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from
Page
PLAUTUS
BRNO 2019 to Stage

Titus Maccius Plautus Casina or Basilia's Wedding

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UNIVERSITY CINEMA SCALA, BRNO

The performance takes part in frame of the international conference
Titus Maccius Plautus: From Page to Stage.

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TRANSLATION

Ewa Skwara

PERFORMED BY

Studencki Teatr Klasyków "Sfinga" from Poznań

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Anarchides' allies

Anarchides (*Lysidamus*), husband

Michał Gondek

Salwator (*Alcesimus*), neighbour

Jakub Skrzypaczak

Olimpik (*Olympio*), servant

Sebastian Ciurkot

Militaria's allies

Militaria (*Cleostrata*), wife

Anna Dominikowska

Mirra (*Myrrhina*), neighbour

Michalina Gworys

Siodłás (*Chalinus*), servant

Dawid Kuczkowski

Panterka I and II (*Pardalisca*), maids

Klaudia Stachowiak,
Natalia Bednarska

Directors: Katarzyna Kaniceka-Juszczak a Łukasz Berger

Music: Theme song "Trudno tak" by Krzysztof Krawczyk
and Edyta Bartosiewicz

ABOUT THE PLAY

The Plautus' comedy *Casina* is restaged in modern times and presented in a new Polish translation (in verse) by Ewa Skwara. It touches upon such universal issues as marriage, love, and unfaithfulness. In the domestic micro-universe governed by the married couple Anarchides and Militaria, everything is turned upside down. The head of the family, driven by lust to the young maid Basilia (Lat. *Casina*), entrusts his fate to the cunning servant Olimpik. Meanwhile, the bossy wife is plotting with the neighbour and other maids in order to teach the unfaithful Anarchides a lesson. As a result of the conflict between spouses, social roles and gender identities will get mixed up and reversed.

The comedy takes place in the interior of Anarchides' and Militaria's household.

ARGUMENTUM

Conseruam uxorem duo conserui expetunt.

Alium senex allegat, alium filius.

Senem adiuuat sors: uerum decipitur dolis.

Ita ei subicitur pro puella seruolus

Nequam, qui dominum mulcat atque uilicum.

Adulescens ducit ciuem Casinam cognitam.

Two fellow slaves are keen to marry a fellow slave girl. Their old master commissions one, his son the other. The lot favors the old man, but he is deceived by tricks. A wicked slave is palmed off on him instead of the girl. He beats up his master and the overseer the young master marries Basilia after she is recognized as a citizen.

Excerpt I (vv. 229–40, 249–53):

Quarrel between Anarchides and Militaria

ANAR. My wife and my pleasure, how are you?

MILIT. Go away and keep your hands off me.

ANAR. Goodness, my Juno, you shouldn't be so unfriendly to your Jupiter. Where are you off to now?

MILIT. Let go of me!

ANAR. Wait.

MILIT. I won't wait.

ANAR. But I'll follow you.

MILIT. Please, are you in your right mind?

ANAR. I am, since I love you.

MILIT. I don't want you to love me.

ANAR. You can't succeed.

MILIT. You're killing me.

ANAR. (*aside*) I wish you were telling the truth.

MILIT. (*overhearing him*) I believe you in that.

ANAR. Look back at me, my delight.

MILIT. (*turning around with sarcasm*) Yes, just as you're mine. Please, where does the smell of perfumes come from?

ANAR. (*aside*) Oh, I'm dead! Poor me, I'm caught in the act. Why am I slow to wipe my head with my cloak?

[...]

MILIT. Hey there, you worthless creature! You grey-haired gnat, I can barely keep from calling you what you deserve. Are you promenading the streets in your old age perfumed, you good-for-nothing?

[...]

ANAR. Hey there, my wife, it's enough now. Control yourself. You're making too much noise. Save some speech for something to argue about with me tomorrow.

Anarchides tries to find a discrete way to have sex with the household maid Basilia. He plans to let his loyal servant Olimpik marry the girl so that he himself could get closer to Basilia. Militaria – suspicious of her husband's real intentions – proposes that the maid should rather marry Militaria's servant – Siodfas. Thus, the old man chooses to resort the conflict to casting lots.

Excerpt II (vv. 412–21):

Casting lots

ANAR. Go on, my wife, draw now. *(to the servants)* You two, pay attention. *(aside)* I don't know where I am for fear. I am dead.
[...]

MILIT. I've got hold of a lot.

ANAR. Pull it out!

SIOD. *(to Olimpik)* Are you dead already?

ANAR. *(to Militaria)* Show me! It's mine!

SIOD. Then it's evil torture!

MILIT. You've lost, Siodfas.

ANAR. I'm happy the gods have helped us, Olimpik.

OLIMP. It's happened because of my piety and that of my forefathers.

ANAR. Go inside, my wife, and prepare the wedding.

MILIT. I'll do as you tell me.

After losing in the lots, Siodfas overhears -by chance- Anarchides talking to Olimpik. That is how he finds out about the old man's cunning plan: Anarchides wants to spend the wedding night with the bride in place of the groom, and he will use the neighbour's house for that purpose.

Excerpt III (vv. 467–79):

Eavesdropping scene

ANAR. *(to Olimpik)* How I'll kiss Basilia today, how I'll do myself a lot of good turns behind my wife's back!

- SIOD. (*aside*) Goodness! Now at last I'm back on the right track. He himself is in love with Basilia. I've got them where I want them.
- ANAR. (*to Olimpik*) I'm keen to embrace her right now, to kiss her right now.
- OLIMP. Let her be taken home first. Why on earth are you in a rush?
- ANAR. I'm in love!
- OLIMP. But I don't think it can happen today.
- ANAR. It can, if you believe you can be freed tomorrow.
- SIOD. (*aside*) I have to stick my ears further into this: now I'll kill two birds with one stone.
- ANAR. (*to Olimpik*) In the house of this friend and neighbour of mine a place has been prepared for me. (*points to the house of Salwator*) I confessed all my love to him. He said he'd give me a place.

Right after the wedding, when all the other guests left the stage, Olimpik (competing with Anarchides) tries to get intimate with the bride. The girl, however, turns up to be surprisingly strong and brutal. Anarchides is still determined to continue with the plan and both men lead Basilia to the house next door.

Excerpt IV (vv. 835–49):

First making out of the newlyweds

- ANAR. Has my wife left now?
- OLIMP. She's in the house. Stop being afraid.
- ANAR. Hurray! Now at last I'm free. (*to "Basilia"*) My little sweetheart, my little honey, my little spring.
- OLIMP. Hey, you, watch out for trouble if you're wise. She belongs to me.
- ANAR. I know, but my enjoyment comes first. [...] (*praying*) Mighty Venus, you gave me many good things when you gave me possession of her.

OLIMP. (*trying to fondle "Basilia"*) Oh what a tender little body! My little wife – what on earth?

ANAR. What's the matter?

OLIMP. She stamped on my foot like an elephant.

ANAR. Be quiet, will you? A cloud is not as soft as her breast.

OLIMP. (*trying to fondle again*) Yes, a pretty little nipple – dear me, poor me!

ANAR. What is it?

OLIMP. She hit me in the chest, not with her elbow, but with a battering ram.

During the wedding night, it turned out that Olimpik had married not Basilia but Siodfas, disguised in a white dress. It became all too evident when the couple was in bed and the light went off. Now, Anarchides, shocked and disappointed, runs into the stage while chased by Basilia-Siodfas, who threatens to give him thrashing for how he planned to cheat on his wife.

Excerpt V (vv. 967–78):

The old man's misdeed exposed

ANAR. (*to himself*) I'm dead! He'll smash my loins with his club now. I have to turn this away: that way a loin wreck is facing me. (*turns away from Siodfas*)

MILIT. My greetings, lover.

ANAR. Look, my wife is facing me. Now I'm between the altar and the knife and don't know where to flee.

MIRRA How are you, bigamist?

MILIT. My dear husband, where are you coming from with this setup?

ANAR. I'm dead!

SIOD. Let's go to bed now! I'm Basilia.

ANAR. Go and be hanged!

SIOD. Don't you love me?

Luckily, Militaria proves to be merciful and decides to forgive her husband. Thus, it all ends with a happy ending – and with one final advice for every unfaithful husband.

Excerpt VI (vv. 1005–8):

Happy ending

MILIT. Now I'm granting you this pardon less grudgingly for the simple reason that we shouldn't turn this long play into an even longer one.

ANAR. You aren't angry?

MILIT. No, I'm not angry.

ANAR. Can I trust your word?

MILIT. Yes.

ANAR. Nobody has a more charming wife than I have.

English translation by Wolfgang de Melo (with modifications).

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