

Slave.

Says nothing.

Senator.

Iam patribus suāsī ut omnem familiam suppliciō afficiāmus sine ūllā exceptiōne: hominēsque mulierēsque infāntēsque; ueterēs et iuuenēs.

I have just convinced my fellow senators to put the whole household to death without exception, men, women, children, old and young.

Slave.

Eō tempore quantās aerumnās tulī ! Iliās malōrum ! Edepol ! In meā clūne "lactizāte!" cauteriō ustum est. Sīc erat... multī iocī, certē !

I was in trouble then, of course I was. A sea of troubles! Jeez. They branded "kick me" on my behind. I tell you what, there was a lot of banter, for sure.

Poet.

Ego nōn seruus sum. Seruōs Pedānīi nōn nōui. Hominēs tōtōs cūrāre studeo, uērumst, sed nōn possum. Culpam poena premit comes.

Horace, Carmina IV.5.24

I am not a slave. I do not know the slaves of Pedanius. I try to care for all people, it's true, but it's not possible. *Punishment goes hand-in-hand with crime.*

First woman.

Rēs est trīstis. Seruī nostrī amīcī sunt dē illīs moritūrīs.

It's a sad business. Our slaves are close to the those who will be executed.

Second woman.

Certē ! Et ob hanc causam agere dēbēmus ut morbus nōn peruādat. Pedānius, uir cōsulāris, interfectus est per insidiās seruīlīs. Sī seruōs impūnītātōs dīmīttāmus, quis proximus caedātur ā famulō suō ? Ego ? Tū ?

Exactly. That's the reason why we need to act before the disease spreads. Pedanius, a man of consular rank, has been killed by a conspiracy of slaves. If we were to let the slaves go unpunished, who next would be murdered by their own slave? Me? You?

First woman.

Sed poena tam dūrissima est. Nōnne aliter fierī potest ?

It's just such a harsh punishment. Is there no other way?

Condemned slave.

Vōs obsecro, mihi īgnōscite.

Please, please, be merciful to me.

Nero's agent.

Sī uōce grātā cecineris tibi parcēmus. Age, cane.

If you read well we'll spare you. Come on, read.

Condemned slave.

Imperātōrī grātiās !

Thanks be to the emperor.

Ego nōn sum imperātor. Quālem blennum !

I'm not the emperor. What an idiot!

Condemned slave.

**Tū regere imperiō populōs, Rōmāne, mementō;
hae tibi erunt artēs; pācisque impōnere mōrem,
parcere subiectīs, et dēbellāre superbōs.**

Virgil, Aeneid VI, 851-3

You, Roman, remember to rule the nations with your power – here lies your talent – and to impose your way of life on a foundation of peace, to spare the conquered and subdue the proud.

Trader.

Bona opera facimus. Quadringentī seruī nouī ? Facilis. Pretium bonum semper damus, uērōst.

We do a good job. 400 new slaves? Not a problem. We'll give a good price, we always do.

Poet.

Uērō pater meus libertīnus erat. Quid ergo ? Nīl mē paenitet. Semper pater mē bene cūrābat, ut ego possem litterās scīre, et Latīnē et Graecē dēclāmitāre, et uersūs recitāre, et histōriās tōtās legere, et praesertim ad studium philosophiae mē cōferre. Mē fēlicem ! Nunc bene uīuo.

Yes, my father was a freedman. So what? I am not ashamed of that. My father was always careful to see that I was literate, that I could declaim in both Latin and Greek, and recite poetry, and read all the histories, and above all apply myself to the study of philosophy. I'm fortunate! Now I have a good life.

Trader.

Negōtium bene uādit. Uīnum et oleum exporto, et pellēs et seruōs importo. Auus meus negōtium fundāuit. Trāditio familiae est.

Business is good. Oil and wines out, people and skins back. Grandfather started the business. It's a family tradition.

Slave.

Meliōrēs sunt hominēs hūc quī uentitant, sīc est, grauissimī. Differentia in odōre est.

Better sort come here. People of influence. You can smell the difference.

First woman.

Quid faciam sī mea tōta domus plēna est cum plōrātū sempiternō. In culinā, in tricliniō, in hortō, ibique sunt uultūs trīstēs !

What am I to do if all my household is filled with endless wailing. In the kitchen, in the dining-room, in the garden, everywhere there are gloomy faces.

Second woman.

Tuī seruī?

Your slaves?

First woman.

Omnēs.

The whole lot.

Second woman.

Rēs est facilis. Illōs iubē laetōs esse.

It's simple. Order them to be cheerful.

Slave.

Apud Pedānium ? Sīc est. Aliquōs bene nōuī.

At Pedanius' place? Yes, I know some of them.

Poet.

Haec mouet arte latus, tunicisque fluentibus aurās

Accipit, expēnsōs fertque superba pedēs:

Illa uelut coniunx Umbrī rubicunda marītī

Ambulat, ingentēs uārica fertque gradūs.

Ars Amatoria, III, 301-4

Here's a woman who knows how to move her hips, her dress catching the breeze, and measures her steps, full of poise. And here again is a woman who lopes along with the large strides of some ruddy-faced wife of an Umbrian.

Slave.

**Sed ego uīuus sum ! Dum fāta sinunt, surrīdeāmus !
Officium meum facio.**

But I'm alive! So keep smiling as long as the fates allow!
I do my job.

Trader.

**Sīc sīc, erant difficultātēs in Britanniā. Prīmō Boudicca ... illa fēmina
īnsāna ... omnēs ēmptōrēs meōs cecīdit. Deinde, post uictōriam, omnēs
captiūī Britannicī ā mīlitibus sunt necātī ! Mēhercule ! Uīs scīre quantum
argentum ducibus dederim pro paucīs uīuīs ? Ego magnam pecūniam
perdidī ... et pretiī crēscunt. Sīc est mercātus. Quō aliō supersit homō ?**

Yes, yes, we had problems in Britain. First, Boudicca ... that crazy woman ...
slaughtered all my slave-buyers. Then after the victory all the British captives
were put to death too. Jeez. You want to know how much I paid the generals
for a few survivors? I lost a lot of money. The price rise is inevitable. It's the
market. A man's got to live.

Poet.

Concordēs multōs annōs ēgimus ... Manē ...

We've been together for many years ... Hang on...

**Sed sit, ut in multīs, modus hīc quoque: rusticus alter
Mōtus, concessō mollior alter erit.
Pars umerī tamen īma tuī, pars summa lacertī
Nūda sit, ā laeuā cōspicienda manū.**

Hoc ...

Ars Amatoria, III, 305-9

But in your walking, as in many things, let there be moderation here
too: the one movement is agricultural, the other will be too precious.
Still, leave the lower part of your left shoulder and upper arm bare, a
pleasure to behold. This ...

Slave.

**Lacrimās tibi nōn effundam. Bene. Hic locus melior est quam balneae ...
Crēde mī !**

I'll not weep tears for you. It's okay. This place is better than the public
baths... Believe me!

Second woman.

Scīlicet legēs ferās dē lacrimīs seruīlibus ?

You want the tears of slaves to make our laws?

First woman.

Nōn.

No.

Second woman.

Capio, capio, columba mea. Mea Lucilla quoque semper plōrat. Sed ut dīcit papa, tālia in fundāmentīs urbe Rōmā sunt. Legēs concordiam sustinent. Remedium est ūnum ... nisi crēdimus Pedānium esse caesum iūre ?

I know how you feel. I do understand, my dove. My Lucilla is always in tears. But look, as father says, this is fundamental to the city of Rome. Society depends on the law. There is only one option ... unless we believe that Pedanius' killing was lawful?

First woman.

Concordo, concordo, iūre dīcis.

I agree, I agree, You're right.

Second woman.

Ad lūdōs uādēs ?

Are you going to the games?

First woman.

Certē ... uādāmus ! Ēia ! Affer ornātrīcēs ! Uādēs mēcum ?

Yes ... Let's go. Hey! Fetch the hairdressers! Are you coming too?

Second woman.

Nōn. Centum hominēs iugulantur ? Quārē ? Nōn est dēlectātio. Cum ūnum tum omnēs uīdistī. Sed tū illum gladiātōrem cupis ?

No. A hundred men having their throats cut? Why bother? It's not my thing. When you see one you've seen them all. But you're keen on that gladiator, aren't you?

First woman.

Quem gladiātōrem ? Nōn.

Which gladiator? No.

Second woman.

Sīc, paululum ?

Yes, just a little?

First woman.

Nōn est uēritas. Mihi placet pugna quod saltātio est.

It's not true. I like the combat – it's like a dance.

Gladiator.

Dē seruīs Pedānīi ... nōn opīnor.

Pedanius' slaves? I don't have an opinion.

Senator.

Illā familiā tōtā morbō uitiōsō affectā nunc solum remedium est ūnum: hanc domum purgēmus prō Pedāniī dignitāte, prō eius liberōrum salūte, prō imperātōre, prō imperiī maiestāte, prō senātū populōque, prō urbe, prō maiōribus, prō omnibus cārissimīs.

That whole household is afflicted with this corrupting disease and now there is only one solution: we should purify this house for the sake of Pedanius' position, for the safety of his children, for the emperor, for the majesty of the empire, for the senate and the people, for Rome, for our ancestors, for everything we hold most dear.

Trader.

Seruī lucrōsī sunt – sed necesse est eōs cūrāre, et hoc magnī pretiī est.

Slaves are alright – but you have to look after them, and that can cost a lot of money.

Poet.

Sī quis ex familiā Pedāniī uersuum expertus sit, saluus erit! Nero ipse poētās amat.

Anyone from Pedanius' household who is skilled in poetry will be safe. Nero himself loves poets.

Condemned slave.

**... Cinerem et sōpītōs suscitāt ignēs,
noctem addēns operī, famulāsque ad lūmina longō
exercet pēnsō, castum ut seruāre cubīle
coniugis et possit paruōs ēdūcere nātōs.**

Virgil, Aeneid VIII, 410-13

... She rouses the ash and drowsy embers, stretching her chores into the night; and puts the maids to work by lamplight with the long-lasting weight of wool, so that she can keep the bed of her husband chaste and bring up her small sons.

Mother of the condemned slave.

**Domine ! Domine ! Mea filia optima est apud
Pedānium ! Quattuor certāmina uīcit. Uersūs legit
Horātii, Ouidiī, Uergiliī, Propertiī ...**

Sir! Sir! My daughter is the best reader in Pedanius' house. She has won four competitions. She can read poems of Horace, Ovid, Virgil, Propertius ...

Slave.

Fiat. Ut dīcunt Christiānī, sī quis tē percusserit ...
So be it. As the Christians say, if someone strikes you ...

Trader.

Difficile est quālitātem aestimāre dē hīs bēstiīs, ut uidēs. Seruī sunt – quaestio cadit. Dīco ut caueat ēmptor.

No guarantees as to the quality of such low life – as you can see. They are slaves, and that's that. I say the buyer should watch out.

Poet.

Pedānius mancipia ē Britanniā ēmerat. Illa īnsula, ut scīs, ab cultū et hūmānitāte longē abest.

Pedanius had bought many slaves from Britain. That island, as you know, is a place with no culture or civilization.

Trader.

Quid dīcis ? Egō tam Rōmānus sum quam tū. Linguam latīnam modō Britannicō loquor ?

What do you mean? I'm a Roman as much as you are. Are you saying I speak Latin with a British accent?

Gladiator.

Hodiē multōs aemulōs habeo. Sumus multī pugnātōrēs in urbe. Ille retārius ? Illa pugna erit grandissima. Uērōst .

It's competitive nowadays. There are lots of good fighters in Rome. The retarius? Yes, that's going to be a big fight.

Trader.

En, meōs lūdōs in amphitheātrō uīdistī ? 'Boudiccam dēmentem ululantēs Druidas trūcīdantem' uīdistī ? Mīrābilis! Plausūs accēpī et populī et ipsius Nerōnis.

Hey, did you see my games in the amphitheatre? Crazy Boudicca butchering the howling Druids? It was wonderful! I was cheered by the people and by Nero himself.

Senator.

Quid mē facit beātum ? Loquī prō honestāte ordinis et glōriam ferre ad imperātōrem patriamque deōsque maiōrēsque liberōsque.

What makes me happy? The chance to speak for the honour of the senatorial rank, and to bring glory to the emperor, to my country, to my gods, to my ancestors and to my children.

Gladiator.

Grātiās, sed nōn ausculto fāmās et laudātiōnēs. Post pugnam omnia obliuīscor. Cum amīcīs quiēscō. Nōn uincit ille quī sē amat – uincit ille quī superest. Aut uincere aut morī ... in eō sunt omnia.

Thanks, but I don't listen to all the chatter and compliments. After a fight I put everything out of my mind. I rest with my friends. It's not about ego, it's about survival. Victory or death ... everything hangs on that.

Trader.

Sīc est, abauus meus Britannus erat. Britanniam bene nōuī. Pater meus agēbat paululum negōtium cum Prasutāgō Icēnōrum rēge.

It's true to say that my ancestor was British. I know Britain well. My father had a bit of business going on with Prasutagus, king of the Iceni.

Poet.

Ego grammaticus, recitātor, philosophus sum. Nōn cum mūsculīs sed cum mente labōro. Nunc sum in honōre apud optimōs, quī ad multās cēnās mē uocant ut uersūs audiant.

I am a teacher, a reader, a philosopher. I do not work with my muscles but my brain. Now I am popular with the top people, who invite me to lots of dinners so they can hear me read lines of verse.

Trader.

Frātrēs meī mortuī sunt, uērō. Ego ūnicus hērēs sum. Quid dīcere uīs ?

My brothers all died, yes, and I was the only heir. Your point is?

Poet.

Quid mē beātum facit ? Rērum causās intellegere, uersūs legere, ōrātiōnēs patrōnī meī exscrībere.

What makes me happy? Understanding the causes of things, reading poetry, writing out the speeches of my patron.

Gladiator.

Quid mē beātum facit ? Uincere !

What makes me happy? Winning.

Mercator

Ēia ! Spongiam !

Hey ! A sponge!

Slave.

Quid mē beātum facit ? Mē facit beātum labōrāre in aquaeductīs. Mē lauāre possum... Adsum!

What makes me happy? Working on the aqueducts makes me happy. You get a wash... Coming!

Poet.

**Lūsus habet finem: cygnīs dēscendere tempus,
duxērunt collō quī iuga nostra suō.**

Ut quondam iuuenēs, ita nunc, mea turba, puellae

īnscrībant spoliīs 'Nāso magister erat'. Ars Amatoria, III, 809-12

My playful moment is over. It is time for the swans to step down whose harnessed necks have pulled our car. And now my girls, my team, as the boys did a while ago, upon your trophies write: "Ovid was our teacher".

Grātus sum. Multās grātiās.

Thank you, thanks very much.

Girls in audience

Ille poēta bellus est.

That poet is good-looking..

Trader.

Quid mē beātum facit ?

What makes me happy ?