

ATROCIOUS 1

*At end of song Furius and Atrocius shoo the chorus away. They return to buying and selling
At their market stalls etc.*

BILIUS Come here you two.

Furius and Atrocius return to Bilius

BILIUS Now listen, The Emperor is visiting Pompeii today...

ATROCIOUS *(rubbing his hands)* Oh goody. Can we have a picnic?

BILIUS A what?

ATROCIOUS We always have a picnic when my Aunty visits.

BILIUS Huh! This is going to be no picnic! There's dirty work to do.

ATROCIOUS *(to Furius)* We've got to clean out the public toilets again. *(walking round, holding nose)*

FURIUS *(hitting Atrocius)* Will you pay attention!

ATROCIOUS Ow! That hurt!

FURIUS *(to Bilius)* Sorry boss.

ATROCIOUS Great! He hits me and says sorry to him! *(walks round holding head)*

BILIUS Listen carefully. When Nero arrives, there's some DIRTY work to do! *(draws finger across throat)*

ATROCIOUS *(to Furius)* He wants us to take his tonsils out. *(draws sword and walks around making practise lunges)*

FURIUS Put that away!

ATROCIOUS It'll be just like that 'Casualty' on the telly. *(as surgeon, puts hand out to Furius)* Scalpel please, nurse.

FURIUS You'll be a casualty in a minute!

BILIUS Streuth! I'll take his tonsils out in a minute, with me bare hands. *(goes for throat of Atrocius)* Pay attention! The Emperor visits Pompeii today on a state visit...

ATROCIOUS Why is he in a state, boss? Is it his tonsils playing up?

FURIUS You fool! He meant 'state' not, 'state'!

ATROCIOUS *(not understanding)* Oh.

BILIUS Will you shut up! I've started so I'll finish...

Bilius signals to Furius to put hands over mouth of Atrocius to stop him speaking.

BILIUS The Emperor visits Pompeii today, and this is my big chance. We get rid of him – and – guess who becomes the new Emperor? *(struts about proudly)*

Atrocius and Furius pay no attention to Bilius. Atrocius is almost suffocating. Furius releases his grip.

ATROCIOUS *(gasps, collapses, now free to speak)* You stopped me breathing there!

BILIUS *(annoyed that he is being ignored, prods Atrocius)* I said, 'Guess who becomes the new Emperor?'

ATROCIOUS What? Oh, er, give in, boss.

FURIUS Can we phone a friend?

BILIUS I do, you fools.

ATROCIOUS Oh congratulations, boss. *(shakes Bilius' hand)*

FURIUS Well done!

ATROCIOUS *(calling out)* He's the new emperor everyone!

BILIUS Shut up, you fool! *(looking round nervously)* Don't congratulate me yet! You've got to get rid of Nero first.

FURIUS Who has?

BILIUS You. That's the easy part. You've only got to kill him. I'll have to run a whole empire.

ATROCIOUS We can help you there.

BILIUS How?

ATROCIOUS If we don't kill him, you won't have to bother.

BILIUS No, no. It's my destiny. I can hear the people calling me on to greatness. I must accept the burden of high office.

FURIUS *(to audience)* He thinks he's Tony Blair *(or whoever)*

BILIUS Now, I want you to use your initiative and get rid of him.

ATROCIOUS Who? Tony Blair?

BILIUS No! The Emperor, you fool! *(thoughtful)* Well, Tony Blair as well would be nice...

Furius and Atrocius look at each other blankly.

BILIUS And, one last thing...

FURIUS Yes, boss?

BILIUS Not a word to my son, Decius. He's such a goody-goody.

ATROCIOUS Yes, he is. We saw him helping an old lady across the street today.

FURIUS
ATROCIUS
BILIUS

Even though she didn't want to go.
He gave some sweets to some kids and told them it wasn't nice to fight.
Not nice to fight? *(shaking his head, sadly)* See. He'd never understand. Where did I go wrong? Where did all that goodness come from? *(exits, shaking his head sadly)*
Not from his dad, obviously. We need a plan, Atrocius.
Yes, better talk to that bloke that built the Forum. He had lots of plans.

ATROCIUS 2

Enter Gladioli wearing a false moustache.

FURIUS Is that him?
ATROCIUS *(to Gladioli)* Are you him?
GLADIOLI No, I'm not him, I'm me.
ATROCIUS You can't be me. I'm me.
GLADIOLI Well I'm not him, whoever him is.
FURIUS You sure?
ATROCIUS *(to Furius)* He don't look like a me, he looks more like a him.
GLADIOLI Well you wouldn't look like you if you was me.
ATROCIUS *(puzzled)* Eh?
GLADIOLI I've got a moustache see. He doesn't have a moustache does he?
FURIUS Er, no.
GLADIOLI He looks like this, doesn't he? *(lifts false moustache)*
ATROCIUS *(to Furius)* He's right. He does look like that.
GLADIOLI But I look like this. *(puts moustache back)*
ATROCIUS Ah, right.
FURIUS Sorry to have troubled you.
GLADIOLI No problem. *(walks off, smiling at audience)*

Atrocius and Furius look at each other for a moment. Then the light dawns.

ATROCIUS Hang on!
FURIUS *(to where Gladioli left stage)* Come back here, we want to kill you!

Both exit running after Gladioli. Some chorus enter looking eagerly around for the arrival of Nero. Some flags waving possibly.