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# THE FINAL LESSON




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# THE FINAL LESSON

written by

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## Synopsis

This play is about Athens greatest thinker, Socrates, the day of Socrates execution. This is a 4 character play, Socrates being the lead, Crito and Phaedo being the supporting characters, while the guard is a very small role.

**Cast of Characters**

CRITO

SOCRATES

PHAEDO

GUARD

**Props**

Paper
Pen
Ink
Cup
Bag of Coins

## ACT I

### Scene 1

Setting: Prison cell- day, a small, dimly lit cell.

At Rise: SOCRATES, serene despite his circumstances, sits on a straw pallet. CRITO, paces anxiously.

**CRITO**

Everything is prepared, Socrates. As you wished.

**SOCRATES**

Thank you, Crito. Your diligence is appreciated.

**CRITO**

I still can’t believe it. That this is happening. To you. The wisest man in Athens.

**SOCRATES**

Wisdom is often a lonely path. One I chose to walk.

*(PHAEDO enters. He is carrying paper and ink!)*

**SOCRATES**

Phaedo. My friend. Where is Plato?

**PHAEDO**

He is ill. A fever has encumbered him! He sent his deepest apologies. He is heartbroken he couldn’t be here.

**SOCRATES**

Tell him I understand. My thoughts are with him. Tell him my final words are a testament to the enduring nature of truth. Please, Phaedo, sit. These are not moments to be spent alone.

**PHAEDO**

It is an honor, even in such somber circumstances.

**CRITO**

Socrates… There's still time. We could escape, and you can change the minds of Athens.

**SOCRATES**

No, Crito. If I could not sway the council the first time, how may I sway them after a stunt like escaping! Justice must be served, even when it seems unjust. The laws may be flawed, but must be respected!

**CRITO**

This is a travesty! We must escape. I have everything arranged.

**SOCRATES**

My friend, your zeal is admirable but misplaced. Escape would be a betrayal of the very principles I have championed my entire life.

**CRITO**

Principles? Socrates, for being the wisest man in Athens, you certainly are foolish! They sentenced you to death for questioning their beliefs! For searching for the truth!

**SOCRATES**

And yet even in their flawed judgment, there is a semblance of order. The laws of Athens, however imperfect, represent a societal contract. To break them, even for a righteous cause, would undermine the very foundation of our society.

**PHAEDO**

But is it just to be condemned for seeking truth? It all seems excessive.

**SOCRATES**

Justice! It is a complex tapestry, woven with threads of both human fallibility and divine aspiration. It's not always easily discernible. Yet, the pursuit of justice is paramount.

**CRITO**

But this is not justice! This is murder! A mockery of reason and philosophy! The ones who honor these so-called laws are Tyrants…

**SOCRATES**

My dear Crito, even a flawed system must be upheld, lest we descend into chaos. My death, though unjust, will be a testament to the enduring power of the state, a paradox perhaps, but no less significant. It's a lesson in the duality of morality, even a sacrifice, a choice I freely make.

**CRITO**

Then let this be a lesson to them, Socrates. A testament to the resilience of the human spirit. That even in death, truth prevails.

**SOCRATES**

Perhaps. But even a lesson learned through suffering is a lesson nonetheless.

**PHAEDO**

Will your teachings live on? Will the pursuit of truth not falter after your passing?

**SOCRATES**

Truth, like the soul, Phaedo, is immortal. It cannot be chained or extinguished. It will find its way, even in the darkest of times.

*(A GUARD enters holding a cup.)*

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**SOCRATES**

My dear friends… My time is drawing near. The hemlock infused with my natural body grows! Soon, I will breathe this dusty air for the last time!

*(SOCRATES gestures weakly towards CRITO.)*

**SOCRATES**

Crito, my old friend You have been a steadfast companion throughout my trials. Remember always, the unexamined life is not worth living.

*(SOCRATES looks at PHAEDO.)*

**SOCRATES**

Phaedo, tell Plato… tell him that the pursuit of truth, however arduous, is the highest calling of man. That the pursuit of virtue is the only path to a fulfilling life.

*(SOCRATES gives off a slight smile.)*

**SOCRATES**

I have sought wisdom, not power. Understanding, not fame. And in this pursuit, I have found a peace that transcends the fear of death. The body dies, my friends, but the soul… the soul is immortal.

*(SOCRATES rests his hand on CRITO.)*

**SOCRATES**

Remember… always question. Always seek. Never cease in your quest for truth.

*(SOCRATES gets a burst of energy and desperation.)*

**SOCRATES**

Crito, we owe a cock to Asclepius. Pay it and do not neglect it!

*(SOCRATES eyes close.)*

**CRITO**

I will! Socrates?

*(SOCRATES goes limp.)*

**CRITO**

Here lies a man, who was wrongfully executed for beliefs! To silence Athen's greatest thinker just because they are afraid…

**PHAEDO**

Crito?

**CRITO**

Keep this off the record Phaedo! I will not have my treason wrote down and published! Athens will fall for what they have done. History will write itself! Escape Athens while you can and plea with Plato to do the same! They came for Socrates, I have no doubt that they will come for Plato! Farewell Phaedo! Farewell Socrates, wherever your soul has gone let it be better than here!

*(CRITO leaves, the GUARD enters.)*

**GUARD**

Best be off, so we can dispose of the body.

**PHAEDO**

Take care of him! His mind is as valuable as his body!

**GUARD**

It’s a corpse. I’ll just toss him with the rest…

**PHAEDO**

You will do no such thing! We will have a proper burial in Kerameikos cemetery!

**GUARD**

I have my order to dispose of all executed prisoners in an unmarked grave.

**PHAEDO**

Villainy! To tarnish this man’s legacy now his physical being! By throwing him into an unmarked grave with scoundrels, thieves, pirates, and murders!

**GUARD**

I have my orders!

**PHAEDO**

I will not stand for it! Is there anything I could do to sway you to bestow the body upon me, so his students, His friends, His children, His wife may lay him in the earth

**GUARD**

Maybe for some Drachme.

**PHAEDO**

Athens and its riches… How much may sway your mind?

**GUARD**

I do need new pairs of shoes… 8 will suffice!

*(PHAEDO pulls out a baggie and gives it to GUARD.)*

**GUARD**

I will mark Socrates of Athens disposed of!

*(GUARD leaves.)*

**PHAEDO**

Once a city for thinkers, now a city for tyrants! How far has Athens fallen?

*(Black out)*




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