

An excerpt from
Euryalus & Lucretia
 by Joseph Aragon



(Piazza del Campo. The Palio, minutes before the start of the race. A large, excited crowd has gathered, jostling and shouting at each other as they jockey for a good view of the track.)

EURYALUS: Nisus!

NISUS: Sir! Back so soon?

EURYALUS: Pacorus has escaped.

NISUS: What?

EURYALUS: The man's gone mad. No telling where he is now.

NISUS: Have you told the King?

EURYALUS: Yes, he's put all the other lances on watch.

I think we've been found out, Nisus. Sosias has disappeared. And when I tried to see Lucretia from the innkeeper's back room, I found the window to her bedroom completely walled shut!

You need to help me.

NISUS: I'm sorry sir, but I don't see how I can. You're on your own.

(NISUS leaves.)

Song: THE DAY WHEN THE HORSES RUN

BOOKMAKER:
 Three minutes till the rope
 drops! Last chance to get
 your bets in!

BOOKMAKER: PEASANT 1:
 Fifty lire on Vipera!

BOOKMAKER: PEASANT 2:
 Vipera? Why Vipera?

PEASANT 4:
 Two hundred on Bella
 Speranza!

Two hundred on Bella
Speranza.

PEASANT 3:
One hundred on Zodiach!

BOOKMAKER:
I'm sorry sir, I didn't catch
that . . .

PEASANT 1:
I heard that Zodiach's
jockey is going to throw the
race.

PEASANT 4:
You're throwing away your
money.

BOOKMAKER:
A hundred on Zodiach,
thank you.

PEASANT 2:
Where'd you hear that?

PEASANT 3:
I said a hundred on
Zodiach!

BOOKMAKER:
Any other wagers, my
friends?

PEASANT 1:
I have friends in the Shell
contrada.

PEASANT 3:
(to PEASANT 4)
What can I say? I'm feeling
lucky.

BOOKMAKER:
Going once . . .

PEASANT 2:
Are you sure they're right?

PEASANT 3:
I know it's a long shot . . .

BOOKMAKER:
Going twice . . .

PEASANT 1:
It's as good as won.
Trust me.

PEASANT 4:
Yes it is, you're a fool.

BOOKMAKER:
The books are closed!
Thank you!

PEASANT 2:
I don't know if I can . . .

PEASANT 1:
Well it's too late now.

PEASANT 3:
**You're going to eat your
words.**

PEASANT 2:
I'm going to regret this.

PEASANT 4:
**But take a close look, it's
a mule!**

PEASANTS 1/3: **To reap the rewards, you must take some risks . . .**

PEASANTS 2/4: **Though you may see your riches slide . . .**

ALL: **But what may be the outcome
only Fortune can decide . . .**

**Every moment counts
as the mighty mounts
come thundering down the street,
and the stakes are high
as the deals fly
like the dirt beneath their feet.
It's a vicious lustful glorious quest
and the spoils are all-or-none.
But we never can say**

**what may come our way
on the day when the horses run!**

(EURYALUS approaches PANDALUS.)

EURYALUS: Pandalus!— . . . friend . . . A word with you—

PANDALUS: Friend? One moment I'm looking down your blade and the next I'm your friend?

EURYALUS: I'm in dire need of your help. I'm going to reveal something that may incriminate me to your cousin, but you must not tell him.

PANDALUS: And give me one good reason why I shouldn't.

EURYALUS: . . . All right, I will.

(EURYALUS takes PANDALUS aside.)

NOBLE 1:
Ser Dario! May I have a word with you?

NOBLE 2:
What is it?

NOBLE 1:
**I have bad news:
Salvatore has accepted a bribe.**

NOBLE 2:
That two-faced dog!

NOBLES 1/2: **Let's fix the books and bribe him back!**

NOBLES 3/4: **Let's dope their horse with wine!**

ALL: **No sin is too egregious when prestige is on the line!**

**Doing shameless acts
and devising pacts
in a gambit for control.
And devise you must
even though you trust
not a single blessed soul.**

NOBLE 3:
Guess what I heard!

NOBLE 4:
From the Owls?

NOBLE 3:
**Oh yes!
I heard that they were talking with the
Eagles.**

NOBLE 4:
I see.

**And the house of cards may fall and the best laid
plans will become undone,
but without remorse
we continue our course
on the day when the horses run!**

(Church bells chime.)

PEASANT: The horses are arriving!

(The TOWNSFOLK gather excitedly. PANDALUS re-enters.)

MENELAUS:

Ah, Pandalus! There you are.

TOWNSFOLK:

Hot and high

the tension will mount to,

strong enough to

kill the faint of heart . . .

Now it's time,

the race is about to start . . .

PANADLUS:

Sorry I'm late, cousin, I had some last-minute business to attend to.

MENELAUS:

Last-minute indeed. I was afraid you were going to miss the Eagle's finest hour.

PANDALUS:

Not for the world, cousin! Now, let's place ourselves well. Not a thing shall escape our eyes! . . .

(A mortar goes off and the CROWD erupts.)

(As PANDALUS makes sure MENELAUS is being sufficiently distracted by the race, EURYALUS swoops in and yanks LUCRETIA from the crowd.)

MEN:

Go

Go

Go

Go

Faster

Faster

**Picking up the
pace**

Go

Go

Go

WOMEN:

Run

Run

Run

like the wind

Run

Run

Run

Faster

Run

Run

Don't you lag

LUCRETIA:

Euryalus!

(they kiss)

EURYALUS:

No. I only have until the end of the race.
Your husband will be out tonight.
Pandalus is seeing to it.

LUCRETIA:

Pandalus knows about us?

**Go
Faster
Faster
Tightening the
race**

**behind now!
Run
Run
Faster
Faster**

EURYALUS:
Relax. I told him I'd persuade the king to
make him a Count. He's agreed to open
the gate for me.

LUCRETIA: **I thought I'd never see you again.
I thought all hope was lost.
But here you are . . .**

EURYALUS: **Here I am . . .**

LUCRETIA: **We'll be together . . .**

EURYALUS: **We'll be together . . .**

LUCRETIA: **We'll have each other . . .**

EURYALUS &
LUCRETIA: **Regardless of the cost! . . .**

PEASANT: They're down the home stretch!

TOWNSFOLK:
**Now the rumbling herd
by the crowd is spurred
to a frenzied reckless pace,

as they lay on the strap
in the final lap
of a cruel demented race!

A single charger pulls ahead
and the Palio's good as won!
As the vanquished trail,
only one prevails . . .**

EURYALUS: Wait for me tonight.

LUCRETIA: You've risked so much.

(They kiss.)

EURYALUS: Go, go!

LUCRETIA: I love you!

EURYALUS: Till tonight!

*(The CROWD erupts—in joy or despair, accordingly—as the
horses cross the finish line. MENELAUS is elated, and turns to
LUCRETIA just as she arrives.)*

MENELAUS: Fortune smiles on us today!

LUCRETIA: Yes it does . . .

ALL: **On the day when the horses run!**

(Black.)



End of Excerpt