

This dialogue is embedded within the opening number however for auditions it can be performed as a monologue.

PROLOGUS (Pseudolus)

Playgoers, I bid you welcome. The theatre is a temple, and we are here to worship the gods of comedy and tragedy. Tonight I am pleased to announce a comedy. We shall employ every device we know in our desire to divert you.

It all takes place on a street in Rome, around and about these three houses. First, the house of Erronius, a befuddled old man abroad now in search of his children, stolen in infancy by pirates.

Second, the house of Lycus, a buyer and seller of the flesh of beautiful women. That's for those of you who have absolutely no interest in pirates. Raise the curtain! (*Curtain drops into floor.*)

And finally, the house of Senex, who lives here with his wife and son. Also in this house lives Pseudolus, slave to the son. Pseudolus is probably my favorite character in the piece. A role of enormous variety and nuance, and played by an actor of such ... let me put it this way ... I play the part.

(PROTEANS enter U.R. Spoken.)

And these are the Proteans — only three, yet they do the work of thirty. They are difficult to recognize in the many parts they play. Watch them closely.

(PROTEANS appear in and out of center house in assorted costumes.)

A proud Roman. A patrician Roman. A pretty Roman. A Roman slave. A Roman soldier. A Roman ladder. Tremendous skill. Incredible versatility. And, — above all, dignity! And now the entire company.

(THE COMPANY enters from center house and form a line D.S.)

(ALL exit, except PROLOGUS. He crosses S.R., addresses heavens.)
Oh, Thespis, we place ourselves in your hands.

(To audience.)

The play begins.

(Exits D.R.)