

- Diana So, Teodoro, you want to marry?
- Teodoro Yes, but only if you wish it.
For, my lady, you must believe
I really have not offended
Quite so far as some people say.
Envious tongues have a scorpion's sting.
If Ovid had known, I dare say,
What it's like to be in service,
I am sure he would have said
The snakes of envy are really found
Not on the plain, nor the mountain,
But beneath the roof of every house.
- Diana Then you don't love Marcela?
- Teodoro I could easily live without her.
- Diana But all the servants did concur
You're out of your wits with love for her.
- Teodoro Since my wits are rather small
Their loss would not be a tragedy.
But, madam, you can't believe all
You hear. I'm sure that she truly
Deserves such attention, but
Marcela's never had it from me.
- Diana But haven't you told her of your love
So often that you could deceive
Even the strongest-willed woman?
- Teodoro Words are very cheap, my lady.
- Diana My God, what did you say, then?
Tell me, just what does a man say
To woo a woman, when he tries?
- Teodoro He becomes both lover and beggar.
He embroiders with a thousand lies
One small truth – perhaps not even that.
- Diana Is that so? What words does he use?
- Teodoro Madam, you're pushing me too far.

- Diana You're blushing. What your tongue denies
Your face confesses in its colour.
- Teodoro What has she been telling you?
I know I once did take her hand
But barely for a moment...
- Diana Ah yes, your hands were clasped in prayer
And your lips were mouthing psalms on her.
- Teodoro Yes, you're right, I did once dare,
Though I was trembling all the time
To cool my lips a moment there
Upon fresh snow and lilies white...
- Diana Lilies and snow? Is that the cure
For a wounded heart? I want to know.
Can you advise me, Teodoro?
- Teodoro Well, if this lady that you know
Loves a man so far beneath her
That to give way to her desire
Would put honour in grave danger,
Couldn't she see him in disguise?
She could enjoy him freely then.
- Diana Yes, but can she really trust him?
Wouldn't it be safer to kill him?
- Teodoro Marcus Aurelius is said to have given
Gladiators' blood to his wife
Faustina to curb her desires.
But surely in these civilized times
We don't need Roman remedies?
- Diana True, but then we've no Lucretia
Nor Torquatus, or Virginius
Who very nobly killed his daughter
To save her from Appius's lust.
Of course, the Romans had Messalina,
Poppeas and your Faustina.
Now write for me, Teodoro,
Some words upon this subject...Oh!
(*slips over*) I slipped. Why are you staring at me?

