

## VANILLA 1

AUDIENCE No!  
VANILLA What? Well they could last night. Still they did come from (*local pash area*) They'd been to school and everything. They could count up to XXV. Think about it. Come on, force yourselves. (*tries to get audience to call out*) Priscilla... Hibernia... Ooh, you're hopeless! Haven't you ever been in a pantomime before?  
AUDIENCE Yes/No!  
VANILLA You're not foreigners, are you?  
AUDIENCE No!  
VANILLA So you don't come from... (*nearby town*) then?  
AUDIENCE No/yes!  
VANILLA I'll have to make it easier for you, won't I?  
AUDIENCE Yes!  
VANILLA All right. I'll say 'What Flavia?' and you all shout 'Vanilla'. Can you do that?  
AUDIENCE Yes!  
VANILLA Good. Let's give it a try. (*goes off stage and comes back on*) What Flavia?  
AUDIENCE Vanilla!

*(Repeat if necessary)*

VANILLA Great! Now, my boy should be along soon. (*looking off*) Oh, I had such hopes for him. I wanted him to grow up to be a big, brave, strong gladiator, that's why I called him Gladioli, see. Well it's a bit like gladiator, isn't it? And you've got to be able to fight with a name like that, haven't you? But he's a big disappointment to me. He turned out just like his late demented father... limp... yes, that's it.

*Enter Gladioli trying to pull his short toga down.*

GLADIOLI Hello, ma.  
VANILLA (*to audience*) Look at him. (*local area*) ... answer to Russell Crowe!  
GLADIOLI I wish you'd make my togas a bit longer, ma. (*pulls down again*) I'm freezing.  
VANILLA There is a draught. (*looks round*) I don't know where it's coming from.  
GLADIOLI I can tell you where it's going. (*pulls toga down again*) If this is what Romans wore in the winter, no wonder the race died out.  
VANILLA Did you find a job like I told you to?  
GLADIOLI I tried, ma. I went down the Job Centre for an altitude test... I stood on this chair and got all dizzy.  
VANILLA Altitude...? Aptitude test, you...! So what did they say you were suited for?  
GLADIOLI Early retirement. I asked about statue polishing, chariot cleaning, but they said nothing available.  
VANILLA What about that job cleaning out the stables at the barracks?  
GLADIOLI (*holding his nose*) Whew! I'm not that desperate!  
VANILLA We are, son. We're broke. (*to audience*) He was sacked from his last job see, on the grounds of illness and exhaustion – yes – they were sick and tired of him.  
GLADIOLI I even went round to senator Bilius, but he didn't want me. And I upset his guards.  
VANILLA What happened?  
GLADIOLI I asked them for something to do and they said I couldn't feed the lions...  
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 2

*Furius and Atrocious pick themselves up, making a pretence of keeping crowd away.*

NERO Ah good, very thoughtful.

*Enter Dame. Nero and Bilius stop to watch her.*

VANILLA (*to audience*) What Flavia!  
AUDIENCE Vanilla!

**VANILLA** Great! Ooh! They tell me the Emperor is arriving today. They say he's horrible and ugly...  
**NERO** *(reacts)* What!  
**VANILLA** I want to throw something at him. He'll be along here soon. *(looks around for him)*  
**NERO** *(moves towards her)* Woman! What did you say?  
**VANILLA** Don't you 'woman' me! *(turns and pokes him in the chest as he backs away)* I'm here to throw some rotten eggs at the Emperor. *(to audience)* You can easily spot him... he wears a silly laurel wreath... up on his... *(points to head, looks at Emperor and slowly realises)* and a purple... Oh dear! I've done it now. *(kneels and tugs at his toga)* Forgive me, Great Circumference, a silly mistake... my eyesight you know...  
**NERO** What's wrong wit your eyesight?  
**VANILLA** I keep seeing blobs and squiggles...  
**NERO** Have you seen an optician?  
**VANILLA** No! Just the blobs and squiggles you silly old...  
**NERO** Tell me, old crone...  
**VANILLA** *(getting up)* Old crone! I'm not that old... Still a few miles on the clock! *(nudges up to Nero, suggestively)* You naughty boy.  
**NERO** Silence when you speak to me!  
**VANILLA** Sorry. *(kneels down again and tugs at toga)*  
**NERO** Careful! You'll have that off me in a minute! It's a family show, you know! Tell me, oh ugly one, how are you at fighting lions?  
**VANILLA** Well I went to a Harrods sale once... Alright... I'm going... I'm going...

*She moves away to apron as Nero and Bilus continue to talk together.*

**VANILLA** I think he fancies me, don't you girls? Oh yes, there was a gleam in his eye, did you see it? I can always tell.  
*(preens)* Mrs Emperor, yes, it has a nice ring to it!  
**NERO** *(bellowing at her)* You still here!  
**VANILLA** Oh, so masterful! Just think, I could soon have me hands on the Imperial Mint!  
**NERO** Guards!  
**VANILLA** Just going... *(exits waving to audience)* I'll have to think of something to help him make up his mind. Bye!  
**AUDIENCE** Bye!  
**NERO** *(thumbs up as exiting)* Caesar! Caesar!

### **VANILLA 3**

*At the end of the tune Amnesia enters to give them lessons in the art of soothsaying. The mini-soothsayers sit around Amnesia.*

**AMNESIA** Good morning girls and boys!  
**MINI-SOOTHSAVERS** Good morning miss.  
**AMNESIA** And who am I?  
**MINI-SOOTHSAVERS** Amnesia, miss.  
**AMNESIA** Good, good. Just like to be sure. Now all say *(spookily, arms and fingers waving)* 'Sooth, sooth'.  
**MINI-SOOTHSAVERS** *(imitating Amnesia)* 'Sooth, sooth'.  
**AMNESIA** Good, good. Now, *(movements again)* 'Beware, beware'.  
**MINI-SOOTHSAVERS** *(imitating Amnesia)* 'Beware, beware'.  
**AMNESIA** Good, good. Now, *(exaggerated movements again)* 'Woe, woe and thrice times woe'.  
**MINI-SOOTHSAVERS** *(copying Amnesia)* 'Woe, woe and thrice times woe'.  
**AMNESIA** Good. Now this is how you tell the news.  
The news today is rather grim  
The volcano's rumbling – quite a din.  
I hope it won't blow up this time  
Cos I've left me washing on the line...  
**MINI-WITCH 1** Don't you have any good news, miss?  
**AMNESIA** *(shocked)* Good news! We don't tell them any good news!  
**MINI-WITCH 2** Why not?  
**AMNESIA** Well... because... there isn't any.  
**VANILLA** *(entering and staying to one side of stage)* What Flavia?  
**AUDIENCE** Vanilla!  
**VANILLA** Great!  
**MINI-SOOTHSAVERS** *(spookily with arm and finger movements)* What Flavia? Vanilla! Great!

AMNESIA No, no! Not that!  
 MINI-SOOTHSAYERS *(with movements)* No, no! Not that!  
 AMNESIA *(to audience)* Gawd! Who'd be a teacher?  
 MINI-SOOTHSAYERS Gaw...  
 AMNESIA STOP!  
 VANILLA Oh, it's just like *(local school)* This could be Amnesia the Soothsayer. They say she's a sort of ancient Boots the Chemist.  
 AMNESIA SOOTH! SOOTH!  
 MINI-SOOTHSAYERS SOOTH! SOOTH!  
 VANILLA Talking of ancient boots, have you seen that face! I wonder if it's her? I've heard of Roman ruins, but this is ridiculous!  
 AMNESIA SOOTH! SOOTH!  
 MINI-SOOTHSAYERS SOOTH! SOOTH!  
 VANILLA *(to audience)* Do you think it's her, boys and girls?  
 AUDIENCE Yes!  
 VANILLA I'll ask her. Excuse me, are you the Soothsayer?  
 AMNESIA SOOTH! SOOTH!  
 VANILLA *(to audience)* A woman of few words!

*Mini-soothsayers amuse themselves playing games etc. during the following.*

AMNESIA SOOTH! SOOTH!  
 VANILLA *(to audience)* You wouldn't think it took her three months to learn her lines, would you? *(losing patience)* Are you going to stand there all night saying 'SOOTH!' or are you going to get involved in the plot?  
 AMNESIA What plot?  
 VANILLA Yes, I see what you mean. No, no, there must be one. We just haven't got to it yet.  
 AMNESIA What do you want to know, old ugly one?  
 VANILLA *(to audience)* She'll get a smack in the gob in a minute! Still, better be nice to her or she won't give me the love potion. *(to Soothsayer, smiling sweetly)* I want to know if you are Amnesia the famous and wonderful Soothsayer?  
 AMNESIA Of course I am you silly old bat. Why do you think I'm standing here saying 'SOOTH! SOOTH!'  
 VANILLA *(controlling herself with difficulty)* Sorry, I thought you might be looking for the local dentist. *(to audience)* D'you get it? Tooth, tooth. Os, make up your own jokes then! *(to Amnesia)* Then, good woman, if you are truly Amnesia, I have need of your services.  
 AMNESIA I can see into the future you know.  
 VANILLA *(impressed)* Really. What can you tell me about my future?  
 AMNESIA Well, you're wasting your time with a love potion for a start.  
 VANILLA *(to audience)* You've got to admit, she is good isn't she? *(to Amnesia)* And how did you know I wanted a love potion?  
 AMNESIA It's always the same with the ugly ones. They think a love potion will solve everything.  
 VANILLA She is good, you've got to hand it to her *(raises fist)* And I will in a minute. What do I need then?  
 AMNESIA A miracle, a sledgehammer, or a very short-sighted man.  
 VANILLA Oh thanks very much! No, no. Look, I must have a love potion. It's my last hope. I've met this man see... he's not much to look at but he's very rich. And you can't have everything, can you? *(to audience)* Oh, fancy being married to a rich emperor. Lazing about by the swimming pool all day. All your meals thrown in. *(to someone in the audience)* No, not in the pool you silly...  
 AMNESIA Have you got the wherewithal?  
 VANILLA *(preening)* I've never had any complaints.  
 AMNESIA Money. I mean money.  
 VANILLA Oh, right. Well, not really. Can't you let me have it on a long term loan?  
 AMNESIA How long do you think you're going to last?  
 VANILLA Charming!  
 AMNESIA I'll let you have a love potion if you do something for me in return.  
 VANILLA *(laughing)* What? You're not trying a love potion on someone are you? You've got less chance than me! *(round stage, laughing)* What a scream! *(to audience)* Her! With a love potion! Ha!  
 AMNESIA Do you want the potion or not?  
 VANILLA *(controlling herself)* Oh, yes, I'm sorry. I got carried away for a minute!  
 AMNESIA You should be.  
 VANILLA Oh, I'll do anything. You must help me, oh you must! *(up and down stage)* I'm desperate! I'm so lonely! Oh! What's going to become of me? Cast out! Nowhere to go! I'll be all on me own in me old age!