

# **WARNAR**

**By P. C. Hooft and S. Coster**

**(probably)**

**Based on Plautus' *Aulularia***

**Translated by Christopher Joby © 2011**



## PROLOGUE

Two allegorical figures: Generosity; Miserliness.

*(The scene is a street in Amsterdam. There are two houses, one belonging to the miser, Warnar, and the other to Rijkert and his family. Generosity enters and stands in front of Warnar's house).*

Generosity: Citizens of Amsterdam, both those who were born here and those who have chosen to make their home in this noble city; a city which will soon pierce the clouds with the tower of the Westerkerk and the crown on top of it, received as a reward from the hand of the Emperor, do not be surprised if my dress is extravagant, I am your fellow citizen, munificent Generosity, who, unlike a miser, does not live frugally with her riches, but lives joyfully herself, and feeds the poor with her abundance. I shall not keep quiet about the reason I have come here: it is to gain power over this house, which my deadly Enemy now possesses. She sits brooding about the gold, which lies buried there in a pot, forcing the owner to live like a slave, whilst he could be feasting with counts. The owner's grandfather buried the money first under the hearth by the fire, so that no one could steal it. But when death was approaching, he never said a word about it to his own son, for fear that everything would be lost: and when he died, his son had to live off his own income, which wasn't exactly a fortune. He had to eat and dress very frugally, and just got by until he, too, died. His son now lives in the same way, although he has absolutely no need to do so; for when he re-laid the floor round the old hearth, he found the pot with the gold in it. He keeps this now like an old fool, which is why Warnar, which means 'True Fool', is a good name for him. He has reburied this treasure several times in various places in his house, and the floor still holds those coins; but his daughter's name is Claertje, and she will clear the pot out, when she appears, of that I'm certain. The girl is pregnant (but does not know by whom). That is certainly strange, but you will see it's true, however incredible it may sound. The young lad and his family are certainly wealthy people, and I would gladly see that pair married. And when that happens, people will respect me more, and I, instead of Miserliness, will rule this house. The tide turns and all things come to an end. *(Miserliness comes out of Warnar's house).* Come out, you old witch, with your scrawny beak; you'd eat your own faeces out of greed. You have occupied this house long enough. You must realize that your time is over!

Miserliness: *(Exits Warnar's house).* Farewell, lovely money, that I love so much, though I weep sad tears as I take my leave of you. Oh, but my heart cannot leave you; let me stay a while so I can give it one more kiss.

Generosity: Go, your time is up.

Miserliness: Why are you being so aggressive towards me? I'll faint if you hound

me like this.

Generosity: You've kept a miserly household here long enough.

Miserliness: Oh, let me teach the old man just one more lesson.

Generosity: It's gone on far too long. I'm watching you.

Miserliness: Then I shall call out to him from afar: (*turns to Warnar's house*). Warnar, Warnar, remember what I taught you. Make sure that you don't forget me, now that they've driven me out of your house. Always be frugal, even though I have to leave so quickly. (*Aside, slowly leaves the stage*). I know he has pledged his heart to me so steadfastly, and that he will remain a prisoner of his love for me, even though I have been forced to leave him.

Generosity: This will be called the potty play, if you will, most honoured patrons! Plautus had the play produced for citizens and nobles of Roman blood. One of the household gods speaks the prologue there, but because you may not be so familiar with them, the translator has given that role to me, Generosity. Plautus set his play in Athens, but it can just as well be set in Amsterdam. So, we shall use well-known places and alleys. And don't take it personally, it's all made up.



## CHARACTERS

WARNAR – A Miser

REYM – A Housemaid

RIJCKERT – A Neighbour of Warnar's

RITSERT – The nephew of Rijckert, who rapes Claertje, Warnar's daughter

GEERTRUYD – The sister of Rijckert and mother of Ritsert

LECKER – Rijckert's assistant

CASPER – A steward

TEEUWES – A cook

Cook's assistant

# WARNAR

## ACT ONE

### SCENE ONE

Warnar and Reym

Warnar: (*Warnar chases Reym out of his house*). Out, I say, get out, I told you to get out now. She's rooting around with her eyes like a pig with its snout.

Reym: Oh my back, oh my head, oh my nose, oh my cheeks.

Warnar: Yes and your face should get a few whacks, too, now and then.

Reym: And why are you hitting me like this? My nose and mouth are bleeding.

Warnar: Are you asking why, you slut?

Reym: And why can't I stay in your house any longer?

Warnar: Look at that baboon. What sort of tricks are going on here? Do you think I have to give you a reason for what I'm doing? I'm going to hit you again in a minute with a club. Out of the door now, or your face will get a few more whacks.

Reym: (*To herself*). How good it would be to be hanged so you could rest in peace, then at least you wouldn't have to serve such a madman.

Warnar: What are you mumbling?

Reym: Nothing.

Warnar: Then the devil's playing with your trap. The next time I'm doing something and you come to disturb me, I shall gouge your eyes out with a drill. Come here quickly, or I'll grab you between the neck and stomach with a huge pair of tongs. (*Aside*). She's plodding along like a louse on a coat covered in tar. Here, come closer, I tell you. Right, that's good. Just sit there for me, and do some spinning, without moving your foot, and if you look round, or bring a straw bed over here, then you'll get the gallows at a knock down price as a New Year's present. (*Aside*). I'm so old and I've got through something like fifty maids, but in my whole life, I've never known one like her: she's as cunning as the devil, and if I let her talk me round, I'm afraid she'll pull the wool over my eyes. She's so crafty, and so diabolically bad. If she gets a whiff of the pot with money in it, then I'll be as poor as imprisoned slaves. Now I

have to go and open the floor up again and see whether it's still where I put it. If I think that someone might have tracked down the money, then I'll shiver from top to toe. (*Goes into his house*).

Reym: Oh, I just don't understand why my master has taken leave of his senses. What crazy idea has he suddenly got into his empty head, to make my life so miserable, chasing me out of the house ten times a day? His brain has turned to mush; he lays awake the whole night, and gets up fifty times. He sits in his house all day long, like crippled tailors sit with their legs crossed in their shops. We're finished, and I don't know how I can save Claertje's honour; she's pregnant and about to give birth. Now everything's lost, I don't see a way forward. Woe is me, if he gets to hear just the slightest whisper about this; it would be better if I went to hang myself somewhere in the Nes, on a pastry baker's hook, and that would be the last you'd hear of me. Mmm, my mouth is watering when I think of the turkey I'd be.

## SCENE TWO

Warnar, Reym

Warnar: (*Comes outside again. Aside*). Now everything is safe, and in its place, I'm feeling somewhat better than I was just now. Go in Reym, and look after the house.

Reym: (*Aside*). Yer, of course, I have to protect the house to make sure it isn't stolen; because there's not a halfpenny for thieves to steal; there's nothing but the wind and cobwebs in the house. Or is he afraid that someone will come and steal them?

Warnar: As far as you're concerned, our dear Lord should make me as rich as the Pope, or the King of Spain, or the like. Stop all these fantasies; and get inside. I know I'm poor, but I bear it with patience and resignation. Whoever knocks on the door, don't let them in, and keep your eyes peeled. I'm going shopping and I'll be back in a minute.

Reym: What if a neighbour comes round asking for a piece of burning coal?

Warnar: Put the fire out, then they won't be able to ask for it; otherwise I'll put your head in the fire bucket instead. If anyone comes for water, call out immediately, 'We can't give you any, our water-butt is empty'. Call to the people through the window, then we won't get any intruders. If someone comes for a bucket, send him to the cooper; for a treble hook, a well hook or other junk, just say, 'I lost them on the street, the thieves have run off with them'. In the name of Christ, however much they sweet-talk you, when I'm out, I don't want anyone to be let in. Indeed, even if lady luck herself came along, I'm warning you, be careful and



keep the door shut tight, or you'll make me really angry!

Reym: Don't worry. People burn horns to keep her at bay. Do you think that she'll knock on our door? Crap! She'd turn back as soon as she got a whiff of the stench outside your house: and if she had to come this way, then she'd think twice about walking on this side of the road. She'd get a chill in her spine just looking at the front of your house.

Warnar: Shut your mouth and get inside.

Reym: Yes, I'll shut my mouth and go inside. (*Goes inside*).

Warnar: (*Calling out*) The riffraff are sniffing around a lot, so put both bolts on the door. I'll be back shortly, so don't open it before then. (*To himself*) I don't want to go, but I have to go the Prinsenhof. They're going to decide what to do with the money they've collected from fines; whether they'll spend it on the shooting ranges, or turn it into spoons. If I don't turn up, then I can imagine that they'll spend the rest on booze: what's more, they'll think that I'm staying away, because I've found the money. For a long time, they've thought of me as frugal and prudent, so they'll quickly come to the conclusion that I'm neglecting to advise them to save, because I'm busy trying to make a larger profit, and however well I cover it up, it's likely almost all the world will think that; those who meet me will greet me in such a friendly manner, whereas previously they used to greet me so feebly. It's 'Good day, Warnar, where are you going, Warnar? How's your father doing?... Adieu, all the best, farewell, have a good year'. I'm afraid they'll smell a rat; they won't just be doing that for nothing. But I'd better be off, as I was planning, and help them do their work as quickly as possible, so I can get back home again before too long. (*Exit*).

### SCENE THREE

Geertruyd, Rijkert

Geertruyd: (*Comes out of the other house with Rijkert*). I hope, my brother, that you will interpret the words I speak to you today positively, as any brother should do with his sister's advice, although I know very well that people pay little attention to what women say, arguing that we just talk hot air. But, I'll put that to one side and won't contradict it just now. However, I do want you to think about the fact that I am your sister, and have to be concerned about your honour and well-being.

Rijkert: What have you got to say?

Geertruyd: Well, you're getting on a bit, and if I lose you without having any children, then my father's family name will die out completely. So, I've

spent the whole night thinking, how I can best get you married.

Rijkert: (*Ironically*). I'm sure that'll make me happy and for even more sweetness, throw in a pound of figs.

Geertruyd: Look, sooner or later, you're going to fall completely for some phoney, shallow whore.

Rijkert: Do you really think so, sis?

Geertruyd: Yes, I do. Quite seriously.

Rijkert: I'm afraid it's too late.

Geertruyd: How do you mean?

Rijkert: Look, I can't stand this sort of talk. If that's what you want, come on, give me a couple of black eyes: you couldn't say anything that would make me sadder.

Geertruyd: Listen.

Rijkert: Every word about that is like a kick in the shins.

Geertruyd: Trust me.

Rijkert: (*Ironically*). If that's your advice, then I'll do it.

Geertruyd: Otherwise you'll come to grief.

Rijkert: Marriage might be the right thing, but not for me.

Geertruyd: Just listen to what I'm saying. Take some advice, my good man: don't disregard it, because your well-being is at stake.

Rijkert: I'm happy then. Find me a bride tomorrow, provided that I can kick her out the next day. If you can sort that out, then I'll be off to the barber's to get a shave

Geertruyd: You're making fun of me. Just listen and think about it, and stop all this crazy talk. I have this widow in mind, who's forty years old. Older or younger than that, I don't know, but it's about that, and she wheedled a will out of her husband, and by nagging and going on, she got the best part of what he owned. She's got lots of go and she's prudent, and she managed to get the better of him, and not vice versa.

Rijkert: What a bitch!

Geertruyd: Relax, even though it looks like deception, that's how things are these days. She's done well out of it: she's got all the money she needs, well dressed, great house; from top to bottom, everything's sorted; and she's after men like any other girl.

- Rijkert: A woman on fire, who doesn't get her hands burnt. I know exactly who you mean: the widow of Claesje Klik: We don't suit each other, Lobberig and me: that smooth-talker isn't my cup of tea. And if you're going to call me mad, then I'll have to be mad. You could've got me interested if you'd tracked down a girl of eighteen like the daughter of our neighbour, Warnar. She could have helped me out of my troubles.
- Geertruyd: If you want her, then I think that can be sorted out: but they haven't got any money. Her family is too poor.
- Rijkert: But the girl's attractive and the father's honest: I don't want a father-in-law who's always running around collecting debts: nor a house full of maids to order around all day. I can't be doing with all that fuss and bother.
- Geertruyd: If that's what you want, may God grant you happiness.
- Rijkert: We've been chatting long enough. I'm going to see her father. Look, here he comes now, on his way home.

#### SCENE FOUR

Warnar, Rijkert

- Warnar: (*To himself*). I thought as much. I could feel it in my bones. I was so against going that it was bound to be in vain. When I got to the Prinsenhof, I couldn't find a Corporal or NCO, Captain or Lieutenant, inside or out: people never keep good time. It must be because they're mad. Now I'm going back home, because that's where my heart is.
- Rijkert: Neighbour Warnar! Good day. How's life?
- Warnar: Ah, rich neighbour Rijk. Good day to you too, if God wills it.
- Rijkert: And a good year to you. I hope it doesn't bring you any sadness.
- Warnar: (*Aside*). When rich people speak to the poor like that, it's not for nothing; I fear the maid has told him about the business of the pot.
- Rijkert: How are things, then?
- Warnar: All well and good, unencumbered by money, as is usual for simple folk like me.
- Rijkert: What? The world doesn't just revolve around money; if you're content, then you've got nothing to worry about.

Warnar: (*Aside*). What a smooth talker he is? This is all about the pot: as soon as I get home, the first thing I'll do is poke the maid's eyes out, however much she begs me not to. Then I'll rip the tongue out of her throat.

Rijkert: Dear neighbour, why are you standing there talking to yourself like that?

Warnar: I'm complaining about the poverty that I have to suffer; I only have one daughter to marry off, but I can't provide her with a dowry, dear chap, and so no one's asking for her hand; and I'd be so happy, whilst I'm still alive, for a man to take care of her, because I'm afraid that if I die, sooner or later she'll go down the wrong path in these difficult times.

Rijkert: If you haven't got anything else to worry about, then stop complaining. I want to help, so don't give up hope.

Warnar: (*Aside*). I know what he's up to, but he won't succeed. He wants the cooking pot, that's why he's being friendly.

Rijkert: I've got something special to say.

Warnar: (*Aside*). Oh, I've lost the money already. He's dug it up, I should think, and now he comes along acting all, 'oh, let's split what's been found', and then cut a deal. Oh, how miserable it is for me! (*Starts running off to his house*).

Rijkert: Hey neighbour, where are you running off to so quickly?

Warnar: I've got to tell the maid to do something at home and I'm afraid I'll forget it. I'll come straight back. (*Enters his house*).

Rijkert: When he finds out that I'm planning to ask for his daughter's hand in marriage, he'll think that I'm making fun of him, because it's so unusual to see a marriage between two people so unequal in wealth.

Warnar: (*Comes out of his house and talks to himself*). God be praised, the pot is still there! Everything is as it was. I nearly felt a stab in my heart when I entered my house and I nearly fainted. What were you saying Rijkert?

Rijkert: Will you give me an answer?

Warnar: If the corresponding questions please me: if I don't like them, it's best that you know that I won't answer them at all for the rest of the day.

Rijkert: I won't ask anything unreasonable. What do you think of my family?

Warnar: They're beyond reproach.

Rijkert: What about the life I lead? Is that just as good?

Warnar: You've always been a good-natured fellow.

Rijkert: Can you guess how old I am?

Warnar: There's quite a few years to count; like your pennies.

Rijkert: Well, I've always thought of you as a respectable citizen, and still do; even though your parents were simple folk, they were beyond reproach.

Warnar: (*To himself*). I don't know what's wrong with him, but he's got a whiff of my pot. (*To Rijkert*). So, what do you want, then, neighbour Rijkert?

Rijkert: (*To himself*). May God on high bless him! (*To Warnar*). As you know me well, and I you, I hope you won't deny me one request, which is that you give me your daughter to be my wife.

Warnar: But Rijkert, I never knew in all my life that you were such a strange bloke; is it right for you to deride an old man like me? Have I deserved this from you? I'd never have thought so.

Rijkert: You shouldn't interpret my words in any other way than good. My request is serious; I tell you I mean it.

Warnar: My dear chap, just leave me and my daughter in peace!

Rijkert: Believe me, neighbour, I'm not doing it for a laugh.

Warnar: Like with like; that's what makes the best couples. Rich belongs with rich, poor with poor. You wouldn't want to know me and you'd make my daughter arrogant. Then I wouldn't count for anything, and I wouldn't like that.

Rijkert: That's how some rich people act; but I'll know you as a father, and that's how it should be.

Warnar: Do you promise me that?

Rijkert: Yes I do.

Warnar: Good luck, then. You have my word. You shall have the girl, so what are you waiting for? (*To himself*). In the name of God, what's that commotion I hear in there? There must be somebody after the booty? (*Enters his house*).

Rijkert: As regards the girl's own affections... hey, he's off again. He's away, but where's he gone? I think he's playing hide-and-seek. What's going on here? Did you ever see such a thing? With him it's now you see me, now you don't. Quick as a flash he's out, and then before you know it he's in. But it's not surprising that he's all confused. When the rich start a conversation with the poor, they always think that they'll be swindled or taken in, and then sometimes they miss a good opportunity.

Warnar: (*Warnar appears at the door, and calls into his house*). On God's word it's true. You should think about it, my girl, and if I can't pull your

tongue completely out of your mouth, then I give you permission, authority and the special task of getting the best deal you can from Dr. Jeurjaen, the quack with the bent ribs, to castrate me. I'm telling you quite calmly, be on your guard.

Rijkert: So, neighbour, I don't think you hold me in high regard. What have I done to deserve you making a fool of me?

Warnar: Not at all, I have a lot of respect for you. If I am making a fool of you, then may God strike me down!

Rijkert: How are things between us, then? Are you going to keep to your word?

Warnar: Indeed, but as I said, I can't give you anything with her.

Rijkert: I know that, but that's not important. Even on that condition, she will still be my bride.

Warnar: Listen. Don't think that I've found a pot with gold in it.

Rijkert: What nonsense, I'm marrying her for her good character.

Warnar: Just so we're clear, I won't be providing a bottom drawer.

Rijkert: We're in total agreement.

Warnar: Yer, but I know you well. With rich types, it's give first, then take back later. You promise to take her without purse or money now, but then on a whim, you'll cancel the marriage. You rich people only keep your word when it suits you.

Rijkert: I tell you I shall keep my promise and in order to prove that further, let me bring my family round to your house this evening to agree the terms of the marriage together. I shall go now and make arrangements for us to have a feast, since I know that you can't pay for it. Goodbye, I'll see you later. I'll be off and be as quick as I can. (*Exit*).

Warnar: There he goes. O my Lord, what an awful thing it is to have money. That man would never have set his heart on my daughter, if you ask me, if he hadn't known anything about the treasure. He sticks to me like a limpet.

## SCENE FIVE

Warnar, Reym

Warnar: (*Warnar is standing outside his house and calls Reym outside*). Where

are you, you gossip? You've been telling everyone in the neighbourhood that I can provide my daughter with a large dowry? Quickly, get your hands moving, and don't hang around. Wash the dishes quickly, put everything in its place, go on, tidy up and don't dilly-dally. Scrub the floor, and scour the kitchen sink, tidy the kitchen and sweep the entrance hall. Give the windows a good clean, but if you break a pane, I'll take it off your wages. Whitewash the inside wall and get a penny's worth of sawdust at the shop. Put it on the slate.

Reym: Master, do you want to get through your money quickly? Why are you being so generous? A whole penny for sawdust to spread on the floor? You'll waste all your lovely money by doing that. Think about it; if you do it twice, it'll cost you tuppence.

Warnar: That doesn't matter. I've got the wind in my sails now; my daughter is going to be a bride.

Reym: Good luck! But, who's she marrying?

Warnar: Our bachelor neighbour, Rijkert. This evening, we're having a feast to formalize the marriage with family on both sides.

Reym: My word. That will cost a lot.

Warnar: The bridegroom doesn't want anything from me. There won't be a problem. He'll look after the food and drink. I'm just off to the Dam. You get to work. I'll be back shortly. Keep the door shut. Make sure everything is neat and tidy, or you'll get the sack, and someone else will get your present from the bride. (*Goes off towards town*).

Reym: Now me and Claertje are up to our necks in trouble: the bride, the bride to be... and she's heavily pregnant. I just don't see how everything's going to be sorted out. I'd better go in and do my work, and wait to see what misfortune we shall suffer. (*Enters the house*).

## ACT TWO

### SCENE ONE

Lecker, Caspar, Teeuwes and his assistant.

Lecker: (*Close to Rijkert's house*). Well my friends, you two are always together, as thick as thieves. If one of you doesn't know something, the other will.

Busy chatting, hey? Greetings to you both.

Teeuwes So, Lecker, where are you off to?

Lecker: Lucky I met you. I was just on the way to see you.

Teeuwes: What's there to sort out?

Lecker: Well, you've got to get a feast ready. My boss's pre-wedding feast is happening this evening.

Casper: Well, that is news, I hadn't heard anything about it. What sort of wife's he getting? Tell me her name.

Lecker: Have you never heard that a wedding comes as quickly as a crap? I think it caught the boss unawares too. He's never talked about a wife in all his life, but today he got into a funny mood and went straight to see our neighbour, Warnar, to ask him for his daughter's hand in marriage, and it didn't take them long to settle the matter.

Teeuwes: Quickly sorted, then. So what did you want to say?

Lecker: Just this. The family is going to the bride's house this evening to sort out the marriage. My boss wants to keep his reputation and treat them all to a feast. That's his intention, and that's why he's asked me to find a steward and cook as quickly as possible.

Teeuwes: Well, we're quite busy at the moment.

Casper: Mr. Roastpork is having visitors tomorrow and we have to provide the food and service. Ask your old boss to wait until the day after. Mr. Roastpork has invited all the family, so it would be really bad if we left him in the lurch.

Teeuwes: We're just working everything out at the moment, right down to the smallest details; how we're going to manage everything.

Casper: They're very fussy people and that takes time.

Lecker: I don't know what else to say. My master wants me to do everything to sort this out, without delay. If you can't help me, I'll have to find someone else. I'd better be off.

Teeuwes: Listen. Stay here for a minute.

Casper: Just wait. We'll have a think about it and let you know.

Lecker: You shouldn't think you're the only option. Whoever does the catering tonight can also do it for the wedding.

Teeuwes: If we don't sleep tonight, then we'll just have enough time.



- Casper: Go on then. Because it's you, we'll do it. But if it were someone we didn't know, then we'd just leave them in the lurch. Anyway, how come it's the bridegroom who's footing the bill? It's usually the bride's family who pays.
- Lecker: Huh, huh! Get the bride's father to pay the costs?
- Teeuwes: Impossible, my dear chap, that wouldn't work; I know him well and he's as tight as tight can be. Impossible, he'd cry blue murder and 'Fire! Fire!' when there was only smoke, because he'd think so much warmth was being lost.
- Lecker: That's why he's put a sail over the fireplace, so that the smoke can't escape when there's a sudden draught, but has to spend half a day looking for a way out. Before he puts his head on the pillow at night, he closes the pipe on the bellows so that no air can accidentally escape through it when they aren't being used.
- Teeuwes: Huh. He should close his pipe so no air can accidentally escape from him.
- Casper: What a lot of stingy people there are in Holland.
- Lecker: I could tell you a long story about that: Just recently he was visiting his niece Trijn. He took his chance and fasted for three days, as much as he could bear. And when he began to eat, he stuffed his belly with as much food as he eats in three days; so he ate at someone else's expense for a full seven days!
- Teeuwes: Well, what a pig! How could his stomach handle it? Or did he get what he deserved?
- Lecker: His stomach was making noises so much, and his chest, grumbling, rumbling, grunting, as if fifty people were at loggerheads with each other.
- Casper: Really! So what did the doctors say about his pee?
- Lecker: Whatever people said, he didn't want to see the doctors. He was too afraid about the endless costs, and it got to such a point that he had already given up on himself. 'Cousin Warnar, think of your soul', said one of his old cousins. 'If a preacher came along, who read to you from the bible "with you it's going from flood-tide to ebb-tide, and your life is ebbing away," ... he'd want a pound, he said. So it didn't happen. What do you think about such a miser?
- Teeuwes: Greedy people always save, even if they have to build with dung. They'd prefer to have a pound than the consolation of heaven.
- Lecker: When he clips his nails, he keeps the clippings in a box.
- Casper: Hmm. He's the biggest miser in the whole country.

Lecker: Recently, he went to the fish market with a net in hand, and bought small eels and smelt as bate. Then the stork came along, gulp! and pulled one through the net. He ran after it, angrily, as if it were a ton of gold, along Bird Street, over the Church Bridge, to the bailiff! He exaggerated the whole thing and just stood there moaning that the stork should be arrested. And he's done a thousand things like that in his life. There are so many of them, that I can't remember them all. But, anyway, we shouldn't waste our time on that.

Teeuwes: Yes, but if we are going to buy the provisions, then you have to tell us how many people are coming, and then we'll do our sums based on that number. You see we need to know in advance.

Casper: And we've got to work out the seating plan.

Lecker: OK, let's go and have a look. Come on.

Casper: Alright, let's go. The steward ought to be on the right hand side, when he walks along with someone else. I don't like you people being in the middle, because that's the most respectable place to be when there are three.

Lecker: No way, you're not going to swing that. I tell you, keep quiet or I'll kick you to kingdom come. I'll go in the middle as I represent the master. Who else is giving you work but me? Who's giving you your bread?

Casper: I'm not going to do it, even if you kill me. Would I really give another person my place? I, I, I served as a steward in Antwerp for over thirty years. Am I going to let a cheeky monkey mock me like that?

Teeuwes: Gentlemen, please. I don't give a row of beans for all this harping on. I don't care, whether I go behind or in front, above or below. But listen to what I have to say, so that we can cross the street without squabbling and arguing. I think it's best that Lecker goes in front so that everyone is in the right place and doesn't lose face.

Lecker: Let's go then. You can follow; it's not far.

Casper: Sorry. I'd rather be dead than let that happen. Every day, I deal with distinguished people. What would they think if I agreed to that?

Teeuwes: Quite right. If you don't put yourself forward, no one else is going to. Everyone should have their due; that's best.

*(Lecker, Casper, Teeuwes and the cook's assistant come to Warnar's house).*

Lecker: Come on Reym, come on, open the door of this nest. Out of the way, clear a path, these people have to get to the kitchen.

Reym: *(Peering round the door).* Yer, but there's no fire in the house.

Lecker: Then you must get one going.

Reym: I don't think there's any turf.

Lecker: That doesn't matter. If you've not got any turf, use wood, or you'll get it in the neck.

Reym: There isn't any.

Lecker: Haven't you got any planks of wood in the attic? Learn to talk sensibly.

Reym: What is this bloke waffling on about? Does he want me to throw the house on the fire?

Lecker: Why not? The work has to carry on. No harm will come of it; it's a wedding.

Reym: He's mad. May God cure him.

Lecker: Or think up something else. The steward, the cook and his assistant are here; they can't hang around. Go in, my friends, go in. Let me just taste the bride's wine.

Reym: Wine? Have a drink of wine? No one dares do that here. Are you talking about bride's wine, Lecker? Ask for watered-down bride's beer. Wine has never come over the threshold of this house. What are you talking about?

Lecker: Hasn't the drink arrived yet? Then it will be here soon. The boss has already ordered it, and the maid is on her way to collect it. Goodbye. In the meantime, I hope you'll be wise. (*Lecker walks off; Casper and Teeuwes go inside with Reym*).

## SCENE TWO

Warnar, Teeuwes and his assistant.

Warnar: (*Returning from town*). I wanted to keep my honour as the father of the bride, but such a portion of elvers like thin ropes for fourteen pence? And don't even think about shellfish or cod. That's why I went from the fish market to the meat hall, but lamb's meat, calf meat and beef: that's all too expensive. Per pound it costs a guinea and I've seen meat just as good as that being sold for a quarter of the price a hundred times in my life. I thought to myself: these people are taking someone for a ride. Then you've got the cost of basting the meat, of turf and wood; you see, everything is so expensive, it's shocking. It can't be done, and I've nothing more to say on the matter. Recently, I've been asking myself whether I'm just being too generous, but when the wedding is over, it

won't matter any more. A couple of young spendthrifts might well mock me, but intelligent people will give me more respect. A penny saved is a penny earned. That's what my godfather taught me. It's not as easy to get money as you might think. It's much easier to waste it and drink it away than it is to earn it. Hey, what's going on here? My house door is wide open. Are they digging up my pot? They're busy with something.

Teeuwes: (*Comes out of Warnar's house with his assistant, calling back into the house*). Haven't you got a spit? Then you can use a broomstick. You can measure liquids with your belt. (*To his assistant*). Here's a list of the food, young lad, run along! Tell the butcher and the poultry sellers that I've sent you along. (*To Warnar*). Tell me, my friend, this pot is too small. Is there a bigger one somewhere? Handfuls of sugar and cinnamon won't hurt either.

Warnar: Oh! He's talking about the pot. I thought as much. There must be some thieves after my money! Oh, my heart is beating so quickly. I'm alarmed. I'll chase them shouting and cursing, and as long as I can stand, I'll carry on beating them. (*Runs into his house*).

## ACT THREE

### SCENE ONE

Teeuwes: (*Coming out of Warnar's house*). Drat! I'm the last one. Everyone's gone. Has no one seen master Casper or my lad? Tell me, dear citizens, which direction did they go in? He can go to hell! We shouldn't let ourselves be hounded by such an old man. He beat me so hard with a club that I'm black and blue. It was no use me shouting, 'stop, I'm the cook'. If he was drunk, then he reacts badly to drink. Anyway, things have worked out, because at first there wasn't any wood in the house, but he helped us once and for all with his club.

### SCENE TWO

Warnar, Teeuwes

Warnar: (*Comes running out of his house*). Come here, you blackguard, and stand still, I tell you.

Teeuwes: Now, you old nutter, here I am, what have you got to ask?

Warnar: Why are you standing there holding such a big knife? Are you trying to threaten me with it?

Teeuwes: (*Ironically*) If I regretted all my sins as much as I regret not threatening you, then I'd die a happy man.

Warnar: I say there can't be a worse blackguard than you, and that I detest no one more than I detest you.

Teeuwes: You're not lying, sir, even though you can do that well. The matter is clear: you don't need to give any proof of that. But you randy old man, what have you got against us, that leads you to rant and rave against us without any reason?

Warnar: Are you still asking, you dirty thief? Have you not had enough yet, then I'm sorry I didn't beat you harder.

Teeuwes: I swear I'll beat that head into marrow so much that you won't forget it for at least a month.

Warnar: I don't know about that. I've beaten you enough for the moment, anyway. But, what are you doing in my house when I'm out?

Teeuwes: Well, isn't there a wedding at your house tonight? The steward and I came to prepare for the feast.

Warnar: What business of your's is it what I want to eat, whether it's raw or cooked. That's going too far; you're in charge, like yer!

Teeuwes: I'm only asking if you're having a meal here tonight.

Warnar: And I'm asking you whether I'm the boss in my own house.

Teeuwes: I'm asking you who's doing you out of anything? Tell me why we can't prepare the meal.

Warnar: Are you really asking that, you rogue? Why were you rooting around in the main room, the kitchen and the rest of the house? A few beatings will teach you. If you'd only been dealing with the food, I wouldn't have hit you over the head with the club. Stay there, I tell you and don't come too near my threshold, or I'll do your head in right here and now. Don't take another step. Stay there, where I tell you. (*Enters his house*).

Teeuwes: (*Shouting*). And I'm telling you you've got to give me my jacket back, and my cooking knife with the silver finish, or I won't go away for the rest of the day. (*To the audience*). My goodness. How things turn out differently from what you expect. I thought I'd be earning money from roast chickens, but now the barber-surgeon will be earning money from me.

### SCENE THREE

Warnar, Teeuwes

Warnar: (*Comes out of his house, speaking to himself*). No, in the name of God, as long as it's there, I'll have no rest: wherever I go, I'll have to take that cooking pot with me. If that rabble goes rooting around under the floorboards: but they won't do the dirty on me; I'll put the pot out of harm's way. If they track it down, it'll be gone. (*To Teeuwes*). You can come in now, cook, with all your rabble. I give you permission and that should make you happy. Cook and braise; mess and muck about until you've had enough. Go into the main room and kitchen, or wherever you want.

Teeuwes: That's good, that is, after you've beaten us so scandalously. My head's hurting so much, I don't know where to put it.

Warnar: You've been hired to cook and not to chat. If you don't want to, then get lost. It'll be no skin of my back.

Teeuwes: You'll have to pay the doctor's bill for my bruised head.

Warnar: I won't say much to you, but I will say shut up!

Teeuwes: Look mate, I've been hired to cook and not to be beaten. Understood?

Warnar: If you want to be paid, then call me before the judge; otherwise go and get your mates, and be a good lad and get to work.

(*Teeuwes exits*).

### SCENE FOUR

Warnar: There he goes. He can't sue me, because he hasn't got any proof: by God's bleeding heart, how difficult things are for a poor man, when he has to deal with a rich man. You're always at a disadvantage. Whether it's a marriage, or becoming their friend, or going into business with them, you're always going to come off second best. That's how it is with this Rijkert, who's supposedly after the girl, but is of course only out to get his hands on my pot. I bet he quickly tracked down those people, who specialize in deception, and hired them specifically so that they could nab my booty. Hmm. Pretend to want to be my son-in-law? Huh, the sly toad! But Warnar isn't as stupid as he looks. He's on the ball when it

comes to his pennies – you’d better understand that. I’ve just had a fight with our cockerel, and it’s now lying mortally wounded, at death’s door. Oh, that rascal nearly ruined me, but I got angry and gave it such a beating. It was scraping away at the floorboards, scraping and scratching with its claws, where the pot lay hidden, in the name of God. I’m almost ready to believe that the cooks put him up to it. In the name of God, I was in such a temper; I was so angry. And why not? I caught the thief red-handed, whilst he was doing it. I followed that good bit of advice, ‘Whoever finds a thief in his house, can kill him there and then’. (*Rijkert approaches in the distance*). Oh, hello, here comes my future son-in-law. Letting him go past without saying anything would be impolite in this situation.

## SCENE FIVE

Rijkert, Warnar

Rijkert: (*To himself, not having seen Warnar*) So, I have spoken with all my family and friends. They congratulate the bride and the father. I think it’s very useful for rich suitors to marry a poor daughter. It makes for more social harmony in the city. There’d certainly be fewer problems caused by envy, and if poor people aspired to having children from marrying the rich, then they would be less inclined to lead dissolute lives than they are at the moment. And we wouldn’t have to lay it on so thick with our wealth.

Warnar: (*To himself*). What a son-in-law I shall have. He knows how to speak. When he speaks about being thrifty, he speaks so beautifully.

Rijkert: (*Still has not seen Warnar*). If all daughters were to be married without a dowry, then they’d all set about trying to get a husband with their good manners. Then you wouldn’t hear them moaning every day, ‘Why shouldn’t I, it’s my money we’re talking about. I’ve given just as much money to this marriage; perhaps more than you. I want to wear damask on Sunday and taffeta during the week. I want a chain just like my cousin’s, so you’d better get used to it; our neighbour’s wife has got the latest bracelets. They’re worth a hundred gold coins. I’ve had some chairs made out of ebony, but they only cost six guilders each. What a bargain!’

Warnar: (*To himself*). Goodness me. He knows rich women inside out. They should just make him the supervisor of all of them.

Rijkert: (*To himself*). All day long, people have been knocking at the door, and there are always people loitering in front of it. First it’s the new seamstress with fine cloth and lace, and it makes no odds that we’ve already got a regular seamstress. Then it’s the furrier with sable fur

lining; scourers and cleaners, who almost seem to live here. Then there's an embroiderer with all his patterns, 'This is a new design; I sketched it out first with charcoal. Grietje Goossens has got some of the other one on the front of her wedding dress. The flower motif will be made of gold thread and have green edges. Your cousin Truitje has got that pattern on a pair of gloves'. After he's grumbled for a bit, and hasn't yet finished, a pot of strawberries, the favourite food of pregnant women, suddenly comes along in a boat from Leiden, which she buys for later. Then the goldsmith's assistant comes along out of breath, to ask precisely what sort of ring they want, as if it was a matter of life and death. Then someone brings along a linen cloth, starched and ironed; then the shoemaker comes along to fit the new shoes. Then they bring along samples of wine or foreign beer. Then comes the bill, three or four pages long, written out by the tailor the previous Monday, item by item, with the lines as close together as possible. Anyone who saw it would get the shivers. Then an old woman brings cooked meats to the house, and I bet they can only be bought for a tidy sum. Then she's got so many gossips around her, that it makes your head spin. I don't know where she digs them up from in the street. They have four mayors and a whole council, with so many different ranks that you could never praise them enough. Lijs Milksop is second-in-command and her sister-in-law is head bailiff. Wobbly Weetwel is the town clerk, what do you think about that? Reym'rich Cackle is the treasurer, and Niesje Nosey-Parker is the town messenger. They know how to do things better than the men; we're just a bunch of dumb blokes. My goodness, there's such a commotion! Twice a week you can read the pamphlets with the latest news from the four corners of the town, faithfully gathered by secretary Know-all. There you read who's after men and who has to get married: who's rejected Harmen and which girls Goris is chasing; that Jan is being henpecked and that Krijn is beating his wife; that little Heim has had a miscarriage and Dibberich is pregnant: who'll get the blame for that and who the father is. They keep right up-to-date on that and pay close attention to how many bankruptcies there have been in the Granmarchand family. What Snorker Braggart loses each year when disasters befall his pregnant sheep; how many bastards Broeck Bigpants has fathered; how many lovers Katy Cockscomb has got, what clothes and jewels each bride has got, and how many thousand guilders each father gives with his daughters to get them married off. And they know how to say these things in such a thrilling way and with such well-chosen words that the Brabant rhetoricians couldn't hold a candle to them, and the Holland ones certainly couldn't. They weigh up national politics and the war with the Spanish with finesse. They use Scripture to back up their argument: 'ergo this, ergo that'. And the heart-rending stories that make people so miserable were all sorted out long ago by that lot. It does not matter how difficult something is, they can resolve it: they devour those problems like a child eating sweets. If a cook or steward or pastry or cake maker comes along with the order, they just have to wait until the matter is sorted out, and they go their separate ways. In short, those women make so much fuss that I'm almost sick.



Warnar: Well, I never. Future son-in-law. How well you talk.

Rijkert: (*Startled*). Did you hear what I said?

Warnar: A bit.

Rijkert: Who wouldn't moan about such a nuisance?

Warnar: I was standing there laughing so much that I had to hold my stomach in with both hands. Yes, sir, you certainly know how to talk.

Rijkert: And I haven't even told you a thousandth of all their tricks. I'd rather go through Purgatory twenty-five times than marry a rich woman.

Warnar: Oh, don't worry about that. You could make someone young again with the way you speak. I really like the way you talk about thrift.

Rijkert: Fine, but I hope that you act decently at your daughter's wedding. Is your wedding suit ready to be worn?

Warnar: Worn? It isn't worn, you know. I've got a camel's hair jacket, with a couple of patched-up sleeves. That will do me for the day before the marriage and the day of the marriage itself. Everyone should dress according to rank. Those who don't have money can't just expect it to grow on trees.

Rijkert: No, you've got a bit though, and if God blesses that, then a bit might become a lot.

Warnar: (*To himself*). I don't like the sound of that. He knows about the pot; the maid has betrayed me. I wish in the name of God that she would go and sit on a large spike.

Rijkert: Why are you talking to yourself?

Warnar: That bloody whore!

Rijkert: Who are you mumbling about? What's up now?

Warnar: Who would I be mumbling about apart from you?

Rijkert: What have I done apart from please you?

Warnar: You might well ask. You sent me a house full of thieves. They were swarming all over the place; lots of moaning and groaning; a whole gallows full of cooks, and three or four hundred cook's assistants, all wicked rascals, cunning and impudent. As far as I could see, each of them had two pairs of hands. They just grabbed things and didn't ask once about pots and pans. In short, they were all a bunch of thieves, even the clothes they had on their backs. Those clothes were all dirty with splodges and stains, so badly educated that whatever they touched couldn't be removed for the first three weeks, or at least a fortnight: you

couldn't have got it off even if you'd used a treble hook or anchor and put four horses of the same breed in a harness to pull them.

Rijkert: What are you rabbiting on about?

Warnar: It's true, I tell you!

Rijkert: But from what I've heard, you sent them all away.

Warnar: Even if my whole body was full of eyes, I wouldn't be able to keep a close enough watch on them: they had quick fingers, and beaks like magpies'.

Rijkert: What do you think of the wine? Did the tap leak at all, or had it not yet arrived when you went out?

Warnar: I can't say; I haven't seen any wine. I don't care if it doesn't come to my house for the rest of the year.

Rijkert: But I'll have to fill you up this evening: you can't be dry when you're making wedding arrangements.

Warnar: I don't like it.

Rijkert: You must, or it will all go wrong. You must drink to wedded bliss, if you love your daughter.

Warnar: (*Aside*). I'm just playing dumb. But I know what he's got in store for me: he's planning to get me drunk with a little piece of trickery, in order to get my money without further ado. But dear brother, you can't fool me like that; I'll put a stop to it, or my name isn't Warnar! I shall hide it somewhere outside the house, where no one can steal it. Then his wine will be finished and he'll be racking his brains in vain.

Rijkert: What do you say? Are you going to have some Dutch courage tonight?

Warnar: If I must, then I must, said the man, and I must. We'll have a drink when all the details have been finalized.

Rijkert: Goodbye then, until this evening. I'm going to visit a notary. (*Exit*).

Warnar: (*Takes a coin out of his pocket and addresses it*). What cunning tricks people play to get their hands on you, my lovely round coin! O pot! How many people are after you! I didn't think that bloke was someone you could trust. Where's the best place to hide the pot? Let's see; in the charnel house by the church? Watch out! I must be careful what I do. Just recently a barber-surgeon was walking past the churchyard in the moonlight with his wife, and had nearly reached the grammar school. Then he said, 'Let's look for a skull, my dear, that's brand new and flawless, in mint condition'. 'A skull?' she said, 'a skull. What a strange man you are'. 'Yes, a skull', he said again. 'Do you find that so weird? It will look good in the shop, opposite the door. Just wait here'.

Immediately he climbed over the wall. She began to call out, 'Master Wybrand, what are you up to? Come back at once'. 'Wait', he said, 'whilst I look for one without any grit in it'. When he got one, he came back and said, 'Here's one. Hide it under your apron'. Then they went along Ditch Street and the New Dike and that was fine. But when they got to the Damrak, just before Salt Lane, there were a couple of lads horsing around. The wind got up and lifted her apron. Then they shouted, 'Witch, witch', and began to throw stones. To cut a long story short, they only just got away with their lives. No, pot, if I hide you there, the devil might find you. If the barber-surgeons came rooting around amongst the skulls, they'd perforate you with a trepan and dissect you from front to back. Anyone who gets into their hands should be given the last rites. If the pot went that way, then I'd never see or hear of it again. I'd rather bury it in the robbers' graveyard. No one is buried there except those condemned to death, and there won't be any death sentences passed before tomorrow morning.

## ACT FOUR

### SCENE ONE

Lecker:     (*Near the New Church*). Goodness me, if it's always like this with all this rushing about, then I wouldn't like to be involved in a wedding every day. I looked high and low for our Ritsert. Eventually, one of his mates said he was in the local library. I found him there with his nose in the books. 'In the name of God, Ritsert', I said, 'I've looked everywhere for you, in the Peteweynen, in Heermans, the Lute, all those inns, the dance school, the fencing school; into the gambling den, out of the gambling den'. 'Well', he said, 'why are you in such a hurry? What's up? Tell me?' I told him about the wedding, and that was like a thunderbolt to him. The lad turned as white as a ghost. Believe me, he'd been counting on that money. He'd thought that his rich uncle Rijkert wasn't going to get married. But, my goodness, at least you can count on an old godmother. As for godfathers, you can often be mistaken about them, my good people. When they're old and long in the tooth, they get a silly idea in their heads, sometimes as frivolous as those of young lovers. And an old man with a young wife! They're sure to have kids.

## SCENE TWO

Warnar, Lecker

*(Still near the New Church).*

Warnar: *(Enters with the pot).* My word. I need to have my wits about me, so that no one sees this. Are there people looking through the windows? No, there's no one there. I'll bury my most valuable possession here. O, dear churchyard, dear churchyard, look after the treasure, so that it does not fall into the wrong hands.

Lecker: Who's that in the churchyard? In the name of God, it's the father of the bride! Graves are expensive. They cost loads of money. I think he wants to buy all of this corner of the churchyard, in order to dig a grave for himself suitable for someone of his rank, and then sell the rest in plots to his family and friends. He's very wise to remember that one day he'll die. And if he keeps it all for himself then his descendants will inherit lots of land, and the price is going up a lot, rising every day. Hey, he's rooting around in the ground. Why is he doing that? I can't imagine that he's lost something there, unless it's one of his forefathers. I want to find out what this is all about. I'll have to go there in a minute, when he's gone. What a strange thing he's doing; he never did anything more odd. He's stamping his feet as if he were kicking clumps of peat. Now he's climbing over the wall. There he goes, now it's my turn. If people see me here, they might think that I'm working for a sorcerer. I think the old man and me both look crazy.

Warnar: O my heart's beginning to beat quickly. I get the feeling that someone might be watching me through the window. My heart is beating as quickly as if I were in a dance hall. *(Sees Lecker).* You rogue, what are you doing on the wall? I'll break your neck. Hurry up, I say, and give it back!

Lecker: What do you want from me? What's this madman babbling on about? Who's taken anything from you?

Warnar: I'm telling you, you dirty thief, give it back!

Lecker: I don't know what you want back.

Warnar: Hurry up, I tell you, give it back. This isn't a joke!

Lecker: Why are you pulling me, thumping me and pushing me? I'm telling you, blast you, let me go!

Warnar: Take that, and that, and that.

Lecker: What on earth's causing you to hit me? If you want to hit someone, go away and hit yourself.

Warnar: Give it back, or you'll get some more.

Lecker: Why are you threatening me? Have I done something wrong to you?

Warnar: You may well ask, you church robber, you downright thief? Give it back quickly, or I'll beat you again.

Lecker: What? Are you calling me a thief? What I have taken?

Warnar: I'm not going to tell you, you rogue, you twin Judas.

Lecker: My goodness, you're hopping mad, or mentally deranged. Either you've flipped your lid and your brains's gone awol, or you've got a stone in your head, or you've hired your head out as a millstone. What on earth do you imagine is going on? I come from an honest family; search me all over and see if you find anything.

Warnar: If you don't give it back, thief, I'll give you a good hiding. Where are your hands?

Lecker: Here's one, and here's the other.

Warnar: Come on, where's the third!

Lecker: Think about whether your conscience is clear.

Warnar: Yes, it is, because I haven't beaten you half as much as I should; but I'll put that right, unless you tell me what you've stolen.

Lecker: Nothing at all, I swear.

Warnar: Where have you hidden it? Take your jacket off.

Lecker: I'm innocent. Search me, if you want.

Warnar: What have you got in your breeches? What's that in your bag? I bet the rascal will give in now.

Lecker: You can open it if you want. There's nothing in it except a pair of scales for weighing gold.

Warnar: Shake everything out, all the pockets.

Lecker: It's my boss's bag, which I carry money in.

Warnar: And in the pockets of your breeches?

Lecker: There's nothing of your's there. Try lower if you want.

Warnar: Who is your boss?

Lecker: Your future son-in-law. I've looked after his money for one and a half

years.

Warnar: And if you're meant to be collecting money, what are you doing here?

Lecker: I was passing through, until you accosted me.

Warnar: Pass through as quick as you can to the gallows.

Lecker: That's nice, that is.

Warnar: I won't leave the pot here. I'll go and dig it up again. Now, off you go, and don't look round or I'll break your neck.

Lecker: Right, I'm off. My word, how you curse! Now I'll just slip quietly away and look round the corner. I know for sure that that greedy bloke must have buried a sack with money in it. If I can find it, that will be the worst thing that's ever happened to him. My goodness. He's got a whole fire bucket. If it's full of money, then I'm saved. I've taken four or five hundred guilders out of the cash-box. I can make it up now, and I'm so happy I could almost sing. Drat! He's taking it away, he doesn't think it's safe here any more. But if he isn't going to bury it at home, then I think he'll hide it somewhere else. I shall follow him without delay. If I get my hands on those coins, I shall be as happy as a sand boy.

### SCENE THREE

Geertruyd, Ritsert

*(In front of Rijkert's house).*

Geertruyd: But Ritsert, what am I hearing? You've raped Warnar's daughter? How reckless, stupid and unthinking young people are: what dangers people run when their children start going out. If this gets out, what will happen to us? Rape! Rape! That's way beyond the pale.

Ritsert: Rape or no rape, it wasn't that bad; she didn't shout too loudly for her father or the neighbours.

Geertruyd: What possessed you? How could you dare? And didn't you think that you'd bring great misery on yourself?

Ritsert: It went quite differently from how you think, you see. I'll tell you how it happened.

Geertruyd: I'm prepared to believe anything because the strangest things are happening at the moment.

Ritsert: Grietje Gossens was the bride and I had to dress up: I was wearing a Polish tunic, and had a bow, and a quiver full of arrows; a sabre by my

side, a cock's feather on my cap: my long hair was tied up in a bunch. Even though I had the mask on my belt, the devil wouldn't have recognized me. I was coming out of the Moor's Head with my mates; and whilst we'd been changing in there, the drink was flowing and no one was counting how many mugs we drank. So, on the outside I looked wild, but on the inside I was even wilder. In that condition I went with the whole crowd to the wedding. The wedding guests were drinking there as if Holland's future depended on it and it turned out that the tables hadn't yet been put to one side. When we saw that it was too early to go in, we went for a walk to waste a bit of time, and to see if we could find some fun. I lost the rest of the crowd, as I was hanging around in an alley for a bit. Then I found Claertje at the door and I went and had a chat with her. I got into her house; we were all alone. The girl was attractive, I'd always thought that. The wine was in my head, and half turned me into an animal. It was quite dark; the moon was shining through the windows. She still didn't recognize me, however closely she looked, but she could see that I wasn't a real sailor. Then it occurred to me that I had heard her say that her father had threatened to wring her neck, if she opened the door after he had gone to bed. So she would rather die than make a noise, and if her father did come... well, he's just a dwarf: that's what I thought to myself, and so I set to work even more violently. It isn't a pleasant tale, I confess, but I went all the way.

Geertruyd: How do you know she's pregnant?

Ritsert: I have kept a close eye on her since that time, and seen that she is getting bigger and bigger, so she must be pregnant. And it won't be many days, I guess, before she gives birth.

Geertruyd: What can I say? I'm ashamed that I gave birth to you.

Ritsert: Mother, please don't get wound up. That won't do any good. But if you find this situation so horrible, please try and think up a solution. Give me permission to marry her and to save her honour.

Geertruyd: If we do to others, as we would like them to do to us, then things will be OK. But such a marriage? That's far too little. I thought you were such a wonderful lad, but now you've brought shame on yourself, by throwing away all you have in a marriage like that.

Ritsert: Moaning about it isn't going to do any good. I have an upright character; it could have been worse.

Geertruyd: That's true. You can always comfort yourself with the thought of something worse. You could have got Jannetje Joosten as your wife, with twenty thousand guilders. She's a really nice girl, who always stays at home.

Ritsert: She's a gossip.

Geertruyd: Or Wijntje Waverer.

Ritsert: That stammerer.

Geertruyd: So what? She's a stammerer, but think what an inheritance she's due. Her mum's still sitting on the throne, but when she dies, her daughter will really rake it in.

Ritsert: If she's still on the throne, she can carry on pooing in peace until she's ready.

Geertruyd: You won't get the money with corny jokes like that. If I'd given you to her, you'd have been taken care of. You wouldn't be in such a tight spot, if she had found you, because she can talk like the best of them.

Ritsert: As if every tooth was full of mouths.

Geertruyd: So, she's no good either: what do you think of Meyns? All the rich people call her cousin!

Ritsert: She is so Puritanical, as if she'd fled from England.

Geertruyd: I don't understand. What are you saying? What is she?

Ritsert: As mad as a hatter. Oh, mother dear, don't talk to me about crazy people.

Geertruyd: It's no use; it's all too late: but tell me, what shall we say to your uncle? To convince him to give up his bride, now that the time of the wedding has already been decided? How will he agree to you taking his place?

Ritsert: He'll do it straightaway, if he isn't blind.

Geertruyd: How do you mean?

Ritsert: Are you really asking that? Because she's pregnant.

Geertruyd: That's true. I've lost my sense. I'm all confused.

Ritsert: It's not about puppy-love, or money for him. Ask carefully, then he won't put anything in my way.

Geertruyd: If he remains as he is, a bachelor, and you take the girl who hasn't got anything, then I can weigh one thing with another, and I think I'll inherit his iron chest, and then you'll get almost as much as you would if there was a dowry.

Ritsert: You go in. I'll follow. There's no time to be lost. (*Geertruyd and Ritsert go into Rijkert's house*).

Lecker: (*Enters*). The devil's own luck. I'm now as rich as the water is deep. Where are Broeck Bigpants, Granmerchand, Braggart and those rich gentlemen now? Scrooges, misers, all those sharp operators at the exchange. If they came near me, they'd get what they deserve. Huh, all those jumped up little kings: I am the King of Spain, who, if you'll



excuse the expression, never goes to the loo without passing a Count or a Marquess; who, every time he yawns, spits out pieces of gold as if they were beans; who blows sceptres out of his nose and sweats nothing but crowns. Warnar, ‘ true fool’, certainly lives up to his name. He hid his pot under a landing-stage in the new part of town, and was standing so deep in the water, with his stockings and shoes on! As soon as he was away, I got it! A pot full of old doubloons. The fool. What a piece of luck for me! I’d better keep out of the way; he might come back. (*Exit*).

#### SCENE FOUR

Warnar: (*In front of his house*). Oh! If only I had it again, I would die peacefully. What is happening to me? I’m lost. Catch the thief, catch the thief: which thief? I don’t know. He’s already gone. My eyes have been stolen too, I think. Where am I going? Forwards or backwards? I don’t really know, I’m so totally confused. Just tell me, good people, do you understand the situation better than me? Has no one seen the thief? No one at all? No one? Whether he goes, or he stands, or he runs, or he flees, I shall write to all the provinces to get him arrested. Good citizens, I beseech you with hands together. Good citizens, assist me, help me on this journey, so I can catch the crook, who’s wrung my neck: this is the first time in my life that I’ve been deceived so heinously. What are you saying? I see from your nose that you’re not a liar. Do you know where he’s run off to? Oh! Let me know, I shall ensure that my future son-in-law invites you to his wedding. It’s only a little trouble for you; will you do it for me? Why are you grinning? There are a whole lot of thieves amongst you. Search each other; that would help me so much. Has no one got it? I’m becoming so desperate; for it is not easy for the poor to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. You see, if I lose my money, I’ll lose my mind. What shall I do? I’m losing my head; all my beautiful doubloons gone in a flash? My heart is shaking like a girl’s pet dog. Has no one got any canal water? Oh, give me a little sip? No one wants to give me any? Oh, this is too unkind. At least hold some vinegar under my nose, because then I could throw-up, I’m feeling so faint. Has no one got anything to eat? Some pipe tobacco then, or I’ll start to throw up straightaway. I can’t stand it anymore. Look, I’m almost bursting with rage. How embarrassing. No rascal has ever got one over on me like that before. I’ve scrimped and saved year after year, and only set the table under which the pot was hidden, when I’d fasted so long that I was dying of hunger: now I reckon a young lad is sitting there squandering my beautiful doubloons: and calling me a skinflint, dog, miser, scrooge, whilst he’s enjoying himself. What do you think about that, good people? Do you think that should be tolerated? I’m that close to exploding with rage.

Ritsert: (*Leaves Rijkert’s house*). What on earth is that racket going on outside my door? Who’s standing there screeching so much? There must be trouble brewing, or someone’s got into difficulty. It’s Warnar, (oh dear), his

daughter must have given birth. What's the best way to deal with this situation? Shall I beat it, or stay here, or go over to him? There's no point in me just letting him whinge on like that, the truth has to come out.

Warnar: Who've we got here?

Ritsert: Me, poor me!

Warnar: Poor me? That's what I should be saying.

Ritsert: Just go ahead.

Warnar: Oh, what misery has come my way: there's no one in the whole world who's as wretched as me.

Ritsert: Chin up!

Warnar: How can I?

Ritsert: I did it, I confess.

Warnar: What did you say?

Ritsert: The truth.

Warnar: My lad, what's come over you? I knew your late father, he was different from the rest. How have I deserved this? Why on earth did you decide to ruin me and all my descendants?

Ritsert: I had to do it. There was no other way.

Warnar: Had to? That's rich; you're putting a fine spin on it. It's not good at all.

Ritsert: I admit I have acted badly. I beg you, don't take it badly. Forgive me.

Warnar: Shame on you, that you're after my possessions.

Ritsert: I did it because I was drunk and in love. I am so sorry. Don't hold it against me too much.

Warnar: Oh, yer? When girls get married, do you steal their chains, or take your pick of their gold bracelets, and then run off with them? And when the bailiff gets wind of it, will you say that it was because you were drunk and in love? Fine words, of course, a nice story! You're not getting away with that. It's a scandalous deed. You know it won't do anyone any good.

Ritsert: Things have gone so far that we'll just have to let them be. Getting angry won't help anyone, so just forget about it.

Warnar: Let them be? In the name of God, 'No'. Give it back to me, or I'll twist your head round.

Ritsert: What do you want from me? Your daughter's virginity? How can I help you? It's too late, you see.

Warnar: Leave my daughter... my daughter out of this. This is a heinous act. You should be ashamed that you dare to show your face in public.

Ritsert: I do feel remorse. Forgive me, please. I will put things right, as much as I can.

Warnar: Doing something wrong and then asking for forgiveness? I don't like that. You should have left it where you found it, and realized it wasn't right.

Ritsert: Because I didn't do that, it's right that I keep what is mine.

Warnar: Your's? It's mine and you can drop dead.

Ritsert: I don't disagree. But it seems to me that no one else has a better claim on it than me. I'm sure you understand.

Warnar: No one else has a better claim on it than you? What do you mean? I'll be blown? Are you not going to give it back?

Ritsert: What?

Warnar: I'm going to the bailiff!

Ritsert: What have I got to give back?

Warnar: The pot of gold. Or I'll set the bailiff's henchmen on you.

Ritsert: I don't know about any pot or gold.

Warnar: You've just made a confession, so do you want to be questioned on the rack?

Ritsert: A confession about a pot? I didn't think... I wouldn't have anything to say, even if you put the thumbscrews on.

Warnar: Wouldn't have anything to say? Hmm, even your old shoes know about it.

Ritsert: I don't know anything about money or a pot, or anything like a pot.

Warnar: Are you backtracking? This is a criminal act. I wouldn't care a row of beans if the executioner chopped your head off.

Ritsert: Me, a pot? Where from?

Warnar: From over there, the dock by the mill, underneath the landing-stage. You're just acting stupid and then you begin to ask the way you already know! But listen, give me it back and don't try anything on. I'm happy to give up part of my claim, and call it quits and then I won't report you.

Ritsert: What do you think of me now, Warnar? You think I'm a thief. Are you out of your mind? Oh, this is too outrageous.

Warnar: But, you confessed it yourself.

Ritsert: There must be some misunderstanding.

Warnar: You made the confession yourself, or else I don't understand.

Ritsert: I thought you were fingering me for something else, and that you'd got wind of something else that affects us both. I'd be happy to talk about that if you had the time.

Warnar: Tell me the whole truth: are you the thief or not?

Ritsert: No, not at all.

Warnar: So, who is then?

Ritsert: I can't tell you.

Warnar: But if you do find out, you must tell me.

Ritsert: Gladly. You've no need to worry about that.

Warnar: And without asking for any reward?

Ritsert: No reward. I'm not out to make a profit.

Warnar: And without asking for the thief to be exonerated?

Ritsert: Correct. If you get him, you can give him hell.

Warnar: Do you swear on oath?

Ritsert: Yes.

Warnar: Hold your hand up.

Ritsert: I swear.

Warnar: Good. What have you got to say now?

Ritsert: You knew my father well, didn't you? Dirk Treblehook. One of the old school, humble and good.

Warnar: Of course I knew him. We grew up in the same neighbourhood. As a little lad, he wore a tunic made of goat's hair.

Ritsert: And my mother, Geertruyd?

Warnar: She's one of those women who just sits there and gapes. I was so close to your grandmother, who's now with the Lord; she was such a frugal

woman; she baked buckwheat cakes with lard, and slices of cabbage instead of apples and currants. As soon as she had 25 guilders, she'd put it on interest. That's how you make money; a penny saved is a penny earned.

Ritsert: I was the only child of those two good people, so you don't have to worry about my financial situation.

Warnar: I've heard it said, but where's all this going?

Ritsert: You've got a daughter.

Warnar: Yes, she's still a young girl. Today, I gave her in marriage to your rich uncle Rijkert. This evening, we are going to agree on the details.

Ritsert: That's what I came to tell you; my uncle's calling it off.

Warnar: In the name of God, I hope he falls sick. I was afraid of that: calling it off! Calling it off! I've already received people's good wishes.

Ritsert: Be patient, until I reveal his reason.

Warnar: The house has been cleaned; all our close friends invited. All my money's been lost and I've been made miserable, and it's all because of him.

Ritsert: Listen, I bring you good news: 'Congratulations!'

Warnar: Congratulations?

Ritsert: Amen. May the Lord bless you. Look, Warnar, whoever's played such a dirty trick, and knows in his heart that it is, is right to ask for forgiveness and to be resigned to his punishment. That's why I implore you from the bottom of my heart to forgive me for what I have done wrong against you and your daughter, not out of pure malice; but out of burning passion and drunken recklessness. I shall take her to be my wife, if you want: for I have to confess that I have defiled her, and at the moment she's ready to drop any day.

Warnar: Oh! What's happening to me? What's the point of living any longer? Oh, it's too much, it's too much.

Ritsert: Why are you moaning so much? You'll be a grandfather as quickly as your daughter will be a bride.

Warnar: Fortune was never more angry with anyone.

Ritsert: That's why my uncle was so happy that I took charge of her. Just go into your house to see whether things are not just as I've said.

Warnar: Unhappiness never comes alone. There's never misery without misery. Prosperity always seems to desert me.

Ritsert: You'll find things just as I say.

Warnar: I'll see for myself. Oh, what's come over me? Oh, oh, my heart is so heavy.

*(Enters his house).*

Ritsert: I'll follow you shortly, I'll wait until he's calmed down a bit, and until the maid has explained everything to him. I don't think things can get any worse than this: from now on, they'll get better. But what am I still doing here? I'd be better going for a walk round the block, and coming back shortly.

## ACT FIVE

### SCENE ONE

Lecker, Ritsert

Lecker: *(Coming along the street).* No King is my equal, whether Turk of Christian. In this joyful state, I shall eat until I burst. A fire bucket full of doubloons: what a fool, I bet, by God, that I'll never put them under a landing-stage. So, a miser gets his just reward.

Ritsert: *(Leaving his uncle's house).* Isn't that our Lecker? Yer, that's the lad. It's three hours since he came into the library, and he probably hasn't been home since he left me.

Lecker: *(Hasn't seen Ritsert).* It's right that someone should get one over on him, that scarecrow.

Ritsert: Lecker, come here, why are you so happy?

Lecker: *(Startled).* My goodness, it's Ritsert, where shall I put the money?

Ritsert: Have you got no shame?

Lecker: What do you mean?

Ritsert: Are you really asking that, you joker?

Lecker: *(Aside).* I've been spied on; he knows.

Ritsert: What are you grumbling about? Where have you been for so long?

Lecker: They were arguing about the types of coins at the exchange; they didn't give me any proper money; it's not easy to carry.

Ritsert: What did you get?

Lecker: (*To himself*). What should I say? If it was in a bag, I would let it quietly slip between two paving slabs: but if the pot breaks, it would make too much noise, so I'll have to think of another way of keeping it hidden.

Ritsert: Oi, you lout, are you deaf? Can't you hear what I'm saying?

Lecker: The money? Yes, yes, yes, I got it: but he gave me so much small change, that it's really heavy.

Ritsert: Is that why you're sweating so much? What about the moneychanger?

Lecker: I'll get even with him, I swear.

Ritsert: Let's see what you got palmed off with. Where's the account sheet?

Lecker: I've got it in my pocket book.

Ritsert: Let's see.

Lecker: As soon as I get home, I'll write it up neatly.

Ritsert: I've got other things to do, let's see: why all this delay?

Lecker: My book's gone.

Ritsert: What are you doing fiddling about in your coat?

Lecker: It's nothing. I've got such an itch in my side.

Ritsert: I bet you've got some pastries in there or some other sweets. Open your coat. We don't hide anything here.

Lecker: In the name of God, Ritsert, can you keep quiet about it? I'll give you half of the profit, and you can pay off all the innkeepers, then have a good time with what's left. I've been off on a really fun adventure.

Ritsert: I think you've found a little box with something beautiful, I mean something useful, in it.

Lecker: If I were to call it 'something useful', that wouldn't be so ridiculous.

Ritsert: You've been having a glass of something over at the armoury.

Lecker: No, a pot of gold, so full of doubloons that I could only just carry it.

Ritsert: (*Aside*). I was afraid of that, damn it. Now everything's falling into place. Where did you get that from? I've never heard of such a thing in all my life.

Lecker: Over there, under the landing-stage by the Holy Way dock. It was lying there sunk deep into the mud.

Ritsert: You good-for-nothing, that's where you saw our neighbour Warnar hide it. He's my future father-in-law.

Lecker: What did you say he is?

Ritsert: My future father-in-law.

Lecker: That was all that was needed. I deserve to be hanged if I understand what's going on. Are you and your uncle going to be business partners?

Ritsert: My uncle is happy that I'm to be a bridegroom.

Lecker: Do you each want to contribute money and jointly set up a shipping company together, like the small merchants who invest in the East India Company? Tell me how you're going to divide up the shares. I'm in your service in order to learn.

Ritsert: It's not bad for people to know something about everything, but it isn't good for them to meddle in everything.

Lecker: This all seems strange to me, I don't understand what you're on about. You're going to be Claertje's bridegroom? How the devil did that happen?

Ritsert: It's true. Rich uncle Rijkert has promised me to her, because I'm glad to say I got her preggers.

Lecker: In the name of God, they spend lots of money on this new telescope, but I would give my last tuppence for something, which can look into people's hearts and loins. I would spy on them, like hunters spy on game, and see precisely what they're up to.

Ritsert: You should keep your mouth shut. Just think how inappropriate it is for such a young lad as you, who's still wet behind the ears, to talk like that. I bet there aren't many people who want to listen to your claptrap.

Lecker: Not everyone can keep his mouth shut. There are enough people who don't know how to, even though they went to school half as long again as me. A tongue that's silenced is as bitter as laurel berries.

Ritsert: Lad, if you carry on like that, you'll be a champion chatterbox, and you should work as an estate agent rather than a merchant.

Lecker: No way. The gift of the gab is useful for merchants, as well, to gloss over



losses and to talk up profits.

Ritsert: A few punches would do you good now and again, or eating ship's biscuits on a Spanish galley. Come on, come with me to Warnar's house.

Lecker: To Warnar's? What? What for? I found it honestly.

Ritsert: Finders stealers! What a load of drivel this lad is talking.

Lecker: Yer, but now you've got the daughter. Just put yourself in my position. Then things would be different. I bet you'd think differently if you listened to your conscience.

Ritsert: Come on and don't talk about these things.

## SCENE TWO

Reym: (*Ritsert and Lecker knock on Warnar's door. Reym lets them in, and then sets off to see Geertruyd at Rijkert's house*). Now I can see a way through, despite all the setbacks. Now a child is coming along, and it's got a rich father. There won't be any more problems, God bless my soul: but, my word, we've been in trouble. Now he's given his word to marry her, we're going to really stuff our faces. If the marriage does go through, perhaps I'll find a boyfriend amongst the people there. O, that will be a double feast then, a wedding and a new-born baby. All the thrifty people will be following our lead before long; it's economical; you kill two birds with one stone. Goodness me, when I think about it, I wish I was already drinking. It's too much on one day, caudle for the new born and spiced wine for the newly weds. I wish I'd already got my knife sharpened, then I wouldn't miss out on any food. It's good to relax after work; I wish my knife was ready. My teeth are watering so much, I can hardly wait any longer. I only get five guilders a year, and a pair of new clogs, along with bread and fifty pence as a Christmas tip, and half an English shilling for New Year. Now I'll get the whole lot every week. And what shall I get as a wedding present? A silver chain at least, and a belt, knife and a scabbard: but what am I standing around here for? I should bring Geertie Gaper, the mother of the bridegroom, to the birth. She should be there more than anyone else. That's beyond dispute. (*Arrives at Geertruyd's house*). The door is closed; where can I find the bell? Wait a minute. There's a door knocker here.

### SCENE THREE

Geertruyd, Reym

Geertruyd: (*Opens the door*). Hello, don't knock the house away. Why are you knocking like that? Just knock more gently.

Reym: Hello!

Geertruyd: What do you want?

Reym: I'm Warnar's maid, from round the corner; you know what the situation is, you've got to hurry. The stork is on its way, so you'd better come to meet it. Look, you're the father's mother, so you're involved.

Geertruyd: My neighbour Warnar has done the right thing in sending for me.

Reym: I think so, too. We couldn't do it without you.

Geertruyd: I'll put my jacket on and come with you. When did her waters begin to break? She's gone to full term.

Reym: Her waters broke out of fear when her father told her this morning that he was going to give her in marriage to Rijkert. Oh, keeping her pregnancy hidden, what are things coming to; it's so frightening, I wouldn't wish it on my enemies.

Geertruyd: Is the midwife there yet?

Reym: She's been there for a long time: because before her father had heard the truth from your son, I'd already got a midwife to come, on the quiet, and enter at the back through the cellar window, because no one would think of that.

Geertruyd: How did you manage that?

Reym: Anyway, your son hasn't got a bad catch.

Geertruyd: I hope that's true.

Reym: Oh Lord, she is such a girl, and I'm going to be such a daughter-in-law. She can make everything that goes on in the house better. I carried her in my arms, and held her hand, when she was young: I won't lie to you. She was a little monkey and could sing a hundred songs by heart. And the tricks she played would drive you mad. What can I say? I love Claertje twice as much as her father. If you bothered that blighter, she'd really let you have it; and whatever people called out in the street, she would repeat. If we ate a biscuit or the like together, then she would

want my bit too.

Geertruyd: Can you hurry up? You're so enthusiastic you're forgetting what's going on around you. We're wasting our time talking here.

Reym: I'll tell you this, then I'll shut up: she was such a sweet child; she got up to so much mischief. When she began to walk around chairs and benches, she would look for raisins and then the tin that the sugar was in. You see, there was more generosity in the house when her mother was still alive. Things were very different then! Mrs. Mains kept her house spick and span. May the Lord keep her soul, we were so happy together. We were never embarrassed when people dropped in.

Geertruyd: But what did our neighbour Warnar say when you wasted so much money?

Reym: Oh, when he thinks back to it, he howls like a guard dog, with so much groaning and moaning that the sobbing and complaining almost kills him.

Geertruyd: Shall we go? I thought you wanted us to get a move on!

Reym: Just listen for a minute.

Geertruyd: Why are we hanging around?

Reym: If I just think about it, I can't stop myself from crying. If only I could swap him for her, with Mrs. Mains coming back and him going.

Geertruyd: Are you ready?

Reym: Listen.

Geertruyd: OK, then.

Reym: Claertje is just like her mother. But even if I swear it, what good would it do? You must put your trust in my simple words.

Geertruyd: God bless me, what a load of claptrap. I'm off. Let go of my jacket.

Reym: I tell you 'my yes is my yes and my no is my no'. You'll see that I'm not just a prattler: you see I don't just say things for the sake of it.

Geertruyd: Then the devil must be playing with your gob.

Reym: I've forgotten something else.

Geertruyd: Something else? What is it this time?

Reym: You should tell your son to treat her well. She'll be an excellent wife for him. I can assure you of that.

Geertruyd: Let me go, this is crazy.

Reym: She's a second Rebekah, and so she'll take care of her husband. It's true what I tell you. O Lord, we'll get along just fine, me and her.

Geertruyd: Be off with you! Be off with you!

Reym: I'll be off in a minute. Just have a little patience. She's a girl fit for a king, for an ambassador, for a count, for a duke, even for a nobleman, for a prince, for an emperor! Now I'll be quiet.

Geertruyd: Keep to your word.

Reym: Yes, an emperor, an emperor, I tell you, would give her his son, such a lovely girl. She knows how things should be. She can sew, she can knit with cotton and silk.

Geertruyd: I've had a stomach-full of this.

Reym: I'll add this, too: washing the dishes, scouring the kettles; you'd be dumbfounded if you saw it.

Geertruyd: Have you suddenly lost your tongue, then?

Reym: There's no flies on her. She can whitewash walls and mop floors as well as the next person. She knows how to get by; it would be a pity if she were rich: you only have to see her to know she can do all these things.

Geertruyd: Listen here, give a poor man half of your tongue as alms, and fish out another pair of ears from the gutter somewhere.

Reym: I'm sorry my lady if I'm keeping you back with my chat. I can't praise our daughter's virtues too highly.

Geertruyd: Your door is open.

Reym: That is, by your leave, to show you the way.  
*(They enter Warnar's house).*

#### SCENE FOUR

Ritsert, Lecker

*(On the way to Warnar's house. Ritsert goes in front; Lecker follows a little way behind).*

Ritsert: How quickly rumours spreads. Yesterday no one except me and the maid knew that Claertje was pregnant. But now it's on everyone's lips. It's taking a lot of time because everyone is congratulating me. Otherwise

they wouldn't have had to wait so long for me at Warnar's house.

Lecker: Oh Ritsert, think about it some more. Sleep on it tonight. Giving back the money will come soon enough.

Ritsert: Why should I wait?

Lecker: A fool and his money are separated easily enough: they'll think we're stupid; a couple of crazy idiots. Put it on deposit for six months, then you can relax.

Ritsert: Make profit from someone else's money, how can you justify that?

Lecker: Well, why not? There are lots of rich people who go into business together, where one of them entrusts ten, twenty thousand guilders to the other, year after year: do you think they just sit on it? Then they really would be backward.

Ritsert: It's true that you find that sort of person amongst honest people, but even if they appear to be honest, they're really quite different from that and they can be sure they'll found out in the end.

Lecker: What do they care, my dear chap?

Ritsert: But if with the one with the other man's money dies, what happens then? His family will pay a heavy price. They can only keep what they own if they've acquired it honestly. Everything they've stolen will be worthless, and they won't be able to leave their money to the third generation. That sort of person rarely lives in his grandfather's house.

Lecker: That rule might well apply to common people.

Ritsert: And are great potentates too powerful to be punished?

Lecker: That's right, and that's why that sort of person makes it their duty to collect as many goods as possible in a short space of time, so that they can make all their children kings. Then they're sorted, if lady luck is smiling on them.

Ritsert: If not, then they go to the grave with heart and soul, just like Robert the pirate, with the anchor that he tried to nab.

Lecker: But anyone who wants to have anything today actively needs to manage his affairs. Possessions don't increase if you just sit on your hands.

Ritsert: If they don't increase, then they stay as they are, and that's fine by me. Do you think you can lead me astray? (*Aside*). What will happen to me if I listen to this rascal?

## SCENE FIVE

Warnar, Ritsert, Lecker

Warnar: (*In front of his house*). They say that no one comes along when you're on the lookout, but yet I see Ritsert coming from over there.

Ritsert: (*Approaching with Lecker*). Neighbour Warnar, you'll never have received better news, even though you are nearly seventy years old.

Warnar: What do you mean?

Ritsert: Your pot is safe, with all that gold. That's news to make you jump for joy.

Warnar: If lady luck ordains it, then it will be. You can't force her hand. It seems that she wants to save me now. Where is it?

Lecker: (*Lecker takes the pot out of his bag*). Here, look!

Warnar: O my pot! How much heartache you've caused me. I don't want any more of this misery. It's caused me so much trouble. I'll never keep a pot with money in it again for the rest of my life. I'm tired of that business, to put it bluntly.

Ritsert: Well, what shall we do now?

Warnar: I thank you for your honesty. I've got enough to live on, and because I don't want any more misery, I shall give you all the money for your marriage to your future wife.

Lecker: My goodness, Ritsert, you've really done well out of this. That tough old bird might live for another thirty years.

Ritsert: Because it caused you so much trouble to look after this dross of the earth, I shall accept it and help you out in your old age.

## SCENE SIX

Reym, Ritsert, Warnar, Geertruyd, Lecker

Reym: (*Exits Warnar's house with the baby*). Congratulations, bridegroom; I wish you much happiness with your young son. Look, what a lovely child, a healthy lad. He's got a pair of cheeks just like a Carthusian monk

who loves his food.

Ritsert: Here, let me kiss him.

Warnar: I'm crying with happiness. His face looks just like mine.

Lecker: In the name of God, I'm not going to carry on being miserable. I'm going to strike whilst the iron's hot. May I say something?

Reym: My reward! Don't forget my reward.

Ritsert: Tell us what the matter is.

Lecker: The cash-box is five hundred guilders short. I lost them, but it's not my fault.

Ritsert: Don't lie! Where?

Lecker: On the fives court: I promise that for the rest of my life, I'll never hang around with those lads again, and always be careful with my things.

Ritsert: If he hadn't found the pot, it would probably have been lost, but he wanted to keep it for his own gain.

Warnar: I'll pray for him and won't let him get into difficulties, now that the storms and waves of misfortune have abated.

Ritsert: I shall give you the five hundred guilders, but be good from now on.

Lecker: Thank you! I wish you a happy marriage.

Ritsert: I'm missing the new mother.

Geertruyd: She's doing well.

Warnar: Come in!

*(They all enter Warnar's house, with Lecker bringing up the rear).*

Lecker: I'm clapping my hands because I'm happy: if you've enjoyed this play, then clap along with me.

**END**

## About the authors

The play, *Warnar*, was first published anonymously in 1617. However, it is most probable that it was written as a collaborative effort by two of the leading dramatists of the first half of the seventeenth century in the United Provinces, Samuel Coster (1579-1665), and Pieter Corneliszoon Hooft (1581-1647), usually referred to as P. C. Hooft. Coster was the son of a carpenter, but rose to become a hospital doctor in Amsterdam. He had worked with Hooft before and also written other plays, particularly comedies before 1617. Hooft, by contrast, was the son of a well-to-do merchant, who had also been mayor of Amsterdam. As well as writing plays, Hooft was a celebrated poet and dedicated much of his later life to writing an extensive history of the Netherlands, focussing in particular on the Dutch Revolt against Spanish rule. Both Coster and Hooft were members of a prominent Rhetoricians' Chamber (*Rederijkerskamer*) in Amsterdam, called *De Eglentier* (The Wild Rose). However, they both had disagreements with other members of the Chamber about the ideas that it should promote, and in 1617, the year in which *Warnar* was published, along with another famous playwright, Gerbrand Bredero, they left to form their own Chamber, the Academy. It was at the opening of the Academy that *Warnar* was first performed, on 25 September 1617.

## About the play

The play itself is based on the famous comedy by the Roman playwright, Plautus, *Aulularia*. The ending of Plautus' play has not survived, and a number of subsequent playwrights have written plays based on Plautus' work supplying their own ending. The most famous example of this is Molière, who wrote *L'Avare* (The Miser) in 1668. Plautus' play was set in ancient Athens, and just as Molière translates the story to seventeenth-century Paris, so the authors of *Warnar* transfer it to early seventeenth-century Amsterdam, at a time when the city was growing rapidly and becoming one of the wealthiest merchant cities in the world.

The play begins with a prologue featuring two allegorical figures, Generosity and Miserliness, arguing over who should control *Warnar*'s house. We then meet *Warnar*, who is cursing and shouting at his housemaid, Reym, suspecting her of wanting to steal his pot of money, buried underneath the floorboards. The name *Warnar* means 'Stupid Fool' and indeed most of the characters have similarly appropriate names. He is of course a fool for constantly thinking that people are trying to steal his pot of money, and much humour is generated as he regularly pops into his house to check the pot is safe. The plot is relatively straightforward. *Warnar* has a daughter, Claertje, whom we never meet. His neighbour, Rijkert ('Rich Man'), is persuaded by his sister, Geertruyd, to seek Claertje's hand in marriage. This causes problems for her son, Ritsert, who, we later learn, had previously got drunk during carnival time and made Claertje pregnant. During the preparations for a feast to celebrate the forthcoming marriage, a number of characters, including Rijkert's assistant, Lecker, are in and out of *Warnar*'s house, making him suspect that they, too, are after his pot of money. He eventually decides to bury it elsewhere in Amsterdam, but Lecker spies on him and digs up the pot. Despite all this, there is a happy ending. Ritsert manages to persuade Lecker to return the pot to *Warnar*. He also manages to persuade his uncle, Rijkert, that he should marry Claertje instead, and *Warnar* agrees to this, giving Ritsert the money as a dowry. Ritsert, in turn, is able to do a good deed, by giving Lecker some of the money, with which to settle some of his debts.



## **The Translation and Acknowledgements:**

There is no surviving manuscript of *Warnar*. This translation is based on a recent edition of the play, which is itself based on a 1972 facsimile of a copy of the 1617 edition. I have added appropriate stage directions. Much of the play is in fact written in the Amsterdam dialect, whilst the steward, Casper, speaks with a Brabant dialect. This of course makes translating the play particularly challenging. Where necessary I have referred to a recent version of the play produced by Lia van Gemert and Marijke Meijer Drees. When the translation is performed, it would doubtless add to the comic effect and indeed be true to the original play, if some of the parts were spoken in dialects from around the British Isles, or elsewhere in the English-speaking world, or indeed with accents of those for whom English is not the first language.

Finally, I am grateful to Dr. Ton Harmsen (University of Leiden) for his help in unpicking some of the trickier phrases from the text.

## **Further reading:**

P. C. Hooft, S. Coster, *Warnar*, Jeroen Jansen ed. (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2004).

P. C. Hooft, *Warnar: Geld en liefde in de Gouden Eeuw*, Lia van Gemert and Marijke Meijer Drees eds. (Amsterdam: AUP, 2002).

Karel Porteman and Mieke B. Smits-Veldt, *Een Nieuw Vaderland voor de Muzen: Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse Literatuur 1560-1700* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2008) pp. 226-228.

*A Literary History of the Low Countries*, Theo Hermans ed. (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2009).

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