

Time Travel, A Wedding in Smyrna 590 B.C.

Facts

Smyrna was an ancient city located at a central and strategic point on the Aegean coast. Smyrna rose to a prominence as one of the principal ancient settlements. The trading made it prosperous and many people from east and west met here. The leader of the town was called Basileus and the important noble men and tradesmen was part of a “democratic” leadership. But women, workers and servants had no say at all in this political and official life, and a marriage was an agreement between the families.

600 B.C. the city was attacked and conquered by the Lydian king Alyattes. Parts of the city were destroyed, including the important Athena temple. After the attack it was hard work to build up the city again. The reconstruction followed a certain plan to make the city more modern, with paved streets, bigger houses, a new city wall and a grand temple.

The ruins of Old Smyrna is still to be seen within modern Izmir and it is gradually excavated.

Scenario, Wedding in Smyrna 590 B.C.

It is the year 590 B.C. and the people in Smyrna are coming back to life again after ten tough years. There is still work to do in the city, renovating some of the houses and finish the erection of the new city wall. But the Athena temple is restored and as glorious as ever before. And today is a day of celebration, the wealthy tradesman Gordias is going to marry his 14 year old daughter Daphne to Khilon, a 30 year old cousin of hers.

The wedding causes great excitement among the people of Smyrna as Daphne has won the heart of the people of Smyrna with her kindness and benevolence.

Daphne, though very spoiled in her childhood, was sent to Sappho’s boarding school in Lesbos for a couple of years and had the chance to join the private lessons for young girls given by Sappho. Actually, attending Sappho’s school is a great privilege. Daphne’s father Gordias is a rich and well-known olive-oil Merchant and is among the notable people of Smyrna.

Daphne had dance, poetry, music lessons at Sappho’s school and preparing for marriage, to take good care of her husband and home. Daphne, who completed her courses with Sappho at the age of 14, has now come back to Smyrna to get married to Khilon, who is her close relative. Even though she did not want to leave school and get married, Daphne has to obey the requirements of the society.

The bridegroom Khilon, who recently turned 30, proved his manhood by completing military service and deserves to get married. Khilon’s father Peleus is also an olive-oil Merchant like Daphne’s father Gordias.

The wealth of both families would not have to be separated through the marriage of Daphne and Khilon.

So today, people of Smyrna get together to bond Daphne and Khilon and the two families for life with a wedding ceremony spectacular like Smyrna, rich like Smyrna, warm like Smyrna.

Besides, the people of Smyrna, who have renovated their temple that was ruined by the Lydian attack, will make sacrifices for the Goddess Athena during the wedding ceremony.

The servants are doing the last preparations and the visitors dress up in the best of clothes and jewellery.

Roles

Adults from Turkey are noble families of Smyrna attending the wedding ceremony
Others are relatives of Daphne and Khilon, making preparations for the wedding ceremony.

Foreign Guests are Phoenicians.

The Phoenicians, merchants from the Mediterranean, are coming to Smyrna invited to the wedding of Daphne's father Gordias, whom they know for a long time. These merchants, who love Smyrna very much, are very excited about seeing the wedding in this nice and hot city of Aegean. Moreover, they want to know more about the lifestyle and trading in Smyrna and how the city could be protected.

Key Questions

1. What do you think about the age of marriage in Smyrna?
Do you think it is right to consent a kin-marriage in order not to share inheritance?
2. What do you say about the social differences and the role of women?
3. How do we develop Smyrna to be an even better city?

Activities:

1. Preparations of food
2. Make bracelets/ necklaces and crowns/wreaths
3. Make a new dress for Athena
4. Painting of pottery
5. Poetry workshop
6. Clean the area
7. Decorate the double megaron
8. Discussions in the meeting megaron
9. Music and songs

Time Plan

- 15.00 Participants arrive
Change clothes, names, repeat scenario
- 16.00 Initiation ceremony
Procession to the temple (bride and bridegroom saluting)
- 16.15 Basileus welcome, bath ceremony, speeches, dances
- 16.40 Activities
- 17.25 Gathering, eating, music, poems, discussions
- 17.50 Sacrifice at the temple
- 18.15 Ending ceremony
- 18.30 Short evaluation, changing of clothes
- 19.00 Departure

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