When in Rome...

Book by Martin A. Folloose
Music and Lyrics by Bill Francoeur

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WHEN IN ROME...
Book by Martin A. Folose
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CAST OF CHARACTERS
(In Order of Speaking)

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<td>old lady in the marketplace</td>
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<td>MINIMUS</td>
<td>friend to Gladius; skinny and shorter than Gladius</td>
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<td>GLADIUS</td>
<td>peasant who becomes a gladiator; not the strongest or the bravest, but he will have to do</td>
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<td>partner in crime with Gladius and Minimus</td>
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<td>daughter of the emperor; rude and doesn't like men</td>
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<td>MAID</td>
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<td>ALTILIS</td>
<td>highest senator and a real chicken</td>
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<td>runs messages between the emperor and the princess</td>
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<td>VERBALINA</td>
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<td>SASILLA</td>
<td>still another senator's wife</td>
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<td>LAFFINA</td>
<td>another senator's wife, only giggles</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<td>ATTENDANT</td>
<td>attendant to the princess</td>
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<td>BRUDIS</td>
<td>massive gladiator of few words</td>
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<td>FINA</td>
<td>peasant friend of Gladius</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>EMPEROR</td>
<td>the one and only</td>
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<td>MUSES</td>
<td>backup singers</td>
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<tr>
<td>EXTRAS</td>
<td>as CITIZENS (VENDORS, SHOPPERS, SPECTATORS, SOLDIERS, STREET ENTERTAINERS), PEASANTS, SLAVES</td>
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SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT ONE
Scene One: The marketplace. One day in ancient Rome.
Scene Two: A room in the palace/The marketplace. Later that day.

ACT TWO
Scene One: The marketplace. That same day.
Scene Two: Outside the palace, played on the FORESTAGE. Late that night.
Scene Three: The arena of the gladiator games. The next day.

SET
The set consists of rock walls UPSTAGE with a movable railed platform (about thirty inches high) UP RIGHT to represent a balcony. In ACT ONE, Scene One, the platform overlooks the marketplace. There can be booths from which VENDORS sell their fruits and goods, or they can sell their wares from carts or vendor trays. In ACT ONE, Scene Two, the platform is moved DOWN RIGHT to overlook the audience, with the rest of the stage as the palace interior. Tables, chairs and pictures can be placed around the room with many gold items for JULIA to steal. Later in this scene, a cardboard cutout of a chariot is brought on in front of the stage. In ACT TWO, Scene Three, the platform is moved UP CENTER to represent the royal box at the arena where the gladiator games take place. All props are removed for this final scene. Two stools are placed on opposite ends of the STAGE to give the feel of a boxing ring.
### SEQUENCE OF MUSICAL NUMBERS

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<td>MC 10d</td>
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WHEN IN ROME...

PROLOGUE

IN DARKNESS: MUSIC CUE 1: "When In Rome—Prologue." LIGHTS UP DIM on FORESTAGE. The MUSES ENTER LEFT and RIGHT in a slow processional. (NOTE: There were nine muses in ancient Rome. However, as few as three or as many as desired can be used.) They wear hooded robes over their togas and carry torches (fake, of course!). They move CENTER.

MUSES: (Chant in unison as a "Greek Chorus." Stoic, with pride.) Rome! A shining example of modern civilization. Rome! Cultural center of the universe. Rome! A vortex of mankind's most glorious achievements. Rome! An empire of togas and tunics... and soldiers in short skirts. Yes, my friends, we are the chosen people of the god, Jupiter. We are the undisputed rulers of the world. We are Romans, and we are way cool! (During the following procession, the MUSES move DOWN RIGHT and LEFT or to an area IN FRONT of the STAGE. The ENSEMBLE as CITIZENS ENTERS in a procession from the back of the auditorium [or from LEFT or RIGHT]. A SPOTLIGHT follows the procession. A COLUMN of ROMAN SOLDIERS ENTER first. The lead SOLDIER carries the ancient Roman flag. [See PRODUCTION NOTES.] The SOLDIERS are followed by a FEMALE ATTENDANT holding a basket of flower petals that she tosses on the ground. The LITTER BEARERS carrying the EMPEROR and the PRINCESS ENTER next. [NOTE: If you choose not to use litters, the EMPEROR and the PRINCESS may simply ENTER with their SLAVES behind them, waving palm leaves or fans over the heads of the two.] They are followed IN by the ATTENDANT(S) and MAID(S) of the PRINCESS. ALTILOS [and additional SENATORS] ENTER next, followed by the SENATORS' WIVES. They are in turn followed by the rest of the CITIZENS, who are carrying banners or signs. [See PRODUCTION NOTES.] GLADIUS, MINIMUS and JULIA are part of this last group.)

ENSEMBLE: (Except the EMPEROR and PRINCESS. Chants.) Vivat Imperator Romae diutissime! (VEE-VAHT IM-PEAR-AH-TORE ROW-MY DEE-OO-TEE-SEE-MAY)

Vivat Imperator Romae diutissime!
May the Emperor of Rome live a very long life!
May the Emperor of Rome live a very long life!
Vivat Imperator Romae diutissime!

Vivat Imperator Romae diutissime!
May the Emperor of Rome live a very long life!
May the Emperor of Rome live a very long life! (The ENSEMBLE proceeds to the stage and files across the FOREFRONT, with the EMPEROR and PRINCESS DOWN CENTER. [NOTE: If litters are used, they are placed on the ground whereupon the EMPEROR and PRINCESS step down from the litter.] During the BRASS FANFARE, the CURTAIN OPENS. LIGHTS UP FULL. The ENSEMBLE moves ONSTAGE into the marketplace where the CITIZENS become VENDORS, SHOPPERS, STREET ENTERTAINERS, etc. Lots of CHATTER and CROWD NOISE. Sing.) When in Rome, do as the Romans do!
When in Rome, do as the Romans do!
When in Rome, do as the Romans do!
When in Rome, do as the Romans do!

MUSES/FEMALE CITIZENS: (Sing.)
Welcome, weary travelers, I hear you’ve just arrived.
With barbarians along the way, it’s a wonder you survived!

MALE CITIZENS: (Sing.)
Welcome, blessed wanderers, consider this your home.
By now I’m sure you’ve noticed that all roads lead to Rome.

ENSEMBLE: (Sings.)
Rest a while, kick up your feet, have a soothing Roman bath,
Then cruise the ancient marketplace straight down the garden path.
When in Rome, do as the Romans do!
When in Rome, do as the Romans do!
When in Rome, do as the Romans do!
When in Rome, do as the Romans do!

MUSES/FEMALE CITIZENS: (Sing.)
Buy your ticket for the races at the Circus Maximus,
Twelve screamin’ demon chariots, all chumin’ up the dust!

MALE CITIZENS: (Sing.)
The Colosseum’s down the block, it’s a well-known tourist site.
We guarantee a spectacle when the gladiators fight!

ENSEMBLE: (Except MUSES. Sings.)
Sing your praises to the gods at the sacred Pantheon,
Then close your eyes and bow your head
As the muses chant their song...

MUSES: (Sing.) Ah-ah-ah-ah-ah-ah-ah-ah-ah-ah-ah-ah-
Ah-ah-ah-ah-ah-ah-ah-ah-ah-ah-ah!

ENSEMBLE: (Sings.)
When in Rome, do as the Romans do!
When in Rome, do as the Romans do!
When in Rome, do as the Romans do!
When in Rome, do as the Romans do!

**CITIZENS:** *(Sing.)*
When in Rome, do as the Romans do!
When in Rome, do as the Romans do!
When in Rome, do as the Romans do!
When in Rome...

**ENSEMBLE:** *(Sings.)* ...do as the Romans do!
Do as the Romans do!

**MUSES:** *(Chant.)*
Ah! Ah!
Ah! Ah!
Ah! Ah!
Ah!

**ENSEMBLE:** *(Sings.)* ...do as the Romans do!
Do as the Romans do! *(MUSIC OUT. BLACKOUT.)*

End of PROLOGUE

**ACT ONE**

**Scene One**

LIGHTS UP: The marketplace just outside the royal palace in ancient Rome. The balcony of the PRINCESS’S palace is UP RIGHT, overlooking the marketplace. CITIZENS in the marketplace are VENDORS, SHOPPERS and PEASANTS, bustling as they ad-lib. JULIA is among them. GLADIUS and MINIMUS ENTER, secretly planning. GLADIUS steals a handbag from a LADY, who screams.

**LADY:** Help! Stop him! Stop him! He has robbed me! *(A few of the PEASANTS and CITIZENS begin to chase GLADIUS OFF.)*

**MINIMUS:** *(Goes to LADY and consoles her.)* My lady, are you hurt?

**LADY:** No, but someone stole my money.

**MINIMUS:** It is a shameful thing, these robbers. The city is full of them. *(Turns her around so that she is facing away from GLADIUS as he ENTERS and rushes across the STAGE and OUT. He is still being chased, now by a MOB OF PEASANTS and CITIZENS. MINIMUS waves him on. As GLADIUS passes, the LADY sees him.)*

**LADY:** *(Points at GLADIUS.)* I think that was him.

**MINIMUS:** Are you sure? What color was the robber’s clothing?

**LADY:** Brown. *(Or whatever color it is.)*

**MINIMUS:** Brown? Are you sure that it wasn’t blue?

**LADY:** Blue? No, I think it was brown.

**MINIMUS:** But the sun was in your eyes when you were robbed. Are you sure that the man who robbed you wasn’t wearing a blue robe?

**LADY:** Well, now that I think about it, it was blue. *(MINIMUS turns her around again so that she is facing away from GLADIUS as he ENTERS again. MINIMUS waves GLADIUS on. GLADIUS rushes OFF, followed OUT by the MOB. The LADY sees him again.)* Wasn’t that him?
MINIMUS: That couldn't be him. That man was wearing a brown robe, and you said that the robber was wearing blue.

LADY: I did?

MINIMUS: Yes. Now, was the robber short or tall?

LADY: He was a tall man, taller than you.

MINIMUS: Taller than I? Are you sure? Robbers are usually short people. That way they can hide better. Wasn't your robber a short man?

LADY: No, I am sure that he was a tall man, taller than you.

MINIMUS: Maybe it was the angle at which you saw him as you were robbed. A man close up can look tall when he is really quite small.

LADY: Well, maybe he was a short man.

MINIMUS: Yes, I think that you are right. He was short. (Turns her around again. GLADIUS rushes ON and OFF again with the MOB close behind. Waves him on.) Now, was he really a man, or was he a she?

LADY: What? No, I am sure that he was a man.

MINIMUS: But it happened so fast. Are you sure?

LADY: Yes, I am sure. He was a man.

MINIMUS: But that long, flowing hair...

LADY: Long hair?

MINIMUS: Yes, didn't you see the long, flowing hair and that feminine shape?

LADY: (Unsure.) I guess I must have.

MINIMUS: Yes, I think your robber was a short woman in blue clothing. Am I right?

LADY: Yes. Yes, you are right. The person who robbed me was a short woman in blue clothing.

GLADIUS: (Rushes ON. MINIMUS trips him. Falls and is caught by the MOB.) Unhand me. I have done nothing wrong.

MOB MEMBER #1: You robbed a poor old lady in the marketplace.

MOB MEMBER #2: And we will see you punished for this. (They pull him over to the LADY.)

MOB MEMBER #1: My lady, is this the man who robbed you? (LADY takes a close look at him and seems to recognize him, but before she can speak, MINIMUS speaks.)

MINIMUS: This can't be the man who robbed this poor, lovely lady. She has told me that the assailant was a short woman in blue clothing. Isn't that right, my lady?
LADY: Well, he does look a little bit like the—

MINIMUS: You said that the robber was wearing blue clothing, right?

LADY: Yes, I did say that.

MINIMUS: And this poor man is clearly in brown clothing. Dress that obviously, by smell, needs cleaning. You said that the robber was short, right?

LADY: Yes, I did say that.

MINIMUS: And this man is taller than I. And you did say that the robber was a woman, right?

LADY: Yes, I said that also.

MINIMUS: And although this person has fair skin (Pats GLADIUS'S cheek,) and a feminine way about him, he is clearly a man. So, unhand this poor unfortunate man, who clearly is a tall man in brown clothing.

LADY: He's right. He is not the one who robbed me. (The PEASANTS let GLADIUS go.)

MINIMUS: And now, will you fine Romans take this lady to the soldiers and report this awful crime?

MOB MEMBER #2: Yes, of course. Come, my lady, we will take you to the soldiers. (They EXIT. The VENDORS, SHOPPERS and PEASANTS go about their business quietly in the background. GLADIUS and MINIMUS move DOWNSTAGE.)

GLADIUS: What took you so long?

MINIMUS: She was not an easy woman to convince. Next time, pick an older woman with poor eyesight.

GLADIUS: Old women with poor eyesight have little money to steal.

MINIMUS: How much did we get?

GLADIUS: (Pulls out the stolen handbag and opens it.) Three gold pieces.

MINIMUS: Only three? Hardly worth the effort.

GLADIUS: The effort? It was I who was chased.

MINIMUS: And it was I who had to use his quick tongue to convince the old lady that you weren't the robber. Otherwise, you would have been thrown to the lions, which, I might add, would be very entertaining.

GLADIUS: Not for the lions, as I would take them with one hand tied behind my back.

MINIMUS: You would only have one hand, for the other would be in the lion's mouth.

GLADIUS: Why do you think so little of me?
MINIMUS: Because you only brought us three gold pieces. (*Flips the coins as JULIA comes forward.*)

JULIA: I think that I will have my share.

MINIMUS: Your share? Just who are you?

JULIA: I am the woman who saw you rob that old woman of her money.


JULIA: Maybe the soldiers will be interested in what I saw. (*Begins to call OFF.*) Oh, Roman soldiers!

MINIMUS: Wait! Do you want this poor man thrown to the lions?

JULIA: That would be very entertaining.

GLADIUS: Not for the lion, as I would take the lion—

MINIMUS: Yes, yes, we’ve heard it all before.

JULIA: And so, shall I call the Roman soldiers?

GLADIUS: They are not very nice people.

JULIA: And neither am I, if I don’t get what I want.

MINIMUS: Give us a moment. (*Pulls GLADIUS DOWNSTAGE.*) Do you think we can take her?

GLADIUS: (*Looks back at JULIA as she puts her hand on her hips. To MINIMUS.*) Nope.

MINIMUS: Then we have to share our loot with her. (*Returns to JULIA.*) How do we know that you won’t go to the soldiers after we share the loot with you?

JULIA: You don’t.

GLADIUS: (*To MINIMUS.*) I think she’s got us.

MINIMUS: Very well. Here is your share. (*Flips her a coin.*)

JULIA: Just one gold coin?

MINIMUS: She was a poor woman.

GLADIUS: And now she is a little poorer.

JULIA: So, what is our next job?

MINIMUS: Our next job? We work as a duet, not a trio.

JULIA: (*Calls OFF.*) Roman soldiers!

MINIMUS: All right, all right. Just don’t call the soldiers.

JULIA: My name is Julia.

MINIMUS: My name is Minimus.

GLADIUS: But his friends call him Mini.

JULIA: (*Looks him over.*) Appropriate.

MINIMUS: And this is Gladius.
GLADIUS: But my friends call me Gladis.

JULIA: (To MINIMUS.) Gladis? Isn't that a girl's name?

MINIMUS: (To JULIA.) Don't tell him that. It would hurt his self-esteem.

JULIA: Now that I am a member of the gang, I think that we should hit bigger targets than old women.

GLADIUS: But old women are easy to rob.

JULIA: Do you enjoy being chased?

GLADIUS: It's how I get my exercise.

JULIA: You must be very healthy.

GLADIUS: (Proud.) As a horse.

MINIMUS: Whinny for the lady.

GLADIUS: (Whinnies but is interrupted when the PRINCESS ENTERS the balcony UP R IGHT.) Look! Who is that? (They all look to the PRINCESS.)

JULIA: It's the princess.

GLADIUS: She is so beautiful. I would give anything to be near her.

JULIA: If you were caught near her, you would give your life. She has nothing to do with people like us. We are peasants, she is royalty.

GLADIUS: What do royalty have that I do not? (LIGHTS DIM on the marketplace scene behind them. [CITIZENS may FREEZE during song, if desired.] MUSIC CUE 2: "I Could Be Royalty.")

MINIMUS: (Speaks.) Uh, well, let's see...

(Sings.) They all have money.

JULIA: (Sings.) And property.

MINIMUS: (Sings.) And money.

JULIA: (Sings.) And fine clothes.

MINIMUS: (Sings.) And money.

JULIA: (Sings.) Everyone knows...

MINIMUS/JULIA: (Sing.) ...that they've got brains.

MINIMUS: (Sings.) And money... 

JULIA: (Sings.) Yes, honey...

MINIMUS: (Sings.) ...lots of money

JULIA: (Sings.) ...you're simple and you're squeamish.

MINIMUS/JULIA: (Sing.)

Everyone knows you're a dorkus supremus.

GLADIUS: (Speaks.) I am not!
JULIA:  (Sings.) They eat the best foods...
MINIMUS: (Sings.) The best foods.
JULIA: (Sings.) ...then take a royal bath.
MINIMUS: (Sings.) They’re educated...
JULIA: (Speaks in rhythm.) Oh, yeah.
MINIMUS: (Sings.) ...in both science and math.
JULIA: (Sings.) They’re royal statesmen...
MINIMUS: (Sings.) ...philosophers...
JULIA: (Sings.) ...or muscle-bound he-men...
MINIMUS/JULIA: (Sing.) ...something you’re not!
MINIMUS: (Sings.) Julius Caesar, now there was a man.
    He ruled the people with a strong iron hand.
    He wore a white silk toga trimmed in gold.
    He had twenty thousand slaves, or so I’ve been told. (MUSIC
    UNDER.)
GLADIUS: (Speaks.) Okay, okay, so they have what I don’t. But give
    me money and fine clothes and...
MINIMUS: (Speaks.) Brains?
GLADIUS: (Speaks.) Oh, yes, and brains. Give me all this, and I
    could be royalty. I could lead the masses. I could...
JULIA: (Speaks.) Eat till you are fat and lazy like the senators.
MINIMUS: (Pats GLADIUS’S tummy. Speaks.) You do like to eat.
JULIA: (Speaks; to MINIMUS.) And he’s already lazy.
GLADIUS: (Speaks.) Aw, what do you two know?
    (Sings) I could be emperor. I could be royalty.
    If I had money, surely then you would see,
    I’d have the princess, the servants, the brains,
    And I’d have the throne!
    if I were Caesar, I would be king of the hill.
    If I had money, I could be first on the bill.
    Command the armies, the Senate, the empire,
    All on my own!
JULIA: (Sings.) Now Cleopatra, that was a queen.
    The most beautiful and classy chick the world’s ever seen.
    Cruisin’ down the Nile on her Egyptian yacht,
    She was a vision of royalty, something you’re not!
MINIMUS/JULIA: (Sing.) The woman was hot!
    (The following section is sung as a TRIO. [See MUSIC SCORE.])
GLADIUS: (Sings; dreamy,) I could be emperor. I could be royalty.
    If I had money, surely then you would see,
I’d have the princess, the servants, the brains,
And I’d have the throne!

MINIMUS: (Sings.) They all have money.

JULIA: (Sings.) And property.

MINIMUS: (Sings.) And money.

JULIA: (Sings.) And fine clothes.

MINIMUS: (Sings.) And money.

JULIA: (Sings.) Everyone knows…

MINIMUS/JULIA: (Sing.) …that they’ve got brains.

MINIMUS: (Sings.) And money…

JULIA: (Sings.) Yes, honey…

MINIMUS: (Sings.) Lots of money.

JULIA: (Sings.) …you’re simple and you’re squeamish.

MINIMUS/JULIA: (Sing.)

Everyone knows you’re a dorkus supremus.
(\textit{The following section is again sung as a TRIO. [See MUSIC \\SCORE.\!]})

GLADIUS: (Sings.) If I were Caesar, I would be king of the hill.
If I had money, I could be first on the bill.
Command the armies, the Senate, the empire,
All on my own!

MINIMUS: (Sings.) Money.

JULIA: (Sings.) And property.

MINIMUS: (Sings.) And money.

JULIA: (Sings.) And fine clothes.

MINIMUS: (Sings.) And money.

JULIA: (Sings.) Everyone knows…

MINIMUS/JULIA: (Sing.) …that they’ve got brains.

MINIMUS: (Sings.) And money…

JULIA: (Sings.) Yes, honey…

MINIMUS: (Sings.) …lots of money

JULIA: (Sings.) …you’re simple and you’re squeamish.

MINIMUS/JULIA: (Sing.)

Everyone knows you’re a dorkus supremus. (\textit{End of TRIO.})

GLADIUS: (Sings.) If I had money…

MINIMUS/JULIA: (Sing.) If he had money…

GLADIUS: (Sings.) I’d be on top…

MINIMUS/JULIA: (Sing.) He’d be on top…
GLADIUS/MINIMUS/JULIA: (Sing.) ...of the world!
   On top of the world!
   On top of the world! (A loud whisper.) Yeah! (MUSIC OUT.
MINIMUS and JULIA laugh at GLADIUS. LIGHTS UP FULL on
marketplace as business continues.)

GLADIUS: You two laugh at me now, but someday I will get the last
laugh.

JULIA: And if you do, Gladis, remember your other gang members.

MINIMUS: Yeah, with more than three gold pieces. (Flips a coin to
GLADIUS. MAID ENTERS UP RIGHT, next to PRINCESS.)

PRINCESS: They amuse me.

MAID: Who amuses you?

PRINCESS: The peasants. They live like animals.

MAID: They are animals.

PRINCESS: That one down there, he looks like a baboon.

MAID: Baboon? (Looks at GLADIUS.) He doesn’t even look that
good.

GLADIUS: Look! She’s pointing at me.

JULIA: Don’t flatter yourself. She looks right through people like us.

GLADIUS: No, I am sure of it. (Proud.) She has noticed me.

MINIMUS: Noticed you? Maybe she just wants to pick the next
peasant to be thrown to the lions.

GLADIUS: She can obviously tell that I could hold my own in the
arena.

JULIA: Or that you would make a good meal for her pet. (Pats his
ummy.)

PRINCESS: Look at them. Pawing at each other. There is not a shred
of decency in them.

MAID: They are what they are. They will never change. A leopard
cannot change its spots.

PRINCESS: Ah, but a leopard can be trained. As for these peasants,
they haven’t the brains of a leopard.

GLADIUS: She still looks my way. Shall I throw her a kiss?

MINIMUS: Only if you want an arrow in return.

JULIA: Through your heart.

GLADIUS: But my heart is breaking for her.

MINIMUS: Better to have your heart broken than pierced by an
arrow.

GLADIUS: I must be near her... to tell her how I feel.
JULIA: You speak of crazy things.

MINIMUS: Things that would bring your death.

GLADIUS: Then I shall die in my attempt.

JULIA: But the only ones who get near her are her servants.

MINIMUS: And they are all ladies.

GLADIUS: Then I shall become a lady.

MINIMUS: Oh, that sounds very painful.

GLADIUS: Julia, I need your help.

JULIA: My help? What for?

GLADIUS: Come, I’ll tell you later.

MINIMUS: What about me?

GLADIUS: You can come, too. A lady never walks the streets alone.

(GLADIUS and JULIA EXIT.)

MINIMUS: What are you talking about? (EXITs. PRINCESS and MAID EXIT UP RIGHT.)

ALTILIS: (ENTERS and walks across the STAGE. As he reaches CENTER, MESSENGER rushes IN and bumps him as he passes him and continues.) Hey, boy. Stop! (MESSENGER stops.) Come here, boy. (MESSENGER crosses to ALTILIS.) Why are you in such a hurry?

MESSENGER: I have a message from the emperor for his daughter.

ALTILIS: A message from the emperor? But he is on the front lines of the battle.

MESSENGER: Yes, I know. I ran all the way.

ALTILIS: Let me see the message.

MESSENGER: But it is for the daughter of the emperor.

ALTILIS: I am the highest senator in the empire. I am sure that you have heard of me, Senator Atilis.

MESSENGER: Atilis? Doesn’t Atilis mean “fattened bird” in Latin?

ALTILIS: Yes, then you have heard of me?

MESSENGER: Nope, never heard of you.

ALTILIS: Well, you have now. And now the message. (Holds out his hand.)

MESSENGER: But the message—

ALTILIS: You will show me the message, or I shall have you fed to the lions. (Grabs the paper and reads.) So, the battle is not going well, and he wants all available men to join the battle. (Reads further.) What? Even the senators! Why, one could be killed in a battle.

MESSENGER: That’s usually how it works.
ALTLILIS: (Reads on.) Ah, but one senator shall stay behind to manage the affairs of the empire. (Reads on.) What? The emperor’s daughter will select the senator. This is an outrage... unless I am that senator. Now, how can I make sure that I am the senator who stays behind? This will take a quick tongue, but I must have time before the emperor’s daughter receives this message. Boy, I want you to run three times around Rome before you enter the palace to deliver this message.

MESSENGER: What? But I have already run a long way.

ALTLILIS: So, a few more miles won’t hurt. Do as I say, or you will become meow mix, if you get what I mean.

MESSENGER: (Takes the note.) And to think that someone told me that this was going to be an easy job.

ALTLILIS: Oh, and if we meet again, you don’t know me. Do you understand?

MESSENGER: I didn’t want to know you in the first place.

ALTLILIS: Now run along, but not too quickly. I must have time to talk to the emperor’s daughter. (MESSENGER runs OUT. Calls OFF.) And remember, three times around Rome.

MESSENGER: (RE-ENTERS.) Can I add these extra miles to my frequent flyer miles?

ALTLILIS: No! Now be gone with you. (MESSENGER EXITS.) And now a visit with the emperor’s daughter. (WIVES ENTER. Sees them and tries to slip away from them.)

IMPELLA: Senator Altilis, may we have a word with you?

ALTLILIS: I was just on my way to a very important meeting.

VERBALINA: This will only take a minute. The ladies and I have been wanting a more active role in our empire. These senators’ wives and I have formed a group. Some of the ladies want to call it a club, but when you have a club you have to have rules and elect officers, and we just figured that we didn’t want to get into all that, so we have formed a group.

ALTLILIS: A group? Really?

SASILLA: We have named ourselves the Senators’ Wives.

ALTLILIS: Catchy title.

SASILLA: Yes, it is. I thought of it myself. And we have been talking about what we can do to make our society better.

ALTLILIS: (Interrupts.) Our society better? Just how can you make Rome better?

SASILLA: We would like to become philanthropists.
1 ALTILIS: Philanthropists? What is a philanthropist?

VERBALINA: A philanthropist is a person who raises money for the poor. Well, you can do more than just raise money, you can give some of your time. Of course, you can’t give anyone time, that’s impossible, but you can volunteer your time. You know, do something for the poor, like work at a soup kitchen, or—

ALTILIS: A soup kitchen?

VERBALINA: Yes, a soup kitchen. It’s a place for poor people to get some soup.

IMPELLA: I think he gets the idea, Verbalina. What we want to do is raise money and give it to the poor.

ALTILIS: Give money to the poor? But we tax the poor so that we can have money. Why would we want to give money back to them?

IMPELLA: They have so little, and we have so much.

ALTILIS: That’s the way things are supposed to be. It’s called government.

IMPELLA: But, Senator Altiiis, we feel very strongly about helping the poor. Isn’t that right, Laffina? (LAFFINA giggles.)

ALTILIS: Well, if you want to waste your time, it’s fine with me. (To himself.) Maybe we could tax the poor on the money we give them. (To EVERYONE.) Just how do you propose to raise money?

VERBALINA: We would like to sell something at the next gladiator games.

ALTILIS: But a gladiator game isn’t like a football game. You can’t just walk up and down the aisles selling things.

SASILLA: We believe that it’s a perfect place to make money.

ALTILIS: Just exactly what would you sell?

IMPELLA: We were thinking of lizard on a stick.


IMPELLA: But it’s quite a delicacy in some countries.

ALTILIS: But not in Rome. I will not have you selling lizards on a stick at my gladiator games.

SASILLA: Very well, I’m sure that we can come up with something else.

IMPELLA: Yes, ladies, we have a lot of work to do.

ALTILIS: And speaking of work, I have my own to do. If you ladies will excuse me. (EXITS, followed OUT by WIVES. PEASANTS take their wares and EXIT. BLACKOUT.)

End of Scene One
PRODUCTION NOTES

PROPERTIES

ONSTAGE, PROLOGUE/ACT ONE, Scene One:
- Rock walls along UPSTAGE, platform with railing to represent balcony, booths or carts of fruit and other goods to represent the marketplace (these could also be brought on by VENDORS on trays, if desired)

BROUGHT ON, PROLOGUE:
- Torches [fake, of course!] (MUSES)
- Roman flag (ROMAN SOLDIER)
- Basket of flower petals (FEMALE ATTENDANT)
- Optional litter(s) carrying Princess and Emperor. Otherwise, palm leaves or fans (SLAVES)
- Banners and signs (CITIZENS)

BROUGHT ON, ACT ONE, Scene One:
- Handbag with three gold coins (LADY)
- Paper message (MESSENGER)

ONSTAGE, ACT ONE, Scene Two:
- Platform with railing, items to represent the interior of the palace (tables, chairs, pictures, other expensive-looking items for JULIA to steal)

BROUGHT ON, ACT ONE, Scene Two:
- Scroll of papyrus (MAID)
- Paper message (MESSENGER)
- Feather pen (PRINCESS)
- Cardboard cutout chariot, stool, table with microphone, headphones (DEEJAY)

ONSTAGE, ACT TWO, Scene One:
- Same as ACT ONE, Scene One

BROUGHT ON, ACT TWO, Scene One:
- Various wares, including fruit cart, togas, weapons, a stuffed sheep (CITIZENS)
- Paper message (MESSENGER)
- Swords (GLADIUS, JULIA)
- Bag containing lizard on a stick [this can be made from flattened bread dough, baked with a stick and then green icing and M&Ms for eyes], a program (SASILLA)
- Pet rock (IMPELLA)
- Feather pen (PRINCESS)
- Two gourds (MINIMUS)
BROUGHT ON, ACT TWO, Scene Two:
   Torches (MUSES)

ONSTAGE, ACT TWO, Scene Three:
   Two stools at opposite ends of the stage

BROUGHT ON, ACT TWO, Scene Three:
   Gourd (MINIMUS)
   Whip, chair, ball and chain [fake, of course!], net, swords
      (ATTENDANT)
   Several programs, lizards on sticks and pet rocks in bags or
      on vendor trays (WIVES)
   Cup of water, slingshot (JULIA)

SOUND EFFECTS
   Chihuahua barking, boxing bell (included on CD).

COSTUMES
   The Romans should wear tunics with belts. GLADIUS and
   MINIMUS wear wigs and long skirts when they appear as the
   PRINCESS’S ATTENDANTS in ACT ONE, Scene Two. The
   PRINCESS wears plain Roman attire when she is training
   GLADIUS in ACT TWO, Scene One.

ABOUT THE PROCESSION
   The procession should be fast-paced yet ominous (footsteps and
   rattling armor can be heard on the CD). It should have an air of the
   exotic. The ENSEMBLE should ENTER proudly, with heads held
   high—lots of energy, bravado and big voices. The AUDIENCE
   should feel as if the entire Roman nation has literally marched into
   your auditorium!

ABOUT THE LITTERS
   It would be quite spectacular if the EMPEROR and PRINCESS
   were to be carried in on separate litters by their slaves. Litters
   could be made simply from a stretcher or a folding cot covered
   with a colorful piece of material attached which hangs to the floor
   when the litter is raised. Two long poles could be fastened to each
   side, which would be used to pick up the litter. The EMPEROR
   and PRINCESS can be in full view of your audience or hidden
   away in a small tent-like structure placed on top of the litter. The
   litters should be colorful and have a look of royalty.

   If you choose not to use litters, the EMPEROR and PRINCESS
   can simply enter with their SLAVES behind them fanning them
   with large cardboard fans painted to look like palm leaves.
ABOUT THE ROMAN FLAG

The flag of ancient Rome was square-shaped and dark red with gold lettering. From top left to bottom right, the letters S. P. Q. R. (Senatus Populusque Romanus—the Senate and People of Rome) are placed on the flag. This was the official monogram of the Roman Republic, like “USA” represents the United States. This flag should be carried by the LEAD SOLDIER during the procession.

THE CITIZENS

The banners and/or signs carried by the CITIZENS could have a variety of expressions such as “I Love Rome” (à la the “I Love New York” logo) or “Veni, Vidi, Vici” (“We came, we saw, we conquered”), “All roads lead to Rome,” “Rome wasn’t built in a day,” “Et tu Brute?” “Civis Romanus sum” (“I am a Roman citizen”), etc. CITIZENS could also carry small flags of different colors to wave as they enter. If a more traditional approach is desired, the CITIZENS could wave olive branches.

For “Long Live the Games,” CITIZENS can be dressed as modern-day sports fanatics—faces painted, wearing wild hats and clothing, perhaps with a favorite gladiator on a banner or t-shirt (i.e., BRUDIS). They could bring on other “tailgate” props such as coolers, barbeque grills, lawn chairs, baseball caps, etc.

THE MUSES

The nine MUSES of ancient Rome were inspirational (though fictitious) representatives of poetry, science and the arts. Thus, during the play, they are not only backup singers but also spiritual guides and teachers, like guardian angels of the Roman people, if you will. The number of MUSES used in the show can vary depending upon the size of your production. As few as three MUSES could be used or as many as is desired.

The basic costume for the MUSES is a white toga/tunic and sandals that can be dressed up with a variety of accessories such as wigs, hats, feathered boas, high heels, sunglasses, etc. A breakdown of items needed for each song is as follows:

When in Rome—Prologue: White hooded robes over togas

Nothing Ever Changes in Rome: 60s Beehive hairdo wigs, high-heels and feathered boas

Long Live the Games: Think Mardi Gras. Headpieces with fruit on top (à la Carmen Miranda), colorful scarves wrapped around the waist, feathers in the hair, a variety of carnival masks

I’m Gonna Die: Black fedoras, dark glasses (à la “The Blues Brothers”), black feathered boas, high heels
Rome Wasn’t Built in a Day: Think circus. A little clown makeup (go lightly as it has to be taken off before the next song), red clown noses and balloons or cotton candy
I Got Obligations: Cowboy hats, cowboy boots and bandanas
On This Night: White hooded robes over togas
Who Let the Lions Out?: Chant from OFFSTAGE if extra voices are needed.
The Last Gladiator Standing: Choir robes
When in Rome—Epilogue: White hooded robes over togas
Curtain Call: The basic toga outfit or anything/a little of everything from the show.
We hope you’ve enjoyed this script sample.

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