourself carefully, madame.

**GLYCERA:** What do you intend to tell me? She makes me tremble.

Love is very timid, and my heart is very tender.

**PRESTINE:** With your lover nearby, what can bother you?

No fear in that case would grip me.

(sings)

The first husband I shall have,  
Ah! good gods how I will sing!  
I'll neglect myself,  
I'll let myself go.  
The first husband I shall have,  
Ah! great gods how I will sing!

**CURTAIN**

**ACT II**

Daphnis escorted by his father, Glycera by hers, followed by Prestine, leave the temple and run about, also the young men of the wedding.

**DAPHNIS' FATHER:** Children, believe me, we know the ropes.

Doing as our very prudent ancestors did.

Everything was better then.

Those were the good times, and the ancient centuries,

Being older than we are, were always right.

I tell you that—here lad—will be—

Here—the girl; here—me, father of the lad.

(to Glycera)

There you; and then Prestine over here by her sister,

To learn her part and know how to perform it well.

But I notice that the high-priest is ready.

What a grand and noble air he has!

A majestic holiness is imprinted on an august face.

He resembles his god, whose complexion he has.

**GLYCERA'S FATHER:** Yes, it's plain he's served with great fervor.

Silence, listen carefully.

(GREGOIRE enters followed by the priests of Bacchus. The two lovers put their hands on the buffet which serves as an altar. Gregoire is dressed as high-priest.)

**GREGOIRE:** Intended, and you, intended,

Who come to light at the altar of Bacchus,

The most beautiful flame and the purest ardor,

Be very welcome here.

First of all, before each swears

To observe the rites received,

Before creating the conjugal union,

I am going to present to you the nuptial bowl.

**GLYCERA:** These rites are to love; what needs an oath

To fulfill a duty so precious and so long lasting?

This oath is constantly in my heart, unalterably

Written in feelings

And unerasable characters.

Alas! if you like, my mouth will do it a hundred times.

I will repeat them every day of my life.

And don't think the number would bore me;

They will be all for my lover.

**GREGOIRE:**

(aside) How the happiness of these two increases my fury!

Gods! Let them be punished. Drink, beautiful Glycera,

And drink love in long draughts.

Drink, tender spouses, you will swear later.

You are receiving from the gods infinite favors.

(he goes to take the two cups prepared at the back of the buffet)

**DAPHNIS' FATHER:** Yes, our fathers drank in their ceremonies.

They were worth more than ours are today.

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After one no longer drinks, boredom makes  
The best companies yawn.  
Songs in refrains of dining are banished;  
I used to laugh; I was always happy  
And I no longer laugh since I got old;  
I'm trying to find the reason;  
What do you think is the cause, old pal?

**GLYCERA'S FATHER:** Why—it comes—with time. I am very serious,  
Quite often, despite myself, without knowing the cause;  
It makes a change amongst us.  
But there remain, after all, some touching pleasures.  
The soul breathes easily in the happiness of others,  
And when we marry our adorable children,  
I see we are happy without laughing.

(GREGOIRE presents a small cup to Daphnis and another to Glycera .)

**GREGOIRE:**

(after they've drunk)

Return the cup to me. What! you are shivering.  
There, swear now, you, Daphnis, begin.

**DAPHNIS:**

(singing a measured refrain, nobly and tenderly)

I swear by the gods, and especially by Glycera,  
To love her forever as I love her this day.  
All the flames of love  
Have spread through this wine  
As I emptied my cup.  
O you, who deserved Ariane's heart,  
Divine Bacchus, charming conqueror,  
You reign over meals, loves and war.  
Divine Bacchus, charming conqueror  
I invoke you after my Glycera.

(Symphony)

Descend, Bacchus to these beautiful abodes;  
Bring the mother of cupids,  
Bring with you all the gods;  
They can burn for Glycera;  
I won't be jealous of them.  
Her heart prefers me,  
Prefers me, prefers me to the gods.

**GREGOIRE:** It's your turn to swear, Glycera,  
Before Bacchus himself, to the great god of love.

**GLYCERA**

(sings) I swear an implacable hate,  
To this villainous ape,  
To this dummy, this sot;  
I find him insupportable,  
I swear an implacable hate,  
To this dummy, this sot.  
Yes, father, yes father,  
I would much prefer

THE TWO WINE CASKS: Sketch of a comic opera by Voltaire

To marry Lucifer in hell.  
Don't aggravate my rage further.  
Yes, I'd rather see the few charms I have  
In the mug of the dog Cerebus,  
Than between the arms  
Of this villain who thinks to please me.  
**DAPHNIS:** What have I heard! great gods!

**THE TWO FATHERS:**

(together) Ah! My daughter!

**PRESTINE:** Ah! My sister!

**GLYCERA:**

(recoiling) Ah! the horror!

Get out of my sight! Your very aspect afflicts me!

**DAPHNIS:** What! This is the real you?

**GLYCERA:** Withdraw, I tell you

You'll give me the vapors.

**DAPHNIS:** Eh! What's happening?

Powerful gods, vengeful gods,

Are you so jealous?

Are you separating me from the one I love?

My charming mistress, idol of my senses,

Come back to yours, get hold of yourself.

See, Daphnis at your feet, eyes filled with tears.

**GLYCERA:** I cannot abide you. I think I told you that.

Plainly enough, clearly enough.

Leave or I'm leaving.

**DAPHNIS' FATHER:** Are you trying to test me

By these frightful vexations?

Did you intend to jest with my profound sorrow?

**GLYCERA:** You won't go; I'm leaving;

I'd go to the ends of the earth to be far from you.

(she leaves)

**(QUARTET) THE TWO FATHERS, PRESTINE, DAPHNIS**

I am completely confused. I tremble. I'm dying.

(all together)

What an alteration! What dangers!

Is this the marriage so sweet, so full of charms?

**PRESTINE:** No, I will no longer laugh; flow, flow, my tears.

(all together)

Powerful god, give us your favors.

**GREGOIRE:**

(singing) When I see four persons,

Weeping like this, as they sing,

My heart breaks.

Bacchus, you are abandoning them.

More must be done.

(he goes away)

**DAPHNIS' FATHER:**

THE TWO WINE CASKS: Sketch of a comic opera by Voltaire

(to

(Glycera's father)

Listen, I have experience, because I have seen many things:  
Spirits, sorceries, and metempsychosis.  
The god that I revere, who reigns in these parts,  
Seems to me, after love, the most malign of gods.  
In my time, I've seen him disturb many brains;  
He produces often enough lively quarrels;  
But that diminishes after an hour or two.  
Perhaps the cup was of a heady wine,  
Either strong or sparkling, and that went to the head.  
My daughter drank too much of it;  
The tempest proceeds from there  
That in our happy days darkens the most beautiful.  
The wedding cup disturbed her brain;  
She's mad, it is true, but god be thanked, everything passes.  
I've never seen love nor hate without end.  
She will love you again; you will be back in her good graces,  
Those that she had fermented in her wine.

**PRESTINE:** Father, you've got a lot of experience;

You couldn't reason better.  
I have neither logic nor science,  
But I have eyes and ears.  
By this temple I saw the street sweeper,  
Who in a portentous voice,  
Told my big sister, in a very soft tone,  
To take good care of herself, if she was marrying.  
I put little value on such words;  
I cannot be distrustful  
Of whatever was capable of warning  
That my big sister will go crazy.  
And then I said to myself, still being logical,  
My sister is nonetheless crazy.  
Gregoire is very malign; he pursued Glycera;  
All he got was a refusal; he must be enraged.  
He's become a great lord,  
Who sometimes like to avenge an insult.  
As for me, I would avenge myself  
If they snatched a heart from me.  
See if there's some value  
In my little conjecture.

**DAPHNIS:** Yes, Prestine is right.

**GLYCERA'S FATHER:** This girl will go a long way.

**DAPHNIS' FATHER:** She will some day be a superior woman.

**DAPHNIS:** All of you leave; leave me the care

Of punishing that infamous one here;  
I am going rip out the soul of this monstrous enemy;  
Leave me.

**GLYCERA'S FATHER:** Who would have believed that a day so fortunate  
Was destined for so many ills?

**DAPHNIS' FATHER:** Alas! I've seen so much in the course of my life!

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History is full of all times past.

(GREGOIRE returns in his original clothes.)

**DAPHNIS:** O misery! O transports of jealousy.

Hola! Hey! Mr. High-priest

Mr. Gregory—come closer.

**GREGOIRE:** What profane person knocks in these parts

And speaks to me as master?

**DAPHNIS:** It's me. Do you know me?

**GREGOIRE:** Who, you? No, my friend.

I don't know you from this strange tone

That you are taking with me.

**DAPHNIS:** You are going to know me!

You will die by my hand;

I'm going to bludgeon you to death, traitor!

I'm going to exterminate you, swindler!

**GREGOIRE:** You are lacking in respect to Gregoire, to my position!

**DAPHNIS:** Go, this steel you see will be even more lacking.

Your cowardly audacity must be punished;

Unworthy tool of Bacchus,

Tremble and give me back my wife.

**GREGOIRE:** Eh, but to return her to you,

It would be necessary to have had

The pleasure of taking her—

You see, I haven't.

**DAPHNIS:** No, you won't have her.

But it's you who tore her from me;

It's you who changed her, and almost in my arms:

She loved me more than her life,

Before having tasted your wine.

We know your malign spirit;

Hardly had she drunk of the liquor you mixed,

When her hate against me suddenly exhaled;

She flees me, outrages me, overwhelms me with horrors;

It's you who ensorcelled her;

Your likes have long time been poisoners.

**GREGOIRE:** What! Your wife hates you!

**DAPHNIS:** Yes, perfidious one! Rabidly.

**GREGOIRE:** Well! that's sometimes the result of marriage;

You can inform yourself of that.

**DAPHNIS:** No, you alone have done it;

You've placed an invincible obstacle to my happiness.

**GREGOIRE:** My friend, you think that a woman indeed

Cannot hate you without a miracle?

**DAPHNIS:** I think that in a moment

Your blood is going to satisfy my righteous wrath.

(ARIEETA)

**GREGOIRE:** He will do as he says,

For I no longer have my handsome gown

For which the people revere me,



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And my character is without credit  
Compared to this man in his wrath;  
He will do as he says,  
For I no longer have my handsome gown.  
Be appeased, forbear.—Well! I promise you  
That today your Glycera, with her senses returned  
To her spouse, to her loved returned,  
is going to cherish you more than ever.

**DAPHNIS:** O heaven! Is it really true? My dear friend, Gregoire,  
Speak; what is to be done?

**GREGOIRE:** The two of you must  
Drink a second glass together.

**DUO GREGOIRE, DAPHNIS:**

On this altar Gregoire swears On this altar Gregoire swears  
That she'll love you; That she'll love me;  
Nothing lasts Nothing lasts  
In nature, In nature,  
Everything will pass, Everything will pass,  
Your injury will be repaired; My injury will be repaired;  
She'll make you She'll make me  
Forget it. Forget it.  
Nothing lasts Nothing lasts  
In nature, In nature,  
Nothing will last, Nothing will last,  
Everything will pass, Everything will pass.

A woman's caprice  
Is a momentary affair;  
The weather vane of her soul  
Turns and turns in the slightest wind.

**CURTAIN**

**ACT III**

**GLYCERA'S FATHER:** Yes, there were vapors; it's a malady  
Which the ancient doctors never heard of;  
That comes on suddenly—when you're feeling fine;  
A second dose instantly cured it.  
Oh! How that made you well!

**DAPHNIS' FATHER:** Yes, these types of illnesses are called frenzies.  
My late wife once was seized with them often;  
When her illness took her, she was a true demon!

**GLYCERA'S FATHER:** My wife, too.

**DAPHNIS' FATHER:** There was a torrent of invectives  
A racket, screams, such lively quarrels.

**GLYCERA'S FATHER:** Just the same.

**DAPHNIS' FATHER:** You had to get out of the house.  
The good woman said to me: I hate you with a courage  
From a depth of truth—that sprang from the heart.  
Thanks to heaven, you no longer have this humor,  
And nothing will trouble your head and your household.

**GLYCERA:**

(rising from a bench on the lawn where she was inclined)

I hardly understand this funereal language.  
What's going on? What did I do? What did I say?  
Have I displeased the lover that I adore?  
Alas! I must have lost my wits!  
Love made my marriage; my heart applauded it.  
Great gods, you know if this heart is sincere.  
But from the second cup of wine,  
That I was made to drink at the altar,  
My lover suddenly left,  
Pointing to the darkest humor:  
I vainly ran, attached to his steps.  
Where'd he go? Haven't you seen him?

**DAPHNIS' FATHER:** He's coming.

(enter Daphnis)

Indeed, I see on his face,  
I don't know what sort of hardness, somberness, savagery .

**GLYCERA:**

(singing) Dear lover, fly to my arms.

God of my senses, god of my soul  
Vivify, double my eternal flame—  
Ah! Ah! dear spouse, don't turn away;  
Are your eyes fixed on my tear-filled eyes?  
Is your heart responding to my heart?  
Does the fire that consumes me prove to you my charms?  
Do you feel the frenzy of my happiness?

(to this tender music there succeeds an imperious, terrible symphony)

**DAPHNIS:**

(to Glycera's Father, singing)

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Listen, unhappy father-in-law  
You've given me Megara for a wife.  
Whoever sees her flees;  
Her ugliness makes her all the more proud;  
She is warped, she is vexatious,  
And to complete my cursed destiny,  
Wants to have wits.  
I was stupid enough to take her;  
I'm coming to return her.  
My stupidity is finished.  
Marriage  
Is happy and wise  
When followed by divorce.

(TRIO) THE TWO FATHERS, GLYCERA:

O heaven! O just heaven! Now there's another one.  
Ah! What sorrow is ours.

**DAPHNIS:** Father-in-law, I forever renounce seeing her.

I'm going to travel far: distant from her.  
Goodbye. Good evening.

(he leaves)

**GLYCERA'S FATHER:** What demon has disturbed my family on this day!

Alas! They are all mad.  
This morning it was my daughter;  
And tonight it's her spouse.

(TRIO)

With a common pity,  
Let's join our sighs.  
We find misfortune  
In the temple of pleasure.

**GLYCERA:** Ah, father, I'm dying of it.

**THE TWO FATHERS:** Ah! Everything makes me despair.

**ALL TOGETHER:** Useless desires!

With a common pity,  
Let's join our sighs.  
We find misfortune  
In the temple of pleasures.

**PRESTINE:**

(running in) Rejoice all of you!

**GLYCERA:**

(who has fallen on a bed of grass, turning)

Ah! Sister, I am dead!  
I can't get over it.

**PRESTINE:** Never mind,

I intend for you to dance with father and me.

**DAPHNIS' FATHER:** She's really taking her time, my word;

Prestine, would you be crazy, too, in your own way?

**PRESTINE:** I am gay and of sound mind, and I know your business.

Be totally content.

THE TWO WINE CASKS: Sketch of a comic opera by Voltaire

**DAPHNIS' FATHER:** Ah! Evil little heart!

When you see us, in prey to so many pains,  
Can you be so cruel as to show joy  
In the face of our sorrows?

**PRESTINE:**

(singing) Before speaking I want to sing,  
For I've got lots to say.  
Sister, I am coming to bring you  
Something to assuage your martyrdom.  
Before speaking I want to sing,  
Before speaking I intend to laugh:  
And once I've told you everything,  
You'll want to sing like me,  
Like me, I will see you laugh.

**DAPHNIS' FATHER:**

(while Glycera is languishing on her bed of grass, engulfed in sorrow)  
In that case, tell us, Prestine, and then we will sing,  
If you give us reasons to console us.

**PRESTINE:** First of all, my poor sister, you must hear,  
That you did very badly,  
Not to tell us

That Gregoire was a rival of this handsome Daphnis.

**GLYCERA:** Alas! What interest could there be in my heart for him?  
Was I even able to notice him? I no longer saw him.

**PRESTINE:** I told you so, Gregoire is a good-for-nothing;  
Never more dangerous than when he is really tender.  
Know that in this temple there are placed two casks.  
For all folks who are getting married;  
One is big and deep: the cask of Citeau  
Is only a pint at most, but it is full of dregs;  
It produces discord and jealous suspicions,  
Heavy vexations, cold disgust,  
And secret antipathy.  
Alas! That's the one they gave him! To how many spouses.  
And this fatal cask poisons life.  
The other cask, sister is the one of love;  
The other cask is tiny, tiny. They are very miserly with it;  
Of all the wines we drink,  
That's the one they say's the rarest.  
I want to taste of it someday.  
Know that this traitorous Gregoire  
Switched the bad cask around;  
Maliciously made you drink it.

**GLYCERA:** Ah! Of the one of love I have no need!  
Without it I would idolize my lover and my master.  
Frightful temple: horrible blow!  
Ah! Gregoire! Ah! the traitor!  
What murderous care he took!

**GLYCERA'S FATHER:** From whence did you learn all this?

**PRESTINE:** The serving woman of the temple  
Is a gossip: she told me everything.

THE TWO WINE CASKS: Sketch of a comic opera by Voltaire

**FATHER OF DAPHNIS:** Yes, of these two casks I've seen another example;  
The serving girl spoke the truth. The learned of antiquity  
Spoke at great length of this fine story.  
In former times, Jupiter, as they made me believe,  
had these two casks always at his side,  
From which emerged our benefits and our calamities.  
I read it in an old book.

**PRESTINE:** Well, father, read less,  
And let me speak. As soon as I learned the fact,  
In secret, I quickly ran to turn the spout  
Of the wine of love.  
I made Glycera's lover drink a cup:  
With love for you, sister, he's completely intoxicated;  
Repentant, ashamed, tender, he's going to come.  
He roughed up  
The nasty Gregoire at his ease,  
And as for me, I'm a bit precocious,  
I took a bit of this so sugary wine,  
And I'm keeping it for my wedding.

**GLYCERA:**

(rising) Sister, my dear sister, my despairing heart  
Is revived by you, taking on a new being:  
It's Daphnis that I see appearing:  
It's Daphnis who brightens my day.

**DAPHNIS:**

(entering) Ah! I'm dying at your feet of shame and love.

(QUINTET)

Let's all five sing, of this day of cheerfulness,  
Of this cask with its marvelous effects

**PRESTINE, THE TWO FATHERS, GLYCERA, DAPHNIS** Sister My child My lover My mistress

Let's love each other, let's bless the gods;  
Two lovers quarrel, love each other better,  
Let everyone second us.  
Let's go, let's run, let's toss in the deep  
This villainous cask,  
And let everyone be happy, if they can, in the world.

**CURTAIN**