

Hero 1 / Pseudolus 2

(PROTEANS enter D.L., dressed as CITIZENS. Two of them are holding PSEUDOLUS by the arms. CITIZENS utter obviously fake chatter. HERO turns, sees them.)

HERO

Pseudolus!

(crosses to C.S.)

FIRST CITIZEN

(Salutes)

Citizen! This is your slave? He was parading as a citizen.

PSEUDOLUS

Believe me, master, I was not parading. This is parading.

(Demonstrates.)

I was walking.

(HE starts to walk O.D.R. CITIZEN grabs him.)

SECOND CITIZEN

Come back Here!

THIRD CITIZEN

(To HERO)

He invited us to game with him, and, in a matter of moments, he had taken all our money.

FIRST CITIZEN

He was using weighted dice!

HERO

(To PSEUDOLUS)

Return the money.

SECOND CITIZEN

He took nine minae.

PSEUDOLUS

Nine?! I took seven!

HERO

Give them nine.

PSEUDOLUS

(Handing coins to CITIZEN)

One, two, three, four—I am being cheated out of the money I won fairly.

HERO

Pseudolus!

PSEUDOLUS

(Giving CITIZENS coins)

Seven, eight.

FIRST CITIZEN

What happened to five and six?

(HERO glares at PSEUDOLUS.)

PSEUDOLUS

I'm coming to them. Nine, five, six!

(Hands them three more coins.)

SECOND CITIZEN

Come, fellow citizens!

(CITIZENS exit D.L., chattering. PSEUDOLUS crosses to HERO, sheepishly.)

PSEUDOLUS

I should be whipped ... gently. But I only did it for money. I thought if I could raise enough you'd let me buy my freedom from you.

HERO

Oh, Pseudolus, not again!

PSEUDOLUS

It's all I think about. I hate being a slave.

HERO

Better a slave than a slave to love.

PSEUDOLUS

That's easy for you to ... Love? You? Tell me, master, who is she? Anyone I know?

HERO

Sometimes you can see her through that window.

(HE points to house of LYCUS.)

PSEUDOLUS

Through that win—

(HE is horrified, crosses to HERO.)

A courtesan in the house of Lycus?

(HERO nods.)

Do you know how many minae a girl like that would cost?

HERO

And worth every drachma!

PSEUDOLUS

Your parents would be outraged if they could hear you.

HERO

I don't care! Oh, Pseudolus, I would give anything for her.

PSEUDOLUS

You would? You really love this girl?

(HERO Sighs.)

I like the way you said that. Now, you cannot afford to buy this girl, but in spite of that, suppose someone, someone with tremendous cunning and guile, could arrange for her to be yours.

HERO

Yes?

PSEUDOLUS

If that someone could arrange it, what would you give me?

HERO

Everything!

PSEUDOLUS

Everything? What do you own? Twenty minae, a collection of sea shells, and me.

HERO

Right.

PSEUDOLUS

You don't have to give me the 20 minae, or the sea shells. If I get you that girl, just

give me me.

HERO

Give you you?

PSEUDOLUS

My freedom.

HERO

Pseudolus! People do not go about freeing slaves.

PSEUDOLUS

Be the first! Start a fashion!

HERO

(A pause, then:)

Get me that girl!

PSEUDOLUS

And if I can?

HERO

(Decisively)

You are free!

PSEUDOLUS

I am what?

HERO

Free!

PSEUDOLUS

Free—!