

FABULA 1

VANILLA Well, that sounds easy enough.
GLADIOLI When I asked what was on the menu they said 'You are'. So I ran away. And I left the lion's cage open. They're looking for me. I'll have to hide somewhere. *(runs off)*
VANILLA Poor boy. I don't know what he's got up there working his controls. *(points to her head)* Oh dear!

Vanilla looks worried. Enter Decius.

DECIUS Hello, Vanilla.
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... *(s/y/y)* 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.

FURIUS *(looking round, then to audience)* Have you seen a weedy kid go by here?
AUDIENCE Yes/no.
FURIUS He let the boss's lions out see.

FABULA 2

FABULA Let me go!
BILIUS Ah! Let me see. (*walks round her, looking at her*)
FABULA What are you doing? How dare you! Let me go at once! (*swings shopping bags at them*)
BILIUS Spirited little thing, isn't she? I hope you've got a nice wedding dress in there. Yes, she'll brighten up the imperial palace no end when we're married. Well, there's not a lot to do when we're not conquering people. (*looking at Fabula*) A few improvements, a few little touches here and there... (*makes as if he is about to touch her*)

FABULA Don't you touch anything!
BILIUS Cheer up, girl, for goodness sake, it's supposed to be a pantomime.
FABULA (*struggling and hitting out with the bags*) Let me go! You'll be sorry.
BILIUS Now, now. You must accept your destiny. (*goes to put arm around Fabula but she backs away*) You are to be my new bride. We will walk together into the sunset – and on to greatness.
FABULA Are you sure you can manage that far without your Zimmer frame?
BILIUS Ooh, cheeky!
FABULA Let me go. I've met someone else... He's lovely! Better than you. (*to audience*) Isn't he?
AUDIENCE Yes!
BILIUS He can't be, you silly girl.
FABULA Oh yes he is! And I'll never be married to you.
BILIUS Oh yes you will.
FABULA (*encouraging audience*) Oh, no I won't!
BILIUS Oh, yes you will!
FABULA (*with audience*) Oh, no I won't!
BILIUS You should be grateful that a wonderful, important man like me wants to marry you. (*to audience*) She should be grateful, shouldn't she?
AUDIENCE NO!
BILIUS Yes she should!
AUDIENCE No she shouldn't!
BILIUS Belt up.

FABULA There are so many others that you could marry. Someone more your type...
BILIUS Someone distinguished and noble, you mean?
FABULA No, someone old and ugly.
BILIUS Watch it! (*to audience*) She's pushing her luck. (*to Fabula*) I've chosen you, my dear. You don't know how lucky you are.
FABULA I refuse to marry you.
BILIUS It's either me or the lions – you choose.
FABULA The difficult questions first, eh?
BILIUS (*to guards*) Oh, lock her up until I have time to deal with her.
FABULA How dare you! Let me go!

Guards drag a protesting Fabula off.

BILIUS Now I must prepare this fashion parade for the Emperor. Over there will do, outside the Temple, I think. (*goes over to back of stage*)