

# THE SERVANT OF TWO MASTERS

BY CARLO GOLDONI

Adapted by Marco Luly

Introduction of the Doctor

Good evening. I am "Il Dottore", The Doctor, and I am going to tell you all about the Commedia because I know more about it than anyone else in the whole world (cast shake their heads)...er I know more about commedia than most people .. some people...

Commedia began in Italy in the pre-historic period ....

(cast react derisively)...In the Roman period...

(as before)...Some time ago? (cast applaud)

There are many things to tell you about the Commedia which are here in my book (holds up his BIG book - cast all point to their watches).

The important things are here in my head...

(cast all yawn) the important things which are here in my fingers.

(Holds them up)

There are four. Let me tell you about the four most important features of the commedia:

First: the absence of script. (the doctor stops. Realises:) I have no script! (panic!) I don't know what to say. So I will stop now. My lecture is over. Thank you and good night.

(Cast) But we can improvise.

What is improvise?

(Cast) Make up our own dialogue.

Make up our own dialogue? Ah yes, the actors of the Commedia made up their own dialogue. This is the SECOND important feature of the Commedia. The 3<sup>rd</sup> thing is that the actors were professional

(cast) What is professional?

It means they got paid (others: AHHH!) After the performance! If they performed well.

The next thing is the actors wore masks. The men, but not the women. Why? I will tell you! This was the first time that women could perform on the stage in public, and so the Commedia wanted the women, the BEAUTIFUL women, to be seen, and enjoyed and admired and loved and adored and (cast add their suggestions and starts to mime something naughty) Enough!

Commedia is famous for its use of many masks and characters. There was:

Pantalone (P steps forward as Dottore describes him. P is more interested in the beautiful girl in the front row)

The servant Arlecchino (A steps forward) and the other servants, Zanni and Brighella.

The young lovers Silvio and Clarice (the lovers are too busy looking at each other to listen to the Doctor).

(etc etc until)

And of course, myself, Il Dottore, the doctor, a graduate of Rome, Florence, Bologna, Milan University,  
Professor of Human, Biology, Latin, Football, Food, etc...

Now the important question is, WHO is the MOST important of all the masks? That I can tell you in one  
word...

ALL: Me!

No, no, no. Enough! Now it is time for us to begin today's story, which is called: THE DOCTOR'S  
WONDERFUL ADVENTURE.

PANT No, no, it is called PANTALONE IN LOVE WITH VIAGRA

SMERALD No, it is called HOORAY FOR COLUMBINA!

FLOTINDO/BEATRICE THE TWO MASTERS OF THE SERVANT.

(they all go away arguing each other, except TRUFFALDINO)

TRUFFALDINO Title is: THE SERVANT OF TWO MASTERS.

PANTALONE (TO AUDIENCE)

Ladies and gentlemen, a thousand mea culpas, our company was unavoidably detained. Traffic jam outside  
was not to be believed. We are about to perform for you Signor Goldoni's comedy THE SERVANT OF TWO  
MASTERS, but we have a few minor details to finesse before the gaiety can begin, so we beg your patience  
and good graces. Sit back, relax...and read the advertisements in your programs. Oh, Stage Manager!

STAGE MANAGER (STEPS FORWARD)

Yes, sir?

PANTALONE

Are we ready? Can we start the show?

STAGE MANAGER

Yes, sir! (TO OTHERS) All right, company, here the stage, here the props, and there the costumes.

BEATRICE

I was told I could wear a beautiful gown. I only took this part because I was told I could wear a beautiful  
gown.

STAGE MANAGER

Sir, we've lost the prompter!

PANTALONE

What?

STAGE MANAGER

We lost the prompter!

PANTALONE

What do you mean, we LOST him? What happened?

STAGE MANAGER

He must've lost the way in the traffic jam.

PANTALONE

Well, what'll we do if one of the actors forgets his lines? We've got to find a new prompter! Someone who can read. Put up a sign! "PROMPTER WANTED." Whoever can read it gets the job!

STAGE MANAGER

Yes, sir! Oh, also the crew wants to be paid.

PANTALONE

We're trying to stage great art and THEY want to be paid!

CHARACTERS

PANTALONE

CLARICE

SMERALDINA

DOCTOR LOMBARDI

SILVIO

BRIGHELLA

BEATRICE

FLORINDO

TRUFFALDINO

PORTER

FIRST WAITER

SECONF WAITER

ACT I

SCENE 1

A Room in the House of PANTALONE

ALL (Ad lib) Hooray! Huzzah! Happy Day!

PANTALONE Well, go on daughter. Don't be shy. Simple ceremony and you're engaged.

CLARICE Silvio, here is my hand and with it my heart. I promise to be your wife.

SILVIO And I to be your ever loving husband.

(Clarice stares at Silvio with dreamy eyes. They take hands)

DR. LOMBARDI Well done. Now it's legal, and there's no turning back!

SMERALDINA (Aside) Lucky girl...

PANTALONE (to BRIGHELLA) You, dear Brighella, be witness to the formal engagement between my daughter Clarice and Signor Silvio.

BRIGHELLA It's an honored privilege, sir.

PANTALONE You're the innkeeper, let's make this wedding an intimate affair. I'm not one of those fathers of the bride who invites everybody in town.

DR LOMBARDI No!

PANTALONE Just so he can impress everybody in town.

DR LOMBARDI No!

PANTALONE I'm sure Doctor Lombardi agrees: a small dinner and reception with no extra bodies at the table.

DR LOMBARDI No!...yes.

PANTALONE What do you say, children, does that sound good?

SILVIO Sir, I desire no more nourishment than these delicacies laid out before me.

SMERALDINA (Aside) He's right, there's nothing better than getting laid out delicacies.

DR. LOMBARDI Pantalone, my boy is a truth teller, and truth be told, he loves that little girl of yours more than Heaven!

BRIGHELLA If I may say so sir, I don't think there had better be a very long engagement this time.

DR LOMBARDI This time? What is that you say? This time?

PANTALONE...because if Heaven hadn't preemptively beckoned my daughter's first fiancee, my business associate Federico Rasponi, I could not now bestow her hand upon your son.

SILVIO Yes, Signor Rasponi's untimely death came just in time, wouldn't you agree, Clarice?

CLARICE Silvio, I was prepared to give Signor Rasponi my hand, but only because my dear, good father had so decreed. Whatever flesh he might have held, my heart would have been yours.

DR. LOMBARDI Verily: Heaven works in mysterious ways. Say, how did Rasponi die anyway?

PANTALONE Poor fellow. He was killed in the night...I know nothing. He had the call and went!

BRIGHELLA A certain Signor Federigo Rasponi of Turin?

PANTALONE Yes, Turin.

BRIGHELLA Alas, poor Rasponi...I knew him a little bit.

PANTALONE (To BRIGHELLA) You did?

BRIGHELLA Indeed I did. Three years I lived in Turin. Knew his sister too. Girl was a hell-cat. Dressed like a man, rode like a man. But her brother loved her, and, well...(Tsk)...No one escapes death, eh?

PANTALONE (Solemn and Grim) True, true, death comes for us all... (Claps Hands) Okay, now that we're finished with the exposition, let's plan that wedding! (A knock at the door) What's that, a knock? Smeraldina, see who it is.

SMERALDINA Yes, sir. At once.

PANTALONE I only hope it's not a relative: they'll stay all day and drink every bottle in the cellar.

CLARICE Father, with your permission...if you have a visitor, Silvio and I would like...(try to leave with Silvio)

PANTALONE A moment, a moment. (to Smeraldina) Yes, what is it?

SMERALDINA Sir, it's the stranger of some stranger other. He says nothing to me, wants to give you message.

PANTALONE Let him come in. (Smeraldina leaves) (to Clarice) Yes my dear, you were saying?

CLARICE If you have a visitor, Silvio and I would like to withdraw.

PANTALONE What? Withdraw? Go off by yourself? You' ll stay here!

(Goes to the door. SMERALDINA brings in TRUFFALDINO)

## SCENE 2

TRUFFALDINO My most humble greetings, ladies and gentlemen! What a fine, fine group, yes! Very fine, very fine, indeed.

PANTALONE All right, who are you and what is your business?

TRUFFALDINO (to PANTALONE, pointing to CLARICE) Who's this lovely lady?

PANTALONE That is my daughter.

TRUFFALDINO (gulps) My congratulations, sir.

SMERALDINA (to SILVIO) And this is her fiancée. Signora Clarice is engaged to be married.

TRUFFALDINO (To Smeraldina) And who are you?

SMERALDINA I am Smeraldina, the lady's maid.

TRUFFALDINO Lucky lady.

PANTALONE All right, enough small talk. Now who are you? What do you want? Where do you come from?

TRUFFALDINO Who, what, where? Three questions at once? Give a poor guy a chance.

PANTALONE (Aside to DR. LOMBARDI) The man's a fool blockhead.

DR LOMBARDI (repeats to BRIGHELLA)

BRIGHELLA (repeats again)

TRUFFALDINO (To SMERALDINA) So are you the one getting married?

SMERALDINA (Sighs) No.

PANTALONE Look, do you want to tell me who you are or you want to go about your business?

TRUFFALDINO Well, if that's all you care about, fine. I'll tell you in two words: I AM A SERVANT OF MY MASTER. (Turns to SMERALDINA) As I was saying...

PANTALONE (to DR LOMBARDI) Ah...he is the servant of his master.

DR LOMBARDI (repeats to BRIGHELLA)

BRIGHELLA (repeats again)

PANTALONE So who is your master!?

TRUFFALDINO (To PANTALONE) My master is a gentleman from abroad who wants to have a word with you. (To SMERALDINA) So: marriage.

PANTALONE What gentleman?!? What is his name?!?

TRUFFALDINO My master is Signor Federigo Rasponi of Turin!

ALL Ahh, Federigo Rasponi!

TRUFFALDINO Federigo Rasponi. He sends his regards. And he's come to see you. And he's downstairs. And he wants to come up. And he's...WAITING! (All look surprised. To SMERALDINA, as before:) One more time.

PANTALONE. Uh, sir? ir? Your master! I didn't quite catch the name.

TRUFFALDINO (Aside) Poor guy...deaf as cheddar.

(To PANTALONE) My master is Signor Federigo Rasponi.

PANTALONE Back! Back I say! You're mad, I tell you, MAD! Federigo Rasponi of Turin is dead.

TRUFFALDINO Dead?

PANTALONE Dead!

BRIGHELLA Dead.

DR. LOMBARDI Dead.

CLARICE Dead.

SILVIO Dead.

SMERALDINA Dead.

ALL DEAD!

TRUFFALDINO My master...dead?

PANTALONE Quite dead.

DR LOMBARDI No shadow of doubt!

TRUFFALDINO But I left him one minute ago. He was alive then...

(Improvise mourning for Federigo) Well, gotta go!

PANTALONE Go? Wait a minute.

TRUFFALDINO Why? Dead's dead. If he's dead, there's not a lot left to do. (Aside) Still, I should take a look myself. (Exit)

PANTALONE Well, what is he? A rogue or an idiot?

DR. LOMBARDI I think he's an idiot-rogue.

SMERALDINA I don't think he's an idiot. (ASIDE) I like him. He's swarthy. Maybe I can watch him leave. Excuse me sir, be right back.

CLARICE Heaven help me if it's true.

PANTALONE But you saw the death notice we received from Turin.

SILVIO We'll just tell him he's too late! You are mine!

TRUFFALDINO (entering) Allow me to teach you your manners! Gentlemen should respect their servants! They don't play games with them!

PANTALONE We must be careful, he might be dangerous. (to Truffaldino) What's the matter, sir...the world's been treating you badly, has it?

TRUFFALDINO Did you or did you not tell me that Signor Federigo was dead?

PANTALONE What of it?

TRUFFALDINO He is alive, thank you very much, still waiting outside in the street to come in and say hello!

PANTALONE Signor Federigo?

TRUFFALDINO Signor Federigo.

PANT. LOMB. BRIGH. Rasponi?

TRUFFALDINO Rasponi.

ALL Of Turin?

TRUFFALDINO Of Turin!!!

PANTALONE You are MAD!

TRUFFALDINO Go and look. You' ll see him, Signor Federigo Rasponi!

PANTALONE (lifting his hands) You are asking for a beating!

DR LOMBARDI Calm, Signor Pantalone, calm. Tell him to ask this so-called Signor Federigo to come in.

TRUFFALDINO At last! (exits, to SMERALDINA) We' ll talk again. I go!

CLARICE Silvio, I tremble with fear.

SILVIO Whatever happens, you' re mine!

DR LOMBARDI Now let the truth be revealed.

BRIGHELLA Rely on me, sir. I' m the only one here who' s ever seen Signor Federigo. I' ll soon tell you if it's him.

### SCENE 3

(Enters BEATRICE, dressed as a man.)

BEATRICE Signor Pantalone?

PANTALONE Sir?

BEATRICE Allow me to issue a rebuke. I had been relegated to the street below for fully half an hour!

PANTALONE (Nervously) Beg pardon, sir...Who ARE you?

BEATRICE I am Federigo Rasponi, of Turin.

ALL Ehh? (All look bewildered)

BRIGHELLA (Aside) What's this? That fellow isn't Federigo Rasponi. That's his sister Beatrice. And in disguise! Let's watch!

BEATRICE I suppose you have heard I am dead...

PANTALONE Dead...

BEATRICE Killed in a duel...



PANTALONE Duel...

BEATRICE Thanks heaven I was only wounded.

PANTALONE Tanks heaven...

DR LOMBARDI Thanks heaven...

BEATRICE And so I came here to claim the money you owe me.

PANTALONE Sir, I don't know how to say this, but I was promised Signor Rasponi was dead, so I know you'll understand when I say that we might require some small piece of evidence that would serve as proof to the contrary.

BEATRICE I fully understand. Allow me to present these four letters from mutual acquaintances and associates. (Gives four letters to PANTALONE)

(Noticing BRIGHELLA, aside) GASP! Brighella her? If he opens his mouth and tells them...

CLARICE Silvio, our bright future is receding into the dark past!

SILVIO I'll not forfeit one fleck of your flesh!

BEATRICE (Aloud to BRIGHELLA) Good Sir, don't I know you?

BRIGHELLA Yes, I think you do indeed.

BEATRICE Brighella! Yes, of course! (Goes up to him) Tell me what are you doing here in Venice? (aside) Do not give me away!

BRIGHELLA (Aside to BEATRICE) Your secret's safe. (Aloud) Why sir, I run an inn, sir, in the town.

BEATRICE Why, what a lucky coincidence: I'll take a room at once!

BRIGHELLA My pleasure, sir. (aside) What' s she doing?

BEATRICE (to PANTALONE) Satisfied, sir?

PANTALONE Well, I've read the letters. I' ve examined them...er...yes.

BEATRICE Brighella; he knows me and can attest to my identity.

BRIGHELLA Indeed, sir...

BEATRICE (to BRIGHELLA) What' s my name?

BRIGHELLA Your name?

BEATRICE The truth, sir!

BRIGHELLA Rasponi!

BEATRICE You hear. I am Federigo Rasponi of Turin!

PANTALONE I can only say...Welcome to Venice, Signor Federigo, I'm sorry I ever doubted you.

CLARICE No, he can't be!

BEATRICE (Pointing to CLARICE) Signor Pantalone, who is this fair creature?

PANTALONE This is my daughter Clarice. (aside) Now for some fun.

BEATRICE Clarice? The one I'm engaged to?

PANTALONE Yes, sir; just so. (Aside) I'm in trouble now.

BEATRICE (To CLARICE) Madam, permit me.

CLARICE (Stiffly) Your servant, sir.

SILVIO Sir!

BEATRICE (to SILVIO) Who are you?

SILVIO I am the official fiancée of Signora Clarice. She is betrothed to me!

BEATRICE This guy is engaged to Signora Clarice? But Signora Clarice is engaged to me!

SILVIO No, she is mine!

BEATRICE How dare you, sir. You are speaking of my bride to be!

CLARICE (rushing to PANTALONE) Oh, father!

PANTALONE Dear Signor Federigo, we believed that you were...how shall I put it? You were...

BEATRICE Dead?

PANTALONE That' s the word. So Clarice got engaged to Silvio, but no harm done. I'm a man of my word, so here: take her, she's yours

CLARICE What?

BEATRICE Come, Clarice, come to the arms who adore you.

SILVIO Stop! Enough! A gentleman would never take a bride who has given her hand to another.

DR LOMBARDI Well said, my son!

BEATRICE Oh, no, I would, I'll take her

SILVIO Sir! Clarice is my fiancée, and there is nothing on earth that will make me yield her to you!

DR LOMBARDI YOU!

SILVIO Signor Pantalone, you do me wrong!

DR LOMABRDI WRONG!

SILVIO And you, Signor Rasponi, you will have to fight for her against this, my large and long sword!

DR. LOMBARDI SWORD!

SILVIO. Clarice is mine!

DR LOMBARDI MINE!

(Exit DR. LOMBARDI and SILVIO, both repeating "MINE"!)

BEATRICE (To CLARICE) Dear bride...

CLARICE Don't come near me! You, sir, are a vile, rancid demon sent to torment me from the pits of hell!  
(Exit)

#### SCENE 4

PANTALONE What? Clarice, come back here! I am a man of business and contracts must be honored.

BEATRICE Exactly sir. She'll grow to love me. Meanwhile, let's get down to business. As you know, that is the OTHER reason that brings me here to Venice.

PANTALONE Yes, sir. Your money is ready, the accounts are in order. I shall have them delivered to your hotel. Shall I?

BEATRICE Good, but don't send it to me, let me send my servant to you. He's a very honest fellow.

#### SCENE 5

BRIGHELLA So madam, let me ask you just one question.

BEATRICE Quiet! You want everybody to hear?!

BRIGHELLA Oh, madam, you really fooled them. You like to joke, don't you?

BEATRICE Look, this is what happened: My brother Federigo IS dead, killed by Florindo Aretusi, the only man I ever loved. Federigo, my brother, challenged Florindo, Florindo and Federigo fought, Federigo fell, Florindo fled, I followed Florindo. Now I'm Federigo, to whom Pantalone owed money, which, once I lay my hands on it, will help me find Florindo.

Good, honest, loyal, discreet, HANDSOME Brighella, I beg you help me. You shall be justly rewarded.

BRIGHELLA My Lady, you can rely on me, I will serve you as of old.

BEATRICE Good! Now let's go to your inn. I told my servant to wait in the street.

BRIGHELLA Where'd you find that guy?

BEATRICE I picked him up on the road. He's not as stupid as he looks. By which I mean to say he's STUPID but not as stupid as he LOOKS. But he is loyal, and you can't buy that.

#### SMERALDINA

(TO AUDIENCE) Hi. Hello. You know me as "Smeraldina, the Innocent, Impressionable Lady's Maid", but in real life, I'm an actress. (AD LIB about audience seeming confused with the plot.) We'll get back to "The servant" in just one moment, but first a little quiz.

Does this show take place in Australia, Indonesia, or Italy?

Okay, next question is a little easier. How many of you have eaten Italian food? Spaghetti? And how many of you really like pizza? Do you like a pizza-mint? (GIVES A MINT)

Who was Clarice first engaged to? Was it Fred, Federigo or Leonardo Di Caprio?

One last question. What female character in the play do you find most winsome and attractive? Remember: my name is pronounced :

"SMER-AL-DEE-NAH."

(AUDIENCE WILL PROBABLY YELL BACK SMERALDINA.)

I love the theatre! (SMERALDINA EXITS)

#### SCENE 6

A Street within BRIGHELLA'S Inn

TRUFFALDINO Waiting, waiting, waiting...stomach empty. I'm so hungry I feel quite faint. But it's my own fault: I chose the wrong master: he never eats! They tell us servants: "Serve your master with love." They should tell our masters, "Serve your servants some FOOD!"

(Enter FLORINDO in traveling dress with a PORTER carrying a trunk on his shoulder)

#### SCENE 7

PORTER Sir, I beg you, I can't go any further; the weight's killing me.

FLORINDO Onward, man, it's just a few more steps.

PORTER Help! The trunk, the trunk!

FLORINDO Careful man, careful.

PORTER I am ruined.

TRUFFALDINO Here's my chance for the price of a lunch.

(to FLORINDO) Oh, sir? May I be of any assistance?

FLORINDO Good Man! Carry this trunk into the inn there, would you?

TRUFFALDINO Yes, sir, allow me, sir.

(TRUFFALDINO puts his shoulder under the trunk and takes it by himself,

knocking the PORTER down at the same time) Get off!

FLORINDO Bravo!

TRUFFALDINO Light as a feather. Won't be a moment, sir.

(Goes into the inn with the trunk)

FLORINDO (To PORTER) What are you looking for?

PORTER Your appreciation, sir.

FLORINDO I see. (gives a coin to PORTER) You may go. (Going towards the inn)

PORTER My pay. For the bags.

FLORINDO You walked ten yards. The dock is right there. (Pointing off)

PORTER I'm not paid by the step. Pay me. (Holds out his hand)

FLORINDO Some more... (give him another coin).

PORTER Pay me. (Still holding out his hand)

FLORINDO Two more. (Gives money)

PORTER Pay me.

FLORINDO (Kicks him) Get out of here!

PORTER Now I am paid in full!! (Exit)

#### SCENE 8

(Re-enter TRUFFALDINO)

TRUFFALDINO I've got you a room, sir.

FLORINDO Good, good. Say, what sort of place is this, eh?

TRUFFALDINO A good place, sir. Soft beds, clean glasses, and the kitchen! Such a smell what they call "a comfort smell." I had a word with the waiter. You'll be served like a king.

FLORINDO Very good. And what do YOU do?

TRUFFALDINO Me? What do I do?

FLORINDO For a living.

TRUFFALDINO I'm a servant.

FLORINDO You have a master now?

TRUFFALDINO To tell you the truth, at the moment I don't.

FLORINDO No master?

TRUFFALDINO Do you see a master? (Aside) He's not here, I'm not lying.

FLORINDO What say I hire you to be my servant?

TRUFFALDINO Your servant! Why not? (Aside) If the price was right... My I inquire what would be my remuneration, sir?

FLORINDO How much do you want?

TRUFFALDINO I'll be honest. My last master, the other one, the one who is no more, gave me a ducat a day and all I could eat.

FLORINDO I can manage that.

TRUFFALDINO Good, 'cause for you it's more.

FLORINDO How much?

TRUFFALDINO Ducat and a half.

FLORINDO Done!

TRUFFALDINO I am yours to command!

FLORINDO I'm rather anxious to know if there are any letters for me at the Post Office, so here (GIVES COINS), go and ask if there's anything for Florindo Aretusi.

TRUFFALDINO And you'll order dinner, sir?

FLORINDO Er...sure, dinner... (FLORINDO goes into the inn)

#### SCENE 9

TRUFFALDINO Didn't I did well? I'm off to the Post Office for my new master!

(As he is going, BEATRICE enters with BRIGHELLA and meets him)

BEATRICE Oh, I see! This is how you wait for me?

TRUFFALDINO (aside) This is the master number one.

Why...yes, sir! I am waiting for you, sir!

BEATRICE Then why aren't you in the street like I told you? What was I supposed to do, meet you by accident? I want my trunk brought to the inn of Mister Brighella.

TRUFFALDINO Where is it?

BRIGHELLA Right here, you can't miss it.

TRUFFALDINO Damn! They are both staying at the same inn!

BEATRICE Hurry up, I'm waiting.

TRUFFALDINO Yes, sir!

BEATRICE Hold it.

TRUFFALDINO Yes, sir!

BEATRICE And go down to the Post Office and see if there are any letters for me.

TRUFFALDINO Yes, sir!

BEATRICE See if there are any letters for my sister Beatrice Rasponi, as well.

TRUFFALDINO Yes, sir! Your wife? Girlfriend? Concubine?

BEATRICE. Shut up! It's my sister.

TRUFFALDINO ...your sister.

(BRIGHELLA and BEATRICE into the inn)

#### SCENE 10

TRUFFALDINO I can't believe it! Some servants look for a master all their life, I've got two in the space of a minute. Two masters, double wages, double rations, and if I was found out...double trouble.

(Enter SILVIO and meets TRUFFALDINO)

SILVIO (Aside) The servant of Federigo Rasponi!

TRUFFALDINO And now, off to the Post Office for my two masters!

SILVIO (To TRUFFALDINO) Oh domestic! Fetch me your master!

TRUFFALDINO My master? Which one?

SILVIO Tell him I wish a word. Tell him I wait. Tell him...Go.

TRUFFALDINO Tell my master? Which mast...

SILVIO (Angrily) I said go!

TRUFFALDINO But you have to understand, my masters...

SILVIO I said go!

TRUFFALDINO WHICH MASTER DO YOU WANT?

SILVIO I said go!

TRUFFALDINO (Aside) All right, I'll send the first one I find.

(Exits TRUFFALDINO into the inn)

#### SCENE 11

SILVIO Yes! Bring forth my rival, he whose existence I shall not suffer! Federigo Rasponi may have escaped with his life once before, but he shan't be so lucky this time. Either he renounces his claim to Clarice, or I shall demand satisfaction.

(Enter TRUFFALDINO with FLORINDO)

TRUFFALDINO (Points out SILVIO to FLORINDO) There he is, the beast.

FLORINDO Well, I don't know him. What does he want with me?

TRUFFALDINO I don't know, I'm just trying to go to the post office. (Exit)

FLORINDO (To SILVIO) Sir, are you the gentleman who inquired after me?

SILVIO I, sir? No, sir. I've not even had the honor of your acquaintance, sir.

FLORINDO But my servant said that a man with a bellicose manner wanted to challenge me to a duel.

SILVIO Must've been a misunderstanding. I said I wanted a word with his master.

FLORINDO Well, that's me. I'm his master.

SILVIO Are you?

FLORINDO Certainly.

SILVIO Then I beg your pardon, sir, but either your servant is identical to one I saw this morning, or he is servant to another master.

FLORINDO No, I'm his, he's mine.

SILVIO If that's so, I beg your pardon once again.

FLORINDO All right. Mistakes happen.

SILVIO Er...tell me, sir, are you by any chance a stranger to this city?

FLORINDO I am a simple traveler from Turin.

SILVIO The man I wish to speak is from Turin as well.

FLORINDO I may know him. If he has insulted you, I shall gladly help you obtain satisfaction. What's his name?

SILVIO His name? His name is Federigo Rasponi.

FLORINDO Federigo Rasponi? Ah! I knew him only too well.

SILVIO He makes a claim of matrimony, based on an errant father's promise, to the fair lady whom this very morning swore to be my wife.

FLORINDO Rest easy, friend, Federigo Rasponi cannot steal away your bride or any other's ever again. The man Rasponi...is dead.

SILVIO Yes, well, that's what WE thought too. But then this morning he showed up in Venice safe and sound.

FLORINDO No!

SILVIO Yes!

FLORINDO Sir! Your news make me shake!



SILVIO You should have seen ME! I'm STILL shaking! Signor Pantalone my fair fiancée's father, has made every inquiry. He holds in his hand incontestable proof that Rasponi is alive, in Venice, in person.

FLORINDO (Aside) So Federigo is alive, in Venice, in person? I fly from justice and come face to face with my enemy.

SILVIO If you see the vile villain, tell him that for his own safety he must abandon all hope of any legal coupling between himself and the lovely Clarice. By the way, if you ever need me, my name is Lombardi, Silvio Lombardi.

FLORINDO I am honored, sir. (aside) And what's more, absolutely perplexed.

SILVIO I am honored, sir.

FLORINDO Your servant ever.

SILVIO Your servant ever.

FLORINDO Dispose of me as you will.

SILVIO Dispose of me as you will. (Exit SILVIO)

#### SCENE 12

FLORINDO No, it cannot be! Can the dead arise? Perhaps I did not touch the vital spot. I had no time to watch him breathe his last. No he lives. But wait! If he's not dead, I must return to Turin and console my beloved Beatrice, who is more than likely suffering pangs of abject sorrow for the pain of my errant absence. Ah, Beatrice!

#### SCENE 13

TRUFFALDINO Damn! There's my other master.

FLORINDO Truffaldino! Have you been to the Post Office?

TRUFFALDINO I have, sir.

FLORINDO Were there any letters for me?

TRUFFALDINO There were, sir.

FLORINDO Where are they?

TRUFFALDINO Right here, sir. (Takes three letters out of his pocket. Aside) Damn! I've mixed them up. There is one letter for one master and two for the other, but which is which? I can't read!

FLORINDO Well? Come on, give me my letters.

TRUFFALDINO Coming up! I must confess, sir: these three letters which I carry on me are not all for you. On the way to the Post Office, I met a friend another servant and he said, "Oh! Save me a journey! Could you see if there's anything for my master?" So, sir, one of these letters isn't yours.

FLORINDO Well, here, give me, I'll find mine and give the rest back.

TRUFFALDINO Thank you, sir.

FLORINDO (Aside) A letter addressed to Beatrice Rasponi? To Beatrice Rasponi at Venice?

TRUFFALDINO Did you find the one that belongs to my friend's master?

FLORINDO Who is this friend of yours?

TRUFFALDINO Uh...well, as I said, he's a servant name of...Pasquale.

FLORINDO Who is his master?

TRUFFALDINO I don't know, sir.

FLORINDO But if he told you to pick up his master's letters, he must have told you his name.

TRUFFALDINO Very well reasoned, sir!

FLORINDO So what's his name?

TRUFFALDINO I don't recall.

FLORINDO What?

TRUFFALDINO He wrote it down on a piece of paper.

FLORINDO So where's the paper?

TRUFFALDINO I left it at the Post Office.

FLORINDO (Aside) A confounding and mysterious complication!

TRUFFALDINO (Aside) I'm making it up.

FLORINDO Where does Pasquale live?

TRUFFALDINO I haven't the slightest idea.

FLORINDO Well, if you don't know where he lives how are you going to give him the letter?

TRUFFALDINO Good question! He said he'd meet me on the town square.

FLORINDO (Aside) More mystery.

TRUFFALDINO (Aside) If I get out of this, I'm going into politics.

(To FLORINDO) Sir, give me the letter and I promise to make sure he gets it.

FLORINDO Not a chance, I'm opening it right here and now.

TRUFFALDINO But , it's illegal. You can't read!

FLORINDO This letter is addressed to the one person for whom my opening it would not be a crime. (Opens letter)

FLORINDO (Reads) "Madam, your departure from this city has given rise to much talk, for all the town now knows that you have gone to join Signor Florindo. The Authorities have discovered that you fled dressed as

a man. They intend to arrest you. If I have any more news to tell you, I will send it to you...Take care, madam and Heaven bless you...Your most humble and devoted servant..."

TRUFFALDINO Fancy reading other people's mail....

FLORINDO (Aside) Beatrice fled to Venice? In man's clothes? To join me? She must love me! If only I can find her. Come in! Truffaldino, find this servant Pasquale, find out who his master is!

TRUFFALDINO Fair enough. Give me the letter. I'll do what I can.

FLORINDO There. I'm counting on you.

TRUFFALDINO Should I give him the letter open like this?

FLORINDO Blame it on a postal worker.

TRUFFALDINO What about Turin? We still going after dinner?

FLORINDO Not at the moment. Now get going and find Pasquale. (Aside) Beatrice in Venice, Federigo in Venice! If Federigo finds her, he'll... No, I will find her first and save her. Beatrice I'm coming! (Exit toward the town)

#### SCENE 14

TRUFFALDINO Now! This letter is the one I have to take to my other master. But I can't give him an open letter. I've got to try to fold it (Tries various awkward folds) and seal it. But how? I saw my grandmother seal a letter with chewed bread once by chewing the bread into a paste and pasting the bread over the seal. I'll try that. (Takes a piece of bread out of his pocket) It's a crime to waste a crust of bread on something like this, but then tampering with the mail is a crime. (Chews a little bread to seal the letter and accidentally swallows it) Oops. I ate it. I'll chew more. (Same business) Oops. Ate it again. Stomach has a mind of its own. Down boy! Ruff! Ruff! One more time. (Chews again; would like to swallow the bread, but restrains himself and with great difficulty removes the bread from his mouth.) Success. (Seals the letter with the bread) Oh, that's nice. That's good. I'm very neat.

#### SCENE 15

BEATRICE Truffaldino, have you been to the Post Office?

TRUFFALDINO Yes, sir.

BEATRICE Any letters for me?

TRUFFALDINO One for your sister.

BEATRICE Good; where is it?

TRUFFALDINO Here. (Gives letter)

BEATRICE This letter has been opened and re-sealed with...bread.

TRUFFALDINO Bread impossible! How'd that happen?!

BEATRICE You don't know!? Liar! Who opened it? Answer!

TRUFFALDINO Allow me to confess, sir. When I got to the Post Office, there was a letter for me too, from my dear old grandmother. As I can't read, I opened your letter instead of mine.

BEATRICE If you can't read, why bother to open them at all?

TRUFFALDINO I wanted to feel the paper that my dearest granny's loving hands had touched.

BEATRICE I admire your feeling. (Dirty look to TRUFFALDINO, opens letter. Aside ) A letter to me from my servant in Turin informing me that the authorities are after me and that Florindo is in Venice as well.

(to TRUFFALDINO) Listen, I have some things to do. Here are my keys, as my trunk has arrived open it up and and hang out my clothes.

TRUFFALDINO We'll eat dinner?

BEATRICE When I come back. (Aside) Ah Florindo! (Exits )

#### SCENE 16

TRUFFALDINO That was good. I mean I knew I was good, but I didn't know I was THAT good.

(Enters PANTALONE)

PANTALONE You there! Is your master here?

TRUFFALDINO No, sir, he isn't.

PANTALONE Where is he?

TRUFFALDINO No idea, sir.

PANTALONE He coming back for lunch?

TRUFFALDINO I hope so.

PANTALONE Here. Soon as he comes back, give him this. A hundred ducats. I have to go. Goodbye. (Exits PANTALONE)

#### SCENE 17

TRUFFALDINO G'bye to you too, sir! Funny. He didn't say which master I'm supposed to give it to.

(Enters FLORINDO)

FLORINDO Truffaldino, did you find Pasquale?

TRUFFALDINO No, Lord, I did not find Pasquale, but I did find a gentleman who gave me a hundred ducats.

FLORINDO A hundred ducats? For what?

TRUFFALDINO Let me ask you: were you expecting money from anyone?

FLORINDO Well... I had presented a letter of credit to a merchant.

TRUFFALDINO Then it's yours.

FLORINDO Well, then it must have been the merchant I gave the letter to.

TRUFFALDINO Must've, sir.

FLORINDO Now then, my man, have you put my trunk in my room?

TRUFFALDINO Yes, sir.

FLORINDO Well, here is the key. Give my clothes an airing. (gives the key)

You won't forget Pasquale.

TRUFFALDINO I'll find him right after dinner.

FLORINDO Good! Let's go in and get a menu. (Goes into the inn)

TRUFFALDINO Thank God I gave the money to the right master.

#### SCENE 18

A Room in the House of PANTALONE.

PANTALONE You'll marry Signor Federigo, and that's final! I've given my word, and I can't go back on it!

CLARICE

Father, I have always obeyed you, but this is unjust!

PANTALONE You didn't object the first time you were engaged to him. "Speak then or forever hold your peace"!

CLARICE My filial duty made me mute.

PANTALONE Well, duty calls, be mute again.

CLARICE My heart can't be mute!

PANTALONE Oh, come on...Signor Federigo is a pleasant guy.

CLARICE Not to me!

PANTALONE Why not?

CLARICE I hate him! I do love Silvio and want to marry him.

PANTALONE Oh, shut up please. I am not talking of love, I'm talking of marriage.

CLARICE I'll not stop crying.

#### SCENE 19

(Enter BEATRICE in man's dress)

BEATRICE Signor Pantalone, greetings and salutations.

PANTALONE Your servant, sir. Did you receive the purse with the hundred ducats?

BEATRICE No.

PANTALONE But I just now gave it to your servant. The honest one.

BEATRICE I must have missed him. Not to worry, I'm sure he'll give me the money when I get back to the inn. (Aside to PANTALONE) What's with your daughter? Is she crying?

PANTALONE (Aside to BEATRICE) Signor Federigo, when she heard you were dead, she started to cry, and even your miraculous resurrection hasn't stopped the flood.

BEATRICE (To PANTALONE) A favor: leave us alone. I'll comfort her.

PANTALONE Certainly, sir. (To CLARICE) Sweetheart, daddy has to run an errand. Entertain your fiancée while I'm gone, would you? (Softly to CLARICE) Be smart and play nice. (Exits PANTALONE)

## SCENE 20

BEATRICE (aside) I don't want to see her suffer. (to CLARICE) Signora Clarice.

CLARICE Don't talk to me! Don't look at me! Don't touch me!

BEATRICE Getting me used to married life, eh?

CLARICE Drag me to the altar, you'll hold my fist and nothing more!

BEATRICE If you knew what we have in common, you wouldn't be afraid.

CLARICE What we have in common is your destruction of my happiness!

BEATRICE But I have the key to quell your qualms.

CLARICE Wrong, only Silvio has my qualm key.

BEATRICE True, some things only a Silvio can provide. Signora Clarice, do you want to know a secret?

CLARICE I promise nothing, so keep your secret.

BEATRICE Your severity deprives me of the means to make you happy.

CLARICE You have only the means to make me miserable.

BEATRICE Wrong, madam! And to convince you, I'll be blunt: you don't want me and I don't want you. Your hand is already taken? Well, so is mine.

CLARICE Now I'm starting to like you. Wait, is this some trick?

BEATRICE No trick, madam. I am not Federigo Rasponi. I am his sister Beatrice.

CLARICE (Shrieke) Oh, what are you saying, you a woman?

BEATRICE Yes, every inch a woman.

CLARICE Oh! How can you stand and torment me?

BEATRICE You don' t believe me. I shall give you proof.

CLARICE Proof?

BEATRICE Yes, my dear. (puts a hand of CLARICE on her breast)

CLARICE Oh, I believe you!

BEATRICE Very well.

CLARICE But what about your brother?

BEATRICE My beloved killed him in a duel. I am looking for him now. That's why I'm in disguise. I tell you because I don' t want to hurt you, but I beg you do not betray me.

CLARICE Never!

BEATRICE On your honor, tell no one.

CLARICE I promise, on my honor. Silvio?

BEATRICE No, I forbid it!

CLARICE Well then. I shan' t say a word.

BEATRICE Now, are we friends?

CLARICE Indeed we are.

BEATRICE And I am your friend forever.

## SCENE 21

(Enters PANTALONE)

BEATRICE Give me your hand as a sign of your love.

CLARICE Most gladly. Take this my hand. I entrust it to you.

BEATRICE You won' t break your promise? (they kiss on both hands and cheeks.)

PANTALONE (aside) Promise? Oath? Kisses? Well, that was quick!

BEATRICE Told you she'd come around.

PANTALONE I'm speechless! Five more minutes I'd be a grandpa.

CLARICE (Aside) Somehow I think I'm worse off than I was before.

PANTALONE (To CLARICE) Now we can have the wedding at once.

CLARICE Wedding?

PANTALONE Why not? I saw you kissing and hugging. No doubt about it, the wedding's tomorrow.

BEATRICE Tomorrow?

CLARICE Father, there's still a problem.

PANTALONE Sweet Meat, I know what you're worried about, but don't be. I'll take care of Silvio.

CLARICE Don't let him desert me.

PANTALONE You want two husbands?

CLARICE Not at all, but...

PANTALONE Then enough! The problem is solved. G'bye. (Exits)

CLARICE It's worse now than when you were a man!!! (exits crying, BEATRICE exits too)

## SCENE 22

DR. LOMBARDI Poor my child, I can't help but pity him. Pantalone should never have agreed to him marrying Clarice unless he knew for certain that fellow from Turin was dead. I'll discuss the issue with him, reasonably, with decorum. I just hope I don't lose my famous temper.

(Enters PANTALONE)

PANTALONE (Aside) What's the doctor doing here?

DR. LOMBARDI Your servant, Signor Pantalone.

PANTALONE Your servant, Doctor Lombardi. I was just coming to look for you and your son.

DR. LOMBARDI You were? Oh, what a relief! Signora Clarice is to be Silvio's wife, after all?

PANTALONE (Much embarrassed) Well, actually, I...

DR. LOMBARDI No need for explanations. I feel nothing but empathy for you. It was an awkward situation, old friend.

PANTALONE (Still hesitating) Yes, well, about that promise I made Signor Federigo...

DR. LOMBARDI He blindsided you! Took you by surprise, no time to think. I'm sure you never even realized how much you were going to insult and offend my entire family.

PANTALONE Well...insults and offenses...there was a contract...

DR. LOMBARDI Oh, you don't have to tell me. That was a two-way contract between you and the fellow from Turin, whereas ours is a threesome, confirmed in its validity by the love of the girl herself.

PANTALONE Yes, but...

DR. LOMBARDI And as you know, in matrimonial cases, consensus, et non concubitus, facit virum.

PANTALONE My Latin is a little rusty.

DR. LOMBARDI "Women Cannot Be Sacrificed."



PANTALONE...Any other pearls of wisdom?

DR. LOMBARDI Nothing else.

PANTALONE So you're finished?

DR. LOMBARDI I'm finished.

PANTALONE May I speak?

DR. LOMBARDI You may.

PANTALONE Doctor, you may have the advantage of a higher education, but...

DR. LOMBARDI Of course there's the dowry, but that's negotiable, by and large, give or take.

PANTALONE Let's start again. May I speak?

DR. LOMBARDI Speak!

PANTALONE My turn now?

DR LOMBARDI Your turn.

PANTALONE Then LISTEN: I have great respect for legal learning, but in this case it does not apply.

DR. LOMBARDI Are you trying to tell me the OTHER marriage is still going to take place?

PANTALONE Let me inform you, sir, that HE has captured HER heart.

DR. LOMBARDI Who' s HE? Who is HER?

PANTALONE Federigo Rasponi is HE! I have just left them there, exchanging promises, oaths and kisses.

DR LOMBARDI You appall me, sir! There will be penalties to pay, sir, compensation, pain and suffering and court costs! Gentlemen of the jury, a marriage contract contracted prior to the dissolution of a prior contract cannot be dissolved by contracting a further contract unless the prior contract has been contracted prior to the dissolution of the former one. Sir, you have insulted me, and only a fool rides a horse called "Insult Dr. Lombardi"!

(Exits DOCTOR)

SCENE 23

PANTALONE (Calls After Him) Yeah, well, go to hell, doctor! Don't scare me! A Rasponis can buy and sell all the Lombardi family! One Rasponi is worth a thousand Lombardi!

(Enter SILVIO)

SILVIO (Rudely) Your servant, sir.

PANTALONE Yours, sir.

SILVIO Then the marriage contract between Signora Clarice and Signor Federigo is settled?

PANTALONE Settled, finished, over, done.

SILVIO OH! How can you even show your face! You have no honor, no sense of what it means to be a gentleman!

PANTALONE Excuse me? Is this how a "gentleman" talks to a man of my age?

SILVIO If you're a man of honor, you'll go outside.

PANTALONE I am a gentleman, accustomed to being treated with respect.

SILVIO You are a weasel, accustomed to being a weasel! Now draw your sword, sir, draw!

PANTALONE You...?

SILVIO By Heavens, I shall strike you! (Lays his hand to his sword)

PANTALONE But it doesn't draw...Help! Murder!

#### SCENE 24

BEATRICE (To PANTALONE) Father-in-law, I shall defend you!

PANTALONE Son-in-law! Just in time!

SILVIO (To BEATRICE) Ah-ha, the very man my sword has sought!

BEATRICE Please, let me take the challenge.

PANTALONE Granted.

BEATRICE Or do you want to kill him yourself?

PANTALONE No, you go ahead.

BEATRICE...Sure?

PANTALONE Sure!

BEATRICE On guard, Lombardi!

SILVIO (To BEATRICE) Come, sir, steel to steel?

BEATRICE I warn you, sir, I am an expert. Care to think again?

SILVIO To hell all the Rasponi!

PANTALONE Help! Help!

(PANTALONE runs toward the street. BEATRICE and SILVIO fight. SILVIO falls and drops his sword. BEATRICE holds her point to his heart. Enters CLARICE)

#### SCENE 25

CLARICE (To BEATRICE) No, stop!

BEATRICE Do you want me to spare him?

CLARICE I beg you.

BEATRICE But you must remember your promise to me!?

CLARICE I swear.

BEATRICE Silvio Lombardi, you are lucky! Be grateful to her. (Exits BEATRICE)

SCENE 26

CLARICE Dearest Silvio, are you safe?

SILVIO "Dearest Silvio!" You deceiver!

CLARICE Silvio, why such reproach? I love you, I adore you, I am faithful to you!

SILVIO Infidelity, your name is Clarice! You call faithful your VOW to wed another?

CLARICE I never vowed to wed another. I'd die before I'd lose you.

SILVIO But he said just a minute ago "remember your promise."

CLARICE But that is not a vow of matrimony.

SILVIO Then what kind of vow is it?

CLARICE Dear Silvio, I wish I could explain the vow, but I can't.

SILVIO Why not?

CLARICE I can't tell you, I promised secrecy.

SILVIO And I believed you when you said you loved me!! Go! Go away! Go and never darken my soul again!

CLARICE I love you with all my heart.

SILVIO I hate you with all my spleen.

CLARICE Silvio, I will kill myself if you don't stop this!

SILVIO Better dead!

CLARICE Fine, then, I hope you'll be satisfied! (Picks up his sword)

SILVIO Yes, that should do.

CLARICE You're being very cruel to me!

SILVIO From your lips I learned the way.

CLARICE Then you want me to die?

SILVIO I don't know what I want.

CLARICE I do. (Points the sword at her breast) One day you'll know how much I loved you! Sword, come!

(Enters SMERALDINA)

SCENE 27

SMERALDINA Hold on here!! What's going on? (Takes the sword away from CLARICE) (To Silvio) What were you gonna do, let her stab herself? Big man! (To Clarice) Don't tell me: he decided he doesn't want you anymore. Little saying: the man who does not WANT you is the man who

does not DESERVE you. (To Silvio) Girl Killer!

CLARICE Ingrate! You'll know that I was innocent, and it'll be too late, and you'll be the one crying then!

SCENE 28

SMERALDINA I don't get it: you got a girl with a sword on the point of killing herself, and you stay there like you're watching a play.

SILVIO Oh, come on! You don't really think she was going to kill herself?

SMERALDINA All I know is if I hadn't showed up, she'd be gone now.

SILVIO The sword she held was nowhere near her heart.

SMERALDINA The blade was in the general vicinity.

SILVIO You're a woman...

SMERALDINA AND?

SILVIO Women have imaginations.

SMERALDINA And what women do, men can't imagine.

SILVIO She is a two-faced perfidious wretch.

SMERALDINA I know your game. Soon as a woman starts having a mind of her own you men start ruining her reputation.

SILVIO That's not true.

SMERALDINA It's all very well for you men to invent scandalous tales about women. When given the chance, you're committing all the infidelities you can. Why are we women always condemned? And why are you men always excused? I'll tell you why: because the laws are made by them men. I mean, if women made the laws, things'd be different! All right, if I ruled, I'd put every man what's unfaithful up to public show, I would. I'd make him carry an oak branch in his hands. Do that and we wouldn't be able to move for threes, would we? You men!(SMERALDINA exits)

SCENE 29

(AT THE INN)

TRUFFALDINO You' d never believe it: two masters and none has had dinner yet. But we know what will happen, don't you? They' ll both want to eat at the same time, same restaurant, same table, same dishes, same waiters, same...

BEATRICE Truffaldino! Ready for dinner?

TRUFFALDINO At last!

BEATRICE Tell Brighella I want a table for two. I am asking Signor Pantalone to join me.

TRUFFALDINO And what would you like to eat, sir?

BEATRICE Oh, I don' t know. Not a lot. Quality rather than quantity.

TRUFFALDINO Why not leave the ordering to me, sir. I am an expert in the food line. Quantity rather than quality!

BEATRICE Why not. You go ahead.

TRUFFALDINO Have confidence on me, sir. (aside) I can order what I like!

BEATRICE A moment.

TRUFFALDINO (aside) He' s changed his mind. Yes, sir?

BEATRICE Take this banker's order. (hands it to him) Put it in my trunk. Be careful! It is a letter of credit!  
(Exits BEATRICE)

### SCENE 30

TRUFFALDINO This is my moment. My destiny calls me: this is the first time this master has ordered me to order dinner. I'll show him I'm a man of taste. I'll just put away this check and then no, later, mustn't waste time. Hey in there! Anybody home? (Calling into the inn) Brighella!

(Enters BRIGHELLA)

BRIGHELLA What is it, Truffaldino?

TRUFFALDINO My master has a gentleman coming to lunch. He wants something good and quick. Kitchen stocked?

BRIGHELLA I got plenty. Half an hour, I whip up whatever you want.

TRUFFALDINO All right then, what comes with what?

BRIGHELLA First course, we got soup, fried fish, boiled meat, and a fricandean.

TRUFFALDINO I know the first three, but tell me Brighella, what's a fricandean?

BRIGHELLA Kind of a ragout. It's French for..."tastes good."

TRUFFALDINO Good, that's the first course. What's the second?

BRIGHELLA Second course: duck, salad, meat pie and trifle.

TRUFFALDINO (Indignant) A trifle? These men are big men, hungry men, they won't be satisfied with a trifle!

BRIGHELLA Trifle is a dessert, a pudding, it's from England.

TRUFFALDINO (Nonchalantly) Oh. Well. If it's "English...all right, how about setting the table.

BRIGHELLA Don't worry about the table, the waiter' ll take care of the table.

TRUFFALDINO Uh...excuse me, friend, but laying a table is not something that can be "delegated." This is my master's table. (indicating check)

BRIGHELLA No, the master's table is there.

TRUFFALDINO No, this is my master's table.

BRIGHELLA No, the table is there.

TRUFFALDINO Well, just imagine for a second that this is my master's table.

BRIGHELLA Okay.

TRUFFALDINO Here are five dishes and in the middle the soup. (He tears off a piece of the bill of exchange and puts it on the floor to represent a dish) Now the boiled meat. (Same business)Put the fried here, (Same business), here the gravy and here that tasty frickin French stuff. See? A well laid table! It's a good thing!

BRIGHELLA Uh-huh...you got your gravy a mile away from your meat.

TRUFFALDINO All right, so we move it closer.

(Improvise placement of dishes)

#### SCENE 31

(Enter BEATRICE and PANTALONE)

BEATRICE What are you two doing?

TRUFFALDINO (Stands up) I was just arranging the table setting.

BEATRICE What's that paper?

TRUFFALDINO (Aside) The check he gave me!

BEATRICE Is that my check?

TRUFFALDINO I'm very sorry, sir; let me put it right back together again.

BEATRICE Is this how you take care of my things? A check for four thousand! You should be beaten repeatedly! Signor Pantalone? Have you ever seen anything like this?

PANTALONE Tell you the truth, I was too busy laughing. Ahem, of course, it would be serious if it couldn't be fixed but I'll write you another check, it'll be fine.

BEATRICE (to TRUFFALDINO) You're an idiot!

TRUFFALDINO It's all because Brighella doesn't know how to lay a table.

BRIGHELLA Everything's my fault!

TRUFFALDINO Some men don't know how to lay a table.

BEATRICE (To TRUFFALDINO) Get out of here.

TRUFFALDINO To lay tables the right way...

BEATRICE Go, get out, now!

BRIGHELLA I don't get that guy. He's like an enigma wrapped inside a mystery wrapped inside an idiot. Anything particular you fancy for lunch?

PANTALONE Meatballs, two meatballs. My teeth aren't very good nowadays.

BEATRICE You hear? Meatballs.

BRIGHELLA Very good, sir. Sit down, please, lunch will be up shortly.

BEATRICE And tell Truffaldino to come wait on us.

BRIGHELLA I'll tell him, sir. (Exits BRIGHELLA)

#### SCENE 32

PANTALONE Oh, sir, I accept your kind hospitality. Frankly, it cheers me up. I'm still a little shaky from this morning. If you hadn't saved me from that young scoundrel Silvio, he would've run me through.

BEATRICE I'm just glad I got there in time.

(WAITERS enter from the kitchen and carry glasses, wine, bread, etc.,

into the room where BEATRICE and PANTALONE are to dine)

(Enters TRUFFALDINO carrying dish)

TRUFFALDINO What is this? Mutton? Or veal? Mutton, I think. I better check it. (Tastes) Nope, not mutton, not veal. Lamb.

(Goes toward BEATRICE'S room)

(Enters FLORINDO)

FLORINDO Truffaldino! Where are you going?

TRUFFALDINO (turning) Sir?

FLORINDO What are you doing with that dish?

TRUFFALDINO I was just putting it on the table, sir.

FLORINDO For whom?

TRUFFALDINO For you, sir.

FLORINDO Why are you serving my dinner before I've arrived?

TRUFFALDINO I saw you coming from an upstairs window!

FLORINDO So you start with boiled meat and then have soup after?

TRUFFALDINO In Venice, sir, the soup is always supped last.

FLORINDO I'd like my soup first. Take that boiled thing back to the kitchen.

TRUFFALDINO Yes, sir, as you wish, sir.

FLORINDO Where do I have my meals? Is it here? (pointing the room where are BEATRICE and PANTALONE)

TRUFFALDINO NO SIR!

FLORINDO Uh?

TRUFFALDINO I say...no, sir. It's because in that room, they serve...meat first.

FLORINDO Meat first?

TRUFFALDINO Yes, sir. This way for "soup first" (pointing another room).

FLORINDO Room "soup first"?

TRUFFALDINO Yes, sir. This way.

FLORINDO (Exits. Aside) Ah, Beatrice.

(FLORINDO goes into the other room)

TRUFFALDINO I have got one master in here and one master in there. If I pull this off it really will be something to boast off!

(TRUFFALDINO quickly takes the dish in to BEATRICE and starts delivering dishes in both rooms. Scene of dinner. At the end, tired, TRUFFALDINO is alone in the middle of the stage)

TRUFFALDINO I have done it. Served two masters at the same time and neither of them knows the other exists. But if have served for two, now I want to eat for four!

INTERMISSION

(PANTALONE and BEATRICE enter arguing.)

PANTALONE Don't want to hear another word!

BEATRICE When I was hired, I was told I could wear a beautiful gown in the last scene!

(CLARICE enters with SILVIO)



PANTALONE The script says you wear a “manly masculine garb” and you will remain dressed in manly masculine garb right through the curtain call! You want a beautiful gown, write your own play!”

(SMERALDINA enters.)

PANTALONE You ready for your scene? Where is Truffaldino?

SMERALDINA You guess!

PANTALONE Eating!

STAGE MANAGER Places! ACT III! Stop eating, drinking, slipping, chatting, phoning!

(They all exit. Act II begins.)

ACT II

SCENE 1

A Street with BRIGHELLA'S Inn

(Enters SMERALDINA)

SMERALDINA Well! My mistress wants me to go inside that inn and deliver this letter. Me to go inside a tavern? A young girl like me? Never! Then: she is supposed to be in love with Silvio, but sends message to Federigo...Hey! One for summer and one for winter? This is the tavern, and here I am, but I won't go inside. I'll make them come out. Hello! Anybody there?

SCENE 2

(Enters TRUFFALDINO with a bottle in his hand, a glass and a napkin)

TRUFFALDINO You called me, Signora?

SMERALDINA Oh, I hope I haven't disturbed you.

TRUFFALDINO Nooooo! Your pleasure is my duty.

SMERALDINA I don't want to interrupt your lunch.

TRUFFALDINO Don't worry, you won't.

SMERALDINA I'm very sorry.

TRUFFALDINO And I'm not. I was full to bursting, but your effervescent eyes are just what I need to help me digest. (TRUFFALDINO burps)

SMERALDINA (Aside) OH! A poet!

TRUFFALDINO What can I do for you, my sweetheart?

SMERALDINA (Aside) Sweetheart! (To TRUFFALDINO) My mistress sent this letter to Signor Federigo Rasponi. I didn't want to come inside the tavern, so I thought I might ask you to deliver it, seeing as you're his man.

TRUFFALDINO With pleasure; but first, I have a message for you.

SMERALDINA From who?

TRUFFALDINO Tell me, are you acquainted with one Truffaldino?

SMERALDINA I've heard a word or two, but nothing solid (Aside) This must be him!

TRUFFALDINO He's handsome, lovely looking fellow, full of spirit, a fine master of ceremonies, elegant and very macho!

SMERALDINA Uh? Don't know him.

TRUFFALDINO He knows you. He loves you.

SMERALDINA You're teasing me!

TRUFFALDINO And if he can glimpse a small sign of affection he would make himself known.

SMERALDINA Well, maybe if I met him and liked him I could return his affection.

TRUFFALDINO Wanna see him?

SMERALDINA Please.

TRUFFALDINO Be right back. (Goes into the inn)

SMERALDINA It's not him then.

(TRUFFALDINO comes out of the inn, makes low bows to SMERALDINA, passes close to her, sighs, and goes back into the inn)

SMERALDINA Did I miss something?

TRUFFALDINO (Re-entering) Did you see him?

SMERALDINA Who?

TRUFFALDINO That man in love with your titillating beauty.

SMERALDINA All I saw was you.

TRUFFALDINO (Sighs) Uh-huh.

SMERALDINA So it's you?

TRUFFALDINO Oh, yeah. (Sighs)

SMERALDINA Why didn't you say so before?

TRUFFALDINO Because I'm just, I guess, shy.

SMERALDINA (Aside) This man could seduce a stone.

TRUFFALDINO Well, what do you say?

SMERALDINA I say...

TRUFFALDINO What do you say?

SMERALDINA I say...

TRUFFALDINO What do you say?

SMERALDINA I say...

TRUFFALDINO Say something!

SMERALDINA I guess I'm kinda shy too.

TRUFFALDINO Great! If we got married we'd be two married shy people.

SMERALDINA Well... in that case...that could be nice.

TRUFFALDINO But wait a minute, have you ever been a bride before?

SMERALDINA What a question!

TRUFFALDINO That means "yes"?

SMERALDINA That means "no."

TRUFFALDINO Hey, me neither!

SMERALDINA I could've had dozens of husbands, but I never found the right one.

TRUFFALDINO Look, if somebody wanted to marry you, who would he have to ask?

SMERALDINA I've no mother or father, ask my master and mistress.

TRUFFALDINO Say I ask. What do they say?

SMERALDINA They'll say they're happy if I'm happy.

TRUFFALDINO And what'll you say?

SMERALDINA I'll say I'm happy if they're happy.

TRUFFALDINO Good, we're all going to be happy. Give me the letter and when I bring back the answer, we'll talk.

SMERALDINA Here's the letter.

TRUFFALDINO You don't happen to know what's in it?

SMERALDINA No, but I'm dying to find out!

TRUFFALDINO I don't want trouble, but if I don't know what's in it, I can't carry it inside.

SMERALDINA We could open it but how do we seal it again?

TRUFFALDINO Honey, "sealing letters" is my middle name.

SMERALDINA Then open it!

TRUFFALDINO Let's do this neatly. (opens the letter) There. It's open.

SMERALDINA Quick, read it.

TRUFFALDINO It's your mistress's handwriting, isn't it? You read it!

SMERALDINA I must confess it...I can't read.

TRUFFALDINO Give me the letter! The letter says...

SMERALDINA The letter says...

TRUFFALDINO The letter says...

SMERALDINA The letter says...

TRUFFALDINO ...I must confess: neither can I.

SMERALDINA Why did you open it, then?

TRUFFALDINO Well, I have had a few lessons. I learnt ABC... I know, let's both work on the letters one by one, like a team.

SMERALDINA Let's see...the first one...isn't it a M?

TRUFFALDINO No, it's a R.

SMERALDINA No! It's a H.

TRUFFALDINO It must be a O!

(BEATRICE comes out of the inn with PANTALONE)

### SCENE 3

PANTALONE (To SMERALDINA) Smeraldina, what are you doing here?

SMERALDINA (Frightened) Sir! I was just coming to look for you.

PANTALONE (To SMERALDINA) What do you want?

SMERALDINA The mistress wants you, sir.

BEATRICE (To TRUFFALDINO) What's this?

TRUFFALDINO (Frightened) Nothing, piece of paper.

BEATRICE Let me see.

TRUFFALDINO (Gives paper, trembling) It's of no importance, sir.

BEATRICE Another letter addressed to me, and you opened it again!

TRUFFALDINO I am completely in the dark about this.

BEATRICE Signor Pantalone, I received a letter from Signora Clarice informing me of Silvio's insane jealousy, and this villain has the impudence to tear it open!

PANTALONE (To SMERALDINA) And you helped him?

SMERALDINA I'm in the dark too, sir.

BEATRICE Then who opened the letter?

SMERALDINA Not I.

TRUFFALDINO Not I either.

PANTALONE Well, who brought it?

SMERALDINA Truffaldino brought it to his master.

TRUFFALDINO And Smeraldina brought it to Truffaldino.

SMERALDINA (Aside) I don't love you anymore!

TRUFFALDINO I don't love you, either!

PANTALONE So, young lady, you're the cause of all this trouble! I've a good mind to give you a thrashing!

SMERALDINA A man raise his hand to a woman? I'm shocked, sir, shocked!

PANTALONE (Coming near her) You are responsible!

SMERALDINA What, you'll chase me? You've always been too old to catch me before, why should now be any different? (Exit running)

PANTALONE I'll show you I can chase! Come back here! I'll get you! (Runs after her)

#### SCENE 4

BEATRICE (Looking at the letter, aside) Poor Clarice! She despairs over Silvio's jealousy.

TRUFFALDINO (Tries to steal away quietly) I've got a headache.

BEATRICE Hey, where are you going?

TRUFFALDINO Nowhere. (Stops)

BEATRICE Who is responsible for opening this letter?

TRUFFALDINO I cannot tell a lie. It was Smeraldina.

BEATRICE Smeraldina?! It was you! One and one make two, and that's the second letter of mine you've opened today. Come here.

TRUFFALDINO (Approaching timidly) Oh, sir...

BEATRICE Come here, I say. I'll teach you to open my letters!

(BEATRICE takes one stick and beats him well, she standing with her back to the inn. FLORINDO appears at the window and sees the beating)

FLORINDO I say, what goes on here? Beating my servant? (Leaves window)

#### SCENE 5

TRUFFALDINO (After BEATRICE has gone).The shame! Beaten like a drum! If you don't like your servant, you put him on probation, you don't beat him!

(FLORINDO comes out, unseen by TRUFFALDINO)

FLORINDO What's that?

TRUFFALDINO (Seeing FLORINDO) Oh! I said: "Those who don't have their own servants have no right to beat someone else's." You wanna beat a servant, get your own, I'm taken! It's an affront to you, sir!

(Looking toward direction of BEATRICE'S exit)

FLORINDO You know, you're right. I'm really the one who should be offended. Who gave you that thrashing?

TRUFFALDINO If I knew, sir.

FLORINDO Well, if you didn't know him, why did he thrash you?

TRUFFALDINO Because...no idea, sir.

FLORINDO So you let yourself be beaten and made no attempt to defend yourself? Did nothing? And in doing nothing, exposed your master to mockery, insult, and injury with all the consequences therein implied? You have brought shame upon me, boy! (Picks up the stick) Since you so enjoy a good thrashing, I shall thrash you again! This is for the mockery, this is for the insult, this is for the injury, and this is for all the consequences therein implied. (Thrashes him and exit into inn)

TRUFFALDINO Well, there's no doubt about it! I'm a servant of two masters cause I have had my wages from both of them.

#### SCENE 6

A Room in BRIGHELLA'S Inn

(Truffaldino Enters, Shaking His Shoulders And Talking To Himself.)

TRUFFALDINO Frankly, I don't care if they beat me, long as they feed me, and tonight I'll be fed even better than this afternoon; and as long as I serve two masters, I'm a two income family. Let's see now. Master Number One is out on business, Master Number Two is taking his nap. I think I'll give their clothes an airing, take them out of the trunks. Here are the keys, this room will do. (Calls) Hey, waiters!

(Enter WAITERS)

FIRST WAITER What now?

TRUFFALDINO Help me bring some trunks out of those rooms. I need to give the clothes some air.

(TRUFFALDINO comes out of the room with the SECOND WAITER carrying a trunk)

TRUFFALDINO Be careful! Put it down here. (They put the trunk in the middle of the room) Now let's get the other, but quiet, my master is asleep.

(TRUFFALDINO and SECOND WAITER go into FLORINDO'S room)

(TRUFFALDINO and SECOND WAITER re-enter with the other trunk)

TRUFFALDINO Put this one here. (They put it down a little way off from the other. To SECOND WAITER) There! You can go now.

FIRST WAITER A man who loves his work.

(Exit WAITERS)

TRUFFALDINO At least I can do my work in peace and quiet, with no one to bother me. (Takes a key out of his pocket) Now which key is this? Which trunk does it fit? Let's try this one. (Opens one trunk) Right the first time! I'm a genius! Ergo this key will open the other trunk. (Takes out second key and opens second trunk) Two for two! Let's empty 'em out. (He takes all the clothes out of both trunks and puts them on the floor. In each trunk there must be a black suit, books and papers, and anything else ad lib) See if there's anything in the pockets. You never know, sometimes they leave cookies or candy or meat pies. (Searches the pockets of BEATRICE'S suit and finds a portrait) Ho, ho, ho, a little picture! Now that is a handsome man! Who can it be? Funny. Face is familiar, but I can't place it. He kinda looks like my other master. Except he's not wearing the right clothes, and that wig.

(FLORINDO calls from his room)

## SCENE 7

FLORINDO Truffaldino!

TRUFFALDINO Damn! He woke up. If he comes out and sees my other master's trunk, he'll want to know quick, quick I'll lock it up and say I don't know whose it is. (Begins putting clothes in again)

FLORINDO (Calling) Truffaldino!

TRUFFALDINO Coming, sir! (Aside) Gotta hide these first. But which coat goes with which trunk? And which trunk goes with the book? Which trunk is which? Which coat is which? Which which is?

FLORINDO (Calling) You want another beating?

TRUFFALDINO Be there in a minute, sir. (Aside) I'll figure it out once he's gone! (Stuffs the things into the trunks anyhow and locks them. FLORINDO comes out.)

FLORINDO What are you doing?

TRUFFALDINO Well, you said to give your clothes an airing. I was just doing it.

FLORINDO Uh-huh. And whose trunk is that?

TRUFFALDINO Oh, that's your trunk sir.

FLORINDO No, this trunk.

TRUFFALDINO Some other guest of the inn.

FLORINDO Give me my black coat.

TRUFFALDINO Very good, sir.

(Opens FLORINDO'S trunk and gives him the black suit. FLORINDO takes off his dressing gown with TRUFFALDINO'S help and puts on the black coat; then puts his hand into the pockets and finds the portrait)

FLORINDO (Much surprised) What's this?

TRUFFALDINO (Aside) Oh NO! I switched coats, that should be in my other master's pocket. Why do they all have to wear BLACK coats!

FLORINDO (Aside) There can be no mistake. This is my own portrait; the one I gave to my beloved Beatrice. (To TRUFFALDINO) Tell me, how did this portrait come to be in my coat pocket? It wasn't there before.

TRUFFALDINO (Aside) There's an answer to this. I don't know what it is, but there's an answer. (More trunk improvisation)

FLORINDO (Knocking on trunk) Truffaldino! How did this portrait get in my pocket?

TRUFFALDINO Sir, forgive me . This portrait belongs to me. I hid it in your coat pocket because I was afraid I might lose it.

FLORINDO How did you come by this portrait?

TRUFFALDINO My master left it to me.

FLORINDO Left it to you?

TRUFFALDINO Yes, sir, he died and left me his portrait.

FLORINDO Alas, when did this master of yours die?

TRUFFALDINO Uhhh, a week ago

FLORINDO What was your master's name?

TRUFFALDINO I don't know. He was always in disguise.

FLORINDO Incognito? How long did you work for him?

TRUFFALDINO Week, week and a half.

FLORINDO (Aside) Beatrice! Indeed she fled here as a man!

TRUFFALDINO (Aside) As he seems to be buying this, I might as well embroider.

FLORINDO (Despairingly) Tell me, was your master young?

TRUFFALDINO Very young.



FLORINDO Beardless?

TRUFFALDINO Beardless.

FLORINDO (Aside) Sigh, this is she. Beloved, Beatrice!

TRUFFALDINO (Aside) He looks upset, I hope he doesn't beat me again.

FLORINDO Where did your late master hail from?

TRUFFALDINO You know, I used to know, but at the moment, I don't know.

FLORINDO Was it Turin?

TRUFFALDINO Turin! That was it!

FLORINDO (Aside) Every word he speaks is a stab to the heart. (To TRUFFALDINO) Your young master from Turin is really dead?

TRUFFALDINO Dead, dead, dead.

FLORINDO From what did he die?

TRUFFALDINO Well...he had an accident. He was thrown off his horse.

FLORINDO Where is he buried?

TRUFFALDINO He wasn't buried, sir.

FLORINDO What!

TRUFFALDINO No, sir, his former servant came, put him in a coffin and mailed him back home.

FLORINDO Was this the same servant who got you to pick up his letters from the Post Office?

TRUFFALDINO Yes sir...Pasquale.

FLORINDO (Aside) All is lost. Beatrice is dead. Poor girl, the perils of the journey and the tortures of her heart must have killed her. Oh! I can no longer endure the agony of my grief! (Exit to his room)

## SCENE 8

TRUFFALDINO Gee, that portrait made him really emotional. He must've known the fellow. The sadness in his eyes, the tears in his eyes, the desperation in his...eyes. The trunks! Gotta take them back to the rooms, or I'll get in more trouble!

(Enter BEATRICE and PANTALONE)

BEATRICE I assure you, Signor Pantalone, the last shipment you sent me has been billed twice.

PANTALONE Maybe the boys in the warehouse made a mistake

BEATRICE Well, luckily I have my own set of books to compare them to. One of us will owe the other. Truffaldino!

TRUFFALDINO Sir!

BEATRICE Where's the key to my trunk?

TRUFFALDINO Right here, sir.

BEATRICE What's my trunk doing in this room?

TRUFFALDINO I was airing your clothes, sir.

BEATRICE And have you aired them?

TRUFFALDINO I have, sir.

BEATRICE Then open the trunk and give me...wait, whose trunk is that?

TRUFFALDINO Another gentleman who's just arrived.

BEATRICE Give me my diary.

TRUFFALDINO Yes, sir. (Aside, ad lib) Show me the way Lord! (Opens trunk and looks for the book)

PANTALONE As I say, if we've made a mistake; there'll be no charge.

BEATRICE If everything's in order...

TRUFFALDINO Is this the book, sir? (Holding out a book to BEATRICE)

BEATRICE I should think. There'll be no problem. (Takes the book without looking carefully and opens it)  
Wait, this isn't my book! Whose book is this?

TRUFFALDINO Sir?

BEATRICE (Aside) These are the two letters I wrote to Florindo. I tremble, I sweat, I know not where I am.

PANTALONE Signor Federigo? Are you ill?

BEATRICE It's nothing, Truffaldino. How did this book get in my trunk?

TRUFFALDINO I don't know, sir...

BEATRICE Hurry, don't confuse me, out with the truth!

TRUFFALDINO (Aside) I'll use the same story as I tried with the other one. It worked for one master, it'll work for the other. Sir, forgive me. This book belongs to me. I hid it in your trunk because I was afraid I might lose it

BEATRICE So you gave me your book instead of mine and didn't notice?

TRUFFALDINO (ASIDE) This one is more clever. (To BEATRICE) Tell you the truth, sir; I only had the book a short time, I didn't recognize it at first.

BEATRICE So how'd you get it?

TRUFFALDINO My previous master here in Venice died and willed the book to me.

BEATRICE How long ago?

TRUFFALDINO Week, week and a half.

BEATRICE But I met up with you in Verona.

TRUFFALDINO Which is where I was having just come from Venice on account of my poor master's death.

BEATRICE Your master...was his name...Florindo Aretusi?

TRUFFALDINO Florindo Aretusi, as I live and breathe!

BEATRICE And you're sure he's dead?

TRUFFALDINO Dead, dead, dead.

BEATRICE How did he die? Where is he buried?

TRUFFALDINO You'd like to visit the grave? He fell into a canal, sank like a stone and was never seen again.

BEATRICE Oh, wretched me! Dead is Florindo! Dead is my love! Dead is my only hope! What purpose serves this, my useless life, when dies the one for whom I lived? All is lost. I left my home, I left my family, I dressed in manly garb, I confronted danger, I hazarded my very life, all for Florindo.

PANTALONE (aside) What an actress!

BEATRICE I no longer bear the light of day. My adored one, my beloved, I follow you to the tomb.  
(BEATRICE EXITS into her room, raving)

PANTALONE (Who has listened to her speech with astonishment) Truffaldino?

TRUFFALDINO Sir?

PANTALONE A woman?

TRUFFALDINO A female woman.

PANTALONE What a surprise!

TRUFFALDINO Strange.

PANTALONE I'm speechless!

TRUFFALDINO I'm all confusion!

PANTALONE I'm going home to tell my daughter. (Exit)

TRUFFALDINO So, I'm not a servant of two masters after all, I'm a servant of a master and a mistress. (Exit)

## SCENE 9

PANTALONE My problems are solved, my worries are gone, our long national nightmare is over. Clarice can marry her beloved Silvio after all and lucky me here comes Silvio.

(Enter SILVIO)

SILVIO (Aside) Ah-ha! Pantalone! My chance at last.

PANTALONE Signor Silvio, I have good news, if you will hear it.

SILVIO What say you, sir? Speak.

PANTALONE The marriage of my daughter to Signor Federigo...has foundered.

SILVIO You deceive me!

PANTALONE It's true. And if your affections have not been fickle, my daughter is prepared to render you her hand.

SILVIO I am recalled to Life! But wait! How can I clasp a hand that has so intimately clasped another's?

PANTALONE Long story short: Federigo Rasponi is Beatrice, his sister.

SILVIO I don't get it...

PANTALONE The gentleman we thought was Federigo is in fact Beatrice.

SILVIO I don't get it.

PANTALONE (To SILVIO) Federigo is Beatrice dressed as a man.

SILVIO Dressed as a man?

PANTALONE Dressed as a man.

SILVIO Hu?

PANTALONE Go into my house. My daughter doesn't know any of this yet. I'll explain it to you both.

(Exit with PANTALONE. PANTALONE ad libs.)

## SCENE 10

### A Room in BRIGHELLA'S Inn

(BEATRICE and FLORINDO come out of their rooms simultaneously; each holds a rope tied to a rock and is on the point of committing suicide. They both come forward in such a way that BEATRICE and FLORINDO are unaware of each other's presence.)

FLORINDO I can no longer endure the agony of my grief.

BEATRICE I can no longer bear the light of day.

BEATRICE Excuse me.

FLORINDO Sorry....Beatrice, I will follow you to the grave.

BEATRICE Florindo, I will jump into the wave.

(FLORINDO and BEATRICE see each other, recognize each other, and stand dazed)

FLORINDO Beatrice!

BEATRICE Florindo!

FLORINDO Who do I see?

BEATRICE Florindo!

FLORINDO Beatrice!

BEATRICE Alive?

FLORINDO You too?

BEATRICE Oh, joy!

FLORINDO Oh, rapture!

#### SCENE 11

FLORINDO (continued) Why were you going to do away with yourself?

BEATRICE Because of the news of your premature death.

FLORINDO Who said I was dead?

BEATRICE My servant.

FLORINDO My servant told me YOU too had fled this vale of tears. We must seek our servants out and confront their villainy. (Calling) Hey, you in there!

(Enter BRIGHELLA)

BRIGHELLA At your service, sir.

FLORINDO Where are our servants?

BRIGHELLA I don't know. You want I should look?

FLORINDO At once. And send them to us pronto!

BRIGHELLA I only know the one, but let me check with the waiters, they worked with 'em both. Oh, and by the way, loved your death scene, but in the future, double suicides, bad for business.

(Exit BRIGHELLA)

#### SCENE 12

FLORINDO Tell me: your brother Federigo, is he dead?

BEATRICE He died on the spot.

FLORINDO But I was told he was alive and well and here in Venice.

BEATRICE No. That was me.

FLORINDO My dear! But my servant told me...

BEATRICE No, it was my servant who told me that...

FLORINDO But, where are those two servants of ours? Here comes one.

SCENE 13

(Enter TRUFFALDINO brought in by force by BRIGHELLA and the FIRST WAITER)

BRIGHELLA We caught this one close by. We find his pal, we'll bring him right away.

FLORINDO Yes, I want the both of them here together!

(BRIGHELLA AND FIRST WAITER exit.)

FLORINDO (To TRUFFALDINO) All right, the truth: how did the portrait and the book get into our belongings?

BEATRICE Why did you conspire to drive us crazy?

(TRUFFALDINO signs to both with his finger to keep silence)

TRUFFALDINO SHH! (To FLORINDO) Sir? May I have a word with you in private? (To BEATRICE just as he turns to speak to FLORINDO) Hold that thought.

(To FLORINDO) Master, I am innocent of all charges. The guilty party is Pasquale, the servant of that lady there. (Cautiously pointing at BEATRICE) He switched the stuff in the trunk and the pockets of the coat. I was completely in the dark. The guy pleaded with me to take the blame, because he was afraid his master would fire him, and well...I guess I'm just a sentimental softy who'd lay down his life at the drop of a hat...but I made up all those stories to help him. I never dreamed it was a portrait of you or that you'd get so angry about the death of that other person. Now that I've come clean, I'm sure you'll see that I am indeed an honest and faithful servant.

FLORINDO (Aside to TRUFFALDINO) Then the fellow who got you to fetch that letter from the Post Office was the servant of Signora Beatrice?

TRUFFALDINO (Aside to FLORINDO) Yes, sir, Pasquale, sir, he's who done it, sir.

FLORINDO You and Pasquale both deserve a beating.

BEATRICE I hate to interrupt, but have you two finished?

(TRUFFALDINO moves toward BEATRICE)

TRUFFALDINO (To BEATRICE) Madam? (Aside to BEATRICE) You remember I told you about that gentleman's servant?

(TRUFFALDINO ad libs same Pasquale story, speaking very rapidly)

It was Pasquale!!!

SCENE 14

PANTALONE Clarice, you're being very difficult! Silvio admits he went a little over the top, but see how sorry he is? So he behaved like a fool, so he sat on his butt while you tried to disembowel yourself...that's how men show love!

SILVIO Your father's right, Clarice. I know I hurt you, but take your own pain and multiply it by a very large number, and that's how much pain I was in. Heaven wants us to be happy, do not reject heaven's blessing.

DR. LOMBARDI To the prayers of my son, may I add mine?

SMERALDINA It's up to you. Granted, men are pigs. Granted, they're hypocrites. Granted, they treat us like dirt and beat us like rugs...and yes, there's a "but" coming but love is our sickness, madam, and man is the only medicine. Think of him as something bad you swallow today to make you better tomorrow.

PANTALONE Smeraldina's right. Drink up, Silvio's not rat poison.

DR. LOMBARDI Verily, Silvio is not rat poison.

SILVIO Clarice, say something! Cannot a single word come from those sweet lips? I know I deserve to be punished but, punish me with words, not silence. See, I kneel at your feet. Show me some compassion, please.

CLARICE (To SILVIO with a sigh) Oh, cruel one.

PANTALONE (Aside to DR. LOMBARDI) She spoke! It's a sign!

DR. LOMBARDI (Aside to SILVIO) It's a sign! Press on!

SILVIO If you desire my blood to avenge my cruelty, I will give it from the deep of my heart. But, if, on the other hand, instead of the blood in my veins, you would accept that other bodily fluid which gushes from my eyes.

CLARICE (Sighing as before, but more tenderly) You unkind creature.

PANTALONE Brava!

DR. LOMBARDI (Aside to PANTALONE) We're almost there...

PANTALONE

Here, come on. (He raises SILVIO, takes him by the hand) Stand here. (Takes CLARICE'S hand) And you come here. Now, join your hands together again and make peace. Heaven bless you both.

SILVIO (Holding CLARICE'S hand) Oh, Signora Clarice.

CLARICE Pig!!

SILVIO Petal!

CLARICE Beast!

SILVIO Beloved!

CLARICE Monster!

SILVIO My soul!!!

CLARICE (Sighs) Ah!

PANTALONE (Aside) Going, going.

CLARICE (Sighs) I forgive you.

ALL Gone!

(Enter BRIGHELLA)

SCENE 15

BRIGHELLA Signora Beatrice is here, and wants you should receive her.

PANTALONE So show her in.

(Enters BEATRICE)

ALL (surprised) Ahh!

BEATRICE Ladies and gentlemen, I come to ask your pardon and forgiveness. If I have caused you pain, please pardon me.

SILVIO Now that I am happy, I want all the world to be happy. Let's all get married!

SMERALDINA (To SILVIO) What about me?

SILVIO Who are you going to marry?

SMERALDINA The first man that comes along. I agree with Signor Silvio: marriage is best.

(Enter TRUFFALDINO)

SCENE 16

TRUFFALDINO My respects to the company.

BEATRICE (To TRUFFALDINO) Where is Signor Florindo?

TRUFFALDINO He's ready and waiting and eager to enter.

BEATRICE Signor Pantalone, will you welcome Florindo?

PANTALONE Is that your young gentleman?

BEATRICE He is my fiancée.

PANTALONE I would be honored.

BEATRICE (To TRUFFALDINO) Show him in.

TRUFFALDINO (Aside to SMERALDINA) Fancy meeting you here!

SMERALDINA (Aside to TRUFFALDINO) Oh, swarthy one, nice to see you too.



TRUFFALDINO We'll talk.

(Exit TRUFFALDINO)

SMERALDINA (To CLARICE) Madam, may I speak with you?

CLARICE (Going aside to listen to SMERALDINA) What is it?

SMERALDINA (To CLARICE) That boy is the servant of Signora Beatrice. He wants to marry me, and if you could drop a word in his mistress's ear...?

CLARICE I will do so at the earliest possible convenience.

#### SCENE THE LAST

FLORINDO (Enter FLORINDO shown in by TRUFFALDINO) Sir, I present myself at the behest of Signora Beatrice. Signora Beatrice is to be my wife, and we'd like you to give away the bride.

PANTALONE Whatever we have to do... let's do it quickly. Give her your hand.

FLORINDO Signora Beatrice, I am willing.

BEATRICE Here is my hand, Signor Florindo.

PANTALONE Then everything's fine? You'll all live happily ever after.

TRUFFALDINO (To FLORINDO, taking him apart) Sir? A word.

FLORINDO What now?

TRUFFALDINO You remember you promised to ask Signor Pantalone for Smeraldina as my wife.

FLORINDO Oh, yes!

TRUFFALDINO (Aside) I want a happy ending too, you know.

FLORINDO Signor Pantalone, although this is the first occasion on which I have had the honor of knowing you, I fear I must be bold in asking you a favor. My servant desires to marry your maid.

PANTALONE Is this servant of yours a good honest man?

FLORINDO He's only been with me a day, but so far he has proved himself both trustworthy and intermittently intelligent.

CLARICE Signor Florindo, you have beat me to the punch! I was supposed to propose marriage between my maid and the servant of Signora Beatrice.

TRUFFALDINO (aside) Oh-oh. Trouble again.

CLARICE But seeing that you've requested her hand for your servant, I guess there's nothing I can do about it.

FLORINDO No, please, you preceded me, after you.

CLARICE No, no. I pray sir, please continue.

FLORINDO No, no, I will not say another word on behalf of my servant. In fact, I will actively oppose my servant marrying your maid.

CLARICE Sir, if your man doesn't marry her, then no man shall marry her.

TRUFFALDINO (Aside) Do you believe this? They swop compliments and I'm standing here without a wife!

SMERALDINA (Aside) How did I just get two proposals and no husband?

PANTALONE Come on, the poor girl wants to get married, give her one of 'em!

FLORINDO Nothing shall induce me to insult Signora Clarice!

CLARICE Never will I tolerate an injustice to Signor Florindo.

TRUFFALDINO Sir? Madam? Let me see if I can settle this one. (With his usual air of great ingenuity) Signor Florindo, did you not request the hand of Smeraldina for your servant?

FLORINDO Yes.

TRUFFALDINO And you, Signora Clarice, did you not intend Smeraldina to marry the servant of Signora Beatrice?

CLARICE Yes.

TRUFFALDINO Give us your hand, Smeraldina.

PANTALONE What right have you to ask for her hand?

TRUFFALDINO Because I am the servant of Signor Florindo.

BEATRICE What?

TRUFFALDINO And I am also the servant of Signora Beatrice.

FLORINDO What?

BEATRICE What'd he say?

FLORINDO Signora Beatrice, where is your servant?

BEATRICE Right here! Truffaldino!

FLORINDO But Truffaldino is my servant!

BEATRICE I thought your servant was called Pasquale!

FLORINDO I thought your servant was called Pasquale!

BEATRICE (To TRUFFALDINO) How do you explain this?

FLORINDO You waited on two masters at once?

TRUFFALDINO Me...

FLORINDO You cheeky rascal!

BEATRICE You monkey!

PANTALONE Cheat!

SILVIO Trickster!

CLARICE Liar!

TRUFFALDINO To serve two masters is too hard. But I have done so, praise be me! I plead special circumstances. I did it without thinking and it didn't last long. But at least I can boast you this: you would have never found me out if I hadn't fallen in love.

(He holds out his hand to SMERALDINA who runs to his. To audience)

But if you can find it in your heart to forgive me, I promise you this. Never again, as long as I live, will I ever try to be...The Servant of Two Masters!

THE END

"THE SERVANT OF TWO MASTERS"

by Carlo Goldoni

translated and adapted by Marco Luly