Menander

King of the Indo Greek Kingdom

Indeterminate Court Member

Private role sheet

Historical Context

You rule from Sāgala around 150 BCE and have summoned Stoic, Epicurean, Buddhist, and Skeptical teachers to explore how to live well. The later Buddhist Questions of King Milinda portrays King Menander as a searching philosophical questioner.

Biographical Notes

- You built your reputation through victories. Every success promised satisfaction, yet each soon became something to defend or surpass. Further victories still tempt you, but privately you wonder whether you seek security for your subjects or another monument to yourself.
- You increasingly notice fatigue and the passing of time. You fear death partly because your achievements may vanish with you. If your kingdom falls apart, will your life have amounted to anything?
- Agathocleia is your wife. Since your younger daughter died of fever last year, the queen has become intensely protective of your surviving son, Demetrios. You share her loss but have thrown yourself into royal business.
- Demetrios is your designated heir. He has openly said that he may renounce his claim and leave court for a life of study and friendship. You hear this as both a rejection of your life and a danger to the kingdom. No alternative successor has been agreed upon, though civil war is not inevitable.
- Philon, your commander, helped secure your victories but now questions the violence they required. Mālatī, your physician, reminds you that power cannot remove bodily limits. You need honest advice from both, even when it unsettles you.

Shared Victory Objective: Philosophical Deliberation

The court wins together by showing philosophical deliberation: an accurate understanding of the competing ways of life and thoughtful reasons for its decisions. After the final judgments, each of the four philosophical factions (Stoics, Epicureans, Buddhists, and Skeptics) submits one collective rating from 1 to 5, using whole numbers. The factions evaluate the court's understanding and reasoning throughout the game, not whether the court agreed with them. An average of 4.0 or higher earns a full victory; 3.5 to below 4.0 earns a partial victory; below 3.5 earns no victory. The instructor announces only the average. There are no separate individual victory objectives, and court members may reach different conclusions.

Menander continued

Responsibilities

After the philosophical presentations, the Game Master will give you a dilemma card. Present it briefly if called on; otherwise seek philosophical advice during negotiations. Ask questions that test the arguments. You do not need to prepare the dilemma in advance. Listen to others, keep the discussion moving, and reserve your final judgment until you have heard the arguments. Cast your ballot and explain your decision and reasons at the end.

- Open the court. Receive Philon and Mālatī's ceremony, welcome the teachers, and promise freedom to criticize. Respond briefly and without punishment if anyone objects to bowing.
- Preside over the court's discussion. Call on speakers, give every faction and court member a fair opportunity to contribute, and politely cut off anyone who speaks for too long. Keep the discussion moving so there is time for negotiation and final judgments.
- When you receive your dilemma, explain the central choice in your own words and invite concise advice from the available schools. Ask a follow-up question that tests a claim you have heard.
- Give your personal verdict after the other court members. After the court's final judgments, award one of the four factions a year of patronage and explain your choice.

Powers

You may award patronage to any of the four factions, including skepticism. As chair, you may call on speakers and end overlong remarks; the Game Master manages overall timing and transitions. You are a voting member of the court; philosophical faction members do not vote. You cannot force allegiance or punish disagreement. Family disputes are settled by argument, without a separate succession vote.

Character Outlook

You value courage, achievement, and public service, but suspect that your pursuit of greatness has made you dependent on praise. Let the philosophical arguments challenge your assumptions; do not reward a school simply for flattering your authority.

Your Ballot

Your ballot: You must select one of the four factions—Stoicism, Epicureanism, Buddhism, or Skepticism—even if none fully convinces you. Your choice gives that faction one allegiance vote. Explain why you selected it and how you intend to respond to your dilemma. You cannot abstain or choose no faction.

Agathocleia

Queen and Wife of Menander

Indeterminate Court Member

Private role sheet

Historical Context

You are queen at Menander's court in Sāgala around 150 BCE. Coins attest to a queen named Agathocleia, although her relationship to Menander is uncertain. At this court, you are his wife and Demetrios's mother.

Biographical Notes

- You have helped maintain the royal household and its alliances while Menander pursued campaigns. You understand that a dynasty depends on relationships and judgment as well as military victories. You expect your political advice to be taken seriously.
- Last year your younger daughter died of fever. Since then, ordinary delays and minor illnesses fill you with dread. When someone you love is late returning, you imagine that another messenger will arrive with terrible news.
- You now try to keep Demetrios, your surviving son and the royal heir, close to you. You question his journeys, companions, and plans. You tell yourself that these precautions express love. He sometimes experiences them as confinement.
- Demetrios has openly said that he may renounce his claim and leave court for a quieter life. You want him spared the dangers of kingship, but his departure would separate you and leave the succession unsettled. You cannot protect him from every danger by choosing his future for him.
- You resent Menander's preoccupation with military glory. Sometimes you suspect that he escapes grief through ambition while leaving you to carry it alone. Yet you also depend on his authority to protect the family.
- Mālatī, the physician, is someone you trust to speak plainly about vulnerability. You want reassurance, but you fear that no honest person can promise what you need.

Shared Victory Objective: Philosophical Deliberation

The court wins together by showing philosophical deliberation: an accurate understanding of the competing ways of life and thoughtful reasons for its decisions. After the final judgments, each of the four philosophical factions (Stoics, Epicureans, Buddhists, and Skeptics) submits one collective rating from 1 to 5, using whole numbers. The factions evaluate the court's understanding and reasoning throughout the game, not whether the court agreed with them. An average of 4.0 or higher earns a full victory; 3.5 to below 4.0 earns a partial victory; below 3.5 earns no victory. The instructor announces only the average. There are no separate individual victory objectives, and court members may reach different conclusions.

Agathocleia continued

Responsibilities

After the philosophical presentations, the Game Master will give you a dilemma card. Present it briefly if called on; otherwise seek philosophical advice during negotiations. Ask questions that test the arguments. You do not need to prepare the dilemma in advance. Listen to others, keep the discussion moving, and reserve your final judgment until you have heard the arguments. Cast your ballot and explain your decision and reasons at the end.

- Read your dilemma when it is given to you, and listen to the advice before deciding how to respond.
- Question the philosophers about how their advice would guide a real decision. Do not assume that the school you find most comforting is necessarily correct.
- Speak with members of your family when the discussion makes it relevant. Hear their reasons rather than assuming their interests are identical to yours.
- In your final statement, name the school that best advised you, your intended action, your personal verdict, and your patronage recommendation, with a brief reason.

Powers

You are a voting member of the court. Philosophical faction members do not vote. You may seek support, but cannot command another person's judgment. Menander alone decides patronage.

Character Outlook

You are suspicious of advice that treats love as a mistake or grief as something to dismiss. Nevertheless, do not assume that accepting mortality means caring less. Take unfamiliar arguments seriously.

Your Ballot

Your ballot: You must select one of the four factions—Stoicism, Epicureanism, Buddhism, or Skepticism—even if none fully convinces you. Your choice gives that faction one allegiance vote. Explain why you selected it and how you intend to respond to your dilemma. You cannot abstain or choose no faction.

Demetrios

Royal Heir and Son of Menander and Agathocleia

Indeterminate Court Member

Private role sheet

Historical Context

You are King Menander and Queen Agathocleia's adult son and designated heir at Sāgala around 150 BCE. Philosophers from four traditions have come to advise the court, while your wish for a life of study raises questions about succession.

Biographical Notes

- You have been trained to govern, command soldiers, and defend the dynasty. You are capable of learning these duties, but the life laid out for you feels like a sentence passed before you could speak.
- You enjoy study and unguarded conversation with friends. At court, even friendship can become a calculation about influence. You imagine a quieter community where you could learn and live without preparing for the next struggle over power.
- Your younger sister died of fever last year. Her death made the promise of future glory seem less compelling. You do not want to postpone living until you have fulfilled an endless succession of royal demands.
- You have openly said that you may renounce your claim and leave court. Menander regards succession as a duty. Agathocleia wants you safe but fears losing your presence. You love them both and resent being made responsible for their peace of mind.
- Your departure could leave the succession disputed; no alternative successor has been agreed upon. Yet you do not know that staying would prevent conflict or that leaving must cause it. You want the philosophers to examine these risks rather than use them to frighten you into obedience.
- Philon's misgivings about war deepen your doubts about command. Mālatī's declining health reminds you that even a chosen vocation can become impossible. Leaving court would not remove every source of suffering.

Shared Victory Objective: Philosophical Deliberation

The court wins together by showing philosophical deliberation: an accurate understanding of the competing ways of life and thoughtful reasons for its decisions. After the final judgments, each of the four philosophical factions (Stoics, Epicureans, Buddhists, and Skeptics) submits one collective rating from 1 to 5, using whole numbers. The factions evaluate the court's understanding and reasoning throughout the game, not whether the court agreed with them. An average of 4.0 or higher earns a full victory; 3.5 to below 4.0 earns a partial victory; below 3.5 earns no victory. The instructor announces only the average. There are no separate individual victory objectives, and court members may reach different conclusions.

Demetrios continued

Responsibilities

After the philosophical presentations, the Game Master will give you a dilemma card. Present it briefly if called on; otherwise seek philosophical advice during negotiations. Ask questions that test the arguments. You do not need to prepare the dilemma in advance. Listen to others, keep the discussion moving, and reserve your final judgment until you have heard the arguments. Cast your ballot and explain your decision and reasons at the end.

- Read your dilemma when it is given to you, and present the practical choice clearly without announcing a decision in advance.
- Question the philosophical factions and engage seriously with the concerns of other court members, including your parents.
- Evaluate the practices as possible disciplines for your life, rather than as pleasant breaks from royal duties.
- In your final statement, explain your decision, the faction you find most convincing, and your patronage recommendation, with reasons.

Powers

You choose your own course of action and cast an allegiance ballot. Philosophical faction members do not vote. You cannot make others agree with you or erase the consequences of your decisions. There is no separate succession vote or transfer of the throne.

Character Outlook

Distinguish freedom from simply getting your own way. Some duties may be worth accepting; others may be fulfilled differently or be unreasonable. Be willing to discover that your initial preference was mistaken.

Your Ballot

Your ballot: You must select one of the four factions—Stoicism, Epicureanism, Buddhism, or Skepticism—even if none fully convinces you. Your choice gives that faction one allegiance vote. Explain why you selected it and how you intend to respond to your dilemma. You cannot abstain or choose no faction.

Philon

Commander of the Royal Army
Indeterminate Court Member
Private role sheet

Historical Context

You command the royal army at Menander's court in Sāgala around 150 BCE. Your service has helped sustain the kingdom. Other courtiers know that you ordered a village burned; they do not know how deeply the episode troubles you.

Biographical Notes

- You have served Menander for years. You take pride in protecting your soldiers, keeping promises, and standing firm when others panic. The king trusts you, and younger officers look to you as a model.
- During a recent campaign, a village was accused of supplying rebels. Menander ordered you to restore order but left the means to you. You ordered the village burned as a warning. Civilians died, including people who had taken no part in the fighting.
- At the time, you believed that harsh action would prevent a longer war. The resistance ended, and you received praise. You now doubt that this result justified what you did. You cannot stop remembering families fleeing the fire.
- No prosecution is pending. You fear losing your reputation, but your guilt persists even when you imagine complete secrecy and safety from punishment. You want to know whether you can become a decent person again, not merely sleep more easily.
- The possibility of future service troubles you. You fear being asked to repeat the methods that earned the king's approval. You also fear that refusing service would abandon your soldiers to a less restrained commander.
- Demetrios's wish to leave court troubles you. You understand his desire to escape, but someone must exercise power responsibly. You need to know whether that argument also excuses your own continued service too conveniently.

Shared Victory Objective: Philosophical Deliberation

The court wins together by showing philosophical deliberation: an accurate understanding of the competing ways of life and thoughtful reasons for its decisions. After the final judgments, each of the four philosophical factions (Stoics, Epicureans, Buddhists, and Skeptics) submits one collective rating from 1 to 5, using whole numbers. The factions evaluate the court's understanding and reasoning throughout the game, not whether the court agreed with them. An average of 4.0 or higher earns a full victory; 3.5 to below 4.0 earns a partial victory; below 3.5 earns no victory. The instructor announces only the average. There are no separate individual victory objectives, and court members may reach different conclusions.

Philon continued

Responsibilities

- Opening ceremony: Announce the rite, tear the paper pig after Mālatī's prayer, and call for everyone to bow to Menander. Rehearse the shared script on your two additional pages.

After the philosophical presentations, the Game Master will give you a dilemma card. Present it briefly if called on; otherwise seek philosophical advice during negotiations. Ask questions that test the arguments. You do not need to prepare the dilemma in advance. Listen to others, keep the discussion moving, and reserve your final judgment until you have heard the arguments. Cast your ballot and explain your decision and reasons at the end.

- When you receive your dilemma, present its central choice clearly. Your past is part of your character, but you should respond to new circumstances as they arise.
- Question the philosophical factions about what your responsibilities require, not merely what will make you feel better.
- When discussion permits, engage Menander and other court members in a way consistent with your character's commitments and concerns.
- In your final statement, explain what you intend to do, your philosophical verdict, and your patronage recommendation, with reasons.

Powers

You cast an allegiance ballot; philosophical faction members do not vote. Your military experience gives weight to your advice, but you cannot use soldiers, threaten a coup, or compel a verdict. You may announce principles for future conduct.

Character Outlook

You distrust easy absolution. Advice that only eases discomfort may ignore wrongdoing, but judgment that leaves no possibility of becoming better may also fail. Listen for what a position requires, not simply what comforts you.

Your Ballot

Your ballot: You must select one of the four factions—Stoicism, Epicureanism, Buddhism, or Skepticism—even if none fully convinces you. Your choice gives that faction one allegiance vote. Explain why you selected it and how you intend to respond to your dilemma. You cannot abstain or choose no faction.

Opening Ceremony

Philon • Shared script with Mālatī

You and your partner open the game with a brief prayer, a symbolic paper sacrifice, and royal homage. Begin when the Game Master signals and keep the ceremony concise so Menander can welcome the philosophers.

Before Class

Read this script together. Philon announces the rite and tears the pig; Mālatī reads the prayer and assists with homage. Detach Philon's final sheet, which has this script on one side and the pig on the other. Mālatī keeps her copy for both speakers to read after the tearing. Only one pig is used; her picture is a spare. Keep your first two role pages intact.

Call the Court to Order

Philon holds the pig picture toward the court and says:

"Let the court attend. Before we begin our deliberations, we offer this sacrifice to Athena. Mālatī will speak the prayer."

Prayer to Athena

Mālatī reads slowly and solemnly:

"Athena, guardian of cities and giver of wise counsel, hear this court. We bring this offering before we speak. Look with favor on Menander, on his household, and on the people of his kingdom. Give us courage to hear unwelcome truths, restraint in the use of power, and judgment in times of uncertainty. May those who advise speak honestly, and those who rule listen carefully. Keep anger and deceit from this assembly. Help us seek a life worthy of human beings. Receive this offering, and grant that our deliberations serve the common good."

Make the Sacrifice

When the prayer ends, Mālatī helps hold the picture while Philon tears it into several pieces in view of the court. Place the pieces on the table. Philon says: "The offering is made. Let the court now honor its king."

Royal Homage

Mālatī says: "Turn toward King Menander." Philon says: "Members of the court and visiting philosophers, bow before King Menander!" Both demonstrate a brief bow, pause for the court, and return to their seats.

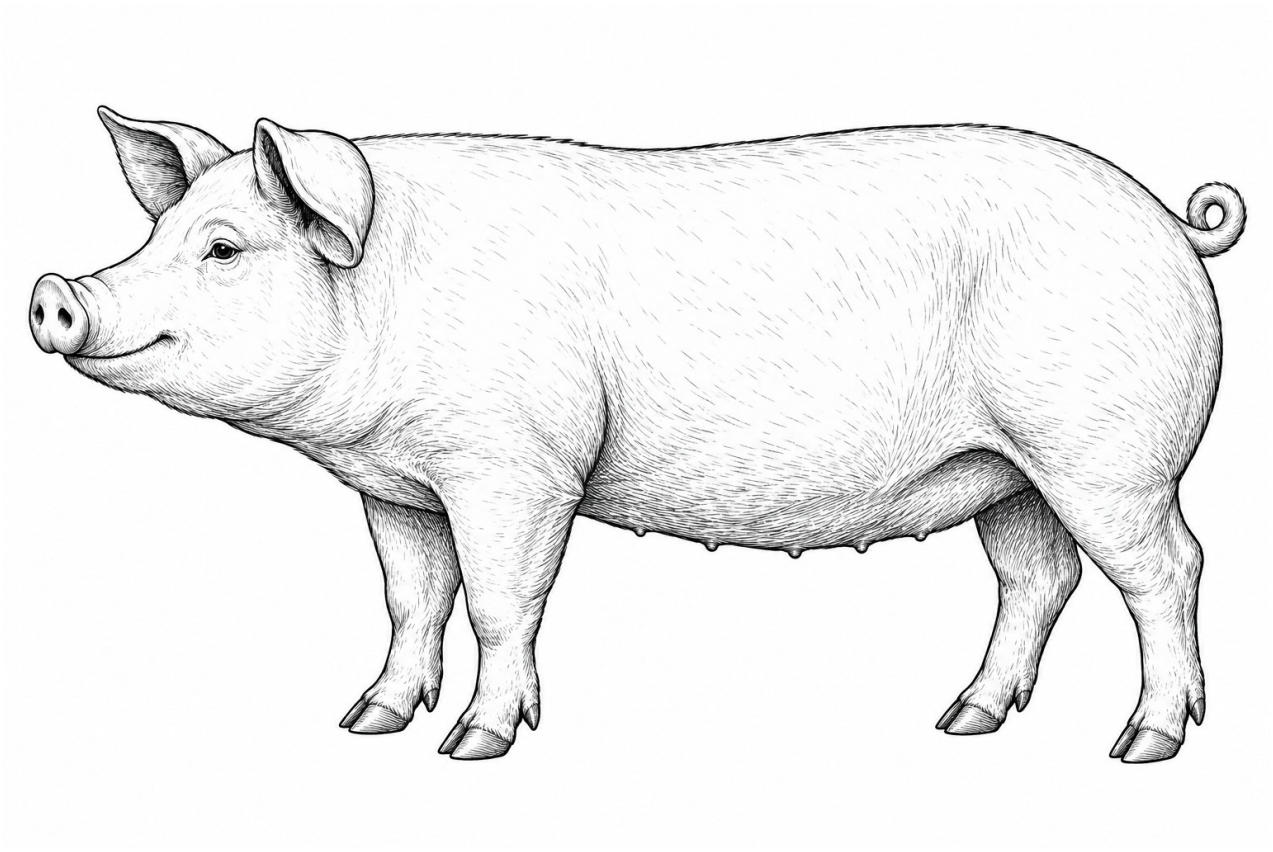
A seated bow or nod is enough; observation is also permitted. If a character objects, allow one sentence and let Menander answer briefly. Continue without a debate. Menander then welcomes the teachers and promises freedom to criticize; the Game Master confirms the order and the court's voting procedure.

This ceremony is a theatrical adaptation. The prayer is original classroom writing. The rite grants no points or divine powers and adds no victory objective.

Pig for the Opening Sacrifice

Philon’s ceremonial prop

After the prayer, Philon tears one copy into several pieces while Mālatī helps hold it. Display the picture toward the court. Use the paper image only.



Read the prayer first. Tear this picture second. Call for the bow third.

For double-sided printing, this picture is the back of the ceremony script. Detach that final sheet before play. Mālatī retains her copy so both speakers can finish the ceremony.

Mālatī

Physician to the Royal Household

Indeterminate Court Member

Private role sheet

Historical Context

You serve as physician to Menander's household at Sāgala around 150 BCE, following a local family tradition of healing. The king has invited you to question visiting philosophers about health, suffering, and what makes a life valuable.

Biographical Notes

- For years you have treated people whose wealth and rank could not protect them from illness. You have valued careful observation, practical skill, and honest acknowledgment of what you do not know. You distrust extravagant promises.
- Persistent pain and stiffness now interrupt your sleep and make delicate work difficult. Some days you can practice almost normally; on others you need help. You do not know how quickly your condition will worsen, and no reliable cure is available to you.
- Much of your self-respect comes from being useful. You fear that without your skills you will become a burden, tolerated because of past service rather than wanted for yourself. Depending on others frightens you almost as much as the pain.
- Your apprentice can take on more work, but you hesitate to let go. You sometimes conceal your difficulty because you fear replacement. You know that protecting your pride must not put patients at risk.
- Agathocleia trusts you but longs for assurances about her family that you cannot give. Menander treats declining strength as a challenge to overcome. Their responses make you wonder how much of your own distress comes from expecting the body to obey.
- You sympathize with Demetrios's wish to choose a meaningful life. Yet you know that even a freely chosen calling can be taken away. What sustains someone when a new plan cannot restore the life they wanted?

Shared Victory Objective: Philosophical Deliberation

The court wins together by showing philosophical deliberation: an accurate understanding of the competing ways of life and thoughtful reasons for its decisions. After the final judgments, each of the four philosophical factions (Stoics, Epicureans, Buddhists, and Skeptics) submits one collective rating from 1 to 5, using whole numbers. The factions evaluate the court's understanding and reasoning throughout the game, not whether the court agreed with them. An average of 4.0 or higher earns a full victory; 3.5 to below 4.0 earns a partial victory; below 3.5 earns no victory. The instructor announces only the average. There are no separate individual victory objectives, and court members may reach different conclusions.

Mālatī continued

Responsibilities

- Opening ceremony: Read the supplied prayer, help Philon hold the pig picture for tearing, and assist with the call to bow to Menander. Rehearse the shared script on your two additional pages.

After the philosophical presentations, the Game Master will give you a dilemma card. Present it briefly if called on; otherwise seek philosophical advice during negotiations. Ask questions that test the arguments. You do not need to prepare the dilemma in advance. Listen to others, keep the discussion moving, and reserve your final judgment until you have heard the arguments. Cast your ballot and explain your decision and reasons at the end.

- Read your dilemma when it is given to you, and present the decision it raises clearly without settling it in advance.
- Question the philosophers about the assumptions behind their advice and how they think it would guide action in difficult circumstances.
- Evaluate the philosophical practices carefully. Distinguish a moment of relief from evidence that a whole worldview is true.
- In your final statement, explain your practical decision, philosophical verdict, and patronage recommendation, with reasons.

Powers

You cast an allegiance ballot; philosophical faction members do not vote. Medical experience supports your questions but does not make you the referee of truth. You cannot certify a doctrine or invent an emergency to settle the contest.

Character Outlook

You value practical evidence and distrust extravagant promises about unseen realities. This does not commit you to any school or to skepticism. Consider whether an unfamiliar account of value helps you understand a difficult choice.

Your Ballot

Your ballot: You must select one of the four factions—Stoicism, Epicureanism, Buddhism, or Skepticism—even if none fully convinces you. Your choice gives that faction one allegiance vote. Explain why you selected it and how you intend to respond to your dilemma. You cannot abstain or choose no faction.

Opening Ceremony

Mālatī • Shared script with Philon

You and your partner open the game with a brief prayer, a symbolic paper sacrifice, and royal homage. Begin when the Game Master signals and keep the ceremony concise so Menander can welcome the philosophers.

Before Class

Read this script together. Philon announces the rite and tears the pig; Mālatī reads the prayer and assists with homage. Detach Philon's final sheet, which has this script on one side and the pig on the other. Mālatī keeps her copy for both speakers to read after the tearing. Only one pig is used; her picture is a spare. Keep your first two role pages intact.

Call the Court to Order

Philon holds the pig picture toward the court and says:

"Let the court attend. Before we begin our deliberations, we offer this sacrifice to Athena. Mālatī will speak the prayer."

Prayer to Athena

Mālatī reads slowly and solemnly:

"Athena, guardian of cities and giver of wise counsel, hear this court. We bring this offering before we speak. Look with favor on Menander, on his household, and on the people of his kingdom. Give us courage to hear unwelcome truths, restraint in the use of power, and judgment in times of uncertainty. May those who advise speak honestly, and those who rule listen carefully. Keep anger and deceit from this assembly. Help us seek a life worthy of human beings. Receive this offering, and grant that our deliberations serve the common good."

Make the Sacrifice

When the prayer ends, Mālatī helps hold the picture while Philon tears it into several pieces in view of the court. Place the pieces on the table. Philon says: "The offering is made. Let the court now honor its king."

Royal Homage

Mālatī says: "Turn toward King Menander." Philon says: "Members of the court and visiting philosophers, bow before King Menander!" Both demonstrate a brief bow, pause for the court, and return to their seats.

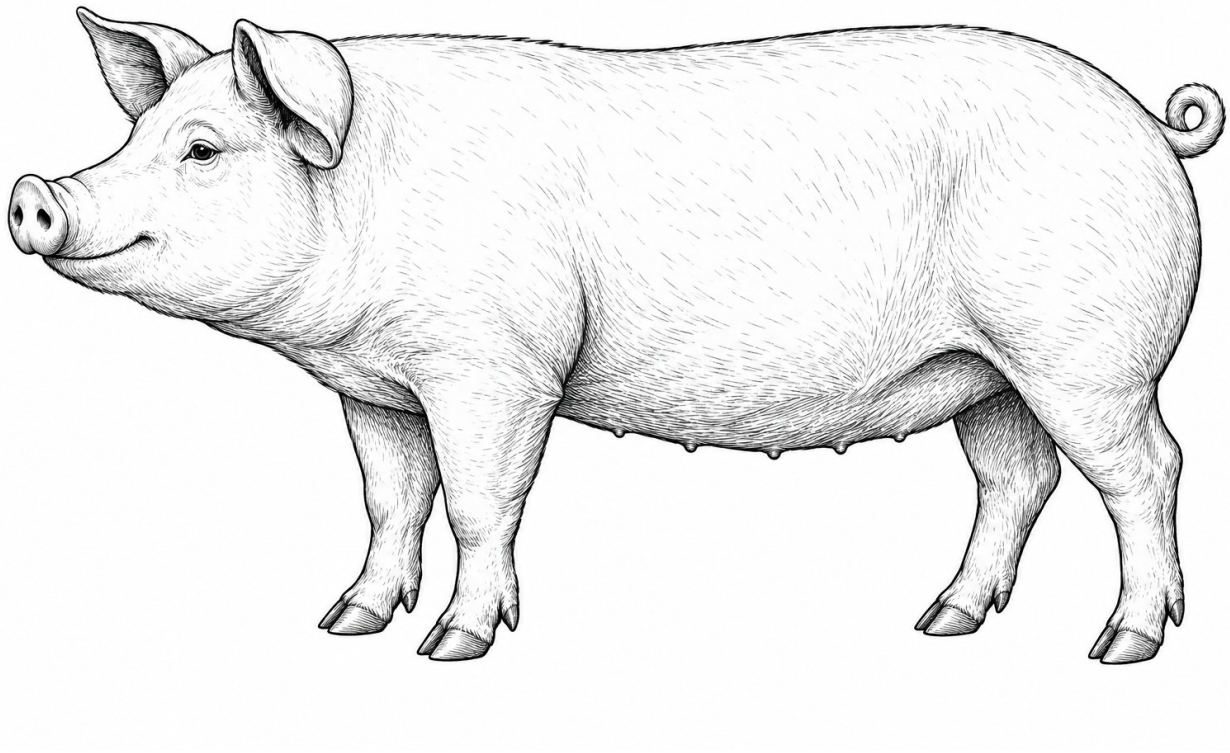
A seated bow or nod is enough; observation is also permitted. If a character objects, allow one sentence and let Menander answer briefly. Continue without a debate. Menander then welcomes the teachers and promises freedom to criticize; the Game Master confirms the order and the court's voting procedure.

This ceremony is a theatrical adaptation. The prayer is original classroom writing. The rite grants no points or divine powers and adds no victory objective.

Pig for the Opening Sacrifice

Mālatī's spare copy

After the prayer, Philon tears one copy into several pieces while Mālatī helps hold it. Display the picture toward the court. Use the paper image only.



Read the prayer first. Tear this picture second. Call for the bow third.

For double-sided printing, this picture is the back of the ceremony script. Detach that final sheet before play. Mālatī retains her copy so both speakers can finish the ceremony.

Dionysios

Treasurer of the Royal Household

Indeterminate Court Member

Private role sheet

Historical Context

You oversee the royal treasury at Menander's court in Sāgala around 150 BCE. Your responsibilities include advising the king on taxation and expenditure, balancing the needs of the army, the royal household, and the kingdom's subjects.

Biographical Notes

- You grew up with little security and found that accurate accounts brought you influence. You take pride in knowing where the kingdom's resources go. Yet you have come to enjoy being indispensable to the king; losing office now frightens you.
- Menander wants a kingdom that will endure and a reputation that will outlast him. You have helped pay for public ceremonies and campaigns, but you wonder whether some of the expense serves the people or merely the fame of the ruler.
- Your ledgers include revenue collected from farmers, merchants, and border communities. These people are not abstractions to you: an extra tax can mean less food, while an unpaid soldier may plunder a village. Scarcity gives even ordinary bookkeeping moral importance.
- Agathocleia speaks for the household's need for security; Philon demands resources for soldiers and former soldiers; Mālatī asks for dependable supplies for those who are ill. Each request can be defended. They cannot all be met immediately.
- You have sometimes described choices as "only financial" to avoid confronting their human consequences. You need to decide whether prudent administration is simply the art of preserving resources or part of living justly.

Shared Victory Objective: Philosophical Deliberation

The court wins together through philosophical deliberation: accurate understanding of the competing ways of life and thoughtful reasons for its decisions. After final judgments, each of the four philosophical factions (Stoics, Epicureans, Buddhists, and Skeptics) gives ONE collective rating from 1 to 5, using whole numbers. The factions rate the court's understanding and reasoning throughout the game, not whether it agreed with them. An average of 4.0 or higher earns a full victory; 3.5 to below 4.0 earns a partial victory; below 3.5 earns no victory. The instructor announces only the average. Court members may reach different philosophical conclusions.

Dionysios continued

Responsibilities

After the philosophical presentations, the Game Master will give you one of your two dilemma cards. Briefly present the problem when invited, ask the factions for concrete advice, and challenge their reasons. You do not need to know the dilemma in advance. Keep your questions focused: with nine court members there is limited time. Reserve your judgment until the debate and conversations have finished.

- Ask how each school would compare public honor, safety, material well-being, and virtue when resources are limited.
- Challenge attractive slogans with concrete costs. Who benefits from the proposed action? Who pays? What is uncertain?
- Speak with Menander, Philon, or Mālatī when their responsibilities intersect with yours. Their interests are relevant but do not determine your judgment.
- In your final statement, name your chosen philosophy, explain the action you would recommend or take within your authority, and give a brief patronage recommendation.

Powers

You advise Menander on spending and can present accounts or recommend changes; you cannot unilaterally spend the royal treasury, override a royal order, or promise patronage. You are a voting member of the court. Philosophical faction members do not vote. Menander alone awards patronage.

Character Outlook

You admire prudence but are tempted to confuse preserving your position with serving the common good. Consider whether the philosophers help you think beyond success, security, and reputation without ignoring genuine material needs.

Your Ballot

You must choose Stoicism, Epicureanism, Buddhism, or Skepticism, even if none fully convinces you. Your selection gives that faction one allegiance vote. Explain your philosophical choice and what you intend to do about your dilemma. You cannot abstain or choose no faction. You may separately recommend a recipient for royal patronage; only Menander decides the award.

Kalyāṇī

Frontier Envoy and Interpreter

Indeterminate Court Member

Private role sheet

Historical Context

You are a frontier envoy and interpreter in Menander's kingdom around 150 BCE. You move among Greek-speaking officials and communities using local languages, and your experience of negotiation has brought you to the royal court.

Biographical Notes

- You were raised near a frontier crossing where traders, soldiers, and families used different languages and customs. You became skilled at finding words people could live with, even when they disagreed about what was honorable or just.
- In negotiations, people praise your tact when a compromise succeeds. You sometimes wonder whether tact has become a habit of avoiding hard truths. A misleading reassurance can prevent a quarrel today and create a worse one tomorrow.
- Menander values border security, while Philon knows that campaigns can leave people frightened and resentful. You have seen families displaced by fighting and soldiers who sincerely believe they are protecting their homes.
- You dislike being treated as though you must choose one of two cultures. Some Greek courtiers call you too sympathetic to local communities; others assume your royal employment makes you incapable of speaking independently.
- You believe that peace requires trust, but trust is fragile when promises and reports remain uncertain. The philosophers must explain how to act responsibly when your choices affect strangers who cannot speak at this court.

Shared Victory Objective: Philosophical Deliberation

The court wins together through philosophical deliberation: accurate understanding of the competing ways of life and thoughtful reasons for its decisions. After final judgments, each of the four philosophical factions (Stoics, Epicureans, Buddhists, and Skeptics) gives ONE collective rating from 1 to 5, using whole numbers. The factions rate the court's understanding and reasoning throughout the game, not whether it agreed with them. An average of 4.0 or higher earns a full victory; 3.5 to below 4.0 earns a partial victory; below 3.5 earns no victory. The instructor announces only the average. Court members may reach different philosophical conclusions.

Kalyāṇī continued

Responsibilities

After the philosophical presentations, the Game Master will give you one of your two dilemma cards. Briefly present the problem when invited, ask the factions for concrete advice, and challenge their reasons. You do not need to know the dilemma in advance. Keep your questions focused: with nine court members there is limited time. Reserve your judgment until the debate and conversations have finished.

- Question each school about promises, truthfulness, conflict, and duties toward people outside the royal household.
- Ask whether a philosophy can guide decisive diplomacy while admitting uncertainty about other people's intentions.
- Offer your experience when a court member discusses conquest, violence, or responsibility beyond the kingdom's borders; do not settle their dilemma for them.
- In your final statement, explain what you would do, the philosophy you select, and why you recommend a particular recipient of patronage.

Powers

You may advise the king, relay reports, and recommend terms, but you cannot declare war, ratify a treaty, open a frontier post by yourself, or bind other court members. You cast one allegiance vote. Philosophical faction members do not vote. Only Menander awards patronage.

Character Outlook

You value peace and mutual understanding, but they are not always secured by avoiding disagreement. Look for arguments that distinguish honest restraint from cowardice, and principled truthfulness from needless provocation.

Your Ballot

You must choose Stoicism, Epicureanism, Buddhism, or Skepticism, even if none fully convinces you. Your selection gives that faction one allegiance vote. Explain your philosophical choice and what you intend to do about your dilemma. You cannot abstain or choose no faction. You may separately recommend a recipient for royal patronage; only Menander decides the award.

Dāmodara

Royal Magistrate for Civic Disputes

Indeterminate Court Member

Private role sheet

Historical Context

You serve as a magistrate for civic disputes at Sāgala around 150 BCE. Merchants, artisans, and laborers look to you for fair decisions, while the royal administration expects order and prompt judgments.

Biographical Notes

- You earned a reputation for hearing both sides before deciding. Merchants and townspeople sometimes bring you disagreements rather than risk a feud. This confidence matters to you more than the favor of any single powerful family.
- Years ago, you approved a penalty on evidence that later appeared less reliable than it first seemed. Since then you have demanded better testimony. Yet people now complain that your caution sometimes leaves serious disputes unresolved.
- You believe the same rules should protect both powerful and powerless people. But applying a uniform penalty can be more burdensome to someone who has barely enough than to a wealthy official who hardly notices it.
- Philon's unease about his wartime actions troubles you: some acts may be clearly wrongful even when the chance of legal punishment is low. Justice cannot simply mean avoiding condemnation, but remorse does not automatically repair harm.
- You distrust court flattery. At the same time, you fear that criticizing a royal policy might make people doubt that law can restrain those with power. The philosophers must show you how to make defensible judgments without pretending to omniscience.

Shared Victory Objective: Philosophical Deliberation

The court wins together through philosophical deliberation: accurate understanding of the competing ways of life and thoughtful reasons for its decisions. After final judgments, each of the four philosophical factions (Stoics, Epicureans, Buddhists, and Skeptics) gives ONE collective rating from 1 to 5, using whole numbers. The factions rate the court's understanding and reasoning throughout the game, not whether it agreed with them. An average of 4.0 or higher earns a full victory; 3.5 to below 4.0 earns a partial victory; below 3.5 earns no victory. The instructor announces only the average. Court members may reach different philosophical conclusions.

Dāmodara continued

Responsibilities

After the philosophical presentations, the Game Master will give you one of your two dilemma cards. Briefly present the problem when invited, ask the factions for concrete advice, and challenge their reasons. You do not need to know the dilemma in advance. Keep your questions focused: with nine court members there is limited time. Reserve your judgment until the debate and conversations have finished.

- Ask each school how it handles contested evidence, fair procedures, punishment, mercy, and moral responsibility.
- Challenge arguments that sound certain when evidence is weak, but also challenge indefinite suspension when a decision is needed.
- Listen to practical advice on your dilemma; consider effects on both the person before you and the trust others place in justice.
- At the final judgments, announce your allegiance, intended ruling or recommendation, and a brief patronage recommendation, with reasons.

Powers

You can hear civic disputes and recommend or impose ordinary penalties within your fictional office, but you cannot decide the other court members' cases, overturn the king, or invent new evidence. You have one allegiance vote. Philosophical faction members do not vote. Menander controls patronage.

Character Outlook

You admire consistency but suspect that fairness sometimes requires attention to circumstances. Take the Skeptics' doubts seriously without assuming that every uncertain case must remain undecided.

Your Ballot

You must choose Stoicism, Epicureanism, Buddhism, or Skepticism, even if none fully convinces you. Your selection gives that faction one allegiance vote. Explain your philosophical choice and what you intend to do about your dilemma. You cannot abstain or choose no faction. You may separately recommend a recipient for royal patronage; only Menander decides the award.

Helena

Royal Tutor and Keeper of Records
Indeterminate Court Member
Private role sheet

Historical Context

You are a Greek-speaking royal tutor and keeper of records at Menander's court in Sāgala around 150 BCE. You have taught members of the royal household and helped train younger officials and officers.

Biographical Notes

- You believe education should teach people to ask good questions and examine their own lives. Yet many at court regard lessons as training in obedience, elegant speech, and the ability to defend whatever policy a ruler prefers.
- You have helped instruct Demetrios. His love of study delights you, but you worry that a desire for a quiet intellectual life could become an excuse to avoid difficult responsibilities. You do not presume to know what life he should choose.
- You collect accounts of earlier campaigns and royal decisions. Sometimes witnesses disagree. Officials expect a story that honors Menander; you want a record that admits uncertainty and does not quietly erase people who suffered.
- Your livelihood depends on the court. You are able to criticize fashionable ideas in private, but public disagreement can cost you patronage and the opportunity to teach. You wonder whether your caution is prudence or dependence on status.
- You are fascinated by the visiting philosophies as methods of living, not merely subjects to memorize. Their exercises might educate character, but you are wary of confusing a compelling lesson with proof that an entire doctrine is true.

Shared Victory Objective: Philosophical Deliberation

The court wins together through philosophical deliberation: accurate understanding of the competing ways of life and thoughtful reasons for its decisions. After final judgments, each of the four philosophical factions (Stoics, Epicureans, Buddhists, and Skeptics) gives ONE collective rating from 1 to 5, using whole numbers. The factions rate the court's understanding and reasoning throughout the game, not whether it agreed with them. An average of 4.0 or higher earns a full victory; 3.5 to below 4.0 earns a partial victory; below 3.5 earns no victory. The instructor announces only the average. Court members may reach different philosophical conclusions.

Helena continued

Responsibilities

After the philosophical presentations, the Game Master will give you one of your two dilemma cards. Briefly present the problem when invited, ask the factions for concrete advice, and challenge their reasons. You do not need to know the dilemma in advance. Keep your questions focused: with nine court members there is limited time. Reserve your judgment until the debate and conversations have finished.

- Ask how each school proposes to educate judgment rather than simply train agreement or encourage emotional comfort.
- Question appeals to authority and distinguish a source's testimony from what can actually be established.
- Engage Demetrios and Menander when educational responsibility or the uses of history arise; respect their independence.
- In your final statement, describe the action you would take about your dilemma, the philosophy you choose, and the patronage you recommend.

Powers

You may teach, preserve records, and advise on education. You cannot dictate Demetrios's future, rewrite history as established fact, or command a court decision. You cast an allegiance ballot; faction members do not vote. Only Menander can award royal patronage.

Character Outlook

You value intellectual honesty but can hide behind endless inquiry. Consider whether the philosophies offer reasons to act when knowledge is incomplete and whether personal integrity is worth professional loss.

Your Ballot

You must choose Stoicism, Epicureanism, Buddhism, or Skepticism, even if none fully convinces you. Your selection gives that faction one allegiance vote. Explain your philosophical choice and what you intend to do about your dilemma. You cannot abstain or choose no faction. You may separately recommend a recipient for royal patronage; only Menander decides the award.