

# ADIOGENES and the PROSTITUTE

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**CAST:** DIOGENES: man, 35 - 50, thin  
PROSTITUTE: woman, 20 - 30, moderately attractive

**SET:** Athens c.350 BC. Prostitute's bedroom

[Diogenes and a prostitute enter her living quarters.]

**PROSTITUTE**

Excuse the mess. I would have cleaned up,  
but I didn't feel like it.

**DIOGENES**

Thank you for not telling me the maid got sick.

**PROSTITUTE**

Would you like some water?

**DIOGENES**

Is that all you got?

**PROSTITUTE**

For three drachmas, yes.

**DIOGENES**

Three!? You said two if I bathed.

**PROSTITUTE**

Did you bathe?

**DIOGENES**

Well if you can't tell, what do you care?

[SHE leans over to sniff him.]

[HE raises an arm and blows the vapors of his armpit into her face.]

**DIOGENES**

There. Two drachmas, okay?

**PROSTITUTE**

Okay.

[HE hands her two coins.]

**DIOGENES**

Drachma isn't worth shit any more anyway.  
Feel how light these are.

[SHE hefts them and shrugs.]

**DIOGENES**

Okay, they feel the same, but put them on a scale against  
Solon's drachmas and they float like pond scum.

[SHE puts the money in a jar by the bed.]

**PROSTITUTE**

Long as they pay the bills.

[SHE returns to Diogenes and gets into physical romantic mode.]

**PROSTITUTE**

So much for business. Let's get down to business.

**DIOGENES**

Uhh... I was thinking we might do something different today,  
something special.

**PROSTITUTE**

[Romantic mode] Okay. I can do special.

[Business mode] We're talking two drachma special now, aren't we?

**DIOGENES**

Actually I was thinking we might just talk.

**PROSTITUTE**

*Talk?* You paid me two drachmas to *talk*?

**DIOGENES**

Yeah.

**PROSTITUTE**

[Romantic mode] Wow Di, that's really flattering.

[Business mode] For how long?

**DIOGENES**

Till I get off.

**PROSTITUTE**

Forget it.

**DIOGENES**

[Goes to the window & looks out.] Until the shadow of the statue reaches the bottom of the window.

**PROSTITUTE**

[Goes to the window & looks out.] Which window?

**DIOGENES**

That one.

**PROSTITUTE**

[pause] What if the shadow misses the window?

**DIOGENES**

*Oh, come on!*

**PROSTITUTE**

Hey, I know you, remember?

**DIOGENES**

Okay, then whenever it reaches the same height on the wall.

**PROSTITUTE**

Fine. It's your money.

**DIOGENES**

And not just talk. I can get that anywhere. I'm paying for honesty.

**PROSTITUTE**

No man wants honesty.

**DIOGENES**

No man except Diogenes.

**PROSTITUTE**

Okay. [SHE sits on the bed pulling him down with her] Well then, let's talk.

[SHE lies down and pats the bed inviting him to lie beside her.]

**DIOGENES**

[Pause] You know, actually I kinda think better sitting up.

**PROSTITUTE**

Oh. Okay. Well, where do you want me?

**DIOGENES**

Any... talking position will be fine.

[SHE rests her chin on her hand propped up at the elbow.]

**DIOGENES**

[Pause] Shit, now I can't think of anything.

**PROSTITUTE**

Don't you worry. Happens to everybody. [pause]  
So how come Diogenes has to pay for honest conversation?  
I thought people paid you for that.

**DIOGENES**

They do. But only as much as they can handle.  
If I give 'em too much, they don't come back.

**PROSTITUTE**

So don't give them more than they want.

**DIOGENES**

I try not to, darling. But the problem is, I've got a lot more to talk about than what they can handle.

**PROSTITUTE**

And you think I can handle it?

**DIOGENES**

Probably not, but it's worth two drachmas to find out.

**PROSTITUTE**

Why me?

**DIOGENES**

You're more honest than most.

**PROSTITUTE**

How do you know?

**DIOGENES**

Because you don't fake orgasms.

**PROSTITUTE**

How do you know?

**DIOGENES**

*Because you've never had one... with me anyway.*

**PROSTITUTE**

How do you know I don't fake them with other men?

**DIOGENES**

Well I just assumed ... Really?

**PROSTITUTE**

All the time - whenever they want it.

**DIOGENES**

I wanted it - real ones anyway.  
You figure I'd know the difference?

**PROSTITUTE**

No, but you want honesty more. So with you I act honest.

**DIOGENES**

You "*act honest*"?

**PROSTITUTE**

Yeah.

**DIOGENES**

You mean you weren't really *being* honest;  
you were just *acting* honest?

**PROSTITUTE**

I gave you what you wanted.

**DIOGENES**

[Stands.] *Damn you!* I wanted *real* honesty, not *acting* honest.

**PROSTITUTE**

If you don't know the difference, what do you care?

**DIOGENES**

Shit! You're just like all the rest of 'em. Damn you!  
This is exactly the exact opposite of what I came here for.  
[goes to money jar] Gimme my damn money back!

**PROSTITUTE**

Take your damn money back. Asshole! I should have known better. You're just like all the rest of 'em.

[DIOGENES is at the door about to leave.]

**PROSTITUTE**

I *told* you no man wants honesty.

**DIOGENES**

[Hit dead center] Aw shit!

**PROSTITUTE**

Telling me about people can't handle it?  
Look who can't handle it.

**DIOGENES**

I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry.  
How could I not see that? God damn! Here.

**PROSTITUTE**

Keep your lousy two drachmas. I can turn that faster than you can explain some stupid philosophical thing nobody cares about.

**DIOGENES**

Look I'm sorry, damn it. Here, I'll make it three. Okay?

**PROSTITUTE**

[takes the money] Don't think this buys you one bit of extra time, 'cause it doesn't. Only reason I give you a discount is 'cause you don't take long. You want to act like a drunk senator, you pay like one.

**DIOGENES**

Okay, I overreacted.

**PROSTITUTE**

You're whole life is overreaction.

**DIOGENES**

[sits on bed.] Well how can you blame me? Damn! I mean there's bullshit all over the place. Everywhere you look there's this all permeating bullshit. God damn I hate this world!

**PROSTITUTE**

[Pause] [Romantic mode]  
Why don't we both just fuck your brains out and forget it?

**DIOGENES**

I just had a fuck. It didn't help.

**PROSTITUTE**

Who?

**DIOGENES**

Uhh... the air head with the big tits. Whatzername.

**PROSTITUTE**

Cleonice?

**DIOGENES**

Yeah.

**PROSTITUTE**

That bitch! I hate her. She charges five drachmas.

**DIOGENES**

Seven. [does a take] *That bitch!*

**PROSTITUTE**

[Pause] [chuckles] So big tits couldn't do it for you, and you came to me. I like that.

**DIOGENES**

And after you, then where do I go?

**PROSTITUTE**

Poor Di. Nobody can satisfy him.

**DIOGENES**

This is not just about *me*, damn it. We're all swimming in the same shit. The air we breathe is thick with lies, not just in the market place, people take it home with them. They make it part of themselves. It's part of being normal. They say, "*How are you doing?*" And you're supposed to say, "*Fine thank you. How are you?*" And if you don't, you're rude. And if you actually answer the question and tell them you're totally disgusted with existence, then you're weird.

**PROSTITUTE**

That's just good manners. I really don't see what you're getting so upset about.

**DIOGENES**

It's because I don't like living in a world where lies are good fucking *manners*.

**PROSTITUTE**

Hey, get used to it. You're not going to change it. And if you'd learn some manners, you'd do a lot better. - instead of talking that trash-mouth. People expect philosophers to talk like philosophers.

**DIOGENES**

Philosophers don't give a shit what people expect.

**PROSTITUTE**

You don't hear Plato and his crowd talking like that.

**DIOGENES**

Plato and his crowd are sell outs.

**PROSTITUTE**

Some people say he's the greatest philosopher that ever lived.

**DIOGENES**

He's a politician.

**PROSTITUTE**

You know what people say about you?

**DIOGENES**

I don't care what people say about me.

**PROSTITUTE**

They call you the dog. And they call your students dogs.

**DIOGENES**

That's good. Dogs are honest.

**PROSTITUTE**

They're also dead broke.

**DIOGENES**

Stop. You're not hearing me. I said I do not care what people think of me. I know very well that I could get a lot more money if I did care, but I don't. I care what *I* think of me.

**PROSTITUTE**

Ok so... what do *you* think of you?

**DIOGENES**

I think I'm the best man that ever lived.

**PROSTITUTE**

Get real!

**DIOGENES**

Except maybe Socrates, and even there it's a toss up. I wouldn't mind being martyred for truth. That's what philosophy is all about. It's not about reading a bunch of shit, and writing a bunch of shit, and talking over everybody's head. It's about figuring out what's right and doing it. You think Plato would die for truth? *Hah!* He'd have his accusers trying to define it, and sneak out the back door. Socrates may have passed on his mind to Plato, but he passed his guts to me.

**PROSTITUTE**

Bravo. And what does it get you?

**DIOGENES**

More self respect than I know what to do with. And if everybody was like me, the world would be a great place to live.

**PROSTITUTE**

You mean if everybody was a self righteous bigot?

**DIOGENES**

Better self righteous than *unrighteous*. And I'd rather live with ethical bigotry than ethical apathy.

**PROSTITUTE**

You're nauseating.

**DIOGENES**

Don't puke yet; it gets worse. I am ashamed to be human. I think you're all a bunch of shit heads, and I deserve better company.

**PROSTITUTE**

Are you happy? [comes in close on him.] That's the biggy. Even if you're the best man who ever lived, [walks away] some day you'll die like all the rest of us, and become a ghost floating thru Hades, and nobody'll give a shit.

**DIOGENES**

You people, on the other hand, are *already* ghosts floating thru Hades *because* you don't give a shit.

**PROSTITUTE**

Well, what is there to give a shit about, goddamn it!? Certainly not sex or money - that's just for us morons. It's *noble* to walk around talking about truth, and "*the good*", and all that. Well tell me something, Di. What's so good about talking about "*the good*"?

**DIOGENES**

[Pause] I don't know.

**PROSTITUTE**

You don' t *know*?

**DIOGENES**

I don' t know if there is any such thing as the good.  
But there might be. And the slightest chance that there  
might be is enough to bet your whole life on it.

**PROSTITUTE**

You' re not even making sense.

**DIOGENES**

I make more sense than anything in your whole nothing life.

**PROSTITUTE**

Oh please.

**DIOGENES**

Did you ever wonder if maybe some ghosts get better bodies  
than other ghosts?

**PROSTITUTE**

Ghosts don' t have bodies.

**DIOGENES**

I mean ghost bodies. Do you think we all get the same deal  
in Hades no matter what kind of life we lived?

**PROSTITUTE**

That' s how I heard it.

**DIOGENES**

Maybe some ghosts have to take shit from other ghosts just  
like it is here. Don' t you even care which end of the stick  
you' re on?

**PROSTITUTE**

I care about it right now, and obviously more than you do.

**UDIOGENES**

Yeah, but this life only lasts a few decades.  
Nobody knows how long you live in Hades.

**PROSTITUTE**

So?

**UDIOGENES**

Don't you ever think about this stuff?

**PROSTITUTE**

No.

**UDIOGENES**

Shit. [sighs] You got any hemlock?

**PROSTITUTE**

What?

**UDIOGENES**

Nothing.

**PROSTITUTE**

I got something better than that.

**UDIOGENES**

What?

**PROSTITUTE**

Lydian hemp.

**UDIOGENES**

No shit?

**PROSTITUTE**

Yes shit. You gotta go halves with me, though.

**UDIOGENES**

Aw no, I don't want to do that.

**PROSTITUTE**

Why not? Just one more drachma.

**DIOGENES**

It's not the money. I don't like that stuff.

**PROSTITUTE**

You like honesty, right?

This'll take us to new levels of honesty.

**DIOGENES**

I know what it does. It makes everything slosh together. You can't even tell real from imaginary. If you take enough of it, everything merges into one big unity, and there's nothing to do but just sit there and gawk at it.

**PROSTITUTE**

It's fun!

**DIOGENES**

Only until you figure it out. Then it's a waste of time. I'm going the opposite direction. I want to see things as clear as possible, cause then you can recognize patterns and see which box goes in which box, and figure out what's going on. [Pause]

You don't have any idea what I'm talking about, do you?

**PROSTITUTE**

Well if nothing's fun after you figure it out, why do you keep figuring everything out?

**DIOGENES**

[Pause] That one I haven't figured out.

**PROSTITUTE**

You really need weed.

**DIOGENES**

Been there; done that; forget it.

**PROSTITUTE**

Well shit, Di, what haven't you already done?

**DIOGENES**

I haven't found the fucking answers is what I haven't done.

**PROSTITUTE**

[Pause]

Is it true you climbed Mount Olympus when you were a kid?

**DIOGENES**

No. I was in Anatolia when I was a kid.  
I climbed Olympus when I came to Greece.

**PROSTITUTE**

Weren't you scared the gods might do something to you?

**DIOGENES**

Yes I was scared. I've never been more scared of anything.

**PROSTITUTE**

Why'd you do it?

**DIOGENES**

If you have to ask, you couldn't possibly comprehend the simplicity of the answer.

**PROSTITUTE**

Of course. I'm too stupid for that. What was it like?

**DIOGENES**

Cold. Just rocks and snow and clouds, then I got above the clouds and there was just snow and rocks. I could see the whole range... and there were no gods and no temples.

**PROSTITUTE**

Maybe they were in another part.

**DIOGENES**

I could see the whole damn range. There were no gods.

**PROSTITUTE**

So what are you saying - you're an atheist?

**DIOGENES**

Of course not. They stone atheists. Besides, I don't even care if gods exist. They're irrelevant. I care if *justice* exists. *That's* the biggy.

**PROSTITUTE**

Of course justice exists, sometimes.

**DIOGENES**

Sometimes isn't enough. There's got to be some point where everybody gets exactly what's coming to 'em.

**PROSTITUTE**

How can you have that without gods to enforce it?

**DIOGENES**

You probably can't. But even with a whole sky full of gods you still might not have justice. First you need righteous gods, and I sure as shit don't see any.

**PROSTITUTE**

Who do you think you are to judge the gods?

**DIOGENES**

I'm something that can't help judging what's right and what's wrong.

**PROSTITUTE**

What if *you're* wrong?

**DIOGENES**

Then I invite the gods to change me and make me right.

**PROSTITUTE**

They could change you into a frog if you piss 'em off!

**DIOGENES**

Fine. Then why can't they change me so I can think more highly of them.

**PROSTITUTE**

Watch what you say!

**DIOGENES**

Ah yes. Be careful not to reveal your true self, because the gods may be listening. How do you suppress yourself like that? Tell me; be my mentor. Teach me how to be a whore, so I can worship my creators without puking my guts out.

**PROSTITUTE**

Don't you be saying shit like that in my house!  
The gods are righteous.

**DIOGENES**

If so, I've got nothing to worry about. If there's ultimate justice, I'll do quite well. And if there's not, then *fuck* life, and *fuck the gods who made it!*

**PROSTITUTE**

*Get out of my house!* Right now. *Get out!*

[SHE goes to the door and opens it.]

[HE slams it shut and grabs her.]

[SHE starts to scream.]

[HE holds her tightly from behind and quickly covers her mouth.]

**DIOGENES**

[Very controlled] Do not struggle; be very still, and quiet, and calm. You're a professional, remember? You can handle things. That's why I'm here. This is the part I can never show in front of my students - the rage. Don't worry. I'm not going to hurt you. I'm not violent. I just had to get this off. You understand?

[SHE nods affirmatively.]

[HE removes his hand from her mouth.]

**PROSTITUTE**

[calmly] Please let go of me.

[HE lets go.]

[SHE walks to the window and looks out.]

**PROSTITUTE**

You still have some time left. And you paid for honesty. Here it is. Sometimes you're fun, but not often. Most of the time you bore me. I don't even understand you. When I do understand you, you depress me. And now you're scaring me. I don't need this. We made a deal, and I will sit here and endure your company until your time is up, but really I wish you would just leave.

**DIOGENES**

[Pause] Fair enough. That was good. Honesty should not go unrewarded.

[reaches for his money]

Here's another drachma, no, make it two. That was as good as any five drachma job.

[HE holds it out to her.]

[SHE doesn't take it.]

[HE tosses it onto the bed and starts to exit.]

**PROSTITUTE**

Hey, Di.

[HE turns.]

[SHE sits on the bed and picks up one or two coins.]

**PROSTITUTE**

Gotcha last.

**DIOGENES**

Yeah, well at least you didn't have to fake anything.

[HE exits.]

Blackout.