

# Christine de pisan: a prayer

Business



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

“ Oh Lord, how can this be? Unless I commit an error of faith, I cannot doubt that you, in your infinite wisdom and perfect goodness, could make anything that wasn't good. Didn't you yourself create women especially and then endow her with all the qualities you wished her to have? How could you possibly have made a mistake in anything? Yet here stand women not simply accused, but already judged, sentenced, and condemned! I just cannot understand this contradiction. If it is true, dear Lord God, why wasn't I born a male, born Christopher, not Christine so that my every desire would be to serve you, to do right in all things, and to be as perfect a creature as man claims to be?” I did not know, dear Lord, until now, until this very moment, what sins I had committed, what terrible acts for which I am responsible.

But Lord, I cannot fathom what I am to do. If these writers speak truth—if Jean de Meun and Ovid and Matheolus are correct in condemning all females for our wrongs, then is there a chance—a possibility, an action, that I may carry out to serve you better? They say we are distrustful, irrational. That we ourselves, our sin, taint their own. But all the ladies that I know are as virtuous as the gentlemen—they put all others before them, and they serve you, Lord God, above all else. We are told we cannot love, but I myself have loved, have loved and have been hurt. They say Eve brought our sins, and that, as a result all women are sinful.

Yet, Lord, how can this be, when our own Virgin Mary, who begat our Lord Jesus, was so virtuous, so sinless? Lord God, they mock us so. And even worse, their mockery is appreciated—is even, at times, popular, as with de Meun's “ Roman de la Rose.” And we, “ the women,” we are grouped, it

seems, “ as if we were a race of less than human beings”, as if we could not serve you, oh Lord, as well as they. I don’t believe it. I don’t believe it.

How can it be possible that I, that we, are what they make us seem—that women, in all facets, “ are vessels in which all the sin and evil of the world has been collected and preserved?” They believe we are a mistake, that somehow their seed has been mutated and we are the result. They tell us this is our fault. But I know that we are not, for I know You, Lord God. You would never make such an error. I feel absolutely your love for me, for my ladies, and I know You would never strive to hurt us, to disallow us from adoring you as much as the others.

You brought us Christ when we faltered in our faith, and you have continued to guide us for fourteen and a half centuries after that. I believe with all my heart that You have placed us here, as inferior, as lesser than the men, for a reason. Perhaps my simple brain, my lack of divinity, bars me from the conception of your purpose, but I am sure that you must have one. Do we women serve our men because we are the gentler, the less violent of the two genders? Does our lowly position mirror that of Jesus Christ our Savior? I cannot know, nor will I ever, but I can, oh Lord, strive to fulfill whatever ideals you have set for the female gender. I can do what I am told, for I know that you speak through society to us, even if we do not hear clearly your intentions, nor your reasoning. I strived to be a competent wife, and so I will strive for as a mother.

But I will not accept the rest, oh Lord. I will not allow them to make mockery of our ways, to condemn us for their own wrong-doings. We may be inferior,

but we are still human, and we may still serve You our Lord just as they may. I will not allow them to claim we are a mistake. I will not sit and listen to them whimper about Eve and the Fall of Man. I will not stand by as they condemn women, as a whole gender, for the wrongs of a single human being, who is just as human as she is female.

My patience with complaints about the gender that has served the Earth and its societies for generations is nearly at an end. My words may not penetrate the beliefs of those in France today, or even those in the far future, but I feel absolutely that I must proclaim my displeasure at the actions toward my gender. Oh Lord, do help me to, with full respect, begin prove to men that which I have just described. I will no longer be condemned.