Menander | King

DILEMMA 1 · An opportunity for conquest

Read your card, ask the philosophers for advice, and decide what you will do and why.

A neighboring ruler has died, leaving his kingdom divided. Your generals urge you to seize a strategic pass. Controlling it could make your frontier safer and bring you lasting glory, but an invasion would cost many lives. No attack on your kingdom is imminent. You suspect that your desire to be remembered is influencing your judgment.

Menander | King

DILEMMA 2 · How to spend the time remaining

Read your card, ask the philosophers for advice, and decide what you will do and why.

Your physician warns that an illness may shorten your life, although no one knows by how much. You could delegate much of your work and spend more time with family, friends, and philosophical teachers. Your advisers fear that withdrawing would weaken the kingdom. You fear that continuing as before will leave you no time to learn how to live.

Agathocleia | Queen

DILEMMA 1 · Letting your son leave

Read your card, ask the philosophers for advice, and decide what you will do and why.

Demetrios (your son and the royal heir) wants to spend a year traveling with teachers and friends. The journey offers learning and independence, but travel carries real dangers. Since your daughter's death, the thought of losing him terrifies you. He asks for your blessing and says that demanding he stay would make your fear the ruler of his life.

Agathocleia | Queen

DILEMMA 2 · Joy after loss

Read your card, ask the philosophers for advice, and decide what you will do and why.

A family celebration falls on the anniversary of your daughter's death. Demetrios (your son and the royal heir) asks you to join him. You would enjoy seeing the family together, but you feel that laughing and celebrating would betray your daughter's memory. You are considering spending the day alone among her possessions instead.

Demetrios | Royal Heir

DILEMMA 1 · A life of your own

Read your card, ask the philosophers for advice, and decide what you will do and why.

Friends invite you to leave court and join a small community devoted to study and companionship. You would welcome this life. Your parents insist that, as heir, you owe the kingdom your service. No replacement has been agreed upon. Leaving could cause instability, but staying would mean accepting a future you never chose.

Demetrios | Royal Heir

DILEMMA 2 · An insult before the court

Read your card, ask the philosophers for advice, and decide what you will do and why.

A prominent noble publicly calls you weak and unfit to rule because you prefer books and friendship to military glory. Several officers laugh. Menander (your father and the king) invites you to respond. You feel humiliated. Demanding an apology might defend your standing, but it could turn the insult into a lasting feud.

Philon | Army Commander

DILEMMA 1 · The survivor's request

Read your card, ask the philosophers for advice, and decide what you will do and why.

A survivor of the village you ordered burned asks you to pay for rebuilding its homes. Meeting the request would consume most of the savings intended to support your household in retirement. No court will compel you to pay, and the survivor cannot damage your reputation. You would still remember what you did even if you refused.

Philon | Army Commander

DILEMMA 2 · Stay and restrain or refuse

Read your card, ask the philosophers for advice, and decide what you will do and why.

Menander (the king) asks you to lead another campaign. You believe it will probably involve actions you consider unjust. If you refuse, an officer known for brutality is likely to replace you. By accepting, you might protect civilians and restrain your soldiers, but you would also help carry out a campaign you oppose.

Mālatī | Court Physician

DILEMMA 1 · A life beyond your work

Read your card, ask the philosophers for advice, and decide what you will do and why.

Your pain and stiff hands increasingly limit your medical work. Your apprentice is ready to take over, and the queen offers you a comfortable place in the household without duties. You could retire or continue with fewer patients and more help. You fear that giving up your position would mean giving up what makes your life valuable.

Mālatī | Court Physician

DILEMMA 2 · Relief or a clear mind

Read your card, ask the philosophers for advice, and decide what you will do and why.

A remedy substantially eases your pain but leaves you sleepy and unable to study or teach for much of the day. Without it, you remain clearheaded, but the pain makes ordinary activities difficult. Your apprentice can care for the patients, so their safety does not depend on your choice.

Dionysios | Royal Treasurer

DILEMMA 1 · A Monument Or The Waterworks

Read your card, ask the philosophers for advice, and decide what you will do and why.

The treasury can fund only one major project this year. Menander's advisers propose a monument celebrating his victories, hoping it will strengthen loyalty and attract visitors. Farmers instead urge you to repair damaged irrigation channels before the next planting season; without repairs, some families may lose their crops. You must advise the king. A monument might help unify the kingdom, but the waterworks could prevent immediate hardship. Your recommendation will affect how both the king and his subjects judge your service.

Dionysios | Royal Treasurer

DILEMMA 2 · An Error In The Accounts

Read your card, ask the philosophers for advice, and decide what you will do and why.

You discover that a tax official collected more than the law permitted from several market families. The excess has already been assigned to payments for injured soldiers. Returning the money would leave those soldiers without promised support; keeping it would mean knowingly benefiting from an error at the families' expense. The tax official asks you to correct the ledger quietly, without admitting the mistake. You must decide what to report to Menander and how to recommend putting matters right.

Kalyāṇī | Frontier Envoy

DILEMMA 1 · A Promise At The Crossing

Read your card, ask the philosophers for advice, and decide what you will do and why.

During talks at a frontier post, you promised safe passage to families fleeing a local conflict. Now guards warn that a few armed scouts might be traveling among them. No one has identified a scout, and the families have already begun their journey. If you urge the gates closed, people may be stranded in danger and lose trust in your word. If you recommend admitting them immediately, you may expose the town to an attack. There is little time to obtain better information.

Kalyāṇī | Frontier Envoy

DILEMMA 2 · Words That May Preserve The Peace

Read your card, ask the philosophers for advice, and decide what you will do and why.

You are translating an agreement between Menander's representatives and a neighboring community. One phrase could mean either a limited truce or a lasting pledge of friendship. Both sides appear to hear the meaning they prefer. If you clarify the disagreement, the talks might collapse and fighting may resume. If you let the ambiguity stand, the agreement could succeed for now, but each side may later accuse the other of betrayal. Your words may shape what happens next.

Dāmodara | Civic Magistrate

DILEMMA 1 · Two Witnesses, One Judgment

Read your card, ask the philosophers for advice, and decide what you will do and why.

A market storehouse burned during the night. Two witnesses accuse a young laborer of starting the fire, but their accounts differ about the hour and what they actually saw. The laborer denies responsibility. Merchants demand punishment and warn that releasing the accused may invite further destruction. An unjust conviction, however, could ruin an innocent life. You are expected to make a recommendation soon. You can delay for more inquiry, but the town may regard delay as a failure to protect it.

Dāmodara | Civic Magistrate

DILEMMA 2 · The Same Law For Two People

Read your card, ask the philosophers for advice, and decide what you will do and why.

A local rule imposes a substantial fine for cutting wood in a protected grove. Two people admit breaking it: a wealthy merchant who used the wood for a decorative pavilion, and a struggling parent who repaired a leaking roof. The same fine would barely affect one person and might leave the other without food. Some citizens insist that equal treatment requires the same penalty; others argue that justice must consider motives and circumstances. You must recommend how each case should be resolved.

Helena | Royal Tutor

DILEMMA 1 · The Lesson The King Wants

Read your card, ask the philosophers for advice, and decide what you will do and why.

Menander asks you to teach young officers that a worthy ruler never allows fear or uncertainty to delay action. You believe courage matters, but you also think this lesson confuses boldness with good judgment. Several students have already begun repeating it as an excuse to dismiss criticism. If you teach the lesson as requested, you may help them become loyal officers; if you challenge it openly, you risk your position and the chance to educate them at all.

Helena | Royal Tutor

DILEMMA 2 · An Inconvenient Account Of Victory

Read your card, ask the philosophers for advice, and decide what you will do and why.

You are preparing an official account of an earlier royal campaign. The familiar story celebrates a swift and honorable victory. A newly received account, from a witness you find credible but cannot fully verify, describes serious suffering among civilians. Publishing that uncertainty may anger officials and weaken confidence in the army; leaving it out may turn the royal archive into an instrument of praise rather than inquiry. You must decide what the record should say and how publicly to defend your choice.