

ESME (clap) Mmm . . . !

ELEANOR (calls) All right! (to Max) It's my Sappho tutorial.  
Do you mind?

Esme pops in and straight out, wearing a red-leather bomber jacket.

ESME (voice down) Lezzie lesson . . .

ELEANOR (calls after her) In here!

Remind me to shout her. Do I look all right?

MAX (looks) All present and correct.

ELEANOR I mean my face—

MAX (Oh . . .)

ELEANOR —do I look as if I've been crying?

MAX No. Sorry, I'm (sorry)—(letting go, angrily) I'm down to one belief, that between theory and practice there's a decent fit—not perfect but decent: ideology and a sensible fair society, it's my double helix and I won't be talked out of it or done out of it or shamed out of it. We just have to be better.

GILLIAN, a student who dresses 'sensibly', carrying books, etc., comes into the garden uncertainly. Max ignores her, goes past her into the house. Eleanor greets Gillian and smiles her into the second chair.

A door slams: Max leaving the house.

Esme's music becomes louder. Eleanor excuses herself and goes into the house. Gillian puts on her glasses and gets out her essay.

Esme's music cuts out. Sounds of Eleanor and Esme having a brief row, cut off by a door slam.

Eleanor returns to her place.

ELEANOR Right. Off you go.

GILLIAN It's Fragment 130.

ELEANOR Eros the knee-trembler.

GILLIAN (reads) 'Eros deutē m'ō lusimeles donēi glukuplērōn amachanon orpeton . . .' 'Eros, once more, loosens my limbs, stirs me, bitersweet naughty boy—'

ELEANOR (Naughty?)

GILLIAN '—he steals in.'

ELEANOR And why not sweet-bitter?

GILLIAN 'The interesting word here is Sappho's invention glukuplērōn, sweet-bitter, with no known . . .'

ELEANOR Really, Gillian? It's a nice compound, but the interesting word here is amachanon. Naughty doesn't get near it. What's the root?

GILLIAN I . . . Machan . . . ?

ELEANOR Right. Machan. Think 'machine' . . .

GILLIAN (confused) (Think-machine?)

ELEANOR . . . contivance, device, instrument, in a word, technology. So, a-machanon—un-machine, non-machine. Eros is amachanon, he's spirit as opposed to machinery, Sappho is making the distinction. He's not naughty, he's—what? Uncontrollable. Unageable.

GILLIAN (bursts out) But I think I've found a precedent for glukuplērōn!

ELEANOR (pause) Really? Try me.

GILLIAN (*gathers herself*) . . . Sappho's invention *glukupikron*, sweet-bitter, with no known precedent. Or is there? The lacuna in front of *pieros*, Fragment 88a, line 19, is suggestive—

ELEANOR Have you been to look?

GILLIAN Look?

ELEANOR At the papyrus. It's in Oxford in the Ashmolean.

GILLIAN No.

ELEANOR Well, I have. If that's a lacuna I'm a monkey's uncle—  
*But Gillian has broken—she gathers up her stuff in a rush, falling to keep back her tears, and leaves the way she came . . . passing Esme entering.*

ESME (*reproaching Eleanor*) Munn . . .!

ELEANOR There isn't time . . .!  
*Blackout and 'It's All Over Now' by the Rolling Stones—which merges into a segment of the same song as recorded in English by the Plastic People of the Universe on the album Muzbez usi—it's about ten minutes into the first track.*

~~Smash cut to:~~

~~Prague. Office interior. A table, two chairs, coffee cups, plate of biscuits. Jan sits facing his INTERROGATOR, a youngish middle-ranting bureaucrat.~~

~~The Interrogator has files to refer to.~~

~~INTERROGATOR So, Doctor . . . Have a biscuit. They tell me your luggage consisted entirely—I mean entirely—of socially negative music.~~

~~JAN Yes, I'm thinking of writing an article on socially negative music.~~

~~INTERROGATOR (*deadpan*) Really? When our allies answered our call for fraternal assistance to save socialism in this country, thousands of Czechs and Slovaks who happened to be in the West decided to stay there. You, on the other hand, whom we requested to remain in Cambridge for Professor Morrow's . . . 'summer—what?'~~

~~JAN 'Teach-in'.~~

~~INTERROGATOR 'Summer titchin', you rushed back to Prague. Why did you come home?~~

~~JAN To save socialism.~~

~~INTERROGATOR I'm afraid you're not taking us seriously. You have one doctorate from Charles University and nearly a doctorate from Cambridge University, so you're thinking two doctors must be cleverer than one official in the Ministry of the Interior. I take it you're Jewish.~~

~~JAN No, that's not what—What?~~

~~INTERROGATOR (*referring to a file*) You left Czechoslovakia just before the Occupation.~~

~~JAN No, in April, for the summer term.~~

~~INTERROGATOR The Occupation. The Nazis. Hitler.~~

~~JAN Oh! Yes. Yes. The Occupation. Sorry.~~

~~INTERROGATOR Because you were Jewish.~~

~~JAN So it seemed.~~

~~INTERROGATOR Well, are you or aren't you?~~