



Digital Commons@

Loyola Marymount University
LMU Loyola Law School

LMU/LLS Theses and Dissertations

Spring 2021

The Poetess

Savannah Solorio

Loyola Marymount University, savsolorio@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/etd>



Part of the [Film Production Commons](#), and the [Screenwriting Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Solorio, Savannah, "The Poetess" (2021). *LMU/LLS Theses and Dissertations*. 980.
<https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/etd/980>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ Loyola Marymount University and Loyola Law School. It has been accepted for inclusion in LMU/LLS Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@Loyola Marymount University and Loyola Law School. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@lmu.edu.

FINAL THESIS
FEATURE SCREENPLAY PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Student Name: Savannah Solorio

Thesis Logline: After a thwarted assassination attempt, renowned poet Sappho is forced into exile in ancient Sicily, where her hubris and terrible advice on love from Aphrodite jeopardizes her dreams of artistic greatness.

Writer

Title

A teleplay written and produced and presented to the faculty of
the Writing for the Screen MFA Program in the School of Film &
Television at Loyola Marymount University of
Los Angeles, California

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Master of Fine Arts

Writing for the Screen

By

Savannah Solorio

Student Name



3 PDT)

Student Signature

APPROVAL TO ADVANCE TO CANDIDACY

The following student has met all the criteria to advance to candidacy for an M.F.A. in Fine Arts with an emphasis in Writing for the Screen:

Savannah Solorio

Student Name



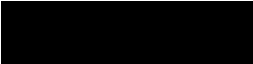
21 14:40 PDT)

SCWR 690 Fall 2020 Instructor



4:40 PDT)

SCWR 691 Spring 2021 Instructor



1 14:40 PDT)

Graduate Director Signature

Date: May 4, 2021

THE POETESS

Written by

Savannah Solorio

Inspired by, the life of Sappho.

savsolorio@gmail.com
(817) 422-6443

FADE IN:

EXT. FOREST - MORNING

SUPER: Mytilene, Lesbos 600 BCE.

The strongest city-state on the Greek island.

The sweet tune of a LYRE disturbs the still wilderness.
Collective SINGING VOICES OF WOMEN follow.

THIASOS

(singing)

... Sea-born, birth-giving Goddess,
friend of those romantic encounters
which extend to dawn, holy one...

A THIASOS (community of women), walk through the violet dawn.
Each dressed in their best peplos (tunics). Laurel garlands
adorn their heads.

THIASOS (CONT'D)

... At night causing mortals to
mate, wily mother of necessity, for
everything comes from you and you
have caused the Kósmos to
procreate...

On the lyre, their leader, SAPPHO (25, small in stature,
large in hubris).

Beside her, ATTHIS (23, kindhearted) guides a small she-goat.
A rope tethered to its neck.

Sappho looks to Atthis. They exchange a glance of desire.

Behind them, One holds a water vessel. Another carries a
basket of barley on her head, ANDROMEDA (17). The Rest hold
torches.

THIASOS (CONT'D)

... You are sovereign over the
three realms and are the origin of
everything that which is in the
sky, in the fruitful Earth, and in
the deep sea, holy attendant of
Vákkhos...

The Thiasos come to a clearing. RUSHING WATER drowns their
voices -- a river ahead. The lyre and singing cease.

At the edge of the riverbank, sits an altar with a bronze
basin. Sappho approaches it, lays her lyre beside it.

She takes a torch, lights the ready basin. It catches.

Atthis hands her the rope of the she-goat. Sappho ties it to the altar.

SAPPHO

Barley.

Andromeda offers up the basket. We catch a glimpse of the silver of a KNIFE inside. Sappho disregards it -- takes a handful of grain. She methodically spills it onto the ground, creating a circle around her and the altar.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

Water.

The Woman holding the water steps up to the edge of the circle. She pours some onto Sappho's hands. Sappho washes her arms, then face. Purifying herself.

Sappho takes another handful of water, sprinkles it onto the she-goat's head. The she-goat shakes the droplets off.

Sappho nods, pleased. She gets down on her knees. Raises her hands to the heavens.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

Come, daughter of Kýpros, seated in the Heavens, We behold you, royal Goddess Aphrodite, splendid with your beautiful countenance. I Sappho come with my Thiasos to sacrifice this she-goat in your honor. I pray for good fortune for today's Kallisteia festival. Coat my voice in gold. Enchant my hands with the same persuasive love as your own. Bless my lyre, as if it were an extension of myself.

Sappho rises. She and each of the Thiasos take a handful of barley. They toss it into the blazing basin. It CRACKLES.

Sappho takes the knife from the bottom of the basket. She cuts a few tufts of the naïve she-goat's hair, tosses it into the fire. She unties its binds, hoists the creature up toward the altar. It lets out a BLEAT of confusion.

Sappho lifts the blade high in the air, when --

A stray tuft of hair floats toward Andromeda. It goes straight up her nose. Her eyes widen. She snuffles. Tries to stop it. Too late. She lets out a clamorous SNEEZE!

Everyone turns to her, shocked. A few gasp.

ANDROMEDA
(sheepish)
Sorry.

Sappho releases the she-goat. Throws up her arms in frustration, stomps her foot like a child.

SAPPHO
You have defiled the whole ceremony!

ANDROMEDA
Maybe Aphrodite will not know?

SAPPHO
She is a *goddess*, Andromeda. She sees all!

A SNORT of laughter from Atthis.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)
You find this humorous?

ATTHIS
(laughing)
A little.

Sappho swats at her. Atthis slaps away her hands until they all erupt into laughter.

Sappho abruptly becomes serious again. The Women compose themselves. Merriment over.

SAPPHO
What are you all waiting for? Let us start again.

The Thiasos groan. They painstakingly scoop up the tiny grains of barley mixed amongst the forest floor.

EXT. MYTILINE, LESBOS - DAY

The sun now cracks open like a yolk over the valley.

The Thiasos walk back through the forest toward civilization. Sappho carries the body of the dead she-goat over her shoulder. Blood drips from the limp creature's neck.

HYSTERICAL SCREAMS come from town as they arrive. The Thiasos approach a lavish villa where a horrified ARISTOCRATIC FAMILY watches as armed SOLDIERS pillage their home.

ATTHIS

Three homes in the matter of four days.

SAPPHO

Myrsilus lives up to his name.

A Soldier meets Sappho's gaze.

SOLDIER

Move along! Or your clan's villa will be next!

Sappho glares at him. Moves her Thiasos along.

EXT. SAPPHO'S VILLA - DAY

Sappho and Atthis walk through the courtyard.

SLAVES come to her aid. They take the she-goat to the kitchen for butchering.

ATTHIS

Myrsilus poses more of a threat each day. This is not the same Mytiline we grew up to know.

SAPPHO

He will be over-thrown quicker than he usurped power.

ATTHIS

And if not?

SAPPHO

Then, we shall drink our sorrows away.

(to a Slave)

Wine. Not watered down.

A Slave bows and walks off to fetch it.

ATTHIS

Is it not too early for such pleasures?

SAPPHO

'Tis never too early for pleasure.

INT. SAPPHO'S VILLA - SAPPHO'S ROOM - DAY

Sappho closes the door, kylix (wine cup) in hand.

Atthis sits on the edge of the bed. Takes off her sandals.

ATTHIS

(re: wine)

'Tis ill-mannered not to share.

SAPPHO

Now you want pleasure?

ATTHIS

I believe it's known by now that I
always want pleasure from you,
Sappho.

Sappho smiles, walks over to stand above Atthis. She runs a hand through her hair.

SAPPHO

(tender)

My muse.

Sappho takes another mouthful of wine and leans down to meet Atthis' waiting lips. She trades the wine into Atthis' mouth. It drips from their chins.

They kiss. Hungry for lips over wine.

INT. SAPPHO'S VILLA - SAPPHO'S ROOM - DAY

Atthis dresses. She fixes her disheveled hair in the bronze mirror hung on the wall.

Sappho watches from bed.

SAPPHO

Do you think Aphrodite heard our
prayers?

ATTHIS

My dear, your moans could be heard
from Lydia.

SAPPHO

That is not what I meant.

ATTHIS

She has blessed you with good
fortune thus far. All of Lesbos
adores you. She surely will favor
you again.

Atthis walks over to Sappho's desk full of papyri scraps filled with scribbled words of lyrical poetry.

Atthis' eyes a piece of papyrus. Handwriting different from the rest. She picks it up.

ATTHIS (CONT'D)

Have you read it yet?

SAPPHO

The poem you gave me? No, I have been busy with preparations.

Atthis frowns. Sappho rises from bed. Takes the poem.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

I'll read it the moment you leave.

Atthis nods, looks at the dried goat blood on Sappho's arms.

ATTHIS

You should bathe. Prepare for this evening. I will leave you.

Atthis gives Sappho a quick kiss on the cheek. Leaves.

Sappho tosses the poem back onto the desk, unread.

INT. SAPPHO'S VILLA - BATHING ROOM - DAY

Sappho rests in the bathtub. SLAVES scrub the leftover blood from her arms with cloths.

A small table at the edge of the tub holds a bowl of various fruits. Sappho feasts on figs. She closes her eyes, relaxed.

APHRODITE (O.S.)

Would you care to share?

Sappho's eyes snap open. A golden glow fills the room. Only Sappho is aware.

Beside the tub stands, APHRODITE (30s the goddess of love, beauty, passion, and her personal favorite... pleasure).

***Author's Note:** Aphrodite is only seen and heard by Sappho. No one else. Aphrodite's dialogue will be in Italics.

SAPPHO

(to Slaves)

Leave me.

The Slaves nod, exit.

Aphrodite points to the fruit. Her immense glowing stops but her beauty is still overwhelming. Sappho tosses her an apple.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

I have prayed to thee all morn.

APHRODITE

*I was held over by a handsome
soldier in Athens.*

(re: bathtub)

Must I invite myself in?

Sappho hugs her knees to her chest. Makes room. Aphrodite steps in fully clothed. Water splashes over the tub's edge.

APHRODITE (CONT'D)

Delightful.

(remembering)

What was I speaking of?

She bites into the apple.

SAPPHO

Not of importance.

APHRODITE

(chewing)

*Ah, yes, the soldier from Athens.
The muscles of his arms must have
been as wide as my head!*

Sappho's unimpressed. Aphrodite rolls her eyes.

APHRODITE (CONT'D)

*Yes, I heard your prayers and
received your sacrifice oh great
Sappho.*

SAPPHO

A she-goat. 'Tis your favorite, is
it not?

APHRODITE

(cheekily)

'Tis.

SAPPHO

Tell me. What do you foresee for
Kallisteia? Shall I allure the
crowd?

APHRODITE

*You ask this of each performance,
yet yield the same results. Fame,
love, all a girl could ever dream
of. What more could you desire?*

SAPPHO

*Homer has been dead for ages yet he
and his work are still spoken of.*

APHRODITE

You seek his immortality.

SAPPHO

Yes. And as the first woman to play
on the main stage of Kallisteia, I
shall be steps closer to it. And I
shall make sure all know you are
the goddess who allowed for that.

Aphrodite is pleased by the thought of more attention. She
takes a large bite of her apple.

APHRODITE

(mouth full)

How will Sappho perform?

Aphrodite puts her free fingers to her temple. Closes her
eyes. Deep in thought.

APHRODITE (CONT'D)

(concerned)

Oh.

SAPPHO

What?

APHRODITE

I have seen the destiny of today.

SAPPHO

How shall I do?

APHRODITE

You shall, you shall --

Aphrodite drops the apple. It splashes into the water and
bobs to the surface. Her eyes burst open, she clutches her
throat. Gasps for air.

Sappho watches in horror. Aphrodite murmurs something
unintelligible. Sappho leans in closer.

SAPPHO

What?! What is it?

APHRODITE

You shall... choke!

Aphrodite spews her half-chewed apple into Sappho's face. Sappho glares, appalled. Aphrodite breaks into laughter.

Sappho rises from the tub, throws on a peplos.

APHRODITE (CONT'D)

Wait! By Zeus, you mortals are so touchy.

SAPPHO

I shall not choke?

APHRODITE

Come now, you are no man, you do not need me to stroke thy ego.

Aphrodite mimes a hand job.

APHRODITE (CONT'D)

Come here.

Sappho leans down to her. Aphrodite brushes the apple from her face.

APHRODITE (CONT'D)

Your fate will be determined by your skills... and animal sacrifices of course.

SAPPHO

You are right.

Aphrodite CLAPS.

APHRODITE

That is my devoted follower!

A CREAK of the door disturbs them. Cleis walks in.

SAPPHO

Mother?

Cleis looks around, oblivious to Aphrodite.

CLEIS

(to Sappho)

Who were you speaking with?

SAPPHO

I was... practicing lyrics.

CLEIS

Hm, good. Once you're done wake your brothers for Kallisteia.

SAPPHO

That's what slaves are for.

CLEIS

I did not ask the slaves. I asked
you.

Sappho looks to Aphrodite for help. POOF she disappears.

Sappho groans, sinks under the water.

INT. SAPPHO'S VILLA - DAY

Sappho approaches a wooden door. She KNOCKS lightly. No
answer. She enters as if hearing an invitation.

INT. SAPPHO'S VILLA - EURYGIUS' ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Sappho walks into a nearly identical room to hers.

EURYGIUS (15) holds to his last years of boyish innocence,
nonverbal but gives looks that say a thousand words. He lies
in bed.

SAPPHO

Eurygius, Mother wants you to
prepare for Kallisteia.

Eurygius looks up, locks eyes with Sappho, gives a LOOK... a
curious wisdom.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

You know?

Eurygius nods, gives another look.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

Yes, Atthis was here earlier. How'd
you --

He cuts her off with the sharp raise of an eyebrow.
Embarrassment flushes over her. Sappho is somehow fluent in
the boy's peculiar/special language of silence.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

We share a rather thin wall. Yes,
of course... sorry. Forget you
heard that. Do get dressed though.

INT. SAPPHO'S VILLA - DAY

Sappho KNOCKS at another door, nothing. She invites herself in.

INT. SAPPHO'S VILLA - CHARAXUS' ROOM - CONTINUOUS

In bed is CHARAXUS (27) the head of the family only by birth right.

He's butt naked with a prostitute, KORINNA (50s). They're sound asleep. Loud SNORES escape Charaxus' mouth.

SAPPHO

Charaxus?
(beat)
Charaxus!!!

CHARAXUS

(grumbles)
Go away!

SAPPHO

Get up. Mother wants you to prepare for Kallisteia.

Sappho shuffles through an alabaster chest at the edge of his bed, throws him some clothes. He ignores it.

Fed up she jumps on the bed, pinning down Charaxus. He struggles, strong enough to push her off but, she's too quick -- Sappho strings down a large loogie. It dangles dangerously close to his face.

Charaxus' SHRIEKS, squirms, gags from the thought of it.

CHARAXUS

Fine! Fine! Put that thing back in your mouth and I'll dress!

Sappho sucks it back up, hops off the bed. Charaxus hugs his legs to his chest, traumatized.

Korinna, used to the oddity of the job, is unfazed.

SAPPHO

Korinna. Sorry if my brother disappointed you again.

Korinna flashes a smile, missing a few teeth.

KORINNA

Grown accustomed to it.

Sappho holds back a giggle.

Korinna dresses, walks to the door, remembers, turns--

KORINNA (CONT'D)

You promised extra pay, for--

She tries to inconspicuously point to her BUTT. Charaxus springs up, stops her hand gestures.

CHARAXUS

Yes, yes!

Charaxus grabs his coin pouch, empties it, nothing. He moves around the room searching for payment.

CHARAXUS (CONT'D)

Here we are!

Charaxus pulls out a tiny wooden chest. Small enough to fit in the palm of his hand. He hands it to Korinna. She opens it. Expecting money.

Inside is little orange nuggets of resin.

KORINNA

What the fuck is this?

CHARAXUS

Frankincense! The supreme scent of the god, Sol. From my travels in Persia.

Korinna tucks the tiny chest in between her breasts.

KORINNA

You have two days to pay me.

Korinna leaves.

CHARAXUS

But, but, but, that cost me a small fortune!

SAPPHO

Dear brother, *butts* are what got you into this mess.

CHARAXUS

Shut up!

Sappho playfully swats his butt, he chases her around the room as she laughs.

EXT. KALLISTEIA FESTIVAL - DAY

SUPER: Messon, Lesbos.

An annual festival celebrating the Island's federation under Mytilene.

A handsome poet stands on stage, ALCAEUS (30s). He performs a solo act for a LARGE CROWD, SINGING his poetry while playing a KITHARA.

SIDE STAGE

Atthis and the Thiasos wait anxiously wearing matching white peplos. In their hair, tiny white wildflowers are weaved into braids.

Sappho walks donning her signature laurel garland, lyre in hand over to them. Just arrived.

ATTHIS

There you are.

Atthis greets Sappho with a hug.

The Crowd APPLAUDS in the background.

ATTHIS (CONT'D)

'Tis nearly time.

Alcaeus exits the stage. He throws his kithara in anger, it shatters on the ground.

ALCAEUS

Myrsilus, that bastard. Could he not give us one day of freedom?!

Everyone's eyes fill with fear. They look to the Crowd.

SAPPHO

Myrsilus, here?

ALCAEUS

Sat in the front row.

In the front row, a fat man sits, MYRSILUS, 40s, the usurping tyrant of Mytilene. Next to him, his daughter CALLIOPE (16). Beside them, armed GUARDS.

ALCAEUS (CONT'D)

If you have chosen a political poem, I suggest you choose another.

SAPPHO

I do not fear him.

ALCAEUS

You should. Be careful my friend.

Alcaeus pats Sappho on the shoulder, storms off.

MAN (O.S.)

Presenting the final performance of
the festivities, Sappho!

The Crowd erupts into more CHEERS, chanting her name.

Sappho grabs her lyre and takes the stage.

STAGE

Sappho waves to the cheering CROWD as she makes her way to
sit in a carved wooden chair.

Myrsilus' takes in the cheers. Calliope claps, smiling.

The Crowd goes SILENT as Sappho brings her lyre to position.

Sappho eyes the crowd, eyes settling on Myrsilus. She takes a
deep breath, shakes off the nerves, and PLUCKS her LYRE. It's
a quick harsh sound, demanding yet captivating.

Sappho looks to the side of the stage to her Thiasos. Her
eyes lock on Atthis, they exchange a smile.

Sappho's plucks become SOFTER. She turns back to the Crowd
and SINGS. Her voice as rich as honey.

SAPPHO

(singing)

At noontime, when the earth is
bright with flaming heat. The
cricket sets up a high-pitched
singing in his wings.

Atthis leads the Thiasos on stage. They stand behind Sappho.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

I took my lyre and said...

The Thiasos SING along with her, an enamoring harmony. The
Crowd, awestruck. Myrsilus, captivated, sits up in her chair.

SAPPHO & THIASOS
Come now, my heavenly tortoise
shell, become a speaking
instrument...

INT. KALLISTEIA FESTIVAL - SAPPHO'S TENT - NIGHT

Sappho gets drunk amongst a group of MEN. All can barely stand. SLAVES endlessly fill their kylixs with wine.

Atthis and Cleis watch from the couch, both unamused by the slobbery.

A PUDGY MAN climbs on a table, holds up his kylixs.

PUDGY MAN
A toast, to Sappho!

The Men hold up their drinks.

MAN
The greatest female poet of all
time!

Alcaeus and Charaxus, drunkenly, stumble over to Atthis and Cleis. Tailed by the sober Eurygius.

CHARAXUS
Not a difficult feat.

They sit. Charaxus sips from his kylixs.

Cleis elbows him. Eurygius gives a look. *Be nice.*

CHARAXUS (CONT'D)
What? It's not when she's the only
female poet on Lesbos.

ATTHIS
She is not the only one.

ALCAEUS
You compose?

Atthis snatches Charaxus' wine. Downs it. Gaze on Sappho.

PUDGY MAN
If Homer was 'The Poet', she'd be
'The Poetess'!

He reaches out his hand. Sappho takes it, joins him on the table.

SAPPHO

Although they are only breath, the
words in which I command are
immortal. As Homer, my name shall
echo through time!

(mimicking an echo)

Sappho, Sappho, Sappho.

MEN

Sappho, Sappho, Sappho.

Suddenly, armed GUARDS barge into the tent, followed by
Myrsilus. Silence fills the air.

MYRSILUS

Do not cease on my account.

Alcaeus approaches Myrsilus, drunk with courage.

ALCAEUS

Have you not taken enough joy from
us today?

Myrsilus nods at his Guards. One puts a finger to the swaying
Alcaeus' forehead. He pushes. Alcaeus falls backwards.

Sappho looks down at Myrsilus from the table.

SAPPHO

You disturb my celebration.

CLEIS

Sappho!

SAPPHO

Mother, shhhh. I have this under
control.

The Pudgy Man climbs down, cowers in fear behind a Slave.

Myrsilus circles the table.

MYRSILUS

I was pleased with your
performance. As was my daughter.
She desires for you to perform at
her wedding. Tomorrow.

SAPPHO

I would rather die.

Charaxus rises from the couch. Sobered by Sappho's dangerous
boldness.

CHARAXUS

She did not mean it. She's drunk.

SAPPHO

Drunk. Sh-munck. I meant it.

Myrsilus laughs. Sappho laughs with him. He abruptly stops and kicks the table. Sappho loses her balance, falls to the floor. She looks up to Myrsilus' sword in her face.

ATTHIS

Do not harm her!

Atthis jumps in front of Sappho, shielding her. Myrsilus turns his sword to her.

SAPPHO

Atthis--

MYRSILUS

You. You were in her choir.

ATTHIS

I was.

Myrsilus looks down at Sappho.

MYRSILUS

Perform at my daughter's wedding
and I shall spare the life of your
friend.

SAPPHO

Fuck you.

Myrsilus' angles the sword closer to Atthis' neck. He presses the blade to her skin. She winces in pain as the blade kisses her neck, drawing blood.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

Stop! I will perform at the
wedding! Leave her.

Myrsilus smiles, he drops his sword.

MYRSILUS

I shall expect you tomorrow. Do not
be late.

Myrsilus walks out, his Guards follow.

Sappho rises. She holds Atthis, inspecting her neck.

INT. SAPPHO'S VILLA - SAPPHO'S ROOM - NIGHT

A single spouted lamp lights the dim room. Sappho and Atthis lie in bed.

Atthis' neck wound is now dressed with white cloth. Sappho places a gentle kiss over it.

SAPPHO

You will stay here tomorrow.

ATTHIS

(angry)

I am in your choir. I shall perform alongside you.

SAPPHO

No, you will not.

ATTHIS

You cannot make that decision for me.

SAPPHO

Do not be stubborn. Please. I could not bear the thought of anything more happening to you.

Atthis calms.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

Stay here with Cleis. Keep her from fearing the worst.

ATTHIS

How may I calm her when there is fear in my own belly?

Sappho lifts the sheets, kisses down Atthis, to her belly. Rests her head on it.

SAPPHO

Belly of Atthis, leave the fear for the gods who hold our fate.

ATTHIS

Pray they be tender with it.

INT. SAPPHO'S VILLA - SAPPHO'S ROOM - NIGHT

Sappho sleeps, drool glistening from her mouth. Atthis sleeps beside her.

Charaxus nudges Sappho awake. Sappho's eyes drift open, she wipes the drool.

They whisper, quiet enough to not wake Atthis.

CHARAXUS
Come with me. It's urgent.

EXT. ALCAEUS' VILLA - NIGHT

The cloaked Sappho and Charaxus walk the streets. Torches in hand to guide them. They approach a villa, KNOCK at the door.

A small cut-out on the door opens, Alcaeus' eyes appear.

ALCAEUS
Who goes there?

SAPPHO
(annoyed)
Who does it look like?

He opens the door, guides Sappho and Charaxus in.

ALCAEUS
Follow me.

INT. ALCAEUS' VILLA - CONTINUOUS

Alcaeus guides Sappho and Charaxus through the large villa -- layout similar to her own. Common architecture in Lesbos. He takes them through the courtyard of lush green gardens.

They reach a room. He opens the door to the andron.

ALCAEUS
Make yourself comfortable.

He points to a couch.

SAPPHO
Will one of you idiots tell me what was so worth disturbing me from my beauty sleep?

ALCAEUS
We must discuss the plan for the wedding tomorrow.

SAPPHO
Plan?

CHARAXUS

I'm aware your thiasos will also be
in attendance.

SAPPHO

Get to the plan or I'll leave.

Charaxus and Alcaeus exchange a look.

ALCAEUS

We've devised a plan.

CHARAXUS

A brilliant one... You shall sneak
Alcaeus and I in amongst your
thiasos so we may kill Myrsilus.

SAPPHO

My thiasos is known to be all
women. If Myrsilus sees men amongst
us, suspicion would surely arise.

CHARAXUS

That is why we'll wear a disguise,
to appear as women.

SAPPHO

(laughing)
You are both mad.

ALCAEUS

I would do anything to save
Mytilene from this tyranny.
Wouldn't you?

SAPPHO

Yes, though I'd like to keep my
life.

ALCAEUS

I know of your ambition, Sappho.
You wish your name to be remembered
for all of eternity. This is how
you do it.

CHARAXUS

You would be a hero.

SAPPHO

(realizing)
All heroes are immortal.

APHRODITE (O.C.)

That they are.

Aphrodite appears, standing between the unknowing Alcaeus and Charaxus. She strokes their hair.

APHRODITE (CONT'D)

Heroes get statues erected in their honor, not poets. You, Sappho, have the opportunity to be both Homer and Odysseus.

ALCAEUS

What say you, Sappho, will you join the assassination?

SAPPHO

(to Alcaeus and Charaxus)
...I'm in.

INT. SAPPHO'S VILLA - SAPPHO'S ROOM - NIGHT

Sappho lies back in bed next to the still sleeping Atthis.

Sappho, wide awake, stares at the ceiling.

EXT. MYRSILUS' VILLA - DAY

Sappho approaches the estate lyre in hand with her "ALL FEMALE" Thiasos. Two new members, Alcaeus and Charaxus, sporting poorly shaven five o'clock shadows. If you don't look close enough, Alcaeus is almost pretty.

SAPPHO

Tell me this will work.

ALCAEUS

It will. My wit is superior to Myrsilus'. He would never suspect me to don female garments.

CHARAXUS

Good thing we are secure in our manhood.

Alcaeus twirls his hair in his fingers, embracing the role more than expected.

SAPPHO

Stop that.

As they approach VOICES and MUSIC emerge from the festivities. They approach the front gates where a LARGE GUARD stands.

LARGE GUARD

Who goes there?

SAPPHO

I, Sappho and my Thiasos. We are here to perform upon Myrsilus' request.

GUARD

Come in, Myrsilus wishes you to set up immediately in the courtyard.

SAPPHO

As you wish.

She curtsies, the Thiasos follow suit. The Large Guard looks at Alcaeus, curious.

LARGE GUARD

That one.

Points to Alcaeus.

SAPPHO

(nervous)

Yes?

Aphrodite appears.

APHRODITE

Be cool.

LARGE GUARD

Is she... unmarried?

SAPPHO

Oh, um, no, sorry, she's taken. Virtue stolen years ago!

Sappho laughs nervously. She looks to Aphrodite who gives two thumbs up.

GUARD

Shame. Go on.

They hurry inside.

EXT. MYRSILUS' VILLA - COURTYARD - NIGHT

At the side of the courtyard Sappho sits in a chair PERFORMING with her Thiasos.

Alcaeus and Charaxus stand among them, hiding their faces from the crowd, pretending to sing. The WEDDING GOERS listen as they drink.

The song ends. Sappho arises, bows as CLAPS fill the space. The Wedding Goers mingle. Aphrodite eyes an attractive SLAVE in the corner.

Alcaeus and Charaxus huddle the Thiasos.

ALCAEUS

This is it. Sappho, you shall sing while Charaxus and I find Myrsilus. Choir, leave, go home to your families. I thank you all for being part of the history that will take place here tonight.

The Thiasos nods, leaves. Alcaeus and Charaxus disappear into the crowd of Wedding Goers, on the hunt for Myrsilus.

SAPPHO

(to the Crowd)

I thank Myrsilus for allowing me to perform here on this truly delightful night.

Myrsilus raises his kylixs.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

Now, I shall perform solo in dedication to Calliope, the blushing bride. May this night be one to remember!

The Wedding Goers raise their kylixs. Shout in delight.

Alcaeus and Charaxus set eyes on their prey, they inch closer and closer toward Myrsilus.

Sappho sits, brings her lyre to her lap. She begins--

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

(singing)

Workmen lift high The beams of the roof, Hymenæus!

Alcaeus and Charaxus flank Myrsilus. Alcaeus reaches into his peplos. Myrsilus is too wrapped up in the music to notice.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

*Like Ares from sky Comes the groom to the bride, Hymenæus!
Than men who must die*

(MORE)

SAPPHO (CONT'D)
*Stands he taller in pride,
Hymenæus!*

Alcaeus pulls a knife. WOMAN behind them SCREAMS.

Myrsilus turns at the last second to see Alcaeus' knife heading toward his chest.

Myrsilus' hand comes up. The knife sinks into his palm. Leaving his chest protected.

Wedding Goers panic and run every which way, desperate to escape. SCREAMS echo through the courtyard. Chaos ensues.

Alcaeus pulls the knife out. Stabs down again. Myrsilus grabs his hand! Charaxus wrestles it down.

Myrsilus manages to disarm Alcaeus. The KNIFE flies across the floor. Charaxus and Alcaeus wrangle him to the ground.

Armed Guards fight their way through the Crowd.

Sappho's instincts kick in. She runs toward the pandemonium.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)
Alcaeus! Charaxus!

CHARAXUS
Sappho, the knife!

Sappho picks up the knife and thrusts it down toward Myrsilus! He WAILS in pain. Sappho staggers back.

Alcaeus and Charaxus release Myrsilus. The knife sticks out of Myrsilus'... arm!

Armed Guards holler. Closing in. Alcaeus and Charaxus, accept defeat. They grab Sappho and drag her toward the exit. They run for their lives.

ALCAEUS
His arm? His arm Sappho?!

Myrsilus stands, steadied by a Guard. Eyes filled with rage.

MYRSILUS
I shall string you all up by your
feet! And your families! All shall
die tonight!

EXT. MYRSILUS' VILLA - NIGHT

Sappho, Alcaeus, and Charaxus run into the night.

Aphrodite calmly trails behind.

Charaxus sees a MAN mounting a brown-spotted horse. He strides over, pulls the Man down. The Man falls face-first into the mud.

APHRODITE

I think I shall stay here.

SAPPHO

You said you would follow me every step of the way!

APHRODITE

Yes, well, there is a handsome slave inside that I have had my eyes on all night.

Aphrodite makes her way back inside.

Charaxus mounts the horse, reaches down for Sappho's hand. She steps on top of the fallen Man for a boost.

SAPPHO

Sorry!

Alcaeus hoists her up.

ALCAEUS

Go, flee into exile. Be quick.

Alcaeus slaps the horse's ass, then runs off to save himself. The horse SHRIEKS and bounds off into the darkness. Sappho clutches Charaxus.

Myrsilus' villa fades in the distance.

EXT. SAPPHO'S VILLA - NIGHT

Charaxus hurries to help Sappho off the horse.

SAPPHO

What will we do? Mother will be furious.

They run to the villa.

CHARAXUS

There is no choice but to keep running. We'll take the family ship and sail to the Greek Colonies in Sicily. I have a friend there who owes me his life. He will help us.

(MORE)

CHARAXUS (CONT'D)

As long as Myrsilus rules, we shall
not be safe.

INT. SAPPHO'S VILLA - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Cleis and Atthis sit at the table, eyes heavy with worry.
Sappho and Charaxus run in, tails between their legs.

CLEIS

Thank the gods!

CHARAXUS

Save your thanks.

CLEIS

What happened?

CHARAXUS

We tried to assassinate Myrsilus.
It failed. Pack your bags we must
flee now!

Cleis takes a moment to process this, then--

CLEIS

I shall wake your brothers. What of
the slaves?

Charaxus turns to them, wide-eyed.

CHARAXUS

Go! All of you, be free. No one
shall die here tonight.

They scramble out.

Cleis rushes to get Euryguis. Charaxus follows behind her.

Sappho looks to Atthis, sees the hurt in her eyes.

SAPPHO

Atthis...

Atthis, mad, walks off toward Sappho's room.

INT. SAPPHO'S ROOM - NIGHT

Sappho and Atthis furiously pack things in bags.

Atthis packs the papyri on Sappho's desk. Knowing Sappho's
work is more important to her than clothes. She picks up her
poem buried amongst it.

Sappho takes notice, bites her lip.

ATTHIS
Did you ever read it?

SAPPHO
(lying)
Of course.

ATTHIS
What did it say?

Sappho freezes. Unable to repeat a single a word.

Atthis' chin quivers. Her eyes well with tears. She places the poem in the bag.

ATTHIS (CONT'D)
You can read it in Sicily. To remember me by.

SAPPHO
Are you not coming? You could be in danger if you stay. Myrsilus knows you are in my Thiasos.

ATTHIS
I will not leave my home for your mistakes. If consequences come, I shall face them.
(beat)
You never consider me.

SAPPHO
What?

ATTHIS
Did you once stop to consider how your actions could hurt me?

SAPPHO
I did this for us. So we could live in a peaceful Mytilene.

ATTHIS
No, you did this for you. As always. I fear--

Atthis stops.

SAPPHO
You fear what?

ATTHIS

I fear you only ever loved me as
your muse.

SAPPHO

Is that not the highest compliment?

ATTHIS

To sing of someone only for others
to love you?

SAPPHO

Atthis --

ATTHIS

Enough!

Atthis tosses the bag to the floor.

ATTHIS (CONT'D)

I've had enough.

She turns for the door.

SAPPHO

Wait!

ATTHIS

I'll pray for your safe journey.

SAPPHO

(bitter)
Will you?

ATTHIS

Yes.

Atthis storms out.

EXT. LESBOS PORT - NIGHT

Sappho, Cleis, Charaxus, and Eurygius board their family
ship. Bags of any belongings they could carry in hand.

Charaxus quickly preps the ship for departure, raising the
bright red sail with the help of his brother.

CLEIS

Must we take this pathetic one?

Cleis looks at a large, more impressive ship docked next to
it.

CHARAXUS

We must slip away unnoticed.

Cleis sighs.

EXT. CHARAXUS' SHIP - SEA - DAY

Thick clouds darken the sky.

Sappho and Cleis sit eating their meal for the day. Sorry rations of stale bread and dried meat.

Eurygius and Charaxus sit at the mast-crutch, steering the ship. The wind carries the sails, guiding them at a steady pace.

The Family is tired, disheveled, and hasn't properly bathed in weeks. The journey long and taxing.

Cleis stares at her rations.

CLEIS

I have never known the feeling of
hunger in my life.

SAPPHO

Here, take some of mine.

Sappho tears off a portion of her bread, hands it to Cleis. Cleis doesn't acknowledge it.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

You cannot ignore me forever.

Sappho gets up. She takes her lyre tucked under the bench and moves to the other side of the tiny vessel.

She positions the lyre and plucks. Her fingers move swiftly until they freeze, crippled by lack of inspiration. She hums, thinking of lyrics instead. Nothing fruitful comes to mind. She gives up, tucks the lyre back under the bench.

A DOVE flies overhead. Sappho watches it soar through the clouds. She senses a presence, turns to see Aphrodite on the bench next to her.

APHRODITE

*Your brothers are quite excellent
seamen.*

Sappho turns away from the Goddess.

APHRODITE (CONT'D)

I have angered you.

SAPPHO

You abandoned me when I needed you most... all for some slave.

APHRODITE

He was most excellent in bed.

SAPPHO

Leave me to rot at sea in peace.

APHRODITE

Lesbos was too small for you anyhow! Now you can spread your wings. Show your gifts to Sicily.

SAPPHO

How am I to do that when I cannot think of a single lyric without my muse?

APHRODITE

Forget about Atthis! Sicily has the best lovers to spark inspiration. The second you arrive at the shores you shall see.

SAPPHO

You never liked her.

Thunder rumbles. Rain falls.

APHRODITE

I am incapable of dislike. I'm --

SAPPHO

The goddess of love, yes. But you always steer me from her... why? Are you jealous?

APHRODITE

You mortals might be more vain than the gods.

SAPPHO

No one is vainer than you.

Lightning strikes! Dangerously close to the ship.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

Calm yourself.

APHRODITE

It was not my doing.

Cleis holds onto her bench for dear life as the dark water becomes choppy.

Charaxus and Euryguis run to the whipping sail to lower it before the wind tears down the mast.

CHARAXUS

Sappho! Help, Euryguis!

Sappho runs over. Takes a halliard.

Charaxus runs back to mast-crutch. Guiding them through the perilous water.

SAPPHO

(to Aphrodite)

Help us! Settle the storm!

APHRODITE

Do you forgive me?

SAPPHO

No!

The boat leans dangerously to one side. Close to capsizing.

APHRODITE

Then I will not help.

SAPPHO

Fine!

APHRODITE

Fine, what?

SAPPHO

I forgive you!

Aphrodite brightens. She lifts her hands, wiggles her fingers. The rain ceases. The dark clouds turn light and part. The sun peeks through.

The Family runs to each other and embraces. Nearly avoiding death. Cleis points over the ocean.

CLEIS

Land!

In the distance, the welcoming shores of Sicily.

EXT. SICILY - PORT - DAY

SUPER: SICILY, THE GREEK COLONIES

Sappho and Eurygius wait alongside Cleis who kisses the solid ground with gratitude.

Charaxus pays SLAVES on the docks to take care of the boat. He finishes and ushers his Family toward the city.

CHARAXUS

Come. Keep close. Sicily is much larger than Lesbos.

EXT. BANITI'S VILLA - DAY

Sappho and her Family approach a massive walled-in estate. GUARDS are stationed at the doors.

CHARAXUS

I'm here to see Baniti. Tell him his friend Charaxus seeks the favor he was promised.

The Guards look at each other, skeptical. One Guard nods at the other. He goes inside.

EXT. BANITI'S VILLA - DAY

The Guard emerges from the walls with BANITI (30s, Egyptian). He wears expensive silks and jewels.

BANITI

(excited)
Charaxus?!

He wraps Charaxus in a welcoming hug.

BANITI (CONT'D)

I was not expecting you! When did you arrive?

CHARAXUS

Just sailed in.

BANITI

Who have you brought with you?

CHARAXUS

Baniti. Meet my family. My brother Eurygius. My sister, Sappho. And mother, Cleis.

Cleis eyes Baniti's expensive jewels. She smiles and offers her hand.

CLEIS

Pleasure.

Baniti kisses her knuckles. Eyes shift to Sappho, captivated.

BANITI

Sappho. Here, in Sicily? A day of good fortune.

He goes to Sappho, kisses her hand slowly.

CLEIS

They know of her work here?

Sappho smiles, cocky.

BANITI

Why, her songs fill the streets! A female poet, so unheard of in Sicily. You are revolutionary.

SAPPHO

(beaming)

Indeed.

BANITI

What brings you to our city-state?

SAPPHO

We have come to live amongst the Greek colonies--

CHARAXUS

We've gotten into some political trouble with Myrsilus. We came here for exile.

BANITI

Say no more! My home is yours. Anything for Charaxus. Did you know he once saved me from a sand snake in Egypt! I owe him my life.

CHARAXUS

(sotto to Sappho)

Told you.

Cleis nods at Charaxus, impressed with him... for once.

Baniti ushers Sappho and the Family inside the walls.

INT. BANITI'S VILLA - CONTINUOUS

They pass through a lush garden and shallow pool. Rooms arranged around a courtyard. Slaves go about their daily tasks.

The Family takes it in.

BANITI

Welcome!

CLEIS

Oh my.

BANITI

Your new home!

CHARAXUS

We won't overstay our welcome. I will search for housing first thing tomorrow.

BANITI

Nonsense! You will stay as long as you like. A treat for bringing the Poetess to Sicily.

(beat)

I'll show you to our spare rooms, leave your things, the slaves will take them.

Sappho keeps her lyre with her, her last bit of home.

INT. BANITI'S VILLA - SAPPHO'S ROOM - DAY

Baniti guides Sappho into a spacious room, much bigger than hers on Lesbos.

Sappho rests her lyre on the bed with great care.

BANITI

I wish for all of Sicily to know you are gracing my home. I shall throw a party! You will perform there! We must introduce you to Sicily properly.

SAPPHO

A party! For me? An excellent idea.

BANITI

They will instantly fall in love with your allure.

Baniti touches Sappho's arm. Tracing it, for a beat too long. She lets out an uncomfortable laugh.

She clocks a ring on his finger.

SAPPHO
Where's your wife?

Baniti takes back his hand.

BANITI
She weaves with her friends most days. You will meet her tomorrow.

Baniti stares at her, transfixed.

SAPPHO
I should get some rest.

BANITI
Of course! Till tomorrow.

Sappho walks him out, closes the door after him, and releases a sigh of relief.

She starts to unpack her bags.

As she opens one, Atthis' poem falls out. Sappho picks it up.

SAPPHO
(reading)
"Immortal Aphrodite, on your intricately brocaded throne, child of Zeus, weaver of wiles, this I pray: Dear Lady, don't crush my heart with pains and sorrows..."

Sappho stops. Holds the paper close to her chest.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)
Oh, Atthis. It's beautiful.

INT. BANITI'S VILLA - SAPPHO'S ROOM - MORNING

Sappho wakes from a much-needed night of sleep in an actual bed. At the foot of her bed, two FEMALE SLAVES wait.

SAPPHO
How long have you been there?

The Female Slaves smile but don't speak.

INT. BANITI'S VILLA - BATHING ROOM - DAY

The Female Slaves scrub Sappho head to toe. The bathwater is mirky with dirt.

Baniti peeks his head in.

BANITI

Would you like anything to drink?

Sappho shrieks. Cover herself. The Female Slaves quickly usher him out.

BANITI (CONT'D)

(being pushed out)

Let me know if you change your mind!

INT. BANITI'S VILLA - SAPPHO'S ROOM - DAY

Sappho sits, lyre in hand, hair still damp. She plucks and hums. Nothing seems to stick. She plucks harder --

SAPPHO

Fuck!

Sappho tosses the lyre on the bed.

A light KNOCK at the door disturbs her.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

No Baniti I do not need a drink!

IRIS (20s, Baniti's wife) poised and sure, walks in. Although mortal her beauty glows nearly as bright as Aphrodite's.

IRIS

Not Baniti but his wife. I'm Iris.
And you are the legendary Poetess.

Iris sits on Sappho's bed, crosses her legs. A slit in her peplos exposes her legs. Sappho's transfixed.

SAPPHO

Pleased to meet you.

IRIS

The pleasure is all mine. I'm headed to the agora and thought you would care to come? We could find you a new peplos for the party. My gift to you.

Iris eyes the lyre.

IRIS (CONT'D)

Have I interrupted your poetry?

SAPPHO

No. Not at all. I was thinking I could use a break.

Iris smiles.

EXT. AGORA - DAY

A crowded marketplace. The center of daily life in Sicily. A melting pot of PEOPLE and cultures. Languages of all kinds, mainly Greek.

Bartering VOICES of VENDORS blend together: Confectioners with pastries and sweets, Slave traders, Fishmongers, Vintners, Cloth Merchants, Shoemakers, Dressmakers, jewelry Purveyors.

Sappho and Iris stop at a tent selling peplos. The luxurious fabrics call out to Sappho.

SAPPHO

It's all so beautiful.

Iris points to a few. The MERCHANT pulls them down and hands them over.

Iris lifts them to Sappho. Seeing which one would be worthy. She decides on a blue one.

IRIS

Sapphire.

SAPPHO

Definitely my color.

Iris steps close to her. She gently pushes a strand of hair behind Sappho's ear.

IRIS

It brings out your eyes. With this on you will be the talk of Sicily after your performance.

They look into each other's eyes for a beat, then--

DAMOPHILIA (O.S.)

Pardon! Did you say Sappho? As in, the poetess Sappho?

A girl shopping at the same tent, DAMOPHILIA (16), stands too close for comfort. She looks up at Sappho in awe.

Iris cuts her eyes to the girl. Angered she ruined their moment.

IRIS
You've misheard.

Iris pays the Merchant for the sapphire peplos.

DAMOPHILIA
I know every lyric of your poetry!
I have a splendid idea! You must
mentor me! I am a poet too!

Damophilia inches closer and closer, in Sappho's face. Sappho gently pushes her away.

SAPPHO
I am no teacher.

IRIS
You heard her, girl, leave us be.

Iris takes Sappho's hand. Drags her along.

Damophilia frowns watching them go.

INT. BANITI'S VILLA - SAPPHO'S ROOM - DAY

Sappho, wearing the sapphire peplos, looks at her reflection.

SAPPHO
Fuck me. I look ...

APHRODITE (O.S.)
Like the tenth muse?

Sappho scoffs at Aphrodite behind her in the mirror.

APHRODITE (CONT'D)
Exile looks good on you.

Sappho goes back to admiring herself.

Aphrodite stands beside Sappho, puts a hand on her shoulder.

APHRODITE (CONT'D)
*Sappheiros. A color meant to evoke
feelings of devotion. A gift from
the most beautiful woman in Sicily.*

SAPPHO
You've been watching us.

APHRODITE
I follow the feelings of desire.

SAPPHO
There's no desire. I still love
Atthis. And Iris is married.

APHRODITE
*You think Atthis would forgive you
after everything?*

SAPPHO
I could only hope.

APHRODITE
*What will you do for tonight?
You've yet to come up with a new
song.*

SAPPHO
I'll sing an old one.

APHRODITE
*This is your introduction to
Sicily. You promised a new song.*

SAPPHO
Fuck! I know. I am severely
uninspired at the moment.

Aphrodite eyes Atthis' poem on the desk. Sappho notices.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)
Atthis gave it to me.

APHRODITE
Is it any good?

SAPPHO
It's brilliant.

APHRODITE
Then use it.

Before Sappho can protest, POOF, Aphrodite's gone.

EXT. BANITI'S VILLA - COURTYARD - NIGHT

The space is filled with GUESTS. A lively party.

Charaxus chats up an Exotic Dancer and, let's face it a probable prostitute.

Cleis drinks her problems away in the corner.

Eurygius is off to himself, he admires the artwork of a pot. He touches it. It falls off its pedestal and shatters. He looks around to make sure no one saw. Only a marble statue of a naked man stares back. He puts his finger to his mouth, hushing the statue and nonchalantly walks away.

Sappho walks down the stairs. Lyre in hand. Hair braided into her signature laurel wreath. She's stunning.

Baniti sees her and drops everything. He quickly runs to her side. He takes her hand. Kisses the top. It's long and drawn out. All the Party Goers watch. Uncomfortable.

Sappho clears her throat. Baniti stops. He helps her down the final step and guides her over to a--

STAGE

Sappho takes a seat.

The Party Goers crowd around the stage. Murmuring excitement.

BANITI

I introduce Sappho, the Poetess.
She has journeyed here from Lesbos.
May she grant our ears the pleasure
of her lyrics!

He leaves her on the stage and stands with Iris in front. They both look to Sappho longingly.

Sappho readies her lyre. Gulps, pulls out Atthis' poem, reads over it and PLAYS.

SAPPHO

(singing; Atthis poem)
Immortal Aphrodite, on your
intricately brocaded throne, child
of Zeus, weaver of wiles, this I
pray: Dear Lady, don't crush my
heart with pains and sorrows.
But come here, if ever before, when
you heard my far-off cry, you
listened. And you came, leaving
your father's villa...

EXT. BANITI'S VILLA - COURTYARD - LATER

Sappho laughs amongst a group of adoring Fans. Iris approaches.

IRIS

Might I steal you away?

Iris reaches out her hand. Sappho takes it.

EXT. BANITI'S VILLA - GARDENS - NIGHT

Iris guides Sappho through the vast garden, torches lighting the way. The moon shines down brightly over their heads.

The silence eats at Sappho who tries to find words.

SAPPHO

Wonderful party.

IRIS

Baniti likes to show off, now especially with you in his grasp.

SAPPHO

I assure you, I am in no man's grasp.

IRIS

How is that? How is the most divine woman to walk this earth unwed?

SAPPHO

In Lesbos women have more freedom. Especially the aristocracy.

IRIS

You are lucky. Women here are born destined to be wives, our fate tied to a man.

SAPPHO

I'm sorry.

IRIS

My husband is a good man. He treats me well. He has his indiscretions, as do I. We don't care enough to ask. It's an unspoken understanding.

SAPPHO

What are his indiscretions?

IRIS

Women other than his wife. As you could tell.

SAPPHO

You must know. I show no interest in Baniti.

IRIS

I do not doubt that.

SAPPHO

And you?

IRIS

Hm?

SAPPHO

What are your indiscretions?

IRIS

(smiling)

Come with me.

Iris takes Sappho's hand. Pulls her deep into the garden till they are encased by tall flowers. Hidden.

IRIS (CONT'D)

The moment I saw you I could not help but wonder if all the stories were true. I wish to think they are. I desire them to be. The thought that you and I are more alike than we appear has kept me up since you've arrived.

Iris takes Sappho's hand, steps closer to her. Iris leans in for a kiss.

Sappho steps back, surprised.

Iris retreats -- Pride hurt.

IRIS (CONT'D)

I apologize. Seems as though my idea of you was a myth.

SAPPHO

I am no myth. It is not that I don't want to kiss you. I do. But my heart belongs to someone on Lesbos.

IRIS
They are lucky.
(an awkward beat)
I should return to the party.

Iris leaves.

Sappho weaves her way through the flowers back to the courtyard.

Damophilia approaches, a huge smile plastered on her face.

DAMOPHILIA
Sappho! There you are! Your performance was mesmerizing!

SAPPHO
You received an invitation?

DAMOPHILIA
(laughing)
No. I snuck in, silly!

SAPPHO
Of course you did.

DAMOPHILIA
My father, he does not believe women can be poets. That is why I beg you to mentor me. I wish to learn from you so I can prove him wrong.

SAPPHO
Look, girl --

DAMOPHILIA
Damophilia.

SAPPHO
As I said before, I am no teacher. Greatness cannot be taught.

DAMOPHILIA
But --

SAPPHO
Maybe if you wrote as much as you spoke, your father would believe in your talent.

Sappho walks back to the party. Leaving Damophilia hurt.

INT. BANITI'S VILLA - SAPPHO'S ROOM - NIGHT

Sappho stumbles into her room, drunk from the party. She picks up her lyre. Plucks thoughtlessly, hums, her face crinkles as she tries to think of words, nothing comes.

SAPPHO

Words, why do you escape me?

Sappho plucks more harshly. A string SNAPS. It whips against her hand. She drops the lyre to the floor and yelps in pain. She sucks on her tender finger.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

I need Atthis. I need my muse.

Sappho goes to her desk, pulls out writing supplies. Writes: "Dearest Atthis..."

She scribbles a short letter. She folds it up, drips red wax onto it, and seals it with a wax seal stamp.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

(praying)

Dearest Aphrodite, hear my prayers.
Come to me in my time of need! I--

Aphrodite appears. Drenched and sweaty. Hair and clothes disheveled.

APHRODITE

(out of breath)

*Make it quick. I was in the middle
of a rather exuberant act of
pleasure with Poseidon.*

SAPPHO

Isn't he your nephew?

APHRODITE

Why have you called me here?

Sappho hands her the letter.

SAPPHO

Can you take this to Atthis?

Aphrodite takes it.

APHRODITE

What is this?

SAPPHO

A letter asking for her forgiveness
and to come be with me at once.

APHRODITE

*You wish her here to be able to
write.*

SAPPHO

Do not!

APHRODITE

*Say I give this to Atthis. What
happens when she comes here and
discovers you stole her poem?*

SAPPHO

She should be flattered.

APHRODITE

By thievery?

SAPPHO

I did not steal it! I... simply
shed light on it. I never announced
it as mine. I only sang it.

APHRODITE

*You were supposed to write a new
poem of your own making. Everyone
was under the assumption it was
yours.*

SAPPHO

I do not understand why you torment
me! You pushed me to use it!

APHRODITE

*I only give advice. You have free
will.*

Sappho stomps and face-plants on her bed. Groans into the
covers.

APHRODITE (CONT'D)

*Stop your whining. It's pitiful. I
shall take it to her.*

Sappho peeks up.

SAPPHO

You will?

APHRODITE

*Yes. After I wrap up with my
suitor. Now go to bed, you look a
wreck.*

SAPPHO

Thank you --

POOF! Aphrodite is gone, eager to get back to rendezvous.

INT. ATTHIS' VILLA - NIGHT

SUPER: Mytilene, Lesbos

Atthis sits in front of a burning fire. She plucks a lyre.

ATTHIS

(singing)

Exiled and gone. Somewhere you
stay...

Atthis picks up the kalamos reed pen, dips it in ink. She copies her lyrics onto papyrus paper. It's already filled with words.

Aphrodite observes from the corner of the room. Sappho's letter in hand.

Atthis goes back to plucking.

ATTHIS (CONT'D)

(singing)

No word to me, only the sounds of
crashing sea, I lament her parting.
My heart lies barren. I pray she
sends for me and all would be
forgiven. If only to see her face
again...

Atthis puts her lyre down. Stares into the fire. Tears drip down her face.

Atthis gets up and walks out.

Aphrodite lets her go. She walks to the fire. Pauses. And throws the letter into the flames. It slowly turns to ash.

INT. BANITI'S VILLA - SAPPHO'S ROOM - MORNING

Sappho awakes, hungover. Baniti stands at the edge of her bed, smiling.

Sappho jumps.

SAPPHO

Does no one here know of privacy?!

BANITI

I have come to bid you farewell.

SAPPHO

Where are you going?

BANITI

I'm taking your brother to my homeland of Egypt. My family owns a mine. We will oversee a large shipment of gold so it may arrive to the Sicilian shores safely.

Baniti pulls a large bag out from behind his back.

BANITI (CONT'D)

But more importantly. I bring you my parting gift.

SAPPHO

(unamused)

You shouldn't have.

BANITI

Technically it's not from me. But from all of Sicily.

He empties the bag on the bed. Hundreds of letters spill out.

BANITI (CONT'D)

Invitations to parties, symposiums, and requests for performances.

Sappho takes a handful of the letters. Reads them. Excitement overcomes her. She throws off her covers and jumps up and down on the bed.

Baniti climbs onto the bed and jumps with her. He hugs her. His hand begins to slide down her back, lower, lower. He touches her butt.

Sappho yelps, shoves him off the bed. Baniti flies off. He lands on his ass.

Baniti gets up.

Sappho goes to help him up.

He slaps her hand away.

SAPPHO
I'm sorry. I just --

BANITI
I'm allowing you to stay in my
house. Do not be ungrateful.

He hobbles out. Pride hurt. Sappho brushes it off.

INT. BANITI'S VILLA - DINING ROOM - DAY

Sappho eats breakfast. Cleis finishes organizing Sappho's letters into three separate piles with the help of Eurygius.

CLEIS
There.
(points to a pile)
Performance inquires.
(next pile)
Symposiums. Now, we can respond to
each accordingly.

SAPPHO
What about the other pile?

CLEIS
Party invitations. But you will not
be indulging in those. There's work
to be done.

Sappho leans across the table and snatches the party pile.

SAPPHO
I shall take those. Thank you.

CLEIS
Sappho, our wealth from Lesbos
dwindles. We took what we could
grab and it was not much. We need
you to book paying performances.

SAPPHO
I will perform. Eventually!

Sappho skips out with the party invitations.

INT. BANITI'S VILLA - SAPPHO'S ROOM - DAY

Sappho dresses for a party. She places a laurel garland on her head.

Aphrodite appears.

SAPPHO

Did she write back?!

Aphrodite fakes a sorrowful look.

APHRODITE

*Dearest one. I'm afraid I bring
terribly bad news. Last night
Atthis read the letter and...
burned it. I'm afraid she's moved
on with a member of your thiasos.
Andromeda.*

SAPPHO

(in disbelief)

What? No, you're mistaken.

APHRODITE

I'm sorry.

Sappho's sadness turns to anger. She snatches the garland from her head. Throws it to the floor.

APHRODITE (CONT'D)

Did that make you feel better?

SAPPHO

No.

Sappho stomps on the garland.

APHRODITE

How about that?

SAPPHO

No!

Sappho huffs. She sits beside the damaged garland and takes it in her hands. Her eyes fill with tears.

APHRODITE

*She was not worthy of your
greatness. Love is like a sickness.
It is a slow killer.*

SAPPHO

You cannot truly believe that.

APHRODITE

I've seen what love does.

SAPPHO

I shall never recover from this.

Aphrodite waves her hand over Sappho's smashed garland. It's suddenly perfect again! Bright green and lush.

APHRODITE

Yes, you will. Take Iris to the party tonight. I find that the best way to get over someone is to get under someone. Who knows, you may even find inspiration to write.

INT. BANITI'S VILLA - GYNECEUM - DAY

The portion of the house reserved for women.

Iris is at the loom. She weaves a textile.

Sappho enters.

SAPPHO

Are you busy tonight?

IRIS

(coldly)

Yes.

SAPPHO

Come now, your husband has left.
What have you to do?

IRIS

Weave.

SAPPHO

Weaving is so boring. Wouldn't you rather attend a party with me?

Sappho holds up a fancy invitation. Iris smiles.

INT. RANDOM VILLA #1 - NIGHT

Sappho and Iris get drunk at an extravagant party.

Sappho is flooded by adoring fans.

The HOST shows off his collection of exotic animals: snakes, parrots, camels, even an elephant!

Oh, look, Aphrodite lounges on top of the elephant!

INT. BANITI'S VILLA - IRIS AND BANITI'S ROOM - NIGHT

Back from a party Iris and Sappho stagger in. Their drunken laughs fill the air.

Iris immediately undresses.

SAPPHO
I should go.

IRIS
But the night is young!

Iris pulls a nightgown from a trunk. She slips it on.

IRIS (CONT'D)
Stay. I shall have the slaves fetch us one last drink.

SAPPHO
That is a tempting offer.

INT. BANITI'S VILLA - IRIS AND BANITI'S ROOM - NIGHT

Sappho and Iris drink wine and lounge in bed.

SAPPHO
When do you think your husband will be back?

IRIS
Several months, I presume.

SAPPHO
Will you miss him?

IRIS
No. I much rather prefer you in my bed.

A silence fills the air. Sappho becomes shy.

Aphrodite walks right through a wall and enters the room.

APHRODITE
(sloppy drunk)
Sappho, I have come to help!

SAPPHO
I can do this on my own.

IRIS

You can do what on your own? What
are you looking at?

Iris turns in the direction of Aphrodite. She sees only empty
space.

SAPPHO

Nothing! Sorry. This wine is
strong.

APHRODITE

*Serenade her! Wait. That's right,
your inspiration has walked out the
door! Oooh, I have an idea! I shall
compose a poem for you! Repeat
after me.*

Sappho nods.

APHRODITE (CONT'D)

*My name in your mouth. More
decadent than this wine.*

SAPPHO

My name in your mouth. More
decadent than this wine.

Iris beams.

APHRODITE

*He is a god in my eyes. The man who
is allowed to sit beside you.*

SAPPHO

He is a god in my eyes. The man who
is allowed to sit beside you.

Iris hangs on to each word.

APHRODITE

*He who listens intimately to the
sweet murmur of your voice, the
enticing laughter that...*

SAPPHO

He who listens intimately to the
sweet murmur of your voice, the
enticing laughter that...

IRIS

(breathless)
That what?

Sappho peeks over Iris' shoulder at Aphrodite for more.

APHRODITE

*Um, um... That makes my own heart
beat fast?*

SAPPHO

That makes my own heart beat fast.

Aphrodite pats herself on the back. Not too shabby.

IRIS

What of your lover on Lesbos?

SAPPHO

I do not wish to waste another
thought on her.

Sappho leans in. They make out furiously.

APHRODITE

Praise to the heavens!

Sappho shoos her away. Aphrodite doesn't oblige.

Iris kisses Sappho's neck, chest, stomach, goes lower --

SAPPHO

Oh...

And lower. Sappho's eyes widen.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

APHRODITE

Oh!

Oh my.

Aphrodite snaps her fingers. A bowl of grapes appears in her hands. She snacks on them, enjoying the view.

INT. BANITI'S VILLA - BANITI AND IRIS' ROOM - MORNING

Sappho lies awake in bed watching Iris dress.

Aphrodite lies beside Sappho.

APHRODITE

*This was a bonding moment for us. I
feel much closer to you.*

SAPPHO

(suspicious)

She's had to have done this before.

IRIS

Hm? Did you say something?

APHRODITE

She's totally done this before.

SAPPHO

You've done this before.

IRIS

Is that a question? Does it bother you if I have? I have heard your songs. You are not one to be shy with your female lovers on Lesbos.

APHRODITE

True.

IRIS

We will do this again.

SAPPHO

Is that a question?

IRIS

Not if we both know the answer.

(beat)

I must warn you. You were right before, Sicily does not have the same freedoms as Lesbos. We can share a bed here. But our desires do not leave this room.

SAPPHO

Understood.

IRIS

Good. I'm going to breakfast.

Sappho gets up, puts on her peplos, ready to follow.

IRIS (CONT'D)

I think it's best if we leave the room at different times. You know how Slaves are. They love to gossip.

Iris exits the room.

APHRODITE

She is... chaos. It's ravishing.

SAPPHO

She is cocky.

APHRODITE

Yes, but it turns you on.

Sappho sighs and lies back down in bed.

INT. RANDOM VILLA #2 - NIGHT

Sappho and Iris attend a themed animal mask party.

As they walk in they put on their painted ceramic masks. Sappho's mask is in the shape of a bird. Iris' the shape of a wolf.

INT. BANITI'S VILLA - IRIS AND BANITI'S ROOM - NIGHT

Sappho and Iris role play in bed with the ceramic masks.

EXT. MYTILINE, LESBOS - DAY

Atthis hears her song being sung in the streets. She approaches the SINGER.

ATTHIS

Where have you heard this song?

SINGER

'Tis Sappho's newest work. All the way from exile in Sicily!

Atthis' face drops.

INT. RANDOM VILLA #3 - NIGHT

Yet another party. Away from the crowd. Sappho, drunk, squats and pees in the garden. Iris watches and laughs.

Aphrodite dances in the background to a KITHARA PERFORMANCE.

INT. BANITI'S VILLA - IRIS AND BANITI'S ROOM - NIGHT

Sappho and Iris have a lovers quarrel. They quickly make up with sex.

EXT. SHIP - SEA - DAY

Atthis is aboard a large ship that sails at great speed.

The CAPTAIN approaches her.

CAPTAIN

If the weather remains our friend
it should only be a few more days
till we reach land.

Atthis nods, looks back to the sea.

INT. BANITI'S VILLA - DINING ROOM - DAY

Cleis and Eurygius count what's left of the family money.
It's not much.

INT. RANDOM VILLA #4 - NIGHT

You've guessed it, another party! Sappho and Aphrodite gamble. Sappho holds up her cupped hands to Aphrodite's mouth. She blows for good luck. She releases and throws icosahedron dice. They land.

A MAN goes over to count them. He shakes his head. Sappho loses. Sappho gives a look of disappointment to Aphrodite. She hands over two gold coins to the Man.

APHRODITE

*What? I'm the goddess of love, not
luck!*

Iris flirts with a BEAUTIFUL WOMAN by the stage.

Sappho notices and rolls her eyes. She grabs a kylix of wine from a Slave and drinks.

APHRODITE (CONT'D)

*Passion is still more satisfying
than love, is it not?*

SAPPHO

I suppose.

ATTHIS (O.C.)

Sappho?

Sappho and Aphrodite turn to see, Atthis. Sappho looks as if she's seen a ghost.

SAPPHO

Atthis.

Sappho hugs her. Atthis doesn't hug her back. Sappho pulls away, sensing something's off.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

(sheepish)

What are you doing here? How did you find me?

ATTHIS

(angry)

It wasn't so hard. You seem to be the talk of Sicily.

Iris walks over to Sappho's side.

IRIS

Sappho, who is this?

She looks Atthis up and down. Feeling threatened she puts her arm around Sappho's waist.

ATTHIS

Who am I? Who are you?

SAPPHO

This is Iris.

PARTY GUESTS turn their head at the commotion.

ATTHIS

Are you fucking her?

Iris drops her arm from around Sappho. Noticing all the eyes.

SAPPHO

(sotto)

Keep your voice down! They do not think kindly of women sharing beds here.

ATTHIS

Do they look kindly on stealing other poet's work?

IRIS

You dare slander the Poetess' name with your lies?

ATTHIS

You don't know her well enough yet do you? She'll do whatever it takes to further her own success.

SAPPHO

What of your wrongdoing? You refused to read my letter.

ATTHIS
I never received a letter.

SAPPHO
Don't lie to me.

ATTHIS
I have never lied to you.

SAPPHO
I know the moment I left you ran
into Andromeda's arms.

ATTHIS
(shocked)
I would never betray you.

Sappho looks to Aphrodite. Aphrodite stares back with guilty eyes. She backs away slowly. Then runs.

Sappho's face drops, realizing Atthis is truthful.

SAPPHO
I --

ATTHIS
How terribly you've made me suffer,
Sappho.

Atthis looks around the room.

ATTHIS (CONT'D)
(yelling)
Attention everyone! I would like to
inform you that Sappho's latest
poem is a fraud! She stole it from
me!
(softer; tearing up)
Those were my words that I gave to
her in confidence.
(to Sappho; sotto)
I trusted you. I loved you.

Atthis storms off.

SAPPHO
Atthis!

IRIS
Leave her. There's been enough of a
scene caused.

The Party Goers whisper amongst each other.

IRIS (CONT'D)
We should leave.

Iris sets off for the exit. Sappho hurries after her.

SAPPHO
You think differently of me now.

IRIS
Was it only one poem? Or have you
made a living off being an
imposter?

SAPPHO
It was only the one. I promise.

IRIS
Well then. If she gave it to you,
then it was yours. Fuck her for
being so careless with her work.

SAPPHO
(smiling)
You mean that?

IRIS
Yes.

INT. BANITI'S VILLA - IRIS AND BANITI'S ROOM - MORNING

Sappho sleeps beside Iris. She's wide awake, watching Iris sleep. Deep in thought she turns on her back. Stares up to the ceiling.

SAPPHO
(whispers; longing)
Atthis.

The room door opens.

In the doorway stands, Baniti. Bags in hand. Back from his travels. He takes in the sight of the two women.

He calmly steps into the room, closes the door.

He walks to the bed and drops his bags with a loud THUD.

Iris and Sappho jolt awake.

IRIS
You're home. I did not expect you.

Baniti cocks his head at Sappho.

BANITI
I see that.

SAPPHO
I'm *so* sorry.

Sappho gets out of his bed. Pulls on her peplos.

BANITI
Stay.

SAPPHO
I should go.

IRIS
You should stay.

SAPPHO
(confused)
Iris?

Baniti takes off his clothes. Sappho turns and covers her eyes.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)
Baniti!

Baniti approaches. He brushes her hair aside and kisses her neck. Sappho stiffens. He tugs at her peplos. Sappho's eyes remain on Iris, who is turned on by the sight.

Betrayed Sappho face turns into anger. Baniti's hand touches Sappho's breast. She's had enough. Sappho knees Baniti in the balls.

BANITI
Ah!

He collapses to the floor holding his private.

Iris runs to his side.

IRIS
(to Baniti)
Are you okay?
(to Sappho)
What's wrong with you?!

SAPPHO
Me? What's wrong with the both of you?!

BANITI
Get out of my house!

SAPPHO
With pleasure.

INT. BANITI'S VILLA - CLEIS' ROOM - DAY

Sappho walks through the open door. Charaxus, back from Egypt, stands before Cleis and Euryguis. Next to him a tall beautiful Egyptian woman, NOUR (20s).

SAPPHO
Who's this?

CHARAXUS
Sappho, meet my new bride, Nour! I saved her from her life of prostitution.

NOUR
(in ancient Egyptian;
subtitled)
You promised me jewels upon arrival.

CHARAXUS
(in ancient Egyptian;
subtitled)
We shall go to agora as soon as we settle in.

Sappho looks to Cleis and Eurygius who are equally as shocked.

ARMED GUARDS flood into the room.

CHARAXUS (CONT'D)
What is the meaning of this?

ARMED GUARD
Baniti demands you leave immediately.

CLEIS
Charaxus, did you anger him in Egypt?

ARMED GUARD
It is not your son's doing.

He turns to Sappho.

ARMED GUARD (CONT'D)
But your daughter's.

SAPPHO
(to her family)
I can explain.

EXT. BANITI'S VILLA - DAY

Sappho and her Family are kicked out. Along with their belongings.

Cleis scowls at Sappho.

SAPPHO
He tried to bed me! What was I to do?

CLEIS
Sleep with him!

SAPPHO
Mother!

CHARAXUS
Compose yourselves.

Charaxus holds Nour close.

CLEIS
Where will we live now?

CHARAXUS
I doubt I will see the promised payment from Baniti now... What is left of our wealth?

CLEIS
Nothing but a few silver coins thanks to your sister's gambling!

CHARAXUS
Sappho, what has gotten into you?

Sappho hangs her head in shame.

INT. HOVEL - DAY

Charaxus opens a CREAKY door to a small space with five mats on the ground -- A bed for each of them. The Family gawks at their sorry new home.

CHARAXUS

This is the best I could find for
three coins.

Cleis shrieks. Her knees hit the floor, she sobs. Nour lets
out an agonizing wail, then faints.

SAPPHO

I will find as many performances as
I can by tomorrow and collect any
payments I can in advance. I shall
fix this.

EXT. SICILY - DAY

Sappho searches high and low for work. She gets turned away
at every corner. Reputation ruined.

EXT. SICILY - AGORA - DAY

Sappho's about to head home when she spots something...

Damophilia walks through a Crowd. A jewel encrusted lyre
hangs on her back from a leather strap.

Sappho follows after Damophilia, and the jewels.

EXT. EXTRAVAGANT VILLA - DAY

Sappho follows Damophilia to a beautiful villa. Damophilia
stops in front of the doors to talk to the GUARDS.

SAPPHO

(sotto)
She's rich.

Sappho hurries over to Damophilia before she steps inside.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

Damophilia!

Damophilia stops.

DAMOPHILIA

What are you doing here?

SAPPHO

I followed you from the agora.
Lovely lyre. How well do you play?

DAMOPHILIA

Well enough.

SAPPHO

And lovely home.

Sappho takes it in with hungry eyes.

DAMOPHILIA

Oh, this isn't--

SAPPHO

You know, I have been thinking long and hard and have decided to accept the offer to be your teacher.

DAMOPHILIA

Really?

SAPPHO

Yes. I thought coming to the party was very brave of you. It showed determination. Which is what I look for in a pupil.

(beat)

And since private lessons are quite taxing. Perhaps we could discuss payment?

DAMOPHILIA

(sarcastically)

Oh, yes. Let me go fetch a gold piece right away!

Sappho's eyes light up.

Damophilia laughs. Sappho's face falls.

DAMOPHILIA (CONT'D)

Do you take me for an idiot? You ask to be my teacher after how you treated me at the party?

SAPPHO

(plays it off; laughs)

Come now you cannot take me seriously when I'm drunk.

DAMOPHILIA

Besides, I know you're only here because all of Sicily's heard of your scandal with the stolen poem. You're ruined and you need me.

SAPPHO

I am not ruined. I am the Poetess!

DAMOPHILIA

I heard the woman you stole the poem from was an old friend of yours. How would I trust you with my lyrics? Are any of your poems truly yours?

SAPPHO

Yes, they are! It was a... misunderstanding of sorts.

DAMOPHILIA

The poem you sang that night. Those words were strictly your own?

SAPPHO

(flustered)

Well, not exactly. But in ways, those words belonged to me!

DAMOPHILIA

How do her words belong to you?

SAPPHO

I --

Sappho eyes the Guards, she pulls Damophila away. Out of range.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

I made her feel that way. The lyrics in the song were about me. You see! She gave it to me. Therefore, I was their owner.

DAMOPHILIA

Those were erotically romantic words.

SAPPHO

That is beside the point. I --

DAMOPHILIA

(curious)

And you felt the same way for her?

Sappho's silent, having said too much.

SAPPHO

Child, if you could let me inside
your villa. We can discuss this
more, I can explain--

DAMOPHILIA

Damophilia! My name is, Damophilia.
(laughing)
This villa is not mine. I teach the
master's young daughters how to
play the lyre for one drachma a
month. I live in a tiny village
outside the city where my family
tries not to starve each winter.

SAPPHO

(disgusted)
You're poor?

DAMOPHILIA

Yes. And I can tell from your new
desperation that you now are too.

SAPPHO

It's only temporary. I will be
great again. You'll see. Statues of
me will be erected in my honor.

DAMOPHILIA

If that is all you care about, then
you are just like them.

SAPPHO

Who?

DAMOPHILIA

All the male poets here who've
laughed at me when I begged them to
teach me. Like them, all you care
about is your own glory. A
meaningless battle to show off who
has the biggest prick. And now fate
has snatched away those chances.

(beat)

I have to go give lessons to girls
who can use a voice before it's
taken away by their future
husbands.

(beat)

To think I once looked up to you.

Damophilia walks into the villa. Sappho tries to follow. The
Guard slams the gate in her face.

SAPPHO

Well if anyone had the biggest
prick, it would be me! And the
world will see it!

Onlookers eye Sappho. MOTHERS clutch their CHILDREN and pull
them along quicker. Away from Sappho.

INT. HOVEL - DAY

Sappho opens the door to her eagerly awaiting Family. Having
little to no money for food and water they've grown frail.

Nour sits in a corner swaddled in a blanket. She rocks back
and forth mumbling to herself, the poorness of her new home
rotting her brain.

CLEIS

(to Sappho)

So?

CHARAXUS

Any luck?

Sappho hangs her head.

SAPPHO

No. I fear my reputation has been
sullied.

CLEIS

I could go back to mourning. I've
been mentoring Eurygius. He's quite
good.

Eurygius suddenly exhibits an exaggerated sad face. He mimes
brushing away fake tears.

CHARAXUS

It will not be enough. We need to
take greater action.

Cleis nods.

CLEIS

Euryguis, be a good boy and block
the door.

Although confused, Eurygius does as he's told.

SAPPHO

What's going on?

CHARAXUS

There could be a solution to our problem. But it lays with you.

CLEIS

The only way out of this mess you and your brother have created is for sacrifice. Since Charaxus shot an arrow in his foot and got married to a prostitute--
(through grit teeth)
--Who did not have a dowry only debt? That leaves you...

The words sink in for Sappho, her worst nightmare.

SAPPHO

No...

CLEIS

Yes.

SAPPHO

What about Euryguis?!

Euryguis GULPS.

CLEIS

He's far too young and women with money want to marry a man with money.

Sappho makes a sudden dash for the door. The tiny Eurygius holds his ground as Sappho tries to leave. It takes Charaxus, Cleis, and Eurygius to wrestle her from the door handle.

INT. HOVEL - DAY

Sappho's adopted Nour's technique of coping. They sit beside each other, wrapped in blankets. Rocking back and forth with anxiety.

SAPPHO

If your stupid husband didn't drag me into that damned assassination, I would still be home, in Lesbos...
With Atthis.

NOUR

(Ancient Egyptian;
subtitled)
(MORE)

NOUR (CONT'D)

Shut up, I'm trying to pray for
your brother's death so I can go
free.

SAPPHO

I don't know what you said, but I
somehow feel understood.

Sappho rests her head on Nour's shoulder. Nour shrugs her
off.

The front door swings open.

Cleis, Charaxus, and Eurygius walk in.

Sappho stands.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

Please tell me no one will marry
me!

CHARAXUS

No one will marry you --

Sappho jumps up with joy.

CHARAXUS (CONT'D)

Except for one. A notable suitor,
Kerklyas of Andros.

SAPPHO

His name is Kerklyas of Andros?

Eurygius stifles a laugh. Even Cleis holds in a chuckle.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

That translates to "Dick Allcock
from the Isle of Man."

CHARAXUS

I... am aware. Seeing as you have
no dowry--

CLEIS

And all of Sicily now hates you.

CHARAXUS

There were not many options.

CLEIS

There was only one option.

CHARAXUS

'Tis the best we could do.

SAPPHO
Is he at least handsome?

CHARAXUS
He is... short.

CLEIS
Don't forget fat.

Eurygius gives Charaxus a look, "tell her." Charaxus bites at his lip, nods.

CHARAXUS
(blurts)
And he has been widowed seven times. All of Sicily believes him to be cursed!

SAPPHO
What?!

CLEIS
(gentler)
We need him and he needs us. Since his last bride passed, no one has agreed to marry him.

SAPPHO
(sarcastic)
I wonder why?

CHARAXUS
He needs an heir.

CLEIS
And we need his money. He's offering *us* a dowry.

SAPPHO
He must be mad! A man offering a woman a dowry is unheard of.

CLEIS
One could say he's quite... desperate.

SAPPHO
And if I'm his eighth bride to perish?

CLEIS
I think it's a risk worth taking, don't you?

SAPPHO

No!

Nour rises up from her wallowing and gets in Sappho's face.

NOUR

(ancient Egyptian;
subtitled)

Marry the fat man or I will kill
you!

SAPPHO

(to Charaxus)

What'd she say?

CHARAXUS

She *kindly* recommends you marry
Kerklyas. Some sisterly advice.

Charaxus pulls the agitated Nour away.

CLEIS

Sappho, we need this. Look at your
brother, he is skin and bone. A few
weeks and we shall starve.

Sappho looks at Eurygius. Frowns. His cheeks hollowed out
from hunger.

SAPPHO

I shall do it.

Cleis hugs her.

CLEIS

Thank you.

INT. SICILY - TEMPLE OF APHRODITE - NIGHT

Sappho sits on a bench, staring at a marble statue of
Aphrodite. Her brows are knitted with worry.

Aphrodite appears next to the statue. She takes it in.

APHRODITE

*I must find the sculptor who did
this and exchange words. This is
awful.*

Aphrodite looks at the back of the statute.

APHRODITE (CONT'D)

*My ass is much more rounded. I find
this offensive.*

Sappho ignores her, staring off. Aphrodite waves a hand in front of Sappho's eyes.

SAPPHO

I am to be wed tomorrow.

APHRODITE

(sighs)

I know.

SAPPHO

Why have you not appeared to me since the party?

APHRODITE

I thought you needed space.

SAPPHO

You told me Atthis had moved on with Andromeda.

APHRODITE

I saw what I saw.

SAPPHO

When I mentioned it, she seemed appalled by the very thought.

APHRODITE

A good liar.

SAPPHO

I know her better than anyone. She was not lying.

Sappho looks to Aphrodite.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

Guilt looks strange on you. Did you even give her my letter?

APHRODITE

You think I would lie to you?

SAPPHO

You forget. I also know you better than anyone.

APHRODITE

You don't know me, Sappho. A mortal could never understand the complexities of a goddess. I show you what I care to show you.

SAPPHO

Did you give her the letter? Answer me!

APHRODITE

No!

SAPPHO

Why?

APHRODITE

You grew so dependent on her love to give birth to your poetry. Love does that you know. It takes and it hurts and in the end, it's all meaningless.

SAPPHO

You're right. There are still things about you that I do not dare to understand. Like how you are the goddess of love yet seem to despise the very idea it... Who broke your heart?

Aphrodite fills with silence. Her jaw tenses.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

That must be it, right? The reason why you hate love so much. The reason you've always ushered me toward lust.

Aphrodite stands up.

APHRODITE

Good luck marrying that pig. I hope you have a blessed and happy marriage with lots of piglets in your future.

SAPPHO

You won't come tomorrow?

APHRODITE

I do not feel welcomed.

SAPPHO

Maybe you're not.

Aphrodite rises. She looks at the statue of her. With a flick of her finger, it crumbles to the ground in pieces. Then POOF! She's gone.

INT. KERKLYAS' VILLA - BANQUET HALL - CONTINUOUS

Sappho, Charaxus, and Cleis are led down the halls of the massive lavish estate by a SLAVE. They take it in with wide eyes.

CLEIS

For being short, fat, and cursed,
he is well endowed. Well done
Charaxus. For once.

CHARAXUS

Thanks?

The Slave stops outside the door of the banquet hall.

SLAVE

Ready?

CLEIS

A moment.

Cleis turns to Sappho.

CLEIS (CONT'D)

Let me get a look at you.

Sappho stands with bad posture. A pout on her face. Cleis straightens her back. Fixes Sappho's boobs a certain way to make them appear larger.

SAPPHO

Mother!

CLEIS

Oh, hush.

CHARAXUS

Mother, he's waiting.

Cleis finishes with the lick of her hand. She uses her saliva to slick down Sappho's fly-away strands of hair.

Sappho makes an ick face.

CLEIS

There. You are ready.

SAPPHO

For slaughter.

Cleis shoves Sappho through the grand doors.

INT. KERKLYAS' VILLA - DAY

A SLAVE guides Sappho, Cleis, and Charaxus into a banquet hall. At a long table, two men and a woman sit.

SLAVE

Sappho, Cleis, and Charaxus of
Lesbos, I present to you my master
Kerklyas, his sister Hestia, and
her husband Damianos.

KERKLYAS (50s, obese, short man with a long beard) rises from the table. HESTIA (40s) and DAMIANOS (50s) remain seated.

KERKLYAS

Leave us.

The Slave nods, hurries out.

KERKLYAS (CONT'D)

(to Sappho)

Come.

Kerklyas motions for Sappho. Cleis elbows her. She walks over to him.

Standing nearly two feet shorter, he looks up as he circles her, inspecting every detail.

CHARAXUS

What do you think?

KERKLYAS

Is she pure?

CLEIS

She is.

HESTIA

Are you sure? I hear women of
Lesbos are quite the little whores.

CLEIS

I assure you. She has never been
touched... by another man.

Cleis and Sappho exchange a knowing look.

KERKLYAS

Good.

HESTIA

She is awfully skinny, brother.
Those hips are no good for
childbearing.

KERKLYAS

Silence, Hestia.

Sappho lifts an eyebrow at Cleis. Cleis motions for Sappho to stick her belly out, Sappho does.

CHARAXUS

Do we have a deal or not?

KERKLYAS

One last thing.

Kerklyas takes a handful of Sappho's ass. She squeals in surprise. He jiggles it, thinks. A long pause.

KERKLYAS (CONT'D)

It'll do.

Cleis claps her hands together.

CLEIS

Excellent!

SAPPHO

(unenthusiastic)
Woohoo.

Hestia and Damianos look on, displeased.

KERKLYAS

(to Charaxus)

We may proceed to the engysis.
Since she is fatherless, you will
fill the role of her kyrios.

Kerklyas offers his hand. Charaxus takes it.

CHARAXUS

I offer her to thee to wife, to
give thee lawful children.

Sappho's eyes widen at the thought of children with this man.

EXT. SICILY - TEMPLE OF HERA - DAY

Sappho walks alongside Cleis.

CLEIS

This is the last dedication.

Cleis hands Sappho a knife.

CLEIS (CONT'D)

This one you must do alone. It is meant to represent your shedding of girlhood. A man becomes a man on his own, a girl becomes a woman only through her relationship with her husband.

SAPPHO

Why can a girl not become a woman on her own?

CLEIS

My mother once told me, raising a girl is like breaking in a horse. The marriage ceremony is seen as the final step in the process of taming her.

SAPPHO

Mother, that's ridiculous.

Cleis sighs, rolls her eyes.

CLEIS

I know he will not tame you. But you must pretend. Is that fair?

Sappho takes the knife, feels the weight of it.

SAPPHO

I can do that.

INT. SICILY - TEMPLE OF HERA - DAY

Sappho is down on her knees in front of an altar. Knife in hand.

SAPPHO

(praying)

Hera, queen of lofty Olympus, dark-eyed goddess, beloved of thundering Zeus, radiant daughter of Kronos, and blessed Rhea.

(MORE)

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

Stately and beautiful goddess,
friend of women, friend of
marriage, protector of home and
family, most lovely and most
exalted goddess, I call to you.

Sappho cuts off a strand of hair, places it on the altar.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

... Allow good to spring from this
marriage. May it heal the wounds I
have given my family.

Sappho rises, thinks, sinks back down.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

Please, never subject Atthis to
this madness. May she always know
the taste of freedom.

From a nearby window we see Aphrodite watching from outside.
Jealous at the sight of Sappho praying to another goddess.

INT. HOVEL - MORNING

Kerklyas arrives. He cringes at the state of their home.

Sappho's Brothers kiss her goodbye, followed by Cleis.

Kerklyas offers his hand, Sappho takes it -- much to Cleis' relief.

He guides Sappho out, beginning the gamos (marriage day).

INT. KERKLYAS' VILLA - COURTYARD - DAY

Sappho and Kerklyas kneel at an altar, both sides of Families surround them.

They begin the festivities with a sacrifice, proteleia (premarital), for the Gods to bless the two being wed.

A goat BLEATS. Kerklyas arises, walks over to the source, a small she-goat. He picks it up, walks to the altar.

The she-goat and Sappho meet eyes. Exchange looks of fear.

Kerklyas pulls out a knife and slits the she-goat's throat. Its blood splatters -- some onto Sappho's face. It even gets in her mouth. She spits it out and wipes it off her tongue with her peplos.

Kerklyas, uncaring, drains the she-goat's blood into the basin.

INT. KERKLYAS' VILLA - BATHING ROOM - DAY

Sappho is stripped naked by Kerklyas' Slaves.

The Slaves empty the last of the water into the bath from their loutrophoros (containers).

They guide her into the nuptial bath. To symbolize purification as well as fertility. Sappho steps into the freezing water. She shivers.

INT. KERKLYAS' VILLA - BATHING ROOM - DAY

The Slaves dress Sappho in a long, extravagant purple dress. They pile jewels on her.

And finally, a long veil over her face set in place by a flower garland and a golden headband.

INT. SICILY - TEMPLE - DAY

Kerklyas and a veiled Sappho give offerings to ensure a fruitful future life. They place fruit, jewelry, and incense onto the altar.

INT. KERKLYAS' VILLA - DINING AREA - DAY

The wedding feast. One table consists of MEN, who laugh, eat and drink. At the other table sits the WOMEN, who wait for the men to finish eating before they can.

Through her thick veil, Sappho watches Kerklyas sloppily eat the cooked leg of the she-goat. Slick fat drips down his chin.

Sappho hangs her head, looking at her empty plate. Her stomach GRUMBLES.

EXT. KERKLYAS' VILLA - COURTYARD - NIGHT

Sappho and Kerklyas walk hand in hand through the courtyard lit by torches. They pass through the gathered Wedding Goers who throw dried fruits and nuts to bless them with fertility and prosperity.

Cleis, Charaxus, and Erigyus give smiles of pity.

Kerklyas guides Sappho to the bridal chamber. Only a few are allowed to follow: Cleis, Hestia, and Damianos.

INT. KERKLYAS' VILLA - BRIDAL CHAMBER - NIGHT

Sappho and Kerklyas stand at the edge of the bed. He snaps his fingers. Hestia hurries over with a stool. She places it at his feet. He steps onto, now Sappho's height. He removes her veil and tosses it to the floor.

Hestia hurries over to the opposite side of the room to stand with Damianos and Cleis.

Cleis closes her eyes tightly. Not wanting to see her daughter deflowered.

Kerklyas undresses. Sappho does, too. He nods at the bed. Sappho lies down. He lies on top of her.

Sappho's hand clenches onto the bedsheet. The whites of her knuckles show. Suddenly, a WOMAN'S HAND rests on top of hers.

Sappho looks up, Aphrodite stands beside the bed. No longer angry her eyes are full of remorse and empathy.

SAPPHO

You came.

KERKLYAS

Not yet.

Sappho ignores him, she takes Aphrodite's hand.

APHRODITE

*It is time now. For you who are so
pretty and charming and talented.
My resilient, honeyed Sappho. Do
not be afraid. I am here.*

Kerklyas begins to thrust.

Sappho squeezes Aphrodite's hand harder.

Aphrodite HUMS lightly. We recognize it as the song Sappho sang at the Kallestiea festival.

Aphrodite wiggles her nose. A tickle coming on. Unable to cover her mouth in time she SNEEZES, her snot sprays all over Sappho. Sappho's face fills with disgust.

APHRODITE (CONT'D)

*Sorry. This place is riddled with
dust.*

Kerklyas' thrusts abruptly stop. He grabs his chest as pain shoots through him. He lets out one last sound of both pleasure and pain. It RINGS through the air as he goes limp on top of Sappho.

APHRODITE (CONT'D)

Oh good, he is done. Are you a changed woman, Sappho? Sappho?

Sappho doesn't respond, trapped under the weight of Kerklyas.

APHRODITE (CONT'D)

Oh, no.

Aphrodite rolls Kerklyas off of Sappho. The momentum keeps him rolling until, SMACK. He hits the ground below, eyes wide open... DEAD!

Hestia gasps.

HESTIA

I knew she was evil!

Damianos runs over, shakes Kerklyas' flaccid body.

Cleis opens her eyes.

CLEIS

Is it done?

Cleis sees Kerklyas on the floor then, looks to Sappho.

Sappho turns to Aphrodite.

SAPPHO

(sotto)

What have you done?!

APHRODITE

*We do not know that was my doing!
It was simply a coincidence!*

POOF! Aphrodite is gone.

Sappho drops her head in her hands.

INT. KERKLYAS' HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Sappho and Cleis sit at the table. Across from them sits Hestia and Damianos both seething.

HESTIA

You get nothing.

CLEIS

They consummated it!

DAMIANOS

If there is no male heir, the dowry goes back to the family.

CLEIS

This is horse shit!

DAMIANOS

It is the law.

CLEIS

This is your dead brother's wife!
We are your family now.

HESTIA

No heir. No right to what is ours.

Cleis lunges, Sappho holds her back.

SAPPHO

Mother, come! Let the Gods' wrath take care of them.

Sappho drags Cleis up, puts an arm around her as they leave.

INT. HOVEL - DAY - ONE MONTH LATER

Rain falls outside. Sappho and her Family huddle together for warmth. Starvation setting in. They are skin and bone.

Euryguis runs through the door, soaked and out of breath. He runs to his mother, hands over a soggy loaf of bread.

CLEIS

Where did you -- does not matter.

Cleis takes the bread, hungrily pulls apart five pieces. The Family eagerly wait.

She hands out the pieces. Everyone but Sappho shoves the bread in their mouths immediately.

Sappho looks at the sorry scrap. Her lip quivers. Eyes well up with tears. She cries.

Everyone stares at her, not knowing what to say.

SAPPHO

I hate this. I was once great. I had everything. Now I'm disgustingly poor.

CLEIS

We all imagined different destinies for ourselves. Shut up and eat your bread.

SAPPHO

No!

Sappho drops the bread to the floor. Nour grabs it and sinks her teeth in.

CLEIS

Fine, be dramatic! Go jump off a cliff in your sorrow for all I care!

SAPPHO

Maybe I will!

Sappho gets up, spiteful. She throws the door open, goes out into the storm.

CLEIS

Sappho! Wait!

The rain soaks Sappho.

SAPPHO

I'm not being dramatic!

CLEIS

I am sorry. I did not mean it. I am starving and even more angry than usual. Come inside.

Sappho, on the verge of a breakdown, runs off.

CLEIS (CONT'D)

Sappho!

EXT. CLIFF - DAY

The clouds have turned darker. Rain pours.

Sappho climbs to the top. She's greeted by Aphrodite who stands at the cliff's edge, arms crossed.

APHRODITE

Leave this place.

SAPPHO

I haven't seen you since you killed my chance of getting out of a hovel.

APHRODITE

I told you. It was a coincidence!

SAPPHO

Then why did you disappear? You left me again, just as always. You fuck up my life then I don't see you for days on end.

APHRODITE

Go home to your family. Pick up your lyre. Make music from whatever angst this is!

SAPPHO

This is not my home! Lesbos is. And without it and without Atthis... honestly, I wish I were dead!

Sappho pushes past Aphrodite to the cliff's edge.

APHRODITE

When you lie dead, no one will remember you. Isn't that what you wanted? To be remembered? You can still achieve that.

SAPPHO

(crying)

Look at me! Without her love I am nothing and I cannot bear to be nothing.

APHRODITE

Love is a load of shit!

SAPPHO

Years have made you bitter.

APHRODITE

No, experience has made me wise. Do you remember the first time you called to me? You sang me a song and I could not help but be drawn to you.

SAPPHO

You like your gifts.

APHRODITE

No, I saw a small girl who sang of things beyond her years. When all other poets sang of soldiers and wars and slaying monsters, you sang of the pains of love! I knew then, we were the same. Apples hanging from the topmost branch. Far above the rest, so high up we could never be plucked by ungrateful hands! From then on I swore to save you from heartache. The cruelty of it. But Atthis came and no matter what I did to sway you from her --

Aphrodite stops herself, having said too much.

SAPPHO

I knew it. You tore us apart!

Aphrodite grabs Sappho's arm.

APHRODITE

I wanted to protect you!

SAPPHO

You've ruined me!

Aphrodite's eyes widen. Touching Sappho sparked news.

She looks down to Sappho's stomach.

APHRODITE

Sappho...

SAPPHO

What?

APHRODITE

You... you're with child.

Thunder RUMBLES. Lightning strikes across the ocean in the distance.

SAPPHO

I'm what?!

Sappho backs away from Aphrodite, accidentally stepping closer to the edge. The muddy ground crumbles beneath her, Sappho stumbles back --

APHRODITE

No!

Aphrodite lunges forward. She reaches for Sappho but it's too late. Sappho falls backward, disappearing beyond the edge.

APHRODITE (CONT'D)

Sappho!

Aphrodite looks over the cliff. The waves below are dark and choppy. Sappho is nowhere to be found.

EXT. OCEAN - UNDERWATER - DAY

Sappho fights underwater. Strong waves pull her under.

A light beams down, a figure plunges into the water. Sappho loses consciousness. Everything fades to black.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Aphrodite emerges from the ocean, heaving the unconscious Sappho over her shoulder with incredible strength.

Aphrodite throws Sappho onto the beach, crouches down next to her, brings her hand up to Sappho's mouth. Sea water floats out from Sappho's blue lips.

Sappho coughs as she wakes up. Aphrodite sits by her side as she recovers.

APHRODITE

The day of your wedding, you asked me who broke my heart. His name was Adonis. He was a mortal. Strong and beautiful with golden locks. He could've been a God. And I loved him, more than I ever thought I was capable of. And he loved me back.

SAPPHO

What happened?

APHRODITE

I was not the only one to recognize the beauty of him. Persephone, the goddess of fertility --

SAPPHO

And death.

APHRODITE

Yes, she set her sights on him. One day, Adonis was killed by a boar during a hunt. I rushed to my father.

SAPPHO

You hate him.

APHRODITE

I know but love made me desperate. I got down on my knees and begged Zeus to restore Adonis' life to be with me again, this time forever. But, so did Persephone and she wanted him all to herself.

SAPPHO

How did Zeus settle it?

APHRODITE

He resurrected Adonis but commanded him to live six months out of the year in the upper world with me and the other six months in the lower world with Persephone. After his second trip to the underworld, he fell in love with her. He came back to me with pale skin and eyes sunken in. I knew then he was no longer mine. His bright eyes and smile gone. Persephone got what she wanted, her cold grasp around his throat.

SAPPHO

Why have you never told me?

APHRODITE

It was too painful to recount. As the goddess of love, love itself was suddenly tainted for me. Then I stumbled across you. You reminded me of myself before Adonis and I vowed to protect you from love. I did not want Atthis to betray you as Adonis betrayed me.

SAPPHO

So you made sure I betrayed her?

APHRODITE

Yes.

APHRODITE (CONT'D)

*I did not mean for any of your
misfortunes to happen. I thought I
was --*

SAPPHO

You want to make it up to me?

Sappho grabs Aphrodite's hand. Puts it on her stomach.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

Is the child a boy? Is there still
a chance I can get Kerklyos' dowry?

Aphrodite looks from the stomach to Sappho.

APHRODITE

And if it's not a boy?

SAPPHO

I want you to get rid of it.

APHRODITE

I cannot do that.

SAPPHO

(angry)

You cannot bring me love, you
cannot bring me death. What are you
good for then?!

APHRODITE

I can help you fix all of this --

SAPPHO

You've done enough, Aphrodite.

(beat)

I think it is our time to part.

Aphrodite rises, hurt, she wipes the sand from her clothes.

APHRODITE

You will need me again.

Aphrodite turns into her dove form and flies off.

Sappho looks out over the ocean. Despondent.

INT. HOVEL - NIGHT

SUPER: SEVEN MONTHS LATER

SCREAMS. The sweat-drenched Sappho lies out on the floor, giving birth.

Cleis holds her legs. Eurygius dabs her forehead with a wet cloth. Nour offers her wine. Sappho swats it away.

CLEIS
One last push!

SAPPHO
I can't!

CLEIS
Yes, you can! Push!

Sappho pushes. Until, a silence fills the air. Then...

A SMALL CRY of a newborn. Sappho lies back, exhausted.

CLEIS (CONT'D)
Charaxus, the knife.

Charaxus hands her a knife. Cleis cuts the umbilical cord. She holds up the NEWBORN.

Sappho waits in anticipation. Cleis musters a smile.

CLEIS (CONT'D)
'Tis a precious girl.

Cleis hands the baby to Sappho. Sappho tears up. Angry.

SAPPHO
I can't bear to hold her.

CLEIS
She's your daughter.

SAPPHO
We needed a boy!

The baby WAILS louder.

CLEIS
We wanted a boy, yes. Perhaps we
needed a girl, for our sake. Here.

Cleis rests the, small bloody Baby on Sappho's chest. She cries for her mom. Sappho slowly reaches for the warm bundle, holds her. Her anger softens.

SAPPHO
Look at you... so small, fragile.

Tears turn from anger to joy. She kisses the Baby's forehead.

CLEIS

Let us pray she doesn't grow to
look like her father.

Sappho laughs, Cleis joins in.

INT. HOVEL - LATER

Sappho HUMS a melody as she rocks the beautiful Baby back and forth gently.

Cleis brings Sappho a cup of water. Helps her drink it.

CLEIS

What shall you call her?

Sappho hums more, thinks. She looks to her Mother.

SAPPHO

Cleis... I have a small daughter
called Cleis.

Cleis' eyes well up with tears, grateful.

Sappho's eyes light up, inspiration striking.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

Will you bring me my lyre?

Cleis nods, grabs Sappho's lyre, brings it to her.

Sappho takes it, dusts it off. She begins to PLAY, slowly breaking it back in.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

(singing; soft)

Cleis. I have a small daughter
called Cleis. She is like a golden
flower. I wouldn't take all of
Croesus' kingdom with love thrown
in for her.

Her playing stops. Both Sappho and Cleis are stunned.

CLEIS

You sang.

SAPPHO

I sang.

Sappho cries, overwhelmed with happiness. Cleis hands Baby Cleis back to Sappho.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)
(sotto; to Baby Cleis)
Thank you, my dear. You have come.
I needed you. You have made love
blaze up in my breast once again.
Bless you.

Sappho strokes Baby Cleis' face.

INT. DAMOPHILIA'S HOVEL - DAY

Damophilia and her friend MYRA (16) giggle as they stand weaving a textile on a loom taller than them.

Sappho walks in, stands in the doorway. Damophilia's giggles die out as she takes notice. Her face drops.

DAMOPHILIA
Sappho? How did you find me?

SAPPHO
There are not many loud-mouthed
girls around Sicily. It only took
an hour or so of asking around at
the Agora.

Damophilia, stoic, goes back to weaving.

MYRA
She does not want to speak with
you, *Poetess*.

SAPPHO
I was foolish to not accept you as
my student.

MYRA
That you were.

DAMOPHILIA
Why have you come?

SAPPHO
To apologize.

Damophilia stops her weaving.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

I admit, I have not taken exile well. But things are looking up now.

DAMOPHILIA

What has changed?

SAPPHO

I had a child.

DAMOPHILIA

You, a mother?

MYRA

Poor child.

SAPPHO

I hope you know despite how I have treated you I am quite fond of you. If you will still have me, I would be honored to teach you what I know.

DAMOPHILIA

I have taken a new pastime.

SAPPHO

Poetry is no pastime. It is the air you breathe. We both know that.
(beat)
We could hold lessons here. No payment required.

Damophilia's hopeful for a second, then...

DAMOPHILIA

My father wouldn't allow it.

SAPPHO

Well, damn him. We shall do it in secret at my home.

Damophilia looks up, intrigued by the idea.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

Come to my house tomorrow, at sundown. I live across from the old brothel.

DAMOPHILIA

You may leave now.

SAPPHO

But --

MYRA

She said you may leave now.

Sappho lowers her head. Leaves.

INT. HOVEL - DAY

Sappho sits in a wooden chair and breast-feeds Baby Cleis. There's a KNOCK at the door. Sappho gets up.

She answers, Damophilia stands there, lyre in hand.

SAPPHO

You came.

Damophilia looks at the Baby.

DAMOPHILIA

You were not lying.

SAPPHO

I have lived many lives since we last met.

DAMOPHILIA

I can see that.

Damophilia walks in. Sappho sits back down.

SAPPHO

I'll finish feeding and we shall begin.

Damophilia nods, walks around the sad excuse of a room. She makes her way over to a desk. Papyrus is spread out along it. Pages filled with inked words.

Damophilia eyes Sappho's lyre sitting amongst the papyrus. She touches it, plucks a string. Sappho smiles.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

How well can you play?

DAMOPHILIA

I have had lessons from my mother since I could talk. But they ceased after her death.

SAPPHO

I'm sorry for your loss. When was this?

DAMOPHILIA

Right before you arrived in Sicily.

Damophilia is quiet.

SAPPHO

Play for me.

DAMOPHILIA

What shall I play?

SAPPHO

Something you wrote.

DAMOPHILIA

I have only written fragments of songs.

SAPPHO

Much can be said in fragments.

DAMOPHILIA

Can I sing one of yours?

SAPPHO

If you'd like.

Sappho nods toward a wooden stool, Damophilia drags it to the center of the room, sits. She positions the lyre. PLAYS.

DAMOPHILIA

(singing)

Immortal Aphrodite, on your intricately brocaded throne, child of Zeus, weaver of wiles, this I pray: Dear Lady, don't crush my heart with pains and sorrows. But come here, as before, when you heard my far-off cry, you listened...

Sappho tears up. Damophilia notices. Stops.

DAMOPHILIA

Did I do something wrong?

SAPPHO

No. You sang it beautifully.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

You can sing, your skills on the lyre are fair, and your confidence is unwavering. But there is still plenty of work to be done. We'll begin with lyrics. Tell me, what is the meaning of the song?

DAMOPHILIA

You're asking Aphrodite to help make someone fall in love with you.

SAPPHO

Good.

DAMOPHILIA

Who did you write of?

SAPPHO

My first love.

DAMOPHILIA

Do you still love them?

SAPPHO

Gods no, at that age I loved someone new each day.

DAMOPHILIA

Sappho?

SAPPHO

Yes?

DAMOPHILIA

In the last stanza, you say, "Aphrodite. For easily bent and nimbly, time has reminded me now of Anactoria who is not here." Anactoria is a woman's name. Is it not?

Sappho ignores her, nods at the paper on the desk.

SAPPHO

Let's write. Take some papyrus. Compose a first stanza.

DAMOPHILIA

What shall I write about?

SAPPHO

What do you wish to write about?

DAMOPHILIA

Same as you.

SAPPHO

(smiling)

Write it.

Damophilia picks up a reed pen, writes.

INT. HOVEL - NIGHT - LATER

Damophilia sits at the desk, still scribbling words. Sappho hovers over her.

SAPPHO

'Tis late. Your father will worry.

DAMOPHILIA

Sundown tomorrow?

SAPPHO

Yes.

Damophilia hands Sappho a scribbled on papyrus. Sappho walks her to the door.

DAMOPHILIA

Are you not going to read it?

Sappho looks at the papyrus, reads.

SAPPHO

"It is no use, father dear, I cannot finish my weaving. You may blame Aphrodite, soft as she is. She almost killed me with love for that girl."

Beat.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

Who?

DAMOPHILIA

Myra.

They share a smile, Damophilia leaves.

INT. HOVEL - DAYS/NIGHTS

MONTAGE: Damophilia and Sappho practice day in and day out.

-Sappho teaches Damophilia more complex chords on the lyre.

-Sappho watches Damophilia write, she helps her refine lyrics.

-Damophilia plays and sings for Sappho. Sappho fixes Damophilia's posture.

-Damophilia plays, perfect posture, plucking clean and intricate. Sappho watches, pleased.

INT. HOVEL - DAY - TWO YEARS LATER

Baby Cleis, now two, runs into Sappho's arms. She lifts the squealing infant into the air, kisses her. Her little features similar to her mother's.

Damophilia intently plays the lyre and sings for Cleis whose hair has grown more grey. Damophilia finishes the song.

Cleis claps.

SAPPHO

She composed it all on her own.

CLEIS

Has she?

SAPPHO

You grow before our eyes.

CLEIS

Sicily should hear your voice. They would bow at your feet.

Sappho sets Baby Cleis down. The Child runs to Damophilia and jumps into her arms. Damophilia picks her up.

DAMOPHILIA

My father would never allow it.

SAPPHO

Play for him. He may change his mind.

DAMOPHILIA

I would rather not risk angering him. He could marry me off sooner than intended.

BABY CLEIS

Ew!

DAMOPHILIA

Ew is right!

EXT. DAMOPHILIA'S HOVEL - DAY

MYRA

Why are you acting so strange?

DAMOPHILIA

I've been working on a song I want you to listen.

MYRA

Why do you seem so nervous?

DAMOPHILIA

Shut up and listen.

MYRA

Fine. Go on, then.

Damophilia PLAYS her lyre.

DAMOPHILIA

The moon is set. And the Pleiades shine. It's the middle of the night. Time passes. But I sleep alone. I desire and I crave you. You set me on fire. Suddenly I am a Servant of wile-weaving Aphrodite.

In the distance TRECHUS (40s, Damophilia's father) walks home from a long day of working in the fields. He approaches, hearing the music.

He watches from afar as his daughter sings. A look of anger washes over his face, but as he listens, the music softens him.

INT. HOVEL - DAY

Damophila bursts through the door.

DAMOPHILA

My father, he heard me singing!

Cleis and Sappho rise with excitement. Young Cleis jumps up, flailing her arms in joy.

SAPPHO

Well?

YOUNG CLEIS

He loved it, right? He had to have!

DAMOPHILA

He overheard me playing for Myra. I thought he would be so angry but he wasn't! He cried! My song made him cry! He said it reminded him of my mother.

Sappho and Cleis hug Damophilia. Young Cleis runs circles around them. She tires out on lap two and joins the hug, exhausted from the excitement.

Sappho picks up Young Cleis.

SAPPHO

You both have been my greatest gifts.

Young Cleis kisses Sappho on the cheek.

DAMOPHILA

Bleh. Don't go soft on me, Sappho!
Not when we have work to do.

Damophilia pulls out a papyrus announcement. Hands it to Sappho.

SAPPHO

What's this?

DAMOPHILA

My father is allowing me to take part in a beauty contest.

CLEIS

How exciting!

SAPPHO

Why would you want any part of that? Women have to offer so much more than their beauty.

DAMOPHILA

We are not entering for our beauty. Although that would be more than enough for us to win.

SAPPHO

We?

DAMOPHILA

Yes! We! We are entering for far more than that. Read the announcement.

Sappho reads.

SAPPHO

"'The Judgement of Beauty,' Come showcase your looks and" ... oh... "talent for all to see. Held at... Aphrodite's temple."

DAMOPHILA

This is your chance to perform again.

SAPPHO

No one wants to see me perform again and I'm not going anywhere near that temple. Aphrodite has brought me nothing but bad fortune.

DAMOPHILA

I will only perform if you do!

SAPPHO

You finally have a stage to show off your talent. Don't waste that.

DAMOPHILA

And you should not waste your second chance.

CLEIS

She's right.

YOUNG CLEIS

Come on Mama. I want to hear you sing on stage. Like the stories, you told me. Please!

SAPPHO

I... can't.

DAMOPHILA

Sappho.

SAPPHO

Damophilia.

DAMOPHILA

Sappho!

SAPPHO

Damophilia!

DAMOPHILA

Sapppphhhooooo! Would you risk me not performing because of your stubbornness?

SAPPHO

You are the one being stubborn.

Sappho crosses her arms in a huff.

DAMOPHILA

Please. For me. For your daughter. Show her that her dreams can come true, no matter how big they are.

Damophilia and Young Cleis give Sappho puppy dog eyes.

EXT. DAMOPHILIA'S HOVEL - GARDEN - DAY

The sun sets.

Sappho sits beside Damophilia on a bench, watching her play the lyre.

Damophilia finishes.

SAPPHO

For the last stanza, try this...

Sappho picks up her own lyre. Plucks, creating a more even melody.

Damophilia tries it for herself.

DAMOPHILA

I like that.

SAPPHO

Two more days. Are you ready?

Damophilia nods but can't hide the fear.

DAMOPHILA

What's it like performing in front of so many?

Sappho smiles, remembering.

SAPPHO

It's as if the stage calls to you,
promising you that when you sing,
your words will be remembered
forever. Then you begin. The air
goes silent. All eyes are on you.
It makes you feel like a god.
Everyone else is at your mercy.

DAMOPHILA

(worried)

That sounds like a lot of power.

SAPPHO

It is. And it's easy to become lost
in it.

Beat.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

I should head home before it gets
dark. Keep practicing.

DAMOPHILA

I will.

Sappho hugs Damophilia. She rises with her lyre and starts
the journey back home.

EXT. SICILY - NIGHT

Sappho walks back home as the light fades, the sky purple.

MAN (O.S.)

Hey!

Sappho turns to see the GROUP OF MALES, Baniti amongst them,
kylixes in hand, drunk.

Sappho scowls.

SAPPHO

Baniti.

BANITI

Still playing the lyre? Should you
not take up the loom and leave
music to the real artists?

SAPPHO

Still envious I never gave you a
personal performance as I did for
your wife?

Baniti's smile disappears. He staggers over to Sappho. Inches from her, he pauses, smiles, throws his wine at her.

BANITI

Oops.

She gasps as the deep red covers her and her white peplos. The Men laugh.

Sappho hits Baniti's cup out of his hand in retaliation. It shatters on the ground.

The angry Baniti steps closer, the Men circle her. He snatches the lyre from her back. She tries to wrestle him for it but is out-matched.

SAPPHO

Give it back!

BANITI

Or?

SAPPHO

I will skin you alive.

He plucks the lyre strings aggressively. Until, SNAP. One breaks.

Sappho lunges, the Men pull her back.

BANITI

She does not like that.

SNAP, he breaks another.

SAPPHO

No!

SNAP, another.

He drops the lyre to the ground. Sappho watches, helpless! Baniti steps on the tortoiseshell, it cracks in two.

Sappho's legs give out.

BANITI

Pathetic.

He nods at the Men to let her go. She runs to her broken instrument.

SAPPHO

What have you done!?

BANITI

Reminded you of the importance of
keeping your mouth shut.

Sappho lifts the broken instrument. She holds it close to her
chest. Tears run down her face.

INT. HOVEL - NIGHT

Sappho walks through the door. A numb look on her face.

Cleis rises from her bed, sees the broken lyre in Sappho's
hands.

CLEIS

What happened?!

SAPPHO

They destroyed it.

CLEIS

Who?

SAPPHO

My last bit of home, my last bit of
Atthis. Gone.

CLEIS

We can get it fixed at Agora.

SAPPHO

With what money? We are poor! The
performance is two days away.

Sappho sits.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

I should have never agreed to it.
It was foolish of me to think I
could be as great as I once was.

CLEIS

You never stopped being great. You
play even more beautifully now than
ever.

SAPPHO

Don't lie to me.

CLEIS

'Tis the truth. Your songs and
little Cleis...

(begins to cry)

(MORE)

CLEIS (CONT'D)

...they are the only things that get me through exile. Your words are powerful, Sappho. That's why Damophilia looks up to you. A female poet, better than all the men. They sing of war and violence. You sing of the most powerful thing, love. Look at what you did for Damophilia. You can do that for more girls just like her. How can you do that if you hide away?

SAPPHO

You're right.

CLEIS

Good! Now for your lyre. We have more string. The arms appear undamaged. The shell is the only thing that cannot be mended. We shall go to the shore first thing in the morning. How difficult can it be to hunt down a tortoise?

Sappho raises an eyebrow, skeptical of the plan.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Sappho and Cleis search up and down the beach. Nothing.

CLEIS

(out of breath)

This is much harder than I thought.

Sappho screams with frustration. She plops down onto the sand.

SAPPHO

We've been searching half the day, Mother. I will have to borrow Damophilia's lyre once she's done with her performance.

CLEIS

Are you sure?

SAPPHO

Yes. I'm exhausted.

CLEIS

If you insist.

Cleis and Sappho walk away from the beach.

The COOING of a bird sounds in the distance. Sappho looks up to the sky, recognizing the noise.

A DOVE flies above them.

SAPPHO
(sotto)
Aphrodite.

Sappho grimaces. She grabs a stone. She prepares to throw it at the Dove. Cleis stops her.

CLEIS
We have enough ill luck in our
life. Do not bring more by killing
that beautiful creature!

SAPPHO
It would take more than one stone
to hurt her--

CLEIS
Sappho... look.

Cleis points to the edge of the water. Something emerges. Dragging itself to shore. A TORTOISE.

Sappho looks back to the sky. The Dove is gone.

CLEIS (CONT'D)
Quick!

Sappho and Cleis, desperate, stumble over to the water. Eyes on the creature.

Sappho hand rises, holding the rock.

INT. SAPPHO'S HOUSE - MORNING

Sappho sits at her desk, mending her lyre with the new shell.

She finishes adhering the last bit. Holds it up. Admiring her work. It looks good as new.

SAPPHO
Come now my heavenly tortoise
shell: become my speaking
instrument.

INT. TEMPLE OF APHRODITE - DAY

The temple is packed with PEOPLE. Women are dressed in their best peplos.

A SALPINX (HORN) blares.

The Women head to the stage, the contest beginning. In the crowd, Sappho hugs her Family. They wish her good luck. Sappho dons her laurel wreath. Refurbished lyre in hand.

Damophilia hugs her Father, then Myra. Myra gives her one last look of reassurance, then Sappho grabs her arm and pulls her off toward the stage.

Sappho passes a statue of Aphrodite. She sneers at it.

INT. TEMPLE OF APHRODITE - DAY

Sappho and Damophilia wait in a long line of Women. Damophilia is unable to stand still, anxious.

Sappho rests a hand on her shoulder.

SAPPHO

Breathe.

DAMOPHILIA

What if I mess up?

SAPPHO

You will not.

DAMOPHILA

(nervous)

There are so many people here.

SAPPHO

Do you know what I think of before each performance?

DAMOPHILA

What?

SAPPHO

Atthis. The thought of her helps put my mind at ease. Only look at Myra. Sing to her.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

Here.

Sappho pulls the wreath off her head, places it onto Damophilia's.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)
Laurel is a symbol of victory.

DAMOPHILIA
I have achieved nothing yet.

SAPPHO
But you will.

STAGE

Damophilia walks on stage, hesitant. She sits, positions her lyre with shaking hands.

She quickly scans the crowd for Myra. Finds her. Myra gives her an encouraging smile. Damophilia calms.

She PLAYS.

Sappho watches from side stage, proud. She takes in the Crowd's faces. Everyone is captivated by the song.

INT. TEMPLE OF APHRODITE - DAY

Damophilia is cheered off stage. She runs to Sappho, they hug.

SAPPHO
They love you.

DAMOPHILIA
They're going to love you even more. Go!

Damophilia shoves Sappho onto the stage.

Sappho walks on slowly. The cheers die down.

Sappho takes a seat. She pulls her lyre up. Hands shaking. Breathes. Her hands steady. She closes her eyes then...

Plucks her lyre. The sweet sound fills the temple.

SAPPHO
(singing)
Be here, by me,
Lady Hera, I pray
Who answered the Atreides,
Glorious kings.
They gained great things
(MORE)

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

There, and at sea,
 And came towards Lesbos,
 Their home path barred
 Till they called to you, to Zeus
 Of suppliants, to Dionysus,
 Thyone's
 Lovely child: be kind now,
 Help me, as you helped them..

Sappho's slowly stops plucking. Song ending.

She opens her eyes. Looks to the Crowd. Suddenly the entire temple rumbles with CHEERS.

Sappho processes it in disbelief. Then stands, takes a bow. A smile spreading across her face.

In the Crowd she catches a brief glimpse of Aphrodite, smiling. Sappho blinks and she's gone.

EXT. SICILY - DAY

Sappho leaves her house, a much grander one. She is older, in her 30s. She makes her way down the streets, lyre in hand.

SUPER: SEVEN YEARS LATER

She walks till she reaches a building. She goes inside.

INT. SAPPHO'S MUSIC SCHOOL - DAY

GIRLS fill the space. Sitting, lyres in hand. They perk up as Sappho walks in. In the front row is Damophilia, her hand entangled with Myra's next to her, very much in love.

GIRLS
 (together)
 Good morning, dáskalo.

*Dáskalo - Teacher

SAPPHO
 Good morning, girls. Who's ready to
 learn a new melody? Let's start
 with D Minor Hexatonic.

The Girls get their lyres in position.

INT. SAPPHO'S MUSIC SCHOOL - NIGHT

The Girls exit after a long day, saying their goodbyes.

Sappho picks up the mess of the day. The light from the lamps seems to grow brighter. Sappho looks up, suspicious. She turns to see--

APHRODITE

Hello, old friend.

SAPPHO

Aphrodite. It's been --

APHRODITE

Eight years and thirteen days. But who has been counting?... You've made a good life for yourself. I saw the people of Syracuse erected a statue in your honor. The Poetess thrives.

SAPPHO

After many bad years, things have finally shifted in my favor.

APHRODITE

Well deserved.

SAPPHO

Why are you here?

APHRODITE

Hera tells me you pray to her often. Asking her to be reunited with Atthis. You still love her.

SAPPHO

I do.

APHRODITE

After all these years apart?

SAPPHO

Yes. I'm sure you can imagine the pain.

APHRODITE

I can. I'm sorry Sappho. Truly. I've made mistakes.

SAPPHO

Many.

APHRODITE

Yes, many. I never intended to hurt you.

SAPPHO

I know.

APHRODITE

*I hope to bring you more good
fortune.*

(beat)

Myrsilus has died this morning.

Sappho's shocked. She doesn't know how to process the news.

APHRODITE (CONT'D)

*I thought you'd be happy? You can
return to home.*

SAPPHO

I'm not sure there's anything left
for me in Lesbos.

APHRODITE

And Atthis?

SAPPHO

Surely she's married by now.

APHRODITE

*She was. At the age of twenty-two.
Her husband died in war two years
later. They had no children, she
did not remarry.*

SAPPHO

She would not want me.

APHRODITE

*She prayed to me this morning.
Begging me to bring you home to
her. She's never stopped loving
you. I see now how wrong I was.
Your love for each other has shown
me that.*

Beat.

APHRODITE (CONT'D)

It's time to go home, Sappho.

Sappho cries tears of joy.

EXT. SAPPHO'S GRAND HOUSE - DAY

Sappho and her Family shuffle out of the house. Belongings
packed on their backs.

Baby Cleis (9) runs after her Uncles who tease her. Cleis watches with a giant smile, ready to get the hell out of Sicily.

Damophilia stands, apart, waiting to say her goodbyes.

SAPPHO

(to Cleis)

Go on. I will only be a moment.

Cleis nods, walks off.

Sappho goes to Damophilia whose eyes are puffy with tears.

Sappho hands Damophilia a bronze key.

DAMOPHILIA

What is this?

SAPPHO

I have taught you all I know. And you have mastered it all. The school, it is yours.

DAMOPHILIA

Are you sure?

SAPPHO

Yes. You will be a great mentor to the girls.

Damophilia hugs Sappho tightly.

DAMOPHILIA

Thank you for all you have done for me.

SAPPHO

Trust me, young Poetess, I needed you far more than you needed me. Visit Lesbos soon.

DAMOPHILIA

I will overstay that welcome.

SAPPHO

I know.

Sappho kisses the top of Damophilia's head. Stands back, takes one last look at her, then follows her Family.

EXT. LESBOS - DAY

The Family's old ship reaches the shore. All eager to dock.

Aphrodite appears next to Sappho.

APHRODITE

*She plucks apples in her family's
orchard. Go!*

Sappho jumps off the boat, sparing no time. She runs down the dock.

Cleis jumps off as well, falls to her knees, kisses the dock. Young Cleis follows her Grandmother, kisses the planks.

CLEIS

Home!!!

EXT. LESBOS - APPLE ORCHARD - DAY

Sappho walks through the orchard, peering around. She spots her...

An older Atthis carefully picks apples from a tree, places them in a basket. Sappho watches for a beat, then grows skeptical. She turns, ready to walk away.

She runs into Aphrodite. Aphrodite grabs Sappho and turns her back around.

APHRODITE

Speak.

Sappho swallows down the rock in her throat.

SAPPHO

Atthis.

Atthis drops the apples, they tumble to the ground. The voice a familiar distant memory. She looks up, locks eyes with Sappho, freezes as if she's seen a ghost.

SAPPHO (CONT'D)

Hello.

Atthis turns the other way, walks.

APHRODITE

*What are you waiting for? Go get
her!*

Sappho follows after. Atthis picks up her pace, runs.

SAPPHO

Wait!

Sappho runs after her, gaining on her until -- she tackles her to the ground. They wrestle around, Atthis swats at her, releasing years of pent-up anger.

They stop, out of breath. Atthis' anger turns into bursts of laughter. Sappho laughs along with her. Atthis laugh dies down.

ATTHIS

You are here.

SAPPHO

I am.

ATTHIS

I prayed for you.

Atthis touches Sappho's face, hesitant at first. She runs her hands through Sappho's sea-swept hair.

ATTHIS (CONT'D)

Your hair. You have some greys.

Sappho rolls off of her, suddenly insecure. Atthis climbs on top of Sappho.

ATTHIS (CONT'D)

I like it.

SAPPHO

You do?

Atthis nods.

ATTHIS

I hope it means you are wiser.

SAPPHO

I am. And I am sorry for the years
I was not.

Atthis kisses Sappho. They cling onto each other in the dirt, trees rustling overhead.

Aphrodite watches from a tree branch, smiling. She POOFS into a dove, flies off, leaving them to their moment.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END