

## DECIUS 1

**VANILLA** Oh, hello, Decius.  
**DECIUS** Is everything alright? You look worried.  
**VANILLA** Oh, it's my son. He's in trouble. He's upset your father.  
**DECIUS** Oh, I'll have a word with father. It can't be very serious.  
**VANILLA** Oh, thank you, Decius. I wish Gladioli was more like you. Noble, brave, upright... *(slyly)* single.  
**DECIUS** Oh, he's alright. He'll settle down one day. Don't worry.  
**VANILLA** Thank you. You're such a good boy. Not like your father at all. *(exits sadly)* Bye, bye.  
**AUDIENCE** Bye, bye.

*Enter Fabula, looking round.*

**DECIUS** Hello. Can I help? You look lost.  
**FABULA** Oh, hello. I'm a stranger here. I was trying to find my way round town.  
**DECIUS** You came to Pompeii on your own?  
**FABULA** No. Father is here on business. He thought it would be a good idea if I had a holiday break too.  
**DECIUS** Lots of people visit Pompeii on holiday. Have you come far?  
**FABULA** Yes, from Rome.  
**DECIUS** Rome! It must be wonderful to live in Rome. All the important people live there. I'm Decius, by the way. My father is a senator here in Pompeii.

*They shake hands*

**DECIUS** If you like I could show you around the town.  
**FABULA** That's very nice of you, thank you.  
**DECIUS** Let's start this way.

*He leads Fabula off. Enter Furius and Atrocius.*

## DECIUS 2

**BILIUS** Now, things to do today... *(shopping list again)* get rid of the Emperor, find a bride, get some curtains for the Imperial Palace. Fill bath with asses milk...

**DECIUS** *(entering)* Hello, father. What are you doing?  
**BILIUS** *(quickly hides shopping list)* Oh it's you, Decius. Just making some plans.  
**DECIUS** One day I hope to be a senator. I'd like to do some good. Pass some laws that help the people.  
**BILIUS** *(looks at him, bewildered)* Yes, you haven't quite got the hang of it, have you? You don't pass laws to help people.  
**DECIUS** Don't you?  
**BILIUS** No. You pass laws to help yourself. All this helping old ladies across the street and giving to the poor... it's embarrassing. Gets the family a good name see. It's not the Roman way. I have plans. We are on the brink of greatness. Trust me. This time next month we could be Rome with the people cheering us. There'll be no place for niceness where we're going.

**DECIUS** Are you planning a visit to Rome then?  
**BILIUS** A visit? A one way ticket, lad. But I've said enough.  
**DECIUS** I hope you're not planning something... bad.  
**BILIUS** See! You can't even say the word. It sticks in your throat. What would your poor mother say if she could see you now? We're Romans! We conquer people. Knock 'em about a bit. It's what we do. We bang heads together! Bring people to their knees! It's tradition. We've always done it. A country needs its fine traditions. But won't people start asking 'What have the Romans ever done for us?'

**DECIUS** Course not. We've given them the aqueducts.  
**DECIUS** Yes, but apart from the aqueducts, what have the Romans ever...  
**BILIUS** The roads! We've given them the roads!  
**DECIUS** Yes, but apart from the aqueducts and the roads, what have the Romans...  
**BILIUS** Son, no-one's ever going to ask silly questions like that.  
**DECIUS** Well, father, I'm not sure you're right. But I must go. I've promised to meet someone. See you later. *(exits)*