

The dulcifex and the temple of Mercury

An abridged version of 'the dulcifex'

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GODS

Diāna (Diana), Goddess of the Moon, the hunt, and chastity

Mercūrius (Mercury), messenger of the gods (and god of thieves)

Iuppiter (Jupiter), King of the Gods

MORTALS

Marcus, a thief

Tītus, a thief

Iūlia (Julia), wife of a rich Roman merchant

Daphnē, a Greek slave girl, nanny to Claudia and Aurēlia

Claudia, elder daughter of Iūlia, when visible (Claudia_VIS)

Claudia, elder daughter of Iūlia, when invisible (Claudia_INVIS)

Aurēlia, younger daughter of Iūlia, when visible (Aurēlia_VIS)

Aurēlia, younger daughter of Iūlia, when invisible (Aurēlia_INVIS)

Amphitheus, the Greek head-slave of Phyllis, a rich lady

This play presents part of the original play, *The Dulcifex*, which was first played by children of St Mary's CE Primary School in St Mary's Church, in Latin, on 16/3/2008.

In this episode, the goddess Diana explains that Cupīd, the god of love, has lent her the dulcifex, which had been made for him by Vulcan. It makes mortals nice, but Cupid thinks it is more fun to make people fall in love.

Two thieves plan a robbery from the house of Phyllis a rich lady, and decide to make a sacrifice to Mercury, who is watching what is going on. The goddess Diana realises that the plot might be foiled by the dulcifex, but it isn't yet clear how.

Two children are left in the forum in the charge of Daphne, their slave-girl nanny, while their mother goes shopping in the market.

A handsome young slave, Amphitheus, who is awaiting his mistress's return from a visit she is making, strikes up a conversation with Daphne, and they soon are fully occupied with each other (thanks to Cupid). Noticing the two bad-looking men, the children (urged by Diana) take advantage of the their nanny's distraction to follow them into the nearby Temple of Mercury. Diana keeps an eye on them.

In the temple, the thieves make the sacrifice, and the children hear them tell Mercury of their plans. The children's exclamations are heard by the thieves, who hunt the temple for them. Diana puts down the dulcifex and makes them invisible before they can be detected. The children can now see the dulcifex (previously invisible in god-world), and (after some experimentation) find out what it is for.

Leaving the temple, they find Daphne and Amphitheus still deep in conversation – but not for long, as the latter is soon called away. Daphne now cannot find the children, as they are invisible, and panic ensues. Daphne calls on Jupiter to help: he appears and is cross with Diana for illegal use of her powers to make them invisible, and she restores them to visibility. Daphne is very cross with the children when she sees them, but the children use the dulcifex (now invisible) to change her mood. Julia, the children's mother returns and senses a drama, but she, too, is similarly returned to sweetness!

In the original play, the thieves' plans are indeed foiled later by the dulcifex! And they do indeed become nice.

Scene 1: In the agora

	<i>In a corner of the stage are Marcus and Titus, conferring. Diāna goes centre stage, and speaks to the audience.</i>	<i>In a corner of the stage are Marcus and Titus, conferring. Diāna goes centre stage, and speaks to the audience.</i>
Diāna	Cupīdō lent me the dulcifex, made for him by Vulcan. It makes mortals nice, but he thinks it is more fun to make people fall in love. So he lent me the dulcifex.	Vulcānus dulcificem Cupīdinī creāverat ut mortālēs dulcēs faciat, sed Cupīdō māvult eōs amāntēs facere. ergō mē custōdem dulcificis prō tempore fēcit.
Mercūrius	I don't believe in niceness! I agree with Cupīdō.	dulcitās mitte! Cupīdine concordō!
Tītus	Look, there is Phyllis' house. They say she is very wealthy. <i>Enter Daphnē with Claudia and Aurēlia.</i>	ecce domus Phyllidis. ferunt eam dītissimam esse. <i>Enter Phyllis with Claudia and Aurēlia</i>
Aurēlia_VIS	Why couldn't we go with Mother to the market?	cūr nōn licet nōbīs mātrem comitāre ad forum?
Daphnē	Your mother says it's dangerous there.	māter dīcit forum perīculōsum esse.
Aurēlia_VIS	It's just as dangerous here – look at those men – they look wicked.	et hīc perīculōsum est. vidē istōs. scelestī videntur.
Daphnē	Don't argue. I am sure they are just ordinary people.	nōlīte disputāre! crēdō eōs vulgārēs.
Claudia_VIS	Why are they looking at that house? They are talking together but I cannot quite hear them.	cūr illam domum inspiciant? colloquuntur sed haud clāre satis audiendō.
Marcus	Why don't we burgle Phyllis?	furtum Phyllidī agāmus.
Tītus	Good idea. Tonight? We must first make a sacrifice to Mercūrius.	optimē. hāc nocte? prīmum necesse est nōbīs sacrificium Mercūriō agere.
Marcus	Let's do that. I have a little money to buy a chicken.	concordō. pecūniae habeō satis pullum emendō
Mercūrius	Aha – some business for me – off you go! <i>Exit Marcus and Titus to the market.</i>	euge! negōtium mihi erit. īte! <i>Exit Marcus and Titus to the market.</i>
Claudia_VIS	Look, they are going to the market place. What do we do now?	ecce! ad forum abeunt. quid nunc oportet nōs facere?
Daphnē	Just sit quietly, and wait for your mother.	quiētē sedēte, et mātrem exspectāte.
Aurēlia_VIS	Boring!	insulsum!
Claudia_VIS	Look, there is a rich looking woman and her slave. Who is she?	ecce! illīc est fēmina dīves et servus. illa quis est?
Daphnē	She is Phyllis. She is famous.	Phyllis est. fāmōsa est.
Claudia_VIS	She has gone into that house.	intrāvit illam domum.
Aurēlia_VIS	But her slave is coming towards you. I bet he thinks you are pretty. <i>Daphnē shrugs, and signals children to be quiet. Enter Amphitheus.</i>	servus tamen ad tē ambulat. nōnne tē pulcherrimam putat. <i>Daphnē shrugs, and signals children to be quiet. Enter Amphitheus.</i>

Amphitheus	Hello, I'm Amphitheus. What's your name?	salvē. Amphitheus sum. quid nōmen tibi est?
Daphnē	Daphnē. <i>She looks away, a bit embarrassed.</i>	Daphnē. <i>She looks away, a bit embarrassed.</i>
Amphitheus	What are you doing?	quid hīc facis?
Daphnē	I'm just babysitting.	modo infāntēs cūrō.
Amphitheus	They seem well-behaved. May I sit with you? <i>Sits down beside Daphnē.</i>	facilēs videntur. licetne mihi tēcum sedēre? <i>Sits down beside Daphnē.</i>
Aurēlia_VIS	If we look good, he will distract Daphnē, and then we can play where we like.	sī facilēs vidēmūr, ille Daphnēn distrahet, deinde poterimus lūdere quācumque volēmus.
Claudia_VIS	We mustn't – that would be naughty!	minimē – improbum est.
Amphitheus	Do you have a good household?	famīliane benigna est?
Daphnē	Yes, the family are nice. But the children can be tiresome. <i>Children make faces, but signal to each other to be quiet.</i>	ita vērō, benigna est. sed infāntēs saepe molestae sunt. <i>Children make faces, but signal to each other to be quiet.</i>
Amphitheus	I have seen you here before, and I always wanted to speak to you. You are very pretty. <i>Starts speaking quietly to Daphnē.</i>	tē hīc antehāc vīdī, et semper volēbat tibi loquī. venustissima es. <i>Starts speaking quietly to Daphnē.</i>
Aurēlia_VIS	I think Cupīdō is making them fall in love! <i>Pretends to use a bow and arrow on them.</i> <i>Reenter Marcus and Titus with a chicken.</i>	crēdō Cupīdinem eōs amātōrēs facere! <i>Pretends to use a bow and arrow on them.</i> <i>Reenter Marcus and Titus with a chicken.</i>
Claudia_VIS	Look, there are those bad men. They have a chicken now.	ecce, scelestī! nunc pullum habent.
Aurēlia_VIS	They are going into the temple of Mercūrius. Of course, he is the god of thieves. <i>Exit Marcus and Titus.</i>	intrans aedem Mercuriī. scīlicet deus fūrum est! <i>Exit Marcus and Titus.</i>
Claudia_VIS	They must be really bad.	nōne scelestissimī sunt.
Diāna	Aha, I have thought of a plan to help Phyllis, using the dulcifex and those children. Niceness is a powerful weapon against thieves!	euge! cōsiliū habeō prō Phyllide. sī infāntēs dulcificem invenient, fūrēs dulcēs facere poterunt.
Mercūrius	Don't mess my affairs up, Diāna, or I shall be cross! <i>Diāna makes a rude face at Mercūrius. and points the children at the temple. Exit Mercūrius.</i>	nōlī negōtium meum corrumpere, Diāna, nē irātissimus fīam! <i>Diāna makes a rude face at Mercūrius. and points the children at the temple. Exit Mercūrius.</i>
Aurēlia_VIS	Let's follow the men into the temple.	eōs sequāmur in aedem
Claudia_VIS	We can't! It's dangerous and Daphnē will see us go!	. minimē! periculōsum est, et Daphnē nōs abientēs vidēbit!
Aurēlia_VIS	No, she's too busy falling in love. Let's go! <i>Pulls a reluctant Claudia into the temple. Diāna follows.</i>	minimē! ea amōre nimis occupāta est. eāmus! <i>Pulls a reluctant Claudia into the temple. Diāna follows.</i>

Scene 2: In the temple of Mercury

Marcus and Titus have entered the temple, and have placed their chicken on the altar. They are praying to Mercūrius.

Tītus Great god Mercūrius , help us in our plan.
 Mercūrius *(Looks rather scornfully at the chicken.)* What do you want?
 Marcus You are so beautiful as a male, and powerful.
 Mercūrius True enough. Go on.
 Tītus Some women get rich just because they are beautiful.
 Marcus We are male and beautiful, so we need help to get rich.
 Mercūrius Come to the point.
Enter the children, with Diāna.
 Tītus So help us steal from a rich lady.
 Claudia_VIS There they are.
 Aurēlia_VIS Did they say "steal from a rich lady"?
 Claudia_VIS I think so.
 Marcus We will only take a talent ...
 Tītus ... or two ...
 Marcus ... or perhaps five ... ?
 Mercūrius Greedy!
 Tītus Then we will be a lot richer.
 Marcus And she will be only a little poorer.
 Tītus And we can give you a better sacrifice.
 Mercūrius Sounds good. We handsome males must stick together. Who had you in mind?
 Tītus Phyllis.
 Aurēlia_VIS Phyllis!
 Claudia_VIS Sh!
 Marcus She is rich as can be. And her window faces towards the rising moon.
 Tītus So we'd see her treasures without having to light a lamp.
 Marcus I can climb in if I stand on Tītus' back.
 Tītus Then if someone comes, we can disappear into the shadows.

ō Mercūrī optime, ōrāmus tē ut cōnsilium nostrum adiuvēs.
Looks rather scornfully at the chicken. quid vultis?
 speciōsissimus es, ō māsculissime, ō potētissime.
 ita vērō. etiam quid?
 aliquae dīvitēs fiunt modo quod formōsae sunt.
 ipsī formōsī sumus et dīvitēs fiēmus sī tū nōs adiuvābis.
 quid ōrātis?
Enter the children, with Diāna.
 nōs adiuvā ut dītissimam spoliāmus.
 illīc sunt.
 dīxēruntne "dītissimam spoliāmus"?
 sīc crēdō.
 solum talentum capiēmus ...
 aut duo ...
 fortasse quinque talenta, sī vīs?
 avārī estis!
 deinde multō dīvitiōrēs fiēmus.
 et ea modo paulō pauperior fiet.
 deinde sacrificium melius tibi dāre poterimus .
 bene. oportet nōs māsculōs speciē nostram adiuvāre. quam spoliēmus?
 Phyllidem.
 Phyllidem!
 Sh!
 illa dītior Croesō est. ecce, fenestra eius ad lūnam orientem advertit.
 ergō thesaurōs vidēbimus sine lūmine accendendō.
 in humerō Tītī stans possum in fenestram scandere.
 tum, sī aliquis interveniat, in umbrās ībimus.

Mercūrius	I like it! Because they will use Diāna's moon, they will think that it was she that blessed the robbery.	cōnsilium mihi placet - omnēs crēdent Diānam lūnā ūsam furtum favēre.
Diāna	We shall see!	fortasse nōn!
Aurēlia_VIS	We can't let them do this!	oportet nōs eīs obstāre!
Claudia_VIS	What can we do to stop them?	quid possumus facere ut eīs obstēmus?
Aurēlia_VIS	We'll go to Phyllis' house and see them breaking in. Then we'll shout and run away, and someone will hear and stop them.	ībimus domum Phyllidis, et eōs fūrantes vidēbimus, tum clamābimus magnā vōce et aufugiēmus, et aliquis audiet et eīs obstābunt.
Claudia_VIS	What if ... ??	sed sī ??
Diāna	You will also have the dulcifex to make them nice!	dulcificem etiam habēbitis ut eōs dulcēs faciātis!
Marcus	I hear someone speaking.	aliquem loquentem audiō.
Aurēlia_VIS	Shh!	Shh!
Tītus	Let's look around. <i>Children cower.</i>	quemcumque petāmus. <i>Children cower.</i>
Marcus	Look, over there! I saw a movement.	illīc sunt! mōtum vīdī.
Diāna	This calls for drastic action. <i>Puts down the dulcifex, and makes the children invisible. Marcus and Tītus hunt around, but don't see the children.</i>	oportet mē celeriter agere. <i>Puts down the dulcifex, and makes the children invisible. Marcus and Tītus hunt around, but don't see the children</i>
Tītus	Must have been a mouse. Let's get out of here. <i>Exit Marcus and Tītus.</i>	fortasse mūs erat? exeāmus. <i>Exit Marcus and Tītus.</i>
Claudia_INVIS	What happened? Why didn't they see us?	quid agit? cūr nōs nōn vīdērunt?
Aurēlia_INVIS	Maybe we're invisible?	fortasse invīsibilēs sumus?
Claudia_INVIS	That's impossible. Anyway they've gone now.	illud impossībile est. sed nunc abiērunt.
Diāna	Now you can see the dulcifex, Aurēlia.	ecce dulcifex, Aurēlia.
Aurēlia_INVIS	Look what I found! (<i>Picks up the dulcifex.</i>) I'm sure it wasn't here a moment ago.	vidē quid invēnī! (<i>Picks up the dulcifex.</i>) certa sum id antehāc āfuisse.
Claudia_INVIS	What is it?	quid est?
Aurēlia_INVIS	I don't know. It says "dulcifex" on it. So it makes things sweet.	nesciō. "dulcifex" in eō scriptum est. ergō aliquid dulce facit.
Claudia_INVIS	Maybe it makes honey?	fortasse mel facit?
Aurēlia_INVIS	And look, it says "squeeze" here. (<i>Points it at Claudia. Squeezes it. Noise and flash.</i>) Claudia, are you all right?	ecce, "hīc imprīme" scriptum est. (<i>Points it at Claudia. Squeezes it. Noise and flash.</i>) Claudia, sānane es?

Claudia_INVIS	Yes, I suddenly feel very happy and sweet.	ita vērō! subitō laetissima et dulcissima sentiō.
Aurēlia_INVIS	Dulcifex! That's right! That is what it's for!! It must make people sweet.	dulcifex! nunc intellegō! crēdō id hominēs dulcēs faciendō esse.
Diāna	Yes, even burglars!	et fūrēs!
Claudia_INVIS	Oh good! Let's take it with us, and if Daphnē is cross with us, we'll make her sweet.	bene. id capiāmus, et sī Daphnē irāta sit, eam dulcem faciāmus.
Aurēlia_INVIS	Good idea. We may need it when we get back to her. <i>Diāna looks on with a smile. Exit children with dulcifex.</i>	bene. fortasse id requirēmus quandō ad eam rediimus. <i>Diāna looks on with a smile. Exit children with dulcifex</i>
Mercūrius	You gave the dulcifex to the children!	dulcificem infāntibus dedistī!
Diāna	They'll probably use it better than Cupīdō would!	melius Cūpīdine eō ūtentur!
Mercūrius	I don't like it. Niceness indeed. There will be trouble with Iuppiter.	id nōn amō. dulcitātem fatuam! Iuppiter irāscētur.

Scene 3: In the agora

	<i>Daphnē and Amphitheus are talking intimately, intent just on each other. Enter children and Diāna. The children are invisible - and inaudible - except to each other. Aurēlia is carrying the dulcifex.</i>	<i>Daphnē and Amphitheus are talking intimately, intent just on each other. Enter children and Diāna. The children are invisible - and inaudible - except to each other. Aurēlia is carrying the dulcifex.</i>
Amphitheus	Phyllis is a very kind mistress, and bought me when I was just a boy. I often come out to help her with the presents that her friends give her. But some of these friends are not so nice. One day ... <i>Turns to speak quietly to Daphnē.</i>	Phyllis benignissima est. mē puerum ēmit. saepe eam dēducō et dōna amīcīs portō. sed amīcī quīdam nōn bonī sunt. olim <i>Turns to speak quietly to Daphnē</i>
Aurēlia_INVIS	Look, they're in love! Will they get married?	ecce, sē amant! marītīne erunt?
Claudia_INVIS	They can't get married. They're slaves.	nōn licet eīs marītīs esse. servī sunt.
Aurēlia_INVIS	Why not?	cūr nōn?
Claudia_INVIS	I think that there is a law.	crēdō lēgem esse.
Aurēlia_INVIS	It's unfair! <i>Enter Marcus and Titus, to look again at Phyllis' house</i>	inīquum est! <i>Enter Marcus and Titus, to look again at Phyllis' house</i>
Claudia_INVIS	Look, there are the thieves!	ecce, fūrēs!
Daphnē	... So my mother and I were brought to Rome, and sold as slaves. I was just 5.	... etiam ego et māter adductae Rōmam, in servitium vēnditae sumus. quinque annōs nāta eram.

Amphitheus	That's terrible. So you don't remember your father? <i>Hears something, and looks up.</i> Oh dear, I hear my mistress calling me. I have to go. We must try to meet here again. Goodbye! <i>(To Phyllis, offstage)</i> I'm coming. <i>Exit Amphitheus. Daphnē keeps her eyes on him. Amphitheus looks back and blows a kiss.</i>	dīrum est. ita patrem nōn meministī <i>Hears something, and looks up.</i> ēheu. audiō dominam vocentem audiō. necesse est mihi abīre. iterum hīc congregiāmur. valē! <i>(To Phyllis, offstage)</i> veniō. <i>Exit Amphitheus. Daphnē keeps her eyes on him. Amphitheus looks back and blows a kiss.</i>
Daphnē	He's gone. <i>(Remembers why she is there.)</i> Where are the children? <i>(Looks around in panic.)</i> What has happened to the children?	ēheu. abiit. <i>(Remembers why she is there.)</i> īnfāntēs ubi sunt? <i>(Looks around in panic)</i> īnfāntibus quid ēvēnit? periī!
Claudia_INVIS Aurēlia_INVIS	We're here!	hīc sumus!
Daphnē	<i>(Not seeing or hearing them.)</i> Claudia! Aurēlia!! Where are you? <i>(Hunts around)</i>	<i>(Not seeing or hearing them)</i> Claudia! Aurēlia!! ubi estis? <i>(Hunts around).</i>
Aurēlia_INVIS	<i>Goes to thieves, waves her arms around. They don't see her.</i> We really must be invisible.	<i>Goes to thieves, waves her arms around. They don't see her.</i> vērō nōn possumus vidērī.
Marcus Tītus	That's funny. It's breezy around here. I think we have seen enough. Let's go. <i>Exit Marcus and Tītus.</i>	mīrum est. subitō ventōsum est. satis vīdimus. abeāmus. <i>Exit Marcus and Tītus.</i>
Daphnē	<i>(Still looking, bursts into tears)</i> They have gone. My mistress will kill me.	<i>(Still looking, bursts into tears)</i> abiērunt. domina mē necābit.
Claudia_INVIS Aurēlia_INVIS	What if we stay invisible? Nobody will feed us if we aren't there. Maybe we are goddesses now?	quid agat sī invīsibilēs maneāmus? ita nēmō nōs alet. deae fortasse nunc sumus?
Claudia_INVIS	<i>(Bursts into tears)</i> I don't want to be a goddess. I just want to be me again. <i>(They hug.)</i>	<i>(Bursts into tears)</i> nōlō dea esse. ego ipsa volō esse. <i>(They hug.)</i>
Daphnē	O Iuppiter, help me! Bring those children back! <i>Enter Iuppiter in a clap of thunder. Mortals freeze.</i>	ō Iuppiter, adiuvā mē. īnfāntēs refer! <i>Enter Iuppiter in a clap of thunder. Mortals freeze.</i>
Iuppiter	What's going on? <i>(Looks around)</i> Those children are invisible! <i>Sees Diāna.</i>	quid agit? <i>(Looks around)</i> illae īnfāntēs invīsibilēs sunt! <i>Sees Diāna.</i>
Iuppiter	Diāna! Why are those children invisible? Is this your doing? <i>Diāna approaches Iuppiter. Nods yes.</i>	Diāna, illae īnfāntēs cūr invīsibilēs sunt? nōnne fēcistī? <i>Diāna approaches Iuppiter. Nods yes.</i>
Iuppiter	You know what the law says. "No mortals may be invisible except when they can't be seen."	scīs quid lēx ēdīcat. "nōn licet mortālēs invīsibilēs facere nisi iam nōn possint vidērī."

Diāna	I'm sorry. Mercūrius distracted me just as I was about to make them visible again. <i>Goes to the children, and makes them visible again.</i>	paenitet mē. parābam eās vīsibilēs facere sed Mercūrius mentem distrāxit. <i>Goes to the children, and makes them visible again.</i>
Iuppiter	Don't do it again, or I'll give you a boyfriend, and you won't be the Goddess of Chastity any more.	nōlī illud iterum facere, nē amātōrem tibi dem, et nōn posteā dea castitātis eris.
Diāna	A boyfriend? No, anything but that! Please!!	amātōrem? ōrō nē sic puniar!!
Iuppiter	Don't do it again! <i>Exit Iuppiter. Mortals unfreeze.</i>	nōlī illud iterum facere! <i>Exit Iuppiter. Mortals unfreeze.</i>
Claudia_VIS & Aurēlia_VIS	Here we are! Here we are!!	hīc sumus! hīc sumus!!
Daphnē	<i>(Very cross)</i> You naughty naughty children! Where have you been??	<i>(Very cross)</i> improbissimae! ubi erātis??
Claudia_VIS	Aurēlia, use the dulcifex! <i>Aurelia uses the dulcifex on Daphnē.</i>	Aurēlia, dulcifice ūtere! <i>Aurelia uses the dulcifex on Daphnē</i>
Daphnē	<i>(All smiles again.)</i> I am so pleased to see you. I was so worried.	<i>(All smiles again.)</i> vōs vidēns laetissima sum. valdē sollicita eram.
Claudia_VIS	We were just here.	vērō hīc erāmus.
Aurēlia_VIS	Couldn't you see us? <i>Enter Iūlia with basket of produce.</i>	nōnne nōs vidēre poterās? <i>Enter Iūlia with basket of produce.</i>
Iūlia	What's going on here? You have been crying, Daphnē. Have they been naughty children?	quid agit? cūr lacrimās, Daphnē? infāntēs, nōnne improbae fuērunt?
Claudia_VIS	No, we were close by, but Daphnē couldn't see us. <i>Aurēlia uses the dulcifex on Iūlia.</i>	minimē, iuxtā erāmus, sed Daphnē nōn poterat nōs vidēre. <i>Aurēlia uses the dulcifex on Iūlia.</i>
Iūlia	<i>(Smiles.)</i> I don't know what the fuss is about then.	<i>(Smiles.)</i> ergō querimōniam nōn intellegō.
Claudia_VIS	<i>(Looking at Aurēlia)</i> Where's the dulcifex?	<i>(Looking at Aurēlia)</i> dulcifex ubi est?
Aurēlia_VIS	It's still in my hand. <i>(Looks down.)</i> But look! It's invisible now, but it is still there!	in manū est. <i>(Looks down.)</i> nōn videō, sed vērō ibi est!
Claudia_VIS	That's spooky!	barōcum est!
Aurēlia_VIS	I'll tie a ribbon around it when we get home.	vittam circumligābō cum domī erimus.
Iūlia	Come on, you two. <i>exeunt</i>	venīte ambae. <i>exeunt</i>