

**The Servant of Two Masters**  
Written by Carlo Goldoni  
Edited for four actors by Beni Malone  
for Wonderbolt Circus Productions  
1983

**Cast:**  
**(In Order of Appearance)**

Smeraldina (maidservant to Clarice).....Teri Snelgrove  
Silvio Lombardi (son of Dr. Lombardi).....Beni Malone  
Pantalone Dei Bisognosi (Venetian merchant).....Charlie Tomlinson  
Clarice (daughter of Pantalone).....Cathy Ferri  
Truffaldino (servant to Beatrice, later to Florindo).....Beni Malone  
Beatrice Rasponi (disguised as her brother Federigo Rasponi)....Teri Snelgrove  
Florindo Aretusi (gentleman of Turin, lover of Beatrice).....Charlie Tomlinson  
Dr. Lombardi.....Teri Snelgrove

Stage directions: \* lazzi – performed quickly and with style.

**Pronunciation**  
Smeraldina – Smear-al-*dee*-nah  
Silvio – *Sil*-vee-oh  
Pantelone – Pant-ah-*low*-nay  
Clarice – Cla-*reech*-ay  
Truffaldino – Truff-al-*dee*-no  
Beatrice – Bee-ah-*treech*-ay  
Federigo Rasponi – Fed-e-*ree*-go Raz-*poe*-nee  
Florindo – Flo-*rin*-do  
Lombardi –Lom-*bar*-dee

## The Servant of Two Masters

### Act I

*The stage is empty, with a screen at Centre Stage. The sound of arguing comes from behind the screen: "Someone's got to do it." "I'm not doing a prologue!" "The audience is out there waiting!" etcetera. Finally, Smeraldina is forcibly pushed out from behind the screen.*

**Smeraldina:** I'm not doing a prologue. Forget it. I wasn't hired to do prologues, I was hired to be an actress. *(Offstage laughter.)* I'm not going to do a prologue. And if I was to do a prologue... Well, I, I just wouldn't do one. There you go! Why don't you just send Pantalone out here? He can crawl out here, the money-grabbing, bottom grabbing little spider! Or ...or, or Clarice. Yes, perhaps Clarice could give us a lovely prologue. Or Silvio, Silvio could give a very nice prologue, I'm sure. Or, or, or, maybe he'd have to get his dad out here. Dr. Lombardi could give you a nice big ol' prologue. But no. If anyone was going to do a prologue, it would have to be me, but I'm not going to do one, so I guess there isn't going to be one, so there!  
*(Exit.)*

### **(Scene 1: A room in the house of Pantalone.)**

*(Pantalone, with cane, Clarice, Silvio, and Smeraldina enter.)*

**Silvio:** *(Offering his hand to Clarice.)* Here is my hand, and with it I give you my whole heart.

**Pantalone:** *(To Clarice.)* Come, come, not so shy, give him your hand too. Then you will be betrothed, and very soon you will be married.

**Clarice:** Dear Silvio, here is my hand. I promise to be your wife. *(He kisses it.)*

**Silvio:** And I promise to be your husband.

*(They take hands.)*

**Smeraldina:** *(Aside.)* There's luck for you! And me just bursting to get married!

**Pantalone:** *(To Smeraldina.)* You shall be witness of this betrothal of my daughter Clarice to Signor Silvio, the worthy son of our good Dr. Lombardi! The doctor is a man of my sort. We will have dinner together; we will enjoy ourselves and nobody shall disturb us. *(To Clarice and Silvio.)* What say you, children, does that suit you?

**Silvio:** I desire nothing better than to be near my beloved bride.

**Smeraldina:** *(Aside.)* Yes, that's the best of all foods.

**Pantalone:** Truly we may say that this marriage was made in Heaven, for had it not been for the death of Federigo Rasponi, my correspondent at Turin, poor wretch, I hardly knew. He was killed one night on account of some affair about his sister. Someone ran a sword through him *(Sword thrust with cane.)* and that was the end of him. I had promised my daughter to him. *(To Silvio.)* If he had lived, I could not then have given her to you, my dear son-in-law.

**Silvio:** I can call myself fortunate indeed, sir, I know not if Signora Clarice will say the same.

**Clarice:** You wrong me, dear Silvio. You should know if I love you. I should have married Signor Rasponi in obedience to my father; but my heart has always been yours.

*(A knock at the door.)*

**Pantalone:** Oh! Someone is knocking. Smeraldina, see who it is.

**Smeraldina:** Yes, sir. *(Goes to door.)*

*(Silvio eyes Clarice. He exits.)*

**Clarice:** *(Wishing to retire.)* Sir, may I beg your leave?

**Pantalone:** Wait, we are coming. Let us hear who is there.

**Smeraldina:** *(Coming back.)* Sir, there is a gentleman's servant below who desires to give you a message. He would tell me nothing. He says he would speak to the master.

**Pantalone:** Tell him to come up. We'll hear what he has to say.

**Smeraldina:** I'll fetch him, sir. *(Exit.)*

**Clarice:** *(Looking out.)* May I not go, sir?

**Pantalone:** Whither then, madam?

**Clarice:** I know not...to my own room...

**Pantalone:** No, madam, no; you stay here. *(Aside to audience.)* These lovebirds can't be left alone just yet for a while. Prudence above all things.

*(Smeraldina re-enters, and pauses as if presenting someone.)*

**Pantalone:** *(Looking towards door.)* There's no one there.

**Smeraldina:** Well, I...

**Pantalone:** Well? *(Goes towards door. Drops cane.)* Oh. *(Bends over and fumbles with cane.)* I...can't...get up...

*(Truffaldino enters, and leapfrogs over the bent Pantalone, ducks under Smeraldina's skirt, and comes up between Smeraldina and Clarice. Pantalone rises finally and stares at Truffaldino.)*

**Truffaldino:** My most humble duty to the ladies and gentleman. And a very fine company, too, to be sure! *(Eyeing Clarice.)* Ve-ry fine, indeed!

**Pantalone:** Who are you, my good friend? And what is your business?

**Truffaldino:** *(To Pantalone, pointing to Clarice.)* Who is this fair gentlewoman?

**Pantalone:** This is my daughter.

**Truffaldino:** Delighted to hear it.

**Smeraldina:** *(To Truffaldino.)* What's more, she's going to be married.

**Truffaldino:** *(Disappointed.)* I'm sorry to hear it. *(Turns quickly to Smeraldina.)* And who are you?

**Smeraldina:** I am her maid, sir.

**Truffaldino:** I congratulate her.

**Pantalone:** Come, sir, have done with ceremony. What do you want with me? Who are you? Who sends you hither?

**Truffaldino:** Patience, patience, my good sir, take it easy. Three questions at once is too much for a poor man. *(To Smeraldina.)* Is it you that are going to be married?

**Smeraldina:** *(Sighs.)* No, sir.

**Pantalone:** *(To Truffaldino.)* Will you tell me who you are, or will you go about your business?

**Truffaldino:** If you only want to know who I am, I'll tell you in two words. I am the servant of my master. *(To Smeraldina.)* To go back to what I was saying...

**Pantalone:** But who is your master?

**Truffaldino:** *(To Pantalone.)* He is a gentleman who desires the honour of paying his respects to you.

**Pantalone:** Who is this gentleman, I say? What is his name?

**Truffaldino:** Oh, that's a long story. *(Exaggerated.)* Si'or Federigo Rasponi of Turin. *(At the mention of the name, Clarice and Smeraldina gasp and cling to each other.)* That's my master, and he sends his compliments, and he has come to see you, and he's down below, and he sends me to say that he would like to come up, and he's waiting for an answer. Anything else, or will that do?

*(All look surprised.)*

**Pantalone:** Come here and talk to me. What the devil do you mean?

**Truffaldino:** And if you want to know who I am, I am Truffaldino Battocchio from Bergamo.

**Pantalone:** I don't care who you are. Tell me again, who is this master of yours? I fear I did not understand you rightly.

**Truffaldino:** *(Aside.)* Poor old gentleman! He must be hard of hearing. *(Grand announcement, yelling.)* My master is Si'or Federigo Rasponi of Turin!

**Pantalone:** Away! *(Pause.)* You must be mad. Signor Federigo Rasponi of Turin is dead.

**Truffaldino:** Dead?

**Pantalone:** To be sure he's dead, worse luck for him.

**Truffaldino:** *(Aside.)* The devil! My master dead? Why, I left him alive downstairs! *(To Pantalone.)* You really mean he's dead?

**Pantalone:** I tell you for an absolute certainty, he is dead.

**Truffaldino:** *(Aside.)* Alas, my poor master! *(Sobbing.)* He must have met with an accident. *(To Pantalone as if retiring.)* Your very humble servant, sir. *(Continues sobbing.)*

**Pantalone:** Can I do nothing more for you?

**Truffaldino:** *(Abruptly ceases sobbing.)* If he's dead, there's nothing more to do. *(Aside.)* But I'm going to see if it's true or not. *(Exit.)*

**Pantalone:** What are we to make of this fellow? Is he knave or fool? I really don't know. Probably a little of both. I should say he was just a zany.

**Smeraldina:** He's not such a fool neither. *(Aside.)* I like that little curly fellow. *(Exit.)*

**Pantalone:** But what is this nightmare about Signor Federigo?

**Clarice:** If 'tis true indeed that he is here, it would be the worst news for me.

**Pantalone:** What nonsense! Did you not see the letters yourself?

*(Re-enter Truffaldino.)*

**Truffaldino:** *(Indignant.)* Sir, I am surprised at you. Is that the way to treat a poor man?

**Pantalone:** We must be careful, the man's mad.

**Truffaldino:** To go and tell me that Si'or Federigo Rasponi was dead!

**Pantalone:** Well, what then?

**Truffaldino:** What then? Well, he's here, safe and sound, in good health and spirits, and he desires to pay his respects to you, with your kind permission.

**Pantalone:** Signor Federigo?

**Truffaldino:** Si' or Federigo.

**Pantalone:** Rasponi?

**Truffaldino:** Rasponi.

**Pantalone:** Of Turin?

**Truffaldino:** Of Turin.

**Pantalone:** Be off to Bedlam, my lad, that's the place for you.

**Truffaldino:** The devil take you there, sir! You'll make me swear like a Turk. I tell you, he's here, in the house, in the next room, bad luck for you.

**Pantalone:** If you say any more, I'll break your head.

*(Lazzi\* with cane as he beats Truffaldino.)*

**Pantalone:** Well, bring this man that has risen from the dead.

**Truffaldino:** With pleasure. *(Exit.)*

**Clarice:** I am all of a tremble.

**Pantalone:** Now we shall discover the truth. Some rogue, I dare say, come to tell me a string of lies.

*(Pantalone and Clarice discuss. Enter Beatrice, dressed as her brother.)*

**Beatrice:** Signor Pantalone, that courtesy which I have so much admired in your correspondence is but ill matched in the treatment which I have received from you in person. I send my servant to pay you my respects, and you keep me standing in the street for half an hour before you condescend to allow me to enter.

**Pantalone:** *(Nervously.)* I ask your pardon. But, sir, who are you?

*(Enter Silvio.)*

**Beatrice:** Your obedient servant, sir, Federigo Rasponi of Turin.

*(Silvio faints. Clarice catches him. All look bewildered.)*

**Pantalone:** Extraordinary! I rejoice to see you, sir, alive and in health, after the bad news which we had received. *(Aside.)* I tell you, I am not convinced.

**Beatrice:** 'Twas reported that I was killed in a duel. Heaven be praised, I was but wounded; and no sooner was I restored to health than I set out for Venice, according to our previous arrangement.

**Pantalone:** I don't know what to say. You have the appearance of an honest man, sir, but I have sure and certain evidence that Signor Federigo is dead, and you will understand that if you cannot give us proof of the contrary...

**Beatrice:** Your doubt is most natural; I recognize that I must give you proof of my identity. Here are four letters from correspondents of yours whom you know personally; one of them is from the manager of our bank. You will recognize the signatures and you will satisfy yourself as to who I am.

*(Gives four letters to Pantalone, who reads them to himself.)*

**Clarice:** Ah, Silvio, we are lost.

**Silvio:** I will lose my life before I lose you.

**Pantalone:** I have read the letters. Certainly they present Signor Federigo Rasponi to me, and if you present them, I am bound to believe that you are... the person named therein. Dear Signor Federigo, I am delighted to see you and ask your pardon for having doubted your word.

**Clarice:** Then, sir, this gentleman is indeed Signor Federigo Rasponi?

**Pantalone:** But of course he is.

**Clarice:** *(Aside to Silvio.)* Oh, misery, what will happen to us?

**Silvio:** *(Aside to Clarice.)* Don't be frightened, you are mine and *(Hesitant.)*...I will protect you. *(Moves behind Clarice.)*

**Beatrice:** *(Pointing to Clarice.)* Signor Pantalone, who is that young lady?

**Pantalone:** That is my daughter Clarice.

**Beatrice:** The one who was promised in marriage to me?

**Pantalone:** Precisely, sir, that is she. *(Aside.)* Now I am a pretty mess.



**Beatrice:** *(To Clarice.)* Madam, permit me to have the honor.

**Clarice:** *(Steps forward. Stiffly.)* Your most humble servant, sir. *(Silvio pulls her back.)*

**Beatrice:** *(To Pantalone.)* She receives me somewhat coldly.

**Pantalone:** You must forgive her, she is shy by nature.

**Beatrice:** *(To Pantalone, pointing at Silvio.)* And this gentleman is a relative of yours?

**Pantalone:** Yes, sir; he is a nephew of mine.

**Silvio:** *(To Beatrice.)* No sir, I am not his nephew at all; I am the promised husband of Signora Clarice.

**Beatrice:** What? You the promised husband of Signora Clarice? Was she not promised to me?

**Pantalone:** There, there. I'll explain the whole matter. *(Pause.)* My dear Signor Federigo, I fully believed that the story of your accident was true, that you were mortally wounded, that you were fatally stabbed, your head on the top of a sword, blood and guts gushing out...

**Beatrice:** *(Not amused.)* Ahem.

**Pantalone:** Yes, in short, that you were dead, in fact, and so I had promised my daughter to Signor Silvio, because he wasn't dead, but there is not the least harm done. You have arrived at last, just in time. Clarice is yours, if you will have her, and I am here to keep my word. Signor Silvio, I don't know what to say; you can see the position yourself. You remember what I say to you, and you will have no cause to bear me ill-will.

**Silvio:** But Signor Federigo will never consent to take a bride who has given her hand to another. *(Takes Clarice's hand.)*

**Beatrice:** Oh, I am not so fastidious. I will take her in spite of that. *(Aside.)* I mean to have some fun out of this. *(To Clarice.)* I hope Signora Clarice will not refuse me her hand.

**Silvio:** Sir, you have arrived too late. Signor Clarice is to be my wife and if Signor Pantalone does me wrong, I will be avenged upon him; and whoever presumes to desire Clarice will have to fight for her against this *(Can't get sword out.)* this... sword. *(Touches sword.)*

**Beatrice:** (*Aside.*) Thank you, but I don't mean to die just yet.

**Silvio:** Sir, I must beg to inform you that you are too late. Signora Clarice is to marry *me*. The law, the law, sir, is clear on the point. *Prior in tempore, potior in jure*. My father is a lawyer, you won't put one over on him! Just you wait! Dad! Dad! (*Exit Silvio.*)

**Beatrice:** (*To Clarice.*) And you, madam bride, do you say nothing?

**Clarice:** I say... I say... I'd sooner marry the hangman! (*Exit Clarice.*)

**Pantalone:** (*Shocked.*) What, you minx! What did you say? (*He starts to run after her.*)

**Beatrice:** Pray do not put yourself about for me, sir.

**Pantalone:** I must go, farewell, sir. (*Aside.*) I don't want trouble in my house. (*Exit.*)

**Beatrice:** (*To audience.*) Hush, for the love of Heaven, don't betray me. My poor brother is dead. I am his sister Beatrice. 'Twas thought Florindo Aretusi killed him in a duel. Florindo loved me, and my brother would not have it. They fought, Federigo fell, and Florindo fled from justice. I heard he was making for Venice, so I put on my brother's clothes and followed him. Thanks to the letters of credit, which are my brother's, Signor Pantalone takes me for Federigo. We are to make up our accounts; I shall draw the money and then I shall be able to help Florindo, too, if he has need of it.

## Scene 2: A street with Brighella's Inn.

(*Truffaldino.*)

**Truffaldino:** I'm sick of waiting; with this master of mine there's not enough to eat, and the less there is, the more I want it. The town clock struck twelve half an hour ago, and my belly struck two hours ago at least. Here's an inn! I could find something to tickle my teeth; but what if my master comes looking for me? His own fault; he should know better. I'll go in!

(*Enter Florindo in traveling dress with a porter carrying a trunk on his shoulder.*)

**Florindo:** What lodging is there here?

**Truffaldino:** 'Tis a very good place, sir. Good beds, fine looking glasses, and a grand kitchen with a smell in it that is very *(Sniffs deeply.)* comforting. I could talk to the waiter. You will be served like a king.

**Florindo:** What's your trade?

**Truffaldino:** *(Bows.)* Servant.

**Florindo:** Are you Venetian?

**Truffaldino:** Not from Venice, I'm from Bergamo. At your service.

**Florindo:** Have you a master now?

**Truffaldino:** No... *(Aside.)* My master is not here, so I tell no lies.

**Florindo:** Will you come and be my servant?

**Truffaldino:** Why not? *(Aside.)* If his terms are better! *(To Florindo.)* How much will you give me?

**Florindo:** How much do you want?

**Truffaldino:** I'll tell you: another master I had, who is here no more, he gave me a shilling a day and all found.

**Florindo:** Oh, I'll give you that and welcome.

**Truffaldino:** If that's so, I'm your man, sir. *(Bows.)*

**Florindo:** Good. First of all, I am anxious to know if there are letters at the Post for me. Here is half a crown; go to the Turin Post and ask if there are letters for *(Whips out mirror, combs hair.)* Florindo Aretusi! If there are, take them and bring them at once. I shall wait for you.

**Truffaldino:** Meanwhile you will order dinner, sir?

**Florindo:** Yes, well said! I shall order it. *(Aside.)* I like him, he's a wag! I'll give him a trial. *(Exit into the inn.)*

**Truffaldino:** 'Tis not true that that the other gentleman gave me a shilling; he gives me six pennies. Maybe six pennies make a shilling, but I'm not quite sure. And this gentleman from Turin is nowhere to be seen. He's mad. He's a young fellow without a beard and with no sense neither. I shall go to the Post for my new gentleman.

*(As he is going, he bumps into Beatrice.)*

**Beatrice:** That's a nice way to behave! Is that the way you wait for me?

**Truffaldino:** Here I am, sir. I am still waiting for you.

**Beatrice:** And how do you come to be waiting for me here? 'Tis a mere accident that I have found you.

**Truffaldino:** I went for a bit of a walk to take away my appetite.

**Beatrice:** Well, go at once to the landing stage; fetch my trunk and take it to the inn.

**Truffaldino:** The devil! In that inn?

**Beatrice:** Here, you will go at the same time to the Turin Post and ask if there are any letters for me, Federigo Rasponi, and also for Beatrice Rasponi. That's my sister. Some friend of hers might perhaps write to her; so be sure to ask if there are letters either for her or for me.

**Truffaldino:** *(Aside.)* What am I to do? Here's a pretty kettle of fish!

**Beatrice:** Make haste, be off with you! To the Post and to the landing stage! Fetch the letters and have the trunk brought to the inn! *(Exit into the inn.)*

**Truffaldino:** Now there's luck, eh! There are many that look in vain for a master, and I have found two. I cannot wait upon them both. Why not? Wouldn't it be a fine thing to earn two men's wages and eat and drink for two? And if they find out? No matter! If one sends me on my way, I stay with the other. I swear I'll try it. Here goes. Let's go to the Post for both of 'em. *(Exit miming horseback riding.)*

### **Scene 3: A room in the house of Pantalone.**

*(Pantalone and Clarice.)*

**Pantalone:** That's the long and short of it. Signor Federigo is to be your husband. I have given my word and I am not to be cozened.

**Clarice:** You have my obedience, sir, but I beseech you, this is tyranny.

**Pantalone:** When Signor Federigo first asked for your hand, I told you; you never replied that you did not wish to marry him. You should have spoken then; now it is too late.

**Clarice:** My fear of you, sir, (*Coyly.*) and my respect, made me dumb.

**Pantalone:** Then your fear and respect should do the same now.

**Clarice:** Nothing shall induce me to marry Federigo.

**Pantalone:** You dislike him so much?

**Clarice:** He is odious in my eyes.

**Pantalone:** And supposing I were to show you how you might begin to like him a little?

**Clarice:** What do you mean, sir?

**Pantalone:** Put Signor Silvio out of your mind, and you will soon like Federigo well enough.

**Clarice:** Silvio is too firmly stamped upon my heart; and your own approval, sir, has rooted him there the more securely.

**Pantalone:** (*Aside.*) In some ways I am sorry for her. (*To Clarice.*) You have got to make a virtue of necessity.

**Clarice:** My heart is not capable of so great an effort.

**Pantalone:** Come, come; you shall!

(*Enter Smeraldina.*)

**Smeraldina:** Sir, Signor Federigo is here and desires to speak with you.

**Pantalone:** Tell him to come in; I am at his service.

**Clarice:** (*Weeping.*) Alas! What torture!

**Smeraldina:** What is it, madam? You are weeping? Truly you do wrong. Have you not noticed how handsome Signor Federigo is? (*Clarice weeps louder.*) If I had such luck, I would not cry so; no, I would laugh with the whole of my mouth. (*Exit laughing.*)

**Pantalone:** There, there, my child; you must not be seen crying.

**Clarice:** But I feel my heart bursting!

(*Enter Beatrice as Federigo.*)

**Beatrice:** (*Aside to Pantalone.*) What ails Signora Clarice that she is weeping?

**Pantalone:** (*Aside to Beatrice.*) Dear Signor Federigo, you must have pity on her. The news of your death was the cause of this trouble. I hope it will pass away in time.

**Beatrice:** (*To Pantalone.*) Do me a kindness, Signor Pantalone, and leave me alone with her for a moment, to see if I cannot obtain a kind word from her.

**Pantalone:** With pleasure, sir. I will go, and come back again. (*To Clarice.*) My child, stay here, I will be back directly. You must entertain your promised husband a while. (*Softly to Clarice.*) Now, be careful. (*Exit.*)

**Beatrice:** Signora Clarice, I beg you...

**Clarice:** Stand away, and so not dare importune me.

**Beatrice:** So severe with him who is your destined husband?

**Clarice:** They may drag me by force to the altar, but you will have only my hand, but never my heart.

**Beatrice:** You disdain me, but I hope to appease you.

**Clarice:** I shall abhor you to all eternity.

**Beatrice:** But if you knew me, you would not say so.

**Clarice:** I know you well enough as the destroyer of my happiness.

**Beatrice:** But I can find a way to comfort you.

**Clarice:** You deceive yourself; there is no one who can comfort me but Silvio.

**Beatrice:** 'Tis true, I cannot give you the same comfort as your Silvio might, but I can at least contribute to your happiness.

**Clarice:** I think it is quite enough, sir, that although I speak to you as harshly as I can, you should continue to torture me.

**Beatrice:** Your severity deprives me of the means to make you happy.

**Clarice:** You can never make me anything but miserable!

**Beatrice:** Signora Clarice, I have a secret to tell you.

**Clarice:** I make no promise to keep it; you had better not tell it to me.

**Beatrice:** (*Aside.*) Poor girl! I can't bear to see her suffer.

**Clarice:** (*Aside.*) I'm so angry, I don't care how rude I am.

**Beatrice:** You are wrong, and to convince you I will speak plainly. You have no desire for me, I have no use for you. You have promised your hand to another, I to another have already pledged my heart.

**Clarice:** Oh! Now you begin to please me!

**Beatrice:** Did I not tell you I knew how to comfort you?

**Clarice:** Ah! I feared you would deceive me.

**Beatrice:** Nay, madam, I speak in all sincerity; and if you promise me that discretion which you refused me just now, I will confide to you a secret, which will ensure your peace of mind.

**Clarice:** I vow I will observe the strictest silence.

**Beatrice:** I am not Federigo Rasponi, but his sister, Beatrice.

**Clarice:** What? I am amazed! You, a woman?

**Beatrice:** I am indeed. Imagine my feelings when I claimed you as my bride!

**Clarice:** And what news have you of your brother?

**Beatrice:** He died indeed by the sword.

**Clarice:** (*Aside.*) Yes!

**Beatrice:** A lover of mine was thought to have killed him, and 'tis he whom I am seeking now in these clothes. I beseech you by all the holy laws of friendship and love not to betray me.

**Clarice:** Won't you let me tell Silvio?

**Beatrice:** No; on the contrary, I forbid you absolutely.

**Clarice:** Well, I will say nothing.

**Beatrice:** Remember, I count upon you.

**Clarice:** You have my promise. I will be silent.

**Beatrice:** Now, I hope, you will treat me more kindly.

**Clarice:** I will be your friend indeed; and if I can be of service to you, dispose of me.

**Beatrice:** I too swear eternal friendship to you. Give me your hand.

**Clarice:** I don't quite like to...

**Beatrice:** Are you afraid that I am not a woman after all? I will give you proof positive.

*(Beatrice steps closer to Clarice and turns away from audience. She opens the front of her shirt and jacket. Clarice looks surprised, and reaches out to prod Beatrice's chest once or twice.)*

**Clarice:** It all seems just like a dream.

**Beatrice:** Yes. 'Tis strange business.

**Clarice:** 'Tis indeed fantastic.

**Beatrice:** Thank you. *(Closes shirt and turns towards audience again.)* Come, I must be going. Let us embrace in sign of honest friendship and loyalty.

**Clarice:** There! I could doubt you no longer.

*(Enter Pantalone.)*

**Pantalone:** Well done, well done; I congratulate you. *(To Clarice.)* My child, you have been very quick in adapting yourself.

**Beatrice:** Did I not tell you, Signor Pantalone, that I should win her round?

**Pantalone:** Magnificent! You have done more in four minutes than I should have in four years!

**Clarice:** *(Aside.)* Now I am in a worse tangle than ever.

**Pantalone:** *(To Clarice.)* Then we will have the wedding at once.

**Clarice:** Pray do not be in too much haste, sir.



**Pantalone:** What? Holding hands on the sly and kissing, and then in no haste about it? No, no, I don't want you to get yourself into trouble. You shall be married tomorrow.

**Beatrice:** Signor Pantalone, 'twill be necessary first of all to arrange the settlement and to go to our accounts.

**Pantalone:** We will do that. These things can be done in a couple of hours.

**Clarice:** Sir, I beseech you...

**Pantalone:** Madam, I'm going straightaway to say a word to Signor Silvio.

**Clarice:** For the love of heaven, do not anger him.

**Pantalone:** What, what? Do you want two husbands?

**Clarice:** Not exactly, but...

**Pantalone:** But me no buts. 'Tis all settled. Your servant, sir. *(Going.)*

**Beatrice:** *(To Pantalone.)* Listen, sir...

**Pantalone:** You are husband and wife. *(Going.)*

**Clarice:** Had you not better...

**Pantalone:** We will talk about it this evening. *(Exit.)*

**Clarice:** Oh, Signora Beatrice, 'tis worse than it was before!

*(Exit Clarice and Beatrice. Blackout.)*

## Act II

### Scene 1: The courtyard of Pantalone's house.

**Silvio:** Signor Federigo Rasponi! Prepare to meet your death! *(Mimes sword fight.)* Take that, and this, and this and a that, and that and a this! *(Lunges forward and impales imaginary opponent.)* Not so tough now, are you? Oh, don't get angry, you might...lose your head! *(Mimes cutting off head. Holds up imaginary head at eye level.)* Are you looking at me? Are you looking at me? *(Shakes imaginary head back and forth.)* No! Because if you were looking at me, that could be dangerous. Yeah. You could probably lose an eye! *(Stabs imaginary head's eye.)* Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't see... *(Pretends to trip and stabs imaginary head's other eye. He then*

*drops the head, mimes bouncing it on his knees like a soccer ball, and kicks it away. He looks back at his sword.)* Are you still looking at me? About time I had a little eyeball barbeque. *(Mimes taking out a lighter and moving it under the imaginary eyes on his sword.)* Nice and crispy. Just the way I like 'em! *(Pretends to eat eyeballs.)*

*(Enter Dr. Lombardi.)*

**Silvio:** Sir, I entreat you to leave me alone.

**Lombardi:** Stay, answer me.

**Silvio:** I am beside myself.

**Lombardi:** What are you doing in the courtyard of Signor Pantalone?

**Silvio:** I intend either that he should keep his word, or render me account for this intolerable insult.

**Lombardi:** But you cannot do this in Pantalone's own house. You are a fool to let yourself be so transported with anger.

**Silvio:** A man who behaves so abominably deserves no consideration.

**Lombardi:** True; but that is no reason why you should be so rash. Leave him to me, my dear boy, leave him to me; let me talk to him; maybe I can bring him to reason and make him see where his duty lies. Go away somewhere and wait for me; leave this courtyard; do not let us make a scene. I will wait for Signor Pantalone.

**Silvio:** But sir, I...

**Lombardi:** But, sir, I will have you obey me.

**Silvio:** I obey you, sir. I will go. Speak to him. I wait for you at the apothecary's. But if Signor Pantalone persists, he will have to settle with me. *(Exit.)*

**Lombardi:** Poor dear boy, I feel truly sorry for him. Signor Pantalone ought never to have let him on so far before he was quite certain that man from Turin was dead. I must see him quietly; I must not let my temper get the better of me.

*(Enter Pantalone.)*

**Pantalone:** *(Aside.)* What is the doctor doing in my house?

**Lombardi:** Oh, Signor Pantalone, your servant.

**Pantalone:** Your servant, Doctor. I was just going to look for you and your son.

**Lombardi:** Indeed? Good! I suppose you were coming to give us your assurance that Signora Clarice is to be Silvio's wife.

**Pantalone:** (*Much embarrassed.*) Well, the fact is, I was coming to tell you...

**Lombardi:** No, no; there is no need for explanations. You have my sympathy in a very awkward situation. But we are old friends and will let bygones be bygones.

**Pantalone:** (*Still hesitating.*) Yes, of course, in view of the promise made to Signor Federigo...

**Lombardi:** He took you by surprise, and you had no time for reflection; you did not think of the affront you were giving our family.

**Pantalone:** You can hardly think of an affront when a previous contract...

**Lombardi:** I know what you are going to say. It seemed at first quite out of the question that your promise to the Turin gentleman could be repudiated, because it was a formal contract. But that was a contract merely between you and him; whereas ours is confirmed by the girl herself.

**Pantalone:** Very true, but...

**Lombardi:** And as you know, in matrimonial cases, *consensus, et non concubitus, facit verum*.

**Pantalone:** I am no Latin scholar; but I must tell you...

**Lombardi:** And girls must not be sacrificed.

**Pantalone:** Have you anything more to say?

**Lombardi:** I have nothing more to say.

**Pantalone:** Have you finished?

**Lombardi:** I have finished.

**Pantalone:** May I speak?

**Lombardi:** You may.

**Pantalone:** My dear Doctor, with all your learning...

**Lombardi:** As regards the dowry, we can easily arrange matters. A little more or less, I will make no difficulties.

**Pantalone:** I must begin all over again. Will you allow me to speak?

**Lombardi:** With pleasure.

**Pantalone:** I must tell you: I have the greatest respect for your legal learning, but in this case, it does not apply.

**Lombardi:** *(Taken aback.)* And you mean to tell me that this other marriage is to take place?

**Pantalone:** For my part I have given my word and cannot go back upon it. My daughter is content; what impediment can there be?

**Lombardi:** *(Enraged.)* I am not surprised at you daughter's behavior. But I am surprised at yours, sir, at your treating me in this disgraceful way. The marriage contracted this morning between Signora Clarice and my son, *coram testibus*, cannot be dissolved. If I were to listen to my son I should insist on the annulment of the new contract; but I should be ashamed to receive so disreputable a daughter-in-law, the daughter of a man who breaks his word as you do. Signor Pantalone, you have done me an injury! An injury to the house of Lombardi! The time will come when you will pay for it! The time will come...*omnia tempus habent*.

*(Exit Doctor, ranting to himself in Latin.)*

**Pantalone:** You may go to the devil for all I care. I don't care a fig, I'm not afraid of you. The Rasponis are worth a hundred of the Lombardis. An only son, and as rich as he is... you won't find that every day. It has got to be.

*(Enter Silvio.)*

**Silvio:** *(Aside.)* 'Tis all very fine for my father to talk. Let him keep his temper who can.

**Pantalone:** *(Seeing Silvio. Aside.)* Here comes the other one.

**Silvio:** *(Rudely.)* Your servant, sir.

**Pantalone:** Yours to command, sir. *(Aside.)* He is boiling.

**Silvio:** I have just heard something from my father; am I to believe that it is true?

**Pantalone:** If your father said it, it must certainly be true.

**Silvio:** Then the marriage is settled between Signora Clarice and Signor Federigo?

**Pantalone:** Yes, sir, settled and concluded.

**Silvio:** I am amazed that you should have the face to tell me so. You are a man of no reputation, you are no gentleman.

**Pantalone:** What is all this? Is that the way you speak to a man of my age?

**Silvio:** I don't care how old you are; I have a mind to run you straight through the body.

**Pantalone:** I am not a frog, sir, to be spitted. Do you come into my own house to make all this turmoil?

**Silvio:** Then come outside, then. Come on, if you are a man of honour.

**Pantalone:** I am accustomed to be treated with respect.

**Silvio:** You are a low fellow, a coward, and a villain.

**Pantalone:** You are a most impertinent young puppy.

**Silvio:** I swear to heaven... *(Lays hand on his sword.)*

**Pantalone:** Help! Murder! *(Draws a pistol.)*

*(Enter Beatrice with a drawn sword.)*

**Beatrice:** *(To Pantalone.)* I am here to defend you.

**Pantalone:** My dear son-in-law, I am much obliged to you.

**Silvio:** *(To Beatrice, voice shaking.)* You are the very man I want to fight.

**Beatrice:** *(Aside.)* I am in for it now.

**Silvio:** *(To Beatrice, still afraid.)* Come on, sir!

**Pantalone:** *(Frightened.)* My dear son-in-law...

**Beatrice:** It is not the first time I have been in danger. *(To Silvio.)* I am not afraid of you. *(Presents sword.)*

**Pantalone:** Help! Help!

*(Pantalone runs toward the street. Beatrice and Silvio fight. Silvio falls and drops sword. Beatrice holds her point to his heart and laughs. Enter Clarice.)*

**Clarice:** *(To Beatrice.)* Stop! Stop!

**Beatrice:** Fair Clarice, at your request I grant Silvio his...*(Pauses, and drives sword into the ground between Silvio's legs.)* life, and in consideration of my mercy, I beg you to remember your oath. *(Exit.)*

**Clarice:** Dear Silvio, are you hurt?

**Silvio:** Dear Silvio! Faithless deceiver! Dear Silvio! To a lover disdained, a betrayed husband!

**Clarice:** No, Silvio, I do not deserve your reproaches. I love you, I adore you, I am indeed faithful.

**Silvio:** Oh, lying jade! Faithful to me, forsooth! *(Sulky.)* You call that fidelity, to plight your troth to another?

**Clarice:** I never did so, nor ever will. I will die rather than desert you.

**Silvio:** I heard just now that you have given your oath.

**Clarice:** My oath does not bind me to marry him.

**Silvio:** Then what did you swear?

**Clarice:** Dear Silvio, have mercy on me; I cannot tell you.

**Silvio:** Why not?

**Clarice:** Because I am sworn to silence.

**Silvio:** That proves your guilt.

**Clarice:** No, I am innocent,

**Silvio:** Innocent people have no secrets.

**Clarice:** Indeed I should be guilty if I spoke.

**Silvio:** And to whom have you sworn this silence?

**Clarice:** To Federigo.

**Silvio:** And you will observe it so jealously?

**Clarice:** I will observe it, rather than be a purjuress.

**Silvio:** And you tell me you do not love him? He's a fool that believes you. I do not believe you, cruel, deceiver! Begone from my sight!

**Clarice:** If I did not love you, I should not have run hither in all haste to save your life.

**Silvio:** Then I loathe my life, if I must owe it to one so ungrateful

**Clarice:** I love you with all my heart.

**Silvio:** I abhor you with all my soul.

**Clarice:** I will die, if you are not appeased.

**Silvio:** I would rather see you dead than unfaithful.

**Clarice:** Then you shall have that satisfaction. *(Picks up his sword.)*

**Silvio:** Yes, that sword should avenge my wrongs.

**Clarice:** Are you so cruel to your Clarice?

**Silvio:** 'Twas you that taught me cruelty.

**Clarice:** Then you desire my death?

**Silvio:** I know not what I desire.

**Clarice:** I do.

*(Points sword at her breast. Silvio moves to stop her, but jumps away as Smeraldina enters.)*

**Smeraldina:** Stop, stop! What on earth are you doing?

*(Takes the sword away from Clarice.)*

**Smeraldina:** *(To Silvio.)* And you, you dog, you would have let her die? Have you the heart of a tiger, a hyena, a devil? Look at you, you're a pretty little fellow, that expects ladies to disembowel themselves for you! You are much too kind for him, madam. He doesn't want you anymore, I suppose? The man that does not want you, does not deserve you. Let this murderer go to the devil; and you come along with me. There's no shortage of men; I promise you'll find a dozen of them before evening.

*(She throws the sword down. Silvio picks it up.)*

**Clarice:** *(Weeping.)* Ungrateful! Can it be that my death should cost you not a single sigh? But I shall die, and die of grief, I shall die, and you will not be content. But one day you will know I am innocent, when it is too late, you will be sorry you did not believe me, you will weep for my misfortune and your own barbarous cruelty. *(Exit.)*

**Smeraldina:** Here's something I really don't understand. Here's a girl on the point of killing herself, and you sit there looking on, just as if you were at a play.

**Silvio:** Nonsense, woman! Do you suppose she really meant to kill herself?

**Smeraldina:** How should I know? I know that if I had not arrived in time, she would have gone, poor thing.

**Silvio:** The point was nowhere near her heart.

**Smeraldina:** Did you ever hear such a lie? It was just ready to pierce her.

**Silvio:** You women always invent things.

**Smeraldina:** We should indeed, if we were like you. It's as the old saw says: we get the kicks, and you the halfpence. They say that women are unfaithful, but men are committing infidelities all day long. People talk about the women, and they never say a word about the men. We get all the blame, and you are allowed to do as you please. Do you know why? Because 'tis the men who have made the laws. If the women had made them, things would be just the other way. If I were a queen, *(Silvio laughs. Smeraldina pauses and glares at him.)* I'd make every man who was unfaithful carry a branch of a tree in his hand, and I know all the towns would look like forests. *(Exit.)*

**Silvio:** Clarice faithless! Clarice a traitress! Her pretence at suicide was a trick to deceive me, to move my compassion. But though fate made me fall before my rival, I will never give up the thought of revenge. That wretch shall die, and my ungrateful Clarice shall see her lover wallowing in his gore. *(Exit.)*



## Scene 2: A street with Brighella's Inn.

*(Enter Smealdina.)*

**Smeraldina:** A very proper sort of young lady my mistress is! To send me all alone with a letter to a tavern, a young girl like me! Waiting on a woman in love is a sad business. And what I cannot understand is this... if she is so much in love with Signor Silvio as to be ready to disembowel herself for him, why does she send letters to another gentleman? One for summer and one for winter, I suppose! Well, there it is! I am not going inside that tavern. I'll call; somebody will come out. Hey there! Anyone at home?

*(Truffaldino comes out of the Inn.)*

**Truffaldino:** What do you want?

**Smeraldina:** I ask pardon if I have taken you from your dinner.

**Truffaldino:** I was having dinner, but I can go back to it.

**Smeraldina:** I am truly sorry.

**Truffaldino:** I am delighted. The fact is, I have my bellyful, and your bright eyes are just the right thing to help me digest it.

**Smeraldina:** *(Aside.)* Very gallant!

**Truffaldino:** I'll just set down this bottle, and then I'm with you, my dear.

**Smeraldina:** *(Aside.)* He called me "my dear"! *(To Truffaldino.)* My mistress sends this letter to Signor Federigo Rasponi; I do not like to come into the tavern, so I thought I might put you to this trouble, since you are his servant.

**Truffaldino:** I'll take it with pleasure; but first, you must know that I have a message for you.

**Smeraldina:** From who?

**Truffaldino:** From a very honest man. Tell me, are you acquainted with one Truffaldin' Battocchio? He's a good looking man, thickset, with plenty of wit to his talk. Understands butlering, too...

**Smeraldina;** I don't know him from Adam.

**Truffaldino:** Yes, you do; and what's more, he's in love with you.

**Smeraldina:** Oh! You are making fun of me.

**Truffaldino:** Shall I show him to you?

**Smeraldina:** I should like to see him.

**Truffaldino:** Just a moment. *(Goes into the inn.)*

**Smeraldina:** Then 'tis not he.

*(Truffaldino comes out of the Inn, makes low bows to Smeraldina. He puts his hand inside his shirt, mimicking the motion of a beating heart. The closer he goes to Smeraldina, the faster it beats. He then mimes cutting open his chest, pulling out his beating heart, and gives it to her. Passes close to her, sighs, and goes back into the inn.)*

**Smeraldina:** I do not understand this play-acting.

**Truffaldino:** *(Re-entering.)* Did you see him?

**Smeraldina:** See whom?

**Truffaldino:** The man who is in love with your beauty.

**Smeraldina:** I saw no one but you.

**Truffaldino:** *(Sighs.)* Well!

**Smeraldina:** It is you, then!

**Truffaldino:** It is! *(Sighs.)*

**Smeraldina:** Why did you not say so before?

**Truffaldino:** Because I am rather shy.

**Smeraldina:** *(Aside.)* He would make a stone fall in love with him.

**Truffaldino:** Well, and what do you say?

**Smeraldina:** I say...

**Truffaldino:** Come, tell me.

**Smeraldina:** Oh... I am rather shy too.

**Truffaldino:** Then if we were joined up *(Takes hand.)* t'would be a marriage of two people who are rather shy. Give me the letter, and when I bring you back the answer, we will have a talk.

**Smeraldina:** Here's the letter.

**Truffaldino:** Do you know what is in it?

**Smeraldina:** No... if only you knew how curious I am to know!

**Truffaldino:** I hope it is not a disdainful letter, or I shall get my face smacked.

**Smeraldina:** Who knows? It can't be a love letter.

**Truffaldino:** I don't want to get into trouble. If I don't know what is in the letter, I am not going to deliver it.

**Smeraldina:** We could open it... but how are we to seal it again?

**Truffaldino:** Leave it to me; sealing letters is just my job. No one will ever know anything.

**Smeraldina:** Let us open it.

**Truffaldino:** Can you read?

**Smeraldina:** A little. But you can read quite well, I'm sure.

**Truffaldino:** Yes, I too can read... just a little.

**Smeraldina:** Then let us hear.

**Truffaldino:** We must open it cleanly.

*(He tears off a piece.)*

**Smeraldina:** Oh! What have you done?

**Truffaldino:** Nothing, I've a secret way to mend it. Here it is, open.

*(They pass the letter back and forth, saying, "You read it." "No, you read it!")*

**Smeraldina:** *(Finally opening the letter completely.)* Quick, read it.

**Truffaldino:** *You* read it. You will know your young lady's handwriting better than I do.

**Smeraldina:** *(Looking at the letter. Eventually turns it upside down)* Really, I can't make out a word.

**Truffaldino:** *(Same business.)* Nor I neither.

**Smeraldina:** Then what was the good of opening it?

**Truffaldino:** *(Takes the letter.)* Wait; let me think; I can make out some of it.

**Smeraldina:** Oh, I know some of the letters too.

**Truffaldino:** Let us try one by one. Isn't that an M?

**Smeraldina:** No! That's an R!

**Truffaldino:** Between M and R there is very little difference.

**Smeraldina:** Ri, ri, o. No, no; keep quiet; I think it is an M, Mi, mi, o...mio!

**Truffaldino:** It's not mio, it's mia.

**Smeraldina:** But it is, there's the hook...

**Truffaldino:** That proves it is mia.

**Pantalone:** *(Calling from offstage to Smeraldina.)* What are you doing here?

*(Truffaldino crawls under her dress. Enter Pantalone.)*

**Smeraldina:** *(Frightened.)* Nothing, sir; I came to look for you.

**Pantalone:** *(To Smeraldina.)* What do you want with me?

**Smeraldina:** The mistress wants you, sir.

**Pantalone:** *(To Truffaldino.)* What is this paper?

**Truffaldino:** *(From under the dress, frightened.)* Nothing, just a bit of paper...

**Pantalone:** Let me see.

*(Hand comes out from under dress and gives paper.)*

**Truffaldino:** *(Gives paper, trembling.)* Yes, sir.

**Pantalone:** What? This is a letter addressed to Signor Rasponi.

**Truffaldino:** I know nothing about it, sir...

*(Truffaldino comes out from under the dress.)*

**Pantalone:** Look, it is a letter from Signora Clarice... in which she tells of Silvio's jealousy... and this rascal has the impudence to open it! *(To Smeraldina.)* And you helped him do so?

**Smeraldina:** I know nothing about it, sir.

**Pantalone:** Who opened this letter?

**Truffaldino:** Not I.

**Smeraldina:** Nor I.

**Pantalone:** Well, who brought it?

**Smeraldina:** Truffaldino brought it to his master.

**Truffaldino:** And Smeraldina brought it to Truffaldino.

**Smeraldina:** *(Aside.)* Sneak! I don't like you anymore!

**Pantalone:** You meddlesome little hussy, so you are the cause of this trouble, are you? I've a good mind to smack your face.

**Smeraldina:** I've never had my face smacked by any man; I'm surprised at you.

**Pantalone:** *(Coming near her.)* Is that the way you answer me?

**Smeraldina:** You won't catch me. You're too rheumatic, you can't run. *(Exit running.)*

**Pantalone:** You saucy minx, I'll show you if I can run; I'll catch you. *(Runs after her.)*

**Truffaldino:** And they're off!

*(Baseball commentary lazzi.)*

*(Enter Beatrice. Truffaldino bumps into her.)*

**Truffaldino:** Safe! *(Sees Beatrice.)* Almost.

**Beatrice:** Where are you off to?

**Truffaldino:** *(He stops.)* Nowhere.

**Beatrice:** Why did you open this letter?

**Truffaldino:** It was Smeraldina; I had nothing to do with it.

**Beatrice:** Smeraldina! You did it, you rascal!

**Truffaldino:** (*Approaching timidly.*) Oh, for mercy's sake, sir...

**Beatrice:** (*Aside.*) Poor Clarice! She is in despair over Silvio's jealousy; 'twill be best for me to discover myself and set her mind at rest. Come here, I say.

**Truffaldino:** (*Same business.*) Oh, for the love of heaven...

(*Truffaldino falls to the floor screaming, although Beatrice is doing nothing.*)

**Florindo:** (*Offstage.*) What's this? Beating my servant?

**Truffaldino:** Stop, stop, sir, for pity's sake!

**Beatrice:** Take that, rascal, and learn not to open my letters! (*Exits to street.*)

**Truffaldino:** My blood! My body! (*Gets up.*) Is that any way to treat a man of my sort? Beat a man like me? If a servant is no good, you can send him away, but you don't beat him.

(*Florindo comes out, unseen by Truffaldino.*)

**Florindo:** What's that?

**Truffaldino:** (*Seeing Florindo.*) Oh! I said people have no business beating other people's servants like that. This is an insult to my master.

**Florindo:** Yes, 'tis an affront put upon *me*. Who was it gave you a thrashing?

**Truffaldino:** I couldn't say, sir; I do not know him.

**Florindo:** Why did he thrash you?

**Truffaldino:** Because I... I spat on his shoe. (*Demonstrates, and then wipes Florindo's shoe.*)

**Florindo:** And you let yourself be beaten like that? Did nothing? Made no attempt to defend yourself? And you expose your master to insult, with perhaps serious consequences? Ass! Poltroon! (*Picks up stick.*) Since you enjoy being thrashed, I'll give you your pleasure. I'll thrash you myself as well.

(*Thrashes him and exits into Inn. Beating lazzi.*)

**Truffaldino:** Well, there's no mistake about my being the servant of two masters. They have both paid my wages in full. I don't care that for my beating! I have eaten well, I've dined well, and this evening I shall sup still better; and as long as I can serve two masters, there's this at least, that I draw double wages. *(Pause.)* And now what's to be done? Master number one is out of doors, master number two is fast asleep; why, it's just the moment to give those clothes an airing... take them out of the trunks and see if there's anything wants doings. Here are the keys. This room will do nicely. I'll get the trunks out and make a proper job of it. *(Pulling trunk.)* Gently, I'll put it down here. Fetch the other...quietly...for my master is fast asleep...and put this one here...and fetch the other. *(The second trunk is pushed out from the wings. Truffaldino leaps into the air and lands on top of the trunk as it comes to a rest.)* Here's the other! Now I'm going to do my work properly, in peace and quiet, with no one to worry me. *(Takes a key out of his pocket.)* Now, which key is this, I wonder? Which trunk does it fit? Let's try. *(Opens one trunk.)* I guessed right at once. I'm the cleverest man on earth. And this other will open t'other trunk. *(Takes out second key and opens second trunk.)* Now they are both open. Let's take everything out. *(He takes all the clothes out of both trunks and puts them on the table. In each trunk there must be a black suit, books and papers, and anything else ad lib.)* I'll just see if there is anything in the pockets. You never know, sometimes they leave biscuits or sweets in them. *(Searches the pockets of Beatrice's suit and finds a portrait.)* My word, what a pretty picture! There's a handsome man! Who can it be? I seem to know him, but yet I can't remember. He is just the least bit like my other master; but no, he never wears clothes like that, nor that wig neither.

**Florindo:** *(Calling from his room.)* Truffaldino!

**Truffaldino:** Coming sir! Oh, plague take him! He has woken up. If the devil tempts him to come out and he sees this other trunk, he'll want to know... quick... I'll lock it up and say I don't know whose it is.

*(Begins putting clothes in again.)*

**Florindo:** Truffaldino!

**Truffaldino:** Coming sir! *(Aside.)* I must put these things away first! But I can't remember which trunk this coat came from, nor these papers neither.

**Florindo:** Come here, I say; or must I fetch a stick to you?

**Truffaldino:** In a minute, sir. *(Aside.)* Quick, before he comes! I'll put all straight when he comes out.

*(Stuffs the things into the trunks anyhow and locks them. Florindo comes out in a dressing gown.)*

**Florindo:** What the devil are you doing?

**Truffaldino:** Pray, sir, didn't you tell me to give your clothes an airing? I was just about to do it here.

**Florindo:** And this other trunk, whose is that?

**Truffaldino:** I couldn't say, sir; 'twill belong to some other gentleman.

**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:** What's this?

**Truffaldino:** *(Aside.)* Oh Lord, I've made a mistake. I ought to have put it into the other gentleman's pocket.

**Florindo:** *(Aside.)* Heavens! There can be no mistake. This is my own portrait; the one I gave to my beloved Beatrice. *(To Truffaldino.)* Tell me, however did this portrait come to be in the pocket of my coat? It wasn't there before.

**Truffaldino:** *(Aside.)* Now, what's the answer to that? I don't know. Let me think...

**Florindo:** Come on, out with it, answer me. How did this portrait come to be in my pocket?

**Truffaldino:** My master left it to me.

**Florindo:** Left it to you?

**Truffaldino:** Yes, sir; I had a master who died, and he left me a few trifles which I sold, all except this portrait, sir.

**Florindo:** Great heavens! And how long is it since this master of yours died?

**Truffaldino:** 'Twill be just about a week ago, sir. *(Aside.)* I say the first thing that comes into my head.

**Florindo:** What was your master's name?

**Truffaldino:** I do not know, sir; he lived incognito.

**Florindo:** Incognito? How long were you in his service?



**Truffladino:** Only a short time, sir; ten or twelve days.

**Florindo:** (*Aside.*) Heavens! More and more do I fear that it was Beatrice. She escaped in a man's dress; she concealed her name... Oh, wretched me, if it be true! (*To Truffaldino.*) Tell me, was your master young?

**Truffaldino:** Yes, sir, quite a young gentleman.

**Florindo:** Without a beard?

**Truffaldino:** Without a beard, sir.

**Florindo:** (*Aside, with a sigh.*) 'Twas she, doubtless.

**Truffaldino:** (*Aside.*) I hope I'm not in for another thrashing.

**Florindo:** At least, can you tell me where your late master came from?

**Truffaldino:** I did know, sir, but I can't now call it to mind.

**Florindo:** Was he from Turin?

**Truffaldino:** Turin it was, sir.

**Florindo:** (*Aside.*) Every word he speaks is a sword thrust in my heart. (*To Truffaldino.*) Tell me again, this young gentleman from Turin, is he really dead?

**Truffaldino:** He is dead as a doornail, sir.

**Florindo:** Of what did he die?

**Truffaldino:** He met with an accident, and that was the end of him. (*Aside.*) That seems to be the easy way out.

**Florindo:** Where was he buried?

**Truffaldino:** He wasn't, sir.

**Florindo:** What!

**Truffaldino:** No, sir, of course he was buried. Another servant from the same place got permission to have him put into a coffin and sent home, sir.

**Florindo:** (*Aside.*) Then all hope is lost. Beatrice is dead. Unhappy Beatrice! The discomforts 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.*)

**Truffaldino:** That portrait has touched him in the guts. He must have known the gentleman. Well, I had better take the trunks back to the rooms again, or I shall be in for more trouble of the same sort. Oh dear! Here comes my other master. (*Hides in Beatrice's trunk.*)

(*Enter Beatrice and Pantalone.*)

**Beatrice:** I assure you, Signor Pantlone, the last consignment of mirrors and wax candles has been put down twice over.

**Pantalone:** Maybe my young men have made a mistake. We will go through the books again, and then we shall find out exactly how things stand.

**Beatrice:** I too have a list copied from my own books. We will compare them. Perhaps that may decide the point either in your favour or mine. Truffaldino!

**Truffaldino:** (*Opens trunk lid and climbs out.*) Here, sir.

**Beatrice:** I see you have the key to my trunk.

**Truffaldino:** Yes, sir; here it is!

**Beatrice:** Why have you brought my trunk in here?

**Truffaldino:** To air your clothes, sir.

**Beatrice:** Have you aired them?

**Truffaldino:** I have, sir.

**Beatrice:** Open the trunk and give me... Whose is that other trunk?

**Truffaldino:** It belongs to another gentleman who has just come.

**Beatrice:** Go into my trunk and give me the memorandum book which you will find there.

**Truffaldino:** Yes, sir. (*Aside.*) The lord help me this time!

(*Opens trunk and looks for the book.*)

**Pantalone:** As I say, they may have made a mistake. Of course, if there is a mistake, you will not have to pay.

**Beatrice:** We may find that all is in order; we shall see.

**Truffaldino:** Is this the book, sir? (*Holding a book out to Beatrice.*)

**Beatrice:** I expect so. (*Takes the book without looking carefully and opens it.*) No, this is not the book... whose is this book?

**Truffaldino:** (*Aside.*) I've done it now!

**Beatrice:** (*Aside.*) These are two letters which I wrote to Florindo. Alas, these notes, these accounts belong to him. I tremble, I am in a cold sweat, I know not where I am.

**Pantalone:** What ails you, Signor Federigo? Are you unwell?

**Beatrice:** 'Tis nothing. (*Aside to Truffaldino.*) Truffaldino, how did this book come to be in my trunk? It is not mine.

**Truffaldino:** I hardly know, sir...

**Beatrice:** Come, out with it...tell me the truth.

**Truffaldino:** I ask your pardon for the liberty I took, sir, putting it into your trunk. It belongs to me, and I put it there for safety. (*Aside.*) It worked for the last master. It should work for this one, too.

**Beatrice:** The book is your own, you say, and yet you gave it of me instead of mine, without noticing?

**Truffaldino:** (*Aside.*) He's much too clever. (*To Beatrice.*) I'll tell you, sir; I have only had the book a very short time so I did not notice it at once.

**Beatrice:** And how came you by this book?

**Truffaldino:** I was in service with a gentleman at Venice and he died and left the book to me.

**Beatrice:** How long ago?

**Truffaldino:** I don't remember exactly... ten or twelve days.

**Beatrice:** How can that be when I met you at Verona?

**Truffaldino:** I had just come away from Venice on account of my poor master's death.

**Beatrice:** (*Aside.*) Alas for me! (*To Truffaldino.*) Your master of yours... was his name... Florindo?

**Truffaldino:** Yes, sir; Florindo.

**Beatrice:** And his family name Aretusi?

**Truffaldino:** That was it, sir; Aretusi.

**Beatrice:** And you are sure he is dead?

**Truffaldino:** As sure as I stand here. *(Moves slightly to one side.)*

**Beatrice:** Of what did he die?

**Truffaldino:** He tumbled into the canal and was drowned and never seen again.

**Beatrice:** Oh, wretched that I am! Florindo is dead, my beloved is dead; my one and only hope is dead. All is lost. Love's stratagems are fruitless! I leave my home, I leave my relatives, I dress as a man *(Pulls off hat and lets her hair fall down.)* I confront danger, I hazard my very life...All for Florindo... and Florindo is dead! *(Weeping.)* Unhappy Beatrice! Was the loss of my brother so little to me that Fate must make me lose my lover as well. *(Exit.)*

**Pantalone:** Truffaldino!

**Truffaldino:** Si' or Pantalone?

**Pantalone:** A woman!

**Truffaldino:** A female!

**Pantalone:** Most extraordinary!

**Truffaldino:** Who'd have thought it?

**Pantalone:** I'm struck all of a heap.

**Truffaldino:** You might knock me down with a feather.

**Pantalone:** I shall go straight home and tell my daughter. *(Exit.)*

**Truffaldino:** *(Dragging trunks off stage.)* It seems I am not the servant of two masters, but of a master and a mistress. *(Exit.)*

### Act III

#### Scene 1

*(The stage is empty. Loud sobbing and wailing from Florindo and Beatrice are heard offstage. Enter Florindo and Beatrice from opposite sides. They are determined to kill themselves.)*

**Florindo:** Oh! Beatrice!

**Beatrice:** Oh! Florindo!

*(They sigh and move closer together. Florindo is trying to stab himself with a dagger, and Beatrice is sawing at her wrists with the pages of Florindo's book. They eventually stop and hear each other's voices.)*

**Beatrice:** Florindo? *(Like calling a dog.)* Florindo...

*(They move closer and closer together until they finally bump into each other.)*

**Florindo:** What do I see? Beatrice?

**Beatrice:** Florindo? Oh, destiny!

**Florindo:** Oh, my adored one!

*(They drop their weapons and embrace.)*

**Florindo:** What brought you to attempt such an act of madness?

**Beatrice:** The false news of your death.

**Florindo:** Who told you that I was dead?

**Beatrice:** My servant.

**Florindo:** And mine gave me to believe that you were dead, and I too, carried away by the same agony of grief, intended to take my life.

**Beatrice:** It was this book caused me to believe the story.

**Florindo:** That book was in my trunk. How came it into your hands? Ah, now I know. By the same means, no doubt, as the portrait I found in my coat pocket. Here it is. The one I gave you at Turin.

**Beatrice:** Those rascally servants of ours... heaven only knows what they have been up to.

**Florindo:** Where are they, I wonder?

**Beatrice:** Nowhere to be seen.

**Florindo:** Let us find and confront them.

**Both:** *(In unison.)* Truffaldino!

*(They realize they have the same servant.)*

**Florindo:** What strange things have happened in the course of this one day! Tears, lamentations and anguish, and then at last consolation and happiness. *(They kiss.)* From tears to laughter is a happy step which makes us forget our agonies, but when we pass from pleasure to pain the change is even yet more acutely perceptible. When will you change these clothes?

**Beatrice:** Do I not look well in them?

**Florindo:** I long to see you in a woman's dress. Your beauties ought not to be so completely disguised.

**Beatrice:** *(Passionately.)* Florindo!

**Florindo:** *(Passionately.)* Beatrice!

*(They exit, Beatrice holding Florindo in her arms.)*

## **Scene 2: A room in the house of Pantalone.**

*(Enter Silvio.)*

**Silvio:** *(Practicing his apology. Timidly.)* Clarice, I'm sorry. *(Shakes head. More forcefully.)* Clarice... *(Takes a ring from his pocket. Holds it out to imaginary Clarice, but then tries it on himself and giggles. He tries to take off the ring, but it is stuck. Holds out hand with ring to imaginary Clarice.)* Clarice... *(Mimes getting his face slapped and looks shocked.)*

*(Enter Clarice. She sees Silvio and turns her back on him. He tries to approach her several times, always drawing back before he reaches her. Enter Pantalone.)*

**Pantalone:** Come, Clarice, pull yourself together. You see that Signor Silvio has repented and asks your forgiveness. If he acted foolishly, it was for love of you; I have forgiven him his extravagances, you ought to forgive him too.

**Silvio:** Measure my agony by your own, Signora Clarice, and rest assured that I most truly love you, since 'twas the fear of losing you that rendered my distracted.

*(Enter Smeraldina with a bridal veil.)*

**Smeraldina:** Come, dear madam, what would you? *(Arranges veil on Clarice's head.)* Men are cruel to us, some more, some less. They demand the most absolute fidelity, and on the least shadow of suspicion they bully us, ill-treat us and are likely to murder us. Well, you have got to marry one or another of them someday, so I say to you as one says to sick people... since you have got to take your nasty medicine, take it.

**Pantalone:** There, do you hear that? Listen to Smeraldina. She compares matrimony to a nasty medicine...*(Realizes what has been said, and hastily takes it back.)* No! You must not listen to Smeraldina! Marriage is not a nasty medicine. Instead you must think of matrimony as a lollipop, a jujube, a jawbreaker!

**Silvio:** But dear Clarice, won't you say a word? I know I deserve to be punished by you, but, of your mercy, punish me with hard words rather than with silence. Behold me at your feet; have pity on me.

**Clarice:** *(To Silvio, with a sigh.)* Cruel!

**Pantalone:** *(Aside.)* You heard that little sigh? A good sign!

**Smeraldina:** *(Aside.)* A sigh is like lightening; it promises rainfall.

**Silvio:** If I could think that you desired my blood to avenge my supposed cruelty, I give it you with all my heart. But, oh God! Instead of the blood in my veins, accept, I beg you, that which gushes from my eyes. *(Weeps.)*

**Pantalone:** Bravo! Bravo! Well said!

**Clarice:** *(Sighs as before, but more tenderly.)* Cruel!

**Pantalone:** She's done to a turn. Here, come up with you. *(He raises Silvio. He takes him by the hand.)* Stand over there. *(He takes Clarice's hand.)* And you come here too, madam. Now, join your hands together again; and make peace. So no more tears, be happy, no more nonsense and Heaven bless you both. There, 'tis done.

**Smeraldina:** 'Tis done, 'tis done.

**Silvio:** *(Holding Clarice's hand.)* Oh, Signora Clarice, for pity's sake...

**Clarice:** Ungrateful!

**Silvio:** Dearest!

**Clarice:** Inhuman!

**Silvio:** Beloved!

**Clarice:** Monster!

**Silvio:** Angel!

**Clarice:** *(Sighs.)* Ah!

**Pantalone:** *(Aside.)* Going, going...

**Silvio:** Forgive me, for the love of Heaven.

**Clarice:** *(Sighs.)* I forgive you.

*(They kiss.)*

**Pantalone:** *(Aside.)* Gone! Come, Silvio, she has forgiven you!

**Smeraldina:** The patient is ready; give her the medicine.

*(All start humming "The Wedding March". Smeraldina and Pantalone hold up his cane as an arch. Clarice and Silvio proceed through, Silvio clothes-lining himself on the way. Dance, procession. All march off, save Smeraldina, who throws confetti. Someone off-stage hands her a broom. She takes it and turns the march into a dirge. She weeps. Truf-faldino cartwheels in. They freeze. He hands her a handkerchief for her tears. They hold the handkerchief closer and closer together. They hide their kiss from the audience. They turn and bow and are joined by everyone else.)*

THE END.