

THE FARMER'S TALE

THE FARMER'S PROLOGUE

"Well said!" the farmer cried. "I, too, hate those
Who dress themselves up in romantic clothes
And scheme to steal a girl's virginity,
Then hand her off in shame to men like me!
Real men are husbands, passionate and true,
Who bear the burdens of this life, and who
Are faithful to their vows. Such there be,
As in my tale you will shortly see."

THE FARMER'S TALE

Agesino was a farmer who
Produced fine crops no matter what he grew --
Everything organic, grown by hand.
He was a faithful lover of the land.

Alas! For years he had no other love,
No woman who his eye and heart might move,
For all the men who helped him were, well, men --
This coop was full of roosters, not one hen!

Long he toiled from sunup to sundown,
So many years, eventually he found
Himself near elderly and still alone,
No wife or children, parents long since gone.

And so he looked around to see if any
Women were nearby. There weren't many
In the tiny village near his farm,
And those there were exuded little charm.

He had at last resigned himself to being

Single, given the choices he was seeing,
When a young and lovely woman came
To visit him. Delfina was her name.
She was a student of organic farming,
Anxious to grow food, though without harming
The ecosphere, and tasty food at that!

Agesino saw right off the bat
She was the one for him, but in despair
That such a pretty girl could ever care
For him, he did not even try to talk
Of love. Each morning early they would walk
Through his fields as he showed her how
To shape the land and plant without a plow,
To nurture nature, not to intervene,
But merely with deft hand to set the scene
And then let nature work its wondrous way.

He seemed so wise and loving, in one day
He had won Delfina's heart, so she
Decided to remain indefinitely,
Courting him – he was so shy – until
Both virgin lovers had at last their will.

Within two months they married. Seven more
Brought a son. As though there were a door
To happiness, Agesino walked right through,
Entering an Eden wrought anew,
Where innocence reigned once again supreme,
And life became for him a waking dream.

Delfina for a few years felt the same,
And lived a life unblemished, without blame,
Loving in her husband what she would
See in herself, a person kind and good.

But presently into the garden came
A seductive snake, Alejandro was his name,
A romantic lover, whose memory could not hold
All he had seduced, whose blood ran cold
(Though he could make it hot enough by art),
And whose tongue played music on the heart.

This Alejandro was a hired hand
To help Agesino clear some vacant land
That he had bought just lately from a neighbor
For little more than a pittance and his labor
To turn a junk-strewn thicket to a field

That would in time a healthy harvest yield.

Agesino treated all his hands
As family, making on them no demands
That he did not as well make on himself,
Sharing meals and evenings, that the gulf
Between the men and master, while still there,
Might find a bridge that such a load would bear.

Thus the snake found easy access to
The garden, where he soon began to woo
His victim with whole-hearted admiration,
First with glances, then with sweet oration,
Practiced words that many times had brought
Precisely the dark pleasures that he sought.

For life was joyless, aimless, soul-less, dead
Unless he could pursue some maidenhead
Or undermine the virtue of some wife --
This to him was what brought life to life.

He could not help it, evil though he knew
It was, no more than some drug addict who
Lived only for the rush upon the brain
That eased his constant existential pain.

Delfina, too, was drawn to him of need,
The young wife of an older man, a breed
Much prone to an adulterous desire,
Their husbands meager fuel for such fierce fire.
Soon Alejandro's glances were returned
As both caged animals with passion burned.

And then a note: "You can't be satisfied
With such a husband! I cannot abide
To see you so when I am half insane
To kiss your breasts, or perish of this pain!"

This note he'd used successfully before,
And so he thought he'd try it one time more,
Slipping it to her while passing by,
Which Agesino happened to espy.

Yet to his wife he would say nothing of
What he had seen, trusting in her love.
Time and patience were his usual tools,
For he was tolerant, though not a fool,
And willing to believe eventually

Good would out, if one would let things be,
As nature would take care of human need
With just a bit of stewardship and seed.

Delfina, though, was like dry tinder lit
By Alejandro's words, her normal wit
Consumed by fantasies of ecstasy
In Alejandro's arms. She couldn't see
What was right in front of her, her brain
Full of scenes of love, again, again.

Still, she did not answer him. He wrote
Again, and then again, an urgent note
That gave at last to dreams a time and place
Where they might share the joy of an embrace.

Now she trembled with delight and fear,
Knowing that the reckoning was near,
And she must choose her duty or desire.
She could not bear to live life as a liar,
And yet with hunger she could scarcely stand --
For Alejandro's lips, his tongue, his hand,
His manhood thrusting into her, his burst
Of joy within her! God! He was the first
Who'd turned her from her love of that good
man,
To share whose life had been her only plan.

And so she did the only thing she could,
And bared her heart to him, as well she should.

"My darling Agesino," she began,
"You know well that you're the only man
I've ever been with, nor had I desire
For anyone else. But now a wildfire
Has swept right through me, driven by a wind
From some forsaken place within my mind,
And I have lust for someone else, one who
Has nothing for him but that he is new.

"He's neither good nor kind, nor just nor wise;
In fact, he's just the sort I should despise,
Yet all I do is feel unwanted lust
And fantasize his love because I must.
I cannot sleep or eat or even think.
And now I must confide I'm on the brink
Of going to him. This I'm telling you,
That you, my love, might know of me what's true.

I love you more than ever, please believe
Me! I cannot possibly conceive
Of life without you! That's precisely why
I tell you this -- I would not live a lie."

Agesino took some time for thought,
Dismantled by the truth that she had brought,
For truth it was, of that he had no doubt,
And so he needed time to figure out
What might be the wisest thing to do,
Once his rage and jealousy were through.

He loved Delfina still, and pain apart,
Was grateful she had bared her anguished heart,
For she could easily have cheated him
And secretly enjoyed her lustful sin.
But now that she had told him: What to do?
The ground of life had shifted, now he knew.

"My dear Delfina," he at last replied,
"I am so happy that you haven't lied!
Of course the truth is hard for me to bear,
But in the end, I'd rather be aware
Of what is in your heart than live my life
With someone who's a stranger for my wife.

"I know that I am old and cannot be
The man you need. Please understand you're free
To do what makes you happy. But beware
Of those romantic men who do not care
For those they might seduce, since that might
mean
They could not vanish quickly from the scene,
But might be forced to play the grownup man
By what they feel for someone other than
Themselves. Misogynists all, they play at love,
Loving whom they hate, as time will prove,
Using women for their passing pleasure
And then abandoning them, while those who
treasure
Them must watch with painful indignation
Their lover's naked self-humiliation.

"So do not give yourself unless you're sure
The one who takes you feels a love as pure
As yours, as mine for you has ever been.
This you owe yourself." From his chin
Ran drops of tears streaming from his eyes.

Delfina, too, as you may well surmise,
Wept at these words bitterly, and said:
"My darling husband, would that I were dead
Rather than inflict on you such pain.
I ought not play at life. But I would claim
This chance for ecstasy! This once I must
Seek out the unmarked boundaries of my lust!"

"So go," he answered, "go and do your will,
Knowing that your husband loves you still."

Perhaps there are of you some who would say
No man would send a wife he loved away
To have sex with another. Wait and see!
The outcome will persuade you presently.

Delfina went to meet her lover, but
With half a heart. Her husband's goodness put
Her lust out in the sun, where it would dry,
And in the merciless heat begin to die.
Her heart was full of sorrow for his pain,
And so it was reluctantly she came
To meet her lover at the appointed time,
Repenting her still-uncommitted crime.

"Alejandro," she began when they had kissed,
Holding him back firmly by the wrist,
"There's something I must tell you before we
Begin to take our pleasure. I couldn't be
Myself and live a lie, and so I told
My husband of our plans." Alejandro rolled
His eyes with an incredulous disgust.
"You what?" he said. "You what?" And all his lust
Ran out of him like liquid down a drain.
"I hope you didn't let him know my name!"

"Of course not!" Delfina said. "I wouldn't do
Anything that might cause harm to you."
"What did he say?" Alejandro asked, relieved.
"He thanked me for the truth, and though he
grieved
To hear of my desire, said that he
Would love me still, though I might faithless be."

"The gutless fool!" Alejandro said. "Come here!
Now we can have at it without fear.
With his permission, let us have our way,

And make mad love till sunshine says it's day!
Then send you home to him, the coward who
Could not, even in pain, say what is true:
That he is full of jealousy and rage,
And would, if honest, keep you in a cage,
Or murder you if you step out of line!
But all the milksop does is weep and whine!

"I'll show you what a man is!" And he pulled
Her towards him, by rage, not passion, ruled,
An anger that welled up, he knew not why,
From inner charities he would defy,
That turned against the woman in his arms
And made it spite to decimate her charms.

But she pushed back, now weeping, and then
cried,
"Let me go, please!" as violently he tried
To rip her shirt and bra off, bent on rape,
Knowing that his prey could not escape,
And, guilty as she was, would never scream.

But still she fought, as though in a bad dream,
And wept, and begged for mercy, till his rage,
Too, turned away, and limping left the stage,
Done in by what dead love could come to life
To save the honor of the helpless wife.

"Thank you," she said as he let her go.
"I've wronged us all, all three, as I well know.
But I must ask you, please, to go away.
And since I am the cause that you can't stay,
I'll give you four months' wages, so that you
Might look for work without constraint undue."

"You'll give me money now to disappear?
I don't need your money! Never fear!
I'll go away, all on my own, since I
Need no bribes! But look me in the eye
And say that you don't want me!" So she did,
And for one moment there was nothing hid
Between them, both the evil and the good.

Alejandro shuddered, as he should,
And turned away at last from what he saw:
Himself in her forgiveness -- truth too raw
To let him keep the luster of his lust.

And so my tale ends, as end it must:
Alejandro left; Delfina came
Back to Agesino, all her shame
Washed clean in his acceptance of her whole,
And love not just for body but for soul,
The two as loving after as before.
That's all I have to say -- I'll say no more.