



## CHAPTER 4

### STIEFMUTTER UND TOCHTER STEPMOTHER AND DAUGHTER

#### INTRODUCTION

The anonymous late medieval rhymed couplet text known by scholars as *Stepmother and Daughter* recapitulates an ancient stereotype about women: an old woman (here a mother) teaches a young woman (here her daughter) to exploit her sexuality in order to cheat men and enrich herself. This stereotype can be traced back as far as the classical tradition, prominent examples of which include Ovid, *Amores* 1.8; Juvenal, *Against Women*; and Lucian, *Mother Knows Best*. There are also other medieval examples such as the fifteenth-century Spanish masterpiece, *The Celestina*, by Fernando de Rojas. *Stepmother and Daughter* is set in the world of the burgeoning late medieval German cities. The mother has the largest speaking part, regaling her daughter with tales of the frauds and schemes she has employed in the past to dupe men, and finally offering the daughter detailed instructions in seduction techniques. The mother's lessons are presented as the report of an eavesdropping male narrator, a rhetorical framing device that was common in vernacular German literature of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and that is also used in *A Woman's Confession* (in this volume).

*Stepmother and Daughter* circulated in eleven manuscripts, which is an unusually high number of manuscripts for any rhymed couplet text, suggesting that it was widely known and read. This volume presents two versions of *Stepmother and Daughter* that differ from one another in interesting ways. The first version is from the manuscript Prague, Knihovna Národního muzea, X A 12, which is also the source manuscript for this volume's edition of *A Woman's Confession*. Prague X A 12 is a large compilation manuscript containing German-language stories and poetry, both comic and serious, that was created in the city of Augsburg in 1470 or 1471 for the

patrician Jörg Roggenburg by the professional female scribe Clara Hätzlerin. Hätzlerin, who appears to have devised new titles for many of the works she included in this manuscript, gave our text an apt descriptive title: *How a Mother Teaches Her Daughter Whoring*. The "Augsburg redaction" (as we shall call this version, after the city in which the source manuscript originated) is the longest of the surviving variants and can be found in four other manuscripts, one of which (Sterzing, Sterzinger Stadtarchiv, Sterzinger Miscellaneen-Handschrift) dates from around 1395 and is the oldest surviving copy. In the Augsburg redaction, the women's voices are framed by the eavesdropping male narrator, who not only opens the text (as he does in every version) but also closes it with a pious and moralizing warning. This framing device sets up a strong contrast between the narrator's belief that the mother and daughter are dishonorable women and the mother's belief that her activities are compatible with maintaining a reputation for honor, a structure inviting readers to debate the merits of each point of view.

The second redaction of *Stepmother and Daughter* in this volume is taken from the manuscript Dresden, Sächsische Landesbibliothek, M50, which was compiled in the city of Nuremberg around 1460–62. In Dresden M50, the older woman is characterized as a stepmother; the narrative is streamlined and shortened; a number of obscene passages are added; and the text closes not with the return of the eavesdropping male narrator but with a summing-up speech by the mother which she characterizes as her daughter's dowry. Two other manuscripts preserve virtually identical copies of this version of *Stepmother and Daughter*: Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek, 1590, written in Nuremberg between 1460 and 1465, and the so-called *Weimarer Liederhandschrift* (Weimar, Anna Amalia Bibliothek, Q 564), also written in Nuremberg between 1450 and 1475. These three manuscripts uniquely use the title *Stepmother and Daughter*, which was subsequently adopted by scholars in the twentieth century to designate all versions of this story. It seems virtually certain that this redaction of *Stepmother and Daughter* originated in Nuremberg, which had a flourishing tradition of comic, even vulgar, Shrovetide playwriting and performance into which the Nuremberg redaction of *Stepmother and Daughter* seamlessly fits. More information about the imperial city of Nuremberg is provided in the introduction to the final text in this volume, *Regulations concerning Prostitutes Dwelling in Brothels*, which was also composed in Nuremberg some time after the manuscripts Dresden M50, Leipzig 1590, and Weimar Q564 were compiled. The subject matter of both versions of *Stepmother and Daughter* is bawdy, but this does not mean that its audience was lower class. To the contrary, the manuscripts in which

*Stepmother and Daughter* is anthologized suggest that *Stepmother and Daughter* was read by educated, well-to-do audiences who enjoyed a wide variety of literary forms, from serious and moralizing to comic and obscene.

*Stepmother and Daughter* is set in a city. The female speakers appear to be unmarried. As single women they represent a group of women who figure only sparsely in medieval fictional texts but who in fact made up a large proportion of the urban and rural poor. They are also members of the largest urban population group: poor working people who owned no land or property and survived through various forms of labor: as servants, day laborers, and the like. The settings of the stories told by the fictional mother in *Stepmother and Daughter* imply that she has worked on farms and in urban households. She also routinely exchanges sex for money and other favors. In the late Middle Ages, virtually all cities in Europe followed a policy of tolerating and regulating municipal houses of prostitution, or civic brothels. The final text in this volume, *Regulations concerning Prostitutes Dwelling in Brothels*, gives a glimpse of this world. For the women involved, brothel prostitution was an utterly dishonorable, yet legal, profession. At the same time, part-time or freelance prostitution was common. This was considered illicit and civic authorities attempted repeatedly, and unsuccessfully, to stamp it out.

It seems most likely that the mother and daughter in this text are imagined as freelance prostitutes. Neither they nor the eavesdropping male narrator refer to brothels. The mother's work on farms and in the city implies mobility and a certain amount of anonymity, both of which brothel prostitutes lacked. Most importantly, the mother's success in extorting money from erstwhile lovers appears to strongly depend on successfully maintaining a reputation for womanly honor, and on avoiding being perceived as a prostitute. The two versions of *Stepmother and Daughter* presented in this volume emphasize this point differently, however. In the Augsburg redaction the final return of the eavesdropping male narrator makes him more like a character in the story operating with a different version of female honor than the mother. The narrator's position conforms to the widely held medieval belief that a woman's honor is commensurate with her sexual behavior. The mother, on the other hand, appears to operate with a different, yet also common, understanding that honor is, at base, a story one tells about oneself that is widely accepted to be true. The Augsburg redaction does not resolve the tensions between the mutually incompatible positions inherent in the text: the eavesdropping male narrator's moral outrage and furtive self-righteousness; the mother's belief that she has successfully maintained and traded on a reputation for honor; and a kind of comic delight in the

mother's energy, determination, and apparent success as an entrepreneur. In contrast, most of these tensions are muted or no longer present in the Nuremberg redaction. The role of the eavesdropping male narrator is reduced to that of a reporting voice; the obscene passages further sexualize the women; and the mother asserts that she and her daughter already belong to a dishonorable estate. These differences suggest that the streamlining of the Nuremberg redaction goes beyond plot to ideology, as it proposes not two but only one version of female honor, which is consolidated around the conventional view that a woman's sexual behavior is the measure of her honor.

*Stepmother and Daughter* recasts an age-old story about the battle between the sexes, so that medieval women, who in fact had far fewer legal, political, and economic rights and opportunities than medieval men, are imagined using their sexuality to lord it over their boyfriends and lovers. The text's treatment of prostitution and its suspicion (or mockery) of the poor women who labored in medieval cities are hardly unique. Prostitution was a relatively common topic in late medieval German literary texts of both the bawdy and the moralizing sort. But *Stepmother and Daughter* stands out because it is also a satire about commerce and commercialism. The mother is an entrepreneur, and a successful one at that. She flaunts regulation (the implied contrast is between her freelance prostitution and the civic control of brothel prostitution), makes her own way in the world, and passes her knowledge on to an apprentice, her daughter. She has entrepreneurial drive and good business sense; she enjoys driving a good bargain and derives pleasure from getting something for nothing. Through the figure of the mother, the essence of commerce is revealed, humorously, to be fraud. In this way, *Stepmother and Daughter* pokes fun at the mercantile and commercial values that were a source of civic wealth and pride in the large and flourishing late medieval German cities of Augsburg and Nuremberg.

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STIEFMUTTER UND TOCHTER  
 AUGSBURG REDACTION (PRAGUE X A 12):  
*Wie ain muoter ir dochter lernet puolen*

Ich gieng ains nachtes von huse spat  
 Und kam für liebes kemenat,  
 Da hort ich reden zway darynn.  
 Das merck ich wol in meinem synn,  
 5 Ain muoter und ir döchterlein  
 Die redten nach dem willen mein.  
 Die dochter sprach am ersten wort:  
 Sich sênt usz der massen hart  
 Mein stoltzer leib, mein frischer muot!  
 10 Es wâr wol zeit und deucht mich guot,  
 Das ich suochet und ainen fünd,  
 Der mir mein senen pûsen kûnd!  
 Die muoter sprach: mein liebstes kind,  
 Als ich an deiner weis empfind  
 15 Der magtumb dir gar nachent leit.  
 Darumb solt du zu aller zeit  
 Volgen meiner triuen ler,  
 So widerfert dir guot und Er  
 Mer, dann du dir hast gedacht.  
 20 Da ich was in deiner acht,  
 Da was ich gar ain stoltze dieren,  
 Und kund auch mer troffieren,  
 Dann ander hundert in ainer Statt.  
 Wer mich umb mein puolschafft bat,  
 25 West ich, das er hett pfenning vil,  
 So liesz ich nit, ich gab Im zil,  
 Ich nam auch sein guot daran.  
 Was er aber ain sôlicher man,



STEPMOTHER AND DAUGHTER  
 AUGSBURG REDACTION (PRAGUE X A 12):  
*How a Mother Teaches Her Daughter Whoring*

I left the house late one night  
 and arrived at love's chamber,  
 where I heard two people talking.  
 I realized that it was  
 5 a mother and her little daughter,  
 saying what I wanted to hear.  
 The daughter spoke up first.  
 "My fine body and young spirit  
 have cruel and unbearable yearnings.  
 10 It's high time, and I feel it's right,  
 for me to seek and find a man  
 who can remedy my suffering."  
 The mother said: "My dearest child,  
 I see in your manner  
 15 that your virginity is causing you pain.  
 Now it is time for you to  
 follow my dependable advice,  
 for then wealth and honor will come your way,  
 more than you have imagined.  
 20 When I was like you  
 I was a truly fine maid,  
 and I could do more defrauding  
 than one hundred others in my place.  
 Whoever asked me for my love,  
 25 if I knew that he had a lot of cash,  
 then I didn't hold back, I gave him what he wanted,  
 and I also took his goods for it.  
 But if he was the sort of fellow

Das er wolt zalen uf porg,  
 30 So zelt ich Im ain widersorg:  
 Ich darr vor meinem herren nicht,  
 Wurd mir ain chind usz der geschicht,  
 So präch man mir den lon ab!  
 Mit dem ich Im urlaub gab.  
 35 Ich hett oft dreyer gelt empfangen;  
 Uf ain nacht muost ich erlangen,  
 Was ich den tag hett versaumbt.  
 Nach dem nächsten ich dann gaumt,  
 Den weiszt ich an mein pettlin dan,  
 40 Und leget da ain ketten an,  
 Der zoch dann über sich die hül.  
 Wie rynnnet wasser durch ain mül,  
 Also giengen die reder mein.  
 Den ainen liesz ich vornen ein,  
 45 Den andern schickt ich hinden usz,  
 Den dritten hielt ich in dem hus.  
 Der was dann mein spilvogel,  
 Mit dem was ich also gogel,  
 Das ich der fräden wol geruocht.  
 50 Haimlich ich in der taschen suocht,  
 Was ich vand, was Im verloren.  
 Ich hab manigem uszgeschoren,  
 Der gieng dann traurichlich dahin,  
 Das was alles mein gewyn!  
 55 Dannocht wolt ich nit verzagen,  
 Ich richt fürbas meinen schragen,  
 Ich gieng barhaupt und schwaig  
 Und löset pfennig usz der naig,  
 Das mir ain grosz gefallen was.  
 60 Wann ich dann uszgieng nach gras,  
 So schickt ich allweg zwen hinfür,  
 Ob es wär, das ich ain verlür,  
 Das der ander by mir belib.  
 So man dann das vich usz trib,  
 65 So wartet mein der herre ym stall.  
 Dem muost ich auch damit gefall,  
 Er nam mich haimlich by der hanndt

who wanted to pay with credit  
 30 I gave him an excuse:  
 'I don't dare! It's my master, you know.  
 If our fun got me pregnant  
 my pay would be stopped.'  
 With that I sent him on his way.  
 35 Often I took money from three men  
 because during the night I had to make up  
 what I had neglected during the day.  
 And then I pursued the next fellow,  
 40 showing him to my bed and  
 putting the chain on the door  
 while he pulled the covers over himself.  
 Like water rushing through a mill,  
 that's how my wheels were spinning!  
 The first man I let in at the front,  
 45 the second I sent out at the back,  
 the third I kept in the house and  
 he was my playmate.  
 With him I acted so silly  
 that I indulged his every pleasure.  
 50 Secretly, though, I went through his pockets  
 and whatever I found, he lost.  
 I have shorn many a fellow  
 who was sad to depart,  
 but the profit was all mine.  
 55 What's more, I was no quitter  
 and I cast my fishnets again,  
 went bareheaded, kept quiet,  
 and fished pennies out of the ditch,  
 which was a windfall for me.  
 60 When I went mowing,  
 I always sent two fellows out ahead  
 for if I were to lose one,  
 the other would still be mine.  
 When the cattle were driven to pasture,  
 65 the master waited for me in the barn.  
 I had to please him, too;  
 Secretly he took me by the hand

Und legt mich nider zu der wandt  
 Wau die paren waren weit.  
 70 Da vertrib wir dann die zeit  
 Nach unser baiden lust;  
 Ich truckt In ser zu meiner prust,  
 Das Im der rugg vor fräden kracht.  
 Ich hab gar vil narren gemacht!  
 75 Wann In was der pewtel lār,  
 So waren sy mir gantz unmār!  
 Wann dann die koren waren lang,  
 Ich tett nach pluomen oft ain gang  
 Und wolt da krentzlen machen;  
 80 Ich muost der tagalt selbs lachen,  
 Das ich so groszen schaden tet.  
 Ich macht mit walgen weitte pett  
 Uff und nider in dem getraid.  
 Ich was ain wol versuochte Maid,  
 85 Doch wagt ichs ring recht, als der wind.  
 Ich truog auch ledig siben chind;  
 Chains ich dem rechten vater gab;  
 Nur welher hett die maisten hab,  
 Dem warf ichs morgens für die tür,  
 90 Da die lüt giengen hin und für.  
 Der ward dann vor der welt ze spott  
 Und bat mich dann vast durch gott,  
 Das ich das chind wider nem.  
 Er zalt mir uf mit grosser schām  
 95 Mer dann zehen pfunt,  
 So ich Im nur der eren gunt.  
 Er hett gesworen, es wār sein,  
 Und gelaubet der rede mein;  
 So tet ichs nur durch genyesz,  
 100 Das ich In den vater hiesz.  
 Kind, um mich vachten ainest zwen!  
 Das liesz ich alles übergien,  
 Doch chainer was der recht;  
 Ich hett wol ain liebern knecht,  
 105 Der mir in meinem hertzen was,  
 Sy verluren augen und nas

and laid me down by the wall  
 where the stalls were roomy.  
 70 There we passed the time  
 in mutual pleasure.  
 I pressed him so hard to my breast  
 that his back cracked from joy.  
 I have made fools of so many!  
 75 When their purses were empty,  
 I didn't care one bit about them anymore.  
 When the grain was tall  
 I often took a stroll to pick flowers  
 and make little garlands.  
 80 I had to laugh at the joke myself,  
 because I did so much harm  
 rolling around making wide beds  
 up and down in the grain.  
 I certainly was a maid with sexual experience,  
 85 but it meant as little to me as the wind.  
 Unmarried I bore seven children;  
 not a one did I give to its true father.  
 I cast the child at the door  
 of the one with the most wealth,  
 90 in the morning, when people were going to and fro.  
*Then the whole world mocked him*  
 and he begged me for the love of God  
 to take the child back again.  
 With great shame he paid me off—  
 95 more than ten pounds—  
 if only I would restore his honor.  
 He would have sworn that it was his  
 and he believed my talk,  
 but I only did it for gain,  
 100 naming him as the father.  
 Child, two men once fought over me!  
 I let it all happen,  
 but neither was the right one.  
 In my heart I had  
 105 a fellow I liked better.  
 They lost eyes and nose,

Und wurden darzu lam.  
 Ich nam ain nassen badschwam,  
 Den ich uf mein schaittel pand,  
 110 Mit dem schlayr ich In verwand,  
 Das das pand nit gieng ze hauff,  
 Ich satz ain huot oben daruff  
 Und zochs vast für meine augen.  
 Zu dem ersten gieng ich taugen;  
 115 Ich viel in onmächt da uff In  
 Und truckt In hart, man zoch mich hin,  
 Wann Im sein wunde pluoten ward.  
 Ich sprach: mein trost, mein höchster hordt,  
 Tuo uff deine augen, chennst du mich?  
 120 Solt es sein, ich stürb für dich!  
 Ich macht mein seüftzen also langk,  
 Er sprach: hör uff, du machst mich kranck,  
 Gehab dich wol, mir wirdet nicht!  
 Er wont, ich hett getriüe pflicht,  
 125 Ich schluog mich an das haupt und stiesz,  
 Das der badschwamm zäher liesz.  
 Umb mich waint alles, das da was,  
 So clagt ich nur, das er genas;  
 Das er mir nit schuof sein guot,  
 130 Darumb was ich ungemuot.  
 Ainer newen clag ich mich verfieng,  
 Zu dem andern ich da gieng.  
 Der lag in groszer kranckhait,  
 Ich tet, als wär mir hertzlich laid,  
 135 Und clagt In uszermassen ser,  
 Doch gedacht ich: wär sein mer,  
 Das mir wurd das guot von dir!  
 Söliche triu hett ich in mir.  
 Nun, liebe dochter, nymm dich an  
 140 Lewig und betriug yederman!  
 Des hilf ich dir, als ferr ich mag,  
 Du solt dich fleiszen alle tag!  
 Wann ain gesell gat für dein hus,  
 So luog zu dem venster usz,  
 145 Meld dich, als ain wachtel ser.

and were crippled, too.  
 I took a wet bath sponge,  
 which I bound to my forehead,  
 110 winding a veil over it  
 so that the headband wouldn't slip,  
 and I set a hat on top of it  
 and pulled it down to my eyes.  
 I went secretly to the first one.  
 115 I fainted then and there on top of him  
 and pressed him hard. They pulled me away,  
 because his wounds started bleeding.  
 I said: 'My hope, my dearest treasure,  
 open your eyes, don't you recognize me?  
 120 If I had to, I would die for you!'  
 I sighed deeply.  
 He said, 'Cut it out, you're making me sick.  
 Behave yourself, nothing is going to happen to me.'  
 He believed I was steadfast and dutiful.  
 125 I hit myself on the head and pressed,  
 so that the bath sponge gave off tears.  
 Around me everyone present was crying,  
 but I mourned only that he recovered  
 and hadn't made over his wealth to me,  
 130 that's why I was out of sorts.  
 And then I raised a new lament,  
 and went to see the other fellow.  
 He lay greatly ill,  
 and I acted as though I were heartsick about it,  
 135 and lamented his condition terribly,  
 but I thought to myself: 'If only it were worse,  
 so that I would get your money.'  
 That's the sort of loyalty I had.  
 Now, dear daughter, take this to heart:  
 140 cheat everybody and always lie.  
 I will help you as much as I can.  
 You must work hard each and every day.  
 When an apprentice walks past your house,  
 look out the window,  
 145 and call out, like a watchman.

Frag ain anders: wer ist der?  
 Tuo, als ob ers nit hört.  
 Mit dem wirt er villeicht bedört  
 Und gat dest öfter wider für;  
 150 So stand mitten under die tür,  
 Lach und frag: wau wolt ir hin?  
 Verdriuszt eüch nit, so gat herein,  
 Ir möcht eüch gen mir nennen,  
 Mich zymbt, ich sol eüch chennen.  
 155 Deine füzzen für In setz,  
 Gang zyspen zaspenn übers fletz,  
 Als ain trendel dich vercher,  
 Lasz dich sehen hin und her,  
 Setz dich zu Im uff ain ort,  
 160 Sprich: der durst tuot mir den mort,  
 Als lieb ich eüch sey, sendt nach wein!  
 So will ich dester lenger sein!  
 Das ir wol choment überain,  
 Dein haupt Im uff sein achsel lain,  
 165 Streich dich umb In als ain harm.  
 Sprich zu Im: ir seit warm,  
 Des empfind ich an ewr hannd,  
 Wurd mir ain söllicher puol bechannt,  
 Ich wolt mich nachent zu Im legen.  
 170 Ist er dann so gar verwegen  
 Und greiff dir zu dem puosem ein,  
 So sprich: hört uff, tuot hin!  
 Under den armen In kützel  
 Und lasz offen deinen schützel  
 175 Baidenthalb by der seitten.  
 So mag er kaum erpeitten,  
 Vil plick er zu den prüstlen tuot,  
 Damit so stolzet Im der muot.  
 Kuszt er dich dann zu der stund,  
 180 So schlag Ims zünglin in den mund.  
 Mach vor Im ain hübsch geprenck,  
 Das pringt Im manigerlay gedenck,  
 Und puolet vast umb dich.  
 Kind, so gedenck an mich,

Ask someone else: 'Who is that fellow?'  
 Act as though he can't hear it.  
 That may well capture his fancy  
 and he will pass by more often.  
 150 Then stand in the middle of the doorway,  
 laugh and ask: 'Where are you off to?  
 If it isn't too much trouble, come inside.  
 You could tell me your name,  
 I think I know you.'  
 155 Set your feet in front of him;  
 glide gracefully over the floor;  
 Twirl like a top  
 and let yourself be viewed front and back.  
 Sit down with him in a quiet place  
 160 and say: 'This thirst is killing me!  
 If you like me, send for some wine  
 and I will stay a little longer.'  
 To make sure that the two of you reach a good agreement,  
 lay your head on his shoulder  
 165 and wrap yourself around him like a fur coat.  
 Say to him: 'You're a warm one!  
 I can feel it in your hand.  
 If I had a boyfriend like you,  
 I would want to snuggle up next to him.'  
 170 If he grows so bold  
 that he puts his hand into your bodice,  
 say: 'Cut it out, hands off!'  
 Tickle him under his arms  
 and leave the bodice laces open  
 175 on both sides.  
 Then he will hardly be able to wait.  
 He will glance again and again at your little breasts,  
 and his courage will rise.  
 If he kisses you at that moment,  
 180 then stick your tongue into his mouth.  
 Parade yourself in front of him;  
 that will put thoughts in his head  
 and he will have the hots for you for sure.  
 Child, now remember what I'm telling you.

185 Chomt dir ain milichfridel mit,  
 Der dich umb die liebe pitt,  
 So vorder uszermaszen vil.  
 Ob er das nicht geben wil,  
 Du merckest pald hin und her,  
 190 So schlach ab, als ain vischer,  
 Der pewt umb zwaintzig und gibt umb vier.  
 Sölich mynn und saures pier  
 Sol man geben ringlich von hanndt,  
 Verhelt man das, es tuot gar andtl  
 195 Du wirst vom haubtguot nit verdrungen;  
 Helfen schatt den frawen Jungen,  
 Als der Tonaw ain trunck.  
 Tuo dich umb, du bist noch Jungk,  
 Ym alter gibt man nichtz darumb.  
 200 Gewer, wer in der iugent chommel  
 Wann du dann verschuist die pfeil,  
 Er ist lecht über hundert meil,  
 Dem henck den lären kocher an;  
 Der wirt dann dein lieber man  
 205 Und tuot auch alles, das du wilt;  
 Mit dem ist all dein sach gestilt!  
 Die dochter sprach: fraw muoter mein,  
 Ich will der ler wol yndenck sein,  
 Es chomt noch heynnacht ainer,  
 210 Der da hat ain pewtel swär;  
 Nach underweisung diser ding  
 Will ich Im den wol machen ring.  
 Als ich die red von In vernam:  
 Der Apfel will nach dem stamm  
 215 Geratten! dacht ich mir,  
 Von dem hus da eylt ich schier.  
 Da ward manigem gerüft,  
 Der Jungen valschait ich da brüft,  
 Es kamen tuommeling ain schar,  
 220 Aller erst nam ich der alten war.  
 Der tewffel zerpräch ire glid,  
 So hätt manig guot gesell frid,  
 Und wär auch maniger dochter guot,

185 If a milksop of a lover boy shows up  
 asking you for love,  
 demand an immense amount of money.  
 If he doesn't want to pay it  
 (you will quickly notice that from the back and forth)  
 190 then drop your price like a fisherman,  
 who bids at twenty and sells at four.  
 Such love is like sour beer:  
 One should give it away cheap and easy,  
 holding it back only causes trouble.  
 195 It won't keep you from the big money;  
 helping out harms young women  
 as much as taking a drink of water harms the Danube river.  
 Get going, you are still young;  
 when you are old what you have is worthless.  
 200 While you are still young, accept all comers.  
 And when you have finally shot your last arrow  
 even if it hits a fellow one hundred miles away,  
 hang the empty quiver on him,  
 and he will become your dear husband,  
 205 and he will do everything you want and  
 with him all your needs will be satisfied."  
 The daughter spoke: "Lady Mother mine,  
 I will keep these teachings well in mind.  
 Just this evening a fellow is coming  
 210 who has a heavy purse.  
 Having been instructed in these matters,  
 I will certainly lighten it for him."  
 When I heard this talk from them,  
 I thought to myself,  
 215 "like mother, like daughter,"  
 and I rushed away from the house.  
 Many a fellow got fixed up there!  
 I had confirmed the falsity of the young girl  
 but a crowd of fools appeared.  
 220 Above all I protected myself from the old woman.  
 May the devil break her bones,  
 for then many a good apprentice would have peace,  
 and many a daughter would be virtuous

225 Die sich verlat uf wanckel muot,  
Und bewart auch nit ir Er!  
Die volgen ainer sölichen ler,  
Den chomt es oft ze schaden!  
Gott wöll die frummen begnaden!

225 who now relies on fickleness  
and does not preserve her honor.  
Those who follow such advice  
always come to harm.  
May God have mercy on the righteous!



STIEFMUTTER UND TOCHTER  
 NUREMBERG REDACTION (DRESDEN M 50):  
*Stiefmutter und Tochter*

Ich ginge eins nacht von hawse spat  
 Da kam ich fur ein [k]emnat  
 Da horet ich zwey reden ynn  
 Das merkt ich eben [d . . .] meinem fynd  
 5 Ein stieffmutter und ir tochterlein  
 Die redten nach dem willen mein  
 Die tochter sprach da auf der vart  
 Muter sie sein also hartt  
 Mein stoltzer leib mein frischer mut  
 10 Es wer wol zeit und deucht mich gut  
 Das du mir gebest einen man  
 Der mir mein leyt vertreyben kan  
 Die muter sprach mein liebes kint  
 Seint ich ein follichs an dir empfynd  
 15 So solt du volhgen meiner lere  
 Do widerfert dir wird und er  
 Vil mer dann du dir hast gedacht [dir corrected from mir, ed.]  
 Und da ich was in deiner acht  
 Da was ich gare ein freye diren  
 20 Und konde auch allwegen mer hoffirn  
 Dann annder dreyfzig in einer stat  
 Wann mich dann einer zupulen pat  
 West ich da das er hett pfennig vil  
 So liefs ich icht ich gab im zyl  
 25 Und nam das gelt von im daran  
 Und was er aber ein follicher man  
 Das er wolt [ . . . ] [veilschen? ed.] auf ein borgen  
 Da sprach ich ich dorft nicht sorgen



STEPMOTHER AND DAUGHTER  
 NUREMBERG REDACTION (DRESDEN M50):  
*Stepmother and Daughter*

I left the house late one night  
 and arrived at a room  
 where I heard two people talking.  
 I realized that it was  
 5 a stepmother and her little daughter,  
 saying what I wanted to hear.  
 The daughter spoke right away:  
 "Mother, my fine body and young spirit  
 have cruel and unbearable yearnings.  
 10 It's high time, and I feel it's right,  
 for you to give me a man  
 who can drive out my suffering."  
 The mother said: "My dear child,  
 because I also perceive this in you  
 15 it is time for you to follow my advice  
 and then dignity and honor will come to you,  
 far more than you have imagined.  
 When I was your age  
 I was a wanton maid  
 20 and I could do more courting  
 than thirty others in my place.  
 When someone asked me to make love,  
 if I knew that he had a lot of cash  
 I didn't hold back, I gave him what he wanted  
 25 and I took his money for it.  
 But if he was the sort of fellow  
 who wanted to bargain for credit,  
 I said: 'I don't dare. I'm worried.

30 Und vorcht m[. . .] vor meins heren gepiet  
 Ob es zu eim kinde geriet  
 So brech er mir meinen lon dorumb ab  
 Mit wortten ich in urlaub gab  
 Wolt er mich aber bereyt betzalen  
 35 So kont ich im so suefz her malen  
 Die aller suefzten hubsten redt  
 Das er nach allen meinem willen tet  
 Ich sagt im von der frewden schul  
 Das er vor mir warde zu einem stul  
 40 Das im wurd wachzen das dritte peyn  
 So meynt er dann er were es allein  
 Do hette ich oft dreyer gelt empfangen  
 So muoste ich dann auf die nacht erlangen  
 Was ich des tages hatte versawmpt  
 45 Nach dem reichsten ich umb gawmpt  
 Den furt ich in mein pett hindan  
 Der was dann da mein liebster man  
 Mit mir er dann so frolich was  
 So meynt er dann er meet das erste grafz  
 50 So vand er kainem der grunnen stupffel  
 Und vischet da in leren tumpffel  
 Also so steh ich nach gewyn  
 Wenn ich dann ein liefz voren ein  
 Den anndern liefz ich hinden aufz  
 Den dritten behielt ich in dem haufz  
 55 Derfelb der was dann mein spil vogel  
 Mit im so was ich dann so gogel  
 Sam ich fein vor oft hette gerucht  
 In der tafchen ich im dann heymlich such  
 Was ich dann vandt das was verlorn  
 60 Wann ich habs manigen ab gesworn  
 In der warheit hette ich keinen gewyn  
 Der gewyn ging mit dem lufft dahin  
 Doch wolt ich darumb nicht vertzagen  
 So ruckt ich aber furbafz meinen schragen  
 65 Und ging lanng parhawbt und sweig  
 Und lofet pfennig aufz der neyg  
 Und da nu daselbe verrochen was

I fear my master's orders.  
 30 If I got pregnant  
 he would stop my pay.  
 I sent him on his way with words.  
 But if he wanted to pay me on the spot,  
 then I would chat him up so sweetly,  
 35 with the sweetest, prettiest speeches,  
 that he followed my wishes in everything.  
 I told him about the school of pleasure,  
 and before my eyes he became a stool,  
 that is, his third leg grew,  
 40 and he believed he was the only one.  
 Often I took money from three men;  
 during the night I had to make up  
 what I had neglected during the day.  
 I pursued the richest fellow  
 45 and led him to my bed.  
 There he was my sweetheart,  
 and he was so cheerful with me  
 because he believed he was mowing the first grass,  
 but the stubble he found wasn't green  
 50 and he was fishing in an empty pond.  
 And so I strive for profit.  
 I used to let one fellow in at the front,  
 the second I let out at the back,  
 and the third fellow I kept in the house,  
 55 where he was my playmate.  
 With him I acted so silly,  
 the way he had liked it before.  
 Secretly, though, I went through his pockets  
 and whatever I found was lost.  
 60 I have caused many a fellow to lose his money  
 but in truth I made no profit;  
 the profits were gone with the wind.  
 But I didn't let that discourage me.  
 I cast my fishnets again,  
 65 went bareheaded for a long time and kept quiet,  
 and fished pennies from the ditch.  
 And when all that had gone up in smoke

Und wenn ich dann aufz ging nach grafz  
 So schicket ich allwegen zwene her  
 70 Und ob ich do ir einen verlur  
 Und das der ander beÿ mir blieb  
 Und wenn ich dann das vihe eintreyb  
 So wartt mein here mein in den ftallen  
 So mußt ich da dann auch unterfallen  
 75 Wann dann das korn wurde langk  
 Nach plümlein tett ich manchen gangk  
 Daraufz da solt ich krenntzlein machen  
 Ich mußte mein felbs gar oft lachen  
 Das ich so grofzen fchaden tet  
 80 Mit waltzen macht ich vil pett  
 Da auf und nyder in dem getreyd  
 Ich was ein wol genützte meyd  
 Das wuge ich gering recht sam der wint  
 Lediglichen trug ich syben kint  
 85 Keines ich dem rechten vater gab  
 Newr dem der da hette die mysten hab  
 Dem legt ichs des abends für die thur  
 Wenn dann die lewte da gingen für  
 So sprach ich im zu da grofzen spot  
 90 Das er mich bitten warde durch got  
 Das ich es newr palde wider nem  
 Und zelt mir pald auf mit grofzer fchem  
 Der alten pfennig dreifzig pfunt  
 Das ich im neur der eren gunt  
 95 Er hette gefworen es were fein  
 Er keret sich an die wortt mein  
 Eins tags da vachten umb mich zwen  
 Das mußte ich lafzen ubergen  
 wann do keiner was der recht  
 100 Ich hette einen andern lieben knecht  
 Der was mir lieber im hertzen bafz  
 Dorumb verlüren sie zornn und hafz  
 Und einer slug den andern lam  
 So nam ich her ein nafzen badfwam  
 105 Auf mein fcheytteln ich den pant  
 Einen fleyer ich dorumb want

I went mowing,  
 I always sent two fellows out ahead,  
 70 for if I were to lose one,  
 the other would still be mine.  
 When I drove the cattle in,  
 my master was waiting for me in the barn  
 and I had to take a break with him, too.  
 75 When the grain was tall  
 I used to take a stroll and pick little flowers  
 because I had to make little garlands.  
 Often I had a good laugh at myself  
 because I did so much damage.  
 80 By rolling and crushing I made many beds  
 up and down in that grain.  
 I was a well-used maid,  
 but it meant as little to me as the wind.  
 Single I bore seven children,  
 85 not a one did I give to its true father.  
 I laid the child at the door  
 of the one with the most wealth,  
 in the evening, when people were passing by.  
 I stood there and taunted him  
 90 until he begged me for the love of God  
 to just take the child away again, quickly.  
 And quickly, with great shame, he paid me  
 thirty pounds in the old currency,  
 if only I would restore his honor.  
 95 He would have sworn that it was his;  
 He trusted my every word.  
 Once two fellows fought over me,  
 and I let it all happen,  
 although neither was the right one.  
 100 I had a different sweetheart,  
 whom my heart preferred.  
 For that reason their anger and rivalry was in vain,  
 and one crippled the other.  
 Then I took a wet bath sponge  
 105 and bound it to my forehead.  
 I wound a veil around it

Das er mir genaw ging zuhauffen  
 Und setzt ein hawben da oben auffen  
 Das er mir icht hing fur die awgen  
 110 Und ging zu dem erften hin one langen  
 Und vil auf das pette dar uber in  
 Und drucket in fere das man mich zog hin  
 Und schrey fere uber genen das mort  
 Und sprach mein awzerwelter hort  
 115 Nu schaw mich an kenneft du mich  
 Und solt es sein ich sturbe fur dich  
 Mein hawpt ich selber slug und fiefz  
 117a das der badgeschwamm sein zaher ließ [line added in margin  
 in later hand, ed.]  
 Umb mich weynet alles das da was  
 Suft clagt ich heymlich das er genas  
 120 Ein newe clage ich do an ving  
 Und zu dem anndern ich do auch ging  
 Und macht meine wangen nafz und frat  
 Mit nassen awgen ich fur in trat  
 Und tet sam ich fere geweynet hett  
 125 Das er mich pat mit grofzer pet  
 Das ich solt fweygen es wurde gut  
 Mein tochter das nym in deinen mut  
 Also solt du dich nemen an  
 Liegen und triegen yederman  
 130 Das lere ich dich foweren ich mag  
 Du solt dich fleifzen alle tag  
 Das du sechft oft zum venfter awfz  
 Und wenn dann zwen genen fur dein hau fz  
 So melde dich wenn sie bede genen her  
 135 Und frag den hintern were ist der  
 Und thu sam sein der vorder nicht hortt  
 Damit so wirt er da betortt  
 Das er dann mer wirt gene dafur  
 So stelle dich dann mitten unter die thur  
 140 Und frag in pald wo wolt ir hin  
 Verdrewfzt es euch nicht so get herein  
 Sie worumb wolt ir euch nicht nennen  
 So dunckt mich doch ich solt euch kennen

so that it hung in just the right way,  
 and I placed a hood on top of it  
 so that it would not cover my eyes.  
 110 Then I went quickly to the first one  
 and fell onto the bed on top of him  
 and pressed him so hard that they pulled me off.  
 I bewailed his dreadful misfortune  
 and said: 'My exquisite treasure,  
 115 now look at me, don't you recognize me?  
 If I had to, I would die for you!'  
 I hit my head myself and pressed  
 117a the bath sponge so that it released its tears.  
 Around me everyone was crying;  
 Afterwards I mourned in secret that he recovered.  
 120 Then I began a new lament  
 and went to see the other fellow.  
 I scratched my cheeks and made them damp.  
 With wet eyes I stood in front of him,  
 acting as though I had been crying hard,  
 125 until he made a heartfelt plea  
 for me to be quiet: 'enough is enough.'  
 My daughter, keep in mind  
 that this is how you should behave:  
 always cheat and lie.  
 130 This I will teach you as well as I can.  
 You are to work hard each and every day,  
 keeping a lookout at the window.  
 When two fellows walk past the house,  
 call out as they pass by  
 135 and ask the second one: 'Who is that?'  
 Act as if the first one didn't hear it.  
 That will turn him into a fool  
 and he will pass by again.  
 Now stand in the middle of the doorway  
 140 and ask him quickly: 'Where are you off to?  
 If it isn't too much trouble, come inside.  
 Why don't you tell me your name?  
 I think I know you.'

145 Dein fuefzlein aneinannder wetz  
 Die zifpen zafpen uber das fletz  
 vor im dich trendel und verker  
 Und lafze dich fchawen hin und her  
 Und leihe im deine fuefze wortt  
 Und fetze dich mit im auf ein ortt  
 150 Und fprich zu im mich dürft gar hartt  
 Ich hab eins milten lanng gewartt  
 Nu fchicket uns hin vier umb wein  
 Dieweile wollen wir beyeinander fein  
 Und laft in holen zu ennde der Stat  
 155 Wer weifz wes wir noch werden zurat  
 Dein hawbt im auf fein achfeln lein  
 Und clopff in oben auf fein pein  
 Und ftreich dich umb in an fein arm  
 Und fprich ir duncket mich gar warm  
 160 Das empfinde ich wol an ewer hant  
 Wurde mir ein follicher man bekant  
 Ich wolt mich nahen zu im legen  
 Damit wirdft du im feinen mut bewegen  
 Das er dir wirt greiffen zum pufen ein  
 165 So fprich uh tut hin und laft fein  
 Und gib im an fein wang ein fmitzlein  
 Und lafz unten offenn dein flitzlein  
 Und lafze dich plecken bey dem pein  
 So tut er plick vil mer dann ein  
 170 Die er heymlich hinabe tut  
 Damit erweckeft du im feinen mut  
 Das er dir wirt greiffen zu der fideln  
 Und kumpt dir dann ein milch fridel  
 Der dich dann auch gar fruntlich pitt  
 175 So fihft du wol wie er ift gefitt  
 Do flahe in den pusch und vorder vil  
 Und ob er dann nicht geben wil  
 Das fihft du pald an feiner geper  
 Do flahe ab als der vijcher  
 180 Der pewtet umb zwelff und gibt umb vier  
 Sollich pfenwertt und fawers byer  
 Die fol man geben von der hant

145 Run your foot up and down your leg;  
 glide gracefully over the floor;  
 whirl and turn in front of him  
 and let yourself be viewed front and back;  
 use your sweet words with him  
 and sit down with him in a quiet place  
 150 and say to him: 'I have a terrible thirst.  
 I've been waiting such a long time for a favor.  
 Now send four servants to get us wine  
 and in the meantime we can be together.  
 Have it fetched from the other end of the city;  
 155 Who knows what else we can figure out to do.'  
 Lay your head on his shoulder,  
 pat his upper leg,  
 stroke him and rub his arm,  
 and say: 'You seem so warm to me.  
 160 I can feel it in your hand.  
 If I had a man like you  
 I would want to snuggle up next to him.'  
 That's how you will stir his courage  
 so that he puts his hand into your bodice.  
 165 Then say: 'Oh! hands off, cut it out!'  
 and give him a little slap on the cheek.  
 Leave your skirt placket open  
 and uncover your legs.  
 On the sly he will look  
 170 down there again and again.  
 You will arouse his courage with this  
 and he will grab at your snatch.  
 If a milksop of a lover boy shows up  
 who asks for it in a friendly way,  
 175 beat the bushes and demand a lot.  
 It should be clear to you what kind of a fellow he is.  
 If he doesn't want to pay—  
 you will see it quickly in his manner—  
 drop your price like a fisherman  
 180 who bids at twelve and sells at four.  
 A pennyworth of love and sour beer  
 should be given away;

Verholt man daran es tut gar ant  
 Darumb so volg mir liebes kint  
 185 Wann noch wol sovil ludel find  
 Davon sich manige tochter nert  
 Und ist es dir dann auch beschertt  
 Das du dann solt kumen in den orden  
 Darinnen ich fawl und veift bin worden  
 190 So hast du gehort die rechten regel  
 Du kanst nicht dreschen mit dem flegel  
 Und auch nicht mit der hawen rewten  
 Darumb so ner dich unter den lewten  
 Und beytt nicht lennger dann noch hewer  
 195 Die lere die hab dir zu einer hawfzstewer

holding them back only causes trouble.  
 Obey me now, dear child.  
 185 There are many more schemes  
 and lots of daughters make a living from them.  
 For if it is granted you  
 to enter the order  
 in which I have become lazy and fat,  
 190 then you have heard the proper rule.  
 You can't thresh with a flail  
 or clear a forest with an axe.  
 Therefore, make your living off people  
 and get started today.  
 195 Let this advice be your dowry."