

Diary of Nikos - Athens, 432 BCE

Dear Diary,

Today was such a busy day! The sun was shining so brightly over the Acropolis that it felt like Apollo himself was watching us. I woke up when the rooster crowed (again—he's louder than the marketplace!). Mother gave me some bread dipped in honey for breakfast before Father went off to the agora to talk politics with the other men. He says I'll get to go with him one day when I'm older and can really understand what they're talking about.

After breakfast, my tutor, Lysias, came to our house. He's very strict and makes me write out my letters on wax tablets over and over until they're perfect. My hand got tired, but he says that one day I'll thank him when I'm speaking in front of the Assembly. I'm not sure I want to do that—I'd rather be like the athletes training in the gymnasium!

When lessons were done, I met my friend Theon near the olive trees. We pretended to be heroes from the stories our mothers tell us—he was Achilles and I was Odysseus! We even used sticks as swords and shouted lines like we were in a play. Someday, I want to see a real play at the theatre of Dionysus. Father says the actors wear masks and shout so loud that even the gods can hear them.

Before supper, Mother and I went to the fountain to fetch water. We saw a procession going by for Athena's festival—women carrying baskets and men playing flutes! The air smelled like flowers and roasted lamb. I wished I could join, but Mother said we'd watch from the side this year.

Now I'm lying under the stars, and I can see the temple of Athena glowing on the hill. I wonder if she watches over us from up there. Tomorrow I have to practice my numbers and learn another poem by heart.. I hope it's one with monsters in it!

Goodnight, Diary.

—Nikos

Diary of Callista - Athens, 432 BCE

Dear Diary,

This morning I woke up when the sun peeked through our courtyard. The birds were already singing, and Mother was grinding grain for bread. I helped her knead the dough while my little brother chased a chicken around the yard—until it almost ran into Father! He laughed, thank goodness.

After breakfast, Mother showed me how to spin wool again. My fingers are getting faster! She says that one day, when I'm older, I'll weave fine cloth for our household and maybe even for a festival robe for Athena. I think that would be wonderful.

When the work was done, I went with Mother and Aunt Thaleia to the fountain to fetch water. It's my favourite part of the day because I get to see my friends. We talk while balancing the jars on our heads (it's harder than it looks!). My friend Dione told me her brother is training to run in the Panathenaic Games. She says if he wins, their family will be famous!

At midday, we rested in the shade. Mother told us stories about the gods—today it was about clever Athena and brave Perseus. I tried to imagine what it would be like to have a goddess watching over me. I think I'd ask her to help me be brave, too.

Later, I helped Mother prepare for the festival of Athena. We made little garlands of flowers and baked honey cakes shaped like owls, because the owl is Athena's bird. The house smelled so sweet that even the cat came to sit by the oven!

Now the stars are out, and the air is warm and still. From far away, I can hear music from the festival—flutes and drums echoing through the city. I can't go to the theatre or the Assembly like Father and my brothers, but I still feel proud to live in Athens, the city of Athena herself.

Goodnight, Diary.

—Callista

Diary of Demetrios - Athens, 432 BCE

Dear Diary,

The rooster crowed before dawn today, and I rose with the first light of Helios. My wife, Thaleia, was already busy baking bread, and the smell filled the courtyard. I ate quickly—bread with olives and a sip of watered wine—then set off for the **agora**, the marketplace, where the city comes alive each morning.

The air buzzed with voices. Merchants shouted about their fish, fruit, and fine pottery, while philosophers argued under the stoa about truth and justice. I listened to a man named Socrates again—he's always asking questions that make you think hard about everything you believe!

After that, I met with some of my fellow citizens to discuss city matters. We're preparing for the next meeting of the **Assembly**, where every free man of Athens can speak and vote. I'm proud of that—our city is ruled by the people, not by kings. Still, it's not easy to make everyone agree. One man shouted so much that a dog started barking at him!

When business was done, I walked to the **gymnasium** to watch the young men train. They ran, wrestled, and practiced throwing the discus. It reminded me of when I was their age, dreaming of winning glory at the Games. Now, I cheer from the side—and sometimes wish my knees were still strong enough to join them.

Before returning home, I stopped by the temple to offer a small gift of oil to Athena. The statue of the goddess shone in the afternoon light, and I felt a calm pride. She guards our city well.

Now evening has come. My children sit near the fire while Thaleia weaves. I tell them stories of heroes—Heracles and Theseus—and they listen with wide eyes. Tomorrow, life will begin again at sunrise, and Athens will hum with the voices of free men, brave women, and curious children.

Goodnight, Diary.

—Demetrios

Diary of Nikandros - A Fisherman of Piraeus, Athens, 431 BCE

Dear Diary,

I was up before the stars faded, when the world was quiet except for the sound of the waves against the shore. The air was cool, and the sky was deep blue—Poseidon's colour. I always whisper a small prayer to him before we push the boat out, just in case he's watching.

My friends Timon and Philemon helped me untie the ropes, and soon our little boat was gliding into the open water. The sea was calm today—thank the gods! Sometimes she's wild and angry, but this morning she was gentle, like a sleeping dolphin.

We cast our nets just as the sun rose over the hills of Athens. The sky turned gold and pink, and the water glittered so brightly it hurt my eyes. After a while, the nets grew heavy. When we hauled them up, they wriggled with silver fish! Timon laughed and said Poseidon must have been in a good mood.

By midday, we returned to the harbour at **Piraeus**. The marketplace was already busy—women buying fish for supper, children running between stalls, and the smell of salt and olive oil mixing in the air. I sold most of my catch, but I kept a few of the biggest ones for my family.

In the afternoon, I mended my nets while sitting on the rocks. It's quiet work, but I like hearing the gulls cry and feeling the breeze on my face. Sometimes I see the ships from other lands—big ones with bright sails—and I wonder what faraway places they've come from. Maybe one day, I'll sail that far too.

Now the sun has set, and I can hear the waves again outside my house. My wife is cooking the fish with herbs, and my children are chasing each other around the fire. My back aches, but it's a good kind of tired. The sea gave us a fine day.

Goodnight, Diary,

—Nikandros