

WITH THE RIGHTS OF CITIZENS; THAT ONLY CITIZENS CAN VOTE AND BE JUDGED EQUAL UNDER THE LAWS.

DIODORUS: IT'S OBVIOUS YOU HAVE NEVER BEEN HOUNDED BY SOCRATES. HE NEVER GIVES UP: WHAT IS FREEDOM? WHO IS FREE? WHAT IS EQUALITY? ALL MANNER OF SILLY QUESTIONS WHOSE ANSWER ARE JUST PLAIN OBVIOUS TO ANY INTELLIGENT MAN. I'LL TELL YOU HE HAD AGAMEMNON AND ME SO CONFUSED THAT I DEVELOPED A THUNDERING HEADACHE AND HAD TO LEAVE. BUT NOT BEFORE TELLING THE OLD PEST THAT HE WAS A MASTER OF CLEVER BUT MISLEADING ARGUMENTS.

CLEON: WHAT DID HE SAY TO THAT?

DEODORUS: HE JUST SMILED AND WISHED US BOTH WELL. WE SAW HIM SHUFFLE OVER TOWARD DAMON AND JASON WHO WERE STANDING AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE MARKETPLACE. WE WERE BOTH GLAD TO SEE HIM GO, BUT FELT SORRY FOR DAMON AND JASON. HE REALLY ISN'T A BAD OLD CHARACTER, AND HIS INTELLECT IS VAST, BUT THOSE BLASTED QUESTIONS

CLEON: I DON'T AGREE. THOSE QUESTIONS ARE THE SEEDS FROM WHICH MORE DANGEROUS THINGS CAN GROW. IT IS ABOUT TIME THE LAW DID SOMETHING TO SILENCE HIM AND END HIS HARASSMENT OF THE GOOD CITIZENS OF ATHENS. WHY, THE MERE IDEA OF ASKING WHAT DEMOCRACY IS ... BY THE WAY, DID I TELL YOU ABOUT THE NEW SLAVE I BOUGHT YESTERDAY? HE ISN'T WORTH THE SALT I TRADED FOR HIM.

NARRATOR: SCENE TWO TAKES PLACE THAT SAME AFTERNOON IN THE COUNCIL HALL, THE ACROPOLIS; THREE JUDGES SIT BEHIND A TABLE AND THE ROOM IS FULL OF CITIZENS.

JUDGE #1: HAVE THE GUARDS BRING IN SOCRATES.

NARRATOR: SOCRATES ENTERS. HE IS GRAY AND STOOPED. HIS ROBE IS WORN, AND HE IS BAREFOOT. GUARDS ESCORT HIM FIRMLY BUT RESPECTFULLY.

JUDGE #2: SOCRATES OF ATHENS, YOU ARE CHARGED WITH TWO TREASONOUS CRIMES. YOU DO NOT RECOGNIZE THE GODS OF THE STATE, AND YOU HAVE CORRUPTED THE YOUTH OF ATHENS.

SOCRATES: THE JUDGES OF ATHENS ACCUSE ME UNJUSTLY. I HAVE NEVER DISPUTED THE EXISTENCE OF THE GODS. I MYSELF AM ORDERED BY THEM TO FULFILL MY PHILOSOPHER'S MISSION--TO CAUSE MEN TO SEARCH INTO THEMSELVES FOR TRUTH. I CANNOT BE CHARGED WITH IMPIETY, FOR I AM DOING THE GODS' WORK. MY LIFE IS PROOF OF MY BELIEF.

JUDGE #3: THAT IS ALL VERY WELL, SOCRATES, BUT IT HAS BEEN REPORTED THAT YOU HAVE QUESTIONED OTHERS CONCERNING THEIR BELIEFS. YOUR QUESTIONS HAVE CAUSED DOUBT AND OFFENSE.

SOCRATES: IT IS NOT MY WISH TO CREATE DOUBT OR OFFENSE TO ANY OF THE GOOD CITIZENS OF THIS GREAT CITY. I SEEK TRUTH AND WISDOM. MY QUESTIONS SHOULD NOT WEAKEN BELIEF BUT GIVE IT NEW STRENGTH.

JUDGE #2: I SEE YOU BELIEVE YOURSELF TO BE A KIND OF CONSCIENCE FOR ALL OF ATHENS.

SOCRATES: YES, THROUGH MY INQUIRIES EACH MAN WILL KNOW HIMSELF AND THROUGH THAT KNOWLEDGE ATHENS AND HER GODS WILL GROW GREATER

JUDGE #2: BUT SOCRATES, ALL OF ATHENS KNOWS YOU CARE NOTHING ABOUT GREATNESS OR WEALTH.

SOCRATES: BUT I CARE VERY MUCH ABOUT THE TRUTH, AND GREATNESS COMES THROUGH FINDING THE TRUTH.

NARRATOR. A WOMAN ENTERS. SHE IS IN HER EARLY 40'S, CARRYING A SMALL CHILD.

XANTHIPPE: JUDGES OF ATHENS, EXCUSE MY PRESENCE, BUT I COME TO PLEAD FOR MY HUSBAND, SOCRATES. I KNOW FULL WELL HOW DIFFICULT HE CAN BE, BUT HE IS A GOOD MAN. HE IS PIOUS IN HIS BELIEFS AND HE IS AN HONORABLE CITIZEN OF ATHENS. I BEG FOR HIS RELEASE. HE IS OLD. LET HIM COME WITH ME, AND I WILL TRY TO KEEP HIM SILENT IN HIS REMAINING YEARS.

JUDGE #2: REMOVE HER. A WOMAN HAS NO PLACE IN SUCH MATTERS.

NARRATOR: THE GUARDS GENTLY BUT QUICKLY TAKE HER OUT.

JUDGE #1: SOCRATES, YOU ARE ALSO CHARGED WITH CORRUPTING THE YOUTH OF ATHENS. WHAT DO YOU SAY TO THIS ACCUSATION?

SOCRATES: THIS CHARGE HURTS ME DEEPLY. MY LIFE HAS BEEN A SEARCH FOR TRUTH AND WISDOM.. MY STUDENTS ARE AS DEAR TO ME AS BEAUTY IS TO ATHENS. I COULD NO MORE CORRUPT THEM THAN AN ATHENIAN COULD DEFILE THE PARTHENON. I WANT FOR THEM THE HIGHEST OF PLEASURES AND THE ONE TRUE GOOD: TRUTH!

JUDGE #i: BUT SOCRATES, YOU HAVE CAUSED THEM TO QUESTION THE COUNCIL, THE MAGISTRATES, THE VERY DEMOCRACY OF ATHENS. THEY FOLLOW YOU THROUGH ATHENS AND LISTEN TO QUESTIONS. THEY SEE THE IRRITATION YOU CAUSE. THEY LEARN YOUR METHOD OF QUESTIONING, AND THEY BECOME LIKE YOU. WHEN THEY ARE OLDER, THEY WILL BECOME CITIZENS AND WILL TAKE A RESPONSIBLE ROLE IN THE GOVERNMENT. HOW CAN THEY DO THIS IF THEY ARE CONSTANTLY TEARING DOWN OUR DEMOCRACY BY SUCH QUESTONS? IT IS COMMONLY KNOWN THAT YOU HAVE CRITICIZED OUR DEMOCRACY AS CORRUPT. WE CANNOT CONTINUE TO LET YOU TEACH OUR YOUNG MEN.

SOCRATES: IT IS TRUE THAT I ENCOURAGE MY STUDENTS TO QUESTION EVERYTHING, AND THAT I TEACH THEM METHODS I USE MYSELF. I DO THIS NOT TO MAKE THEM DISLOYAL TO ATHENS, BUT TO MAKE THEM THINK. IN ORDER TO FIND WISDOM AND TRUTH THEY MUST QUESTION. DO THE JUDGES SEE THE SEARCH FOR TRUTH AS A CORRUPTING INFLUENCE?

JUDGE #3: I WARN YOU, SOCRATES; DO NOT BE INSOLENT WITH US!

NARRATOR: NOISE AND CONFUSION FILL THE CHAMBERS AS TWO YOUNG MEN HURRY TOWARD THE JUDGES.

JUDGE #1: WHO ARE THESE MEN?

PLATO: I AM PLATO AND (POINTING TO COMPANION:) THIS IS XENOPHON. WE ARE STUDENTS OF SOCRATES.

JUDGE #1: WHAT DO YOU WANT? YOU ARE INTERRUPTING A TRIAL.

XENOPHON: WE HAVE COME TO SPEAK ON BEHALF OF OUR BELOVED TEACHER, SOCRATES. WE FEAR FOR HIS LIFE AND BELIEVE WE ARE BEST ABLE TO SPEAK OF HIS TEACHING.

JUDGE #2: VERY WELL, WE WILL ALLOW YOU TO SPEAK.

XENOPHON: SOCRATES IS A GOOD AND KIND TEACHER. I HAVE NEVER SEEN HIM DO WRONG TO ANY MAN OR FAIL TO WANT OTHER MEN TO DO GOOD. HE MAKES US WORK HARD TO FIND THE TRUTH. WE LEARN TO QUESTION EVERYTHING: WHAT IS JUST? WHAT IS UNJUST? WHAT IS COURAGE? WHAT IS COWARDICE? WHAT IS GOOD GOVERNMENT? WHO SHOULD GOVERN? HE MAKES US THINK ABOUT OURSELVES AND OUR WORLD.

JUDGE #3: HAS SOCRATES EVER TAUGHT YOU TO QUESTION OUR DEMOCRACY?

PLATO: SOCRATES TEACHES US TO QUESTION EVERYTHING FOR OURSELVES. HE DOES NOT SAY WHAT IS GOOD OR WHAT IS BAD FOR US. WE EACH MUST REACH WISDOM THROUGH OUR OWN PATH.

XENOPHON: OH, IT IS TRUE THAT SOCRATES MAY TELL US WHAT HE BELIEVES IS TRUE, BUT HE NEVER EXPECTS US TO ACCEPT WHAT HE SAYS. HE TEACHES US MORE BY EXAMPLE THAN ANYTHING ELSE. HIS LIFE IS DEDICATED TO REASON. HE REJECTS MATERIAL WEALTH AND POWER. HE TEACHES US TO LOOK BEYOND THE OBVIOUS AND EXAMINE OUR OWN BELIEFS. HE IS THE GREATEST OF TEACHERS. PLATO AND I KEEP A RECORD OF ALL THAT HE SAYS, SINCE HE CARES NOTHING FOR FAME AND WRITES NOTHING.

SOCRATES: (INTERRUPTING): I AM TIRED. I HAVE LED A LIFE SACRIFICED TO THE HIGHEST VIRTUES OF

TRUTH AND WISDOM. I SAY TO THE PEOPLE OF ATHENS, EITHER LET ME GO FREE OR CONDEMN ME, BUT WHATEVER YOU DO, I WILL NOT CHANGE MY WAYS.

JUDGE #3: SOCRATES, BE SILENT. YOU ARE AGAIN SHOWING A BELLIGERENT AND HAUGHTY ATTITUDE TOWARD THIS COUNCIL.

SOCRATES: (SMILING): I DO NOT FEAR YOU, FOR IF YOU KILL ME YOU WILL HURT YOURSELVES MORE THAN YOU WILL INJURE ME. ATHENS IS LIKE A MIGHTY STEED WHICH NEEDS TO BE PRODDED TO ACTION. I HAVE BEEN SENT BY THE GODS TO BE A SORT GADFLY WHO CAN STIR ATHENS TO ACTION WHEN SHE HAS BECOME TOO SETTLED IN HER THOUGHTS. STRENGTH COMES FROM ADVERSITY.

NARRATOR: THE CROWD BEGINS TO STIR AND THERE ARE CALLS FOR SOCRATES' DEATH.

JUDGE #2: ENOUGH! WE HAVE ALL HEARD THE HAUGHTY WORDS OF SOCRATES. THERE IS NOTHING MORE TO BE SAID. THE COUNCIL WILL NOW VOTE.

NARRATOR: SOCRATES IS LED OUT BY THE TWO GUARDS. THE CROWD JEERS AS HE LEAVES.

PLATO: LET ME SPEAK! LET ME SPEAK! HE IS THE BEST OF ALL THE MEN I HAVE EVER KNOWN ...

JUDGE #1: NO! IT IS OVER.

NARRATOR: THE COUNCIL NOW VOTES.

SCENE THREE FINDS US IN A LATE AFTERNOON ONE MONTH AFTER THE TRIAL IN A SMALL PRISON CELL.

PLATO: THIS PAST MONTH YOUR DISCIPLES HAVE COME TO THIS CELL EVERY DAY. YOU HAVE NOT SPOKEN OF YOUR DEATH, BUT OF PHILOSOPHY. SOCRATES, YOU ARE SO CALM!

SOCRATES: WHY SHOULD I NOT BE CALM? I DON'T FEAR DEATH. I AM GIVING UP ONLY THE MOST DIFFICULT PART OF LIFE--THE PART THAT WILL SEE MY INTELLECT SLOWLY FADE. NO, I PREFER TO DIE AT THE HEIGHT OF MY POWERS.

NARRATOR: CRITO AND ANOTHER FRIEND ENTER.

CRITO: SOCRATES, I AM HERE TO SAVE YOU. I HAVE BRIBED THE GUARDS AND YOU MAY ESCAPE. COME. WE MUST HURRY!

PLATO: YES, HURRY, SOCRATES! THIS IS OUR LAST HOPE!

SOCRATES: WAIT MY YOUNG FRIENDS. WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE ME DO? HOW WOULD MY ESCAPE FURTHER THE TRUTH?

CRITO: (EXASPERATED) NOT NOW! WE CAN ANALYZE IT ALL LATER...

SOCRATES: YOU WOULD HAVE ME ACT ON BLIND IMPULSE? THIS IS NOT WHAT I HAVE TAUGHT YOU. REASON MUST RULE OUR EVERY ACTION. I CAN'T RUN FROM MY FATE. MY LIFE WAS HERE IN ATHENS. MY PURPOSE WAS TO PROTECT THIS CITY FROM HERSELF. I WILL NOT LIVE WITHOUT HER.

CRITO: SOMEONE IS COMING IT IS XANTHIPPE.

NARRATOR: XANTHIPPE ENTERS CRYING AND SOBBING.

XANTHIPPE: SOCRATES, MY HUSBAND. I HAVE COME TO BE WITH YOU IN YOUR FINAL MOMENTS. I AM FULL REGRET--YOU NEGLECTED US, IT IS TRUE, BUT YOU WERE KIND ALSO.

SOCRATES: DEAR WIFE, I REGRET THE MANY DAYS I WAS ABSENT FROM YOU AND MY FAMILY. YOU WERE THE BEST WIFE A MAN COULD HAVE. YOU TOLERATED MY WAYS AND SUFFERED MUCH BECAUSE OF ME. PLATO, TAKE XANTHIPPE HOME. I DO NOT WANT HER TO SEE ME DIE. SHE HAS HAD ENOUGH PAIN.

NARRATOR: PLATO TAKES XANTHIPPE AWAY. A GUARD ENTERS CARRYING A GOBLET.

SOCRATES: (QUIETLY REACHING FOR THE CUP) THIS HEMLOCK WILL QUENCH MY THIRST FOREVER. (DRINKS FROM THE GOBLET)

NARRATOR: SOCRATES DRINKS THE HEMLOCK. CRITO SUPPORTS SOCRATES AS HE BEGINS TO WEAKEN. SOCRATES LIES DOWN AND DIES.