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# The Honorable Maid

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*Republic of Venice*

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The Honorable Maid

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## Cast of Characters

OTTAVIO ::

BEATRICE ::

BRIGHELLA ::

OTAVIO ::

MENEGO ::

BETTINA ::

PASQUALINO ::

CATTE ::

PANTALONE ::

COFFEE BOY ::

ARLECCHINO ::

DONNA PASQUA ::

LELIO ::

TITA ::

PANATLONE :

PANTALONE :

BOTH ::

CATTE . :

BETTINA . :

PASQUALINO . :

ARLECCHINO . :

NANE ::

BETTINA :

OTTAVIO :

TICKET BOY ::

ALL ::

Dramatis Personae

Ottavio - Marchese di Ripa Verde

Beatrice - His Wife

Pantalone De Bisognosi - a Veneziano Merchant, Protector of Bettina and believed to be the father of Lelio.

Bettina - a Veneziano Girl

Catte - a laundress, wife of Arlecchino and sister of Bettina

Messer - Menego Cainello - the Marchese's gondolier, believed to be father of Pasqualino

Lelio - Believed to be the son of Pantalone but discovered to be the son of Menego.

Pasqualino - Believed to be the son of Menego but discovered to be the son of Pantalone.

Donna Pasqua - Wife of Menego

Brighella - Servant to the Marchese

Arlecchino - Husband to Catte

Nanne - a gondolier

Tita - a gondolier

A coffee house boy

A Boy - a theatre busker

ACT 1Scene 1

*The Marchese Ottavio in dressing robe, seated at a table, writing, and the Marchesa Beatrice, in an evening dress*

OTTAVIO:

Signora, si. I heard you. Let me finish this letter to my business associate in Padua.

BEATRICE:

Tonight the assembly is at the Countess's Palace.

OTTAVIO:

Is it?

***Writing***

(To my dearest love...)

BEATRICE:

I hope you'll join me.

OTTAVIO:

Can't.

***Writing***

(Please forgive my forwardness...)

BEATRICE:

But who will escort me?

OTTAVIO:

I'll call a gondola for you.

***Writing***

(You are a vision of loveliness...)

BEATRICE:

Thank you.

OTTAVIO:

What?

***Writing***

BEATRICE:

Thank you.

OTTAVIO:

For?

*Writing*

BEATRICE:  
The compliment.

OTTAVIO:  
What compliment?

*Writing*

BEATRICE:  
You complimented me.

OTTAVIO:  
What did I say?

*Writing*

BEATRICE:  
You said I was a vision of loveliness.

OTTAVIO:  
I wasn't talking to ...Oh, yes.

*Writing*

BEATRICE:  
So will you join me?

OTTAVIO:  
I told you. Can't.

*Writing*

BEATRICE:  
But how will I get home?

OTTAVIO:  
Gondola!

*Writing*

BEATRICE:  
But who...?

OTTAVIO:  
Get someone to accompany you.

*Writing*

BEATRICE:  
But whom can I get...

OTTAVIO:  
The devil for all I care!

*Writing*

BEATRICE:  
That's right, fly into a rage!

*Ottavio continues writing*

BEATRICE: (cont'd)  
There's no living with you!

OTTAVIO:  
Hold your tongue!

*Writing*

BEATRICE:  
What fine breeding! I will leave without you then!

OTTAVIO:  
Go! Go! Do me this service and go.

*Writing*

BEATRICE:  
You are writing to a woman.

OTTAVIO:  
No. I told you. A business associate in Padua!

BEATRICE:  
Really, what's the business?

OTTAVIO:  
He's a tailor and I'm seeing if he can fit me.

BEATRICE:  
It shouldn't be difficult. You are of average build.

OTTAVIO:

*Thinks*

Are we talking about the same thing?

BEATRICE:  
I think so.

OTTAVIO:  
Signora, would you be so kind as to leave me alone!

BEATRICE:  
Everyone knows I am a prudent woman.

OTTAVIO:  
Signora, si!

*Writing*

BEATRICE:  
Everyone knows I am a delicate woman!

OTTAVIO:  
Signora, si!

*Writing*

BEATRICE:  
Everyone knows I am a woman of honor!

OTTAVIO:  
Signora, si!

BEATRICE:  
Everyone knows you are mad!

OTTAVIO:  
Signora, si! You are making me so.

BEATRICE:  
Come with me for once?

OTTAVIO:  
Signora, no!

*Writing*

BEATRICE:  
Shall I stay home?

OTTAVIO:  
Signora, no!

*Writing*

BEATRICE:  
Then I'm off!

OTTAVIO:  
Signora, si! Signora, si! Signora, si!

Scene 2

*Enter Brighella*

BRIGHELLA:

*To the Marchesa. She tries to silence him.*  
Milady, the Count has arrived to escort your Ladyship to the assembly.

OTTAVIO:

Oh, the Count has arrived. Good. You have someone to accompany you after all. All a part of your machinations, I presume.

BEATRICE:

You have your associate for business, I have my count for conversation.

Well, sir, anything to say?

OTTAVIO:

Signora, no!

BEATRICE:

Goodbye, then.

*(to the audience, changing her tone)*

I'm off and I don't need any urging. As the saying goes, what's good for the goose is good for the gander. If this the game that we agree to play, then where there's no harm there's no foul.

*Starts to exit then returns to ad lib the "foul" pun.*

I'm coming count.

Scene 3

OTTAVIO:

Porca Miseria!

*He give her the I don't care gesture.*

I can't bear the sight of her! The sound of her voice! Her very aura drives me to distraction! And she would have me Jealous? It should make me mad three times over before I get jealous: mad because it is not handsome to be a bully, mad because I don't love her, and mad because jealousy is no longer in fashion.

Brighella, have you seen Bettina?

BRIGHELLA:

Excellency, yes. I gave Bettina the message but I'm afraid you'll find little success with her.

OTAVIO:

Why?

BRIGHELLA:

She's too high minded.

OTTAVIO:

Well what is her parentage?

BRIGHELLA:

Her mother died many years ago. Her father was Master of a schooner, but he is also dead, and now she has neither father nor mother.

OTTAVIO:

Who looks after her, then?

BRIGHELLA:

A married sister of hers, Signora Caterina, the Cat, meow, a wife of one, Arlecchino, a rough fellow with a tongue like a bell clapper, ding dong, always wagging.

OTTAVIO:

We might manage a meeting through them.

BRIGHELLA:

Your Excellency shall leave it to me. I'll speak to Signora Caterina, meow. She's shrewd and will see the advantage of an alliance with Your Excellency.

OTTAVIO:

Bettina has ensnared my heart and I will not rest until I have her. What if I offer to take her under my protection?

BRIGHELLA:

She's already under the protection of a certain merchant, a Pantalone de Bisognosi, ca-ching.

OTTAVIO:

A merchant will make way for a Marchese.

BRIGHELLA:

Your Excellency, I've learned something else. She's in love...

OTTAVIO:

Porca Miseria!

BRIGHELLA:

...with Pasqualino, son of Menego, your Excellency's gondolier.

OTTAVIO:

Ah. Good. Good. Does he return her love?

BRIGHELLA:

He's head over heels, whoop.

OTTAVIO:

Then this marriage might well be brought about ...yes, yes. Go along, call Menego and tell him I want to speak with him.

BRIGHELLA:

At once, Excellency.

*Exits*

Scene 4

OTTAVIO:

I'll talk to his father and see if I can get this Pasqualino in my service. Once I have him, I'll be one step closer to getting Bettina, in my service as well.

MENEGO:

Your Excellency, you have called for me.

OTTAVIO:

Tell me, are you content with your employment?

MENEGO:

Oh Yes! Your Excellency! My pay is wonderful! I couldn't ask for more. I mean, it's not too much. I'm not overpaid by any stretch. It's just right. Your Excellency treats me well. You, you are a man of heart, made in the Veneziano mold, generous and kind. For you, sir, I would stand in the gondola all day, under the hot Veneziano sun, without food or drink for days and days. But for your wife, the Marchesa, pardon my saying so, but she's another story. At the crack of dawn, it starts with, "Quick Menego, in the boat and fetch the hairdresser." Or, "Hurry, fetch the doctor! the mistress needs her purging!" After breakfast, it's back in the gondola taking the mistress all over Venezia. After dinner in the piazza it's "Quick, Menego, take me to Il Ridotto for a game of cards." Then in the evening, it's "Quick, Menego take me to the theatre." Then back home, then back out for the night, and never a half ducat for a thank you.

OTTAVIO:

*Feigning sympathy*

Menego, I feel for you. It's too much for one man to do. If only you have a son that I can employ as your assistant?

MENEGO:

I do.

OTTAVIO:

You do?

MENEGO:

Excellency, I do, but... I want him to follow in my footsteps but he has no knack for it. The first time he tried to stand in the boat he fell overboard, head over heels.

OTTAVIO:

*Aside*

I hear he does that a lot.

*To Menego*

Couldn't you teach him?

MENEGO:

I've tried, but he does nothing except play the gentleman! Everybody who knows him says he's nothing like me. And there are scoundrels who go so far as to make a remark about it, do you catch my meaning?

OTTAVIO:

Tsk, tsk.

MENEGO:

But I don't pay them any mind. My wife, Donna Pasqua, is the perfect wife. Full of love and dutifulness. It's a shame she's no longer with us.

OTTAVIO:

I'm sorry Menego, I had no idea, when did your wife die?

MENEGO:

She didn't. I expect her back tonight. She's visiting her family on the Isle of Pelestrina.

OTTAVIO:

Oh, well, send me your son. I want to meet him.

MENEGO:

Very good, sir. No orders for the boat?

OTTAVIO:

No.

MENEGO:

Very good sir.

*Exits*

OTTAVIO:

Oh, Bettina! You have stolen my heart and my mind is infected with thoughts of how I must have you! I have lost all sense! If I bring her into the house, I will get nothing but vexation from my wife. What to do? What to do? Aha! I'll contrive to marry her to the son of Menego... For now... Enough. Money will solve everything. *Argent Fait tout.*

*Exit*

Scene 5

*Street view of the balcony of Bettina's house*

BETTINA:

Oh, my beloved sun! How I long for the caress of your rays on my soft skin. What would I do without this balcony? I would die of melancholy without this balcony! I would be forced to suffer leaving the safety of the house, where the gossips' barbs prick my delicate composition. How they like to chatter about Signore Pantalone and his visits. Oh that dear old man, he helps me out of charity and the kindness of his heart. He has promised to find me a husband! But if he doesn't choose Pasqualino, I shan't marry at all and die an old maid. Oh, there I see Pasqualino now. With his adorable face and his lithe physique. One look from him and the blood begins to quicken through my veins.

Scene 6

*Enter Pasqualino wearing a Veneziano tabard.*

PASQUALINO:

There is my love. How beautiful. Her radiance makes the sun pale in comparison. Her smile glistens like the Veneziano waters on a bright spring day. Her eyes sparkle like the flames of a thousand candles in the night. Like Venus riding to shore on her giant shell, Bettina stands upon her balcony, for all the world to gaze at her beauty, to admire her splendor, to worship

(MORE)

PASQUALINO: (cont'd)  
her heavenliness, to stare at, to leer at, to whistle at, to call to, and to blow kisses to. Please, my love, go inside immediately! Why do you flaunt yourself and entertain the ogling of men?

BETTINA:  
Well, that's a fine way to talk to the girl you love! I'm here waiting for you! I can't help it if other men look at me.

PASQUALINO:  
But I don't like you to sit on the balcony. It's so ... cliche!

BETTINA:  
But if I'm not here and you walk by, I won't see you!

PASQUALINO:  
If I pass by and don't see you, I'll knock. Why must you anger me so?

BETTINA:  
Why must you anger me? Is that why you came here, to start a fight a with me?

PASQUALINO:  
No. I want to come in.

BETTINA:  
You can't come in!

PASQUALINO:  
Why not?

BETTINA:  
Because good girls don't do that sort of thing.

PASQUALINO:  
Well, what does that say about me? That I am a rogue, a delinquent, a trouble maker?

BETTINA:  
No, of course not, you are a good and honest man. I only mean that honorable maids don't receive lovers in the house!

PASQUALINO:  
Well, where do they receive them?

BETTINA:  
They don't receive them anywhere.

PASQUALINO:

How am I supposed to woo you if I can't see you?

BETTINA:

You're seeing me now!

PASQUALINO:

But you are miles away!

BETTINA:

It's only 16 feet.

PASQUALINO:

When one is separated from their love, 16 feet may as well be 'twixt here and the heavens.

BETTINA:

I love it when you wax poetical!

PASQUALINO:

So I can come in?

BETTINA:

No!

PASQUALINO:

But Isabella allows Flavio in her house.

BETTINA:

They are betrothed.

PASQUALINO:

And Flaminia allows Orazio in her house.

BETTINA:

She wears his promise ring.

PASQUALINO:

And Lavinia allows Antonio, Aurielo, Bassanio, Cinzio, Fabrizio, Federico, Fulvio, Leandro, Luigi, Mario, Ortensio, Renato, Sireno, Silvio, Tristano, Valentino, and Ugo into her house?

BETTINA:

I'm going to let you think about that.

*He thinks for a moment*

PASQUALINO:

Oh, yes, I see. I guess she's not a good example, is she?

BETTINA:  
No.

PASQUALINO:  
No. Sorry. But when will I be permitted to enter?

BETTINA:  
You must first give me a token of your promise to wed me.

PASQUALINO:  
I can give it to you now!

BETTINA:  
You have to ask for me first.

PASQUALINO:  
Who am I to ask?

BETTINA:  
Whom.

PASQUALINO:  
Yes.

BETTINA:  
What?

PASQUALINO:  
Who am I to ask?

BETTINA:  
Whom.

PASQUALINO:  
Yes.

BETTINA:  
What?

PASQUALINO:  
Who am I to ask?

BETTINA:  
No. WHOM am I to ask.

PASQUALINO:  
You have to ask someone?

BETTINA:  
No. You do.

PASQUALINO:

Yes, I know. What I don't know is who?

BETTINA:

Whom.

PASQUALINO:

What?

BETTINA:

Whom. The correct... Never mind. I have neither father nor mother. So you'll have to ask my sister, Catte.

PASQUALINO:

Yes, of course.

BETTINA:

And you will also have to ask Signor Pantalone.

PASQUALINO:

Why must I ask him? What claims has he on you?

BETTINA:

He has no claim on me, he's only my benefactor and has promised to provide me with a dowry.

PASQUALINO:

Oh, I see. I see what kind of girl you are. Using your feminine guiles to lead him on so he'll give you money. Allowing him in the house, I bet, whilst I, your true love, withers away, outside, in the cold.

BETTINA:

It's June. In Venezia! And how dare you imply that I behave like a common courtesan! I am no jezebel! I am an honorable girl!

PASQUALINO:

I'm sorry my love. Of course, you are an honorable girl. I didn't mean to imply that you are anything but honorable. I just get so jealous when I think of another man being with you, alone, inside your house.

BETTINA:

You must know that I look at Signor Pantalone as a father. He has nothing but the best intentions for me. He took me in when my parents died and raised me as his own. His feelings for me are pure. But wait, I hear my sister coming. I'll ask her to go down to the street and talk to you.

PASQUALINO:

Wonderful! I will speak with her willingly.

BETTINA:

Wait here.

PASQUALINO:

I'll wait for you 'til the end of time.

BETTINA:

*Aside*

I'm not so foolish as those other girls. They let the boys in, the boys get what they want and leave, and then what do those girls have to show for it, but a bad reputation. But I, a girl who has nothing but her honor, must hold it as dear as any treasure.

*Bettina exits*

PASQUALINO:

Oh, my Bettina is the most beautiful, intelligent, and honorable girl in all of Venezia. Nothing is more important to her than her honor, and nothing is more important to me than her, so I must honor her honor and hold it as dear to me as she does.

Scene 7

*Enter Catte looking up at the sky.*

CATTE:

I don't like the look of that.

PASQUALINO:

I beg your pardon?

CATTE:

The sky. It looks like rain. Who are you?

PASQUALINO:

Your humble servant, Pasqualino Cainello. Good day to you, Signora Catte.

CATTE:

Good day to you, Signor Pasqualino.

PASQUALINO:

Were you looking at the sky?

CATTE:

Yes. I'm worried for my sister.

PASQUALINO:

Your sister, why?

CATTE:

Well, my sister Bettina just did the laundry. And if it's going to rain it's bad news for her.

PASQUALINO:

Why bad news for her?

CATTE:

You know the old adage,

"When the girl does the laundry and the sunshine's above,

There's no truer sign of her lover's true love."

So if it's going to rain, it means that her lover is taking his love for her lightly and playing games with her heart.

PASQUALINO:

I can assure you that her lover would never take his love for her lightly nor play games with her heart.

CATTE:

And how can you be so sure?

PASQUALINO:

Because I know him as well as I know myself.

CATTE:

You do?

PASQUALINO:

I do.

CATTE:

Is he handsome?

PASQUALINO:

Well... some would say so.

CATTE:

Well, that doesn't sound too promising! Is he smart?

PASQUALINO:

Um...he's been known to get himself out of a fix or two.

CATTE:

Has he been in a fix or two?

PASQUALINO:

Not very big ones.

CATTE:

Well, that means he must not be willing to take risks if they haven't been big fixes. Is he a coward?

PASQUALINO:

No, no, no. Not a coward at all. He is brave. He's very brave.

CATTE:

Ooh. How many men has he killed?

PASQUALINO:

Oh, three or four.

CATTE:

Three or four?!

PASQUALINO:

Uhhhh...Not different men. Uh...The same man three or four times.

CATTE:

How can that be?

PASQUALINO:

Oh, I can't go on any longer. It's me?

CATTE:

Bettina's lover has killed you three or four times?

PASQUALINO:

No. I'm Bettina's lover.

CATTE:

How did you kill the same man three or four times?

PASQUALINO:

I didn't. I was too embarrassed to tell you that I was Bettina's lover so I was trying to make myself sound better.

CATTE:

Oh, so you were trying to pull the wool over my eyes, were you? Thought you could fool me, did you?

PASQUALINO:

No. I promise you. My intentions are good and pure.

CATTE:

And what are they?

PASQUALINO:

I want to marry Bettina and make her mine for the rest of my days.

CATTE:

*Softening*

Aw, it's so sweet when you wax poetical.

PASQUALINO:

Thank you.

CATTE:

*Changing her tone back*

Your father is the gondolier to the Marchese, is he not? What does he think of this?

PASQUALINO:

I haven't told him yet.

CATTE:

And how do you propose to take care of her?

PASQUALINO:

Well, my father wants me to follow in his footsteps, but I don't wish to be a gondolier. I would like to open a cafe.

CATTE:

A cafe? That's a terrible idea! They're piled on top of each other like dead bodies at the height of a plague. No, no, that won't do.

PASQUALINO:

Or maybe a pizzeria?

CATTE:

You have got to be kidding? Those are worse than cafes. Next, you're going to tell me you want to open a gelateria?

PASQUALINO:

I was going to sell gelato in the cafe.

CATTE:

Ma che cavolo! There's a novel idea! You are not the crustiest ciabatta in the bread basket, are you?

PASQUALINO:

I'm not sure I know what you mean.

CATTE:

Exactly. Listen, I think you're sweet, sincere, good looking, a little dim, but very charming, and by the simpering I hear coming from the balcony (*A simper is heard from above*) I think you would make my sister very happy. But, I can't have her marry someone who can't provide for her.

PASQUALINO:

Oh no! What am I to do? If I can't have Bettina for my wife, I'll just ... faint!

CATTE:

Wow. Let's not be so hasty. I'll go talk to my sister and then to Signor Pantalone. You go and buy Bettina a nice ring and get me my commission of two hundred ducats, and everything will turn out fine.

*Aside*

I feel sorry for him. I feel sorry for all young men. They're so wide-eyed and unsuspecting. He is handsome, though. If Bettina doesn't play her cards right, she might be needing to find another suitor. He does make one lose their heart, doesn't he?

*Exit*

PASQUALINO:

*Aside*

Ah, dear, sweet, kind hearted, Signora Catte. She's a real peach. Two hundred ducats are no small sum for someone with no job and no allowance, but I'll find a way to pay for it. We'll have to cut back on the wedding. A nice, simple dress with gloves and a hat; Wedding party? Nada. Honeymoon? Zip. You know what they say? "*The bread of the idiot is the first thing eaten.*"

### Scene 8

BETTINA:

So, what do you think of Pasqualino? Isn't he a dream walking the earth?

CATTE:  
Eh.

BETTINA:  
Doesn't his smile just light up the room?

CATTE:  
Eh.

BETTINA:  
Doesn't his voice sound like a chorus of angels?

CATTE:  
Eh.

BETTINA:  
Is that all you can say, "eh?"

CATTE:  
Eh.

BETTINA:  
Did he ask for my hand in marriage? What did you say?

CATTE:  
I said we'd see.

BETTINA:  
What do you mean, "we'll see." What's there to see about?

CATTE:  
He has no job nor any prospects. I can't have my sister marry a man like that.

BETTINA:  
You did!

CATTE:  
What?! How dare you speak to me that way!

BETTINA:  
Well, it's true. Your husband has no job and you've been married for 16 years. At least my suitor is pure and honest. The baker's wife told me the story about how you and Arlecchino got married, and I won't allow myself to stoop as low as you did to get a husband.

CATTE:  
Why you little minx. With your airs and your honor. I'll whoop you for speaking to me that way.

BETTINA:

The only one who has the right to whoop me is looking down from the heavens.

CATTE:

I've been like a mother to you all these years. I feed you, I dress you, that gives me the right to box your ears.

BETTINA:

Oh yes, you feed me and clothe me with the money that Signor Pantalone brings me. And you use the money to feed and clothe yourself and your husband.

CATTE:

What's wrong with that? If he's going to come to my house and bore me with stories of his "salad days," why shouldn't he pay?

BETTINA:

You best be careful. If he catches on to you, he won't come around anymore. And then you won't be able to get your hands on any money.

CATTE:

There are other ways to get money.

BETTINA:

What do you mean?

CATTE:

The Marchese is so deep in love with you, I bet we could milk a small fortune out of him. The other day, he was there in the piazza, and all of the other girls were looking at him, trying to catch his eye, but he only had eyes for you. Did you see how much gold was woven into his cape?

BETTINA:

I don't care. I'll have none of him. Let the devil have him.

CATTE:

C'mon Bettina, show some guile, girl!

BETTINA:

And you, show some good judgment!

CATTE:

Don't get all high and mighty with me. Are we to see the goslings lead the goose to drink?

BETTINA:

Yes, Signora! Yes, we are. If the goose has no brains!

CATTE:

Shshshsh! If the sound of wheezing and coughing in the distance means anything, it means that your old man is close by.

BETTINA:

Good. I'm glad he comes to see me. He treats me better than you do.

CATTE:

Yeah, and everyone knows why!

BETTINA:

One who does evil believes in evil, dear sister of mine!

Scene 9

*Enter Pantalone*

PANTALONE:

Hello, ladies, it's me, Pantalone. May I come in?

BETTINA:

Of course, Signore Pantalone. Please come in.

CATTE:

Our house is like a museum, there's always room for more antiques.

PANTALONE:

Huh?

BETTINA:

Ignore my sister, Signor Pantalone. I do.

PANTALONE:

How are you dear, child? Are you well?

BETTINA:

Yes, very well. And you? How are you doing today?

PANTALONE:

At my age, it's no use complaining. I'm as well as someone as old as I can be.

CATTE:

Signor Pantalone, don't say such foolish things. You, old? Why, with that spring in your step, and that youthful smile, and your boisterous laugh, you don't

(MORE)

CATTE: (cont'd)

look a day over 40. And for your charity, I'll run out of praise for you. Why, where would we be without your support? My husband earns nothing. We women, earn next to nothing. Before you came along, we didn't know where to find our next meal. You came from the heavens. The heavens sent you to help us. The gods be praised.

BETTINA:

*Aside to the audience*  
She's such a liar!

PANTALONE:

My dear girl, where I can help, let me know. Now take this half ducat and buy something.

CATTE:

Oh, bless you. The heavens will reward you. Stay, make yourself at home. Bettina has something important that she wants to talk to you about. I'll go to the butcher and buy a chicken. Good day to you, you kind, kind man.

(For a half ducat, one would more than make a fool out of an old man.)

*Exits*

Scene 10

*Pantalone and Bettina alone in the house*

PANTALONE:

*Aside to the audience*  
That woman leaves Bettina alone in the house with a man? I can tell that the girl is not well cared for. I will put an end to this.

BETTINA:

Are you tired? Won't you sit down?

PANTALONE:

Yes, I will. Please join me and have a seat next to me.

BETTINA:

Well, I have to finish darning the socks.

PANTALONE:

Put the work away and let's have a little chat. There are few things I would like to discuss with you.

BETTINA:

I can talk and work at the same time.

PANTALONE:

Brava my girl. You are very industrious. But, tell me, do you wish to stay forever in your sister's house?

BETTINA:

Oh no, Signor Pantalone, certainly not.

PANTALONE:

What would you like to do?

BETTINA:

Well, I'm a bit ashamed to say it.

PANTALONE:

Don't be ashamed. You can tell me anything. We've grown quite close over the years, have we not?

BETTINA:

Yes, Signor Pantalone. You are a dear old friend.

PANTALONE:

Not that old. I mean, you heard Catta say that I could pass for a man of forty.

BETTINA:

Yes, well... an honorable girl shouldn't be the one to broach the subject.

PANTALONE:

*With growing excitement*

Ooh! Please do go on. I think I might have an idea as what you're hinting at.

BETTINA:

You do?

PANTALONE:

Yes. We've been together for such a long time, that we are beginning to think alike.

BETTINA:

We are?

PANTALONE:

Yes. We've developed a psychic bond.

BETTINA:

We have.

PANTALONE:

Yes! And our hearts are beating as one?

BETTINA:

They are?

PANTALONE:

Yes. And now we will speak aloud what we have each been brought together to say.

BETTINA:

Ok.

PANTALONE:

You're in love!

BETTINA:

I'm in love!

BETTINA: (cont'd)

Yes!

PANTALONE:

And you want to get married!

BETTINA:

And I want to get married!

BETTINA: (cont'd)

Yes!

PANTALONE:

As soon as possible!

BETTINA:

As soon as possible!

BETTINA: (cont'd)

Yes!

PANTALONE:

To me!

BETTINA:

To Pasqualino!

BETTINA: (cont'd)

What?

PANTALONE:

To me. You're in love and you want to get married as soon as possible to me.

BETTINA:

No.

PANTALONE:

No?

BETTINA:

No. I'm in love and want to get married as soon as possible to Pasqualino.

PANTALONE:

Who?

BETTINA:

Pasqualino. Messer Menego's son.

PASQUALINO:

The boatman's son?

BETTINA:

Yes. Did you think...? (*Gasp*) But you're so much older than I. You've always been like a father to me.

PANTALONE:

Yes, well, that does make things a bit more awkward, doesn't it?

BETTINA:

How could you think that I would want to marry you?

PANTALONE:

We've grown so close over the years. I took you in when you were just a little girl, and I've watched you grow into a beautiful woman. You've always been so kind to me.

BETTINA:

That was out of respect for your care and generosity. You don't mean to tell me, that all these years, you've been so kind and generous, just to groom me to become your wife?

PANTALONE:

No. No. No. I've only thought of you in that way recently. Around the time that I offered to give you a dowry, it occurred to me that if I married you I could save the 200 ducats that I promised.

BETTINA:

What? You want to marry me to save 200 ducats?

PANTALONE:

Yes. I mean no. I mean that would be a bonus. I want to marry you because I love you. And you said you loved me.

BETTINA:

I meant as a father.

PANTALONE:

Yes, well, that's clear to me now.

BETTINA:

How could I love you like THAT? You're so old and feeble and decrepit...

PANTALONE:

But Catte said I look like I could pass for forty...

BETTINA:

She was just buttering you up!

PANTALONE:

So I'm just a joke to you? A doddering old man to make fun of?

BETTINA:

No. I am genuinely grateful for how you take care of us and that you promised to provide my dowry. She was only trying to make you feel good.

PANTALONE:

Look, I now know that you are in love with this Pasqualino, but what kind of life can he give you? Does he have a profession?

BETTINA:

No.

PANTALONE:

Does he own any property?

BETTINA:

No.

PANTALONE:

Does he receive some kind of commission or endowment?

BETTINA:

No.

PANTALONE:

My dear girl, how will you live? If you marry me, I can provide for you; you can live with me and be the mistress of the house, buying whatever you want for furnishings. Wear the finest clothes, eat the best foods, drink the best wines...

*Under his breath*

I mean within reason. We don't to go crazy now...

*Back to a normal voice.*

(MORE)

PANTALONE: (cont'd)

You said yourself that I am old and decrepit. I am not long for this world and when I'm gone I'll leave everything to you and then you can marry whomever you want. C'mon, what do you say? Can you make an old man happy in the waning days of his long and arduous life?

BETTINA:

Signor Pantalone, I am thunderstruck and discombobulated that you would suggest I prostitute myself in such a manner...

PANTALONE:

That's not what I ...

*She cuts him off with a gesture and sound*

BETTINA:

Sh! I am an honorable maid and to marry for any reason other than true love, would turn me into a common harlot. Is that what you want of me?

PANTALONE:

I wasn't suggesting...

*She cuts him off with the same gesture and sound*

BETTINA:

Sh! Is it?

PANTALONE:

I only meant...

*She cuts him off with the same gesture and sound*

BETTINA:

Sh! Is it?

PANTALONE:

No.

BETTINA:

No. You don't. I know that I run the risk of losing your friendship and the dowry that you promised to provide, but I cannot marry you and will only marry my Pasqualino.

PANTALONE:

I see that you, of course, are right and I apologize for my behavior. I hope that you can accept my love in friendship. As for the dowry, I made a promise to provide that for you and I intend to keep my promise.

(MORE)

PANTALONE: (cont'd)  
I will be on my way.

BETTINA:  
My dear Pantalone, of course, I can accept your love in friendship. I do hope you'll come and pay me a visit soon.

PANTALONE:  
Thank you, my dear, that is very kind of you. If you don't mind, I will call on you tomorrow.

*He exits.*

Scene 11

BETTINA:  
I cannot believe the gall of Pantalone. I could never marry for anything but love. Other women may marry for money or comfort, but those choices only lead to ultimate sorrow. I will only marry Pasqualino because I love him. I love the way I feel when I'm with him. I love the way he looks at me. I love the way I feel when I am in his arms, the way we fit together. I want to be by his side as he endeavors to make his way in the world, to give him the supports that he needs. And he wants the same for me.

*Enter Catte, feigning concern*

CATTE:  
Oh, sister! Oh, it's terrible! Oh, who left the door open?

BETTINA:  
What's wrong? Has something been stolen?

CATTE:  
Nothing's been stolen, but someone came in?

BETTINA:  
Who? Thieves? Murderers? Scoundrels?

CATTE:  
No. Remember I told you about the Marchese that has his eyes on you?

BETTINA:  
Yes.

CATTE:  
Him.

BETTINA:  
Him?

CATTE:  
Yes, him!

BETTINA:  
Why, that cocky, overweening, ass. Send him away?

CATTE:

*Obviously faking*  
I can't. I'm just terrified of what he might do! Ahhh!  
I hear him coming up the stairs now!

Scene 12

*Enter Ottavio*

OTTAVIO:  
Hello Ladies. Charmed, I'm sure.

CATTE:

*Courtesies low to him*  
Your Excellency.

OTTAVIO:  
You are Signora Caterina, are you not?

CATTE:  
Yes, your Excellency.

OTTAVIO:  
They call you The Cat, do they not?

CATTE:  
Yes, your Excellency!

OTTAVIO:

*Making a seductive cat noise*  
Meow!

CATTE:  
Yes, your Excellency.

OTTAVIO:  
Why don't you salute me?

CATTE:  
Oh, you know young people... Always so shy around the nobility. They never know what to do.

OTTAVIO:  
 Good day to you, bella signorina.

BETTINA:  
*Giving a quick curtsey and turning away*  
 Excellency.

OTTAVIO:  
 Why are you so rude to me?

BETTINA:  
 I behave as I am made.

OTTAVIO:  
 You are made to be easy on the eyes, so you should be  
 easy with your behavior.

BETTINA:  
 You shall find that I am not as easy as you may have  
 hoped.

OTTAVIO:  
*Aside to the audience*  
 Her scorn makes me want her even more.

BETTINA:  
*Aside to the audience*  
 His arrogance makes me want to punch his face!

OTTAVIO:  
 Why thank you, Signora Caterina.

CATTE:  
 What for?

OTTAVIO:  
 That cup of coffee you're about to offer me.

CATTE:  
 Was I about to offer you a cup of coffee?

*Ottavio nods*

CATTE: (cont'd)

*Catching on*  
 Oh, yes, would your Excellency like a cup of coffee?

OTTAVIO:

I would relish a cup of coffee.

CATTE:

But we're out of coffee.

OTTAVIO:

I passed a cafe on the corner. Send to the barista and have him bring some coffee.

CATTE:

Yes, your Excellency. Right away your Excellency.

BETTINA:

*to Catte, under her breath*  
No, no, don't go. You can't leave me here alone with him.

CATTE:

I'll be right back your Excellency.

OTTAVIO:

And have some biscotti brought.

CATTE:

Yes, your Excellency.

*To the audience*  
Cookies! How refined these gentlemen are. And dreamy!

*Exits*

Scene 13

BETTINA:

*Aside to the audience*  
Thanks a lot, Catte!

OTTAVIO:

Well, Bettina, now we are alone. Here, come sit next to me.

*He sits*

BETTINA:

I'm fine standing.

OTTAVIO:

Why do you want to stand?

BETTINA:

Standing is good for you. It builds one's resolve. I find that people who sit all day lack fortitude.

OTTAVIO:

*Standing*

Then I'll join you on your feet.

BETTINA:

*Sitting*

I'm suddenly feeling very tired.

OTTAVIO:

*Moving towards her*

Are those bracelets gold? May I see them?

BETTINA:

*Moving away from him*

Your lordship can play with his own bangles.

OTTAVIO:

There is no need to act that way.

BETTINA:

If your lordship doesn't like it he can leave.

OTTAVIO:

Do you want me to leave?

BETTINA:

I wanted you to leave before you walked in.

OTTAVIO:

Don't you know what I can do for you?

BETTINA:

What can you do for me?

OTTAVIO:

I can make your fortune.

BETTINA:

Oh, my fortune. Why didn't you say so before? I suppose you're prepared to spend a few ducats on me and then expect me to fawn all over you?

OTTAVIO:

I'm prepared to spend more than a few ducats. What would you like Bettina?

*Pulling a set of diamond earrings from his pocket*  
Do you like these earrings?

BETTINA:  
You can wear them yourself.

OTTAVIO:  
They're diamonds, you know.

BETTINA:  
I don't care a fig what they are.

OTTAVIO:

*Pulling from a different pocket*  
How about this gold necklace to go with your bracelets?

BETTINA:  
How about you wrap it around your neck and hang yourself?

OTTAVIO:  
I see, too simple.

*Pulling from a back pocket*  
Would you like this string of pearls?

BETTINA:  
No!

OTTAVIO:

*Opening his jacket to show a cutlery set hanging from the lining.*  
What about this silver cutlery set?

BETTINA:  
What would I do with that?

OTTAVIO:

*Pulling a piece of paper from the inside pocket from the other side of his jacket*  
You can use it to entertain while at the Villa on the Riviera. All I have to do is sign this deed and it's yours.

BETTINA:  
And I suppose that all of these offerings are meant to make me your wife?

OTTAVIO:

My wife? Dear God, no. I already have a wife.

BETTINA:

You already have a wife?! Then what do you want from me?

*He starts to answer*

Don't answer that. I know what you want and I'm not that kind of girl.

OTTAVIO:

What kind of girl are you?

BETTINA:

An honorable maid that will marry for love or not marry at all.

OTTAVIO:

I can get you a husband.

BETTINA:

I don't need you for that.

OTTAVIO:

I know that you're in love with Pasqualino.

BETTINA:

So.

OTTAVIO:

He's the son of my gondolier.

BETTINA:

What's that to me?

OTTAVIO:

I know that he has no job nor any prospect of a job.

BETTINA:

So?

OTTAVIO:

Give me what I ask for and I'll give him a job.

BETTINA:

Never.

OTTAVIO:

I can give you a dowry.

BETTINA:

I already have one.

OTTAVIO:

From Pantalone de Bisognosi? You will accept his gifts but not mine?

BETTINA:

His generosity doesn't come with strings attached.

OTTAVIO:

Doesn't it?

BETTINA:

Pantalone is a dear, old man that has known me since childhood. No one can think ill of his generosity. And if they do, it is more of a reflection on them than on me or him.

Scene 14

*Enter the coffee boy.*

COFFEE BOY:

May I come in, your Excellency? I have coffee and cookies for you.

OTTAVIO:

Yes, do come in. Put it down there.

COFFEE BOY:

Yes, sir.

*He puts down the coffee and cakes and then stands expecting a tip.*

OTTAVIO:

Come, Bettina, and have some coffee and cookies with me.

BETTINA:

I don't want to and you can't make me.

OTTAVIO:

Don't be contrary. It angers me when people are contrary to my wishes.

*Noticing the boy*

What do you want? Didn't Signora Catte pay you?

COFFEE BOY:

Yes.

OTTAVIO:  
Well?

COFFEE BOY:  
Tip?

OTTAVIO:  
Tip? What's your name boy?

COFFEE BOY:  
Lorenzo, but people call me Enzo.

OTTAVIO:  
Well, Lorenzo that people call Enzo, here's your tip:

*Giving him money*

If you give someone a ducat and never see that person again, it was probably worth it. Do you understand?

COFFEE BOY:

*HE shakes his no*

Yes.

OTTAVIO:  
Sure you do. Now get out of here before I lose my temper.

COFFEE BOY:  
Yes, sir. Thank you, your Excellency.

Scene 15

*Enter Arlecchino*

ARLECCHINO:  
What have we here?

OTTAVIO:  
Who are you?

ARLECCHINO:

*Puffing himself up*

I am the master of the house!

OTTAVIO:  
Signora Caterina's husband?

ARLECCHINO:  
Yes. Who are you that you know my wife?

OTTAVIO:

I am the Marchese di Ripa Verde. It is a pleasure to meet you.

ARLECCHINO:

*Changing his tone and bowing deeply.*

Oh, your Excellency, it is an honor to have you in my home. To what do we owe the pleasure?

BETTINA:

*an aside to the audience*

He's such a fool.

OTTAVIO:

I am here paying a visit to your sister in law.

ARLECCHINO:

I'm sure she's treating you well?

OTTAVIO:

On the contrary, she refuses to sit with me and drink the coffee and eat the cookies for which I sent.

ARLECCHINO:

My goodness, Bettina! Why don't you want to sit and drink and eat with the Marchese?

BETTINA:

Because I don't want coffee or cookies.

ARLECCHINO:

Well, that puts us in a jam, doesn't it? Did you mention that we have jam?

OTTAVIO:

No jam, just coffee, and cookies.

ARLECCHINO:

No jam. Damn.

Well, let's see. If a woman says she doesn't want something, it means she wants something else. And if she wants something else and not the coffee or the cookies, that would be an affront to the Marchese. And we can't have that now, can we?

OTTAVIO:

No.

ARLECCHINO:

So the only option is for me to drink the coffee and eat the cookies.

*He takes the coffee and cakes and begins dunking the cakes in the coffee.*

OTTAVIO:

Bravo! You have a good appetite, my friend.

BETTINA:

I hope you eat yourself to death!

ARLECCHINO:

Is there anything else Arlecchino can help you with?

OTTAVIO:

Actually, there is. But I must speak with you alone.

*Aside*

It will be better for me to work on him. He has some authority over his sister-in-law.

ARLECCHINO:

Bettina, will you be so kind as to step out of the house?

BETTINA:

I don't want to!

ARLECCHINO:

*To Ottavio*

It seems she doesn't want to step out. Well, there's only one thing for us to do, the two of us will go out.

*Giving orders*

Bettina, you stay here!

BETTINA:

I will!

ARLECCHINO:

*Taken aback*

Right this way, your Excellency.

OTTAVIO:

As you wish.

*To Bettina, taking her hand to kiss*  
Arrivaderci Bettina.

BETTINA:

*Pulling her hand away*  
Ciao, your Excellency.

OTTAVIO:

Still so rude.

BETTINA:

Still so constant.

OTTAVIO:

I hope some day to move your heart of stone.

BETTINA:

I hope some day to remove you from my sight.

OTTAVIO:

Until then, I leave my heart with you.

BETTINA:

I would rather you simply leave.

OTTAVIO:

*to Arlecchino*  
Lead the way, my friend.

ARLECCHINO:

Bettina.

BETTINA:

Ass.

*Exit Arlecchino followed by Ottavio*

Scene 16

BETTINA:

Oh us poor, poor girls. If we are common, men don't want anything to do with us. If we're just the slightest bit attractive, they trip all over themselves to get our affections. I don't mean to imply that I'm beautiful, but I do have a certain something that makes them desire me. I could have been married a long time ago if I had wanted to. Even before Pantalone, there were others who said they would take care of me. But I didn't love any of them. I would rather eat bread and drink water with the man I love than eat fillet mignon and drink champagne with a man I despise. I will live under the stairs if I have to, with my Pasqualino.

*Exit*

Scene 17

*On the street with Ottavio and Arlecchino*

OTTAVIO:

Thank you, Signor Arlecchino.

ARLECCHINO:

It is my pleasure, your Excellency. Whatever you need done, Arlecchino is the man for you. And you know where to find me.

OTTAVIO:

That I do.

ARLECCHINO:

I'm sure your Excellency rewards those who serve you well.

OTTAVIO:

That I do. When the job is done.

ARLECCHINO:

Of course, of course.

OTTAVIO:

Then good day to you Signor Arlecchino

ARLECCHINO:

Good day, my lord.

*He starts to exit, then comes back.*

But I'm sure your Excellency understands that some jobs, have the requirement in which a small release of funds at the start of the aforementioned job, in order to grease the wheels of the afore aforementioned job, to initiate the commencement of the afore... before..aforementioned job.

OTTAVIO:

I merely asked you to talk some sense into her.

ARLECCHINO:

Yes, but you know how girls can be. In order to talk some sense into them you need to loosen them up with food and wine, and cakes and cookies, and lavish gifts like new boots and fine walking sticks and snuff boxes and the like.

OTTAVIO:

*Obviously playing into his lie.*

Oh, I didn't realize that young ladies appreciated such things.

ARLECCHINO:

How could you? That's why you hire Arlecchino.

OTTAVIO:

So true, so true. Well then, here is a small advance.

ARLECCHINO:

Thank you, my lord. You are so kind. Until tomorrow.

OTTAVIO:

Until tomorrow.

*Waiting until Arlecchino is out of earshot.*

Ass.

*Enter Pasqualino*

PASQUALINO:

Good day, your Excellency. You wish to speak with me?

OTTAVIO:

Who are you?

PASQUALINO:

Pasqualino. Son of Menego. At your service.

OTTAVIO:

Ah, Menego's son. Excellent. My, what a strapping young man. I like you Pasqualino.

PASQUALINO:

You are ver kind, my lord.

OTTAVIO:

Tell me, have you any employment?

PASQUALINO:

No, my lord. Up until recently, my mother has kept me in school, learning how to write, do arithmetic and reading the classics. My father wants me to become a gondolier like him, but I have no stomach for a life on the water.

OTTAVIO:

Arithmetic, did you say?

PASQUALINO:

Yes, Your Excellency. I'm fairly good with numbers.

OTTAVIO:

How are you at bookkeeping?

PASQUALINO:

I've never tried it, but I believe I can pick it up quickly.

OTTAVIO:

Is your handwriting clear?

PASQUALINO:

I've been known to have a supple wrist.

OTTAVIO:

Ok. Well then. I need someone to write my letters and keep the books. I will take you into my service.

PASQUALINO:

Your Excellency, I don't know what to say. You are generous beyond belief.

OTTAVIO:

Come, come. It's nothing. But I must speak to you in confidence, Pasqualino. It is Pasqualino, isn't it?

PASQUALINO:

Yes, my lord. You can be as frank as you wish.

OTTAVIO:

I hear that you are in love. Is this true?

PASQUALINO:

Head over heels.

OTTAVIO:

*Aside*

I've heard that as well.

PASQUALINO:

*Taken by surprise*

Does this create a problem?

OTTAVIO:

No, no. I just don't like the people in my service to be distracted by personal issues. Is she a good girl?

PASQUALINO:

As good as gold, my lord.

OTTAVIO:

And your intentions are pure?

PASQUALINO:

Oh yes, your Excellency.

OTTAVIO:

Good. Then marry her at once. I will pay for everything.

PASQUALINO:

Thank you, my lord.

OTTAVIO:

Where do you plan to live?

PASQUALINO:

I haven't thought of it, my lord. I just found out I was getting married two seconds ago.

OTTAVIO:

Well, I can't have my employees living in the streets. How would that make me look? I have it. You'll live in the house with me.

PASQUALINO:

Thank you, my lord.

OTTAVIO:

Has she a dowry?

PASQUALINO:

Yes, my lord. An old man, that has known her from her youth, has promised 200 ducats.

OTTAVIO:

It's not appropriate for an old man to give her dowry. I'll pay the 200 ducats.

PASQUALINO:

Thank you, my lord.

OTTAVIO:

Thank you, my lord, thank you, my lord. Enough of this.

PASQUALINO:

You have filled my heart with joy to bursting.

OTTAVIO:

It's purely selfish, I assure you. Young men are better workers when their wives are by their sides. Now go find your bride and don't waste any time with the wedding.

PASQUALINO:

Your Excellency, I don't know what to say. I promise you won't be disappointed.

OTTAVIO:

I'm sure I won't.

*Aside to the audience.*

One way or another, Bettina will be under my thumb.

*Exits*

Scene 18

PASQUALINO:

What a wonderful, generous, kind man. I am so lucky to be under the care of such a master. He gave me a job, a means to marry Bettina, a roof over our heads. Is there no end to my good fortunes?

*Enter Menego Cainello*

MENEGO:

Well, look who it is. My featherbrained son, with head in the clouds.

PASQUALINO:

Father! Oh, I have such wonderful news. I have found a job!

MENEGO:

You've become a gondolier!

PASQUALINO:

No, I will be the clerk and bookkeeper to the Marchese!

MENEGO:

What? That's no job for my son! You would turn your back on the work of your father, and his father, and his father before him? I know that our work on the water is beneath the work of the poets and mathematicians that you learned about in school. I know that our hands are rougher than the hands of your writers and thinkers. But we gondoliers are an honest sort, trusted by our master and revered by the citizenry. And we would gladly lay our lives down to protect our beautiful Queen of the Sea, our Venezia!

PASQUALINO:

You're right, father. I agree with everything you said, and you should be proud to be gondolier, and I am proud of you. I just cannot follow in your footsteps.

MENEGO:

If it's not in your heart, you can learn it. I can teach you. No one is born a master. A man can do anything he sets his mind to.

PASQUALINO:

I know. But I have no mind for it. Father, I have something else I must tell you. The Marchese wishes me to marry.

MENEGO:

The Marchese wishes it? What about your father? Am I nothing to you? Does my opinion on when my son should and shouldn't get married count for anything? How are you going to pay for it? Where will you live?

PASQUALINO:

You needn't worry father, the Marchese has promised to pay for everything. And after the wedding he said we can live with him.

MENEGO:

You stupid boy. They filled your head with a lot of nothing in that school of yours. Don't you see what's going on here? He's not doing this out of the kindness of his heart.

PASQUALINO:

I know. He told me.

MENEGO:

He told you? And you went along with it?

PASQUALINO:

Of course. He said that employees are better workers when their wives are by their sides.

MENEGO:

You really are dumb. No! He wants you and your wife under his roof so that he can...

*Menego looks to Pasqualino to see if he understands but he doesn't. Menego hints some more. Nothing from Pasqualino. Menego makes nonspecific gestures with his hands.*

PASQUALINO:

So he can do puppet theatre with us.

MENEGO:

Noooo!

*More specific nonspecific gestures*  
(MORE)

MENEGO: (cont'd)

So, in the middle of the night...he can sneak downstairs...and...

PASQUALINO:

Get a midnight snack?

MENEGO:

Yes, except it won't be a prosciutto panino he's nibbling on.

PASQUALINO:

Uh..Tiramisu? I don't follow you.

MENEGO:

Shut up! Us gondoliers wouldn't go for a marriage like that. Our wives are honest. We eat polenta, but it's cooked in our own kitchens and eaten in our own homes. We work hard, but we work with honor, and nobody can say anything against us. Now get this through your thick skull: you're not getting married and I don't want to hear another word about it. Get ready for a life in a gondola or a life staring down the mizzen mast.

*Exits*

PASQUALINO:

Which means in good Veneziano, "Do as I say or I'm shipping you off to the navy." But patience. If the Marchese wants it, it has to be.

I must go and tell Bettina of the good news.

*Exits. End of Act 1*

ACT 2Scene 1

*A street with a view of the canal and the House of Donna Pasqua. A gondola arrives filled with vegetables, Donna Pasqua, and two gondoliers.*

DONNA PASQUA:

Here! Here! You idiot. Just pull up over here.

*Calling to the house*

Hey, Menego! Where are you? Come out and help me with the groceries?

*Pasqualino exits the house*

PASQUALINO:

Mother! Is that you?

DONNA PASQUA:

Yes. Come here and help your mother.

*Helps her disembark the gondola with a lazzo.*

PASQUALINO:

How was everything in Pelestrina? Did you have a good trip?

DONNA PASQUA:

Yes, yes, my son. *(pinching his cheeks)* Faccia bella.

*Giving commands to the gondoliers*

Hey, you, don't just stand there, unload the boat of the vegetables I brought back.

*To Pasqualino*

I brought the stuff to make your favorite dinner: Zucca Barrucca with Bigoli Pasta!

PASQUALINO:

Thank you, mamma, but I don't think I can eat a thing.

DONNA PASQUA:

Oh, my poor boy, what's that matter?

PASQUALINO:

If you only knew the problems Pappa and I have had while you were away.

DONNA PASQUA:

I can't go away for 24 hours without the two of you getting into a fight. What happened this time?

PASQUALINO:

The Marchese wants to give me a position in his household but papa won't let me. He just wants me to be a gondolier like him, but I don't want to be a gondolier! I can't be a gondolier! I have no passion to be a gondolier! I won't be a gondolier! I won't! I won't! I won't!

*Donna Pasqua comforts Pasqualino*

DONNA PASQUA:

Ok, ok, ok, calm yourself.

PASQUALINO:

I want to open a cafe, and roast my own coffee, and serve food and everyone will come to drink my special roast.

DONNA PASQUA:

Sh, sh, calm yourself, sh, sh. (*Pasqualino begins to calm down*) You can open a cafe. Let your mamma take care of everything. Your father is mad. I'll handle him.

*Pasqualino getting upset again*

PASQUALINO:

And I want to get married to, but he won't let me do that either!

*Comforting Pasqualino*

DONNA PASQUA:

Sh, sh, sh, sh. Ok, ok, ok. Calm down. Mamma will take care of everything. Do you have someone in mind?

PASQUALINO:

Bettina. She's pretty and nice, and sweet, and she doesn't let other men in her house, and she loves me, and (*breaking down*) I want to marry her.

*Continuing to comfort Pasqualino*

DONNA PASQUA:

Sh, sh, sh, sh. Ok, ok, ok. Calm down. I know her. She is a good girl.

PASQUALINO:

And nice, and pretty...

DONNA PASQUA:

I know, I know. Sh, sh, sh. You go and plan for the wedding, I'll take care of everything.

PASQUALINO:

But papa won't let me!

*Begins crying again.*

DONNA PASQUA:

I told you, your father is mad. A boy your age needs to get married. If not they... never mind. I'll take care of everything.

PASQUALINO:

You will?

DONNA PASQUA:

Of course, I will. I know how to handle your father.

PASQUALINO:

Oh mamma, your the best mamma a boy could ask for. It's true what they say, "Nothing is stronger than the love a mother has for her son."

DONNA PASQUA:

I know. I know. Now go and start planning the wedding with Bettina.

PASQUALINO:

Oh, mamma, she'll be so happy that you approve.

*He exits. Then Returns.*

PASQUALINO: (cont'd)

Can you still make the Zucca Barucca?

DONNA PASQUA:

Of course, my dear.

PASQUALINO:

With the bigoli pasta?

DONNA PASQUA:

Wouldn't make it without it.

PASQUALINO:

Thank you, mamma. You really are the best! Nice melons!

DONNA PASQUA:

*She pulls two melons out from her fruit basket.*  
Thank you. I got them for desert.

PASQUALINO:

*Sniffing the melons.*

(MORE)

PASQUALINO: (cont'd)  
Fresh.

*Squeezing the melons*  
And firm.

DONNA PASQUA:  
Only the best for you, son. Now go.

*Pasqualino Exits*

Scene 2

*Alone*

DONNA PASQUA:  
Oh, poor boy. It's so true, he has no knack for being a gondolier. If I didn't know better, I would say that he had none of his father in him.

Scene 3

*A gondola arrives from the distance, forcing its way onto the dock.*

LELIO:  
Wonderful! Wonderful! I love to row!

TITA:  
Good, good. Keep it up. Pay attention to the current.

DONNA PASQUA:  
*Aside*  
Look at that spoiled, rich stronzo, out rowing, acting like it's some sort of game. Instead of hard work. He is easy on the eyes, though.

TITA:  
You have a lot to learn about rowing, but you pick it up fast. It looks like you're a natural.

LELIO:  
In Livorno, there's a part of the city we call New Venezia because there are several canals leading to the seaport. I love to row. I would have an oar in my hand all day.

DONNA PASQUA:  
*Aside*  
I wouldn't mind having his oar in my hand all day.

TITA:

But you say that you're a Veneziano?

LELIO:

Most certainly. I am the only heir and son of Pantalone de Bisognosi.

DONNA PASQUA:

*Aside*

It can't be.

TITA:

You don't act or dress like a Veneziano. How come?

LELIO:

It's kind of a long story. When I was a baby, my father was on a business trip to Naples and the ship was overrun by Turkish pirates. Because I was the son of a rich merchant, they kidnapped me and held me for ransom. I was then taken to the Emir in Constantinople and was raised as a servant until my father paid the ransom. When I got back, he sent me to Livorno to learn business but I have no passion for that. I just wanted to spend my time rowing, fishing, drinking, fighting and chasing women.

TITA:

You'll be able to do all of that here in Venezia as well. Welcome home. It's all fun and games for you merchants, but we gondoliers have to make a living on the water. If there's nothing else, I have to get back to work.

LELIO:

Tell me, are there any inns nearby?

TITA:

Don't you want to find your father and stay with him?

LELIO:

No, no, no, I much prefer staying at inns and hanging out in taverns. Besides, I don't want him to see me for a few days so I can see the city in peace.

TITA:

But if he sees you, won't he get mad?

LELIO:

No, he doesn't know me nor do I remember him. I told you, I was sent to Livorno when I was very young and this is my first time back in Venezia since then.

DONNA PASQUA:

*Aside*  
My, how he's changed.

LELIO:

C'mon, amico mio, let's go get a drink and have some fun. I have a thirst to die for and hunger for adventure. Tell you what, I'm not going to pay you yet. Let's play cards first. If you win I'll pay you double. If I win, you pay for drinks.

*Exits*

TITA:

I guess cards is one of the virtues that he forgot to mention that he learned in Livorno.

*Exits*

DONNA PASQUA:

Lelio back in Venezia. I haven't seen him since I was his nursemaid. But there's something about him... it's probably nothing.

*Exits*

Scene 4

*A street. Pantalone enters.*

PANTALONE:

I can't get Bettina out of my mind and put my love for her to rest. The harder I try, the harder I get...entangled with my feelings. How could I not fall in love with her? I have known her since she was a child. I have held her in my arms all of these years. I have looked into those beautiful eyes countless times. The straw nearest the flame has to catch fire. Am I right? I am a man after all. Full of vim and vigor. Does not my heart pump hot blood that courses through my veins?

*Thumps fist against chest and coughs.*

The primal desire awakens, and it is often found that opportunity makes the thief.

*Enter Pasqualino*

PASQUALINO:

Good day to you sir. Might I bother you for a moment?

PANTALONE:

I know what you want. You want to marry Bettina.

PASQUALINO:

*In total amazement*

Wha..! You've guessed it on the first try.

PANTALONE:

Well, I have two words for you: YOU CAN'T HAVE HER!

PASQUALINO:

That's four words. Five if you count the contraction as two words ...

PANTALONE:

SHUT UP! You little twerp. You are a man that has no bread for his basket. No pasta for his plate. No salad for his saucepan.

PASQUALINO:

Why would you put salad in a saucepan?

PANTALONE:

I don't know and I don't care. All you need to know is that you can't marry Bettina.

PASQUALINO:

Yes, I can.

PANTALONE:

No you can't.

PASQUALINO:

Yes I can.

PANTALONE:

No you can't.

PASQUALINO:

Yes I Can. The Marchese has just given me a position in his house.

PANTALONE:

Really? What position is that? Face down, ass up?

PASQUALINO:

NO. Clerk and bookkeeper. And I'll be living in his house.

PANATLONE

Oh great! And while you're living there, your wife will be living at home, doing who knows what with who knows who.

PASQUALINO:  
Whom.

PANTALONE:  
What?

PASQUALINO:  
No, who knows whom.

PANTALONE:  
  
*More emphatically.*  
Who knows who?

PASQUALINO:  
Whom. The correct grammar is...

PANTALONE:  
Who cares what the correct grammar is. You shouldn't leave your wife alone at home like that.

PASQUALINO:  
I won't. The Marchese said she can live there as well. The Marchese has thought of everything.

PANTALONE:  
He most certainly has. Is it possible for you to be that dumb?  
  
He wants you and your wife under his roof so that he can...

*He makes nonspecific gestures with his hands.*

PASQUALINO:  
So he can do puppet theatre with us.

PANTALONE:  
Noooo! So, in the middle of the night...he can sneak downstairs...and...

*More nonspecific gestures*

PASQUALINO:  
Get a midnight snack?

PANTALONE:  
Yes, except it won't be a biscotti he'll be nibbling on.

PASQUALINO:  
Tiramisu?

PANTALONE:  
No. I won't give her to you.

PASQUALINO:  
I'll tell the Marchese.

PANTALONE:  
Go tell the Pope for all I care.

PASQUALINO:  
You'll see what he says.

PANTALONE:  
You'll see what happens.

PASQUALINO:  
She's not your not daughter.

PANTALONE:  
She'll never be your wife.

PASQUALINO:  
Oh, yes she will!

PANTALONE:  
Oh, no she won't!

PASQUALINO:  
Will!

PANTALONE:  
Won't!

PASQUALINO:  
Signor Pantalone, don't tempt a desperate man.

PANTALONE:  
What! Do you think I'm afraid of a ninny like you! I eat men like you for lunch, with a side of roasted vegetables in a balsamic glaze, paired sweetly with a glass of dry Lambrusco. Beautiful. I may be old, but there's still a fire in my belly. And my legs still have strength to kick!

PASQUALINO:  
Kick me?

PANTALONE:  
Kick you, you rascal.

*Pantalone begins kicking and biting Pasqualino. As Pasqualino attempts to get away from the old man, Pantalone takes off his slipper and begins hitting and Chasing Pasqualino with the slipper.*

PANTALONE: (cont'd)  
 If I can't kick you with my foot in it, at least I can  
 hit you with it.

Scene 5

*Enter Ottavio*

OTTAVIO:  
 Hey, there old friend, leave my man alone or you will  
 have me to contend with.

PANTALONE  
 "Old Friend?!" Who the hell are you? The prince of  
 Parma?

OTTAVIO:

*Proudly*  
 I'm the Marchese di Ripa Verde.

PANTALONE

*Mockingly*  
 OOh. I'm Pantalone de Bisognosi!

OTTAVIO:  
 Ah! Pantalone! Just the man I wanted to see. Aren't you  
 the guardian of Bettina?

PANTALONE:  
 Yes.

OTTAVIO:  
 You should know, then, that the young girl is to be the  
 wife of my bookkeeper.

PASQUALINO:  
 Told you so!

PANTALONE:  
 She's to be his wife?

OTTAVIO:  
 She is.

PANTALONE:  
 Marchese, go and do your dictating in you own  
 Marquis-land...Marchi-pality...Markdom...whatever you  
 call it.

OTTAVIO:

Listen, the girl is happy, the boy is happy, I'm happy.  
You mustn't stand in their way!

PANTALONE:

I must and I will! I can prevent it because I'm her guardian and I'm providing the dowry, and I swore that I would see her well married. And this ass doesn't understand what wolf den he's agreed to sleep in. But I do. And I'm going to make sure that no biscotti are nibbled on as a midnight snack. I think my lordship understands me well enough.

PASQUALINO:

*(To Ottavio)*

Could you explain it to me because I don't get all of these food references.

PANTALONE:

Let it be known, that although I'm old and a merchant, I know how to handle myself in a duel, whether it be with pistols, guns, fists, slippers, what you will. Let. It. Be. Known.

*Pantalone tries to put his slipper back on.*

Scene 6

OTTAVIO:

That old buffoon. I should have him beaten.

PANTALONE:

I right here.

OTTAVIO:

Do you need any help?

PANTALONE:

No, I'm good.

OTTAVIO:

Are you sure?

PANTALONE:

Yes.

*Exits.*

OTTAVIO:

But tell me Pasqualino, do you truly love Bettina?

PASQUALINO:

Yes, I do. I only have eyes for her.

OTTAVIO:

Really?

*Points to woman in audience*

What about her?

PASQUALINO:

No!

*To woman*

Nothing personal.

OTTAVIO:

*Points to another woman*

Or her?

PASQUALINO:

Nope.

OTTAVIO:

Really? She's very attractive.

*To woman*

Hello. How are you? I'm fine. As you can see. What are you doing after the show?

PASQUALINO:

Excuse me. Was there a reason why you asked if I truly love Bettina?

OTTAVIO:

*To Pasqualino*

What? Oh, yes.

*To woman*

Pardon me. We'll talk later.

*To Pasqualino*

Go straight to her and marry her right away. Then take her to my palace and leave everything else to me.

PASQUALINO:

But what if she's unwilling?

OTTAVIO:

Good god, man! Do you want to marry her or not? Are you going to let a little thing like her willingness stop you?

PASQUALINO:

Well, yes, I mean, without her willingness, isn't it just kidnapping?

OTTAVIO:

Back in my day, we didn't have these fears.

PASQUALINO:

Well, times do change and we...

OTTAVIO:

Stop this wavering at once. Go and marry her, or I'll have you beaten and thrown in jail and I'll marry her off to someone else.

PASQUALINO:

Yes, your lordship. Right away.

*Exits.*

Scene 7

OTTAVIO:

If I can get this simpleton to follow through with the marriage, my plan to have Bettina will all come together. Once they're in my house, I can handle Pasqualino. But Pantalone could get in my way. And on top of that, to mock me? Threaten me? Am I one to live with such an insult? Never. I'll have my revenge. I'll show him what happens to a merchant that dares to threaten the Marchese di Ripa Verde.

*Enter Lelio, drunk.*

LELIO:

Oh, my heavens! What wonderfully, delicious wine they have here in Venezia. I've always heard that Veneziano wine isn't very good, in fact, we have a joke in Livorno. It goes like this. "How is Veneziano wine like having sex in a gondola? They're both like making love close to water." *(laughs hysterically, then stops suddenly)* No, that's not it. How does it go?

OTTAVIO:

Here's someone who might be able to help. *(To Lelio)* Good evening, sir.

LELIO:

Your Excellency's most humble servant.

OTTAVIO:

Are you new to this city?

LELIO:  
Yes, sir. From Livorno.

OTTAVIO:  
And what is your profession, in Livorno?

LELIO:  
Vagabondage.

OTTAVIO:  
Huh?

LELIO:  
Vagabondism.

OTTAVIO:  
Huh?

LELIO:  
Vagabondary. Whatever you call it. I'm a vagabond.

OTTAVIO:  
Ah. Yes. A wonderful profession.

LELIO:  
Yes, sir. The best. One of the oldest too. I wouldn't want to do anything else. It's a calling, really.

OTTAVIO:  
And how do you do this "vagabondary."

LELIO:  
Well...most people thinks it just comes naturally. But in order to be truly good at something, one must apply oneself.

OTTAVIO:  
I can imagine.

LELIO:  
And there is a veritable cornucopia of ways to express your vagabondage.

OTTAVIO:  
Really?

LELIO:  
Yes...

OTTAVIO:  
I didn't know that?

LELIO:  
Of course... There's drink...

OTTAVIO:  
Oh?

LELIO:  
Women...

OTTAVIO:  
A weakness of mine as well.

LELIO:  
Really?

OTTAVIO:  
Yes. But do go on.

LELIO:  
Let's see, drink, women, oh, how could I forget?  
brawling...

OTTAVIO:  
Of course.

LELIO:  
And my personal favorite, gambling.

OTTAVIO:  
Are you good at it?

LELIO:  
I'm good at losing.

OTTAVIO:  
Really?

LELIO:  
I am a great loser. One of the best. What, with all  
the practice I have at it, I should be.

OTTAVIO:  
Forgive my forwardness, but are you in need of some  
money.

LELIO:  
No. I need a lot of money. Why this month alone, I've  
lost 100 ducats, my sword, my clothes, my linens, my  
horse... All I have now is what you see here.

OTTAVIO:  
Would you have any problems beating up an old man for a  
few guinea?

LELIO:  
How old?

OTTAVIO:  
Somewhere between antique and ancient.

LELIO:  
Well, if he were younger and able to put up a fight, my going rate is a bit higher, but since he's that old...I can do it for a few guinea.

OTTAVIO:  
Excellent. Oh, and look where he comes now. How lucky for us. Now, don't kill him. Just a good beating. When you're done, come find me at the cafe around the corner and I'll pay you. Oh, and make sure that you tell him the Marchese di Ripa Verde sends his regards.

*Exits*

Scene 8

LELIO:  
I guess I could do worse than earn a couple of guineas. But here he comes, the poor old man. I feel sorry for him.

*Enter Pantalone*

PANTALONE:  
(*Aside*) I got a letter from Livorno that my son is arriving today. What is keeping that good for nothing?

LELIO:  
(*Aside*) If I pounce on him without warning, I'm afraid I'll scare him to death. I better break it to him gently. (*To Pantalone*) Your devoted servant, sir.

PANTALONE:  
Sir.

LELIO:  
I would like a couple of words with you, sir. If it's not too much of a bother.

PANTALONE:  
Yes?

LELIO:  
I'm a gentleman, you see, sir.

PANTALONE:

*(With sarcasm)* I guessed that as soon as I saw you, sir.

LELIO:

Thank you. Well, the Marchese di Ripa Verde sends his regards to you.

PANTALONE:

Oh, I see what's going on now.

LELIO:

Yes, well, confidentially, he's paying me to give you a beating.

PANTALONE:

How much is he paying you?

LELIO:

Two guineas.

PANTALONE:

That's it?

LELIO:

Times are tough.

PANTALONE:

I'll tell you what. I'll give you three guinea to say you couldn't find me.

LELIO:

That wouldn't do. He saw you walk up and he pointed you out to me.

PANTALONE:

Four guineas.

LELIO:

I gave my word. And what's a man, if his word means nothing? No, come on. I'll give four hits only, you fall down, and I'll be on my way.

PANTALONE:

Never! The great Pantalone de Bisognosi could never endure such an insult.

LELIO:

Are you Pantalone de Bisognosi?

PANTALONE:

The one and only!

LELIO:

*(aside)* My own father. What am I to do?

PANTALONE:

*(Aside)* Aha! My very name strikes fear into his heart!  
*(To Lelio)* Get out of here or I'll punch you full of holes.

LELIO:

Forgive me, sir.

PANTALONE:

Forgive you? I oughta rip your bowels out and jump rope with your intestines!

*Lelio Exits running off.*

Scene 9

PANTALONE:

Run away, will you? You can't outrun me, you rat!

*Goes after Lelio*

*Enter Tita, stopping Pantalone*

TITA:

Whoa! Whoa! Whoa! Signor Pantalone, where are you going in such a huff?

PANTALONE:

Let me go! Let me go! I'll kill him! I'll rip his lungs out! I'll remove your liver and kidneys and dance the Tarantella on them!

TITA:

Who are you after?

PANTALONE:

That coward, there, running away from me!

TITA:

What's he done to you?

PANTALONE:

Insulted me. Threatened me.

TITA:

But don't you know who he is?

PANTALONE:

No! How could I know that ragamuffin?

TITA:  
That's your son, Lelio.

PANTALONE:  
What? My Lelio? That can't be?

TITA:  
He arrived from Livorno this morning on the ship with the mail. You know...

BOTH:  
The Sail Mail.

PANTALONE:  
Well, that's a fine son. Does he come and see his father after being away for years and years? No, what does he do instead? He plays the rascal and cut throat. What a disgrace! And I spent all that money on his education! Oh, the agony! I'll have him put in chains! I'll have him swinging from the gallows! Why did I pay his ransom? I should have left him there to work the oars on a Turkish galleon! Go after him and bring him to my house. Tell him I'm not mad, I just want to talk to him! Don't let him get away! Don't let me down. Oh, what a son!

*Exits*

TITA:  
I guess the nut doesn't fall far from the tree. I'll not get involved. As the old proverb says, "Let him who has the itch, do the scratching."

*Exits*

Scene 10

*Bettina's Room*

BETTINA:  
What am I to do? Pasqualino doesn't want me sitting in the open on the balcony, but if I wait for him inside I may not hear him when he comes by. Being in love is torture. Every night I dream of him. Every waking moment I think of him. When he's not with me my heart aches so profoundly that I wish the earth would crack and swallow me whole. When he's here my hearts does somersaults and feels as though it will burst from my chest. But alas my poor heart, I cannot see a day when we can be together. The currents of this world are pushing too hard against us. I can't elope with him, that wouldn't be right. What am I to do?

*Pasqualino knocks from offstage*

PASQUALINO:

Bettina. Are you there? Where are you, my love?

BETTINA:

Who let you in? It's not proper for you...

PASQUALINO:

Please forgive me for bursting into your house like this, but it is important. I need you to come with me.

BETTINA:

Slow down, slow down. What is going on...

PASQUALINO:

Now is not the time to argue. My father is against us. Signor Pantalone is against us. But I have a way for us to be together. Just come with me and all will be well.

BETTINA:

Where are we going? What are we to do? Travel the world and sing in the streets for our supper?

PASQUALINO:

I'm taking you to the house of the Marchese.

BETTINA:

Brilliant idea. Why didn't I think of that? Are you crazy? Where did you get that idea?

PASQUALINO:

From the Marchese himself. It was his idea. He's hired me to be his bookkeeper and has taken a great interest in my well being. He even got into a quarrel with Signor Pantalone over this. So he suggested that I come and get you and bring him to his house.

BETTINA:

And what will we do there?

PASQUALINO:

We'll get married and live there. It's been arranged...

BETTINA:

By the Marchese!

PASQUALINO:

By the Marchese!

BETTINA:

Of course, he has. And do you know why he want this?

PASQUALINO:

I told you, he's taken an interest in me and my affairs because I'm his employee, and when employees are happy they do better work.

BETTINA:

No, you idiot. He wants to...

*She makes nonspecific gestures with her hands.*

PASQUALINO:

So he can do puppet theatre with us.

BETTINA:

Noooo! So, in the middle of the night...he can sneak downstairs...and...

*More nonspecific gestures*

PASQUALINO:

Get a midnight snack?

BETTINA:

Yes, except it won't be turkey leg he'll be nibbling on.

PASQUALINO:

Tiramisu?

BETTINA:

No. Me! Me! He'll be nibbling on me!

PASQUALINO:

What would you be doing in the kitchen?

BETTINA:

I won't. I'll be in my bed chamber.

PASQUALINO:

Your bedchamber is in the kitchen?

BETTINA:

No! Why are you fascinated with the kitchen?

PASQUALINO:

You said the Marchese wants a midnight snack.

BETTINA:

You said he wants a midnight snack! I was trying to tell you that in the middle of the night he'll come downstairs, and sneak into my bed chamber, and ...

*She makes hand gestures again*

PASQUALINO:

For the love of god, will you people stop making hand puppets and just tell me what's going on?

BETTINA:

*(Exasperated)*  
He'll ravish me.

PASQUALINO:

No?

BETTINA:

Yes!

PASQUALINO:

No?

BETTINA:

Yes!

PASQUALINO:

Yes?

BETTINA:

Yes!

PASQUALINO:

But how can you be sure?

BETTINA:

He came to me today and tried to seduce me and he offered me expensive gifts in exchange for my body. And now he's plotted to have me live under his roof so he can take me whenever he wants.

*She falls in a heap weeping*

PASQUALINO:

Why that no good, low down, dirty, rascalion. Now I see it. How could I have been so stupid? And to think, I trusted him. I was hoodwinked by the promise of a job. He told me he liked me and that he would take care of me. I feel so used.

*He falls into a heap, weeping*

BETTINA:

How am I to defend my body?

PASQUALINO:

How am I to break free of his charms?

BETTINA:

How can I go on after I've been violated?

PASQUALINO:

How can I go on after I've been lied to?

*Bettina looks at him in astonishment*

PASQUALINO: (cont'd)

How?

*Bettina continues to look at him*

PASQUALINO: (cont'd)

I have it. Let's run away! No one will see us. Grab your belongings and we'll flee the confines of Venezia and face the challenges of the world together.

BETTINA:

I can't leave Venezia without first being married to you. It would be too much of a stain on my honor. I just can't.

PASQUALINO:

But if we stay, Signor Pantalone will marry you to someone else.

BETTINA:

He won't. I will never let him.

PASQUALINO:

My father will send me away from Venezia.

BETTINA:

You'll have to obey.

PASQUALINO:

And you?

BETTINA:

I will wait.

PASQUALINO:

Oh, Bettina. How can we live so far apart?

BETTINA:

We'll have to find comfort in the knowledge that our love is out there in the world loving from afar.

PASQUALINO:

And if we die?

BETTINA:  
Better to die than lose our honor.

Scene 11

*Enter Catte*

CATTE.  
Who's losing their honor?.

BETTINA.  
No one!

CATTE.  
What's all this about dying? Who's going to die?

BETTINA.  
We are going to die if we cannot wed.

CATTE:  
Why can't you wed?

PASQUALINO.  
My father won't have it.

BETTINA.  
Pantalone won't have it.

PASQUALINO:  
The Marchese would have it, but he wants it for himself.

BETTINA:  
And we can't run away, because that would be a stain on our honor. So there's nothing left for me do but die.

PASQUALINO:  
And for me to join the navy.

CATTE.  
The two of you are as helpless as new born babes. Do I have to think of everything? Pasqualino, did you get the engagement ring?

PASQUALINO:  
Yes.

CATTE:  
Did you get my commission?

PASQUALINO:  
Yes.

CATTE:

Good. Give it to me and give the ring to Bettina, and tomorrow morning you can go to the church and be married.

PASQUALINO.

Bettina, I give you this ring as a symbol of my endless love for you.

BETTINA.

Your love for me?

PASQUALINO:

For you.

BETTINA:

That ring?

PASQUALINO:

This ring.

PASQUALINO.

Give me your hand.

BETTINA.

*Giddily*

I can't. It's too much.

PASQUALINO.

How do you expect me to put the ring on your finger if you won't give me your hand?

BETTINA:

I'm nervous. What do you expect from me? I've never done this before.

CATTE.

Come here, come here. Like this...

*(Helps Pasqualino to place the ring on Bettina's finger.)*

PASQUALINO.

My love!

BETTINA:

My love!

PASQUALINO:

Kiss me.

BETTINA.

I can't.

(Coyly)  
Away you villain!

PASQUALINO.  
But we're betrothed.

BETTINA.  
But we're not married yet.

CATTE.  
My goodness! Have we a betrothal here and no celebration? Let's have a little fun. No one's around. Pasqualino do you have any money?

PASQUALINO.  
I have nothing but a couple of silver ducats.

CATTE.  
Well, I guess that's something. I'll get us a little Prosecco and a few biscotti. Give me the ducats and leave everything to me. Cin-cin for the betrothed! Cin-cin for the betrothed!

Scene 12

*Enter Arlecchino*

ARLECCHINO.  
Bravo! Cin-cin for the betrothed!

CATTE.  
Shut up! No one must know about it.

ARLECCHINO.  
Well, aren't we going to have a party with lots of food?

CATTE.  
Well, this whole thing's been done all upside down and backwards, so for the time being, we can't do anything.

ARLECCHINO.

*To Pasqualino.*

So, you come into my house to do things all upside down and backwards, do you? No party? Nothing to eat? I'm going to tell your father what a lousy son he has. I'm going to tell Signor Pantalone what a bum his ward is marrying. I'm going to call the whole town so that everybody knows that you, you good-for-nothing, came into my house, to marry my sister-in-law, without bringing a party or anything to eat.

BETTINA.

Oh, you conniving ass! Do use a little sense.

ARLECCHINO.

Sense? Where there's no food there's no sense. That's the truth.

PASQUALINO.

You'll be our ruin.

ARLECCHINO.

I don't care.

*He goes towards the window.*

Ehi! Folks! Know that in my house...

BETTINA.

Hush!

CATTE.

Hush!

ARLECCHINO.

*Out the window.*

In my house here, there's a...

PASQUALINO.

Shut your mouth for pity's sake!

ARLECCHINO.

There's a betrothal and no celebration or food!

BETTINA.

Hush!

CATTE.

Hush!

ARLECCHINO.

He's marrying my sister-in-law. It's Pasqua...

PASQUALINO.

Here, take this ducat, and shut up!

ARLECCHINO.

Hush!

BETTINA.

Are you satisfied?

ARLECCHINO.  
Hush!

CATTE.  
You'll not make any more noise?

ARLECCHINO.  
Hush

PASQUALINO.  
Are you satisfied to have me stay here?

ARLECCHINO.  
Hush, hush, hush! You are the new master now. Make yourself at home and all is well.

*Exit*

CATTE.  
Well, that's all settled.

PASQUALINO.  
Yes, but now I don't have any ducats. Since, Arlecchino took away my last one, would you be so kind as to give me back the ducat I gave you?

CATTE.  
  
*Pretending to be called away by a neighbor.*  
Oh, Signora, are you calling me? I'm coming I'm coming. You stay here Pasqualino. I'll be back in a minute

*Exits.*

Scene 13

*Pasqualino goes to kiss Bettina and she pushes him towards the door.*

PASQUALINO:  
Do you refuse me, even now? And want me to leave?

BETTINA:  
Of course, I do.

PASQUALINO:  
But haven't I given you an engagement ring?

BETTINA:  
Yes, but...

PASQUALINO:

Can't I stay with my fiancé?

BETTINA:

Of course, my love. If we weren't alone. If there were a chaperone, you could stay all day.

PASQUALINO:

But we're engaged now. No one cares if we're alone together.

BETTINA:

But I care. My mother, rest her soul, used to say to me, "Bettina, remember, your honor is like an egg. Once it's cracked, you can't put it back."

Scene 14

*Enter Catte*

CATTE:

Ragazzi! Ragazzi! Quick, run, hide! Signor Pantalone is here.

BETTINA:

I told you to leave! And you wouldn't leave! Now, what are we to do?

PASQUALINO:

Where is he?

CATTE:

He's coming by gondola. He's pulling up to the dock now.

PASQUALINO:

What shall I do?

CATTE:

Quick! Hide here.

*Pasqualino hides behind the coat rack.*

Scene 15

*Throughout this scene, Bettina and Catte, maneuver Pasqualino around the room, out of the sight of Pantalone, until he is able to jump from the window onto the street below.*

*Pantalone calls from off stage*

PANTALONE:

Hello, child, where are you?

CATTE:

We're in here Signor Pantalone.

BETTINA:

His cloak?

CATTE:

What?

BETTINA:

Pasqualino's cloak is on the back of the chair.

CATTE:

Here.

*She tosses the cloak to Bettina*  
Throw it out the window.

PASQUALINO:

*Sticking his head out*  
No! That's my good cloak!

*Catte shoves his head back under cover.*

CATTE:

Shush!

*Bettina throws the cloak out the window.*

*Enter Pantalone.*

PANTALONE:

Hello, my dear. What are you doing by the window?

CATTE:

She's checking the weather.

PANTALONE:

*Hanging his coat on the coat rack.*  
The weather can't be that fascinating. What holds your attention so? Let me see.

BETTINA:

Well? Do you see anything interesting?

PANTALONE:

Yes. There's a nice cloak floating in the canal.

PASQUALINO:

*Sticking his head out*  
What?

CATTE:

*Shoving his head back and clearing her throat*  
What?

PANTALONE:

There's a nice cloak floating in the canal. I wonder who's it could be?

*Catte and Bettina switch places*

CATTE:

That's my husband's. It was drying on the balcony and it must've blown off. Oh well. He can buy a new one.

PANTALONE:

With what money? He doesn't work. Now, Bettina, I have something I want to discuss with you.

BETTINA:

Yes, sir.

PANTALONE:

Your dear Pasqualino has come to see me, to ask for your hand in marriage.

BETTINA:

Well, sir?

*He sees Bettina's ring*

PANTALONE:

Oh-ho! What is this? A ring on your finger?

BETTINA:

*Aside*  
Oh, I'm undone!

PANTALONE:

Let me see that fine jewel. Is it a gift?

BETTINA:

Listen to him. A gift. You hear what he says?

*To Catte*  
Is it a gift?

CATTE:  
No.

BETTINA:  
It isn't?

CATTE:  
No.

*To Pantalone*

BETTINA:  
It's not a gift.

PANTALONE:  
Is it a token of affection?

BETTINA:  
A token. Can you believe him?

*To Catte*  
Is it a token of affection?

CATTE:  
No.

BETTINA:  
No?

CATTE:  
No.

*To Pantalone*

BETTINA:  
It's not a token of affection.

PANTALONE:  
Then what is it?

BETTINA:  
It's a ring...

CATTE:  
It's a ring my husband gave me. Isn't it a beauty?

PANTALONE:  
What'd he do, rob a bank?

CATTE:  
Ha, Ha, ha... no...rob a bank...silly. He inherited it  
from his family in Bergamo.

PANTALONE:

Very well.

*With growing suspicion*

Why is Bettina wearing it if it's your ring that your husband gave you.

CATTE:

Well... when my husband gave it to me, I was much younger, and my hand was much smaller, and now it doesn't fit me...

PANTALONE:

...because you put on all that weight.

CATTE:

...so I let Bettina wear it sometimes.

*Seeing an opportunity to make some money*

You know, I was going to sell it for some extra cash, but since Bettina likes it so much, don't you think we should make it a present for her?

PANTALONE:

Would you like to keep it, Bettina?

BETTINA:

Oh, yes sir, I would. Very much.

PANTALONE:

How much do you want for it?

CATTE:

Well, I was going to sell it to the bread woman around the corner for 20 ducats, but since it's for my sister, I'll sell it for 19 ducats.

PANTALONE:

19 Ducats? I've never heard of a ring costing 10 ducats. Oh well, here's the full price, 5 ducats, and keep the ring for my sake.

BETTINA:

Thank you, Signor Pantalone. You are too kind.

PANTALONE:

I know.

CATTE:

Listen, sister, you must love the one who gave you this ring.

BETTINA:

Of course, I love him.

*Pasqualino pops his head out.*

CATTE:

And it might be that one day you will be his wife.

BETTINA:

*To Pasqualino*

I hope so.

PANTALONE:

What? Do you mean that? With all your heart?

CATTE:

Oh, come now Signor Pantalone. You mustn't expect a commitment after one gift.

PANTALONE:

Of course. Of course. Oh, I almost forgot. I've had a quarrel with that Marchese I told you about. He swore that he would make you his, either by wooing or by force. He has paid a group of men to come here tonight to carry you off. I was warned by one of the men who knows me.

BETTINA:

Oh dear, what are we to do?

PANTALONE:

I have a plan that you and your sister come with me in my boat and I'll take you to your aunt's. You'll stay there until we can figure out what to do about the Marchese. You'll be safe there.

*Pasqualino pops his head out and shakes it to say "no."*

BETTINA:

Uh, no, Signor Pantalone, we can't...

CATTE:

*Seeing the "conversation" between Bettina and Pasqualino*

No, Pantalone's right. Don't waste time with a discussion. Let's go to our aunt's.

*Whispers to Bettina*

Don't worry. We'll have more freedom at our aunt's. I'll get Pasqualino out of here.

PANTALONE:

If we don't leave soon, you'll be ruined. And I'll be ruined as well.

BETTINA:

*Embracing Pantalone long enough for Catte to sneak Pasqualino out the window.*

Oh, dear Signor Pantalone, how can I ever repay your kindness?

*Sees that Pantalone has become exited*  
I'll go and dress for the trip.

*Exits*

PANTALONE:

Well, how about that? That was quite an embrace. Looks like this old fox has a little animal attraction yet.

CATTE:

You know that Bettina loves you deeply, Signor Pantalone.

PANTALONE:

Really? Do you mean it?

CATTE:

Yes, I do, truly.

PANTALONE:

Do you think that in time she might...

CATTE:

Why not? If you keep giving her gifts, like the ring you gave her today... Who knows? Gifts make givers.

PANTALONE:

That's true. I'll spend willingly if I think that someday, Bettina will say yes to me.

CATTE:

You know, we're going to need some things for the trip to my aunt's. A new cloak, some new luggage, snacks to eat on the way. Twenty ducats should cover it.

*Pantalone gives Catte money as they Exit*

Scene 16*The Street. Ottavio and Brighella*

BRIGHELLA:

Your Excellency. I did everything and got nothing. Bettina and her sister are cunning and that house is locked up tighter than a jar of pickled herring. I couldn't get in.

OTTAVIO:

If I can't have her with cunning and charm, I'll take her by force. I'll kidnap her.

BRIGHELLA:

Well, that's one way of getting what you want. It's not very ethical, but you're the boss. The gondola is waiting. It'll be dark soon. If Your Excellency wishes, let us go and make our preparations.

OTTAVIO:

I wish that young rascal from Livorno were here. I could use him on a mission like this.

BRIGHELLA:

The one that you were talking to in the cafe?

OTTAVIO:

Yes. The one I gave the two guinea to rough up Pantalone.

BRIGHELLA:

I remember him. Leave it to me. If I see him, I'll get him on board. Get it? "On Board" Meaning on board the boat, but also "as part of the plan?" Get it?

OTTAVIO:

Are you still here?

BRIGHELLA:

Right. I'm off.

*Exits.*

OTTAVIO:

Once I have her in my house, and she gets a taste of my riches, she'll see what a fool she's been and come to her senses.

Scene 17

*Enter Beatrice and Tita*

BEATRICE:

Quick, quick, quick, get me back on land. I can't stand the motion of the water. I feel myself getting sick with each wave. I'd rather go on foot.

TITA:

Milady, I must leave you for a moment while I tie up the boat.

BEATRICE:

Be quick about it. I don't want to be left here alone.

*Tita Exits*

OTTAVIO:

*Aside*

Here comes my delicate jewel of a wife.

BEATRICE:

*Aside*

There stands a shining example of a husband.

OTTAVIO:

Well, don't you look the lady, walking around Venezia alone and on foot.

BEATRICE:

You know that the water makes me ill. If I hadn't come ashore when I did, I would have died.

OTTAVIO:

*Aside*

Too bad you weren't out in deep sea.

BEATRICE:

*To Ottavio*

My dear husband, will you accompany me to the theatre?

OTTAVIO:

My darling wife, I give you a most hearty, no.

BEATRICE:

You're very disagreeable.

OTTAVIO:

How sweet of you to say.

BEATRICE:

You're going to make me go home, alone, on foot, and with a gondolier?

OTTAVIO:

Where's the count? Where's the rest of your admirers?

BEATRICE:

Don't try to change the subject. I know why you don't want to come home with me. You have some crooked scheme to attend to, don't you?

OTTAVIO:

Please. I have my hands full with the affairs of the house.

BEATRICE:

Oh, yes, "the affairs of the house". Look at the Grand Marchese, strutting around, showing everyone how important he is. I know what you're up to.

OTTAVIO:

What am I up to?

BEATRICE:

I bet it's something with that hussy, Bettina. If I catch her, I'll show her a thing or two.

OTTAVIO:

My good man, please escort the Marchesa home. The night is drawing in and the damp air is not good for her health.

BEATRICE:

Don't act like you're concerned for my health. Besides, we're going to the theatre.

OTTAVIO:

Not I.

BEATRICE:

You won't come?

OTTAVIO:

No.

BEATRICE:

But, you're expected.

OTTAVIO:  
Let them expect.

BETTINA:  
You won't go?

OTTAVIO:  
Truly, no.

BEATRICE:  
But I made a wager that you would go. I've lost 10 guineas.

OTTAVIO:  
Oh well.

BEATRICE:  
But I have to pay them.

OTTAVIO:  
Pay them.

BEATRICE:  
I have no money. You'll have to give me some.

OTTAVIO:  
Your most humble servant.

*Bows extravagantly and exits.*

BEATRICE:  
Well that's a fine way to treat you wife. When a husband behaves as badly as mine does, what is a woman to do? A husband should pay the debts of the wife. It's the honorable thing. He spends money, why shouldn't I spend money? He throws money away, why can't I throw money away. If the household of the Marchese di Ripa Verde is going to crumble, I want to say that I did my fair share in it's demise.

*Exits with Tita*

#### Scene 18

*The Canal. We see Tita's gondola tied up on the other bank. Two gondolas arrive from opposite sides. One is oared by Menego and the other by Nane. Because of Tita's boat, the canal is too narrow for them to pass, and an argument erupts because each demands that the other backs up.*

*This scene will be developed in rehearsal.*

Scene 19

*Pantalone, Catte and Bettina (both veiled in their shawls), disembark from Nane's boat.*

PANTALONE:

As if things couldn't get worse, we got those two idiots. Instead of backing up, they're forcing us to go by land.

MENEGO:

Your Excellency, I think it best you disembark. This pompous ass won't give me the right of way.

NANE:

Go take a shit, you'll feel better.

BETTINA:

I'm so afraid to be out when it's so dark.

CATTE:

Me too. I'll never get in a boat again Signor Pantalone. I might catch a death of a cold on the water. Let's find a place to get a drink and warm up.

OTTAVIO:

Look! It's Bettina and her sister.

PANTALONE:

Why not? That's a good idea.

Scene 20

*Ottavio, Brighella, and Lelio disembark from Menego's gondola.*

OTTAVIO:

Men, seize them and take them back to my house...

*To the audience*

I mean...the secret spot.

BETTINA:

Help, help! Unhand me!

CATTE:

Help! Someone Help!, Fire! Help!

*The grab them and lead off followed by Ottavio.*

Scene 21

PANTALONE:

Help. Help. Someone stop. Stop!

*Pantalone takes off his slipper and starts beating Lelio.*

*Lelio blocks Pantalone's attacks and sees his father.*

LELIO:

*Aside*

Oh, crap. It's my father.

PANTALONE:

*Aside*

It's Lelio!

You! You disgrace of a son! Help me and I'll forgive everything.

LELIO:

Signore, who are you calling son?

PANTALONE:

You, you idiot. Don't you recognize your own father?

LELIO:

Signore, how can I be your son? I'm from Tuscany and you're Veneziano.

PANTALONE:

Aren't you Lelio de Bisognosi?

LELIO:

No. I'm Leonardo di Bissolati.

PANTALONE:

But someone told me that...It doesn't matter.

Scene 22

*Enter Tita*

TITA:

Ciao, Signor Lelio. Just the man I was looking for.

LELIO:

Hush! Damn you!

TITA:  
Signore Pantalone, I see you've found your son.

LELIO:  
(Runs to Tita and tries to hush him.)

PANTALONE:  
My son? Where?

TITA:  
Here.

PANTALONE:  
This is Lelio?

TITA:  
The one and only.

LELIO:  
Oh, why don't you go take Satan for ride on your gondola!

*Exits*

PANTALONE:  
Oh, that rat. Lied to my face! My only son! I'll get even with you! But poor Bettina, like a dove caught by the falcon. What am I to do? And I with that wretch of a son! Oh, poor Pantalone! Caught between love and rage! What do I do? Do I go after my son, or do I rescue Bettina? What do I do, what do I do. I know.

*He pulls out a coins and flips it. Then goes after Bettina.*

*Exits*

### Scene 23

*Tita joins the other gondoliers in the argument of who should give the right of way as ACT II ends.*

*This scene will be developed in rehearsals*

ACT IIIScene 1

*Enter Beatrice in the house of the Marchese.*

BEATRICE:

Oh, damn him, that dirty, rotten, overblown, jackass, husband of mine. Won't help me pay my debts. I had to pawn my jewels! Says it's my fault for gambling in the first place. Well, what does he expect me to do? He won't take me out to dinner, or to the theatre, or to concerts! If he won't entertain me, I have to find a way to entertain myself. It could be worse. I don't run around with other men, much, I mean...

*She hear's Beatrice crying in another room.*

What is that sound? It sounds like crying...a woman crying...coming from inside the palace. He wouldn't dare...Oh, that dirty sack of sh...where's it coming from?

*More cries*

I'm going to find where he's hiding that little tramp, and when I do, I'm going to wrap that trollop in chains and throw the floozy in the canal myself.

*Exits*

Scene 2

BETTINA:

Aye me. What am I to do? I don't know where I am. I don't know who kidnapped me. If only Pasqualino knew where I was. He would save me. He would walk through fire for me, I know he would. I wish Catte were here. She would know what to do. Is there no one else in this house? Help! Help! Won't someone please help? Please?

*The sound of a door being forced open is heard.*

Someone's coming. Who could it be? I hope it's someone kind.

Scene 3

*Enter Beatrice*

BEATRICE:

Who are you?

BETTINA:

A poor girl.

BEATRICE:  
What are you doing here?

BETTINA:  
Nothing.

BEATRICE:  
Who brought you here?

BETTINA:  
I don't know.

BEATRICE:  
Whom are you expecting?

BETTINA:  
I'm not expecting anyone.

BEATRICE:  
Then who the devil are you?

BETTINA:  
My name is Bettina, and I am . . .

BEATRICE:  
You needn't go on. I know you - *my husband's lady love!*

BETTINA:  
I'm no man's lady love. I don't even know who your husband is..

BEATRICE:  
My dear! Don't you know the Marchese di *Ripa Verde*.

BETTINA:  
The Marchese? Is this his house?

BEATRICE:  
It is, indeed.

BETTINA:  
Now I understand everything. It's he who brought me here. Then you are the wife of this Marchese?

BEATRICE:  
Yes. What of it?

BETTINA:  
Your Excellency, please help me, I implore you. I'm a respectable girl. Your ladyship's husband has done everything in his power to get me: woo me...

*She sobs*

(MORE)

BETTINA: (cont'd)  
Flatter me...

*She sobs*  
Shower me...

*She sobs*

BEATRICE:  
What?

BETTINA:  
With gifts. I refused his advances and told him that I would never be with him because I love another. He hired my betrothed to be his bookkeeper, said that he would pay for the dowry, and told my love that we should marry at once and move into your palace so that he could have me under his roof. When every one of his plans failed, he kidnapped me and brought me here.

BEATRICE:  
Can I really believe what you say?

BETTINA:  
On my life as an honorable maid, I swear it's true - and if your ladyship still doubts me, go and ask my betrothed. You are acquainted with him.

BEATRICE:  
Who is it?

BETTINA  
Pasqualino, son of your ladyship's boatman.

BEATRICE:  
He loves you?

BETTINA:  
He does. But the entire world is against us.

BEATRICE:  
Not anymore. I pledge myself to help you. For now, I have to leave the house, and since I'm not going to leave you alone in the house with my husband. You'll have to come with me.

BETTINA:  
Whatever you say, your Excellency. Where are we going?

BEATRICE:  
The theatre.

BETTINA:

Oh, I can't go to the theatre.

BEATRICE:

Why not?

BETTINA:

Good girls don't go to the theatre. No offense.

BEATRICE:

None taken. Would you rather stay here with my husband?

BETTINA:

No.

BEATRICE:

Well, then, you'll have to come with me.

BETTINA:

Very well, your Excellency. How kind you are!

BEATRICE:

I'm not, really. I'm doing it more to get revenge on my husband than to help you.

BETTINA:

Thank you, anyway?

BEATRICE:

Are you hungry? I always like to eat before attending the theatre.

BETTINA:

I'm fine. I would rather just go, before the Marchese finds us here together.

BEATRICE:

Good point.

*The sound of someone walking to the other door is heard.*

Someone's coming.

BETTINA:

That's the door they pushed me through.

BEATRICE:

It's my husband. I can tell from his lumbering gait.

BETTINA:

Quick, through the secret passage.

BEATRICE:  
 No, he'll follow us. Quick, blow out the candles and do everything I tell you to do.

BETTINA:  
 Ok, but I'm so frightened!

BEATRICE:  
 Shush!

*They blow out the candles*

Scene 4

*Enter Ottavio, in complete darkness*

OTTAVIO:  
*Searching in the dark*  
 Bettina? Where are you, my little turtle dove?

BEATRICE:  
*Whispering to Bettina*  
 Answer him.

OTTAVIO:  
 Say something, my love?

BETTINA:  
 Your Excellency.

OTTAVIO:  
 Why have you put out the lights?

BETTINA:  
*Being prompted by Beatrice, which happens every time Bettina speaks in this scene*  
 I'm bashful.

OTTAVIO:  
 I can't find you. Where are you?

BETTINA:  
 Here, your Excellency.

OTTAVIO:  
 Give me your hand.  
*Bettina refuses so Beatrice reaches out with her hand.*  
 Such a delicate, little hand.

*He kisses it.*  
How do you keep it so soft?

BETTINA:  
Aloe, and sheep's dung.

OTTAVIO:  
*Removes his lips from her hand immediately*  
You're not cross with me because I brought you here,  
are you?

BETTINA:  
No, your Excellency.

OTTAVIO:  
My sweet Bettina, that's so much better, isn't it?

BETTINA:  
Yes, your excellency. But I'm beginning to tire of the  
dark. I wish you would go and get some new candles.

OTTAVIO:  
I'll call for one of my servants to bring us some.

BETTINA:  
No! Not that. I don't want anyone to see me, like this.  
Please go yourself. I promise to make the effort worth  
your while.

*Beatrice kisses his cheek and smacks his butt.*

OTTAVIO:  
Oh my! I'll be right back.

*Exits*

BEATRICE:  
He's gone. Quick, go into the other room and wait for  
me there.

BETTINA:  
Yes, your Excellency. I don't know what I would do  
without you.

*Exits*

Scene 5

*Ottavio returns with candle*

OTTAVIO:

Well, here I am . . .

BEATRICE:

What can I do for you, husband dear?

OTTAVIO:

Nothing.

*He looks around the room for Bettina*

BEATRICE:

*Aside*

He's so confused.

*To Ottavio*

What are you looking for?

OTTAVIO:

Nothing.

BETTINA:

Have you lost something?

OTTAVIO:

Uh, yes, I have...lost something.

BEATRICE:

What?

OTTAVIO:

A jewel.

BEATRICE:

You've lost a jewel.

OTTAVIO:

Yes. Very rare and precious.

BEATRICE:

What does it look like?

OTTAVIO:

Um...well...it's radiant.

BEATRICE:

Radiant?

OTTAVIO:  
Yes.

BEATRICE:  
Is it about this tall?

*Signals with her hand*  
And this big?

*Signals with her hands*

OTTAVIO:  
Um..

BEATRICE:  
Well, I've found it, and it's in my possession.  
Husband, dear - you need think better of bringing a  
jewel like that into the house. A wife, such as me, is  
entitled to respect, and ought not to be trifled with.

*She exits into the other room and locks the door*

OTTAVIO  
What just happened? How did she find out about  
Bettina? Where is Bettina? I'm sure it was her I spoke  
with. Ah! the Marchesa has stolen her away from me. I  
must find Bettina before she can be taken from this  
house. Nothing is going to stop me from getting what I  
want.

*Exits*

### Scene 6

*On a street, the same night. Catte, wrapped in a  
long shawl or cape*

CATTE:  
Where am I? With this darkness, I can't see anything?  
I'll have to wait for the moon to come out before I try  
to find my way. Patience, Catte, patience. But what of  
Bettina? Who took her and where did they take her? Oh,  
it had to be that Marchese, I just know it. If only he  
had come to me, we could have worked something out,  
instead of all of this espionage, and me catching my  
death with this cold, damp, air. I just need to make  
sure I don't fall into the canal before the moon rises.  
If only some kind stranger would wander by to help.

Scene 7

*Enter Lelio*

LELIO:

Oh how I love Venezia. The sights, and sounds, and smells. And the women. There are not more beautiful women anywhere else in the world. There's something about them. I could fall in love with each and every one of them. Even the ugly ones are beautiful. With their style, and bright eyes, and smooth skin, and their big, inviting ...smiles.

CATTE:

*Crossing to Lelio. Aside*  
Looks like a foreigner.

LELIO:

*Aside*  
Here's a Veneziana beauty now. My luck is so good in this city. I love it. If only I had some money.

CATTE:

Excuse me sir.

LELIO:

Yes, Signora. What, a beautiful woman, alone?

CATTE:

Yes, unfortunately, to my disgrace.

LELIO:

Why? Did all the other angels fly off without you?

CATTE:

I lost my companion and I can't find my way home.

LELIO:

It look like the stars have aligned to bring us together. May I accompany you?

CATTE:

That would be wonderful.

LELIO:

Have you eaten.

CATTE:

No.

LELIO:

Neither have I.

CATTE:

Would you like to get something to eat?

LELIO:

I thought you would never ask. Where would you like to take me?

CATTE:

Take you?

LELIO:

Yes. You invited me out to eat so where are you taking me?

CATTE:

You want me to take you out?

LELIO:

Yes. I'm a stranger here and I have no money, but since you offered, I don't want to offend you by saying no.

CATTE:

Of course you don't.

*Aside*

I sure did pick a winner.

LELIO:

So, where shall we go. Let's start off with a nice bottle of wine and some antipasto. Then ...

### Scene 8

*Enter Pantalone*

PANTALONE:

You rat! I found you!

LELIO:

*Aside*

Dammit! How does such an old man find me wherever I go?

*Exits*

PANTALONE:

Come back here you lout! Stop him! Stop him... Signora Catte? What are you doing here? Where's Bettina? Why were you with my son?

CATTE:

Oh, signore Pantalone. Thank the heavens you found me. Oh, the fright I've had. Alone and lost in the dark. And my sister gone. Taken who knows where by who knows who.

PANTALONE:

Whom.

CATTE:

What?

PANTALONE:

The correct grammar is...never mind. But what are you doing with my son?

CATTE:

Was he your son? I didn't know. We only just met and I was desperate for help. He offered to accompany me and I said yes.

PANTALONE:

Oh that poor excuse for a son, I'll get my revenge. But for Bettina, I have a feeling it was the Marchese that took her, or possibly, but less likely, Pasqualino, I don't know. It doesn't matter, I've hired men to search them out and tell me their whereabouts.

*He takes a hero's stance*

I swear, we'll have Bettina back by the end of the night if it costs me my entire fortune.

*Thinks.*

Well, not all of it of course. I mean, I'm going to need some to live off of once I've recovered Bettina. And, it will take some wooing, to convince her to marry me, so I'll need some money to buy gifts. The wedding itself will cost a pretty penny, with her dress, my grooms clothes, the dinner, and the cake. If we get married around the holidays, the church will already be decorated, so I can save some money on the flowers. And the honeymoon. Can't forget the honeymoon.

*Another hero's stance*

I swear, We'll have Bettina by the end of the night if it costs me some of my fortune.

*Exits*

Scene 9

Catte, alone.

CATTE:

*Aside*

Well, how do you like that? Can you believe him? I'll be lucky if I ever see my sister again.

*Exits*

Scene 10

*Enter Beatrice, wearing a Bauta mask, and Bettina wearing a morretta mask and a shawl.*

BEATRICE:

I told you, we're going to the theatre, where I'm going to bring you to meet a relative of mine, who will hide you where no one will find you.

BETTINA:

If the Marchese should find me...

BEATRICE:

Believe me, if you're with me, he won't even dare lay one eye on you.

BETTINA:

*Seeing Catte.*

Catte! It's me, Bettina.

CATTE:

Bettina, is that you?

*Bettina lifts her mask slightly.*

*They embrace.*

I've been looking every where for you. What happened?

BEATRICE:

Who is this woman?

CATTE:

I'm her sister. Who are you?

BETTINA:

Have you seen Pasqualino?

CATTE:

No. I was lost and couldn't find my way.

BETTINA:

Oh, if I don't find him soon, I'll die.

CATTE:

But what happened?

BETTINA:

Something awful.

CATTE:

The Marchese?

BETTINA:

Yes.

CATTE:

I knew it!

BETTINA:

It was horrible.

CATTE:

Did he...?

*She makes vague hand gestures*

BETTINA:

Do puppet theatre?

CATTE:

No. You know...

*More vague hand gestures*

BEATRICE:

Sex! She means, did you have sex with the Marchese.

BETTINA:

No! Her Excellency prevented it.

CATTE:

Who's she?

BETTINA:

The Marchese's wife.

CATTE:

No?

BETTINA:

Yes.

BEATRICE:  
Will you two stop your jabbering and let's get to the theatre.

CATTE:  
You're going to theatre?

BETTINA:  
Yes.

CATTE:  
Good girls don't go to the theatre! No Offense.

BEATRICE:  
None taken.

BETTINA:  
Can my sister come?

BEATRICE:  
Without a mask?

CATTE:  
I can cover my face with my shawl.

BEATRICE:  
Very well. But let's hurry. I want to put and end to this entanglement tonight.

*Exeunt*

Scene 11

*A view of the Grande Canal on one side, on the other the exterior of a theatre.*

TICKET BOY:  
Tickets here. You wanna ticket? Get your tickets here to one of Venezia's most loved comedies, Tickets here.

OTTAVIO:  
I need a ticket. Hey, aren't you the same boy that delivered the coffe this morning?

TICKET BOY:  
No. I'm his twin brother Vincenzo that poeple call Enzo.

OTTAVIO:  
So you have a brother Lorenzo that people call Enzo? And your name is Vincenzo that people call Enzo.

TICKET BOY:

Yes.

OTTAVIO:

Well, what do you do when your mother calls, "Enzo?"

TICKET BOY:

We both run to our mother. Tickets here, get your tickets.

OTTAVIO:

Wait, I need a ticket. Is the show any good?

TICKET BOY:

I don't know, I just sell the tickets. Tickets here, get your tickets.

*Various people pass by in social masks. Nane enters with people in masks and escorts them into the theatre. Beatrice, Bettina, and Catte buy tickets and enter the theatre. Then we see Brighella escort Ottavio into the theatre.*

*Doors open and Menego and Nane greet each other.*

MENEGO:

Ciao Nane. No Hard feelings, huh?

NANE:

For what?

MENEGO:

That argument we had on the water. About the right of way.

NANE:

That little thing? Forgot all about it.

MENEGO:

Fight like that is necessary once in a while to keep up the reputation. Know what I mean?

NANE:

Of course I do. I saw the line of gondoliers behind you. I knew what you were doing. To tell you the truth, I threw in a couple of extra insults just to help you out.

MENEGO:

You're a good gondolier. C'mon, let me buy the first round.

*He pulls out a bottle of wine and pours two glasses.*

Salute.

NANE:

Salute.

*They drink.*

*Enter Tita*

TITA:

Aw, did you two kiss and make up? Are we done with the yelling?

MENEGO:

What yelling? We're Veneziano, that's how we talk to each other. Care to join us?

TITA:

Thought you'd never ask.

*Menego pours a glass for Tita*

*Enter Lelio*

LELIO:

Ciao, Tita! How are you?

TITA:

Signore Lelio. I'm fine. How are you?

MENEGO:

Who is that?

TITA:

A Veneziano who was raised in Livorno, and just now returned home. An excellent boatman, too.

MENEGO:

He's one of us then. Come sir, have a drink with us.

*Pours a drink for Lelio*

A Venezia!

ALL:

A Venezia! Cin Cin!

LELIO:

It's so good to be with men like yourselves.

MENEGO:

Make yourself at home.

LELIO:

Let's have another bottle, shall we?

Scene 12

*Enter Beatrice dressed in the clothes of Bettina  
and Bettina dressed in the clothes of Beatrice*

BETTINA:

Why are we leaving? I was just beginning to enjoy the play.

BEATRICE:

My husband saw us.

BETTINA:

An why did we change clothes? I don't understand.

BEATRICE:

You will.

BETTINA:

Where is my sister?

BEATRICE:

She's with my cousin the Baroness. She'll be safe. I have a plan that only involves the two of us.

*Sees Pasqualino*

Oh good, here comes Pasqualino.

BETTINA:

Why is he here?

BEATRICE:

I had him sent for.

BETTINA:

Why?

BEATRICE:

For you?

BETTINA:

For me? What am I going to do with him.

BEATRICE:

I'm sure you'll think of something.

BETTINA:

What?

BEATRICE:  
Go, run, escape with him.

BETTINA:  
I can't. Not without a chaperone.

BEATRICE:  
You're kidding.

BETTINA:  
No. I'm an honorable maid.

Scene 13

*Enter Pasqualino*

PASQUALINO:

*Aside*

The message from the Marchesa told me to meet her here.  
I wonder why? And where is my Bettina? I'll never  
forgive myself if anything has happened to her.

BEATRICE:

*To Bettina*

Look at him. Isn't he so sad? Don't you want to be with  
him?

BETTINA:  
Yes....But then again, there's no telling what may  
happen if we're alone together.

BEATRICE:  
I could tell what would happen if I were alone with  
him.

BETTINA:

*Not hearing her*

What?

BEATRICE:  
Nothing. Just talking to myself.

PASQUALINO:

*Aside*

Those two masks are looking at me. Could they be the  
Marchesa? That looks like her cloak. Could the other be  
Bettina? I pray to the heavens it is.

Scene 14

*Enter Ottavio and Brighella*

OTTAVIO:

There she is with Bettina. They haven't seen us. Act casual and we'll sneak up and grab them from behind.

BRIGHELLA:

*He makes a sound and gestures that he is squeezing a behind.*

OTTAVIO:

No, not ON the behind. From behind. But I like the way you think.

BETTINA:

Oh my. Here comes the Marchese.

BEATRICE:

Keep you mouth shut and follow my lead.

OTTAVIO:

*Seizing Beatrice by the arm thinking that she is Bettina.*

Now I have you. I'll not let you slip through my fingers again.

*To Bettina thinking that she is Beatrice*  
And you, dear wife, will have my wrath to deal with.

*Sees Pasqualino*  
Pasqualino, What are you doing here?

PASQUALINO:

Oh, uh, I'm just strolling about. I went to see the play. *Servant of Two Masters* is my favorite.

OTTAVIO:

I hate Goldoni. The plot lines are convoluted and the characters are idiots. Would you please escort my wife back to the palace.

*To Bettina dressed as Beatrice*  
I'll deal with you later.

*To Beatrice dressed as Bettina*  
Come, my love, let's go where we can express our heart's delights.

*Exits with Beatrice*

Scene 15

*Pasqualino talks to Bettina, thinking she's the Marchesa.*

PASQUALINO:

Your Excellency, I am at your service. Can I take your arm? No? I am unworthy, I know, but I don't want to be as rough as the Marchese said...No? Ok. Could you at least tell me why you sent for me? ... Was that other mask Bettina? Oh, you're crying? Why? Are you ok? Why are you hiding your face? Would you like to go home?

*Bettina nods*

Yes? Very well. Still no arm? Ok.

*To himself*

If I don't find Bettina, I'll die of despair.

*Exeunt*

Scene 16

*A room in the palace of the Marchese. Enter Menego and Lelio*

MENEGO:

So I hear you're having some problems with your father.

LELIO:

I am.

MENEGO:

Why?

LELIO:

He wants to rule my life, forcing me to follow in his footsteps.

MENEGO:

Look, you seem like a good kid, and Tita says you're a masterful boatman, but take it from me, sons must obey their fathers. And from what I've heard about how you live your life, your father has every right to berate you for your choices.

LELIO:

But he wants me to go into business like him and I can't stand that work, if that's what you can call it. Cooped up inside, counting the stock, and always worrying if your goods are going to make it to port and what's the best exchange rate. Now if I were your son and you wanted me to follow in your footsteps...outside

(MORE)

LELIO: (cont'd)  
 in the fresh air, on the water, sweating for what I  
 earn. I would be perfectly happy.

MENEGO:  
 You say that now. It's one thing to go out on a boat  
 for pleasure, but if you had to do it for a living, you  
 might grow tired of it.

LELIO:  
 Maybe. But everyone has their passion and being on the  
 water is mine.

Scene 17

*Enter Donna Pasqua*

DONNA PASQUA:  
 Menego, Where have you been? I've been looking for you  
 since I got back from Pelestrina.

MENEGO:  
 Ah, just the one I want to see. Come here my little  
 calamari.

DONNA PASQUA:  
 Come give me a hug, my big ol' hunk of prosciutto.

*They Embrace*

MENEGO:  
 How I missed my little shrimp scampi.

DONNA PASQUA:  
 You really know how to stuff my ravioli.

*Lelio clears his throat*

DONNA PASQUA:  
 Oh, hi Lelio

Scene 18

*Enter Pantalone*

PANTALONE:  
  
*From off*  
 Menego, may I come in?

MENEGO:

Who is it? Come.

PANTALONE:

Aha! You slime bucket. Menego, I'm surprised you keep such degenerate company. I heard he was here and now I've found the dirtbag.

DONNA PASQUA:

Is that how you speak to your son?

PANTALONE:

If you had a son like mine, you would speak to him the same way. Donna Pasqua, you would be ashamed that you nursed him and rocked his cradle when he was young, if you knew how he turned out.

MENEGO:

What did he do?

LELIO:

Nothing?

PANTALONE:

If by nothing you mean beat me, then yes, you've done nothing.

MENEGO:

You beat your own father?

LELIO:

I didn't know it was him.

PANTALONE:

Excuses, excuses! I'll have none of them. I spoke with a captain of a ship who's sailing on a slow boat to the far East, and you'll be joining his crew. You like being on the water so much, you'll be a sailor on a merchant ship, and there I hope you'll be happy.

LELIO:

To the Far East? Well... I'll be happy to be away from you.

PANTALONE:

If you won't go out of obedience, you'll go by force. I'm waiting to talk to the Marchese about it tonight.

LELIO:

I swear to heaven, I don't know what keeps me from...

*He attacks Pantalone*

*Menego stops him*

MENEGO:

Stop, stop. You can't attack you own father! We'll work something out.

PANTALONE:

No we won't. A son like him, who disrespects his father, deserves to go to jail. And I'll make sure he does.

DONNA PASQUA:

No you won't.

PANTALONE:

What? Why won't I? How dare you speak to me like that.

DONNA PASQUA:

I'm sorry Signor Pantalone, but I've realized something that I've suspected all along.

MENEGO:

What?

DONNA PASQUA:

That Lelio is not Pantalone's son.

*The three men gasp*

LELIO:

I knew it.

PANTALONE:

How?

DONNA PASQUA:

I thought there was something about him, and then when I saw the birthmark on his arm during the scuffle, I knew him to be ours.

*Three men Gasp*

MENEGO:

How can this be?

DONNA PASQUA:

Remember, Signore Pantalone, when you took that business trip to Naples? You wanted me to go with you because you were taking your newborn son. I had just given birth to our son, so he had to go with us. Our ship was caught in a terrible storm, and we were lost at sea. The ship was taking on water so the crew had to lighten the load. It was decided that I, and the two

(MORE)

DONNA PASQUA: (cont'd)

babes would be placed in a closed barrel with food and water and set to sea. After several terrifying days, we washed ashore in Cyprus. A local fisherman saved us, brought us ashore, gave us food and new clothes, and put us on a ship bound for Venezia. But on our voyage back our ship was overrun with Turkish pirates, who wanted to take me and the infants as ransom.

LELIO:

I was kidnapped by Turkish pirates, too.

DONNA PASQUA:

Don't get a head of me. Since I was the wife of a poor gondolier, they decide to let me and my son go free and keep the child of a rich Veneziano merchant.

PANTALONE:

I'm not that rich, I mean, I get by, well, maybe a bit more than just get by, I mean, I do ok.

DONNA PASQUA:

Since the babies were wrapped in identical Cypriot swaddling, I couldn't tell them apart, and the Turkish pirates just grabbed the one and fled. I returned to Venezia and raised the child as my own. Eight years later, you paid the ransom and Lelio was returned to you.

LELIO:

Eight years?

PANTALONE:

Business was slow.

DONNA PASQUA:

When he returned to Venezia, you sent him to Livorno right away, so I never got a good look at him. But now that I do, I swear Lelio is my son.

PANTALONE:

Which means...

DONNA PASQUA:

Pasqualino is your true son.

PANTALONE:

Thank the stars!

LELIO:

Thank the stars!

PANTALONE:

Of course, it all makes sense. I'll embrace Pasqualino as mine own and you can keep this one. I need no more proof of your story. That birthmark is proof enough. But wait...why didn't you look at his birthmark when the Turkish pirates wanted to take him away?

DONNA PASQUA:

I didn't think of that.

LELIO:

And in all these years you never noticed that Pasqualino doesn't have a birthmark on his arm?

DONNA PASQUA:

I thought it was a phase.

*All think for a moment*

PANTALONE:

Huh. I'm off to find Pasqualino.

*Exits*

Scene 19

LELIO:

Is it true, Signora, or are you just trying to save me from punishment?

DONNA PASQUA:

Oh my boy, my boy! It's all true!

*They embrace*

LELIO:

Then I'm the happiest man alive!

MENEGO:

I'm not.

DONNA PASQUA:

Why not?

MENEGO:

It's one thing to lose me a good son, but to find a drunk, gambling, womanizer to replace him.

LELIO:

I know I've been acting a bit of a scallywag, but it's only because my fath... I mean, Pantalone, was forcing me to give up my heart's desire. Give me a straw boater for my head, an oar in my hand, put me on a gondola and you'll see a new Lelio.

MENEGO:

*To Donna Pasqua*

You should have kept your mouth shut and left him to his fate.

*Exits*

LELIO:

That could've gone better.

DONNA PASQUA:

Make some good of yourself and he'll learn to love you in time.

LELIO:

For good or worse, it doesn't matter to me. I'm a new man and I can't wait to start my new life.

DONNA PASQUA:

C'mon, I'll make you dinner. Do you like Zucca Barruca with Bigoli Pasta?

LELIO:

Never had it.

DONNA PASQUA:

You'll love it. Then over dinner you can tell me all about your life these last 19 years.

*Exeunt*

Scene 20

*A room in the palace of the Marchese*

OTTAVIO:

Come, come Bettina. Now is not the time to be so narrow-minded. I know that you are an honorable maid and that loving a married man is repulsive to you. I know that we can't truly be together until I'm free from the bondage of wedlock. But I won't be married for long. I tell you in confidence, that my wife is ill and doesn't have long to live. She may even go tonight. And when she does, we can be together.

BEATRICE:

*Unmasking*

Your sorrow for the eminent loss of your wife is heart wrenching, you vile, disgusting, jackass! You let your bestial passions carry you so far as to wish for your wife's death? And maybe even plan it? And on top of

(MORE)

BEATRICE: (cont'd)

that, you're so stupid! Did you think that I wouldn't discover your plans. Idiot! I'll divorce you. You'll have to repay the dowry, give me alimony, and I'm going to tell all the world what you've done so you'll never be able to show your head again.

*Exits*

OTTAVIO:

This affair is going to be my ruin. That devil of a wife of mine. But she is clever to have foiled my plans. And she is sexy when she's angry. The way she scowls at me and her face gets flushed with passion. How she bites her lower lip as she's trying to hold back her anger, I begin to feel something. It's so provocative when she thinks I'm up to something and her one eyebrow arches. Perhaps I'm seeing my wife in a new light.

*Gasps*

I think I'm falling in love with my wife. I'll forget Bettina and beg forgiveness of Beatrice. It's the only thing to do.

*Exits*

Scene 21

*Another room in the Palace. Pasqualino and Bettina, still masked and dressed as Beatrice*

PASQUALINO:

Please, your Excellency. We're in your palace now, won't you please remove your mask and tell me why you summoned me?

*Bettina shakes her head*

*Enter Beatrice*

BEATRICE:

Pasqualino, what are you doing?

PASQUALINO:

Hello, milady, I was just asking you to remove you mask and tell me why you summoned me. Wait, What? How can you be sitting there in a mask and here in front of me at the same time?

BEATRICE:

I'm not.

PASQUALINO:

Is it magic?

BEATRICE:

What?

PASQUALINO:

Are you using mirrors?

BEATRICE:

Can you be that stupid?

PASQUALINO:

I don't know, I thought mirrors was good guess...

BEATRICE:

No, you idiot. This is Bettina.

*She removes Bettina's mask*

PASQUALINO:

*He throws himself at Bettina's feet*

Oh, my love. You've been with me this entire time and you didn't say anything? you let me wallow in despair this entire time? Why?

BETTINA:

I'm an honorable maid.

PASQUALINO:

...an honorable maid.

BEATRICE:

...an honorable maid.

BEATRICE:

We know. But did you think that maybe you were taking it a bit too far?

BETTINA:

How do you mean?

BEATRICE:

Never mind. Come, give your hand to your bridegroom.

BETTINA:

But how can we be married without a dowry? Signor Pantalone hasn't given me the two hundred ducats he's promised.

PASQUALINO:

Signor Pantalone? Why, here he comes now!

Scene 22

*Enter Pantalone*

PANTALONE:

My dear son, come and give your father a hug.

*He embraces Pasqualino*

PASQUALINO:

Me? Why do you address me so, Signor Pantalone?

PANTALONE:

You mustn't call me that, call me Pappa. Donna Pasqua is not your mother. She was your nurse on a a business trip I took. She had her son with her, Lelio, that dirty, rotten...

PASQUALINO:

But Donna Pasqua?

PANTALONE:

Right. Well, there was storm so they put the three of you in barrel and shoved you overboard, you washed up on a beach in Cyprus, put on a ship bound for Venezia, which was overrun by Turkish pirates.

PASQUALINO:

What?

PANTALONE:

I know, doesn't sound plausible. They took Lelio instead of you because they couldn't tell which was the baby of a rich merchant and which the one a poor nurse, because you were both wrapped in Cypriot swaddling. It wasn't until now, when Donna Pasqua saw the birthmark on Lelio's arm that she realized that the two of you were switched by the Turkish pirates.

PASQUALINO:

Why didn't she look at the birthmark when the pirates wanted to take one of us?

PANTALONE:

I know, I asked her the same thing.

PASQUALINO:

And in all these years, she never noticed that I didn't have a birthmark on my arm?

PANTALONE:

I asked her that, too. Listen, she's a few candles short of a candelabra.

PASQUALINO:

Yeah, I know, but 19 years...

PANTALONE:

Let it go. It doesn't matter now. We've been reunited and we can make up for lost time. Let's go get gelato and you can tell me all about yourself.

PASQUALINO:

I can't Signor...I mean pappa, until one thing is resolved.

PANTALONE:

Well, go ahead. Speak up.

PASQUALINO:

You know that I am betrothed to Bettina...

PANTALONE:

Of course, that. Well, now that you're my son, you two will get married at once. Nothing is too good for Bettina. I know I wanted to marry her myself, but let's just forget about that, shall we. Come, take each other's hand and with them, my blessings.

*He puts Pasqualino's hand in Bettina's*

PASQUALINO:

My love, my life, my  
Bettina.

BETTINA:

My life, my love, my  
Pasqualino.

PANTALONE: (cont'd)

This is so touching.

Scene 23

*Enter Ottavio, Catta, Arlecchino and the rest*

ALL:

Oh no, it's the Marchese!

OTTAVIO:

I know what's been going on here. I know that Pasqualino has turned out to be your son and that Lelio is the son of Menego and Donna Pasqua. I know that Pasqualino and Bettina are to be married and I am here to say that I am happy for you. In front of the heavens above and the witnesses here, on bended knee, I beg forgiveness from you Bettina and you Beatrice. Bettina, a small gesture of penance, I vow to pay the dowry for your marriage, employ your husband as my bookkeeper, and to buy the two of you a home of your own.

BETTINA:

You treated me like an object that can be bought or won, throwing money and gifts at me expecting me to give you what you wanted. You tricked my lover, lied to your wife, and used my own sister to help you further your plot, and when all of that failed, you kidnapped me. And now, you again use money and gifts to buy my forgiveness.

Everyone here, at one point or another, mocked me for holding on to my honor. You live your lives, one scheme at a time in pursuit of money, or security, or materialistic pleasures. How many of you will be able to say on your death bed that you lived your lives according to your own terms instead of following what others say is important? When all of the clothes, and jewels, and property, and wealth, and fine things we thought were so important have all been stripped away from us what are we left with but our own morality, our honor.

Pasqualino, I have nothing, I come from nothing, all I have is unwavering devotion and a heart that loves relentlessly. The future is unknown, and the world has been known to pair joy and sorrow. But as long as I have you, I'm willing to face all that life has to offer.

Ottavio, I know that nothing annoys one's enemies more than forgiving them, but I also know the only way for me to move forward in my life is to grant forgiveness, so I forgive you. But go and seek forgiveness from the one you have been the most wretched to.

OTTAVIO:

To you, Beatrice, I humbly beg forgiveness for my ways. I vow never to disgrace you like that ever again and to treat you the way that you deserve to be treated.

BEATRICE:

Do you promise to take me to the theatre, and out to dinner and pay for my debts?

OTTAVIO:

I was hoping that if I treated you well, you might stop the gambling?

BEATRICE:

You are in no position to haggle.

OTTAVIO:

True. I pledge to take you to the theatre, and out to dinner and to pay for your gambling debts as long as I shall live.

BEATRICE:

Hm, time will tell. If you truly change your ways, I will forgive you.

OTTAVIO:

I'll take it.

*To Pasqualino and Bettina*

Happy Lover's I rejoice for you and your blissful union. Come, let's to the chapel and to the wedding.

ARLECCHINO:

Excuse me good people. May I say a little something at the time of celebration?

OTTAVIO:

Of course.

ARLECCHINO:

We can't have a wedding and no party. There's no rice to throw, no food, wine, or cake!

OTTAVIO:

He's right. Tonight after the nuptials, I will have Brighella set a feast to end all feasts. Prepare the most succulent meats, the sweetest desserts and open the best bottles of wine. Spare no expense.

CATTE:

Three cheers for the newlyweds!

LELIO:

Three cheers for the bride and groom!

*Fine della commedia*