

Introduction to *Double Bind*

The Play

Menaechmi—*Double Bind*—may well be Plautus’s best-known¹ play in these parts these days, but its reception and retention suffer from what might be termed *originity*—the condition of being a source.

First, it is the oldest surviving twin play in the Western tradition. Twins afford the perfect beginning for a theory of comedy. They engender mistakes, in actors or audience or both, and thus produce the Error that is comedy’s endemic virus. And they do this effortlessly, *naturally*. If rare, they are *there*, nature’s datum, able to produce both Error Simple (unplanned mistake) and Error Complex (deliberate deception), according to taste and necessity. As Smug (Messenio) remarks to the Syracusan Clueless (Menaechmus B) at line 1087,

*You see that man right there?
He’s either the acme of con men, or else your long-lost twin.
I have never beheld a man so much a match for another.
No bead of liquid is liker—you’re two drops of milk in a pod.*

For some present critical inclinations, twinnage is the unadorned zero case of *The Other*; whose contemplation gives us a rationale for turning, however briefly, from the approval of Tragedy to the toleration of Comedy. The honor accruing to the play-as-icon is considerable, but it veers from the play’s own peculiar excellences.

Second, literary history dotes on *Menaechmi*. It serves as a stalking-horse for Shakespeare’s early *Comedy of Errors*, and so it often appears as the *cartoon* on which the Bard stippled his arabesques, doubling twins and pyramiding misapprehensions. There is nothing wrong with this approach except for its incidental result: willy-nilly, the first-time reader of the Plautine play will regard it as something failed or at least incomplete, a *source* whose fulfilled product did not appear until 1595 A.D.

Plays have their own particular destinies, of course, and it is something to be remembered and read after two millennia, even as a forerunner, but *Menaechmi* deserves better. Its liveliness and bite do owe a great deal to its employment of twins, but twins hardly exhaust what the play is *about*. Let me offer two themes for consideration:

Mental Deficiency

The word *insanus* has a field day in *Menaechmi*. We are treated to two “Mad Scenes,” one feigned, one real. The common reaction of any character who apprehends Error is

¹ Admittedly, the success, continuing in video, of the film of the Sondheim/Shevelove/Gelbart *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* may well have raised its source, Plautus’s *Pseudolus*, to first place—but as object of dramatolatry.

the supposition that the others involved are out of their minds. But this observed “insanity” is only symptomatic, the *n*-case of *stupidity*. What we really have here is “dumb-and-dumber” comedy, the free play of ineptitude throughout the *Dramatis Personae*. The only competent character is the slave Smug, and he is kept offstage for half the play, while the feckless twins gripe and grope their way through life. Clueless One, the resident Epidamnian, has built his sand castle of existence on his own inadequacy, choosing a mistress for propinquity and putting up with the sorriest of parasites. Clueless Two may be minimally the brighter, but the triumph of such low cunning as he has is a pretended madness that culminates in playing dead; indeed, the mad complications of the play as it stands are presented as the result of his staggering thickness. Hear him on his first entrance, at line 232:

We're on a search for my longtime-lost twin brother.

And again at 245:

*. . . while I'm alive, I search.
Only a brother can fathom brotherly love.*

Yet, furnished thirty lines later with a striking clue that the search is over and the lost brother found, he might as well be unconscious. One wonders whether the Greek forerunner of *Menaechmi* might not have been prefaced by cautions from *Aporia*, the Goddess of Utter Funk.² Certainly her speech might well have contained the announcement of some meddling, such her intention of depriving the out-of-town brother of all remembrance of the engulfing obsession that has driven him around the Western Mediterranean for seven long years.

But in Plautus's play the only viable cause is *stupidity*. Not for the first time, our playwright has performed a variation on a theme by restricting its application. In *Persa*, the fixed power structure that normally structures society from top to bottom is confined to a truncated polis, the lower half of the Way Things Are. In *Menaechmi*, a hypertrophied error-plot is confined to the mentally challenged: like Shakespeare's Agamemnon in *Troilus and Cressida*, the beset twin brothers have not so much brains as earwax: total strangers not only to themselves but also to deductive reasoning. And the play is the working-out of their brainlessness.

Community

To cite a general rule: ancient drama, especially New Comedy, tends toward assimilation, integration. Even old men can be dragged back into society's womb. The collective must finally be seen to profit from all the foregoing frenzy.

But the rule is not always observed—or, as in this play, thrown down and danced upon. *Double Bind* may bring the separated twins back together, but hardly as mem-

² It should be emphasized that this is a *druther*; a desire on the part of the writer to posit an utterly unprovable state of affairs. If this sounds an impossible deity, it should be recalled that surviving from Menander's *Maiden in Dis-Tress* (*Perikeiromenê*) is a good part of that play's delayed prologue, spoken by Agnoia, the improbably hypostasized Goddess of Ignorance.

bers of a larger community, for the community in this play is not the usual, approved, warm-and-fuzzy Athens of New Comedy, the city to which one would always prefer to belong, but is instead the baneful and baleful *Epidamnus*. And *Epidamnus* is Somewhere Else.

Like the Brecht/Weill “Mahagonny,” Plautus’s *Epidamnus* is a *Netzstadt*—a Net-town, a Snare-ville. Messenio [Smug] points out this identity early:

This is Epidamnus the Damned.

*The stamping grounds of swingers, and lechers, and drunks,
all state-of-the-art. The natural abode of grifter,
flimflam man, con artist, of shyster and skill.*

*The home sweet home of flocks of foxy doxies,
hookers to hook the suckers with tongues of honey.*

*A town of ill repute—Epidamnus, dammit! That’s why
they call this seaside town the Last Resort!* (258–264)

And in spite of his unbearable self-righteousness and the air of ad hoc improvisation that lurks behind his overly frequent Universal Truths, one must agree. *Epidamnus* might well be called *Entrapmentum*—or, given that everyone has a con, an inveiglement, Dodge City. But Smug has the details wrong. What lies in wait at *Epidamnus* for the Syracusan Clueless is not the enticements of the flesh (though he gets a minor dose), but the knotty skein of mutual obligations that goes to make up Life in Cities: family, friends, associates, the sheer business of living. Clueless Two’s voyage of discovery has been free of all that citizen existence imposes, the insistent *musts* that every citizen of *Epidamnus* struggles with, as we see from Diddley’s first speech. But the money is running out. (Smug is quite correct.) Clueless Two must tie into the network again, and quite soon.

The network? Recall Dr. Johnson’s definition: *Anything decussated or reticulated, with interstices between the intersections*. Here, the intertwining of society, the communal system. And as the resident Clueless says, the communal system is what’s wrong:

*ut hoc utimur maxume more moro
molestoque multum, atque uti quique sunt
optumi, maxume morem habent hunc.*

The System is The Trouble . . .

The System is a pest,

The System’s the addiction

Of the brightest and the best. (571–573)

The Stupid System (*more moro*) is the public life of the citizen, the devoirs of being Political Man. Add to this the inevitable inadequacies of his home life, and Clueless One is in the net, *nimis sollicitus*, victim of terminal overbother, decussated and reticulated out of what mind he has. To make this bearable, he has jury-rigged an accommodation, a retreat—wine and woman. Being true to himself, he has located this snug retreat in the worst possible place: the house next door.

The goal of the play is of course the reuniting of brothers, but to an end: to effect Liberation from Community. Clueless Two arrives in “Snareville,” usurps the pleasant portion of his brother’s life, and confines One to unabated suffering; but the reunion of the twain will set them loose, free, *elsewhere*. A finely seditious conclusion. Except . . .

The Stage

Menaechmi employs one of the standard variants of the New Comedy set. We are in the outskirts of the City, or at least not at its center. The meaning of the locale is determined by the side exits: stage right, to the harbor, outside, *away*; stage left, deeper into the City, down to its center, the confining forum/agora. Before us here there are two houses, each allied with its nearer exit: stage right, Clueless One’s retreat—Loveykin’s *maison de joie*, as near liberation as a citizen of this town may know; stage left, One’s own house, container of his wife and other obligations. Little does One know, when he leaves his house this ill-starred morning, that he will not be allowed inside *anywhere* until he has suffered through an Odyssey of pain. And then, at play’s end, with the new old brother, he cuts all ties. Courtesan and parasite disposed of, he will sell house and wife, and the pair will fare off to the West, to a New Frontier where one can breathe free. Except . . .

The staging is all wrong for liberation. And so is the time: breaking up housekeeping and wife-keeping will take a week. And so the brothers enter, not Loveykin’s place, the house of liberation, stage right, at worst a liminal transition to freedom, but Clueless One’s own house, stage left, where this all began. A lot can happen in a week; look at today.

One wonders whether the Brothers Clueless ever *will* get out of Dodge.

Texts

The translator of *Menaechmi* is fortunate in the standard editions of the Latin text: W. M. Lindsay’s *OCT*, Alfred Ernout’s *Budé*, the Hammond/Mack/Moskalew classroom edition. The most happy encounter has been with the very recent edition with notes by A. S. Gratwick (Cambridge University Press, 1993), which addresses the right questions and employs unfailingly rigorous analysis in answering them. It is even a pleasure to disagree with.

Names

Supplied in the *Dramatis Personae* are not only the names of the characters in the translation but also the names in the Latin original and their definitions. It will be noted that they are not the same.

Characters not named in *the text of the play* usually possess only Latin generic names, describing the stock character. Menaechmus One’s wife is thus in the *Dramatis Personae* as *Matrona*, “matron”; *Matrona*’s father is down as a *Senex*, “old man”; the doctor is simply *Medicus*, “doctor.” I have given them names (“Dovey,” “Antiquides,” “Dr. Klyster”) purely out of whim, simply to endow each with some individuality.

Named characters in a Plautine play, which is to say the characters that *are* referred to by name in the text of the play, possess Greek names, for the most part. This is not to

say that they are the same names that they carried in the Greek play that Plautus adapted. He adopts for his names Greek words that either confirm the character (*euonymy*) or undercut him or her ironically (*dysonymy*), and sometimes lead to, or depend on, wordplay in the text.

For example, the parasite. In Plautus, his name *Peniculus* (“brush; small penis”) is elaborately set up by the character himself, with an obsessive insistence on its gustatory sense: “Brush the table” = “Lick the platter clean”; a parasite is basically an alimentary canal. I have tried to combine the gustatory and sexual areas analogously in English, calling him *Diddley*.

The Clever Slave is another problem. In Latin, his name is *Messenio*, indicating that he comes from the very south of Italy and is hence, in a Greek context, a slave. But were Messenians traditionally clever by nature, or self-satisfied, or what? We don’t know. So, since *Messenio* is extremely happy with himself, even for a *servus callidus*, I have picked on that euonymically and called him *Smug*. Greek, it doesn’t sound . . . but it does fit.

Menaechmi, the name of the play and its twin principals, offers another problem. The Greek name in the Latin play may be nothing more than a ridiculously highfalutin appellation (= “Spearthrust”) for a middle-class drudge. But it was also the name of an illustrious astronomer from the century before and would thus be even more dysonymic; I toyed, for the teeniest of moments, with calling this play about twin ninnies “The Einsteins.” Finally, since *Menaechmus* would be incomprehensible to a modern audience, and *Einstein* would open up more cans of worms than I cared to, I split the difference. The dullard brothers were presented with a popular adjective that sounds Greek or Latin and that describes them succinctly: *Clueless*. But the play itself bears a term that became, a few decades back, the emblem of a dysfunctional family: *Double Bind*. Thanks are due to the British psychiatrist R. D. Laing for this.

Other names should be self-explanatory. But one word, at least, needs comment. The principal prop in this play is a woman’s garment, referred to in Latin by the Greek word *palla*. *Dress* or *gown* hardly seemed vivid enough, and so I resorted to the Franco-English *pelisse*, translating by the Humpty-Dumpty Rule: it means what I want it to mean. *Pelisse* refers to a garment, at one time upscale . . . but the one in this play avoids its etymology: it has no fur. And it sounds odd enough.

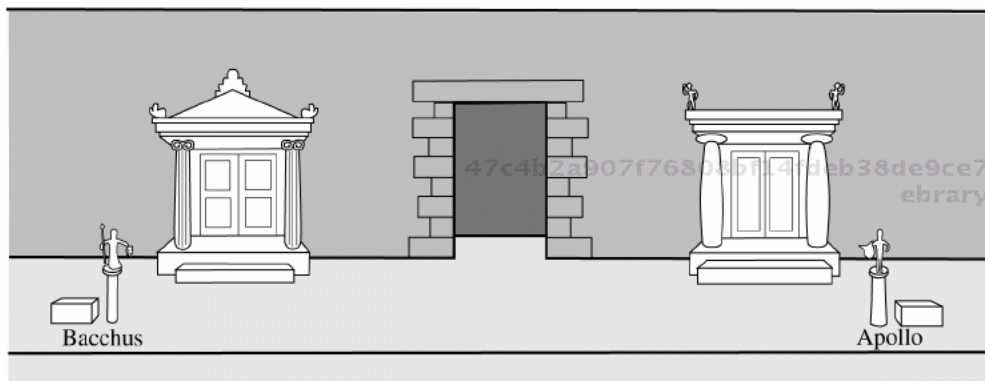
DOUGLASS PARKER

Basic Set

House of Loveykins

Alley

House of Clueless One



To the harbor
(stage right)

To downtown
(stage left)

SCENE: *A quite comfortable middle-class street in the seaside town of Epidamnus—a town innocent of zoning requirements, but little else. Stage left, the house of Clueless One, a well-off middle-class burgher of the town. Stage right, the establishment of Loveykins, a well-off daughter of joy. The distance between these houses is negotiable for the designer, but it should be sufficient to indicate that they are not connected in any way. Both houses have practical double doors opening directly onto the stage.*

Due effort should be taken to differentiate the houses: Clueless's residence is solid and dull, the place of Constriction; Loveykins's is gaudy and entrancing, the place of Release. It is conceivable that on every opening of Loveykins's front doors, wild music should blare upon the stage. In any case, make it clear that no adult male would enter Clueless's house except by necessity, not even Clueless himself . . . but every Anyman would pay a visit to Loveykins, or at least seriously entertain such a desire.

The symbolism is emphasized by two shrines to antitypical gods. Downstage from Lovey's establishment is a sculptured representation of the god Bacchus; downstage from Clueless's house is a like statue of Apollo. These are by no means elaborate, but the gods so honored should be recognizable. They will serve as foci for the wild figure-eights of the "mad scene" in Act V, Scene 2, and may well find other employment.

The stage possesses two side entrances, down toward what might be called its apron. Stage left leads to downtown, the forum/agera, the place of business and law, the turf of Epidamnian male citizens. It is remarkably structured, this offstage

spot: the place of Transaction, where Spatula the cook will buy food, and Clueless One will find himself unwillingly involved in a lawsuit. Stage right leads to the harbor, the entrance by which strangers, complications, and new ideas enter this well-appointed society: the place of Arrival, Departure, and general Chaos, the way by which Clueless Two and Smug will enter to turn this section of town topsyturvy. And offstage residences will confirm this pattern: Clueless Two's sailors will find lodging somewhere off stage right; the Doctor's surgery (or whatever) is towards town, off stage left.

The stage is empty at start. Enter the Prologue, uncertainly moving across the set. He moves center front and addresses the audience.

Dramatis Personae

The Starter

PROLOGUE (Prologus) an inept metatheatrical

The Brothers

CLUELESS MAXIMUS ONE (Menaechmus A) a bourgeois of Epidamnus

CLUELESS MAXIMUS TWO (Menaechmus B) a tourist from Syracuse

The Dames

DOVEY (Matrona) the spouse in the house

LOVEYKINS (Erotium) the whore next door

The Gofers

DIDDLEY (Peniculus) parasite to Clueless One

SMUG (Messenio) slave to Clueless Two

SPATULA (Cylindrus) cook to Loveykins

SKIVVEE (Ancilla) maid to Loveykins

TIDEE (Deceo [?]) maid to Dovey

The Foggy

ANTIQUIDES (Senex) father to Dovey

The GP

DR. KLYSTER (Medicus)

The Muscle

ASSORTED PORTERS (Pompa)

ASSORTED SAILORS (Nautae)

FOUR ORDERLIES (Lorarii)

Double Bind

Prologue [1–76]

(Enter Prologue, the man. Prologuing is not what he does; in fact, speaking to groups of people is not what he does. He is, to come down to it, the world's worst Prologue, pathologically afraid of Leaving Anything Out. This fear is compounded by his one excellence: he is one of the world's Great Digressors. Worse, he is in love with what he says and fancies himself quite a wit. He scans the audience.)

PROLOGUE: I have an announcement:
Greetings!

—that's my announcement, to start off right
at the very beginning—

And salutations.

—to me—

And—not to forget the audience—to *you*.

To you I make delivery of PLAUTUS—

not really, not in the flesh, but on the tongue—

with the standard humble request that you take possession

with most indulgent ears.

The time is ripe

for the PLOT. Please—uh—take possession with intent attention.

I shall supply it as briefly as is consonant

with . . .

Oh.

A word on standard comedic practice:

Playwrights would have us believe that everything happens
at ATHENS. Evidently on the theory that states
the Greeker, the better.

For my part, I refuse

to report any action as taking place anywhere

but where it in fact . . . took place. Which is the reason

that my synopsis, though very Greece-y, or rather

Greekish, is hardly Attish, or rather Attic,

but rather *Sicilic*. Make that Sicilian.

Well.

So much for the *prelude* to the plot synopsis.

I now dole out, as it were, the synopsis itself—

not by the quart,

not by the bushel,

but by

the barnful. When I recount a plot synopsis,
I make it a principle never to stint in the slightest.
There was once a businessman in Syracuse.
He was getting on, when he became the father
of twins. Twin sons. Which is to say, he had two.
They resembled each other to the point that even
the wet nurse wasn't sure which one of the two
she was giving the teat to.

In point of fact, their *mother*—
the woman who *physically* brought them into being—
she couldn't tell them apart.

From each other.

—Don't take
my word for this. I wasn't there. But I have it
on the best authority, an eyewitness account from someone
who *was* there, and saw it all. With his very own eyes.—

Well, when the boys—both boys—were seven years old,
the father packed a large ship rather full
of salable items, took one of the two twin boys
on board that ship, and sailed away to Tarentum.
On business. He left the other boy at home.
With his mother.

Well, when they got to Tarentum, it was
—as luck would have it—a holiday there, and crowds
of people had crowded into Tarentum.

The way
they do on holidays.

Anyway, in all those crowds,
the little boy managed to wander away from his father.
There was a businessman there from Epidamnus who
picked the little boy up and took him off home.
His home. Epidamnus.

Now, losing a son like that
was quite traumatic to the father. It broke his heart . . .
and from that very affliction he, well, he died
a day or two later.

When he died, he was still at Tarentum.

Finally, the news got back to Syracuse:
the boy abducted, his father dead at Tarentum.
The twin boys' grandfather changed the other boy's name,
the remaining boy's name, to the first, kidnapped, boy's name.
Because he loved the lost one so very much
that he gave *his* name to the boy still at home, the name
CLUELESS—which had belonged to the *other* boy,
and was, in fact, the name of the grandfather, *too*.

—I'll never forget it, because I heard it so often,
when the town crier was running him down for a bill.—

I don't want you to get at all confused,
so let me establish this right at the very beginning:
There are *two* twin brothers; both have *one* name—the same.
To reason this out for you perfectly, step by step,
it's back to Epidamnus for me. Right now. On foot.
Pursuant to which, I herewith solicit commissions:
does anyone here need business attended to at
Epidamnus? Don't be shy. Speak up! Your wish
is my command.

Provided you underwrite
your undertaking, of course. No money up front,
you don't get squat. But give me the money up front,
well, that makes all the difference:

you *do* get squat.

But look! I'm back at the place I left. And all
without a single step from this selfsame spot.

—Oh. That man from Epidamnus—remember him?
The one I told you about a while ago,
the one who kidnapped the first little boy—the twin?
Well, he adopted the kidnappee for his own son,
and supplied that son a wife with a hefty dowry,
and made him his heir, and quite conveniently died
—on a trip to the country. There'd been lots of rain.
He waded into a stream, swollen with rain—
not really much more than a little distance from town—
and the coursing current swept him off his feet,
and ducked that abductor, conducting him off to hell!
His money—lots of money—devolved on the boy.

(He points to the house of Clueless One, stage left.)

And here we have the home of the kidnapped twin.
Today the other twin, the one who lives
in Syracuse, is going to come to Epidamnus.
He'll bring a slave along. He'll be on a Quest
to find his twin—*this* twin—his long-lost brother.

(He waves sweepingly at the set, stage left to stage right.)

And *here* is the city of Epidamnus . . .
while this play
is running, of course.

When they do another, it changes:
a different play, it becomes a different town.
—Just like families. They move from house to house.

(Indicating one of the two houses.)

Sometimes a pimp lives here, sometimes a respectable
senior citizen, then a nice young man,
sometimes a bankrupt wastrel, perhaps a king,
or else a beggar, a gofer, a fortune-teller . . .

(Somehow, mercy is taken on the audience, and Prologue's exit is effected—
preferably by mild violence of someone offstage.)

Act I, Scene 1 [77–109]

(Diddley enters from town [stage left]. He is a nasty piece of work, really. His anger
at his occupation forestalls any excellence at it.)

DIDDLEY: Hi, there.

I'm the parasite in this play.
Just call me DIDDLEY. Short John DIDDLEY. The name
my buddies gave me. When I get up from the dinner
table, what I leave is

diddly.

(He shifts to an official mode of presentation.)

—TEN-SHUN!

A personal disquisition Of Human Bondage.

I submit:

Most people shackle POWs
with chains.

Most people restrain recovered slaves
with irons and gyves.

Most people are klutzes.

You cannot

hobble a loser by doubling his load of trouble;
it only increases his craving for breakout and crime.
No matter how fast his fetters, the fetteree finds
some way to effect an exit. He files the weakest
link, or hammers the grommet flat with a rock.
Mechanical gimmicks, *pah!*

No. Bend your efforts
to keep your potential escapee from flying the coop
the *natural* way—with Food & Drink. It's a cinch:
Attach your man by the gullet to a table heaped up
every day with an endless supply of the items,
edible and potable, that suit his particular taste,
and he is hog-tied: even a sentence of death
won't make that man miss dinner. He's never out of
sight or control; no trouble at all.

Now, *that's*

The Tie That Binds.

Humane, too; yessirree:

Victuals are such *agreeable* shackles; the looser they stretch, the tighter they catch.

Take me, for example.

I've been drafted. Called up for service right *there*—the house of Clueless. Do I object to this toothsome indenture? No, indeedy; I'm ready, I'm *fit* to be tied. Clueless, you see, is no mere feeder of men; he's a *stuffer* of men, a positive makeover artist. No doctor does better with drugs than Clueless with food. A lusty young man and consummate consumer himself, his idea of everyday lunch is Festival Blowout, course upon course upon course, with towering piles of saucer and dish and bowl and platter and plate. To get a bite from the top, you need a ladder. But . . .

for more days than I care to count I've been on leave at home, serving myself with delicacies rare enough to begin with, but now that breakfast's broken loose and dessert's deserted, so rare that they don't exist at all.

And so

I'm making my way to my patron.

—An opening door!

And look! Here comes CLUELESS now!

(He nips into the alley between the houses, where he is invisible.)

Act I, Scene 2 [110–181]

(Enter Clueless One from his house, singing back to the open door, behind which [presumably] is his wife.)

CLUELESS I: IN-COM-PAT-IBLE,
 That's what we're not.
 AN-I-MOS-ITY,
 That's what you've got.
 Change your ways, give up your virulence,
 Hate, dementia, dumbness, violence,
 And we'll soon be quite COM-PATIBLE, yup.

IN-COR-RIG-IBLE,
 Don't be that way.
 Be SUS-CEPT-IBLE
 To what I say:
 One more sample of this nastiness,
 Home to Daddy go in hastiness,
 And we're really IN-COM-PAT-IBLE then.

I can't go out of our happy home

Without a full inquisition:

Where'm I going?

What'm I doing?

What'm I up to?

What've I got?

What'd I do when I was out?

I didn't marry a wife; I married a customs agent.

Full declaration required of actions past and present.

I spoil you, sweetie, but that's all through:

NOW HEAR THIS:

What'm I gonna DO?

WHEREAS

I duly supply you the standard and current f14fdeb38de9ce7
ebruary

Items as per the marriage agreement:

The wool, the woolies, the wardrobe,

The household expenses in solid gold,

The millions of maids, the upscale provender,

And enough dye to make everything lavender . . .

THEREAS

Be smart, and save yourself a good deal of woe,

Let your husband go unwatched wherever he wants to go.

(The door slams shut. Clueless One preens himself and strikes a macho attitude.)

And another thing: So all your spying

Should have something to be about,

I'll take the handy hooker to lunch,

And book a couch: we're dining OUT!

DIDDLEY:

He's faking. That's not wife-abuse—

It's ME-abuse instead;

If he goes out to dinner, I'm

The one that won't get fed.

(Clueless One, still not noticing Diddley, turns to the audience and advances down center. He addresses the audience.)

CLUELESS I: Three cheers! Employing the standard invective, I have repulsed my wife from the door.

(No acclaim is forthcoming.)

—I sense a certain reticence. Where's
the applause? the awards?

No cheating husbands in the crowd?

Look: I have strained mightily in the breach, and every man here
owes me congratulations.

(Pulling up his cloak, he displays a somewhat soiled Pelisse that he is wearing
underneath.)

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ebruary

My trophy! An intimate garment:
It's all my doing: this Pelisse has given my wife the slip.
This job's a model: Slick husband outfoxes sly jailer.
What dazzling daring!

What a dandy deed!

What a cunning stunt!

(Not that I profit at all for my peril. This costly item
goes in the debit column—straight to the neighborhood harlot.)

It's booty time, boys, without the loss of a single man!

(At "booty," Diddle advances unseen to Clueless One and claps his hands over his
patron's eyes.)

DIDDLEY: Please, sir, is any bit of that booty bespoke for me?

(Clueless One jumps in terror but does not dare take the hands off.)

CLUELESS I: A trap! Cut down in my prime!

DIDDLEY: No, sir: Propped up this time.

CLUELESS I: Who's there?

(Diddle removes his hands from Clueless One's eyes and moves into view.)

DIDDLEY: It's only me.

CLUELESS I: My Luck! My Advantage! My Edge!
Hello!

DIDDLEY: Hello to you.

CLUELESS I: What're you doing?

DIDDLEY: I'm shaking the hand
that watches over me, sir—that Special Someone's hand.

CLUELESS I: You couldn't have come at a better time.

DIDDLEY: My little way, sir.
Right time, right place: I know all the nooks and crannies of Luck.

CLUELESS I: Would you like a peek at something really superb?

DIDDLEY: Who cooked it?
One lick of those leftovers, sir, and I'll know if he slipped up.

CLUELESS I: You've seen those friezes that fill a wall, of course, where an eagle
is inveigling Catamite, or Venus is snatching Adonis?

DIDDLEY: Ah. Frequently, sir . . . but how do these friezes relate to *me*?

CLUELESS I: Shut up and *behold*.

(He opens his cloak, displaying the Pelisse in all its glory.)

Do I remind you of those friezes?

DIDDLEY:

(Aside.)

I'm chilled.

—You're striking an attitude, sir?

What is that outfit?

CLUELESS I: That outfit is very *in*, and very *elite*. So'm I.

So pronounce these words: "You're very IN and very ELITE."

DIDDLEY: I'll eat? But when?

CLUELESS I: I gave you an order, I think; speak out!

DIDDLEY: Okay: "You're very in and very elite."

CLUELESS I: That all?

No little *lagniappe* of your own that you might throw in?

DIDDLEY: Sorry.

You're *genial*.

Actually jolly, by golly.

CLUELESS I: Pray continue.

DIDDLEY: I will *not* continue until I know what good this does me.
I have to be careful with you; domestic disputes bring danger.
I have reservations, for self-preservation: I never meddle
in family rancor.

CLUELESS I: But this will be On the Sly. A spot
that she knows nothing about. Oh, what a luscious experience!
We'll burn the day to ashes.

DIDDLEY: Just what I wanted to hear.

So sign me up, and put me down to light the pyre.

The day's half-dead already. It's charcoal down to the navel.

Right next to the *stomach*. In case you've forgotten.

CLUELESS I: I wish you'd stop
interrupting like that. You're only keeping yourself from dinner.

DIDDLEY: You can hammer my eye till it rattles inside my skull if I utter
one word unless I'm ordered.

(Clueless One backs away.)

CLUELESS I: Uh—*fine*.

Now move over here.

Let's get away from that door.

(They move downstage right, away from Clueless One's door.)

DIDDLEY: Your word is my command.

(He follows.)

CLUELESS I: And just a little farther . . .

(The same process ensues.)

DIDDLEY: No problem.

CLUELESS I: And now, one last
heroic dash away from the cave of the Lion Queen.

(And again.)

DIDDLEY: What a charioteer you'd make!

CLUELESS I: What do you mean by that?

DIDDLEY: Your rearview instinct. Those constant backward looks to see
if your wife's tailgating.

CLUELESS I: What are you saying?

DIDDLEY: Whatever you want.
My little way. I yea your yeas and nay your nays.

CLUELESS I: How are you at deciphering smells?

DIDDLEY: I beg your pardon?

CLUELESS I: Can you tell from a smell what the hell befell, or will befall?

DIDDLEY: I'm no soothsayer. If you want an odor decoded, convene
the College of Augurs.

CLUELESS I: You've noticed this Pelisse?

(He lifts his cloak again.)

DIDDLEY: God, yes.

(Clueless One faces away from Diddley and hikes up his cloak in back, exposing his
Pelisse-clad rear, to which he points.)

CLUELESS I: Now apply your nose right here, and *sniff*, and kindly inform me
about the aroma's inner meaning.

DIDDLEY: Yuck.

CLUELESS I: Do I sense reluctance?

DIDDLEY: If you have to go around smelling clothing, start at the top.
The whiff of a wife in this location . . . no, that won't wash.

CLUELESS I: Won't wash?

DIDDLEY: No matter how hard you scrub, the stench remains.

CLUELESS I: PLACE NOSE AND SMELL—*RIGHT HERE!* Picky, picky, picky!

(Gingerly and briefly, Diddley complies, after one final statement.)

DIDDLEY: In this spot, picky is peachy.

CLUELESS I: Was that so bad?

(Diddly is recovering his breath.)

Your diagnosis?

Deliver!

DIDDLEY: I'd say the stench says: PINCH, WENCH, LUNCH.

CLUELESS I: Precisely.

This intimate garment is on its way to the Girl Next Door—
Loveykins, there. I'm on my way to order a lunch,
for me, for her, for YOU.

(They make their way to Loveykins's front door.)

DIDDLEY: I *do* like your taste in pronouns.

CLUELESS I: And then we drink till the stars come out . . . and *go* out, too.

DIDDLEY: Excellent schedule. You do have a way of putting things.

(They are at Loveykins's door.)

Do I do the honors and knock?

CLUELESS I: You *batter*.

(He thinks this over and restrains Diddley.)

—No, better not.

Not yet.

DIDDLEY: Oh, damn. My meal recedes, at topmost speed.

CLUELESS I: Proceed.
Knock *nicely*, please.

DIDDLEY: Your girl has pottery doors?
Now, that shows class but makes for a pretty brittle portal.

(He raises a tentative hand but is stopped by Clueless One, who has seen the door move slightly.)

CLUELESS I: Not yet! For god's sake, don't knock yet!

(The door opens suddenly. Clueless One and Diddley spring stage left, considerably out of the way of Loveykins's entrance. Clueless One strikes the attitude of a heroic herald.)

Behold, she comes!

And casts the sun in shade before her gorgeous glow!

Act I, Scene 3 [182–218]

(Loveykins bursts from the house and twines herself around Clueless One.)

LOVEYKINS: Sweetie!

My darling Clueless!

CLUELESS I: Er . . . hi, there.

DIDDLEY: No greetings for me?

LOVEYKINS: Sorry. You're not on my roster.

DIDDLEY: The army all over again.
Backup reserves—we never quite make the muster.

CLUELESS I: 16a5cb84b2aa76e69aa6126a86ffbed2
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Order of the Day: lay on a battle for me at your place.

LOVEYKINS: A *battle*?

(He nods. She shrugs.)

Of course: one battle, coming up.

CLUELESS I: And from this battle
the two of us will drink to settle who's better battler.
Decide which one's your fighting machine, your flying column.
And spend the night with the happy winner.

Oh, You Kid.

The more I look at you, the more I hate my wife.

(In spite of his gustatory predilections, Diddley is miffed.)

DIDDLEY: And that's why you're wearing her clothes, of course.

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ebri118y (He flips up Clueless One's cloak, exposing the stolen Pelisse. She tentatively
touches the Pelisse.)

LOVEYKINS: And what might this be?

CLUELESS I: Once, the dragon's slough. But now, your Golden Fleece.

LOVEYKINS: You win, hands down. The lover who triumphs with me is not
the boor who keeps giving orders, but the sensitive gent like you.

(She becomes more affectionate. Diddley, disgusted, indulges in an aside.)

DIDDLEY: Typical bimbo bombast. It lasts as long as there's bait.
But Love? *True* Love would have chewed his face off, even
swallowed
his nose by now.

(Clueless One starts to take his cloak off.)

CLUELESS I: Hold this.

I'm about to slough my fleece. 6126a86ffbed2
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(In his eagerness, he has trouble divesting himself.)

I made a vow.

DIDDLEY: I'm ready.
And waiting.

(Clueless One has finally removed the cloak. He slings it at Diddley and starts to remove the Pelisse.)

No, no! I want
to remember you just like this: Could we have a dance?

CLUELESS I: Me dance? You're out of your mind.

DIDDLEY: I know; it's the company I keep.
Dance or take it off.

(Clueless One skins out of the Pelisse and holds it up.)

CLUELESS I: This abduction was only accomplished . . .
at very great personal . . . danger.

In relative ranking of risk,
Hercules' grab of Hippolyta's girdle . . .
to voice my opinion . . .
rates as no more than petty theft.

(Lovingly, he presents the Pelisse to Loveykings.)

Take it; it's yours.
You deserve it, you really do. The only person alive
who actually understands me.

(She accepts the garment gracefully.)

LOVEYKINGS: The proper attitude
for genuine lovers. Lovers of taste.

DIDDLEY: And lovers in haste
to be genuine bankrupts.

CLUELESS I: Bought it last year for my wife. It ran me four hundred drachmas.

DIDDLEY: The bottom line? Four hundred drachs straight down the drain.

CLUELESS I: Now, I want something.

LOVEYKINGS: I know.

CLUELESS I: Do you know *what*?

LOVEYKINGS: I do,
I do! I'm getting it ready.

CLUELESS I: Be sure it's piping hot.

LOVEYKINGS: It is, it *is!*

CLUELESS I: And make enough for three.

LOVEYKINS: For *THREE?*

(Clueless One spreads his arms, including Diddley in the group.)

CLUELESS I: The three of *us*, of course.

A delectable lunch inside, here.
Have somebody go to the forum and purchase toothsome goodies,
the sweetest of pedigreed sweetbreads, bacon of noble birth,
hog's half-heads on the hoof, sorts of stuff like that there,
juicy delights whose very sight on the table rouses
a hunger in me that rivals a buzzard's.

And right away!

LOVEYKINS: Oh yes indeed.

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CLUELESS I: We're on our way to the City Center.
Be back in a jiffy and have some drinks till the cooking's done.

LOVEYKINS: Come back whenever you want. It's always ready for you.

CLUELESS I: That's fine. Just *hurry!*

So follow me, fellow.

(He starts off stage left, for the Forum.)

DIDDLEY: I follow you close,
to keep you in view. I swear I won't lose you today, not even
if I have to give up my claim to all the wealth of the gods.

(He skitters after Clueless One. All exit stage left.)

LOVEYKINS: Now where's the cook?

Call SPATULA out here on the double!

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Act I, Scene 4 [219–225]

(Spatula enters from Loveykins's house. A sly menial, he speaks in something resembling a stage Brooklyn accent.)

LOVEYKINS: Now here's the basket, and here's the cash. Check it: six drachmas.

SPATULA: Gotcha.

LOVEYKINS: On your way to buy groceries. Enough for three,
that's *three* precisely, no more, no less.

SPATULA: What sort of t'ree?

LOVEYKINS: There's me, and Clueless, and Clueless's toady.

SPATULA: Dat's ten
an' countin'. Dat sponge can eat for any eight,
an' easy, too.

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LOVEYKINS: I've filled you in on the guests; the rest
is up to you.

SPATULA: Gotcha.
Dinner's all ready already.
Hustle 'em in to duh table.

LOVEYKINS: Now hurry!

SPATULA: Back in a shot.

(With basket and purse, he exits to the Forum, stage left. Loveykings returns inside her house.)

Act II, Scene 1 [226-272]

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(Enter, stage right [from the harbor], a train of laden sailors and porters, shoosed along by Clueless Two [of Syracuse] and Smug, his slave in command, who also totes a heavy seabag.)

CLUELESS II: Smug! A pithy proverb. And all my own work.

(Smug dutifully stops the procession—right in front of Loveykings's house, as it happens—and waits at weary attention. He does not put the seabag down.)

*For sailors, no bliss surpasses the distant view
of far-off land from the deep.*

SMUG: *Except the view—*
I'll tell it like it is—*of distant* homeland
to returning *sailors*.

And now we've come ashore
at Epidamnus. Why?

Are we playing a game
of *Ocean*—lapping every island there is?

CLUELESS II: We're on a search for my longtime-lost twin brother.

SMUG: And when, oh *when*, will that search conceivably end?
The search for your twin has stretched out into six years.
In the course of this chore, we've completely sailed the circuit:
Istria, Spain, Marseilles, Illyria now,
the Adriatic, and outer Greece, and Italy . . .
Our specialty—*shores*. If it's bounded by water, we land there.
Try seeking a needle: more speed, provided there *was* one:
you'd be back home, with your finger bandaged, long since.
We endlessly paw through the living to find a *dead* man.
If he were alive, we'd have struck on him years ago.

CLUELESS II: Okay, then, I'm searching for *confirmation*:
a witness to say he's dead. When I hear *that*,

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chore over, task done, with no more effort expended.
But until that happens, and while I'm alive, I search.
Only a brother can fathom brotherly love.

SMUG: Needle? You're seeking a *noodle*. In a hassock. Give up!
Or are we writing a *Guide to the Scuzzier Ports of the Adriatic?*

CLUELESS II: Enough of this endless grousing:
what I say—*do* it.

What I serve—*eat* it.

What's trouble—*avoid* it.

Don't irk me. This has nothing to do with you.

SMUG: Gotcha. Message received: 16a5cb84b2aa76e69aa6126a86ffbed2
I AM A SLAVE. ebrary
Plainly put in my place by the prince of pith.

(He shrinks back, beaten. But after a short pause, he brightens and steps up again.)

But what do I care?

I have to say my piece.

—A word, Clueless?

What word?

(He produces a smallish money-bag.)

The word is WALLET.

The WALLET wanes; the WALLET wants its wampum.
The wasp-waist WALLET's wasted, won't last the winter
unless you stop stalking this nonexistent twin
and go back home before they freeze our assets.

The reason?

This town is Epidamnus the Damned.

The stamping grounds of swingers, and lechers, and drunks,
all state-of-the-art. The natural abode of grifter,
flimflam man, con artist, of shyster and shill.

The home sweet home of flocks of foxy doxies,
hookers to hook the suckers with tongues of honey.

A town of ill repute—Epidamnus, dammit! That's why
they call this seaside town the Last Resort!

CLUELESS II: So I'll be careful.

Better give me the Wallet.

(Smug shoves the Wallet back into the seabag.)

SMUG: Fat chance.

CLUELESS II: You've got to face it, Smug:
you're a compulsive chaser, you womanize madly.
And I'm a tad cantankerous, short fuse, hothead.

So: if I hold the money, two roads to ruin are shut:
you won't screw it away and consequently
I won't explode in anger and shout it away.
You follow?

(Surprisingly, Smug is convinced. He reaches in the seabag, secures the Wallet again, and hands it over.)

SMUG: You keep it. Safe and sound. With my
enthusiastic approval. Your job, now: DO IT.

Act II, Scene 2 [273-350]

(Enter Spatula laden from the Forum, stage left. He is not perceived by those already onstage.)

SPATULA: Am I a slick shoppuh, or what?

My ansuh: YEAH!

An' such a marvelous meal I'll serve my clients!
An' . . . uh-oh, here's Clueless.

I wince at the welts

awready.

Duh guests are takin' duh air out front,
and I'm not back with the groceries yet.

Now what?

Go up, say hi.

(He moves to Clueless Two, still in front of Loveykins's house.)

—Clueless! To you a large *Hello!*

CLUELESS II: To you *Good-bye*, strange person I never met.

SPATULA: Strange person? You joker.

It's me—duh chef.

You know me.

CLUELESS II: Damned if I do.

SPATULA: But where's duh rest of duh guests?

CLUELESS II: The rest of *what* guests?

SPATULA: You know 'em: *him*. Your pa-ra-site.

CLUELESS II: I'm parasite-free.

(To Smug.)

—A completely obvious loony.

SMUG: Con men in gobs. Remember, you heard it here.

CLUELESS II: All right, young person. *Which* of my parasites
might you be meaning?

SPATULA: Which one?
Diddley, of course.

SMUG:
(Fumbling in the seabag, which he does not put down.)

Plenty of diddly in here. Look, see for yourself.
Or check the Wallet.

(He points to the Wallet, which Clueless Two is holding.)

Diddly, that's what we've got.

SPATULA: You're way too early for lunch, Mr. Clueless, Sir.
I'm just gettin' home wit' the groceries.

CLUELESS II: *Strange* young man,
please answer me this question:
What's the current
quotation on pigs?

SPATULA: On *pigs*?

CLUELESS II: Yes, *pigs*. The pigs
they sacrifice to mitigate sudden madness.

SPATULA: Two drachs per pig.

CLUELESS II: Two drachmas?

(He fumbles in the Wallet, finds a coin, and holds it up for Spatula to view.)

For you. My gift.

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Have someone take this money and *make you sane!*
I'm sure of two items: first, you're deeply disturbed,
and second, mad person, you are disturbing ME—
whom YOU have never *ever* met!

SPATULA: You *know* me!
Spatula, duh chef? You *gotta* remembuh my name!

CLUELESS II: Spatula, Shortbread, Sweetbread—*so*? Get stuffed!
I DO NOT KNOW YOU.

I DO NOT *WANT* TO KNOW YOU.

SPATULA: But I know you, Clueless . . .

(A shocked silence, as Clueless Two belatedly takes this in.)

Uh, dat's your name.

CLUELESS II: And it's the only sane word I've heard out of you.
Okay, then: where did the two of us meet?

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SPATULA: Us? Meet?
Right here. Your mistress's house.

(A beat of total incomprehension from Clueless Two and Smug.)

In *Loveykins's* house!

CLUELESS II: I do not have a mistress. I do not have the slightest idea
of who the hell you are.

SPATULA: Duh hell you say!
Every time—and dat's a lot, believe me—
dat you've been soppin' up wine in dat very house,
who soived as youah *sommelier*? I did, dat's who!
Look, regular drinkuh, I'm your regulah waituh.

(Smug fumbles in the seabag.)

SMUG: Oh, damn. Why didn't I pack something heavy and hard
to knock this blockhead's block off?

CLUELESS II: Regular waiter?
Today is the very first time I've caught a glimpse
of this unspeakable town!

SPATULA: I nevvuh soived you?

CLUELESS II: Never in this world.

SPATULA: And, I suppose, you don't
live in dis house over heah?

CLUELESS II: I call down utter
perdition on any and all who reside in that house!

SPATULA:

(Aside. Impressed.)

Dat's really low self-esteem. An obvious loony.

(To Clueless Two.)

—Clueless, a woid.

CLUELESS II: What now?

SPATULA: A meah suggestion:
Remembuh doze drachmas, Clueless? Duh ones you promised
to give me? Keep 'em.

For you.

A guy what calls
down on his self, dat guy is *really*
over the edge, dat guy could stand some help.
Send out, an' have them deliver one quick pig.

CLUELESS II: He's a mob in himself—a babble of rabble—a pest!

(Spatula turns to the audience.)

SPATULA: Dat's our little way. Solid relationship. Joke
after joke. Wit'out his wife, dis guy's a riot.

(He displays the groceries to Clueless Two.)

Wojjuh say to *dat*?

CLUELESS II: What say? Well, WHAT?

SPATULA: Is dis sufficient provenduh for t'ree of youse,
for you, for duh dame, and duh sponge, or should I buy more?

CLUELESS II: What dames? What sponges?

What are you talking about?

SMUG: You're deranged: what drives you to hassle my master?

SPATULA: Excuse me—do we know each udduh? I'm engagin'
In conversation wit' dis guy; *him* I know.

SMUG: I know enough to know that you're a nutcase.

SPATULA:

(Pointedly ignoring Smug, to Clueless Two.)

Duh meal will be juicy an' tenduh, toot soot.
No Waitin' Inside.

Or, at duh very least,
don't wanduh away from duh building. Stick around close.
Will dat be all, sir?

CLUELESS II: Your head on a platter, perhaps?

SPATULA:

(Flashing into anger for just a moment.)

Bettuh your head on a . . . *pillow* beside duh table.
Duh poifect spot to relax while it cooks, while my
trained hand applies dese classy ingredients
to duh furious frenzy of Vulcan.

(Clueless Two doesn't move. Spatula shrugs.)

So I'm duh one
who goes in, an' lets Loveykins know you're waitin' here.
She'll conduct youse to youah table. Won't let you loituh.

(Assembling his groceries, he moves into Loveykins's house with considerable
dignity.)

CLUELESS II: Is he really gone?

—Based on that encounter,
every word in your spiel was absolutely true.

SMUG: Just be on the lookout. Beware this house right here.
It's my opinion that these are the haunts
of a person of ill repute. You heard what he said—
that madman who just entered that very door?

CLUELESS II: But how did he know my name? I'm really perplexed.

SMUG: What's to perplex? Another type of tricks
these hookers turn. Standard procedure: they send
their best-looking slaves and maids right down to the harbor
to solicit news of the latest foreign arrival.
Home port? they ask. The owner's name? they ask.
Adhesive harlots: once appliqué'd to the owner,
they can't be *pried* off. Tempted and vamped, the cast-off
tourist casts off for home: no salvage value.

A pirate frigate's lurking at anchor in *this* port:
in my opinion, we'd better look out for her,
or we'll be very unjolly and extremely rogered.

CLUELESS II: Gracious. That's sound advice you give me.

SMUG: The proof
of the warning is in the turning. Out.
Advice
is only sound if it's taken. So take precautions!

(Loveykins's door begins to open.)

CLUELESS II: Shut up for a minute, will you? I heard that door
go *creak*. We'd better watch and see who it is.

(At long last, Smug lowers the seabag.)

SMUG: A chance to put this down.

(He moves to the line of baggage handlers.)

A humble request
to the seagoing infantry?

Keep an eye on this.

(He deposits the seabag in the middle of the line and takes up a position by Clueless
Two.)

Act II, Scene 3 [351-445]

(Enter Loveykins from her house. Not immediately seeing the duo, she moves
downstage, singing to a corps of housemaids who are presumed to have
accompanied her to the door.)

LOVEYKINS: *The outside doors are spread and wide.
 Leave 'em open! Back inside!
 Get your broom and start your biz—
 Inside's where the action is!
 Insider, sweet and neat spell CLASS—
 Whisk and dust and bust your ass!
 CHARM gives johns the panting hots,
 CHARM brings money in, in pots.
 TASTE wastes lovers, makes 'em whine;
 TASTE puffs up our bottom line.
 Rub-a-dub-dub will never lose—
 Mama needs a new pair of shoes!*

(Puzzled, she looks around but does not see Clueless Two.)

—But where can he be? The cook swore he was out front.

(She sees him.)

—Oh.

*There he is, my mainest man,
 God's gift to the courtesán,
 Heaven's gate for any hooker,
 A ding-dong-daddy whose name is Sugar!
 Open-handed, flush, and stupid
 My own, my private personal Cupid.
 That's why, though he's not much fun,
 In my house, he's Number One!*

(She moves to Clueless Two.)

—Now the approach, and then the confrontation:

*Baby, why stand here outside,
 When the door is open wide?
 You're the one it's open for,
 Opener than your own front door.
 Everything is fixed precisely
 Per directions, neat and nicely.
 Don't be strange; be satisfied:
 Ain't no waitin' . . . COME INSIDE!*

The meal's on the table. Go in when you want; it's up to you.

CLUELESS II:

(To Smug.)

Who is this woman conversing with?

LOVEYKINS: No one but you.

CLUELESS II: —Excuse me?

Have we now or ever had business together?

(An awkward pause . . . until Loveykins decides it's a New Game.)

LOVEYKINS: Oooh, have we ever!

I am . . . *conversing* . . . with you because
Venus, the goddess of Love, has seen fit to raise you aloft,
to the topmost spot, above all others, in my affection . . .
a place you richly deserve, since you and you alone
have fertilized me with your generous gifts
and made me *bloom*.

CLUELESS II:

(Totally flummoxed, he turns to Smug.)

Smug, I'm sure this woman is either crazy or smashed.
Such warmth—to a total stranger—what sort of welcome is *that*?

SMUG: I told you: Standard Procedure.

You ain't seen nothin' yet.
These are but leaves, adrift on the gentle breeze. Just wait
two days, when the gale's in force: whole trees will totter
and crash . . .
and right on *you*, as it happens. Custom of the country: these are
magnetic whores, as it happens, exerting their force on silver.
—Just let me set some welcome a-waggin':

Hey, you there—female!

I'm talking to you!

LOVEYKINS: About what?

SMUG: When did you meet this man?

LOVEYKINS: Same place where he met me. In Epidamnus, of course.

SMUG: In Epidamnus he never set foot until today.

LOVEYKINS:

(Concluding the exchange with an absolutely flat reading.)

Oh, how cute. I do believe you're pulling my leg.

(She turns back to Clueless Two.)

This way, dear *sweet* Clueless. The atmosphere's nicer inside.

CLUELESS II: Oh damn. My name again! The woman got it *right*!
What's up? I sense an enigma.

SMUG: None needed; she smelled your Wallet.

The one in your hand.

CLUELESS II: Well, talk about your good advice!

(He forces the wallet on Smug.)

—Here, you take it. And I'll find out who's the Loved One here:
my wallet or me?

(He advances to Loveykins. Smug waits.)

LOVEYKINS: Now let's go in and have our lunch.

CLUELESS II: A very gracious invitation, but thank you, *No*.

LOVEYKINS: A *No*? Then why did you just tell me to cook you lunch?

CLUELESS II: I told you to cook me lunch?

LOVEYKINS: You certainly did. And lunch
for your parasite, too.

CLUELESS II: WHAT PARASITE, damn it to hell!

(Aside.)

—One thing's for sure. This woman's seriously addled.

LOVEYKINS: You know—
your Parasite Diddley. No one gets Diddley out of his mind.

CLUELESS II: What possible diddly is that?
The diddly you wipe off your shoes?

LOVEYKINS: The Diddley right on your tail when you gave me that Pelisse.
The Pelisse you burgled away from your wife.

CLUELESS II: Oh god, not *again!*
I made you a gift of the Pelisse I burgled away from my wife?
—She's flipped; she thinks she's a horse; she has dreams standing
up.

LOVEYKINS: Does it turn you on somehow to make me the butt of your jokes?
Why must you insist on denying that something that happened,
happened?

CLUELESS II: Then what *did* happen? Just what did I do that I say I didn't?

LOVEYKINS: Today. You gave me. The Pelisse. Of your wife.

CLUELESS II: Again I deny it!
I have. No wife. I have never. *Had*. A wife. At all.
I never. Pushed foot. Or anything else. Inside. The portals.
Of this tawdry. Town. From the time. I was born until. *Today!*
Lunch I had on the boat.

Then came here.

Then met you.

LOVEYKINS: We're off again. Another variable—I can't stand it.
Your story now has a boat . . . What boat?

CLUELESS II: Your basic boat
of wood—of worn-out, punctured, sprung-asunder *planks*—
resembling the boards too often trod by some hack actor.
It's mainly *pegs* to hold the rest of the wreck together.

LOVEYKINS: All right, sweetie, put paid to your little joke, and let's
go in to lunch together.

CLUELESS II: Look, ma'am, let's get this straight.
The man you're hunting down's *not me*. It's someone else.

LOVEYKINS: I'm sorry. I'm seeking
*a gentleman, Clueless,
the scion of Copeless,
product of Syracuse
over in Sicily
ruled by Agáthocleez
sire of Epítomeez
sire of Anátomeez
third from the top who be-
gat Hippopotamus,
currently tyrant and
emperor, too?
That's not you?*

(Clueless Two, thunderstruck, moves back towards Smug.)

CLUELESS II: It's all true!

SMUG: I swear there's a simple solution: this dame is a Syracusan.
How else could she possibly know your name by the numbers?

CLUELESS II: There comes a point where you simply have to *accept*.

SMUG: No, STOP!
Step over that stoop, and you will be shut down!

CLUELESS II: Shut up.
I've got this firmly in hand.
I agree to whatever she says
for a chance at some R and R.

(He moves to Loveykins.)

—Ma'am, please excuse
my constant denials just now; all part of my little plan.

(He points to Smug.)

It's *him*. I had to keep him in the dark, or else

he'd tell my wife about the Pelisse. And the Supper, too.
But that's all past.

Now let's go into the party.

Whenever.

LOVEYKINS: Aren't you expecting your parasite?

CLUELESS II: Not if I can help it.

The man is a nix, a nebbish, a nit.

In fact, if he comes . . .

please, ma'am, refuse him entrance.

LOVEYKINS: I *like* commissions like that.

Here's one for you, if you don't mind . . .

CLUELESS II: Your wish, my command. 16a5cb84b2aa76e69aa6126a86ffbed2
ebruary

LOVEYKINS: You know my present—the Pelisse?

I'd like it taken down

to the Doodad Shoppe. It needs repair, and I'd really like
to add some appliquéés, and maybe furbelows, too.

CLUELESS II: Cleh-ver, by god, that's cleh-ver!

A completely different effect:

my wife won't know it at all if she meets it on the street.

LOVEYKINS: You'll take it along when you leave?

CLUELESS II: Oh yes; that's what I do best.

LOVEYKINS: So let's go in.

CLUELESS II: I'll be right with you. Just one last word
with my menial there.

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ebruary (Loveykings enters her house. Clueless Two hangs back and turns to Smug.)

—Hey, Smug! You get over here!

(Smug hurries up.)

SMUG: And what's up now?

CLUELESS II: Reconnaissance in progress.

SMUG: We need
Reconnaissance?

CLUELESS II: We always require Reconnaissance.

SMUG: We do?

Don't tell me, I know: You're sounding out the grounds
for personal bankruptcy. Down you go.

CLUELESS II: 16a5cb84b2aa76e69aa6126a86ffbed2
ebruary It's in the bag!

SMUG:

(For a moment, he worries about the seabag, still by the sailors.)

What's in the bag?

CLUELESS II: The booty.

SMUG: Your booty's on the line.

CLUELESS II: I've all but bagged the booty—that's what this battle's about!
You hurry and get this crew booked into an inn somewhere.
Then come back here and get me, before the sun goes down.

SMUG: But master, these are *whores*.

Their tricks you can't conceive!

CLUELESS II: SILENCE! If I screw up through lack of sophistication,
who suffers?

Me, not you.

But lack of sophistication
is what SHE has, not me. She is, in fact, a rube.
From my Reconnaissance,

this beauty's me booty!

ARRR!

(He stalks into Loveykins's house. Smug looks after him.)

SMUG: And so our simple sloop slips slowly into the scuppers
of the dreadnought woman-of-war, to sink without trace.

But no:

only a hick like me would expect to pilot his master.
When he plunked down money for me, he was buying a yes-man
vassal,
not a commander in chief.

(He moves to the seabag, hoists it onto his shoulder, and addresses the sailors and porters.)

All right, men! Follow me!

Quick-march!

Your captain has to return for a stint as private.

(Smug and sailors and porters march off stage right.)

Act III, Scene 1 [446-465]

(Diddle, rumped, disheveled, and furious, staggers on stage left, from the Forum.)

DIDDLEY: In thirty—count 'em, thirty—ugly years of life
not one atrocity did I perpetrate rivaling this one:
I attended a PUBLIC MEETING!

Got trapped,

went down with all hands—

except for Clueless: *I'm* gasping—but *he* bails out and bolts.
Slips back to his popsy, no doubt.

All disencumbered from *me*.

May heaven without exception blast and damn
the man who first conceived the mandatory meeting—
the compulsory convocation to hobble the already hassled!
They ought to require attendance by loafers and slackers and no-
goods,
with instant incarceration for those who miss the shape-up—
that's the way to do it!

And we have slackers in scads,
drones who never met a menu, one-snack-a-day types
who neither go out to dinner nor ever have anyone in.
That is the workforce to muster for public rallies and meetings.
With a law like that, I wouldn't be diddled out of dinner.
My dinner!

A dinner, I'm sure, that wanted me to eat it.

—But onward, still.

Hope springs eternal:

it's Leftover Time!

(As Diddley starts for Loveykins's house, Clueless Two, tiddly and satiated, party
garland on head and Pelisse in hand, totters from the door. Diddley pulls up and
hides behind the statue of Apollo.)

Oops. Clueless departs, still wearing his party garland.
The repast is way past,
lunch is history,
even the table's

a snackless waste

I'm just in time

to walk him home.

Standard plan: keen observation, sharp confrontation.

Act III, Scene 2 [466–523]

(Clueless Two addresses the unseen Loveykins from immediately outside her door.)

CLUELESS II: Don't fuss—I'll bring it back in a flash, repaired,
remade, reaccessorized. I swear you'll swear
it's a different garment.

My personal guarantee:
you won't see this again.

(Diddley watches from behind Apollo and seethes, unnoticed by Clueless Two.)

DIDDLEY:

Errands? Of course!

He's taking the Pelisse to the detail shop *himself*.

The lunch is gorged, the wine is ravaged, the sponge,
the faithful sponge, is purged, shut out, rejected.

And now must I to mine own self be true:

REVENGE, I CRY, REVENGE!

Terrible, swift, and *elegant*.

Just watch me work.

CLUELESS II:

(Moving center, he turns towards the audience and addresses the skies.)

Almighty gods! I'm Number One! You've never
bestowed more bounties and boons in a single day
on a single man who expected less!

Consider:
food and sauce, and sex, and . . .

(He holds up the Pelisse.)

look! A surprise—
a legacy soon to be liquidated for good.

DIDDLEY: The trouble with ambush: I can't hear a thing from here.
He got *his*; is he boasting how he got *mine*?

CLUELESS II: My gift to her, she claims; my theft from my wife.
Perceiving her error, I instantly shout agreement.
I play along as though this twaddle were truth,
that some relationship obtained between us.
Any fantastic assertion she voices, I echo.
To cut to the bottom line: I've never ever
taken in greater receipts for lesser outlay.

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ebrary DIDDLEY: Now the attack: I'm spoiling to start a spat.

(He springs from behind the statue and advances on the startled Clueless Two.)

CLUELESS II: Now what? Another encounter? Who can this be?

DIDDLEY: AHA! you featherweight phony, than whom
no wickeder, nastier, *vicious-er* clown exists!
You're not a man, you're a scandal! Shyster! Cheat!
You absolute moral zero! What did I ever
do to you, to deserve annihilation?
Just minutes ago, you left me in the lurch downtown!
While I was away, you lowered lunch in its grave
and shut me out of the will!

HOW COULD YOU DO IT!

(The vigorous assault initially wearies rather than upsets Clueless Two.)

CLUELESS II: Excuse me, sir, but do we have business together?
I don't know you, you don't know me—so why

this flood of scurrilous invective?

Or would you prefer
impairment, perhaps, in return for vilification?

DIDDLEY: As god is my witness, you already gave me that!

CLUELESS II: Excuse me, sir, but might you tell me your name?

DIDDLEY: As if you didn't know it!

I detest being dissed!

CLUELESS II: As god is *my* witness, I DO NOT KNOW YOU. Never
before today have I experienced you
in any shape or form.

But still, whoever
you are, let's keep this meeting on an equable level.
One simple rule. No hassle. No hassle of *me*.

DIDDLEY: Clueless! Wake up!

CLUELESS II: My oath: I AM AWAKE—
as far as I know.

DIDDLEY: And yet you do not know me?

CLUELESS II: Correct. If I knew you, I wouldn't say that I didn't.

DIDDLEY: You do not know your personal parasite—*me*?

CLUELESS II: This I do know:

you don't have a brain; you have headcheese.

DIDDLEY: One question: you purloined that Pelisse from your wife today
and presented it to Loveykins, did you not?

CLUELESS II: On oath: I have no wife. I neither presented
this Pelisse to Loveykins, nor, in fact, purloined it.

DIDDLEY:

(A brief aside.)

Lost it: there goes the Grand Plan.

—Let's try again:

did I, or did I not; observe you emerging
from that door there, wearing—nay, *clad*—in that Pelisse?

CLUELESS II: Oooh, I despise your kind!

Just because you're a pervert,
is that supposed to mean that I'm one, too?
You swear, or affirm, that I was clad in a *Pelisse*?

DIDDLEY: My oath: I swear you were.

CLUELESS II: Skedaddle! Git!

To any appropriate doom for scum-like you!

Or try a course of moral purification
to turn your mind around!

DIDDLEY: Then hear *my* oath:
I shall divulge this affair to your wife in detail!
Plaintive appeals are useless; I won't be deterred
till all your nasty language redounds on you!
No one eats my lunch and goes unavenged!

(He stomps into Clueless One's house without knocking.)

CLUELESS II: So what the hell's going on? Am I a target,
a butt for derision from everybody I meet?
A laughingstock to everybody I look at?

(He suddenly turns back towards Loveykins's house.)

—But hark. The door over there. I heard a creak.

Act III, Scene 3 [524–558]

(Skivvee, Loveykins's maid, enters from Loveykins's house. She carries a golden bracelet.)

SKIVVEE: Clueless? A request from Loveykins, pretty please?
The goldsmith's is on your way downtown; could you drop
this bracelet off and have it *augmented* a little?
An ounce of gold . . .
and a full makeover, too.

CLUELESS II: Nullo problemo.

(He takes the bracelet from Skivvee.)

Any more errands? Tell her
The take-charge guy is here; no commission refused.

SKIVVEE: You *do* recognize the bracelet?

(Clueless Two squints at it carelessly.)

CLUELESS II: I can tell it's gold.

SKIVVEE: But this is the very bracelet you claimed you burgled
out of your wife's chest, in secret. Some time back.

CLUELESS II: I swear it never happened!

SKIVVEE: You don't remember?
Oh, goodness me!
Well, if you don't remember,
then give the bracelet back.

(She reaches for it. He draws his hand back and affects close inspection.)

CLUELESS II: Now, wait. Let's see . . .
Who could forget my wife's chest?

Well, look at that!

The very bracelet I gave her.

SKIVVEE: The very one.

CLUELESS II: Ahem. What about the expensive armbands I gave her?

SKIVVEE: You didn't. Ever.

CLUELESS II: You're right. I didn't. Just this.

SKIVVEE: Do I tell her you'll take it in charge?

CLUELESS II: Precisely. You tell her

Charge Will Be Taken.

I'll make all the arrangements:

Same-day delivery: Pelisse and bracelet together.

SKIVVEE: Now, could you do something for ME, nice Mr. Clueless?

Have the goldsmith make me a pair of earrings?

Four drachs worth of gold? Pendants with globular ends?

That way, I'll be ever so . . . *nice* when you come to call.

CLUELESS II: Consider it done.

Just gimme the gold.

I'll pay

for the labor myself.

SKIVVEE: Oh. Couldn't you please
supply the gold? I really sincerely promise
to pay you back. Afterwards.

CLUELESS II: On the whole, *no*.

Couldn't *you* please supply the gold? I promise

I'll pay you back afterwards. Double. At least.

SKIVVEE: I haven't got it.

CLUELESS II: Then give it to me when you get it.

SKIVVEE:

(Frostily turning to go into Loveykins's house.)

Will that be all?

CLUELESS II: You tell her that I am In Charge . . .

(Skivvee flounces back into Loveykins's house.)

. . . of Quick Liquidation. How much can I get for this lot?

—Is she inside yet?

No trace; the door is *shut*.

(He moves center, then holds Pelisse *and* bracelet up to the sky.)

Ye gods! I am the pantheon's proper pet!
I'm on their list for patronage, increase, and love.

Better not dawdle, now opportunity
and chance conspire. It's time to blow this bordello.

Attention, Clueless! Forward, march! On the double!
—But wait! A stratagem, of course:

(He moves quickly to the stage left exit, removes the garland, and puts it on the ground.)

I sling
this garland slyly over here, to my left:
the road downtown.

Whoever spots my spoor
will think that I went thataway.

Not me, thanks. I go
*this*away, to meet my slave—I certainly hope
that he turns up—and fill him in on the goods
and chattels the gods have showered on me today!

(Joyous, he exits stage right, towards the harbor.)

Act IV, Scene 1 [559-570]

(Enter, from Clueless One's house, Dovey and Diddley. She strides; he creeps.)

DOVEY: HOW LONG DO I SUFFER IN SILENCE?

My husband loots
the house and drags the swag to his popsy next door . . .
That isn't marriage, it's pillage!

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ebrary DIDDLEY: Please—no more noise!
The game is afoot, about to be caught red-handed.
Stay close behind me.

Let's see. The subject was making
his way to the detail shop with Pelisse in hand.
Yours, in fact, that he burgled from home sweet home.
Quite drunk . . .

and wearing a garland . . .

(He spies Clueless Two's cast-off garland on the way to town and pounces on it.)

Got it in one!

The garland itself!

(He points off stage left.)

He went thataway! Don't take
my word for it; track him, and check me out,
because you'll find . . . no, check that: here he comes.

Right on the dot of doom . . .

That's odd:

No Pelisse.

DOVEY: But what approach do I take with him now?

DIDDLEY: The standard.

Don't change. Just make his life hell.

It works for me.

Let's watch from here. A handy spot for an ambush.

(They secrete themselves in the alley between the two houses as Clueless One enters.)

Act IV, Scene 2 [571–674]

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(Enter from the Forum, stage left, Clueless One. He is bedraggled and disheveled and distinctly annoyed. He sings "The Song of Annoying Obligation.")

CLUELESS I:

*The System is The Trouble,
The System is a dud,
The System's gonna get you
And make your morals mud.*

*The System has no reason,
The System is a pest,
The System's the addiction
Of the brightest and the best.*

*The System is a custom
That tries to be a science
Where Patrons pick out others
And make them into Clients.*

*They don't pick out the Clients
Who know their ought or should.
The System isn't based on
Who's awful or who's good.*

*The saint who has no money
Is, to **The System**, bad.
The lowlife with high income's
The man who must be had.*

*The System maps our culture
With notch and nook and niche;
There's room for any bastard
If the sonofabitch is rich.*

*Which explains the staggering number of Clients
with absolutely no regard*

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ebruary

*For law or ethics, which renders the existence
of their Patrons quite hassled and hard.
Defaulters and dodgers, these human vultures
are forever entangled in lawsuits—
No great surprise, since extortion and lies
are the usual source of their assets.*

*When Client has his day in court,
It's Patron's day in court, too . . .
For perjury, the very way
The System says he ought to
Defend his Client's dodge or grudge
To jury, magistrate, or judge.*

*My Client's entanglements tripped me and trapped me the whole
afternoon*

*With no chance of getting back here to the party anytime soon.
I presented his case at the hearing, a tissue of lies and omissions
That put the best face on his hideous tally of tacky transgressions,
And changed his brutalities into mere peccadillos—in short,
I hacked out a cunning compact to settle his case out of court.
Oh, what a deal I was cutting, a tailored brief that had style,
Contorted and twisted and studded with loopholes . . .*

*until my vile
Client decided, the hell with agreements, he'd take it to trial—
Where hostile witnesses clustered to sink him, three in a row,
Where his guilt stood up in court and shouted out, "HeLLo!"*

*Damn that litigating clown,
The man who shot my party down.
Damn me, too, for going to court:
My Ideal Day is cut off short.*

*Still:
The day's not over; there's a thought:
I ordered lunch; is it still hot?
Is my mistress waiting, too?
Check it out—that's what I'll do.*

*If Loveykins is really miffed;
What device to sue for peace?
Loveykins must have a gift . . .
And that's the answer:*

The Pelisse!

(His voice rises to a shout.)

*The Pelisse I pinched from my wife and plumped in Loveykins's lap!
Oh, Bless that Dress!*

DIDDLEY: Any comment?

DOVEY: My marriage in ruins! My spouse a roué!

DIDDLEY: I wouldn't want you to miss a word.

DOVEY: I hear quite well, thanks.

(Still not seeing the two watchers, Clueless One makes for Loveykins's house.)

CLUELESS I: If I have any sense, I'll go over here and improve my lot.
The wiser path leads to Loveykins's house: pleasure at last.

DIDDLEY:

(Flanking Clueless One on his right as he passes.)

But misery first.

(Dovey zooms in on Clueless One's left. Flanked, he stops, at first more surprised than fearful.)

DOVEY: By all that's holy,
you'll pay interest on that heist!

DIDDLEY: Good move.

DOVEY: Did you really think
that you could commit these heinous atrocities under wraps?

CLUELESS I:

(Genuinely puzzled.)

Oh, hello, darling. Did something happen?

DOVEY: You're asking *me*?

CLUELESS I: Well, I'll ask *him*, if that's what you want.

(He puts a placating hand on her arm. She shoves it violently away.)

DOVEY: Hands off! No foreplay!

DIDDLEY:

(Coaching her.)

Now follow through.

CLUELESS I: You seem annoyed. Something I did?

DOVEY: You ought to know.

(Diddle continues coaching her.)

DIDDLEY: He knows, he knows. The bastard's faking.

CLUELESS I:

(Beginning to realize that not all is well.)

Something I did?

DOVEY: The Pelisse.

CLUELESS I: *The Pelisse?*

DOVEY: Someplace, the Pelisse . . .

DIDDLEY:

(To Clueless.)

You're panicked.

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CLUELESS I: I am *not* panicked.

DIDDLEY: You are. At least, you're pale.

The Pelisse produces pallor, at least.

Gulping the feast
while I was away—you shouldn't have done that.

(To Dovey.)

—Go on the attack!

CLUELESS I:

(With a minimal head-shake to Diddley.)

Please be quiet.

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DIDDLEY: No, dammit, no quiet from me.

(To Dovey.)

—See that?

A head-shake to shut me up.

CLUELESS I: No, not in the goddam least.

I am not shaking the head,

(He shakes his head at Diddley.)

nor am I slipping the wink.

(He winks violently at Diddley.)

DIDDLEY:

(To Dovey.)

There's chutzpah. What you see with your very own eyes, he denies.

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CLUELESS I: By Jupiter *and* the other eleven—is that sufficient?—
I shook no head!

(He shakes his head violently again.)

DIDDLEY: *That* point we grant. Get back to business.

CLUELESS I: What business is that?

DIDDLEY: Standard small business: the detail shop.
Get back down there: we sue for return of one Pelisse.

CLUELESS I: Pelisse? Please, what Pelisse might that be?

DIDDLEY: I say no more.
I leave the rest to my client, who does not appear to recall
the particulars of her case.

DOVEY: I remember this: I'm RUINED!

CLUELESS I: Ruined? But how? But why? Come on, now, you can tell *me*.
I know: it's a personnel problem.

Have you been smart-alecked, sweetkins?
Perhaps the maids, or maybe the males indulged in backchat?
Just give me names and times and places. They'll pay!

DOVEY:

(Demurely.)

That's blahblah.

CLUELESS I: I understand. You're upset. And that upsets me.

DOVEY: That's blahblah.

CLUELESS I: You're obviously miffed at a member of the household staff.

DOVEY: Still blahblah.

CLUELESS I: But, dear, you couldn't be miffed with *me*?

DOVEY: Now, *that's* not blahblah.

CLUELESS I: Whatever for? My hands are clean.

DOVEY: And back to blahblah.

CLUELESS I: Sweet, spotless spouse, what can have caused such discomposure?

DIDDLEY: And Mr. Niceguy turns on the suave.

CLUELESS I: —Excuse me? Did I
solicit your observations? Stop butting in!

(He strokes Dovey's shoulder.)

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DOVEY: HANDS OFF!

(She hauls off and pastes her husband one, sending him reeling.)

DIDDLEY: By george, she's got it.

(As Clueless One regroups.)

—So dashaway, dammit, you oh-so-rapid
to wolf down lunch in my absence, you all-too-rapidly-ready
to flaunt your garland later and pan me with pie-eyed put-down
out here in front of this house.

CLUELESS I: Hold on just a goddamned minute!

I swear that I today have neither (A) had lunch,
nor even (B) set a single foot inside this house!

DIDDLEY: You deny it?

CLUELESS II: I do deny it.

DIDDLEY: Effrontery, blatant and brazen!
Did I not see you myself a moment ago right here,
before this house, sporting a wreath all bloomy and budded?
Did you, or did you not, declare me sick in the head,
and deny you knew me, and claim you came from overseas?

CLUELESS I: Well, no.

It's quite a while since I lost you in the crowd;
I just got back.

DIDDLEY: Don't try that; I know you inside out.
Little did you think that Diddley'd devise a device for Revenge!
I told your wife Everything. All. The Lot.

CLUELESS I: Which comes to *what?*

DIDDLEY:

(Suddenly coy.)

Afraid I'm not really sure.

Perhaps you'd better ask *her*.

(He gloats as Clueless One turns to Dovey.)

CLUELESS I: —Well now, what's all this?

What story has he been telling?

What's up?

What's with the silence?

What's up, *please?*

DOVEY: As if you didn't know. But why are you asking *me?*

CLUELESS I: I'm asking you because I don't know.

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ebrary
If I did, I wouldn't.

DIDDLEY: Typical culprit behavior: Avoidance, Denial, Concealment.
—It's useless. You can't keep it hidden.
—She knows it all. In *detail*.
I laid it all out to her, dammit!

CLUELESS I: And what the hell does *that* mean?

DOVEY: It means that, inasmuch as you appear to have lost
all sense of shame and all desire to give your (hah!) side
of the story, you'd better come quite close and listen up.
Now learn from me: what he told me—the reason I'm angry—is
this:
My Pelisse was purloined from the house!

CLUELESS I: What's that? My Pelisse *purloined*?
ebrary

DIDDLEY:

(To Dovey.)

Look out—a standard slick subterfuge.

(To Clueless One.)

Purloined from *her*,
not you! If *you'd* been fleeced, we'd *never* find the Pelisse.

CLUELESS I:

(To Diddley.)

I have nothing to say to you.

(To Dovey.)

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ebrary—Now, what's all this you're saying?

DOVEY: My Pelisse was fleeced from the house.

CLUELESS I: Aha. Who, please, was the fleecer?

DOVEY: The roach who poached it should know.

CLUELESS I: Does said roach have a name?

DOVEY: The name, I believe, is Clueless.

CLUELESS I: That was a *very* low blow.
Which Clueless might this be?

DOVEY: For the record: you, to wit.

CLUELESS I: Me, you mean?

DOVEY: Yes: you, to wit.

CLUELESS I: Who's bringing the charge?
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DOVEY: Me, to wit.

DIDDLEY: Me, too. You feloniously conveyed it
into that dwelling to your mistress—one *Loveykins* by name.

CLUELESS I: It was *me* who gave it away?

DOVEY: For the record: you, to wit,
You, to wit, YOU!

DIDDLEY: If you like this barrage of “to wits,”
you’d better hire an owl. It’s very tiring work.

CLUELESS I: By Jupiter *and* the other eleven—is that sufficient?—
I did NOT give it away!

DIDDLEY: Okay.
By Hercules, then,
WE are NOT telling lies!

CLUELESS I: I did NOT give it away—
not free and clear, that is. I, well, I *leased* the Pelisse.

DOVEY: Goodness gracious. I don’t go renting your coats to people,
or leasing your underwear out. There’s a proper way to handle
spare apparel: Women give *women’s* clothes away,
and men give *men’s*; it’s simple.

(Savagely. She is in command and knows it.)

Now get that Pelisse back home!

CLUELESS I: I’ll make sure it gets back.

DOVEY: It’s to your advantage to do so.
That frock is your ticket to homelife. Display it on entrance,
or never pass through those doors.

(Smiling as she turns away.)

I think I’ll be going . . . *Home*.

DIDDLEY: What’s to be my reward for all the assistance I gave you?

DOVEY: The same assistance, of course, when something’s burgled from *your*
house.

(Mistress of all she surveys, she returns inside what we shall still call the house of
Clueless One. Diddley sadly watches her go. He is utterly deflated.)

DIDDLEY: And that works out to Never; nothing to burgle at *my* house.
Heartfelt damnation descend on the both of you, husband and wife!

I see I’ve managed to alienate the whole damned family.

Time for a quick trot down to the center of town, now.

'Bye!

(And off he scoots for good, stage left, leaving Clueless One as frequently, alone.)

CLUELESS I: My wife may think she's put me out by putting me out,
but hey, no problem. There's a place for me, a haven—
a place where they Let Me In, and a *better* place, to boot.

(He yells at the closed door of his house.)

I don't meet your high standards? I can live with that,
because I meet my Loveykins's standards over there.
She won't exclude me from *her* house, and oh, how that baby
includes!

(Shouting over, he ponders.)

So what's the plan? I arrive and go down on my knees: will she
please
release the Pelisse I brought her? I'll buy her a sweeter and neater
Pelisse. Perhaps cerise. That should easily keep the peace.

(Moving to Loveykins's house, he bangs lustily on the door.)

Who's on the door today?

Hey there! Anyone home?

You in there—open the door and call my Loveykins out!

Act IV, Scene 3 [675–700]

(Loveykins's door opens just a bit, and her voice is heard.)

LOVEYKINS: Someone asking for me? Now, who can it possibly be?

CLUELESS I: One far more foe to himself than to your sweet inner child.

(That this is a fairly inept compliment escapes him, as it does Loveykins, who is doubtless used to his ineptness. In any case, she opens the door and emerges affectionately.)

LOVEYKINS: Why, Clueless! Standing around in front? Come in—*this* way.

CLUELESS I: Hang on. Guess why I came.

LOVEYKINS:

(Willing to play along. It's like a game, and she likes games.)

I know: to play more house?

CLUELESS I: Not that, dammit! I came about the Pelisse.

(A silence. She is apprehensive.)

You know,
the Pelisse I gave you today.

(Still silence.)

Anyway, give me it back.

(The silence, still confused, turns frosty at the edges.)

My wife's found out. The way it happened. By the numbers.
I'll buy you a nicer Pelisse.

Worth twice as much.

Your choice.

LOVEYKINS: But I just *gave* it to you, to take to the detail shop.
And that bracelet, too, to go to the goldsmith's, to be made over.

CLUELESS I: *I* took the Pelisse and the bracelet? Think hard; it never happened.
Retrace it: early today, I gave the Pelisse to you.
I then departed, left, *went away* downtown. And now
I'm back for the very first time.

I haven't seen you since.

LOVEYKINS: I see your little game. I entrust my goodies to you,
and so you're finagling a way to keep them and diddle me out
of what is rightfully mine.

CLUELESS I: Oh, damn! I am not trying
to diddle you! *Of course* they're yours. What I am saying
is this: MY WIFE'S FOUND OUT.

THE WAY . . .

LOVEYKINS: It's not as if
I asked for the item, you know. You brought it here on your own.
You gave it to me, a *present*, of your own free will. And now
you *demand* it back.

All right, it's yours; I can handle that.
Keep the Pelisse. Take it for walks. Wear it in health—
you? your wife? who cares? Seal it up in your strongbox.
*But do not make the mistake of thinking that you will ever
be welcome in this house again!*

I deserve better than this.
But now that you deem me a creature worth only contempt and
rebuff,
you'd better bring buckets of cash, or else you won't have me
to hook and hoax any more!

In fact, from this day forward,
find some other gullible goose to victimize!

(She stalks back to her doors. Clueless One turns to the audience.)

CLUELESS I: Notice that anger? She's overreacting.

(He turns to see Loveykins vanish between the doors of her house.)

Hey, wait! Stick around!

Come back here, please!

Just do it for *me!*

(SLAM! go the doors.)

She's gone inside.

And shut the door.

Than me there is no castouter outcast:

Both at home and in haven, my word's worth nothing at all.

So. Off to lay this maddening mess in front of my friends.

They're sure to have an opinion—what in the world should I do?

(Slowly he shambles off to downtown, stage left.)

Act V, Scene 1 [701–752]

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(Enter, stage right, Clueless Two, with Pelisse and bracelet.)

CLUELESS II: Plumb the pits of idiocy—that's what I did.

Put my wallet and money in Smug's tender care,

and weighed him down to the bottom of some low dive.

(He stops and looks back off stage right. Dovey enters from Clueless One's house. She scans the street, first to the left . . .)

DOVEY: How soon will my husband return?

How . . .

(. . . then to the right. She sees Clueless Two.)

ooh!

I'm safe! I'm whole! He's brought the Pelisse back.

(Clueless Two, center, does not yet see or hear her.)

45 CLUELESS II: 1 Smug's gone out cruising, doubtless . . . Where would he go?
ebruary

DOVEY: I shall advance and meet my mate in the words,
hallowed by culture, that he so richly deserves:

(She nears the unsuspecting Clueless Two and screams into his ear.)

LOUSY NO-GOOD EXCUSE FOR A MAN!

For shame!

Traipsing before me with that frippery, yet!

(Clueless Two is startled but hardly terrified. He recovers.)

CLUELESS II: Does something bother you, lady?

DOVEY: The very nerve!

To utter the merest word in my direction,
even in an undertone!

CLUELESS II: I committed some sin?

So noxious I'm not allowed to speak?
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DOVEY: Me?
Shameless audacity prompts you to question ME?

CLUELESS II: An inquiring mind, lady: you know, of course,
why Greek employs the proper name *Hecuba*
as a synonym for BITCH?

DOVEY: I would NOT know.

CLUELESS II: That's odd; there's such a similarity: she
performed precisely as you do now, unloading
floods of assorted abuse on all and sundry.
And so in time she won her formulaic
epithet, which, in case you missed it, was
BITCH.

DOVEY: I do not have to endure these heinous habits!
I'd sooner drag out my existence single and alone,
without a trace of a husband, before I'd endure
this constant humiliation and utter disgrace!

CLUELESS II: It's nothing to do with me. Stick out your marriage,
or go back home.

Is this in your culture pattern—
compulsive tale-telling to new arrivals?
Or do all of you make up fairy tales to relay
to unwary tourists?

DOVEY: *Fairy tales!*

I repeat:

I'd sooner get divorced and stay that way
than try to cope with your heinous atrocities!

CLUELESS II: I couldn't care less . . . so get your divorce, and stay
divorced till heaven's under new management.

DOVEY: Just look at that Pelisse! Only a bit ago
you swore you hadn't stolen it, and now
you flaunt before my eyes the very Pelisse
you feloniously filched. Have you no shame?

CLUELESS II: Godalmighty, you are some brazen woman,
no shame at all! You really insist this Pelisse
was ripped away from your wardrobe, the very garment
another female gave me to be refurbished?

DOVEY: You dare to say . . . ?

Words fail me. Time to send
for Daddy. I'll give him chapter and verse on all
the disgrace I have to stand from your heinous habits!

Tidee!

Oh, Tidee!

(The spruce young maid Tidee appears at the door.)

Go find my Daddy *now*,
and bring him straight back here!

Say I HAVE NEEDS.

(Tidee sprints off stage left, towards town.)

I shall proceed to expose your heinous habits!

CLUELESS II: You're crazy.

Which heinous habits might you be
referring to?

DOVEY:

Your theft, for starters: you burgle
my jewelery, my Pelisse—property of Your Wife—
and fence them off to your mistress.

That *Fairy Tale*
strike a chord of truth?

CLUELESS II:

Could you prescribe a potion
that I might take by mouth to build up resistance
against this galloping utter lack of restraint?
I haven't the slightest idea who you think I am,
but I do know this:

Hercules was the husband
of Deianeira, who was the daughter of Oeneus,
who was the son of Porthaon . . . and him I met
on the very same afternoon that I met *you*.

DOVEY:

Make fun of me if you will, but you can't deride
my Daddy . . . and here comes Daddy now!

(She points off left.)

Look there!

You *do* know Daddy, of course?

CLUELESS II:

I certainly do.
We shared a tent in the Trojan War. I turned
to him and said, "Look there—a horse!"

And there
you were.

DOVEY:

You mean to say you don't know ME?
You don't know Daddy?

You get there.
Largo.

(One final plod. Dance finished, he moves gradually on to the stage.)

*In Age, afflictions come to call . . .
But an unabridged list with nothing missed
Would cut down my speed, which would mean that I'd
Never finish this hike at all.*

*Do let me discuss today's disorder,
Headache and heartburn:*

*Why would my daughter
Demand my immediate presence without
Giving a reason? What's this about?*

*And yet, it's really simple stuff;
I know the answer, near enough.
My darling daughter's got her spouse
In the dock inside the house:
And now proceeds to prosecute
A most uncivil domestic suit.
That's the way that women do—
Vicious vixens through and through:
Women's dowries go away
If their menfolk don't obey.
Not to say that men are perfect;
Every husband has his defect,
And wife should only have to stand
So much from hubby's heavy hand.*

AND SO:

*When Daddy's sent for on the run.
Something wrong's been said or done:
A conjugal catastrophe,
Or all-out quarrel.*

Q.E.D.

Whatever the facts may be, I'll find out shortly.

(He sees Dovey and reacts with complete unenthusiasm.)

Well, look at this. She's out in front of the house.
And there's her husband, looking properly gloomy.
Hypothesis confirmed.

I begin the hearing with her.

(He moves toward his daughter but has not reached her. At best, he looks very dour.)

. . . —Hey there! Daughter!

DOVEY:

Daddy?

Aren't you glad to see me?

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ANTIQUIDES: *Of course* I'm Glad to see you.
Glad to be dragged across town,
Glad to fetch up in Gloom . . .
But *Glad* is hardly the word—
I'm positively *Glowing*.
My Daughter The Wife is all frown,
my son-in-law's fuming aloof.
I've arrived on a field of battle during a temporary lull.
So answer the standard question:
Whose fault? Who started this?
No orations, please: all that's needed's a simple "ME."

DOVEY: Let me unburden your mind on this point, Daddy Dear:
I'm not guilty of a single thing but losing my patience.
I simply *cannot* exist in this house a moment longer.
TAKE ME BACK HOME TO LIVE WITH YOU AGAIN!

(Antiquides recoils.)

DOVEY: Your darling daughter's been dissed!

ANTIQUIDES: Been dissed?

DOVEY: *Disparaged, disdained . . .*
and dumped on, too!

ANTIQUIDES: But what were the grounds?

DOVEY: The front yard here—
but mostly, inside.

ANTIQUIDES: Who did it?

DOVEY: That no-good you married me off to.

ANTIQUIDES:

(A relieved aside.)

Oh, *that's* it. Merely a Typical Wedded Tiff.

(To Dovey.)

NOW HEAR THIS:

How many times do I have to make this completely clear?
I do not do domestic disputes!

Neither of you
applies to me to referee tiffs!

DOVEY: But Daddy, where else
can I apply?

ANTIQUIDES: *I'm asking the questions.*

DOVEY:

(A turn of the screw.)

Please, Daddy, *please*.

ANTIQUIDES: How many times have I had to read you the simple rules?

Humor your Husband!

Pamper your Man!

And Play Along!

No Checking Up on his actions, intentions, or destinations.

DOVEY: So what's to check? My husband cheats within earshot: He's having a torrid affair with the whore whose lair is the house next door!

ANTIQUIDES:

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(Struck with admiration in spite of himself.)

Now, *that* shows serious planning . . .

(Recovering.)

I mean, the more you keep on your husband's case, the more said affair will flourish and bloom.

DOVEY: And while he's there, he *drinks*.

ANTIQUIDES:

And if you drive him to tipping somewhere downtown, you think he'll turn teetotally dry?

You're a disaster.

Can't you act like a wedded woman?

Start with these premises, what can we expect from you next?

(He simpers in a high voice.)

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I'm sorry, dear; no dining out for you! or else it's
Having those loafers over to dinner? Not in this house!
You don't want marriage, but *Domination*:

Follow your logic
out to its end: Give your husband little jobs
to do around the house. Oh, I can hear you now:

(High voice again.)

Just pull up a stool over there with the maids, and card your wool!

DOVEY: Just my luck—I've retained my husband's counsel, not mine.
Get to the other side of the court; don't stand by me, and plead for
him!

ANTIQUIDES: The slightest delinquency on *his* part, and I press charges
on *him* that make the ones I pressed on you resemble
extenuating circumstances! The Facts are these:
your husband keeps you chic and jingling, dressed to the nines,

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ringed beyond the elbows, covered with allover gilt,
provided with maids in profusion, provision in positive scads.
Your only sensible recourse to a flood of goodies like that
is common sense, or Putting Up With.

DOVEY: He's stolen my gold,
and robbed my garb direct from my chests at home, and delivered
the loot to prostitutes on the sly!

(Antiquides is deeply shocked.)

ANTIQUIDES: But those are worth *money!*
Felony! Theft! He's committed a CRIME!

(He recovers himself.)

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—provided, of course, ebruary
that he has actually done . . . well, what you said.

If not,
then *you*, of course, have committed the crime—defaming the name
of an innocent man.

DOVEY: *He's* committing it *now*, this very moment!
A pilfered Pelisse on his person, *plus* the bracelet from home,
the one he took next door to *her*—but now he's bringing
it back to me. Because, you see, I Checked It Out.

ANTIQUIDES: Just leave this mess to me. I'll grill him; he'll spill the facts
in no time at all.

(An advocate prepares.)

Now, first the approach, and then the address.

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ebruary (He starts plodding towards Clueless Two, who, still located near Loveykins's door,
has been watching and disapproving; but a look from Clueless Two cows Antiquides,
and he winds up making his pitch from a position more or less behind Dovey.)

Clueless, an answer, if you please. Precisely what
is the subject under, let's say, *discussion* between you two?
Why are you frowning?

Why is my daughter fuming aloof?

CLUELESS II: Look, Mr. Whoever-the-hell-you-are, or Who-shall-be-nameless,
or, let's say, *Old Guy*,

I plead the pantheon in toto . . .

ANTIQUIDES: You're making *avowals*, yet? But what in the world *about*?

CLUELESS II: . . . to witness that I have committed no crime against that rancid
female obsessive there, who insists that I did extract
from the house before us

(He indicates the house of Clueless One.)
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and, further, from her filch this garment!

(He holds up the Pelisse for all to see.)

DOVEY: He's committing a lie under oath!

CLUELESS II: I further affirm as follows:
I have never. Pushed foot. Or anything else. Inside. This house . . .
And if I have, I plead upon the powers that be
to plunge me deep to the utter nadir of human agony,
anguish, woe, and degradation!

ANTIQUIDES: You *want* to be wretched?
You never pushed foot inside this house—your legal dwelling?
You raving lunatic—don't talk crazy!

CLUELESS II: Look here, Old Guy:
do you affirm that this house here's my legal dwelling?

ANTIQUIDES: Do you deny it?

CLUELESS II: On oath, I truly *do* deny it.

ANTIQUIDES: You truly deny it *falsely*!
Unless you moved last night.

(An incredulous gape from Clueless Two. Antiquides turns to Dovey.)

—Honey, come over here.

(She complies.)

You answer the question:
did you move out of here last night?

DOVEY: Of all the questions . . .
Move out to where? And why?

ANTIQUIDES: I haven't the slightest idea.

DOVEY: He's making fun of you—what else?

ANTIQUIDES: Enough of the jokes,
Clueless. Stick to business!

CLUELESS II: What business? We're partners, perhaps,
with mutual obligations? I don't even know who you are.
Just give me your name and address, and add the amount that's
owing.
To you, I suppose.

Or come to think of it, *her*.

(He fuels his annoyance with a glance at Dovey.)

She sticks!

A virtuoso *artiste* in unremitting *Bother!*

(He is now beside himself.)

DOVEY: Daddy! His eyes are positively *green!*

He's turning all *pale!*

It starts at his temples, goes to his brows, his eyes are aglimmer
with that washed-out greenish glow . . .

CLUELESS II:

(Aside, gloomily.)

I know. The standard symptoms:

they think I'm crazy.

Well, why not? I do a good Crazy.

I'll pretend I'm around the bend, and frighten these cretins away.

(He takes several deep breaths to prepare himself, looking around for inspiration.)

DOVEY: The hideous faces, the awful grimaces—what do I *do?*

ANTIQUIDES: You get over this way, daughter. As far from that loon as you can.

(But Clueless Two's gaze has landed on the statue of Bacchus, who, among other things, is the mad god of the rural riot. The mortal takes his cue and goes wildly mad.)

CLUELESS II: Bacchus of the Blast and Boom!

Yoicks!

Tantivy!

WAHOOOO!

You call me a-field to hunt? I hear thy harrying halloo,
and would a-hunting go,

(He moves to the pair in a savage stalk.)

but I am hampered and hindered,
hemmed on my left by the slavering, rabid Bitchgoddess *there* . . .

(He charges at Dovey, who breaks for the statue of Apollo. Antiquides, alarmed, breaks to stage right and cowers behind the statue of Bacchus.)

not to neglect this dithering Dwarf behind you *here*,
vapid veteran, throughout his career, of perjured witness
in plenty to plunge the innocent low!

ANTIQUIDES: You're a dead man!

(Clueless Two shrugs him off and cups an ear at the statue of Apollo.)

CLUELESS II: What's this, Apollo? A sudden oracle doth bid me now
to cauterize this bitch's eyes with burning brands?

(He mimes torches in either hand and advances on Dovey.)

DOVEY: Daddy—my final words! He says he'll burn my eyes out!

(Clueless Two stops and delivers an aside to the audience.)

CLUELESS II: Oboy. Both round the twist, and they call *me* insane.

ANTIQUIDES: Hey, daughter!

DOVEY: Hey, *what?*

ANTIQUIDES: Got a plan?

DOVEY: Why don't I get some slaves
to carry him off and tie him up inside the house?
I'd only be gone a moment . . .

(She gathers herself for the short dash to her door.)

CLUELESS II:

(Aside.)

Which way can I possibly turn?
If I don't get some overall plan, then I'm all over—
delivered in chains to their happy home.

(Back into the madness.)

—What say, Apollo?
A full-force fusillade of fists on this female's face
lest she slip slyly from sight on her way to total damnation?
Good thinking, Apollo.

(The torch-bit forgotten, he advances on Dovey with fists clenched and raised.)

ANTIQUIDES: Home, girl, home! As fast as you can,
or you're pulverized! Flee!

DOVEY: I'm fleeing, I'm fleeing!

(She is—but, arrived at her door, she stops in another sort of concern.)

Just one thing, Daddy:
Don't let him get away!
But oh! the distress, the disgrace!
No decent woman should have to hear such dreadful language!

(She goes inside. Clueless Two pats the statue of Apollo and drops the rhetoric for the moment.)

CLUELESS II: One down, Apollo. Pretty good job, if I say so myself.

(Back into the madness again.)

—And now I turn to this towering Titan of total abasement,
white-haired and trembling, the bearded Bitchdad!

(He cups his ear at Apollo's statue.)

—Another order?

Crush and commingle his arms and his legs and his bones and his joints
in a bloody puree? And create this mess with the coward's own cane?

(He advances on Antiquides, who backs away, brandishing the cane in question.)

ANTIQUIDES: Look, sonny. If you lay a single finger on me, or come just one step nearer, you'll get into serious trouble, hear?

CLUELESS II: Good suggestion, Apollo. First, let me get mine *axe*, both edges agleam, and trim his innards from their bony cage, gobbet by greasy gobbet!

(He mimes a raised axe and continues the advance. Antiquides addresses the audience.)

ANTIQUIDES: —I *think* we've reached the point where I'd better look after myself, and take a precaution or two. Am I right to worry that he intends me some serious harm?

CLUELESS II:

(Affecting to cope with a flood of commands, using invisible props.)

Apollo! Not all at once!

Yoke two unbroken braces
of stampeding stallions?

Check.

Mount to my insolent chariot's
battle station?

Check.

Then grind to diminutive flinders
this stinking, feckless, toothless excuse for a senile lion?
Check and Double-check!

(He mimes mounting for epic attack.)

—I mount to my place in the car.

—I firmly grasp the reins.

—I cuddle the quirt in my fist.

—Onward, my steeds, to Attack!

—Now sound the boom of your hooves!

(He beats his chest with cupped palms, then grabs up "reins and quirt" again.)

—Let savage spring impel the relentless speed of your feet!

(He poises to charge, then slumps.)

ANTIQUIDES: You're running me down in a four-horse rig?

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ebrary *That's what you're doing?*

CLUELESS II: Yet one more order, Apollo?

One final rush on this loon
who blocks my way, to lay him low and wipe him out?

(He raises himself for action . . . but Antiquides raises his very real cane, deflating the younger man's ardor. Clueless Two stops and jerks his head backwards.)

But hold! Who hangs his hand in my hair, and rips me forth
from my chariot's floor?

(He stumbles back and poises precariously for an instant.)

I know you won't like this one bit, Apollo.
Your power's revoked.

You'll have to revise your edict.

(He spins around, falls on his back, and is still. After a slight interval, Antiquides inspects the body.)

ANTIQUIDES: Mercy me—this must be a swift and dreadful disease.
Cut off in the full flush of madness—and only a moment ago,
how fresh and vital he was.

What a quick and deadly attack!
I'd better go get the doctor. And quickly.

No speed spared.

(He shambles off, stage left, at his usual painful plod.)

Act V, Scene 3 [876–888]

(Clueless Two raises his head cautiously.)

CLUELESS II: So did they leave?
Off to warp another sane man
into a loony?

(He scans the stage as well as he can from his back.)

Nowhere to be seen.
They're gone.

(He rises and looks around again.)

Looks safe. Then now's the time to make for the ship.

(He rises and starts off stage right, stops, comes downstage and addresses the audience.)

Hi, you out there. A simple request:
If Old Guy
makes another appearance, please don't tell him
the route I took to make my escape.
Goodbye.

(He sprints off stage right. As Clueless Two disappears, Antiquides makes his entrance stage left. Slowly, as on his previous entrance. He stops and addresses the audience.)

ANTIQUIDES: Don't doctors make you *well*? Just sitting and watching for this one to meet his appointments has made me a victim of vicious lower-back pain and a hideous squint. He finally made it back from his patients, but just. Mending a broken leg for Aesculapius, or so he said, and setting an arm for Apollo. I wanted a doctor . . . instead, I got a sculptor.

(He looks back, off stage left.)

Oh, look: he approaches.

Speed! An ant walks faster!

Act V, Scene 4 [889-898]

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(Enter, stage left, the Man of Medicine, Dr. Klyster. Very aged and slower than ebrary Antiquides, whom he joins, down left.)

DR. KLYSTER: Now, bring me up to date on the ailment's nature: Schizophrenia—that what you said? Or good, old-fashioned Possession?

Let me have the facts:

Narcolepsy? Shingles? Possibly Gout?

ANTIQUIDES: You've got it backwards. *You* tell *me* what's wrong, and then you make him well.

DR. KLYSTER: The technical term is *cure*. That's easy. I stake my reputation: he shall be well. I assure you, the cure's secure.

ANTIQUIDES: But can you ensure me a cure that endures?

DR. KLYSTER: Why, sure.

My basic bedside mode, guaranteed to contain no less than six hundred racking sighs per day—*concerned* sighs—over the patient. Now, *that's* pure cure. It's cure that's *mature*.

ANTIQUIDES:

(He looks off stage left again.)

Here comes your patient now.

DR. KLYSTER: We engage in close observation of subject's behavior.

(They move to down stage right and watch.)

Act V, Scene 5 [899-965]

(Enter, stage left, back from the Forum, Clueless One. He is frazzled, mussed, and completely worn out.)

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CLUELESS I: God, what a day! Been fingered by fortune every which way.
All my dirty little secrets exposed, and me
hung out to dry.

And who, pray, *who* is the cause of all this?
Who crammed me full to the brim with dread and utter disgrace?
My parasite! My half-price epic diddler, Diddley!
He's boiled his liege lord down and left him in the soup!
May I live to effect that reprobate's termination!

(He tries to calm himself.)

—But no. I'm being dense. It isn't his fault; it's mine.
It's nurture, not nature. That man is the product of *food* and *expense*
And every last bit of that food and expense came straight from *me*.
I'll choke off his life at the source!

(Another calming.)

Moving right along,
my hooker's behavior was perfectly proper, given the habits
of whoredom. I make my request: "Please, return the Pelisse,
for further return to my wife." Her answer, in Old High Bimbo,
"I already *give* it back!"

The result of which is the me you see,
true to my standard, the wretchedest sonofabitch on earth.

(He stomps around, upstage center, in a perfect mixture of anger and chagrin.)

ANTIQUIDES: Hear what he says?

DR. KLYSTER: He states he's unhappy.

ANTIQUIDES: Why not get nearer?

(The Doctor moves from Antiquides, down right, to Clueless One, up center.)

DR. KLYSTER: Clueless! I trust you're . . . *well*.

(Clueless One aims a blow at the Doctor, who skillfully avoids it.)

No sudden movements, please.
Undue strain exacerbates your tender condition.

CLUELESS I: Exacerbate yourself!

(He raises his arm for another blow, but the Doctor nips in deftly and pinches him
on the arm.)

DR. KLYSTER: Feel anything?

CLUELESS I: Oh, I do!

(He completes the blow, but the Doctor moves out of the way again and scuttles
back to report to Antiquides.)

DR. KLYSTER: A serious case.

Immediate tranquilization required—
mountains of medication. Hellebore in heaps.

(He returns to Clueless One.)

—Clueless, a word?

CLUELESS I: What word?

DR. KLYSTER: Just answer these simple questions.
Your Potation of Choice—white wine or red?

CLUELESS I: YOU GO TO HELL!

DR. KLYSTER:

(To Antiquides.)

There, now, we have the first shy hint of encroaching madness.

CLUELESS I: Why not ask me about my taste in *Bread*? Blue bread?
Vermilion bread? Or Canary bread with polka dots?

(The Doctor retreats to Antiquides.)

Do I eat roast chicken with the scales left on, or do I prefer
baked trout with every feather still in place?

ANTIQUIDES: Now, *that's* true madness, ravings, the real stuff! So would it
be too much to *give* him something for it, Doctor—
one of your potent potions, perhaps—before the affliction
invades and takes over completely?

DR. KLYSTER: Patience yet a while.

Some *deeper* questions.

(He moves back to Clueless One.)

ANTIQUIDES: More talk—the deadliest tongue in town.

(The Doctor renews his inspection of Clueless One.)

DR. KLYSTER: And now the next question: have you ever suffered from *Hard Eyes*?

CLUELESS I: Hard *what*?

DR. KLYSTER: Hard Eyes: the eyeball sheathed with transparent glaze.

CLUELESS I: It may have escaped your notice, Doc, but I'm no lobster.

DR. KLYSTER: I'll be the judge of that.

Now, do your bowels—as far
as you can observe—ever exhibit a resonant rumble?

CLUELESS I: After I've eaten, no rumble; before, we have *serious* rumble.

(The Doctor returns to Antiquides.)

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DR. KLYSTER: No insanity there. His answer was fundamentally sound.

(Going back to Clueless One, who is, in spite of himself, caught up in the process.)

—Sleeping Habits: Sound sleep, through till the break of day?
Does sleep come easily? Off and snoring when you hit the bed?

CLUELESS I: I sleep right through . . . provided I've paid my creditors . . .

(Struck by annoyance at both the invasion of privacy and his collaboration with it.)

WHAT?

May the gods reduce you to rubble, you morbid, prurient *snoop!*

(He poises for a really mighty blow, but the Doctor scuttles back to Antiquides.)

DR. KLYSTER: Now *there* we have the onset of *real* insanity . . . *and*,
to judge from what he's saying, you'd better protect yourself.

ANTIQUIDES: Well, what he's saying sounds like *Nestor's Rules of Order*,
compared with what he *was* saying just a little while back.
Slavering, rabid Bitchgoddess—that's what he called his wife.

CLUELESS I: *I* said that? *Me?*

ANTIQUIDES: You did. You were mad, of course.

(It's his turn now. Mighty in his wrath, he advances on Clueless One.)

CLUELESS I: I was?

ANTIQUIDES:

(Furious, waving a finger.)

You were. What's more, you threatened *me*. To flatten *me!*
Under the wheels of your four-horse chariot. That's what you said.
I was your witness . . . and I'm your accuser, here and now.

(Clueless One has had enough, and he advances to meet Antiquides.)

CLUELESS I: And *I* am witness that *you* purloined the holy wreath
from the head of Jove! Am witness that you were sealed away
in jail for such a crime! Am witness that on release
you found yourself stuck in the stocks and flailed with rods!
Am witness—sorry, I almost forgot—that you did dispatch
your father from life and sold your mother for what she'd fetch
in a life of shame!

It's tit for tat, and I can do
a pretty good Sane—or don't you agree?

(There may be a kernel of truth or more in the accusations—certainly Antiquides is
very upset. In any case, he speeds back to the Doctor.)

ANTIQUIDES: Oh, Doctor, *help!*

And Doctor, *quick!* Whatever cure you're thinking of, *do* it!
Completely lost touch with reality—out of his mind!

DR. KLYSTER: An idea.

(He huddles with Antiquides. Clueless One moves nearer to the two.)

ANTIQUIDES: Yes, yes?

DR. KLYSTER: Your most effective course of action is this:
Consign this man to my clinic.

ANTIQUIDES: That's your advice?

DR. KLYSTER: It is.
There, I can cure this patient to my heart's content.

ANTIQUIDES: Whatever.

(Clueless One is very near the ancient duo. The Doctor looks up at him.)

DR. KLYSTER: You'll live on a liquid diet—straight hellebore, twenty days.

CLUELESS I: You'll serve me for target practice—straight arrows, thirty days.

(The Doctor begins to shuffle imperceptibly towards the exit stage left. He addresses Antiquides.)

DR. KLYSTER: Go hire a corps of porters to bring him to my place.

ANTIQUIDES: How many?

DR. KLYSTER: Insanity, very advanced . . . a four-porter case. At least.

(His shuffling becomes more pronounced.)

ANTIQUIDES: I'll have them here in a moment.

And you keep an eye on him, Doctor.

(He turns to exit left, but the Doctor is already ahead of him.)

DR. KLYSTER: Sorry. No can do.

I have to get home and prepare
all those . . . er . . . preparations. That. I really must . . . er . . .
prepare.

It devolves on *you* to have the underlings bring him to *me*.

(His shuffle has become flight. He speaks over his shoulder to Antiquides.)

ANTIQUIDES: My personal care. He'll be there shortly.

DR. KLYSTER: I'm leaving!

(Reaching the exit, he disappears as Antiquides calls after him.)

ANTIQUIDES: Good-bye!

(With a look at Clueless One, he hobbles to the exit stage left and departs, leaving his son-in-law alone, upstage center.)

CLUELESS I: No more Doctor.

No more Stepdad.

Only me.

Jove almighty, what happened? Why should they drop by to declare me insane? Me, of all people? Since I was born, I've never been sick a day in my life. I'm, well, I'm a *well* type. The people I move among, the people I *know*, are well types. "You're looking *well*," we say. "I hope you're *well*." "You're *Welcome*."

Or could it be the case that this strange pair, so quick to declare me nuts, are wrong . . . *because they're nuts themselves*?—So, what's the plan?

I want to go home. But Wife says No.

(He gestures at Loveykins's house.)

And no one over *here* is about to let me in.

(He moves to his own house, before the door.)

Talk about your decidedly damnable denouements.
I'll stay right here.

I'll be in by dark.

At the very least.

(He sits down gloomily directly before his own front door and "freezes," staring out at the audience. He is, for all intents and purposes, part of the set.)

Act V, Scene 6 [966–989]

(Enter, stage right, Smug. As usual, he is in love with himself. He does not notice Clueless One, nor does Clueless notice him. He launches into his *apologia pro vita sua*. First, a recitative.)

SMUG:

KNOW YOUR SLAVES

*Noting, as I start, an axiom that might well be taken as ironclad—
That Good is Better than Bad—*

*I address a burning question of the day which may have bred, in
some of you, a nagging doubt:*

*What is the Good Slave's nature? How can you ascertain the Good
Slave? or rather, What is SuperSlave all about?*

*He is about his master's business, which he plans, scans, arranges,
changes, facilitates, and superintends*

To his Boss's felicitous ends.

The acid test occurs when Boss is away,

And SuperSlave doesn't play,

But manages to be both magnificent menial and exalted go-getter,

By functioning just as well as Boss, or indeed, going Boss one better.

(Then a hymn.)

*Take up your master's matters,
Ye servants of the Boss!
Facilitate his dealings—
He will not suffer loss . . .*

*Your head be screwed on tightly,
Mouth shut and belly sla-ack.
Thus armed, you need not suffer
The lash on legs or back.*

(Another recitative.)

*SuperSlave's motivation should be supplied by obsessive inspection,
from hub to nub,
Of the distinctive markings of that SuperSlave antitype, the instant-
fulfillment sluggard: The Sub-
SubSlave is stippled with stigmata: striped by the whip's splash on
back, scarred and scored by manacles
On wrists and anacles,
As he staggers, turning the millwheel with groans and wheezes,
Stooped with exhaustion, shrunk with starvation, stiff with the cold
endured unclad in the hardest of freezes.
Such, as SuperSlave know'th,
Are the rewards of sloth.*

*And such are what I'm afraid of:
Since I'd rather not show the world at large the shoddy stuff I'm
made of,
I've made my decision firmly founded on Fear,
And being Super-, not Sub-, is a lifestyle to which I shall firmly
adhere,
Inasmuch as I prefer flack to whack, eating to beating, filling to
milling, and mouth's crunch to millwheel's curse . . .
And hence the consumer and not the surce.*

(He sings a Song of Subordination.)

*And so,
I live with fear
Up to the hilt
And follow orders.
No groans
For Boss to hear,
I get no guilt
Inside his borders.
I'm there*

*By Boss's side
Each time he calls
Me in his guy-way.
That's what
Advances me—
HIS WAY Is My Way.*

*The rest
Can swill their fill—
A motley mob
To be blindsided.
But I
Will do my will
And fill my job,
So I've decided.
Throughout
My stormy life
I've traveled both
Should-way and Is-way,
But now,
To serve my Boss,
I'll do it HIS WAY.*

*And so I save
My back from scars.
Because for stripes
You get no stars.
At being Good,
If I succeed,
Well—who can tell?—
I might be freed.
Let record show
I took no blow,
But did it HIS WAY.*

(Performance over, he looks at the area in front of Loveykins's house and then returns to straight speech.)

And so, pursuant to orders, I have located lodgings,
and there have checked the baggage and checked the men.
Next, I meet him here . . .

(He looks around.)

or rather knock right *here*

(He knocks at Loveykins's door.)

to let him know . . .

(He waits.)

that I've arrived . . .

(He waits some more.)

to lead him forth

in safety . . .

(Yet more.)

from this Sump of Despond and Disaster.

(He gives up waiting.)

Uh-oh.

I fear I reach the field too late.

The battle's over.

(He sits down dejectedly in front of Loveykins's house.)

Act V, Scene 7 [990-1049]

(Enter, stage left, Antiquides, conducting an awkward squad of four Orderlies. They are large but not, shall we say, especially luminous, nor inclined to come to grips with a madman. Antiquides is somewhat overcome by his role.)

ANTIQUIDES: This is serious business, dammit! Remember who's in command!
I've given you orders; obey them.

I'm giving you more; obey *them!*

That man's our objective:

advance, and hoist him on high,
and convey our prey to the Clinic! Immediately—unless
you want your sides and shanks studded with ugly welts!
He'll threaten you, perhaps—don't give it a second thought.
CHARGE!

(The squad does not move, collectively or individually.)

Immobility? Hesitation? Why?

You should already have him wriggling in air and halfway there!

(The four move, raggedly. Antiquides sighs.)

I'm off to the clinic. Quite easy to find when you get there.

(He exits hurriedly [for him] stage left. The squad of Orderlies swoops on Clueless One, who emerges from his suspended animation and notices them for the first time.)

CLUELESS I: Ooogoddam!

What's happening?

I seem to be the object of a mad attack.

Who are you, please?

(They reach him . . .)

What's your intention?

(surround him . . .)

Why'm I encircled?

(lay hands on him . . .)

Where are you hauling me off to?

(hoist him high in the air . . .)

Correction: *heaving* me off to?

(as he calls to the audience . . .)

Fellow citizens! Epidamnians! Aid and assistance! Please!

(as he struggles to no avail.)

—Let me down, dammit!

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(The foofaraw rouses Smug, in front of Loveykins's house. He takes in the situation at a glance.)

SMUG:

Ye Gods! What do I behold?

My master borne away on the shoulders of utter unknowns,
in a fashion that hardly befits his rank or position!

CLUELESS I:

(In extremis, as yet unconscious of a potential deliverer.)

Is there no one ready to risk my rescue?

(Smug leaps to his feet.)

SMUG:

Yes, one!

Reckless of my own safety, master, I speed to your succor!

(Before he speeds, he addresses the audience.)

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—Epidamnians all, what has become of your civic pride?
Subjecting a tourist of rank to a brutal multiple mugging
in a public street, in a city at peace, in the glare of day?
Disgraceful!

(He shouts to the Orderlies.)

—Let that master *go!*

(He is seen by Clueless One, who is vigorously writhing in midair.)

CLUELESS I:

Dear total stranger,

a plea: can you condone this colossal miscarriage of justice?

SMUG:

(As he rushes to bring aid.)

Not I! I fly to aid and abet, and otherwise supply
selfless support.

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Never will I consent to your slaughter—
far, far better were mine!

(Almost there.)

Do not go gentle, boss:

(He arrives.)

You break that shoulder hold—grab the guy's eye, and pull!
I'll plant a crop of blows in these faces and raise sheer hell!

(To the Orderlies.)

—Carry my master? You'll pay a bill of lading in blood—
PUT HIM DOWN!

(He attacks, inspiring Clueless One to real action against one of the band of four.)

CLUELESS I: I've got him by the eye!

SMUG: Well, don't
let it go till you see the socket!

(Under his furious assailing, the Orderlies put Clueless One down. Smug attacks them singly, first one . . .)

Bunch of brigands!

(then another . . .)

Squad of savages!

(then a third.)

Mob of muggers!

(They have not yet disengaged but wish to.)

ORDERLIES: Cease and desist!

Enough's enough!

SMUG: Then let him go!

(The three peel off. Clueless One concentrates on the fourth.)

CLUELESS I: Naughty—no touching!

(He perceives Smug at work on the last of the three.)

—Set his skull in cornrows!

(The three are in full flight to the exit down stage left, with Smug close to the last one.)

SMUG: Absent thyself—to hell!

(He receives the fourth and last Orderly from Clueless One.)

A straggler? Congratulations, sir—you've won last prize!

(He boots him off. The Orderlies are gone. Smug preens as he stares off after them.)

I've fulfilled my dream: to change the world, one face at a time.

(He looks around for Clueless One and finds him very grateful. They meet down center.)

—Hooboy, boss—I came to your rescue just in the nick.

CLUELESS I: May Heaven bless you much and often, total stranger:
if you hadn't showed, I'd never see another sunset.

SMUG: Thanks for the blessing, boss . . . but the really *proper* reply
is manumission.

CLUELESS I: You mean you want me to set you free?

SMUG: Certainly, seeing as I saved your life; that's how it's done.

CLUELESS I: How strange. I fear you're mistaken.

SMUG: Mistaken? Me?

CLUELESS I: I swear by Jove the Father that I am *not* your master.

SMUG: Don't say that; He might hear!

CLUELESS I: I'm telling the absolute truth:
no slave of mine ever did for me what you just did.

SMUG: You're not my master?

CLUELESS I: I'm not.

SMUG: Well, then, you shouldn't object
to letting me go free.

CLUELESS I: As far as I'm concerned,
okay:

Be thou free, and go wherever thou wilt.

SMUG: I presume you *bid* me to do this? That's how the formula runs.

CLUELESS I: *By whatever power is vested in me, I BID you be free.*

SMUG: I salute you, Honored Patron, formerly known as Master.

(Clueless One, tired of the game, turns away. Smug is nonplussed for only an instant. Acting as another, he shakes his own hand, taps his own head, and addresses himself.)

Congratulations on your liberation, Smug!

(Liking the ritual, he shakes and taps again, and then speaks as to one of a crowd of admirers.)

You, too, sir?

(Same routine.)

And, sir, you? 22f19bf8dea92bdefab6b1d7893f8bd5
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(Gazing at his imaginary flock of well-wishers.)

Such sincerity all round!

(Back to reality, he faces Clueless One.)

—Oh, Patron? One request: Let there be no reduction
in the orders you give me, former slave though I may be.
I hereby give notice that I intend to stay at your side.
Whithersoever thou goest—like *home*—thither go I.

CLUELESS I: Oh no, thou don't.

SMUG: Now go I off to the tavern to fetch
the bags and the cash. The Wallet with all your funds for our trip
is duly stashed away under seal. I'll deliver it here
to you in a moment.

CLUELESS I:

(A lightning reconsideration.)

A Wallet? Thou'd better get a move on.

SMUG: I guarantee to return the exact amount. Wait for me here.

(He rushes off stage right, leaving Clueless One bemused but, on balance, pleased.)

CLUELESS I: A day for amazing surprises in all sorts of guises and sizes—
my identity stripped and denied, my body barred and excluded,
my person mugged on demand, my longtime sponge gone dry,
my gifts transmuted to thefts—and this by my near and dear.
But then my life is saved by an utter unknown, who insists
that he's my slave—and so I set him free. Of course.
And now he's on his way to fetch me a stash of money.
Well, yes.

If he brings the money, I'd better *insist* that he takes
his departure *whithersoever he goddam will*, or else
he'll probably come to his senses and demand the money back.
Amazing!

The doddering duo declared that I was insane;
I'm certainly very confused.

What does all this madness mean?

No matter what it is, it seems to me like dreaming.

(He shakes his head to clear it and stares at Loveykins's house.)

And now for another try at the daughter of joy next door.
Her fury doesn't faze me, provided I can persuade her
to give me back the Pelisse.

I've got to get it back home.

(He slips into Loveykins's house, without knocking.)

Act V, Scene 8 [1050–1059]

(As Clueless One disappears into Loveykins's house, Smug returns, stage right, with Clueless Two. The pair are not happy.)

CLUELESS II: This time you've gone too far. Having the gall to insist
we've met since I sent you off with the sailors!

SMUG: We did *so* meet!

(Indicating Clueless One's house.)

On this very spot, before that house, I rescued you,
I plucked you off the shoulders of four abductors, rough types,
as you were being shanghai'd. I can still hear your scream:
"Ooogoddam!" was the way you put it,
I speed to your aid!

I snatch you away!

They fight, but I carry the day with my fists!
And as I delivered you, so did you set me free . . .
But when I proposed that I'd go pick up the bags and the cash,
you ran like hell to cut me off and deny you did what you did.

CLUELESS II: I *bade* you depart a free man?

SMUG: True.

CLUELESS II: I'd sooner be sold
as a slave myself than set you free—now, that's what's *true*!

Act V, Scene 9 [1060–1162]

(Clueless One enters from Loveykins's house, shouting back into the closing door.)

CLUELESS I: *Not true!* You can swear till you're blue, but that won't make it true!
I never purloined the Pelisse or the bracelet!

(He turns away from the door and makes in the general direction of his own house.)

Disgusting floozies.

(His face is exposed to the pair downstage.)

SMUG: Undying gods! What do I see?

CLUELESS II: I give up: what do you see?

SMUG: Your personal mirror.

CLUELESS II: And what in the world do you mean by that?

SMUG: Your spit-and-image, down to the least detail.

(He turns Clueless Two to see Clueless One.)

CLUELESS II: Damn!
The more I look at me, the less unlike the likeness.

(Clueless One has noticed the pair. He tries to attract the attention of Smug, who is still engaged with Clueless Two.)

CLUELESS I: —Young man?

Hey, Total Stranger?

Oh, you who saved my life—

Yoo-hoo!

(He advances to Smug. The three are now arranged down center: Smug in the middle, Clueless One on his left, Clueless Two on his right—a configuration they will maintain, roughly, until until the brothers join.)

SMUG: Yoo-hoo to you. Might you reveal your name . . .
unless it goes against the grain?

CLUELESS I: Oh, hang the grain.
For all your blessings on me, you deserve to achieve your desire.
And so: my name is *Clueless*.

CLUELESS II: It isn't! That name is *mine*.

CLUELESS I: From Sicily. Syracuse.

CLUELESS II: My own, my native land—
my hometown, too!

CLUELESS I: What did I hear you say?

CLUELESS II: The facts.

(Smug inspects Clueless One.)

SMUG:

(To Clueless One.)

—You see, I thought *he* was *you*. I bothered him half to death.
Now, *this* is the one I know. My master. I'm slave to *him*.

(To Clueless Two.)

—I *do* apologize, sir, for any stupid remarks
I may have delivered to you from the depths of my confusion.

CLUELESS II: You're not confused; you're crazy. We disembarked together
this morning, you and I. Or have you forgotten?

SMUG: Oops.

Correct as usual, sir. *You* are my master, of course . . .

(He turns to Clueless One.)

— . . . and *you* are out one slave. And so,

(He turns to Clueless Two.)

hello to *you*,

(He turns to Clueless One.)

good-bye to *you*.

(To the audience, as he indicates Clueless Two.)

Take my word for it, *this* is Clueless.

CLUELESS I: No, you take *my* word: *I* am.

CLUELESS II: What flimsy fiction is this?
You're Clueless?

CLUELESS I: So I claim. Legitimate son of Copeless.

CLUELESS II: Son of *my* father?

CLUELESS I: No, not yours. I'm son of my own.
I don't jump claims on fathers. I have one—I'll keep Copeless.

SMUG:

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(Advancing downstage, dead center.)

Ye gods in heaven, bring to fruition the expectation
that even now balloons and burgeons within my brain!
Unless this mess miscarries, these are the twins in question.
Names and addresses the same—precisely identical parents.
I'll cut Boss out of the herd.

(He looks upstage at the two Cluelesses.)

—Oh, Clueless?

CLUELESS I AND II: You called?

SMUG: Not both.
Just one: the Clueless I knew on the boat.

CLUELESS I: Not me . . .

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CLUELESS II: . . . but *me*.

SMUG: It's you I want, then. Q.E.D. Come over here.

(Clueless Two comes down quickly, at Smug's right.)

CLUELESS II: I'm over here. What's up?

SMUG:

(Pointing to Clueless One.)

You see that man right there?
He's either the acme of con men,
or else your long-lost twin.
I have never beheld a man so much a *match* for another.
No bead of liquid is liker—
you're two drops of milk in a pod.
You take after him, he copies you—a facsimile set
with sameness of names, and duplicate dads, and homogenous
homelands.

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Our course of action?

We work in close and probe this double.

CLUELESS II: Now, there is a perfect plan. For this advice, much thanks.
Don't stop your support, I beg you:

I pledge to set you free
if you can give me proof that this is my mislaid Brother.

SMUG: I hope so.

CLUELESS II: Ditto.

Likewise, I mean.

Or else, me, too.

(Smug turns to Clueless One.)

SMUG: —A word.

(Clueless One advances to Smug. The three are now arranged down center: Smug in the middle, Clueless One on his left, Clueless Two on his right—a configuration they will maintain, roughly, until the brothers join. Smug's air is very official; he is managing things.)

I believe you claimed your name was Clueless?

CLUELESS I: I did.

SMUG: Well, here's another claimant; *his* name is Clueless, too.
You stated, as Birthplace, Sicily: city of Syracuse—
his Birthplace, too, as it happens.

Your father, you further averred,
went under the name of *Copeless*. It happens that *his* did, too.
I offer you both a once-in-a-lifetime chance to advance
your personal fortunes—and, at the same time, mine as well.

CLUELESS I: You clearly deserve to get whatever you want from me.
I may be free and clear, but I'm utterly in your debt;
I'll further your aims and whims like merest merchandise.

SMUG: I hope to establish you two as twins, as brothers born
on a single day to a single father and . . . single mother.

CLUELESS I: Another surprise! Your project assuredly gets my backing . . .
if you can bring it about.

SMUG: I can.

(He addresses them both.)

—What I need from you
is answers. Clear and concise replies to the questions I ask.

CLUELESS I: Inquire when ready; I'll answer, with nothing I know withheld.

SMUG: Your name is Clueless?

CLUELESS I: It is.

(Smug turns to Clueless Two.)

SMUG: And yours as well?

CLUELESS II: It is.

(Smug turns back to Clueless One.)

SMUG: You further affirm your father was Copeless?

CLUELESS I: He was.

CLUELESS II: Mine, too.

(This hastiness earns a frown from Smug, who keeps on interrogating Clueless One.)

SMUG: Your Birthplace—Syracuse?

CLUELESS I: It was.

(Smug turns to Clueless Two.)

SMUG: Yours, too?

CLUELESS II: Of course.

(Smug beckons both closer to him, and his tone becomes less formal.)

SMUG: I feel that I can inform you that things are Looking Good.
But don't slack off.

(He shoves them back to their former positions. Again the inquisitor, he addresses Clueless One.)

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Now cast your mind way back to the past.
Give me your earliest recollection of your native land.

CLUELESS I: Well, when I left it. Went to Tarentum with Daddy on business.
Got lost in the crowd.

Kidnapped.

Carried off here.

CLUELESS II: God in the highest, preserve me!

(This provokes Smug to severity.)

SMUG: No shouting, please! Keep quiet!

(Back to the interrogation of Clueless One.)

—And what was your age, when Daddy took you off on that trip?

CLUELESS I: Seven, I think . . .

Yes. I was losing my baby teeth.

I never saw Daddy again.

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SMUG: Quite so. And how many sons
did Daddy have?

CLUELESS I: It's been quite a while . . .

SMUG: Just take your time.

CLUELESS I: Let's see. There was me . . . and another.
That should work out to . . .

(He does it on his fingers.)

two?

SMUG: And you were the older?

CLUELESS I: No.

SMUG: Then you were the younger?

CLUELESS I: No.

(An awkward pause.)

Well, we were both the same age.

SMUG: But how could such a thing happen?

CLUELESS I: Well, we were twins. Of each other.

(Clueless Two is overcome by this revelation.)

CLUELESS II: Ye gods! Preserved again!

SMUG: —No Interruptions! Shut up, or I shut this inquiry down!

CLUELESS II: I'm shutting.

SMUG: —Moving along:
You two twins shared one name?

CLUELESS I: Not, not at all.

I had the same name I have now.

Clueless.

But Brother—at least back then—

they called him *Bootless*.

CLUELESS II: The clues are all in place!

I can't restrain myself—

it's time for hugs!

(He lurches toward Clueless One but is restrained by Smug.)

—Oh, sibling and twin, a happy hello!

Remember Brother Bootless?

CLUELESS I: But how did you get my name?

Why are you Clueless?

SMUG: I want to be
your auctioneer.

CLUELESS I: And so you shall.

SMUG: It's not too soon
to make the announcement. When's it scheduled?

CLUELESS I: Week from today.

SMUG:

(Advancing to the audience, he shills loudly as the Twins watch.)

ATTENTION ALL!
Official Announcement Is Hereby Made

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of an ebrary

AUCTION!!!

Today Week Dawn till Noon

FOR SALE

The Goods, Effects, & Fixtures,
The Chattels, Dwellings, & Farms,
The Slaves & Stuff
of CLUELESS, late of this city

EVERYTHING MUST GO!!!

TERMS: CASH

BONUS!

One (1) WIFE

—Used, a Fixer-Upper—

NO OFFER REFUSED

That amounts to at least

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One-twentieth ebrary

of 1%

of 1%

of 1%

of 1%

of any sum

you care to name . . .

(He drops his role completely, solicits the audience as audience.)

—And now, dear audience,

To you from us,

A Fond Farewell.

To us from you,

Thunderous Applause!

(All exit into the house of Clueless One. The play is over.)

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