

“The marriage of Koutroulis”, by A. R. Ragavis

[«Του Κουτρούλη ο γάμος», Α. Ρ. Παγκαβής]

A few words about the writer:

Alexandros Rizos Ragavis (1809 – 1892) was a Romantic poet, a painter, a professor of Archeology at the University of Athens, a politician and diplomat. Influenced by Molière and borrowed from Aristophanes in both form and content, Ragavis introduces *Koutroulis* in 1845. Only 15 years after the founding of the Greek state, this political satire seems tragically timeless. All the issues it raises such as corruption, customer state, rupees, decency, manslaughter, xenophobia, intrigue, the relationship of press and power and the division that has often painfully defined all of our recent history, are the same ones that unfortunately concern us almost 200 years later.

A few words about the plot:

Manolis Koutroulis, a wealthy tailor from Greek island Syros, arrives with his servant Strovilis in Athens to marry the ambitious Anthousa, daughter of hotelier Spyros. Anthousa has a secret relationship with Leonidas Xanthoulis, a young police officer who is also very much in love with her. Anthousa sets a condition in order to avoid marrying Koutroulis. To become his wife the humble descent and uneducated tailor must quit sewing and becomes a minister. With the help of his servant, Koutroulis tries his best to succeed in his ministry and manages to convince everyone that he has really succeeded. So the great Anthousa quickly marries him. Everything seems to be going well until fraud and lies are revealed and justice intervenes.

Characters:

MANOLIS KOUTROULIS:	tailor from Greek island Syros
STROVILIS:	Koutrouli's servant
SPYROS:	hotelier in Athens, Anthousa's father
ANTHOUSA:	Spyro's daughter
LEONIDAS XANTHOULIS:	police officer, fall in love with Anthousa

MISTHOFAGOS

SFIKIAS

SITIZENS

Place: Athens

1st Scene:

ANTHOUSA: Finally! You remembered that we also exist?

XANTHOULIS: Ah...

ANTHOUSA: What happened? You seem really troubled

XANTHOULIS: Ah, ah...

ANTHOUSA: Oh dear, something terrible must have happened!

XANTHOULIS: Ah, my dear Anthousa, I'm losing you! I saw that bloody tailor from Syros talking to your father!

ANTHOUSA: What? Koutroulis?

XANTHOULIS: That's right! They were talking about a wedding! And he was gloating and smiling... I really wanted to grab him from the neck and- Anthousa... you're killing me! You are the only one I've ever loved, don't let me drink the poison!

ANTHOUSA: Oh, don't cry my Leonidas. I would never change you! If Mr. Koutroulis wants a wife he can marry his scissors and if my father wants him so much as a groom let Him marry Koutroulis!

XANTHOULIS: Oh, my dear Anthousa! You're making me so happy!

ANTHOUSA: Leave and let me handle the situation. (*Xanthoulis leaves, she continues by herself*) So, mister Koutroulis came... Pft! Me? Marrying a tailor! He is rich... So what? I'm going to be Mrs. Koutroulis and he is going to serge and sew day and night! Sorry, but I'm not buying it! (*Spyros enters*)

2nd Scene:

SPYROS: Dear child! Go get dressed and put on some make-up! Mr. Koutroulis came! He confessed his love for you!

ANTHOUSA: Oh, unfortunate one!

SPYROS: He wants to propose to you with a ring and all!

ANTHOUSA: Ah, appalling one!

SPYROS: And I'm afraid that if the wedding doesn't take place soon he will take his life with his own scissors!

ANTHOUSA: Ah! Poor one!

SPYROS: I don't get it, honey... Why poor, appalling and unfortunate?

ANTHOUSA: Father, you said that he loves me, right? And that he wants to propose to me, correct? You said that either we're getting married or he is going to kill himself, didn't you?

SPYROS: Exactly, that's what I said.

ANTHOUSA: Oh, I'm sorry father, but Mr. Koutroulis has to choose the second option. 'Cause I'm not going to marry him.

SPYROS: May I know the reason? What's wrong with him?

ANTHOUSA: What's wrong? WHAT'S WRONG!? He is a TAILOR, that's what's wrong! You are a businessman, a great hotelier! Are you going to lower your level and accept a tailor as your son-in-law?

SPYROS: Eh? Yeah... Off course... You're right.

ANTHOUSA: Is this why I was educated and taught piano, dance and savoir vivre? To marry a tailor? No! Never!

SPYROS: However, honey, nowadays there aren't many available men to marry!

ANTHOUSA: Ok then. Listen what's going to happen: Either he abandons that horrible craftsmanship and rises up to our level or no marriage. But only then!

SPYROS: Well done, Anthousa! You speak logically... Speak to him and if he doesn't agree do whatever you want. Ah, there he is! (*Koutroulis and Strovilis enter*) Oh, Mr. Koutroulis! Come in, don't be shy. You know my daughter.

3nd Scene:

KOUTROULIS: My lady, the memory of your beauty does not let me sleep at night ...I was looking forward to seeing you again. That's why I took a boat from my island and came here as fast as I could to confess my love to you. (*To Strovili*) Did I say it correctly?

STROVILIS: (*to Koutroulis*) I think it's a bit exaggerated!

ANTHOUSA: Thank you for your beautiful words sir, but I don't think so.

KOYTROULIS: Strovili, I'm feeling dizzy, I'm dying out of love what should I answer?

STROVILIS: I suggest you don't say anything.

KOUTROULIS: You don't believe my words? Then I swear to my own scissors that I truly love you. (*to Strovili*) I've lost my brain.

STROVILIS: That's not a big damage.

ANTHOUSA: Nowadays swears are outdated, sir.

KOUTROULIS: So, my words don't convince you? Strovili the time has come. Bring in the thing I told you. You know that thing... (*Strovilis takes out of his pocket a small box, he gives it to koutroulis who gives it too Anthousa*) This will explain the situation.

ANTHOUSA: This ... I can't say ... The emerald is crystal clear. But ... I'm sorry I can't I cannot accept.

KOUTROULIS: What? Why? Strovili am going to commit suicide.

STROVILIS: I don't have a knife with me right now.

ANTHOUSA: You see, my father said ... I mean he noticed that.. Father tell them.

SPYROS: Me? What did I say? I didn't say anything!

ANTHOUSA: But dad, didn't you say that you would never forgive me if I ever got married to a tailor?

SPYROS: Aaa ... yes, you know M. Koutroulis, our social status ... my daughter... the education ... you understand...

KOUTROULIS: No, I don't understand at all.

ANTHOUSA: Aaa my father is right indeed. How I, an educated woman will get married to a tailor?

STROVILIS: Yes, yes, an educated woman (*ironically*)

ANTHOUSA: How dare you. Your slave is very ignorant, sir.

KOUTROULIS: (*to Strovilis*) shut up. (*to Anthousa*) So you want me to quit tailoring. Difficult but I'll do anything for you. What do you want me to be? A Builder, a fisherman, a shepherd, a farmer; Choose whatever you want.

ANTHOUSA: Oh my god. Couldn't you think of something more important for a career? Something more high class.

KOUTROULIS: Do you want me to become a flight attendant?

ANTHOUSA: Oh my god.

KOUTROULIS: Then choose what do you want me to be?

ANTHOUSA: I want you to be a MINISTER!!!

EVERYONE ELSE: What?!

ANTHOUSA: Why don't you think I'm good enough for being the "first lady".

SPYROS: But, my daughter...

KOUTROULIS: But, my lady ...

ANTHOUSA: What daughter and what lady are you talking about? I don't think it's a problem that you are a tailor. Everyone starts from scratch. You want me to be your wife? Then you have to be minister. (*she leaves the stage*)

4nd Scene:

KOUTROULIS: You heard her.

STROVILIS: I did.

KOUTROULIS: Jesus! Don't you have mercy upon me? What are we gonna do now?

STROVILIS: Should we go back to our home, in the island?

KOUTROULIS: What? Are you crazy? Never! Did you see her beautiful eyes? (*he sighs*)

STROVILIS: I saw them . She is a little bit cockeyed.

KOUTROULIS: And her hands...?

STROVILIS: I saw them all, her hands and her legs and her back. I saw her from head to toe. But what about that?

KOUTROULIS: I don't want us to leave! Strovili , please find a way to make me minister.

STROVILIS: How are you expecting me to do that? I've never done this before.

Κουτρούλης : You 'll try it today!

STROVILIS: Do you know how much qualified you need to be in order to become a minister? First of all you have to be well educated, something you are not. Secondly, you have to be a hypocrite, deceitful and selfish but the most important, you have to be influential.

KOUTROULIS: Influential? Can I become a minister without being influential?

STROVILIS: No, you can't.

KOUTROULIS: At least can I buy influence?

STROVILIS: Yes you can.

KOUTROULIS: Well.., then take these money (*he gives him some money*) and go to buy as much confidence as you can find.

STROVILIS: OK boss. (*he leaves*)

KOUTROULIS: From now on a new life starts for me. I will become a minister! (*he leaves*)

5nd Scene:

XANTHOULIS: (*he gets in the room alone*) Where is Anthousa? I gave her a cue to come down but will she come?

ANTHOUSA: (*she gets in the room*) I got the cue and I came here. What happened?

XANTHOULIS: Something terrible happened! You are betraying me! You are cheating on me!

ANTHOUSA: What are you talking about? It's not true!

XANTHOULIS: Didn't you tell me that you will remain faithful to me? You told me you were going to get rid of Koutroulis!

ANTHOUSA: You ungrateful! How dare you? I should have left you crying! Well now learn that Koutroulis has no future with me.

XANTHOULIS: Really? Anthousa my angel!!

ANTHOUSA: You have no reason to be afraid of him.

XANTHOULIS: What did you tell him?

ANTHOUSA: Something hilarious! I told him that I will marry him only if he manages to become a minister.

XANTHOULIS: What if he succeeds?

ANTHOUSA: Well then I will marry him! Hahahaha!

XANTHOULIS: OH MY GODD!!

ANTHOUSA: What now?

XANTHOULIS: Don't you know? Koutroulis will become a minister!

ANTHOUSA: Nonsense!

XANTHOULIS: It's true! Everyone is saying that!

ANTHOUSA: Well then everybody has lost their minds. Things like this can't happen. What you are saying is ridiculous. But now you have to leave. I see his servant, Strovilis, coming here and he mustn't see us together.

XANTHOULIS: I 'll leave but I'm warning you, if you marry him I'll go crazy. (*he leaves*)

ANTHOUSA: Yeah, yeah...(*alone*) Omg! What is he talking about? Minister? JESUS!

6nd Scene:

ANTHOUSA: Welcome mr. Strovilis! How... How are you mr. Strovilis? Where is mr. Koutroulis? Has he gone for a walk?

STROVILIS: If only he had time to. He has meetings with many VIPs. Everywhere I go I hear people calling him a minister! Even on the newspapers I read that he' s officially going to take the minister's position.

ANTHOUSA: Newspapers? Really? Ah...you know...I'd like to confess to you something. I have always appreciated mr. Koutroulis, but when I saw him in the morning I felt such an incredible happiness. He made a new impression to me and I got a new emotion about him. Ah, my dear mr. Strovilis... I'd like you to tell him all these, but in a way that I wouldn't be exposed you know... **STROVILIS:** Okay, my lady, lean on me. Oh, that's him, he's coming! How serious he is! I've never seen him like this again, true minister! (*Anthousa leaves and Koutroulis gets in*)

STROVILIS: Aw, my lord, our plan has succeeded. Anthousa confessed to me her love about you. Well done mr...Minister.

KOUTROULIS: Really? Do you think after all she has noticed how gentle I am and has started falling in love with me?

STROVILIS: Sure! Trust me.

KOUTROULIS: Ah! You cannot imagine how happy you make me! (*Misthofagos enters*)

MISTHOFAGOS: Is mr. Koutroulis here?

KOUTROULIS: Yes, who asks for him?

MISTHOFAGOS: Awww! My friend Manolis, how are you? I learnt that you are having a campaign to become prime minister and I'd be pleased to ask you for a favor. I'd like you to appoint me to something. Do it and I will raise 200 votes for you.

KOUTROULIS: Fine, my dear mr. Misthofagos. You are appointed to the prefecture of Zakynthos.

MISTHOFAGOS: Thank you very much, Manolis! (*Misthofagos leaves, Sfikias gets in.*)

SFIKIAS: Is mr. Koutroulis here?

KOUTROULIS: Here please. And who requests him?

SFIKIAS: I am Sfikias, publisher of the best newspaper. I promise you to give you a big fame. You will just need to pay 300.000€.

KOUTROULIS: 300.000?! By no means! Ridiculous!

SFIKIAS: Then, I shall turn it to opposition. No one is going to vote you!

KOUTROULIS: Sodoff!

7nd Scene:

SPYROS: Anthousa, Anthousa! Run Anthousa! Oh God, where are you Anthousa?

ANTHOUSA: What happened, dad? Why are you yelling?!

SPYROS: Come everybody, come to hear the news. Mr. Manolis Koutroulis has become...

ALL: Say it!

SPYROS: Minister!!!

KOUTROULIS: Is it certain?

SPYROS: Yes sir!

KOUTROULIS: And how did you learn it?

SPYROS: (*Whispering*) Straight by the royal palace.

ALL: The palace?!

SPYROS: I have a "contact" who cooks there.

ANTHOUSA: Aw, that's a miracle my darling!

KOUTROULIS: The only miracle is you, my sweet Anthousa.

ANTHOUSA: I'm so happy to be the first that congratulates you, Manolis. Bravo, bravo!

KOUTROULIS: My little Anthousa, all this glory will be yours, only if I get one title, the title of your husband! What do you say mr. Spiros?

SPYROS: Take her, god dammit, take her.

KOUTROULIS: My love!

ANTHOUSA: Fat chance that I will let you go...

KOUTROULIS: Daddy!

SPYROS: My child!

KOUTROULIS: Everyone get prepared! We're getting married! I'll be treating appointments, salary rises and many many favours!

8nd Scene:

KOUTROULIS: Thank you!!! Thank you, good nationals, supporters and voters! And I am being explained not to be misunderstood belong the posts in public belong to my good patriots and ministerial friends.

CITIZENS: My dedication to you is endless.

KOUTROULIS: What do you want?

CITIZENS: Pensions, salaries...

KOUTROULIS: You will have them

CITIZENS: I want to Me too..... Me too

KOUTROULIS: (*goes up to the table*) AAAA!!! Why are you acting like that? I said the honest and worthy ones will be appointed. What do you think is the public? Shame on you

CITIZENS: You liar!!! We voted for you so you would help us. All the politicians are the same... Koutroulis should leave!

KOUTROULIS: STOP! Whoever was appointed was appointed!!! That's enough! For that you think the minister exists? To feed some people like you?

CITIZENS: We voted for you and now you are driving us away? Ungrateful!!!

ANTHOUSA: Manoli, I am scared

STROVILIS: I am calling the police!

(Are fighting... The police enter. The policeman is Xanthoulis)

XANTHOULIS: What is going on here? Everybody stay still! Why are you shouting? Who caused the fight? Will somebody answer me or should I take you all for interrogation?

ANTHOUSA: Yes police officer. I mean Leonida

XANTHOULIS: Policeman lieutenant Xanthoulis Leonidas.

ANTHOUSA: Mister police lieutenant ...

KOUTROULIS: My dear, do you know him?

ANTHOUSA: My love, this is my childhood friend Leonidas. Leonida, this is my husband, Emmanuel Koutroulis, minister!

XANTHOULIS: Sir, you are under arrest.

KOUTROULIS: Excuse me?

STROVILIS: What?

ANTHOUSA: Leonida?

XANTHOULIS: For fraud, criminal impersonation, fake authority, disturbing the common peace, spreading fake news and many more. Follow me please!

KOUTROULIS: Strovili, I don't understand. Who did all of this?

STROVILIS: You sir....

KOUTROULIS: But I am the minister!

XANTHOULIS: No sir. You are a tailor and this lady's husband.

ANTHOUSA: A tailor? Then he isn't my husband!!! I am a victim of fraud. The marriage is illegal!

XANTHOULIS: I am sorry. The sir is illegal minister but legally your husband. Fortunately!!!

ANTHOUSA: and I will remain miss tailor forever? And not only didn't I become miss minister but not even miss police lieutenant? (*Anthousa and the other citizens leave*)

KOUTROULIS: Strovili, what are they saying? Didn't I become a minister?

STROVILIS: No boss. It was a dream.

XANTHOULIS: Let's go sir.

SPYROS: You know me mister police lieutenant. I guarantee for my groom. (*he gives money to Leonida. Leonidas left*)

KOUTROULIS: Thank you. Thank you, mister Spyros. What did I do? I gave up on my art. I ruined my whole life for a woman. And I brought hatred, discord, disruption. I almost got in prison and for what? For a woman. Or maybe for power.... Who knows? The only thing for sure is that I will become a Greek proverb. Every time people get messed up about anything, every time we have tangles, trouble and riots people will say that "the Koutrouli's marriage" is taking place.

THE END