
**Once a Greek Translated
from the German by
Richard and Clara
Winston**

Durrenmatt Friedrich

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by Richard and Clara Winston**

Author: Durrenmatt Friedrich

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BY

Friedrich Duerrenmatt

Translated from the German by

RICHARD AND CLARA WINSTON



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FIRST EDITION

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Once a Greek . . .



It had been raining all day,
all night, for weeks. The streets, the avenues, the boulevards, gleamed with wetness. Rivulets, brooks, little streams, flowed along the curbs. Automobiles splashed through water; people walked under umbrellas, shrouded in raincoats, their shoes soggy, their socks permanently damp. The atlantes, putti, and caryatids that supported the balconies of mansions and hotels, the sculptures that clung to the façades, trickled and dripped; thin streams of water ran down them, dissolving the bird droppings; and the pigeons sought shelter under the Greek gables of the Chamber of Deputies

and between the legs and breasts of patriotic statuary. It was a miserable January. Then came the fog, and it too went on for days and weeks. It was accompanied by an epidemic of grippe, not especially dangerous for respectable people of substance, but it did carry off a few old uncles and aunts, to the delight of their heirs, as well as several venerable statesmen. Otherwise the only victims were the clochards who slept under the bridges by the river. And the fogs were succeeded by more rain. And still more.

His name was Arnolph Archilochos, and Madame Bieler behind her counter would say: "The poor boy. Such an impossible name. Auguste, bring him another glass of milk." And on Sundays she said: "Bring him another Perrier."

She addressed her husband, thin as a rail, winner of a legendary Tour de Suisse and runner-up in an even more legendary Tour de France, who served his customers in his cyclist's getup, a yellow jersey. (His café was the center for a small group of cycling fans.) But Auguste did not agree. "Georgette," he would say in the morning when he got up, or in bed, or behind the stove after everyone had left and he could warm his thin, hairy legs, "I don't understand your fondness for Monsieur Archilochos. He's not a man, he's all bottled