

Pseudolus, Lycus, Hero

HERO. A virgin!

PSEUDOLUS. (To LYCUS.) Well??

LYCUS. Only yesterday she was sold.

HERO. Sold! (*Draws his dagger melodramatically. PSEUDOLUS wrests it from him.*)

PSEUDOLUS. Behave yourself! (*Begins casually cleaning his nails with dagger.*) She was sold?

LYCUS. To the great captain, Miles Gloriosus, who comes this day to claim her. She cost 500 minae.

PSEUDOLUS. (*Amazed.*) Five hundred!

LYCUS. A great sum, to be sure. But being a man of conquest, his heart was set on a virgin.

START

PSEUDOLUS. You say she just arrived from Crete?

LYCUS. Yes.

PSEUDOLUS. Mmm. I hope the great captain is kind to her. She deserves a bit of affection before . . . (*Sighs, then to HERO.*) Tragic, is it not? (*HERO moans.*)

LYCUS. What is tragic?

PSEUDOLUS. The news from Crete.

LYCUS. What news?

PSEUDOLUS. Why should I darken your day? Farewell, Lycus.

LYCUS. (*Grabs him.*) What is the news?

PSEUDOLUS. What news?

LYCUS. The news from Crete.

PSEUDOLUS. I heard it. Tragic.

LYCUS. Pseudolus!

Side B

PSEUDOLUS. You force me to tell you! Crete is ravaged by a great plague. People are dying by the thousands.

LYCUS. But this girl is healthy. She goes smiling through the day.

PSEUDOLUS. She doesn't! I thought you knew. When they start to smile, the end is near.

LYCUS. No!

PSEUDOLUS. Yes. I am told it is lovely now in Crete. Everyone lying there, smiling.

LYCUS. Is it contagious?

PSEUDOLUS. Did you ever see a plague that wasn't?

LYCUS. My other girls!

PSEUDOLUS. You had best get her out of there.

HERO. Yes!

LYCUS. And then?

PSEUDOLUS. I could look after her until the captain comes.

HERO. He could!

LYCUS. But would you not be . . . ?

PSEUDOLUS. I have already had the plague. I would tell you about it but . . . (*Pantomimes disgust.*)

LYCUS. I do hope she lives until the captain gets here. (*Exits into his house.*)

HERO. Pseudolus, I am to be with her!

PSEUDOLUS. Until the captain arrives.

HERO. (*Sadly.*) Yes.

END

~~PSEUDOLUS. Wait! (*Thinks a moment.*)~~